The Crew's first Superactivity for the 2011 summer season was a kayaking expedition into Desolation Sound Provincial Park in British Columbia. Located beyond the northern end of Highway 1 in Lund, the Sound lies to the east of the fabled Inside Passage between Vancouver Island and the B.C. mainland that leads to Alaska. The scenery is breathtaking, with deep, calm water punctuated by small but mountainous islands with steep cliffs, forest, and pristine wilderness.

We drove up to Port Angeles and sailed the Black Ball ferry to Victoria, then continued up Vancouver Island to Comox. At Comox, we took another ferry to Powell River, then finished the drive to the Malaspina Peninsula and camped for the night. Our fleet was a mix of personally owned sea kayaks and some good rental boats from an outfitter in Penrose Bay. We put in on Monday morning and paddled up to our first campsite on the Gifford Peninsula at a protected anchorage called Grace Harbor. Our tents were placed in various flat spots wherever we could find them along the cliffs overlooking the anchorage. There was a trail that lead to a waterfall for primitive showers. The trail continued up to an unnamed fresh water lake; we named it

Leech Lake after discovering what lived there.



Although it has a 15 foot tidal differential, the Sound's currents are minimal but very predictable. On an ebbing tide, we continued our trek north out of the Malaspina Inlet, paddling between rocks and estuaries that only a shallow draft kayak could navigate. The rocks were dotted with pink and blue starfish, usually 9-11 inches across. We stopped for a meal on an island in the middle of Galley Bay just as a storm arrived. With no suitable sheltered campsite in Galley Bay, we braved an open-water crossing at the mouth of the Sound and entered the lee side of Mink Island. The crossing was a true adventure, with 3 foot swells, 15 knot winds, and driving rain that reduced our visibility to a quarter mile or less. The value of a compass, a good

sea kayak, and multiple "workouts" paid off as we made our way along the south side of Mnk and on to the Curme Island group.

Curme is a gorup of 3 islands in the middle of the Sound with some exposed campsites and a pit toilet. Unfortunately, we spotted some tents as we approached and knew we wouldn't all fit. Instead, we altered course and headed east into Tenedos Bay, where we pulled ashore and found more than enough room for all our tents. There was an established fire ring, and it was only a five minute walk up the trail to Unwin Lake for fresh water swimming. We decided to make Tenedos our base of operations, and would paddle out on daily trips. Given the cold, wet weather that arrived with the storm and lingered for the rest of the week, it was a good decision.



We had also decided to conduct a Kodiak Challenge Leadership Course during the expedition, so establishing a footprint at Tenedos made it easier to have a class in the morning after breakfast and then in the evening after dinner.

The next day's paddle was an exploration of the shores of Tenedos Bay. Exposed rocks in the middle of the Bay at low tide were loaded with seals. Starfish were colorful and found everywhere along the rocks. A special treat awaited us on the west side of the Bay, directly opposite from our campsite, when we paddled quietly up to an oyster bed to observe a 300-pound black bear feasting at low tide. We just floated about 20 yards off the shore and watched for 15 minutes or so as the bear enjoyed his meal. He looked at us curiously once or twice, but decided we were no threat and probably didn't taste as good as the plentiful oysters

surrounding him. We paddled back to camp and hit the Lake for a swim and to clean up.



We put in a long trip the next day as we left the Bay and headed north and around Otter Island. We turned back along Otter's north side and crossed over to come ashore and explore the Curmes. The tents we had seen earlier in the week were still there, along with a hearty campers who were staying there for the week. After a snack, it was time to head back to Tenedos and some rest and to complete our Kodiak Challenge with a closing ceremony over a roaring campfire.

Our final complete day underway was our longest. After packing up and sweeping our campsite, we loaded up and paddled out of the Bay, hugging the sound shore of the Sound on a slow and steady pace as we watched for more wildlife. We stopped for a lunch along the western shore of Galley Bay, facing east as the clouds finally began to lift and treated us to a view of the snow-capped peaks to the east of the Sound. We re-entered Malaspina Inlet at "slack water" and rode the rising tide down to our take out at Penrose Bay.

The last day was spent in transit down the B.C. mainland, with ferry rides between Saltery Bay and Earl's Cove, then Langdale to Horseshoe Bay and over the Lions Gate Bridge. While the "Sunshine Coast" of British Columbia may not always be sunny, it's certainly scenic beyond expectation, eh? And what's with this business of gravy with french fries?