Che DDRC News

Newsletter of the Dallas Downriver Club—Visit our website at www.down-river.org

January 2006

FINE PRINT - The DDRC Current News is published monthly by the Dallas Downriver Club and is provided to its members either by First Class postage or by email. Opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors and may or may not reflect the opinion of the club or its officers.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION of articles, announcements, events, trips, etc. is the 1st Thursday of the month. It is on a come first served basis therefore sooner is better

DDRC BOARD MEETINGS are held every **second Thursday** of the month - **7:00 PM** @ Enchilada's (directions on back of newsletter). All members are welcome to attend to learn more about club business.

Trips & Events

1/19 — DDRC Meeting — 7 p.m. Enchilada's Restaurant, 6526 E. NW Hwy

Marshall Creek Rd. Marshall Creek Park

Trophy Club Dr.

Grapevine

Marshall Creek Map—January Urban Paddle

1/28 — Urban Paddle & Potluck — January 2006 Urban Paddle and Potluck Adventure will

be Jan. 28 at Marshall Creek Park, a very pretty section of Denton Creek off of Lake Grapevine. When lake levels are higher you can paddle in the back sections of the lake with some very interesting twists and turns. One might say a GPS would come in handy! But with lake levels so low at this writing, the plan is to go up the creek with a paddle! So we'll meet at 10 a.m. at the boat ramp. We'll paddle 'til we get hungry, then turn back and have potluck lunch. There is no shuttle involved...we put in and take out at the same place. Lunch is when we get back, not on the river! Bring your paddling gear, friends, family and whoever else you want, and potluck lunch for you and a few others. There are facilities and a nice picnic area. There is a \$3 entry fee per car to the park so you may want to carpool. Questions? Call Pat Chamberlain at (214) 478-6204.

1/28-29 — Freeze Trip — Alamo City Rivermen's 20th Annual Freeze Trip has been tentatively moved from the Colorado River to the San Marcos due to the burn ban. Camping will be at Pecan Park. Check back on the events calendar for more details as they become available. This trip requires a committed RSVP due to logistics. Interested? Please contact Bryan Jackson, Hollowcreek@paddlinpals.com or call 972-979-2519.

2/16 — DDRC Meeting — 7 p.m. Enchilada's Restaurant, 6526 E. Northwest Highway

2/18-19 — Village Creek — Join us as we return to explore the Big Thicket down near Kountze, TX. We will be camping at Indian Springs Camp and if we have enough people committed to coming, we will use their group area, which has a large group shelter and kitchen as well as plenty of room for tent camping. To reserve the group area we need at least 15 people committed by February 1. Potluck supper Saturday night is a Southwest/Mexican theme, so bring you favorite dish and your appetite. For more info or to RSVP, contact Bryan Jackson Hollowcreek@paddlinpals.com or call 972-979-2519.

2/25 — Urban Paddle & Potluck — 10 a.m. Location to be determined.

3/4 — Kiamichi River — See online events calendar for details. More info to follow in February news.

A message from the Prez

Happy New Year everyone! I hate to have to kick off the year with a bunch of issues BUT ... Its membership renewal time. Dues for 2006 will remain \$20 and are due now. Newsletter mail and email lists will be revised in February for the March issue. Those who are not current will not receive the March issue. Dues can be paid at the monthly meetings or by mail. If mailing, send your check to DDRC Dues, P.O. Box 820246 Dallas, TX 75382.

Those of you who are ACA members may have noticed that the November edition of their newsletter contained the 2006 ACA dues schedule. You may also have noticed that there are hefty price increases for everyone. Individual Paddle America memberships will go up to \$30, Family to \$45 and as a club the DDRC would be looking at \$225, an increase of \$125 from 2005 and a \$225 increase from 2003 when it was free. The ACA is selling this as a "good thing". The \$225 club membership fee would include 20 "complimentary" event memberships (that's what we charge the extra \$10 for at the TRC) that we could give away and the clubs that participate in the blanket liability insurance would no longer have to pay the optional \$5 per ACA member. The ACA has shifted this cost to the actual member, hence the increase in member dues. The DDRC has never participated in the insurance program as far as insuring individual members. We only use the ACA insurance for the TRC, so as far as I can see there is no real benefit to the DDRC in all this. Whatever we save from the 20 "complimentary" event memberships is just eaten back up by the increased up front cost. We would still have to charge \$10 per racer at the TRC for non-ACA members (which was 88 out of 95 participants last year) and since we do not participate in the insurance, there is no payback there either.

I feel very strongly that the extra \$10 has contributed to stagnating the growth of TRC participation the last two years. I sent a letter to the ACA with our TRC recap and the check for the \$880 we collected from paddlers outlining my concerns and disappointments with their performance in support of the DDRC and the TRC in the hope that maybe they would do something to address the higher costs. In the letter I pointed out:

- That membership cards had not been received by most participants by race day making it difficult to identify who exactly was or was not a member.
- That the \$10 per person event membership was too high and was causing people not to participate.
- That the ACA had not done a single thing to support or promote our race, but they certainly made sure that I received an email the day after reminding me to send them their check for event memberships collected.
- That they had not replied to voice messages or emails regarding the status of our sanctioning application that was very late being approved.
- That their web site was left un-maintained for 4 months before our race and our race never added to the event calendar.

Two days later I received an email stating "For many years, the ACA has kept insurance coverage for on-water activities affordable to all paddlers. Although there may be other sanctioning bodies that provide insurance at a lower rate, we feel that the amount of coverage the ACA provides is second to none, especially for Paddle America Clubs." None of my other comments or concerns were acknowledged or addressed. Two months later, I get the 2006 Membership prices, complete with hefty increases.

Now DDRC members, we have a decision to make as far as renewing our affiliation as a Paddle America Club. I have to ask is it worth it? What do we get for our money besides Paddler magazine? When was the last time the ACA did anything in Texas that was of any benefit to the paddling community? Do we have any options?

My answers would be No, Nothing, Never, and Yes. Our options really depend on why we were affiliated with the ACA in the first place. If we just want to insure the TRC, we can do it for less. If we want a voice in river access or environmental issues there are more active local groups we could align more closely with.

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STOCK UP AND SHIP OUT!

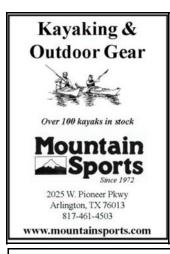
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December New Year's Eve Urban Paddle

A great time was had by all at the December McInnish Park Urban Paddle. More than 15 paddlers became one with the wind as we paddled this section of the Trinity River and explored Denton Creek. What better way to ring in the new year than with good fun, great people and food! Nice job picking the location Jaws—too bad you couldn't be there to enjoy it.

The weather was so beautiful that we had a nice long lingering lunch. It was great to see so many new faces that we hope to see again. Come join us any time! We hope to see you at Marshall Creek in January.

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No matter what we decide to do, its up to you. If you have an opinion on this, please come to the January meeting and make it known. I have been looking into a few options, which I will present and then open up the floor for comments and any other ideas. We are in no hurry to decide, so lets take our time and make the most informed decision we can.

Rich Grayson sent me an email about an article he read in the January issue it Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. Rich writes....

"TPWD Exec. Dir. Robert L. Cook's childhood memories of his dad's 10' kit boat with 2.5 hp outboard, growing up in Zephyr, Texas. The story, however, quickly deteriorates in the third paragraph as Mr. Cook writes: "...Some might ask, shouldn't "paddle-powered" canoes and kayaks be registered also? Don't they use the same public resource of our rivers and lakes? When they need help, don't they use the same game wardens come to their rescue and assistance? Don't they use our same state parks, boat docks and boat ramp parking areas? Yes, they do. Canoes and kayaks that are not motorized do not present many of the management problems, resource issues and human conflicts, as do the other boats. But, they are using the resource, occupying space on our public lakes and streams and requiring some of the same oversight as motorized boats. On the other hand, kayakers and canoeists need additional public access points to put in and take out along our rivers and streams. Would it be reasonable to ask that canoers and kayakers help fund the conservation of our natural resources, pay a portion of the boating safety effort and fund additional public access points to our rivers and streams? I wonder if those users would be receptive to an \$8 to \$10 annual fee if the legislature dedicated 25% to state parks, 25% to boater safety, 25% to improving and increasing public access points to our rivers and streams and 25% to improving our fisheries....""

Looks like it's starting again, TP&W just can't wait to get into our back pocket. TP&W has a budget shortfall and magically making everyone with a canoe and kayak pay a registration fee makes it go away. The article very incorrectly assumes that paddlers use resources that they don't pay for.

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In 2005 I paid \$35 for a fishing license, \$60 for a park pass, \$12 for a limited public use permit and about \$100 in camping fees in state parks. So lets see, according to the breakdown in the article they want me to give \$2 more to state parks over and above the \$160 I already pay, \$2 more to improving our fisheries to which I already contribute \$35, \$2 more to the \$12 I already pay for a public land permit that I use maybe twice a year and \$2 to boater safety when paddlers already have available to them better training than power boaters get, without spending a penny of state funding. Seems to me like we pay our fair share. If there is a shortfall, THEY NEED TO CUT THEIR BUDGET. What kills me is how much more we pay overall for park access, boat registration and licensing than most states and get so much less in return.

I have invited Mr. Walt Dabney for TP&W to come to a meeting in possibly February or March and give a presentation on the state of Texas parks and the budget shortfall.

In the meanwhile I think a letter writing campaign or a petition is in order to make sure that the powers that be at TP&W know that we are opposed to their "canoe tax".

Still awake? Good, I'll get down off of the soapbox now and leave some room in this issue for more interesting stuff. I would like to thank everyone who pitched in to make the Christmas Party so special. In 30 minutes we turned the Dreyfuss Club into a winter wonderland, had a fantastic dinner, a huge raffle and great time! Paul the caretaker also said we did an excellent job of cleaning up. I don't know about you but I think we should have it there next year. I hope to see everyone at the meeting on the 19th.

Bryan Jackson















Tales from the River of Sticks A Sabine Adventure to Remember (Installment 1 of 2)

Thomas Taylor:

Fellow of survivors! Despite the obvious problems we encountered we had a successful trip. Eight paddlers and seven boats entered the river at US HWY69 and all eight of us exited without serious injury at FM1804, even if the trip took 24 hours longer than we expected. We broke in a new novice paddler, who exceeded all expectations considering the difficulty of the trip.

Marc McCord:

Christmas came and went, and then it was back to the business at hand - paddling rivers and enjoying the company of fellow DDRC members. On December 26, a group of eight met at the home of Bryan Jackson for a trip to Mineola and the Sabine River far above Toledo bend. None of us had ever paddled this reach before, and judging by what we saw it is unlikely that many others have, either.

We began at the US Highway 69 bridge with a take-out destination at FM 1804 about 11.7 miles below our put-in. The group included Paul and Ann Boling, Thomas Taylor, Steve Crowe, Jaws, John Pullman, Bryan and I. The easy part of the trip was getting there and getting ready to begin our "adventure". It was not a trip for the fainthearted or weekend warrior. This trip demanded more physical energy from me than any I have EVER expended before.

Thomas Taylor:

We unloaded the canoe's and kayaks at US 69 at about 10:30 am and then Bryan and I shuttled his vehicle with the trailer to the take out at FM 1804 and returned and left my vehicle at US 69. We loaded up our boats with a day's provisions "lunch" and headed down stream. After about 20 - 30 minutes we encountered the first obstacle, a blown down tree, however, we saw so many in the next eight hours I couldn't tell you exactly where it was and how we got around it. We repeated the cycle, paddle for a few minutes, move the boats over, under or around a blown down tree or trees. We started to get spread out in a couple of hours in twos and threes as we bunched up at a portage and then moved out one by one as we got our boats back in the water. We stopped for lunch at place where the Sabine had changed channels over the years. Our progress down stream was blocked by a large tree that completely blocked the channel with no access around the left or right bank. John, who figured out a lot of our difficult portages, straddled the log and lifted his boat over to the other side. He then proceeded to help each one of us get out of our boats on the upstream side and then helped us lift our boats over to the downstream side, get back in our boats and proceed on. I don't think my feet even got wet! In my mind that was the point of no return.

John Pullman:

Yes, darkness did find us on a river blocked by fallen trees and yes we did underestimate both the distance we had to travel and the length of the time it would take us to do it. So did Christopher Columbus.

I am finally starting not to feel the burn from muscles much in disuse this Wednesday afternoon and am looking forward to being a member of a soon to be elite group of the "River Sticks, Rowed hard and put up wet Pre-New-Years 36 hour afternoon Paddle Club". Let me start by saying Monday the day after Christmas was a beautiful day and that we had a terrific group of people to go with. I think we all respect and admire each other and felt comfortable undertaking this trip just like the hundreds of past ones and hopefully future ones. While nothing is 100% when it involves nature, we all knew the weather was going to be fine and that there was a certain amount of the unknown in the route we had decided to take.

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Marc McCord:

At times, we were able to pull our boats across tree trunks without getting out of the river, but for many of them we had no choice except to carry or drag our boats across grass and/or mud to get around obstacles in the river. On a few occasions we were able to slide under trees by getting very low in our boats and using our arms to pull us through with the trunks just an inch or two from our faces.

Before dark, Tom and I were paddling along near the rear of the group when we saw a couple of feral hogs. We had been hearing them for awhile and saw them as they were coming toward the river, then abruptly turned and ran away upon seeing Tom (that boy is truly scary!) We saw various birds, a few cows that started to look pretty delicious, turtles and Steve even saw one snake, probably a water snake of some species. The moon was very late rising, and was ebbing toward the new moon phase as we paddled under a star-filled sky that was mostly clear. Visibility was terrible, and we were fortunate that Tom had his head-lamp because it

allowed us to at least find our portages around fallen trees for the nearly 3.5 hours we paddled after dark. Once again, the Helen Keller contingent of DDRC was at work doing what only insane paddlers do – going blindly into the night.

John Pullman:

I think there is a little Huckleberry Finn in each one of us who went on that paddle. We were each curious enough, good-natured enough and able enough to undertake an adventure like the one we eventually had, even if it didn't start out that way. If we had been daunted by the fallen trees across the river, early on, we could have easily turned back like so many of us have done before on windy or rainy days. Had we as a group made the "Right", decision at noon to turn back because of the difficulty we had already encountered I for one would always have wanted to go back and finish that stretch of river another day.

There was also the eternal optimist in us all who wanted the blow downs to stop and river to be running 6 feet deeper, as if wanting it to be so would have the desired affect.

I'm sure no one dreamed that there would be a tree down every 200 feet for the entire distance. Sure it would have been a good idea to have had a couple more working flashlights and a change of dry cloths for everyone, but as it turned out there was just Thomas' headlamp.

Thomas Taylor:

Oh the dark! Well at dusk we were at a portage on the right bank of the river. I was starting to get chilled so I put on my NRS splash jacket, taking off my Camelbak and life-jacket. I got my headlamp out of my Camelbak put my life-jacket back on, repacked my dry bag and moved on. That was the last time I saw my Camelbak, my gloves, goggles and binoculars! Having the only light among the five canoes we kept moving forward, not having seen the two kayaks for over an hour. JAWs and Steve were able to navigate though a lot of obstacles easier than the canoes so they ended up ahead of the pack. I think that each obstacle that the canoes encountered probably added ten to fifteen minutes to the separation between the two groups. Hoping to encounter the bridge for our take out we kept moving, tree snag to tree snag! I stayed at the end of the pack using the Light to make sure everyone got over the obstacles in the dark. It became apparent that my light was needed at the front of the pack after every portage to pick our way through the debris in the water. We did have a problem when I got out in front after one portage. I heard a splash and John called out that they needed the light! When I got there I was told that someone tipped into the water and they lost their hat. Well, everyone knows when you lose your hat the trip is over! Thankfully the hat was recovered a short distance down stream. (Hat and trip saved!)

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Commercial backcountry guides are required to be certified in WAFA if they venture one hour or more from emergency medical aid. Many of us venture to locations which are days out. This federal law exists for good reason. Remember, the life you save may be a friend, *or your own*.

WMI WAFA is sponsered locally by Crew 890 and will be held at Camp James Ray at Texoma Lake two consecutive weekends, Friday 6:00 PM through Sunday, February 10-12, and 17-19, 2006. Cost is \$300 which includes course materials, hot meals, and free camping with hot showers.

Class size is limited to 30 people and is half full now. Your \$75 deposit will hold your place until January 4. To register or obtain additional information contact Robert Squyres, 972-699-0339. or David Harmon, 214-505-3290. You may e-mail robert_squyres@troop890.org or you can access the WMI course web site at http://wmi.nols.edu

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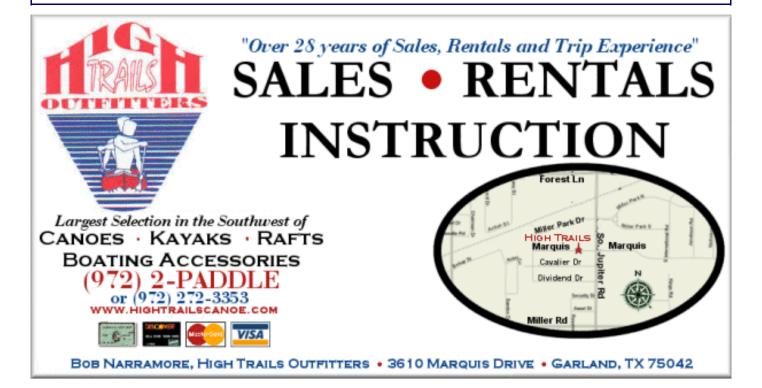
John Pullman:

Some of the group saw and heard the feral pigs which had been routing up the river banks for miles along our route; we all heard the coyotes who howled at the beautiful stars which we never see here in town because of light pollution. With the help of Thomas' headlamp, some of us saw a beaver the size of a Labrador retriever ambling along the river bank above the beaver dam which they had built in the nearly empty Sabine River bottom. When Thomas' headlamp was way off ahead and my eyes adjusted to the dark, I saw the outline of a huge beaver swim silently in front of my canoe through the narrow patch of starlight reflected off the water. I kept telling myself it was to cold for alligators this time of year. We heard 2 kinds of owls deep in the night. The first outburst being a maniacal cackling and hooting of some sort of big owl and later the "hooo hooo hooo" of a smaller cousin, and just before dawn a great blue heron let out one if its loud ORKs which Ann had never heard before. We were all relieved that a whippoorwill had not followed us down the river. Steve said he heard a beaver slap the water with its tail during the night and all the way down the river I observed hundreds of huge freshwater clam shells opened like mother-of-pearl angels wings, the former occupants of which the herons had dining on.

Thomas Taylor:

We eventually hit a stretch of flat water and I kept seeing green eyes glowing on the bank. I managed to catch a large (BIG) beaver on a sloping bank on the right, and he hit the water behind me after we passed. Our beaver friends had another surprise for me down stream. In the dark I started hearing the sound of white water (in the dark with a little head lamp!) When we reached the source we found that the beavers had thrown up a dam, which actually made the river navigable above the dam. We portaged the dam on the right and then continued down stream working our way through a large downed oak tree that we were able to paddle through. Shortly there after I caught the glow of reflective tape on Steve Crowe's jacket on the river bank. My hope of having reached the take-out were dashed when I found them on the right bank, the take out at FM 1804 was on the left! We finally met up with them at 10:30 pm and they reported they stopped when they couldn't see any further, (no flashlight!) at 7:30 pm.

...TO BE CONTINUED



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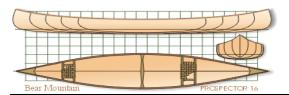
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The Official Newsletter of the Dallas Downriver Club Postage

DDRC Meetings

Thursday 7:00 PM January 19, 2006

Enchilada's Restaurant 6526 E. Northwest Hwy.

DDRC Meetings are the 3rd Thursday of every month.

