



**For Immediate Release**

## **Ocean River Sports splashes into 30th year of on-the-water adventuring**

**Sept. 21, 2011, Victoria, BC** – For Brian Henry, founder and owner of the Victoria-based Ocean River Sports, celebrating 30 years in the paddling business is both sweet and surprising.

“Back when I first opened shop in 1981, in a small, 250-square-foot retail space with just one employee, me, kayaking was nowhere as mainstream as it is today,” said Henry. “If someone drove by with a kayak strapped to their car, I knew exactly who it was. It’s been great to see the rise of paddling sports over the past 30 years.”

Today, Ocean River Sports has long since outgrown its original space, moving in 2001 to a 6,500-square-foot outdoors centre that encompasses a retail and online store, kayak school, tour and expedition outfitter, boat rental and storage facility, docks, workshop and even a performance paddling club. Henry has also expanded from being a solo enterprise to one with 26 full- and part-time employees and a separate division, Ocean River Adventures, to oversee the lessons and tours division of the business.

“Our expeditions are extremely popular with locals and tourists alike,” said Henry. “The idea behind Ocean River Adventures is to empower our paddlers to get out and appreciate all our beautiful coastal backyard has to offer. Today, we have more than 40 unique lessons and expeditions and are working on new local and distant offerings for the 2012 season, including a 2012 kayak tour of the Hebrides, located on the west coast of Scotland.”

In the coming years, Henry plans to keep working at increasing passion for on-the-water sports, encouraging people to try paddling sports and stretch personal boundaries, tempting youth away from the TV and video games and into the wild outdoors and educating people on the importance of ocean sustainability and respect. Henry also says he won’t ever stop looking for new and edgy watersports opportunities, such as SUP – a popular sport that first started on the beaches of Waikiki in the early 1960s. Ocean River led the way by being one of the first Canadian outfitters to offer SUP tours and lessons.

Current Ocean River Adventures lessons and tours range from harbourfront kayak lessons, expeditions on the West Coast of Vancouver Island and overnight camping programs for youth, aimed at empowerment and environment education.

Over the past 30 years, Henry and his team have also supported a number of local programs, charities and initiatives, including ongoing support for the Victoria Youth Paddling Club (VYPC), the Boys and Girls Club in Victoria, YW-YMCA Camp Thunderbird and the Save Victoria Harbour initiative.

“When I first got involved in the paddling business, back in the ’70s when I first tried my hand at building kayaks and then in 1982 when I founded Current Designs Kayaks, I never truly expected that it’d take off that way it did,” said Henry. “Starting out with practically no experience, just pure unadulterated passion, and being able to work day-in and day-out in an industry that I absolutely love is the ultimate reward.”



For more information about Ocean River Sports or to book a tour, lesson, course or excursion, call 1-800-909-4233 or visit [www.oceanriveradventures.com](http://www.oceanriveradventures.com). For information on Ocean River Sports' retail and online store, call 250-381-4233 or visit [www.oceanriver.com](http://www.oceanriver.com).

### **About Ocean River Sports**

Located in Victoria, BC on beautiful Vancouver Island, Ocean River Sports is a premier specialty kayaking and outdoor store. With 30 years in the business, Ocean River Sports includes a retail store, kayaking school, tours, rentals and performance paddling club. In 2011, the instruction/guiding/tour portion of the business was rebranded Ocean River Adventures. The initiative behind the rebranding was to create a "hub" for paddling enthusiasts and professionals, showcasing Vancouver Island through sustainable practices and professional guiding. For more information visit [www.oceanriveradventures.com](http://www.oceanriveradventures.com).

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