

Kayaking on Jordan Lake

By Michael Pollock

Susanne Gomolski leads kayak tours around Jordan Lake most weekends.

From 751 a short paddle across leads to Northeast, New Hope, and Morgan creeks. At NE Creek there are quiet coves dappled with duckweed, surrounded by swamps of ash trees and knotweed beds. There are low beaver dams and lodges and bank burrows. A pair of ospreys regularly uses a large, twiggy nest. Adult and juvenile bald eagles are common.

By now they are probably done, but there are also great blue heron rookeries. Staccato belted kingfishers dive for fish and red-headed woodpeckers love beaver ponds snags. In May two-foot carp made loud clicking and showed their backs in the shallows and largemouth and striped bass jumped. Big catfish can also be seen. There are globes of white flowers on buttonbushes, which like to grow in water, and Susanne has seen "clouds" of butterflies there. Waves of singing in frog choruses wash over kayakers, which she says is a "pretty magical" experience. In the evening it is easy to see beavers and there are occasional otters and turkeys and she has seen bobcat and bear tracks.

There are mallards and geese now, and wood ducks later. In winter flocks of gulls and cormorants lounge amidst sunken forests. It is also possible to see problems in the polluted

northern reaches of the Lake.

Susanne leads excursions mainly around the Eagle Management Area and Bush Creek. In the upcoming sunset and full moon paddles, she leads evening trips around the lakeshore to an island near Farrington Road where there is a break for a camp fire and smores. She focuses on NE Creek, east of 751, but last year it started to silt up, in addition to having fallen trees. This year that creek is too shallow, unless the Lake is at least a foot above normal. It was possible to go upstream above where Panther Creek comes in from Cary, and even to the waterfowl impoundment on O'Kelly Church Road. New Hope Creek is passable to Stagecoach Road, and Morgan Creek is passable, but has a lot of large fallen trees.

There will probably also be a trip on Harris Lake. Harris Lake is very clear and it is possible to paddle through grassy channels, with lotus and white water lilies having enormous four-foot pads. Another guide leads trips at the Haw River end of Jordan Lake.

Susanne's company, Kayak Adventures (see www.kayakadventuresnc.com and the wildlife videos on her Facebook page), provides a rigid flatwater kayak for each customer, and also rents kayaks. Speaking from experience, a few miles of paddling is not very taxing, even for beginners. This is not whitewater kayaking, though there



are occasional portages and obstructions to push over. It is difficult to tip over and there is plenty of leg room. The creeks only have enough room for one-seat kayaks, and the trips cost \$25-40 per person. Children at least 12 years old can come with a guardian. This is a labor of love because of the small scale. A tour can have 12 people, but six to eight is usual.

Susanne has been doing this for four years. She lived near Robinson Creek, and for the last 20 years she has swum and fished at the Lake with her three children. Then she went paddling on the Cape Fear with friends, using a kayak because the canoes were taken. Though she fell out of the kayak, Susanne says it opened "a whole new world I never knew existed." She bought a kayak herself and followed the Lake's shoreline into hidden creeks and coves and drifted quietly. Susanne says paddling makes one feel smaller, relaxed, and "filled with a sense of

wonder. There is no place I'd rather be." She didn't know a lot of wildlife, but learned by seeing animals in their habitat. Her mission is to show people what lives there, species that might not be seen in their backyards. Government officials are welcome to come on private trips to learn about the Lake. People passing by might see a great blue heron, and not know what it is. Susanne says some might think "the heron just happens to be there or it will fly away somewhere." But "it lives there," so it is "critical to protect the area." Susanne hopes that kayak touring will persuade more people to think of water quality.

For information, see www.kayakadventuresnc.com or call Kayak Adventures at 919.929.3805.

Michael Pollock is a writer living in southern Durham who founded Northeast Creek Stream Watch. He studied biology and anthropology at UNC.



WE'RE TURNING ON TOMORROW'S LIGHTS TODAY.

Reliable power for the future begins today, with innovative and environmentally responsible solutions from Progress Energy. We're increasing energy efficiency, pursuing renewable energy, upgrading existing plants and planning for new power plants along with better ways to get electricity to you. All for clean, reliable, affordable power – today and tomorrow. To learn more, visit progress-energy.com.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY
STATE-OF-THE-ART PLANTS

 **Progress Energy**

LOOKING AT POWER IN A NEW LIGHT.

©2009 Progress Energy Carolinas, Inc. and Progress Energy Florida, Inc.

letter to the editor

To the Editor:

I endorse and appreciate George Lucier's attention to needs and his all around perspicacity as a planner. Chatham Water, unfortunately is still the beggar and dependent on whoever will help, eg., Cary, Durham ... but never in the situation of controlling their own destiny. As long as Chatham is dependent, it can't really make its own way. The partnership that George discusses will, if it comes to fruition, have to be a governmental organization for water allocation, which means something along the lines of a Water Authority. It is doubtful that OWASA will submit to that, when it is itself an Authority. So one wonders about the final results.

William Sommers
Farrington Village

Carrboro Family Medicine

- Now accepting new patients
- Most major insurance plans accepted
- Sports injuries, acute trauma
- Workers compensation
- X-ray and lab on site
- Same day or walk-ins welcome
- Sport and camp physicals



929.1747

www.carrborofamilymedicine.com

Willow Creek Professional Center at 610 Jones Ferry Road