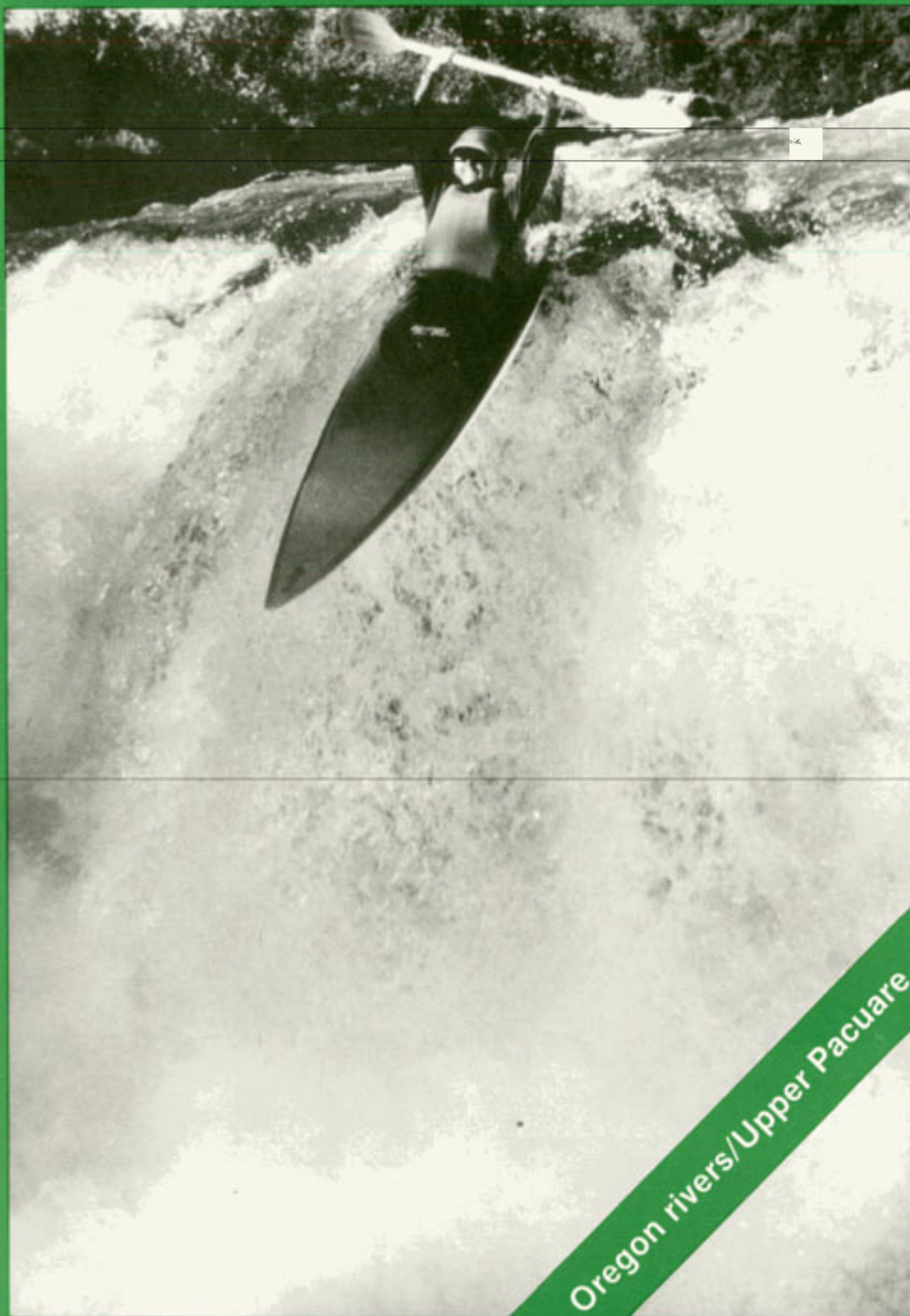


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Oregon rivers/Upper Pacuare

March/April 1990

american whitewater

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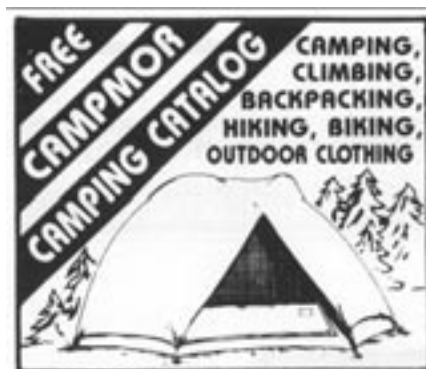
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End Notes

The great kayaking winter sport: the roll session

by Gary Carlson

Covers: This is American Whitewater's version of a swimsuit issue: hot female paddlers in action. On the front, Caron Sandford boofs Rockwell Falls on New York's Hudson River. The back cover captures Jody Dixon carving up a wave on the Ottawa. Eat your heart out, Sports Illustrated. Photos by Jim Swedberg.



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forum

FERC staff: brain dead?

This news clipping recently
crossed my desk. Honest.

"Pin the Dam on the River"
was a game invented by the lawyers in
FERC's Hydroelectric Litigation Sec-
tion during their annual Christmas party.

According to eyewitnesses, the
game was played before a large mural
of a wilderness forest scene with a
whitewater river coursing through the
forest. Participants were blindfolded and
given a pin with a small paper dam
attached. Then, they were spun around
three times and pointed in the direction of the mural.

The FERC employee who got his or her dam closest to the river was the
winner.

I'm sure the FERC people have a rational explanation for this episode:
*"Well, the Wild Turkey flowed like a Gauley release. Some of our folks got
drunker'n Hootie Owls and exercised bad judgment. But, boys will be boys. We're
sure you wouldn't want us to get riled just because some of the guys made a joke
that was in questionable taste..."*

Hell, why not? Sack the sonsabitches!

Any person stupid enough to be caught in such a compromising action
has got to be brain dead or hopped-up on very weird drugs. We don't need them
filling public office.

These people are making the decisions that determine final uses of river
resources. A joke of this manner demonstrates a predisposition of opinion.

What would happen if a judge presiding over litigation involving a racial
matter was overheard making derisive remarks about Blacks? Or if an arbiter in
a sex-discrimination issue voiced demeaning comments about women?

The guilty FERC staffers should enjoy the same kind of reaction

After a two issue hiatus, I'm back as editor. But then you probably didn't
notice I was gone. Bob Gedekoh and John Porterfield turned in steller perform-
ances in my place. **American Whitewater** remained the best semi-professional
whitewater magazine in the world.

The arrangement worked so well we're going to continue it. Bob, John
and I will take turns as issue editors while I will serve as managing editor for every
edition--determining design, supervising production and making final editorial
decisions.

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WHAT IS AMERICAN WHITEWATER ?

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over 1300 whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 50 local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

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

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

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

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

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES: AWA was incorporated under Missouri "on-profit corporation" laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 146 N. Brockway, Palatine Illinois, 60067. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 401(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

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

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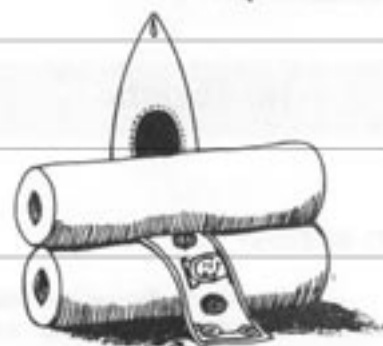
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letters

Godly authority

Dear Chris,

Just an afterthought from the Nov/Dec's "Salt Caves Refuse to Die," article. Was it my imagination that on a PBS program done on the migration upstream of salmon that when given the choice to take an original riverbed (I believe it was on a Washington State river) or take a newly dug canal route skirting the dam blocking the original river, the salmon stayed in the main river below the dam. Many died as they spent too much time attempting to swim upstream. Has the state of Oregon not brought up subjects like this to FERC?

Who gives FERC such godly authority to override the wishes of the taxpayers who pay their salaries? I know much is being done legally to prevent much of what they're doing such as relicensing and construction of dams, but can we not fight for changes in the FERC itself? Under whose direct authority do they get their power?

Thanks. Great job with the newsletter.

Sincerely,
Katrina Peterson
Chillicothe, OH

No sexism

To the Editor:

I read with disgust the letter entitled "Sexist Pig Unmasked" and your reply in the Nov/Dec issue. Apparently I must not have read the issue involved carefully as I'm sure I would have felt as outraged as the writer's non-kayaking friend did--what a terrible example was sent to the nonpaddling community. First of all, there are many female boaters, especially in N. Carolina; secondly, there is no excuse for sexism--blatant or otherwise, anywhere.

You can be sure that if any further material of this kind is published and I see it, I will no longer be an AWA member or supporter.

I can't believe this issue is still alive and well in 1989.

Laura L. Helfman, M.D.
Sylva, NC

(Editor's reply: American Whitewater does not condone sexism. Had you carefully read the reply to the letter in question, you would have noted that I consider Gary Carlson's columns to present a character of the male whitewater paddler--a portrayal that exposes macho stereotypes to ridicule.

I personally think Gary dwells too much on the drinking habits of whitewater boaters. But if I get letters from citizens concerned about drug abuse, I'll tell them the same thing I'm telling you: Gary's character is no more rooted in reality than Archie Bunker. Archie was a sexist and a bigot--I hated him. But I still laughed at him once a week. And once in a while he caused me to re-examine some of my own attitudes.

I appreciate your sensitivity regarding this issue. But I hope you can cut me a little slack. If you were able to read the issue in question without immediately detecting the material as offensively sexist, I also might have difficulty identifying it.--c. koll)

Funny talk

Dear Editor,

Well I'd just like to take a smidgen of time to respond to ole Gary's funny little story about the eager fish.

Now, that ole Gary gave me a stir when he mentioned that us Southerners talk funny. I'll tell yall, there ain't nuthin like paddling with a Southerner. I ain't no literary genius, but I know we don't talk funny down here in Georgia. People's like to get a burr in their backside when folk poke fun at a man's speech.

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Jeff Snyder blasting a Tube on the Cheat River, West Virginia.
Photo: Kevin O'Brien

letters

I'd like for my man Gary to put on his coveralls and head on down south to the Ocoee in Tennessee. We could do some squaring and blast some hawls. Then at the take out, we could eat some fried chicken, turnip greens, tata salad, and drink a few Black Labels.

As for the story about the thirty pounds of salmon, I don't believe a lick of it; cause ain't no fish gets as big as the ones grown down south.

Oh yeah, don't forget to bring you a 4x4 pick em up truck, we like to go fourwheelin' after a day on the river!

Now Gary my friend, if you believe all Southerners talk like interbred banjo players from the backwoods of the Chatooga, perhaps you also believe that your readers think you sold your squirt boat as a lure.

If you do ever happen to make it down to the rivers of the deep south, don't forget your bows and arrows...someone may want you to "squeal like a pig."

Y'all come back now, ya here.
Frank W. Lawson
Atlanta, GA

(editor's reply: Man, it's Gary's issue to catch heat. But Frank, Gary didn't indicate that Southern boaters are stupid...he just said they talk funny.

I don't know who Gary paddled with on the Gauley--but I paddled with Woody Callaway and Dale Adams, husbands of AWA directors. And they both talk funny.

But come to think of it, I paddle with Mike Bush. He's from southern Ohio and he talks funny. Jeff Snyder is from West Virginia, and he talks funny, too—even when he's not talking about swimming over waterfalls. And boaters from New England...they talk real funny. And California boaters...they talk way funny, dude.

As a matter of fact, it seems like all boaters talk funny except those from upstate New York. I wonder why that is.--c.koll)

Bonehead boating

Dear AWA,

Now that the new decade has arrived, and with it a new season, I know I will certainly make new mistakes, but I refuse to repeat errors of my past. The epic run of the Haute Montmoronie last May in Canada represents one such error, and I would like to add this cautionary tale to the ever-increasing lore of Bonehead Boating Stories.

We entered Quebec last May in driving rains, after being stripsearched at the border...nah, that's not true at all. The driving rains finished before we arrived, but the rivers were screaming. Our Canadian guide, who has since moved to North Carolina (we put a bounty on his head) steered us to the Haute Montmorencie. The water was cold and high, our guide was the latter.

After an hour walk--in drysuits, with boats--to a lake leading to a paltry beaver dam, not a seething river, we trudged back to our cars. It was 2:30; we found the real put-in at 3:30. Now what? An unknown river, a rising wind, a 2-hour walk (to a lake!) behind us...we put on. What the hell.

What we found was a beautiful stream, quickly changing from class III to IV, that abruptly stopped at two class VI waterfalls. We had read the guidebook, sort of (it was in French), and didn't expect a problem, but in this case, it was a huge problem: no portage trail. Still, how long could a 1 1/4 mile portage take? For the next two hours, we dragged, pushed, and pulled our boats and ourselves through a forest that had seemingly been involved in an earthquake followed by a tornado--every tree was sideways, and in our way. It's true. And two feet of snow was on the ground. And we were tired and cold. And we were suddenly, officially, unquestionably boneheads. Again.

By the time we emerged from the forest, we were exhausted. I finished the portage on my hands and knees, but at least that was better than The Mighty Edge, looking less than



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mighty, who had put a hole in his new **drysuit**. Edge also neatly summarized the run when we finally took out at dusk: "Horrendous."

No pictures commemorate this semi-tragic, semi-comic story. Rather, it has become part of Bonehead History, never again to be repeated in the 1980's. The question is, "What will the 1990's bring?"

We'll find out.

Sincerely,
Peter A. Cogan
Putney, VT

Pete is the president of the Kayak and Canoe Club of Boston.

(Editor's reply: Don't feel bad, Pete. When I was in Quebec last spring, I tried and failed to find the put-in to the Haute Montmerencie. I guess that makes me a bonehead shuttle driver.)

Alaska report

Dear AWA,

So...it ended up here a few weeks early. Last run on Six Mile Creek was on 10-6 and it was a great high water run--solid V. But there is 5 feet of snow at the top of Alyeska Ski Resort at 2,900' here in Girdwood, just 40 miles south of Anchorage and my boat has a skiff of white solid stuff laying on it there on my deck. It's hard for me to put it under the house, but it's getting time to shovel the deck.

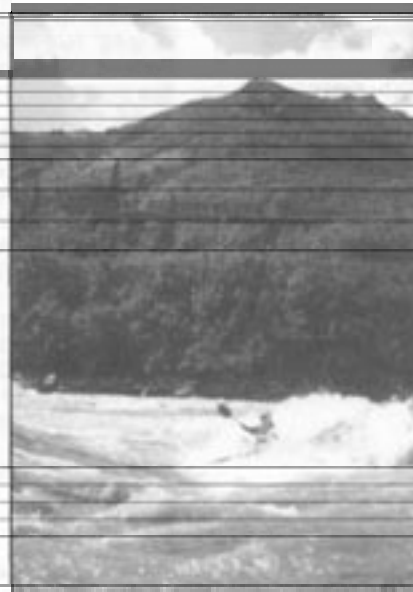
Luckily we have some photos to show for the season. Photos of ourselves (yah!) in Six Mile, Canyon Creek, Little Susitna River and Ship Creek--all solid V rivers. Lots of fine memories of great hack, tall enders, shorts and sandals. Indeed, we had lots of sun and with eight class III-V+ rivers within a day's drive, along with the midnight sun let us be more than just weekend warriors. What a great summer it was!

But the one memento that all of us have is this small callous. It's on the control hand...you know...the second knuckle on the paddler's shaft side of

the thumb. I'm sure you kayak scum of the lower climes have designated a name for our special boating brand. How about letting your boating buds up north know what it is called?? The autumnal equinox has passed and we're in the dark.

Michael Polzin
Girdwood, AK

(Editor's reply: Because that common hardening of the skin is caused by boating, it is universally known as a marine callous. Except when it occurs to a female boater: then it is called a marina callous.--c. koll)



Alaska boaters at play last summer.

AWA "the best"

Dear Chris,

Our organization is the best. The semi-professional journal, **American Whitewater**, is the best. I cuss the mailbox each day I don't receive an issue. I will continue to renew my membership over the years.

My New Years resolution was to become more involved in river activist issues. As whitewater paddlers, we all have a duty to our sport to protect

our natural playgrounds. I scan each new issue of **American Whitewater** searching for river issues and people to contact regarding those river issues so that I can fire up my typewriter and lend a hand. Upon mailing a stack of correspondence, I get a warm feeling knowing that I am giving back some of what the rivers have been giving me. Let's all of us that paddle whitewater and love the environment we use fight those seeking to destroy our natural resources through unnecessary development. Their greed could cause all of us great hardship.

Sincerely,
Larry Demster
Worthington, OH

*(editor's note: A true professional probably develops a blasé attitude toward laudatory letters like your's, Larry. Which is further proof that we're only semi-pros here at **American Whitewater**, because I still love getting them. But, anyway, congratulations on your attitude. You might want to check the list of AW Regional Coordinators printed in this issue. Your Regional Coordinator can help you channel your energy in the most effective direction.*

Another convert

To whom it may concern,

Please subscribe me to AWA. I've seen your magazine a number of times and find it more interesting than River Runner and Canoe. I've been paddling for seven years steady here in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. I've been slalom racing for three years and belong to ACA-USCKT. I've taken pictures of different drops on most all midwest rivers we run. If anyone on your staff is looking for information, let me know and maybe I can help.

Happy paddling
Lloyd Larson
Stevens Point, WI

Coordinators represent every region

Sometime during the course of 1990, an American Whitewater representative will paddle practically every mile of whitewater in the country...

That goal would have been impossible before this year. But with the establishment of the American Whitewater Regional Coordinator Network, an American Whitewater presence **will** be evident in every area and every whitewater river in the nation.

Every region has its unique problems. Access. Protection from dams or pollution. User quotas. Permit systems. The scheduling of water releases. The purpose of the Regional Coordinator system is to provide American Whitewater with the grass-roots link to the problems facing paddlers regardless of their location.

With the addition of a body of representatives who are also active boaters, every American Whitewater member will now have the opportunity to meet or paddle with part of the American Whitewater staff. We're trying to become more accessible.

Seek out your local Regional Coordinator. Let him know what American Whitewater needs to do for you.

Ohiopyle hosts O.C. Nationals

The 1990 Whitewater Open Canoe National Championships in both downriver and slalom **will** be contested July 10-13 on the Lower Youghiogheny River at Pennsylvania's Ohiopyle State Park.

The races will be sponsored by the Benscreek Canoe Club. Volunteers who wish to assist with the event should contact race chairman Bruce Penrod at (814)487-4164.

AWA Regional Coordinators

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Ric Alesch	8718 West Floyd Drive Lakewood, CO 80227	Rocky Mtn. States
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Romer's Canyon helmet: full-face protection

Romer takes head protection one step further with their new helmet, the Canyon.

The helmet fits the head on an internal suspension system. Several research foundations have stated that this offers the best diffusion of impact. The inside of the shell is further padded to offer further protection.

The most striking feature is the chin guard. It too is padded and attaches near the ears, like a motorcycle helmet. This offers significant facial protection. Frontal bumps should be repulsed or substantially diminished.

The facial protection is great, but is needed? Well, every year a few stories surface of paddlers with broken jaws or facial injuries. Frequently these injuries occur on steep creeks, when paddlers flip and wash over shallow ledges or creek beds. Thus, this helmet would most benefit paddlers who fre-

quent steep creeks and/or those who make first descents.

On more moderate waterways the helmet continues to offer great protection. However, it severely limits communication with other paddlers. The

chin guard muffles speech and hides facial expression. Fortunately the guard is removable and optional. And despite the absence of ear holes, you can hear your companions without difficulty.

--By **TOM McANDREW**

Stoneycreek Redezvous scheduled

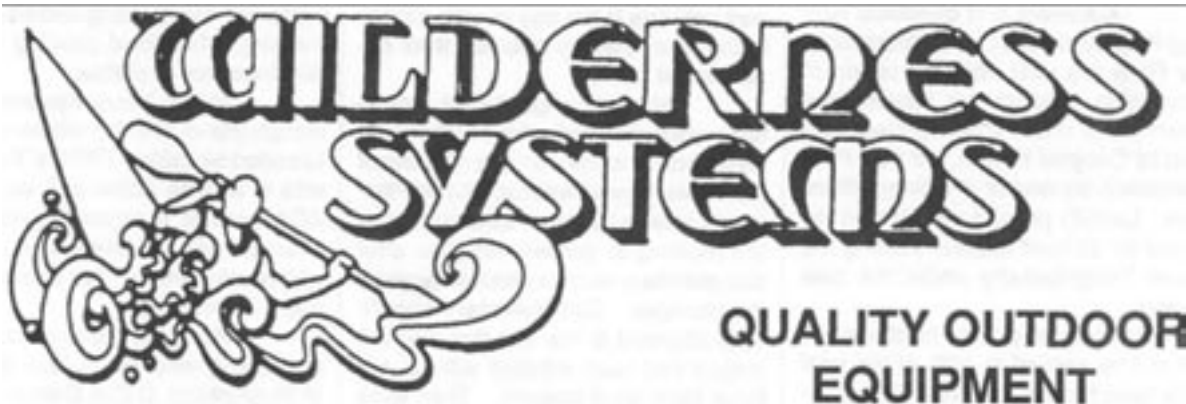
The 5th annual Stonycreek Rendezvous, sponsored by the Benscreek Canoe Club of Johnstown, PA, has been scheduled for the weekend of March 31, 1990.

Formerly known as the Stonycreek Whitewater Weekend, last year's event attracted more than 300 paddlers to the Johnstown area to paddle the whitewater of the Stonycreek watershed. With adequate water levels, eight

separate whitewater runs ranging from class II to class V will be available.

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The Benscreek Canoe Club promotes the annual event in an effort to secure recreational releases from an upstream reservoir on the Stoney. For further information, contact Bruce Penrod at (814)487-4164.



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Five directors named to AWA Board

The American Whitewater membership approved by a wide margin all Board of Directors candidates presented for confirmation.

Newly named to the board are Jack Hession of Anchorage, AK; so and so of whereever, CO; and Chris Koll of Fabius, NY.

Pope Barrow of Washington, DC and Phyllis Horowitz of Phoenixia, NY were also returned to the Board for another two year term.

All the candidates polled an unprecedented approval rating of over 90%.



American Whitewater director and media darling Pope Barrow speaks at last year's dedication of the Gauley River Recreation Area. Barrow spearheaded AWA support of the legislation preserving the Gauley corridor.

Reservations required for Lower Yough

Kayakers and canoeists running Pennsylvania's Lower Youghiogheny River this year have the option of phoning in advance for launch time reservations under a pilot project initiated by Douglas Hoehn, the new Park Operations Supervisor at Ohiopyle State Park. Launch permits will also be required for all hard boaters utilizing the Lower Youghiogheny under the new system.

As in the past private hard boaters will still be entitled to 10% of the total daily launches on the river. Forty percent of the launches are allocated to private rafters and fifty percent to commercial rafters. The hard boat quota was reached only one time during the past paddling season. However, the thirty hard boat per hour quota has resulted in considerable congestion at the put-in during busy summer weekends the last two seasons.

The pilot project was initiated by Hoehn (pronounced Hane) because of complaints from out of town boaters who wanted only to run the Loop (first two miles of the river) instead of the whole river. Out of town boaters had also complained that they often had to

wait until late in the day to gain access to the river, thereby delaying their departure for home.

Hoehn's original pilot regulations were modified after receiving an icy reception at the January meeting of the Three Rivers Paddling Club in Pittsburgh. Hoehn had been asked to attend the meeting to present his plan after club members learned circuitously about the changes. Club members specifically objected to the fact that the pilot project had been initiated without any input from local boaters. They were also upset that TRPC's 1989 petition to Arthur Davis, the Secretary of the Pa. Department of Environmental Resources, addressing the same issues, had apparently been ignored. That petition had the official support of both the AWA and the American Canoe Association.

Local boaters who utilize the Lower Youghiogheny complained that the new system would drastically limit their access to the river and that the telephone reservation system would be unwieldy and inconvenient. They argued that most Pittsburgh area boaters do not plan their trips to the Lower Yough weeks in advance, but that they

prefer to make boating decisions in the morning, when local gauging information becomes available.

Hoehn listened patiently to the complaints of TRPC members and responded by asking TRPC's Tom Irwin, who is also an active and well-known ACA member, to organize a meeting at Ohiopyle with representatives of major whitewater clubs so that a compromise might be reached.

Attending this three hour January meeting were Hoehn, Irwin, Ed Gertler of Washington, D.C.'s Canoe Cruisers Association, Charley Walbridge of the Philadelphia Canoe Club, Steve Ingals of Ohio's Keelhaulers, Mike Boyd of the Conewago Canoe Club, Bob Allen of the Baltimore Canoe Club and Bob Gedekoh of the AWA.

After the meeting the proposed regulations were modified so that only one-half of the hard boat quota will be available by phone reservation, the rest will be first come first serve. It is hoped that out of town boaters will utilize the phone system, while local boaters will take the first come first serve spots.

Hoehn also agreed to "end" the hard boat quota day at 3 p.m., allowing

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briefs

additional boaters the opportunity to put on and run the Loop or the entire river after that time. This had been an integral part of TRPC's 1989 petition, and was considered a major concession to local boaters, who will now be able to avoid the quota system and the congestion on the river by putting on afterthree. It is believed that by shifting utilization of the river by local hardboaters later in the day, conditions on the river earlier in the day will also be improved.

Those attending the January meeting with Hoehn were generally pleased with the new park superintendent's willingness to compromise and his expressed desire to maximize the utilization of the river by all sectors of the boating community. During the past several paddling seasons the atmosphere at Ohiopyle State Park has deteriorated, and there have been a number of confrontations between boaters and the park staff. It is hoped that Hoehn's appointment and his modified pilot project will help to reduce

tension at Ohiopyle this year.

Hoehn, who comes to Ohiopyle from Pennsylvania's Delaware Canal-Stover State Park, has a good reputation with eastern Pennsylvania boaters, who found him supportive, particularly in regard to his management of the Tohickan Creek. But there is little doubt that dealing with the situation on the Lower Youghiogheny, one of the nation's most heavily utilized day use rivers, will be an even greater challenge.

Other portions of the pilot proposal of particular note to hard boater include the mandate that all boaters be off the Loop by sunset and that those paddling the entire river arrive at Bruner Run before the departure of the last shuttle bus. This time will be posted at the put-in.

Boaters wishing only to paddle the Loop before 3:00 p.m. will be permitted to do so if they have a launch permit.

Finally, anyone paddling the river at any time is now expected to

obtain a permit at the put-in or sign in at the launch if it is not manned.

Hoehn has repeatedly emphasized that the new regulations are part of a pilot project which may be modified or discontinued if the situation at the park becomes unmanageable.

The pilot project regulations pertaining to hard boaters are reprinted here in entirety.

Pilot Proposal Regulations Pertaining to Private Hard Boaters

All hardboaters will be required to have a launch permit prior to putting on the river. A launch permit for access during quota hours of 8:W a.m. to 3:W p.m. will be available through either of two methods, PRIOR RESERVATION BY TELEPHONE or FIRST COME FIRST SERVE LAUNCH RESERVATION AT THE LAUNCH AREA ON THE DAY OF LAUNCH. As in 1989 launch times will be 8:00 to 9:00, 9:00 to 10:00, 10:00 to 11:00, 11:00 to 12:00, 12:00 to 1:00, 1:00 to 2:00 and 2:W to 3:00. A launch window will be assigned rather than a specific launch time.

Of the 30 launch spaces available in each launch window 15 spaces will be available to the boater wishing to make prior

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reservations. Persons making prior reservations will be required to check in at the launch area no less than **one-half** hour prior to the start of the launch window. A roster of all persons covered by the **permit** will be required at that time. If a person with a prior reservation **should** arrive after the check in time, or not at all, the reservation will be cancelled and these spaces added to the first come first serve spaces for that launch window. A boater arriving late may reapply for a launch time upon his reaching the launch area contact station if times are **still** available first come first serve.

When telephoning the park office for reservations a caller will be limited to making reservations for only five launch dates per call. This limiting is needed to help ease the length of such a telephone call. In addition, an individual may only reserve a maximum of five slots in any one launch date. Clubs or organizations may reserve up to fifteen spaces per launch time if confirmed within two weeks of the launch date. This confirmation must be done in writing on club letterhead and should state the reservations are needed for a club or organization sponsored outing, and that the club or organization is non-profit for the purposes of this outing.

Fifteen first come first serve spaces, plus no shows, will be available for

each launch window. Boaters wishing to reserve one of these spaces will be required to complete a launch permit and supply a roster of all persons covered by that permit. Forms, pens and paper will be available at the launch contact stations. Permits will be issued for specific launch windows and must be used during those time frames.

Hard boaters, whether they wish to utilize the Loop or make the full trip to Bruner Run, after **3:00 p.m.**, will not be counted in the daily quotas. The **3:15** launch time will be the last scheduled launch time for inflatable boaters making the full trip to Bruner Run due to the shuttle schedule. All boaters must be off the river at sunset. The exact time of sunset will be posted prominently at the launch. Boaters must reach the Bruner Run take out prior to the last **shuttle** bus leaving the area. The time of the last shuttle bus will also be posted prominently at the launch. This time may vary. It is the hard boaters' responsibility to see that they **can** reach Bruner Run by this last shuttle if they choose to make the complete run. The Loop is available to all boaters between 8:00 a.m. and **3:00 p.m.** daily without a bus token but requires a launch permit and a launch time. After **3:00 p.m.** the Loop is available to all boaters. A bus token is not needed but the boater must exit the river by sunset

All boat launches will require a permit. For time periods after the dose of the launch contact station or for other periods when the launch is not manned this **permit** will be in the form of a sign-up sheet at the launch contact station. This sheet will be attached to a **clipboard** and will require the boater's name, city, state, time of launch, **type of craft**, destination (Loop or Bruner Run), and for inflatable the number in each craft.

All hard boat launches during quota hours will be controlled by rosters completed by the permit holders. Individual boaters will be checked against these rosters when launching. Bus tokens will be available until the last scheduled quota launch time. Tokens may be purchased in advance for use that day or on subsequent days.

Unjustifiable failures to complete the sign-up sheet prior to launch, failure to exit the river by sunset, or failure to reach Bruner Run prior to the last posted shuttle bus departure time will be considered violations of the Pa. Criminal Code. Park rangers will exercise discretion in the matter of issuing citations.

If at any time during this pilot project conditions should become unmanageable due to the implementation of these changes, the pilot project may be suspended, modified or terminated at the direction of the park superintendent.



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AWA moves to protect more whitewater

By **MAC THORNTON**

Eastern whitewater conservationists took their cue from residents of Berlin, who ended the year of **1989** chipping away at a hated, dam-like structure. What was the Berlin Wall anyway, but kind of a dam? Like the Berliners, **1989** was the year that the AWA went on the offense, the goal being to gain positive protection for numerous whitewater rivers.

AWA helped prepare a massive report for Monongahela National Forest, asking for permanent "Wild and Scenic" status for **10** superlative whitewater segments. Similar reports were prepared and presented to George Washington National Forest (eight rivers) and Jefferson National Forest (two rivers).

AWA helped defeat a second hydro proposal for the Savage, and now there is an all-out effort to get Congress to declare the Savage "off-limits" to hydromania forever.

Several AWA members stood in the drizzle at **Summersville** Dam on September **16** to participate in the dedication of the Gauley National Recreational Area, forever protecting the Gauley, and naming the first Wild and Scenic river in the Middle Atlantic: the lower part of the Bluestone. AWA worked hard to get this legislation enacted.

Great Falls Access Rights

Following a year of intense negotiations with



Wild and Scenic for the Williams?



Popular Smoke Hole run on S. Branch Potomac

the paddling community, the state of Maryland issued final regulations on September 4 for paddling the Great Falls of the Potomac. Basically, a written registration is required of each Great Falls paddler, acknowledging that he or she understands that the Falls is Class **VI**, and that rescue is very difficult. This regulation was agreeable to paddlers as an alternative to closing the Falls entirely. In fact, registration was favored by all parties except National Park Service (NPS) official John Byrne, who opposed allowing any Great Falls paddlers.

However, NPS controls all practical land access to the Falls. On September **8**, at Byrne's behest, the NPS issued a secret letter to Maryland stating that all access to the Potomac from NPS land was closed to Great Falls paddlers.

Alerted, Washington area paddlers sprang into action. Paddlers demonstrated to NPS brass that Byrne's actions were unlawful under NPS regulations, and urged that NPS access policies should be made consistent with the new Maryland registration law. The latest word is that the NPS is leaning

toward agreeing with AWA. Also, Byrne has been "transferred out of his job; he has been reassigned to the Appalachian Trail Authority, where he will no longer be able to pester paddlers.

Savage

For the second time in less than a year, paddlers have defeated a proposed hydropower project on the Savage. On July 14, **Synergics, Inc.** surrendered its preliminary permit from FERC, apparently convinced by documents submitted by the Savage River Defense Fund that the project was not profitable at current

energy prices, and that paddlers were prepared to wage a costly legal and political battle to save the Savage.

At year's end, paddlers are mounting a campaign to convince Congresswomen Beverly Byron to sponsor a bill declaring the Savage "off-limits" to hydro, once and for all. Western Marylanders are supporting this effort, and canvassing efforts are underway. If you live in Maryland, please write Beverly Byron in support of this effort c/o 2430 Rayburn Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515.

Monongahela National Forest Rivers

In the most ambitious Middle Atlantic whitewater conservation project in history, the AWA helped

assemble a group of 21 conservation organizations to sponsor a movement to get 10 West Virginia whitewater rivers permanently protected as Wild and Scenic: two Potomac tributaries, five Cheat tributaries and three Gauley tributaries.

Allied with AWA are five other national conservation organizations and several west Virginia groups. MNF is now formulating its river study plans, and paddlers have been at MNF headquarters in Elkins, WV negotiating for all premium whitewater segments.

MNF will have to complete its studies, make recommendations to Congress, and Congress will have to act favorably. It's a long road.

George Washington and Jefferson Nat. Forests.

Paddlers did not stop with the Monongahela National Forest streams. Documents were prepared to the two national forests located in Virginia asking for Wild and Scenic studies of a total of 10 classic Blue Ridge barnburner stream segments.

Cheat Basin.

The Army Corps of Engineers is currently engaged in a flood control study for the entire Cheat Basin, and is focussed on an earlier study suggesting five dams on five whitewater streams: Gandy Creek, Laurel Fork, Gladly Fork, Shavers Fork and Dry Fork. The reconnaissance study is due in June 1990--and AWA will have that study under a microscope to ex-

pose any of the Corps' typical gamesmanship. **Greenbriar.**

The Corps is also halfway through a flood control study on the Greenbriar, and is focussed on a dam between Cass and Marlinton, WV. However, the Corps has run out of funding for this study, and paddlers are working to deny them further money.

Lost/Cacapon.

Paddlers are supporting the Cacapon River Committee and other valley residents in opposing a boondoggle dam on Kimsey Run, an important tributary which enters the Lost River near Lost City, WV. This is a classic pork barrel story: operating in secret, a rich landowner-county pol gets the federal government committed to

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build a lake, greatly increasing the value of his adjacent lands.

Belatedly, a sturdy group of citizens formed to oppose the dam. With help from paddler Steve Taylor, the citizen group demolished the engineering and economic justifications put forth by the **government** for the dam. Pressure forced a public meeting. Some 400 people opposed the dam; only one citizen spoke in favor of it. State and federal **pols** have started to get cold feet, but construction plans continue. Stay tuned...

Lower Yough Access

AWA assisted the Three Rivers Paddling Club of Pittsburgh in petitioning Pennsylvania for changes in Lower Yough management. The latest inside

word from AWA director Tom **McAndrew** is that the following changes are probable for 1990: (1) the overall quota of 192 private hardboaters per day will not be liberalized, as we had asked, (2) a telephone reservation system will be put in place for hardboaters, and (3) "Loop" runs will be permitted all day, but will be counted against the 192 quota. Note that the 192 quota was not reached on any day in 1989, although it was reached on six days in 1988.

Upper Yough Access

Acting several years too late, the State of Maryland finally put regulations in place limiting raft use on the "Upper": a maximum of 72 raft passengers were allowed per day, divided among 12

companies. These regulations have several flaws, but are due to be reworked in 1990 after a team from Penn State University releases its recreation capacity study of the Upper Yough.

In addition, **AWA's** Rich Bowers successfully worked on Maryland legislation removing the upper limit on state-owned acreage in Garrett County. The express purpose of this bill was to facilitate state purchases of land in the Upper Yough corridor. However, it remains to be seen how aggressive the State will be in actually acquiring title to the land.

Upper Yough Relicensing

Pennsylvania Electric's license to operate Deep Creek Lake Dam (source of Upper Yough

flows) expires in 1993, and the relicensing proceedings are underway. AWA Directors Pete Skinner, Pope Barrow and Mac Thornton spoke at public meetings in Garrett County on the project, and submitted written requests for improvements in whitewater release management. Paddlers want: (1) better advance notice of releases, (2) more releases on weekends and Fridays, and (3) more releases of three hours or longer, even if this means a fewer total number of releases.

James

AWA has assisted the Coastal Canoeists in battling three hydro projects on the James in downtown Richmond. Two projects have been killed off. The remaining appli-

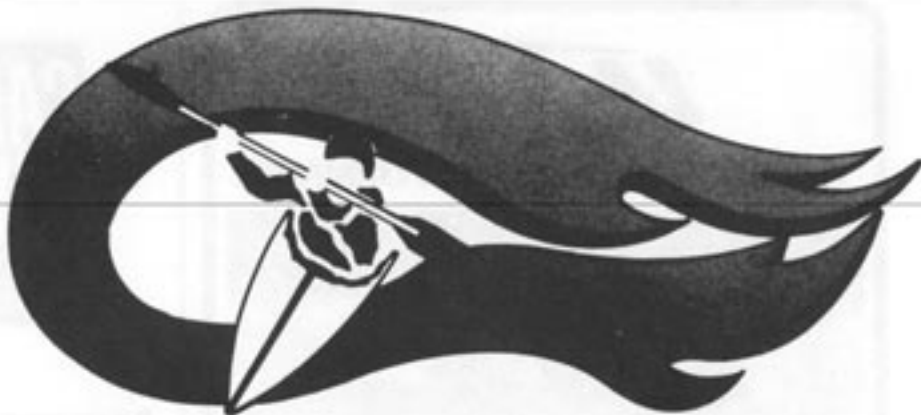
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cant is the City of Richmond itself, which is studying repairs and modifications to the **Hollywood-Belle Isle** Dam (with the facility on the island itself). This would probably dewater Hollywood and Cemetery Rapids, two of the best rapids on the river.

Russell Fork

AWA is spearheading intervention in FERC proceedings regarding installation of a hydropower project at Flanagan Dam on Virginia's Pound River. This dam is the source of fall **whitewater** flows on the Russell Fork. **AWA's** intervention was joined by Eastern Professional River Outfitters and the county government of Pike County, KY, where paddlers take out on the Russell Fork run.

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Subject: Scarcity of White-water
Statistic: *Less than 1% of U.S. river miles offer whitewater (@ 34,000 mi). Less than 2,000 U.S. rivers have class II+ rapids*
Source: *American White-water, Nationwide White-water Inventory (1990 edition)*

Subject: River mileage free-flowing, dammed, etc.
Statistics:
• *3,500,000 river miles were once free-flowing (U.S. Total).*
• *500,000 to 600,000 miles (14 to 17% of total) now behind dams*
• *7,300 miles (0.2% of total)*

are in wild and scenic system

• *Only 2% of U.S. river mileage still sufficiently undam-mend, undeveloped, and clean to possibly qualify for inclusion in wild and scenic system.*

• *Only 312 significant streams in the lower 48 States are still free-flowing and undeveloped in their entireties (0.4% the total U.S. river mileage).*
Source: *National Park Service. Also W. Kent Olsen in Appalachia, Summer 1987.*

Subject: Wild and scenic rivers
Statistic: *300 new wild and scenic rivers would amount to only 2% of total river miles in U.S. 90% of existing wild and scenic river mileage is within*

existing national forests, parks, and other Federal lands.
Source: *Kent Olsen at 1988 American Rivers conference.*

Subject: Demand for outdoor recreation
Statistic: *86% of American people want more outdoor recreation.*
Source: *National Geographic Survey in 1987 for Presidents Commission on Americans Outdoors.*

Subject: importance of Tourism
Statistic: *In the year 2,000 tourism will be the #1 industry in the U.S.*
Source: *Pat Noonan reporting at 1988 American Rivers Conference on 1987 findings of Presidents Commission on Americans*

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Subject: Hydropower:
Number of existing plants
Statistic: 1,523 hydro-
power projects are operat-
ing under FERC license or
exemption. (This is 53% of
the total developed
hydroelectric capacity.)
There are 750 Army Corps
of Engineers or Bureau of
Reclamation dams.
Hundreds of private unli-
censed hydropower
projects also exist, and
thousands of power
facilities and other dams
were built throughout the
U.S. by the the Soil Con-
servation Service and oth-
ers. The total number of
dams in the U.S. is
conservatively estimated to
be 60,000.
Source: Hydroelectric
Power Resources of the

United States, FERC 1981
Natural Rivers and the
Public Trust, W. Kent Olsen
(1989)

Subject: U.S. Hydropower
potential
Statistic: 49 % of the
nation's theoretical hydro-
power potential has been,
or is currently being-
developed. Of the remain-
ing theoretical potential,
75% is at large-scale sites.
Source: Hydroelectric
Power Resources of the
United States, FERC 1988.

Subject: Hydropower
growth trends
Statistic: Between 1978
and 1985, 6,500 applica-
tions were filed with FERC
for new hydroelectric power
projects, mostly for small
projects. Between 1984
and 1988 the number of

hydroelectric plants operat-
ing in the U.S. grew from
1546 to over 2010, more
than a 30% increase in 4
years. In 1977, FERC re-
ceived 25 applications for
licenses; by 1985 320 were
filed. In 1978 only 36 appli-
cations for preliminary per-
mits were filed, but 3 years
later the number jumped to
1,856.

Source: FERC, Hydroelec-
tric Power Resources of the
United States (1988);
FERC Monitor (VI, No. 19;
Sep 18, 1986); M.A. Proett,
Cumulative Impacts, 11
Harv. Env. LR. 82 (1987)

Subject: Energy from small
hydro projects.

Statistic: If all financially
and environmentally
feasible small (i.e. less than
100 megawatts) power-
plants which can be built in

the future are actually built,
they would generate yearly
the same amount of energy
as 1 medium-sized coal-
fired powerplant. This equal
@ 0.11% of our current
fossil fuel usage. Even if
existing environmental limi-
tations were repealed only
0.28% of current fossil fuel
usage would be replaced
by these plants.

Source: FERC, PURPA
Benefits at New Dams and
Diversions, Final Staff Re-
port (July 1988); Com-
ments of S. Taylor in Final
Report.

Subject: Electric power
Statistic: 8 % of U.S.
energy is generated by
hydropower. (5% oil, 11%
natural gas, 19% nuclear,
55% coal, and 2% other
sources)

Source: Edison Electric

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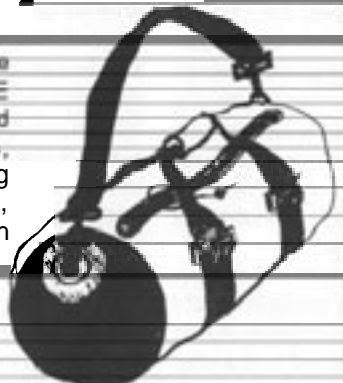


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reation around the re-
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gus release times.

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open the Little. Tell your
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1069) denies paddlers their
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how a river resource should
be utilized. Secondly,
contact Northeast Utilities
directly. Write attention to
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Hartford, CT 06141-0270.

Knowing when to bail out...

"Roll or die" philosophy can lead paddlers into trouble

Over the past twenty years, the **Eskimo** Roll has evolved from a stunt performed by a few experts to a basic skill for any kayaker serious about paddling whitewater. Rolling permits a fast recovery from flips, allowing beginners to learn faster, intermediates to play more aggressively, and experts to attempt rapids which they would never afford to swim.



By CHARLIE WALBRIDGE
A WA Safety Chairman

As rolling became commonplace, the pressure to perform increased. A cult-like allegiance has grown up around the idea that you should never, ever swim. Many experts boast that they have gone years without missing a roll. Unfortunately, some have even "hung in" so long that they have even lost consciousness; others have been carried into strainers or undercut rocks and pinned. But the "roll at all costs" philosophy has clear limits, which I am going to explore.

I'm not going to argue the importance of a **bombproof** roll for the hard-core expert in **dangerous** places where swimming can't be considered an option. Nor am I going to minimize the tremendous advantages a roll poses for any paddler seeking safe, enjoyable river trips. You are usually safer inside your boat than out of it, especially in cold water. A fast roll is the safest possible way to recover from a flip, and it's usually worth making several tries to come up.

But there are risks to hanging upside down for long periods while your boat flushes uncontrollably down a rapid. You can be carried into a pinning situation that you cannot see, much less prepare for.

KNOWING WHEN TO BAIL OUT

No kayak or canoe, no matter how well constructed, can be expected to hold its shape when exposed to the full force of a whitewater river. When these craft collapse, the owner is in desperate trouble. Most paddlers know the sensation of brushing and banging rocks while hanging upside down and organizing a roll. Brief scrapes and impacts are not usually dangerous to those who are properly trained and equipped. **Tucking** forward, "Hanging in", and coming back up despite these distractions is extremely satisfying; everyone has their own stories about how they prevailed despite considerable abuse.

But when your canoe or kayak is actually being held against an obstruction, the danger of pinning is significant. Here stubbornness can work against you: wait too long and you can become trapped. You want to kick free before bailing out ceases to be an option.

Fortunately, boats seldom "splat and wrap"; there are usually several seconds between first contact and the moment when the hull catches the full force of the current, "settles in", and collapses. The sensation of your boat "hanging" when in contact with an obstruction means that you are at the edge of trouble. Over the past decade a number of paddlers, many with considerable experience, have died in pinning accidents. Some might have been saved if they had used this brief "window" to escape their boat rather than hanging on until it was too late.

Deciding to leave a canoe or kayak at the right time is not easy. After years of learning to fight panic and handle yourself under water, a decision to bail out goes against the grain.

Many factors enter into the

decision. In general, pinning is more likely on tight, technical streams. Big water is often less obstructed, leaving more time to safely organize a roll. What lies downstream is important, particularly in steep or obstructed drops. A paddler in the middle of a flooded river, a class VI rapid, or any other place where rescue is difficult is going to be a lot more reluctant to wet exit than a person who gets snagged in more moderate places. Some spots are known to be extremely hazardous to swimmers (such as left crack on Section IV of the Chatooga) and this figures in the decision. There have been cases where paddlers, escaping a pinned boat, became caught in undercut rocks below. Rapids of this nature are intolerant of error, and portaging is a reasonable alternative for those unsure of their ability to roll up.

Since the decision to eject is often made in an instant, your boat should be outfitted so you can get out quickly. Since paddlers hold themselves in their boats with muscle power, there

is no excuse for outfitting which is excessively tight. Low-volume boats pin more quickly, and this caution applies doubly to them! If you don't swim much, wet exits should be practiced occasionally to test your gear. If you "hang up" on something, fix it at once!

A lot of paddlers are reluctant to bail out because they aren't comfortable swimming in rapids. A rescue course which teaches these skills or informal practice in a known rapid on a summer day will help you become more comfortable in the water, making your swim easier to take.

HEADS UP PINS

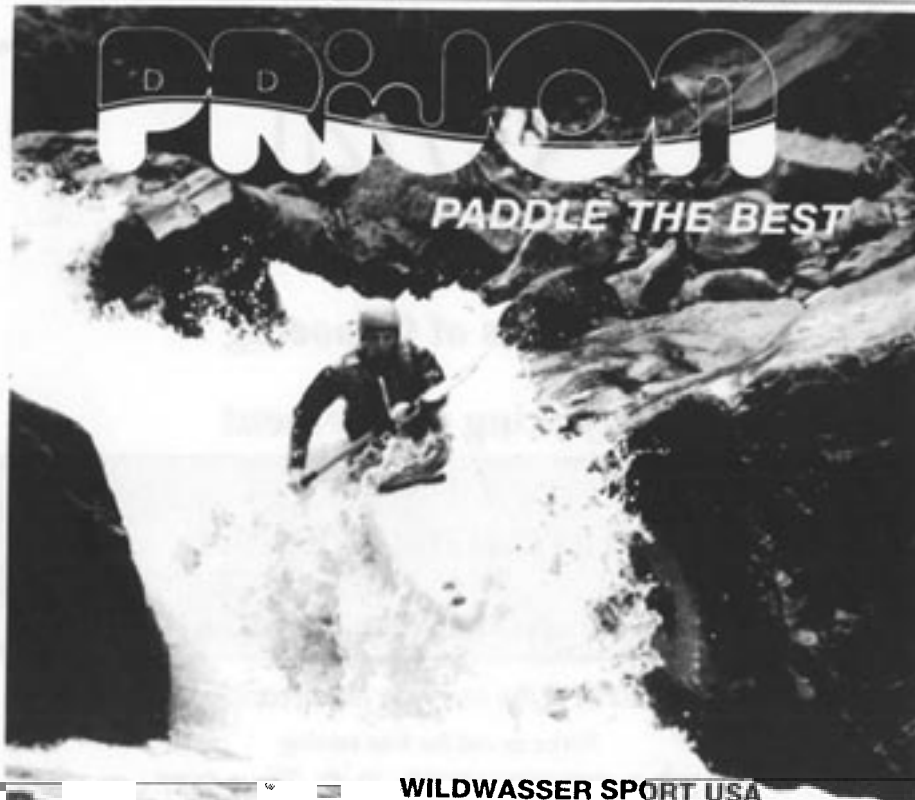
Broaching on a rock while upright is less hazardous than being caught "head-down", but the situation must be treated with great respect. Leaning into the rock can make your craft seem deceptively stable, but in strong current the balance can shift without much warning. Remember the drowning of Mark

Allen, one of the country's most skilled

paddlers, in California's Giant Gap of the North American. Mark died killed while trying to wiggle free of an "embarrassing" pin that turned on him suddenly. Once the boat flipped and folded he was in serious trouble.

This is no place to linger. To maintain your position, the hull of your boat must be angled hard downstream so that the water passes cleanly under it. But beware! The force of the water can gradually pull the boat over until the upstream edge catches, at which point the current will grab the hull and wrap it.

There is also a tendency, in the case of downed trees, for a boat to gradually be sucked down underneath the trunk. The best course of action is to get clear quickly, fending off the rock with your hands. If this doesn't work, get out of your boat and hop out onto the obstruction quickly. This is harder for kayakers than canoeists, but equally important. You can extricate your boat and launch from there.



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CAUTIONS ON BOW RESCUES

A bow rescue is made when a paddler puts **his** bow in a position where an overturned boater can grab it and pull himself upright. Once used almost exclusively as a flatwater drill, this technique is now being used on the river to help novices recover quickly from flips. **When used** by competent instructors in supervised drills in the runoff of deep, unobstructed rapids it certainly works. But I wouldn't use it to support beginners on typical river trips when this assistance may be a while in coming and where all the dangers lurking downstream are not known.

This past season a young woman paddling with experienced friends flipped on an **eddyline** above a downed tree. Although she had no roll the situation, while tense, was not overwhelming. She did, however, hang upside down, waiting for a bow rescue as she had been instructed.

She never saw the obstacle and, having no chance to protect herself, was **pinned** fast. Had **she** bailed out of the **boat** at once she could have taken evasive **action** by **swimming** to one side or pushing off with her feet. If a collision with the strainer seemed imminent, she could have swum head-first for the obstacle and climbed up on it with her arms. Scary techniques, to be sure, but the alternative is being **sucked** under the water.

Swimming in rivers is part of the sport, and everyone needs to **learn** how to do it. Novices especially need to know what to do when they find them



Jim Diehl of Utica, NY opted to swim after flipping at the top drop of Knife's Edge rapid on the Black River. It was a wise decision as Jim lost only skin from his butt rather than his face.



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selves in the river, since they will frequently capsize and have to bail out. They should be taught the importance of getting away from their boat, how to drift safely in rapids, and how to swim themselves to shore if there is no rescuer handy.

Practicing these **skills** are a significant aspect of their training. I

would not encourage a student to hang upside-down in a **kayak** in a river waiting for help unless I was quite sure I could get to him promptly, and had a good idea of the dangers which lay below. I would also be aware that people have had their hands broken by the rescuers bow during these maneuvers, and plan my approach accordingly.

Another accident which emphasized the importance of basic **swift-water** survival training occurred last summer when a young woman drowned in an easy class **II** rapid on the Potomac near Harper's ferry. Although a strong swimmer, she had no whitewater instruction prior to **making** the run. After flipping she became pinned between her canoe and a submerged log. Had she **been** properly instructed she **would** have swum away **from** her **canoe**, and drifted downstream to safety on her back, feet first. Unfortunately, no one was along that day to give that instruction.

ROPE RESCUE FROM HOLES

Ropes may be thrown to a paddler who, while upright, is unable to break free of a reversal. They can then exit their boat and get pulled to safety. This past Fall an expert paddler was caught in just such a place upstream of a Class VI drop during a high water run on West Virginia's Lower Meadow River. A member of his group realized the danger he was in and threw a rope across the bow of his boat. He chose not to use it, and although he later got free of the hole he was too exhausted to roll up and subsequently died in the drop below.

Hindsight is always perfect. If he had **rolled** up, we'd never have known about his problem with the hole. Had he taken the rope and bailed out, his boat and paddle would have been carried downstream to an uncertain fate. The decision in this case depends on one's personal philosophy of risk, and many of us, after reading this, might opt for the rope.

PRACTICING TOLERANCE

Because there are times when rolling is not the best alternative, I feel it is silly to emphasize the idea that rolling is the only reasonable alternative when training. Even experts are seldom confronted with "must roll" situations. The advantages of rolling are clear enough without heaping abuse on swimmers. Far better to teach the swimming and self rescue **skills** that all of us, no matter how skilled, will need from time to time.

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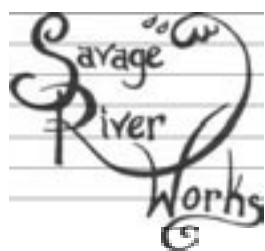


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to follow his heart
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Jim and Gracie Goddard enjoy a whitewater honeymoon

*By JIM GODDARD and
GRACIE MOSCHEL GODDARD*

Prelude

The antiquated telephone rang at 1:00 a.m. in Jim Goddard's Davis, West Virginia hotel room. He was off, alone, on an annual ski weekend. His fiancée, Gracie Moschel, nearly 1000 miles away in St Louis, was on the line.

"How would you like to move to Portland, Oregon?" Gracie's voice practically bristled with delight.

Jim's mind went into overdrive as he wiped the sleep from his eyes and tried to remember his two paddling and hiking vacations in the Pacific Northwest. The boating had been magnificent and the hiking was breathtaking. Jim had come back east with the distinct impression that if you weren't living in West By God Virginia, the Northwest was the place to be.

Gracie excitedly described her impending job transfer while Jim tried to remember what he had heard about the job market for engineers in Portland.

"Portland....ahhh.... Oregon....sounds good to me", Jim replied, realizing that their long-distance courtship might finally be coming to its logical conclusion...in one of the ultimate playgrounds of the United States.

.....especially if there's whitewater

Northwest Passage

It has been two years since we relocated to Portland. For those who have forgotten their grade school geography, Oregon and Washington are located just north of the California Hair Scene and just a little too far west of Idaho for eastern boaters to access by car. The eastern **three-quarters** of both states consist of high, dry plains, which meet the Cascades about 150 miles from the Pacific coast.

We have discovered that there are many terrible temptations which test the fidelity of northwestern boaters to their sport. Witness the sad fate of Mark Singleton, featured on the cover of Jim Snyder's *Squirt Book*. Mark's kayak is gathering dust under an ever growing pile of windsurfing paraphernalia.

Same of the world's best **boardsailing** is in the **Columbia Gorge**, the border between Washington and Oregon, just an hour east of Portland.

But even if you are not a potential boardhead, you might fall victim to the year-round skiing on the slopes of **Mt. Hood**, elevation 11,239, also an hour's drive from Portland. And if you are not tempted by the opportunity to **ski** on a 90 inch base with no lift lines, you might decide to free your heels and try cross country **skiing** in the backcountry nearby. The cover is good from October through April on or around any of the 10,000+ foot peaks nearby: **Mt. Ranier**, **Mt. Adams**, **Mt. Bachelor** or **Mt. St. Helens**.

Those boaters who don't like snow might fall victim to the ocean, one hour to the west. Surf and **sea kayaking** are popular here, and you can fill your freezer **with a magnificent bounty** from the sea obtained by fishing or scuba diving. For those who prefer solid footing, **hiking** provides access to calender quality panoramas on cliffs high above the crashing surf.

And we haven't even **addressed** the issue of backpacking, mountain biking, rock climbing...

Well, these comments are not



Jim Goddard photo

Gracie Goddard explores new whitewater on Oregon's White Salmon River.

Intended to be the malicious taunts of **spoiled** Oregonians to those unable to share our paradise. Rather they **represent** the passionate love song of two **relocated** eastern kayakers who become **more** enthralled with the Pacific Northwest every day.

But let's talk about **whitewater**.

The first thing we noticed here is that the "freezing level" is the critical **topic** in most "what's running" **telephone** calls, rather than the location

and amount of recent rainfall. This is because the Cascades steal water from the wet Pacific winds and store it, not by the inch, but by the foot, as snow. The Cascades store more potential whitewater in this form than 10,000 Summersville Dams, and the Army Corps does not control the valves.

The runoff fluctuates, depending on the elevation at which freezing, or, more to the point, melting, is occurring. This brings up a second point, water temperature varies from ice **cream**

headachecold to just pleasantly numbing. **Drysuits** are the norm year round. Only on the warmest days of summer on familiar rivers do northwestern boaters dare forsake their **drysuits** for neoprene and paddling jackets.

Another **surprising characteristic** of northwestern boating is that you can actually see through the water. We know that this **will be** difficult for those back east to believe, but water doesn't have to be opaque, and rocks do not have to be orange. Rocks can be visually stimulating in their natural hues, without mine acid cosmetics, especially when coiffured with toupees of moss and algae.

The **pool-drop** rivers around

Portland open their banks invitingly to the technical (scared of big water?) boaters from back east. The only **complication** is that trees can be, and usually are, anywhere in the stream. **These** strainers take some getting used to.

Whitewater Menu

So lets get specific. Where do we boat, and what is good? That is a tough question since during our **first** months here we paddled 20 **different** rivers without repeating one. And, there are many more we have yet to paddle. When you come to visit us, leave **your** copy of Whitewater West Virginia at home and pick up a copy of the **Soggy Sneakers** guide to Oregon whitewater.

Until then we will **describe**

some of our favorites...some morsels **from** the enticing whitewater banquet **available** to northwestern boaters.

The White Salmon

The Upper, Upper section of **this** river features classic **technical** water. **Start** with a **line-your-boat-down-put-in**, followed by steep staircase drops with unpleasant consequences for those whose concentration lapses, runnable waterfalls..and unrunnable waterfalls. All of this culminates in the Zig Zag **Canyon**, a section not deemed part of the run by the authors of the **Soggy Sneakers** guide, for reasons of liability.

This section is more intense than the Upper Yough, and it remains the province of an elite class of boaters. Bruce Warner, one of these elite, graciously led Jim down this river for the first time last June.

The White Salmon is captured between two sheer Columbian basalt walls. Springs flowing from the cliffs augment the volume considerably. The clear water lulls the paddler, almost into a state of hypnosis. The river is deceptive since the volume and power of the river seem minimal.

Jim discovered this first-hand as he followed Bruce down a **non-descript** diagonal ledge. Upon hitting an innocent looking boil at the foot of the drop, Jim was catapulted twenty feet laterally into an undercut basalt wall where thousands of projecting fingers tore at his shoulder. As he slowly inched his way out of this dilemma, he spotted Bruce in an eddy below, smiling. He had seen the same thing happen to all the first timers on this river.

Below the **Zig Zag** Canyon lies the Upper White Salmon Only the rapid just below the put-in is as difficult as what lies upstream. A fourteen foot, dogleg waterfall used to be considered the only portage on the river. However, paddling legend Harvey **Shapiro's** pioneering backward plunge over the drop has paved the way for more conventional assaults on this menace.

Not far downstream rafts suspended from a cable signal the beginning of the commercially paddled section of the White Salmon. The river is one of our most popular rafting rivers, since it runs throughout the summer when others have lost their flow. **Still, even on the busiest weekend day,** the total number of rafts on the river is



Jim Goddard photo

Bruce Warner challenges the steep gradient of the Upper, Upper White Salmon.

no greater than the number pinned in Entrance Rapid on the Lower Yough during any random fifteen minute interval.

The gradient here is 90 feet per mile, but for the most part it is evenly distributed. There are, however, a few steep drops featuring ender spots that could distract a boater for an entire day.

The Breitenbush

Harvey Shapiro introduced us to the Breitenbush...one of those rivers whose intimate and breathtaking beauty seems a surprise every time we paddle it. The towering forest of fir trees, carpeted by luxurious mosses and ferns, is more impressive than any botanical garden. The river lives up to its environment.

Choose your put-in depending on the karma of the day. A serpentine channel early in the run called the Slot collects trees and logs. These are usually avoidable but are very intimidating. Otherwise, the river's pool drop character makes eastern boaters feel at home.

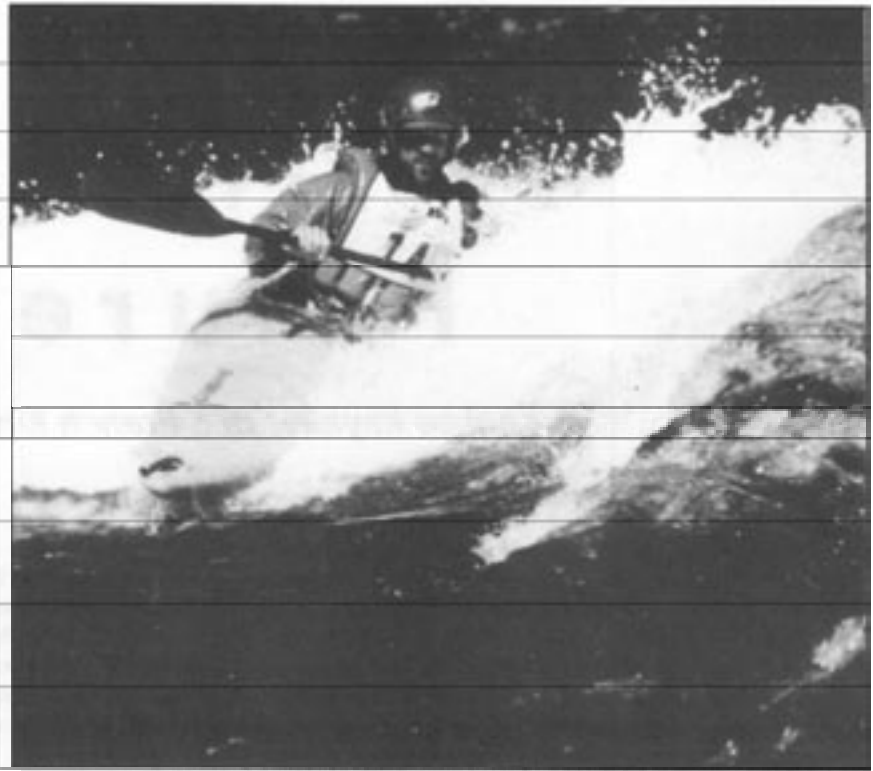
Some of the river's steeper drops can elevate one's pulse to aerobic levels. And to top things off, there is a commune turned resort just above the put-in, blessed with natural hot springs.

The Clackamas

This is Oregon's answer to Pennsylvania's Lower Youghiogheny. Although numerous portions of this river are runnable, the section from the Three Lynx power station to Bob's Hole is the most popular. Your run here might be tainted by the sight of another boating party somewhere on the river, an unusual occurrence here in the Northwest.

The Clackamas's broad nature is funneled into narrow, sloping drops with big waves, followed by unpredictable squirlies. The river also is sprinkled with remnants of the area's volcanic past. One particular rapid has lured many an unwary boater into a recirculating eddy, where the escape of last resort involves climbing a strategically placed chain ladder up a cliff face.

At the end of this run lies Bob's Hole, a seething white trough formed at the base of a sloping shelf just beyond a series of surfable waves. The hole resembles Big Nasty on West Virginia's Cheat at low water, and is more than many boaters care to tackle. The exis-



Rodeo riding at Bob's Hole on the Clackamas River.

Jim Goddard photo

tence of this rapid, and its proximity to the road, has helped create a unique hybrid paddler, one that will spend his or her entire river career writhing 200 yards of this fabled spot. This is also the site of the annual Bob's Hole Rodeo, an event that has attracted and challenged most of the Big Name Western Boaters.

The Wind

The Wind could easily become a Portland kayakers' favorite, being only an hour from home and navigable over a wide range of flows. We have spent many memorable days with our new found paddling acquaintances on this premiere section of whitewater. Comparable in difficulty to the West Virginia Big Sandy, the Wind features only one small refuge of calm water in the entire first half of the run.

After a nice warm-up, the river builds to a crescendo of technical, steep drops. Good river reading skills and quick reflexes are a must, as boaters dodge rocks and holes, choosing from a myriad of routes, not all of which are truly desirable. The rapids here are long by northwestern standards and they tend to flow together. The steep canyon walls go unnoticed as paddlers concentrate on the matter at hand.

The second half of Wind is more soothing and playful. Disconcerting is the evidence of man's intrusion into the wilderness, unfortunate clearcuts studded with the stumps of once magnificent trees. But not far downstream, a glorious waterfall cascades from the side to the edge of the river, making it easy to ignore the minor devastation above.

The take-out is identified by the remnants of a bridge washed out long ago. This also serves as the Wind's crude gauge. The water level is not measured by feet, inches or cfs here, but rather by the number of ties showing above the water.

A New Home

As we mentioned before, these are just a few of the magnificent rivers we have discovered near our new northwestern home. The variety and the beauty of the rivers here seems endless...we hope this sampler will answer some of our old eastern friends' queries about what we've been up to since we made the move. We're more than satisfied with the whitewater we have found, and we're looking forward to experiencing new northwestern rivers for years to come.

Back in the Future

A Yankee kayaker in a French king's court

By CHRIS KOLL

It was after midnight when I crossed a narrow bridge over the Beaver River and entered the hamlet of Belford. The village was already asleep and the mist from a steady autumn rain settled over the darkened houses like a thick comforter.

I was about to park my truck on the quiet street, crawl into the back and wait for morning when I spotted ahead the distinctive red beacon of neon that promised a backcountry tavern.

"What the hell," I said aloud. "It's still early." And I pulled into the gravel lot of the Belford Inn.

An hour earlier, I had left Watertown, NY, cutting east across the Tug Hill before rejoining the Black River upstream at Lowville. Crossing the Black, I plunged northeast over deserted roads into the foothills of the Adirondacks. I had to backtrack twice before finding the unmarked turn to Belford.

I was responding to a unique invitation from Niagara Mohawk—our local public utility—to join a selected cross-section of central New York boaters to "test" the feasibility of whitewater paddling on a section of the Beaver normally dewatered by the Taylorville hydroelectric project.

There are a bunch of dewatered sections on the Beaver. In fact, during the **tumultuous 25-mile** stretch where the Beaver tumbles down nearly 1,000 feet out of the Adirondack highlands, the river is blocked by 12 hydroelectric dams.

The dams are built at the heads of major drops or long stretches of rapids and funnel the water into huge, steel tubes, 10-feet in diameter. The tubes, known as penstocks, parallel the river back into the trees, collecting the power of compressed water rolling downhill, until releasing the river at a generating station.

Some penstocks run for only a few hundred yards. Some stretch for several miles. But in either scenario, the result is the same: a once wild river reduced to a trickle.

All of the eight hydro plants operated by Niagara-Mohawk are up for relicensing in 1993. Part of the process requires the utility to consider how the river **can be** used for recreation as well as generating power.

So, Ni-Mo asked us, would you mind playing "guinea pig" for a day while we released varying flows back into the river?

Sure.

The two gents sitting at the end of the bar looked up as I entered the room, quickly ascertained that I was of less interest than their beers, and redirected their attention to their draughts.

After the bartender poured me a cold one, I wandered about the rambling inn. A wide room, empty except for a pool table and a juke box, was adjacent to the bar. Additional dining areas, now dark and deserted, lay beyond.

The expansive tavern spoke of better times. I imagined the place when Belford was a boisterous little town, flush with activity from logging. Back then the rooms must have been almost too small to hold the broad shouldered Friday night crowd. I pictured the Inn full of smoke and shouting voices...

What a magnificent country this must have been. To have seen the Beaver—if only once—before it was fettered behind a chain of dams. 1,000 feet in 25 miles. To go back in time—just once...

Shaking off my reverie, I regained my stool at the bar and ordered another libation. The door to the inn blew open. A pair of couples entered and greeted the bartender. The men went into the other room to play pool while the women settled three stools down and chatted merrily.

Pretending to study a poster on the wall announcing an approaching "Big Buck" contest, I secretly examined the women. I took a sip of my drink, and looked again. My eyes lingered. Returning to my drink, I drained the glass and turned back again.

Wham! All went black and I remembered no more.

I awoke alone in an empty field to the gray sky of early dawn. My boat and paddling gear lay strewn around me, but there was no sign of my truck. What had happened?

Had an escort of one of the comely lasses noticed my unseemly glances and applied a pool cue to the back of my head?

Or had I simply imbibed one dram too many, fallen from my stool in a drunken stupor, and been deposited in this isolate meadow by the disgusted proprietor of the Inn?

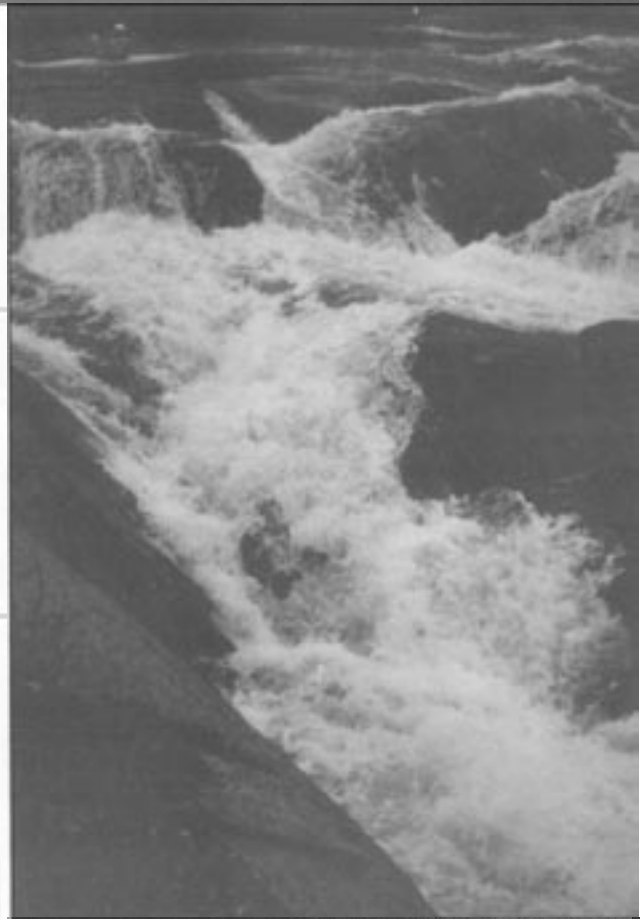
My headache promoted either possibility. But in any case, where was my truck? I rose to my feet and staggered down a rutted cart path in what seemed to be the direction of the town.

The path was littered with frequent land mines of horse manure and led down to the Beaver. The river was swollen, spilling over its banks.

"Odd," I muttered to myself. "The dam at Stillwater controls flows. It should be a maximum of 500 cfs."

I followed the river downstream. My consternation grew with every mile. Where was Belford? Where was my truck? I passed frequent rapids, narrow tumbling drops roaring in flood. I reasoned: this drop has to be Belford, High Falls or Beaver Falls...but where are the hydro projects? Where are the houses? Where are the roads and bridges? Where the hell am I?

With every footstep, I grew more desperate, but what could I do but trudge downstream? Finally, I rounded a bend to



Brad Vroman photo

Back in the present, Barry Robinson plunges down a steep chute in one of drops of the Taylorville section of New York's Beaver River.

find a collection of rough dwellings perched on the banks of the Beaver. Now I was really confused--this wasn't Croghan or Beaver Falls or any of the other half dozen little towns lining the Beaver. I couldn't exactly tell why, but it didn't look like any backcountry village I had ever encountered.

What was it that appeared so odd? Not the unpainted, rough planking of the shelters. Not the wood split shakes that shingled the roofs. And certainly not the privies tucked away behind each house. No—any boater familiar with the Appalachians has seen similar sights.

Then I realized what seemed so strange: not one abandoned automobile rested on blocks in the yards of the village. And not a single satellite dish scanned the heavens beside the houses. Where am I? Where is my truck?

I staggered toward the village. Down at the edge of the water, a solitary figure dressed in a light blue morning coat with white breeches fished the Beaver.

"Hey," I accosted him, "lappeartobea little lost. Could you tell me just where the hell I am?"

The gentleman turned aside from his angling, cast me a withering glance, and replied"

"Tu es en Castomille, tu idiot!"



Steve Massaro photo

Boat-scouting at the top of a drop on the Beaver.

Castowille! That was name given one of the region's first settlements by its earliest French settlers, back in the early 1800's.

"What is this, some kind of reenactment, huh?" I said. "That's why you're wearing those odd clothes. You're dressed for the period."

"Odd clothes," sputtered the Frenchman, staring with disbelief at my Patagonia pile sweater and pants, "It is I wearing odd clothes? It is **you** wearing odd clothes! **Tu** resemble a~ une chenille poilu." (you resemble a hairy caterpillar--editor)

I knew **then** that something was amiss.

I happens all the time in the movies. Time warps. Time machines. Time travel. Peggy Sue, Michael J. Fox, Captain Kirk and H.G. Wells. Back to the future.

I couldn't explain it. Somehow, I had been transported back in time to the early nineteenth century.

My situation could **have** been worse. The region around the Beaver had been settled by French aristocrats fleeing the revolution in their homeland. **They** had purchased large tracts of land and lived in relative leisure by selling pieces of their vast holdings, one chunk at a time.

My fishing acquaintance proved to be an emigre Count, and after accepting my unusual attire, he became my benefactor.

I needed one. Despite my 20th century education at one of the nation's finest football factories, I was remarkably unskilled. I couldn't farm. I was lousy with an axe. I couldn't cook without a microwave. And I couldn't build without **power** tools.

I was reduced to performing menial chores for the Count. I paddled his canoe, cleaned his fish and shoveled his stables. I lived in a drafty hut behind his comfortable lodge. I ate the scraps **from** his table. It was a lifestyle as destitute as that of any raft guide.



Steve Massaro photo

The author leans into a pillow in the middle of a tight chute.



Brad Vroman photo

Bernie Wooten "boofs" the boil over a ledge of the Beaver River.

Until one fateful night changed my life...

*Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's older brother, the former king of Spain, owned an sumptuous estate at Lake Bonaparte, about 20 miles to the north. He occasionally visited **the area** for the fishing and to visit his mistress. Learning that Joseph would pass through Castoruille the next month, the Count prompted hatched plans to provide the monarch a welcome, **well, fit** for a king.*

*Every member of **the** the Count's staff plunged into staging the celebration. I was in charge of the bar.*

Unfortunately, the Count's wine cellar was in a sad state of affairs. His supply of grape brought from France had long vanished and the local vintage bore a strong similarity to vinegar.

What to do? At last, my 20th century training paid dividends.

*In the village, a French mason produced lime for his mortar by baking common limestone. I captured a by product of the **process--CO2--and** released gas in a tightly corked barrel of fresh spring water. Voila--I had created my own version of seltzer.*

Mixing the seltzer with the Count's dubious grape, I introduced the world's first wine cooler. I held my breath as the King took a long pull of the drink, his glass garnished by a tiny colorful cocktail umbrella I had created by festooning long twigs with sumac leaves.

The King wrinkled his nose as the bubbles tickled his sinuses, and announced:

*"**Cette** boisson est delicieuse! Emploie le **Bouffon.**" (This is good stuff. Employ the **buffoon--editor**).*

*My fortune was made. The beverage was the toast of the festivities. I was about to become an Adirondack **kayaker** in a expatriot King's court.*



Brad Vroman photo

C-boater leans to avoid a potential pin.



Steve Massaro photo

I established a plant upstream on the Beaver, near where my truck was to disappear 150 years in the future. The King was demanding. He paid top dollar for every bottle, but constantly called for more production. I hired a staff. Limestone was in abundance. We stripped away a side hill and quarried more than we needed.

Fuel for the fire was no problem. Trees were everywhere. We clear-cut swathes through the woods.

I even found a cheap source of bottles--so economical I didn't bother to reuse the empties. We developed the first non-returnable.

Finally, I had leisure time to explore the river.

My boating gear was still in the meadow where I had abandoned it. One by one, I conquered the wild sections of the Beaver.

There was the easy rapids above Stillwater...Moshier Falls, a wild three-mile section of sheer drops and tight, constricted channels...Eagle Falls, perhaps the most challenging half-mile of boatable water in New York--a 45-degree, 30-yard slide into a tiny pool followed by a ten foot drop, another ten foot drop and then a fifteen foot drop, all with challenging class IV lead-ins...Soft Maple Falls...the 25-foot Effley Falls...Elmer Falls...a continuous mile of class IV at Taylorville...the cataract at Belfort...High Falls and finally Beaver Falls.

The Beaver fell in spurts. Sections of gut-wrenching whitewater were separated by long, placid pools. I'd drift the pools and fish for supper while the stunning Adirondack scenery passed by on both banks of the river.

Shuttle was easy. I simply rode a horse dragging my boat behind. I'd go upstream as far as felt like paddling and then throw my boat in the water. The horse would find her way back to the barn unaided.

My French compatriots did not understand my infatuation with whitewater. They considered rapids a dangerous ob-

struction that necessitated a portage.

Their attitude was in some degree a product of the untimely death of Pierre Pharoux, the surveyor who first explored the region, mapping the boundaries of the settlement.

Several years before, Pharoux had attempted to cross the Black River near the present site of Watertown after several days of hard rain. He had previously forded the river at the same spot many times, using long poles to push a wooden raft across. But on that occasion, the poles failed to reach bottom of the swollen stream. The raft careened out of control downriver before finally plunging over the 20-foot cascade known as the Great Falls.

The French would not understand that 200 years in the future, rational people would actually pay to put on the Black in rafts just 100 yards below the Great Falls.

Despite my idiosyncracies, it was an easy life. And little by little, I used 20th century technology to make my existence more comfortable.

We built a small penstock. First we used water power to mechanically turn large ceiling fans to cool the house during hot summer days. Then, after paying an exorbitant amount for some fine copper wire, I fashioned a crude generator.

I felt a little guilty...using the river to power generation. After all, it was the same issue I had ragged Ni-Mo about, 150 years in the future. But I had to have power.

Not for light. Candles were adequate.

Not for heat. With five fireplaces that roared continuously, my cabin remained snug and warm.

But the Adirondack insects...the mosquitos and black flies. I had to do something.

My French employees called my latest invention "un machin pour tuer les insectes."

They couldn't wrap their tongues around "bug-zapper."

Years rolled by. The business prospered. I boated every day and spent the evenings gathered with my employees, watching the moon rise over the river, roasting passenger pigeons on a spit over a barbecue, distracted only by an occasional moth's fiery dance of death in the zapper.

Then a fateful day. I paddled home one afternoon to be greeted at river edge by my friend the Count, the sheriff and a fat Yankee businessman.

I had been dispossessed.

"The money, my friend, the money--it is short." said the Count.

"White coal," said the Yankee. "This river is white coal."

I clutched my head. What had I done? My interference had altered the course of history. The responsibility was mine. That damn bug-zapper.

I swooned.



Brad Vroman photo

"Hey. Wake up," Chris, wake up." Pete Skinner stood at the open door of my truck. I had been asleep in the front seat, my feet sticking out the door.

"You must have had a hard night," Skinner said solicitously. "I had a heckuva time waking you."

I blinked, then quickly looked about. My truck was parked beside an imposing square building. Mounted in front was a sign that read "Taylorville Station."

I remained unusually quiet as the other paddlers arrived. Barry Robinson from Albany, Chris Roberts, Brad Vroman and Bernie Wooten from Utica, Steve Massaro from Watertown, a pair of C-boaters from Rochester and several others I didn't know. By the time Ed Kiesa, the river yuppie, rolled in—a shiny new Sabre mounted on his turbo Volvo—we numbered twelve.

It must have been some bizarre dream, I kept saying to myself. But I couldn't shake the vivid impression

that I had been here before. I couldn't dismiss a depressing sense of personal responsibility. This plant was here because of me.

I followed the others to a wide garage behind the facility. Jamie, a good old boy from Ni-Mo, dressed in Carharts for the occasion, gave us a briefing over coffee and doughnuts:

"In order for us to judge what flows are most appropriate for whitewater, we'd like you to run the stretch four times. We'll alter the flow with every run. The reach is only about a mile long, and we figured each run would take about an hour. After each trip, we'd like you to fill out a questionnaire so we can get your input as to the conditions at that particular flow.

"We'll have a little spread hereafter the second run, so you'll get something to eat. And we'll shuttle you and your boats back to the top after each run so you can just leave your vehicles here."

My companions buzzed with excitement. This was proving to be one hell of a deal. Shuttle. Lunch. And a new river with water on demand. My spirits lifted. Heck, it was a dream.

We bounced about in the back of the truck as the pickup drove up a narrow dirt road through the trees to the dam at the head of the run. The sun broke through the clouds and brightened the red and yellows of the hardwoods. It was a beautiful Adirondack autumn morning.

The road ended at a fairly unobtrusive dam that stretched between a couple of islands. An open gate spilled a torrent of water into a tiny pool that emptied immediately into the first drop. We rushed to unload boats and zip drysuits.

For the following five hours, I lived another sort of dream—a dream of a perfect day on the trip.

The Beaver was an intimate river. The channel running from the opening pool was only four feet wide, rushing down a constricted slide into a nasty undercut.

We put in just below where the river widened to fifteen feet, bounced through several standing waves, and eddied above the first significant obstacle.

A large pour-over rock dominated the middle of the river forming an imposing hydraulic. We surfed across the pillow in front of the rock and dropped into the eddy below, hooting with delight and **stroking** for the next horizon line.

As we approached, it became apparent that Jamie's schedule of an hour-long run might be put in jeopardy. This was a serious drop. We jumped out on the right to take a look.

The Beaver funneled down a **45-degree** slide, rating down a 100-foot pitch before culminating with a wicked hole where the fast water hit collided with the bottom pool. The slide was not entirely smooth, but punctuated by ledges where our boats dropped abruptly a foot or two at a time. Our boats accelerated to a fearful pace and then slammed through the hydraulic.

Sitting in an eddy at the bottom, just out **reach** of the hole, Barry and I tried to adopt an insouciant demeanor—the kind of attitude that said, 'Well, of course I'm going to jump in this hydraulic. But if you really want to go first, then go right ahead.'

But after half a minute, I felt as if my bluff had been called. Hell, I could never play poker, either. I slid into the hole.

At first I thought I was in for an easy ride. The hole was smooth—predictable. I lifted my paddle above my head and smiled at the boys. But then I caught an edge and when I rolled back up, my paddle was gone.

The hole had been toying with me—leading me in. I flipped again and the boat was tossed end over end. The hydraulic ripped me violently from the boat.

Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful in removing my lifejacket and drowning myself before popping to the surface. My compatriots joyfully rained abuse upon me.

Two more memorable class 4 drops followed. Both were tight, technical, challenging. Then an easy **lead-out** featuring a series of easy play hydraulics.

We loaded the boats and ran the river twice more. The third run featured the most water. Predictably, it was the best run of the day.

To test the river's suitability for rafting, we had brought my **13-foot** Campways, and after running a drop in our hardboats, selected crews scampered **back over** the rocks to man the inflatable.

It was amusing to watch an inveterate collection of kayakers fight for positions in the raft. **Skinner**, who claimed to have never before ridden in a raft, usually claimed the front tube.

He occupied that position when Massaro, a commercial raft guide, maneuvered the raft through the river's final major rapid. Kiesa and I also possessed commercial experience, and we manned the remaining slots.

Skinner squealed with delight as the **Campways** pitched down a steep 15-foot slide into a short pool below. But Peter, unschooled in the difficulty of water currently negotiated by raft, clearly anticipated Massaro to beach the raft before a series of abrupt five-foot ledges that followed.

As the three of us dug in toward the next drop, **Skinner** turned anxiously:

"No. No. Not the waterfall!" Then he dove into the middle of the boat as the raft plunged over the precipice.

We all experienced particular delight as Skinner—the man who had at one time or another terrified us all, leading us blindly down some horrible rapid—slunk away from the raft as we bailed at the bottom.

Our calls followed him:

"No. No. Not the waterfall."

I knew after the third run that

my day was done. Although the run was less than a mile long, I felt as if I had completed a long stretch of river. The others were done in as well. Yet we lingered at the final hydraulic, surfing and surfing.

I was in a reflective mood as I tied down my boat. I realized my dream had been some sort of subconscious warning...

Maybe I hadn't single-handedly altered the course of history leading to the damming of this wonderful river, but I shared the responsibility.

All the times I failed to **extinguish** an unnecessary light, drove my truck at 70 mph, procrastinated in put-

Would he lie to you?

The author's account, far-fetched as it may seem, appears to hold some historical validity.

In the late 1700s, French refugees did establish a town named Castorville at the present site of the village of Beaver Falls.

The drowning of Pierre Phareux, surveyor for the group, is described as reported in historical documents.

Joseph Bonaparte, the ousted King of Spain, did own a fishing lodge at what is now known as Lake Bonaparte.

The veracity of the remainder of Mr. Koli's story will be left to the reader to judge.

ting up storm windows, neglected to recycle that bottle, when I was **too damn lazy** to do all the easy little things to conserve our resources I was contributing to the erection of those facilities and the loss of the river.

As we all did.

But I felt better after running the Beaver. Through relicensing, maybe I help taking part in changing the future.

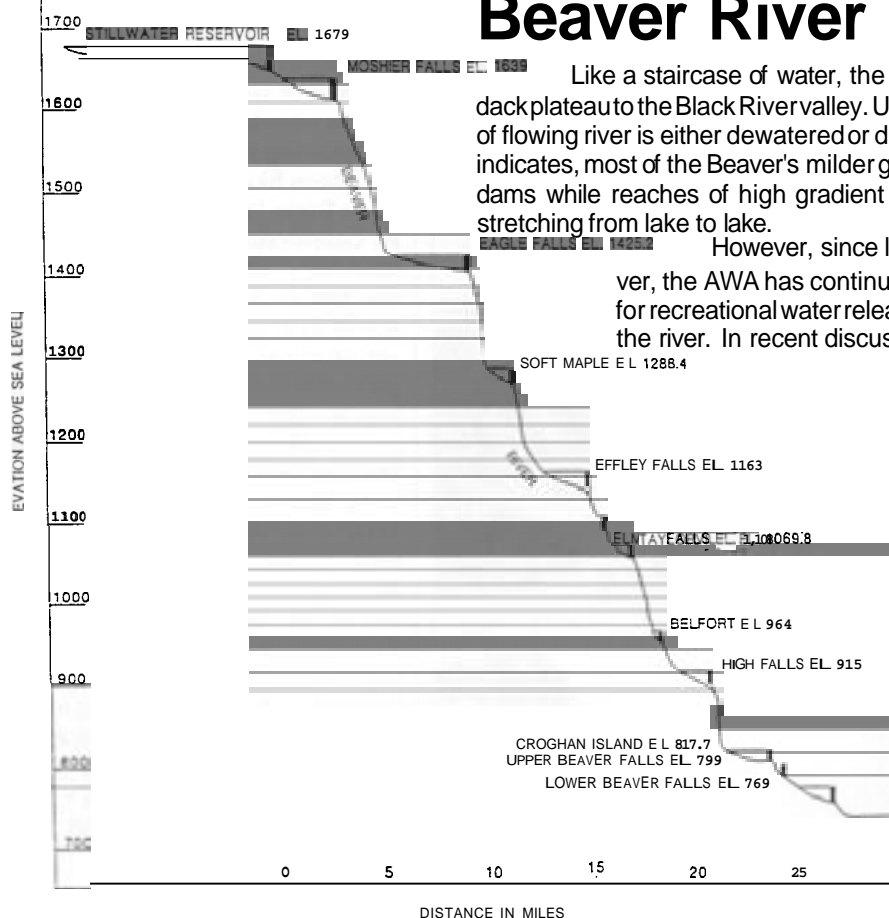
I cinched down the last knot and turned to enter the truck when my foot slipped over a glass object, half buried in the dirt.

It was an ancient bottle. Its raised lettering was still legible. "Adirondack Wine Cooler."

I tossed it in the back of the truck. Time to turn it in for deposit.



Beaver River profile



Like a staircase of water, the Beaver River tumbles off the Adirondack plateau to the Black River valley. Unfortunately, the entire 25-mile stretch of flowing river is either dewatered or drowned behind dams. As the diagram indicates, most of the Beaver's milder gradient is buried forever behind hydro dams while reaches of high gradient are entirely bypassed by penstocks stretching from lake to lake.

However, since last autumn's test descent of the Beaver, the AWA has continued to negotiate with Niagara-Mohawk for recreational water releases in currently dewatered reaches of the river. In recent discussions, Ni-Mo officials haven't denied that the potential for recreation exists in reaches like Taylorville, but have expressed concerns over how to allow paddlers access without exposing the utility to liability.

The AWA will continue to work with Ni-Mo to establish a workable solution that allows paddlers back on the Beaver on a regular basis.

The Taylorville reach of the Beaver is just one example of how the AWA's ambitious River Relicensing Program can improve the state of paddling across the nation. Dozens of other hydro sites up for relicensing in the next five years have a similar potential for revitalized whitewater flows.

Was *this* one the portage?

By CHRIS LEA

Darkness comes early in the canyon of the Rio Pacuare. It is the end of a very difficult first day's paddling on the Pacuare "Amba" (upper Pacuare). With daylight dwindling we have exited a very difficult gorge and found a suitable open, grassy place in which to camp. After a cold dinner, we build a fire on the beach.

The late December Costa Rican night is not at all chilly, but, with the sun down already, it seems **to be** the only thing to do; besides, it may ward off slithering terciopelos. The fire provokes us to stare into it; staring provokes thinking...today's canyon has had continually hairy paddling - long, boulder-choked rapids and several big and dangerous drops. Our sources say we may have another difficult canyon tomorrow - this one may include two mandatory portages. We are a bit worried. We have managed to paddle every drop today, but some were about at the limit of what we'd care to attempt on this remote, seldom-paddled river. Considering what the **runnable** rapids have been like, we wonder how bad a Costa Rican "mandatory portage" can be. Considering this section of river has been run perhaps five or six times before and **we have** but a vague description of its difficulties, we wonder what we can expect. Eventually, we chase the giant wood roaches off our sleeping bags and turn in.

It is December, 1986. Bill Webster, Bob Book, and I have come to Costa Rica to paddle. It is my first trip here, while they each have been here once before to paddle the more standard runs, such as the middle **Reventazon** and the lower Pacuare. I have known Bill for a number of years from climbing. He eventually moved to North Carolina and got into a kayak; several years later, I got tired of sitting around when it rained and started paddling also. I had always trusted Bill's judgement in outdoor pursuits; after all, he

or *this* one?

(Top) Bob Boch at "La Catarata Grande"--the second falls in the second gorge.
(Bottom) Bob at second ledge of first falls.

had selected the Cheat Canyon, the New River Gorge, and **Chattooga** Section 4 as good, fun runs for me when I had had two months of paddling experience. So when he suggested a self-planned trip to Costa Rica to try some difficult rivers no one, including most paddlers who had been to the country, seemed to know much about, I quickly signed on. I drove from D.C. to Chapel Hill to meet Bill. We met Bob, another Carolina kayaker, in Miami. On the plane to San Jose, we attempted to put the finishing practice touches on our last minute reviews of old college Spanish texts. The flight attendants were not impressed, but we could now hold a meaningful conversation with any four-year-old in the country.

In San Jose, we met Costa Rican river guides Oswaldo and Mario and, an American, Mark. They had a day off, and we drove to Turrialba, a Caribbean slope town which may someday become the Friendsville of Central America. A few miles outside of town, we put in at the Angostura bridge for the Catie section of the lower Reventazon—a big water run much like the Gauley, but steeper and more continuous. The water was big; play spots and scenery were excellent. Oswaldo, Mark, Bill, Bob, and I had a great day. Mario also had a day. Without a river roll, he had performed a series of heroic swims, including a particularly awesome one through Lava Central, Costa Rica's answer to Pillow Rock. That evening, plans were laid to smuggle Mario and his kayak into the Hotel Europa's indoor pool for some clandestine rolling lessons. This would be in return for his stories about Peruvian women.

After several Reventazon trips, we asked about the upper Pacuare, a 15 mile long Class 5 section above the popular and scenic lower commercially-run section. Oswaldo had made one trip down it:

"You go through two canyons, man, and all of the real hard rapids are in the canyons. You have to make two mandatory portages at some falls in the second canyon. You might want to make some more portages, and, when you're down in there, you want to scout everything."

Mark had an anecdote from his trip. The group had been getting out

on shore to scout a difficult rapid on the upper Pacuare, when they scared up a terciopelo. Terciopelos, also known as velvet snakes or fer-de-lance, are very

or *this one?*



Bob Boch enters opening rapid of the first gorge.

large, very aggressive, and very poisonous Central American vipers. This snake, which Mark described as being as thick as his upper arm, bolted into the river and swam toward a kayaker parked in an eddy. Fortunately, the current swept it on through the Class 5 drop. Thinking they had witnessed the reptile's demise, the group paddled the drop to find the snake waiting calmly on a rock at the bottom of the rapid. Another Costa Rican paddler, Rafael Gallo, was even less thrilled about the upper Pacuare; he had been swept under an undercut and said he had almost died on it.

We planned a three day, 30 mile trip on the river. The upper Pacuare section ends at the lower Pacuare put-in, deep in the river's canyon. The poor access here makes it logistically desirable to continue down the scenic and more mellow lower river, but we would have to pack food, water, and camping gear for three days. None of us had paddled carrying overnight gear in our boats, and we weren't sure what an extra 15 pounds in the sterns of our kayaks might do to our maneuverability on a river where we were obviously going to need lots of it. Oswaldo was going to try to join us, if he didn't need

to work. But he did not meet us at the rendezvous outside Turrialba. Without his firsthand knowledge of the river and his fluency in the country's language, we knew we had even more of an adventure coming.

We had one car available for the shuttle and had hired Mateis, a local man from near Turrialba, to drive us to the put-in and pick us up at the lower Pacuare take-out at the highway bridge near Siquirres 3 days later. Mateis made a living growing coffee, running a **popo-ria** (small general store), and running shuttles for one of the commercial outfitters, and he coached a soccer team, as well. He was a jovial sort who spoke no English, but seemed to delight in our rather simplistic descriptions of life in "los Estados Unidos," paddling on the "Rio Cheat and Rio Nuevo," and, of course, Mario's swims.

After about an hour of dirt road driving, we descended into the Pacuare canyon at a group of houses along the river called Bajo Pacuare. We checked the government gauge just upstream from the put-in bridge. Oswaldo had said not to consider the trip if the water were above a certain level. Naturally, not one of us remembered what level he had mentioned.

But the river looked low and gentle as it poured through a small rock garden below the bridge—maybe even too low to be fun, we thought. Later, we were to be quite grateful for no more water than this.

After "adios" and "suerte" from Mateis, we paddled downstream. For several miles, the Pacuare did little to confirm the seriousness of its descriptions. Easy rock gardens led into blue-green pools of clean, warm water. We were in a canyon perhaps as deep as the New River Gorge, but its sides were sometimes densely-forested, sometimes pasture. The occasional cattle drinking in the river and small shacks high on the canyon's sides were reminders that, for all their mystery, rivers we consider exotic are often less wild than some of our own.

After about an hour's paddle, things changed dramatically. The Pacuare twisted into a narrow gorge within the main canyon and dropped out of sight. A shore scout showed the river flowing left through a complex rock garden, then turning right over several narrow chutes before the flow converged in a narrow channel against a sheer rock wall and powered through two big holes. We eddy-hopped through the first half of the rapid, picked a careful line through the slots, then cranked the lower drops to the pool below. It was our first taste of paddling Class 4-5 rapids with loaded boats. One needed to paddle aggressively to keep from bogging down. Turns into eddies could be made more exciting by the threat of the stern getting swept on downriver before one cleared the eddy-line, and big drops threatened to capture or backender boats paddled with less than full authority.

"Wow, that was a pretty good one."

"Yeah, let's get ready; this could be that first canyon Oswaldo was talking about."

But the gorge opened up, and the Pacuare flowed on through more easy miles, as if had never just been through a big, violent rapid.

We came to several swinging footbridges, meaning that we had arrived at Bajo Pacuare. We had not paddled in a circle; this settlement and the one from which we had started

shared the same name, as do many other Costa Rican towns in the same area - apparently for no other reason than to confuse already lost gringo paddlers. We had a quick lunch just past Bajo Pacuare 2. The easy river was beginning to worry us; it was getting into afternoon, and we had been through only one difficult rapid. We still had two whole canyons of difficult boating somewhere ahead. We paddled on.

The river began to steepen, and the rapids began to get more interesting. Eventually, they built up to a series of solid class 4s that had to be boatscouted carefully to avoid pinning possibilities on rocks and occasional logs. But they weren't slowing us down much. Then, about mid-afternoon, the river approached another steep-walled, densely-jungled gorge. Huge volcanic boulders choked its channel as it poured through a very obstructed, and obviously very difficult, rapid.

A scout from a midstream rock showed a line through the first drop, but the remainder of the long rapid was a garden of steep chutes, undercuts, and small eddies. The rapid was very technical, and the channelization of the water by the huge rocks made the drops quite powerful, as well, an observation made all the more obvious by the difficulties of paddling loaded kayaks through them.

"I think we're in it now!"

"Yeah, paddling with all this gear sucks. That was hard!"

"Looks like another big one."

"This must be the hard stuff."

Another long, blind rapid followed. I got out on the left bank to look. Suddenly remembering Mark's story of terciopelos and their fondness for Class 5 water, I picked up my paddle and banged rocks ahead of me as I walked....."here, snake...look out, snake!" I wasn't kidding. This was no place to get bit.

But the left bank steepened to a short cliff before I could see downstream to what was obviously the big stuff. I would have to climb above it and thrash through the vegetation above to see much from this side. Across the river was a large shoreline eddy, from which one could more easily walk downstream, along the right bank. It was just above what looked like a long, difficult

section, and a couple of easy drops and chutes led to it. I chose the threats of ferrying above Class 5 rapids over those of Class 6 snakes and jungle. Bill and Bob had also gotten out on the left bank to look. I told them I was going to paddle down a ways and look from the right side. They watched as I crossed through the initial drops and turned into the eddy.

I suddenly realized things were not going to be that easy. Not anticipating the momentum of the stern of my loaded kayak, I had entered the eddy a bit too casually and was now in danger of slipping out the downstream end. Paddling hard, I looked over my shoulder. If I were swept down trying to make the eddy, there were ugly rocks and chutes immediately below. Yet the weight of the boat made it difficult to accelerate upstream and safely into the eddy. I quickly figured that I might not make it and had better do something else before tiring myself out. I peeled back out into the main current.

The first drop was complex, but I had guessed the best channel. Things got worse from there, as the drops got more difficult, and were close enough together that I didn't dare mess up trying to eddy out again for a boat scout. As I paddled one of the hardest rapids I'd done up to that time, without scouting and under less than ideal conditions, I realized that Bill and Bob weren't even in their boats yet. Somehow it didn't seem that crazy, as I was making it. I came over a particularly big drop and hole and saw the current head for a huge undercut rock. It poured around the rock's right side between it and the right bank, which was now a sheer rock wall. I suddenly remembered that somewhere on this river were two mandatory portages....

"Man, I better stop....that falls could be around the corner...."

I fought for the leftside eddy above the huge undercut and carefully ferried in front of it to an eddy on river right to peek around the corner and see where I'd have been headed....

A long pool extended for hundreds of feet.

I got out of the boat and climbed to the top of the huge rock to signal Bill and Bob through. They didn't need it. Apparently they must have taken my

decision to carry on down alone as an indicator of the casualness of the rapid and were now following my line through it. For this unintentional solo probe incident, we later referred to this long, complex Class 5 as "Lost Paddler."

Paddling down the pool was a welcome break for the moment, but there was a convincing horizon line at its end. Looking from the left shore, we saw a very different problem.

The rapid was short, but quite intense. It was actually two four-foot falls in quick succession. The first ledge was riverwide and dropped into an unavoidable hole. A large tree trunk was sunk into the drop from the right side. The obvious problem was to punch the hole, perhaps the most powerful we had yet seen on the river, without being sucked back in, backended, or flipped or otherwise losing alignment. This was unthinkable, as the second drop was only two boat lengths further and required an immediate decision to run one of three channels formed by two potential pinning rocks in the drop and the shorelines. We looked hard for branches protruding from the sunken tree. The drop looked clear, but it was powerful enough that there seemed to be little chance of rescue from an entrapment.

Bill made his decision quickly. A crack barely a kayak width in the rocks along the left shore afforded a dry slide bypass to the first ledge. From there, one could enter the left of the three channels in the second drop, which demanded merely bracing a difficult pillow off the left bank, then paddling past an undercut-looking cliff. "It's the 'Webster Sneak'," he chortled, and slid down the chute and dropped down the second ledge into an eddy.

Bob and I continued to look at the main drop. We were each obviously desirous of watching an experimental probe test the unknown variables of this drop, but neither was committing to try it first. Finally I settled on a reasonable plan. The outflow from the first drop headed mostly directly at the left rock, an evil looking, stump-shaped thing that begged for something to pin. Making Bill's route down the left channel after running the main drop seemed impossibly tight, but if a paddler came over the first drop clean and angled to

the right, he might ferry forward and to the right and make the center slot of the second ledge. One thing was obvious:

or this one?



an immediate decision would be needed after punching the hole. I decided to go for it before thinking about it too much. I told Bob.

"O.K., I'm gonna try it, if you hold a throw bag."

"O.K." He got the rope and into position between the drops on the left shore.

"Uh.....I forget, which end do you hold?"

I looked over at him, not appreciating the gallows humor in this situation. But he wasn't kidding. When you haven't practiced in a while....

"Bill!!!!" But he was my safety boat and couldn't hear anyway. It was getting late. After a quick remediation, Bob and I were as ready as we were going to be.

Fortunately, the entrance was a pool, and I was able to paddle the sluggish boat up to speed. The hole barely slowed me, and I plowed out being pushed slightly broadside toward the stumplike rock. Staring the beast down as I was pushed toward it, I cranked for the center slot. Closer...closer...got it! I saw my body would clear the rock and turned forward to drop between the rocks into saner waters.

I gave thumbs up to Bob, but maybe it looked too close. He took the Webster Sneak. We later would learn

that it was here that Rafael had briefly disappeared from the surface world.

Fast, flat water led on, but the river was not going to give much. An even more definitive horizon was ahead. Two men stood on the shore at the brink. Getting out to look on the right, we found a surreal scene.

The Pacuare raced a hundred feet from the double ledge-falls along the sheer left wall, compressed to barely a kayak length wide, and dropped over a vertical twelve foot falls into a pool lined by cliffs, forming a great amphitheater. The hydraulic below the falls boiled up in blue-white foam twenty feet beyond the drop. The two locals on the rock shelf at the top of the falls were fishermen who had evidently made their way to this spot down from some path through the jungle above through a break in the cliffs to the river. Long poles cut from saplings, with nets fastened to the ends, extended out over the falls. Amazed, we watched fish attempt huge leaps up the falls - all that we witnessed failed to make it, and one ended up in the net and was hauled in.

This could have been a candidate for a "mandatory portage." But those were supposed to be in the second canyon, and this looked runnable. The hole below looked like the worse thing to be caught in south of Sock-em-Dog, but the strategy seemed simple:

paddle like hell over the drop and paddle like hell after the drop. After the last drops, I was feeling pretty stoked. This one seemed reasonable, in comparison, and I didn't mind being the white rat again. As speed, speed, speed promised to be a critical factor, we portaged our gear around the drop to run it with empty boats. Shouting to the fishermen across the river, I pointed to the falls and made paddling arm motions. They grinned and pulled their poles in for us. This was not Appalachia; these guys were glad to trade some fishing time for what promised to be good entertainment. Then again, how often did kayaks pass by here?

Wanting a long runway for this takeoff, I started some sixty feet upstream from the horizon. I took off down the accelerating water. A small wave slowed me slightly, then I was quickly plunging over.

Just as quickly, I was upside down.

"What hit me?" was left unanswered, as "I'm dead meat," became the central thought of my now underwater world. I was being thrashed around. I had earlier decided that flipping precluded any chance of leaving the hole in the boat. Without trying to roll, I ejected to face my destiny, somewhere in which I was hoping for a rope.

Wrong choice. Surfacing, I saw that I was in an eddy against the left side cliff. The eddy eventually fed back into the falls, but, with some effort, I was able to keep myself and my boat against the wall. The drop had been deceptively difficult. The narrow slot and the long, straight raceway above the falls had accelerated the river to speeds not encountered on most waterfalls (which are much wider), making it nearly impossible to outpaddle the river and clear the drop enough to avoid a violent backender and flip. Fortunately, it had also been deceptively forgiving; the hole had a leftward kick toward the temporary refuge of the eddy. One needed only to be patient, roll up, and paddle across the backwash to safety. But I was now out of my boat, which was also filled with water, since I had removed the storage airbags to portage the gear. Bill and Bob were across the river and could do little, for the moment. Upstream were the falls. Trying

to swim or be pulled out across the downstream ~~boil~~ had the risk of being pulled into the hole. That left up, but there was the matter of a sheer cliff.

Almost sheer. In the back of the eddy, a chimney-sized crack led up a boat length to the fishermen and safety. They were chattering to each other and at me, not sure of what to make of this. I emptied the kayak as best I could and pushed it up the crack, with much effort. Eventually, one of the fishermen reached the grab loop and tied it to their pole with a piece of wire. Both pulled, and I chimneyed and pushed up the slippery crack from below, thankful for the years spent climbing.

Suddenly a red kayak hull was bobbing in the eddy. Bob rolled up, and dug out a throw bag, having run the falls to get it to me.

"Thanks. This is stupid." I tied the rope to the lower grab loop, climbed past the boat to the fishermen and helped them pull it to the ledge above the falls. Emptying the boat and viewing the steep walls upstream and downstream, I saw that another run over the falls was going to be the best way out of there, but I would be entering the current only about twenty feet above the drop.

"Well, it's really not that bad, and I want to do it anyway...."

I shook hands with and thanked my benefactors. They then looked on in amazement, as the neoprene-, nylon-, and plastic-clad warrior climbed in his boat for another battle with the river. I peeled out, got just a few swift strokes, and was dropping over again....

The results were not surprising, but I rolled up and paddled across the boil. I turned to wave to the fishermen.

"Muchas gracias! Adios!"

"Gringos locos."

"Hey, think that's a mandatory portage?"

"He said they were supposed to be waterfalls..."

"But this is only the first canyon, unless you count that first rapid at the start of the trip."

The waning afternoon and not knowing how much further this gorge continued suspended this speculation for the moment. Bill had paddled on ahead to look at the next drop. When Bob and I reached him, he was ready to

go:

"This one doesn't look that bad from here."

He paddled off down the rapid, which was, once again, one of the long and technical type. I followed him partway, then caught an eddy behind a rock and watched. He suddenly dropped from view, but I caught sight of his helmet somewhere below. Bob arrived.

"Looks O.K. Bill made it!"

Following, we discovered a potent reactionary wave at the bottom of the drop where Bill had disappeared. A saving brace was necessary. At the bottom, Bill confessed that it hadn't looked so hard from above.

"Well, we better stop. Looks like we're stuck in this gorge for the night. See any flat spots between the boulders?"

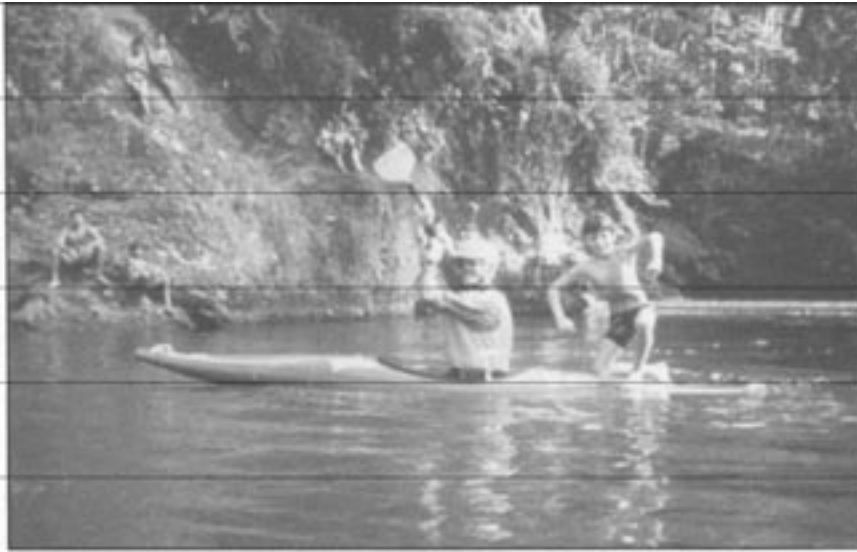
"No, wait a minute...." While the others were examining the not so-promising shoreline, I decided to peek ahead at the next drop and paddled down the pool. It took some frantic waving and yelling to get them away from the hunt for a campsite.

"Look!"

The next drop was trivial and led into another pool at the end of which, the gorge widened. The left side of the canyon was a grassy pasture. We were out of the first canyon! With a plush sand beach to sleep on, we couldn't have been happier had the Hotel Europa appeared along the river. We set up camp and built the fire.

Morning comes early year-round at this latitude. About 5 a.m., it is fully light and we are eating breakfast. We are still uncertain of what to expect ahead. We have obviously just finished one of the two difficult "canyons!" The big falls in the gorge just upstream, and perhaps the dangerous double ledge above it seem like possible "mandatory portage" candidates. But they were in the first gorge we encountered and, although quite serious, were manageable. We assume someone would have paddled them before, if we could. The thought of a similarly difficult canyon, with a couple of even worse drops, is an uneasy one. The only certain thing is the uncertainty downstream. We start downstream.

After a moderately difficult rapid, the Pacuare moderates and flows



Chris entertains the local rug rats at the lower Pacuare take-out.

through easy rapids in the open canyon. A mile or two pass.

The canyon walls abruptly narrow, and a line of huge boulders block the view ahead. Bob probes ahead, boat scouting. It is a hard rapid, a difficult labyrinth of rocks and water. Bob is confidently weaving through it and getting further ahead. I park behind a rock. Bill is getting behind, so I wait; Bob will wait ahead, I figure.

Bill flips in a drop. Watching him drift upside down toward a large rock, I'm suddenly worrying.

"Get it, get it, IT!"

He rolls up and puts in a few quick strokes, clearing the rock.

"Good place for a roll."

"Yeah, I don't like the way this boat handles. This stuff is too hard to be floundering around in."

"Bob's on ahead. Guess he'll wait; I think we better stick close through this stuff."

We catch up to Bob somewhere in the next rapid. It is another biggie - screaming turns past menacing undercuts lead into eight foot wide slots and sudden drops. Another short pool leads into more of the same. It is now clear that we are in the second canyon. Although we are still boat-scouting, we are watching for the falls which could be anywhere ahead. Bob is paddling confidently and remains our probe. Suddenly, I'm realizing that this is a blast - that things might rarely get much better. Each rapid is a new maze to be

figured out - about as hard as each of the others difficult, but we are getting used to the rhythm of following the leader from boulder to boulder. There is always a view to a safe eddy to encourage us onward - for the moment. Working our way down the gorge, we lose track of the number of rapids.

"This is it!" We look at Bill. He points to the left bank. There is a road, of sorts.

"The put-in for the lower Pacuare. I remember it. We're done. We'll be out this afternoon!"

It is only 9 a.m. We cruise the pools and easy rapids of the suddenly much tamer Pacuare. It is a relaxing day of great scenery, wildlife watching, and other diversions with which the upper river would simply have not put up. The gorges are steep-walled and wild-looking when entered, but there are none of the blind channels through huge boulders nor steep downward plunges of the river which kept the grip factor high on the Pacuare "Arriba."

In mid-afternoon, we arrive at the highway bridge near Siquirres, where the river reaches the coastal plain. We need to get Mateis' phone number to let him know we are out a day early. Bill and I walk to town to find a phone and fathom the mysteries of Costa Rican directory assistance. We leave Bob to watch the gear; this sentences him to hours of boundless attention from the local rug rat population. When we return, they have commandeered our boats

and gear and several little girls are subjecting him to a tea party in español. His vocabulary in the area of common kitchen items has increased dramatically.

Mateis arrives. Un hombre bueno, he has even washed our filthy rental car! He wants the details of our adventures. Remembering our tales of Mario on the Reventazon, he particularly wants to know who swam. I laugh.

"Yo."

"Donde?"

"En la catarata grande!" Mateis laughs. In San Jose, we run into Mark:

"How was the trip?"

"Awesome!"

"How much did you have to carry?"

"Well, we ran everything...we didn't know where we were supposed to carry...." he shakes his head. "Crazy mothers."

We spend Christmas at the beach, then return to Turrialba for more fun on the Reventazon. On New Year's Eve, Bob and I go for a second trip on the upper Pacuare - this time as a day trip. Bill passes but drives us to the put-in. Mateis will pick us up in his truck at the end.

The trip goes quickly and smoothly. We stop to scout only a few times. Even in light boats and with knowledge of the river, we are impressed with the difficulty. Bob almost loses his paddle. Having neglected to bring our breakdown paddle, we are sobered by the thought of having to try to walk out of here. At the double ledge, I walk. It's been enough.

"You're not even gonna run the famous Webster Sneak?"

"When the river gods give you one, you sometimes got to show your respect."

The big falls are downright fun. There's a different audience this time. We still get flipped every time.

After a long lunch break, we're off down the second canyon and out in less than an hour. Holding on to our boats in the back of Mateis' pickup, we have to laugh. With two runs within two weeks, we probably know the upper Pacuare better than anyone. It'll be a while before the commercial rafting tours start here.

Costa Rica facts

The Upper Pacuare, a 15 mile section with much Class 5, is described in Mayfield and Gallo's "The Rivers of Costa Rica." It lies immediately above the popular lower Pacuare run (Class 2-3, with some 4), and most paddlers will want to continue on the lower river, for a 2-3 day, 30 mile trip because of the difficulty of exiting the canyon after the upper section and the beauty of the lower river. This requires paddling boats through continuous technical Class 5 rapids with overnight supplies. Boaters can probably take only a bivvy bag and sleep in a light sweater, at most seasons. The upper river can be paddled in a day by a strong group, but this would be pushing it, if no one knows the river, as most of the difficulty is concentrated at the end of the trip, and one must carry boats or arrange animal transportation 2 miles up a road (of sorts) out of a 1200 foot deep canyon after the run.

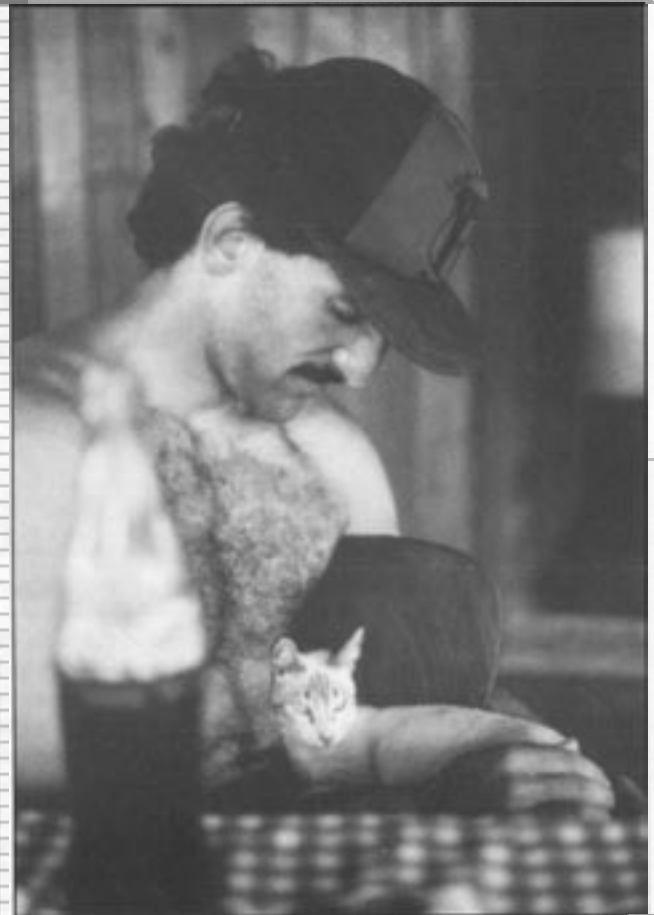
Most of the run is shown on the Costa Rica topo map series Tucumque quadrangle, with the put-in and shuttle road to Bajo Pacuare 1 on the Pejibaye quadrangle. These maps are fairly accurate and informative and show the entire run's gradient at 75-80 feet per mile. Much of the run is quite moderate (Class 1-3 rock gardens and pools). The two difficult gorges are each about a mile long and reach about 100 feet per mile, with the difficult rapids being caused more by narrowing and congestion (with huge boulders) of the main canyon, rather than by a great increase in gradient. It is important to

remember that these difficult sections are, in fact, pool-drop, making for some very steep rapids. The run should be made in relatively low water (usually after mid-December); rapid ratings given in this description are for low to medium levels. The upper Pacuare has been compared to the Watauga gorge in difficulty, character, and total length of the difficult sections, although the overall length and remoteness for the Pacuare run are greater.

The Mayfield-Gallo guide accurately stresses the seriousness of the run; however, one part of the description seems misleading, compared to our experiences. Where they describe a first canyon of many rapids, we found only a single difficult rapid, and they do not describe the third canyon, which is quite significant.

The river is easy for about 45 minutes past the put-in; an abruptly-appearing, long Class 4 5 is a landmark. If this proves too much, one should paddle another few easy miles to take out at the footbridges at Bajo Pacuare 2, since there is much of the same or harder ahead. A road (probably temble and likely not driveable) exits the canyon on the left here.

After Bajo Pacuare 2 the rapids increase to Class 4. About where the map shows the Rio Pacayitas entering the Pacuare on the left, the river enters the first difficult gorge, which will probably be obvious. It is a mile long, although it will probably seem much longer. There are 5 major rapids - all can be considered Class 5 (or harder). Allow ample time for scouting and carrying. The gorge



Bob and friend in a very informal Costa Rica restaurante. No shirt, no shoes, pets O.K.

begins with a long, technical two-part entrance rapid, with a brief moving pool in the middle. Lost Paddler, another long, blind section, is next. After a pool is the first "falls" - the double ledge. This is Class 5-6 and may be the most dangerous spot on the river. The leftside Webster Sneak is an honorable option, especially if the water is up. Next is the second falls, called "Jumping Bobo" by Mayfield and Gallo, after the fish which attempt to leap up it. This twelve foot drop can be run in reasonable safety in low water (most of you can expect to flip here), but the hole below could be awfully grim if the water were up. A final long difficult rapid completes the first gorge.

Several moderate

miles lead to the second gorge, which is east of the words "Alto Corozal" on the Tucurrique map. Here, we counted ten rapids, all separated by short pools and all hard Class 4 or harder. These drops are not as powerful as those of the first gorge, but they seemed even more blind and technical. The end of this gorge is the end of the upper Pacuare, with a bad road to the left (no motor vehicles) leading out of the canyon.

Hopefully, this description will help interested and strong paddlers in experiencing what Mayfield and Gallo accurately call "one of the world's great white-water treasures." Then again, you could ignore this and the book and maybe have an even better time.

Kayak Corps

Special serialized fiction feature

Chapter 2 Because we need the eggs.

Our story so far:

Captain Beau Winston has the luxury of a job at the Pentagon that allows him to sit around most of the time, read "Outside" magazine, and daydream of kayaking. His boss, General Vetterling, a career military officer, is enthralled by Beau's tales of paddling derring-do. Rath, a shadowy person somewhere in civilian government with neither a clear position nor a clear agenda, dislikes Winston. Rath, like Vetterling, is well-aware of Beau's kayaking fixation. When Rath and Vetterling discover that the only path to a drug kingpin's processing plant is through twenty miles of whitewater, they both begin to get ideas. Though it's far from likely the two of them get the same ideas....

Vetterling and Rath burst into Winston's office so fast Beau barely had time to stash his magazine. He did not have time to put on his shoes.

Vetterling spewed forth in the kind of staccato military-equivalent of spoken English that he used whenever big things were afoot. Rath smiled and stayed inside himself — keeping silent and working through his own calculus of cause and effect.

Winston's head was spinning and he thought momentarily that if he closed his eyes and wished really hard he might be able to wind up back home. Vetterling was smiling -- well... Winston had no problems with that. Rath smiling meant that somebody, somewhere was about to be stuck like a pig -- and Beau never fancied himself as a side of chitlins.

As nearly as Beau could make out the US Government was asking if he thought it was possible to paddle down some river in Central America.

Rath caught sight of Sharon looking into the still-open door to the office and trying to figure out what

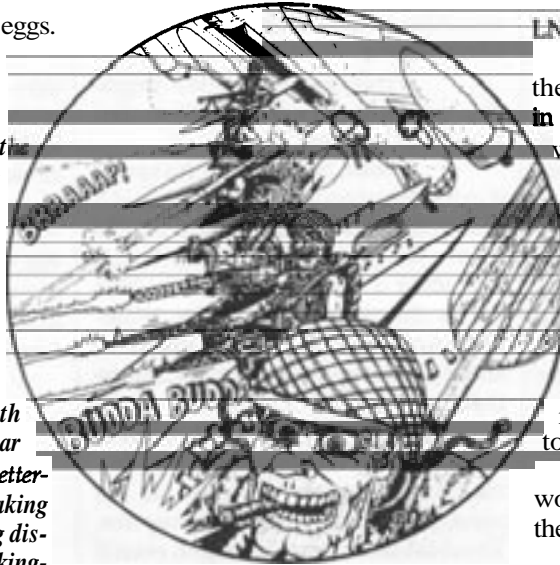


Illustration by William Nealy, reprinted from *Kayaks To Hell*, courtesy of Menasha Ridge Press

was going on. Politely he closed the door. The sound of it shutting distracted Vetterling.

Using the brief break in the excitement, Beau casually slipped his feet into his shoes.

Vetterling offered the obvious solution "Look, Beau. Why don't you follow us downstairs and we'll go over this thing?"

"Sure." He got up and walked with them towards the door to his office.

They were almost out the door when Rath noticed Winston had unlaced shoes.

Perhaps it was the fact that Winston was about to do something Rath needed that made him, with utmost tact and discretion, tap Winston's shoulder and tell him, softly, that his shoelaces were untied, so as not to embarrass him in front of the General. Winston, so subtly notified, called out, "Wait up, Duke. Gotta lace these shoes."

Rath vowed he'd never do a favor for Winston again.

They led him down the corridor through into the Black Area, with Vetterling signing as escort on a need-to-know basis. They emerged in Room

LN404.

Beau took a quick look around the room and saw it filled with civilians in three-piece suits. "Guys want to work in a bank, why don't they just go out an' do it?" Winston thought. Suddenly, one of the faces broke through the thin barrier separating the threatening from the familiar.

"Hey, ... I know you... You're the Secretary of State."

"Why yes. Yes I am." Klaus said, reveling in a celebrity recognition that **did not** often come to Cabinet members.

Beau now hoped they wouldn't shoot him to keep whatever they wanted quiet.

Before him, on the wall was a map of some place called San Marco. Beau figured this was probably the place they were interested in, but was ready to be proven wrong.

Vetterling was all excited, "See that river, Beau? Can you paddle it, Beau?"

Huh?"

"Well, it's a mite tough to tell from this map. All I know is that there's water there."

One of the spooks next to Klaus spoke for the first time.

"What kind of information do you need, Captain?"

"Well, something more detailed."

"Would a three-dimensional enhanced scan of the entire area help?"

Later Beau would marvel that at this point he **still had** not thought that he might be dreaming. "Sure."

Later Rath would recall that it took all of his energy not to say "Would you like us to build one in the cafeteria for you?" "With your permission, General?" Vetterling nodded and the spook rose, moving with the kind of unearthly certainty that Winston had

Kayak Corps is the creation of Johnson Cerveau. Johnson has contributed to American Whitewater in the past under a different name.

Kayak Corps

only seen among people who either knew exactly what they were doing, or mercifully had no clue what they were doing. "Captain?" He said, holding the door open for Winston. They left.

"Fine young man, I like him already," Klaus said after the door had closed. Rath bit his tongue and started hoping that Secretary Ehrenberg did not become as enamored of **kayaking** tales as **Vetterling**.

The spook led Beau to yet another area of the Pentagon he'd not yet been privileged to be granted access to. The circuitous route led to a door with a cypherlock. Going through the door, Beau saw a six-foot inflated **Gumby** holding a sign that said: 'Welcome to Terrain Analysis. You might not know how you got here - but we can sure show you how to leave.'

"Friendly guys, aren't they?" Beau said. It was the first words he'd felt comfortable exchanging with the spook.

"Lack of discipline," was the only response.

He needed to be signed in, and then administered the usual secrecy oath, but with Ehrenberg's flunky vouching for his need to know things moved quicker than he'd ever seen in the government.

The spook left him in the care of a duty officer who escorted him to a room even further back, crammed with display terminals that looked like they might be able to give him a full-body X-ray.

Two men were there. The one with horn-rimmed glasses approached him. "You're Winston? Boy you must rate. We got word you were coming."

"Captain, these men will help you with your simulation." He abruptly left. Winston wondered what kind of magazines he had.

"Hi, I'm Percy." Said the man with horn-rimmed glasses.

"Harold." The other laconically rejoined.

"Just call me Beau, guys." Beau sauntered over to the **bank** of terminals.

"What's **goin'** on here?"

Unceremoniously the pair sat him in front of one. Harold signed onto the computer through three or four

layers of password security. Winston wondered how he could keev all of those passwords straight in his mind when he used the word **KAYAK** on everything from his bank card to his filing cabinet.

Percy gave Beau the **beginning** driving lesson while Harold worked at another terminal.

"Now, this joystick. Just point it in the direction you want to go, and it will automatically move you along the river. The path of the river is here," indicating a winding column in blue across the upper part of the multi-windowed display. "Your speed is: about 2 miles an hour. We can change that if you want."

Beau played with it momentarily moving the joystick to and fro, watching in joyous delirium as the scenery swayed to match his caprice. The child-like wonder of flight, even if only simulated, was release. If only he could do this in his boat...

"Hot damn! This is the best video game I've ever played. Can I get one of these for home?"

The two analysts looked at each other, wondering if he fell within their arcane guidelines.

"That was a joke."

"Oh," they said, and then laughed.

Beau didn't get to see flowing water, so it was hard to make the leap from screen to river running. He was left with static recreations of different parts of the river based on processed satellite pictures. He wondered if the system somewhere contained an image of his backyard.

The first four and a half miles seemed boring - flats without obstacles -- and Winston began to wonder if his being here were not completely superfluous, if the question was so trivial that anybody who'd bothered to look could have given an answer.

At the five mile mark all of that changed.

It started out with a series of ledges.

The irregular steps seemed at this scale to be like a staircase made by giant children, who had seen stairs but did not care for their regular incre-

ments. He brought the scale down and saw the individual drops. The first few seemed small compared to the ones he'd run elsewhere. The later ones seemed hole-filled.

They were salted with boulders - big boulders. Lots of 'em, with white pillows that made the riverscape look more like a mogul field than a stretch of water.

Beau saw six or seven of those - and they were the major ones. Coming out of the staircase there was a screaming jog to the left as the river cut through a chasm. Losing it there would rake him along the chasm's rock face.

"Harold?"

"Yes."

"What kind of rock is that?"

"Basalt."

"Is it smooth or rough?"

"Think of sandpaper."

Beau had a vision of himself trying to roll while being scraped along a bed of nails. It did not please him.

It looked a lot like the Jaw-bone and Sock-em-Dogone-two punch in the Chattooga. He'd lost it there once, a **couple** of years ago, and was resolved to not do so again.

When he lost it the river was running at 2000 cfs. In the superstitious logic of people who had bad experiences, he compulsively needed to know the flow rate.

Harold brought up a menu on his screen and it looked to Beau like he selected an option labelled "Hydrodynamics".

"Watershed's about 200 square kilometers."

"What's that in miles?"

Harold's lips curled with a slightly visible trace of disdain. "Figure about 75 square miles."

"That's it? What's that mean for a discharge rate? 20 cfs?"

Harold took a second or two to convert: "1500 cfs minimum. Usually 3200 cfs during the rainy season. Recorded high of 8000 in 1982 during a hurricane."

Beau whistled low. "Hog heaven."

"Excuse me?" It was Percy.

"There's a lot of action here."

"Yes, the abundant rainfall and

mountainous conditions make for extreme hydrodynamic differentials in a relatively confined space."

Beau shook his head and said, "You mean there's lots of whitewater."

Percy nodded his head **vigorously**, "Yes. That would be one of the geographical manifestations."

Giddy with the realization there was something here Beau zoomed forward with his joystick and saw what he thought was a hole. A hole after a constriction with a ledge off to the right — with water coming into it from three sides.

"Can **we resolve** that a little better?"

"Sure."

Harold worked his fast forward magic and brought the scene into sharp focus. Instantly Beau was suspended above the rapid. From the location of The boulders and ledges, and from the stills of foam and curls, he swore that water flowed into this from three sides, creating the aquatic equivalent of a cuisinart.

Two lines seemed like static nodal points. The effect from above was to flatten out the drop. To make it look as though it were trivial, a bathtub oddity. Beau knew better.

"**Lordy**, lordy, how would you do that?"

He had Harold bring his point of view down to river level. Approaching the drop he saw the world drop to oblivion, with the blue flow of a river coming out somewhere near the vanishing point. He allowed himself to approach the drop, tensing himself as though prepared to take as much purchase from his paddle as fluid and sinew would yield, and felt senses reeling as he continued **snaking** along the river at his previous speed in a impossible roller coaster illusion of computer graphics.

The computer didn't behave the way water did. He felt none of its reaction against **him**, and this thwarted his own instincts and reflexes.

In real life he might now be stuck, or circulating, or decapitated.

None of these **prospects** thrilled him.

He re-ran the scene, looking at it from a viewpoint six feet above the

ground, on the riverbank — scouting **position**. He saw more than he had **previously** — the microeddies he could **probably** catch, the channels between the lumps of rock and motion.

An odd sense of elation began to fall over him — yes. A river like this **comes** along once in a lifetime, and a **drop** like this maybe less often than **that**. In the pit of his stomach he felt the **empty** gnawing that might be either **excitement** or dry heaves — the mystical **ground** between moving to perform an act and the act itself.

His palms started sweating and his breath became uneven and he wanted nothing so much as to stand there — on that ledge scouting that rapid, before climbing back into his boat and running it.

Beau did not yet know the route he would take — and doubtless he would discuss it for hours with some of his buddies before they got to see it.

But who was he **kidding**. His chances of ever seeing this river in the flesh were about as likely as him ever getting Eluenberg's job.

He returned to the screen. A pair of waterfalls were the next major drops. It was testament to the power of the drop he'd just seen that he sloughed them off without a big worry. Two separate falls **through** a gorge — a twenty foot drop into what looked like the still water of a pool, and an eighteen foot drop into turbulence. He noted that the left side out of the second drop looked a lot cleaner, but made a note to check it out again. At the twenty mile mark a bright orange cluster of buildings appeared a few hundred yards inland and a small, tinny buzzer started going off.

"Target reached." Flashed on his screen.

"Target? What **target**?" He thought aloud.

"Never mind about that now, Beau." It was Rath. So engrossed had he been in the video never-never land that he had not noticed Rath and Vetterling enter the room.

Rath sat back with cool eyes, steeping his hands and asking, "Is it paddable?"

Vetterling was less restrained, "Could you do it? Huh?"

Winston was so engrossed in reverie that he didn't register the question for a few heartbeats.

"Odds are. Sure. You scouting your winter vacation or something?"

Vetterling laughed and Rath grimaced.

"Yeah, Beau. Something like **that**!"

"Wait a minute. What are you trying to do here, bring some guys in?" He thought for a minute. "Spy stuff, huh?"

"Yes."

"Well what about the rest of the way **down**?"

"**Unnecessary**. At mission completion we'll be able to chopper in a pick-up squad." Vetterling seemed certain. That was enough for Beau.

He'd be practicing on the Potomac Falls for hours, working this through his head.

"**I'm** still on this operation — right?"

"Of course."

"**I** think you can paddle it." Seeing the beam in Vetterling and the smirk in Rath he hastened to add "But we need to look at some things. One — I don't have a clear view of the gorge. We need to look at that somehow."

"Okay, Beau. You're in **charge**. Tell us what you need."

"Give me a couple of days. Two: I'm going to need a pass to access this place." Rath nodded and it was waiting in Sharon's in-box that afternoon.

That night Beau slept poorly. Images of destruction floated in his mind like so much flotsam — intermixed with visions of the river, of standing, of scouting that one rapid, of wondering what he would do and whether it was at all possible.

He awoke convinced that keeping his reservations about the hole to himself was not the smartest thing he'd ever done.

to be continued next issue!

Pool session

By GARY CARLSON

The first time I heard someone mention the possibility of losing his roll, I thought he was talking about switching to a light beer or joining a Nutri-System program or something.

It had never occurred to me that one's Eskimoroll might inexplicably disappear—like money in your pocket during a night's debauchery in a bar—over the course of a winter.

Granted, up here in northern New York, paddlers face a lengthy lay-off during the winter months. But I had always figured that rolling a kayak was like drinking shots of cheap whiskey: you never really like doing it but you never forget how it's done.

Anyway, ever since I heard that some boaters do indeed lose their roll, a kernel of doubt was sown in the Back Forty of my mind. It usually springs to life during a day in mid March with the snow still piled high along the banks of the river, ice chunks bobbing in the water and the temperature hovering just above freezing.

I'll waddle down to the put-in, layered deep with pile and sealed in a drysuit, looking something like a blue Pillsbury doughboy. After sliding the boat into the river, the first splash of water in the face reminds me what a bitch it would be to swim. And then I think, Jeez—what if I've lost my roll?

Of course, sooner or later I'll flip, and it's surprising how 38-degree water induces you to get upright. I'll roll so fast my hair stays dry under my helmet.

But this year, just to put my mind to rest, I crashed a local paddling club's midwinter roll session. My plan was to loosen up with a dozen rolls and then maybe offer some sage counsel to the novices present on the intricacies of righting a flipped kayak. Besides—I figured goofing around an indoor pool might be fun. Launch a few boats off the three-meter board. Squirt in the deep end. Check out what the local women paddlers actually look like underneath the camouflage of a wetsuit or paddle jacket.

I should have known better.

Around here, roll sessions are serious business, mister.

Roy Kooper, the club's roll session coordinator, held open the door as I dragged my boat into the pool's locker room.

"We're always happy to welcome new faces to our sessions," Roy said. "But...ahhh...how did you ever get so many scratches on the bottom of your boat? Some of them look real deep. Take it right into the showers and I'll fetch a scrub brush to clean out that ground-in dirt. And could you replace those patches with some fresh duct tape?"

Roy joined me as I hosed down the boat.

A stream of filthy water flowed from the cockpit of my boat. In it floated a veritable time capsule of the previous summer's paddling history: crumpled Snickers wrappers, a flattened beer can, a neoprene bootie, Skoal tins, an empty aspirin bottle—all mixed with the sand of New York, West Virginia, Maryland and Canadian rivers.

I joined the club at poolside as Roy led stretching exercises. I felt on foreign ground. The only stretching I was familiar with was with tie-down bungees...the truth...and with my damn spray skirt that seems to shrink at the waist each year.

So I sat on a stack of club boats, waiting for the members to finish. I noticed that the hulls were as smooth as a baby's behind.

"Jeez," I said to Kooper, after had finished his exercises, "you guys must buy new boats every year. There ain't a scratch on these babies."

"Well, of course not," Kooper said. "We're careful not to drag the boats on the concrete, or run into the side of the pool."

"No, no. I mean from bangin' on rocks."

"Yes...well, we hope to plan a trip down a river this year. But only if our group can advance from the extended paddle to the screw roll."

Holy smokes! I wondered what kind of roll I used. And whether it was good enough to take on a river. I figured it must be one of those screwy rolls—cuz everybody says it looks terrible when I come up.

My musings were suddenly interrupted.

"Gary, I'm getting ready to roll," Kooper announced. "Would you hand me my gear?"

Gear? What gear do you need to practice rolling. A sprayskirt?

"I like to be fully outfitted," Kooper explained. "For example, this wetsuit top is essential—the water is cold—barely 70 degrees. A canvas sprayskirt like this is particularly suited for pool sessions—it doesn't react to the chlorine like a neoprene skirt. These goggles allow me to observe my technique from underwater. Also, for a true simulation of actual conditions, it's vital to wear a life jacket and helmet. And of course, I don't believe a paddler could survive a pool session without his nose plugs."

Looking like he was equipped to tackle a early-spring hair run, Kooper slid into his boat.

"Now, could you join me in the water and really rock the end of my mat while I roll? I believe a good rocking makes the roll practically authentic."

Well, I jumped in, grabbed the stern end of his boat, and gave him my best class IV shaking. Kooper flipped and attempted a single roll. His paddle sliced straight down. Instantly, he abandoned his paddle and flailed at the surface.

Later, after I had assisted him in dumping his boat, Kooper addressed his problem.

"I'm going to get a new boat for rolling season next year," Kooper said. "I think I read in Canoe Magazine that the rollability of my model of kayak isn't all that great."

"Oh, by the way, if you want to try a few rolls, you better get out there now," Kooper said. "We're all going to play a version of dead fish water polo in a few minutes. Let me lend you my sprayskirt."

As Kooper pulled the sprayskirt down over his hips, it became immediately apparent he had neglected to tightly secure his shorts. The shorts dropped to Kooper's ankles along with the sprayskirt.

I quickly turned away and left the building. If I had lost my roll, I certainly wasn't going to find it there.

Besides, one glimpse of the disrobed Kooper convinced me: the water was too cold.



Take
me
to
the
river ...
drop
me
in
the
water...

Phil DeRiemer, Siete
Tazas, Rio Claro, Chile.
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