

EASY CURRENT NEWS

The Washington Water Trails Association Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2009

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It's A Shore Thing: WWTA's Annual Auction

Saturday, April 4th, 2009

Community Center at Mercer View
Mercer Island, WA

Presented by
Cascade Canoe & Kayak Centers



WWTA's 13th Annual Auction and Dinner promises to be the most fun you can have outside your boat. Browse two silent auctions during the champagne and hors d'oeuvres reception. Sip local micro brews or wine during your dinner from returning chef Henry Gordon of Balabuste Catering. After a delicious dessert dash, the funny and fast-paced David Silverman takes the stage and hosts a live auction, featuring an array of one-of-a-kind items and great getaways.

Early Bird tickets are \$60 each, \$450 for tables of eight. Early Bird sales end March 9th. Ticket includes appetizers, beverages and your choice of dinner entree: Caribbean Seafood Stew, Jerked Chicken or Caribbean Vegetable Cakes.

Get your tickets today!

**www.wwta.org/auction
206.545.9161**

Site Steward Program Evolves

The Cascadia Marine Trail (CMT) Site Steward Program is a long-standing volunteer effort to maintain a water trail that spans a couple thousand miles of shoreline. Site Stewards monitor campsites with the perspective of the paddlers who use the sites and are trained to evaluate the function and features of the campsite. Four essential features define CMT sites: access to and from the water, a place to camp, restroom facilities, and identifying signage. In addition, many sites feature kayak racks, fire pits, picnic tables, and running water. Site Stewards monitor and report the condition of CMT facilities at least two times a year, conduct litter clean up, and provide up-keep to signage. Stewards may be called upon to advocate for the Cascadia Marine Trail by attending public meetings, submitting comments to government agencies, and serving as a liaison between WWTA and the public.

Traditionally, Site Stewards have each adopted a particular campsite and committed to monitor it several times a year. It was not uncommon to have a "waiting list" for a particular campsite, as would-be Stewards waited their turn to volunteer. Meanwhile, the level of reporting varied from site to site, steward to steward.

WWTA is re-organizing the Site Steward Program for 2009. No longer will Stewards be assigned to particular campsites. Current Stew-

ards are welcomed to continue reporting on their long-adopted sites, but will be encouraged to report as they visit different Cascadia Marine Trail sites. This will allow WWTA to recruit reports as needed (can anyone get to Lighthouse Park? We haven't seen a report in years!) and hear from a variety of perspectives regarding campsite conditions. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the revised Site Steward Program – no more waiting list!

You can join the ranks of trained Site Stewards by attending the next training Saturday, May 2 (location TBA). The free Site Steward training covers the basics of observing and reporting site conditions, identifying invasive species, working with land managers, and low-impact recreation skills. If you are interested in attending the training, please contact steward@wwta.org. Additional training dates may be announced, depending on interest. Learn more at www.wwta.org/steward.



Puget Sound Challenge: Around Kitsap Peninsula

The Olympic Kayak Club is proposing a challenge: paddle or row 150 nautical miles between Belfair and Allyn, around the Kitsap Peninsula. Participants can paddle or row any segment or section anytime or all segments in one long trip, as an individual or with a group. Olympic Kayak Club is organizing this paddle-a-thon to help raise funds for WWTA while providing a unique and fun challenge.

An added bonus is that this event will help draw attention to much-needed public access and Cascadia Marine Trail sites on Kitsap Peninsula. Learn more and sign up for the challenge at the Olympic Kayak Club website: www.olympickayakclub.com/the-challenge.html.

Leave No Trace Trainer Course June 6-7, Central Puget Sound

Join WWTA for an intensive weekend workshop focused on practicing and teaching low-impact recreation skills and ethics. Participants get a comprehensive overview of Leave No Trace through direct, in-field experience during the two-day overnight course. The Leave No Trace Trainer Course provides participants with innovative teaching skills to educate friends, family, and community about low-impact recreation.

Tuition: \$100 General Public, \$75 WWTA Member, \$60 WWTA Site Steward. Tuition includes meals, certificate of completion, and a one-year membership to the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. Class size is limited, register online at www.wwta.org/lnt

Changes at Washington Water Trails

Like most organizations and businesses, WWTA will be working with a dramatically reduced budget in 2009. Members can expect to see changes in WWTA operations, but should know that the staff and board are committed to keeping WWTA afloat and on course. Notable differences include cuts in office hours and staff time, reductions in printed publications and mailings, decrease in travel associated with meetings and site visits, postponement of much-needed technology upgrades and a scale-back of the Sound Education & Action Kayaker Program.

This edition of Easy Current News is the last print edition planned for 2009. WWTA will continue to publish the quarterly newsletter and post it electronically. Members will receive notification by email when each edition is available. To ensure you continue receiving the newsletter, please be sure we have your correct email address. See page 4 for more information. If you do not use email, please let us know, we will try to accommodate you.

From Board President Don Crook

Hello, and a belated "Happier New Year" to all. We all know it is hard to pick up a newspaper or watch the news without getting depressed and worried. There is no doubt these are serious times for lots of folks struggling to maintain. WWTA is, like many other non-profits, facing cutbacks, reduced staff time, and diminished ability to do all things desired - but still focusing on the mission and prioritizing resources to achieve these goals. The brighter side is we have many opportunities for future improvement.

The upcoming It's A Shore Thing, WWTA's Annual Auction and Dinner, is a great opportunity to bring the human-powered boating community together for camaraderie and generate sorely needed revenue as well. Whether you can volunteer to help out, donate items for auction, or just come to enjoy - your participation is encouraged.

Responses to the annual fund drive have been gratifying (but more is needed) - and members volunteering time to help with activities have been particularly helpful. The involvement and participation is always appreciated and the need only grows as we move into spring and summer kayaking times. Not that you can't kayak in the ice and snow - since that is where it all started; but personally, I have more fun in the sun and warm weather.

See you at the Auction.

From Executive Director Julie Anderson

Many thanks to our members for their support from the Annual Fund Drive! WWTA would not be operating without your help. These funds are committed to continue WWTA's work in protecting and increasing public access.

WWTA hosted a successful Open House in November. Thanks to all who attended. A special thanks to our sponsors - Loren Jacobsen, Reed Waite and the Shed Boys - AND all of the WWTA board members who contributed their support.

As we begin the New Year, we continue in an economic downturn which has affected almost everyone. This has presented WWTA with a challenge of decreased contributions and reduced staff hours.

As you look forward to the coming year consider what steps you can take to promote the mission of Washington Water Trails. Tell everyone you know about WWTA and why it's important to become a member. Sign up to volunteer at a work party. Attend WWTA's events. Write your legislators to keep open the CMT sites on proposed closure of several State parks. Every contribution can add up to make a big difference.

WWTA's Annual Auction is April 4th. Come join us for fabulous food, fun and entertainment! Sign up by March 9th for the early bird discounted ticket prices - tickets available at www.wwta.org/auction.

Speaking of changes, WWTA would like to thank Emily Slotnick for her service and commitment. Emily served as a Washington Service Corps volunteer in 2007-2008 and continued her stellar volunteer and Site Steward coordination part-time as she began her graduate studies in Urban Planning and Design at the University of Washington. Emily is no longer on staff but remains an active volunteer and consultant. Thanks, Emily!

As staff hours decrease and work loads increase, your participation and support is more important than ever. WWTA will be counting on members and volunteers to help steward and advocate for water trails. You can help by volunteering at outreach events and work parties, keeping your membership current, telling your friends (and strangers, too!) about WWTA, becoming a Site Steward, and attending the upcoming auction. Thank you for your membership and continued support of WWTA - together we can continue to protect public access to the shorelines for people using human-powered boats!

Easy Current News is published four times a year by Washington Water Trails Association, a nonprofit organization that promotes advocacy, education, and stewardship of public access to Washington's waterways for people in human and wind powered beachable watercraft.

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Winter 2009

Volume 18

Number 1



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Marine Shoreline Public Access Portal

The Department of Ecology's online Washington Coastal Atlas, known for its aerial shoreline photos, will soon feature more information useful for the public. Deborah Purce, a NOAA Coastal Management Fellow from Western Washington University, is developing a public access portion for the Atlas. She envisions the Atlas as a portal for positive experience and education at saltwater edge. The two-year fellowship ends mid-2010.

There are already updates. In addition to the GIS-based viewer's 2006 marine shore photos of Puget Sound and the outer coast, it now has aerial photos taken in 2007 for the Columbia, Snake and other major water bodies, including Lake Chelan in eastern Washington and the lakes of the Lakes-To-Locks Water Trail. Ecologists can view land cover, habitat types, drift cells, eelgrass, kelp, and shellfish

areas. Those interested in development history can view photos from the 1940's, '70's, '90's, and 2002.

Purce is working on an Atlas redesign to include a point and click public access database and improved links. Background imagery can be selected for viewing: satellite imagery, hillshade, USGS topos, and soon, NOAA nautical charts. This useful planning tool will only improve over the next year and a half. See for yourself by surfing to www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/atlas_home.html.

The Coastal Management Fellowship was established in 1996 to provide on-the-job education and training opportunities in coastal resource management and policy for postgraduate students and to provide project assistance to state coastal zone management programs.

Budget Proposal Threatens to Close Four Cascadia Marine Trail Sites

Last spring, a dozen WWTa volunteers relocated a Cascadia Marine Trail Site that was sloughing into the sea at Kopachuck State Park. The afternoon was spent pulling weeds, installing signs, and grubbing campsites. As the work party ended, a local boy scout troop arrived to take measurements for a new kayak rack they would later install. The new Kopachuck Cascadia Marine Trail is high above the eroding effects of the waves, but now the park and campsite are threatened by shortfalls in the state budget.

Governor Gregoire's proposed 2009-11 budget reflects the critical state of the national economy. Services and spending are being cut across the board, including funding for parks and recreation. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission budget proposal for the next biennium, which begins July 1, aims for a \$10 million reduction. This budget cut includes reductions in equipment replacement, closure of the Puget Sound Region office, limiting of services, and a move to "mothball" or close 15 parks and expand seasonal park closures.

State Parks will close and seek other public owner-operators for 13 parks deemed by the Commission as "not consistent" with the Centennial 2013 Vision (premier destinations or places of regional or statewide significance). Among the park closures are four key Cascadia Marine Trail Sites: Kopachuck, Fay Bainbridge, Joemma

Beach, and Fort Ward. In addition, a new site was planned for Old Fort Townsend, another park slated for closure. If the budget cuts are approved, the parks may be closed or turned over to new owners by September 15th, 2009.

Closure of these Cascadia Marine Trail Sites would reverse years of progress on the water trail and leave gaping holes for long-distance paddlers. State Parks is making an effort to find new operators for the parks, such as local county park departments, but local agencies are feeling the budget crunch as well. Ideally, the parks will remain in the hands of State Parks, a long-time partner and proponent of the Cascadia Marine Trail. If the ownership of these important sites changes, however, WWTa will advocate to keep the Cascadia Marine Trail Sites open and available for overnight use by non-motorized boaters.

Your local representatives will be charged with making final determinations about the state budget. Please consider calling or writing a letter of support for Puget Sound's precious State Parks. Call Washington's Legislative Hotline at 800.562.6000 to leave a brief message that will be passed along to the three legislators from your district - it takes only a couple minutes! To contact your representatives by mail or email, find your legislators' contact information at www.leg.wa.gov.

Thank You for Supporting WWTa's Annual Fund Drive!

A special thanks to everyone who contributed to the Annual Fund Drive, your support is more important than ever. The Fund Drive succeeded in raising over \$10,000 to support WWTa programs and operations. Didn't have a chance to make a year end donation? It's not too late to contribute, you can still give online at www.wwta.org/afd.

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Calendar



For updates and more info, visit www.wwta.org/news/calendar

February

17: **Invitation Mailing Party.** Stop in anytime 4-8pm at WWTA Office. RSVP to volunteer@wwta.org.

March

7: **Blake Island Work Party.** Help restore native dune grass at the Cascadia Marine Trail Site. Transportation provided, or arrive under your own power. Email volunteer@wwta.org to sign up.

9: **Deadline for Early Bird tickets to WWTA's Annual Dinner & Auction.** Early registration is \$60 per person, \$480 for table of eight.

April

4: **It's A Shore Thing: WWTA's Annual Dinner & Auction.** Entertaining, delicious, and a great cause, Not-to-be-missed! Details and tickets online at www.wwta.org/auction.

4: Puget Sound Challenge Kick-off. 9am, Belfair State Park. Details and registration at www.olympickayakclub.com

17-19: Port Angeles Sea Kayak Symposium. Visit www.raftandkayak.com Volunteer at WWTA's outdoor booth! Contact volunteer@wwta.org

May

2: **Site Steward Training,** location TBA Details on page 1. Contact steward@wwta.org if interested.

9: **Blind Island Work Party.** RSVP to volunteer@wwta.org.

16-17: Puget Sound Sea Kayak Symposium, Tacoma. Visit www.metroparkstacoma.org Volunteer at WWTA's outdoor booth! Contact volunteer@wwta.org

30: Richland Paddlefest, Howard Amon Park. Visit www.columbiariverpaddlefest.com Volunteer at WWTA's booth! Contact volunteer@wwta.org

June

6-7 **Leave No Trace Trainer Course.** See page 1 for details. www.wwta.org/lnt



Preserving access to Washington's waters for future generations

Washington Water Trails Association

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