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and Belted Kingfishers. The slider turtles sunning on the fallen logs didn't want to budge until the last second, so they make great photo opportunities if you drift quietly. There were lots of Cliff Swallows swirling around their mud nests plastered on the metal bridge girders under the Route 29 bridge. We also heard an invisible owl practice his evening call and we had to smile because we were quieter than the owl. There was no sign of the resident Bald Eagle pair; the nest site is still hidden on top of a nearby ridge which we spotted this spring. Our new paddlers wanted to explore more—forgetting we still had to paddle the same distance back! Finally, at a one last rocky outcrop where the lake narrows, the wind picked up and the clouds started to gather, so we turned around to explore the opposite side.

By trips end, we discovered we had covered 10 miles of quiet paddling, with at least 3 kayaks full of floating bottles and cans, one large black plastic pot, carefully balanced for the whole trip back, one canning jar complete with lid, several misplaced fishing lures and nylon fishing line found hanging in low tree limbs, one nice large heron feather, some newly sore shoulder muscles, and several more new friends.



Rocky Gorge Quiet Waters Photo by Rich Stevens



Kurt Rodowsky Photo by Ralph Heimlich

Passing the canoe dock, we beheld Bela Mariassy, who had been late getting his permit and lugged his kayak down the road on his shoulder from the locked gate. Makes up for his automotive feat at Assateague. Now six, we paddled leisurely down, checking out the wildlife and enjoying shade.

One mishap. As I tried to "land" a stray inch worm on a branch, Robert Golden, surprised by my sudden deceleration, half-rolled his new Solstice and baptized his boat in earnest. We had fun deploying our 3-boat X rescue and Robert enjoyed the cooling off. After a short wade-ashore lunch (yes Dale, same one we used a week earlier), we headed back to the landing for a nice, easy day.

We saw Paw Paws fruiting on the bank, eagle, osprey, kingfisher, spotted sandpiper, plop of a snoozing otter, turtles, wild turkey (at the landing) and spotted an otter on the road down to the landing as I shuttle Bela back to his car.

Mid-Pax Day Paddle

By Ralph Heimlich

Five of us (Robert Golden, Mimi Pollow, Suzanne Farace, Kurt Rodowsky and I) assembled at the Queen Anne Canoe Launch, near the Patuxent 4H Center, for a shady paddle on an atypically mild July 21. I had originally scheduled this for a kayak kamper, intending to paddle down to the Selby Landing paddle-in site and then down to Magruder's Landing for a take out on Sunday, but I wasn't quick enough getting campsite reservations [Note: the Kamper is on for August 24-26, which will be typically hot, hazy and humid. See http://www.cpakayaker.com/events.html?event_id=508] Launching from the floating canoe dock is a bit different, but we all made it afloat without incident. We paddled upstream, against a weak current to see how the Pax RoughNecks had cleared out the snags and blowdowns. We managed about half a mile, but then the water got a bit "thin", so we turned around for the somewhat more challenging downstream slalom.



Our wade-in lunch spot Photo by Ralph Heimlich