



Wooden Canoe Heritage Association

NORTHWEST CHAPTER

Northwest Chapter Fall Newsletter August 2026



Fall Meet: Manning Park, BC September 18–21, 2026!

Join us at Manning Park, BC, in September, for beautiful canoes and small boats, old and new friends, and the scenic Lightning Lakes. We will camp at the Lone Duck #2 campground, right on the lake, in the best of fall weather. Bring something to share for the Saturday night potluck, some irresistible auction items, and remember your woollies and toques! Note that this will be a Friday—Monday Meet. See you at Manning!

Fall Meet 2026: Manning Park, BC

Directions

- Easy to miss: From Hwy 3, east of Hope, BC, turn right (south) after the Manning Park Lodge, 41 km from the Manning Park west entrance. Entrance is marked by a carved marmot.
- Follow signs to **Lone Duck Group Camp 2, Lightning Lake, Manning Park**. 4km off Hwy 3.

Accommodations: Rustic!

- Brand new picnic shelter with tables and wood stove, outside fire pit. Burn bans may be on, so plan accordingly.
- Flush toilets and cold running potable water. Showers available at nearby Lightning Lake campground.
- Parking lot and large walk in area for tents. Use only designated tent sites.
- Limited RV space; no hook-ups.
- Bring tarps for rain.
- Dogs must be on leashes. US people: remember dog import forms to go home:
<https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs>.

Reminders! Passports!

- Bring potluck supper item for Saturday night—main dish, sides, salad or dessert.
- \$20 per person/ night; Kids and grandkids free. Kids very welcome! Currency at par.
- Canadians bring firewood, if no burn ban
- Bring **warm clothes**, hiking boots and sticks.
- Bring new or gently used items for the Saturday afternoon fundraising auction. Support our auction!
- Musical instruments and voices for campfire sing-along.
- Program on our website, nwwoodencanoe.wcha.org
- Restaurant, groceries and other supplies available at Manning Park Resort.
- Brochures and information available at Manning Park Resort.
- Fire Information: We will monitor fire activity, and send out notifications if there is risk of cancellation. You can check also at the E.C. Manning Park website, or at <https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/current-wildfire-information-2023>



Wading the canoes through the shallows between lakes, Manning Fall Meet 2024. Livdahl photo

Fall Meet Program (Weather may adjust schedule)

- **Friday:** Arrive, set up camp. Meals on your own. Enjoy the lakes
 - Evening: Speaker: “Canoeing the BC Coast” with Chris Cooper
 - Campfire
- **Saturday:**
 - Dawn Patrol
 - Mid-morning: Speaker Chris Eden: “Morris Canoes”
 - 1:00: Meet the Canoes
 - 3:00: Group photo
 - 3:30: Auction
 - Evening: Wilderness Potluck dinner
 - short chapter business meeting
 - Campfire
- **Sunday:**
 - Dawn Patrol
 - Canoe to the end of the Lakes for lunch
 - afternoon: Canoe Compass Course
 - Campfire
- **Monday:**
 - Dawn Patrol
 - Clean up, pack up. Safe travels! See you at Camp Bishop, May 7, 8, 9, 2027!



Steve and Joan Ellsworth enjoy Lightning Lakes in their Willits. Livdahl photo

Spring Meet: Camp Bishop May 2026



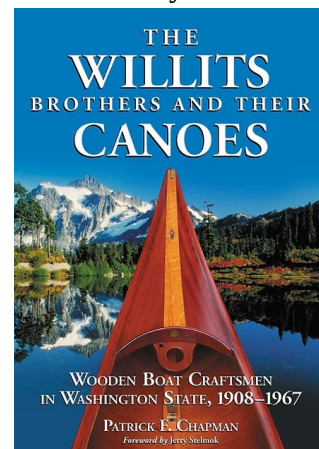
Mike Livdahl begins the discussion of Lou Marlowe's canoe. Norton photo

The Northwest Chapter gathered at YMCA Camp Bishop, Shelton, WA, on Lost Lake, May 8–10, 2026. It was a weekend of beautiful weather, interesting boats, and old and new friends. Camp Bishop was groomed and prepared for the summer camp season under the direction of the new site manager.

The group met in the lodge for Friday evening's program. We began with an appreciative look and discussion about Lou Marlowe's lovely built-for-her canoe designed and built by Morris Elliott of Kanaka Canoe Company of BC. Lou was a founding member of the NW Chapter, and Morris Elliott was an early chapter member. Lou meticulously hand painted the birchbark design on her new canoe. Lou passed away in 2017, and the 14.5' canoe was donated to the chapter by her son Erich Neupert, to find a new appreciative home, hopefully within the chapter.

The chapter can use the canoe as a fundraiser, and it will be offered to members first. Discussion centered on a price range for the canoe, and it will be advertised internationally if there is no local interest. Many people enjoyed paddling the canoe over the weekend—it is light, responsive and quick, but doesn't feel tippy, a delight to paddle. The canoe will be enjoyed at chapter meets until it is sold.

Friday evening the group next viewed “The Willits Legacy”, courtesy of Pat Chapman. This film, made by Pretty Gritty Tours, includes a walking tour through the intact Willits shop, when it was first opened by the family prior to contents and records being turned over to Tacoma’s Foss Waterway Seaport Museum. For Willits fans, and those who had the opportunity to see some of the shop contents while in storage in Tacoma, this film provides a look and context for the actual building of the canoes. It was exciting to see the tools, machines and materials in their real places. This documentary makes a perfect companion film to Michael Sullivan’s “Makers on the Tide” which focuses more on the Willits family, the canoes themselves, and the renewed interest in Willits canoes. “The Willits Legacy” can be viewed via a link available on Pat’s McFarland Lake Canoe website.



Many members own or have read Pat’s definitive book “The Willits Brothers and Their Canoes. With the availability of actual access to the shop, its contents, and the Willits records, Pat has expanded the book to include much new information. A second edition of the book will be available soon, and we hope Pat will have copies available at the Spring Meet!

Scavenger Hunt!

Mike Livdahl introduced a digital canoe Scavenger Hunt at the Fall Meet, which was very popular: photos were taken by participants to record finding each listed item. A Scavenger Hunt list was prepared for the Spring Meet, including items such as the oldest canoe, longest canoe, types of trees, most colorful paint job, Donald Duck’s nephew (the “Huey” canoe), etc.. Chocolate prizes were won by those completing the list: Ted and Charlie Farmer, Lucy Cross, and Aliannah Ebberly.

Dinner and Auction!

Saturday night’s potluck dinner and salmon barbecue was again coordinated by Vern Heikkila, with help from Jim Cullins, Scott Christianson and others. Generous salads, side dishes and desserts complimented the delicious salmon. Unfortunately, smoke from the grills set off the dining hall’s fire alarm, and dinner was delayed for some time when normal protocols could not silence the very loud alarm. Eventually, fire department personnel arrived to turn off the alarm, then joined the chapter for salmon dinner. We enjoyed hearing of fire department life, and the officers gave department swag to the children. Thank you, Mason County fire department!



Following dinner, a spirited auction was held, with President Mike Livdahl acting as auctioneer. Books, new dry bags, model canoes, honey, Canoe Ridge wine, camping food, a pack basket and many other items netted \$401 for the Chapter. A custom Willits Brothers canvas bag was donated to the auction, but was not sold. The group decided instead to send the bag to former WCHA board president Michael Grace, to be part of his collection of Willits canoes.

Meet the Canoes: Camp Bishop, May 2026



Canoes line the Camp Bishop beach at Lost Lake. Foreground: Bill and Carol Clark's 1936 Old Town Otca, Dick Cross's Geoffrey Burke Wee Lassie, and Dick's 1906 Rushton Indian Girl. Livdahl photo

An interesting and varied selection of watercraft lined the shores of Lost Lake for the Spring Meet. K. Bill and Carol Clark's restored CS-grade Old Town Otca was originally ordered for Camp Farwell, in Westbury, VT.. The camp was the first girl's overnight camp in the US (1889), and was/is known for its equestrian program. This Otca eventually made its way to Montana and was restored by Bill.

Dick Cross brought several boats, including a Wee Rob lapstrake canoe built by Geoffrey Burke. Dick's gleaming red immaculately restored Rushton Indian Girl was part of Ray Arcand's collection. It was restored by Dick to include open gunwales instead of the stock (and water retaining) closed ones.



Camp Farwell campers launch a war canoe on Hall's Lake, VT in early days of the camp.



Dick Cross's trademark pinstriping highlights the Rushton canoe. Livdahl photo



Dick and Robin Cross enjoy the fast, responsive Rushton. Livdahl photo

Dick also brought a project boat, which he passed on to Martin Ferwerda for restoration. The Shell Lake Boat Company canoe is a flat-bottomed 17' canoe, with inside stringers defining its half-ribs, indicating a "deluxe model". The canoe has mahogany thwarts and carry thwarts. The company was founded in Wisconsin in 1909, and built several canoe models, plus hunting skiffs and outboard motor boats. The canoes shared planking similarities to Thompson Brothers canoes, and some design features that may show a connection between the two companies. Shell Lake Boat Company closed in 1957, and was bought by Lund Boats in 1960, who then manufactured primarily fiberglass boats until 1980.



Many people greatly enjoyed trying late member Lou Marlowe's Morris Elliott canoe. Donated to the chapter by Lou's son Erich Neupert, the 14'5" canoe is painted to appear as birchbark. It is wonderfully quick and responsive, without feeling tender. Whomever is the new owner of this canoe will appreciate its light weight, and will have a lot of fun with it. It could be yours!



Lou Marlowe's Morris Elliott faux birchbark canoe. Livdahl photo



The Shell Lake Boat Company canoe from Dick Cross will be restored by Martin Ferwerda. Livdahl photo



Martin Ferwerda tries out the Marlowe Morris Elliott canoe. Livdahl photo

Many of the canoes at the Meet were familiar. Mike Livdahl's 1967 Old Town Otca has now experienced the Arctic Ocean! Susannah Ebberly showed her sleek green 1945 Otca, a project gift from Courtney Codrington. Susannah, a Gray's Harbor Community College Carpentry graduate, restored the canoe with the guidance of Vern Heikkila, including rib and stem repairs and refinishing.

Scott and Phyllis Christianson brought their 16' E.M.White Guide canoe, built by Scott with help of Jerry Stelmok. Mary Norton and Joe McElroy came with "The Explorer", the green Old Town HW given to grandsons Charlie and Teddy Farmer by Ray and Beth Arcand. The canoe is stable and comfortable for the whole family. Craig Dupler brought his Atkinson Traveler design built from plans from Rollin Thurlow; Craig built the canoe for his family in 2003. The striking ipe trim shows off his woodworking interests.

The Heikkilas showed a variety of boats. Not everyone tried the fast single tribal racing canoe (21' x 17" beam!) built by Vern to plans from the Hiault Tribe of Duncan, BC, but those that did stayed dry this year! "Huey", the distinctive small orange canoe with its voyageur duck logo, was originally one of three canoes remaining from the Red Cross' Grays Harbor/Aberdeen water safety programs dating from the 1920's. Salvaged by Vern and restored, "Huey" now is owned by the Gray's Harbor Museum and is part of the Camp Bishop summer program; the two companion canoes were lost in the Museum's unfortunate fire some years ago. Vern also oversees the Museum's 25' Old Town War Canoe. The War Canoe—part of the early Red Cross program-- was also salvaged from life outdoors covered in blackberries, restored by Vern and a group of volunteers, and now is part of Camp Bishop's water programs, while still owned by the Gray's Harbor Museum. The camp's distinctive new canoe house was inspired by the possibility of having the War Canoe on site at Camp Bishop.

Vern also brought their white 1942 18' Guide canoe, donated to the NW Chapter as a project, without canvas, needing new stems, decks and refinishing. Now fully restored by Vern, the beautiful canoe is a thrilling sight racing across the water powered by four paddlers!

In addition to canoes, the Meet hosted several other interesting boats. Stephen Farmer launched his 12' Old Town fishing kayak at the Meet, and Lucy Cross brought her yellow Eddyline sea kayak. Many people took a row in Vern Heikkila's small blue rowboat of his design; Vern related that his father had built a number of similar small rowing boats.



Susannah Ebberly's restored 1945 Otca. Ellsworth photo



Dick Cross and 1906 Rushton Indian Girl. Livdahl photo



Steve Ellsworth enjoys the rowboat designed and built by Vern Heikkila. Livdahl photo



"Huey" canoe. Livdahl photo



Canoe Meet friends Charlie and Teddy Farmer and Ali Ebberly. Above, Norton photo; Right: McElroy photo

Canoes Available:

16 Ft. Peterborough Otonabee c. 1929

This is a first-grade model, a very classy and beautiful canoe. Time has taken its toll so it needs a full restoration but would be a beautiful canoe once completed. Asking price is \$950.00
If you are interested in more details contact Erik Nordholm at: 250-924-3115 or via email at ashleyfield@shaw.ca



From Chris Eden:

I have decided to part with my **1924 OT Charles River**.

I've just finish my 1922 Willits and as well as a new build 1908 BN Morris. I'm running out of room to store canoes and have decided to part with the 1924 OT Charles River some of you may have seen in Manning last fall. I would like to get 3000 for it. Would not let it go for less. That would not include any paddles as I need those for my other canoes. This was a very complete restoration and Benson Gray helped a great deal with Charles River deck documentation.

During the meet, many seemed to have an interest and given the complete restoration, I think the price is fair. Let me know if anyone in the chapter has an interest. I may post on Craigslist but would much rather keep in the chapter "family".

I'm in Anacortes and I do need to get the completed Willits and Morris out of the shop and into my storage area where the 1924 OT now sits.

Thanks. If anyone wants to call to discuss feel free. My cell is (206) 321-1473



Canoe Available

For those of you that went to the Spring meet, this is the Shell Lake Canoe Dick Cross donated to me.

It is a 17 Feet long Shell Lake Deluxe Model, I am guessing around 80lbs or so.

Mahogany Decks, thwarts, inwales and outwales

Oak stems, seats, carrying thwarts, and bilge stringers

New caned seats (machine woven cane, cause that was how it was from the factory).

New canvas, and new interior varnish, new outside stems and keel, stem bands

Cracked ribs repaired with backside repairs, except one I spliced, various other fixes here and there.

Hull has a bit of a dip afore the aft thwart where it looks like it sat upright too long on a sawhorse, the usual things you see on an old canoe.



Asking \$600 US, pretty much trying to recover cost of materials and a few six packs of beer to cover labor.... Located 30 miles east of Portland, OR.

Martin Ferwerda mferwerda111@gmail.com



"Before" photos taken in May can be seen elsewhere in this newsletter. This beautiful Shell Lake canoe shows its Thompson Brothers influence in its profile, exterior stem, and stringer-delineated half ribs. Ferwerda photo



Top left: Arthur Johnson's first canoe ride, with Annie McElroy., McElroy photo. Top Right: Craig Dupler in Atkinson Traveler canoe; Livdahl photo. Middle: detail of gunwale and thwart: Morris Elliot canoe; bow Geoffry Burke Wee Rob: Livdahl photos. Bottom: Arthur Johnson and Annie McElroy investigate 21' Hiaulat racing canoe built by Vern Heikkila; McElroy photo





Spring Meet Group Photo 2026: kneeling: Joan Ellsworth with Ryder, Steve Ellsworth. Front standing: Mary Norton with Duff, Joe McElroy, Phyllis Christianson, Scott Christianson, Courtney Codrington, Robin Cross with ---, Carol Clark, K. Bill Clark, Dick Cross, Mike Livdahl, ????. Middle row: Jim Cullins, Nancy Douglas, Stephen Farmer with Charlie Farmer, Craig Dupler, Jan Heikkila, Martin Ferwerda, Vern Heikkila, ???, ???, very back row: ??? Dylan Johnson with Arthur Johnson, Annie McElroy Johnson, Lin McElroy with Teddy Farmer, Lucy Cross. Not pictured, Susannah and Aliannah Ebberly, Sean Norton McElroy, Becka Christianson. If you know who the un-named people in this photo are, please let us know! Note the Shell Lake canoe! Livdahl photo

See You At Manning Park, BC, September 18–21, 2026!

Bring woolies, toques, potluck food, and auction items. Help support our fundraising auction! US people remember passports! US dog owners: remember to fill out the CDC dog import form to allow your dog to cross back into the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs>.



Enjoy loon calls across the lake, beavers, ducks and more at Lightning Lakes! Livdahl photo

Remember the Spring Meet: Camp Bishop, May 7, 8, 9, 2027!