

Easy Current News

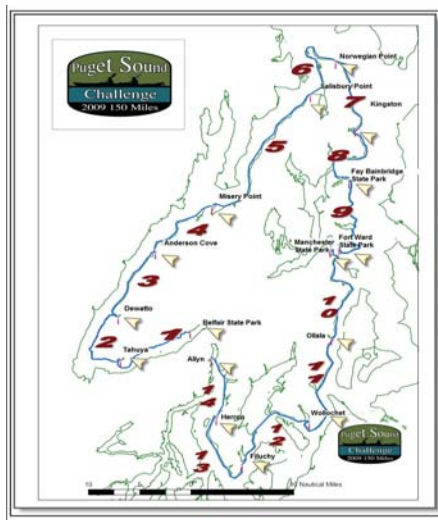
The Washington Water Trails Association Quarterly Newsletter

Autumn 2009

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Puget Sound Paddling Challenge Crosses Finish Line



The challenge? A 150-nautical mile route, divided into fourteen legs and suitable for beginning paddlers. It was a challenge “to capture your imagination and spirit of adventure” as environmental reporter Christopher Dunagan wrote in a blog prior to the kickoff paddle, April 4th.

The route began at Belfair State Park and ended at Allyn Waterfront Park, a deceptively short drive between the two via land, or, as Duna-

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Greater Columbia Water Trail Update

There is a vast network of people working to develop the Greater Columbia Water Trial (GCWT). The Port of Chelan is partnering with WWTA, numerous state and federal agencies, the National Park Service, county governments, public utility districts, cities along the route, Native American Tribes, non-profit land trusts, outfitters and local paddle and boating clubs.

When completed the GCWT will encompass 500 + miles of water trails. From the Tri-Cities in south central Washington, and north all the way to the Canadian border, it will span over 400 miles on the Columbia River as well as passage on two of its tributaries: 18 miles on the Similkameen River and 82 miles on the Okanogan River.



Along its journey the GCWT passes through 11 counties and over 8 dams.

The trail is being worked on, and is most easily described, in four sections or segments: the northeastern is Lake Roosevelt (by the Idaho border); the northwestern segment runs along the Similkameen and Okanogan rivers, from Oroville to the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia rivers near Brewster, Washington; the central segment runs from Grand Coulee Dam to Rock Island Dam; and, the southern segment runs from Rock Island Dam to the Tri-Cities.

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Easy Current News is published by Washington Water Trails Association

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

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From Board President Don Crook

To paraphrase what someone once said, "Planning is bringing the future into the present so we can do something about it" and for WWTA this means a Strategic Plan. Specifically, a plan to review the organization's Mission Statement, recognizing the current environment we will be working in over the next two to three years, and a determination of our goals to realize the mission over that period.

The WWTA Strategic Plan is an evolving document that continually checks status, benchmarks progress, and affects change as required. It is also the guiding tool for management, policy, recruitment, and WWTA advocacy. Over the years, the WWTA board, staff, and members have put much time and serious thought into ensuring WWTA's Strategic Plan is the best it can be. Now it is time once again to plan for the future.

This year the WWTA Board and Executive Director dedicated their annual retreat to a discussion and planning process with an updated "Draft Strategic Plan" that will soon be available on the WWTA website for your review. Please remember, the planning process is most important. To elicit continued membership involvement is arguably the best way to grow WWTA.

Each part of the Strategic Plan will have a committee (focus group), headed by a WWTA board member charged with finalizing that portion of the draft plan. Seven committees, seven subject areas: Executive; Financial; Nominating; Trails and Public Access; Membership and Advocacy; Development and Organizational Excellence; Ad Hoc/Events. Four committees will be open to volunteers. (See pg. 6)

WWTA member input is essential for the future direction of the organization. Please contact WWTA staff to sign up to be on a committee, or two. This is your chance to share your ideas and thoughts, and to help guide the course of WWTA as an organization.



At the WWTA Open House...

WWTA is happy to welcome Exped LLC as WWTA's newest business member! In the photo, Julie Anderson is deep in conversation with Ted Steudel as is Judy Moyer with Kaj Bune; Ted and Kaj are both with Exped LLC.

WWTA thanks the Smilin' Scandinavians for lively music, board members for supplying scrumptious food, and Lorne Jacobson for generously donating the wine!



From Executive Director Julie Anderson

As the last official WWTa event of the year, the Open House at the REI Flagship Store was a pleasurable way to meet with a gathering of friends. As 2009 draws to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank all who participated and volunteered over the past year!

I'd also like to share some of what is planned for 2010. WWTa will be expanding its' stewardship training program to recruit additional WWTa members to become site stewards. We are very excited to be reopening 2 sites (Laughlin Cove and Salisbury Point) and to be opening 3 new sites (Guillemot Cove, Anderson Point, and Pilot Point) on the Kitsap Peninsula. WWTa will continue with annual work parties at Blake and Blind Islands. Other work party information will be forthcoming as soon as we have scheduled additional site visits and determined the specific needs for these sites.

WWTa's first event in 2010 will be the Annual Sea Kayak and Canoe Winter Seminar. It will be held at South Seattle Community College on February 6th. Please check the WWTa website for class topics and directions.

WWTa's SEA Kayaker Program will be returning next summer along with another Leave No Trace Training. Work is ongoing on the Greater Columbia Water Trail and preliminary work on revising and updating the Lakes-to-Locks Water Trail will be starting soon. As always, WWTa will continue its essential work with state and federal agencies to conserve and protect existing sites.

As WWTa staff hours have decreased over the past months, your participation and support has become more important than ever. With the valued assistance of volunteers WWTa will continue to follow its mission. WWTa will be counting on members and volunteers to help steward and advocate for water trails in several ways. Please consider volunteering for a work party or joining one of WWTa's strategic planning committees. Together we will continue to protect and expand public access to Washington waterways.

Thank you so much for your membership and sustained support of Washington Water Trails Association! We are all looking forward to a bright 2010!



Volunteers for Office Help!

Have time to share? WWTa needs your help with a variety of tasks in the office.

Whether you want a one-time gig or an ongoing opportunity to contribute, your time at WWTa will be put to good use. Located in the Historic Good Shepherd Center in Seattle's Wallingford neighborhood, you'll find plenty of parking, good company, and beautiful views.

For more information, contact us at volunteer@wwta.org.

Thank you!

Updates on Cypress Head, Pelican Beach and Strawberry Island...

WWTa has shared a long-standing partnership with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in providing and maintaining campsites and water access points along the Cascadia Marine Trail (CMT) and other waterways in Washington State. The Cascadia Marine Trail sites at Cypress Head, Pelican Beach, and Strawberry Island are critical to this trail and seasonal closures negatively affect the value of the Cascadia Marine Trail.

WWTa understands that DNR has been struggling with extensive budget cuts and has been working with them to find a solution to this situation. At Cypress, DNR is looking to expand volunteer efforts, seek out donations, and to better manage and monitor use levels. These efforts may help them maintain the remaining facilities in the future.

WWTa has been in talks with DNR staff, and letters have been written. The ultimate goal is to re-open the Cascadia Marine Trail campsites at Cypress Head, Pelican Beach, and Strawberry Island for year-round use. WWTa and DNR have been discussing a stewardship program aimed at looking after the sites, to keep them open. These discussions are ongoing.

GCWT *Continued from Page 1*

The path of the GCWT will pass by historic sites, state parks, wineries, fruit orchards, sand beaches and salmon runs. It will afford access to remote shorelines, and will offer views of mountains and unusual geological formations, as well as potential encounters with wildlife—black bear, moose, elk, coyotes, osprey, merlins, loons, meadowlarks, and more.

The Port of Chelan County, based in Wenatchee, has been a driving force in helping to establish the GCWT and is currently developing content for a website that will include interactive printable maps and interpretive information for the central section of the trail. The National Park Service and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife have contributed funds to erect signs, and print brochures with maps of the water trail. Three boat launch sites on the Similkameen and two on the Okanogan are currently designated as GCWT sites.

Douglas County PUD is in the process of dam re-licensing, due in the spring of 2010. They have identified two possible campsites/boat launches for addition to the GCWT. These two sites would be located in the central section near the confluence of the Okanogan and Columbia rivers and possibly north of Wells Dam. One of these sites would include four campsites, an improved boat launch, outhouse, picnic tables, and a wind/cook shelter. Other possible GCWT sites being considered in the central section would be established at three different state parks, one county park and a private winery; all located directly on the Columbia River.

The City of Wenatchee, located roughly halfway along the GCWT (and the geographic center of the state of Washington), would be a logical location for a Flagship GCWT information center/campsite/boat launch. The Port and the Wenatchee Row and Paddle Club are exploring the possibility of locating the GCWT “headquarters” in the club’s newly acquired (second) boathouse. The boathouse is located at Riverfront Park on the Columbia River, adjacent to the city’s new Riverside Drive, the linchpin in the city’s \$20-million waterfront development. Wenatchee also has a beautiful state park, located at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers, which would make an ideal GCWT site.

Plans for an event on the Greater Columbia Water Trail are in the works. Stay tuned to the WWTa website for upcoming details. For more information visit www.gcwt.org.

Editor’s Note: Thank you to Gus Bekker, WWTa Board Member, for submitting this article.

PSC Finish Line *Continued from Page 1*

gan also wrote, “a distance of less than five miles as the crow flies.”

However, by paddling the water route, the Challenge circled the entire Kitsap Peninsula! Belfair is in the southern part of Hood Canal and Allyn is in the southern part of Puget Sound. The trip was completed by paddling all the way along Hood Canal, around the northern tip of Kitsap Peninsula and then back through Puget Sound.

Paddles were scheduled every weekend, rain or shine, for those who wished the camaraderie of traveling in a group. The very first paddle was from Belfair State Park to Tahuya Bridge. It was about 8 miles, or 2-3 hours of paddling time. Others paddled the water trail individually or in their own small groups, on a day here, a day there, throughout the season.

Organized by John Kuntz, David Fisher, and many volunteers from the Olympic Kayak Club in Port Gamble (formerly Poulsbo), this was an opportunity to experience the region up close and personal. Kuntz, the founder, said about the Challenge, “Our area is one of the best in the country for paddling... You’ll get an idea for what this area is all about.” He’s right. The environment, while not far away from surrounding communities, is isolated in its own way, offering a profusion of landscapes and an assortment of marine mammals, sea birds, and land-based wildlife.

The purpose of the Challenge was to create an enjoyable event, exclusive to Washington State, and to raise funds for Washington Water Trails Association. There was no cost involved with participating other than a \$25 donation (\$5 to support WWTa). In exchange for a donation, each paddler received a Challenge T-shirt and a 3” x 3” boat decal. The decal will be updated each and

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Paddling to the first annual Challenge finish line at Allyn Waterfront Park on October 10, 2009



WWTA Receives REI Grant Check

Julie Anderson traveled to Sumner, Washington, to personally receive the grant check from the REI Distribution Center. Mark Cole, of REI, looks on.

These funds will go a long way to expanding the Site Steward Program in 2010: to double the number of Site Steward Trainings from two to four trainings; to add 25 new Site Stewards to the roster over the course of the twelve-month grant period; and, to increase the number of restoration work parties.



WWTA Opposes “No-Go Zone” Proposed by NOAA

As you read in “Of Orcas and Access” in the summer issue of *Easy Current News*, NOAA’s Fisheries Service is proposing new rules on vessel traffic aimed at further protecting Southern Resident killer whales in Puget Sound. In addition to a 200 yard approach restriction, the proposed regulations would set up a half-mile-wide no-go zone along the west side of San Juan Island from May 1 through the end of September where generally no vessels would be allowed, including non-motorized boats.

The original deadline of the comment period has been extended to January 15, 2010. This is significant as it gives WWTA members, along with the rest of the public, additional time to weigh in on this critical issue.

WWTA has written a letter, signed by the executive director and board president, to register official opposition to the proposed restrictions proposed by NOAA. This letter is copied to Congressman Jay Inslee.

It states, “WWTA, on behalf of its membership and the Cascadia Marine Trail, opposes the “no-go zone” for kayaks, canoes, small sailboats, and other non-motorized craft.”

Specifically, WWTA has taken a stand against the no-go zone because the CMT site on the west side of San Juan Island will be inaccessible if the restrictions take effect.

The letter also states that the Cascadia Marine Trail Study Act, sponsored by Inslee, was recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. It makes clear that the campsite and water access point at San Juan County Park on the west side of San Juan Island is essential to the Cascadia Marine Trail “which will be made irrele-

vant and unusable to and from the water” if the no-go zone proposal is enacted.

WWTA is following its mission in opposing the no-go zone and protecting access to the water trail. Even so, the fact is, there are several issues involved for WWTA members. As a Leave No Trace adherent, WWTA advocates for the protection of the environment and all of the wildlife living within it.

If WWTA believed that small non-motorized boats would disrupt or threaten wildlife (in this case, Orcas) the organization could not take this stand. However, WWTA board members attended a public meeting held this fall and came away from that meeting convinced the research is not sound with regard to threats offered by non-motorized boats.

The specific problem is that the proposed restrictions do not differentiate between non-motorized and motorized watercraft, and it is on this basis that WWTA officially opposes the proposed restrictions.

Having taken this stand, WWTA wholeheartedly urges members to not harass or disturb Orcas, or any wildlife, in any way. Leave No Trace principles and practices are based on an abiding respect for nature.

This is a complex issue and WWTA recognizes that its members will differ in their opinions. All opinions are respected so take this opportunity to contact NOAA directly and give voice to any concerns you might have by commenting before the January 15th deadline.

Please visit NOAA’s Northwest Region website at www.nwr.noaa.gov.

PSC Finish Line *Continued from Page 4*

every year the paddler takes on the challenge.

Someone mentioned that the mission of the first Puget Sound Challenge was aimed at transforming individuals and communities through paddling. This isn't a race. If there's any competition here it is to challenge yourself while enjoying the company of others.

On October 10, 2009, over 75 paddlers crossed the finish line arriving at Allyn Waterfront Park just about noon. Mostly kayaks, there was at least one canoe, one stand-up paddleboard, and one rowboat in the flotilla! The ensuing celebration marked the official end of the first annual Puget Sound Challenge. WWTa congratulates and thanks everyone who participated in 2009!

According to RealReader Viewer, "For cyclists, it's STP. The ride from Seattle to Portland is the focal point of the cycling season... but for the paddling community—canoeists, kayakers, rowers—there hasn't been such an event. Until now."

Plans are already underway for next season's paddle and you can be sure it will be another bold, unusual challenge.

See you all on the water!

WWTa Committees Accepting Volunteers

Trails & Public Access—Will maintain, expand and ensure access to water trails in Washington State, and will promote stewardship of the CMT through expanded stewardship training and additional work parties. Will begin to re-establish information to update the Lakes-to-Locks Trail, and will support work being done on the Greater Columbia Water Trail.

Membership & Advocacy—Will work to establish membership levels, enhance membership benefits, and develop new recruitment concepts. Will create initial advocacy plan, and develop supportive literature on key issues for use with public officials. Will work to enlist volunteers to deliver key messages and to participate in advocacy events.

Development & Organizational Excellence—Will expand and diversify revenue generation activities, and create a funding program plan. Will work to maintain an environment of operational excellence, and maintain an effective Board of Directors.

Ad Hoc/Events—Organize and execute WWTa's events, and specific needs for the Winter Seminar, Open House, and more.

2009 West Coast Sea Kayak Symposium



WWTa was at Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend, Washington, for the 26th Annual West Coast Sea Kayak Symposium in September. It is traditionally the largest, and the most long-lived, sea kayak symposium in North America. The weekend-long event, put on by the Trade Association of Paddlesports, offered opportunities to gather for instruction, try out new products, talk with industry leaders and with friends, and to meet new people. It was a wonderful finish the 2009 paddling season!

Even though late September, the sun was welcoming, bright and hot. And the beach, sandy with over 1400 ft of waterfront, was crowded with boats, gear, and happy people. Thanks to all those who attended WWTa's Potluck on Friday night. A wonderful time was had by all! Everyone enjoyed lots of flavorful foods while visiting with great friends.

This year a couple of raffles benefited WWTa. Cheston Clark of Sitka, Alaska, won an Epic 18X Kayak, the raffle sponsored by Epic Kayaks and Sea Kayaker Magazine. A second lucky person was Denise Moedt of Abbotsford, British Columbia, the winner of a Suspenz Storage Rack generously supplied by Victoria Hammarstedt of Suspenz Kayak & Canoe Storage Racks. Congratulations and happy paddling to both winners!



ONE ENVIRONMENT.

ONE SIMPLE WAY TO CARE FOR IT.

EarthShare Washington (ESW), part of a national organization, plays a vital role in promoting environmental education, volunteerism, and charitable giving through partnering with more than 70 businesses and government agencies to encourage employees to give to the environment at work through payroll giving programs and volunteer projects. ESW is funded almost entirely by workplace giving donations from individuals.

In addition to workplace giving programs, ESW plays a pivotal role as a communication and coordination nucleus, committed to representing premier organizations whose work contributes to livable communities and a healthy planet. EarthShare Washington builds relationships with non-profit organizations that meet their requirements.

In addition, ESW's work requires that they understand the perceptions and needs of the workplace donor. They want to ensure the donor that, year in and year out, ESW will invest those hard-earned donations to earn the greatest yield. To that end, through a rigorous application process, ESW works hard to ensure that participating non-profit organizations fulfill this goal annually.

Please support EarthShare Washington and help protect your health, your children, and everyone's quality of life. See page 8 of this newsletter for how you can support WWTa through EarthShare Washington. Thank you!



Washington Water Trails Association's Kayak & Canoe Winter Seminar

Join us on Saturday, February 6, 2010 for the
annual Sea Kayak & Canoe Winter Seminar!

This year's day-long event will be held at
South Seattle Community College in West Seattle

Sample Classes Include:

Navigation; Trip Planning; Boat Repair; and, new this year,
Family Paddling—A Remedy for Nature Deficit Disorder
& Much More!

Register Online Now

Early Registration: \$35 (\$40 after January 5, 2010)



SAVE THE DATES—Coming in 2010...

- WWTa Annual Work Parties:

Saturday, March 6, 2010 — Blake Island

Saturday, May 8, 2010 — Blind Island

Consider joining WWTa for a work party. If you
can't make either of the above dates, additional dates
and sites will be scheduled soon.

- WWTa's Site Steward Program will be expanded
this next year. Please contact Mike Woolf at stewardship@wwta.org for information if you are interested
in becoming a steward of one or more sites.

- ATTENTION: WWTa's Sound Education Action
(SEA) Kayak Program will be reinstated in the sum-
mer of 2010. Watch for upcoming details.

Over 150 paddlers competed December 12th in the 4th Annual Deception Pass Dash or-
ganized by the Outdoor Adventure Center. WWTa Board Members Bruce Farrar and Bill
Brackin were on hand to speak with the participants. Congratulations to all who raced!

Thank You To All WWTA Supporters!

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Sound Rowers
South Sound Area Kayakers

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Work for WWTA: Workplace Giving

Workplace giving is an efficient way to support WWTA, especially if your employer offers payroll deductions through EarthShare Washington (ESW). EarthShare Washington is a federation of organizations inspiring people to care and provide for livable communities and a healthy planet. WWTA is one of 21 Washington-based EarthShare member groups selected again for the next three years, beginning in 2010. Your gift can be directed toward WWTA, or you can choose to make a general donation to EarthShare, to be distributed evenly among member organizations.

Giving to Washington Water Trails Association via EarthShare is an option for many corporate, state, county, and federal employees. Not sure if your place of employment offers EarthShare giving? Check the list of partners at www.esw.org/giving/partners.html.

If your workplace does not yet have a relationship with EarthShare, please let WWTA staff know. We can help your organization to partner with EarthShare Washington.

Additional Ways to Support WWTA

- Renew your WWTA membership online for one or more years!
- Think about gifting a WWTA membership during this Holiday Season!
- Buy your Kayak & Canoe Winter Seminar tickets early, and purchase tickets for your friends!
- Visit WWTA's SHOP page to find books, maps & other gifts for the paddlers on your holiday gift giving list!