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#2

ISSUE NO.

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

OUR SPECIAL THANKS TO :

Dr. P Giridhar Kini
REGISTRAR, MAHE

Cdr. (Dr.) Anil Rana
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MIT, Manipal

Dr. Somashekara Bhat
THE JOINT DIRECTOR
MIT, Manipal

Dr. Shreesha C
THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT
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MIT, Manipal.

Students and their Parents

A publication by

Centre for 
Outdoor Studies



MANIPAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
MANIPAL
(A constituent unit of MAHE, Manipal)



At the heart of our programs, The Centre for Outdoor Studies is dedicated to contributing to key UNSDG goals. Empowering through education, we nurture leadership, life skills and environmental stewardship.

Commitment to sustainability is key; from bicycle maintenance to Leave No Trace, we instill responsible practices. Our engagement in marine and environmental programs actively advocates for conservation.



As we geared up for our 3-day finale on the latest edition of the Adventurer – a certificate in outdoor leadership, we got a shocker! A directive from the government of Karnataka banned trekking in the western ghats. This was a blow to us as we had been working towards cycling to Andar from Manipal and then summiting Ajjikunj, a prominent peak in Kudremukh. We had been training for this day for 3 weeks. Finding a challenge worthy enough for a climatic finish was much desired for this team which was energized and highly motivated from the get-go. A day away from our finale, we had to do some quick thinking.

Our core team consisted of Shravya Pare, Piyush Nahar and BK Krishna. Shravya and Piyush were part of the team that cycled the remote Zaskar Valley in June 2023. During our time in the Himalayas, Shravya and Piyush had battled tough conditions on a daily basis for 3 weeks. At high altitude, we surmounted mechanical issues, mountain sickness, exhaustion, and unpredictable conditions to summit the 5100m Shinku La pass at the end of a tough tour. BK Krishna on the other hand was part of the team that kayaked the coast of Karnataka. On tour, we had 4 AM wake up call, followed by a spartan breakfast of eggs, fruits and chai followed by 7-hour days exposed to the sun on a single seater kayak in dynamic conditions at sea. All three had proved to be resilient individuals, keen on a good challenge. Our core team exuded confidence! We knew we had the fire power to galvanize the team to pull off something special in the hills.

And so we came up with an audacious plan! We decided on a circuitous route of 130kms, with an elevation gain of 2000m. Our conservative estimate pegged this to be a 14-hour day. Apart from cycling the long distance we would need to be prepared for heat exposure, dehydration, hunger, thirst, exhaustion and self-doubt. When we dropped this plan on our unsuspecting participants they were shocked! Many said that this was impossible given that the maximum distance we had cycled till date was 45kms.

How did it turn out in the end? Songs were sung, tears shed and somewhere along the way, the can-do-attitude sparked. Each one of our participants did a commendable job in rising up to the challenge and collectively we achieved the impossible!

Each one of our programs strives to cultivate dynamic leadership. We do this by providing controller exposure to challenging situations. Students work in teams to take charge in assessing risks, strengths and weaknesses based on which strategies are executed. Students are completely in charge of their own stories and are in the driver seat of their own success. The pages here contain a record of our activities. It is a record of our struggles, our victories, our lows and highs. It is our story.

As an educator, it's been an absolute honor to work with our students and to facilitate transformative experiences. Many people have worked tirelessly behind the curtains to bring this to fruition – Office staff, MIT Finance Desk, Freelance Instructors & Managers, Designers, Senior Administrators at MIT and MAHE, Small Business Owners, Karnataka Forest Department, DC Udupi, Coastal Police Udupi, Kargil Tourism, Parents and Well-Wishers.

Onwards and Upwards!

Ganesh Nayak

Coordinator,
Centre for Outdoor Studies,
Manipal Institute of Technology,
Manipal



Long-winding mountain road -
Into The Great Unknown

Illustration by Radhika

Dept. of Chemical Engineering, Adv Ed. 07

The KickOff

Words by Anuj Mahajan

Department of Instrumentation
Assistant Instructor Adv Ed.07 / Ed.08

This September, COS completed its 7th edition of The Adventurer by scaling the mighty Ajjikunj. The Adventurer, a program in outdoor studies and leadership has always aimed to create a perfect outdoorsman: independent, knowledgeable, strong, street-smart, and ready to face anything. The course does it by putting the participants in uncomfortable situations, situations where they must keep going when they can't, or when they need to turn back or sit one out when they don't want to. This develops a kind of resilience but also an ability to assess risk. This covers a big part of leadership; self-leadership which keeps one from being a liability in the group while also making them more independent. Other aspects of leadership are covered through making the students manage some of the rides and assigning leadership roles to them for entire weeks. Putting them in a spot to make decisions often makes them more thoughtful as here, instead of managing themselves now they must manage multiple different people. All of this contributes to better leadership skills and better people skills even.

Every adventurer must face adversity. We can prevent this to some extent by assessing and avoiding risky situations, but not always. Sometimes, it must be dealt with. As a course that primarily focuses on cycling, the biggest adversity comes in the form of cycle-breakdowns or injuries/accidents. The course consists of a bike maintenance workshop as well as a first aid workshop to get you out of some basic and commonly occurring situations like a punctured tyre or an open wound. Knowing this is important for the participants' confidence as well as their ability in going on longer trips where they can effectively look after themselves.

Another important part of being outdoors is respecting and appreciating the outdoors. "Leave No Trace" is a principle that we practice and preach to our best. Since

we visit places of natural beauty and biological diversity, it's important that we do not disturb the ecosystems or ruin the natural beauty in any way. That's what Leave No Trace is all about, you leave a place as you saw it. With respecting nature comes appreciating it. The course always consists of birding, herping sessions with enthusiasts and knowledgeable people in the field. The goal is to spark an interest in them to know about the creatures that we share this world with. It also gives an extra layer to the expeditions as spotting beautiful birds is always awesome but knowing who they are makes it better!

The first edition of the course was a bunch of students riding up to Agumbe. From there, we have come a long way to having a course with multiple instructors, multiple trips and workshops to compliment them. The course evolves with every edition and I'm sure people will see a very different version of the course next year. The goals and the vision, however remain the same. Even then, the most important thing is that this is a participant-driven course and the nature of the course relies as heavily on them, as on the instructors and program director.

Anuj is a fourth year engineering student with a love for exploring new places of natural and cultural beauty.

Radhika loves exploring new ways to be creative and adventures of the mind. She likes payasam and all things Greek & Indian mythology.

Lazy Days, Crazy Waves

Words by Dheeraj Chettiar

Assistant Instructor Sea Kayaking, Oct 2023

Dept. Aeronautical Engineering

Calling me lazy wouldn't be an understatement, I would rather stay in my room and procrastinate than go out and explore and this was the case till about my 5th semester where I first came across The Adventurer and me being my lazy self didn't pay much attention to it till my friends started to enroll. By the time I made up my mind to join the program, all the slots got full and then began six weeks of seeing my friends having the best time of their lives, exploring the landscapes of Udupi, and making bonds, that was when the FOMO set in, and I promised myself that I would grab onto the next opportunity that came my way. I didn't have to wait too long as Ganesh sir started the brand-new sea kayaking program and as promised I didn't waste any time and enrolled ASAP. My program began in December of 2022, it was a 15-day long course where I was the first and only student of the pioneer sea kayaking course. I would like to believe that I was rather lucky as being the only student meant that my coaches Kullu Sir and Ganesh Sir gave me their complete attention making it possible for me to learn the basics faster and begin learning advanced skills much earlier. During my first couple of days, I got accustomed to being in the kayak, being alone out in the water and soon progressed to spending time upside down in the water learning important skills like hip snaps, T rescues and rolls. When I was not in the water, I was engrossed in reading about the water, rivers, the waves, and sea kayaking in general from the plethora of books that Ganesh sir provided.

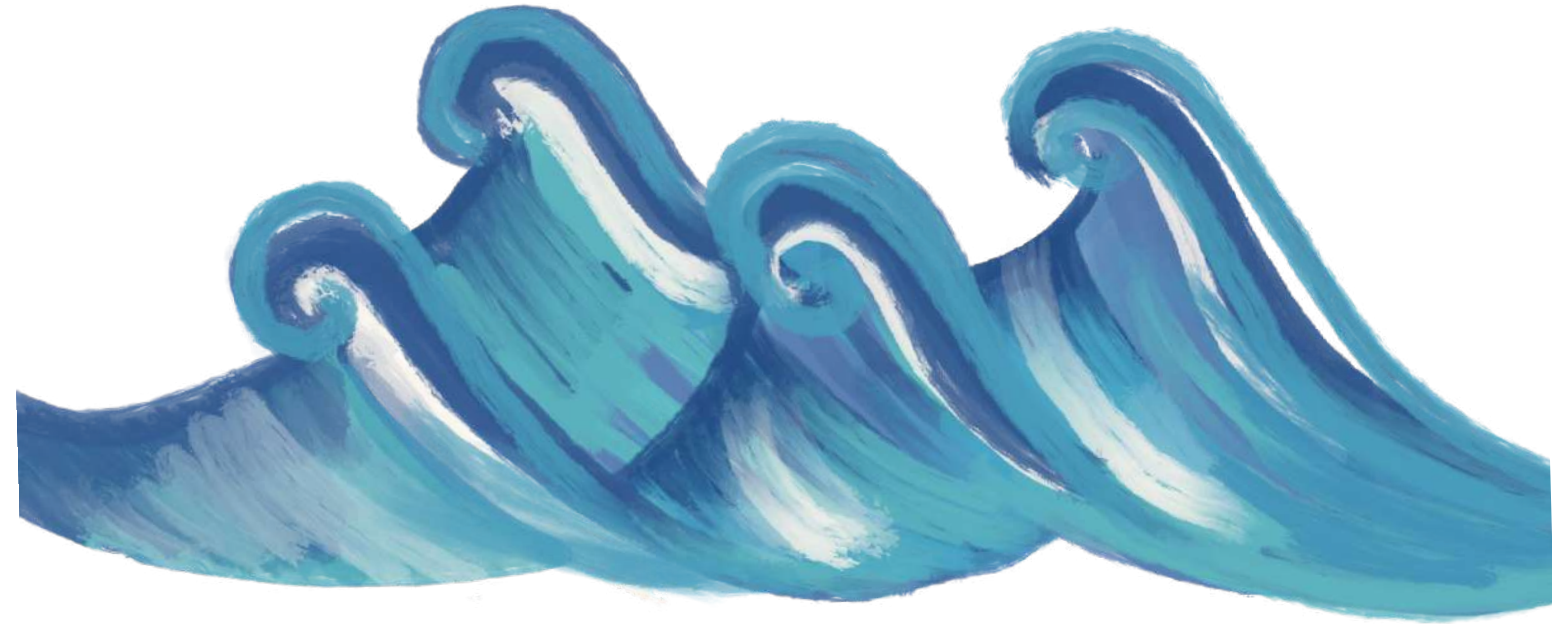
After spending about a week training in the Papanashini river, we finally ventured out to the open sea where Rohit sir graced us with an enlightening session on sea safety and taught us how to read waves. Using all that I had learnt till then Ganesh sir, Kullu sir, Manu sir and I

paddled out to the island we lovingly called Mattu rocks. The trip there was draining, and I needed to squeeze out every ounce of my will to get there but the moment I landed at the beach and saw the mesmerizing view of the coast, all my tiredness simply vanished, and I was overcome with a sense of joy and exaltation; that was the moment I finally found my calling. Over the course of the remaining days, we made trips to many such rock outcrops near Mattu beach and continued to build our endurance we even carried out recces for future editions.

After my course got over, I sat waiting eagerly for the day that fateful call from Ganesh sir would come and he would ask me to join him and help run the next sea kayaking course; it was a long eight month wait but, in the September of 2023, my phone finally rang, and I picked it up and said "YES" without a moment's hesitation. I was really excited about the new course as I would finally get to share my knowledge with someone else and help them fall in love with kayaking just like I did. The best part of teaching was helping people overcome their fear of being in the water. Seeing people make the journey from being afraid of even getting in the water to being able to tackle the biggest of waves was really satisfying.

The course was really exciting as we got to visit not just one but two offshore islands, our beloved Mattu rocks as well as an island known as Fingerprint Island about 7 kilometers off the shore of Kapu beach. There were a lot of new and exciting things we did on this course like kayaking in the evening chop where swells in the water threw us more than a couple of feet in the air making us feel like we were riding a rollercoaster and not a kayak. We also learnt about many exciting things in nature like

The sea has a unique power to teach us about ourselves and the beauty of nature.



mangroves, glaciers as well as the local flora and fauna thanks to all the educators who were affiliated with the course.

In conclusion, my journey as an assistant instructor for this sea kayaking course has been a transformative and rewarding experience. Witnessing the growth and enthusiasm of our students as they conquered the challenges of the open water has been truly inspiring.

Dheeraj really likes planes because they let him be one with the clouds and feel what the birds feel. He is fascinated by space and the infinite ways one can experience it.



HIMALAYAN BITES

A look at the savouries of Zaskar

Piyush Nahar

Team Himalayas, June 2023

Dept. of Instrumentation Engineering

For the Himalayas expedition, I was given the mouth-watering task of trying out and reviewing all the different types of food and cuisines we would encounter. The journey for my taste buds began in the city of Bangalore where the team had gathered to assemble our bicycles and learn some basics of repairing them. From the 5 crore worth dosa skills of Rameshwaram Cafe to the Rajasthani delicacy of Dal Baati Churma to the team dinner at KAARA By The Lake, Bengaluru had it all. Following this, the Indian Railways did a fantastic job providing us with some hot and delicious meals on the Rajdhani Express from Bengaluru to Delhi. These included chapatis with curry for dinner, traditional vanilla ice cream for dessert, bread and eggs for breakfast, and some steaming and piping hot lunch.

Immediately after setting foot into Jammu Tawi, we did what everyone does when they reach Jammu- buy cherries. The team simply couldn't get enough of it so we bought two more boxes of it for our journey to Sonamerg. On our way, we had some rajma chawal and tea enjoying the beautiful view of the Dal Lake and the Chenab River. We stopped at the Narindeer Punjabi Hotel and Restaurant in Sonamerg after arriving exhausted. There, we had parathas and slurped down some cool lassi. When we set foot to explore this small town, we found some local shops selling different varieties of dry fruits and apricots. In order to handle the cold, meaty dishes such as lamb and mutton are prepared and served with some boiled vegetables. I observed that individuals continued to consume little meals in addition to their larger ones to keep themselves warm and tackle the cold. Our bicycles next took us to Kargil which was very rich with so many dishes to portray their unique style of cooking. Lamb momos, kebabs, omelets, ladakhi tea were some of the things we tried at the Kargil main market. One thing that stood out in this town was the amount of bakeries present here. Cream rolls, a variety of naan and breads, donuts, and cakes are what these bakeries offer for people with a sweet tooth. We also unexpectedly had some great pizza and pasta from a cafe called Brew Bites. This town stood out in terms of the diversity and variety it offered in terms of food.

Next was Sankoo which felt like a small, cute town every man dreams of retiring in after some long battles in his youth with the corporate world. People were friendly, welcoming and offered us snacks like samosas and sweet buns with some hot tea. It was evident as soon as we approached Padum that we had landed in a Buddhist culture region of Zaskar Valley, where people were enjoying their chowmeins, momos, and noodles. We also became the first customers of a cafe called the M17 cafe near the helipad of the town, the owner served us some hot and fresh parathas and sandwiches and wished us luck for the journey ahead. This cafe was really special because it was based inside a helicopter, the M1-17 which was abandoned in 2001 and he took it upon himself to convert this abandoned piece of metal into a cafe for the locals and visitors of the town. For the final stretch of the trip, we arrived at the Acho Camping and Restaurant- situated at the base of Gonbo Ranjan Peak. After completing one of the most difficult rides to reach the camp we were greeted with some maggi and tea. We had a new soup at the camp that was prepared with yak cheese! A creamy preparation that helped to relieve some of our fatigue. Later on, crossing the Shinkula pass we entered Himachal Pradesh and experienced a whole new cuisine. As the tourist center, Manali has excellent cafes and street sellers selling delicious local food, so much so that we had a mouthwatering experience. The standout items included 7 flavours in 1 softie, paneer momos, kulhad pizza, pani-puri, and apple pie with ice cream. It was the perfect way to end such a remarkable trip.

Piyush enjoys reading fiction novels and watching documentaries. He considers himself a very religious football supporter. To calm himself down in stressful situations you will find him enjoying some good old rock music.

COS Features

Byndoor to
Apsarkonda



5-day kayaking expedition documents biodiversity

Deepthi.Sanjiv@timesgroup.com

Udupi: Despite encountering challenging conditions in the sea, along specific stretches, the nine-member team led by Professor Ganesh Nayak from the department of instrumentation and control engineering at a private college in Manipal, successfully documented the wealth of biodiversity during their recently completed five-day kayaking expedition. The expedition was held from December 15 to 19.

Prof. Ganesh Nayak, coordinator of centre for outdoor studies, Manipal told TOI that the ground support crew, which included two student videographers,

FROM BYNDOOR TO APSARKONDA

Swaroop and Sharath, Lisa David (team manager), and Afran (a passionate naturalist from Karkala), played a pivotal role in assisting the team with the documentation of biodiversity. The team documented 76 species of birds, 27 species of butterflies, six species of frogs, eight species of reptiles, and 26 species of spiders.

He said, "It was certainly not a great start for the team, because at the beginning of the journey the drone crashed. Despite this setback, the breathtaking scenery, including a mesmerising sunrise, uplifted the team's spirits. The surroundings appeared to be adorned in golden hues, creating an atmosphere



AGAINST ALL ODDS: Kayaking team at the start line

re of optimism. Each day commenced at 4.30am, and the team encountered a multitude of unique experiences as the conditions varied. For instance, near Murudeshwar, at Kagegudda, the sea exhibited an almost serene stillness. However, the team miscalculated the distance between Shiror and Murudeshwar, making the additional 4km of kayaking a formidable challenge."

"Spotting Lord Shiva's statue, they prematurely assumed they had reached their destination, only to realise it would take a few more hours to actually arrive at their campsite. Enduring seven hours in the water proved to be a challenge, testing the strength of the entire crew as they were exposed to the elements. Despite the difficulties, the team pressed on, determined to overcome the hurdles posed by the unpredictable conditions of their expedition," he said and appreciated the efforts of the Coastal Security Police, who were constantly checking on the team.

Students Pearl Behl and BK Krishna described the expedition as an invaluable learning experience. They said, "We were introduced to the principle of 'leave no trace,' where the emphasis was on meticulous planning and preparation. The team adhered to using sustainable gear, utensils, and water cans, and opted for unprocessed and unpackaged food such as fruits and eggs to minimise the generation of non-biodegradable waste at their campsites. Conscious efforts were made to avoid campfires. Furthermore, the team took the initiative to collect any waste at the campsite before leaving, ensuring they left the site cleaner than they found it."

Pearl stressed the therapeutic value of engaging in such activities for individuals grappling with anxiety issues. Reflecting on her own experience, she said facing a panic attack amidst the vastness of the ocean and successfully navigating through it was a profound sense

Kayaking expedition will raise awareness on ecology

Deepthi.Sanjiv@timesgroup.com

Udupi: A nine-member team, led by Prof. Ganesh Nayak from the department of instrumentation and control engineering at a private college in Manipal, is gearing up for a kayaking expedition from Byndoor in Udupi to Apsarkonda in Uttara Kannada district.

The team comprises four crew members and five kayakers, including two students from the Center for Outdoor Studies, Manipal. The four-day expedition is scheduled to commence on December 15 and will be preceded by an advanced training camp from December 12 to 14.

The team is diverse, with Manu, a freelance kayak instructor from Kundapur, and Meghana Binraj, a marine ecologist joining the expedition. The ground support crew includes, two student videographers Swaroop and Sharath, Lisa David, team manager, and Afran, a passionate naturalist from Karkala. The expedition will focus on exploring and understanding the local ecology. Prof. Nayak told TOI.

The team plans to camp at Byndoor, Bhatkal and Mugali and will engage in kayaking each day from 6am to 11am. The rest of the day will be dedicated to ecological surveys, with Afran and Meghana Binraj being expert resource persons along with Manu, who has also completed a course with the Nature Conservation Foundation.

Apart from the core activities, the team aims to explore local architecture and culture, conduct nature walks, and document flora and fauna, including participating in birding activities. Additionally, the



FUN TIMES: The team is all set for the sea kayaking expedition from Byndoor in Udupi to Apsarkonda in Uttara Kannada

participants will watch a documentary on Nagathirtha at Someshwar Beach in Byndoor, created by Praveen Shetty from the Center for Inter-cultural Studies, Manipal.

Discussions are underway with Hasta Shilpa Heritage Village Museum to provide architectural walks for students. This initiative, scheduled before the expedition, aims to enhance their understanding of traditional homes and will help document the same in Murudeshwar.

The team will undergo training in pitching tents, outdoor cooking, first aid, and sustainable travel practices during the advanced training programme, starting on Tuesday. The expedition aims to meet the following UN Sustainable Development Goals - good health and well-being, quality education, climate action, life on land, life below water, responsible consumption, and partnership for the goals.

Coastal Karnataka Expedition



Seascapes

Zaskar Valley



Prof, 6 students pull off Himalayan expedition

Deepthi.Sanjiv@timesgroup.com

Udupi: Six engineering students, led by prof. Ganesh Nayak from the department of instrumentation and control engineering from a private college here, have completed a 15-day cycling expedition in the Himalayas. The students — Jordan Kuruvilla, Harsh B Patil, Humesh Sanaboyina, Shravya Pare, Piyush Nahar, and Nakshatra Bhandary — were trained for a year by prof. Nayak, during which they did several expeditions in the Western Ghats.

Prof. Nayak told TOI: "The team pedalled 500km from Sonmarg in Kashmir through Zaskar Valley to Darcha in Himachal Pradesh. They cycled up to an altitude of 5,100 metres at Shingo La pass. The expedition supported by a sporting equipment retailer, that provided two bicycles and clothing."

The team left from Bengaluru to Delhi and Delhi to Jammu by train. From Jammu, they travelled by a tempo traveller to Sonmarg. The expedition was between June 11 and June 25. The first high-mountain pass they pedalled was Zoji La pass at an altitude of about 3,500 metres. They



HAPPY FEET: Six engineering students, led by prof. Ganesh Nayak from the department of instrumentation and control engineering of a private college in Manipal, completed a 15-day cycling expedition

stayed in Kargil for a day, and met the assistant tourism director who arranged for free accommodation further on. From there, they travelled to Suru Valley, which was in full bloom, proving a visual treat. They pedalled to Pensi La pass, where one of the students met with an accidental fall because of which her bicycle was damaged. "She managed the rest of the distance with only one brake," said prof. Nayak.

Another student suffered altitude sickness and fell ill, but soon recovered.

"Despite all challenges,

including extreme climate conditions, bad roads, several water crossings and flooded roads, the team pulled off the expedition. We did not have any support vehicle. But we collaborated with the Centre for Wilderness Medicine, who put in place an acclimatisation plan. The roads were bad near Zaskar Valley and the last 100km was tough. A 10km stretch took us about three hours to complete. Ours is probably the only cycling team from a college to have done the Himalayan expedition," prof. Nayak claimed.



Adventurers



Team Himalayas

Harsh Jordan
Shravya Humesh
Piyush Nakshatra
Ganesh Sir

Juley!!

SEA qajaqking

an overview

Words by B K Krishna

Team Coastal Karnataka, Dec 2023

Dept. of Commerce

HISTORY OF SEA KAYAKING:

The roots of sea kayaking can be traced back to the indigenous peoples of the Arctic, who developed specialized boats for their survival in the challenging conditions of the northern seas. *Known as “qajaqs” or “kayaks,” these vessels were incredible feats of engineering.* These kayaks were made from naturally occurring materials like animal pelts, driftwood, and bone, and were intended to be used for ice-free paddling. Their hull was sleek and narrow, enabling them to maneuver with agility even in harsh weather. To keep the paddler warm and dry in the icy seas of the Arctic, seal skins—a waterproof and insulating material—were used to wrap the kayaks.

AGE OF EXPLORATION:

During the Age of Exploration, when European explorers came across a variety of boats on their voyages, sea kayaking was first popularised worldwide. The Inuit kayak piqued their interest the most. The increasing understanding of kayak design and construction in Europe can be attributed to these exchanges. However, sea kayaking did not become well-known around the world until the early 20th century. One of the earliest thorough accounts of the Inuit kayak was given by British explorer Sir William Scoresby in his 1820 book “An Account of the Arctic Regions.”

THE KAYAK’S EVOLUTION:

The mid-20th century saw the introduction of contemporary materials like fibreglass and plastics, which significantly changed kayak design. Thanks to these new materials, kayaks are now more widely available and reasonably priced. Although the classic kayak designs remained, other models that served various functions and tastes have joined them. Sea kayaks became lighter, more durable, and easier to handle, allowing more people to enjoy the sport.

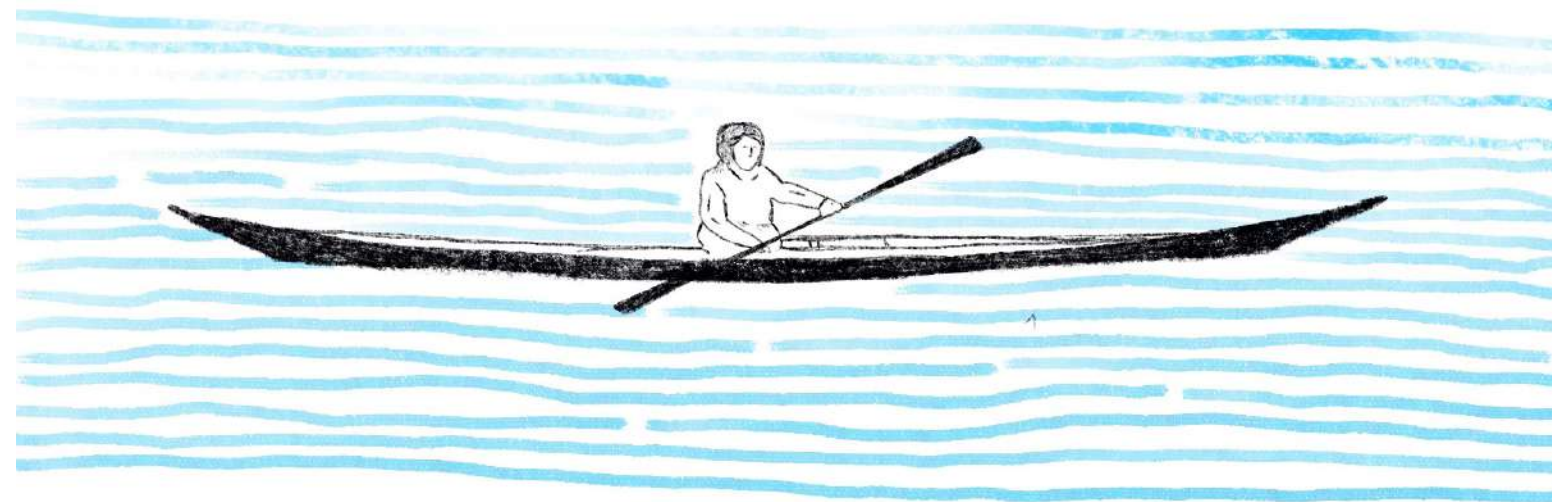
THE BIRTH OF SEA KAYAKING AS A SPORT:

In the 1970s and 1980s, sea kayaking gained popularity as a recreational activity. People began to realise how special it was to explore islands, coasts, and far-off places from the perspective of a kayak. This experience provided a greater connection with nature, which was both physically and spiritually fulfilling. Kayakers organised events and trips as interest rose, creating a lively and expanding community of enthusiasts. The camaraderie and common love of sea kayaking had a major role in elevating the sport to new heights.

SAFETY AND EDUCATION:

As sea kayaking gained more and more traction, safety and instruction were essential components of the activity. Sea kayaking courses and certificates were introduced by organizations like the American Canoe Association and the British Canoe Union. In order to guarantee that enthusiasts could paddle safely in a range of situations, these programmes concentrated on teaching fundamental abilities, navigation methods, and safety procedures. Understanding the marine ecosystem and the significance of responsible ecotourism were also emphasized.

BK is a social and adventurous individual who loves driving and traveling, with a background as an ace MUNner and a two-term service on the management board of AIESEC, this showcases his dedication to global youth development. His engaging personality and leadership skills makes him a go-to person for exciting hangouts and collaborative endeavors.



<https://paddlingmag.com/stories/features/history-of-sea-kayaking/>

<https://www.amalfikayak.com/>



Breaking Limits

Words by Shravya Pare

Team Himalayas, June 2023

Dept. of Mechatronics

Cycling the Himalayas was an experience I had never imagined during my time at MIT, Manipal. This was until Professor Ganesh Nayak invited me to join the Himalayan Bicycle Crew aiming to cycle the remote Zaskar Valley in Ladhak. In preparation for the tour, we completed a course in outdoor leadership from the Centre for Outdoor Studies, MIT and the team rigorously trained for months with the Professor, who had cycled the Himalayas twice.

I'll now share an experience that left an indelible mark on me.

On the ninth day of our tour, we tackled the remote Pensi La pass(4400m) and entered the desolate Zaskar valley. Descending the pass was a challenge due to the rocky track inundated by glacial melt. We had to pause many times as our hands turned red and ached from continuous braking. After grappling with rough roads, scorching sun, and sore muscles, the sight of a well-maintained road was a welcome relief. It had been a long time since we encountered such good conditions, and as the road began to go downhill again, I couldn't wait to cruise down. I let out a joyful "woohoo," and then disaster struck - I crashed! My enthusiasm had led me to overlook a speed bump while descending at high speed. Fortunately, I escaped serious injury and got away with a few bruises. My bike didn't fare as well; the rear brake was damaged, and the brake lever lay on the road. It was isolated and not a single vehicle passed us. It was just Nakshatra - one of our teammates and me, standing on the side of the road, pondering our next move. The professor who was bringing up the rear, caught up with us. I explained what had happened. I was feeling very tense, but the professor reassured me. We inspected the bike, removing the debris that had lodged inside the brake levers. To our relief, the shifters and the front brake were functioning properly.

Reaching Padum, our destination that evening, we searched for a bike shop but to no avail. Now, the question was whether I should proceed by bicycle or by vehicle. From our research we knew we had approximately 100 kms left. But this was going to be the toughest 100kms as the road slowly climbed to Shinku La at 5100m. After discussions with the team, we decided to take it step by step and so I was to cycle as long as conditions were manageable. As we proceeded up the valley conditions became tough - with washed away roads, tracks made of sand, impenetrable headwinds, and hair-raising descents! My team mates, Harsh and Jordan rallied around me and kept me safe. My trust in them was absolute as they made sure that I wouldn't go over the edge at some particularly steep sections. I could sense my confidence grow as each challenge was surmounted and won. 3 days and a tough 100kms later we were atop Shinku La, successfully completing one of the toughest rides ever! The fact that I completed this with a broken bicycle is a testament to the strong team that supported me and the months of training that went in to this expedition. After this experience, I have come away with a stronger sense of my capabilities and a never give up spirit that would have been difficult to cultivate without this singular experience of cycling the Himalayas!

Shravya is an engineering student at MIT, Manipal. She loves riding motorcycles and is enthusiastic about staying fit. Besides her passion for adventures, she enjoys reading non fiction books in her spare time and occasionally indulges in painting.

COASTAL KARNATAKA TOUR

Manu Nackathaya

Team Coastal Karnataka, Dec 2023
Kayak Instructor

In 2019, during the Center for Outdoor Studies' Adventurer 3.0 program, Ganesh Nayak and his students cycled to Mannanpaapu Mane - a homestay I managed at the foothills of Kudremukha. Interacting with Ganesh since then has been deeply inspiring. We share a similar enthusiasm for nature and the outdoors. As we got to know each other, Ganesh invited me to try sea kayaking at the COS headquarters in Katapady. Our first paddle together through the mangroves ignited an interest in me to learn more about kayaking. I began spending more time on the water and trained with other kayaking professionals.

I'm Manu, a freelance chef, property manager and kayak instructor with COS.

Ganesh has been telling me about his dream of kayaking the coast of Karnataka for 3 years now. In 2022 we did a little bit of planning, but couldn't make it happen. In 2023, we set our minds to make it happen no matter what. And we did it!

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

Planning this journey involved several recce's. Route maps, contingency and emergency plans had to be made. We also had to get the necessary permits from the District Administration, Tourism Department, Coast Guard, Forest Department & the local police. We sometimes felt helpless dealing with the timelines and protocol of multiple government offices and ended up having to run around until the last day to get it done.

Our expedition also had a secondary objective - learning about the landscapes and biodiversity of the region. It was invaluable to have Afran on board, as team naturalist. Our ground crew also consisted of Swaroop and Sharath

who recorded our journey through beautiful photographs and videos. Liza came to our rescue as team manager and support vehicle driver, responsible for all ground operations and general team cheerleading. Pearl, BK, Meghana, Ganesh and I made up the paddle team. The two day training camp at COS headquarters was imperative to everyone getting acquainted with each other and the different parts of the operation. Training included endurance paddles, setting up tents, learning to cook on a camping stove, organising and packing equipment, learning and practising LNT principles including waste management, documenting wildlife and getting used to the daily routine. By the end of the 2 days, the team were excited to start a journey to remember, the kind that's never been done on the quiet coast of Karnataka!

THE PADDLE BEGINS AT BYNDOOR

We reached Byndoor, our starting point, by road on the evening of 15th December 2023 and stayed at a forest Inspection Bungalow on the laterite plateau overlooking the Someshwara delta beach (a.k.a Ottinene). After a nightjar-abundant walk with Afran around the grassy landscape, it was time for our final briefing, gear & supplies check. Pre-dawn on the 16th morning, we hiked down to the beach. At first light, we were in our kayaks and out of the surf zone soon after, ready to paddle the 10-11 kms to our next pitstop.

What an experience it was looking out into the vastness of the ocean, appreciating its beauty, feeling small, grateful and content. Every rhythmic stroke of the paddle was a step towards realizing our dream. We reached Bhatkal at 10:30 am, after 3 hours in the sea, with the conditions in our favour. The ground crew were waiting



The inviting shade of a cool camp after 24 km and 7.5 hours on the water!

for us, waving in excitement. We shared hugs, laughter, joy, and a feeling of accomplishment.

CAMPING AT BHATKAL

It was time to test our camping skills on a secluded beach! Hammocks and tents surrounded our central tarp area with water, food and books. Afran with others found some interesting wild & marine life around the rocky beach. The day was peppered with laughter, solo walks, naps, reflection and relaxation. After a sunset swim, the team came together to make our favourite, (in) famous camping dinner - Maggie with cheese, cooked

by the students on a camping stove. We went to bed with a smile on our faces, despite a few hiccups in time management and local police men trying to ruffle our feathers.

The routine continued over the next few days: a 4:30am wake up with a breakfast of boiled eggs, bananas, oranges, muesli and chai to send us on our way.

A LONG STRETCH TO MURUDESHWAR

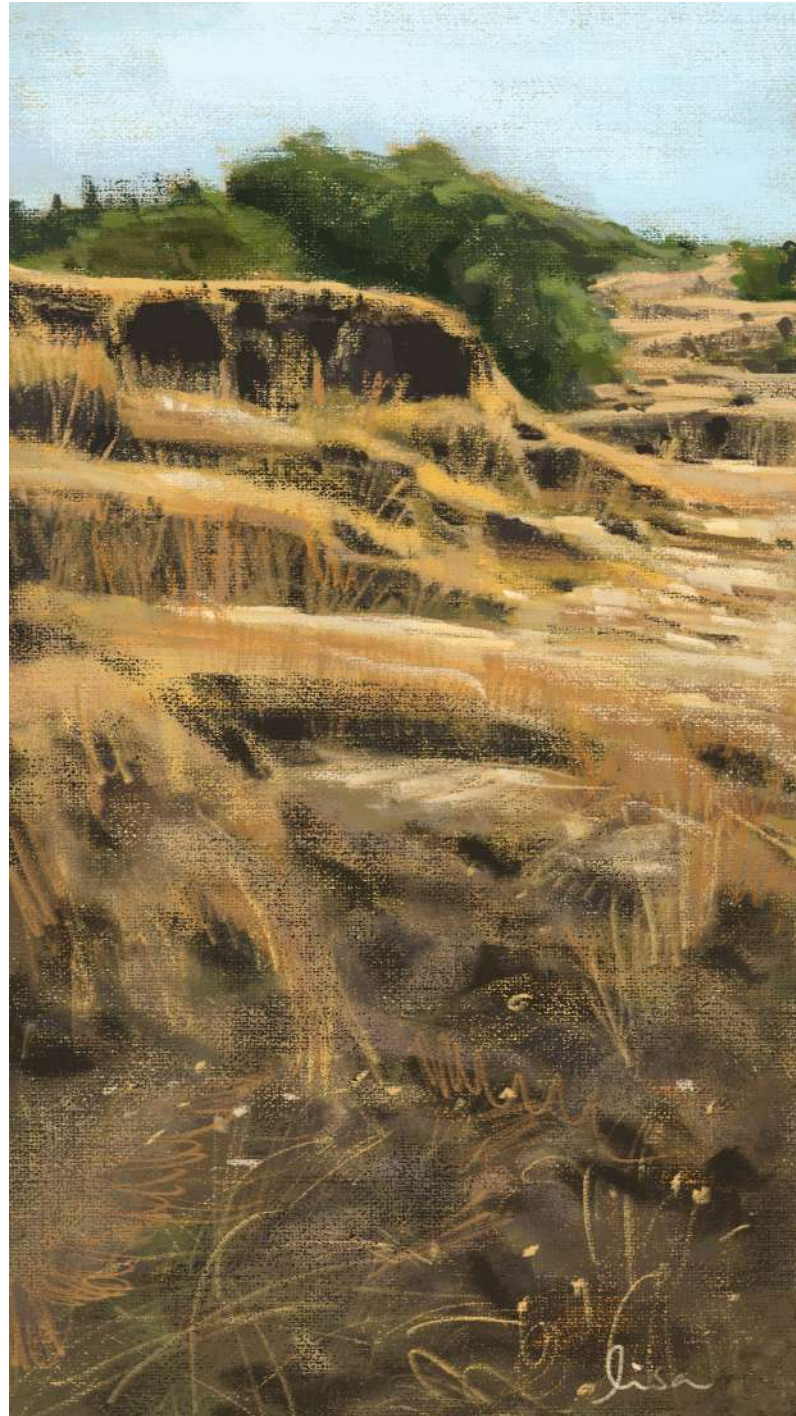
We left Bhatkal prepared for the longest paddle of the expedition, a 17-18 km stretch, or so we thought. By 10 AM, after 3 hours in the water, we'd covered about 12 kms in windy and choppy conditions. A recalculation showed that we had 8 km to go. The team was still energetic. At an average speed of 4km/hour, that would mean 2 more hours of paddling. But, with the sun above us, tiredness & soreness didn't take long to creep in. It was tough going. A flicker of hope was restored when Murudeshwar's Shiva statue came into sight. But at 12:30 PM, we had finished the expected 20kms and yes, Shiva was closer, yet still so far away! We had to dig deep and encourage each other to keep going.

Finally, we made our way around the rocky bend and could see the land crew flashing a mirror to signal us in to land. Relief. We inched closer to the landing site, still staying well beyond the surf zone. The ocean had its own plans that day! Waves began breaking further and further back and flooded some of our decks. Ganesh got carried by a wave and managed a landing. One member started panicked because of the unexpected waves and was unwilling to land. After some consolation (and some circus!), we all landed safely - after 7.5 hours in the water and paddling a total of 24 kms. Much longer than we had imagined and ever trained for. Hard lessons learned about planning distances, dealing with tough conditions and what to do in such eventualities.

Luckily, lunch was waiting for us in a cool, shady camp with fresh water and simple conveniences. A nap and a slow evening followed, walking the old traders' street and taking in the sights and sounds of the temple town.

FINAL STOP - HONNAVAR

A friend's house on a private beach near Honnavar was our last stop. After the previous day's 24 km paddle, 13 kms seemed easy. We took it slow, enjoying the rocky plateau views of the Uttara Kannada coast. The day was bright and beautiful. After landing and refreshments, we shared reflections and learnings, juggled, doodled, played a game of volleyball on the



A morning walk on the grassland near Honnavar.



Mojo : The 50 km coastline that the team paddled from Dakshin to Uttara Kannada was largely defined by the rocky laterite plateau meeting the coast, often forming dramatic cliffs that made for stunning viewpoints.

beach and got a comfortable night's sleep. A morning walk on the nearby wild laterite plateau with stunning views of the sea was a highlight of our trip. On our final day, we paddled 3 kms across a cliff to Apsarakonda, our pickup location. Over 3 days, we had done close to 50 km of paddling along a small part of the coast of Karnataka. And we were thrilled!

I am so grateful for the team we created, the companionship we shared, our persistence & enthusiasm, and for all the planning & execution. And grateful to all the people who supported us in making it happen - officials who gave us permits to locals who watched out for us and invited us into their homes. Already looking forward to the next one.

Illustrations by: Lisa is a visual and service designer by profession, natural builder in training and manager on the COS Coastal Karnataka Sea Kayaking Tour.

Pedaling Through Stories

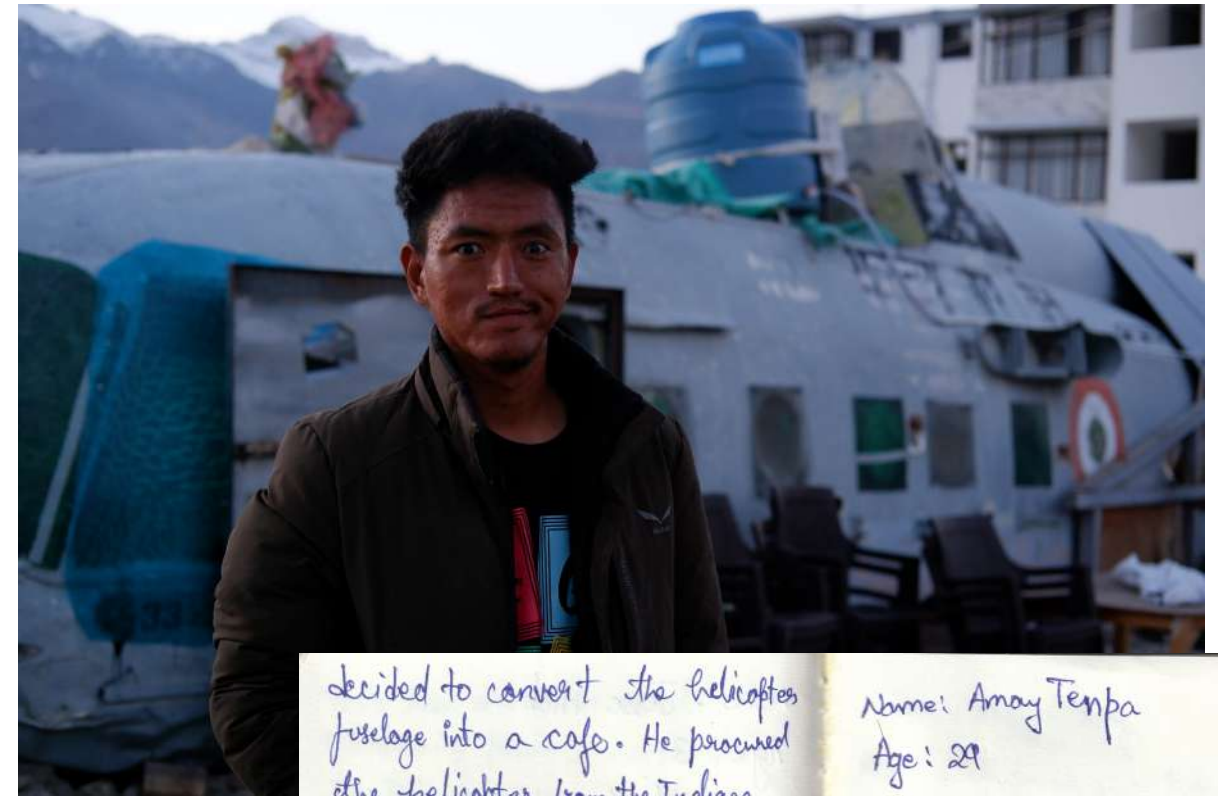
Unveiling the Tapestry of Human Connections

Humesh

Team Himalayas, June 2023
Dept. of Aeronautical Engineering



Embarking on the Himalayan Cycling Expedition I got the opportunity to meet and interact with different people along the way. Each face told a story, and every interaction became a chapter in the collective narrative of the expedition. From the train voyage to Jammu to concluding the cycling expedition in Manali, I've encountered numerous stories, each possessing its own genuine and distinctive essence. As we pedalled through the villages, we were greeted with genuine warmth and kindness. At every stop, locals would approach us, eager to learn about our journey. I was more than happy to talk to them and exchange stories of our own. Interacting with fellow travellers has been an eye-opening experience, especially as I've encountered individuals who made the bold decision to leave their jobs behind in pursuit of travel. This encounter has served as a poignant reminder to me of the intrinsic human inclination to forge connections with the world that surrounds us. I've had the opportunity to meet locals who, following their retirement from the army and police force, embarked on a new chapter by establishing hotels to serve as welcoming havens for the travellers passing through their villages. Every person I encountered on the journey exuded friendliness and a willingness to share their personal stories. This experience allowed me to approach their lives with an open mind, gaining insights into how we, as human beings, navigate and thrive in this world. As an introvert, I initially encountered difficulties in engaging with people. Nevertheless, the journaling activity I embarked upon played a pivotal role in pushing me beyond my comfort zone, ultimately leading to the formation of beautiful friendships with the local people of the Himalayas—a prospect I had never imagined.



Amay

decided to convert the helicopter fuselage into a cafe. He procured the helicopter from the Indian Airforce and renovated into a cafe. He was very welcoming person and invited us for the breakfast before we leave Padum. The food from the cafe was really good and sandwiches he made were yum.

His village Ralokung as he describes is one of the most beautiful village and would definitely wants us to visit it one day.

Name: Amay Tenpa
Age: 29

Met him during our stay at Padum. He is a DU graduate and pursued M.com after which he worked in AT&T company for 1.5 years and then he quit his job. He observed the crashed helicopter at padum and was saddened by seeing its state. He wanted to make some of the crashed helicopter M17 just lying there near the helipad in Padum. The helicopter was just lying there since 2002. So, Amay Tenpa



Jesse

He's been one of the most entertaining person I have met on the trip. Me, Piyush and Nakshatra had a good time talking to him. We met him again and again on our way to Padum and Purne. Every time we would see him, we would wave him a 'Hi'. He is such a lively person I met on this trip. He's into paddling, trekking mountains in America with his friends and traveling on the bike.



Name: Jesse Hieb

Age: 37

We met him during our stay LA Himalaya at Rangdum.

He's from Wisconsin and is traveling right around different states of India.

He's the most Chatty person I met on this trip. He quit his job as a creative producer and now just travels around different countries. He shared a lot of stories of his stay in India.

Now his aim is to serve the travellers passing by his village, Matayen. So, he set up a hotel & restaurant named "SNOW MOUNTAIN" which is still under construction.



Name: Muhammed Latif

During his 12th grade in 2001 He left school in order to join the Indian Army. He was very much inspired by the army and saw that there was recruitment going on. This dates back to the year 2001, when he got the certificate from his college so he could join the army even though his father was persistent of him to study further.

He served in the army for a period of 19 years and got out of his unit during the period of COVID-19.



Muhammed

TRANSCENDING LESSONS

Words by Raghav Jajoo

Adv Ed. 06, 2023

The first time I met Ganesh sir was during the initiation of Adventurer 6.0, and little did I know that it would transform my life into this constant need for some kind of thrill and adventure. His foresight to create such a course where we learn so much, not in the closed doors of a classroom, but in the lap of nature, always inspires me. I write this article with the sole intension of sharing my experience in the Adventurer, and how those lessons, taught in the great outdoors of Karnataka, have turned into a fundamental part of my personality. With this, I hope to inspire the reader into embracing their adventurous side.

On the pleasantly cold mornings of Manipal, we are asked to report to the meeting spot at 5:30 AM to avoid riding our cycles in too much sunlight. It takes a while to get used to it, but once you are comfortable waking up early, it becomes enjoyable. Little by little, day by day, we were taught a variety of things: Teamwork, LNT (Leave No Trace), planning, leading & journaling; to name a few. In between riding we would also have special sessions with a guest professional showing us a glimpse of their world: bird watching, snake poisons, buffalo racing & cycle maintenance; to name a few. Those were highly anticipated days. The excitement of riding with a big group was something most of us had never felt before. With time our bonds became strong and by the end everyone had some sense of accomplishment.

The basics of this course were simple enough to understand, but the depth of those lessons still teaches us something new every day. Recently I was given the chance to coach a small team of chess players. The objective was to prepare them for a tournament. Now, I'm not a very strong chess player myself, but I know enough to teach school kids, hence they chose me. The interesting thing about this story is that chess has got nothing to do with adventure, but the lessons learned transcended their original purpose and helped me navigate this new path that I was on. Planning ahead became second nature, the dynamics of teamwork were on point, LNT and minimalistic packing were practiced. I was able to lead my team to a successful venture. I believe that a lot of this would not have been possible if not for the Adventurer. I cherish those memories and I am grateful for the time I've spent with everyone associated with it.

