

If Only Kayaks Could Fly

Story by Hank Brooks, photos by Lynn Goertzen

Kayaking is fun! You get the feel of the water gliding under your boat and get to see the creatures in the water environment. However, in a kayak we have a very low and limited view of our surroundings. On this trip, some of our group would get a great aerial view of the Dunedin Causeway area.

About five TBSKers met in early December to paddle off Dunedin Causeway. Sue Tantalo, Rob Shea, John Ennis and Bob Chierico showed up to paddle with me. Tides were good. We had clear weather with a morning temperature of about 70 degrees and wind blowing from the South, Southeast at close to 10 mph. I



Would guys like to go up?

was still trying to wear off all the rich holiday food and not paddling very fast. The plan was to stay out of the wind as much as possible and then have it push us home. At total paddle of about six miles would be great.

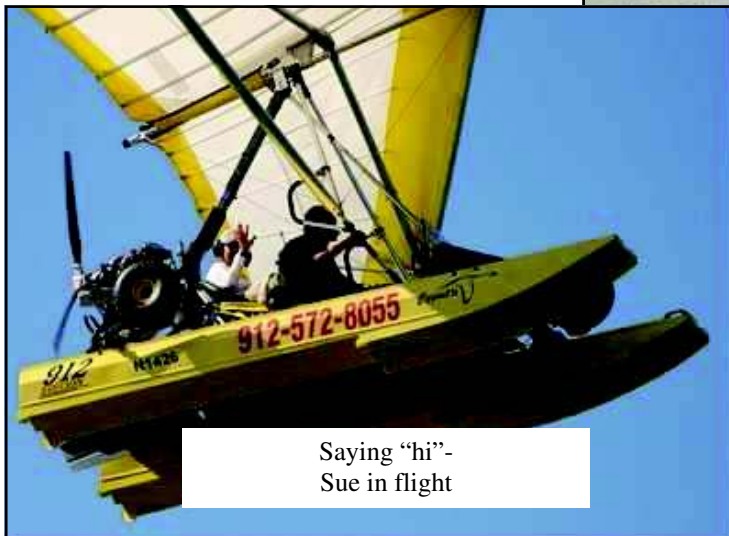
After we launched, we paddled parallel to the causeway to get some protection from the wind. Small manta rays suddenly jumped in front of us - giving us a small fright. We then headed south, keeping close to the shore. After about an hour's paddle, we decided to head for one of the spoil islands in the middle of the Intracoastal Waterway. We noticed that two ultra-light planes were circling above and then landing close to Caladesi Island. After a few minutes,



Bob's all ready to fly!



Ready, Set, GO!!!



Saying "hi"-
Sue in flight

we lost sight of them, so we continued our paddle to the island we had chosen for our break. When we got to the leeward side of the island, there were the two ultra-light aircraft sitting on the beach. They were amphibious - having both pontoons and wheels. (Story continued on next page)

If Only Kayaks Could Fly (continued)

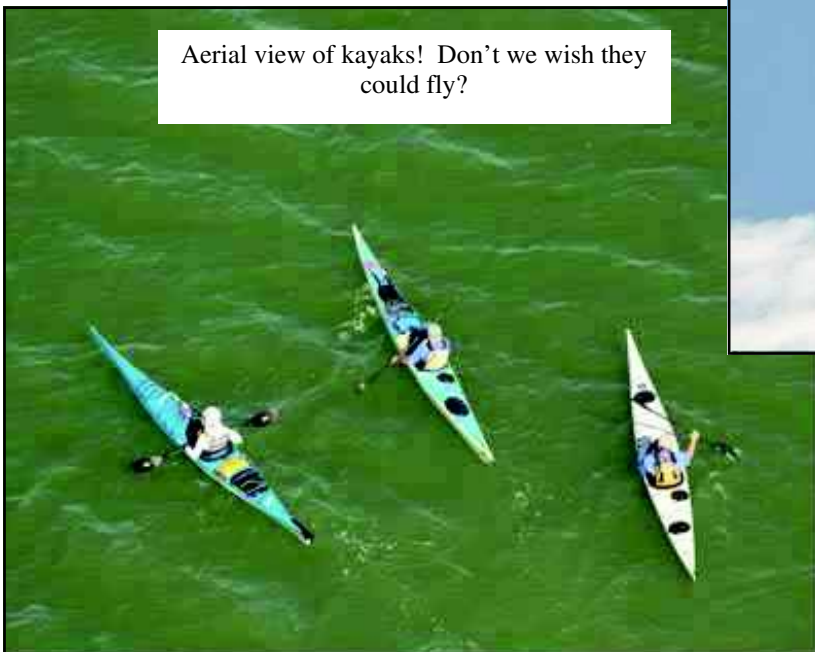
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We quickly struck up a conversation and they asked if we wanted a ride. We all looked at one another wondering which of us was crazy enough to take them up on their offer. Finally, Bob Chierico and Sue Tantalo agreed to go. The pictures you see on these pages are of their flight. As an intrepid TBSK newsletter reported, I interviewed both of them on the paddle back to our take-out to get their impressions of their air adventure:



Sue's impressions: It was exhilarating, only took about 100 yards to take off into a 10 mph wind. Once we were up to about 1000 feet, you could see for miles around. Just took my breath away!

Bob's impressions: The aircraft is very open and you could feel the wind as if you were on a motor bike. It was like a bird flying. When we were going directly into the wind we almost stood still. I loved it! The highlight of my day - both kayaking and flying.



The pilots were Derek Holmes and Dave Myers from Amphibian Air. They give introductory, instructional flights in their light sport, amphibious aircraft. They are in the area into April of 2014 and can be reached at 912-572-8055 or flywdave@gmail.com if you are interested in taking a flight. Photos taken by Lynn Goertzen.