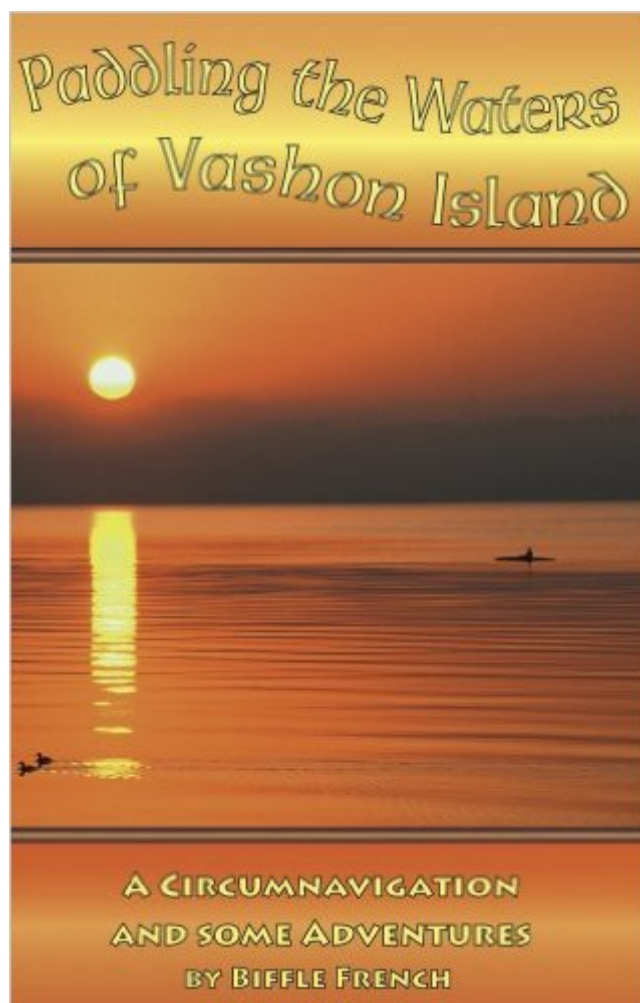


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Padding The Waters Of Vashon Island



Synopsis

'I will be dead in about three minutes, and it's very annoying.' So begins Biffle French's new book about kayaking around Vashon Island, Washington which breaks the mold of contemporary kayaking books. Although it does have 13 maps and details ten separate kayaking trips around the Island, the book is much more than a guidebook. The paddling chapters are not boring route descriptions, but rather delicious little salt water travelogues, filled with adventure and humor. The Puget Sound offers some of the very best sea kayaking opportunities in the world, and Vashon Island is at the top of the list of paddling locales for those in the know. French's book will take readers there and put them in the seat with a paddle in their hands. This beautifully-designed book has sections about learning to kayak, all the best places to paddle on Vashon Island, and about the natural environment of the island, including the tide rips and the underwater topography that causes them. Many of the maps include current flow depictions to help paddlers understand the best routes to paddle. There is also a fascinating section about the history and culture of Vashon that explains a little about how the island became what it is. Finally, the last part of the book describes the best places for launching and recovering, which is especially important for paddlers who don't live on Vashon, and may have some surprises for those who do. This exciting, fun-to-read book is aimed at everyone who is interested in kayaking from expert paddlers who plan a trip to Vashon to armchair paddlers who just love a good adventure story.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Paddling the Waters" takes you on several life enriching journeys within its pages. The best part is

that the reader need have no knowledge of kayaking in order to partake. Mr. French has integrated science, folklore, humor and love of life into this charming narrative about life in the Pacific Northwest in the 21st century. There are wonderful adventures complete with dangerous encounters as well as beautiful descriptions of wildlife and natural phenomena. There is abundant humor and humility in Mr. French's weaving together the many elements of his life that have landed him on the water in his lime green NC17. The book offers a great depth of scientific knowledge and explanation including numerous maps, charts and graphs - enough to provide any navigator with all the tools one could need to set out successfully on the waters of Puget Sound or anywhere else for that matter. This book offers a complete package, a rich addition to anyone's library.

Biffle French, former US Air Force supersonic jet pilot turned retired IBM Director lives up to his unusual name writing a Kayaking book that offers something for everyone. Hidden in the shallows of French's daily Kayaking forays lie a hidden introduction to the charting of Puget Sound by Captain Vancouver, Mr. Puget and Mr. Whitney and the history of Western expansion. He offers insight into the clear cutting of the Great Northwest Woods, of which Vashon was a part, to build cities in California in the late 1800's. Swimming between modern day paddle trips and historical narratives, French offers a smörgåsarbord of information about navigation, aerodynamics, physics, topography, bird migration, tidal changes and the gravitational relationship of the Sun, Earth, and Moon. All this makes for an interesting read, however, the most entertaining aspect of the book lies in the humorous stories about the odd characters French meets along his journeys and his personal insights revealing his own eccentricities. It is a delightful book whether or not you are a kayaking enthusiast and if you are planning any Kayaking around Vashon Island, this is the book to read.

A delightful book that turned out to be much more than I expected. My thought when I started reading it was that it was going to just be a guide book for the Vashon area. Although it includes all the useful information one would find in a guide book it mixes it in with stories and experiences that express the personality of the area. It was fun reading and learning through the experiences and adventures of Biffle. This is much better than most guide books where the author lists the launch points, directions etc in a monotone dry robotic fashion. A very easy read that has made me want to meet up with Biffle and experience the waters of Vashon Island. This book takes you along as Biffle paddles around Vashon Island in a series of day trips. The wildlife provide as much of the stories as do some of the characters he meets along the way. This book is entertaining even if you will never get the opportunity to paddle around Vashon.

biffle has written a wonderfully entertaining kayaking guide that covers historical and personal experiences of paddling in and around the picturesque vashon island. written in a first person's pov, one has the feeling of being in the cockpit of a sea kayak on a glassy bucolic august Northwest afternoon. a must read. Rob Casey Photographer & Kayak Guide Ballard, Wa

The best kayaking/travel book I've ever read!! Not much on HOW TO KAYAK, but a great description of the beauty, challenge & fun of being in/on Puget Sound. Anyone familiar with Vashon Island, the waters surrounding it and the shores across those waters should recognize and enjoy the detail in the book about the beaches, neighborhoods, channels and shipping lanes.

While I live in the Puget Sound area and have traveled the waters around Vashon Island by boat, I have not kayaked there. The author takes the reader on the paddle with him. Not only does he share his knowledge about the paddle, currents, and tides, but he also takes us inside his head. Sometimes that is a bit like kayaking in whitewater rapids, other times a gentle paddle. And I enjoyed the trip. A fun and interesting read.

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