

Trip Report
May 29-May 31, 2209
Cedar Creek, Virginia and Cacapon River, West Virginia

Two states in two days may seem too demanding for some, but Dick Swomley stepped-up to save what had been a club scheduled North Branch of the Potomac River dam release trip that failed due to a release date error. Designated and disappointed leader Christine Brubaker was desperate to find new water; while Dick with his Maryland paddling club background was able to redirect our Lancaster Canoe Club members to new and exciting waters that must be revisited. Thanks, Dick!

Bud Buri, Christine Brubaker and Dick Swomley banded together and agreed to paddle and camp as planned. In less time by one hour we were in Strasburg, Virginia, Route 81 exit 298, rather than Barnum, West Virginia, and pleased upon our arrival to Cedar Creek, water that feeds into the Shenandoah River. We camped at Elizabeth Furnace, George Washington National Forest campground. The shuttle was easy since the take-out was back in Strasburg. The put-in was 10.5 miles upstream at the Rt 628 bridge, off Rt 55 north of town. Joining us were three other MD paddlers who knew Dick and were open boaters.

The class 2 Cedar Creek waters without rafters made Chris so cheerful that she would not shut-up about how pleased she was with the real water and scenery! (She comes from a camper canoe background before she bought a whitewater kayak and wants always to be reminded that she can be a happy kid again!) One of MD paddlers was also a camper and a Boy Scout who claims he camped each New Year's Eve in Panther Cave, a limestone rock outcropping, with his troop. (He must have also been happy kid too.) Now he is a technical businessman and company owner who wants to relax paddling. (Bud has pictures to prove the cave exits.)

That night we ate at a local diner. Chris decided to attend a local hymn sing and revival while Bud and Dick returned to the campground and ended-up talking to the local ranger. The late night storm with loud thunder and lightening made the mountains echo but the morning was sunny and bright.

Next morning we broke camp and headed to West Virginia, the Cacapon River's lower section, for 8 miles of paddling. We drove Rt 81 to Rt 50 and then Rt 127. Bridge work forced us to use the adjacent North River at Gaston Road for the put-in. We shuttled to the public access via Cold Cabin Road, opposite Pine Creek Road, on Route 127. Cold Cabin Road was a 2.8 mile but seemingly longer gravel road descent to the river. The challenging ledges we paddled made up for the otherwise flat water experience in this section of the river. Dick suggested we do the upper section in the future where the ledges are even more challenging. Maybe!?! Again the scenery and possibilities for bank camping whetted our appetite for a future 2 day trip. Just before the take-out we paddled under a new high bridge that astounded us because it was private! A rural development called The Crossings, a 200 lot gated community, accounts for the bridge. Seeing is

believing what rural development looks like as Washington D.C. retirees move into West Virginia.

All in all, the Lancaster Canoe Club would do well to consider more trips to these areas for class 2-3 paddling. Chris has photocopied many suggested new waterways thanks to the advice she sought from the MD paddlers. These are now in the club library files.

We have much to learn from other paddlers. I hope we will continue to contact other clubs and embrace relocated Lancaster County residents who can bring to our club good advice for new waters to paddle. Also, trip leadership can be made easier if we share the responsibilities for such and keep accurate past trip records.

Christine Brubaker
Ex-officio Trip Leader