



Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club

Newsletter

February 2016

Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club 355 Gorge Road West Victoria, B.C. V9A 1M9
Phone: 250-590-8193 (Info only) Website: www.vckc.ca

Notices

- **Next General Meeting:** Tuesday, February 2nd at 7:30pm (Presentation on the Blueway Trail – *see below*)
- **Victoria International Marina Paddlers Photo-Shoot** - Sat Jan 30 @ 2:00pm at Royal Quay, Songhees
- **Voyageur Program Annual Open Day:** Saturday, January 31st at 9:30am (all welcome)
- **Flatwater Paddle:** Saturday, February 6th - Becher Bay to Pedder Bay by way of (if winds permit) Race Rocks.
- **Paddle for the Kids: Practice Paddle (Kick off):** Sunday, February 7th at 9:30am
- **TRANSPORT CANADA NOTICE:** Keep clear of Black Ball Ferry terminal area, repairs are underway.

Notes: see calendar item on website for details; meet at the Clubhouse unless noted otherwise.

35th Annual Voyageur Paddle for the Kids March 19, 2016 by Joe Boyd

Planning for the **2016 Peninsula Paddle for the Kids** is well under way. This annual fundraising event at VCKC is in support of the Lions Society Easter Seal Camp at Shawnigan Lake. The camp allows children with disabilities to enjoy a summer camp experience in a safe environment. Funds raised by the club help the Lions Society operate the facility for children and families with special needs.

The route follows the shore of the Saanich Peninsula from Brentwood Bay to the Clubhouse. We paddle Voyageur canoes with two teams of 6 or 7 per boat. Each team paddles up to 2 hours and then switches off with another team. The whole trip is about 40 miles and takes 10-12 hours to complete. Bus transportation, great food, and a warm dry rest area are provided by the local Lions Club. It all makes for a great day of paddling for a good cause.

The paddle will take place this year on **Saturday March 19th**. There will be 7 practice paddles leading

up to that date. Practice paddles can be the best part of the program. You can expect an adventure on every outing.

Practice Trips and Dates:

- Sunday January 31st - Portage Inlet – Intro to Voyageur (9:30 am start)
- Sunday February 7th – Victoria Harbour, Pancake Brunch (9:30 am start)
- Sunday February 14th – Sook Basin
- Sunday February 28th – Saanich Inlet
- Sunday March 6th – Maple Bay - Cowichan Bay
- Sunday March 13th – Ladysmith Harbour

All trips but the first two will start by meeting at the Clubhouse at 8:30am where ride shares and boat towing are arranged. Please bring a paddle, PFD, dry bag, dry clothes, weather-appropriate clothing, food, and water.

This program is open to all VCKC members. If you can't paddle with us, please remember to help support Camp Shawnigan.

If you have any questions, please contact Joe Boyd: vpresident@vckc.ca, 250-386-6004

Regional Marine Trail Blueway Trail

by John Rogers



Proposed Blueway Trail Route

This Inlet/Harbour portage route is a vital component of an exciting regional initiative. The 'Regional Marine Trail' or 'Blueway Trail' is a 22 km circular paddling route that many seasoned boaters have struggled with for many years (*see map*). Just as the CRD is creating a circular multi-use regional trail (Galloping Goose + E&N Rail Trail), I am campaigning for a vastly improved marine route which will include at least 15 amazing landing / launch locations in 5 municipalities! These will typically have good access, historic interest, and a range of useful amenities (washrooms, water fountains, food services, etc.), making the journey fun for all, including novice paddlers.

The Tillicum Walkway is a vital component to the Marine Trail's success. Just as the current Johnson Street Bridge is a barrier to both cyclists and the city's waterfront pathway project, so the Tillicum tidal waters hinder kayakers, canoeists and/or stand-up boarders from safe, efficient passage. The vintage postcard (*see below*) shows that there was once a

popular walkway on the Saanich side under the bridge in the early 1900s. Boaters were able to easily bypass the rapids and carry on their way. It eventually fell into disrepair, was removed and the land west of Tillicum was then sold into private hands. The various paddling clubs should team with Saanich to build a new walkway underneath Tillicum Bridge, complete with docks at each end.

The Gorge Beautification Project from Tillicum to Admirals was built from 1966 to 1968. It's impressive that Saanich had the long term vision to acquire the properties and built the path to Tillicum Road around 2003. Work is still required to finish the last 161 metres of Saanich's remarkable 2.5 km waterfront path by 2018.



Vintage Postcard

This would be the crowning achievement marking the 50th anniversary of Gorge Beautification! Few urban cities can boast of a circular marine trail that has such history, beauty and amenities. With the local Chambers and Tourism Victoria support, it will become a world class 'must do' recreational opportunity for residents, visitors and tourists alike. The eco-tourism spinoffs for restaurants, boating services, etc. are obvious.

Attend the February 2nd General Meeting to learn more.

The Colquitz River Mud Flats

by Jean Chandler

(*excerpts from 'Coastal Shore Stewardship' handbook*)

Estuaries and mud flats are highly productive because of the rich nutrients and fine sediments they contain, their variety of habitat, and the mixing of fresh and salt water. They are important nursery habitats for many kinds of fish and invertebrates.

Main Biological Features

Estuaries and mud flats contain distinct vegetation communities (estuarine swamps and meadows) that adapt to seasonal flooding and salty soils. Their intertidal and subtidal biological communities can survive with rapid changes in temperature and salinity. They provide important rearing and feeding areas for many fish species including juvenile salmon as well as waterfowl.

Estuaries and mud flats contain:

- A variety of biological communities that can survive rapid changes in water temperature and salinity.

- Salt marshes and other brackish vegetation that provide cover, detritus and produce invertebrates used as food sources by fish and waterfowl.
- Important staging and overwintering habitat areas for waterfowl and shorebirds; feeding area for Great Blue Heron; and vital rearing area for juvenile fish and invertebrates.
- An osmotic transition zone where salmon can adapt from freshwater to seawater and back.
- Detrital sinks where land-based carbon sources accumulate and fuel the marine aquatic food web.

Eelgrass Beds

Intertidal and subtidal eelgrass beds, which often are found in these areas, are rooted in the sediment and are particularly sensitive to disturbances that may uproot them (propeller wash, dredging) or changes to the transport of sediment. It is difficult to compensate for losses to eelgrass habitat as recruitment processes and ideal growth conditions are not well known.



Canoe Program Update

The mild winter should continue to provide great canoeing opportunities. Many thanks to Alan for leading great flat water paddles and helping us get out there to enjoy it. We look forward to an increase in flat water paddles as a few others are interested in organizing trips. The river levels have been going up and down, and the Chemainus has come into play a

few times for the enjoyment of river paddlers. It's great to see the weekly trips that members paddle in. For those interested this spring's offering of courses will include moving water courses, and they have been well attended in the past. The skills learned are also very applicable to paddling on the ocean's currents. Also coming this spring but still in the design stage will be skills clinics. Not an official course but just a short session designed to focus on a

particular skill for our clubs paddlers. I have had the pleasure of learning to canoe under the guidance of Dan, and now look forward to helping get everyone into a canoe as often as possible. David Dorosz

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## Flatwater Paddle

by Alan Thomson

There will be a Club Flatwater paddle on Saturday, February 6th. I am thinking of the trip from Becher Bay to Pedder Bay by way (if winds permit) Race Rocks and certainly by Bentinck Island. If the wind conditions are not suitable, another, more sheltered site will be chosen - possibly in Cowichan Bay as the tides will be high throughout most of the day.

An e-mail will be sent out to Club members in the Canoe & Kayak programs the week beforehand.

### Trip Report

The Flatwater Paddle on January 16th took place in a providential calm period on an otherwise windy week-



end. The group of 5 canoes and one kayak launched on Somenos Lake and headed into the brush that separates the lake proper from the marshes beside the highway. An hour later, we emerged having visited the birding observation platform and many dead-end paths through the brush. Linda (1 of 3) did very well in her kayak in what was mainly pretty close-quarter combat with the bushes. Plenty evidence of beavers at work and quite a few swans graced the lake and the swamps.

Emerging from the maze, we headed down to the outlet to Somenos Creek, expecting to paddle down to the Cowichan River. However, early on we encountered some mats of weed growing in the creek and after a couple of hundred metres of increasingly dense matts that were hard to get a canoe across, let alone a kayak, we turned back. We'd encountered this weed - *Elodea Canadensis* - on last year's trip, but further downstream, below the Lakes Road Bridge, only getting thick near Trunk Road. Looks like the paddle path to the Cowichan is closed for the foreseeable future, which is a pity. Back



up to the lake; lunch on the side opposite the put-in and then up Richards Creek to the fields near Richards Road. The water level was quite high, and progress went well until we came across (heard) duck hunters on the dyke to the west. So we turned east and headed over the fields away from the creek until forced to return someday



short of the Herd Road bridge. Some evidence of beaver, but few water fowl, no doubt thanks to the hunters. The morning rain had stopped and the last stretch back to the ramp was graced with blue skies and sun, a reward for our perseverance.

Thanks to the 11 paddlers who took part - 3 Lindas, and one each of Dave, Hélène, Julie-Anne, Alan, Paul, Grace, Sandy and Edmond.

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Outrigger Program Update

With the colder weather here now I would like to remind everyone that it is important to avoid paddling through the ice. There can be significant damage to the hull and ama when trying to go through the ice, even if the ice doesn't appear to be very thick.

Wake Up the Gorge has been set for Saturday, April 2nd and we now have the confirmation from CORA. We will be holding another OC6 steering clinic and, as soon as I can hammer down a date, I will let everyone know.

I would also like to remind everyone to keep filling out the sign out sheets for the OC6s. Do not hesitate to call me if there is any missing equipment or damage to the boats.

We will be holding another OC6 steering clinic and as soon as I can hammer down a date I will let everyone know.

In the meantime, thanks again for all your support and cooperation. Shawn Hamilton

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### President's Report

By the time this is read, the 2016 Executive will have had its first meeting and the handover from 2015 to 2016 complete. I would like to thank the whole 2015 Executive for its hard work and leadership on behalf of the club. As you heard at the AGM, a lot was accomplished during the year. In particular, I'd like to thank Jean Chandler, for her 2yrs as President, and those who are leaving the Executive: Anne Ardiel after 4yrs as Treasurer, Dan Walker after 3yrs as Canoe Director, Joe Boyd after 4yrs as Voyageur Director, Pam Carroll after 2yrs as Past-President and Derek Jenkins, Maylene McMillan, Judy Leonard, Barbara Murray, Bonnie



Retiring Executive

McPherson, Debi LaHaise and Ryan Ovens for their work in their positions during this last year.



The rest of the 2015 executive will be back either in their old positions or re-incarnated into a new one and will be joined by Bon Lee, Arthur Caldicott, David Dorosz, Tim Marks, Paula Gough, Kim Capson, Bill Buckley, and Ron Crabtree. Thank you all for volunteering and I look forward to working with such an able group.

Linda Thomson



2016 Executive

## February 2016 Events Calendar

| Sunday                                                                            | Monday | Tuesday                                            | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 31<br>8:30 AM<br>Eddyhopper<br><br>9:30 AM<br>Voyageur Program<br>Annual Open Day | Feb 1  | 2<br>6:30 PM<br>VCKC General Meeting<br>7:30pm     | 3         | 4        | 5      | 6<br>8:30 AM<br>Flatwater Paddle -<br>Becher Bay to Pedder<br>Bay    |
| 7<br>9:30 AM<br>Paddle For The Kids:<br>Kick Off                                  | 8      | 9<br>6:00 PM<br>Executive Meeting                  | 10        | 11       | 12     | 13<br>9:00 AM<br>World Fisheries Trust<br>Workshop 9:00am-<br>1:00pm |
| 14                                                                                | 15     | 16                                                 | 17        | 18       | 19     | 20                                                                   |
| 21                                                                                | 22     | 23                                                 | 24        | 25       | 26     | 27                                                                   |
| 28                                                                                | 29     | Mar 1<br>6:30 PM<br>VCKC General Meeting<br>7:30pm | 2         | 3        | 4      | 5                                                                    |

### Club Contact Information

#### Officers

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