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Trip Report

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Port H'kusam (Sayward) (paddling)

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Mon Sep 08 to Tue Sep 09, 2014

 Leader: **Susan Holvenstot**

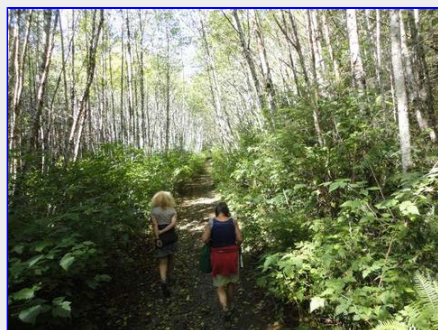
Co-Leader:

The plan was to paddle, 6 people in three canoes and a kayak, from Kelsey Bay, across the mouth of the Salmon River, 4 miles south to Port H'kusam, where Susan had lived in the early 1970s. It was not to happen.

After a stop at Roberts Lake for their famous cinnamon buns, we passed the still active logging dump at Kelsey Bay, to see that the windswept Johnstone Straits before us, had 3-4 ' waves with whitecaps. We retreated to Plan B, a hour long hike on the Port H'kusam Trail, over the shoulder of Mt H'kusam.

Port H'kusam was one of a series of Steamship ports, established in 1890s. Privately owned since the 30's by a Sayward family, it had an abandoned main house, a working sawmill, barns, hotel, store and cabins when Susan lived there for 5 years, with horse and canoe as her only transportation. All was gone now except the barn where I had lived, a part of the main house and the main beams of the sawmill. The namesake, Port H'kusam hotel, preserved in photo and paintings around the area, is now just a pile of rubble. The old steamship dock is just a few big beams. The meadows and gardens are now filled with mature alders.

After a lovely day exploring napping in the sun and hearing stories, we hiked out again to the Sayward Valley and set up at a pretty little Forest Service campground. Unfortunately a nearby logging road bridge was being repaired until two in the morning. After a leisurely breakfast, we put the boats in at the Salmon and White River confluence. It was a serene and calm paddle, with occasional low-water riffles to lift the boats over. The pink salmon were in full migration, with thousands passing beneath us, and eagles, vultures, bears, kingfishers and seagulls, all enjoying the bounty. A lone bull elk greeted us around one corner, but quickly disappeared into the river edge. After a four hour paddle we came to our takeout spot, with shuttle vehicle waiting, and loaded up. Ah, so sad to leave what seemed like a weeks journey in only 2 days.



Port H'kusam trail is an old 4 miles logging road, now quite washed out
[Ed Tickner photo]



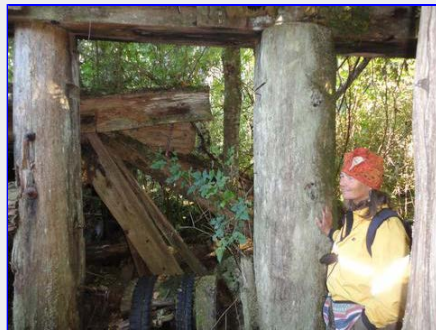
The last remaining WWII building floated in from Yorke Island
[Ed Tickner photo]



*Ruby House Hotel, from a foto
in Roberts Lake Cafe
[Susan Holvenstot photo]*



*Final remains of the Steamship
dock
[Ed Tickner photo]*



*Huge supports of the sawmill
are all that remain
[Linda Fuerniss photo]*



*Rough water and strong winds
in Johnstone Strait
[Ed Tickner photo]*



*Calm and serenity on the
Salmon River
[Ed Tickner photo]*

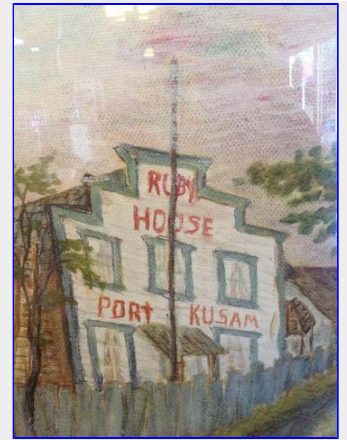


*Thousands of pink salmon were
migrating upstream under our
boats
[Ed Tickner photo]*



Resting on old logging tackle at

the Cable Cookhouse
[Susan Holvenstot photo]



*Historic painting in the
Cable Cookhouse*
[Susan Holvenstot photo]

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Participant list (6 of 6): Linda F, Susan H, Kathryn L, David T, Ed T, Roger V,

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