

Meet the Crew

Foothills Products

text by Sandy Lewis



Art and Sharon Onweller, from Evergreen, Colorado, are long-time boaters at Lake Powell. They've been on the lake when it was high and when it was low, and have enjoyed each and every visit.

One evening they decided to visit Hole-in-the-Rock. Because of incoming inclement weather, they decided to stay overnight on their 245 SeaRay Sundancer in Cottonwood Canyon, with the idea of walking up the old Mormon trail the next morning.

After securing the boat, they enjoyed a pleasant evening before the winds and rain forced their retreat to the cabin. Art said, "About 2:30 a.m. I felt a very light brush on my arm followed by an elbow in the ribs. 'Something just crawled across me,' shouted my wife. Turning on the cabin light revealed a small mouse sitting on



the galley counter looking at us with the expression 'anything good to eat?' Immediately we thought, 'How did it get on board,' followed very quickly by, 'How do we get rid of it?' For the next two hours I chased that mouse around the interior of the boat and discovered nooks and crannies I never knew existed. It became very apparent that the mouse had been on other boats. Finally, losing the 'chase and corner' battle, we settled on an alternate course of action. We

opened a large paper sack, dropped a few peanuts in the bottom, and placed the sack next to the rear cabin, where I suspected the mouse was hiding. A few minutes later it appeared, and we were amazed as it walked on the top edge of the sack. It wanted those peanuts. The mouse tried hanging by its rear feet but couldn't reach the peanuts. Finally, it

dropped to the bottom of the bag. This action prompted me to leap to close the top of the bag. I finally caught it! Quickly, I carried the bag out of the cabin and flung it onto the shore. Looking at my watch I saw it was 4:30 a.m. and the sunrise was only an hour away. After breakfast, I retrieved the bag and noticed that the mouse—and peanuts—had left. The tracks from the bag were identical to the tracks leading to one of my anchors in the sand."




The most common quick fix to keep those cute little critters from walking up your boat's mooring lines, entering your boat, and helping themselves to your food is to cut a hole in a paper plate and attempt to attach it to the line. It's not a great solution to the problem.

Art and Sharon thought, "There must be a better way!" While the critters are cute, they can contaminate foodstuffs. In addition, any damage they may cause is not covered by insurance.

Their experience led them to develop the OFFBoard® mooring line shield. It's made of durable plastic with a stainless steel spring hinge so it was easy to install on the mooring line, and once attached, it won't come off. They made it one inch larger than the standard nine-inch paper plate for additional safety.

After talking to houseboat users, they further developed a 15-inch shield for houseboats. This will work on larger mooring lines from a half inch to one inch in diameter.

A testimonial to the value of their shields was a call they recently received from one of their Lake Powell customers. "Greatest invention I've ever seen. We love them. They're wonderful, easy to put on, and they're great. I couldn't ask for anything better after struggling for the past twenty years to keep mice off my boat."

To learn more about their products, call Art and Sharon at (866) 643-0353 and visit www.offboard.com. 

Boatpacking (from page 57)

cooked meal, and comfortable room.

For the next two mornings, we snaked our PWC through various obstacles in Smith Fork and Moki Canyons and were able to beach on hard enough ground to allow us to embark on memorable five-mile morning hikes.

We used the afternoon hours to cruise other canyons as far up as Knowles Canyon at mile 108. In this part of the lake, we found many contrasts from our previous trips at higher water. For example, in May 2005 neither Defiance House Ruins nor the North Fork of Moki Canyon were accessible by boat. Evenings were spent back in civilization on the shores of Bullfrog Bay within the excellent accommodations of Defiance House Lodge.

Finally on Day Five, having obtained food provisions at Bullfrog Marina and wishing we had more time to cruise up to Good Hope Bay (beyond which PWCs are not allowed), we headed downriver from Bullfrog at 7 a.m. for the west fork of Iceberg Canyon (mile 79). There we enjoyed a spectacular hike over the sandstone hogsback ridge overlooking the rockslide-dammed pond and vast amphitheaters.

We continued downriver in the afternoon in search of a campsite near Dangling Rope. An approaching storm and gusty winds, however, caused us to change our plans.

We took advantage of another feature of the PWC, speed, and outran the worst of the weather, reaching Wahweap around 6 p.m. However, along the way we were drenched by two-foot whitecaps on some tacks and did briefly stop in a cove at one point.

Some significant challenges of boatpacking make this activity one that should be carefully considered. First, boatpacking involves some risks, such as tour boat wakes and high waves in bad weather like what we encountered.

But we were enormously pleased with the performance, stability, and endurance of our Honda PWC in the variety of taxing conditions to which we subjected it.

A second challenge is, of course, space. Experienced backpackers will recognize the advantages of packing light and the many advances that have been made with ultra-light tents, sleeping bags, dehydrated food, and the like. These have made the weight of backpacking increasingly manageable.

The concepts of multiple-use items and absolute necessity guided our trip planning. In the glove box storage area, we packed a map, radio, GPS, sunscreen, Kelsey's guidebook, and other incidentals. In the cargo area we easily stowed a tent, tarp, sheet, food for three meals, gas stove, cups, ropes, water, a first aid kit, clothes, and other carefully sized items—all well within the manufacturer's weight limit specifications.

Additionally, hiking poles were looped around the outside mirrors and some items such as cameras and energy snacks were stored in the oversized shirt and pant pockets of our hiking attire. Straps for both sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats completed our 90-plus degree cruising couture.

A third challenge is bathroom facilities and the important regulations of the "Keep Lake Powell Pure" campaign. The Park Service has made this much easier with the eight floating toilets, in addition to the facilities at Dangling Rope Marina, which we passed in our travels. Also, we had a light camping toilet in its own stuff bag lashed to the rear of the PWC; this met the Lake Powell regulations.

Reflecting on our maiden voyage, we are enthusiastic about boatpacking Lake Powell often in the future. Especially if lake levels are low and fuel prices are high, this approach to boating, hiking and camping expands horizons for adventurers of all ages. 