

Superior Kayak & Outdoor Adventure Club

(Formerly the Twin Cities Sea Kayaking Association)

SKOAC
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Summer '03 Newsletter

Note from the Editor:

We are in the thick of paddling season and members have been reporting on from their far-flung adventures. Sounds like folks have had quite a summer, tackling a variety of Club trips as well as private endeavors.

The **Spring Fling** on Basswood was well-attended this year, despite all the wet weather, with everyone congregating in the Disco Tipi to share homemade wine, cider, chocolate-covered strawberries and other goodies on your final night. The Memorial Day trip to the Saurau Islands attracted 18 paddlers and culminated in a Hawaiian Luau in honor of **Arnie Stefferud's birthday**. Our **Silver Islet to Rossport** Sequel was blessed by all the good karma that our first attempt (last summer) lacked. SKOAC also actively participated in both the **Bayfield Inland Sea Symposium** and the **Two Harbors Kayak Festival**.

SKOACers have tackled a number of ambitious *private* paddling trips this summer, as well, including **Pukaskwa**, **Voyagers**, **Silver Islet to Rossport**, and **even Glacier Bay, Alaska**. Other members are pursuing **non-paddling activities** such as riding **RACBAI** (a bicycle race across Iowa), climbing the local rock crags, **sailing** on Lake Superior, and **hiking** the coastal mountains of Ireland. This is, of course, just a sampling of what Club members are up to. I encourage you to keep us posted of your adventures, whether they are official SKOAC trips, or not. No telling who else might share your interests.

Plan to attend SKOAC's 4th Annual Fall Ball on **September 12th – 14th** (originally scheduled September 5-7). Once again, we have the big group site on Sand Island reserved for a weekend of paddling and partying.

The Fall Ball marks the transition into what I consider to be the best paddling season on Superior. The bug-free cooler weather, fall colors, and bigger waves on the Superior make for paddling magic. Last year we pushed "paddling season" through the fall and into the winter with trips in November (Sand Island) and December (Split Rock). With a kayak-transportable, wood stove-heated, ultra-light tipi, we are able to warm up and dry out gear, making the whole experience remarkable painless. This year we'll continue to push the limits of "paddling season." Look for trips in the Fall newsletter.

As always, I welcome feedback, articles, and anything else related to sea kayaking or the outdoors. I don't care whether your adventure is a "club trip" or not. We want to hear about it. Don't hesitate to call me at (612) 823-1272 or e-mail me at brock.hunter@justice.com with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Brock Hunter

Board News:

- The SKOAC Board met once since the last newsletter, on July 10. Present were Lynn Jacobs, Brock Hunter, Adrienne Madson and Bill Newman.
- The Board approved the creation of a **new Club position, Trip Coordinator**, and appointed **Stellar Sager** to fill the role. Stellar has already demonstrated her PR and organizational talents in representing SKOAC at various symposiums and in organizing a number of trips over the last few years. Once Stellar officially assumes her new role later this fall, she will help ensure we are offering a good mix of trips for different skill levels and interests. Stellar will also become the sole contact for anyone planning a Club trip. She will work with the trip organizer and the Board to assess the difficulty rating and to get the trip on the Calendar. Many thanks to Stellar for filling this much-needed position.
- Board member, **Jerome Rausch**, has proposed the purchase of a **SKOAC kayak trailer** for use on Club trips. He has promised to research models and prices and report back to the Board at our September meeting. The Board will discuss various funding options and report back to you in the fall newsletter.
- Calling All Nerds!**

by Bill Newman (in his last desperate act as Membership Director)

As Brock has been telling you in the last couple of newsletters we are trying to convert our newsletter and calendar updates into an emailed format. This it turns out, is more difficult than we thought. First, all of the players involved in this transition are **volunteers** (check your Thesaurus – that is a synonym for incompetent, overworked and distracted). Our current "old" database was a rudimentary affair designed to keep just the basic information we needed for a club mailing list and phone list. The first step is to remove myself as the database guy, because with a growing business I barely have enough free time to bang my head against the wall and scream. More importantly, I know doodley squat about Microsoft Access, and we need to retool the database.

My first move is to hand over the membership duties to Jerome Rausch (612) 925-1710 or email rauschja@sd.net. Jerome is smarter than me, has better computer skills and more free time so I hope he can pull this together. **With that said, I invite any computer nerds out there who are unfortunate enough to work with Microsoft Access to give Jerome a call or at least send him an email, or flowers or beer/hard liquor etc.** We have several shortcomings with the existing database as follows:

(1) First and foremost we don't have a convenient way to export an email list from the database to Outlook for club group emails. Right now we have Brock reading the list, comparing it to the printed report from the database and trying to spot changes. Poor bastard! For group emails Sarah Ohmann has been doing most since she sort of has an almost complete list of club emails on her computer. Often however folks yell at me because they didn't get an email from Sarah since of course she did not have the updated email list from the database. Jerome or one of you helpful nerds out there will have to help us figure out an easy way to export the up-to-date email addresses from Access to Outlook or Netscape.

(2) Club phone list report. The way the database is currently set up, it prints the name and phone number of the first entry in the database for a household membership. Brock and I have tried to pull out other names and with the same number in a household, but we need to modify the database so that it lists all the names in a household with their phone numbers. When we have two or more people in a household with different last names it is confusing for members to figure out how to call them. For example who knew that Bubba Lipshits was married to Jane Doe! We are going try to fix the phone list report so that it prints a phone number for all the names entered in the database.

(3) We need to fix the lack of information that we have for many members. For members who signed up from the website we often just have the information from their check and the ACA liability waiver. At times that means name and address but no phone or email address! For folks who have a membership that is due you should have an additional information form along with an ACA waiver to complete to renew your membership. Your membership expiration date is printed on your mailings address label. We are looking to keep the following information in our database: Name, address, home and work phone, email address, whether or not you are a member of the MCA, ACA number, and an emergency contact name and phone number. If you are renewing please send this information to Jerome via the club P.O. box or via email. Even if your membership is not due please send this information if we don't already have it, so we can update the database.

That's all for now. Just remember from here on out any problems with the database are Jerome's fault! Give him some tech support if you are a Microsoft Access guru and of course lots of moral support regardless of your computer skills. I will still be doing the club PR and info@skoac.org answers for folks interested in the club, and I will try to do more instruction based work. Teaching our spring classes and skill sessions has been very popular with club members, and now that I have Sarah and Ellen as newly certified ACA instructors we can teach a lot more club members. With Jerome handling the database end of the membership duties I should be able to do more instruction and promote more skill sessions for the club.

Club News:

Trip Reports

1. Spring Fling - May 9-12

by Brock Hunter

SKOAC's 2nd Annual Spring Fling was blessed by the same **stormy weather** as the 1st. Despite the cold, wet conditions, we still had a **great turnout**.

We paddled to Basswood Island Friday afternoon, arriving in time to set up camp before the rain started. We spent a pleasant evening around the picnic table, under **Dennis Amussen's** wonderful **ultra-light tarp**, sharing stories and **Daryl Zier's homemade wine**.

On Saturday morning we were joined by late-arriving SKOACers and enjoyed a **leisurely paddle around Basswood Island**. Based on an ominous forecast for Saturday night/Sunday morning, we opted to move our camp to Buffalo Bay for our second night.

We had Buffalo Bay camp ground completely to ourselves Saturday night and the manager generously gave us all the free fire wood we could burn. We spent the early evening sipping more of Daryl's wine and **Steve Mercer's homemade cider** while **Bill Newman** entertained us with **Drunken Master**-style karate katas (check out the quicktime movie on our web site).

Later, as the weather moved in, we ducked into the **Disco Tipi** for the latest incarnation of the **laserlight show** and chocolate-covered strawberries (of course, accompanied by more homemade wine and cider).

The predicted storm hit in the middle of night with howling winds and sheets of freezing rain bombarding our camp. I roused at around 7 am to the sound of car engines. By the time I got up, packed my gear and exited my tipi a half hour later, everyone – and I mean everyone – was gone. I never did find out whether everyone stayed dry all night.

Despite two years of foul weather for the Fling, we have discovered that a little cold and rain doesn't dampen the fun. **Tarp 'n Tipi provide us warm dry refuge while allowing us to witness Superior in all her moods.**

2. Bayfield Inland Sea Symposium

Symposium organizer, **Gail Green**, invited our **resident paddling celebrities, Sara Omann and Bill Newman**, to speak at this year's event. Sarah and Bill did two presentations one on their favorite **paddling trips on Superior**, and another on **"Weird Gear"** (provided by a number of SKOAC members). Sarah and Bill also took part in teaching a number of the Symposium's skill sessions.

Many other SKOACers joined Bill and Sarah at the Symposium and all report this year's event was very well-organized and fun. We hope to take part in making next year's Symposium even more successful.

3. Silver Islet to Rossport – July 1-9

by Brock Hunter

This year's most ambitious SKOAC club trip, paddling 80 miles of **Superior's most remote shoreline**, between Silver Islet and Rossport, Ontario, was **blessed by good karma**. As you may remember, we **attempted this trip last year** but seemed **cursed at every turn**. The combination of a car fire, unusually rough paddling conditions for that time of year (6th, heat (in the 90's), BUGS (swarms of flies and mosquitos), and the varied skill levels within our group conspired to end our trip before it really even began. Undeterred, we were back this year with a small, seasoned group (**Jerome Rausch, Bill Newman and I**) and were blessed with all the good karma that last year's attempt lacked.

Initially, this year's trip seemed as doomed as last year when Bill Newman's kayak **trailer blew a hub** just after dropping our boats and gear in Silver Islet. Silver Islet is a tiny cottage community without electricity or phones. It lies at the tip of the Sibley Peninsula, 25 miles from the nearest service station. Good Karma interceded at this point in the form of a **Sam Holloman**, an 84 year young local stud. Sam happens to be a retired metal shop teacher and tool maker with a fully equipped shop and a lot of time on his hands. He single-handedly **saved our trip** and then treated Jerome and I to a **cold Guinness** as Bill took off to pre-position our car in Rossport. **Dave Tamblin** of **Superior Outfitters in Rossport** **shuttled Bill** back to Silver Islet where Jerome and I had the boats packed and ready to go.

We spent our first night in **Finley Bay**, positioned to cross the temperamental Black Bay Straight first thing in the morning. Minutes after we finished pitching our tents a massive thunder storm rolled over us. Still in our wetsuits, we covered in the woods for a half hour as a **lightning struck all around us** and rain swept down in sheets. The storm was gone as fast as it came, though, and we were able to dry our gear get a **good night sleep**.

The following morning we crossed a mirror-calm Black Bay, lunched on **Porphrey Island**, then paddled on to **Number 10 Island** where we enjoyed a fog-infused sunset from our campsite at the base of an old lighthouse. Later, we built a small camp fire on the rocks at water's edge and Bill started in on his supply of cognac.

Day three found us on **Swede Island** around noon, having paddled a short six miles from Number 10 that morning. Discovering Swede (and, more importantly, its sauna and cabin) was deserted, we decided to settle in for the night and take advantage of the facilities. **As always, we left the cabin and sauna better than we found it, sweeping the floors and replenishing the wood supply.**

After the our sauna session on Swede, we set our sights on **CPR Slip**, 27 miles away, for day four. Paddling to CPR would make up for our pitiful six miles of progress the day before. More importantly, CPR Slip boasts the best sauna in the area. Again, karma intervened in the form of southwesterly winds with **3-4 foot waves that surfed us a good portion of the way to CPR**. Even with the help from Mother Superior, we arrived at CPR cold, wet and tired. Karma answered in the form of a **friendly Canuck power boater** who met us at the landing with cold bottles of **Labatts** and an invitation to head straight up to the **already-raging sauna**. Within minutes of setting foot on land we were soaking up the heat and working on our second of many power boater-supplied beers that evening.

Nursing hangovers in the hot sun we spent day five cruising calm waters on to **Woodbine Harbor**, seeing some amazing **Columnar Basalt rock formations** along the way. Fog rolled in that night and I awoke to morning mist and Newman's shouts as he landed a three pound lake trout from a nearby point.

After a **breakfast of made broiled trout** and French roast coffee, we set off in near **zero-visibility fog** on our way to **Battle Island**. Hugging the coast of Simpson Island we made our way to the point closest to Battle. With fog limiting our visibility to a few feet, we **relied on our compasses and GPS's** to make the **eerie three mile crossing to Battle Island**.

Newman caught another fish (this time a **five pounder**) as we cruised into the harbor on Battle and we enjoyed grilled trout for supper before hiking to the **Battle Island lighthouse** where we witnessed another **amazing sunset**.

Day seven was a short paddle into Rossport from Battle Island. A Westerly wind pushing down Nipigon Bay provided some waves to play in along the way. We ended up finishing the trip a couple days early, not needing any of the built-in weather days.

We highly recommend this trip to any paddler who is ready to tackle it. This portion of Superior's shore is much more exposed than Minnesota's North Shore or the Apostles, and light winds can generate sizeable waves. The channels leading from the main Lake up into Nipigon Bay create currents that also must be respected. **For the prepared paddler, though, this remote, pristine coast is the best Lake Superior has to offer.**

3. Glacier Bay National Park – July 12-27

by Sarah Ohmann

Bill Newman, Ellen Nacik and myself recently returned from a kayak trip around Glacier Bay, Alaska. If you haven't paddled Alaska before (and we hadn't), it's hard to give a sense of the place without falling into a series of cliches, and the pictures we took really didn't do it justice, either. **We were all struck by the scale of the place** and constantly had trouble estimating the size and distance of objects.

The park is basically a series of fjords that recently exposed by retreating glaciers, leaving **narrow inlets hedged by 5,000 ft.** mountains. As you paddle from the southern end of Glacier Bay north to the smaller inlets, you see less and less vegetation as you come to land which was glaciated until a few decades ago. The lack of greenery in the northern parts of the Bay give that area a barren, arctic feel.

At the end of each inlet are the **Glaciers** that give the park its name, some now terminating well back from the water, but many still tidal, or **calving directly into the water**. Some were very active while we were there, constantly **thundering and groaning** as the **ice fell away from the face of the glacier**. For the most part we were able to view our way through the **iceberg maze** near these glaciers, and catch glimpses of **harrow seals** resting on the larger bergs.

One of the more **impressive sights** was the narrow entrance to the lagoon at the foot of the **MacBride Glacier**, where **tidal rips** form and numerous **large icebergs spin in the whirlpools** formed by the current - **Bill was tempted to "run the gauntlet"** but after some closer observation **decided to go fishing instead**.

Besides the glaciers, icebergs and incredible scenery, the other thing that amazed us was the number of **critters: humpback whales, orcas, seals, sea lions, sea otters, mountain goats, leaping salmon, moose, grizzlies, and one wolf** were among the creatures we sighted. **Grizzlies** are present in **large numbers**, and the park service requires campers to use bulky but supposedly **grizzly-proof containers to store all food**. We saw a number of these humongous bears carelessly flipping large boulders with their claws and paws to get at cysters and other treats along the low tide line - very intimidating animals. **One wandered into camp one afternoon, and snuck up behind me** - Bill says it backed away once it saw me and is convinced that it caught one whiff of unwashed camper and beat a hasty retreat. Whatever the reason, it **largely ignored us** and went about vacuuming the berries off the bushes.

Ellen and I had a crash course in reading tide tables and dealing with the **20 foot tidal range**, but quickly **got the hang of it** and are glad to report that there were no tide "incidents".

The trip definitely **whetted our appetites** for more travels in southeast Alaska - I'm sure we'll go back when we've accumulated enough frequent-flier miles!

5. Two Harbors Kayak Festival Aug 1, 2, 3, 2003

by Nora Whitmore

Friday night started with the reception for all the participants. The **food was exquisite** and the **beer was free**. They had a **great band** playing and there was a feeling of anticipated excitement for the weekend to come. It was a treat to watch the many different kayaks as they arrived in the campground and meeting the different people.

Saturday dawned with the **races** scheduled for that morning. The weather was not cooperating and they delayed the races for half an hour. From SKOAC, **Ellen Nacik** was in the **"under 19 foot"** 18 mile race. **Ron Olsen** was in the 5 mile **Betty's pies** race. **I was in the "19 foot and over"** 18 mile race. For all three of us it was our **first time in a race**. SKOACers **Mark and Jean Lusche** were also at the festival with Mark competing in the 18 mile race. With the weather being bad, the **waves were high**, -especially around the first point. The race was exciting, to be sure, with **several capsizes** and some **people turning back**. Thankfully no one was hurt and all of us came back with another story to tell around the campfire. Which we did...that night...we made plans...**next year** we said as we drank our wine around the fire.

Saturdays also brought **classes, demo's, tours & talks**. The instruction and talks were fun. The tours were a fun ride with the waves playing with the tanderms. There were also many **demo's** boats for people to try. Saturday night finished up with a dinner and awards.

Sunday there was more instruction and demo's. The weather was beautiful and the bay calm. There was also the **tandem races** to be run. **Pam Schilling** and **Harry Linscheid**, from our group, entered and **won 4th place**. Congratulations Pam and Harry!

On the whole, the weekend was great! The people that put on the Festival were wonderful people and every volunteer was absolutely great! A big "Thank You!" to everyone who put their time in to bring us this weekend. Everyone had a great time! ... Next Year!!

Kayaking Skills & Safety:

1. Lifetime Fitness Triathlon

by Bill Newman

Three SKOAC members worked as volunteers to provide safety boats for the swim leg of the Lifetime Fitness Triathlon. We knew this event was a big deal with 2,000+ participants, but only during the event did we learn just how big an event it was! The 1st place prize was \$250,000, the largest purse in the history of Triathlon events! The other unusual thing about this event was that they offset the start time for the men and women professional races based on **lifetime years time difference** between the winning mens and womens racers. By doing this they made it a winner take all for men or women in the pro event. This year a woman won. She blew away all of the other women competitors, but had two men hot on her heels who were tearing up the kayak run and quickly passing the other racers. It was quite a dramatic finish on TV although we were all bummed since we were trying to see shots of our finals during the swim and they seemed to cut all the camera shots so our kayaks were excluded from all the TV footage! Really we were there! Just ask Dave and Adrienne they will vouch for me!

Our SKOAC members did not race. Myself, Adrienne Madson, and David Christenson all qualify as flabby gilymen/women and we were content to sit on our butts and watch everyone else sweat! We just did kayak safety patrol and ate a ton of free food and grabbed whatever free stuff we could get. We watched the run and bike legs of the race on TV like everyone else, but had a great view of the swim leg. In addition to our three safety kayakers there were dozens of lifeguards with rescue floats, on paddle boards, as well as several power boats. I thought this would be a big time overkill since swim racers should – well – you know be able to swim? Nothing could be farther from the truth! The pro racers zoomed by at a fast pace, far, far faster than we could swim even for one length of the pool. Then came the elite amateurs tearing along at almost as fast a pace.

Then came the citizen racers and they were huffing, puffing, and in general just barely staying afloat! We had dozens of people stop to rest on our boats, and I took one guy to shore on my boat and paddled three others to wearing power boots. Who knew that folks would sign up for a swimming race who couldn't really swim all that well? I asked the guy that I took all the way to shore on my bow if he had been a swim racer in high school, but maybe had been back in the pool for awhile. He said hell no he had never been swimmer. He was a hockey player and his buddies at work talked him into doing the swim leg of the team event. Doing safely for the half marathon we saw the worst carnage with a dozen or more folks bailing out or swimming 10 yards from one safety boat or paddle board to the next to rest.

Adrienne and I fell left out during the short swim course as we kept offering to let folks rest on our boats but almost all the swimmers made a beeline for a 20-something lifeguard with a centerfold body who was positioned for a safety stop half way between us. All the guys that stopped must have been tired as they were clinging to the paddle board that she was straddling, and there was a lot of heavy breathing. Even though Adrienne, David and I were not "hot" enough for anyone to pretend to be tired just to flirt with us, we did get the chance to help out a lot of tired swimmers. The lifeguards especially liked the fact that we could shadow a tired swimmer down much of the course and allow them to keep fixed positions on the swim. The water safety folks gave us a big thank and hoped we would help out next year. I know the three of us will definitely be back next year and we hope we can recruit another half dozen folks to join us.

SKOAC 2003 SPRING AND SUMMER CALENDAR

How to sign up for a trip:

- ❖ Check the trip rating system at the end of the newsletter to see what skills are required for a trip. Please remember to check the trip distances to see if they are within your range. If you are unsure about a requirement, please talk to the organizer about it.
- ❖ Contact the trip organizer to sign up for the trip and get more specific information about meeting time and place.
- ❖ Official club trips have "SKOAC" next to the date and generally require participants to be members of SKOAC and are covered by ACA and club guidelines. Non-official trips/events are not sanctioned by the ACA or SKOAC, and membership is not required.

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| SKOAC | Sept. 12-14 | Annual Fall Ball on Sand Island: Meet at Little Sand Bay and paddle over either Friday evening or Saturday morning. FMI, contact Adrienne Madson 952-955-1897 kayakinade@aol.com |
| SKOAC | Sept. 13 | Lake St. Croix to Prescott, WI: Level III. You must RSVP to participate! No exceptions. Contact: Lisa Dau 651-407-8201 hm or 651-398-7283 cell. |
| | Sept. 17 | Wednesday Night Skills Session: 6-8:00 PM, north beach Lake Calhoun, Level I. Open session, all levels welcome! Come and play/practice/tune-up/share/show-off/etc... any and all of those wonderful skills you've worked on this summer with fellow paddling enthusiasts. ACA certified instructors will be on hand to help out, answer questions or just plain joke around with (no, really. Bring a joke to share! We'll start out at the north beach of Lake Calhoun at 6:00 and paddle to Brownie Lake where dunking is a must if you forget to bring a joke (i.e., dress to get wet)! For more information, contact Ellen Nacik at 651-308-1150. |
| | Sept. 26-28 | Leech Lake with Jeff Kidder and the Paddle Pushers from the Brainerd area: Jeff has invited us to join his club for a weekend at Stoney Point on Leech Lake. National Park Campground with all the amenities. We can launch from three sides and do a 10-15 mile paddle on Saturday and then paddle to Bear Island on Sunday. FMI: Jeff Kidder at 218-828-0729. |
| | February 2005 | Kayak, Scuba Dive, Camp in Antarctica: Level II Cruise from Ushuia, Argentina to the Antarctic Peninsula via Quark Expedition's ship Professor Mulatanovskiy. > Join Chris, Sarah and Bill for the trip of a lifetime! Imagine yourself, > Paddling a 15-foot Prijon Double Barge, er, kayak in the company of penguins. > Diving under the Antarctic ice in tepid 28F waters. > Winter, er, austral summer camping on the ice pack. > "Feeding the fish" from the deck of a Russian ice breaker. Due to the expense of this trip and SCUBA diving qualifications necessary, we are publicizing it far in advance. FMI: Contact Chris at webmaster@skoac.org |

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITE FOR ADDITIONS: SKOAC.ORG

SKOAC Guidelines for Official Club Trips and Activities:

Individual Equipment Required for Club Trips Rated Level II or higher and Great Lakes or Ocean Paddling:

- Sea worthy Sea Kayak with flotation bags or watertight bulkheads – preferably 16 feet or greater in length
- Spray Skirt
- Personal Flotation Device (PFD) with whistle – PFD's must be worn at all times on club trips
- Paddle Float
- Bilge Pump
- Map/Chart and Compass – required on Great Lakes and Ocean Trips
- Wet Suit or Dry Suit for all Superior trips
- Waterproof Flashlight or Headlamp for night paddling

Recommended Gear and Individual Equipment for Club Trips Rated Level II or Higher and Great Lakes or Ocean Paddling:

- Water bottle and food within reach of the paddler (energy gel, power bars, etc.)
- Tow line for towing tired or injured cockpit
- First Aid kit
- VHF Radio
- Repair Kit for Kayak and other important equipment
- Sunscreen
- Sun Glasses
- Extra food to allow for waiting out bad weather
- Extra clothes, sleeping bag, tent or bivvy sack – even for day trips; in case of bad weather
- Paddle leash and/or spare paddle
- Straddle light and/or reflective tape on PFD
- Flares and signal flare – required on Great Lakes and Ocean Trips
- Way-cool dock-hat for shade or warmth
- Helmet for surfing

Skill Requirements for Club Trips:

Each club trip differs in the kayak skills that will be required for participants to have a safe and enjoyable experience. Skills required for a club trip are determined by the trip organizer and/or the TCSKA Board using the following lists as a general guide only. Participants are expected to self-assess their abilities and take responsibility for themselves on club trips. Trip organizers help organize trip logistics and coordinate in kayaking – do not expect them to act as guides on trips! Note also that the focus on the rating systems requirements is on skills rather than on the number of years of experience in kayaking. A paddler with ten years of experience would still be qualified only for SK I trips if they had not developed, for example, reliable self-rescue skills.

Level I: No previous paddling experience is required for club trips with a level I rating. Examples would include club-sponsored skill sessions on inland lakes and winter pool sessions. Level I trips and skill sessions will be used to help new paddlers develop the necessary skills to participate in more advanced trips. Level I trips will be limited to sheltered waters and short distances with few significant hazards.

Level II: Level II trips may include less sheltered open water paddles and longer distances. Participants are expected to have a working knowledge of kayak paddle strokes and braces. They also must be able to demonstrate a self-rescue technique such as a paddle-float rescue and have experience using at least one assisted rescue such as a T-rescue or rafting-up. A trip organizer may require a demonstration of both a self-rescue and assisted-rescue before allowing a paddler to come on a Level II or higher rated trip. Conditions are also expected to have a working knowledge of basic navigational skills such as using a chart and compass, and basic knowledge of the effects of weather on paddling conditions and how to obtain marine forecasts prior to starting a trip. It is assumed that participants can maintain a reasonable pace for trips of up to ten miles per day in good weather.

Level III: Level III trips may include open water paddling in challenging conditions and longer trip distances. On Level III trips, participants should have well developed paddle strokes and bracing skills. Participants should not only have good high and low bracing skills, but should be working on a strong sculling brace and learning to Eskimo roll. Paddlers should be comfortable paddling in higher winds (over 15 knots) and traveling in waves of 2-3 feet. They should be comfortable launching and landing in moderate surf when breaking waves are 3 feet or less. Participants in Level III trips should have a good working knowledge of navigation including strong piloting and dead reckoning skills. On Level III trips participants should have the endurance to paddle up to 20 miles per day in good weather with a fast, efficient forward paddle stroke.

Level IV: Level IV trips may include open water paddling in very challenging conditions over long distances. Participants should have very strong paddling and bracing skills, be comfortable paddling in rough conditions (waves 4 feet or greater and winds up to 30 knots), have mastered group and self-rescue techniques, developed a reliable Eskimo roll (preferably on both sides), Participants should also be comfortable with landing in larger surf with 3-6 foot waves. As a rule, trip organizers would avoid setting out to paddle in the above conditions, but for example, a later-Fall trip on Lake Superior might be rated a Level III-IV rather than a Level III in recognition of the greater chance of running into sudden Fall storms.