

Easy Current News

The Washington Water Trails Association Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2010

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Easy Current News is published by Washington Water Trails Association

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

Stewardship...

Consider becoming a Washington Water Trails Site Steward in 2010. Washington State's fragile shoreline habitat along the Cascadia Marine Trail needs constant monitoring. In addition to restoration efforts to protect the native coastal vegetation and to regain lost functions in these habitats, there is an ongoing need for site restoration to repair areas damaged due to overuse and weather.

WWTA Site Stewards are trained to assess the essential features defining a CMT site: access to and from the water, a place to camp, restroom facilities, and identifying signage. In addition to reporting the conditions of these features, Stewards also monitor the environmental integrity of sites by reporting the effects of user impacts such as trampled vegetation as well as the growth of invasive species. Site Stewards can be considered first response. They are the people who alert WWTA (and sometimes land managers) to the need for work parties when bulletin boards need replacing, or when trail maintenance and campsite development/restoration needs to be done.

In addition to serving as WWTA's eyes and ears, Site Stewards are also in an exceptional outreach position as they encounter other water trail users, as well as individuals in the general public.

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Lakes-To-Locks by Don Crook

Most northwest kayakers have a personal list of memorable Puget Sound paddling trips on which they will gladly regale other kayaking (and non-kayaking) enthusiasts at every opportunity. Their visit to Strawberry Island, longer hauls to Patos and Suquia, etc., bring forth smiles and stories in abundance. But, ask about paddling Lake Sammamish, Lake Washington, and Lake Union, and the response is generally less animated and even,

perhaps, a little disdainful. Are these really paddling destinations to amaze or excite? Well, I am here to tell you I think they are! And, there is a water trail that connects all three.

The Lake-To-Locks Water Trail is a WWTA water trail that covers a fair amount of territory while tracing some of Seattle's original native and pioneer history. It is a flat water path to adventure, exploring a network of

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Spring 2010

Volume 19

Number 1

From Board President Don Crook

I would be the first to profess that one can kayak in winter weather as well as in summer sunshine, and still have fun and a different experience. Puget Sound water temperatures don't vary that much, and water is water—whether it be rain or salt water sea spray. But after a long dark season, the thought of rainless skies and warm, balmy paddles brings a totally new perspective. So get ready to change out the ski racks for kayak racks and launch your way into a season loaded with paddling opportunities.

The Puget Sound Challenge is in its second year. Are you up for the Challenge? It officially began April 10th and runs through the coming season (and on into October). Sponsored by the Olympic Kayak Club, you can find out how to participate and/or donate to worthy causes and rack up quite a few nautical miles while you're at it: www.olympickayakclub.com

Next on the list this season, is the work of the WWTA Trails and Public Access Committee surveys of the Cascadia Marine Trail and Lake-To-Locks water trail sites. The goal is to visit each individual site, meet with local stakeholders and land managers, and complete updated site assessments. WWTA members and stewards are welcome to join in the process for all or any portion of this work, including joining one or more committees. (A site visitation schedule will soon be published on the website for those interested.)

In August, WWTA has reserved the group campsite at Kopachuck State Park for an all member (& guest) weekend campover. On the agenda are meetings with Park Rangers, State Park representatives and other local land managers, along with a scheduled WWTA Site Steward Training. In addition, part of the deal for the "no fee" camping is a work party effort to help the rangers clean up the CMT site area. And, I personally guarantee good weather!



WWTA extends a welcome to the most recent addition to its Board of Directors, Jameson Riser. Jameson has been involved in the outdoor industry for the past couple of decades. And, an all-embracing "welcome back" to Tom Steinburn, a WWTA co-founder.

May 15th marked the annual Puget Sound Alliance Lake Union Sweep. Several WWTA members joined in on this opportunity to paddle favorite city waterways and visit Lake-To-Locks launch sites on Lake Union and Portage Bay.

The Center for Wooden Boats and others sponsored this "clean up" gala. Many of the launch sites around the water trail are Seattle Park "end street" parks where non-paddlers were able to join in the clean up from the shore!

From Executive Director Julie Anderson

Requests come in to the office, and we're often asked what is Washington Water Trails Association really about? First of all, it's not a club. What it is, is an advocacy group that supports and protects public access in Washington State for the future. Private ownership has been growing for decades and as it grows it leaves less and less public access to our waterways for Washington residents. There are rules for shoreline that needs to be protected. What does your membership do? It supports the cause of protecting public access. Please see "Call to Action" on page 5 of this issue for ideas about how you can help. To donate go to www.wwta.org.

The office has had a busy winter. We welcomed Jackie Harden as our Membership and Office Manager after saying a tearful farewell to Amy Popp. The office has moved to a smaller space (from 800 to 300 sq. ft) to cut down on overhead. Many thanks go to Ben Peterson for all his volunteer help with the move. Fortunately, it was a short move... the only thing that has changed is the suite number (which is now #307).

WWTA has many plans for this spring and summer, and so far WWTA has had two successful work parties (Blake Island, and Jones Island in the San Juans). Dates are still to be determined for work parties at Kitsap County sites. WWTA board and other volunteers will be attending many events this summer. See our calendar for specific dates. Also check out Site Steward and Leave No Trace training dates. Happy Paddling!



WWTA is in dire need of a (relatively) new digital camera. If you, or someone you know, can donate one to be used in outreach work, please contact the office. Thanks very much!

Leave No Trace Training Course in the Mid-Sound – June 12-13, 2010

Don't miss WWTA's Leave No Trace Training in 2010. Consider joining Reed Waite and Sarah Krueger for a pleasurable weekend on the mid-Sound while getting to the heart of the principles aimed at reducing damage caused by outdoor activities. Upon completion of this class you will be certified to teach these core principles to others, expanding a needed knowledge base. Requirements for this course:

1. Commit to completing the course in its entirety, beginning early Saturday morning and ending mid-afternoon/early evening on Sunday. A lot of material is packed into two long days in the field, and so you are asked to come prepared to participate.
2. Provide personal (or rented) paddling and safety equipment: seaworthy sea kayak (14' or longer), spray skirt, PFD, paddle, bilge pump, immersion protection (wet suit or dry suit) and paddle float. Must have previous open-water paddling experience and be self-sufficient on the water; no training will be provided during this weekend.
3. Provide personal camping equipment and adequate clothing. WWTA will provide food and kitchen equipment, but you will be responsible for your own shelter, flashlights, layered clothing, etc. We encourage people to share tents or bring bivy sacks. All clothing and sleeping bags must be stored in water-tight bags.
4. Conduct a 20-minute lesson during the course. The Trainer Course is highly participatory. You and each of your course mates will conduct a lesson in the field. Topics and guidelines are provided in advance so you can prepare prior to the course.

There are few spaces left, so register today at www.wwta.org!

Note: When the class fills up you will be placed on a waiting list and notified if someone cancels.

Lakes-To-Locks *Continued from Page 1*

launch and landing sites designated for hand carried craft. The Trail starts to the east with Lake Sammamish, connects to Lake Washington via the Sammamish Slough, then continues through Montlake Cut into Portage Bay passing the house boats, and traveling on to Lake Union. Of course for those that need to have salt water to make it a kayak trip, keep paddling on into the sunset through the Hiram A. Chittenden Locks to Puget Sound. There are abundant places of interest along the way and many spots to land, take a break, and enjoy a local treat. My personal favorites include the Redhook Ale Brewery along the slough, the cooling showers under the Arboretum bridge fountains (when they are working), and then dinner on the water at Agua Verde Cafe & Paddle Club.

So, when your paddling buddies start talking about the Tacoma Narrows or Deception Pass slack water dashes, tell them they have not seen anything until they have paddled through Montlake Cut clapotis (reflected water), dodged landing seaplanes on Lake Union, and traveled through the Locks squeezed between the USS Forrestal and the Queen Mary (OK, I exaggerate, but everything is huge compared to a kayak). The Lakes-To-Locks is proudly a different kind of adventure well worth the time. Give it a go.

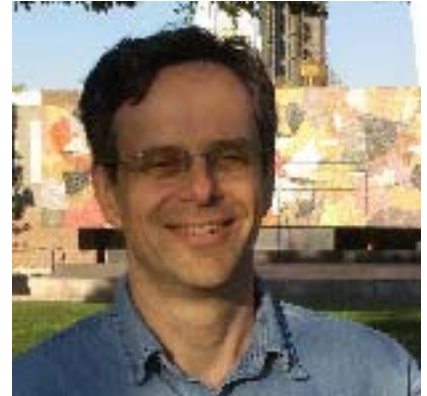
Lowdown on the Lakes-To-Locks Trail:

This is a day use trail (no overnight camping), with over 100 public places to launch and land small non-motorized boats in the midst of vibrant Pacific Northwest communities. Lakes-To-Locks began as a partnership effort in 2000 between sixteen agencies committed to connecting people and communities on the water. In 2010, WWTa is in the process of reconnecting with partners and updating information on sites. Recently, WWTa has been meeting with land managers and with Seattle Parks and Recreation to explore possible street ends that could be used for launch sites. (There may come a request for work party volunteers in the next several months.) This plan also includes printing updated maps for the Lakes-To-Locks Trail to be available sometime in 2011.

Exploring the greater metropolitan area on the water offers distinct and unparalleled views! However, please make sure to see the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks website for instructions to ensure safe passage. Note that there are specific guidelines for kayaks, and other small non-motorized boats: www.nws.usace.army.mil/PublicMenu/

Stewardship *Continued from Page 1*

Meet Mike Woolf, WWTA's Volunteer Site Steward Coordinator



So, why not consider becoming more involved as you paddle this season, visiting your favorite places?

Eleven people attended the most recent Site Steward Training on May 18th! WWTa sends thanks to every one of them for their interest and enthusiasm.

Contact Mike Woolf directly at steward@wwta.org for information about WWTa stewardship. There's still time to sign up for the Site Steward Training at Kopachuck State Park on Saturday, August 21st (see below).

Kopachuck Weekend for Members & Guests Coming August 20, 21, 22!

Friday evening will start off with a social and a pot-luck dinner. Come see friends; meet new friends.

Most activities at Kopachuck happen on the beach which is appropriate as the name means "at water" (from the Chinook language, "Kopa" meaning "at" and "chuck" meaning "water").

This park is 109 acres with 5,600 feet of saltwater shoreline. Kopachuck also has an underwater park and a wooded forest that includes a lush mix of foliage.

A Site Steward Training will be offered on Saturday morning (possibly including a brief LNT class as well). Saturday afternoon a work party will tackle whatever project(s) the land manager needs done! Last but not least, Sunday will be a day full of play.

Please contact Bruce at bgf117@comcast.net to let him know how many will be in your party. Also, please indicate which day you will arrive, for how many nights you will be camping, and which events you plan to take part in. – Looking forward to it!

Call to Action—WWTA is about Public Access—Communicate it!

Washington Water Trails needs you! WWTA advocates for public access to the state's waterways, and the organization needs you to communicate this intrinsic message to others.

Having made tough decisions in the past year and a half about the best use of limited staff time and efforts while resources have been scarce, WWTA is focusing on all kinds of outreach and communications tools to reach out to the general public so that the organization will grow stronger—larger—and more viable.

To grow, especially in the current environment, WWTA obviously needs to expand its support base. So, this is a call to action. Or, rather, a call to communicate! It is a simple thing, really. Just talk. Talk about WWTA. Talk to who you talk with to spread the message... in person, through emails, social networking sites, blogs, texts. Whatever means (methods) floats your boat.

Need talking points? Here's a refresher in WWTA history... Washington Water Trails Association came about because for the last century (at least) the State of Washington had been losing public shorelines due to a combination of booming population growth followed by ineffective protection policies.

Thus, there came a definite need for an organization to advocate for, protect, educate about, and steward public access to Washington's waterways.

It all started with the Cascadia Marine Trail. From the National Recreation Trails website, "The Cascadia Marine Trail is the result of citizen involvement. In the late 1980's, members of the local sea kayaking community realized that a 5,000-year old tradition of traveling Puget Sound by small boat was threatened by increasing shoreline privatization and development. Paddlers looking for beaches to stop and rest or set up camp found few private landowners willing to share their shores. Concerned kayakers proposed a water trail throughout Puget Sound, allowing human- and wind-powered boaters to travel safely throughout the United State's second largest estuary."

And so, WWTA was born! In 1990 the non-profit was founded, and in 1993 (along with Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission) WWTA formed

partnerships with port districts and city, county, and regional parks to establish campsites along the 2,000 plus miles of Puget Sound shoreline—culminating in the Cascadia Marine Trail.

Since that promising beginning, the vision has expanded to encompass six water trails spanning the State of Washington.

Around the world there are many types of water trails. For WWTA a water trail is a route along or across bodies of fresh or salt water for people using small beachable boats like kayaks, canoes, day sailers, or rowboats. Water trails are most often identified by the land facilities that support water travel. These include launch and landing sites (trailheads), campsites, rest areas, and other points of interest. On land, trails have distinct paths or walkways; on water it's the entire water surface, a surface that is constantly changing with flow, tide, current, boat wakes, and wind. WWTA works to establish access, recreation and educational opportunities in environmentally sensitive manners.

WWTA's valued membership is clearly weighted towards the paddling community. And that's as it should be. However, through tabling events and other requests for information it has become apparent that there is still much work to be done to enlighten the general public about this essential advocacy work.

And this is where you can all help! The office is the hub while WWTA's supporters, volunteers, members are the organization's network—and strength!

A talking point: According to a variety of sources, the amount of land access that is available for public access to waterways in Washington State ranges as low as ten to twenty percent.

These estimates include shoreline along both fresh and salt water sources!



Celebrate the Greater Columbia Water Trail's Wenatchee Valley Reach with a Weekend on the Water June 18, 19, and 20th! It all begins with wine tasting and live music on the evening of the 18th at the Rio Vista Winery. On the 19th there will be a ten to twelve mile paddle (starting about 10:00 a.m.). The takeout will be at Chelan Falls with a short interpretive program. Lunch will be provided. On the 20th there will be a brief dedication of the new Greater Columbia River Water trail site at Confluence State Park, followed by a paddle of less than two miles for the opening of the new Wenatchee Row and Paddle Club boathouse. An Open House at the boathouse will offer a chance to get on the water for a couple of hours (12:00 to 2:00 p.m.). All events will be open to the public. Everyone interested in volunteering and/or participating in some way, please contact Gus at Gus@wwta.org.

Please note that the above Columbia River event will be held on the weekend following the Wenatchee River Festival.

Blake Island and Jones Island Work Parties 2010!



Planting dune grass on the beach at the annual Blake Island work party...



Re-established ferns on slopes to stop erosion on Blake...

Manually hacked salal and roots to make way for the tractor on Jones...



Assembling finishing bins for composting toilets as part of the Jones Island work party...



Notice: New Permit and Training Requirements San Juan County Park Boat Launching

Beginning this season (May 1 through September 30, 2010), boaters will be required to attend a brief training session and obtain a permit prior to launching any boat from San Juan Island Park.

This training was developed in association with the Whale Museum's Soundwatch program, and will cover the laws protecting orcas (killer whales) as well as other marine wildlife.

These training and permit requirements will be in force for anyone launching a motor, wind or human powered vessel.

Contact the San Juan County Parks and Recreation office at 360-378-8420 for details and additional information.

Note: The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) proposed regulations this last year which could effectively close San Juan County Park's boat ramp and prohibit most boating activities on a large percentage of the west side of San Juan Island during the summer season.

Please contact NOAA for updated information.

Looking for your expertise! Join a committee!

Have you considered sharing your expertise with WWTA? Enter 'committee' in the subject line with the appropriate email address listed after each section below.

The Development Committee is looking for knowledgeable people with fund-raising experience to help establish a funding program. Work is needed to expand and diversify revenue generating activities. Contact Laurie@wwta.org

Recruitment of supporters is part of the plan for the Membership and Advocacy Committee. This committee is revisiting membership levels and membership benefits along with creating an advocacy plan to develop supportive literature on key issues. Contact Bill@wwta.org

The Trails & Public Access Committee will maintain, create and ensure access to water trails in Washington State and promote stewardship of the Cascadia Marine Trail. Efforts have been started to reestablish information for the Lakes-To-Locks Trail and to support the Greater Columbia Water Trail. Contact Don@wwta.org

The Ad Hoc/Events Committee works on special events throughout the year. Help is needed to organize and execute these events. Contact Jameson@wwta.org

Thank You To All WWTA Supporters!

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