

The Chesapeake Paddler



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Overnight Assateague Kayaking Trip

By Barbara Southworth

What was great about kayaking camping with Jim Zawlocki and Maxine Mead at Assateague? This version of Jim's almost-annual trip, my first, featured delightful weather, unlike last year's, cancelled unequivocally due to high winds and much rain.

Early Saturday morning the first weekend in May, the pale pink and yellow sunrise sky, Bay and Bridge aglow gave way to eerie fog enveloping towns, farms and forest driving east to the National Seashore's permit office, where the three of us met up. Maxine camped at the State Park Friday evening as per the original plan, while Jim and I, tied to tasks at home later than hoped, enjoyed scant traffic on our separate routes.

True to form, Jim had prepped us well in advance with all we needed to know about permits, the 11-mile out and back route, maps, itinerary, and what to bring, including head nets for legendary mosquitos. We secured back-country permits for the Green Run paddle-in site as soon as the office opened, and launched on a by-then calm, blue-sky day.

Shallow transparent water, unruffled except by our semi-languid strokes, mirrored puffed clouds low on the western horizon, and revealed sponges on the bottom and a skate



zooming by. How very fine too, were the temperatures, warming from low 50's to 70-ish.

A breeze, mostly a headwind, picked up in the afternoon, making us extra glad to make land and explore our home for

the night. Mosquitoes weren't really an issue, courtesy perhaps of that breeze.

Green River, the third in the string of bayside paddle-in sites,



was all ours with a decent privy (if only Kent Island were so equipped) and a picnic table apiece. We spread our gear and pitched tents, then Jim and I headed for the ocean, while Maxine kicked back and held the fort (against no other campers so intrepid.)



2023 Assateague Camper (Barbara Southworth)

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Jim called the walk overland to the ocean “the gauntlet” which anyone who has experienced the island’s other mascots besides ponies (did I mention headnets) will understand. The very-small-but-very-persistent land animals were surprisingly well behaved, causing me to wonder if the insect apocalypse has reached a new inflection point.

We were also surprised by the “life form” that *has* overtaken the



beach – ORV’s, evidenced by super highway looking tracks travelled by high dollar rigs passing intermittently to and fro- much more a thing, than either of us recalled from the past. Still, so great to walk between the sea and dunes.



2023 Assateague tire tracks

In time we dined, Jim made a fire, and he and Maxine chatted while I struggled and failed to be social and soon called it a day. Sunday, Maxine got an early morning beach fix, Jim slept way in, and Maxine and I chilled at

the site, taking our time preparing to depart. Back on the water sometime after noon (very chill) we looked forward to a tail wind. First Jim, than almost Maxine, except for her bright lime CPA top, became distant specks, while I used half my energy to stay on track. So much for the tailwind.

It was grand to be out there with ponies and pines. Mentioning it to someone I learned of some Assateague history, during the era of fly-in hunting and vacation lodges, documented by photographer Allen Sklar. Green Run was the site of the biggest lodge, former site of a Coast Guard station which explains the decrepit building at the landing. Here’s a picture: (<https://www.assateaguephotos.com/Other/The-Old-Assateague-Island/i-5Lq6w8f/>) This site features lots of fascinating pictures, detailed drawings and captions from memories of those who were there shortly before the National Seashore.

Upcoming CPA Events

Piracies are back!! Check out the one nearest you, and take time to visit other locations

[Piracies](#) are back, your destination for “hump day” paddling near you. Check out the plans for the season. Check the [CPA Meetup page](#) for details and for notices of CPA



Pirates of Patuxent 2023 (Daniel Wells)

events such as trips, classes, Piracy paddles and registration info.



Pirates of Sugarloaf 2023 Riley’s Lock (Ricardo Stewart)

All participants should download the [updated CPA Waiver](#) before participating in any Club activity.