



Newsletter for the Bayou Haystackers Winter 2013

Presidential Ramblings

When I became president last year, my number one priority was to try to “grow” the Club. We did some outreach events, tried to publicize the Club, and I appreciate everyone’s help with that. Hoyt gave me an accounting a few weeks ago that shows we gained 19 new individuals and 5 couples in 2013. I think that is great! Now we have to keep them. How do we do that? Over the coming months, I will be contacting many of our new members and asking them something along those lines. Also, I will be looking for means to get those new members (as well as old) more involved in club activities (I haven’t seen many on trips) and see what recommendations they might have for Club growth. New members, please have put some thoughts into these areas so you are ready if I give you a call. And frankly, no one with any ideas should have to wait for me to call them. Just drop me an email any time!!!!

Speaking of Club members, unfortunately, this year has seen a few of our more active paddlers, and great teachers, go under the knife with various surgeries. Let’s hope we see Woody and Darryl back on the water soon. For those that don’t know, other than being great on-the-water instructors, Woody is our Club gearhead and Darryl the resident boat broker...

Finally, the New Years Day social/pot-luck/paddle will be held at Tickfaw State Park this year. Since not that many bring boats and paddle, we thought we would hold it at a location more centrally located. Please come out and paddle, or just bring some good food to share. We will be at Pavillion #2. And to complete this message, at that same event, we will hold the official elections for the Board and Executive Committee for 2014. The nominees for Board are:

Rick Hartman (President) Patricia Fontova (Vice-President)

Hoyt Salyer (Treasurer) Debbie Salyer (Secretary)

Nominees for Executive Committee are:

Glen (Woody) Wood Mimi Clifton

Marie Aubin John Durnin Shelby Harris

Labor Day Black Creek Trip Report

Hoyt Sayler

We had a fine trip on Labor Day weekend. The weather was nice with no rain and the creek level was at 3.8 ft. which is a good lower level to paddle. We paddled the Brooklyn to Janice Landing section of Black Creek, a distance of about 18 miles. The creek is located in De Soto National Forest in southern Mississippi.

We had a nice mixture of paddlers from the very experienced to the enthusiastic paddlers of a couple of years. We started off at Brooklyn Landing with Lucy & Reed Melancon, Mary & Steve Irving, Chris Ramagos & Marie Aubin, Leonard Naquin & Vickie, John Durnin and me. The 7 mile section from Brooklyn to Moody's Landing is more challenging with trees and sandbars to maneuver around. Everyone handled it well except when the rental boat rammed Lucy in her kayak.

We were joined at Moody's Landing by Wanda & Bruce Norton who wanted a shorter trip. We usually camp about half way to Janice Landing but we wanted to go further to a new massive sandbar that was created last year when the creek made a new cut through. We had seen no campers all day but when we came around the bend the sandbar was taken over by 30 Boy Scouts and associated adults! So we had to continue on to find another campsite large enough and with access to the woods. With no complaints (that I heard) we made it to the sandbar across from Pierce's Creek that was just large enough. We had paddled 12.5 miles the first day, but it left just 6 miles for the second.

We had a nice night camping, with no moon we could see a multitude of stars and fireflies. As always a small battery fan made life enjoyable sleeping. On Monday we took our time breaking camp, but were ready to go when we saw the first of the Boy Scouts. On our break that morning we had a great sandbar with great rope swings that Reed, Leonard and I took advantage of to return to our youth. We made it to the takeout before the Scouts so we didn't have a jammed unloading. As always all had a wonderful time on a beautiful creek. Hoyt Sayler

Sabine River trip report

Rick Hartman

On the Columbus Day weekend in 2013, five members of the Bayou Haystackers Paddling Club tackled 30 miles of the Sabine River just south of Toledo Bend. On the trip were Richard and Dottie Hartman, Larry Langois, John Durnin, and Linda Bourgault. The idea was to get on the water Friday afternoon, and make 30 miles downriver to the take out by noon Monday. That would allow everyone to get home easily before dark Monday. I decided we would leave our vehicles for the duration at the outfitters because I didn't feel comfortable leaving them beside a

road for three nights. It made for a long shuttle when we took out, but I didn't want to take a chance on vandalism.

Everyone made it in to the outfitter (Tack-a-Paw Expeditions) by about 2:30 Friday afternoon, and we ran the shuttle. Shuttle was reasonable, about \$100 for all five of us and included both put in and take out drives. Was about a 20 mile drive from the outfitter to the put in (bridge over river at Louisiana Highway 8), and since the outfitter was picking us up at the take-out (30 river miles south), we had to drive back to the outfitter after dropping off all the gear. Then he drove us back down to the put in. What that means is, we didn't get on the water until late in the day, which turned out to be a big, BIG mistake. See, that section of the Sabine River isn't far from Toledo Bend, which has a hydroelectric dam used to generate electricity. We were told they were only going to open one gate, from 3 to 5 pm. I had no clue what that one gate could do to water levels on that section of the Sabine River. Getting on the river late meant I wanted to find a nice campsite quickly before dark. We found one. Nice dry sandy beach about a mile down from the put in. No debris on the beach, sand was dry and fluffy. Sounds good, right? We all set up our tents about 5 pm on the beach, about a foot in elevation above the adjacent water and proceeded to fix dinner.

About 7 pm as it was getting pretty dark, we all noticed the water slowly rising and moving toward our gear. Canoes previously up on the bank were close to floating. We scrambled like crazy, grabbing gear, tents and boats and moved them up onto an adjacent higher bank having some vegetation where we found an opening. All five tents got crowded together in close proximity to each other. No one panicked and everyone helped each other. **THIS WAS A GREAT GROUP I WAS WITH!!!** Then we proceeded to sit and watch the water SLOWLY continue to come up. It was kind of amusing how various individuals handled it. Linda was placing a twig at the water's edge and measuring incursion of water supposedly every five minutes (sometimes she couldn't wait to move the twig and measure it). Larry made observations on her lack of scientific method. The rise of water appeared to slow around 10:30 pm and everyone retired to their tents. Well, water continued to rise a little and came in behind the tents, making where we were camping an island. We had to move a few tents a second time to try to keep inhabitants and their gear dry. Eventually, around 11:30, water levels were stable and everyone fell asleep.

In the morning, everyone stumbled around for a while collecting gear, taking down somewhat soggy tents, eating breakfast, and repacking canoes. A picture is included below showing where we ended up camping that night. We resolved to make sure to camp on higher elevation sand bars, having loose debris, for all future sites. Turns out there is a reason there wasn't debris on that first sand bar we stopped at – it all got washed away daily!!!

The second morning we got on the water about 9:30 am with the desire to try to average 12 miles per day, to leave us a short paddle to the take out Monday morning. The Sabine River has a slow current, about 1 mph, so paddling, rather than just steering, is a must. It was wider than streams I

am used to paddling, but shallow and relatively clear. There were many sand bars, and lots of dead trees and fallen timber in the stream itself. It is a good paddle for novice paddlers as there are not a lot of tight fits to wedge a canoe through, the current is slow, and the river does not meander that much. I was hoping for cooler weather given the date of the trip, but it was in the upper 80s. So, we were able to swim in the water to cool off during the day and to take a bath prior to going to our tents. The second day, we were off the water in plenty of time to set up gear and let it dry off. The second and third nights, we camped on excellent sand bars and were able to have a fire the last night. Farther down river from Toledo Bend, the water didn't rise as much or as rapidly after the dams were opened. Monday morning saw us joining up with a group of paddlers out of the Beaumont area and we made it to the take out about 11 am.

Important things I have learned about paddling in general and the Sabine River in particular:

1. Don't get on the water late in the day on a river you have never paddled before.
2. Don't camp on sand bars having NO loose debris.
3. If you are going to camp below a hydroelectric dam, know what the impact will be on water levels and when. Supposedly, there is a web site for Toledo Bend which will tell you daily how many openings and when will be used to generate electricity.
4. Unless you like lots of company on the river, avoid paddling this river during the Memorial Day, Labor Day and July 4th weekends. I hear it is very popular with clubs out of Beaumont, Lake Charles, Houston and Dallas, as well as locals.



The above picture is our tents the morning after we almost got flooded out. The picture was taken from where we had initially camped the night before...





Typical Sabine River view. In front is Larry, Linda and John...

Paddlefest 2013

Shelby Harris

If you missed Paddlefest this year, you missed out! We all arrived Friday night at the CTO for some good old Haystacker fun and enjoyed some awesome potluck. The newcomers to the club were treated to quite a fun time and teasing from our very own Hager, which Shelby taking the brunt of it as she was seating next to him, but I have to say I think I handled myself pretty well with the old boy! A roaring bonfire was set and attended to by our own resident fire starter Woody. After our roaring bonfire went out it was time to turn in. The brave camped outdoors, while the wimps such as myself slept in the cabin.

Saturday morning we all got up, had breakfast and prepared ourselves for the Upper Bogue Chitto paddle and we left around 11am. It was a wonderful, somewhat chilly, but sunny day that was fit for a paddle. The water was rather low and the current rather slow. The day was pretty

uneventful with no capsizing, not even by me! After the paddle and showers were had, we were off to the perspective classes. We were treated to a class on choosing paddles by Mimi and Pat and a class on what essentials one needs for survival gear was taught by Hager. Later on, Kayce gave a class on photography that was quite in depth and very informative. Afterwards, Rick grilled some hot dogs and everyone ate those and left over pot luck.

Sunday morning the gang once again got on the water to paddle Magee's Creek. Mimi and Pat taught some paddling strokes to the newbies in the group and we learned how to paddle against the current. The water was crisp, the weather was sunny and it turned out to be quite a day. On this trip we all saw quite a bit of wildlife. We saw a bald eagle soaring way above our heads, many fish in the water and towards the end of the paddle, a few of us saw 4 otters. It was quite a spectacular day. After securing our boats on our cars it was time to clean up and head home.

New Year's Eve Paddle and Feast

This year's New Year's Eve Paddle and Feast will be held on Wednesday January 1, 2014 at Tickfaw State Park.

A topic on paddling safety

After the Bogue Chitto paddle when we were all home safely, Kayce brought up a very important subject and that is safety. Many of us are probably not paying enough attention to the safety of others while on the water. We all need to be mindful of the slower paddles and keep closer to them throughout the paddle. We do not want anyone paddling alone because the fortunes can change on the water in a heartbeat. We can all try to avoid tragedies by keeping an eye out on each other and never allowing another group member to paddle alone. We all enter the water together, we should all leave the water that way as well.

Clothing for Cold-Water Paddling: How to Choose

Article borrowed from REI

On calm waters, in mild conditions where the chance of capsizing is low, your clothing needs are fairly simple—add a layer of insulation beneath your rain gear and you should be assured of adequate protection. Read more about choosing clothing layers for paddling.

In colder weather, or in cold-water environments where there is a chance of taking a swim, the need for immersion protection increases. This article discusses wetsuits, drysuits and your other clothing options for paddling in cold weather and cold water.

These snug neoprene garments don't keep water out, but rather trap a thin layer of water next to your skin where it is warmed by your body. Neoprene minimizes evaporative cooling, so once you are out of the water you remain comfortable.

Wetsuits come in a variety of styles: full-length suits, short-sleeve "spring suits," sleeveless "Farmer Johns" and separate jackets and pants. Farmer Johns (sleeveless suits with full-length legs) are among the most popular for moderate-weather paddling since they allow some cooling of the torso. "Farmer Jane" suits are available to fit women.

Wet suits are available in different thicknesses of neoprene. The thickest options are usually too bulky and warm for paddling and are more often used by divers. Most paddlers opt for 2mm or 3mm neoprene.

Polyurethane-coated fleece is another available fabric, best worn when immersion in cold water is less likely. Warm, stretchy and windproof, it resembles neoprene, only fuzzy.

Just like wetsuits, garments made of this fabric allow water in and then warm it next to the skin. The fleece interior makes them comfortable to wear for extended paddling in cool weather.

Drysuits

If you paddle in cold water, rough rapids or surf, or you're out in bad weather, drysuits offer the best protection. These one-piece suits are made of nylon with a waterproof polyurethane coating or waterproof/breathable Gore-Tex® laminate. They feature latex gaskets at the wrists, ankles, and neck plus a special zipper or roll-up closure to prevent any water from entering. So even if you take an unexpected swim, you remain dry.

Drysuits provide no insulation, so they need to be paired with long underwear or specially designed fleece liners for warmth.

Choosing the right clothing is toughest when the weather is hot but the water is very cold, as is common in northern climates in summer. You need to weigh your desire for paddling comfort against the risk of capsizing and cold-water immersion.

If capsizing is a possibility (a long, open-water crossing or rough water, for instance) your best bet is a Gore-Tex® suit that will allow body heat to escape as you paddle. Otherwise, you'll end up getting wet from perspiration.

Dry Tops

Dry tops feature latex neck and wrist gaskets, often supplemented with protective neoprene cuffs. The waist bands, typically made of neoprene, are double layered to seal with your spray skirt, both inside and out. Dry tops can be worn over Farmer John-style wetsuits, or with dry bibs for versatile 2-piece systems.

Dry Bibs and Pants

These are an inexpensive solution for boaters who wear a dry top the majority of the time, but need the added protection for bigger and colder water in case of an unexpected swim.

Insulation and Liners

Insulating layers made specifically for water sports are available. Tops and bottoms of Polartec® Power Stretch® fleece fit comfortably underneath wet- and drysuits or can be worn alone comfortably. This quick-drying, breathable fabric features an abrasion-resistant outer surface that blocks wind, plus it offers a soft, velour interior for warmth.

Full-length fleece liners with front zip entries are popular for layering underneath full drysuits.

Rash Guards

These popular, quick-drying polyester/Lycra® spandex shirts are frequently worn under a wetsuit to provide protection from chafing. Their SPF ratings also make them good sun-protection choices for wearing by themselves, for paddling, surfing or swimming. Their stretch and form-fitting designs allow freedom of movement.

Hats

If you're expecting cold weather, pack an insulated hat. Popular options include fleece or wool caps and face masks, lightweight balaclavas, and even full neoprene hoods for extremely challenging routes in cold conditions.

Gloves

In cooler conditions, you'll need to bring along gloves or mittens. Make sure they're durable and water-resistant. Paddling gloves made of neoprene, nylon or Lycra® spandex provide good grip and good protection without impairing your paddle control.

Hand protectors called "pogies" are also available to paddlers. These neoprene or nylon covers fasten over your hands and around the paddle shaft without interfering with your grip.

Footwear

In warm weather and water, wet feet are rarely a serious problem. Sport sandals, water slippers, or even old tennis shoes work just fine. In colder conditions, wet feet mean cold feet. You can keep them completely dry in calf-high rubber boots or with Gore-Tex® socks worn inside boots or shoes. Or opt for thick-soled neoprene booties which will allow your feet to get wet but will keep them warm.