



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
March/April 2008

International Whitewater

A Grand Canyon in Mexico
White Nile, Whiter Knuckles
How to Fly With Your Boat



Whitewater Kids

A Five-Year-Old Hand Paddler

Early River Experiences

A Parent's Perspective on Kids and Whitewater



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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

March/April 2008 - Volume #48 - Issue #2

COLUMNS

- 3** The Journey Ahead by Mark Singleton
- 4** Mind Over Water by Doug Ammons
- 10** Safety First: Cold Injury by Eric Nies
- 56** News & Notes
- 62** Accident Summary by Charlie Walbridge

STEWARDSHIP UPDATES

- 14** Colorado Report by Nathan Fey
- 16** Fight Over Roadless Area by Mike Dombeck
- 18** Southeastern Report by Kevin Colburn
- 19** California Report by Dave Steindorf
- 20** Northwest Report by Thomas O'Keefe

WHITEWATER KIDS

- 28** Kayak Kid by Christine Boush
- 32** It can be Scary, but it's Always Exceiting by Jessica Bechhofer
- 34** The Story of a Young Kayaker by Sara Hunter
- 35** A Parent's Perspective on Kids in Whitewater by Ken Cote

INTERNATIONAL WHITEWATER

- 38** Murchison Falls Expedition, Uganda by Justin Venable
- 48** Barranca Sinforosa: a Grand Canyon in Mexico by Rocky Contos
- 54** How to Fly with Your Boat by David Hughes



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Cover: Hang on boys, we're takin' on water! Jordan Guldman cools off in the South Fork American photo by Catherine Howard



Printed on Recycled Paper



Publication Title: American Whitewater
Issue Date: March/April 2008
Statement of Frequency: Published bimonthly
Authorized Organization's Name and Address:
American Whitewater
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Purpose American Whitewater

River Stewardship: An Integrated Approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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American Whitewater is printed by
The Printing House in Quincy Florida
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The Journey Ahead

American Whitewater Partners with Non-paddlesports Allies

By Mark Singleton

I've just returned from the winter Outdoor Retail trade show in Salt Lake City. The show is enormous; it fills hundreds of thousands of square feet and is the largest trade event to come to Salt Lake City each year. Actually it rolls into town twice a year, winter and summer. During the show, downtown Salt Lake City turns into a virtual show room of new outdoor products. While the summer show is more focused on paddlesports, the winter show provides the opportunity to reach out to key industry partners outside the paddlesports space.

In this column I thought I would share some of the highlights of the show with American Whitewater members. The level of support our organization is receiving from partners outside of paddlesports is unparalleled in the history of American Whitewater. This support is a clear demonstration of the importance of our river stewardship project work across the broader outdoor industry.

One of the interesting trends emerging at the show over the last few years is the prevalence of conservation causes. Personally, I view this as a highly encouraging sign; the outdoor industry clearly recognizes that quality recreation is dependant on pristine natural resources. Rivers, trails, forests, crags and snowscapes all provide a special place for recreation. Through recreational experiences on these special lands and waters we become more aware of the finite nature of our country's natural resources and become more committed to conserving special areas. Here I will highlight some of our partners and their efforts to assist us.

Conservation Alliance

The Conservation Alliance is a clear leader in protecting wild places (www.conserv

ationalliance.com). Their mission is to engage outdoor businesses to help protect and conserve threatened wild places for their habitat and recreational values. The Conservation Alliance is a group of outdoor industry companies that disburses its collective annual membership dues to grassroots environmental organizations. They direct their funding to community-based campaigns to protect threatened wild habitat where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. The Conservation Alliance is a key funder of American Whitewater project work. Back in 2002, the Conservation Alliance began funding our work on the Cheoah River with American Whitewater's One River, One Chance campaign. That effort led to restored base flows on the dewatered Cheoah and regular releases for boating. More recently the Conservation Alliance funded work on the Nantahala and Tuckaseegee relicensing process with our Headwaters of the Little Tennessee campaign.

As an example of a successful Conservation Alliance project, I spoke at their breakfast meeting about the removal of Dillsboro Dam on the Tuckaseegee River. The message I tried to communicate is these projects take place in local communities that require constant pressure, evenly applied over time. None of our project successes happen overnight; on the Headwaters of the Little Tennessee we have been working for close to a decade and it's not over yet! Truth be told, it's very hard to walk away from any of the river restoration projects American Whitewater has been part of. Even after initial project success there is still on going monitoring and management. Conservation Alliance support has allowed us to keep local pressure applied on the tributaries of the Little Tennessee.


KEEN Foundation

Motivated by the devastating effects of the tsunami disaster in 2004, the folks at KEEN dedicate both time and financial resources to social and environmental organizations as part of their marketing program. Since 2004, KEEN has distributed more than \$1.5 million to non-profit organizations.

Referred to as Hybrid Care in KEEN lexicon, the foundation has paved the way for sustainable change through community driven projects. American Whitewater has been a core Hybrid Care partner for 3 years and KEEN hosted a fund raising event for American Whitewater and other partners at the Outdoor Retailer show. Money raised at the OR KEEN event will go into local communities where we have active river projects.

Outdoor Alliance

The Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of human powered outdoor recreation groups that includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Hiking Society, American Whitewater, International Mountain Biking Association, and Winter Wildlands Alliance. All these organizations share in the mission of conservation and stewardship of our nation's land and waters through the promotion of sustainable, human-powered recreation. With our friends in other outdoor disciplines, the Outdoor Alliance hosted a happy hour reception where we released a short film on mining reform. Mining policy, dating back to 1872, impacts all forms of human powered recreation on public lands in the west and has been long over due for reform. The film can be viewed on the Outdoor Alliance YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/outdooralliance).

Constant pressure, evenly applied over time. That's the secret to much of what American Whitewater accomplishes. Thanks to membership, industry supporters, foundation funders, coalition partners and community-based volunteers American Whitewater is able to maintain that pressure—now and in the future. 

See you on the river,



Mind Over Water

Fear In Whitewater, Part II

By Doug Ammons

Editor's Note: Doug Ammons is a Ph.D. in psychology, a world class kayaker for 25 years, and author of the book The Laugh of the Water Nymph. He contributes this regular column to American Whitewater as a forum to discuss the psychology of whitewater paddlesports.

The first part of this article, published in the November/December 2007 issue of *American Whitewater*, dealt with the nuts-and-bolts physiology of fear. It stressed that fear was a hard wired survival mechanism, and that the biggest problem for us as paddlers was that our usual "fight or flight" survival reflexes evolved to have us run, fight, or freeze in the face of danger—reactions that are totally inappropriate on a river. The physics of flowing water determine how effective any response will be, and water is a force of nature, not a living creature that can be intimidated, driven away, or killed. This means that we have to learn a new set of skills to keep ourselves safe, skills that are very different from what comes instinctively.

So this second part discusses the psychology of fear, which includes the dynamics of when fear is experienced and how we learn it. We will look at how easily fear is learned, and how it can occur in situations where there is no objective danger at all, which leads us to consider the distinction between realistic and unrealistic fears. We will look at the fact fear is just another form of general arousal, a half step away from excitement and fun. The primary things that separate fear from excitement are the context and meaning the situation has for you.

The third part of this series will be published in the forthcoming May/June issue, and will focus on strategies for dealing with fear.

Before we dive in, I want to stress one thing. With all this focus on fear, readers should not overlook an important reality:

fear is a derivative reaction that happens when things go wrong, or we worry they might. However, the reason we're even on the river in the first place is that whitewater paddling is the funnest, wildest, greatest sport in the world. The river is a powerful and dynamic environment, and when we learn the skills to handle it, we're set free in a new world, exploring with a magic carpet or our own private space ship. It's exciting and fascinating, it's humbling and inspiring.

So the real issue here is to understand this thing called fear that interferes with our ability to move into this brave new world. Understanding is power, and when used correctly it leads to freedom. This article's goal is to help you understand fear and to set you free.

Learning Fear is Easy

There are two simple psychological facts that make it difficult to avoid fear. First, fear can stick its head up anywhere. You don't need to be in a dangerous situation to experience it. It can appear even when you are perfectly safe and there is no objective threat at all. Unfortunately, even a fear that is unrealistic can be just as debilitating as a realistic one.

The second is that fear is a potent experience that leads to extremely fast learning. In the first part of the article we talked about the fear pathway through the amygdala. This fires up so quickly and its effects spread so quickly through the sympathetic nervous system that memory for fear is a full body experience, learned incredibly easily and lasting forever. It's like a form of super learning. You'd love to be able to do that in school, on your job, or on the river. Imagine how it would work with a freestyle move: one try and you've got your loop in the bag and you're on to the next trick. It would be like Neo in the movie *The Matrix*; suddenly you just "know" kung fu.

Unfortunately, that fearful super learning only works for the bad stuff that interferes with all the things we want to enjoy. The good learning is slow, fitful, and requires constant practice. The bad learning is

virtually instantaneous and can last your entire life. It also can overwhelm years of careful good learning.

Let's consider in a little more detail the psychology of how and why fear is learned so quickly. A fear response is the easiest thing to learn because it is the most important for survival. Our psychology is defined by a time when we weren't the main predator in the food chain. We were small, weak, slow two-legged primates in a world full of more powerful and fearsome animals. Our one main advantage was our remarkable ability to learn, and that ability is in full view with fear. In a predator-prey world like that, we could be wrong about a lot of things that didn't matter, but a situation where we could be killed was an absolute. So our remarkable ability served the primary purpose of small prey—to fast-track learning fear, even to the extent that it overpowers everything else.

As a hair-trigger system, learning fear is geared to err on the side of caution and avoid danger. This works because it is far more effective to have a lot of false alarms than to be critically wrong just once. Thus, our psychological makeup is strongly biased to avoid potentially dangerous situations rather than to test them. Think of what this means for a deer. They tend to run first and ask questions later, if at all. Or think of our tribal forebearers—when they heard a peculiarly menacing growl they didn't think, "That sounded like the angry tiger that ate my neighbors last week. I think I'll check it out!" No, from the standpoint of survival, it's better to be wrong and safe than possibly test something uncertain and end up dead. Evolutionarily speaking, there are few things more final than being eliminated from the gene pool.

Now, think of what this means on the river. We're 21st Century intellectuals looking to have fun, with a multi-million year old limbic system ready to steer us clear of danger. From the very beginning of learning the sport, we're constantly in situations where we are testing our control and understanding, while that limbic system, which is the bedrock of our nervous system, is ready with its

finger on the fear button. The sport itself tends to push us closer to the edge of a system that already has a hair-trigger. With this combination, it's no wonder that so many people end up grappling with some aspect of fear.

Fortunately, there's a wonderful counterbalance to this, which is that for all the time you spend not feeling fear, all that testing and learning of control, you're excited and focused, surfing waves and running rapids, feeling your way intimately into one of the planet's deep powers. These are hugely potent and rewarding experiences that we all know and love. They are the opposite image of the fear, and you cannot consider fear without thinking about the feelings that lead us to be on the river in the first place. The chemical fireworks of fun, challenge, excitement are the close brothers of fear, and are constantly enticing us to come along with them. Our job is to follow them without getting waylaid by the Big Bro.

The physiology we discussed in the first part of the article describes the mechanics of fear, but we aren't mechanical robots, and our emotions aren't just mechanical responses to stimuli. We have intentions, thoughts, will, feelings, memories, and desires. We have passions and senses of humor and we make decisions about all these things. But the difficult thing with the fear reaction is that it literally has a mind of its own that veers strongly away from anything we control within us.

Remember, fear occurs at a level underneath your conscious will or control, because the limbic system and pathways through the amygdala and hypothalamus are outside the higher areas of the brain through which you exert conscious control and awareness. This means that once fear starts, it tends to shanghai your control panel, overriding the other things you've learned, shoving aside all your fine tuned sensibilities and intentions, and even your ability to control your own arms and legs.

It also means that once fear is learned, it is very powerful and resistant to change. It is diffused throughout your body and stored

in ways you can't access consciously, so is difficult to get at using rational thinking. People can spend years in therapy undoing the effect of one serious fearful experience from an accident, mugging, or other trauma. A situation just a few seconds long can be retained for your entire life, so it's not something you want to fool around with if you have any choice in the matter.

All these things together are why whitewater paddlesports are some of the hardest, but also some of the most fascinating and rewarding adventure sports. They require a wonderful mix of movement skills and great flexibility in using them to the point of pure improvisation. This yin and yang aspect mirror perfectly one of the main differences between fear and fun, terror and delight—that context and your attitude largely determine the emotional outcome of any event. In most situations, what is going on inside of you controls the emotional results.

You Can Fear Anything

We can learn to fear anything because we can potentially feel threatened and vulnerable in almost any situation. In the extreme, we can even bring a sense of vulnerability to any situation, even when it poses no threat at all. That's called baggage. Because adventure sports require learning a new set of skills in a new environment, they are well tuned to finding your baggage. In a sense, every adventure sport is a long term investigation into fun that requires learning to separate the things that don't matter from the things that do. A great deal of the fun comes from learning skills to direct your destiny, which means not being distracted by problems that can be predicted or controlled, or by worries that are irrelevant. Rivers have a great many lessons to teach us about accurately understanding the world. In a word, it can teach us truth.

Realistic Versus Unrealistic Fears

So let's start by separating realistic from unrealistic fears. From what I've

seen, most of the fears paddlers feel are unrealistic—we're fearful even when in reality we are quite safe. In contrast, a realistic fear is one learned from direct experience of an actual injury and the fear accurately represents the reality of what happened. There probably aren't statistics on this, but in my experience the people with such realistic fears seem to be a tiny minority. Nearly every time I've ever talked with people about their fears, the fear is not based on something dangerous that actually happened to them, but on their anxiety about unknown possibilities and their lack of confidence. There are a lot of people who don't seem to have any direct reason to be fearful. Instead their fears are anticipations and doubts compounded by all sorts of other factors.

A friend of mine illustrated this situation well. Susan has been kayaking for more than ten years. She is solid on Class IV and has a lot of experience paddling the standard runs in Colorado. Yet, she is frightened. When asked why, she admits she's never been hurt. She's most scared of hitting her head on a rock when upside down, although it's never happened to her. She's also scared of swimming even though she's never been hurt swimming, and was a national level swimmer for 15 years, going to college on a swimming scholarship. She's in great condition, smart, strong and skilled, can do a roll both sides better with her hands than with a paddle. She would seem to be an ideal candidate for having great confidence and little fear.

Why is she fearful? Well, here's where the other factors come in. Consider that she paddles only seasonally, from late spring through summer. By the end of the summer she feels great, with good control and a bomber roll. But then she doesn't kayak for eight months. She's a mother, chemist, professional researcher, and musician, so she has plenty to keep her busy away from the river. When she starts thinking about kayaking again the next spring, the rivers are cold and high. The long lay-off plays with her mind and she starts doubting herself again. If she could just paddle a few rivers during the off season, her familiar sense of control would

Mind Over Water

return, but the rivers are frozen and there's no place to go. This slight chink in her armor yields worries, and the worries grow because there is no direct action or practice to counter them. She has huge anticipation and her confidence wanes while her worries take front stage.

And when spring comes, she'd like to start out slow and ease into the season, but the nature of runoff in the Rocky Mountains does not allow for this convenience. The water is high, cold and the weather can be unstable. Even the easy runs are much harder in the spring. To compound these worries, her husband is a good Class V paddler, and while he's fairly patient, he doesn't want to ease into the season, so she has difficulty finding partners and usually is mismatched in attitude and skill level. Once she's out and on the water, there's great relief and a growing sense of confidence as the familiarity of the moves and sensations return with the feeling, "Oh yeah, I can do this." But if she's going with her husband, since he accommodated her on an "easy" run, she feels the next trip has to accommodate him better and is probably going to be harder than she'd like, so in the back of her mind she's already tensing up for that. Paddling would be much easier if she didn't have to juggle all these other concerns. However, like most of us, she lives in the real world and her life is filled with such things.

Obviously, the situation isn't optimal for reinstating control and confidence each year, but it reflects the fact that most people don't have their lives set up to develop perfect confidence and skills in paddling. Very few do, usually only younger people without many responsibilities. Susan's never even had a bad experience on the water, but it makes her uncomfortable and she ends up second-guessing herself. This interplay of compounding factors makes it difficult to develop and maintain her confidence, and largely unrealistic fears creep in. Between the layoff, loss of familiarity, harder-than-preferred runs, expectations, no partners who really match her in motivation and comfort zone, there's plenty of fodder for Susan's doubts and fear.

This last observation is a theme that runs through most fear. The best course of action is to take small steps, increase your familiarity, and systematically improve your skills and control. Knowing you can do something, knowing that your skills are solid and knowing that you are prepared, leads to feeling confident. Competence, control, skill and understanding are the antidotes to most fears, particularly the unrealistic ones. Most fears occur because we try to take bigger steps than we should, attempt to do unfamiliar things, and don't systematically improve our skills and control. Consequently, there is no way our confidence will be solid, because the chinks in the armor are there, ready for the river to work on.

While Susan's situation shows how unrealistic fears can creep into the life of a competent paddler, here is a simpler example of an overwhelmingly powerful, yet totally unrealistic fear.

Marie is a friend of mine who has been deathly afraid of water all her life. It stemmed from one incident: on a family vacation when she was 4, she fell off a dock at a small lake. As she briefly floated there at the surface, holding her breath, watching and listening to everything that was going on, her mother went completely bonkers, hysterically screaming, "She's drowning! Help, Help, My baby is drowning!!" It took all of 10 seconds for the father to jump in, scoop up his daughter, and get her to safety. She didn't choke once. She wasn't even afraid. But the damage was done because she'd watched her mother come unglued, and that screaming and terror has echoed in her ears ever since. Her phobia is a deep-rooted, reflex fear that to this day, 30 years later, is so powerful it pervades every association she has toward water. Needless to say, when I offered a kayaking lesson, she wasn't interested.

Exaggerated, unrealistic fears restrict and dominate our thoughts, preventing us from exploring and finding the truth about the world. They are false in the sense that they do not accurately reflect reality, even though they are real feelings. And while Marie's situation was dramatically

produced by her mother in a ten second childhood incident, Susan's is a complicated interaction that has developed over ten years. And think again about the example from the first part of this article, in which my friend Steve repeatedly swam Class III rapids on his first day in a kayak. That was three hours on a river, and the reality is he took multiple swims and only got wet, a little cold, and choked a couple of times. That's pretty benign. Yet, all the emotion pouring through his system converted an annoying and uncomfortable experience into something terrifying. The chief cause was feeling out of control and the threat of being swept into the unknown. These are critical themes in the creation of fear. Even in the case of unrealistic fear, once the threshold is reached and the fear reaction begins, those potent chemical fireworks feed the very worst of your inaccurate perceptions.

These examples illustrate that much of our fear comes from ignorance, particularly as beginners, because we simply don't know what the water will do and we don't have the skills to deal with it. You fear what you don't know and can't control, and this becomes especially pronounced when you feel catastrophe looms in every direction.

To deal with fear, we have to separate this untrue, self-created feeling of disaster from what the real dangers are, so we aren't controlled by what amount to powerful, personal superstitions, jet fueled by our most potent chemistry.

What is a Realistic Fear?

Here are two examples of realistic fears:

A recent acquaintance named Tom told me about an incident he'd experienced his second year of kayaking. He flipped upside down in a Class III rapid on an easy run, severely hit his head, suffered multiple skull fractures and had a terrifying and painful time getting out of the river. He then struggled through long term, major rehabilitation. He loves paddling, went back to it with a vengeance, and is doing very well, having paddled widely and honed his skills to solid Class IV+.

Yet, he finds himself wrestling with deep doubts when confronting rapids, with fear creeping into his best experiences and preventing him from enjoying the sport fully.

I have to say that in my nearly 30 years on rivers and all the accident reports I've ever seen, his was a freak injury. Such things are incredibly infrequent and he was very, very unlucky. Yet, the incident happened and his fear reaction is fully realistic. That fear exists at a deep, physiological level. In effect, he has PTSD, post traumatic stress syndrome, a deep classically conditioned fear based on the trauma of the injury and pain he experienced. It pervades his whole attitude and experience of kayaking. Currently he's working on ways to deal with it.

Another realistic fear is a much more specific one of my own. In 1989 Rob Lesser, Bob McDougall and I set out to do the first self-contained descent of the Grand Canyon of the Stikine in northern British Columbia. We scouted the first huge drop, called Entry Falls, and decided on a line that had worked when Rob and McD did the first (helicopter assisted) descent four years before. However, we couldn't see the critical part because it was hidden by a massive boulder that had shifted positions. McD went first and disappeared over the edge. I gave him time and then came down, only to find as I was entering the drop that he was being annihilated in a powerful hole that swept back into undercuts on both sides. To make a long story short, I avoided the hole and ran the whole rapid out of control. Meanwhile, McD was pounded beyond belief, then swept underneath a boulder and just barely managed to scratch his way back to the surface. The ordeal continued, as he was trapped against a sheer cliff with nothing but shattered rock above him for 400 vertical feet, and a massive class V rapid in front of him. Being a big wall climber, he headed up the improbable wall and somehow made it. To hear the whole story, you should take a look at my book on the Stikine when it comes out. The effect on him was that he never again did hard Class V, and the effect on me was that I developed an aversion to running things blind, and to assuming any drop is

still fine because it was run four years before. In fact, I will never run something hard I haven't scouted. I have younger, highly skilled friends who regularly run hard things by the seat of their pants, on verbal instructions without looking at the drop themselves. But I will never do that again because the problem on the Stikine was one too many. I don't know whether to call it a fear, but let's just say I have a deep dislike for not knowing where I'm going on a difficult river. That feeling was created entirely by watching my best friend come as close as it's possible to drowning, and being helpless to do anything about it. Importantly, this fear is incorporated in a fully realistic way into my entire approach to rivers.

The above examples from Steve, Susan, Marie, Tom, McD and me could be expanded by thousands of others. They show that you can learn fear from a wide variety of experiences, some of which represent realistic dangers, and others that reflect only a false sense of threat. It also shows they are then incorporated in many ways. Susan continues to kayak and intermittently feels fearful and confident. That near disaster on the Stikine didn't stop me from going up there three more times and loving the place, as well as paddling hundreds of other difficult runs. McD still paddles, but his hard-core expedition fire went out. Interestingly, all these years later he feels good about what happened—he was dealt one of the worst situations you could ever imagine and he handled it. Steve is still working on his paddling skills—warily, but with great enthusiasm. Marie will never do more than wade ankle deep in a lake, and will not get in a raft or kayak for any reason. Tom is a serious paddler working through his underlying fear by gaining control of it and his paddling skills. This range shows our reactions are heavily dependent on the context, and what we interpret as dangerous or threatening, and especially, whether we can develop a sense of control over the threatening aspects.

Arousal—Emotional Jet Fuel

A key element in our reaction to fear is the context in which the experience occurs. You get wired up with internal chemicals; it is possible to interpret the feelings as fireworks of fun or firebombs of fear depending on the surroundings and your expectations.

Arousal is a term psychologists use to talk about the general state that occurs when our bodies are revved up. Fear is just one type of arousal. You can refer to the first part of the article for the description of what fear entails physiologically. In general, arousal includes any kind of excitement, sexual reactions, aggression, anger, sadness, joy, or exhilaration. Exhilaration is where the fireworks are enjoyable, terror is where they start threatening us.

The typical psychological model for this is the “inverted U,” meaning too little arousal leads to boredom, while at some intermediate point the arousal is at an optimum level – we're excited and revved up – and as the level of arousal ratchets upward, it become more aversive until we reach fear, or even terror.

The reason we use a general term like arousal, is that many of our emotions are almost exactly the same physiologically. It is difficult to tell them apart by the chemistry or internal responses. For example, the same general physiological responses occur in fear as occur in anger, and even in excitement. This speaks to the complexity of human learning. A major part of any emotional reaction comes from the meaning the situation has for us. So our experience of one emotion or its opposite is largely due to the context in which arousal occurs. Being out of control on a roller coaster ride is great fun for a teenager, but it may be a traumatic disaster for a child. Deliberately swimming a Class II rapid and catching eddies like an otter is an absolute blast, but for a beginning kayaker, dumping unexpectedly in the same rapid, choking and bailing out can be utterly terrifying. We differentiate according to context, and

Mind Over Water

interpretation can mean the difference between a great experience and a horrible one. A nice example of this principle is another friend of mine whose response was the exact opposite of Steve's. He swam repeatedly on every run of his first season, freezing, shivering, and getting bruised, but he thought it was fun, never felt afraid.

A more dramatic situation is one in which the same place evokes both emotional extremes. I experienced this one of the first times I paddled the Lochsa River in the early 1980s. The Lochsa is one of the world's great Class III+ to IV play rivers; it's big water, with big holes and waves and fantastic drops for 35 miles. However, it was considered serious territory back then, particularly for mere intermediates. We came over with huge anticipation, worried but resolved to try and run it. We felt like we were right on the cusp of the ultimate challenge.

My two partners and I were in flimsy 13-foot fiberglass boats, and after some sobering rapids, we were just trying to get down the river without getting trashed. It had been cloudy the entire time, and then started raining heavily. The river looked dark and foreboding. We'd managed to survive most of the run, but were close to our limit when we came down on a dramatic drop and confronted a monstrous crashing wave. We eddied out and talked it over. There was lots of tense gesturing and speculation. One friend was really scared and said, "It's going to rip us out of our boats. I'm cold and tired. I'm getting out. Right here. Right now." The other friend said, "It's too big, it's going to break our boats in half."

As they started climbing out, the sun came out and showed brightly and warmly. Suddenly, all the foreboding was gone. The river looked clean and sparkling and beautiful.

I had a welter of feelings—I was worried and on the verge of getting out too. But I'd been having a good time, and now the sunlight completely changed the mood and I found myself saying, "Other people have run the thing. It must be possible." I gritted

my teeth and headed down, tensing up as I got nearer and nearer, then confronted the wave looming over me. I remember thinking, "Oh my god, I'm wrong—this thing is huge" It picked up the kayak and flipped me over backwards end for end, and I somehow came down the front face of the wave surfing. My eyes bugged wide open, the world careened wildly by. Reflexively, I managed two cut backs with the boat skipping and bouncing, and then the wave broke on me and I submarined out.

First thought: Wow! Second thought: We can surf the thing! The wave was massive and intimidating, thick, totally clear, and towering over our heads. It would undulate smoothly and then occasionally lift up and collapse with a deep thump, then smooth out again. We discovered we could actually get back up to it with a little scraping, and all three of us tentatively tried some more surfs, getting the thrill of our lives. There were no broken boats. No being ripped out of the cockpit. Just wild rides in crystal clear water with the sun pouring down and the canyon glistening in a million shades of green. We surfed for three hours and one friend swam after getting beaten down by the break, but we slapped each other and laughed and shouted again and again, "This is the best river in the whole world!! This is the best surf wave on the whole planet!"


After that, it was always the first place we went to surf. Today the wave is known across the country simply as "Pipeline."

This story shows the whole sweep of emotions is right there any time, from fear to exhilaration. It shows that in a few minutes you can run out across the inverted "U" from optimal arousal to worry to terror and back to ecstasy. It's all in how you interpret the context.

These last examples suggest another important fact about arousal. People differ immensely in how reactive they are to events. Some people seem frightened by everything; others don't seem to get upset no matter what. Some people are impulsive and love new experiences, others are cautious, and still others are terrified

by novelty and change. Such differences may have roots in upbringing and prior experiences, but people also seem simply to be geared differently in their basic responses to the world. When you couple these individual differences in reactivity to the effects of context, it means in a group of people you can expect the entire universe of possible experiences. It also means that there is no one description or solution that will apply to all people or to all situations.

Exploration as a Primal Motive?

While I stressed above that psychologically we're geared to be cautious for survival, I have to add here that at the other extreme, testing limits and exploring might be a primal motivation that can override fear. Just as people have huge variations in their arousal, they also vary greatly in how they respond to the unknown, and how willing they are to take risks. It is a fact about the world that sometimes great discoveries can be made by those who decided to look where others fear to tread. As maybe the most dramatic example of this, think about the tribes in Siberia who somehow decided to head north into the unknown, crossed the land bridge to the new world and found two entire continents full of mountain ranges, huge lakes, deserts, and vast prairies filled with unknown threats and wonders. They could have stayed on familiar ground, but instead they engaged in one of the greatest acts of exploration in the history of humankind. So I personally believe probing the unknown must be an important part of our humanity, even if each individual only takes very small steps. I felt it strongly that first day on the Lochsa, and many times since. I'm equally sure every reader has felt it too, on other runs, and in other parts of your lives. I think this is also why a great adventure epic both raises the hair on the back of our neck, and inspires us: every emotion is intimately interwoven with its opposite. 

Stay tuned for Part Three, in which we will discuss how to control fear.



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Safety First

Cold Injury

By Eric Nies

What's the coldest you've ever been? Cold enough that you couldn't stop shivering? That your hands wouldn't work? That you couldn't think straight? For most of us, being truly cold is a rare and brief experience, one that usually ends when we jump in the hot tub or duck inside the ski lodge.

As boaters, though, we often commit to extended jaunts through a wet and chilly landscape, where the threat of cold injury is constant and real. Here, then, is an overview of some of the things that happen when cold gets the better of us.

Man the Mammal

We are warm-blooded creatures. This means that the chemical systems in our bodies are designed to work at around 98 degrees Fahrenheit. If we stray from this value by a few degrees, enzymes and proteins become inefficient at their jobs, and important things like nerves and muscles stop working right.

So, our bodies spend a big slice of our energy budget maintaining and regulating a fairly constant internal temperature. When we're hot we produce sweat to cool the skin's surface, and then we shunt blood flow to the skin, to cool it down before it flows back to the core. In addition, we modify our behavior when our internal temperature starts to rise. We drink more because we're thirsty, we turn on a fan, we go for a swim; sometimes we even strip down to our skivvies and take a nap in the shade.

When it's cold, we also modify our behavior: we dress warm, we build a fire, maybe we get out of the wind and rain to decrease the cold challenge that our bodies have to face. We also tend to keep our muscles moving, thus generating heat. We walk in circles, we stomp our feet, we swing our arms back and forth. (John Muir wrote that when he couldn't start a

fire in the woods, he'd dance all night to stay warm.)

More than this, our bodies automatically ramp up the inner fires of our metabolism when we get cold, and we start to burn more calories even while sitting around. Specialized cells called brown fat cells exist only for this purpose, and are activated when we get cold. If push comes to shove, we will start to shiver, an involuntary process that generates more heat from our muscles. To stay warm, we also tend to shunt blood flow away from the skin, to decrease heat loss to the environment.

Hypothermia

When the cold challenge of our surroundings overwhelms our ability to respond, we start to get cold, and eventually the core body temperature starts to drop. This is called hypothermia, and it causes a well-known series of changes in the body. In mild hypothermia (core temp in the mid 90s F), we get a little clumsy and may start to show some poor judgment. As we move into moderate hypothermia (low 90s F), these effects become pretty apparent, even incapacitating. These changes have been called the "umbles," as in "stumbles, mumbles, fumbles, and grumbles." At some point on this continuum, significant shivering sets in as well.

You don't need a thermometer to make this diagnosis. In fact, forget the numbers because they won't help you on the river. Instead, just simplify your thinking: if someone is acting a little off, and if they are shivering, you need to step up and treat them for hypothermia.

You have two modes of treatment: decrease the cold challenge to this person (warm clothes, bonfire, tent and sleeping bag...), and increase their energy production (hot drink, candy bar, sip of water, jumping jacks ...). Use some common sense, and tailor your response to the situation. Often on the river, all you need to do is keep a good eye on this person, share your concerns with the group, then step up the pace a bit and stick to the drier lines through rapids. (More on this below.)

Severe hypothermia (core temp below 90 F) is a true medical emergency. People in this state are beyond shivering. They appear pale, cold and near-dead. At this point, they have lost the ability to rewarm themselves, and no amount of bonfires, dry clothes, and snuggling in a sleeping bag will fix this. This person needs to be transported to a hospital as quickly and gently as possible. (For more on this, see the Nov/Dec '07 issue of the American Whitewater: "CPR: What's New, What Works.")

The only good field treatment for severe hypothermia, then, is preventing it. The good news is that severe hypothermia usually takes hours to set in, and is generally preceded by a very recognizable period of mild to moderate hypothermia as described above. Even in the setting of a pin or cold-water drowning, severe hypothermia probably doesn't set in for at least 30 or 40 minutes. In general, you have every opportunity to recognize and treat hypothermia before it gets bad.

It's Not Just Hypothermia

Hypothermia, even in harsh conditions, takes time to set in. Before this happens, cold can cause other problems. The most obvious example of this is the clumsy, numb, painful hands we get when we forget to bring our pogges on a nasty day. Hands have a lot of surface area, and not much in the way of insulating fat or heat-generating muscle, so they get cold easily. If the body is already working hard to stay warm, it may decide that it cannot afford to lose more heat through the hands, at which point blood flow may be shunted away from the extremities. This preserves core warmth, but makes the hands that much colder. Between the cold and the poor blood flow, they become numb, stiff, and next to useless.

Forgetting your pogies is like touching a hot stove—you only have to do it once, then you remember never to do it again. What many of us don't factor in is that pogies aren't good for much more than paddling. I learned this the hard way after

doing a dicey hands-on rescue on a raw day. After a few minutes in and out of the ice-cold water, my hands turned into near-useless lumps. Since then, any time I've used pogies, I've packed along a pair of neoprene gloves, either in a drybag or tucked inside my drysuit. On a cold day, these are as essential for rescue work as a rope and 'biners. Some of my boating friends have even switched from pogies to gloves just for this reason.

The second part of this equation is to keep your body toasty and well-fed. If the body is warm and happy, it will be less stingy with the blood flow to the hands. Underdress, and your hands will know it.

Cold Shock

We all know the breathtaking hit of a jump into chilly water. As it turns out, the body can do some weird stuff when hit with even a faceful of cold water. These immediate responses go under the general heading of "cold shock response."

First, we get an intense and immediate adrenalin surge. Most of the time, this isn't dangerous, but occasionally it will cause our hearts to skip beats or beat ineffectively. If this happens for a second or two, we may feel it as a "palpitation." More rarely, the heart can toggle into a disorganized or ineffective rhythm that persists for seconds to minutes. This can cause blood flow to stop, leading to unconsciousness, etc, etc.

If someone falls into cold water and seems to pass out for no reason (e.g. they didn't hit their head), this phenomenon should be high on your list of potential culprits. Your fix is easy: get this person on shore, take a moment to try to wake them up, and start CPR if they don't show signs of life. (You don't know CPR? Take a class. Please. You're a boater.) This person might also respond to a shock from a defibrillator. If that's not an option, just do the best you can with regular CPR.

Along with heart mischief, a hit of cold water can play havoc with our breathing. Many of us know the automatic and



Justin Venable prepare for a Shock to the System, Blackwater River, WV

Photo by Jack Ditty

uncontrollable gasp of air we take when we hit the cold. This is bad when we suck in a mouthful of water by mistake. Then we're coughing and gagging, panicking to get some air.

Similarly, our windpipes can spasm shut in response to a cold hit (or in response to choking on water, as above.). This is the feeling when you have "the wind knocked out of you." You want to breathe, but for some strange reason nothing goes in. Usually this lasts just a few anxious seconds, but rarely it can persist long enough to cause unconsciousness. Again, your job as a rescuer is clear: rescue this person and start CPR if they don't show signs of life.

(Oddly, laryngospasm usually presents no barrier to rescue breathing. In fact, rescue breathing usually causes the spasm to relax. This is a good chance for CPR to work.)

Cold Equals Stupid

It's a maxim among raft guides and kayak instructors: swimmers in rapids do stupid stuff. They stop thinking, they stop listening, and they basically act like idiots. I've seen it, and I've done it. And cold makes this much, much worse.

It's easy to understand why this happens. Most swims are unplanned, and often they are frightening, if not dangerous. Often they follow a heinous and prolonged beatdown. So, we're starting with fear,

some mild hypoxia and an adrenalin surge. Add a mouthful of cold water and freezing temperatures, and paint this over a base layer of mild hypothermia, and you've got a heady cocktail guaranteed to drop anyone's IQ by 40 points.

For you, the rescuer, the burden is on you to adjust your actions accordingly. When it's cold, you need to be extra clear and directive when helping a swimmer ("GRAB MY BOW! GOOD! TAKE A BREATH! TAKE ANOTHER BREATH, GOOD!") When doing any kind of rescue work with a cold victim, be ready for major panic and major stupidity.

Cold Equals Weak

Also, rescuers need to realize that cold saps strength. This can happen pretty fast, on the order of 5 to 10 minutes. If you're dealing with a boater who's been pinned or swimming in cold water for more than a few minutes, you have to think that this person is rapidly losing their ability to participate in their own rescue. Their hands are losing feeling, their strength is evaporating, their thinking is getting fuzzy. Sooner or later, they won't have the mojo to hang onto a rope, clip a carabiner, or even pull their sprayskirt. Again, the burden is on you to adjust your plan to deal with this.

This can be a tough call. You might find yourself doing something quicker than you'd otherwise like, because waiting just won't work. (See sidebar: "Jack's Swim.")

Safety First

Or you might decide you need to get in the water or otherwise ramp up a rescue, which obviously increases your own risk. Just keep this in mind when cold is a factor. If you've got a decent Plan A that needs a proactive victim, do it and do it fast. If it's been a few minutes, reassess the situation, especially the status of your buddy in the water. If they are looking marginal, you may need to move on to Plan B or C.

The Cold Snowball

The real problem with cold injury on the river is how it can snowball. It's cold, someone has a swim, maybe they're underdressed. Of course they're too embarrassed to ask for help, so they dump their own boat (while standing waist-deep in frigid moving water) and otherwise refuse all assistance (hey, we've all been there). Now they're a little cold and a little rattled. Their boat's probably not dumped completely dry, or maybe their skirt isn't quite on all the way. Hands are a little numb and clumsy. And so the next swim happens soon after ... and the next and the next.

As we see this nightmare unfolding, we can get a panicky-type feeling that the only fix is to get this person back in their boat and down to the takeout as fast as possible. And often this is the right call. But sometimes it isn't. At some point, the right move is to stop the trip, get on shore, have a snack and a sip of water, and reassess your options. Is it time to hike out? Do you have time and wood for a quick bonfire, or some dry clothes to re-outfit your chilled friend?

The best way to play this, of course, is to avoid it in the first place. First, don't let your buddies say "no" to help. They will want to self-rescue, they will want to swim after their paddle, they will want to stand hip-deep in an ice-cold eddy and dump their boat. In short, they will want to do stupid stuff. In this situation, do whatever you need to do to get them out of the water quickly. Often this takes the form of gentle verbal coaxing ("Look, Fred's got your paddle, now just get your stubborn ass on shore NOW before you freeze to

death, ya idjit!").

And most anytime I get a swimmer's boat to shore, I just go ahead and drain it good and dry myself, and I situate the boat so it's ready to go. That way the swimmer doesn't have to exhaust himself all over again wrestling with a sodden boat. This is good form after any beat-down swim, and especially apropos if hypothermia is lurking. If I get the swimmer and boat in together, I'll usually just get out of my own boat and give them a hand dumping out on shore, and then just sit for a minute ("no hurry, it's all good ... You need a snack? Water?") before fixing to push off.

An Ounce of Prevention

The very best way to deal with cold is to stay warm. For me, dressing warm means being ready for an ordinary river run, and also for the swimming, wading, and hiking that jazz up a river day when things go less than perfectly. In truly cold conditions, this means either a drysuit, or a drytop and a good wetsuit. If you're relying on staying upright and in your boat to stay warm, you are underdressed.

If it's cold enough for pogies, I usually bring along a few other things. First, for any kind of real river trip, I'm probably pulling out my creekboat. It gives me a drier, mellower ride than a playboat, and has the room to carry the thermos, spare clothes, etc, that are nice to have along on a nasty day. Second, I'll pull out the big winter helmet. For some folks, this is a helmet with more coverage and foam for warmth, or with enough wiggle room to wear a skullcap under. I have a hefty, full-facemask, big-coverage helmet I pull out for hard creeks, but it also works great for cold days. The facemask really makes the helmet a lot warmer. Next, I'll usually bring a spare paddle, or at least neoprene hand paddles. In the summer, I might skip this if I'm comfortable hand-paddling out of a run in a pinch. In the winter, bare

What's in your drybag? My everyday disaster kit includes duct tape, a space-blanket bag, two piezoelectric lighters, firestarter, a waterproof headlamp, a warm hat, and a small first aid kit. For cold weather I'll add a neckwarmer spare neoprene gloves, and extra clothes as needed. At times this has included a sleeping bag, pad, and tarp. Snacks are essential. I'll usually chuck some Clif Bars in my dry bag and keep something handy in a chest pocket as well.




hand paddling is a pretty grim option. Lastly, as I said above, if I'm using pogies then I'm also bringing neoprene gloves, for any kind of rescue or portage work.

Staying warm also takes energy, and plenty of it. Think of how bone-weary you feel at the end of a hard day of skiing, winter creekking, or ocean surfing in cold water. You have been burning some serious calories all day. And think of what you eat when it's cold outside—stew, chili, cheese fondue—the kind of dense calories that stick with you. You would never touch this stuff after a hot, sweaty soccer game, but you can't get enough of it après ski.

It's good form to have a solid meal before getting out on a grim day, to bring some snacks, even for a short run (if you swim you'll be glad you got 'em), and to make sure not to skimp on the liquids. Dehydration can be a real problem on cold days—you don't sweat as much, but you do lose more moisture by breathing in cold air. And dehydration is a set-up for the muscle malfunction and hypothermia that can poison a cold day.

This question always comes up: are hot liquids better than cold? The amount of heat in a cup of hot tea or cocoa is pretty small, probably not enough to significantly change your body temperature. Yet we've all felt the happy warming effects of a hot cup of something when we're chilled. It may be that the hot liquid tricks our bodies into thinking that it's not so cold after all. They may even act to push more blood to our hands. Who knows? They feel good, and they certainly don't hurt.

Happy boating, and stay warm. 

*The author celebrating Christmas, 2007,
Stony Kill, NY*

Photo by Kate Udall

Jack's Swim

Blame it on the boat—it was brand new, and he put it on eBay the next day. Anyway, it was the only boof I've seen Jack flub, but it was a bad one, the middle line at the second boof on Tomko Falls. He penciled in, got schooled in the hole, and ended up swimming in the turbulent pocket eddy at the base of the drop, with plenty of rapid waiting downstream. Water temp, maybe 40 degrees. Air temp, maybe 35.

Jack was waist-deep in near-freezing water, rimmed in by snow-covered boulders, with no chance to climb up and out. Swimming the rest of the rapid was unappetizing at best. Johnny ran up the opposite shore with a rope. He and Jack were separated by maybe ten feet of steep, shallow, ugly current.

I stayed below, ready to rope him in if he swam on down. None of us knew exactly how to play it. Jack made the call, and he made it fast. "I'm getting cold, I gotta get out of here." He took a rope from Johnny, then without hesitation launched himself as best he could into the current. Johnny reeled him in, and three seconds later Jack was across and scrambling up the icy shore. It wasn't pretty, but it worked. If we'd waited much longer, I don't think it would have



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Stewardship Updates

The Colorado Stewardship Report

By Nathan Fey

Colorado's Water Supply Future

Throughout Colorado, water planners are evaluating the importance of stream reaches for “non-consumptive” environmental and recreational values, and taking positions on whether these needs are worth protecting. In each river basin, a non-consumptive needs assessment (NCNA) is being developed under the Interbasin Compact Process, to identify and quantify river flows valued by non-consumptive water uses, like rafting and kayaking, fishing, or wildlife habitat. Where recreational and environmental water use is not identified and quantified through the NCNA process, new water delivery projects could diminish flows previously essential to rafters and kayakers, not to mention fish and riparian systems. American Whitewater is collecting recreational use data in river basins around Colorado, including the Dolores and San Juan basin, the South Platte, Colorado and Gunnison. This data will help paddlers play an important part in the prioritization and quantification of Colorado's Non-Consumptive water needs, particularly as the NCNA process establishes priority stream segments around the state.

The goals of the Non-Consumptive Needs Assessment process are to:

- * Identify priority areas and reaches for environmental and recreational attributes based on existing data
- * Identify the quantities of seasonal flows necessary to maintain priority areas and reaches, to the extent possible with existing data, based on agreed-upon methodologies.
- * Outreach to interested parties about the existence of the products of this effort

so that parties can use the information developed in other water planning efforts. The methodology for completing the NCNA focuses on a two-step process for evaluating non-consumptive needs: Prioritization and Quantification.

Prioritization

Build Upon Attributes: Over the past several months, the NCNA Work Group has worked with each Basin to review and comment on the GIS coverages of environmental and recreational attributes compiled during State Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) Phase 2, as well as to suggest development of additional, important GIS coverages and data layers specifically for their basin.

Establishing Priorities: Once Basins have identified the data layers that contain important non-consumptive attributes for their basins, they will establish priorities. A basin's priorities will be based on both local and state information. In addition, basin roundtable members will be able to consider whether and how to prioritize a reach or area.

Quantification

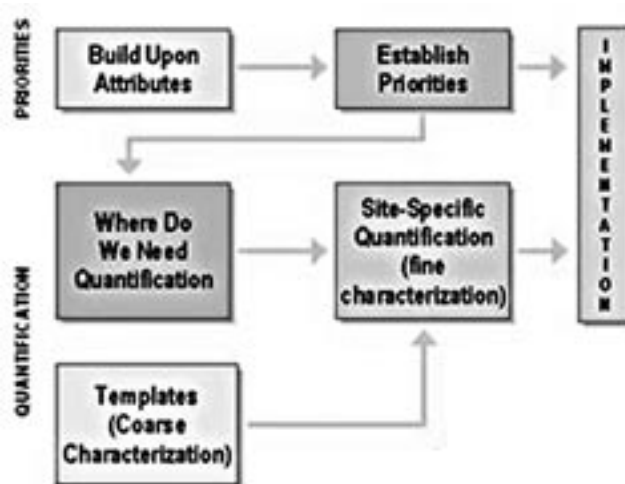
Where do we need quantification? The work group will develop criteria to help evaluate the need for quantification in priority reaches. The “triage” process will begin with the prioritized reaches and areas. Basins will consider the condition of the reach or area as well as

its existing status or land use protection. Based on this evaluation, the roundtable will decide if it would be appropriate to perform quantification.

Templates (Coarse Characterization): Approximately 10 templates will be developed for Colorado stream and river types (e.g., high mountain headwaters, ephemeral desert washes, etc.) based on gross differences in hydrology and function. The template would provide a model hydrograph as well as specify which components of the hydrograph are important for specific ecological and recreational attributes.

Site-Specific Quantification (Fine Characterization): Where priority reaches warrant site-specific quantification, the Interbasin Compact Committee will use the appropriate template from the coarse characterization and apply it to the specific river reach using existing data regarding flow and function.

The NCNA process is Colorado's best opportunity to take a snapshot of river-based recreation in the state, establishing recreational water needs as a legitimate and an economically important water use. AW continues to work with each of Colorado's Basins to highlight recreational water use, and to ensure that paddlers have opportunities to advocate for flows need to sustain the \$150 million dollar rafting and kayaking industry.



More Wild and Scenic Rivers for Colorado?

In the Upper Colorado River basin and along sections of the Yampa River, the Bureau of Land Management is revising the agency's resource management plans. As part of this effort, the BLM is assessing rivers that are eligible and suitable for Wild and Scenic Rivers designation. Colorado's only Wild and Scenic River, the Cache la Poudre above the city of Fort Collins, may get to share the designation with some of Colorado's most iconic rivers. The 30 river segments under consideration include Gore Canyon on the Colorado and Cross Mountain Gorge on the Yampa. Congressional designation of these wild and scenic rivers will help protect them from additional water withdrawals threatening fish, wildlife habitat, and a growing recreation economy.

Fearing federal water rights in rivers along the Colorado Plateau and the impacts these rights may have on future water development, water providers and local governments are pushing for alternative management plans that allow full development of Colorado's available water supplies. AW supports the development of management alternatives for Colorado's rivers, but not at the expense of our free-flowing rivers and creeks, and the outstanding values they support. AW has just completed a three-month survey of private and commercial paddlers to gather data on flows necessary to support the vibrant rafting and kayaking industry along the Upper Colorado River. By working with the Bureau of Land Management and other stakeholders we can determine how much water is used to sustain the outstanding recreational values and environmental needs for the Colorado River, along miles of riparian corridor from Kremmling to Glenwood Springs.

Federal resource management plans in the Dolores and San Juan River Basins are undergoing revisions as well, which include Wild and Scenic Rivers analysis. AW is working with our members and volunteers to ensure paddlers have a seat at the negotiation table, and to fold

recreational use data into the decision-making process.

Draft Lower Blue River Cooperative Management Plan

In early 2005, an initial group of stakeholders met to discuss concerns over protection of the lower Blue River corridor, from Green Mountain Reservoir to the confluence with the Colorado River, in Grand and Summit Counties. The Lower Blue River Management Plan is a cooperative effort to develop a strategic framework for protecting the natural and aesthetic resources of the lower Blue River, including its wildlife, fisheries, vegetation and soils.

A draft of the interim version of the plan is now complete and ready for distribution to the public for comment. This first draft interim version of the plan contains background information, the mission, vision and issue statements, and eight planning sections with guiding principles and section goals. Currently, the plan is lacking management actions for each of these sections. These management actions will be subsequently developed after consideration of public comments.

Comments will be accepted until March 13, 2008. All documents will be posted on Summit County's website, <http://www.co.summit.co.us>. Look for a "Draft Lower Blue River Cooperative Management Plan" link under the "Documents for Review" section in the upper, right corner. To submit comments, contributors are asked to please use the comment sheet provided. Including a section or page number and a subject with each comment will greatly facilitate compiling, sorting and accounting for all comments received. Electronic submission of comments via e-mail is preferred, by sending completed comment sheets to: LBRcomments@co.summit.co.us

Once completed, a second draft of the plan with the management actions will become available for public consideration later this year.

Keeping water in Colorado's Rivers

In January, American Whitewater and a coalition of interest groups endorsed legislation designed to make it easier to keep water in Colorado's rivers and creeks. Designed to remove legal bottlenecks that might hinder or reduce flows in Colorado's streams, the legislation includes:

- * Measures that make it easier for ranchers, farmers and other water-right holders to contract with the Colorado Water Conservation Board to leave their water in streams without jeopardizing their rights to use that water in the future.

- * Creation of a \$1 million fund to assist the state with purchase of water rights to keep healthy water flows in streams. Currently, the state relies on voluntary donations of water rights.

- * Creation of tax incentives for water-right owners who leave their water in local streams and rivers.

Only the Colorado Water Conservation Board, a state agency under the Department of Natural Resources, can hold instream flow rights. Unlike traditional rights to divert water from river systems, instream flow rights protect the natural environment by keeping water in the river. Citing the report, "Healthy Rivers, Healthy Economy," funded by the group Environmental Defense, proponents of HB 1280 say that a slight increase in water flows in the Colorado would generate another \$4.4 million in recreational spending and create 340 more jobs in the rafting and fishing business.

AW believes a strengthened instream flow acquisition program would provide obvious and important benefits to Colorado's rivers and creeks, while also creating greater flexibility for water rights holders in how they use their water.

Stewardship Updates

Fight over the Roadless Area Rule in National Forests is Purposeless

By Mike Dombeck

Wednesday marked 10 years since the Forest Service proposed a moratorium on building new roads on 58.5 million acres of remote wild lands in our national forests. After three years of analysis and well over 1.5 million public comments, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was finalized, making the moratorium permanent.

Within 24 hours of assuming office, President Bush blocked implementation of this rule, and over the past seven years, his administration has tried to reverse and weaken it. Litigation both for and against protection has resulted in judicial decisions that have been appealed and reversed—with still more

litigation pending.

In spite of seven years of Bush administration effort, roadless areas remain protected in the national forests of the lower 48 states, but more litigation to remove protection is in progress with the outcome uncertain. The Bush administration lifted protection of roadless areas within Alaska's vast and spectacular Tongass National Forest. In the past seven years, construction of new roads in roadless areas has amounted to three miles for a phosphate mine in Idaho's Caribou-Targhee National Forest and four miles in the Tongass for salvage logging.

After spending millions of dollars on administrative actions and judicial proceedings, it is time to stop fighting and look to the future. Here's why:

Commodity values in the vast majority of roadless areas are low. The remaining

wild and remote places in the national forests did not remain roadless by accident. Costs to access the timber and minerals in these rugged backcountry areas are always high. Harvesting the resource in most cases is simply not economical without government subsidy.

During the past seven years, according to House Appropriations Committee, the operating budget of the Forest Service has been slashed by 34.8 percent. It's time to stop wasting money on endless debate, with no tangible outcome, that shortchanges higher priorities such as wildfire, forest restoration and visitor services.

The 192 million acres of national forests "officially" contain nearly 400,000 miles of roads; countless thousands more that are not on the map.

With nearly half the Forest Service's

shrinking budget going to firefighting, deteriorating roads and bridges have created a maintenance backlog exceeding \$10 billion. These roads, particularly in rugged country, are bleeding sediment into streams, thus destroying habitat for many species, including salmon and trout, and reducing water quality for downstream communities.

With sprawl and development occurring at a near record clip, we are losing open space at a rate approaching 10,000 acres per day. Remote sensing studies by the Forest Service Southern Research Station report that in the conterminous U.S., only 3 percent of the nation's land is farther than 17,000 feet from the nearest road.

The first "roadless" or primitive area inventory on national forests was conducted in the mid-1920s. The Forest Service inventoried 74 tracts larger than 200,300 acres. In the '70s, areas larger than 5,000 acres were inventoried. By the late '90s, we were debating 500-acre tracts. What size tracts of land we will be fighting over 25 years from now? Where will the open spaces and remote places be for our great-grandchildren to connect with nature, fish, hike, camp or kayak in reasonable solitude?

Roadless areas represent most of the last best trout fishing and trophy big game hunting in the country and are the remaining stronghold for many rare species. As unknown climate change challenges loom, these remote and wild places will provide migration corridors for both fish and wildlife and will supply water for many communities.

A century ago, Theodore Roosevelt was leading the charge to protect public forestlands for future generations. Today the need for such a vision is even greater.

Previously printed in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Mike Dombeck is professor of global conservation at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He formerly served as the chief of the U.S. Forest Service and director of the Bureau of Land Management.

Backcountry Kayaking Through Roadless Areas

By Thomas O'Keefe

The U.S. Forest Service manages 192 million acres across the nation that includes some of our most treasured whitewater resources. These lands provide a diversity of experiences from day trips with developed river access that see hundreds of paddlers on peak weekends to less crowded remote wilderness sections that can take several days.

While more than half of our National Forests have been open to development and resource extraction, much of the remaining land retains its wild character. Of these wild undeveloped lands approximately 40% is protected through Congressional designation as Wilderness while the remaining 60% remains in regulatory limbo in a category known as Roadless Areas, a designation that is subject to ever-shifting agency policy that blows with the political winds.

These backcountry Roadless Areas provide highly valued paddling opportunities. Many are on the edge of designated Wilderness areas but still within easy striking distance of existing roads that provide convenient access. Some are in small pockets of undeveloped forest lands that may never become formal Wilderness but nonetheless provide spectacular opportunities to explore special places. Others require a longer hike in, offering opportunities for a unique challenge and solitude.

Runs like the South Fork of the Salmon and Little North Fork Clearwater in Idaho, Hermosa Creek in Colorado, Middle Fork of the Feather and Forks of the Kern in California, Snowbird Creek and Upper Wilson Creek in North Carolina, Tea Creek in West Virginia, McCoy Creek in Washington,

and Big Branch Creek in Vermont, and many, many more flow through lands classified as Roadless Areas.

For the past several years AW has called for a halt to future development and road construction in areas that currently have no roads. After all we have at least 380,000 miles of roads on Forest Service lands, and the agency already can't even come close to maintaining them. This spring, paddlers have an important opportunity to weigh in to protect Roadless Areas in Idaho where a novel state petition process is being used to crack the door open to development in one of the most intact ecosystems in the nation, home to some of our most spectacular whitewater resources. Check the AW website for details on commenting—the deadline is April 7th.

Steve Tegtemeyer at Chinook Falls, McCoy Creek WA in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest's Dark Divide Roadless Area

photo by Scott Collins



Stewardship Updates

Southeastern Stewardship Report

By Kevin Colburn

Virginia Access Opportunity Dashed on Rocks

The Virginia legislature rejected a proposal earlier this year to conduct a \$6,000 study of stream access problems and opportunities. Paddlers supported the study with letters, emails, and in verbal communications but to no avail. While a disappointing result, we are hopeful that the proposal can be reintroduced in the near future with better support.

Dillsboro Dam Controversy Continues (NC)

American Whitewater is at the center of the debate regarding the removal of Dillsboro Dam. We have spoken at hearings, filed official comments at the state and federal level, and been quoted in almost all of the many newspaper articles on this subject. In January we wrote an editorial for the local papers, highlighting the bad advice dam owners are getting from their attorney and others. Removal of the dam is the keystone to the settlement agreement that includes West Fork Tuckasegee releases. Thanks to all the paddlers that wrote letters to FERC and the State. Depending on whether or not lawsuits are filed, this process could labor on for at least another year, but either way, American Whitewater will keep at it.

Conservation Importance of the AW River Database

For paddlers, our online rivers database is a fun and informative place to learn about whitewater runs, check gages, and share photos and stories. This resource though, goes a lot deeper! FERC uses our website to analyze the value of rivers. Colorado is

using it to list the rivers with recreational values that need to be protected as water withdrawal decisions are made. AW is using the database to map rivers, mining claims, and roadless areas to determine which rivers are at risk of ecological harm. We are then using the photos and descriptions to put a face on the places that new legislation on mining and roadless areas could protect. The Bureau of Land Management and the River Management Society have integrated our database into their websites to educate the public on recreational opportunities. Our website is often used to support Wild and Scenic designations. In some states our website provides evidence of navigability. Many state and federal agencies use our database in their planning and management activities.

Our river database is only as good as the information paddlers add to it. Adding photos, stories, and new river reaches to the site might just save the rivers that you know and love best.

Damless Hydropower on the Rise

New technological developments have recently led to a series of the first hydropower projects being permitted and built without dams. This technology is called "hydrokinetic" and amounts to one or more turbines being suspended in a river or tidal area. Moving water spins the blades which then generate power similarly to a turbine in a dam. Picture a bigger than normal box fan and you will get the general idea. Picture several thousand of them wired into your favorite river, and you'll understand why we are nervous about this technology.

FERC (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) is allowing some hydrokinetic projects to be built on a trial basis. The first was in the East River in New York, and permits have been filed for the Mississippi River and several rivers in Alaska. The environmental and recreational impacts of these projects are unknown, and the first few projects will

be analyzed in detail. It seems possible at least that while generating less power than dams, these projects may have fewer environmental impacts. What is almost certain through is that they would totally eliminate recreational use of the project area for boating, angling, swimming, and possibly even shoreline access. We'll be keeping a close eye on this technology, and are working with our partners in the Hydropower Reform Coalition to make our concerns known. So far we have cautiously supported efforts to learn more about this technology.



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The California Report

By Dave Steindorf

New Flows for the Feather

Summer recreation flows have been canceled for the past two years on the Cresta reach of the North Feather due concerns surrounding potential impacts on foothill yellow legged frogs. American Whitewater has been working with the resource agencies, their amphibian biologist, and PG&E to develop a flow schedule that is more protective of frogs.

American Whitewater has developed a flow proposal that we believe mimics and restores critical components of the natural hydrograph. This flows schedule consists of a single pulse that would begin in May and gradually taper off to base flow in mid to late summer. Our proposal is designed so that peak flows in May will be comparable to recreation release flow of 1000 to 1600 cfs. August base flows would be 350 to 250 cfs in normal and dry years respectively. The question, and reason for our flow study, is to determine what boating opportunity would be available under this new flow schedule.

American Whitewater recognizes that the

flow schedule that we have proposed will not provide the same level of boating opportunity that exists under the current agreement, however, we feel that this new flow schedule will be far more protective of frogs and have significant benefits to the entire river ecosystem. The major benefits to frogs will be during the critical breeding season. During this period, beginning of May through the end of June, frog egg masses can be either scoured (washed

*Charlie Guilbault heads out of the middle eddy at
Bullet, West Branch Feather River*

photo by Dave Steindorf



Stewardship Updates

away) or stranded (dried up) by large unnatural flow fluctuation. American Whitewater supported the canceling of June recreation releases back in 2003 because of this concern. Unfortunately, this was not enough to protect frogs. Flow fluctuations have continued during the frog-breeding season. In 2006 half of the egg mass population was wiped out due to a precipitous decline in flow that happened during the middle of the frog-breeding season. Similar flow fluctuations occurred in 2003 and 2005 from project operations. It is clear to us that eliminating these types of flow fluctuations will be critical if foothill yellow legged frogs are to be protected on the Cresta reach. We will be working with PG&E and the resource agencies to further develop this flow schedule.

Access On Butte Creek and West Branch Feather

Discussions continued in January on the Butte Creek project. Last year PG&E agreed to provide access to several locations on the project that were of interest to the recreating public. In turn AW did not ask for additional flow studies or other mitigation measures on this project. The Upper Butte Creek run is a Northern California Classic. After PG&E decided to lock the gate to the put-in several years ago, paddlers have had to hike over three miles to the put-in. Through this new agreement we hope to have secure access to the DeSabra Powerhouse (put-in for the Class V run) and to the Centerville Powerhouse (put-in for the Class II-III run). We also have an agreement to provide flow information and additional access on the West Branch of the Feather. American Whitewater will be conducting a site visit meeting with PG&E sometime this spring to examine access issues and options.

The Northwest Stewardship Report

By Thomas O'Keefe

New Hydropower on McKenzie River?

The McKenzie River begins in the headwaters of Oregon's Cascade Mountains, thundering over a couple of big waterfalls, and flowing through a beautiful forested valley before joining the Willamette River in Eugene. From 78-foot Sahalie Falls, where Shannon Carroll made a name for herself as a big drop ace, to the Class II sections where many aspiring boaters take their first paddle strokes, the McKenzie offers a little something for everyone.

This proposed project is part of a new trend to justify hydropower as "renewable energy" and the concern is that projects like this produce a relatively small amount of power for their substantial impacts on the river and surrounding ecosystems. Other utilities in the region have focused on removing hydropower projects that provide marginal energy benefit relative to the impact on rivers, focusing on efficiency improvements to existing facilities, and diversifying energy portfolios to include non-hydro renewables.

American Whitewater is currently working with Trout Unlimited and other conservation groups to mitigate the impacts of the existing Carmen-Smith Hydropower Project. Recently, as these negotiations were underway, we were shocked to learn that a developer has proposed a series of nine new hydropower projects on the river that would extend over 30 miles of the most classic section of this river.

We will continue to be a leading voice for rivers in discussions over future energy development. Keep an eye on the AW website for more updates on the McKenzie River projects and opportunities to speak up for this outstanding river.

Editor's Note: As this issue goes to press, FERC has rejected the preliminary permit application for this project. However, the applicant has indicated that they may correct the deficiencies and resubmit. We will continue to watch this one closely.



Bob Lee and Megi Morishita on Marten Rapid

photo by Thomas O'Keefe



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An Opportunity to Reform the 1872 Hardrock Mining Laws

When you run rivers like the Grand Canyon, the Middle Fork of the Salmon, and many other rivers on public lands with developed facilities, you pay fees to do so. Did you know that those who engage in hardrock mining on public lands pay no royalties or rent for their use of public land? On top of that they have been allowed to patent or purchase their claim at 1872 prices of less than \$5 an acre, less than the price of a night in a Forest Service campground.

American Whitewater has joined our colleagues in the outdoor recreation community in calling for reform of the outdated hardrock mining laws. We have three primary goals that include institution of a system for royalty payments for mining on public lands, protection of special places like Wild and Scenic Rivers, and an end to the patent

system and special entitlement to purchase public lands at 1872 prices.

All other extractive industries that use our public lands pay for the privilege to do so. If you want to harvest timber, mine coal, or drill for oil and gas you pay a royalty fee of around 10% to do so. In the case of hardrock mining, which includes extracting metals like gold, copper, and uranium, collecting this fee would provide funds to help clean up some of the more than half a million abandoned mine sites around the West. The EPA has concluded that these old mines degrade 40% of western watersheds.

Some special places on public lands like Wild and Scenic Rivers should be exempt from new mining claims. More than a century ago our public lands were viewed as an unlimited resource and mining was thought to provide the highest return on that otherwise “useless” land. Since that time, Americans have come to recognize that public lands provide essential ecosystem services, clean drinking water

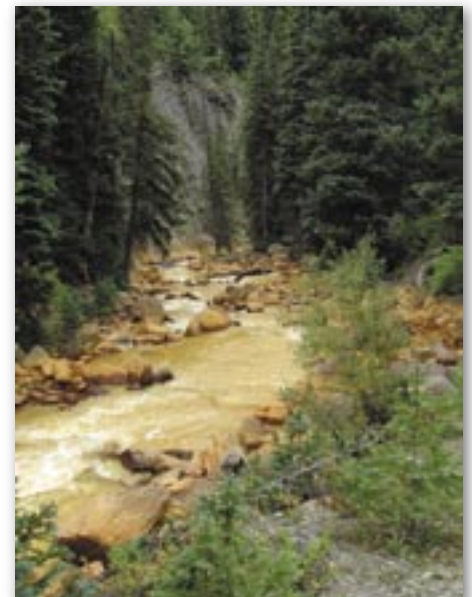
for millions of Americans, and great places for recreation. While we all use the materials mining provides, some places should be off limits to mining.

Maybe paddlers can relate to the concept of “staking a claim,” since we expect the individuals who make successful first descents to name the rapid, but the ability of miners to purchase these public resources for a nominal fee is absurd. Our public lands are an important asset that should not be sold for a pittance.

While the need for mining reform has been discussed for years, we are seeing real movement in Congress with passage of The Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act (HR 2262) in the House this past fall. The Senate is now taking up the issue and paddlers have an opportunity to make their voice heard on this issue. Check the AW website for details on how to add your voice.

The consequences of hardrock mining on display along the Uncompahgre River in southwestern Colorado

Photo by Nathan Fey



Mike Trepp on Buckskin Mary rapid on the Deschutes River

Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

National Landscape Conservation System

American Whitewater is part of a coalition working to formalize the National Landscape Conservation System. Although support is building in Congress to recognize these great Western Landscapes many paddlers are still not familiar with this effort. The Conservation System was established in 2000 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency that manages 264 million acres, located primarily in the 12 Western States. It represents the crown jewels of public lands managed by BLM.

In contrast to recreational opportunities on other public lands that tend to be more developed, the Conservation System, which includes 26 million acres and 38 Wild and Scenic Rivers, provides unique opportunities for exploration and adventure. With minimal infrastructure, the Conservation System provides hikers, paddlers, climbers and skiers with unique, self-directed, rugged outdoor experiences that allow visitors to experience the wild beauty of the West.

Rivers like Fortymile in Alaska, North Fork American and Tuolumne in California, and two dozen rivers in Oregon like the Crooked, Grande Ronde, Deschutes, John Day, Klamath, Rogue, North Umpqua, and Sandy are all part of this system.

While the BLM took a great step forward in recognizing the need to unify these resources into a system, they now need our help in going to Congress to make the system permanent through legislation. This will ensure that these lands and rivers receive the management and the funding they need to protect the diverse recreational opportunities that currently exist within them.

Learn more about this effort by going to <http://conservationsystem.org>



Stewardship Updates

Bear (CA) Relicensing in the Works

By Bob Center

A sprawling network of projects that spans three watersheds—Yuba, Bear and American—is up for Relicensing in 2013. The projects divert most of the snow runoff out of the Middle Yuba and South Yuba River basins, never to return, and have transformed the upper Bear into a series of afterbays connected by bypass reaches at minimum flows. The Relicensing process offers an opportunity for improving ecological values and recreational opportunities in the reaches affected by the projects.

Whitewater within the project includes classics such as Edward's Crossing to

Purdon's Crossing and Purdon's Crossing to Bridgeport on the South Yuba, and Fordyce Creek, an alpine creek upstream of Lake Spaulding.

For several years American Whitewater has worked with other organizations in preparation for the relicensing process. Since September, AW has been working collaboratively with the Licensees, other NGOs, Resource Agencies and individuals to define high-priority study plans that will guide studies beginning in early spring of 2008. AW's primary focus has been on the Recreational Flow Study Plan, and in addition has contributed to key Aquatics Technical Working Groups.

In developing the Recreational Flow Study Plan, AW and the Licensees' consultant worked together to inventory and classify the numerous existing and potential

boating reaches affected by the projects. The Recreational Flow Study Plan is nearing completion and is anticipated to receive consensus approval by mid-March. The plan describes flow studies that will be conducted in the Spring by pre-releasing water to augment natural flows, and flows in summer that result from project operations, such as in Fordyce Creek. Additionally, study participants will be asked to complete questionnaires regarding boating trips on naturally-occurring winter and spring flows.

As part of flow studies, additional flow information from Licensees's gauges will become available and will be published on the AW website and on Dreamflows.com.

Flow studies will begin in spring 2008. The extent and timing of these flow studies will depend on precipitation in the



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next few months. Information regarding flow studies will be published the AW website as California's water year develops and plans and timing are refined.

Black Canyon of the Bear (ID) Whitewater Releases

by Charlie Vincent, AW Regional Representative

In less than two months the first scheduled whitewater releases in the Black Canyon of the Bear will occur. This season will be the first year of up to 16 whitewater releases. In this first year there will be up to four high-likelihood releases as PacifiCorp does fish stranding studies to establish the ramping rate protocol for this year and the next three years. Current snowpack also suggests that more releases are possible this year.

For those who have not experienced the Bear during the infrequent high snow pack or plant maintenance releases over the past 10 years, these releases will give

you the perfect opportunity to experience this gem in southeast Idaho. The Bear flows through a classic basalt canyon hidden in the open farm land of Idaho ... beautiful down in the canyon and barely noticeable from the farm country above until you are virtually standing on the edge looking down.

The details of the releases will be as follows:

- Flows will be scheduled to occur on weekends between April 1 and July 15.
- Up to 16 releases per year—based on available flows—are expected.
- A meeting between PacifiCorp and AW is scheduled in mid-March to collaboratively select the first release dates.



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- Release dates will be published on the PacifiCorp website once approved by the license Environmental Coordination Committee (ECC) made up of the State and Federal Agencies, NGOs, AW, etc. <http://www.pacificorp.com/Article/Article40779.html> Updates to the next upcoming release dates will also be available on the PacifiCorp flow phone (800-547-1501). Releases will also be announced on the AW website.

- Generally speaking, in wet years the releases should be skewed to spring runoff flows, and in drier years to irrigation flows later in the season.

- Flows will occur for a minimum of the next three years (starting in 2008).


- Flows beyond year three (2010) will continue to occur providing there are

no significant impacts on native fish populations and macroinvertebrates in the Black Canyon Reach, as determined by the on-going Black Canyon Monitoring Study.

PacifiCorp has asked for our help in reminding other paddlers about local speed limits through the farm on the upper access road to Grace Plant, as well as through the plant area itself as you near the take-out. Unfortunately, as a result of local ordinance, PacifiCorp is unable to allow overnight camping on-site, but there are public lands located relatively nearby for anyone who is so inclined, and a nice private campground near the upper end of Oneida reservoir (20-25 miles south of the take-out).

When you are driving into (or away from) the Black Canyon take out, check out the former Cove dam site. Downstream of

the Grace powerhouse there used to be a forebay and a diversion canal to the Cove powerhouse 1.7 miles downstream. These structures were demolished in 2006 and PacifiCorp will finish site reclamation this year. It is remarkable how close the original river bank topography is to the original photos taken before Cove was built, and many of the original rocks are still amazingly identifiable.

From a personal standpoint I'm excited that, after 12 years of meetings, studies, negotiations and countless hours of work by many dozens of people, the long-awaited Black Canyon releases are finally upon us. The process has at times seemed so long, and a few times I wondered if the releases would ever really occur. However the collaborative efforts of PacifiCorp, State and Federal Agencies, AW, Idaho Rivers United, and others has made this possible ... come out and join us on the Bear in 2008! 

Oneida Narrows on the Bear River, Idaho

Photo by Kevin Lewis



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Whitewater Kids

Kayak Kid

By Christine Boush

Brad Mann was only five when his father first plunked him on the Green River in a whitewater kayak.

“I was excited and scared that I might flip over,” Mann, said. “My first time I got surfed in a little play hole, flipped over, and my dad had to rescue me.”

Flipping over in a kayak can be very disorienting as paddlers bounce around in swirling whitewater and hit the occasional rock, but Mann stayed very calm.

“I didn’t want to get surfed again but, it was pretty fun,” Mann said.

His ability to stay calm when things go wrong is a big part of why four years later, at age 9, Mann is kayaking rivers that many adult kayakers avoid. While his friends are signing up for Little League and soccer teams Mann is happily strapping on his kayak battle-gear to go paddling with his dad, Milton. His paddling résumé includes notorious rivers like Section IV of the Chattooga and Wilson’s Creek as well as Baby Falls, a 17-foot waterfall on the Tellico River.

“The first time I ran Baby Falls was really

scary,” Mann said. “I closed my eyes and wished I wouldn’t die.”

He went off the waterfall perfectly, arms flying like windmills as he dropped smoothly into the pool below.

Both Mann and Milton, known on the river as Miltymann and Littlemann respectively, kayak with hand paddles

Brad smoothly catches the set-up eddy above Bull Sluice. He ran the rapid for the first time backwards and upside down at age 7 when he missed the eddy, shocking the other kayakers when he rolled up effortlessly at the bottom.



instead of a traditional paddle. The hand paddles offer less power than a traditional paddle but allow Mann more control over his boat and a faster roll. Mann has mastered his roll by spending hours practicing in the pool.

"I have the fastest roll in the West!" Mann said. "If you don't roll fast you may go over something you didn't want to go over."

Mann has only swam out of his boat four times since he began boating, a statistic that gives veracity to Mann's robust claims. In situations where many other kayakers would have swam, Mann stays in his boat.

"When I was 8, I ran Bull's Sluice backwards and upside down," Mann said,

Summer of 2006, Littlemann catches air doing a low water summer run off the sneak boof at Bull Sluice

Photo by Casey Cash

referring to a difficult Class IV rapid on the Chattooga. "Another time I ran Wilson's Creek and flipped over and got cut on my face."

Both times, Mann rolled up after his watery beat-down, wide-eyed but calm.

"Sometimes you get to see the show and sometimes you are the show," Mann said, shrugging off the memory with a laugh.

And Mann is usually the spectator, which has earned him acclaim from his kayaking heroes and sponsorships for his abilities from outfitters and kayaking manufacturers. Many experienced kayakers, like Heath Miller, relish paddling with Mann and passing on the torch.

"It's a treat to paddle with Mann," Miller said. "It's not everyday you get to paddle with someone so young and who has the talent he does. We still go places that are challenging and fun. It is impressive to

do that with a kid who's less than half my age."

Miller said it's been amazing to watch Mann progress from learning how to roll in the pool to having more skills than any other child his age.

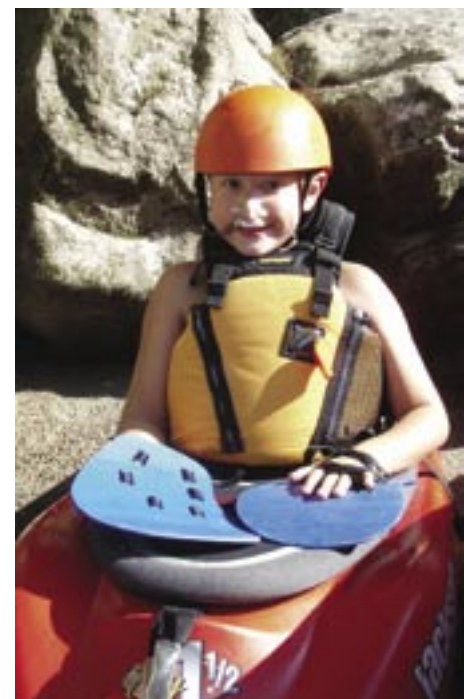
"It's awesome that he and Milton followed that same learning curve together," Miller said. "Both of them have made tremendous improvements."

Miller said one of the neatest things for him is the fact that kayaking is a father-son activity for the duo.

"It's not often you see a father and son taking on this kind of endeavor together," Miller said. "I hope that when/if I have children I can do the same thing. Milton is the inspiration for that because I see how well it works for him and Mann—it's pretty sweet."

Littlemann flashes his classic smile before launching in to his first run of Seven-Foot Falls on Section IV of the Chattooga

Photo by Chris Boush



Whitewater Kids

Miller said he wished more children would steer clear of the football, baseball arena and try kayaking.

"I came from the baseball soccer background and I think there are good things to be said for team sports, but stuff like kayaking gives a sense of self accomplishment as well as good team working skills," Miller said. "The thing about this sport is you learn a lot about yourself. You really do have to spend some time thinking if you're ready for what you're trying to do, the risks, and the consequences. It's a soul searching experience, and pretty intense, but it's good for children because it builds a lot of confidence."

Mann said he isn't phased by the fact his sport isn't mainstream, but he does wish more children his age would start paddling. Most of the time, he's the youngest on the river by at least 10 years.

"It's nice to be good at something and I like to be with dad and Heath but I do miss my friends sometimes," Mann said. "I like to paddle with other kids."


Mann may be helping to pave the way for more children and their parents to take up the sport. Mann received the first children's boat from Jackson Kayak when he was 5 years old and is now testing out Liquid Logic boats designed specifically for children paddlers.

Woody Callahan, founder and co-owner of Liquid Logic, said they released a children's river runner for the first time in 2007 because of the emergence of young boaters like Mann.

"This is the first time that first-generation kayakers are getting old enough that they now want to take their kids out kayaking," Callahan said. "The Mann family is kind of representing the first group of parents who actually kayaked and are now bringing their kids in. Mann loves it, and when I see him on the river he's smiling ear to ear and he's good! He's hand-paddling and rolling—just having a blast. I'm really good at recognizing talent and I think he's going to be really good."

Mann's little sister, Becca, 6, now has a boat of her own but isn't quite ready to put on the river yet so she usually stays with Holly, Mann's mother and his biggest fan. Milton said he started Mann kayaking, but credits Holly with pushing them both to move from the pool to a river.

"I'd let him run the Lower Green in an inflatable kayak but I was really nervous about putting him on moving water in a hardshell," Milton said. "Holly made the call for him to fire it up and I give her credit for supporting his desire to go because I'm not sure I'd have let him on the river that first time at age 5 and a half."

Brad Mann said he hopes to go professional and even compete in the esteemed Green River Race, but right now, he thrives on the time with his dad and other river heroes, and on the awe-filled whispers of "that's Littlemann," as he paddles smoothly by. 



Milton Mann beams as Eric Jackson teaches Brad Mann to adjust the first Jackson

Photo by Holly Mann

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Whitewater Kids

It can be Scary, but it's Always Exciting

By Jessica Bechhofer

Whitewater kayaking makes me so scared—but I love it! A good example of this is the story of the last time that I paddled a rapid called “The Green Room.” The put-in is extremely difficult to get to. My dad and I trudged through a thickly wooded area to get to a rock slide. We tied our boats to a thick white and yellow rope and let the boats slowly scrape their way down to the edge of the water.

I was on the verge of tears and my knees were weak before I even got down to the river, but I promised I would run this rapid with my dad, so I grabbed the paddles and inched my way down the steep hill. I made sure that I didn't step on any loose rocks for fear of slipping and falling down the steep path. When I saw the rapid thick with foaming water, and moving fast with a rushing current, my teeth started to chatter. I felt almost faint as I slipped into my kayak. I feel like I never know how the water is going to treat me; sometimes I will come out battered and other times I'm perfectly fine. My father had told me not to worry, to trust him, but when I saw the water my heart skipped a beat and I wasn't quite sure if I should.

I made sure my helmet was tight on my head, that my lifejacket was securely fastened, and that my sprayskirt was fully attached to the boat. I also made sure that my nose plugs were secure, because even if I didn't tip over, I was sure my father would find some way to give me a big splash in the face on my way down the river. My dad yelled for me to hurry up. Still chattering I obliged by slowly turning upstream and nosing out in to the current, paddling ever so slowly. As my boat turned and I realized that the waves were exceedingly large—at least for a small kayaker like me. Seeing these waves I stopped paddling. Even though my father was yelling, “paddle, paddle” I could not seem to move. I went straight into the core of a surfing wave and my boat stood on its end. A second later, my head plunged in to the icy cold water.

My paddle slipped out of my open fingers and I tried to wriggle free from the boat. I opened my eyes, and saw the waves from below. They looked slightly yellow, as I groped around to find the cord, attaching me to the boat. As I came to the surface gasping for a breath I forgot about my boat and swam towards the nearest ledge.


“The Green Room” is surrounded by huge, sharp, grey, barren, 60-foot cliffs, which have thick forests on top. My dad threw me my paddle and tried to grab my boat, but it slipped out of his grasp and silently it made its way down the river. My father looked at me and said that we had a little problem, and as I came to my senses, and stopped worrying about whether I was going to be okay, I realized our problem too. I was sitting on a ledge called “Poison Ivy Ledge” while my father was in the eddy below; we had two people, two paddles, but only one boat. My dad, being very polite, offered me the boat; he would swim through the next small rapid. After that, we could paddle to the side and get out.

I sat in his kayak, which felt big and bulky compared to mine. I could hardly turn it, but to my delight my father said it could not overturn because I was too small. He grabbed on to the back of the boat as we headed on down through the next rapid called “Big Heater.” I couldn't steer his large boat. At on point, I heard an “Ouch” and looked back. I had gone over a huge rock and so had my dad, since he was hanging on to the boat. That sent me into another fit of tears, because not only had I flipped, but I had hurt my dad too! He quickly told me he was okay and not to worry.

At the take-out my mother, my aunt, and a family friend had come to watch me. You can imagine that it gave them quite a scare to see my boat go down the river with no one in it. Our family friend jumped into her car and raced down the river to retrieve the boat. She found it stuck on a rock called “Bone Cruncher.”

My aunt and mother stayed to watch for us. Eventually they saw us slowly paddling towards the shore. As they helped me

climb out of the boat, I was still sniffing and shaking, but I told them about my big adventure. When we got back that evening and I was feeling better and warm my dad showed me a huge scrape that ran all the way up his leg. We laughed about it and I realized that it was really good that I ran the rapid, even though I was so nervous. It was the first time that I had flipped in a strong current, and I knew then that I could paddle the “Green Room” again if I had to.

Looking back, I must say I was very glad I put my nose plugs on, because I would have had half the river up my nose without them! Even though this was a quite nerve racking adventure, I still love kayaking. It lets me feel free, and it makes me feel accomplished when I finish part of a river that is just a little bit harder, than what I did before. I am able to say, “Yeah, I did that rapid” and people are so proud of me. My father pushes me hard, and makes me work hard to help me become a better kayaker. Through his help and hard work I am now a proud Class IV kayaker. 

Jessica Bechhofer in the final waves of “Double Trouble” on the Ocoee river. This photo was taken four years after experience in The Green Room, and every time she goes through big waves, she always leans forward and paddles hard!



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Whitewater Kids

The Story of a Young Kayaker

By Sara Hunter

These stories describe a young girl's passion for kayaking. I wrote these stories a few years ago, before I had the opportunity to attend New River Academy. Although simple in nature, they accurately depict the feelings of frustration and pure joy that I have found to be intrinsic to kayaking.

The First Time

An excited little girl walks beside her daddy, clutching her skirt and paddle, as he carries her kayak towards the edge of a pool. The water looks friendly, enticing her, calling her to it.

After pulling up her skirt to her belly-button in the same way she has watched her brother put on his so many times, she hops into her boat and begins to wrap the skirt around the cock-pit, struggling with it. After a moment, her daddy turns to help, pulling the loop out with experienced hands.

Pushing off into the pool, the girl watches the water splash out around the kayak. After turning to see her daddy getting into the pool to be the rescuer, she nods, indicating that she is ready to flip.

Tipping towards the surface, the girl begins to fall down into the water, clutching the grab-loop of her skirt, water surrounding her, smothering, pouring into her nose. Looking up into the green water, she forgets what to do. In a panicked frenzy, she begins to try to force her way out of the kayak, forgetting to pull the loop, unable to get out.

After a moment, she feels her boat coming back up to the surface. Her father has flipped her back over. Air rushes into her lungs, comforting.

She gets out of the pool, scared to flip back over, scared to go paddling again

but knowing that she has already become so connected to kayaking that she could never resist it.

The girl's wet gear clings to her as she stares into the falls. Freezing water pours over the top rock and around another one, creating a safe green tongue surrounded by unfriendly water. At a ripe old age of nine, the little girl is excited to run it. Acting as if she has no fear and hiding her nerves, she does not bother asking what her instructor means when he talks about holes, curls, and other river features.

The First Swim

Turning with the group, she makes her way back to her kayak and gets in, sliding her boat over the concrete slab into the water. Lining up like ducklings, the group readies itself for the run down the river. They stick their paddles into the current and head downstream, catching eddies on the way down and avoiding rocks.

Finally, they arrive in a huge eddy just above the main rapid, nerves begin to overtake the girl. Clutching at a rock on the bank, she waits for the others to head down and watches as both of her friends swim out of their boats. Her legs begin to shake under the boat's plastic surface.

The girl sees what she has been waiting for: her instructor's paddle lifted vertically into the air, the signal to go.

Peeling out, the girl leaves her nice calm eddy for the big water, paddling ferociously down the rapid, wishing she had her fingers free, so she could cross them. For a moment, the girl finds herself staring sideways up into the sky, tipping. She grabs a quick breath before the water flips her upside down.


As she takes hold of the grab-loop on her skirt, the girl feels the rush of cold water coming in. Pushing off the side of her boat, the girl escapes. Air hugs her, as she reaches the river's surface. A moment of wet surprise is broken by a rope thrown from the bank. She grabs it and is hauled

to the shore, smiling the whole time, happy because she has just conquered her fear of paddling.

Roll Practice

Frustration almost overwhelming the girl, she tries to roll her kayak again. She has been working on it for almost a year but just cannot get her big red boat to flip upside-right.

Putting her paddle in set-up position, she begins to flip over to the left into the clean pool-water, taking a big breath as she nears the surface. Suddenly, she is under the water, staring up at her skirt. She closes her eyes, scared of the water surrounding her. Stretching out to the left, she moves her paddle into the next position, pausing for a second, getting ready to hip-snap. Forcing all of her energy into one motion, she tries to roll the boat, breaking the surface and feeling the warm air surrounding her.

The happiness of success only last for a little moment before returning to frustration. As she falls back into the water, she taps on the boat to let her father know that he can flip her back up, feeling like she will never get her roll. She brushes a little of the frustration off and gets ready to try again. 

Jordan Guldman shows that paddling can be a blast—even off the water

Photo by Catherine Howard



A Parent's Perspective on Kids in Whitewater

by Ken Cote

Wow, what an amazing two years! It has been incredible to watch my little one grow up. It's great to see the intensity in her eyes, the determination in the strokes and the willingness to take a beating from the very element she considers her sanctuary, the element that makes her feel so good and provides her a place to grow.

As a boater, and more importantly as a parent, I can assure you the sense of accomplishment is invaluable to a child's self-esteem, because once they start paddling, they look less to others to evaluate their self worth. When they finally run a particular rapid without flipping over, or when they have their eight seconds of riding the bull disguised as a wave, what they've accomplished is written all over their face.


They grow in ways you might never expect. What I've seen is the lack of desire to conform to peer pressure, which we all know can make parents lose sleep. Also, cruising the mall just doesn't seem that attractive anymore, especially when there's talk of a rain that could make her favorite run come to life. Interestingly enough, I've seen my own child get to bed early because she knew the river release was early and she wanted to be ready for the full day ahead. She has also come to realize, without being told by mom or dad, that to get good at something takes commitment and work. She learned the skill of focus, which carries through to her academic work. She learned earlier than we'd hoped that she'll only get as much out of something as she puts into it. Many of life's lessons that as parents we want to vocalize are spoken for us through their own efforts ... what a wonderful sport!

The one thing I find the most interesting is the growth in composure. At the age of 13, my daughter has discovered perspective. It comes from getting outside of her comfort zone, pushing past the fear and trusting

her skills. Whether it's her first time being upside down in a boat or acing the Five Falls of Section IV on the Chattooga, she has learned to say with an introspective voice, "Hey, if I can run these incredible rapids, I can certainly handle a simple math test." There's a sense of confidence that carries over to her day-to-day life.

What can getting involved do for your relationship with your child? As paddlers you can grow together by sharing your successes as well as your fears. The nature of the sport can be such that you literally put yourself in each other's hands. For me this is a testament to the relationship I have with my daughter. I can tell you from personal experience, if you're really willing to put yourself out there, your child will see who you are as a person, not just as a parent. You will be rewarded accordingly.

The best part of all of the aforementioned is, because I moved past my fears for her and became a paddler myself, I have had the absolutely priceless privilege of watching all of this happen to my child first hand and in front of my eyes. Making the commitment to be involved in her life has allowed me to be part of and share in her growth. She doesn't have to say a word; I see the appreciation written all over her face.

So get out and paddle, find a part of yourself and a part of your children you never knew existed. 



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photo: Scott Ligare; Rush Sturges paddling the Rio Baker, Chile

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White Nile

Whiter Knuckles

2006 Murchison Falls Expedition, Uganda

by Justin Venable

Photos by Ben Brown, Steve Fisher and Desre Pickers

Definition: *Uncontrollable Salivation:* (n): 1. an automatic, profuse, uninhibited drooling from the salivary glands in the mouth that often occurs when one's appetite is stimulated by anticipation (e.g. of food, sex, whitewater, etc.) 2. The opposite sensation of the "*Class V Dump*," which occurs while scouting whitewater, when the bowels loosen quite suddenly in anticipation of a possible beat down.



Mention the White Nile in Uganda to a kayaker, and visions of epic big-water play waves cause uncontrollable salivation in many of our brethren. However, there is another stretch further downstream, flowing through Murchison Falls National Park that deserves equal recognition for its ability to induce anxiety and provoke perspiration among those familiar with its challenges. It is often spoken of in hushed whispers around campfires. Those who have paddled it usually vow never to return; it is often these same men and women who find they cannot stay away from this ecological jewel despite the risks.

The only ones uncontrollably salivating around here are the man-eating crocodiles waiting for a delicious meal ... of unwary boaters!

Sounds of thumping music, toasts and cheers, and the smells of a feast being prepared 200 meters away on shore greeted me as I paddled downstream in growing darkness from Nile Special wave. Upon arriving at the Hairy Lemon Island, just after the conclusion of the first day of the 2006 Nile Freestyle Festival held this past December, a raucous celebration was already underway.

Left: Crocs aren't the only hungry beasts to be found on the White Nile. This drop's got a serious appetite. Below: (from left to right) Dustin Lindgren, Ben Brown, Scott Lindgren, Hendri Coetzee, Steve Fisher, Pete Meredith, and Justin Venable

International Whitewater



Rumors of an imminent expedition to Murchison Falls had been floating on the breeze for days, and the assemblage of the team members had already begun with the commencement of the competition. The recent arrival of Scott and Dustin Lindgren to complete footage for their upcoming film about Steve Fisher, as well as Ben Brown who arrived freshly recovered from a boating injury sustained in Thailand, indicated that the pieces were falling into place.

The expedition leaders were South Africans Hendri Coetzee and Peter "Megadeath" Meredith—the dual talismans of African river exploration and essential roster members for any serious mission on the continent. In one of the most impressive voyages in modern history, these highly respected men led a committed crew down the entire 6700 km of the White Nile in four months of 2004, from source to sea.

I was lucky enough to be invited along by Hendri and Pete as the final member of the team and kayaking expedition doctor. The extreme inaccessibility of the stretch virtually eliminated the possibility of emergency helicopter extraction in a reasonable amount of time or cost. So I was there to do what I could for anyone who ended up seriously injured and far removed from definitive medical care. Unfortunately for us, marginal medical facilities, even in the major cities, only contributed to an otherwise complicated situation if someone did get hurt.

As details of the trip were explained, the challenges quickly became evident and I began to experience that warm sensation that usually precedes the Class V Dump. Hendri mentioned that the whitewater would be huge, the setting remote wilderness within a national park, violence from rebels a real possibility, and the concentration of dangerous hippos and crocs the most dense in the world.

Murchison Falls National Park, also called Kabalega Falls, is Uganda's largest park and one of the most spectacular in all of Africa. Named after the founder of the Royal Geographic Society and geologist Sir Roderick Murchison, the park begins where the Nile rages over the still un-run Karuma Falls and continues around it

downstream for 80 km. Finally the world's longest river explodes violently and with a deafening roar through a narrow six-meter cleft in the Rift Valley escarpment to plunge into a frothing pool 43 meters below.

Park wildlife populations have largely recovered from the mass slaughter and poaching of the 1980s; currently elephant, giraffe, Cape buffalo, leopard, warthog, many antelope species, lions, monkeys, hyenas, and baboons, as well as a dazzling variety of water birds are commonly seen there. Impossibly large and slothful-looking crocs bask on sandbanks until the appearance of a kayak causes them to erupt to life, sailing into the current much faster than anyone could paddle. Drifting through pods of submerged hippos feels like stumbling through a land mine field; you quickly realize that if you boat here long enough (or perhaps at all), your luck will eventually run out.

The White Nile in Uganda, or "Victoria Nile" as it is also known, is the most proximal section of the world's longest river. It has played a monumental role in history. Many of mankind's most prolific civilizations have risen and fallen on her shores. The Pharaohs, Moses, Cleopatra, and Alexander drank her waters. The Nile provides sustenance for lush green fields bursting forth from the endless sands along her banks, as if the river was life itself. Although Ethiopia's Blue Nile is more voluminous, the White Nile is 1700 km longer and widely considered to be the true source. The White Nile actually begins in Central Africa's tropical highlands, the perpetually glaciated Ruwenzoris, also known as the "Mountains of the Moon." The various tributaries mostly converge in Lake Victoria and pass through Owen Falls Dam, from whence the mighty river pulses south to north like the Aorta of Africa, through jungle, savannah, the Sahara Desert, and to the Mediterranean Sea.

But the source was once shrouded in mystery. Early attempts to explore its headwaters, in the Great Lakes region of East Africa, were repulsed by cannibalistic, warlike tribes, rampant disease and parasites, ferocious wildlife, impassable deserts, impenetrable jungle, and the confusing, elusive nature of the source itself. In the nineteenth century, the race to locate the source became the Holy Grail of discovery, and ultimately the most consuming geographic riddle of all time. Men like Burton, Speke, Livingstone, and Stanley staked their lives and those of their



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teams; the grail became more exalted as the number of failed expeditions mounted and the death toll climbed.

Even now, boaters intent on pursuing adventure on more remote sections of the river like Murchison face many of the same obstacles that plagued early explorers, such as mosquitoes carrying deadly falciparum malaria, Tsetse flies vectoring African sleeping sickness, and jungles harboring voracious wildlife. Perhaps this is why, along with the obviously fierce Class V whitewater, the Nile through Murchison Falls NP has only seen a handful of previous descents—the first of which was made in 1996 by a crew from Adrift Adventures.

Ben Brown in the thick of the action

In Uganda in the 1980s, just as society was recovering from the tyrannical regime of Idi Amin and a subsequent devastating civil war, which claimed an estimated 300,000 lives, a new evil presence began stalking the remote northern jungles. The ironically named Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is a violent rebel group with no stated political aims or rationale behind their attacks on civilian targets. Guerillas from the LAR abducted more than 25,000 children, forcefully conscripting and brainwashing the young boys into becoming child soldiers. In the region surrounding Murchison Falls and north into Sudan, tens of thousands of civilians have been maimed or killed by LRA rebels since its inception in 1986. In the small village of Karuma, we met four young guys who had been captured years ago by the LRA—their parents burned to death, the boys were conscripted into the

rebel army against their will. If they had complained once, they would have been instantly executed. After a few months, all four managed to escape under a hail of gunfire. Two brothers were hit; one carried the other on his back 30 km back to their village. Widely publicized stories of encounters with guerillas usually ended in merciless bloodshed. Many mutilated and disfigured villagers living in this region bear the scars of their encounters; we therefore resolved to avoid any and all contact with humans on our trip, especially on the north bank of the river, as any humans were likely either poachers or guerillas. We struggled to suppress thoughts of ourselves becoming involved in such hideous scenarios. Despite recent reports of tenuous ceasefire agreements between rebels and government forces, we weren't taking any chances.





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International Whitewater

Despite such atrocities, or perhaps because of them, Ugandans today are some of the friendliest people one could ever hope to encounter. Their overt kindness and optimistic attitudes are positively infectious. One of the most memorable and ubiquitous sights that visitors to this magnificent land will fondly recall are the children sprinting wildly out of their huts with beaming smiles, waving both hands frantically, and screaming greetings of, “Jambo, muzungu (white person), how are you?” As Hendri noted, many foreign paddlers become so accustomed to this sight that upon return to their homelands, they feel quite alone even on the most crowded urban streets. “How can we ever return home now, after all this,” he asked, as we bounced along rutted red dirt roads in the back of a truck overflowing with kayaks, pursued by dozens of our new friends.

We departed the Nile River Explorers camp at Bujugali Falls on Monday, December 4, 2006, bound for Kampala to procure supplies and permits in a bombproof Land Cruiser. A very generous donation of a fully-stocked field trauma kit from a friend in Kampala who runs a paramedic/air evacuation service (as well as a funeral service—a bit ominous perhaps?) ensured that if disaster struck one of us on the river, we would be reasonably prepared. Our motley crew consisted of Desre Pickers for land support; in the support raft, Pete would be on the sticks and Dustin up front with a T-grip; five kayakers would be in the water. Our driver was a local man named Solomon with kind eyes and a generous smile, who seemed quite perturbed with our stated intentions.

We finished loading supplies and drove nine hours to our Karuma Falls campsite; over tea, Hendri and Pete discussed safety protocols, which turned out to be the most intimidating briefing I’d ever heard. Hippos were to be avoided at all costs, and charging crocs must be dealt with reciprocally: we were to charge directly back at them, prepared to strike with our paddles and hope for the best. Vigilance for approaching wildlife must be maintained at all times, with the presence

of humans announced by the sound of paddles beating on hulls. We fell asleep to the roar of the unseen falls and a full moon overhead that was replaced by a sudden microburst and deluge sometime in the middle of the night.

The first day on the water was spent casually boating the two rapids upstream of Karuma, which possessed a strong “Stikine” component ... everything looked

much bigger when down in the maw than when scouting from the bank high above. No good lines presented themselves in the impressive Karuma Falls, so we retired to camp. We listened to croaking tree frogs and watched thousands of lightning bugs blinking in the darkness, with plans to portage the falls the next morning.

Murchison Falls



We awoke to a spectacular sunrise to leave civilization behind and begin the trip in earnest. Water levels were slightly lower on this trip than on the last trip that Peter and Hendri made in 2004, but this made the first rapid under the bridge more difficult for the heavy raft. The kayakers paddled the first powerful rapid under the bridge and pulled over to help hack out a trail just below the bridge, rigged the raft, and we all set off. Three hundred meters downstream and just around the bend, the whitewater was heavy and Pete and Dustin flipped in a hole. The incentive of survival was enough motivation to have both of them on top of the raft in record time, as a large six-meter croc trailed us through the water to see if we were something tasty. It took all seven of us to right the heavy supply-laden boat. Within 30 minutes, the raft flipped again! Back upright, we continued downstream with an ominous feeling in the pits of our stomachs. The rapids eased somewhat but the number of hippos and crocs increased alarmingly. Lots of agitated behavior with blowing, open-mouth posturing, and surprise surfacing put us all on edge. We made sure to be as noisy as possible. The last thing we wanted to do was sneak up on a territorial hippo.

To our right lay LRA country. We stared hard at the bush for signs of life, wary but at the same time fascinated with a morbid curiosity of this infamous place. We spotted river otters, bathing Cape buffalo, and some men on the bank with guns whom we kindly ignored as we paddled quickly away. Finally we spied a nice campsite on a small rock ledge and agreed to stop before the typical late afternoon thunderstorms rolled in.

The first night we established a perimeter of boats around the tents, assuming that if a hippo (or something) strayed into camp, we could hear the loud crunch of plastic and then be prepared to ... what—jump in the river, where the biggest crocs were eagerly awaiting our arrival with opened jaws? Perhaps it was best not to think about it. Hypothetical talk of marauding wildlife was discouraged with a mere glance from Pete or Hendri. It was quite




inspiring and comforting having two such experienced leaders. They both continually exuded confidence and quiet strength which permeated the rest of the group to maintain calm even when charging crocs or hippos threatened our safety.

Awake at first light, we quickly rigged and shoved off. We made many miles because the water slowed significantly with hundreds of islands and channels, some with easy Class III and some with unrunnable terminal pourovers, but all routes appeared identical from above. Fortunately Hendri and Pete seemed to have intuition to supplement where memory of specific lines left off and we had no difficulties. We pulled into camp early and hacked out a spot in the jungle on the north side. Peter made a delicious meal of two chickens stuffed with garlic, lemons, and ginger and smeared with olive oil and spices on coals with butternut squash and mashed potatoes. With uncontrollable salivation, we tore into the meal like hungry wolves. Afterward, we sat around the fire under a tarp while a storm raged on, and we recounted and embellished old stories. The croaking of baby crocs lulled us to sleep.

We had camped at the head of “Go Left”

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rapid, so we spent a bit of time early doing reconnaissance for raft lines and scouting hero lines for the kayaks. We walked along game trails and found an impressive hippo skeleton, elephant tracks everywhere, warthog holes, and a large striking black and white monkey. On the water, a skillful maneuver from Megadeath and Dustin involved a tight line and a midstream pendulum to safety; they made a tough move look easy. Four kayakers ran the left channel with impressive lines for the cameras. It had taken us all morning to negotiate one long rapid, so we boogied downstream. Radio contact between the probes and the raft was becoming tenuous, and a miscommunication left most of us running safety with the raft through a steep and complex rapid by eddy hopping and boat scouting the whole way down. We reached the bottom relieved and feeling ecstatic. Scott and Hendri were still hacking their way upstream, unaware that we had already successfully negotiated the torrent. Eventually we regrouped and set up camp on a pristine little beach just below the rapid.

We awoke at dawn to quickly scarf some calories before we tackled the big portage at “Go Right,” which loomed just ahead. Here the river separated into several channels and tumbled over a series of unrunnable cascades. A previous expedition took four days to portage this half kilometer stretch on the left bank; it would take us just over an hour on river right. We slogged through claustrophobic jungle—the thick, dank air pressed down on our shoulders and poured into our lungs. Mosquitoes, black flies, and Tsetse flies terrorized us with painful bites that left large welts on any exposed skin. We vigilantly watched for cobras and black mambas hiding in the tall grass or in trees overhead.

Luckily we located some hippo trails that traversed the large rocky island in all directions. We dispersed to find the best route leading to another small channel, which would bypass the chunkiest section of whitewater. The trouble with utilizing these trails for access was that eventually we were destined to encounter hippos!

While searching, Steve and Ben startled a cow hippo and her calf in the thick bush; she bellowed loudly and began crashing through the jungle, frantically searching for the safety of the river. Steve and Ben both attempted to run from the charging beast by diving off the trail into the impenetrable jungle; both were immediately ensnared by vines and thorn thickets along the trail, nearly unable to move their arms or legs at all. Fortunately for them, the hippos happened to run in the opposite direction. I encountered Ben running at breakneck speed back towards the boats, jungle vines trailing him from his dash from death and breathlessly explaining that we were under siege. We decided to rendezvous back with Dustin at the raft to regroup.

When we arrived back at the top of the rapid, Dustin had a wild look in his eyes and a harrowing story! He had heard a loud crashing sound in the bush and thought a warthog was coming down to the water for a drink, so he jumped from shore into the raft; no sooner had he gotten in than the same hippo that was startled by Ben and Steve came barreling down the trail (hippos can run up to 30 km per hour on land), kicking kayaks into the air in a full-on sprint. Dustin said it all happened so quickly, he just clutched an oar and stared in dumbfounded terror as the beast showered the raft on his dive into the river, just inches away. This was still Dustin's first week in Africa and he was having quite the immersive experience; after that, he refused to be left alone with the boats again! Steve emerged from the bush with blood covering his face from cuts he sustained while running full-tilt through a briar patch. He said of his earlier encounter with Ben that he could not remember the last time he had been that frightened; pretty interesting coming from a boater with such a reputation for fearlessness. We regrouped and agreed to stay together for the portage across the island, which we accomplished in record time.

While waiting for Pete to finish rigging, the kayakers ran downstream into a small channel that disappeared into a dark tunnel

of overhanging vegetation. A fairly large tree hanging just above the water spanned most of the river in the middle of the steep rapid, invisible until we had entered the flow and were committed. We all managed to avoid the wood but were concerned for Pete and Dustin in the raft. Scott and I attempted to hack back upstream to alert them of the danger. Scott stayed near the water; I decided to use a convenient hippo trail to get back above the rapid and report beta to the boys still rigging above. I heard a loud grunt just ahead of me and looked up to see the jungle ahead erupt into chaos and begin shaking wildly back and forth. Something huge was bearing straight down on me very quickly. I realized that I could not outrun whatever was coming, so I looked up and grabbed the largest vine I could reach and clambered up hand-over-hand as fast as I could. Just as I reached about eight feet off the ground and pulled my legs up, two massive bull hippos came charging straight underneath me on the same spot that I had just been standing! I clung desperately to the vine until it seemed safe enough to return to terra firma, hollered for Scott (who had managed to warn the boys in time) and returned to the boats as quickly as possible to assess the damage from my Class V dump.

We all paddled across the river to eat lunch and decompress. Hendri led us up to a high grassy knoll overlooking the falls; this was easily one of the most beautiful places I had ever been. We noticed from this vantage point that a transformation was taking place around us; the thick, dark jungle was subtly changing to undulating savannah. Acacia trees, with their stratified branches like low, wispy clouds, hovered randomly, many islands in a sea of golden waist-high grass. It was quite easy to imagine a hungry lion stalking us here. Buffalo and impala grazed on rolling green hills that stretched into the distance, and the river thundered over the cascades below ... we agreed that we were indeed blessed to see such beauty remain completely unmolested by the hand of man.

Scouting the next large rapid, “Jou Ma,” we

strategised about how to avoid the massive hole at the bottom that seemed to be sucking light from the sky. We negotiated the broken ledges successfully in kayaks, but the raft was inadvertently pulled into the main channel at the bottom, with a resultant spectacular flip and a deep flush. The boys were fine; we righted the raft again and continued pushing downstream. The astounding number of hippos forced us to stay in the main flow and avoid all eddies like the plague. Occasionally this forced us to take heavy lines that we otherwise would have likely avoided. The fact that hippos are herbivores was little consolation considering that they kill more humans than all other wildlife in Africa combined.

Arriving at Likkewan, we encountered a complex series of violent pourovers in the center and large curlers feeding the maw on the left. The raft flipped for the fourth time attempting to run left, but we quickly righted it and made our way to the last river camp, a wide, grassy beach with views of the rapids upstream providing ample fishing opportunities. Ben caught two respectable Nile perch, much to Steve's envy. Fisher baked them up for us on a bed of coals in true river expedition style and we fell asleep watching shooting stars in an unparalleled equatorial African sky.

Everyone awoke early for the crux day. Just after entering the river, a massive seven-meter croc, which at first had appeared to be dead, saw us and flung itself with


shocking speed and agility into the water to give chase. We disturbed a pod of land-grazing hippos that recognized our presence and dashed back to the river, sending small tsunamis speeding toward us from their panicked belly-flops. The greatest concentrations of animals were along the river; even elephants allowed us to get quite close to them as they grazed along the bank.

The Matrix was the first of the day's big rapids, famous for its colossal standing wave with a true 20-foot face; with the lower water, it had now degenerated into a steep breaker with a chaotic pile on the left shoulder and a sticky ledge just downstream. We lined the raft around the upper drop and took turns defying gravity in our kayaks on the Herculean wave. Our broad smiles greeted each other in the bottom "Thank God" eddy.

S-Bend was the final crux rapid of the entire run; it is nearly a mile long with a last-chance eddy on river left that, if missed, results in an inevitable first descent over Murchison Falls. Des had trekked upstream from the falls to meet the crew and her boyfriend, Steve. She motivated us with the announcement that she had procured plenty of cold beer, which was waiting at the take-out. We chose our lines carefully over the many ledges and between pods of hippos amid the heavy whitewater. We all executed flawless runs and made the critical eddy without problems.

We embraced and breathed deeply of the euphoria that accompanies success. There was a general consensus that we had all just shared the ultimate river experience. We passed the evening with friends and girlfriends and too much strong drink. We told stories, we joked, and we danced. In the air there was that slight fever that reigns over survivors of an ordeal, tinged with a hint of regret that the action is over, the mission accomplished. Fortunately for us, the most serious carnage of the entire trip included foot rot and skin infections, amazing considering the potential for serious injury or death.

The following day, before heading back to civilization, we all loaded up for a relaxing three-hour launch boat trip upstream to the base of Murchison Falls; there was spectacular game viewing and bird watching, and for once the wildlife posed no menace.

Happiness is a state of mind. For me, nothing can match the treasure of common experiences and of lessons won from shared hardship, which bind us in friendship forever. It is such a privilege to spend the greatest moments of our lives among rivers whose dangers remind us of our vulnerability and in whose refuge we find the riches of secret treasures. 



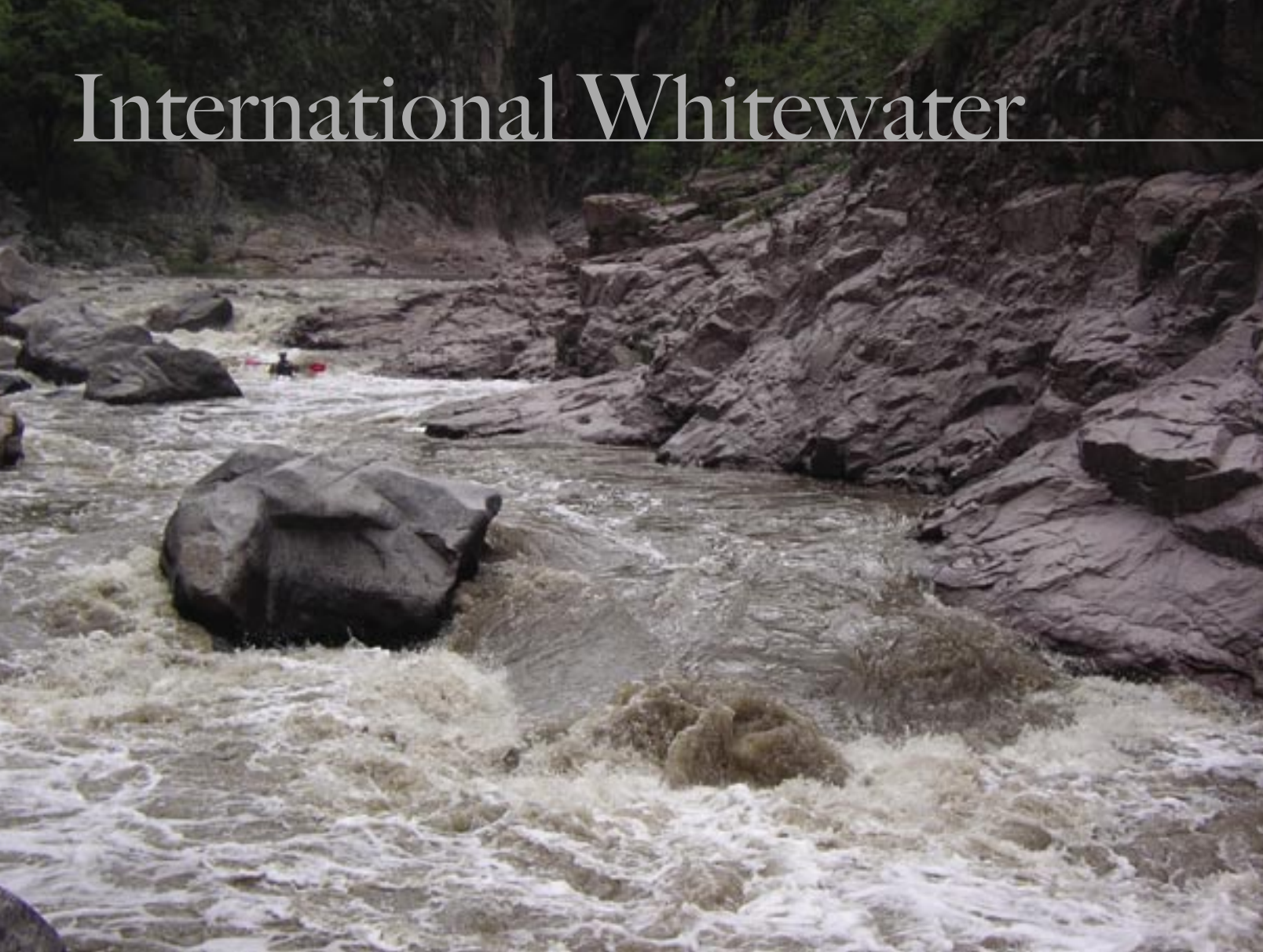
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Mica Fugate on the
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Barranca Sinforosa: a Grand Canyon in Mexico

By Rocky Contos

Photos by Rocky Contos and Alex Chong

As we float on Rio Verde through the Barranca Sinforosa, we are in awe of its beauty, reminiscent of the Grand Canyon, but greener. Huge vertical walls tower above us, eventually reaching up to the rim over 4700 ft above. Stopping to scout the next Class IV rapid, Alex Chong and I decide on a route through it. With a few appropriate strokes, we maneuver around a couple of boulders in the river and punch through a hole or two. A pool leads down to the next rapid, which looks like a fun eight-foot drop. I plop over, unintentionally going deep into the hole

but squirting out with a smile on my face. Wheeew! The rapids keep coming in close succession, mostly Class III-IV, but occasionally easy Class V. In this section, I had been worried that the average 120 feet per mile gradient would make for a lot of portages, but am pleasantly surprised to find everything runnable. The approximately 1600 cfs of silty water that we are floating on is about normal in summertime. It's our fifth day of the journey. We wonder how, that in 2004, one of the most magnificent river runs in the world is still a first descent.

Rocky floating through the bedrock rapids in the heart of Barranca Turuachi

The Barranca Sinforosa, located in the state of Chihuahua in northwestern Mexico, is more profound than the Grand Canyon and similarly spectacular. At its deepest point, 18 km upstream of the pueblo of San Miguel, it is 6230 ft river-to-rim on one side and 6750 ft on the other. For over 60 miles the canyon depth averages approximately 4500 ft. Although this is roughly the same depth as the nearby Barranca del Cobre (Copper Canyon), the Sinforosa is not as popular because it is more out-of-the-way. For the Barranca del Cobre, a train whisks tourists along the

rim, allowing them to get out and take in the view at Divisadero. For the Sinforosa, one must drive to a point near the town of Guachochi for a similar vista. But the Sinforosa has a larger river at the bottom, the Rio Verde, the upstream extension of Rio Fuerte, which is the largest river in northwest Mexico.

Around lunchtime we reach an area where the main trail from the rim (at Cumbres de Sinforosa) supposedly reaches the river. We search around a little and find it, then decide to camp on a nice beach on the opposite side of the river. Since we made it through the 120 fpm section much more quickly than anticipated, it is

still early enough in the day for me to hike up to the rim. Alex would like to simply relax, exhausted after our four prior days of arduous paddling, so he offers to stay behind and watch the gear.

I take off on a hike up to the rim. From the river, the trail is about 5 miles with about 4700 ft of elevation gain. Based on similar hikes I have done up and back in the Grand Canyon, I estimate that I can hike/run up and back within 5 hours. However, after the first 15 minutes on this Sinforosa trail, I notice that it is starting to descend. I realize that I took a wrong turn, and mistakenly am heading downriver to the abandoned village of Sinforosa. I retrace

the route and find the correct branch up to the rim, having to go through a little corral gate. Compared to the Grand Canyon's Kaibab trail, at least two things are certainly different: the Sinforosa trail is much narrower and there are no people around. I do see some pieces of red tape marking a route—perhaps left over from the ultra race that occurred here the previous week.

I run as much as I can, but the steepness of the trail calls for hiking much of the

*View of the river and canyon
from the hike up to the rim*



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way. The switchbacks seem endless. The air is getting thinner and cooler. While at the canyon bottom the temperature was topping out near 100 F, I am now at an elevation where it typically only reaches the 70s. Thunderstorm clouds start to darken the sky. I see some goats grazing nearby. A small trickle of water drips out of one of the walls, but I decide to wait until I get to the top to fill up my water bottles again. Getting closer, I can make out more clearly a tower overlook on the edge of the rim, reminiscent of the Hopi Desert Tower. The redolence of pine trees waft down to me and soon I am walking among such conifers.

Within three hours I have made it to Cumbres de Sinforosa on the rim. This area is remarkably similar to the Grand

Canyon's South Rim. It is a raised plateau, flat for dozens of miles in three directions, all at an elevation averaging about 8000 ft. It differs from the Grand Canyon's rim in that it is barely developed. Some guys hanging around a small gate are collecting 10 pesos (\$1) to allow a vehicle to drive to the rim for the view. A small store sells provisions and souvenirs. I go in and purchase a few items: a fruit drink, tuna, tomatoes, crackers, water, and a gift for Alex. Thunder deafens us and it starts pouring rain. I hang out in the store, talking with the owner, waiting out the rain and resting up for the run back to the river. Once it stops, I go check out the tower and view. It is breathtaking!

I hang out for another hour or so. As I start back down, my sandals and feet get

muddy and dirty, and I occasionally slip, but soon I am back on relatively dry trail and trotting down quickly. I reach the river at dusk, ferry across and take a swim to rinse off.

As we settle in for dinner, hundreds of bats dart across the river above us. I boil some water and toss in the mota that I collected the previous day. Although illegal, mota (marijuana) is a common cash crop in the region, and can be found growing along the river's edge in places, apparently from seeds swept downstream. The water-extract doesn't have much of an intoxicating effect, but the tea is very pleasant to drink.

Vertical walls rise directly from the river in many places within Barranca Sinforosa



I tell Alex all about the hike to the rim and that I have a gift for him when we finish the trip in five more days. I joke that he needs a little incentive to keep going. Alex isn't used to all this hard work to get down a river: paddling a loaded kayak for 10 days; 225 miles on an unknown river with over a dozen portages. Alex is used to the easier river rat way of life, including lots of beer drinking and socializing. The first trip we did together was a typical raft-support 18-day Grand Canyon trip I had invited him on. He's an outstanding kayaker, who has paddled all over the USA, Chile, New Zealand, and Australia. He typically guides rafts on the Kern in spring/summer, but has also guided on the SF American and Gauley. His computer science degree allows him to make money during the off-season in temporary employment.

Here at camp, he talks of rivers, girls, beer, Australia, San Diego (where we both grew up), and he tells a long list of jokes. He is game for an adventure, and although we both grumble at the portages, he is well accepting of the expedition. I am glad to have such a competent paddling partner along—he has already helped me get off a broach on this trip.

But frankly, I am surprised that he's come to Mexico with me again. We had attempted to do the Sinforosa the previous year, but were warned away by rumors of low water, and instead headed south for a descent of Rio Acaponeta. On that trip, we started at the headwaters, dragging our boats for a day or two. After boating for a while, we encountered an unexpected 100-plus-foot waterfall with nasty runoff

that required a long portage (it was my fault that it was unexpected—I failed to recognize an extra contour line on the topo map). Downstream, the unportagable tight gorges, numerous Class V-VI rapids, and an indication it was going to get worse made us decide to abort the trip after four days. Climbing out took two days of difficult trekking with most of our gear. The boats are still in the canyon, waiting to be resuscitated one day for the completion of the journey.

Yet here he was again, this time enjoying himself more. We had started the Sinforosa trip on Rio Turuachi (the uppermost part of Rio Fuerte) at nearly 7000 ft elevation. Although we did have a dozen portages in the first three days, there were also innumerable fun rapids all

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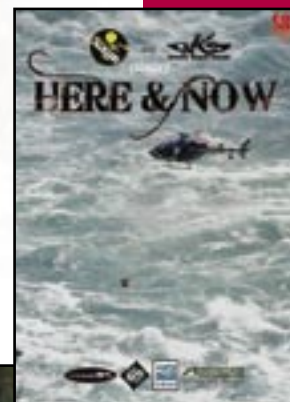
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Short for "Teen, Keen and Enthusiastic", Wilderness Tours' OKS' Keener Program is the world's best youth development program through kayaking. It attracts young paddlers the world over for 3 – 9 weeks every summer.

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What do Rafa Ortiz, Nick Troutman and Joel Kowalski have in common?

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International Whitewater

the way down to Rio Verde. The highlight of that first portion of the trip was the Barranca Turuachi (Turuachi Gorge), where vertical walls rose directly from the river with bedrock Class III-IV rapids. In the heart of the gorge, two unportageable rapids caused us concern. Looking down the second of these (V-), the river exited through a very narrow passageway. I questioned whether it might taco a boat going in sideways. We couldn't really see below. Alex went first, nicely negotiating the passageway and giving a hoot that it was all clear. Nice job, Alex! We both agree that the Turuachi Gorge is one of the most amazing sections of river we can imagine paddling.

Now, here we are in the heart of the Barranca Sinforosa. We awaken to the sun shining bright, we pack up, and start paddling again. A few miles downstream we reach a footbridge across the river that reminds me of the Bright Angel Trail Bridge. We stop and walk across, snapping some photos and video.


A first descent of this section of the river was attempted by raft in January 1986. Richard Fisher recounts the trip in his book *Mexico's Copper Canyon*. Probably due to very low flows (approximately 100 cfs), they encountered constant portages and could only cover a couple of miles each day. Within five days the other members of the team wanted to quit—"mutiny," he writes. The trip was aborted at the Cumbres de Guerachi Trail, where they packed it out. This section of the river has also been traversed by at least two canyoneering groups—one led by Russell Ray (mentioned in Fayhee's hiking book *Mexico's Copper Canyon Country*), and another by canyoneer Carlos Lazcano (described on a web page).

In the footbridge region, the riverbed is wide and the rapids are fairly easy Class II-III. Later that day, though, we arrive at the last whitewater hurdle of our journey—the section of river above the Los Loera confluence where the gradient averages 90 fpm for four miles. The river narrows and huge boulders clog the flow. Based on the Fisher and Lazcano accounts, I expect

some large falls and probable portages in here. Yet what we find is different, mostly runnable and enjoyable Class III-IV rapids, with a few Class V (all easily portaged, if desired). We are ecstatic and settle in for camp on a large beach a little downstream of the Los Loera confluence. A boulder overhang keeps the rain off us so we don't even have to put the flies on our tents.

We are now on Rio Guerachi, 100 miles into the trip, and the added water of Los Loera gives a total flow in the river of about 3000 cfs. I enjoy the bigger water feel. We make good time progressing downstream and arrive at a new road bridge being constructed that will link Guachochi with Baborigame. I get out and speak to the construction crew. I am sad to see more development in this relatively pristine canyon, but realize that such an access point will make the river trip more feasible for many paddlers. Our goal is to arrive back in Creel by train, though, so we have another 100-plus miles to paddle in the remaining three days. We continue, negotiating many more Class III-IV rapids downstream.

After a long section of Class II and 30-plus miles of reservoir paddling, we are at the train stop of Palo Dulce. We load the kayaks on the cargo car, and enjoy the ride back up to Creel. I give Alex the gift I bought at Cumbres de Sinforosa. Both he and I put on the t-shirts that display a photo of the Sinforosa Canyon along with the saying "Recuerdo de las barrancas

- La Sinforosa," meaning, "Souvenir of the canyons – the Sinforosa." We will always remember this fantastic trip! 

For more information, go to www.sierrarios.org.

CORRECTION!

In our January/February issue, we ran a story in this space about the **Dogg on Colorado's St. Vrain River**. With that story were several high quality photos that were un-captioned and, more regrettably, un-credited. We would like to offer our sincere apologies to the photographer whose name we omitted. Evan Stafford, we are sorry.



International Whitewater

International Travel: How to Fly with Your Boat

By David Hughes

Paddlers often ask, "How does Huge Experiences' move a high school with kayaks?" Response: "We fly with them." Flying with your kayak may be intimidating at first, but it is only slightly more difficult than flying with normal luggage.

The goal with this travel segment is to teach you how to fly internationally with your paddling gear at an economical rate.

Lets break it down into steps:

Choose a kayak friendly airline

Airlines post their oversize baggage specifications, regardless of whether they allow or "blacklist" kayaks. Stay away from airlines that do not allow kayaks as oversize luggage. If you use the rules in this article you may still be able to fly with a blacklist airline, but don't count on it. Know weight and size allowance: Bags are free under 50 pounds, but will be classified as oversize based on dimensions and weight. Your max limit maybe around 115" (length +

width + height) and typically = \$80 fee. Freestyle kayaks are around 74" l + 13" h + 25" w = 112". Check the oversize baggage allowance for your airline.

Packing your kayak (in six easy steps). You will need:

packing tape, sharpie, strap, boat bag or alternative kayak wrap.

Label each piece of gear. Don't take chances. This is your first precaution when flying with oversized gear.

Stuff lightweight items like fleece, dry tops, skirts, and booties into bow and stern compartments. Do not exceed 50 pounds unless you are fine with a possible second oversize fee for dimension and weight.

Brace your paddle(s). Use sleeping bags, sleeping pads, PFDs, sandals, and any bulky items to provide support between your kayak and paddle. Tape the paddle well to the cockpit rim. Non-braced paddles can break.

Wrap to protect

You can use a kayak bag, but they are hard to find and end up being an additional

awkward piece of gear you will have to keep up with during the entirety of your travels. I use a disposable tarp or tough blanket from a thrift store. Wrap the kayak well with the tarp and secure with packing tape. You can use the tarp later as a ground cloth for camping. Tarps are also easy to pack during travel.

Make a handle for the skycaps. Imagine that skycaps hate heavy luggage that's awkward to carry. So, make it easy to carry.

1. Cut a hole in your wrapping system at the cockpit rim, allowing access to the cockpit for use as a handle.

2. Or make a shoulder strap that you previously built prior to wrapping. The shoulder strap can later be used as a piece of webbing that ties around the bow and stern and protrudes out of two holes from the tarp.

Label, Label, Label. Where will you be, where are you going, what is your flight number?

Checking in

Show up three hours early. You have large luggage and if the plane is nearly full the counter person is likely to turn you down. If you are one of the earliest then there is little stress related to an over packed plane belly. Plus, you will want the extra time to carry your heavy gear.

What to say. I avoid the word "Kayak." The word "Kayak" is an expensive word at airports that is often charged twice as much as other similar sized items. I always call my craft a "surf ski." What is a "surf ski?" A made up term, as far as I know. For our purposes of saving funds, let's

Learning to fly with kayaks has opened a world of cultural experiences for New River Academy students. The few rupee paid to this Buddhist monk in Kathmandu, Nepal was worth the lasting memory.

Photo by David Hughes



use the following explanation, "A surf ski is something you sit on top of and surf in the ocean. It is like a surf board because of its design and you surf it in the ocean." I keep relating it to a surfboard using the word "surf" repetitively because I want the surfboard rate. If they charge you \$80 extra be happy, pay your fee, and leave the desk person with a smile.

What to do if airline will not accept the boat. Allow them to be in charge from the start. Ask them how you can help move the item where they need it so they will not have to do any extra work. Be excited about your "surf ski" adventure, and smile. If they turn you down and say they don't accept kayaks, then you are going to have to ask them for their help. Going over the top to management is a bad ideal unless worded correctly.

Why is the question, "Can I speak to your

manager?" a bad ideal? Note that the manager is the one who has probably trained employees to turn kayaks down in the first place. Bringing them onto the scene of a conflict puts them in a place where they have to make an example in front of those employees. Try this instead: "Thank you for your help. Obviously, you realize how important this piece of equipment is to my vacation. Is there anything you can do, or someone you can ask or lead me to speak with who can approve this? My apologies for not packing this well, not being here earlier, etc. Any help you can offer would make me most appreciative and have a strong positive impact on my vacation."

Now, you have asked them for genuine help. It is hard to deny wanting to help someone who has been kind and asked for help. You may have to be persistent. Keep your eye on being the world champion of

gratitude and letting the officials know how much it would benefit your trip. I have stuck out several "no you can not travel with your kayak" episodes, only to later be allowed based on steadily barraging airline employees with kindness.

Best of luck. Enjoy your travels! 

David Hughes is the founder and director of Huge Experiences' New River Academy. David continues to teach and lead international trips. For more travel tips surf to www.kayakschool.org.



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News & Notes

Whitewater Junior Olympics Returning to Original Site

by the Junior Olympic Committee

The 13th edition of the Whitewater Junior Olympic Championships will be conducted in Wisconsin from July 3 to 13, 2008. This is a return to the site of the first Junior Olympic competition, in 1996, and we're hoping it will prove to be lucky for the youngsters who'll be participating.

It was in 1994 that the initial meeting of the Junior Olympic Task Force took place at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in North Carolina. A second meeting followed in 1995. Purpose of these meetings was to develop a program that would attract more teenagers to the sport. Attending were such whitewater luminaries as Eileen Ash, Gordon Black, John Brennan, Wayne Dickert, Chuck Hines, Peter Kennedy, Mike Larimer, Tom Long, Risa Shimoda, and World K-1 slalom champion Richard Fox, from Great Britain.

Under the direction of Olympian Wayne Dickert, the first actual JO Championships were contested at Wausau, Wis., in 1996. Four regional qualifying events were held around the country, with the top performers from each region advancing to the Championships. The emphasis was on slalom racing, and one of the winners at Wausau was Scott Parsons of Ohio, who went on to become a U.S. Olympian in 2004. The team title was won by Adventure Quest of Vermont, coached by Peter Kennedy.

The second JO Championships were unique. They were part of the Amateur Athletic Union's Junior Olympic Festival, held at Charlotte, N.C. in 1997. Over 12,000 young athletes from 45 states participated in 20 sports, viewed by 30,000 spectators. Wayne Dickert and Mike Hipsher directed the whitewater events, which included slalom and sprint. They were held at the Carowinds Amusement Park. The slalom took the young racers through a tunnel. The Southeast Team,

comprised of 28 youngsters from eight states and coached by Chuck Hines, took top honors in the AAU scoring system, defeating the Northeast, Midwest, and Far West.

With Wayne Dickert again in charge, assisted by former World champion and Olympian Jon Lugbill, the 1998 JO Championships reverted to form and were held separately on the James River in Richmond, Va. The Championships were then hosted by Colorado in 1999 and Texas in 2000. By this time, there were eight regional races being held from coast to coast.

In 2001, the Nantahala Racing Club conducted the JO Championships and won the Chuck Hines Cup that was awarded to the club compiling the most points in the slalom competition. Hines is the former president of the NRC Rhinos. In 2002, the Mach One Team from State College, Pa., coached by Dave Kurtz, copped the Cup, but NRC retaliated with three straight slalom victories in 2003, 2004, and 2005 over Mach One and clubs from Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, New York, Texas, and Washington State.

The 2005 Championships, held at South Bend, Ind., saw the addition of several new events—down-river sprint, freestyle/rodeo, boater-cross—along with the traditional slalom. For the first time, a large contingent of Canadians came and competed. The Ray McLain Cup was introduced in memory of Ray McLain, to recognize overall river supremacy in ALL of the various disciplines, and the Front Range Paddle Club from Golden, Colo., coached by Chris Wiegand, was the winner. McLain was the long-time coach of the Green Bay, Wisconsin youth program that produced numerous champions, including Rebecca Bennett-Giddens, who won gold and silver medals in world and Olympic competition.

With Wiegand leading the way, the 2006 Junior Olympics became truly an international event. Held in British Columbia, Canada, the JO Championships attracted teams not only from a dozen

American states and Canadian provinces but also from China. Mach One was the winner of the Chuck Hines Cup for finishing first in slalom, edging Nantahala by two points, and then won the Ray McLain Cup for excellence in all the disciplines, defeating runner-up Front Range and 10 other clubs from the U.S. and Canada.

Chris Wiegand and his Front Range supporters hosted the 2007 Junior Olympic Championships and made it bigger and better than ever. It was a two-week long event with fireworks and fiery competition at Boulder and Golden, Colorado. In addition to all the clubs and individuals from around the U.S. and Canada, there was a team of three girls from Iran, accompanied by their female coach. Wiegand worked hard to bring in the Iranians, a feat that attracted international publicity. When all the smoke had cleared, Mach One again went home with both the Chuck Hines Cup and the Ray McLain Cup.


There is also a youth Leadership Trophy, presented annually at the JO Championships to a whitewater teacher or coach who has devoted many years to working with youngsters and/or promoting youth paddling and racing. In 2003 Wayne Dickert of North Carolina won the award, Dave Kurtz of Pennsylvania in 2004, Mike Larimer of Georgia in 2005, Tom Long of Idaho in 2006, and Ben Kvanli of Texas in 2007. Who will it be in 2008?

Dave Kurtz is chairing the Junior Olympic Committee this year, which is affiliated with United States Canoe and Kayak (USACK), the sport's governing body, headquartered in Charlotte, N.C. Kurtz, who has been teaching and coaching kids for 50 years, said:

We will start this year's Junior Olympic Championships on a lake near Stevens Point, Wisconsin. On the 4th of July, we'll probably have a biathlon, which will consist of paddling across the lake, doing a local obstacle course, and then paddling back. On the 6th, we'll have the Grand Slam Slalom. Then we'll move to the

outstanding whitewater course at Wausau, which has hosted many national and international races in the past.

Housing will be available at the Wausau YMCA camp, and we'll have a full slate of events over the next week for juniors 15-16 and 17-18, cadets 13-14, and cub-cadets 12 and under. The Wausau course will be a challenge for the younger paddlers, but we'll have the lowest water level possible, both to save on water and to make it as safe as possible.

Wausau has one of the best-organized whitewater sites in the country and will be hosting the Age Group Nationals and WACKO Slalom two weeks prior to the Junior Olympic Championships, so they should be all set to conduct an outstanding JO competition. The emphasis will be on fun, and this year it will have more of a festival atmosphere than in the past. One thing we want to do is improve on our mentoring program, in which the older teenagers reach out to help teach the younger ones. 

Those seeking additional information about the 2008 Whitewater Junior Olympics should contact Dave Kurtz at d1k@psu.edu.

Ethan Diefenbach, age 11 at the Sunnyside Paddling Park in Bellefonte, PA

Photo by Duane Diefenbach



Qualifying for the 2008 Junior Olympics

The Junior Olympics are events for aspiring cadet and promising junior paddlers. Races are needed throughout the country to qualify young athletes for the various Junior Olympic Events. These can be in slalom, wildwater or downriver, and freestyle. The qualifying races and events are intended to indicate that the youth are trained well enough for participation in the Junior Olympics, that they have experience at least in one of these types of activities. Youth who qualify in one, can participate in all events at the 2008 Wausau Junior Olympics (JO) Festival. For example, a paddler qualifying in slalom can compete in wildwater or freestyle. Similarly, a kid qualifying in freestyle, can also compete in wildwater and slalom. The Junior Olympics Festival will be held from July 3-13, 2008.

Qualifying events can be organized by clubs that are affiliated with USACK, the American Canoe Association, The US Canoe Association, or those unaffiliated with any of these. However, those youth who qualify and wish to go to Wisconsin for the JO Festival must be individual members of USACK at that point. We hope to have a website operating by publication time specifically oriented towards the Junior Olympics. Check www.daveyhearn.com for information about qualifying events.

Youth qualify in one of 4 age group categories using the ICF/USACK age group definitions:
Cub Cadet: (BD 1998-1996) (three years in the grouping, the others are 2-year groupings)
Cadet: (BD 1995-1994)
Junior 15-16: (BD 1993-1992)
Junior: (BD 1991-1990)

They also qualify in any one or more of the classes, which are singles kayak for men or women, singles canoe for men or women, and doubles canoe for men, women, or mixed gender.

Qualification is for a specific boat class, kayak or canoe, and will apply for any or all of the events in slalom, wildwater, or freestyle. To encourage more doubles canoe participation, we will allow make up teams to form from youth who have qualified in a singles kayak or canoe class. If a doubles team has a mixed age, the competition will be in the older age group of the two persons involved. The Grand Slalom on July 5 or 6 will qualify make-up doubles teams.


The present system used for qualifying is as follows:

In the kayak classes, the top four not previously qualified will qualify. In singles canoe the top three will qualify and in doubles canoe the top two.

The following athletes are pre-qualified for 2008: the 2007 cadet team, the 2007 Junior Team, the medal winners (1-3 places) in the respective events at the 2007 Junior Olympic Festival at Golden, Colorado, and the 2007 Paddlesport Team.

Canadian youth will qualify according to methods designed by Canadian organizations.

Youth who live greater than 150 miles from a qualifying event may qualify by letter indicating they have had experience in 4 events prior to the 2007 Junior Olympics.

There is a drastic need to have more—indeed many more—qualifying events than what we have had in the past. Paddlers should make strong efforts to create new qualifying events. Enter information at the web site listed above, send a copy to Dave Kurtz, and promote it locally, regionally, and nationally! 

David A. Kurtz, PhD from Penn State University, started working with youth as a Scoutmaster while an undergraduate student at Knox College in 1953. Introduced to whitewater paddling with an Explorer Post in Midland, MI in 1954, he continued paddling immediately upon arrival at State College for graduate work at Penn State and has never stopped. There he worked with Explorer Post 32, Post 101, and then the Wildwater Boating Club. Since 1999, he has been president and coach of the Mach One Slalom Team. He was a member of 4 U.S. National Slalom Teams participating in World Championship events in the years 1963-1969. He won three National Championships in slalom doubles canoeing in the period 1965-67 with teammate Les Bechdel who now resides in northern Idaho. An International Canoe Federation Slalom Expert since 1965, he has been an At Large member of the USA Canoe/Kayak Whitewater Slalom Committee since 2003. He was appointed Chairman, Junior Olympics Slalom Committee in December, 2006.



\$5,000 Academic Scholarship to New River Academy

"And That Has Made All the Difference."

American Whitewater and the Huge Experiences' New River Academy announce a \$5,000 Academic Scholarship to the author of the best original composition describing a remarkable river experience.

Have you ever thought of attending Huge Experiences' high school for kayakers? Want to go to New Zealand and Chile and paddle amazing rivers after school? Have you had a remarkable experience on the river that you want to write about? If so, here is an opportunity to receive a \$5,000 Academic Scholarship and find yourself studying on the banks of, and then paddling, the best rivers in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Chile for the 2008-2009 school year.

The Rules

Applicant must be thirteen to eighteen years old.

- Only one composition per member per category will be accepted.
- Entry must be solely the work of the applicant; plagiarized entries will not be accepted.
- Entries should be about a river experience incorporating the school's slogan, "And that has made all the difference."
- Previously published works will not be accepted.
- All entries become the property of American Whitewater and Huge Experiences.
- A panel of faculty from American Whitewater and Huge Experiences will judge entries.

- Decisions of the panel are final.


Submissions

- All entries must include a cover letter that lists: your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, current grade level, and your high school name and address.
- Entries may be fiction, non-fiction, poetry or news writing.
- Entries must be double-spaced and no more than 1,500 words in length.
- All entries must be submitted via email, as an attachment in Word document or Acrobat PDF format, to ben@americanwhitewater.org or hugh2o@yahoo.com.

Deadline

- Entries must be received by June 8, 2008.

Award

- \$5,000 Academic Scholarship to the author of the best original composition.
- The Winner and all other applicants will be notified via e-mail and/or by mail. 

For more information contact David Hughes at www.kayakschool.org or (304)574-0403.

Academic scholarship recipients discover that the New River Academy is challenging, inspiring, and offers a unique perspective of the world. "And that has made all the difference."

Photo by David Hughes



Are you ready for the 2008 Wenatchee River Festival?? A Good Time Will Be Had By All

June 13-15, 2008 in Cashmere,
Washington

*By Jennie Goldberg, Festival Director and Peter
Stekel, WRF Steering Committee*

You can continue to complain about how you never meet anyone new on the river, doing the same old runs with the same crowd, or you can head on down to the 2008 Wenatchee River Festival in Cashmere, Washington.

Here's why: Meet new paddlers and catch up with all your old paddling buddies. Play on the water. Guzzle your favorite beverage. Pig out at the BBQ. Pit your strength against a hundred others during the mass-start downriver race. Get carefree in the river during the freestyle competition. Plunk down some cold hard cash for some great deals on gear, clothing, vacation trips and a bunch of other great stuff at the WRF raffle and auction. All the money goes to AW. Think of it as the most important donation you can make, supporting you, rivers, and American Whitewater. It's a great idea, right?

Let's face it. Paddlers in the Pacific Northwest have some of the best whitewater in the United States. With runs like Icicle Creek, Wenatchee River, and Little Wenatchee, the hot place to be in early June is the Wenatchee River Valley. And when boaters are done getting wet at the end of the day, they like to end up in Cashmere for the Wenatchee River Festival to party, hang out and visit with all the other Northwest paddlers. The Wenatchee River is located on the east side of the Cascades and offers sunshine and great


whitewater ranging from Class I to Class V. Can't remember dates too well? The Wenatchee River Festival is always held the second weekend in June at Riverside Park in Cashmere, Washington. That means that this year it'll be June 13 to 15. And talk about convenient. All the good stuff takes place right at the take-out of the best play run in the state. The snowpack this winter is deeper than it has been in decades and you know what that means—great flows! Guaranteed.

Of course, you can miss out on all the fun and great water to hang out in front of the TV ... but you'll be regretting it all year.

Everything starts with a Stewardship Roundtable Friday night. The focus is on conservation and access issues in the Wenatchee Valley. Speak your piece and hear what everyone else is saying, thinking, and doing. All day Saturday and Sunday at Riverside Park there is food, drink, booths, equipment demos, and music. Ready to lower your carbon footprint? We have a free shuttle both days for paddling the river or competing in the on-river events. You'll then end up back at the park for more entertainment! Participate in a rocking fun four-mile downriver through the big waves of the Class III

section in the morning Saturday and show your stuff at a great play wave and hole Saturday afternoon featuring a friendly crowd to cheer you on. Afterwards you can retire back to the Riverside Center for the evening's festivities—hang out in the beer garden, enjoy a BBQ dinner, listen to music, watch some videos, and get great deals at our sensational silent and live auctions held on the patio! And don't forget about the WRF raffle. Every dollar we make at the Festival goes to furthering American Whitewater's stewardship efforts in the Pacific Northwest.

Visit our website at <http://www.wenatcheeriver.com/> for more information. There you'll find information about camping, other indoor and outdoor activities nearby, sponsorship opportunities, and details about the Festival schedule. If you want to help out before, during or after the Wenatchee River Festival, there's information about that too.

See you there! 

*Tim Blecha on the Trinity Wave at
Drunkard's Drop on the Wenatchee*

Photo by Thomas O'Keefe





**FIRST
DESCENTS**

Announcing the 2008 EddyFlower Vertical Challenge

EddyFlower is kicking off the second annual EddyFlower Vertical Challenge, a simple 32-day paddling competition, a fundraiser for First Descents, and a membership drive for American Whitewater. This event is open to paddlers of all skill levels. Teams of up to five paddlers from any state in the country can compete to drop as much vertical as possible.

The Vertical Challenge opens May 15 and closes June 15, 2008. Teams can compete for prizes in one of five divisions (Open, Class V, Class IV, Class III, Weekend Warrior). We currently have over 870 eligible runs in 24 states. To register online go to www.eddyflower.com and select the 'Events' tab for information, registration and to get your AW membership for \$10. The first 100 of these discounted memberships are available to registered competitors. Registration is now open!

Last year 80 competitors dropped a total of 588,000 feet (equal to 20 Mt. Everest sea-summit attempts) while raising \$7,500, which sent seven youth to camp for a week. Brad Ludden, founder of First Descents had this to say, "First Descents was really founded in the local kayaking community. The EddyFlower Vertical Challenge is a perfect way to get them involved with us and get more people on the river. I think that this is a key relationship for First Descents and we are proud of EddyFlower's support."

Here's what competitors thought about last year's event.

CodyHoward, DaBoss@huckinhuge.com:

"As soon as I heard about the competition, I was scrambling to find out how I could be a part of it. Once on EddyFlower, I found a professional level event and website. I was floored to find such a high quality, sophisticated, and user friendly site in the kayaking community. I urge you and your buddies to sign-up!"

Tom Janney, 2nd place Overall Vertical Feet 2007: "I like the fact that there were so many divisions. I got to paddle with an amazing amount of people last summer around Colorado and was impressed at how many people were in the Vertical Challenge."

Christian Cook, 4th place Overall Vertical Feet 2007: "I would have never kayaked that much in one month if I had not been a part of the Vertical Challenge."

Nick Wigston, SWR instructor: "The EddyFlower Vertical Challenge takes competing back to pure kayaking."

Craig Waddell, Utah Legend: "What wound up being the most fun of the whole sha-bang was helping out an awesome charity doing what we were going to do anyway. The real-time standings and easy accessibility made entering runs a breeze. It was also a great opportunity to see what the other competitors we're up to that day (in and out of state)."


Thanks to our sponsors for 2008: Alpenglow, Aquabound, Boquete Outdoor Adventures, Dagger, Face Level, Front Range Paddling Association, Go Pro Camera, Kayak Session, Keen, Level 6, NRS, PeakUK, Red Bull, Smith Optics,

Tech 40, WRSI

Prizes will be awarded to 1st and 2nd place for all 5 divisions.

- 1st Place, 1 of each: Go Pro Helmet Camera, PeakUK PFD, Kokatat Drytop, Aquabound Carbon Paddle, Level 6 Skirt and Bladder; 2nd Place, 1 of each: Smith Optics Sunglasses, Keen Shoes, WRSI Helmet, (2) NRS Throw bags

- Prizes for most donations raised: 1st Place: Dagger Nomad; 2nd Place: Aquabound Carbon Paddle

- Prizes for most vertical dropped: 1st Place Go Pro Helmet Camera; 2nd Place: PeakUk Safety PFD ; 3rdPlace: WRSI Helmet 

Paul Gamache running Stupid Falls on the Upper East in Crested Butte, CO during the 2007 vertical challenge

Photo by Lawrence Simpson



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Accident Summary

American Whitewater Accident Summary July - December 2007

By Charlie Walbridge

Last year was the safest in recent memory. There were 34 reported swiftwater fatalities reported to American Whitewater in 2007, the lowest number since 2002. The toll among whitewater kayakers, seven, was the lowest in over a decade. These numbers can be attributed to the droughts plaguing large sections of the country, combined with a slight decline in river sports generally. It was a difficult year for commercial rafting, with eleven deaths listed among guided and rented rafts. Details are lacking on some of these accidents; we often get no more than the date, river name, and section. Canoeing fatalities were about average, mostly involving inexperienced paddlers who didn't wear life vests. Several outstanding rescues helped keep the overall count down.

Kayaking Deaths

Novices routinely float New York's Class II Esopus Creek at low summer levels. But on July 14th, five paddlers in recreational kayaks encountered serious problems at the Route 28 Bridge. According to Dave King of KCCNY, their plan was to paddle under the center span of the bridge, between the two abutments. But one member of the group, Elaine Dier, went to the far left. There was a huge log pile against the left abutment and a good part of the current on that side flowed into it. The 52 year-old woman washed into the strainer and pinned head down. Her friends tried to paddle up to the abutment, but they couldn't make it. They had to paddle ashore and swim over. The kayak released easily once they got to it, but by then she had been under water for more than ten minutes. They started CPR and called for help. An ambulance transported Ms. Dier to a hospital where she was pronounced dead.

Conrad Forney of Banks, Idaho probably

knew the North Fork of the Payette's Class V+ rapids better than anyone else. A veteran of big water runs throughout the world, he was well-known locally for a much publicized rescue of a pinned kayaker on the Lower Payette last fall. But on August 12th the North Fork got the upper hand. According to Paddler Magazine, he was running a challenging left-hand line down Nutcracker Rapid when he hit a huge hole. Here he was pummeled and slammed into an underwater rock sieve. Pulled from his boat by the turbulent water, his leg was caught in the sieve and he was held underwater. There was never the slightest chance of rescue.

The New Zealand Paddling Association sent word that Alabama paddler Kyle Stidham was killed during a high-water run of the "Awesome Gorge" section of the Kaituna River. He was the second American to die in New Zealand this year. He was paddling with three other paddlers, two of whom were locals, when his kayak pinned between two trees. Rescuers had to wait for the water level to drop before recovering his body.

Thousands of paddlers travel to West Virginia's Gauley River each fall to enjoy its beautiful Class V drops and the many lesser rapids between. "Little Z" is a Class III+ drop below Iron Ring. While the normal line is to start left and work right, some paddlers execute a top right boof over a 5-foot ledge. Maxwell Lentz, 17, was an expert paddler from a top western kayak academy who had run the Upper Gauley 20 times during the previous year. A group of eight students and one instructor planned to boof at Little Z. Several paddlers made the move successfully, but Mr. Lentz was thrown off line and pushed to one side. His kayak fell into a narrow chute and pinned vertically. Initially Mr. Lentz's body was out of the water and the situation looked manageable. Unfortunately, the right side of the chute was more undercut than anyone realized. During the rescue attempt his kayak broke loose and plunged deeply, sliding partly under the rock. It was a very bad pin. Mr. Lentz was completely under water, with his kayak wedged tightly and

his body trapped inside. Paddlers could reach him, but couldn't pull him free. A commercial raft trip arrived 25 minutes later. The guides contacted the dam via radio and asked them to cut back the flow. They set up stabilization and snag lines, but could not pull Mr. Lentz free. As the water dropped one of the guides stayed behind with Park Service river rangers. Eventually they released the boat using a Z-drag. This incident reminded me of many pins that have occurred in Initiation and Conestoga Rapids over the years and as well as terrifying accounts of near misses in various Gauley River side chutes. These drops are almost always undercut and more serious than they look. In fact, all but one of the kayaking deaths on the Upper Gauley in the last 30 years have occurred in the so-called minor rapids. That's something to think about!

Paddlers in southern Virginia were shaken by the death of Jerry Nutter, 55, on the James River in Richmond. According to a report written by his son for the Coastal Canoeists web site, water levels were low on December 29th when Mr. Nutter, his son, and another man paddled the river. The trip was uneventful until Pipeline Rapid. Mr. Nutter, running second, flipped unexpectedly. He attempted to roll, but fell back over. As he washed over a mid-stream pourover his companions moved in to help. His son tried a T-rescue; when there was no response to it he pulled alongside his father's kayak and executed a "hand of god" rescue on the first try. Although Mr. Nutter was only under water for a few seconds, they knew he was in trouble. He was completely unresponsive and there was a 2" gash on his head in the left temple area. The pair yelled loudly to the victim, but got no response. Paddling on each side of his kayak they worked their way to river left, floating down the next riffle and landing at a beach. They pulled Mr. Nutter out of his boat, checked him for vital signs, and began CPR. His son continued the CPR while their friend went for help. Paramedics arrived 10 minutes later and began treatment. Mr. Nutter was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead. Clearly Mr. Nutter's paddling partners did all

that anyone could possibly expect of a whitewater rescue. Unfortunately, the temple area is a very fragile part of the skull and I believe that the impact here killed him outright. He isn't the first and he won't be the last. Paddlers must make certain that their helmet covers this vital spot, and see that the fit is secure and does not shift underwater. Many helmets don't pass this test.

Canoeing Deaths

Whitewater canoeing deaths usually involve inexperienced people who paddle easy whitewater without life vests. One such fatality occurred on California's Sacramento River when two men flipped a canoe in China Rapid. One man was wearing a life vest and made it to shore safely. The second, Ronald Osborne, 23, was last seen floating downstream holding onto his PFD. Rescuers found the life vest, but not the man. In similar tragic circumstances, Teresa Yawn, 43, and her fiancé decided to run Montana's South Fork of the Flathead River on July 15th. Neither paddler was wearing a PFD when their canoe flipped in Devil's Elbow Rapid. Both paddlers made it to the west shore of the river, where there are no roads. They decided to swim to the other side and climb up to the highway. Halfway across the river Ms. Yawn became exhausted and slipped beneath the surface. Her fiancé jumped in and tried to help her, without success.

We have a report from Canada that an unidentified man became entangled in his bow line after flipping a canoe on Alberta's Kannanaskis River. The boat pinned, and he dangled helplessly in the current. He drowned despite wearing a PFD and a helmet. Loose lines on whitewater boats have caused much trouble over the years, motivating experienced whitewater canoeists to use grab loops instead. If painter lines are used, they should be carefully stowed to avoid entanglement.

Rafting Deaths

Although water levels were low this summer, the icy, fast moving Arkansas River in Colorado was still challenging to rafters! On July 5th two people died when a pair of commercial rafts flipped on the Numbers section. Although the flow was only 1080 cfs, Lynn Marks, 52, washed a mile downstream and drowned. A second passenger, 55 year-old Bea Kovic, received serious head injuries and died a few days later. A third woman received treatment for hypothermia. These were the third and fourth drownings respectively on the Arkansas this year.

Inexperience and high water led to several other rafting deaths. On July 8th a 26 year-old Texas man drowned on the Trinity River after his raft capsized during a high water run; he was not wearing a life vest. On July 13th Frank Archible, 49, missed his takeout on the Guadalupe River at high water and washed under zero-clearance, low-water bridge. Apparently his PFD became entangled in some debris and he was trapped there. Firefighters had to wait until the river dropped to recover his body.

Two other deaths involved inflatable kayak paddlers. Kristi Adams, a 20 year-old novice, was paddling Oregon's North Umpqua River with three friends in kayaks. She flipped in a narrow chute, washed under a log, and was pinned. Her friends pulled her out, began CPR, and called for help. She was flown to a hospital but did not survive.

A second incident occurred on an August 12th during a guided ducky trip down West Virginia's Upper Gauley River. According to guides at the scene the water level was 700 cfs, higher than expected, but still manageable. Pat Bortner, 51, was having a "great day" until her boat broached against Woodstock Rock in Iron Ring Rapid. She flipped upstream and washed into a sieve at the base of the boulder. Her guides, one of whom was stationed on top of the boulder, made numerous attempts to help her. The water was later cut back at the dam and guides on the scene recovered her body four hours later.

Near Misses and Rescues

There were a number of incidents this year that could easily have been fatal. Several involved low-head dams; one person actually washed through the intakes! Other incidents included a broken hip and several near drowning events that required hospitalization. The most unusual report involved a 500-pound man who tore up his ankle and knee while rafting on Wisconsin's St. Croix River. He was stranded in the shallows mid-stream for hours until 40 people, using a johnboat as a stretcher, hauled him out. All reports are available in the AW accident database on our website; several of the more interesting incidents are summarized below.

A kayaker running Colorado's Crystal River Gorge in July made a hard landing at the bottom of Zute Chute, a 40-foot high drop. The first 15 feet of the drop slope at a 75 degree angle; the last 25 feet fall vertically into a relatively shallow (5-foot deep) pool. Unfortunately the kayaker landed flat on the bottom drop. He wrote on Mountainbuzz.com: "After the impact it felt like my whole body was numb and my paddle was gone. I looked down and saw my paddle gripped firmly in my hands. That's when I realized my whole body was numb! I was staring downstream at one of the hardest sections of whitewater in Colorado and I could barely move my arms or breathe. I desperately tried to catch an eddy ... the feeling crept back into my body but breathing remained difficult. There was no way I was going to paddle out of the gorge." A member of the party free-climbed 50 feet out of the gorge and lowered a rope so the injured kayaker could use ascenders to climb out. From here he hiked a mile downstream, paddled a mile of Class II, and boated across a small lake to the take-out. The pain was intense and every breath hurt. At the hospital he found out that he'd fractured a vertebrae right behind his diaphragm. With each breath he was driving bone fragments into his spinal cord! Even though he made it out OK, the story is unsettling to anyone with first aid training. People with similar neurologic symptoms are normally immobilized on

Accident Summary


a flat surface and backboarded before transport. Fortunately the group had all the right tools for self-rescue; fitness and good luck prevented further injury.

In late August John Clark, an NOC kayak instructor, rescued one of his students from a bad pin on the Cheoah River. It happened just below "God's Dam," a small ledge on the upper part of the run. According to an account posted on his blog, after one of the students pulled out a waterproof camera and took a few shots, he was pushed out the back of an eddy and into the pourover before he knew what was happening. He could only get air by pushing off the bottom with his paddle to bring his head to the surface. When Mr. Clark paddled up and his student reached up, grabbed the bow, and pulled his head to the surface, the situation was stable; however, getting him free would be a challenge. The man was pinned in his kayak by unknown forces. Mr. Clark climbed out of his kayak and waded up the eddy, which was only knee deep. As he held his student's head above water they worked out a plan. Mr. Clark waded carefully to the bow of the pinned kayak, keeping up a constant dialogue with his student. After some discussion he let go of his student and lifted the bow of his kayak. There was a surprising amount of force on that boat! He lowered the boat and returned to his student, who told him that the pressure on his legs was much reduced when the boat was lifted. After several cycles of lifting and lowering the student kicked free. His sprayskirt was still caught in the boat but it came loose without too much effort. The dynamics of the pin were now clear. After the student flipped in the pourover, a tree stump several inches in diameter was shoved between his legs. This hooked him and his boat in the current and blocked his exit. Although the log was completely underwater, hidden by the upstream pourover, it hit the bottom of his kayak with enough force to crack the hull. There's more to the story, of course. The full blog posting, with pictures, is

available in the AW Accident Database. Go to the Safety section of the American Whitewater website, look up this year's accidents, and find the listing.

There was trouble in Northern West Virginia this fall when paddlers made several unsuccessful attempts on a steep tributary of Otter Creek. Local rescue squads were called out on two different occasions to locate missing party members. Even worse, one member of the group complained in a club chat room about the obesity and lack of fitness of their rescuers. Talk about ungrateful! Naturally this posting found its way back to the rescue squad. Let's be clear, folks. Paddlers should have the right to attempt any river or rapid that they think they can manage, but the corollary is that they need to take full responsibility for themselves and their group. If they ask for outside help, they should accept it gracefully without making snide remarks on a public forum.

This report, and others like it, depends on paddlers like you. We always need information on whitewater fatalities, near-misses, and rescues. I'd like to thank Slim Ray, Dane Patterson, Margaret Weise, Chris Aidnan and others who took the time to correspond with me. Several accident reports were found in SwiftH2O News, a Yahoo group. Others were in a newsletter published by the Paddlesport Industry

Association. Splashes, the newsletter of the West Virginia Wildwater Association, does an excellent job reporting accidents in the region. It's now easier than ever for you to contribute. Go to www.americanwhitewater.org, click "Safety," and bring up a report form. You can cut and paste newspaper stories and Internet postings or write your own account. The material you send in will be available on-line and gets forwarded to the AW Safety Committee for review. You may also correspond directly with the safety editor, Charlie Walbridge, at ccwalbridge@cs.com. 



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In 2006, Keen's contributions will aid American Whitewater's projects in the Southeast, and the Pacific Northwest. In the Southeast Keen's support will help American Whitewater's work restoring the Catawba watershed. Additional funding from Keen will support AW's projects on the Columbia River Basin and the Cascade range in the Pacific Northwest.

Class IV Sponsors



At Dagger we love what we do because it's all about the water, and American Whitewater is the organization that helps put water in our rivers. That is why Dagger has long supported American Whitewater and is proud to continue our support of their river stewardship program today.



Wave Sport is American Whitewater's longest standing and largest philanthropic supporter. Both Wave Sport and AW are committed to one thing, whitewater.



As part of Jackson Kayak's focus on environmental responsibility, the Jackson's have long supported AW through promotional efforts. In 2006, as part of their commitment to 1% For the Planet, Jackson Kayaks will be supporting AW's river stewardship work.

Class III Sponsor



Kokatat remains one of AW's strongest allies by continuing support of AW's membership and river stewardship programs. By providing American Whitewater with valuable membership and donation incentives, Kokatat will create the support we need to continue our stewardship of North American rivers.



Teva and American Whitewater have worked together for nearly a decade to protect access and conserve whitewater resources for paddlers and rafters nationwide. Teva and AW have partnered on numerous tours and events over the years, including AW's 50th Anniversary Gala in 2004.

Class II Sponsor



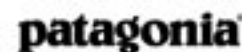
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Wave Sponsors



ASTRAL



Throughout the history of the natural world, water sources have been the centers of life, providing habitat and sustenance for animals and plants alike. Patagonia is proud to support groups like American Whitewater that work to reverse the destructive effects of damming, development and pollution.



Subaru always has been, and will continue to be, committed to safeguarding the natural environment that so many of its customers avidly enjoy. Subaru is proud to continue this tradition by supporting American Whitewater's largest event of the year the 2007 Gauley River Festival now presented by Subaru.



Founded in 1972 by Payson Kennedy, Aurelia Kennedy and Horace Holden, the Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) has grown from a roadside inn to the nation's most popular whitewater recreation destination. Our Paddling School, with its champion instructors like Wayne Dickert, Eli Helbert, Andrew Holcombe, Anna Levesque and Anne Sontheimer introduces more people to the sport than any other, and our Outfitter's Store on the bank of the Nantahala River has provided generations of paddlers with the best available equipment and advice. All year long, paddlers fresh off the Nantahala, the Cascades, or any of the area's plentiful whitewater can be found with a bowl of chili in River's End Restaurant, or enjoying a beer in our Paddler's Pub. NOC is a special place where paddlers and outdoor enthusiasts from all over the Southeast congregate to share their love for the outdoors and to begin new adventures.

It's also where our staff members, committed to active, outdoor lifestyles, have chosen to make their careers. Every NOC staff member works at NOC for the unique lifestyle and community it offers, a community that values outdoor recreation, responsible environmental stewardship and a commitment to personal and organizational excellence. To this day we're still an employee-owned organization dedicated to providing the highest quality products and programs in outdoor recreation and education. Sharing these primary values with our guests remains one of our highest priorities, and as a company we still invest 100% of our proceeds back into our community and programs.

Like AW, NOC is committed to promoting access to this country's whitewater



NOC's famous Outfitter's Store, left, and River's End Restaurant, right, stand along the banks of the Nantahala River in Wesser, North Carolina

Photo by Jennifer Petosa

resources. We enable people to safely enjoy whitewater rivers who would otherwise be unable to, we expose them to the beauty of river gorges, and we share with them the sublimity of riding rivers to new places. Surely some of our guests simply enjoy the rush of running the rapids, but most leave with an appreciation of the place they've been and a new understanding of how rivers—typically on the periphery of their day-to-day consciousness—have intrinsic worth as well as recreational value.

That's why in '08 NOC has stepped up its partnership with American Whitewater to the Class IV level. We've always been there to help AW: we sat side by side with AW at the Cheoah River relicensing meetings; we ran shuttles at the Tallulah River for AW (until the take-out road claimed too many of our transmissions); we offer AW members a 10% discount in our Outfitter's Store; we always welcome AW fundraisers at our events, and American

A NOC Paddling School clinic negotiates a small rapid on the Nantahala River. Through similar clinics NOC has introduced more people to whitewater paddling than any other school in the country

Photo by Pat McDonnell

Whitewater is consistently a favorite during our Annual Staff Charitable Contributions Day. We believe that our support helps American Whitewater be the best it can be, and we challenge others to join the fight in protecting America's Rivers and creating the next generation of whitewater stewards. **AW**



Join



AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!

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



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

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

be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

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

Join on-line today at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership>, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723



PO Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723
(866) BOAT-4-AW

Membership Application

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

Name _____
Address _____
City, St, Zip _____
Telephone () _____, AND e-mail _____
Club Affiliation _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- ☐ \$25.00 Junior (Under the age of 18)
☐ \$25.00 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (**SAVE \$10** if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club)
☐ \$35.00 Individual One Year
☐ \$50.00 Family (Immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18)
☐ \$65.00 (2) Year Membership
☐ \$75.00 Affiliate Club Membership
☐ \$100.00 Ender Club* (Receive AW's annual **Ender Club T-Shirt FREE**)
☐ \$250.00 Platinum Paddler* (Receive AW's **IR Platinum Paddler Polartec Basec T FREE**)
☐ \$500.00 Explorer Membership (Receive a Dry Bag from Watershed **FREE**)
☐ \$750.00 Lifetime Membership (Receive AW's Lifetime Membership NRS Paddlers Duffle **FREE**)
☐ \$1000.00 Legacy Membership* (Receive AW's exclusive **Kokatat Knappster Shorty Top FREE**)
☐ \$2500.00 Steward Membership (Thank you items will be arranged on an individual basis)

*Indicate Ender Club, Platinum Paddler or Legacy shirt size (S M L XL XXL). A portion of your contribution is tax deductible. If you would like information about the tax deductibility of your contribution, please speak with an AW Staff member.

ADDITIONAL DONATION and/or KAYAK SESSION SUBSCRIPTION

- ☐ \$5.00 ☐ \$10.00 ☐ \$25.00 ☐ Other \$ _____ ☐ \$ _____ monthly (via monthly c.c. or checking acct. withdrawal. Send voided check w/check option.)
☐ \$30.00 Kayak Session Subscription

AMOUNT

Membership subtotal \$ _____ ☐ I am interested in volunteering
Donation subtotal \$ _____ ☐ Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups
Kayak Session \$ _____ ☐ Do NOT mail me the AW journal, I will read it online.
TOTAL \$ _____ *Helps us conserve and, saves AW money too!*

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Affiliate Clubs

AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1957 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over 100 clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club consider joining one.

For the past five years Clif Bar has sponsored the Flowing Rivers grant, a joint initiative between Clif Bar and American Whitewater that puts money in the hands of people who are protecting the rivers that are running through their backyards. The 2007 funding supported initiatives from the Foothills Paddling Club (SC) and the Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club (OR). The Foothills Paddling Club is using their funding to enhance an access area and purchasing water quality equipment. The Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club is using their funding to organize a safety education weekend. To read more about the two projects see <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Article/view/articleid/29549/display/full/>.

AFFILIATE CLUBS, we want to know what you are doing. Send your events to us a ben@americanwhitewater.org and we will include them in the Journal.

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham
Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Country Paddlers, Windsor
Otter Bar Lodge Kayak School, Forks of Salmon
River Touring Section, Angeles Chapter
Sequoia Paddling Club, WindsorGold
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Ch., San Jose
Sierra Club SF Chapter, Livermore

Colorado

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder
Big Thompson Watershed Forum, Loveland
Colorado Whitewater Asso, Englewood
Front Range Paddle Asso, Lafayette
Grand Canyon Priv. Boat. Assn., Colorado Springs
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Association, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Assoc., Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Chicago

Indiana

Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville
Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kansas

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky

Bardstown Boaters, Frankfort
Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine

Outward Bound, Newry

Maryland

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

Massachusetts

Brian White, Boston
AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers, Honover

Minnesota

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Missouri

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

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Franconia
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Merrimack

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
Colgate University, Hamilton
FLOW Paddlers Club, Rochester
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk
KCCNY, New York

N. Carolina

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Davidson Outdoors, Davidson
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Indian Trail
Triad River Runners, Winston, Salem
Watauga Paddlers, Boone
Dixie Division ACA, Tuxedo
Western Carolina Paddlers

Ohio

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

Oregon

Face Level Industries LLC, Portland
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
North West Rafters Asso, Portland

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Easton Whitewater Parks Commission, Bethlehem
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
PA Organization for Watersheds & Rivers, Harrisburg
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Lehigh Valley White water Club, Lehigh Valley

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport
E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis
Tennessee Scenic River Assoc., Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

Utah

USU Kayak Club, Logan
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Essex Junction

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
FORVA, Roanoke
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Richmond

Washington

Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Venturing Crew 360, Snohomish
EPIC Outdoor Adventures, Cheney
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton
Whitman College Whiteater Club, Walla Walla

West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Association, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
NE Wisconsin Paddlers Inc. Appleton

Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Discounted AW Membership for Affiliate Club Members

By Carla Miner, Membership Manager

AW offers a discounted Affiliate Club membership of \$25, a \$10 savings. If you are renewing your AW membership or joining as a new member, select the Affiliate Club Discounted Personal Membership online at <https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Store/?crn=199>. Or, if you are renewing or joining by mail or telephone just mention the name of the Affiliate Club you belong to and you can take advantage of the \$25 membership.

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

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

Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

10 Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for the 2008 Clif Bar Flowing Rivers grant

For more information,
contact Carla Miner at
membership@americanwhitewater.org
or sign-up on-line at:
www.americanwhitewater.org/membership

Guidelines for Contributors



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).

If possible, articles should be submitted on a 3-1/2-inch computer disk. (Microsoft Word if possible – 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 or electronic, digital photos, 300 dpi tiffs, Photoshop or high res jpegs minimum 3"x5." 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. The better the photos the better the reproduction.

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water.

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 II, III & IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not our intent to 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, please don't send it in! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes made prior to publication.

American Whitewater is a 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.

Send your material to:

Journal Editor

P.O. Box 1540

Cullowhee, NC 28723

E-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org



PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723

www.americanwhitewater.org

Release for publication

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

- I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.
- I understand that I will not be paid for my work.
- I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation, or agency in this work.
- I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an American Whitewater publication
- I promise that this material has not been and will not soon be published by another magazine or publication and the rights to this material are clear and unrestricted.
- I understand that once this material is printed in American Whitewater it may be reprinted or reproduced in other publications if I wish, providing I notify them that it has already appeared in American Whitewater.
- I understand that the contents of American Whitewater Magazine, including my contribution will be archived on the American Whitewater website.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

This release must be signed by the contributing author(s), photographers(s), and graphic artist(s).


Send your material to:

American Whitewater Journal PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723 or via email to editor@amwhitewater.org

A man with a backpack is hiking through a forest, carrying a blue kayak over his shoulder and a large red and yellow Werner paddle. The scene is backlit by sunlight filtering through the trees.

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A close-up shot of a red Werner paddle, showing the brand name and logo on the blade.

The Powerhouse - Premium Whitewater

Toby MacDermott (aka "Budget") hikes to harvest the goods of the Raven's Fork River in Tennessee.

photo by Raphael Thiebaut

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