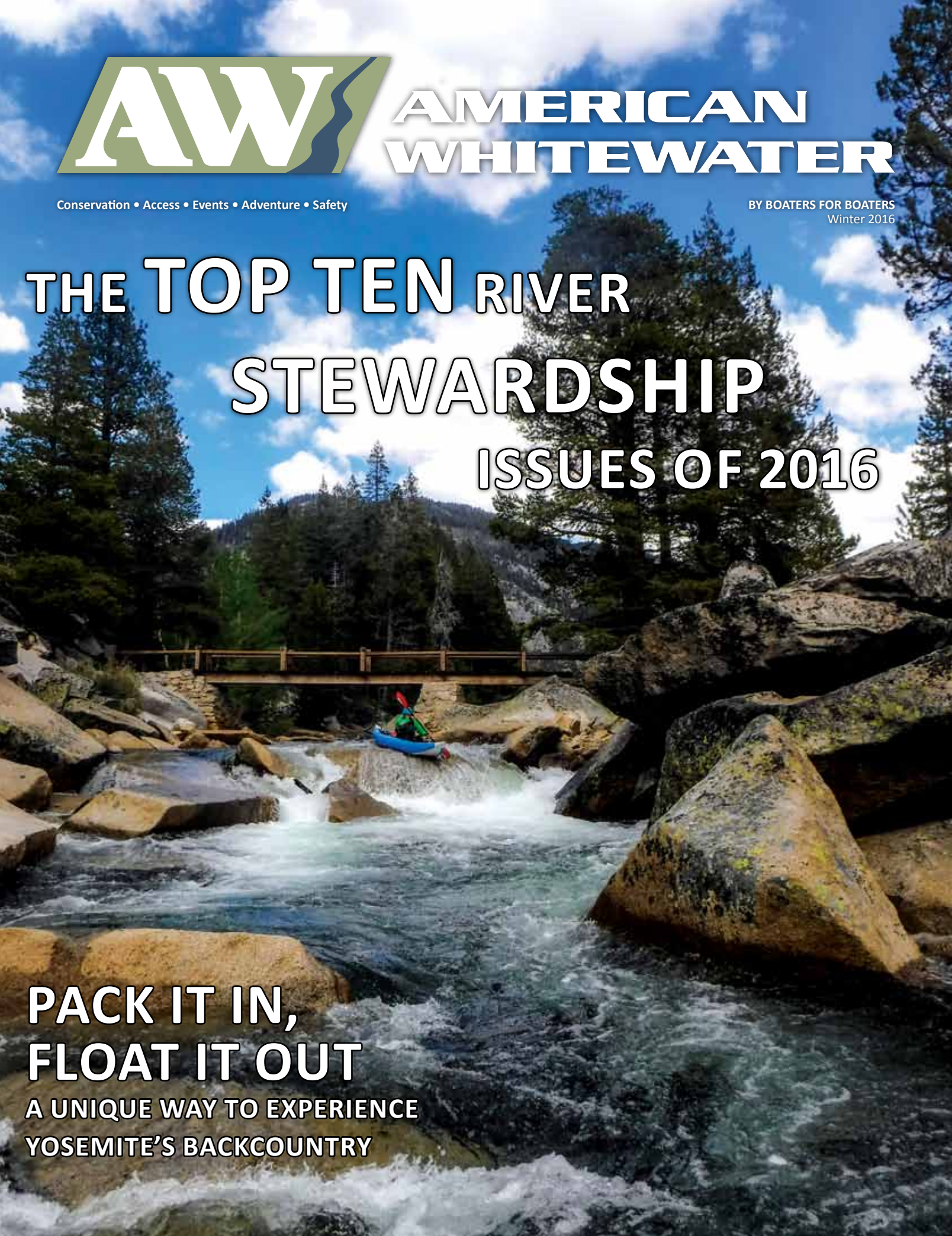

AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
Winter 2016

THE TOP TEN RIVER STEWARDSHIP ISSUES OF 2016

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American Whitewater Journal

Winter 2016 – Volume 56 – Issue 1

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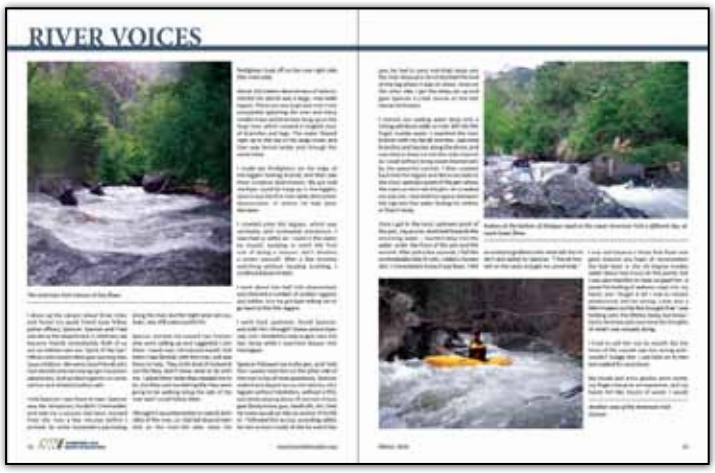

Priscilla Macy paddles the Merced River in Yosemite National Park under the footbridge that marks the end of the Lost Vallley of the Merced and the approach to the crux gorge. American Whitewater worked with the Park Service to make it possible to paddle this incredible section of river.

Photo by Jacob Cruzer

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PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision-making processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

EDUCATION: AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

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

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

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Founded in 1954, American Whitewater is a national non-profit organization (Non-profit # 23-7083760) with a mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." American Whitewater is a membership organization representing a broad diversity of individual whitewater enthusiasts, river conservationists, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates across America. The organization is the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States, and connects the interests of human-powered recreational river users with ecological and science-based data to achieve the goals within its mission. All rights to information contained in this publication are reserved.

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

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THE JOURNEY AHEAD

Welcome to the *American Whitewater Journal* for 2016! At the start of each year, we explore the top 10 issues wild rivers face. We expect these issues will be important themes and American Whitewater staff to play leadership roles in these issues affecting rivers across the country. Our top 10 list takes into consideration a broad geographic cross-section and recognizes pressures that rivers confront. From protecting Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands to restoring the Connecticut River watershed, our top 10 issues highlight projects that reside in your backyard. Our list also includes national themes that have an impact on the way rivers are managed for years to come. Whether it's leveraging federal regulations used to protect a river's flow in the hydropower licensing process or against constructing new dams that do not make sense, American Whitewater is ready to confront these serious threats in the coming year.

The reason we fight like we do to defend our wild rivers is that we know them well; this knowledge is not something you can put a price tag on. We take a stand when public access to rivers is threatened or bad river management decisions are made. What all of us close to these issues understand is that recreation and stewardship are intimately connected. Time spent on rivers forms the basis for a contemporary conservation ethic. It's very hard to love something you don't know, and it's our community's love of wild rivers that makes us aggressive defenders of rivers across the country. No other group knows the headwater reaches of major river systems better than boaters. It's that intimate knowledge that provides relevance to our story and helps to keep the conversation real with policy makers and river managers.

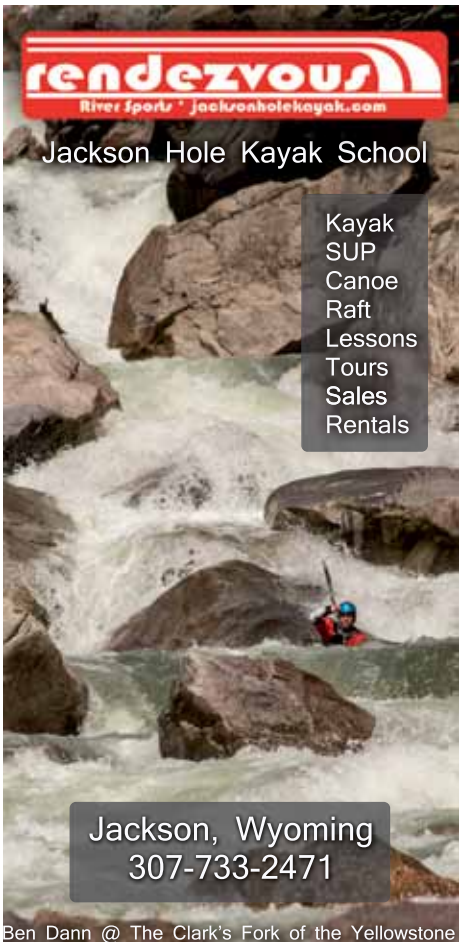
At the core of the American Whitewater River Stewardship Program is the understanding that conservation and healthy human-powered outdoor recreation are mutually dependent. Whitewater boaters appreciate natural landscapes, and those special places need conservation-oriented paddlers to help preserve and protect these treasured resources. As we move into the coming year, staff at American Whitewater will be pushing for new opportunities to reconnect rivers with paddlers, habitat, and local economies. As we look to the future, we continue to appreciate the importance of rivers and their role in supporting the health and well being of the paddling community.

Our stewardship program is made possible through on-going membership support. If you are reading this publication and you are not a member, please consider supporting this work. If you are a member, thanks for your support; please pass this issue on to a friend and let them know what we are doing. There has never been a better time to support American Whitewater to protect the wild rivers we know and love!

Take care of our rivers and your paddling will take care of you!

P.S. - If you happen to be looking for a way to deepen that connection with wild rivers, join me on the American Whitewater Rogue River trip in June. Thanks to support from Northwest Rafting Company, American Whitewater members have the opportunity to join our staff and board members on an exclusive four-day trip down Oregon's Rogue River. We invite you to come learn more about what we're up to while having a great time enjoying one of our nation's first Wild and Scenic Rivers. The trip, which will take place June 14-17, 2016 will be fully outfitted by Northwest Rafting Company with professional guides, exceptional food, transportation, and all necessary group equipment. You will have the option of bringing your own boat, renting a kayak, or joining as a passenger on one of the rafts. This trip was such a great experience last year that we wanted to offer it again. Please see the article on page 45 for additional information.

Executive Director, American Whitewater



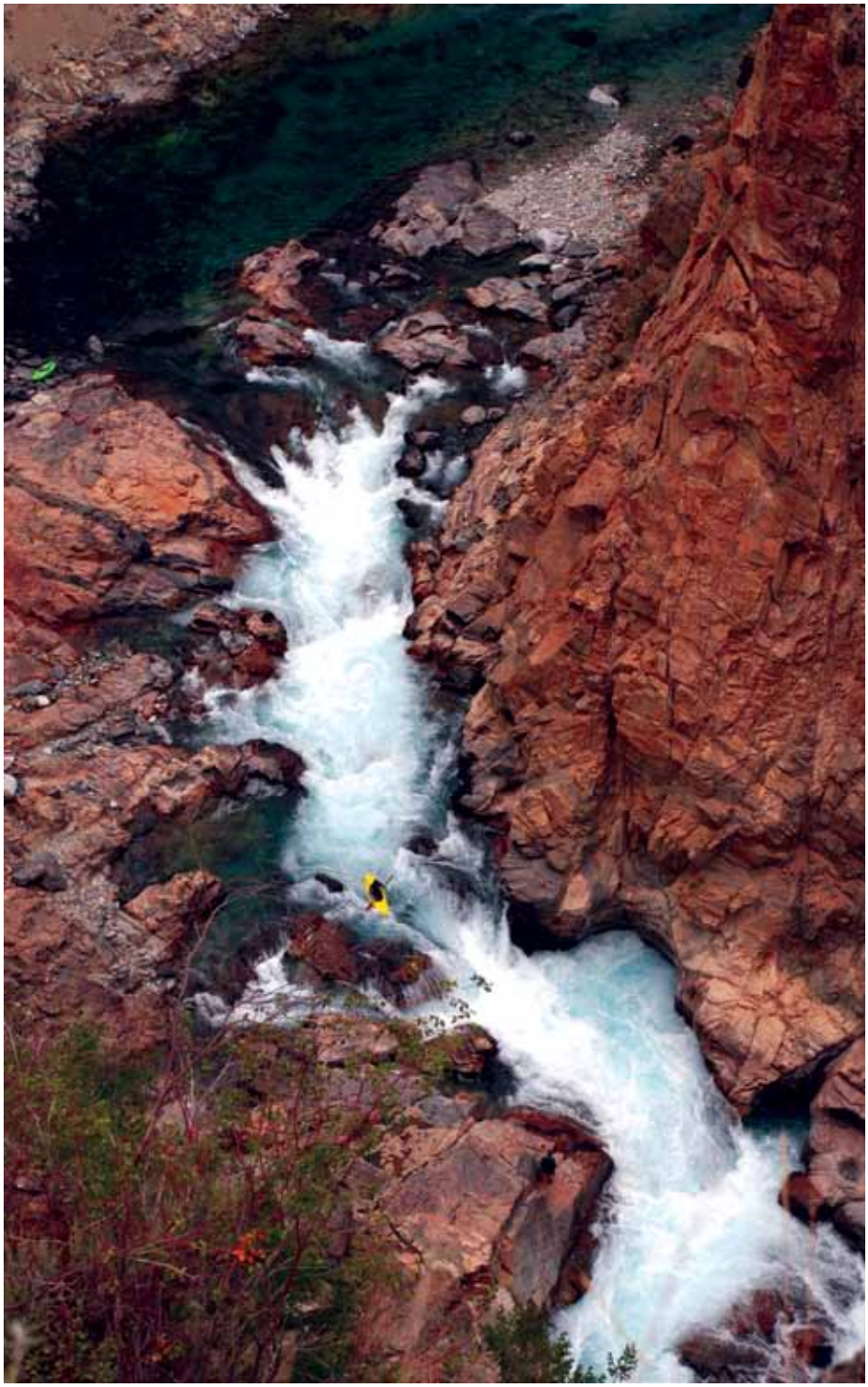
Ben Dann @ The Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

TOP TEN STEWARDSHIP ISSUES 2016

BY AW STEWARDSHIP STAFF

Introduction

Our Top 10 Projects for 2016 span the country, represent the diversity of our work, and will all lead to inspiring paddling trips for current and future generations. At any given time American Whitewater staff and volunteers are working on well over 100 river conservation and access projects on your behalf. All of our projects are certainly important, but each year we highlight 10 projects that we'll focus a lot of our energy on because we view them as game-changing. This year, we'll continue our work to protect rivers in the face of threats from new dam proposals, and be proactive by working to protect thousands of miles of streams from new dams using the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. We'll also be working to secure improved river flows and public access, which is a winning strategy that American Whitewater has used for decades with incredible results. As always, your voices and support will be so important to seeing these projects through.



***This page**: Entrance Exam Rapid on Chelan River (WA).*
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe
***Opposite page top**: Whitewater opportunities on rivers like the Cheoah in North Carolina are threatened by hydropower industry efforts to weaken the hydropower relicensing process.*
Photo by Ben Van Camp
***Opposite page middle**: American Whitewater restored flows to the Feather River in California. Opportunities like these are at risk.*
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

Protecting the Tools We Use to Restore Flows

In 2015, the hydropower industry lobbied hard to strip away many of the tools that American Whitewater uses to restore flows to rivers affected by hydropower dams. Legislators responded by introducing bills in both the House and the Senate that are certainly the most dangerous pieces of hydropower legislation that we've seen in 10 years. The hydropower industry isn't letting up in 2016, and American Whitewater will continue to fight to protect our rivers.

The tools that the hydropower industry is targeting are the very ones that we have used to revive rivers across the country, including the Cheoah (NC), Tallulah (GA), Deerfield (MA), Yuba/Bear (CA), Chelan (WA), and Bear River (ID). If the hydropower industry gets its way, our work to restore flows to rivers with hydropower dams will be seriously compromised. If you've enjoyed boating rivers like these, or others that have been restored through dam removal, you'll be directly affected.

Here's how it works. All hydropower dam operators are required to get a license to operate their dams from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). These licenses outline how a dam will operate for the next 30-50 years, meaning that it basically is a prescription for whether or not a river will be healthy enough to still be considered a river. Since the late 1980s, local communities, tribes and agencies have had a seat at the table as decisions are made about what is in a license. The end result has been a better outcome for our rivers for fish, wildlife and, yes, paddlers. American Whitewater works in partnership with state and federal agencies to restore flows for paddlers, and if the hydropower industry gets its way, this legislation will weaken these agencies' authority to protect water quality, habitat for fish and wildlife, and flows for recreation.

The hydropower industry claims that they seek to "modernize" hydropower for the sake of "clean and green" energy. However, initial versions of the bill gave strong preference to hydropower operations over all other river values, while making fish passage, river flows, and public access harder–and in some cases impossible–to achieve. The industry continues to seek a way to weasel out of environmental provisions that protect water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife. There's nothing "clean" or "green" about that.

In 2016, these large and powerful energy companies will continue to seek special treatment in order to squeeze our rivers dry for their own interests. American Whitewater has played a leadership role in opposing this legislation, and will continue to do so this year. Our members did an amazing job reaching out to their representatives in 2015, and we'll need your help again this year. Stay tuned to our website and social media channels for ways to take action.

River Access: Virginia and Other Hotspots

Paddlers need access to rivers and rights to float downstream, and American Whitewater works toward those goals on rivers across the country. Our favorite projects involve working with partners to buy, build, or improve launch sites, but when we need to, we'll defend the basic right to paddle rivers in state legislatures or court. We anticipate some of each kind of project in 2016, with tangible and important outcomes.

In Virginia, paddlers have long struggled with ambiguous commonwealth policies on the right to float headwater streams. In 2015, after years of effort, Virginia officials clarified that a suite of whitewater runs are legally navigable. Johns Creek was on the list, where American Whitewater owns a river access site and paddling was presumed to be off-limits for over a decade. A great group of paddlers helped us clean up our access site, spread gravel, and get ready for rains. Fall weather was generous and we saw quite a few descents of Johns Creek by paddlers who went out of their way to respect private property rights while enjoying the stream.

2016 will be a critical year on Johns and other Virginia creeks. American Whitewater will be working closely to encourage responsible and respectful use. We'll work to enroll our site and others in the "Virginia Treasures" program to have their value formally recognized. And we'll be ready to respond to any unfortunate legal challenges that may arise as a result of public use being restored to Virginia streams.

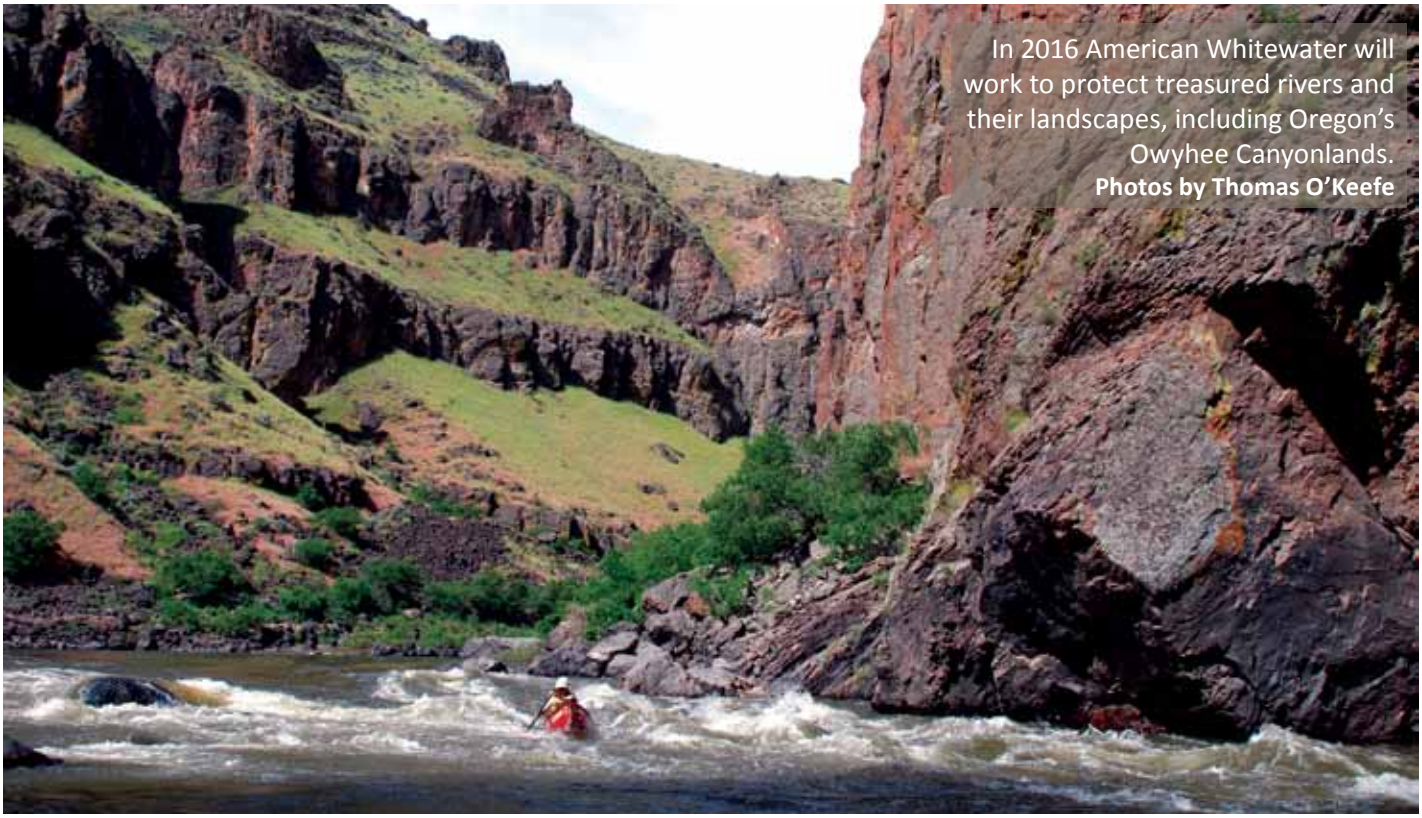
Another bright spot in Virginia is along the northern border near Harpers Ferry, where the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers join in a valley rich in history and Class III whitewater. While the paddling is great, public access in the area has diminished over the years to only a few parking spaces. With the help of the Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program, and a terrific cast of local paddlers and regional planners, we spent the last year creating a river access plan and got started on some key solutions. American Whitewater secured another year of competitive RTCA support for 2016 and we will be tackling specific on-the-ground solutions in a collaborative manner throughout the year.

Paddlers gathered in 2015 to clear brush from American Whitewater's river access site on John's Creek in Virginia.
Photo by Kevin Colburn

We'll be busy with access throughout the rest of the country as well in 2016. In Colorado, the battle over public access and navigability of the state's rivers is expected to ramp up. We will tackle this from two angles. First, we'll work with individual paddling clubs and landowners to address specific conflicts on the ground, and second, we will coordinate with the Governor's Outdoor Recreation Industry Office to develop policies and programs that protect whitewater paddling and the state's multi-billion dollar recreation industry. In California, we'll bring ongoing projects on the North Fork Feather and Lower Merced Rivers to completion. On the policy side, the California State Lands Commission is in the process of creating a statewide strategic plan, which includes river access. This plan has the potential to be a huge help in protecting paddler's rights across the state, and American Whitewater will stay engaged in the process to ensure that it does. And in Washington, we will be working on state legislation to enhance public access at bridges, and remain actively engaged in water trail projects on the Nisqually, Cedar, Skykomish, and Nooksack Rivers with the goal of securing additional access points.

Stay tuned if you're interested in learning more about these and other access projects. We'll have more in depth information in the March/April issue of the *American Whitewater Journal*.

Protecting Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands and Important Riverscapes



In 2016 American Whitewater will work to protect treasured rivers and their landscapes, including Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands.
Photos by Thomas O'Keefe

The whitewater boating community has enjoyed the incredible backcountry of the Owyhee Canyonlands in Oregon and Idaho for decades. The stunning canyons, diverse wildlife, dark starry skies and hot springs all make for an excellent whitewater adventure. We have few places left in the world where one can simply disappear into the landscape and experience a transformative wilderness adventure and the Owyhee Canyonlands stands out as one of those places.

The conservation value of the Owyhee River was first recognized more than four decades ago when the river was designated as an Oregon State Scenic Waterway in 1970. In 1984 the Owyhee and South Fork Owyhee were designated as federal Wild and Scenic Rivers and the North Fork and West Little Owyhee were added in 1988. In 2009, half a million acres of public lands in Idaho were protected as the Owyhee River Wilderness and 325 additional river miles were designated Wild and Scenic, including the Jarbidge, Bruneau, and several other tributaries of the Owyhee.

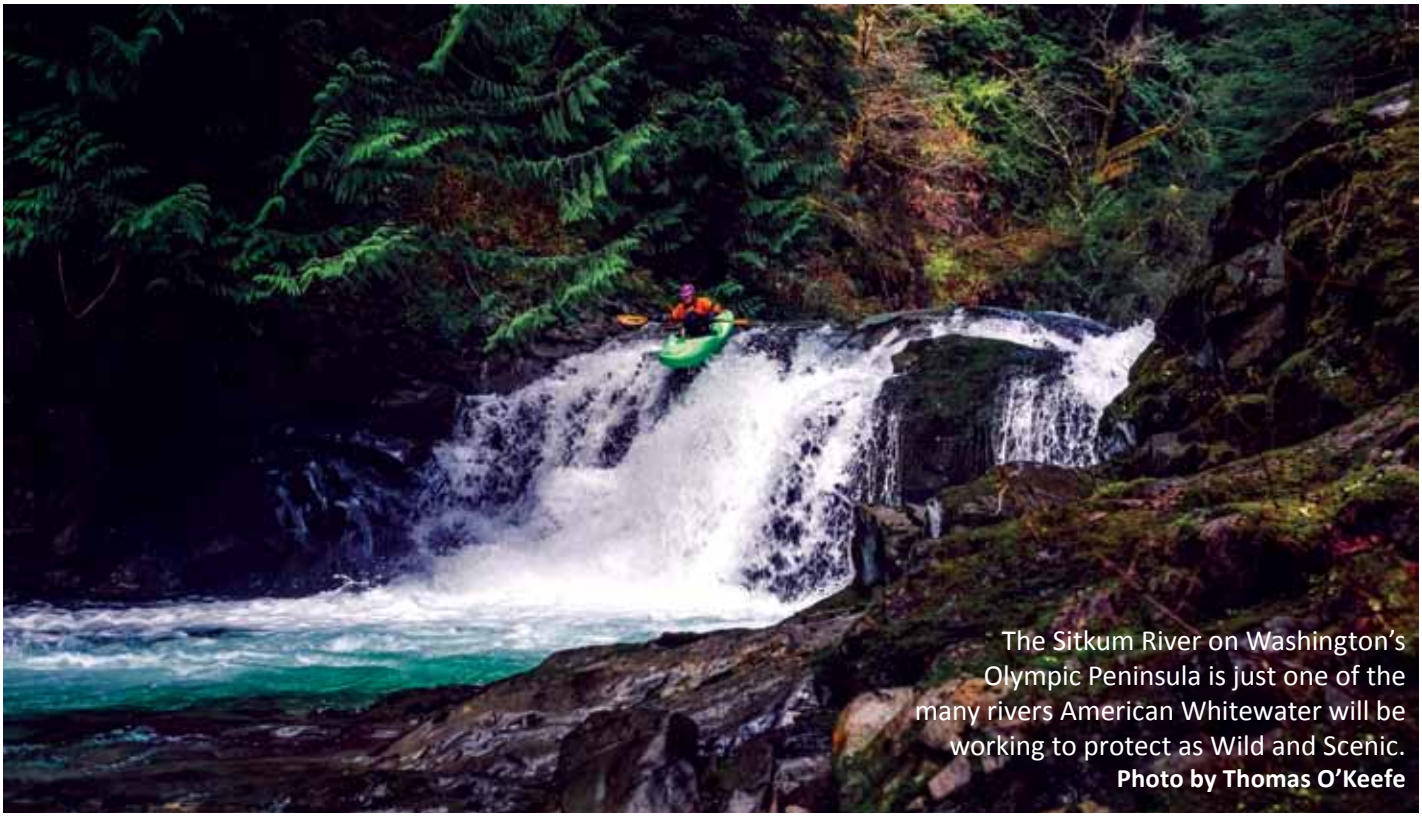
Despite the long history of conservation achievements, much of the landscape in Oregon remains unprotected—some two million acres of wilderness quality federal lands in total. The Owyhee Canyonlands area represents the largest conservation opportunity in the Western United States. As we witness the encroachment of resource development on some of the wildest backcountry areas we enjoy, the time to protect this special place is now. The Owyhee Canyonlands region is wild country and our goal is to keep it that way.

In 2016, we'll also be supporting efforts to protect other important landscapes across the country, including the Grand Canyon, where development and mining interests threaten to degrade the experience of river runners. We will also be closely monitoring the future of public lands in southern Utah and the ongoing dialogue over finding the balance between resource development and conservation that embraces and recognizes outdoor recreation. In Alaska, the President has already taken a bold step in recommending Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In the coming year, we will engage in opportunities to implement this vision. In West Virginia, we are part of an effort to protect the Birthplace of Rivers, which holds the headwaters of the Gauley River.

With these efforts and others we will be working towards protection through Congress. However, if Congress fails to act we will make our case for protection through administrative action by the President. Stay tuned to our social media channels and our website for updates and ways that you can help protect these special places.

STEWARDSHIP TOP 10

Washington State: Wild Olympics



The Sitkum River on Washington's Olympic Peninsula is just one of the many rivers American Whitewater will be working to protect as Wild and Scenic.
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

FOR MORE THAN two decades American Whitewater has advocated for long-term protection of the spectacular free-flowing rivers of Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Few places on Earth offer the diversity and density of wild rivers that one finds here. In a 1993 issue of the *American Whitewater Journal*, Gary Korb described it as a "whitewater paradise, a land of towering mountains where rivers drop as much as 5000 feet in twenty miles on their way to the sea," with more than 70 runs ranging from Class I to Class VI.

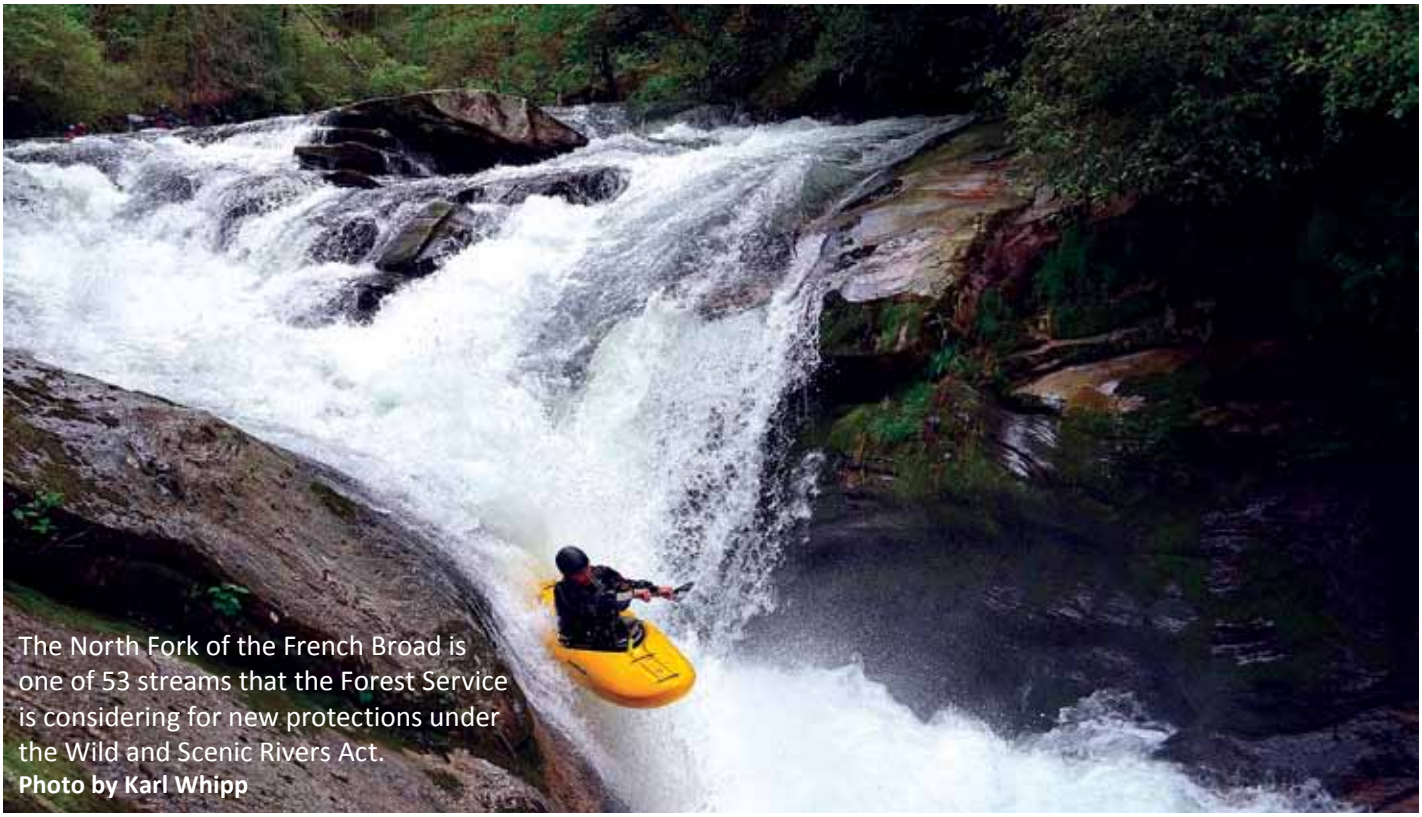
Rivers like the Elwha and Bogachiel offer great opportunities for backcountry adventures, the big drops of the Hamma Hamma and Big Quilcene attract the nation's top experts, beautiful canyons on the Sitkum and Matheny serve up high quality whitewater for the regional whitewater community during the winter rainy season, and sections of the Sol Duc are great for those just learning the sport. The Olympic Peninsula has a little something for everyone and in most years boasts year round paddling opportunities.

These rivers are important to a broader community than just whitewater paddlers. Native Americans who have called these rivers home for thousands of years have a rich cultural connection to the rivers. The rivers are also among our last strongholds for Pacific salmon and provide cool, clean water for the shellfish industry.

Strong advocates for the values these rivers represent, Senator Patty Murray and Representative Derek Kilmer introduced the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 2015, which was the third time this bill has been introduced in Congress. We will continue to seek opportunities to move the bill in Congress in 2016, as well as work to build local support and partnerships for conservation and sustainable timber harvest in a manner that addresses local economic development needs. Through our work, we are partnering with stakeholders in the timber industry to develop a vision for managing lands that are outside our wilderness proposal. Our goal is to ensure that there is a sustainable supply of timber while protecting water quality and investing in important restoration work.

Additionally, we will work with others who seek to promote the incredible assets for outdoor recreation found on the Olympic Peninsula, which attract young professionals and visitors from around the world. By building strong partnerships, we are increasing local support that will ultimately lead to permanent protection of the remaining ancient forests and all the major free-flowing rivers in this region. Stay tuned to our social media channels and website for updates.

Protecting Wild Rivers and Paddling in Western North Carolina



The North Fork of the French Broad is one of 53 streams that the Forest Service is considering for new protections under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
Photo by Karl Whipp

Crazy amounts of rain, 6,000-foot peaks, and lush uninhabited mountains make western North Carolina a paddler's dream come true. The same goes for hydropower developers. The region has almost 400 dams, and there is room for more. But we think western North Carolina's remaining free-flowing rivers should stay that way, and it turns out we are not alone. Paddlers and partners are rallying around our proposal that the Forest Service protect a significant number of streams as eligible for Wild and Scenic designation.

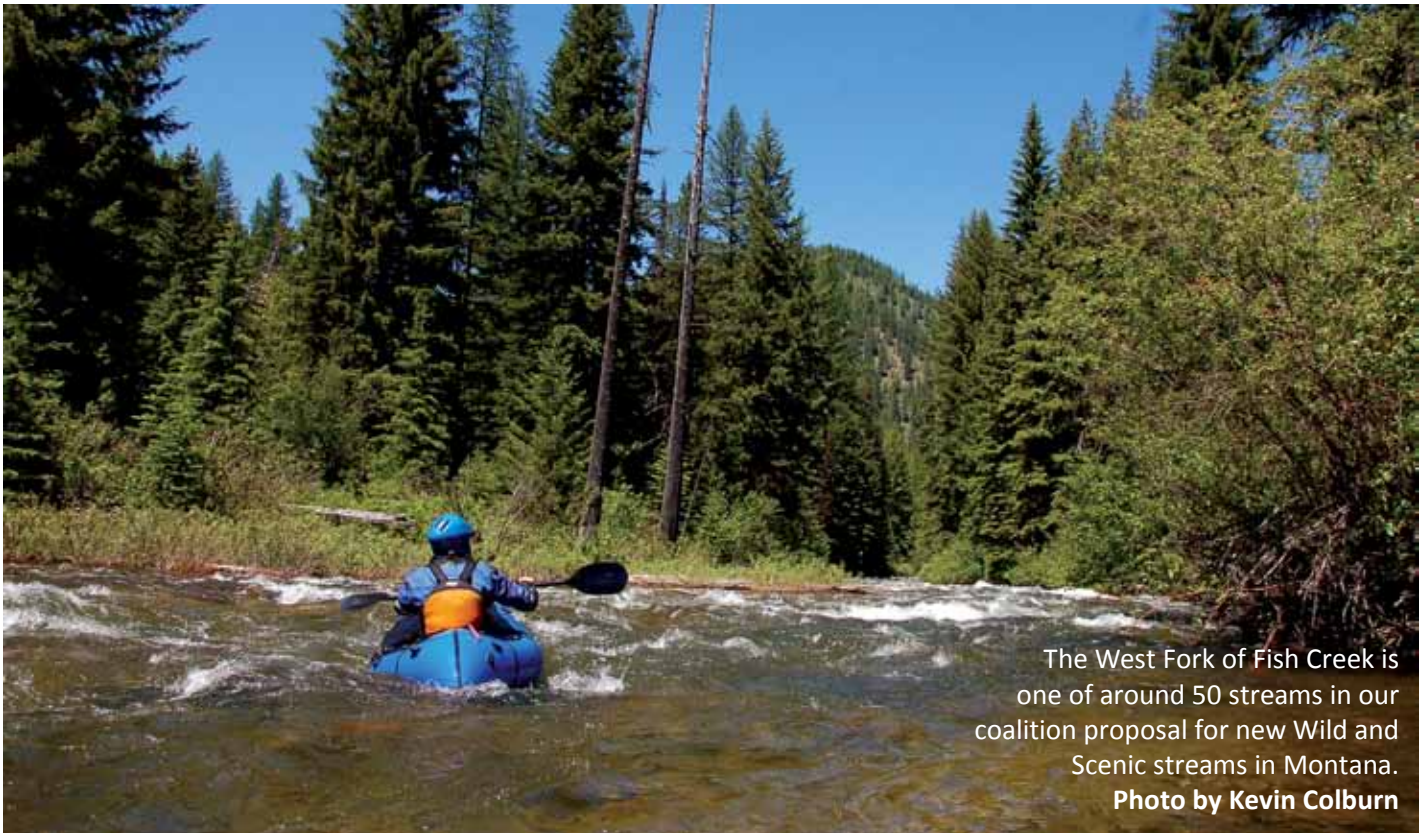
The opportunity comes only once every 15-20 years when a National Forest updates its management plan. The Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests are midway through their plan revision right now. American Whitewater has spent the past two years meeting monthly with a diverse group of stakeholders to develop recommendations to the Forest Service. The Forest Service has already recommended that 10 streams be considered as eligible, and we proposed that 22 streams be added to that list. The agency included our proposal in its request for feedback, which is a very good sign! In spring of 2016, it will release its draft Environmental Impact Statement outlining the options it is considering, and these rivers will need your support!

Want to paddle more of the Upper Chattooga more often? This forest planning process should reconsider lifting the seasonal, flow, and geographical paddling limits on the NC portion of the river and its tributaries, which represents quite a few miles. We've asked the Forest Service to take a fresh look based on the new information that it has collected. Few people paddle these sections and impacts are non-existent. The bans were always about politics, not river protection, and it's time the Forest Service manages the Chattooga River better. You'll be able to ask them to do this in 2016.

Bigger than the Chattooga is management of paddling, mountain biking, climbing, and hiking across the forests. We are working with recreational partners to advocate for a plan that celebrates the diverse recreational values these forests hold. Creative ideas include the creation of National Recreation Areas that protect our mountains and rivers while encouraging sustainable recreation. You can expect to see some exciting ideas for how the forests could be managed in 2016 and we hope we can count on you to let the Forest Service know what you think!

STEWARDSHIP TOP 10

Montana Headwaters Campaign



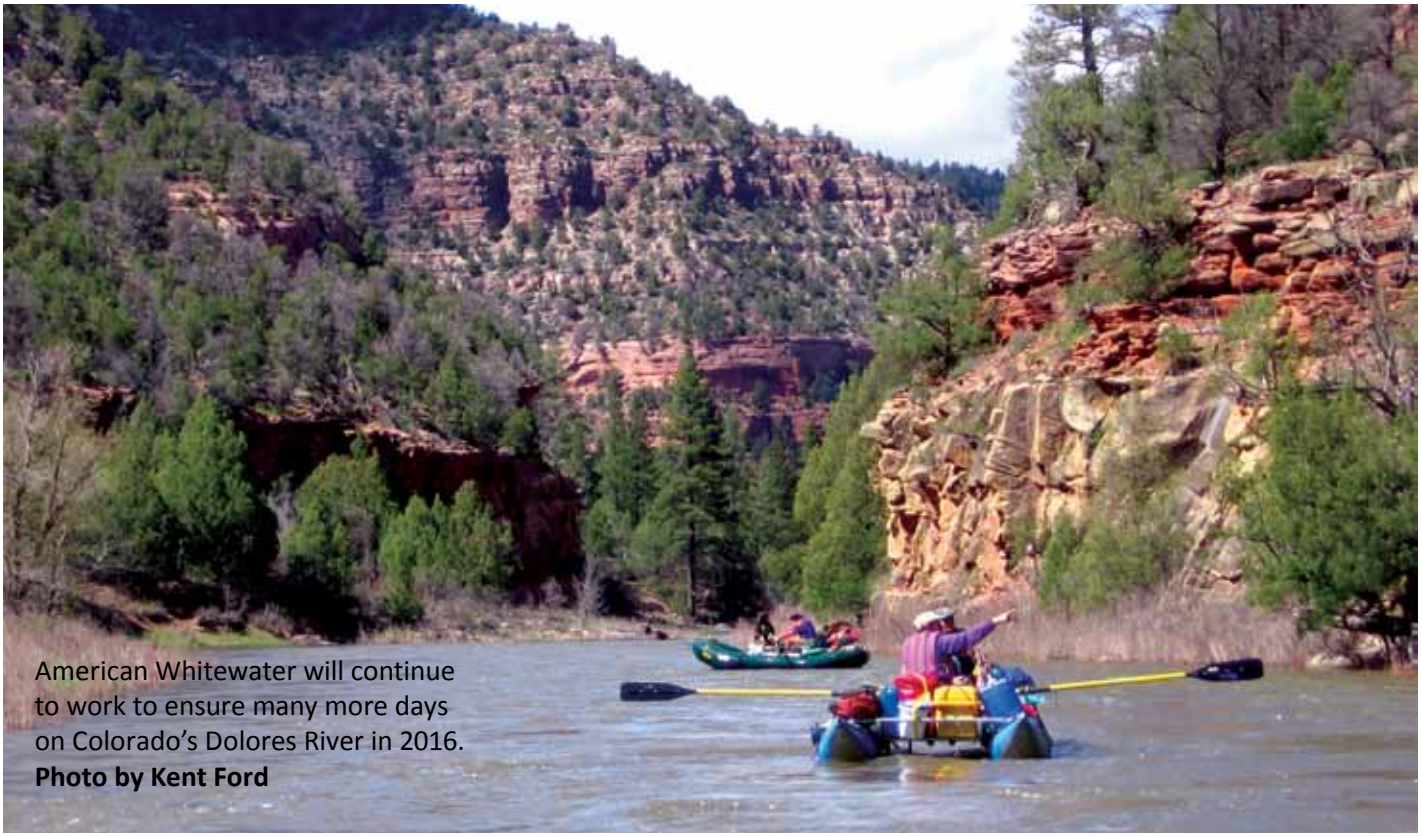
The West Fork of Fish Creek is one of around 50 streams in our coalition proposal for new Wild and Scenic streams in Montana. **Photo by Kevin Colburn**

It was 40 years ago, in October of 1976, that the last Wild and Scenic River was designated in Montana. The state has seen major changes over the past 40 years, but thankfully wild rivers still flow free through the state's spectacular northern Rocky Mountains. Five years ago, American Whitewater and several partner organizations kicked off an effort to protect some of Montana's last best rivers with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. We've created a coalition called Montanans for Healthy Rivers with American Rivers, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and Pacific Rivers Council. We aim to introduce, and hopefully pass, legislation in 2016 to designate around 700 miles of 50 rivers and streams as Wild and Scenic Rivers.

It takes a long time to shepherd an authentically grassroots effort like this from the idea stage to the passage of legislation. So far, we've collectively met with well over 100 groups and opinion leaders, hosted a dozen public meetings, and attended countless events. Support has grown organically and we are confident that Montanans are overwhelmingly in favor of new Wild and Scenic River designations. And of course, as the effort gets more "real," limited opposition is also likely to be voiced. This year will be the most important one yet for paddlers from around the region to voice their support for our proposal through comments to congressional offices and letters to the editor in newspapers.

We've recently defeated a handful of proposed dams in Montana and Idaho, and we feel the time is now to protect certain exemplary rivers from future dam proposals. Our proposal includes many Flathead watershed streams like the Spotted Bear River, Swan River, and Graves Creek. Around Missoula, we are looking at designations for Rock Creek, Monture Creek, and the North Fork Blackfoot, as well as the forks of Fish Creek. Further east, we are looking at the Gallatin, Madison, and other Bozeman area rivers, as well as a suite of incredible rivers on the Beartooth Front. Our proposal creates a system of protected whitewater runs that is unique to Montana and incredible in quality and diversity. Check out our campaign website at www.healthyriversmt.org. We'll be ramping up our efforts, and hope we can count on your help in 2016!

The Dolores: "River of Sorrows"



American Whitewater will continue to work to ensure many more days on Colorado's Dolores River in 2016. **Photo by Kent Ford**

Since 2007, American Whitewater has been heavily involved in deciding how best to protect and restore the Lower Dolores River. As most paddlers in the Southwest know, the Dolores is second only to the Grand Canyon for its multi-day desert wilderness experience, but it has been reduced to just a trickle since McPhee Dam was completed in the late 1980s. American Whitewater has been focused on restoring flows, and securing permanent protection of the rare desert canyons of the Dolores for many years. Our strategy is long-term, and in the coming year we hope to have accomplished many of the outcomes we have fought so hard for.

The Dolores was found "suitable" for Wild and Scenic River designation by a congressional study in 1974, and president Jimmy Carter recommended designation of the Dolores in 1978—which Congress failed to act on, owing to local opposition and supporters of McPhee Dam. Nearly two decades after the dam was constructed, the BLM renewed the suitability determination for the Dolores River, and asked that local interests develop an alternative to Wild and Scenic designation that the agency could accept in place of designation. Since 2007, American Whitewater and local stakeholders have been working together to figure out how to protect the Wild and Scenic values of the Dolores River, restore native fish populations, and improve the quality and quantity of boating days on the Dolores—all while balancing the water needs of local communities.

After hundreds of meetings over the past eight years, many pieces of the puzzle have come together—we have established new guidelines for how water is released from McPhee Dam for fish and padders, and new flow protections for 40 miles of the river below the San Miguel confluence are on the books. The critical part of our strategy on the Dolores that still remains, however, is to designate the Lower Dolores River as a National Conservation Area.

In 2016, we will be working with lawmakers and our conservation partners to wrap up a multi-year effort to introduce legislation that creates an alternative to Wild and Scenic designation—securing firm protections for the river canyon—along with opportunities to improve flows below McPhee Dam. Our efforts this year will ensure the legislation includes a National Conservation Area, Special Management Area, and new Wilderness designations. It will also include new release guidelines that American Whitewater and our members developed over the past eight years, which will provide opportunities to restore flows in the river.

Implementing the Colorado Water Plan

The confluence of the Yampa and Green Rivers in Dinosaur National Monument, Colorado - where plans for a new dam and reservoir would have flooded this iconic valley. **Photo by Nathan Fey**

Released in November 2015, Colorado's first-ever statewide water plan is an important step forward for the state in terms of conserving water in cities and towns, protecting rivers, and promoting world-class whitewater paddling. In 2016, American Whitewater will serve as the lead recreation interest working alongside state agencies, water utilities, irrigators, the business community, and others to implement the Water Plan and take action to ensure Colorado increases water conservation and recycling, keeps rivers healthy and flowing, and avoids new large trans-mountain diversions.

The Colorado Water Plan makes important progress in balancing Colorado's water demands by:

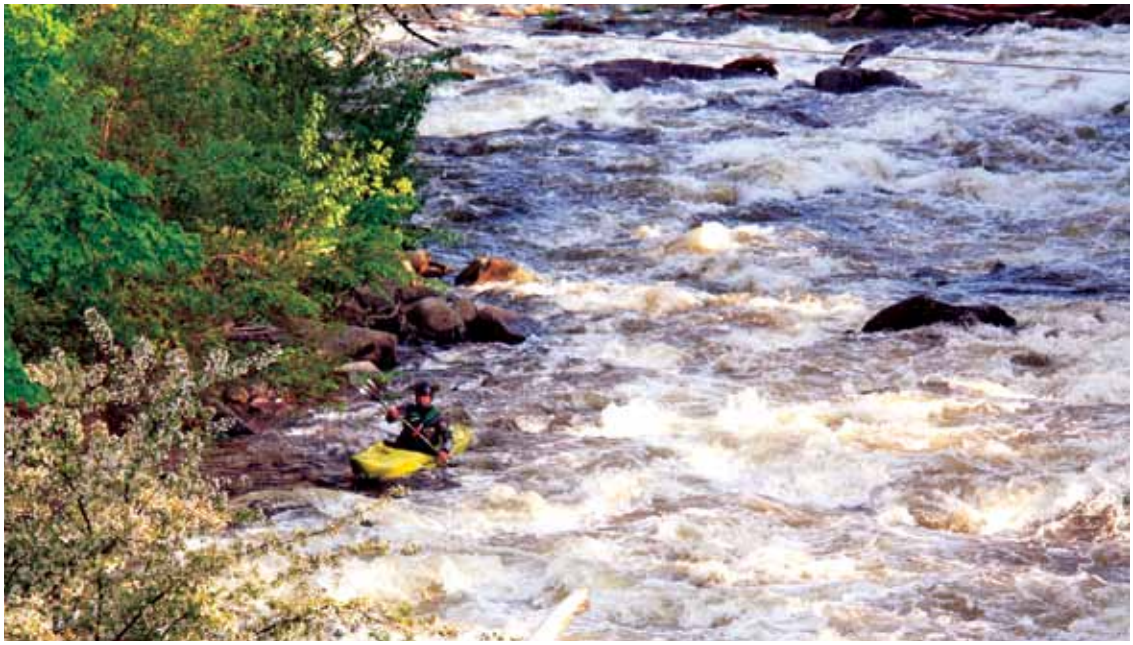
- Setting the first-ever statewide water conservation targets for cities and towns, prioritizing water conservation as never before;
- Helping preserve and restore our rivers by proposing annual funding for healthy rivers, which will create ongoing and unprecedented financial support for river assessments and restoration projects;
- Making new, costly, and controversial large dams and trans-mountain diversions that would harm rivers and local communities much less likely.

Implementing the Colorado Water Plan will mean developing stream management plans for 80 percent of the state's rivers by 2030. These plans will address a variety of concerns, including pre- and post-fire mitigation, forest health, water quality impairments, potential impacts of legacy mines, flood mitigation and recovery, aquatic and riparian habitat enhancement, and land use changes. Key to the success of Stream Management Plans will be good information on river recreation, including access needs and flow protection. After years of work ensuring that the environment and recreation are important values to Colorado's brand and the Colorado Water Plan, American Whitewater is shifting our focus in 2016 to developing local stream management plans that reflect what is needed to protect and enhance paddling opportunities, and how good water management, stream restoration, and new projects can improve our economy and way of life.

In 2016, we will tackle several important demonstration projects around the state that put the Water Plan into action. These include stream-management plans for high-priority rivers like the Yampa, Colorado, Rio Grande, and tributaries of the Gunnison. In other watersheds, we will work with local agencies and counties to evaluate how small new reservoirs may affect existing paddling opportunities.

We have a lot of work to do in 2016! The Water Plan will only have value if our members provide input and Colorado's leaders take action to implement it. Meeting all of Colorado's water needs will require cooperation and action in the same spirit of collaboration, flexibility, and innovation that was shown in producing the Water Plan.

Navigating, Protecting, and Restoring the Connecticut River Watershed



New Hampshire's Mascoma River is threatened by a hydropower company's proposal to build a dam. **Photo by Nick Gottlieb**

For fish and boaters alike, easily navigating the Connecticut River Basin's 38 major rivers and 148 tributaries is nearly impossible. With 54 major dams covering the river's 410 miles, it is among the most extensively dammed river systems in the United States. Hydropower dams on the mainstem and tributaries have dewatered many miles of the natural river channel and closed portions of the river to public access. As if these impacts weren't damaging enough, a newly proposed hydropower project threatens to destroy one of the few remaining whitewater boating opportunities in the watershed.

Hydropower relicensing provides river advocates in the Northeast with an opportunity to restore, preserve, and enhance recreational opportunities. On the mainstem of the Connecticut River, FirstLight and TransCanada are seeking to relicense five hydropower projects in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts that have an impact on whitewater boating at Sumners Falls, Bellows Falls, and Turners Falls. At Bellows Falls and Turners Falls, hydropower operations have dewatered the natural river channel below the dams, eliminated opportunities for beginning and intermediate whitewater boating, and destroyed aquatic habitat. The public has been impeded from utilizing these reaches by the lack of scheduled flows, inadequate public access, and the lack of available information. Whitewater boating studies on all three sections demonstrated the importance of these boating opportunities to our community.

Existing and proposed dams also affect whitewater boating opportunities on the tributaries of the Connecticut River. On the Deerfield River, relicensing of the Bear Swamp Pumped Storage Project in Florida, MA provides us with the opportunity to improve on the current whitewater releases from the Fife Brook Dam, and improve access and whitewater boating on rapids above the dam. On the Mascoma River in Lebanon, NH, hydropower developers are threatening to build a new dam that would eliminate whitewater boating and dewater a section of the river that provides advanced whitewater boating opportunities. And on the West River in Vermont, where all but a single scheduled whitewater release have been unjustifiably eliminated, we are continuing our efforts to educate and advocate that whitewater boating opportunities be restored.

Through our work in the Connecticut River Watershed, we are also supporting efforts to protect scenic and recreational values through the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. Legislation to designate the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook through the Act has been introduced, and we are working with our partners in an effort to protect whitewater boating on these rivers, including the Tarrifville Gorge section, which has been the site of national whitewater championships.

Restoring natural flows and protecting treasured rivers will provide new and expanded recreational opportunities, and will also have positive economic benefits for the region. Through hydropower relicensing, Wild & Scenic River protections, opposing the construction of new dams, navigating, protecting, and restoring the rivers of the Connecticut River watershed will be a priority for American Whitewater in 2016.

Preventing Costly New Dams in California

Another year of drought has made the water situation in California even more dire. In October 2015, most of California's reservoirs were depleted to 10% to 30% of their total capacity. While this news fueled a louder cry for more new dams and storage, these cries come despite the fact that proposals to build new dams and raise existing ones would actually do very little to relieve California's water woes.

Binocular Rapid on the Patterson Bend section of the San Joaquin River, which is difficult to scout, can be viewed with binoculars from the distant take-out road. This area will be deep underwater if Temperance Flat Dam is built and filled.
Photo by Paul Martzen

For example, the Bureau of Reclamation is proposing to build Temperance Flat Dam on the San Joaquin River, which would flood the San Joaquin Gorge. By any measure, this dam is a complete economic boondoggle. If built, it would be the second tallest dam in California and yield a paltry 60,000 acre-feet of water for a price tag of $3 billion. By comparison, the tallest dam in California–Oroville Dam–has an annual yield of 20 times more water at 1.2 million acre-feet. On top of that, building Temperance Flat Dam would actually reduce the amount of power generated on that section of river.

There's clearly a disconnect between the hard numbers of economics and water yield and the mounting pressure for more storage. This same disconnect weaves its way through the myriad of proposals for other storage projects in California, including raising Shasta Dam, raising New Exchequer Dam on the Merced River, building a new dam on the Bear River, and building Sites Valley Reservoir, which would require drawing water from the Sacramento River and pumping it off the river channel and into a yet-to-be developed reservoir. The combined expense of these projects is in the tens of billions of dollars, and they will flood precious river reaches and further destroy California's river ecosystem by changing natural flow patterns. Most importantly, the reality is that new dams will produce little, if any, new water for Californians. This is a perfect illustration of the fact that all of the cost-effective sites for storage dams have already been developed.

It seems that the main objective of these storage proposals is to help some avoid the reality that Mother Nature has given us all the water that she can, and that we will have to use the 50 million acre-feet of water from existing dams in the state more efficiently in the future. In 2015, Californians clearly demonstrated that this is possible. Between June and September, when water demand is usually the highest, residents reduced their water consumption by more than 25%. Urban water users are on track to conserve a total of 1.2 million acre-feet by February, which is 20 times more water than would come from Temperance Flat Dam each year. This is enough water to provide over one third of the residents in California all the water they need for indoor household uses like drinking, cooking, and bathing for an entire year. It is important to note that this is real water, rather than water that is based on the misguided hope that it will snow and rain more in the future.

In 2016, American Whitewater will work with other river conservation organizations and environmental groups to educate the public and legislators on the folly of these new storage projects. We will also engage with groups that encourage fiscal responsibility. This makes sense, given that these projects are more geared to capturing taxpayer dollars than water.

Top Ten Conclusion

We've got our work cut out for us in 2016, and there is a direct role for our members (that would be you) in each of these projects. Your membership dollars and donations directly fund this work. Your emails and calls to decision makers when we ask for them can help these projects succeed. Showing up at a public meeting or hearing is hugely helpful. Your photos, videos, and stories about the rivers featured in these projects helps build public awareness and enthusiasm for protecting the rivers we love. Thank you for your support so far. We hope to continue to offer a meaningful way for each of our members to engage in these projects this year, and look forward to sharing some successful outcomes that benefit the rivers and all who enjoy them. Stay tuned to our webpage or social media channels for updates throughout the year!

TOP TEN 2015 UPDATE

BY AW STEWARDSHIP STAFF

Curious about what happened with our 2015 Top Ten Stewardship Issues? Here's an update on what happened last year.

Preventing New Dams In California

Worsening drought kept American Whitewater busy battling proposals for ineffective and costly new dams in 2015. We met with legislators and agency staff throughout the year, including joining with other conservation organizations to spend a day at the State Capitol in Sacramento educating legislators about the importance of rivers and the folly of thinking that we can dam our way out of the current drought. We also met with the state director for the Bureau of Land Management to support their recommendation that a segment of the San Joaquin River, where the Temperance Flat Dam is proposed, be designated as Wild and Scenic. As you can see by our 2016 Top Ten, we're in this for the long haul!

Opposing New Dams in Alaska - Susitna and Talkeetna Rivers

In late 2014, hydropower developers secured a preliminary permit to explore the potential to build a hydropower dam on the Talkeetna River. In July, federal regulators eliminated the immediate concern over hydropower development by pulling the plug on the proposed project's preliminary permit. The Susitna-Watana Hydropower Project remains on life support. Alaska Governor Bill Walker initially placed a spending freeze on the project shortly after taking office in 2014, but lifted it in July, allowing the state to spend previously allocated funds to wrap up studies. With low oil prices affecting state revenue, further progress on the estimated $5.5 billion project remains in question. However, many are still eager to move it forward.

Securing a River Access Plan for Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

We did it! Thanks to the help of a great group of paddlers and planners from across the region, we completed a river access plan for Harpers Ferry in 2015. You can check it out at: http://arcg.is/1DvCqCy. American Whitewater hosted workshops and site visits last year and reviewed 23 potential, historical, and current river access sites. Out of these, we selected a handful of recommendations and pulled together a work group to tackle each of them. In our research on Millville Dam, we realized it segments a huge section of otherwise free-flowing river, impedes fish and boat passage, dewaters a reach, and on average, generates very little power and loses money. We've asked federal regulators to consider removing the dam. We are also pleased to report that we secured a second year of Park Service assistance, and have high hopes for this project.

Protecting Rivers Through Forest Service and BLM Management Plans

Advocating for Wild and Scenic eligibility has become a core effort for American Whitewater. It is an efficient and effective way for paddlers to protect rivers from future hydropower threats, and we saw success with it in 2015. In western North Carolina, the Forest Service requested public comment on 53 potentially eligible streams, 22 of which we previously pitched to the Forest Service for review. We are hopeful this is a good sign that we'll see major new river protections in the region. It helped that we won an appeal of a lackluster eligibility process in Idaho and Montana, and secured two new eligible streams through that process. The outcome of our efforts in other regions remains to be seen, but we will continue to engage in planning efforts that include rivers our community enjoys. This work is ongoing and going well!

River Access in the Pacific Northwest

American Whitewater celebrated the opening of new river access sites on the Nooksack (WA), Sauk (WA), Canyon Creek

The proposal for a new hydropower dam on the Talkeetna River in Alaska was halted in 2015.
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

Bull Falls on the Shenandoah is the first Class III rapid tackled by many mid-Atlantic paddlers. American Whitewater completed a river access plan for Harpers Ferry, WV in 2015.
Photo by Justin Abel

(WA), Sultan (WA), and Clackamas (OR) in 2015. We continued to work with local partners to bring Punchbowl Falls in Oregon into public ownership and we were partners in the publication of a new recreation plan for the Nooksack River in Washington. We were on the ground for site visits at several other rivers across the region, setting the groundwork for development and improvement at several other sites. In the Washington State Legislature, we killed one bill that would have reduced access at bridge crossings. We also ran our own bill to enhance access at bridges, which passed unanimously in the Senate before we ran out of time to secure passage in the House. We will be back this year.

Protecting Free-Flowing Rivers Across the Northwest

Just as the 113th session drew to a close in 2014, Congress passed important Wild and Scenic River legislation for Illabot Creek, Middle Fork Snoqualmie, and Pratt Rivers in Washington. In particular, we're especially proud to see the Middle Fork Snoqualmie receive protection because it is a river that one of American Whitewater's founders, Wolf Bauer, recognized as a candidate for protection more than 50 years ago. As a new session opened in 2015, Congressional representatives reintroduced legislation for the Wild Olympics in Washington and on the Rogue and Molalla Rivers in Oregon. Throughout the year, we continued work with partners in the river conservation community to make progress on our Nooksack and Montana Headwaters proposals.

Restoring Flows to Dolores River, Colorado

While the "Miracle in May" delivered a significant amount of rain and snow to the Dolores River Basin, the impact of long-term drought held the Dolores River in its grasp again in 2015. McPhee reservoir remained below full capacity, deferring any release into the Lower Dolores for boating this year. Local farmers and ranchers were short in their supplies of water, as were the fish and recreation economy from Cortez to Gateway. On another note, the Dolores River did receive a new instream flow water right from the State, protecting flows up to 900 cfs along 40 miles of the river from the San Miguel confluence to the Town of Gateway. This is a significant addition to the suite of protective measures that American Whitewater has pursued and supported for the past decade.

Protecting Streamflows in Rivers across the Southwest

In 2015, American Whitewater leveraged the data collected from our members to improve the quality of watershed management across the west. In Colorado, new Stream Management Plans are being developed under the new State Water Plan that will integrate this information to ensure that high-priority paddling opportunities are not sacrificed through the search for new water supplies. Across the region, this information is helping American Whitewater defend our rivers and mitigate the impacts from damming and diverting even more water.

Promoting Healthy Rivers in the Northeast through Hydropower Relicensing

In 2015, American Whitewater continued to advocate on behalf of our members through the hydropower relicensing process throughout the Northeast. We completed a flow study on the Connecticut River at Bellows Falls, successfully advocated for flow and access studies on the Deerfield River, and provided data-based critical analysis on several hydropower dams in the region. While relicensing is a lengthy process, our work over the past year will help ensure that boaters will have improved access to whitewater rivers that have been affected by hydropower dams.

Protecting Northeast Wild & Scenic Rivers

In 2015 we celebrated the designation of the Missisquoi and Trout Rivers in Northern Vermont as the state's first rivers protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. We also continued our efforts in support of additional federal river protections in the region—including designating the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook in Connecticut as Wild and Scenic—and began to develop the preliminary stages of a campaign to protect other valued rivers in the Green Mountains.

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THE HEART OF THE SIERRAS: HIKING IN, PADDLING OUT—AN ADVENTURE ON THE MERCED RIVER IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

BY PRISCILLA MACY

The author enjoys the view on the paddle out through Little Yosemite Valley.
Photo by Jacob Cruser

In June of 2015, my boyfriend Jacob and I set out to run some of the newly opened stretches of the Merced River in Yosemite National Park. We are drawn to paddling not only for the sake of the experience, but also because we enjoy compiling the necessary information and coordinating logistics. I studied Recreation Resource Management for a majority of my higher education, and I was drawn to running the Merced because it was an undocumented kayak exploration within one of our nation's most esteemed National Parks. Jacob has always loved the logistical preparations involved with kayaking and this run involved complex, detailed planning, map work, and preparing for previously undocumented whitewater. For both of us, the trip was long, rewarding, and full of trials. It's one of our favorite adventures yet.

History

The story of the Upper Merced began long before the publicized descents of 2015. The Merced and its headwaters have long held value for Yosemite visitors. The natives of Yosemite, the Ahwahneechee, made their home along the banks of the Merced, but in the early 19th century, Spanish explorers titled the river "*El Rio de Nuestra Señora de la Merced*" (River of our Lady of Mercy), and it has since been abridged to simply the Merced. In 1869, Yosemite legend John Muir traveled to its headwaters and ascertained that in this "heart" of the Sierras one could find a sense of "true freedom, a good practical sort of immortality."

Paddlers had long sought to enjoy this sense of freedom on the Upper Merced, but were denied that opportunity. For decades the Park Service prohibited paddling on most of the rivers within Yosemite, including most sections of the Merced. The river

Jacob hikes to the put-in for the Merced River in Yosemite. Not a bad view, right!?!
Photo by Priscilla Macy

was designated as Wild and Scenic in 1987, which served to protect its Outstandingly Remarkable Values (requirements for designating a river Wild and Scenic). Although recreation—including whitewater recreation—is often considered a Wild and Scenic value worth protecting, at the time, paddlers were still prohibited from experiencing the Park by boat.

In 2010, the Park began to develop the Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, giving the public an opportunity to weigh in about what was important to them in the river corridor. Initially the Park proposed to maintain the status quo and continue to keep boaters off of the river. American Whitewater participated throughout the planning processes, advocating that the Park manage paddling just as they would any other activity within the Park, like hiking, climbing, and backcountry camping. The organization was also committed to endorsing paddling as a mode of low impact recreation that fits well with wilderness values, which was an important component of opening the conversation.

Through several rounds of comments and meetings, American Whitewater's California Stewardship Director Dave Steindorf worked with Park staff to offer ways to both address the Park's concerns and open the river to paddling. After years of negotiations, most of the Merced officially opened to paddlers in April 2015, with Park administrators committing "to figuring out a way to keep the river open to providing boater access as well as making it as hassle-free as possible." It certainly was a significant day for the paddling community, and an important piece of the grander plan to preserve the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Wild and Scenic Merced River. It also gave us a chance to travel to the heart of the Sierras and seek out Muir's sense of freedom.

The Story: Running the Merced

Our part of the story started earlier in 2015 with our first trip to the High Sierras. Jacob rarely goes anywhere without eyeing a set of maps first, and this trip was no exception. We had our sights set on South Silver and Upper Cherry, but with flows looking higher than we had hoped for, Jacob sleuthed around the Internet for backup options and came across an American Whitewater article detailing a number of runs that were legalized for the first time in the Yosemite area. With hopes for Upper Cherry, and back up plans in store, we then headed south, eager to reach our planned destination.

After a fun day of sliding down South Silver we saw Upper Cherry flows were still higher

SLICE 11'

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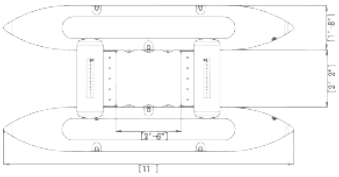

Quick Facts:

- 11'x 5'6", 50 lbs.
- 20" Diameter Tubes
- 6" Bow/Stern Rocker
- 1100/4000 Denier PVC
- Poly-urethane Bottom Wear Patches
- 3" Drop-stitch Floor
- 2 Dry-Zip Compartments
- Backpack, Foot-pump, Repair Kit
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than we had hoped for, and the groups split up to each accomplish their preferred experience during our limited time in the Sierras. Jacob, Kory, and I headed to Yosemite to do some sightseeing, and all the while Jacob was whispering sweet nothings about the run American Whitewater had just secured access to. We agreed to humor him and went to the local raft guide shop to see if they had an inflatable kayak (IK) for rent, to no avail. We then headed into the park and opened a guidebook found in the main Wilderness Center to see what was available for us to hike. After seeing a picture of an unnamed cascade—one of the large slides Jacob had been describing to us—it was no longer a difficult sell to haul one of our hard-shell kayaks seven miles up the John Muir trail for a ride down the slide.

Unfortunately Jacob's research had come up short in regards to the permit system, and we were soon informed that all the permits had been issued for the day. Instead, we decided to head to Ostrander Lake and experience, for our first time, a night under the stars in Yosemite.

While our fortune did not allow us to run any part of the Merced this time, we could not let go of the magnificence of the park, and the appeal of the river that lay in the heart of the park. We spent the next few weeks planning our return, and doing the necessary research to give us the best possible chances for success in completing the run. When flows finally lined up with our work schedules, we took time off and headed back to California, this time with the correct information necessary to

Priscilla runs the first slide below Merced Lake.
Photo by Jacob Cruser

secure a permit. (See the sidebar for basic info on permits and the hikes.)

Although advertisements imply that a high clearance vehicle is necessary to reach a whitewater run of this caliber, we took a more renegade approach in order to reduce gas costs and borrowed Jacob's mom's Prius for the trip. It proved to be a perfectly acceptable method of navigating the paved roads within Yosemite to reach the access trail. Armed with a $100 gas card Jacob had received as a birthday gift from his grandmother, our total out of pocket cost for the expedition, including the $30 entrance fee to the park, gas, food, and free wilderness permit was under $100.

After driving through the night to acquire our permit, we took a much needed nap and spent some time walking around Yosemite Valley. While taking some pictures of a deer amongst the valley scenery, we saw another group of kayakers drive by, having just completed the run for themselves. We gave them the universal kayaker sign ("brown-claw"), but the difficulty of the task before us was apparent in their exhausted hundred-yard stares.

The next morning we set off from Glacier Point with our inflatable kayaks (lighter than conventional kayaks) and overnight gear strapped to our backs and into an area so much more impressive than we had dared

PERMITS AND HIKING

If you'd like to paddle the Upper Merced, here's some basic information on permits and hiking to help you plan. Trailheads are arranged from least energy output to most, and named by the starting points and trail names of the four most obvious access trails. All of these hikes use a portion of the John Muir Trail, and distances are to Merced Lake. If you plan on running the upper stretch starting at the Lyell Fork confluence, add about five miles to the hike.

To run the Upper Merced, paddlers need a wilderness permit, the same kind required for backpacking and other overnight wilderness uses within the Park. Because reserving a permit months in advance is not realistic for paddlers requiring specific flows, we only mention information about first-come, first served permits. These permits are issued at wilderness permit stations in the Park at 11 a.m. the day before they are valid. Permit priority for a particular trailhead is given to the closest permit issuing station, though a permit can be procured for any trail at any permit issuing station. Show up willing to use any of the trailheads available, and have a list of options. Early arrival is wise.

Glacier Point: A little over 13 miles. This option allows you to camp about eight miles up the trail near Moraine Dome, at the end of the whitewater section. This means paddlers can ditch their camping gear here and hike the rest of the way to put-in with only a partial load. First come, first served permits available: 4

Tenaya/Sunrise Lakes: About 11 miles. This hike has two uphill portions, each a mile or less. You will need to carry your full gear to the Lost Valley. From the Crux Gorge and down, you will need to make the run with a loaded boat. First come, first served permits available: 6

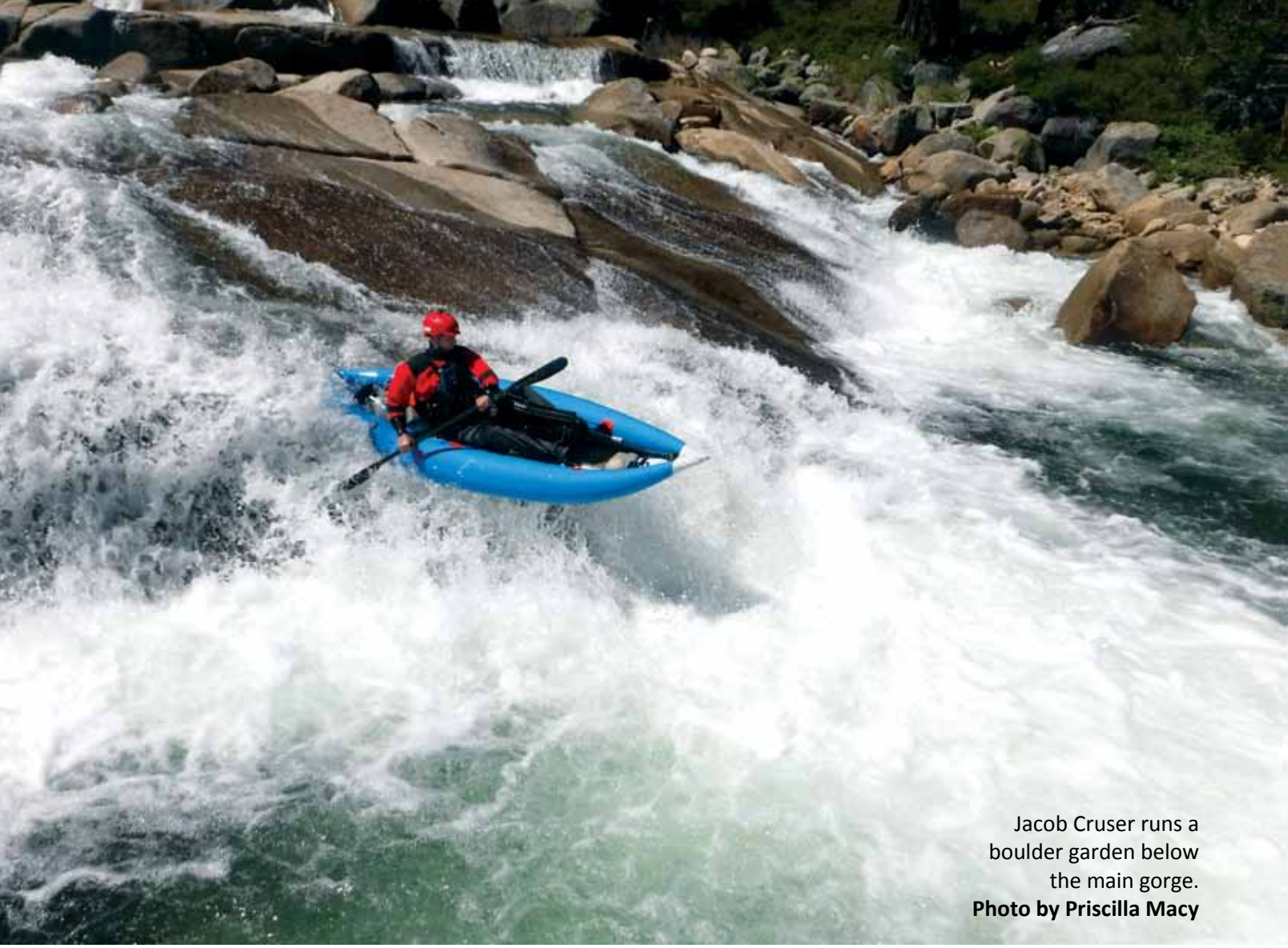
Tuolomne/Rafferty: Just over 14 miles. This is the longest distance to Merced Lake on this list, dropping into the Merced about a mile above Merced Lake. It is a good option for boaters running the section above Merced Lake. Merced Lake is a good campsite; however, from this trailhead everything below the lake must be run with a full load. First come, first served permits available: 8

Happy Isles: Although this hike is shorter than Tuolumne/Rafferty at about 11 ½ miles, be aware the first three miles climb a brutal 2,000 feet of elevation. Paddlers can camp at Moraine Dome. First come, first served permits available: 12. Note that these are highly sought after by hikers.

Parking is also more regulated in Yosemite than it is on the average kayaking run. The bus system is not designed for kayaking purposes, but can be used for shuttling people. Check out the "Getting Around Yosemite" section of the Park Service's Yosemite National Park website for more info.

Access for kayakers is not completely dialed in yet, so more options for getting into this section may be available to crafty boaters. All trips require a hike out of four miles along the John Muir Trail (the Mist Trail is not recommended for kayakers with backpacks).

Check out americanwhitewater.org for more beta about the whitewater!



Jacob Cruser runs a boulder garden below the main gorge.
Photo by Priscilla Macy

hope. Yosemite Valley is amazing and full of outstanding views; but the path to Little Yosemite Valley takes you from the role of a viewer, through the frame to become a part of those views. We found the eight-mile hike to camp to be taxing, but never once got to the point of exhaustion or regret or to a place where we wanted to "just get there." Both of us agreed this was the most rewarding hike of our lives. There were scattered thunderstorms that were exciting to watch, and we had the good fortune of setting up our camp during a dry spell, just before the final rainstorm of the night. We ate, got a decent night's rest and woke up the next day ready for what lay ahead.

Hiking up from the bottom allowed us to scout the river on the way up, and these scouts were a good excuse to remove our packs and take in the colossal granite landscape we were surrounded by. The four-and-a-half miles of river from Merced Lake back down to our camp was two days of mind-blowingly high quality boating. Coming from Oregon where basalt is the way of the river, this style of glacially carved granite riverbed was new to us—and we loved it. The typical "Class Fun" whitewater, two committing gorges (we portaged both), and the three outrageously clean 50-foot cascades the Merced offered were only eclipsed in our minds by the reverence this place commanded when we were afforded the time to look around and soak it in.

After two days of piecing together the whitewater sections below Merced Lake, we were rewarded with running the final slide—the one from the hiking guidebook that had originally inspired the trip. Jacob was so thrilled at both the completion of the run, and the fun involved in the first lap down the slide that he went up for a second lap, before we paddled over to our camp at the base of the slide.

Having decided that we wanted to complete the hike out that afternoon, we ate some lunch, and packed up for our paddle to Little Yosemite Valley. Now, having all of our camping gear in our boats, we both noticed that the short boulder gardens and few log portages were more challenging than some of the whitewater upstream, only due to our loaded boats and general state of tiredness.

The float through Little Yosemite Valley was like taking a Disneyland ride through an Ansel Adams print. The river trail veers away from the hiking trail here, which allowed us a private tour of one of the most awe-inspiring portions of one of the most visited parks in the country. This was possibly our favorite part of the trip, where

the easy-to-negotiate water allowed us to reflect and take in the granite moonscape.

Having reached our take-out at Little Yosemite Valley, we reluctantly deflated our boats, and pieced back together our IK backpack set ups. With our foam floors saturated from paddling, the packs had gained significant weight, and made the hike ahead seem much less pleasant than our earlier trek in. Jacob and I decided to hike out via the Mist trail—one that had enticed us with shorter distance than the alternative John Muir trail, and boasted sublime views of both Nevada and Vernal Falls, consecutive 300-plus-foot high waterfalls with the entire flow of the Merced River charging over them.

Within the first mile of this trail we realized that the hike out was going to be the most physically draining part of the whole journey. The Mist trail descends over 2,000 feet in less than three miles; with heavy packs and slippery granite steps, the trail provided moments where we just wanted to be done. After reaching the main Valley, and with luck, catching one of the last buses to the backpacker's camp, we were happy to close our eyes and get as much rest as we could in preparation for the long drive back in the morning.

The conversations on the drive home bounced between the quality of the whitewater, the challenges of the hike, and the general satisfaction of the experience that we had just been a part of. On parts of the drive home, we looked for audiobook stories about the original explorations of Yosemite, those without paths or digital imagery.

We continued to have conversation about how appreciative we are that Yosemite retains its prestige and wild character, while at the same time allowing boaters to legally access and experience this place in the way they best connect with the world.

Looking Forward

The Merced River plan represents more than just the opening of an incredible whitewater run. The collaborations between American Whitewater and the Park Service may prove a catalyst for future discussions to legalize other streams in Yosemite, as well as other National Parks. Through this, paddlers have been presented the chance to establish our sport as low impact on the environment and in alignment with the wilderness values that the stewards of our country's National Parks hold dear.

WHITEWATER WARRIORS:
TEAM RIVER RUNNER, ASHEVILLE
BY JULIET V. MATTHEWS

BJ Phillips guides local veterans down the Nantahala River. **Photo by Jim Glaze**

I believe there is a special camaraderie that exists among paddlers. When I am with my friends or even a stranger and we are kayaking alone in a gorge, deep in the woods on a cold winter day, I don't think about work or the unfolded laundry. I simply enjoy the moment and focus on my environment and those around me. In 2011 I began driving from Birmingham, Alabama to parts of western North Carolina and northeastern Georgia almost every chance I got in order to kayak. Good fortune brought me the opportunity to kayak as a volunteer with members of the Asheville chapter of Team River Runner, or TRR. I had never heard of this organization, so I searched the Internet to learn what they were about ("To create an environment of healthy adventure for healing active duty and veteran service members through adaptive kayaking."). The more I discovered about this great organization, the more impressed I was. Everything I discovered about the boaters with whom I would soon be kayaking down the river forever changed my perspective on whitewater and on life.

My first-hand experience with TRR began on Memorial Day weekend, 2012. The river destination was the Tuckaseegee River in Dillsboro, North Carolina. I was invited to participate as a volunteer sweep (safety boater) that day. As I waited in the parking lot at the put-in, a nice, super-sized, white van arrived from the Charles V. George V.A. Center. Loaded inside were some enthusiastic paddlers, a bunch of boats, and gear. I was excited to see people of varying ages, races, and backgrounds so eager to be on the river.

The boaters were active duty service members, veterans, or their family members. They were all at the river that day, some of them possibly on their first whitewater descent, thanks to TRR. I would later learn that TRR was not only offering an opportunity for challenges via kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, whitewater boating, and other paddlesports, but was providing the opportunity for service members and vets to find health and healing. These folks were getting the benefits of having a social network and support system and were part of a progressive step-by-step program to learn whitewater skills. They were embarking on many exciting adventures and were on a journey to accomplish things that may have seemed impossible before.

Everyone had a smile that day as we enjoyed the warmth of sunshine in forgiving Class II rapids. I paddled that day with Victor Gaines, and Horace McDonald. I would return to this river later, as well as Section 9 of the French Broad, to share many laughs with Victor's daughter, Angela Richmond. We also shared some

moments of excitement as we navigated down rapids. I was forced to step up my river skills a notch when Horace's nephew, Tristan, a new kayaker and a bright child, encouraged me to try new things on the river and practice my roll.

Kayaking with these folks was a blast. Soon I wanted to know more about some of their stories and why each person chose to travel down the river. I already knew from my research on TRR's website that it existed for the purpose of creating "an environment of healthy adventure for healing active duty and veteran service members through paddles sports." I also discovered that the organization gave the family members of veterans the opportunity to participate in paddle sports as well. Some of the veterans may have been recovering from post-traumatic stress disorder or were living with a physical or other mental disability. Their being on the river was not only a time for learning, but also a time to socialize and let Mother Nature recharge their brains. This made me realize that one of the many reasons I kept returning to the river was that it fueled my soul, cleared my mind, conditioned my body, introduced me to friends, and helped me overcome my fears.

I wanted to learn more about the veterans I met on the river with TRR, and I decided the best way to get the willing to share their stories was over dinner at the local pizzeria. Horace and Cliff Counsell, TRR Asheville's highly organized and thorough Trip Coordinator and kayaker, took charge of getting veterans to join us for pizza and conversation. On a cold winter night, 10 people showed up, and over several hot pies their stories unfolded.

Victor, 58, got involved with TRR after meeting with Beverly Bradigan, the lead recreation therapist at the Asheville Veterans' Medical Center. Beverly thought Victor would be interested in a new activity in the community for veterans, and Juliet Jacobsen Kastorff and Becca Day of Endless River Adventures were starting a chapter called Team River Runner Asheville. Victor told me that he already loved water sports, so he gave it a try. While he had canoed in the past, he had not whitewater kayaked. His first training session was at Warren Wilson College in the swimming pool. All of the equipment was provided by TRR, which Victor thought was great. Today he owns his own gear and has been boating with TRR for five years. He says that TRR has made a significant difference in his life, as kayaking has helped him relieve stress, and it helps him mentally, physically, and spiritually.

Victor also gets to spend time with his family on river trips with TRR. His daughter and her husband Mark are a regular part of the group; Mark has even purchased his own kayak. Angela tells me that she really enjoys seeing how the inexperienced vets react during their first boating experience. She says that TRR made her realize that anything is possible, and the TRR experience has been nothing but positive for her dad. When I asked for Victor's wisdom about why other vets would benefit from TRR, he said, "The benefits are freedom on the water with a sense of independence, yet being a part of the group, and knowing that when someone is in trouble on the water you or your buddies will be there to help them. Pretty much like we were there for each other in the military."

Like a good comrade, Victor invited Horace McDonald to join TRR. Horace would quickly play an integral role in getting the vets to and from the river, as well as down it, as the trip driver, boat loader, and sometimes lead paddler/guide on different rivers. Horace can drive a Sprinter van through the switchbacks to the lower Green River like a pro. He told me that when he first saw the flyer about TRR, he really wasn't interested, but then he met Victor who made kayaking sound fun. So he tried it and had a good time! Horace has led boaters down several scenic and challenging rivers in the Southeast and tested his skills on the Salmon River in Idaho while boating during the TRR National trip in 2013. He told me

A TRR veteran kayaking down the Nantahala River.
Photo by Jim Glaze

Victor Gaines, Leslie Segal, and Horace McDonald on a TRR trip.
Photo by Will Leverette

that kayaking has had a positive effect on his life and has caused him to get out and meet people. For Horace, steering away from isolation and toward being closer with his family is the benefit of being on the river. He feels that being a part of TRR has presented him with a chance to work on his leadership skills, a physical challenge, and a mechanism to improve his mental and physical health.

Veteran and kayaker Mike Dow shared with me his first experience boating with Horace and TRR on the Upper Green River. They reached a rapid called Pinball, which is a Class III+ double drop. Horace had paddled ahead of Mike, and suddenly Horace disappeared below the horizon line. Mike saw Horace's paddle blade fly wildly in the air and thought, "This can't be good." Still, he paddled into Pinball rapid, charged on, and made it through. Mike said that when he moved to Asheville in 2013 he hadn't been in a boat for over 12 years. He saw a flyer about TRR, contacted the V.A., and on a beautiful day ventured down the Tuckaseegee River with Team River Runner. Later that day the weather turned into a massive thunderstorm, but Mike said all he could think while being on the water with a storm looming overhead was, "What other sport can you do and it feels so good?" He says that kayaking has given him life-changing experiences and opened up the possibility that he can do wonders.

Other TRR boaters like Ephram Byerly, David Whitlow, and Mike Hyer all share the common experience that boating is not only challenging but a fun social experience. When John Coligado was having trouble adjusting to life after the military, a V.A. psychologist at the Columbia, South Carolina V.A. Center recommended he try TRR. Since then, he has developed many lasting relationships with other TRR members and gained a renewed sense of self. John said to me, "I would've never thought to pursue kayaking prior to TRR and now I'm a fan of kayaking and TRR. In particular my experiences with Asheville TRR have helped me readjust to life after the military." His favorite event is the Southeast Regional at the Nantahala, and the best part of TRR for him is getting to kayak and raft with his son Joe. John said to me, "TRR is the most veteran-oriented organization I've ever participated in outside the military. They care about their members and help veterans adjust to life after the military."

A couple of hours later only a few slices of pizza were left. There were smiles and laughter around the table from talk of our river adventures. I had kayaked with some of these guys and gals at one time or another and watched them push past many of the same fears I have had on the water. I was no longer some random

Opposite page top: *Veterans and volunteers from multiple chapters of TRR attend the Southeastern Region Rendevous on the Nantahala River (NC)***.**
Photo by John Colidago
Opposite *page bottom:* *TRR veterans navigate Lesser Wesser Falls on the Nantahala River.*
Photo by Jim Glaze

safety boater from Alabama volunteering on a TRR trip, but now a local Asheville transplant, and the people of TRR were my boating Comrades. I was starting to see that the rivers and creeks were not only the life of our planet, but healing waters for our veterans and so many others. I no longer saw members of TRR as having a disability, but as brave, strong, bright, and courageous people who keep on giving. As Will Leverette, TRR's head of paddling instruction said to me one evening while sitting on his back deck, "They are our Whitewater Warriors."

For more information about Team River Runner see: http://www.teamriverrunner.org/ or visit them on Facebook.

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THE BOY IN THE RIVER

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DANIEL ANDERSON

The rapids of the American Fork are demanding in medium flows (pictured), but in high water, can become dangerous to paddlers and bystanders alike.

June 2011. It was a hot, sunny, late afternoon in Northern Utah. The 200 percent winter's snowpack was rushing down the Wasatch Mountains, coalescing from drops to rivulets into raging creeks and streams. I was standing on the side of the road just inside American Fork Canyon, Utah, and my day was about to change significantly.

My friend Rodney and I were spending a few hours of our day kayaking down a short section of the American Fork River near the mouth of the canyon. The river was running high (about 400 cfs), and the water was brown and very cold. Normal boating flows are between 100-200 cfs for this run. This was our "backyard" run, and we wanted to push the envelope a bit and see what it would be like in near flood.

After a thorough scout, we put on with racing hearts and a good deal of trepidation. From the moment we hit the water, we found the river was in control, and we were just hanging on for the ride. The water was extremely fast with large, unpredictable building waves, big swirls and boils, and no eddies.

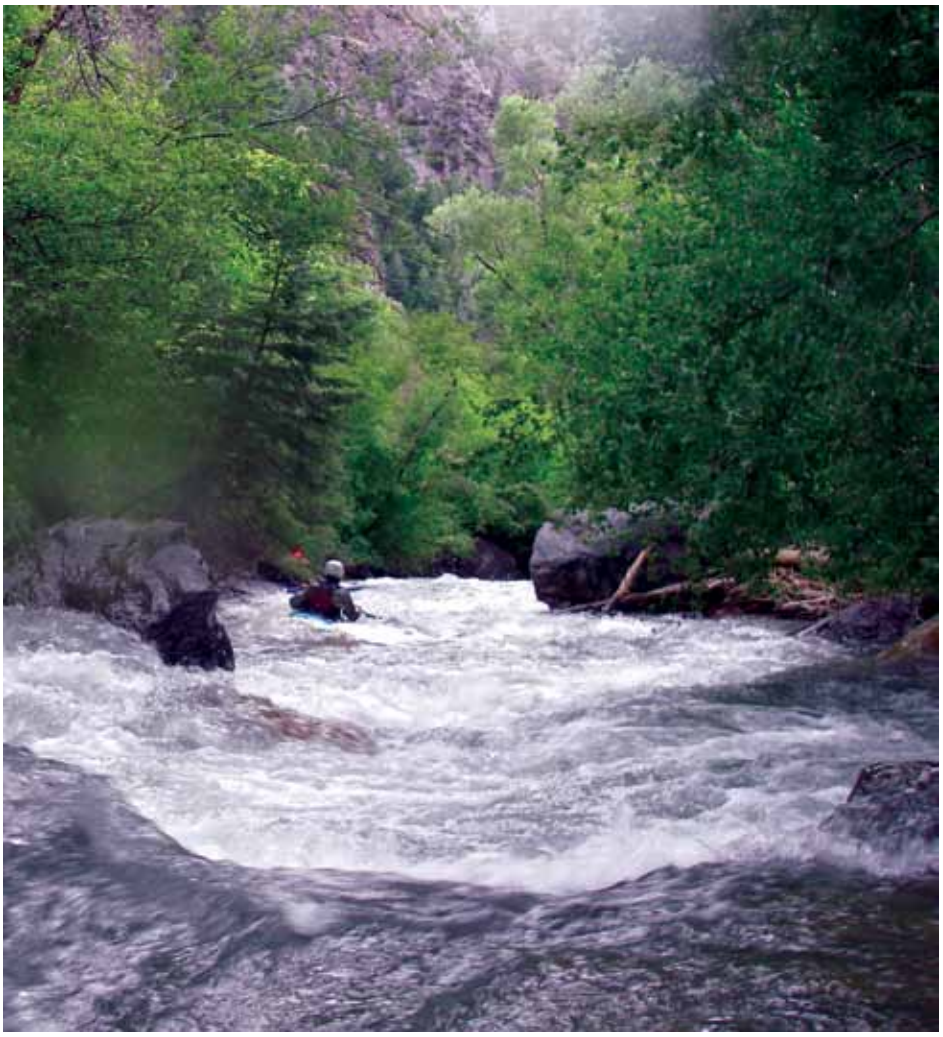
We completed our second kayak run and had no further desire to scare ourselves any more that day. We were still in our dry suits, chatting by the side of the road, when things changed.

I believe we were meant to be there that day, still in the canyon at that time, still in our kayaking clothes. As we were talking, we heard emergency vehicle sirens. We watched as an ambulance, two large fire trucks, and a fire department pickup tore past us up the canyon.

I worked as a police officer for a local police department at that time, and Rodney was a park ranger, so we were both used to seeing emergency vehicles going up the canyon full throttle on the way to medical emergencies. Initially, we didn't think much of it. It seemed like every week there was an ATV rollover, a rock climbing fall, or a vehicle accident up the canyon.

A few minutes later, we saw two police SUV's from my department fly past with lights and sirens, then more emergency vehicles. That day I got a gut feeling that something really bad must have happened, because officers from my department were heading up the canyon.

I told Rodney I suspected someone was in the river. He agreed that was the most likely scenario, since there had already been two drownings this spring in Northern Utah due to the sustained high water in the creeks and rivers. I immediately jumped in my truck and sped up the canyon.



The American Fork Canyon at low flows

I drove up the canyon about three miles and found my good friend (and fellow police officer), Spencer. Spencer and I had started at the department in 2008 and we became friends immediately. Both of us are ex-military and are "spirit of the law" officers who would rather give warning than issue citations. We were close friends who had shared some harrowing epic mountain adventures, and worked together on some serious and stressful police calls.

I told Spencer I was there to help. Spencer was the temporary Incident Commander and told me a woman had been rescued from the river a few minutes before I arrived, by some bystanders picnicking along the river, but her eight-year-old son, Ryan, was still unaccounted for.

Spencer pointed me toward two firemen who were suiting up and suggested I join them. I went over, introduced myself, told them I was familiar with the river, and was there to help. They both kind of looked at me like they didn't know what to do with me. I asked them what they needed me to do, but they said something like they were going to be walking along the side of the river and I could follow them.

I thought it would be better to search both sides of the river, so I started downstream solo on the river-left side, since the firefighters took off on the river-right side (the road side).

About 100 meters downstream of where I started my search was a large, river-wide logjam. There was one huge pine tree trunk completely spanning the river and many smaller trees and branches hung up on the large tree, which created a tangled mess of branches and logs. The water flowed right up to the top of the large trunk, and then was forced under and through the wood sieve.

I could see firefighters on the edge of the logjam looking around, and then saw them continue downstream. My gut told me Ryan could be hung up in the logjam, since it was the first river-wide obstruction downstream of where he had been last seen.

I crawled onto the logjam, which was unsteady, and somewhat precarious. I searched as safely as I could in the water by myself, keeping in mind the first rule of being a rescuer: don't become a victim yourself. After a few minutes searching without locating anything, I continued downstream.

I went about one-half mile downstream and checked a number of smaller logjams and eddies, but my gut kept telling me to go back to the first logjam.

I went back upstream, found Spencer, and told him I thought I knew where Ryan was, but I needed his help to give me a live bait belay while I searched deeper into the logjam.

Spencer followed me to the jam, and I told him I would need him on the other side of the river to be of most assistance. Spencer walked and slipped across the sketchy, slick logjam without hesitation, without a PFD, and while wearing about 25 pounds of duty gear (body armor, gun, handcuffs, etc.) that he knew would act like an anchor if he fell in. I followed him across, providing safety for him as best I could. At the far end of the

jam, he had to jump mid-thigh deep into the river because a shrub blocked the end of the log where it was on shore. Once on the other side, I got the belay set up and gave Spencer a crash course on live bait rescue technique.

I started out wading waist deep into a strong whirlpool eddy on river left into the frigid, muddy water. I searched the river bottom with my hands and feet, searched branches and bushes along the shore, and searched as deep out into the main channel as I could without being swept downstream by the powerful current. I then crawled back onto the logjam and slid on my belly to the most upstream point of the jam where the main current met the jam. As I crawled my way out, I reached into spaces between the logs into the water feeling for clothes or Ryan's body.

Rodney at the bottom of Shotgun rapid on the Lower American Fork a different day, at much lower flows.

Once I got to the most upstream point of the jam, I lay prone, stretched towards the oncoming water. I reached deep into the water under the front of the jam and felt around. After just a few seconds, I felt the unmistakable feel of cold, rubbery human skin. I immediately knew it was Ryan. I felt around and grabbed onto what felt like his shirt and yelled to Spencer, "I found him. Get on the radio and get me some help."

I was sad because I knew that Ryan was gone beyond any hope of resuscitation (he had been in the 44-degree muddy water about two hours at this point), but I was also thankful to have located him. A powerful feeling of sadness crept into my heart, but I fought it off. I had to remain professional and be strong. I was also a little freaked out by the thought that I was holding onto this lifeless body, but knew I had to be brave and overcome the thoughts of what I was actually doing.

I tried to pull him out by myself, but the force of the current was too strong and I couldn't budge him. I just held on to him and waited for assistance.

My hands and arms quickly went numb, my fingers became unresponsive, and my hands felt like blocks of wood. I would

Another view of the American Fork Canyon.

The American Fork Canyon viewed from above.

look over at Spencer every so often, so grateful to have him sharing the burden of this tragic event. He would call out words of reassurance every few minutes and ask how I was doing.

I thought about the boy and his family. I thought about what his parents must be going through, especially his mother who had risked her own life in an attempt to save his. She saw him in the river and dove in to try and rescue him. The force of the current was too great, and Ryan was pulled from her hands. Had there not been people picnicking who heard her screams and were able to get her out of the water, there would most likely have been two bodies under the logjam.

It seemed like 15 or 20 minutes passed before a suited-up rescuer arrived on scene. He waded out into the river above the logjam and worked down towards me, and then onto the logjam. He lay prone next to me and asked, "Are you ready to pull him out?" By this point, my arms, hands, and fingers were completely numb from being in the cold water for so long, and I was worried I might lose my grip. I looked the rescuer square in the eyes and said, "I'm not pulling him out; you are. I'm just here to help." By this point, I had made the conscious decision that I would do everything I could to get Ryan out, but also I promised myself I would not look at him once he was out of the water. I had the feel of his body already in my memory and did not want to have the image of his dead body burned into my soul as well. I especially did not want to see his face.

The rescuer gave me a strange look, then reached into the water and grabbed hold of Ryan. We counted, "3, 2, 1, pull!" We pulled with all-out strength, but were only able to get Ryan partially out from under the jam. We had to struggle for a few minutes to get his body out of the water completely and onto the logjam.

Once Ryan was out of the river, I did take one look at him. He was a small, pale, lifeless boy. Despite the promise I made to myself, I needed to see him. I needed Ryan not to be some faceless stranger. I needed to see the boy, not "the body," so that I would remember why I choose to help others, why I picked that path in life, and why I continue to follow that path. I

Daniel, left, and Spencer, right on Twin Peaks (UT) in happier times.

Squiggles, one of the better known rapids on the American Fork at medium-high flows.

knew there would be an emotional price to pay for that choice, but it was necessary.

We carried Ryan to the river-right shore and passed him to other rescuers, who immediately put him into a waiting ambulance. I was exhausted and spent. Then I became aware that it was getting dark. The rescuer told me the log jam looked too dangerous for me to cross over and that "my buddy" would have to find his own way back across the river. I looked the rescuer in the eye and said, "I'm not leaving my brother behind," and crossed over to the river-left side as the logjam continued to disintegrate.

Spencer and I coiled up my rope and started walking upstream through thick brush, across steep, slippery scree slopes, looking for a footbridge that was about three-quarters of a mile upstream.

We were both sweating and breathing hard; we were wet, muddy, and covered in spider webs and leaves and God knows what else. We talked about the incident and talked about the positive aspects of being able to at least provide the family their son's body. We talked about how we were proud that we had courage when we needed it most, and that we had made a difference that day.

We then laughed at ourselves and each other as we tripped, slid, and stumbled along the slope. We were both physically and mentally fatigued at this point, as well as damn thirsty and a little hungry. We needed to decompress. We needed to find something positive and focus on how we helped the family. It was not our fault Ryan fell in the river. It was not our fault we didn't find him sooner. It was not our fault we could not bring him back to life. It was not our fault that life is sometimes cruel. We did all that we could do, and after hours of intense stress, we needed to share our admiration for each other in a way only people who have experienced a similar event like ours, or combat, or surviving a near death experience, could understand.

After about 30-45 minutes of stumbling and thrashing through thick woods, we found a foot bridge at the upper picnic site and crossed back over to the road side of the river. Some firemen met us and offered us a ride, but we declined, stating we needed to decompress a bit longer. We finished our slog back to the Incident Command Post.

Spencer walked with me to my truck and I took off my rescue kit. We gave each other a warrior hug and talked a few minutes more. We had forged a combat bond that evening that brought us together like no other experience could, and we remain close friends to this day.

SHREDDING SUB-ELF FLOWS ON THE SELWAY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JERRY SPENCE

The Selway was low on this trip. Much lower than we had hoped for. But was it too low to take a shredder down?

For the last 34 years, my longtime friend Russ (Kink) and I have been paddling all over the East, West, and South, and we have always enjoyed kayaking technical creeks and rivers, but also have enjoyed multi-day expeditions. We have been lucky to do the Middle Fork Salmon and Main Salmon, but the one river in Idaho that has eluded us has been the Selway. We have tried for several years to obtain a lottery permit, but that is nearly impossible, and the odds are against boaters since the park service only allows one launch a day and the season is very short. Instead, we decided to try a post-permit season trip, and this is where the story begins.

The permit season on the Selway ends July 31st. Water levels are very dependent on snow pack, how hot the summer is, and what kind of spring there is. We were watching weather reports and SNOTEL reports all winter long, hoping for the color purple on the maps for Idaho's Selway Basin. We needed 70 percent or better to have a chance at decent flow. We called several rafting companies to find out what the minimum flow would be. The gauge on the American Whitewater website was for below Selway Falls, and we were trying to get a correlation for the Paradise Gauge. During the permit season we called the West Fork Ranger Station every week to find out the gauge reading at Paradise. Time kept passing by, but the Selway remained in our minds. Schedules prevented us from leaving until late August and we were pressed with trying to find out what was the absolute lowest we could take a shredder down the river.

Calling raft companies and talking to guides and talking to the head ranger that patrolled the river, we determined that putting in at Paradise at around 500 cfs would not be feasible. It was suggested that we fly into Shearer or Moose creek airstrips. The idea of flying into the put-in intrigued us. We had never done that before, and although it would be an additional cost, we were up for it. We made arrangements with McCall Air to be flown in from Salmon, Idaho to Shearer Airstrip. Our pilot, Mike, was the

son of the founder of McCall Air. Mike was short in stature and was very quiet and likeable. We expressed our concerns about the low water, and Mike assured us we could get down because he had gone down at those levels. We loaded up the plane and flew off into the Idaho Bitterroot Mountains. We watched as we left the town of Salmon behind and below us.

Our necks stretched in all directions. Flying to Shearer Airstrip was a unique experience. I kept looking for the river basin and our pilot kept looking for elk. The undulating green mountains seemed to extend in all directions and never end. Eventually we could see what looked like a river valley, and Mike began to circle and follow the river. It was all wilderness and no development—just what we came for. We followed the river for quite a while, and then we could see an open area with what looked like a dirt airstrip running down its middle. We passed the strip high overhead, circled back, and then started to lose altitude. The mountains began to fill the windshield of the small Cessna, but it was a thrilling ride and we trusted our pilot; he seemed calm and relaxed. We crested a knoll, and then the airstrip came into view. A few bounces, and we came to a stop. Mike turned the plane around and taxied back a couple of hundred yards and then shut the engine off. We unloaded our gear and talked to Mike for a while. We shook hands with Mike and he started up the Cessna and then taxied away. As he flew overhead, he gave the conventional pilot goodbye by rocking the plane from side to side. We now were alone on the Selway. We stood in the middle of the airstrip and as we stared at the mountains and pines and we noticed a smoky haze. We were aware of forest fires but the Forest Service didn't close access. We carried our gear down to the river and set up camp for the night. After setting up our tent, we reclined in our camp chairs. Right away we noticed a black bear foraging for food on the opposite side of the river. We just hoped he stayed over there in his search for food. It reminded us to hang our food up high and cook away from our tent. What a peaceful place it was. We settled in and we thought we were alone, but we were wrong.

In the distance we saw a tall man walking towards us. He introduced himself as Hal and told us he was the caretaker at the Shearer Ranger Station. There was a work

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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Our arrival at Shearer Airstrip, unpacking the plane in the smoky summer air.

crew repairing a pack bridge and a horse packer was bringing in supplies. His job was to cook for the crew. He told us the packer would have a train of mules and that he would release them at night and they would come stampeding through the fields at night. He also said to be aware of rattlesnakes. He had one staying under the porch of the cabin. We bid goodnight and settled in for the evening, constantly vigilant for the bear we had seen earlier.

We awoke around midnight with the sound of a thundering roar. The earth seemed to be trembling. We thought, "What the heck is that?" and then we remembered what Hal told us about the mules. I am sure glad he did because that would have frightened us back to Salmon without a plane. The herd of mules passed right by our tent and kept running.

We awoke the next morning to a bright, sunny, hazy, smoky day. We packed and loaded up the shredder and launched. The river looked extremely low—what our friend Jimmy Snyder would call extra low flows, or ELF. We paddled down by the cabin and corals where Hal was staying. He waved goodbye and watched us as we negotiated the rocks. There were a lot of rocks and in some places we had to push with our feet while we sat in the shredder. As we approached what used to be the Selway Lodge, the rapid before the bridge was technical and boulder-choked, and was hard going for us. We must have jammed our ankles 20 times. Finally, we made it into the deep pool below the bridge and stopped on the white sandy beach below the bridge across from the lodge. I sure wished we were staying in the lodge because it looked deluxe. The caretakers came down and talked to us for a while. We regained some energy and then headed downriver. The next several miles were easy going. I think we paddled Bear Creek rapid, and some other rapids, and finally made it to Rattlesnake Camp.

That night we tried fishing for Western Cutthroat but had no luck. The water was pretty warm and we surmised the fish had moved downstream. Because of the camp's name we were careful of every step and every hand placement. That night we watched fires burn on the tops of mountains, watched the red glow, and then put the day behind us.

Next morning brought sunny skies, smoky fire, haze, and more ELF. We broke camp, loaded up the shredder, and launched. We noticed more burning trees. It was actually quite eerie. There were trees partially on the bank that were in flame, while the part of the tree in the water was not. We entered a section of Class II-III rapids that were technical at low flows and required a lot of maneuvering. We kept a good pace and made it through one of the Class IV rapids called Ham. The Selway River sure lived up to its reputation as scenic and green. I had been told the Grand Canyon does for the color red what the Selway does for the color green. I found that to be true. It was a mesmerizing place and the water was champagne clear. As we entered another section of tight Class II-III rapids, our day was about to change.

Pushing though some tight rapids, we were forced to make a tight right turn between the bank and some boulders. We suddenly realized there was a large tree in the water but burning in flames on the bank. We were staring at the flames when all of a sudden, POOF! There was a sudden sound of exhaling air. The left tube of the shredder deflated in seconds, sending me into the water and leaving Kink to guide the spinning shredder with only one tube. I was swept into branches but pushed hard to stay clear and made it to the safety of the left shore. Kink also was able to bring the shredder to rest on the left side as well. No one does a multi-day trip without a repair kit, and yes, we did have one, but the problem was that we were on the shady side of the river and being without sunlight prolonged the adhesive's curing process.

Three hours later, and the repairs of the two-foot gash were complete. I had to

place a patch on the inside as well as the outside to ensure that it would withstand the Moose Juice section that awaited us downstream. Our plan for the night was to stay and visit the Moose Creek Airstrip and historic ranger station. Once we arrived at the pack bridge above Moose Creek that indicated the trail up to Moose Creek Airstrip, we pulled over on river right and found a nice camping spot by the bridge. The bridge was wrapped in shiny silver fireproof material and there were water hoses attached to the bridge. There was a gasoline pump down by the river. I looked at the rapid that started at the bridge, and below. I believe it was Tony Point Creek. There was no way we could make it through there with the shredder without carrying it. Our ankles and calves were already in extreme pain from the 20-plus miles of sub-ELF river we had done. We had read over and over that Moose Creek was supposed to double the flow. The inflow of Moose Creek would have a crucial impact on the remainder of our run.

After setting up camp we hiked to Moose Creek to check the flow. We were shocked by what we saw. We had more water in our water bottles than the creek was augmenting. It was adding less than 100 cfs and there was no way was it doubling anything. I was having very serious doubts, told Kink my body had had it, and I couldn't do two more days of crushing my ankles against the rocks. I said I was going up to the ranger station to see if the fire fighters had a satellite phone so we could make arrangements to be flown out. Reluctantly Kink agreed, and we both started hiking up the trail that switch-backed up to the airstrip in the impending night.

I don't know how, but at some point Kink and I became separated. I called out for him but heard no response. I saw some camp lights in the distance and started walking toward them. I came upon a group of campers that had flown in and had a very nice camp and dinner going. They offered me some homemade pie and something to drink. I explained our situation, and one of the pilots offered me the use of his satellite phone. I didn't have the number of McCall Air, but he had some aircraft manuals and we were able to look it up. I called but reached voicemail. I left a message with instructions and just hoped the pilot would arrive in the morning. I thanked the pilot, and they wished me good luck as I headed toward the lights of the ranger station.

The fire crew was eating dinner and it sure looked a lot more appetizing than the freeze-dried packaged food we had been eating. I explained the situation to them and asked about the fires. They assured me we would be okay and there was nothing to worry about. I asked them if I could use their sat phone in the morning to confirm our pick up, and they said yes. I started walking back to camp in the dark, down the airstrip, with only my headlamp. There were eyes staring at me from all directions. I sure hoped they were deer.

I started to switchback down the steep mountainside when I noticed the opposite side of the river was glowing bright red for as far as you could see, top to bottom. It was surreal and there was no smoke. I had never experienced anything like it. I kept wondering about the animals. That might have explained why we saw the bear when we first arrived at Shearer Airstrip. The fires had the animals on the move. I got down to camp and Kink was sound asleep. I, too, was watching the back of my eyelids within minutes.

Ka-POW!

A large caliber rifle blast resounded down the river canyon. What the hell was that? I guessed it was time to pack up and head up to the airstrip. I packed up the shredder and carried it the mile up to the airstrip and then came back down for some gear bags. We were able to get everything up in two trips. Since I was only able to leave a voice

Leaving the smoky Selway Canyon.

message at McCall Air, I needed to find out if, in fact, there was a plane coming to pick us up. I walked up to the ranger station and asked the fire fighters for the use of their sat phone. I spoke to the receptionist at McCall Air and she said that Mike, the pilot who flew us in, was on his way.

After confirming the flight, I asked one of the fire fighters what that rifle shot was about. He said guides were flying gear in for hunting trips. A bear was ravaging their cache and one of the guides shot at it. I didn't ask if he had actually shot him, or just near him, to scare him off. I didn't want to know. The fire fighter did show me where bears where breaking into their cabins and storage areas. I hoped the bear was okay, since I believe in leaving well enough alone with animals. We now could relax with the assurance that we would be flown out and would not have anymore shoving against rocks. The agony was over.

Moose Creek Airstrip is actually two airstrips in the form of an X. We were trying to decide where to place our gear to wait for Mike, and decided to put it near the center of the X. We lay back and absorbed the atmosphere, as one of my friends who was co-founder of the Burned Out Canoe Club would say. He also referred to it as Power Lounging. Moose Creek is a beautiful and peaceful place. In a way we regretted leaving, but just could not bear to push the shredder down the sub-ELF flows for another three days. The Selway would be there and we would come back in a good snow pack year. The sky was azure blue and there was not a cloud in it. All we could hear was birds singing and going about life in the mountains. There were no more rifle shots to make our spines shudder. After a while, we heard the drone of the Cessna 206, and then we saw Mike making the approach landing. We again greeted each other and loaded up the plane, bounced down the runway, and flew up into the mountains. We peered out the window to look downriver and see what we missed. Even though we didn't complete the river, flying in and out of the backcountry of the Selway was an experience that we both cherished and were grateful for, never mind our time on the river.

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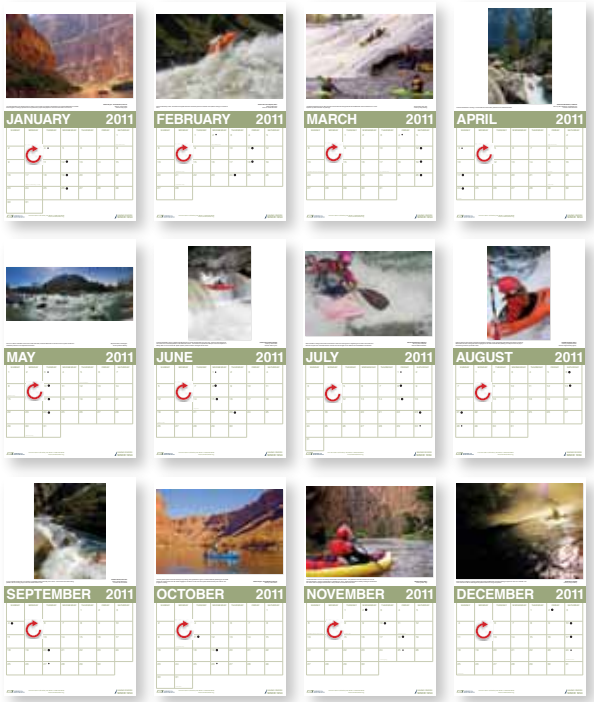

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NPFF

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bwa

34th Annual Media Competition Benefiting River Conservation Presented by volunteers of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association

FIRST DESCENT!

BY CHICO CORNELL

PHOTOS BY AMY VAN KUIKEN

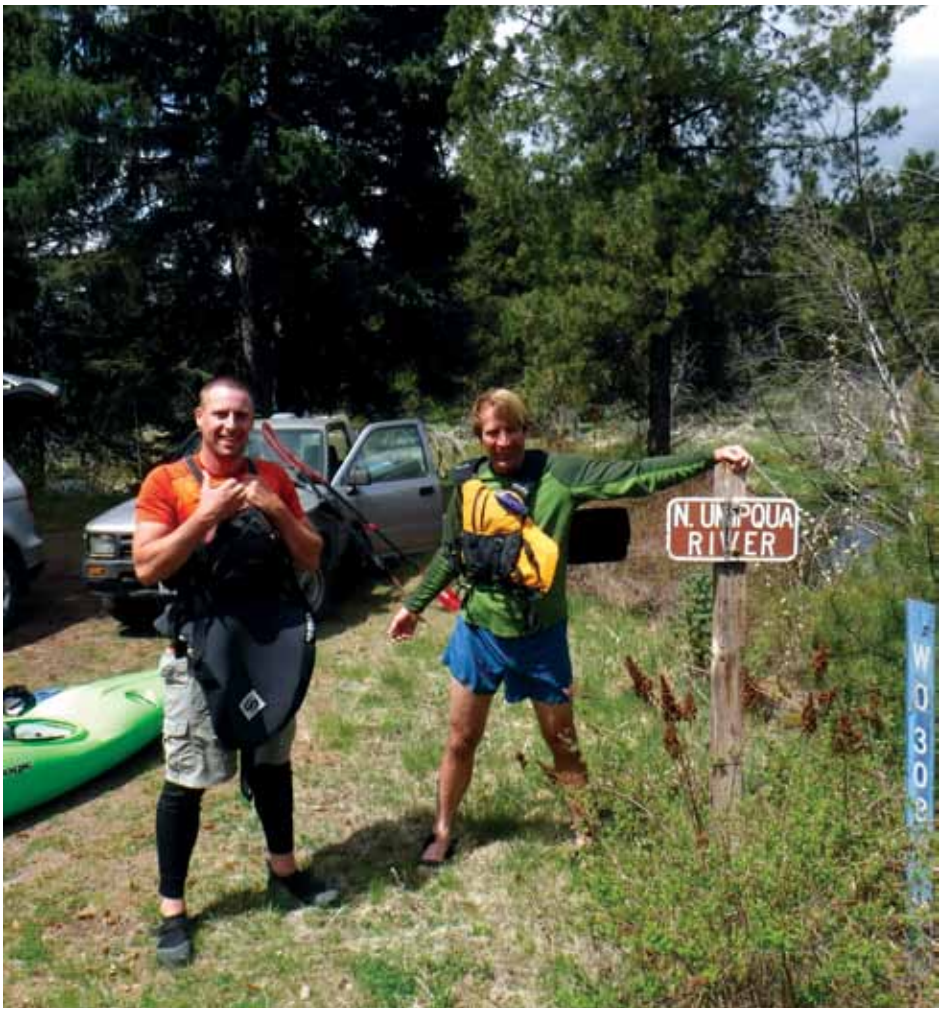
Highly coordinated teamwork and absolute trust among group members are essential in high-stakes first descents. Here Parker Biedscheid sets safety as Chico Cornell figures out which direction is downstream.

For whitewater kayakers, a first descent can be the crowning achievement of a lifetime. In the earliest era of the sport, first descents waited for brave and talented kayakers to be plucked like ripe fruit from the branches of nearby trees. Whether it was the thrill of discovering something unique and having to test one's skills of river reading and running, or the subsequent thrill of being able to brag to one's friends about the epic challenges one surmounted, the first descent became the Holy Grail of many a kayaker. It may not be impossible to find a first descent in the continental United States, but one has to wonder what kind of small and low quality stream exists in order for it to be unexplored in this day and age. One team of not very elite kayakers recently discovered the answer to this question when they ran the upper upper upper North Fork of the Umpqua River in Oregon.

The North Fork of the Umpqua River is a pleasant river, with a variety of Class II and III segments that flows through the beautiful Cascade Mountain range. This was not the scenario with the recent first descent of the two-mile stretch that empties into Lake Lemolo. While doing extensive research of this stretch of river, we found the map gradient routinely confused our team. Specifically, there didn't seem to be any gradient. Most of the river is easily accessible by one road or another, and so it would be laughable to think that a first descent lurked in its nether regions.

If one follows the river on a map from its source to its confluence with the South Fork, one notices that the river starts out as a meandering spring that flows into Lake Lemolo, a man-made reservoir that diverts water for a hydroelectric plant. The tiny stretch between the springs and Lake Lemolo, about two miles or less, could hardly be described as a river, since it is so miniscule and resembles a spongy mess of puddles more than a river. And this is exactly what convinced the team that this stretch of "river" could be hiding a first descent. If boaters had run it previously they surely wouldn't have claimed it. This collection of springs comes together and flows downstream with very little, if any, gradient and changes from a flow of about 150 cfs at the put-in to about 600 cfs at the lake.

When the exploratory team members (AKA Team Flatwater) made the decision to paddle this stretch of river they were making every effort to think clearly and



Team Flatware mentally preps for Class I

methodically. They followed the mantra, "What would Charles Bukowski do?" when it came to liquid refreshments the night before. As a result, on the day of the descent the team was in top shape. The team was composed of Team Leader Chico Cornell, Parker Biedscheid as official second-in-command, and Team Support Specialist Amy Van Kuiken. Upon arriving at the put-in, Team Support Specialist Amy Van Kuiken expressed the opinion that she would rather go home than drive the shuttle, but the other team members pointed out that a two-mile stretch should only take 20 minutes. They conveniently forgot to factor in the time its many log portages would require.

The following is a step-by-step chronicle of this bold first descent.

Day One, 12:05 p.m. The team puts in on 150 raging cfs and begins paddling the river. (In this case, the word "raging" indicates that one could tell the river was flowing from one place to another. Sort of.) The sky is full of ominous clouds, posing the very real possibility that someone might get wet.

Day One, 12:06 p.m. The team is forced to make its first log portage 37 yards downstream of the put-in.

Day One, 12:07 p.m. After having an incredible run of luck, the team manages to paddle almost 60 yards before its next portage.

Day One, 12:09 p.m. Parker realizes that he forgot to wear his dry top. After discussing options, the team decides to continue on.

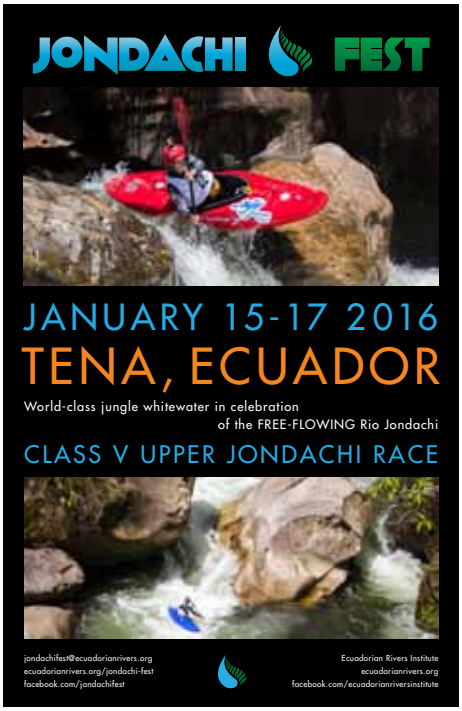
Day One, 12:13 p.m. The team makes its third log portage.

Day One, 12:14 p.m. Another log portage, blah blah blah, you get the picture.

Day One, 1:07 p.m. The team arrives at a tributary from Clear Springs that is contributing a massive 60 or 70 cfs. The team members hope that this added flow will open up the channel and reduce the number of portages.

Day One, 1:07 and 30 seconds p.m. The team members have their hopes shattered.

Day One, 1:08 p.m. Chico Cornell apologizes to Parker for bringing him on this mission.



Day One, 1:35 p.m. The team arrives at what appears to be a small lake or large pond. This is a good thing, since lakes and ponds do not usually have log portages.

Day One, 1:36 p.m. The team follows the outlet of the lake by asking the advice of a clearly irritated fisherman and soon finds that the stream has turned into a full-fledged river with about 600 cfs. On the horizon line, team members notice that a Class I riffle leads to another log portage.

Day One, 1:38 p.m. The team arrives at the next log portage and sees the Team Support Member/Shuttle Driver with the bridge in the background that marks the take out. Mission f&%#ing accomplished.

Logistics and facts:

Difficulty: Class I with portaging ability required.

Number of portages: 23 (No joke, we counted them.)

Gradient: Sure, whatever.

Length: The shuttle road is two miles, but the "river" snakes around a lot, so maybe three miles.

Recommended craft for running this river: A good pair of mud boots. Just walk along the shore and enjoy the scenery.

Take-out: Lake Lemolo. To get there, take Highway 138 to the Lake Lemolo exit and follow it to the lake. If you get lost and can't find the put-in, consider the possibility that this might be a good thing.

Put-In: Two miles upstream of Lake Lemolo.

Season: All year, because it is spring fed. (Which makes it attractive to logs.)

In all seriousness, the scenery was pretty cool, especially in the lake/pond, where the water was so clear and the sand a light blue color that it was like a miniature version of Lake Louise.

Above: Chico Cornell almost gets lost at the put-in.

Below: One of several necessary log portages that mar an otherwise phenomenal new run.

AW ROGUE TRIP 2016

BY MARK SINGLETON

For the past couple of years, the staff of America Whitewater has joined with a number of our members to participate in a four-day float trip on the Rogue River in Southern Oregon. This trip has been a great opportunity to connect with members in ways that build a lasting understanding of the role of recreation in fostering a stewardship ethic. As one of the original eight Wild and Scenic Rivers in the country, the Rogue is an outstanding classroom for American Whitewater's river stewardship program. Staff members share current projects, their challenges and successes, as well as highlights of national policy work that impacts Wild and Scenic rivers like the Rogue. The trip is made possible through the support of Northwest Rafting Company. They provide professional guides, exceptional food, transportation to and from Galice (the put-in), and group equipment.

In June 2016, American Whitewater members will again have an opportunity to join American Whitewater staff and board members for this exclusive trip on the Rogue. We invite you to come learn more about what we're up to while having a great time enjoying one of our nation's first Wild and Scenic Rivers. You will have the option of bringing your own boat, renting a boat, or joining as a passenger on one of the rafts. The price for the trip will be $1045, with a portion of the trip proceeds going to American Whitewater to support our work.

The trip, which will take place June 14-17, 2016, will be fully outfitted by Northwest Rafting Company with professional guides and all group equipment. The trip is suitable for all skill levels. Last year we had paddlers representing the full range of skill levels from experts who are out every weekend, to folks who had not been in a boat for a while, and some who were just getting into an inflatable kayak or raft for the first time. Everyone is welcome on this trip—the only experience you need is a love of rivers. One of the most important concepts the Rogue trip will reinforce is what we all know firsthand—it is our common love of whitewater that makes us such passionate defenders of rivers. Oh yeah, and the food is excellent and the camping superb. Last year, we had a full trip, so make your reservation soon to ensure a spot on the Rogue trip with American Whitewater this summer.

Make your reservation directly through Northwest Rafting Company's website today at http://www.nwrafting.com/rogue. We hope to see you on the Rogue River this June!

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IMMERSION RESEARCH

Each day American Whitewater faces new challenges that threaten our whitewater rivers. To aid us in this fight, we rely on support from members, donors, foundations, and partners in the industry. Companies throughout the whitewater and outdoor industries are stepping forward to support AW's River Stewardship work. American Whitewater urges you not to make purchase decisions blindly. When you buy your next piece of outdoor gear there are many factors to consider: quality, dependability, comfort, safety, and fashion. American Whitewater hopes you will add one more consideration to this list: corporate responsibility. Support companies that support your rivers.

NRS began in 1972 when an idealistic business professor named Bill Parks decided he should see if the principles he taught in the classroom could work in the real world. He believed that a company that worked toward the best interests of all its stakeholders—customers, employees, vendors, communities, and the environment—could not just survive, but succeed.

A passionate river runner, Bill knew from experience how difficult it was to source quality river gear in those days. So, with $2,000 of his personal savings, he stocked some inventory in his garage and typed out the first NRS catalog.

Not long after starting NRS, Bill began manufacturing items that he couldn't source. In 1977, after his supply of WWII military dry bags dried up, he designed and built the industry's first purpose-built dry bag, the Bill's Bag. Later, NRS became the first manufacturer to adapt tie-downs from the freight industry for rigging and transporting boats. Today the Bill's Bag and the NRS strap remain iconic pieces of gear found on waters around the world.

Building on the success of those early products, NRS has become a leading manufacturer of paddlesports apparel and accessories, as well as high-quality inflatable boats and SUPs. Meanwhile, Bill's passion for river running has grown into a company-wide passion for all types of human-powered adventure on the water.

Today, NRS employs nearly 100 people at its headquarters in Moscow, Idaho, and in keeping with Bill's progressive ideals, became 100% employee owned in January, 2014. With a focus on access and stewardship, NRS works with American Whitewater and other important advocacy groups to help protect, restore, and sustain our most precious natural resources.

Bill Parks in the Grand Canyon.

Join AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!

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

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

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the U.S. American Whitewater currently has 6,300 active members. When considering the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join American Whitewater. If you are a member, please be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual Annual Memberships are only $35. If you are a member of your local paddling club and your club is an Affiliate Club member of AW, join as a Club Affiliate Individual for $25. This is less than a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

Join on-line today at *http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/*, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723

AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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For more information about making a bequest to American Whitewater
CONTACT Carla Miner: 1.866.262.8429 *or* carla@americanwhitewater.org

AMERICAN WHITEWATER

It's Easy to Support AW!

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

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN# 23-7083760. To learn more about the Giving Options below, contact us at 866-BOAT4AW or visit the "Donate" link under "Support AW" on our website at www. americanwhitewater.org

- Donate online today!
- Monthly Giving: Contribute a minimum of $10 via credit card or electronic transfer from your bank account.
- Bequests: Include AW in your will or living trust. Bequests to AW are generally exempt from federal or state inheritance taxes, and subject to an unlimited deduction.
- Combined Federal Campaign: Federal employees including federal civilians, military personnel and U.S. Postal Workers can donate to AW through the CFC a once a year charitable fund raising program. Look for AW (Agency #11351) in the official CFC listing of eligible donors.
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- Employer Matching: Many employers will match your donations to non-profit organizations. This includes membership payments, as well as additional contributions. Check to see if your employer has a matching program.
- MissionFish: Sell your items through the MissionFish program on eBay and the proceeds come directly to AW.
- Other Assets: A gift of real estate to AW qualifies you for a tax deduction based on the property's fair market value. If it is not a river access point, AW will sell the property and use the proceeds to protect access and restore rivers. Acceptance of property is subject to certain conditions. You may also be eligible to receive tax benefits for gifts of real property. Art and jewelry are examples of personal property items that may be eligible. Interested donors should check with your financial and tax advisors and AW on the feasibility and tax considerations of such gifts.
- Securities: Donating appreciated stock to AW benefits both the donor and whitewater rivers. The donor receives two tax-related benefits. First, the gain on the stock is not subject to capital gains taxes. Second, the donor can deduct the value of the stock as a charitable contribution.
- United Way: All federal campaigns, and a few of the local campaigns will allow you to donate to AW. AW's UNITED WAY member # is 2302.
- Vehicle Donations: Turn that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefiting AW.

AFFILIATE CLUBS

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY CARLA MINER

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

Our Affiliate Club Spotlight this issue is on the Bluegrass Wildwater Association an outstanding Affiliate Club and longtime supporter of our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

The objectives of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association are to encourage enjoyment, preservation, and exploration of American waterways for self-powered craft; to protect the wilderness character of these waterways through conservation of water, wildlife, and parks; to promote safety and proficiency in all aspects of wildwater activities; to promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness waterways and wildwater sports; to chart and preserve wilderness waterways in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and through the southeast/mid Atlantic. BWA members play critical leadership roles hosting the National Paddling Film Festival and the Russell Fork Rendevous. The club also has a very active novice instruction program that introduces whitewater paddling skills to new boaters.

Members of BWA support an active organization that is a major contributor to the river stewardship efforts of American Whitewater. BWA yearly dues are an affordable $20 for an Individual and $25 for a Family and your paid membership entitles you to receive the newsletter, discounts at many local and out of state outfitter shops, use of club equipment, discount at pool rolling sessions, a listing in the BWA handbook, a stream gauge guide, and website with a list serve for members' messages, plus lots of other fun activities and good friends to do them with.

To learn more about the BWA or to join their club, check out their website at http://www.bluegrasswildwater.org/. And remember, current BWA members of the BWA receive a $10 discount off their AW membership.

Thanks again BWA for your support of American Whitewater!

The *AW Journal* Club Affiliates by state:

Alaska
Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks
Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona
Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff
Thunderbeard Outdoor, Glendale

Arkansas
Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California
Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers, San Jose

Colorado
Colorado Whitewater Assn, Denver
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Assn, Glenwood Springs

Connecticut
AMC – Connecticut Chapter, Waterbury

Delaware
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

Georgia
Georgia Canoeing Asso, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

Idaho
Backwoods Mountain Sports, Ketchum

Illinois
Chicago Whitewater Assn, Chicago

Indiana
Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg
Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

Iowa
Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

Kentucky
Bluegrass Wildwater Asso, Lexington
Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine
Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Troy

Maryland
Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club, Baltimore
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

Massachusetts
AMC Boston Chapter, Boston
Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont

Michigan
Venture 8 / Troop 8, East Lansing

Minnesota
Rapids Riders, Eagan

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

Montana
Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada
Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire
AMC New Hampshire Paddlers, Raymond

New Jersey
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
KCCNY, Flanders

New York
ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
Flow Paddlers' Club, Livonia
Hamilton College, Clinton
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq., Ossining
KCCNY, Flanders
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Buffalo

North Carolina
Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
H2o Dreams, Saluda
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Charlotte

Ohio
Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Friends of the Crooked River, Akron
Keelhauler Canoe Club, Clevland

Oregon
Eugene Kayaker, Eugene
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Next Adventures, Portland
Northwest Rafters Association, Roseburg
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Portland
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania
AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Centre County, Lemont
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg
Holtwood Hooligans, Paradise
Leehigh Valley Canoe Club, Leehigh Valley
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh

South Carolina
Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee
Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Limestone
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Ocoee River Council, Knoxville

Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club, Kingsport
Tennessee Scenic River Assn, Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

Utah
High Jim and the A.S.K., Salt Lake City

Vermont
Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia
Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg
Canoe Cruisers Association, Herndon
Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke

Washington
BEWET- Boeing Employees Whitewater & Touring Club, Bellevue
Northwest Whitewater Association, Spokane
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
The Mountaineers, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

West Virginia
Dbl Z! Whitewater Club, Fayetteville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Berkeley Springs
WV Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

Wisconsin
Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
North East Wisconsin Paddlers, Inc., Neenah
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, Madison

Wyoming
American Packrafting Association, Wilson

British Columbia
Thompson Rivers Univ Adventure Studies, Kamloops

Ontario
Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, The Kawarthas

Quebec
Club de Canoë-Kayak d'Eau Vive de Montréal

DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

By Carla Miner, Membership Manager

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

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

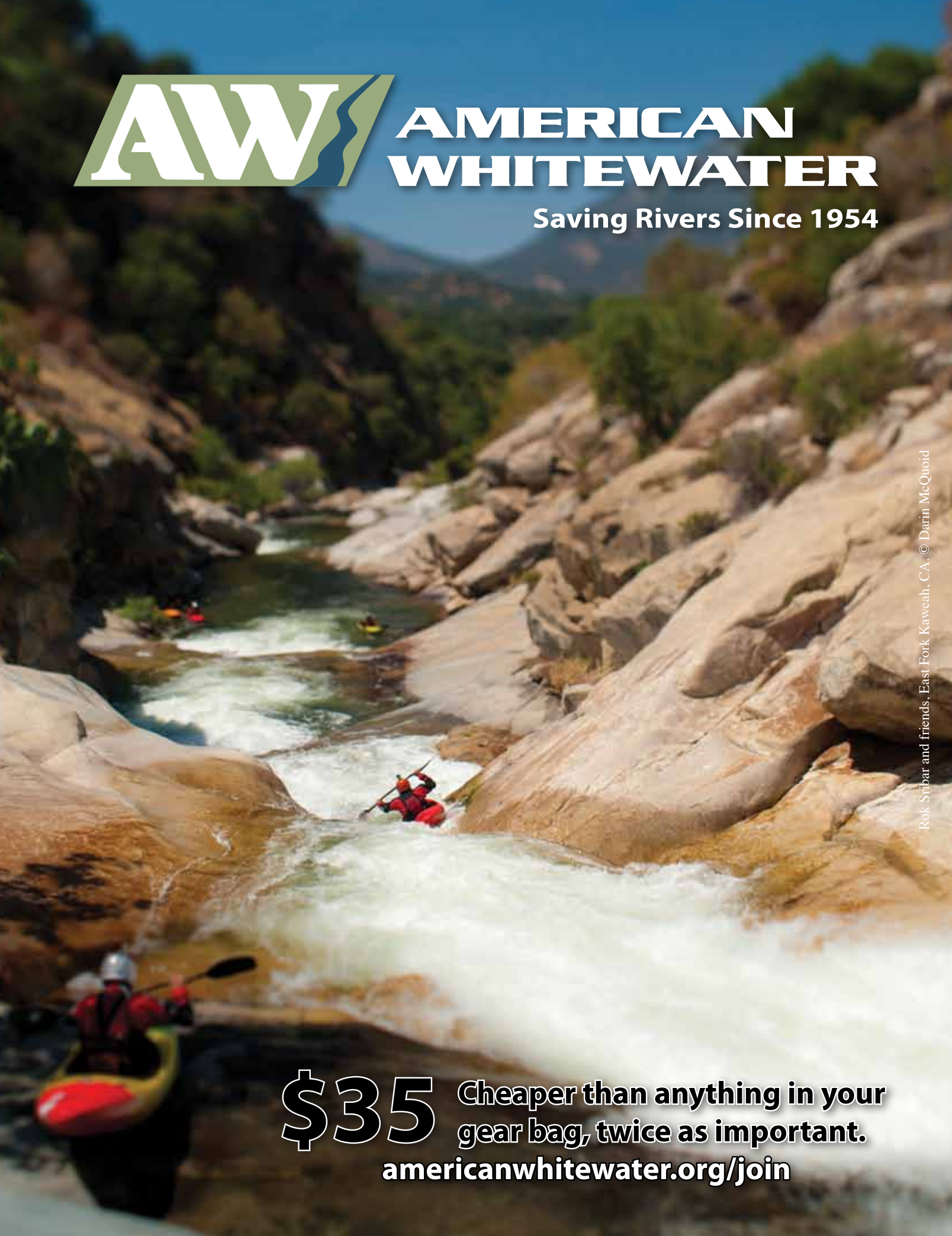
If you have any questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please contact me. I can be reached at 866_BOAT-4AW or membership@americanwhitewater.org.

JOIN AMERICAN WHITEWATER AS A CLUB AFFILIATE!

10 REASONS TO JOIN AW AS AN AFFILIATE CLUB

1. Support river access and restoration through the AW River Stewardship Team.
2. Be part of a national voice for the protection of the whitewater rivers your club values.
3. Tap into the professional expertise of AW staff for river issues that come up in your backyard.
4. Your club's members can become AW members for $25. A $10 savings!
5. Receive the American Whitewater Journal, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
6. Your club is recognized in the list of Affiliate Clubs posted to the AW website.
7. Recognize your club in the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly AW Journal.
8. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
9. Gain Club satisfaction from lending support to AW's stewardship efforts.
10. Improve your club members river karma.

For more information, contact Carla Miner at membership@americanwhitewater.org or sign-up on line at www.americanwhitewaer.org/membership.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We're always accepting submissions and we hope you'll consider contributing. For complete submission details, story topics, deadlines, and guidelines, go to:

americanwhitewater.org > **Library** > **AW Journal**

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