



# The Yukon Paddler

YUKON CANOE & KAYAK CLUB  
SPRING ISSUE 2001

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## **NOTICE OF AGM**

WHEN: APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup>

WHERE: RIVERVIEW HOTEL  
MEETING ROOM

TIME: 6:30 – 10:00PM

VIDEO OF NEPAL, WINE & CHEESE

BRING SLIDES TO SHOW

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The sun has been making its way out and is melting the snow. This means that the lakes and rivers will be iceless and filling up with fresh water. It is time to check our gear for leaks and prepare for the summer paddling season. I am eager to try my luck in the some of our exceptional rivers this year and I am looking forward to those quiet canoe trips on the calm waters of the local small lakes.

This winter things took off slowly as summer took it's time to fade. Was it summer or was it winter? The weather was so mild. The week of minus 40 Celsius, some say, was too short. Some of us kept busy in the pool to practice our skills. The pool sessions began slowly but after the new year things picked up. Many people are coming to the pool sessions trying to get in shape for summer paddling. In no time the rivers and lakes will be open and we can play outside again!

We are hosting our AGM at the end of the month. Currently our staff is short and we are seeking new members for the board. If you are interested in helping out, we could use the help. There are several summer activities and projects planned that we need assistance with and thus could use some energetic volunteers to help out for the summer and into the new year.

As we enter the season of long days, long journeys, calloused hands and mosquito bites, take the time to: enjoy the view, leave no trace, take plenty of snapshots, and have a million or two laughs!

## WINNING THE RIVER QUEST

Yannick Bedard

The Yukon River Quest is a canoe/kayak race in which competitors paddle 735 km, from Whitehorse to Dawson. There is a 2-hour mandatory layover in Carmacks, and a 6-hour layover in Minto. I did the race solo, in my sea kayak. I did the first leg in approx. 24 hours, arriving in 5th place. It was brutal. It rained for most of the night, and I had a very hard time staying awake. The second leg was very short (about 6 hours), but it was a challenge staying ahead of Brian Horton and Yvonne Harris, who came into Minto about 45 min. after me. Minto was the only sleep I got during the race (4 hours). The final leg was the most exciting one, but also the most difficult. After 10 hours of paddling, I caught up to the 3rd and 4th place canoes. After an hour of well needed socializing, I went ahead. Being in

3rd place was great motivation, allowing me to put several km between us. However, as fatigue set in, they caught up to me 7 hours later. We paddled together for another 4 hours, but then, I couldn't keep up. 2 hours later, I arrived in Dawson, 25 min. behind them, 61 hours and 15 min. after leaving Whitehorse. The whole experience made me feel like the world was a smaller place.

## Canoeing: Did You Get Wet Last Summer? Leslie Rowe-VP Canoeing

One good thing about paddling is it doesn't matter if it rains. The rain last summer may have dampened our spirits, but not our love of paddling. I saw quite a few new paddlers who got bitten by the bug of canoeing last summer....I sure hope to see them out again!

The Takhini saw high traffic in the summer. If you think it may be a drag, just go to admire the beautiful scenery. There's always something to do no matter what the level. The water in July was the highest it had been in 20 years, according to Jack and Pat who have lived on the Takhini that long.

A few of us ventured out to the Lapie twice last year thanks to the high water. On the July 1 weekend the river was in flood with smoky gray water zipping along. On the last weekend of July another gang headed up there and paddled the canyon section. This weekend the water was crystal green and clear -trying to hypnotize you, but you have to watch out for the next rock or play spot that's approaching. This is a fantastic canoeing river-with lots of excellent surfing waves and eddies to catch. It's too bad the Lapie involves a long trip because it really is a fun river in a beautiful area with something for everyone.

On a brilliantly sunny Sunday, a group went down the Watson River, finishing in Bennett Lake. This section ribbons along-you can almost get dizzy. We admired a huge black bear munching grass. Good thing he was big because he was easy to watch-from a distance. There is one canyon, which can be challenging-best to scout on river left. Again, the scenery on this river is hard to keep your eyes off-but better watch out for the sweepers on the corners.

Even though some of the rivers have changed, including the intake, most of us enjoyed the paddling season last year. I know the season is just about to begin again. If you haven't dusted off your canoe yet this year, there's still time to get ready.

Lets have fun this summer!

## Interesting Websites

Kayak Yukon

[www.kayak.yk.ca/](http://www.kayak.yk.ca/)

Canada Canoe Polo

[www.emyr.net/kayak/](http://www.emyr.net/kayak/)

Yukon River Quest

[www.polarcom.com/~riverquest/](http://www.polarcom.com/~riverquest/)

Whitewater Kayaking Assoc. of British Columbia

[www.whitewater.org/links.htm](http://www.whitewater.org/links.htm)

Hiking in the Yukon

[www.out-there.com/hkg\\_yt.htm](http://www.out-there.com/hkg_yt.htm)

Kanoe People

[www.kanoe.yk.net/](http://www.kanoe.yk.net/)

Snow Kayaking

[www.mensjournal.com/adventure/9912/extremes\\_snowkayak.html](http://www.mensjournal.com/adventure/9912/extremes_snowkayak.html)

[www.polo.com/editorials/multi660.htm](http://www.polo.com/editorials/multi660.htm)

The Yukon Outdoors Club

[www.yukonoutdoorsclub.ca/](http://www.yukonoutdoorsclub.ca/)

Tatshenshini Expediting

[www.tatshenshiniyukon.com/](http://www.tatshenshiniyukon.com/)

## Eco-River Holidays from



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(867) 668-3108

## The Nahanni River

Theresa Landman-August 1999

The thunderstorm was in full force and the weather completely socked in. We were in Fort Simpson NWT ready to fly out to the Nahanni River. We were discouraged after organizing gear most of the night; it wasn't likely we would fly out that morning. There were six of us, Catherine, Kathy, Shannon and I drove up from Whitehorse and Flo and Mark from Kenora, Ontario.

We got to Nahanni River Adventures at 8:00 AM our expected take-off time, to find everyone sleeping soundly. The guides knew that no one would be flying in the next couple of hours, till the pilot got the full weather report. It was very quiet so we made some noise until someone poked their head out of their tent. He looked just like a gopher raising his head from the hole. He directed us to another tent, to the next gopher hole. The guide was very helpful and got us our canoes. He told us to hang out at the Nahanni Inn and wait for our pilot Jacques Harvey.

Everyone knew about Jacques, he was this brave, incredibly talented bush pilot. When he sat down with us at the Nahanni Inn we were humbled in his presence. He told us that even though the weather was bad here, it was clear and sunny at Rabbit Kettle Lake and so he could fly us in that afternoon. Jacques was going to save the day.

It was a dreary, cloudy trip and then it opened up to see Ram Plateau and the Ragged Range. Jacques decided to take us into the Cirque of Unclimbables because the weather conditions were ideal. This is a spectacular rock climbing area where the cliffs rise up to 8,000 feet. Jacques took us right in so we were just about kissing the shear walls, weaving around huge peaks and feeling like we were boxed in with no way out. Good-bye IMAX and hello South Nahanni Airways. The adrenaline flow was cranked and we hadn't even reached the river yet.

We arrived at Rabbit Kettle Lake safely in the hands of Jacques, though some of us would have preferred to be in his arms. The weather had been hot for two weeks and the lake was perfect for swimming. The following day Carl Lafferty, a ranger, took us on a hike to the Tufa formations. Lafferty's Riffle was named after his grandfather who had prospected in the area. The Tufa formations are impressive mounds half the size of a football field. The secret in their creation lies in the fact that the warm spring water contains no sulfur. Dissolved calcium carbonate is therefore able to precipitate as a solid, forming ridges, terraced shapes and huge mounds. The mounds are delicate and to protect it, you can only walk up them barefoot.

Later in the afternoon we canoed up to Hell-Roaring Creek and had a delicious salmon pasta dinner. Catherine and Kathy took charge of a clean camp and made sure all the food and cooking pots were stored high up in the bear caches. This made life more interesting as we had to

haul heavy bags up flimsy ladders every night. There had been a grizzly in camp that night, which we found out two days later.

The next day was a long cold rainy paddle to Virginia Falls. We had seen a moose and her calf and one lone caribou. The river was flat with very little current. We could hear the roar of the falls in the distance and there were no warning signs to be seen, as we got close, except for a black horizon line.

We spent two nights at Virginia Falls and the weather was beautiful. Mark, Shannon and I hiked up Sunblood Mountain while Flo stayed in camp and watched a river guide chop wood. For supper that night we had Dutch Oven Lasagna, some of us were new to cooking with a dutch oven and were pleasantly surprised to have a five star hotel meal. We met up with two Germans named Andre and Stephan. They were in a tiny raft and had started at Moose Ponds where there is some good whitewater. They had wrapped it once on a rock but came out OK. They always wore the same outdoor "Wolf" wear clothing, boating or hiking. We got pictures of them doing the figure 8 rapid. They wanted that picture badly because they left their address at three different "Nahanni river stops" so we would be sure to send it to them.

Virginia Falls are sometimes described as a gentle river gone mad. Violent rapids cascade down the falls and crash into the giant pillar rock called Mason rock named after Bill Mason. The 1-km portage took us 2-3 hrs. It was amazing to see what the guides on the guided trips were portaging--- barbecues, propane tanks, steaks, their packs were absolutely huge. The paid clients did not have to carry anything. One client, who looked just like "the unsinkable Molly Brown" character from the Titanic, was determined to enjoy her holiday and relax at the end of the portage.

We were just a private group and didn't enjoy those luxuries so we called ourselves Budget River Adventures or BRA Tours. You carry, you cook and you canoe, sure wish we were with that other group.

We saw Jacques take off with the twin otter right over the lip of the falls. He would bank it back and forth to give his sight seeing clients a real thrill. It was scary and exciting just to watch this daredevil pilot in action.

The Fourth canyon has very high shear cliff walls. The water was high and had a very fast current. With the roar of Virginia Falls in the background, we were all getting butterflies. We already heard about two canoeists that had swamped in the big waves and had to bail out. They realized they didn't have the right equipment and so they went back to Virginia Falls Camp and were flown out.

We started off down the canyon and eddy scouted around the bends. The river was so much faster and bigger than the upper section we had done. We all had to get comfortable with maneuvering a loaded canoe in fast, big volume water. Mark who had virtually no whitewater

canoeing experience and Shannon who had some, definitely got the best quality ride hitting most of the big waves. They were feeling way out of control initially but by day two of the whitewater, they had made a pretty good team. We camped at picturesque Marengo creek, which was outside of the high canyon walls.

The next day in 3<sup>rd</sup> canyon we paddled to the figure 8 rapid which is considered by some the hardest rapid on the Nahanni river. The whirlpools, boils and big waves looked impressive and we were debating on running it or portaging. Losing gear in big water is big trouble. It would be a long swim with no back up downstream, but after studying the rapid for a lengthy time we decided to give it a try. We punched through the big eddy line and lined up between the big waves and the whirlpools and then headed left to avoid the wall. It was totally fun; Shannon and I ended up spinning our canoe in a whirlpool, so we ran it backwards. I was fortunate to run the rapid three times as no one else opted to be in the stern.

That evening we paddled in sunshine to Pulpit Rock. This pinnacle of rock was created from the river changing its course in the canyon. The 1500ft canyon walls narrow and you feel dwarfed in their presence. The lead canoe paddled frantically realizing this was the last eddy to catch for the campsite. The other canoes paddled equally as frantic as they thought there must be some wild rapid around the next bend. It was a busy campsite, with many campers armed with bear spray; we were promptly told where to do our cooking.

We did a spectacular hike up to the top of the canyon to look down at the Pulpit Rock and the river in the distance.

The Second canyon is very pretty with big mountains very close to the river. The unique rock formations throughout the canyon would be a geologist's dream come true. We headed into Deadman Valley where the views opened up to big sky country. We had a fun singsong night around the campfire at Dry Creek Canyon and the northern lights put on a spectacular show for us. We started First Canyon doing George's Riffle, which were big waves and lots of fun.

This is where the park wardens lost their motorboat and lots of very expensive equipment such as satellite radios and other gear. A log got caught in their motor, which stalled the boat, and they ended up swamping in the big waves. The boat sunk to the bottom of the river and the crew was stranded. They had to stay there one night until Jacques the bush pilot, spotted their rescue symbol in the ground and flew in to rescue them.

We bathed in the Kraus Hot Springs and loaded up with bug dope or Nahanni hair spray as Flo called it. We paddled through the splits into Nahanni Butte. This small community has a lot of character; the Nahanni Butte store was also the restaurant, hotel and central hub. We had seen

a sign saying "all stray dogs will be shot on Wednesdays" on the community center door. We thought this was an interesting choice for a community event.

We decided to leave on the Liard River for Swan Point. The bugs were wild; I've never seen so many dragonflies feasting on mosquitoes. We all dove into our tents with record speed; a broken zipper would have been shear torture. We had met a couple that was speeding down the river because their tent zipper broke and they were out of bug dope. Flo grabbed an extra can of Nahanni hair spray (bug dope) and dutifully gave it to them.

We took out at Blackstone Territorial Park except for Mark and Shannon who wanted more quantity time on the river and got out at Blackstone Landing. There had been a discrepancy on the map of where to take out. We all celebrated with stinky drinks (before showering) at the Nahanni Inn. We decided to treat ourselves, so we stayed overnight at the Nahanni Inn, a three star hotel with a five star price.



## Sea Kayaking News

Gary Morgan

Sea Kayaking has quickly grown to be one of the most popular forms of wilderness travel in Canada. The sport has engaged the imagination of many people who until now have never considered wilderness travel. One of the attractive features of the sport to many is the apparent ease of accessibility the watercraft allows the beginner to experience wilderness travel. While it is true that the recreational touring kayak is designed to be user friendly, the skills and knowledge necessary to safely travel by kayak takes focused skill development. The YCKC is offering a progressive series on basic skills courses, focused on fundamental paddling skills, efficient self and group rescues

... continued page 6

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that work and strategies for staying out of trouble on the water.

The following three courses are all 2-hours and cost \$20.00 for club members and \$40.00 for non-members, which include a membership. The fourth course offered has a separate cost, which is outlined in the description. Your fee includes boat rental.

If you have questions, or wish to register for any of the following programs contact Gary Morgan, VP Sea Kayaking at 393-2389. Courses will be based on a first come first served basis. Courses will be cancelled if the minimum registration requirement is not met within 5 days of the course.

1) Intro to Touring Kayaking

Date: April 20, 2001  
 Location: Lions Pool  
 Time: 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm  
 Max. # 10 participants

*Course Description:* This 2 hour program will introduce the participant to the world of sea kayaking. Our dry-land session will go over the basics of equipment and outfitting. The pool time will be focused on developing a comfort level in the boat and include: wet exits, boat stability, the fundamentals of the paddle stroke and bracing.

2) Basic Rescue

Date: April 27, 2001  
 Location: Lions Pool  
 Time: 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm  
 Max. # 10

*Course Description:* This 2-hour program will introduce the participant to the techniques used in self-rescue and allow them the time to develop efficient self-rescue techniques. The fundamentals of body position and bracing will be reviewed and practiced.

3) Assisted and Advanced Self Rescue

Date: May 4, 2001  
 Location: Lions Pool  
 Time: 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm  
 Max. # 10

*Course Description:* This 2-hour program will begin with a discussion on the implications and considerations of assisted rescues. In pairs, the participants will practice several assisted rescue techniques and discuss the merits and limitations of each technique. For those who wish to move on to advance self-rescue techniques, a review of advance bracing and rolling will take place and participants will have the opportunity to work on their roll.

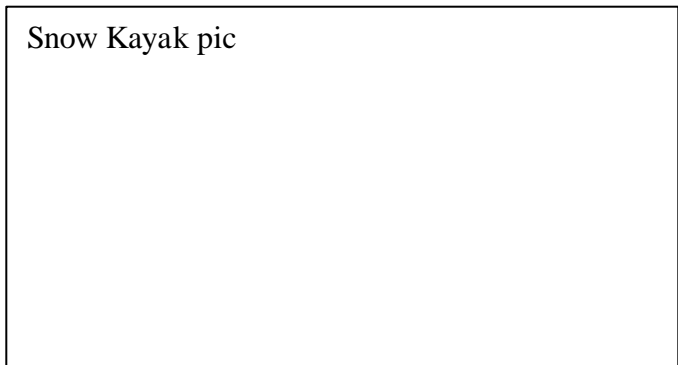
4) Touring Skills and Assisted Advance Rescue

Date: June 2, 2001  
 Location: Chadburn Lake  
 Time: 10:00 am to 2:00 pm  
 Max. # 8

*Course Description:* This 4 hour program will begin with a discussion on the implications and considerations of kayak tripping, including essential equipment and packing consideration. The on water program will be broken into two components. The first component will be on the development of efficient paddling strokes and will be tailored to the skill level of the group. The second part of the day will be focused on advanced assisted rescue techniques.

*Cost:* YCKC Club Member \$ 40.00  
 Non Club Member \$ 60.00

- \* Participants responsible for bringing their own boat and touring gear
- \*\* Dry and or wet suits required as well as additional warm cloths
- \*\*\* Bring hot drinks and a lunch



## Ever Been Tobogganing?

Mark Kelly

Picture the Skagway summit on a crystal clear day... You're twelve... and a just got a brand new wooden toboggan for your birthday. Mom and Dad have loaded the snow machines on the trailer and you're on your way. I'm willing to bet you can hardly contain your excitement. That's how I felt as a few of us loaded up the truck with our boats hoping to hitch a ride with a snow machine to the summit.

Now we know that we are a funny looking lot, loading into our kayaks at the side of the highway in the middle of winter. But if you've ever been snow kayaking, you'll understand the willingness to look this silly. On this particular day we weren't able to hitch a ride with any of the snow-machines so we popped off the side of the highway at Summit Lake aiming for the smooth slopes below.

It took some maneuvering and lowering to get in position. We anchored our boats with our paddles to scout out the drop below. About 25 meters below was a smooth run out. Mike was on skis and Scott opted for lowering himself and his boat to the bottom. I on the other hand anchored my boat once again and loaded in. The snow was wind packed, not as ideal as the chest deep power I learned in. (In powder you can carve as if in water). I pull out the anchor and went for it. I attempted to carve, but the pitch was too steep. I picked up speed and caught a lip of snow. We have lift off. Mike was ready with his camera and caught me about 3 meters in the air. I landed in the soft powder with the exhilaration of that twelve-year-old with that new toboggan.

Once we set up for the afternoon at the bottom of the slope, Mike skinned up, and Scott and I tied on the rope for towing the boats to the top. This was the first time Scott had snow-kayaked, and was keen to go first while I took photos. His ride was short, but he was hooked. He quickly hooked up again to get higher on the slope. His rides were fast with the wind packed snow, but made it that much more adrenaline filled. Over the afternoon, we managed 5-6 runs in the sun before we called it a day and faced the daunting trek back up to he highway. After a swig of hot coffee, we loaded up and were back on the road to Whitehorse, setting dates for the next journey out.

We are looking at the Easter long weekend for a trip to the Haines summit. Call Mark at 668-3108 or e-mail [bigwave@ehmail.com](mailto:bigwave@ehmail.com) for more details.

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### HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO GET INTO SNOW KAYAKING:

- Kayak (no spray deck, you don't want to get pinned upside down in your boat)
- Paddle
- Something waterproof for your feet (your boots probably wont fit in your boat)
- Helmet
- Gloves or mitts you can hold a paddle with
- Goggles
- A safe slope with a good run out (as you have no brakes)
- Preferably deep powder for banking the snow as if on a wave

## Whitewater Park Update

Vernon Beebe

Rock the River began in Bob Daffe's living room with a meeting to discuss how to incorporate the building of the south access with the placement of some strategic rocks in the Yukon River to create the ultimate play hole. Paddlers representing the entire paddling community of Whitehorse discussed this concept for hours. They looked at the pros and cons and talked about all the reasons why people have not been able to do this in the past, and when they finished, they decided. Why not? If we present this project in an organized and well thought out concept then there should not be any barrier that we could not eventually pass through.

Well years later, and hundreds of volunteer hour spent monitoring and managing, and planning the Yukon Canoe and Kayak Club has now received an amended water license that will allow us to place a second in river structure at the intake. This is a continuum of our planning process as we are experimenting with man made shapes that will create the ultimate play spot in the Yukon River.

Over the years we have witnessed the deterioration of the intake as a paddling spot. The concrete is sloughing away and there is an actual pinning slab pocking its ugly head up right in our beginners shoot. Coinciding with this new rock we are working on a cosmetic and safety upgrade to the intake, which may see much of the rusty rebar removed and some natural rock to sit on instead of broken concrete. Wish us luck and remember we could always use a hand.

Pick of Bob & Teresa playing at the Intake, site of future whitewater park.

## Summer Events

Bob Daffe

The Yukon Canoe & Kayak Club is a dynamic and diverse volunteer organization whose mandate is to promote the sport of paddling and the enjoyment of water through out Yukon. This summer we hope to provide a multitude of activities to help encourage canoeing and kayaking for all levels of fitness; from beginners and family nights, to training for more serious athletes.

Some of our events this summer include:

- Lectures: wilderness first aid tips, racing, water safety and more,
- Kayak Polo,
- Regatta's and races,
- Family Events,
- River Trips,
- Ocean Kayaking,
- Youth events,

Please join us for all the summer fun and adventure!

## Membership

With a membership there are many activities you can become involved with. Our volunteers are helping to provide you with many recreational activities:

- Rock the River project, which is the creation of a whitewater Park in Whitehorse.
- Youth at Risk Program, which is an introduction to paddling for youth and is free of charge.
- Kayak Polo recreational league.
- Kayak/Canoe practice session in the Lions Pool.
- Sea kayaking self rescue clinics.
- Youth Paddling Corp, a program for a youth group from the age of 9 to 12.
- Clean up of the Yukon River at the Old City Intake
- Promotion of water sports as a family event
- Use of equipment/gear
- Information and maps
- Annual whitewater kayak rodeo



### Yukon Canoe and Kayak Club Membership Application 2001/2002



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Fees:</i>	<b>Single Membership</b>	\$20.00
	Youth (17 and Under) Membership	\$10.00
	Family Membership	\$40.00
	Corporate Membership	\$50.00
	<b>Total</b>	

**Memberships are renewable annually April 1<sup>st</sup>**

Please Remit Memberships to:  
 YUKON CANOE AND KAYAK CLUB  
 PO BOX 5546  
 WHITEHORSE, YUKON  
 Y1A 5H4

Contact: Wade Holmes @ 667-6279



