

# Great Champlain-Hudson Paddle

## A Voyage of Rediscovery



Great Champlain-Hudson Paddle participants and friends on the Walkway Over the Hudson, photo courtesy Fred Schaeffer.

The Great Champlain-Hudson Paddle (the Paddle) was the Hudson River Valley Greenway's Signature Quadricentennial Legacy Event. The event was held to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hudson and Champlain exploring the waterways which now bear their names; and to celebrate and promote the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail. The Paddle was a voyage of rediscovery by kayaker and rowers of the river, of the historic voyages of Henry Hudson and Samuel De Champlain, and of the human spirit of adventure. This year, in honor of the Quadricentennial, the Paddle started in the Fort Edward area and journeyed to Manhattan along the Champlain Canal and the Hudson River.

A group of Paddlers and Rowers camped out in state and local parks over the course of fifteen days and 192 miles along the way. Paddlers and rowers were either Thru-Paddlers doing the entire trip or Getaway Paddlers participating in predefined segments of the trip. The Paddlers visited heritage and cultural sites in the communities in which they stayed. The Paddle was based upon the Greenway's experience conducting eight annual Great Hudson River Paddles from Albany to Manhattan. The Paddle was organized by **Scott Keller**, the Greenway's Trails and Special Projects Director and was led by an experienced and knowledgeable team of guides who have worked together for many years on earlier Paddles.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is a regional state agency charged with creating a locally based regional planning compact and creating a multi use trail system in the Hudson River Valley. The trail system includes developing the Hudson River Greenway Hiking, Biking and Water Trails. The Greenway also manages the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, a federal program whose mission is to recognize, preserve, protect and interpret the nationally significant cultural and natural resources of the Hudson River Valley for the benefit of the Nation.

**We would like to thank our SPONSORS  
without whom we couldn't hold this event**

**Organizers**

Hudson River Valley Greenway  
HRV National Heritage Area  
Hudson-Fulton-Champlain  
Quadricentennial Commission

**Premier Sponsors**

NYS Bridge Authority  
New York State Canal Corporation  
NYS Department of Environmental  
Conservation  
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

**Presenting Sponsor**

Hudson Valley Outfitters  
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and  
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**Partner Sponsor**

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Saratoga County  
Town of Lloyd  
Town of Saratoga  
Village of Schuylerville  
Village of Cold Spring

**Supporting Sponsor**

Hudson River Rowing Association  
Rich Hines and the Hillbilly Drifters  
Shady Harbor Marina  
Yonkers Paddling and Rowing Club

**Sanctioned By**

American Canoe Association

**We would like to thank our HOSTS  
without whom we would have been sleeping with the fishes**

**Orientation:** Hudson River Rowing Association

**Moreau:** NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

**Fort Edward:** Rogers Island Visitors Center

**Schuylerville:** Saratoga County, Town of Saratoga, Village of Schuylerville

**Stillwater:** NYS Canal Corporation

**Waterford/Cohoes:** NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, NYS Canal Corporation, Waterford Harbor Visitors Center

**Bethlehem:** Town of Bethlehem

**New Baltimore:** Town of New Baltimore, New Baltimore Conservancy

**Athens:** NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, Village of Athens, Town of Athens, Greene County Soil & Water Conservation District

**Saugerties:** United States Coast Guard, Village of Saugerties, Town of Saugerties, Kiwanis Ice Arena, Saugerties Lighthouse Conservancy

**Kingston:** Hudson River Maritime Museum, City of Kingston

**Lloyd:** Town of Lloyd, Highland Landing Park Association

**Wappingers:** Chelsea Yacht Club, Town of Wappinger, Village of Wappingers Falls

**Cold Spring:** NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, Hudson Valley Outfitters, Village of Cold Spring

**Stony Point:** Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site

**Irvington:** Village of Irvington, Irvington School District

**Yonkers:** Beczak Environmental Education Center, Westchester County Department of Parks and Recreation, Yonkers Downtown Waterfront Business Improvement District (BID), City of Yonkers, City of Yonkers Department of Parks, Yonkers Paddling and Rowing Club, Yonkers YMCA

**New York City:** Hudson River Park Trust, The Downtown Boathouse, The River Project, New York City Parks

## Registered Participants and Dates on the Paddle

### Thru Paddlers

Cynthia Bluhm, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Bob Campbell, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Tom Doo, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Phil Jache, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Emory Sadler, 8/2 to 8/17/09

### Getaway Paddlers

Leon Barnish, 8/2 to 8/13/09  
  
Cinda Becker, 8/2 to 8/11, 8/15-16/09  
Madeline Wilson, 8/2 to 8/11, 8/15-16/09  
  
Jim Cary, 8/2 to 8/8/09  
  
Herschel Weiss, 8/2 to 8/7/09  
  
Bruce Romanchak, 8/2 to 8/5/09  
Jim White, 8/2 to 8/5/09  
Don Yackel, 8/2 to 8/5/09  
  
Bob Gurfield, 8/7 to 8/17/09  
  
Roger Donegan, 8/8 to 8/16/09  
  
Lee Goldsmith, 8/8 to 8/10/09  
David Goodman, 8/8 to 8/10/09  
Dan Karger, 8/8 to 8/10/09  
Louise Karger, 8/8 to 8/10/09  
Wayne Spanier, 8/8 to 8/10/09  
  
Diane Dickey, 8/13 to 8/17/09

### Building Bridges Building Boats (crew of the Whitehall Gig)

Arthur Austin, 8/2 to 8/6/09  
Kieran Austin, 8/2 to 8/6/09  
Danielle Bassignani, 8/2 to 8/6/09  
Stefan Carlson, 8/2 to 8/6/09  
Chloe Goldberg, 8/2 to 8/6/09  
David Hardy, 8/2 to 8/6/09  
Spencer Hardy, 8/2 to 8/6/09

### Guides

Connie Hyman, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Scott Keller, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Dan McLaughlin, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Mark Mykytyn, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Carol Roscher, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
  
Alan Lovgren, 8/2 to 8/7/09  
  
Jack Gilman, 8/8 to 8/17/09  
  
Maggie Atkins, 8/10 to 8/17/09

### Land Support Crew

Andrew Cassulo, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
Tom Ryan, 8/2 to 8/17/09  
  
Jason Pohleven, 8/2 to 8/10/09  
  
Lina Kroehling, 8/2 to 8/6/09  
  
Shawn Lollman, 8/10 to 8/17/09

## Pre-Launch, Sunday August 2, 2009

### West Shore Marina, Moreau (Fort Edward area), Saratoga/Washington Counties

Tonight we gathered in Moreau and prepared for our launch early tomorrow morning. Many of our voyagers have paddled with us before, but the excitement level seemed high, even amongst the old timers. Our land crew arrived by 3 pm and our paddlers began to gather by 4pm. Skies were threatening, rain was misting, and camp was hurriedly set up. Around dinner time it poured, but most people were at dinner at a local restaurant and those that stayed at camp were under the awnings, so nobody got wet. After dinner and the rain we celebrated a couple of birthdays with **Carol Roscher's** homemade carrot cake. Happy birthday wishes went out to **Dan McLaughlin** and **Danielle Bassignani**.

Everybody who will be on the water tomorrow arrived today; most of them camped at our launch, but a few sheltered at a local hotel.

Those whose voyage of rediscovery started on the third of August:

**Thru-Paddlers:** Bob Campbell, Cynthia Bluhm, Emory Sadler, Phil Jache, Tom Doo

**Getaway Paddlers:** Bruce Romanchak, Cinda Becker, Don Yackel, Herschel Weiss, Jim Cary, Jim White, Leon Barnish, Madeline Wilson

**BBB Rowers:** Arthur Austin, Chloe Goldberg, Danielle Bassignani, David Hardy, Kieran Austin, Spencer Hardy, Stefan Carlson, Lina Kroehling

**Guides:** Alan Lovgren, Carol Roscher, Connie Hyman, Dan McLaughlin, Mark Mykytyn, Scott Keller

**Land Crew:** Andrew Cassulo, Jason Pohleven, Lina Kroehling, Tom Ryan

Note: The miles given below in the day-to-day summary come from two different places, river miles in the Day headings, and actual miles traveled in the daily statistics area. River miles are taken from the United States Coast Pilot and represent an idealized distance if one had traveled in the center of the river the entire way. The daily statistics miles, times and speed information were provided by Thru-Paddler **Bob Campbell** who compiled the data from his GPS. Weather data is from nearby National Weather Service stations. River conditions are observational. In the daily statistics section the number of Paddlers, Rowers, and Guides on the water are listed; in the highlights section the number of boats (kayaks and gigs) on the water is listed. These numbers don't include public paddlers who joined us enroute, except when these numbers are available.

### **Day 1, Monday August 3, 2009**

#### **Moreau/Fort Edward to Fort Hardy Park, Schuylerville, Saratoga County, 11.4 miles**



A foggy beginning to a beautiful journey, photo courtesy Christina Bach.



**Daily Statistics:** 12.22 miles traveled, 3:06 time paddling, average speed 3.9 mph, and 26 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 0, New York City 192.

**Daily weather:** High in the upper 70's, low around 60, light northwesterly winds, maximum gusts around 9 mph, clear and sunny, low humidity, heavy morning fog

**River Conditions:** High water and fast current for the canal. The river was so high that all of the beaches were underwater.

**Highlights of the Day:** We were up at 5:30 a.m., broke camp, and ate breakfast. Then we enjoyed welcoming remarks from **Tara Sullivan**, Executive Director of the Hudson Fulton Champlain Quadricentennial Commission, **Carmella Mantello**, Director of the NYS Canal Corporation, **Arthur Johnson**, Chairman of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, **Preston L. Jenkins, Jr.**, Supervisor of the Town of Moreau, and our emcee **Mark Castiglione**, Acting Executive Director of the Hudson River Valley Greenway. Ms. Sullivan presented all of the Paddlers with a Quadricentennial boat flag.

At 8:30 a.m. the paddle began with 19 people in single kayaks and the Whitehall gig *Robert C. Bickford* with a crew of seven. Our 26 adventurers found it easygoing as we headed downriver, but there was no opportunity to get out of the boat and stretch due to the high water in the canal—all the beaches were gone! We “locked” through Champlain Canal Locks C-6 and C-5 today, a first for many of our paddlers and rowers. We arrived in Schuylerville by lunch time and landed on the grass at Fort Hardy Park because the water level was so high.

We set up camp, ate lunch, took showers, explored Schuylerville's attractions and historic sites, and relaxed until dinner—an excellent buffet put on by our hosts, the Village of Schuylerville,

Town of Saratoga and Saratoga County.

This community dinner attracted in excess of 325 people to talk with us and to enjoy an evening of music which followed dinner. The musical performance featured a very good local bluegrass band.

A side note: We launched right into the middle of the biggest environmental cleanup in the United States, the upper Hudson River PCB dredging project. It is a rare thing to be able to paddle through such an historic cleanup, which will result in the upper Hudson River being free of PCB's for the first time in a century. Plans call for dredging to occur over a forty mile stretch of the river for the next 5 years.



Entering Lock 6, photo courtesy Bob Campbell

## Day 2, Tuesday, August 4, 2009

### Schuylerville to Lock 4, Stillwater, Saratoga County, 13.9 miles

**Daily Statistics:** 13.73 miles traveled, 4:16 time paddling, average speed 3.2 mph, and 30+ people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 11, New York City 181.

**Daily weather:** High in the mid 80's, low in the upper 50's, and light southerly winds, maximum gusts around 15 mph, clear and sunny, low humidity, afternoon haze.

**River Conditions:** Water levels somewhat lower, but still with a good current push, still very difficult to find a beach so we can get out of the boats and stretch.

**Highlights of the Day:** Up at 5:30 a.m., on the water around 8:00 a.m. We were joined for the day by guests **Mark Castiglione** of the Hudson River Valley Greenway, **Garret O'Connor** of the NYS Canal Corporation, and several members of the public. Today we had our group of 21 kayakers, the seven in the gig, and the members of the public. We again enjoyed an easy day of paddling, with everyone getting to know each other. At the end of the day we locked through Champlain Canal Lock C-4, our home for the night. We were off the water by early afternoon. Camping at Lock C-4 provided an opportunity to watch the Lock Tender operate the lock. He generously took the time to explain how the lock worked. It was a very interesting process and one we could not have experienced without the support of the NYS Canal Corporation. We spent a beautiful summer's evening sitting around camp, eating and telling stories.

## Day 3, Wednesday, August 5, 2009

### Stillwater to Peebles Island, Waterford, Saratoga County, 12.2 miles



The Head Start crew looking at the chart, photo courtesy Madeline Wilson.

**Daily Statistics:** 11.56 miles traveled, 2:47 time paddling, average speed 4.1 mph, and 26 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 25, New York City 167.

**Daily weather:** High in the mid 70's, low around 60, and gentle northwesterly winds, maximum gusts around 18 mph, clear and sunny, low humidity, morning fog, afternoon haze.

**River Conditions:** Water levels again somewhat lower than day 2, still with a good current push, and no beaches in sight.

**Highlights of the Day:** Up at 5:30 a.m., on the water around 8:00 a.m. Happy birthday wishes went out to **Mark Mykytyn** and **Cinda Becker** during safety briefing. Today we had 19 kayakers and the gig with a crew of seven. We locked through Champlain Canal Lock C-3 and about 9:30 a.m. we stopped in the City of Mechanicville to pick up a delicious take-on-board now, eat later lunch that was provided to us by the City. While we were there we met students from the Mechanicville Head Start Summer Camp, an initially shy group of 4 to 6 year-olds who eventually warmed up to us and asked questions, even singing happy birthday to Mark. They then came down to the water to look at our boats and see us off. We locked through Champlain Canal Lock C-2 and then had lunch on a quiet lawn. After lunch we passed the *Day Peckinpugh*, the last of the motorized canal boats and a floating museum, at Champlain Canal Lock 1. They had left from Waterford and were going to Mechanicville. Salutes and best wishes for safe journeys were exchanged. After locking through Champlain Canal Lock C-1 we reached the area that Henry Hudson's crew definitely explored, but it is very different now than it would have been then—locks, channels, development. We wondered what his crew would think if they could see it now, would they recognize it?

We are the first group to be allowed to camp at Peebles Island State Park, a strictly day use park. It is a wonderful site with excellent, well maintained facilities. The viewing platform attracted many of us, who stayed on it as darkness fell and spent the evening sharing stories of the river.

Several of our Getaway paddlers left after we arrived at the state park: we will miss **Bruce Romanchak**, **Don Yackel**, and **Jim White**.

#### Day 4, Thursday, August 6, 2009

#### Waterford to Henry Hudson Park, Bethlehem, Albany County, 18.4 miles

**Daily Statistics:** 18.18 miles traveled, 4:16 time paddling, average speed 4.2 mph, and 23 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 38, New York City 154.

**Daily weather:** High in the mid 70's, low in the mid 50's, and light northwesterly winds, maximum gusts around 16 mph, clear and sunny, low humidity.



The *Bickford's* crew just before heading home, photo by Scott Keller.



**River Conditions:** Passed through Federal Lock 1 at Troy and onto the estuary early this morning. From here on out river conditions are mostly a function of tides and wind. Today we got a very nice downriver push from the ebb tide.

**Highlights of the Day:** We awoke at 5:00 a.m. and were on the water by 7:30 a.m. to catch the tide. Today was our longest day in terms of miles traveled and we had 16 kayakers and seven in the gig. We finally got an out of the boat break in Watervliet at their new kayak docks, which are part of the Greenway Water Trail. We stopped in Rensselaer for a long snack/short lunch break and made it to camp by 12:30 p.m. We had worried we might have to paddle against the flood tide towards the end of the day, but we made excellent time and eventually arrived right at slack tide. **Jim Cary** was supposed to leave the trip today, but surprised us that evening with ice cream and the welcome news that he would continue to paddle with us through Athens.

The teenage crew of the gig from Building Bridges Building Boats left at the end of the day. They have had so much fun on this and other Paddles that one of them, **Lina Kroehling**, even volunteered to work on the land crew this year just so she could come back. Today the rest of the crew let her onboard the *Bickford* so she could row the last day, with **Spencer Hardy** graciously taking her place on the Land Crew. Our paddlers thanked Lina for all of her hard work and the BBBB crew for their companionship with much cheering and a few tears at the morning safety briefing.

This campsite was in a very nice park and has a spectacular view of the river. It is the first camp where the river was getting commercial traffic passing by. The vessels seemed close and very large for the river's size.

### **Day 5, Friday August 7, 2009**

#### **Bethlehem to Cornell Park, New Baltimore, Greene County, 7.6 miles**

**Daily Statistics:** 7.3 miles traveled, 2:42 time paddling, average speed 2.9 mph, and 17 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 56, New York City 136.

**Daily weather:** High in the mid 70's, low in the mid 50's, and gentle westerly winds, maximum gusts around 21 mph, clear and sunny, low humidity.

**River Conditions:** Good current push makes for an easy river day.

**Highlights of the Day:** Slept in until 6:00 a.m. and on the water by 8:30 a.m. We launched 17 kayakers today, including new arrival **Bob Gurfield** who will be with us for the rest of the trip. We'll add a lot of people tonight. We let everyone sleep in since we have a short day today in order to get us onto the best traveling schedule for our campsites and to allow folks to recover from the long mileage day yesterday. We have a long way to go on this trip and we have learned that occasional short days help everyone's stamina as we head down the river. The weather is expected to change for the worse in a few days and that reminded one of our paddlers of an old poem:

## A Morning Poem

by Unknown

Whether the weather is cold or  
Whether the weather is hot  
We'll weather the weather  
Whatever the weather  
Whether we like it or not

Today everyone loved the weather. We have seen lots of bald eagles over the last two days and can expect to see a good number of them until Kingston. We stopped at Schodack Island State Park and let everyone spend a couple of hours exploring the trails there while some of the guides watched the boats. Our paddlers walked about 3.5 miles and then came back for lunch. During lunch park staff talked about the history of the island and the designation of the area as the newest state park. A group of day campers from a Baptist church in Albany stopped by and we talked to them about what we are doing and why, and showed them our boats. Most of the kids are from the inner city, and, in spite of excellent access to the river in Albany, didn't seem to have been to the river a lot.

We arrived in New Baltimore in the early afternoon, set up camp, and took showers. We walked to a reception and dinner that was hosted by the Town and held in former Town Councilman **John Wallner's** backyard. Our paddlers were very impressed with this stop noting that the meal was "superb," the townspeople were "very friendly," and their hospitality "stunning."



Bob Gurfield, Tom Doo, and Cynthia Bluhm on the way to New Baltimore, photo courtesy Bob Campbell.

**Herschel Weiss** and guide **Alan Lovgren** ended their trips today. Their leaving will mean that the trip will be quieter, not as much fun, and we'll need a new sweep. A sweep performs an important role in guiding the voyagers down the river. While we are on the water the guides are arrayed around the perimeter of the group with a "point" out front, who no one passes, a "sweep" in back who takes care not to let anyone fall behind, and inside and outside "flanks," who keep containment on our paddle pod perimeter. The remaining guides roam in the group checking

for problems. So far there have not been any problems or anything close to it, but we'll keep watching.

### **Day 6, Saturday, August 8, 2009**

#### **New Baltimore to State Boat Launch, Athens, Greene County, 12.0 miles**

**Daily Statistics:** 13.58 miles traveled, 3:32 time paddling, average speed 3.8 mph, and 22 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 64, New York City 128.

**Daily weather:** High in the mid 70's, low in the upper 40's, and very light northwesterly winds, maximum gusts around 10 mph, clear and sunny, a little more humidity.

**River Conditions:** Good current push and light winds today, mostly at our backs.

**Highlights of the Day:** Back on our normal schedule today: awake to the call of a bald eagle at 5:30 a.m., break camp, eat breakfast, prepare yourself and your boat for the day, attend a safety briefing, and then get on the water by 8:00 a.m. We had 22 kayakers on the water today, with the addition of **Dan Karger, David Goodman, Lee Goldsmith, Louise Karger, Roger Donegan, Wayne Spanier**, and guide **Jack Gilman** to our happy band of voyagers. We stopped at the Hudson River Watertrail Association's Van Schaack Campsite on Bronck Island. A highlight of the stop was the composting toilet and the ADA accessible ramp up to it. Later, one of our paddlers confided, "There is nowhere I would rather be at this moment than on this grand



A shore break on a misty day, photo by Scott Keller

river, with easy going and interesting people, living luxuriously outdoors."

We lunched on Middle Ground Flats where many paddlers tried out each other's kayaks, including two Hobie pedal kayaks, just to see what they might want to buy in the future. After landing we went through the by now standard camp setup; showers and dinner soon followed. Tonight we are staying at a state run trailered boat launch so we are sharing our camp with many boaters. It was fun to talk with them and see all the different boats and the different techniques used when backing up their trailers.

**Jim Cary** could no longer get his wife to allow him to extend his trip and left tonight, but we could tell he really didn't want to go.

## Day 7, Sunday, August 9, 2009

### Athens to US Coast Guard Station, Saugerties, Ulster County, 17.1 miles

**Daily Statistics:** 15.99 miles traveled, 4:06 time paddling, average speed 3.9 mph, and 20 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 76, New York City 116.

**Daily weather:** High in the low 70's, low in the upper 50's, and gentle southerly winds, maximum gusts around 20 mph, mostly cloudy, misty light rain, humid, morning fog and afternoon haze, late night thunderstorms.

**River Conditions:** Good current push makes a good day on the river, winds not much of a factor, other than to cool us down.

**Highlights of the Day:** Up at 5:00 a.m. and on the water by 7:30 a.m. We only have 20 kayakers today; **Bob Campbell** has a sore shoulder and wisely chose to spend the day with the land crew. We still have a long way to go and resting injuries early on will give them a chance to heal and give him a much better chance to finish the trip. After having lunch on a gravel beach with plenty of downed logs to sit on, we headed up Esopus Creek to the Coast Guard station, just as the tide turned and the flood pushed us up the creek. Timing is everything! At the end of the day today we are just about halfway through our trip.

Our land crew was delighted to find a series of large tents already set up with tables and chairs underneath so they did not have set up our awnings or tables today. They made up for the lost "exercise" by helping haul boats off the dock when we arrived early in the afternoon. They were a huge help. The paddlers were delighted to have a dry place to sit up off the ground. After dinner most folks made it an early evening and there were not many of us sitting up past 9. A few rumbles of thunder and some rain accompanied the night, but the thunder stopped by the time we had to get up in the morning and did not hold us up.

## Day 8, Monday, August 10, 2009

### Saugerties to HR Maritime Museum, Kingston, Ulster County, 12.5 miles

**Daily Statistics:** 12.85 miles traveled, 4:45 time paddling, average speed 2.7 mph, and 22 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 93, New York City 99.

**Daily weather:** High in the low 90's, low in the upper 60's, and light southwesterly winds, maximum gusts around 25 mph, cloudy with occasional light mist, humid, morning fog, severe thunderstorms in the evening.

**River Conditions:** Good current push makes for a good, albeit hot, day.

**Highlights of the Day:** We will be on our 5:30 a.m. get up, 8:00 a.m. launch for the next several days. With **Bob's** shoulder feeling better and guide **Maggie Atkins** joining us, today we had 22 kayakers on the water. This morning is the last we'll see of the cool temperatures we have enjoyed. We launched into the Esopus Creek and headed downstream to the Hudson, escorted by a great blue heron. We passed the 100 mile point of our journey about 2/3 of the way to Kingston. We stopped for lunch at Kingston Point Beach and had a fun time poking through the





Paddling in the rain near Turkey Point, photo by Scott Keller.

remnants of the old Hutton Brickyard scattered about. There are a number of brick collectors in our group and it was easy to spot them as their boats got heavier as we proceed south. The sun came out and the temperature soared. After lunch we passed around the Rondout II Lighthouse and headed up the Rondout Creek. We have to fight the ebb tide as we go up the creek, but it is not too bad.

Tonight we are camped at the Hudson River Maritime Museum and our tents are set up in the shadow of the tugboat *Mathilda*. This steel clad steam powered boat worked the St. Lawrence and the Hudson Rivers between 1898 and 1969. A severe thunderstorm rolled in just after dark. Museum staff allowed our group to shelter in the museum and many took advantage of their generosity. One bonus of the thunderstorms is that the air temperature dropped a good bit and the biting insects all went away.

**Dan and Louise Karger, David Goodman, Lee Goldsmith and Wayne Spanier** all completed their trips and headed home. It seems like they just got here. **Madeline Wilson** and **Cinda Becker** have signed on for an extra day! There has been a switchover in our land crew too; **Jason Pohleven** has left and been replaced by **Shawn Lollman**. Our land crew is doing an outstanding job of taking care of our paddlers; terrific food and cheerful help whenever asked.

### **Day 9, Tuesday, August 11, 2009**

#### **Kingston to Highland Landing Park, Lloyd, Ulster County, 14.7 miles**

**Daily Statistics:** 16.18 miles traveled, 4:25 time paddling, average speed 2.5 mph, and 17 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 105, New York City 87.

**Daily weather:** High in the upper 80's, low in the upper 60's, and light northwesterly winds, maximum gusts around 12 mph, partly cloudy, some humidity, morning fog.

**River Conditions:** Good current push and light winds make for a nice hot day.

**Highlights of the Day:** On the water by 8:00 a.m. as usual, with 17 kayakers. We stopped at Esopus Meadows Lighthouse today and then headed across to Esopus Meadows Point, a Scenic Hudson owned site, and part of the Greenway Water Trail, that has a composting toilet. As we pulled up we startled a milk snake swimming in the water near the beach.



Two views of Highland Landing Park, one from the Walkway Over the Hudson and one in camp.  
Photos courtesy Bob Campbell (left) and Roger Donegan.

We ate lunch on a shingle beach with just enough tree trunk seating. We were across the river from Hyde Park, home to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the longest serving U.S. President. We arrived just after 2:00 p.m. at Highland Landing Park, a new access point on the river and the only access on the west shore between Esopus and Newburgh. We have a lot of fun things to do tonight; fortunately the weather is going to cooperate. Our first event is a trip to the soon to open Walkway Over the Hudson, one of three major projects the state has undertaken for the Quadricentennial. The project involves the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the old Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge into the longest and highest pedestrian-only span in the world. This new state park will officially open in October and work crews are still laying down the walkway and assembling the handrails. The Paddle is the first official group to use the span and we are treated to a tour by Walkway Over the Hudson President **Fred Schaffer**. The views of the river and our campsite from the middle of the bridge are spectacular and many pictures were taken. Back in camp we are treated to a wonderful performance by Rich Hines and the Hillbilly Drifters, a five man folksy bluegrass band who donated their performance because they like what this journey represents. Our thanks go to all of them.

**Cinda** and **Madeline** departed tonight, but we may not have seen the last of them.

### **Day 10, Wednesday, August 12, 2009**

#### **Lloyd to Chelsea Yacht Club, Wappingers, Dutchess County, 11.9 miles**

**Daily Statistics:** 12.18 miles traveled, 2:57 time paddling, 3.0 average speed mph, and 15 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 120, New York City 72.

**Daily weather:** High in the low 80's, low in the mid 60's, and light southeasterly winds, maximum gusts around 9 mph, clear early then cloudy and an all night soaking rain, thundershowers north and south of camp, humid, occasionally heavy fog.

**River Conditions:** Good current push and light winds make for a quick, but warm day.

**Highlights of the Day:** The tide was unusually low today, our 15 kayakers launched at 8:00 a.m. following sendoff remarks from Town of Lloyd Supervisor **Ray Costantino** and Highland Landing Park Association President **Matt Smith**. Many comments were heard from the paddlers about the proximity of the freight trains, which ran right next to our tents for most of the night. It was a bedraggled and tired bunch who arrived at Chelsea Yacht Club at lunch time. We had time to set up tents, dry out gear, take showers in the clubhouse, and indoctrinate (scare?) the last of our new paddlers, **Diane Dickey**, before the rains came. We removed a frightened garter snake from the clubhouse and let it go where there was less traffic.

**Leon Barnish** ended his trip tonight; he has been with us since the start and it will be strange not to see him tomorrow.

In the early evening the weather turned: a thunderstorm just missed us to the south, then one just missed us to the north and around 6:30 p.m. a drenching rain accompanied by gusty winds arrived. The winds calmed down quickly, but the rain stayed with us the rest of the night. Welcome to the Hudson River Valley Diane!



A little rain did fall, photo courtesy Roger Donegan.

### **Day 11, Thursday, August 13, 2009**

#### **Chelsea to Dockside Landing, Cold Spring, Putnam County, 10.5 miles**

**Daily Statistics:** 10.55 miles traveled, 3:03 time paddling, average speed 2.5 mph, and 18 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 132, New York City 60.

**Daily weather:** High in the mid 70's, low in the mid 60's, and light northerly winds, maximum gusts around 7 mph, rain, cloudy, humid, fog.

**River Conditions:** Good current push and light winds make for a good day.

**Highlights of the Day:** It was still raining when we got up and we had to take our tents down in the rain. Fortunately the club had an awning people could drag their tents under and keep the insides somewhat dry as they broke camp. By the time we launched at 8:15 a.m. the rain had mostly stopped. We had two guest paddlers today, Dutchess County Tourism Director **Mary Kay Verba** and her cousin from Oklahoma, **Deb Wisniesky**. Mary Kay and Deb will join us in

a double kayak for the next two days. As mentioned previously, **Diane Dickey** arrived and she will be with us for the rest of the trip. Diane is our fourth visitor from southern California and helps bring our kayaks on the water total for today to 17.

Our first rest stop/lunch break was at Denning's Point, home to the Beacon Institute for Research and a Greenway Water Trail campsite. The campsite was in use, with two paddlers from New Jersey and Pennsylvania surprised in their tent by our 10:30 a.m. arrival. At the site we found a spider web dangling from between two branches on a tree. To keep the wind from wrapping the web back upon itself the spider had added a tendril to the bottom of the web into which it had incorporated a small stone. After leaving Denning's Point, our next stop was by Bannerman's Island to listen to **Dan McLaughlin's** interpretive talk about the Island and the castle on it.

Tonight's destination of Cold Spring is the home of Building Bridges Building Boats and we were all looking forward to a reunion with our gig crew. As we approached Little Stony Point we spied a couple of gigs on the beach. As we got closer we realized there were four gigs and it is not BBBB, but a group called Rocking the Boat, a great bunch of high school kids learning about the river, rowing, sailing & camping. They were waiting for the tide to change to the flood before heading north to Chelsea Yacht Club. We landed and shared river stories and **Mark**



Rocking the Boat with their new Quad flags and some new friends, photo by Scott Keller

**Mykytyn** gave them Quadricentennial boat flags to fly as they proceed upriver.

After arriving in Cold Spring, we set up camp and were treated to a musical performance by a great band in a local café. The rain finally quit and a gorgeous sunset accompanied dinner back at camp. And we did finally

meet up with our BBBB friends!

## **Day 12, Friday, August 14, 2009**

### **Cold Spring to Stony Point Battlefield, Stony Point, Rockland County, 14.2 miles**

**Daily Statistics:** 15.6 miles traveled, 4:34 time paddling, average speed 2.5 mph, and 25+ people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 142, New York City 50.

**Daily weather:** High in the mid 80's, low in the low 60's, and light southerly winds, maximum gusts around 6 mph, partly sunny, humid, fog.



**River Conditions:** Good current push and light winds should make for a good day, but we get caught in a major back eddy south of the Bear Mountain Bridge and have a tough go of it all the way to Stony Point.

**Highlights of the Day:** The first highlight today occurred when the US Military Academy at West Point's morning gun awakened us from across the river right on schedule. Today we were joined by a number of guests and our only outfitter sponsored day paddle this year. When we launched at 8:00 a.m. we had fifteen of our kayakers, four more with guests including **Tara Sullivan** of the Quadricentennial Commission, her husband **Ned Sullivan**, President of Scenic Hudson and their daughter **Annie Sullivan**. Also joining us was **Fran Dunwell** from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Management Program and a number of paddlers with Hudson Valley Outfitter's (HVO) day paddle. Before the launch Tara, Ned, Fran and HVO's **Teri Barr** provided us with a few inspirational remarks before we headed into the heart of the Hudson Highlands.



Bannerman's Castle and the Hudson Highlands, photo by Scott Keller.

This section of the river is replete with spectacular scenery and some of the most important activities in our nation's history. Yesterday we entered the Hudson Highlands, passing Storm King Mountain, the site of an early battle between a public utility and local citizens that eventually confirmed individual citizen's ability to sue over proposed public works projects. Thus it was here that the American environmental movement was founded. Before that, however, the area was famous for its forts and fortifications along the river which played key roles in the American Revolution. For example, in 1778 the Americans stopped British ships from sailing north by deploying an enormous chain across the river between West Point and Constitution Island. At another Highlands location, Fort Montgomery, the Americans weren't so lucky and the fort was captured by the British in October 1777. Two years later, in July 1779, the Americans were able to capture Stony Point, just south of the Highlands, in a daring midnight raid under the leadership of General "Mad" Anthony Wayne.

We stopped at Manitou to drop off our guests and day paddlers and proceeded up the Popolopen Creek to our lunch site at Fort Montgomery State Historic Site. Once back on the river, what followed can only be described as a long, hot slog to our absolutely wonderful

campsite at Stony Point Battlefield State Historic Site. As we approached the point from the north we were fired upon (powder charge only) by Site staff using a six pound cannon. As we rounded the point to land on the south side they followed up by peppering us with musket fire. This experience gave us a feel for what it must have been like trying to sail past this Point with its commanding view up and down the river while under fire. Perversely, we have rarely felt so welcome, as Site Manager **Julia Warger** and her staff warmly greeted us. They then shuttled us in electric carts to our campsite way up the hill between the museum and the lighthouse. A gazebo provided an ideal spot for the land crew to set up and we all enjoyed showers and dinner. Bed is early for many after a tough day. Those of us who have been here since Moreau are starting to feel the length of our journey and tomorrow's another long day.

### **Day 13, Saturday, August 15, 2009**

#### **Stony Point to Scenic Hudson Park, Irvington, Westchester County, 15.0 miles**

**Daily Statistics:** 17.01 miles traveled, 5:07 time paddling, average speed 2.4 mph, and 17 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 156, New York City 36.

**Daily weather:** High in the upper 80's, low in the mid 60's, and light southwesterly winds, maximum gusts around 9 mph, clear and sunny, humid, fog, hazy, air quality alert.

**River Conditions:** Good current push and light winds in our face make a long day not as hot as it could have been.

**Highlights of the Day:** We are surprised by the return of **Madeline** and **Cinda** who have decided to paddle with us this weekend. Many of us are surprised to learn it's the weekend. When we launch at 8:00 a.m. we have 17 kayakers. It was very hazy and as we moved into Haverstraw Bay, the widest part of the river, it was difficult to see the far shore. The Bay is 3½ miles at its widest point; it really doesn't feel much like a river here.



Cooling off in the river, photo courtesy Bob Campbell.

We saw lots of wildlife today including osprey, cormorants, fish swimming by our boats, and a boatload of nude sunbathers as we head past the Palisades. We stop for lunch in Nyack at a

park with flush toilets, leading one wag to remark on the luxuriousness of this particular lunch stop. We pull into Irvington's Scenic Hudson Park around 3:00 p.m. and set up camp, shower and eat pizza and salad. **Madeline** and **Cinda** bring us ice cream! The sunset over the Palisades is spectacular.

### Day 14, Sunday, August 16, 2009

#### Irvington to Beczak Environmental Center, Yonkers, Westchester County, 6.9 miles

**Daily Statistics:** 7.29 miles traveled, 1:56 time paddling, average speed 3.3 mph, and 17 people on-water.

**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 171, New York City 21.

**Daily weather:** High near 90, low in the mid 60's, and light southwesterly winds, maximum gusts around 9 mph, clear and sunny, humid, fog, hazy, air quality alert.

**River Conditions:** Good current push, light winds and a short trip make for a good day.

**Highlights of the Day:** Up at 6:00 a.m. On the water at 8:30 and Andrew gets even for all we have put him through by spraying everyone with a hose; he really seemed enjoy it too. There are 17 of us today and we are joined by two novice kayakers from the public. Our guides made sure they got to Yonkers safely. We are joined en route by paddlers from the Palisades Boat Club and the Yonkers Paddling and Rowing Club (YPRC). One of our paddlers notes that, "We have become waves of influence washing against the shore, influencing the people in each community we touch."

We arrived in Yonkers by 11:00 a.m. and were greeted by a sign made by children participating in a seining program. **Cliff Schneider**, Executive Director of the Beczak Environmental Education Center, tells us about their programs and the excitement the center is generating in local communities. Later Yonkers Council President **Chuck Lesnick** visits and



Diane Dickey and Roger Donegan on the way to Irvington, photo courtesy Bob Campbell.

welcomes us to Yonkers. **Scott** produces quad flags and asks us all to sign them. Everyone will get a quad flag with all the voyagers' signatures on it.





Andrew Cassulo sprays Bob Gurfield with a cooling mist, photo courtesy Bob Campbell.

**Roger Donegan** leaves shortly after landing and goodbyes. He just cannot make the logistics work to finish the trip. The afternoon is spent exploring Yonkers and preparing for the end of the voyage tomorrow. A long, pleasant evening is spent visiting YPRC and watching the locals drift by.



Welcome from the gang at Beczak Environmental Education Center, photo by Scott Keller.

### **Day 15, Monday, August 17, 2009**

#### **Yonkers to Pier 96, Manhattan, New York County, 13.4 miles**

**Daily Statistics:** 13.22 miles traveled, 2:38 time paddling, average speed 5.0 mph, and 14 people on-water.



**Start of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 178, New York City 14.

**Daily weather:** High in the low 90's, low in the upper 60's, and light southerly winds, maximum gusts around 7 mph, clear and sunny, humid, fog, hazy, air quality alert.

**River Conditions:** Good current push and light winds make for an easy last day.

**Highlights of the Day:** For our final day on the river we only have 14 kayakers. We get to sleep late, all the way to 6:30 a.m., although almost no one does. It is the last day this group will be together and that is on everyone's mind; even as we all look forward to going home and seeing our loved ones. We launch at 9:00 with a police escort from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Marine Patrol Unit. The water is very calm and we are out just before the tide switches from flood to ebb. A sign of the economic times: a number of barges and a few tugs are moored in the Yonkers anchorage waiting for cargo and trips that do not seem to be coming these days. As we head south we have to be careful not to get too close, because as the tide changes the barges swing 180 degrees on their anchors. It is the best indicator we have of exactly when the tide is turning.

The trip down to Manhattan is highlighted by at least seven ospreys fishing the river in the lower Bronx and upper Manhattan. It is amazing how hard they hit the water and how often they are successful per attempt at a fish. We stop for a long break/short lunch at Riverside Park just past the little red lighthouse under the great gray bridge (the George Washington Bridge). Afterwards, as we approach the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Basin, **Scott** sprints ahead to speak at a press event with New York City Parks Commissioner **Adrian Benepe** and **Robert Kloos** from the Danish Consulate. Everybody else patiently waits on the water. Following the press event Mr. Benepe and Mr. Kloos and their guides from the New York Kayak Company join us for the final miles to our takeout at Pier 96.



The George Washington Bridge with Manhattan in the background, photo courtesy Bob Campbell!

Upon our arrival we are greeted by about 100 people from family and friends to the press to fellow paddlers and NYC Parks staff. Our Land Crew has gotten lunch and, after many goodbyes and promises to stay in touch, we send everyone on their way with a full stomach, lots of stories to tell, tired bodies, and refreshed minds.

**Total Trip Statistics:** 197.97 miles traveled, 57:17 hours paddling, average speed 3.3 mph.

**End of Day Mile Marker (From/To):** Moreau 192, New York City 0.