

Kayaking 04-22-09

It was worth the wait.

Last November, my husband Al, got me a tandem kayak for my birthday. I haven't been able to do much kayaking between then and now, but it was definitely worth the wait. Crowdaddy Outdoors, where we purchased my kayak, has a six week program called Marsh Migrations. For six Tuesday evenings starting in April and ending the middle of May, Darrin Siefken, the owner of Crowdaddy's, guides interested kayakers through Sweet Marsh in Tripoli. You can sign up for one or all of the Tuesday evenings to experience the Marsh and the different migratory species that can be found there. Sweet Marsh is ranked one of the top ten bird watching spots in Iowa and it is only about 20 miles away from us!

Having gotten my kayak in November, I was in *no* way ready to go. Since I've been dying to get it out on the water somewhere, I rallied to be able to at least go to the Marsh once. Al stopped in at Crowdaddy Outdoors and ordered me a rack system so that I could haul the kayak with the truck and hopefully handle it by myself. Then, last Friday and Saturday, Crowdaddy's put it on for me and double checked everything to make sure it wouldn't fly off. Last Monday night around 9:00 p.m. Al drove into Waverly to get me my registration stickers, too. Finally, all was ready. Tuesday afternoon came and I loaded my new kayak up for the first time. I had Al there to spot me, but I wanted to do this all by myself. I swung by and picked up Janette, my friend from work, and we headed out to Sweet Marsh.

We pulled in right at six and unloaded. Darrin and his crew helped us get situated in the water and off we went. Right into the cattails!! Obviously, I haven't steered much and I was in the back so we headed to the cattails. But, what better chance to get out my camera and snap a few shots to prove we were there and share the beauty! Janette had been canoeing before and she soon became our fearless leader. There were at least 20-25 canoes and kayaks on the Marsh that evening coming from places as far as Ames, to Parkersburg, Cedar Falls, Clarksville, Janesville, and Waverly. It was a good natured group laughing and offering us suggestions. We didn't actually run into *anyone*.

Even though it was cool and quite windy, we had a blast! Janette and I *may* have taken the whole two hours to figure out paddling together and steering in the wind. We *may* have run into the cattails 3 or 4 times. We *may* have dripped water in our laps each stroke. We *may* have had to ask for help getting out so that we didn't get any wetter than we already were. We also *may or may not* have had to ask for help strapping the kayak to the truck as I *may* have forgotten how they worked.

But, we *may* also have gotten some good exercise. We *may* have met some fun and interesting people. We *may* have learned a thing or two about kayaking, Sweet Marsh and strapping things down. We *may* also have seen Coots running on water, Canadian geese laying on their nests, a Sandhill Crane and a real live Swan!!!! Lastly, we *may or may not* have been quite sore by the time we made it home but also *may* have had a great time being outdoors with friends so it didn't matter much.

Being able to finally take my new kayak out on the water was definitely worth the wait. Now, I just can't wait to go again.