



Story by Dean Scott

July 2007

The paddle (8 AM to 3 PM) started at Hobuck Beach and ended in the town of Neah Bay a distance of about 14 miles. The trip took us around Cape Flattery and included circumnavigation of Tatoosh Island. The three paddlers Tom Plank, Dean & Calista Scott explored sea caves and made stops at secluded beaches along the way. At the end all were tired but pleased with the day – one that will be remembered for many years.

Tom has visited the Cape nearly a dozen times and indicates each visit is different but always interesting. This was Dean & Calista's first time and they consider it a highlight of their kayaking experiences. The forecast was 10 mph winds, 1 foot wind waves with a swell of 5 foot at 10 seconds. This is about as easy of conditions as one can expect. However, remoteness of the area requires skill and caution to handle a variety of conditions that can become extreme. As Calista said "she was comfortable with the paddling conditions but well aware of potential hazards". Our training the last few years helped prepare us for this adventurous day paddle.

The scenery was spectacular. Tom assisted us in picking our way along the shore behind large rock outcroppings. The swell created "Boomers" that had to be avoided. We sneaked past large rocks on the protected side and viewed the ocean swell going from placid to bursts of spray and foam as the rocks were exposed. After observing the conditions for a few minutes we would paddle out on incoming swell through the area that was void of rocks to the next outcropping. The excitement was accentuated by the sounds of the ocean waves echoing off of the steep cliffs.

Early in the paddle after breaking through the surf we spotted two grey whales. The day included a total of four sightings; one within harpoon range. Other bird and wildlife spotted included hundreds of Sea Lions, Pelicans, Oyster Catchers, eagles, and 1 Puffin.

Sounds were a big part of the experience; crashing waves, echoes from the sea caves, oyster catchers whistling, eagles squealing, sea lions growling, whales blowing.

As we approached the view point at Cape Flattery we saw hikers and photographers pointing and taking photos with ourselves being the point of focus. It was exciting to think that we three paddlers from "Hole in the Wall" Club were creating such excitement. A few years back I would have been looking but not doing.

One Day Earlier

John McKean and Bob Cox were also part of the Hobuck campout and although they did not make the Friday paddle they did paddle the Hobuck surf, hike the trail to Cape Flattery and joined Tom, Calista and Dean for a paddle up the meandering Sooes River to a fish hatchery. John and Bob also provided our camp fire entertainment, a little wine with roasted marshmallows and helped juggle cars so that transportation was made easy at the end of the Cape paddle.

The Club provides the hub for so many wonderful experiences; besides just paddling. Participants are the beneficiaries. Thank you HITWall.

