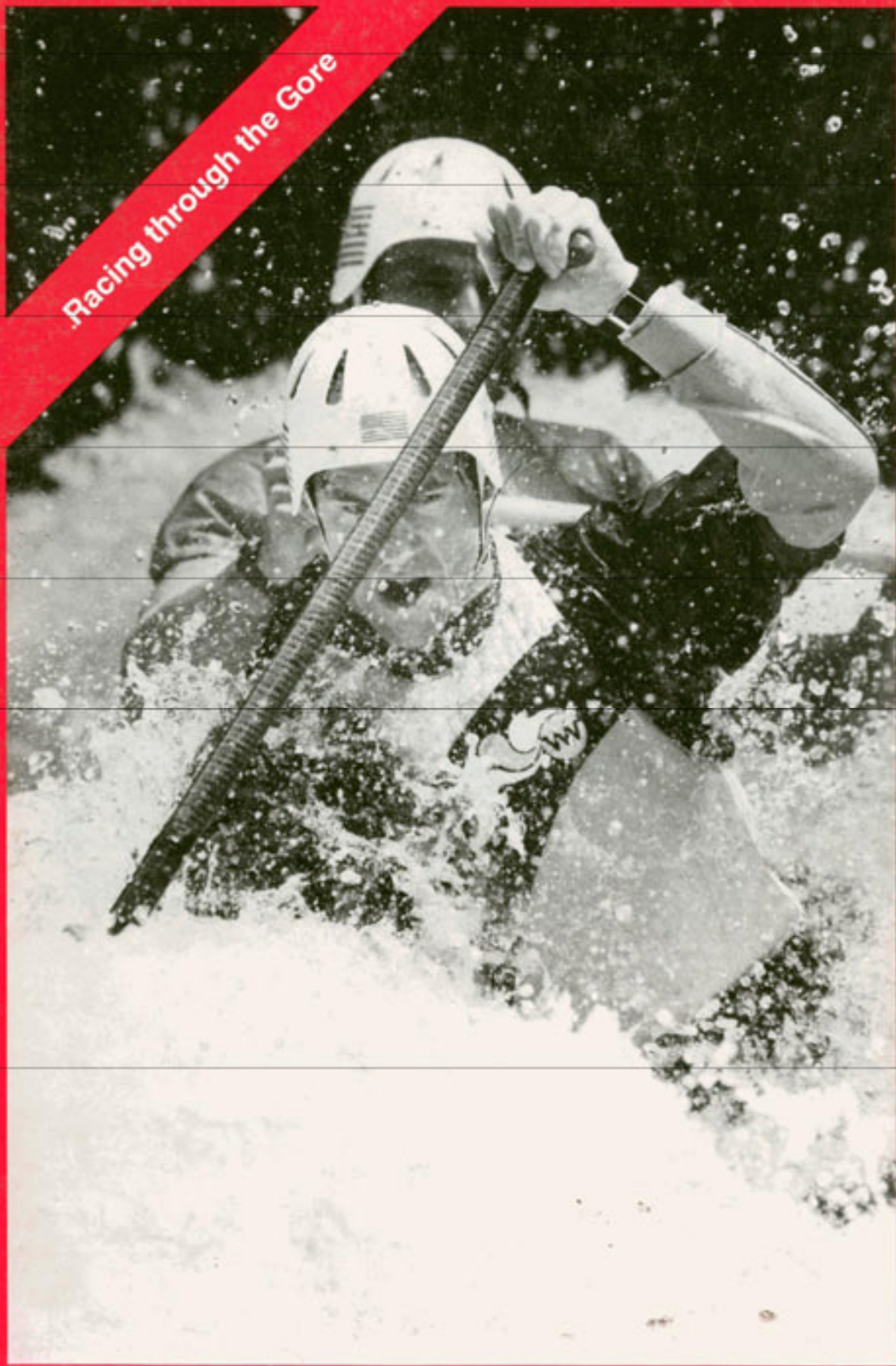


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# american whitewater

January/February 1991

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# american whitewater

JOURNAL OF THE  
AMERICAN WHITEWATER  
AFFILIATION

January/February 1991  
Volume XXXVI, No. 1

## FEATURES

20

### Horsepasture

Whether you're plunging down this steep North Carolina river's precipitous drops or portaging its unrunnable waterfalls--there's plenty of reasons to watch your step on the Horsepasture.

By LEE BELKNAP

26

### Carbon River

It's fortunate that this class 5 Washington river lies hidden at the bottom of a gorge that narrows to thirteen feet--paddlers probably wouldn't like what they see, anyway.

By TOM SCHIBIG

30

### Racing through the Gore.

This sprint down a section of the Rockies' most difficult whitewater challenges the fable Upper Yough Downriver Competition for the title of the toughest downriver competition.

By CLAY WRIGHT

32

### Don't Flush Rivers Down the Drain

Simple water conservation techniques can eliminate water projects that threaten our whitewater resources.

By RIC ALESCH

## DEPARTMENTS

6

### Conserve

The massive James Bay II project opposed...Wild and Scenic is not the only conservation tool

12

### Briefs

Firefight on the Rio Grande...Hardcore vs. Fairweather paddlers...AWA membership tops 2,000...Festival head named

16

### Safety

International safety symposium held at NOC yields interesting ideas

By CHARLIE WALBRIDGE

36

### Big Swim

S\*\*\* happens on the Upper Yough

By JOHN FRACHELLA

38

### End Notes

The Great Adirondack Raisin Race

By GARY CARLSON

**COVER:** Jim Swedberg captures Jamie *McEwan* and Lecky Haller during 1990 World Cup.





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## FORUM

# New Year's Resolutions

By the time you peruse these pages, faithful readers, we should be several weeks into the next decade and I will have already forsaken most of my personal New Year's resolutions.

But here are some of the promises I'm making regarding American Whitewater--just don't hold me to them.

- we will print a feature about a class III whitewater river--even if I have to blow a weekend to run one.

- we will feature more articles about Western rivers...as soon as I can find a Western boater who can write.

- we will run more stories on whitewater open boating--eventhough the best open boaters come from the south and they can't read anyway.

- we will find a mug shot of Charlie Walbridge that doesn't make Charlie look like a stuffed head mounted on a wall.

- we will publish a special whitewater rafting issue (all pictures with captions in easy-read type).

- we will eliminate all typographical airers and misspellings.

- we will include a special fold-out featuring a different director each month. The first effort will be with Pope Barrow and Mac Thornton (the boys of Washington).

- we will double our acceptance fee for published material (what is double of nothing?).

- we will appoint a special editor to review all material to insure all offensive and controversial material is deleted. Gary Carlson will fill the position.

- we will use this space in the magazine to address serious subjects.

- we will continue to publish the world's best semi-professional whitewater magazine.

Have a great new year.

In this issue, we continue to feature some of the nation's more challenging whitewater runs. From the East, we have a report of the incredibly steep **Horsepass** River while from the West, we cover Washington state's seldom-run Carbon River. And to cap it all--there's an article about the Rockies' challenge to the Upper Yough Downriver Race for the title of the world's wildest whitewater competition: the Gore Canyon Race.

That's enough hot whitewater action to warm up paddlers during even the coldest winter weather.

## STAFF

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## PURPOSE

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over 2,000 whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 100 local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

**EDUCATION:** Through publication of a bi-monthly journal, the AWA provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique, and equipment.

**CONSERVATION:** AWA maintains a national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through its "River Watch" system, publishes information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers, and provides technical advice to local groups regarding river management and river conservation. AWA also gives annual awards to individuals to recognize exceptional contributions to river conservation and an annual "hydromania" award to recognize the proposed hydroelectric power project which would be most destructive of whitewater.

**EVENTS:** AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation. Since 1986, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual Gauley River Festival in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation, other than at international racing events.

**SAFETY:** AWA promotes paddling safety, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, and maintains both a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and the internationally recognized AWA Safety Code.

**ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES:** AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

**PROFESSIONAL STAFF:** Except for membership services and the Executive Director position, all AWA operations, including publication of the bi-monthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.



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## LETTERS

### Boats lack safety

Hey Chris,

I've read about the Green River Narrows and Overflow Creek and many other class V runs you have written about for **AWA**. But I still see pointy boats like the Dancers and other used. The Europeans have been running steep runs like these for years in T-Canyons, Taifuns, Gattinos, Mountain Bats and Topolinos. It seems the American boater is asleep on things like keyhole cockpits, bulkhead footrests, blunt and rounded ends. The boats I have mentioned are less likely to vertical pin on drops like those on the rivers you have written about.

Sam Keaton  
Powhatan, VA

(Editor's note: I can't agree with you, Sam. The Green article mentions that the boats of choice for that run include the Corsica and Jeti--designs similar to

those you mentioned. However, it is true that American boaters paddle designs that Europeans might consider perilously small for steep runs. And incidentally, check out Charlie Walbridge's safety column in this issue about the keyhole cockpit.)

### Hypocritical snobs?

To Whom It May Concern,

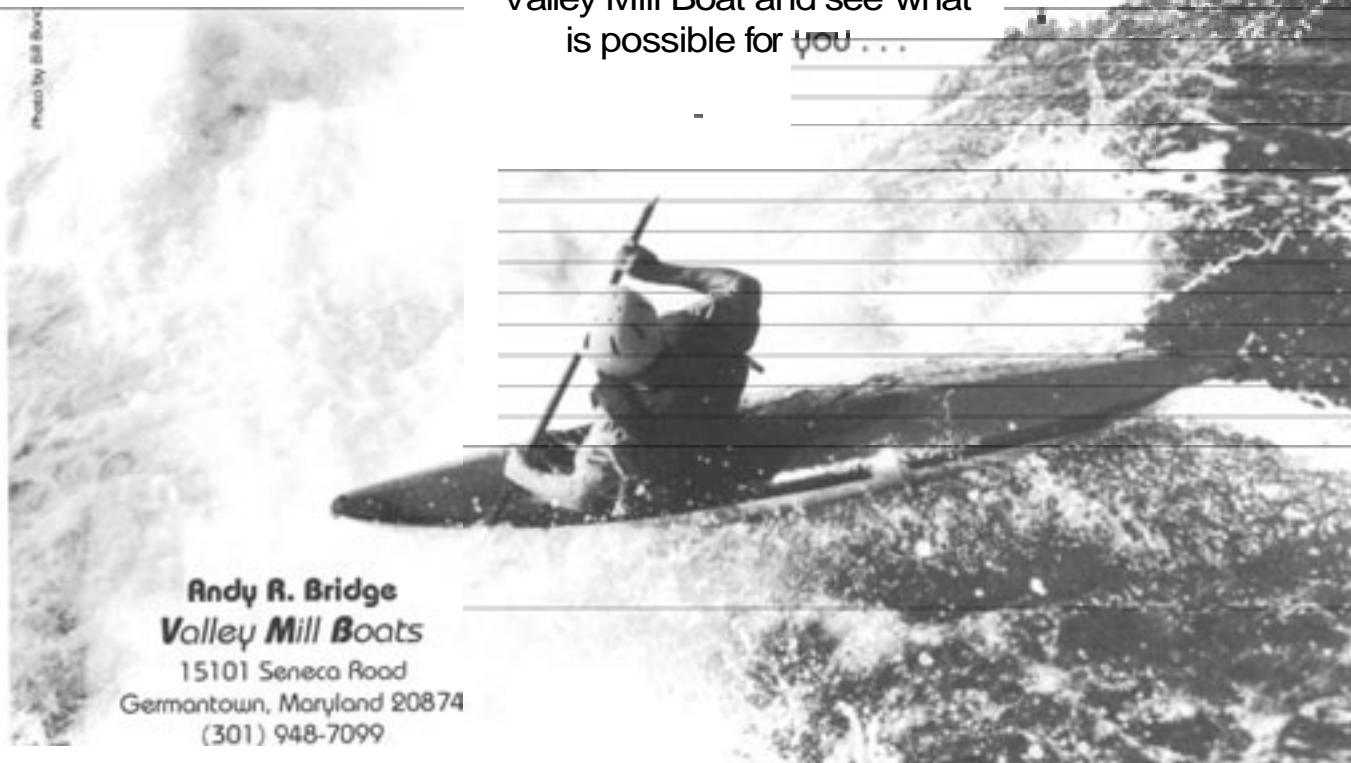
Enclosed is a donation for the WVRC prompted primarily by my love for the Cheat Canyon. Over the years it has become one of my favorite places to paddle and I would like to see it remain so. I also am generally opposed to development on other whitewater rivers. However, I have some questions and/or comments in the back of my mind. I think some thought and effort should be given to finding a form of energy that conservation-minded paddlers can support. Most of our efforts seem to be against power generation in any form, be it coal, nuclear or hydro. Yet, the single brutal fact re-

mains that unless we can convince our fellow citizens to adopt a drastically lower standard of living (ourselves included), energy generation in some form or another is going to remain with us. Even as paddlers, we benefit from the technology that our energy-consuming economy spins off. How many kilowatt hours of electricity are consumed in the production of boat-building materials such as kevlar, fiberglass, polyethylene and the various synthetic materials of which boats are constructed? How about our plastic drysuits, our polypro clothing, our foam-filled life jackets, our Gore-Tex rain and camping gear and our Hollowfill sleeping bags? How do various boat builders dispose of the hazardous chemicals used in construction? These are questions that our opponents will raise in an effort to discredit us as elitist hypocritical snobs.

Now I will grant that the Corps of Engineers is pig-headed beyond words and that most of the small hydro developers have something up their sleeves and they deserve to be fought and blocked at every possible turn. I would not donate if I thought otherwise. But as long as we

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only oppose and never propose we are always going to be on the defensive.

Sincerely,  
Rex Unkefer

(Editor's note: As an organization, the AWA does not oppose any form of energy production. Projects are evaluated individually on the basis of their environmental impact as well as their effectiveness as an energy-producer before we actively attempt to block their construction. That's why small hydro ranks at the top of the AWA hit list--not only does small hydro often result in significant environment damage, but the projects often depend upon artificially high prices for power in order to be cost effective.

But you are right on the money when you note that conservation begins at home. Our first and best river defense is to eliminate the need for unnecessary projects by conserving energy use. See Ric Alysich's article in this issue regarding simple methods of water conservation in the home.)

## Oust Carla, Gary

Dear Editor,

As a long-time reader of the AWA Journal, I appreciate your efforts made toward improving the overall quality and timely delivery of the magazine. However, I feel that someone need comment on the mindless and soul-sickening drivel that regularly appears in your "End Notes" section.

I have no idea who this Gary Carlson and Carla Garrison are; nor do I care. Their scatological sense of humor and disrespect for basic traditional decency has no appeal to me. Too often, your "End Notes" could only be amusing to the perverted or immoral--certainly not the paddling community in general.

Misogyny has no place in American Whitewater. Carlson and Garrison must go! Please do not publish any more of their writing.

Sincerely,  
Dylan Smith

(Editor's note: Both Carla and Gary wanted to know where you wanted them to go. I suggested you probably meant they should go to Hell. Neither of them had any rejoinder to that.

But seriously--do many of you AW readers out there agree with Dylan that Carla and Gary are getting too out of control? If even a small percentage of our readership is offended, we'll just have to take a page out of the **Sadam Hussein** guide to editing and cut off their writing hands.)

## LETTER POLICY

American Whitewater welcomes response from its readers. Letters should be addressed to Chris Koll, 7987 #5 Rd. W., **Fabius, NY 13067**. Letters should be reasonably brief, avoid obvious slander, keep profanity to a minimum, be typed (or at least readable) and not depend on this editor to correct misspellings.



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BILL BURGER

# PADDLES FOR THE 90's

*Massive hydro project to dam, dewater rivers*

# James Bay II attempts to alter face of Quebec

Conservationists from Canada and the United States have allied in opposing the second phase of the James Bay Power Project--a monumental hydro-electric plan proposed by Hydro-Quebec.

The scope of the James Bay Power Project is staggering. Phase one, completed in 1985 after 12 years and at a cost of about \$16 billion, includes three reservoirs and powerhouses on northern Quebec's La-Grande River. Five smaller rivers were diverted into the LaGrande, effectively doubling its average flow.

Phase two, scheduled to start construction in 1992 with an estimated cost of approximately \$60 billion, is even more ambitious. It effects three separate drainage areas:

•**LaGrande**, Phase

Two. A major powerhouse at the mouth of the river along with five additional facilities on diverted upstream tributaries are planned.

\***Great Whale**

River. Three power stations are planned on the Great Whale and two other rivers are scheduled for diversion to augment flows on the Whale.

•**Nottaway**,

Broadback and Rupert Rivers. The NBR Project calls for the Nottaway and Rupert rivers to be diverted into the Broadback where eight powerhouses would be built.

The strong support of Quebec premier Robert Bourassa coupled with the rising energy costs of the 1970s helped Hydro-Quebec



Just above the proposed site of Great Whale Three, this rapid on Quebec's Great Whale River would be inundated **by** the project. A total of seven projects are scheduled for the Whale.

push the first phase of the project through without widespread opposition. However, cost over-runs suffered during construction focussed attention on the project and conservationists gained strength during the public

that of Lake Erie.

\*Diverted rivers would receive virtually no mitigating flows--reducing formerly free-flowing rivers to trickles.

\*Rivers with increased flows would

on fish and wildlife.

•**Submerged**

vegetation left to rot under **impounded** areas could release dangerous levels of CO2 into the atmosphere and mercury into water. The mercury is particularly insidious because it is absorbed into fish used for food by native populations.

•**A small dam**,

found in the coastal marches and tidal flats near river **es-**tuaries, could be endangered by salinity changes. The dam is the primary food for many species of migratory birds.

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scrutiny.

The environmental impact of the project is significant:

•**New reservoirs**

would impound a combined surface area greater than

experience significant erosion problems.

•**Increased flows**

into various locations in Hudson Bay and James Bay could effect water salinity levels with adverse effects

*"Quebec is a vast hydro-electric plant in the bud, and every day, millions of potential kilowatt hours flow downhill and out to sea. What a waste?"*

*—Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa*



issues, the effect of the project on the lifestyle of native Cree and Inuit Indians has invoked controversy. A negative effect on the native fishery and caribou migration would disrupt Indian culture. Already, a higher level of mercury found in Indian populations has been attributed to contamination of fish by James Bay I.

For river runners, the completion of the James Bay Project would spell disaster for a number of wilderness whitewater expedition opportunities. The loss of free-flowing segments of river behind dams combined with the dewatering of other sections of river would eliminate many rapids and major drops.

Two organizations have stepped forward to organize American opposition to the project. For further information, contact



*A major dam proposed for this site on the Great Whale would destroy these falls.*

the Sierra Club James Bay Task Force, c/o Karen Lohr, Box 259, Blowing Rock, NC

28605 (704)295-3196 or the James Bay Defense Coalition, Jeffry Wollock,

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*Seven ugly--but effective--alternatives*

# Wild and Scenic is not the *only* solution

By POPE BARROW

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is the Snow White of river conservation. It can be a beautiful thing. It has probably stopped the construction of more unwise dams and saved more rivers than anything else.

The Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is so essential to river conservation that most river protection organizations consider the care and feeding of the wild and scenic rivers system to be their Number 1 mission in life.

The Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

It is certainly true that, for some river conser-

vation problems, the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is far and away the best solution. It provides complete protection from damaging water projects. It provides professional land management by trained personnel. It offers greenbacks from the Federal Treasury to buy threatened lands and to develop needed camping and access sites. And it puts a river on the map in a way that can attract tourism and recreational usage in a BIG WAY.

The Federal Wild and Scenic approach is frequently a good fit for rivers flowing through national forests or other Federally managed lands. For this reason, American

Whitewater, together with a contingent of about 20 other groups, is now working to designate 13 of the best rives in West Virginia's Monongahela National Forest as national Wild and Scenic rivers.

But there is a downside to the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Only rivers with outstanding wild, scenic, or recreational characteristics worthy of special national recognition are eligible for Federal Wild and Scenic protection. And even then, inclusion in the system requires an Act of Congress, often an uphill battle at best.

There are other problems. Private landowners fear condemnation of

their land. Often they raise such a ruckus that the whole idea is dropped like a hot potato by politicians, most of whom are not eager to tell their angry constituents: "Hi, I'm here from Congress to expropriate your farm."

In addition, management by the National Park Service or the National Forest Service may not always be a plus. Where State or county lands are involved, the State and county governments may be reluctant to turn their fiefdoms over to the Feds. Federal permits and regulations and intensive park-type management also have little appeal to commercial whitewater businesses...and even to some private whitewater



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river users. Commercial outfitters dislike quotas. Private boaters hate permits and fees, the threat of overcrowding, and the unsympathetic attitude adopted by a few Federal river managers towards risk-taking.

To top it off, the Park Service is not crazy about establishing hundreds of new linear parks, ribbons of water scattered across the landscape, disconnected from other Federal lands. This is why rivers like the Penobscot or Kennebec in Maine, the Savage and Youghiogheny in Maryland, and the Green in Washington State are not currently candidates for addition to the wild and scenic system.

#### The Seven Dwarfs

Fortunately, the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is not the only arrow in the river conserva-

tion quiver. There are at least 7 other river conservation techniques currently in use--or being tried.

At first blush, these "7 dwarfs" seem a lot less attractive to river conservation buffs than Snow White, but sometimes they can do the job that the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act cannot do. The 7 dwarfs of river conservation are (1) rear guard litigation, (2) State designation (3) State-managed Federal designation, (4) national recreation area status, (5) permanent wild and scenic studies, (6) bullet bills and (7) Clean Water Act bans.

#### Rear Guard Litigation

Most river conservation efforts do not start out or end up as campaigns to pass Federal wild and scenic legislation. Most are rear guard defensive maneuvers. Someone threatens a river by filing a

hydropower license or by starting to develop a shoreline area or by opening a mining operation in the river bed. What to do? Nine times out of 10 the answer is: Bring a lawsuit.

River protection advocates have used almost every law on the books to try to stop imminent river abuse: the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Forest Management Act...in short... anything an inventive lawyer can think of.

Sometimes these lawsuits are successful and sometimes they are not. Mostly they are techniques to gain time for publicity or politics to drive the evil river abuser away. Rear guard lawsuits are always expensive, time-consuming, and dreary. Often they are not

successful. The worst is that, as soon as one river abuser is chased off, another one pops up to take his place and the tiresome merry-go-round starts all over again.

Clearly, sitting around waiting for someone to threaten a valued scenic or recreational river, and then suing to delay or derail the threat, is not the prettiest of river conservation tactics. However, it still remains the Number #1 river conservation tool of last resort.

#### State Designation

When river conservationists tire of dragging themselves off to the battlefield of litigation time and time again they try to get ahead of the curve. By now most people realize that—sooner or later—very stretch of river in the country will be threatened by some kind of environmental prob-



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## CONSERVE

lem.

One possible solution is to ask the State governments for protection under State law, either under a State wild and scenic rivers Act-if there is one-or under State water law.

This approach is especially useful where agricultural diversions are the main problem and State water law can be changed to require that instream flows be maintained to protect recreation and fisheries. Often, however, State law does not provide the needed protection. Some State river protection laws are so toothless-or so poorly enforced-that almost all varieties of river abuse are tolerated. The Upper Youghiogheny River in Maryland, for example, is the State's only wild and scenic river. Yet one

riverside landowner thumbed his nose at the State in 1990 and burned down everything along the river bank.

An even worse problem is the fact that the Federal government can squish State laws like a bug. The most notorious villain here is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. FERC takes exquisite pleasure in overriding State river protection efforts and granting licenses to install hydroelectric projects on State protected waterways!

State Managed Federal Wild and Scenic

There are ways to address the Federal preemption problem with State-managed rivers. One is State management under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Unfortunately, this is a seldom used tool.

Among experts it is known as "2(a)(ii) protection". Under section 2(a)(ii) of the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, if a State legislature makes a river wild and scenic under State law and asks for Federal approval, it can get the same protection from Federal water projects as if the river were a full-fledged Federal wild and scenic river.

This technique seems a perfect solution to those cases where a river flows mostly through State lands and the State government wants to continue managing the river.

2(a)(ii) protection has been proposed for rivers like the Savage in Maryland and the Green in Washington State (both now largely in State management), but unfortunately, the 2(a)(ii) solution seldom catches fire. State bureaucrats just don't

trust it. They seem to feel that the National Park Service will get in their pants and interfere with State management.

National Recreation Areas

Sometimes Federal management is desirable, but the problem is a P.R. thing. Some people just don't like the word "wild". It suggests rigid wilderness-type restrictions: no trapping, no hunting and no motorized access.

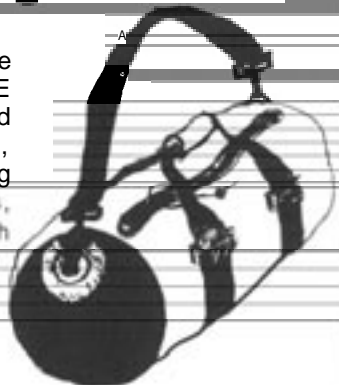
In West Virginia, beginning in 1987, attempts were made to include the Gauley and Meadow rivers in the Federal Wild and Scenic system. Many West Virginians, however, developed an allergy to the words "wild and scenic". Then the local Congressman suggested establishing a "national recreation area" instead. It worked like a charm, and the Gauley River

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National Recreation Area was established by Congress in October of 1988.

Curiously, the Gauley River NRA has all the same protections as provided for wild and scenic rivers. It even includes much more far-reaching authorities to condemn private land than does the Wild and Scenic law. As it turns out, the name "wild and scenic" was too much for West Virginians to swallow. Yet the same people just loved the sound of a "national recreation area"—and all the tourism and Federal money those words seemed to imply.

Wild and scenic studies

If the 4 techniques described above are not promising, don't give up. Try a less traditional approach. Something completely new or some little-used technique might work.

One idea is to get the river designated as a study river under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This does not provide Federal management or land acquisition, but it does give protection from water projects during the study and for 3 years after the study is submitted to Congress.

A creative embellishment on the study river technique is to designate the river as **under study**—permanently. This was done most recently to protect the Letchworth Gorge of the Genessee River in New York State from potential hydropower development.

Bullet bills

A really direct approach to a river conservation problem is to have Congress pass a "bullet bill". These do not look for overall river conservation and

management by Federal or State agencies. They never mention high falutin things like "pristine wilderness" or "protection and preservation for future generations". They simply shoot an unpopular river project in the head. Bullet bills are usually favored by conservative members of Congress, not by advocates of traditional river conservation tools. They are dassic proof that river conservation is not always pretty.

Clean Water Act bans

An inventive approach which may work for certain kinds of river conservation problems is to enact a Federal law prohibiting the issuance of permits under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act for certain types of projects, **including** Federally licensed hydroelectric power projects.

The Clean Water

approach was recently tried out by the Savage River Defense Fund to make the Savage River race course in Maryland off limits to hydropower. Legislation having this effect passed by the House of Representatives in the fall of 1990, but was dropped for unexplained reasons in the last few hours before Congress left for the elections.

**New River Protection Techniques Coming?**

New recruits may be joining the Wild and Scenic Rivers **Act** and the 7 dwarfs in the near future. Two new Federal laws have been proposed-and bills have already been written and introduced-which would greatly expand the options available to river protection advocates. More about these in the next issue.



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# Rafters survive Rio Grande firefight

compiled from THE SPRAY  
of the Colorado Whitewater Association

Random violence continued to stalk whitewater boaters on the Rio Grande during the 1990 season after three rafters were engaged in a two-hour firefight with two unidentified gunmen.

Three young Texan professionals were nearing the end of their second day of a wilderness raft trip on the Rio Grande through the rugged Big Bend National Park in Texas when they encountered a single man waving and whistling to them from the Mexican side of the river.

The man, who appeared to be a Mexican in his mid twenties, was holding a rifle alongside his leg as if he was attempting to conceal the weapon. When the Texans continued to paddle downstream, the gunman began to follow along the shore.

The rafters paddled more strongly in an effort to outdistance the stranger and within a few minutes, they had left him behind. That's when a shot rang out. Russ Alexander, 30, of Waco, felt the bullet pass next to his chest.

"I fell off the raft backward and looked down into the water to see if I was bleeding," Alexander said. "I wasn't. There was just a hole in my shirt pocket."

The other two men joined Alexander in the water, using the raft to hide from their assailant as a second shot splashed into the water. Two of the Texans had handguns in their gear, and they cautiously retrieved their packs from the raft and made their way to the American side of the river.

They landed on a slippery slope leading to a rocky terrace about 30 feet above the river. It was a long and exposed climb with a rifleman at their backs.

"It was real hard, muddy and sandy and real slick," said Ben Saage, 29, of Houston. "We slipped down it a couple of times. We were deathly afraid we were going to get shot."

Hiding in tall grass behind a slight mound, the three men believed themselves to be safe on the American side of the river. After several minutes, they shifted their position to behind a boulder when a shot ricocheted off the rock. Fragments from the rock struck Jim

Gentry, 29, of Houston, and he momentarily thought he was shot.

The gunman has followed them across the Rio.

Gentry was further unnerved when he heard a noise from somewhere above them.

"I started thinking, if it was me, I may try to cross the river and try to get above us," Gentry said. He took Alexander's Colt .45 and crept up the slope toward the top of the cliff. Halfway there, he saw the rifleman stick his head over the ledge directly over where Saage still hid.

Gentry froze, knowing he was an open target if spotted.

"But he didn't see me. He saw Ben" Gentry said.

Gentry watched in horror as the rifleman stood and took aim at Saage, who was unaware of his presence.

"I took the gun and I took a real quick aim and I fired," Gentry said. The gunman jerked back from the cliff and Saage dashed for new cover where the three rafters regrouped.

"Speaking for myself," Gentry said, "I was kind of at the point where I kind of felt I could easily slip off into panic and lose control. There's just a real fine line between panic and maintaining control when you know that at any minute you can be shot and you'd be dead."

"I knew he was going to kill us if he could," Alexander said.

The three friends decided to work their way toward the top of the mountain that bordered the river, staying above and in front of the gunman.

They began a pattern of 20- and 30-yard rushes, dashing across open spaces from boulder to gully to rock pile. Before they moved, they fired off a couple of shots toward what they believed to be the gunman's position to force him into cover. Then they ran—sometimes together, sometimes alone. They dove for cover across cactus and rocks and shrubbery. Many times bullets ricocheted past them, shattering rocks.

After two hours, the rafters had traveled approximately 250 yards up the mountain and 300 yards downriver. As some of the shots sounded differently and appeared to originate from different positions, the men determined that two men were pursuing them. But the men believed that when night fell, they could escape over the mountain under cover of darkness.

The plan worked. Before the full moon rose, they made their way to the top of the mountain, then descended and followed an animal trail through the desert.

Saage estimated they walked about 15 miles before they hit a paved road. Within 20 minutes, they had caught a ride to Rio Grande Village and reported their ordeal to park rangers.

The men spent the next two days with Border Patrol agents reviewing the scene of the shooting. Trackers discovered that they had been followed by two horsemen during part of their evening trek through the desert.

In November of 1989, snipers had killed a man and wounded two others who were rafting the Rio Grande.

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## *Cold temperatures separate the hard-core from Fairweather paddlers*

By CHRIS WILCOX

It's that time of the year again; the leaves have all fallen, revealing a barren landscape that was hidden behind a lush canopy of green. For some of us that means digging out the winter paddling gear and patching holes that begin to leak that increasingly colder

water; for others to put away all the paddling stuff and breakout the ski equipment. And on top of it all, it starts to get Damn cold up here in New Hampshire. It's also at this time of year we start to see the budding novices from spring and summer start to make the decision of whether to become either a hard-core paddler or a Fairweather paddler. For

those of you who haven't made the distinction between the two, there are several distinct characteristics that easily distinguish these two different classes of paddlers.

Not to humble the Fairweather paddlers at all, but there are a large number of people who begin their paddling season with a few sporadic spring trips at high water and don't really get into the swing of the season till the water reaches at least 55 degrees. Needless to say, they usually wrap up their season when the water cools back down. One of the more noticeable aspects of the Fairweather crowd is the sheer number of the people that they paddle with. While not always the case, it always seems that the most crowded paddling times are on "nice sunny days".

Some of the attributes of the Fairweather boater may include...

(1.) The total lack of cold weather gear. We're not talking about the lack of drysuits, since they usually wear them on all but the hottest days.

(2.) Usually they are the ones

with the newest and most abundant amounts of equipment; since they paddle less frequently, they are less likely to abuse or lose something.

(3.) Nine times out of ten they are always the ones with those incredibly large lunches. I presume they tend to think that, since it's such a nice day, we should have a picnic!

Enough of the Fairweather crowd, they seem to have enough problems of their own without us picking on them, time to give the hardcores some guff. These boaters do not always represent the larger **percentage** of higher skilled paddlers that they think they are. To tell the truth, whether they be a novice or expert, they're all slightly brain dead. Who else would call paddling in **sub-zero** weather **fun**? Also, when they paddle in colder weather, they don't experience the crowds that might be present on a warm sunny mid-summer day. While this might hold true, to be hostile to these mid-summer crowds just ruins everyone's day, not to mention their karma. Be cool, it will be cold soon enough and all

the Fairweather dudes will disappear before you know it. The **hardcore** paddlers often consist of small groups of paddlers who regularly boat together. Trying to penetrate these small groups usually means that one must prove themselves by accompanying them on a paddling trip that consistently falls on one of the coldest days of the year. Most consider it one of the rites of passage and to pass up the opportunity makes it even more difficult to be accepted.

Hardcores can most often be spotted by...

1. The length of icicles dangling from the visor of their helmet or the total inability to dislodge frozen hands from the paddle.

2. The total disregard for the weather outside, because after all, paddling is always more important than some freezing weather or a little blizzard.

3. The deplorable condition of their equipment; since most hardcores paddle year-long, they normally don't have an off-season in which to do major repairs and have to rely heavily on the

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existence of duct tape.

It can almost be heard now, no doubt many paddlers will find some objections in the above text, but it is just a basic generalization, and there are always exceptions to the rule. Different paddlers have different reasons for when and where they paddle, and that is their option. Paddling is a sport based on fun, and people seek fun in various ways. Next time you go out paddling though, look around and see how much of this generalization might be true: depending on how you look at it, you just might be looking forward to the next snowstorm, or nice sunny day for that matter.

## American Whitewater solicits manuscripts

American Whitewater welcomes submissions from its readers. Proposed articles should relate in some way to whitewater...river conservation...expeditionary boating...safety...interviews with river personalities...paddling techniques. Our readers are most interested in new rivers, not previously described in well-known guidebooks. Most of our readers are intermediate to advanced boaters, they do not need instruction on how to brace or roll, but they are interested in innovative designs and styles. We try to be receptive to any and all ideas.

The readers of American Whitewater are interested in whitewater...unlike some boating magazines we do not publish articles regarding flatwater canoeing or sea kayaking.

Submissions should be double spaced and neat. Correct spelling and grammar are appreciated.

Photos should be included when appropriate. Black and white prints or color slides are accepted. Photos with pronounced color contrasts reproduce best.

Stories must be edited as necessary to fit the format of American Whitewater. Remember that even the work of professional writers is usually heavily edited before publication. The editor of a major outdoor publication recently revealed that he rarely deals with amateur writers, not because their work is inferior, but be-

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cause they are unwilling to accept appropriate editing. Expect to see some changes in your story.

Story length should rarely exceed 3000 words...twelve typed pages..double spaced. The best stories have a distinct focus or slant. This aspect of the story should make it unique and should catch the readers' interest. The focus should be introduced in a clear way at the beginning of the article.

It is often better not to use chronological order in telling the story of a river exploration. Our readers rarely care about what kind of vehicle was driven to the put-in or which interstates were traversed. Avoid extraneous details and cliches. Open the story with an exciting anecdote that will catch the readers' interest, then fill in the details later.

Humorous stories and articles with a different point of view receive special consideration.

The editors and writers of American Whitewater do not receive financial compensation. Every effort will be made to return submitted materials but we can not guarantee their safety.

## Festival chairman named

Barry Tuscano, an AWA Regional Coordinator from Ligonier, PA, has been named as the chairman of the 1991 Gauley River Festival.

Tuscano takes over for Anita Adams, chairperson for the past two Festivals. Under Adams' leadership, the Festival has continued to evolve as the largest nonracing whitewater event in the world--last year attracting over 1,500 participants and earning more than \$10,000 toward AWA conservation activities.

Adams will continue to be involved as a consultant in organizing the Festival.

Tuscano has also played a significant part in the success of the past two Festivals supervising installation of lighting and electrical requirements. In addition, in his role as a Regional Coordinator, Tuscano has been involved with representing paddling interests on both the Upper and Lower Yough.

Volunteers interested in assisting Tuscano stage the 1990 Festival can contact him at RD 1, Box 32, Boliver, PA 15923. The Festival is tentatively scheduled for the third Saturday of September.

## AWA membership tops 2,000 mark

Membership in the AWA topped the 2,000 mark in October and with new applications rolling in at a pace of 100 per month, the organization continues to strengthen its position as the nation's leading whitewater organization.

The turn-around is impressive in light of the fact that five years ago membership had dropped to nearly 900.

Much of the credit for AWA's revitalization belongs present and past executive directors, Phyllis Horowitz and Risa Callaway.

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# River safety: an issue of international concern

During the past decade some of the funds raised by the sale of "The River Safety Report" has been used to send American Canoe Association representatives to the International Canoe Federation Safety Symposia held in Europe. Those who attended found these conferences fascinating, and felt that our

continued participation was important. At the last meeting in 1988 our representative offered to host the '90 event in the U.S. I had grand plans of making it a large national gathering as well, but the Europeans were not enthusiastic. They were determined not to become, in their words, "a sideshow in an American circus". Accordingly the meeting, held this past September at the Nantahala Outdoor Center, was kept small, and although larger than previous events, there were only a few representatives from each nation.

Slim Ray faced many challenges in organizing the event. The first problem was money. Even though participating was not inexpensive, it would have been much higher without additional support. The Nantahala Outdoor Center donated some services, and many staff members donated their time. The American Canoe Association safety fund kicked in \$1000. But Perception Kayaks saved the day by providing the bulk of the financial support. This paid for pre-event expenses such as mailing and telephone calls, with money left over to pay partial expenses for delegates with limited resources.

Getting invitations to the proper people in each country proved to be unexpectedly difficult. The International Canoe Federation is primarily a racing organization, and in many countries has little contact with the non-competitive paddlers, outfitters, and rescue professionals who exert leadership in river safety.

This was less pronounced in the strong European federations than in countries where paddlesport is just developing. Fortunately Slim had extensive contacts from previous international trips, and he worked them to the max. He obtained representation from twelve countries, including distant Australia, New Zealand, and Russia. After all this ground work, running the event, while still time-consuming, was easy.

It was a diverse group that assembled on the banks of the Nantahala. The European countries: Britain, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria have well-developed whitewater communities; others like the Australians, New Zealanders, and Norwegians have fewer participants and less organization. The emerging countries were the most interesting. We were fortunate to have a group of four Russians from the "Laboratory of Adventures" (an outdoor adventure cooperative) as well as a contingent from Japan. The Soviets have been running rivers for decades; their gear is home-made but far from crude, and their achievements are impressive. They are running some truly nasty stuff; safety research is hampered because fatal accidents until recently were considered "state secrets". The Japanese are just now turning their energies to recreation; they have all the latest gear and their reps spent big bucks at the outfitter shop. Their videos of river running on the North Island, which is still unspoiled, showed a river very similar to the Lower Gauley. Don't ask me to pronounce it; even their translator spoke English poorly. The "developed" paddling countries came to exchange information and ideas; their technical presentations were extremely interesting.

The best part of the conference from the point of view of the average paddler came on the second day during the afternoon's "practical" demonstrations on the Nantahala River. Both the Germans (HF Sport) and the Brits (Wildwater) brought along a number of "rescue" life jackets with quick-release chest har-



By CHARLIE WALBRIDGE  
AWA Safety Chairman



THE KEYHOLE COCKPIT is considered an important safety feature by European boaters. In the series of photographs above, Austrian Peter Reitymaier demonstrates how the keyhole cockpit aids escape in a vertical pin situation. Reitymaier uses a stem painter to

brace himself while sliding foot to lip of cockpit before essentially stepping out of the boat. The procedure allows the boater to use the powerful muscles of the legs to escape rather than having to push his way up and out of the cockpit with his arms.

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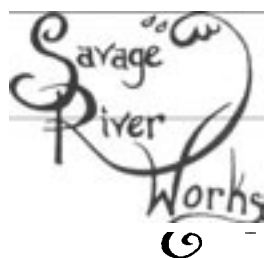
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nesses for evaluation and testing. These have much to offer extreme paddlers, and we await their wider distribution in this country. A "V - Lower", a telfer lower for people in life vests, was set up to demonstrate some of their capabilities. Also of interest is the German concept of a 500 kilogram norm. This means that all components of a rescue system (such as a z-drag or v-lower) must be able to support 1100 pounds of pressure. With this in mind "weak links" in the rescue "chain" can be identified and strengthened. For example, lightweight line used as prussicks can be replaced with Spectra cord, and buckles, rings, or other hardware on a harness which is not up to specifications should be replaced. I recommend a "U.S. norm" of 1800 pounds. This is the breaking strength of 3/8 marine polypropylene, and can easily be achieved with readily-available products.

Arnor Larson, an internationally-known rope rescue expert and the lone Canadian representative, demonstrated the "Kootenay Highline", an improved tyrolian traverse system designed to give access to remote gorges and cliffs of Canada's western national parks. The capabilities of this system, compared to the dangerous jury-rigged arrangements set some by U.S. rescue instructors, sends a clear message: do it right or leave it alone! Canada, surprisingly, was one of several countries where the national federation did not get the message to boaters interested in rescue. Arnor is best known as a mountaineer, and only happened to be in the area. If there are Canadian readers (or any other foreign safety experts) out there who would like to become involved in future events, please write Slim Ray, Nantahala Outdoor Center, Highway 19 West, Bryson City, N.C. 27813. The next event will be held in Moscow in 1992.

Peter Reithmaier of Austria, in discussing self rescue from vertical pins, made a compelling case for keyhole cockpits. This term is widely misused in the U.S.; it means the ability to take your knees off the thigh braces and out of the cockpit without moving your butt from the seat or pushing off the boat with your hands. With the boat in a vertical position, Peter demonstrated how to climb out of a keyhole equipped kayak by putting one foot on the apex of the coaming. From there he could stand, then make a controlled exit. He also showed how you can use a stem painter for support

when doing this, and how to use paddle hooks and chest harnesses for paddler rescue and boat recovery. Several of these tools and skills would have been of tremendous assistance in the fatal entrapments experienced in the Gauley drainage over the past few years, and I suspect as boating in the U.S. becomes more extreme these tools will be more widely used.

A surprising revelation was that the grab loops with one-point anchors (such as are used on many fiberglass boats) are dangerous. Several Europeans reported cases where a paddler became seriously injured when a boat they were trying to rescue spun, wrapping their fingers tight, then pulled away. A friend

of mine dislocated a finger that way; the Euro's reported at least one amputation! A good reason to use conventional grab loops and to place several fingers inside the loop before pulling!

Many representatives gave an overview of paddling in their country as their presentation to the conference. Many were fascinating....much better than dry "safety" lectures or long debates on possible "standards" for life vests, helmets, and boats. I wish that the photos and videos which were a part of this could have been shared with a wider audience. I also hope that next time more people have the opportunity to interact with a group like this. *Maybe* next time!

## Hypothermia: a seasonal danger to paddlers

By ART VAUGHN

Given the fact that most of us will spend well over half of the season paddling in dangerously cold water, a good working knowledge of the recognition and treatment of hypothermia should be expected from everyone on the river. The person least capable of recognizing the onset of hypothermia is the victim, so we all have to depend on each other to be capable of recognizing the signs and taking positive action to prevent the situation from deteriorating.

The paddler's body will respond to cold by going through a compensatory stage to a decompensatory stage as the

core body temperature drops. These stages are referred to as mild and severe hypothermia. Our bodies are still in control in the compensatory stage. We shiver to generate more heat, peripheral vasoconstriction causes our hands and feet to be cold to preserve core temperature. Our objective is to recognize the compensatory stage and to intercede to prevent severe hypothermia. Common signs of developing hypothermia include shivering, drowsiness, slow breathing and pulse, and difficulty with coordination.

Severe hypothermia is something none of us ever want to see. Once the



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body core temperature drops below 95 degrees, thermal control is lost. The blood which has been lingering in the extremities has become cold, acidotic and hyperkalemic. A cold heart is particularly sensitive to cold acidotic blood. If this blood reaches the heart rapidly, it can cause ventricular fibrillation and death. A victim of severe hypothermia must be treated very gently. Abrupt motion or rapid warming of the extremities can be deadly. He should be removed from the river horizontally and maintained in a horizontal position to prevent shock from worsening and keep blood flowing to the brain. Helicopter rescue must be considered. This is a serious medical emergency and all efforts should be directed towards evacuation and hospital treatment while attempting to minimize further heat loss.

It should be expected that a paddler in the early stages of hypothermia will not recognize his condition or be willing to slow down the trip to undergo treatment. Furthermore, since the early signs of lethargy, apathy, slurred speech, and clumsiness are exhibited by some pad-

dlers we know even when warm and comfortable by the campfire, a more quantitative means of determination is desirable. Fortunately a tool, simple to carry in a small first aid kit, is the ordinary household fever thermometer. Although these thermometers are not calibrated below 94 degrees, a simple oral temperature reading below 95 degrees should give positive and convincing evidence that action needs to be taken. Don't forget to shake down the thermometer.

A dry shivering paddler with a temperature above 95 degrees should probably eat a candy bar and paddle harder. He is shivering because his body still has the means to compensate for the heat loss. The objective is to maintain that compensation with continued exertion and a continued energy source. If the shivering continues, it's probably best to stop and build a fire. Don't mistake trembling for shivering.

A temperature below 95 degrees in wet shivering paddler is an indication for immediate action. This guy needs help. Dry clothes, a fire, warm rocks and

skin-to-skin contact are the objective. Friends can reverse this situation and prevent severe hypothermia. While warm skin, warm rocks and a fire can reverse a case of mild hypothermia on the river, a re-warmed post-hypothermic paddler is at risk of acute renal failure, thromboembolism, and pneumonia for 24 to 48 hours after the incident and should be encouraged to seek medical attention as soon as possible.

An oral temperature below 95 degrees in a paddler who has been, but is no longer shivering, is a matter of grave concern. If he cannot tell you where he is, the day of the week, or his name, he is suffering from severe hypothermia. Go ahead and ask these questions. It is vitally important that the paddler knows his name. Look for signs of severe muscle rigidity, trembling on one side of the body, blue puffy skin or dilated pupils. Rapid warming or the rough handling of an evacuation will be dangerous. Send someone out for the helicopter.

While we all like to warm up by a fire near our favorite play spot, re-warming a victim of severe hypothermia is best done in a hospital setting using heated peritoneal lavage. Lacking this on the river, our objective is to minimize further heat loss and treat the victim gently. Keep him off the ground. Minimize wind chill. Do not rub the extremities. Do not administer coffee or alcohol. Administer warm fluids only if the victim is clearly conscious. Continue to monitor vital signs. The only change to CPR, if required, would be to check the pulse for one full minute. You want to be certain that CPR is required because the chest compressions can initiate ventricular fibrillation in a victim of hypothermia. Medical rescue teams will want to resist intubation because the vagal stimulation can also cause this dysrhythmia.

Nobody wants hypothermia to interfere with fun on the river, so let's all eat lots of candy, drink plenty of water, wear pile on the head, keep dry, paddle hard and learn CPR.

Art Vaughn is from Niles, Ohio. This is his first submission to American Whitewater.



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In a valley so steep that Indians let  
their horses roam unfettered lies a  
river that cascades 1,700 feet in  
little more than four miles.

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# HORSE PASTURE

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What follows is a story of two boaters  
who put on the river only to wonder  
what they've stepped into.



Rainbow Falls

By LEE BELKNAP

We very carefully stairstepped down a series of eddies to the pool above the next massive drop. There was not much more than blue sky beyond the horizon line. This was brink of Rainbow Falls...160 feet high.

Peering over the lip we could see a multitude of what appeared to be class II rapids. But I knew from our scouting expedition that this was an illusion. There were a number of ten foot falls hidden among those tiny looking rapids, and some of them landed, not in pools, but on flat rock.

As we carried around this beautiful, shear drop, we were still in the shade. Victor seemed to be in an awful hurry and was slipping and falling every few steps. I wondered if hypothermia might be setting in so early in the trip. I took the slope more cautiously and joined him at the base of the falls at the edge of a clearing.

The sun was shining warmly here and we soaked in its wonderful heat while we admired the rainbow in the mist. Then, when we took a few steps towards the river, we found ourselves in the spray from the falls and in the worst, windiest and most treacherous ice storm one could imagine. We climbed into our boats and paddled out of there in a hurry.

### Short but Steep

When the Horsepasture became a Wild and Scenic River it came with two distinctions. Its 4.25 mile protected segment was the shortest in the whole Wild and Scenic system, and its altitude adjustment was the largest...1700 (yes, 1700!) feet. Needless to say the Horsepasture has more than a few spectacular waterfalls.

The Horsepasture earned its name because it traverses a narrow, steep walled valley. A valley so steep, in fact, that the Indians used to let their horses roam unfettered here, knowing that the precipitous hillsides up and downstream would prevent their stock from wandering off.

The Horsepasture begins its relatively short life in Cashiers, North Carolina, across town from the origin of the Chatooga. After meandering through the resorts of Fairfield's Sapphire Valley, the river turns due south to fall off the edge of the Blue Ridge into South Carolina's Lake Johassee.

Access to the lower reaches of the river are difficult since the river empties into the lake five miles from the nearest paved road. A primitive "trail" that starts at the lake "follows" the Horsepasture four miles upstream. It will eventually be improved as part of the Foothills Trail System, but for now it is not for the weak of heart or those who get easily lost. Only the initial mile of the trail from the top is well defined, offering an excel-

*Needless to say, the Horsepasture has more than a few spectacular waterfalls.*



*"Bust Yer Buff Falls"--a long rock slide starts out the action on the Horsepasture.*

lent means to visit the first few falls.

One mid-December weekend, about a year before the river achieved Wild and Scenic status, Victor Jones and I set out to run it. To our knowledge nobody had made the trip from the top to the lake before. We put-in early in the morning while it was still quite cold and the sun was hidden behind the mountains. We expected a high around 40 and sunny weather all weekend long.

Victor had been wanting to do the Horsepasture for a long time. We had hiked the river, inspected all but the last waterfall, and calculated that we should be able to make the run in one day. Nonetheless, we stuffed a minimum of summer camping gear into our boats, just in case we had miscalculated.

I remember telling Victor that since it was HE who wanted to make the first descent, I would not be disappointed

*I remember telling Victor that since it was HE who wanted to make the first descent, I would not be disappointed to make the second.*

*At one point I found myself surfing the base of one big drop with only three feet of pool between me and the next big drop.*

to make the second. For the twentieth time HE suggested that I was a fool for letting him talk me into such an adventure. HE may have had a point.

The warm-up rapid is known to many as Drift Falls and to others as Bust Your Butt Falls. It is a 45 degree, 45 foot tall waterfall with a small drop-off and a

Rainbow Falls, mentioned above. After our chilling portage we paddled a mile or so of interesting rapids punctuated by a couple of portages, finally reaching the top of Staircase Falls.

In the neighborhood of 100 feet, this falls is broken into a sequence of six or eight drops between ten and twenty-five feet high. Many landings are shallow, so boofing is mandatory.

At one point I found myself surfing the base of one big drop with only three feet of pool between me and the next big plunge.

Suffice it to say that I had to line up quickly after pushing off the rock face of the upstream falls.

This is a good reminder of why the Horsepasture should only be fun at relatively low flows.

When we finally got to the bottom of Staircase we paused to look back at what we had run. We wondered if anyone would believe us.

Until this point the trail had not meandered far from the river. But from here the trail became a rough-hewn Forest Service property boundary with dangerously sharp spikes of chopped rhododendron stalks. I slipped once and landed on all fours with a sharp, foot tall spike inches from my chest. Scouting and portaging beyond this point is not easy.

Just below Staircase lies another big falls. It has two very different sides. The right side plunges sixty feet in a single, gnarly cascade. The left has two drops, the first similar to one of the higher drops in Staircase, then, thesecond, after a pool, traverses a boulder sieve.

We probably could have run the first drop on the left, but we yielded to intimidation and threw our boat over the edge instead. Victor's boat had a good launch and was caught with ease. Mine was not so cooperative, and decided to explore the rock sieve. Victor got to it quickly and unpinned it before any damage was done.

The next rapid would have been a challenging, very long, very fast waterslide if it weren't for a small, fallen pine at the top and a dangerous-looking, boat-wide slot at the bottom. We portaged again. We were entering unknown territory. This was the last rapid we had scouted on our hike.

We had been told that there was only one more waterfall downstream of consequence. We figured that if we could



*With a gradient of 400 feet per mile, the Horsepasture is a series of waterfalls.*

*We...spotted several more tall waterfalls leading to what looked like continuous "class II" rapids. But this time, on closer inspection, the "class II" rapids turned out to be fifty footers.*

reasonable pool at its base. In summer its close proximity to the road and the resort makes this a popular waterslide. Victor ran first and landed oriented 35 degrees to the side. He flipped violently when he hit the pool at the bottom and had to roll.

I somehow managed to keep my bow straight, but found myself too far to the right at the bottom. As I skipped like a stone across the eddy at high speed, I braced my ankles for what appeared to be an inevitable collision with the rock wall on the other side. At the last instant my nose gently rose up on the pillow and the tail-heavy Dancer gently caressed the wall. Who says a surface boat can't splat?

Next came Turtleback Falls—another popular summer waterslide. As we ran it I was taken by the intricacies of the approach. By comparison the ferry at the base of the falls into the ten foot outlet didn't seem too difficult when we were exiting the pool.

After leaving Turtleback we hopped from eddy to eddy to the top of

get to it in time we would be on the lake before dark and finish our run in the early evening hours. For the next mile or so the rapids were tough, but delightful. This is probably the best whitewater on the Horsepasture.

One four foot narrow falls terminated in a vile, rocky hole. Victor got too close while boat scouting and fell into it. The rocks prevented a dignified paddling exit, so he had to swim out. While he was collecting his gear in the pool below, I carried.

A few blind drops later we stopped again. Victor caught a last chance eddy to attempt to boat scout. He was hidden from my view in the eddy, so although I knew where he was, I could not see what he was doing or imagine what was taking him so long. I was getting ready to join him when he backed into view and motioned for me to portage on his side of the river.

I was a little surprised because my side looked easier, but I followed his directions. There I found Victor, safe in the eddy all right, but the boulders along the bank were so steep that he couldn't exit his boat without help. Not far behind him was a big, nasty waterfall with most of the water disappearing under rocks at the base. I helped him onto land and we turned to admire what was surely our last big falls.

We were certain that we were almost done. In the near distance we could see the gorge opening up into what could only be the lake. We shook hands and congratulated ourselves. We would make the run in one day.

### A Rude Awakening

About half way through the portage we came to the rude awakening. Peering through the trees downstream, we discovered that the Horsepasture plunged over an ominous horizon line, beyond which not even treetops were visible. From where we were standing the river seemed to fall off the face of the earth. We had been tricked by the river gods; the "last big falls" we were portaging was nothing more than an entrance riffle!

From our distant vantage point we could see no way around these incredible falls. On either side cliffs seemed to wall us in. When we finally made it to the lip and looked over, we could see a very tall drop, below which the river



*We would learn that this was Windy Falls...a sequence with a drop of 600 feet! The overall gradient for this mile of river is 800 feet.*



*Some you walk--some you carry: In the top photo Victor Jones negotiates one of the Horsepasture's typical rapids. In the bottom shot, however, discretion rules out over valor as Victor hoofs around a major drop.*



*The rocks prevented a dignified paddling exit, so he had to swim out.*

turned abruptly to the right. Beyond that we could not see.

We found traces of a rugged, almost horizontal trail on the left. As we followed it, we quickly found ourselves with cliffs both above and below us. At times we had to hand our boats across wide gaps between trees with little to catch any equipment that might have been dropped over the almost vertical slopes.



*The author, still huddling in the security of his sleeping bag, recovers after a long, dark night on the Horsepasture.*

to the side of the cliff. Victor and I found ourselves in a huge rock bowl. We carried over to the river and looked over the next edge.

We were at the base of one of the tall drops. The cliff we had descended was on our left, with another cliff directly across the uncrossable river. When we looked over the edge we could only see the undercut ledge we were perched upon.

The only way down was by rappelling. We were lucky. The height was exactly half that of my 75 foot throw-rope, so we were able to save it for next time.

When we reached the bottom we paddled across the river to look over the next edge. There were many more waterfalls to go and it was starting to get late. We accepted the inevitable and started to look for a campsite.

### The Long, Dark Night

We were surrounded by steep slopes and vertical rock walls and there was no flat ground in sight. I knew what to look for. When a tree falls, it takes its roots with it. When decomposition is complete, there is often a pile of dirt left behind where the roots had been, and a huge hole in the ground where the tree had stood. On a steep slope, such as the one we were on, this type of formation would form a shallow bowl just big enough to fit a compact campsite for two.

We walked a hundred yards through the mature winter forest and found just such a place. By the time we had retrieved our boats and carried them back to the campsite it was dark.

The full moon cast its light onto the distant mountainsides, but we were in pitch blackness. We kept our drysuits on until we could get a warm fire going. While I got out a sandwich for dinner, Victor, who seemed to be caught a little off guard by our only half planned lay-over, grabbed some leaves and twigs and hastily attempted to build a fire. I watched his futile efforts with amusement, not yet ready to tell him that I had fire starters in my survival kit.

While Victor was unsuccessfully trying to light his twigs, I noticed a light above us on the opposite cliff. My maps told me that there used to be a road in that direction, but I was surprised that it was so close, and deeply disappointed that someone actually used it and had even

Finally we propped our boats against some trees and did some more scouting. We crawled out onto a rock outcropping that overlooked the second drop and spotted several more tall waterfalls leading to what looked like continuous "class II" rapids. But this time, on closer inspection, the "class II" rapids turned out to be fifty footers. After our expedition, by reviewing a better map, we would learn that this was Windy Falls...a sequence with a drop of 600 feet! The overall gradient for this mile of river is 800 feet.

We returned to the crude trail and found the river getting further and further below us. This perception caused us to make the mistake of leaving the trail to get closer to the river. We used my throw rope to lower ourselves and our boats down a couple of hundred feet through some trees that somehow clung

*Shortly thereafter, I discovered that my booties had frozen solid.*

built a house on it. I didn't want to be stranded this close to civilization!

But as I watched, the light increased in size and I discovered, to my relief, that it was the rising moon. I suggested to Victor that since he wasn't cold, he might as well put away his matches and eat while we waited for moonlight to allow us to collect real firewood.

It was about this time that I realized the first reason he was so worried. His dinner consisted of some homemade cookies his girlfriend had given him. I gave him a sandwich I had intended for the next day's breakfast and he offered to split the sweets in the morning.

Looking for firewood turned out to be easy. We groped about until we ran into something. If what we found bent, we went around it, if it broke easily, we brought it back to camp. The abundance of fuel showed us one of the advantages of camping where no one ever goes. I brought out my firestarters and soon we had a friendly fire going. Now we could change from our drysuits into more comfortable attire. Shortly thereafter I discovered that my booties had frozen solid.

By now I knew another reason for Victor's anxiety. His "sleeping bag" consisted of an old wool army bag liner plus a thin quilt. Although I was a bit better prepared with a thirty degree rated down bag, the frozen booties led me to start thinking about better ways to stay warm.

After improvising a satisfactory bed, we sat for a long time close to the fire which was at one end of our tiny depression. Victor sat on the rim of our nest while I sat on the hill side.

We talked quietly, and occasionally one of us would nod off. My brief dreams would always conclude with me falling off a waterfall or cliff. I would awaken just in time to keep from toppling into the fire.

The bed we slept in was...er...different. Because of our paucity of equipment, we had to double up to keep warm. A ground pad was fashioned by stuffing wet gear flat into our drybags and covering the arranged pieces with my poncho. Victor's army bag was spread flat on top of this for enhanced comfort. On top we placed his quilt, my sleeping bag and his space blanket. We never needed to add my space blanket to

*The only way down was by rappelling. We were lucky.  
The height was exactly half that of my  
75 foot throw rope...*



***At low water, the Horsepasture trickles over the series of cascades known as Staircase Falls.***

the pile.

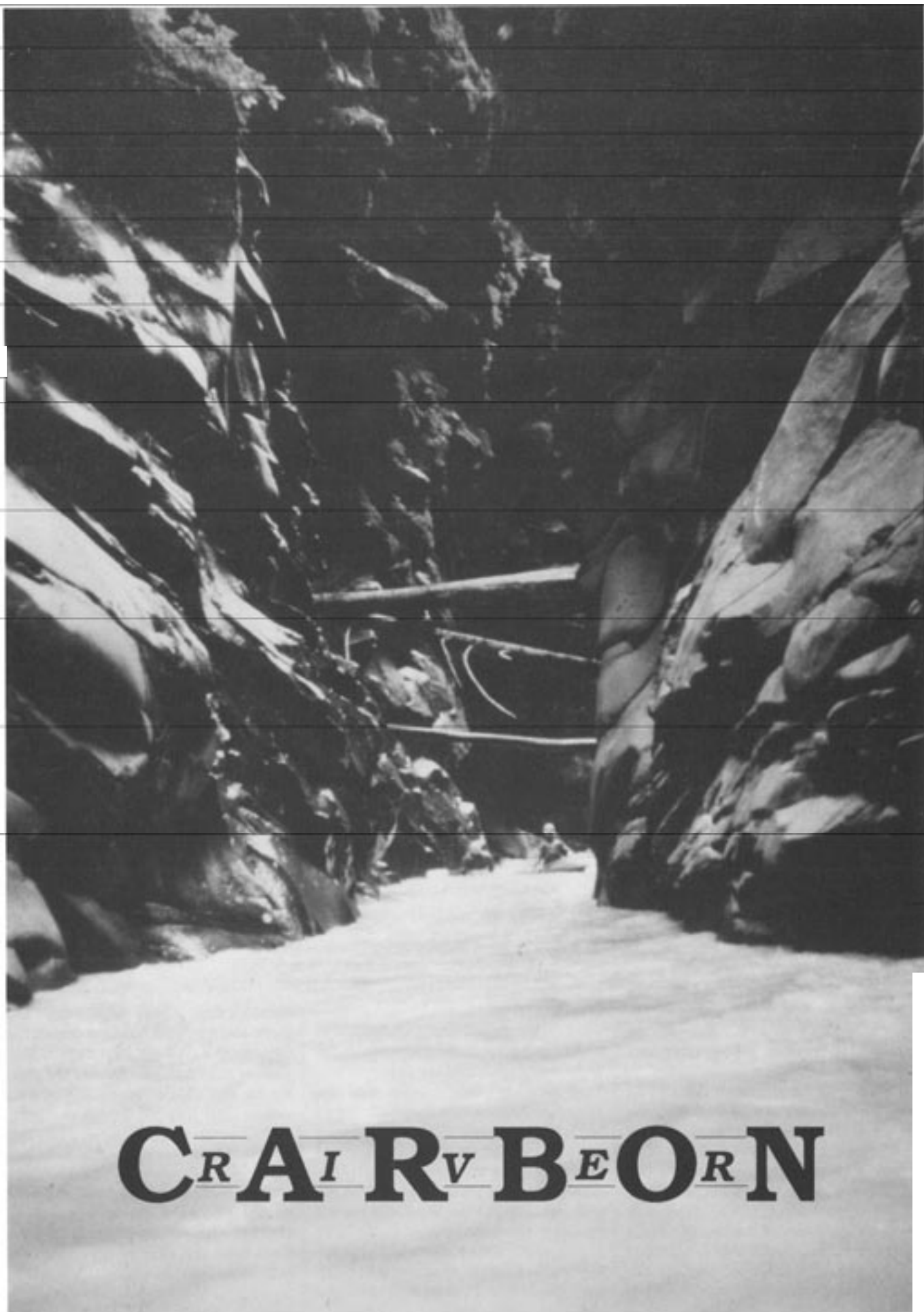
We stayed warm all night, and when I woke late in the morning, Victor had already rekindled the fire.

When we finally hit the Horsepasture again we paddled a hundred yards, then spotted the trail on the far bank. It was better defined here because of heavier foot traffic from downstream. After a few more portages, mostly on the trail, we rounded the bend and passed the last of the waterfalls.

Just before we reached Lake Johasee, we surprised some fisherman who had accessed the river by way of a

class VI four wheel drive road. Our maps had made no mention of this. Perhaps we should have used them as firestarters. After accepting a beer and pausing for a good chat, we finished the authentic class II run to the lake.

Normally the windy five mile paddle across the lake would have been tedious, but we were too elated to notice. We had spent an eventful day and a half on the Horsepasture, and though we glad to be finished, we felt privileged to have been the first to experience this incredible journey.



# CRAIRVEON

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# Washington State's hidden and forbidden class V fruit

By TOM SCHIBIG

Anyone who's traveled the asphalt ribbon of Highway 165 to Mt. Rainier National Park has crossed over a high bridge just shy of the park's north entrance. As they rattle the planks of the wood and iron arch, a casual glance over the edge gives motorists the impression of bottomlessness. This often brings a quick stop and a long look from the railing at a dizzying view of a wild canyonbound river. The overlook has not gone unnoticed by river runners in the area, and the sight of the Carbon River from Route 165's Fairfax Bridge is an eye-popping first look at one of Washington State's best water-scoured prizes. Lying an easy 60 miles from about three million people, the Carbon is the Looking Glass that a handful of kayakers have stepped through to find themselves in another world.

The Carbon River originates from the Carbon Glacier of Mt. Rainier's precipitous north face. Its glacial waters flow north then west to meet the Puyallup River then onto Puget Sound at the city of Tacoma. The Carbon was first visited by a white man in 1833 when William Frazer Tolmie of the Hudson Bay Company traveled up the narrow river valley in search of medicinal herbs. Later in the century and into the next, large amounts of coal were extracted from the Carbon's matrix for the South Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads. Human population blossomed and waned with the coal demand. Small cities grew from the lush, rain-soaked forest and then were lost in time to the verdant Cascade jungle. Logging came after the coal years and is still prepotent in the valley today. But towns such as Wilkeson and Carbonado are shadows of their early-century life, vacated and shuttered facades that are now only a part of the area's history.

The river itself was not used for travel; the sheer-sided walls and steep rapids kept early settlers from venturing down into the Carbon's deep cleft. In fact, impenetrable brush along the gorge rim keeps all but the most persistent from getting even a look at the plunging, constricted drops that form the riverbed.

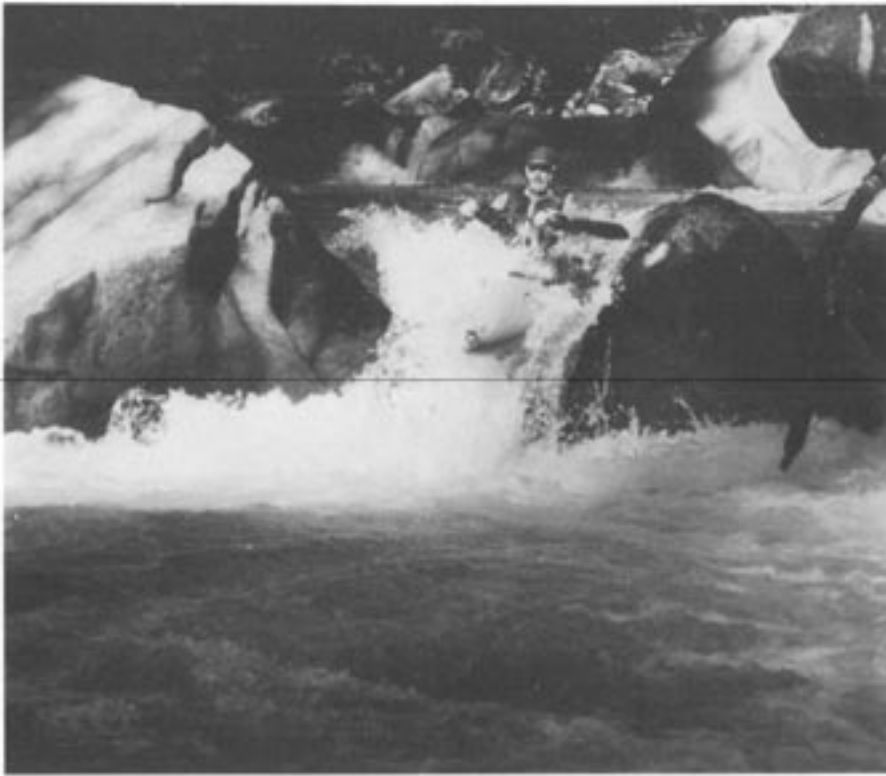


*Bob Duffner plummets over the steep drop at Pickpocket. (opposite page) The narrow gorge of the Carbon in a relatively calm spot. Note the logs lodged high up the gorge wall at high water.*

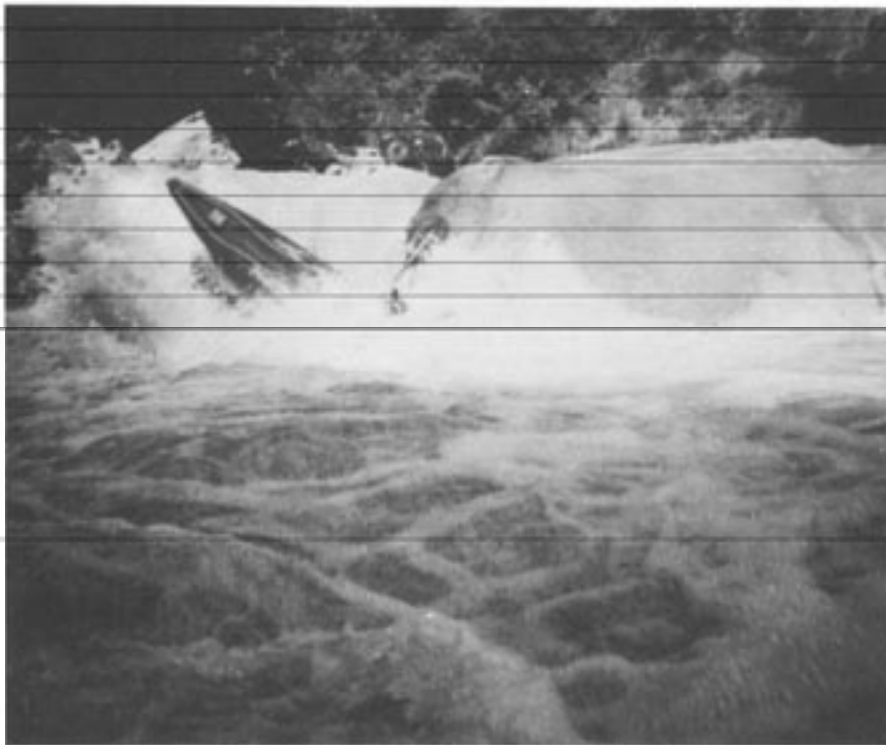
Any serious river-running interest was slow to develop. A few hardy souls that crawled through the thorny, twisted garden to reconnoiter the cataract were turned away by what they saw. In 1975, a kayaker using an airplane to scout the river was killed when his Piper Cub snagged powerlines suspended over the

river and crashed into the Carbon's ravine. The Carbon had cleaved itself into remoteness in Mt. Rainier's ancient Osceolan Mudflow.

Seattle kayakers Rick Williams and Paul Morgenthaler heard about the potential of the Carbon by local river explorer Don Sessions. The threesome



*The Boulder Garden section of the Carbon Gorge features tight slots and sharp drops. Here Tom Schibig runs a narrow crease between two large boulders.*



*Sticky hydraulics often lurk at the base of the steep drops in the Boulder Garden section of the Carbon River. Here Al Albright does battle with a hole that threatens to swallow him*

ventured onto the river in September of 1985 by rappelling into the gorge below the drops of the steep, vertical walled section. The intrepid trio got off to a shaky start when the grab loop of Don Hollow-form parted while being lowered. The careening yak nearly skewered Rick at the river's edge and then miraculously stopped short of soloing the first rapid. However, once on the water, they found themselves on a fantastic kayak run. They happily discovered that everything they encountered proved to be runnable or relatively easy to portage. In one memorable place, the river pinched down to four or five feet and the black rock walls rose up for a hundred vertically. Their first four mile excursion from the rappel to the first road access was just a beginning to the Carbon's wonderland.

Their appetites whetted and ready for a new fix, Paul and Rick had to check out the section that had turned away their predecessors. Lying between the Fairfax Bridge and their rappel put-in, passage down the river corridor was an unknown equation. Map calculations put the gradient near 200 feet per mile for two of these mystery miles, and access was only from river level. They spent a full day hacking and crawling through the alder and Devil's Club that chokes off the steep slopes above the gorge rim. A couple of hard-earned overlooks revealed the river's secrets, and what they saw was outrageous. There were vertical to overhanging rock walls that rose directly out of the river current for as far as they could see. In places, boulders pinched off the silt-laden torrent to kayak-wide slots and tongues of water reeled off polished slabs and boiled in fluted pockets. It was a hydro-carved bobsled run through a dreamscape of stone. The rapids looked wild but passable...maybe. The only way to realize their fanciful run was to put paddle blade to water and make the moves. One thing certain going in was that exiting the boats to scout would be difficult, and climbing out of the gorge to portage or escape appeared impossible.

Scratched and weary, Rick and Paul decided that dealing with the problems at river level was preferable to facing more Devil's Club. The next day they put on near the long-gone town of Fairfax. They took an early start and a little climbing gear for the just-in-case scenario. As they skimmed along the gravel bar riffles that form the upper river, they nervously watched for the towering Route 165 bridge



that would signal the beginning of the difficulties. (From the bridge deck, the entrance rapid had been dubbed "Welcome", an analogous greeting as you would get at any Amusement Park House of Horrors.)

After passing the first two miles of easy going, they arrived at the last eddy above "Welcome". The pioneering pair checked their sprayskirts and fidgeted their paddle grips, then cast off into the Carbon's black alleyway. They negotiated the entrance rapid's tight, steep chute in the shadow of the Fairfax Bridge and tucked into an eddy behind a Cadillac-sized rock. Now committed to the river, Rick and Paul continued down, running each boulder-choked drop as they had viewed from their bird's-eye scout at the gorge rim. The passage was more spectacular from the river level, and at each horizon line they had to hope that they could correlate memory with the tangible pickets and squeeze chutes. And with the passing of every cascading maze, their exhilaration displaced the claustrophobic anxiety that trademarks the Carbon's narrow corridor. It was a breath of relief when they arrived at their original foray's rappel put-in. Grins widened and paddles twirled in celebration of overcoming the terra incognita and moving onto the known section. They arrived at the take-out with secrecy on their minds, but the Carbon was too good to keep down.

Since then, only a fortunate few have paddled through the Carbon Canyon. This stretch of river is a mind-bender rather than muscle-render. It is generally run in the 500 to 1,000 cfs range. At the lower flows, the trip is a nightmare of pins and broaches. At the higher volumes, the narrow riverway creates confused hydraulics that link rapids into blinding continuance. With an average gradient of about 100 fpm for the 10 mile run, the gorge merits its own classification. If there was a formula for combining gradient with a run/portage option, a translation of f.p.m. would be frights per mile in the Carbon's case.

I've been lucky enough to have ventured down the Carbon's dark spell-binding cut a time or two. Each visit brings the same nervous flutters as the first trip. The river commands respect. Some of the named rapids tell of the action: Rick's Slide, Tom-Tom and Sword-in-a-Stone—mini epics that have earned places in the Carbon's lore. On a typical run, pins, lost paddles and occasional



*Tom Schibig negotiates tough section of the Carbon above the Weir.*

swims are the rule rather than the exception. And there are still plenty of features waiting for a Christening party.

However, the canyon is amorphous. Rocks tumble into critical keyholes and trees clog the entire passage at times. The only sound and sane approach, unpleasant as it may seem, is to thrash through the brush and look into the guts of the canyon. On some days the sole option is to make a rappel below the impassable bottleneck. And other days it's best just to walk away. Unsuspecting river floaters have gotten into trouble when they were carried into difficulties

they were not prepared for. The extraction of victims is extremely dangerous and difficult on most of the length of the river.

So some day, if you're just out for a sightseeing tour or ready for a challenge, check out the Carbon's image from the Fairfax Bridge. For the reflection you see in the Carbon is more than the imagination of an adventurous soul. And even though you won't meet any of the characters from Lewis Carroll's story, you will definitely find yourself in the Carbon's unique and often frightening world.

## If you go--boat with a veteran

*The best concession to safety a party of paddlers can make while attempting a descent of the Carbon is to include a veteran familiar with the river.*

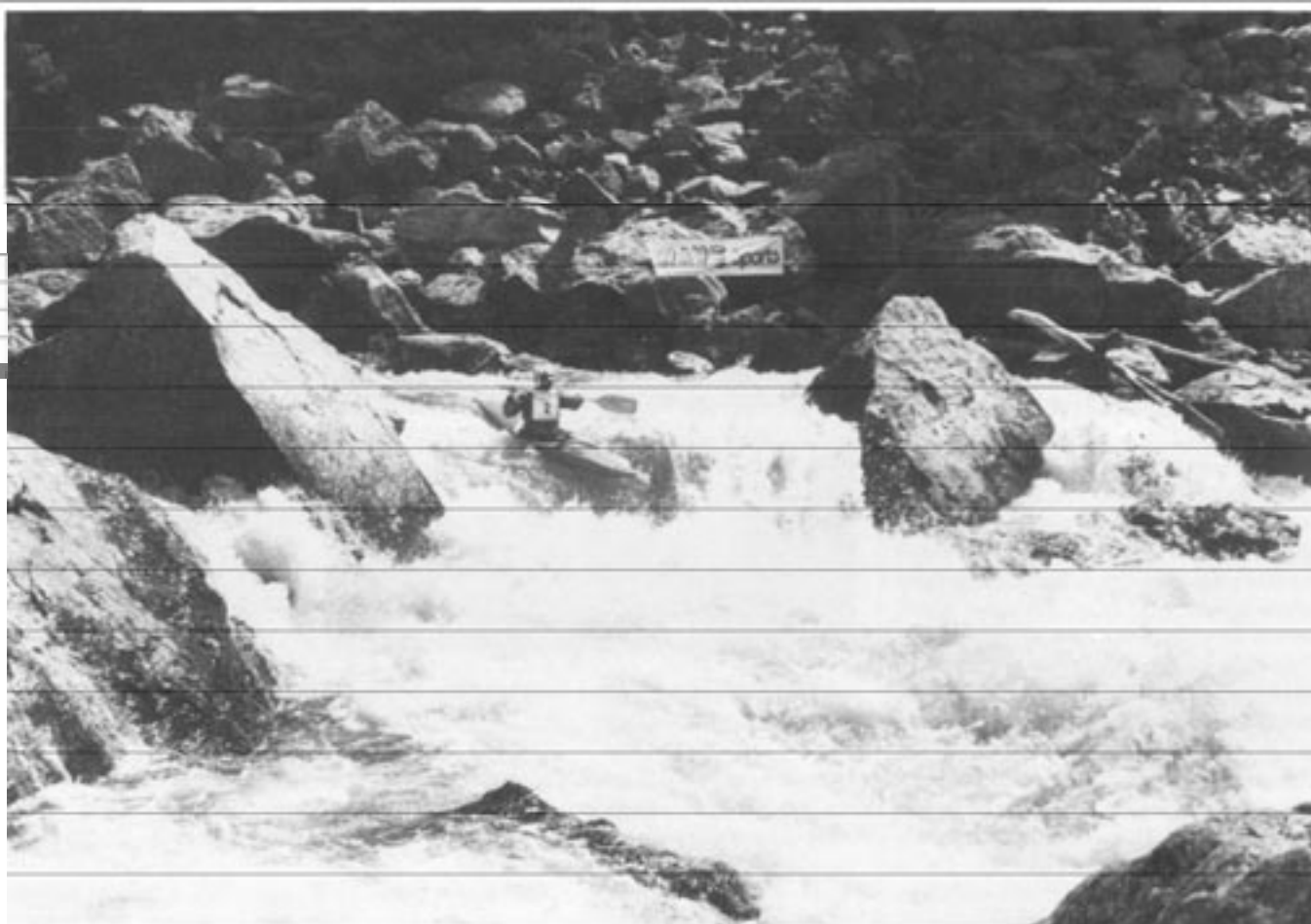
*Because of the high probability of logs lodged in the narrow gorge—at some places no more than 13 feet wide—scouting is essential. However, on the Carbon, scouting is often a difficult proposition.*

*A view of the river is available at several locations on the gorge rim, but as detailed in the account, these vantage points are protected by thick vegetation. Local paddlers know the passages to reach these spots.*

*In addition, there are particular places on the river where paddlers are afforded a view downstream. Only previous experience on the river enables paddlers to recognize these vital locations.*

*The Carbon is a glacier-melt river and typically boasts appropriate water levels from late March until early May and then again from the end of August until October.*

*Suitable flow levels for the upper gorge ranges from 300-600 cfs while the lower gorge is boatable from 300-2,500 cfs.*



# Racing through the Gore

By CLAY WRIGHT

Far upstream from the crowds of the Grand Canyon lies the whitewater heart of the Colorado River, the Gore Canyon, four miles of pushy, technical class IV-V whitewater with an average gradient of 91 feet per mile. Just ten years ago, few dared to enter the gorge except on foot. Those that did went prepared to carry most all the major rapids. But paddling has come a long way in the last ten years, and today some paddlers are not content just to run the Gore Canyon, they must race it.

In the tradition of the Upper Yough race, for the past few years Wave Sports and Sun Valley Beer have teamed up to sponsor a downriver race of the Gore Canyon—but with a Colorado flair. Unlike most races, there is no entry fee for competitors or the spectators, the safety boaters are just as likely to win the

new Lazer kayak as the competitors, and all the Sun Valley Beer you care to drink (which for most of us was a lot) is free. Sound appealing? Sixteen kayak racers, six four-man raft teams, and around thirty safety boaters thought so, and on August 25th and 26th, they all came down to the pump house near Kremmeling, CO for the race.

Due to the difficulty of the river, Saturday was reserved for practice runs down the canyon. But instead of practicing race lines and paddling for time, most boaters practiced *enders* and paddled for pictures, as several photographers had hiked into the gorge. There were kayakers dropping off all sorts of nasty places and doing all sorts of nasty things, all in the name of Patagonia (what would *you* do for a catalogue shot?). There was lots of swimming going on, too, and much of it in places only a Snyder could enjoy. It was pretty frivolous for the day

before the race, and it got progressively more so at the end of the run when the free beer was brought out. Hacky-sacks, bottle tops, and banjo music filled the air for the rest of the evening.

Luckily for all of us, the race was not scheduled until noon on Sunday, allowing plenty of time for the last traces of hangover to fade. By 12:30, all the racers were present and the top-seeded racer was on the water. For those of you who have never done a downriver race, I can barely attempt to describe the sensation of seeing a river you know so well come at you so fast. *All* is a blur of recall and improvisation, as you seem to hit the meat of the rapids before you realize you are in the approach. Accordingly, the Gore race went a little like this:

*"...three, two, one, BANG!"*

*"Go, Go, Go, Go...!"*

*Pull, pull, pull; I'm off and speed-*

*ing through the little stuff: Head down, ignore it, just go straight for the V's; pull, pull! Round the bend—oh, Fisherman's Nightmare (scrape, bonk)...looking smooth. Into the jlat stretch, pull, pull, pullll! Hell, I'm dying (gasp)—I'll never make it to Gore—but here it is! Whew, safetyboaters! Around the rocks—through the slot—boof. Whoa, almost impaled the Patagoniaguy—where do I go at the bottom? Who cares—pull, pull! Isn't that a race jersey on that guy at the bottom? I wonder why—no I don't. PULL! Let's see, (ka-splash!) that must have been Pyrite Falls so Haywire should be near, look for the straight—a tunnel? This must be (get left) Tunnel Falls already (get left!)? (boof, scrape, splash) Whew, I'm flying! This is great; only one more...why are they pointing left? TOI-LETBOIL!!! the ones sure way to lose and I'm going—around it, and straight down into Kirshbaum—this one is no problem and I'm moving so fast that nothing (big wave) can (big hole) stop (piton) me (backender)! This is NOT supposed to be a rodeo! OK, out of the hole and pull, pull, pullll! Here comes the finish, past the timer, up on the rocks and...beautiful—what do you mean the finish is over there?*

The four-mile gorge section was completed in 20.25 minutes by the winning kayaker, John Jaycox, with second and third place finishers Steve Holmes and Dana Scalf coming in about a minute behind. Cheral Chipman led the women's division with a time of 30.38 and the Boaters On Crack (Boulder Outdoor Center) led the rafters with a time of 33.33 minutes. More importantly, despite one DNF and two pinned safety boaters, all the paddlers completed the demanding stretch in safety, and despite the close competition, the spirit of the night before was not lost. The last bit of the beer was finished during the awards ceremony and the winner of the new Lazer, Charlie Ebel, donated the new boat to his friend who had lost her Dancer while safety boating.

Due to insurance problems, the future of this race is uncertain. Chan Zwanzig, the race organizer, believes his company, Wave Sports, has become too easy a target for lawsuits if anything should happen during the race. And given the current legal climate, it may be difficult to find other sponsors. Hopefully, even without the incentive of a hot, new boat, paddlers will continue to come from all over Colorado to race the Gore each year on the last weekend of August. Heck, I'll come just for the beer.



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# Would you rather go boating...



# ...or mow the lawn?

*River conservation  
can start at home  
using simple water-  
saving techniques*



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By RIC ALESCH  
AWA Regional Coordinator

How do you protect a river? Most people think you write a letter to your congressman or appear at a public meeting. More typically, you join a local or national conservation organization and let the group's active volunteers or paid staff fight the battles.

These are good ways to help preserve rivers, but they concentrate on the "supply" side of the problem, at times when it is difficult or virtually impossible to stop a project. To save more rivers we need to place greater emphasis on reducing our demand for resources that lead to projects affecting those rivers. This is true no matter what part of the country you live in, and it is especially true in the arid west where water supply projects, such as the proposed Two Forks dam near Denver, continue to be the primary threat to our precious rivers. This also means reducing our electricity use (especially peak power use) and the resultant demand for hydroelectric projects.

This article is about some simple (and not quite so simple) things you can do at your home to save substantial quantities of water. And to make you feel even better about saving rivers, you will be rewarded with lower utility bills. Some of these measures will pay for themselves in a couple months, while others may take a few years; however, each will go on saving you cash year after year. I am using all these methods at my suburban home near Denver, so this advice is based on first-hand experience. All these are "do-it-yourself" projects that can be done with minimal to modest home improvement skills. None required a change in lifestyle, although a concurrent change in some habits and more conscientious water use around the home would produce even greater savings.

#### Low-Flow Fixtures

Low-flow fixtures are faucets, showerheads and toilets that use substantially less water, with little or no change in performance. The states of California, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island and Washington have passed laws requiring low-flow fixtures in new construction. It is interesting to note that only two of these seven are arid-land states. There are also bills in Congress that would set

national standards for low-flow fixtures. Such requirements help reduce water demand in new construction and will eventually reduce demand from existing dwellings as fixtures are replaced. However, there are many **water-guzzling** units in the millions of existing homes that could be replaced now at a reasonable cost with minimal effort.

Flow-restricting aerators are washer-like plastic disks that are inserted in the spout of kitchen and bathroom



*Low-flow showerhead*



*The secret to a Xeriscape landscape is to reduce bluegrass lawn to a minimum.*

sink faucets to keep the maximum flow to a level that is sufficient to wash hands or do other typical sink things. They mix air with the water to reduce flow while still giving the full column of water. They prevent inadvertent excess use, especially important for homes with small children and for those of us that frequently suffer mind-lock and do not realize how much water we are running down the drain. Their only drawback is that it **takes** a little longer to fill your sink or large pots and pans with water. They only cost a dollar or two, but if your home is less than ten years old, check first because you may already have them. They have become a fairly standard fixture in recent years.

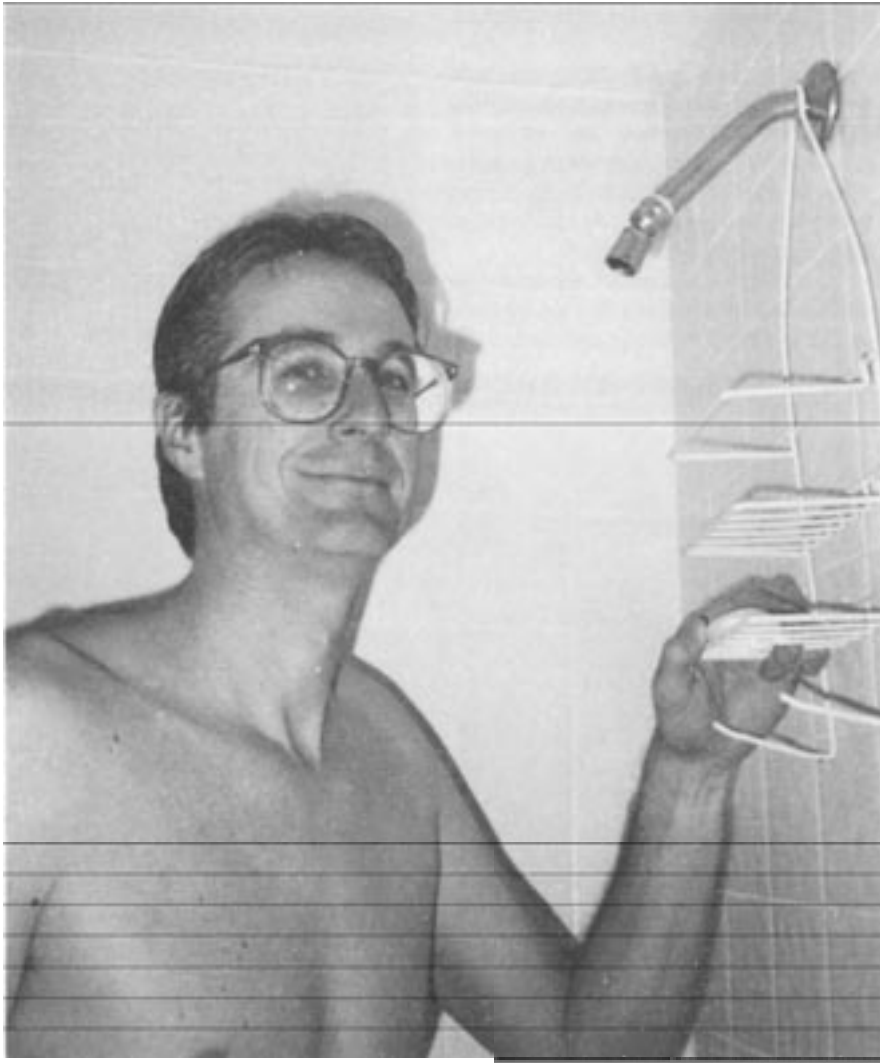
Plastic **flow-restrictors** were **also** promoted for showerheads during the "**energy-crisis**" a few years ago, but they produced a **low-quality** weak shower. Most people that installed them have probably since removed them.

After a cold day on the river, there is nothing like a good hot shower,



*Low-flow toilets appear like regular commodes but save substantial water.*





The author prepares to enjoy a low-flow shower. Low-flow showerheads can significantly reduce water consumption without diminishing bathing quality.

and I would never advocate giving up this one of life's basic pleasures. However, showers account for about 20% of indoor water use and consume more hot water than any other use. The standard showerhead produced before 1980 uses over six gallons per minute. That's 60-plus gallons for a 10-minute shower! Every day Americans send about three billion gallons down the shower drain. Low-flow showerheads use about 2.5 gallons per minute or less. They can be purchased for about \$10 and will save that much on water and gas (or electric) bills in a couple months. If you only do one thing to save a river, this should be it.

I recommend the low-flow heads that produce an aerated spray, which will feel a bit different at first but provide enough force for a quite satisfactory shower. We have used them in our home for over 10 years, originally for energy

conservation, but equally now for water conservation. Unfortunately, there are many so-called waterconserving showerheads on the market that produce a pitifully weak spray. I have stayed at a number of hotels and motels over the past 10 years, including some fairly pricey places, that had these lousy showerheads. Do not buy one based only on claims made on the packaging.

My personal favorite on the market these days is the "IncredibleHead" made by a company called Resources Conservation (I guess it has something to do with the name). It uses two gallons per minute, costs about \$7, and I recently bought one in a chain hardware store for a friend. If you cannot find the "Head," look for other models that are small and entirely made of metal. This is a case where bigger and plastic are not better. If you are still not sure, the July 1990 issue

of Consumer Reports recommends 11 models, including the "Head."

The toilets in most homes built before 1980 use about six gallons per flush. The typical toilet installed since that time uses 3.5 gallons. Every day Americans flush about five billion gallons down the sewer. New low-flush toilets on the market use only 1.5 gallons per flush, providing the potential for significant water savings. They cost up to \$200, but with the major manufacturers entering the market, there are several lower cost models now on the market and the prices are also better than reported & the magazine.

I recently took advantage of a surprisingly progressive program sponsored by the Denver Water Board to provide rebates for consumers that install low-flush toilets. I bought two one sale at \$65 each and put them in myself. The rebate covered the total cost and we have used them for about three months with quite satisfactory results. Beware of terms like "water-conserving" as it is still used to sell the 3.5 gallon variety. The newer water conserving models will be called "ultra-low-flush" and specify that they use less than 1.6 gallons per flush, a standard developed in Europe.

### Appropriate Landscaping

Home landscaping consume about half the water used by American households. Watering the lawn is an American tradition that most people take for granted. Having a large lawn surrounding the house comes from an old English tradition; but you know how much it rains there. Unfortunately, the large water-guzzling bluegrass lawn, at least in the arid west, is out of place and should take on the image of the large gas-guzzling car. What is primarily an aesthetic landscape element is costing us dearly in river resources. The already extensive water supply system operated by the Denver Water Board is substantial testimony to our inappropriate love affair with the large bluegrass lawn.

Savings of 30 to 80 percent can be obtained by using an alternative approach to landscaping—called "xeriscape." The first thing to say about this approach is that it does not advocate converting a bluegrass lawn into a gravel yard, although I admit that would be better for rivers. A correctly installed xeriscape yard will in a few years actually have more total biomass than a traditional blue-

grass dominated landscape; the plants will just use less water. There are seven basic principles to the xeriscape alternative.

The first principle is to develop a plan for your yard. This will allow you to implement your desired water-saving landscape in phases to minimize the initial investment and spread the work out if you are doing it yourself. (Incidentally, no fountains, please.)

The second principle is to reduce turf to only those areas where it is functionally necessary. Normally only about 20 percent of a typical yard is needed for activities such as child's play. The rest is just looked at, mowed, fertilized, and watered. Because turf areas take more water, they should be consolidated and kept separate from trees, shrub beds, and flower gardens. This also simplifies mowing the remaining lawn. If you have a large yard, consider replacing bluegrass areas with native grasses or drought-tolerant coarse grasses that can survive with little or no additional water.

The third principle is to improve the soil. Soils with too much clay or sand waste a lot of water, and many of our soils, especially in the west, have these problems. Adding organic matter will improve the water-holding capacity of the soil and also give plants beneficial nutrients.

The fourth principle is to select plants that demand less water. There are many beautiful trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and grasses that use less water than others. Local nurseries can give you advice, and most communities in water-short areas have developed lists of water-conserving plants. Also, check your library for publications that list drought-tolerant plants and provide advice on water-conserving landscaping for your area.

The fifth principle is to use mulches around shrub beds and over bare earth to allow ground covers to get established and to provide walking surfaces. Mulches cover the soil, keep it cooler, reduce evaporation, and keep weed growth down. Organic mulches include wood chips and bark or similar plant materials. Inorganic mulches include rock and gravel. I recommend organic mulches, especially in areas where you want plants to spread. Many tree trimming companies sell wood mulch at a very reasonable cost. Use a breathable synthetic fabric underneath the mulch to reduce weed growth. Avoid plastic sheets, especially



*Xeriscape yard features considerable plant life but still requires little water.*

where you want plants to grow. Plastic weed barriers do not allow the soil to breathe and water will not penetrate into the soil.

The sixth principle is to apply efficient irrigation to the landscape. A well designed irrigation system can save water, especially if it incorporates drip systems. However, an appropriately designed and zoned xeriscape yard can save water with or without an automatic irrigation system. This is because only the water required by the plants in a certain area is applied to that area, avoiding over-watering to other more drought-tolerant zones in the yard. Young plants normally take more water, but once they are established, watering can usually be reduced.

The final principle in xeriscaping is to spend a little time maintaining your new yard, pulling weeds and replenishing mulch when needed. This may take more work in the early years until the desired plants are established, but it will significantly reduce your work over time. Unfortunately, some people have installed water-conserving landscapes only to walk away from them, allowing weeds to take over and giving the xeriscape concept a bad name. In my experience, it has lessened my yard work considerably. Since I reduced my turf grass to only 800 square feet in the back yard, it takes me just four minutes to mow the lawn, leaving me extra time for running rivers on weekends.

While this sounds like a lot of effort, and it can be a major project to do

a complete conversion on a large property, you can do it in phases or use only some of the principles and still gain substantial savings. By just converting some bluegrass areas to traditional shrub beds, such as lilac bushes, you will lower your water bill considerably. The typical shrub bed requires only about one-third the water of a bluegrass lawn.

An investment in xeriscaping will take a few years to pay off, but it will increase the value of your home if done properly (just show them your water bills), and it will have many other environmental benefits. Most importantly, it will increase your boating time. Wouldn't you rather be on that river than mowing the lawn, anyway?

#### Tremendous River-Saving Potential

A few years ago when the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Denver's Two Forks project came out, I compared our family's water use with the numbers used to forecast metro area water needs. Our use was less than half the typical metropolitan household. Even with the Water Board's inflated population projections, I calculated that if other households used water at our rate, there would be no need for new water supply projects to serve the Denver area for the next 50 years! Just think what we could have done with the \$30 million spent to complete the water supply study, the most costly EIS in the National Environmental Policy Act's 20-year history.

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Yes, I want to join the AWA and receive a subscription to *American Whitewater*. I've enclosed my tax-deductable contribution of \$20 (\$25 Canada, \$30 overseas) to help conserve our whitewater resources and promote river safety.

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# \*\*\* S Happens on Upper Yough

By JOHN FRACHELLA

It all started when we met Charlie Walbridge in Friendsville the Monday after the Gauley Festival. He said the gauge for the Upper Yough at Sang Run was 2.1 or 2.2, natural flow. (It had been raining the day before.) The release would not arrive at the put-in until later in the morning—which was fine by us because we were somewhat intimidated by the Upper's reputation for hammering paddlers at higher levels. We'd run this river a week before at 2.0 and I'd run it two other times in the last six years—hardly enough to know anything except that the difference between 2.0 and 3.0 was the world. We were with our favorite guide of a week earlier, Bob Opatchko of D.C. area and with Bob and Walbridge, we figured we'd be okay at almost any level the river could be that day.

As predicted, the gauge at Sang Run put-in was 2.2 and the run to just above National Falls was a hoot. As C-boaters, Davey (one of the Maine boys) and I had always wanted to paddle with Charlie. To finally have that happen on the Upper Yough was real neat.

Charlie was paddling one of his legendary battleships, Davey was in a new Perception Slasher C-1 and I had a chopped-off Ultramax, an old retired race boat that John Sweet had made. To me, it was a collector's item since Sweet doesn't make boats any more and hasn't made one of those for years. I was using it on the Upper because I didn't want to push plastic and I didn't trust myself in unfamiliar water with my new Viper squirt C-1. On the other hand, Charlie seemed to think that my Ultra wasn't a whole lot different from a squirt boat. And after the release caught us unexpectedly just above National Falls, the increased water level did a fine job convincing me Charlie might have been right.

I was doing some fine melt downs in some of those bigger holes at the bottom of a few drops. I almost totally disappeared at one point where Charlie was estimating the flow to be 2.6. Things were getting real busy, Rifle Barrel, Meat Cleaver, Hinzlerline . . . very confusing, one right after the other. Charlie was looking a bit apprehensive, especially when Courtney (another one of the Maine boys) began disappearing and reappearing and grinning a lot in his Big



Foot.

The following sequence of events happened suddenly. Bob, paddling lead, headed down the left in Powerful Popper. I was next in the train and I didn't know this could be a hairy choice until Bob's Dancer flipped and pinned in an undercut. I kept my eyes on his boat and in a few seconds he surfaced, swimming freestyle and looking strong. That's when I broached on a rock with the center of my hull and on an undercut with my stern (which is what you get when you're watching your friends in busy shit when you should be watching where you're going).

Luckily, I was stable, balanced on the rock under my butt. Charlie was there in a flash with throw ropes and caribeaners, just like in the movies. Man, I couldn't think of anyone on earth I'd rather have right there than Charlie Wall. Nonetheless, it was my hairbrained intention to slide off the rock to take my chances with the undercut behind me. Charlie firmly discouraged that from shore and he didn't look like he wanted an argument. On Charlie's recommendation, I popped my spray skirt and threw my paddle to shore. Charlie threw me a rope instructing me to beamer it to my bow loop. Then he belayed me as I worked my way hand over hand to safety area pretty rescue. Textbook. Just what you'd expect from Walbridge.

We started to pull my boat off the rock, but suddenly the grab loop let go. I had replaced the original loops (that I had sawed off with the race-legal ends) with inferior, glued-to-the-deck loops. Don't ever do that to a boat you're fond

of. Suddenly, the cockpit cracked and the boat folded over the rock.

We watched helplessly as the broken boat unpinned itself and made its crippled way through some slots down the next rapid to lodge on a particularly ominous rock that finished it off by shearing it into two clean halves.

By then, Chris Koll and some other nice AWA folks paddled by and helped pick up the pieces. Everyone took particular note of how my boat had severed almost perfectly in half directly adjacent to a "Shit Happens" sticker on the deck. Charlie captured the moment to tell me how the boat had pinned in "Death Slot" in Powerful Popper Rapid, then got swept down F— Up Falls at the bottom of which it split in two on "Tombstone Rock". Overwhelming. . .

We stashed the pieces in the woods and I graciously accepted a raft ride down the rest of the river (thanks again to Bob). Later that afternoon, Davey and I made our way back to Powerful Popper through the woods on our mountain bikes. We found the boat halves and rope-towed them back through the woods to Friendsville. When we made it to the pavement we were pretty muddy, and didn't those boat parts make a racket when they hit the tar! Around a turn or two and up over some curbs, the halves threatened for a few moments to disrupt the evening quietude of that little Maryland town.

Thanks to Phil Coleman, we hosed down our dirty bikes and bodies at Precision Rafting, and home to Maine we headed. Boy, was I glad to be alive and whole.

*REI assists protection*

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## WV Rivers receives additional seed grant

The National Rivers Coalition, chaired by American Rivers, Inc., announced seed grants to ten **grass-**roots conservation organizations across the country. The AWA is a member of the national coalition.

The grants will assist with river protection efforts in Alaska, California, Idaho, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The National Rivers Coalition has been underwritten for the last three years by Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI). REI is a nationwide distributor of outdoor clothing and equipment.

New seed grant recipients are:

**ALASKA:** Alaska Center for the Environment, to represent the state's conservation community in the final planning process for Alaska's recently formed Recreation Rivers System. Six premium rivers (over 450 river miles) and river corridors in southcentral Alaska were designated into the system in 1988.

**CALIFORNIA:** Friends of the River, to produce and distribute a mailing alert in support of National Wild and Scenic River designation of threatened rivers in the Stanislaus Forest.

**IDAHO:** Idaho Rivers United, to print and distribute "A Citizens Guide to Idaho Water Policy," a handbook for activists. The group, a new umbrella organization, is working to update and reform a hundred years of **develop-**ment-oriented water policy in the state.

**NEW HAMP-**SHIRE: Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, to prepare and distribute three "activist alert" mailings about river protection legislation.

**NEW HAMP-**SHIRE: Pemigewasset River Council, to work with students and teachers from the region's high schools to prepare an educational videotape of the river.

**NORTH CARO-**LINA: National Committee for the New River, to visually assess current development and developed areas along a "**scenic**" section of the river that Congress designated into the National Wild

and Scenic Rivers System. Continued development could threaten that status.

**OREGON:** River Network, to prepare and distribute information on river resource issues, including land development, pollution and dams.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Condoquinet Creek Watershed Association, to add the **creek**, which flows from the Appalachian Mountains to the Susquehanna River, to the state scenic rivers system.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Meshoppen Creek Task Force, to secure designation for the **creek** in the Pennsylvania Scenic Rivers System.

**WEST VIRGINIA:** West Virginia Rivers Coalition, to print a brochure about the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System for landowners and other citizens. This brochure will aid in the Coalition's current campaign to obtain **protec-**tion for 13 mountain **white-**water rivers in the **Mononga-**hela National Forest..

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## Bush cuts Savage R. protection

On the last day of the last Congress, the big public works bill contained a provision which would have prohibited the construction of a hydropower project on the Savage River forever. Word came down that the bill passed on the last day. Paddlers interested in the Savage immediately began to celebrate.

But then the awful news was revealed. The Savage River provision was not in the final bill! It had been deleted at the last moment at the request of the Bush administration.

Paddlers are still trying to determine what happened and why. The provision was favored by Congresswoman Beverly Byron, the state of Maryland and by hundreds of Marylanders. It had no known opposition.

Despite the setback, paddlers plan to submit the provision again next year.

## *Volunteers, equipment needed for WV Rivers*

Founded by the AWA, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition (**WVRC**) is mounting a grassroots political effort to get permanent protection for 13 superlative whitewater rivers in West Virginia.

A few months ago, the WVRC obtained a grant for \$40,000, and it has a full-time Executive Director at work in Elkins, WV, Roger Harrison. But Roger can't do it alone. WVRC **must** have a cadre of volunteers to be successful. The immediate need is for one or two people to take charge of **WVRC's** membership roster. As of now, WVRC has no members at all, but we hope someday to have 1,000 or more.

D.C. paddler John

Williams has developed a computer program for a membership list, and our primary need is for someone to be willing to maintain a list as it develops. You need to have a PC, of course, but John will help mount the program.

WVRC needs other volunteers, as well as miscellaneous office equipment. The most pressing need is for a donated PC and printer. Donations are tax deductible.

Would you like to play a role in the exciting battle to guarantee the future for 13 river gems in West Virginia? If so, please contact Mac Thornton, Chairman of WVRC at 202-543-4923.



Adobe Whitewater Club  
PO Box 926  
Albuquerque, NM 87103  
Allegheny Canoe Club  
**c/o** Walt Pilewski  
755 W. Spring St.  
Titusville, PA 16534  
AMC Cl. **Bk.** Chap.  
**c/o** Bill Cushwa  
63 Silver St.  
South Hadley, MA 01075  
AMC Delaware Valley  
**c/o** Eric Pavlak  
Apt. x2-11 Hatfield Village  
Hatfield, PA 19440  
AMC **Genesee** Valley  
**c/o** Scott Trude  
3565 North Creek Rd.  
Palmyra, NY 14522  
American Swan Boat  
Assn.  
**c/o** Glen F. Green  
312 Duff Avenue  
**Wenonah**, NJ 08090  
Antioch Kayak Club  
**c/o** Karl Mahle  
PE Dept. Antioch College  
Yellow Springs, OH 45387  
Ashville YMCA Kayak  
Club  
**c/o** Charles Hines  
5 Holly Hill, CT.  
Ashville, NC 28806  
Badger State Boating  
Society  
5315 N. Lovers Ln. Rd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53225  
Baer's River Workshop  
RR1 138 Arcadia Rd.  
Hope Valley, RI 02832  
Beartooth Paddlers  
**c/o** Ron Ladders  
PO Box 20432  
Billings, MT 59104  
Blue Ridge River Run-  
ners  
**c/o** Travis Overstreet, Sr.  
PO Box 315  
Monroe, VA 24574  
Bluegrass WW Assoc.  
PO Box 4231  
Lexington, KY 40544  
Boat Busters Anony-  
mous  
2961 Hemingway Ave.  
St. Paul MN 55119  
California Kayak Friends  
14252 Culver Dr.  
#A-199  
Irvine, CA 92714  
Canoe Club of Harris-  
burg  
**c/o** Walt Stieger  
2747 N. 4th St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
Carolina Canoe Club  
PO Box 12932  
Raleigh, NC 27605  
Champaign Canoeing  
**c/o** Keech T. Leclair  
Brayton Park  
Ossining, NY 10562

Ctl. **IL** Whitewater Club  
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Pekin, IL 61554  
Chicago **WW** Assn.  
**c/o** Marge Cline  
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Palatine, IL 60067  
Chickenshit Rubber  
Duckers  
**c/o** Mark Reisner  
738 Arkansas St.  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
Coastal Canoeists  
PO Box 566  
Richmond, VA 23204  
Colorado Rocky Mt.  
School  
**c/o** Bob Campbell  
1493 Rd. 106  
Carbondale, CO 81623  
Colorado **WW** Assoc.  
7600 E. Arapahoe  
**Englewood**, CO 80112  
E. TN Whitewater Club  
PO Box 3074  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830  
Erie Basin Sons of Ahab  
**c/o** William Hoyt  
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Buffalo, NY 14203  
Explorer Post 2001  
11627 South Arbor  
Houston, TX 77089  
Farmington River Club  
**c/o** F. Perruccio  
PO Box 475  
Canton, CT 06019  
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PO Box 6331  
Greenville, SC 29606  
Fresno Kayak Club  
**c/o** Paul Martzen  
942 N. Narrison  
Fresno, CA 93728  
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Atlanta, GA 30357  
**Guadalupe** River Pad-  
dlers  
Betty Walls  
37 Chaparrel  
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Gunwale Grabbers Ca-  
noe Club  
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# The Great Adirondack Raisin Race

I'd started hiking in just after four in the morning, my boots crunching through the thin crust of snow on the abandoned logging road, just so I arrive at my tree stand before first light.

By five-thirty I'd shinnied up an old maple, nestled in a convenient crook of the tree and sat passing the time waiting for dawn by spitting tobacco juice ten feet down onto the white carpet of the ground.

My head still throbbed from the a late night filled with endless Rolling Rocks while my feet and toes ached from the late November chill. Winter comes early in northern New York's Adirondack Mountains.

But despite my discomforts—I had no complaints. I just **knew** that around seven in the morning, the biggest damn buck in **Herkimer** County would warily wander into that clearing forty yards out and I'd be set for venison jerky the rest of the winter.

And that's exactly the way it nearly happened. The woods were still gray when I heard the sound of crunching snow and cracking twigs as a large animal made its way through thick brush on my right. Between gaps in the cover I caught quick flashes of white indicating a deer with a monumental rack was moving toward me.

When it finally stepped into the clearing I was momentarily stunned by the magnificence of the animal. Wide-spread antlers of ten tines rose from its head. Pawing the ground, it snorted once, steam pouring from its nostrils into the chill air.

But I quickly recovered and pulled down my rifle, centering the scope on the buck's massive shoulders. My finger was already squeezing the trigger when I heard it....

"...wwwaaaaAAAAHHHH"

Started, I jerked my eye away. When it returned to the scope, all that remained of the buck was its shadow.

"...wwwaaaaAAAAHHHH"

In its place, a snowmobile slid to a stop in the middle of the clearing. Its driver revved the engine twice spewing a cloud of noxious smoke into the air and vibrating an avalanche of snow down from a tall neighboring spruce tree and onto on my head.

The driver was completely at-

tired in black leather with "Yamaha" emblazoned across the back. He doffed his helmet, looked up at me (looking something like a vanilla ice-cream cone) and inquired:

"Which way to the Big Moose Inn?"

I reacted like any self-respecting naturalist. I quickly put five 30.061 slugs through that candy-apple red machine. The driver escaped while I was reloading, but that was OK I really didn't want to have to gut and skin him.

We don't much care for 'bilers up here in the Adirondacks. We call 'em "raisins"—either because of the resemblance of their wrinkly blackleathersuits to dried grapes or the appearance of their brains. In either case, they stream into the Adirondacks from foreign countries like New Jersey or Long Island right in the middle of **huntin'** season (which is right after **boatin' season**) and stay right through **skiin'** season.

They careen through the woods from daybreak until three in the morning—usually in groups of twenty or more. Now I know they're kind of like a paddling club in that respect, but that's where the similarity ends. Other times they're crowded into bars **drinkin'** and **grabbin'** women or clustered around a snowmobile trailer admiring the latest equipment or **bitchin'** about the level of snow. Does that sound like paddlers?

Well—maybe. But I don't care—I still hate 'em. How could I like anyone who was like me?

So, I guess it was inevitable that sooner or later there'd be a confrontation. I swear it wasn't my fault. I was just commenting at a bar one night that there must be a new cologne called **eau'd two-cycle** and one of them took offense.

After all the **pushin'**, **shovin'**, **shoutin'** and **fingerpointin'** had ended, what transpired was the challenge of a race to settle our differences. And since that **stoopid** raisin claimed his sled could beat anything on the snow...he foolishly left the conditions of the contest to me.

Perched high above the Moose River is our local **ski** hill. It's small by Adirondack standards but it's steeper than a **bitch**—so steep, in fact, that half the trails never get groomed and fields of

moguls grow there like weeds.

I met the raisin at dawn at the summit. He pulled up in a metal-flake model called a "Defibulator" or a "Throbulator" or something like that. I was already sitting in a broken-down Perception Sabre, its duct-taped end balanced over the lip of the headwall.

"You're going to race in that?" the raisin sneered.

I simply pointed to the far side of the frozen Moose River.

"First one there wins, **Piston-Head**."

The 'biler took an immediate lead, gunning his sled forward while my boat slowly gained momentum. Ahead, the mogul field loomed ominously. The raisin was already slowing his sled to weave around and between the snowy obstacles.

In my kayak, I lacked his maneuverability and hit the moguls straight on. Hipping back in the boat, I managed to boof bump after bump, constantly gaining speed as I surfed the backside of the moguls. As I swept by the raisin midway down the slope, I leaned over on a rail to shower him with a roostertail of snow.

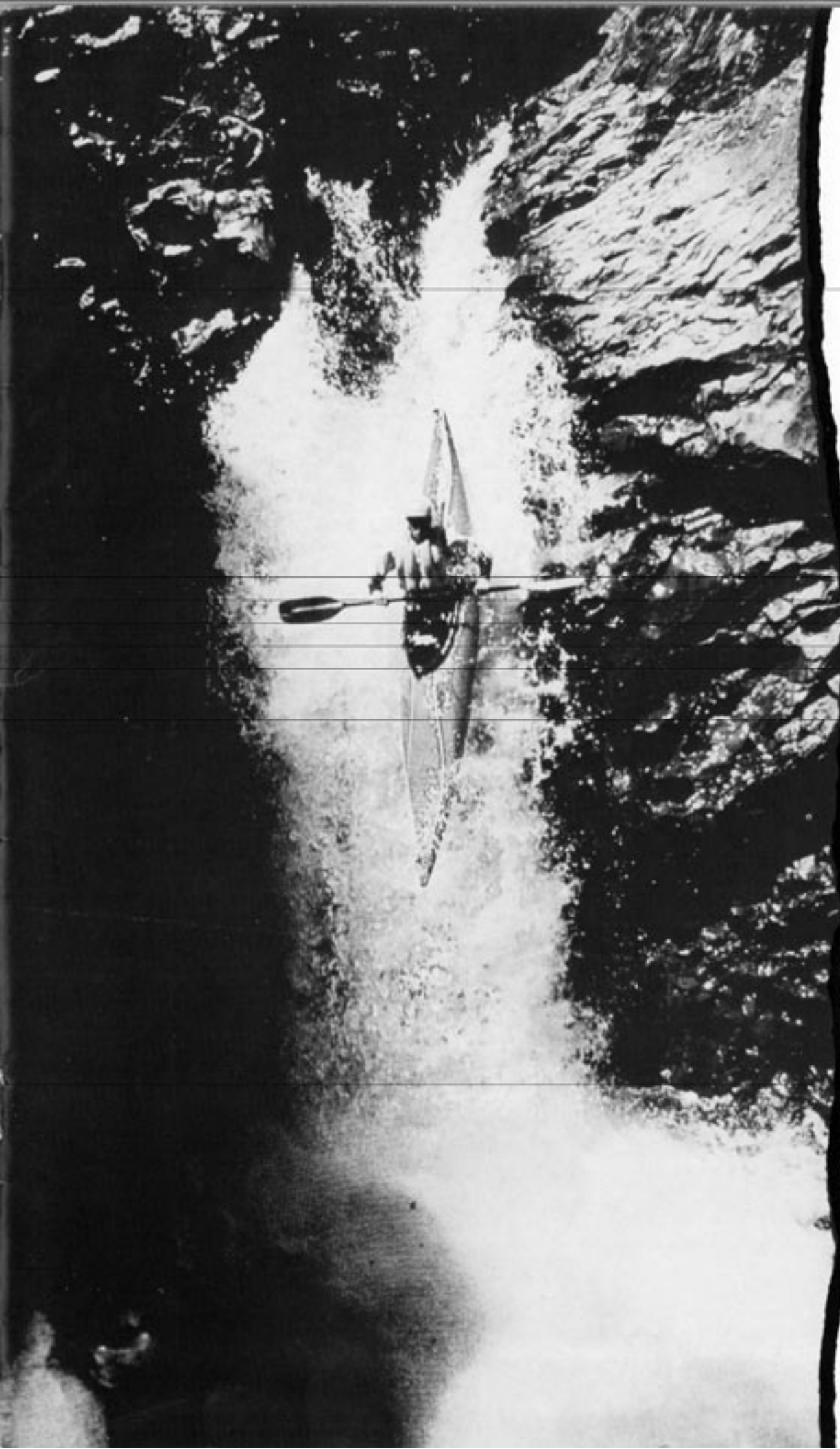
The river was in sight as my boat cruised across the smooth **run-out** between the slope and the shoreline. As I plunged down the bank, I figured I had that biler whipped fair and square when....

"...wwwaaaaAAAAHHHH..." the 'biler roared by me onto the ice, flipping me the bird as he passed.

Of course, I had neglected to mention to that **stoopid** raisin that the middle of the Moose never freezes completely solid. He vanished through the ice without a trace. My boat, still following his track, quickly drifted to a stop once it hit the open water. I paddled with my hands to the other side where I declared myself the victor.

Now I'm just hoping that 'biler doesn't screw up my favorite paddling haunts on the Moose this spring. Lord knows that a raisin from New Jersey will probably leave a bathtub ring on the river bank.

**By Gary Carlson—who is more of an alien than any 'biler from New Jersey.**



*Take  
me  
to  
the  
river...*

*drop  
me  
in  
the  
water...*

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