

# THE HUNGRY BEAVER

*The Journal of the Kekekabic Trail Club*



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## The Food Pack

The one thing that is needed on any canoe trip is the food pack. It is usually the pack that nobody wants to carry at the beginning of the trip, and everyone wants to carry on the last day. It is also the pack that is most likely to be stolen, that is why we hang it in the air like an air compressor at a construction site. We all do the food pack a little different; here are a couple of things that I have adopted over the years.

Bears, squirrels and mice are the most likely thieves to molest our food packs. How do they find it? Generally not by sight, but by smell. That is why Jim always puts his food not only in airtight plastic bags, but also into a waterproof food pack. Granted, a waterproof foodpack is heavier than the average Duluth pack when dry, but that can all change once the rain starts to fall. So, after trying out a dry bag inside of a Duluth Pack in May, I decided to get rid of the Duluth pack and buy a dry bag with straps. (In hindsight, I should have bought a pack that had straps at least as wide as the Duluth pack that I was leaving behind.)

Eating heavy is a concept I try to utilize to lighten the Food pack as quick as I can. In other words, it is heavy eat it or drink it as soon as possible. Of course moderation is called for, especially when the drink it might be a two liters of box wine (removed from the box to save weight).

Hanging the food pack is always a challenge. That is how I have developed a two step system for the support system. First I hang a pulley, and then I hang the food pack.. Back in my whitewater paddling days, I purchased a rescue rope. This rope is specifically designed to be thrown to a struggling paddler to rescue them from imminent demise. The shape lends itself to throwing without causing bodily injury (which can happen when fastening a rock to the end of a

rope and throwing it up in the air.) To this rope I have attached a pulley, which although it could cause a headache, it is safely concealed in the rope bag during the throwing phase. The entire Throw rope is attached to another smaller rope (Parachute cord for solo trips, clothes line rope for weeklong trips) and then a suitable target (Horizontal Branch) is found. Making a contest to see who can get the rope over the desired branch first give youngsters a chance to help when setting up camp, or a pleasant diversion for grownups who may be partaking of the aforementioned box wine. Once the rope is thrown over the branch, remove the pulley and fasten it to the clothesline and raise the pulley up to the desired height, making sure to keep both ends of the Throw rope within reach from the ground. This way keeps the rope across the branch from burning into the bark and preserves the horizontal branch for future food packs.

Now, here is what can happen when you put all of this together and hang food pack from the thieving varmints that haunt canoe country campsites. On the third day of an arduous canoe trip, my nephews threw the rope to a branch higher than the one we were aiming at. Rather than pulling it down and starting over, we decided to hang the food pack from this branch. Being early in the trip, there was a considerable amount of food and liquid in the waterproof pack. After completing dinner, we went to hang the food pack. We hoisted the pack on the branch that was around 40 feet in the air. You probably guessed, the branch broke and the food (and wine) came tumbling down. Luckily no one was below the pack and we avoided injury, or so we thought. As I was straightening out the straps on the pack, my hands were getting damp. I looked at the sky and didn't see any rain there. The smell was a little sweet, so I decided to look inside the pack. There were bags of oatmeal, gorp and pasta floating around inside the food

pack. This is where the waterproof pack really earned its place. After removing all the food from the pack, we carefully strained the wine from the pack into an empty water bottle. (As I said before, this was early in our trip.) After that we were able to enjoy Chardonnay with a subtle hint of granola. The force of the impact also showed us that even the best sealed ziplocks can keep pressurized liquid from reaching the contents.

The food pack sustains us so that we can endure the hardships of the BWCA like carrying the food pack across muddy portages. Take care of it and guard it, just remember not to stand under it.

## **Thomas-Strup Trip 2004**

*By Lynn Glesne*

Our group of 9 assembled at the Grand Ely Lodge at 5 on Friday, May 21, for a last meal. Little did we know that the food assembled for the trip by Tatjana Gleixner and Margaret Lyngholm was going to be much better than restaurant fare. Our leader, Lowell Jaeger, a veteran of 12 trips, made sure we all learned each others names and we started to get acquainted. After our stay at Sommers and organization of the gear brought by many of us, we headed out on Snowbank in 4 beautiful Kevlar canoes provided by the forest service. After 8 lakes and portages we arrived at our campsite on Hatchet in the rain.

At this point the engineers,( Brice Pullen, Wayne Wooley, Bob Cronk, Roget Parrot and Steve Menart,) took over. We had 3 food bags to hang, a rain fly to put up near the fire where there were few trees and one party had left a tent fly in the garage and another the tent poles in the closet. Fortunately extra tarps and rope had been brought and we soon enjoyed our first dinner of chicken fajitas.

On Sunday we headed out to clear, first canoeing over to the trail and then forming inney and outey groups (not actually chosen by belly button type). The outey group hiked to Mosquito and work back and we all met happily in the middle. We had some reason to carry

saws on this section. Monday brought a long canoe to Strup with some deviations along the way due to map and compass errors and 3 canoes follow the lost and misguided. Strup shows the full blowdown most dramatically and we had a big day for the nippers resulting in our only medical misfortunes, 2 sore swollen wrists. The wind kept coming at us on our way back. We figured we had everything except snow. We spent our last night at a beautiful east facing campsite on Disappointment Lake which was not disappointing with a rainbow over Disappointment Mountain, a beautiful sunrise and a wonderful walleye dinner supplied by our fishermen, Lowell, Steve and Wayne, making portaging those poles worth it. This trip was highlighted by camaraderie, stories of past adventures, cooperation, safety, new canoeing skills and great food. Lowell brought along coffee filters and rubber bands to put around the intake of water filters to save on those expensive filter replacements. Plastic ice cream pails work well to dip in the lake and the filterers can pump in comfort into collapsible plastic water containers. Special thanks to Lowell for volunteering for 12 years and being such a great leader.

## **BOD Retreat Summary Minutes**

The KTC Board met on Sunday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004, at President Terry Bernhardt's cabin in Wisconsin. In attendance was: Terry Bernhardt, Lisa Pazdernik, Mark Stange, Connie Van Valkenburg, Fred Base, Terry Serres, Lynn Glesne, and Liisa Beckman. Thanks to Terry and Jeanne Laqua for hosting the meeting. It is a beautiful setting and there was time at the end of the day for canoeing, kayaking, and hiking.

We reviewed the mission statement, and discussed the KTC's strengths and weaknesses. Brainstorming took place on how to increase our strengths and work on improving our weaknesses. Goals for the next three years were established. The membership committee

reported 124 members, and stated a goal of 200 paid members in the next year. The treasurer reported \$5,200 in our account. Grant activity was discussed, particularly various existing needs. Several areas of the trail could use improvement, perhaps with grant funding. The Trail Guide needs to be updated, and options to achieve this were discussed. Plans were made to clean out and inventory the storage room at Midwest Mountaineering. Volunteers from the membership will be solicited, and incentives offered. A sheet of Kek items for sale has been created and approved by the Board. Events for National Trail Day 2005 were proposed; sub-committees will need to be formed. Thoughts on increasing membership participation were brought up, and added to the upcoming goals. One such idea is to create a presentation on the KTC history, mission, goals, etc. that would be available for use in recruitment of members and trail crews. There was much discussion about how best to achieve this. Terry Serres volunteered to head up this effort, soliciting assistance from the Board and members.

## Monthly Board Meeting Summary Minutes

The KTC Board met on Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004, at Midwest Mountaineering. In attendance was: Terry Bernhardt, Derrick Passe, Mark Stange, Connie Van Valkenburg, Fred Base, Lynn Glesne, and Liisa Beckman.

The membership committee reported 124 members. The treasurer reported \$5,200 in our account. It was determined to create written procedures for the various tasks associated with keeping the KTC running (i.e., 800# message retrieval, KTC e-mail retrieval and response). Deadlines and schedules for production of the Hungry Beaver newsletter were detailed, and will be published on the web and in the Hungry Beaver. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month is the deadline for submission of articles for the newsletter, and volunteer mailing night will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> was chosen as the night for mailing out the Hungry Beaver, as well as

## Contact Information

**Terry Bernhardt - President**  
tbernhardt1@comcast.net  
651-226-6546 cell phone

**Lynn Glesne - Vice President**  
glesn001@tc.umn.edu  
612-722-6815 home

**Derrick Passe – Trails**  
dpasse@spacestar.net  
763-286-0570 cell phone  
715-386-8348 home

**Bill Burt - Hungry Beaver/Publications**  
lmjwrb@aol.com  
507-280-9877 home

**Jim Luadtke – Treasurer**  
jluadtke@aol.com  
651-489-4418 home

**Mark Stange - Secretary**  
mark\_e\_stange@uhc.com  
651-483-5373 home

**Connie Van Valkenburg - Grants**  
connievanv2@aol.com  
651-645-5463 home

**Liisa Beckman -Coordinator /Consultant**  
beckm012@umn.edu  
612-729-7675

**Lisa Pazdernik**  
[n340979@cpinternet.com](mailto:n340979@cpinternet.com)  
218-365-8496 home  
218-340-9686 cell

**Fred Base**  
715-839-6579 home

**Terry Serres**  
Serrest@comcast.net  
952-826-3338 work  
612-414-4116 home

**Peter Sparks**  
Pjsparks@isd.net  
651-470-7248 cell  
612-822-1184 home

cleaning out the storage room. It was decided that pizza will be served, and mystery gifts will be offered as incentives. Exploration will occur on the feasibility of loading digitized maps on the web. File size is the concern.

## General KTC Schedule:

1st Tuesday = 5:30 PM Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM Member Meeting  
 2nd Tuesday = HB Article Deadline  
 3rd Tuesday = Volunteer Mailing Night

## 2004-2005 KTC SCHEDULE

### October

Tuesday, 9/21, 6 PM = Volunteer Night  
 Wednesday, 10/6, 5:30 PM = Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM = Member Meeting  
 Tuesday, 10/12 = HB Article Deadline  
 Tuesday, 10/19, 6 PM = Volunteer Mailing Night

### November

Tuesday, 11/9, 5:30 PM = Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM = Member Meeting  
 Tuesday, 11/16 = HB Article Deadline  
 Tuesday, 11/23, 6 PM = Volunteer Mailing Night

### December

Tuesday, 12/7, 5:30 PM = Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM = Member Meeting  
 Tuesday, 12/14 = HB Article Deadline  
 Tuesday, 12/21, 6 PM = Volunteer Mailing Night

### January

Tuesday, 1/4, 5:30 PM = Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM = Member Meeting  
 Tuesday, 1/11 = HB Article Deadline  
 Tuesday, 1/18, 6 PM = Volunteer Mailing Night

### February

Tuesday, 2/1, 5:30 PM = Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM = Member Meeting  
 Tuesday, 2/8 = HB Article Deadline  
 Tuesday, 2/15, 6 PM = Volunteer Mailing Night

### March

Tuesday, 3/1, 5:30 PM = Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM = Member Meeting  
 Tuesday, 3/8 = HB Article Deadline  
 Tuesday, 3/15, 6 PM = Volunteer Mailing Night

### April

Tuesday, 4/5, 5:30 PM = Board Meeting  
 7:00 PM = Member Meeting  
 Tuesday, 4/12 = HB Article Deadline  
 Tuesday, 4/19, 6 PM = Volunteer Mailing Night

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### KTC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

YES, sign me up at the following Annual Membership Level (all levels include a 1-year subscription to the *Hungry Beaver*):

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 **Individual**
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$35 **Family**
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 **Sustaining** (Includes your choice of a 3-map set of the Kekekabic Trail OR a KTC T-shirt—indicate below)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 or more **Trail Guardian** (Includes **both** a 3-map set of the Kek Trail AND a KTC T-shirt—indicate below)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, send me a 3-map set of the Kekekabic Trail!
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, send me a KTC T-shirt! Circle shirt size: SM MED LG XL
- \_\_\_\_\_ Special gift

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED       Check this box if you do not want your name in the KTC phone book.

Return this form with your check made payable to: Kekekabic Trail Club, 309 Cedar Avenue S., Minneapolis MN 55454  
*The KTC is a nonprofit, charitable organization under 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax deductible.*

# MINNI HISTORY OF THE KEKEKABIC TRAIL

*By C. Van Valkenburg*

The Kekekabic Trail is a renown, ruggedly mean, thirty-eight miles, that traverses the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in northern Minnesota, from the Fernberg Road area near Snowbank Lake, to the Gunflint Trail, ending there, a few miles from the Border Route Trail.

Its name was taken from the Ojibwe “Keke-quabic”, meaning “Hawks nest on the Rocks”.

Long before the trail was built, in 1783, the border between the present United States and Ontario was established by the Treaty of Paris. This border was not really perfected until 1925, mostly because our government was not aware that the Mississippi River did not lie West of the Lake of the Woods.

During the period from 1880 to 1900, the major part of what is now the Superior National Forest was clear-cut by the numerous hungry lumber companies. The Superior National Forest itself was formed in 1909 by President Theodore Roosevelt.

The “Kekekabic” originally started at Lake One in the Superior National Forest, and was partially constructed by the CCC in 1934, then later worked on by Forest Service groups. Parts of it were built on old train beds or old logging roads, for there were several mining companies who built railroad tracks used by both the mining and logging industries.

In the 1930’s power interests wanted to install a series of 80’ high electric generating dams along the international borders which would have flooded the heart of the wilderness. At that time the Duluth Missabe and Iron Range railroad went from Duluth to Ely, hauling iron miners, trappers, moon-shiners, hunters, tourists, lumbermen, fishermen and others. Another railroad, the Port Arthur, Duluth and Western, ran from Port Arthur to the Paulson mine, west of the Gunflint Lake, around 1890 to 1914, passing on the north side of the Gunflint Lake. It went from Cloquet, to Cascade and Rose Lakes. The CCC camps were still operating in 1936, helping with trail building, upkeep, and fighting

fires. During this time the Chippewa, and other people like Justine Kerfoot and Dorothy Molder were living in the Boundary Waters Area.

The Kekekabic Trail was constructed as an access trail for fire fighting and forest management, and a way to reach fire towers deep in the canoe country. There used to be many fire towers, with fire spotters to man them, through out the Superior National Forest – at Fernberg, Kelso Mountain, the Kekekabic Lake and many other spots. These have long since been torn down, since the area uses planes and satellite spotting for fires in these days.

In 1937 the Forest Service took over the trail building, adding to and making use of trapper blazed portages and camp sites, while building log walkways, and clearing trails though heavy second growth, over beaver dams, up steep hills and down again. They cleared not just the “Kek”, but also the Snowbank Trail and many of the others we know today. It finished building the “Kek” in 1938.

The opening up of the forest by logging brought an increase of wildlife: deer, moose, grouse, rabbits, lynx, fox, bobcats, bears, beavers, wolves, otter, martens and fishers. During the 30’s the wildlife and the beauty of the area brought in tourists, and fishermen, and the start of the resorts.

The boy scouts helped clear trails erased by blowdowns in 1949, learning at the same time to appreciate the sounds of the forest, and the beauty of the lakes. In the 1960’s the Forest Service cleaned and repaired the trail for hiking, and there was sporadic cleaning up of blowdowns. Then Hubert Humphrey promoted the Wilderness Act, which passed in 1964. In the 1970’s the Forest Service stopped maintaining the trail. By 1974 the Kekekabic was difficult to traverse, the tread was light, the beaverdams often in poor repair because of over trapping, the marshes deep mud. Then, in 1978 the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act designated 1,075,500 acres of the Superior National Forest as hiking and skiing trails only, followed in 1983 by a decision not to have motorized traffic in the area at all. The resorts, depending on fishermen and others who used motorboats, objected to this, but had the resiliency to change their

direction to canoe outfitting, snow machine riders, and tourists.

In 1990 a dedicated group of men got together and decided to do something about the condition of the Boundary Waters Trails. Under the aggressive leadership of Martin Kubic, a strong and hearty man who loved the Kekekabic Wilderness, they made an agreement with the Forest Service that they would maintain the ailing trail each year, using, of course, only non mechanized tools, except for the short distances outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

In 1992, the Kekekabic Trail, and later some of the other trails, were mapped using GPS by the “Kek” Club. There are no signs or directions inside the Boundary Waters, in keeping with the Wilderness designation, so the annual clearing of the tread helps keep hikers from getting lost.

In July of 1999 the BWCA was hit by straight- line winds, and from the Fernberg Trail to the Gunflint Trail caused a disastrous blow-down. The Forest Service stepped up and cleared much of the route, which was marked by

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members of the Kekekabic Trail Club. They also cleared campsites and portages, as did the Kek Club members. Since then the men and women of the Kekekabic Club have continued the upkeep in the BWCA, clearing annually 121.5 miles of trails: 38 miles of the Kekekabic, 27 on the Pow Wow, 4 miles of the South Lake trail, 3.5 of the Eagle Mountain Trail, 8 miles of the Boule Lake Trail, plus 41 miles of the Disappointment Mountain Loop, the Old Pines Loop, and the Snowbank Trail.

These strong, dedicated individuals also contributed their time and energy to building bridges, biffys, and marsh crossings.



309 Cedar Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55454  
1-800-818-HIKE  
e-mail: [Info@kek.org](mailto:Info@kek.org)  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED