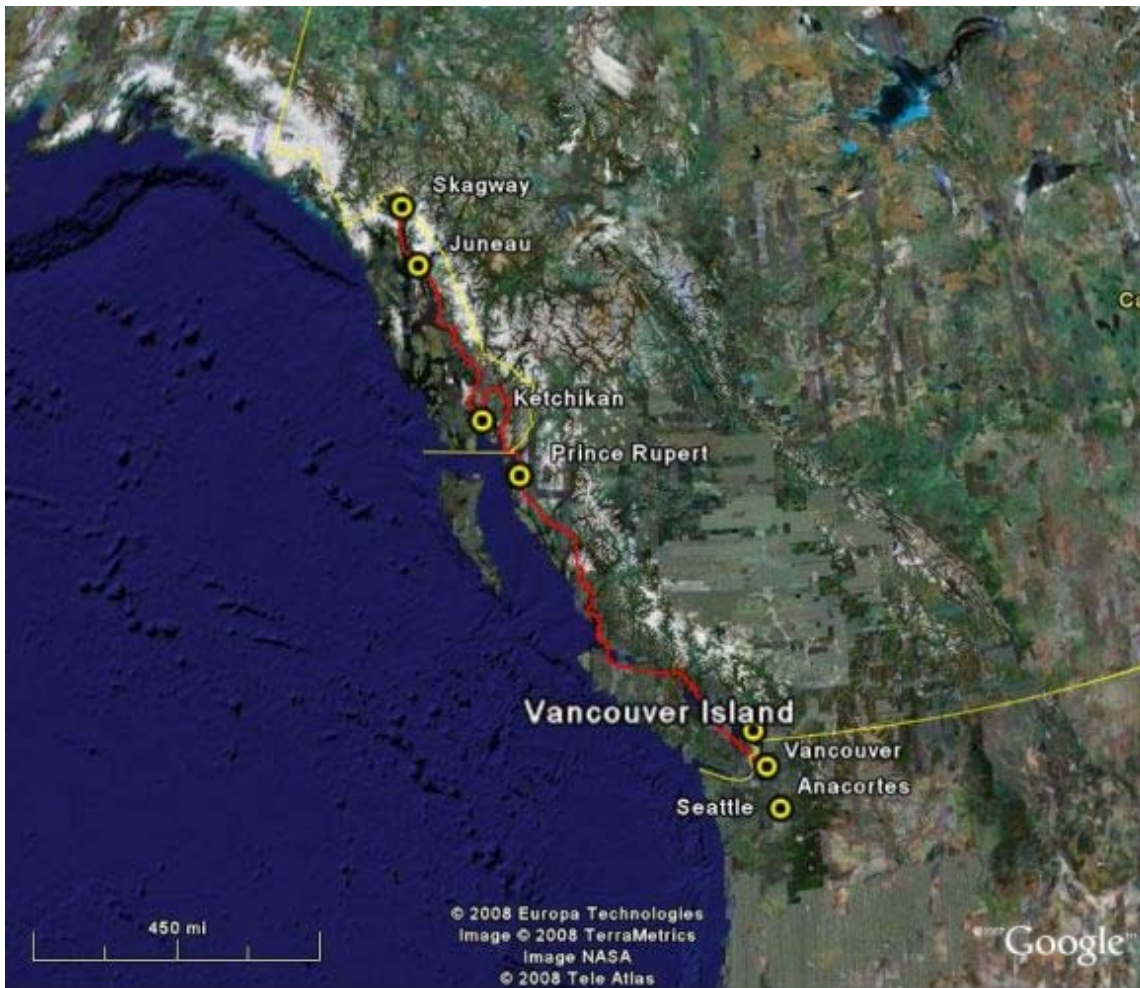


## BCR's Inside Passage Trip of 2007



I've dreamed of paddling the Inside Passage of the Pacific Northwest for 30 years now. The dream began on a ferry ride down from Prince Rupert to Vancouver Island in 1976 after a float trip on the Skeena River in northern British Columbia.

## Pre-trip Warm-up Paddles

March 30, 07

OK, Cochiti Reservoir isn't a particularly interesting place to paddle, but the choices here in northern NM are limited. After sore shoulders following the first hour of paddling, the body has adjusted pretty well, and I've paddling the last 3 out of 4 days.

Otherwise, time is spent weighing and packaging food and a lot of logistical details.



I expect to leave Santa Fe on April 26, and start paddling out of Anacortes, WA around May 4, 2007. We'll see how well the schedule holds up over the last few weeks of preparation...

April 2, 07

One hour paddle on Cochiti beginning 11:30.

Air temp at shore 64.

Water temp 50.

Filtered sun through high cirrus.

Wind 15+ knots.

I paddled in shorts and wind shirt today as it seemed too warm for dry suit. I'll have to see what the warm temp limit is for the dry suit because I'll want to be wearing it for the cold water temps up north.

Used GPS and found speeds 4.5-5 mph with the wind and 2-3.5 into a gusting wind. Speed is faster (both ways) than I was expecting. I'll be curious how much slower I am with a loaded boat.

April 3, 07

Air temp (at water) 59.

Water temp 50.

Hit the water around 10:30. Wind never got over about 5 knots. Mostly high cirrus again. I decided to try the full dry suit today as I expected the wind to come up. It was too warm, but doable. Paddling with the wind was warm--I would get sweat running down my temples. But coming back into a light breeze wasn't bad. Still was damp when I took the dry suit off. Hope it isn't too warm up north when I'm paddling.

Paddled for 1 1/2 hours. Arms and shoulders were fine, but I was getting fidgety, trying to find comfortable positions for my feet and butt. It's a good idea to do this warm up paddling to get my body conditioned to sitting for hours on end.

April 4, 07

Water temp 52.

Air temp 58.

Blue sky. Breezy at start, but wind died down. Kayak almost blew off car on way to reservoir.

Paddled further up river today, and after an hours paddle, I got out and stretched and ate a granola bar. Didn't get fidgety on the paddle back to the car like yesterday, but the outside anklebone of my sprained ankle did start bothering me again like yesterday. Body's feeling good for all this paddling. I feel like I could push my time longer if I wanted.

April 6, 2007

Got a late start after flying this morning. Foggy kind of overcast at 1700 feet.

Air temp 60.

Light breeze to start.

Paddled up to the river and eddy hopping a ways. Gusts of wind showed up as I was munching an energy bar. Wind picked up as I headed back, and temp dropped a little. Generally made 3-3.5 mph against the wind which surprised me. It really started picking up, or I got more exposed to the east wind, as I started across the reservoir to the put-in. I undid my sprayskirt in anticipation of a quick exit, but at the last minute, I decided to put the GPS away. Of course, then a wave slaps me broadside, and I almost tip over. Saved by a brace, but water came down the neck of my jacket and dumped into the cockpit. But I made a quick exit and all was well.

I was even able to load the kayak on the car by myself in the wind. That surprised me. I even took off the bike racks so I could spread the rack more so the boat would be more secure driving in the cross winds.

Before I left the reservoir, I watched several boats get loaded on trailers as everyone was getting off the water. Most were successful, but one guy had trouble, and his 18 foot ski boat got washed into the rocks on the shore. Ugly sounds of fiberglass being crunched. I think the damage was superficial, and the guy was able to drive it away and ultimately get it loaded on his trailer, but I'll bet he was bummed.

Driving home, the boat stayed in place well, even though the crosswind was vicious.



April 8, 07

After snow yesterday, it was overcast and cool (40s) this morning. I thought it would finally be the right temp for my polypro and dry suit, but I was still damp inside the suit. Have to try thin long johns next time.

Very little wind and few boats made for a nice paddle this morning. Clouds cleared out somewhat and I assume the temps

climbed well into the 50s.

April 13, 07

It snowed in town last night, and it was snowing pretty good as I was driving to put-in this morning. Temp at put-in was a chilly 36 and raining.

It was a good chance to see how the drysuit worked in cold weather. As expected, it was more comfortable in cold weather than in warm. I used my warm gloves, and they worked pretty



well, but surprisingly, the backs of my hands stayed cold. They didn't feel particularly cold as I was paddling, but when I stopped for lunch and took the gloves off, the backs of my hands were red and cold. The gloves are thin neoprene, I think, with synthetic leather on the palms. There wasn't any wind penetration, but the constant rain soaked the gloves with cold water, and the insulative value seemed to be lost. I guess I'll pack some pogies in my gear also, though I don't know if it will ever be that cold on my trip.

The water level on the river was down a few inches. Don't know if that was due to the cold (probably) or the fact that I was out early today.

There wasn't another soul on the water today. It rained most of the time I was paddling and it was cold, so folks left the whole reservoir to me.

Got a tailwind from the north returning to put-in, and it was blowing 15-20k by the time I had the boat on the truck.

April 14, 07

A beautiful, clear day following yesterday's cold front. Slight breeze from the SE. Temp 53.

April 15, 07

Air temp at start was 48. The water was glass smooth at 9:30 start. There was a rower coming down the river in a skull just as I was entering the current. Birds were out: grebes, snowy egrets, osprey, and lots of mallards. Heard a splash on the shore--probably beaver. There are lots of signs of beavers along the river--cut down willows and mudslides where the beaver drag branches out of the water.

River level was the lowest I've seen it. Still wondering how much is due to the cold weather and how much is due to daily fluctuation from the cold nights and warm days.

Paddled 12.5 miles today. Light breeze from the south on return, but very light.

April 18, 07

I'm taking a lot of precautions sending my food to my food drops in Canada. I haven't heard first-hand accounts from anyone who's done it, and some folks don't feel it's worth the risk of having a Canadian customs official decide my home-made granola looks suspicious so he's returning the whole package to sender.

I've talked to 2 customs officers in Vancouver and a lady at Health Canada, and I think I'm going to be okay. But as they all warn me, there's no guarantee...

Today I shipped my first food to Nanaimo. I expect to get there around May 8-9. Before I start paddling on the 4th, I'll send the next parcel to Port Hardy. A few days later, my wife, Carlie, will send the next parcel to Bella Bella.

Hopefully the food will arrive safely, and I won't have to rely on white bread and spam, or whatever else I can find.



April 22, 07

I spent most of the last week getting my gear together so I didn't get out to paddle again for a week. I weighed my gear, and, without water, it weighed 135 lbs. Water will add up to 30 lbs. at 8 lbs/gallon.



I put in around 5:30pm and loaded my kayak with all my gear. What a difference in paddling. Now my sleek, fast craft felt more like a log in the water. I checked my speed with the GPS, and it was reading 3.6-3.8 where before it was 4.2-4.5mph. Still not a bad speed.

I also did a couple rolls with the full boat. It wasn't hard at all. It rolled slowly, but not with difficulty. I was nervous about going over, but now that I know I can roll it, my confidence in rougher water will be much higher.

I was going to camp tonight, but problems I've been having with my remote keyboard software made me want to be home so I could email the tech reps in Britain early in the morning.

April 24, 07

Thanks to everyone who sent good wishes my way. And to those of you who think this is the dumbest thing you've ever heard of, well...we'll see.

I finally got all my gear packed up yesterday, and, amazingly, it all fit in the boat! I had to stuff the tent in the cockpit in front of my feet, but that'll work. My gear weighs 130+ lbs. Including the 4 gallons of water I'll be carrying some of the time, I guessing around 165 lbs. I took the rig down to Cochiti Reservoir for a test run in the evening. It's sluggish, but it still floats. It's kind of like paddling with another person strapped on the boat. But I can roll it so I guess it's different than having a person strapped on. Not that I expect I'll have to roll on my trip, but it's a nice boost to my confidence knowing I can roll it if I have to.

So now I feel like I'm ready to go, and I've still got a couple days before driving out.

It's hard to imagine what this trip is going to be like because I've been so focused on the details of gear and packing and logistics, I haven't had time to think about things like that. Now I can allow myself the time. But I still have very little idea what it will be like. Will I be spending all my time dealing with rain, finding suitable camping, staying warm, and worrying about what the ocean conditions are going to become? I don't think so, but certainly some of my energy will be spent there. And what will it be like to spend so much time alone? How many days straight have I ever spent alone? 2? 3? Marc Sani will be joining me for the first 2 weeks or so, and I'll bet I appreciate not having to go directly to a solo experience right off the shore at Anacortes. But what kind of company am I going to be to myself? It will be interesting to find out. Will my excitement for the journey last? Will I get bored with the monotony of the same coastline day after day? Will I reach a point where I've had enough of the experience and I just want to make a beeline for Skagway? Or to the nearest ferry stop?

I originally thought there would be 2 things of most concern for me: weather and bears. That part of the world isn't known for its warm, sunny climate, and the stories of bear encounters are numerous. But another concern I've recognized recently is how I'll adapt to the solitude of the journey. We'll see...