

The Best of Lopez (aka Gourmet Paddling)

Date: September, 2004

Author: John Montgomery

On Friday afternoon, folks set up camp around the pond and we spent the rest of the day relaxing in the sun and talking about all sorts of kayaking-related topics. We also picked a ton of strawberries from my garden and had sliced berries and ice cream for dessert! It was on the chilly side, however, when we launched into San Juan Channel the next morning and crossed over to San Juan Island. After lunch at Jackle's Lagoon, we cruised down to Cattle Pass and hopped out of our boats to study a long line of breaking waves just outside the pass. These breakers were created as the ebbing tide slid through Cattle Pass and slammed into the wind and waves rolling in from the Strait of Juan de Fuca. After watching a couple 30-foot sailboats get tossed around in this stuff we choose a fairly aggressive ferry angle to cross back over to Davis Point on Lopez Island. Although we stayed well clear of the white stuff we still encountered a series of long broad waves that almost felt like ocean swell. At one point, I watched Mac totally disappear from my view as he sunk into a trough.

After nearing Davis Point, we allowed the current to carry us outward through bouncy water and then we had the joy of riding two-foot following seas and 20-knot tailwinds all the way back to MacKaye Harbor where we'd left a shuttle car. It was a very exhilarating ten-mile paddle and I was quite happy with the way our little group performed. After hot showers at the cabin, Sharon, Mike, and Mac treated me to a wonderful dinner at The Galley Restaurant and then we returned home for home-made Apple Crisp with Vanilla Ice Cream (it was unbelievably good!).

Sunday turned out to be one of those incredible days in the San Juan's where the skies are blue and there's hardly a breath of wind. We launched at Agate Beach then made our way around Iceberg Point and the rugged southern coast of Lopez Island. It was so calm, we cruised out around Colville Island before landing for lunch on a hot, pebbly beach. Then we paddled up Rosario Strait and into Lopez Pass where we took another break and did some rolling and rescue practice. After that we checked out Paul Allen's estate on Sperry Peninsula (can you believe he didn't invite us in for coffee?) then returned to Hunter Bay where we started yet another rolling session. Some people don't know when to quit! But hey, it felt good to keep hitting rolls after fourteen miles of paddling and two separate rolling sessions.

After showers and dinner, I made PLUM CRISP for dessert and we enjoyed it while viewing slides from my kayak trips to Baja and the west coast of Vancouver Island. I think it'd be safe to assume we all slept soundly that night. The next morning, we hiked up Chadwick Hill for a gorgeous view of the Olympics and North Cascades before heading for the ferry landing.

Thanks, Mike, Mac, and Sharon for a great weekend!

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS:

Sharon Lindsay — "The Best of Lopez" doesn't do justice to the kayak adventure John Montgomery gave to us. Great weather, fantastic sights, good company and outstanding desserts prepared by John. This was an exceptional trip. Thank you John.

Mac Carter — This was the most interesting and enjoyable WAKE trip I've been on so far. John did a great job planning it. The kayaking had a touch of challenge to it (wind, currents, tides and beach landings). The weather could not have been better and the shoreline scenery at the south end of Lopez was absolutely beautiful. We shared ideas about kayaking and simply enjoyed being together --- lot's of

stories, laughing and interesting conversations. But the real PLUS was having HOT showers, FRESH veggies from John's garden, COLD beer and FRESH Apple/Plum Crisp desserts at the end of every day – it was simply a truly special experience. THANKS for a great trip, JOHN! See you on the Patos Island trip.

Mike Massey — John was a wonderful host and the idea of using a base camp for day trips worked well and made for some luxurious "camping". I enjoyed John's approach of facilitating the trip instead of leading it outright: discussing a proposed plan and learning how tides, currents, wind and availability of landing beaches affect course choices and schedules. There was something very nice about hiking up the hill on the last day and getting a sweeping view of where we paddled the day before. What a great trip! Probably the nicest surprise was getting to know you and Sharon and John, being fairly new and not knowing what to expect. I look forward to paddling with you all on future trips.