

# The Chesapeake Paddler



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## Paddling Virginia's pristine Barrier Islands



*Looking across Cape Charles Inlet from Smith Island at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. The area is part of Virginia's Barrier Islands with miles of deserted Atlantic beaches and inland bays for numerous paddling opportunities.*

### By Bill Upton

Virginia's Barrier Islands contain a beautiful mix of paddling trips including protected marshes, open water crossings and deserted Atlantic beaches. Using [Kiptopeake State Park](#) as a basecamp there are several trip opportunities if the wind and weather cooperate. For me, it took two visits and dodging the remains of three tropical storms to get in trips to Wreck, Mockhorn and Smith Islands.

On the first visit I managed to get in a trip to Wreck Island. The trip description on the [Virginia Water Trails](#) site is a good guide but make sure you have charts and a GPS, too. Note that the mileage listed, eight miles, is one way. [Wreck Island](#) is closed in the summer but generally open from September 1 to April 14.

The trip starts with a launch from Oyster, VA, about 15

minutes north of Kiptopeake State Park. Oyster has a dedicated kayak launch area with a dock, concrete ramp and a small beach (click [here](#) for photos and maps).

Currents can be strong so timing the trip to ride out the ebb and return on the flood is best. The first three miles through Sand Shoal Channel are protected but things start to open up once past the northern tip of Mockhorn Island with Cobb Bay to the north and a large channel between Mockhorn and Man and Boy marsh to the south.

Past Mockhorn, and the last of three green channel markers, it's hard to distinguish between Wreck Island and Cobb Island in the distance. Wreck Island is more to the south and east. Channel marker #3 listed in the Water Trail description looks like it ended up on the

[See Barrier Islands on page six](#)

## From the CPA Coordinator

# Looking back on 2020 and ahead to 2021

This is the last newsletter of the year so a good time to reflect on the events of the past season. There were several CPA events that were cancelled due to the virus along with many active members missing from the scene.



Bill Smith

Some of the cancelled events are the backbone of CPA's nearly thirty-year history along with the many day trips and campers that did not happen this year. So far 2021 is not looking much better but we can all hope for a miracle in the next few months. I do believe that paddling is as safe as it gets as far as avoiding close contact with others and being outside reduces the risk considerably if everyone does their part.

Not all was doom and gloom since a few of the piracies did function along with limited day trips and campers at a lesser capacity. The Pirates of Arundell, Pirates of Potomac and Pirates of the North held sessions with limited participation. I attended several of the Pirates of Arundell paddles which usually drew about ten members each week who were able to paddle together as safely as possible.

Prior to the quarantine the cold-water workshop was held in January and SK 101 was held in March but that was the last of the full participation workshops. This year we will probably see more virtual training events like the kayak camper chaired by Suzanne Farace and Maxine Meade.

This year did see an uptick in new paddlers and old paddlers reappearing since kayaking is something you can do and still socially connect with less fear of contamination. I just hope we do not see an increase in cold water mishaps since beginner paddlers are more likely to take a chance without the proper gear.

After 2021 rolls around and the holidays are behind us it will be time to think about the 2021 season. I

am hoping we will get a few members to step up and lead a few trips this year. I am going to commit to leading at least five trips this coming season. I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and looking forward to next year.

### Thoughts on the KIP Series

*After reading my September coordinators column, Marshall Woodruff sent his thoughts on the KIP paddles and one of his post-Kip speeches and is printed below. Marshall's passion for the sport and the KIP series is obvious. Thanks, Marshall, for your input.*

First of all the program wouldn't be as successful as it is without the 'Old KIPPERS,' those paddlers who come back year after year to be mentors for the new paddlers.

When we started in 2006, KIP was just a paddle around Kent Island with a modest plan: meet once a month and increase distance. There was a lot of trepidation from the CPA officials. No one had ever done this, and they were afraid of the liability. But we did it anyway with a small group of good paddlers.

By the end of September when we had paddled around Kent Island, 34 miles, a plan came to light. Let's do it next year and next year and next year! Who knew? Each year more people came out and those that paddled before

[See KIP on page three](#)



*Marshall Woodruff has led the popular KIP series since starting it in 2006.*



## [KIP, from page two](#)

helped out with the new paddlers, ergo mentors.

And each year things became more and more refined in what we were doing. It became easier because the Old KIPPERS, those who kept coming back, offered more and more suggestions. As we got to know the waters of the Chesapeake Bay, weather conditions, tides, and the different degrees of paddling skills, we adapted.

The one thing that never changed was safety, the keystone of CPA. And the other, we never said “no” to a paddler. Their only obligation was a commitment to come once a month, miss two and you are out.

At the end of a KIP series, the last paddle, we always have a dinner and the awarding of the KIP patch and a speech. This is one I wrote and I think it reflects all of our feelings about the KIP series:

“First of all, congratulations to both the New and Old KIPPERS, what a great year and what a great paddle we have had. And to the Cabana people for giving up a Saturday to help out, thank you! I want to take this time to really thank the Old KIPPERS for a great job this year and the previous years. I think each year we step up a



*Members of a past “Scenic Group,” who travel at a more leisurely pace, celebrate completing the 34-mile trip around Kent Island with Marshall, center.*

little higher in our sport. I want to share with you a little glimpse of how I feel about our series.

“It is a funny relationship we have, some of us have become closer and closer, others we just know. But the bonding we have is something you rarely see, a trust, a respect and a camaraderie that not many people have.

“We have been together not just in years but in experiences that not many go through. Out of this we have developed a trust, not just a trust but proven that we have put our lives in each other’s hands. That is what we have.

“We may not know a lot about each other in private life, but I can look at the Old KIPPERS and I would go anywhere with them and we have proven that. We look out for each other, we trust each other, we have grown together and can depend on one another. We are bonded together through our experiences and respect for each other, again not many people can say that.

“I went to the Arctic with Dave Isbell, a KIPPER. We don’t talk a lot, even on our trip, but there was this unspoken relationship we have. We were high up on the food chain for three weeks, just the two of us. Every day we counted on each other to be there for the other. This is how I feel about the Old KIPPERS.



*Each KIP paddle starts with a briefing from Marshall and co-leader Jim Zawlocki to set the goals for the day.*

[See KIP on page four](#)

## KIP, from page three

“Each year, for the past fourteen years, we have our Rookies. Those that stuck through our event they have learned so many things. We try to expose them to as many conditions as we can find and to push them out of their comfort zone as much as one wants. With what they learn, confidence begins. Trust in your boat, paddling, experience and the people you are with.

“The one constant thread we experience is a bond. It may come the very first paddle, maybe the middle or the end paddle. But after this bond we see things differently in kayaking. A new respect for each other, a new growth in our sport and what we are learning.

“We may not all go into the wilderness for adventure, but we do go on local paddles and we have seen nature throw things at us. How we handle it reflects on what we have been exposed to. We go on these trips and when we see a fellow KIPPER, there is a smile and a knowing what we have been through to be one. And a feeling that we can count on each other

“As the years went by we learned more things to make the series better and add them to it. In fact, we all love paddling so much we got into a peer winter paddling, meeting once a month for a simple enjoyable paddle, the KIPBURRRZ paddles.

“One big thing that happened that we were not expecting. By coming back year after year you grow, build confidence, leadership skills and all of a sudden CPA had new trip leaders! Who knew? Don’t get me wrong, not everyone wants to be a trip leader, but one thing I



*The Chesapeake Bay Bridge is a familiar landmark during practice paddles and the final trip around Kent island.*

guarantee is you become a better, more aware paddler.

“I never knew what KIP would turn into, it just did. I was more of a solo paddler and certainly not a real joiner of things. I always depended on one person, myself, selfish in that way. But KIP did teach me a lot.

“I found new friends, challenges and sure enough grew in skills. Enough to go to Glacier Bay, Alaska and do a two-week solo trip into the wilderness. It was a great trip. I learned a lot and sure enough used the skills I have learned.

“A couple of years later I asked Dave Isbell if he wanted to go to the Arctic and do a paddle, he said yes. We went to Pond Inlet, Canada, about 400 miles south of the North Pole. We landed and paddled out for three weeks into the wilderness, what a paddle!

“I want to thank all the paddlers I have met through KIP. You have brought me so much, I am so lucky. The Old KIPPERS mean so much to me, without you, we wouldn’t have the series, I wouldn’t have grown and enjoyed life, they were always there for me.

“I have had three cancers, head and neck cancer, Lymphoma stage 4 and kidney cancer, a new rotator cuff, feeding tube and a tracheostomy. During these paddles they have always been there, when I couldn’t make the paddle they stepped forward to lead.

[See KIP on page five](#)

*The KIP patch is worn with pride by many CPA members who complete the KIP series, including a 34-mile circumnavigation of Kent Island.*





[KIP, from page four](#)

“Recovery was easier for me when I paddled they were there to shepherd me. I want to thank Jim Zawlocki who stepped up to lead the KIP series when I couldn’t, not an easy job. We had our ups and downs, but his spirit is always there.

“Out of these adventures and the KIP series one doesn’t need to do them to prove anything, it is not for everyone. What I have found from a lot of the paddlers that did the KIP series is they went back to paddling they liked, whether it was soft paddling going up creeks, rivers, bays or oceans. It doesn’t matter, they went back with more skills, confidence and safety to enjoy our sport.

“That’s it, just some thoughts, Marshall.”



*Building friendships through shared paddling experiences, fostering education and coming away with a lasting sense of accomplishment are the hallmarks of the KIP series.*

## Remembering David Mood



*Dave, the gentleman in the black jacket and cap, at a Pier 7 Halloween party.*

David Mood recently passed away. David was a CPA member before there were piracies, dating to the mid 1990s. He earned his nickname of “Dave the Wave” while out hurricane paddling with CPA in Newport News, Virginia.

An ocean-going trawler was heading back into harbor at the end of the hurricane. As it motored past the group Dave jumped on the stern wake and rode it all the way back with the trawler to the launch site, a couple of miles away. Dave paddled regularly with the Pirates of Pier 7.

**- Greg Welker**

## [Barrier Islands, from page one](#)

beach of Man and Boy marsh.

Once at Man and Boy marsh, at about six miles, it's a two-mile open water crossing to Wreck Island. This would not be an advisable crossing in heavier winds. Cobb Bay is a large expanse of water to the north and the channel between Wreck Island and Man and Boy marsh opens up to another large body of water, South Bay, to the south.

The landing on the bay side of Wreck Island is smooth sand and few oyster shells. Sand Shoal inlet right off the point was calm but there was a lot of surf about a quarter mile offshore, courtesy of Hurricane Paulette. Around the point there's nothing but deserted Atlantic beach for miles. My only company was a bald eagle resting on the sand.

After just a couple hours of incoming tide, the landscape on the return trip is markedly different. Crossing back from Wreck to Man and Boy marsh, pay close attention to your GPS and chart because it is easy to bear left into a channel between the marsh and Mockhorn Island instead of heading to the main Sand Shoal channel farther north.

Once back in Sand Shoal channel it's easy to retrace your steps to Oyster. If you see white plastic pipes stay offshore because they mark shallow oyster reefs (somebody is going to have some of my boat's gel-coat in their half-shells).

The remains of Tropical Storm Sally moved in the next



*Military towers from WWII on Mockhorn Island make a good destination from the launch at Wise Point.*

day so no more trips were possible on that visit. Besides a large rainstorm, high winds made Magothy Bay look like a washing machine. A couple weeks later I was able to return to get in two paddles to Mockhorn Island and Smith Island. This second visit, I had a rare light and variable wind both days.

Both trips start at the launch at Wise Point, just a few miles south of the park and part of the [Eastern Shore of Virginia Wildlife Refuge](#) near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. You can launch for free at a small area for kayaks (it's muddy) or pay \$10 to use the boat launch area.

Going north through the channel from the launch, after 1.5 miles you reach Skidmore Island. From Skidmore, it's a 1.25-mile crossing to the tip of Mockhorn Island. From there, you can follow the shore another four miles to two WWII towers.

Along the way, there's a stop at the remains of a former



*The decommissioned Cape Charles Lighthouse on Smith Island that is now owned by The Nature Conservancy.*

[See Barrier Islands on page seven](#)

## [Barrier Islands](#) from page six



*Pristine Atlantic beaches await on Wreck Island and other Barrier Islands on Virginia's Eastern Shore.*

hunting lodge. You can land on the beach near it at max high tide, but at any other time it's a maze of rocks and concrete. Also, just before the towers there is a gut that gets you into the interior of Mockhorn Island for exploration.

The next day, the wind was still calm so it was off to Smith Island. From Wise Point it's about 1.75 miles across Magothy Bay to the decommissioned Cape Charles lighthouse.

At high tide, you can land on a small beach near the light but the island's owners, the Nature Conservancy, ask that you stay on the shoreline to protect nesting birds on the island (the largest group of Oystercatchers I've ever seen were in the shallows just offshore).

Just north of a pair of old pilings near the lighthouse there's a small gut that winds back into the marsh near the lighthouse and the old WWII towers. From the lighthouse it's about 1.25 miles south to Cape Charles at the southern tip of Smith island.

Landing on the bay side of the point it was a short walk to another stretch of deserted Atlantic beach. There were small spilling waves onto a long flat beach, perfect for surfing and surf landings.

On the return trip I followed the shore back up to the lighthouse and then across to Skidmore Island. Magothy Bay is surprisingly shallow, just a couple hours after high tide I was paddling in about 10 inches of water.

All in all, the Barrier Islands are a magical place to paddle but subject to frequent strong winds and large stretches of open water. If you are there in the fall and the winds are bad, bring your binoculars and stop by the [Hawk Watch](#) at the park to check out migrating raptors.

The watch is staffed from Sept 1 to Nov 30 and there's plenty of room for social distancing. Almost 200 kestrels, a large kettle of broad wings and numerous other birds went by on the day I was there.

Photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ahEV9gSdAQZ7XoWt8>



*If the winds are high, watching migrating raptors is an option during the fall at Kiptopeake State Park.*



# Annual Meeting Zooms along



*Like many other organizations in the age of COVID-19, the CPA Annual Meeting took place via ZOOM.*

## By Ralph Heimlich

2020 was a challenging year for CPA because of the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in February, which produced much uncertainty about which activities would be permitted and whether paddling events would be safe for participants and organizers.

Many of our signature events (SK102, Fall Out of Your Boat/Gear Day, Annual Meeting, and Holiday Party) were cancelled, while regular paddling trips and events, including some car camping trips, were safely conducted under the guidance issued by CPA early in the year.

Twenty members signed in to the CPA Virtual Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 1 via our new ZOOM account ([ZOOM@CPAKAYAKER.COM](mailto:ZOOM@CPAKAYAKER.COM)). We conducted our normal Annual Meeting business, including recognition of leaders and organizers of events during the year, and the financial, membership, and participation reports.

The results of the electronic voting were announced. Fifty-four votes confirmed the reelection of the existing slate of Officers and Steering Committee members for the 2020-21 season. Changes to the by-laws were approved by a wide margin.

New discussion included cancellation of the Holiday Party for 2020, cancellation of any rolling pool sessions due to pool closures, and the Planning Meeting in February will be dependent on progress in controlling the pandemic.

There was discussion of using our new ZOOM account to hold virtual training for kayaking tips, SK203 Trip Leader Training, Navigation classes, and another Kayak Camping equipment training.

The consolidated Annual Report containing the Annual Meeting minutes and all reports is on the CPA website at <https://www.cpakayaker.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CPA-Annual-Report-2020.pdf>



# CPA Officers ready to serve for 2021

Each year CPA members elect the Officers and Steering Committee members who help keep CPA a leading resource for the sea kayaking community. Behind the scenes of CPA trips, training and other

events, these officers, pirate captains, event coordinators and volunteers make it all possible. Here are the CPA Officers and Steering Committee members for 2021:



*Bill Smith  
Coordinator*



*Sue Stevens  
Secretary*



*Rich Stevens  
Treasurer*



*Lisa Arrasmith  
Steering Committee*



*Beth Boyd  
Steering Committee*



*Ralph Heimlich  
Steering Committee*



*Paula Hubbard  
Steering Committee*



*Katherine Neale  
Steering Committee*



*Shelly Wiechelt  
Steering Committee*

# Help preserve water access in Anne Arundel County

By Lisa Arrasmith

Attention Anne Arundel County residents! We have another opportunity for public water access input in the Anne Arundel County Plan2040 General Development Plan (GDP) process.

Please email our elected officials ASAP. Details below. The county released an amended draft Plan2040 GDP. Although we made some progress, there is still great room for improvement.

Here's the county GDP website if you want to read hundreds of pages for yourself: [https://](https://www.aacounty.org/departments/planning-and-zoning/long-range-planning/general-development-plan/)

[www.aacounty.org/departments/planning-and-zoning/long-range-planning/general-development-plan/](https://www.aacounty.org/departments/planning-and-zoning/long-range-planning/general-development-plan/)

As part of the [Public Water Access Committee](#), we sent a letter to Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman outlining our suggestions for more water access for the public in the proposed GDP. Click [here](#) for the full letter.

I've summarized our comments and outlined what is good and bad in the proposed General Development Plan below and made suggestions for action:

*First*, progress. The amended Plan2040 draft now sets public water access as a priority – on page 187 of the background material contained in Volume 2 of Plan2040.

**Public water access must instead be a strong goal set out in the main GDP instead of hiding it in the end of the background material.**

*Second*, more progress. The amended Plan2040 still misclassifies most waterfront public parks in the "Conservation" Land Use category.

However, this draft modifies the definition of "Conservation" to specify that facilities, including public water access, *may* be acceptable in the Conservation



*Help preserve public water access in Anne Arundel County, such as Beverly Triton Park, by sending in your comments to the County's proposed General Development Plan.*

Land Use category. This is an improved misclassification, but still a misclassification.

The fact that the park obstructionists are striving to have all the waterfront parks classified as "Conservation" tells us that "Conservation" will be used as a tool to block public water access.

**Our waterfront public parks must be placed in the "Public Use" Land Use classification.**

*Third*, no progress. The amended Plan2040 still includes a "Peninsula Privilege" that grants special traffic and development protections to the most affluent residents of the county. Our waterfront public parks are mostly on peninsulas. The Peninsula Privilege will be used to block water access improvements and whittle away at existing public water access.

**The Peninsula Privilege must be eliminated and protections against traffic and development deployed fairly and equitably across the entire county.**

*Fourth*, no progress. The amended draft Plan2040 lacks funding for public water access. Hundreds of thousands of public dollars are being used for the improvement of private community beaches instead of for public benefit.

[See Access on page eleven](#)

## [Access, from page ten](#)

### **Public money must be used for public water access rather than improving private community beaches.**

The deadline for comments to the Planning and Zoning office was November 15, 2020. However, the inboxes of our elected officials never close and your comments are critical.

#### **Please send your comments ASAP to:**

Official GDP comment address: [Plan2040@aacounty.org](mailto:Plan2040@aacounty.org)

County Executive Steuart Pittman:  
[expitt99@aacounty.org](mailto:expitt99@aacounty.org)

Rec Advisory Board Chair Rudy Brown:  
[TheRaven52@verizon.net](mailto:TheRaven52@verizon.net)

Rec Advisory Board Member Mike Lofton:  
[MSL49@aol.com](mailto:MSL49@aol.com)

Please also send your comments to the Anne Arundel County Council members:

District 1 Councilwoman Sarah Lacey:  
[slacey@aacounty.org](mailto:slacey@aacounty.org)

District 2 Councilwoman Allison Pickard:  
[allison.pickard@aacounty.org](mailto:allison.pickard@aacounty.org)

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District 7 Councilwoman Jessica Haire:  
[Jessica.Haire@aacounty.org](mailto:Jessica.Haire@aacounty.org)

Remember to include your full name and snail mail address so they know you are a real person and a real constituent.

If we stick together, if we act for the public, we will all get to the water together. It's all of us or none of us.

## For Sale



**Current Designs Suka** sea kayak in fiberglass, yellow over white, with skeg. 16'6", 46 pounds, Greenland style, ideal for smaller paddler. Paddled 6 times. Bought new and always basement / garage kept.

The Suka is a retired Current Designs model. Suka specs and photos are on the Current Design website: <https://www.cdkayak.com/Kayaks.aspx?id=46>

Suka reviews on paddling.com: <https://paddling.com/gear/current-designs-suka-1-kayak/#reviews>

\$2800 (cash only). Located in Gambrills MD. Pick up only. Text or call 410-991-4386.



# The Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.

*The mission of the Chesapeake Paddlers Association is to provide a way for people to enjoy sea kayaking within the Chesapeake Bay area and to promote safe sea kayaking practices through educating the local sea kayaking community and the interested public.*

[www.cpakayaker.com](http://www.cpakayaker.com)

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VACANT — Please consider volunteering

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## CLASSIFIEDS

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We accept display advertising that relates to the interest of our readers.  
Monthly rates are as follows:

size	cost	dimensions (col)
1/8 page	\$20	2.4" x 3.5" (1)
1/4 page	\$32	4.9" x 4.7" (2)
1/2 page	\$50	7.5" x 4.7" (3)
Full page	\$80	7.5" x 9.75" (3)

A 5% discount will be given for ads supplied as electronic files in acceptable formats (i.e., .tif, .gif, .jpeg, bit-map). Email [news\\_editor@cpakayaker.com](mailto:news_editor@cpakayaker.com) for more information and for a 10-month discount.

Public service announcements and personal ads to sell kayaks/ accessories are printed at no charge; non-members pay \$10 for three months. Ads dated three months before the date of this issue will be pulled unless a new request is received by the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. And if it has sold... please tell us!

## THE CHESAPEAKE PADDLER

The Chesapeake Paddler is published 10 times a year, with combination issues in Nov/Dec and Jan/Feb. The deadline for submitting copy is the 15th of the preceding month. Articles and illustrations (graphics, photos) should be submitted as separate attachments to: [news\\_editor@cpakayaker.com](mailto:news_editor@cpakayaker.com)

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# Upcoming CPA events

The screenshot shows the Meetup profile for the Chesapeake Paddlers Association. The 'Events' tab in the navigation menu is highlighted with a red circle. The page includes a header with the Meetup logo, a group photo of a lake with a tree, and a sidebar with group details. The main content area features a 'What we're about' section and an 'Upcoming events (5)' section.

CPA is currently scheduling some Club activities. Due to the rapidly changing environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, members should refer to the [CPA Meetup page](#) for the latest event information.

Also, all participants should read the [CPA COVID-19 event guidelines](#) before participating in any Club activity.

## The Chesapeake Paddler

Chesapeake Paddlers Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 341

Greenbelt, MD 20768-0341

### ATTENTION CPA MEMBERS!

EFFECTIVE January 2021, all Paddler newsletters will be sent via email with a link to the current monthly issue and no printed copies will be mailed to members.

Please be sure to keep your email address current to keep receiving the Paddler newsletter by contacting the CPA Secretary: [membership@cpakayaker.com](mailto:membership@cpakayaker.com).