

PADDLE SPLASHES



March 2014

Appalachian Mountain Club
New York/North Jersey Chapter
Canoe & Kayak Committee

Fall Foliage Weekend
on Eaton Lake



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Fall Foliage Weekend on Eaton Lake

by Rich Kleinhenz

If you think AMC stands for ‘Appalachian Mountain Club,’ you’re obviously not one of the 33 paddlers attending Rich Breton’s Fall Foliage Adirondack expedition. We know that AMC stands for Adirondack Mountain Catering.

This is the 18th fall foliage trip that Rich Breton has organized, and each one of them has been unique. I don’t mean just in terms of the paddles – there have been no repetitions there – but judging from the stories I heard, each had a unique flavor, creating special memories. This was the biggest group yet, a mix of first timers and returning fans.

I met Rich at Mohican Outdoor Center two years ago on an introductory weekend my wife Linda persuaded me to participate in. Amidst a turmoil of medical issues this year, I made the weekend a focal point and arranged my life around it. Luckily, it worked out.



Fall Foliage Weekend

The base this year was Lake Eaton, a New York State campground just outside of Long Lake. In the past, some trips were expedition style (or tripping, as it were), where you carried your gear to a new campsite every day. The fixed base and car-trips format is a little easier for newer paddlers, and logistics.

After tent set-ups, Bouillabaisse—a Rich Breton tradition. Absolutely delicious. Lenny Grefig and Arlene Kaplan do most of the cooking, and it's a good idea to not get in the way. They made it seem like they cook for such a crowd every day, deftly assigning peripheral jobs like veggie chopping to volunteers. Rich and

Henry Sengstaken outfit the outdoor galley with all their own equipment, brought in by two minivans.

Later, at the first night's camp fire, Rich went over the paddling plans for the next days. The evening got very cold. Temperatures dropped into the mid-thirties that night. It was a very clear night with an absolutely incredible view of the stars.

We awoke to a fog over the lake. It was beautiful to watch the sun burn off the haze as the far mountains emerged. One group crossed Raquette Lake (something like a two mile crossing), then paddled up the Marion River. I am not a big fan of open lakes, so I and my paddle

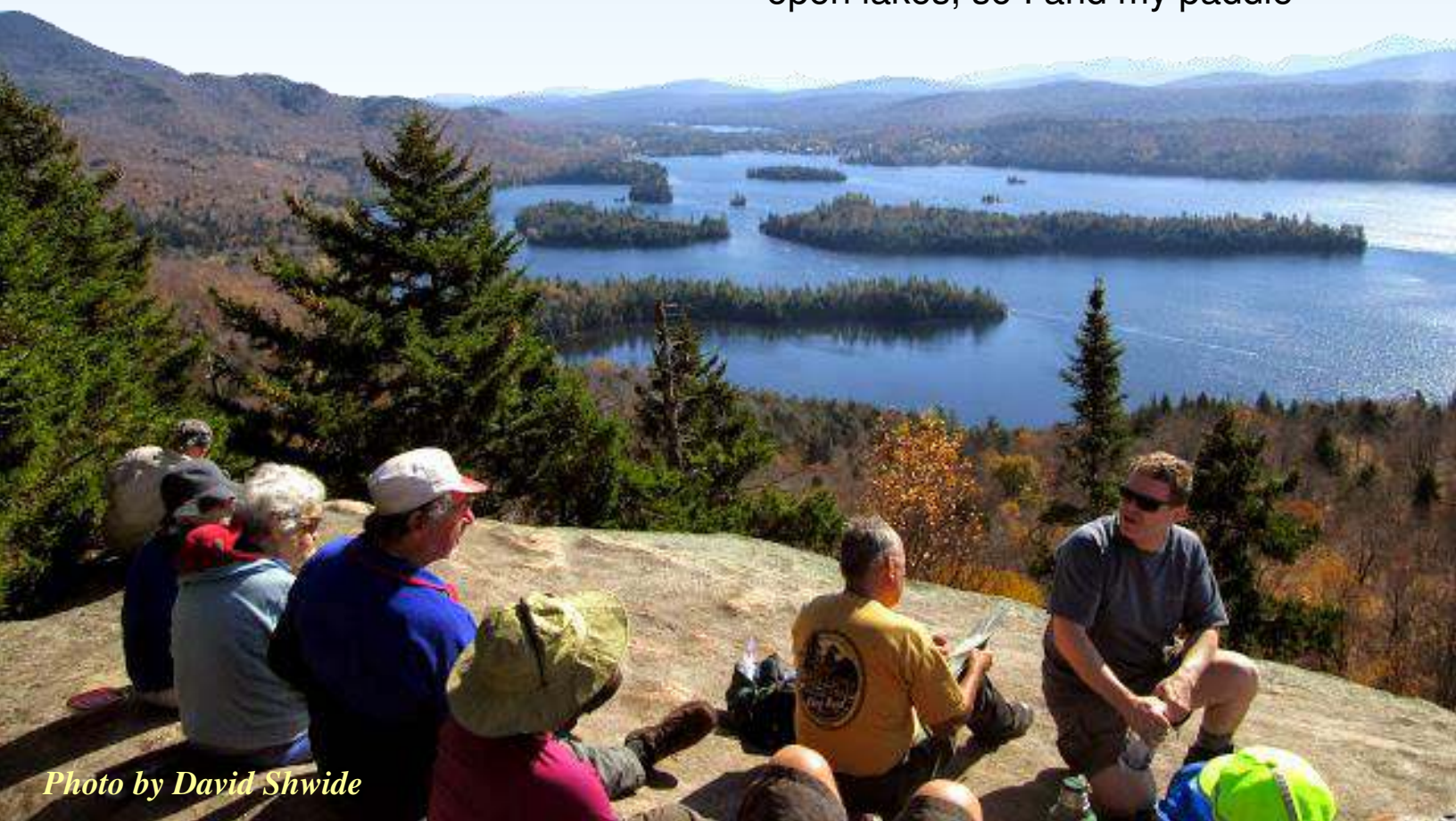


Photo by David Shwide



Fall Foliage Weekend

partner Eileen Yin joined the other group, paddling up the South Inlet. It was a nice paddle in slow waters, meandering through marshes where it was not always easy to tell which way the main river went.

The foliage had peaked the weekend before, and some storms had taken down most leaves. Still, it was a beautiful, warm day, and the occasional bright yellow birch lit up by the sun was that much more of a treat for the eyes. After 50 minutes of paddling we arrived at some rapids that stopped us short. There was no easy way to carry around the obstacle so we stopped for lunch, then paddled back. We played leapfrog with a heron along the way.

Back at the launch site the group split – some went back to Lake Eaton to do a reportedly nice paddle there. Eileen and I stayed with the other group and we continued along the shoreline of Raquette Lake, a nice relaxed paddle. We saw two loons on the way back, just as the Marion River gang came into view.

Around the campfire, the wind kicked up quite a bit, making me fear an exciting windy lake crossing the next day. After the crowd thinned, I

brought out my guitar and enjoyed a couple of quiet hours playing by the camp fire.

After pancakes and sausages, we all set out from the public launch in the village Blue Mountain Lake and crossed Blue Mountain Lake, weaving between a few islands, to get to a trailhead on the other side and add a hike to our adventures. The paddle/hike combo is something else Rich started a few years ago and it was so well liked by the participants he decided to make it a more regular feature. The day was sunny and warm, and the moderate wind we encountered was of a type I had only read about: it's called tailwind and is experienced by few. We felt very special! I paddled with Linda Polstein that day, and we made the crossing in about an hour.

We climbed to Castle Rock, a one mile trail gaining 700' elevation above the lake with stunning views of Blue Mountain Lake and the surrounding mountains. I was quite surprised by the number of other people on the trail, but it was a holiday weekend, and the views are worth it! At least they had day packs, not like our clumsy dry bags. The paddle back was delightful, there was barely any wind.

Fall Foliage Weekend

It was Italian Night back in camp, plus smoked pork loin in a wonderful dipping gravy with fresh herbs and spices, plus Brant Collins' home-made wine. One of the best camp meals in the history of the Adirondacks. After dinner, another tradition – jokes around the camp fire. Dave Kaplan and Bob Lindquist, cheered on by the crowd, tried to best each other – I don't think there was a clear winner. Some new jokes, some old ones – all funny because of the expert presentation. Later I had fun playing my guitar again.

The morning's French toast breakfast was a last meal and send off for most of us. Still, three tandem canoes paddled on the Raquette River, upstream of Butternut Falls. They had more dedication than myself.

A wonderful weekend in the Adirondack, er, wilderness? The camp certainly was anything but. Quiet paddles though, in the serene surroundings under a blue sky made you remember why the Adirondacks, so close to home, are so special. Most of us will make an effort to return next year. I know I will. It will be something to look forward to next fall.



MEET THE COMMITTEE

Andy LoPinto is the Canoe & Kayak Committee's spirited new Chair.

Andy LoPinto

Chair of the Canoe & Kayak Committee

But, he is humble.

So humble, in fact, he demurred from drafting up his own biography, so please let's welcome him with this heartfelt—albeit interpretive—introduction.

Most of us first met Andy at the beginner's classes just a year or so ago. He stood out.

First to try everything. First to help out. He seemed to struggle to suppress an ever-present chuckle and smile. But no luck. He was just too excited to get out and play in the rapids.

Later, we'd catch Andy lining up with the rest of us at the Mongaup. His eyes still light up as he assesses the flow. Usually, he laps us. He'll hop from one paddler to another with his characteristic wit and charm trying to get more of us to join him for another go.

A bomb run? Not likely. He's the kind who twirls into all the eddies he can, and caresses every play wave he finds.

That's the kind of enthusiasm he brings to everything he does, especially his volunteer work for the club. He started helping us with our equipment inventories and clean up, then moved on to jump-start trip scheduling. It worked. More and more trips got entered on the website.

If you're on a river, he's the very model of river leadership—whispering to the sweep and safety boaters to keep an eye on certain newbies.

What's most impressive, though, is that he breaks every stereotype you've heard about IT folk. Techy Geek? Anti-Social? Neither.

He is just at home around a campfire of veterans as he is leaping puddles with his cape-costumed, superhero boy, Cyrus.

Andy is easy to talk to and very open to hear your goals, dreams and reactions.



MEET THE COMMITTEE

Suzanne Villegas visited the AMC NY-NoJ Canoe/Kayak booth at Paddlesport three short years ago, where she entered the drawing for – and won - the Whitewater Instructional weekend. As she tells it, on the weekend of the instructional she took a big swim on the Lehigh River because she stopped paddling and couldn't stop grinning. From that moment, she fell madly in love with the sport, so much so, she got rid of her recreational kayak, upgrading to the big time.

Suzanne is a writer/artist/HR Manager/mother of a grown and gone son named Kevin. She was born in Califas (California), raised Tejana (Texan) and has resided in Seattle, Chicago, Michigan and in the past 10 years has lived in what she calls “heaven:” NYC. She was a lifelong camper and taught at a Girlscout horseback riding camp in her Texas youth.

Suzanne serves as Events Coordinator for the Chapter and is the club's new Secretary/Special Events Coordinator. She dragged catered food and party decorations through a foot of snow to make this year's Paddlers' Holiday Party so much fun.



Suzanne Villegas

Secretary & Special Events Coordinator

Her goals this year include cementing her combat rolls, buying a new boat, and recruiting new “greenhorn” paddlers to the club. If you ask Suzanne how she'll do it, she changes posture from her tough New Yorker take-no-prisoners stance, leans back on her heels and in full o'l southern drawl and says “if y'all ain't smiling, y'all ain't livin. Let's have some fun!”

Welcome, Suzanne. See you on the river.

MEET THE COMMITTEE

In the past, the Canoe & Kayak Committee has been blessed with the enthusiasm and hard work of many dedicated members. This year's committee is no exception. Please join me in welcoming and thanking the members of the 2014 Committee.

Andy

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Helen Marie Chapman

NY Canoe Committee Chair, 1974-75

The passing of Helen Marie Chapman offers a chance to honor a vibrant spirit of our Chapter.

Helen Marie was our committee's chair from 1974-75, but spread the joy of adventure so much more than that tenure records.

A Class 4 canoeist herself, she led many to first experiences on wilder rapids, deftly steered expeditions nationally and internationally, and taught the fellas a thing or two about building home-made decked canoes.

“It was largely due to Helen Marie’s tireless work and smooth politicking,” remembers Jill Arbuckle, “that the Mohican venture succeeded.”

“Back then, the aluminum Grumman with a shoe keel, and the C-1s (homemade in someone’s basement from a borrowed mold) were the hot boats,” adds Jill. Helen Marie bequeathed one of each, and so much more, to our grateful club.

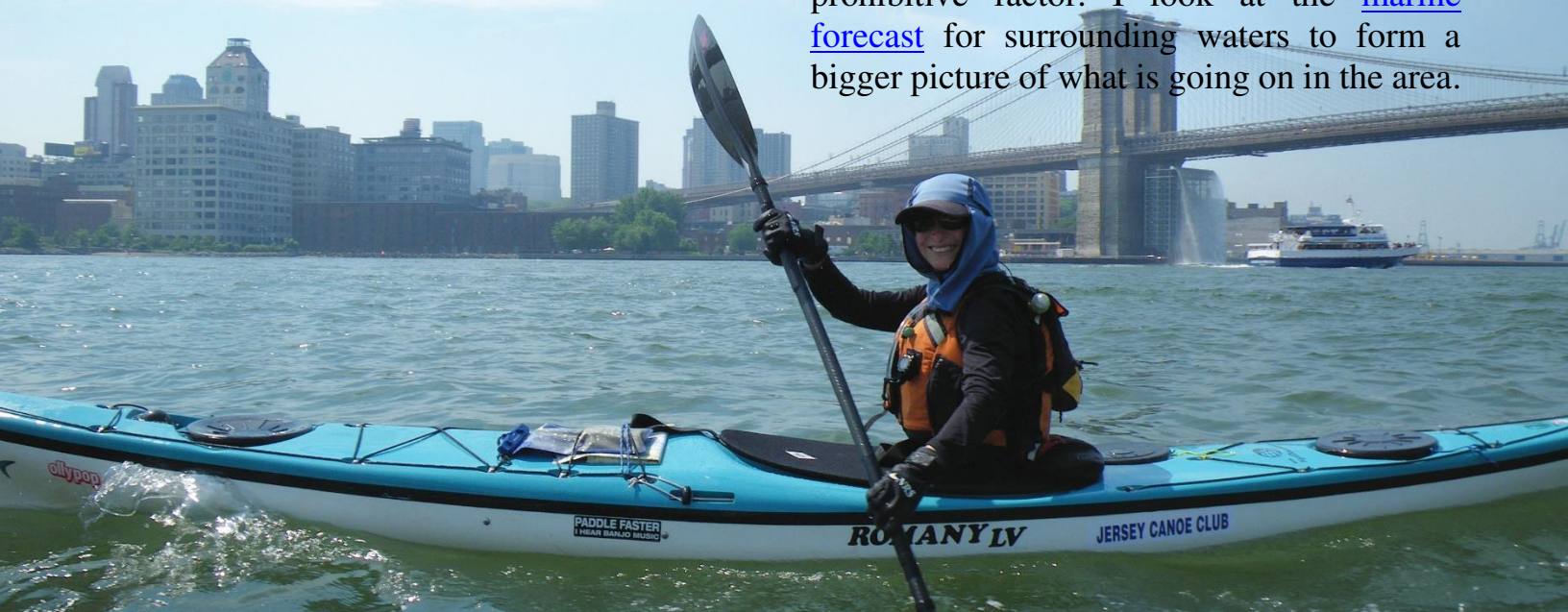
Sea Smart Before Launch

by Olly Gotel

For whitewater folks, navigation is mostly a no-brainer when paddling well-documented rivers. You launch at the put-in and float with the current until you get to the take-out. Much can go wrong, especially if you can't recognize the take-out from the water, but it's usually pretty clear which way to go once on a river. Named rapids with distinguishable features also give you some idea of where you are and how far you have left to go. You are 99.9% more likely to get lost trying to find the put-in, doing the shuttle or hiking out.

As a sea kayaker, I paddle on the ocean and in tidal estuaries. I have to do some form of navigation every time I go out, even when I paddle the same stretches of water many times a year, be this hand-railing a coast line, doing an open water crossing, playing in a surf zone, or simply cruising around New York harbor. This is because the sea moves two ways horizontally, changes speed and vertical shape dynamically, and the weather impacts everything. Here's what I do when I plan to paddle locally, launching from Chelsea Piers on the Hudson River:

MARINE FORECAST. I look up NOAA's coastal waters forecast for New York harbor. The weather and sea state is the defining factor for what I plan to do. If I see red text saying "GALE WARNING," I may see if my buddies want to do some rough water rescues and rolling practice in the shelter of the pier. Otherwise, I look at the wind speed (measured in knots), and the wind direction (stated as the compass direction from which the wind blows), and I get a feel for how the weather is changing. The harbor is quite protected, so the sea state is rarely a prohibitive factor. I look at the [marine forecast](#) for surrounding waters to form a bigger picture of what is going on in the area.





Sea Smart Before Launch

WEATHER. I look up the regular [weather forecast](#), not only to double-check the wind, but also because I am interested in the temperature, air pressure and radar. In particular, is a storm coming in? In the summer months, it is usual to have a late afternoon thunderstorm in New York City, and lightening and water don't mix. If it is below freezing with the wind chill, or above 100 degrees with high humidity, I don't go for long ambitious trips. It is also worth noting the time of sunset. Weather is as important to sea kayakers as CFS is to whitewater paddlers and the major determinant for launch.

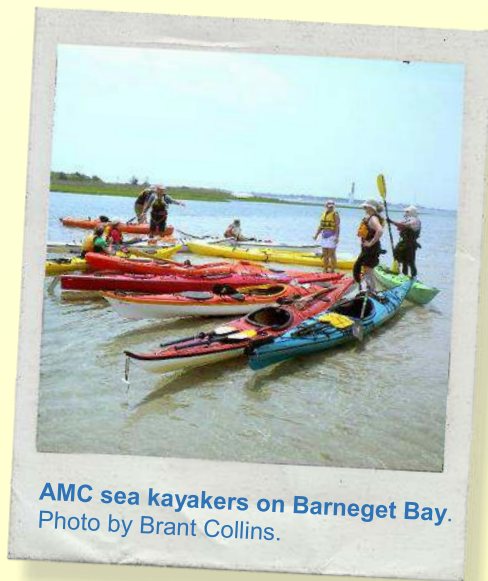
CURRENTS. I look up the currents at Hell Gate and the Narrows. When the water is flowing out to the ocean, the current is ebbing; when it is flowing back into the harbor, it is flooding. I look for the times of slack current (when it is changing direction), and the times and strength of the maximum current (max ebb and max flood). Slack tells me when it may be a good time to turn around on a trip. Max ebb at Hell Gate can get to over five knots, so it is kind of stupid to try to paddle into that, especially if there is also a 20 knot head wind blowing down the East River. Based on these data points, I can calculate what is happening with the currents around the local waters based on known current differences at defined locations. While there are plenty of online resources, I like to use the tried and trusted [Eldridge Tide and Pilot Book](#) for East Coast waters to get my daily data and reference differences.

TIDES. I note the time and size of high and low tides at the Battery. Big spring tides mean more water is flowing and hence stronger currents. However, there is a relatively small tidal range in New York harbor, so this only really impacts launches and landings. An exceptionally low tide translates into wrestling with kayaks in the Hudson River sludge at some of my usual landing spots, or having to negotiate many usually submerged pier pilings. While these data are also listed online and in the above resource, I like to look at the [Tidelog](#) for the MidAtlantic. It uses cool Escher graphics that tell me what is going on in an instant. It is important to note that the currents don't align as you might expect with the tides in New York harbor.

When it is high tide at the Battery, the water will still flood into the Hudson River for a few more hours, and when it is low tide the water still has a few more hours to ebb out.

EXCLUSION ZONES. I check to see whether

there are any new [Coast Guard advisory notices](#). During the Super Bowl weekend, an exclusion zone was set up around the New Jersey shoreline. Such notices tend to list the latitudes and longitudes that demarcate permanent or temporary areas that are prohibited to boat traffic. Being able



AMC sea kayakers on Barneget Bay.
Photo by Brant Collins.





Sea Smart Before Launch

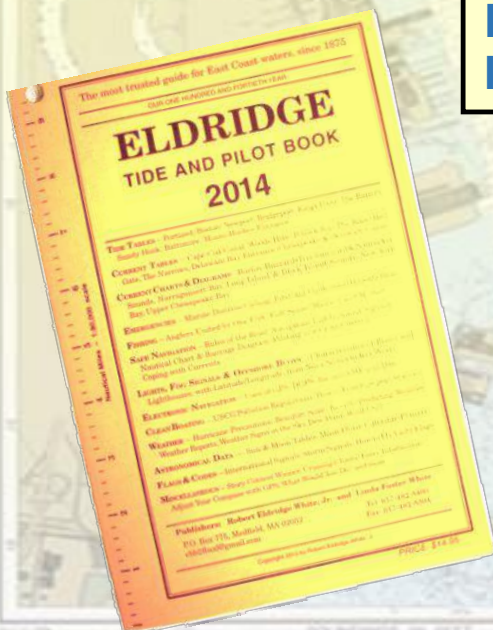
to read a nautical chart comes in handy if you want to avoid being arrested.

Based on all the above, and who is paddling with me, I do a risk assessment and make a decision. How long and how challenging a paddle do we want? Do we want to battle wind and current for a mega workout, or do we

want to zip along making as much use of the wind and current as possible? We could end up doing a cruise up and down the Hudson River, going for a trip down to Lady Liberty, setting off on a Manhattan circumnavigation, or taking Dave to Coney Island for a hotdog. With so many variables, no one trip is ever the same

What's all this got to do with navigation? I only mentioned "nautical chart" once and I never even got to compasses. We are still on the dock at Chelsea Piers, but now with an informed idea of which trip makes sense. Navigation 101 is all about: (a) knowing where you are, (b) knowing where you want to go and (c) finding a safe/efficient/challenging/exciting/smart (you choose your definition) way of getting there. As you can see, a lot of factors come into play *before* I even reach for a chart and a compass when sea kayaking.

"People think sea navigation is just a lot of impossible math, but it's really not," says instructor Chris Raab. Look for the next issue of *PaddleSplashes*, when Olly shows us how the basics are done. Did you know there are three kinds of North?



Touring Water

Update

Touring Water Requirements

Quietwater

Participation on any two QW trips. The two trips may be on the same body of water. No rating card recommendations are necessary.

Level 1 Rating

Participation on two Level 1 or greater trips and a recommendation from one of these trips. The two trips may be on the same body of water.

Level 2 Rating

Two trips on two different Level 1 or greater trips and recommendations from both of these trips, each by a different observer. At least one of the trips must include some exposure to conditions near the upper end of the range for protected water.

Level 3 Rating

Participation on five level 3 or higher trips and recommendations from three of these, each by a different observer. At least three of these trips must include some exposure to conditions near the upper limit of the range for open water.

Level 4 Rating

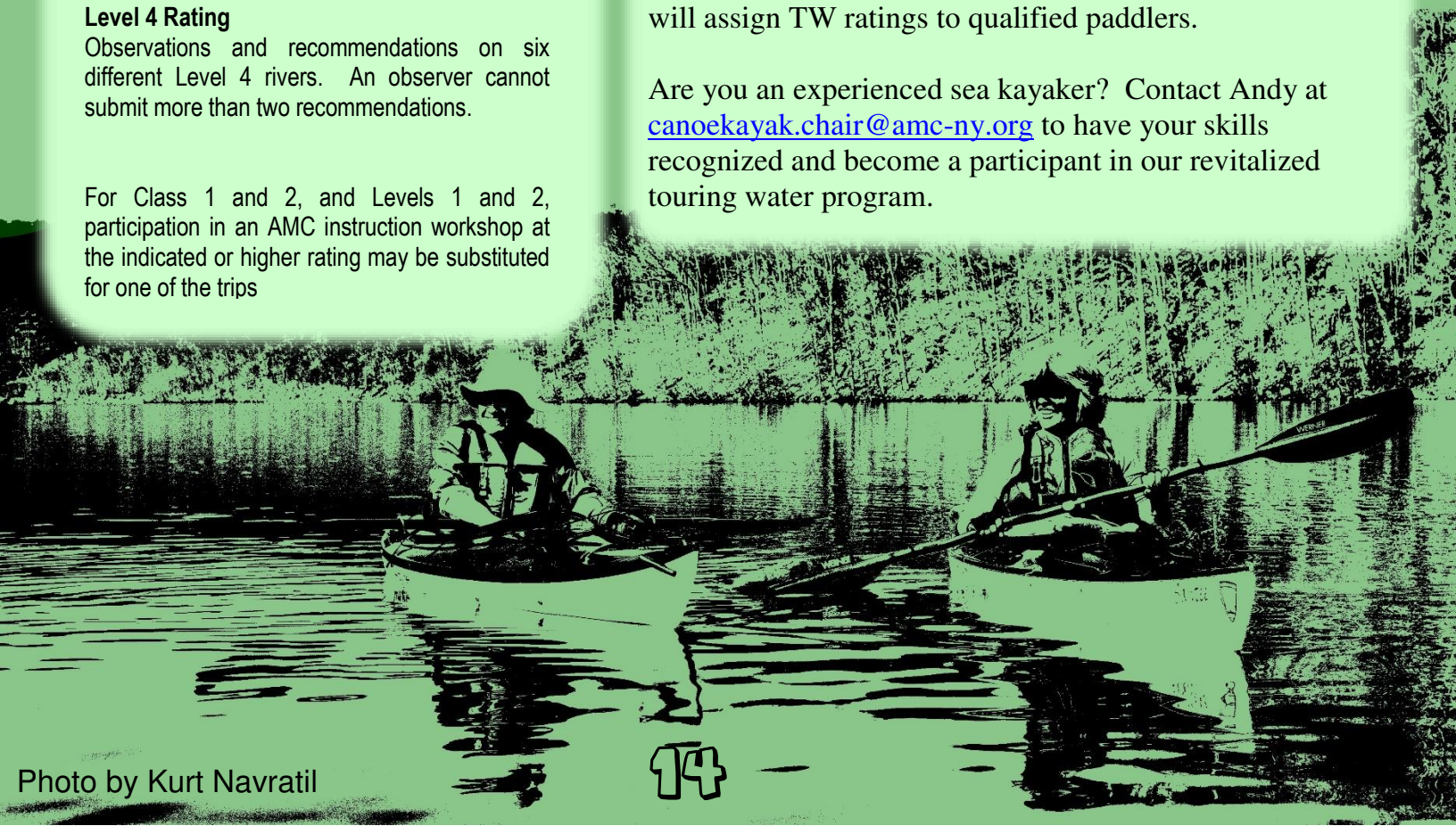
Observations and recommendations on six different Level 4 rivers. An observer cannot submit more than two recommendations.

For Class 1 and 2, and Levels 1 and 2, participation in an AMC instruction workshop at the indicated or higher rating may be substituted for one of the trips

Our committee's touring water (TW) program began in 2005, when a grant from AMC Headquarters allowed us to buy a fleet of sea kayaks and related equipment. For several years our sea kayaking program grew, but over time our TW trip leaders moved out of the New York area or have otherwise become inactive, and our program has stagnated.

To rekindle our program, we need to designate new TW leaders who can run trips, function as on-water leaders, and award TW ratings to other qualified paddlers. As was the case when our TW program was in its infancy, the Canoe & Kayak Committee will temporarily amend its rating procedure to designate new Touring Water paddlers. Active AMC paddlers may qualify for a TW rating by presenting to the Canoe/Kayak Chair documented mastery of the required skills. Examples of acceptable documentation include training by a recognized organization (American Canoe Assoc., British Canoe Union, etc.) or experience that can be vouched for by a recognized authority. The Canoe/Kayak Chair, in consultation with other members of the committee, will assign TW ratings to qualified paddlers.

Are you an experienced sea kayaker? Contact Andy at canoekayak.chair@amc-ny.org to have your skills recognized and become a participant in our revitalized touring water program.





Paddlers Party

Dec 14, 2013



AN APT APPIE

Marty Plante

At one time or another, we've all found ourselves in the arms of Marty Plante.

Figuratively, yes, but literally, too.

People lucky enough to be hanging around with AMC paddlers over the past decade have no doubt been scooped up in his embrace and steered into an eddy during rescue class. Or they've found themselves in his capable hands as equipment loans and shuttles are arranged.

Thanks to the Chapter's prestigious Appie Award, we get to recognize his abundant patience and generosity with due gravity.

The Appie of the Year award cannot be given to anyone who has ever been a chapter chair before before being nominated for this prize. Instead, the award historically names someone who is less visible in title, but overwhelmingly essential to the core success of our chapter of AMC.

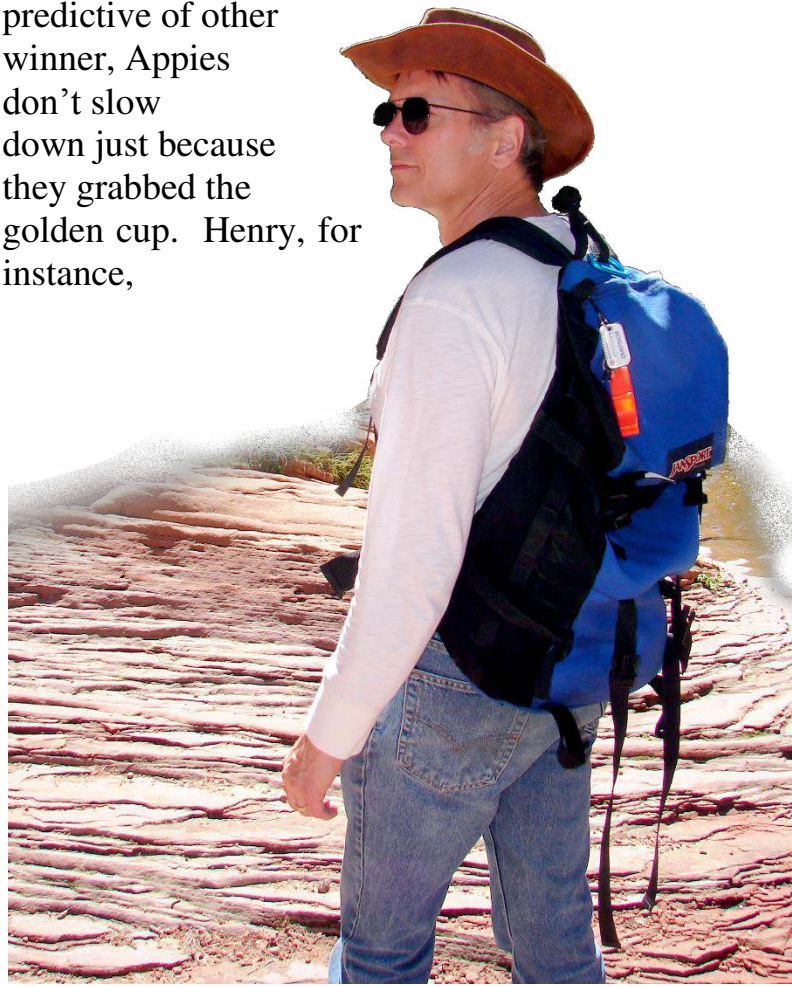
All the committees weigh in—all of them: Fire Islanders, hikers, climbers, walkers, backpackers, cross-country skiers, singles and sociables, trail managers and conservationists.

Winners show a talent and creativity wholly at the service of making the team stronger, not just their own status. They are someone who made possible the growth of club leaders and club effectiveness. On top of all this, they do

it while maintaining strong roles in their own families and careers. They are jugglers.

In the past 30 years, more than a third of the names engraved on bronze plates on a great wall plaque at HQ bear the name of our paddling demigods. For their tireless instruction, rescues, leadership training, trip coordination and so all-round spirit, the list of deserving honorees include the likes of David Brucas, Lenny Grefig, Don Getzin, Henry Schreiber, and more.

"I was the first Appie to become Chapter Chair after the award," notes Henry. And if his life is predictive of other winner, Appies don't slow down just because they grabbed the golden cup. Henry, for instance,





AN APT APPIE: *Marty Plante*

is now the AMC's Director for the Northeast Region.

Marty, we Marty, we dearly hope, will continue to enjoy the reward of watching us all grow, and remain as big a part of our club life as he will always be in our hearts.

But don't just take this editor's word for it. Read the nomination, at right, submitted by outgoing Canoe/Kayak Committee Chair Carin Tinney.

I am nominating Marty Plante as Appie of the Year for several reasons.

Marty has taken on two incredibly thankless and time consuming roles for the Canoe/Kayak Committee this year: Treasurer and Records. In his Treasurer role, he has taken the Committee into the 21st century by implementing an all-electronic trip payment and record system. A part of this system is the implementation of PayPal for trip leaders. Whereas before trip leaders had to write a check for the fees collected, send waivers and return a trip participant list, this process can now be done via the internet. With over 50 trips a year, the upkeep of such a system is not an easy job. He tends to trip reports, payments and leader questions so responsibly and in a timely fashion.

He is also our committee's records keeper. Not only does he maintain several lists (active paddlers, newsletter distribution, and ratings list), he has assisted me in locating old CKC policies in prior newsletters, leader's manuals and from his own history with the CKC. He has been an indispensable resource on the Chapter, the club, and our committee.

Marty has served in several roles for the CKC over the years, including the role of Chair. One of the biggest achievements during his tenure as chair was the implementation of the Class 4R rating for our whitewater program. The 4R rejuvenated the Class 4 trips as there were only a few CL4 rated paddlers. A 4R rating allows those with the rating to lead select class 4 rivers.

In addition to leading trips, he gave continuity of assistance to the grand tradition of the Southern Rivers Week of Rivers expedition. Not only that, Marty leads the CKC's Advanced Safety and Rescue Class, which brings the skills of helping others on the water to advancing paddlers.

Marty has never said no to a request by me. He has graciously ordered equipment, helped locate old policies, and kept and updated Committee files.

Unbeknownst to most paddlers, Marty is a key player in the beautifully designed *PaddleSplashes*. Working in conjunction with the *PaddleSplashes* editor, he has provided expert formatting and design to the publication.

I do not know anyone who deserves to be Appie of the Year more than Marty. He eats, sleeps and breathes AMC.



Marty on the Chatooga.
Photo by Carin Tinney.

AMC PADDLING NEWS

ALL NEW!

- **SHOCKING**
- **BIZARRE**
- **INCREDIBLE**
and it's **ALL TRUE**

THE PADDLING WORLD'S ONLY RELIABLE NEWS SOURCE

AMC PADDLERS

CONFESS!

THEIR NON-SENSE OF DIRECTION

**LOST AND
FOUND**

*in the Adirondack
Wilderness*



as told to
Loretta Brady
with Curt Gellerman





AMC PADDLERS CONFESS

Paddlers, by and large, neglect orienteering skills — at least in comparison to hikers and backpackers. Long Lake is not that long, after all. It's a no-brainer: rivers run downstream. Getting lost seems a joke. Two tubers walk onto a sandbar, look out at the flow and ask, "Do we go right or left?" (True story.)

But if you ask around a bit, even expert leaders like Curt Gellerman and Chris Raab know that getting lost on lakes and rivers *does* happen. We glean their advice as we relate one AMC boater's recent experience at getting lost and found.

The Expert Orienteers

When you meet the free-spirited Curt Gellerman, with his laid back ways and easy laugh, you wouldn't think he was one for making extensive plans for his annual trips-of-a-lifetime in the arctic barrens. But in fact, he takes over a year to plot optimal routes and know his landmarks in these remotest, least landmarked places on the continent. Some of his take-outs have registration books with 5 names in them—dating back a decade ago.

"Why pay an outfitter when you can do a trip yourself at $\frac{2}{3}$ the cost? Just get out there and get the skills down," says Curt.

Long-time canoe and sea kayak instructor Chris Raab is based in New Jersey. He strongly advocates that all group members practice their orienteering skills and keep them sharp.

"Don't get dependent on the leader having all the navigation skills," says Chris. "I guarantee there'll come a time when you may get separated from a leader, or the leader is unable to function."



AMC PADDLERS CONFESS

“How do you get to Raquette River Falls?

Practice, Practice, Practice.”

We had eagerly signed up last summer for Russ Faller’s week-long expedition in the Adirondacks to trace the Raquette River. Russ’ strong reputation was a big draw.

Russ leads frequent trips on the Hudson River and Long Island Sound, paddle-and-camp trips on the Delaware, and even week-long expeditions in Canada.

“A lot goes into knowing your route and maps thoroughly,” Russ says.

“My favorite part of the trip is the preplanning: looking over the maps, rationing the mileage each day, plotting the stops,” says Russ.

The journey’s rigor attracted a highly fit, highly skilled set of members.

It’s easy to get overconfident.

We each had our own official, topographic maps put out by *National Geographic* with the cooperation of the Adirondack Mountain Club. Every bog and wildflower field appears, as well as numbered shelter sites, all with contoured elevations and distances drawn to scale.

The carry by Raquette Falls would be clearly blazed. All a paddler had to do was follow the river’s blue line counterclockwise, hopping from lake-to marsh-to pond-to lake. It was all there in pretty little drawings. Didn’t seem tricky at all.





AMC PADDLERS **CONFESS**

“You can’t always count on just following a river on a map,” Curt cautions. “We’d once pre-planned to follow a river through a particularly remote wilderness,” Curt said. Compasses don’t work in the semi-arctic zones where he loves to play. Magnetic north is so close it throws off the needle’s reliability.

“Using the only map you can get for the wilderness area we were in, we expected to follow the blue line it showed—water—until we realized in reality it wasn’t there anymore,” Curt recalls. “There was nothing. Nothing. Just a dried up old gravel field.”

At a loss—or, excuse me, explorers never get lost, just re-routed—Curt and his band tried the work-around. “We portaged up to a lake we knew in the area and figured there had to be navigable tributaries feeding from there to where we needed to go.”

On our Raquette River trip, I decided to take a break at a spot amid the marsh grass with a maze of grassy canals right near Stony Creek, on my map. I had been paddling a loaded canoe with

mostly a bent shaft, one-blade paddle while the rest had their 12-pound Hornbecks and double-bladed kayak paddles. I yearned for a longer rest, while the others opted to explore. They meandered on ahead while I promised to stay put till their return.

We were a seasoned group of Raquette River adventurers and had communicated well. I’d said I’d stay put till they returned. Only I didn’t.

Midweek in the ‘Daks. You feel wonderfully alone in nature. You lose track of time.

Then you start exaggerating time. Weren’t they gone too long? Okay, use your observations of nature to guide you. Follow the river current by noting the direction the underwater grass sways, not the rippling surface flow caused by the wind.



AMC PADDLERS **CONFESS**

Once underway awhile, I realized I had just circled around an oxbow loop, landing back at the resting place where I'd begun.

By compass and map, I needed to go northwest, but the channels were uncooperative. The map's illustrations didn't help much.

Wilderness landmarks are so fickle with the seasons.

You wait. And you wait.

So much for the calming influence of nature. At that point, you just get more and more anxious—or as comedian Stephen Wright describes, you get that feeling like the moment you're tipping back in a chair, just before it falls over. But the moment lasts.

Then, finally, they paddled back into view, returning to my rest

spot. Turns out they'd been a bit worried, too.

“Getting separated is the most common mistake groups make in the wilderness,” Curt advises. A buddy system calms those navigation self-doubts. A club is your safety net to practice your orienteering in the real world. They showed me how I could pick different bearings, and how to distinguish the older oxbow islands and the more recent, “re-routed” channels.

The Fog—and the Plot—Thickens

On our final morning, an all-devouring fog rolled in. Another chance to practice. Could I go out and try to find my way in *that*? “Knock yourself out,” Russ encouraged.

The canoe pushed silently away as the camp site was consumed in fuzzy grayness.





AMC PADDLERS CONFESS

No discernable current could guide me. The compass gave some information, but my dead reckoning would need additional life support in this situation.

I squinted to see hills or shorelines.

Nope. Hidden and overcast, the sun failed me as a clue.

Try straining your hearing for tell-tale sounds. At first there were only bird songs that mocked us. *They* could find their way. I felt a whole new breed of aloneness. From somewhere far off, I heard the swoosh of cars. Tupper Lake had only a few nearby roads, still, from which direction was the sound?

Finally, watch the fog more closely. It had a source. The winds were pushing in from the North East. That, plus Russ's laugh, confirmed the course I should river lead.

We had all brought along a compass of our own, but now it's clear that map/compass skills must combine

with other observation and knowledge, the kind you glean from practice in real situations. One of us even had a digital compass, GPS, a Spot satellite messenger, and a Kindle. That was Nathan Baker, expert hike leader and well-read techie.



Russ on the Raquette

“Digital technology has its place, but back ‘em up,” notes Chris Raab

“You sure you have enough batteries?” Curt asks, “And a signal? And that nothing’s

gonna happen to that transmitter?”

AMC leader and canoe instructor Kurt Navratil learned that lesson. “Don’t leave them in the boat when you go for a paddle-hike,” he says. He had brought such a device along on the October AMC Fall Foliage weekend. After the incredible summit and inspiring vista, his return was “re-routed” and delayed. He had bushwhacked back to the boat where



AMC PADDLERS CONFESS

the handy device was waiting for them.

Need Help? Join the Club!

The lesson is clear. There is no substitute for pre-planning, skills instruction, and safe practice, practice, practice.

“It can happen so easily,” agrees Cameron Klinger. “We had to return these jet skis before the rental place closed and thought it would be a snap to recognize the marina,” he recalls. “We wound up landing a few beaches off and had to figure out a way to get them back via land.”

Getting lost—or re-routed—happens more than you think.

“I was sailing on Lake George and couldn’t find my dock site,” says Radu Teodorescu. “My paddling friends

had to come out to me,” he says. It’s just not that easy to get close enough to identify features.



Curt dressed for success

You’ve got to practice it. “If we were out West it would be easier, but the hills, islands and shores all can blend to look the same,” he said.

The point is paddlers *do* need orienteering skills.

Free and cheap courses abound through AMC, Tent & Trails, Sebago Canoe Club, or through Chris Raab’s [Tuktu Paddles](#). But it doesn’t always work out like it looks on YouTube.

On a different AMC trip, the popularity of the Osgood Lake meant a whole mess of boats to keep tabs of on the water. Then the sweep changes up, and we lose track of how many boats make each turn. A tense hour. Faster paddlers retrace the last two beaver dam turns. The “re-routed” tandem regroup. The emotional reunion. The cautionary debrief.

Go get that compass. Study the maps. Be observant. Let club friends mentor you.

Maybe then we’ll get as good as the pigeons.

At the very least, we’ll be more thoughtful humans, more in tune with the natural world we love so much.



2013 Eddie and Ozzie Awards Name *Paddle Splashes* as a Finalist

It's the Grammys, the Oscars, the Emmys for the media world.

Over 2,300 self-nominations this year represented the breadth of the magazine publishing industry. Five hundred finalists were selected. Whether it's *National Geographic* or the *Huffington Post*, excellence is noted in relevant categories, including non-profit and digital media.

PaddleSplashes earned distinction as a quarterly, digital, non-profit publication for Nature and Outdoor Recreation. Actually, if there were a category for non-profit and non-salaried publications, we might've bumped up a few points.

The award recognizes the very best in editorial and design. It's the largest and most inclusive awards program of its kind in the industry. But most of all, it reads between the lines to match the media with the mission.

We were asked to submit one issue for evaluation. The 100th year anniversary edition was our submission. What else? We sent the whole issue which they judge for editorial content and design with respect to our club's goals: education, safety, community, and the wish to inspire passion and responsibility for our natural waterways.

While vanity surely crept in, the real point in entering the contest was to gain critique and feedback.

In life, it's always instructive to have outside eyes show us what we don't see: the good and the bad.

Turns out judges look for how vibrantly a publication lives up to its mission. How involved and interactive is the media with its readership? In our small way, we are doing that.

We had some tough competition in our category. A certain gun magazine won honorable mention. This year we were aced by *Spa Magazine*. Who knew that salons were an outdoor sport? A victory for eco-tourism.

This all comes at a good time. AMC NY-NoJ is about to unveil its redesigned website. The revamping maximizes our ability to interact with members—more links to social media, more accessible pictures, a simpler look, a more welcoming feel for newcomers.

Our media is the face of our club. And now our two publications, *Trails & Waves* and *Paddle Splashes*, will have a greater online presence.

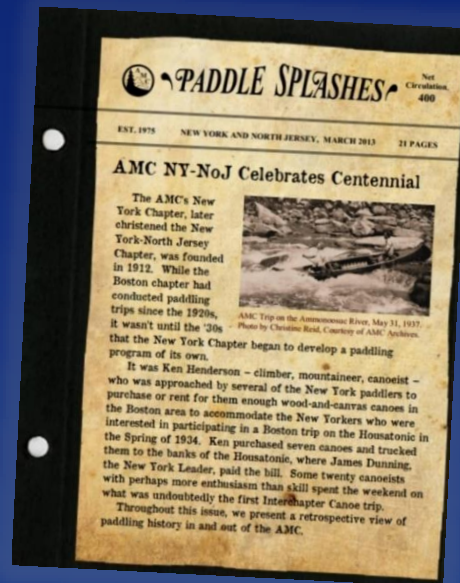
What would make us greater is to have even more member-driven content—reflections, dreams, goals, stories, and skills to pass on.

PaddleSplashes needs even more connection to you, its readers.

Share your goals, your trip observations, your knowledge and experience.

When we check out an issue, we get to feel a little more skilled, a little bit safer, and a whole lot closer to the dreams and adventures of our paddling buddies in quiet or moving waters. Because of all the members who have shared their stories and reflections, we get close enough to see the spray fly from the paddle blades.

Now that's something to be proud of.



Spizzle Creek
Bird Blind

Shore Rd



Sedge
Island

SEDGE ISLAND

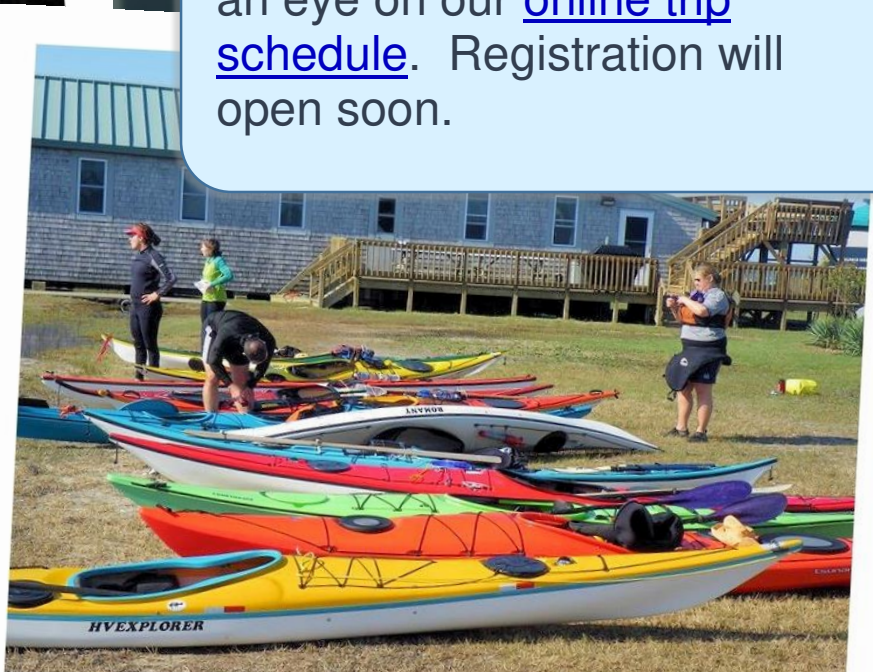
Legendary Sedge Island resumes its coveted place as an AMC destination trip this year. Located in Barnegat Bay, the Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center shelters a phenomenal number of rare bird and sea life species.

There is only one trip this year, August 15-17, at the peak of terrapin turtle egg-laying season. Sea kayaks are available.

If you find the rewards of a natural setting outweigh the nuisances of insects and bare-basics accommodations, keep an eye on our [online trip schedule](#). Registration will open soon.



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Oh, the Places You'll Paddle!

2014 Activity Schedule								
	Date	Touring Water	BW	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Instruction / Misc
Feb	22-23							Pool Session (Wed, 2/26) Jingirian
	1-2							Pool Session (Wed, 3/5) Jingirian
March	8-9							Pool Session (Wed, 3/12) Jingirian
	15-16			Ramapo (Sat, 3/15) Plante				
	22-23							Pool Session (Wed, 3/26) Jingirian
	29-30	Visit our booth at PaddleSport 2014						
	5-6							
April	12-13		Oswego (Sun, 4/13) Watters		Adirondacks & Upstate NY Holbrook			
	19-20 Easter							
	26-27							
	29-30							
	3-4							
May	10-11 Mothers' Day							Wappinger Creek Paddle/Clean-up (Sat, 5/10) Faller Pelham Bahy Clean-Up (Sun, 5/11) McCabe
	17-18		Fishkill (Sun, 5/18) Faller					Black Creek Paddle/Clean-up (Sat, 5/17) Faller
	24-25 Memorial Day					Yough Futrell/Lewis		



Parting Shot

Photo courtesy of Tumblr

~PADDLE SPLASHES~

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PaddleSplashes is published quarterly by the Canoe & Kayak Committee of the Appalachian Mountain Club, New York-North Jersey Chapter. Please direct all submissions to [canoekayak.newsletter \[at\] amc-ny.org](mailto:canoekayak.newsletter[at]amc-ny.org)