



# The Prairie Dog Companion: Newsletter of the North Texas River Runners

## Ocoee DrawDown

by Lorraine McPhee

Following a grueling 14-hour drive from Arlington, Texas with fellow paddler Conrad Seghers, we landed in Tennessee at 4am. I wasn't sure how I would feel paddling the Ocoee River after the drive, and only three hours of sleep, but any fears were unfounded as the adrenaline hit and we were off!

A group of nine of us paddlers put in at the damn on the Middle Ocoee River. We were from all over: Texas, Atlantis, Maryland, even

Asheville. Our leader was Scott Coultas, and he runs this trip annually at Drawdown time, with an open invitation to paddlers every year. His interesting philosophy is to put on the river about noon each day to beat the crowds. It was very different from Charles Smith's clinics!! We actually ran into Charles Smith and his clinic group as they were about to put on, which was a wonderful surprise. I wished to be with them.

Like us, they were really enjoying the

weather which was spectacular--not hot, but not cold either, just gorgeous. I quickly discovered that the water too, was a nice temperature when I flipped trying to catch a boof near Hawaii-5-0.

Our group was a fun mix of canonist and kayakers. It was very interesting to see the different lines everyone took. My strategy the first day was to bomb every hole I could, to see how my new boat would perform. Boy did I get squirrled! It sure was fun though. The

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### January Program

Don't miss our special guest and program January 15th with Ben Kvanli - 1996 Olympian in Kayak, 2005 US. National Champion C-2, founder of the non-profit Red River Racing Team, and '08 Olympic hopeful in C-2.

## Sea Beagle Does Salt Water!

by Ronnie Ash

Thirty five years ago I discovered plans for a plywood hulled, Western Greenland style sea kayak, the "Kempock," in a little boat plans catalog that I had ordered from the back of Popular Mechanics

magazine. The picture that accompanied the written description of the boat showed 2 stalwart paddlers, attired in anoraks, grasping double bladed paddles, and standing alongside their Kempocks on a desolate shore of Baffin

Bay, with ice bergs afloat in the background. It conveyed a sense and a spirit of adventure so intense that my imagination was irrevocably captured and it marked the beginning of my long love affair with

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## Sea Beagle (Con't)

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boatbuilding.

Last month, my own handcrafted Kempock, the "Sea Beagle," finally reached the sea shore at Port Aransas on the Gulf coast. Sure, Port "A" offers a less exotic and intimidating shore than that of Baffin Bay, but we had a fine little outing nonetheless.

The "Beagle" and I, along with my old Aquaterra Chinook sea kayak, an aged Folboat tandem touring kayak, and a Mohawk tandem canoe, joined my parents and my oldest sister for a week of modest adventuring. We enjoyed a divine level of luxury, staying at the Sea Gull Condominiums in a 3 bedroom condo on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor, with balconies on both the Gulf and the Corpus Christi Bay sides, and a commanding view. I very nearly wore out my binoculars admiring the scenery!

My youngest sister and her husband joined us for the first 2 days, and later in the week my niece, her husband, and their 2 youngsters added their presence to the joyful assembly for a couple of days.

We enjoyed 4 significant paddling ventures. Our first foray was upon the Lighthouse Lakes Canoe Trail. We launched at Lighthouse Lakes Park on SH 361 and were immediately faced with the challenge of crossing the channel that leads from Aransas Pass to Port Aransas. With a steady parade of recreational power boats dragging big wakes and creating a confused chop we had a 40 yard sprint to reach the calm water of Lighthouse lakes on the far side. It was too much for my little sister and her spouse in the canoe. They had an unfortunate incident on the Snake River a few years ago that has left my sister noticeably nervous over the thought of canoeing. Discretion being the better part of valor, they elected to put the canoe back on the trailer and return to "camp."

The rest of the party survived the channel crossing and had a grand tour through the black mangrove maze to the Lydia Ann lighthouse. The downside of this route is that there's no good place to stop for a break, or to disembark and stretch one's legs, so I was hearing a few complaints about aching backsides and stiff knees (my own included) by the time we returned to the put-in.

In the past, on my expeditions to the coast, I've al-

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## Coastal Trails

Submitted by Jean Muncrief

Information on all coastal paddling trails and the four inland trails is now

available. Plan your next trip on the water today with site information available under Inland Trails and Coastal Trails.

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails/>

This service is provided free of charge by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

## Ocoee Drawdown (Con't)

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only hole that got me was the little one mid-river about 50 yards below Double Trouble. Charles Smith calls that hole “trashy”. It did trash me for sure, but I managed to get out eventually, that hole now merits a “don’t go near” status. It was a great first day.

Around camp that night, we had a fire, and the stars were so bright. In a brief ceremony Conrad Seghers was officially inducted into the Ocoee Swim Team, (he had experienced an epic swim just below Grumpy’s

Ledge, plus a few others). He was awarded a nice medal on a ribbon, placed around his neck accompanied by much applause. All four days were

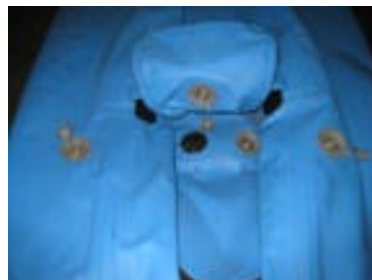
wonderful, with various new members joining the swim team, and lots of great conversation and new friendships forged.

My favorite spot on the Ocoee this trip was “Gerbil Stuffer” for spin practice (not too far below Diamond Splitter). That is the little hole I would bring home with me if I could. It was a wonderful trip!

## For Sale

**Tyler Bennett <TylerB@stansport.com>** wrote:

Hey it's Tyler B. I'm out here in CA doing the west coast thing but guess what I came across in my warehouse at work! It's a great ducky style kayak that has never been used and is greatly reduced in price and we are just trying to get rid of it I'm attaching some pictures of it so you can see it better. It's a very heavy gauge vinyl with a back rest and nice air valves; all a person would have to do is attach some anchor points for thigh straps. Retail on this boat is \$1,115 and cost is \$550, we are offering it for \$360 plus shipping of course. The boat is 9'9" and 36" wide. Let me know if you need any more info. Hope all is well in Texas !!



## Sea Beagle (Con't)

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ways taken my “Tupperware” sea kayak so as not to risk the Sea Beagle’s pristine hull. My sister’s presence and need for a boat on this trip prompted me to take the Sea Beagle so she could paddle the Chinook. I’m so glad that I did, for I fell in love with the Sea Beagle all over again. What a sweet and steadfast craft! Naturally though, within an hour of launching I ran over a submerged and sharp edged rock and put a 3 foot long gouge in her heretofore flawless bottom. In the week that I was down there that was the only rock I saw. *Sacre Bleu!*

For our next jaunt we launched at Wilson’s Cut, just across the highway from the Sea Gull Condominiums, and made the half mile crossing of Shamrock Cove out to Shamrock Island in Corpus Christi Bay. The island is a bird sanctuary and no landing is permitted, but it sports a series of interior “lakes” which one can paddle into and explore. It’s magical!

After my niece and her family showed up we made a special little outing tailored to the kids and I was able to take my 4 year old great (?) niece for her first canoe ride. (I consider it my bounden duty to turn kids against jet skis as early as possible!)

My niece’s husband is a chef at Viga on the Banks, one of the most prestigious and expensive restaurants in San Antonio. That evening he cooked dinner for us – pork tenderloin medallions, Mexican rice, zucchini, and an exquisite green sauce made with cilantro, jalapenos, and ground nuts that was so superb I still salivate at the memory of it. I could eat cardboard with that sauce on it and think that I was dining with the angels!

We then took a day off from paddling to go to the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus. As luck would have it, we got there just in time to watch them feed the Anaconda. It’s not often that I feel sorry for a rat, but it can happen!

On our final full day I departed from my comfort zone, drove down Mustang Island to the north end of Padre Island, and went to windsurfing school at Worldwinds Windsurfing at Bird Island Basin on Laguna Madre. It was ever so stimulating! Laguna Madre is a world renowned windsurfing destination with consistent winds and ideal conditions. The school’s beginner boards are wide beamed and forgiving, and I had a bang up time.

Later that afternoon my folks and I launched at the City Marina in Port Aransas to tour the harbor and admire the boats. Then we nosed out into the ship channel and were fortunate enough to be on hand when an inbound tanker turned the corner from the jetties into the ship channel. With half a dozen porpoises frolicking in the froth on her bow stem, it was all too cool, although the Sea Beagle and I felt pretty small as that throbbing steel behemoth went surging past.

Our week at the coast passed all too quickly, and I heartily recommend Port Aransas as a paddling destination. On salt water or fresh, “there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.



### **Fabulous Friday Night Flips**

Just like last year, indoor heated pool time to work on your roll and paddling strokes. Bring your paddle skirt and PFD and demo the entire line of Jackson Kayaks. This event is appropriate for all skill levels, beginners to experts.

## **The Colony Aquatic Park Pool 5580 North Colony Blvd.**

**Friday nights, beginning  
October 19, 2007  
through April 18, 2008  
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm**

**Costs – \$5.00 pool rental, free kayak use, \$5.00 PFD – skirt – paddle rental**

**Please visit our website for additional information  
[www.kayakinstruct.com](http://www.kayakinstruct.com)**

### **5th Annual Brazos River Clean-up**

Saturday, April 5, 2007

Meet at Tres Rios Campground at 9:00 A.M., near the confluence of Brazos River, Paluxy River and Squaw Creek

2322 County Road 312

Glen Rose, Tx. 76043

Ph) 254-897-4253

Complimentary Ranch House BBQ dinner after clean-up (1:30 - 5:00 pm)

Free canoes and shuttles provided by Low Water Canoes and Rhodes Canoes

Complimentary camping at Tres Rios April 4, 5, 6.

Cabins available. Call Tres Rios for info (254-897-4253)

Contact: Ed Lowe W)214-358-0612; M)214-802-6811;

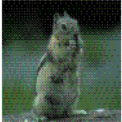
email: [twt-edlowe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:twt-edlowe@sbcglobal.net)

### **23rd Annual San Marcos River Cleanup,**

Sat., March 1, 2008 - San Marcos, TX

Contact: Tom Goynes 512-392-6171

For more info, go to <http://www.txrivers.org/calendar.html>



The North Texas River Runners  
P.O. Box 1284  
Bedford, TX 76095-1284

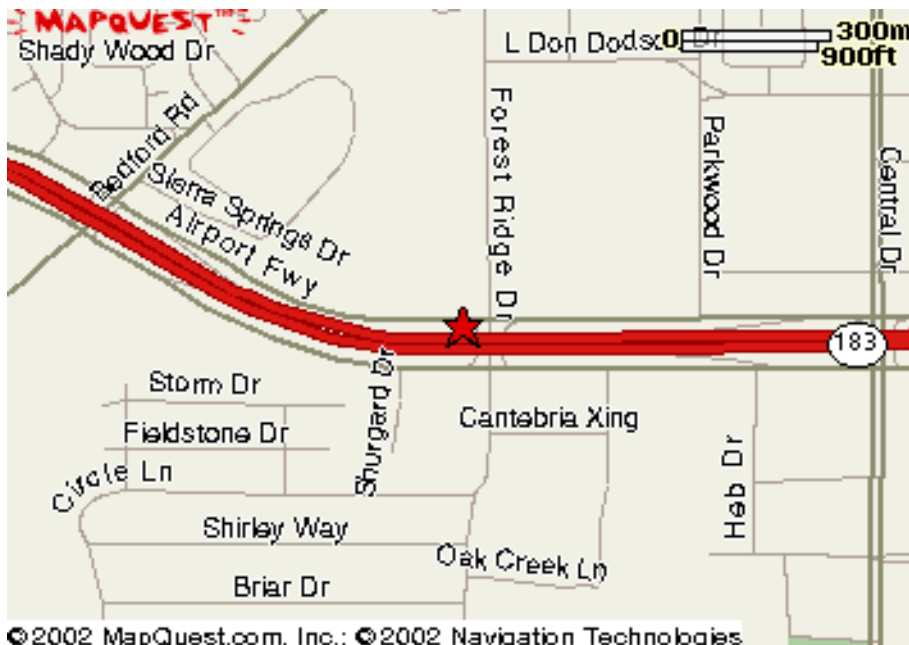


Home of the Prairie Dog Surfing Society  
"If we're not in the hole, we're sitting right beside it."



We're on the web!  
[www.river-runners.org](http://www.river-runners.org)

If you would like to receive the Newsletter by email, please  
contact: [cdboerner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cdboerner@sbcglobal.net)



Club meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at Spring Creek Barbeque from 7:00—9:00 PM  
Next Meeting: January 15th

**Spring Creek Barbecue**  
1509 Airport Freeway  
North-West Corner of Forest & 183  
817-545-0184