

Paddler Profile: Meet Laura Scharle

Lives in: Ocean Pines, MD

Real job: Interpretive Programs Manager for Delaware State Parks, Owner/Founder of Scharle Outdoor Rec Consulting, LLC

Do you regularly attend a CPA Piracy? No, most trips are a pretty far drive for me.

Number of years paddling? 16

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? I paddled recreational kayaks for a few years and wanted to start going longer distances.

What boat(s) do you paddle? 14' Perception Solé and a 12' Necky Looksha

Rudder or skeg? Rudder, but I'm curious about skegs!

Type of paddle used? I have nothing fancy - love my Bending Branches paddle with padded grips.

Do you do any other paddling than sea kayaking? I sometimes lead guided trips for Delaware State Parks on sit-on-top kayaks, and we have a sit-on-top tandem now to take my son out, but when it's just me, I only paddle my Perception Solé.

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities? My family and I hike, camp, and fish, but kayaking is always my first choice for an outdoor activity!

How often do you paddle between May and October? Weekly on average, wish I had time to go more!

Do any winter paddling? I soooo want to! I have been on the fence about purchasing a dry suit. But I have no friends down here that would go with me in the winter (safely) and I'm not sure I'm ready to paddle alone. My husband has a dry suit and kayak-fishes in the winter, but he never wants to paddle where I want to! :)

Favorite local paddling location? All over Delmarva. I have a paddling blog and a goal to paddle around the whole peninsula (www.LauraPaddlesDelmarva.com). I also write and do marketing for www.VirginiaWaterTrails.org

Favorite CPA trip you've ever been on and why? I haven't been able to make a trip yet!

Coolest paddling trip you've ever been on anywhere and why? Kayak camping at Mockhorn Island really stands out, as well as camping at Saxis WMA. The stretch between Hacks Neck and Broadway Landing (just south of Onancock) was pretty impressive with tons of dolphin sightings and sand bars to explore.

Scariest/most dangerous paddling trip/incident and why? I got stuck in the mud at low tide behind Metompkin Island back in 2015 when I was 7 weeks pregnant. I was alone and it was terrifying. It was the only time I considered using my VHF radio to call the Coast Guard. Somehow I shimmied across the mud for some distance before making it into deeper water.

Bucket list trips? Tangier and Smith Islands, Norway, a flatwater canyon out west, circumnavigating Fisherman Island (will likely do this with hubby soon), kayak-camping the coast of Georgia, and some urban paddling (maybe NYC?)

Three things you like most about paddling? It's the only thing I truly do for me. It keeps me grounded. I love seeing landscapes that hikers and boaters will never see. It's an awesome family activity, as we've been taking my son kayaking since he was 2!

What do you like about CPA? I've only attended the SK101 program back in April. Great experience, looking forward to more!

What other paddling clubs/groups do you belong to? None. I'm an ACA L1 instructor, but that's not really a club.

One unusual non-paddling thing we'd be surprised to know about you? I fire an 1894 Lyle gun at work. It's basically a small line-throwing cannon. It's the only piece of artillery designed to save lives, rather than take them. I am a certified black powder safety officer, trained by the National Park Service.

