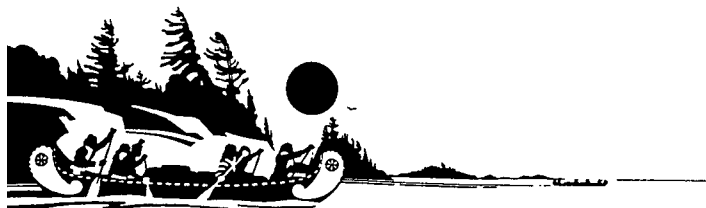


About the Club ...



HISTORY

The Blackwater Paddlers has existed in its present form since 1994. The club evolved from an earlier Quesnel organization known as The Déné Voyageur Heritage Society.

The DVHS had been formed in 1990 to plan and stage a major local festival, to commemorate in 1993 the 200th anniversary of Alexander Mackenzie's historic trek to the Pacific. Mackenzie's journey of 1793 was the first recorded crossing of the North American continent. A group of modern-day "voyageurs" from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, was re-creating Mackenzie's journeys, and Quesnel was their last major stop before the final leg to the coast.

Members of the Thunder Bay group were the featured guests at the Mackenzie Bicentennial Festival in Quesnel, and they had been joined by a group of local paddlers for part of the British Columbia section of the re-enactment.

The major project on the Quesnel front for the Mackenzie celebration was the construction of a 26-foot Voyageur North canoe, to be crewed by local paddlers in that re-enactment.

Construction of this finely-crafted vessel took place in a shopping mall over the winter of 1992-93, with



a dozen or so skilled local woodworkers volunteering their time and talent. Shoppers and tourists watched with interest and admiration as the piles of building material eventually morphed into a gorgeous replica from the fur-trade era.

The finished canoe was christened in the spring of 1993 as the Blackwater Dancer. (It was the route of the West Road River – later renamed the Blackwater – that Mackenzie and his companions followed after passing through what is now Quesnel.)

The Dancer is a lasting and cherished tribute to the 1993 festival. It is maintained by the Club, and is used a few times a year for special events.

Photos: Dancer launch day in 1993.



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The Mackenzie Bicentennial and its theme of “Canada Sea to Sea” sparked considerable interest in the historical aspects of canoeing, and when the hugely-successful 1993 Festival was over, its many volunteers did not want to let the enthusiasm drift away.

So together with other paddling enthusiasts in the Quesnel area, these people gradually turned The Déné Voyageur Heritage Society into the Blackwater Paddlers.



T O D A Y

Today, the club continues as Quesnel’s community organization through which paddling trips, lessons and social events are co-ordinated.

Informal Wednesday-evening paddles, along with weekend events, are scheduled throughout the summer months. A Sunday paddle in late September - in observance of BC Rivers Day - is normally the final event of the season.

Two major social gatherings are held each year. A spring get-together, usually in April, welcomes the public to a slideshow and informational evening, along with an invitation to take part in paddling events and consider joining the club. And the club’s Annual General Meeting in late October is combined with a social gathering, usually featuring a slideshow or equivalent presentation.

For details of the club’s current trip schedule, membership form, or to make specific inquiries about the Blackwater Paddlers, please click on the appropriate paddle icons on the home page.