WCHM To Host 2017 Upper Great Lakes Regional Canoe Assembly

The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM) in Spooner (WI) will host the 2017 Upper Great Lakes Regional Canoe Assembly on August 24-26, with activities taking place in a variety of locations during the three day period. The Assembly is an annual gathering of canoeing enthusiasts from throughout the Upper Midwest and beyond. The event has been previously hosted in various locations throughout the Midwest by regional chapters of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association (WCHA), including Marquette (MI) in 2016 and Lansing (MI) in 2015.

In 2017 the main activities will take place on Saturday in Memorial Park & Campground on the shores of Shell Lake in Shell Lake (WI), just five miles south of the museum. Activities being planned include a canoe and wooden boat show, dry-land workshops, on-the-water paddling demonstrations, and an evening parade of canoes. On Thursday and Friday leading up to the main event, there will be a variety of activities in various locations, most starting out at the museum. Paddle trips, guided tours of local attractions, evening presentations and local live music, and a welcome reception for Assembly participants are all in the planning. Onsite camping in the park in Shell Lake is available through WCHM, but spaces are limited so early reservations are recommended. Early registration for the Assembly is encouraged for all participants. Look for details on the pages that follow in this newsletter.

Robert Morris Kayak Building Class

Robert Morris from the Brewery Creek Small Boat Shop in Vancouver BC, and author of the illustrated instructional book “Building Skin-on-Frame Boats”, will be teaching a Greenland Kayak building class at the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM). The class will begin Saturday July 29th and continue daily through Saturday August 5th, 2017. During this eight-day course the students will learn to build a traditional Greenland style skin-on-frame kayak. By the end of the week they will have a stunning boat ready for the water, and the skills and knowledge to build a second boat.

This class will be limited to four students (and their partners) so that each will have the opportunity for a real hands-on experience. Because this is the first time WCHM has offered this course, they are offering it at a special first-time tuition rate of $695. This rate covers the cost of all materials and instruction for you (and a second person if you so choose) to build a kayak and take it home afterwards. Participants will be guided through the process of building kayaks in the West Greenland style. The kayaks will be completed and ready to paint by the end of the workshop. Throughout the session, building practices and techniques will be linked to the instructor’s research and experiences with this traditional form of kayak. Interested students can register by calling WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke. Call 715-635-2479 or write info@wisconsincanoeheritagemuseum.org.
Your Guide To The 2017 Upper Great Lakes Regional Canoe Assembly

A variety of activities starting Thursday August 24 and running through Saturday August 26 has been planned for the Upper Great Lakes Regional Canoe Assembly (UGLRCA) of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association (WCHA). The 2017 Assembly is being hosted by the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum (WCHM), and activities will take place in both Shell Lake and Spooner, Wisconsin. Here is your daily guide to everything you won’t want to miss.

Thursday August 24

Assembly Registration & Museum Exhibit Hall Open House (10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, WCHM Exhibit Hall). Stop by the museum for a quick tour and to pick up your registration packet anytime during the regular museum open hours. If you haven’t pre-registered, you can do so now.

Paddle Trip: Namekagon, a Wild & Scenic River (1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, Meet at Museum 12:00 PM). Explore a scenic and peaceful stretch of the Namekagon River with Jamie Souza of the St. Croix River Association (www.stcroixriverassociation.org). We’ll paddle far away from roads and highways, and enjoy the abundance of wildlife along this stretch of river from County K to Whispering Pines. We’ll experience flat water with a few riffles and light rapids. Numerous islands and river bends hide other paddlers, offering a quiet and secluded excursion. During the paddle, we’ll discuss and attempt to spot wild members of the river ecosystem, including freshwater mussels, sturgeon, colorful dragonflies and bald eagles. This ten mile stretch should take three to five hours. Meet at the museum in Spooner one hour before start time to organize shuttles. The trip is limited to six canoes so we suggest reserving a spot.

Tour: The Potter’s Shed (4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, Meet at the Museum at 3:30 PM or the big fish in Shell Lake at 3:45 PM). The Potter’s Shed in Shell Lake is a 50,000 foot creative compound with an art gallery and garden with ponds and waterfalls. A hands-on area gives visitors’ young and old a chance to decorate their own pottery or make their own wood sign. Behind the public space are the creation and production areas of Spooner Creek Design and Macone Clay, both nationally recognized hand-made clay products. We’ve arranged for Assembly participants to tour these areas to see how tiles, plaques, clocks, picture frames, vases, and the make-your-own pottery pieces are produced.

Welcome Reception For Assembly Participants (5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, WCHM Exhibit Hall). “Hello, haven’t seen you in a while.” “Has it been a year already?” “Where are you staying?” “Are you going on the paddle tomorrow?” “How about the tour?” “What did you bring to show?” “Have you seen all the new items in the museum?” The Thursday evening welcome reception will be a great time to catch up with old friends, enjoy a refreshment or two, and get set for the evening presentation to follow. We hope you’ll stop by and say “Hello….”

Presentation: Haack On Wild Rice (7:00 PM, WCHM). UW-Extension Natural Resource Educator John Haack will give a presentation on wild rice, the food that grows on water and is often harvested by canoe. This tall aquatic grass has provided nutritious food for humans in the Upper Midwest for the past 2,500 years. This presentation will highlight the growing, harvesting, and processing of wild rice as well as the historical significance of this fascinating plant. The WCHM presentation will begin at 7:00 PM and last about an hour. It will be preceded by a welcome reception in the museum exhibit hall for participants in the Upper Great Lakes Regional Canoe Assembly, and followed the next day by a paddle trip with John Haack to nearby rice areas on the Yellow River.
Friday August 25

**Assembly Registration & Museum Exhibit Hall Open House** (10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, WCHM Exhibit Hall). Stop by the museum for a quick tour and to pick up your registration packet anytime during the regular museum open hours. If you haven’t pre-registered, you can do so now.

**Paddle Trip: Ricing On The Yellow** (10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Meet at Museum 9:15 AM). The Yellow River was called the “River Juane” by early French explorers because of the bright yellow sand on the bottom of Yellow Lake through which it flows. The river offers stream and lake canoeing with a slow to moderate current and a few gentle rapids. There is excellent fly fishing, canoeing or kayaking on the Yellow River as it flows out of Spooner Lake in Washburn County, through Burnett County, which then meets the St. Croix in Danbury. Wildlife is abundant; most common is the white-tail deer and numerous varieties of waterfowl. John Haack, who gave the previous evening presentation on wild rice, will lead this paddle through a two mile stretch that will include a ricing demonstration and discussion on wild rice and the ecology of the river. Expect a 1.5 to 2 hour trip. Meet at the museum in Spooner one hour before start time for coffee and doughnuts and to organize shuttles. The trip is limited to six canoes so we suggest reserving a spot.

**Tour: The Fish Hatchery** (10:00 AM, to 11:00 AM Meet at Museum 9:30 AM for coffee and doughnuts). The Wisconsin DNR’s Spooner Fish Hatchery is the largest cool water hatchery in the state. More Muskie are produced in this hatchery than anywhere else in the world. A bonus for birders is the number of ospreys, eagles, and other predatory birds attracted to the ponds. They also have a wonderful visitor’s center which has interactive learning stations that are informational and fun for the kids. We’ve arranged for Assembly visitors to have a guided tour of the facilities. And you’ll be back in time for the afternoon paddle.

**Paddle Trip: Birchwood Primitive Areas** (1:00 PM to 5:00 PM, Meet at Museum 12:15 PM). Washburn County has two primitive canoe routes in a primitive area with little to no development that provide a unique opportunity for a quiet, back country experience. Many refer to this area as their “mini boundary waters” due to the amount of glacial lakes and the solitude that they find when exploring this little-known gem. The canoe route areas lie within heavily forested, rolling topography with a high density of small glacial lakes. These lakes are land locked deep soft water lakes with steep banks and wooded shores. Bass and Panfish are abundant. Terry Koehn will be your guide through a canoe trail system. Some short portages may be included. Meet at the museum in Spooner one hour before start time to organize shuttles. The trip is limited to six canoes so we suggest reserving a spot.

**Tour: The Fish Hatchery** (2:00 PM to 3:00 PM, Meet at the Museum at 1:30 PM). If you missed this in the morning, or were out on the morning paddle, you can still catch the tour of this great facility. See the details listed for the 10:00 AM tour.

**Music: TrueGrass at The Shed** (7:00 PM, The Potter’s Shed). The Shed Café, located next to The Potter’s Shed in Shell Lake will delight you with its home cooked menu and old world rustic decor. Dine inside the comfortable indoor seating or savor the outdoors in the expansive garden with ponds and waterfalls. On Friday evenings The Shed presents live music, and this week it will feature TrueGrass, a four piece string band from the Ashland area playing traditional and original music in the early bluegrass style, with Tom Draughon on guitar, Jed Malischke on banjo and Dobro guitar, Liesel Wilson on fiddle, and Bruce Qualey on bass. It’s a great place to enjoy a glass of wine or a craft beer or even buy some art along with a pizza or dessert (expect a small cover).
Saturday August 26

**Assembly Registration** (9:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Shell Lake Memorial Park, Picnic Shelter). If you missed picking up your registration packet on Thursday and Friday you can do so on Saturday in Shell Lake at memorial Park, site of the Assembly of Wooden Canoes & Boats. Look for the us near the picnic shelter. Get your 2017 UGLRCA shirt there too!

**Assembly of Wooden Canoes & Boats** (10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Shell Lake Memorial Park, Lawn Area Under The Trees). We invite you to display your canoes and canoe related items of all types, classic and modern, plus wooden boats of all shapes, sizes, and designs, and classic and vintage water and paddling related items of interest. Our theme this year is the Shell Lake Boat Company, so we would especially like to see any Shell Lake boats and paraphernalia. There will be prizes for best of show in several categories. The exhibit fee is $20 for private or commercial exhibitors and free for non-profit exhibitors. See additional details on the boat show registration form.

**Dry-Land Workshops** (11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Shell Lake Memorial Park, Various Locations). Canoe building and restoration, paddle making, canoe tripping, history lessons, and anything canoeing will be the topics of a series of workshops to be held at various locations around the boat show. Watch for detailed topics and schedules on our website at www.WisconsinCanoeHeritageMuseum.org. If you have an idea for a workshop or presentation you would like to give, contact Ron Carlson at 715-416-2124 or rcarlson@stresau.com.

**On-Water Demos** (11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Shell Lake Memorial Park, Waterfront Dock Area). Paddling techniques, FreeStyle paddling (what’s that?), beginner’s paddling and safety, canoe sailing, and anything featuring canoes on the water will be the topics of a series of demonstrations to be held at the waterfront dock area by the boat show. Watch for detailed topics and schedules on our website at www.WisconsinCanoeHeritageMuseum.org. If you have an idea for a demonstration you would like to give, contact Barry Christenson at 507-822-4406 or midwaygooney@gmail.com.

**Parade of Canoes: Paddle By & Salute** (7:30 PM, Shell Lake Memorial Park, Waterfront Dock Area). Sign up before 5:00 PM at the WCHM booth to participate in this traditional Assembly of Canoes event, then assemble with your canoe at the waterfront dock area by 7:15 PM and be ready to launch canoes at 7:30 PM. An announcer will read the description you provide of your canoe and its occupants as you paddle by the reviewing stand. We’ll finish up with a “paddles up” salute and group photo. Period costumes are encouraged. Prizes for best of show.

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**Camping at Shell Lake Campground, The Best Place To be For The UGLRCA**

Most Thursday and Friday activities of the 2017 UGLRC Assembly will either take place at or start from the WCHM Museum in Spooner, Wisconsin. The Saturday activities, however, will take place in Shell Lake, an easy five mile drive south of Spooner, in the community park on the shores of Shell Lake. The park has a very nice campground adjacent to the show site, and we have reserved a number of campsites for both Friday and Saturday nights for participants of the Assembly. The sites have electric and water hook-ups. There are hot showers available, a dump station, a public swimming beach, and restaurants and shopping a short walk into town (across the street really).

Please make reservations for a site by contacting WCHM Executive Director Jed Malischke at 715-635-2479 or jed@wisconsincanoeheritagemuseum.org. The cost is $30 per night, payable to WCHM. If you would also like a site for Thursday or Sunday or other nights, we can help you with that also. Make your reservation as soon as possible as the number of sites is limited.