

Easy Current News

The Washington Water Trails Association Quarterly Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2010

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Easy Current News is published by Washington Water Trails Association

WWTa is a non-profit organization that promotes advocacy, education, and stewardship of public access to Washington's waterways for people in human and wind powered beachable watercraft.

WWTa Receives 2010 REI Grant!

Fundraising for non-profit organizations like Washington Water Trails has gotten much tougher in the past couple of years. Still, WWTa has corporate friends that understand the importance of our missions and have a few dollars available to share. On September 22nd, WWTa received a grant of \$10,000 from REI as part of their corporate giving program. Julie Anderson, WWTa's Executive Director, traveled to REI Direct Sales at the Distribution Center in Sumner, Washington to accept the check in a presentation ceremony.

This is the fourth year in a row that WWTa has received a grant from the Direct Sales division of REI. In 2010, REI will donate over \$3.5 million in grants "to help protect and restore the environment, increase access to outdoor activities, and encourage involvement in responsible outdoor recreation" according to the "REI Gives" page on REI.com.

Each of these grants starts out as a nomination by an employee or group of employees at each of REI's stores and corporate divisions. REI's giving efforts are distinguished by their unique employee-driven approach. The grants program is predominantly guided by local employee nominations. They believe this "on the ground view" is the most authentic way to allocate community support because REI's thousands of employees work, play and volunteer in

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SEA Kayaker Team Outreach

Sound Education and Action (SEA) Kayakers were out in the field again in 2010, following a hiatus in 2009. Beginning in July, SEA Kayaker Educators, Michael Silence and Robert Taylor, spent 3-4 days every week reaching out to the public with direct, in-field outreach at public beaches and CMT sites throughout Public Sound.

Ensuring public access to waterways for future generations of Washington State citizens requires that the public must be educated; especially those members that make most use of trailheads. Reaching users of watertrails for educational purposes is a distinct challenge in that users of watertrails can begin trips from any of a great number of trail origins dispersed over a big geographic area. The SEA Kayaker Team is matchless in its ability to meet these educational needs.

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Washington Water Trails Association (WWTA)

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From Board President Don Crook

State of the Cascadia Marine Trail: This year I had the opportunity and the time to visit almost all of the CMT sites—including closed sites and potential new sites. I am happy to report that most sites are in good to great shape and are being frequently used. This is largely due to caring users and hard working park/site managers and staff. I say “caring users” as many park/site managers I spoke with expressed their appreciation and gratitude of paddler/campers “who can be counted on to take care of their sites.” Of course, beyond users and local managers, this speaks to the efforts of State, County, and City Parks, along with DNR, and all agencies who manage and maintain these facilities. Qualitatively I would assess CMT site conditions as B+.

Looking beyond individual site specifics, the CMT is a large trail network that continues to evolve. There are pressing needs for more CMT sites. Paddler and area usage demographics are changing. Younger paddlers and families require shorter distances with more frequent access to and from shorelands. For example, not everyone can safely paddle the 28 nms between Triton Cove and Salisbury Point traveling on Hood Canal, or crossing 18.5 nms between Pt. Doughty and Lighthouse Park. Then there are islands making up part of the Strait of Juan de Fuca shoreline (Turn, Patos, Sucia, etc.) that already have great park facilities but no CMT sites. So, while trail site “maintenance” has been good, trail network “development” has been lagging.

What does the future hold? We do know that government entities are currently all in financial need because of budget cuts. In the near future, there will be unavoidable state and county park closures and in an effort to reduce costs, responsibilities will change (often falling to local communities). In addition, kayakers are but a small minority within all recreational users. As WWTA’s goal is to sustain and grow the Cascadia Marine Trail, we need to do our part to get our fair share.

Your help through your memberships, stewardship, as well as financial and volunteer donations, provide this organization with the means to educate, advocate, and spearhead the WWTA mission of public access to watertrails into the future.

Thank you for all you do, and happy holidays to all!

From Executive Director Julie Anderson

2010 has been an exceptional year in many ways. Many businesses throughout the paddling community have helped sustain WWTA. We also have had paddling clubs advocating for WWTA’s mission, participants in our first-ever online auction and support from individual members and donors. WWTA has several new site stewards and eight new LNT trainers resulting from classes WWTA sponsored this year. Washington Water Trails Association thanks each and every one of you for choosing to partner with us through financial means and/or volunteering your time!

I’d like to take this opportunity to introduce a new WWTA Board Member, Karen Scharer. Karen assisted staff in the office prior to being elected to the Board. In addition, Karen was a huge help with the online auction. Welcome Karen!

And, many heartfelt thanks to exiting Board Members, Bruce Farrar and Rachel Van Noord, for their many years of valuable service. They’ll be missed. I’d also like to personally thank all of our Board Members for their active participation over this past year. We couldn’t have survived without you!

2011 will bring new adventures for WWTA. I hope you all come along for the ride (or paddle)!

WWTA Board Members Recall Their Experiences Taking On The Puget Sound Challenge!

Paddler Bruce Farrar: In early days indigenous peoples of Puget Sound, explorers and settlers used Puget Sound to get around. Today the waterways are still work-ways but we also seek out the waves for spirit and adventure.

In 2009 I signed up for the Puget Sound Challenge for an adventure but did not participate in a single segment. When 2010 rolled around I was determined to paddle it because I love Puget Sound, really enjoy sea kayaking and I always appreciate a great outing with like-minded folks.

The event is the brainchild of the Olympic Kayak Club (OKC) and they are based in West Puget Sound (meeting in Port Gamble on a monthly basis). Segment 1—of the 13 segments that cover approximately 150 miles—began at Port Townsend and ended about 10 nm south at Jefferson Park on Indian Island.

The April morning was damp and there was a chill in the air but paddlers were jazzed about starting. The boats that were lined up on the beach poised to go included mostly sea kayaks and a few recreational types. There was even one Hobie Cat pedal kayak. David Fisher, OKC President, got everything started with words about safety, and then we were all off!

The PSC is not a race, however the excitement of getting underway pumps the adrenaline and makes the arms dip and stroke with vigor. Before we knew it the second half of the day's schedule found the group spreading out and going in different directions. Nonetheless, all arrived at Jefferson Park invigorated, looking forward to each and every segment.

One of the segments was on Lake Washington, both begun and ended at Magnuson Park at Sand Point, proceeding north to Log Boom Park (between Lake Forest Park and Kenmore) and next to the Kenmore Air Harbor. The weather was wonderful albeit a bit windy going back south to the park. This segment benefited The Seattle Police Foundation, WWTA, and North Kitsap Trails Association.

Paddle Kitsap, another segment and sponsored by the Olympic Outdoor Center, is a two-day event over a Friday and Saturday. On Friday the group started at Point Gamble with Kingston as the destination for overnight camping as well as the launch point for the next day. Unfortunately, the weather turned windy and most of the group could not finish in Kingston because of the lateness of the hour. The second day began with much optimism. An estimated 60 paddlers set off from Kingston to Poulsbo, a trip of about 14 nm. Three rest stops were built in including a generous lunch break near the Suquamish Tribal Center. The outing was well planned and supported by OKC. I met paddlers from Utah. They felt good about participating in a truly Northwest experience—water, wind and waves—the combination of which they don't get in the desert.

Even paddling a few of the Challenge segments offered me time on the water that was a welcome respite from the hectic world of everyday living. Where our ancestors 'had' to be on the water, we 'get' to be on the water. I appreciate this difference more and more each day.

Bruce Farrar, WWTA Board Member (outgoing)

Paddler Bill Brackin: I joined for Segments 11 and 13 of the Puget Sound Challenge.

Segment 11 was a paddle from Zitell's Marina, which is located in Baird's Cove northeast of Olympia, and ending at Luhr Beach at the mouth of the Nisqually River. Paddlers met in the parking lot, paid the \$4.50 launch fee (parking was free), and vehicles were shuttled. David Fisher gave a brief orientation and safety talk. We packed up and set out on a day with calm water, puffy clouds and blue skies.

It wasn't long before we discovered a beautiful narrow passage into a deep blue lagoon. A solitary harbor seal was fishing there and, except for a couple of homes at the mouth of the lagoon and a distant house nestled in the trees on the hillside, it was peaceful and quite beautiful.

Continued on page 4

Point Doughty, in the San Juans, is one of the most remote CMT campsites. Located on a bay too shallow for most power boats, it offers a peaceful solitude...



PSC Continued from Page 3

The party continued paddling down the coastline to the southeast. There were some interesting homes and cabins along Dogfish Bight, and a Geoduck farming operation caught our attention. According to Wikipedia, “Geoduck aquaculture on private tidelands in Puget Sound, particularly in South Puget Sound, has been steadily growing over the last ten years.”

Our flotilla pulled in to the beach at Tolmie State Park for lunch. It’s a park with a beach, lagoon, and uplands, offering picnic tables and a little bridge. After eating, we paddled away with the outgoing tide.

The shoreline rose to the southeast, homes set back from the water, often on bluffs above. In a couple of small bights we found access beaches, boat ramps, and private parklands. At one of them a carcass of a large old wooden boat lay on its side in the shallows.

As we approached Nisqually Head, we passed a couple of crab boats at anchor and some duck blinds. Luhr Beach is a busy place on a Saturday, and this day was no exception. Above the boat ramp, I was surprised to discover Gerry Hodge, a long-time WWTA volunteer, working on a project counting boaters with and without PFDs. After loading my boat on my car, I spent a few minutes talking with Gerry and observing his count.

Segment 13 was really a joint celebration of the finish of the 150-mile journey. For such a small community, the citizens of Allyn, Washington, have done themselves proud by setting aside a nice large waterfront park and building a fantastic open-air pavilion.

David Fisher and OKC gave out t-shirts, commemorative items, prizes, and more. They cooked hot dogs and hamburgers, and everyone contributed to the potluck. OKC raffled off the final kayak in their 3-kayak raffle, and donated funds to WWTA. It was an appropriate end to the wonderful 2010 season of paddling.

by Bill Brackin, WWTA Board Member (current)

WWTA’s Online Auction 2010

In October, WWTA ran its first-ever online auction as a major fundraising effort. Instead of having a Live Auction last spring, steps were taken to move the auction online—due to reduced office hours, and office staff availability. Board members Ann Rieser and Karen Scharer pulled together a list of 52 items to auction off, by asking local vendors, and board members to donate items for the auction.

Items up for bid varied from gift certificates for massages and local restaurants, exotic wines, Hales Ale beer, wine tasting experiences, overnight cabin getaways, life coaching, paddle lessons, dry bags, hatch covers, homemade cookies, tickets to Seattle performances, Greenland Kayak instruction classes and Sea Kayaker magazine (subscriptions and a set of historic back issues).

The first day of bidding was a flurry of bids, and the last day of bidding brought many looking to get bids in under the wire to win these items. A total of 283 bids were made, making over \$6,300 for the WWTA general operating fund.

Just three weeks after the auction ended, all the money had been collected and the items delivered to the winning bidders. Although many hours were spent in logistics and email follow-up, the WWTA online auction was a resounding success.

Thank you to all the individuals and vendors who donated items for bid, and to everyone else who participated in supporting WWTA’s Online Auction!

~Ann Rieser



Sound Education & Action (SEA) Kayaker, Michael Silence speaks at the WWTA Annual Open House

Olympia Dry Paddling—Issues of Interest

Paddlers have no paid lobby in Olympia. Many issues come up that could affect paddlers that never reach the ears of the paddling community because WWTA has volunteer representatives in well-placed positions who work the process to eliminate those issues before they can blossom into legislative proposals. The reason the paddling community is unaware of the many attacks on their chosen recreation is that if “wolf” were to be cried every time an attack were made, those sounding the alarm would have little credibility when the attack was truly dangerous. Fortunately, the political process is so cumbersome we have plenty of time to let things die of their own lack of merit without coming to you saying “the sky is falling”. Unfortunately, in these times of budgetary crisis, the previously neutral bureaucratic agencies have aggressively joined the hunt for additional revenue. Foremost among those agencies is law enforcement, chiefly because the current regulatory fee structures means non-registered boats are easy pickings for more revenue.

This is my take on preliminary information coming out of Olympia that may affect non-motorized boaters in the upcoming 2011 Legislative session:

- The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Vehicle Use Permit is changing. It currently sells for about \$13. However, a new Washington Access Pass is being talked about that will allow access to both the WDFW and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands at a price of up to \$40 per year, per person. DNR access has been free in the past.
- The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee preliminary report on boating has been long awaited, and is a good snapshot of how boating monies are collected and spent in the State of Washington. In making a gross estimation, paddlers seem to contribute less than 1% of direct boating dollars and consume about 5% of the boating budget. The leveler is the fact that the biggest percentage of boating expenditures come out of the state’s general fund and demographic studies of the paddling community show conclusively that paddlers contribute to the fund above and beyond the average citizen. The report is available at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/JLARC/AuditAndStudyReports/2010/Documents/RecreationalBoatingPreliminary.pdf>
- The WDFW may be extending Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) fees for motorized boaters but are not proposing inclusion of the non-motorized boating community in this session. Oregon and Idaho have adopted AIS fees for non-motorized boats the last two years.
- The budget woes of the DNR continue and outright closure of Pelican Beach and Cypress Head are under consideration. The DNR will also be seeking inclusion in the recreational immunity liability laws which will enable them to charge fees. State Parks has reduced its list of threatened closures, but Fort Ward (which has a WWTA site) is included on their short list.
- The WDFW will likely partner with the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs to seek registration of all motorized boats in the state, \$10.50 of each registration to be earmarked for law enforcement agencies. Once put into place this will effect previously exempt motorized boats having less than 10 horsepower and not operating on Coast Guard defined navigable waters (most lakes). Using current boat registration fees, this would mean about \$25 per year for each boat valued at \$1,000.00. If successful, human-powered craft could follow.
- The Recreational Resource Account was swept into the general fund by the 2010 Legislature and the Washington Boating Alliance will be seeking to prevent that from happening again in 2011, as well as removing the lid on the gas tax revenue that feeds the account. A pro-boating group, the Washington Boating Alliance will be working to restore the Recreational Resource Account (which contains millions of dollars for improvements to boating facilities). The Washington Boating Alliance meetings are open to all, scheduled the second Thursday of each month (9:30am to 12:30pm) at a rotating location. If you are interested in becoming involved, or to be added to their email list, or if you would like more in-depth information on any of the above issues, please contact Gerry Hodge at gnthodge@hotmail.com.

~ by Gerald Hodge (Gerry Hodge is WWTA’s representative to the Washington State Parks Boating Safety Advisory Council and the Recreational Trails Program administered through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. Gerry is also on the Executive Committee of the Washington Boating Alliance and has served on the Department of Natural Resources Sustainable Recreation Work Group.)

REI Grant *Continued from page 1*

Mark Cole presenting Julie Anderson with the REI Grant Check for WWTA



their communities. WWTA's grant nomination was spearheaded by me, an employee with REI Direct Sales who is also a WWTA Site Steward and local area paddler.

During the check presentation, Julie explained that the REI grant will support WWTA's Public Access Outreach programs including Site Stewards, the Sound Education and Action (SEA) Kayaker Team, and Leave No Trace Training Classes.

WWTA's Site Stewards monitor sites with the perspective of paddlers who use the sites. Stewards report on campsites and access points in need of restoration work, and monitor the environmental integrity of sites reporting the effects of user impacts such as trampled vegetation as well as the growth of invasive species. Site Stewards assess the need for work parties when "heavy duty" chores such as bulletin board replacement, signage or site maintenance needs to be accomplished, all the while working as partners with WWTA and land managers.

The SEA Kayaker Team mirrors and magnifies the efforts of WWTA volunteers during peak summer months. With over 50 public campsites making up the framework of the Cascadia Marine Trail, the SEA Kayaker Team spend 3-4 days every week, over weekends, reaching out to the public with direct, in-field outreach at public beaches and CMT campsites throughout Puget Sound. This pair performs an integral role in educating the public about public access issues, Leave No Trace principles, and in recruiting new volunteers to expand WWTA work.

by Mark Cole, REI Employee

SEA Kayakers *Continued from page 1*

Through raising awareness of those using Washington's watertrails and shoreline sites, the SEA Kayaker Team program is able to help diminish the negative impacts of increased use.

Michael and Robert covered hundreds of nms on the Cascadia Marine Trail in their season in the field. Now the SEA Kayaker Team work will continue through clinics until March 31, 2011. The focus of these clinics will be Leave No Trace (LNT), public access issues, stewardship, and the work of WWTA in general.

If you are interested in scheduling a clinic to have a WWTA SEA Kayaker speak with a group, club, school, or any other organization, please contact SEA@wwta.org.

Washington State Trails Conference 2010

Washington State Trails Coalition (WSTC) conferences happen every two years. These conferences are the primary forum of the coalition. Since Washington Water Trails Association is distinctive in its mission, it's significant that it was well represented at the conference this year. Several WWTA representatives attended, including Executive Director Julie Anderson, and WWTA Board President Don Crook.

Founded in 1999, the Washington State Trails Coalition's purpose is to provide an effective and interactive forum focusing on protecting, promoting, and enhancing a state-wide system of trails through voluntary and public involvement, in cooperation with landowners and land managers. Both non-motorized and motorized outdoor recreation and transportation trails are included.

Membership is open to anyone with a passion for trails. Other forums include the off-year meeting and the Washington State Trails Coalition's website.

In 2010, the Conference took place in Tacoma, Washington, called "From Backyard to Backcountry and the Trails Between." It was reported by the coalition that this WSTC conference was one of the best ever, with almost 200 in attendance.

Election results, bylaws update, the Idea Marketplace, key survey results and session highlights are currently posted. Check the WSTC website the end of January 2011 for a published conference report.

Recent WWTA Activities & Accomplishments

- * Soon a new site will be included in the Cascadia Marine Trail. It follows the culmination of 11 years of negotiations and working partnerships, and is located on Hood Canal at what's been called the Wolfe Property. Originally this site was planned for Point Hannon only the final location was changed late last year in a decision by Washington State Parks;
- * Several potential new Cascadia Marine Trail sites are currently in the works. These sites will be located in Kitsap County and on the Key Peninsula;
- * The proposal to designate the Cascadia Marine Trail a "National Scenic Trail" passed the House of Representatives last October (2009) and is currently awaiting a vote in the Senate;
- * In 2010 WWTA site work parties were held at Blake, Jones, and Hope Islands, as well as at Joemma and Kopachuck State Parks—thank you to all the volunteers who helped out;
- * Due to a joint effort between WWTA Site Stewards, the WWTA Trails Committee, and WWTA Board President Don Crook, most all of the Cascadia Marine Trail sites were inspected this past season;
- * In 2010 WWTA's Sound Education and Action (SEA) Kayaker Program was reinstated following a year's hiatus. This program is supported by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and REI grants, along with individual and organizational WWTA supporters;
- * The annual Leave No Trace Training Class graduated eight newly certified LNT Trainers in 2010;
- * Site Steward training classes were held in four locations over the past year, expanding the number of trained Stewards;
- * In an effort to cut overhead costs in this time of economic downturn, the WWTA office moved in to a smaller space in 2010 resulting in a significant reduction in rental costs.

Stewardship Update: WWTA's Volunteer Stewardship Coordinator, Mike Wolf, has had a busy season compiling and updating Site Steward reports. Information from the reports has created a list of projects that need to be sorted and prioritized in order to determine and schedule work parties for 2011. Some of these work parties will require more work while others should be on a smaller scale. Be sure to watch for volunteer opportunities to join a work party on the WWTA calendar and in e-newsletters.

WWTA Is About Public Access to Waterways

It could be said in about every case, that prevention is the first line of defense. It is certainly true in the case of public access to waterways in Washington State. Shoreland water access needs to be protected now, and expanded, before it is lost for good. According to a variety of sources, the amount of land access that is available to the public in this state ranges as low as ten to twenty percent. These estimates include shoreline along both fresh and salt bodies of water.

As WWTA advocates for public access to the state's waterways, we ask each of you to reach out to communicate this message to others as much as you can. Thank you for all you do!

Thank You To All WWTA Supporters!

2010 Online Auction Donors

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