



WATERLINES



Newsletter of Poudre Paddlers

July, 2007

North Platte - Six Mile Gap to Treasure Island

By Roger Faaborg

Ken Bauer has been floating the upper North Platte River for 23 years. I was very fortunate to join his party and float from Six Mile Gap to Treasure Island June 8-10. Our group included four tandem and two solo canoes.

This was the first time I had hauled camping equipment in my 12-foot whitewater canoe, a Dagger Rival. I was worried that the heavy boat would take on water, and I'd end up swimming. To make matters worse, it was snowing as I drove past Chimney Park on Wyoming 230. Just what I needed: cold water and cold air.

This section of the North Platte is rated class II and II+. Of course, that doesn't mean a whole lot. Is it a Town Run class II or a Filter Plant class II? I find whitewater exciting; however, if it becomes too exciting, it switches to terrifying and no fun at all.



Morning Mist in Six-Mile Canyon by Roger Faaborg

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Letter from the prez...

2007 is a great year to be on the water! The Poudre's flow has been incredible. Our countryside seems a bit more green than in the past few years, and the summer heat just makes you want to be near the water. Gratitude and kudos go out to those who have contributed their time and love of paddling to host events for this club and keep our behind-the-scenes wheels turning (this newsletter, the website, the trip list, the list-server, the advertising, the conservation & access work, training classes, bookkeeping, etc.). You are the life-blood of this club and all your efforts are applauded.

The others I want to thank are those who get in their boats and join in our events. We wouldn't be a club without your participation and camaraderie. I just love our incredible mix of skills, experience, personalities and adventures. We take our common interest and expand it into so much dang fun! Keep up the good, wet, work!

So here I sit on the 4th of July and wonder what else we can add in for the rest of the season (which as far as I'm concerned really never ends). There's already more Poudre, Colorado and North Platte river trips on the schedule. How about a paddle n' dutch oven cook-off/picnic? How about a sunrise or sunset paddle? Maybe another camping trip to a mountain lake? Do you know any great little places that we haven't been to yet? Do you have any special skills that we could incorporate into a Paddle Rodeo? Poling, gunwale jumping, paddle making, boat making, special gadgets that make any facet of paddling easier (loading, unloading, camping, bailing, portaging, packing, etc.) What would you like to do or see? Let's hear from you! From Debbie Hinde



Six-Mile Gap, continued

(Continued from page 1)

Thursday night I joined Mike and Brie Koliha camping at Six Mile Gap Campground. It was a cold night, but my zero degree down bag was comfortable. The morning dew was frozen into long icicles.

Shortly after 8 am Saturday, the others arrived and we all carried our boats down to the river by an incredibly steep trail, which drops about 300 feet in 600 yards. This pretty much eliminates any drift boats or large rafts from this section of the river. In fact, we saw no one from Six Mile Gap to Pickaroon.

I had six dry bags and I wasn't sure what to do with them. Luckily, Douglas was floating a Dagger Outrage and I watched him pack. He put the dry bags beneath the floatation and I did likewise. It took a while to carry everything down from the cars and then we ran the shuttle to Treasure Island. From Six Mile Gap to Treasure Island is 32 miles by car and 37.8 miles by river. That is a very good float to shuttle ratio.

When we were almost ready to go, Ken put on a full wet suit. Then he put on a wet suit cap, like divers wear, to which Mike remarked, "Ken, you are starting to scare me." In retrospect, I don't think Ken was concerned at all about spilling. He was getting ready to take care of us, since he had no idea of our paddling skills or lack of them.

We started off and things went fine. There were a lot of rocks a few inches beneath the surface and hard to see, but everyone guided their boat through all the rapids. No one swam on the entire trip. We were lucky that the flow was about 1100 cfs. Ken has floated at all levels and says that below about 600-650 cfs you start scraping your boat. The tandem canoes had lots of equipment and did take on some water. But they were able to



Ken Bauer High-Braces to Douglas Rapid Eddy by Roger Faaborg

camp in more comfort. I didn't bring a lawn chair or ice chest in my 12-foot boat.

Our first camp was at Deadwater South. Up river from the campground were several large rocks in the river that reminded me of the Lake of the Woods area in Northern Minnesota. Ken and Douglas had good luck fishing, catching and releasing many Rainbow and Brown trout. I watched Ken catch a Rainbow while he was drifting in his canoe and it twice jumped way out of the water. The trout in this area of the river reproduce naturally and are not stocked. They are wild trout.

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The upper North Platte, at about 8000 feet, is lined with spruce, ponderosa, and lodgepole pine. After Bennett Peak you start to see the Cottonwoods that line the North Platte on the lower stretches near Saratoga at 7000 feet.



Gary and Garrison Osteen in Douglas Rapid by Roger

It was so foggy in the morning that you couldn't see the other side of the river. I went ahead with Ken and set up to take some pictures of the others going through Douglas Rapids.

Pickeroon Campground is just below Douglas Rapid. Below this were fewer rapids, but you still had to be alert to avoid the rocks. I had noticed that the willows and other trees near the river were white. The bark had been scraped off the trees. Ken explained that this spring an ice

"Douglas in Douglas Rapid"
By Roger Faaborg

dam formed above North Gate Canyon. When it finally broke apart, the large chunks of ice scoured the riverbank, scraping the bark off the trees.

On Saturday night we camped at another beautiful place along the river in a flat area by a rock wall. We hiked up the rocks to get a view of the campground and river.

(Picture of camp and river from rocks)

Sunday we floated past Bennett Peak and arrived at Treasure Island about noon. It was windy as it often is in Wyoming and I had to rearrange the weight in my boat, placing more weight forward, to make it easier to paddle.

It was a great float with great people in a beautiful area of the country. I look forward to doing it again next year.



May is the Month for Northgate Canyon

by Scott McDonald

After years of talking about it, Bonnie Gallagher, Bill Rivers and rafters Mike(ael) Angelo and friend Rick and I ran Northgate Canyon on the North Platte River in May.

It is a 10.5 mile run with several class 3 and one 3+ or 4 minus. The scenery is the same as the Six Mile Gap run immediately below. It was flowing at 1200 cfs when we left but the rangers said it was down to 800 cfs by the time we launched—fine for us canoes but the rafts would want more water.

Six miles into the run is Narrow Falls also called O.F.R.(Oh F*%# Rapid) on some unedited maps. Bonnie ran first and got spun around at the top and stuck in a hole. After breaking free she couldn't get back around so ran the next two drops backward, but remaining upright! Bill ran cleanly and I was knocked a bit to left by the entrance wave which sent me into the nasty center portion but remained upright. The best line is right but the first wave sends you left. This drop could be portaged over the rough carry on the rocks on the right. Although the books say scout left but we got a closer look by scouting it from the right.

Two more easier class 3 rapids at the end bring you to the take out at Six-Mile Gap and the long carry **up** to the cars. The two rafters picked up some more passengers and continued down to Treasure Island for the balance of the weekend.

So, overall you want to shoot for about 1000 cfs and if you are a decent class 3

paddler you won't have any problem. You can carry around Narrow Falls.

It had a bit more flat water than I expected but that was only bad because that famous Wyoming wind came up then.

Flotilla-Club Officers

President.....Debbie Hinde 970-669-6247

Vice Pres.....vacant

Treasurer.....Mary Peck 970-484-6309

Membership...Mike O'Brien 970-482-2623

Trip

Coordinator....Roger Faaborg 970-669-4182

Marketing.....Debbie Artzer 970-282-9135

NewsletterEric Hermann 970-482-8339

Conservation ..David Karan 970-224-5621

InstructionEric Hermann

Webmaster.....Will Golson 970-207-0101

**Check our website,
www.poudrepaddlers.org
for membership application, photos,
calendar, and much more !**

Springtime in Saratoga

By Rober Faaborg

Another year, another nice float on the North Platte between Treasure Island and Pick Bridge.

Originally this float was scheduled for May 5th. But a forecast of snow with a high temperature of 34 degrees convinced me to delay the trip one week. What a difference a week made! We floated on May 12th in sunny weather with the temperature in the 70's.

This float actually starts Friday evening in the Bar of the Wolf Hotel. Why not? It is the Poudre Paddlers Canoe and SOCIAL Club. Steve Skinner suggested we also meet in the morning for coffee and doughnuts before the float. I think we spent almost as much time drinking as floating on this trip.

The water this year was lower than previous years, with a flow of about 1800 cfs. We actually had to avoid shallow spots in the river instead of just floating anywhere. Fishermen were still catching fish as the water clarity was acceptable. We were floating before the June rise.

The trip from Treasure Island to the Hobo Hot Springs in Saratoga took about 2 1/2 hours. We saw two Bald Eagles and then, later, a nest with an adult and one or two baby Eagles. Usually, we see the Eagles north of town, but this year we saw them before reaching Saratoga. At one point we watched several deer jump across the river. They weren't swimming, but were able to touch the bottom and then jump, quickly crossing the river.

We stopped for lunch at the hot springs. The water in the hot springs pool has been so hot the last few years that you feel you will be cooked if you stay in too long. At the hot springs, we also found a note from Ray Morrison saying that he and his friend Scott are about an hour behind us and that we should wait for them at Pick Bridge.

North of Saratoga is a small wave, but no one had any trouble with it. We saw some yellow-headed blackbirds, something I hadn't seen in years.

Along the river north of Saratoga you start to see some high bluffs including Sheep Rock. The swallows make nests on these dirt cliffs and feed on insects over the water. There are thousands of swallows.

Our group got separated as some of us took a side channel that ended up going for about a mile. But eventually we all, including Ray Morrison and Scott Hansen, ended up at Pick Bridge. The float from Saratoga to Pick Bridge took about 2 hours and 10 minutes.

It was another good "Springtime in Saratoga."



The Mountain Shop Will Close Its Location after 36 Years

Sadly, after 36 years, The Mountain Shop is closing. Locally owned and operated since opening in October 1971, the store was originally founded by Phil Teeter, who retired and sold the shop to Dan Evans and Matt Evans in July 1994.

According to Matt Evans, co-owner of the shop, "It's hard to see the shop close. We have invested a lot over the years to bring special products and special staffing to Fort Collins. Because we offer brands and specialty equipment that other stores don't, our supporters will have great trouble finding the type of gear we have carried. Our whole family has worked closely with a staff of some incredible people over the years, and seeing them go really hurts. We are giving up something that has meant so much for so many over the years."

Dan Evans also says, "We are really sad to see our staff go. They are our extended family. They've worked really hard over the years to make the Mountain Shop special, to bring the best backcountry gear to town. They have great pride and personal emotion over the Mountain Shop, and are really sad to see our run in business come to an end."

The staff cites various reasons for a decline in profitability over the years. Business itself costs more. Former backpackers and kayakers are now spending more time at home or work. And big-box retailers and the Internet feature low prices instead of service.

The Mountain Shop will conduct a progressive store closing sale over the next several weeks. According to Matt, "we ask that the community take advantage of the great pricing we will offer, and to come celebrate the legacy that is The Mountain Shop."

For Paddlers, there is some encouragement: Dan intends to carry on the canoe and touring kayak side on a seasonal basis.

The Mountain Shop brand and its sideline company, Poudre River Kayak and Canoe, are for sale, and buyers are interested, according to Dan Evans. "We would really like to see the brands carry on. There is good value in a 36-year old brand name." Adds Matt, "Having brand name recognition and built-in customer base could work well for a new owner with new energy, to pick up and run with the brand(s) and start their business off strong. The

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Mountain Shop is not alone. Other notable closings include EMS, Adventure Outfitters, and Fort Collins Outdoor World, and other shops like Mountain Sports and The Boulder Mountaineer in Boulder, and Mountain Miser in Denver, as the outdoor industry has redefined itself and moved toward larger general sporting goods and big box stores.

Testimonials

Jon Prouty

Ten years ago, when I took up white water kayaking, I carried my Dagger Crossfire kayak into The Mountain Shop (16 or 17 feet long – the bow disappeared over the horizon!). In those days, outfitting was zero. After hours of hard work by the folks at The Mountain Shop, I had a new back band and carefully sculpted foam everywhere – it fit like a glove. Although the boat is history, I will remember that experience as well as their excellent advice, customer service and friendship over the years. The closing of The Mountain Shop is a sad event and a loss for our community.

Ron Stokley

A sad day indeed. Dan Evans is one of the best canoe repair guys ever! He did a fantastic job repairing my Mad River Canoe when one of the straps holding it in the rafters of my garage came loose. The stern fell to the concrete floor while the bow stayed attached! When Dan finished, it looked brand new.

Just last year I contacted him about repairing a Mad River Expedition layout Explorer for a customer at REI Boulder, where I work. The canoe was damaged in shipping. Again, a fantastic job. The Mountain Shop and Dan's expertise will be sorely missed!

Mary & Jack Detweiler

After returning the damaged canoe Cabelas had sold us, we headed for the Mountain Shop, whose staff discussed our needs and sold us a fine Mad River Explorer. Last year in Wendover Canyon, we literally bent our boat in two around a rock. I was sure it was a goner even though it snapped back and got us to the pull-out. The Mountain Shop was most helpful, thoroughly repairing the canoe. I was very sorry to hear of their closing since it has been a great local business, run by people who really know canoeing and the outdoors. We will miss them.

Mark Riffe

Life is change. The Mountain Shop has had, by local business standards, a long life, and one that has benefited many of us over the years. From my first pair of climbing shoes, and then cross country skis in the early 70s, I found my first pair of climbing shoes at the alleyway shop on West Laurel Street. From there, the shop moved to its own building around the corner on Mason Street, where I discovered paddles and floatation bags. The owner(s) and staff changed over the years but the friendliness and helpfulness of the store remained the same. The shop was, among other things, a place to learn. I'm thankful for the way that The Mountain Shop brought people together over a common joy in the adventure of the out-

Poudre Paddlers Calendar: Check the web, Poudrepaddlers.org, for details

July 19 and 26 (into August, as flows allow): Thursday Nights on the Poudre Filter Plant (Class 2) or Bridges (Class 3) Contact David Karan at 224-5621 or poudre-man@comcast.net. We will switch to Bridges as Filter Plant gets scratchy.

August 3 – 4: Glendo-Guernsey. Good learning and family trip. Rating: Class I++. Paddlers need river experience. Campout at Two Moons Campground in Glendo State Park August 3 (and 4th if you want) - paddle Saturday, August 4th. Potluck dinner for Saturday night campers. Contact Karen Roth, roth@fs.fed.us (970) 482-4360.

Sometime in August or September (stay tuned): Debbie Hinde and Eric Hermann are planning a Canoe Rodeo/Cookout – we think at Swift Ponds. Fun, wetness and safety: demos, slaloms, races—just canoe/kayak fun. Debbie: 669-6247 and Eric 482-8339.

Sunday August 12: Horsetooth Open Water Swim - Wingshadow event
Details will be added later. Basically, we need boats to follow swimmers.
Contact: Mark Riffe: mriffe@fs.fed.us or 970 224 9812.

Sunday, August 19: Blue River, Green Mountain Canyon, Class 3. Join Steve on the Blue for a very scenic and entertaining trip. Quick current, many rapids (mostly Class II with some nice III's. Host: Steve Cassells (303 684-9252) scassell@lccc.wy.edu.

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Addresses circled are behind on dues, for whom this is last newsletter.