

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND ON RED CREEK

June 1980

On Thursday before the memorial Day weekend the U.S. Forest Service at the DeSoto National Forest reported to the Canoe and Trail Shop that Red Creek was still at flood stage, having just come within its banks that morning. Feelings of anxiety and disappointment struck those who had been looking forward to the annual ritual of canoeing Red Creek on the last weekend in May. However, we knew from past experience that Red Creek's waters fall rapidly, and, when we arrived at the put-in spot east of Wiggins, Mississippi, we were not disappointed. Though still a few feet above seasonal level, the stream was ideal for canoeing. Ten Sierrans and guests shoved off in beautiful sunshine that was to last the whole weekend.

As in prior Red Creek expeditions, the canoeists were a varied and variegated bunch wearing an assortment of great hats. Several veteran Red Creek enthusiasts were there: Pete "Flying Dutchman" Van Duym, Dorothy "Hyper" Jennings Head, and Art "Grumpy" Tissol. Fine cuisine was prepared by Gordon "Mouthpiece" Patton and Josie "Nuestra Señora" Patton. [Readers will recall that the Pattons were part of the scientific expedition that discovered the Great Hairy Frog in 1979.]

The flood waters had unfortunately inundated the wild huckleberry bushes and stripped away the berries that had provided a delicious addition to morning pancakes. Perhaps next year's high water won't be so destructive. The flood waters did not, however, affect the hundreds of fragrant magnolia blossoms that line the creek. In some places the magnolia trees lean over the creek, and a canoeist has a sense of floating through a deep green tunnel full of fragrance.

Needless to say, the tradition of the memorial Day Weekend on Red Creek will continue. We're looking forward to next year already.

– Earl Higgins