

## Pocomoke Camping

By Suzanne Farace, Trip Coordinator

Over the July Fourth weekend, nineteen CPA paddlers gathered at the Pocomoke River State Park for a weekend of camping and paddling. For those of you who are not familiar with it, this Park is located in the southwestern section of Worcester County and is known for its stands of loblolly pine and the bald cypress swamps which border the wild and scenic Pocomoke River. This black water river originates in the Great Cypress Swamp in Delaware and flows southwesterly approximately 45 miles to the Chesapeake Bay.



Pocomoke Campers; Scenic Group

Photo by Leigh Hall

Over the course of the weekend, the group enjoyed paddling the area's well-established water trails: Corker's Creek (a loop from Shad Landing campground), Nassawango Creek (round trip from the campground to the bridge at Red House Run), and the upper Pocomoke River (round trip from the town of Snow Hill to the bridge at Porter's Crossing). We thank the always very accommodating Pocomoke Canoe Company, [www.pocomokerivercanoe.com](http://www.pocomokerivercanoe.com), for allowing us to launch from their floating dock. (Please call and ask permission first, and make a point of buying a few hats, t-shirts, etc. to support them when you do visit). The creeks and rivers in certain areas are very narrow and winding and have a noticeable current, and the lunch stops at the bridges can only hold so many boats, so sometimes we split up the group and staggered our paddles accordingly.

Snow Hill always has terrific fireworks over the river in celebration of the Fourth, but sadly the display this year was moved Sunday because of an organizational glitch. Our paddlers did, however, enjoy a nice dinner out at a local restaurant with great live music on Friday night and a delicious potluck in the campground on Saturday night. For the latter, we were visited by a couple of other CPA members we had just happened to encounter on the water earlier that day, who were on their own, separate trip. One evening at the campground we were visited one of the rangers who told us all about the rescued turkey buzzard he was carrying around on his forearm. And, despite an ominous weekend forecast, the weather was fine. The only time it really rained on us while in camp was at night when everyone was in their campsite anyway. All in all, a very good trip. ☺



River Paddlers

Photo by Suzanne Farace

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Ready to Launch

Photo by Rich Stevens

greetings, nine out of ten of kayakers announced they had their marine radios ready, including two friends who had newly purchased radios in tow! The gang coordinated their radio channels & tweaked the squelch (channel 69 was full of a chatty fishing debate so we picked another channel). We packed up our gear, lots of frozen water, and headed together out on the Miles River, under the highbridge. Counting 5 yellow kayaks, 3 red kayaks and 2 nicely finished CLC wood kayaks, we had just enough kayaks to make for an easy count.

This bridge carries State Road MD 33 over Royal Oak Creek, paralleling the path of the old, now abandoned Baltimore, Chesapeake & Atlantic Railway right of way (later known as the Baltimore & Eastern Railroad). This rail corridor originally stretched from the small waterfront community of Claiborne near the tip of Tilghman Point on the Chesapeake Bay over to Ocean City. Long before there were highways we follow today everything and everyone used our many convenient rivers and the later railroads to get to town and their produce to market. Now there is another well managed boat ramp located at the old ferry landing in Claiborne with its obvious heavy duty ferry pilings still in place. A portion of the old liberated rail corridor runs through the residential side of busy St. Michaels has been rebuilt as a hiking nature trail: <http://www.trailink.com/trail/st-michaels-nature-trail.aspx>.

Heading out on the Miles, the south winds behind us pushed us easily across to the far side of the river with its long wooded shoreline and a lonely wood dock slowly falling into the water at Long Point Island. The crew quickly spotted cownose sting rays, waving their tiny triangular wing tips as they swam by our group: [http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fieldguide/critter/cownose\\_ray](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fieldguide/critter/cownose_ray).

No one appears to be living on the island, although there are two bungalows hidden on the rip-rapped front side of the island. Our gang spotted several sandy beaches, a planted American flag flapping in the breeze, and a half buried-in-the-sand picnic table. It's too early in our paddle for lunch, but it would be a nice stop over location on a shorter kayak trip. Now we need choose: avoid the wind and go up short Hunting Creek to the east or go out into the main river. On we go.

It's still overcast and pleasantly breezy as we make our way up the northern side of the Miles *and we have not melted yet!* Two water towers spotted over St. Michaels make for good, tall landmarks as the south winds push several more sailboats and our kayak fleet downriver. We slide into the mouth of Leeds Creek, directly opposite St. Michaels - easily 6-7 miles, and reconvene. The wind is blowing steadily and the building clouds are looking much darker ahead; some chatter on the radio says it is raining over on the western side, but not

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