



# PADDLE SPLASHES

Canoe & Kayak Committee  
Appalachian Mountain Club  
NY-NoJ Chapter

OCTOBER 2016

**CANOE  
EXPLOSION:**  
The Resurgence  
of Open Boating





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# CANOE EXPLOSION

OPEN BOATS ARE  
RIDING A WAVE OF  
POPULARITY!

**N**ationwide, the ACA reports a surge in paddling activity. What's trending most? SUPs *and* canoes.



Loretta Brady on the Lehigh

We had all noticed the decline in boating in past years. At the Lower Yough, the volume of river permits slowed so significantly pre-booking permits didn't seem needed any more, even on long weekends. Just walk-on and buy 'em.

But something is in the air.  
Or the water. Let the  
statistics speak for  
themselves:

AMC's 2016 Moving  
Water Instructional was  
fully registered with a  
combo of kayakers &  
canoeists.

The Wilderness Learning  
Skills weekend had a  
wait-list of four  
disappointed boaters.  
Twenty-one participants  
registered for the April  
Wallkill birding paddle.  
(Rare 25 mph winds forced a  
rescheduling to the fall  
migration.)

Mere numbers have a corporate feel.

To absorb the real rise in quality of life  
paddling, listen to the new AMC  
paddlers:

"It was like playing a musical  
instrument with the sound of nature,"  
remarked Nazanin Ghanbari about this  
year's Adirondacks paddling  
expedition. She and her husband Sean  
joined us this year at NJIT pool  
sessions and the Moving Water  
Instructional. "This was our special  
first anniversary of canoeing." Some-  
thing tells me this marriage will last.

Our own data does suggest a canoe  
renaissance. At the 2016 Instructional,



Marty Plante on the Hudson River Gorge

canoeists outnumbered whitewater  
kayakers two to one. Tandem  
canoeing for the NY-NoJ Chapter is  
reviving on whitewater and flatwater  
trips. Recent canoe counts on the  
Lehigh, Zoar Gap and Mongaup show  
ratios inching up to about ¼ of boats.  
And Stephen Ferder crushed it on the  
Lehigh in his sleek closed-canoe racer.  
(He also crushed his calves.)

But it's not just our own club  
observations. The American Canoe  
Association reports there are 3% more  
paddlers in 2014 and 2015. Video  
streams of canoe and kayak Olympic  
events appeared on NBC Sports "most  
popular views" page. And our own

Kurt Navratl, Campmor salesman and AMC paddler, reports that boat sales jumped about 20%—mostly fishing kayaks, followed by canoes.

Note, though, that some new canoeists are hybrids or cross-overs. One Mad River owner at the Lehigh last month commented, “I use a double blade with my canoe now because I lead a lot of step-up trips. I just find I can attain and get to where I need to be so much faster with the kayak paddle.”

We did note he favored one-blade angling on his eddy turns.

Another closed-boat owner that day commented, “I had to switch from kayaking because of my back. Now I have a second career at my job, and a whole new second career as a paddler!”

The question emerges, “Why?” “Why are more learners interested, especially in AMC-led events?”

No doubt a large part is due to Canoe/Kayak Committee Chair Suzanne Villega’s vision. She focuses on adding strong leaders and more trips.

For example, there’s the new position she added onto the CKC Committee: Media Specialist, Christian Lazo.

Christian connects AMC to the wider world of Social Media: [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com), regular postings of trip photos and information on the [AMC Paddlers’ FaceBook](https://www.facebook.com/AMCPaddlers) page, and outreach to other clubs for jointly-held trips.



Steve Ferder on the Housatonic

## CANOE PARTICIPANTS IN USA

(in millions)



Not only that, Suzanne ceaselessly surfs the web for links to new boaters. Toggling between the many paddler chat groups, websites, and MeetUp.com, she guides paddlers to realize it's not so overwhelming to register for AMC outings and cash in on affordable rentals and limitless safe support.

Now there's a bargain.

The rise in canoe boating perhaps has a more complicated explanation.

It may be the uptick in canoe expedition stay-cations, a smart alternative in a slowed economy. Those trips then lead people to whitewater or more day tripping.

Yet the increase is seen at both ends of the age continuum: boomers and their kids and grandkids, and millennials.

"It makes sense," says Dan Olson, a joint member who pulled in four new canoeists from SCC, his Sebago Canoe Club membership to our Instructional. Sebago actually embraces sailing, sea kayaking, and even rowing. On City of Water Day, Sebago headlined canoes as a central event, especially the popular war canoe rides for families and kids.

"It just takes exposure," Dan will remark when talking about his Boy Scout canoe trips and open paddles. "As people get to experience it, canoeing becomes more normal to everyone."

It was Dan's idea, too, to network all our region's clubs for a "Canoe Consortium." This permits members from other clubs to join in one another's paddling activities, but especially canoe-centered ones.

Don't miss out on this rise in paddling.

On the 21st Annual Fall Foliage Expedition, 18u of the 24 boats were canoes. Because Rich Breton master-minds the itinerary to run three simultaneous paddles per day, our boreal explorations stay intimate and wild.

The more the merrier. Bring on the stampede.



# OLLY GOTEL:

## *Making a Splash in Kayak Polo*

Olly Gotel is incredible! She's giving, smart (earning a Ph.D. at age 25), and always willing to lend a hand, shoulder, gear, technique or a sympathetic ear. This year, Olly made us all even prouder of her by competing on the USA Women's National Kayak Polo team.

In August, the team spent a month on the road, traveling to Germany, Belgium, Amsterdam and Italy to train and compete. She scored many goals and was recognized for her efforts on and off the water as a leader and a high scorer.

Olly Gotel, above left, and below, training for the US Women's National Kayak Polo Team. Photos by Suzanne Villegas.





Olly Gotel, second from left, and teammates.

To make the team, Olly spent more than a year training hard and practicing, running drills, and building muscle. Olly's mom, Chris, is a sea kayaker and introduced Olly and her wonderful husband Dave Michael to the sport of kayaking. Olly and Dave are BCU-certified sea kayak instructors and solid Class 5 white water kayakers. They have traveled across the world to paddle, including 18 days in Greenland building their own kayaks.

Kayak Polo is a team sport, played with five players per team in specially designed kayaks on calm water. The object of the game is to score goals in a net suspended two meters above the water. It's similar to basketball and handball, with limited boat-on-boat pushing and an occasional tackle of the ball holder, and a great way to improve paddling skills.

This year, the US Kayak Polo National tournament was held in Brooklyn. This annual tournament is open to all clubs in the US. The AMC's New York North-Jersey Chapter fielded a team, *AMC Gotham Rapids*, with mostly AMC members plus a few other whitewater paddlers looking for a team.

If you want to give it a try, New York Kayak Polo (<http://www.nykayakpolo.org>) offers one or two introduction sessions during their winter season in Jersey City and provides the required gear.

Congratulations to Olly and to all the other members of the USA Women's National Kayak Polo Team!

*Suzanne Villegas*

## *Rob Holbrook*

AMC Gotham Rapids team members (l to r): Eric Schomburg, Adelene Tan, Mary Lukasik, Zac Hvizdak, Rob Holbrook, David Michael and Carin Tinney.





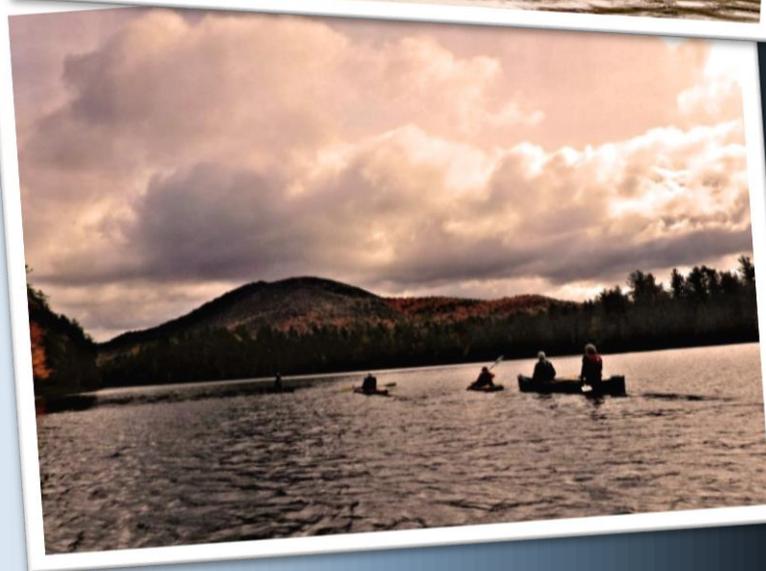
## *Rich Breton Leads his 21<sup>st</sup> Consecutive Adirondack Fall Foliage Trip*



The more things remain the same, the more they change. The 21st Annual Fall Foliage trip was in some ways the best of the same and the best of the new. So many of the same expert paddlers joined—a set of leading boaters with over 700 years of experience (yes, we counted)—but several new expeditionists joined us, notably two new women canoeists.

The best of the tradition was the scenery. Even at the Fish Creek Pond Campsite trees sported four colors at once: flaming reds, orange, glowing greens and yellows. Yet there was the best of the new. We picked a new loop route that tested us with four short carries. We passed!

It's hard to convey all the delicious conversation, food and fireside bonding. Suffice to say that it's not just the trees that are aglow during the weekend. Great thanks to Rich Breton, Henry, Lenny, and Tom, Brian, Bob and all who did so much to make this such a magical weekend.



Our paddlers will never forget this special trip, and will never forget our special paddlers. The highlight of the weekend was an 89<sup>th</sup> birthday party for Dave Kaplan and his late wife Arlene.



by  
**CHRISTIAN  
LAZO**

# HOOKED **on kayaking**

*How a New Paddler Came to Join the Fold*

**I**m a sucker for boats and anything to do with large bodies of water.

So one day when I entered the NJIT pool for a swim, I discovered there were a bunch of strange people paddling around in kayaks. I figured it might prove difficult to swim laps with these boats splashing around but they (the paddlers) turned out to be friendly and invited me to hop in a boat.

Damn it, they got me. With that start, I've only grown more and more keen on getting into these kayaks and seeing what I can do with them.

While I wasn't able to get out onto the river the summer following my first pool sessions, I believe two seasons of pool sessions proved to be immensely helpful.

“**Everybody watches out for, and takes care of, each other in the group.**”

I was able to hone in on paddling techniques and even get a decent roll going. As warmer weather came, I was finally able to get out onto the rivers.

Boy, was I in for a surprise. It was even more fun paddling down river than in the pool!

The beauty of the natural landscape surrounding the water and the majestic, almost daunting, strength of the rapids had me hooked. I love a challenge, and when an unsuspecting rock flips me over, I just have to roll myself back up.

I can't swim.

I won't swim.

And when I do swim, I want to go back to repeat and run through it again so I can fix what I did wrong. The rush and the challenge definitely get me to come back to the water again.

Beyond that, there is a whole other aspect to paddling that I didn't quite expect to come across: the community that formed around those of us who look to conquer these waters. This common interest and all-around friendliness make it feel like I'm with old friends.

Everybody watches out for, and takes care of, each other in the group.

We even lend a hand to random fellow paddlers who happen to be out on the river holding a “yard sale” wipe out.

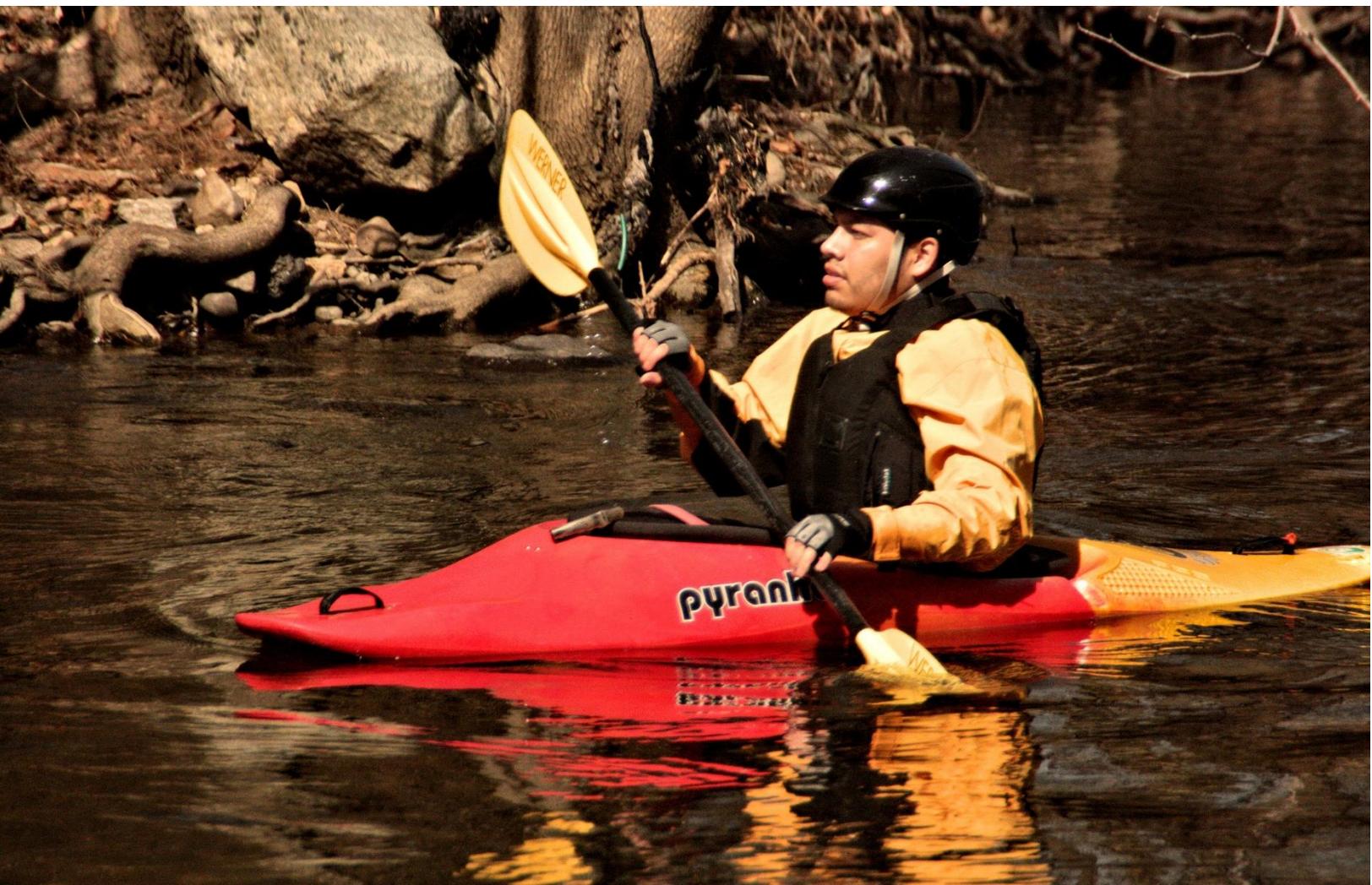
The post-paddle comradery and friendship are probably my favorite parts, though. The opportunity to share food and drinks with everybody really ties together a successful day on the river.

Through our group here at the AMC, I feel like I’ve joined a family who helps guide me through the ropes and gives me a firm foothold to start and continue exploring what whitewater kayaking is all about. Through these

river trips and weekends such as the Instructional Weekend, I have met some spectacular people and paddlers from all walks of life. I am extremely grateful for all of those whom I have had the pleasure of paddling with and look forward to many more river trips, combat rolls, and happy hours.

Learning to whitewater kayak. How do you start? Join one of the NJIT pool sessions this winter or the Beginner Kayak Instruction Weekend next June.

See you on the river!



story by RUTH ANN WOOD

photos by JASON WOOD

# Kayaking, Tasty Treats,

*È up to our  
È elbows in*

# Muck

**A**t the beginning of the New Year a friend of mine—Julie, who loves everything water—asked my husband Jason and me if we wanted to do a weekend adventure at Sedge Island through the Appalachian Mountain Club.



It turned out the trip coincided with Jason and my eleventh year wedding anniversary. It was an awesome way to celebrate by being immersed in air, water, sun, animals and earth.

We enjoyed the kinship, stories and food prepared by the fourteen guests Friday evening through Sunday noon. It was a great first experience with AMC and Sedge Island.

First of all, the schedule of kayaking and eating around the setting and rising of the sun was the best itinerary I had all year (and this included Jason and my India Couch Surfing/ travel adventure in March on my birthday during the color festival of Holi). It felt liberating to leave my money and cell phone in the car and be offline for two days.



I was so impressed with the all-female intern crew who rode with us on a motor boat from Long Beach Island or paddled with a group of kayakers with their own boats to Sedge Island and ran our activities.

The days were nice and hot and quickly got chilly after sunset, so I was a bit apprehensive about going kayaking after sunset the first night with a tickle in my throat that came on after delicious rich ice cream and chocolate dessert. That's when I learned about rubber waders where you literally step into rubber boots and pants and feel warm on the water, something our interns recalled using in the colder months. I also wore a light rain jacket and a red fluorescent flare hooked to my collar. A total of seven solo and tandem boats did a count off and enjoyed the glow of stars and an almost full moon. I was enchanted by the shadowy sights as my husband and I made a leisurely lap around the island.

The next day, after a little fishing followed by a large breakfast buffet prepared by guests, we set off on our plastic kayaks under the hot sun with snacks and peanut butter and banana sandwiches. Jason got lots of nature

photos along the shore and I got one of Jason up to his elbow in sandy muck as he found some clams with the group (which, by the way, were deliciously grilled that evening and enjoyed with garlic and butter, in between our pre-dinner snack and dinner).

Back at Sedge Island we saw two turtles in mid-birth, laying eggs in the sand. As guests we participated in finding and collecting the freshly buried eggs as the interns checked the health of the mothers. Then the eggs were transferred and buried in a protective, predator free enclosed area with wooden sides and a chicken wire roof.

Another uplifting part of the experience was trip leader Loretta Brady, who organized the weekend adventure, collecting payments, assigning a meal planner and was helpful before, during, and after the weekend Sedge adventure. I was told she took it over from the last organizer and wanted to keep these trips going. Now I know why. Jason, Julie and I would love to go on another AMC trip after having so much fun on our first Sedge adventure.

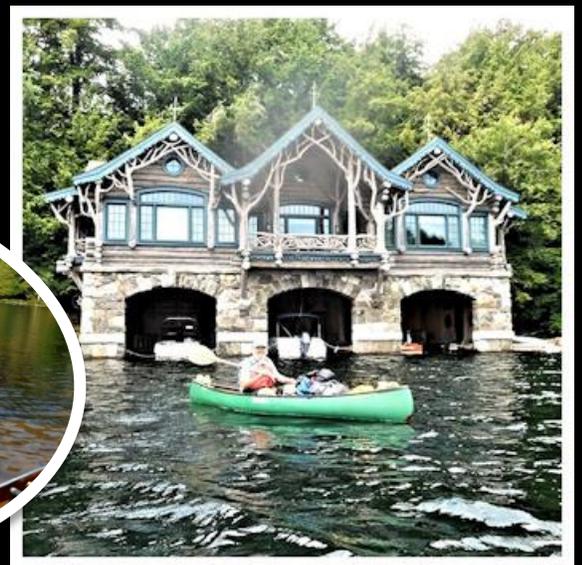




# St. Regis Wilderness

Adirondack Mountains

July 2016





# Girls JUST WANT TO have fun at HARRIMAN

*Eileen Yin's July 16 Ladies Canoe & Kayak Weekend*

by KLARA MARTON

Who knew that you could do all of this in one weekend? There was time for everything: enjoying the company of new people, paddling, hiking, relaxing, and gourmet food—delicious happy hours, dinner and breakfast.

This was my first time at the new Harriman facility. It is a place for everyone who likes nature. The cabins and shelters blend nicely in the environment. All facilities are well-equipped, clean, and spacious.

Each weekend is special, but this one was particularly nice because it was a great group of outdoors-enthusiastic-women who came to paddle and more.

This weekend the cabin and its environment were filled with positive female energy. Women were sharing stories about their lives, laughing, chatting, and offering help to each other.

There were so many special moments. Just imagine an early morning at the lake when the sun is just about to rise and only the birds are chirping. Most people are still asleep, except for a group of women who are moving through various yoga poses at the dock.

There was something magical in the air: the water, the trees, the clear sky, and the breath of beautiful yogis. Since this visit, I've been recommending that all my friends and colleagues spend a weekend or more at the new Harriman Outdoor Center.

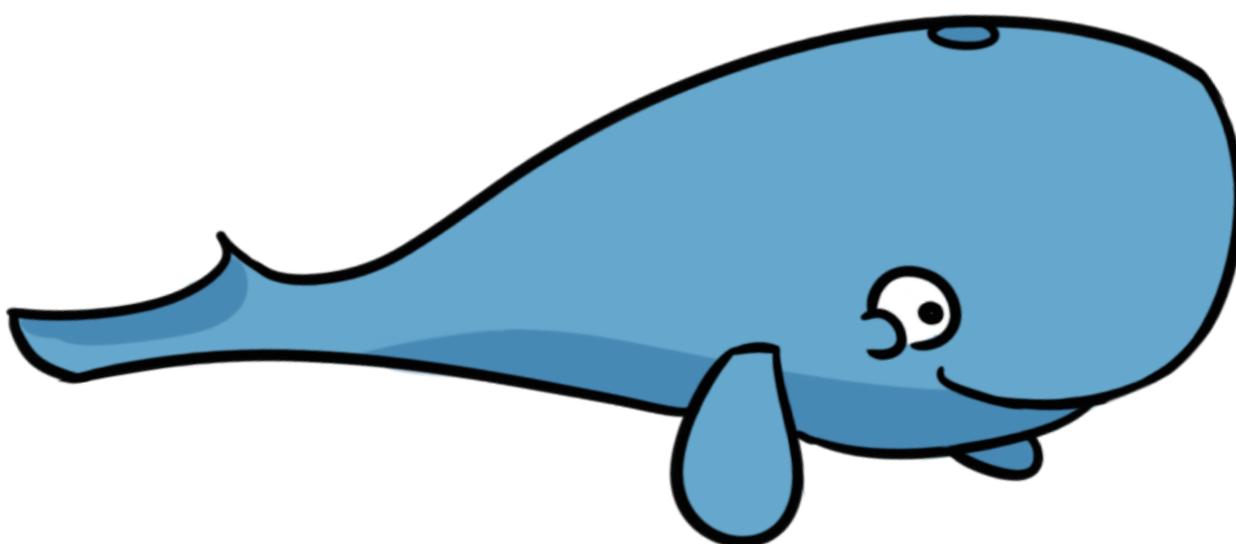
Who knew that you could do all of this in one weekend?

It all depends on the people.



**SOMETHING  
BIG  
IS ON THE WAY!**

***Paddlers' Party***  
***Coming March, 2017.***  
***Date & Venue to be Announced.***



## **Become an AMC Adventure Travel Trip Leader**

**Sign up for Adventure Travel  
Leadership Training!  
November 11-13, 2016**

Visit some of the most exciting places in the world as the leader of an AMC Adventure Travel trip! This workshop provides important training to people who have AMC chapter leadership experience (no beginners) to transition from leading weekend chapter activities to more complex and longer trips, domestically and overseas. Previous outdoor leadership training is necessary. Emphasis is on planning, cost estimating, marketing, trip management, people skills, risk management, and reporting. [Click](#) for more information.



# Lows Lake luxury

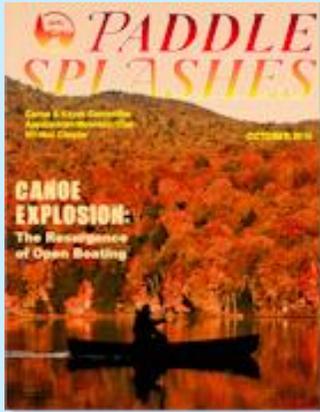
***Eight intrepid AMC paddlers travel to the Adirondacks for a week on the Bog River and Lows Lake.***

The AMC and Sebago Canoe Club jointly initiated new explorers in all the crucial skills for wilderness living. Dan Olson's long leadership experience was pivotal in helping us survive beaver attacks, bear sightings, and lightning storms while paddling. Chris Viani introduced us to the advanced skill of sailing a five-canoe raft in 15-20 mph tail winds. Sean and Naz clocked us at 4.5 mph for over an hour. Nice!

Photos by SAHAND AINECHI

# August 2016





## **PADDLE SPLASHES**

**Loretta Brady, Editor**  
Marty Plante, Printer's Devil

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### **Guidelines for Submissions**

Photos are preferred as high resolution jpeg files attached to email. Please do not crop, compress, resize or otherwise interfere with them. Contact the editor if you need assistance sending large files. Current and prior issues of PaddleSplashes are available on the Chapter's website at <http://www.amc-ny.org/paddle-splashes>

### **Send all submissions to:**

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*Attack of the*  
**DEERFIELD**

**MONSTER**



*Zoar Gap Can't  
Hold It.  
Nothing Can  
Stop It.*

*An Appalachian Mountain Club Production*

starring **SOZANNE SOLMAZ • CHARLES MICHENER • OLLY GOTEL • JAKE LEWIS**

Produced by MARTY PLANTE Directed by LORETTA BRADY Executive Producer SUZANNE VILLEGAS

