



W.A.K.E.

Whatcom Association of Kayak Enthusiasts



February 2005

Volume 24 Issue 3

Message from the Board Norm Nielsen

Message From The Board Norm Nielsen

Lots to cover this month. I will begin with a gentle reminder that 2005 membership dues are due. If your mailing label says EXPIRES 2005, then you will be dropped from our membership list at the end of this month. When renewing, please state whether you want e-mail notice of the Club newsletter or hard copy. The Club's most significant expense is mailing newsletters, and the Board encourages electronic notice so we can devote money to education, training, and events (more on this below).

The Club welcomes our new Trip Coordinators to the WAKE Board. Dawn Groves and Margen Riley will share this position. Dawn and Margen will soon be contacting some of you about initiating trips.

The WAKE Demo Days and Swap Meet will be on May 14th at Bloedel Donovan Park. We are inviting many vendors, and we plan to have short on-water and on-shore demonstrations by vendors or WAKE members. There will be a volunteer signup sheet at the March 15th general meeting. We are looking for volunteers to help with setup, teardown, assist par-

ticipants into and out of boats, run the swap meet and possibly present demonstrations.

Lo and behold, your Board has a vision. This year's WAKE Board has set goals of:

1. Limiting the Club's liability exposure.
2. Promoting individual understanding of the elements of the Club's release forms and universal use of the forms on an individual basis and for all trips.
3. Sponsoring skills training.
4. Sponsoring lots of trips appealing to many skills levels.

To implement these goals, the Board has made several decisions affecting the Club's direction this year and beyond:

Following the advice of our attorney, all WAKE trips, the Saturday paddles included, will be limited to WAKE members only. This decision is consistent with the general consensus of those of you who partici-

parted in the liability discussion following last month's general meeting. The Board thinks that \$20.00 annual membership dues (\$10.00 after July 1st) are not onerous, and that this requirement

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March 15th club meeting
Downtown
Bellingham Library
Doors open at 7:00, meeting starts
7:30
Roger Lamb
Crossing the Sea of
Cortez by Kayak

Our Mission Statement:

To further the enjoyment, knowledge, and safety of kayaking by providing training, a wide variety of trips, and social events to our members and the general public.

"No one goes hungry on a WAKE trip"

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- will facilitate trip initiators' comfort level that trip participants have a skill set appropriate for a particular trip.
- The Board decided that every member should have a release form on file.
- To facilitate individual understanding of the Club's release forms (i.e., know what you're signing), five or so minutes of every general meeting will be spent discussing some aspect of the release forms.
- The board decided to set aside money for an education fund.
- A primary focus of the Club will be training. If there is interest, the Board hopes to sponsor members-only courses on navigation, first-aid, CPR, global positioning systems, radio communications, tides and currents, low-impact camping, kayak repair, rescues, paddling skills, and leadership. Money to pay for these courses will come from the education fund.
- To develop a list of individuals qualified to initiate trips and on-water training courses, the Board decided to establish a scholarship fund. The plan is that an individual would apply to the Board for money to cover 50 percent of a for-fee training class up to a reasonable limit. In exchange, that individual would commit to initiate trips and/or no-fee training courses for our members. The number and nature of trips or training courses the individual commits to would be a function of the scholarship size. The Board particularly wants to develop a pool of individuals to initiate basic skills trips and courses, as we perceive a need for this in Whatcom County.
- The Board decided to craft a Trip Release Form that includes an individual skills rating and equipment checklist. Our logic for this decision was to provide trip and course initiators with pre-launch information to assess the abilities and preparedness of participants. Trip and course initiators are fully authorized to reject persons lacking the ability and preparedness for an event. A copy of the new Trip Release Form is included in this newsletter and at www.wakekayak.org.
- The Board decided that individuals wanting to participate in a trip or course will be responsible for obtaining the Trip Release Form, filling it out and arriving at the event with the filled out form. One form one person. Trip initiators are encouraged to require that trip participants RSVP prior to the trip, and that participants send the Trip Release Form to the initiator prior to the day of the event. This would aid planning and give the initiator time to review the readiness of a person to undertake a particular trip. These requirements should be entirely at the discretion of the initiator. The idea for these requirements is that ultimately every individual, not the trip initiator, is responsible for her/his own safety and well being. Because the Trip Release Form includes an individual skills rating and equipment checklist, there should be no surprises once on the water.
- The Club will sponsor and advertise members-only, for-fee training courses presented by American Canoe Association and British Canoe Union credentialed instructors. WAKE will offer these courses at cost. WAKE Board members are presently contacting local instructors about their availability to instruct courses.

This will be an interesting year. I think the Club is blessed with an energetic and purposeful Board.

Skills Building Classes by Dave Peebles

Have you ever been on a day trip or longer expedition where most everyone stood around while one or two folks pored over the charts, mumbling incantations, before announcing that it was time to launch, and everyone was expected to fall in behind the leaders and trust they would take you where you wanted to go? I myself have been in that situation more than once, and later berated myself for my laziness and passivity in letting others decide my fate.

Our first step in enabling self-determination for all paddlers starts March 8 (too late for readers of this newsletter, I'm sorry to say), and will cover chart reading as a preliminary step to navigation. Our second class will explore what's "dead" about dead reckoning, but will emphasize the piloting skills paddlers more often rely on. This will be April 12, at 7:00 to 9:00 at the Fairhaven library, in the Northwest Room downstairs (across the hall from WAKE's old meeting place). If you have charts of the San Juans, or any other paddling destination, bring them along, plus your compass and any other navigation tools you might have.

Possible topics for future classes include tides and currents (ably taught by Tom Emrich last year (hint, hint, Tom), GPS navigation, VHF radio rules and procedures, leave-no-trace camping, and on-water skills. We are hoping to enlist Chris Mitchell for his excellent leadership training sessions, and are contemplating a mini-symposium, to cover basic strokes, stroke improvement, and rescues, during the summer.

If you have issues or topics you want us to cover, let me know via e-mail (selbeepoo@aol.com), or talk to any of the board members.

Kayaking Through the North Cascades Wilderness

By Donald W. Spencer

Oregon ocean Paddling Society's (OOPS)

Washington State's North Cascades stretch their high mountainous, east-west spine along 100 miles of the USA-Canadian border. Long distance backpackers feast on the solitude of the wilderness trails under old growth forests, and climbers pine for opportunities to be trekking on the magnificent glacier ice and roping up for an ascent of the hazardous rock walls. The North Cascade National Park's wilderness trails, glaciers, and jagged rock walls would seem to be inhospitable territory for sea kayak paddlers. Yet snuggled in the deep Skagit River Canyon glisten two glacier-fed, man-made lakes beckoning adventuresome kayakers. Diablo and Ross Lakes provide a north-south waterway snaking through the North Cascades glaciated peaks beyond the Canadian border into the rushing rapids of the Skagit River.

After seven hours of driving from Portland on Saturday, August 7, 2004, six of us arrived at the Ranger Station in Marblemount to apply for the daily reservation permits needed for our choices from the 19 designated backcountry campsites on the banks of Ross Lake. Our planned schedule of six days padding called for five different improved campsites each with a pit toilet, table, bear box, and fire ring. Jubilantly we departed the Ranger Station with permits in hand for campsites approximately 10 miles apart. Our anxiety mounted during our first drive through busy Colonial Creek Campground on Diablo Lake because all sites were full. But on our second drive through a friendly inquiry to two young couples we assumed were setting up tents revealed they were actually taking down tents. A week's rigors of camping with young children had tried their patience and tired their young bodies; excitedly they invited us to locate on their large circular two-site, pre-paid campsite. After setting up our own camp we headed back to Marblemount to the superb little road side diner, "The Eatery" founded in 1982 by two elderly sisters whose father and mother homesteaded in the area in the late 1890's. The Eatery's menu filled with home-cooked meals and desserts tempted us in to submission to gorge ourselves on delicious calories as we contemplated six days in the wilderness.

Sunday's sunrise found us quickly eating breakfast, eagerly packing our kayaks, and hurriedly preparing for our launch into the frigid, opaque, greenish-white waters of Diablo Lake. Our muscles tensed as they pulled against the drag of kayaks heavy laden with a week's supply of food and cooking gear, food and sleeping bags, food and reading materials, food and tents, food and snacks, food and more food. The kayaks would prove to be wonderful transportation for a vast variety of foods and camping luxuries. (What a contrast from my previous summer's week-long trip backpacking 110 miles around Mt. Rainier.) Each paddler planned, packed, and prepared an evening dinner for the entire group while each individual planned, packed, and prepared their own breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. Sumptuous, scrumptious food graced our plates every evening followed by desserts prepared in a Dutch oven and brews of the rich blends of our favorite coffees.

The narrow Thunder Creek arm broadened into Diablo Lake allowing us to gaze on the massive rock faces of 7000+ feet Pyramid and Colonial Peaks with an undulating, broken glacier stretched between them. As we headed into the Skagit River's current, the canyon deepened and narrowed bringing its shear rock walls and vegetation closer and closer enthraling us into a loss of attention to time and distance. Suddenly to our surprise we had paddled 5 miles and the gray concrete of Ross Dam and its hydroelectric buildings stood in our path. We explored the dam and boiling current then beached to load the heavy kayaks on two trucks. For \$15.00 per kayak and paddler two young men ferried us the 1.5 miles with an elevation gain of approximately 500 feet to Ross Lake. (We had the option of not paying the \$15.00, remaining true to "wilderness travel," and transporting our own gear like the Lewis and Clark expedition. The vote was 6 to 0 in favor of hiring the young drivers with their trucks. We believe Lewis and Clack would have agreed.)

To our surprise the water of Ross Lake was a significantly different color, much clearer and warmer than Diablo Lake. A greenish blue wake peeled back as we glided onto the lake into which we could peer to a depth of 15 or 20 feet. Jack Mountain with its huge Nonohomeen Glacier guided us to our first camping site a Roland Point. From this isthmus campsite our eyes could feast on the expanses of 7408 foot Ruby Peak with its reddish grey of rock set against the glacier and Jack Mountain's contrasting dark gray cliffs descending into the broad glacier face with exposed crevasses.

Rounding Roland Point on Monday morning we could see approximately 10 miles of lake stretched out before us like a mirror reflecting the mountain peaks, glaciers, and old growth forests. Desolation Peak was made famous in beatnik Jack Kerouac's existentially depressing diary published as the novel "Desolation Angels" after he served as a fire lookout in 1956. It pulled us towards its shoreline flanks for our second night at Lightning Creek. Tuesday's 14 mile round-trip hike up Desolation Trail with a 4200 foot elevation gain to the lookout proved a tough climb reminding me of my many hikes on Columbia River Gorge's Mount Defiance. From Desolation Peak's 6102 foot perch one could see north to the twin peaks of Hozomeen Mountain at 8000 + feet looking like the humps of a camel formed

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from brown play dough by a creative child.

Mt. Spichard's 9000 foot mass of marbled rock laden with glacier ices attempted to show itself from behind the smoke enveloping it from the forest fires on this slopes. The muffled engine noises of firefighting airplanes and helicopters and the constant stream of human jabber on the two way radio in the lookout brought this complaint "No solitude; no peace and quite up here with all these fires," from Helen the lookout person who obviously hoped for a respite from ever increasing number of spot fires caused by lightning each evening. I descended Desolation Peak wondering how Kerouac retained such a discouraging, pessimistic, dark attitude towards life surrounded by the marvels and majesty of God's wilderness. I saw God's handiwork for 360 degrees but I realized Kerouac saw no God on any of the wilderness or urban trails he traveled during his short life.

Wednesday we paddled across the Canadian border into the Skagit Valley Provincial Park's marshes until we found the Skagit truly flowing like a river. We cooked and slept on the river rock banks of the Hozomeen Creek with its mountain namesake rising above us.

Early Thursday morning brought the thrilling sound of the voices of loons yodeling to each other across the lake. While paddling, the thrill was elongated that morning when the long necked bird with its white necklace and pearl-white marks could be seen mirrored on the placid lake.

Thursday we lazily paddled approximately 13 miles in the most pleasant of mountain lake surroundings until a wind began blowing upstream creating some nice whitecaps for the last two miles of our 15 mile day to Rainbow Point. Our last night proved interesting because of our mistaken belief we had properly changed our final designated campsite with the Forest Ranger. But we found ourselves double booked with a troop of friendly, flexible Boy Scouts. These hungry teenage backpackers appreciated our generous gifts of food from our oversupplied kayaks and we appreciated their accommodating us on their designated land.

Friday three early-bird kayakers packed and headed out the most direct and fastest route to reach Portland by that evening while the other three kayakers invested the day in a more leisurely shore exploration trip to the cars with the intention of arriving back in Portland on Saturday.

Our paddling travels had taken us about 70 miles across two majestic lakes into the fjords of their feeder mountain streams for close up observations of wondrous falls and flora, around islands that once had been high points of ridges above the Skagit River, through log jams, and into the high marsh grasses and old growth timber surrounding the entrance of the Skagit River into Ross Lake. No bears, few mosquitoes, Van Gogh starry, starry nights, beach sleeping quarters, great camp food and picturesque wilderness landscapes will long be remembered.

Paddlers included OOPS members: Gordon Williams, Jacqui Bostrom, David Shirley, Joan SchwiezerHoff, Don Spencer (organizer) plus non-member Lehman Holder.

For information regarding another planned Diablo and Ross Lakes paddle in August, 2005, that will include day hikes close to the glaciers contact Don Spencer, pdxspencers@juno.com or 503-293-1236



Part 2 of the Trip Waver Form

The full Trip Waver Form can be downloaded on the front page of the WAKE Website

III. I HAVE THE FOLLOWING SKILLS:

- Wet exit ability
- Experience with wet exits, assisted rescues and bracing.
- Confident assisted and self-rescue abilities and bracing.
- Ability to brace automatically. Confident self-rescue ability. Eskimo roll ability.
- Advanced paddling and seamanship skills. Self-reliant paddling and rescue skills. Dependable Eskimo roll ability.

IV. I HAVE THE FOLLOWING ENDURANCE:

- Ability to paddle not exceeding three hours and/or 6 nautical miles.
- Ability to continuously paddle 3-4 hours and/or 6-10 nautical miles.
- Ability to continuously paddle 4-6 hours and/or 10-15 nautical miles .
- Ability to continuously paddle more than 6 hours and/or more than 15 nautical miles.

V. I CAN CONSISTENTLY PADDLE AT A SPEED OF:

- <3 Knots. Putsy Paddle.
- 3-4.5 Knots. Average touring speed.
- >4.5 Knots. Working pretty hard, sweaty and tired.

VI. I HAVE WITH ME ON THIS TRIP THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT:MANDATORY EQUIPMENT

- Personal Floatation Device (PFD)
 - Spray skirt the fits the kayak combing
 - Paddle (leash suggested)
 - Whistle or air horn
 - 3 visual distress signals (e.g., Type A, B, or C flares) **REQUIRED AT NIGHT** by U.S. & Canadian Coast Guard
 - Drinking water
-
- Clothing appropriate for the trip
 - Pump or bailer

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

- Paddle float
- Sponge(s)
- Throw line
- Spare paddle
- Buoyant throw line (Canadian Coast Guard **REQUIRES** one 15-meter (50-foot) line per boat)
- Water repellent paddling jacket
- Immersion clothing (wetsuit or dry suit)
- Signal mirror
- Float plan left with responsible person
- Sun screen
- Smoke signals
- Foot ware
- Sun glasses with securing strap
- Change of clothes
- Hat
- First-aid kit
- Paddling gloves and/or poggies
- Flashlight (preferably water proof)
- Weather radio or VHF marine radio
- Waterproof matches or lighter
- 2-way radios
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Charts, tide tables, and current tables
- Cell phone
- Compass
- Knife
- Fire starter
- Insect repellent or clothing
- Extra food
- Repair kit (multi-tool, crimpon fittings, marine-grade epoxy, fiberglass cloth, duct tape, rudder cable, Aquaseal[®], sewing awl and thread)
- Navigation lights (if paddling at night or during restricted visibility)
- Helmet

By signing this document, I acknowledge that if anyone is hurt or property is damaged during my participation in any activity, I may be found by a court of law to have waived my right to maintain a lawsuit against WAKE on the basis of any claim from which I have released it herein. I have had sufficient opportunity to read this entire document.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT, RELEASE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RISK, AND I AGREE TO BE BOUND BY ITS TERMS.

Signature

Print Name

Date

Secondwind Sports

Chris Mitchell has been a great contributor to WAKE providing excellent instruction

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www.secondwindsports.net



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**W.A.K.E. Membership Application can be downloaded from the website
All WAKE voyages require a Trip Release form at the launch
(which can be downloaded from the WAKE website)
and we ask you to be a current WAKE member to join in.**

Calendar of Events

Every Saturday Short paddles in the Bellingham area. Beginners always welcome. Destinations are determined by the skill level and interests of whoever shows up, and, of course, by the weather.

- Meet at Sehome Village Starbucks @ 9:00AM. contact John Janney (360) 933-1584

Nooksack River Vernal Equinox Trip Sunday March 20, 2005, 9 AM, Ferndale to Squalicum Harbor. Squalicum Harbor Launch Ramp, Roeder and Bellweather Way. Then look for cars with kayaks on top. We will meet near the ramps on the left edge of this photo. (See Page 9 of e-newsletter) weather permitting, backup options if wind is forecast. Meet at the Squalicum launch ramp and then we will shuttle to the put in. Please email to reserve a place and get more details. Trip limit will be based on group strengths. Trip Initiator: Reg Lake re-glake@hotmail.com

The latest "Twitch" video by Eric Link will be shown at the the Pickford Dream Space (1318 Bay St., Bellingham) on **April 7th** at 7:30 PM. A Necky Blunt and a carbon fiber paddle will be auctioned to raise money for American Whitewater, and there will be music afterwards. Information on the video is at www.alpinekayak.com/detail.aspx?ID=112

SKILL BUILDING CLASSES April 12, at 7:00 to 9:00 by Dave Peebles

Have you ever been on a day trip or longer expedition where most everyone stood around while one or two folks pored over the charts, mumbling incantations, before announcing that it was time to launch, and everyone was expected to fall in behind the leaders and trust they would take you where you wanted to go? I myself have been in that situation more than once, and later berated myself for my laziness and passivity in letting others decide my fate. This class will explore what's "dead" about dead reckoning, but will emphasize the piloting skills paddlers more often rely on. This will be April 12, at 7:00 to 9:00 at the Fairhaven library, in the Northwest Room downstairs (across the hall from WAKE's old meeting place). If you have charts of the San Juans, or any other paddling destination, bring them along, plus your compass and any other navigation tools you might have.

Port Angeles Kayak Symposium – April 15-17 For details see: www.raftandkayak.com/ks5.html Demo a wide variety of sea kayaks, whitewater kayaks, canoes and gear from some of the leading manufacturers. Clinics will be held throughout the 3 days on various whitewater and sea kayaking techniques, safety, etc., as well as slide shows and other on-land informative talks. There will also be a Coast Guard helicopter rescue demo and Kayak Polo.

Vic Cano will be presenting an exciting evening for our **April 19th** WAKE meeting cruising Southeast Alaska's wild and scenic waters aboard his converted troller "The Galaxy". Vic has spent the last 13 years plying and paddling these waters amidst the majestic beauty of some of Alaska's most awesome landscapes and splendid examples of Alaskan wildlife.

Swap Meet & Demo Days – May 14 Swap your gear, and shop for other people's gear. 10% of swap sales go to support WAKE. We are inviting many vendors, and we plan to have short on-water and on-shore demonstrations by vendors or WAKE members.

Coast Kayak Symposium – May 20-23 This popular annual event is 3 1/2 days of hands-on experience, training, seminars and, of course, the FUN of kayak touring. Held on a 67-acre camp on Thetis Island in the Canadian Gulf Islands, the symposium is a kayaker's dream come true: beautiful scenery, excellent companionship, and some of the best instructors on the West coast. Download the brochure at the Symposium section of the WAKE website.

The W.A.K.E. Hierarchy

Norm Nielsen (360) 647-2531
Dave Peebles (360) 734-1842

Dave Johnston (360) 754-5379

Alison Graham (360) 676-0615
Sharon Lindsay (360) 733-2519
Ted Ullman (360) 220-0044
Holly Hinman (360) 671-7592
Lisa Wallis (360) 756-7553
Dawn Groves (360) 738-3617
Margen Riley (360) 647-1160

nordicnorm@comcast.net
selbeptoo@aol.com
Training Coordinator, & Speaker Scheduler
sameplace1@comcast.net
New Member & new member liason
alisonjgraham7@msn.com
shabiyak@att.net
tedullman@hotmail.com
hhinman@comcast.net
trekkin@fildalgo.net
dawn@dawngroves.com
margenb@earthlink.net

President
Vice President &
Training Coordinator, & Speaker Scheduler
Vice President &
Secretary
Treasurer
Newsletter Editor
Webmaster
DNR Liaison
Trip Coordinators

WAKE

Whatcom Association of Kayak Enthusiasts
P.O. Box 1952
Bellingham, WA 98227





Boat Ramps

Nooksack River Vernal Equinox Trip Sunday March 20, 2005, 9 AM, Ferndale to Squalicum Harbor. Squalicum Harbor Launch Ramp, Roeder and Bellweather Way. Then look for cars with kayaks on top. We will meet near the ramps on the left edge of this photo. (See Page 9 of e-newsletter) weather permitting, backup options if wind is forecast. Meet at the Squalicum launch ramp and then we will shuttle to the put in. Please email to reserve a place and get more details. Trip limit will be based on group strengths. Trip Initiator: Reg Lake reglake@hotmail.com



Past WAKE photos by Reg Lake

