

SOUTHERN MAINE

SEA KAYAKING NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 4794 Portland, Maine 04112 June, 1999

MISSION STATEMENT

The Southern
Maine Sea
Kayaking
Network is
an association
of paddlers
interested in
connecting with
others who
enjoy the sport
of sea kayaking.
Our purpose is
to promote safe
and responsible
practices and,
at the same time,
have fun.

EXPAND
YOUR
KAYAKING
HORIZONS

Island Usage Forum

by Bill Ridlon

On April 21st, the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) and the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) hosted a forum in Owl's Head, Maine to discuss public island usage issues. The forum covered a discussion of what the issues are that need to be addressed, observations of island conditions, proposed guidelines from the BPL, possible next steps, and an extended interaction among MITA, BPL, and the 60 or so other kayakers, sailors, island owners, and interested parties attending the forum. Dorry Shaw and Bill Ridlon attended, representing SMSKN.

The forum began with a brief introduction of the goals that MITA hopes to accomplish. They include a plan for self-managed access restrictions to the public islands to forestall the state from deciding that firm access rules would be adhered to. The more formal description read: "In managing the BPL public recreational use islands, we are seeking to protect the islands' natural aesthetic appearance and ecological integrity to provide the opportunity for visitors to discover and enjoy relatively wild and natural coastal islands."

Next, Steve Spencer, of the BPL, gave a history of access to the public islands. In 1986 the first brochure about the islands was distributed. In 1987 the Maine Island Trail was proposed and in 1988 MITA was started. Since then, MITA and BPL have worked as partners to manage the islands.

Then Karen Stimpson of MITA discussed MITA's role at the forum, which was to initiate discussion about the issues of "spill-over", social degradation, and crowding at the put-ins.

MITA volunteer Sid Quarrier then explained what he had seen on the islands during his annual spring island inspections and heard from campers who had provided feedback to MITA. The traditionally high-use islands continue to see high use but not significantly higher in 1998 than in 1997. However, some of the lesser-used islands are now starting to see significantly higher usage.

The result is loss of vegetation, enlarged campsites, ground trampling, and new campsites being established. The causes are most likely large groups and multi-day stays.

Karen then spoke again about what MITA is already doing to deal with the higher usage. She talked about the is-

land monitoring program and that it was being beefed up, communications with members to explain the problem and the possible remedies, and education of island users in low-impact methods. She also told the group that MITA would no longer be promoting the use of the islands and island trail. In addition, Karen explained additional MITA tactics that would be implemented: an increase in the resource with the addition of eight mainland day-use-only public parks and two mainland campgrounds to the trail; behavior modification efforts in the form of the Leave No Trace program and the Fragile Islands brochure (if you'd like a copy of the brochure, call MITA, call SMSKN, or send an e-mail to outdoors@gwi.net); hardening of campsites where appropriate; and limiting use.

Steve Spencer then talked about what the BPL would be doing to limit use. He explained that the program would be one of "self-managed" camping.

(Continued on next page)

*"...MITA would
no longer be
promoting the use
of the islands
and island trail."*

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Any restrictions would be voluntary for the first year. Those restrictions would be: a maximum of 12 people per overnight group and a maximum of a 2-night stay on any public island in 1999. In 2000, maximums would be tailored to each island. As an example, Little Snow, Thief, Sellers, Steves, and Wheat would be limited to 8 people and 4 tents at any one time. Little Hog and Potato would be limited to 6 people and 3 tents.

At that point, the forum was opened to the audience for a general discussion. A number of questions were raised as well as a number of ideas. One of the questions that didn't seem to have an answer as yet was: What happens when multiple groups converge on an island such that the maximum person count is exceeded? What happens at the end of the day and there's no time to paddle to a different island? The ideas covered a range of topics. Some felt that human waste was a problem. Outhouses were suggested for some islands but the thin soil and lack of any depth that an outhouse hole could be dug would be a challenge. Some felt fires and fire pits were a problem. Hence, no fires should be allowed. The MITA plan of education was discussed. Some felt it would be a challenge because, as Karen mentioned, close to 80% of island users are neither MITA members nor outfitter groups. Registration to use the islands was discussed as a means to solve some of the education challenges.

Charlie Jacobi of Acadia National Park added his thoughts to the group's. He felt that the Leave No Trace program would be a good program to emphasize. He also felt that a limit to group size would help. Then he mentioned some things that were thought-provoking. Ecological damage must be stopped at a very early stage, otherwise you will be suddenly

in need of a restoration process rather than a protection process. Because of this, MITA might want to also focus on the islands that are still in good shape so that they remain that way. Also, MITA and BPL might consider a variety of experiences for campers rather than a "relatively wild" experience on every island. Some islands might be suited for more of a social experience with some hardening of sites.

One of the outfitters spoke about the large groups that come to them looking for an outfitter. In those cases the outfitters don't create the big groups, the customers do. It was felt that it was too late to do much about limiting group sizes this year because many of the trips had already been booked and were full. Another year would be needed to deal with a reduction in group sizes.

One person felt that the Fragile Islands brochure should be included with the sale of any kayaking equipment. Another thought that the MITA web site might be used to continue the dialogue of possible solutions. A third wondered what MITA itself might be doing to cause the abuse of the islands.

At the conclusion of the forum, MITA committed to creating a list of the good ideas that had been generated, BPL said that signage would be in place on the islands for the summer paddling season, and both committed to an outreach program that would get information about the situation to both MITA members and the general public.

A second meeting will be held in the autumn to discuss the results seen from the 1999 initiatives and what should be done for the 2000 paddling season.

Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network Officers May 97-98

President
BOB MURRAY 846-3997

Secretary
BOB ARLEDGE 442-9730

Treasurer
DORRY SHAW 798-7915

Members At Large
ESTHER COYLE 725-4233

BILL RIDLON 799-5161

KRISTEN WOODBERRY
775-5480

Membership Chairman
BILL RIDLON 799-5161
outdoors@gwi.net

Newsletter Editor
DEBRA NICHOLS 985-4111
finelines@gwi.net

Newsline
874-2640

The newsline is available
24 hours a day.
Call for updates on events.

*If you have any thoughts
on any of the above
or ideas that might be helpful
in addressing the increased usage,
please contact:
SMSKN at (207) 874-2640
or
outdoors@gwi.net.*

APRIL ELECTION RESULTS

from Jon Swan

At a well attended membership meeting on April 8, 1999, members voted to amend the bylaws and elect a new board of officers.

Robert Murray agreed to run as a write-in candidate for president. Esther Coyle filled his place as a candidate for member-at-large.

Bob's campaign speech, "I'll do it if nobody else will" won over the largest number of voters. There were a number of other write-in votes; seven other people were named for president alone.

The bylaws revisions added a family membership category, and changed the starting date for the term of office for the board to January 1st. The newly elected board of officers is:

President: Robert Murray
Treasurer: Dorry Shaw
Secretary: Bob Arledge
Members at Large: Esther Coyle, Bill Ridlon, and Kristen Woodberry

Boats For Sale

From Rick Rapone: 1996-97 K 1 Feathercraft Kayak .It has never been in the water...it has been assembled 3 times...it has a turquoise deck, rudder, seasock..and lists for approx. \$3500...I would gladly take \$3200. or best offer. This model does not have the new bow design. I believe that came out late last year/this season. I want to make that perfectly clear. I bought the boat with the intent to circumnavigate P.E.I. then bought a glass boat and used it instead. I live in Ct. but if it's a serious sale I will travel.
Phone.#203-772-3174.

From Dorry Shaw: Teal Fiberglass kayak with hatches and rudder. Solstice ST. \$1,000 -negotiable. 798-7915.

The "FWAA"

an exchange between Ray Houllhan & Bill Ridlon

Some e-mail is just too good not to share. Those of you who have paddled with Ray & Bill may be accustomed to their humor. For those of you who have not paddled with them, this is a taste of what you are missing.

The Editor

I confess I paddled on fresh water yesterday. I had been fresh-water free for more than a year before that. Mark this one down as early spring or a foliage paddle.

Moose Pond in Denmark (near Pleasant Mt.) was the destination. Put in at the Denmark Municipal Recreation Area. Take a right off Route 160 right after the dam. Thirteen point eight (regular) miles round trip to Route 302.

You do have to suffer the vulgarities of fresh water: warm water (2 young gentlemen of questionable intelligence were still in SWIMMING at 5 PM), no sea breeze (just enough to keep the bugs away), it's always high tide. Great mountain views.

It wasn't all roses: there was a speed boat and a jet ski. And there was a gaggle of islands full of fishermen. Buy me a beer and I'll tell you about the bear....

Ray

I think there is an organization called FWAA (Fresh Water Addicts Anonymous) for folks like you. I don't know a lot about it but I've heard that they have a 12-step program to get you back into salt water and say goodbye to fresh water forever.

Of course you'll always have that craving, especially when driving by Maine lakes and ponds. I think it's always best not to take a kayak west of Route 1.

You've probably heard of those invisible pet fences? You can sign up for the invisible kayak fence on Route 1. I hear it works quite well. Good luck.

You can use my name as a reference at your first FWAA meeting. Probably won't do you any good but it should confuse them long enough so they may not throw you out as a lost cause.

Bill

2000 x 2000: An AIDS Awareness Expedition

Dear Friend,

On Memorial Day Weekend, 1999, a committed team of six will embark upon a very personal and unique journey to help fight the battle against AIDS. We need your support and encouragement to make this vision a reality.

Beginning in May, we'll take seven months out of our lives to paddle over 2000 miles. We will depart from Lubec, Maine and journey to Key West, Florida. This expedition is entitled: **2000 x 2000: An AIDS Awareness Expedition**. Although this is billed as a "team" trip, there exists an open invitation for friends, family, groups, and individuals to join us for various legs.

Our goals are simple: to raise money and awareness for AIDS organizations, to have a substantial impact on young people especially, and to encourage everyone to do what they can to assist in the fight against AIDS.

We would like to raise over \$500,000.00 for various AIDS organizations along the eastern seaboard of our great nation. Our plan includes having some of the costs of the expedition covered by corporate sponsorship and private donations and pledges.

Components to this effort include:

- Visiting 3-4 classrooms per week, delivering a life affirming message.
- Communicating via an on-line classroom to young people throughout the USA.
- Co-hosting fundraising event in pre-designated port cities to benefit local AIDS organizations.
- Distributing the documentary to schools across the country.

We are looking for passengers to come aboard (vicariously) for one of the most exciting and historic adventures this century...

This team kayak journey will, much like a message in a bottle, impact people from one shore to another; join us if you can.

Warm regards,

Ted W. Regan

Ted's story is very interesting. If you would like to know more about this trip or meet Ted and his team when they stop in a city near you, check their website: www.rippleffect.net.

Salty Dog Talk

The Nautical Origins of Everyday Expressions

by Bill Beavis & Richard G. McCloskey

Ever wonder where the expression "the bitter end" came from?

Here's the explanation from Salty Dog Talk.

"The name given to the innermost end of the anchor rope, so called because it was secured to a set of 'bits' or large pillars of oak bolted and fixed upright to the deck. In controlled circumstances an anchor rope is allowed to run out a measured amount until the anchor hits the sea bed, whereupon it is checked. However, if the water is a lot deeper than expected or things go wrong, then the rope will keep running unto the bitter end. After that there is nothing left!"

To paddle (in a group), or NOT to paddle (in a group), that is the question.

by Gregg Bolton

Whether it is better to suffer the outrageous fortunes of slow or less experienced paddlers, poor trip planning, noisy neighbors, or any of the other million reasons why you could choose to separate yourself from a group paddle on any given day. Or - by separation - lose them and strike out on a course and speed of your own.

This is a choice we all must face every time we dip our paddles in the water for a SMSKN, or any group, trip. For me the choice is a simple one. If I choose to leave the beach with the group I am making a contract with the group. The contract is a simple one, it says in short, "I will look out for you and you will look out for me. We will work together (and play together) towards a common goal - usually an eventual safe return to the beach we just left.

Implementing this contract sometimes requires that the group accommodate a slower or less experienced paddler by reducing the pace to one that all can keep. Perhaps the expected goal of the trip must be modified because someone simply can't handle the weather or water conditions. It means a lot of different things to a lot of different people in a lot of different conditions.

One thing it always means is that you can't let the group get spread out all over the ocean! If you see that you are getting so far from the others in the group that you can't communicate with them STOP and WAIT for the rest to catch up. If you see that someone ELSE in the group is getting too far ahead, communicate this to the person(s) before you lose contact with them. If you see that someone is getting too far behind the group to maintain contact, stop the entire group and wait - you weren't always the fastest paddler on the block you know. This is EVERYONE'S responsibility, NOT just the trip organizer or trip leaders responsibility.

With a great effort here not to sound like I am preaching, I have been on too many so-called "group paddles" where one or more persons took off and left the rest of the group to fend

for themselves and catch up later. Worse yet, I have seen people take off without a clear idea of where they were supposed to be going, dragging several other people with them. I have been on paddles where the group had a "destination" in mind at the outset of a crossing, but due to conditions, a new destination needed to be developed and people were so spread out that it was extremely difficult to communicate the need to everyone in the group.

These situations are just examples of poor "group paddling" scenarios I have seen. In all cases things went better than they could have, and everyone did eventually arrive home safely, it was just a little more challenging than it needed to be.

I have also been involved with MANY terrific examples of good (responsible) "group paddling" scenarios (I'm sure more good than bad if a tally were to be made). I am not suggesting that I have not left a group to go play in some nearby breakers for a moment or two - anyone who knows me KNOWS I have. But I am saying that there needs to be a concerted effort on the part of every member of every trip to be responsible to and for the group as a whole.

In my view, the choice is simple, if you paddle with the group, then STAY with the group. If you can't do this, then paddle with your chosen partner(s) and forgo the "group" experience in favor of a more personal one (I do not consider this a bad option, just an alternate path).

It takes practice, it takes effort, and most of all it takes patience but there are many great things that can come from paddling in a group IF you make the effort. Try it and see.

That's my opinion, what's yours?

Please send your opinion to the editor:
finelines@gwi.net

Debra Nichols, 157 Walkers Lane, Arundel, ME 04046

Cobscook Bay Encampment

Sea Kayaking in the Kingdom of the Tides

Dates: Sunday, July 11–Friday, July 16, 1999

(Arrive Sunday, paddle Monday through Friday, leave Saturday.)

Itinerary: We will day trip from an ocean-side campsite at Cobscook Bay State Park. The park and its surrounds combine a near wilderness setting with the most interesting sea kayaking water on the Atlantic coast. See Tamsin Venn's article in the August '96 *Atlantic Coastal Kayaker*. We will paddle Whiting and Denny's Bays from our campsite. We'll explore the Canadian islands—Harbor de Lute to Head Harbor on Campobello, and the northern end of Deer Island. We'll paddle in Machias Bay, and maybe hunt moose on the Denny's River. We will observe (but not run) two tidal wonders—Cobscook Reversing Falls and the Old Sow whirlpool. We will see eagles and seals daily.

Note that the L.L. Bean Sea Kayak Symposium will be held 7/9-11 in Castine, which is on the way to Cobscook Bay, making it possible to do both with one trip to downeast Maine.

Organization: This will be a low-key, share-the-chores and decisions trip. Come for as many or as few days as you wish.

Skill level: Trips will be predicated on intermediate sea kayaking skills. Most paddling will be close to shore, but currents and cold water require that paddlers be comfortable and confident in wind and waves. A roll is not necessary, but paddlers should be practiced at self and group rescues. Paddlers with no moving water experience should consider pre-trip workshop over.

Equipment: Limited to sea kayaks. Sorry, no open cockpit boats or canoes. All boats must have skirt, compass, horn, and self-rescue gear. Wet or dry suit is mandatory.

Food: Bring your own, or share in community cooking, shopping, and clean-up duties. Leader will supply cooking equipment. **Bring your own lunches, eating utensils, and beverages for all meals.** A few nights we'll sample the fare at local eateries.

Cost: Camping expenses approximately \$5 per day, plus food.

Registration: Register in advance with Clark Bowlen, (860) 623-6587, MA_Bowlen@commnet.edu

SMSKN is not endorsing this trip. Anyone interested should use his or her own judgement about paddling in the area.



If you're not getting regular e-mail from SMSKN
We might not have your current e-mail address.
To up-date your e-mail address, contact Bill Ridlon at:

outdoors@gwi.net

An electronic newsletter soon may be an option, so be sure you're on the list!



"Mussel" Beach

By Jay Rancourt

The Maine Islands are loaded with the perfect food for kayakers, free for the taking and easy pickings it is. You don't even need to dig!

Caution: Call the Department of Marine Resource's Red Tide Hotline at 1-800-232-4733 for official reassurance that there is no red tide alert in effect, to be on the safe side. "Red tide" is a bloom of poisonous dinoflagellates that can occur during the warm summer months. Because mussels are filter feeders, these dinoflagellates can build up in their systems and make you quite sick.

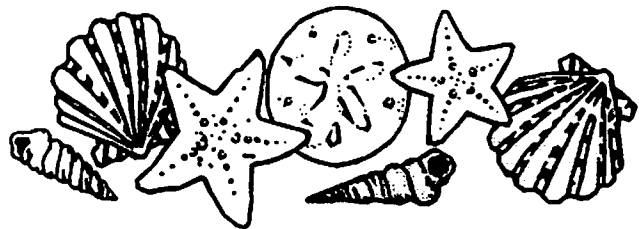
Mussels are mostly to be found below or just above the low tide line. They don't appreciate being out of water for very long. Pick the mussels off rocks rather than sand - they taste better; avoid the heavily barnacled ones. Get the big ones, they're just as tender.

Discard any mussels with open shells and watch out for the ones filled with mud, not meat. Scrub them well and use that Leatherman from your tool kit to pull the byssus out. The byssus is that tuft of filaments that sticks out of the crack between the mussels' bivalves and serves to attach them to rock, the ocean floor and one another. The dictionary says that it is chemically similar to silk, strong, supple and fine. Rinse the mussels with new sea water and drain well. Don't soak them in fresh water; mussels don't like fresh water.

On the bottom of the pot: 1 to 2 cups white wine, lots of chopped garlic and herbs, an Italian or fines herbes mix are both good. I bring a mixture of basil, oregano, fennel, parsley, and thyme in a small zip-lock bag. Steam the mussels for seven to ten minutes, until the shells open and lose that translucent slimy look. They should be firm and pull readily off the foot in one piece.

The mussels release lots of broth as they cook. If you like a salty stew to slurp up with bread after you've wolfed down the mussels, steam them with chunks of vegetables as well. Or shell the mussels and use some of the salty broth to cook pasta or use as a chowder base.

Mussels are extremely nutritious, solid protein and loaded with mineral salts, iron and vitamins A, B, C, and D. Sweaty summer paddlers need to replenish salts and mussels are just the ticket! Bon appetit!



Something You Should Know...tidbits from *Paddlewise*

Thinking of packing some bug repellent for your next island adventure? Keep in mind that DEET dissolves nylon, rayon, acetate...and some paints, but poly bags seem impervious. If you have DEET on your hands be careful not to touch your tent fabric...and be extra, extra careful not to spill or spray any inside a tent.

Ever experience "Itchy Butt" while out paddling? The fundamental problem is that in a kayak, our butts are likely to get wet and stay wet. Add friction and a source of bacteria or fungi and you can easily get a spreading dermatitis. If you ever have this problem, try Gold Bond powder, which dries and changes the pH of the skin surface both of which can contribute to healing.