



## Cascadia Water Trail Campsites

### **Cypress Head** *The North Sound Area*

Cypress Island features a tombolo, a sand bar connecting one island to another, on its eastern side that creates a bay and a cove on either side. Campsites are perched high on this peninsula with excellent views. Cypress Island is located in one of the geologically oldest areas of the San Juan Islands and is now mostly preserved. Washington State Department of Natural Resources manages 4,700 of the islands 5,500 acres.

#### Natural History.

Maps of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century show the Spanish name for the island as Isla de S. Vincente, in honor of the Mexican Viceroy. Captain George Vancouver named the island Cypress in 1792 after trees on the island which he thought were cypress. Botanists have since declared the trees to be junipers.

#### Trailheads:

Youngs Co. Park	2.7 nms
Washington Park	4.6 nms
Guemes Is. Ferry	4.7 nms

#### Adjacent Sites:

Pelican Beach	2.5 nms
Strawberry Island	4.6 nms
Saddlebag Island	7.4 nms

Coordinates:        N 48<sup>0</sup> 34.111'        W 122<sup>0</sup> 40.220'

Charts:                NOAA Chart 18430        SeaTrails Chart WA 001

#### Beach Approach:

Rock and gravel beaches on both N & S sides of the tombolo. The north beach is more convenient.

For the most current information, visit the website of the Washington Water Trails Association generally

[www.wwta.org](http://www.wwta.org)

*Report your adventures at this campsite to the webmaster ( [PapaOtter@SeaOtters.US](mailto:PapaOtter@SeaOtters.US) )*

### **Trip Report: To Cypress Head and Back!**

*The following trip report will be posted on the club website (<http://www.holeinthewallpaddlingclub.org/photo.html>) and on the notes on campsites of the Cascadia Water Trail (<http://www.holeinthewallpaddlingclub.org/Cascadia.html>).*

The group heading out from Washington Park to Cypress Head for a day trip on April 28, 2012, included Carmen Witte, Mac and Penny Carter; it got underway just prior to 9:00 am and arrived landed on the southern side of the tombolo after 1 hour and 35 minutes of friendly paddling. After a brief lunch, both in the sun and out of the wind, Mac led an effort to scope out the waters between Cypress Head and Guemes Island before heading back to WashPark. The group kept to the east side of Bellingham

Channel to enjoy the best of the ebb current, clocking speeds above 5 knots.

Taking the channel buoy to starboard, it noticed either a very large seal or a small sea lion sunning itself on the buoy itself; it was not disturbed in the least!

We spotted an incoming ferry as it emerged from Thateher Pass: as it approached we could plainly see its starboard side, indicating that it would pass north of us.

We knew it had modified its course when it appeared coming straight at us, at which time we hove to so it could pass south of us en route to the terminal. It changed course a second time, again showing us its starboard side, so we shifted our course to the southwest and picked up the pace. Whether the ferry changed course on account of us or the currents in Rosario Strait or some other reason is an open question; we were not going to risk puncturing the ferry's coat of paint.

We landed at WashPark and loaded the cars prior to 2:00 pm, with de-briefing at the Rock Fish Grill, where all hands enjoyed 12 or 16 ounces of locally produced ibuprofen-substitute.

This day trip has further potential for helping those with Skill Level II advance to Skill Level III: exposure to moderate currents and winds, easy distance, potential boat traffic, ease of navigation (Cypress Head is visible from WashPark), interesting waters between the two islands. It could also be incorporated into other easy trips, with destinations of Saddlebag Island, Pelican Beach, Strawberry Island, Burrows Island, Lummi Island, and Vendori Island. It would be interesting to see whether the east side of Bellingham Channel offers higher currents under flood conditions.

Ron (5'16") Frederick