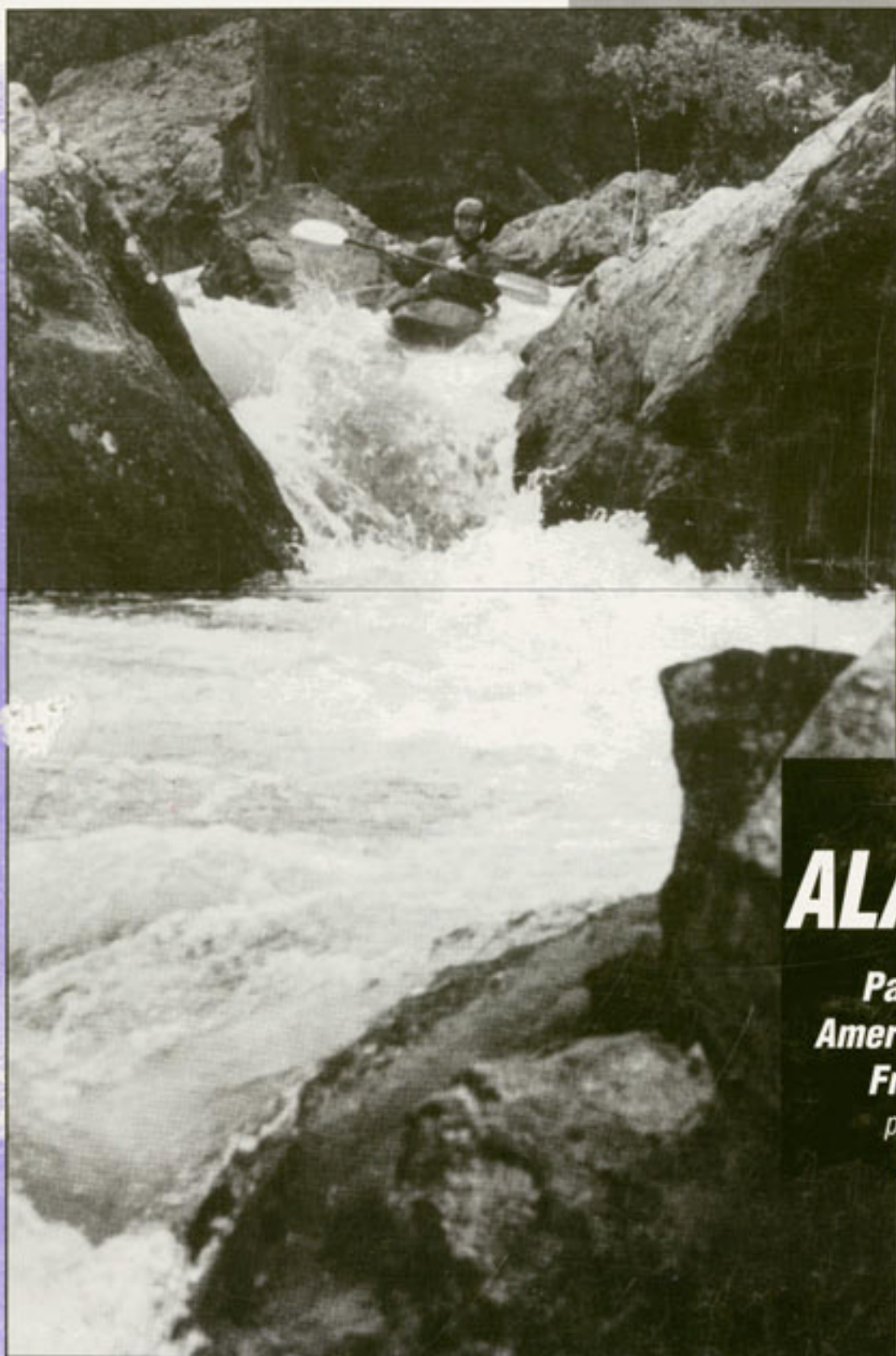


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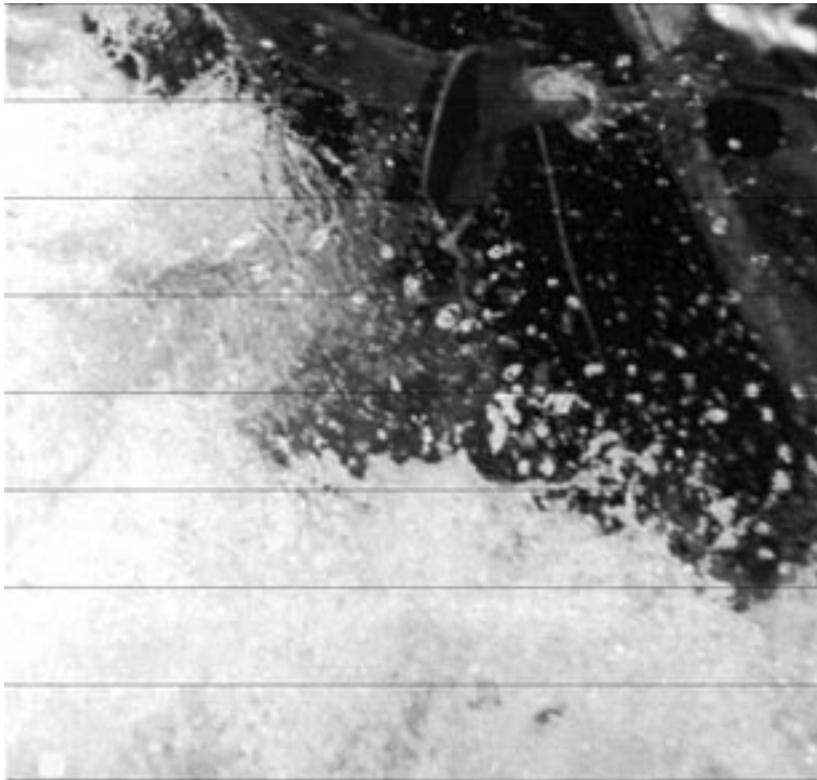
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Journal of the American Whitewater Affiliation

C O N T E N T S

Volume XXXVIII, No. 3

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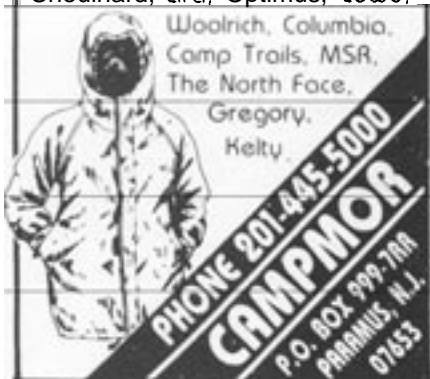
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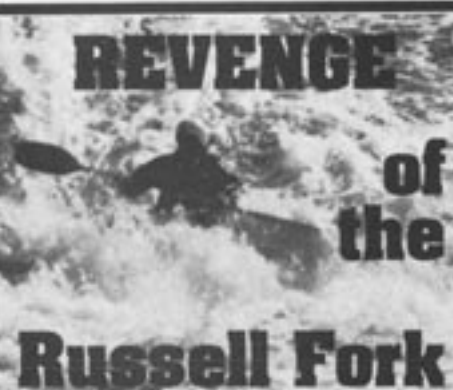
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FORUM

Up On The Roof

I don't know about you, but when I'm on the road and I spot another vehicle with a canoe or kayak on the roof, I always honk and wave. Sometimes this makes me feel a bit adolescent, but I rationalize my behavior with the argument that, since I've been boating a long time and since the number of whitewater enthusiasts around home is relatively small, odds are I know some of those folks in that car or truck.

Of course, it is hard to use that justification when I'm boating out west or down south. But what the hell, I honk just the same. And, most of the time, the occupants of the other vehicle honk and wave right back. But my interest in the other boaters I spot on the highway goes beyond that. Sometimes I flag them down to see if they want to set shuttle. Or I pump them for information about local boating conditions.

And anytime I see a vehicle hauling boats pulled over onto the berm of the road, I stop to see if help is needed. On a few occasions I have been on the receiving end of such assistance, offered by other boaters.

Driving with a boat on the roof identifies one as a member of a special brother/sisterhood. One that entails not only benefits, but obligations. A canoe or a kayak is a very visible badge of membership. And how you behave in and around your boat bedecked vehicle ultimately reflects directly on the entire boating community.

That means that you probably shouldn't pass that lollygagging old granny on the double yellow line. Or flip the bird to that old pappy who pulled out in front of you, driving at a snail's pace.

It means you shouldn't speed through residential areas full of small children.



And, it goes without saying, that you shouldn't toss trash out the window. Or change your clothes in someone's backyard or park inconsiderately on private property at a put-in or take-out.

Winding the windows down and blaring raucous rap or rock or country or new age or classical music is another form of unacceptable behavior. These days everyone has a radio or tape deck; if they wanted to listen to Ice T or Sonic Youth or the Dead or even John Denver, God forbid, they could. Most folks just don't want or need other drivers to entertain them.

Of course, there are a hundred different forms of inappropriate behavior that reflect poorly on the boating community. Over the years I've witnessed my share. One eccentric kayaker of my acquaintance used to proposition young women as he drove through the small Appalachian towns near our favorite rivers. Actually I use the word "women" loosely, since he

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considered any girl over the age of ten to be fair game. Needless to say this did not endear him, or boaters in general, to the local citizenry.

Ironically, the support of those very citizens is now being courted by the West Virginia Rivers Coalition in their efforts to have several local rivers designated Wild and Scenic. I hope those girl's parents are either very forgiving, or very forgetful.

In this era of river access **problems** and misguided river development, we need **all** the allies we can get. That's why how we represent ourselves... how we look... to the rest of the world is so important.



Speaking of how we look, you may have noticed some changes in the layout of American Whitewater. Credit those changes to our new Graphic Designer, John K. Victor, a paddler from Ohio.

John is a professional and he is making our publication look better than ever. The challenge for the rest of us is to make sure that the editorial content of the magazine merits this royal treatment.

Meanwhile, Chris Koll is taking a well-deserved, temporary (we hope!) break from his editorial duties. Chris singlehandedly produced American Whitewater for many years and it is very much his child. Everyone who enjoys American Whitewater owes Chris a pat on the **back** for a difficult, time consuming and thankless job that was always well done.

Bob Gedekoh



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PURPOSE.....

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of approximately 3000 whitewater boating enthusiasts and 100 local paddling club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

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

CONSERVATION: AWA maintains and publishes a national inventory of whitewater rivers, **NATIONWIDE WHITEWATER INVENTORY**, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through both its River Watch and Regional Coordinator systems, publishes

information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers and provides technical advice and other support to local groups regarding river management and conservation. AWA also takes an aggressive stand on whitewater access issues pursuant to the organization's official guidelines published in **PUBLIC ACCESS TO RIVERS AND STREAMS FOR RECREATIONAL BOATING**.

EVENTS: AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation. Since 1986, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual Gauley River Festival in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation. Each spring AWA also hosts the Ocoee Rodeo in Tennessee and has become increasingly involved in simplifying organizational aspects of rodeos across the country through its development of the National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos.

SAFETY: AWA promotes paddling safety, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, maintains a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers, THE

INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF WHITEWATER DIFFICULTY, and publishes the internationally recognized **AWA SAFETY CODE**.

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

PROFESSIONAL STAFF: Except for membership services, the Executive Director and Conservation Director positions, part-time bookkeeper and professional graphics consultant for the journal, all AWA operations, including editing of its bi-monthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.

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LETTERS.....

SORRY CHARLIE!

Dear Editor:

We are responding to Charlie Walbridge's letter to the editor in the Jan/Feb issue. Like Mr. Walbridge, we have been paddling for many years, both as guides and as private boaters. We remember how it was in Ohiopyle before the state park, and we know how it is now. So we agree with Mr. Walbridge that the Yough is crowded. But that's about our only point of agreement.

First, let's set the facts straight about the fee. Contrary to the amounts stated in Mr. Walbridge's letter, the actual fee is \$4 per private boater per trip (\$2.50 user fee; \$1.50 shuttle fee). His letter goes on to make two arguments in favor of paying the fee—it's cheap ("less than the price of a coke and a candy bar," as he puts it), and it's our fair share,

i.e. the price we have to pay for access and facilities as rivers become more crowded.

We take issue with both assumptions. Contrary to Mr. Walbridge's experience, not all of us drive to Ohiopyle in "nice cars" or own "\$1500 in paddling gear" and "the latest in camping equipment". We sure didn't when we started out. As a matter of fact, we know a lot of paddlers who drive second hand cars, own second hand equipment, and sometimes decide not to eat out because their budget is too tight. Unemployment is high in Western Pennsylvania, Mr. Walbridge, and you'll find that paddlers live at both ends of the economic spectrum.

But, maybe \$4 isn't much to you, and it isn't much to us. We can afford to pay the fee, and it wouldn't keep us from paying to paddle the Yough. But our principles will. That's

because there's a lot more to this issue than the amount you consider "trivial".

For example, we don't believe it's our "fair share" to pay for the day use facilities that other people use for free.

You claim in your letter that boaters are being provided with "worthwhile services" like changing rooms, toilets and parking. Did you know that every other park visitor uses the exact same facilities for free? Hundreds of thousands of bicyclists, picnickers and fisherman park in the same parking lots, use the same restrooms, and hike the same trails as we do. We pay; they don't. That leaves only the quota system, which we'll get into in a minute.

So where does all this money go? Is it earmarked for boating safety of for boaters' facilities or even for Ohiopyle State Park? Not a chance. Some of the money may end up being used in Ohiopyle, but a lot of it won't. It goes into a general maintenance fund for all Pennsylvania state parks. So it might be used to repair picnic tables as a park you've never even heard of and will never visit in your lifetime. The people who eat on those tables are using them for free; private boaters are paying to fix them. But that's our "fair share", right? We don't think so.

But let's get back to the Ohiopyle quota system—which is the real heart of the problem. On the surface, it seems more than fair. Fifty percent of the river's use is supposed to be reserved for private boaters; 50 percent for



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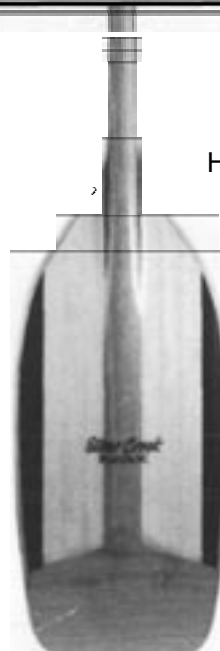
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commercial companies. Only those aren't the real numbers. Forty percent of the so-called "private boaters" are actually rafting customers who are renting their equipment from the commercial companies. That makes the actual percentage on the Yough more like 90 percent commercial and ten percent private. But we're the ones who should pay for the crowded conditions. Yeah, that seems fair. And did you know that you'll pay that fee even on weekdays and holidays, when the river is nearly empty. It doesn't matter whether there are three boaters or three hundred—you'll still have to pay.

OK, we're all grown-ups here. We understand that Ohiopyle is big business, and we're not going to change that fact. We sincerely want to find a reasonable way to co-exist with the commercial compa-

nies and to accommodate all the boaters who want to paddle the Yough. So it may surprise Mr. Walbridge to learn that we would gladly pay the fee—

- if it were strictly a reservation fee
- if walk-ons (people who ~~didn't~~ make a reservation) didn't have to pay it
- if it strictly covered the cost of administering the reservation system.

None of this is true now. And, just in case you are wondering, the park administration and the Department of Environmental Resources have shown little interest in addressing our concerns. Private boaters had no effective input before the fee was put into place, and they have none now. The fee's in, its time to pay up and shut up. In fact, the response we've gotten so far has been an open threat to reduce the number of private

boater slots on the river in retaliation for the boycott. Oh, and if you don't follow park "rules" to the letter, maybe you'll just happen to get fined or arrested. Because they can, you know.

That's the situation at Ohiopyle, Mr. Walbridge. And that's why you'll see reasoning, reasonable adults carrying signs in Ohiopyle and boycotting the river until the toll booth closes at 3 p.m. We'd much rather paddle than picket. But we do it because we believe that you've got to stand up for what you believe is right—as private boaters and private citizens. It's a matter of principle.

Sincerely,
Debbie Patz, President,
 Keystone River Runners
Phil Patz, Keystone
 River Runners
Tom Irwin, Parks
 Committee Chairman, Three
 Rivers Paddling Club

Editor's note:

I have known Charlie Walbridge for a long time and hold him in high regard. No one has done more to promote whitewater safety than Charlie. He graciously spends a great deal of his time working on AWA and ACA projects and we all owe him a debt of gratitude.

I value Charlie's opinion, but, this time, I'm afraid I have to side with "the rebels!"

You see, I recently had the "privilege" of making out a rather sizable check to the Treasurer of Pennsylvania to cover my state income tax for 1992. So, when I am confronted by state park rangers demanding that I pay a fee to paddle the Yough, I don't consider it trivial... I consider it insulting. Unlike some residents of Pennsylvania, I do not receive a welfare check, subsidized day care or free health care. Actually, I don't get a hell of a lot for my state tax dollar. In fact, using the facilities at Ohiopyle is one of the only tangible services that the state provides to me. So why am I being asked to pay for it twice?

On a number of occasions I have heard park rangers talk about how they intend to manage "their park"! That really irks me... as a taxpayer I thought the park belonged to me... and that as public servants, the rangers worked for me.

Most of the paddlers picketing at Ohiopyle are law abiding taxpayers who are concerned with the environment in general and the river in particular. It seems to me that when so many citizens are so unhappy, it would behoove the park management and state authorities to ask themselves some serious questions about what is wrong at Ohiopyle. Then they should take steps to correct the situation.

Maybe it is time for the citizens of Pennsylvania to picket and protest. Maybe it is time for them to take back their park.

Bob Gedekoh



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LETTERS

S. Fork of American Permit System Californians Take Note!!!!

Dear Editor:

In June of 1992, the County Board of Supervisors directed Parks and Recreation Division Staff to work with the River Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) on the development of a private boater identification system for the South Fork of the American River.

On February 24, 1993, RMAC recommended that a private boater permit system be initiated. The permit system proposal was reached through consensus among RMAC members. Within the

County's committee structure, RMAC advises the Parks and Recreation Commission; the Commission advises the Board of Supervisors.

Since 1987, Parks and Recreation Division staff and RMAC have considered the implementation of a fee permit system for private boaters. Fee permits are viewed favorably for several reasons:

1. Private boaters **will** pay their fair share for County services and improvements to boater facilities. Outfitters' fees are now the sole source of revenue for the County's river program.

2. Registering for a permit will reduce boaters' anonymity and the permit holder will be accountable for the behavior of the people on the trip. Accountability is an important consideration to property own-

ers along the river. This issue is of primary concern to RMAC members.

3. Efforts need to be made to dissuade illegal, or "pirate" outfitting on the South Fork. Through the 1980s, the average number of private boaters on the South Fork during the summer season was around 22,000 per year. The last three years, the number has swelled. In 1992, a conservative estimate of 37,000 private boaters went down the South Fork from May through September.

Granted, there are myriad factors contributing to this increase. But it has become apparent there is a significant number of "private" trips on the river that are not cost-sharing, non commercial trips. Staff believes that a permit on which the permittee signs a statement that the trip is non-commercial will be the least intrusive way to get the message across. Pirate trips should not be tolerated because they contribute to congestion, hurting everyone's river experience. They compete unfairly and illegally with legitimate outfitters.

4. The educational/informational opportunities afforded by a permit will result in improved boater experience levels and help to lessen rafting's impacts on the river corridor.

The County's present approach, adopted in a 1984 ordinance, requires boaters to display a registration tag. The tag program was also conceived to inform and educate, but has produced uneven results on the four issues above.

The accompanying staff report outlines the progress of RMAC and staff on the Board's directive. The present proposal is similar to the types of permits on federally managed rivers: a registration form will be completed and a tag displayed on the boat. Please notice that in the first year, there will be no fees associated with the permit. Staff will evaluate the costs and results of the system before recommending any changes for the 1994 season.

Your comments on the pro-

posal or participation in public meetings would be greatly appreciated.

The Parks and Recreation Commission, in a public meeting March 17, will decide whether to forward RMAC's recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. If the Commission recommends approval of the permit system, a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors will be scheduled (probably in mid-April). There **will** also be a representative from the Parks and Recreation Division obtaining comments as the Friends of the River Conference in Oakland on March 27-28.

You may contact me at the address/ fax above or at (916) 621-5349.

Sincerely,
Jeff Novak
River Recreation Supervisor
County of El Dorado
2441 Headington Rd
Maintenance Division
Placerville, CA 95667
FAX 626-0387

Editors note: I live and boat in the Appalachians so this doesn't mean a lot to me. But it does sound a bit ominous... reminiscent of our situation on the Lower Youghiogheny. Those of you who paddle the South Fork of the American would do well to take note and make your feelings known. The fact that we received this letter seems encouraging.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The photos of Billy Bob Taylor and Andy Bridge running the Great Falls of the Potomac in our January/ February issue were taken by Emmy Good. We are sorry that the photo credits were accidentally omitted.



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INSIDE THE BELTWAY

by Ed E. Lyne

An eight-lane interstate highway (known as the "beltway") encircles Washington, D.C.* like an poisonous snake protecting the capitol from reality outside. Inside this terrifying inferno, while the rest of the nation looks on in horror, the clashing gears of government slowly grind away.

The world inside the beltway is a cacophonous Tower of Babel — inhabited by politicians, bureaucrats, T.V. news casters, lobbyists, lawyers, government contractors, drug addicts, and special interest groups.

Undeterred by this horrific scene, and ever alert to anything and everything affecting whitewater, AWA keeps a close watch on events of interest to whitewater boaters.

The following is part of a continuing series of reports from inside the beltway.

* Stands for Darkness and Confusion.

Editor's Note: Unless otherwise stated, the views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the policies or views of the AWA.



BIG SHIFT IN FOCUS FOR RIVER CONSERVATIONISTS

No longer is Congress the only circus in town for river conservationists. Al Gore, Bruce Babbitt, and underlings too numerous to name, including some not yet appointed, are waving the green flag from windows in office buildings in the executive branch for the first time in 12 years.

People have been recruited for jobs in the new administration from almost every environmental organization now operating inside the beltway. The Sierra Club, National Audubon Society and other groups have gleefully accepted the resignation of their best and brightest, departing for jobs in the new administration. Even American Rivers lost a key employee, Chuck Fox, who became a special assistant to the new pro-environment EPA Administrator.

It is too early to tell what all this will mean if anything for river conservation. Several trends, however, have already become clear.

The Clinton administration continues to focus on the economy, jobs, and the national debt. This means several things.

First of all, it will mean more and higher fees for all forms of public land

use. The President's February 17 "Vision" document made this obvious when it proposed higher grazing fees, a royalty on hard rock mining, and the elimination of below cost timber sales. That document proposed to raise \$265,000,000 over 4 years through user fees, recreation fees, and entrance fees on federal lands. The increases would be from \$1 to \$3 with the revenues being plowed back into recreational programs.

Like other recreationists who use Federal lands, boaters may also have to pay more to get into national park and national forest areas, as well as Army Corps of Engineers campsites.

There is plenty of good news as well, however.

The President's energy tax proposal hit hydroelectric power generation although "clean" and "renewable" energy sources, such as wind and solar, did escape the tax. This prompted the National Hydropower Association to label the tax "discriminatory".

AWA's Washington staff, Rich Bowers, blasted the Hydropower Association's opposition to Clinton's energy tax. Bowers asked Congressional tax writing committees to keep

CONSERVE

Clinton's hydro tax in place. Interested readers can get a copy of his letter by calling Rich at 202-547-6900.

In another new development, some of the most pro-hydro appointees at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) have resigned. This includes Charles Trabant, known for his slash and burn attacks on river recreation interests. There is even a small — but real — possibility that FERC may get a "green" commissioner for the first time in history.

A lobbying campaign was waged by AWA, the National Wildlife Federation, and others to encourage President Clinton to appoint someone with knowledge of river resources to FERC. This could counterbalance the agency's historic pro-development bias. The appointment of even one commissioner with a minimum level of environmental awareness would be a big step for FERC — and it could dramatically affect the relicensing of

more than 200 hydro dams now in progress at the agency.

The groups are also asking Clinton to reform the way the agency is managed. [See the article elsewhere in this issue by Rich Bowers]

The Office of Hydropower at the Energy Department is also under fire from river advocates. AWA is asking that it be completely dismantled. The office has served as little more than a mouthpiece for the hydropower industry, costing the taxpayers more than a \$1,000,000 a year.

One novelty for river conservationists is the discovery that it may no longer be necessary to lobby congress to get river protection projects moving in the Federal government. Now, Gore or Babbitt or someone else high up in the new administration can, with a stroke of the pen, repeal a 12-year old encrustation of anti-environmental rules and regulations, replacing them with something more up-to-date and

environmentally aware !! This could make life inside the beltway, a lot easier for river advocacy groups.

Another plus for river advocates could be the Administration's new "infrastructure" and jobs initiatives, as well as Clinton's short term "stimulus" package.

There is \$1.7 billion in the stimulus package, some of which is supposed to be for environmental public works. Signals from the new administration suggest that environmental restoration projects — including river restoration — may come in for some significant new money, especially if the projects are job intensive.

The Army Corps of Engineers is already hard at work putting the Kissimmee River back in its original meandering course, ripping out all the dikes and levees they constructed several decades ago. Could this be the wave of the future ?? ■



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ANOTHER TRY FOR THE NORTH FORK OF THE PAYETTE

Congressman **Larry LaRocco** has introduced a new version of his bill to include Idaho's famous whitewater attraction, the North Fork of the Payette, in the national wild and scenic rivers system.

A similar effort last year came close, but got tangled up in a fight over the Lower Main Salmon which was included in the same bill causing local political problems.

The new bill H.R.233 covers only the North Fork of the Payette 25-miles downstream of Cabarton Bridge and upstream of Banks.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Write Chairman **Bruce Vento**, Subcommittee on National Park and Public Lands, Committee on Natural Resources, US House of Representatives, 812 House Annex 1, US Capitol Washington, DC 20515. Ask him to move the bill through his committee this year.

RED RIVER BILL

The State of Kentucky has 510.3 miles of good whitewater, according to the AWA Nationwide Whitewater Inventory, but not one river mile in Kentucky has been protected under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. (The Big South Fork of the Cumberland is included in the National Park System, but not protected from FERC dams.)

Senator **McConnell** proposes to change this embarrassing situation by designating 194 miles of the Red River downstream of highway 746 a Federal Wild and Scenic river. This section contains class II-III whitewater.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Write Senator **Dale Bumpers**, Subcommittee on Public Land, National Parks and Forests, 308 Dirksen, US Capitol, Washington DC. Ask him to move the **McConnell bill**, S. 250 through his committee.

RIO GRANDE RIVER BILL INTRODUCED

Another wild and scenic rivers bill affecting whitewater has also been introduced in the US Senate. A bill was introduced by Senator **Bingaman** in February to add an additional 12-mile segment of the main stem of the Rio Grande in New Mexico immediately downstream of the segment already included in the system.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Write Senator **Dale Bumpers** at the address above. Ask him to move the **Bingaman bill**, S. 375 through his committee.

STATE OF THE NATION'S RIVERS

Proposals now being developed by key river conservation groups could radically change the direction of future river protection efforts. Some cutting-edge environmental advocates, led by the upstart Oregon-based Pacific Rivers Council, are beginning to address river conservation issues from a more scientific point of view. As with so many other environmental issues, the key idea is "biodiversity".

The new initiatives are being developed in response to a recent avalanche of troubling scientific revelations. According to fisheries biologists, fresh water ecologists, zoologists and other scientists, the nation's fresh water rivers and streams, and the aquatic species which inhabit them, are in surprisingly desperate shape. [See the article elsewhere in this issue, "Scientists Sound Alarm for River Ecology"]

River advocates are reacting to the heightened level of scientific concern for riverine biodiversity in two ways: first by trying to ascertain the scope of the problem and second, by developing new strategies to address river conservation from an ecological point of view.

Two proposals are now under development. One, based on a bill (H.R. 5001) introduced in the House of Representatives last session, is now being retooled by the Pacific Rivers Council and several other national river conservation groups including AWA. This is the "State of the Nations Rivers" proposal. At this point it is not clear whether legislation will be needed or whether the proposal can be carried out administratively. The idea is to require the Federal government to prepare, every 5 years, a State of the Nations Rivers Report evaluating the existing status and historic trends in river resources.

Other legislation will be following on the heels of the State of the Nations Rivers proposal. One bill is designed to encourage efforts, at all levels of government, and by private landowners, which contribute to restoring ecological health to degraded rivers. The strategy goes far beyond merely addressing surface runoff of water pollutants or wild and scenic values in specific short river segments. The idea is to assist project which recognize the biological interrelationships between the river, the riparian zone, the flood plain, the hyporheic zone (the water underneath a river), and, in fact, the entire watershed.

Again, the Pacific Rivers Council is spearheading development of this legislation. The bill draws on exhaustive research and analysis prepared by the Council and published in March of this year in a report entitled "Entering the Watershed". The report and a draft of their bill is available from the Council's offices in Eugene, Oregon. PO. Box 309; zip 97440.

STATE PROTECTED RIVERS

Federal court decisions continue to reduce the authority of State agencies to protect State water rights and instream flows from damage associated with Federal hydroelectric projects.

The ruling in the notorious 1990 Supreme Court case (California v FERC) has now been expanded by a new California case involving the South Fork of the American River. The court held that the Sales Flat Hydro project on that river does not even have to submit to the State water permit process.

After failing to reverse California v FERC in last year's National Energy Act, river advocates are working on a new strategy, exemplified by the bill recently introduced by Senator **Jeffords** of Vermont. This bill amends the Clean Water Act to permit States to impose conditions on dams to protect natural and recreational resources important to the State.

FERC RECEIVES WASHINGTON RESOURCE PROTECTION PLAN

FERC has received a plan from Washington State to protect more than 23,000 river miles from new hydro development and to require mitigation for another 43,712 river miles. FERC is required to take State plans of this kind into consideration in issuing new hydro licenses. The rivers were classified on the basis of several types of natural resources which could be adversely affected by hydro development, including recreation resources. Unfortunately, many new projects already proposed (as many as 72 sites) will not be affected by the State plan.

Canadian Receives Perception's River Conservation Award

Canadian Ric Careless has been named the twelfth recipient of the Perception, Inc. River Conservationist of the Year Award. The award is given annually to support individual initiative in the fight to preserve free flowing rivers according to Bill Masters, Perception C.E.O.

For the past three years Careless has been instrumental in the delay of the copper mine construction that would devastate the Tatshenshini River in British Columbia. Careless has formed Tatshenshini International, a consortium of 35 conservation organizations from the United States and Canada to prevent the destruction of the river. More than seven million concerned people belong to the thirty-five organizations that oppose the project.

"Virtually every conservation group in the hemisphere has been organized to fight the proposed copper mine and to save the Tat. That is no mean feat," said Timothy E. Wirth, United States Senator from Colorado.

"Ric Careless... put together the elements of a national and international coalition to oppose this travesty of a mine," remarked Brock Evans, Vice President of National Issues for the National Audubon Society. "In 1991, Ric actually got all of us together in one place to formalize the great structure that he had already built - an international assemblage known as Tatshenshini International. It is the very first North American organization which operates and functions as such."

"The Tatshenshini would not now be posed for preservation were it not for Ric. In fact, there would likely already be roads in the incredible wilderness valley," according to Johnny Mikes of Canadian River Expeditions, Ltd. "His energy, intensity and determination have virtually single-handedly carried the campaign."

"His work to bring out the facts about the dangers of the proposed mine, especially the potential acid drainage and the devastating effects the acid would have on Glacier National Park in the U.S. and on the Alaskan salmon fishing industry has galvanized the support of the entire conservation community," remarked Paul George, founder of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

The presentation of the Perception Award, which includes a check for \$1000 as well as a plaque, was made at the Tatshenshini International Board of Directors meeting in Gabriola Island, British Columbia, by his primary nominator, Sally Ramney, president of American Wildlands.



"Ric Careless is the leader and coordinator, the mastermind and the guiding spirit of this campaign. There is no one more deserving of recognition for brilliant campaign management, dedication... all he has sacrificed and all that he has gained for the Tatshenshini River," she said.

Past recipients of the Perception Award include:

1991 Scootch Pankonin, Washington, D.C. Representative for America Outdoors and a prime mover in virtually all major conservation efforts. Volunteers as Vice Chair of American Rivers Board of Directors.

1990 Wendy Wilson, Idaho. Fought for passage of Idaho's State Protected Rivers Program, gaining protection for 873 river miles on the Forks of the Boise, the Priest, the Payette and the Middle Snake.

1989 Pete Skinner, New York. Member of AWA's Board of Directors. Lauded for his grassroots work and for encouraging citizen involvement in the licensing and relicensing of hydro dams.

1988 Mark Dubois, California. Instrumental in fight to save the Stanislaus. In 1986 he founded the International Rivers Network, which fights to save rivers around the world, particularly in Third World Countries.

1987 Pope Barrow, Maryland. Member of AWA Board of Directors. Originator of the River Watch System, an early warning system to publicize controversial new hydro projects. Prime mover and shaker in all

of AWA's conservation efforts and in the recent development of the river access policy statement.

1986 Frank Fly, Tennessee. Fought to stop the Columbia Dam on the Duck River, Tennessee's longest free flowing river. Fought to develop a plan that would protect the river indefinitely.

1985 Nick Adams, Maine. Formed the Penobscot Coalition to save the West Branch of the Penobscot River. Unified fisherman, boaters and other outdoor interest groups in this battle.

1984 Dr. Gerald Meral, California. Dual efforts to save the Tuolumne from damming and to defeat California Governor Deukmejian's massive water development plan.

1983 Steve Taylor, Washington D.C. Tireless efforts to save the Gauley River in West Virginia from a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers hydroelectric project.

1982 Tom Easley, Colorado. Helped form the Northwest River Alliance, which fought to obtain Wild and Scenic Status for the rivers of Colorado.

1981 David Brown, West Virginia. Provided full-time leadership in struggles to save the Gauley in West Virginia and the Ocoee in Tennessee..



Idaho Rivers United Recruiting River Monitors

Volunteers Needed to Achieve Wild and Scenic Status

Idaho Rivers United (IRU) is recruiting volunteers for a new river monitoring and protection program, the River Advocate Team (RAT). River Advocate Team Volunteers will adopt a river that is under study for inclusion in the federal Wild and Scenic River system and work with Idaho Rivers United staff to support the process.

Clearwater and Nez Perce Forest officials have announced that Wild and Scenic suitability studies will be conducted on nineteen rivers in the two forests over the next two years. Suitability studies are the second of the two part Wild and Scenic river evaluation process established by the Forest Service.

The first part, determination of the Wild and Scenic eligibility of a river, was conducted during preparation of the forest management plan. To be eligible, a river must be free-flowing and possess one or more outstanding values... ie. scenic or recreational.

The suitability determination is more subjective and is heavily influenced by public opinion. Topics considered in the suitability study include:

The uses of the land that would be enhanced, foreclosed or curtailed if the river is designated Wild and Scenic.

The river values that would be lost if the river is not protected.

Public, state and local government interest in protection.

Current land ownership.

When the Forest Service deems a river suitable for designation, the Secretary of Agriculture may forward the recommendation to the President, who may forward it to Congress for a vote. If a river is found unsuitable, interim protection is lifted.

The Idaho suitability studies will be staggered over the next two years. Forest Service official Dennis Griffith will act as coordinator. Rivers lying totally within public lands will be studied first, followed by rivers with mixed land ownership. The first studies, to be completed by April, 1994, will probably be on the watershed of the North Fork of the Clearwater, White Sand Creek and the headwaters of the Selway.

The Forest Service plans to eventually evaluate every river in Idaho that lies within their domain. RAT volunteers will be responsible for gathering basic information about their river, establishing contact with the federal management agency, and helping the Idaho Rivers United staff monitor the study process. IRU will provide all of the volunteers with a handbook. RAT volunteers may work alone, or may choose to work in teams on a particular river.

"The River Advocate Team is a simple way to get involved in protecting a river that is near and dear to you. If you live near a river or visit a river regularly, you're the expert on that river," said Liz Paul of Idaho Rivers United. "The RAT volunteers will serve as liaisons between the agencies and IRU."

For additional information about the RAT program call IRU at (208) 343-7481 or (800) 574-7481. The address is: p.o. Box 633, Boise, Idaho 83701. IRU is a statewide, non-profit river conservation organization with 800 members. ■

Rivers to be Studied in the Nez Perce Forest

Bargarmin Creek

Bear Creek Drainage (Brushy Fork, Cub, Paradise, Wahoo)

W.F. Gedney Creek

Johns Creek

Lake Creek

Meadow Creek

Moose Creek (East, West and North Forks and Rhoda Creek)

Running Creek

Slate Creek

Three Links Creek

White Bird Creek

South Fork Clearwater

Rivers to be Studied in Clearwater Forest

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ADDITIONAL REGULATION THREATENS ACCESS TO WESTWATER CANYON

Ric Alesch

New regulations for Westwater Canyon in eastern Utah are making it harder to get on the popular Colorado River run, and a proposed regulation for next year threatens to ruin an annual fall pilgrimage for many western boaters. Westwater is a popular class III-IV river trip in Utah about 30 miles west of Grand Junction, Colorado. It offers beautiful canyon scenery and is especially popular in the late season when other streams have dried up. Westwater is one of the few desert canyon whitewater trips that can be made in one day, although many parties make it an overnighter, which increases its appeal as a weekend float.

River use in Westwater Canyon is controlled by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and access to the canyon has gotten more and more difficult for private boaters in the last 15 years. In recent years BLM has also increased equipment requirements. In the last two years they added three stipulations that most private boaters considered excessive and, in the case of two of the three, many termed ridiculous. Specifically, kayak parties were required to carry one extra paddle and life jacket per every three boats. Kayak parties were also required to have a human solid waste carry-out system.

Most paddlers do not ob-

ject to reasonable stipulations needed to protect canyon resources and control user numbers, as long as they are kept to an essential minimum and treat private boaters fairly. Most private boaters also support efforts to increase whitewater safety, but generally believe that education, not regulation, is the answer. Carrying a spare paddle is always a good idea, especially for remote areas. But requiring one for every 3 boats in Westwater Canyon would seem excessive.

Private boaters have suggested that each group should assess their skills and determine the right number of spare paddles to bring. The logic behind requiring extra life jackets for kayak trips also has been called into question. In over thirteen years of day trips in Westwater and elsewhere this author has never known of anyone losing his or her life jacket. (Note: this requirement

was dropped last year due to protests from many boaters.)

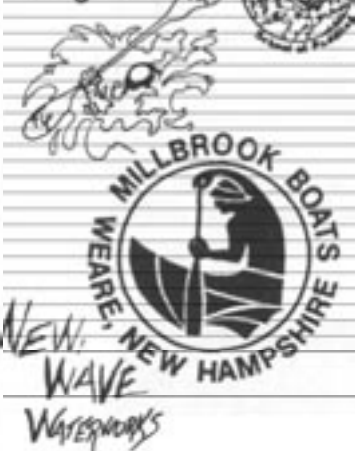
Requiring a human waste carry out system for kayak day trips has also raised the hackles of private boaters. They argue that with the facilities at the put in and takeout, pit stops to leave solid waste along the river are relatively rare. Even when private boaters are required to carry a plastic pickle jar or some other container, most would probably not use it.

The BLM recently issued its 1993 Moab District permit information and they are once again tightening the regulations for access to Westwater Canyon (and the San Juan River and Desolation Canyon on the Green River), without public input. BLM is extending the permit season to include April and October. For 1993, the October extension in Westwater only applies to overnight trips; however, BLM

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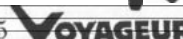
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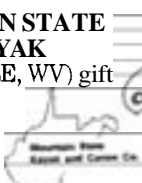
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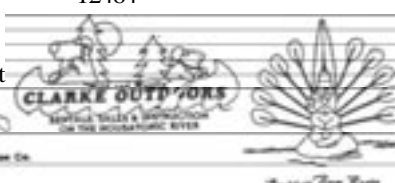
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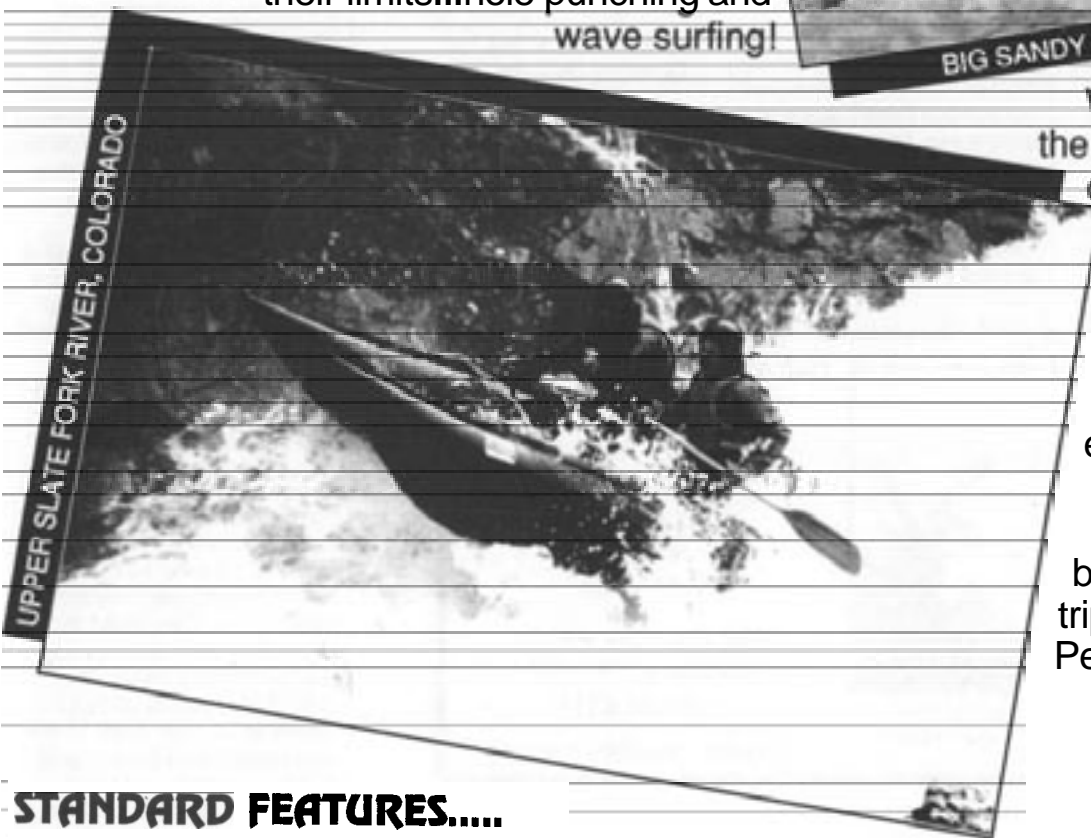
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ASK FOR TONY

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is considering also limiting day use during October in 1994.

During the last 15 years Westwater Canyon has become a mecca for whitewater paddlers in early October who either failed to get summer permits, or who, for one reason or another, did not try. Last year over 700 people launched the first Saturday in October. Late season flows are ideal for **kayaking**, offering many popular play spots. **Rafting** is still good, and the weather is often quite nice.

October weather in Utah can be iffy though, and in November average temperatures drop significantly. Snow is a real possibility, and daylight hours decrease rapidly. Extending the permit season to November would discourage most boaters from coming to Westwater after permit season.

Some private boaters believe that this may be exactly what BLM wants; it would likely eliminate what Paddler Magazine recently referred to as the annual Westwater "hydraulic convergence."

One of the reasons for the pent up demand for access to Westwater is the increasing difficulty that noncommercial boaters have had using the river in recent years. The many changes that have been made in procedures for permit applications, fees, and equipment requirements, all came without public input. Several years ago BLM quit allowing kayakers to use unfilled permit space at the launch site. Noncommercial demand has grown more dramatically than commercial demand, but BLM has not adjusted the user day allocation to reflect the greater noncom-

mercial interest levels. This is a common problem on western rivers that are managed under a split allocation system.


In addition to all these changes made without benefit of public input, to this author's knowledge Westwater is the only major federally-managed permit river that lacks a comprehensive river management plan. BLM's allusion to axing the October free day use season in the 1993 permit application literature appears to be an attempt to "test the waters" for public reaction.

Representatives of the AWA are urging BLM to reconsider the idea of extending the season for day use and asking them to address these issues in a long overdue river management plan. The AWA representatives are calling for support from the general boating public.

The AWA is arguing that rather than make it more difficult for private boaters to get on the river, BLM should consider changes to the existing management system. First, they suggest that the **user-day** ratio could be adjusted to increase the noncommercial allocation relative to commercial use. This ratio was set at 50/50 over 15 years ago, and to this author's knowledge, it has never been adjusted.

The AWA also believes that the BLM should also consider increasing the daily limit on the number of boaters allowed to make day trips through Westwater Canyon. They argue that use levels should be controlled to limit environmental impacts and preserve a quality experience. However, day trips have minimal impact on canyon resources, and Westwater is not considered by most boaters to be a primitive wilderness experience. They argue that there is no need to keep day use at very low levels. The AWA believes that some increase in day use could be accommodated without degrading the experience. In fact, BLM probably does not have a strong basis for controlling use levels as tightly as they do, because Westwater Canyon, although found eligible for designation as a wild and scenic river several years ago, has not yet been designated by Congress, and the interim protection has expired.

The AWA is urging boaters to write to the BLM and protest the increased regulation of the Colorado River in Westwater Canyon (and other Utah rivers) without public input, especially the contemplated October extension for 1994. Letters should be addressed to the District Manager, BLM, at P.O. Box 970, Moab, UT 84501.



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LOSS OF RIVER-BASED BIODIVERSITY ALARMS SCIENTISTS

by Pope Barrow

Scientists have always known that fresh water rivers and streams are an essential cog in the complex machine known as the natural ecosystem. Lately, however, a consensus is growing within the scientific community that the biological health of America's flowing waters is seriously impaired. If the degradation continues unabated, it could have serious consequences for many forms of life.

According to a January 1993 article in the technical journal, *BioScience*, fresh water rivers are as critical to biodiversity as tropical rain forests. "Flowing waters ... are of great importance to our physical, chemical, and biological world...[harboring] a diverse and unique panoply of species, habitats, and ecosystems, including some of the most threatened species and ecosystems on earth and some ... having greatest value to human society."

The rumblings from academia were first reported in the July/August issue of this magazine after experts testified before a Congressional subcommittee that "the biota of North American rivers has been decimated by the actions of human society". According to Dr. Arthur Benke and Dr. James Karr the damage has been going on for so long and is now so extensive that the "total loss of biodiversity may never be known."

New Reports Contain a Disturbing Message

Recently the anxious warnings from a few scientists have grown to a crescendo of troubling new information. In a blockbuster 552 page report released at the end of 1992 by the National Academy of Sciences, in a 317 page analysis entitled "Entering the Watershed" prepared by experts at the Pacific Rivers Council, and even in articles in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, the disturbing message is the same: numerous river ecosystems have already been damaged almost beyond repair; others are on the verge of collapse; and no effective mechanisms are in place to avert the damage or to restore degraded riverine ecosystems.

The biotic impoverishment of our rivers and streams is most dramatically illustrated by the loss of species diversity.

To the average person, the extinction of the Tellico snail darter in Tennessee or the disappearance of a few frog and mussel species here and there does not seem a major catastrophe. But the biological changes now underway in thousands of rivers and streams throughout North America may be having relatively invisible, but dramatic, effects on river ecology.

Scientists point out that, in any river ecosystem, the thinning of individual species in-

A 1990 study by Larry Master of the Nature Conservancy found that in North American fresh waters 23% of our amphibious species are now rare or extinct, as are 34% of our fish, 65% of our crayfish, and 73% of our mussels.

Another study of freshwater mussels found that of the 237 known species, 13 are currently extinct, 40 are endangered, 2 are threatened, and 74 are Federal candidate species. These losses have been termed "catastrophic" by zoologists and biologists.

crementally impairs the entire system. At some point the whole system collapses. According to Dr. John Cairns of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, it's like an airplane wing: "If you keep pulling rivets out, [eventually] the wing is going to go."

Existing Laws Not Adequate to Protect Biodiversity

Americans have made massive — and expensive — efforts to clean up the chemical contamination of rivers and streams through the Clean Water Act. We have also tried to protect some outstanding free flowing waters through the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These efforts are now beginning to seem woefully inadequate — and maybe even misdirected.

In the 20 years since the passage of the Federal Clean Water Act in 1972, significant progress has been made in reducing chemical contamination from urban sewage and from industrial pollution. Many formerly poisonous rivers are now fishable and swimmable. Some are even drinkable, consistent with the objectives of the original clean water legislation. But recent scientific studies suggest that purifying the rivers and streams of industrial and municipal contaminants will not, in itself, restore bio-

logical and ecological functions.

According to the testimony of Dr. James Karr before the U.S. Congress last year, our obsession with cleaning up the chemical pollution in our rivers has been myopic. While we were spending more than \$453 billion since 1970 to reduce sewage contamination and industrial chemical pollution, we were overlooking the biological functions of free flowing river systems. As a result, virtually nothing has been done to preserve the biological integrity of any river system in America.

During the past 25 years, river conservationists have also engaged in a massive and difficult campaign to protect the most outstanding rivers under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Specific segments of free flowing waters with special scenic or recreational values have gradually been added to the system. But, like the Clean Water Act, scientists say that this approach is also inadequate and misdirected.

One problem is that only 2% of America's rivers and streams could even qualify for inclusion in that system. This leaves the vast majority of America's degraded rivers and streams susceptible to continued degradation. In some areas there are no rivers left in good enough condition to qualify for wild and scenic designation. All but 149 miles of the 2,446-mile long Mis-

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souri River have been dammed! The waters of the Colorado River are so impacted by dams and diversions that none have reached the Pacific in the past 25 years.

Another problem with the Federal wild and scenic legislation is that even "protected" rivers are not immune to continued biological degradation. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act only applies to a narrow band of riparian lands averaging a 1/4 mile on each side of the designated river. Moreover, designated segments are often just that - segments - short stretches of free flowing water downstream of extremely degraded tributaries and upstream of larger, and even more degraded, river segments.

Even designated wild and scenic rivers are vulnerable to degradation associated with environmental changes in head water tributaries, in the flood plain, and elsewhere in the watershed. For example, flows in the wild and scenic segment of the Little Miami River in Ohio, for example, have been reduced 30% by dams on the upstream tributaries, Ash fork and Caesar Creek.

Most mainline river conservation groups have been slow to realize that the wild and scenic approach and the Clean Water Act are unequal to the gigantic tasks ahead. But an ambitious program initiated by the Pacific Rivers Council suggests that a new direction in river conservation is finally emerging in response to the findings of aquatic biologists and fresh water ecologists. [For details on these new initiative, see "Inside the Beltway" elsewhere in this issue.]

What is needed, according to recent scientific findings, is an approach that reflects the ecological functions of rivers and reduces those stresses within the ecosystem which adversely affect the biological health of free flowing waters.

A Variety of Problems

The causes of damaged stream ecology are numerous and varied. Dams, diversions, landscape alterations, exotic species, overfishing, secondary ex-

tinctions, and chemical pollution all play a role.

Flow disruptions caused by dams and diversions completely alter normal river functions by changing water temperature and chemistry (dissolved oxygen, mobilizing of naturally occurring mercury, increased acidity), by stopping the flow of nutrients and sediment downstream, and by interfering with the upstream and downstream movement of fish and micro organisms.

Dr. Arthur Benke of the University of Alabama lays much of the blame on hydropower development. In his 1992 testimony before Congress, he noted that efforts by the Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to build

over 1100 new hydro projects would effectively double the number of hydro sites in the nation but add only 2% to our total hydro generating capacity. Benke blasted FERC for contributing to "the total

exploitation of the nations rivers, [heedless] of its practicality and of the degradation of rivers as natural ecosystems"

In a recent article in *Canoe* magazine, Alan Kesselheim reports that wildlife populations have crashed in the vast deltas formed by the Peace and Athabasca Rivers in northern Alberta. The probable cause is the Bennett Dam, hundreds of miles upstream in British Columbia, constructed to provide flood control, hydropower, and lake recreation.

Half the delta's natural vegetation and wetland habitat has disappeared since construction of the dam, destroying the food chain on

which millions of birds and dozens of mammals species depend.

While hydropower, flood control and irrigation dams, have done tremendous damage,

many scientists say that landscape transformation is the most widespread and damaging threat to freshwater ecosystems. Denuding the land in the watershed by timbering and fanning causes erosion and radical increases in sediment entering the river, choking organisms downstream. It also causes a more rapid runoff of snow melt and rainwater resulting in higher peak flows (even flooding) and lower minimum flows during periods of lower precipitation. Changes in vegetation and hydrology due to draining of flooded areas, road building, and the spread of human settlement have widespread ramifications throughout the aquatic ecosystem.

Another problem is non-native species. Since 1950 there has been an explosion in the intentional or accidental introduction of exotic species, like the zebra mussel, into waterways throughout North

America. Often these are promoted to improve recreational sport fishing opportunities or to eradicate endemic native species viewed by some as undesirable. The introduction of exotic species radically reduces biological diversity through predation, alteration of habitat, diseases and parasites, and interbreeding with native organisms.

When opossum shrimp were intentionally introduced into river systems in Montana, they consumed the zoo plankton on which kokanee salmon were dependent, causing a collapse in the kokanee salmon population. This, in turn, has drastically reduced the bald eagle and grizzly bear populations which feed on the spawning salmon, their eggs and carcasses.

Unfortunately, exotic species, once established are often impossible to eliminate.

Secondary extinctions occur

when the disappearance of one species has cascading effects through the food chain or habitat structure.

The answer, according to scientific experts, is to restore the stream ecosystem by restoring the physical habitat as close as possible to its unaltered state. This strategy includes the construction of mini wetlands, meanders, riffle pool sequences, and especially the restoration of stream side vegetation in buffer strips next to stream channels.

Some Projects Already Underway

A number of river restoration projects are already underway throughout the country. One fascinating project in Florida is intended to return the Kissimmee River to its original meandering channel.

Only three decades ago the Army Corps of Engineers channelized, dredged, and straightened out the Kissimmee River in Florida for flood control purposes. The result was a devastating chain of events wreaking havoc throughout an entire 9,000 square mile hydrological system. Now the Corps is trying to totally reverse the process and make the Kissimmee work the way it did before the engineers "improved" it.

The ultimate goal, according to the National Academy of Sciences, is to restore - where possible - river ecosystems to a close approximation of their condition prior to disturbance. This can be done by restoring the natural sediment and water regime, restoring the natural channel geometry, restoring the natural riparian plant community, and restoring native plants and animals. In all cases, says the NAS, a priority should be accorded to river restoration projects which will preserve biodiversity; and all river restoration projects should treat the stream and its riparian zone, or the river and its flood plain, as components of a single ecosystem. ■

RIVER WARS CONTINUE IN CHILE

by Pope Barrow

The disappointing decision by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to provide \$70 million towards the \$465 million cost of the first of 6 dams to be built on the Bio Bio River has not ended the political controversy in Chile over rivers and hydropower. (The IFC is an international lending institution affiliated with the World Bank.) The IFC's only concession to environmental opponents was a promise that no loan moneys would actually be disbursed until the power company finished an assessment of downstream impacts.

Not only are Chilean river conservation groups still waging a campaign against the Bio Bio project, they are fighting to protect a number of Chile's other exquisite rivers, including the Petrohue and the Futaleufu. From top to bottom, every river in Chile, is threatened. No river, even those within national parks, is safe from the grasp of powerful and hungry electric power developers, led by the Endesa Company.

Currently three lawsuits are pending against the Bio Bio dam and street demonstrations in Santiago are becoming an almost regular event. 2500 people took to the streets in December just 8 days before the IFC vote. Demonstrations took place again in the first week of March.

For more information on what you can do to held conter threats to Chilean Rivers, call River Conservation International at 2024634378 or write to them at 1200 N.H. Ave, NW, Suite 220, Wash, D.C. 20036. ■



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DAMS STILL POSSIBLE FOR FRENCH BROAD TRIBUTARIES

by David Whitmire

In early February the Federal Soil Conservation Service ("SCS") presented North Carolina boaters and other interested parties with 12 flood control alternatives for the Upper French Broad River basin. The options included dams, flood proofing homes, early warning systems, and a "do nothing" alternative.

The good news for boaters is that damming the North Fork, West Fork, and East Fork and two proposed dams on French Broad tributaries do not look cost effective to the SCS.

The favored alternative, #11, has the highest cost-benefit ratio, according to the SCS. This involves a combination of damming the South Fork of Flat Creek and flood proofing homes in the flood plain.

Local groups feel, however, that Alternative #10 is preferable. #10 is a "no dam" option which involves flood proofing of homes, early flood warning systems, and enhanced E.M.S. and rescue services. This alternative avoids all of the environmental damage associated with dam building.

The "no dam" option would negate the creation of a fallacious reason to build the rest of the dams, when it inevitably becomes evident that one dam alone will not work. The single dam suggested in option #11 would only reduce water levels in the closest town, Roman, by 7 to 8 inches in a 100-year flood, so it seems clear that the dam would not be effective.

Pressure is needed on the Transylvania County Commissioners, since the option which they favor will likely be the one chosen by the SCS.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:
Boaters who would like to preserve the free flowing tributaries of the French Broad should write to the Transylvania County Commission, Chairman John Smart, PO Box 666, Brevard, NC 28712. Tell him to approve Alternative #10, the "no dam" alternative. For more information, contact David Whitmire, Rt 1, Box 411-A, Lake Toxaway, NC 28747.

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TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND - AUSTRALIA

Highlights of Ongoing AWA River Conservation Activities

By Rich Bowers
AWA Conservation Program Director

Coosa River, Alabama

Since 1982 (10+ years), regional boating interests have attempted to get predictable flows and advance notification of release dates at the Jordan Dam Project on the Coosa River. In March of 1991, the Federal Energy Regulatory Agency stated that that Alabama Power Company "has not even attempted to answer the question of whether higher... longer... steadier, and more predictable flows... would facilitate increased use of the Coosa River by recreational boaters."

Alabama Power is now conducting surveys loosely targeted to gauge boater use and economic/recreational payback. Coosa River Paddlers urge those planning a trip to the Florida coast, to pack along their boats and run this five mile, Class III river. If you need more excitement, you can check out the nearby Tallaloosa River, Class IV.

Contact: Coosa River Paddling Club (205) 272-0952

North Fork Mokelumne River, California

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is planning to release a draft Environmental Impact statement (EIS) on this river in 1993. While the Forest Service has recommended 27 miles of the upper North Fork, and 6.5 miles of the lower North Fork, as eligible for Wild and Scenic status, the remaining 10.5 miles of the lower river were not recommended in order to accommodate the proposed Devil's Nose hydro project. This dam would flood more than nine miles of river, and seriously affect the lower Class IV wilderness run. The AWA has intervened in this licensing process to represent whitewater interests.

In addition, the pending EIS will consider relicensing the existing hydro project on the river. The main stem Mokelumne (Electra Run, Class II) is threatened by the proposed Middle Bar Dam.

Contact: AWA Conservation Program Director Rich Bowers at (301) 236-0436

Clavey River, California

This river is truly one of the "gems" of whitewater, and is the only major undammed tributary of the Wild and Scenic Tuolumne River. This Class V expert run is currently in danger from the Turlock Irrigation District and Tuolumne County, which are proposing two large dams on the Clavey, and several diversion dams on tributaries. River groups, including the AWA, are looking for a Congressional sponsor for legislation this year, to add the Clavey and its tributaries to the Wild and Scenic System.

Contact: AWA Conservation Program Director Rich Bowers at (301) 236-0436

Animas River, Colorado

The AWA has petitioned American Rivers, Inc. to include the Animas River as one of the nation's "Top Ten" most endangered rivers. Last year, this river made the 15 most threatened list.

Outlined in the last edition of *American Whitewater*, the Animas river in Durango, CO, along with the San Juan, LaPlata, and Mancos rivers are threatened by a pumped storage mega-project. Besides de-watering whitewater areas of the Animas and San Juan rivers, this project seriously jeopardizes the growing outdoor industry and climate of Durango. The AWA hopes that, given the national attention generated by this "Top Ten" listing, the Animas-LaPlata project will not receive Congressional funding in this session, and will die a long overdue death!

Besides the Animas, there are many whitewater rivers under consideration for this listing: Upper Rio Grande (NM); Mokelumne and Clavey (CA), and the New River (WV), Penobscot (ME).

Contact: Bill Baker (303) 399-6821

Arkansas River, Colorado

The AWA and the Colorado Whitewater Club submitted joint comments in February on the Draft Arkansas River Rationing Plan. While not directly affecting private boaters, decisions made at this time could ultimately affect how private use is managed in the future.

At this point, implementation of rationing will be based on historical use, and the AWA has recommended that rationing be triggered when the number of boats, or people per day, reach capacity, whichever comes first.

Contact: Ric Alesch (303) 985-8620 or Doug Ragan (719) 395-2422

Middle Snake, Idaho

The AWA recently commented on the Draft Comprehensive State Water Plan for the Middle Snake River, Milner Dam to King Hil. As drafted, this plan would protect seven separate sections of this river under state "Natural" or "Recreational" classification.

While the Idaho Dept. of Water Resources plan is commendable in its effort to protect the natural use of the river, it has several flaws:

1. The AWA has requested that two excellent whitewater sections, the Upper Milner Gorge and Devil's Corral areas, be included as recreational areas. Both of these river runs were excluded due to their short length, but both offer the upper end of whitewater expertise on the Mid Snake.

2. Permanent protection is not assured under "recreational" designation, as the plan allows for new pump diversions along the river. Large scale diversions could seriously delete available flow, adversely impacting recreation.

Finally, while the plan prohibits new dam construction on the river, state prohibitions are often ignored by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Federal Agency in charge of issuing private dam licenses. There are ~~six~~ proposed hydropower facilities waiting for development in this reach. The Star Falls project would ruin the last remaining waterfall on the Mid Snake, and the Boulder, Empire and Kanaka projects would all adversely impact whitewater recreation. The AWA has urged the Board to include stronger language to help offset future dams, and to seek Federal (permanent) protection under State designated "Wild and Scenic" status.

Contact: AWA Conservation Program Director Rich Bowers at (301) 236-0436 or Wendy Wilson, Idaho Rivers United (208) 343-7481.

Little River, Massachusetts

For years, recreational boaters (led by AWA regional coordinator E.J. McCarthy) have attempted to gain access to this Class III-IV stream below the Cobble Mountain Reservoir, City of Springfield- but with no success. Recently however, the National Park Service has weighed in and offered to mediate between the City, boaters, and other interests. The AWA is hopeful that renewed interest will eventually be successful in opening this recreational resource.

Contact: E.J. McCarthy (203) 672-6837

Dead River, Maine

On March 22, Central Maine Power held a joint public and agency meeting to explain the applicants' plans for seeking a license renewal for the Flagstaff Storage Project (FERC No. 2612) which will set policies for future recreation on the Dead River.

Contact: AWA Conservation Program Director Rich Bowers at (301) 236-0436

Illinois River, Oklahoma

A bill to designate the Illinois as a "National Scenic River" was recently introduced in Washington DC. Currently the Illinois is an Oklahoma state scenic river.

This river originates in Arkansas, and is a popular float trip and home to several canoe liveries. It also offers a nice play spot (breaking wave/hole) called Fisher Ford, just a few miles from the border. During dry years it is one of the few whitewater resources in Oklahoma and Arkansas. Recently it has had its share of access problems, with a local landowner threatening boaters along the banks.

Politically, the State of Oklahoma is seeking national designation to prevent out of state pollution; Federal protection grants immediate protection for up to three years. The City of Fayetteville, AR, protected under a 1992 US Supreme Court decision, has been releasing treated effluent into a tributary of Mud Creek, which dumps into the Illinois. Following the basic rule of plumbing, this effluent eventually winds up in OK.

Contact: Don Piper at (501) 521-2465.

Lehigh River, Pennsylvania

The PA State Parks are discussing new plans for access at Rockport, PA, on the Lehigh River. New construction by the Hazelton Water Authority, has made this necessary, but no plans are in the works for construction during the 1993 boating season.

Meetings are being planned (but no final dates have been set) to discuss this issue in detail, including: priorities for improvements; allocations; need for public hearings and comment periods, traffic congestion; etc. There is a good chance that park regulations at the **Youghiogheny** river will also be discussed.

Contact: AWA Conservation Program Director Rich Bowers at (301) 236-0436

Chattooga River, South Carolina

The US Forest Service is proposing developments in the Bull Sluice area of the "Wild and Scenic" Chattooga River. While not directly affecting boating use, the planned increases in general tourism could have significant impacts on the unique and wild experience offered in this river corridor. Proposed enhancements

include: flush toilets, septic tanks and drain fields; and a trail to the top of Bull Sluice rapid.

Contact: AWA Conservation Program Director Rich Bowers at (301) 236-0436

Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone, Wyoming

A proposed gold mining operation near Cooke City, Wyoming, could degrade water quality and threaten boater access to streams on both sides of the Daisy Pass region. Daisy Creek, home of the beautiful Ice Box Canyon, the headwaters of the Clarks Fork, and the Stillwater could all feel the effects of this mining operation.

The mine is heavily supported by Cooke City residents who desperately need the industry. However, for boaters, this area has been virtually undiscovered and offers numerous first decent possibilities (Daisy Creek is a good example, but may never be run! About half-way down the Creek enters Yellowstone National Park, and boaters will find themselves suddenly on the wrong side of the law).

The site of the proposed mine is adjacent to the only access road to the headwaters of the Stillwater River, and could affect future boater access to this area

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For more information on NOWR events, contact the local coordinator or Risa Callaway at 803/855-5477

NOWR is a part of the American Whitewater Affiliation.

1993 NATIONAL RIVERS COALITION

In the last American Whitewater, an outline was given of the grassroots river grants distributed during 1992, through the REI funded National Rivers Coalition (NRC). For 1993, REI has increased base funding for this program from \$60,000 to \$75,000, with an additional \$5,000 slated for river legislation. With an average grant of \$1,000 per request awarded, ~~this~~ allows the ~~advisory panel~~ (which includes the AWA) to approve approximately 20 additional river efforts in the coming year.

NRC grants go towards: protecting river resources through federal or state designations; river access; river legislation; and operating support for grassroots river groups.

NOTE: As with any funding proposal, lobby the advisory panel to fund your effort. For river issues, contact the AWA, ACA, River Network, American Rivers, and others,

Please submit requests to Rich Bowers (301) 236-0436

NPS RIVERS AND TRAILS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

As in previous years, the AWA, along with a coalition of other river and trail organizations, will be lobbying Congress for funding for the National Park Service (NPS) Rivers and Trails Conservation Programs. For fiscal year 1993, the previous Bush Administration included this program in its budget request at \$8 million. This year, the coalition would like to see the budget increased to \$12 million to address the backlog of projects needing assistance. To date, the NPS has more than 350 project requests.

Over the years, this program has been of great benefit to whitewater paddlers. The NPS has been able to offer assistance on the Gauley River (WV), and the Lackawanna River, (PA). Through this program, the NPS has also helped resolve conflicts in hydro interventions. Projects include: Deerfield River (VT & MA); Pine and Peshtigo (WI); Ayers Island (NH); and the N. Umpqua (OR).

AWA HYDROPROGRAM UPDATES

by Rich Bowers, Conservation Program Director

The AWA hydro relicensing effort has been successful on both legislative and project specific issues. In the upcoming boating season, several whitewater boating tests will be conducted, through AWA license interventions, on the following streams: Tallulah Gorge (GA), in April; Little Quinnebec Falls (WI), June; and the Colton and Moshier areas on the Black River (NY), ???.

HYDRO-COALITION PRESS CONFERENCE

On February 25, a coalition of more than a dozen river recreation and conservation organizations, including the AWA, held press conferences in the following cities: Washington (DC); Albany (NY); Portland (ME); and Seattle (WA). The coalition urged the Clinton Administration to reform the way the Federal Government issues licenses for private dams on America's rivers. In 1993, some 230 hydroelectric dams on more than 100 rivers will be issued new 30 to 50 year licenses.

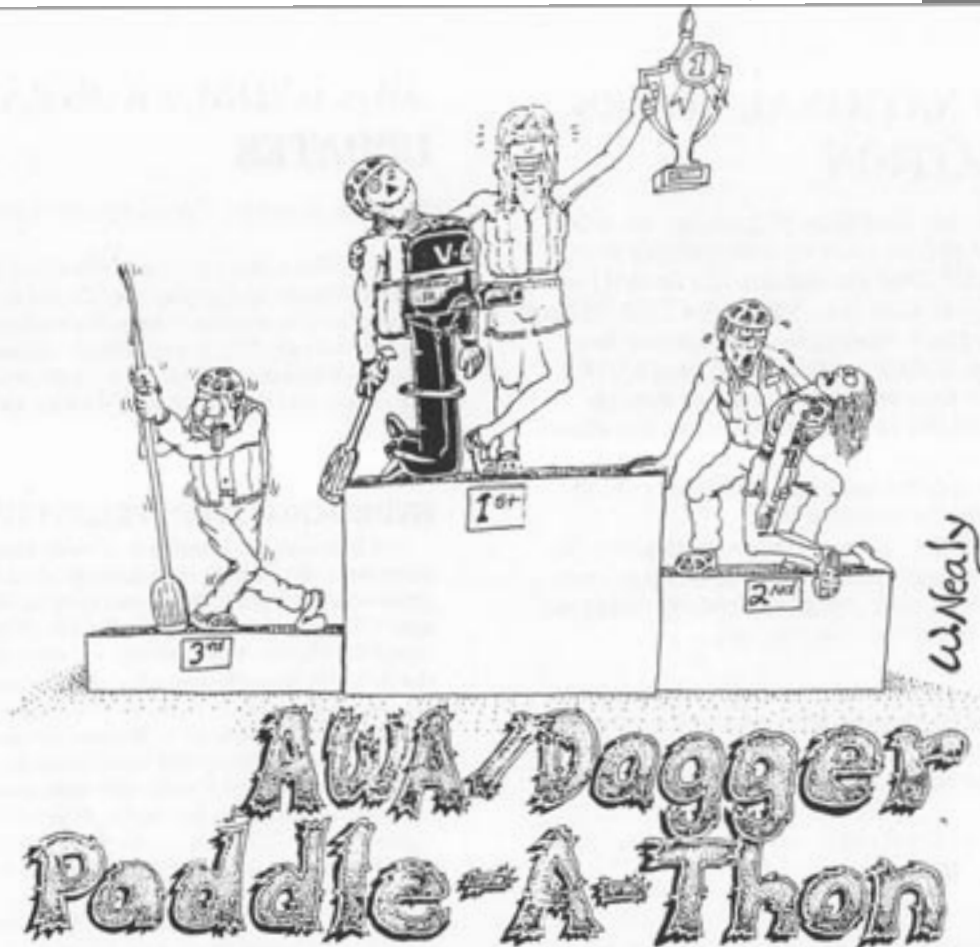
The timing of this press conference was critical due to this large number of dam license renewals, and the fact that four out of the five Commissioners on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC - the Agency which sets policy regarding hydro projects and their effects on our river systems), will be appointed under this administration.

This "Class of 1993" offers a chance for the federal government to take a long, hard look at how the Commission has been assisting utilities and private developers to deplete scarce river resources for the better part of the last century. To illustrate this, the FERC recently (1992) hired a leading engineering firm, Stone and Webster, to carry out the Commission's environmental assessments and environmental impact statements. Stone and Webster have historically represented dam operators and been involved with new dam construction. This agreement is estimated to be worth approximately \$46 million over the next five years.

During this conference, the coalition requested reforms including:

1. Specific Commission reforms-
Appoint Commissioners with natural resource experience
 Of the 23 FERC commissioners nominated in the past twenty years, all but one have come from the energy-production industry, predominantly gas and oil.
 The only nominee who proclaimed to be a "conservationist" was James Watt (1975)!
Consider removing hydropower jurisdiction from FERC and moving it to a more balanced agency, such as the Environmental Protection Agency or the Dept. of the Interior.
Shorten dam license terms, and strengthen citizens' rights to enforce and re-evaluate license conditions.
Exercise rigorous Congressional oversight to assure FERC's adherence to environmental law.
2. Environmental and recreational reforms-
Mandate upstream and downstream fish passage.
Protect riparian and watershed lands

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Proceeds to benefit AWA's Whitewater Defense Project. HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE PADDLING ON BEHALF OF A CURRENT AWA AFFILIATE CLUB, ANY MONEY YOU RAISE WILL BE SPLIT WITH 75% TO AWA'S WDP AND 25% FOR YOUR CLUB'S USE IN ITS CONSERVATION, SAFETY OR TRAINING PROGRAMS. Affiliate participants are also eligible for Individual and Grand Prizes.



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Ensure free public access to rivers.

Establish a mitigation fund for river conservation/recreation and restoration programs,* and funding for long-term maintenance and/or decommissioning of retired dams.

Restore sufficient water flows to rivers to provide river restoration and recreation resources in bypassed river channels.

Base relicensing decisions on comprehensive river plans. On many rivers, numerous hydro projects adversely affect the river's health. The Black River in New York is affected by a total of 38 licensed and license exempt projects.

■ A nationwide survey prepared for the Coalition indicates that an overwhelming majority of Americans (88%) favor requiring five percent of the profit made from hydroelectric dams, to be used to clean up and protect the river. Without this, the free use of 105 of our rivers (for 50 years) will offer these companies a public subsidy approaching \$10 billion dollars, with only minimal environmental and recreational protection.

HYDRO-COALITION ADMINISTRATION MEETING

As a follow up to this press conference, the AWA and other coalition members requested a meeting with President Clinton's staff to discuss the upcoming ETRC appointments.

On Tuesday, March 9, coalition representatives met with

White House staff, and other energy and consumer advocates. The coalition's primary goal was to recommend possible Commissioner appointees whose credentials include either a strong natural resource background, or a proven commitment to river advocacy.

The Coalition recommended two strong candidates for these positions, and endorsed another three already on the White House list. White House nominations supported by the coalition include: David Nemtsov, Jessica Lavery, and Elizabeth Noel. Each of these have backgrounds which could provide a balanced assessment of both power and non-power river values, but none of the White House nominees represent a proven commitment to rivers, or the experience necessary to change FERC's business as usual licensing process.

In addition, the coalition requested that two other names be added to this list:

Bruce C. Driver — an attorney and private consultant from Boulder, CO with expertise in energy and water resources.

Ron Eachus — Oregon Public Utility Commissioner (Chairman), Chair of the Energy Conservation Committee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), and a boater!

The AWA expects that these nominations will be made as we go to press. Look for future updates and profiles on these FERC appointments. ■

AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION 1993 RIVER ACCESS SURVEY

River access problems are rapidly becoming the number one threat to whitewater recreation.

AWA is expanding its efforts to secure and improve access to whitewater rivers throughout the country, and we need your help. We want to identify specific river access problems in your area as well as opportunities to secure improved access for boaters.

You can help by filling in the survey below and returning it to the AWA.

Your Name: _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone No. (W) _____
(H) _____

Threatened segment(s): _____

Primary boating activity: (please circle one)
K1 C1, OC, SQ, Raft, Other

State: _____
Counties: _____

ACCESS THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY:

Name of River: _____

Type of Recreation Resource - (please circle)

CONSERVE

MIDDLE ATLANTIC CONSERVATION ROUNDUP

By: *Mac Thornton*

A state-by-state roundup of major river conservation issues.

West Virginia

West Virginia Rivers

Coalition. Since 1989, WVRC has grown from a paddler's living room project to a major river-saving organization, with a staff of two full-timers and an annual budget of \$75,000.

WVRC's principal goal is to build political support for federal protection for 13 paddling beauts, including the Smoke Hole Canyon, Blackwater, Laurel Fork and the Cranberry. The opposition is rough, lead by the state's Department of Natural Resources, which is concerned about their ability

to construct limestone drum facilities (to correct acid rain problems) and other measures to improve fish habitat.

WVRC petitioned the U.S. Forest Service on this issue and obtained a favorable interpretation of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, an interpretation which would allow such structures if impact on the free-flowing quality of the river is minimized, and if the facilities are designed to harmonize with the natural setting. (These facilities would be upstream of the paddling sections.)

WVRC expects legislation to protect a first group of these target rivers in 1993.

WVRC benefited from the RIVER ROLL ON! concert last April (organized by Ron

Knipling and assisted by Ed Gililand), and from a benefit raffle by River and Sea Watersports, the Washington areas new whitewater and diving outfitter (Nell and David Walton).

New River. WVRC is working towards permanent protection for the New River from the Virginia line to Gauley Bridge, including the "Dries". In October, Congress designated the New from the Virginia line to Bluestone Lake (20 miles) as an official Wild and Scenic study river, a move designed to forestall a major utility line and potential pumped storage project in a valuable wilderness stretch.

Gauley. WVRC supported expansion of the National Recreation Area by about 9,000 acres, and has been pressing the National Park Service improve whitewater access points and to provide primitive camping areas, as required by

the legislation passed in 1988. The NPS appears headed towards improving the Woods Ferry (river right) access this spring. Some paddlers also want access near Sweet's Falls and above Koontz' Flume.

Paddlers continue to keep a close watch on the possible construction of a hydro project at Summersville Dam, which received a license from FERC in October. It is fairly unlikely the thing will actually be built at today's low electric rates. If it was built, the project would have to comply with stringent conditions designed to minimize the impact on paddling and rafting. The parking area at Summersville Dam would be moved downstream, but paddlers could still put in above the warm-up riffle. However, the astounding spectacle of the river pouring from the outlet tubes would be gone.

Iron Ring. WVRC continues to lead the search for the

Class I II III IV V V+

Potential popularity of river area if access were available:

Low Medium High

Name of Developer, Agency, Utility or other Landowner

Brief description of access problem or opportunity, and potential resource:

Can you recommend other boaters involved with this issue?

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone No. (W/H)

Club Affiliation?

How can the American Whitewater Affiliation help in this situation?

Additional comments:

Please return the AWA Access Survey to:

Rich Bowers
Conservation Program Director
American Whitewater Affiliation
1609 Northcrest Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20904

(301) 230-0134

famous lost Gauley artifact. If it doesn't turn up soon, work will start on fabricating a replica. Washington paddler Stuart Davidson has offered to finance the replica, which would have to meet strict Park Service guidelines.

Elk. WVRC is leading the move for permanent protection of the Elk from headwaters all to Sutton Lake, downstream of Webster Springs.

Lost/Cacapon. Paddling groups were plaintiffs in a successful lawsuit which defeated a boondoggle flood control dam on Kimsey Run, a Lost River tributary. This victory was affirmed in the West Virginia court system.

Pine Cabin Run Ecological Lab. WVRC strongly supports Dr. George Constantz and the Pine Cabin Run Ecological Laboratory near Capon Bridge, W.V. George is passionate about West Virginia rivers, and he is the leading advo-

cate for riverine values in the eastern part of the state.

Virginia

Potomac Gorge Preservation Council. PGPC as is dedicated to keeping the Potomac from Great Falls to Key Bridge wild and wonderful. The Potomac Gorge may be the world's most outstanding wilderness river greenway in a major urban area.

PGPC is disheartened by tree-cutting and other encroachments, and is working on a strategy of working with landowners to get them to respect the wilderness character of the Gorge, by acquiring scenic easements or development restrictions. Joe Bryson is leading the land ownership research effort; Kevin Coyle and Chris Brown are leading strategists.

James. Charles Ware and the Coastal Canoeists are lead-

ing the move to designate the James in Richmond under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, or to solidify some other protective status. Charles is also spearheading other river conservation efforts in Virginia, on the Rappahannock, North Anna, Roanoke and New Rivers.

Maury. Paddlers are supporting designation of the spectacular Goshen Pass section of the Maury (featuring "Devils Kitchen") as a scenic river under Virginia state law. In and of itself, this designation wouldn't accomplish much, but it could lead to richly deserved permanent protection.

Russell Fork. Recreational flows on the Russell Fork have been cut back in the last two years to what many hard boaters consider unacceptably low levels. These low flows have allegedly been instituted to protect the river's fish population. AWA's Steve Tay-

lor has been spending a lot of time rebutting this invalid assumption. This could have wide reaching consequences, since some fisherman have argued for low flows to protect fish at other dam release rivers as well.

Pennsylvania

Allegheny. Paddlers supported Congressional designation of the Allegheny as Wild and Scenic as well as study status for the Allegheny tributaries well-known to Pennsylvania paddlers, Clarion River and Mill Creek.

Maryland

Savage. The Savage River Defense Fund continues to work with (on?) the Army Corps of Engineers on getting whitewater flows for the Savage. Chances are decent for recreational flows in May and/or October of 1993. Steve Taylor is masterminding the effort. ■

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— David "Psycho" Simpson (Steep Creek Pioneer)

"The most agile playboat I've ever paddled."

— Jeff Richards (Winner 1992 Ocoee Rodeo)

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VIPER 12	12'6"	27.25	15.50	49
XL11	11'4"	29	15	45
XL 13	13'3"	30	15.5	55
XL 14	14'3"	32.5	15.5	60
XL 15	15'4"	35	15.5	65

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Ah! Spring (Creek)... at Last!

by Lee Belknap

What's This!?!

We were eyeballing a horizon- the brink of a waterfall- on a creek that wasn't supposed to have one. And it far exceeded our class III expectations.

Jonathan and I scurried around in the last chance eddies, looking for an obvious route. I gave the far right side a good long look but couldn't be sure. The far left wall looked like a boiling undercut hell. The center of the ledge was a complete unknown. We paddled upstream and scouted.

Paddle a new river and you'll be amazed at what you'll find. This was supposed to be a fast paced class III - IV stream. A waterfall like this just wasn't part of the program — at least not on this section of the river.

I'd been trying to catch Spring Creek for almost a decade. For much of that time this jewel was one of North Carolina's best kept secrets. I knew Spring Creek only by reputation: A class III stream with some tough IVs at the top. A day before the run I noticed a nasty falls along the road near the bottom. That wasn't supposed to be there, was it? Maybe it had been put there as a hint, or maybe an enticement. We were told the bottom of this drop was littered with jagged rocks

toppled in from the road above and that it was best portaged. We weren't about to argue.

Over the years I'd only had one other opportunity to tackle Spring Creek. On that occasion I was burdened with a large group, and a river guide who made Spring Creek sound like Section IV of the Chatoga in flood. I didn't believe him, but the group did, so off we went to paddle another stream instead. I continued to wait for my chance.

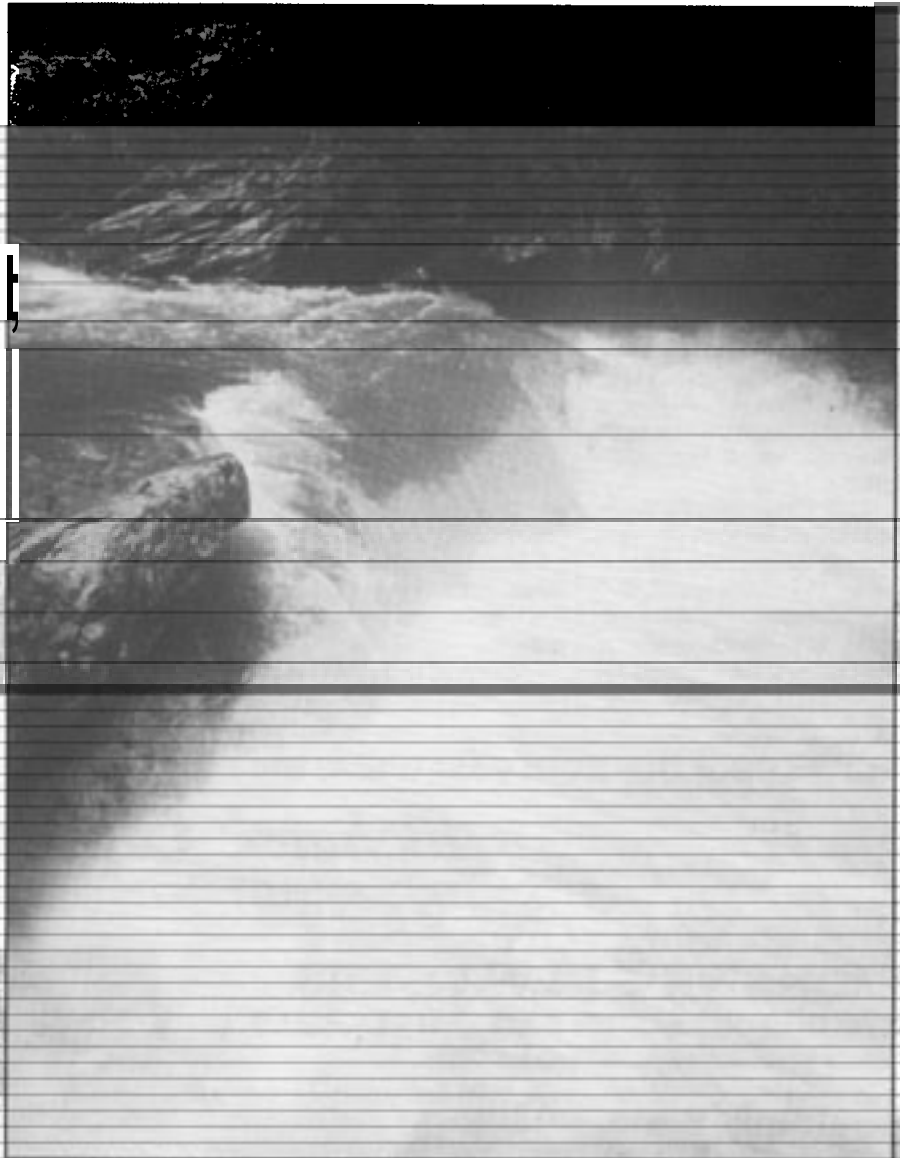


Photo by John Lehman

Ah! Spring (Creek)

Julie Bard charges into the first rapids on North Carolina's Spring Creek. Photo by John Lehman

Now, finally, the time had come. It was a perfect mid May weekend. After several months of near drought, Mt. Pisgah was buried under **57** inches of snow (in May?!?) — more than the total snowfall of the last several years combined. And all of this whitewater in storage was being released into the French Broad and its tributaries.

Julie and I had come to meet a group of old friends from St. Louis to enjoy Big Laurel Creek and the newly opened Hot Springs Resort. We had it all planned. Two days on Big Laurel, reservations for the hot tubs and a cook-out. We had even thrown in our cross-country skis, just in case.

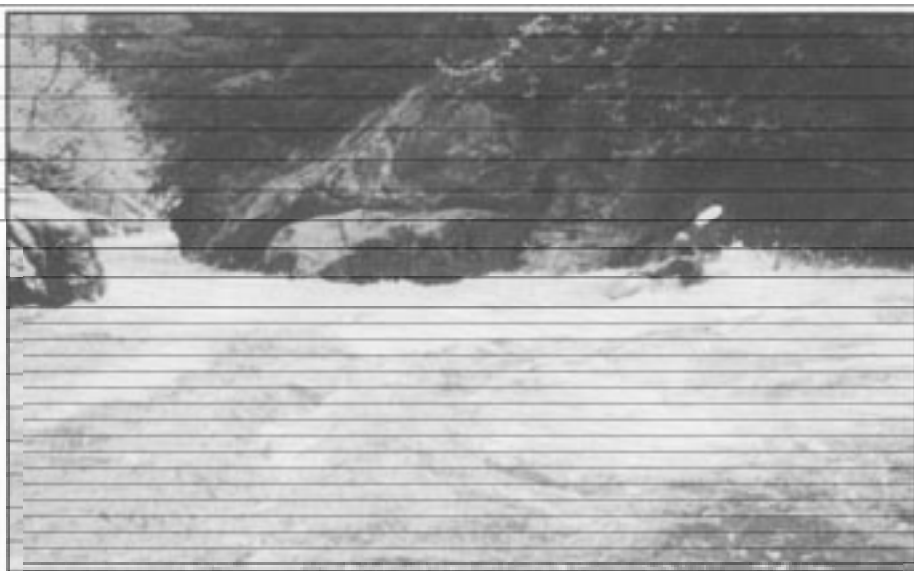
But, until we read the gauge, we figured Spring Creek would be a dream, just out of reach.

Saturday rolled around and it was still cold. We were shocked to discover that Spring Creek was running high. Too high for the abilities of our group. So we crossed our fingers for Sunday.

On Sunday it was nearly 80 degrees, with bright sunshine and a leaner, stronger crew. The level looked just right. The fact that I had impatiently waited ten years to run Spring Creek, with a bunch of midwesterners who just happened to meander by at the right time, just didn't seem fair. But such is the irony of river life.

At the put-in we bumped into another party of paddlers, who suggested that we scout from the trail that paralleled the first major rapids before putting on. Being a hot day and not wanting to rush putting on the drysuit, I followed the rest of our team for a look. After all, none of us had experienced Spring Creek before.

The other group ran while we watched, demonstrating that the pinning spots and holes could be missed. Cindy decided to carry down below this to put in while Jonathan played with his camera. I decided to leave my drysuit in the car.



Stan asked me to run the rapid first, and I finally agreed when he pushed me into the current and threatened not to return my paddle if I didn't go voluntarily. My new "Creek" boat handled well as I punched the criss-crossing hydraulics, found a couple of the eddies, and danced around in the deep breaking wave at the bottom. Jonathan caught one of the eddies and got his pictures.

So far, so good. We headed down the river, looking for the next "big one". It was a double slide drop with a tree on the bottom left bank and a hole in the center to the rocky far right. A hump between the tree and hole marked a scratchy path of least resistance.

As I finished boat scouting and set up to run, I became aware of a commotion behind me. I turned around to investigate and found that Jonathan had managed to stick his C-1 paddle in a rock at the bottom of the first drop. He was knuckle bracing off the bottom of the river. He finally swam, but not before I had time to hop out of my boat (my large cockpit's first chance to prove it's usefulness), only to discover that I had left my throw rope in the car. Oops!

As Jonathan's boat came drifting

by, I stepped waist deep into the tiny pool and caught the grab loop, thankful for the rare and tiny foothold I'd found in the sloping rock bank. Suddenly Jonathan came swimming by and reached for something between my legs. I cringed as he grabbed the only thing he could find... the balls... attached to my spray skirt loop.

I swung the boy and his boat to safety above the tree and again thanked the tiny foothold. I was also glad that the water was not nearly as cold as expected, given that this was my first bare-legged excursion of the season.

We soon settled into a routine. I would run first and boat scout the ledges as we came to them. Julie would follow, missing an occasional "must catch" eddy, consequently delin-eating new and exciting routes for everyone else to follow. Stan would lead Cindy through, while Jonathan would sweep up the rear with that broom shaped C-1 paddle of his.

Not far into the trip, we came to a real "big boy". I couldn't see the bottom, so I meticulously worked my way down to a last chance eddy on the left bank just above a split ledge. I couldn't see a thing, so I worked my way into an "even laster" chance micro



Photo by John Lehman

eddy in the middle. I spotted a route and made an "S" move through the right side of the ledge and back to the middle. As I sailed by I didn't get much of a look at the right side, but it seemed pretty gnarly. I negotiated the remaining drops and finally got a chance to look back to assess the rapids.

By this time Julie was dropping sideways into the right side — and she breezed right through. I was impressed. Because the others didn't want to make the "S" move at the top, they all followed. Now I don't know if that route will work at other levels, but the that day it seemed to work for all of them.

By reputation I figured that was the last of the big class fours until the portage near the end of the run, and soon found that the assumption seemed accurate. The river presented a lengthy series of class III ledges and we finally started to make some time. A couple of times we were confronted with horizons but were always able to sneak into a micro eddy on the brink and scout the line.

We were in heaven. The leaves on the trees were full and so was the river bed. The sun was out and the temperatures were in the 80s.

As we picked our way down, we encountered the previously mentioned horizon with the undercut left wall and inviting, but blind, drop on the right. As we walked down the scout trail, the

rapid began to look even worse. The scout trail ended at a rock overlook immediately above the right chute, which emptied into an ugly rocky caldron. I was glad I hadn't blindly tried that!

From this perspective the height of the largest drop seemed to be about seven feet, with a pair of shallow entrance ledges to twist through at the top. Most of the current flowed from the right of the top ledge into the boiling undercut in the left wall. I noted that with some momentum and a well aimed nose one could easily overpower this, providing a perfect line for the center of the big ledge, and enough speed to sail beyond the hydraulic at the bottom.

And there was evidence that this rapid could and should be run; the scout trail terminated at the midpoint of the rapid, implying that portages were uncommon here. But this day was to be an exception.

Cindy decided to walk this one immediately. Stan waited until I was getting into my kayak before he gallantly offered to safety boat for me at the bottom ... of course! That meant he had to sacrifice his own run and carry. What a friend!

That left myself, Julie, and Jonathan. While I waited in an eddy for Stan to set up, Jonathan sat on the bank and waved for me to get it over with, presumably so he could go. Julie had his camera at the overlook, but

the wait was long, so Jonathan decided to take the pictures himself. At least that's what I thought.

But the next time I looked his boat had disappeared down the trail as well. The waterfall had claimed another victim, and nobody had even attempted it yet!

I lined up with a slight left to right angle and hit the first ledge right on target. My speed was such that I hit the second ledge without slipping as far left as expected- the two ledges were only half a boat length apart. I was delighted when I didn't even scrape, and I proceeded to line up for the main event. The boat made a gently sweeping arc with the current, first to the left, then gracefully to the right, and with two or three more strokes I found myself just where I wanted to be. Over I went and the boat plopped into the calm pool at the base of the rapid.

So, that was it! I looked upstream and saw the now smaller, straight forward ledge from a new perspective. I looked downstream and saw boats emerging from the rhododendron thicket. Julie, having watched my run, hopped into her boat and made quick work of the thing. Some big deal waterfall that was!

Now Spring Creek seemed to follow a pattern. We encountered a number of two tiered ledges, usually featuring narrow negotiable chutes on the right.

Ah! Spring (Creek)

The narrowest of these channels was only two boat widths wide and a boat-and-a-half long. It seemed best to skirt a large hydraulic at the bottom, but that would not be easy. I boat scouted and ran, being careful to keep as far from the hydraulic as possible. I was still uncomfortably close and I wondered if anybody would demonstrate the big surf here. A couple of the others came awfully close, but it wasn't until the last that we were entertained.

Cindy "tried" to surf it, but was instantly windowshaded. Fortunately she flushed away from the meat of the pourover and rolled quickly.

I chose to scout another ledge from a river right micro eddy while Stan chose one on river left. He was able to see over the otherwise blind drop. I could not. So everybody else followed Stan's example and tackled it, while I gingerly extracted myself from my ill-fated eddy and worked my way up stream. Finally, I was in position to turn and make a blind run, with guidance from below.

Stan was carefully lining me up to the for the clean line on the left, but Jonathan seemed to be indicating that I could come strait ahead. Unfortunately I was watching the wrong man. The fat snout of my boat hit a rock at the bottom and bounced off. I could see the whole nose flex, but bounce it did. I knew then that I was going to like my newfangled creek boat.

As their confidences grew, some of the others started to take the lead. We were all looking for signs of the trails from Rocky Bluff Campground and a strainer that had reportedly come to roost in this vicinity.

We approached a ledgy rapids with a log beached on a rock;

I had to do some boat scouting to determine that this would not block our way. About the time I became satisfied that there was no problem here, Julie started calling out to me- something like "Tree!... Tree!"

I shook my head "yes" to show that I was aware of it and continued on. When I was finally able to look upstream to signal that all was well, I discovered the contrary. Julie had been calling, "Lee!...Lee!" because Cindy

was swimming at the top of the drop!

Since I was already couple of ledges below, I could only wait and watch as she body surfed from hydraulic to hydraulic toward my side of the river. I helped her to shore and then went for her boat. All I could see downstream was her kayak flushing through a seemingly endless series of class III and IV rapids.

It was probably the worst place on the river to retrieve a boat. It seemed to take forever. A drop or two after the chase began I spotted her paddle temporarily beached in the center of a shallow ledge.

When I finally manage to nudge the errant boat to shore, I was thankful, once again, that the new keyhole cockpit readily allowed me to easily hop out to secure her boat. Those large cockpits are great, I didn't have to squirm around and risk getting launched back out into the current while I was exiting my boat. This would not have been the case in my other kayaks, with them I might have found myself chasing her boat further, sans spray skirt.

Stan caught up to me first, followed by Julie. It seemed that everybody had already passed the point where I had spotted Cindy's paddle except Jonathan, who was still in an eddy halfway to the top of this otherwise delightful series of drops. After a while, Jonathan started making wild gestures, inquiring about the lost paddle. I pointed to where it rested, but it took a while before he realized that it was right in front of him.

Meanwhile Stan found a trash dump where he thought the trail should have been and started looking for it's access road. He climbed higher and higher before he discovered that the trash had been thrown off the roadway almost directly above. There just wasn't a way to walk upstream on this side of the river. He arrived back from his scouting expedition just in time to help catch Jonathan and Cindy, who was clinging to his boat, before they would have washed backwards into the next drop.

With all paddlers, paddles and paddling craft back together, we soon

found the real trail below Rocky Bluff. Now things started to mellow. After a few more ledges we passed some hikers and arrived at a swift class I stretch visible from the highway overlook. I was amazed at how quickly this passed and how beautiful it was. I envied the owner of the only house we saw, with it's only access being a foot bridge and a ford.

Spring Creek almost had the character of an alpine stream in Colorado. It even had the right fragrance. But this ambience ended all too quickly at the first highway bridge.

The remainder of the river featured several more long, easy rapids, one portage (over the nasty falls mentioned earlier), another tail ender, and the curious remnants of a dam.

It had been a wonderful day on the water and Spring Creek was everything I had hoped for all those years. Beautiful scenery, great rapids, and good friends.. what more could I ask?

Perhaps just a chance to run it again... before another decade passes by.

Spring Creek Vitals

Spring Creek is located in Hot Springs, North Carolina along State Route 209.

Put in- Forest road 233 bridge, a few miles west of Rocky Bluff Campground on SR 209.

Take out- US 25/US70 bridge in downtown Hot Springs.

Gauge- US 25/US70 bridge in downtown Hot Springs.

Runs infrequently. 3' is high, 6' is low. If the gauge on Big Laurel Creek is 1 1/2 feet or higher, there may be enough.

River miles- 6.

Total drop- 500 feet.

Average Gradient- 83 feet/mile

Editor's note: Lee Belknap is a member of the AWA Board of Directors with a special interest in river safety. Though young at heart, he has been exploring the steep creek of Appalachia for a long, long time.

SAFETY

BIG SNOW - BIG TROUBLE?

by *Charlie Walbridge*

With the big snow accumulation in New England and the West, paddlers are looking forward to a high runoff year. High water, regrettably, usually means more accidents than usual. Its been five to seven years since many parts of the West have seen really big water, and during that time many newcomers have begun paddling whitewater and some veterans have retired. The stage is being set for an unusual number of fatal accidents.

The year has gotten off to a rough start. First reports are coming in on a double drowning on the Futelefu, a huge volume, class V+ river in Chile. The group was made up of ex-

perienced big-water paddle-rafters with lots of international experience. It was lead by a Bio-Bio outfitter who was looking for another river on which to operate. There were 3 eighteen foot, self-bailing rafts and three kayakers in the party. Everyone was wearing type V rafting life vests (26 lbs. flotation) and wetsuits.

The party put in at the town of Futelefu. The accident occurred in a canyon 2 miles downstream. The group had called an upstream dam in Argentina to check the flow, and scouted the canyon before running it. Once in the river, however, they found it to be much bigger than it looked. One raft hit a hole and flipped, putting all hands into the river. The survivor I talked with had a relatively easy swim, popping up in an eddy. Here she found the tripler, and seeing no one else nearby, they began a grueling attempt to climb out of the sheer-walled canyon. Af-

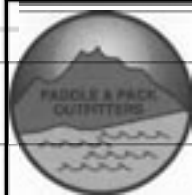
ter several false starts they reached the rim. Here, in the gathering dusk, they spotted one of their rafts and a kayaker. The two downclimbed to rejoin their group. The raft was carrying a two-way radio; they were able to contact the rest of their party. They found out that one other raft had flipped, one kayaker had swum, and two paddlers from the first raft were dead. At this point police were notified.

The two who died were not pinned or caught in holes. They flush-drowned despite the considerable flotation their gear offered. No one saw the individual swims, and details are sketchy. This underlines the seriousness of this river, the difficulty involved in scouting rapids by boaters unfamiliar with the huge scale of the region's landscape, and the fact that gear alone will not save a boater in big water.

In late February a boater

died in a vertical pin on a low-water run of the "Middle-Middle" section of the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie in Washington State. 400 cfs were running in this Class III run. The victim, a 3 year paddler with a marginal roll, apparently pinned vertically while going over a 4' ledge. In attempting to escape from his large-cockpit boat the kayak toppled. No one knows what happened, but somehow he broke a leg and hit his head while trying to climb free. His partner made numerous swimming rescue attempts to assist him before paddling downstream for help in what turned into a body extraction.

Climbing out of a vertically pinned kayak is a skill like any other. I recommend that EVERYONE park their boat on a steep embankment, anchor it, get in, and try to climb out. The best method seems to be to bring one foot out, placing it at the bottom of the cockpit rim,



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bringing the other foot out, then jumping. The dangers in actual use are destabilizing the boat or being knocked over by the current before you are free. This can result in some truly bizarre and deadly entanglements. Large cockpits help, but do into guarantee success.

An expert San Francisco Bay Area boater died on the Arroyo del Valle, a small rain-swollen creek near Livermore, California. The creek offers a 20+ mile run and had not been attempted for nearly a decade because of the drought. The rapids were long and choked with willows, with several sections of serious class V. Towards the end of the run the victim flipped, floated some distance upside-down, and became pinned in a logjam. He apparently hit his head; autopsy reports showed massive contusions and no aspiration of water, as one might expect with a drowning.

One of the other two boaters with him was caught in a "heads up" pin in some trees with a branch across the cockpit. The remaining boater, knowing he could not rescue the victim alone, elected to free this other individual first. Together they approached the victim from a midstream boulder. With some difficulty they attached a rope to one grab loop and pulled hard. Upon release of the kayak the victim fell out and floated some distance downstream. Even without these distractions, the victim was in very serious trouble from the time he hit his head. Poor helmet fit and marginal early season physical conditioning may have contributed to this accident.

I'll need all the help I can get in keeping up with what is sure to be a very busy year. If you hear of a fatality please write me at 230 Penlllyn Pike, Penlllyn, PA. 19422 or call 215-

646-0157. You don't have to write a report unless you want to; names, location, dates, and contacts are helpful, and newspaper clippings are always welcome.

AWA RESPONDS TO PROPOSED COAST GUARD PFD REGULATIONS AN OPEN LETTER

Chief, Office of Boating Safety
U.S. Coast Guard
2100 Second Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20593-0001

Dear Sir:

By now the Office of Boating Safety has received considerable comment on the proposed "seat cushion" regulations your organization proposed last December. When I received the notice, I felt that eliminating seat cushions as a

SAFETY

PFD substitute in canoes and kayaks was a good idea. They serve no use on human-powered sport craft other than to give their owner with a false sense of security. Upon reading the densely-worded, contradictory, and confusing regulatory prose several times, I was shocked to discover that kayaks and canoes over 16 feet would be required to carry, in addition to their life jackets, a type IV throwable device.

That's a seat cushion or ring buoy to us civilians. I was disappointed to see the proposal to lift the life vest exemption for racing craft. And I have serious reservations about giving added leeway to the states to toughen the life jacket requirement at their discretion.

USCG-Approved seat cushions are a relic of a 1950's style of boating safety, a holdover from a time when life vests were uncomfortable and something you "stowed". Comfort-

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SAFETY

able life jackets had not yet arrived on the scene. They are not really useful as a life jacket substitute, and while there is some opposition from Canoe Liveries, the elimination of seat cushions could be phased in gradually over five years. This would allow the seat cushions in the rental fleets to be replaced with wearable PFD's with minimum economic impact to these businesses.

I've been trying to figure out why your regulators want to lift the exemption for canoes over 16 feet from carrying, in addition to the paddler(s) life jackets, a Type N throwable device. I suppose the argument has something to do with uniformity, but real life defies bureaucratic notions of tidiness. However, even a non paddler can appreciate the significant difference in size and storage capacity between a 16' powerboat and a 16' canoe or kayak. In a 24" wide sea kayak,

for example, there is simply no place to put a seat cushion except behind the seat, where it is inaccessible. It's hard to imagine how a solo canoeist or kayaker could, after falling "overboard", throw himself the device. Anyone who thinks that it's practical to heave a type N when seated in a tandem canoe or kayak ought to try it; we've done it in rescue classes with comical results. And I'm sure you know enough not to recommend standing up in a canoe or kayak to throw a type N.

It's clear to me that racers need the exemption from PFD regulations in order to train effectively. Sprint and marathon paddlers exercise fiercely, and would overheat badly were they to wear life vests. These would interfere with training, and place the United States at a serious disadvantage versus our competitors. Whitewater athletes, on the other hand, al-

ways wear life vests, but these devices, while meeting international standards, are not U.S. Coast Guard Approved. The reasons for this are simple. First, the international standards (ICF and DIN) differ from Coast Guard requirements. And second, given that gaining Coast Guard Approval (one design, four sizes) costs over \$10,000, there is no way that producing a handful of specialized life vests for elite athletes can possibly be profitable. I could see your concern if deaths among competitors was a big problem, but I know of no fatal accidents or near misses involving any canoe or kayak racers over the past decade.

Your proposal to grant more power to the states to develop and enforce PFD regulations fills me with concern. For one thing, paddlers will be subject to varying regulations governing the same activity in different states, a situation which invites misunderstandings. Second, we've seen existing regulations capriciously enforced by certain states for political reasons having little to do with boating safety. For example, citing "squirr kayakers", extremely low volume stunt boats paddled by experts, for wearing custom-made life jackets contributes nothing to boating safety. Suggesting that they return to the parking lot and stuff an approved device into their boats in order to be "legal" is equally illogical. And yet this sort of harassment happens with alarming frequency at the state level. I would suggest that in the interests of uniformity and fairness that the existing restrictions on state authority be maintained.

It surprises me that, as these proposals were being formulated, no national organizations representing paddlers were consulted. Not the American Canoe Association, which has performed well in a number of Coast Guard grants over the past decade. Not the American Whitewater Affiliation, whose Safety Code has been the recognised standard since 1959. No one in the North

American Paddlesports Association, an industry trade group, or the Trade Association for Sea Kayaking, or the National Association of Canoe Liveries, or the U.S. Canoe Association, or even Canoe Magazine (1-800-MY CANOE) was asked for an opinion. So far as I know, no local club, outfitter, manufacturer, or dealer was asked for advice. Had we been involved during the early stages we might have been of service. But since you probably only consulted other bureaucrats in preparing these regulations, it's not surprising that public opinion took you by surprise.


There needs to be better communication between paddlesport organizations and your office. In addition to being the agency responsible for boating safety, the Coast Guard has tremendous expertise with large boats on the open ocean. Your seamanship is legendary. None of our groups would presume to tell you how to manage your craft. But to my knowledge you have no expert canoeists, kayakers, or rafters on your staff; we do. We should work together on matters affecting our activities. We should at the very least be contacted in the developmental stages of regulations affecting our sport. Unless you are ready to make a serious commitment to learning about our activities by working with the groups representing the different aspects of paddlesport you should not be wasting the taxpayer's money trying to regulate them.

I'm hoping that these proposed regulations die a quiet, but sudden death. If they do become law, you have not begun to hear the protests from paddlers throughout the country. This is a tremendous waste of our time and energy, and will not reflect well on the Coast Guard.

Sincerely,
Charles C. Walbridge
Board of Directors/ Safety
Committee
American Whitewater
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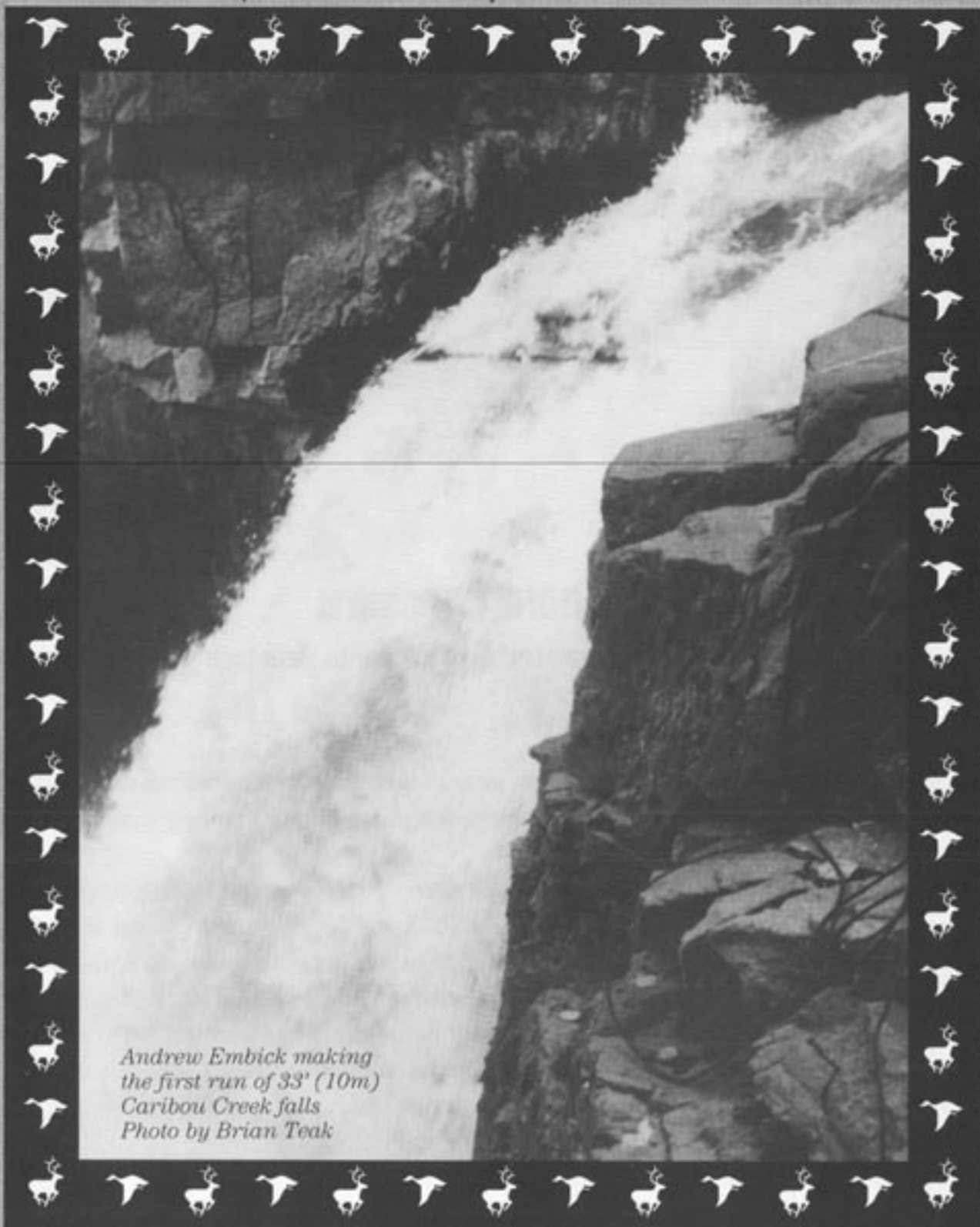
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ALASKA



*Andrew Embick making
the first run of 33' (10m)
Caribou Creek falls
Photo by Brian Teak*

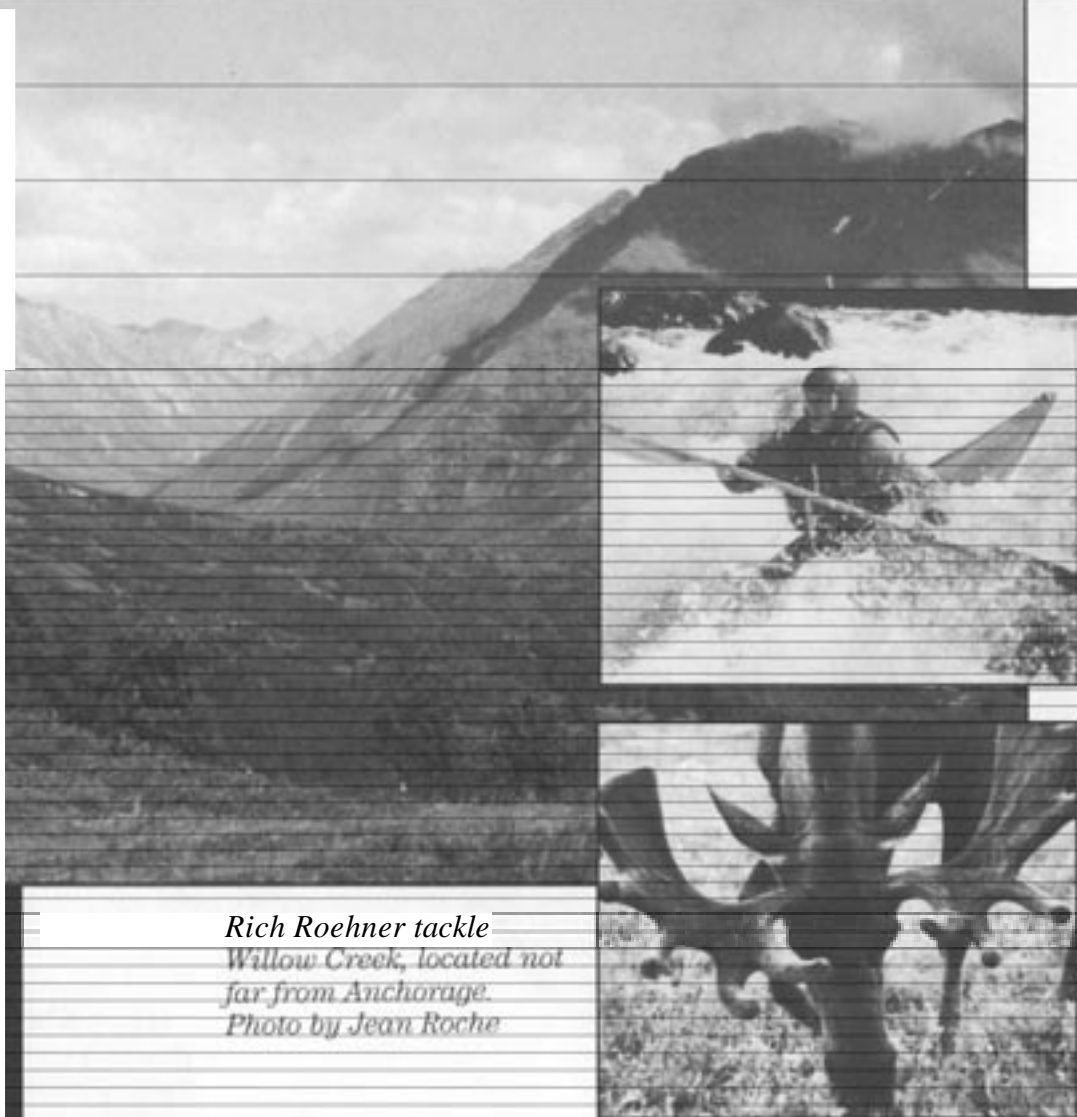


Photo by Roger Pollard

Photo by Bob Gedeck

*Rich Roehner tackle
Willow Creek, located not
far from Anchorage.
Photo by Jean Roche*

Northern Exposure

Whitewater Adventure in America's Last Frontier

by Roger Pollard

A name that conjures up images of solitary igloos, yapping dog sled teams, dour faced totem poles, airborne salmon and, sadly, greasy oil spills.

But there is a lot more to Alaska than that. To the enlightened whitewater buff Alaska means rivers... and lots of them. In fact, Andrew Embick's soon to be published whitewater guide (summer of 93) will list more than seventy runnable waterways. And every single one of these save one is completely free flowing... that's right... devoid of dams. And the Alaskan boating season is equally expansive, running from April to October. In short, the potential for river running in Alaska is nearly endless.



Photo by Roger Pollard



Photo by Roger Pollard

Deep in the canyon of the Tsaina River near Valdez

Mike Lawson negotiates the Kings River

Alaska features three types of rivers: clear water run-off rivers, rivers that are fed by glacial melt, and those that are a combination of the two. Early in the season, through mid June, the clearwater streams run high, while the glacial rivers are low. As the temperatures rise in late June and July, the glacial rivers rise. Hence those rivers that have a mixed watershed often have prolonged boating seasons.

This diversity of Alaskan rivers means that even the most obsessed whitewaterjunkie should always be able to get his or her fix.

Because most Alaskan rivers are relatively young in geologic terms, they often present steep and continuous gradients. Paddlers accustomed to pool-drop rivers may find this a bit disconcerting. Alaskan rivers feature fewer discrete technical rapids, but offer a lot more non-stop, booming action.

Alaska's extended boating season is magnified by the long, long days of summer. In June there is nearly twenty-four hours of daylight per day. Summer temperatures tend to be moderate and provide a welcome relief from the blistering heat of the continental U.S. The skies are not often clear; partly cloudy days are the rule.

Boaters visiting Alaska benefit from the fact that there are no language or cultural barriers, no necessity to change to a different currency and no threat of exotic disease. Of course, in the Alaskan wilderness, some of the comforts and conveniences that city dwellers take for granted may be a bit hard to come by.

When you are in the wilderness you can't just drop into a local 7-11 to pick up a post run case of Black Label. You're more likely to find your brew in a more colorful establishment, like Skinny Dick's Halfway Inn or the Bird House.

The ratio of whitewater enthusiasts to rivers in Alaska is so low that it is unlikely that you will see many other boaters on the water. In fact, on most runs, you are more likely to see a moose or bear. Even on Sixmile Creek, our most popular classic, you will rarely encounter more than two other parties on a weekend day.



Photo by Roger Pollard



Some boaters claim to have gone as long as two years without spotting another boating party of the rivers of **Alaska**.

Most **visitors** to Alaska fly into Anchorage; with 250,000 people it is Alaska's largest city. There are more than twenty **runnable** creeks and rivers within a hundred mile radius of the city, some within minutes of downtown. The Copper **River** region and Valdez are two other popular Alaskan boating destinations.

Perhaps the best thing about Alaska is its wild nature and character. One is likely to encounter a lot of exotic wildlife, even on runs that are close to the road. Every paddling trip is a scenic, dramatic adventure, and there are no rules, no permits, no fees... just wide open spaces and freedom.



Alaskan boaters do not wait in eddies, fight for **parking** spots or pay users fees. This is, of course, an idyllic situation, but sometimes I do **find** myself wondering what it would be like to be part of the mainstream paddling scene.

Like a **farm** boy intrigued by life in the big city; I sometimes long to loiter around a put-in on a hot day, clad in my **stylin'** paddling shorts and life jacket, **checking** out the bikini clad babes. I sometimes want to soak in sunscreen and hit the local whitewater rodeo and laugh at the knuckleheads running class 4 rapids in inner tubes while trying to down a Budweiser.

I wouldn't mind measuring my style and ability against others, even if meant that folks would laugh at me. I'd even like to hear some officious

Ranger Rick or landowner Jimmy Jack try to order me around, just so that I could tell him to **\$@&% \$##**. I must admit that, even in my wildest fantasies, I don't want to fill out any forms or permit applications; I've **never** been glib at that!

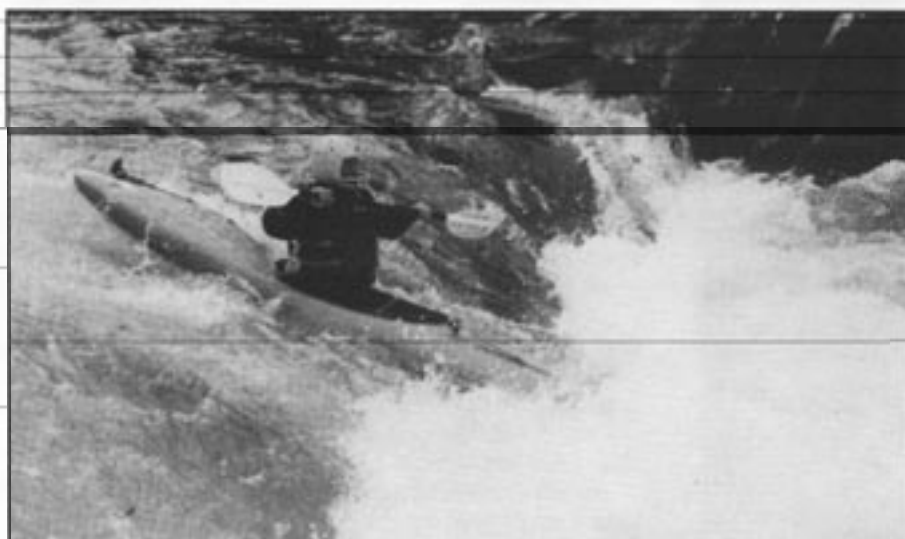
Sometimes I get tired of yelling "Go away bear!" on the approach to every bend in the river. I don't always like wearing ten layers of pile and that damned neoprene cap, especially when I'm dragging my boat through an alder thicket. And sitting around a bush pilot's cabin, waiting for the weather to break, sometimes gets me down. I guess the grass is always greener...

And some folks just don't know when they've got it made.

*Scouting Six Mile...
Vedant?? and pristine
Photo by Bob Gedekoh*

*Brian Baines on **Six** Mile
Creek... Alaska's most
popular kayaking run.
Photo by Roger Pollard*

*Boater — Greg Brown The
steep, technical Little
Susitna*





Wild and Woolly on Sheep Creek

"Let's give it one last try," declared bush pilot Boyd Gochanour as he herded Mike Lawson, Jeff Maylen and me toward the float plane at the Susitna Air Service. This was going to be it; if he couldn't get us in this time, we would have to scratch our plan to make a first descent of Sheep Creek, located about 80 miles north of Anchorage.

Soon the Cessna 206 engine spooled up and the powerful single engine float plane lifted off Kashwitna Lake. The expanse of the Susitna Valley opened beneath us as the plane's wake settled on the banks of the mirror far below.

Fortuitously the clouds parted, allowing access to the small lake on which we planned to land.

"Boyd, have you ever been in there with this beast?, I inquired, struggling to be heard over the drone of the propeller. "Only in my Supercub, never in the 206," he smirked, as he eyeballed the lake, trying to anticipate the effects of the wind.

"Think we'll make it?" I asked, trying not to sound nervous.

"Oh, we can get in. I just don't know if I can get back out."

"Good," we replied, knowing full well that we would not be in the plane on the return trip. "Let's put her down."

After one additional turn, the floats touched down on the blanket of water, the spray roostertailing high behind us.

Every bush pilot is good at two things; flying his or her aircraft and unloading it quickly. While his passengers stand preoccupied, breathlessly absorbing the scenery, the bush pilot quickly empties the aircraft, knowing that any delay might allow the clouds to roll in and strand him in a less than hospitable location. No bush pilot wants to be forced to spend a night with a bunch of gun toting hunters dressed in the latest Eddie Bauer apparel. Sitting around a campfire listening to big city rich boys recount their favorite hunting fairy tale rarely meets a bush pilot's definition of a good time.

And so, within a few minutes of landing, Boyd made an unceremonious and uneventful departure, leaving us standing on the shores of the high alpine lake, a classic scene from the Alaskan outback.

Soon we could no longer hear the whine of the plane at all. "Well," Mike observed wryly, "We're on our own now." The creek was still a mile and half below us and we were in bear country. Being afflicted with a common Alaskan malady known as *bearmania*, I had procured a package of Black Cat firecrackers, which I was carrying in the pocket of my spray jacket. I had visions of a ten foot grizzly clutching a knife and fork and waiting for us in every clearing. My assumption was that if I exploded a firecracker every hundred yards or so, that my phantom bear would assume it was a gunshot, abandon his eating utensils and hit the road.

I had considered bringing bottle rockets for this purpose, but decided against it because of their potential trajectory. I could just imagine one sailing over a bear's head, then exploding, effectively driving him in our direction. My paddling partners called

me a Sissy Pants and laughed at my behavior, but, undaunted, I kept it up until we reached the relative safety of the creek.

Our first glimpse of Sheep Creek revealed that it was all that we expected, a beautiful emerald, studded with granite boulders. We paddled through a pristine forest for about five miles without incident, finally entering a section of mellow water that braided through an overgrown area. It was the kind of place that invites the mind to wander.

Suddenly we received a profound dose of reality... in the form of a big brown ball of fur on river left. Several seconds clicked by before my mind digested and processed this image, and when I came to terms with it, I discovered that I had already drifted beyond the last eddy.

With a quick sweep I spun about and paddled hard, determined to reach the safe haven upstream. I called out a warning to my companions. Mike joined me in the eddy, while Jeff took refuge upstream.

Typically a bear will run away when confronted by a human, particularly a human as weird looking as a kayaker. But there are exceptions;

veteran Alaskan kayaker Andrew Embick was forced to fire a warning shot over a grizzly's head on the first descent of the Chakachatna River, to ward off a potential attack.

Still, we were surprised when the massive grizzly mounted a charge upstream in our direction. The bear crashed through the brush that bounded the stream, while I extracted my trusty can of Counter Assault Bear Spray from my boat.

A charging bear can run at 44 feet per second. That meant that within a few seconds our boats were about to undergo the ultimate product test. As for us... all I could think about was the guy who survived an attack who reported that he could feel his skull crack in the jaws of an angry brown bear.

The bear was only thirty feet away when she changed course and ran off into the forest. From his vantage upstream Jeff saw why; her cubs were hiding on the banks, not far from our eddy. I spent the next five minutes shaking uncontrollably. Sows with cubs are notoriously unpredictable; we couldn't be sure that the giant might not come crashing out of the brush again.

Like tornado victims whose house remains standing in the midst of a neighborhood that has been demolished, we wondered why we had been spared. When we were ready to resume our journey, no one very anxious to accept the lead position.

But eventually we started back down the narrow winding stream, and after another 15 miles and 12 hours we reached the take out at the Park's Highway. In the course of that journey we had sighted five grizzlies, two black bears and dozens of eagles and salmon.

As I remember that day I can still see the creek's opalescent green waters and verdant forest lined with purple fireweed. As I write this we are locked in the grip of the harsh Alaskan winter, but by the time you read it, Sheep Creek will once again be a narrow, twisting torrent... ready to thrill the next party of whitewater adventurers who stalwart enough to accept the challenge.



Bush pilot Boyd Gochanour prepares to make a hasty retreat from the Happy River put-in.



Photo by Roger Pollard

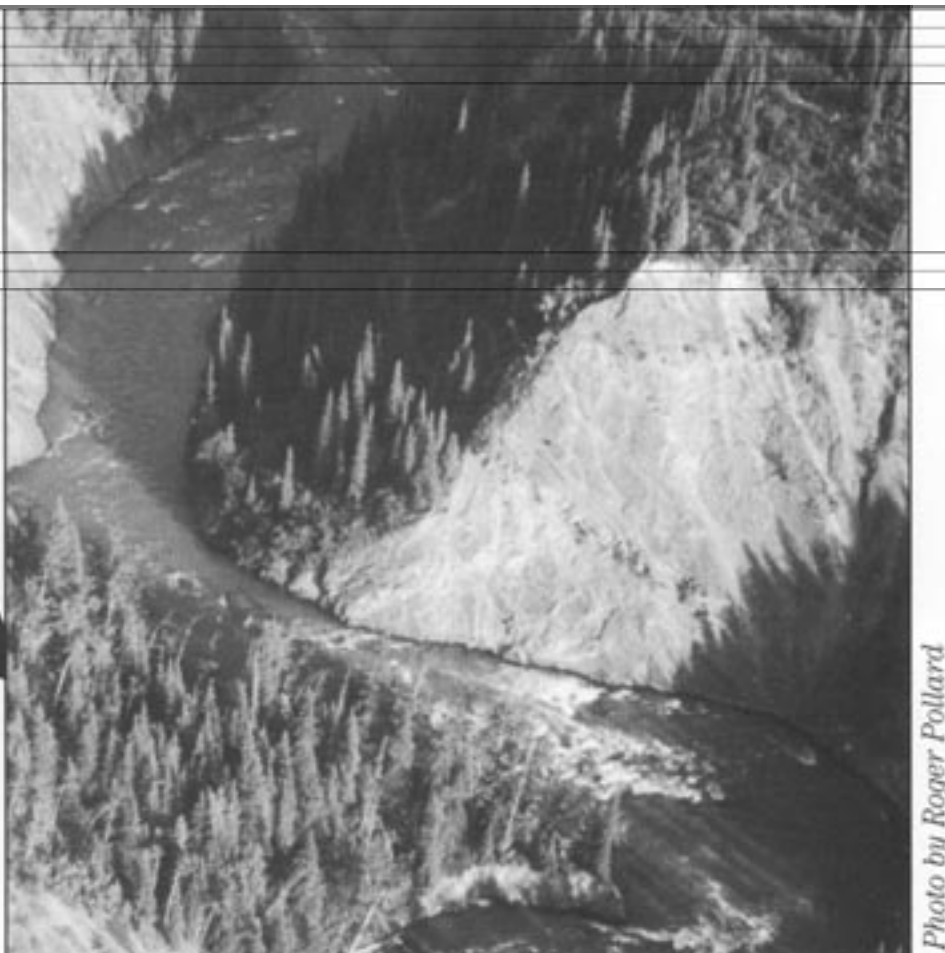


Photo by Roger Pollard

Aerial reconnaissance of the Happy River Canyon.

Happiness is a River

Descent of Alaska's Happy River

by Roger Pollard

It was late evening and we were deep in the canyon, nearly one hundred miles from the nearest road. We were lying under a tarp trying to catch some sleep, but I was suffering from a bad case of bearsomnia. Next to me Chris Roach had his .44 Magnum Redhawk revolver strategically placed beside his head. Three cans of Counter Assault Bear Spray were lying within arms' reach.

I rolled over and discovered that the barrel of the gun was pointed directly at my head. I silently pushed it away. A few inches separated the ground from the bottom of the tarp, allowing me to peek out. In the dim evening light I imagined bear paws just outside. It was not a reassuring vision. You might as well shoot a grizzly with a BB gun as with a 44. Eventually I managed to dispel these disturbing thoughts and drift off to sleep.

This was the night we spent on the Happy River, a crown jewel of Alaska Range rivers. As a former Air Force

navigator, I had seen the Happy River from the air several times on routine training missions. From 29,000 feet the Happy looked like any other river, a vein on the earth's surface; one in a complex network that fed into Susitna, which, in turn, flowed into Cook Inlet and eventually the Pacific. But a closer inspection with binoculars revealed that the Happy river had a unique character. I hoped that it hadn't been run.

I called Alaskan river pioneer Andrew Embick, and he reported that the Happy had not been paddled. This was confirmed by Vern Hummel, owner of the Rainy Pass Lodge, which is located nearby. In fact, Vern responded to my inquiry with a classic Alaskan reply, "I think someone tried it years back, but everyone died."

Sounds good to me, I thought.

A first descent of a remote Alaskan river can be a costly endeavor these days, since those rivers with easy access have already been explored.

Embick reports in his book that he has taken 33 fixed wing flights, seven airline flights and nine helicopter charters in the course of exploring sixty different rivers.

Since there are few roads and hiking trails in Alaska, the bush plane becomes the main mode of transportation for both the reconnaissance and the running of many rivers. This is not to say that if you want to mount a first descent you absolutely need a Cessna 185, replete with expert pilot, but it does help. Fortunately, almost everyone living in Alaska knows someone with a small plane.

And so, after a few phone calls, Jeff Mahlen and I were treated to a close up view of the river, courtesy of bush pilot Rick Whitaker, who yanked and banked the plane along the canyon rim. It was an exciting flight, perhaps too much so. Jeff, a hardened river rat, looked like Casper the Friendly Ghost in the rear seat of the aircraft. But our reconnaissance ended with a straight and sure low level sweep over the turquoise, granite studded river, and we were hooked. Jeff and I exchanged glances that could mean just one thing... let's do it!



Photo by Roger Pollard

Within a week our plans were near completion. Our expedition on the Happy would be self supported with lightweight gear, in deference to the technical upper section. We would paddle the river in two days, to accommodate everyone's work schedules. Peter Sennhauser, Chris Roach and Jeff's wife, Tawny Nicholysen would accompany Jeff and I. But we needed to fill one more seat in the airplane to lower everyone's cost. The search was on.

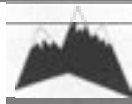
It has been said that millions have been made and lost, inventions born, and great ideas formed within the walls of a coffeehouse. But, did you know that rivers can be stolen there too? Well, add that to your list.

For, as sure as Jesse James robbed a train, as sure as Saddam took Kuwait, a man stole our the Happy River away from us.

Two days before our well coordinated trip, Peter bumped into an old friend from the lower 48 at the local Cafe del Mundo. Knowing that we needed another passenger, good natured Peter invited his friend along.

After analyzing photos, studying the maps and feasting on smoked salmon, the friend departed, "unable to make a commitment". The next day he and a compadre flew in and ran the lower canyon, remarking later that he "had left the upper section for us".

We had lost our gold nugget down a bottomless crack. Perhaps the innocence that comes from living in a place far from the dog eat dog world had done us in. But, what does a first descent mean anyway? Just some names on a piece of paper. We still didn't



The first descent at the Upper Canyon of the Happy River.

know what the Happy was like. It was still the adventure we were looking for, even if it had lost some of its virgin lustre.

And so, soon we were dragging our boats a quarter of a mile across the tundra to the creek. In the distance two grizzlies munched on roots and blueberries. Two more could be seen loping up the treeless mountainside. Within a few minutes they had covered quite a distance, reminding us that they can be fast moving, long range travelers. We knew that we needed to be on the lookout and to make a lot of noise.

The Happy started off as a small turquoise stream flowing through a magical, boreal forest. Granite boulders in the stream bed rendered this section of the river interesting, though not terribly difficult. (Class II and III.)

After four miles the walls steepened and we approached the canyon. We knew that camping would be difficult in the canyon, so we elected to spend the night at its entrance. Priorities must be set on self-supported trips; we had brought the light pyramid tarp instead of a full-blown tent, reasoning that we would tough it out if it rained. But, in what might seem an absurd contradiction, we found space for our bear insurance, the two pound .44 Magnum pistol. Comfort is a relative term in Alaska.

Although the whitewater in the canyon was easier, it offered unique geologic formations. Eagles soared over our heads, each apparently patrolling its own territory.

After twelve serpentine miles we reached the massive glacial fed Skwentna River. At 20,000 cfs, its swift brown water cut through a vast valley. The river and scenery was so magnificent that we scarcely noticed the moderate whitewater. The river valley was so immense, in fact, that one unaccustomed to reading topos might easily have gotten lost.

Fortunately, Peter and Jeff sniffed out the point of entry into the slough that led to Red Salmon Lake, our rendezvous with the plane. The slough's banks were pulverized, suggesting that the bears had been gorging themselves on salmon there in the not too distant past. We were grateful that none were there that day. Our luck, not our planning, had saved us from being blocked by this potentially impenetrable barrier.

As we paddled into the open we spotted the Halloween orange Cessna 206 from the Susitna Air Service waiting for us at the end of the lake. We cut a line through the muskeg to the plane and loaded up. Within a few minutes, pilot Boyd Gochanour had us airborne, leaving "Happyness" behind on our way back to civilization.



Editor's Note: Adventurer Roger Pollard is a navigator for the National Gaurd in Alaska and a trip leader for Kayak Alaska, a company which provides support services to whitewater enthusiasts.



Just the "Bear" Facts! *How Great the Risk?*

by Bob Gedekoh

Boating in Alaska sounds great, doesn't it?

Wide open spaces, fabulous scenery, uncrowded rivers.

And the wildlife!

Ah, yes... the wildlife. Therein lies the rub.

Because when it comes to boating in Alaska, the word "wildlife" seems almost to be synonymous with the word "bears*."

"Bears*", as in Great Big Potentially Man Eating Brown Bears. What boater wants to wind up **as** an snack for a 1500 pound bruin?

Well, before you let **bearanoia** dissuade you from your dream of paddling in America's Last Frontier, you ought to carefully read what follows. The experts tell us that the odds of being attacked by a bear are vanishingly small, especially if you use common sense and take the appropriate precautions.

The more you learn about the life cycle of bears and their behavior, the less you will fear them, and the more you will respect them. Here are the "bear" facts.

Alaskan brown bears belong to the same species as the Kodiak bears of Kodiak island and the Grizzly bears of

Montana, Wyoming and Canada (*Ursae arctos*). The large brown bears of Eurasia are also members of the same species, which is to say that if they were in geographic proximity, they could interbreed. More than half of the brown bears of North America live in Alaska.

Alaskan brown bears may weigh nearly a ton, but they often loose one fourth of their body weight during their winter hibernation, which is generally spent in inaccessible, high country dens. Sows give birth to their one pound cubs in midwinter, while hibernating. Twins are common; triplets occur less frequently. The cubs nurse for two or three years, then are weaned and driven away. Only about one half of all cubs survive to maturity.

The life of a brown bear is one of alternating six month feasts and famines. During the spring and summer they must feed voraciously, storing energy in the form of fat to carry them through the winter. By late fall their bodies are insulated with a six inch layer of fat. Alaskan brown bears are omnivorous, eating more than twelve species of plants **as** well **as** meat... predominantly salmon and rodents.

The salmon runs, which generally begin in early June, attract large numbers of brown bears to the sides of streams and rivers. Here the bears may devour **as** much as 60 pounds of fish in **an** hour, gaining **as** much **as** 100 pounds in two weeks. The bears travel from river to river, following the temporal pattern of the migration of the fish.

Mating occurs in late spring; each female may mate with several males. But implantation of the fertilized eggs does not occur until late fall. Males do not participate in the rearing of cubs. In fact, the females must defend their young against attacks by males, who will kill the cubs in an attempt to bring the female back into heat. Brown bears have but two **natural** enemies, other bears of the same species and man. The life span of brown bears in the wild is thought to be about twenty years.

The risk of being mauled or killed by a bear have been exaggerated by the media. To put this into perspective consider the following: each year more than 100,000 people are killed by other men (wars, murder), about 60,000 people die of poisonous snake bites (only 1-2 in the U.S.), 1000 people each are killed by tigers, crocodiles and domestic livestock, 500 are killed each by hippos and elephants, 100 are killed by lions, while an average of only one ~~Der~~son is killed by North American Brown Bears.

Between 1900 and 1980 there were only 126 brown bear attacks in the National Parks of the United States. During that period of time there were 41 deaths, 19 in the National Parks and 22 in Alaska, outside the National Parks. Only one in 1.3 million visitors to Glacier N.P. is injured by a bear. In Yellowstone, a brown bear attack occurs in only one in sixty thousand days spent by individuals in the backcountry.

At a recent meeting of the Wilderness Medical Society, Dr. Steven French, the world's foremost expert on bear attacks and founder of the Yellowstone Grizzly Foundation, presented the results of his years of study. According to French, most brown bear attacks occur because the animal is taken by surprise, or because it is attempting to drive off a perceived threat. That is why although sows with cubs



make up only 20% of the bear population, they account for more than 70% of bear attacks. Because bears can smell human beings from up to mile away, surprise encounters should be rare, unless the bear is preoccupied, as with fishing for salmon.

Bears rarely attack humans with the intention of eating them, i.e. as prey. Occasionally rogue bears, who have been long exposed to humans and associate them with food, adopt this form of behavior.

French suggests that the key to bear safety is avoidance. Hunters and photographers, who sneak through the woods in hopes of getting close to bears, are particularly at risk. That a familiarity with bear behavior is important is reflected by the fact that of 115 attacks on humans by bears in Alaska during 1900-1985, only two involved Native Americans. Clearly the natives are quite adept at avoiding the wrath of their neighborhood bruins.

French suggests that backcountry travelers should make lots of noise, travel with others and avoid constricted areas, animal corridors or areas where bears are known to feed. Avoid camping at sites that have been trashed by others and make sure all food is stored away from your tent and in a fashion that precludes odors that can attract midnight marauders. French maintains that there is no good evidence to support the myth that brown bears are more likely to attack menstruating women.

He also suggests that backcountry visitors should have a contingency plan in case of an encounter. Being familiar with the geography of the area is a start. French recommends that campers sleep in tents, but that they don't zip themselves into their bags. Keep a flashlight beside you when you sleep. In general, French is not enthusiastic about bear mace such as Counter Assault; he feels that it often provides a false sense of security, and that, quite often, it will only blow back into the victims face. However, he does recommend keeping a can of it handy within the tent at night, in the unlikely event of a nocturnal attack.

French believes that guns are of questionable value in the event of a brown bear attack, since few victims will have the presence of mind to use

their weapon effectively and because brown bears have a very small kill target area. For instance, their brains are long and narrow... so shooting a bear is far more likely to enrage him than to kill him.

In the event of a chance encounter, French recommends that you identify yourself by making noise and that you avoid sudden movements. Your behavior should suggest submission, but not necessarily vulnerability. Do not make prolonged eye contact with the bear, this may be interpreted as a threat. French recommends that you stand your ground; running may trigger an attack, and brown bears have been clocked at more than thirty miles an hour. And, in spite of their size, they are quite adept at climbing trees.

If the very unlikely event that a bear charges, don't panic (this sounds good), but take steps to minimize the damage. Remember, in all likelihood the bear doesn't want to kill you, she just wants to establish dominance. They generally will use only as much force as they feel is necessary to remove a perceived threat. Bears are head oriented in their attacks, most fa-

tal injuries involve the head and neck.

Don't fight or scream. Fall to the ground in a fetal position, face down, with your hands interlocked behind your head and your neck flexed forward, elbows protecting your face. Don't make eye contact with the bear during the attack.

Finally, stay down after the bear moves away. The bear may interpret any additional movement as a challenge and attack again. Generally the injuries that occur in these second attacks are more severe. Make sure that the bear is gone before you attempt to leave.

In summary, the likelihood of experiencing an serious attack by a brown bear, even while kayaking in Alaska, is vanishingly small, if you use common sense and take some simple precautions. These mighty creatures deserve our respect, even more than our fear. They are magnificent creatures who thrive in an incredibly harsh environment.

We may visit the backcountry, but only as "tourists".

The wilderness of Alaska remains the brown bears' turf.

Loaded for Bear

by Andrew Embick



Editors note: In this excerpt from his soon to be published guide to paddling in Alaska (*Fast and Cold: A Guide to Alaskan Whitewater*) noted whitewater pioneer Andrew Embick advises boaters on bears... and guns.

There are few restrictions to carrying a gun within Alaska, though remember that the airlines will want it transported un-

loaded, in a rigid, locked case with ammunition in original containers, and declared as baggage (not carry-on). Air taxi operators want guns unloaded, and small planes (and boats) can carry guns in soft, zippered cases more easily than in bulky rigid ones. Denali Park does not allow guns, but the "new" parks do. Canada does not allow handguns. Do not attempt to drive across the border with one—it will be confis-



cated. Some state parks prohibit shooting except in self defense.

A gun will not invariably solve all of your bear problems. Keep in mind that if you shoot a bear, at the very least you'll have to skin it and transport the hide to the nearest Fish and Game office. You may not keep bears killed in the defense of life or property, unless it is bear season and you have a hunting licence and a bear tag and, for out-of-staters, a licensed, very expensive Alaskan hunting guide. If you shoot at a bear, you may miss. Or the bear may keep coming, even if mortally wounded. Or, **min**orly wounded, you may just piss it off.

There's no point bringing a gun if it makes you feel cocky and inclined to take poor risks. But, if questioned, most Alaskans will indicate that guns come along on their trips, at least those involving camping. They themselves may not be the ones with the weapon, but someone on the trip has brought the gun, and invariably, the group feels safer. Feeling more comfortable is a worthwhile goal in itself. Being part of a large group is safety in itself, as bears generally avoid all but the smallest parties.

What gun? Probably a pump 12 gauge shotgun, such as a Winchester 1200, loaded with slugs. With a short barrel, and able to be fitted with a folding stock, it will be compact, light, easily carried and, though capable of only short-range accuracy, can provide seven shots. A high powered rifle (.30-06 or larger) is the weapon of choice for hunters, capable of more accuracy and longer range. But they provide a maximum of four shots, cost two or three times as much, are heavier and longer, and the bolt actions are harder to work than a pump **ac**-tion.

A pistol is not a good choice, except for true experts as a last ditch weapon. The vaunted .44 Magnum is inadequate with respect to power for brown bears, and unless you've shot a couple of hundreds of rounds with one, your accuracy is probably not adequate either. However, if your choice on a kayak trip is the .44 or nothing, bring the .44, loaded with hot, hardloaded jacketed bullets or heavy, hard cast bullets. For the latter, try Garrett Cartridges, their 330 grainers going out a 1280 fps (P.O. box 170, Chehalis, Washington 98532)

Whatever gun you bring, be familiar with it, be safe in its use, and keep it close at hand and clean and **dry**. The first shot should almost always be above the bear, which may scare it away. That avoids the problem of wounding the bear. On a back-packing trip around Mt. Drum in the Wrangells, my friend Joe Loffredo persuaded a grizzly in a bad mood to leave, by firing several above it with a .22 pistol, at a distance of a few feet. On the Chakachatna, I did the same with a .44, but, at the first shot, another bear came out of the bushes. Then they both left.

The closest I've come to being **killed** by the local fauna was not by bears, however, it was by a moose. On a solo run of Upper-Upper Willow Creek, I waited for a cow and calf to cross, then went ahead. I should have waited longer. Mama charged in with murder on her mind, and in the shallow water, I couldn't get away from her, especially since she cut out and ran on shore to catch up twice. **Looking** back over my shoulder at those pounding hooves looming above me just a few feet away gave me a little extra speed to escape. ■

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Grin and Bear It... An Alaskan Adventure

by Dean Fairburn



It was about the time my new paddling buddy, Kevin Stillman, asked if I owned a sawed off shotgun that would fit into my kayak that I knew I was definitely gonna' be doing some interesting paddling. At that moment my gravest concerns were confirmed; I had been asked along on what amounted to an annual whitewater grizzly bear "hunt". Yes, my new found paddling acquaintances intentionally paddled small, shallow streams when the salmon were spawning... just so that they could observe the bears and their gluttonous feast!

Kevin Stillman, Doug Blockowsky and Dean Fairburn huntin' for bear.

I remember considering an alternative trip... perhaps to Victoria Falls... for what seemed likely to be a more enjoyable, though no more certain, death. But, for reasons that are still a bit unclear to me, I decided to go. And why not? I had not landed a job yet and I had never seen a grizzly up close and personal.

I had just moved to Fairbanks and I was learning that boating in Alaska was going to be quite a bit different from the river running that I had done before. The rivers in Alaska were, for the most part, silt-laden and, consequently, sometimes difficult to read. The boating season was limited to the summer, the only time that the rivers were not frozen. Even in the summer the water was so cold that wet or dry suits were a necessity. And, of course, the Alaskan scenery was magnificent, and there was an abundance of wildlife.

Yes... there were mosquitoes. And yes... there were bears.

Fortunately the people in Alaska were warm and friendly. Maybe this was because these sourdoughs had abandoned their families in the lower 48 and maybe it was a function of the cabin fever they experienced during the winter. At any rate, I soon discovered that, in Alaska, friends are family and summer is bliss.

Shortly after my arrival I made some friends at the Nenana Race Festival

who were to introduce me to boating in the far north. After a few runs on the Nenana, I was asked to go on a three day, fly-in river trip to the interior of the state. Our destination was a tributary of a tributary of the Susitna. Regarding its actual identity I can say no more; I am sworn to secrecy. This hardly matters, the story could no doubt have been the same on any one of a hundred runs. The trip was to feature some good whitewater, some good scenery, spawning salmon and... of course... the bears.

The plan was for three self contained parties of three to fly into a lake which emptied into the small, salmon infested stream. I was to catch the last flight, one which was temporarily delayed due to low cloud cover. And so, while we waited for the skies to clear, Kevin Stillman, Doug Blockowsky and I hung around the air taxi's cabin, staring at a massive, vengeful looking grizzly mounted on the wall.

It was nearly evening when we departed. I did not know then that bears are most active late in the day. Flying in, the gray overcast sky set the mood. Because of the clouds we were forced to fly around the mountains instead of over them, further delaying our arrival. At any rate, any fear of bears that I possessed was temporarily transformed into a fear of heights as I looked down at the magnificent, rugged contours be-

Photo by Dean Fairburn



Little did they know that around the next bend.. Ursa Horribilis was waiting.

low.

We followed a river to the point where the creek that we had targeted entered. The contrast at the confluence was tremendous, the river was large and thick with glacial silt, whereas, the creek was tiny and clear. Even from the plane we could see the hordes of big red salmon fighting their way up the stream.

I continued to stare at the salmon as we flew up the creek, marveling at their ability to find their way back thousands of miles to their spawning ground, the place of their birth. I marveled at their determined struggle, one that terminates in certain death.

And I MARVELED at the size of the freak'n grizzly bear that was wading right up the middle of the tiny, narrow stream! A stream that I would soon be navigating!

Oh, I could enjoy watching that bear from the safety of the plane. It was the first I had ever seen and it was a magnificent creature, so large, in fact, that it breached nearly one quarter of the width of the stream. But I realized that the next time I might see that bear I would not be a thousands of feet over his head.

But as we flew around the next bend I became even more apprehensive. Far

below us, the other six kayakers were floating along, unaware of the fact that they were about to come face to face with the bear. We circled the party but there was no way to warn them of what lie ahead. Later I discovered that it hadn't mattered; the bruin must have temporarily abandoned the stream because they never saw him at all.

As we unloaded our kayaks after landing on a lake a caribou trotted towards us from the brush. I stood watching the splendid animal until Doug commented, "He's probably running from something.. maybe a bear."

Oh boy! That B word again!

Soon we left the vast lake, drifting

into the narrow, twenty foot wide creek. The banks were dense with brush; my wide angle splatter vision was replaced with tunnel vision. It was an exhilarating moment, but it made me feel insecure.

Doug had made this run before and on each occasion had encountered grizzlies. And, by the signs on the bank, it seemed certain that we would confront some too. Every blade of grass was matted down by the heavy traffic. Bear tracks and dung covered the sand bars. The banks were littered with half eaten salmon, filling the air with a foul odor and an unsettling atmosphere.

Perhaps the reason so many of the fish were only half eaten was our defense strategy... which was to make a lot of noise. No doubt we interrupted quite a few hearty meals.

Doug sang loudly and constantly into the bushes. Kevin, a transplant from New Mexico who looked and acted the part of a laid back farmer, seemed a bit out of character when he joined Doug in song. Not being able to carry a tune, I felt a bit self-conscious, but after noticing all the bear sign, I

Alaskan brown bear—to be respected as well as feared.





joined in as well.

But we had a second line of defense, just in case our songs were not adequate. Doug and I were armed with bear mace, while Kevin was armed with a stainless steel forty four Magnum.

Rounding bends was especially unnerving, especially when the creek was particularly narrow. Often we were startled by the sudden violent splashing of the three foot long salmon darting from under our boats. Each time it took a moment to recognize that the commotion was being caused by a fish, and not a charging bruin.

After thirty minutes our singing evolved into shouts of "Hey... Bear!" Eventually the creek channeled between two log jams at a bend. We did our best to scout the descent, all the while chanting, "Hey... Bear."

Doug was running first, I was in the middle and Kevin was bringing up the rear.

Just as Doug was about to start into the rapid Kevin called out, "A Bear!" But it sounded to us like much of the same, and his warning went unheeded.

"A BEAR DAMMIT!" Kevin screamed and this time we got the message. Doug managed a hasty back ferry into an eddy and I plowed into him, just after I spotted the huge, button eyed bruin just around the bend. We soon lost sight of the monster from the vantage of our eddy.

I was pumped too full of adrenalin

to thank Kevin for saving our necks. I was so excited that I couldn't imagine what we were going to do next. In fact, I was in a state of panic. Proceeding downstream seemed out of the question. Portaging... suicidal.



I was in such a bad way that I couldn't help but blurt out, "What the hell are we gonna do now?"

Doug's reaction was calm and unruffled. "Did he go into the bush?" he inquired.

"Couldn't tell," was Kevin's characteristic, nonchalant response.

Doug peeled out into the current, grinning broadly, as if to say, "Well, this what we came here for, boys."

"Stay close!" he called over his shoulder.

Kevin followed and I mindlessly paddled into the current as well. Now the adrenalin was really pumping. I have never been wound so tight. My senses were crystal clear and I felt hyper alert. My paddle strokes were sure, strong and precise. And though my voice may not have been as sweet as Pavarotti's, I know it was every bit as loud.

As it turned out we had no further encounters with that particular bruin.



Bear on the run 1500 pounds of unpredictable dynamite.

Photo by Dean Fairburn



Bear hunter, Doug Blockowsky takes time to surf.

Bear hunter extraordinaire -- Julie Klacker

But we started to make noise with a new found enthusiasm as a consequence of that close call. We sang at the top of our lungs; I was no longer the least bit self conscious about being out of key. We called out constantly to one another, but, remembering Kevin's nearly unheeded warning, we agreed that no one would use the word "bear" again, unless one had actually been spotted.

In fact, the word "Bear!" was utilized several times that late afternoon. Although many of our encounters were close, most of the time the bears just trotted off nonplused through the thick willows and alders. This was not too intimidating, by the time we spotted most of them they were already high-tailing it for cover. These were the best times... times when we could enjoy watching these incredible animals without fear of being eaten.

But there were occasional moments of high anxiety. Sometimes the rapids were so noisy that the bears would not notice our approach. Because the stream was so tight and narrow, by the time we spotted them we were often quite close, with the current driving us even closer. To avoid becoming another entree on the bears' menus, we scrambled to catch micro eddies or to grab a rock or branch along the shore.

From these precarious river side sanctuaries we would shout and bang on our boats until the bears would vanish into the brush. Then we would haul ass downstream... along the opposite bank, of course.

But eventually we encountered one bruin that was not so easily intimidated. He was a particularly large boar stand-

ing in the creek on river right. We drove our kayaks onto a gravel bar on river left about one hundred feet upstream. As per our routine, we started to make a lot of noise. He heard us all right, but he was apparently not about to surrender his territory. In fact, he casually started lumbering towards us.

My first instinct was to find my camera so that I could take a picture, but when Kevin pulled out his holstered forty-four I reconsidered and started looking for my mace. Meanwhile the bear continued to amble our way. We yelled, we screamed, we waved our arms and paddles in the air, but the bear continued. For the second time that day I seriously considered the likelihood that I was going to be eaten.

The grizzly came to within fifty feet of us before he stopped, giving us a disgusted look, as if to say, "What the hell are you doing here?" Then he turned and slowly sauntered into the bushes across the narrow creek.

I had my sprayskirt on in a heartbeat, but Kevin, who was paddling in

borrowed equipment, took quite a bit longer. As a consequence there were some tense moments before we got the hell out of there.

Shortly thereafter we spotted a sow with two large cubs, allegedly the most dangerous combination. As luck would have it, we had to make a portage in her vicinity. Another moment of high anxiety!

Although the whitewater was never more than class II, the presence of the bears made it seem like class V+. The eight hours we spent on the creek that day constituted one of the most intense paddling experiences I had ever had, and at the end of it I was exhausted. It wasn't until we reached the confluence of the creek with the large, silty river, that we could relax. We drifted far out into the protection of the current, a bear sighting from here could once again be a pleasant, non-threatening experience.

We soon rendezvoused with the other six members of our party and set camp. They too had spotted a number



Photo by Dean Fairburn

of bears. In fact, Julie Klacker claimed that their group had actually paddled the stream silently, so they could maximize their chances of getting a good look at them. And then, as if to prove her point, she wandered off alone to take a hike. I admired her courage, but remembering the nine bears that I had seen that day, I decided to remain in camp, relaxing in the safety of numbers.

As fate would have it during the next two days, while we paddled the larger river, we never spotted another bruin. But these were splendid days, nonetheless, featuring continuous class IV action and spectacular scenery.

I learned a lot about Alaskan bears on my first bear "hunt". They have different personalities and their behavior is not always predictable. It is not necessary, or desirable, to carry an arsenal of weapons. No one wants to turn the river corridors into battle ones. But carrying mace and a small firearm may be advisable. Using appropriate camping techniques can do a lot to reduce the risk of unwanted and dangerous encounters with the bears. Site selection and food handling and storage are of critical importance.

Grizzlies range throughout much of Alaska; this is their turf. Paddling in their midst certainly adds a whole new dimension to whitewater boating, potentially giving a whole new meaning to "Getting munched!"



Editor's note: Regular contributor Dean Fairburn recently moved from Tennessee to the Native American village of Holy Cross, Alaska, where he teaches school.

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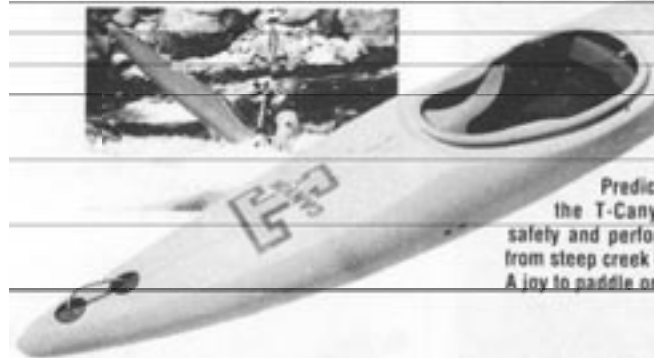
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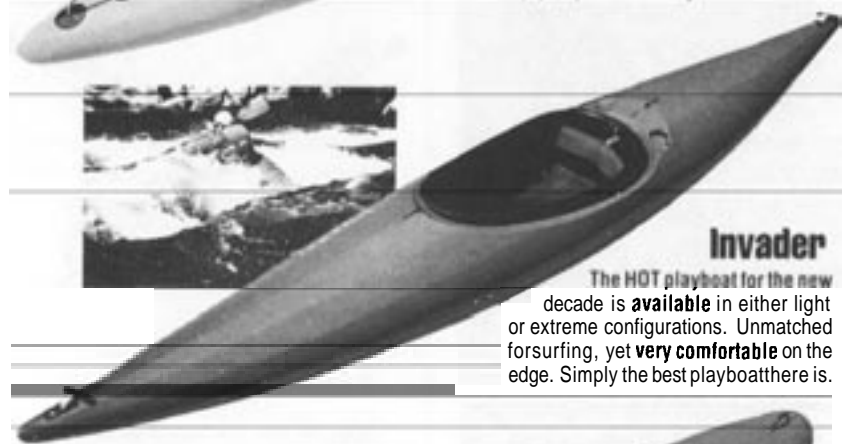
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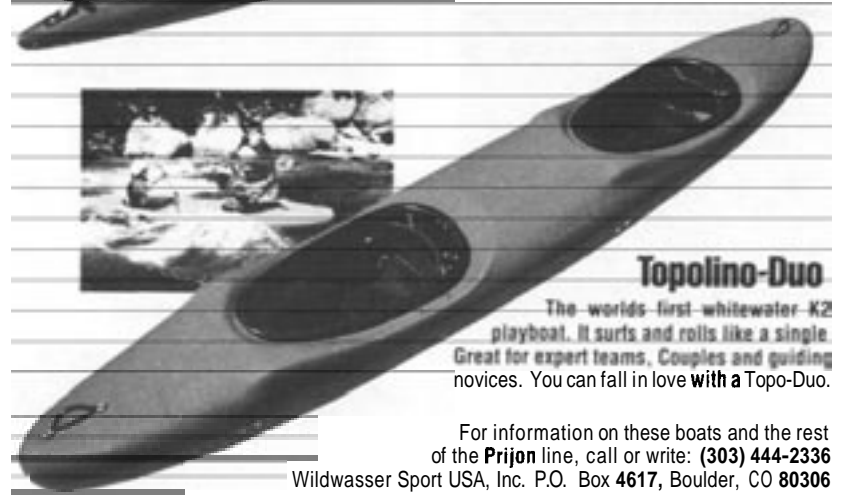
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Alaska Kayak, home base to Roger Pollard, who authored one of this month's articles, is located at 2732 Encore Circle in Anchorage, Alaska 99507. (907) 349-4588.

Alaska Kayak offers preplanned intermediate and advanced wilderness kayaking trips as well as support services and outfitting for groups wishing to individualize their Alaskan expedition. Arrangements can include food, lodging, transportation, fishing assistance and raft support. They also sell a full line of kayaking equipment.

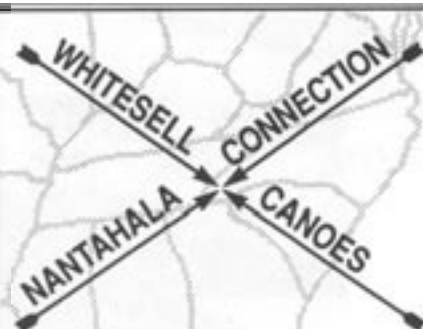
Keystone Rafting provides similar services to whitewater enthusiasts visiting the vicinity of Valdez. Contact Mike Buck, po 1486, Valdez, Alaska 99686. (907) 835-5234.

The Nantahala Outdoor Center also offers prepackaged whitewater adventures to Alaska each summer. 41 Highway 19 W, Bryson City, North Carolina 28713-9114 (800) 367-3521.

BRIEFS

ACA Instructor Workshops Slated

ACA sanctioned Instructors' Developmental and certification Workshops have been scheduled at the Valley Mill Camp near Washington, D.C. on May 26-30 (Open Canoe) and June 10-14 (Kayak). The Open Canoe section will be taught by canoe-sport writer Bob Foote. The Kayak section will be taught by Mark Moore of the National Outdoor Leadership School. Class size for each section is limited to ten and the registration fee is \$285. For additional information call (301) 948-0220 or write to the Valley Mill Camp, 15102 Seneca Rd., Germantown, Md. 20874.



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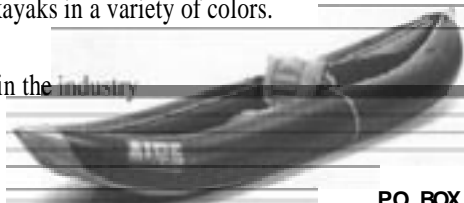
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Pacific Northwest Race/Rodeo Schedule Announced

The following schedule was provided by the League of Northwest Whitewater Racers. (206) 933-1178. Call the individual race director to confirm each event.

April 24-25 North Idaho Whitewater Festival
Riggins, Idaho

Willy Accola (800) 243-1677

May 1-2 B.C. Slalom Series #2

Capilano River, B.C., Canada

Brian Creer (604) 275-6651

May 1-2 Bob's Hole *

Clackamas River, Estacada, Oregon

Steve Scherer (503) 285-0464

May 29-30 Mamquam Jr. Race (Sat)

Intern. Race (Sun)

Squamish, B.C.

Don Jamieson (604) 898-5498

May 8-9 Olymic Regional Festival Trials and

N.W. Divisional Championship

Verlot, Washington

Dawn Meekhof (206) 633-165

June 5-6 Salmon la Sac

Roslyn, Washington

Werner Furrer (206) 348-5935

June 12-13 Snake Canoe and Kayak Classic *

Idaho Falls, Idaho

Paul Reep (208) 523-3572

July 10-11 Payette Whitewater Roundup *

South Fork Payette, Idaho

Bruce Bistline (208) 345-3654

July 17-18 White Salmon Races

Hasum, Washington

Bill Bowie (503) 281-7765

July 31- Sauk River Race

Aug 1 Darrington, Washington

Jennie Goldberg (206) 933-1178

Oct 9-10 Nooksack Race

N.F. Nooksack River, Washington

Peter Koci (604) 876-3476

* includes rodeo

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3rd Annual Nantahala Rescue Rodeo and River Bottom Stomp July 10, 1993 -- Wesser, NC



"This is a first rate event that is enormously fun and a great learning experience. Relative competence is judged, but only to add spice for those with competitive drives."

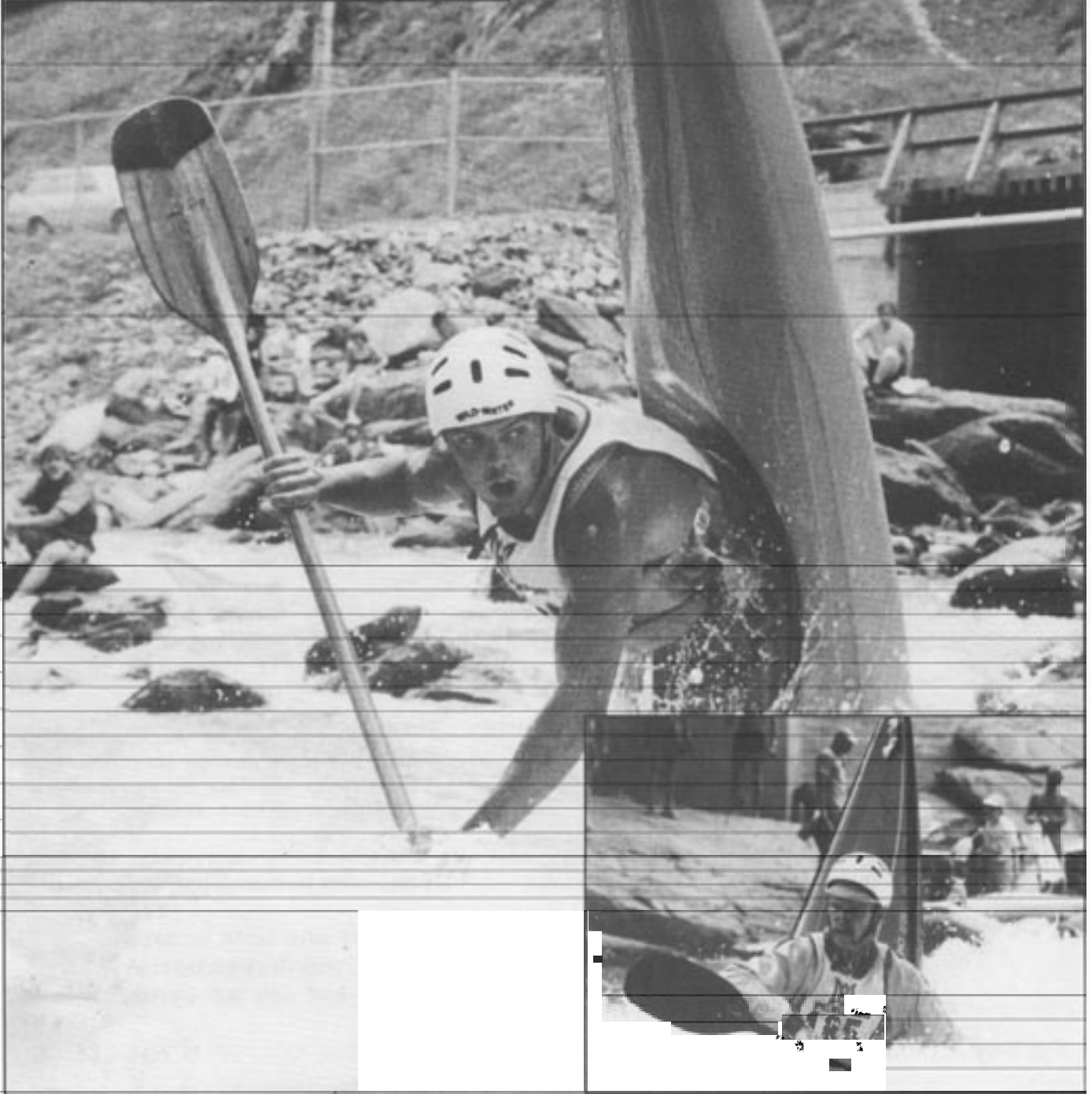
"The first aid judges were wonderful. After we were through they helped us understand what we did correctly and what we could have done better."

"Ugh, gross!" (entrant viewing latex bone fragments protruding from a victim's leg)

**Novice and open classes
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Individual and team entry**

For information, contact: Chris Bell, Route 1, Box 519, Candler, NC 28715 704-665-9665

OCOEE WHITEWATER RODEO



Photos by Sandi Loftis

Ocoee WhiteWater Rodeo

Dates: Saturday and Sunday, June 5 and 6

Where: Ocoee River; Ducktown TN

More Information, registration forms, and dinner reservations contact:

Susan Wilson-Gentry
646 Deer Creek Trail
Hoschton GA 30548
Home: 706-654-2725

Freestyle event for Kayaks, Squirt boats, C-1, and
Open Canoes.

Famous Man of Rubber Downriver Raft Race.

Team Trials for the 1993 WORLD WHITEWATER RODEO, October
16 and 17 1993.

Friday June 4

5:00-7:30 p.m. Registration at Ocoee put-in
(\$10 late registration fee after June 4)

Saturday June 5

7:30-9:00 a.m. Registration
(9:00 a.m. deadline for all registration!!!)
10:00-2:00 Squirt Competition at Torpedo
2:00-5:00 Open Boat Competition at Hells Hole

Saturday evening

Awards, party, dinner, raffle, silent auction, auction, and live music. Location to be announced. A Great Time for competitors, spectators, rafters, or any AWA supporters. (dinner reservations are recommended)

Sunday June 6

10:00 a.m.-4:00 Surface K-1 and C-1 competition at
Hells Hole
9:00 a.m. Registration for raft race only at Ocoee
river put-in
4:30 Awards ceremony at Hells Hole

All money earned goes to the American Whitewater Affiliation!!!!





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