

# Professional Development

By Lorraine Williams

*Not only do you learn stuff - but it's loads of fun too!*





**Wow! I was amongst thirty Canoe & Kayak instructors, guides and trip leaders recently enjoying an action packed four days expanding our skills and knowledge in the C & K Professional Development Course at Taupo.**

On Monday at the pool we briefly discussed what we wanted to achieve, then Dan of BOP 'taught' Jill how to improve her Eskimo Rolling while the rest of us observed and itched to join in. On the lake after lunch we worked on developing sea kayak rescues and paddle strokes.

Tuesday morning in calm weather we paddled to the Maori carvings, which were awesome, with Pete shouting things like "giant wave coming from the right, brace, brace!" so we all dutifully braced into the oncoming ripple. A 20 knot head-wind on the return challenged some of us. Then we practised lighting a fire in the rain - I think I'd better work on that one. We went on to Reid's Farm for combat swimming and throw-bagging. The water wasn't as cold as I anticipated, but I was wearing Sharkskins under a wetsuit, with semi-dry jacket and trousers on top, so the water hardly touched my skin.

Wednesday, we were on the Mohaka River, and white water. Our newbies played Pooh Sticks in a creek, studying river dynamics and water flow. On flat water after lunch we had a go at ferry-gliding and eddie turns. Most were in sea kayaks for their first time on such a river. Experienced paddlers ran the Mohaka with Matt Barker, a senior outdoor activity lecturer from AUT.

On Thursday Matt set up a system of ropes and carabiners to demonstrate single-handedly pulling a SUV with the hand brake on. "Why not take the hand brake off?" "No! That would be far too easy!" This set-up can be used to pull a stuck kayak off a rock. We then formed our groups and hit the river.

Many appreciated instructions and advice from experienced paddlers who nursed us down the trickier bits. Anxious faces gradually relaxed



*This photo, Left and below:  
With a multipurchase rig setup, you can pull surprisingly heavy loads.*



*Plenty of time for a chat and photo.*



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and everyone had a great day. It was my first time in a white water kayak in rapids, but I'm hooked!

I must especially thank Mad Dog (aka Mike) for giving us all great support and encouragement, and also, young Brock. At just 14 years old, mentored by Mad Dog, he is going to be a star. In charge of my group he proved to be an excellent leader, giving a confident briefing and clear instructions. On the water he was able to split his attention between Harvey, who wanted to tackle all the difficult eddies, Jane and me (who wanted a gentler ride) and reveal his exceptional kayaking skills.

It was great to see everyone learning new things and developing confidence. I'm looking forward to the next camp.



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