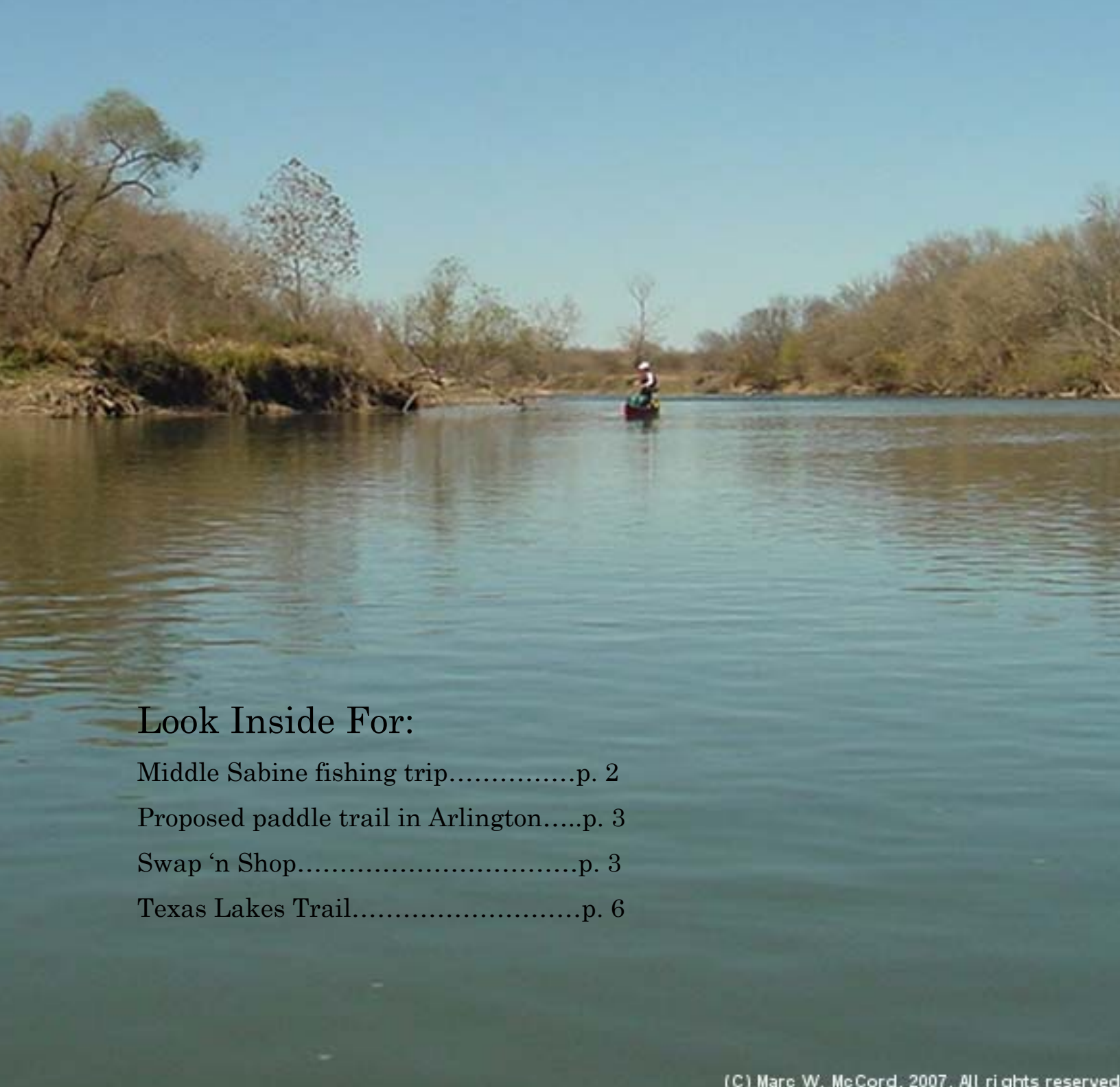


The DDRC Current News

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

Jan/Feb 2008



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Trips and Events

January 17 - Monthly meeting at the Circle Grill. Ben Kvanli will speak about activities to take place at the Power Olympic Center on the San Marcos River.

January 18-21 -Annual ACR Freeze Trip - Annual winter social event sponsored by the Alamo River City Men—to be held on the San Marcos River (due to the burn ban on the Colorado) at the Pecan Park Retreat in San Marcos. Contact Marc Mc Cord at 214-221-1290 for information (e-mail : canoeman@canoeman.com) or to make reservations for the pot luck dinner Sat night (\$6).

February 16-18 - President's Day Weekend Trip to Goose Island State Park - This trip will include paddling, fishing and bird watching on the intercoastal waterway and barrier islands on the Gulf of Mexico. There is a \$3 entry fee and \$10 tent site fee (to 8 occupants). Paddling should not be difficult, barring lots of wind, and the weather ~ hopefully warm. For more info, contact Steve Crowe at 940-484-7361 or check the DDRC website.

February 21 - Monthly meeting at the Circle Grill.

February 23-24 - Middle Sabine Fishing Expedition—We will be paddling the Sabine near Carthage during the Sand Bass spawning run. On this fairly flat stretch of scenic water, a variety of birds and wildlife can be spotted. We'll paddle (and fish!) 12.3 miles, camp at a riverside sandy beach and enjoy a potluck dinner Saturday night. For more info, contact Bryan Jackson at:

hollowcreek@paddlinpals.com or call 972-979-2519.

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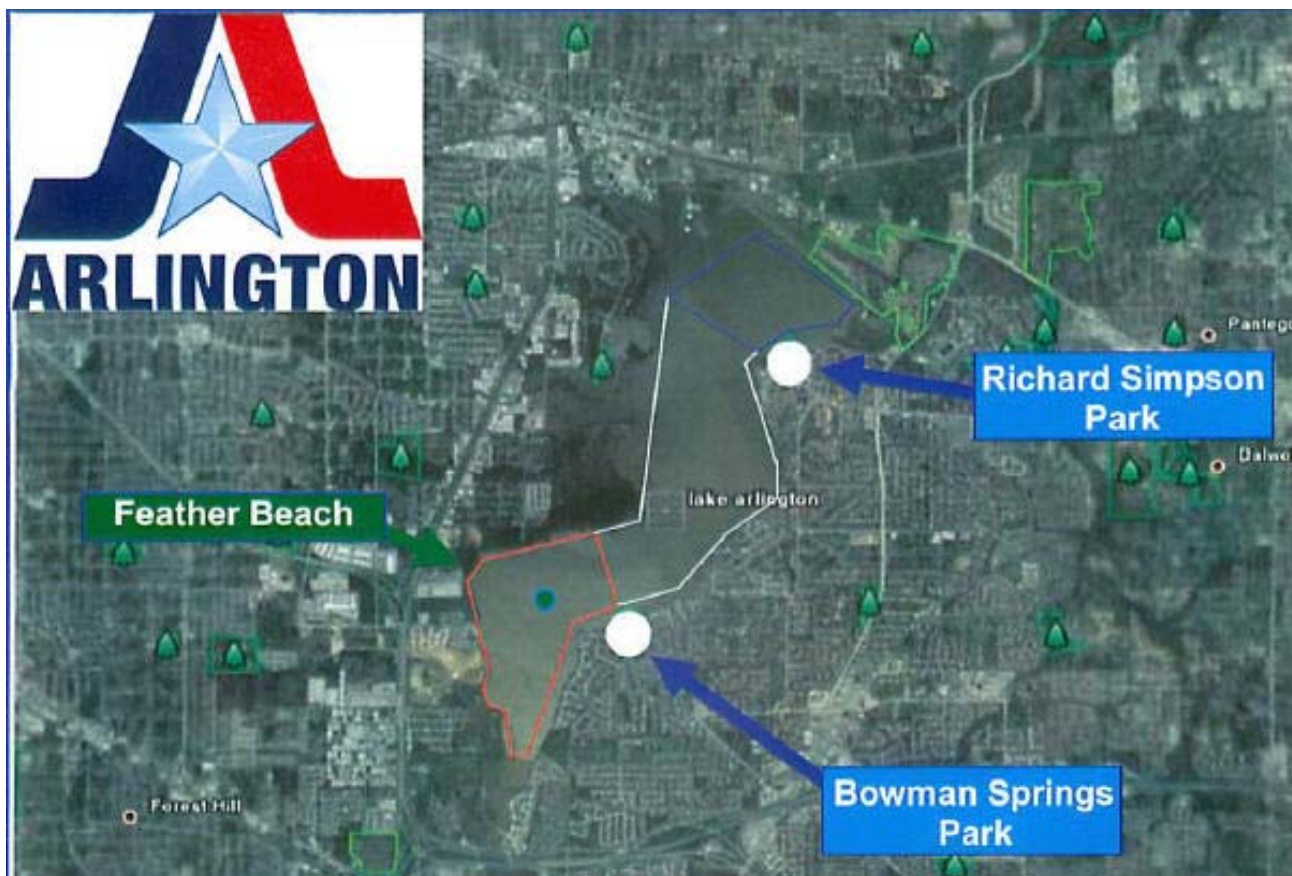


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Paddle Trail Proposed for Lake Arlington

Arlington Parks and Recreation is interested in setting up a paddling trail on Lake Arlington and is looking for some feedback from local paddlers. Gary Packan, Assistant Director for Enterprise Programs for the City will be at the February Meeting to discuss the details of the Trail and what the DDRC can do to help to get it done.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newsletter content always needed- *Please* share your adventures, recipes, photos, classifieds with us for our reading enjoyment. Email content to newsletter editor Carolee at: la_sirena_84@yahoo.com.

We will try to have a Swap 'n Shop section next issue. If there are good items you don't use (or items you need!), please email them to the editor. Include a *brief* description with the color, age, size, functionality, etc.

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 @ On the Border** (directions on back of newsletter). All members are welcome to attend to learn more about clubiness.

Annual Colorado River Expedition by Marc Mc Cord

On December 29, members of DDRC set out for the 3rd Annual Colorado River Expedition between Webberville and Bastrop. The first CRE was done by Tom, Steve and Marc in 2005-06. Last year, the group of eight included Marc, Lige, Marion, John Eastwood, Barbara Rubin, Sam and Jean Ting and Dale Harris. Participating this year were Marc McCord, trip organizer, Lige and Marion Balceszak, Tom Taylor, Steve Crowe, Earl Atnip and his sons Alec and Zach, and Aggieland Paddling Club V-P Eric McGhee. On this trip we prepared group dinners, with everyone being responsible for their own breakfasts, lunches, snacks and beverages.

After meeting at Little Webberville Park on Saturday to unload boats and gear, the drivers headed for Bastrop to shuttle vehicles down to Fisherman's Park where we would take out Tuesday afternoon. Returning to Webberville, the group proceeded to load boats and prepare to launch. Typical of our "Crack 'o Noon Club" status, we made in on the river by about 12:15 PM. We had gone about 200 feet when Marc's chair, which was standing in the stern of his canoe, caught on a tree limb and flipped him into the river in a very swift and cold current. Luckily, it was a warm day with temperatures in the mid 70's, so after bailing the boat and repacking it, we again set out on our trip. That flip set the tone for the whole trip, though we had very few problems during the four days and three nights on the river.



(C) Lige Balceszak, 2007. All rights reserved.

On Saturday, we paddled a leisurely 5.68 miles to an island just below Big Webberville Park and camped there our first night on the river. Marc prepared a dinner of Italian sausages, potato salad, red beans and rice and Mexican corn which was devoured by the group of nine. We experienced a fairly cold night on Saturday, with temperatures probably below freezing, but otherwise it was perfect conditions. We had adequate flow, light winds that were mostly behind us and clear skies, so we paddled under a warm sun and camped under a starry canopy.

Sunday was another gorgeous day, and we paddled a little over 10 miles down to another island just a little above FM 969. We saw a few others on the water, but they were out for day trips, and after passing we never saw them again. There were few others around the river all weekend, so we had mostly solitude and peaceful conditions, though we did hear occasional gunfire (it IS deer season, you know!) We capped Sunday's paddle by arriving at our campsite around 3:00 pm. Dinner consisted of Portabella and cracked black pepper rubbed pork loin, zucchini, yellow squash, tomato, red potatoes, bell peppers, carrots, onions, celery and an assortment of spices cooked in a Dutch oven. There was hardly a bite left at the end of the night.

Most of the group was in bed by 8:00 pm, but a small group that included Earl, Eric, Steve and Marc stayed up until nearly 11:00, then started drifting off,



(C) Marc W. McCord, 2007. All rights reserved.

one by one, to sleep through another very cool night. We had very modest winds and clear skies again, with temperatures warmer than the first night by several degrees.



(C) Marc W. McCord, 2007. All rights reserved.

On New Year's Eve Monday, we were on the water by 10:30 AM, and intended to paddle as far as we could that day. The weather report that called for increasing winds and colder temperatures beginning Tuesday! We ended up paddling about 13.7 miles, and were setting up camp around 4:00 PM. After a leisurely period in camp, we began preparing two large pots of Marc's homemade beef stew, which really hit the spot. We ate most of it. Everybody had at least two servings, and several people went back for third or fourth servings.

Beginning before dark, we started hearing the sounds of fireworks being set off in celebration of the new year. We were camped at the lower end of the island and could not see anything except a starry sky, but we heard discharges

until around 3 AM. The temperature was the warmest yet of the three nights, and made for very comfortable sleeping conditions. Again, most of the group was in bed by around 8:00 pm - long before 2008 arrived - some way to ring out the old year and ring in the new one!

On Tuesday morning we arose to an increasing wind speed and a shift to northerly winds that brought a slight chill to the air. Eric had to be back in Houston to pick up his girlfriend at the airport that afternoon, so he headed out around 10:00 AM, followed shortly thereafter by Lige and Marion and the Atnips. Steve, Tom and I departed downriver around 10:40 after attending to our campfire and other routine duties. The first mile was tough – we were fighting a fairly strong headwind that actually made Tom sit down to paddle. After that first mile the wind calmed and started turning to the north, and it was at our backs for much of the day's paddle. We paddled about 7 miles down to Fisherman's Park that last day and were all back in Bastrop by about 1:00 PM. to load vehicles and depart for home, having completed another great trip.



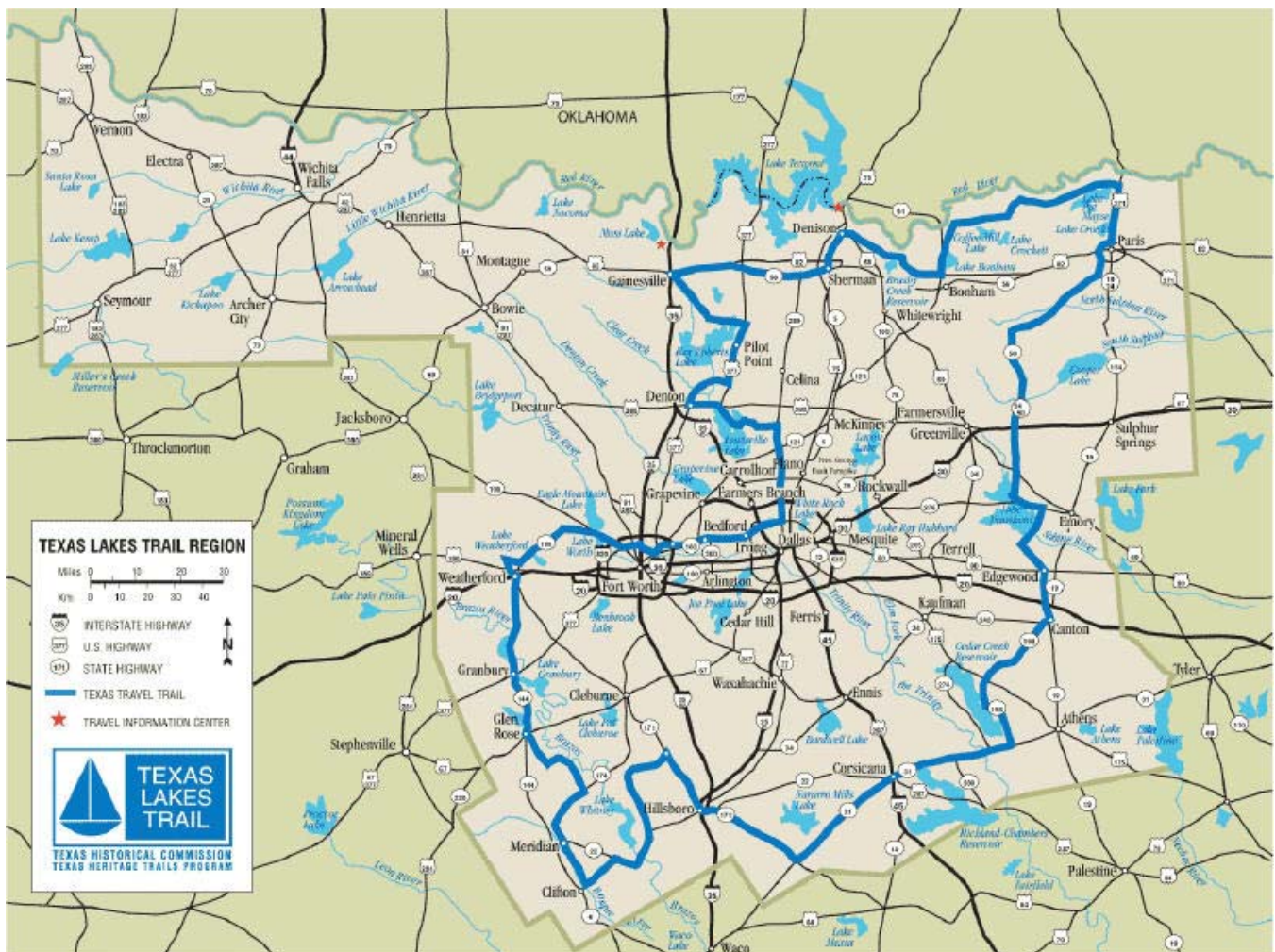
(C) Lige Balczak, 2007. All rights reserved.

We had plenty of firewood all three nights, and Eric did a yeoman's job of building the campfires each night to keep us warm and comfortable while preparing and eating our dinners. Marc did most of the food preparation and cooking, though he was assisted by various group members each night.

Hopefully, the CRE 2008 will be bigger and better than the previous ones. It is a better way to end one year and begin a new one while saving a lot of money. You do not have to buy tickets to a crowded event, suck down the cigarette smoke of others, have booze spilled on you, eat cheap food that is included in the high priced ticket or leave with your ears ringing from the noise.

New Monthly Activity Kicks off Soon

Tom Taylor and Steve Crowe will be leading weekend trips to state parks along the Texas Lakes Trail. The point of these trips is to visit some of the more out-of-the-way state parks and lakes and enjoy what they have to offer. Most of the destinations will be 2 hours or less from DFW, making it possible for those who do not wish to camp to just come out for the day and join in the fun. Bring the kiddo's - we want these to be family friendly events. The day's activities will depend on the individual park and what the group feels like doing. Many offer paddling and fishing as well as hiking, biking and camping. We look forward to exploring these lakes. For more info on the Texas Lake Trail go to <http://www.texaslakestrail.com/home/index.asp> For more info on the trip series, contact Tom Taylor 214-726-0153 or email tomtaylr@swbell.net.



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What's in your Gear Bag?

I hate the cold. More to the point, I hate being cold. That's one reason I moved to Dallas 15 years ago and why I routinely turn down offers to work in places like Minnesota or New York. I have made it a goal to stay away from places that have a winter that lasts much more than a day or two at a time.

When I first came here, it would be 45 degrees in December and people would be Christmas shopping all bundled up in sweaters and down jackets and I would laugh at them as I went about my business in a tee shirt, shorts and sandals. "They don't know what cold really is" I would say to myself. Some of you can identify with this, being transplants from colder climates yourselves. Remember the first August you were here and saw the winter coat display in Penney's and you laughed quietly to yourself. I do.

But then a funny thing happened a few years ago. I got up one morning in October and I was absolutely freezing. I kicked the heat on in the house and checked the thermostat. Imagine my surprise to find that it was 60 degrees in the house. Oh nooo!, I had become acclimated. Not me, no way, no how. Pretty soon that rack of ski jackets at Penney's started looking pretty good.

Since I was moving to Texas, I had given away a lot of my cold weather gear; one of several collections of stuff I thought would never need again. As with all the other things I had unwisely disposed of, I decided I needed to rebuild my inventory. Now if you were to go through my gear storage, there is no way of telling exactly where I live. If you look at the pile of sleeping bags and pads, propane heaters, wool blankets, dry gear, boots and everything else I have in there, you would think I would be just as at home in Alaska as Antlers, Ok. For God's sake Survivorman did a paddling survival show in the Aleutians and survived with a raincoat, gloves and a multi tool and ate fish heads that washed up on the beach, but I get cranky when the propane freezes up and my stove won't light on the first try. Maybe I have gotten just a little too soft?

But then I said to myself, "I really don't use all this stuff", I got a lot of it "just in case" and I set out to decide the things I could totally not live without for camping and paddling in the wintertime to supplement my regular gear. I came up with a surprisingly small list and most of it was pretty basic stuff and none was too expensive if you know where to look.

Socks were right up on the top of my list since if my feet are cold, the rest of me is miserable. I have an assortment of thick and thin wool / acrylic, wool / lycra and even some wool/ cotton blends that I choose depending on how active, cold or wet I plan to be. I also have polypro and silk liners and neoprene booties to wear with them. I have learned to always carry extra in my dry bag, so I at least have a dry pair for the ride home. Socks do not have to be expensive to be good. This time of year most Wal Marts or sports stores will have plenty of them on clearance. Get an assortment and see which blends work best for you.

Insulated Underwear or Base Layers can be used under hiking or paddling gear and are indispensable. You can spend a fortune on this stuff at REI or through NRS, but once again Wal Mart, Dicks or Academy typically have the same blends (avoid the cotton if you are going to get it wet) for a lot less. Read the labels and watch for clearance sales. The new Dick's in Rockwall had tons of Underarmor cold gear sitting unsold when last I looked. I picked some up last year at the one in Frisco for \$15 each piece (that's like a \$40 savings).

Flannel Lined Pants – For about \$20 at Bass Pro, you can pick up cotton duck pants with a flannel liner. They just can't be beat sitting around a campfire on a cold night.

Waterproof Jacket – Gloria gave me a Lands End Marinack jacket years ago for Christmas. Its simple, fleece bonded to a waterproof membrane with nylon inside lining. Its windproof, waterproof and its easy to put on over a sweater. It breathes pretty well, and it packs down fairly small. If I could only carry one jacket, that would be it.

Camp Stove – When its cold, propane and butane stoves can be problematic. I always have my little Coleman single burner gas stove around just in case. A few pumps and it lights right up and is normally ready to cook on quickly without having to use alcohol or burning paste to pre heat the tank.

Cold Weather Emergency Kit – In one dry bag I carry; several packs of matches, two space blankets, two of the heavy duty 55 gallon construction type trash bags, nylon cord, fire starters, granola bars, a wing stove that uses the little fuel tablets, an aluminum cup and a few packs of instant cider or hot cocoa mix.

That's not to say that I will be giving my Mr. Heater or my double thick airbed away anytime soon, but I'm pretty sure I could get by without them. If I had to, I guess.

We would like to know what's in your gear bag that you just can't live without. Send your list to Carolee at la_sirena_84@yahoo.com and we will publish it in the next newsletter.



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Unfortunately, Sportsman's Warehouse will be closing its doors at the end of January. It's rumored that they grew a bit too fast, and so three of their stores—the one on Hebron Pkwy. in Lewisville, one of two in San Antonio, and one in West Bend, Wisconsin (go figure!) - will be closed. Corporate moved some big ticket items to other stores, but there is still a great variety of neat things at 30% or more off! (Things you can't do without when they're on sale!) We sure will miss their great staff, some of whom were at TRC XCII with their donated kayak. Best of luck to them all.



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As Dallas stands by for reservoir, report touts other locations for refuge. Dallas wants land for reservoir; groups say water needs are overblown.

By MICHAEL GRABELL / The Dallas Morning News , Thursday, December 20, 2007

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could build a bigger and better wildlife refuge if it chose a different site than the one Dallas has long eyed for the Fastrill Reservoir, according to a new report prepared for the city. The report comes amid a yearlong federal lawsuit between the city and the federal government over a proposed wildlife refuge on the Neches River in East Texas.

Supporters of the refuge say the 25,000-acre site is one of the last bottomland hardwood forests left in Texas and an "interstate highway" for migrating ducks. City officials say the site is critical if the Dallas-Fort Worth area wants to have water beyond 2060.

"What the city has tried to say to the Fish and Wildlife Service is, 'Look, you can have both; you can have a reservoir, and you can have your refuge,' " S. Cass Weiland, an attorney representing the city, said Thursday. "If they had considered these other opportunities that existed out there, we might not be where we are." A Fish and Wildlife spokesman said he couldn't comment because of the pending lawsuit. But reservoir opponents dismissed the report's findings and said the issue of the site was settled years ago.

"This report was commissioned by people who want to build Fastrill Reservoir," said Janice Bezanson of the Texas Conservation Alliance. "I'm extremely skeptical that this site is better ... because the Fish and Wildlife Service has been looking at these sites since the 1980s, and they have chosen the best site."

But the city argues that the information used in the agency's 1985 study is outdated and no longer accurately represents the area. Officials with the city and the Upper Neches River Municipal Water Authority met with the Fish and Wildlife director in April 2006, asking the agency to withhold approval of the site until the city had a chance to conduct a study and offer alternatives.



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COST: Free to observers, \$5.00 pool use fee to participants, boats & paddles provided at no charge, PFD & helmet required and available for additional \$5.00 if needed

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Its Election Time and the DDRC Needs YOU!

Nominations for officers will be held at the January and February Meetings. Elections will be held in February with new officers taking over in March. President and Vice President are currently open. We also will need committee chairs for Raffle, Event Coordinator, Trip Coordinator and for some of the TRC committees. Help us make the DDRC the best it can be by sharing the “chores”. See Bryan Jackson or Sam Sloan for more information.

DDRC Officers & Committees

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Bryan Jackson
972-564-2318

VICE-PRESIDENT

Sam Sloan

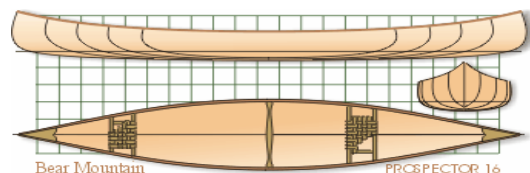
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Attention all DDRC Members:

During the year, various local groups, paddling clubs and the TRPA will be hosting cleanups on rivers around the state.

1) Any DDRC member that participates in any two TRPA river cleanups will receive a FREE DDRC T- SHIRT *and* 25 miles credit towards the 2006 most miles paddled award (for each cleanup). 2 cleanups = 50 miles, the more you clean the more you earn.

2) Any DDRC member that participates in any two TRPA river cleanups and one of either Watermelon Cleanups in preparation for TRC XII, races for free in TRC XII.

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Next DDRC Meeting
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DDRC Meetings are the
3rd Thursday of every
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