

SMOKE SIGNAL



SUMMER 2015



Recently a group of MCC members' current and past gathered on a whim to paddle a section of the Potomac together above Point of Rocks. Many of you may know Tom McCloud. Tom was paddling a beautiful Wood and Canvas canoe that he collected and in his retirement has restored.

Hopefully you will appreciate the story Tom tells starting on (page 3) and appreciate the skill and hard work it took to restore it from a destroyed canoe to what you see above. Imagine the stories it could tell.



Harpers Ferry Access -- Update

June 10 meetings hosted by the National Park Service.

A small contingent attended the Wednesday afternoon meeting

that was convened on the grounds of the Harpers Ferry Adventure Center (HFAC). There was a brief discussion of the viability of river access at sites discussed at January meeting. One point of clarification was made regarding the newly acquired parkland in Loudon County, VA below the Rt. 340 Bridge: it does not have river access, and we need not waste time discussing it. We then took a "road trip" to examine a couple of locations. First stop was across the river to Weverton where we walked the trails through the woods between the tow path and the river. Additionally, we walked up the tow path a few hundred yards to the clearing that had been the site of several cabins/shacks until the early 1990s when the Park Service took over the land. The next stop was back to Potoma Wayside. While there, Lee Baihly of River & Trails, suggested that we check the land above Potoma Wayside, just across the creek at the waterfalls and opposite the traffic light/petrol station where, surprisingly to all except Lee, there's remnants of an old road that leads down to the bottom land near river level.

The evening meeting was held at NPS property at the former Storer College in HF. It was well attended by people representing various interests, including the NPS, American Whitewater, local government planners, CSX, outfitters, paddling clubs, and private boaters. The highlight was at the end when participants were given stickers to place below the names of favored access places that had been nominated earlier. The count was not announced; however, winners appeared to be, in no particular order, (1) private land below the usual Staircase put-in at Millville in the vicinity of the "River Rats" cabin (closer to the entrance rapids above Bull Falls); (2) at Weverton across the railroad tracks on CSX property or further across the tow path on NPS land; and (3) the "newly discovered" parcel of land adjacent to Potoma Wayside. Stay tuned for the next development. This will not be resolved overnight.

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The Red n' White by Tom McCloud



The canoe was salvaged off an island in the Cape Fear area below Lillington, N.C. It was broken in two with only the canvas holding the ends together. The builder was the White Canoe Company of Old Town, Maine, and it left the factory in 1948.

The rebuilding was started by fastening a 2x4 along the keel line to hold the front & rear in approximate alignment while woodworking was done. Rebuilding included steam bending, then installing 16 new white cedar ribs and a lot of red cedar planking, stem reinforcement, new oak gunwales and keel, and new cherry decks. Most of the oak came from trees that grew on my property. Considerable effort was required to force the hull back into reasonable alignment. The inside of the hull was stripped, hand sanded, then received multiple coats of spar varnish. Two new seat frames were made, the rear a bent wood, U-shaped frame that would be typical in a turn-of-the-century White, and I hand-caned hem. New canvas was stretched, filled, sanded and primed. And since the canoe was built by White, it got painted white.

The finished canoe is 16 feet long, 32 inches wide and 12 1/2 inches deep, weighing 72 pounds. The bottom is somewhat round, and she has a fast feel while being paddled, but does not turn quickly.

I gave her the name 'The Red 'n White'. Why? Well, it was salvaged in North Carolina, it was built by the White Canoe Company, I went to school at NC State University, and the school colors of NC State are red and white. So put all those things together and you get the obvious name for the canoe. The font used in the graphic is identical to the font used originally by White.

It took 3 winters in the basement to complete this restoration several hundred hours. The Red 'n White went back into the water in June 2015. 'The Red 'n white' was shown at the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association assembly in the Adirondacks in July. For anyone interested in old wooden canoes. <http://www.wcha.org>



southern Smokies Week of Rivers - Ed Evangelidi

Another fourth of July and another 9 days paddling southern rivers. This has been my ritual for a dozen or more years now. Why do I make the trip there when there's paddleable waters closer to home? Many reasons:

- 1) The Carolina Canoe Club, as sponsor, gathers some 300 paddlers from all over the country to sample the many rivers in the Bryson City, NC area. Many of these paddlers from Texas, Tennessee, or even Canada are now familiar faces to me.
- 2) The choices of rivers include about a half dozen dam released rivers (guaranteed paddleable water) and about 50 novice runs that I have identified and maybe that many harder runs that depend on natural flows (see the Ashville Boating Beta web page for some of these). What is the difference between the Ocoee and the lower Youghiogheny rivers, besides southerners thinking the Yough is harder and northerners thinking the Ocoee is harder? The Ocoee runs on a guaranteed dam release schedule. The Tuckasegee and the Potomac Needles are somewhat similar but again the Tuck is guaranteed water. When hundreds of boaters get together each morning to plan their attack – choices are plenty, and everyone should have a chance to sample a different river each day, regardless of skill requirements.

This year the week of rivers started out a bit dry, with most trips relying on the releases. But by mid week the sky is the limit – or maybe a tiny creek is the limit. Some very

obscure runs like Scotts Creek in Dillsboro found us testing a feisty 4' drop on a generally mellow run (with one token strainer, of course). Steep Fires Creek, in a national forest near Murphy, looked like an easier version of the Savage. The Cartecay River in nearby Georgia always provides great fun as seemingly high drops generally provide very few mishaps and lots of photo opportunities. Even a reliable tubing creek (Deep Creek) a few minutes away, provides a change in style. When we chased after streams without gauges and came up dry – we were able to recover on another nearby stream. The Hiwassee River starts in Georgia, flows thru North Carolina into Tennessee, but only the popular Tennessee section is usually paddled. We drove up to a dam on the GA/NC border only to find the river dry. But about 15 miles downstream we found the river slightly beefy with added flow from tributary waters, and we had a great run with Shenandoah Staircase style rapids. There even were a few well known instructors willing to take on a few students for free this week to freshen up whitewater skills on the Nantahala or similar river.

I'll be back again next year to sample some ol' familiar rivers (the Nolichucky is drop dead beautiful) as well as hopefully some more obscure runs (the Pigeon River has so many of these). Oh yeah, the great food available in many locations after spending a day paddling is something else to look forward to.

20th Annual Smoky Mountains Week of Paddling 5/9/15 - 5/17/15; Richard Hopley, organizer



*Near the top
of Big Laurel*

Open Canoe: Dan Bertko (MA), Kim Buttleman (VA), Richard Hopley (NC). **Kayak:** Lee Belknap (NC), Karen Egbert (CO), Jon Hitchings (CO), Ned Howenstine (VA), Keith Merkel (VA), Len Rice (VA), Jenny Thomas (MD). **Non-boating:** Lois Carra (MA).

We had a very small group this year; seventeen people signed up originally, but one dropped out a month before the trip and five more dropped out in the week before the trip started. I missed seeing the friends from the DC area who dropped out, but it was a lot easier to manage shuttles and restaurant seating with such a small group than the 15 or 16 people we usually have on this trip. The eleven of us who participated live in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Massachusetts, and Colorado.

We've had good years and bad years with respect to rainfall, and this was not a good year, but when people plan their vacation time four or five months in advance we have to take what we can get. This time we had a dry week following a wet week and preceding another wet week. We rendezvoused the first night, Saturday, May 9, at Hot Springs Campground, Hot Springs, NC.

Sunday, May 10: Big Laurel Creek, -4"

Ned and Len hadn't arrived yet, so there were only

eight of us on the creek. Big Laurel is one of the most popular Class III/IV creek runs in the Southeast and we were very lucky that this held at a minimal boatable level until we got there. The put-in for Big Laurel Creek is three or four miles up the highway from the campground, and joins the French Broad River three miles upstream from the campground, so we took out in camp and had a quick ten-minute shuttle to recover put-in vehicles. Nice. Everyone agreed that we would not want to do it any lower, but we had no mishaps and everyone also agreed that we were glad we did it. Once on the French Broad, we split around the two island groups, half of the group running Kayaker's Ledge at the first island group, and half running Frank Bell's Rapid at the second. We went to the Smoky Mountain Diner in Hot Springs for dinner, but it was closed, so we went to the upscale Iron Horse Restaurant facing the RR tracks in Hot Springs and had a mighty fine diner.

Monday, May 11: Nolichucky River, 1,250 CFS

Dan took the day off to repair damage his boat

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sustained on Big Laurel, and Len had still not arrived, so we were eight boats again. I called ahead and reserved two shuttle drivers from The Nolichucky Gorge Campground and we drove from Hot Springs to Erwin, TN, in my van and Lee's van. I was apprehensive putting on, and even more so after Entrance (AKA Railroad) because I was paddling my new Esquif l'Edge half canoe (this tiny creek canoe handles very differently from a real canoe, and in big water I haven't yet figured out how to ferry properly). And sure enough, I let myself be intimidated into lifting over the entrance to Quarter Mile, which left me on the wrong side of the river. I failed the ferry, got rocked, and swam. Ned got to me and pulled me into an eddy just yards above Murphy's Ledge, where I would have joined my boat in its 45-minute recirculation, and probably not survived. Thanks again, Ned! Another boater flipped at the very top of Quarter Mile, but managed to get to the right side and swim the standard line over Murphy's Ledge. Fortunately we had no further untoward events, and got to the takeout minutes before a massive cloudburst. Lee's driver had parked his van back from the river under the trees at the takeout, but my driver had thoughtfully left my van a very short carry from the river. What my driver didn't know was that he had parked my upon about twelve inches of mulch, and after 3/4 of an hour of 50-foot-visibility downpour (with occasional periods of hail), so after the rain let up and we finished loading and changing, when I started the van it immediately dug in up to the hubcaps. Took another 45 minutes to dig out, with the help of Don, the campground manager, and his son, so we were two hours later leaving the takeout than we had planned. We wound up eating at the mediocre Azteca Mexican restaurant in Erwin and got back to camp late.

Tuesday, May 12: French Broad River, 1640 CFS

This I took the day off to put my boat back together after half of its outfitting had been ripped out during its 3/4-hour beat down the day before. While unloading boats at the put in I was standing atop my four-step ladder and couldn't quite reach a rope on top of my van, so I hopped a bit and grabbed it, and came down on my chest on the camera in my breast pocket. OUCH! I organized the shuttle so that two would have their car at the short take-out at Stackhouse and everyone else would have their vehicles at the NOC takeout in Hot Springs. There was no carnage, but Jenny was sufficiently worn out that she was happy that she and Kim had elected to take the short take-out -- after all, they had just seen the lower section on Sunday below Big Laurel Creek. We got an early start on the trek down to Long Creek, SC, and stopped for dinner at Kostas Family Restaurant in Dillsboro. It isn't the defunct Dillsboro Smokehouse,

but it is a darned good place to eat if you're in the area at dinnertime. I had called ahead to reserve a group campsite at The Chattooga River Resort and Campground, and we rolled in just as dusk was fading to full dark. This place is only six or seven minutes away from the US-76 Bridge, where we take off Section III and put on Section IV, so it is remarkably convenient.

Wednesday, May 13: Chattooga, Section III; 1.68' (USGS gauge)

Len arrived at camp early in the morning, so we were finally at full compliment of ten boaters. Dan's wife Lois drove their Sprinter van to the put-in, so mine was the only vehicle we left at the put-in. The water was pretty low (I consider 1.6' to be boating zero) but everything was boatable; there were a few hang-ups in the shoal areas, but no-one had to get out and walk. We put on at Earl's Ford, the upper out-in, because those first three miles are possibly the most beautiful part of Section III. This morning, with every stroke, my chest hurt where I had landed on my camera the day before; it had not bothered me over night, but I seriously considered taking out at Sandy Ford and walking/hitching back to get my van, but I made the selfish decision to be the weak link in the group and go all the way. Glad I did, because it was the last boating I did all week. We had a couple of short swims at Second Ledge (not including me, I'm glad to report) but I was still afraid of my boat so I (and most of the others) carried around Bull Sluice. That evening we drove into Clayton, GA and ate at la Cantina, a much more satisfactory Mexican Restaurant.

Thursday, May 14: Chattooga, Section IV; 1.64'

1.64' is low for Section III, but Section IV is much more channelized, and boatable well below 1'. I ran shuttle with Lee, Keith, Ned, and Len, to leave their vehicles at Tugaloo Lake (the traditional Section IV takeout) but everyone else left their vehicles at the put-in. This was because the others would take out at Camp Creek, on the Georgia side of the river, just above the Five Falls, which is a very, very long shuttle. We were able to finesse the shuttle because Dan and I were not boating and I was able to fit the remaining five and their boats in/on my van. Dan took a long bike ride and Lois was able to relax in camp and walk down to Long Creek with her easel and paints. I went to Clayton, got updated gauge readings, and had an egg-salad sandwich, chips, and chocolate malt at the Clayton Pharmacy's lunch counter -- not to be missed if you are in Clayton at lunchtime. We had to pass through Clayton on the way back from the Camp Creek takeout, so by pre-arrangement we met up with the Lake take-out group at Mama G's Italian Restaurant. From the restaurant I phoned the Nolichucky Gorge campground to reserve space for the next night.

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Friday, May 15: Chattooga Section III & 3/4; 1.63'

This time everybody decided to take out at Camp Creek, so we ran no shuttle; everyone left their vehicles at the put-in and got on the river early, and they were all freshly familiar with the run, so they were quick. I made a brief stop at the library to update my list of gauge readings, and Lois and I met everyone at the Camp Creek takeout. We re-united everyone with their vehicles, and I gave everyone directions to the Nolichucky Gorge Campground, where we all rendezvoused by 6:00 PM. We drove into Johnson City in my van and Lee's, and had a bang-up

dinner at The Firehouse Restaurant, a barbeque and rib joint in a converted firehouse, complete with a 1920's-era fire truck and wait staff dressed in turnout gear.

Saturday, May 16: Nolichucky River; 970 CFS

I was tempted to revenge-boat this, but my bruised ribs were still killing me. Lois and I drove everyone to the put-in, and I headed home from there. I have heard no dire reports, so I assume everyone had a good day on the river.

Every year I swear this is the last time I will go through with organizing this trip, then by midwinter I so miss my DC-area friends again that I put the trip back on the MCC and BRV sched-



***Jon, exiting
Stairstep on
Big Laurel
Creek***

***Kim, at
Suddy
Hole, on
Big Laurel***





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Membership Form

Membership dues are still only \$15 per family living in the same residence. Please make check payable to **Monocacy Canoe Club** and send to:
Monocacy Canoe Club - P.O. Box 1083, Frederick, MD 21702-0083

Name: _____

Do you want delivery of the SS Newsletter in Adobe PDF format via email instead of regular mail? Yes No

Any changes in membership information? Yes No (If No, please do not fill out the rest of this form).

Family members: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email 1: _____ Email 2: _____

NOTICE AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK: Canoeing or kayaking (paddling) can be physically demanding and/or dangerous. Canoeists and kayakers (paddlers) take personal responsibility for their personal safety. By participating in Monocacy Canoe Club activities, you acknowledge an assumption of the risk involved in paddling, which could involve risk of serious injury or death.