

September 2006

# North Texas River Runners



## Commodore's Column

Curtis told me that a good way to write the monthly column for the newsletter was to look back a year or so and build one out of a past column or, better yet, have your spouse write it for you. I will try it on my own to start. I can always resort to other methods at a later date. We have a strong set of new club officers in place this year that are quite capable of helping move the club forward. The officer staff will focus on providing monthly educational and training programs that are of benefit to the club members. There are a significant number of club activities and trips planned that we believe will have interest to club members.

How will we know if we are successful? Success can only be measured by the degree to which we are able to meet the needs of the club members. The officer staff serves at the pleasure of the members. We need your help to be successful. Take a look at what we are doing. Tell us what you like about what is being done. Let us know what you don't like and why you don't like it. Above all, make suggestions. Your suggestions will help more than you can imagine in providing the programs and activities the club members need.

The officer staff for the current year as elected by the members is:

<b>Carmen Ward</b> -- Vice Commodore	<b>Ray Louthan</b> -- Secretary
<b>Dianne Poling</b> -- Newsletter Editor	<b>Laurie Patterson</b> -- Activities Chair
<b>Jean Muncrief</b> -- Safety Chair	<b>Ronnie Ash</b> -- Environmental Chair
<b>Allen Harrison</b> -- Commodore	<b>Matt Fritz</b> -- Treasurer

Make your plans now to PARTICIPATE in the next planned club activity, a trip to the Buffalo River at the end of September. We expect good water, great food and fantastic weather. Laurie has the details. Contact her. We will see you at the next club meeting on Tuesday, September 19.

Allen Harrison  
Commodore

## Channeled Scablands

By Ronnie Ash

This evening, let's consider an environment and an event far removed from the stupefying heat and scorching drought that constitutes our current reality, a matter of cool, even cold temperatures and abundant, superabundant water. Let's look at the Channeled Scablands of eastern Washington.

Channeled Scablands – sounds pretty romantic doesn't it? Although the Scablands may never challenge Niagara Falls as a honeymoon destination, they offer a fantastic and enigmatic geography, a landscape that rivals the Grand Canyon for drama and wonder.

Even the early settlers in the area, very few of whom had any formal training in geology, realized that the face of the earth had suffered traumatic injury by forces unimaginable, abrupt rips and scars in the landscape, canyons up to 1000' deep torn through the deep layer of volcanic basalt which forms the eastern Washington plateau, dry waterfalls which dwarf Niagara, strange layers of silt and ash, great boulders, made of no rock found locally, sitting isolated and out of place, coulees, dry stream beds, water carved canyons where no water flows, and giant potholes of a scale far beyond anything attributable to classic river action.

These peculiarities presented a real puzzle for geologists. Some features were characteristic of river action patiently operating over millions of years. Others, like sedimentary deposits of silt and gravel, could only have been caused by slow moving or stationary bodies of water. Objects like the erratics, those isolated boulders which must have been transported from hundreds of miles away were clearly representative of glacial activity, yet the ice sheets of the ice age never made it as far south as the scablands.

The giant pot holes were one of the most mysterious elements. In the canoe class, Charles liked to impress the students by reaching into a pothole and pulling out a few of the pebbles which inevitably resided therein, explaining that the pothole had been drilled by these little pebbles swirling around and around over the centuries. But these scabland pot-holes were way beyond anything a handful of pebbles could ever aspire to – these things are big enough to contain Tom Cruise's ego with plenty of room left over! What could possibly have caused them?

### Inside this issue:

Channeled Scablands	2-3
June Environmental Report	4-5
Granola recipe	5
NTRR activity details	6

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*(Continued from page 2)*

It wasn't until the advent of the airplane, which permitted an elevated view of the larger picture, that a significant clue was revealed. Areas that had, from ground level, seemed to be no more than a series of rolling hills, were seen to be patterns of immense ripples. Now we've all seen ripples in the sand along the riverbank. Those ripples might be an inch high and a few inches from crest to crest. The scabland ripples, however, were up to 40' high and 350' from crest to crest. Clearly, water movement on a scale far beyond anything in human experience had occurred here. But where could the water have come from?

The answer to that began to emerge 250 miles to the east, around Missoula, Montana, where scratches in the bedrock indicated glacier movement and ancient water marks on the hillsides defined the shores of a vast prehistoric lake. As the evidence collected a picture emerged. During the last ice age, some 15,000 years ago, an arm of the ice sheet ½ mile thick and 23 miles long dammed up the Clark Fork River near the Montana/Idaho border, forming an immense lake some 2000' deep containing 500 cubic miles of water, a volume of water equal to Lakes Ontario and Erie combined.

Eventually, the incredible pressures at the dam/lake interface and the atypical hydraulic actions engendered by those pressures caused the ice dam to fail, abruptly and explosively. Those 500 cubic miles of water contained within Glacial Lake Missoula did not simply drain out; they erupted at the rate of 400 million cubic feet per second, emptying the immense lake in only 48 hours. Let me repeat that flow rate in case it didn't really register – 400 million cubic feet per second – that's 10 times the combined flow of every river in the world today.

The floodwaters, which reached depths of 900', tore east & south at ferocious speed, scouring, blasting, and tearing across the Columbia Plateau, creating in just a few days the ravaged features of the Channeled Scablands that we marvel at today.

Consider the place known today as Dry Falls, 5 times wider and 2 ½ times taller than Niagara Falls, at the Lower end of the Grand Coulee. Here the flood waters roared 300' deep at 65 mph. All waterfalls move slowly upstream due to undercutting and erosion at their faces. Dry Falls (which was anything but dry at that point), under the savage assault of the rampaging floodwaters, retreated 20 miles upstream over a period of less than 2 weeks.

Beyond the scablands the floodwaters backed up somewhat as they entered and enlarged the Columbia River gorge, wreaking yet further havoc in their rush toward the Pacific. Before reaching the ocean they submerged the site of Portland Oregon to a depth of 400 ft. That's probably why we find no written records from the city of Portland prior to 12000 BC!

The Channeled Scablands are an astounding example of natural violence on an incomprehensible scale. The word "awesome" is way too weak to apply. Clearly, the Glacial Lake Missoula flood was no place to be messing about in boats!

## June 2006 Environmental Report

### By Jean Muncrief

As a natural follow up to my nature center paddle, I had planned to do this month's environmental report on snapping turtles, but my doggone computer has had a nervous break down so I was unable to do the research. (That's what happens when we place our faith in technology!) But I do have a couple of environmentally oriented stories for you, one involving a triumph of reason over revulsion, and the other about a newsworthy victory of caring people over the forces of greed.

A couple of weeks ago I heard my significant other barking outside the back door, barking in that endearingly homicidal manner that she adopts when she has discovered a life form that might just be willing to die between her powerful jaws. When I went to see what was afoot, her attention was focused on a bush beside the back door. With a pretty strong suspicion of what I would find, a cautious inspection soon revealed that my canine companion had treed a 4' long snake.

Thanks to my research for last month's environmental presentation, I was able to quickly and positively ascertain that it was non-venomous. (It was sporting a large smooth shiny cap on top of its head, rather than the smaller nose cap that the poisonous pit vipers prefer.) (I don't know what it was, but I do know what it wasn't!)

In the old unenlightened days, identification uncertainty and fear might have prompted me to introduce said serpent to Mr. garden hoe, but, now, having recently encouraged you all to respect and accommodate "most" of the earth's creatures, I could hardly do less myself, so I put the deadly dog in the house to give the poor reptile a chance, and watched the fortunate creature descend from the bush and make good his get away into the tall grass. (At that moment, I decided that I really ought to mow the lawn more frequently!)

So now I have another ally in my war against rural rodents and a noble feeling of expanded tolerance and increased compassion. (I have also had a recurring series of snake infested nightmares – if the road to enlightenment was easy, everybody would be driving on it!) Of course the dangerous dog was disappointed that she didn't get to kill it, but a tasty Wal-Mart dog biscuit soon restored her moral. Freedom is on the March!

And now, to the news...

continued from page 4.....

In 1916 the National Park Service was commanded to “Conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife within the park system for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Historically, the Park Service reviews and revises its management policy manual every 10 years. It received a routine update in 2001 after a 6 year long public process. Recently, in a suspicious break with tradition, powerful forces, working through political appointees within the Dept of the Interior, moved the Park Service to radically rewrite its management policies without input from Congress, the public, or the superintendents of the national parks, opening the door for increased commercial exploitation and motorized recreational uses.

When a draft of the revised rules was leaked last August, a concerned citizenry reacted. After receiving some 50,000 comments opposing the changes, the Park Service cancelled the rewrite this month. It was a huge victory for those who love the national parks and who place stewardship of the earth ahead of short term profits.

Although it often seems that we are helpless to deflect the rapacious and self serving interests of Big Money, this action proves that caring individuals who look at the long term can influence events. So let your voices be heard – We can make a difference!

## Tasty Granola Recipe

Submitted by Jean Muncrief

### Granola

3 cups rolled oats  
1 cup slivered almonds  
1 cup cashews  
3/4 cup shredded sweet coconut  
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar  
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons maple syrup  
1/4 cup vegetable oil  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1 cup raisins

Preheat oven to 250 degrees F.

In a large bowl, combine the oats, nuts, coconut, and brown sugar.

In a separate bowl, combine maple syrup, oil, and salt. Combine both mixtures and pour onto 2 sheet pans. Cook for 1 hour and 15 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes to achieve an even color. Remove from oven and transfer into a large bowl. Add raisins and mix until evenly distributed.

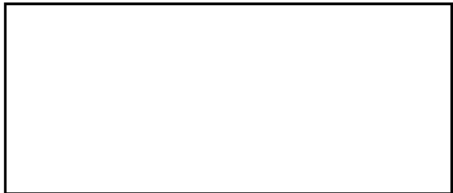




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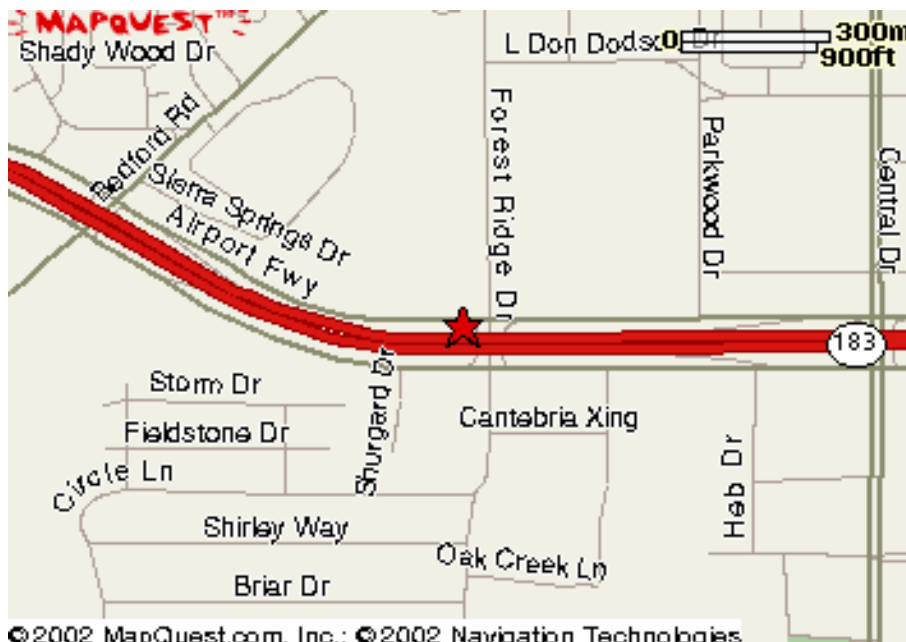


Home of the Prairie Dog Surfing Society

"If we're not in the hole, we're sitting right beside it."



If you would like to receive the Newsletter by email, please contact:  
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## Spring Creek Barbecue

1509 Airport Freeway  
North-West Corner of Forest & 183

**Club meetings  
are held on the  
3rd Tuesday of  
the month at  
Spring Creek  
Barbecue from  
7:00—9:00 PM**

**Next Meeting:**

**September**

**19th,**

**Tuesday**