



www.houstoncanoecub.org :: Volume 2010 :: June

## Table of Contents

Next Meeting Announcement  
Last Meeting Minutes  
New Members  
Market Place  
The Wall of Honor  
Buffalo Bayou nears National Heritage status  
Places to Paddle in the Houston Area  
A Letter to Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Jerry Eversole  
Texas Paddling Trail Program  
Texas Co-op Power Magazine: Devils River  
Builder's Corner: Hand Tools  
I Wanna Check you For Ticks

## Trip Reports:

Upcoming River Trips  
Buffalo River, Arkansas  
Trip Leader Training at Hidalgo Falls  
Lake Charlotte  
Paddling to Painted Canyon on the Pecos  
the Hard Way  
Picketts Bayou Times Two

The Waterline is the monthly newsletter of the Houston Canoe Club, Inc. The Waterline is made possible by your dues and critically depends on member contributions. Please submit items to HCC's Newsletter Editor, Linda Gorski at [LindaGorski@cs.com](mailto:LindaGorski@cs.com).

The Waterline is prepared by an on-line newsletter editor written by Fraser Baker, HCC's Webmaster.

## Next Meeting Announcement

---

**When:** June 09, 2010 @ 7:00 PM  
**Where:** Bayland Community Center, 6400 Bissonnet, Houston, Texas  
**Directions:** First driveway, North side of Bissonnet, just West of Hillcroft.  
**Speaker:** **Bob Pearson & Ron Nunnelly**  
**Speaker Bio:** **Bob Pearson:**

My family and I have lived in Houston area for 40 years and spent most of my career with Houston Lighting and Power, Reliant Energy, and CenterPoint Energy. I am married to my wonderful wife Carolyn of 45 years and we have two fantastic sons, Chris and Kyle who live in Austin. We spent many hours on the water as a family fishing and water sports have always been a part of my life. My paddling career started in scouts on the Grand



**Bob Pearson**

and Neosho Rivers in Oklahoma. I personally have been a member of the HCC for 7 years, I think, and have been a 100 mile+ paddler two times and several near misses. I enjoy expedition/tripping and river running, bird and wildlife watching more so than kayaking but have done some bay paddling on occasion (Redfish in the flats).

**Ron Nunnelly:**

I started paddling in 1954 with the Scouts, We use Grumman aluminum, over the years I have paddled all types of water, white water, big open lakes, long slow rivers, and open bay and gulf water in both canoes and kayak. I have lived all over the USA and started paddling in West Virginia, and have paddled rivers and lakes in several states and country's. I have lived in Texas off and on since 1968. In 1995 I came back to Texas for good.



**Ron Nunnelly**

Expedition paddling has become one of the things I really enjoy. Listening to the wolves calling, The bull moose coming through the woods, the bear on in the edge of the woods, all make for an interesting paddle.

**Description:** We will be presenting an overview of a trip of 10 days and 9 nights in the **Quetico Wilderness** (Canadian boundary waters), of the most incredible beauty one can imagine, to include our personal special moments and locations that were our favorites. Share the exciting moments of high winds on large open water, 4 hour portages from hell, and quiet clear nights so clear that the Milky

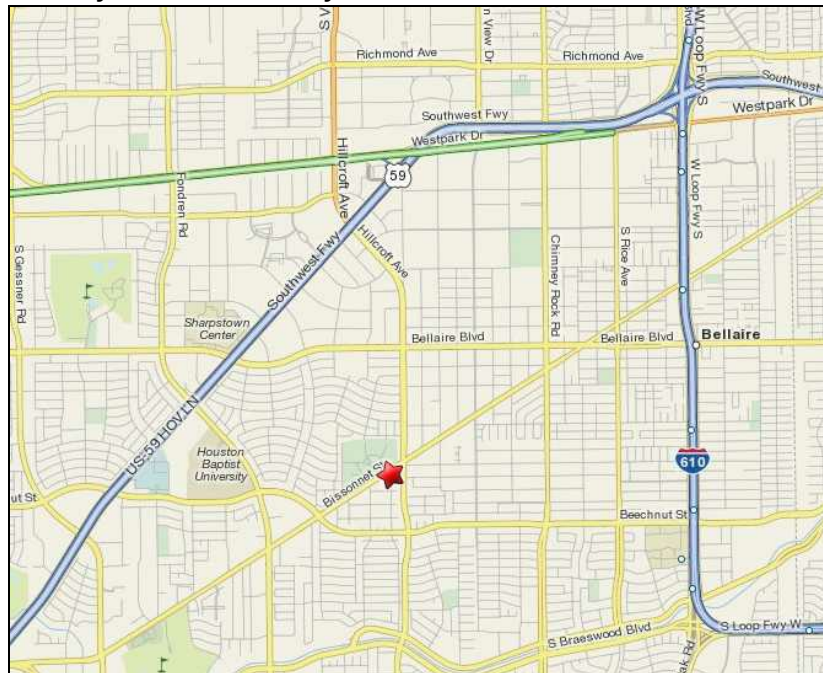
Way looked like whitewater, not to mention the wildlife. After we answer any questions of the trip we will show a short slide show of the pictures of the trip which in my eyes was a trip of a life time.



**Quetico Wilderness**



Map to Bayland Community Center:



---

Be sure to set this date aside on your calendar, then come out to support our speaker and club.

## Last Meeting Minutes

---

**Date:** May 12, 2010

**Recorder:** John Ohrt

**Minutes:** Vice-Commodore Ken McDowell called the meeting to order (Commodore Bill Grimes was out of town).

Officers and guests were introduced.

Harmon Everett gave a Safety Minute on throw ropes.

The program speaker was HCC member Natalie Wiest on Places to Paddle in the Houston Vicinity. She is working on a book on this subject.

In the absence of Fleet Captain Donna Grimes, Jim Barton gave the Fleet Captain's report.

John Ohrt reviewed the minutes of the April general meeting which were accepted as read.

Ken McDowell announced that he had sent a letter on behalf of the club to Commissioner Eversole in favor of allowing paddlers to put in and take out at the same point on the Spring Creek Greenway.

Harmon Everett gave a financial report.

Paul Woodcock discussed the ACA paddle Safe brochure with the club logo which we plan to give to local stores. Linda Gorski announced that the club plans to operate a booth at the June 5th children's Day event on the Buffalo Bayou Partnership.

Harmon as webmaster is looking at the commercial running of the club website as it is hard for us to keep it going. The HASK site was mentioned as an example.

The meeting was adjourned...

---

Please contact HCC's recorder, John Ohrt, if there are any omissions or corrections.

## New Members

---

**Member Name:** There are no new members this month.  
**Membership Type:** individual  
**Member's Family:**

---

The HCC cordially welcomes new members to our club. New members are the life blood of the HCC, so be sure to provide opportunities for all our new members to paddle by coordinating more trips.



# Market Place

---

## Items For Sale

**Item:** **Two Necky Kayaks plus accessories**

**Description:** 2 kayaks: one 13' & one 14', Necky fiberglass ultralight, red, bought fall of 2008.

- Werner Paddles ( 2 )
- Yakima Roof Car Carrier ( 2 )
- Kayak Trolley
- Wall Mounts for Garage ( 2 )

Used 4 times!

Asking \$3,000 for everything.

**Asking Price:** \$3,000

**Contact Name:** Thomas Boles

**Contact Phone:** 832-286-6437

**Contact Email:** tb\_gb@yahoo.com

###

**Item:** **Squamish Touring Kayak and accessories**

**Description:** Squamish touring kayak by Current Designs, 15' 8", yellow, with retractable skeg and tight sealing rubber hatches.

Photos and manufacturers specs: [Click here.](#)

Paddle:

- Werner Little Dipper carbon fiber paddle

Accessories:

- Ubolt on deck for locking
- Wheeled cart
- Bilge pump
- Cockpit cover for storage/travel
- Coastal Tour spray skirt
- Inflatable PFD
- Sealline Kodiak Window dry bag with purge valve (15L)
- Solid braid tow line (black 3/8")
- Safety kit, including whistle, adjustable kayak paddle float
- Kayak wall-hanging system

Transport system:

- Yakima 66" round bar pair, cylinder locks, low-rider towers, Landshark saddles (4)
- Boatloader bars
- Lockable security cable
- Bow and Stern tiedowns, each with self-locking ratchet type tightender
- 2 tiedowns for kayak body (10 ft)

Everything in perfect condition. Kayak used only 4 times.

Located in Houston, Texas.  
**Asking Price:** \$1,900.00 firm for everything (Cost new \$3,200)  
**Contact Name:** Bonnie New  
**Contact Phone:** 541-490-9919  
**Contact Email:** bnew1@live.com

###

**Item:** **Sawyer Oscoda Solo 13 Canoe**  
**Description:** I have more photos which I can forward to anyone interested. It is stored in my garage. It seems to be a rare, desirable boat.  
[Photo 1](#)  
[Photo 2](#)

**Asking Price:** \$650  
**Contact Name:** Ken Proctor  
**Contact Phone:** 281-480-1268  
**Contact Email:** kenneth.proctor@sbcglobal.net

###

---

## Items Wanted

**Item:** **Found: Paddle**  
**Description:** Found caught underwater in a thorny mesquite tree strainer, just around a reedy blind corner, on the Pecos River, Mile 4½ from Pandale, May, 2010. If you lost one out there, contact me with the description to prove it's yours and claim it.  
**Contact Name:** John Rich  
**Contact Phone:**  
**Contact Email:** JohnRich3@sbcglobal.net

###

---

Please contact the Newsletter Editor to post any items that you may have for sale or desperately need.

# The Wall of Honor

by  
Charles Zipprian

*This is another of Charles' stories inspired by the ancient Indian rock art which can be seen via a canoe trip on the lower Pecos River in Texas.*

~~~~~

Spar threw down his load of wood in disgust. It had been raining solid for five days and every piece of wood he found was thoroughly soaked. His mother handed him a slice of rabbit meat, which had been roasting over the open pit. His little brother took the wood and stacked it around the fire pit allowing it to dry before being placed into the fire. Spar's family of four had lived in this partial cave every summer for all of his eleven years.

Spar walked over to stand next to his father. He could tell his father was very worried about the river. Even with the main body of the Pecos more than a half-mile away, they could hear the water roaring. Their cave was in a side canyon, where the limestone had been eroded overtime by innumerable floods to form an area sheltered by the resulting overhang of rock. The cave was positioned so that the opening faced the southern stars. The cave was deep with a slight slope that dropped down quickly to the canyon floor. During most times of the year, their canyon was a dry wash. Only in heavy rainfall would they get a short-lived stream running down the middle of the canyon.

Spar and his father stood at the water's edge. With all the recent torrential rain, their canyon stream was running over twenty feet deep. Spar was looking downstream when he felt his father's hand on his arm. Following the direction his father was pointing, Spar could see a tree come tumbling through the maelstrom of water. The water had eroded the ground around a cedar tree, eventually exposing the roots. The cedar was washed away in the constant rolling flood.



**Mortar hole**



**Pecos flooding**

Spar's father motioned for them to go back into the cave; they all had their evening duties to perform. Spar had to grind down mesquite beans using a three-inch oak limb. Placing a

handful of beans into the mortar hole, he would lift the oak limb and drop it onto the beans. After many repetitions, the beans would be ground into course flour. Spar's mother would add water to the flour making a paste, which could be baked on a smooth stone over the fire into flat bread.



Spar's little brother, Cub was to fill the old deep mortar holes with river water. The limestone that was used to grind down the beans over hundreds of years would become several feet deep forming a nice water container. Cub would fill the hole with river water. When the canyon was dry, the hole could hold the clear cool river water over night. When the river was running high and muddy like now. The muddy water could be poured into the hole and after many hours would separate, leaving clear water on top. Once the water was drank, the mud would be scraped from the bottom and the process started over again.



**Water hole**



**Sharpening rock**

Spar's father would work on his atlatl darts and points. His mother would cook and sometimes help his father rubbing bone fragments into working knives or needles.

Tonight with the pouring rain, darkness came early. They didn't have firewood to waste so everyone turned into their sleeping furs when the fire burned down to coals.

Spar woke to Cub's yelling and water splashing in his face. Struggling to separate his sleeping furs from his feet, Spar felt a wall of water slam into him. Just as he gained his feet, he felt something hard slam into his mouth knocking him backwards. Pin wheeling his arms to gain his balance, Spar felt arms grasp for him and then fall at his feet. Feeling his feet come free of the sleeping furs, he planted them against the rushing water. Grasping in the darkness, he felt for the body wrapped around his legs. Clutching a pair of arms, he pulled them to a standing position. He could now hear his brother gasping for breath and trying to call his name. Standing there together, they were afraid to move due to the vulnerable footing.

Spar felt the water rushing just below his knees. In the darkness, he could not tell how far down the cave he had been washed. Over the noise of the river, he thought he could hear his father yelling their names. Taking a tentative step in the direction of his father, he felt his foot give way. Falling face first into the water, he splashed around trying to catch his footing again. He could feel Cub struggling next to him. A flailing arm would strike his face bringing dancing lights to his eyes. Flinging his left arm forward, Spar caught onto a strong branch and grasped it tight as he continued to slide along the ground. Cub slapped him again and Spar reached out grabbing Cub's arm. Pulling his brother closer, Spar hung onto the branch. He realized to late the branch was moving with them. Spar pulled until he was able to encircle his right arm around Cub just as he felt the ground drop away below them.

Struggling through the night, Spar held onto the tree branch as it floated down the canyon. Several times during the night they came close to being jarred from the tree when it came into contact with a solid substance. Spar woke to the morning light fighting through the clouds and rain. In the light he could see Cub a few feet away wedged into a fork of the tree. The large pine tree they had been clinging to had become lodged on a outcropping of rock.



Grabbing Cub, he pulled and scrambled until they were both under a slight overhang on the cliff face. For the next several hours they slept.



**Pine tree ledge**

Spar woke to see his brother staring out over the ledge. Looking around he estimated the ledge to be no more than seven feet long and jutting out ten feet from the cliff face. The water level was slowly dropping. It was several feet below the ledge now and still roaring strongly. The pine tree was gone, with the drop in water it's position on the ledge shifted allowing it to roll back into the water and float away.



**Lion's cave**

Turning back to the overhang the two boys notice a small opening to one side. Cub climbed into the opening telling Spar there was tunnel that angled up. With the low light and darkness coming on the boys explored only a short way into the tunnel before coming back to their ledge. The boys being cold, tired, and hungry stayed the night against the cliff wall protected from the steady drizzle. In

the morning, both boys slithered up the tunnel until they came to another opening that branched off into additional tunnels.

Each boy took a tunnel to explore, they soon realized that the larger tunnels all lead back to the cliff face. They came out onto a large ledge shelter with several smaller cave openings. Walking the length of the shelter, they found a year old mule deer with two broken front legs. Taking a large rock Spar was able to end the deer's suffering while Cub collected driftwood lodged in the smaller caves.

Using some chert as their father had taught them they soon had a fire going and were roasting a portion of the deer. Spar took a deer's antler and began scrapping it against the rock face, forming a crude knife. Having eaten, the boys lay back to rest for a while. Spar awoke to see Cub staring down the ledge. Signaling for Spar to remain silent, Cub stood and walked to the south end of the ledge. As they moved closer to the edge they could hear a low mew coming from over the edge.

Lying on their stomachs they slowly moved forward until they stretched themselves over the edge and were able to look down. Below the ledge they could see where run off water from their ledge had formed an oval pit into another limestone ledge below. With the river so high up the cliff face, river water was lapping at the pit's rim. The angle of the sun cast a heavy shadow into the pit. They could still hear a mewling coming from the pit but were unable to see into the shadows. Stretching out over the ledge they tried to peer deeper into the pit. A mass of screaming fury launched itself up from the bottom. The puma's front claws landed two feet below the pit's rim as the cat slid back down into the darkness.

The boys scrambled back from the ledge with their hearts pounding in their chests. Neither boy had ever been close to a puma. To see those snarling fangs only a few feet away, to feel the growl vibrate in their chests was to understand the power of the spirit that lives in the puma.

As the day waned, they smoked the remainder of the deer while tracing the boundaries of their ledge. They tried to scale the cliff walls but the steepness along

with the constant rain made the walls to slick to scale. Neither boy entertained the idea of trying to swim with the river being this high and rough.

The next morning they awoke to the sun peaking over the horizon and the mewing of the puma. As the sun rose in the sky, the boys worked their way to the pit. Chewing on some of the smoked deer meat, they peeked over the edge. They could now see into the bottom of the pit and they were greatly disappointed in the site. The mighty puma was shivering from exhaustion. From head to tail the puma's fur was coated with mud. Looking at the scene in full light, they were able to understand how the puma had been washed over and trapped while chasing the mule deer. The pit was more of a funnel with a small hole in the bottom that was keeping the pit drained of water. Spar could see the deep claw marks made on the pit's walls. A couple of the claw marks were just under the pit's rim. Catching sight of them, the puma pulled back it's ears and snarled at them.



**The puma**

Cub stood and walked away while Spar stayed to watch the puma. He watched the cat slowly circled the bottom of the pit. Several times the cat stumbled as it continued its walk of frustration.

Cub came back with a slab of bark and several lengths of cane. After a bit, he was able to fashion them into a ladle with a handle made of canes lashed together. Taking care he was able to dip the bark into the river and then lowering it into the pit. The scoop of bark would only hold a few spoonfuls of water. At first, the cat snarled at the bark but after a few minutes the dehydrated cat lapped up the water. The boys worked the ladle for the next hour getting water to the cat. Using his new antler knife, Spar sliced up the deer's remnants and lowered the pieces to the cat.

By evening, they could see the level of the river was slowly receding. After feeding and watering the cat the boys watched as the cat curled up and slept. The boys were fascinated with watching the cat. They spent hours studying as the cat paced the pit or slept. For the next couple days, they spent more time supplying water and deer remains to the cat.

On the third day, the river level had dropped to where they could no longer reach the water with the ladle. Taking several lengths of cane, the boys bundled them together to form a crude ladder. The boys were now able to scramble up and down the cane ladder. From the lower ledge, they were able to ladle more water to the cat. The puma no longer snarled at the boys as they came to stare at him. Often they would try to sneak up on the cat, only to find the cat looking up to the exact spot where they peeked over the rim.

Searching the lower ledge they finally found a passage that lead around some rock outcropping and to the top of the cliff. In the evening, the boys discussed how to get back to their parents. They also discussed what to do about the cat. In the end, they decided to drop their bundle of cane into the pit allowing the cat to climb out as best he could. Feeding the Puma the last of the deer remains and ladling more water, the boys prepared to go home in the morning.



Walking along the plateau the boys made there way north. For two days they followed





**The wolf**

the twists and turns of the river. On the first day, they caught a prairie hen and on the second they trapped a rabbit. On the morning of the third day, they were crossing a ravine when they saw the first wolf. These wolves roamed the prairie following the great buffalo herds and every member of the tribe feared them. Spar had listened to tribe members as they talked about how a pack of wolves over a

dozen strong had attacked a herd separating out a lone straggler. The wolves would attack from many different directions, working in unison to take down the animal, some wolves being decoys while others attacked from behind.

Keeping an eye on the wolf, the boys began to climb out of the ravine. They traveled for another two hours before they saw the second wolf and shortly after they saw the third and fourth. The boys started searching for a tree or secure spot where they could hold off the wolves if they attacked. Each boy had a strong staff they could use as club. Seeing a tall oak tree off to the left the boys turn in that direction. Walking only a few feet they discovered a fifth wolf standing between them and the tree. The boys continue to walk to the tree getting closer to the wolf. Raising their staffs they yelled at the wolf trying to force it to give way. Almost too late Spar realized the wolf in front was a decoy distracting them from the wolves sneaking up from behind. Spinning around Spar was in time to whack a wolf that had come to within five feet of Cub. The boys were now encircled by six wolves, one they had never even seen come up on them.

Standing back to back, the boys faced the wolves as they circled around them. Ever so often one of the wolves would charge forward and then stop when one of the boys would raise his staff to strike. As long as the other boy faced the remaining wolves, no wolf could charge from the rear. This tactic went on and on for over an hour. The boys kept angling toward the big oak, but were eventually pushed away from it. The constant stress of vigilance was taking its toll on the boys. Cub was beginning to stumble when they had to shift positions quickly.



**Wolf**



**Wolf**

The wolves changed tactics, two wolves charged forward distracting both boys as a third launched itself at Cub's ankles. Midway through the leap a streaking bundle of fur enveloped the attacking wolf. Sharp piercing fangs closed on the wolf's neck as hind claws reached up and raked down the soft under belly of the wolf. Mortally wounded the alpha male crawled off into the bush. The remaining wolves turned to stare at the snarling Puma.

The alpha female rushed in to snap at the cat's flank. The cat twisted around and landed on top of the female burying its fangs into the wolf's neck just back of his head. The two animals rolled at the feet of the boys in a fury of growls. The remaining wolves looked onto the rolling mass of fur, searching for an opening to attack the cat and avoid the boy's clubs. Spar kept a vigil on the wolves just in case they decided there was an opening. Cub raised his staff and swung down with all his might hard across the back of a wolf concentrating on the cat. The staff

broke in two as is connected on the wolf.

The Puma stood holding the dead female's neck in its jaws. The three remaining wolves scampered off into the brush not liking the new odds. Releasing the wolf, the cat stared at the two boys and then moved off into brush with hardly a sound. The boys skinned the three dead wolves and had an amazing story when they finally meet up with their parents.

In Oso canyon just off the Pecos River, there is an old cave wall where pictographs have been painted to honor the spirit of the Puma. The pictographs are a scene frozen in time 4000 years ago. The scene is of a Puma launching itself against an alpha male wolf to save the lives of two boys. If you look closely on the wall, you can see other mighty gray wolves in the background sneaking forward.



**Oso Canyon pictographs**



The characters and events in this story are fictitious. The author does not intend any similarity to real persons, living or dead. No animals were hurt or injured in the making of this story.

To learn more about the wolves of west Texas:

<http://wildworldofwolves.tripod.com/id37.htm>



**The author, Charles Zipprian**

# **Buffalo Bayou nears National Heritage status**

**April 28**

**by**

**Bob Arthur**

From the "Memorial Examiner":

A resolution that would make a 25-mile stretch of Buffalo Bayou the first National Heritage Area in the state was introduced Tuesday by U.S. Rep. Gene Green (D-29th District).

"We have seen wide support from public community and private industry for this distinction," Green said. "There isn't a more fitting place in Texas to receive the honor."

When passed, the designation will allow federal funds totaling as much as \$1 million a year for the next 10 years to be spent on the 25-mile-long area and provide tourism benefits.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison introduced the companion legislation in the U.S. Senate.

Green and Hutchison originally introduced the Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Study Act, passed in 2002, which directed the Department of the Interior to undertake a study evaluating the area on eight criteria required for the designation.

"The Buffalo Bayou has played an important role in the development of Texas, helping Houston become the fourth largest city in the United States," Hutchison said.

J. Tynan "Ty" Kelly, president of the Bayou Preservation Association, said his group is grateful to the lawmakers, because it was founded in 1966 specifically to preserve the important waterway.

"BPA views this designation as an important step in the long effort to advance the public interest in protection and restoration of Houston's bayous and waterways and protection of the Houston area environment," he said.

Buffalo Bayou was initially a jumping off point for Texas settlement. It was also the site of the Battle of San Jacinto, in which Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836.

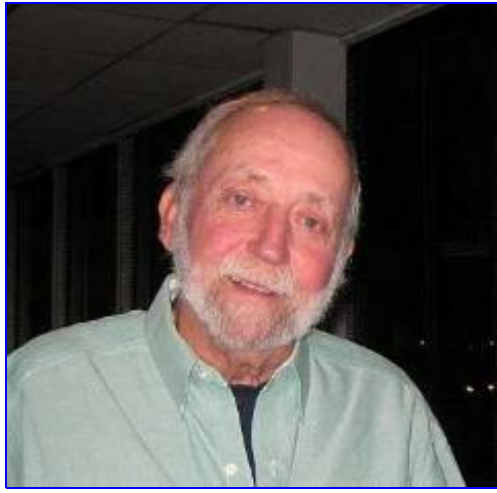
~~~~~

To see the story online, along with the accompanying canoe photos, go to:

[www.hcnonline.com/articles/2010/04/28/memorial\\_examiner/news/me\\_bayou\\_funds.txt](http://www.hcnonline.com/articles/2010/04/28/memorial_examiner/news/me_bayou_funds.txt)







**Bob Arthur**

# Places to Paddle in the Houston Area

by  
**Natalie Wiest**

The following “sampler” highlighting Places to Paddle in Houston comes from a wonderful presentation that Natalie Wiest gave to the Houston Canoe Club on May 12. The information will eventually become part of the book that Natalie is writing for Texas A & M press.

According to Natalie, this sampler is what she suggests to novice paddlers who would like to see if they enjoy canoeing at all, without driving a great distance or tackling difficult water. She did not include Buffalo Bayou but that’s another obvious choice.

The “A”, “B”, etc. designation after the place name identifies the web site (listed below) that offers information about that particular area.

A sampler for the Houston area:

1. Armand Bayou. Use the put in at Bay Area Park.  
See A, B, E below
2. Champion Lake.  
See B below
3. Lake Charlotte. Use the access at Cedar Hill Park and find your way into Mac Bayou, up to Mac Lake. There is water here at almost every season of the year.  
See A, B below
4. Oyster Creek. This is a several hour float, from Stratton Ridge put-in to Oyster Creek Municipal Park; or put in at Stratton Ridge and paddle upstream, then back to the boat ramp.  
See B below
5. Double Bayou. Put in at Double Bayou Park and run the shuttle to Beason Park or paddle up and downstream from Double Bayou Park.  
See A, B below
6. Clear Creek. Put in at Countryside Park, paddle upstream and back to the launch site.  
See B below
7. Colorado River: Columbus Loop. This is a little farther afield, but always a pleasant paddle.  
See C below

Web sites for more information:

- A. Bayou Preservation Association: [Paddle Trails Guide](#)
- B. Houston Canoe Club: [“Places”](#)
- C. Lower Colorado River Authority. Colorado River Trail: [Guide for River Users](#)
- D. Texas General Land Office: [Beach and Bay Access Guide](#)
- E. Texas Parks and Wildlife: [Texas Paddling Trails](#)

[Click here](#) for an Excel spreadsheet of the place names and mileages for river stretches. Consider it “general guidance” and some kind of proof that there are LOTS of places to paddle within an easy day’s drive of Houston.

The spreadsheet has two tabs – the “Table of Contents” being one you should

ignore as it's an early version of the contents for that version of manuscript submission. However, I did modify it on the "HCC Edit" tab to get an approximation of distances. It's fairly crude too and nowhere near a finished product but gives a pretty good idea of how many miles are available, where. The miles are more accurately described as "approximations": if the much earlier Texas river guide had mileages, I used them, and they're probably quite accurate. Others I had to guess on. In any case, I think it shows how I come up with 1500 miles for a total of paddleable waterways within a day's drive from Houston, about 125 miles to the farthest one.



**The author, Natalie Wiest**

# **A Letter to Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Jerry Eversole**

**May 4, 2010**

**by  
Ken McDowell**



**Houston Canoe Club  
P.O. Box 925516  
Houston, Texas, 77292-5516  
[www.houstoncanoeclub.org](http://www.houstoncanoeclub.org)**

May 4, 2010

Harris County Precinct 4  
Commissioner Jerry Eversole  
Parks Department  
22540 Aldine Westfield Road  
Spring, TX 77373

RE: Jesse H. Jones Park  
Canoe Launch 'Rule' allowing a launch or take out, not both.

Dear Commissioner Eversole,

Please let me introduce the Houston Canoe Club, Texas oldest and most active paddling club. Our members share a joy of paddling and a strong sense of promoting safe paddling skills. Founded in 1964, the HCC includes folks who canoe and kayak paddling all over the Texas, and the rest of the country, but most especially, near our home. Spring Creek is one of our most popular venues. I led four trips myself along the Greenway in 2009 alone.

We are writing to you on behalf of our membership who would like to see a rule change regarding use of the canoe launch at this park and other parks if the same rule applies.

Currently, this park 'rule' allows a person to launch a boat OR take out, not both. This rule adds extra gas mileage, time and difficulty accessing the creeks.

For instance, if two people were to launch from Jones Park, they would have to take two cars and leave the boats (unattended) by the water at Jones Park, drive both cars to the take out point at the Highway 59 site and leave one car there, drive back to the launch and park the first car. Then go paddling to the take out at Highway 59, load up the boats and drive back to Jones Park and pick up the other car. All this instead of being able to park, launch and take out at Jones Park in a single vehicle!

This rule results in needless driving and greatly reduces use and access of the creeks. It would be much easier and make much more sense to be allowed to launch and take out from one site. More importantly, the only other reliable take/out

put in is at the Hwy 59 overpass. That site requires folks to carry their boats several hundred yards to the river bank, making it hazardous to those not in peak physical condition. Our paddlers include kids, seniors, and a few disabled folks and we would like them to experience the joy of paddling the Spring Creek Greenway.

We would greatly appreciate the rule change to allow launch and take outs from the same site, particularly at Jones Park. This is a favorite destination of many paddlers belonging to our membership and we are able to introduce many new people to the joys of being on the water and the recreational opportunities available along the Spring Creek Greenway.

Sincerely,  
Kenneth McDowell  
Vice Commodore



**The author, Ken McDowell**

# **Texas Paddling Trail Program**

**May 13, 2010**

**by**

**John Bartos**

HCC member John Bartos shares news of two stories in the Houston Chronicle featuring paddling adventure. Click on the titles below to view the stories:

[\*"Texas Paddling Trail program paves the way"\*](#)

[\*"Canoe/kayak trails provide plenty of options"\*](#)



**John Bartos**



# Texas Co-op Power Magazine: Devils River

May, 2010

by

Jody Horton

The May edition of "Texas Co-op Power" magazine features a story about canoeing the Devils River of Texas, titled *"Not for the Faint of Heart: Devils River"*. This magazine is a monthly newsletter for rural electric cooperative customers.

The Devils River story is five pages in length and contains some great canoeing photos. The story begins:

*"Wild and remote, the Devils River melds the biological crossroads of the Hill Country, Chihuahuan Desert and South Texas brush country as it navigates some of the most rugged landscape in the state. Spring fed, with water clear to emerald green, it is known as one of the purest rivers in the U.S. Winding from its headwaters in Sutton County west of Sonora, it flows south through Val Verde County before emptying into Lake Amistad near the Texas/Mexico border. The river is approximately 90 miles long, including stretches when it flows underground. But only the last half, south of Baker's Crossing, is reliably navigable.*

*"The roar of falling water grows louder as our canoe glides to the edge of the drop. Our eyes are fixed on a narrow channel. Clear, deep and a few feet wide - just wide enough - it cuts between two small stacks of whitewater. We point the bow to the middle of it, dig in hard with our paddles and gain speed as we near the lip..."*

To read the complete story online, click here (pdf file): [Texas Co-op Power](#), and go to page 10.



# Builder's Corner: Hand Tools

by  
**Milton "Skip" Johnson**

**Tool** *n.* An implement or machine used to do work or perform a task.  
(Webster's New Riverside Dictionary).

In this case we're talking about hand (or non-powered) tools used to build boats.

Hand tools can be broken down into three general categories.

1. Tools used to measure.
2. Tools used to cut.
3. Tools used to hold or clamp.

## Tools used to measure

The photo shows measuring tools used around my shop more or less arranged in order of importance left to right. A 24" flexible steel ruler is the most versatile (or flexible) of my measuring tools. Good to measure with, handy as a straightedge both with pencil or to make a cut with a utility knife. Measuring without marking doesn't accomplish much so some number two and harder if you can find them pencils are in order. Not shown is the pencil sharpener bolted to the column behind the saw. A standard tape measure is pretty much essential for the longer stuff. A small carpenter's square is handy for a lot of little layout task and doubles as a guide when crosscutting with a skill saw. The larger square serves in working with larger pieces. The level is used occasionally but I don't find it to be an essential tool. Likewise the vernier caliper in the background is handy for checking diameters and thicknesses at times but if it disappeared I wouldn't run out and get a new one. On the other hand I've got two flexible steel rules just in case.



**Tools used to measure**

All photos by Skip Johnson

## Tools used to cut



**Tools used to cut**

Once again tools are arranged in order of importance or preference, left to right. Cutting starts out with the ubiquitous utility knife already mentioned in a previous article is a preference for premium bimetallic blades, they are sharper and last a little bit longer than standard blades. Scissors, any reasonably good quality scissors will do the job until you decide to cut some Kevlar or other aramid fibers. For these fibers the choice is either a separate dedicated pair of high quality scissors, never to be used to cut fiberglass or

carbon fiber cloth, or anything else for that matter. Some people have had good luck with some brands of inexpensive tin snips but I've got no experience with

them. The single edge razor blade in the background is handy for the jobs that require that last little bit of sharpness. Also handy for scraping. Once upon a time the only saw really suited to trimming wood strips for a stripper canoe was a dovetail or gents saw. These saws are rarely seen today they have been replaced by the 'Japanese pull saw' type blades. Usually with 17 or more teeth per inch and laser cut sharp teeth, even inexpensive versions do a fine job for wood canoe building. The hacksaw and coarser tooth saw in the background aren't used that much in canoe building but they are used regularly around my shop.

### **Tools used to hold or clamp**

I've never heard a boat builder claim to have enough clamps or even more improbably too many. The most versatile of the bunch is the standard c-clamp. The 2" size fits the bill for most things canoe wise and I've got 30 or so. A few larger 4" to 6" size rounds out the c-clamp inventory. Right behind the c-clamp in utility are spring clamps and I've got a number of these. Sometimes the best way to hold things in place is just some tape; the painters tape has the advantage of usually not leaving any residue when it's pulled off. Probably the most cost effective of clamps is the PVC ring. An inch and a quarter or so wide (vary width for different clamping pressure) cut from regular schedule 40 PVC pipe and then slit, they are a mainstay of my clamp inventory, I've got a five gallon bucket full of the things plus a bucket of 3" and 6" rings. Occasionally a wider grip is called for and a bar clamp of some sort is in order. Not shown but often used, particularly when stripping the ends of a canoe is some nylon twine wrapped around end of boat and tensioned up with truckers hitches, wedges or Spanish windlasses.



**Tools used to hold or clamp**



**Vise**

Not really necessary for boat building but handy for many things is a 4" or so vise. Mine shown here is on a homebrew stand with a circular concrete base so it can be tilted up a bit on edge and rolled around to be used at best advantage.

### **Errata**

That covers a basic overview of hand tools; I've accumulated a lot of stuff over the last 50+ years, but in this article tried to cover the regular stuff that I use on a regular basis and would replace in a heartbeat if lost or broken.



**The author, "Skip" Johnson**





# **I Wanna Check you For Ticks**

**by**  
**Edited by Linda Gorski**

I'm sure all of you have heard the song "I Wanna Check you for Ticks". As most of us who love the outdoors know, it's not just a popular country and western tune but an important lesson for outdoor enthusiasts. The article below is adapted from a health bulletin that I recently received.

~~~~~

Tick season has arrived and we all need to be aware of the risk of tick bites and be vigilant in protecting ourselves from Lyme disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Lyme disease is a rapidly emerging infectious disease and is the leading cause of all insect-borne illness in the U.S. Over 28,000 confirmed cases and 6,277 probable cases of Lyme disease were reported nationwide in 2008.

Lyme disease is a multi-stage, multi-system bacterial infection that is most commonly transmitted by a tick bite. Individuals who are bitten by an infected tick can become infected with the Lyme disease bacteria. Ticks will attach themselves to any part of the body, but prefer body creases such as the armpit, groin, back of the knee and nape of the neck. Ticks can bite year-round; however, peak tick season is April through September in the Northeast, and November through April on the West coast.

The first symptom that most people experience is a red, expanding rash that generally starts as a small red spot at the site of the tick bite. Over a period of days or weeks, the spot grows larger and forms a red rash that is shaped like a circle or an oval. The rash may resemble a bull's eye as it sometimes appears as a red ring that surrounds a clear center area. The rash can range in size from that of a dime to the entire width of a person's back. As infection spreads, rashes can appear at different sites on the body.

The rash is often accompanied by other symptoms which can last from a few days to a few weeks. These symptoms include fever, headache, stiff neck, body aches and fatigue. Although these symptoms may be similar to those of common viral infections such as the flu, Lyme disease symptoms tend to continue longer or may come and go.

If the infection is left untreated, the majority of those affected will develop recurrent attacks of painful and swollen joints that last for a few days to a few months. Lyme disease can also cause neurological complications including inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain (meningitis), temporary paralysis of facial muscles (Bell's palsy), pain or weakness in the limbs, numbness and impaired muscle movement. These complications may occur weeks, months or even years after an untreated infection. Memory loss, difficulty with concentration and a change in mood or sleeping habits have also been associated with Lyme disease. Less commonly, individuals who have not taken antibiotics may develop heart or other problems weeks, months or even years after infection. Eye inflammation, hepatitis and severe fatigue may also occur, although none of these symptoms are likely to appear without other Lyme disease symptoms being present.

Lyme disease may be difficult to diagnose because many of its symptoms mimic

those of other disorders. Additionally, not all individuals with Lyme disease will develop the characteristic bull's eye rash, and many may not recall being bitten by a tick because ticks are so small and their bites are usually painless. For individuals who have Lyme disease symptoms but do not develop the distinctive rash, their healthcare providers will rely on medical history and careful physical exams for diagnosis. Laboratory tests to identify antibodies to the bacteria may be used to help confirm a diagnosis. These tests are most reliable a few weeks after an infection, after the body has had time to develop antibodies.

Individuals treated with antibiotics in the early stages of the infection usually recover quickly and completely after three to four weeks of oral antibiotics. Antibiotics that are commonly used for oral treatment include doxycycline, amoxicillin or cefuroxime axetil. Individuals who experience symptoms with neurological or cardiac involvement may require intravenous treatment with medications such as ceftriaxone or penicillin.

Fortunately, the cause of Lyme disease is known and the disease can be prevented. The best protection against Lyme disease is to avoid contact with ticks. Studies have shown that an infected tick normally cannot begin transmitting the infection until it has been attached to its host for approximately 36 to 48 hours. If avoiding areas where ticks are likely to be is not possible, the best line of defense against Lyme disease is to perform a self-examination after potential exposure and remove any ticks before they become engorged (swollen) with blood. Removing them promptly can help prevent infection.



According to the CDC, a tick should be removed from the skin as soon as possible. Instructions: Use fine-tipped tweezers to firmly grasp the tick very close to the skin. With a steady motion, pull the tick's body away from the skin and clean the skin with soap and warm water. The dead tick should be thrown away with the household trash. If the tick's mouthparts remain in the skin, do not be alarmed. Once the mouthparts are removed from the rest of the tick, it can no longer transmit the Lyme disease bacteria. Avoid crushing the tick's body. If the tick is crushed accidentally, clean the skin with soap and warm water or alcohol. Never use petroleum jelly, a hot match, nail polish or other products to remove a tick. To keep ticks off of the skin, the CDC recommends the following tips:

Know where to expect ticks. Ticks live in moist and humid environments, particularly in or around wooded or grassy areas. Individuals may come into contact with ticks during outdoor activities around the home or when walking through vegetation such as leaf litter or shrubs. Hikers should walk in the center of trails to avoid ticks.

Use insect repellent. Adults should use insect repellent with 20 to 30 percent DEET (chemical name: N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) on exposed skin and clothing to prevent tick bites. A ten percent concentration should be used on children. Clothes and other fabrics (tent walls, mosquito nets, etc.) can be sprayed with permethrin which kills ticks on contact. When applied to clothing by aerosol or trigger spray, permethrin provides protection which lasts up to two weeks or two washings, whichever comes first. Permethrin should not be applied directly to skin.

Wear protective clothing. Individuals should wear long pants, long sleeves and long socks to keep ticks off of the skin and wear light-colored clothing to spot ticks



easily. Pant legs should be tucked into socks or boots and shirts should be tucked into pants in order to keep ticks on the outside of clothing.

Perform daily tick checks after being outdoors. Individuals should check their bodies for ticks after being outdoors. A hand-held or full-length mirror is recommended so that all parts of the body can be viewed and ticks can be removed immediately. Special attention should be paid to following areas - under the arms, in and around the ears, inside belly button, back of the knees, in and around the hair, between the legs, around the waist

If you believe that you may have Lyme disease, it is important that you consult your healthcare provider for proper diagnosis. In general, the sooner that treatment begins following infection, the quicker and more complete the recovery.



## Upcoming River Trips

---

### HCC Trips:

**Date:** Saturday, May 29, 2010

**Title:** [Memorial Day - Sabine River](#)

**Inclusive Dates:** May 29 - 31

**Description:**

This is a float trip down the lovely, sandy Sabine River. The Sabine River forms the border between Texas and Louisiana. It is a true wilderness camp-out-of-the-canoe trip. After unloading and shuttling Saturday morning, we will get on the river. We will camp on a sandy beach for the night, then Sunday morning, pack up and go further down the river to another sandy beach to camp. Monday, Memorial Day, we will go on to the take out, pack up and leave.

Some of us will camp under the TX Hwy 63 / LA Hwy 8 bridge Friday night, May 29.

Everyone who signs up who has never done this trip before will get a packet that will include maps, suggested gear and other useful information. This trip is a total of 28 miles over 3 days.

**Skill Level:** **Beginner:** Familiarity with basic strokes and can make the boat go straight on flat water typically experienced on Armand Bayou, can maneuver the boat on slowly moving water, is aware of basic river safety and can confidently avoid hazards and strainers frequently experienced on Texas' Colorado River or the Buffalo Bayou at a modest flow rate.

**Contact:** Contact Philip and Tisha Matticks by phone 713-826-5705, or by email [ptmatticks@att.net](mailto:ptmatticks@att.net).

####

**Date:** Sunday, May 30, 2010

**Title:** [Burnham's Ferry/Colorado River/ 175th annual](#)

**Inclusive Dates:** May 30

**Description:**

13 miles on the Colorado River, between LaGrange & Columbus, TX. A trip to visit and possibly explore the Burnham's Ferry area where the Texas Army crossed in 1835 on or about March 17 of that year.

Car camp at the take-out if desired, with possible group feed/dutch oven cooking. A bit of star gazing, some spittin, some whittling, a bit of staring at the fire and possible general carousing. Put-in and take-out are both on private property and there are no facilities at all at the campsite, meaning its primitive. No need to haul camping gear on the river as vehicles will be left at the take-out area.

**Skill Level:** **Beginner:** Familiarity with basic strokes and can make the boat go straight on flat water typically experienced on

Armand Bayou, can maneuver the boat on slowly moving water, is aware of basic river safety and can confidently avoid hazards and strainers frequently experienced on Texas' Colorado River or the Buffalo Bayou at a modest flow rate.

**Contact:** Contact Bob Arthur by phone 713-416-0017, or by email [rwarthur@oplink.net](mailto:rwarthur@oplink.net).

###

**Date:** Monday, May 31, 2010

**Title:** **HCC Memorial Day Paddle**

**Inclusive Dates:** May 31 - Monday

**Description:**

This Memorial Day Paddle is the tenth (minus 2 due to high water) of a very successful, well attended and enjoyable 6-mile day trip on the Colorado River near Columbus Texas. Columbus is some 70 miles west of Houston on Interstate-10.

Experienced HCC paddlers will be along to give paddling tips and to provide all sorts of information to newbies about paddling. We will paddle a few miles, stop for a break on an island, then resume for a few more miles, then stop at a beach for lunch. Be sure to bring a lunch and a desire to make new friends and renew old ones. Watermelon and a cake will be provided. The trip will end by about 2pm.

There is no trip size limitation, but be sure to contact the trip coordinator prior to Memorial Day.

**Skill Level:** **Beginner:** Familiarity with basic strokes and can make the boat go straight on flat water typically experienced on Armand Bayou, can maneuver the boat on slowly moving water, is aware of basic river safety and can confidently avoid hazards and strainers frequently experienced on Texas' Colorado River or the Buffalo Bayou at a modest flow rate.

**Contact:** Contact Fraser Baker by phone 713-202-2503, or by email [flbaker@sbcglobal.net](mailto:flbaker@sbcglobal.net).

###

**Date:** Saturday, June 05, 2010

**Title:** **CANCELED: Hill country paddle and Kerrville Folk Festival**

**Inclusive Dates:** June 5 - 6

**Description:**

Let's plan on paddling a couple of days in the hill country and for those that want, an evening of music at the

**Skill Level:** **Novice:** Confidently execute basic strokes plus ability to manage high wind and high waves typically experienced on Lake Charlotte or Sheldon reservoir, can maneuver the boat on moving water plus familiarity with eddy turns, ferrying and surfing in Class 2 rapids typically found on the San Marcos and Guadalupe Rivers. Able to read the river and identify the eddy line.

**Contact:** Contact Donna Grimes by phone 713-728-1645, or by

email [donnapaddles@gmail.com](mailto:donnapaddles@gmail.com).

###

---

## **Other Club Trips:**

# Buffalo River, Arkansas

April 23 - May 1

by  
John Rich

On April 23rd, four Houston Canoe Club members joined up to car pool together to the Buffalo River in northern Arkansas, for a week-long expedition paddle covering 71 miles. The four members were Ken Anderson, Dana Enos, John Rich and Paul Woodcock. Joining up with us in Arkansas was Ronnie Fetzko from Tallahassee, Florida.

The Texans joined forces to ride together in Dana's shiny new car, pulling Paul's well-traveled but solid canoe trailer. Everyone threw some money into a common kitty fund for shared expenses like gas, campgrounds and shuttle fee, and off we went.



**Loading boats in Houston**

All photos by John Rich  
unless otherwise noted



**Gear in trailer**

*(Click on the thumbnail images to display a large version in a separate screen.)*



**Flooded tent pad**

The drive was about 12 hours total, of which we did 8 hours the first day, camping overnight in a lovely Arkansas State Park called DeGray Lake. That night, a torrential downpour ensued, creating problems for everyone, no matter how good you thought your tent's rain fly was. The tent pads at the campground had nice little concrete walls around them to contain the soft pea gravel for comfortable tent sleeping. However, when you combine that much rain with a concrete wall, you get... a swimming pool! The only thing that

saved me was a sheet of plastic I used as a liner on the inside of my tent, to keep water from coming up through the tent floor.



Dana has a good organization system for his camping gear, choosing to put a lot of different items each in their own small dry bag. This eliminates the problem of digging through one large jam-packed bag trying to find a single small item. The only problem with this idea, however, is remembering in which bag you placed the item.



**Dana's colorful dry bags**

With about 4 hours of driving on the 2nd day, we arrived at the Buffalo River, at the site of an old General Store in the tiny town of Gilbert, Arkansas, where our outfitter would provide the shuttle service for us. The hour and a half drive for one vehicle was \$150. Other put-in locations are cheaper. They were also diligent at checking water conditions for us with the local National Park service folks, filling out a permit, and informing us of the park rules.

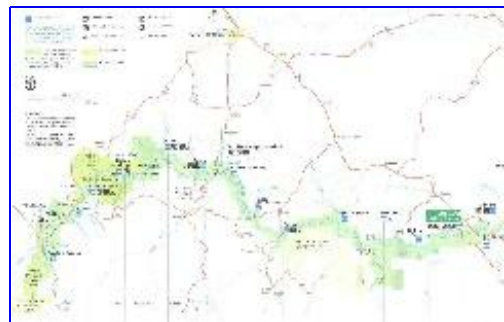


**Outfitter canoes**



**The outfitter's logo**

Congress made the Buffalo River a "National River" in 1972 to preserve it in its natural state. Thank you for that! It flows through the beautiful Ozark Mountains, and is chock full of Class I and Class II rapids, providing plenty of entertainment, with little danger. The banks of the river are lined with bluffs as high as 440 feet, composed of sandstone, limestone and dolomite. In addition to the cliffs, there are waterfalls, springs, caves and forests, as well as historic log cabins and cemeteries. It's an absolutely gorgeous river that you simply must put on your to-do list. It reminds me a lot of west Texas rivers, except that you have lots of trees instead of cactus.



**Buffalo River map**

At certain times of year, the river is said to be inundated with hordes of paddlers, so you may want to time your visit to avoid those. Our week on the river saw only one large group - a batch of teenagers on a multi-day field trip from a private school. I wish I had grown up in a school like that. There are convenient "pocket parks" every dozen miles or so, providing convenient places to camp overnight with pit toilets and water, if you wish to use them. We chose primitive camping on the riverbank for the quiet and solitude, but stopped at the parks to replenish our water supplies, so we wouldn't have to carry an entire week's worth in the boats.

We wanted to put-in at Ponca, but the water level was reported to be too low there. So we started downstream a few miles at Steel Creek, which can be seen on the left side of the map. From there, we would travel 71 miles downstream to our take-out at Gilbert, on the right side of the map, where our vehicle would be waiting for



US.

After our shuttle driver dropped us off at the boat ramp put-in, some drama began. Since it was late in the day, our intention was to camp overnight at the put-in, and start the river paddling the next morning. But the campground was about a mile from the boat ramp, and access to the river from the campground was difficult. So we decided to camp across from the boat ramp - there was no indication that this was not allowed. So we unloaded our boats and gear, the shuttle driver departed, and we started making camp. That's when a volunteer park ranger arrived, and informed us that camping is not allowed there. We had no means to relocate, since our vehicle was now gone. So we had no choice but to go ahead and pack our boats, get on the river, paddle out of sight around the bend, find a gravel bar and camp on the river. This made for a late and tiresome first day.



**The put-in site**



**On the river!**

With the deluge of rain the previous night, we were very concerned about a possible rising water level. Some local folks told us it wouldn't be a problem, but we were skeptical. Not knowing the terrain and how water flows in that area, most campers played it safe and climbed a bank to camp on high ground in the woods. John stayed on the gravel bar, up against the riverbank. Besides, there were thorns up there in the woods that could puncture a comfy inflatable sleeping pad. A cairn of rocks was built at the water's edge to keep an eye on the water level. As it turned out, the river did rise overnight, but only about one inch!



**Camp, Day 1**



**Water level cairn**

Arising on Day 2, we began our first "real" day on the beautiful river. The water levels are more shallow at this upper end, to grow deeper as you travel downstream. Scraping bottom was a bit common at first. Numerous times we had to step out of our heavily-laden boats to float them over riffles. The deeper channels were easier to see because they were a beautiful emerald green in color.



**Paul in riffles**



**Ronnie approaching bluff**

We stopped for a side-hike up to a place with the quaint name of "Hemmed-in Hollow". Three-quarters of a mile up a creek bed is the highest waterfall between the Appalachian and Rocky Mountains, at 220 feet high. The waterfall location is so tall, and the woods so dense, that you can't stand back far enough to get a photo of the entire waterfall from top to bottom. So what you get below is a photo of the water pouring off the top, and a second photo of the splashdown pool at the bottom. You could walk around and stand in that cave behind the waterfall, but actually standing underneath the falling water was a very slippery proposition due to algae growing on the wet rocks.



**Hemmed-In Hollow Waterfall**



**Splashdown!**

And this began the cycle of the trip: Paddling for a couple of hours in the morning, stopping to rest, paddling to lunch time, lunch, paddling a few more hours, rest, finding a campsite after 4 pm, making camp, dinner, campfire and conversation. So went six wonderful days and nights in the wilderness.



**Paul weaving new seat**

Paul's woven cane seat broke through on his canoe, so he made a temporary patch with duct tape, and that evening he pulled out a spool of cord and ingeniously wove himself a new one.







**Ken alongside rock bluff**



**Dana & Ken grab a nap**



**John in water cave**



**Scenic campsite**



**A campfire was built every night except the first and last**



**Butterflies gather to lap-up something sweet**

critters. The river was full of fish, but didn't seem to have any real monster-size fish. But there were a



**Turtles**

number of people floating along in canoes, fishing for dinner every night with great success. Turtles were plentiful, often perching themselves up high on logs sticking out of the water, and performing high-dives back into the water when you got too close. I had the pleasure of watching one turtle through the crystal clear water sort of half-walk and half-swim along the bottom underneath me.



There were buzzards everywhere, often circling in thermals in great numbers, and gliding alongside the cliffs so close that the



**Buzzards circle overhead**

bird and their shadow almost merged. There were egrets, blue herons, kingfishers and plenty of others which I can't identify. Ducks would be disturbed by our presence and fly downstream to escape, only to have us arrive again forcing them to repeat the maneuver. The kingfishers are smart enough to circle around behind us through the woods, so that they are done with our intrusion in just one try.

An otter was spotted running alongside the river and hopping over rocks. And by gosh, they even have elk up here! We were not fortunate enough to spy a real elk, and had to settle for enjoying their tracks in the sand. In the elk track photo at right, a 3" chap stick is used for scale to show the large size of the tracks, compared to deer.



**Elk track**

And then there were the blood-curdling screams from some kind of animal fight, that kept occurring over and over again, all night long. We tried to imagine what kind of creatures could be making such a hellish noise, and we guessed that it was a couple of bobcats. I slept with a paddle outside my tent door to use in defense in case werewolves invaded our campsite in the middle of the night. Our Florida paddler, Ronnie, seems to have now identified this sound as foxes. You can listen to a similar example, here: <http://www.angelfire.com/ar2/thefoxden/sounds.html>. Select the "fox\_territory\_call.wav" file and listen to it.

Then there was the nocturnal whippoorwill bird at one campsite that started his mantra at sunset, and went on all night long until sunrise, over and over again, driving us all nuts. You would think they would go hoarse after a while!



**Canoe below bluff**



**Dana floats on emerald green water**

Quite by chance, our last night's campsite ended up being along a public river access point by a bridge, just four miles from our take-out point. This prompted Dana to come up with a brilliant idea: Instead of everyone laboriously packing boats in the morning for a short 4-mile run, he pointed out that all we really needed was one boat to go to the take-out to pick up the truck, and bring it back to the campsite. That way, we would save packing and loading all that gear into our boats, and could put it directly into



the trailer for the trip home.

Dana, Paul and John all wanted to complete the trip to the take-out, leaving Ken and Ronnie behind to guard the gear. And once again, to simplify things, all three of us decided to go in a single boat. Since my tandem canoe was the largest, with an 1,100-lb capacity, we piled in and started paddling: Dana in front, John in back, and Paul sitting uncomfortably on a thwart. It was a bit awkward coordinating three paddlers, and despite the nearly 100 years of combined paddling experience, we still managed to unintentionally eddy-out once. Go figure. But we did manage to cover the four miles in just 50 minutes!

Once the truck was driven back to the campsite, the next trick was to figure out how to get five boats on a four-boat trailer. That was a short-term situation, whereby we needed to get Ronnie back to her vehicle which was at the put-in site. Once there, Ronnie put her boat on her own vehicle, and we straightened out the boats on the trailer for the long drive home to Houston.



**Three in One!**

Photo by Ken Anderson



**Five in Four!**

This was another fantastic trip, with amazing scenery and experiences, with incredible people. I feel fortunate to be able to experience such events, and I'm grateful to Dana Enos and Louis Aulbach for inviting this one-time stranger along for a canoe trip, several years ago, based upon only a couple of chance random encounters at west Texas campsites. They've started me along on a new path in life that provides me with many wonderful adventures and friendships.



**Group photo: John, Dana, Paul,  
Ronnie, Ken**





**The author, John Rich**



# **Trip Leader Training at Hidalgo Falls**

**May 1 - 2**

**by**

**Harmon Everett**

Ken McDowell, the HCC Vice Commodore, convinced the Executive Committee into using the HCC education fund to pay for Patti Carothers to teach a class on leading paddling trips. I signed up immediately. Open to all HCC members, all we had to pay for was food if we wanted Patti to cook, too, and sleeping in the bunkhouse. If you camped, that part was free.



**The group getting together Saturday morning**

All photos by Harmon Everett



**Looking at Hidalgo Falls.  
It is running at about 8,000 cfs.**

The location was going to be Hidalgo Falls, near Navasota. Sweetest batch of rapids and falls on the whole Brazos. The TRPA owns a stretch right at the falls, and if you pay the \$25 membership fee and sign up and support TRPA, you can get access to the falls year round - and agree to help maintain it. Its about an hour and a half from Houston, and well worth it.



**A closer look at the rapids**



**Ken and John looking at the rapids**

Patti sent us assignments and reading lists ahead of time. What goes into planning a trip, how do you evaluate whether the participants have the skills necessary for the type of trip you are going on? What should you consider in terms of equipment and safety and timing, and tides and emergencies and everything else.



**Patti giving the tour of the property, and showing Mike and Robert some of the fine points of the Falls.**



**Continuing the tour through the secret bamboo trail**

Some people went up Friday night and had what was reportedly a fabulous bonfire. I showed up Saturday morning to meet Patti and Russel and Sophie and Ken and Ken and John and Mike and Rae and Christy and Robert and Joe. Patti took us on a tour of the property, including the long drop put-ins to the river. This is the Brazos, after all, and a 20 foot drop from the bank to the river is, um, normal. And some of the nicer and nastier vegetation. The bamboo, some very healthy looking poison ivy, and some rare Ladies Breath orchids.



**A closer look at the rapids**



**There is a chute that some otherwise intelligent kayakers occasionally use to slide down the bank and into the water. Use at your own risk.**

Then we sat around the tables outside and started talking about planning better trips, or planning trips better and keeping disasters to a minimum and responding better to emergencies while on trips. We shared experiences, what our researches had revealed while trying to prepare for our part of the assignments, and memories of how previous trips had gone right, and how they had gone wrong. There was a vast amount of experience in the group. We discussed hypothetical trip plans, and what to say at the pre-trip safety talk, and how to respond to changing conditions and emergencies. Then we got to play in the river.





**There are tomato cages around the property protecting some rare plants. This is evidently a rare orchid, unfortunately not in bloom at the moment.**

**This was the classroom. It was rough.**

Russell and Christy had their play boats and they dashed about in the surf in the middle of the rapids. Mike pushed his sit-on-top out into the surf as often as possible. He dunked a couple of times and is considering whether he needs another boat or not(don't we all). I ventured out into the swells and tumbles as often as I dared, but while Russell's and Christy's boats looked like they were having fun, my boat felt like it was hanging on by its teeth and fingernails. I definitely need a play boat for this stuff.



**Christy and Russell out on the water**



**Michael playing in the surf**

It was forecast to be rainy all day, but was instead sunny and mostly clear. We then got together after supper and continued discussing equipment and first aid, and more trip plans. Everybody should take some basic first aid classes, and there are several wilderness survival first aid classes out there, Wilderness First Aid (WFA) and Wilderness First Responder (WFR) which I intend to look into as soon as possible.



**Christy playing in the surf**



**The surf was a little scary**

Sunday morning again was clear, and we continued on discussing water conditions and the difference between river trips and coastal trips and some of the pitfalls of each. Wind and rain and snakes and natural and man-made obstructions and what to do when otherwise responsible adults decide to go off and do something stupid on their own on a trip you have some legal liability for. Then we went down to the river again, and practiced rescues. If someone is getting swept down river, you should have a throw bag with a rope in it, to throw to them. It's harder than it looks. Throw it at their head, and give it way more juice than you think it could possibly need. When I was playing the victim, it took my rescuers 5 different throw bags to get one to me, and I was almost swept down the rapids. Ken J demonstrated some of the ways to ride a boat for a rescue. We practiced towing, and how to get back into your boat by yourself if you fall out of your boat when you are by yourself (and what the heck are you doing out by yourself in the first place?)



**Sophie taking her boat out**



**Christy looking like she is having lots of fun**

Then we went for a debriefing and discussion of what we thought was good in the class, and what could be improved. Tired, sore, sunburned and exhausted, we then left for home. Can't ask for a much better time. Can ask for many more of them. Oh, right, this class was to help promote more trip leaders leading more trips. Got it.



**Russell out in the surf**



**Christy, Russell and Michael discussing their next moves**



**The class discussing throw bags**



**Practicing throw bags**



**Christy giving Ken a tow, while Patti and Sophie watch**



**A different way to help carry a person after a mishap**





**Ken helping Sophie rig a paddle float sling, to help get back in your boat if you fall out when by yourself**



**The author, Harmon Everett**



# Lake Charlotte

May 8, 2010

by

Joe Coker

On Saturday, May 8, 2010, 19 intrepid paddlers in 17 boats braved the wilds of Lake Charlotte. We met at Cedar Hill Park (the put-in and take-out) at 9:00 am and were underway by 10:00 with me in the lead, John and Cindy Bartos in the middle and Dave Kitson riding sweep.

Conditions were great... slightly overcast skies, temps in the 80's, light breeze, water level 8.5 feet.

The chosen destination for the day was Mac Lake... roughly a 10 mile, 5 hour round trip. The first leg took us due west across Lake Charlotte to Mac Bayou. From there, it was an easy float on favorable current to Sulfur Cut which we explored from top to bottom. As usual out there, we saw a couple gators... ne very big mama basking on the shore... probably protecting a nest since she held her ground steadfastly in the face of all us gawking tourists!



**One big alligator!**

Photo by Joe Coker



**Lunch break on a sandy beach.**

Photo by Joe Coker

From there, we headed down and around the bend into the Trinity River. The current was light, so we paddled up-stream about half a mile to a nice sandy beach at the river bend for a lunch break.

Fortunately we were able to enjoy a good spell of peace and quiet before some raucous power boaters descended upon us with stereos blaring. Sad, but oh well... guess I can remember those days. It was about time to move on anyway, so we left them to their partying and headed back downstream to the Sulfur Cut and up toward Mac Lake. On the way, we slipped briefly into a small "secret cut" on the left... rarely visited, so it's one of the wildest, most secluded spots in the area. Finally we opened-out into Mac Lake. The water was high enough for us paddle to the very top end which we did before turning around and heading home. Mac Lake doesn't get much traffic either, so as usual, it was serene and beautiful... the vegetation fully leafed-out and covering most of the bad scars left by lke.

The return trip was fairly leisurely and uneventful. Out-flow current on Mac Bayou was lighter than it could have been, but still strong enough to tax already tired bodies. The final leg back across Lake Charlotte to Cedar Hill was nice and flat. Fortunately, we never saw a hint of the forecasted 15-20 mph winds.

Everyone was off the water by about 3 pm...



pretty much on schedule. We packed up fast and enjoyed some nice cold watermelon... and no, it wasn't spiked with vodka, but the thought did arise! Great group! Fun day!

**A beautiful day to be out on the water!**

Photo by Joe Coker

Trip length: 10 miles.

Participants: Joe Coker, Sereniah Breland, Lois Wright, Charles Zipprian and family (party of 5), Mike Pollard, Philip and Tisha Matticks, Dave Kitson, Shannon Wilson, Lydia and Roy Cruzen, Rea Ingles, John and Cindy Bartos, and Colleen Connelly.



**The author, Joe Coker**



# **Paddling to Painted Canyon on the Pecos the Hard Way**

**May, 2010**

**by**

**Charles Zipprian**

Saturday morning, May 15, we met at the boat ramp off of highway 90 just outside of Comstock, Tx. Due to work commitments, my son Daniel and I were not able to join Louis Aulbach's party for the trip down the Pecos River from Pandale which had begun on May 12. We decided to meet them by going upstream from Comstock. Of course, this was met with a lot of wide-eyed skepticism. Talking to a few people, no one had heard of anyone attempting to go upstream against the many rapids on the Pecos.

Terry Burgess and Kathleen have a canoe outfitted with a 4-hp outboard motor. We tied our two kayaks to his canoe and headed upstream at a little over 5-mph. The trip took us from mile 61 to mile 48.5 per Louis's book, crossing under the Hwy 90 and Railroad Bridge. The risk of hidden rocks prevents Terry from going much more upstream past mile 48.5. We untied the boats and headed upstream. Travel time from boat ramp to mile 48.5 was just over two hours.

When we moved up the rapids we began to classify the rapids in three ways:

- Water volume - as low (ankle depth), medium (mid calf) or high (knee) volume.
- Water Speed - fast or slow moving.
- Length of Rapid - long or short.

In every rapid we looked for the medium to low depth, slow moving, and shortest routes. +3 rating.

A rapid with high volume, fast moving, and long would be given a +9. The ratings are my own invention and meant as a way for me to classify the difficulty we had in moving heavy boats upstream.

All through this section of the river, the flat water was fairly easy to paddle upstream with the water measured at roughly 150 CFS.

The first rapid we encountered is called "Last Rapid." This 100 ft rapid was passed on the north side with low to medium water, medium speed, and was a short length. +4

Rapid. Traversing this 200 ft rapid was done on the south bank. The water was low and we were able to move upstream with little difficulty avoiding most of the faster moving water. +3

Big Rock Rapid. Traversing this 150 ft rapid was done on the north side. We hugged the north bank where the water volume was low and we had to drag the boats over several rocks to move upstream with slightly more difficulty. +5

At slight bend in the river, the water was pinched down and fast moving. While this area is not classed as a rapid, it did require us to exit the boats and tow them upstream. The water level was not high and walking was moderate. +3

Weir Dam Rapid. Traversing this 300 ft rapid was done on the south side. The water was low and we were able to move upstream with little difficulty. Moving up

the south side we were able to move through the bamboo and avoid most of the faster moving water. This was the longest of the rapids we encountered before the dam. +5

The last rapid before Weir Dam is only a few yards from the dam. The dam has to be crossed on the north side. Even though it's only a few yards, the water depth is greater than six feet, therefore you have to get back into the canoe/kayak for the few paddle strokes or swim across.

Weir Dam crossing with heavy boats was difficult but possible. Daniel and I handled each boat together.

Rapid number six by our count was at mile 46. Traversing this 350 ft rapid was done on the north side. We hugged the north bank where the water volume was low and we had to drag the boats over several rocks to move upstream. +5

This was the last rapid before the Painted Canyon class III-IV rapid. Paddling from eddy to eddy we arrived at Painted Canyon rapid six hours after moving 4.5 miles upstream. The equivalent time going downstream was two hours.

We camped that night at Painted Canyon mile 44.3, moving the empty boats upstream with no difficulty. That night we had a good downpour, drenching all the equipment. We slept in late and allowed most of the equipment to dry before heading up to Lewis Canyon.

On this mile stretch we encountered a short section of fast moving water, but were able to paddle through the section.

Rapid number seven by our count was at mile 42.7. Traversing this 250 ft rapid was done on the north side. We hugged the north bank where the water volume was medium. While there was no major rock to deal with, walking the length in medium water was difficult. +6

Rapid number eight, while this area is not classed as a rapid, it did require us to exit the boats and tow them upstream. The water level was not high and walking was moderate. +4

Long Chute Rapid mile 41.9 Traversing this 1,000 ft rapid was done on the north side. We hugged the north bank where the water volume alternated between medium and high and we had a long walk through the water. +6

Rapid number ten, the water was shallow and fast moving. While this area is not classed as a rapid, it did require us to exit the boats and tow them upstream. The water level was not high and walking was moderate. +4

Three Rock Rapid mile 41.6; We spent a good hour trying to figure how to traverse this 700 ft rapid. The north side of rapid had high water and volume. The middle was deep water and impassable on foot. A rock shelf could be seen sticking out from the south side. Low water, many small rocks, and in many spots tall cane blocked the south side. The rapid had a dogleg curve at the upstream end. The upstream end of the rapid had high fast moving water over large rocks on the south side. Walking out to the edge of the rock shelf, we saw a small opening in the cane at the upstream end allowing us to bypass the high fast moving water. We hugged the south bank pulling boats over the small rocks. We walked the boats through the cane into a small pool of shallow water and were able to access the upstream flat water. Total time to pass through this rapid was close to hour and



half. +7

Rapid number twelve - The water was pinched down and fast moving. While this area is not classed as a rapid, it did require us to exit the boats and tow them upstream. The water level was not high and walking was moderate. +4

Mile 41 – We camped downstream of the Ledges Rapid.

Traveling upstream from Painted Canyon to second night camp spot was a total of 3.3 miles and took six hours.

Knowing we still had two major rapids to transverse, Waterfall Rapid and Lewis Canyon Rapid plus two other known rapids, we made the decision to travel back to Painted Canyon the next day.

Traveling the 3.3 miles downstream trip took one hour and fifteen minutes. For the third night of camping we again stayed at Painted Canyon. That night, we experienced a class VI thunderstorm. During the night, the Painted Canyon rapid rose between 12 – 18 inches in height.



**Charles (right), with son Daniel  
(left), on the Pecos River**

Photo by John Rich



# Picketts Bayou Times Two

April 11 and May 16, 2010

by

Natalie Wiest

I've been intrigued by the Trinity River basin for some time and was finally able to accomplish a route I'd looked at for quite a while – and twice at that, 5 weeks apart, and with very different water conditions.



**Ken Anderson on Picketts Bayou, full to the banks.**

Photo by Natalie Wiest



**Map of Pickett's Bayou area**

Map by Natalie Wiest

My trip leading instincts have occasionally gone awry, so success in the trips reported here is largely due to Dave Kitson's exploring part of the route some time earlier and taking me through the challenging turns to the Trinity River from Picketts Bayou. Ken Anderson was bold enough to run the entire stretch with me my first time through it, then came back for a second run with more of our HCC buddies.

Ken was the only one brave enough to try that first run. We did this on April 11, 2010 with the Trinity River gage at Liberty (USGS 08067000) reading 16.5 feet. We were both paddling our yellow sea kayaks, meeting at Cedar Hill Park to drop one vehicle for the takeout, and driving to Champion Lake/Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge/Picketts Bayou boat ramp for the putin. That's about 30 miles of shuttle for 9 miles of river, but well worth the drive.

The river bottoms were wearing spring green, and dotted with white Mexican plum (and probably mayhaw) trees in full bloom. Kingfishers were numerous, and there were little blue herons, great blues, snowy egrets, and a whole chorus of birds in the woods. The streams were bank-full and as we made the turn from Picketts Bayou into the Cutoff, we had a strong current to paddle against on our route to the Trinity. We were passed in the Trinity by a game warden in a motor boat who told us she had putin at Picketts Bayou and was herself headed for the Trinity, with a possible takeout at the Sulphur Cut which we also would paddle en route to Mac Bayou and thence to Lake Charlotte and Cedar Hill Park.



**Narrower reaches of the bayou with cypress trees' knees completely covered by water.**

Photo by Natalie Wiest

The Cutoff also features a low water, movable control gate dam. At this level, it is only a big ripple and only 6" of the tallest pipe at the structure was sticking out of the water. Contrast this with the photo taken 5 weeks later when you can see the

whole structure.



**Believe it or not, here is the low water swing gate dam -- on the tip of a pipe sticks up out of the water to right of picture.**

Photo by Natalie Wiest



**Here's what the low water, swing gate dam device looks like when you can actually see it. Swing gate is on the left where you can't see it against the wall.**

Photo by Natalie Wiest

Our reward for paddling against the strong upstream current was a flush flow (i.e., a lot of current) downstream on the Trinity. My guesstimation on mileages here are 5 miles for the Picketts Bayou/Cutoff segment; 3 miles on the Trinity; and 1 mile for Sulphur Cut/Mac Bayou to Lake Charlotte and Cedar Hill Park. We saw some motor boaters also on the Trinity, and two other kayakers at the Sulphur Cut; and a bunch more fishermen at the Cut. They warned us about an over-“friendly” huge gator upstream on the Cut. Ken just had to see how close he could get before the gator noticed – and the answer was, not close at all. Beware – we don’t know if the gator is truly aggressive, but it sure approaches boats and we didn’t wait around to find out. I suspect fishermen had been throwing fish guts to the gator and it was expecting a free meal from any boat.

Emboldened by my success and not having gotten lost on the first try, I offered up the same route as a more official HCC trip and 6 intrepid souls joined me for the May 16 trip.



**Harmon, Sophie and Ken setting off at the boat ramp. Ken is paddling his red canoe this day.**

Photo by Natalie Wiest

That included Ken, this time in his red canoe, Harmon Everett, Sophie Lopez, Paul Woodcock, Ellen Shipman and Marilyn Kircus. This time the water was much lower, about 6.5 feet on the same Trinity River gage. What a difference that made, as you can see on the photos. We saw even more birds on this trip, all of the above plus many white ibis (they nest in the region) and my favorite – the prothonotary warblers flying yellow above the water and calling from the trees. Northern parulas added their trills and we could have spent a great deal longer just birding the place if we hadn’t had all those miles to travel.

We met at 8:30; ran shuttle and were on the water by 10; and off by 4 including this time two rest stops with swim time for Marilyn and me to cool off as it got quite warm AND we had an upstream wind on the Trinity without the strong downstream current. Next time I’ll remember to warn the rest of the folks that water time is to be enjoyed IN the water as well as on.

Sand bars and tree roots were both much more evident this time. And we got to see all of the





water control structure above water. It was a delightful day out there on the water – I wish you had been along too.



**Now you can see what a true vertical bank looks like - think of this when you're considering stepping out of your boat into water of unknown depth even right next to the bank.**

**Probably there was a sand bar covering these roots when the trees first grew.**

Photo by Natalie Wiest



**Harmon, Ken, Paul and Sophie enjoying lunch on a sandbar overlooking the Trinity River close to where the Cutoff has joined in.**

Photo by Natalie Wiest



**The author, Natalie Wiest**