

CanoeSki Spring News 2014



Everyone knows the winter was weird; it was a country-wide phenomenon! However we did manage by hook and by crook to work around the -30 C wind chills, sparse wind-blown snow, ice, mini chinooks and slushy tracks. A lot of ski lessons were cancelled and re-scheduled. Fortunately, only one session had to be carried forward to next season when we ran out of “skiable” snow! All these minor trials & tribulations & triumphs I felt compelled to elaborate on in a blog post at the end of March, entitled [The Winter of Our Discontent](#).

Unrelated to skiing, but launched at the height of the season in late January, Tourism Saskatoon’s Green Stem Sustainability Project is a new initiative to encourage the local tourism industry to “go green”. CanoeSki was involved on the advisory committee for the project and was one of the first Tourism Saskatoon members to sign the Sustainability Pledge. CanoeSki is featured on the [Green Stem website](#) as a pledge taker and an Environmental Champion!

Backing up to last fall, mid-September was our last canoe trip of the season to run on the South Saskatchewan River. Super weather and tail winds made for relaxed paddling. Fall colors in the valley were at their prime and the annual migration of geese and sandhill cranes had begun during our Cranes & Colors Corn Roast Trip. Follow a fun day’s events and photos in [Shelly’s Story](#) on the CanoeSki blog.

We initiated a brand new program last summer called [Canoeing & Painting in the Wild](#). I worked with local artist [Nicki Ault](#) (who actually suggested the idea) to fashion a trip that would appeal to artists with an affinity for outdoor adventure and the Canadian Shield landscape. The trip ran in Lac La Ronge Provincial Park in mid-Aug. with a small, but keen group of painters. We encountered a truly wild thunderstorm on our canoe trip to base camp, but once that passed we had truly “picture perfect” weather for the rest of our time and some beautiful artwork has resulted from the trip. You’ll enjoy viewing an eye-catching slide show of our [Canoeing & Painting Trip](#) on Flickr.

Back closer to home, the canoe-camping potential of the South Saskatchewan River never ceases to amaze me. We ran our [Urban Canoe Camping for Beginners](#) trip over the Aug. long weekend and ended up camping less than 40 km south of Saskatoon in a riverbank spot with no evidence of previous camping activity. What a privilege to enjoy a pristine area with all the natural amenities of a wilderness location so close to a large urban centre! You can share my continuing amazement by taking a look at our [Urban Canoe Camping South Saskatchewan River Trip](#) slide show on Flickr!

CanoeSki conducted several river trips over the season in conjunction with Tourism Saskatoon and Tourism Saskatchewan sponsored media visits. [Canada’s ‘Tooned In](#), a New York Post article by Michael Kaplan, opened with a recommendation on canoeing the South Saskatchewan River with CanoeSki. On another trip upstream of Saskatoon, we got a couple of Pittsburgh journalists acquainted with the wilderness-like character of the river valley. [An Adventure Through the Canadian Heartland](#) opens with a stunning fall photo of canoeing with abundant flocks of migrating birds overhead. It isn’t till we end up post-trip at the pub and several paragraphs into the story, that author David Zuchowski opens up about his experience with CanoeSki!

Moving downstream from Saskatoon, we ran a couple of [River Trails of 1885](#) trips with Ontario and B.C. journalists.

The Canadian journalists seem to have been somewhat less productive than their American counterparts, as I have yet to see any of their stories in print!

Enough of past news. Coming up soon on April 25th is an exciting new event – the Saskatchewan Paddling Symposium, a multifaceted celebration of paddling in all its forms and traditions. Exhibitor displays, a paddle craft show, presentations, canoe raffle, auction, a supper meal and more! See the [event website](#) for more info and tickets. Come and see me at the CanoeSki display, in the “boat show & shine”, and doing an evening presentation.

The annual Canoe Club Open House & BBQ at Victoria Park Boathouse takes place 12 noon – 4 pm, May 4th. Everyone is invited to visit the facility and sign up for a 2014 membership.

Tourism Saskatoon is launching their summer version of the [Saskatoon Experience Pass](#) on May 10th. This **free pass** to local events and attractions is for out-of-town visitors who stay at participating hotels. If you have visiting friends and relatives, tune them in on the fantastic offers. CanoeSki is involved in the promotion, offering a free 1-hour guided canoe tour!

On May 24th the second annual [NatureCity Festival](#) starts with a kick-off event and continues for a week of (mostly free) mini-adventures and urban nature escapes for all ages. CanoeSki is sponsoring a space on our Urban Canoe Camping trip for a lucky prize winner. Get involved and get your name in the draw!

CanoeSki scheduled programs and courses get rolling May 27 with [Learn to Canoe lessons](#) followed shortly by our spring [Map & Compass course](#). Tours follow in late June and throughout the summer and early fall. Tourism Saskatoon's Hot Times magazine comes out with the Star Phoenix on May 10 with advertising on CanoeSki programs. Keep an eye out for it and follow updates on CanoeSki doings on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

In the meantime, brush the winter dust off the paddles; this ice rain and snow will soon dissipate! See you at the Paddling Symposium!

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