

Paddler Profile: Bill Smith

by Bob Browning

Lives in: Severna Park, MD

Real job: Construction Manager for RE Construction

Do you regularly attend a Piracy? Pirates of Arundel

Number of years paddling? Sea Kayaking 9 years

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? I was always a canoer but, I was invited to join some friends on a November Sea Kayaking trip to the La Chennault Islands in the upper peninsula of Michigan. I later moved to Florida and became a regular kayaker with two different paddle clubs.

What boat do you paddle? Valley Nordkapp 18'-0 foot Kevlar layup, red over white

Rudder or skeg? Neither, the Nordkapp's stern acts as a skeg

Type paddle used? Greenland

Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking? I started canoeing over 50 years ago with my dad and brother. In 1985 I took lessons and began 20 plus years of white water canoeing.

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities? I like to hike and camp, especially canoe camping. I used to cross country ski a lot until I moved to Florida

How often on average do you paddle between May and October? Normally once or twice a week, but this summer has been a challenge due to my work schedule.

Do any winter paddling? Yes, I try to get out about once a month

Favorite local paddling location? Eastern Neck Island, Kent Island and a few areas in the bay south of Annapolis. I like areas that are not so crowded and have nice sand beaches to stop on.

Favorite CPA trip you've ever been on and why? I like the fall Chickahominy trip and the KIPP paddles. The KIPP paddles are great for anyone who wants to increase their skill level. The KIPP paddlers are a dedicated group with a great following.

Coolest paddling trip you've ever been on anywhere and why? I have two stand out trips-both are in Canada. The Sand River on the north shore of Lake Superior in Lake Superior Provincial Park near Wawa, Ontario. This is a physically challenging trip with 29 portages and many waterfalls and rapids-including Lady Evelyn Falls, the second highest waterfall in Ontario. The scenery was awesome and so was the wildlife with black bears and moose. We started this trip the last week of September and it was already getting very cold at night.

The other trip was the Rivera Bonaventure in Quebec. We started this trip in May which is too early to be that far north; the mountain was still covered with patches of snow and there were several frozen waterfalls. The river starts from the top of the Chick choc Mountains on the Gaspé Peninsula and ends in the Atlantic Ocean. The river is very clean and fast running. We were traveling at 7 mph without paddling. This mountain has the highest moose population in Quebec so we observed several.



Bill Smith

photo by Vickie Smith

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why? My scariest paddle adventure was on the Stoney River in Western PA-my first time down the river. I was fairly new to White water canoeing and decided to join a group on the Stoney. The Stoney has about 17 rapids in 5 miles with some right after the other-not much break in between. This was my first attempt in a solo canoe so my skill level was low. I think I swam every rapid, got sucked into many holes and was trashed from one end to the other. I was wearing a dry-top but not enough underneath for the constant dunking. By the end of the day I was cold, tired and just plain wrecked. I paddled that river several times since; this was our training river when I went for my ACA instructor certificate so I learned to master it but would still have vivid memories from my first time down.

Future bucket list trips: Boundary Waters, Isle Royale and Alaska

Three things you like most about paddling? I like paddling because it gives me stress relief, a chance to play in the water, and good companionship. Paddlers are always great company

What do you like about CPA? It's a good way to hook up with other paddlers as paddle partners, people with similar interests, and mentors to improve your skill level. CPA has a lot of good people

One unusual, non-paddling thing other people find interesting about you?: I drove to Alaska with my wife and two daughters, this was a 12,200 mile trip over 5 ½ weeks. My daughters were 12 and 4 years old at the time. ☺

We would like to know about you! Contact Bob Browning if you are interested in a being featured in the Paddler Profile or if you know of someone else he can contact. Contact Bob at: BBBrowning43@verizon.net