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by Katie Lee
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Forum



No Rules!!!

A few days ago while leafing through my copy of National Geographic Adventure, I came across an article titled the "Rules of Paddling." I knew right away that I wasn't going to like it.

I'll be honest. I don't like rules. Maybe it's because I'm a child of the sixties and a hippie at heart. Maybe I have anarchist tendencies. In any case, rules just rub me the wrong way, especially when they are meant to apply to my favorite pastime... whitewater paddling.

As Whitewater Safety Rules go, and I have seen many such lists, the pronouncements in the Adventure article were fairly innocuous. To its credit, the article did quote Roger Zbel and Charlie Walbridge, two genuine authorities and both friends of mine. And the first two rules were harmless generalizations: "Know what you don't know" and "Understand river hazards and avoid them." Who could object to those? The third rule was "Always wear a PFD." Even I couldn't argue with that... unless they meant while watching extreme videos in my living room!

But the fourth rule got my goat: "Never boat alone." Most of us have seen this rule reiterated so many times that we hardly notice it. Even though many of us choose to ignore it, we see it written everywhere. Yet, to my mind, this emphatic prohibition against boating alone is a good example of one of the things that is wrong with the concept of

absolute, inflexible Safety Rules. Too often such rules achieve a sense of validity by repetition, even when there is very little real evidence to support them.

For example, we now have well over a hundred canoe and kayak fatalities recorded in the AW database. Of these, only four involved individuals who were paddling alone. And in each of these instances it is not clear that the deaths could have been prevented if another boater had been present.

Conversely, we have on record more than a hundred instances in which paddlers died while paddling with others. In several of these instances it seems likely that other members of the group inadvertently contributed to the tragedy. Does that mean that "Never boat with others" should be a rule? Does this mean that I think that it is safer to paddle alone than to paddle with others?

No. It just means that there are risks to both.

If you become hopelessly pinned in your boat, stuck in a vicious hydraulic, or take a debilitating swim while boating alone, you may perish. A companion might have been able to save you. Yes, boating alone can be dangerous.

On the other hand, if you are paddling with a weak or careless group on a difficult river, you may find yourself in deep trouble. Paddling with a group can also lead to a sense

of complacency. And all too often, we have seen instances in which individual judgment was clouded by group dynamics and bravado. Yes, boating with a group can be dangerous.

So, rather than to dogmatically state "Never boat alone" or "Never boat in groups," I think it is better to educate whitewater boaters about the specific risks of each. Then, let each individual boater make rational decisions, based upon his or her circumstances and abilities.

Consider another commonly stated prohibition, "Never paddle over a low-head dam." I was recently taken to task by a reader (see Letters to the Editor) who felt that I should not have published the photo of nine year old Robyn Abernathy paddling over a dam in the September/October issue. The reader argued that by publishing such a picture, I might be encouraging others to engage in dangerous behavior.

When I first glanced at the picture of the child running the dam, I must admit I cringed. Low-head dams scare me and I almost always portage them. But then I took a better look and realized that there was so little water running over the dam when the photo of Robyn was taken that the recycle at its base was inconsequential. I decided that Robyn had not been in peril; I suspect that most of our readers came to the same conclusion. I would not have run the photo if I thought she had been in real danger, at least without comment. Actually, I hoped that the photo might elicit an objection like the one I received, so that it could serve as a springboard for a discussion... like this one.

Inarguably there have been many fatalities related to low-head dams reported to the AW fatality database. Several involved experienced boaters who should have known better. These unfortunate boaters died because they were unable to escape the backwash at the base of the dams... the proverbial Drowning Machine. There is no denying that vicious, inescapable recycle can form below low-head dams when there is a significant amount of water pouring over them. But vicious, inescapable recycle can also form below natural ledges as well as in naturally formed hydraulics, at certain flows. Yes, your favorite play spot can turn into a deathtrap at high water. Maybe there should be rules that state, "Never paddle over a ledge" or "Never surf a hydraulic." I doubt that very many of you would accept that premise.

Better that whitewater boaters should learn to evaluate recirculation in each of these circumstances, realizing that appearances can be dangerously deceiving. Then they can rationally decide what is safe and what isn't. Education about recycle and how and when it forms, not inflexible dogma, is the best way to prevent fatalities. In this case

the message should not be, "Never paddle over low-head dams." Rather, it should be, "Think long and hard before you decide to try to punch through powerful recycle, irrespective of what caused it to form."

The same correspondent who complained about the dam (not damned!) photo, also complained about my decision to publish the story by Teresa Gryder in which she recounted running Chatooga Section IV in a storm at night. (At least she wasn't boating alone!) Again, the letter writer argued that by printing the story I might influence AW readers to take similar risks.

Admittedly, a recent study at a major university (I forget which one, but I heard it on TV so it must be true) demonstrated that most people are not as smart (or as funny) as they think. Nevertheless, I find the suggestion that reading Teresa's story might inspire others to follow her example a bit insulting to our readers. I know for a fact that most AW members have a great deal of common sense and intelligence, and are not the least bit impressionable.

And in her story, Teresa clearly acknowledged the risks she had taken and admitted that, in retrospect, running a Class IV+ river at night in a thunderstorm might not have been such a good idea. Besides, if I refused to publish any articles in which people do (How should I put it tactfully?) "misguided things," this magazine would be empty. None of my stories would see the light of day; that's for sure.

There is no denying that Teresa and her friends violated two of the traditional safety rules, "Never boat at night" and "Never boat during a thunderstorm."

But, once again, are these rules really valid? One could argue that there is not a single whitewater canoe or kayak fatality in the database that occurred at night or as the result of a lightning strike. Contrary to what some of you might think, there are a lot of boaters who paddle at night. And if you paddle long enough, sooner or later you are bound to find yourself on a river in an unexpected thunderstorm.

Obviously being on an open body of water during a lightning storm puts one at risk. But what if you are on a river in a deep gorge, like the Chatooga? Are you safer on the edge of the river—at the lowest possible elevation, or standing under a tall tree? I don't know the answer to that question, but it merits discussion. Stories like Teresa's and thoughtful letters to the editor like the one mentioned above stimulate such dialogue.

Certainly paddling at night can be dangerous. You may find yourself trapped in an undercut because you did not see it soon enough and your friends may not be able to rescue you because they cannot find you. But what about paddling a familiar and easy river,

relative to your own skill, in a full moon?

Is that really more dangerous than running a twenty-foot waterfall in broad daylight? A 50-foot falls? A one 100-foot falls? Should I stop running stories about kayakers paddling over falls? Should there be a Rule prohibiting the running of falls?

One of my biggest objections to Safety Rules is that they can become a crutch. Boaters can delude themselves into thinking, "If I just follow these few simple rules, nothing bad will happen to me." Well, if you

believe that I hate to burst your bubble, but it just ain't so. Rules can never be a substitute for common sense, experience, and judgement.

Many complex factors contribute to whitewater accidents, not the least of which is bad luck. Complex problems rarely have simple solutions. Most of the unfortunate individuals listed in the AW whitewater fatality base did not wind up there because they broke a simple rule. And even people who try to follow all of life's rules die sooner or later.

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Bob Gedekoh

"This code, however, is only a collection of guidelines; attempts to minimize risks should be flexible, not constrained by a rigid set of rules. Varying conditions and group goals may combine with unpredictable circumstances to require alternate procedures." From the introduction to the AW Safety Code.

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Letters

Responses to Nov/ Dec Forum

New School Rant

Bob,

Dude man, like WHAT is your problem? You think us young punks get on your nerves, you have no clue. Here's some stuff us New Schoolers could live without for the next Millennium.

The Attitude - You Old Schoolers show up at our kewl hole and front surf with these banana boats that you could land a cargo plane on. Dude, doesn't your retirement plan provide enough cash to buy a decent boat? I mean come on, front surfing and side surfing went out with Saturday Night Fever. Show us you can do a Rad Double Ollie Porn-Star Blunt with a McTwist and maybe we'll let you surf in our hole. You think we really care how many festivals you nut on? You think we really care that you negotiated the release on the river we just paddled? When was the last time you competed in a Rodeo or a Race? How many years ago?

Fear of Technology - How come you guys never post anything on the internet, and when you do its always something like

this...FESTIVAL THIS SATURDAY AT THE BADASS RIVER. Don't miss out on all the fun 5-10 this sat at the big pavilion in Badass town, for more information e-mail me at oldschooleratwhoopassdotcom. Is your caps lock and punctuation keys all screwed up? Give me a call, I'll hook you up with a new keyboard. And why are you afraid to post anything controversial on the rare occasion that you do post? Are you afraid of getting flamed by all us punks? Do you think that the internet is a powerful information sharing resource? WRONG! It's a place for degenerates to set up virtual dysfunctional communities.

Smoking on the river - Dudes, get with the program... smoking is out unless you're the CEO for Phillip Morris or the President of the USA (actually the president doesn't really SMOKE the cigars, but I digress).

Experience? - If you guys have been paddling for so many years, then how come you never use a Duffek stroke and you brace just as often, if not more, than we do. In your eyes we're all a bunch of sissies until we run a rapid or a line that you won't, then we become suicidal maniacs. What's the deal?

Fear of heights - Don't you know that nowadays the biggest drop you have run is directly proportional to the size of your weenie? The cover of AW always shows some

old-shriveled up viagra-addicted fogie running Class III rapids with a frightened look on his face and nose plugs. I KNOW you have glossies of sick ass in your face 60 foot drops with kids running them in playboats. Come on, you know what we want, now GIVE IT TO US. There's only 4 color pages in your mag, 3 of them are wasted on ads, and your cover is always lame.

And that picture of you in the editorial section - it's a nice picture, but what is with the paddle? I have the same make & model paddle but the face of my blade only has 1/2 the surface area due to constant use and abuse. Either you are making enough money to buy new paddles every six months or you need to get out more and paddle.

Lack of respect - We never make fun of you when you screw up running a drop, but if we get munched in a hole or swim you go out of your way to rub it in. What's up with that? I mean, they caught the working on tape, isn't that bad enough? My homey's never berate me personally, they just host a new website called www.watchkarlgethammered.com with streaming real-time video of my disgrace.

Obsession with death - We all appreciate the nightmares we get from those great accident reports you are always printing. Maybe if you scare us enough we'll stop running insane drops. Nahhhhhhhh. Why don't you focus on the positive aspects of the sport?

Kavaking Videos - While you may have disdain for paddling videos, our generation simply uses them as visual guidebooks. Those dudes in the videos are in fact, no better paddlers than most of us. In fact, as ridiculous as it may sound, most of us 'weekend warriors' make ten times as much in our legit jobs as the pro paddlers, and yet we still can't afford to buy new boats. What's up with that?

Fear of modifying boats - When you printed the article about night paddling in total blackness you put in a two sentence disclaimer. When you printed the article on boat modifications you printed two pages worth of disclaimers and consulted Kayaking Manufacturers, the Board of AW, Your Lawyer, and Team Star Bellied Sneech. What's the deal? As someone who has personally suffered at the hands of today's small volume rodeo boats, I can assure you that no boat can be TOO SQUASHED, unless it gets run over by an 18 wheeler like Njord's Glide. You didn't see Njord crying over squashed boats? Nope, he just duck taped up the huge cracks and went right back to paddling Class V stuff. Xtream man. Shoot, Riot made a bundle by borrowing the Star-Bellied Sneech's boat squashing Machine and turning their unsuccessful Glide mold into the rodeo winning Slice. Come on Bob, Everyone's doing it.

Plastic Critters - What's up with the dumb plastic crap I always see duct-taped to older paddlers helmets? I've seen ratts, dinosaurs, lizards, rubber chickens, and floppy anten-

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nas. OK, bee-man is cool cause he's got a THEME going, but the rest of you guys look like dorks. I'm going to call PETUPA (Paddlers for the Ethical Treatment of Ugly-ass Plastic Animals) and report you guys.

I hope all you old timers come off your high horses and start treating some of the new schoolers with the dignity and respect we deserve. Dammit.

Karl "No respect for his elders" Gesslein

The Old School Checks In

Dear Bob,

Great opening column in the latest issue of AW. My sentiments completely. I figured I'd get this to you before the deluge of, "Hey, like, dude, how come like you're so harsh," e-mails. You missed my pet peeve-the fact that everyone I meet on the rivers these days (under age 30) is "sponsored." That's right, they can barely read water and they're "like, sponsored by Boof Daddy, Boof Mommy and, like, Anarchist paddle gear."

Bob Woodward

Ranting Old School Reply

Dear Mr. Gesslein,

Thank you for your insightful response to my forum, "Tom Toms, Rail Grabs and the New Millennium," published in the November/ December issue of American Whitewater. I must admit your letter came as a pleasant surprise to this Old Schooler. I had no idea that any of the New Schoolers knew how to read, much less write. And so cleverly, too!

But please allow me to address some of your specific concerns about Old School boaters.

As for the size of our boats and the size of our weenies... I can only say that many Old School boaters are simply too large to fit comfortably into the tiny little plastic condoms you New Schoolers call kayaks. And it's not because Old Schoolers have big feet.

Of course I can understand why so many of you New Schoolers prefer those tiny boats... I'm sure you don't find them tight at all, and they are so very easy to roll. But, with a little practice, most of you could probably master the art of rolling larger kayaks as well.

As for noseplugs, I have never worn a pair, nor do I believe that I ever will. I would rather develop a sinus infection that erodes through the base of my skull into my brain, turning it into a pus ball, than be seen on a river with noseplugs. But I see nose plugs on New School boaters all the time. I assume that their mommies put them there to remind them not to pick their snotty pierced noses.

And while I'm on the subject of pierced

noses, I know that many of you New Schoolers think that we Old Schoolers aren't "kewl" because we don't have rings and studs stuck through our noses, eyebrows, lips, tongues and nipples. Well, I'll have you know that just because you don't see any pierced body parts when we blow past you on the river, that doesn't mean we don't have any. I have more holes in me than the Ocoee. But we Old Schoolers come by our holes honestly, not by way of self-mutilation. Our holes are the result of gunshots (angry husbands), knives (bar fights), and the teeth of rampaging grizzly bears.

As for the many festivals we sponsor, did you actually think that we held those so that you New Schoolers could come and have a good time? Hah! I know for a fact that the only reason that Old King Koll hosts the Beaver, Black, and Moose Festivals is so he can watch all the New Schoolers get hammered. He and his ancient cronies lurk in the eddies and laugh themselves silly when you swim.

You wondered if I can do any New School tricks in holes. I'll have you know that every time I drop into a big hydraulic I make moves that are so cutting edge that they don't even have names. Yet! Eat your heart out Eric Southwick.

In regard to the plastic critters that some Old Schoolers fasten to the top of their helmets... I personally have never done such a thing, but I have been known to consort with a few Old Schoolers who do. Let me warn you, those guys are just setting a trap, and the plastic fish, frogs, chickens, and duckies are the bait. You see, the only thing those big tough gnarly old duckiehead dudes love to do more than kayak is brawl. So they intentionally make themselves look silly, hoping to trick some punk New Schooler into making a crack. You insult the man's duckie, and the next thing you know you get a big dose of the whupass.

Finally, you mentioned the Old Schooler's obsession with death. Well, there was time when we were fearless... but then some genius came along and invented Viagra. Now we do want to live forever.

I'd like to go on, but my nurse says its time for my Geritol, Prozac, Metamucil, and a nice nap. All of us Old Schoolers in the home want to be fresh for the Bingo tournament tonight... and the Rec Room orgy that follows.

With unpierced tongue firmly planted in unpierced cheek.

Sincerely,
Bob Gedekoh
Editor, American Whitewater

Seriously, I'm glad that someone from the New School checked in. I will not deny that I fall into the category of Old School, but that isn't what I want this magazine to be. For some time I have felt that our coverage of

New School subjects has been less than "kewl," I would like to see more articles about whitewater rodeos, rodeo techniques, and hot New School Boaters. New School humor would be very welcome.

For better or worse, what you see in American Whitewater is defined by what arrives in my mailbox. Soplease, New Schoolers, check out our writer's guidelines, published in every issue, and rev up your word processors. Your articles and photos are welcome here.

More From the Old School

Dear Bob,

Regarding your Nov/Dec forum, I didn't think you were being sarcastic. I've had the same thoughts, but felt like I was just being a cranky old fart so I just kept them to myself. (You were semi-serious? Right?)

I would like to add something we do need in the new millennium. A modern kayak which weighs less than 35 lbs., which I can get my feet into with shoes on, and which will carry enough gear for a couple of nights on a Class IV river. It seems like most of the new boats are all heavy and designed for doing cartwheels in a pool. Myself, I still like to run rivers and so do a lot of my old time paddling buddies. There are a number of trips in the west that are very challenging and long enough to require several days on the river. No one seems to make a boat for this kind of river running any more, but there is a market out there. I personally know 3 or 4 people looking for such a kayak. Manufacturers take note.

Just as an aside, I'm using a Dancer XT with Dagger thigh braces for the above mentioned purpose. New Perception and Dagger thigh braces fit in the large XT cockpit with minimal effort and feel much more secure than the originals. I don't know what I will do when this boat goes to the gentle river in the sky. That is why I would like to see something on the market that fills this niche.

Ward Eister
San Jose, California

Tuolumne!

Hi Bob and Chris,

During the many years I have been a subscriber to American Whitewater I have often seen the name of California's Tuolumne River misspelled. Oh well, I figured that this wasn't the easiest river name to spell. There is even a trail sign in Tuolumne meadows that is misspelled.

But when I saw how badly mangled the name was in Chris' article, "Fear and Loathing in California," I had a suggestion for you. Put "Tuolumne" in your spell checker.

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Also in the article Chris refers to the South Branch of the Tuolumne, which is actually the North Fork. And, the San Pedro Reservoir is the Don Pedro Reservoir.

Nancy Dagle
Past Board Member of the Tuolumne River Preservation Trust

Editors reply: Chris has been sentenced to write the word "Tuolumne" one thousand times on the blackboard. He will not be allowed back into his boat until he has completed his punishment.

Courtesy Needed on Ottawa

Dear Bob,

I just received my copy of *American Whitewater* yesterday. I read your "Letters" section and came upon Kevin Maggs letter. It is certain to draw a response, considering the current popularity of rodeo boating in North America.

Let me start by saying that I am not a rodeo boater myself and I have no desire to become one. Now don't get me wrong, I like surfing in holes. It is a skill that is very important if one is to paddle difficult water safely. The skills learned in a "safe" hole could be life saving on a Class V run. However, to appreciate Kevin's opinion you must appreciate the Ottawa River. Where else can you find a river that NEVER goes below 5000 cfs, always has a multitude of safe play spots at all levels, has excellent access points, and is BIG and bathtub warm all summer.

McCoy Chute, the first rapid (and the best playspot in the hemisphere), is less than ten minutes paddling on flatwater from the put-in. There is a parking lot at the put-in that has been graciously donated by OWL rafting. It is a perfect set up. The river is quite heavily rafted during the summer months, and we all know how many boaters there are now. This combined with a whole new generation of "rodeo boys" who prefer to park-and-paddle instead of actually running a river, leads to congestion at McCoy's of Gauleyish proportions on every summer weekend.

The trouble is that not everyone does the entire river, and most who do spend half the day at this one rapid. It is common to sit in line at the bottom of the rapid behind 35 boats, not counting the rafts, waiting for a chance to surf. All those boats bouncing into each other in a boily, big water eddy tends to bring out the worst in some people. People frequently butt in line, and some frequently take four minute surfs practicing countless whirlydoos, while 35 kayakers and 40 rafters sit waiting their turn. Collisions in the hole are becoming common, also.

I sympathize with Kevin's opinion about the rodeo. A rodeo at McCoy's compounds the problem of congestion, especially on a long

weekend. It also monopolizes the playspot for the entire weekend. The Ottawa is a big river with room for everybody, if we can just keep them moving downstream. If we do not, for safety sake, someone will do it for us. If everybody shows a little bit of consideration, it would make paddling the Ottawa a whole lot more enjoyable for everyone.

Sincerely,
Mike McCrodan
Morrison, CO

Damned Dams!

Dear Friends:

About a year ago I began squawking in earnest about these insults to Rivers, Nature, The Land, and our Vocabulary. I squawked to a lot of people in all sorts of vocations and age groups, who either nodded their heads or vociferously agreed with me, but knew not where to go to alter, and eventually stop, the misbehavior of the bureaucrats fooling around with our language and wrongfully naming something to suit their own political preferences.

Then, Nancy Jacques, bright of mind and cool with words, came to the rescue. She found the first step from whence to proceed, and I urge everyone to consider how we have been shafted over the years into believing the word "lake" when we see it on a map, hear it on the airwaves, or see it in some travel, recreation, Park, or Monument brochure. Here in the West, especially, about one out of forty is a true lake.

We need legislation to change these misnomers — overtime, but starting NOW. Whenever a map is updated, wherever road signs point to a "lake" that is a "dammed" thing, a plug in a once living river and no lake at all, that sign must say "reservoir." And there we can read all that a reservoir implies — something made by man, like a "special use permit" ... until revoked!

Respectfully yours,
Katie Lee
Author of "All My Rivers Are Gone"

Not Just a Matter of Semantics

An Open Letter to the Executive Secretary, U.S. Board on Geographic Names
Dear Mr. Payne:

We don't call the Erie Canal a "river." We don't call irrigation ditches seen by satellites "rivers." Why are we calling reservoirs "lakes?" The standards by which the U.S. Board on Geographic Names operates includes the following: "Standardization of the written form of a name and its application has become increasingly important during the last 100 years because of reference needs associated with the development of the natural sciences

and highly accurate large-scale maps and charts." Calling "reservoir" by the name of "lake," even by acts of Congress, is neither scientifically nor technically accurate. Naming a dammed river or stream a "lake" does not change the facts and is incongruent to the standards by which all place and feature names are established by the laws giving the Board their authority.

It is therefore my request that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names and the Domestic Names Committee, having the authority to name a body of water behind a dam but not the dam, review all names of artificial limnological bodies of water within the boundaries of the United States and change names referring to dammed-up rivers and streams as "lakes" to reflect accurately that they are "reservoirs."

According to the factors used by the Board in assessing requests for review of names, the history, folklore, and local verbal usage are values used in making name decisions. Since a dam impounds rivers or streams, there can be no folklore, history, or local verbal usage associated with a created body of water. Contemporary language that includes "lake" in lieu of "reservoir" should not be taken into account because such usage is not the result of tradition but of imposition! For example, there can be the "Colorado River" and "Glen Canyon" as proper names substantiated by documents and history where "Reservoir Powell" now exists, but there was, and is, no "lake." Glen Canyon was dammed, which as specified by your categories, is a so-called "cultural place" and is then, by definition, a "reservoir." Congress, or the Bureau of Reclamation, has jurisdiction to name dams, including "Glen Canyon Dam," but the Bureau's naming of "Reservoir Powell" as a "lake" was intended to satisfy commercial and political purposes. Such intentions should not override the technical and scientific standards by which you operate. It compromises the integrity of your whole system.

It is my understanding that reviewing and changing the names of places established by a Federal Agency is a "gray" area for the Board, but you ultimately have the power to do so under several different categories and standards. You can review and make a statement regarding the appropriate use of names of "cultural places" behind dams, even if a name was established by a Federal agency. The review of names of reservoirs built by the Bureau of Reclamation will reveal that this agency is not consistent in naming the bodies of water created by damming rivers. For example, the San Juan and Piedra Rivers flow into Navajo Reservoir. The Dolores River flows into McPhee Reservoir, which means that the Bureau itself recognizes that bodies of water created by dams are not lakes. Therefore, I am petitioning that names created by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, or any other Federal Agency,

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reflect the accuracy of what is created, past, present, and in the future.

I know that the Domestic Names Committee meets monthly. I would appreciate their consideration of this issue. My intention is not that all USGS maps be changed but that your database be changed to reflect the accurate name/description of all artificial limnological bodies of water. When the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and state and commercial map entities and enterprises update their publications from time to time, they refer to you as the authority. At that time, the necessary changes can be made. New publications will reflect accurate descriptions, and professionals and the public alike will be better able to realize the landscapes with which they interact.

Nancy Jacques

Tearing Down Dams Not Enough

Dear Editor,

Your recent articles on dam removal are excellent and informative. I note particularly your warnings that after removal of a dam we cannot sit back and say the job is done and that nature will in time by itself restore the trees, shrubs, and grasses of the original riparian areas. Instead, tamarisk, in some areas, loose strife and other weeds will note the vacant niche and move quickly to fill it.

There is a solution and it seems obvious. The job of dam removal is not complete until we give nature a hand in replanting the new shores. First off, entire areas should be seeded with a mixture of perennial prairie grasses, as currently developed by the Land Institute, followed by young trees, not seedlings, spaced appropriately, of cottonwoods, in some areas, evergreens and hardwoods, in other areas.

I hope you will publish this letter starting an educational movement that appears to be sadly overdue.

Sincerely,

John W. Peirce

jackpeirce@aol.com

NPFF Roadshow Hits Europe

Dear Editor,

I am writing to tell everyone about the first Paddling Film Festival (NPFF) Roadshow outside the United States. On December 11, 1999, we had a Roadshow Film Festival at the Neil Kayak Club in Antwerp, Belgium.

We came up with the idea when we saw the Roadshow program advertised in AWA. The evening was a resounding success with over 80 people attending from several coun-

tries. The money raised will be used for access issues in Europe.

We watched over 7 hours of videos. We especially enjoyed the humorous videos like *The Legend of Team C*. My European friends told me, "Boy, Bryan, if all Americans paddle like these guys, you must be one of the best in your country." The other videos convinced them that this is not so. Several people said they want to shoot video in Europe to enter into next year's NPFF.

Much appreciation is due to the NPFF Roadshow coordinator, Zog Aitken, and the NPFF staff for making this happen. They were extremely helpful in making this a successful event.

Bryan Stewart

Belgium

Boater Input Needed to Change

Idaho Permit System

Dear Editor:

As whitewater rafting and kayaking grows in popularity, noncommercial boaters find it more and more difficult to get onto Idaho's limited-access rivers. The current odds of obtaining a permit in the Forest Service lottery system to run the Middle Fork of the Salmon, for example, are only 1 in 23.

Meanwhile, the customers of commercial outfitters can simply make a phone call and reserve space for the upcoming summer.

That isn't fair.

Though outfitters perform a valuable service to the public, one thing they shouldn't be allowed to sell is privileged access. Access to a publicly-owned resource should be equally available to all.

The Forest Service now has an opportunity to correct that imbalance through its new management plan for the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. One of the proposed alternatives for management of the Middle Fork and Main Salmon rivers is a "freedom-of-choice" system, which would eliminate the current system of split allocations between commercial and noncommercial launches. Instead, everyone would compete in the same permit pool, and successful applicants would then decide whether to go with an outfitter or not.

The National Organization for Rivers, a boaters' group that for years has been advocating a system that provides fair access, has suggested that the Forest Service take the freedom-of-choice alternative one step further—by eliminating the lottery and putting everything on a reservation basis. By requiring participants to provide a list of actual people on the trip, such a system would cut out the deadwood—people entering the lottery with no concrete trip plans. Furthermore, it would be more palatable to outfitters by allowing their clients to book their

trips with the outfitters just as they do now. The only difference would be that the clients' waiting time would be the same as that of noncommercial boaters.

Outfitters claim the current system is more than fair to noncommercial applicants since they are allocated 60 percent of total launches. What they fail to point out is that a 60-40 split in supply is fair only if demand is also split 60-40. In this case, it's not. Noncommercial demand makes up far more than 60 percent of the total. Private boaters are entitled to whatever share of allocated space would bring those ratios into balance. The beauty of the "freedom-of-choice" system is that it does not require constant adjustment of the numbers to keep things fair.

The Forest Service points out that adoption of a freedom-of-choice system would result in a 71-percent loss of business to Idaho river outfitters if all their prospective clients competed in the permit pool (and more if they didn't). If that's true, then it's just another way of saying that under the current system, 71 percent of outfitters' clients are being allowed to butt in line ahead of noncommercial boaters.

River outfitting provides an infusion of cash into the economies of Idaho's mountain towns, and a good source of local employment. It's a great summer job; I know because I used to do it. However, management policy toward outfitting should be based on public need, not outfitters' incomes.

Comments on the proposed wilderness management plan can be sent to: Salmon-Challis National Forest, Box 600, Salmon, ID 83467, Attn: FCRONRW SEIS. The official deadline is Feb. 1, which will probably have passed by the time you read this. However, the Forest Service will generally consider comments it receives past the deadline.

Greg Moore

Ketchum, Idaho

Irresponsible Articles!

Dear Editor:

I recently struggled with whether or not to renew my membership and subscription to your publication. It is, after all, a marginally useful magazine for rafters. I decided to stay with you, mostly due to my position as the safety officer of an all-volunteer rafting organization, for your accident reviews and safety articles. I look to you as a resource for the latest thinking on the subject of boating safety. I figured that the publishers of the *Safety Code* would promote safety.

I therefore was disappointed in two items in the September/October issue. The first was Teresa Gryder's account of paddling in a thunderstorm at night. This is the kind of poor judgement that gets people listed in an accident report. Yet you ran the piece with noth-

ing more than a weak admonition at the end that "boating at night or during thunderstorms can be dangerous." Dangerous, hell; it could get you killed six ways from Sunday! I can't think of another situation on the river that could be more dangerous. Yet you honored that piece by publishing it in all its stupidity. You tacitly endorsed the activity. By printing the article, you may well have inspired others to follow Teresa's example.

The second item was in the 'Kid's Korner' article about the nine year old kayaker. The picture on page 118 apparently shows him launching off a low-head dam. Now I've been paddling for 18 years, taking and teaching rescue courses, and I've always heard low-head dams described as drowning machines. I've been instructed, and instructed others, to avoid dams - and ledges - if at all possible. I don't claim to know everything and I'm always willing to learn. So tell me: how is this picture demonstrating a safe move for a paddler, especially one so young?

I insist, with both our guides and participants, that safety be our number one priority. I don't see how you could make such a claim. By publishing examples of unsafe behavior, you condone and implicitly endorse them. You then become a force for further injuries and deaths, rather than a voice for safe boating. I hope that future editorial decisions will make boating safety a preeminent consideration and that you'll edit pieces so that they reflect that commitment.

Sincerely,
Bill Weinberg
San Rafael, California

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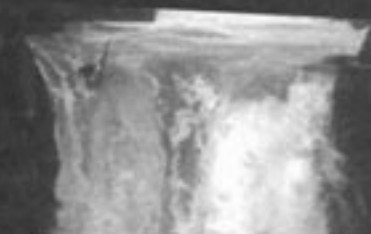
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Please read this carefully before sending us your articles and photos! This is a volunteer publication, please cooperate and help us out. Do not send us your material without a release – signed by all authors and photographers (attached)!!!

The editorial staff of American *Whitewater* carefully reviews all material submitted for publication. We are particularly interested in receiving full-length feature articles, conservation and club news, special event announcements, articles pertaining to whitewater safety and short, humorous pieces.

Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, AW Briefs, River Voices, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines, Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater cartoons are also welcomed.

If possible, articles should be submitted on a 3-inch computer cassette. (*Word Perfect* preferred – others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

Those without access to a word processor may submit their articles typed. Please double space.

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints, or color prints. Keep your originals

and send us duplicates if possible; we cannot guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Because we publish in black and white, photos with a lot of contrast work best.

American *Whitewater* feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water. The best features have a definite slant... or theme. They are not merely chronological recountings of river trips.

Open the story with an eye-catching lead, perhaps by telling an interesting anecdote. Dialogue should be used to heighten the reader's interest. Don't just tell us about the river... tell us about the people on the river... develop them as characters. Feature articles should not be written in the style of a local club newsletter.

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled, or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to Class III and IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personali-

ties are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through and don't be afraid to poke a little fun at yourself... and your paddling partners.

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not our intent to intentionally offend our more sensitive members and readers.

Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies, and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally *responsible* for the accuracy of such material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

Articles will be edited at the discretion of the editors to fit our format, length, and style. Expect to see changes in your article. If you don't want us to edit your article, don't send it to us! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes we make prior to publication.

American *Whitewater* is nonprofit; the editors and contributors to *American Whitewater* are not reimbursed. On rare occasions, by prearrangement, professional writers receive a small honorarium when they submit stories at our request. Generally, our contributors do not expect payment, since most are members of AW, which is a volunteer conservation and safety organization.

Release For Publication

I hereby release my work (literary, graphic or photographic) for publication in *American Whitewater* magazine.

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Purpose

American Whitewater

Our mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

The American Whitewater (AW) is a national organization with a membership consisting of thousands of individual whitewater boating enthusiasts, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates.

CONSERVATION: AW maintains a complete national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors threats to those rivers, publishes information on river conservation, provides technical advice to local groups, works with government agencies and other river users, and-- when necessary-- takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

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

EDUCATION: Through publication of the bimonthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater, (AW) provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

SAFETY: AW promotes paddling safely, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, maintains a uniform national ranking system for whitewater

rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and publishes and disseminates the internationally recognized AW Whitewater Safety Code

EVENTS: AW organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation, including the Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo in Tennessee, the Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), the Arkansas River Festival in Colorado, the Kennebec Festival in Maine and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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Director's Cut

by Rich Bowers

A Changing of the Guard (New Faces and New Views)

Every December, American Whitewater goes through a rather painful experience as we schedule a year-end conference call for our entire board of directors. While we try to limit this several-hour call to a few key issues, they still are not considered fun by *anyone* involved. If you're a veteran of such calls, you know how onerous they can be—now add in 28 cantankerous boaters, all in different time zones and with varying agendas—and you see the problem. The only bright side is that evening calls in the dead of winter offer less chance that our board will bail on the meeting to go boating!

But the meetings do produce results. This year's meeting approved five new directors for American Whitewater and elected officers for the coming three-year term. The officers play a big role in keeping American Whitewater true to its mission and effective in getting the work done for rivers and paddlers. Since the officers play such a key role in your organization, I thought I'd take a minute to introduce each of them to you.

Returning as Treasurer is Jeff Leighton, a resident of California's rivers and with great experience in nonprofit management and fund-raising. One of Jeff's jobs is keeping us solvent and making sure we get the biggest bang for the buck from our various supporters.

Also returning for a second term is Barry Tuscano as Secretary. Barry it seems has locked in the role of "conscience" for our organization. As we grow, and as river issues continue to escalate, Barry is the voice of reason making sure that we always represent our members and don't forget our roots. Barry has also served on our Nominating and Events Committees. Both Jeff and Barry have played an important role over the past few years, and I know I couldn't do my job without the two of them.

For the year 2000, Richard Penny takes over the role of Vice President. If you paddle anywhere in California, I'm sure you've run into Richard on one river or another! In addition to being an avid boater, Richard is the Development Director for Friends of the River and author of the *Whitewater Sourcebook*. Over the years, Richard has se-

riously helped American Whitewater in our conservation, membership, and fund-raising efforts.

After many years as President of American Whitewater, Ric Alesch has stepped down and turned over the reins to another Colorado boater, Jay Kenney. Over the years, Jay

has been hard at work collecting camping fees at the Gauley, volunteering at the Ocoee, and defending boaters from trespass on his home rivers. Since Jay will set the tone for American Whitewater's actions in the coming years, I asked Jay to address our members directly.

A Letter from the President

I am delighted and more than a little in awe that I've been elected to be the new president of American Whitewater. Delighted, because it gives me a chance to commit to river conservation, access, and safety with more enthusiasm and energy than ever before. Awe, because my fellow and sister board members are, without exception, more dedicated, more committed, and more passionate about rivers and river protection than any group with which I've ever been associated. I am also amazed at the incredible talent American Whitewater has in its staff and cadre of dedicated volunteers. Across the board—access, conservation, safety, events, and administration—American Whitewater has been blessed to find river enthusiasts willing to work long, frequently lonely hours and usually on salaries well below what they could find in the private market.

As I scan the year ahead, I am excited at the changes in store for us. Ric Alesch, our immediate past-president, did a marvelous job guiding us through the past eight years. American Whitewater is growing. Both our revenues (and our expenses!) increased last year by more than 20%. Our membership will and must continue to grow if we are to be an effective and persuasive voice for rivers across the country. Indeed, as I look back on the last four years of board service, I am amazed at the growth we've experienced as an organization and in our ability to protect rivers and help members and nonmembers alike get to and down the rivers safely.

The coming year holds much in store for us. American Whitewater will be meeting in Boise, Idaho for its spring meeting. We intend to complete a comprehensive strategic plan that we began at the Gauley in 1999. We have recently hired a new development director to guide us in fund-raising, grant seeking, and donor appeals. We are revamping our membership services to increase our total members—not so much growth for growth's sake, but because the size of our membership directly affects our ability to protect rivers across the country. We want to become stronger, more persuasive and more influential in the daily disputes and discussions that swirl around every watershed in the country. We can only do that by growing the size of American Whitewater.

I ask this of our membership. First, and foremost, don't stop working for your local groups and organizations just because you think American Whitewater can do it. The truth is there are so many challenges and threats to rivers that without your work and your efforts, American Whitewater's would count for naught. Boating volunteers and river activists are the backbone and soul of American Whitewater and we never want to lose touch with those roots or those people. Second, help us grow stronger. Sign up local paddlers who belong to your local club but not American Whitewater. Volunteer at an American Whitewater event, river festival, or to work with our talented staff on important conservation and access issues in your neighborhood. Finally, when we send out our fund raising appeals, give generously to the **only** national organization of boaters that protects your rivers and your right to run them. And let us know how we are doing. Sound off in the Journal. E-mail us with your thoughts. Let us know what we are doing right as well as what we did wrong. Together, we can make a difference.

Jay Kenney, President
American Whitewater

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Conserve

Implications of SCE and PG&E'S Divestiture Proposals for California Rivers

SCE (Southern California Edison) and PG&E (Pacific Gas & Electric) have chosen contrasting approaches in the future restructured electric utility market in California. SCE has elected to retain its hydropower generation assets in the restructured market. PG&E, on the other hand, plans to sell off its hydro generation facilities. These divergent paths have direct repercussions on opportunities to restore instream flows to California rivers dewatered by hydropower operations.

In 1992, Congress passed legislation granting individual states the authority to restructure the power industry into what many term a deregulated market. Each state is free to draft its own restructuring plan within certain side boards outlined in the federal legislation. California was one of the first states to pass restructuring legislation permitting utilities to sell power in a competitive marketplace. Under the California plan, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and Southern California Edison (SCE) are required to develop a plan to "market value" their generation assets through sale or appraisal. Because of the public resources at stake, their divestiture proposals must be approved by the state legislature and state Public Utilities Commission (PUC). In order to get their appraisal plans approved by the legislature and the PUC, both of the utility giants recognize the need for endorsements from conservation and recreation groups early in the process.

American Whitewater and member groups of the California Hydropower Reform Coalition signed an agreement in September, 1999 with PG&E requiring significant restoration of instream flows and land protection in exchange for support of PG&E's proposal to sell its hydro generation facilities. The California state legislature failed to approve PG&E's divestiture proposal prior to close of the 1999 legislative session thereby nullifying the agreement with the conservation groups (see page 28 in the Nov/Dec 1999 issue of the American Whitewater journal). PG&E submitted a new divestiture proposal to the PUC that entails auctioning off its hydro generation facilities. This proposal does not contain an environmental agreement with the conservation community. The PUC has determined that PG&E's auction proposal must go through a state equivalent NEPA process.

In contrast, SCE plans to retain its hydro generation facilities in the restructured utility market. In December, 1999, American Whitewater again with member groups of the California Hydropower

Reform Coalition signed an agreement to support SCE's proposal to retain hydro generation facilities. In exchange for these signatures of support, SCE will provide an extensive river monitoring system of the utility's hydropower network. In addition to the monitoring program, the agreement includes a \$50 million environmental trust fund, administered by a forum of diverse stakeholders on behalf of the river resources. This trust fund can be used to purchase additional instream flows for environmental and recreational improvement.

These contrasting proposals equate to very different consequences for California rivers dewatered by hydropower projects. SCE owns several dozen hydropower facilities on rivers and streams in California. Many of these facilities are located in the same watershed. Retaining ownership of the facilities within SCE allows coordination of watershed-based restoration in upcoming relicensing proceedings. The \$50 million trust fund provides a mechanism to increase instream flows below SCE hydropower projects a number of which impact whitewater opportunities on rivers such as the San Joaquin and Kern.

Under PG&E's auction proposal, future project ownership and operation is uncertain. PG&E owns 68 power projects including over 170 dams on 16 rivers. Many of these hydropower projects are stair-stepped facilities on river systems with substantial whitewater potential such as the North Fork Feather and Pit rivers. Auctioning these facilities may result in multiple ownerships of hydropower facilities within a single river system. Competition in the restructured energy market will impede communication and coordination between the independent project owners. River restoration opportunities will in turn be limited to the available water resources and economics of the specific facility. Access to flow information will be more difficult. Furthermore, multiple hydro operators in the same watershed increases the relicensing workload for American Whitewater since it will be necessary to negotiate with each entity individually in relicensing proceedings. In other words, this scenario equates to more work for less river restoration and fewer whitewater days mitigated with less volume.

American Whitewater, a founding member of the CHRC, will file joint comments with the CHRC in the PUC proceeding reviewing the PG&E auction proposal. For more information contact John Gangemi 406-837-3155, email: <jgangemi@digisys.net>.

U.S. Geological Survey Stream Gaging Network Facing Budget Shortfalls

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) monitors stream flow data at approximately 7,000 gages across the country. That system of gages may be drastically reduced due to budget reductions. The current system of gages provides invaluable information for paddlers monitoring boating opportunities locally, regionally, and nationally. A reduction in the system of gages would be a terrible loss to river users. American Whitewater, Trout Unlimited, and the American Canoe Association joined forces to help keep these gages on-line. The groups submitted a written request to the Office of Management and Budget for a \$26 million spending increase for the USGS stream gaging network. This budget increase would keep the existing 7,000 gages operative.

Animas-La Plata Project Threatens Wildfire, Recreation, and Environment

The Bureau of Reclamation recently released a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Animas La Plata project on the Animas River in Durango, Colorado. The DSEIS evaluated ten alternatives. The Bureau's Preferred Alternative will divert water from the Animas River and build a 120,000 acre foot holding reservoir in Ridges Basin above Durango. Under this plan, water will be diverted from the Animas and pumped uphill 400 feet into the holding reservoir storing the water until it can be used. An alternate citizens proposal meeting the Indian Tribes Settlement Agreement was rejected because it does not provide water for regional municipal use. The Bureau expanded the scope of the project beyond settling Indian water claims as originally authorized. Legislation will probably be introduced this year to implement the Bureau's recommendation.

The project will result in numerous undesirable impacts. A biological assessment prepared for the Bureau found that the water depletions are likely to threaten the Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker and adversely modify critical habitat in the San Juan River. Ridges Basin, proposed site for the storage reservoir, is currently a State Wildlife Area used by up to 2,000 elk as a prime migration corridor and frequented by 1,500 resident and migrating mule deer. The project will block their migration corridor and prevent the deer and elk from moving between summer and winter ranges. Lower river flows will eliminate over 4,000 kayaking and rafting user days. The pumping station will consume approximately as much power as the downtown districts of the City of Durango

currently use. Perhaps worst of all, there is no current need for the water; the projected future uses include the construction of two power plants, two or three golf courses, a casino-resort, and a dude ranch.

All of this is going to cost the U.S. and Colorado taxpayers nearly \$330 MILLION, plus annual operating costs of several million dollars. Although the ALP project will settle Ute Indian water rights claims, there are better ways to achieve a settlement with the Ute tribes. A local citizens group has shown that existing water rights can be purchased and transferred to the tribes with a lower cost to the government and without a dam!

The Bureau is taking scoping comments on the proposal until March 17, 2000. You should send comments to: Pat Schumacher, Bureau of Reclamation, 835 E. 2nd Ave. Durango, CO 81301. Comments are also accepted by e-mail at: ALP DSEIS Comments@uc.usbr.gov

PLEASE WRITE AND TELL THE BUREAU TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO THE STRUCTURAL RESERVOIR AT RIDGES BASIN. THEY SHOULD FURTHER STUDY AND RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVE #6, THE ANIMAS RIVER CITIZEN'S CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVE.

Key points to include in your comments:

The DSEIS clearly documents that there is no legitimate use for the excess water beyond the Indian water rights settlement. None of the suggested future uses justifies the enormous cost and environmental damage imposed by ALP. The Bureau has mischaracterized the nonstructural alternatives comparing them against larger alternatives as a means of negating their merit. In reality, nonstructural alternatives are more practical, cheaper, and would be less harmful to the environment.

The great majority (70%) of the ALP water will supply power plants and coal mines. Almost all the remaining water will supply golf courses and resorts (16%) with federally subsidized water. Only 2% satisfies Ute Indian housing needs.

The Kidges Basin Reservoir will displace elk and deer.

Project construction will impact native bald eagles.

Project construction and operation will impact water quality and quantity in the San Juan River threatening endangered fish species.

Project operation will reduce whitewater flows on the Animas River.

The new ALP will cost U.S. and Colorado taxpayers \$330 million.

For more information contact Dylan Norton Taxpayers for the Animas River, at 970-259-8156, email: <dylan@frontier.net> or visit the information web-site at www.angelfire.com/al/alpcentral. You can also contact Kent Ford at 970-259-1361, e-mail: <kentford@frontier.net>.

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Your Comments Needed On The Final Plan For The Deepest Canyon In North America

In 1975, the U.S. Congress passed a special law to protect a special place. The deepest canyon in North America and adjacent wildlands were designated as the 652,000 acre Hells Canyon National Recreation Area (HCNRA). The Snake River runs through the heart of the HCNRA. This is a fantastic multi-day whitewater trip.

In addition to whitewater opportunities, the HCNRA harbors amazingly diverse wildlife habitats at the heart of the Columbia Basin. It is a critical biodiversity corridor connecting all ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest. It contains over 300,000 acres of roadless back country; endangered spring Chinook salmon; healthy predator populations; the largest free-roaming elk herd in the United States; rare plants like MacFarlane's Four O'clock and some of the most extensive, intact native grasslands remaining in the region; old growth boreal forests of ponderosa pine, Englemann spruce, western larch, and Douglas fir; abundant recreation from whitewater rafting to mountain biking, back country skiing, and hiking on primitive or maintained trails.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, manager of the HCNRA, is about to release its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the new HCNRA Comprehensive Management Plan. The DEIS will include the Native Ecosystem Alternative, an independent management plan developed by a coalition of 15 people representing local, regional, and national conservation advocacy groups; local native American tribes; and other professionals. You can help shape future management policy for the Hells Canyon Ecosystem!

Public comments from individuals will have a tremendous influence because the Forest Service needs to be reminded that Hells

Canyon is a NATIONAL treasure. Please write a letter to the address listed below. Key issues you should raise are:

Adopt the Native Ecosystem Alternative as the new management plan.

Dedicate the 31-mile 'wild' section of the Snake Wild and Scenic River as non-motorized.

Close Lord Flat, Kirkwood, and upper Pittsburg Landing Roads.

Vacant livestock allotments should be closed to commercial grazing.

Prioritize programs of holistic ecosystem restoration, not commodity extraction.

Require monitoring as a compulsory condition for continuation of any human activities.

Please write to the Forest Service today! **THE COMMENT DEADLINE IS JUNE 20th, 2000! WRITE TO:**

Karyn Wood, Supervisor
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest
P.O. Box 907
Baker City, OR 97814

For more information contact the Hell's Canyon Preservation Council (541)963-3950; <www.hellscanyon.org>.

Is Thar' Gradient in Them Thar' Hills: Are it Runnable?

The licenses for seven hydroelectric projects in the hills of Western North Carolina expire soon. The hydro operator, Nantahala Power and Light (NP&L) intends to renew the licenses for each project.

A team of local paddlers has been exploring the river channels below the NP&L projects to determine the presence/absence of whitewater resources. Whitewater opportunities have already been identified at three of the projects through field reconnaissance efforts. The rivers are within easy driving distance for the burgeoning population of paddlers living in the Knoxville - Asheville - Greenville - Atlanta areas.

Below is a list of the NP&L hydropower projects, river name, and a brief description of the river dryways. Dryway descriptions are known for only three of the hydropower projects. We are looking for additional information on the other hydropower projects. This information is critical for the American Whitewater Conservation Program to prioritize workloads. The absence of whitewater (gradient) at hydropower projects is equally important since it enables us to delete the project permanently from our list.

Keep in mind when reporting, that hydropower project operations can alter instream flows by holding and releasing water for power generation or projects can be designed in such a manner that all water is diverted out of the river channel. In addition, hydropower dams obstruct downstream navigation making it necessary to access the river channel below the dam for whitewater recreation or portage around the dam. Some hydropower projects unfairly hinder public access to the river. Through the relicensing process American Whitewater's Conservation Program works to restore instream flows for aquatic organisms and flow dependent recreation as well as ensure public access.

The seven NP&L hydropower projects are a subset of over 30 hydropower projects due for relicensing in the southeastern U.S. alone. Hydropower projects are granted a license for 30 to 50 year terms at which point the operator must apply to renew the license. Relicensing is a 5-1/2 year process requiring identification of issues, conducting studies, and developing the terms and conditions of the new license. This 5-1/2 year time period is the whitewater communities only window to restore access and instream flows favorable for whitewater recreation. American Whitewater is extremely successful at securing an annual schedule of whitewater releases in hydropower relicensing proceedings but these wins require a significant time commitment. The Conservation Program needs boaters nationwide to assist with our efforts to identify those hydropower projects impacting whitewater resources. Your familiarity with rivers in your region provides us with critical information. If you have information on these projects or would like to volunteer to recon these or other hydropower projects due for relicensing please contact John Gangemi 406-837-3155; email: <jgangemi@digisys.net>.

John has a master list of hydropower projects for all 50 states. He will gladly share all or part of that list with interested boaters.

Nantahala Power and Light Hydropower Projects:

East Fork Project, FERC No. 2698, East Fork of the Tuckasegee (North of Lake Toxaway, NC)

Project facilities: This project includes multiple dams, reservoirs, and powerhouses each with a respective bypass channel with considerable gradient but lacking instream flows. The dams include Ten-

Is Thar' Gradient in Them Thar' Hills...continued

nessee Creek Dam, Wolf Creek Dam, Bear Creek Dam, Cedar Cliff Dam

Rivers/Creeks Impacted by Project: E. Fk. Tuckasegee and Tennessee Ck

River Channel Characteristics:

East Fork Tuckasegee: River channel characteristics unknown at this time. Two dryways below Bear Creek Dam and Cedar Cliff Dam respectively.

Wolf Creek: Hike the creek from the Wolf Creek Lake spillway, or, better yet, down behind the Wolf Creek Church that sits along Hwy 281 less than a half mile downstream of Wolf Creek Lake. Wolf Creek meanders as quietly as can be, slows up, turns a corner and plummets well over 100 narrow, pothole-laden, twisting feet into a pool. This drop can be portaged, with some difficulty, on river left. From there it seems like another 150 ft over a mile or so, where Wolf Creek joins the East Fork.

Tennessee Creek: The spillway below Tennessee Creek features a spectacular rapid that involves a 90 degree turn about halfway down the 35-40 foot drop. The riverbed drops 400 vertical feet over two miles on its way into the Bonas Defeat Gorge section of the East Fork.

West Fork Project, FERC No. 2686, West Fork of the Tuckasegee (Glenville, NC - north of Cashiers on Hwy 107)

Project facilities: Thorpe Dam and Tuckasegee Dam

Rivers/Creeks Impacted by Project: W. Fk. Tuckasegee

River Channel Characteristics:

From Thorpe Reservoir, the West Fork of the Tuckasegee drops 1,000 feet in a nine mile stretch to the powerhouse. The primary features include Onion Falls just below Thorpe Reservoir and High Falls, both in the first mile of the run. The lower four or five miles looks like Class III and is viewable from the road.

■ **Nantahala, FERC No. 2692, Nantahala River**

Project Facilities: Nantahala Dam, White Oak Dam, Dicks Creek Dam and Diamond Valley Dam.

Rivers/Creeks Impacted by Project: Dicks Ck, White Oak Ck, Queens Ck, Nantahala River

River Channel Characteristics:

The seldom-run Nantahala Cascades (Class IV+), as well as the Class III section from the Cascades to the standard put-in to the Nantahala Gorge.

Dillsboro, FERC No. 2602, Tuckasegee River

Project Facilities: Dillsboro Dam

River Channel Characteristics: Unknown

Bryson, FERC No. 2601, Oconaluftee River

Project Facilities: Ela Dam

River Channel Characteristics: Unknown

Franklin, FERC No. 2603, Little Tennessee River

Project Facilities: Lake Emory Dam

River Channel Characteristics: Unknown

Mission, FERC No. 2619, Hiawasse River

Project Facilities: Mission Dam

River Channel Characteristics: Unknown

One Step Closer to Unrestricted Kayaking on South Boulder Creek in Colorado

In November 1999, Colorado Front Range boaters received good news with the release of the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the licensing of Denver Water Board's (DWB) Gross Reservoir hydropower project. The new license will grant kayakers access to South Boulder Creek and permit non-motorized boating on Gross Reservoir. Gross Reservoir bisects two whitewater runs on South Boulder Creek; the Class V upper South Boulder Creek, and the Class IV-V lower South Boulder Creek. On the upper run DWB historically required kayakers to carry their boats two miles to their cars rather than paddle across Gross Reservoir to the take-out. On the lower run DWB did not allow kayakers to access South Boulder Creek below the reservoir. The relicensing proceeding offered local boaters an opportunity to lift these unnecessary access restrictions to South Boulder Creek and Gross Reservoir. A group of local boaters along with American Whitewater's Conservation Office became actively engaged in the relicensing proceeding for Gross Reservoir. Their active involvement helped achieve this positive outcome. FERC will issue an FEA (Final Environmental Assessment) in 2000 containing the operating terms and conditions for the next license thus allowing boaters unrestricted access to both Gross Reservoir and South Boulder Creek. This license will likely be issued for a 30 year term.



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Multiple Whitewater Flow Studies Planned for 2000

In the upcoming year, American Whitewater anticipates being engaged in numerous whitewater flow studies on rivers across the country impacted by hydropower operations. American Whitewater requests these flow studies on rivers where hydropower operations impair whitewater opportunities. Hydropower operations alter the timing, frequency, and volume of river flows as well as impede river access. Some hydropower operations completely dewater the riverbed by diverting water around substantial lengths of the river channel to a powerhouse further downstream or outside the watershed. Whitewater flow studies are a critical part of the data gathering phase in a hydropower relicensing proceeding. The results of the study are used in part to mitigate lost whitewater opportunities through implementation of an annual whitewater release schedule. In their hydropower relicensing work over the years, American Whitewater has participated in 30 or more whitewater flow studies and is widely recognized as a national expert in this area.

Flow studies are designed to identify a range of boatable flows for a variety of watercraft. The ideal flow study releases a range of flows over a period of several days. This is referred to as a controlled flow study since the release of flows is controlled by the dam operator. A team of boaters in a variety of watercraft paddle each flow. After each release, participants complete a single flow evaluation form rating the quality of the whitewater resource at that flow volume. At the conclusion of all the releases, the boaters complete a comparative evaluation form to identify the optimum flow and the minimum acceptable flow. The minimum acceptable flow is the lowest flow in which at least 50% of the participants indicate they will return to

paddle. Flows less than this volume are considered unacceptable for whitewater recreation. Participation is generally restricted to a small group of paddlers for logistical and safety reasons. Accidents during the study phase dampen the prospects of negotiating a favorable whitewater release schedule.

Flow studies are a study component of the larger relicensing proceeding. Relicensing is a 5-1/2 year process. American Whitewater is engaged in this process from start to finish. The ideal model is to have local boaters working in concert with American Whitewater's Conservation Office. Local boaters provide knowledge of the whitewater resource and use patterns. American Whitewater brings knowledge of the relicensing process. Together this team develops a mitigation package to restore whitewater opportunities impacted by hydropower project operations.

Potential flow studies in 2000.

River	State	FERC Project	Estimated WW Difficulty	Length (miles)
Chelan	WA	Chelan	Class V	4
Little Sandy	OR	Bull Run	Class IV	9
Pit	CA	Pit 3	Class II-III	6
Pit	CA	Pit 4	Class III-IV	7
Pit	CA	Pit 5	Class IV	9.5
North Fork Feather	CA	Poe	Class V	14
Cheoah River	NC	Tapoco	Class IV	9

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Letters needed on Merced W&SR Plan (Yosemite, CA)

By Steve Evans (sevens@friendsoftheriver.org)

Thirteen years after Congress added the Merced River to the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System, the National Park Service has released a draft management plan for the 81 miles of the river (including the main stem and South Fork) located in Yosemite National Park.

The primary goal of the plan is to ensure the protection of the Merced's free-flowing character, outstanding values, and segment classifications. The Park Service was required by court order to develop and release the draft plan in response to a lawsuit challenging the agency's widening of Highway 140 east of El Portal. The Sierra Club and other litigants were concerned about the impacts of the project on the adjacent river's outstanding scenic, recreation, cultural, biological, geological, and hydrological values. A federal court judge agreed that the agency needed to complete the plan to comply with the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

Unfortunately, the draft plan is quite vague in regard to how the Park Service intends to ensure protection of the river in regard to future road projects, or other visitor facility developments that may be proposed adjacent to the river in Yosemite Valley. The huge 450-page plan and its 860-page draft EIS and appendices are quite complex. While applying the three classifications (Wild, Scenic, or Recreational) appropriate to each river segment as required by law, the draft plan also provides an overlay of 14 different management zones and prescriptions, all of which may vary between the five alternatives considered in the plan.

The good news is that the plan formally documents for the first time, the Merced's outstanding values; identifies various river segments and applies applicable Wild, Scenic, or Recreational classifications; and establishes a river corridor boundary. This documentation provides a good foundation for future management of the river. But the plan's apparent inability to apply these fundamental river protection mandates to controversial activities such as the Highway 140 widening and other proposed visitor facilities, remains a possibly fatal flaw.

Other key issues identified to date include:

River Corridor Boundaries - The Wild & Scenic Rivers Act allows river corridors to vary, as long as they encompass an average of 320 acres per mile. The Park Service is using this flexibility to establish

a variable width river corridor in Yosemite Valley to avoid existing facilities and possible future development sites.

Boating - The draft plan unfairly blames calm water boating in Yosemite Valley (a very popular activity) for adversely impacting the Merced's riparian and aquatic habitats. The draft plan permits boating on a limited basis in the eastern portion of the Valley and discourages boating and prohibits boating-oriented access facilities on virtually every other segment of the Merced.

Cascade Dam - The draft plan fails to adopt as a goal the removal of this non-functioning dam on the Merced River, despite strong public support for its removal.

What You Can Do:

The Park Service is holding a series of public meetings throughout the state to solicit public input and is accepting written comments until March 15 (even if you submit comments at a later date the Park Service will notice them). Please attend one or more of the hearings and write a letter to the Park Service before the comment deadline. Be sure to include the following points in your comments:

... Specific standards and guidelines should be adopted in the plan to ensure protection of the Merced River's free-flowing character, outstanding values, and segment classifications.

... Road widening projects and other visitor facility improvements must be analyzed to avoid adverse impacts on the river's Wild & Scenic values.

... All water-contact recreation activities should be reasonably regulated to protect the river's riparian and aquatic ecosystems, not just boating.

... Boating should be considered a specific outstanding value of the Valley and Gorge segments of the river.

Friends of the River and American Whitewater are still reviewing and analyzing this large and complex plan. We have yet to take a position in support or opposition to any of the five alternatives in the draft plan. For the latest information, check out www.awa.org, www.friendsoftheriver.org, or call Jason Robertson at 301-589-9453 (Access@amwhitewater.org).

Send your written comments to Superintendent David A. Mihalic, Attn: Merced River Plan/EIS, P. O. Box 577, Yosemite National Park, CA 95389. In addition, please attend one or more of these public meetings.

Mysterious River Fairy Opens Access on Rancheria Creek (CA)

By Jason Robertson

"This run is one of the most beautiful and accessible wilderness runs in California. I want to thank all of the folks that worked on the access issues at the Mountain View road." - Vince Williams

In January, a group of boaters with the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers discovered that someone had mysteriously solved the ongoing access problems on Northern California's Rancheria Creek at Mountain View Road.

There is a new access site downstream of the bridge on river left that is comparable in difficulty to the old trail and much better than

river right upstream. Vince Williams reported that someone had constructed a 4-foot high post and barb wire fence that terminates 10-feet from the bridge, allowing plenty of room to access the river. Though a "No Trespassing" sign is posted on one end of the fence on a tree, the sign is angled toward the bridge, and is not perpendicular to the plane of the fence. This suggests that the fence was constructed with the intention of providing limited access to the river.

Furthermore, the whole area has been groomed and a notorious poison oak bush had been cut down to the roots and removed. Someone had also cleared a trail next to the old ladder on the bridge

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and placed a river gauge on the downstream, river-left, bridge piling. Whether the county or the landowner opened the 10-foot area for access to the gauge or for access to maintain the bridge pilings is uncertain; however, the result is that boaters apparently have a new access site. Vince concluded with this great advice: "Don't just take my word for it. This is the perfect winter warm-up run. Go see for yourself. But take a trash bag and police the area so we're perceived as caring about the place. Respect the place, the people, and the legends and you'll have a good day."

Nancy Dagle, Conservation Chair for the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter River Touring Section had contacted me several times in the past about this issue, so I asked her if she would describe the history of the problem. These are her notes:

In the winter of 1999, my husband and I were at the put-in to Rancheria Creek when a man approached on foot. He explained that he had just bought the property and that it was illegal for us to put-in. I then mentioned that I had discussed access at the bridge with the local sheriff and the sheriff's department didn't have a problem with our putting-in at the bridge. He backed off a bit, but stated that he was going to fence off the access. He did not want to be liable for boater injury. We had a polite discussion about the rights of boaters to use this access. He even helped us run our shuttle and let us put-in 100 yards downstream on his property where there was easier access.

I spread the word in the boating community about my encounter with the landowner and asked for feedback as to any access problems they might encounter. Word came back that the fence had already been erected. A man only known as Derek did a lot of research as to a possible easement at the bridge at the Mendocino County Court House and talked to people at the County about right-of-ways. Later, Randy Hodges reported in April of 1999 that someone had torn the fence down.

Derek and I continued calling the County Department Right of Way Department in an attempt to get them to establish an access point for boaters as well as their winter maintenance crews. Kevin Lewis, an American Whitewater board member provided insight into water law issues. Other people involved in this issue were Dave Tracy and Dan Dunlap.

I asked AW to join us in writing a letter to the landowner. Our letters went unanswered. I attempted legal help through the Sierra Club to no avail.

When I heard that Vince was leading a trip on Rancheria, I asked him to let me know if the fence was still up. Wonderfully, he reported that the trail had been opened!

Thanks to Nancy and everyone else who worked on this! We may not know who you are, but your work has not gone unnoticed.

Fee Demo Up For Review: Act Now!

By Michael Zierhut & Jason Robertson

The legislative battle against permanent authorization of the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program is heating up and will take place this year.

The program is set to expire in September of 2001, but the push to make it permanent will come this summer when the 2001 federal budget is passed. Now is the time to make a difference. This fight can't be left to someone else; it is time to act. Write or call Congress, write letters to the editor of your local paper, and get your friends to do the same.

Most importantly, we need as many senators and representatives as possible to be aware that this program is wrong and should not be continued.

Second, and of near equal importance, is for Congress to restore proper funding through tax dollars for our public lands. After all, there is a huge budget surplus, only a tiny fraction of which would shore up public lands budgets.

The congressionally mandated pay-to-play program imposes fees on kayakers, rafters, and canoeists as well as hikers, bikers, back-country skiers, and other noncommercial users of public lands.

In Washington, the politics surrounding the program have recently undergone a positive sea change. While the Clinton administration has expressed its unfortunate interest in continuing the program, Congressman Ralph Regula (R-Ohio), chair of the House Interior Appropriation Subcommittee, and Senator Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) the chair of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources which controls public lands legislation, have reportedly come out against making Fee Demo permanent. If you believe that free access to our public lands is an American right and privilege, you should take a minute to thank Congressman Regula and Senator Murkowski for dropping their support of Fee Demo. With your letters, it is more likely than ever that the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program will end in September of 2001 without a follow-up bill giving permanent authorization.

Fee Demo was designed as a ~~test~~ gauging the public ability and willingness to pay for visiting public resources. Dozens of studies have been commissioned examining the efficacy of the program and, as we enter its fourth year, we are finding a pervasive public disdain

for the program. *Though, people like the idea that fees are returned to the resource area from which they were collected, they don't like paying fees for lands and services that they feel are already covered through their taxes.*

The fall 1999 issues of two academic journals on recreation (*Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, & *Journal of Leisure Research*) were devoted to research on the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program. One group of activists in Southern California called "Keep the Sespe Wild" has compiled excerpts from many of the articles (<http://www.igc.org/sespewild/journals/Journals.html>).

Many independent studies have found strong evidence counter to the Forest Service's claims that the public supports Fee Demo. Check out this quote from the Forest Service's Recreation Fee Demonstration Program website: "Based on survey results, overall, the public accepts the fees (70 percent or more of the respondents generally favor the concept)." Now read a quote from one of the articles: "with a variety of communities of interest and place, Winter et. al. (*Journal of Leisure Research*) found a vast majority to express disapproval of fees and an additional minority who expressed only conditional acceptance." This discrepancy could likely be due to the methods used to determine support as suggested by another article: "a majority of fee evaluation efforts have tried to resolve this issue [of public opposition] by asking *only those who have paid a fee.*"

There are also increasing reports of the public being subjected to increased law enforcement under Fee Demo. In one recent case, Kevin Brady of Albuquerque, New Mexico was fined \$75 for refusing to pay a fee for walking on public lands. In standing up for his philosophical unwillingness to pay for access to public lands, Mr. Brady explained, "I feel strongly that this program is a fundamental shift in the management of public land and the relationship between the Forest Service and the taxpayers." Mr. Brady then described how frustrated he was that even his father who had paid taxes to support the Forest Service for 50 years, served in the CCC building, the George Washington National Forest in Virginia, and served in the Air Force during World War II, would have to pay the fee for a hike in the Sandia Forest.

Continued ➤

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In one recent editorial, the author wrote, *"The Forest Service should declare the fee program a failure, go back to Congress, and get its funding from the proper place—from federal income tax revenues."* We Agree — and we encourage everyone to repeat this message loudly and frequently so that Congress will finally accept what the public has been saying all along. Fee-demo is philosophi-

cally flawed and violates our public trust. No amount of fiddling can make something that is so fundamentally wrong - right.

American Whitewater will continue working on this issue with the Public Access Coalition (www.nofees.org) and will focus our energies on finding alternative means of funding access and conservation efforts on America's public lands and wildernesses.

Poked on the Moke (CA)

By Jason Robertson

Eric Arons and a handful of friends were ticketed for paddling the extended run on the Mokelumne in December.

After paddling down to the Middle Bar Road section, the group pulled out through a big undercut in the fence on river left. Arons reported that there was no signage on that side of the river. However, the group found that there were rangers waiting for them by their take-out vehicle on river right, and that the rangers had called for deputies from Amador and Calaveras Counties. The deputies cited the

group, but didn't list a court appearance date or list the violation—apparently trespassing. As the Journal is headed to press, the group is still waiting to receive their official citations in the mail.

The rangers indicated that the boaters were trespassing once they crossed a certain fuzzy point on the river. Arons reported that "they watched us from the 39 bridge, but claimed they didn't say anything because we hadn't crossed onto their land yet and therefore weren't in violation." Arons added, "It's probably not a good idea to try the extended Moke run right now. There's only one good rapid after the bridge take-out... although it's pretty good."

American Whitewater has offered to assist the boaters, and we will have more to report in the future.

Rock Creek Park (DC): Access Secured!

By Jason Robertson

Great news! In December, I wrote an article for the Jan/Feb Journal explaining that National Park Police had prevented two pairs of boaters from boating Rock Creek in downtown Washington, DC. The creek had been moderately swollen by Hurricane Dennis, and a handful of the officers were unfamiliar with the paddling community's long tradition of boating this Class III (IV+) creek after heavy rains.

In early January, Rock Creek Park Police called our offices and stated that they would not prevent kayakers or canoers from boating the creek in the future. This statement came in direct response to American Whitewater's discussions with the Park's administrators.

Police Lieutenant Kass reported that his research confirmed that there is a regulation banning recreation in the creek. However, the Lieutenant's research also confirmed that former Superintendent Shields waived this regulation for kayakers and canoers more than 20 years ago and that former Superintendent Ellerd later dropped all boater registration requirements in the mid-80s.

The Lieutenant added that Assistant Superintendent Cox, representing Superintendent Coleman, respected her predecessor's decisions and that experienced whitewater canoers and kayakers would be permitted to float the creek, regardless of water level, and that no special permits or permissions would be required.

The police cautioned that they are not trained in swift water rescue and are not lifeguards. He also explained that the D.C. Fire Department is responsible for all emergency rescues on the creek, but that the department's river rescue kit consists of a single foam donut. In other words, boaters must continue taking personal responsibility for their actions and personal rescues. Additionally, boaters must wear life jackets and helmets, and be aware of the unique hazards associated with running this urban creek, including strainers, coliform and street runoff, low bridges, and the 8-foot Class IV+ dam at Pierce Mill.

American Whitewater wishes to thank: Ron Knipping and Martin Radigan for reporting the access problems on Rock Creek; Lieutenant Kass and Assistant Superintendent Cox for their cooperation in resolving the problem, and working with us to address the issue; and Mac Thornton and Ed Gertler for sharing documents detailing the history of the 1980s access agreements with the Park's superintendents.

South Fork American (CA): Greenwood Creek Parking at Issue

By Mike Bean

On October 20th, the River Management Advisory Committee met in Coloma for its monthly meeting to discuss use on the South Fork American. The agenda included a discussion of issues regarding use of the BLM parcel for river access at Greenwood Creek. This parcel has seen an increase in use primarily by kayakers in the last two years, and shuttle parking on the shoulder of Highway 49 has become a safety concern. Proposed alternatives in the new management plan recommend leaving the Greenwood Creek area as undeveloped wilderness for the near term.

Jim Eicher from the BLM office in Folsom was asked what BLM was planning to do with managing the parcel. Jim replied that the BLM wouldn't do anything until the county updated the river management plan, and that BLM wanted guidance in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) from the county on whether to develop the Greenwood Creek parcel.

The BLM does not consider the present level of use of the Greenwood Creek parcel problematic; however the BLM foresees problems with projected increases in summer use. Jim suggested encouraging outfitters near Highway Rapid to allow private put-ins and take-outs through temporary special use permits to relieve the parking problem on Highway 49. Scott Underwood, representing Mother Lode, responded that it was not financially feasible for him to allow public access due to security and maintenance issues, especially during the off season. There is also a question of whether there is capacity for both commercial and private boaters at any of the current commercial launch areas near Highway Rapid during busy summer weekends.

The El Dorado County Parks and Recreation representative, Cravin Alcott, recommended that members not change their position on Greenwood Creek access until after the draft EIR was completed and under review fearing any changes would lead to further delays in completing the draft EIR. Carrying capacity studies are being developed to support the draft EIR; however these studies do not address a take-out or put-in near Greenwood Creek. The lack of this data may make changing the proposed alternative more difficult considering the need for additional data to support such a change.

There is also an ongoing lawsuit in which a resident alleges unfair business practices between the County and outfitters. Part of this lawsuit claims the County has been delaying the creation of a new

management plan which was supposed to be completed two years ago. So far the county has spent almost half a million dollars on the update process and completion is still months away.

A couple of citizens at the meeting complained about the traffic situation and recommended closing the area if nothing can be done. CalTrans could make improvements to the shoulders of the highway and place signs warning of the crossing pedestrians but this would require agreement from the county (local), BLM (federal), and CalTrans (state) on what should be done.

I'm not sure what will happen next. Everyone agrees that the traffic problem is real. Placing no parking signs on Highway 49 is the simple solution; hopefully it is not the only solution.

Dan Bailey's Adventure Slide Show Supports ACCESS (CO)

By Jason Robertson

Last year, after attending a Colorado Whitewater Association meeting, Jay Kenney and I drove up from Denver to an old theater in Fort Collins. We braved snow and freezing rain to attend a unique fund-raiser for the Access Fund and American Whitewater.

A talented young adventure photographer, Dan Bailey, hosted the show, featuring his dramatic shots of big wall climbs, creekin' in Colorado, and travelling around Tibet. The show also included several new whitewater videos, a huge raffle for American Whitewater and Access Fund members, an incredible sound show, and a sold-out crowd.

Here was a photographer I'd never met or heard of, who was just learning to boat, didn't know the meaning of "boof," and was from the Access Fund's backyard in Boulder, promoting American Whitewater's access program? It didn't add up.

What I discovered is that Dan has a wealth of energy and a huge circle of active climbing and boating friends. and that **he is dedicated to giving back to the communities that support him and his ability to enjoy the outdoors.** When Dan discovered kayaking, he also discovered American Whitewater and knew that he had to do something to support our access programs.

Despite the bad weather, the event was a great success; we got dozens of new members and raised several hundred dollars for access, which we've used successfully to improve access in Colorado.

This year, Dan's doing it again. He's been traveling around the world, improved his boating, gone climbing, and come home for the big show!

Check out his website at <http://dbailey.gitech.com> for more information, a preview of the show, and the final date for the event, which is presently scheduled for late April.

If you are interested in hosting and planning a similar event promoting American Whitewater's river access programs and activities in your neck of the woods, call Jason Robertson at 301-589-9453 or e-mail at Jason@amwhitewater.org



Ever Been Kicked out of the Pool?

By Jason Robertson

This is definitely one of the stranger access issues I've been asked about.

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits has been using a city pool in Columbus for roll practice for several years. Now the city wants to terminate the roll clinics, claiming that kayaks introduce pathogens into the water and therefore pose a health problem.

My first thought was that this could only happen in Ohio. My second thought was that this is bogus. My third thought was what about all the pathogens from kids peeing in the pool!

I've never heard any evidence that boaters add contaminants to pools during roll clinics or that this is a legitimate problem. In fact, speaking from four years of registering new chemicals and pesticides at the EPA for commercial pool use, and three years researching aquatic organisms at Carolina, I have to conclude that boats wouldn't

add pathogens to public pools.

Any critters on or in the boats would be the same ones that the chlorine is added in the pool to kill. Any pathogens that miraculously survived the trip to the pool in a boat, getting desiccated on top of the car, and getting soaked in the chlorine bath would be the same critters that entered the pool naturally through the air. Even protozoa and nematodes can be transported by wind.

A little common sense suggests calling their bluff or asking for access to a hose outside the facility to rinse sand off boats, just like hosing off before entering the pool. Boaters could also dilute one capful (about a teaspoon) of bleach to 2 gallons of water and slosh it around in their boats before entering the pool. Even though this is a dilute solution, anybody that has ever brewed beer knows that even a trace of chlorine will kill yeast as well as any other beasts in the Carboy jug. Drain the chlorinated water into the cockpit of the next boat and reuse the water.

Two cautionary notes: chlorine can burn skin, and chlorine may degrade the bulkhead foam, neoprene skirts, and airbags over time, especially if it is too concentrated. However, anybody that's ever taught a roll clinic knows pool water is going to damage gear over time anyway so I wouldn't worry about it too much, and just remember to rinse everything off after practice.

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There is evidence that motorboats have spread whirling disease between some lakes in the West. However, these were natural environments that weren't blessed with the potpourris of death in our pools. The greatest possibilities for introducing pathogens to pools are probably from viruses coming in off the shoes or feet of visitors, or algae, molds, and yeasts in the air.

Sounds to me like the managers in Columbus just don't want to provide access and are grasping for straws to kick boaters out. I wouldn't stand for it.

If you are aware of a trend or other cases in which kayakers are being kept out of pools because of the fear of contaminants, please report it to us at Access@amwhitewater.org

Colorado Access Issues.

By Ken Ransford

Twenty-seven access problems have been reported on at least 12 Colorado rivers in the past year; it's been a busy year! Two boaters were arrested for walking around a diversion dam on the Arkansas River near Buena Vista. Local police officers have threatened kayakers with arrest for criminal trespass on Bear Creek near Morrison. A landowner has strung barbed wire across the Colorado River near Granby, creating a life-threatening obstacle at high water. Landowners have felled trees and threatened to put fences across the river on the Lake Fork of the Gunnison to prevent boating. A landowner on the Roaring Fork River sprays kayakers with a hose if they stop in an eddy next to his property, claiming that Colorado law forbids any passage on streams coursing through private property. The Denver Water Board has closed access into and on Gross Reservoir, and out of its outlet stream on South Boulder Creek. The City of Longmont forbids boaters from crossing Buttonrock Reservoir, the take-out of a run on the North St. Vrain.

Eleven access problems have been reported on the South Fork of the South Platte near Denver. Many boaters have been threatened with arrest or arrested on the lower run above the confluence with the

North Fork where Two Forks Reservoir was planned. Two different groups have been arrested on the upper run out of Lake George: in both cases, AW President Jay Kenney got the arrest charges dropped. Several parties have been harassed when boating the Taylor River near Gunnison, and local landowners have sought the support of state legislators to pass a law restricting access. Landowners on the White River near Meeker have enlisted the aid of sheriffs who say they will arrest boaters for trespassing. Boaters have been arrested for trespass on the Yampa River near Steamboat Springs for kayaking. There hasn't been a single report of problems caused by boaters, but it goes without saying that boaters should be especially vigilant and courteous when boating in Colorado.

Note: Compilations of state access issues like this list for Colorado are very useful tools for American Whitewater when discussing the importance of clarifying strong navigability laws with legislators. This list details the problems, demonstrates widespread confusion within law enforcement circles over navigability rights, and provides real-world examples of the statewide relevancy of what appear to be "local" issues. **Please report access problems in your home state to us.** Either fill out the form below and mail it in, or log on to our website and fill out the form at: www.awa.org/awa/access/access_input_online.html

Renegade Kayakers Redux (CO)

By Jay Kenney

A low-head dam on the Arkansas River just downstream from the Buena Vista Baseball fields has created significant access conflicts for years for American Whitewater and the Colorado Whitewater Association (CWWA) members. The problem is that there is an irrigation headgate and ditch on river left, and the owners are concerned that boaters will damage them while scrambling around and portaging the drop. River right, the natural scouting stop, is no better since an unhappy landowner has heavily posted her property against trespassers. A boat chute on river right is runnable, but it terminates in a rock jumble requiring a sharp diagonal left move to avoid the rocks. Under every river safety protocol, boaters should scout or portage this obstacle, but the trespass issues have historically made scouting as dicey as running the river. Now, a new criminal case in Chaffee County Court will resolve boaters' rights to scout and portage the low-head dam on river right. CWWA and American Whitewater expect a favorable result.

In late June, 1999, two kayakers launched at Railroad Bridge to run the Fractions and Frog Rock run on the Arkansas River near Buena Vista. The water level was medium high that day, about 2,300 cfs. They planned to paddle past the now traditional take-out in Buena Vista because they intended to meet several friends at Johnson's Village for a late afternoon Milk Run. Both were relatively experienced—one had been a Class V boater in years past, but had not paddled much in the last five years. The other was an advanced

intermediate, more than capable of negotiating the natural rapids, but concerned about the low-head dam and boat chute. After discussion, they agreed to scout the dam on river right. Although concerned about possible trespass issues, they decided that scouting at or near river level might not be trespassing.

When they came to the dam, they eddied out on river right and began scouting close to the river's edge. Sadly, the landowner had been watching intently with a pair of binoculars. She immediately phoned the Chaffee County Sheriffs Department and a deputy responded within minutes. The deputy wrote up a summons for the pair of kayakers, escorted them off the property, and summoned an AHRA (Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area) employee to remove the offending kayaks. The summons, for third degree criminal trespass, was premised upon the notion that a streamside landowner owns to the middle of the channel—in technical terms to the middle of the *thalweg* (the deepest part of the stream).

The kayakers called the AW/CWWA Stream Team for help. With the volunteer assistance of Patrick Tooley, Esq., the team discovered an anomaly in the landowner's deed. A close examination of the plat map (prepared by the original developer) revealed that the landowner does not own to the center of the Arkansas River. Rather, her property line stops about 45 feet from the center of the river. Equally important, beyond the landowner's property, is a streamside (depending on water level) parcel dedicated to access and fishing. Armed with this important information, the Stream Team negotiated dismissal of all the criminal charges, asserting that the kayakers never set foot on the landowner's property.

As a result of this case, the AHRA Management team has begun surveying the disputed property accurately (with a volunteer CWWA member, Paul Grabowski) and is in the process of negotiating a permanent easement for scouting and portaging.

Other New Faces

American Whitewater hires new Executive Assistant

Just a word to all American Whitewater members to announce my good fortune in joining the staff of our organization as Executive Assistant to Rich Bowers, Executive Director. My involvement with whitewater began around 1975 the first time I took a yellow and blue raft bought at an army surplus down an unusual set of rapids called the Seine River Diversion just outside of Atikokan, Ontario. I have been hooked ever since and owe a lot to my friends at the Chicago Whitewater Association for introducing me to hard boating and thanks to John Reagan for his plug of that dedicated bunch. Even before I ever sat in a kayak however, I became a member of what was then the American Rivers Conservation Council, Ocoee River Task Force and Friends of the Gauley. As those grass-roots efforts paid off, our sport grew and I came to recognize American Whitewater as our primary voice in both conservation and access. It is heartening to be able to see firsthand the talent and dedication of the folks here and their nationwide focus. The greatest residual benefit of my involvement in this sport has been getting to know the incredible individuals it seems to attract.

SYOTR, Nick Lipkowski
Nick can be reached at (301) 589-9453 or by email at Nick@amwhitewater.org



Nick Lipkowski and Nancy Galloway

American Whitewater hires new Development Director

We are pleased to introduce our new Development Director, **Nancy Galloway**, who joined the staff of American Whitewater in January and is located in the Silver Spring, Maryland office. Nancy has previously been the Major Gifts Officer for the Washington, D.C.-based consumer advocacy organization, Public Citizen, and Executive Director of United Way in Moscow, Russia.

"I'm delighted to be a part of American Whitewater," she said, "and look forward to getting to know our supporters. Whitewater resources are under constant threat, and we need to work together to promote safety, protect our access, and increase and restore the number of rivers available to paddlers and others."

"I believe that conservation and access go hand-in-hand, says Galloway, "without clean water and adequate river flows, we can't have a quality whitewater experience."

"Over the next year, I will be building on the solid foundation that's been put in place by Rich Bowers, the board of directors and AW staff, and looking for additional support from foundations, corporations, and new members. I hope to have your help in these endeavors, so that we can all have more great days on the river!" Nancy can be reached at (301) 589-9453 or by e-mail at Nancy@amwhitewater.org

Laura Wittman, Access Assistant

Laura is not a new employee; she has been working part-time for over a year with Jason Robertson to keep river access open to boaters. However, she hasn't been highlighted in the Journal to date, and we thought we'd introduce her to our members. Chances are you'll be talking with Laura if you call our office.

Laura has been hard at work compiling permit information on rivers across the nation, researching access problems (like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and the Chattooga), and just lately started to pull together safety and accident information that often leads to access closures and restrictions.

When not working for American Whitewater, Laura is seeking an advanced degree at the University of Maryland.

Paddlers Now Have Easier Access to Congress

Note: American Whitewater and the American Canoe Association (ACA) work together on dozens of major issues with national importance every year. These issues range from outfitter policy legislation to limiting jet skis in the national parks. Now, the ACA has created an exciting new tool that will help empower the entire boating community. The first issue this tool is being used on is writing letters about improving water quality on the Potomac River.

Paddlers will now have easier access to their representatives in Congress. *ACA Action Net* is a new feature on the ACA web site (www.acanet.org) that allows paddlers to e-mail, fax, or mail letters to Congress with the click of a button. This state-of-the-art advocacy technology is the same that is now being used by powerful groups like the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the National Rifle Association (NRA).

Equally-easy access to federal agencies is provided in conjunction with alerts on key issues to facilitate public comment from the paddlesports community. The site allows for ZIP code searches to access one's elected representatives and to find contact information for local media outlets. The power of *ACA Action Net* is also being made available to club and other paddling-related web sites by virtue of a ZIP-code search "sticker" that can be placed on any site.

Issue alerts that are featured on *ACA Action Net* will have an automatic letter writing function attached with pre-written language that can be customized by anyone choosing to send a letter

from the site. A paddler can write a unique letter to his Congressman or Senator in a matter of minutes and send it out (via e-mail or fax) without ever leaving his or her computer. The option also exists to print the letters and mail them.

Other features of *ACA Action Net* include a "Today In Congress" ticker, campaign and election updates, candidate profiles, and access to Federal Election Commission report information. The service will expand to include access to state-level elected representatives as funding and resources permit.

ACA Action Net is part of a larger ACA effort to increase the influence of paddlers on public policy. The role out of its Internet component is in conjunction with the unveiling of the completely redesigned and improved ACA web site. For more information contact David Jenkins, Director of Conservation and Public Policy for the ACA, at (703) 451-0141 ext. 20, or go online and visit WWW.ACANET.ORG

Colorado leads the nation in access problems

By Ken Ransford
AW Board of Directors

American Whitewater keeps a database of river access problems in order to monitor difficulties which boaters encounter when they are on the river or use historic put-ins or take-outs. Sixty-eight river access problems have been reported nationwide over the past 20 months, and 42%, or 29, have been in Colorado. Although the South Platte and Taylor are the most reported rivers, access is a broad problem throughout Colorado, and reports have been received for 12 rivers in every major watershed in the state. Several boaters have been arrested in Colorado, but so far all criminal charges have ultimately been dropped. The *Crested Butte Chronicle* and *Pilot* reported on December 3, 1999 that legislators are meeting with landowners to discuss a new state law which could restrict boating on any river with private land ownership.

Washington is the next most reported state, with eight rivers reported, mostly due to government and logging company river closures. Three river access problems have been reported in North Carolina—Raven Creek, the Rocky Broad River, and the Narrows of the Green—and three reports have also been received for both Wisconsin and Texas. Access law recently received a major setback in Texas when the Texas Supreme Court held that a landowner owned the bed and banks of a river and could therefore prevent access to boaters.

Perhaps the most ominous development is the lawsuit recently brought by James Watt's organization, the Mountain States Legal Foundation, to overturn Montana's access-favorable law. Montana has the most progressive access law in the West, the result of a statutory change in the 1980s. It holds that all surface waters that are capable of recreational use may be used by the public, regardless of who owns the land underlying the waters. The public also has the right to use the bed and banks up to the high-water mark. This Montana law still stands, but it's under attack. Boaters with support from American Whitewater hoped to pass similar legislation in 1996 in Colorado, but that bill failed when rural legislators opposed it.

Surprisingly, government agencies are responsible for more river access problems than private landowners. Federal, state, and local governments have attempted to restrict boating on 11 rivers, while landowners have attempted to restrict access on 10 rivers. American Whitewater has been working for years to open access to rivers in Yellowstone National Park, a case that highlights access problems caused by government agencies.

American Whitewater's access policy is that, once on the river, boaters have the right to float and portage when necessary. Boaters do not have the right to trespass across private property to reach rivers, and should carefully respect private property and leave as minimal an impact as possible.

Can any trends be discerned? Access problems seem to be mounting, especially in the West, where urbanites are populating rural areas and questioning historical land and water use patterns. Boating has exploded, especially on smaller rivers in watersheds that were once remote. As river use increases, access problems will likely mount as well. The take-out at Mazomanie on the lower Wisconsin River was recently closed by the Department of Natural Resources because of nudity. Although it is often the case that non-boaters cause the "problems" reported on rivers like the Lower Wisconsin, the solutions can severely restrict boating.

American Whitewater cannot directly resolve all local access problems, which are being reported at a rate of more than three per month, but we will help where we can. Local boaters must take the lead in resolving local access problems. Try to meet with landowners to assuage their concerns, which may be as simple as signing their property to prevent trespass or parking problems. Many landowners are concerned that they can be sued if a boater is injured on their property. In fact, recreational use statutes have been passed in nearly every state which hold that landowners are not responsible if a boater is hurt while recreating on their property.

At a minimum, show the utmost respect for private property rights and honor AW's access policy. It helps to be informed of the law and to keep your cool, since sheriffs and legislators listen to local landowners first. American Whitewater has compiled a report on access laws and cases in every state; contact American Whitewater's full-time Access Director Jason Robertson at jason@amwhitewater.org for the law in your state. American Whitewater can always use help. If you are an attorney, can you serve as a resource when access problems arise in your state? Reports of problems have now been received for 19 states, demonstrating the need for legal expertise across the country. If you are arrested, American Whitewater will try to assist you with legal help when possible.

As boating increases, local economies also benefit. Consider doing a recreation economic study to determine the value that boating brings to your area. See the November-December 1998 AW Journal for an article on how to determine economic benefits that boating brings to your community. As Ric Alesch, American Whitewater President from 1994 to 1999 says, "Access is won in small steps." Boaters need to be more vigilant than ever about access problems, since these problems are likely to get worse. And please keep the reports coming. If access problems are getting worse, our best defense is good information about just how widespread the problems are.

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you can afford
to lose any more
brain cells.



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Trouble on the Waters

If you had trouble getting to the river, let us know. Use this form to report access problems so that AW can convince legislators and government authorities where and when river access is a problem. If you have met an irate landowner, noticed signs forbidding access, or were stopped by a landowner, barbed wire fence or a locked gate, tell us about it on this form. If several boaters are arrested or involved, only 1 form should be filled out per incident naming a boater available for future contact.

River _____ State _____

Date of incident _____

Access code categories: List below or circle the categories, multiple categories are ok.

Brief description of incident:

Boater contact _____
Address _____
City etc. _____
Phone _____
email _____

Landowner/Agency/Sheriff contact (if known)

Name _____
Address _____
City etc. _____
Phone _____
email _____

1. Trespass. Ticket, warning or arrest for:
 - 1.1.0 Trespass on private property
 - 1.2.0 Trespass on public property
 - 1.3.0 Criminal trespass arrest
 - 1.4.0 Civil trespass lawsuit

2. Public Access Closure
 - 2.1.0 Denied by federal law
 - 2.1.1 Denied by BLM
 - 2.1.2 Denied by Forest Service
 - 2.1.3 Denied by Nat'l Park Service
 - 2.2.0 Denied by state
 - 2.3.0 Denied by local authority

3. Injury from man-made obstacles
 - 3.1.0 Barbed wire or fence
 - 3.2.0 Low head dam

4. Obstacles running river, scouting or portaging
 - 4.1.0 Fence or chain on land blocking access
 - 4.2.0 Fence, wire, or tree on river blocking access
 - 4.3.0 Warning of no trespassing or posted sign
 - 4.4.0 Vehicle towed, ticketed, or vandalized
 - 4.5.0 Threats or acts of violence

Closures: Rivers closed that were once open

- 5.1.0 Closed by private landowner
- 5.2.0 Closed by government agency
- 5.2.1 Federal
- 5.2.2 State
- 5.2.3 Local
- 5.3.0 High water closure

6. New access fees

- 6.1.0 Charged by private landowner
- 6.2.0 Charged by government agency
- 6.2.1 Federal
- 6.2.2 State
- 6.2.3 Local

7. Dam controlled rivers

- 7.1.0 Water turned off
- 7.2.0 Inconsistent flow: too much/too little
- 7.3.0 No notice of releases

8. Lawsuits and legislation

- 8.1.1 New legislation to block river access.
- 8.1.2 Lawsuits to block access.
- 8.2.1 New legislation to enable river access.
- 8.2.2 Lawsuits to enable access.

Send to Ken Ransford, 475 Sierra Vista, Carbondale, CO 81623, 970-963-6800, FAX 970-963-6700. ransford@csn.net

Access is a constant struggle. The AW Access Committee needs your help.

EventsCentral

By Jayne H. Abbot, Events Manager

Lots of happenings in the world of whitewater events, from changes to the OutdoorPlay.com Freestyle Championship Series, to the start of a festival highlighting the magnificent recreational features of the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. There's sure to be something for everyone this season. Check the schedule in this issue for dates and contact information on an event near you, and visit our web sites often at www.awa.org and www.nowr.org for the most up-to-date information.

A spring full of American Whitewater Events

Tennessee Paddle 2k, April 7-9:

The ambitious organizers of this event were off and running shortly after contacting the events office with news of their plans to host an event on the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. A web site was up before long (www.tennesseepaddle.com) and a troupe of eager volunteers were mobilized. Town officials were courted and soon became enthusiastic supporters. It's sure to be a weekend filled with new friends and lots of fun. The event will help to raise funds for the Obed Wild and Scenic River watershed management program, and awareness of the conservation and access issues in this area. There will be lots of "events" taking place both on and off the water, and a great party Saturday evening. Partners in the event organization include American Whitewater, Chota Canoe Club, East Tennessee Whitewater Club, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning, the University of Tennessee Canoe and Hiking Club, and the Obed Wild and Scenic River Park.

Stonev Creek Rendezvous, April

8-9: Successful in it's first year, this event is back, bigger and better than ever. Plan to run some of the great rivers in this area and relax with good friends and entertainment in the evening.

3rd Annual French Broad River Festival, May 5-6:

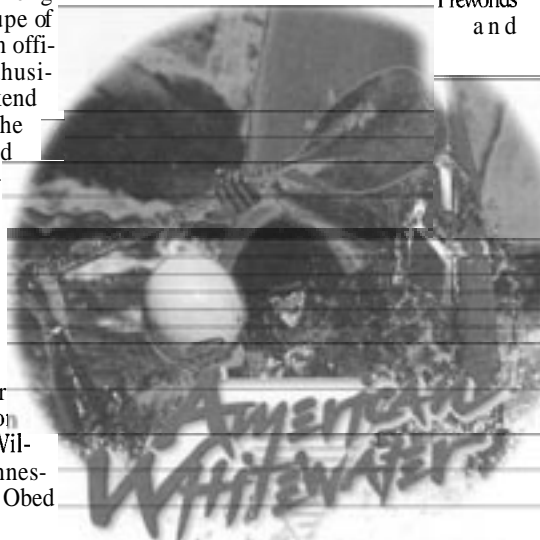
Back for it's third year, the French Broad River Festival is sure to keep the beat. As in the past, the event focuses on fun-filled competitions during the day (raft race and downriver kayak race) and bands playing throughout the evening on the banks of the French Broad River in Hot Springs, NC (yep, real hot springs to soak your bones in also!)

OutdoorPlay.com Freestyle Championship Series Update

After it was announced in January that the 2000 Preworld Championship would be held in Sorte, Spain on June 28-July 2, the Championship was changed from a five event series to a three event series to accommodate travel schedules for this important international event. Having a major competition in the midst of the Championship Series created a significant conflict for the competitors.

Among the top priorities of the series is developing the sport and the participants. Consequently, the Animas River Days and the Subaru Gorge Games were removed from the Series to eliminate the scheduling conflict and maintain the integrity of the overall Series title. That is, all participants will have a fair shot

at both the
Preworlds
and



the Outdoorplay.com Freestyle Championship Series title. Note, Animas River Days and the Gorge Games will remain as NOWR 2000 RiversLiv Series events. Gorge Games will still have a cash purse of \$5,000 for the Pro competitors. Please see the schedule in this issue for dates on these events.

We hope you join us in supporting the professional athletes. Modifying the Series schedule is our collective way of evidencing that support, while preserving the integrity of the Series title.

USFKA chooses the Ocoee Rodeo as site of 2000 Freestyle Team Trials

American Whitewater's Ocoee Rodeo, May 19-21, has been chosen by the U.S. Freestyle Kayak Association (USFKA) as the qualifying event for the U.S. Team who will compete at the Preworld's in Sorte, Spain this summer. In the past, there was no need to select a team for Preworld competition because, well, it was the Preworlds, a warm up for the following years World competition. However, with the tremendous growth of the sport, success of the 1999 Worlds, and the close proximity of Spain to Europe competitors, the Preworld organizers decided it was wise to limit the number of competitors each country could send, or contend with far too many competitors than could be managed at a single event. This late-breaking decision required the USFKA to determine qualifications for a team, and do it in less than six months time.

While the Ocoee feature is not "the best" rodeo hole in the country, American Whitewater can offer a strong infrastructure to run a quality Team Trials event. We are working with the USFKA and Forest Service on possible modifications that would enhance the competition.

The USFKA's mission is to promote, develop, and enhance the sport of freestyle kayaking by facilitating the creation of whitewater courses, evolving judging and scoring in conjunction with NOWR and the International Freestyle Committee (IFC), and by sanctioning events with the interests of athletes in mind.

Pro Registration

Notice to all Pro athletes, remember that you must qualify and be registered with NOWR to compete as a Pro at any and all events on the NOWR circuit in 2000. Be sure to check the NOWR web site or contact the Events Office at 828-645-5299 for more information. You must be registered by March 31, 2000 for standard fee. Late registration fee is significantly higher, with a final registration deadline of May 1, 2000.

Team USA Sweeps World Freestyle Championship

In a stunning group victory, Team USA took first place in the team competition in all seven classes at the worlds. That's right, the team placed first in Sr. K-1 Men, Sr. K-1 Women, Jr. K-1 Men, Sr. C-1 Men, Sr. OC-1 Men, Squirt K-1 Men, and Squirt K-1 Women. Eric Southwick took the highly coveted first place in the K-1 Men's division, taking the title of World Champion for the next two years. See Eric's interview with OutdoorPlay.com in this issue for Eric's perspective on the competition. Our Junior men whipped up a second and third place win (Brad Ludden and Ethan Winger respectively), and U.S. Team members took first in both OC-1, Eli Helbert, and Squirt K-1, Andy Bedingfield. The U.S. women were also a force to be reckoned with as Brooke Winger took first place in Squirt K-1 Women and third in K-1 Women.

Congratulations to all members of Team USA 1999!

Sr. K-1 Men

- | | | |
|----|----------------|-----|
| 1. | Eric Southwick | USA |
| 2. | Corran Addison | RSA |
| 3. | Steve Fisher | RSA |

Sr. K-1 Women

- | | | |
|----|---------------|-----|
| 1. | Deb Pinniger | GBR |
| 2. | Julie Dion | CAN |
| 3. | Brooke Winger | USA |

Jr. K-1 Men

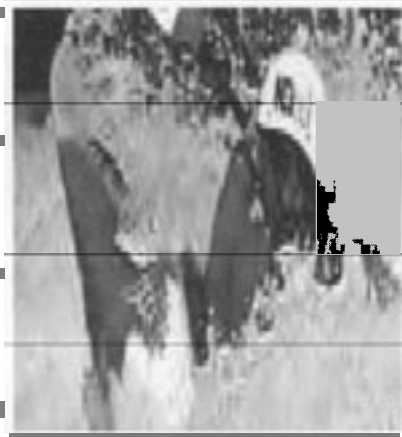
- | | | |
|----|---------------|-----|
| 1. | Mark Birkbeck | GBR |
| 2. | Brad Ludden | USA |
| 3. | Ethan Winger | USA |

Sr. C-1 Men

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Paul "Cheesy" Robertson | GBR |
| 2. | Andy Nicholl | GBR |
| 3. | Cedric Courbis | FRA |

Sr. OC-1 Men

- | | | |
|----|--------------|-----|
| 1. | Eli Helbert | USA |
| 2. | Paul Eames | NZL |
| 3. | Brian Miller | USA |



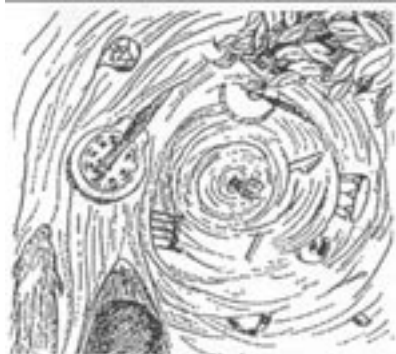
Janya Shuman Photo

Squirt K-1 Men

- | | | |
|----|------------------|-----|
| 1. | Andy Bedingfield | USA |
| 2. | Clay Wright | USA |
| 3. | Brendan Mark | CAN |

Squirt K-1 Women

- | | | |
|----|----------------|-----|
| 1. | Brooke Winger | USA |
| 2. | Louise Wigmore | GBR |
| 3. | Motoko Ishida | JPN |



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After the Worlds: A Look Ahead

By Risa Shimoda Callaway



Allen Braswell, 2-time C1 World Champion, shredding. Photo by Peter Kennedy.



Representatives from the Maori people welcome competitors and team managers



It would be easy to mistake the scene, near Taupo, for a rodeo event in the states.

As whitewater rodeos proliferate, freestyle competition is turning the page on athletic expectation and sponsorship. The World Freestyle Championships, conducted December 1-5, 1999 in Taupo, New Zealand, presented a clear 'state of the union message' to the worldwide whitewater paddling community. The sport is, despite its 'boutique' status, growing in popularity all over the world. This growth has upped the ante, increasing the demands on:

- 1) the quality of competitive venues, referenced by
 - how good (or not) the river features are at the competitive venues
 - the consistency and reliability of the judges and scoring system
- 2) the products used for competition (boats, paddles, etc.)
- 3) corporate sponsorship
- 4) the media, and the way in which paddlers and event organizers communicate news to their audience.

Here are reflections on the Worlds from several of the top competitors in the sport. They also share a few thoughts on Freestyle 2000 as they look to the future.

Meet Clay Wright, Allen Braswell, and Jimmy Blakeney. Allen is a veteran of the Worlds scene, with two C1 World Championship First Place ribbons on his mantel. Clay took Gold in the Squirt Class in 1997 and came home from New Zealand with a Silver medal. Jimmy is Chair of the U.S. Freestyle Kayaking Association and Bronze Medalist in the 1999 North American Cup Series.



Allen Braswell

Clay Wright

Jimmy Blakeney

What made the World Freestyle Championships significant?

CW The top kayakers were there, with the best skills. You could tell where the sport is headed.

How has the event changed since the previous events?

AB The increase in the number of paddlers competing and the changes in equipment. Skills have grown. Everything is more professional. It is still hard to find sponsorship, though.

JB Judging has evolved, exposing who really has skills. Now you can't just be a hacker.

What did you learn from having been to the Worlds?

JB Our judging system works, even as it evolved. You can tell who has the most experience. Also, the strength of the U.S. Team was awesome. We may not have had the top place in each class, but we had the best 19 out of any 2 paddlers there.

CW Initially I was bummed about just squirting. Once we got there, Dan Gavere and I realized the other competitors were serious - and really good paddlers! We didn't want to lose, so we decided we needed to 'be here, now.' As soon as I made that mental switch, it was easier NOT to let the pressure get in the way and I was able to rise to the occasion.



Shane Benedict, Chief judge for the worlds, gives competitors the low-down on format.



Jimmy Blakeney (second from left) and Ken Whiting (arms crossed) 1995 K-1 Men's Champ, check practice runs.

JB It was definitely frustrating not to be able to compete...but judging was good experience

What was surprising, or particularly interesting?

AB How the paddlers finished: the effect of the pressure of competition and the surge of the wave.

JB Seeing how many factors there are that affect performances. There was a lot of behind-the-scenes pressure. It's who's the best on that day.

CW How high the skill level demonstrated how popular the sport has become.

JB The women! Some could have made the first cut in the Men's competition.

CW The format and how it all played out was incredible - seeding, etc. In the K1 Mens Finals Corran had the perfect ride, then Wick did the same thing and added a split.

AB I was amazed I didn't get the flu [as did several of the competitors, including World Champion Eric Southwick, during the week prior to the event]. It was also interesting to see all the effort that everyone put into getting there and getting around once they arrived in New Zealand: raising money, buying carack.

How will team selection and the timing of the Pre-Worlds effect your plan for the year's competitive schedule?

CW It definitely breaks up the loop.

What are your plans for competition this year? So many events!

CW Paddlers are going to go where there's 1) money, and 2) there's other good paddling nearby.

What is your response to the Outdoorplay.com sponsorship?

AB It has become the driving force, taking over the sport.

JB It's the precursor of things to come...

CW Now that sponsorship is happening, it is time for athletes to make a showcase of our sport.

How will team selection and the timing of the Pre-Worlds effect your plan for the year's competitive schedule?

CW It definitely breaks up the loop.

What are other significant events that will influence your plans?

JB The Triple Crown [April, 2000]. The



Tracy Clapp, left and Eric Southwick K-1 Men's Champion for '99, eagerly try on team garb provided by Bula and Lotus, Five-ten, and Freestyle.

**World Freestyle Championship
December, 1999
Results Next page**

Team USA Cahalk talk, led by team Manager, Christie Dobson
Photo by Dan Gavere.



World Freestyle Championship - December, 1999

Results

Mens OC

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1 ELI HELBERT | (USA) SAVAGE |
| 2 PAUL EAMES | (NZL) SAVAGE |
| 3 BRIAN MILLER | (USA) SAVAGE |
| 4 CHRIS HARRISON | (GBR) SAVAGE |
| 5 JAMES WEIR | (GBR) SAVAGE |

JR MEN K1

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 MARK BIRBECK | (GBR) Dagger-Centrifuge |
| 2 BRAD LUDDEN | (USA) Riot-Slice |
| 3 ETHAN WINGER | (USA) Perception-Arc |
| 4 STUART MOUNSEY | (CAN) WS-Forplay |
| 5 ANDREW SPINO-SMITH | (USA) Riot-Slice |

MENS C1

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Paul "cheesy" Robertson | (GBR) Pyranha Inazone |
| 2 Andy Nicholl | (GBR) Riot-Slice |
| 3 Cedric Courbis | (FRA) Dagger-Centrifuge |
| 4 Allen Braswell | (USA) Perception-Arc |
| 5 Brian Miller | (USA) Pyranha-Inazone |

WOMENS K1

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Debs Pinniger | (GBR) WS-X |
| 2 Julie Dion | (CAN) WS-XXX |
| 3 Brooke Winger | (USA) WS-Forplay |
| 4 Aleta Miller | (USA) Dagger-Centrifuge |
| 5 Niki Kelly | (NZL) Eskimo-Machine |

MENS K1

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 ERIC SOUTHWICK | (USA) WS-FORPLAY |
| 2 CORRAN ADDISON | (RSA) RIOT-SLICE |
| 3 STEVE FISCHER | (RSA) RIOT-SLICE |
| 4 RUSTY SAGE | (USA) WS-FORPLAY |
| 5 ALEX NICKS | (GBR) NECKY-PYRO |

MENS SQUIRT

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------|
| 1 ANDY BEDDINGFIELD(USA) | (USA) |
| 2 CLAY WRIGHT | (CAN) |
| 3 BRENDAN MARK | (USA) |
| 4 TRACEY CLAPP | (USA) |
| 5 DAN GAVERE | |

WOMENS SQUIRT

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| 1 BROOKE WINGER | (USA) |
| 2 LOUISE WIGMORE | (UK) |
| 3 MODICO TANAKA | (JAPAN) |
| 4 RISA SHIMODA CALLAWAY | (USA) |

1999 U.S. Freestyle Kayaking Team

Men's K-1

Eric Jackson
Keith Liles
Dave Persolja
Brandon Knapp
Javid Grubbs

Men's K-1 continued

Rusty Sage
Taylor Robertson
Eric Southwick

K-1 Women

Jamie Coooper
Kelly Murphy
Aleta Miller
Brooke Winger
Deb Ruehle
Erica Mitchell

K-1 Junior

Nathan McDade
Brad Ludden
Andrew Spino-Smith
Ethan Winger
William Crenshaw

C-1 Men

Eric Jackson
Brian Miller
Chris Manderson
Harry Fields

Allen Braswell
Barry Kennon

OC-1

Tom Fredricks
Eli Helbert
Chip Hogan
Brian Miller

Squirt Men

Clay Wright
Dan Gavere
Eric Zitzow
Andy Beddingfield
Tracy Clapp

Squirt Women

Brooke Winger
Deb Ruehle
Tracy Hines
Kim Jordan
Susan Wilson
Alt: Risa Shimoda Callaway

Team Manager:

Christie Dobson

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Meet Eric 'Wick' Southwick

2000 Freestyle Champion

Interview by Outdoorplay.com
Photos by Tanya Shuman



At age 24, you are the new Freestyle World Champion! Congratulations!
Thanks.

Give us the play-by-play. How did you win it?

Well, the finals were tough. Sudden Death is what they call the format. Each paddler takes one ride and the worst ride is eliminated. 5 to 4, 4 to 3, 3 to 2, 2 to 1.

Like musical chairs?

Yep, but psychologically grueling. Alex Nicks went first and flushed. This took a lot of stress off as I now didn't have to do much to advance. Steve Fisher went next and ripped. All I had to do was a spin and a shuvit. My plan was to do only that and learn the wave a little more for the next round... conserve the energy. I conserved energy all right! On my ride, I only did a spin and a shuvit and a big fat wash. It was all I needed to advance to the Final 4.

Did that make you a bit nervous going into the next round?

I knew I had to step up to the plate and turn on the heat. I had a fantastic ride, but then Steve Fisher had one as well. He left the battle for the 3rd spot to Rusty Sage and Corran Addison. Both had equally good rides but came off the wave early.

Did you think you had made it at that point?

Sitting in the eddy, we didn't know who was going to be knocked out - Corran or Rusty. The announcer called Corran's name to be sent out and Rusty's heart sailed. You could see total disappointment in Corran's face.

Bummer!

Yeah, but then suddenly the announcer realized he made a mistake. Rusty was out and Corran was in the Final 3!

Ouch. That hurts.

Yeah, it was sweet for Corran though. Total change of emotions for both competitors. I could relate from my experience at U.S. Team Trials.

of the eddy, he stuck a shuvit entry move, which was risky but a time saver for variety.

Corran likes to take risks!

(laughs) He blunted left, and then right, and that racked up his variety score. He stuck a clean spin.

No pressure now, right Wick?

Well, I knew the ride I had before wouldn't be enough. Corran's clean spin was a super point scorer.

How do you beat a ride like that when the pressure is on?

Instead of trying a clean spin, I thought I would try and stick a split at the end of my ride.



We were the final 3, Corran went first. He threw his sickest ride yet. He didn't stop for the full 30 seconds. Steve Fisher went next and did the same.

Were you nervous at this point? Everybody's watching and the other two had wicked rides!

Yeah, I had two impressive and difficult rides to beat. The pressure was on me. No time to be conservative, I threw 6 vertical ends at the last 6 seconds. Fisher walked with the Bronze.

So it came down to you and Corran in the final round for the World Champion Title.

Corran went first and pulled a full 30-second ride with all the glitz and glamour. Coming out

Nice! (Talk about risks) Guess it was "now or never" time huh?

A split has a higher variety score and technical score. My plan was to let it all hang out.

It obviously worked. You are the World Champ now!

It did work. Coming onto the wave, I stuck every move, but not without having to pull all that I had left in me. When the 10-second buzzer went off, I set up for the left hand cartwheels - 1, 2, 3, 4 look for the timely placement to stick the split, and then SPLIT!!! I couldn't believe it. I had done the split a second before the buzzer.



Of course, wasn't that the plan?

Yes it was, and the plan worked, I realized that my dream had come true. I was the new World Champion.

Right on. How was the overall organization at the event?

For as many obstacles as the organizers had to overcome at the last minute, the competition went reasonably smooth. The judging was some of the best that I have ever seen (led by Shane Benedict). There was a good vibe surrounding the crowd and the competitors.

Athletes didn't get much practice time. What was the deal with the water down there?

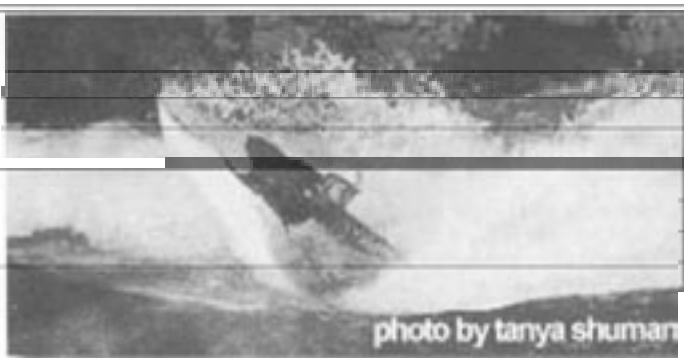
The government owned power company, (Sic), had guaranteed water release during and prior to the Worlds Competition. Unfortunately between the time of the World's bid and the actual Worlds Competition, the power company was sold to the private sector and the bottom line was dollars, not the competition.

Did the bad water situation in New Zealand hurt you in the competition?

This probably helped me in the end. The river would pulse four times a day. I was used to the unpredictable wave. You had to be super aggressive, but willing to wait when it wasn't there. The pile on the wave would come and go making moves very tricky and difficult.

Meet Eric 'Wick' Southwick

The lack of water must have been a difficult situation for the event organizers to deal with. What is being done to ensure this doesn't happen at the next Worlds?
Down in NZ, the Worlds Committee met to discuss the future of our sport and the site for the 2001 World Championships.



What are the single biggest factors that need to be addressed in order for Freestyle Kayaking to make it to the next level?
First, the organization that governs the sport needs to evolve.

So if everyone were OK with it, you'd support a title sponsor like Marlboro?
Yes. The reason I would do this is because even though I don't smoke, I think people should have the right to choose.

How about Playboy magazine, with the contingency that everyone had to put a bunny on their boat?
(Laughs) Again it would depend on what my current sponsors thought.

So where will the next World Championships be?
A decision was made to hold the event in Spain. There is a written contract guaranteeing water and media for the event. The site is being constructed to the specifications of the Worlds Committee. Therefore, competitors have the perfect hole for performance.

Airplane tickets to Spain aren't cheap. Traveling to event after event must be an expensive

lifestyle. How do you do it?
I live on my credit cards when sponsor's money runs out. HA HA (Laughs) No really though, my family has been very supportive, and they've really helped make my dream come true. Thanks Mom, Dad, and Grandma "you kick ass!"

What about your sponsors? Who are they?
Wave Sport, NET-tel, Bula and Shaman Products are my premier sponsors. They support me financially. Lightning and Orosi help, along with Freestyle Watches, Five-Ten & Lotus Designs.

Any special thanks?
Jim Kenefick, the owner of NET-tel Communications, has been a great supporter. He always encouraged me to follow my dreams. He told me, "Do what you love and the money will follow." I don't know about the money part but I know I will always be rich in love and life.

The future on the sport seems to be the topic on the year. Many people feel that freestyle kayaking is on the precipice of exploding, similar to what snowboarding did 5 years ago. Yeah, you hear that a lot.

Do you think the sport is poised to deal with the growth it is currently experiencing?
The sport is changing very rapidly and when anything grows fast you experience growing pains. I think that we will be able to meet the demands of the future as we sail into the new millennium.

You are an optimist Wick. With huge growth come equally huge challenges and responsibilities. Who do you think will address these challenges as we move into the new millennium?
I think the people who are the most likely to profit from these ventures will address the problems. These people I believe are the manufacturers.

Really? In a sport like Windsurfing, which is far smaller than kayaking, the manufacturers support the top athletes to the tune of paying them salaries of 50+ K per year. Why are the paddlesports manufacturers so far behind?
I don't know, but if any one has an angle on this one let me know.

What are the other big factors to consider?
Well, the way the sport is viewed by spectators needs to improve. Also, we need to get it on TV.

The TV. thing seems like a major piece of the puzzle. Why won't the media buy into the sport today, as it is?
I think that media is increasingly becoming more attracted to the sport, especially in Europe.

What needs to happen?
We need a scoreboard that interacts with the viewers. This is one of my projects that I am trying to undertake. Second, the corporate sponsors need to come in and bring TV with them to gain the exposure needed to make it worth sponsoring an event. Outdoorplay.com has taken a big step in the right direction with the 2000 Freestyle Championship Series.

If Marlboro came in today and threw down \$1 million to sponsor competitions, would you support it?
It would depend on how they used my image for promotion, and how my personal sponsors felt about the event. It's their image I'm wearing and portraying.



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Tennessee Paddle 2K	April 7-9	Wartburg, TN	Dale Robinson	423-637-8193	daler@planet.com
Stoney Creek Rendezvous	April 8-9	Johnstown, PA	Steve Podratsky	814-266-9744	mantonik@surfshop.net
3rd Annual French Broad River Festival, May	5-6	Asheville, NC	Chris Donochod	828-236-1209	
Salmon River Whitewater Festival	July 8-9	Pulaski, NY	Dan Murn	315-298-6475	dmurn@pacs.cnyric.org
Sacandaga Festival	July 15	Hadley, NY	John Duncan	518-696-5710	nofear@global2000.net
Black River Festival	July 22-23	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Deerfield Festival	July 29	Charlemont, MA	Mike Coleman	781-646-6744	colemanm@beaconarch.com
"Don't Call This a Festival River Rendezvous."	September 2-4	Belfort, NY/Beaver River	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Gauley Festival	September 16	Summersville, WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355	whiteh2o@catskill.net
Russell Fork Rendezvous	October 6-8	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011	surfin@kymtnnet.org
Moose River Festival	October 14	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com

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Chuck's Race @ South Yuba Gathering, April 22, Nevada County, CA	Dave Good	530-477-2722	wolfcreek@gv.net
Canyon Creek Extreme Race May 4 Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	acks@teleport.com
French Broad River Race May 6 Asheville, NC	Chris Donochod	828-236-1209	
Great Falls Race June 4 Great Falls, VA	Greg Morrison	301-263-9572	kavuday@aol.com
Black River Race July 22 Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	cko111234@aol.com
Gore Canyon Race August 19-20 Kremmling, CO	Paul Tefft	970-923-3955	enviro@rof.net
Russell Fork Race October 7 Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	506-278-2011	surlin@kymtnnet.org
Gauley River Race TBA Summersville, WV	Donnie Hudspeth	304-658-5016	dhud@geoweb.net
Moose River Race October 15 Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	cko111234@aol.com

RiversLiv 2000 Series- Presented by American Whitewater

Kern River Festival April 14-16 Kernville, CA	Terry Valle	818-340-3083	tvalle@ix.netcom.com
Trinity River Freestyle Rodeo April 21-22 Rig Flat, CA	David Steinhauer	530-623-6293	splash@trinityriverrafting.com
New River Rodeo April 28-30 McCoy, VA	Roanoke Co. Pks/Rec	540-387-6078 x251	rshowalter@co.roanoke.va.us
Oregon CUP April 29 - May 7			
Maupin Daze April 29-30 Maupin, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201	allstar@telesport.com
Oregon Surf Off May 2 Pacific City, OR	Dave Slover, 541-395-2201		allstar@telesport.com
Canyon Creek Extreme Race, May 4 Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	acks@teleport.com
Sunset Falls or the Wheel Rodeo May 5, Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	acks@teleport.com
Bob's Hole Rodeo May 6-7 Estacada, OR	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	acks@teleport.com
Bigfork Whitewater Festival May 26-29 Bigfork, MT	Linda Woods	406-862-2801	wildmile@hotmail.com
Coosa River Whitewater Festival, May 26-28 Wetumpka, AL	Lonnie Carden	334-272-0952	knewton@hellsouth.net
Wyoming Whitewater Championship NEW DATE, June 3-4, Jackson Hole, WY	Aaron Pruzan	307-733-2471	jacksonholekayak@wyoming.com
Potomac Whitewater Festival June 2-4 Great Falls, VA	Greg Morrison	301-263-9572	kavuday@aol.com
Union mutes Freestyle Festival, June 9-11 Englewood, CO	Shawn Hartje	304-292-6679	whhartje@aol.com
Headwaters Championship/FiBARK, June 15-18, Salida, CO	Mike Harvey	719-530-0360	fatface@amigo.net
Animas River Days June 23-25 Durango, CO	Nancy Wiley	970-259-3893	info@riversports.com

Any Electricians in the Crowd???

Gauley Fest Electrical Guru Denis McLane has been hard at it since 1992 lighting up the event. It's grown to be too much of a responsibility for one person to handle, and we're looking for one or (preferably) two electrical types to assist Denis and keep him from completely burning out. You needn't be a licensed electrician to volunteer. Interested? We could really use your help. Contact Phyllis Horowitz for details (914-586-2355; whiteh2o@catskill.net)

RiversLiv 2000 Series- Presented by American Whitewater continued

Skyfest	June 24-25	Index, WA	Jock Bradley	206-368-5648	whiteh2o@home.com
Gorge Games Freestyle Event, July 10-11		Hood River, OR	John Trujillo (Tree)	541-386-8751	info@outdoorplay.com
Black River Festival Rodeo (beg and sport only), July 23, Watertown, NY			Nancy Weal	315-592-4576	fishinsp@hotmail.com
Ottawa River Rodeo	September 2-4	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223	paul@equinoxadventures.com
Kootenay Rodeo	September 2-4	Castlegar, BC	Gerry Harmon	250-362-2128	gharmon@bcgas.com

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(Ocoee Whitewater Festival May 19-21 Ducktown, TN Jayne Abbot 828-645-5299 jhabbot@aol.com

***** Ocoee is also 2000 U.S. Team Trials event *****

(South Bend Freestyle Championship, August 18-20, South Bend, IL Outpost Sports 219-259-1000 info@outpostsports.com
(Wausau Freestyle Kayak Championship August 25-27, Wausau, WI Julie Walraven 715-845-5664 design@dwave.net

OTHER EVENTS

Immersion Research Triple Crown, First 3 wks of April NC and TN Penstock Productions LLC , 828-268-0676 www.penstockproductions.com

Gillman Falls Rodeo April 11 Old Town, ME John Miligan 207-827-6111 otoymca@aol.com

South Yuba Gathering April 22-23 Nevada County, CA Dave Good 530-477-2722 wolfcreek@gv.net

Cheat River Festival and Race, May 6 Albright, WV Kerry Manier 304-329-3621 foc@cheat.org

Kananaskis River Festival May 27-28 AB Tony Palmer tpalmer@telusplanet.net

Lochsa Festival CANCELLED

Clear Creek Festival June 3-4 Golden, CO Chuck Cremer 303-277-0133

Gallatin Whitewater Festival June 10-11 Bozeman, MT Danna Heins 406-522-8708 montanapaddlers@ahoo.com

Willow River Paddlefest June 16-18 Prince George, BC Rick Brine 250-964-7400

Pre-World Championships June 28-July 2 Spain

American River Festival TBA Placerville, CA Susan Debret-Welter 530-626-3435

Export A - A Whitewater Rodeo Challenge October 7-8 Bryson, QB Paul Sevcik 416-222-2223 paul@equinoxadventures.com

East Coast Kodo Surf Circuit

Wrightsville Beach Surf Kayak Rodeo May TBA, Wrightsville Beach, NC, Lydia McCormick 910-256-4445

Ocean City Kayak Surf Festival September TBA, Ocean City, NJ, Jim Caterina 609-728-0171

Outer Banks Surf Kayak Rodeo NEW DATE, September 9-10, Nags Head, NC, Pam Malec 252-441-6800 pam@khsports.com

Folly Beach Surf Kayak Rodeo NEW DATE, October 21-22, Folly Beach, SC, Carol Townsend 843-762-8106 prch2o@bellsouth.net

North Myrtle Beach Surf Kayak Rodeo October 28, No. Myrtle Beach, SC, Rick Gardner 843-272-4420





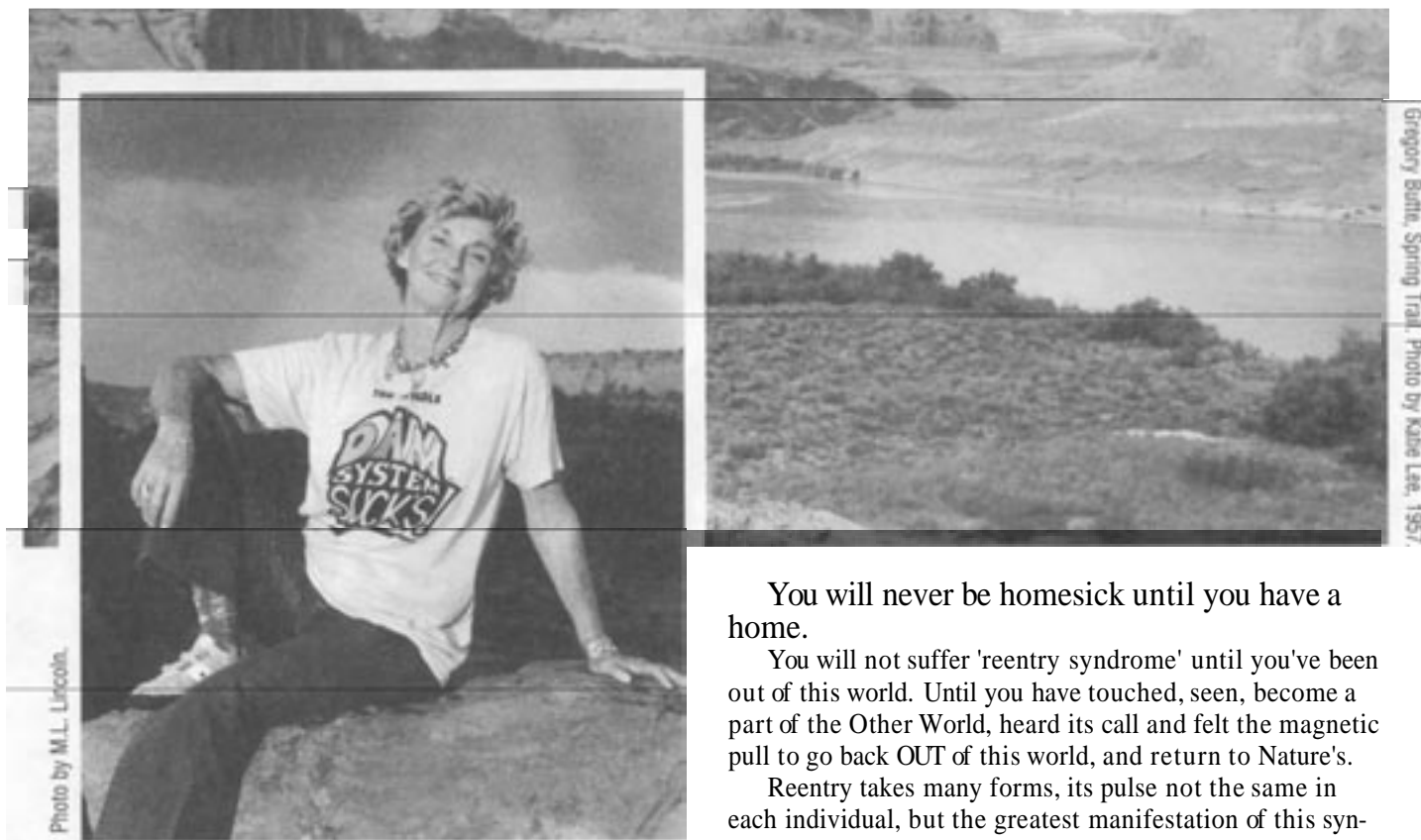


Photo by M.L. Lincoln.

Gregory Butte, Spring Trail. Photo by Kabe Lee, 1967.

You will not suffer 'reentry syndrome' until you've been out of this world. Until you have touched, seen, become a part of the Other World, heard its call and felt the magnetic pull to go back **OUT** of this world, and return to Nature's.

You will never be homesick until you have a home.

You will not suffer 'reentry syndrome' until you've been out of this world. Until you have touched, seen, become a part of the Other World, heard its call and felt the magnetic pull to go back **OUT** of this world, and return to Nature's.

Reentry takes many forms, its pulse not the same in each individual, but the greatest manifestation of this syndrome won't be denied. Frustration. The frustration of not being able to explain the Other World to someone who hasn't been there. Where one person will feel ostracized by this disconnection, another will feel aloof and pleased. Some will be angry, some joyous, others thwarted and disgusted with the world they live and work in. Some even feel guilty for having experienced what the others have not and cannot share.

Among this disparate group there is a gaggle of souls whose Other World is the Colorado Plateau, its rivers, its sibling canyons and tributaries; who have experienced the pain of reentry over and over again. Both blessed and cursed by this nagging, they nonetheless hold tight to the experience, because no one can take from them the fact that they have been there. A thing to covet.

My years in Glen Canyon, before its damming, initiated me into this ambivalent fraternity, and left such a mark on

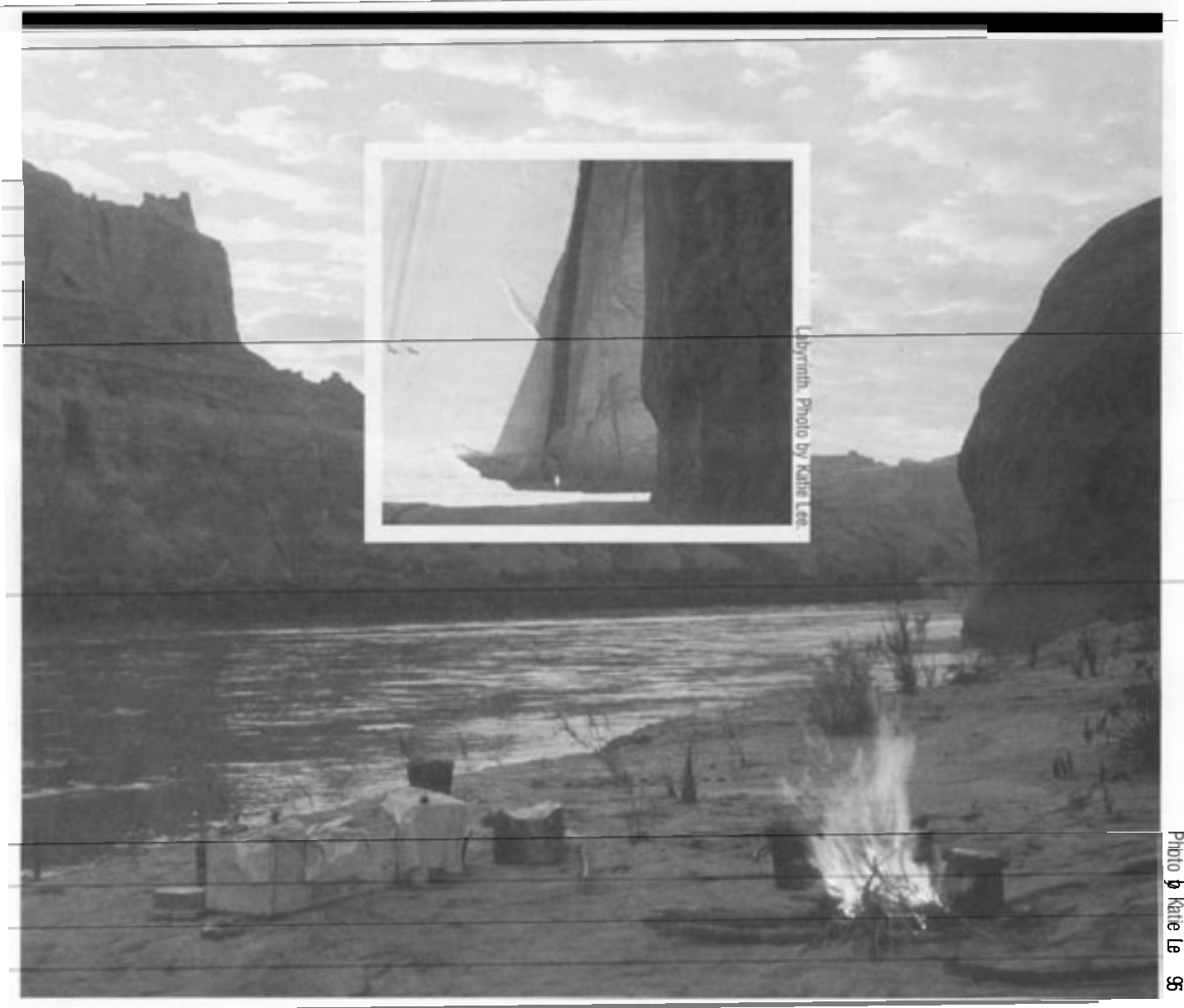


Photo © Katie Lee '95

me that I can see, smell, and feel it as if I'd left it only yesterday. Something zooms in to remind me of the place and...zap! I'm there in an instant. At times that makes me feel like the most fortunate human being on this earth...at other times, the most devastated.

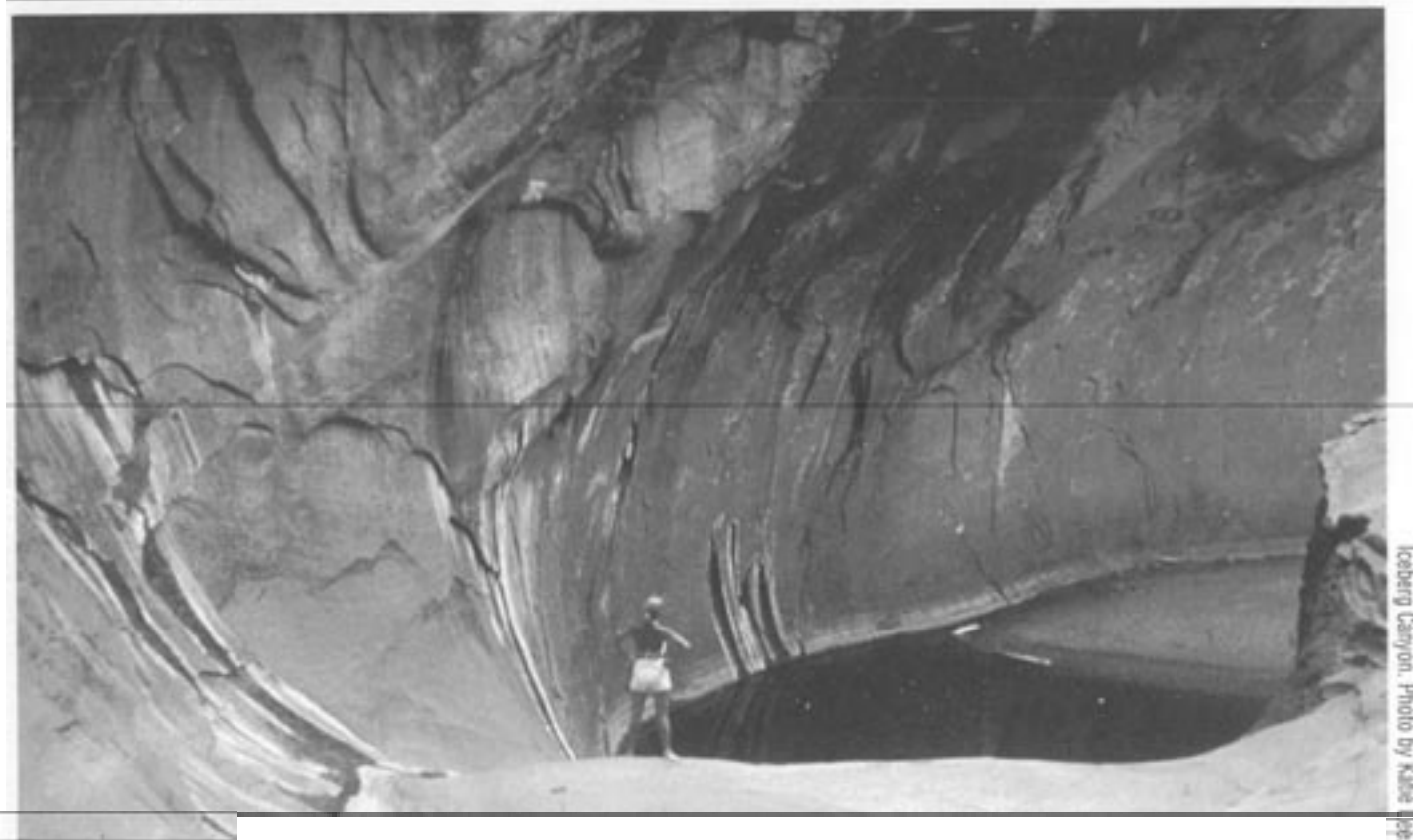
We Riverphiles are plagued as soon as we leave the sounds of living river behind. Since I can't heed the call but two, maybe three times a year, the stimulus will begin a few days *before* take-out, along with a nagging apprehension about how long before I'll be here again?...soon?...next year?...never? Because of that, I will look more intently at each detail; inhale and store memory of the smells, tracks in sand and mud, temperature of the water in a certain pot-hole, a seep, a birdnest I saw passing beneath an overhanging limb, a steep set of Moki steps up slick-rock—then put it all on 'save' for coping with the mess we call civilization—that world where I do whatever I have to do in order to return to this one. Those last days I won't even recall the magical places I've so recently been—the ruins, waterfalls, cathedrals, fluted canyons, potholes, caves and cataracts—

because those places are still part of me and I have a few more hours of discovery to heap on top of them.

Knowing I must get back to work, I will *try* to think about where I have to be and when; just simple stuff—not what I actually have to do, prepare, wait for, or step over. Yet those thoughts will skip from my brain swifter than a bat scooping water from the river. I have trouble remembering where I left my car; where's my wallet? am I supposed to meet someone? are there extra clothes in my trunk? Nothing finds a conclusion. I will even pass off, as if it weren't a fact, that within hours I won't be *here*...here on this river. I just go on living in this Other World like it's the only world I've ever known.

How do I do that?

I step out of linear time and thinking, away from learned experiences...into dreamtime. For days—weeks if I'm on a long trip—I empty my brain, wash the decks of my mind to live within the moment, the hour, the present. In *this* place. Untutored, my imagination and intuition rise to embrace these exquisite surroundings. I don't calculate or plan, just



Iceberg Canyon. Photo by Katie App.

take it all in, alerting all my sense to respond to Nature and her stimuli—to accept it, become a part of it and move blissfully along with the flow of the river. I become light sensitive, adjust to shapes and motion rather than ways and means.

It is endemic that we cannot achieve this state in a flash, until we get our footing, so to speak, in this Other place. Our hangover from social living prevents it. If we're lucky, given a day or a few hours, we will begin to merge with the terrain and the wild life already in place, and will not fall from a ledge any more than a coyote from a cliff or a bird from its perch, because the primitive in our nature, what little is left, will lead us. But if we do not go to the Other World prepared to enter as in a dream, without learned information, we will not know it—worse, it cannot speak to us.

There are more people than you would guess who have never reentered—or have ended it right there by choice—like Buzz Holmstrom, the first solo boatman down the Green and Colorado rivers from Wyoming through the Grand Canyon to Reservoir Mead. He couldn't cope with life in cities, even his hometown. Instead, he built his houses (boats) and took them to the rivers (his real home). Some of us live half in half out of that Other World—floating like sal-sify plumes, drifting, swirling in the air of fakery that surrounds us.

Step lightly.

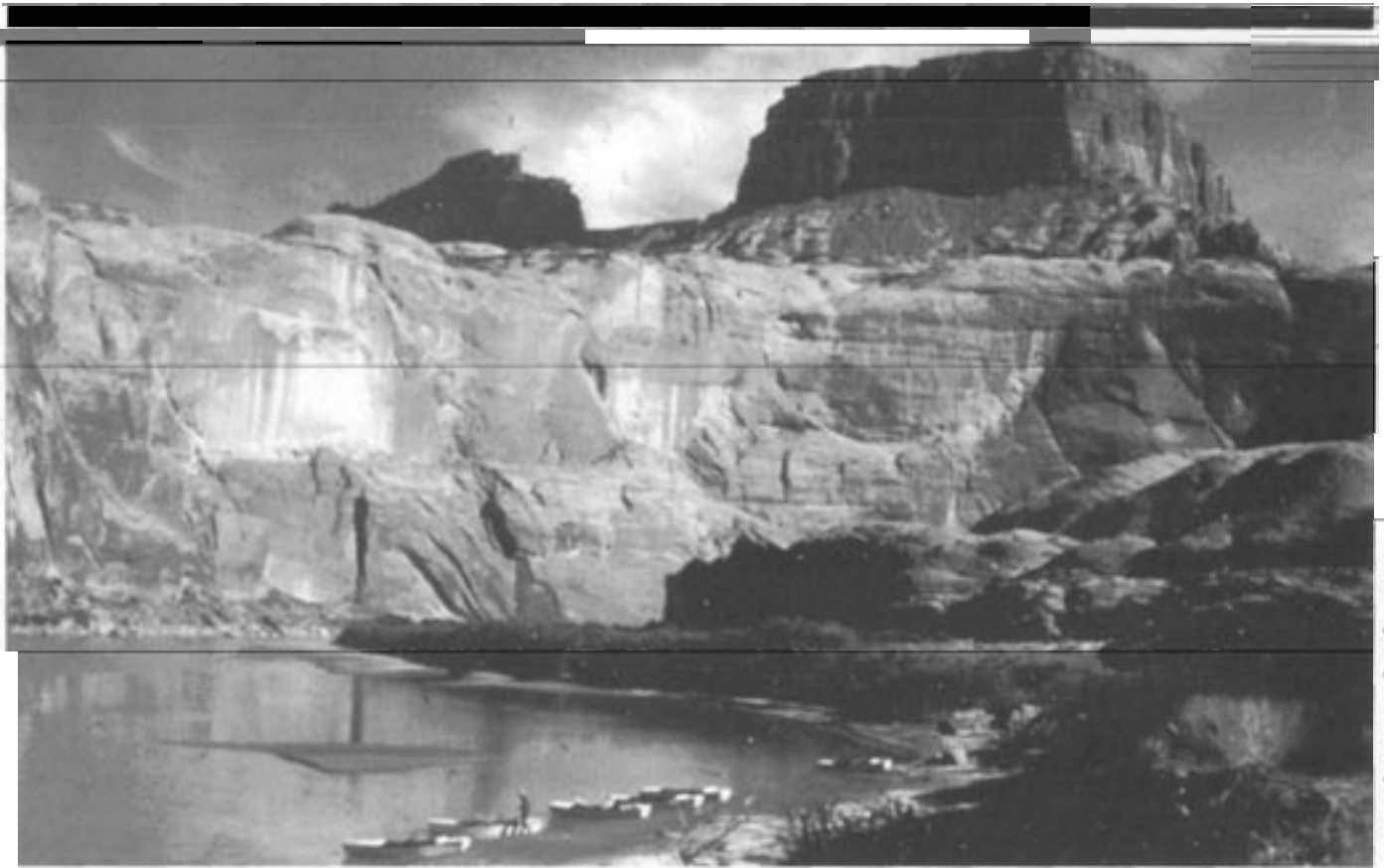
When your friends have just come off the river or a wilderness hike, give them space—try not to ask serious questions, or have them concentrate on a problem—they're still "out there" not at all ready for this brain-battering, rivet

machine we live in and must deal with. Quite likely they are wishing they were not here with you at all. Maybe they are having the sort of feelings I've partially described in *All My Rivers Are Gone*:

"...Looking at people, I see a river flowing over their faces; across a page of script a sandstone cliff looms; down the asphalt, a narrow fluted canyon twists; in traffic I hear a rapid's roar, forget what I'm supposed to be doing. I haven't 'come down' yet. My wilderness high would last for weeks, and even after it began to fade, in quiet moments I could call it up and make it last long enough to regenerate my spirit. When I could no longer do that. I used the memory as a bromide to put me to sleep."

But there was more. Along about sunset I'd find myself stopping wherever I was, whatever doing, waiting for something. What? Then, one late afternoon, standing on a busy hillside street in Hollywood, it connected. I was waiting for the wind to change from up canyon to down—felt it there in the passing traffic, remembering its brush against my skin! At night if there was static on the radio, I'd hear our campfire crackling; often wake up with my arm asleep from hanging it over the bed, feeling for the river, the sand, the stream, the sandstone. In dreams I would smell the river's silty, earthy essence and breath it in, deeply. After rowing my own boats—weeks or months later, at odd times and in obscure places, my palms would itch, pulling me back to the river.

We're not crazy, those of us who have these flash dances with wilderness. We've been given the gift of finding a way back to our private zone in the *natural* world, and mostly we don't give a damn if anyone understands our behavior or



Ferblessing Canyon. Photo by Katie Lee.

not. Take note of people who say they have "been there" but have not—they will talk about it long and loudly. Those who have, don't.

I had no reentry problems after my first fast and furious trip in the Grand—four of us in a 21 foot Chriscraft diesel powerboat, leaving Lee's June 16, 1953, arriving Pierce's Ferry six days later—I had hardly been gone. Everything went by so fast I didn't have time to focus on anything but staying alive while running every rapid on a river moving at 66,000 cubic feet per second. Back at work, it was nonstop yapping to anyone who would listen—and some who wouldn't—dramatizing the hairiest parts of the journey, the biggest rapids, the narrowest canyons, the wild adrenaline rushes.

But I got no spirit of that magnificent place other than it was unlike any other, bigger than all hell, full of wild water and the softest sand I'd ever felt on lo-n-n-n-n-g wide, driftwood-piled beaches. (I can be grateful that I wasn't crammed into a motorized pontoon with 50 other dudes who get far less of the canyon's essence now on a five-day, half-run. Eat your heart out!) But I hadn't really "been there" then, any more than they have now.

My first symptoms broke crystal the next year after one float trip on the San Juan and two more in Glen Canyon, each marked by a bewildered loathing to return to work and the place where I worked; each successive reentry manifesting itself stronger and longer. Because in the Glen's sensuous, gentle beauty and Silence I had time...a soft ticking of the oars...to take a good look at where I was; discover its hidden secrets, and allow the canyon's primitive spirit to spark a memory in my own genes. Only then did I fully un-



Uttermost Canyon. Photo by Katie Lee.

derstand what I'd been handed. The rarest of privileges. An everlasting gift. A treasure that was going to add limitless depth and meaning to my life. Shape it. Change it.

When we become involved in an intimate relationship with a place we are asking for the same kind of turmoil, frustration, rapture, devotion and loss that we experience when we fall in love with a person. Actually, if we don't have such a relation, love or a deep and abiding friendship with the place, we haven't "been there." Been through there, you could say—looked at it, but didn't really see it. If someone

asked you a question about it's intimate nature; the colors, smells, sounds, the feel of the place, would you be able to tell them? Did you want to embrace it, know all about it, learn its moods, enjoy touching its parts, feel an emotional contact with the plants-water-earth-sand-rock? Did you feel welcomed there, relaxed, at peace? If so, you have "been there" and as so, you will want to return.

When I returned to Grand Canyon in the summer of 1955 for an oar-driven float in the "Cat boats" (the sadirons Norm Nevills designed for two passengers and a boatman—not two 'snouts' filled with air) I knew the heart-stopping significance of "being there" as opposed to "been-there-done-that." Adrenaline flowed, but it was no roller coaster ride, it was a lesson in how the earth was put together; how insignificant we are in the overall plan; how little we know and will ever know; and that the best we can do for ourselves in our little time, is to try to discover who we are, then make the best of it.

Charles Eggert, who made a documentary film in Grand Canyon back in the fifties—A Canyon Voyage—explains his reentry phenomenon this way:

"...Maybe it's because the experience is so psychologically personal and ephemeral that it can't really be translated into words. [After 31 days on the river in 1955]...I felt the most profound effect of reentry was in relating to other people once I got back atop the earth's crust again. I felt I had been to a place which defied understanding or

describing...that somehow in my soul I held something which was totally personal and private...And it is this awareness of absence in others which is perhaps the most profound of the 'reentry' experience."

Brad Dimock, coauthor of *The Doing of the Thing* and a Grand Canyon boatman for many years says: "For many of us, reentry is the hardest and most disturbing part of the river experience. Having just recently discovered (or rediscovered) an entirely different world, it is wrenchingly difficult to leave it, to return to the so-called real world. Which, one wonders, is the real world after all?"

"The more one comes to know and love the River and the solace it brings to the soul, the more miserable reentry can be. Those of us who spend our lives on the River experience the symptoms on an even greater scale. The end-of-the season blues can be devastating, and worst of all is the time when a boatman must leave the river entirely for family, health, or fortune. Many of us never fully reenter, but live out our lives trapped in some limbo, torn between the pain of parting from the River, and the joy and vision it has given us to carry through life."

Serena Supplee, dear friend, artist and boatlady, paints the river and almost literally has the river with her when she leaves. What's more she lives near the river, rows its silky, ruffled, burbling, rolling surface at least once a week and often for many weeks at a time so, to her, reentry should be like

THE

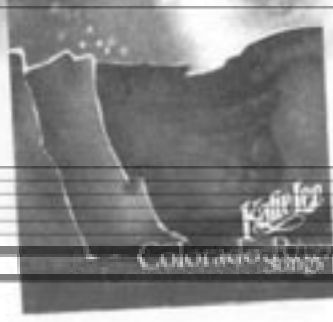
Katie Lee

COLLECTION



Katie Lee recounts her years as a river-runner, guide, and explorer in Glen Canyon. Her descriptions of this magnificent desert oasis and its rich archaeological ruins are a paean to paradise lost.

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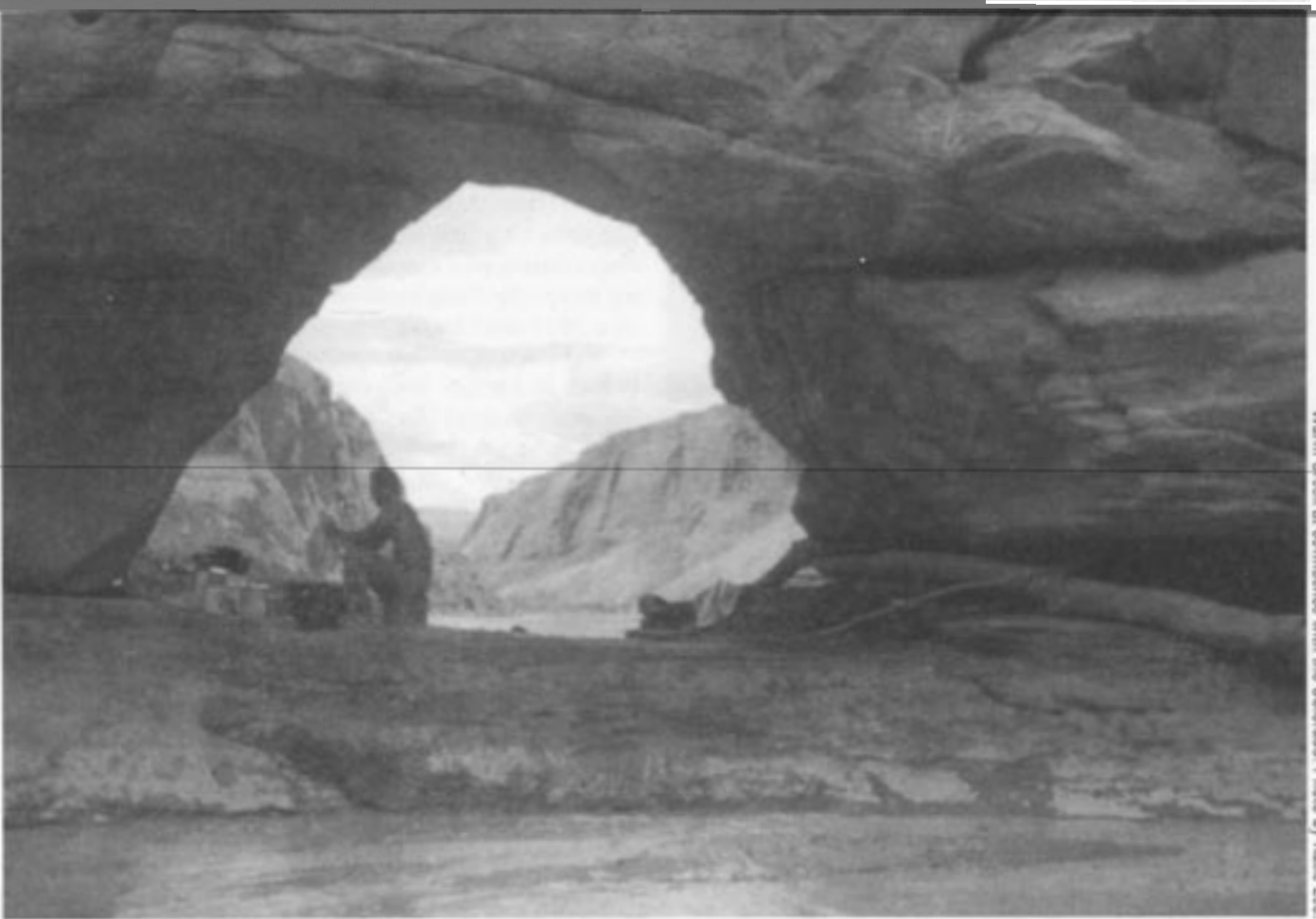
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Features Katie Lee reading excerpts from her book, All My Rivers Are Gone and singing some of the songs she wrote on river trips in Glen Canyon.

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Warm Creek at confluence with the Colorado. Photo by Katie Lee.

cloud dancing-no problem. She often won't finish a painting while she's in the canyon, but brings it home to work on, which in essence, puts her back on the river. She agrees that's true as long as she's painting, but when she stops to attend the myriad chores of this world, life becomes oil on water that can't be homogenized. She grows frustrated and stutter over the way nothing fits into a logical or sincere rhythm and flow, the way Nature and the River arrange things. (Have you noticed when Nature has a go at rearranging Her Earth, things comes out clean, beautiful, pristine? When we have a go, ours resembles the rubble in the nest of a mega packrat gone berserk). She doesn't want to think about how rough it would be if she didn't have the river to return to.

Other World: Serena sits on The Ledges after dinner, as she has so many wondrous nights, under the glow of an almost full moon. The water is high, rushing and surging under the stratified tables along the water's edge...the wind is warm, the rocks clean, the river restless; an upstream eddy and a downstream current argue in a whirlpool until they disappear beneath the surface. She looks up. Within the orbit of the moon's glow no stars shine but above the rim they swim in a sea of rich indigo; strips of angel-hair clouds ride west to east on a high wind over the monoliths. Looking down, almost in a trance she watches a thin strand of molten silver backlight the cliff, then slide eerily down its edge to burst open upon the river's swirls.

Paints it.

I buy it. Just looking at it calms my spirit.

Adam Stem, a member of the Glen Canyon Institute and a budding writer noted a particularly difficult reentry following a second meeting with the Green River:

"The first visit was breathtaking, the return visit was... breathgiving. But by the time I approached the airport, I felt like my spirit was being squeezed into a snug piece of Tupperware after it had just spent a week expanding in the sun. Sad, because I felt like I was giving up the week's gains.

In retrospect, however, I think the long-term benefits justify the pain of reentry. That's why we return to sacred places. The trials and scares we encounter in the wild, as well as the awe, are Good. The experience of living in the real world, [Nature's] as opposed to the human construct, grants the ability to separate real problems in your life from imagined ones. This provides perspective to get on with the task of living, if you're brave enough, or to humbly accept your failings if you're not.

Be it a sweaty hike up Pyramid Peak in the Adirondacks, a sunbaked scramble up Green River canyon walls, or a mystical float through Glen Canyon, reentry demands a physical return to rank and utter bullshit (comforts of home accepted) but with a spirit strengthened, wisened by the experience, more equipped for living ...maybe."



What we all mean to say here is, the Other World can show you ways of doing things more compatible with your nature, talents and peace of mind, like the River and Glen Canyon did for me. I only wish I could return the favor, set those rivers free of aneurisms and let the life blood of our planet flow again!

Humbly, I submit a navigational warning on the tricky waters of reentry:

If you dearly love someone take them with you—you could enter Nature's World as a larvae, and return to this one a ghost moth or a butterfly — unrecognizable to your mates, or them to you.

With what remains of your primitive genes, you could morph down there, combine with similar forms (read; boat-men-guide) and elect to reenter only on specific, altered, mostly unacceptable, terms. The fact that it was The River—The Untamed—Nature's Other World that captured your imagination and touched your primitive well-springs hasn't occurred to you as yet.

Navigate.

River Journal - Phantom Ranch - July 14, 1956

....sun was gone when we rowed beneath the suspension bridge. The eight (passengers) who take it from here are still up on the rim, coming down tomorrow morning as we go up. Boy, aren't we a bedraggled looking crew...I tell you this old canyon makes you live hard. Too bad every man can't have the feel of the elements first hand. Humans under glass...what a sad thing. In the east they don't even know what you're talking about, the way of life is so different...Out

in the wide open it's a little better, they spread out, build rooms that *look* like living outside; but even then, under glass. So it rains on you...You get wet at 100 degrees or over, what's that? And there's a little sand in your bed—Oh, I can think of a lotta people who should never go *with-out* sand in their beds. And the sun...strong, all day...weathers you up a bit. Devoid of powder and paint, the face takes on a little character, not just from the sun, but from relaxing into the real you. I can't even be lavish with my sorrow for those made-up people, because they don't care...they don't know.

But I'm so glad Gina came with us...such a grand person to have on the trip. She's one of us and understands why we feel as we do about our Canyon...I sang for quite a while to-night, out on the lawn...turned in and thought about civilization tomorrow. Oh, Lord, if only we could be ourselves in that world...but they'd take it all and leave you nothing if you were...so on go the protective covers. Sad.

Sunday - July 15th - Bright Angel Lodge - Rim

When I said good-bye, I didn't feel very good inside. There they were, those four little white birds (the Cat boats) all nosed together on the sand below the bridge—as we ascended they got smaller and smaller, and I got sadder and sadder...while the River kept calling...calling. I got on the right side of the Packer and had the first mule behind him. This a verrreeee smart move...the farther back, the more

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dust, pardnuh!...n for a while I rid his mule, so I had a nice comfortable journey up.

(That evening)...we dressed for dinner and went to the bar. I didn't want a drink. Puss (one of the passengers) seemed to fall right back into the slip-shed phoney world with no trouble at all. Gina and I had more to shake off than he did, I reckon...I couldn't get with it...didn't want to dance, drink, listen to juke boxes... nothing but sit there on the rim and try to keep what was left of the Canyon stillness imprinted a little longer. But he was jumpin' and bumpin' and shovin' and suggestin' ..and I was trying to forget where I was...trying to be down there in the canyon with the rest of them. I was almost rude. I finally gave up and said I was tired. I was...of all the yakkity-yak. And sorry for being so bored, because Puss and Paul are nice fellows, just not able to soak up stillness, or know where they've been.

So, when the two deer stood in the flood of headlights — frozen in silhouette and fuzzy—I gasped at their beauty...and longed for their kind of freedom.

Then the lights went out.

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Grotto Canyon. Photo by Katie Lee, 1957.



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Katie Lee

speaks from the heart

By Ken Ransford; Member, AW Board

After reading Katie Lee's book *All My Rivers Are Gone*, I had to meet her. Like so many of us, a river trip changed her life. Her first trip was down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon in 1953. When she floated through Glen Canyon the next year, she named many of the side canyons along the river. Her book captures the essence of a river, the still beauty punctuated by rapids, the new world around each bend, the lullaby of sleeping next to a river, the fury of a desert dust storm, the roar of a flash flood that covered the river from bank to bank with logs and debris, only to be followed by stillness.

All My Rivers Are Gone is a journal recounting several of Katie's trips through Glen Canyon in the fifties, when she rarely saw anyone on the Colorado River. Like the flooding of the canyon itself, Glen Canyon Dam creeps slowly into the pages. In chapter 21, Big Dam Foolishness, she writes of receiving a letter from Clyde Eddy of the American Whitewater Affiliation in 1960. He talked of the folly of the Bureau of Reclamation's desert dams, she called it the Wreck-the-Nation Bureau. American Whitewater was on record as opposing the dam slated for the Green River at Echo Park in the 1950s; that

dam was scrapped only to be replaced by the larger Glen Canyon Dam. Longtime Sierra Club advocate David Brower laments to this day that his failure to oppose the Glen Canyon Dam was the biggest mistake he ever made.

After the diversion tunnels were closed in 1963, Katie only went back a few times because she could no longer bear the sight of the dam. By then, she had left her career as a Hollywood singer and barnstormed the country singing and writing about the folly of Glen Canyon Dam. After living in Aspen in the 1960s, Katie moved to Arizona.

I first met Katie when she returned to Aspen last October to put on a concert to benefit the Glen Canyon Institute and American Whitewater, just before her eightieth birthday. Too old for political correctness, Katie spares no punches in describing the harm that Glen Canyon Dam has wreaked. Lake Powell is Foul Reservoir. While experts toss out statistics about evaporation loss, species decline, and the greatest good for the greatest numbers, Katie speaks from the heart. "There never was a place as beautiful about Glen Canyon and we wrecked it. It's time to fix it."

While Katie puts a human face on the Glen Canyon disaster, other organizations are tackling the problem from a scientific and legal perspective. When the Sierra Club first brought up the subject of breaching Glen Canyon Dam a few years ago, I thought, "No way. There's just too many house boaters there, and it's in conservative Utah."

But dam breaching has entered the nation's consciousness. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has made it a cornerstone of his administration, and there have been reading stories about removing dams in national publications like the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*. The Edwards Dam on Maine's Kennebec is gone, and dams on the Elwah and Condit rivers in Washington are on their way out. Now that over 99% of the salmon have disappeared from the Snake River, the feds might actually remove four dams there. So, breaching dams is not a "fringe" topic anymore. Katie was just there ahead of us.

Glen Canyon Dam was constructed in the 1960s, before Congress required impact statements for projects with environmental consequences. The Wreck-the-nation Bureau now hopes to do its own after-the-fact Environmental As-

Katie Lee Speaks

assessment of the dam, in part to support the Bureau's plan to pump water over the top of the dam to warm up the river downstream and save the razor-back sucker that is almost extinct. More folly.

The Glen Canyon Institute wants the Bureau to do a more exhaustive Environmental Impact Statement, which would require the Bureau to consider all alternatives to the dam, one of which is dam removal. The Bureau's Environmental Assessment would allow them to sidestep or downplay this alternative. The legal distinction between these reports is obscure, but the consequences are huge. American Whitewater's board voted to support the Glen Canyon Institute's efforts to have an environmental impact statement prepared for the dam.

I received a call from Owen Lammers recently, one of the founding members of the International Rivers Network in Berkeley. He just moved to Moab, Utah in order to work for the Glen Canyon Action Network. When I asked him why removing Glen Canyon Dam was more important than opposing new dams in the third world, he replied that the world is watching to see if we really will remove this dam. If Glen Canyon Dam goes, he said, it will become much more difficult to construct large dams in South America, Africa, and Asia. The stakes are getting bigger.

If you just want to sit back and watch the river go by, meet Katie in her book *All My Rivers Are Gone*. But we hope you can do more. If Katie Lee comes within a thousand miles of where you live, go see her! Support the efforts of American Whitewater to breach unnecessary dams, and join and support other organizations such as the Glen Canyon Institute, www.glencanyon.org, the International Rivers Network, www.irn.org, or Idaho Rivers United, www.idahorivers.org, which is currently directed by American Whitewater board member and longtime boater Bill Sedivy.

To learn more, read Patrick McCully's great book, *Silenced Rivers, The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams*, available from the International Rivers Network.



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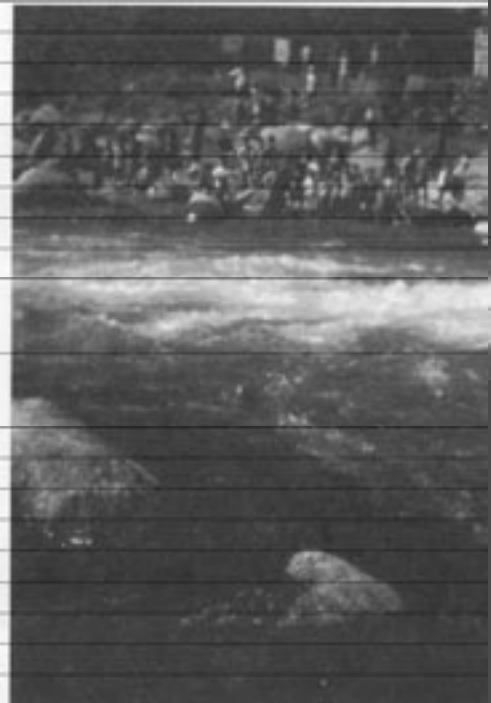
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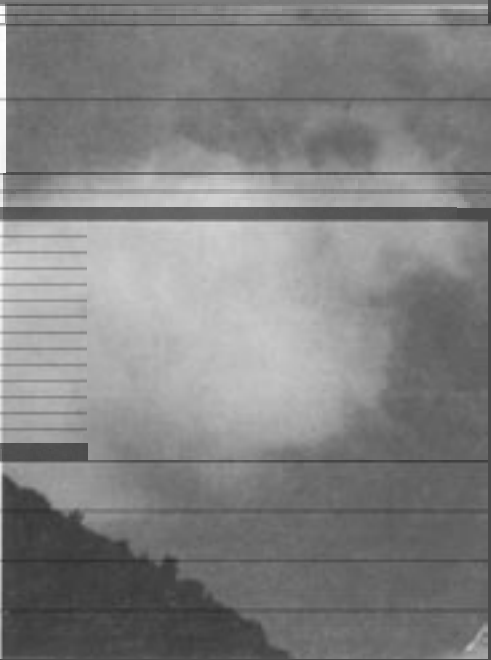
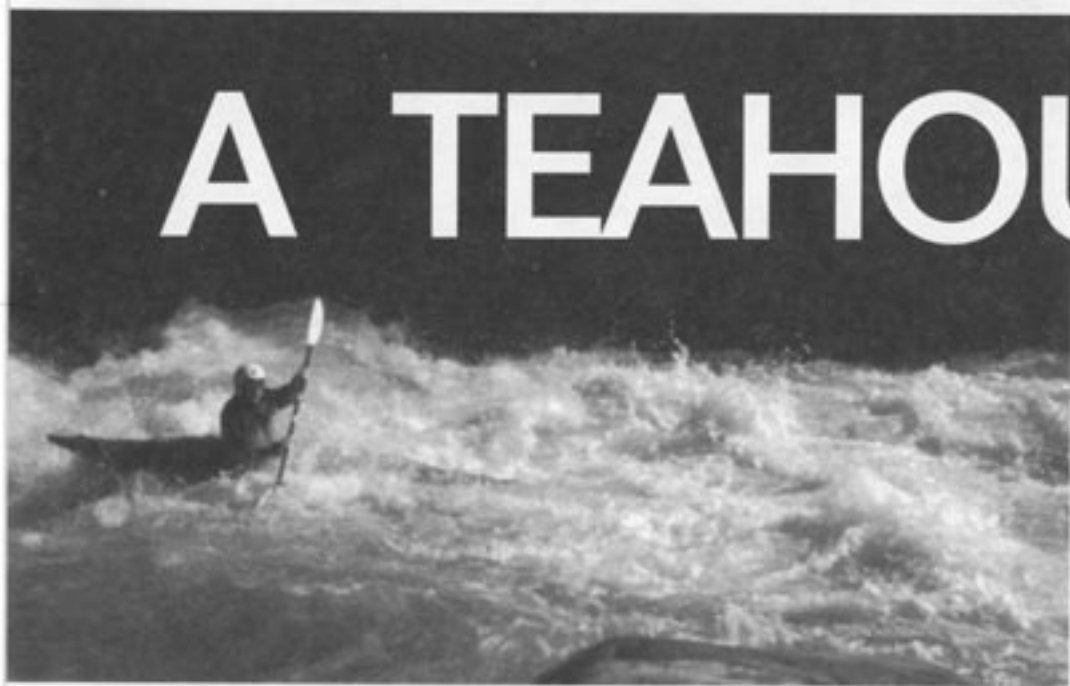
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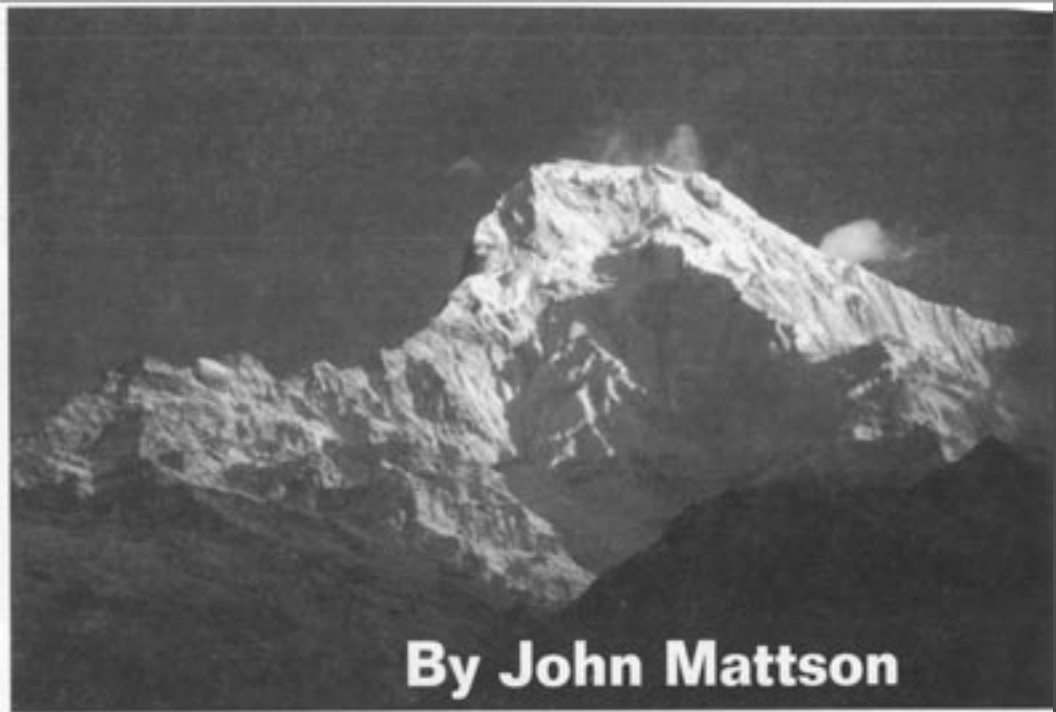
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A TEAHOUSE T





By John Mattson



The locals were chanting, praying, and going through their morning rituals as the sun rose out of the smog of the Kathmandu valley.

That first day in Nepal was as euphoric as any I have ever spent. The thrill of being on the other side of the world surrounded by a completely different culture, the smell of incense and the towering Himalayas. I was with good friends and a great adventure was just beginning.

My friends, Ken Ransford and Dave Neff, and I had taken an early morning jaunt to the monkey temple and were walking back through the busy narrow streets of the ancient city. My eyes and ears were focused on the hustle and bustle of a third-world city greeting the new day.

It was like being in a dream as we recovered from 42 hours of travel and remembered the events of the past days. The many airports, the negotiations to get the kayaks on the planes, the mid-air party with the crazy man from Bombay, and sleeping in the sauna in Singapore. (We were rudely awakened just as we were about to leave and luckily escaped caning.) There was a great sigh of relief as the kayaks rolled into the luggage terminal in Kathmandu. We were greeted immediately by some friendly hustlers.

"Mr.! Mr.! You need taxi? You need hotel?"

"No thanks. We are staying at the Kathmandu guest house."

"Kathmandu guest house is full. We have nicer hotel. Very cheap! Free taxi!"

The taxi had rolled down the narrow streets at a breakneck speed dodging chickens, pigs, rickshaws, bicycles, and Nepali children. The hustlers at the airport had actually been very helpful. The Tayamo hotel in Thamel was a great place to stay. It had a roof-top restaurant with views of the Himalayas and a friendly staff that helped us with our logistics and allowed gear storage while we were on our adventures. We could finally relax and plan the logistics for our first river.

By mid-morning the next day we were loading our kayaks into a taxi and heading out of the busy city. The driver was forced to push his way through the



Monkey Temple

throng of rickshaws, cows, and people. One of the most exciting parts of Nepal was the transportation. There seemed to be only one traffic rule. The largest vehicle gets the right of way. The buses were routinely blessed by a priest before departure (cheaper than new tires).

In about an hour we were out of the city and driving through the rice fields of the Kathmandu Valley. The road that

we were traveling had at one time been the ancient trade route to the Tibetan capital of Lhasa.

Our first destination was the Belephi Khola, a small tributary of the Bhote Kosi near the Tibetan border. This magnificent creek offers great surfing, clear water, and Himalayan views. But we had to get there first. Our taxi stopped in a small village and refused to go farther.

"Road very bad! Taxi can't go. Maybe a truck today."

We were stranded at a Nepali truck stop on the road to Tibet. The sleepy village was awakening with the word of our arrival. Even the laziest dogs rushed to the scene. We were surrounded by curious villagers and a throng of children.

The Nepali have an interesting solution to the disposable diaper problem. Don't give the children any pants for about 4 years. Of course, this leads to messy streets. Soon we were engaged in a cultural interchange wherein the local children jumped, bounced, and sat in our kayaks while we took their photos. The older folks stood in the shadows and watched. The sun was shining, the day was warm and Coca Cola was only ten cents. Paradise is where you find it and there would be a truck someday.

In only a couple of hours the truck



John Mattson, Modi Khola

Ken Ransford photo



Festival on Holy Day, Kali Gandaki

arrived and the bargaining began.

The Nepali feel that tourists are fair game and they do not respect you unless you barter with them. With the right attitude it can be quite amusing. I can only envision a Nepali tourist in a ten-items-or-less supermarket lane offering the cashier 50% of the going price and refusing to pay more. After 15 minutes of haggling, a price was agreed and we were throwing our boats in the truck.

The taxi driver had been correct. The Belephi Khola was far below us as the truck lurched and bounced on the narrow precipitous road.

A very large mountain loomed ahead. One of the spectacular peaks in the Langtang region was catching the last rays of daylight. In a couple of hours we reached the end of the road and were greeted by a pleasant hostel. It was the home of the truck driver and we were using the beds of some young mothers. They seemed quite happy to part with them for the extra rupees. They were wonderful hosts and sewed an elegant dinner of Dal Bat (rice and lentils, the Nepali staple) and beer.

We woke early with excitement. Our hosts had risen before dawn, and were huddled around a smoky fire drinking cha (milk tea). No one in this small village was willing to carry our boats, so we threw them on our shoulders and started walking. It was another perfect day and the sun was starting to hit the high peaks. We walked by a small temple that consisted of a large stone hand reaching into a pond. The priests were setting

incense and flowers in the palm of the hand. There was an old rickety suspension bridge with half of the planks missing or broken. A group of porters carrying heavy loads crossed the bridge without missing a stride.

We rested our shoulders and limped cautiously across the bridge to Jalbire, a beautiful

village with narrow streets and ancient buildings. Here we managed to find some porters; we continued our trek up the valley of the Belephi Khola. After leaving the village we wandered into a countryside of small terraced farms. The colorful terraces stepped their way up the steep hillsides and the workers were busy hawesting rice. Whole families were in the fields cutting, carrying or stamping the grain out of the stock. Everyone stopped to watch the caravan of strangers. A couple of miles up this trail, we had our first porter dispute. We managed to coax another quarter mile or so out of them, then decided to start paddling.

Amidst a scurry of onlookers and discontent porters we managed to organize our gear, get dressed, and paddle away.

After four days of traveling, we were finally on the water! Everyone in the village came out to watch as we refreshed our skills in some great play holes.

The Belephi Khola was worth the effort. The crystal-clear waters flowed through a valley that had been farmed for generations. Each time we pulled into an eddy we would catch a view of another spectacular mountain, and whenever we stopped to surf a wave, we drew a crowd of ancient people, curious to see these strange foreigners in their plastic boats.

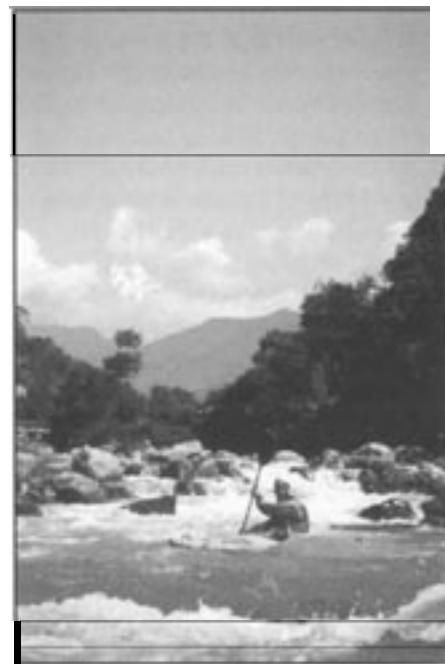
We eddy hopped our way back to Belephi, where the taxi had left us the day before. The creek was a fairly continuous Class III to IV-, with some interesting drops.

Many of the same villagers were there to greet us as we loaded our boats onto the top of a bus and headed on up the road to Barabise, along the Bote Kosi. This river flows from Tibet and the road that we were traveling was the main road to Tibet.

In a couple of hours we arrived in downtown Baribesi. The dim lights were glistening off of the combination duck pond/sewer system in the front yard of the hotel. The medieval room that opened to the hiway offered a constant flow of noise and fumes. The horns started promptly at 4:00 a.m. The truck drivers wanted to make sure that everyone knew that they were there. The whole village awakened to greet them.

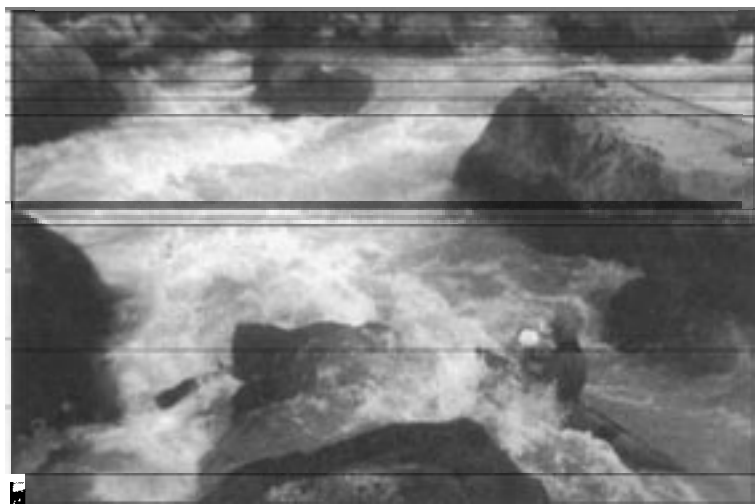
Amidst this turmoil we met some of the nicest people that I have ever encountered. The owners of the hotel were friendly and, for two dollars a night, we received personal attention and personally cooked meals with food we had picked from the market.

The Bote Kosi is a very good roadside run that would be an excellent day float or warm up for an expedition. Put-in at KH. 95 and take-out below Baribisee at the Lamosangu dam. Depending on the water level, the Bote Kosi could be quite challenging, especially above and right below Barabise. The water was pushy with quite a few



Neff Tamar

IV+ to V rapids. We scouted often and portaged one rapid that had a thin line and serious consequences. This river was a big step up from the Belephi Khola. It was a great afternoon's boating, but the bridge at Barabise was a welcome sight. The sun was still shining as we toasted the days adventure with Nepali beer. That night we had a great feast and prepared for our journey back to Kathmandu.



David Neff on Marsiandi

It was early in the afternoon and the sun was warm as we climbed on top of the crowded bus back to Kathmandu. Riding on top of busses on warm sunny days is more pleasant than sitting inside. But soon it was cold and dark and not quite so pleasant. The crowded bus crawled up the long hill to Kathmandu. We arrived cold and tired, very late in the night.

The next day was an arduous but yet an exciting one in Kathmandu. We rushed around in rickshaws obtaining trekking permits, plane tickets, and last-minute supplies. We also met with Jeff Parker, another Colorado paddler who had stopped in Nepal for a few days en route to the Brahma Putra. Meeting him was a bit surprising and added new energy to the group.

Our next river was to be the Tamar in Eastern Nepal. This normally mandates an intense 18 hour bus ride, but thanks to a generous boat shuttle by Guy Robbins of Equator Expeditions, we had the luxury of a short plane flight. Short plane flights in Nepal are inexpensive and spectacular, but carrying boats on planes is a problem. In less than an hour we were landing in the great plains of India which extend into southern Nepal.

The Himalayas rise abruptly out of the great plains and form a giant barrier to the rest of the Asian continent. Soon we were bouncing along another dusty road in the terai, the flat jungle which, until recently, was inhabited by rhinoceros, tiger, leopard, and deer. As the sun was setting, we were winding

our way into a great range of mountains dominated by Kachenjungua and Makalu, the third and fourth highest mountains in the world. These peaks form the border with China and India at Nepal's eastern edge.

At the village we were greeted by a friendly hotel host who offered us boiled potatoes, omelets, and lemon tea. He was also a great help in finding porters, who would carry our boats 80 km. over very rugged terrain. This was to be our longest shuttle and we were fortunate to have good porters. Anything else could have been a disaster.

Dawn came and the porters arrived to examine the loads. The kayakers were a bit awkward to carry but lighter than their normal loads. Porters regularly carry as much as 100 kg. (220 lbs) up and down rugged terrain barefoot or in terrible shoes. These amazing people do this with smiles on their faces and songs in their voices as they trudge mile upon mile. Our porters had traveled this path often and sang songs to the landmarks that they passed.

In one of the villages, they sewed a special brew called Tomba. A cheap fermented grain brew that was very popular with the locals.

At least half the enjoyment of kayaking in Nepal is trekking to the river (if you have good porters). This 80 km. walk offered views of Makalu and Kachenjungua. The descent into the valley of the Tamar was as spectacular as the great peaks.

We reached Dohban by noon on the

third day of trekking. Our porters proudly paraded our kayakers around this village before dropping them at the put-in. We paid them along with a generous tip. Tipping is not a custom in Nepal, except for porters or guides. This is called Backshesh, and is usually 30-50% of their low wage.

The porters were happy with their payment and gave us their blessings as we put on our strange clothing, loaded our kayakers, and

paddled away. We started on a small steep tributary of the Tamar. After nearly three days of walking, it was a wonderful feeling to be on the water. This trail took us through a valley where few westerners had ever been. The small tributary soon reached the Tamar, which was running about 10,000 cfs. The first day was like all the good rapids of the Grand Canyon compressed into 15 miles. It was continuous big water Class III- IV, which could be eddy scouted or "Jeff scouted." Jeff was getting psyched for the Brahmaputra. He charged fearlessly down all the big rapids. We were able to avoid the big holes by watching his cartwheels. His hole riding abilities allowed him to escape without mishap.

We camped that night on a sandy beach. The weather was warm and dry. We were traveling light and cooked our dinner on an open fire using driftwood. Ken had promised that it wouldn't rain so we had left our tents in Kathmandu.

The next morning came early. The local children had found our camp. They came sliding down the cliffs and swimming across the river to inspect these travelers who had invaded their world. They were amusing, friendly, and great for photos, but a nuisance as we tried to cook and load our boats.

As we paddled away from the throng, they were running after us and waving blessings. The canyon widened and became more remote. The rapids all but disappeared, but the scenery remained spectacular. The population

thinned (and appeared to become more primitive) as we floated down the canyon. They looked at us as if we had landed from another planet.

The fourth day was more exciting since. We encountered some big drops as we left the canyon and entered the large wide canyon of the Sun Kosi. Here, three great rivers, Tamar, Sun Koshi, and Arun, come together to form the Sapta Khosi. This huge river flows into the Ganges and onward into the plains of India.

We stopped for lunch at this confluence and hiked up the Arun for a little ways. I still have a very vivid memory of the trail that heads up the dark canyon of the Arun towards Mount Everest.

Our journey on the Tamar was finished. We were now on a huge river. The Sapta Kosi was very swift with a few small rapids. The mountains were gone.

The serenity of the mountains was replaced by the sound of jackhammers and backhoes. The Nepalese were taking down one diversion dam and replacing it with another one.

Our Landrover shuttle was waiting not far downstream. We had no time to smell the roses in Dharan. Another bus was waiting and in a few minutes we

were bouncing along another dusty road. This 18 hour ride from hell took us to Pokhara, which was a relaxing break after the marathon bus ride. This large village sits on a lake and offers views of Annapurna, Machapuchre, and Manaslu. It has all the tourist conveniences of Kathmandu, without the noise and smog.

But we had come to paddle. Another set of porters, another trek, and another great river. The Modi Cola consisted of classic sustained Class IV rapids with views of Annapurna South and Machapuchre. A dinner of rice and apple pie was waiting for us in the cobblestone village of Beretante. We had a room on the river for 50 cents and watched the sunset on Machapuchre. We continued downriver the next morning. The rapids were less sustained, but there were still some big drops. We camped that night near a rice farm.

The next morning we paddled into a literal oasis as we entered the sacred valley of the Kali Gandaki. There were cold and hot springs sprinkling water from all the canyon walls, which were bedecked with ferns and mosses. The Kali Gandaki was similar in difficulty to the Grand Canyon, lots of flat water with a few big drops and great scenery.

The locals were celebrating Dewali, an important holy day. Everyone was wearing flowers and bright clothing. A routine stop to buy noodles resulted in an invitation to a party and a gift of flowered leis for each of us. We paddled away with the leis around our necks and camped at the ancient castle of Ranighat. Two more days of great scenery and some good play spots brought us to Ramdi. Here we witnessed a cremation and caught a tourist bus back to Pokhara.

Our time together was beginning to run out. My friends had only five remaining days in Nepal and we wanted to catch one more river, the Marsiandi. It proved to be the best of them all.

Another bus, one more set of porters, and a short trek from Besisahar to Ngadi. The trek in gave us great views of Himalchule and the Marsiendi valley. The rice harvest was now nearly over and the poinsettias were in full bloom. On the trek in we scouted the

river from a high bank. It looked challenging, even from a great distance. We arrived in Ngadi about 3p.m., anticipating a short exciting run down to Bhul Buli that afternoon.

We were not to be disappointed. The first rapid had nearly everyone upside down. We cautiously eddy hopped and scouted our way to the village. It was a beautiful sustained Class IV to V—and we were flying high on adrenaline when we reached our destination, a friendly inn with a sunset view of one of the largest mountains in the world. The alpenglow on Himalchule over the Marsiendi was as fine of view as there can be.

The next day was exciting. The river was still quite steep and gaining volume. We were on a tight schedule. We arose early to greet our challenge. The Marsiendi wasn't as sustained as the day before, but the drops seemed harder, and there was always one more.

After Besisarhar the river dropped into a deep gorge with few people and fewer villages. We had some food along, but we were traveling light and had hoped to stay in an inn.

Daylight was running out as we navigated what seemed like an endless number of Class IV to V drops. We were eddy scouting most of the rapids and had a couple of close calls with very large holes. We finally spotted a bridge. We would have Dal Bat and beer in Tarkughat, a primitive village that saw few tourists.

The next day on the river was much easier as the trip came to an end. Another bus ride, a big party in Kathmandu at the Everest steak house, and our great adventure was a memory. Dave and Ken took the big plane ride and Jeff wandered east. I hiked the Annapurna circuit and sampled the beaches of Thailand. If you travel half way around the world you might as well stay for a while!

Nepal Travel Tips

How to get there: It's 11 time zones away, so get ready for some serious jet-lag. Wind Over Mountain travel or Narayan's Gateway to Nepal (both in Boulder, Colorado) offer flights for about \$1,300 from Denver. The Sauna at the Singapore airport was a great



On the trek to Belephi Khola

to lessen the jet-lag. Prepare to spend \$150 to \$250 per boat and be prepared to barter with the Asian airlines.

When to go: September and October, depending on the monsoon and how much water you want. The monsoon usually ends in August and the water gradually drops. If you like big water the monsoon would be great. We went mid September to mid October.

What to bring: Dry top and cool weather paddling gear. Weather and water were warmer than normal Colorado conditions. Bring an extra spray skirt and an emergency repair kit.

Medical supplies: Bring a large complete medical kit with prescriptions for stomach ailments, an antibiotic for infection, and favorite remedies. Prescription drugs can be purchased over the counter in Nepal at very low prices, but you need to know what you need. The local pharmacists are very helpful. The mountains of Nepal are a low-risk malaria area. Talk to your local doctor before you leave. Read or bring *Medicine for Mountaineering* by James Wilkerson. Make friends with doctors and invite them on your trips. (Editor's note: Like me!)

Food and Drink: The local food is interesting and good, but be careful. Meat may not be refrigerated, chicken is usually very fresh. Make sure that tea



John Mattson on Belephi Khola

Ken Ransford photo

is boiled sufficiently. Water should always be boiled or treated with iodine. Buying bottled water should be avoided because of the litter.

Where to Stay: Hotel Tayomo or the Kathmandu Guest house are low to medium priced hotels in the Thamel section of Kathmandu. Tayomo was very friendly and helpful. Refer to *The Lonely Planet*.

Getting around: Buses seemed to be everywhere we needed them. Local schedules can be obtained at the bus station. Many of the buses will stop when you wave them down. Kayaks can be tied on top for a few extra rupees. Be prepared to barter and bring plenty of rope and cam straps. Roads are very rough. Long bus rides can be torture and are dangerous, but you should take at least one to really experience the culture. Taxis and land rovers are available for a much higher price than the bus. Some times they are desirable, depending on your budget and level of adventure.

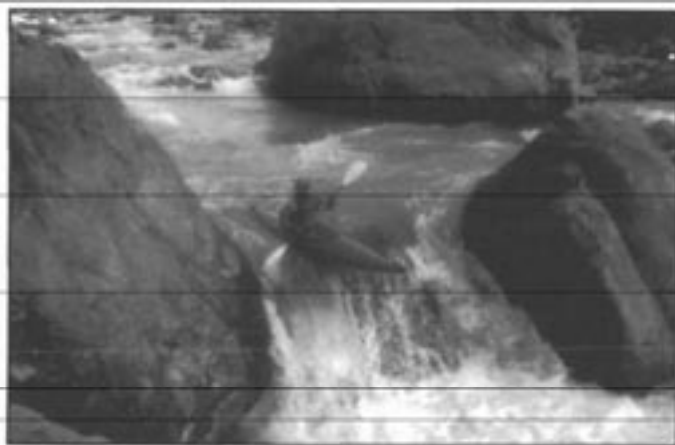
Airplanes: Short flights are inexpensive and very scenic, but it is difficult to fit boats on board.

Hiring Porters: Stay at a hotel near the trail head and ask the manager to arrange them. We paid \$5-\$10. per day, including backsheesh.

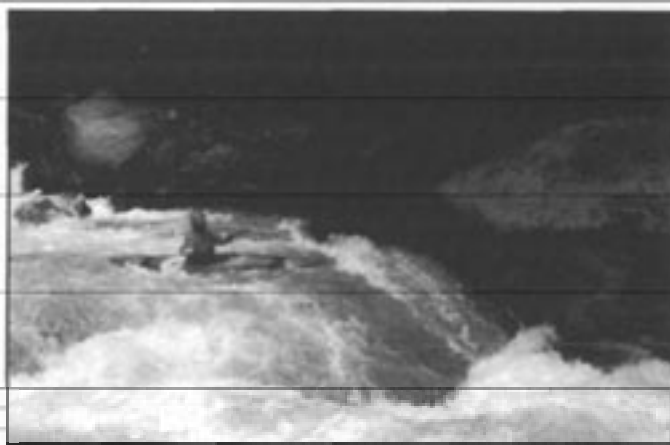
Bartering: Can be fun and challenging. Most Nepali expect to do some. Try to be light hearted about it and leave a good impression for the next group that will be following in your footsteps.

Trekking permits: Required for most rivers, you can get them at immigration office in Kathmandu or Pokhara. Pokhara is much easier.

Maps and books: Great bookstores in Thamel (Kathmandu) selling good maps and books of the local region.



Ken Ransford on Modi Khola



Dave Neff, Marsiandi

Guidebooks: Lonely Planet Trekking The Nepal Himalaya, and Nepal Whitewater by Peter Knowles and David Allerdice.

Suggested reading: A Mountain in Tibet; Annapurna, by Herzog.

Language: Very helpful to learn a few words, Basic Gurkhali Dictionary by M. Meerendonk is good. Most people involved in business speak at least some English.

Dangers and Annoyances: Buddhist and Hindu people are very passive, but there is some danger of theft. Avoid flashing money and expensive objects.

Courtesies and customs: This is a very old culture. Nudity, scanty clothing and public displays of affection should be avoided.

Backpacking supplies: Food and most items can be obtained in Kathmandu and Pokara. Small villages have very limited supplies. Specialty items and repair kits should be brought along.

Outfitters: Boat rental, guiding, instruction, and commercial trips are available from Equator Expeditions (Guy Robbins) 011-977-141-5812 or 1933 Fax and phone respectively, or Ultimate Descents (Dave Allerdice) 011-977-141-4803 or 6694, both in Thamel, Kathmandu.

Miscellaneous: Nepal is a great place. The people are wonderful, friendly and inspirational, and it's some of the best paddling in the world.



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Getting Myself Back: Recovering from a Traumatic Kayaking Accident

By Dunbar Hardy

I feel as if I have lived a lifetime in the last 9 months. I think of all that has happened in my life since last February, and am astounded by the changes that have occurred. All of this has happened since I broke 4 vertebrae in my back running a big drop down in Ecuador. The injury required surgery and had me incapacitated for months. The process of recovering from this continues today, with more surgery in my future and perhaps a lifetime of back pain.

I remember all the thoughts and feelings I had as I stood at the top of the drop. There was no question that this one was big enough to hurt me. I had feelings of nervousness and queasiness and a growing sense of impending danger and pain, as I stood alone at the top waiting for the others to set up below. These feelings were mixed with growing excitement and anticipation, as I was to be the first one of our group to run the drop. I briefly thought of not running it due to these mixed feelings, but I overruled myself. I felt as if I had to run this drop regardless of the outcome. Today, knowing what would happen, I don't regret my decision to run that drop: my life was drastically and forever changed in those 3-4 seconds of flight.

My last thought in the air was "this is going to hurt." I hit the foam pile butt first, leaning forward over my cockpit, thankfully staying upright. The wind was knocked out of me and I quit breathing. I couldn't hear anything and I didn't know where I was. I remember floating in the water into an eddy and having a sense that something was not right, but I wasn't exactly sure what had happened or where I was. I finally realized I hadn't breathed for awhile and I tried to sit upright. When I realized I couldn't, I slumped forward onto my forearms, gasping for air. A sharp pain in my mid-back kept me from inhaling deeply. I was forced to breathe shallowly and desperately with much effort. I also felt as if there was a hinge in the middle of my back and that my shoulders would drop forward and touch my stomach. I was broken.



The process of becoming unbroken and whole again was a long one. Surgery was necessary immediately in a hospital in Quito to fix me, but the real work was yet to be done to heal me. I laid in a hospital bed in a third world country for seven days unable to walk, all the while struggling to believe that this was my own life I was living. After surgery I had to learn to stand up and walk again. My first new steps were tentative and filled with fear. As soon as I got back to the states, I had to lie in bed for a month straight with only exhausting movements to the bathroom. I was given a back brace that I had to wear all day, everyday for six months. Mentally I plummeted and lost hope. I had been young, healthy, active, strong, and attractive; now I felt aged and elderly, crippled and broken, hurt and fatigued, achy, and full of doubt. I had to let go of all of my plans of work, travel, and competitions. I couldn't get out of bed, much less live my life of never-ending motion. I was forced to sit still, and I grieved for all the loss in my life. I doubted myself and my ability to recover.

I couldn't be active at all, much less paddle, so I pushed paddling away. I had so many mixed emotions about the sport that I had once loved so much and that had now crippled me so severely. I was physically and mentally scarred from paddling in a way that made me doubt I could try it again. I searched for new things to fill the place that paddling had occupied in my life. I realized how much of my life had become focused on paddling and that there was a lot of room for new things.

I began physical therapy, and was humbled by how weak I was. I realized that almost every movement - standing, sitting, walking, and lifting - was connected to my back. I was learning how to use my body again in a new way. I did therapy three times a week for 2 hours a day for 3 months. I began to feel some strength growing, and slowly my hope began to return. I tried anything that would offer me help - Rolfing, Acupuncture, Massage. I found



myself committed to do whatever was necessary for me to get better. I realized that no one else was going to do any of this for me, my recovery was up to me.

Slowly time passed and progress was made. I finished physical therapy, joined a gym, and began working out with a trainer just to get back some of what I had lost, not to get huge. I started going to Yoga classes to help with my flexibility, which has been severely limited by two 12-inch titanium rods in my back. Slowly I began to feel more comfortable in my body. However, there were still hours and days where I felt broken, defeated, and completely alone. I would wake up each day and try to do something to help myself heal.

After six months of being dry and watching everyone around me play hard during the summer, I was faced with getting back in a kayak. I could not completely walk away from this sport. I had to at least try just to see if it would be possible for me to paddle again, but in a different way than I had before. I was filled with fear, nervousness, and excitement, as I went paddling again for the first time. I was in touch with what a beginner feels. As I dragged my boat to the river's edge, I remembered how emotional this sport can be. I needed help getting my skirt on. I cried out with gratitude to be able to experience the river once again. I found so much pleasure in simply catching eddies, ferrying around, and

just getting wet. At the take-out of that first run I was beaming, loving again what I had missed for so long.

I have learned so many life lessons from this experience and I'm sure that as time passes more lessons will be revealed to me. I made the choice to run that drop and I have to accept the consequences of my actions. No one else was to blame for what happened to me. I didn't listen to my own intuition, I overruled myself. That voice is there to protect me, and I need to tune in to and trust that voice inside myself. Today my boating has so much more consciousness in every mo-

ment on the water; I have to be so much more aware at all times. I have no problem scouting and walking any drop that doesn't feel right to me. Some drops are just not worth it to me to run any more. I've been given another chance and I don't want to take it for granted. I do not wish to repeat this process, nor do I wish to see anyone else repeat it.

My paddling has indeed changed. I like paddling rapids where my butt is on the water more than in the air. I don't care to paddle glamour park and plop waterfalls. Paddling to me is an incredibly rich and rewarding way of life. I now realize that it is not worth dying for or being seriously injured over. In many ways I just couldn't keep up with my previous life-style and pace of travelling, paddling, and competing. I now realize that when all I did was paddle, my perspective on life became narrower and smaller. I felt the expectations of myself and from others. I struggled with competing, and began losing touch with the fun of the river. I needed to paddle more, harder, and higher. It was a dangerous spiral and not a sustainable way to paddle.

Today I don't take as many things for granted in my life. I complain a lot less today, because most irritations are nothing compared to what I've been through. I now have the ability to see what is important in my life and to care for those things. Paddling is for me now, not for anyone else; it is fun and rewarding again. I truly am grate-

ful every time I get wet, no matter what the river's rated. I also enjoy paddling while I'm paddling—I enjoy the moments on the water. I have broken myself so that I may never physically be able to do the moves I used to, and mentally I may never paddle the hardest or gnarliest drops. I will never be the best or the raddest, and today I accept that. No longer do I seek to prove myself; I simply just want to enjoy myself.

I hope to have water and rivers in my life forever, and I wish to enjoy this sport for years to come. I now have the beginnings of a life that boating is a part of, not all of. I am so thankful to have the opportunity of a healthy life and functioning body.

My health would not have been restored to me without a truly amazing group of people who helped me just after the accident. I will forever be grateful to each of you and indebted to each of you: Land Heflin, Polly Green, Seth Warren, Traycee Bowerman, Victor the driver, Gynner Coronel, Dr. Hernandez, Larry Vermeeren, Don Beveridge, Phil and Mary DeRiemer, Dave Calver, Nancy Hiemstra, and Melody Schmidt.

The following group of people has supported my healing and recovery through their love, friendships and support. I thank each of you greatly for all you have offered me in my time of need: Southwest Spine Rehabilitation Center (Sue B., Julie, and Erin Van Winkle), Kate Zorensky, Jules Harris, Jessica Beaudette, Sam Anderson, the whole gang at Four Corners Riversports (Andy Corra, Mike Balster, Kent Ford, Andrew Wracher, Kelly Starrett, Aaron Phillips, George Blair, Brittany Valdez), all of those people that prayed for my recovery, and my family (my sister Elizabeth, my brother Gus, and without a doubt the best mom and friend I could ever wish for—Mary).

I also appreciate the continued support and encouragement of the following companies: Necky Kayaks, Werner Paddles, KAVU Clothing, 5.10 Shoes, Watershed Drybags, Salamander Paddling Gear, Lotus Designs, Kokatat, Powerbar, Chaco Sandals, Smith Sunglasses, and Croakies.

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Take Better Paddling Photos

By Julie Keller

For years I have found great pleasure in sharing paddling photos with friends. I also found that as my photo skills improved my friends were more appreciative of the photos I shared. Now I want to share a few tips (and photos) to help other paddlers take better photos on the river.

The first thing to do when taking a river photo is deciding which kind of picture you want. Do you want scenery shots with a paddler included for perspective, or do you want action shots?

Finding the best place to take a photo often involves some paddling skill and a

little luck. Look for rocks that jut out into the river or that are high above a rapid. Avoid shooting into the sun. Experiment with different locations for photos. The river right photo of a kayaker at Sockem-Dog allows the photographer to get closer to the action, but the river left shot of Steve Frazier makes for a better photo.

Big drops make spectacular photos! In general, I like to get below the lip of big drops and snap the photo when the boat is in the air. For the shot of Dave Mackintosh at the Great Falls of the Potomac River I was standing on a rock about halfway up the drop. Lower water levels make bigger drops look bigger. The photo of Wilko van den Bergh at Baby Falls was taken at a very low level.

Many rapids are best when shot from an elevated position to show as much of the rapid as possible. Also most rapids have more than one good camera angle. Bull Sluice on the Chattooga River has several great photo spots. My favorite angle is that used for the photo of Monte Smith. Unfortunately, in the shot of the



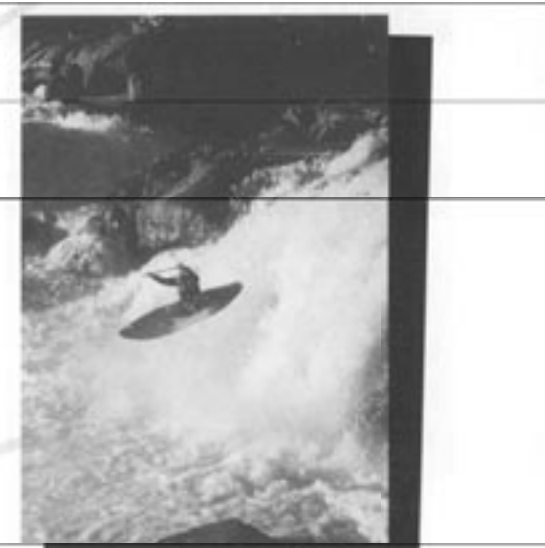
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Take Better Paddling Photos

tandem canoe, the bow paddler has her arm in front of her face.

Avoid cluttered backgrounds. The two shots of paddlers doing enders at Smiley Hole on the upper Ocoee both caught paddlers with lots of air and their tongue's hanging out. But the shot of the kayaker has the crowd of spectators in the background, this makes for a very cluttered and distracting photo.

Big, brightly-colored boats usually make the best photos, white or gray boats don't. The only time light colored boats look sharp is when they're being endered out of the water against a dark background, like Jen Seabury on the Middle Fork of the Salmon.

There often is not a rock in the place you want to stand to take a photo or it is just not possible to get out on that rock you want to shoot from. This is one of the reasons I carry a waterproof camera tucked into my PFD. I can take shots from the middle of the river or in an unstable eddy. It is great for scenery shots. For close up action shots I like carrying a SLR camera with zoom lenses and faster shutter speeds.

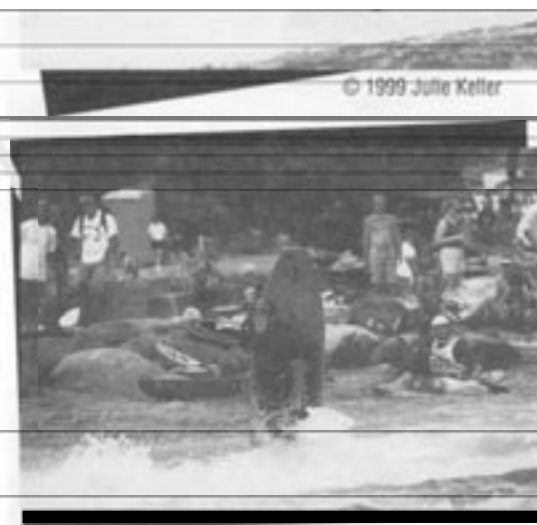
The type of camera you use can make a difference in the quality of your photos. If you are using a single-use waterproof camera don't expect to be able to enlarge photos for the wall, but they will be able to take photos from lots of places you wouldn't want your SLR camera to go.

Film speed is an important consideration for shooting whitewater photos. In general, use faster film than you would for non-paddling photos, especially when using cameras without center-weighted or spot metering. In my Nikon Action Touch waterproof camera I rarely use 100 speed film, but have found that 200 speed film works well under most conditions. On cloudy days 400 speed film helps prevent lots of blurry photos.

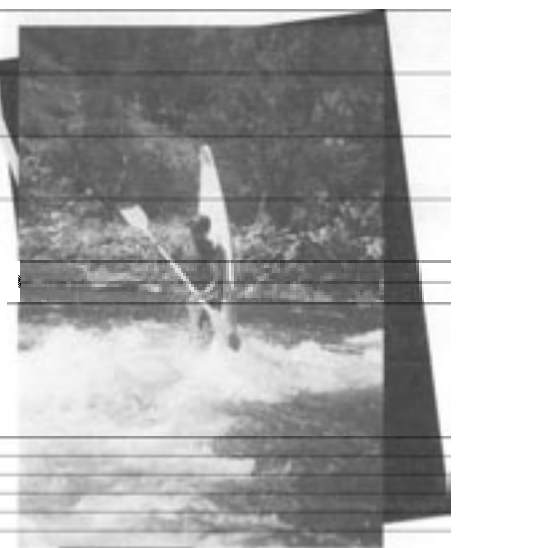
When using a SLR camera with a



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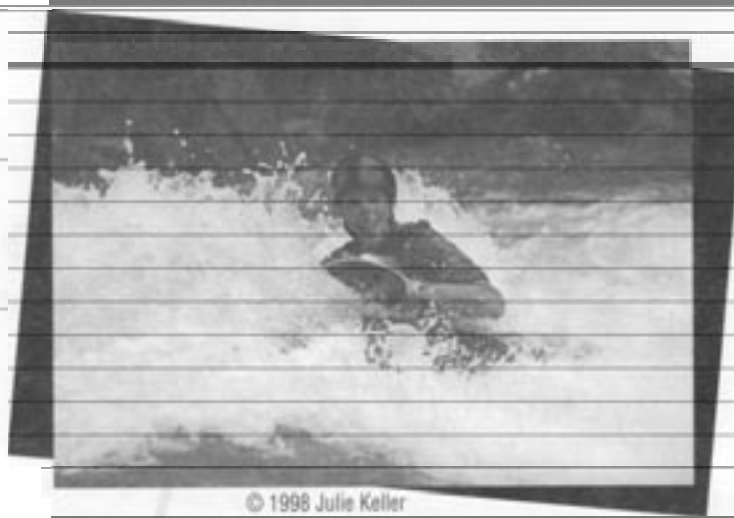
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choice of metering options, center-weighted metering works well for up-close action shots. The face of the kayaker hand surfing at Hell Hole on the Ocoee River would have been dark without using center-weighted (or spot) metering. Without the center weighted (or spot) metering all the whitewater tends to make the faces of the paddler dark. The paddler's expression is what you really want to capture in this type of photo.

Using a SLR camera in a Pelican box takes considerable time and effort. Make sure your paddling day allows for the extra time. The people you are paddling with should want to have their photos taken and be willing to take the time on the river necessary to set up for shooting.

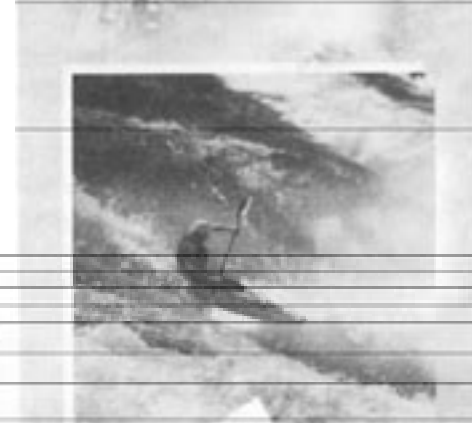
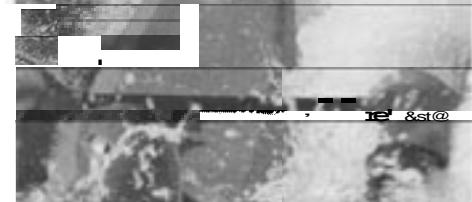
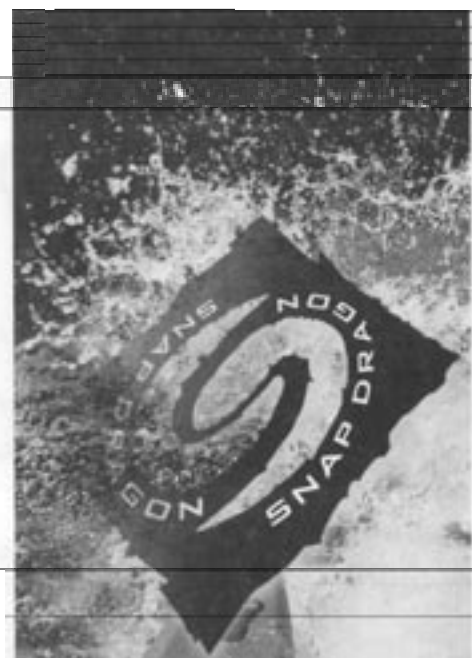
I carry a Nikon N90s and three Nikon lenses (35-70 mm f2.8; 80-200 mm f2.8; and a 24-50 mm f 3.3-4.5) in my 1450 Pelican box for a weight of about 15 pounds. A hand towel in a plastic bag is useful for drying hands before handling the camera. Pelican boxes need regular attention to stay dry. I leave my box open when not in use and keep the gasket clean and lubricated with 303.

Remember to give your camera to a

friend so that you will have some shots of yourself. After a while you will wish that you were in some of your own photos. Some paddling friends had a good time recently when everyone swapped cameras for the day. It was really interesting for everyone to get the photos developed.

Paddling photos are not just about taking photos on the water. Many interesting "paddling" shots have nothing to do with water. I love the shot Steve Frazier took of Fran Fitzpatrick and I while we were waiting for our shuttle train to take us from the take-out to the put-in of the Flims Gorge on the Vorderrhein River in Switzerland.

Lastly, don't forget to share your photos with your friends and American Whitewater.



© 1999 Julie Keller
Photo by Steve Frazier



1999 Downriver Rankings Announced

By Chris Norbury photos by Emily Truckenmiller

The Gore Canyon Race, the Animal Upper Gauley Race, the Upper Yough Race, the Russell Fork Race, and the Cheat Canyon Race. These are all races covered by the AW Journal and followed by a large number of paddlers in the U.S. But who are the paddlers who win these races? They aren't the icons like Corran Addison or Eric Jackson, or the Olympic hopefuls like Scott Shipley and Jason Beakes. The paddlers who win these races are the fastest, fittest paddlers on rough water in the country. These are the paddlers who love to take a wafer thin carbon-kevlar racing machine, unstable at best on flatwater, down Class V rivers, paddling as fast as possible for up to an hour. This is the sport of Wildwater racing.

Wildwater (Also known as Downriver) isn't the biggest paddling sport in the U.S., nor the most widely recognized. Of the top ten K1 men in the country only one is sponsored by a boat manufacturer (and he works for them). These paddlers love speed above all else. They spend the majority of their time perfecting their technique and endurance on flat water, doing endless aerobic workouts to increase their speed on the rough. So, who is the fastest, and how fast are they really?

To answer this question the ACA Wildwater Committee has compiled rankings for downriver in the U.S. The rankings include any races that were held on Class II or over, whatever length; and the times must have been recorded to allow calculation of percentages from the winner. In addition, the race must have included a composite or plastic downriver boat in the results. So, for instance, the Russell Fork race, won by Chris Hipgrave in a Wavehopper, counts towards the rankings. But the Great Falls race, won by Eric Jackson, did not include any downriver boats, and the final was in an untimed head-to-head format, so the race did not count towards the rankings.

The race results were also rated by race importance and field strength. The highest race importance factors were given to those races that counted as Internationals (e.g. the Ocoee Double Header) or the National Championships or Team Trials. Other established races that are held to a format resembling international downriver races were next in impor-

tance, followed by "extreme" races, mass start races, and, finally, local races. Race importance ranged from 1 (e.g. Ocoee) to 0.8 (e.g. Dickerson Whitewater Sprint).

Field strength was calculated on the number of U.S. team members racing, or, in the case where there were no current U.S. team members racing, or the number of ex-U.S. or foreign team members racing. To allow consistency to be a factor all rankings were calculated from the best percentage of a total of 5 races, or part thereof. Results from 46 races, ranging from races in New York to Alabama, Colorado, and the Pacific Northwest, were used in the rankings.

Races ranged in difficulty from Class II-III on the Nantahala to Class V on the Russell Fork and over Ohio Pyle Fall. Despite being a "minority" sport, over 650 boats were ranked in the various classes, although the majority of paddlers participated in only one race through the year. Hopefully next year many more paddlers will participate in more than one race.

So who topped the rankings? Who is the fastest? Andrew McEwan, from Germantown, MD, and paddling out of the Bethesda Center of Excellence (BCE), won the K1M ranking by a large margin (461.25 points out of a possible 495). Andrew was undefeated over Classic length races this year, finishing second only once to Cody Harris in a Wavehopper sprint on the Arkansas River. Classic races are those held over courses 15-25 minutes long, whilst sprint races combine the times of 2 runs down a single rapid, each run generally lasting 1-3 minutes.

Andrew won races on Tohickon Creek, the Ocoee, the Cheat (by over 5 minutes), the Gauley, the Roaring Fork and the Potomac. He missed out on challenging Roger Zobel for the crown on the Upper Yough, because he was at school in Tennessee. He was also the top ranked U.S. paddler in the World Cup in New Zealand,

> List of races ranked in 1999.

placing 32nd at the age of 19.

Ranked second is former U.S. team member Ted Newton (Lehigh Valley Canoe Club), who narrowly held off the challenge of former Swiss team member Heinz Roethenmund (BCE) by winning a race on his home river, the Lehigh, PA. Ted won races on the Lehigh, placed second to Andrew on the Tohickon and Cheat, second to Canadian champion Neil Gerrard at the Salmon, and narrowly missed winning the Upper Yough race. Ted is having his best season ever and is looking to win a place on the U.S. team at the world Championships in France next year.

Ted will have to watch out for the youngsters though. The results of the Junior Men's rankings bode well for the future. Nathan and Austin Krissoff (Reno Wildwater Center) both paddled consistently well throughout the year to place first and second. Trips abroad for international competition in the past few years have given these two the experience to earn a top spot at senior level in coming years. It's worth noting that Nathan Krissoff would have placed fourth in the senior rankings this year.

Also making a strong showing, despite never having paddled a downriver boat until July of this year, was Simon Beardmore (BCE) who improved dramatically and should be a contender for a top spot next year. These paddlers, along with Middy Tilghman (19), who was the second U.S. boat in the World Cup this year, should challenge Andrew McEwan for the top spot in the coming years. Hopefully competition among these teens should raise the standard of U.S. wildwater internationally.

In the Women's K1, Cathy Hearn (BCE) took first place, thanks to strong performances in sprint races on the Nantahala and Ocoee rivers. Second was Jennie

Tohickon Creek, Ocoee Double Header and Sprint, Potomac Circuit races (216, 2/28, 5/5, 6/20), Nantahala Spring Splash Classic and Sprint, NOC Glacier Breaker, Roaring Fork, Kernville, Lehigh (5113, 5/27, 6/10, 7/8 and Sprint and Classic on 11/7), Potomac Downriver race, Cedar, Cheat Canyon, Feeder Junior Olympic Qualifier, Salmon La Sac, Skykomish, Tim Gavin Memorial race. National Championships (Sprint and Classic—Friday and Sunday), Yampa, FibArk, Gore Canyon, upper Yough, Snoqualamie (7/10 and 11/6), Salmon, Upper Gauley, Russell Fork. Bottom Moose. Mulbeny Fork, Dickerson WhiteWater Challenge, Red Moshannon, Ohioyle Falls, Little Falls of the Potomac, Missouri Whitewater Challenge and Big Piney races.

For a full listing of the National rankings check out the wildwater website at www.usawildwater.com. The site also contains a listing of upcoming events all over the U.S. and contacts if you are interested in participating.

Goldberg, paddling for the League of North West racers in the popular North West series of races, and third was Trish Chambers. In the Junior category Zuzana Vanha (Team Colorado) paddled strongly in the National Championships in Colorado, but was overtaken in overall ranking by Beth Karp (BCE), who improved steadily through the year and paddled in more races to gain more overall points.

In C1 the national ranking champion was Joe Winters (Team Colorado/FIBArk Paddling Club), who narrowly edged out Tom Wier (Team Colorado/FIBArk Paddling Club). Having graduated from the junior ranks last year, Tom made a big impression on the senior ranks this year, beating Joe in 3 of 4 races. However, a disappointing performance on day 2 of the National Championship Classic race relegated him to second. Former National Champion Tim Sampsel (Team Colorado/FIBArk Paddling Club), now racing mostly in C2 with Scott

Overdorf came in third. In C2 the Bailey brothers, Russell and Reid (Georgia Canoeing Association), demonstrated their whitewater skills by racing a downriver C2 in the Gauley race this year, and took first place in the rankings to boot. U.S. team boats Scott Overdorf and Tim Sampsel (Team Colorado/FIBArk Paddling Club) took second, with Charlie Albright and Norwood Scott (Reno Wildwater Center) in third.

After much experimentation with the format of the rankings this year, the calculations will be slightly different next year. Races will still be ranked for importance and field strength. Next year the races with the highest importance are likely to be the East (Nantahala) and West (White Salmon) Coast Team Trials, the National Championships, and any international events in the U.S., such as the Ocoee and FibArk. The Field Strength will be calculated from the score of the top ranked competitor from this year's ranking who is participating in the race. Overall the rankings will be expressed differently, as the mean of the totals (after taking the race importance and field strength into account) from the best 5 races. If individuals do not participate in 5 races their score will be reduced by 5% for every race missed.

So, for next year, race in a lot of races (11 was the highest number of races last year), go to the important races, race the good paddlers...and you will get a good ranking, and, hopefully, have a lot of fun along the way.



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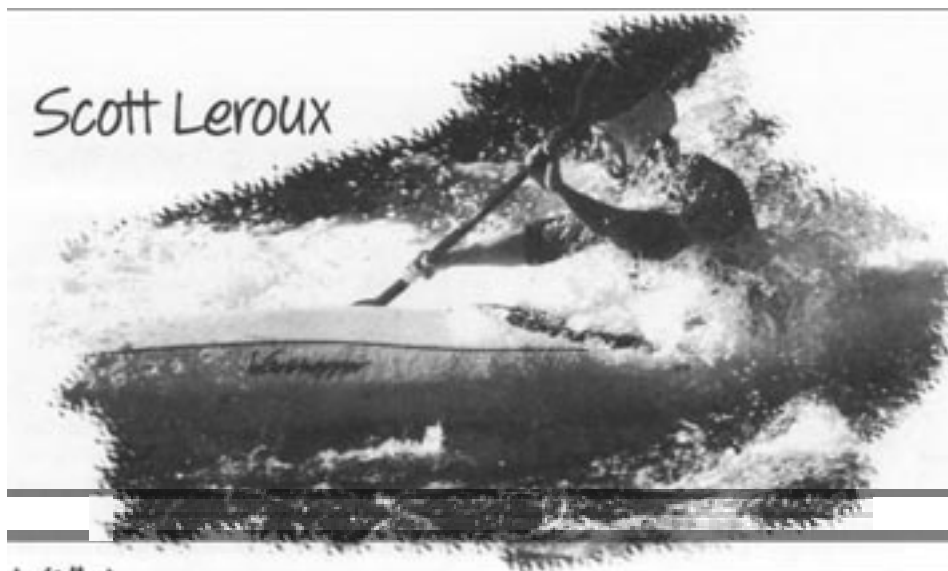
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K1M

Position	Name	Class	Best total	No. of races
1	Andrew McEwan	K1M	461.25	5 of 7
2	Ted Newton	K1M	435.62	5 of 10
3	Heinz Roethemund	K1M	435.36	5 of 8
4	Chris Norbury	K1M	414.69	5 of 11
5	Paul Hoda	K1M	407.06	5 of 8
6	Chris Iezzoni	K1M	391.38	5 of 6
7	Dave Bonomo	K1M	384.15	5
8	Nelson Oldham	K1M	373.17	4
9	Matt Lutz	K1M	346.75	4
10	Jeff Parker	K1M	342.04	4
11	Chris Hipgrave	K1M	341.71	4
12	David Zimmermann	K1M	318.75	4
13	Mike Burns	K1M	310.98	5
14	Steve Kauffman	K1M	298.39	4
15	Matt Davidson	K1M	295.58	4
16	Scott Leroux	K1M	290.32	4
17	Eugene Gallagher	K1M	286.08	4
18	Gaw Lacey	K1M	260.29	3
19	Brian Homberg	K1M	235.43	3
20	Dave Ward	K1M	231.00	3



photo by Mike Hams



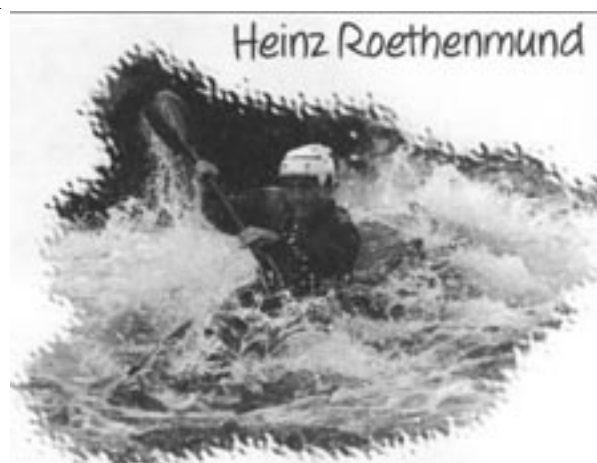
Simon Beardmore

K1M Jr

Position	Name	Class	Best total	No. of races
1	Nathan Krissoff	K1M Jr	417.94	5
2	Austin Krissoff	K1M Jr	411.34	5
3	Simon Beardmore	K1M Jr	361.05	5
4	Sven Hoosen	K1M Jr	294.99	5
5	James Burris	K1M Jr	228.46	4
6	Matt Weldon	K1M Jr	201.01	3
7	Jeff Johnson	K1M Jr	147.69	2
8	Puss Johnston	K1M Jr	147.57	2
9	Nick Boatwright	K1M Jr	143.14	2
10	Clay Wilder	K1M Jr	117.63	2

K1W

Position	Name	Class	Best total	No. of races
1	Cathy Hearn	K1W	382.39	5
2	Jennie Goldberg	K1W	365.15	5
3	Trish Chambers	K1W	261.64	4
4	Tracy Hines	K1W	228.28	3
5	Carol Pelmas	K1W	220.85	3
6	Hope Concannon	K1W	208.35	3
7	Marian Davidson	K1W	203.50	3
8	Michele Hinatsu	K1W	196.72	3
9	Lisa Farin	K1W	181.64	3
10	Lane Errickson	K1W	175.02	2



K1W Jr

Position	Name	Class	Best total	No. of races
1	Beth Karp	K1W Jr	265.40	5
2	Zuzana Vanha	K1W Jr	259.72	4
3	Kathryn Dyer	K1W Jr	132.38	2
4	Becca Red	K1W Jr	118.52	2
5	Laura Jorgensen	K1W Jr	118.07	2
6	Mandy Weldon	K1W Jr	118.02	2
7	Shannon Reeves	K1W Jr	117.14	2
8	Katie Dennis	K1W Jr	114.93	2
9	Meloday Scheefer	K1W Jr	77.01	1
10	Lindsay Jenkins	K1W Jr	71.26	1

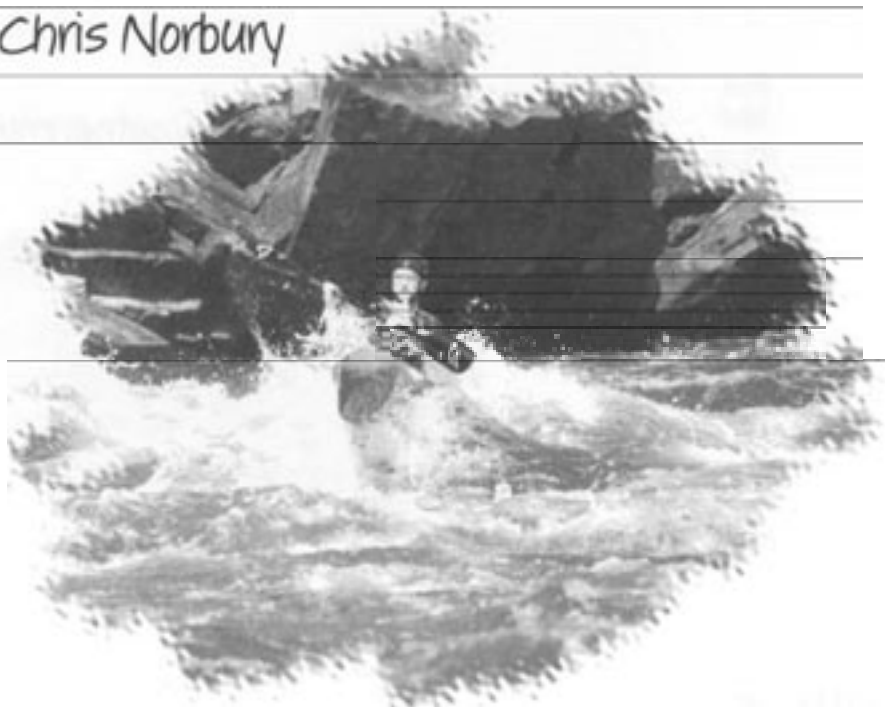


Dave Bonomo

C1

Position	Name	Class	Best total	No. of races
1	Joe Winters	C1	309.32	4
2	Tom Wier	C1	295.51	4
3	Tim Sampsel	C1	172.94	2
4	Kevin Michelson	C1	168.84	2
5	Michael Beavers	C1	160.15	2
6	Andy Bridge	C1	157.81	2
7	Mike Harris	C1	100.79	2
8	Lecky Haller	C1	77.04	1
9	Lee Sanders	C1	69.82	1
10	Scott Overdorf	C1	68.13	1

Chris Norbury



C2

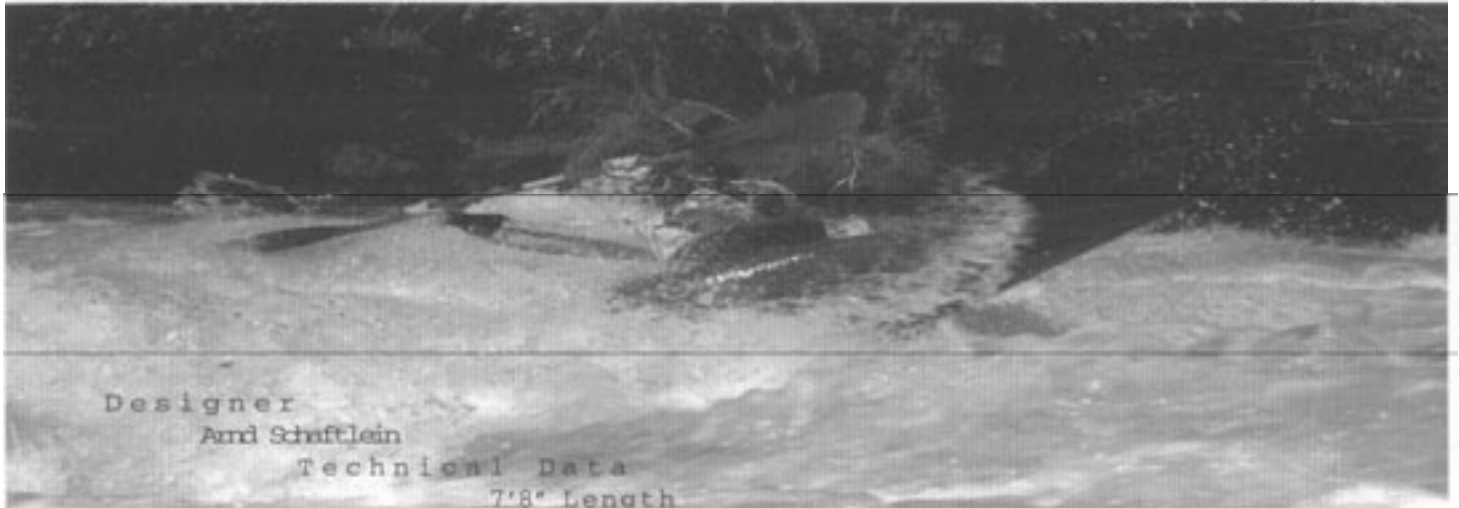
Position	Name	Class	Best total	No. of races
1	Bailey/Bailey	C2	230.05	3
2	Overdorf/Sampsel	C2	78.90	1
3	Albright/Scott	C2	68.83	1
4	Zimmermann/Mein	C2	67.33	1
5	Ross/Havens	C2	66.69	1
6	Lubbers/Davis	C2	65.92	1
7	Lynn/Burris	C2	64.00	1
8	Hagg/?	C2	59.00	1
9	Van Winssen/Van Winssen ..	C2	57.40	1
10	Wenchel/Mein	C2	54.38	1

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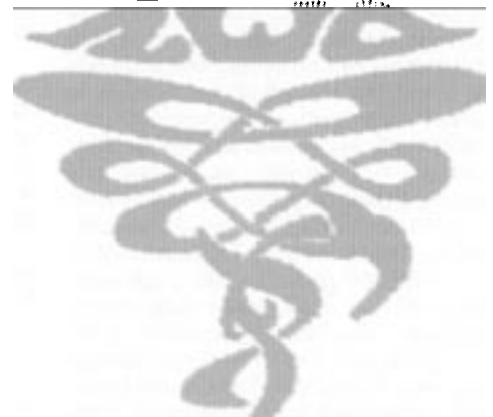
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And Schafflein
Technical Data
7'8" Length

26" Width
31 lb Weight



Coming Soon: The Quadro

Lessons

by Robert Farmer

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The first river I ever really paddled was the Lower Youghiogheny (Yok-a-gain-ee) in southwestern Pennsylvania. When I say "really paddled," I mean by that that I paddled an entire section of a river rather than just a tiny piece of it. I had paddled for one or two hundred yards on a tame section of the Arkansas River in Colorado, but I had quickly capsized and nearly drowned in trying to escape the claustrophobic, old-style cockpit that threatened to remove my kneecaps every time I attempted to enter or exit the boat. Also, I had briefly been in a Class I rapid on Cache Creek in California, but that too was not really intended as an entry into the sport. The Lower Yough (pronounced "Yok") was, for all intents and purposes, the first time I had ever attempted to maneuver a kayak. I was terrified. Although I was a strong swimmer, I had no idea what I was up against in the rapids and holes on this river. It's not that I underestimated them—don't get me wrong, here—it's just that I quite literally had no idea. It was this fear of the unknown that really bothered me. I, like many people, had an intense fear of drowning, a fear that seemed all too likely to be realized in that confused and turbulent river environment. As I pushed out from the shore at the put-in, I was nervous. My new used boat, purchased only minutes earlier from one of the local outfitters, seemed impossibly unstable, and I knew that, if I flipped, I would swim. I did not yet have a roll. I had never even tried to roll. I had absolutely no conception whatsoever of how a roll should work. My strategy was, quite simply, to remain upright at any cost. Failing that, I would wait for my friend Joe to paddle over and somehow right me. If that didn't work, I would swim the terrifying, unfamiliar rapids.

As I approached the first wave—a gentle, easy, diagonal wave often used by beginners and others for surfing practice—I was very apprehensive. This would likely be my first swim, in this first easy wave above this first terrifying rapid. If I swam here, I would most likely be unable to exit the wide, powerful current before being sucked helplessly into the churning maw downstream, which was quite clearly controlled by the forces of darkness and chaos.

I tried to paddle hard, to build up some momentum to punch through the violent hole at the base of this sinister 8-inch drop. At this point in my paddling career, however, momentum was something that the river did

to me, rather than being something over which I could exert even the tiniest modicum of control. Somehow, though, I managed to pass through the hole, the hole that most people could drift through unconsciously, after which I struggled over to the right shore, my boat rocking violently as my poorly-adapted body tensed and overcorrected at all the wrong times. I sat there at the margin of the action for several minutes, watching scores of "experts" swarming the river with masterful control. Finally, there was enough of a gap in the traffic flow that I could slip out into the current without fear of a collision. I teetered downstream.

Somehow, probably due to Joe's route-finding ability, I struggled through Entrance rapid without capsizing. My relief was immense. The field of rocks below me and the powerful, changeable currents offered a horrifying scenario for a swimmer. From the eddy at the bottom, I briefly enjoyed some little satisfaction from my little success, and then, quickly, without missing a beat, began hyperventilating in anticipation of Cucumber, the next, most bodacious rapid. My goal for this rapid was simply to paddle far enough right to miss the rocks on the top left, and then to wash through upright The second part eluded me.

I don't remember much, other than being upside down in the water, with incredible pain in my sinuses as a result of the cold river water penetrating places where it was never meant to be. For unexplained reasons, I had washed over to shore, where I could at least pull my head out of the water, even though I had no clue how to bring my disobedient boat back under control. Bad boat! Bad, bad, boat! Joe paddled over and twisted the boat upright, and I was ready to go again.

For reasons that defy logical explanation, I was able to remain upright through the next several rapids, indeed, on most of the rest of the river. Except, of course, for Dimple.

Dimple is the toughest rapid on the river—Class 4+, in my opinion, although the local outfitters would never admit that—and it looks it. It involves a narrow chute on river left that slams head-on into a squarish obstructing rock with an upstream surface that leans forward toward the unwary paddler like the Tower of Pisa. For kayakers, what this means is that, if the side of your boat actually touches the rock, you will be leaning upstream; if you lean upstream, you will flip. These are immutable laws, following in ineluctable progression. Once the sequence is initiated, it can not be denied. There are other ways to flip here, though, my favorite being the Instinctive Counteraction Against Non-Exis-

tent Centrifugal Force method. It must be my favorite, because I used it long after its novelty had worn away, despite many visualization sessions in which I abandoned it completely and decisively, relegating it to its deserved place on the junkpile out back of my consciousness. Old habits die hard. This method also involves that pernicious and redoubtable nemesis, the upstream lean. What happens is this: (1) you approach the hideous Dimple rock; (2) you see that the river piles up angrily before sloping gradually off to the right side; (3) as you move rightward, you lean to the right, upstream side, in anticipation of the turning forces which you have come to expect from your experiences on bikes, in cars, and in trains, planes, and buses; (4) you flip immediately; (5) experienced paddlers laugh at you—inappropriately, really, considering the danger here—because they've seen this a thousand times; (6) you, however, don't see step 5, because you are underwater, in fear for your life; (7) you either roll up, or you swim.

There is another step that occurs sometimes, but it is by no means as certain or as common as the ones preceding it. That step is the one in which you get trapped underwater, and you die.

Someone dies at Dimple rock pretty much every year—rafters, usually. It is good to remember to maintain respect for the river here, for all rivers everywhere. Even easy rivers are far more powerful than you are. Remember that as you observe the depth of the valley the river has cut.


On my first trip down, I swam from Dimple all the way down the following set of rocky rapids, through Swimmers Rapid, to the pool downstream around the corner to the left. This is not an unusual occurrence for novice boaters. It would not be unusual for me, in particular.

After taking a break to eat, swim, and play, Joe and I continued downstream. I managed to blunder without upset through all the rest of the rapids on the river, except for River's End. After watching the current slam into River's End Rock and then shoot left over an obstructionist row of smaller rocks, I carried my boat over the rocks on the left shore. Two near-death experiences a day are plenty for me, thanks. Clearly, I had met up with the limits of my abilities. This was quite easy to do at that point in my paddling career.

I am also proud to report that I managed to paddle through the second hole at Double Hydraulic without capsizing this was a miracle that can not be explained in any but religious terms. (I, of course, had no idea where I was heading at the time.) There was no reason at all for me not to flip—I went right through the middle—but, inexplicably, I didn't.

I floated haphazardly down to the take-out, where I emerged happy to be alive, and cognizant that I had a long way to go. I couldn't imagine that I would ever be capable

R I V E R V O I C E S



of paddling Class 5 or 6-my fear of drowning was just too intense. Yet I also realized that I would most likely keep improving steadily, and, knowing my personality as well as I did, I imagined that I might well someday be tempted to run Class 6 rapids. Whether I actually would, I could not know. Nevertheless, such knowledge frightened me. I felt shivers along my spine.

It is now weeks or months later. I have paddled the Lower Yough numerous, or at least several, times. I have usually run it alone, although one is never really alone on a weekend run of the Lower Yough. There are always people around in case of emergency, so I don't really feel alone, even though, strictly speaking, such a situation still really is not the same as paddling with others.

After my first trip on this river, I vowed that I would not return until I could roll at least somewhat better than 50% of the time. I spent several days at a convenient eddy on the Potomac near Harper's Ferry doing nothing but flipping, swimming, draining my flooded boat, and, sometimes, rolling. My roll technique is now good on flat water, where I never need it, but only iffy in rapids.

I am preparing to run Dimple. I have run it every time that I have done the river so far, and every time I have flipped. My learning curve here is dismayingly flat. But here I go again.

I charge down the chute, and approach the heinous Dimple Rock. I instinctively fear it, and lean away-upstream. Again. As you'll recall from the immutable laws mentioned earlier, this means that I am immediately upside-down. I have flipped. The most important thing to remember here, I think, is not to panic. If I'm going to come out of my boat again, as I usually have here, I'm going to wait until after I have floated past Dimple Rock. A person in a boat-even an upside-down boat-has much greater flotation than do a person and a flooded boat separately. Also, here is not a good place to roll back up. I wait.

There is now less turbulence in the water, so I attempt a roll. I miss, but I manage to get a breath of air. I attempt another roll. I am up! I hear whooping from shore. But, in my inexperience, I overshoot, flipping over to the opposite side. I try again to roll. I miss. I try again. I miss again. That's it, then, I'm outta here. I push my way out of the boat. Now I am swimming down a set of rocky, turbulent rapids. I keep my feet up, arching my back to try to stay near the surface. Bam! My butt hits a rock solidly, without slowing me much at all. I regain my floating position. Bam! I hit another rock, more painfully. Bam! A rock hits my ribs. Bam! My butt hits another one. Okay, this is too shallow. I should be able to stand up safely here. Bam! I try to grab the rounded, smooth, slippery, submerged rock that has just smashed me in my buttocks. I try to stand. My hands slip off

the rock. I try to curl my legs up underneath me as I roll over backwards. Then, I stop. Finally! My right lower leg is jammed in vertically between some rocks; my knee is only inches below the surface. I reach out for a rock that will allow me to push my face above the surface of the water. I grab a rock and push, twisting my face toward the atmosphere. But the rocks are too far away; my arms are not long enough. I can not get my face to the surface. I am trapped underwater, unable to breathe.

I reach around with increasing annoyance-I am not yet scared, although such fear might serve me well here, for motivational purposes. There are no suitable rocks within reach. Thus I instead try to sit up-my abdominal muscles are pretty strong-but the more I sit up, the more water hits my chest and shoulders, pushing me back down, in the same way that an airfoil operates. Even the Incredible Hulk couldn't sit-up his way out of here. Next, I figure that I should rise out of the water bottom-first, pulling my head up last. This can't be done, either; I have no fulcrum, and the water pushes down on my hips, too. The air above the water's surface is only inches away; I can reach it easily with my hands, but not my face. If only I could grab a handful of air and put it in my mouth; but, I can not. Now, suddenly, I realize what is happening here. I am drowning. I am about to die.

This is ludicrous. This can't be happening! This water is only two-and-a-half feet deep, 30 inches or so, barely over my knee! How is this possible? The answer, quite simply, is that the water here is deeper than the length of one of my arms to the opposite shoulder-perhaps three-and-a-half feet, downstream here, where my face happens to be. Just as an unconscious person can drown in a half-inch of water, or a baby can drown upside-down in one inch of water at the bottom of a bucket, I can drown here with my face one inch below the surface of the water because the density of the water prevents any usable quantities of air from getting to my nose and mouth. Thus, I can expect to die soon, perhaps in seconds. Possibly, I might live for as much as 8 more minutes, but I will be conscious for perhaps only one of those minutes. Then, after I lose consciousness, my brain will begin to die in 4-6 minutes more, I recall from my extensive first-aid training. So I figure, add a couple of more minutes, and I'll be dead.

I wonder if anyone noticed a body disappear here under the water. One minute I was on the surface, and the next minute I was gone. Probably, no one did. Despite all these people immediately upstream from me, I am essentially alone here. I believe that a person is always alone on the river anyway-unless someone is standing nearby with a throw-rope ready-in-hand; and even then, such help may not be able to effect a rescue-but now I

am really, totally alone. By the time someone figures out that there is a body trapped here, underwater, and scrambles downhill over those large, rounded, slippery river rocks along the shore, I will be long dead, my body fluttering pathetically in the current, suspended from my right knee ... I find these thoughts to be unacceptable. There has to be something I can do ...

I grab my clothing, and try to crawl up my leg with my hands to get to the surface. It doesn't work. The current is too strong. I try to maneuver around, stroking and sweeping with my hands and left foot, trying to rotate my left leg downstream underneath me. If I can stand on my left leg, I can pull against my jammed right leg in an A-frame, tripod-like arrangement to lever my body up out of the water. Finally, I get my left leg underneath me. Pulling on my right leg, I push with my left leg. I am up; I can breathe. I expect to stand there briefly, but as soon as the air reaches my lungs, my right leg pops loose, wrenching my knee in the process. Now I'm floating downstream again, my knee throbbing.

"Bump my ass as hard as you want," I think to myself, "I'm not falling for that trick again. 'Fool me once-shame on you; fool me twice-shame on me.' I remind myself.

I float on downstream, in the now-familiar manner, to just below Swimmers Rapid. People there have salvaged all of my gear for me. I thank them. They probably have no idea that I just nearly died, just out of sight around the bend upstream. Well, I'm not going to tell them. I just want to sit here for awhile before I continue downstream. I just want to rest a minute.

Later, I will learn to run Dimple well, in a variety of ways; but, on the first 8 or 12 times I ran it, I always flipped upside-down. It was a long learning curve. Some of those times, I may have managed to roll up afterward-but not at first. I'm glad it's behind me.

On another occasion, I paddle with a group, one member of which I have encountered briefly before. The person in this group with whom I am acquainted is a pretty, dark-haired girl who approached me at a gas station when she recognized that I had the same model of boat she did. Then, we talked for a while before going our separate ways. Today, she has a male friend, perhaps a boyfriend, whom she seems always to paddle near.

Everything is fine, everyone is having a good time, until we come to River's End. As I make the left turn in the middle of the rapid, I see that someone is pinned against the rocks on the right. It is the girl's friend, trapped in his kayak, pinned horizontally against the broaching rocks that characterize this rapid. Other people, more experienced and knowledgeable people, I presume, have beaten me to the scene. The boat is, I believe, partly above water, but perhaps not. As I paddle over through the eddy behind the rocks, his rescuers free him; there seems to be no harm done.



After he reenters his boat, he describes the situation. "I felt pretty stable," he says, "I wasn't scared." Wait. Stop right there. "Excuse me, you weren't scared?" I ask rhetorically. "A hundred thousand pounds of water per second is flowing down this river, a disproportional amount of it landing directly on you, pinning you inside your boat against a rock, and you weren't scared?" I query him aggressively. "Now, let me explain something to you here: You damn well should have been scared, because what happened to you back there is exactly how people die. You almost died back there, and, apparently, you don't even realize it. So if you weren't scared, then there is definitely something wrong here." I later discuss this with Joe, my experienced paddler friend, and he confirms my suspicion. "And furthermore," I continue, "I've known people who didn't know when to be scared, and several of them are dead now—victims of what I term 'an excess of courage.'" They died in climbing accidents, mostly, but that difference isn't important; faulty judgment is faulty regardless of its circumstances. "So you had damn well better learn to be scared, or I expect that you won't be living much longer. If you weren't scared, if you can't learn to be scared, then perhaps you should take up some other, safer activity-like golf or backgammon."

The victim mutters something, like "O.K.," and drifts off downstream. Behind his back, his girlfriend silently mouths to me the words, "Thank you." I've seen it before, I reflect. I

think about the departed I have known, victims in that other sport that I have loved so long. I think about a 100-foot bloodstain that adorned the Wind Tower in Eldorado Canyon for several months one summer and fall—a stain of the blood that leaked from a young man's ear, I was told, after he fell a ridiculously-an 'unforgiveably,' as it turns out—long distance down a fairly easy rock wall. His dried, thickened blood, as ephemeral as the lost, squandered life of which it had once been a part, stood that season as a testament to foolishness, until it was later, at long last, washed away by the cold, wet winds of a Rocky Mountain winter. I seem to recall being told that he too was out with his girlfriend that fateful day... An excess of courage. It is a thin line.

These sorts of things happen every day, I am sure. Many of them happen on the Lower Yough. It is inevitable, really, with so many people receiving their first introduction to river-running here. In addition to that, the Yough is a convenient training ground for novices who wish to become intermediates, and intermediates training for the next step up, perhaps to the Cheat Canyon, or maybe the Lower Gauley. The Yough sees a lot of traffic.

I never really had anyone to explain to me all of the various river mistakes that people make—some of them quite foreseeable, some of them fatal. Such a person would have been quite useful. I learned to develop a survival

sense through climbing, and it is somewhat transferable, though not strictly, to other activities, as well. In the days when I climbed more often, I used to read *Accidents in North American Mountaineering*. Every year, each volume would have largely the same accidents; mostly what changed were the names of the injured and the dead. For river sports, there is the *River Safety Report*, an analogous volume of river accidents that makes educational, if sobering, reading. It is assembled by Charlie Walbridge, a river safety expert, and published by American Whitewater. You might want to get a copy.

I don't paddle the Lower Yough much anymore, but I know it is still there, teaching a new generation the same lessons it has always taught since this sport began, as do all rivers, creeks, and assorted streams every day. The river seems benign, but it is not. It is sometimes an unforgiving teacher. The river is not your friend—not all of the time, anyway. It simply is. It is good to remember that.

Editor's Note: Robert Farmer has been working for the past several years to write a book of river stories. If you enjoyed this story and would like to reach the author with publishing advice or encouragement, please contact Robert Farmer at PO Box 41184 Baltimore, MD 21203 or rsfartner@starpower.net

A First Descent: (I promise)

By Tyler Williams

There was no turning back. Though we stood at the put-in and contemplated the run's hazards, the time for changing our minds was long past. For avid kayakers living in the parched Southwest, the murky channel of snowmelt seductively swirling its way into an unrun canyon was too much to resist. We knew in our guts that we were going to run it. Nevertheless, we carried on a discussion of our options, feigning indecision. I started: "Well, the water looks a little low." Eric answered: "Yeah, but it's sure to come up." "Then it might be too high." "Yup, might be." Obviously, our pregame talk was getting us nowhere, so we returned to the car and unloaded the boats.

A thin film of ice crept in from the edges of the pool. We steered our boats into it, testing its thickness. Our kayak bows cut a break of open water like a ship might ply an Arctic icepack, and our paddles dipped in the newly liberated fluid. After all, it was only mid-March, and probably the only time of

year we could kayak this ephemeral watercourse draining the Mogollon Rim of Arizona.

The creek we were running doesn't even have a name. The gorge through which it runs, however, is more than impressive enough to illicit a title. It is called Woods Canyon.

The modest stream began tumbling downhill over small boulder gardens. We continued with reluctance, for there was clearly not enough water to cover all the rocks. We picked the deepest channel and gritted our teeth, preparing for the jolt of rock on plastic. But to our surprise we felt nothing but gentle glancing blows. Curiously, the rocks felt soft. Closer inspection revealed that they were not rocks at all, but large hummocks of grass! With a soft and slimy riverbed under us, we decided that the water wasn't too low after all, and we forged deeper into the canyon.

Our grass riverbed was short lived, however. It changed to bedrock, then constricted

and steepened, and suddenly it seemed that there was plenty of water. We were treated to three successive slides into giant plungepools before our progress was slowed by the first portage. A tumbling cascade terminated in a pile of boulders prompting us to name the unrun rapid "Undercut Hell."

The next mile was an alternating course of bedrock-smooth slides and haphazard mazes of table-sized boulders. Eric and I were eddy-hopping from shore to shore, leap-frogging downstream and paddling over blind horizons on each other's advice.

We paused at a waterfall rapid too spectacular to pass by without a photo. I knew Woods Canyon would be a spectacular run, and I had a strong desire to document the canyon with dramatic photos. I climbed onto a ledge of rock above the falls for the overhead view. I could already see the caption: "Kayaker Running Waterfall." Eric ran it cleanly and the snap of the shutter was timed perfectly. I smugly put my camera back into its waterproof case knowing I had just taken the next cover shot for the *AW Journal*.

A 10-foot falls had me on shore sizing up the next award-winning picture. This image would show Eric from behind, charging off the lip of the falls towards the pool visibly far below. Click. Another stunning shot.

The creek took a turn under a north-



facing wall, and we begrudgingly paddled into the shade of winter. Ice falls threatened to skewer us from above as they hung precariously from the cliff to our left. We impatiently paddled underneath, anxious to get out of the drop zone.

The canyon walls were rapidly closing in. Our sunny little creek quickly took on an ominous feel. Dark walls of basalt rose vertically from the shores, forcing us to keep a keen eye for potential portage routes. We ran a few Class IV and V slides. These rapids would have had us grinning with glee earlier, but now we finished each drop with a focused sense of relief.

When a larger than normal horizon line loomed in front of us, we got out to take a look. This one would not be run. The whole 200 cfs slid down a 30-foot ramp, slammed into a wall, careened to the right and stairstepped another 20 feet to the pool below. The canyon surrounding this cataract arched overhead, creating a cathedral-esque echo chamber that roared and made the place even more intimidating than it already was.

Our portage route was feasible, but hardly inviting. A steep slope covered in snow was the only option. Eric kicked steps in the shin-deep snow ahead of me, and we gingerly carried our boats across the slope at an Everest-like plod. The portage wasn't the most difficult I've done, but it was likely my most carefully executed. A slip would have sent me sliding down the steep snowslope and off a cliff at the bottom, depositing me in the boisterous pool at the base of the falls.

A rest spot in the middle of our cautious traverse allowed a downstream view. Orderly columns of basalt towered over the river, sandwiching a layer of sandstone beneath them. High on the canyon wall, water squeezed through a gap—freefalling for 300 feet to the pile of talus at river's edge. Beneath all the scenery snaked the river, slithering through a chaos of boulders and dropping at the rate of 400 feet per mile. This was the crux of the run.

The first rapid knocked me off balance immediately. In a desperate attempt to remain upright, I braced against the cliff wall to my right. This "rock bracing" technique only served to knock the paddle out of my hands and therefore accelerate my momentum towards the inverted. Just as my head went underwater, my knuckles grated across the coarse-grained wall of basalt and I used the split second of leverage to roll back upright. The launchpad at the bottom of the sluice was coming up quickly. I stuck my hands in the water for a feeble attempt at propulsion and plummeted off the pour-off at the mercy of the river. Surprisingly, I landed upright and beyond the hydraulic. A conveniently placed boulder provided a spot to halt myself, so I leaned into the rock, grabbed it, and looked back at the drop to search for my paddle. Four seconds later, it

arrived right on cue—forgiven by the river gods again.

After watching this fiasco from above, Eric promptly lifted his kayak to his shoulder and met me at the next available eddy. The river tumbled downhill through a never-ending pile of rocks. We were constantly out of our boats scouting, and soon realized that our time would be better spent walking our boats along shore than trying to paddle them down the creek. We portaged the next half mile.

Safely beyond the steepest section of river, we again got in our kayaks. We were below the basalt, and now walled in by vertical buff-colored sandstone—the next level of geologic layer cake that the river would knife through.

The verticality of canyon walls is always a factor to consider when running new rivers. One of the ultimate river running nightmares is to be sluiced into a sheer-walled gorge with no possibility of a portage and subsequently forced over a thunderous Class VI waterfall. But however obvious and poignant this fear may be, I have found that such a scenario is exceptionally rare. In my years of exploring rivers in deep canyons, I had never found a bad rapid that could absolutely not be portaged. For me at least, the old adage "where there's a will, there's a way" had rung true.

It was to my astonishment then, when we arrived at the rapid subsequently named "Mandatory Penalty." We wanted to portage it to be sure. But just as surely, portaging here was not an option. Perhaps we had relaxed and let ourselves drift into this situation by not carefully planning our routes upstream. The canyon had mellowed, and the walls were not as menacing in appearance as they had been earlier. In practical terms, however, we were now at the most committing piece of the run.

River left was only a 30-foot wall, much lower than the cliffs we had already come through. Unfortunately, it was solid rock plunging straight into the river. The river right cliff was even lower, but absolutely sheer. Twenty vertical feet separated us from freedom. We paddled around the pool like mice in a glass jar, looking for a way out.

The rapid below us was a ledge of sandstone backed up by a mess of boulders that had rolled into the canyon and been flooded downstream only to get hung up here, behind this natural dam. Most of the flow shot down the left side before splintering into several chutes, each too narrow for a kayak. A small

portion of this left channel, though, found its way back to river right, where it joined forces with the myriad of channels from above and plunged over the ledge in a clean five-foot flume.

I ran first. In my over-exuberance to get right, I tattooed my elbow on the cliff wall at the bottom of the flume. I was a little banged up, but safely beyond Mandatory Penalty. Eric learned from my mistake, and landed it perfectly—elbows intact. We had made it through a potentially disastrous situation and vowed to proceed with even more caution downstream.

Soon a side-creek entered and added significantly to the flow. The extra cushion pushed us quickly through the next couple miles of Class IV water and out of the narrow gorge, but we were hardly finished. Arriving at another Class V as the sun threw a soft pink on the rim of the canyon, we pulled our kayaks onto flat riverside ledges and called it camp. Knuckles were bandaged, clothes were dried, stories exchanged.

Our evening calm was interrupted by the uncertainty of rising water. The creek continued to grow from the afternoon snowmelt, its roar escalating as a suffocating darkness filled the canyon. The river almost seemed frantic in its race downhill. Every so often, it would throw a possessed splash onto the dry rocks of camp, reminding us of its restless flight. We watched the river methodically invade our riverside camp until 9:00 p.m., when it finally began to drop, and we could finally go to sleep in peace.

The next day brought yet another layer of geology and the first paddle strokes of morning sent us hurtling over a 25-foot redrock slide. I captured a three shot sequence of Eric's run: "The Entrance;" "Scraping the Wall;" "Backender Exit." Playful but punchy ledge drops punctuated our morning. Yesterday's sieves were replaced with slides, and the fear factor turned into the fun factor.

The remainder of the journey was a Class II and III paddle out. A bull elk decided to cross the river ahead of us, reminding us that the water wasn't the only wild thing in Woods Canyon. I pulled ashore and scrambled for my camera to get a picture of the strutting ungulate, but I was too slow.

"No worries," I thought, "I've got enough awesome photos on this roll of film to sate my picture-taking desires for a year. In fact, I'll just rewind the film right now so as not to inadvertently damage it." The rewind lever turned with a peculiar ease. And it kept turning. After five minutes of camera fiddling, I finally accepted the truth. The roll of film had never been wound, and I had not taken a single photo! "Kayaker Running Waterfall," "Backender Exit," they were just captions waiting for a home. Though I was too angry at myself to be philosophical, Eric saw the bright side. "Well, I guess we'll just have to come back and run it again" he said. Indeed, we will.

Review of Steep Creeks of New England

By Ambrose Tuscano

A new book out by New England boaters Greg and Sue Hanlon provides a great new tool for the experienced steep creeker. It is remarkable in that nothing quite like it has ever been produced for this region. *Steep Creeks of New England* contains essential information for anyone intending to sample the northeast's hairiest whitewater. Twenty-nine Class V creeks are described in the book and each one sounds steeper, narrower and harder than the last. A quick glance at the pictures throughout the book should be enough to assure anyone that these creeks are for real.

The book is laid out like this: each creek is given a brief description and a listing of water level information as well as other standard guide book stuff like shuttle directions and topo maps. In addition, there are useful paragraphs called "Additional Information" for each creek that give historical information (first descents) and warn of particular hazards. The book also provides a few blank lines after it discusses each river so that you can keep personal notes on that run.

While I first found the descriptions of the rivers to be a little meager for my liking, I realized that it is mostly due to the extremely short length of these runs. Certainly, adequate information is given so that a boater who had committed the contents of this book to memory could run any of the rivers within it without being taken by surprise by any heinous rapids. Needless to say, in the above scenario much scouting would be required.

The best feature of the book seems to be the exhaustive detail put into the water level section. For many of the creeks covered in *Steep Creeks of New England* there are simply no gages available. However, the authors give superb information on how to extrapolate levels from gages on nearby watersheds.

One of the only downsides that I was able to find to the book is that it makes little distinction between the difficulty of the creeks it describes. Since nearly every run is labeled Class V, there is almost no way to quickly assess the relative difficulty of the many rivers. This would be a perfect place for the implementation of the new AW ratings system. Hopefully this will be considered as an addition to future editions of this book, which will surely be in high demand for years to come.

Greg's Video Corner

Unconventional Videos Reviewed

By Greg Akins

This installment of Greg's Video Corner looks at three relatively unconventional whitewater videos. While these videos are all distinctly different, they share a common thread of experimentation. Good and bad can come from experimentation. In these cases, we get a little of each. *Wicked Liauid* has the typical components of contemporary whitewater - fast paced music, extreme paddling and huge whitewater, but is packaged as a guide to the Zambezi. My copy of *Who's Your Daddy?* came with the following warning: "...this video is not suitable for all audiences so please don't watch with your children ... should be listened to loud for full effect." *The Best of Gore* presents whitewater rafting as a spectator sport and includes coverage that would impress ESPN.

Wicked Liauid is an excellent, narrated feature video highlighting the rapids of the Zambezi River in Africa. On display are some of the finest rapids I've ever seen. This video has a documentary feel to it, but it doesn't come off as boring. Instead it portrays a completely cultural experience rather, than just a snapshot of exotic paddling. There is some great music and fun surf/play footage. But the video also includes interviews with kayakers and some rafting guests.

Most extreme kayaking videos would not be bold enough to include rafting footage. In *Wicked Liauid* rafting action just adds to the overall effect. These aren't just the usual rafting carnage shots. It's impressive to see an 18 foot raft tossed like a child's toy. Imagine what would happen to your puny rodeo boat? If you dream of paddling the Zambezi, especially if you are planning a trip there, call **Revealed Water Products** at 877.766.4757, to buy this video. Enjoy the journey.

Who's Your Daddy? may be the worst video I've seen in a long time. It has disgusting, sexually-explicit subject matter, loud offensive music, and ugly paddlers. OK, it's actually pretty entertaining. Marketed as "paddling porn," this video doesn't actually have as much true pornography as I expected. However, unless you want to field a

lot of questions, I wouldn't watch this with your 3-year-old. **Good Gravy Productions** obviously put a lot of effort into creating skits for the video. And while they aren't always funny, they do break up the monotony of the video. The featured paddling isn't as exotic as in other contemporary videos, but I suspect the producer of *Who's your Daddy?* was trying to establish a new paradigm for paddling videos, rather than just rehashing the same steep-drop/big-wave sequence.

My only real criticism of this video is that it lacks production quality. But if you want to round out your collection and offend your neighbors, buy this one. **Good Gravy Productions** can be reached at 416.921.2333

The Best of Gore

This video, by **Enviro-Action Sports**, caught me a little off-guard. I was expecting a video like *Wicked Liauid*: a video guide to Gore Canyon. Instead, the film includes professional quality event coverage of the 1999 Gore Canyon raft race.

For rafters, this video shouldn't be missed. Rather than a run of the mill video showing 100 shots of a raft flipping in Big Nasty, *Wicked Liauid* highlights technically superb raft maneuvers, rather than carnage. Of course there is still plenty of carnage; misadventures are inevitable while racing through a steep, high volume, granite-lined canyon like Gore. And the runs of both the winners and the losers are portrayed.

The footage of kayakers in the race seems more ancillary. As a downriver racer, I would have liked more emphasis on the kayak event. There is still some exciting kayak footage, including a dynamic boat exit from the back half of a Topoduo.

If you are a Gore regular and missed the race or would like to participate next year, this video is well worth seeing. And if you just want to see what famous big Colorado whitewater is all about, call **Enviro-Action Sport** at 970.923.3955 to order a copy.

Briefs

2000 Wildwater Eastern Team Trials on the Nantahala River

The nation's best wildwater racers will compete on the Nantahala River on March 31 and April 1, 2000, for a spot on the U.S. Wildwater Team. The team will represent the United States in the 2000 World Championships in Treignac, France in June and in other international competitions. A Junior team of paddlers under age 18 will also be selected at this event to compete in the Junior World Championships in Vipitino, Italy in July.

Wildwater racing is the whitewater version of downhill ski racing with competitors racing kayaks and decked canoes at top speed over a 3-4 mile section of the river. The action is fast and exciting as racers call on

their endurance and knowledge of the river to get to the finish line in the fastest time. The event will draw competitors in the men's and women's kayak classes, and men's single and double decked canoes, known as C-1s and C-2s.

In addition to the elite classes, race organizers have introduced a plastic boat class. Paddlers new to Wildwater will test their skills in plastic kayaks such as the Perception Wavehopper or Prijon Beluga. These plastic boats are similar in design but more forgiving than the composite boats elite racers use.

The Eastern Team Trials on the Nantahala will consist of two days of racing. The top finisher in a class each day will earn a spot on

the U.S. Wildwater Team. A Western Team Trials will be held in Washington State for Seniors and in Colorado for Juniors. The two more racers in each class will be chosen to complete the team. Race Organizers will host a series of informal training weekends for competitors before the race.

Eastern Team Trials will be held in conjunction with the Nantahala Outdoor Center's (NOC) annual Spring Splash! festival, which is expected to draw over 10,000 people. The event features sample programs of NOC activities such as biking and paddling and a popular outdoor gear flea market.

"So many things have come together here to guarantee an excellent event" says race co-organizer Carolyn Porter. "The variety of racers of different ages and skill levels, and the excitement of Spring Splash! will make this Team Trials unique."

For further information or to volunteer, go to www.noc.com/nrc.htm or contact race organizers:

Chris Hipgrave at 828-488-1377, DaggerRep@compuserve.com

Carolyn Porter at 828-488-2176, ext 166, Carolyn@dnet.net

National Paddling Film Fest Travels Abroad

By Zina Merkin

The National Paddling Film Festival Road Show has hit the road in a big way! On December 11, 1999, the Neil Kayak Club brought the show to Neil, Belgium, for the benefit of over 50 club members and friends primarily from Belgium and Holland. Organized by Bryan Stewart, an American stationed there with the army, and Bruno DeWitt, a Belgian kayaker, the Road Show was warmly received.

Bryan contacted Zog Aitken of the NPFF after reading an article about the Road Show in *American Whitewater* magazine. Aware of the wide variety of good whitewater videos available in the U.S., Bryan thought it would be interesting to give his European club-mates a test of American whitewater culture. Bryan and his committee picked out several hours of films from the NPFF archives. They pre-screened them and offered reviews, then publicized the event through their club newsletter, e-mails, and word of mouth.

The crowd didn't actually vote on a Best of Festival video, but the favorite of the night appeared to be *Silent Thunder: the Legend of*

Team C. All the humorous videos were well received, perhaps showing more of American culture than Bryan originally intended. The Europeans were impressed overall by the quality of the videography as well as the skill of the paddlers. They enjoyed the variety of styles of filmmaking, and the range of paddling styles as well. Several at the Road Show were inspired to consider making their own videos to send in to the 2001 NPFF.

Bryan said that European whitewater paddlers face similar obstacles as Americans in regard to access issues. Not only is there a shortage of adequate public access points, but many rivers also have "seasons" in which kayakers are forbidden to paddle in deference to fishing. There was one celebrated protest last year in which hundreds of kayakers held

hands and formed a chain across the Meuse River in Lieges, Belgium.

Whatever the challenge your club or your area faces, the NPFF Road Show would be happy to be the centerpiece for local conservation or access fundraising. Or just the center of a good time! Check the NPFF web page <http://www.surfbwa.org/npff> for links to the Road Show, and watch for new titles from the 2000 NPFF competition.



32nd Annual Southeastern U.S. Slalom and Wild Water Championships

The 32nd Annual Southeastern U.S. Slalom and Wild Water Championships will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 29-30, 2000, on the Nantahala River near Bryson City, North Carolina. The races also include the American Canoe Association Dixie Division Decked Boat Championships. The event is sponsored by the Georgia Canoeing Association with the assistance of the Nantahala Outdoor Center and the Nantahala Racing Club. Race headquarters will be at the Nantahala Outdoor Center.

The slalom course will take racers through the Class III Nantahala Falls. The wild water runs 8 miles and include Class III rapids Patton's Run and Nantahala Falls. There is also a 5-mile Down River Fun Race—from Ferebee Park to above Nantahala Falls, which does not include any rapids above Class II. A "Puppy Slalom" is being considered for younger and beginner racers using only the gates below the Falls. Skill levels of competitors typically range from persons making their racing debut in the Fun Race to nationally ranked paddlers honing their techniques in the slalom or wild water races.

There are separate classes for: men, women and mixed (tandem); adults, juniors and masters; kayaks, decked and open canoes; and championship (racing) and cruising (recreational) designs.


This year the slalom championship classes for both decked and open boats will be held on Saturday on a challenging course, and the cruising/novice classes for both decked and open boats will be held on Sunday on a "toned down" course.

Awards will be presented in ceremonies at the end of each day's races for the top three finishers in each class. The Southeastern Cup will be awarded to the paddling club whose members accumulate the most race points.

In addition, there are three special awards in the wild water race. The Charlie Patton Award is presented to the fastest canoe racer in the wild water race. The Julie Wilson Award is presented to the fastest female competitor in the wild water race. And the Ramone Eaton Award is presented to the tandem team turning in the fastest OC-2 wild water time.

The Southeastern Championships provide a week-end of fun and excitement for competitors, race workers and spectators alike against the backdrop of the Nantahala National Forest. All racers and race workers receive a race T-shirt. In addition, there will be a raffle with lots of paddling prizes.

You may register by mail or in person on the afternoon before the race. There will be no late registration on the day of the race. To register by mail, you can receive race registration package, which contains an entry form, description of fees, waivers and other race information, by sending your name and mailing address to David Martin, Race Registrar, 108 Wakefield Drive, Atlanta, GA 30309 or e-mail your request to dsmsr@flash.net



*Or UV do a clean 720, a vert end...
Throw me into a monster hole, to a cartwheel,
to a splitwheel then let's snap ten ends.
thrill me little luv boat... turn me around...
squirt me out... make life fun again --
luv boat.*

*It's stiff,
it's durable,
it rules.*

*There are at least
312,457 ways
used to describe
the really big river.
Fortunately you only need to know
one...*

PRILON
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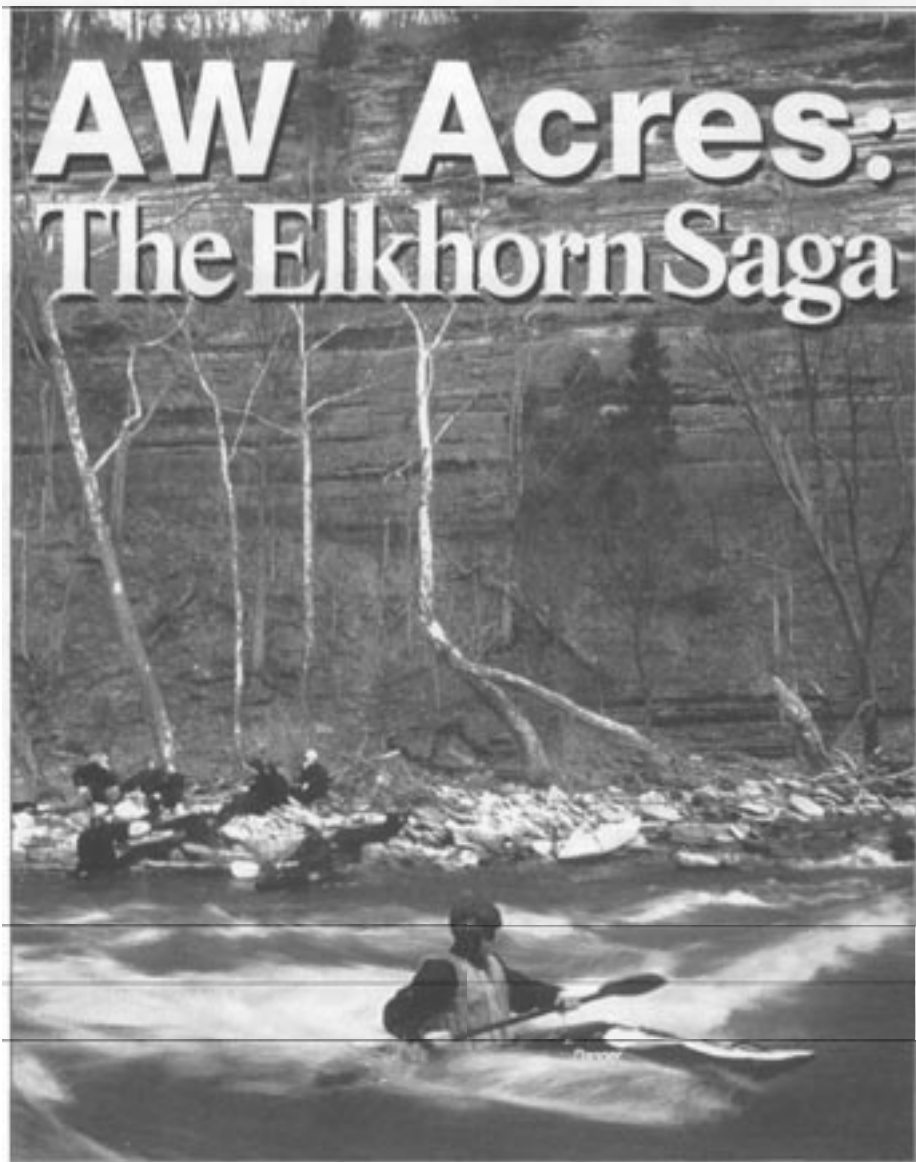
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*303-444-2336
www.wildnet.com*

The whitewater reach is the Elkhorn "Gorge" of Kentucky. Five miles of Class II-III rain dependent stream whose flow has been called home. sanctuary, playground, and business has recently gained a new status whitewater access protected. This is the story about the creek, the land, a family, a feud, some bottles of bourbon, and how a group of people who love whitewater secured a place for all paddlers.

The run has historically been from the "Forks of the Elkhorn" bridge put-in on U.S. 460 where the North Elkhorn and South Elkhorn tributaries come together down to the traditional take-out through "Saufley's gate" on Peaks Mill Rd. Birthplace to generations of wwpaddlers, the Elkhorn's large watershed has the ability to hold a good rain and generally keep it's flow. Occasionally prone to massive floods, which are constantly changing and rearranging it's limestone creek bed, there was one particularly awesome deluge, that actually smoothed out the Elkhorn's whitewater into Class I-II for a brief time. But don't pass the "Mighty" Elkhorn off as lame or too tame. Even during it's brief post flood wwanemia the creek could still kill. Although one flood totally blew out a brand new and costly concrete bridge the influential Saufley family had constructed at the take-out, the same high water left the innocent looking low dam at the Jim Beam Bourbon distillery still standing and remaining as a multiple killer. At most flow levels (use the visual gage on the Forks U.S. 460 bridge) this easily run barrier is a Class II move with Class VI drowning potential that continues to claim the occasional careless tuber or too casual or inexperienced boater who becomes caught in it's drowning machine grip.

Through the late 80s and early 90s the Elkhorn had more periods of high water that gradually brought back the Class III hydraulics and the wwpaddlers to carve it's currents. Then in 1997, a huge flood shoved out a few solid Class III drops just in time for the wwpaddling boom that was sweeping across the country. Suddenly, the 99 mile long Elkhorn "Creek" (one mile short of making the river classification) seemed covered in boaters and gleaming SUVs. Not only were private wwpaddlers enjoying the higher levels but also lots of people very new to the



sport (folks who tended to rent their boats from outfitters and sometimes sit on their life jackets instead of wearing them).

The owners of the take-out, Yvonne and Zack Saufley, had always graciously allowed private wwpaddlers of the Elkhorn Gorge to exit the creek across their land and park their cars along the wide place in the road next to their gate. In the days before wwpaddling became so popular it was rare to see more than 3 or 4 boater's cars parked here on any of the rainy days the creek was high enough to paddle. However, this same wide spot in the road was also a frequent hangout for locals bent on partying, fishermen, high school lovers, and unwelcome overnight guests. These non-paddling folks were much more frequent, and polluting prone visitors. They tended to drop beer cans, spent condoms, empty worm containers, tires, and washing machines. According to legend, this prompted a member of the Saufley family to take a frontloader and actually push one persistent local's car into the creek. Eventually the state

was petitioned to install guard rails along the roadway. This action, along with the Saufley's own fences and gates, mostly kept the non-boating people out. Yet there was still just enough room left for the occasional paddler or fisherman to get their car legally out of the road with no hassles from the Saufley family.

WWboaters generally were welcome by creek side landowners back in the 1970s and 80s. The Saufley's had even invited the Bluegrass Wildwater Association out of Lexington to hold monthly meetings on their land on at least two occasions and also helped the group conduct a Boy Scout trip by allowing everyone, including one of the local outfitters, CanoeKY to park and organize on their land. The BWA and other KY paddling groups, including the Viking Canoe Club of Louisville, and Elkhorn Paddlers, always endeavored to keep good relations with the Saufley family as well as all of the landowners along the creek. Performing annual creek clean-ups, being considerate, respectful to privacy and property, and generally attempting to



The view of Saufley's gate (old, now closed) Elkhorn takeout.
photo by Ed Council

kiss Mrs. Saufley's butt with bottles of Jim Beam at Christmas. These were harmonious, symbiotic times for private wwpaddlers, landowners and bourbon makers.

When the popularity of paddling began soaring in the early 90s and the car company ads were sprouting kayaks, two commercial outfitters began having some success running self guided canoe and kayak trips along the various sections of the very scenic Elkhorn. Soon, all the local landowners were upset at the increased numbers of people floating or paddling the Elkhorn and it's forks. Feeling invaded, the locals were constantly reminded that the world had found them as they watched large commercial vans pulling trailers full of boats and disgorging lots of loud, nervous tourists all over their serene countryside. The parking, loading and unloading of half dressed humans of all ages along the narrow, winding road was whipping the locals into a property rights frenzy. There were also more frequent disturbances from the unskilled paddlers of the Elkhorn Gorge. Competent wwoaters on the stream at higher levels were witness to numerous ugly swims and sometimes were called upon to assist in the rescue of totally unprepared boaters who, after their swim, ended up trespassing across private property and disturbing irritated locals to use the phone or beg a ride. It was becoming a stream with it's people out of balance and everyone demanding their own piece of the Elkhorn.

Kentucky is a state that has seen it's fair share of Hatfield vs McCoy style feuds. Right here in the rolling hills of Franklin, Co., home of the Elkhorn Gorge a new fight between neighbors, the Outfitters vs the Landowners was forming fast. For awhile the private wwoaters managed to stay neutral and were able to gingerly paddle between the threatening legal boulders and nasty verbal hydraulics raging between these two interests. Around 1998, the Rain Gods bestowed their bounty and produced the second year in a row of unusually wet weather conditions. The rain fed, flood enhanced, Elkhorn Creek seemed to be running continuously and on the ever sexy Elkhorn, if it rained, they would come.

The Elkhorn was now more easily paddled and convenient than any time in recent boater memory. Always a relatively safe and forgiving beginner stream (if you portage the bourbon plant dam on the left) the Elkhorn Gorge is also full of fun surfing spots for experienced playboaters. Just a few minutes from Lexington and Louisville, an easy day trip from Cincinnati and weekend from Indianapolis. Private wwpaddlers were becoming much more prevalent. Outfitted in the new smaller boat designs, which were helping to bring out

the nuances of the Elkhorn's flow at various levels, boaters were creating new fun moves. Unfortunately we were into another type of style which created some problems. The cancer growing in wwoater relations began with the overcrowding of the few parking spaces available along the Saufley's sliver of land at the take-out.



Instead of 5 shuttle vehicles, it grew to 10 and even 20 or more on those sunny summer Saturdays when the creek was flowing strong. Private paddlers were also generating plenty of noise, exposed skin and middle of the road conversations along the narrow and moderately used country lane. The vastly increased volume of private boaters was helping to tip the people situation further out of balance on the Elkhorn. The landowners were losing patience and it soon became apparent that no amount of Jim Beam would help maintain access to the creek.

Mrs. Saufley was spotted taking pictures of the parked shuttle cars along the road. Boaters were getting nervous that the Saufley's take-out may soon be taken away and nobody wanted to see their brand new Lincoln Megamachine pushed into the creek with a frontloader or towed. It wasn't a long wait when one day the dreaded "no parking signs" sprang up and were stuck into the prime parking spots along the right of way at the Saufley's gate by the KY Dept. of Transportation. The very next weekend those signs were promptly pulled out in broad daylight, virtually under the noses of the Saufley's, by a couple of shortsighted boaters and thrown into the creek. Suddenly, thanks to these few, all wwoaters lost what little immunity might have remained against the landowner and outfitter feud raging around them.

By the time 1999 rolled around, the troubles on the Elkhorn were getting beyond ugly. An anonymous complaint from a landowner gave rise to a lawsuit by the county against the owner of CanoeKY, one of the outfitters on the creek, for having a commer-

cial operation on property zoned rural/residential. Ed Councill, the owner of CanoeKY owns a house along the creek at Knight's Bridge (aka; Quarles Bridge) about 1.5 river miles downstream of the Saufley's gate and the next available place to take-off the creek. State Troopers were reported to be cruising around when it looked like rain to check the reinstalled "no parking" signs and added barbed wire.

Members of the BWA and other local paddling groups realized that the Elkhorn was becoming much more difficult to paddle. In hopes of avoiding the tow truck at Saufley's, private boaters were being pushed downstream to Knight's Bridge. Unfortunately the parking problems around the bridge were really no better and there was little doubt that numerous "no parking" signs or guard rails would sprout soon around there as well.

By the spring and early summer of 1999 there was an optimistic and promising new initiative started to gain federal matching funds towards the purchase of the Quarles land, 50 yards downstream of Knight's

Bridge and perfect for paddler access. The federal matching grant could provide funds for improvement into a public creek access point. It seemed a good solution to everyone's dilemma. David Quarles (the only landowner willing to sell land for this purpose) could sell his land, wwpaddlers gained a take-out, outfitters would have a legal boat launch and pickup point, and landowners would see, hear, and encounter less congestion and disturbance around the road and near their residences. The grant writing effort was spearheaded in a collaboration between several members of the BWA and the Elkhorn Trust, a conservation organization represented by Ed Councill, owner of CanoeKY.

Expertly written by a dedicated BWA member, the Knight's Bridge Landing proposal for funding was unanimously approved by the Kentucky State Trails Advisory Board with the Department for Local Government staff ranking the proposal 5th out of 58. It was starting to look good for the paddlers of the Elkhorn. Commissioner Bob Arnold of the Department for Local Government, who made the final recommendations and submittal of funding requests to the Federal Government Federal Highway Administration, was only one remaining hurdle to overcome before the dollars flowed. If the proposal got the go ahead from Mr. Arnold, federal approval was virtually assured.

A letter writing campaign was initiated by paddlers from three states to help Mr Arnold understand the necessity of Elkhorn Creek access. At one county tourism commission meeting where the project was discussed Mrs. Saufley stood up and declared that it would be a "cold day in hell" before she

allowed any boaters the use of her land ever again. Another landowner appeared in local TV news interviews claiming increased congestion and trash if the take-out was funded. Two weeks later Mr. Arnold, an unelected political appointee of Kentucky's Governor had reached his decision. He denied the Knight's Bridge Landing proposal, using as an excuse, the fierce opposition from the few well connected local landowners. In a triumph of no-brainer political expediency, the good ol' boy (and girl) network had successfully portrayed the proposal as the work of outside special interests bent on destroying the serenity and sovereignty of the area by encouraging hordes of tourists and trespassers to descend upon the Elkhorn.

This created a crisis for wwpaddlers. Not only had private wwboaters lost the bid to create a new access point, we were now fully embedded into the feud between the landowners and the outfitters. The Quarles land was still for sale (as it had been for almost 2 years) and several dedicated members of the BWA continued to work to find a solution. Hopes (and the weather) were in a severe drought however with no one anticipating a simple or quick opportunity to gain access. Boaters were dreading the inevitable confrontations with landowners that surely would come with the winter and spring rains.

Then in mid October of 1999, David Quarles decided to put up his land for sale in an absolute auction to take place in 30 days. For private wwpaddlers, this moved the situation from a simmering crisis to an outright and immediate emergency. There were no other landowners between the Saufley's and Knight's Bridge known to be willing to sell their land—especially if it was to be used for creek access. If the Quarles land were to be purchased by a nonpaddler or possibly by an adjacent landowner hostile to recreational access, Elkhorn wwpaddlers could become an endangered species reduced to outlaw renegades down a creek with no take-out.

Faced with dwindling time there were still huge divisions within the BWA ranks over the best plan to follow in the event of a successful bid at the auction. We needed a single uniting plan and we had two. It was a very bad case of shuttle madness over how we would drive this bus to the take-out. One group, fearful of the restrictive zoning and injunctions over use as access was advocating the land be purchased and donated to the Fish and Wildlife Service which was perceived to have increased leverage in getting zoning changes. Another faction was pushing for a completely private buy with the land held by a small group of investors as a limited liability corporation. Finally, a handful of BWA paddlers strongly involved on both sides

of the debate met over a few beers at an Irish pub the Monday evening before the sale that Saturday. It was during this meeting where the consensus was finally brewed to purchase the land with private donations and immediately donate it to American Whitewater. The entire land donation was to be controlled throughout the sale by the "principle donors" (people who gave \$500 or more towards the purchase). Each \$500 donation equaled one vote on the new AW Acres Council. The AW plan was announced at the BWA meeting on the following night with only three days left till the sale. The membership immediately voted to donate \$1,000 to the cause. Within those three days the access movement had miraculously obtained donated pledges in excess of \$32,000 thanks to the generosity, determination, and on-line connectivity of wwpaddlers, their organizations in three states, and the able help of the staff and other volunteers of American Whitewater. Actually the full total collected in the emergency blitz was slightly over \$40k including "loan pledges" to be used in case of a close bidding competition.

We felt sure that we had enough money. Who else would really want 4.89 acres of perpetually flooding creek bottom? The only other interests that were perceived to be out there were local deep pocket landowners bent on buying the land only to keep it out of wwboater's hands. We paddlers were completely paranoid and receiving reports that



there would be hostile, local landowners or their representatives bidding at the sale. A plan was needed to give the impression that the boaters had run out of money in order to stop someone from simply bidding up the price. We could not allow ourselves to get into a toe-to-toe bidding war with a landowner who potentially had much deeper pockets and an equal fervor to "save" the Elkhorn.

Saturday morning, the day of the sale arrived and the final stealth meeting of the key players was held in Lexington. Mr. Party (aka Rich Smithers) was there in his green

Jim Barna Log homes hat and JB Log Home logo satin green warm-up jacket. John Foy, treasurer of the BWA pressed into service for the sale, came armed with the last minute donor money totals loaded into his laptop. I was there to represent American Whitewater and Burgess Carey for the BWA. In between gooey McDonald's pancakes we went over the plan and made sure everyone understood the bidding queues and our roles. Then we lit out for Frankfort and the sale at 10 a.m. on the property at Knight's Bridge.

For the numerous volunteers heavily involved in the process it had been a fast moving three days. Frantically soliciting money from donors via e-mails, message board postings, and phone calls, there was no time for traditional snail mail communication. Along with the conferences with lawyers, auctioneers, surveyors, paddling groups, landowners, and web page builders, the money was pouring in with credit card donations through the AW web site and by hand delivered and mail promised checks. David Quarles, a local calmwater paddler and owner of the property up for auction even added a dramatic karmic twist by joining the BWA and donating one of the largest contributions to the cause. He wanted to see his land go to American Whitewater as much as the wwboating public did.

Mr. Party drove himself to the sale at the Elkhorn and made sure to stay separated from John, Burgess and I who were acting as if we didn't know him. Pulling onto the land with a boat on the racks of Burgess's Sportsmonster 4X4 van we proceeded to play our parts as the nervous paddlers we were. A few other boaters showed up and we double checked to make sure that none of them attempted to talk to or recognize Mr. Party, who strolled around seriously inspecting the land and talking to the auctioneer.

It was a sunny, unusually warm November day and there were maybe 25 people milling around the property. The auctioneer and his son were handing out plats of the land from the back of their microphone-equipped pickup which also doubled as their float in the Capital City Christmas parade and were attempting to identify the real players in the auction. We boaters were trying to seem nonchalant as we scanned the crowd for our competition when just before the start of the sale, we were approached by an older gentleman none of us knew. He smoothly introduced himself and explained how he too was a canoeist of the Elkhorn for many years. We idly talked of our situation and inadvertently tested his feud politics by vaguely relating our troubles with old Mrs. Saufley. At this point in the conversation, the gentleman held up his hand and then gently

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informed us that he was in fact Mrs. S's accountant. He then courteously excused himself from our company just as the auctioneer was climbing into the bed of the pickup truck to start the bidding.

After statements about the absolute nature of the auction and hearing no questions from those gathered about the property, the auctioneer began his sing song chant at \$60,000. "...who'll gimme 60, 60, 60..." he pleaded while his son walked around in front of the crowd beckoning and motioning with his hands like a revival preacher looking for converts. "...who'll gimme 60, 60, 60... Come on ya'll, this here is prime creek front land" boomed the auctioneer "...who'll gimme 50, 50, 50... now then 45, 45, 45..." He slowly worked his way down and then at \$20,000 - WHAM - someone off to the left in the crowd motioned a bid. The boaters had no problem looking stunned. In our pre-sale strategy meeting that morning we had decided that we would not bid beyond \$17,000. If we were to stick to the plan, the "boaters" couldn't even make a bid... we were "out" of money. The horizon line of the drop and the sound of the auction gavel hitting was all that was left and we hadn't even caught an eddy. The boaters were all following Mr. Party's lead now.

That first bid was immediately followed with a second, and then a third and fourth all coming within seconds of each other. It was maddeningly unclear, at least to me, exactly who was bidding since the signals were subtle and the action so fast. I could feel the pulse pounding in my ears as I focused on Mr. Party, our shiny green log home man on the scene, calmly wag his finger at \$29k. The auctioneer's son was in major arm swinging and pulling motion now. He seemed in disbelief that we boaters weren't bidding. He cajoled the crowd and harangued everyone over and over looking to pull a nod or signal from among us. But the boaters just looked around and kicked the dust in mock resignation and remained silent. Finally the auctioneer's son gave up pulling for more money from the crowd and "Going once...going twice...SOLD for \$29,000!" thundered from the auctioneer who waved towards Mr. Party. Burgess looked over, threw a subdued air punch with his clinched fist and whispered "YES!"

We had won but we were still trying not to act like winning bidders. It had been agreed that if the boaters held the final bid, those of us present would not make a scene. We didn't want to celebrate too strongly or give an impression of gloating. That time would come later. The Saufley Family owns the entire ridge line overlooking the newly acquired AW Acres and the consensus feeling was to be as low key as possible. There was still great paranoia regarding the vague wording of the zoning laws and besides, we were neighbors with the Saufley's and the other landowners now and we wanted the feud finished as soon as possible.

David Quarles looked slightly stunned when Burgess walked over to tell him quietly that the paddlers actually won the bid. As David was new to the BWA he had never laid eyes on Mr. Party. Nor had any idea of the amount of money that had been collected. As a seller and a donor David had excused himself from AW Acre council decisions until after the sale. When Burgess let him in on the scheme he had no idea AW had won the final bid. He thought he was going to be watching Abe Lincoln in a silk warm-up jacket build a log home on the creek. I walked over to the auctioneer and authorized the AW 10% deposit check and confirmed that American Whitewater would indeed be taking possession of the deed at closure in 30 days. Time to break out the bourbon and party.

With a flurry of signatures in an 18th century, walnut paneled Frankfort, KY law office American Whitewater took full possession of it's latest land acquisition and became a property taxpayer in Kentucky. Through the focused action of members, AW was continuing to set new precedents for action in securing whitewater access. By providing the infrastructure to make such donations of the land a reality, American Whitewater and dedicated people are helping to promote the strongest, most assured method possible to obtain whitewater access protection — direct property purchase.

But the land acquisition and success of the auction only marks the end of the shuttle in the saga of AW Acres. We've all still got to run this thing and make it as environmentally correct a paddler's parking lot and gathering spot as we can. That will take more planning and money and volunteers. We also need to be good neighbors and cool the feud. The courts may already be helping that along amid CanoeKY's successful defense of it's zoning lawsuit with the county and the judge's ruling effectively evaporating any looming worries over zoning issues and the whitewater access of AW Acres.

Now it's time to write the next chapter in the Elkhorn saga and draft new tales of paddlers working to preserve and enhance their sport. I hope its been raining or melting water into your favorite drainage while you've been reading this article. Get out there. Go paddling and join up with your boating friends for fun, safety and strength in keeping each other's whitewater streams open and free. While you're out there you might reflect on this saga and how one band of committed, creative paddlers working together with American Whitewater faced the challenges and helped to forever expand your paddling opportunities.

For more information on how you can help support AW Acres or secure and protect access on your favorite or endangered stream please contact:

Jason Robertson
American Whitewater Access Director
1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD
20910
Phone: 301-589-9453 email:
Jason@amwhitewater.org
or visit our web site: <http://www.awa.org>

Difficult Rapids Claim Lives of Experienced Boaters

Accident Reports - Second Half 1999

By Charlie Walbridge

The last half of the year is often a time of low water, creating fewer opportunities for whitewater accidents. There were only two canoeing and three rafting deaths reported to us during this time. However, the 6 kayak deaths recorded would have been a full year's worth just a decade ago. Even more troubling for American Whitewater is the fact that only one of the victims was inexperienced; the rest were advanced or expert kayakers running Class IV or higher whitewater. Nowadays kayaking deaths, unlike canoe and rafting fatalities, will probably involve skilled paddlers. There were 18 kayak fatalities reported to AW in 1999; 16 in the U.S., and 2 overseas. The skills and interests of the victims parallel those of the typical member of American Whitewater.

These reports are usually forwarded to AW from the internet via e-mail, and many originate as postings to rec.boats.paddle, a usenet group. I'd like to thank Kevin Sulewski, Kathy Streletsky, Ada Parkinson, Paul Schelp, Slim Ray, and the board and staff of American Whitewater for sending this material to me as they encounter it. I'd also like to thank those who actually wrote these accounts. These efforts allow the paddling community to learn from these tragedies, and enable others to avoid a similar fate.

Kayak Accidents

Idaho's North Fork of the Payette

Offers mile after mile of relentless Class IV-V big-water rapids. It was on the upper section, in Nutcracker Rapid, that Richard Carson lost his life. According to his post on rec.boats.paddle, Brad Moulton met Carson on August 15th at the put-in below Smith's Ferry. Carson, 30, was a very experienced kayaker from Memphis. He was paddling a Topolino and wearing a full coverage motorcycle-style helmet. After a brief discussion they agreed to paddle together.

The pair ran the first few drops cleanly, but at Nutcracker, Carson dropped into a huge hole. After a short, violent surf he exited. He seemed dazed and was not swimming aggressively. Moulton moved in quickly

for a boat rescue. He eventually reached a small eddy, but Carson would not let go of the boat. After they washed out the back of the eddy, Moulton flipped and rolled in the violent rapids below. He later discovered that the water pressure punctured his eardrum! Carson let go of his boat during the roll, and Moulton tried to pick him up again. Because Carson could not grab hold, Moulton pulled him onto his deck and paddled him into an eddy a second time. Again Carson did not let go of Moulton's boat and get to shore, and, once again they drifted out of the eddy and into the rapids. This time Moulton snapped his paddle and flipped. He bailed out and swam to shore just in time to see Carson disappear around the bend. After catching his breath, Moulton, who had lost his boat,

walked downstream along the railroad tracks on river left to Big Eddy. Here he swam across the river to the highway, and found a group of ER nurses bent over Carson, performing CPR. Despite these efforts, the victim never regained consciousness. An autopsy uncovered no evidence of head injury; indeed, there were no broken bones of any kind. It's probable that this death was caused by flush-drowning, and that Carson's helplessness was simply the result of exhaustion. Brad Moulton is to be complemented on his tenacious attempts to perform a rescue despite clear personal risk. Doing what he did in big water is very difficult!

Washington's Cascade River

On August 27th Eric Adler, 33, died while attempting a run of Washington's Cascade River with three friends. A report submitted by J.P. Hargrave, one of his companions, describes the accident as follows: Adler attempted to run the first Class V drop, "Starts with a Bang" by starting right, then finishing left. He lost his line and dropped into a bad hole. After trying to work free for several minutes and after being flipped repeatedly, he bailed out and started to swim hard for shore. Two of his friends had landed, left their boats, and were working their way upstream with throw bags when this happened. A third man attempted a boat rescue, but was stopped by a hole that Adler washed through.

Adler was still attempting to swim to shore when he was pushed downstream into Bridge Drop, another steep, obstructed Class V. Running this drop blind was not prudent, so his group got out of their boats and ran down along the shore. No one saw what happened, but he was found floating face-down at the bottom of the drop by some catarafters an hour later. CPR was performed without success. This is not the first flush-drowning to occur on the Cascade; we can only hope it will be the last.

Colorado's Poudre River

By mid-September the Poudre River west of Fort Collins, Colorado had dropped to a low level. This made it possible to run Poudre Falls, a very steep Class VI roadside drop above the highest conventional run. According to a first-person account posted to rec.boats.paddle by Kevin Hammonds, he met Dan Stoltz, 32, early on the evening of September 16th. Together they spent over an hour scouting this very difficult, complex drop.

The plan was to run the first two drops, eddy out on river left, then ferry to a micro-eddy on river right, just above a final unrunnable drop. There Hammonds, waiting with a rope and carabiner, would clip into Stoltz's grab loop and secure him so he could get out safely. Stoltz ran the first two drops flawlessly, caught the left eddy, then ferried

over to river right. He caught the micro-eddy, but as he eased back to allow Hammond to reach his grab loop, his stern passed to the wrong side of a small boulder. This put him just beyond Hammonds' reach. Stoltz struggled briefly, attempting to beach himself against a shallow rock. Then he slipped backwards, over the horizon line and into the unrunnable drop.

No one saw what happened, but he was almost certainly pinned beneath the surface against a rock in very powerful current. Rescuers searched for three days without finding his body. Authorities were planning to close upstream dams to reduce the river's flow before looking further.

Connecticut's Quinnipiac River

On September 17th, the rains of Hurricane Floyd had passed through New England, raising many river levels past flood stage. Paul Santoni, 34, decided to paddle the Quinnipiac River near Cheshire, Connecticut with a friend. According to Edwin Miles, a local paddler familiar with the river, the Quinnipiac is a benign little river with a few rapids in the Class I-II range. The pair was using sea kayaks, using life vests and helmets, but no sprayskirts.

The accident occurred where a pipeline crosses the river, creating a small drop. The high water turned it into a very nasty hydraulic, much like a low-head dam. The pair capsized and became trapped in the backwash. They clung to their kayaks and screamed for help. Eventually a homeowner heard them, investigated, and called 911. The victim's friend managed grab hold of an overhanging tree limb until firefighters arrived. But Mr. Santoni lost his grip on his boat and was quickly swept under water.

West Virginia's Lower Gauley

Gauley Festival weekend is a joyful gathering of whitewater paddlers in Southern West Virginia, and thousands turned out this year to enjoy the bright sun and sparkling water. Chris Malamisura, 20, borrowed his father's car and drove to the Bucklick Access to the Lower Gauley from Bluefield, Virginia. He approached some paddlers from Pittsburgh and asked if he could run the river with them. After asking him a few questions about his experience, which included the New River Gorge and several comparable runs in the Southeast, the group allowed him to join them.

Koontz Flume lies about a half mile below the put-in. It's abig, but relatively straightforward, Class IV. The group rallied above the drop, then made for the large staging eddy near the top of the rapid on river right. The eddy is not particularly difficult to catch, but it deserves your full attention. A report submitted to AW by Barry Adams stated that Chris flipped just upstream of the rock that

formed the eddy, then washed down along the eddyline. He attempted four or five rolls, coming close but not quite righting himself, before bailing out.

At this point he was just upstream of Koontz Rock. There's a bad sieve in between this rock and some smaller boulders just upstream. Chris exited right above this hazard and washed into the sieve head-first. AW Safety Chair Lee Belknap spoke with a ranger involved with the rescue. He stated that Chris's knee was caught between two rocks, with his head downstream. He may have attempted to keep his head above water by pushing off of rocks with his paddle.

Adams and other members of his group landed upstream and attempted to reach Chris using throw bags. He was able to grab one, but when the group tried to pull him out he could not hold on. After he let go of the rope, a member of the Pittsburgh group attempted a very dangerous swimming rescue. He was washed into the same strainer and was rescued by an alert paddler with a throw rope. A rescue PFD, if it had been available, would have been a safer alternative. By now a very large crowd had gathered at the scene. More attempts at recovery were made until National Park Service rangers reached the scene. The rangers were delayed by near gridlock on the access road, which was blocked by the illegal parking of a few careless private boaters. The rangers made several attempts, then decided that they could not make a safe recovery until water levels dropped significantly. NPS personnel returned the following morning, before the Sunday release arrived, and were able to retrieve Chris's body.

Most of us have either asked to paddle with a group of strangers or been approached by unknown boaters seeking to paddle with them. This is a great way to meet new people, and I've spent many enjoyable days doing this. What happened on the Gauley is everyone's worst nightmare, and although the Pittsburgh group reacted to the situation with skill and courage, it was a terrible experience for everyone involved. For myself, I paddle whitewater near the limits of my skill with people I already know. In easier whitewater, I can be less selective. My reasoning is that when you join an unfamiliar group, you boat to their tempo and style. They can't be expected to make allowances for your weaknesses. In hindsight, someone who knew Chris better might have chosen to avoid the tricky staging eddy where the accident occurred. But you can't expect to really "know" someone after a few minutes of pre-trip conversation.

Nepal's Sun Kosi

It has been a very wet year in the mountains of Nepal. The Sun Kosi, a popular and frequently run 170 mile long river trip, was

running between 50,000 and 100,000 cfs. This level was high, but not unreasonable. Several rafting companies had recently completed successful runs. Jim Traverso, 44, was an experienced kayaker who had lived and boated in Nepal for twelve years. He was making his third trip down this reach, leading a group from New England. According to a report by David Allerdice, a local outfitter, the accident occurred on October 9, on the sixth day of a nine-day trip. The group stopped and scouted Jaws, a hard Class IV rapid located just below the confluence of the Dudh Kosi. Just downstream this rapid lies "Dead Man's Eddy," a powerful recirculating current capable of sucking ten foot logs under water at lower flows. It was decided that the kayakers who wished to run the drop would go first, so they could provide safety for the raft.

The group entered the rapid closely spaced. A woman, paddling second, flipped and was quickly rescued by the leader. Traverso, running third, rolled in a large hole, then capsized in the huge waves below. A following boater picked him up on his rear deck. Traverso, still holding onto his boat and paddle, did not assist his rescuer very much. This made for slow going, and soon they were being carried towards "Dead Man's Eddy." Suddenly a big pulse of water tore Traverso off the back deck of the rescue boat, sucked him under water, and pushed him into the eddy.

His rescuer was pushed the other way, and was carried some distance downstream. The other kayakers in the party, after seeing the raft float through "Jaws" made their way downstream. They spotted someone floating face-down in "Dead Man's Eddy." Two kayakers paddled deliberately into the eddy and attempted a rescue, but they were unable to grab Traverso or push him to shore. After about ten minutes the exhausted kayakers were forced to quit. Then, as shore based rescuers watched, Traverso's life vest was torn from his body. He was then pulled underwater and disappeared. His body was never recovered.

High flows don't make the Sun Kosi High technically more difficult, but they do increase the consequences of a swim. Several members of Traverso's kayaking team observed that it is not possible for a single boater to pull both a swimmer and his gear in water this big. Had Traverso simply let go of his boat, he could have been pulled to safety more quickly. They also speculated that Traverso may have inhaled water or been stricken by a catastrophic health problem. It is also possible that Traverso was hit by floating debris and knocked unconscious. Those familiar with the river describe the eddy as an unpleasant and dangerous place, but feel that most swimmers in it would survive.

Canoeing Accidents

In early September a canoe carrying a family of four broached on a midstream rock while running a Class II section of the Housatonic River near Gaylordsville, Connecticut. Very quickly the canoe tipped, filled with water, and wrapped. According to an article in the New Milford News-Times, Tara Butler, 10, was caught between the boat and the rock. Although she was wearing a life vest, it was of no help as she struggled to keep her head above water. Her father made several rescue attempts, but was thwarted by the swift current. Family members saw Route 7, which runs alongside the river and flagged down a car. Volunteer fire fighters, who were holding an open house less than a quarter of a mile away, responded quickly, but could not reach her in time. Several of the firemen were carried some distance downstream by the current.

We also received an article from The Hartford Courant containing sketchy reports of other canoe accidents occurring on that first weekend in October. Another family of four was stranded when their canoe capsized on the Farmington River near Apricot's Restaurant. They had to be pulled off a midstream rock by fire fighters. That same day a 45 year old man died after his canoe capsized in rapids on the Connecticut River near Northampton, Massachusetts. Police reported that the victim was not wearing a PFD. I suspect that there were other incidents during the high water period following Hurricane Floyd, and anyone with information about them is encouraged to contact me.

Rafting Accidents

Of the three rafting deaths reported in the latter half of this year, two were commercial, and one was private. On August 1st Charles Thompson, 56, died after swimming through Ripogenus Gorge on Maine's West Branch Penobscot River. His guided raft flipped at Exterminator Wave. He was pulled into shore after a long swim through heavy Class IV rapids. Thompson initially seemed fine, and told his guide that he wanted to continue the trip before collapsing. This suggests heart failure or some other catastrophic health problem.

On August 13th Lindsay Gillespie, 14, fell out of her guided raft at Lower Railroad Rapid on West Virginia's New River following a collision with a rock. The New, one of the most popular rafting runs in the country, was running quite low due to drought. This exposes a number of dangerous undercut rocks. The NPS Morning Report stated that Ms. Gillespie was carried into Clamshell Rock, a nasty undercut, where she was trapped for roughly 11 minutes. Guides worked rapidly to free her then began CPR. They maintained her vital signs during the evacuation, first on foot, then by vehicle, and later by a

helicopter waiting at the rim of the gorge. Despite these efforts, she never regained consciousness and died the next day.

On October 2nd a two-boat private trip encountered trouble in Utah's Westwater Canyon. Both boats flipped in the big hole in Skull Rapids. One rafted most of the people in it washed through this rapid and several other drops downstream before reaching shore. The victim, Max Turner, 29, was flushed with the other raft into the Room of Doom, a violent recirculating eddy that's always full of debris. The raft pinned, and Mr. Turner's leg got caught in the bow line dangling from the raft. Several strong paddlers from other groups were unable to reach him, and he drowned after a desperate 30-45 minute struggle.

Death Strikes Unprotected Swimmers

Tragedy struck at the World Rodeo Championships during the first week of December. This event was held at Full James Rapid in New Zealand, which consists of a big wave/hole, two strong side eddies, and smaller waves running out into flat water. During a break in the competition a number of boaters who were not wearing life vests began swimming and tubing the drop. Niamh Tomkins, 24, a member of the Irish Rodeo Team, entered the water behind several others.

Clay Wright's RBP post reported that she was pulled down by a strong eddyline and held under for about 30 seconds. She resurfaced briefly, and was being helped by nearby boaters and swimmers, when she was pulled down for a second time and held under for 15 minutes. Alerted by the public address system, all competitors immediately began searching for her. She was spotted floating under water; and nearby paddlers bailed out and pulled her to the surface. Race organizers, kayakers, and emergency services personnel then worked with utmost skill and speed on her behalf. This was, unfortunately, not enough to prevent her death.

Although experienced whitewater paddlers seldom drown this way, deaths of unprotected swimmers in fast moving water are not uncommon. The National Park Service Morning Report, forwarded by Ada Parkinson, reported five other river swimming deaths this summer. On July 4th two swimmers died in separate incidents on Pennsylvania's Delaware River. On July 18th Mary Ward, 80, drowned on Deep Creek in Great Smokey Mountain National Park after becoming separated from her inner tube. Eighteen year old Alexander Terry drowned on August 1st, while swimming in the Big South Fork of the Cumberland in Kentucky. On August 4th Sergei Markowitz became pinned under a boulder during a swim in Yosemite Valley's Merced River. Several weeks earlier a base jumper, attempting to elude park rangers, also jumped into the Merced and was killed. On August 17th Bonia Hubbard, 17, drowned

while swimming in the low-water Potomac River near Great Falls, Virginia. Most narratives report that the victim was doing fine until they were pulled under suddenly by diving currents. In each case, a well-fitted life vest would have saved the victim's life.

These narratives should remind all paddlers, no matter how skilled, that they need to wear a PFD at all times in whitewater. This is especially true in big water, where powerful downdrafts may pull a swimmer far below the surface and hold them there for long periods. People who are pulled far underwater without PFDs often become disoriented, and actually swim away from the surface! One rec.boats.paddle post speculated that the festive atmosphere at the World Championship site, the warm sun, music, and the excitement of competition may have made swimming the rapid seem safer than it really was. Although recent advances in the sport by elite paddlers have shattered many preconceived ideas of what's safe and what isn't, we must always respect the basic safety rules that serve as the foundation of our sport. There are several fatalities behind every guideline listed in the American Whitewater safety code. As mass paddling events become more common, each of us must remember not to let enthusiasm and excitement substitute for common sense and good judgement.

In a more disturbing incident, Doug Van Houten sent us an e-mail detailing fate of a teenager who threw a dead fish at passing rafters on the Snake River in Wyoming and hit a woman in the face. Later he was assaulted by the woman's boyfriend and thrown into the water at Lunch Counter Rapid. The teenager, who was not wearing a PFD, drowned. His assailant is now facing manslaughter charges!

Also in the news this past summer: a huge canyoneering accident. Rising waters in a narrow canyon in Switzerland claimed the life of at least 18 people. This sport, which involves swimming, climbing, and rappelling down streams too steep to paddle, was frequently confused with white water paddling. AW office personnel were often called upon to set the record straight.

I'd like to thank everyone who wrote or forwarded the material that form the basis of this report. Your continued help is vital to AW's safety mission! As the New Millennium begins, let's have fun and stay safe. Please don't forget to send us press clippings, e-mail accounts, and other info. Don't worry, we won't mind getting duplicate submissions! Please let me know if your name or any other information in your report should be kept confidential. You can reach Charlie Walbridge, AW Safety Editor, at RE 1, Box A43B, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525; Phone 304-379-9002; e-mail: cwal@compuserve.com

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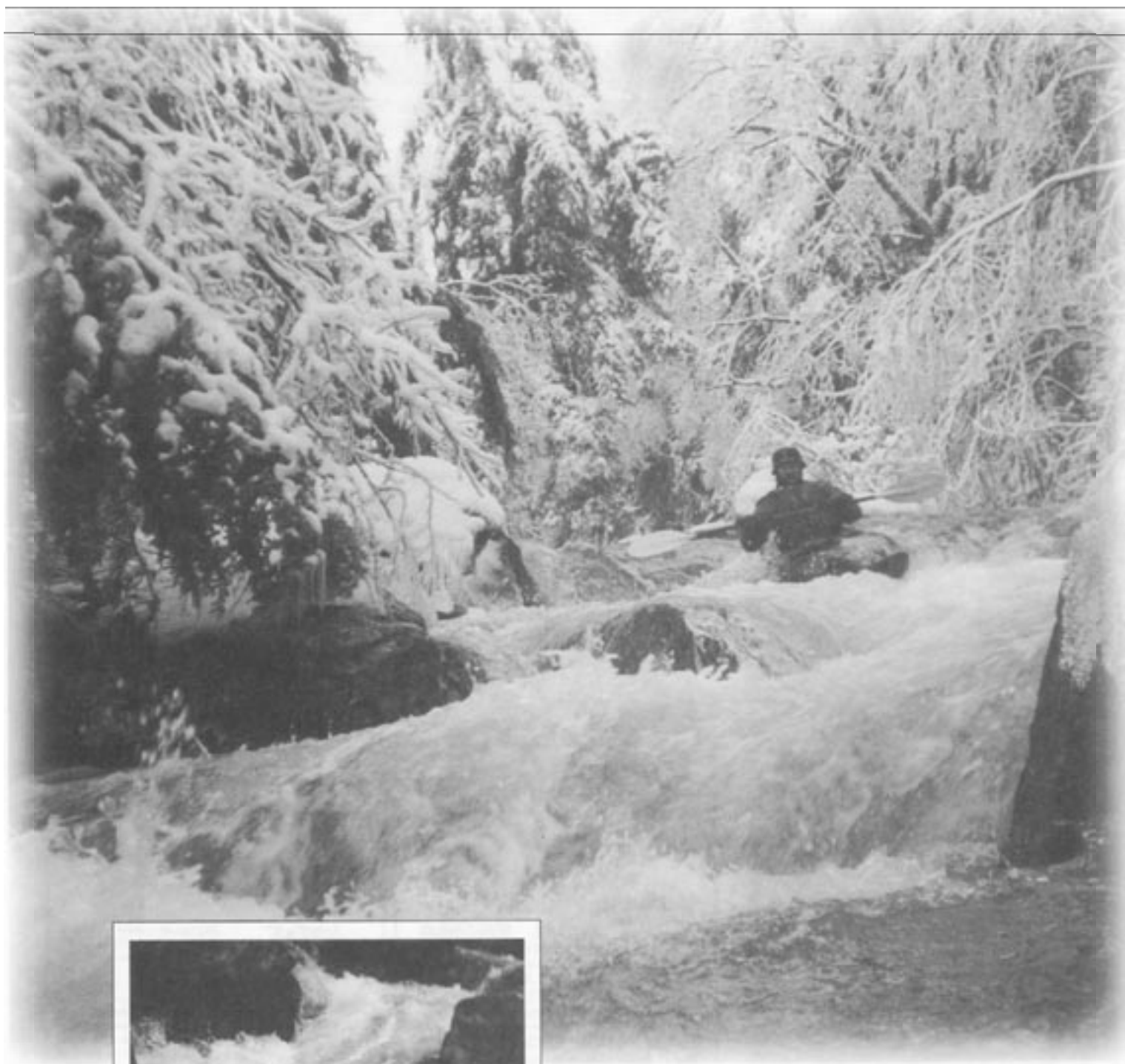
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AW Boater Photos

Top; Richard Grape ... a hardy soul ... breaks the ice on Fikes Creek in southwestern Pennsylvania. Photo by Bill Blauvelt.
Bottom: Jeff Polsgrove charges through Camel Rock Rapid on the Obed-Emory river system in Tennessee. Photo by Todd Spencer.

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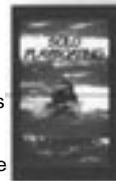
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