

Paddler Profile: Rich Stevens

Lives in: Ellicott City, MD, moving from Arlington, VA.

Real job: Retired self-employed restaurant service tech.

Do you regularly attend a Piracy? Pirates of Arundell

Number of years paddling:
18

How did you get involved in sea kayaking? After suffering a stroke, I decided it was time to stop working three jobs. I'd spent most of my life swimming or crewing on other people's boats. A full-day course with Atlantic Kayak and a few of their trips and I was hooked.

What boats do you paddle? Necky Arluk 1.9, 18', yellow/black/white. First and only.

Rudder or skeg? Rudder, rarely needed.

Type paddle used: Werner Ikelos, high angle Euro.

Do you do any other type of paddling besides sea kayaking ? No.

Do you regularly do any other outdoor activities ?

Cutting and hand-splitting firewood. Frequently accused of not weeding the garden.

How often on average do you paddle between May and October?
2-3 times a week

Do any winter paddling? Rarely, but I have a dry suit for the late fall/early spring trips.

Favorite local paddling location : St. Michaels and Blackwater area.



It can be hard to snap a picture of Rich, well-known among club members as a fast paddler. But Saki was up to the task on the Nanjemoy. Thanks, Saki!

Favorite CPA trip you've ever been on and why: The Loons Adirondacks trips. Almost unlimited paddling opportunities, many in wilderness areas. Lakes, rivers, streams, bogs, etc.

Coollest paddling trip you've ever been on anywhere and why : The springs and rivers in Florida. A tropical paradise with crystal clear waters and exotic plants and creatures of all kinds. Just avoid the hotter and buggier times of year.

Scariest/most dangerous trip/experience and why ? While not a near fatal experience, I was on a 30+ mile solo exploration of the lower Tred Avon and the creeks south of it. A major nor'easter was predicted to come in after 10:00 that night. Well, it came in around 6:00 as I was headed back, 25+ knot wind directly down the river. With daylight fading and paddling as hard as I

could with 4 miles to go, my GPS indicated I was making barely 1 mph. To add more excitement, I tried to wipe the spray off my glasses only to find there had been an oil spill, essentially blinding myself. I eventually worked my way up hugging the Oxford shore to where the ferry had ceased operation due to the weather. Fortunately, I was able to use a bright street light on the Bellevue side, ferry parking lot to navigate back across the river well after dark.

Future bucket list trip(s): Manhattan circumnavigation. Some of the other Florida rivers besides the Suwannee.

Three things you like most about paddling? The peace and quiet. Exploring new places, often where few people have been before. The unique view of the world from the water.

What do you like about CPA? The people

Two unusual, non-paddling things other people find interesting about you: I've been to every one of the lower 48 states except Arkansas, plus Canada and Mexico, on solo cross-country motorcycle trips. Also, I was at Woodstock. ♠



Rich Stevens paddles on Henderson Lake in the Adirondacks in 2016. Photo/Sue Stevens.

Do you know a paddler who would make an interesting profile? Contact Bob Browning at: BBBrowning43@verizon.net