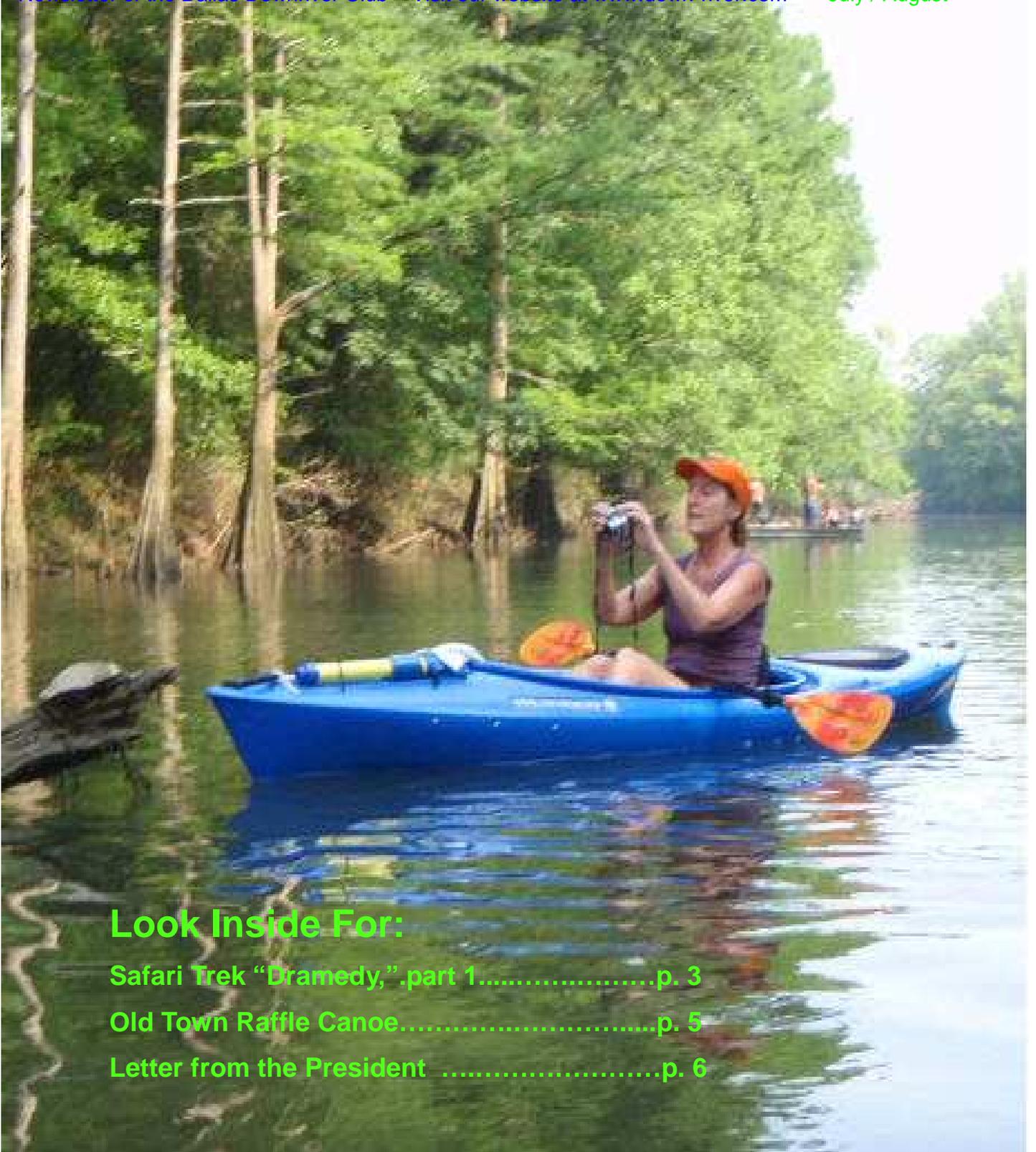


The DDRC Current News

Newsletter of the Dallas Downriver Club Visit our website at www.down-river.com July / August



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Trips and Events

- July 17** — **DDRC Monthly Meeting** at the Circle Grill, NW corner of Buckner and I30.
- July 19** — **Moonlight Float** - Meet at Trinity Park in Fort Worth at 6pm. We will eat our picnic dinners (and shared items) while we wait for the sun to go down. Then we will paddle the Clear Fork of the Trinity River under the full moon and lights of the Cowtown skyline.
- July 28** — **Urban Paddle** - Meet at McKinnish Park in Carrollton at 9 am. Bring sunscreen, water, bug repellent, lunch and/or something to share. We will paddle up the river to Lige's Lake (AKA Hidden Lake).
- August 2-3** - **Kiamichi Overnight Trip**—Meet at the Hwy. 271 put-in near Antlers, OK, at 9am. For more information, see the website or contact Bryan Jackson at: 972-979-2519.
- August 8** — **Paddle 'n Roll Session** - Grand Prairie Outdoor Pool, 6 — 9pm.
- August 16** — **Moonlight Float** - Location to be announced.
- August 21** — **DDRC Monthly Meeting** at the Circle Grill, NW corner of Buckner and I-30.
- August 23- Urban Paddle** — Rowlett Creek.
- August 30—September 1—Labor Day Trip**—Two nights on the Lower Mtn. Fork/Little River. For more details, check the website next month, or contact Bryan Jackson.
- September 18- DDRC Monthly Meeting** at the Circle Grill.
- September 27** — **Trinity Trash Bash**, McKinnish Park, Carrollton. BYO boat if you can.
- October 4** — **Watermelon Cleanup** for TRC the 13th. Meet at McKinnish Park at 9 am.
- October 11** — **TRC the 13th** McKinnish Park, Carrollton.
- October 24-26** — **Caddoween**, our annual Halloween Campout/Costume/Cooking bash at Caddo Lake

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SAFARI TREK, A DRAMEDY IN TWO PARTS

BY BRYAN JACKSON

Captain's log, Saturday, June 14, 2008. It's ten past 4, close to a hundred degrees, very little shade and I'm sitting on a cooler next to the Fentress bridge on the San Marcos. I've been up since before dawn packing, loading and driving. I have been sitting here for about 45 minutes watching Marc and Larry's hour and a half time cushion fade away. They passed Staples at 1:30 or so, well ahead of the 3pm cut-off. At that rate I expected them at about 3, or 3:30 at the latest, given the fact that they only had to cover 6 miles. I'm not feeling too fresh and I am positive they are not either, but at this point they're only about ten percent into the 260 odd miles that they are supposed to cover between now and Wednesday. How did I ever get mixed up in this? (play flashback music in your head here as the calendar rolls backward).

November 2006. On a Rio Grande trip, Canoe and Kayak associate editor Larry Rice gets to talking with Marc McCord about the Texas Water Safari. If you have ever been around when this topic comes up, you know the details: 260 miles, hot, broken boats, only real tough people, blah, blah, blah. Well after hearing Marc's standard spiel, Larry says he is thinking of writing an article about it for his magazine, wants to actually enter it and needs a central character for the story. Marc avails himself and the deal is done. A few weeks later, Marc is telling me about all this and for just an instant, I left the logical world and heard myself actually volunteering to team captain for them. Due to Larry's busy travel/paddle schedule, 2008 was set as the target for this happy enterprise. I really did not think much about it after that for a year or so. "They'll forget about it or change their minds way before that," I thought to myself. Occasionally the subject would be brought up around a campfire or paddling down a river. Marc would enthusiastically report that it was all set, sponsors were being lined up and he was going to be Zoltan Mraz's TC in the '07 Safari to learn the route and start his training.

Fall 2007, Marc tells me to keep my calendar clear in early March as Larry will be flying in for some extensive training. The plan being to paddle large sections of the route, focusing on the reaches that we are the least familiar with, mainly the Guadalupe from Cuero on down, with emphasis on practicing the bay crossing. The plan is modified a few times as Larry has consulted some of his "expert" friends, who have told him that that much training is probably unnecessary. Zoltan, who had taken it upon himself to help the boys train, was not amused. "Hmmm, dissent in the ranks already," I told Gloria after discussing it on the phone with Marc.

March 2008, Training. I arrive in Luling at Zedler Mill at 7:30am to meet Marc and shuttle him back up to Martindale. The plan was that I would follow along in my boat and paddle with them on these runs (don't know why). I had just flown in to Dallas on Friday night late, slept a few hours and headed south, armed with a 24oz espresso and a couple of large Snickers bars - perfect shape to begin 40 mile training run. We head up to Spencer's to meet up with Larry and Zoltan, then it's up to City Park in San Marcos. Very cleverly, I unpack my car and put all my gear in Marc's tent before we leave.

The deal is that on the first day of the Safari, you have to get from Spring Lake to Zedler Mill in Luling before 9pm or you are disqualified. Our plan was to, as closely as possible, make that run (some 46 miles) in 12 hours. We made our way down the San Marcos, Zoltan, Marc and Larry portaging Rio Vista and Thompson's Island (I just ran 'em), then on down to Cummings, through Cottonseed (the attack goose almost got me) with no trouble. By the time we got to Martindale dam, the lack of sleep, long drive and the 15 miles of paddling thus far was about all I could do that day. I pulled out at Spencer's, quickly inflated my airbed in some shade by the river and was well on my way to dream land before the guys headed back out.

Nine pm that same Saturday came and went. I had been napping pleasantly until the skeeters came out. I got up and built a little fire and about 9:30 or so, here comes my team back from Luling. They didn't make it in 12 hours, in fact they only made it to Luling 90, some six miles short of their goal. Marc assured me, though, that it was due to circumstances beyond his control and that they would be sure to make it come race day.

Next day, we paddled 16 miles from Luling to Palmetto (like the bug) State Park. This section features a portage over the Ottine Dam. There is no way to safely portage it - it requires a lot of climbing and lifting and the foot work of a mountain goat. Marc and Larry really struggled to get their 85 lb behemoth aluminum canoe down this monster and it really seemed to take a toll on both of them. Fortunately, it was also close to our stopping place for the day at Palmetto. When we arrived, Marc greeted the folks on the low water bridge at the park and then proceeded to have the worst case of dry heaves I have ever seen. Larry, being the shameless opportunist, photographs this session and promises to photoshop in whole fish or Cliff bars, so the readers get the full effect. After one of my hearty dinners and waiting for an hour to get a shower at one of Palmetto SP's world famous cold shower stalls, the boys were out like a light.

One of the bright spots of our training sessions was getting to spend some time getting to know Zoltan a little better. A veteran of some 17 Safaris, Z knows his way along the route, especially when it comes to where to get a bite to eat. While Marc and Larry were discussing how many heater meals they were going to carry, Zoltan was giving me tips on the best places to pick up breakfast burritos and where the best Chinese buffets were located. This and knowing the locations of all the BUCKEES, where 20lb bags of ice can be had for 99 cents are the essential building blocks of being a good Safari Team Captain.

Fade to reverse flashback music: Captain's Log 4:15 pm, The guys just came through here at Fentress. Lack of water in the river is really slowing them down and they now have only a little over three hours to make it to Luling 90. I give them a pep talk before they head back out (actually I told them that they needed to get their asses in gear), but I am really worried about their chances of making it. TO BE CONTINUED.....

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MAY SWIFT WATER SAFETY CLASS AT WHITE ROCK LAKE

By Sam Sloan

The May Safety class had a great turnout. Including Ken Lock, we had 18 people show up. Ken is a certified instructor who knows his subject. The class emphasis was on swift water self rescue — how to deal with dangerous hazards like water hydraulics at dams and tree strainers. There was also throw bag instruction and practice. Since most of us are not in the rescue business, self rescue is more important to the average paddler, and should be the first thing to learn. Also there may not be time to wait on help from others. I have had two days of instruction before, but this class was a good refresher course and I learned a few things I didn't know beforehand.

Ken gave the class at no charge for the club, and being in Dallas, there was no long drive. I was encouraged by the large turnout and hope to sponsor a water based class in the future. If you would be interested in spending a day on the river to take a swift water rescue class please e-mail Sam Sloan at ddrcmail@yahoo.com. I will post more information as things develop.

Remember the life you save may be your own!

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URBAN PADDLES ARE BACK AGAIN !

On Saturday, June 28th, our urban paddle adventures began again with a paddle down the Elm Fork of the Trinity River starting from the Ray Roberts Dam. Present were Steve and Kay Crowe, Carolee Doty and a friend, Traci Holmes, Tom Taylor and his nephew, John, Keith Smith, Tim Stanton, and John Kuhlinschmidt. We paddled a leisurely 5 miles down to the State Park on Hwy. 428, stopping to enjoy the old iron bridge where hangings and subsequent ghosts are said to have been. We saw a snake and lots of fish in the clear water. At times, we had to walk our boats through shallow spots, as not much water had been let out. But there were lots of shade trees overhanging the river in this section, which made the temperature pleasant and the river quite beautiful.

Afterwards, we enjoyed lunch, watermelon and relaxing conversation at one of the picnic tables in the state park. Thank you Steve and Kay for coordinating this first trip of the year.

We look forward to many more. Join us on July 28 as we leave McKinnish park for an easy water trek to (Lige's) Hidden Lake for lunch.

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Letter from the DDRC President

We are half way thru our year and I would like to report that it has been a great year so far. We have had at least one great trip each month this year. The South Llano trip, Goose Island, Little River, and Lower Mountain Fork to name a few. Also we did several river cleanups and had fun doing it, namely the Brazos and the Medina rivers. The urban paddles are back and we have been doing our usual and unusual Moonlight floats, with one coming up this Saturday in Ft. Worth. I'd like to thank all those that helped make these trips and events happen.

We have our big race, the Trinity River Challenge 13, coming up in October and we will need everyone's help to make this happen. We are in need of safety people, harbor masters, kitchen help, and people to contact sponsors. Also we will be needing volunteers for our two cleanups before the race. The TRC race is one of the events that helps set our club apart and provide a important service for our paddling community, so please help out and lets have a great race this year! If you wish to volunteer you can contact: Brian Jackson – TRC co-chairman, Al Currie co-chairman, Dale Harris – safety, Sam Sloan – lunch and raffle.

Thanks, Sam

Sam Sloan

DDRC President

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JUDGE RULES IN FAVOR OF THE NECHES RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE!

Judge Jorge A. Solis today denied motions by the City of Dallas and the Texas Water Development Board attempting to overturn the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge, ruling in favor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's creation of the refuge.

After careful review of the case, Judge Solis ruled on all counts that the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) had adequately considered all aspects of the issue before deciding to establish the refuge.

We'll be sending more details – for now we just wanted to spread the good news!

Janice

Janice Bezanson, Executive Director,

Texas Conservation Alliance

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The following was a response written to Eva-Marie Ayala at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram about an article she wrote about the opening of the canoe launch at Legacy Park in Arlington:

Eva-Marie,

My name is Bryan Jackson and I am on the board of directors of the Dallas DownRiver Club. Our club has over 300 members who participate in just about any type of paddling that you can imagine, ranging from flatwater paddling on lakes to huge whitewater rivers like the Colorado in the Grand Canyon or the Arkansas in Colorado. A few of our members have even been to the Olympics as competitors and in fact we have one trying to qualify right now. We are also very active in promoting paddling as a sport and water safety education. Our membership includes certified instructors, certified EMT's, Certified Wilderness First Responders and many of our members are swiftwater rescue trained. We take river safety very seriously. Which is why I am writing you at this time.

One of our members read your article about the canoe launch in Legacy Park and forwarded it to me. In our opinion, the proposed operation of the canoe launch at Legacy Park is unsafe and should not proceed as currently planned. Here is some history.

In 2006 the folks from the River Legacy Foundation came to one of our meetings and invited us to come out and paddle Legacy Park, putting in at the pedestrian bridge off of Collins. We were also asked to provide feedback about what we thought of the river and the experience.

We did and we found that the river current even at low flow was too swift to paddle upstream even for some of the strongest paddlers in our group, much less for novice, first time paddlers. We also found that the river bottom was strewn with discarded concrete and re-bar. One of our members accidentally stepped on a submerged piece of re-bar and punctured his heel while trying to pull his canoe back upstream to the canoe launch. This resulted in a trip to the emergency room and several weeks fighting a bad infection due to the poor quality of the water in the river there.

We reported back that we would certainly not recommend opening just the one launch for reasons of safety and that it would be better to open a second launch either upstream or downstream of the Collins pedestrian bridge at the same time to keep people out of the river as much as possible to avoid injuries. We also offered to help with cleanups to get the concrete, re-bar and trash out of the river. We never received a response to our emails or phone calls.

The Legacy Park launch could be made safe by removing all of the dumped construction concrete and re-bar and opening a put in and a take out at the same time, creating a "one way" trip. With no place to take out, most paddlers are likely to put in at the launch and try to paddle either upstream or downstream and try to return to the launch. Either way this has paddlers eventually fighting the current and getting out of their boat and wading in murky water, unable in some places to see what they are stepping on.

The Dallas Down River Club encourages people to get involved with paddling and supports the development of carefully planned Paddle Trails, like the one currently planned for Lake Arlington or the wonderful job that Fort Worth Streams and Valleys did in convincing the city to build the whitewater features at Trinity Park. Legacy Park however, poses a real danger to paddlers as it exists today and should not be promoted until it is corrected.

Bryan Jackson

DDRC Treasurer

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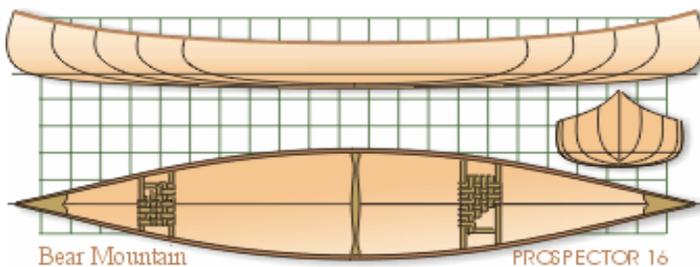
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newsletter content always needed - *Please* share your adventures, recipes, photos, classifieds with us for our reading enjoyment. Email content to newsletter editor, Carolee Doty at: la_sirena_84@yahoo.com.

Attention all DDRC Members:

During the year, various local groups, paddling clubs and the TRPA will be hosting cleanups on rivers around the state.

1) Any DDRC member that participates in any two TRPA river cleanups will receive a FREE DDRC T- SHIRT *and* 25 miles credit towards the 2006 most miles paddled award (for each cleanup). 2 cleanups = 50 miles, the more you clean the more you earn.

2) Any DDRC member that participates in any two TRPA river cleanups and one of either Watermelon Cleanups in preparation for TRC XII, races for free in TRC XII.

What a deal, what a concept ! Clean rivers, be a friend to the environment, get free stuff! Cleanups will be posted in the newsletter, on the website and email reminders.

The Official Newsletter of the Dallas
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Next DDRC Meeting
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