



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

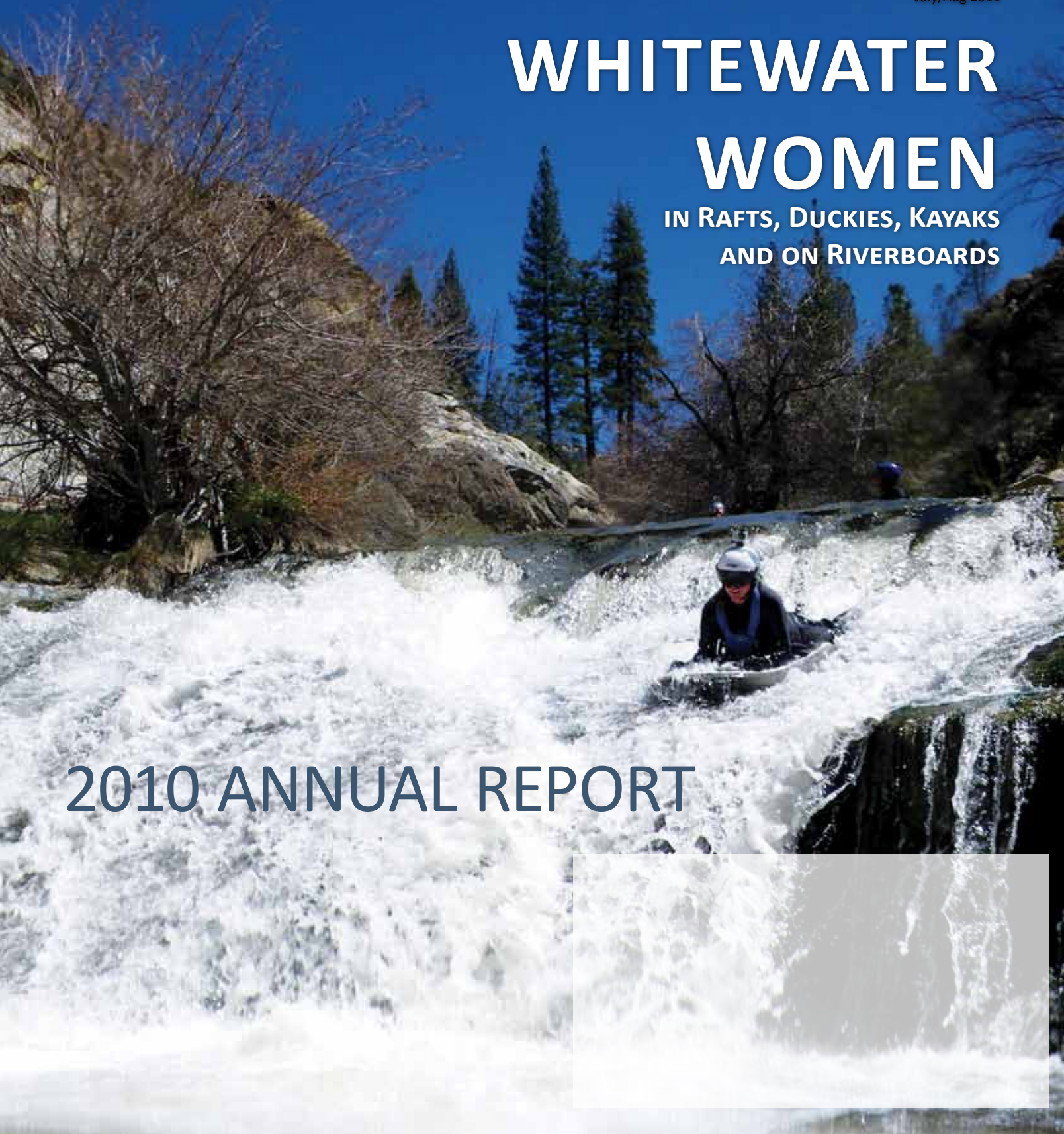
BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
July/Aug 2011

WHITEWATER

WOMEN

IN RAFTS, DUCKIES, KAYAKS
AND ON RIVERBOARDS

2010 ANNUAL REPORT





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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal July/Aug 2011 – Volume 51 – Issue 4

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RIVERS OF INDIA



By Stephen Cunliffe

India is a vast country with a rich cultural heritage and a diverse landscape. The country is home to some of the most beautiful rivers in the world, and it is a great place to go for a whitewater kayaking trip. The rivers of India are not only beautiful but also offer a unique challenge for kayakers. The rapids are often very technical and require a high level of skill and experience. The scenery is also stunning, with lush green hills and dense forests. The water is crystal clear and the air is fresh. It is a truly unforgettable experience. The rivers of India are a great way to see the country and experience its culture. It is a must-do for any whitewater kayaker who wants to see the world's most beautiful rivers.



By Megan Hooker

Another Hydropower Threat Averted by Megan Hooker. The article discusses the impact of hydropower projects on the environment and the importance of protecting our rivers. It highlights the need for responsible development and the role of citizens in advocating for their water resources.

WHITEWATER WOMEN




FROM SCAREDY CAT TO RIVER RAT
By Shelley Poli

For many years, I was a scaredy cat when it came to whitewater kayaking. I would watch others go down the river and think, "I can't do that." But then, one day, I decided to give it a try. I signed up for a class and went to the river. I was nervous, but the instructor was great and helped me feel more confident. I started with easy rapids and worked my way up to more challenging ones. Now, I'm a river rat and I love it. It's a great way to stay fit and have fun. I've met some amazing people and made lifelong friends. It's a truly rewarding experience. If you're looking for a new hobby, whitewater kayaking is a great choice. It's a challenge, but it's also a lot of fun. So, grab your paddle and head to the river. You'll be surprised at how much you can achieve.



WHITEWATER WOMEN

The article features several stories from women in the whitewater kayaking community. It highlights their experiences, challenges, and the sense of community they find in the sport. The stories are inspiring and show that anyone can enjoy whitewater kayaking, regardless of their gender. The women featured in the article are passionate about the sport and have achieved many milestones. Their stories are a testament to the power of perseverance and the joy of outdoor recreation. The article is a great read for anyone who is interested in whitewater kayaking or simply wants to be inspired by the achievements of others.

 Alicia Monahan, sliding down Brush Creek (CA).
Photo by Josh Galt, Face Level Industries



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PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Our mission: "To conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely," is actively pursued through our conservation, access, safety and education efforts under the umbrella of River Stewardship. The only national organization representing the interest of all whitewater paddlers, American Whitewater is the national voice for thousands of individual whitewater enthusiasts, as well as over 100 local paddling club affiliates.

AW's River Stewardship program adheres to the four tenets of our mission statement:

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision-making

processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

RIVER ACCESS: To assure public access to whitewater rivers pursuant to the guidelines published in its official Access Policy, AW arranges for river access through private lands by negotiation or purchase, seeks to protect the right of public passage on all rivers and streams navigable by kayak or canoe, encourages equitable and responsible management of whitewater rivers on public lands, and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

SAFETY: AW promotes paddling safely, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, maintains a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and publishes and disseminates the internationally-recognized American Whitewater Safety Code.

EDUCATION: AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding

whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bimonthly *AW Journal*, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

Together, AW staff, members, volunteers, and affiliate clubs can achieve our goals of conserving, protecting and restoring America's whitewater resources and enhancing opportunities to safely enjoy these wonderful rivers.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723; phone 1-866-BOAT-4-AW (1-866-262-8429). AW is tax exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service.



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The opinions expressed in the features and editorials of American Whitewater are those of the individual authors. They do not necessarily represent those of the Directors of American Whitewater or the editors of this publication. On occasion, American Whitewater publishes official organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

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THE JOURNEY AHEAD

IN THIS ISSUE of the *American Whitewater Journal* the staff and board share our 2010 Annual Report with you. While last year provided challenging economic conditions, American Whitewater focused on our core river stewardship program and delivered outstanding project successes. Some of these river stewardship stories are shared in our Annual Report as a sample of the types of projects we undertake and the methods we employ for long-term success.

At the heart of our river stewardship program is the understanding that conservation and recreation are mutually dependant. Time spent paddling forms the

also utilizing additional professional services to assist in our story telling and outreach about the importance of flows in rivers, not only for recreation but for restoration of the resource as well. This additional bandwidth helps American Whitewater address the increasing demands being placed on the stewardship efforts of our organization as water allocation discussions ramp up across the country.

Finally, we just completed our annual face-to-face Board of Directors meeting in North Bend, WA. Our board has the foresight to implement a succession plan that takes American Whitewater through

So please take some time in this American Whitewater Journal to read through our Annual Report on page 48. You'll see that we have a good story to tell about real differences being made to protect the places we all value as paddlers. Our partnership between our Board of Directors and professional staff is strong and functioning at a high level. There has never been a better time to be an American Whitewater member and make a real difference in the stewardship of our rivers.

See you on the river,



Mark Singleton
Executive Director, American Whitewater

FEW ORGANIZATIONS ACCOMPLISH THE SAME LEVEL OF RESULTS WITH THE LIMITED RESOURCES OF AMERICAN WHITEWATER. EACH MEMBERSHIP DOLLAR THAT AW RECEIVES IS LEVERAGED TO GENERATE \$5 IN TOTAL FUNDING DIRECTED AT SUPPORTING RIVER STEWARDSHIP.

basis for a conservation ethic that values water in rivers. Paddlers understand that you cannot love what you don't know. It's our love of whitewater that makes us fierce defenders of rivers and their flows. This intimate connection to flowing water has made American Whitewater a force in river stewardship for over 50 years.

Few organizations accomplish the same level of results with the limited resources of American Whitewater. Each membership dollar that AW receives is leveraged to generate \$5 in total funding directed at supporting river stewardship. The \$1 to \$5 ratio is achievable because AW is able to attract support from foundations, private donors, advertising opportunities, events and partnerships. As a result, your membership dollar goes five times as far in the protection of whitewater rivers.

As we move into the future, we are adding capacity to our river stewardship program. This year, we have hired two stewardship assistants to provide additional support for projects in California and Colorado. We are

the next decade of board leadership with an organized officer transition process in place. This plan helps to ensure an orderly transition of board members over time and addresses the need for broad geographic and talent diversity among our Directors.

At our North Bend meeting our Directors elected new board officers as follows:

Norwood Scott (CA) – President
Chris Bell (NC) – Vice President
Don Kinser (GA) – Treasurer
Jennie Goldberg (WA) – Secretary

Serving with this group of officers on the American Whitewater Executive Committee are two at large members, Evelyn Locke (MA) and Kent Ford (CO).

Please join with me in welcoming Norwood Scott and the rest of the officers to their new leadership roles with American Whitewater. Remember that our board is comprised of volunteers who give their time, energy and passion to the governance of American Whitewater.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HOPE THAT, AS you read this letter, you have all had an opportunity to take advantage of an epic spring boating season and are enjoying the warmer summer months. I'm very pleased to have been elected your next American Whitewater President. Though it will be difficult to fill the shoes of Don Kinser, who has been instrumental in leading AW over the past three years, I am up for the challenges ahead.

AW consists of a strong team of dedicated individuals—from our extremely effective Executive Director, Mark Singleton, to our experienced staff, knowledgeable board, and motivated volunteers and members. I'm honored to work with all of you, as well as our stakeholders to create an even stronger organization and continue to pursue our mission.

I'm often asked what my primary goals will be for the next three years, while serving as Board President. AW is a \$1.2 million organization, which represents 5,200 direct dues-paying members, 120 affiliate clubs, and a community of 30,000 whitewater paddlers across the nation. I would like to increase our budget so we can hire more staff and contractors who can help us accomplish even more than our lean organization does currently.

Our membership numbers have been flat for the last few years so this is an area where I plan to focus my attention. During our May board meeting in North Bend, Washington, we implemented a membership strategy that includes a board competition to increase membership numbers. I will be reporting the results to our Executive Committee each month during our regularly scheduled conference calls. I'm asking for your assistance too—please help us increase membership.

In May we started a Development Committee, chaired by Christopher Hest, a California board member with extensive

philanthropy experience. Christopher will be working with Kent Ford and others to educate potential donors about our work and seek their financial assistance. If you know of potential donors, and would be willing to meet with them, we will offer you any assistance that you may need. Please don't hesitate to call on us for help.

Another area I would like to see AW improve in is our website. We recently completed an audit of our website, which scolded us rather firmly for its current deficiencies. We need a website that serves our mission, and is a go-to resource for all of you. If it is cost-effective in the long run to make major design changes to our website, then I would like to see such changes happen sooner, rather than later. This may be an expensive undertaking for AW so if you know any web design firms that believe in our cause and like to do pro bono work for non-profits, please let us know!

In closing I want to thank all of you for your support. I look forward to being your President and I know we can accomplish greatness together.

Hope to see you on the river soon,



W. Norwood Scott



STEWARDSHIP

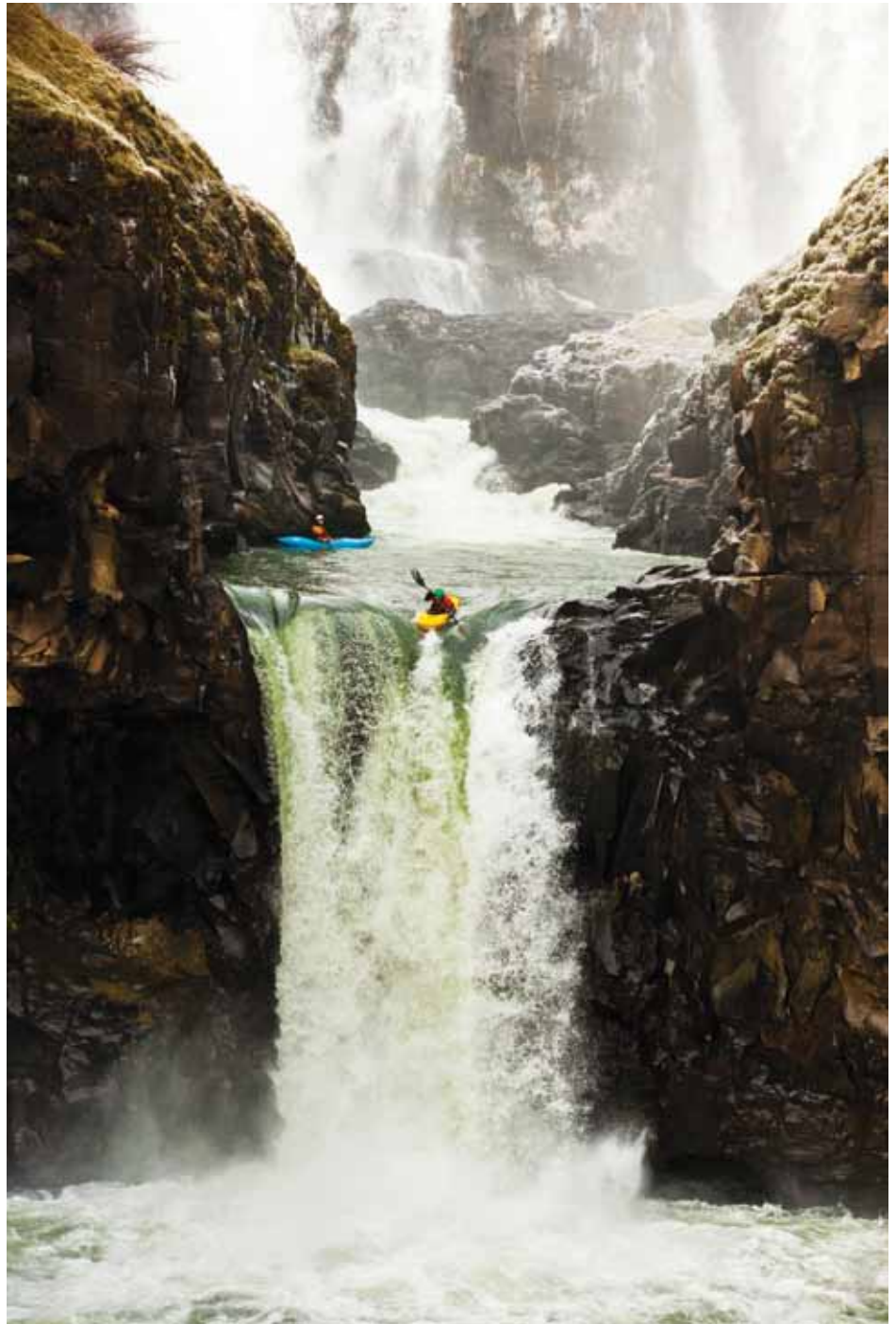
ANOTHER HYDROPOWER THREAT AVERTED: WHITE RIVER FALLS, OR

BY MEGAN HOOKER

OUR NATION'S RIVERS are under increased pressure and threat from new hydroelectric projects as we seek to increase carbon-neutral energy production in the face of global climate change. These proposed hydro projects are popping up throughout the U.S. And while the Pacific Northwest is in the spotlight for removing dams, including the Hemlock, Marmot, Condit, Elwha, and Glines Canyon Dams, the region is not exempt from these pressures.

In 2010, the Northern Wasco County Public Utilities District ("NWCPUD") revived a decades old plan to rehabilitate an old hydroelectric plant for new production at White River Falls in Oregon. The White River plunges over a 90-foot basalt shelf to create the Falls, and the scenery draws people from around the region all year long. The lower tier of the falls is known to kayakers as Celestial Falls, and was a great runnable waterfall prior to a decision by the State Parks to close the falls to recreation. The White River's headwaters are fed by an active glacier on the southeastern slopes of Mt. Hood, and the river flows 53 miles through forest, agricultural and desert lands before its confluence with the Deschutes River.

The White River and White River Falls have been recognized for protection in numerous ways. In 1988, the White River was designated Wild and Scenic for its outstanding geology, fish habitat, wildlife, recreation and scenic resource values. The entire length of the river was given this designation, except for a 0.6-mile stretch around White River Falls, which was later recommended for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic system. The river was also recognized for its conservation value by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, which identified it



Celestial Falls, the lower tier of White River Falls (OR), is safe from dewatering by a hydroelectric project once again. Efforts continue to focus on opening the falls to legal paddling, which has been off limits for a decade.

Photo by Tyler Roemer

as a "Protected Area." Rivers included in these areas represent special places where hydroelectric development would pose an unacceptable risk of irreversible loss to fish and wildlife. The state has also recognized the value of the water in the river at the

STEWARDSHIP

Falls, and holds two instream water rights for the area—one for the protection of aquatic life and the other for preservation of the scenic values at White River Falls and the state park that surrounds it.

Hydropower was originally developed at White River Falls in the early 1900s, and operated until the Dalles Dam was completed on the Columbia River in the 1960s. When the project was decommissioned, the dam, diversion works, portions of the penstocks and powerhouse were left behind. In 1983, NWCPUD applied for a license to rehabilitate the old project for hydroelectric production, but at the time the project was found to be economically infeasible. NWCPUD ultimately decided not to pursue production and formally surrendered its license in 1995.

In an effort to provide additional incremental power supply resources required under federal power obligations, the NWCPUD sought to revive the project again in 2010. The project was found to be feasible only if the facility could use up to 450 cfs streamflow for power production between October 31 and May 31. American Whitewater and our fellow river conservation partners were concerned that the project would impact instream flows that make White River Falls a valuable scenic resource, and in late 2010, we filed a motion to intervene in the application for the preliminary permit to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Shortly thereafter, plans to revive the project hit a snag when the scenic water right for White River Falls, which had previously not surfaced in the project scoping process, was discovered. While NWCPUD held a water right for hydroelectric production for the site in the 1990s, the utility requested that the right be surrendered after they decided not to pursue the project. The Oregon Water Resources Department cancelled the right, and in December of 1994, the Oregon Water Resources Control Board filed for and approved an instream scenic water

right at White River Falls on behalf of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Modeling of the project showed that it would not be possible to meet flow needs for hydroelectricity and the requirements of the instream scenic water right at the same time. NWCPUD explored their options for challenging the instream water right, but ultimately decided not to pursue the issue.

In March 2011, the project was once again deemed to be economically infeasible, and the falls and adjoining state park were spared further development. While hydroelectric developers are aggressively pursuing new projects, White River Falls is a prime example of what we are seeing across the country. Such projects are financially and environmentally costly with little promise of return in electricity production. American Whitewater supports a final Wild and Scenic designation for White River Falls to protect the area from future development.

While the hydroelectric story has been laid to rest for the time being, the recreation story continues. The lower falls at White River Falls, Celestial Falls, is still closed for whitewater boating. Historically, Celestial Falls was recognized as one of the best waterfalls in the country for paddlers to sharpen their big drop skills on. In 2001, Oregon Parks and Recreation “closed” the falls at the state park to kayaking, citing safety concerns. This decision came despite the fact that recreational use of the lower falls for kayaking is specifically referenced in the river management plan. American Whitewater has long regarded this closure as inconsistent with state and national river management practices. Waterfall bans have generally been temporary on rivers where they have been instituted, and we continue to work to restore whitewater boating as a valid activity at Celestial Falls.

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PADDLER FITNESS

PADDLER HEALTH AND FITNESS: WHERE TO BEGIN?

BY JOHN AMTMANN AND MEAGHEN RANDALL

LAST TIME IN this space we discussed a plan to improve paddlers' cardiorespiratory fitness. In this installment, we ask, "How do we put it all together to develop a program that will improve all of the fitness components for the river recreationalist?" To some, "putting it all together" sounds so daunting that it gets put off indefinitely. It's important to remember that procrastination is the enemy of health and fitness improvements. Do it today!

Consider this: Approximately 75% of all Americans are either completely sedentary or inadequately active, which means they are not getting more than 2 days per week of physical activity. These numbers probably reflect the river enthusiast community as well. We Americans are creative in formulating excuses for why we should not be exercising today. Many, however, just don't know where to start. This article will describe some lower intensity programs – programs I have actually prescribed for individuals who just didn't know how to begin. If you fall into this category, you should be aiming for about an hour of moderate to intense and balanced physical activity every day.



Abdominal curl

Photo by John Amtmann

A beginner's program is one that I consider using for someone who hasn't exercised in more than six months to a year. Those who have been sedentary for that long need time for their body to adapt to a regular regimen of physical activity. The guidelines for improving health and fitness are general enough to allow for more than one approach to improving fitness. Some experts believe in the comfortable approach, and schedule a somewhat gentle total of four days per week of exercise. Program A is one example of a beginning balanced exercise program of four sessions per week:

Program A

Mondays and Thursdays

- Warm-up for 10 minutes

- Cardio for 20 minutes
- Strength training:
 1. Leg press
 2. Leg extension
 3. Leg curl
 4. Lat Pull Down
 5. Dumbbell bench press
 6. Abdominal curl
 7. Back extension
- Cool down and stretch

Tuesdays and Fridays

- Warm-up for 10 minutes
- Cardio for 30 minutes
- Cool down and stretch

Specific Guidelines for Program A

1. To begin each session, warm-up: Just like it's a good idea to warm up the shoulders before paddling, it's a good idea to warm up the body before exercising. Don't dismiss it. Walk, jog, jumping jacks—anything to increase body temperature for 10 minutes.

Back Extension.

Photo by John Amtmann



PADDLER FITNESS



Dumbbell bench press
Photo by John Amtmann

2. Each and every session should end with a cool down including some effective and focused stretching. This topic will be covered in a future issue.

3. The intensity of the cardio session should be monitored by palpating heart, and intensity should be adjusted to keep the heart rate in the appropriate range rate (both heart rate monitoring and ranges were covered in the previous issue of American Whitewater).

4. Perform one set of each exercise. During the first week, take the time to learn the movements well. Do not complete each set to fatigue or failure until the second or third week when the movements begin to feel more comfortable. Beyond the third week however, each set should be to muscular fatigue or failure—until you can't continue the movement with good form.

5. Do 8-15 repetitions for each exercise, except for the abdominal curl and the back extensions. Complete up to 30 repetitions for each of these. When 30 can be done, hold weight to increase resistance.

6. When 15 reps can be completed for the other exercises, increase the weight for the next workout.

7. Strength training repetitions must follow these requirements:

- a. three seconds to raise the weight
- b. two second pause
- c. four seconds to lower the weight

8. Record weights and reps in a journal so you know what you've done and what your session goals will be.

This program requires a commitment of four days per week. Some river enthusiasts, however, are more comfortable with a six day per week commitment. If you feel better able to maintain the fitness schedule every day during the workweek and have the time to exercise once each weekend then Program B is for you. It modifies the above program for three days per week

of cardio and three days per week of strength training.

Program B

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

- Warm-up for 10 minutes
- Cardio for 20 minutes
- Strength:
 1. Leg press
 2. Leg extension
 3. Leg curl
 4. Lat Pull Down
 5. Dumbbell incline or bench press
 6. Abdominal curl
 7. Back extension

- Cool down and stretch

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

- Warm-up for 10 minutes
- Cardio for 30 minutes
- Cool down and stretch

Any river rat not regularly exercising should try one of these programs to help improve their fitness...today!



Lat pull down
Photo by John Amtmann

WHITEWATER WOMEN

RIVER LESSONS

BY JEN CLINE

I HAVE A HUGE sense of adventure. I thought my former husband did too, until one morning at breakfast he proclaimed, "Marriage is boring," and sure enough, he left a few months later.

I realize now that some people can substitute sensation for emotion. This means that the sensation that an activity provides (rock climbing, paddling, any extreme sport) replaces the feelings the person may be avoiding. I am the opposite: the outdoor activities I enjoy intensify the emotions I am feeling and I feel more connected to the outdoors and those around me. Gripping a rock face with my backside hanging out in the breeze has always been a huge thrill for me. Peering down a wide open bowl on skis over looking the Rocky Mountains is even better. Backpacking is slow and arduous but when I start out on a solo trip, I am nervous and excited all at once.

It comes as no surprise that I would be interested in kayaking. I love water and getting wet, and kayaks are the "sports cars of the wilderness." They are compact, sleek, and fast. With the US National Whitewater Center just 20 minutes from my house, it was too tempting to learn. I signed up for a package of lessons last fall and was soon rolling my kayak inconsistently and paddling the Wilderness channel (Class III). I laughed at myself because every time I hit "M wave," the largest wave on the channel, I would shut my eyes and scream.

The first week in November my neighbor invited me to paddle the Upper Green. Many experienced paddlers were going, and "newbies" were welcome.

"Am I ready for a real river?" I asked.

"Absolutely," Will replied.

"Besides," he said, "Sanders and I will be there to look out for you."



I needed to find a paddle, gear to keep me warm, and a babysitter for my kids. I was skeptical I could pull it all off, and let the week go by. Will called me again on Saturday,

"C'mon, Jen, I think you should go," he said. It was a good opportunity, I realized, and I should make every effort to experience it.

Will lent me the gear I needed, I ran up to Great Outdoor provisions (GOP) to buy a paddle but because they were sold out of my size, they lent me a demo paddle for my trip. A call to my former husband, and he agreed to be at my house at 5:30 am to stay with the kids. I was in.

Sanders and Will picked me up dirt early and we were off to the mountains after meeting the rest of the group. When we arrived at the put-in, I quickly got geared up and waited for the others. I stood looking at the river and the gorgeous trees dropping their leaves in the water. I also listened and watched the water slap against the rocks and was amazed at how it was constantly flowing. The mist was rising and the scene was gorgeous. I decided privately at that moment to dedicate the day to one of my former patients at the hospital.

The author at Bayliss Boof on the Upper Green (NC).

Photo by Anna Levesque

She was a 32-year-old pregnant woman wrought with cancer. I treated her off and on for four months, and as her physical therapist, it was my job to make her stronger. Her goals were to transfer into a wheelchair to visit her son in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) every day (she delivered in August) and to go home for Thanksgiving. She fought hard, and despite being paralyzed from the waist down, and battling severe pain on a daily basis, she never refused a therapy session. She was vibrant, and funny, but most of all, she was brave. It wasn't enough though. She had died earlier in the week. In honor of her, I decided to be brave on the river that day. I felt lucky to be healthy and strong at 40 years old, and didn't want to shy away from any challenges.

Forty minutes into the trip, I flipped my kayak and was pinned against rock. I lost my paddle, but Will and Sanders were there in a flash. Will helped me retrieve my boat and Sanders found my paddle. I kept my calm the entire time. Ten minutes later we pulled our boats over to the side of the river to scout a rapid. It looked scary, a fairly big drop, and I watched guys paddle over it.

WHITEWATER WOMEN



The author with her children, Tommy and Katelyn Cline.

Photo by Rob Zabel

I paddled down the rapids, spun my boat at the bottom, but landed square in the water. My first Class III rapid on a real river and I was upright. I was beaming and so in the moment that I barely heard the cheers of the 18 men I was paddling with.

“Did you hear them cheering for you?” Will asked, when we reconvened.

We continued down the rest of the river, through two more Class III rapids and my lines were good. I flipped one other time, didn’t manage a roll, but a friend was there and he flipped me back up again. The day was perfect. The sun came out and the trees stayed vibrant along the gorge. Even carrying my kayak at the take-out (a mile, I think) up and out of the gorge was

tolerable because I was so happy about my accomplishment.

We returned home and my kids were excited to hear about my day. I went through the details and shared with them how my patient inspired me. “How did she conspire (inspire) you, Mommy,” my seven-year-old son inquired.

“When people are brave during scary or sad moments, it makes you want to be like them,” I replied. At that point I wasn’t sure if I was referring to my handling of my former marriage, or my first real river trip, or my patient from the hospital, but it really didn’t matter. My kids got it, and I felt more connected to them than ever.

“You don’t have to do it if you don’t want to.” Will was allowing me an out. I shook my head, and replied, “Let’s go.”

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WHITEWATER BRINGS US TOGETHER

BY JEN BURKS

UNTIL RECENTLY, INSPIRATION had been lost somewhere among lists of things to do or buy and the everyday hustle of the American life. I'm quite certain it was lying somewhere in between the comfort of the couch, the babble on the television, and constant toxicity within the city. Sometimes I caught glimpses of it in strangers that I passed daily, but never felt a full embrace. My inspiration may have been lost, but I sure wasn't. I was wandering. And when I was in the forest, I found myself next to the river.

Whitewater quickly taught me that on the river, there are no strangers. All the inspiration one needs is along every bend, bank, and the bubbling beauty of each wave crest. It is in the air you breathe, the water you drink, the earth you smell, and the adrenaline you taste. Each and every paddler has her own story to tell. It was this experience that allowed me to see an entire other side of America, the world,



and myself. When the great Mother Nature surrounds, protects, and softly speaks to you, you're sure to listen.

I didn't recognize the difference of paddling with women until a trip down

Clear Creek on the Obed River Wartburg, TN. In photo (left to right): Ellie Ansback, Christine Vaughan, Jessa Davis, Jen Burks. Photo by Jessa Davis

the Tuckaseegee with the ladies of River City Canoe & Kayak and Girls At Play. It was then that I realized how relaxing, educating, and uplifting a trip down river could be. It wasn't about how fast we could paddle or the biggest "gnar" we could "huck." It was about unity, flow, and the feeling of ultimately escaping the world for a few miles. From this experience, I learned that I can transfer the ideas of the river to my very own everyday life. I too can eddy out, scout, and find the right line to accomplish my future goals. I thank the women of whitewater for their support, encouragement, and dedication that they have shown. Now ladies, it's time to recruit our friends!



Jessa Davis, Christine Vaughan, and Jen Burks at Fontana Lake, NC. Photo by Christine Vaughan



The author at Hooker Falls on the Little River in Dupont, NC.

Photo by Hannah Culwell

MY KAYAKING JOURNEY

BY KELSEY BRACEWELL

MY PADDLING JOURNEY began in the mountains of North Carolina in the spring of 2006. I was a young student at Brevard College, studying Wilderness Leadership and Experiential Education. I began whitewater kayaking as part of an introduction to paddling course offered by the college. On an impulse, I bought my first boat about a year later; from that day forward I was constantly drawn to the water.

Throughout my paddling pursuits I had my fair share of hardships and challenges; I believe that women in particular face many obstacles when pursuing adventure and extreme sports. I felt pressure from a number of sources: intimidation from experienced paddlers, fear of the rivers themselves, and lack of confidence in myself. These burdens were not easy to overcome; in fact, I still struggle with them

to this day. I spent a few years paddling on local western North Carolina runs, learning, pushing myself, and doing my best to prove myself to a paddling world maintained primarily by men. As a part of my education at Brevard College, I began assisting my professors with their paddling classes ranging from whitewater kayaking and canoeing, to sea kayaking expeditions. This teaching experience, alongside a whitewater kayak instructor certification through the American Canoe Association, began to show me that I did indeed have something unique to offer to the paddling community. There were plenty of students who needed a patient and encouraging entrance to the world of whitewater paddling, and I found education and inspiration to be some of my strengths.

In 2009, I attended my first Gauley Fest in Summersville, West Virginia. I had never paddled any river of the same magnitude as the Gauley, and when I successfully completed this run, a new hope and

determination drove my paddling passion. I have attended the festival ever since, and the success that I have gained from overcoming personal challenges has made me an even better instructor because I have faith in myself and my ability to help others feel the excitement and rewards of whitewater kayaking. In addition to reaching my personal goals of paddling the Gauley, I was also honored to compete in the American Canoe Association's Collegiate National Championships in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Building a relationship with the ACA was another beneficial step for me as a paddler and an instructor; I feel motivated to teach and encourage others by showing them the vast resources available to paddlers of any skill level.

I have since moved to Athens, Ohio to attend graduate school at Ohio University. I am privileged to have the opportunity to teach introductory kayaking classes to undergraduate students while studying recreation and its many benefits and

WHITEWATER WOMEN



First run of the Upper Gauley (WV) on opening day, 2011.

Photo by Patrick Cindrich

mission to nurture a new generation of passionate paddlers.

Looking back on the past five years, I have realized that paddling for me will always be a mixture of grace and mistakes, mystery and understanding, challenge and fulfillment, and of personal battles and teamwork. Rivers provide a chance, even if brief, to view the world from a rare perspective. I hope to introduce this perspective to others, not for my own credit, but for the glory and adventure that the river holds for everyone.

complexities. I will continue teaching whitewater paddling to youth and teens at various summer camps near Brevard, North Carolina as part of my personal



Deerfield Fest: July 30



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WHITEWATER WOMEN

KAYAKING, A WAY OF LIFE

BY AIDAN AMTMANN

I STARTED KAYAKING AS a little girl here in Butte, Montana. I was six years old and it was a couple of years before the first kids' boats were designed. Interestingly enough, we usually don't see many other women kayakers. I am now 14, a freshman in high-school, and other than a few close friends of my dad's, more often than not my sisters and I are the only women on the river. This is unfortunate, because kayaking can be a way of life just as easily for women as for men. I have been able to apply the lessons I've learned on the river to my life, and the same is true for my two little sisters as well.

One of the first lessons that I have learned is responsibility. My dad always says, "If you want to be a real kayaker you have to carry your own gear." Though he would help my little sisters and I when we would try to carry our kayaks down the steep banks of the Big Hole River, he encouraged us to be able to deal with our own equipment, even though the kayaks were still way too big for us.

Another example of responsibility is organization in school. Lessons I learned from kayaking carry over to other areas of life, such as time management, and help me keep up with my busy teenager life. I have to go to soccer or tennis practice after school, do my homework, and find free time so I can hang out with my friends and do the other things I enjoy. Kayaking has taught me that I am responsible for me, my belongings, and the mistakes that I make. Sometimes I'm even responsible for others, especially when I have to watch over my little sisters. When I am on the river I fully understand that I am responsible for the decisions that I make, good or bad, and I also have come to understand that I am responsible for the decisions I make in my life.

Kayaking has also taught me that anything is possible in life if we're willing to keep



trying. Last kayaking season my family and I were paddling down The Alberton Gorge north of Missoula. As we approached a huge rapid that had a terrifying hole waiting inside, known as Tumbleweed, I began to get butterflies, as I always do before this drop. I had run it about fifteen times, but I had never run it before without getting flipped. In the eddy on river left, just above the rapid, I took a deep breath and went for it. As I entered the rapid there was no turning back, so I dug my paddle into the water as hard and fast as I could. The first wave swallowed me whole and the second wave hit me like a ton of bricks. Opening my eyes a moment later, I realized that I had made it through without flipping over for the first time ever. The amazing enjoyment I got from that experience is indescribable. I felt as though I was on top of the world and that I could accomplish anything.

Success on the river also improves self-confidence and self-respect. When you've gone down rivers successfully, you can compare your river experiences to life and say, "I did that and that was harder, so I can do this." You look at yourself from a new perspective and find things out about yourself that you didn't know. Last year my dad and one of my sisters (Hannah) and I kayaked the Wise River for the first time.

The author at Tumbleweed on the Clark Fork River (MT) in 2009.

Photo by Mike Malament

This river was different from any of the others that I have run because it's more of a creek, tighter and more technical. On this river I found that I needed to be more decisive and commit to my decision because the river was steeper and faster than I was used to. I needed to anticipate my moves in order to get down the river safely. Anticipating moves—on the river, and in life—is a good thing!

So many things I have learned from kayaking can be applied to everything else that I do. Learning these lessons at an early age has helped me deal with some of the challenges of being a young girl. Self-confidence, responsibility, commitment, anticipation, and self-respect are important qualities to have on the river, and in life, especially for a woman. Kayaking is sometimes considered a guy's sport, and when a girl is doing the same exact sport as a man (maybe even doing it better) people step back and say "WOW." From kayaking, I realized that WOMEN KICK BUTT. I'm looking forward to meeting and paddling with lots of other woman kayakers and I'm proud of the fact that kayaking is a way of life for me.

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WHITEWATER WOMEN

STILL LYING DOWN ON THE JOB

BY ROCHELLE PARRY

I GREW UP NEAR the ocean in southern California, and luckily my parents enjoyed summer days at the beach. I would spend almost the entire day in the water, no matter how cold, foggy, or flat the conditions. I suppose that prepared me for future bodyboarding competitions. At first I rode a blue raft that had ropes along the side, but when I outgrew that I bodysurfed. In 1978 I got a Morey Boogie Bodyboard to use with my Duck Feet swimfins. Although I tried standup surfing off and on for years, I always came back to the bodyboard.

Fast forward a few decades and I find myself in northwest Washington, a long drive from fickle, but occasionally epic surf. A trip to the coastal Olympic peninsula involves a ferry ride, camping, a ton of driving, and sometimes no surf. I wanted something closer. I had heard that river formations can create standing waves; I'd witnessed it myself when I lived in Jackson, WY, at Lunchcounter rapid on the Snake. Then I came across a riverboard demo during a kayak festival on the Wenatchee. Another surfing friend from Seattle showed up, and Josh Galt lent us riverboards, pfd's and



helmets. We rode through Granny's rapid a few times. It was a record low water year (2005) but it was still fun. I didn't try it again, though, until the Gorge Games in 2008.

Rochelle Parry jumping into the Fish Ladder wave in Idaho with a bodyboard. Bodyboards don't offer as much floatation as riverboards, but are easier to maneuver on waves.

Photo by Josh Galt, Face Level Industries



The first riverboarding Gorge Games event was a down-river race on 6 miles of the White Salmon. Although I hadn't been on a riverboard for more than a couple hours, I passed a lot of competitors and finished fifth. The winner had never been on a riverboard but was an Olympic swimmer. Ironically, I didn't get very far in the wave surfing competition—Rattlesnake is much different than an ocean wave! I did much better at the boarder-cross on Maytag rapid finishing second. I was nervous each time I advanced because I had a plane to catch that afternoon to LA then on to El Salvador for a surfing trip, and really didn't want to miss my flight.

Rochelle Parry, about to plunge over a drop on Brush Creek (CA).

Photo by Josh Galt, Face Level Industries

The riverboarding event at the Gorge Games was part of a competition series Josh Galt put together to promote Face Level Industries. The grand prize was a trip to Costa Rica. I went on that trip in January 2009 and had the time of my life! When the competition series began again that spring, I bought a Kern Riverboard so I could ride at home.

What stuck with me the most about this sport was the community. There we were, a fringe sport, somewhat extreme, but I felt very respected. In spite our age range (teenage – 60+), we all got on well. We were fierce competitors in the water, pulling all the stops—including the occasional foul—to gain any advantage, but truly enjoyed each other's company off the water.

After competitions in California, Oregon, Colorado and Idaho, I finished in the top three. Our events had no divisions based on sex or age. This time the winner was a competitive sailor, Peter Cameron, and I joined him, Alicia Monahan, Peter Lamka and Josh for another round of riverboarding in Costa Rica, December 2009.

Although line-ups form at popular surf spots such as Turkey Shoot, a river wave breaks all day, people cheer you on when you perform tricks, and you can catch up with old and new friends in the eddy while waiting your turn. Ocean surfing is more individually focused. Other surfers won't think anything of paddling around you to take what should have been "your" wave, especially if they are "locals" and you are visiting (the only true "locals" are the dolphins, seals and Orca whales, by the way). And if you're on a bodyboard, it's not uncommon for stand up surfers to view you as unworthy of riding any waves. I used to come out of the ocean angry and stressed out from what should be a relaxing, invigorating sport.

Riverboarding is not popular in Washington, although many rivers and creeks here work well for the sport, especially if you wear kneepads. The boating community has been welcoming, if not a little "concerned" for me at times. Certainly in some situations,



Rochelle Parry knee surfing at The Fish Ladder, Idaho.

Photo by Josh Galt, Face Level Industries

kayaks are better suited for the river, especially if the run contains unavoidable exposed or barely submerged sharp rocks. "How do you boof?" I get asked sometimes. Well, you can kick a bit harder off a ledge, but we don't get as far out in front of a drop. So far it hasn't been an issue. The advantage is, if we turn upside-down or sideways, it's very easy to flip back over: no roll is required, and the craft is light and very maneuverable. Knock on wood, but my rescues thus far have been limited to losing



my board at Drunkard's on the Wenatchee (the board surfed a good minute or two longer than I did), and getting a hand from a kayaker at Norm's Resort on the Cooper (the hole where boats check in, but they don't check out—thanks, Jay!).

My favorite local run is the Nooksak in Glacier, Horseshoe Bend in particular, an exhilarating Class IV+ followed by a very scenic Class III. There's a group of kayakers who tackle the run every Thursday evening in season. I'll boat with any craft, but hope that more people will want to give riverboarding a try. I have run Class V but it's more survival than enjoyment. I watched my friends I have competed against—Alex Koutzoukis, Peter Lamka, and Kevin Yount—run Jacob's Ladder (on the North Fork Payette in Idaho), while I was happy to hold a throw bag and take pictures. Riverboarding has taken me to West Virginia, Costa Rica, California, Colorado, Idaho, and all over Washington and Oregon, into some of the most beautiful, Eden-esque places on earth. I hope to some day riverboard in Indonesia, Chile, Nepal and New Zealand. I suppose I still drive as much as I would for surfing ocean waves, but the river forecast is a lot more predictable than the ocean surf, and typically it rains less at inland rivers than on the coast.

I'm heading to the Kern (CA) in a couple of days for a gathering of the tribe. It'll be interesting to see what new surfing moves have been invented since the last time we were together (personally, I am hoping to see a head stand). I'm not sure if it's the adrenaline, the beauty, or the community that keeps me coming back; probably a bit of all three.

Rochelle Parry lives in Bellingham, Washington. You can find out more about riverboarding at www.teamfli.com

From left: Alicia Monahan, Rochelle Parry, Josh Galt, Peter Cameron, & Peter Lamka at the Pacuare put-in, Costa Rica.

Photo by Luis (our driver)

FROM SCAREDY CAT TO RIVER RAT

BY SHELLEY POLI



My first boof!
Photo by Ohiopyle Adventure Photography

EIGHT YEARS AGO, when my husband Dave turned 50, I surprised him with a private kayaking lesson. He has always been a “water person” and was fascinated by the kayakers we saw on the river. Well, after just one lesson, he was hooked. He quickly bought a boat and started practicing at a nearby lake while I watched. Quickly, though, he talked me into trying it out. Unfortunately, I have never been a “water person” like Dave. I couldn’t swim to save my life, and I wasn’t very comfortable in the water, but I tried it out for him. And after paddling his boat on the lake a few times, I told him to go ahead and find me a used boat, so he bought me a big, comfy kayak.

The first bad experience I had with my boat was in the lake practicing my roll. With help from my husband, I had rolled three or four times on my own. Dave then went back to shore with my youngest daughter to hang out while I paddled around a little longer.

As I was going back to shore, I thought I could pull off one more roll before I called it a day. I set up, rolled over and missed. I tried two more times before I decided to pull the skirt. I was tired and hadn’t gotten a breath in any of my tries. When I reached for the pull cord I was shocked - it wasn’t there! My husband had just bought a new skirt for my kayak and it was a little too tight, so he had to help me put it on that day. Apparently, when he pulled the front on he inadvertently tucked the pull cord underneath. The skirt was so tight that I couldn’t find a spot to get my hand under to help break the suction. At first I panicked. I was tired and had already let my breath out thinking I would be at the surface by now. I kept thinking, “I have about 10 seconds before I have to take in a breath, it sure would be nice if it was air!” After another few seconds, I calmed down and thought this was no way to go. I calmly grabbed the front of the skirt and worked my fingers down the sides, feeling for a weak point. I

didn’t find one until I got to my hips. There, I got one finger under the skirt and pulled with all my might. The skirt flew off and I fell out. As I surfaced, Dave was standing right beside me, ready to save the day. As my daughter tells me later (after we all calmed down), she and Dave were sitting on the picnic table watching me as I went for the final roll. They saw me try three times to get up and then saw my paddle float up. “She’ll be up soon,” my husband said, but as they sat there and watched, they realized I wasn’t getting out of the boat. My husband ripped off his shirt and dove into the lake - then quickly stood up, since the water was only three feet deep. He said that as soon as he got to me, he saw me pull the skirt and fall out. After that, I was afraid to try a roll and figured there was plenty of time learn later.

That fall, we finally decided to try kayaking on moving water, instead of lakes. There is a small creek across from our house, a

WHITEWATER WOMEN

gentle Class I-II. Of course, having no roll, it looked like a raging inferno to me. The first time we went down the Loyalhanna, I was scared to death. We were only on the water a few minutes when I got stuck. I had drifted right up on top of two rocks close together. I couldn't push off because I was directly over the water while my boat was sitting on top of both rocks. I didn't know what to do. Finally my husband got out of his boat, walked out to where I was (the water was pretty low) and picked up the front of the boat and faced me in the right direction. (I know, by now you're thinking this girl should NOT be in a kayak.)

We worked on our skills throughout that summer—Dave more than me. The next year brought more rain and more trips on the river. Dave was getting much better and was advancing to bigger water. He didn't want to go on the easier rivers as much, and that worked in my favor. It seemed every time he tried to get me onto anything above a Class II, I froze up, which in turn made

me do worse. I was staying upright most of the time, but had fear written all over my face for the entire trip. It was evident I wasn't enjoying myself. I started going less and less, and he started going more and on harder rivers. I think the last straw was a trip on the Middle Youghiogheny. It's an easy Class I-II stretch and I had been down it numerous times over the years. I was scared the entire time. I knew the river, the levels were low, but I just kept thinking that I was going to flip. I think that day, both Dave and I finally realized that I wasn't a kayaker. I resigned myself to never being on the river again. It wasn't that I was going to miss kayaking that much; it was the fact that I was going to miss being with Dave. We have always enjoyed doing things together, and when we first started, we thought this was one more thing we could enjoy as a couple.

The summer passed by as I worked in my gardens while Dave kayaked. Then one day, he came home excitedly telling me how a

friend of his was selling a used duckie, and would I possibly want to try it? It was cheap enough that we figured even if I didn't like it we could resell it or keep it around for friends to use. So, Dave bought it and brought it home. It was patched from front to back and faded from use, but it looked like heaven to me. We blew it up, and as soon as I sat in it I felt comfortable and relaxed. I thought to myself, "I can do this!"

That weekend, we took it out for a spin on the Loop on the Lower Yough. I had only been on the Loop once in my kayak with disastrous results, but I wasn't nearly as scared as I thought I would be on a Class III+ stretch of whitewater. Dave took me through the easy lines and I made it through with only one swim. I felt a sense of accomplishment and actually wanted to try again the next weekend. That summer, we went almost every weekend and I started looking forward to our trips. Dave fine-tuned the duckie for me by making a footpad so I didn't slide down to the front on every rapid. I created a backpack for it, so when I was done I could roll it up, strap it on my back, and walk up to the car easily.

Dave keeps asking me if I want a newer duckie, a smaller, more maneuverable one, but I am adamant on keeping this one. It may be old, large and worn, but it's my Cadillac on the river, and it goes through anything. At the end of last year, I was even getting the hang of surfing with it! Dave says it looks rather funny – this big old duckie sitting in line to surf with all the kayakers.

I am so glad my husband found a way to help us be on the river together, enjoying ourselves. He says it's nice to see me coming through a rapid with a big smile on my face, something he didn't think he'd ever see!



Working my way out of a hole.
Photo by Ohiopyle Adventure Photography

WHITEWATER WOMEN

WHO NEEDS BOYS?

BY STACY FALK

NO DOUBT ABOUT it, the best days on the water have always been with the ladies. There are three situations in particular that I will highlight to prove that this male free phenomenon makes for a great day on the river. From showing up at the put-in with a group of woman you've never met, to embarking on a kayak road trip with your best girl friends in the world, or introducing women to the river for the first time on a bachelorette river trip, there is nothing quite like it.

Sorry guys.

Girls at Play

Twelve woman kayakers, three female raft guides, gourmet meals, plenty of wine, and the mighty Salmon River for six days of adventure. How could anyone say no to that? Jimbo knew that I wouldn't, hence my invitation.

I know Jimbo from working at Four Corners Riversports in Durango. In the summers, he and his wife Helen guide for Canyons Inc. Every year they are allowed so many guest spots on their commercial trips for

friends and family. With the season coming to a close and only one September trip left, a co-sponsored endeavor with Anna Levesque and Girls At Play, they had to invite a female kayaker.

"I know it's only a few weeks notice, but you can't miss this Stacy," said Jimbo. "We have two spots so you can bring a friend."

Since I don't own a car and didn't know how I was going to get to the put-in somewhere beyond Salmon, Idaho, I offered the spot to anyone who could get me there.

Turns out one of my co-workers offered to drive his girlfriend, Erin, and myself out there while he took the time to explore the whitewater gems of Idaho for himself. It all came together and Erin appeared to be even more excited than me. Erin was fairly new to the sport and neither of us had ever paddled in Idaho, so we thought this would be a great way to boost confidence and build skills on the river.

The 17-hour drive blurred into a fuzzy memory and before we knew it we were all scampering into our kayaks. Everyone seemed to bond immediately. The ability to kayak in the wilderness has the

power to connect people beyond most casual encounters.

I made many fascinating connections with all of the women on the trip. Everyone came from such a different background that it really put my life, in terms of kayaking, back into perspective. It doesn't matter what demographic, social scene, or location you hail from. If there is a desire to kayak, you will find a way, and you will kayak. It's a concept that I never really thought about before this trip and watching my new determined friends paddle out of every scary rapid and gnarly hole proved that to me.

East Coast Stacy (I had been dubbed West Coast Stacy) said she took up kayaking in Tennessee because she needed an escape from her everyday routine. And since the moment she picked up her first paddle she has not put it down. She has traveled the world with friends she's met through kayaking. She said her husband doesn't quite understand—he's not a kayaker—but he does know that it's an important part of her new life and he supports her addiction.

Stacy and I were friends instantly. The friendship grew as we drank the most Tequila I have ever consumed in one sitting (and because of this, I might add, I will not drink Tequila to this day). Stacy rescued me from my terribly hungover swim the following day in the flattest stretch of water on the entire trip. We laughed for hours and I promised I that I would take a trip out East in the near future. The energy in the air made me so happy to be alive (even with a hangover).

As with any multi-day river trip, being on the water is only half the fun. Cindy, a badass fire fighter from Austin, TX, enjoyed having her toes painted for the first time in her life during spa night. This certainly



A relaxing afternoon with the ladies in the Barth hot springs on the Main Salmon River, ID.

Photo courtesy of Canyons Inc.

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WHITEWATER WOMEN



The Girls at Play, looking good on the Main Salmon, September 2010.
Photo courtesy of Canyons Inc.

wasn't your average hangout around the fire pan at camp. The large Pelican case filled with masks, lotions, oils, clippers, loofahs, and polish with colors I didn't know existed, brought out the best of us. I had no idea things could get so girly on the river.

Cindy took up kayaking to escape city life and enjoy a world outside of her very stressful career. Since then, she has been on multiple Girls at Play adventures and has worked at the Nantahala Outdoor Center where she loves helping fellow woman boaters.

I wanted to talk to Cindy since the start of the trip. I knew she was a lesbian—I just have that sense, which might be why people think I am a lesbian sometimes. The next day Cindy and I opted to chill out on a raft and we got to talking.

I asked Cindy when she discovered that she was attracted to woman. "I just always knew from a young age that I liked girls," she said.

I told her that people had often mistaken me for a lesbian especially during the time in my life when I shaved my head. I told her that because of all the buzz I began to question it myself. But, with a few

Rowdy River Girl, Lani Hanna, teaches her rookie river girl passengers a thing or two about rowing on flat water.

Photo by Cristie Scott

quick questions, Cindy set me straight, and helped me realize that my doubts were unfounded.

Once again, another extraordinary friendship born on the river that will last a lifetime. Even if we don't see each other for many years to come, we will pick up right where we left off the next time we do.

And it wasn't just the kayakers that I made lasting friendships with; I also made great connections with our guides. Our guides' knowledge about every element of every aspect of the main Salmon made for a much more enriching experience.

This happened to also be my first experience on a commercial trip. Erin and I couldn't really get used to the idea of someone else always cooking, cleaning, rigging, and setting up the groover for the group, so we were always helping out, even when they kept telling us not to.

Our guide Lisa a.k.a. "Whizzy" has rowed the Salmon for over 30 years. We got to share the stories behind each other's lives in the place where her soul is rooted. Her sun-bleached hair, tan-weathered skin, and

beautiful personality had raft guide written all over her. But Lisa is like no other female guide I've ever met. She kind of adopted me during the trip; I hadn't felt that loved in a long time.

We shared just about everything, and since I technically wasn't a paying customer but a guest of a guide, we could talk about anything: the good times, the bad times, what we want to do in the future and all the craziness in between.

In the end we made a pact to check in on each other every so often and make sure we are on track in pursuing the life goals we have each envisioned for ourselves. I know that we will.

The Girls Only Tour

On the other end of the spectrum, there is team Kum and Go. This story involves not exactly making new friends on the river but furthering friendships with existing river buddies.

The idea for the team started when Missy and I bought a ton of Kum and Go swag and pretended we were sponsored. Kum and Go convenient stores have been around



since 1959 are located throughout the mid-west in 11 states. Their success is attributed to their catchy name and we like it. They sell shirts, hats, coozies, flasks, boxers, shot glasses, beer mugs and much more.

“Well, if we are ‘sponsored,’” said fellow member Ashleigh, “we should take a trip.”

The next day we had constructed a map that took us from Durango through Pagosa Springs, over to the Arkansas, then to Vail during Teva Mountain Games, on over to Glenwood Springs to test out the new epic play wave and back through the San Juans, making a minor detour at our favorite local distillery.

The trip got pretty crazy with all of the people, gear, and stops along the way. We were four women with enough gear and food for a 23-day Grand Canyon trip all crammed into a two-door Nissan with jump seats. Let’s just say a few of us weren’t exactly speaking by the time we got to Glenwood.

After turning around for multiple items we forgot, one of which was actually a

kayak, the sun had set by the time we rolled into the first paddle spot on the map. We shrugged our shoulders and went shopping for some last minute beverage supplies instead.

We decided to at least camp near the second destination on the map by the East Fork of the San Juan for a nice early morning paddle. But in the morning, after a lecture from a campground ranger about not paying the fee the night before, we found the road to the put-in closed due to a landslide.

“So when do we actually kayak on this trip?” asked Michelle.

After the second shut down, we decided that Browns Canyon, a classic Class III on the Arkansas, would be an appropriate start. But once again, after all the giggling, fumbling, and searching for gear, we didn’t have much day light left.

“At least we won’t run into any commercial trips this time of day,” I said. The girls were beginning to wonder if we’d make it. Did I mention the hail and 60 mph winds?



The bride, Gloria Kaasch, raises a toast to the Rowdy River Girls of the San Juan on her bachelorette trip in March 2011.

Photo by Cristie Scott

And if there wasn’t enough to worry about I had to teach my team members how to reduce my shoulder in case of any dislocations. I figured since I was having surgery in two weeks I would take the risk and luckily my friends were okay with that. I wouldn’t typically put anyone in that situation but I knew that I wouldn’t be paddling for at least seven months after surgery, so I decided to go for it.

We hadn’t been down Browns in while, but I felt confident I would recognize where we were. Missy was especially concerned about Toilet Bowl rapid, claiming she had been worked there in the past.

“Game on!” I yelled back to the ladies as we dropped into Zoom Flume, the first real big rapid. The hydraulics were pushy and I braced on end the entire rapid. When I could finally catch an eddy and look back,

Gloria, bride to be, battles the wind while Kelly lays low in the bottom of the Goosenecks on the San Juan River, Utah.

Photo by Cristie Scott

WHITEWATER WOMEN



Recuperating from the previous night while lounging in the sun on the last leg of the trip.

Photo by Cristie Scott

Missy was more or less somersaulting each wave in her little purple Jackson that we call “Barney.” This made her even more concerned about the rapids to come. I couldn’t help but laugh a little.

“You’re a great kayaker dude!” I said. “Don’t worry about it, just paddle.”

With a lot of yelling and screaming about where the hell the Toilet Bowl was, in the blink of an eye we were at the take-out. We had no idea when we actually went through it, but at least no one swam or got window-shaded.

The journey continued and I should write a whole series about it because there’s way

The original Team Kum and Go (left to right), Stacy Falk, Michelle Fletcher, Ashleigh Tucker, and Missy Votel with the store clerk, J.T., after a long day’s surf at the West Glenwood wave.

Photo Courtesy of Ashleigh Tucker

too much to share. But until I do, I’ll skip to the end of the tour. Before I do, though, I must mention that Michelle ended up naming her dog after a super cute red headed guy we met and paddled with on the Eagle River—thanks Roddy!

When we took the exit off of I-70 in Glenwood Springs for that big wave we kept hearing everyone talk about I could see the light from heaven shining down on the building. And no joke, right near the wave, was the most amazing shocker: a Kum and Go store! None of us honestly knew there was going to be a Kum and Go at the highlight of the trip. How on earth could that be a coincidence?

At high water the West Glenwood Wave creates a river-wide wet dream. Constructed by Jason Carey in 2008, it has brought kayakers from all over the world to test their skills. Our skills got tested and I didn’t want to leave. I think the thought of all us going into the Kum and Go wearing our shirts and hats is the only reason I did.

The clerk couldn’t stop staring at us or speak a word as we raided the Kum and Go for more goodies.

“Don’t worry (pause for name tag check) J.T., we are from corporate,” said Missy. “Just making our routine rounds.”

He still didn’t say two words when we all rushed the counter and asked a stranger to take a picture for team headquarters. To date, the team Kum and Go kayak tour is an annual event that any new (female only) members are initiated into during the hunt for the Toilet Bowl.

Rowdy River Girls

I sat in silence when my best friend asked me to be the maid-of-honor in her wedding.

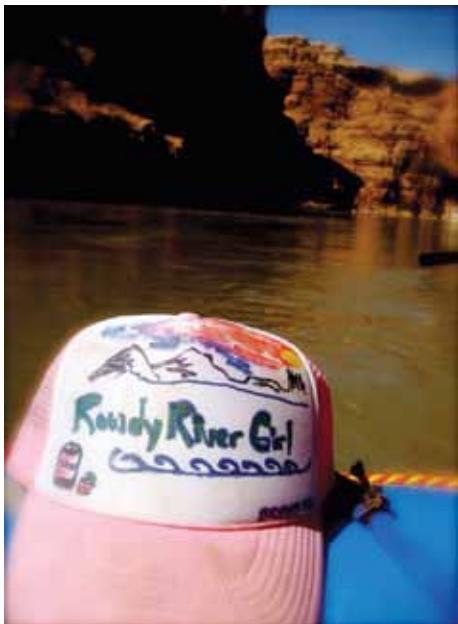
“Stacy, what’s wrong? Do you not want to do it?” Gloria asked as I continued to sit there speechless.

“The maid-of-honor plans the bachelorette party right?” I said with a big grin on my face.

Plenty of time for a March trip with the wedding scheduled in April. I figured my safest bet was a San Juan trip in southeast Utah. The upper stretch from Sand Island to Mexican Hat seemed too simple. I wanted a bigger challenge. I pulled a lower San Juan permit from Mexican Hat to Clay Hills, which makes for a heinous shuttle and can be a gamble at low water, as sometimes you literally have to drag your boat through the sand near Lake Powell.

I didn’t realize that being a trip leader for a bunch of girls could be so much work!





One of the many customized hats worn throughout the entire Rowdy River Girls adventure.

Photo by Cristie Scott

Not only did I have to coordinate borrowing all the rafting gear, but we needed to find tiki torches and a trailer too. I rallied all my friends' gear to make it happen. Gloria couldn't fathom the idea that all she had to do was show up and go.

On an extremely windy afternoon in March nine Rowdy River Girls in personalized pink trucker hats said goodbye to the world for four days on what would become one of the best river trips in our lifetime.

Three of the girls had never been on a river trip and I felt responsible for making sure they would want to continue exploring rivers.

Because we had to make 57 miles in only four days at below recommended levels I couldn't help but be a little worried that we wouldn't make it. We arrived at camp the first night just shy of three miles from my goal. Not bad.

The next morning I couldn't be more impressed with the girls. Everyone helped with everything, and as the boats got

rigged, I sat back and made bloody marys. We departed camp in record time.

And as we drank more each night we somehow managed to depart earlier each morning. I couldn't figure it out.

"It's cause there's no guys," said Kelly. "They have to drink twice as much coffee, use the groover three times, fiddle around with the ashes in the fire pan and so on."

I totally agreed with Kelly. We were so much more efficient. That is until we almost lost the bride-to-be.

I didn't know what happened at first because I was hiking back up river to check on a boat that had been stuck on a rock.

"We have to get to camp right now," demanded Kelly. "Are we close?"

Luckily we were very close. Gloria was having an asthma attack and had forgot her inhaler. My trip leader mode clicked on and I kept everyone calm. We got to camp, pitched a tent, stripped Gloria of her wet clothes and tried to keep her calm so she could get some air.

I felt as trip leader that I should have made sure she brought her inhaler, but in the chaos of packing I completely forgotten to check on everyone's medical history and realized the hard way that's why it has to be done.

Fortunately, everything turned out okay and we finished the trip with a bang, a.k.a. car bombs, grease bombs, comedy shows, costumes, gin, champagne and much more that I can not discuss here.

I went down in maid-of-honor history and the whole experience only solidified in my mind the fact that the most incredible experiences on the river are with the girls.

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WHITEWATER WOMEN

GETTING MY ROLL ON WHITEWATER KAYAKING AS MY METAPHOR FOR LIFE

BY JENNIFER S. DAIL

"Rivers know this: there is no hurry. We shall get there some day."

- A. A. Milne, *Pooh's Little Instruction Book*

ABOUT A YEAR-AND-A-HALF ago, I began kayaking after meeting my husband, Garth Brown, who convinced me to give the sport a try. Like many others, I quickly fell in love with the adrenaline rush and beauty of whitewater kayaking. However, I faced a steep learning curve and a high frustration level, and I realized I had not recently had to learn something with which I had no prior experience.

This learning curve had a whole other element for me, too. Have you ever tried to learn to do something from your significant other? It really doesn't work! Garth taught me a lot about the basic paddle strokes and river-reading skills, but teaching me to roll presented a challenge our marriage did not need. My frustration level was so high that cuss words started flying from my mouth and off Garth's back very quickly. Garth was a champ about letting it roll off of him, but because of my frustration level (and likely his unspoken one), he hesitated to really push me. I needed someone to push me if I was going to learn to roll, which is the one skill that would take my paddling to the next level.



Fortunately for me, Garth's ego wasn't so big that he was unwilling to try a new scenario; he was very willing to hook me up with other teachers. While several people have worked with me, Chuck Armentrout with Urban Currents has proved phenomenal in helping me with my roll. While he encourages me, he doesn't let me get away with stopping just because I claim I am tired or don't want to hang out upside down underwater anymore (I think that's supposed to be my motivation to right myself). Unlike my husband, Chuck won't just roll me up if I miss my roll; he makes me go back under and set up again because that is what I will have to do on the river.

I do not fully have my roll yet, but I have learned many other things about whitewater kayaking and how I approach life through the process of learning to roll; whitewater kayaking has become the lens through which I perceive my approach to daily living on and off the river.

Self-Confidence and Performance are Closely Related

Self-confidence and performance closely connect. I never grew up participating in sports, gravitating instead to more indoor, artistic activities, so I have never used athletic as an adjective to describe myself. Embarrassingly, I started kayaking at my highest weight and convinced myself that because of that weight, I can't do some things that others can, including rolling a kayak. I have trouble seeing past my own perceived limitations of my weight and body, but when I begin to let go of my self-conscious internal dialogue that tells me others are judging me, I start to experience success with my roll.

Life throws so many things at us that can beat us down: work, the daily grind, family and friends. Those beat downs chip away at our self-confidence in a variety of areas and,

The author getting her roll on.
Photo by Garth Brown

in turn, negatively affect our performance in those and other areas. Simply put, we must let go of all the personal junk in our head and focus on the specific task to perform to our fullest ability. Sometimes the great paradox is that the harder we try not to think about the junk, the more it permeates our thoughts.

Focus on the Task at Hand

At first on the river, I could only think about the things that scared me, such as running Nantahala Falls. I used self-talk to get myself through the falls, saying things like, "People run the falls in pool toys; I am certainly okay in a kayak." The Bump on the Nantahala is my nemesis. Go right and the wave hole followed by a pour over presents no threat, but somehow I manage to miss that far right line. Every time. My swims there result from my focus on The Bump as my nemesis rather than on the line that I need to take to avoid it. With this mentality, not surprisingly, I swim.

When Chuck started teaching me to roll, he said, "Focus on the task at hand. Don't worry about all the other stuff." Such obvious and simple advice that offers so much; if I am worried about other things, I can't accomplish the current task. The reverse holds true as well: If I focus on accomplishing the current task, I can't worry about what might go wrong.

Pick Your Line and Ride It

Not unlike other novice kayakers, I feel much uncertainty about which line to choose on the river. I approach a rapid and look at Garth, asking where to go. Like a good teacher, he asks what I think and why. Regardless, I still feel much anxiety about the possible consequences of choosing the wrong line. What if the wrong line flips me? What if the wrong line has a lot of shoals and makes me work hard rather than just riding out the wave train? Never mind that the stakes for picking the wrong line on a Class II river are low; I still have the internal conversation.



The author running S-Turn on the Cartecay River (GA).

Photo by Garth Brown

Like Robert Frost's narrator in "The Road Not Taken," we face choices in life, and human nature makes us worry about making the wrong ones. We ask, "What if?" and worry about the potential consequences of choosing the line not taken. We can plan and scout lines, but we can never know for certain the outcome of our choice beforehand. Yes, we can minimize risks, but are the most fun lines the ones we just pick and ride? What if we approached the lines we face in life that way, too? I have more fun and don't take myself too seriously when I just ride the line.

Failure is Scarier in Your Imagination Than in Reality

Until I took my first swim, I feared it. Who doesn't? But that fear caused me to tense up in my boat, making the likelihood of swimming much greater. My first swim was at Delabar's Rock on the Nantahala. I lost my line and got pushed right into the rock. Since the other paddlers in our group were ahead of me, I pulled the skirt and swam to the bank. Like most first-time swimmers, I forgot to hold on to the boat. When I got to the bank, after trekking through briars and brambles down to where Garth had tied my boat to a tree, I hit a fast-flowing feeder creek that cut off my path. I walked back and jumped into the frigid water to swim to my boat. Swimming by, I tried to grab the loop on my boat's stern and missed it,

which resulted in another boater helping ferry me to the large eddy and beach on the other side of the river. I had cuts and bruises, but man, was I happy! That swim was nothing compared to the one in my imagination! My imagination had produced the epic swim every boater hears horror stories about, the swim that re-circulates you in the hugest hydraulic known to man as you fight your way out of it.

Imagination conjures up incredibly real images that somehow become part of our truths until one day, something like my swim happens to completely shatter that truth. We fear failure because we live in a culture that highly values success; we judge people based on their success. Failure often seems far worse than it is in reality. Failure can make it seem that we have not succeeded with something when, in fact, it really presents an opportunity to learn, which can lead to even greater success. Some of the best lessons I have learned in life, at work, on the river have come from my failures, and I approached them as learning opportunities. If we are receptive to them, failures on the river will make us better paddlers.

Depending on Yourself Boosts Your Confidence

When I paddle with others, I feel self-conscious about possibly swimming, needing their help, and holding up the

group. I let them know that I will hang out for the bow rescue if I cannot roll. In fact, I will hang in there for quite a long time because I don't want to impose on others by making them stop to help me if I swim. Yes, we are all dependent upon each other on the river in many ways, but I feel like my lack of a combat roll means that the group needs to babysit me in some way. The primary way in which developing this skill will take my paddling to the next level is by boosting my confidence; it's priceless!

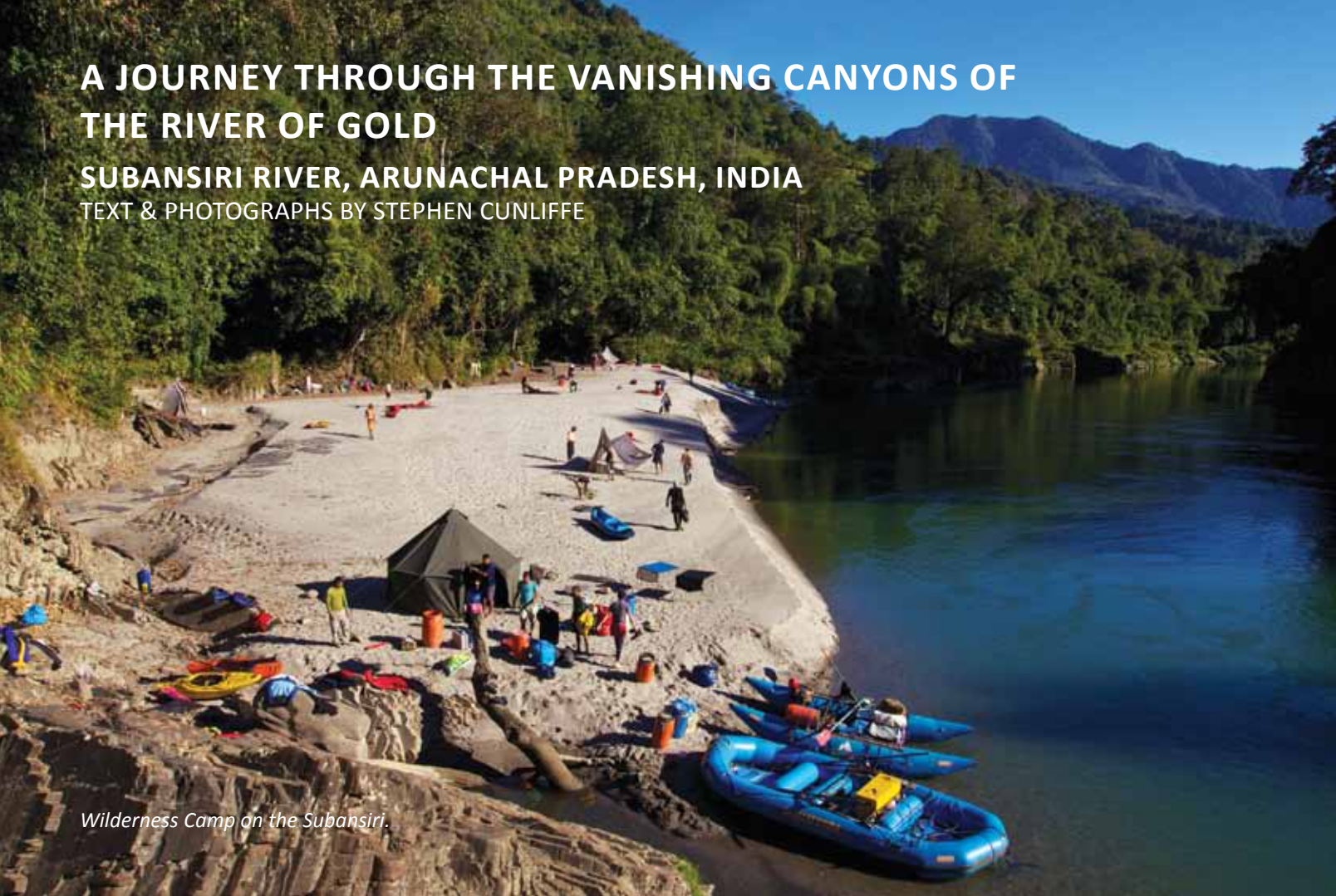
Marriage has probably presented as challenging an adjustment for me as learning to whitewater kayak because for about fourteen years prior, I lived alone and owned my own condo. Now I have to face someone else's clutter and remind myself that in the big scheme of things, it doesn't matter if Garth left dishes in the sink. Don't get me wrong, I do not wistfully long to have my single adulthood back, but I think it played a pivotal role in building my confidence and sense of self. Strong self-confidence helps you realize what really matters and helps remove your focus from the smaller, trivial items in life. Just as self-reliance has helped boost my personal and professional confidence, I know that developing the same self-reliance on the river will boost my confidence in my paddling.

Even though I am still learning to kayak, each day I learn just as much about how I approach life as I do about how I need to approach the river. Metaphors help us structure our thoughts about the world in which we live, and they help add imagination and life to our day-to-day world. Perhaps using kayaking as my metaphor for life allows me to bring the river with me, even when I cannot go to it. Like the river, I know there is no hurry in life; I will get there someday.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE VANISHING CANYONS OF THE RIVER OF GOLD

SUBANSIRI RIVER, ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN CUNLIFFE



Wilderness Camp on the Subansiri.

THE SUBANSIRI, MEANING River of Gold, is the largest tributary of the Upper Brahmaputra. This mystical river begins its journey by draining the frigid waters of Tibet beyond the Great Himalayan Range—from Tsona Dzong up to the Great Loop of the Tsangpo—before slicing a deep gorge through the Eastern Himalayas and entering India at Asaphila. The eight-day expedition from So Nala to Gerukamukh covers a 164-km stretch of river, which sees the Subansiri drop 925 vertical feet as it cuts a swath through the rugged hinterland in the remote tribal region of Arunachal Pradesh, an isolated and sparsely inhabited part of India characterized by wild terrain and dense jungle.

“Everybody get down!” yelled Vaibhav to his laid-back crew. I looked up to see the raft just ahead of ours getting sucked into a big hole where it began to surf on the recirculating water. As the river thundered over a submerged rock, the pour-over created a strong backwash that latched

onto the 14-foot raft and prevented it from breaking free. The boat gyrated wildly as it surfed the powerful hydraulic. Bow paddler Rohan Guptan was the first to go. Sucked overboard by the raging whitewater, he clung precariously to the boat’s safety line as the powerful current tried to suck him away. Fellow bow paddler Sachin Bhatia moved across to try and haul him back into the raft. Their combined weight, along with Rohan’s drag, caused the raft to roll dangerously. “Highside left!” Vaibhav screamed in vain. Despite the captain’s desperate instructions to counter the toppling raft, the boat flipped and the entire crew was summarily dumped into the raging river.

“OK team, let’s go save some swimmers,” commanded our unflappable guide Sanjay Rana. We paddled hard to reach our wide-eyed companions as they bobbed around in the turbulent water. One by one we manhandled them into the sanctuary of our raft, while the safety kayakers picked

up the stragglers in the calmer water a little further downstream. We were only a couple of hours into day one of our Subansiri adventure, but already the solid whitewater, non-stop action and striking scenery had set the tone for an epic expedition: the Subansiri would be an experience to savor.

“Play hole coming up on river right,” yelled kayak guide Khan Singh. A big smile washed over the face of British kayaker Matt Tidy; I could see that he was itching to test out the large, violent surf hole that beckoned just ahead. After catching the eddy and confirming that it looked safe, he ferried across and dropped into the extremely powerful hydraulic. He managed to pull off a few spins as he surfed the steep breaking wave, but his big riverboat was ill-suited for the fearsome play boating conditions. As he fought for control on the explosive wave, the recirculating water grabbed hold of him, thrashed him around for a while and spat him out the back. Next

RIVERS OF INDIA

into the mix was Canadian kayaker, Dave Prothero and the beastly hole was ready and waiting for him. As he surfed the potent stopper, the unpredictable wave repeatedly latched onto his kayak, picking him up and slamming him violently back down again. As the river toyed with Dave, tossing him around, he managed to bob up wide-eyed in the strong backwash a couple of times before the raging torrent finally got the better of him and he was unceremoniously ejected.

After watching the two most experienced kayakers on our expedition team take a beating, no one else was brave—or silly—enough to volunteer for a thrashing, but these two untiring gluttons for punishment couldn't get enough of it. Using the eddy and paddling strongly, they ferried across and dropped right back into the monster for round two of a serious pummeling. There was no glassy face or gentle foam pile for pulling tricks; this was a steep crashing wave where the mighty river had all the control. The boats gyrated wildly as they surfed the powerful backwash and all the kayakers could do was attempt to weather the storm by holding on and reacting to the sudden violent mood swings of the gigantic stopper. There was no margin for error: one wrong move and they disappeared only to bob up 40 meters downstream wondering

what the hell had just happened. It was a formidable, thrashy and uncompromising hole where the river reigned supreme. "Exciting, dynamic and bloody hard work," Matt aptly described it afterwards.

Two Indian army teams initially opened the Subansiri in 1994, while Aquaterra's 2006 trip was the first commercial descent of the river. As the kayakers were enjoying the near-continuous world-class whitewater on day one of the 2010 expedition, it was the raft and support crews that made history with an epic first raft descent from So Nala to Koda. It was on this section of challenging whitewater that Vaibhav and his crew flipped and deservedly earned their "Subansiri Swim Team" nickname, which stuck for the remainder of the trip.

As the Subansiri traverses Arunachal it dramatically alters its complexion from one day to the next. What starts out as a steep technical descent, steadily gains volume transforming itself into the textbook pool-drop river, ideal for an entertaining raft adventure. In its upper reaches, the river offers consistently exciting whitewater with plenty of opportunities for kayakers to play. Action attractions include big boofs, slots, drops and even a couple of small waterfalls to keep paddlers suitably entertained. However, you don't have to be



Higher up in its drainage the Subansiri is tighter and more technical.

a world-class boater to enjoy the Subansiri, the braided nature of the river means that there is always an option to take a more conservative line or even portage the occasional challenging rapid if need be.

Colorado-based raft guide and videographer, Jon Etters, shared his thoughts on the Subansiri and how the river rates on the international stage. "So far as grade is concerned, the Subansiri's whitewater is world-class. While you don't necessarily need to be a professional boater, you would certainly want plenty of solid Class IV experience, because this is a river that keeps you on your toes. From the put-in at So Nala, it's a technical descent down a boulder-sculpted river that requires executing tight moves and precise maneuvers through some gnarly rapids. The consistency of the whitewater is phenomenal and it doesn't let up for the first three days."

Boaters wanting even more intense action can tackle some seriously gut-wrenching

Farther downstream, more volume equals more fun for rafters.



RIVERS OF INDIA



Even on the edges of the Subansiri's remote canyon, transportation remains decidedly low-tech.

stuff a little further upstream on the legendary two-day kayak run from Nacho down to So Nala. It's a Class V section of inaccessible river that is too steep and technical for raft support. Kayakers need to be completely self-sufficient and fully committed when they run this action-packed stretch of whitewater, as there is no exit strategy en route.



From So Nala onwards the river begins to ease off allowing kayakers and rafters to read-and-run the vast majority of the Class III/IV whitewater with only a couple of mandatory scouts required ahead of the most notorious rapids. Farther downstream tight drops are replaced by huge wave trains with big avenues: a thrilling and completely safe expanse of river to play in. This is also the perfect place to pump up the Duckies and get wannabe kayakers out of the rafts and into inflatable kayaks for a thrilling water-level view of the whitewater action.

Due to the difficult terrain and steeply sloping valleys, the Subansiri has no arterial road link to either side of the Great Himalayan Range, so it's not surprising that the upper reaches of this incredible river remain isolated and very sparsely inhabited. Our initial campsites attracted sporadic visits from local Tagin and Galo tribals who were fascinated by the strange antics and rituals of the "foreigners." Eventually we left even the track and tribals far behind. For many days we paddled through a genuine wilderness devoid of people until a small group of mahseer fishermen from the Mishing tribe greeted us on the final stretch of our journey onto the plains of Upper Assam.

LOGISTICS BOX: SUBANSIRI

When to go: The best months to tackle the Subansiri are November and December.

Flights and Visas: Continental Airlines (www.continental.com) offers direct flights between New York and New Delhi, while American Airlines (www.aa.com) and Jet Airways (www.jetairways.com) have non-stop services from Chicago. Alternatively, most other major airlines connect US cities to Delhi via European hubs. Visas are required by US passport holders and must be obtained in advance. The standard tourist visa is valid for six-months; allow at least two weeks for processing. Consult the Trivisa website (www.trivisa.com) for visa application instructions.

Getting there: From Delhi a scenic flight (www.jetlite.com) takes you past snowy Himalayan peaks via Guwahati and on to Dibrugarh. From there a rafting outfitter can arrange all permits and transportation for the two-day boat and road transfer to the put-in point at So Nala.

Recommended operators: Aquaterra Adventures (www.aquaterra.in) is currently the only operator offering guaranteed annual departures on the remote Subansiri River. Further information at: www.aquaterra.in/details/the-subansiri-river-expedition.html, or contact Fay Singh (fay@aquaterra.in) with inquiries.

En route the picturesque river descends through a breathtaking landscape of steep-sided, verdant valleys with lush, jungle-clad slopes that are home to elusive leopards and some of India's last free-ranging

Taliha Camp on the Subansiri



tigers. Vaibhav Kala, owner of Aquaterra Adventures, shared his thoughts: “The section below Daporijo is very special. There is absolutely no access into this area except by boat. The remote valleys are totally devoid of people except for the occasional fisherman. This is one of India’s greatest wilderness areas and home to the last truly wild river expedition in all of Asia.” With its incredible beach campsites nestled below deep blue skies and hemmed in by an amphitheatre of densely forested hills, not to mention the solid and continuous whitewater, I have to agree that this is a river journey like no other in South Asia.

Sadly, the days are numbered for India’s ultimate wilderness experience. At Gerukamukh, just upstream of the confluence of the Subansiri and Brahmaputra rivers, a coffer dam blocked our passage, marking the site of what will soon become India’s largest hydroelectric dam. As we carried our boats and equipment up to the waiting trucks, we gawked at the 126-metre-high Hydel dam wall being constructed on the Lower Subansiri. Ultimately, 38 000 km² of pristine rainforest will be submerged when the dam is flooded, robbing India of this precious natural treasure. With completion of the dam delayed until at least 2013, there is little time left to savor the undisturbed wilds of the Subansiri.

While a handful of activists still argue that a combination of the seismic activity in the area (which makes the site totally unsuitable for dam construction) and an upcoming election might still block the flooding of the dam, Kala cautions, “The real problem is that there is never sufficient public debate before dam construction commences. By the time people start to question a project of this nature, it is already at such an advanced stage that there is virtually no chance of it being scrapped. We just don’t learn any lessons from the dams that have already been built all over India. You’ve seen the incredible valleys and stunning wild terrain of this river and it’s a real travesty that it’s all going to be lost to future generations.”

Sachin Bhatia, a member of our Subansiri expedition team, eloquently verbalized the mood of the group as our journey drew to a close, “What a tremendous opportunity to have been on this remote river; to see dense jungle and pristine forest like this is a rare privilege in India. It’s just such an incredible honor to be one of the few people fortunate enough to have experienced this unique wilderness, which will soon be lost forever.”

With its unique blend of epic whitewater, spectacular scenery and extraordinary wilderness experiences, the Subansiri

The Subansiri offers all the best elements of a great wilderness river—but hurry to see it before it’s too late!

offers a truly unbeatable combination of attractions. This is a river that every whitewater aficionado and outdoor enthusiast needs to paddle at least once.

Stephen Cunliffe is author of the soon-to-be-released book India Whitewater, which aims to encourage adventurous whitewater enthusiasts from around the globe to explore some of the planet’s finest multi-day river expeditions in India. Scheduled to hit the shelves mid-year, India Whitewater will showcase the very best of India’s Himalayan whitewater with stunning images and entertaining accounts of the many river trips on offer. For more information see his website: www.stevecunliffe.com

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NEWS & NOTES

DOUG AMMONS HOSTS 2011 NATIONAL PADDLING FILM FESTIVAL IN FRANKFORT, KY

BY BETHANY OVERFIELD

Correction Notice

So you might be thinking to yourself, "Wait, I thought I just read about the National Paddling Film Festival in the last issue of *American Whitewater*." If so, you're right. We did print a wrap-up of the nation's best whitewater film fest in our May/June edition... unfortunately the announcement we published was from 2010. Now that we've got things straightened out, please check out the exciting highlights from the 2011 NPFF below. Our apologies to the NPFF and our readers.

- *American Whitewater* Editorial Staff

THE 28TH ANNUAL National Paddling Film Festival (NPFF) was wildly successful! We had a huge turnout, with a number of attendees who traveled from far and wide to participate in all of the festivities. In our effort to throw one gargantuan weekend-long party showcasing the best in paddlesport footage and imagery, we managed to eat well, float ten kegs, get some stellar deals at the silent auction, and most importantly, raise a bunch of money to give away, which truly was a win-win!

We were thrilled to have legendary expedition kayaker Doug Ammons as our guest host this year. Doug and his wife Robin proved to be gracious, humble, and engaging as they spent time talking one-on-one with scores of people. Doug spoke to the whole crowd briefly on Friday night before Thomas Oliver introduced the much anticipated Raven Fork movie.

On Saturday, Doug had the floor for an hour talking about the evolution of filming whitewater and the progression of

whitewater paddling in general. As filming has progressed over the years, Doug noted that skills have gotten better, the whitewater has gotten harder, the equipment has improved, and ultimately, the driving force behind filming has changed. He provided some great footage as he took the crowd through that succession and talked about how the focus in the sport has shifted and is now more adrenaline-based with a constant focus on pushing the envelope.

Doug, however, talked about finding fulfillment in focusing on artistic and aesthetic components when filming. He then introduced "Wildwater: A love story", his most recent collaborative effort with Anson Fogel (who directed the film). In this film, a successful effort was made to get back to the root of trying to capture with a lens what is at the heart of what can be classified as "soul boating." Wildwater was so well received at the festival it won the Paddler's Choice Award, an award voted on by all attendees at the conclusion of the festival. Steve Fisher's new film "Halo Effect" was also a huge crowd-pleaser and took home the Best Professional General Boating Award. The full list of the winners is below:

Best Professional General Boating: "Halo Effect" by: Steve Fisher

Best Professional Documentary: "Ice Water in the Veins" by: Cimon Charest

Best Accomplished Documentary: "Trout On The Wind" by: Ralph Bloemess and Sam Drevo

Best Accomplished General Boating: "Foamboater: Keep it Between the Land - The Motion Picture (with sound)" by Tom Gerencer

Best Amateur Documentary: "Currents: Mexico" by: Mike McKay

Best Amateur General Boating:

"Seasons: Fall, Boating the White Salmon River with Kate Wagner" by: Skip Armstrong

Paddler's Choice Award: "WildWater" by: Ansel Fogel

Best of Festival: "Halo Effect" by: Steve Fisher

Best Still Image: "Pillow Rock Saviors - Gauley River" by: Emily Grimes

The NPFF is a completely volunteer-run, grassroots event. Our main source of funds comes from ticket sales and the silent auction. A plethora of companies donated items to us and without our donors and sponsors we wouldn't be nearly as successful at fundraising. We are always blown away by the generosity of these people (to see the list of donors, check out our website). Two of our largest donors this year were Jackson Kayak and Bluegrass Brewing Company (BBC). Jackson donated a Villain for our silent auction and BBC donated eight kegs of beer—a special thank you goes out to both of those companies.

We had well over 60 volunteers this year, most of whom are members of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association. We would like to thank all of the volunteers, sponsors, donors, judges, and submitters for making the 28th NPFF possible. Because of their efforts and entries, we were able to give donations to American Whitewater, Team River Runner, the Kentucky Waterways Alliance, Friends of Cheat, West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and the Elkhorn City Area Heritage Council.

Check out www.npff.org for more information and for details on having the NPFF roadshow debut films from our festival for your club event or house-party!

We are looking forward to a tremendous 29th NPFF, which is scheduled to take place on February 24th-25th, 2012. Keep those cameras rolling!

THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE AN INSIDE LOOK AT REP'S

GARY LACY

BY EUGENE BUCHANAN

LIKE THE HEADWATERS feeding the Arkansas River flowing outside his office in Salida, Colorado, Gary Lacy, president and owner of whitewater park designer Recreation Engineering & Planning (REP), saw his curiosity about the outdoors begin as a trickle, slowly building into a career that would shape his life, while improving communities and opportunities for paddlers in the process.

"I was constantly exposed to mountains and rivers growing up camping, skiing and paddling with my family," says Lacy, whose formative years saw him living in such Colorado towns as Boulder, Grand Junction, Aspen, and Steamboat Springs. "And it sparked a natural curiosity in how things worked...how snow formed glaciers, how wind formed dunes and how water created canyons."

It was the latter—Lacy's focus and fascination with moving water—that eventually led to his founding of REP and a career as one of the nation's leading whitewater park designers—a vocation spawning a trend fast making waves from coast to coast.

"'Whitewater park' wasn't even a word when we got started," says Lacy. "But we've been at it a long time and have seen a total transformation in their acceptance across the country."

Lacy, 55, founded REP in Boulder in 1983 with a degree in civil engineering and hydrology from the Colorado School of Mines. After an initial stint designing bike paths and greenway projects, his thirst for nature's best recreational traits, gradient and precipitation, directed REP to its focus on rivers. Ever since, he has skippered the firm—which also includes course designers Mike Harvey and Shane Sigle, and now has



offices in Boulder and Salida—into one of the world's leaders in dam modification and whitewater park and riverside design and restoration.

For Lacy and his colleagues, it's a true labor of love. "We're all pretty active paddlers, which makes the work all that much more enjoyable," he says. Harvey can be found almost daily on his local waves in Salida; Sigle is a former U.S. team paddler, semi-pro adventure racer and member of the U.S. Men's Rafting Team; and Lacy has competed in Colorado's 26-mile FIBArk downriver race every year since 1974, winning it six times and placing second 15. He also competed in the downriver World Championships in Wales in 1980 and in France in 1999. All this means REP course designers practice what they preach, and build what they build.

Lacy's first real entry into the world of whitewater park design came in Boulder with the design of the Boulder Creek Whitewater Park in 1990. Shortly after that he designed Golden's Clear Creek Park in 1996, the country's first whitewater park designed exclusively for paddlers. Built for an initial cost of \$165,000, according to the city's public works director Dan Hartman the park now brings more than \$2 million into the community every year. "Golden broke the mold by allocating municipal funds solely for a destination whitewater park," says Lacy. "They approached it as

REP founder Gary Lacy walking the walk.
Photo courtesy of REP

they would a new softball field. And a lot of other communities have taken notice."

The park also served as the basis for the City of Golden to win the state's first-ever Recreation InChannel Diversion water right, proving that recreation is a "beneficial" use of the state's water, in a case that went all the way to the Colorado supreme court. "The Golden decision was the big, big breakthrough for recreational water rights cases," says water attorney Steve Bushong of Denver's Porzak, Browning and Bushong. "These municipalities are trying to protect their investment, and the parks provide the diversion and control necessary to meet the right's requirements. It's the new West, showing that recreation has come of age."

Lacy's firm has gone on to design similar courses in Lyons, Pueblo, Pagosa Springs, Lawson, Steamboat Springs, Buena Vista, Salida and more in Colorado, as well as other locations throughout the country, including Casper, Wyo.; Cascade, Idaho; the \$37 million National Whitewater Center in Charlottesville, N.C.; last summer's \$21 million park on Alberta's Bow River; and even courses in Ohio and Michigan.

But having had a hand in courses big and small, he's also learned a few things along the way and knows that designs have

NEWS AND NOTES



The \$1.2 million, 1,400-foot-long Pueblo course on the Arkansas River (CO).

Photo courtesy of REP

to adapt to each specific circumstance. “Paddlers understand the beauty of non-engineered waterways,” says Lacy. “Like the communities they flow through, every river is unique in size, flow rate, water quality, and access. Our goal is to try to recreate nature as best as possible with the specific project’s engineering requirements in mind, whether it’s flood mitigation, erosion, public hazard or recreation. And there’s always a way to do it in an environmentally friendly way that adds a recreation component.”

He also admits that things have changed in terms of design, both from liability issues and the way communities view their rivers. There’s more red tape to jump through, and more factions to appease. Historically, he adds, river modification, especially in urban settings, focused on removing structures and making straight lines on banks and across rivers. These engineered structures like dams, diversions and utility crossings are the antithesis of nature, he says, and can be both eyesores and dangerous.

Today’s era of dam-decommissioning has also opened municipalities’ eyes to the recreation possibilities of the once-blocked amenities in their back yards. Towns in the

upper Midwest states of Iowa, Michigan and Ohio are now changing liabilities into amenities, turning to their rivers as a source of recreation, education, pride and revenue. Michigan alone has four major developments in progress, valued at more than \$15 million, in Flint, Ann Arbor, Petoskey and Grand Rapids.

Following through on a state-ordered mandate to remove the failing Hamilton Dam on the Flint River, Flint is spending \$10 million to convert the river corridor bisecting the University of Michigan/Flint campus into a 2,000-foot-long river park with bank improvements, esplanades, and user-friendly put-ins and take-outs. A downtown revitalization project in Grand Rapids is converting obsolete dam sites into a vibrant river park. In Ann Arbor, in the heart of the University of Michigan campus, the Huron River is backed up by the Argo Dam, with a 1,500-foot-long head race canal diverting water to an abandoned power plant. A \$1.2 million project will convert the canal into a canoe bypass and add whitewater features below. “It’s the perfect political solution,” says Lacy, adding that 40,000 canoeists are forced to portage around the dam every year. “Everybody wins. Rowers are happy because they still get to ply Argo Pond, canoeists no longer have to portage, and whitewater paddlers get a new stretch of water.”

Ohio has also jumped into the waters, with the state’s first-ever park on Buck Creek in Springfield. The \$900,000 project has already renovated two obsolete dam sites, with two more to go. “Springfield is at the forefront of a trend to create whitewater features from low-head dams,” says former American Canoe Association executive director Pamela Dillon, now chief of Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Watercraft. “They identified a series of hazards in the form of low-head dams and, through engineering modifications, turned them 180 degrees around to create play areas and activity areas. Paddlers are already traveling into Springfield from surrounding states to use it.”

Projects like these and more, says Lacy, are at the forefront of the growing trend, but one that necessitates evolving with the times. “Today’s challenge of controlling and managing communities’ water resources requires a new approach, which is to allow the river to integrate itself with the community but retain its natural personality,” he says.

But the hydrology and basic engineering issues, he adds, remain the same. “Rivers still flow the same way they always have,” he says. “The goal is to apply past knowledge and apply it to each unique situation. As soon as you have a Xerox approach, you invite trouble. You need to build them, and then let the river do its thing.”

Lacy adds that river use is evolving along with the industry, migrating from slalom to freestyle and even stand-up paddling. Indeed, the top wave in the Salida course was built largely with SUPs in mind, spawning river-based SUP-maker Bad Fish to make boards specifically for that wave. Today’s courses also need eddies and easy access points to accommodate entry-level users. Rather than building one specific feature, many townships are now also employing a broader vision of the entire corridor, creating longer “town runs” for a variety of user groups and often incorporating bike paths, beach areas and public parks.

In short, the game has changed since people began moving rocks around in rivers in the early days. It’s now an involved process requiring input from everyone from cities’ public works departments to water rights attorneys, engineers and varied user groups. But the premise behind it all is the same: restoring river habitat and opening up paddling opportunities add a new source of revenue for municipalities. “Countless communities throughout the country could benefit from this type of work,” says Lacy. “And as well as restoring and making many of these waterways safer, it also gives all of us more places to paddle.”

NORWOOD SCOTT SERVES AS NEW AW PRESIDENT

BY MARK SINGLETON



NORWOOD SCOTT OF San Francisco, CA was elected by his peers on the American Whitewater Board of Directors to serve as President. Norwood first started paddling over 30 years ago at Camp Mondamin in Tuxedo, NC. Since those first strokes on Lake Summit, paddling has been a major part of his life. He has taught canoeing and competed in slalom, freestyle, surf kayaking, and international wildwater events.

Norwood served on the Tuolumne River Trust's Board for seven years and continues to act as an advisor to that organization.

Norwood's educational background, which is in environmental economics and finance, has proved helpful in the service of AW's Board for the past 10 years. Professionally, Norwood works for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in San Francisco where he offers assistance regarding EPA's comments on environmental assessments and environmental impact statements.

Past Board President, Don Kinser, continues to be active in American Whitewater leadership, having agreed to serve a special one-year term as Treasurer.

Officers of American Whitewater who were elected at our recent North Bend, WA meeting are as follows:

Norwood Scott (CA) – President
Chris Bell (NC) – Vice President
Don Kinser (GA) – Treasurer
Jennie Goldberg (WA) – Secretary

Serving with this group of officers on the American Whitewater Executive Committee are two at large members, Evelyn Locke (MA) and Kent Ford (CO).

Please join with me in welcoming Norwood Scott and the rest of the officers to their new leadership roles with American Whitewater. Remember that our Board of Directors is comprised of volunteers who give their time, energy and passion to the governance of American Whitewater. Next time you see one of these folks on a river near you, please thank them for all that they do as volunteers to represent your membership interests and to lead American Whitewater.

STEPHEN WRIGHT SIGNS WITH NEW RIVER ACADEMY

BY DAVID HUGHES



NEW RIVER ACADEMY has hired freestyle kayaking's world bronze medalist Stephen Wright to coach at their international riverside Pucón, Chile base for a single quarter. This arrangement works around Wright's intense competition and travel schedule. High School directors David Hughes and Matt Smink know that Wright has already had tremendous success as a youth coach, leading arguably the world's most successful youth kayak

program, Ottawa Kayak School's Keeners. In addition to that proven record, Hughes says, "Stephen brings presence of character to the program. He's a role model who has an energy that inspires his colleagues and students." In addition to being on site in Pucón, Wright will further develop the coaching program and offer spot coaching as schedule allows.

Wright believes kids need structure modeled and taught by responsible adults. As an active athlete he personally discovered kayaking provided more fun than any other activity in his life. In effect, Wright shares a common passion with the students, making it easy for him to connect with and inspire kids. Wright asserts that progressing in kayaking translates to various life skills and ultimately one's own self-content.

As per coaching goals Coach Wright focuses on individual attention and student accomplishments. "My coaching style focuses on learning fundamental skills that allow kayakers to progress daily," Wright says. "Each student should continue to progress and in the course become more passionate for the river and kayak skills."

Wright will have his work cut out for him as Huge Experiences/New River Academy has produced champions for ten years:

Past Huge Experiences/ New River Academy Athletic Accomplishments

- Pat Keller (Runner-up World Champ, Green Race Champ)
- Casey Eichfeld/Ricky Powell, (C-2) US Olympians
- Emily Jackson- 2x World Champ
- Jason Craig- World Champ
- Ali Wade- Runner-up World Champ, World Cup Champ
- Isaac Levinson- Green Race Runner-up Champ
- Michael Quinif- World Cup Champ
- Todd Baker- World Bronze
- National Champs from: Africa, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA

NEWS & NOTES

IN PASSING

BY MARK SINGLETON

AMERICAN WHITEWATER IS saddened to report that Holly Wallace, wife and inspiration of paddling legend William Nealy, died at the age of 56 on April 1st of complications following abdominal surgery. Holly was a co-founder of Menasha Ridge and served as its national sales manager during the 1980s. Diagnosed in her early twenties with rheumatoid arthritis, a progressive, painful, and debilitating disease, Holly appeared on the cover of Newsweek in 1987 as a spokeswoman for those suffering from this condition. Disease notwithstanding, no one embraced life more, or lived it more fully than Holly Wallace. Her courage and positive attitude in the face of great adversity were an inspiration for all who knew her and she will be missed.

LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION AGENCIES AS PADDLING PARTNERS

BY SCOTT MARTIN



FOR PUBLIC PARKS and recreation agencies, these are tough times. While big ambitions and goals are spoken of in DC through the potentially significant American Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative, most parks and recreation agency budgets are getting slashed. Many park leaders look at AGO and wonder how serious it is when today's budget cuts result in trails that go unrepaired, the closing of parks, and staff that are laid off or furloughed.

Despite severe budget cuts, a potential counter-intuitive truth does exist for paddlesports. Due to the high costs of traditional sports infrastructure, local parks



and recreation agencies are looking for less expensive activities to invest in with their limited funds. There may be a small window of opportunity today to expand local parks and recreation supported whitewater paddling programs given the sport's low facility and programming costs.

Sports Growth History

Sports in post-WWII US grew because of systemic and intentional local government support. Growth in football, baseball, and soccer is not a result of chance, cheesy movies, or spontaneous, grass-roots movements. Communities made very large investments through local public recreation agencies and school districts to support these activities. Baseball went from the sandlot to large, lighted baseball complexes scattered across the county in a single generation. As a result, cumulative annual visitation today to local parks and recreation facilities dwarfs that of visits to national and state park units. (www.tpl.org/cityparkfacts)

Local parks and recreation departments are generally viewed as positive in their communities. If you want to see paddling grow in your hometown through facilities,

Floyds Fork of the Salt River Canoe Trail (Louisville, KY).

Photo courtesy of 21st Century Parks, Inc.

programs, or events, it makes sense to partner with your community's largest provider of public recreation programming. Fair or not, it's one thing when a paddling club goes to a County Board asking for a river access project, and another entirely when the paid staff member who runs a soccer program serving thousands of area youth AND the paddling club make the request together.

How to Talk to Parks Departments with Declining Budgets

In the realm of public budgeting, parks are first cut and last restored. Today, most parks agencies are playing defense. Parks departments have not stopped looking for ways to improve their communities. Here are some thoughts to keep in mind if you want take advantage of our sport's growth potential through partnerships with local park agencies.

First, do your homework. Most states have adopted comprehensive parks and

recreation master plans. Parks directors generally trust these plans. River recreation is a component of many of these planning documents. Before meeting with a parks department, pull your state's comprehensive outdoor recreation plan and find out what it recommends for your community. For a list of state recreation plans, go to: www.narrp.org

Second, paddling IS economic development. Communities are fighting harder than ever to prove to taxpayers that they are attracting private sector investment and talent. Every community knows it has to be relevant to attract talent. Small towns and rural communities are desperate to attract and retain residents with college degrees and higher than average income. National data indicate that paddlesports enthusiasts have higher incomes and educational attainment levels than the general public, particularly in rural areas. (<http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchPaddlesports.pdf>).

Paddling is an exciting and affordable recreation activity that targets an important economic development demographic. The typical advertisement in an economic development trade publication can run \$5-\$10,000 each. A community can outfit itself with a paddling program for about the same amount of money.

Thanks to the uniqueness of each river, this recreational amenity, unlike industrial parks and baseball complexes, cannot be duplicated next door. Outdoor recreation is the rare venue where smaller communities can be instantly competitive with larger communities. (<http://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/economicdevelopment.htm>)

The moment a community has public water access points, some parking, a picnic table

*Floyds Fork of the Salt River Canoe Trail
(Louisville, KY).*

Photo by John Nations

or two, and a well designed river recreation information system deployed via the web, it becomes a cooler place to live, work, and play. (<http://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/economicdevelopment.htm>)

Third, despite the recession, achievement still matters the world of public parks. Communities still compete like mad over the best new recreation amenity. Since the recession hit, the game has changed as public funds are rarely there to build a \$1 million sports field complex. Achieving parks departments will expand their programs and facilities by focusing on the art of the possible during this extended recession. While large in-stream whitewater parks are beyond the fiscal capacity of many communities, \$20K canoe launch sites are still doable in most places. Inexpensive river access facilities provide great ribbon cutting opportunities in lean budget years demonstrating civic accomplishment through improving a community's quality of life.

Fourth, make your request personally to the parks leader(s) in your community. This is how traditional team sports groups approach park needs. Then, do whatever it takes to get the parks leader on the water.

Show them the river. Time on the water is always time well spent. Park leaders know baseball and soccer fields intimately. Knowledge of paddlesports amenities is often lacking—your job is to bring them up to speed on our sport by taking them to where it happens.

While there is no real difference between paddling, football, and art programs, well-meaning parks administrators too often push paddlesports programs to outdoor recreation programmers or local clubs. The result is a winnowing of program exposure to the already saturated outdoor sports customer base. We have to make these administrators understand that paddling isn't just outdoor recreation, an extreme sport, or an environmental program—it's a recreation program within public river corridors. Paddlesport programs should instead be integrated within a community's recreation system alongside soccer, baseball, art, etc.

While programs and facilities are the key for long term growth in our sport, events still matter when building any new recreation activity. Remind leaders that families travel for paddling festivals. Smaller jurisdictions depend on events for restaurant and motel/hotel tax revenue.



NEWS & NOTES



*Our park design showing how the park follows the stream (the linkage between park planning and river recreation).
Map courtesy of 21st Century Parks, Inc.*

And when paddlers come to a community with boats strapped to their cars, it makes an immediate positive impression throughout town. Paddling events brand a community as a cool place to be.

Credibility matters. Be honest about your event and activity. Do not promise millions of dollars of economic impact or thousands of visitors unless you can prove it afterwards. Every community will not be home to the next Nantahala Outdoor Center or become the next Salida, CO. But, all communities can experience some positive impact from paddlesports. Lower initial expectations typically result in higher long-term results for special events.

The public sector cannot afford huge TV advertising campaigns. Through paddling events, communities can get positive front page coverage. Positive media exposure is priceless. Work with your local public access or local cable franchise to get their cameras to film fun scenes on the river. Locally generated and aired TV coverage is inexpensive, oftentimes repeated, programming that brings our sport into living rooms long after the events end.

Think about Post-Event Programming. Lots of communities host paddle events. The communities with events that transition into ongoing programs are where our sport

thrives. Activities need stickiness to stay around and build. Don't stop with paddling events that quite naturally come and go. Events ebb and flow—programs hang around and start impacting generational change. Paddlesports boosters need to pull together a plan for post-event programming that extends the life of our sport. This is where parks and recreation departments become very valuable allies through advertising and administration.

Summary

Whitewater is a recreational and economic asset. This is still true in the current recession. If paddlers work with their local parks departments to grow appreciation of the recreational asset of a river or stream, paddlesports can be in position to mimic the success of baseball, soccer, etc, and become more systemically available for public use through enhanced facilities, events, and ongoing programs.

For more information on how to expand river access programs and facilities, check out the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program - www.nps.gov/rtca or paddling resources such as American Whitewater and the American Canoe Association.

Scott Martin is the Parks Director for The Parklands of Floyds Fork, a 4,000-acre public park presently under development along Floyds Fork of the Salt River in Louisville, Kentucky. Martin has fifteen years of experience in local parks and recreation administration through work in Boise, Idaho and Franklin County, Virginia. He holds a BA and MPA in Public Administration from Boise State University.



*Pigg River Ramble Canoe Event (Franklin County, VA)
Photo courtesy of Franklin County Parks & Recreation*

YOU NEVER KNOW UNTIL YOU TRY

BY ANGELA BALDO

A GERS FALLS IS a friendly 18-foot Class IV drop on the Bottom Moose (V) in Upstate NY. On May 14, 2011 many folks ran the river while attending Spring Black/Moose Fest hosted in Lyons Falls, NY. This year the Festival also served as a fundraising benefit for a local paddler, Ward Dailey, whose young daughter requires a kidney transplant. This series of photographs was taken as part of an effort to raise money for the cause.

For fun Eric Adsit and Ben Schott ran Agers in a raft, without paddles, and attempted to hampster wheel it and land on the bottom of the boat. It didn't work out, but watching their run was entertaining, nonetheless. Scott Gilbert looks on from the bottom of the falls in his kayak.

Lyons Falls will host another festival on the Moose, October 14-16, 2011, if any other intrepid souls would like to attempt this feat for the enjoyment of spectators.

The photographer, Angela Baldo, was sidelined this season by shoulder surgery and so lent her camera skills to the Festival instead of paddling.



RIVER VOICES

GREENING OUT IN MONTREAL

BY REUBEN HUDSON

// **THEY'RE EMPTYING SUNSET Lake,"** Dr. Crespi said. "No chalk-talk today; we're going to check it out."

While the rest of the class filed out behind my biology professor at 9 am on a Friday, I ran back to my dorm room as quickly as possible. Vassar College, located in

Poughkeepsie, NY, drains their man-made Sunset Lake once a year, but you never know when. Building and Grounds just pulls the six-foot wide center block out of the dam. Two hours and a hundred thousand gallons later, the lake is empty. Any paddler would recognize the potential for a surf wave here, and as a local to a tidal reversing falls, I had a keen sense for the fleeting nature of this prospective play spot.

I quickly threw on my paddling gear and pulled my boat down from above my desk—a perch where it would spend all but a day or two per semester. Mucking around in the mud, Dr. Crespi never noticed me sneak down to the dam. Sunset Surf Spot never really amounted to much, starting as a small hole and ending as an even smaller wave, but nevertheless, I was thrilled to be on it. As a solitary boater in a sub-par paddling region, I would take what I could get.



Despite the fact that I skipped it to go paddling, aquatic ecology impacted me more than any other class. I spent my summers guiding for the Chewonki Foundation—fulfilling my self-imposed, yearly paddling quota in a few short months, and acting as an environmental educator along the way. Reissuing what I had learned about aquatic ecosystems to teenagers on extended wilderness whitewater kayaking trips served as the perfect way for me to mold young students into good environmental stewards. Though teaching and learning about pollutants in the watershed is valuable, searching for solutions is much more rewarding. By senior year, I knew it was time for a change of pace.

Though I wouldn't trade my time at Vassar for anything, these were the dark days of my paddling career. After spending four years driving alone to the Deerfield or the Housatonic once a semester, by senior year, I was ready for something new.

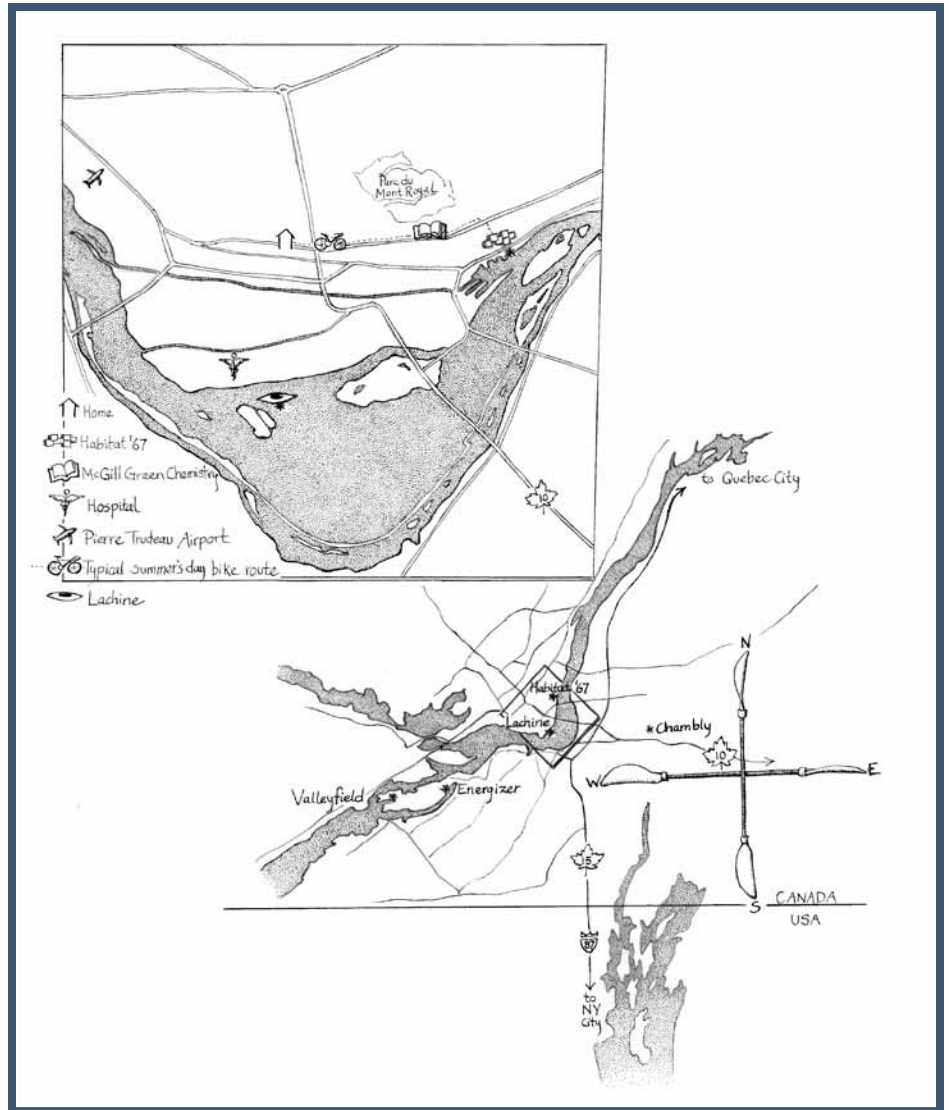
These are the two stories I feed to people when they ask why I moved to Montreal. To parents, academic advisors, and fellowship interviewers I say that my change of pace was McGill and their steadfast dedication to Green Chemistry. Here, I am a Ph.D. candidate in this emerging field. We're working to re-write the book of reactions for organic chemistry by moving from toxic,

Riding to the river.
Photo by Katrina Heyde

petro-chemical based solvents (which ultimately end up in the waste stream), to the definitive benign solvent—H₂O. Since so much of my life has revolved around it, I find particularly fitting that the way I'm hoping to cut down on pollutants in the watershed is to use water itself as an alternative to toxic solvents.

Let's be honest though. I know my audience. My change of pace had more to do with boating than anything else. I came here for lunch break surf sessions at Habitat '67. I came here to throw airscrews at Lachine before work. I came here to huck pan-ams at Chambley after school. Heck, I even came here to spend weekends at Energizer and loop at the ever-consistent Valleyfield on the rare occasion that nothing else is running. I came here to live in a paddling Mecca.

After a few weeks though, I remembered that I wasn't just up here to bro-out and turn this experience into the next Young Gun Productions flick. I'm here to green out. Not just on the wave. Not just in research. I'm here to green out in all aspects of life. Even though my apartment is only six miles from Habitat, and not even five from Lachine, I still found myself gassing up far too frequently. Coming from a town without a single stoplight, this was my first realization that city driving takes a significant toll on mileage.



Map of Greater Montreal Paddling Destinations.

Map by Josephine Ewing



I was within spitting distance of two world-class surf spots but still relying on fossil fuel to get me there. If you wanted to get serious, you could probably calculate the carbon footprint for a single ride (something like # of surfs/round-trip mileage). Each carve costs an acre of polar ice caps. Well, maybe not quite...but you understand the moral dilemma. I decided to rethink my transportation entirely.

When Habitat '67 greens out, you'll need a Habitat '74 to catch it.

Photo by Don Hudson

How about the bus? You can't fit a kayak—not even a playboat on a city bus. When my roommate was ticketed \$200 for bringing her bike on the metro *not* on the first car, my friends and I decided it must be legal to take your bike (or maybe anything oversized?) on the metro if it *is* on the first car. Someday I want to take the subway to Lachine, surf to my heart's content, drift five miles downstream to Habitat, do it all over again, and hop back on the metro when I'm done. However, imagining a dripping paddler bumping into dry commuters



There's always room for two. The brothers Hudson at Habitat '67. Photo by Don Hudson

deters me from using the subway as a primary mode of transportation to and from the river. I knew there must be a better way.

Over the past 10 years or so, Montreal has been steadily increasing its bike-path infrastructure. Today a cyclist can get nearly anywhere in the city without leaving the safety of these routes. During the short painting season in Montreal, it's not uncommon to see painters towing fifteen-foot ladders with wheels at the bottom and the top rung looped over the seat, drop cloth, brushes and buckets all strapped on top. If they could do it, so could I.

Three minutes on ebay and 2-4 weeks of shipping later, I had myself the ideal bike trailer. The 2-foot by 3-foot compartment holds all my gear, while the aluminum bars that frame this box serve as a perfect rack

to strap a boat, or two to. One morning on my way to Lachine, I caught the eye of a cute little Quebecoise boy who couldn't have been more than 4 years old. "Mama, mama, un bateaux, un bateaux!" he yelled, pointing emphatically as I rolled by. To my knowledge, this is one of the only heads I've turned, even when biking downtown, miles from the river. Anyone who's been in the city for more than four years has seen it all, the fixed gears, the unicycles, the painter's rigs, and the winter bikers.

Not only is the ride often quicker than the drive (given Montreal traffic), it allows much more freedom as well. I can bike my boat to McGill in the morning, lock it up outside, come back at lunchtime to go to Habitat, take five or ten surfs, then go back to work. In this way, I get to paddle more, and I'm not killing baby polar bears while doing it.

As a global paddling community deeply rooted in the offerings of the natural world, it's important that we, as much as anyone, take the initiative to preserve them. If a handful of paddlers bike to and from their favorite spots, will this solve the issue of climate change? Certainly not, but if we walk-the-walk and make lifestyle decisions guided by our passion for the outdoors and influence others to do the same, then hopefully our baby steps can turn into something more substantial.

In one sense, the answer to what I'm doing in Montreal greatly depends on the audience. But either way, there's really only one answer: I'm trying to green out in Montreal.

RIVER VOICES

RÍO PIAXTLA: A FIRST DESCENT THROUGH THE DEEPEST CANYON IN NORTH AMERICA

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROCKY CONTOS

BEN STOOKESBERRY AND I scramble down to see the next drop in the Barranca Piaxtla. It's a 30-meter broken falls where the water plunges under an incredible overhanging rock. Several hundred meters downstream in a relatively flat gorge, we clamber and swim to the following falls. This one is much higher, a clean free-fall plunge seemingly off the face of the earth, but actually just 60 meters down into a vertical-walled Shangri-La. There will be no rappel portage here. Our two climbing ropes are only 50 meters each. We also know that downstream there is an even higher falls of ~200 meters. Getting around these beasts will be difficult and time-consuming. Although we face a tough portage now, we also are enjoying a ton of runnable falls/rapids and look forward to completing this monumental undertaking ... river gods be willing.

We are hoping to accomplish a first paddling descent of the entire Upper Piaxtla through the deepest canyon in North America. You may question the assertion of "deepest canyon," having heard Hells Canyon of the Snake River or the Copper Canyon of Río Urique touted as such by others. Yet all one has to do is scrutinize the maps a bit more to realize that the Piaxtla is more profound, particularly when considering both sides. Where the Piaxtla River is at 680 meters elevation, a straight line connects rim peaks on either side at 3220 meters (Cerro Huehuento) and 3100 meters (Cerro El Tásate), making depths of 2480 meters and 2420 meters respectively. Although Hells Canyon is nearly as deep on one side of the canyon (2437 meters/7995 feet),

This 200-foot waterfall and another 600 footer just downstream required a full day's portage (with two full climbing ropes) to rappel down to the river.

it falls grossly short on the other (1676 meters/5498 feet). Río Urique is less than 2000 meters deep on both sides. The Grand Canyon (at roughly 1700 meters) is not even close to any of these.

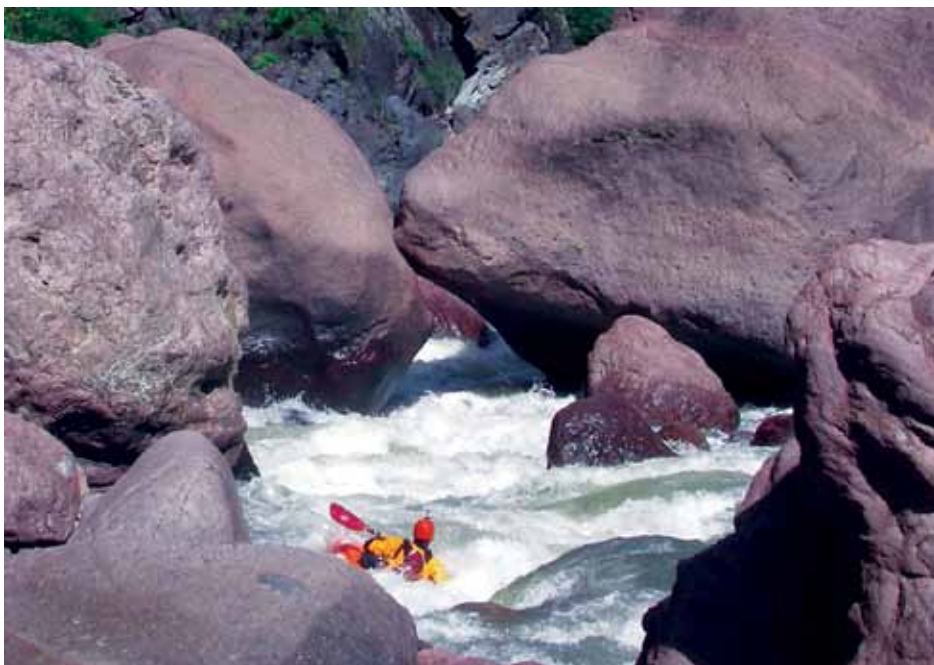
The decision to paddle through this section of Río Piaxtla was not undertaken lightly. When I invited Ben and friends down, I envisioned us skipping the ultra-steep section where the river drops 500 meters in about 2 kilometers (i.e.1300 feet/mile) by hiking into the barranca at a point just downstream. Ben, having paddled some 1

km river segments with roughly 1000 ft/mile gradients, probably thought there might be some outrageous runnable waterfalls in the steepest part. I was certain the section would be a portage nightmare, and perhaps impossible with our gear. However, after much deliberation, some scouting, and a call to some canyoneering friends who had been in the area previously, I agreed to give the whole thing a go (but only with two full climbing ropes!).

In a little over two days since starting, we have already made it down 17 km and nearly



RIVER VOICES



In the Puerta de Piaxtla section, we navigated this Class V rapid with confused whitewater going under a boulder.

600 meters of vertical drop. The upper river near the Río de Miravalles put-in at about 2300 meters elevation was in a beautiful pine forest with open sliding bedrock falls. The action picked up to Class V-VI in a “Spines Section,” where fantastic pinnacles rose from both banks. This upper section featured many boulder-choked rapids, but occasionally open bedrock too. A stretch of three waterfalls was a highlight our second day, with one clean 13-meter drop that we all hucked (“Limpio”). Innumerable other rapids made for quality paddling. After the high pine forests we experienced in the first few kilometers, the vegetation changed to tropical deciduous thorny shrubs, which were still verdant green this time of year.

So far, we have been fortunate to have moderate boatable flows on the river. Río Piaxtla, like all rivers in the Sierra Madre Occidental, is seasonal, with paddlable water levels mostly confined to the summer monsoon season. About the time of our trip (late August), the river has its highest average flows—approximately 150 cms (4500 cfs) down near the mouth but only 15 cms (500 cfs) in the ultra-steep section we are currently facing. The water comes from thunderstorms, so river levels can fluctuate wildly during this season. Although we’ve

had a very manageable 8 cms (300 cfs) the first two days, exactly one year previously the flows were above 100 cms (3500 cfs) here. Water levels could spike at any point. Before we began, I postulated that there was about a 50% chance we would have to abort due to high water levels. So far, at least, the gods are allowing us to continue.

After we all view the 60-meter falls from above, we retreat to our boats. Ben and I decide to scout out the portage route while our partners (Darin McQuoid, Jesse Coombs, and James Duesenberry) relax and recuperate from gastrointestinal bugs and rashes. We find some cattle trails that help us through the thorny shrubs, eye what looks like a descendible gully back to the river, and come back a few hours later stating that we think the portage will only take 4-6 hours.

The next morning we start early. We carry our loaded kayaks up several hundred meters above the river, traverse downstream a kilometer or two, and begin our descent. It is hot and dry. Our portage time estimate is crucial since we each bring only 1-2 liters of water (which we quickly consume). We drag and lower boats in the gulch initially, then have to rappel dry falls

once... twice... three times, but still do not see the river below. The rappels take a lot of time—getting our bodies down one at a time, in addition to each of the boats. Eventually we reach a ledge where we rest a bit. By this time, we have already spent 8+ hours in the portage. At least now we can see the river, but it is still a near-vertical 300 meters below us. Will it be possible to make it the rest of the way?

Adding to our dismay is the fact that we are all dying of thirst. Fortunately, we find a few liters of filthy algae-filled water in a small pool on the granite, and after straining and iodizing it, we get a tiny bit of fluid replenishment (but not nearly enough). I descend to check out the next crucial rappel moves and shout to Ben, “I think we can make it down to a tiny ledge with a tree for support, but we can’t all fit.” It seems precarious, but it is our only hope. Everyone rallies down to the ledge I am on. Ben is doubtful of my plan. He nonetheless takes the lead, and by a stroke of incredible luck, finds a thin but longer ledge midway down that obviates the need for my precarious tree-based relay plan. We rappel several more times, which requires the use of both 50-meter climbing ropes more than once. Finally, over an hour after dusk and 13 hours after starting our portage, we are back at the river, where we gulp liters of purified water and settle in for a good night’s sleep. We are thankful—the gods are still willing.

With the “portage from hell” over with, we look forward to making some real progress downstream. The next 10 km of river are still very steep (220 feet/mile) and difficult, especially since the volume has more than doubled as a result of two major tributaries that have joined in. We continue to be glad to have a low manageable flow of 15 cms (about 30% of normal). Initially we find most of this section runnable, with only about a dozen more river-level portages. In an accident partly due to miscommunication,

Jesse ends up dislocating his shoulder. An incapacitating injury in the middle of this barranca could be disastrous. Fortunately, he is still able to paddle Class III-IV, but just wants the trip to end *pronto*. We all help him through the tougher passages downstream.

We then arrive at another crux of the trip—a place I call the Puerta de Piaxtla, a gateway narrows where the river is squeezed between granite walls hundreds of meters high with steep Class V-VI drops leading down to it. From our view above, it seems roughly similar to the Crucible section of the San Joaquin River in California. We are unsure we'll be able to get through at river-level. I could see this spot on satellite imagery, but did not realize how intimidating the place would be until actually standing at the entrance. We portage several of the steep drops leading down to the Puerta, and find that the final

Class V into the gorge must be run. I take the lead through and paddle into the abyss to see what lies within. I return with relieving news: there are no more difficult drops within the gorge! Jesse makes it down the entrance rapid just fine, and soon we are all paddling through the incredible chasm. So while initially the Puerta appeared to be similar to the Crucible, it turns out not to be as tough. However, with normal higher summer water levels of 45 cms, it could get particularly challenging to enter, with an additional mandatory Class V rapid.

Out of the Puerta, we settle down for our sixth night on the trip. The next day, after another kilometer of Class IV-V rapids, the Piaxtla calms down and remains calm for the remaining 28 km to the town of Tayoltita. The riverbed here is unobstructed by big boulders. Instead, rapids are formed from granite bedrock and smaller rocks (mostly Class III with a few IV). Views up

the sides of the canyon are spectacular. It is in this section that the river canyon is at its deepest point. After all our struggles, we can rejoice in being the first to paddle through this incredible place. We enjoy the last several kilometers where the river passes through the Tayoltita Gorge with numerous Class III-IV rapids. I imagine hiking into this section will become one of the most popular ways to run the Piaxtla—possibly even in rafts. Finally, on day 7, we arrive at Tayoltita, a town whose existence is based on a major gold mine. Although roads reach the town from high up in the Sierra, an easier way to travel here is on one of the daily flights from San Ignacio (a town downstream only 1 hr drive from Mazatlán).

We are all jubilant for completing this trip. I come away with a deep respect for my paddling partners: Ben, Darin, Jesse, and James. I like their attitude and willingness to tackle the most outrageous runs. We part in Tayoltita. They all decide to take the long 10-hour ride up to El Salto and back down to Mazatlán, while I opt to paddle 10-hours and 80 km of Class II-III to San Ignacio. I had paddled this section 9 years earlier as my first major trip in mainland Mexico, and am glad to be able to experience it again. I confirm that this section would make an ideal multi-day raft trip. I take my time getting downstream and camp at the confluence with a major tributary. A storm blows in that night and the river rises over a foot. I imagine, if that downpour had been concentrated in the upper Piaxtla, would we have made it? At least this time, the gods were willing.

Footage of this trip is featured in Ben and Jesse's latest video, Hotel Charley V. A complete description will appear in the guidebook soon to be published: Mexican Whitewater: Occidental. Additional photos and guidebook information can be viewed at www.SierraRios.org.

One of the most scenic sections of river, just above the Puerta de Piaxtla, with vertical walls coming directly to the river.





2010 Annual Report

Removal of the Dillsboro Dam on the Tuckasegee River (NC) in 2010

DEAR MEMBERS,

On behalf of the American Whitewater Board of Directors and staff, we are pleased to report that AW achieved another year of solid financial performance for its members. More importantly, 2010 was a year that made a lasting impact in river conservation and stewardship. While we take pride in our solid financial earnings, the tangible results of our stewardship efforts are witnessed in projects like the removal of Dillsboro Dam on the Tuckasegee River in North Carolina.

Thanks to strong donor, industry, and foundation support the “Great Recession” proved to be a remarkably stable period for American Whitewater. In the midst of a global financial crisis, American Whitewater focused on river stewardship and emerged from the economic downturn with greater credibility.

Charity Navigator recently recognized American Whitewater’s diligence in adhering to strict financial accountability and awarded us their highest Four-Star Rating. It is an honor to receive this top rating in distinction for our philanthropic efforts in river conservation. We will strive to maintain the high standards set forth by Charity Navigator and continue to earn the trust and respect of our members. We make conscious choices to keep our overhead costs very low (as demonstrated in the following financial reports).

Restoration projects, like the removal of Dillsboro Dam, reveal that what’s good for fish is also good for boating. The interests of

habitat restoration and recreation work in tandem through the stewardship efforts of American Whitewater. These projects are important not only for recreational users but for fish and other organisms that depend on the connectivity and flows rivers provide. Projects such as these (and others outlined in this report) create a triple bottom line: they provide local communities a sustainable economic base, they result in healthier rivers, and they provide opportunities for improved boating flows and access. Reconnecting people and communities with their rivers creates an enthusiastic and lasting constituency for river conservation and stewardship.

Taking the long view on river stewardship is made possible through your support. The key to our success is strong support from American Whitewater members. As we look to the future, we continue to appreciate the importance of rivers and their role in supporting the health and well being of the paddling community. At American Whitewater, we remain committed to giving back to these special places through our river stewardship program.

Thanks for your support,



Norwood Scott
President, Board of Directors

Mark Singelton
Executive Director



Sams River (WA) ©Javin Eliff

Conserving Free Flowing Rivers: Wild Olympics

Throughout the West and across the country we are seeing increasing threats to free-flowing rivers in the form of new hydropower and water development proposals. The best tool we have to protect our most iconic free-flowing rivers is the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Over the past year we have expanded our efforts to designate rivers for permanent protection as Wild and Scenic Rivers. Few places in the country offer the diversity and concentration of rivers as can be found on Washington State's Olympic Peninsula. In 2010 we collaborated with other conservation and recreation organizations to launch our Wild Olympics Campaign.

The Wild Olympics campaign is focused on a dozen major river systems that represent important opportunities for river conservation. The region is unique - watersheds here receive several feet of precipitation each year, which creates an incredible number of river miles in a small geographic area with dozens of whitewater runs that pass through towering old-growth forest and hidden canyons. There are endless opportunities for backcountry exploration as well as convenient roadside runs. Some rivers challenge the nation's top experts while others represent popular destinations for those just learning the sport. Our specific objectives include designation of additional river miles for protection through the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, new wilderness areas that protect key watersheds, and additions to Olympic National Park that enhance watershed protection.

The Wild Olympics is not our only effort to protect free-flowing rivers. Over the past year we have developed strategies through both administrative and legislative approaches to keep rivers

free-flowing. These include North Cascades of Washington, the Volcano Country of Washington, Molalla River in Oregon, tributaries of the Rogue in Oregon, and the rivers of Montana. Highlights over the past year included successful passage of three bills to protect Illabot, Middle Fork Snoqualmie and Pratt, and Molalla. While the clock ran out in the Senate we are well positioned for the next round in Congress. We also conducted important inventory work in the North Cascades and Montana that we used to inform agency planning efforts that will lead to interim protection of rivers by classifying them as eligible for Wild and Scenic designation.

Dam Removal

In early 2010 Dillsboro Dam on the Tuckaseegee (NC) was removed and later in the summer Powerdale Dam on the Hood River (OR) was removed. In both cases removal of these outdated and uneconomic dams resulted in restored free-flowing rivers that could be immediately enjoyed for whitewater recreation. In December we received the official word from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ordering the removal of Condit Dam on the White Salmon (WA). This critical step in the regulatory process represents the culmination of more than a decade of work on this project leading to a success that we soon hope to be able to celebrate.



Dolores River (CO)

Water Scarcity in Colorado

Streamflows needed for healthy rivers and high quality recreation opportunities are threatened across the arid West by limited resources and pressure from population growth. In times of drought, the needs of fish and recreation are usually given a small piece of the water-pie, if any at all. As decisions are made about who gets how much water and when, it's important to have an advocate for these interests at the table. This is especially true in the Colorado River basin, where American Whitewater has been working to protect and restore flows on the Dolores River.

The Dolores River in Southwestern Colorado is a major tributary of the Colorado River, and flows through the heart of one of the nation's most water-scarce regions. Water has been diverted from the river for agriculture since the 1880's but the construction of McPhee Reservoir in 1983 led to large and unprecedented water withdrawals. Management of McPhee Reservoir promptly eliminated more than 50% of historic boating opportunities and contributed to the significant decline of native fish populations.

Since 2004, the "Dolores River Dialogue" has brought together a diverse range of interests in an effort negotiate improved river conditions on the Dolores River below McPhee Dam. As part of this group, American Whitewater has been a strong proponent for the restoration of more natural flow releases from the dam that would benefit paddlers and the ecology of the river.

In 2010 American Whitewater orchestrated a large scale recreational flow study to define the flows needed to restore paddling opportunities. Over 350 paddlers participated in the study and contributed to a robust report on recreational flow needs. This information promptly served as the basis for formal discussions about restoring elevated river flows in the spring

to mimic natural conditions and meet specific recreational and environmental flow needs. American Whitewater participated in five Dolores River meetings per month throughout 2010, and in October reached a turning point in negotiating a new innovative flow release plan. Based on this collaborative effort, paddlers will have improved opportunities to float one of the best multi-day rivers in the country in 2011, and hopefully for years to come!

The 2011 flow release plan is part of a larger strategy to reach a long-term agreement that provides for annual spring high flows and adequate flows the rest of the year, while honoring existing rights to withdraw water for agriculture. In addition to our work on the Dolores itself, we are also working to protect flows in the San Miguel River, a major Dolores River tributary that was recommended for Wild and Scenic designation in 2011.

American Whitewater's efforts have significantly contributed to a cohesive, diverse, and knowledgeable coalition of groups seeking the restoration of flows on the Dolores River. The outcomes so far are cause for celebration, and we are optimistic that the Dolores River has a bright future. Our Dolores project is reflective of our flow protection efforts around the arid southern Rockies, where water diversions consistently threaten ecological and recreational values. To better take advantage of these enticing opportunities American Whitewater secured funding in 2010 to help us hire additional staff support for the Dolores River.

The new recreational perspective we are bringing to these age-old water debates has proven to be a game-changer. We are both confident and hopeful that our initial success on the Dolores in 2010 is a sign of good things to come for rivers throughout the region.



Rubicon River (CA) ©Dave Steindorf

Flow Restoration: Spotlight Rubicon River

In the quintessential California guidebook *The Best Whitewater in California*, Chuck Stanley describes the first descent of the Rubicon by he and his intrepid teammates, Lars Holbeck and Richard Montgomery. He also describes the other paddlers who thought about running the Rubicon before them, saying “Many a group of brave paddlers considered the challenge, some even attempted the run, but all failed. It wasn’t a lack of courage, skill, guts, determination, fortitude, valor, intrepidity, resoluteness, audacity, prowess, or moral righteousness that kept them from success. No, it wasn’t that; it was a lack of water.”

As Stanley eloquently put it, “As we all know, rivers are made of water and rocks; this river always has rocks, and it seldom has water.” Water does occasionally flow through the Rubicon, but only when the Lower Hell Hole Dam is spilling. The Dam is just one piece of many that make up the puzzle of the Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project.

Since 2006, American Whitewater has been an active participant in negotiating the new license for the Placer County Water Agency’s (PCWA) Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project, due for completion in 2013. Until 2010, determining flows on the Rubicon required driving to the put-in and consulting a shaman or looking at a star chart. Thanks to American Whitewater’s efforts and participation in the relicensing process, flow information for the Rubicon will be available to you through the AW web-site. Traditionally, this information is only available after the license is agreed upon, and getting this information

before the new license is a huge milestone.

Over twenty years after the first descent of Stanley and his crew, American Whitewater is working to make the Rubicon have more water and less rocks. Negotiating hydroelectric licenses takes time and persistence, and in 2010 California Stewardship Director Dave Steindorf attended well over 40 meetings in this effort. Our primary goal is to restore a more natural hydrograph to the system, creating flows that peak with the snowmelt in the spring and gradually taper off to low flows in the summer. This type of flow regime will have benefits to all who are at home on the river - from fish and frogs to whitewater boaters. American Whitewater has advocated for this approach for years on this and other river systems, including California’s McCloud, Yuba and Feather Rivers. We are excited to see agencies and utilities getting on board.

On the Rubicon and Middle Fork American, we are committed to continuing to play a pivotal role in negotiating the new license. In 2011 our work will continue as we look forward to completing a flow study on the Rubicon and finalizing flow negotiations. The Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric relicensing process is the twentieth for American Whitewater in California. American Whitewater is a primary national advocate in restoring flows to whitewater rivers. The Rubicon will join the ranks of our successful negotiations for restored flows on rivers across the country, such as the Cheoah River in North Carolina, the Tallulah River in Georgia, the Moose River in New York, and the Penobscot River in Maine.

Preserving our Connection to Rivers: Spotlight Ausable River

River recreation is good for the soul as well as the body, local economies, and ultimately rivers. While this positive feedback loop seems so obvious to American Whitewater and our supporters, plenty of influential people would prefer if paddling were simply not allowed on most or all rivers. Enhancing river access is a core element of American Whitewater's mission, and a great deal of our river access work has focused on responding to proposed river closures by these individuals, municipalities, government agencies, or corporations.

For example, in 2010, a local power company in New York lost a decade long fight to keep paddlers locked out of the towering slot canyon known as Ausable Chasm on the Ausable River. Paddlers thought the fight for access was over, and celebrated as they carried their boats past the powerhouse, put on, and floated through one of the region's natural wonders. The mood quickly dampened again when a downstream landowner filed trespassing complaints against several of the first paddlers to descend the river. Thankfully, the court refused to hear the cases and no charges were filed. OK - now you can celebrate! After threats from multiple sources, paddlers finally are able to enjoy the simple act of floating down the Ausable River.

Of course, access gains on the Ausable did not happen on their own. American Whitewater, dozens of our members, and our partner the Adirondack Mountain Club filed countless comments over the years to convince the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to require the dam owner to provide public access. Later, when trespassing complaints were filed, we worked to educate decision makers on the law protecting paddlers and to mobilize river access advocates in the state.

Restoring access to the Ausable required the full suite of grassroots organizing, volunteer coordination, legal knowledge, technical skills, media outreach, and strategic planning that are the hallmark of American Whitewater's work. We apply these skills and strategies on a state and national level as well. In 2010, we opposed bad river access legislation in Utah, Oregon, and Colorado, advocated for better boating regulations on several US Forest Service and Park Service rivers, and rallied against specific river closures across the Nation.

In sharp contrast to this reactive work, in 2010 we had the pleasure of working with the Federal government on a positive and proactive initiative aimed at restoring the connection between Americans and nature – including rivers. The America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative gathered public input on current hurdles and opportunities associated with outdoor recreation. American Whitewater offered significant comments, encouraged paddlers to attend public meetings, and even hosted our own "homegrown" listening sessions in partnership with the Outdoor Alliance and AGO coordinators. The result was a report released in March 2011 that calls on all federal agencies to improve opportunities for Outdoor Recreation, and specifically access to rivers.



Elephant Rock on the Ausable River, NY ©Willie Kern

As our society rapidly modernizes, paddlers offer a unique and authentic voice for one of the most ancient forms of travel. Whether it is through commenting on national policies or working with a landowner, paddlers help keep our public waters open to the public and our citizens connected with natural forces and places. American Whitewater guides and enhances these efforts, and consistently advocates for responsible river use regulations, high quality river access areas, and protection of the flows and scenery that make paddling a river such a powerful experience.

2010 Statement of Activities

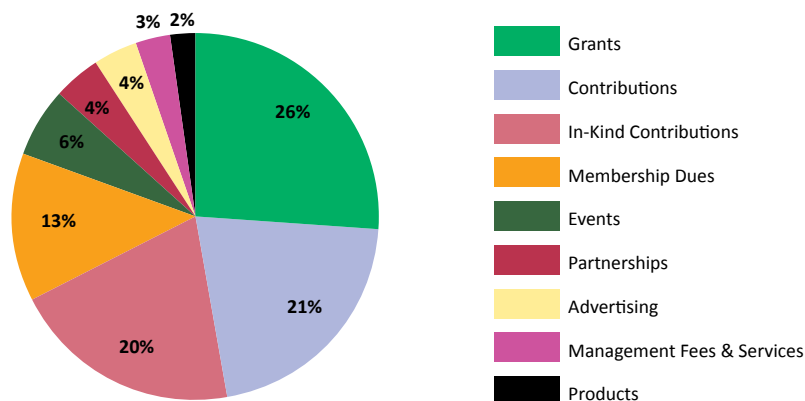
REVENUE	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL 2010	TOTAL 2009
Contributions	\$252,323	\$12,231	\$264,554	\$290,789
Membership dues	\$162,602	\$-	\$162,602	\$172,732
Advertising	\$54,015	\$-	\$54,015	\$60,810
Grants		\$316,888	\$316,888	\$217,915
Events	\$76,095	\$-	\$76,095	\$65,559
Sponsorships/Corp Programs	\$55,420	\$-	\$55,420	\$52,245
Products	\$21,699	\$-	\$21,699	\$24,181
Management Fees & Services	\$41,875	\$-	\$41,875	\$44,736
In-Kind Contributions	\$248,618	\$-	\$248,618	\$469,289
Interest & Dividends	\$1,157	\$-	\$1,157	\$1,311
Misc. Income	\$244	\$-	\$244	\$989
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$217,410	\$(217,410)	\$-	\$-
Total Revenue	\$1,131,458	\$111,709	\$1,243,167	\$1,400,556

EXPENSES

Access & Conservation	\$620,977	\$-	\$620,977	\$676,508
Public Education	\$334,786	\$-	\$334,786	\$429,659
Total Stewardship Expenses	\$955,763	\$-	\$955,763	\$1,106,167
		\$-		
General & Administrative	\$117,259	\$-	\$117,259	\$126,227
Fundraising	\$74,990	\$-	\$74,990	\$73,524
Total Supporting Expenses	\$192,249	\$-	\$192,249	\$199,751
Total Expenses	\$1,148,012	\$-	\$1,148,012	\$1,305,918

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$(16,554)	\$111,709	\$95,155	\$94,638
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2010 Revenues



2010 Assets and Liabilities

CURRENT ASSETS:

	2010	2009	+ / -
Cash	\$524,152	\$329,751	\$194,401
Accounts Receivable	\$22,961	\$6,875	\$16,086
Grants Receivable	\$37,338	\$64,088	\$(26,750)
Investments	\$228,684	\$245,387	\$(16,703)
Prepaid Expenses	\$19,422	\$16,508	\$2,914
Direct Deposit Funds Advanced			
Inventory	\$6,612	\$5,876	\$736
Total Current Assets:	\$839,169	\$668,485	\$170,684

LONG-TERM ASSETS:

Lands held for protection	\$61,056	\$61,056	\$-
Computer equipment, net	\$6,121	\$4,631	\$1,490
Total Long-Term Assets:	\$67,177	\$65,687	\$1,490
TOTAL ASSETS:	\$906,346	\$734,172	\$172,174

CURRENT LIABILITIES

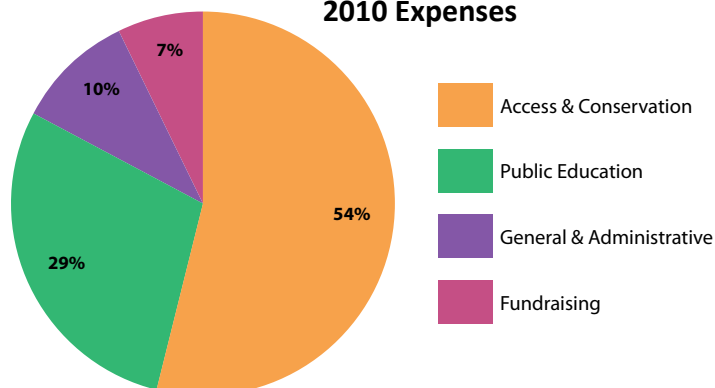
Accounts Payable	\$32,491	\$14,851	\$17,640
Other liabilities	\$65,864	\$6,869	\$58,995
Payroll Liabilities	\$16,540	\$16,156	\$384
Total Current Liabilities:	\$114,895	\$37,876	\$77,019

NET ASSETS:

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$432,621	\$449,175	\$(16,554)
Restricted Net Assets	\$358,830	\$247,121	\$111,709
Total Net Assets:	\$791,451	\$696,296	\$95,155

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS: \$906,346 \$734,172 \$172,174

2010 Expenses



*American Whitewater is a registered charitable corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Financial statements are audited by Corliss & Solomon, PLLC. You can receive a copy of AW's most recent audit by emailing your request to mark@americanwhitewater.org.

2010 Honor Roll

Industry Partners

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Class IV - \$15,000

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Class III - \$10,000

Kayak Session

Kokatat

Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC)

Class II - \$7,500

Chaco

Clif Bar

Exact Target

Immersion Research

LVM

Smith Optics

Subaru

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NRS

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Yakima

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OARS

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Kayak Session

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Kokatat

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Pyranha

\$1,000+

Cascade Designs

Chaco

Dagger

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Immersion Research

NOC

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Wavesport

Yakima

\$500+

Werner Paddles



Go to americanwhitewater.org > **Community** > **Industry Partners** to see AW's current list of industry supporters.

We hope you'll consider a company's commitment to river stewardship when making your next purchase.

AW's largest fundraiser - American Whitewater Gauley Fest, 2010 ©Drake Carson



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Jim and Lisa Burton
Michael M. Carroll
Jim Cavo
City of Seattle
Seth Cooper
Mark D'Agostino
John Daffron
Nancy and Joe Damboise
Quincy Dan
Jason Darby
Jaime Davis
Daniel J. Deptula
David Dooley

2010 Honor Roll

William Duffy
Larry and Christine Dunn
Daniel W. Dutton
Don Ellis
James Ellis
EnPro Industries
ExxonMobil
Fannie Mae
Susan A. Fialkowski
Robert Fisher
William O. Fisher
Follett Corporation
Claude Frank
Ken Frederick
Brian and Carrie Freeman
David Garrity
Jeffrey B. Gartman
GE Foundation
Edward J. George
Claire Gesalman
Richard Gibson
Kelly Gillespie
Google Matching Gifts
Ed Goufas
William Griffin
Barry and Cynthia Grimes
Barbara K. Hall
Ronn E. Harding
Andrew Harrell
James Harris
Oliver Heim
Brian Henderson
Neil Hermansdorfer
Hewlett Packard
Richard Hicks
Jeffrey Holdsworth
J. M. Huber Corporation
Frank W. Hughto-Delzer
Jeffrey Hunt
IBM Charitable Contribution
Campaign
IBM Corporation
Andris Ikstrums
Independent Charities of America
Intuit
Robert A. Johnson
Johnson & Johnson
Thomas Jones
Eric Jones
Joshua Kaufman
Seth Kaufman and Susanne Rublein
Chris Kelly and Nanette Laughrey
Lark A. Lambert
Glenn Lamson
Brian and Mari Little

Major Mather Little
Brad Love
Jerry Malloy
Barry Martin
Gary and Susan Martinez
Robert J. Mascio
Timothy McGinty
Scott McKay
Microsoft
Mile High United Way
Marin Millar
Henry Miller
Daniel P. Molnar
Christian Morath
Robert Moses
Network for Good
Andrew Nix
Jennifer Paisner
Irov R. Pardee
Bruce A. Patton
Darrell Penn
Jessica L. Pesqueira
Alan Pettingill
Don Ellis
Rebecca Post
Zachary Ramsey
Robert Ratcliffe
Jennifer Raymond
Regence Employee Giving
REI Charitable Action
Steve Revier
Tracey and Eric Roush
Sharon Sahrie
Daniel R. Sanborn
Eric and Tera Schreiber
Charles Scroggins
Billy Simmons
Scott Slayton
Jesse Smith
James Sprouffske
Bryan and Michelle Stewart
Robert Stiles
Sharon Suhrie
Tracy Tackett
Robert Tempel
Grace Thompson
Linda Tulaba
Christopher Tulley
Laura J. Ulibarri
United eWay
United Way of Benton and Franklin
Counties
United Way of Central &
Northeastern Connecticut
United Way of the Columbia-

Willamette
United Way of the Greater Triangle
United Way Silicon Valley
United Way Special Distribution
United Way of Treasure Valley
United Way Truist
Lorn VanSteenbergh
Verizon
Stephen D. Vitale
Wachovia Securities, LLC
Matthew Wallace
Wells Fargo Community Support
Sue Whitney
Rich Wiegand
Carol Wilson
Howard Wolosky
Jillian Wright

Affiliate Clubs

ADK Schenectady
Adobe Whitewater Club of NM
AMC - Connecticut Chapter
AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter
Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts
Arkansas Canoe Club
Atlanta Whitewater Club
Avid4 Adventure Inc.
Bardstown Boaters
Base Camp Cullowhee
Benscreek Canoe Club
BEWET - Boeing Employees
Whitewater & Touring Club
Birmingham Canoe Club
Blue Ridge River Runners
Blue Ridge Voyageurs
Bluegrass Wildwater Asso
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak
Club
California Floaters Society
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg
Canoe Cruisers Assn
Carolina Canoe Club
Chico Paddleheads
Chota Canoe Club
Coastal Canoeists Inc
Colgate University
Colorado Whitewater Assn
Columbus Outdoor Pursuits
Conewago Canoe Club
Coosa River Paddling Club
Creek Freak Paddlers of Franklin
County VA
Dbl Z! Whitewater Club
Dixie Division

2010 Honor Roll

East Tennessee Whitewater Club
Elkhorn Paddlers
EPIC Adventures
Eugene Kayaker
Fairbanks Paddlers
Float Fishermen of Virginia
Flow Paddlers' Club
Foothills Paddling Club
FORVA
Friends of the Yampa
Georgia Canoeing Asso
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation
Gold Country Paddlers
Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assn
Greater Baltimore Canoe Club
Hamilton College
Hollins Outdoor Program
Holtwood Hooligans
Hoosier Canoe Club
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq.
Houston Canoe Club Inc
Huntsville Canoe Club
Idaho Whitewater Association
Iowa Whitewater Coalition
James River Float Company
KCCNY
Keel Haulers Canoe Club
Landmark Learning
Ledyard Canoe Club
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Inc.
Lower Columbia Canoe Club
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers
Memphis Whitewater
Merrimack Valley Paddlers
Minnesota Canoe Assn
Mississippi Outdoor Club
Missouri Whitewater Assn
Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers
Northwest Rafters Association
Nova Riverrunners Inc.
Ohio Valley Paddlers
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club
Oregon Whitewater Association
Outdoor Adventure Club
Outdoors Unlimited
Ozark Mountain Paddlers
Ozark Wilderness Waterways
Paddle Trails Canoe Club
Paddlers for Conservation
Paddlers4Christ
Palmetto Paddlers
Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society

Philadelphia Canoe Club
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club
Recreation Student Organization
Rocky Mountain Canoe and Kayak Club
RPP Kayak Club
RSC Kayak Club at Univ of Michigan
RTS, Angeles Chapter, Sierra Club
San Miguel Whitewater Asso
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors
Sequoia Paddlers
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers
Sierra Club SF Chapter
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter
Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club
St. Lawrence University
Stand Up For Rivers
Team SICK
Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club
Tennessee Scenic River Association
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club
Thompson Rivers Univ Adventure Studies
Three Rivers Paddling Club
Toledo River Gang
Town Tinker Tube Rental
Triad River Runners
University Kayak Club
University of Colorado Kayak Club
USU Kayak Club
Utah Whitewater Club
Vermont Paddlers Club
Viking Canoe Club
Washington Kayak Club
Washington Recreational River Runners
West VA Wildwater Assn
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club
Wilmington Trail Club
WVU Whitewater Club
Zoar Valley Paddling Club

Events and Festivals

American River Festival
Deerfield River Fest
Feather River Festival
French Broad River Festival
American Whitewater Gauley Fest
National Paddling Film Festival
Ohiopyle Over the Falls Festival
Potomac River Festival
Stonycreek Rendezvous
Wenatchee River Festival

Active Projects

National Policy

America's Great Outdoors Initiative
Clean Energy Legislation
Invasive Aquatic Species Control
National Forest Planning
Wild and Scenic River Management

Southeast

Catawba River (NC, SC)
Chattooga River (NC, SC, GA)
Cheoah River (NC)
Coosa River (AL)
Horsepasture and Toxaway Rivers (NC)
Nantahala and Tuckasegee Rivers (NC)
Saluda River (SC)
Tallulah River (GA)
Twelvemile Creek (SC)
Watauga River (NC)

Mid Atlantic

Appomatox River (VA)
Blackwater and Cheat rivers (WV)
Gauley River (WV)
New River (WV)
Ohiopyle Falls (PA)
Potomac River (VA)
Savage and NB Potomac Rivers (MD)
Susquehanna River (PA)
Upper Yough (MD)
Virginia Access (VA)

Northeast

Ausable River (NY)
Black River (NY)
Green River (VT)
Hudson and Indian Rivers (NY)
Moose River (NY)
Saranac River (NY)
West River (VT)

Midwest

Elkhorn Creek (KY)
Fox River (WI)
Red River (WI)
Vermilion River (IL)

Northern Rockies

Bear River (ID)
Boulder Creek (ID)
East Rosebud Creek (MT)
Little Potlatch Creek (ID)
Lolo Creek (ID)
Madison River (MT)

2010 Honor Roll

Middle Fork Salmon (ID)
Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers
(MT,WY,ID)
Snake River Headwaters (WY)
Sullivan Creek (WA)
West Rosebud Creek (MT)

Southern Rockies

Animas River (CO)
Blue River (CO)
Boulder Creek (CO)
Cache la Poudre River (CO)
Colorado River (UT)
Colorado River Access (CO)
Colorado Water Supply Future (CO)
Dolores River (CO)
Eagle River (CO)
Fish Creek (CO)
Fraser River (CO)
Green River (WY,UT,CO)
Gunnison River (CO)
San Miguel River (CO)
Taylor River (CO)
Uncompahgre River (CO)
Upper Colorado (CO)
Virgin River (UT)
White River (CO)
Yampa River (CO)

Pacific Northwest

Chehalis River (WA)
Chelan River (WA)
Cispus River (WA)
Cooper River (WA)
Crooked River (OR)
Elwha River (WA)
Green River (WA)
Illabot Creek (WA)
Klamath (OR/CA)
Little Wenatchee (WA)
McKenzie River (OR)
Middle Fork Snoqualmie River (WA)
Molalla River (OR)
Nooksack River (WA)
North Santiam (OR)
Owyhee River (OR)
Pilchuck Creek (WA)
Rivers of the Olympic Peninsula
(WA)
Rivers of Volcano County (WA)
Rogue River (OR)
Sandy River (WA)
Skagit River (WA)
Skykomish River (WA)
Snake River (WA)
Snoqualmie River (WA)

Sultan River (WA)
White Salmon (WA)

California

Butte Creek (CA)
California Hydropower Reform
Coalition (CA)
Feather River / Oroville (CA)
Feather River / Poe (CA)
Feather River / Rock Creek-Cresta
(CA)
Feather River / Upper North Fork
(CA)
Kern River (CA)
McCloud River (CA)
Merced River (CA)
Middle Fork American / Rubicon
(CA)
Mokelumne River (CA)
Pit River (CA)
San Joaquin River (CA)
Tuolumne River (CA)
Yuba/Bear Rivers (CA)

Board of Directors

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Board Members at the 2010 Spring Board Meeting



Staff members at the 2010 Spring Board Meeting

Class V Sponsors



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KAYAKS
www.bliss-stick.us



with our first-class team, Team Bliss-Stick US. We are here for the US customer and the United States market.

As part of the global Bliss-Stick family, we stand behind the kayaks we import. We also believe in and support AW's mission for our rivers. With that, we want to take the opportunity to be a part of that mission by becoming a class V sponsor. We are honored to be a part of the mission!

Grassroots, keeping it Grassroots!
Arohanui!

Michael and Greyson Briere
www.bliss-stick.us

American Whitewater is supported by members, donors, foundations, and partners in the whitewater and outdoor industries. In each edition of the *Journal*, we highlight one such partner in this space. American Whitewater urges you not to make purchase decisions blindly. We hope you'll consider a company's commitment to river stewardship when making your next purchase.

Who are we? We are Bliss-Stick US, a division of WakaWai Distribution. We are a family owned and operated company based in Asheville, N.C. Paddle sports is our passion. Our business is a production of our passion.

We strive daily to maintain our quality of lifestyle. Our lifestyle is our family, the river, the kayaks, as well as making all attempts to craft a sustainable life as often and as much as possible. In the meantime, we aim to share this lifestyle with you!

We, Bliss-Stick US, bring you the best damn kayak in the world, all the way from New Zealand, by way of marketing, brand awareness, customer service, sales, distribution and community participation



Join



AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!

American Whitewater has been extraordinarily fortunate in our ability to leverage a strong grassroots base—members and other volunteers—to assist our limited staff with many whitewater river conservation and restoration efforts.

Over the years, American Whitewater volunteers have participated in numerous hydropower meetings as well as instream and recreational flow studies; filed comments and assisted with an uncountable number of filings; appeared as expert witnesses; lobbied; worked to fight new dams, remove existing dams, deny licenses, and improve public access to rivers and streams. In nearly every river stewardship issue AW has been involved with, the outcome has been favorable to paddlers. Not only has AW secured favorable decisions for the paddling community, but we are the only national organization representing paddlers as these decisions are being made.

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the US, AW currently has 5,500 active members. When you consider the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join AW! If you are a member, please be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual annual memberships are only \$35 (\$25 if you are a member of an AW Affiliate Club). This is less than a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

It's easy to join or renew an AW membership: Join or renew online today at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-aw/>; call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429); or complete the membership form provided in this Journal and mail it to:

Membership
American Whitewater
PO Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723

*Note: AW will never share your information with others

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Member Number: _____

↑ _____ if you have one and know it

Membership Level

\$35 Standard

\$25 Member of Affiliate Club

Club: _____

\$25 Student

School: _____

\$50 Family

\$75 Affiliate Club

\$100 Ender Club (Shirt Size: _____)

\$250 Platinum Paddler

\$500 Explorer

\$750 Lifetime

\$1,000 Legacy

\$2,500 Steward

**For current member rewards
go to:
americanwhitewater.org**

Donation

Donation of \$ _____

Additional Subscriptions

\$30 Kayak Session Magazine - 4 issues per year (KS donates \$5 to AW!)

Journal Options

Do NOT mail me the AW Journal, email it to me <- Saves AW money, and trees! :)

Auto-Renew (No Renewal Notices!)

Auto-renew my membership each year on the credit card below

Payment

Credit Card Cash Check # _____

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITOR,

I was glad to see the article "Pacific Northwest Huckfest," profiling local drops in the May/June issue of *American Whitewater*. Not only have I paddled some of the falls featured in that story, but I know several of the paddlers on the trip. However, I was extremely disappointed by the quality, content and tone displayed by Bobby "THE DOGG" Miller. This feature was a grammatically deficient, poorly written, hyperbole of what is wrong in whitewater kayaking. This overtly sexist, testosterone-driven, bro-journalism turns off attracting new paddlers (particularly women), businesses, sponsors, advocates and supporters from the sport. It has no place in a publication representing the sport to a larger community. Mr. Miller has every right to express himself in any manner he sees fit. However, there are other, more appropriate outlets for him to do so. I am sorry that *American Whitewater* printed this meaningless, self-congratulatory drivel

American Whitewater would be best served to pass on any additional content offered by Mr. Miller.

Collin Whitehead
Portland, OR



COLLIN,

Thank you for expressing your opinion about an article in our last issue of *American Whitewater*. I have to admit that every time I choose to include an article by Bobby Miller in our magazine, I wonder how much mail it will generate. In reading one of Mr. Miller's stories, it doesn't take much effort to identify statements that could concern, startle, or offend a reader choosing to interpret the work as strictly literal. To my continued surprise, over the years (you may remember his earlier work, which has been published in the Journal for more than a decade now), there has been barely a middle-school essay's worth of complaint, hardly a whisper of outrage.

I've always assumed that given the obviously over-the-top tone of Mr. Miller's work readers recognize his hyperbole as satirical. While some may see it as "meaningless self-congratulatory drivel," others find it to be an appropriate critique of the "overtly sexist, testosterone-driven" male paddler stereotype that persists in our whitewater community. Though, to be honest, while Bobby Miller's work hasn't generated much in the way of hate mail, neither has it received an outpouring of praise from readers. I think it's fitting that in this issue featuring "Whitewater Women" we ask our readers to weigh in, not on Bobby Miller's literary persona and his merits, but on whether the whitewater paddling community is now so open and egalitarian that we don't need any more reminders about how ridiculous skirt-clad men sound spouting sexist ideas.

So please, readers, if you have a strong opinion here, let us know how you feel. Is it better to ignore offensive behavior and hope that it dies of neglect or to hold up a mirror to the actor(s) and trust that they recognize themselves in a work of satire?

And Mr. Whitehead, if you're unhappy to see the rivers of the Pacific Northwest cast as the backdrop of a Bobby Miller tale, you can still take action. *American Whitewater*

is always looking for stories from around the country and the globe. The next story we feature on the rivers of the Pacific Northwest could be yours...

Sincerely,

Ambrose Tuscano
Editor, *American Whitewater Journal*



GRANT WINNER

2011 CLIF BAR FLOWING RIVERS CAMPAIGN WINNER

American Whitewater and Clif Bar are proud to announce the recipient of the 2011 Clif Bar Flowing Rivers Campaign: the Mount Washington Valley Paddlers! MWVP will receive a \$1,250 grant to go towards their project as outlined below.

The Mount Washington Valley Paddlers project is for the improvement of two access points along the Androscoggin River in New Hampshire as well as a river cleanup along the same stretch of river. MWVP will be improving the river access point at Errol Rips by replacing the old, degraded stairs with a wider more stable set. The work on this project will be provided by the local Enriched Learning Center Technical Education class. Another access point at the Pontook put-in will be improved by the placement of three water bars along the slope to the river, to ease erosion. Finally, the remaining funds will be used to hold a cleanup along the same section of the Androscoggin River.

Thanks again to all the clubs who participated in this year's grant process. Most of all, a huge thanks goes out to Clif Bar for sponsoring this wonderful opportunity for our Affiliate Clubs to do their part in saving rivers! Check out Clif Bar's "Who we are" part of their website to see how this endeavor plus many others makes them a true river and environmental steward.



It's Easy to Support AW!

American Whitewater is proud of the work we have accomplished in our stewardship program but we need your help to sustain our success. Your support through membership and donations enables our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. Donations don't have to be large; each person doing a small part makes a noticeable difference. Many donors fail to take full advantage of federal tax incentives specifically intended to encourage charitable contributions. Such incentives often enable a donor to make a larger gift to AW at little or no additional cost. For more information about maximizing your gift visit the IRS website dedicated to charitable organizations.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN# 23-7083760. To learn more about the Giving Options below, contact us at 1-866-262-8429 or visit the "Donate" link under "Support AW" on our website at www.americanwhitewater.org

- Donate online today!
- Monthly Giving: Contribute a minimum of \$10 via credit card or electronic transfer from your bank account.
- Bequests: Include AW in your will or living trust. Bequests to AW are generally exempt from federal or state inheritance taxes, and subject to an unlimited deduction.
- Combined Federal Campaign: Federal employees including federal civilians, military personnel and U.S. Postal Workers can donate to AW through the CFC a once a year charitable fund raising program. Look for AW (Agency #11351) in the official CFC listing of eligible donors.
- Charitable Remainder Trusts: Convert a highly appreciated asset (such as real estate or stocks) into a lifetime income while minimizing income and estate taxes.
- Employer Matching: Many employers will match your donations to non-profit organizations. This includes membership payments, as well as additional contributions. Check to see if your employer has a matching program.
- MissionFish: Sell your items through the MissionFish program on eBay and the proceeds come directly to AW.
- Other Assets: A gift of real estate to AW qualifies you for a tax deduction based on the property's fair market value. If it is not a river access point, AW will sell the property and use the proceeds to protect access and restore rivers. Acceptance of property is subject to certain conditions. You may also be eligible to receive tax benefits for gifts of real property. Art and jewelry are examples of personal property items that may be eligible. Interested donors should check with your financial and tax advisors and AW on the feasibility and tax considerations of such gifts.
- Securities: Donating appreciated stock to AW benefits both the donor and whitewater rivers. The donor receives two tax-related benefits. First, the gain on the stock is not subject to capital gains taxes. Second, the donor can deduct the value of the stock as a charitable contribution.
- United Way: All federal campaigns, and a few of the local campaigns will allow you to donate to AW.
- Vehicle Donations: Turn that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefiting AW.

AFFILIATE CLUBS

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY CARLA MINER

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1954 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. We have over 100 current AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club, consider joining one.

Our Affiliate Club Spotlight this issue is on the Pikes Peak Whitewater Club an outstanding Affiliate Club and long time supporter of our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

Pikes Peak Whitewater Club is a kayak oriented whitewater club based in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Club, founded in 1975 to foster an enthusiastic group of paddlers, provides a place to meet other people who enjoy whitewater kayaking, and explore Colorado's exciting whitewater rivers and beyond. With a wide range of talent and experience, the group shares stories, tips, hidden river gems, camping areas, and adventure destinations.

With a membership roster of 125+, PPWC is a great resource for finding other people to paddle with. They'll be paddling somewhere, in something (canoe, kayak, raft, or duckie), and just playing. If you're a beginner, PPWC will help you learn to roll, inform you about the sport, and provide opportunities to get on the river with experienced paddlers, who can help show you the way.

All are welcome to join, please come join in the fun! Membership in the Pikes Peak Whitewater Club is open to the public; annual dues are \$45 per year for an individual and \$60 for a family of two (additional family members are \$5 each). Club dues include pool sessions (pool sessions without membership are \$10 each). To learn more about the PPWC or to join, check out their website at <http://www.pikespeakwhitewaterclub.com/>. And remember, current members of the PPWC receive a \$10 discount off their AW membership.

Thank you Pikes Peak Whitewater Club for your continued support of American Whitewater!

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks
Nova Riverrunners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham

Coosa River Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
RTS Sierra Club Angeles Chapter,
Sherman Oaks
RTS Sierra Club SF Chapter, Livermore
Sequoia Paddlers, Forestville
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers,
San Jose

Colorado

Avid4 Adventure Inc., Boulder
Colorado Whitewater Assn, Englewood
Dolores River Action Group, Mancos
Friends of the Arkansas River, Canon City
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
Grand Canyon Priv. Boat. Asso.,
Colorado Springs
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
Rocky Mountain Canoe/Kayak Club,
Broomfield
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
Stand Up For Rivers, Telluride

Connecticut

AMC - Connecticut Chapter, Waterbury

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Assoc, Atlanta
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Assn., Boise
Recreation Student Organization, Moscow

Illinois

Team SICK, Carbondale

Indiana

Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition,
W. Des Moines

Kentucky

Bardstown Boaters, Bardstown,
Bluegrass Wildwater Asso, Lexington
Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Louisiana

Sabine Whitewater Club, Lake Charles

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Troy

Maryland

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Silver Spring
Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Cockeysville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Smithsburg

Michigan

RSC Kayak Club at University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor

Minnesota

Minnesota Canoe Assn, Minneapolis
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Mississippi

Mississippi Outdoor Club, Clinton

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Assn, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

AMC New Hampshire Paddlers, Raymond
Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover
Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Intervale
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Nashua

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
KCCNY, Flanders

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of NM,
Albuquerque

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
Colgate University, Hamilton
Hamilton College, Clinton
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
KCCNY, Flanders
St Lawrence University, Canton
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia

North Carolina

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Dixie Division, Tuxedo
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Charlotte
Triad River Runners, Winston-Salem

Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Keel Haulers Canoe Club, Westlake
Outdoor Adventure Club, Dayton
Toledo River Gang, Haskins

Oregon

Eugene Kayaker, Eugene
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Northwest Rafters Assoc, Roseburg
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton

Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Holtwood Hooligans, Lancaster
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Inc., Lehigh Valley
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts,
Limestone
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis
Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing
Club, Kingsport
Tennessee Scenic River Assoc., Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

Texas

Houston Canoe Club Inc, Houston

Utah

Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Essex Junction

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg
Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond
Creek Freak Paddlers of Franklin County,
Rocky Mount
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke
FORVA, Roanoke
Hollins Outdoor Program, Roanoke
James River Float Co, Madison Heights
Paddlers for Conservation, Vienna

Washington

BEWET- Boeing Employees Whitewater &
Touring Club, Bellevue
EPIC Adventures, Cheney
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
RPP Kayak Club, Bellingham
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

West Virginia

Dbl Z! Whitewater Club, Martinsville
West VA Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston
WVU Whitewater Club, Morgantown

Wisconsin

Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, Madison

British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Burnaby

DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

By Carla Miner, Membership Manager

AW offers a discounted Affiliate Club membership of \$25, a \$10 savings. If you are renewing your AW membership or joining as a new member, select the Affiliate Club Discounted Personal Membership online at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/> Or, if you are renewing or joining by mail or telephone just mention the name of the Affiliate Club you belong to and you can take advantage of the \$25 membership.

A list of AW Affiliate Clubs can be found on our website at www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Affiliate/view/. If you do not see your Club listed here please encourage them to renew their Club membership or to join AW as a new Affiliate Club. Your Club's membership and your personal membership enable our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. When you join or renew your membership your support is helping to meet the many challenges whitewater rivers face.

If you have any questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please contact me. I can be reached at 866_BOAT-4AW or membership@americanwhitewater.org.

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- Post Club information on the AW website to help paddlers find you
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- Most importantly, your financial support helps us save rivers!

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[www.americanwhitewater.org/
content/Membership/join-aw](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-aw)

For more information contact Carla Miner at

membership@americanwhitewater.org
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Px MY PADDLE PRESCRIPTION

PADDLER: John Grace

HEIGHT: 5'11"

OCCUPATION: Video Guru



I choose to support American Whitewater through the HealthyWaters Program.

Paddling forces me to focus, and the confusion of life subsides for a bit. My perfect fit ▶

— John Grace

SHO-GUN

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- < and have more fun on the water



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