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CONTENTS

BC Parks View Point p 7

Gulf Islands Kayaking p 8

Wild Islander-Katy Holm p 11

How to Live the Life p 13

Reviews p 16

Cover: Snowshoeing on Mt Albert Edward, by

Philip Stone

Contents: Kayaking in Blackfish Sound

by Greg Shea



Wild Islander - Katy Holm

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Issue 15 - April-May, 2001

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EDITORIAL



magazine that will further cement its role as the west coast adventure community's magazine.

Regular readers will immediately notice our use of an additional colour throughout the mag body. I am often asked "when *Wild Isle* will go full colour"? This is a choice we've wrestled with from day one and it comes down to simple economics. Our mission is to provide a forum for the west coast adventure community while providing indispensable advertising at an affordable rate. There is no shortage of full colour publications out there for businesses to buy expensive (if glamorous) ads. Where *Wild Isle* differs is that our energy goes into bringing hard content rather than regurgitating the same hyperbole about how great our islands are and dressing it up with a colour coat.

Welcome to a very exciting issue of *Wild Isle*. Exciting of course because it is once again packed with articles, news and stories from BC's wild side. But exciting also because we're busy growing and making changes with the

A business card size ad in *Wild Isle* costs only \$125 per issue (or \$600 a year with 5 issues). That ad will be seen by over 100,000 readers in the course of 12 months. Other publications boast a similar readership nothing strange there. But what sets *Wild Isle* apart is that of those 100,000 exposures as near as damn it, every last one of them are active outdoors people and your potential customers. So full colour or not *Wild Isle* is a very effective marketing outlet.

Where we are able to use colour to its fullest though is on the internet and here we've been busy too. We've moved into a new web domain www.wildisle.ca and begun the huge task of reworking our web site to make it easier to navigate and and fleshing it out with progressively more content. Would you believe the site already stands at over 700 pages!

Last but far from least, we are welcoming Ryan Stuart to our team as assistant editor. Ryan has written several articles in recent issues while studying journalism at Langara College and will come on board as his program completes in time to work on production of our next issue.

Philip Stone

WILD ISLE

Welcomes submissions.

Feature stories, photographs, artwork, press releases are all encouraged.

Send it in by eMail to: wildisle@island.net

or by Canada Post to Box 482, Heriot Bay, BC V0P 1H0

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FROM THE FIELD

New Northern Ferry Service Contracted

PRINCE RUPERT – A new passenger and freight service between Prince Rupert and the isolated communities of Hartley Bay, Oona River, Kitkatla, and Metlakatla is planned to start March 1, Bob Lingwood, BC Ferries president and CEO, announced today.

Over the next five years, BC Ferries will provide an annual subsidy of \$321,000 for a contracted passenger and freight ferry service to the four communities, which rely on air, contracted barge and private fishing vessels for transportation.

North-Co Corp. Ferry Services Ltd., a company formed by the Hartley Bay, Kitkatla and Metlakatla band councils, will own and operate the service. Costs over and above the subsidy will be raised by North-Co Corp. through fares.

"BC Ferries worked with these communities on a trial ferry service in 1998," said Lingwood. "Because BC Ferries is now on sound financial footing, we can make long-term plans for reliable ferry service."

"These remote communities are among the last populated areas along the mid-coast to have access to cost-effective transportation and I am pleased BC Ferries has undertaken this important service," said North Coast MLA Dan Miller.

The agreement with North-Co Corp. will allow BC Ferries to renegotiate the contract if a different vessel is used that results in a different subsidy requirement. BC Ferries and North-Co Corp. will review the contract during the second year of operation to ensure the agreement is meeting the goals of both parties.

BC Ferries provides financial support to nine contracted services in B.C.

Surfing Vancouver Island Has Moved

www.island.net/~surfer/ has moved to www.surfingvancouverisland.com and/or www.coastalbc.com see you there!

Paddlefest 2001

Vancouver Island Paddlefest 2001: June 23 & 24th Ladysmith, BC. For information call 250-245-4246 or visit our web site at www.PaddleCentre.com email us at Paddlefest@PaddleCentre.com Fax 250-245-5708

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Tourism Operators' Return From Japan Successful: Interfor Logging Targeted

TOFINO- Kayak business owners Bonny Glambeck and Dan Lewis returned this weekend from a business tour in Japan. There they met with Interfor customers and gave media interviews and seminars about the negative impact logging is having on the eco-tourism industry in BC. Through their presentations and interviews, millions of Japanese people were told to contact companies that buy ancient rainforest wood and paper, particularly from Interfor, and ask them not to do so any more.

"We're glad to be back home to run our business, and we feel good to have gone abroad to advocate for our livelihood and our forests," says Lewis.

The Ministry of Forests has 4500 staff. The Ministry of Tourism has 75. Tourism is BC's 5th largest employer (2nd largest employer on Vancouver Island, after government). Logging is BC's 9th largest employer. Last year the Tofino Chamber of Commerce wrote the premier asking that the Ministry of Tourism be given lead agency status in Clayoquot Sound, as tourism is a far greater employer and income generator than forestry. A year later the Ministry of Forests continues as the lead agency over Clayoquot Sound's lands. These inequities between logging and growing economies, such as tourism, are institutionalized. It leaves the biggest employer and income generator in Clayoquot Sound as a beggar at the door of resource discussions.

"For businesses like ours this is a matter of survival," says Glambeck. "Our business is based on how special BC's ancient forests are."

Even conservative organizations, such as the BC-wide Council of Tourism Associations (which includes the big hotels, and sports fishing outfits), have launched efforts on behalf of their members to stop logging from undermining their industry's viability. All over the province tourism businesses are fighting to protect their investments in a climate hostile to their needs. Eagles Nook Lodge in Barclay Sound fighting to save its viewscape from Interfor logging. Knight Inlet Lodge is trying to protect its bear viewing grounds from the Ministry of Forests, and Tofino's eco-tourism operators are still struggling to be part of land use decisions.

For more information please call (250)726-8136 or (250)725-3117

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The Coors Light Outdoor Adventure Sports Show



British Columbia has a world renowned reputation for outdoor adventure sports and travel and the Coors Light Outdoor Adventure Sports Show February 16-18 was the best opportunity to experience everything the 2001 season has to offer. This year's show was record breaking as 29,500 consumers circulated through the doors of BC Place Vancouver to discover more than 200 exhibitors selling the latest equipment, services and travel destinations.

"See it! Do it! Live it!" was the motto of the weekend as consumers had the opportunity to participate in dynamic and interactive features, like the Mazda white water demo pool, the Degree climbing wall, and the Hi-tec indoor adventure race. There were over \$20,000 worth of prizes to be won and opportunities to talk to industry experts about the latest in outdoor adventure sport technology.

The hugely popular Mazda Water Sports Zone offered everything from kayaking and canoeing to scuba diving. Free demos and product testing took place all weekend and world champion kayakers were on hand to entertain the crowd with the exiting sport of freestyle white water kayaking.

Mountain bikers and BMX racers were drawn to a 10,000 square foot dirt course that presented thrills and spills all weekend. The expanded Bike Expo area hosted bmx racing, pro big air demos, pro trials demos, the annual Indoor North Shore mountain bike race and leading companies from the bike industry.

Over 140 mountain bike riders challenged themselves on the radical new course designed by "Dangerous Dan" Cowan. Six foot wheelie drops, teeter totters and high narrow ladders kept the riders focused and the spectators glued to their seats.

The 170 BMX riders raced against each other on a tight and twisty BMX track built by the Action BMX club from Surrey and provided tons of entertainment as up to five riders at a time vied for the hole shot. It was easy to see why full faced helmets are a requirement.

Big Air aficionados Chris Donahue, Travis Fontaine, Andrew Ryser and a few others had the crowd watching in awe as they landed unbelievable stunts such as 360's, back flips and suicides. As usual, the spectacular crashes drew just as much applause as the ones that were cleaned. Fortunately, all the riders walked away in one piece.

Norco pro rider Ryan Leech amazed everyone with his gravity defying trials riding while Volkswagen Trek pro riders Alison Sydor and Roland Green as well as Rocky Mountain pro riders Richie Schley and Brett Tippie were on hand for autograph sessions.

The Nikon International Adventure Travel Show was a fantastic mix of domestic and international destinations offering trips for all ages. Exhibitors from around the world offered trips in ecotourism, safaris, photography, nature tours, seakayaking, trekking, caving and lodging. The Lipton Discovery theatre held presentations every hour offering adventure hungry attendees a taste of adventure off the beaten path.

Anyone ready to take up golf could wonder over to the The Vancouver Golf and Travel Show offered with the admission to the Coors Light Outdoor Adventure Sports Show. Experts were on hand offering tips on technique and there was even an opportunity to win \$10,000 for sinking a putt. The finals were a real nail biter as the last contestant came centimeters away from the hole.

The combination of four shows in one offered a rare opportunity to celebrate active west coast lifestyles. So mark your calendar for February 15-17, 2002 because National Event Management will be sure to produce another jam packed weekend you won't want to miss!

For more information regarding the Coors Light Outdoor Adventure Sports Show, The Nikon International Adventure Travel Show, The Bike Expo or the Vancouver Golf and Travel Show please contact:

National Event Management at 1-800-891-4859 or visit their website at www.nationalevent.com

HAPPENINGS

Every Sunday	Mountain Market - Arts and Craft Fair	Mt Washington
April 20, 21, 22	SKGABC Guides Exchange	Ladysmith
For more info contact June 10	roscoe@saltspring.com Or messages at 250.537.7568 cell	
June 30 & July 1	Port Alice Rumble Mtn Rage	Port Alice
July 14	Canada Day	Mt Washington
July 20	2nd Annual Beer Festival	Mt Washington
July 21 & 22	Eco Adventure Showcase	Mt Washington
	Family Picnic and Glacier Paintings	Mt Washington
July 28	Mountain Luau	Mt Washington
August 3 - 6	Adrenalin Fest - Mountain Bike Clinics	Mt Washington
August 4	Full Moon Sunset Ride & Dinner	Mt Washington
August 11	3rd Annual Wine Festival	Mt Washington
August 16 - 19	Mountain Musicfest - Rock and Country Music	Mt Washington
August 25 & 26	Mile High Arts Festival	
September 1	Full Moon Sunset Ride & Dinner	Mt Washington
September 22	Harvest Dinner	Mt Washington
October 6 - 8	Thanksgiving Turkey Sale	Mt Washington



View Point

by
Andrew Smith

- the view is not always clear -

A SOCIAL QUESTION

With BC reaching its commitment of increasing the Protected Area System to 12% of the province, managing this world class system appropriately is of paramount importance. Matching the commitment for protection with that of management has refocused BC Parks' continued pursuit of Ecological Integrity (EI).

EI has many definitions but the root meaning is essentially the same. An area has ecological integrity when the structure, composition and function of an ecosystem are unimpaired by stresses from human activity.

However, it isn't the issue of what EI is, but the complexity of managing for it which I want to draw attention to. While science will always be used as a basis for decision-making and in many cases accepted even with some disagreement, there is a social component that can often complicate things.

A case and point would be an issue on Jedediah Island, a provincial park in the Strait of Georgia, east of Qualicum. The park was established through public donation, funds from the Dan Culver Estate and Government support. The Island had been used as a homestead for years and when the owners moved, approximately 50+ goats, 50 sheep, and an old house was left behind. As normal, a public management planning process was advertised and carried out and as a starting point, a vision statement was developed through public

meetings and indirect input. The vision statement described the island's "natural" ecosystem being re-established. Based on the vision, the final signed off plan, having been reviewed by the public, recommended removal of all feral animals in order to re-establish the limited Coastal Douglas fir ecosystem.

However, when Park staff began seeking someone to remove the animals, many individuals voiced their disagreement, indicating that it was the existing ecosystem with the animals that they wished protected. Science can be used to defend the removal of the

...the point really is, what ecosystem is more important to protect and manage for...(?)

animals but the point really is, what ecosystem is more important to protect and manage for, and this is a social decision. There is no wrong to this issue and in this particular case, it is evident more public discussions are required. However, it should be understood that whatever decisions are made, the ramifications are far reaching and will impact good or bad on future generations.

On Jedediah it is feral animals, but in other parks we may/are facing similar decisions about recreational activities or facility development all of which may affect the EI of a park. Managing for EI is undisputedly an important goal, but the decisions surrounding it are not always clear.

Give it some thought and if you have a point of view please contact Andy Smith, BC Parks, Extension Officer at Tel: (250) 337-2405, Fax: 337-5695. Andy.Smith@gems6.gov.bc.ca or send letters to BC Parks, Strathcona District, 1812 Miracle Beach Drive, Black Creek, BC, V9J 1K1.

Rumble Mountain Rage

By Jacquie MacKenzie

Rumble Mountain Rage in Port Alice is the only sanctioned Cross-Country bike race north of Campbell River on Vancouver Island. This year's Rumble Mountain Rage will take place on Sunday, June 10, 2001 at 10:00am.

The pre-registration deadline is Saturday, June 9, at 10:00 p.m. For an \$8.00 late fee, registration will be accepted until 8:00 am on race day. Registration fees range from \$15.00 - \$30.00, depending on category entered. One-day licenses cost \$7.00.

You can register by mail, (Box 130, Port Alice, BC V0N 2N0) or by fax, (250-284-3416) or inquire by e-mail can be sent to: info@village.port-alice.bc.ca. Phone Jacquie or Michelle at 250-284-3912, evenings, for more information.

The Village of Port Alice, where friendly locals welcome visitors to their community, is a scenic three-hour drive from Campbell River. Located along beautiful Neroutsos Inlet, the setting is perfect for outdoor adventures such as hiking, kayaking, and mountain biking. This little town is situated on a mountainside, providing mountain bikers with plenty of elevation!

Besides experiencing the natural beauty of the North Island rainforest, there are many other reasons to make the trip up to the Rumble Mountain Rage:

- Participants receive a complimentary breakfast of muffins, fruit, coffee, and juices;
- An awesome course with a variety of single and double track, lung-bursting climbs, and technical terrain that includes the new extension of steep switchbacks called, "Rager's Rush";
- Showers are available after the race at the Recreation Centre. This is appreciated by those on long road trips (and especially appreciated by those sharing the vehicle with them!!);
- FREE salmon BBQ lunch for all participants and volunteers.



Courtesy of the North Island Gazette

The lunch is also available to the public for a nominal fee;

- A mechanical pit stop, provided by, "The Bike Shed" of Port McNeill, will be set up along the race course and will sell bike parts for riders experiencing technical difficulties;
- All participants receive valuable draw prizes;
- \$750.00 cash purse for the Pro category;
- A great group of volunteers who are proud to be involved in the race will help make your stay in Port Alice terrific!

Accommodation in the area is provided by: Quatsino Chalet 250-284-3338 Forest Grove apartments 250-284-6323 Evergreen Terrace Townhouses 250-284-3451 Ozzieland RV Park 250-284-3422 B & B - Michelle & Brad Mitchell 250-284-3904

As well as the following campsites: Marble River Campsite, approx. 15 minutes outside Port Alice FREE Link River Campsite, on Alice Lake, 20 minute drive \$6.00/night Spruce Bay Campsite, on Victoria Lake, 40-minute drive FREE

If you are new to bear/cougar country and plan to camp in the area, please remember that the scent of food or garbage is a dinner invitation to some wildlife! Please use common sense in the handling and storage of your foodstuffs.

We welcome your inquiries and look forward to an exciting competition! Come check out the Rumble Mountain Rage in Port Alice!

WILD ISLE

In Our Backyard

GULF ISLANDS

SEA KAYAKING



By Al Keith

Two youthful paddlers at Chiver's Point, Valdes Island.

Photo: Al Keith

I slo-mania is an affair of people who find islands irresistible" wrote Lawrence Durrell in his *Reflection on a Marine Venus*. A sort of blissful affliction! But then, people say a lot about islands. They're either too close to civilization or not close enough; too big or too small, too lonely or too crowded. The advice you'll get is endless. And yet, when you are a kayaker, even an over-aged one, like me, you just love 'em. That's why, when I had the opportunity to move to Salt Spring, I jumped at the chance.

A northern extension of the U.S.'s San Juan's in the Pacific Northwest, Canada's Gulf Island waters offer paddlers of all ages and skills endless possibilities for exploration and enjoyment. The archipelago consists of some 200 islands and islets - some barely visible at high tide - and only the larger ones, i.e. Salt Spring, Galiano, North-and-South Penders, Mayne and Saturna are serviced by ferries from both the mainland and from Vancouver Island. But if there is a better way to explore this fascinating island world than by kayak I haven't found it yet.

The most westerly, and the largest of the southern Gulfs is Salt Spring Island, the 'hub' of the 'Gulfs'. When travel writer Paul Theroux wrote: 'The ideal island is a whole world, and what a world it is...' he could have been speaking of Saltspring.

With a population of 9,500, largely made up

of artists, artisans, sheep farmers and retired folk, galleries and artist studios are one of its major attractions. As is the colourful Saturday Outdoor Market, where local artisans and farmers sell their wares. The island features several marinas, and kayak rental outfits offer charters, group tours and lessons. Convenient for those who bring their own crafts, one of the island's many launching sites lies right next door to the Long Harbour ferry terminal.

However, for my first, solitary exploration of some of the islands my wife Joyce drove me to the old, 'retired' government dock at Fernwood, on the island's east coast. Here, under a bluebird sky and with hardly a breeze, I loaded up, said a quick goodbye and pushed off into Trincomale Channel. After playing tag with a couple of harbour seals, I made for Wallace Island, which beckoned in the distance. This would be my first kayaking experience in Gulf Island waters, my first close-up 'impression,' and I wanted to taste that all by myself. Later I would head out again with friends or members of the kayak club. But this trip would be a solitary experience.

That day in early summer the sea offered easy paddling. Yet I would find on later trips that there would also be times when the raw northwesterly unleashed the dormant power of the waves here, sending paddlers scrambling for shelter. I headed for Chiver's Point, a popular kayakers' haul-out at the northern tip of Wallace, and was lucky to claim the last of

the camp-sites. Here, toothy rock formations bar access to all larger craft, and the kayaker is 'king' indeed! The island was purchased in 1946 by David Connover- author of *Once Upon An Island*. But his resort plans fell short of expectations, and in 1990 all by 11 acres of Wallace Island were purchased by the provincial government and declared a marine park.

After pitching my tent, I planned my itinerary for the next four or five days, and chatted with a group of kayakers. They hailed from Seattle and seemed to be obsessed with the 'Eskimo Roll.' While I admired their zeal, at 70 I leave the 'roll' to the younger crowds. Having canoed all my life and kayaked for five, I had no trouble getting back into my kayak on the few occasions when I ended up 'swimming'.

A couple from Vancouver showed off their double kayak, which they had rigged for downwind sailing. The rig was a home-made affair, featuring a square 'pusher sail,' which gave their muscles a rest when the wind came from the right quadrant.

My supper that evening was simplicity itself: An apple, a cup of tea and the tuna sandwiches my wife had been kind enough to provide for my first stopover. When I turned in, I read for a while from my dog-eared copy of Byron Ricks' *'Homelands'*, which covered a five month kayak trek by the author and his wife Maren through the Inside Passage.

Kayaking In Paradise

Paddling Through British Columbia's Gulf Islands Archipelago

Though it made for fascinating reading, it wasn't long before I was lulled to sleep by the soft lap of the sea.

Waking early, I crawled out of my tent and 'brewed' my morning cup of 'instant.' Then I sat on a rock and enjoyed breakfast watching the dawn rise, softening the outlines of the neighbouring islands, and turning shades from morning gray to a bright, daytime blue. This beautiful scene made me think of the terse words Captain George Vancouver had written in his journal when he scouted this area in 1792: 'Nothing can be more striking than the beauty of these waters....' Amen to that!

A couple of hours later I was heading out again on a lively, morning sea. My next destination was Dionisio Provincial Park, on the north-eastern tip of Galiano Island!

As I fell into the rhythm of easy paddling again, I realized that I could think of no greater satisfaction than to kayak between these delightful islands, especially in the morning hours. And set my day according to the movements of sea, wind and current. With only a tug and its two barges and a lone fish-boat in sight, I finally reached Porlier Pass, the lively strait which separates Galiano and Valdez Islands. And which kayakers are warned to tackle only at slack tide. It's either that or contend with vicious maelstroms of rip-tides that can pick speeds of up to 10 knots.

I beached my kayak for an hour and caught up with my log entries, while chewing on some energy bars, and waiting for slack. Then I felt my way through the narrows, with waters as quiet as an inland lake now, and landed two hours later at Dionisio Provincial Park. Formed in the early 1990's, it offers outdoor toilets and pumped, fresh water. It even has a special access for kayakers. I pitched camp in record time and hiked through the park, exercising my legs, and discussed the merits of various island passages with a group of fellow paddlers. Since they kept raving about the fine, large beach at Blackberry Point, on Valdes Island, I decided to include it in my itinerary.

The next morning I woke to a surprise: A heavy curtain of fog with near zero visibility was cloaking the island. With the neighbouring tent barely visible, I crawled back into my sleeping bag and promptly fell asleep again. Two hours later, when I woke, there wasn't a shred left of the grey stuff. While larger vessels rely on their radar when visibility fails, in a kayak you're vulnerable, and I avoid paddling through fog whenever possible. After breakfast, I folded the tent, loaded my kayak and headed out Porlier Pass in near slack tide, then



The author tucking in his "Narpa" for the night.

Photo: Al Keith

pointing my craft northward. Hugging the coast of Valdes, I reached Blackberry Point, my destination, just after noon. I had no trouble locating the vaunted shell beach, however a dozen colour kayakers were more or less lined up there. A class of energetic teenagers - 13 to 15 - had beaten me to it, and were having a ball. But somehow I managed to squeeze my tent in among theirs, and that's how I got to know Clark and Janis, the two youthful leaders of the group. They told me that they hailed from a private school on Vancouver Island and were making a 10-day tour of several islands. We also discussed the merits of different campsites and the local weather patterns.

Blackberry Point Campground is

“...either that or contend with vicious maelstroms of rip-tides”

administered by the B.C. Marine Trail Association. Their goal is to secure access to coastal recreation sites on Canada's west coast every eight to ten miles, so that paddlers can make overnight stops with minimal impact on the environment, a laudable thought. Early next morning I climbed the cliffs behind the camp, and was rewarded with one of the most spectacular views of the surrounding islands. A dozen white-capped eagles - some circling overhead, others perched on nearby treetops - seemed to be the guardian here and kept me in their sight all the time. It was a reminder

that I was the intruder here and better behave accordingly.

The next morning, after helping some of the youngsters launch their kayaks, I pointed the bow of my boat southward again, settling in for the long haul to Montague Harbour, at the southern end of Galiano. Montague was B.C.'s first marine park, and offers, in addition to a dock for boaters, easy access by land. That's why it is frequently crowded. Fighting contrary winds and a restless sea all the way, I reached Montague by late afternoon, with the muscles in my back and arms protesting in no uncertain terms. I was reminded, once again, that no matter how hard I worked at keeping fit, there's no way I regain the strength and endurance now, at seventy, as I did when in my twenties. Or thirties! Still, as one sexagenarian marathoner put it, a wise man indeed, 'Just try to be the best you can be. At any age!'

Feeling tired, I didn't turn up my nose at the crowds at Montague Harbour, powerboats and sailcrafts mainly, and managed to secure a tucked away tent-site, where I would recoup for a couple of days. So I confined myself to a bit of hiking and to exploring the islets outside Montague Bay. I was especially fascinated by tiny Ballingual Isle, home of the protected, double-crested cormorants, who have built their stick-nests in some of the weather-worn junipers here, and make for a fascinating sight.

continued...

I had planned to make Pender Island my next, brief stopover, and set out in that direction at early dawn. But the weather had changed and soon it began to rain, lightly, but consistently. Wondering how long it would take for me to grow gills, I finally changed my direction and headed for the nearer Prevost Island, and hauled out at an abandoned orchard. To my surprise it stopped raining the moment I had pitched my tent, and the sun was making a slow, tentative come-back. In 1995, the provincial and federal governments jointly purchased 235 acres of Prevost Island land, including the entire Peile peninsula, and that's where I pitched my tent for the final night of my trip. Before nightfall three other kayak parties landed, plus a couple in their forties, taking advantage of the pastoral ambience here.

The next morning, after listening to an uncertain weather forecast, I packed and pushed off early, setting a direct course for Ganges Harbour on Salt Spring. On the way I pondered something the middle-aged couple had told me the night before. Not being that keen on camping out, they had made reservation with Bed-and-Breakfast places on two of the islands. While sleeping in your

tent in remote corner of the islands can be a delightful experience, it isn't the only way to enjoy sea kayaking in the Gulfs. All major islands have their B&B's, some of them with quite a reputation for their cuisine. I was told that kayaking from one island B&B to another one, on the next island, is fast gaining in popularity. The kayakers are picked up right at the island dock and driven to the guest house. This way, you can leave much of your gear and provision at home and travel light. While bed-and-breakfast kayaking sounded a bit decadent, it certainly would make for great weekend get-aways. After an intimate dinner, you have the chance to discuss your favorite sport over a pint at the island pub.

As I entered Ganges Bay and approached the first of the tiny Chain Islands, the wind shifted and I had to tie my hat down to keep it from blasting

off. Still, as I reached the inner harbour and headed for the Coastguard dock, the wind ebbed, and I made quickly fast and got out. After I phoned Joyce, and while waiting for my pick-up, I treated myself to an ice cream cone. Then I rolled out my charts and started working out another route through these beautiful islands. A different course for my next Gulf Island 'paddle adventure.' This time it would be in company. But I wouldn't wait too long. After all, one has to do something to keep the rust at bay!

WI

For Further Information:

--B.C. Ferries: 1-888-223-3779 or 250-386-3431

www.bcferries.com

--Saltspring Island Visitor Info: Ganges, B.C. Phone 250-537-5252

www.gulfislands.com or www.gulfislands.net

Some of my Favorite Books

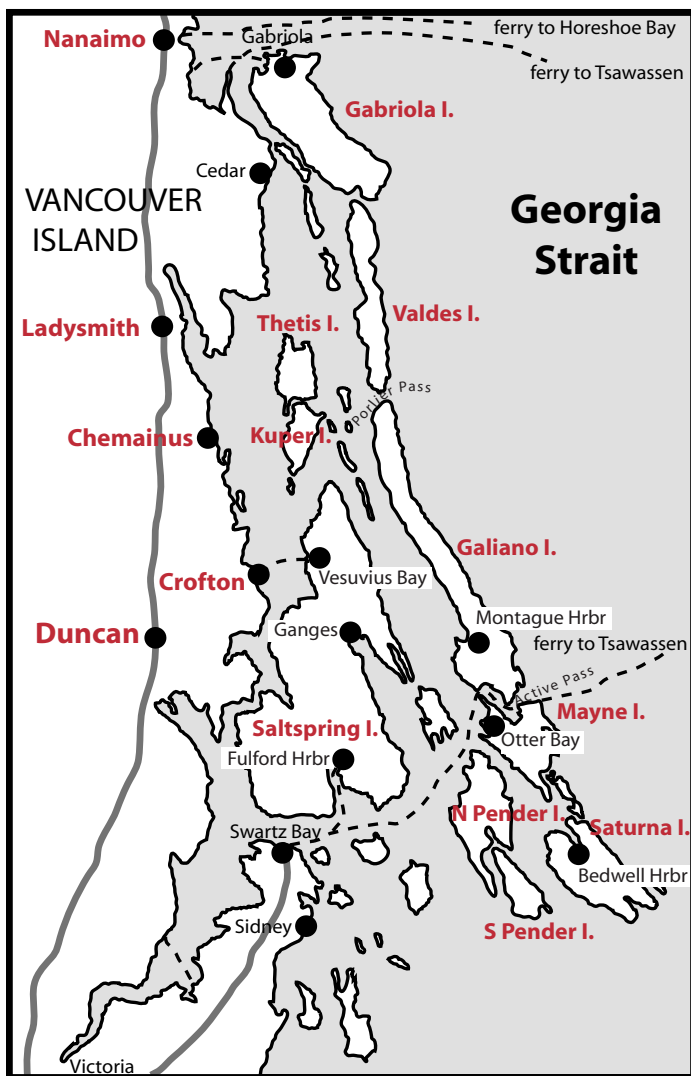
--Sea Kayaking Canada's West Coast (by J. Ince & H. Kottner) Raxas Books

--Kayak Routes of the Pacific Northwest Coasts (P. McGee) Greystone Books

--Island Paddling (M.A. Snowden) Orca Books

--The Gulf Islands (Irene Rinn) Hillside Publishing

--Fragments of Paradise (P.&A. Grescoe) Raincoast Books



Bird's eye view of Active Pass

Photo: Al Keith

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WILD ISLANDER PROFILE

By Greg Shea

KATY HOLM

**NAME:** Katy Holm**AGE:** 25**SHOE SIZE:** 8**BASECAMP LOCATION:** Victoria, BC**FIELD CAMPS:** Vancouver, Victoria, and all over Vancouver Island

Katy Holm is our first wild islander to be featured in our new regular section that profiles individuals that stand out in our west coast outdoor community. Katy is a committed and competent adventurer who's many exploits & accomplishments have inspired people around her. Talented in many outdoor sports this fuels Katy's passion for the outdoors. From instructing to participating in expeditions Katy is a person quickly learn to love, respect and trust. Read on to find out how this islander gets her kicks.

WI: What are your favourite outdoor activities?

KH: Rock climbing, sea kayaking, white water kayaking, mountaineering, and backcountry skiing mostly. I have done a fair amount of down hill skiing and sailing, and have done some spelunking, aid climbing and hang gliding (in New Zealand), but am not pursuing these activities.

WI: You've recently been on quite the all women's journey that included a few different modes of self propelled

travel, some seriously remote wilderness and overall goal to explore a region that not many have set foot.

KH: The Stikine River from Telegraph Creek BC to Wrangell Alaska. August 19 to Sept 11, 2000 Accompanied by Ann-Marie Conway, Mandy Kellner, and Jude Spancken

The concept was to do a self propelled month long adventure trip that utilized a canoe to access remote mountains. We canoed from Telegraph Creek B.C. to Wrangell Alaska and did a 9 day side trip into the Sawback Range. We targeted an area of the Sawbacks that has many unclimbed spires since we hoped to do technical first ascents.

Though relatively low in elevation the small spires in this range are awesome to behold. The Sawbacks pierce the skyline like many jagged teeth, sheer faces rising vertically for thousands of feet. We set our eyes on what seemed the only spire in our valley that might be free climbed in a day. However the weather pelted us continually with rain and snow so we ended up climbing "5 1/2 pimples" which were probably all first ascents but consisted of a bunch of sub-peaks and small spires. Most climbs were done in rain and snow so were exposed scrambles but not technical climbing. Jude and I climbed a great 5.8 pitch to the summit of a small spire near our high camp in our one half day of sun. This area of the Sawbacks has rarely been visited. There are many first ascents to be had of the spires and multi day aid routes up their larger faces.

WI: What was the highlight of the trip for you?

KH: Exploring the Sawback Range. The solo trips I did up some of the small spires were incredibly rewarding. Alone, scrambling over snow and rock up dark towers shrouded in swirling mists and soft falling snow. Only my foot prints mixed with those of the mountain goats and only the shrill screams of marmots, clucking ptarmigan, and twittering

flocks of Rosy Finches or Pipits breaking the whisperings of the wind. Intensified awareness of the awesome, raw power of untouched wilderness mixed with the thrill of exploration, and the humbled understanding that I was an insignificant visitor.

WI: How was it travelling with an all female team? Was this your first all women trip?

KH: Yes this was my first big trip with an all women team. Each woman in our team is incredibly talented in her own way. I enjoyed being with a strong group of women who's fun loving spirits do not diminish, but strengthen under hardship. I don't hold any preference for doing trips with men or women, and I think what made this group special was insatiable silliness under all conditions. I would value this characteristic in a man or woman.

WI: Any notable ascents during the trip?

KH: First ascents of the "5 pimples" are notable since they were all first ascents of which one involved technical climbing and others involved short scrambles and steep snow slopes similar in difficulty to the regular route on Colonel Foster.

WI: If you where to change one aspect of the trip what would it be?

KH: The weather

WI: Any epics or near misses ?

KH: It was pretty epic just getting in to the Sawback range. Our packs weighed about 80 lb. and we bushwhacked through devil's club, vaccinium and slide alder up 4000 ft down 2000 ft and up another 1000 ft to reach these spires. The ground was sometimes so steep that we were reduced to crawling. The rain and snow was also pretty epic. Thankfully we did not have any near misses in mountains or on the river, just shots of adrenaline while canoeing as we negotiated log jams and rapids on the river.

WI: One reason *Wild Isle* wanted to feature you and your escapades is because over the past 8 years I've heard your name arise in many circles of people. Some wishing they could climb as well as you and other dreaming of having the same paddling skills, others can't believe that you can fit it all in. And if you think listening to the boys is bad you should hear the girls. But seriously, people do look up to you as a role model. Do you feel this or find yourself filling some role?

KH: Wow. Well I certainly don't feel deserving of the position of role model. Rather, I more feel like someone just starting out in the world of mountaineering, rock climbing, etc. who has A LOT to learn. I like sharing my passions with people and have often introduce others to the sports I love. Others have passed their knowledge and skills on to me and I hope will continue to do so. I am happy to continue this trend. I don't think that I have any special talent or am an expert in anything. I just love going out in the outdoors, playing, and challenging myself.

WI: Were did it all begin? Who influenced your first pursuits in the great outdoors?

KH: My family is pretty outdoors oriented



High in the Sawback Range

and I grew up hiking, sailing, and going ocean kayaking. My parents first instilled in me a love of the outdoors. Two other people that probably most influenced my initial interest in outdoors sports; my older brother Kris, and a friend, Nicola Marian. In his pursuit of outdoor sports, my brother opened my eyes to many opportunities. Kris joined the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club at age 16 and I followed. The playful spirit of the members of this club who shared backcountry skiing and mountaineering with me got me hooked. My brother also introduced me to the U-Vic white water club, and even though I was not yet at university I spent many Friday nights at pool sessions learning how to roll, and a little time on the river. Kris and I both worked at Ocean River Sports, and here I was taught the techniques of paddling later taking on roles of instructor and guide.

The second person who influenced my initial interest in the outdoors was Nicola Marian. Already an avid mountaineer, rock climber and a free spirited explorer, Nicola sparked in me an independent desire pursue outdoor sports. Even though Nicola was ten years older than me, she invited me as a companion for a month of exploring in the summer 1991. Off we went, climbing mountains in Strathcona park and the Stikine Alpine, ocean kayaking in the Deer Group, day hiking to Cape Scott, and rock climbing. Nicola introduced me to a lifestyle and group of people to which I wanted to be part.

WI: What goals or objectives do you place on an activity or trip?

KH: I like to have an array of goals so that at least some can be achieved. One of our goals for the Stikine trip was just to paddle the river and see the incredible wilderness in this area. Luckily this goal could be completed in any weather conditions. I place tentative long term goals and a bunch of short term goals. Long term goals for this trip were to do technical first ascents in the Sawback range and to climb Kate's Needle. Short term goals I use when actually climbing. When I made a solo attempt on our goal spire, my first goal was to climb up to the the east ridge. After completing this goal I made the

goal to reach the highest subsidiary peak. In this way even though I didn't reach the summit I still achieved something. This makes turning back a lot easier.

WI: What's the most difficult trip that you've undertaken?

KH: Honestly I am not quite sure because I don't typically think in that way. Some of the most memorable climbs I have done are a recent solo day trip up the SW face on Rugged Mountain, the North Buttress on Mt Aspiring in New Zealand, and The Rostrum in Yosemite. Some other climbs that I have really enjoyed are the Grand Wall via the Roman Chimneys on the Squamish Chief, the NE ridge of Bugaboo Spire, The Nose of El Capitan, and a day trip up the Regular Route on Half Dome.

It might also be good to mention that I have ocean kayaked down the West Coast of Vancouver Island (Port Hardy to Victoria) and done river kayaking first descents of portions of the Gordon River and Loss Creek. I think if I have a strength, it is as an all rounder rather than in specific activities.

WI: Any big trips or adventures on the horizon?

KH: I don't have any specific trips planned yet. I would like to do a month long ski trip this spring, but haven't got any details worked out.

WI: What's the one dream trip that you one day image taking part in?

KH: I would like to do technical mountaineering trips around the world. There are lots of areas that I would like to visit in the Andes, Himalayas, St Elias Range, etc, but I don't have any specific ideas for a dream trip.

WI

Katy Holm would like to extend her and her teammates thanks to:

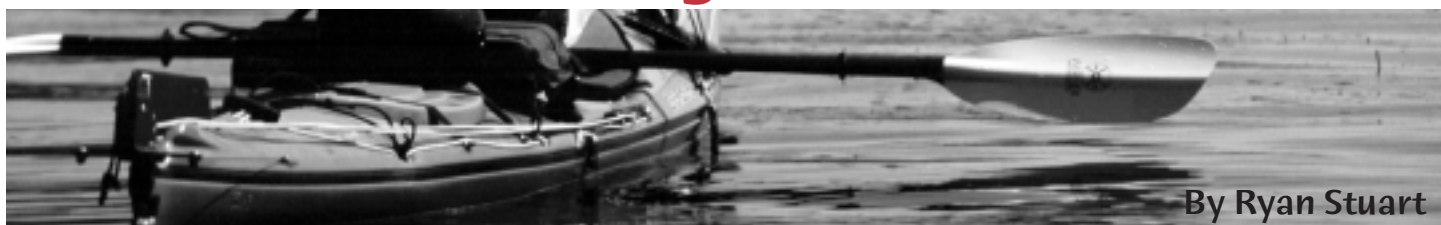
The Canadian Himalayan Foundation, The Jennifer Higgins Memorial fund, the Mountain Equipment Co-op. Also thanks to Western Canoeing and Kayaking, Ocean River Sports, Valhalla Pure Outfitters, Piper Harris, and Ryan Gill for their assistance in making their trip to the Sawbacks possible.

THE OUTDOOR GUIDE

There's no life like it



So...which way to head next?



By Ryan Stuart

Photo: Courtesy Geophila Adventures

All I want to do is to get paid to play.” That is the goal for some of the people who love the outdoors and especially outdoor adventure sports. From teaching kids outdoor education, to guiding multi day sea kayak trips, to leading international mountaineering expeditions, the choices are as numerous as the people that lead them.

Some are in it for the chance to travel the world working in the outdoors, others do it because they love to teach and still others do it as a cool summer job. But the one thing everyone working as guides and leaders have in common is the love for the outdoors and the knowledge that they will never be millionaires.

Anyone contemplating working in the adventure sports industry must know that it is a lifestyle choice. You will not get rich and you will spend night after night in a sleeping bag. Friends and family will be making fat cash at their jobs, their pasty white faces and paper pusher hands sitting in offices, chained to the computer and fixed to a nine to five schedule. At night they will fall asleep to the sound of sirens and the glow of the city. On weekends their out of shape office bodies fight the crowds and traffic heading to wherever their favorite weekend getaway is.

Meanwhile those choosing a job outdoors will be mostly broke, saving the remains of the last pay check for that essential piece of gear. Their weather beaten and tanned faces will sleep under the stars listening to the sounds of the wild. Their days are ruled by the arc of the sun across the horizon. Their fit bodies

work the trails, rivers, rock, snow and ocean daily, and between paid trips they race off to test themselves on personal adventures. Ah, life in the adventure sports industry.

So you have gotten past the lack of money issues and the sleeping bag thing, and you still want that outdoor job. But how do you get that job guiding, teaching or leading. The first thing you need is some basic hard skills. This can be achieved by joining outdoor clubs at school, work or with recognized associations like the Alpine Club of Canada or through personal trips with friends and family.

Either way participating in these activities teaches the beginner skills, like how to paddle a canoe or how to pack a backpack, and shows if you like sleeping in a sleeping bag enough to do it for a living. After your first few trips up mountains and down rivers, if you are anything like me, you have made enough mistakes and had a few near misses and are thinking that more training would be a good idea to maintain your health. There is a growing industry that is dedicated to training wanna-be outdoor leaders.

There are college programs, leadership semester programs, certification courses and week long guide tests. Each course is different. The right course depends on the individual. The courses teach soft skills like group dynamics and navigation, and hard skills like how to roll a kayak or how to build a rock climbing anchor. For the most part the training takes place in the backcountry so students gain real life experiences. After you have forked out cash to be trained you are probably looking for a job in the outdoors. But before you

can get that first job there is one skill you will almost certainly need regardless of your chosen sport—first aid. There is a long list of different courses and different companies found all over the place that teach all kinds of first aid. Different jobs have different requirements, but wilderness first aid is a good bet for jobs that venture into the backcountry. The courses are fairly similar, most are upgradeable and all will have to be renewed every few years.

With an outdoor job comes many companions to do personal trips with. This will add to your personal experience. To be paid for better trips experience is key. Lots of it, more, the better. No one can train anyone for that, you will have to get out and play in your chosen medium on a regular basis to get the skills and confidence to lead trips. With more experience you will probably want to upgrade your skills. Additional certifications is what is required here.

The certification process is like passing a course at school. It shows that the candidate has the necessary skill and technique to safely lead or teach the sport. Whether it is upgrading from an assistant sea kayak guide to a full guide or getting ACMG rock guide certification more advanced certificates make a guide more in demand. A certification by provincial certifying bodies is usually recognized across the country.

Because there are so many different companies offering so many different types and levels of training The Wild Isle has compiled a list of selected courses and schools that offer outdoor leadership training around Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland.

Hooksum Outdoor School

Karen and Stephen Charleson are the owners of a training program that is unique. Not only is the four week course based out of a traditional long house in Hesquiat Harbour at the north-western end of Clayquot Sound. But there is no running water or electricity and the course has a strong indigenous cultural element. "Indigenous knowledge and values are interwoven throughout the course," says Karen Charleson. "As is environmental awareness."

What they offer: 28 day course teaching 50 hour wilderness first aid, water life saving, surf guiding, seven days sea kayaking that prepares participants for the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of B.C. and coastal hiking. Groups: A maximum of 18 participants with a one guide to three participant ratio at all times. Ages 18 and up.

Cost: \$3700 for everything from pick up at Tofino on May 1, 2001 to drop off at Tofino on May 28, 2001. Participants are expected to bring their own wet suit, hiking boots and back pack.

What do graduates do? "Many are inclined to youth work and a lot are into the community development field," said Charleson. Contact: 250-670-1120, www.hooksumschool.com

Wilderness Kayak Institute

Running out of Port Hardy on the north end of Vancouver Island WKI teaches two courses. The masters program will be taught eight times this year. "The masters program is unique in North America," said Grant Thompson, operations director at WKI. "It offers sea kayak training on a personal and advanced level." The other course offered is sea kayak assistant guide instruction and certification. They are offered seven times this year.

What they offer: A eight day course that offers certification of Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC (SKGABC) and Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides BC (ACSKGBC) kayak guides and a 12 day masters course designed for advancing the skills of advanced paddlers.

Groups: A maximum of 10 students with two instructors, ages range from 19-65.

Cost: \$950 for certification course and \$2590 for masters course. What do graduates do?



Learning the tricks of the trade with COLT.

"Most work in the commercial sea kayak industry in B.C.," Thompson said. "About 20 per cent are school teachers who want skills to teach outdoor school programs." Contact: 1-800-677-0877, www.wildernesskayak.com

Canadian Outdoor Leadership Training

C.O.L.T. is the grand-daddy of Canada's leadership courses. It is also the most diverse. It teaches everything, surf kayaking, white water kayaking and canoeing, sea kayaking, flatwater canoeing, backcountry hiking, mountaineering, rock climbing, navigation and leadership skills. All that activity is packed into 100 days. The course is based at Strathcona Park Lodge in the centre of Vancouver Island and travels as far as Squamish and San Josef Bay, on the north end of Vancouver Island.

What they offer: A 100 day diverse leadership course and certifications. 50 hour wilderness first aid, Association of Canadian Sea Kayak Guides assistant guide, flatwater canoe instructor and the chance to do a working practicum at the outdoor education centre.

Groups: Ages 19 and up and they come from all over the world. Maximum 10 students to two or more guides.

Cost: \$8500 for 100 days, including all food and accommodation. Tents, boats and technical gear is provided but student is responsible for packs shoes and personal clothing.

What do graduates go? Successful COLTies can get jobs at Strathcona Park Lodge. They are also frequently hired as sea kayak guides, at kids camps or other outdoor education centres.

Contact: 250-286-3122, www.colt.bc.ca or info@strathcona.bc.ca

Capilano College Wilderness Leadership Diploma

Capilano College offers a course with college credit in the Howe Sound, Squamish, Whistler, Pemberton corridor. The course offers two streams, water or wilderness travel, both of which include classroom time. They are both run twice a year from February to mid May and from August to mid November. If a student wants both skill sets he or she can return to do the other during the next session. Scott Fischer, is the head instructor for the program, he wants, "Someone who is looking to get a jump start into the tourism and adventure tourism industry." What they offer: Both streams offerer class time to learn landscape interpretation, natural history and navigation type courses as well as an Emergency Response Certificate. The water certs are Flatwater Canoe Instructor, SKGABC Seakayak Day Trip Guide, Radio Operators, and Rescue Canada Swiftwater Rescue Certification. On land hiking, climbing and backpacking skills are learnt as are nordic and Telemark Instructor certifications. All the courses taken during the course can be credited toward a college diploma.

Groups: 24 people are in a class but groups are only 12 students ranging in age from 19 to

40. Students come from all over Canada and even internationally

Costs: \$6500 for an intensive 14 week course. It includes all travel and expenses when on courses outside of Squamish. But participants must provide own housing when not in the field. Personal gear is also needed. What do graduates do? "One third go on to do our outdoor recreation management diploma," says Fischer. "Some work in the field as park rangers or heli guides or a Mountain Equipment Co-op." Contact: 604-984-4960

Association of Canadian Mountain Guides

If you want to lead international mountain trips this is the kind of certification needed. The ACMG is for those that are very serious about a life as a guide in the mountains. Full mountain guide certification takes on average six full years. The certification process involves a series of courses and exams designed to develop a student's skills, knowledge and leadership. There are a few different ACMG certifications hiking guide both day and backpack, climbing gym instructor and mountain guide which is comprised of several other certifications, assistant rock guide, alpine guide and ski guide. In 1999 ACMG teamed up with the University College of the Cariboo in Kamloops to run all the training and testing for certifications.

Contact: 403-678-2883 for general information, for info on training and certifications 250-372-0118 www.acmg.ca,

North Island College Coastal Adventure Tourism Certificate

The water based course calls Campbell River home but travels around Vancouver Island from Barkley and Clayquot Sounds to the Inside Passage and Johnstone Strait learning how to lead trips on a variety of ocean crafts. What they offer: A five month full time course that is part of a diploma program. Training includes sea kayaking, sport fishing, canoeing, sailing, power boat operation, first aid and tourism classes. And there is a work placement. What do graduates do? Graduates jobs include sea kayak guides, fishing guides, sail and power boat charters and whale and wildlife tourism operators.

Geophila Adventures

Based off Quadra Island, Geophila Adventures offers Professional Sea Kayak Guide Training Courses endorsed by the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of BC. Instruction is provided by top industry instructors and carries a reputation as being a challenging and very informative course. Greg Shea part owner of the company says the courses are geared toward, "People interested in pursuing sea kayaking as a profession or wanting to gain the skill & knowledge necessary to feel confident paddling anywhere on the BC coast that is suitable for our ocean going craft. Participants should be



Wilderness first aid - knowledge, improvisation, problem solving & decision making

accustom to wilderness travel and have the willingness to learn and participate in course activities."

What they offer: Three 10 day courses, between April and June, that prepares students for the required written test and practical examination to be certified as an assistant guide in the Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of B.C. Groups: Ages 18 and up, and a maximum of 10 students to two guides. Cost: \$1000 for 10 days, must provide own sleeping gear, tent, sleeping bag etc., personal clothing and paddling gear. Boats are not included but can be rented.

For an information package contact Ocean River Sports 1 800 909 4233 Geophilia Adventures (250) 285 3308 geofilia@island.net

The Genesis from Slipstream

This is a land based course that utilizes all of B.C. to teach its three segments. From the Canadian Rockies to the Coast Range and onto Vancouver Island the course teaches decision making, problem solving and the interpersonal skills needed to be a good leader. Brooks Hogya, owner and instructor of Slipstream says the Backcountry Leadership part of the course sets it apart from other leadership semesters. "It is the high end of leadership development, it really teaches the skills needed to be a good guide." That includes back country cooking, "We teach them to cook as good or better than a restaurant." The Genesis participants are expected to be able to carry 40 to 60 pound packs on rough terrain. What they offer: The course is broken down into three separate parts and includes Advanced Wilderness First Aid. The first segment is climbing, which includes sport, gear, aid and rock rescue on one pitch and multi-pitch routes. Alpine climbing, which is made up of alpine snow, rock and glacier climbing techniques, routefinding and risk management, is the second unit. The last is backcountry leadership training which is the development of guiding skills such as group communication, hard skills and everything else

that makes a guide. That section is taught on Vancouver Island in 25 days, including two backcountry trips and five days in class. Groups: Guide to student ratio is 1:3 on average with a maximum number of students being eight. Cost: \$6998 for three months from May 14 until Aug. 15. Cost includes transportation and expenses from Victoria for course but does not include time between trips. Contact: 1-800-760-3188, www.slipstreamadventures.com

Slipstream Wilderness First Aid

Slipstream offers three types of first aid. But its 80 hour advanced wilderness first aid is by far its most popular. The courses teach the techniques and the thinking processes required to treat injuries and illness in the backcountry with only the things carried on the trip. The three levels are designed for the differing requirements of employers and associations throughout B.C., Canada and even internationally. Advanced has become the standard says Brooks Hogya, owner and instructor of Slipstream. "We only offer three or four essential (50 hour) courses, on request, this year. While we are running 20 advanced first aid courses." The advanced course costs \$558 for 10 days. The essential for leaders is \$428 and the recreational four day course is \$228. The only requirements Hogya says are necessary for first aid courses is proficient English, and a willingness and keenness to learn. The people that generally do the best are the ones that have spent time in the backcountry, while those that have done other first aid courses but rarely leave road accessed areas are the ones that don't do as well, Hogya said. He says there is a 85 per cent pass rate for the advanced course.

Brooks Hogya, owner and instructor of Slipstream, a company that runs wilderness first aid courses, says that most companies in the outdoor business require first aid, "The vast majority of associations and employers want Advanced Wilderness First Aid." The advanced course is 80 hours long and is designed for people guiding in the backcountry. Hogya said it is "ridiculous" for people to be guiding without first aid. "By definition guiding is keeping your clients safe, but when you're on wilderness trips shit happens. Guides should be able to deal safely and professionally with whatever happens." But Hogya doesn't think every job in the outdoors requires the first aid his company teaches. "There are two ways to look at wilderness first aid, there are those that are coming from civilization to perform a rescue, they can bring whatever they want in with them. On the other side is the guide who is in the backcountry dealing with the health of a client with only the gear they brought in. For those two circumstances there are different courses. I really encourage people to shop around and find the right course for them." Hogya says part of that is knowing what a person will be using their first aid for helps in choosing a course.



Strathcona Wilderness Institute

Working in partnership with BC Parks, 'SWI' inspires awareness, appreciation, and stewardship of the natural world through education and participation.

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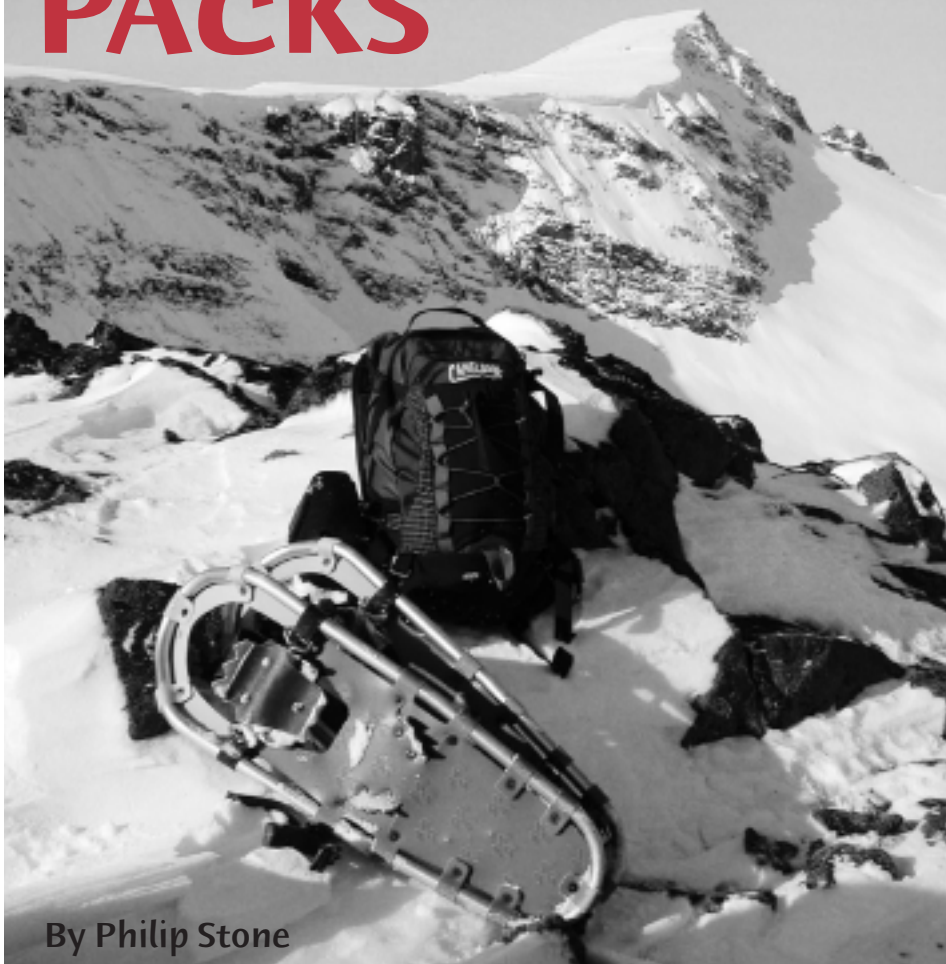
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HYDRATION PACKS



By Philip Stone

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Despite our best efforts to ensure this zip was closed, it repeatedly leaked water. Once after a fall and roll off a bike the entire contents dumped onto the rider!

We also found a disconcerting tendency for the long DirectFlow™ tube to be caught underneath the pack, the loaded weight of which was sufficient to open the valve and completely syphon the reservoir dry. This happened on a number of occasions but does have an easy fix. Trimming 6-7 inches off the tube so it isn't long enough to be caught under the pack did the trick. Don't be over eager and trim too much though!

The wide opening permits easy cleaning and access to pack snow in to melt. We'd prefer to see a larger version of a screw top closure like Cascade Designs™ Hoser™ reservoir though.

Camelbak™ with Hydrolock™

In the cat and mouse of innovation Camelbak™ have pulled up a rung introducing a small tap (Hydrolock™) on the ergonomic mouthpiece of their reservoir. With the tap in the off position there seemed to be no chance of draining the reservoir. Carrying a spare would be smart!

We preferred the supple material the Camelbak™ was constructed with. In our tests we froze both reservoirs repeatedly to see how the plastics performed. Both stood up to our tests equally but we remained suspicious of the more brittle plastic in the Big Zip™ and how it might perform with age at low temperatures.

One hang tag graphic demonstrates a car with a wheel driven up on the Camelbak™ to prove its strength. We tried the test just standing on each reservoir. The Camelbak showed no sign of leak with 150lb load whereas the Big Zip™ zippered open spilling all at barely half that weight.

Camelbak™ offer a line of cleaning tools including a brush and drying rack which although a more expensive solution does compensate for the lack of easy access to scrub the interior.

REVIEWS

Every now and then an item of outdoor equipment comes on the market that revolutionizes our recreation experience. What ever did we do before Therma-Rests™, Gore-tex™, dry bags or plastic boots? Recently a new product has come out to play, the hydration pack and it has revolutionized the way we drink.

The first of these packs to catch my eye were the Camelbaks™ strapped to the back of sleek looking mountain bikers. The principle seemed ideal, water on the go. The reservoirs are easily moved into other packs or even the cockpit of a kayak making them very versatile units. Manufacturers were quick to note this versatility and today you have a choice of numerous pack sizes for every type of adventure.

Wild Isle invited three manufacturers to send samples of their larger day-tripping packs to be put through their paces. Cascade Designs™ Typhoon™, Mountain Equipment Co-op's Mountain Fountain Whopper™ and Camelbak's Sherpa™. We've taken these packs, biking, riding, skiing snowshoeing and hiking and have news of their performance for you.

The Packs



Cascade Designs - Typhoon

Manufacturers stats:

Water Capacity: 3 litres (100oz)

Water Storage: Platypus Big Zip 3

Gear Capacity: 29 litres (1750 cu in)

Weight Empty: 740g (26oz)

Venerated manufacturers of Therma-Rests™ and Seal Line™ dry bags we expected great things of the Typhoon™. In style and construction the Typhoon™ did not disappoint. It boasts a trim back hugging design with the most compact use of the cross the board 30 litres of volume in our test packs.

The only improvements we'd like to see would be an interior route for the reservoir tube. The Typhoon has an opening close to the bottom of the pack and the tube runs outside the pack and then over the shoulder. This exposure allows easy freezing and we can only presume that in hot temperatures will make that first mouthful unpalatably warm. That and a screw top reservoir such as the Hoser™ would be ideal.

Form: *** Function: *******



MEC- Mountain Fountain Whopper

Manufacturers stats:

Water Capacity: 6 litres (200oz)

Water Storage: Two Platypus Big Zip 3 reservoirs

Gear Capacity: 29 litres (1750 cu in)

Weight Empty: 740g (26oz)

With a strong history of pack design and manufacture we were not surprised to find the MEC's offering to be an enlightened version of the theme. Very strong and durable construction with a comfortable fit when loaded. The individual sleeves for each reservoir makes it easy to stow them when full and permits easy access to the cargo compartment for other gear.

The side pocket configuration is particularly functional although the mesh side pockets might be better converted to a solid construction to accommodate poles, shovel handles etc. As it is they look like they are designed for a water bottle!

The only drawback is the MEC's use of the Big Zip™ system which brought with it the problems mentioned on the opposing page. If MEC opted for a Camelbak™ reservoir (or Camelbak style like the Hoser™) this would be a valuable improvement.

Form: *** Function: *******



Camelbak - Sherpa

Manufacturers stats:

Water Capacity: 3 litres (100oz)

Water Storage: 3 litre Camelbak with hydrolock

Gear Capacity: 28.5 litres (1740 cu in)

Weight Empty: 1100g (26oz)

Grand-daddy of the hydration pack world Camelbak boasts a line of packs covering every sport/activity imaginable. The Sherpa™ covers many bases itself with the only gear loops for climbing gear, dedicated shovel patch and ice axe loop found on our test packs.

We found the cargo storage to be the most ample of the packs reviewed but with the result when it's fully loaded that the Sherpa™ looked and felt a little bulky - hunchback style. This was amplified when the reservoir was stowed in the insulated compartment down the ventilated back. Here the full reservoir bowed the back out even more. We preferred to store the reservoir in the main compartment inside a wierd drawstring compartment even though it sagged into the bottom of that. There is confusion as to where the reservoir should actually go, with neither location really being ideal. As with the other packs construction and material is bombproof.

Form: *** Function: *******

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TECH TIPS

By Chris Perrault

There's something about a hand made Italian hiking boot that gets me going. I suppose it's because most of the footwear today lacks the artistic and careful quality that the Italian cobblers have retained over the years. I'm lucky to have a great pair of well broken in hiking boots. They fit great. If you're lucky your boots fit too. If you're smart you take care of your boots and wear quality socks to protect your feet from blisters and all that good stuff. If you care, and you should, you also have some supportive insoles or custom foot beds.

Custom foot beds! Why, what for you ask? Well, for starters all footwear is designed to fit everyone poorly. This is a good thing. Footwear manufactures would be shooting themselves in the foot if they attempted to build into their footwear the support required for the individual foot. Of course, there is a consistency among feet that manufactures have been able to build into their footwear, but if you want a perfect fit your going to have to take the extra step and put something supportive under your feet. Most shoes are fitted with a generic foam insole to offer some 'cush' when trying on new shoes. These insoles are comfortable when new but loose their effect after a few weeks of use. With out the support of any insole you're walking around on the shoe's midsole. The midsole is designed to give structure to the footwear and in most cases does not support the foot; at least not as well as a quality foot bed.

Our feet were designed to work best from the support of soft ground. Imagine footprints on a sandy beach. The sand conforms to every detail and completely supports the foot. Now, imagine footprints on a concrete sidewalk. If the foot were sweaty, there would be a print, but certainly no evidence of support. Ouch. The good news it that the sandy beach support we lost by paving our

planet can be had by getting your feet on some custom foot beds. Foot beds range from replaceable insoles like Superfeet to heat formed insoles like Formthotics. The support you require depends on your physical health and level of activity. Regardless, if you run marathons or hike with a heavy pack you will benefit from supporting your feet.

Taking a step (we average eight to ten thousand a day) is more than just putting one foot in front of the other. First your heel is impacted. If the heel is improperly supported your foot will turn excessively outward; this is called over-pronation and can lead to a variety of different problems. Over-pronation leads to soft tissue damage that can cause bunions, heel spurs and hammer toes. From there, knee and back problems can arise. Not a good situation if you enjoy an active life style. If you have any of these problems then foot beds may offer some relief. If you're healthy then consider foot beds to avoid the problems of an unsupported foot. Most running and hiking shops will carry a variety of foot beds to choose from. If you're new to foot beds take your time getting used to them. Start out wearing them for a couple of hours a day and if any persistent pain occurs address it immediately. Listen to your feet, they will let you know what they need.

If your shoes fit well and you're comfortable with you're setup great; consider your self lucky. If you want to improve the comfort and support of your footwear while reducing strain on your joints and muscles then get some foot beds. You will notice a difference in comfort, support and balance. Your feet will thank you for it. Walk softy and carry a big smile. **WI**

Chris Perrault is an avid outdoors person and runs Strathcona Outfitters in Campbell River where he endeavours to reinvest as much as possible back into the local outddor community with trail info, great advice and a friendly atmosphere.

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