

THE CampChuck REVIEWER

A nonprofit subsidiary of CampChuck

Special 37.1 Special Travel Edition

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Editor, critic, layout, distribution, and general factotum ...



Meryl Streep Leads CampChuck Kayaking Clinic

page 5

Away and Back, Away and Back

Less than a week back from a kayak-centric getaway to the eastern Sierra (and a less-than-48-hour swing through Bay Area familying), we stuffed the van yet again. Just past our 8th anniversary of adventuring via kayak, we're no more than a couple of outings away from 100 separate paddle hikes in nearly 4 dozen different locations.

Perhaps what stirred this trip into producing a CampChuck special travel edition was the accommodation style. It wasn't the camping that seems, after many decades, to be fading into yesteryear. It wasn't a vacation rental like the good condo deal we found at Mammoth Lakes to stage our hiking, biking, plus kayaking on Mary, Twin, Crowley, and Saddlebag lakes.

At McArthur Burney Falls State Park we stayed in a "cabin" (no electricity or anything but comfy bedding and private enclosure). At Lewiston Lake we "glamped" in a huge tent with a big rustic bed and a close view of the lake.

Perhaps producing this newsletter stirred from all the wildlife we saw: herons, pelicans, ospreys, ducks, geese, and other birds; huge dragonflies; fish in clear water, water snakes, bats, deer (deer swimming), a muskrat...



Day by Day

Sun 8/21: Drive to kayaking at Baum Lake (mile out, mile back), stopping at Packway Sculptures nearby; set up at campground cabin (3 nights), McArthur Burney Falls State Park.

Mon 8/22: Solo bike ride 5 miles out, 5 back; hike the Burney Falls Loop; kayak from main park marina to where Burney Creek flows into Lake Britton (mile out, mile back); drive around Lake Britton.

Tue 8/23: Solo bike ride 4 miles out, 4 back (opposite direction); kayak from Dusty Campground on Lake Britton (mile out, mile back); kayak Big Lake (mile out, mile back) to reedy shore of Ahjuwami Lava Springs State Park.

Wed 8/24: Drive to Redding via 89 and 44 and on to 2 nights "glamping" at Mary Smith Campground on Lewiston Lake

Thu 8/25: Drive to Coffee Creek at north end of Trinity Lake via Trinity Dam Rd. & Route 3; Drive Trinity Alps Resort road; kayak Lewiston Lake at Lakeview Resort (mile out, mile back)

Fri 8/26: Drive home.

*between dusk and dark,
mere inches above the lake...
bats feasting on bugs*

There's Wildlife and Then There's Wildlife



We saw a range of wildlife, most of it while roaming in our kayaks. Our first wildlife sightings, curiously, happened a couple miles before we reached Baum Lake.

At a materials supply company, called Packway, on a side road off nowhere much, the owners have kitsched up their property with oversized metal sculptures. They're quite good and certainly fun.

Scaling down from the oversized inanimate animals, dozens of huge red dragonflies (among many colors and sizes) rivaled any other wildlife sightings. We touched the reedy shore of Ahjuwami Lava Springs State Park, which can only be reached by paddling across Big Lake. Forget about photographing these quick flitters in the air, but dragonflies do land here or there if you wait. Meanwhile, the tall reeds sway in the wind.

Marvina spotted scampering movement way across Lewiston Lake (cougar?), and though a closer look revealed it was only deer, two of them treated us to something we've never seen deer do – swim. Toward sunset, a heron popped from its perch, flapping with awkward grace and a prolonged honk into flying form.

Our photo of a muskrat (also spotted by Marvina) can only be called a memory jogger. It dove from a fallen tree, and emerged to race across a branch with some small goody in its mouth. We need to remind ourselves how much a memory can jog just watching without the camera.

Manufactured Mailbag

Dear Editor,

Isn't it hot in August?

Bea Springersaul, Rockland, ME

Dear Be,

In a region where August could easily mean triple digit temps, we experienced low nineties, often helped by breezes. I dowsed with cooling wetness when kayaking and when reading a book lakeside.

Ed.

Dear Editor,

Man, how do you even sit in a kayak for an hour? Or Geez, two hours? You know it doesn't compare with the comfortable kick back of movie theater seating.

A friend, Los Angeles

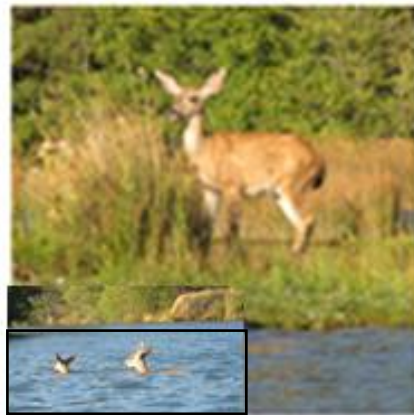
Dear Friend,

Remember how people have suggested to you about doing a thing or two outside your comfort zone? Remember how people have suggested you work up to new things a little at a time?

Ed.

At lake level we tried to paddle slowly, quietly, and sit motionlessly to compose decent 8-times zoom shots of birds. No doubt we approached closer than we should have. Snapping a photo of a flying bird is mostly luck, even when it's mixed with a bit of patience.

2



The Dilemma about Lewiston Lake “Glamping”

“Glamping” (glamor-infused camping): You sleep in a real bed in a camping environment. You go to sleep and wake up at a choice outdoorsy location – not a short drive away. Open your senses; you’re there.

For context, there’s glamping and there’s glamping. Some big room-sized tents have more furnishings and other glam accessories. Of course, the greater the conspicuous consumption, the higher the cost.

Lewiston Lake, near Redding, CA, is entry level glamping. You get the foundational comfy bed with linens and quilt. They add in a night stand and a battery-run lamp. The outside deck chairs and table is an almost classy transitional zone. For merely three times the cost of a normal campsite, you don’t need to assemble your own tent and bedding.

At this particular glamping ground, you still have to track a bit further than you want to the bathroom. Note: how far is the bathroom, for people of a certain age and temperament, may be what pushes glamping back into the camping pool.

Walk-in camping means you can’t park the car at your campsite. You must cart whatever all you want quite a ways – although Lewiston Lake did provide a hauling wagon. Walk-in glamping – as a matter of cost and concept – may siphon some of the enthusiasm for needing to work so hard. Not incidentally, with no door to lock (even a storage door), count on additional schlepping for a multi-night stay.

Glamping on a lakeshore – more than merely camping – some might want their kayaks at water’s edge for a late evening or early morning paddle. Lewiston Lake glamping means carrying kayaks and kayak stuff on a tenth-of-a-mile-long incline, or else you’re back to taking a short drive for that aspect of the total experience.

It’s important to emphasize that for less than the cost of a motel, you sleep in a comfy bed in the outdoorsy setting where you want to be, and when you wake up, you’re still there. We enjoyed it many ways. It’s a significant reminder that this is one of those all-around fortunate dilemmas.

Find links to photo sets of this trip at
<http://www.campchuckus.blogspot.com>.

Look for the Burney Falls / Lewiston page near the top right. Each link opens its own window. If you click on a photo look for the “Slideshow” tab and click “Play” or click through individually.
(may work a bit differently on handheld devices)



No Better Falls Than Burney Falls

There is no better waterfall than Burney Falls. It is attractive in its geology, composition and proportions, most notably its meshing of two very different stylistic statements.

Taken separately, there’s the ample twin falls (129 ft. tall) divided by a lush jut. That jut sports its own inner accents on the cliff’s special character. Then there’s the wider cliff face, a closely hung curtain made of dozens of falls that spring feed through the fractured structure of the lava rock. At the far end of the curtain, a cascading slope would be an especially cute waterfall experience all by itself.

An inviting blue green pool spreads away from the twin churn, and up Burney Creek less than a mile, this resplendent flow is zero flow – well, zero flow above ground. Burney Falls springs eternal.





Lewiston Lake is managed at a fairly constant level as a dependable feeder for Whiskeytown Reservoir (through an eleven-mile tunnel).

Shasta Lake, on the Sacramento River, is the largest reservoir in California. Comparatively, it isn't being siphoned this fifth consecutive drought year the way Trinity Lake has been. Trinity is California's third largest reservoir (though nearly half Shasta's size). It's down more than 100 feet, with huge branches of lake essentially dry and the local economy sorely affected.

