



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

Commodore's Column

by Allen Harrison

Something Different Ain't So Bad

Since I started taking formal paddling training I have had little desire to spend the limited time I have to paddle on any water that was not fast moving. I seemed to get more bang for the buck on intermediate whitewater than any other form of paddling. Well, I found out this past week that there are other paddling disciplines that can provide equal thrills and satisfaction. I participated in the club trip to the Gulf this past week to kayak the bays around Port Aransas. I had no equipment suitable for the activity, but Laurie Patterson was kind enough to loan me one of her touring kayaks for the trip. There will be a trip report or two published soon so I will not get into any de-

scriptions of our experiences. If you want to know if I enjoyed the experience, please be aware that I came back and started pricing touring kayaks! I want to do again something I never thought I would want to do at all. Don't dismiss the club trips just because you don't think you will like the activity or the people that attend. Laurie has some potentially terrific trips in her plans. Keep your eyes and mind open to the upcoming trips and be ready to have a great time.

Something different for our club meeting in May is a get together for all members and their family at Lake Arlington arranged by Lorraine McPhee. It will be held on May 20th, which would be the normal date for our May meeting at our host, Spring Creek BBQ. If you missed George

Wilhelm's presentation on his trip down the Nahanni River you missed something different. The trip narrative was captivating. Not one person left the meeting early or left the room during the presentation. That's a first! Perhaps no one left early because we sold the raffle tickets early and did not have the drawing until the end of the meeting, but I think no one left early because we were all visualizing ourselves in a canoe alongside George for that three week wilderness trip. A trip like that would be a great club activity, Laurie.

The whitewater paddling class at Tarrant County College still exists. Our class trip to the Mulberry River is this coming weekend and there is going to be a lot of water for the fortunate few who signed up for the
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SpringFest: April 2008 by Lorraine McPhee

Springsfest this year was a little quieter compared to last year, (no formal slalom competitions) but no less fun for us. Margaret Thompson, Susan Blair & Ken, Clyde Mahler and I hung out together camping at Pecan Park. We played both in

the section of river by our campground, and at Rio Vista. We all took classes and demo-ed some boats. It was fun seeing friends down there, including Laurie Patterson, (who was busy organizing most of the event/registration/silent auction), and Larry Lewis and Steve

Ford (who each taught many classes and competed in the Dutch oven cook off).
Camping was fun, including the crackle of a cheery fire. We weren't going to have a fire, but Clyde set his hanky on fire accidentally trying to make
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May Meeting Change of Location!

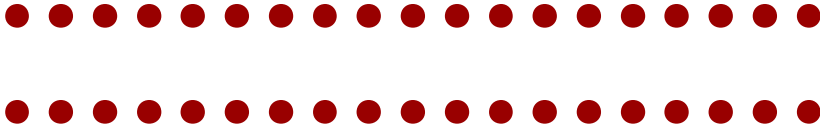
See page 2 for the details of the club meeting at Lake Arlington this month. We will not be meeting at Spring Creek Barbeque!

Commodore's Column (Con't)

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class. The class is different than it used to be. The class is no longer for credit; it is only for continuing education credit. There is only one field trip instead of two or three. There are different instructors with a somewhat different approach to teaching. None of this different adds up to bad. In spite of the differences from a few years ago, this class is outstanding. You will definitely learn to paddle if you are a beginner and you will definitely improve your skills if you are an experienced paddler. This class deserves your support and the support of the NTRR.

Keep an eye out for the opportunity to do something different. "If you keep on doing what you have always been doing, you keep on getting what you have always been getting." Things may not get worse, but they sure as the world cannot get better or more exciting. And remember, if you are going to paddle upstream to reach that exciting spot just around the bend, you have to paddle with a purpose!



For Sale (still): Brand New Canoe Paddle. Werner Nantahala 56" Retail \$150. Asking \$85. Barb Cutter 817-354-6853, bjscutter@sbcglobal.net



NTRR May 20th 6pm

An Evening at the Lake

Fun for the whole family

- *bring a side dish or dessert to share & your meat for the grill
- *bring a chair
- *bring your boat (if you like)

Charcoal will be hot and ready, paper products utensils, soda, lemonade and ice will be provided

**Fun on the Water: games, skills and drills, competitions

**Photo Scavenger hunt for the kiddos-bring your camera

**Tug of war: put your paddling guns to the test

Don't miss it!

Location: Lake Arlington
 6300 W. Arkansas Ln.
 Arlington, TX 76015
 Questions? Call Lorraine McPhee
 682-551-3101



Activities

May 31-June 1 Swiftwater Rescue class The class will be taught by Phil Meyer here at our Center in San Marcos. The price is \$95 per day with the first day being ACA River Essentials, and the second day being the full ACA Swiftwater Rescue class. The links to ACA and information and the materials are at: http://www.kayakinstruction.org/Kayak_Instruction/Swiftwater_Rescue.html

We would love to work with you guys. To sign up all I need is credit card information from people to hold the spot. They can pay however they like when they get here. Let me know if you have any more questions,

Michelle Kvanli

May 17th Fish Creek Clean-up

Meeting Point –

10 a.m.,

Sat. May 17, 2008

North End of Mountain Creek Soccer Complex.

3730 Belt Line Road, Grand Prairie, TX 75052.

Pull in the north gate. We will direct you where to park.

I want to meet everyone here and introduce the project, walk the bridge and show you some important things before we begin exploring access points for a future cleanup.

Tammy Chan's cell phone:

214-212-7958

Mexican Fudge

Submitted by Lois Michie

4 eggs

1 pd. cheddar cheese - grated

jalapeño peppers - chopped - remove seeds

1 tbps. minced onion

If you can handle the heat use as many peppers as you want to.

Beat eggs and onion, slightly

add cheese and peppers

The mixture will be thick, spread in a 13x9 inch pan.

Bake 350 for 30 mins.... Yummy

Angelina River Trip By Jean Muncrief

I arrived at Martin Dies State park a bit “white knuckled” from gripping the steering wheel for 5 hours. Driving my mid sized utility vehicle with a 17 ½ foot Old Town Tripper tied to the top in high winds was, to say the least, a bit trying on my nerves! I thought at any minute we would be come airborne. Lois Michie, my navigator, and I were devising a plan in case we sailed off a bridge and landed in the water We would crawl out of the truck, untie the canoe, flip it over and paddle to safety!

Our fellow NTRR paddlers were already at the park “making camp” and dreaming about “what’s for supper” when Lois and I arrived. Weldon Sanders had driven his big (I might add heavy here) truck, chauffeured 5 paddlers and trailered all their boats down to the park where we would camp for the night.

Members of our expedition included:

Laurie Patterson
Weldon Sanders
Ina Klune
Larry Lewis
Darrel Lee
John K
Lois Michie
Jon Muncrief
Jean Muncrief



Jon drove over early from Huntsville, TX and selected two great campsites for us. Martin Dies has recently opened after being closed for several months due to the damage from Hurricane Rita. Texas Parks and Wildlife has done a wonderful job of cleaning up campsite areas and removing

debris. But hurricane damage was still evident in the form of limb striped trees and freshly bulldozed areas. Nature is amazing in its recovery

process from trees growing leaves and small limbs directly on

their trunks and plants prolifically sprouting and growing in bulldozed areas. I especially noted a lot of Poke Weed which was a spring greens staple for early pioneers. (I couldn’t get any takers once I told the group Poke was poisonous and you needed to boil it 3 times pouring off and replacing the water between boils before eating it!)

With tents up and kitchen gear out, Lois and Jon began to pre-

pare the supper we all had been dreaming about. Jon brought Chuck Wagon Chow, an old family recipe, with beans, corn, stew meat and chili like seasonings. To our delight, he also

baked a large batch of cornbread in his Dutch Oven to go with our Chow. After the meal, Lois produced a decadent dessert she had made at home of chocolate cherry cake with boiled chocolate icing! Oh, yum!

Sated by a delicious supper and the kitchen clean, we dragged



our chairs into a circle. John K. surprised us with his now infamous “Fire in a Box”. He pulled out a propane log fireplace from a round canister, hooked

it up to our propane and lit it. It was great! The only thing missing were the sparks that fly from real logs burning! Our conversations then turned to water, paddling, past and future trips..... a fitting close in anticipation for the next days paddle. We all rolled out early the next morning to “Break Camp”, pack everything up for the river and devour Ina’s wonderful scrambled eggs, fruit cups and muffins for breakfast. Once we

were loaded, we met with one of the Park Rangers and talked about the river trip. She encouraged us to come and help with debris clean up on the river to help especially in control of invasive non-native water plants.

Soon, the Camp Hosts, Barb and Emil, who Laurie had asked to shuttle us arrived and we headed for the river put in. Our launch site at Highway 63 was excellent with a cement ramp and convenient boat loading area. We quickly arranged our gear in the boats and started our trip down the river. Paddling tandem canoes were Laurie and Darrell, Weldon and Ina and Lois and myself. John K. paddled a solo canoe and Jon M. and Larry paddled kayaks.

The Angelina had a slow current for a leisurely trip. Birds were in abundance especially the Pileated Woodpecker, Kingfishers and Great Blue Heron’s. Flowers bloomed along the banks including wild azaleas and dogwoods. And the weather was perfect, not too warm or too cold for comfort!

Larry Lewis led the way scouting for motor boats, interesting sites to see and secret coves to explore. We

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Angelina River (Con't.)

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paddled about 8 miles to a sand bar on the right hand side of the river which was grassy and had a wooden shelf perfect for setting out lunch ingredients. "Lunch by Weldon" was delectable with lunch meats, cheeses, Pringles (especially the loaded baked potato ones) and would you believe and ingenious product of peanut butter and jelly in the same jar?!

After resting, replenishing our body fuel and picking up trash left by other campers at the site, we loaded back in the boats and headed on down the river. We all took turns paddling close to our fellow paddlers to visit (this is one of the great things about a leisurely flowing river trip).

We stopped about 3:30 pm at our campsite for the night on the left hand side of the river after paddling about 10 miles. It was called Bluff #1 and has the best loading and unloading area of all the sites we observed. Laurie had made reservations for the site through the Corp of Engineers. It is one of the nicest river camp sites we have been and included a large picnic table for our kitchen, lots of room for our 9 tents and very clean.

We "Made Camp" and then Laurie and I proceeded to set up the "facilities". We located a secluded place and set up her new PETT Toilet, the pee bucket and hand wash facilities. Once in place, Laurie called everyone together to conduct a lesson in "potty training" including "faux pa" demonstrations!

Next on our agenda was supper "by Laurie". She wins the award for most "Creative Meal on the River"! We had Asian food beginning with egg roll appetizers and on to stir fry beef and broccoli, orange chicken and of course rice. To top off the meal, we devoured the rest of Lois' cherry chocolate cake. It was so good that people were practically licking the crumbs out of the pan right Ina?!

While supper was being prepared, John K. proceeded to gather wood for a "real" camp fire. As darkness encroached, the fire was lit and we all enjoyed the campfire including the sparks and sounds from popping wood and the smoke to blowing in our faces (which also made the mosquitoes briefly disappear!). Our conversation again ran to rivers, paddlers, boats, gear, trips and river food A fitting closure for a great day on the river.

The next day we were up and around for a paddlers' breakfast "by Larry". It consisted of a delicious skillet dish including hash browns, scrambled eggs and ham. After a leisurely meal, we "broke camp" and loaded our boats for our final day on the river.

The river soon became wider and the current slower and more motor boat traffic was observed. We were careful to move to the edge whenever we heard the whirr of an outboard. Still it did not significantly detract from the beauty of the river and banks.

Laurie noted that after mile 17 it was hard to find a place to stop for lunch. We finally stopped at a wetland spot with lots of cypress knees (which, by the way, looked pretty eerie!). Water was all around us except for a narrow strip which we stood or sat on for our lunch.

John K. provided a lunch of Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwiches. For dessert we had "No Cook Somores"! We were all wondering what John K. would produce for this dessertwould it be graham crackers with mini marshmallows and a Hershey bar that you eat separately? Oh, no, this was ooey gooey stuff all right – just like the real thing and just as messy! This is what you do....take marshmallow cream and spread it on one side of your graham cracker (by the way we found out it is best to break the cracker into the top and bottom pieces before you start spreading the gooey stuff). Then you take a can of whipped chocolate cake icing and spread this on the opposite side of the cracker. Next put the cracker pieces together (gooey sides in of course) and take a big bite! Be sure to have your napkin ready for wiping your face and hands! If you were blind folded you might not be able to tell the difference between the cook and no cook versionsthe only thing missing from no cook somores would probably be the mouth burn from a fiery hot marshmallow.

We soon loaded back into our boats and headed down the river looking for the cut off through a more scenic part of the actual river.

By this time the Angelina had joined with the Neches River which made the river even more unhurried and again it had widened in breadth. This cut off was hard to find so we split up into two groups but we all wound up in the same place (a good thing!). We paddled across a short distance of open water to the boat ramp at Martin Dies State Park where the camp hosts had shuttled our vehicles and left them. We efficiently loaded our boats and gear and headed back to our campsites in the park to "Make Camp" and clean up before

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SpringFest (Con't)

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hot chocolate, and as it lay smoldering pathetically in the fire pit for over an hour, I believe we were inspired.

On Saturday evening, following a long day of paddling, we decided to play poker in my van. Margaret happened to have a deck of cards in her glove box, but she warned us that they had been in there for years. She wasn't joking! When Margaret first shuffled the cards, a heavy cloud of dust erupted from them. Two cards immediately disintegrated to

the point of no return. Clyde observed that the cards had gotten wet at some point, and he speculated how the cards could have possibly gotten wet in the glove box? Margaret is a vet after all, so what had spilled on them, a specimen of cat urine? Hanta virus? Little puffs of dust continued to appear whenever the cards were shuffled during the game. Following much laughter we conceded that Clyde was the winner (he filled a perfect straight from the inside! and didn't drop dead from the deck dust) and we hit the sack.

One dream of mine was actualized at Springsfest this year: my ACA certificate had arrived in the mail earlier in the week, and it was fun and exciting for me to assist teaching my first classes: Never Ever Peddler with Jeff Leach, and Kayak 101 with Steve Ford. All of our students survived, and our Never-Ever guy was working on his roll by the end of class!!

Sunday morning we all attended Tom Goynes Pecan Park Sabbath service. There was no guitar music this time, but a powerful uplifting scripture presentation on Abraham was given, accompanied by the gurgle of the river nearby. It was a perfect morning.

Things I learned this SpringsFest: stick your butt out while front surfing, posture is everything! Larry Lewis wears leg-warmers, and paddling a beautiful river with good friends can be one of the best things in the whole wide world! I can't wait for Springsfest next year.



Angelina River (Con't.)

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our evening meal.

Supper was "by Jean" and included an antipasti platter, salad, garlic bread, rigatoni spaghetti and marinara sauce made with sweet Italian sausage and beef. I conned Jon M. and Lois into making dessert in the Dutch Oven. It was a pumpkin cheese cake which was then topped with cool whip.

After supper, out came John K's infamous "Fire in a Box" which we circled our chairs around laughing and talking into the evening. We turned in that night to a brilliant star studded sky.

That night, we noticed lightning in the distance and clouds soon started to move into the area. Jon M. called his wife the next morning and got a weather report that storms were supposed to move into the area soon. So we hustled around breaking camp while Darrell prepared the grand finale breakfast of the trip. We savored breakfast burritos as mist began to touch our faces. To no avail, what is a little mist to a paddler anyway?! We did not let that hurry or spoil our last camp meal of the trip! Soon we loaded up and headed for home having enjoyed camping and paddling 19 miles on the Angelina.

Thanks to Laurie, NTRR Activities Chairperson, for a well planned, leisurely trip on the Angelina River.

Upper Salt River March 13 to March 16, 2008

by Larry Lewis

The upper Salt River runs from just above Globe, Arizona to Roosevelt Lake. The area is arid and the river is fed from snowfall in the mountains above it. The river level is at put-in slightly above 2,000 feet elevation.



This section of the Salt flows for 52 miles through some very tight canyons of sandstone and granite as well as open canyons covered with arid plants and large Saguaro cactus, some reaching nearly forty feet in height.

Rafting on the Salt is usually limited from mid March to early May due to the warm climate and early snow melt. The river requires a permit that is secured by lottery. Our group applied for three dates and was lucky enough to receive permits for all three dates. I chose to row the first permit received, which was from March 13 to March 16, 2008. This trip included nine people rowing four rafts. The permit holder was Von and he brought his two daughters, Summer and



Holly as well as their husbands Greg and Matt. Joe came by himself and but took Matt and Holly down the river on his raft. Rich, Wally and

I came together. Rich and Wally were on Rich's raft while I rowed solo.

The minimum flow for rafting on the Salt is considered to be 800 CFS. At the put-in, the flow was about 1600 CFS on March 13. Due to the warm weather, the level rose to about 2100 CFS while we were on the river. The gauge at the take-out was about 2500 CFS at the start of the trip and rose to nearly 3000 CFS. This was ideal flow for rafting.

All nine of us met at Pablo's home in Globe on March 12 and camped in the back yard. Pablo is a rafting friend that did not make this trip with us. On the morning we got up early, consolidated the rafts and gear into Von and Rich's vehicles, did our last minute shopping and headed for the river. After a forty-minute trip to the river and completion of the permit information, we unloaded and started to rig the rafts. About 1 PM we started rowing. The lead raft was Von's with Greg rowing and Von watching the map and as well as the river lines. Joe followed with me in third and Rich as sweep.

The trip took a bad turn on Bump and Grind rapid only a mile and one half from the put-in. Greg was far left and got caught on a rock. Joe followed in an effort to assist. As Joe approached Greg's raft, Matt and Holly stood up. Joe hit a rock and Mat and

Holly were our first swimmers. With all back aboard quickly, we continued down the river. Holly had another swim before we made camp and from that time on, she sat in the front of the raft with her back to the front tubes and feet on the cooler. Her hands were gripped tightly on two straps attached to the raft chicken line. I am not sure how much of the river she saw after that time but she felt safe.

Before we made camp, Greg hit another rock that launched him out of the raft. Von and Summer were able to get him back in the raft before Rich or I even saw the event. After a total of about ten river miles, we made camp. Summer made Greg's favorite dinner of nachos and tacos for his birthday.



I made a French Apple cake on which we put candles and sang Happy Birthday to Greg. Since it was a long day and a late dinner, everyone retired to their respective tents for a welcome nights sleep.

Winds had increased by the time we put-in on the second day. At times it was had to make any forward movement against the strong headwinds. After about four miles of tough rowing we en-

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Upper Salt River (Con't)

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tered White Rock rapid with Greg leading. He got too far left and hit a rock near the top of the rapid. The raft rose up on the right side and did a slow motion flip near the left bank. Joe was on the same side of the river and stopped near Greg's raft. I



took the right side of the river and stopped in the first small eddy available. Rich followed me and was able to catch an eddy below me. All hiked back to Greg's raft with throw bags. Since the raft was near the bank. It was relative easy to attach ropes and right the raft in place. Only a water bottle and a helmet was lost and another group later found the helmet and returned it to us.

We continued to battle the winds until we stopped for a late lunch. With the winds continuing and the wet clothing in Greg's raft, Von made the decision to camp for the night. I made an early dinner of Caribbean rice and a green salad. Rich made an apple dump cake that all enjoyed. The winds dropped about five PM and the night was cool and nice.

Prior to putting in on the third day, Von chose to change the rowing order for some of the major rapids on the river. He put Rich leading, Greg next with Joe following Greg. I took sweep. Not long after we put on, the winds picked up again. They were not as bad as they were on the second day but still; they were a force to contend with during much of the day.

We made it safely through many of the major class III and IV rapids without incident and with everyone rowing well. On approaching the class IV Quartzite rapid, Rich eddied out on river left in a very small eddy. He was able to tie-up his raft but there was not enough room to tie up the other boats. Greg clipped up to Rich, Joe clipped to Greg and I

clipped to Joe. Rich, Wally and Von were on shore while everyone else was in the rafts. As soon as I clipped to Joe, the entire flotilla stared out from the bank. Joe quickly was able to unclip me and I luckily made it to a one-boat eddy down stream. Matt was able to unclip Joe's raft from Von's and Greg unclipped from Rich's raft. Greg and Joe were then loose to try and make it over a difficult rapid from a point on the far left side of the river to the shut on river right. Both came close but both rafts flipped prior to making the rapid. Rich and I could not see the carnage from our location and we ran the rapid. While in the rapid, I viewed the overturned rafts and then saw Summer stuck on a small rock ledge on river left. I eddied out and tried to get close enough to her for her to get on my boat but the left side of the rapid was too strong and I was only able to catch an eddy about fifty yards downstream. After tying up and getting a throw rope ready, I started trying to communicate to Summer that she needed to get back in the water and swim to me. She did that and as soon as she was unable to cross the eddy line, I through her a throw rope.

With Summer safely on board, we proceeded downstream nearer where Joe's boat was trapped upside down.

Joe, Holly and Matt had safely swum to river left and were preparing to rescue Joe's boat. Von's boat had continued down stream and was out of sight. Joe's boat was trapped on river left of Corkscrew rapid which is another class IV rapid. After Greg's flip, he had swum down to Joe's raft and climbed on top. He was then able to attach two ropes to the D rings on the side as well as a bowline to the front. With all able-bodied men pulling, we were able to pull the raft back from the rocks that trapped it and right it with the lines tied to the side.

During this time, Holly and Summer were freezing and had taken the fleece and rain gear off my boat and dressed in clothes as warm as possible. This was a trip where four or more sets of fleece would have sold for top dollar.

Von got on Rich's boat while Summer and



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Upper Salt River (Con't)

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Greg got on mine and we started out to find Von's boat. It was well over a mile before we found the boat waiting upside down for us in an ideal place to right it. We found the gear in tack with only the oarlocks damaged. After Von borrowed one oarlock from me and bent the other one back into shape, we were off to camp.

After wet gear was hung up, I made a quick chicken and rice casserole and Rick made a peach cobbler. With some time before retiring, Greg retrieved his guitar, which had made it through two flips without taking on much water, and played for us. We were even able to get Von to sing his Salt River song to the tune of "I've Been Everywhere".

Our last day on the water was about sixteen miles from takeout and included only some minor rapids. Von told us that we could row out and we started for the takeout. The row out was without incident and we made it to the take-out near noon.

After lunch and de-rigging, we started for Pablo's home. We were almost there when Rich said oh shut or something to that effect. He explained that he had left two small Pelican cases at the takeout when he had went to look for his truck. His wallet, cell phone and personal items were in the boxes. We continued to Pablo's, dropped Greg off and went back to the takeout. The boxes were gone.

We turned the loss in to the Sheriff's office and went back to Pablo's. After leaving word about the loss, we started home. Rich contacted his wife who had not heard from anyone about the loss and we tried calling his cell phone several times without luck. We were beginning to worry that someone had taken the boxes and was not planning to return them. At that time we got a call from Jerry who is another rafter in our group that Rich had called on the way to the river. Jerry said the rafters that had found the boxes used Rich's phone to call the last number dialed. The left there number with Jerry and Rich was able to contact them and have them FedEx the items to him.

All returned home with good memories and some practice at swift water rescue. We all expect to be better rowers on our next trips and to experience fewer incidents. Of course, this may mean that the next trips will not be as memorable. We will remember this trip.

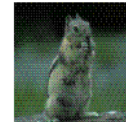




The North Texas River Runners
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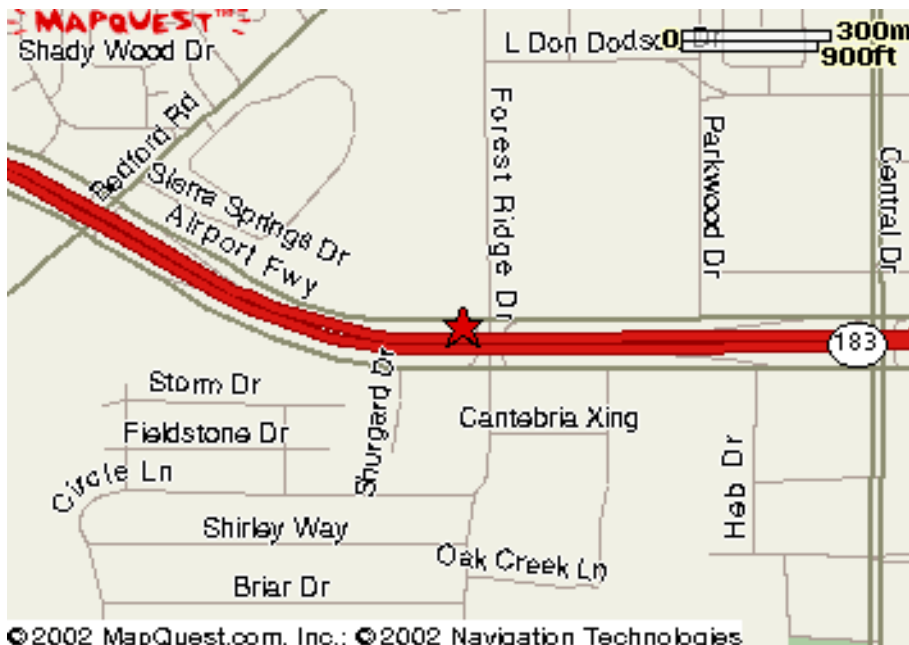


Home of the Prairie Dog Surfing Society
"If we're not in the hole, we're sitting right beside it."



We're on the web!
www.river-runners.org

If you would like to receive the Newsletter by email, please
contact: cdboerner@sbcglobal.net



Club Meeting
will be held at
Lake Arlington
6:00—9:00 PM
Next Meeting:
May 20th

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