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May/June
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with
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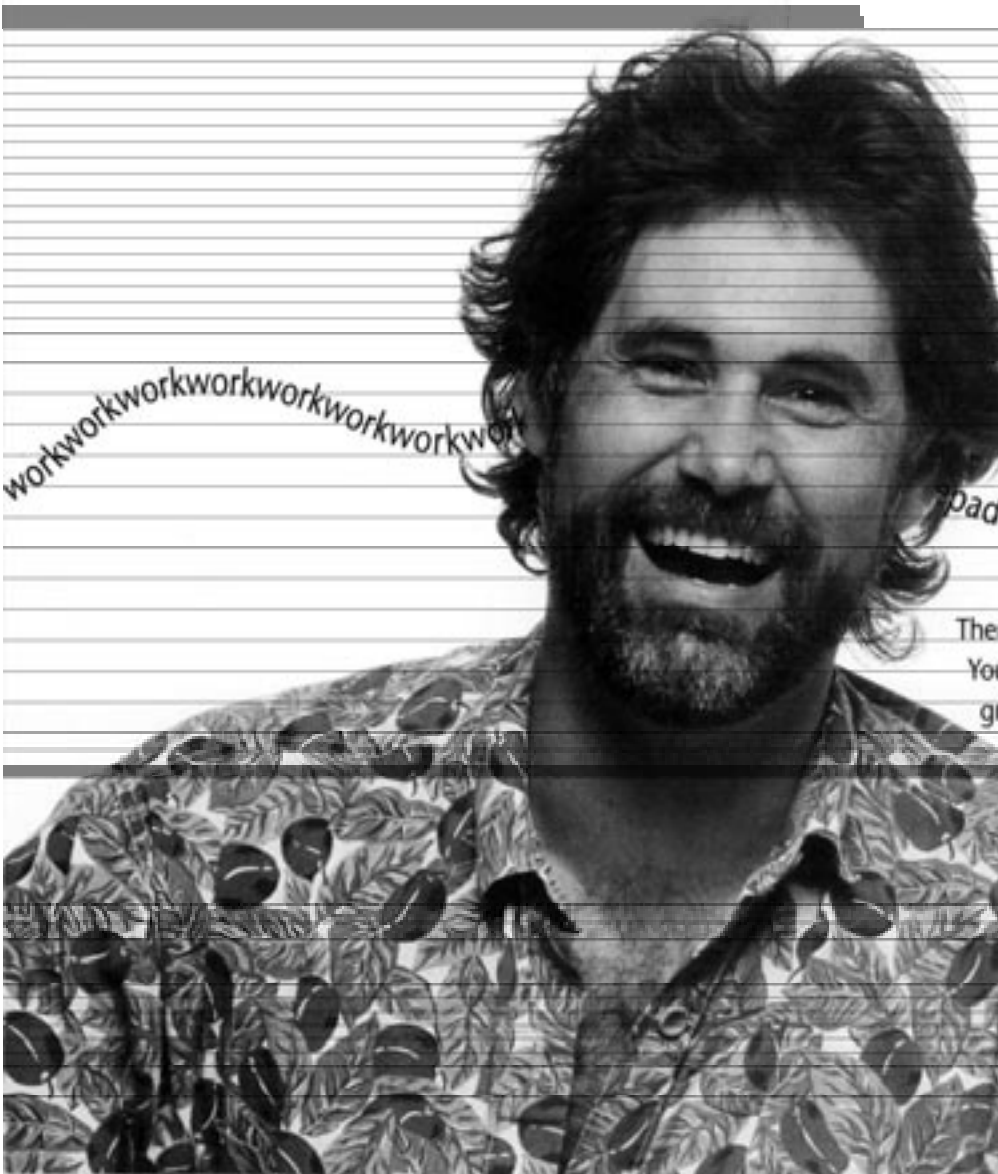
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american whitewater

Journal of the American Whitewater Affiliation

Volume XXXV, No.3

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The Real McCoy

by Michael Deckert



KUSKULANA!

by Roger Pollard



Her Hands

by Ret Talbot

The World According to Bob

Dear Charlie Walbridge and Lee Belknap: Members, AWA Safety Committee

I hear that since I announced to the world in the last issue that you were modifying and expanding the AWA class V rating that you have been deluged with suggestions and proposals. I know your tentative plan is to make the new system analogous to the one rock climbers use to rate the difficulty of various routes.

I said in my Forum last month that I thought you should rely on the opinions of expert boaters who are currently paddling near the **edge in developing this new system**. I also **acknowledged** that since I hardly fit that description, that I should keep my ideas regarding this matter to myself.

But after giving this some consideration, I have changed my mind. After all, why shouldn't I put my two cents worth into the soup, like everyone else? I may not be a suicidal maniac, but I am, at least, somewhat self destructive... and that should count for something!

Besides the system I have devised is incredibly simple... yet quite specific and easy to use. I'm sure you'll want to incorporate a lot, if not all, of it into the final AWA product. Read on and see for yourselves...

5.0 These are the rapids that I know, deep down inside, are really class IV, but were given a class V rating by an excitable guidebook author, ten or more years



ago. Coliseum on the Cheat, or Shoulder Snapper on the Tygart, for example.

5.1 These are easy class V rapids that don't worry me any more... though maybe they should, since they still manage to knock me over about one in ten times. Pillow Rock or Iron Ring on the Gauley, for instance.

5.2 These are rapids that make me nervous, but I still usually paddle, especially if someone has a camera. Swallow Falls on the Top Yough, for example.

5.3 These are rapids that I **run**, but only under specific circumstances. One, the level must be just right and the sun must be shining. Two, I haven't had sex for at least a week. Three, beautiful women are watching. Pine Creek on the Arkansas.

5.4 These are rapids that I have only paddled once, and for a specific reason. Like the fact that women in my party did it first, and made it look easy... Double Undercut on the Lower Meadow. Or the fact that the only other option was to starve to death on the riverbank, because there was no way to portage... Do or Die on the Middle Fork of the Feather.

5.5 These are rapids that I have been thinking about running for years, but I never seem to work up the nerve. (Sometimes I dream about running them, and I always do just fine!) Big Splat on the Big Sandy.

5.6 These are rapids that I would surely paddle, if they didn't have a class **5.3** approach and a recirculating, undercut whirlpool at the bottom. Great Falls of the Potomac.

5.7 These are rapids that probably wouldn't kill me if challenged them, but they would almost surely beat the snot out of me. (When I dream about running them, I have nightmares!)

Tomko Falls on the Upper Blackwater.

5.8 These are rapids that I will almost certainly never run, even though they have been hand paddled by gutsy and talented experts. Jacob's Ladder on the N. Fork of the Payette.

5.9 These are rapids whose names are so horrible that I am quite sure I will never attempt them, even though I haven't even seen them. Frankenstein on the Green Narrows.

5.10 These are rapids where I worry about catching the eddies to start the portage, even though those eddies are as big as farm ponds. Home of Sweet Jesus on

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in the features and editorials of *American Whitewater* are those of the individual authors. They do not necessarily represent those of the Directors of the American Whitewater Affiliation or the editors of this publication.

On occasion *American Whitewater* publishes official or organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

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LETTERS

the Lower Meadow.

5.11 These are rapids so frightening that I don't even like to walk along them, for fear I might slip and fall in. The Niagara Gorge.

5.12 These are rapids that are so intimidating that I have to close my eyes when someone else runs them, even on a video. The Falls of the Little River.

5.13 These rapids are so awful that they even scare Johnny Regan. Gorilla on the Green Narrows.

5.14 These are rapids that Eric Jackson says are worse than Gorilla. Stairway to Heaven on Bear Creek.

5.15 These are rapids so treacherous, so difficult, so downright mean and vicious, that no one has ever attempted them. Not even the brothers Snyder, or the brothers Kem!!! ...???... (There must be a rapid somewhere they won't run, but right now I can't think of one!)

So, there you have it. Brilliant, huh? I know my system might seem a bit egocentric, but that's the beauty of it! Rather than having a lot of people fighting over how a rapid should be rated, the AWA can just leave it all up to me.

In fact, I would suggest that I be given a position as the Official Rapid Rater for the organization. You could send me all over the country... expenses paid, of course... to pass judgement on the difficulty of class V whitewater.

It will be a tough job, but somebody has to do!

Let me know what you think.

Sincerely,
Bob Gedekoh

QUESTIONS TRIP LEADER LIABILITY

Dear Bob,

I read with interest the **January-February, 1995** issue of the AWA Journal. I noted, on page 22, the article dealing with "Access" and the comment dealing with Trip Leader Liability.

Unfortunately, the author of the article did not comment on all of the details.

The facts, as I understand them, are that the participant in this unfortunate drowning was a novice paddler, a young woman from Dartmouth College's Paddling Club. On the day of the incident, the West River was in flood stage from prior overnight heavy rain and run-off, adding to the normal water release from the Ball Mountain dam.

Although an argument can be made concerning the victim's possible contributory negligence for paddling on a river in flood stage, (was she aware of

it?), this does not excuse the trip leaders from negligence. Why any "experienced and well qualified trip leaders", would have put in the river that day with a novice paddler is beyond comprehension. This obviously was negligence on the trip leaders' part, and the college's for resultant vicarious liability for the paddling club's actions and resulted in the case being settled.

Many clubs are trying to get away from the "trip leader" connotation to that of "trip coordinator" and having all club members sign a waiver of liability. However, even if this had been in use in the present situation, the obvious negligence of the more experienced members of the paddling club, who lead the victim, would in my opinion render any waiver invalid and **the college/club still be held liable** for damages.

Very truly yours.
Peter G. Wallace
Flushing, NY

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LETTERS

WELCOME ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear Bob,

I am embarrassed to admit that I am just now finding the time and money to join A.W.A.. I realize that this is incredibly slack -but hey- I'm also just getting around to getting my drivers license this week. (It's been expired for 2 years)

A.W. has become the best whitewater magazine out. It's great for the boating community to have a place to voice opinions and obtain information. Clay says that the AW magazine is the only thing certain to pacify me on an extended land surf. All of my friends will be glad to hear I will be getting my own subscription. Now I will be able to visit them without diving

into their current issue of AW.

I think you are doing a great job. I especially enjoy reading Forum and Carla/Gary and I'm looking forward to the article that Mike Seases' friends golden retriever will write as a replacement for Jonathan Katz. Or better yet, take the pages that would have been wasted on Katz and reprint the entire Carla/Gary series from the beginning.

Keep up the good work,
Colleen Laffey
Fayetteville, WV

KATZ IS KOOL!!!

Dear AWA,

The Adventures of the McBride-Omaha brain trust provide a great service to the paddling community. It's re-

freshing to see such politically incorrect material get published. Jonathan Katz almost changes my belief that our civilization is in decline. Protect Fun!

Sincerely,
John Stormon
Yakima, WA

Editor's note: Glad you like it. Mr. Katz has a few detractors, but a large cadre of loyal followers, too. We are proud to feature Part III of Jonathan's latest epic in this issue.

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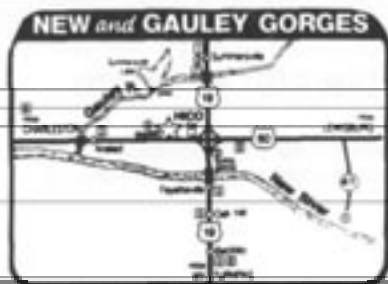
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PURPOSE.....

The American Whitewater Affiliation

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

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

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

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

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

SAFETY: AWA promotes paddling

safely, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, maintains a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and publishes and disseminates the internationally recognized AWA Whitewater Safety Code.

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

AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at P.O. Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464, (914) 688-5569. AWA is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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Ocoee River

by AWA Staff

In the last few Journals, several of our readers have commented on the AWA's position regarding the Upper Ocoee and the future Olympic Course on this river. To date, the AWA has taken no organizational position on this issue.

The debate about the present and future of the Ocoee River is, at the heart of the matter, one of philosophy. A debate about stream bed modification; economic development; how we envision the future of whitewater paddling. For some, the creation of a permanent slalom racing site for the '96 Olympics is a chance to restore a river bed that is dewatered for most of the year, a chance to promote economic development in a depressed county in east Tennessee. For others, it is another insult in a long list of **manmade** intrusions in the area.

From a national perspective, issues become even more complex. Certainly, AWA promotes the growth of whitewater recreation through our festivals and educational efforts. There should be no doubt that (for better and for worse) the Olympics will increase public awareness of our sport, and increase participation. Through our efforts in the hydropower relicensing process, we have been able to demonstrate the importance of downstream recreation to decision makers. On the Black (NY), Gauley (WV) and Kern Rivers (CA) to name a few, we discuss the value of recreational boating in economic terms. On the other hand, we are against human modification to river systems (including dams) that are economically and environmentally unsound. (For example, see the article in this issue on the proposed Army Corps of Engineers dams for the Russell Fork, Cheat and Tygart Rivers.)

But the issue of streambed modification is also extremely complex. Is it **o.k.** to modify a rapid for "safety" reasons, for example removing the pinning rocks at the Gauley's Initiation (W.V.) or filling in the hole at the base of Nantahala Falls (N.C.)? But where do we draw the line? We certainly can't eliminate every dangerous feature on a river; people who want a risk free environment should go to Disney World instead of a real flesh and blood river. If it is **o.k.** to modify a rapid, then why not a stream channel,



Stream Bed Modification, Upper Ocoee River, Tennessee; Photo by John Anderson

like the upper Ocoee. And how are these actions distinguished from blowing up a "dangerous" rapid, such as Quartzite Falls on Arizona's Salt River. We should also remember that stream bed modification is a natural process: the rapids in the Ocoee were modified during the spring flood of '90, making Hell Hole a better play spot. If nature changes rapids, then why not humans?

While AWA has not taken an official position, we believe that the Journal is an excellent format for discussion on a topic of interest to all paddlers. AWA has received and gathered comments and letters from people who are engaged in these issues, from local paddlers and outfitters, to planners who are playing an integral role in the development of this site. We hope that publishing these comments will allow our readers to view the different perspectives on this issue. We encourage others to present their opinions in the future.

On July 26 and 28, 1996, the upper Ocoee River in east Tennessee will host a whitewater slalom event during the '96 Olympics in Atlanta. In order to reach this decision, event planners conducted many studies to determine the feasibility of this concept. In 1991, the State of Tennessee determined that this event and facilities would generate over \$60 million in revenue to the region over 5 years from an initial investment of \$10 to \$15 million. In addition, a two year Environmental Impact Statement concluded that the environment along the Ocoee River can support an Olympic Event with minimal impact to the natural resources.

CONSERVATION

To the editor,

I would like to make a comment regarding the race course on the upper Ocoee. While I realize that I am opening *myself* to massive criticism, I feel that it is ironic that the AWA, which does an unbelievable job of saving and preserving our rivers, seems to sanction the destruction of the Upper Ocoee. Why destroy a great section of river at taxpayers expense when there is a perfectly good *natural* run downstream. The ender spot "slam dunk" will be destroyed, along with three or four other great rapids, to be replaced by what—poured concrete and *rebar*? Remember: none of this is "*free*." Someone has to pay...i.e. us.

The John Maynard Keynes argument is that it will bring in jobs—sure it will, but what will those workers do after its completion...be raft *guides*? I am in total agreement with an earlier writer to AWA who stated, "We private boaters have got to realize that raft companies are not our allies." It seems hardly coincidental that much of the advocacy for the race course seems to come from Bryson City, N.C. Could it be that a certain raft company or coalition of raft companies would like to have a new river to exploit and/or commercialize? The double standard is *clear*—river destruction for dams is bad, but river destruction for race courses is good? What kind of twisted logic is that? Call me what you will, but I predict in 5 years, the upper Ocoee will suffer from the same overcrowding that the downstream section has.

Sincerely,

Name Withheld by Request

AWA Responds:

As we mentioned in the introduction to these articles, the AWA has not been involved in either the planning or development stages of the '96 Olympics on the Ocoee.

NOC Responds:

by Bunny Johns, President, Nantahala Outdoor Center

The Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) would like to make the following comments with regard to the letter regarding the Upper Ocoee race course.

NOC has supported the Ocoee as a site for the 1996 Olympic slalom event. We took part in the long process which led the State of Tennessee to agree to host the event and in the long public process which led to the development and implementation of the current plan for the race course on the Upper Ocoee. We think the Olympic presence will be great exposure for whitewater sport (including rafting) and an impetus for long term rural economic development in the Ocoee region.

We now know we were naive about what the project would cost. While the event could have been held at a lesser cost, the standards for being an Olympic venue are high and that makes the price tag higher. Even so, we still feel the event will have a positive impact on the Ocoee area, the people of the area, and whitewater lovers.

The Upper Ocoee does not currently have regular water releases. Development of the race course has generated interest in the possibility of having recreational releases for this stretch

of river. These releases could do a great deal to spread river use over two sections of river, providing a less crowded river experience for all.

The future use of the Upper Ocoee is still an open question. The USFS will go through a scoping process to determine the issues, the use alternatives, and then complete an environmental assessment. The public is invited and encouraged to be part of this process. This process will provide a **framework** where everyone can provide input. It can also be an opportunity for private boaters, outfitters and others to work together in shaping a future that appeals to all of us. This may not be easy both the results will be well worth the energy we **all** put into the process so we can end up with the opportunity for quality recreational experiences for a variety of users.

We believe private boaters and rafting companies continue to have more in common than we have areas of disagreement. We all appreciate and enjoy river resources, for work and play, and we all share a genuine concern for maintaining and enhancing the quality of experience and

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the natural environment of our rivers. We hope this base of common concern will push all of us to deal with the areas/issues where we have differing positions.

See you on the river,
Bunny Johns

The Ocoee River Project

by John Anderson

For the third time in history whitewater slalom will be included in the summer Olympics, but for the first time it will be held on a natural river. Well almost a natural river. For the Atlanta Olympics, the whitewater events will be on the modified bed of the Ocoee River in southeast Tennessee. For its two previous Olympic appearances, whitewater slalom was held on completely artificial rivers: near Munich, Germany, in 1972 and la Seu d'Urgell, Spain in 1992. The Ocoee River, a popular whitewater run just two hours north of Atlanta, will return the whitewater event to its origins - tumbling mountain streams in the midst of wilderness.

In 1992 when the Ocoee River was formally selected as the Olympic site, it was hoped that the events could be held at the beginning of the popular whitewater run just below Ocoee dam number 2. However, the reality of hosting an event of this magnitude within this narrow river valley with only a two lane road began to set in, and this site was abandoned in favor of an upstream site which had more room.

The new site is located on the upper Ocoee River, two miles up river of the current put-in, near the point where highway 64 enters the river valley. At this site there is more room to hold an event but the river lacks the punch of a world class rapid - mainly because it is so wide. So the decision was made to constrict the river to create a world class race course. The side benefits of this effort would be the opening of a presently de-watered section of the Ocoee River to recreation, as well as economic development in a rather depressed corner of Tennessee.

The U.S. Forest Service began an environmental impact study to determine the effect on the natural environment of the site in November 1992. Public meetings were held, a scope of study was drafted and finally, four alternative plans were developed. The alternatives had to accommodate a three day event plus training time leading up to the event, and of course the media, spectators, and various services - not an easy task at all considering the site did not have so much as a single phone line. The plans ranged in scope from fully temporary facilities - including temporary rock levees to constrain the river to fully permanent facilities. There was also a "no action" alternative to use as a base line measure. In the end, a middle ground approach was selected with some permanent facilities such as the new banks of the channel and some temporary facilities, such as media trailers, officials tents, and the like.

I became interested in the Ocoee project when I heard that the alternatives were to be developed for the Environmental Impact Statement. Even though the project involved a large scale intervention in a natural river, the decision to get involved was not a hard one to make. Here was an opportunity get involved in something where recreation was in the drivers seat and I wanted to make sure that someone with a racing and recreational paddling background at least got a chance to hold the wheel.

The time is right for the upper Ocoee River. The popular lower Ocoee saw nearly 200,000 visitors per year (private boaters and raft customers) and is nearly at capacity. The water quality has improved noticeably since the rotten egg-smelling acid mine run off from the 1970's, and since the demise of copper

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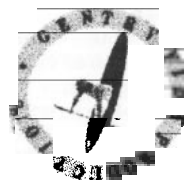
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CONSERVATION

mining, vegetation has once again taken hold in the hills surrounding the upper Ocoee. Yet this five mile stretch of river remained completely diverted for electric power generation, except for flood control releases, when boaters would enjoy furtive pop-ups at Slam Dunk rapid.

The 1996 Olympic Games offered the impetus to re-water this neglected resource for competitive boating - and recreational traffic. Despite early misunderstanding on the part of the commercial raft outfitters concerning the user fee issues (brought about by public relations bungling on the part of Tennessee officials) it is clear that the upper Ocoee will once again run for the enjoyment of behelmed bi-pods.

How does one go about "designing" a whitewater rapid? First get the Tennessee Valley Authority to commission a huge 1:10 scale model of the river bottom complete with running water. Then spend a winter conducting tests in the model and selectively adding rocks to constrain the flow and create just the right whitewater effects. **This is** not a new idea. At Wausau, Wisconsin a neglected side channel of an urban river was modified with thousands of hours of volunteer labor and heavy equipment in order to create a downtown whitewater park.

At the Ocoee the new whitewater course was carefully routed along the natural "line" of the river, taking care to preserve existing river features such as the pop up hole at Slam Dunk rapid. If the quality of the whitewater is accurately portrayed in the model then there will be plenty of action to challenge the best racers. And there will be surfing spots - it is likely that a new world-class whitewater rodeo rapid will emerge somewhere within the new river channel. The benefit of modeling every change in the TVA model was that the effects could known in advance of the actual construction.

Construction of the course began in November, 1994 and is to be complete in time for the Pre-Olympic events this August. Natural river boulders are being used to create new river banks within the existing river channel. Behind the veneer of river rocks will be a supporting structure of grouted limestone boulders which will help resist washout by floods. The new banks will be as low as possible to minimize the impact on the river hydrology. The greatest design challenge is to create river banks and terraces which are tough enough to weather floods but also blend with the natural surroundings. The new banks should eventually support a natural succession of riparian plants such as native grasses and river birch to soften the appearance of things.

To distinguish this effort from the usual engineered river projects the For-

est Service has engaged the talents of the Pickering Firm, a noted planning and landscape architecture firm of Memphis, Tennessee; McLaughlin Water Engineers of Denver, Colorado; Betts Engineering Associates, civil engineers of Chattanooga, Tennessee; TWH Architects, also from Chattanooga; and myself, architect, a former slalom competitor, now turned whitewater designer.

How will the project turn out? Stop by next summer on your next trip to the Ocoee and decide for yourself. Or take it from five time world champion Jon Luginbill who remarked that "If the river is anything like the model, it will be stompin'."

(Editor's Note: John Anderson is a former U.S. team member and is currently an architect for whitewater courses, including the design of the Dickerson Race Course in Maryland.)

The Weeping Wall

by Bill Hay

The wall stands, silent in the early dawn. Water seeps down its face, tears for the victims.

Just up the road, the tall building stands proud. A lone figure opens the gate in the barbed wire fence and enters the grounds. He unlocks the heavy steel door and enters the structure. He puts his lunch pail in his locker, grabs a cup of coffee from the automatic maker, and heads for the control room. There, facing a panel of dials and displays, he prepared

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to turn on the generators, prepares to add a drop of power to the world's gullet, to feed its restless energy.

Up the road even further, a red glow lights up the early morning sky. The air is red with dust and trucks roar out of the earth itself. Furnaces spew fumes to the sky. Trees, so tentatively reestablished in the tortured soil, wince.

Large trucks roar down the narrow street, hauling goods past this place to more profitable markets. A local looks up, grimaces at the noise, and returns to his work.

A tent city stirs to life. Zippers are zipped, stoves are rattled, coffee is brewed, showers are taken, last night's beer cans, carefully hidden from the armed guards, are placed in trash bags. Silently, a government employee, arrogant in his power, cruises, collecting trash and taking note of potential violators.

Down the road, a bus is started. A crowd of happy campers queues at its folding door, tittering nervously at the adventure ahead. A local, a former whiskey maker, checks the air brakes before opening the door to yet another day of humdrum. He thinks briefly of the woman he met last night, the woman from some place in Michigan, shakes his head once and attends to his duties.

The ghost of a seine fisherman passes the weeping wall as the trickle of tears becomes a torrent.

Another day begins on the Ocoee—the Harlem of Rivers.

It's a case study in contemporary American decay, the Ocoee is. From pristine wilderness, to marginally productive agrarian backwater, to mining boom town, to rural slum, to gentrified vacation wonderland, to whatever comes next.

It started who knows how or when. Perhaps when some Indian case the first stone in the river to re-direct the flow and enhance fishing. Perhaps when the first crude stone dam for a grist mill was built. Perhaps when the slag from the first smelter was dumped into the clear waters. Perhaps when the first fish dies an unnatural death.

But, etiology aside, it is clear that the big government project to save the covites and provide cheap power for Tennessee and the world was a major step in the process. Well, TVA did provide cheap power and factory jobs for those whose bottomland farms were flooded, whiskey operations destroyed, and families dispersed to Chattanooga, Atlanta, and wherever else. It also provided power for the bureaucrats in Nashville and Washington. But did it do anything else except ruin a bunch of good rivers and acres of productive land?

Sure. It was progress. It was the

project to end all projects.

Then, just when the formerly outrageous had become the status quo, just when the locals had adapted and moved on to some factory job and gotten a little john boat to fish on the lakes or in the pools in the rivers that were still there, the mines failed, the land died, the pools silted in, the fish disappeared.

The land became a scar visible from 250,000 miles in space and little else. Former mine workers moved away to work some other vein. Former farmers planted pitiful stand of scrub pine to hide the gullies in the red dirt. Former wives and girlfriends lined up for Food Stamps and AFDC checks. Former children learned to steal and make whiskey again and sell their bodies and cadge a meal and look pitiful and hustle.

Hope was not lost, though. Someone—not a local, of course—discovered that the Ocoee is a pretty good Class III whitewater river and, lo and behold, has water most of the summer due to power generation. Gentrification reared its well-groomed head as hordes of paddlers form Atlanta, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and everywhere else made the Ocoee their summer playground. They wanted places to sleep, a good cheap meal, and gear.

Money was made, a little hope was restored, the sun shone through the red morning dust. And it wasn't too bad either. There was a natural limiting factor—the skill and exertion required for paddling. Inevitably, though, everyone discovered that they could make money from the Ocoee. Rafting was born. Put as many people down the river as possible, charge what the market will bear, damn the traffic, damn the noise, damn the danger, dam the river.

Even the locals and bureaucrats caught the fever. TVA joined the rush when managers realized that recreational paddling could provide what their pitiful little outdated hydro-electric generators could not provide—a power base for their bureaucratic domain. Dams were revitalized, flumes restored, mandates re-defined, releases rescheduled, and jobs rescued.

Locals realized that they could sell their whiskey, food, camping spots, bodies, shuttles, and poorly run river trips to just about anyone with a buck. And what they couldn't sell, they could steal while the suckers were safely away on the river.

The Ocoee became the great American River Dream, a money making machine for everyone.

But it just wasn't enough, was it? The boondoggle to end all boondoggles (until the next boondoggle) just had to happen, didn't it? The Olympics were awarded to Atlanta, that cesspool of overdevelopment, and the Ocoee just naturally be-

came the site for the whitewater competition.

Fine, great. The Ocoee is a nice, Class III run. Continuous, lots of eddies, not threatening. Just the type of rivers racers like. Besides, it's already ruined for real river running. Convert it to a slalom course. Have a nice day.

Okay? Not on your life. The river isn't quite perfect. Besides, making it a slalom course will hurt commercial rafting. Business will suffer. Let's use the dry riverbed upstream. Fine, even better. At least it will be a river again.

Still not enough? Let's build our own river up there. Let's make the rapids manmade to suit our conception of what paddling ought to be like in a perfect world, one where nature has no part. It'll have easy, showy, safe rapids, drops designed so that racing boats can demonstrate their useless moves. We'll cut down all those obstructing trees and move all those inconvenient rocks so we can have lots of grandstand space, lots of room for vendors, lots of facilities, room for the media, the traffic, the fans, the hucksters.

Why not? The place is good for nothing else now. It's been exploited since time immemorial. The natives won't care. The river is dead. We'll all get rich.

It'll be a sight to behold. It'll be bigger than the OJ trial. It'll put Eastern Tennessee back on the map. Who would dare stand in our way?

Who indeed? We'll just pack up our paddles and find another river to enjoy. The New? No, it's long gone. The Pigeon? Hold you nose. The Yough? You've got to be kidding. The Grand Canyon? The helicopters will get you. The Middle Fork? Only in designated campgrounds. The Russell Fork? Watch out for rafts. The Lehigh? Watch out for everything. The Kennebec? Only if you pay to put on. The Upper Yough? Watch out for gunfire.

Like any slum, the Ocoee can be rescued, not to its former self, but to become a monument to some new greed and folly. What we really need down there is not a man-made slalom course, not grandstands, not TV and world-wide coverage, not more rafts, not the Olympics. What we need is to paint that dam wall black and etch on its face the names of all the rivers already sacrificed to our greed and foolishness. Then, every morning when the dam's trickle of tears becomes a torrent, the Ocoee will cry for all of its sister rivers.

Etch the names in small print, though, so we will have room to add to the list.

(Editor's Note: Bill Hay is the Editor of Real Sport, a quarterly publication that focuses on outdoor sports in the Southeast.)

Some Thoughts on Misconceptions about the Ocoee River Project

by Paul Wright, Project Director, USDA Forest Service, Cherokee National Forest

First, the modification of the upper Ocoee do not constitute "destruction". The USFS and TVA completed a lengthy EIS in 1994, concluding that alteration of the river for use as a whitewater racing and training site was an acceptable commitment of the resource. Perhaps the great paradox of the Ocoee is that a century of human and environmental abuse created a setting that would allow this reach of river to be adapted for human recreational use. Their field analysis found that no life of any form existed in the sterile waterway, although water quality has returned to acceptable levels.

Second, the lower Ocoee is indeed an excellent whitewater **course...as a** quarter-million raft customers per year can testify. However, for better or worse, Olympic competition is much more than holding a race. It is not only the peak experience for an amateur athlete...it also represents a forum to showcase the sport to a global audience. Olympic standards, in this case, included provisions for some 15,000 spectators, athletes, officials, and media to be present on the site. Experience on the lower Ocoee has shown that a few hundred people attempting to watch a race literally shut down the rest of the world...including closure of the highway as well as suspension of the commercial and recreational paddling activities. The selected site on the upper Ocoee has none of these drawbacks.

Third, the whitewater design team that has been charged with developing the upper river is working with the natural features of the river bed to create an enhanced 525-meter run, with "Slam Dunk" as one of the jewels to be preserved. In fact, no excavation of the competitive channel is called for in the design. The design philosophy has been to "tune" the available water flows (1200-1600 cfs) to the existing features in the river. The well-known rapids will still be there...and others have been enhanced by carefully focusing the water with the relocated river banks. Slalom athletes and coaches, freestyle enthusiasts, wildwater experts, and recreational paddlers have all had a hand in developing and critiquing the course layout. The construction methods being used to create the new river banks emphasize the use of native rock. From all outward appearances, the "new" river will be largely indistinguishable from the "old." However, to ensure that this investment doesn't get swept away in the next flood, hydraulic engineers have developed a structural solution that includes high-strength concrete grout, which bonds the rocks to each other, as well as the bedrock of the river bed. They have also called for several steel-reinforced shear walls to be embedded in the river banks where abrupt **juts** are called to focus water on mid-stream hydraulics, or to create pull-out eddies or self-rescue pools.

The Forest Service, Tennessee Valley Authority, and State of Tennessee agreed to jointly pursue this project - not be-

cause they are big fans of whitewater paddlesport - but because of the economic benefits that it will produce. The initial benefits, estimated at over \$60 million through the Olympics, do indeed come in large part from construction, and the ripple effect that "imported" construction dollars create. But the people of the Ocoee region, long dependent on their natural resources for economic well-being, see the lasting value of the Ocoee Whitewater Center in its continued use as North America's premier whitewater course. While the responsible agencies have yet to complete their plans for future management of the site, rest assured that one of the biggest decision factors will be the economic benefits to the local communities. Whether or not commercial use of the upper Ocoee is even viable is open to question. This option did not instigate the development of the whitewater center, nor will it be the only factor in determining its future.

From AWA's perspective, I see no double standard at work here. There are no foregone options for use of the river. If anything, a five mile reach of river that has been de-watered for over fifty years for hydro-electric power generation may someday see regular flows again as a result of modifying 1500 feet of its banks. For paddlers that have been risking life and limb, sharing the congested waters of the lower Ocoee may become a thing of the past. Families that have longed to sunbathe in peace around the Blue Hole may find a new sense of security and cleanliness there. The development of the Ocoee Whitewater Center for **multi-purpose** water play and sport use in a good example of optimizing our precious natural **resources...so** that the resources endure, and people's quality of life is enhanced.

Excerpts from a speech made by Daniel P. Beard, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation at the National Audubon Society Annual Meeting Kearney, Nebraska, March 18, 1995

I'm used to speaking before groups where they wave at me — usually with one finger pointed up in the air. It really is nice to speak before a group where they wave using all five fingers.

The Bureau of Reclamation...now recognizes that the dam building era in the United States is over.

Public and political support for large, traditional water projects no longer exists. The opportunity for new large projects in the future is extremely remote, **if not** non-existent.

Our future lies in our ability to link the social, economic, and environmental elements of integrated resources manage-

ment. We must initiate innovative approaches using new techniques to achieve "sustainable water resource management."

When I spoke at Asilomar, it was obvious we needed to change and change quickly. And we have. I'm thrilled to report tonight that the organizational goals I described a year ago have been met. Unfortunately, the broader goals that we share as environmentalists have not been met in many cases — and are in fact under unprecedented assault.

The changes we've made at Reclamation in the last 22 months are nothing short of spectacular. We have

downsized, right-sized, refocused, empowered, delegated, and reorganized. It hasn't been easy, it hasn't been pretty, and it hasn't been fun.

But the leadership of the Bureau, most of whom are here tonight, are convinced that these changes were vital. Even though we're not done, we're proud of what we've accomplished and we're excited about the future.

— In the last two years, we've cut our budget by ten percent, or some \$90 million.

— We've reduced our workforce from 8,100 to 6,600 in less than two years and have signed buyout agreements with 700 more workers. This will amount to a 25 percent workforce reduction at an estimated annual savings of more than \$100 million.

— We've reviewed every internal regulation we have — a bureaucratic

thicket which stands 10 feet high. Two feet of the regulations were immediately trashed (actually recycled). The remainder — nearly 8 ft. — will be reduced to about six inches of guidelines, not regulations.

—We've reduced a seven-tiered decision-making structure. Now there are only two, or at most three, levels of authority possible on any decision. To show we were serious about delegating authority, I took the unusual step of abolishing the seven highest positions in the agency.

But what most worries me — and here is where I want to switch gears — what concerns me is that so many in the environmental movement today seem to be so discouraged.

People were dispirited and dejected about the lack of environmental progress in the last Congress.

And now they are fearful, almost cowering, about assaults on the environment in the current Congress.

Many environmentalists seem to be longing for the good old days. As if we had now entered the nostalgic twilight of the movement's halcyon days. As if the tremendous gains of the last thirty years cannot be sustained or improved.

We seem to be at a low ebb. A kind of passive, palms-up, nonchalance has infected many people.

Many environmentalists seem willing to shrug their shoulders and retreat at the first hint of controversy. Their passion for clean water, clean air, protected species, and other goals seems to be withering under the bravado coming from Washington, D.C.

Well, speaking for myself, I reject this attitude.

The problems that sparked the environmental movement thirty years ago still exist today. And the values that led you and me to fight so hard to solve those problems still burns within our hearts and the hearts of millions of Americans.

I for one am not about to turn my back on my commitment to solving environmental problems. I have spent my entire professional life fighting to solve these problems. I'm not about to abandon my beliefs because of one election.

I'm not a blind zealot, or an "Earth Firster." I believe there's a need to find solutions to problems that are sensitive to the environment, allow for a healthy economy, and protect individual rights.

Sure, I think there are some lessons to be learned from recent developments in environmental policy. A few of these might include —

- Give as much attention to the implementation of existing laws, as to the enactment of new ones. In other words, keep an eye on the executive as well as the legislative branches of our government. In many cases, the administrative discretion under current law is broad

enough to accomplish much good, if the agency officials are made aware of strong public support.

- Don't judge the success of programs by the perceived anguish of traditional adversaries. Although complete consensus on environmental issues is seldom obtained, **proposed** solutions that leave significant **interests** seriously aggrieved may be **sowing** the seeds of unavoidable **backlash**. The most effective advocates are those who listen carefully to their would-be opponents, and find ways to deal with their legitimate concerns.

- Build strong local organizations. Effective volunteer action does not come easily for most people. All of you here understand only too well that public participation and environmental advocacy involves nights and weekends away from families, sometimes on issues that can remain heated for months or even years. One of the most important contributions that national environmental organizations can make is the investment in **skill-building** at the local level, to translate the latent environmental values of the American people into an effective voice on the Main Streets and in the State Capitols all across the country.

Now we all know that there is a new cadre of anti-environmentalists in Washington, eager to strike while they perceive the iron to be hot. They have been spending their days **huffing** and puffing about the "mandate" they've gotten for attacking the environment. "The people have spoken," they say, "its time to repeal all these burdensome laws and regulations."

Many in the environmental community seem more than willing to sit back and let anti-environmentalists spin their "repeal" record as if it were the most popular song in the country.

Three recent national polls prove what we all know: The vast majority of Americans support strong environmental laws and they don't want them weakened.

For example, 60 percent of Americans say that regulations to protect endangered species have not gone far enough. That's right, I said: "have not gone far enough!"

Only 4 percent of Americans believe that government has gone overboard in protecting water quality.

By way of comparison, 8 percent of Americans still think Elvis is alive.

Just this week the House of Representatives moved to undermine some of the most important environmental legislation of the last quarter century. The House gutted key-emissions control programs under the Clean Air Act, stripped funding for endangered species listings and protection programs, and mandated large timber salvaging which threatens the health of wildlife and streams.

Earlier this month, the House passed "takings" legislation which would re-

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quire the government to compensate land owners under a long series of scenarios in which such owners are merely complying with basic environmental law. Furthermore, it provided that farmers, ranchers and others who receive federal subsidies, such as **cheap** water, must be **compensated** by the **government** if they are asked at some future date to **pay** the market price of the subsidies. **That** provisions gives "takings" an entirely new meaning—it is the taxpayer who is being taken.

All of these changes greatly concern me—as I know they do you.

My plea tonight is to urge you and everyone else in the environmental community to get up off the mat. Don't let the bravado of a few people lead you to abandon what we've fought so hard to achieve.

The Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and other environmental laws don't need to be repealed. And we shouldn't let it happen.

They need to be administered in a fair and effective manner.

Let's stop the defeatist talk. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work.

I recognize there is a lot of gray hair — including mine — in this room. I realize you probably feel like me. I've done this once before, why do I have to do it again?

Well, the answer is... we must. There is too much at stake.

We don't have to do it **all** ourselves, or do it the way it was done in the 1960s or 1970s.

Much of the future leadership must come from the local level, not the national level. Washington needs to establish and maintain many vital environmental laws and regulations.

But even as Americans say they are as committed to environment, we must acknowledge a desire on their part to see more local control over many issues.

And that may be the next step in the environmental movement. The old Earth Day adage "Think globally, act locally" has never been more on-target.

Besides working closer to the problem at hand, local level support establishes a trust that government agencies can never duplicate.

Think about it. How did the environmental movement get started in the first place?

It got started in 10,000 places at once. In big and small towns all across America, when people started realizing we were putting our greatest natural resources and public health in jeopardy.

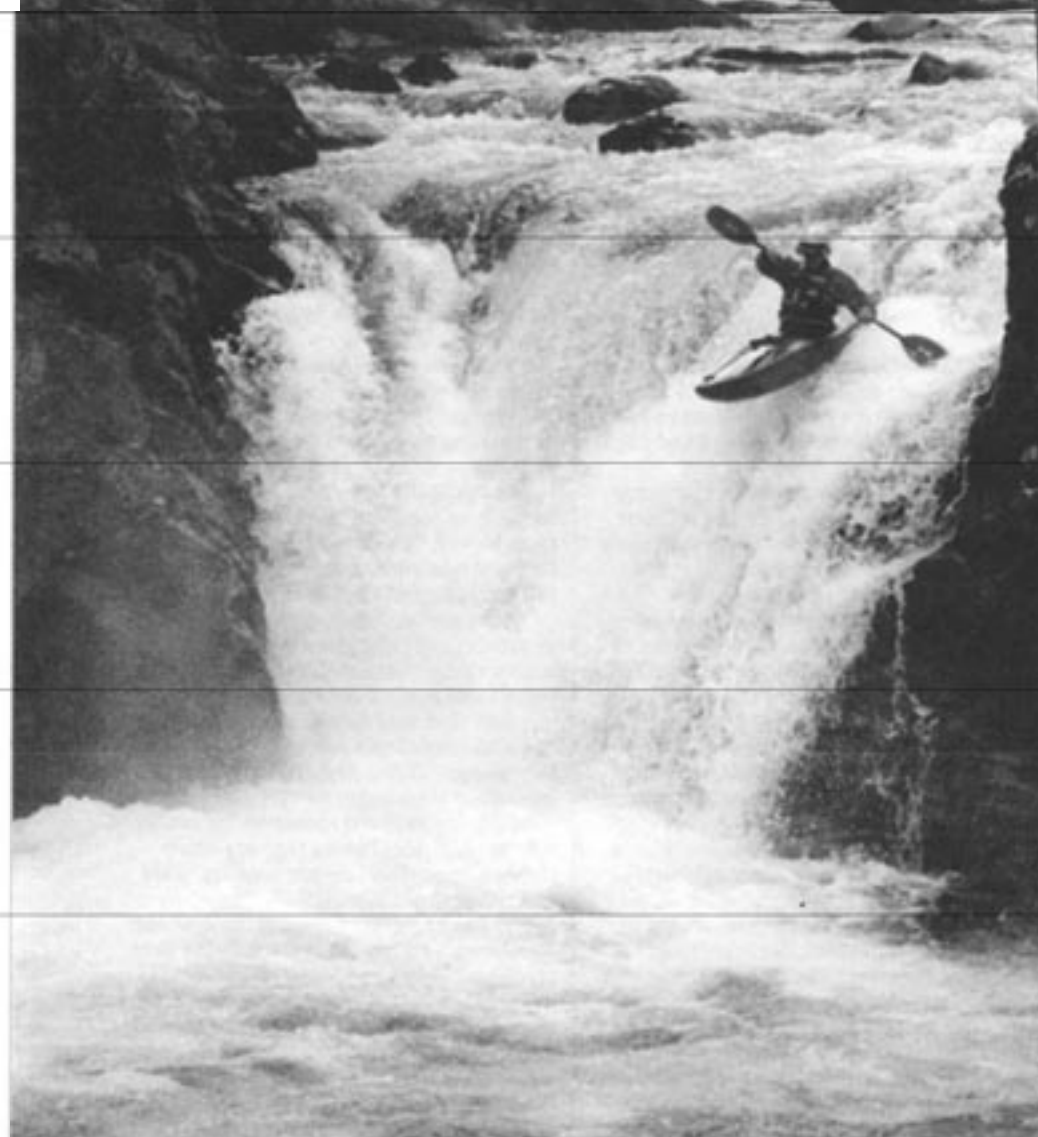
The environmental values you and I share are under assault.

Now is not the time for retreat. It is time for us to stand up, dust ourselves off, and enter the fray again.

I urge you...join me in this crucial battle.

Canyon Creek

by Andrew Wulfers



I felt my lower half pucker as I stared down the throat of the beast: a large, pumping falls dropping into what looked like a rather ferocious reversal. What added to my bowel discomfort was the fact that within a matter of minutes I would be thrusting myself into its hungry jowls. The portage option was a twenty foot seal launch which, if done incorrectly could possibly arrange the condition of my face.

I was looking at Big Falls in Washington's Canyon Creek and since my first time down I have enjoyed the ritual of running it many times. The creek has become a staple for most hardcore Portland and SW Washington boaters. It is a gem. Located in the southwestern pocket of Washington, around 45 minutes from Portland, Canyon Creek is a tributary of the North Fork Lewis River but flows to



tual carnage fest where your best bet is right up the gut to take your **medicine..sorta.**

There are several different put-in options for the lower stretch. **One can** slide into the river at the confluence of Fly Creek, where the bridge crosses over head or drive up the road another mile to the sea launch. I recommend taking the latter option but be careful. few things are harsher than watching your buddies get plastered as they over rotate off of the 18' ledge. It's worth it. Just downstream you'll get a face full at the first significant drop, Final Exam or Entrance Exam, depending on what section of river your navigating. Check this one out from the road on the way to the put-in, some joker decided to joy ride a junker off the cliff. I would hate to see someone miss the move and end up playing mechanic while surfing the hole on river left.

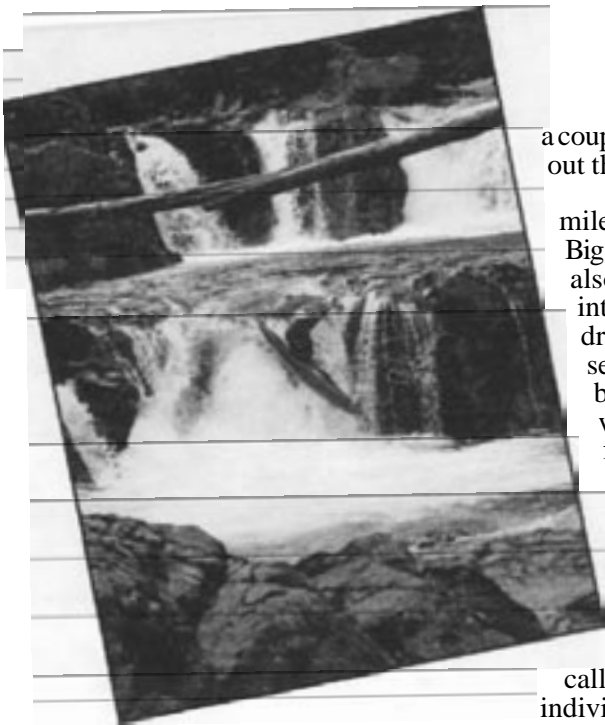
For the next mile or so the river moves through second growth forest tainted with stands of Alder. It offers enjoyable Class II-III rapids with plenty of play spots for those wishing to get loose before the real fun begins. A huge waterfall cascades 100 feet off a canyon wall on river left and large, ancient trees begin to appear more frequently. The river becomes more intimate and soon your in the eddy above the first drop in the canyon section. This series of drops has an intimidating feel as you stare down river, so take your time, scout and portage if necessary. The canyon changes dramatically with different flows. At low water, the ledges are very defined, as are the undercuts. At medium flows, things get a little more exciting and the holes begin to churn. At high flows, the canyon be **kickin'** some serious booty.

The high bridge over head marks Terminator rapids. Entering this drop, you must quickly decide whether you want to catch the eddy on the right or power on through. If your not committed to your move your liable to get **chundered..thus** the name. At high water, I would seriously consider a portage. I won't be mentioning any names, but one of our Eastern friends probed the hole in a rather uncomfortable position. Add another notch on to that wooden paddle! After a few more interesting drops, one enters the Thrasher series.

Prelude to **Thrasher** has it all: wood, nasty reversals and at low water, a bonafide pin spot (the author speaks from experience). There are several lines through and with a little care **I'm** sure you'll do just fine. Thrasher is the ultimate boof move.

With enough water, the sound of plastic hitting water is so sweet! Take

**Photos by
Dave Slover**



**Photos by
Dave Slover**

a couple hundred cfs. away and I'll be walking. A number of people have found out the hard way why we call this drop Thrasher.

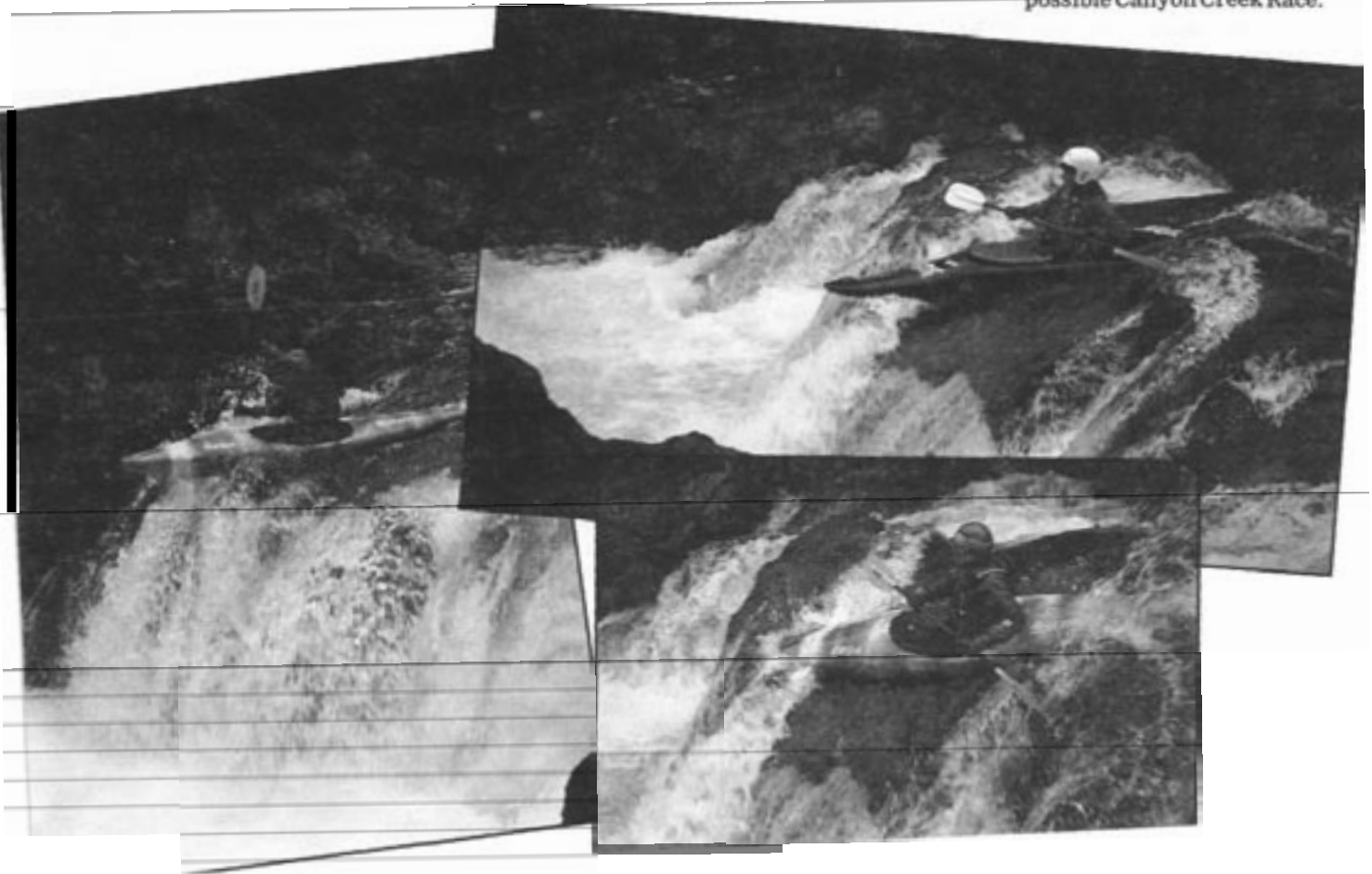
That's it for the easy stuff, now onward toward the falls. A quarter mile of beautiful, boulder-choked Class N leads you right up to the brink of Big Falls. This drop has a reputation of being big, ugly and...friendly. It's also becoming famous (featured in the new Dagger catalog). Looking down into the frothy maelstrom for the first time all I could think about was big drop, big hole, double undercut and lame portage. Since that time I have seen and heard of people taking every conceivable line through that bad boy with only a minor amount of scrapes and bruises resulting. At low water, the falls has the perfect boof ledge, so if your idea of fun is landing flat off of 18', give it a whirl. At high water well...your gonna have to take your medicine.

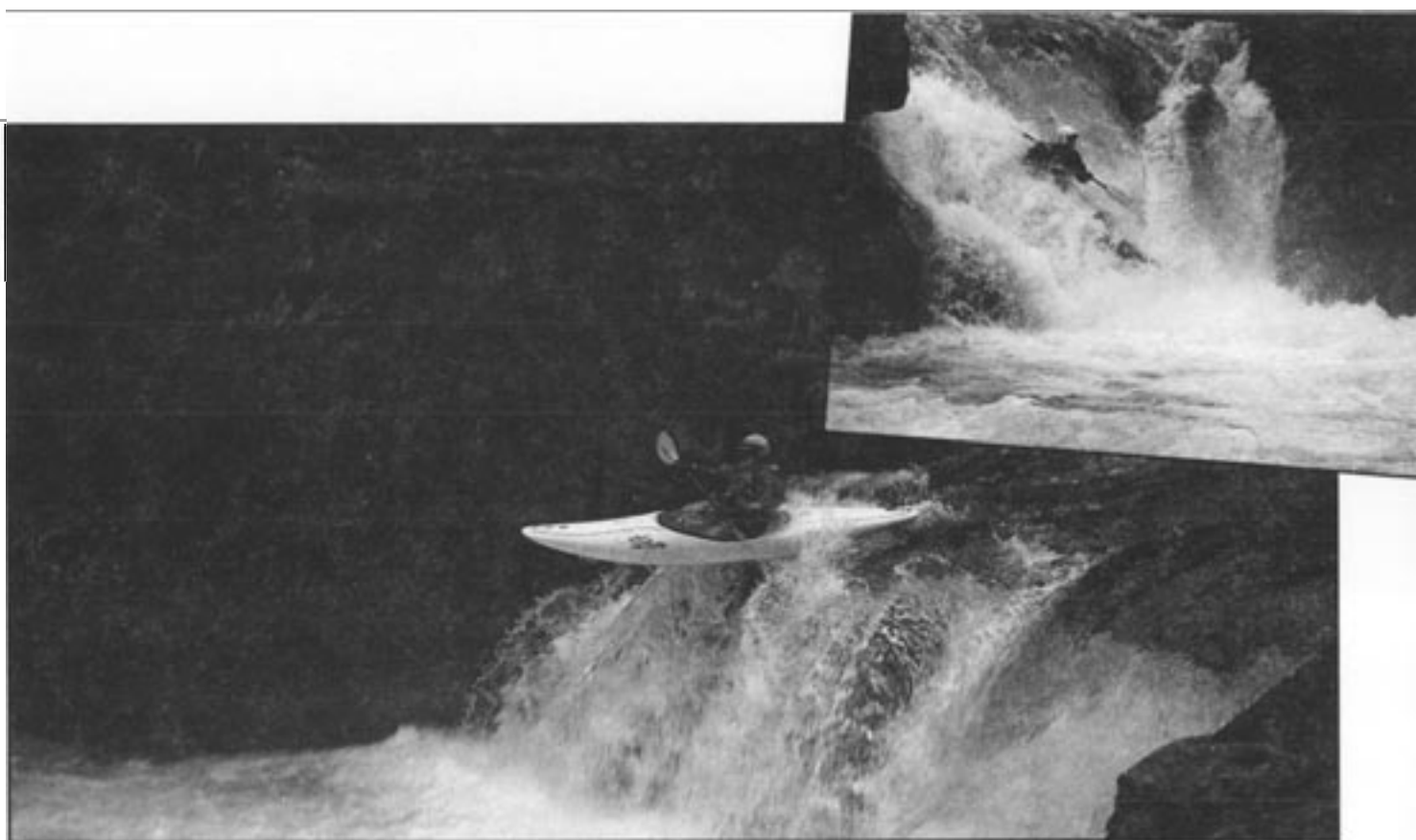
Following Big Falls are more boulder garden ledged drops which take you to the lip of Champaign. The first in a double set of waterfalls, Champaign is fine. It has a beautiful launching pad and a foamy landing. Unfortunately, river right is no option at all. It drops into a churning cauldron shaped like an upstream horseshoe. It's a bad place for good retendos. Immediately following this is Hammering Spot. We used to call this the "so and so" swim hole after a particularly nasty thwacking of an individual I won't mention, but so many people found themselves in the ruthless clutches of this mega, ledge hole that we thought **Hammering Spot** would be more appropriate. From above, the falls looks relatively harmless but if you miss the boof off of a foot wide flake you will surely find out otherwise. Tales of broken boats, radical cartwheels and free form **chundering** have so far kept me on line. The portage is on the left.

After one more falls, you are at the reservoir. Rejoice. The two mile paddle out is a time for reflection, deep thoughts and one question: when can I run it again?

I suppose that one of the reasons the AWA journal, which is a fine rag indeed, does not get more stories from the West is we are afraid you folks will come out in droves and crowd our sweet spots. In this case however, we encourage it. I have written this piece as a semi guide book description and if you can almost taste it, come on out and sink your teeth into it. Hurry, Canyon Creek could be dammed by a money hungry mongrel on the hill. P.S. Be on the watch for a

possible Canyon Creek Race.





Not for Long Folks...!?!: Canyon Creek Dam Proposal Looming

Some see Washington and the Pacific Northwest as the last bastion of **free-flowing, boatable** rivers. A land of spectacular canyons, wilderness runs and just outstanding whitewater. A land where **all** rivers run downhill. Canyon Creek as described in this article is only one.

But this plethora of opportunities is fast disappearing. Bolstered by outdated tax incentives and the desire for profits from cheap energy, the onslaught against rivers and streams from hydropower developers is quickly growing in the Northwest. Look at the statistics: across the nation, hydro generates approximately 10% of this country's energy. However, in the Northwest this is closer to 80%. As the number of sites for large scale dams dwindles, developers are now looking at tiny headwater streams to grow hydro generation. For the AWA, this is our greatest nightmare. Besides providing little power, these small dams have as great an impact as large dams. Projects like Canyon Creek target the very heart of our river systems and often the soul of advanced whitewater boating.

The laundry list for Washington is quite alarming. Iron Creek, Johnson Creek, Summit Creek, the Clear Fork of the Cowlitz, Butter Creek, Silver Creek, and **Summit/Carlton** Creek, to name but a few. In all cases, the proposed projects are on the brink of the profitability scale. Those that do survive the profitability test — and there are many — are sure to

wreak havoc upon the environment, not to mention opportunity for those of us in search of the pristine, backcountry whitewater opportunities so often described in this Journal.

Canyon Creek is a prime example. If the current proposed project is licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), an unknown amount of water will be diverted into an 11-foot diameter pipe from the lower three miles of the river (aka the Lower Canyon Creek run). It doesn't take a genius to conclude that the spectacular run detailed in these pages will be lost. The cumulative effect of this and of the larger, existing hydro projects downstream on the North Lewis watershed will likewise be devastating for all of those involved with these rivers, especially boaters. What's worse, picture the same scenario occurring in the Skagit (where five new dams are proposed), **Nooksack** (seven new dams), Cowlitz (nine dams including the one on the Clear Fork) and many other rivers near you.

By far the most disturbing product of this new age of small scale hydro projects is that few know or care enough about these streams to work to protect them. Most often, the knowledge of these stretches is limited to die-hard river advocates, adventuresome fishermen and boaters who seek out secluded spots and first descents. **FERC's** limited environmental analysis of these proposals (if

any) thus often lacks any discussion of probable effects to recreation, a use of the river which must be balanced with the so-called "power uses" of the river. The projects are then licensed with insufficient or no mitigation for lost whitewater opportunities.

The AWA Conservation Team is working hard to prevent this situation from repeating itself around the country. For instance, AWA is spearheading, along with the Rivers Council of Washington, the effort to block the Canyon Creek project early on. Joining us are a number of local boating, fishing and conservation groups. Keep an eye out for future articles detailing the battle.

We can't do it alone however. Input from boaters describing other little known runs and the projects that threaten them is crucial. We urge you to join the likes of Andrew Wulfers and others in getting the word out. Also, keep a sharp eye in the papers for proposals that may threaten your favorite run. Then join the AWA and other local and national conservation groups in the fight. In some cases, we may just be the last hope.

For more information on how you can help on Canyon Creek, please contact AWA Director Brooke **Drury** at Friends of the Earth, Seattle, WA (206), or Rich Bowers, AWA Conservation Office (301) 589-9453.

New Flood Control Dams Proposed for the Russell Fork, Cheat and Tygart Rivers

by Rich Bowers, AWA Conservation Director

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed spending over \$700 million to protect floodplain areas along the **mainstem** Levisa Fork from Louisa, KY to the town of Grundy, VA, and along the **mainstem** Russell Fork from its confluence with the Levisa Fork to 4.26 miles upstream of the town of Haysi, VA.

In 1981, the Corps was authorized by Congress, under authority of Section 202 of the Water and Energy Development Appropriation Act, to evaluate and formulate flood reduction alternatives in the Levisa and Big Sandy river basins. According to the Corps' report, damages resulting from another flood like the one in 1977 (the flood of record and the event which Congress responded to in this Act), are estimated to be approximately \$178.0 million.

The AWA, American Rivers and the Environmental Defense Fund have opposed this Haysi Dam plan because: 1. the **cost/benefit** ratio is so unbalanced (\$700 million investment to protect \$178 million), and 2. because of the environmental damage to the river (loss of 11.3 miles of natural free-flowing river).

This lack of balance is due to: Corps' failure to properly assess the cost of **non-structural** alternatives; the Corps' desire to provide flood protection well above the 100 year flood level; protecting structures well outside the boundaries set by Congress; and estimating replacement value of existing structures within the floodplain well above their ac-

tual value (the Corps' report estimates replacement values of over **\$160,000** per structure, even though many structures are not permanent, such as trailer homes).

Cheat, Tygart and Buckhannon

The Corps' is also exploring the possibility of building a dam and reservoir on West Virginia's Cheat River, erecting two "dry" dams on the Shavers Fork and the Dry Fork, and a series of smaller flood control dams on the Tygart. Another \$400,000 Congressional appropriation is paying for these studies. (These dry dams would not create permanent reservoirs, but would store water when the streams reached flood stage).

According to West Virginia Rivers Coalition's Roger Harrison, "the Cheat is one of the nation's largest remaining free-flowing rivers." WVRC is also advocating Wild and Scenic designation for 12 streams in the Monngahela National Forest, including the Forks of the Cheat.

The Corps' is also investigating flood problems in the **Elkins, WV** area. Part of this study includes a dam on the Buckhannon (near Sago), and on the mainstream Tygart between Valley Bend and Huttonsville.

On a positive note, the study on the Cheat would also address Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) which has been a reoccurring problem on Muddy Branch, a tributary for the Cheat. AMD studies would be conducted on several priority streams, including Muddy Creek, Pringle Run, Lick Run, Heather Run and Morgan Run. AMD is a priority issue for both WVRC and the newly formed "Friends of the Cheat."

Changing Role of the Corps

ALL of these projects have one thing in common, they are major projects which are coming at a time when the Corps' mission and budget are under intense scrutiny. If you have read "Inside the Beltway" in this issue, you are aware that the New Congress is looking at reducing the Corps' annual \$3.6 billion budget by 30%. In addition, during February the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works proposed a new flood control policy which focused on economically justified projects with substantial local support. More specifically, projects must provide twice the benefits compared to cost, and local sponsors must contribute 75% of new projects.

In order to accomplish a new mission with a drastically reduced budget, the Corps is looking for other benefits for their projects. How to do it? Well, recreation is hot. Economic tourism is even hotter. And whitewater boating is absolutely scalding.

According to the Concept Report of the General Plan Supplement, increasing the pool level of the Haysi flood control dam by 1.5 inches could provide whitewater flows for 17 or more days of releases in August and September, and increase the reliability of recreation flows from the existing Flannagan Dam, which currently supplies the four October releases. Taken to its conclusion, a 1991 Tourism report concludes that these releases could provide in excess of **\$660,000** per year from whitewater sports.

This greatly increases the bottom line for dam economics. It has drawn support from both the Virginia and Kentucky legislature (under economic development), local businesses, and even some local boaters.

On the Cheat, a proposed dam above Rowlesburg has been interpreted by some as meaning guaranteed flows which could eventually rival the nearby fall Gauley season.

The AWA has objected to Corps' plans which use whitewater economics as a reason to build new dams and destroy existing natural rivers. While AWA will continue to fight to include recreation below existing dams as mitigation (for example, we fully support improving recreational flows below the existing Flannagan Dam on the Russell Fork), we can see no difference between damming rivers for flood control, hydroelectricity, or recreation. Let the rivers FLOW.

For more information, call AWA Conservation Office at (301) 589-9453, or Roger Harrison at WVRC at (304) 472-0025.

Dam Proposal on the Gunnison

The Colorado Environmental Coalition, American Rivers, Colorado Whitewater Association, AWA and others have filed an intervention to block construction of a dam which would destroy 27 miles of the Gunnison next to the proposed Dominguez wilderness in Colorado. A preliminary permit had been filed with the FERC by Dominguez Hydroelectric Associates.

The dam would flood a popular canoe run, and a section of river eligible for Wild and Scenic Protection. In addition, it would inundate part of the lower Dominguez Wilderness Study Area managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Dominguez is the largest potential BLM wilderness in Colorado at **87,000** acres.

For more information, contact the AWA Conservation Office at (301) 589-9453, or Norm Mullen, Colorado Environmental Coalition, at (303) 243-0002.

WHAT'S IN YOUR HAIR?

by Mike Mulligan

Most paddlers are conservationists at heart. Whether you are a weekend float fisherperson or you spend your days off running the Green, most whitewater boaters really care about the health of the river.

Water quality is not just an issue on the acid rich Cheat or the sewage laden James in downtown Richmond. It's everywhere. Think of all the tight little streams high up on mountains in the middle of nowhere. These are not protected under a plastic bubble.

Between twenty and thirty percent of all the nitrogen that is killing Chesapeake Bay is coming from the sky. This means that the effluent pipe of negligent industry isn't the only cause for concern regarding how clean your creek may be. We have all heard about acid rain, but more people need to understand how wide scale the problem of water pollution really is.

Acid rain and airborne nitrogen (NOX) comes from two main sources; industrial areas like the Ohio River Valley, and highly congested urban areas. This smog tends to move east to west due to weather patterns. Streams east of the midwest catch a lot of funk, either as rain pollution or dry particulates (dry particles of sulfuric acid, phosphorous, nitrogen, or what ever might be up there). Nitrates and Phosphates are clumped into a category called nutrients. That makes it sound like they are good for the environment, but that is often not the case.

Yes, it's true that our atmosphere contains about 78% Nitrogen. So what the hell is the big deal? Well although NO, might be all around us, when

we put a ton of fertilizer on the lawn or drive the car all over town, we produce unnatural levels of this chemical. Nitrogen and phosphorous wash off the land or come down from the atmosphere in the form of rain... and they kill creeks.

It may seem ironic that "nutrients" could pose a problem. But it is the overload of these nutrients that wrecks havocs on our streams.

Increase your intake of food three fold and you wind up with blocked arteries, heart failure, and too much body fat. The same is true when you are talking about too much nitrogen and phosphorous in a stream. Initially there is an algal bloom, or explosion of algae. This rapidly depletes the oxygen available for other organisms. It also can make the water so turbid that sunlight can not reach the bottom, where it is needed to allow plants to grow... and to allow predatory fish, such as trout, to feed.

Heavy silt in a creek can have the same effect.

So what can you do? The first thing is to acknowledge that it is not just the plant, or the farmer, or the developer, but everybody, that creates the problem. As the population expands we lose more and more of the natural filters that clean our water. These filters are forests, wetlands, and animals that feed on the suspended nutrients in the water.

Use as little fertilizer on your yard as possible.

In fact, some environmentally conscious homeowners aren't bothering with manicured lawns at all. They're letting their yards return to their natural, wooded states. So next time you feel the need to mow your lawn, go boating in-

stead. Your neighbors might not like it at first, but what the hell? Maybe they will learn from your example.

If you're looking for a place to live, don't build. Renovate. Why bulldoze another beautiful mountaintop when there are plenty of existing homes that just need a little work.

Conserve water. The total amount of water on earth is the same as when the dinosaurs ruled the planet. We have just managed to pollute more of it.

If you farm, leave a buffer of trees along rivers and streams.

Be a good consumer, buy products that are less damaging on the environment. (ie... if you want to save elephants don't buy ivory). Start for looking for detergents that are low in Phosphates.

Take someone young paddling. Exposure and education are the only things that can ultimately save our environment.

Once we dismiss the illusion that it's only big industry that kills fish and burns our eyes, we can start to get everyone involved in making the world a better place.

Poor water quality is global, not regional.

THINK COSMICALLY... ACT PERSONALLY!

If you want to find out more about saving streams write to:

The Izaak Walton League
1401 Wilson Blvd. level B
Arlington, VA 22209-2318
1-800-BUG-IWLA, it's FREE

Whitewater Boaters Flood into Europe

So, you are looking for the perfect place to live as a boater? Do you relocate to Friendsville, Kernville or Steamboat Springs? In the future, really hot boaters may be moving to the Netherlands!

But aren't the Netherlands, like, below sea level? Yep, but according to Greenspace, the recent flooding in the Netherlands and neighboring countries is just the start, and they expect further flooding of the Meuse and Rhine rivers over the coming decade.

Even though Greenspace can't confirm this yet, their theory is that the rise in concentrations of greenhouse gases (particularly carbon dioxide: CO2) is creating a warmer climate, and this is creating higher flows. According to this theory, warmer conditions are moving the snow line in the Alps to a higher elevation, which means more rain - less snow. Because of this, wintertime runoff into the Rhine will increase by about 15-20%.

While this may not be popular for the

ski industry, it will suit local boaters just fine. Greenspace expects that the emission of CO2 (from burning fossil fuels) will almost double by 2050. This will cause temperatures to rise by 1.5 to 4.5 degrees worldwide affecting rainfall, droughts (aaargh!), storms, cyclones and sea levels. This combination of more rain and higher temperatures will increase the chance of extreme flooding.

While boaters in the Carmel and Southern Georgia areas may believe this could never happen, it does offer hope for boaters living in less than perfect boating areas (Ohio, Florida, etc.). In the meanwhile, Netherlands boaters are researching the possibility of recreational releases below the dikes.

As we went to press, there were no comments from Greenspace on the future boating conditions in San Jose, Monterey, the Salinas Valley and Clear Lake regions of California!

The "Real" Risk of Boating

by Rich Bowers

Everyone recognizes that whitewater boating is a risk sport. Risk is part of the attraction, both for participants and for the public which views whitewater as alternately romantic, exciting, and dangerous. If you need proof, just turn on the TV and check out the new Chanel and Mountain Dew commercials.

But just as whitewater paddling is changing (skills and numbers of participants), so are the risks involved in boating. The real question is what will be the risks in the future? In the past, boaters were subject to vehicle vandalism, gunfire (e.g. the Upper Yough), and just general aggravation from the locals (although we sometimes gave as good as we got). If the property rights advocates have their way, this may begin again - only this time it may have Congressional approval!

But there is a more pressing problem concerning our right to even paddle on rivers, and our right to determine what personal risks we are willing to take. The

new form of risk is not vertical pins, contusions, lacerations or any combination of these "on the water" risks - the new risk is that of being arrested before, during or after we paddle. It's a simple concept to understand, even if you don't agree with it. Federal and state agencies, charged with managing public resources, are freaking out over how to keep the general public from running over rapids and falls and killing themselves in mass numbers (kind of like Lemmings). Even those that understand that this just doesn't happen, or who give the public some credit for common sense, are worried that they will need to deal with crowds, publicity, injuries or worse. Given the current level of funding and personnel, they don't want anything that will make their job harder. The simple answer in many cases: close it down!

This is certainly the case in Yellowstone National Park, where you can horseback ride, hike, snowmobile, or kayak tour in the park, but not kayak or canoe on any of its outstanding rivers, including the Gardiner, Lewis, Lamar, or the Black and Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone.

It is a predominant issue in recent attempts to close Georgia's Bear Creek.

Bear Creek runs through Cloudland Canyon State Park, and, after an incident when several boaters showed up to boat the river (and sought directions to the put-in), the Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) and the park manager are seeking to close the river to boaters. The major concerns: boater safety and who will pay for rescue and evacuation. As this issue goes to print, AWA and Georgia Canoeing Association have scheduled a meeting with the DNR for the end of March. Until this meeting, DNR has agreed to postpone posting the river off-limits. In our favor, the Bear has been boated for the last five years with no major incidents.

While the Bear may no longer define the cutting edge of boating, it is still no walk in the park. Many of Yellowstone's rivers offer similar difficulty. But state and federal bureaucracies are not solely targeting "hair" runs. One example is New York's Mongaup River, where the local NPS supervisor is fighting tooth and nail to prevent higher flows for whitewater. At issue is the idea that higher flows will create carnage on the downstream Delaware River, a beginner run. The supervisor is un-persuaded by the fact that the local hydro dam releases



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this same higher flow whenever it wants. Another example is the **January/February** Journal's report on the Alta Weir on California's Kings River, which has created a surfing wave surrounded by flatwater whose killer reputation was re-engineered over 8 years ago.

So what do we do? Well, our options are limited. 1. We can fight them (get arrested, take the issue to court, etc.) This has been successful in some states (NY and MT), but usually it takes years, and many times the participants can face severe personal liability for their actions. 2. We can recognize management concerns and work to be sure that boaters do not make life miserable for those responsible. Last summer, when boaters were trying to get the reservation system changed at Ohiopyle State Park (PA), the park manager was reluctant to remove the weekend system which spread launch times throughout the day. If you have ever seen the crowds on the lower Yough on a summer weekend, you can appreciate his point of view (the operating word here is "appreciate," which is different than "agree with"). If we can appreciate their point of view, then sometimes we create a third option: 3. Education.

Educating the public and agencies about whitewater boating (both as a sport and as a lifestyle) is perhaps the only way to permanently assure our rights on rivers. To be successful, we need to start with simple things that everyone can understand. Starting with how we should be allowed to kill ourselves is a bad idea. A good idea would show others that this really doesn't happen very often. Another good idea is to have boaters explain why we paddle rivers (which gets into lifestyle, conservation, etc.) I have spent the last three years listening to boaters talk about rivers at numerous public scoping meetings, and no one can do it better!

Like everything else, this approach has pros and cons. Education takes a long time (how many years did you spend in school??), and like every other group of people, you run into those you just can't deal with. On the plus side, it only takes one chink in the armor to get results.

Fortunately these chinks exist. Not all agencies are unwilling to discuss whitewater needs or find out more about what we do. Pennsylvania State Parks is wrestling with this idea right now, as boaters have been pressing them to lift the ban on running Ohiopyle State Parks. Great Falls Park (MD and VA) addressed this years ago - the result, an expert run in one of the most visible parks in the country. West Virginia dealt with this issue at Valley Falls State Park, and again at the put-in for the upper run located in Blackwater Falls State Park.

When the AWA discusses Bear with

the Georgia DNR, we will use these examples, explain that a possible future rescue is not a good reason to close a river, and document how boaters have negotiated to keep other rivers open to boating. Hopefully, others will be able to use our information on similar issues and continue to build a background of positive examples.

Will it work? In some cases yes. The DNR at this point seems willing to discuss the Bear issue with us. On the other hand, the NPS supervisor on the Mongaup may never change his views and we will probably never figure out his hidden agenda. In some situations we will need to seek other relief. But even if we can't educate everyone, we can at least educate ourselves about solutions, personalities, and perspectives.

Hey, we can always get arrested later.

Verboten Hairboatin'

This expression has been passed down through generations and generations of rural Germans living in villages perched in the tall, steep German Alps. Roughly translated, it means "forbidden boating." These notes are designed to give an overview of access issues and AWA's efforts from around the country. Please call or write AWA's Access Program if you have information about access to whitewater rivers:

1430 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 589-9453
(301) 589-6121 (fax)
e.mail: 76435.731@compuserve.com

Grand Canyon, Arizona

In 1996, the Colorado River Management Plan will be up for revision. AWA submitted the following comments for a publication to be edited by the Grand Canyon River Guides. The GCRG is a non-profit organization dedicated to the quality of the Grand Canyon Experience. They publish an outstanding quarterly magazine, The Boatman's Quarterly Review, from P.O. Box 1934, Flagstaff AZ, 86002.

Everything associated with the Grand Canyon is on a scale all its own. It has the most notorious rapids on the continent, large enough to merit a scale that goes to 10. It has, arguably, the most dramatic landscape of any river trip in the U.S. Even its human explorers are larger than life: the one-armed John Wesley Powell strapped aboard a boat.

The Canyon has also been a battleground of epic proportions: the site of the duel over a proposed Bureau of Reclama-

tion dam that would have flooded many of the canyon's rapids; the fight over Glen Canyon dam and the ongoing struggle to manage water flows from the dam; the interstate squabbling over water appropriation, leaving the Colorado a salty trickle by the time it reaches the sea.

The waiting list for private permits on the Grand Canyon is also in a league of its own, approaching the scale of geologic time. If you want to guide yourself down the canyon, you must wait more than ten years. The management plan for the Grand Canyon is the most controversial in the U.S., the mother of all access problems.

The central problem with the current management plan is its permit allocation system that has not adapted through the years to reflect changing demands. Set in the 1970's, the split allotment formula allocates 68% of the use to commercial trips and 32% to self-guided boaters. These allocations have not been adequately adjusted despite a continually growing demand for non-commercial trips. This inflexible system, over time, has resulted in an unfair and unjustifiable split between commercial and non-commercial users.

While the AWA appreciates the need to limit the number of trip launches at Lee's Ferry to maintain a quality wilderness experience, the current system favors only the commercial experience. While a commercial passenger can book a vacation a few months in advance, the waiting period for private permit holders is now over a decade. As illustrated by the large number of citizens who desire private permits, many people either lack the financial means to join a commercial trip (\$1000-3000 per person) or choose a more personal experience.

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) believes, simply enough, that the Grand Canyon belongs to everyone, not just those lucky enough to afford commercial permits. It is the duty of the Na-

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ACCESS

tional Park Service to reflect the public will, to accommodate all citizens in an unbiased manner.

Above all, the new management plan must be fair and flexible.

In order to be fair, the National Park Service needs to re-examine the 68/32 split. If commercial and self-guided boaters continue to have separate quotas, river managers should devise a methodology to determine true demand. It is important to realize that even the long waiting list may not reflect the demand for private trips, because of the excessive wait that frustrates many from even applying or into going on commercial trips where there is no waiting list.

In order to be flexible, the Park Service should develop a system to **adjust** the quotas to keep supply and demand for both types of trips in balance over time. AWA recommends experimenting with new methods of permit allocation that will accurately reflect the marketplace. In advocating for change, however, we do not wish to undermine the financial viability of commercial trips.

Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind is that when the management plan is said and done, the Canyon will remain, will continue to be the ultimate river trip. Now that's something we all agree upon.

Kaweah River, California

Access problems have arisen on the Kaweah River near the town of Three Rivers in **Tulare** County. The Kaweah River is a popular whitewater river that offers several nice sections of Class III and Class IV paddling. Prior to this year it supported commercial rafting by the Beyond Limits company.

This winter, however, access was blocked at the principal launch site, the Highway 198 bridge near the Gateway Motel and Restaurant. A chainlink fence topped by barbed wire now extends from the bridge abutments to a nearby cliff. Of-

ficial-looking signs on both sides of the road state "No Parking", "No River Access", and "No Trespassing". Who erected these signs and structures is unknown at the moment; many suspect that it was local landowners, perhaps in conjunction with the California Dept of Transportation.

While it still may be possible to enter the river upstream at the boundary of Kings Canyon/Sequoia National Park, launching from this upper point will entail a series of difficult portages and ferries to reach the more **boatable** stretches below. For kayakers of less than advanced to expert skill and for most rafters, these maneuvers will not be feasible.

Downstream access is also a problem. At the Dinely Road bridge and the North Fork Drive bridge, "No Parking" signs have been erected to prevent any opportunity to load or unload boats. Private landowners have erected "No Trespassing" signs in both vicinities. The "No Parking" signs on the North Fork Drive extend for miles up that road as it parallels the north bank of the main Kaweah River, and later where it parallels the North Fork of the Kaweah.

According to California boater Richard Penny, "I have no doubt that these many obstructions have been erected in order to prevent picnickers, sunbathers, swimmers, fishermen, kayakers, and rafters from enjoying access to the Kaweah River. By infringing on the right of the public to enjoy the use of California's rivers these actions would seem to be unconstitutional. The constitution of the State of California guarantees the public's use of and navigation on the state's rivers." Another problem is that these fences extend onto County/State right of way.

There remain two **fine**, legal areas to take out of the river. One is at the county park at Holiday Rapid, and the other is the Army Corps of Engineers launch area on Terminus Reservoir.

Georgia River Access: Will Your Favorite River

Be Next?

by David Cox, Georgia Canoeing Assoc., River Access Chairman

1. The Dog River

Georgia paddlers are quickly becoming embroiled in a river access problem on the Dog River. The Dog is located about fifteen (15) miles west of Atlanta in Douglas County and offers 7 miles of Class III-IV. It is generally considered a high water run that is runnable on an infrequent basis at best. Metro-Atlanta paddlers often paddle it late on weekday afternoons after torrential rains in the area. Authorities have closed the only take-out access to the Dog River to everyone except residents of Douglas County. After months of negotiations, talks have soured and both sides appear to be preparing for litigation.

First, a brief history. In 1988, The Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority (WSA) obtained a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers for to construct a dam on the Dog River on the condition that the whitewater run immediately above what is now the Dog River Reservoir would be preserved. The permit also requires the WSA to provide a public access area.

In 1990, the Georgia Canoeing Association (GCA) became aware that the WSA wished to avoid constructing a public access facility at the reservoir site and wrote a letter to the Corps of Engineers urging them to enforce this special condition of the permit.

In 1993, the WSA contacted the GCA and informed them that, although the dam was finished, several matters, including fish stocking, required that paddlers remain off the river for one year. The GCA complied with this request.

In July, 1994, a group of Atlanta paddlers paddled the Dog River one afternoon following a rain storm. There were no warning signs at the put-in. After finishing the run and preparing for a short paddle across the reservoir to take out, the paddlers encountered large sign saying "No Kayaks or Rafts Allowed Beyond this Point." Not being able to paddle upstream against the current and not wishing to get cited for trespass on private property, the paddlers elected to try to cross the reservoir. They were quickly accosted by WSA security personnel who were extremely rude to the paddlers and issued warning citations to each of them.





Dave Mad Dog Cox gets Access at Super Soc 'Em Dog, Changa River, South Carolina

When asked why the WSA was prohibiting paddlers on the river, one of the **security guards** stated that the "WSA didn't want no queers on the reservoir."

In August, 1994, GCA President Evelyn Hopkins and GCA River Access Chairman David Cox met with officials at the WSA to attempt to work out a solution to the problem of access for **non-residents** of Douglas County. The GCA representatives left the meeting believing that the WSA would likely grant access to GCA paddlers in exchange for river clean-up services on the Dog River. However, the GCA later learned that the WSA was sponsoring a river clean-up of its own and that the WSA had no intention of permitting access to the Dog River.

This response prompted paddlers to form an association named the "Friends of the Dog River Reservoir" (FDRR). Late in February, the WSA and FDRR came into direct conflict at a symposium of river issues. The WSA had an exhibit which proudly displayed citations for high water quality and its t-shirts from the WSA sponsored river clean-up. On the other side of the exhibit hall, FDRR had a display showing the formidable barbed wire fences surrounding the Reservoir Facility and a picture of the sign at the mouth of the Dog River prohibiting kayaks and rafts. The FDRR stated that the WSA is in violation of the condition of its permit requiring public access and declared that the WSA was violating federal law as a result. Local newspapers in Douglas County became interested in these events and a firestorm of angry letters to the papers have been highly critical of the WSA.

On the following Thursday, March 9, 1995 representatives of the GCA, the FDRR and the WSA met, and the WSA **appeared** to be willing to reach a compromise. One solution proposed by the WSA involved a permit system which would allow a specified number of paddlers to take out at the reservoir on any given day. Although the GCA and the FDRR appeared very receptive to this proposal, one influential resident, Danny Eidson, remained adamant that there would be no expansion of existing access to the **reservoir**.

At the conclusion of the board meeting, GCA and FDRR representatives **believed** that the WSA would approve the proposed permitting plan. We were shocked upon learning that the Board

had summarily rejected the idea a week later. No negotiations are in progress at this time. The GCA is **requesting information** from the WSA and is **contemplating** filing a lawsuit.

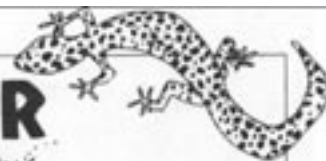
2. Armuchee Creek.

As of the press deadline, the Superior Court of Chattooga County had not yet issued a ruling regarding the Armuchee Creek litigation last December.

3. Bear Creek.

See "The Real Risk of Boating" article in this issue. On Wednesday, March 29, Ron Stewart and Rich Bowers of the AWA and David Cox of the GCA met with the Department of Natural Resources to

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Top: Columbia River Gorge- Confluence with Washington State's White Salmon River
Bottom: Washington's Wild and Scenic White Salmon River

discuss the issue of boating on this Class V+ run.

4. Chattooga River.

Bruce Hare, a long standing member of the paddling community with close ties to the Chattooga River, and a local **non-profit** organization have filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service in Federal court challenging certain revisions to the rule governing the use of the Chattooga River by private and public boaters. Local paddlers are concerned about their lack of involvement in the decision making process.

Boating the Blue Ridge

In early March, several boaters were stopped while driving down the Blue Ridge Parkway (in N.C.), and were told that boating was illegal in the park. Further investigation on these "rules" disclosed that boating was not illegal, and rangers are now being instructed not to hassle boaters. [[[The AWA continues to inform managing agencies about the minimal impact that paddlers have on streams.]]]

Piru and Sespe Creeks, CA.

The Forest Service, after an appeal from Friends of the River (a California based river conservation group), has decided to re-study the Lower and Upper Piru Creek (in Ventura County) as well as Upper Sespe Creek for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System. Those wishing to provide input to the Wilderness Management Plan that includes

boating on Sespe, Piru, and other creeks in the Forest should write to:

Los Padres National Forest
Attn: Sharon Sprouse
6144 Calle Real
Goleta, CA 93117

The Forest Service's original study of these creeks in 1988 greatly understates the scenic, recreational, geologic, plant and wildlife values of the creek.

Piru creek offers 1000 ft. rock faces, vertical walled gorges, waterfalls cascading into the river, hot springs, stunning geology, AND excellent whitewater. The rapids in the gorge are formed by oddly sculpted boulders of the same pink and purple aggregate, somehow reminiscent of "Yellow Submarine" artwork. This gorge section culminates with a large tributary free falling into the creek from perhaps hundred feet above the river! Please urge the USFS to reconsider its original description of the gorge which stated that "the most significant visual feature is the presence of continually flowing water pools in an otherwise hot, arid region."

North Fork Skykomish: Washington

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is considering opening of a new take-out for the spectacular and long Class III-IV+ whitewater run on the "North Fork of the Sky." The usual take-outs on this run leave boaters with a difficult choice: take out early and miss many more miles of spectacular rapids and scenery downstream; or keep going and take out in the tiny enclave of Index, much to the consternation of the local residents.

By reclaiming "The Triangle Property" from a private leaseholder, State Parks would add a needed access point for paddlers, fishermen, picknickers, and anyone else who wishes to enjoy this spectacular river — all at little cost to the agency. (The property is already developed as a primitive access point.) In short, it's a win-win situation.

The AWA is working with State Parks to make this possibility a reality come December. That's when the private lease on the property is set to run out. Our chances of success will be greatly enhanced with support from individual boaters and boating groups. Please write your letters of support to Steven Starlund, Director of the State Scenic Rivers Program, WA State Parks, 7150 Clean Water Lane KX-11, PO Box 42668, Olympia, WA 98504-2668.

Contact AWA Board Member Brooke Drury for more information at 206-633-1661.

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Inside the Beltway

by Ed E. Lyne

An eight-lane interstate highway (known as the "beltway") encircles the nation's capital like a monstrous snake, separating the noxious inferno of politics from the rest of the nation. The populace peers in with an attitude of bewildered dismay. Meanwhile, politicians, bureaucrats, T.V. newscasters, lobbyists, lawyers, thieves, reporters, muggers, government contractors, drug addicts, and spies form a cacophonous Tower of Babel. At the center, gripping his new Contract with America like the Sword of Genghis Khan, Newt Gingrich, newly enthroned Speaker of the House, announces a grandiose strategy to transform the planet. Undeterred by this horrific scene, alert whitewater boaters, trapped deep inside the beltway, carefully filter the pandemonium to report on anything and everything affecting whitewater rivers.

It was loony tunes inside the beltway when the last issue of the Journal reached your mailbox.

Now the funny stuff is turning nasty. Life is especially brutal for Counter Culture **McGoverniks** (a.k.a. bleeding heart liberals). They haven't won a vote for so long that most don't even bother to show up for work anymore. This old liberal crowd has a Humpty Dumpty problem. Their agenda fell off the wall in November of last year, and nobody can put it back together again.

The other team, Sonny Bono, Rush Limbaugh, Phil Gramm, and Newt Gingrich are feeling their Wheaties... **gleefully** cramming the Contract with America down the throats of the bankrupt liberals in Congress with the vengeance of Visigoths.

They have a big agenda. It's getting bigger every day. And it seems wildly popular outside the beltway. The pollsters can't even keep up with the numbers. Everyone is jumping on their bandwagon. There are so many new conservative radio talk show hosts on the air that the FCC is auctioning off new radio bands.

A year from now, Americans will look back at the political battlefield of 1995 and see corpses of the old system scattered and rotting across the landscape. Some of the bodies have already been identified. Affirmative action programs will be dead. No more free school lunches and child nutrition programs. Welfare will be on its way out. Food stamps will be teeter tottering on the lip of the grave. Federal housing assistance will be in the dumpster, together with college loan programs. Forget about women's health, Head Start, and all those other failed relics of the Great Society.

Environmental Laws Hit

Federal environmental laws will be in for big hits. Endangered species are in big trouble. Spotty owls will be on a fast lane to extinction, along with Public Broadcasting's Big Bird and most of the Columbia River salmon. Wetlands will be mostly converted to **WalMart** parking lots.

Pollution in the nation's waterways could increase dramatically. A new Clean Water Act is under construction and, according to a March 22 story in the *Washington Post*, the job of drafting it has been turned over to the paper and chemical industry. Their plan is to make compliance with some provisions of the law voluntary.

In the same new Clean Water bill, the hydropower industry is pushing hard to reverse last year's Supreme Court decision granting State governments authority to control **instream** flows through section 401 of the Clean Water Act at FERC licensed hydro projects. If the hydro crowd wins this battle, efforts by AWA and its allies to increase flows in bypassed reaches of existing hydro project could be dealt a severe blow.

Changes in the Legal System

Killing off programs and reinventing environmental laws is only the tip of the iceberg. The new Congressional leadership intends to fundamentally alter the entire American legal system. The objective here is to free tobacco companies and other businesses from the paralyzing scourge of frivolous lawsuits. Under another bill, intended to protect private property owners from "takings", property owners will be entitled to big bucks every time the government says "no" to anything.

Everything near and dear to the bleeding hearts of liberals, women, gays, minorities, the elderly, the poor, or **tree-hugging environmeddlers** is headed to oblivion. Hey...after all they lost the election (only 49% of the voters voted Democratic). To the victor belong the spoils! It's the American Way. Only one team wins. The losers are left to sulk in the locker room and complain about the referees.

Mudwrestling In the Slime Pit

But that is all just substance. It's the process that is really looking harsh. Politics was always partisan, but politics inside the beltway is now beyond partisan. It's bitter. It's ugly. The cozy little village of Capitol Hill, once filled with perks, pork, and privilege, has become Capitol Hell. Members of Congress gave up their private bank several years ago. They now work 15 hour days, 7 days a week. In February the Senate subway had a wreck, injuring several elderly Senators rushing to a floor vote. Personal relationships have degenerated into a kind of verbal Mudwrestling. In March of this year, a Republican leader dubbed Democratic congressman Barney Frank "Barney Fag". In retaliation a senior Democrat from California told the press that a senior female Republican from Connecticut was a "whore".

The Exterminator

New leaders are emerging from the slime. Sonny Bono is not the only Tyrannosaurs Rex in this league. One Congressman in particular, Tom ("the Exterminator") DeLay, has been more fero-

cious than anyone could have imagined. DeLay is the Majority Whip for the Republicans in the House. The Majority Whip, as the name implies, is kind of a political Marquis de Sade. His job is to whip Hell out of the opposition. DeLay is known as the "Exterminator" because he got his start in life running a pest extermination service in Texas, buzzing around Houston wiping out roaches and fire ants. He got so angry with the Federal government for regulating poisons and pesticides that he ran for Congress and is now applying political poison to Democrats in Congress.

Big Changes for Outdoor Recreation

What does all this have to do with whitewater boating or river conservation? Quite a bit.

For one thing, federal lands are in for big changes. Picture a gigantic garage sale. The national forests will more or less belong to Weyerhaeuser (except that taxpayers will still get to pay for the roads and subsidize the timber sales.) Other Federal lands (especially Bureau of Land Management lands in Alaska, Utah, California, and Nevada) will be turned over to State ownership. Of course, gold miners will still be allowed to stake their claims for \$2.50 per acre on any lands remaining in federal ownership leftover after the garage sale.

Most important to outdoor recreation enthusiasts are the various proposals to privatize various public resources and information supplies. Serious proposals are afoot to deauthorize and privatize some National Park Service areas, such as wild and scenic rivers and national recreation areas (Even the Gauley NRA and the New River could be for sale!). The parks are not the only thing destined for privatization. The U.S.G.S. mapping and hydrologic services are also headed in that direction. Boaters who rely on free U.S.G.S. stream gauge readings to plan their weekend recreational activities may be buying those gauge readings from a private company in the future. The U.S.G.S. may not even exist after the budget battles of 1995.

These changes could result in major access problems and steep fees for private boaters and other noncommercial users of these areas.

If even half of these changes make it through the legislative mill, America will be a different place.

Outside the Beltway

The message to river conservation advocates inside the beltway is clear: "Get out of town fast!" Anyone interested in the conservation of anything other than capital gains tax breaks has already fled

the capitol. The only river conservation now happening is happening in the boondocks.

In this kind of political climate, the only realistic tactic for river conservationists is to go back to ground zero and begin rebuilding the whole philosophy and structure of river conservation from the ground up. The Buffalo River is a case in point.

The Buffalo River, in northern Arkansas, was designated by Congress as America's first National River in 1973. The river is currently threatened by agricultural runoff and deforestation in its watershed, but the politics of the region makes any environmental protection difficult.

So river protection advocates founded a group to work with land owners and farmers instead of using the power of government to try to control them. The Buffalo River Stewardship Foundation, based in Harrison, Arkansas, buys "conservation easements" along the tributaries to the Buffalo River. The easements pay land owners to grow trees on land within 100 feet of the tributaries, instead of grazing cattle or growing crops which increase surface runoff and erosion. Land owners hence earn money for "good stewardship" which protects a precious natural resource. According to Timothy T. Jones, the Stewardship Foundation's Executive Director: "We work directly with local land owners who can directly contribute to protecting the river. We expect high compliance because our programs are voluntary. We expect significant water quality improvements because everyone will be working towards the same goal: maintaining the Buffalo River as a pristine waterway."

"Our program works because people are willing to pay to protect the Buffalo River," adds Jesse Gordon, the Stewardship Foundation's environmental economist. "We bring together those who are willing to pay with those who can provide an environmental benefit. We provide an opportunity for environmentalists to contribute directly to environmental improvement."

The Stewardship Foundation also conducts economic studies and produces educational material concerning the Buffalo watershed, as well as facilitating a "Watershed Council" where all parties discuss mutually acceptable solutions to watershed problems.

Membership in the Buffalo River Stewardship Foundation is \$35 per year — 100% of membership dues go to conservation easements. For more information about the Buffalo River Stewardship Foundation, call (501) 741-1750 or write to Box 5003-161, Harrison, AR, 72602. Land

owners interested in the conservation easement program *may* request a sample easement contract or other *information* at the same address. Box 5003-161, Harrison, AR, 72602 or contact Jesse Gordon on the Internet at brs#wildfire.com

Some Clouds Have a Silver Lining

While the traditional river conservation agenda is now so far off the table in Washington as to be invisible, there are a few isolated developments which may be good news to the boating community.

For one thing, President Clinton has proposed radically altering the way Army Corps of Engineers projects are funded and built. The Republican Congress, desperate to find money for tax breaks, seems likely to go along.

Under the new proposal for the Corps, most of the money for new dams will have to come from the affected localities. The cost sharing - now 75% Federal and 25% local - will be flipped so that localities will have to pay 75% of the cost of most large flood control projects. In addition, all new flood control project benefits must be twice as great as the costs for a project to be approved—and half of the damaging waters must come from outside state boundaries. If this passes, the era of big federal water projects is really over.

Even apart from these reforms, the Corps of Engineers is in for some big changes. According to American Rivers, the Corps must reduce its \$3.6 Billion annual budget by 30% and has been given a new mission: to restore "hydrologic variability" to rivers. Since the building of new dams is costly and not likely to further this new mission, one has to wonder why the Corps is still so avidly pursuing proposals to build a \$700 million dam on the Russell Fork River in Virginia (the Haysi Dam) and three new projects in the Cheat Watershed in West Virginia. Politics is still a paradox.

In a peculiar way, some of the changes in the Contract with America could benefit outdoor recreation groups. Although the effort to exterminate Big Bird and privatize the national parks are hard pills to swallow, the changes in Federal liability law may not be. These changes apply to all kinds of liability lawsuits under State law, even suits against property owners. The proposal is to reduce punitive damage awards and make the loser of the lawsuit pay the winner's costs. This could reduce the fear that some property owners have of lawsuits and make them more willing to allow public access across their lands, but only time will tell.

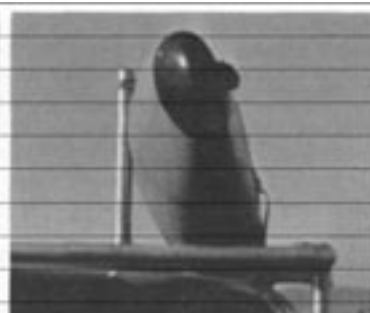
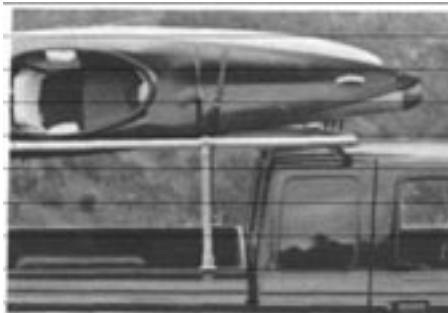
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Friday, June 9, 7:00pm - 10:00pm

Registration- All competitors: Location - NOC Ocoee Outpost.
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Saturday, June 10, 9:00am

Competitors Meeting/Bib Pickup: Location - Hells Hole Competitors area. **ALL COMPETITORS MUST ATTEND.** Preregistered competitors can sign waivers at this time. Preregistrations must be post marked by June 1.

Saturday, 9:30am

Tripedo - Squirt Boat competition begins.
(class order: Jr., Int., C-1, Exp. K-1)

Saturday, 9:30 am

Hells Hole - Open Canoe competition begins.

Saturday, 12:30pm

Hells Hole - Preliminary Hole Riding competition begins. Class order:

12:30pm
Jr.
Int. K-1 Women
Int. K-1 Men
C-1

3:00pm
Exp. K-1 Women
Exp. K-1 Men
Duckie/Sit on Top
C-1



Saturday, 7:00pm

Dinner/Party/Auction: NOC Ocoee Outpost
Sunday, June 12, 9:00am

Put-in: Raft Race registration
Hells Hole: Finish preliminaries
Squirt finals
Open Canoe finals

Sunday, 1:00pm

Hells Hole: Expert C-1 finals
Expert K-1 Women finals
Expert K-1 Men finals

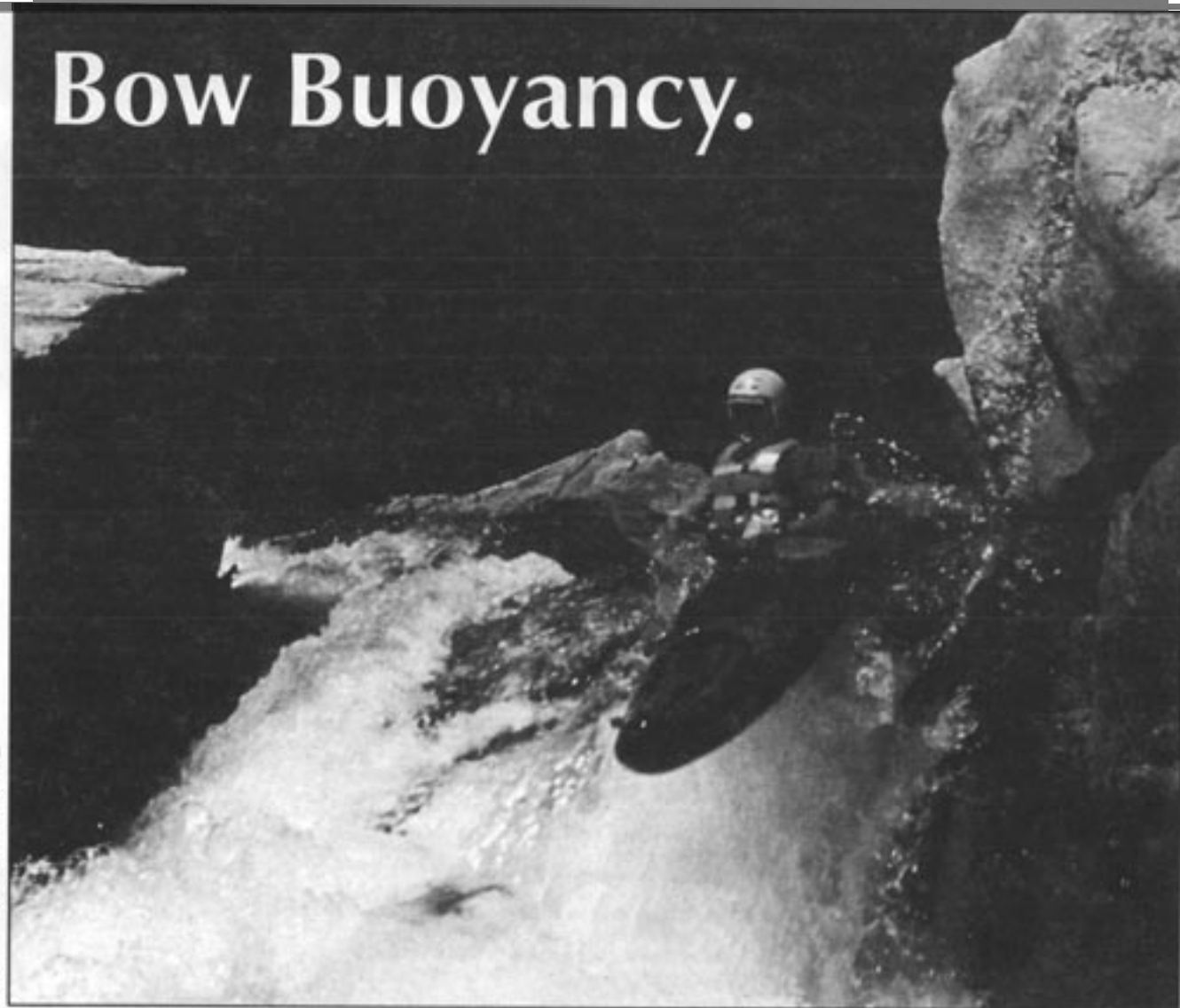
Sunday 4:00pm

Awards: Hells Hole

Photos by Sandi Loftis

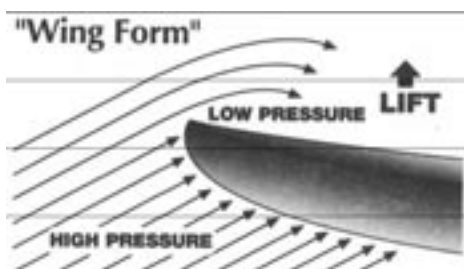
Bow Buoyancy.

Photo by Grant Amara



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E.J. TO BE THE BEST

An exclusive interview with the whitewater world's most versatile, colorful, controversial and driven... guy.



Everybody who knows Eric Jackson has something to say about him. He's the kind of **guy** that immediately evokes a **reaction**, even after a brief first encounter. Boaters that don't know E.J. (as he is widely known) often have an opinion about him too. The adventures of Eric Jackson precede him and float all around the whitewater community. Discussions of rodeos and slalom races seem to always fall back on to something that Eric did or said.

The peculiar thing about these reactions is their diversity. In a typical conversation about Eric you might hear any one of the following: "Eric is the best whitewater boater alive", or "Eric has no idea how to train for slalom properly", or "Eric is going to revolutionize the sport", or "Eric is going to totally self-destruct".

The fact is, though, this wide range of opinions concerning this 31 year U.S. slalom team member from

Germentown, Maryland is what makes him so interesting. When you do finally meet **E.J.** for the first time, you are not sure whether to expect a self-aggrandizing megalomaniac, a happy-go lucky huckster with a knack for kayaking, or just a regular **guy**.

It's easy to figure out why so many people know about E.J. Between winning the 1993 World Championship Rodeo, being a U.S. slalom team member for the past 6 years, his blossoming kayak school in Washington D.C. and his appearances gliding over some of the hardest whitewater in the country, he's all over the boating world, literally and figuratively. But understanding why he always seems to be in the center of controversy and why so many people have so many **different** things to say about him is a little more **difficult**.

Perhaps the root of the E.J. enigma is that there are two distinct sides to his personality. Many

people's first impression of Eric is his overwhelming optimism and enthusiasm. In the course of my interview he breezed through topics like his close calls with financial ruin and nearly missing his Olympic race run as if he was only discussing how he nearly missed a bus. Eric's irreverence is coupled with a quirky way of looking at people while talking to them, a by-product of the fact that he is 50% deaf. He often misses pieces of conversations and is forced to read lips.

The temptation is to dismiss E.J. as a little slow-reacting, but don't kid yourself. Underneath that flippant surface is a hyper-achiever who is not afraid to work. Eric is also never afraid to say what's on his mind. And he does what ever he thinks is necessary to win with an intimidating ruthlessness, even if it ends in complete disaster. The result is that Eric's critics are often not sure if his undeniably long list of achievements is just dumb luck and he is going to

stumble soon, or if he is someone who is going to get the last laugh.

Eric is also reaching the peak of his career in an interesting time in the history of whitewater kayaking. The whitewater industry has just grown to a point where people can actually make a decent living kayaking. Eric lives right on the frontier of this industry. His desire to succeed financially (which is matched only with his desire to succeed in kayaking) is constantly pushing him into unusual and sometimes uncomfortable situations, that he seems to brush past without any regrets. He is ambitious, almost to a fault, and he is constantly looking ahead to greater and greater achievements, that will culminate with himself at the throne of a whitewater universe.

Recently, I had the opportunity to talk with Eric for a couple of hours and try to get to the bottom of some of these lingering questions. After hearing E.J. complain about a few articles written in other magazines that he felt were unfair and slanderous, I decided to let him speak for himself. Read on, then you decide what you think.

Just to start off, what are some of your race credentials since you first made the U.S. team in 1989?

Let's see... in 1989 I got 7th, 6th and 5th in the last three World Cup races and I was 11th overall, according to the old standard of World Cup placement (that was 7 races, with all of them counting. Now, there are 5 races, and you drop the slowest two finishes to arrive at your overall placement). In '90 I was National Champion at Wausau (Wisconsin). At that nationals I beat the next American by 4 seconds. That was probably my best race ever. In '91, I had the second fastest time at the world championships (in Tacen, Slovenia), but with penalties I was 14th. But it's been downhill from there.

You mean that your racing career has been going downhill since '91?

Yeah. In November of '91 I was at a training camp in Seo (Spain) and I reamed my shoulder on the last workout of the last day. It was first thing in the morning, 30 degrees out and I didn't warm up

And then I went to wildwater trials, and I was 6th the first day and 4th the second day. I wasn't that good at wildwater because I never trained in it. It was kind of like I borrowed a paddle, borrowed a boat and ran down the course.



properly. I did this upstream (stroke) and I heard this POP! in my shoulder. I was screwed. I couldn't do gates from Nov. '91 to spring of '92. It was my left shoulder and I didn't do my first upstream (stroke) on the left side until the N.O.C. race (Nantahala Outdoor Center) in March.

But you still managed to get the top U.S. placement in the '92 Olympics in Seo.

Yeah, well that was three or so months later, and I had time to recover. Actually, I started my best run at the Olympics three minutes upstream of the course, because I missed my start.

You missed your start at the Olympics? That's like a nightmare come true. How did you manage to do that?

I was doing a warm-up in some gates upstream of the course right before my start, and while I was paddling these warm up gates, I hit a gate. I paddled back up to do the gate because I wanted to be clean and be properly psyched up for the big Olympic race. Well, anyway, Shipley (fellow U.S. Team Member Scott Shipley) paddles past me and gives me this scowl. I was like 'what's that all about', and I look at my watch and I realize that I am supposed to start my run in 2 minutes and 50 seconds.

I knew from practice before that it was a three minute full sprint to the start from the practice gates. I said SHIT!, and I did this full pivot turn and sprinted down to the start. My heart rate was about 180 b.p.m. I came screaming around the corner and they were already telling the next guy to get ready to go. I just kept paddling and paddling, and I heard my starting beep when I was still ten seconds above the start. I just kept paddling. I was so tired, but I didn't take it easy until I was in the first gate. So that was my

Olympic course. Even with the extra ten seconds I was still 14th.

So anyway, you were saying that your racing has been going downhill since '91...

Well my whole year (1991) was shot because of the injury. Physically, I was below par. Then I went on the Mega Plan. (At this time) Endicott (Bill Endicott, ex-team coach) was basically retired, and this was before Silvan (Poberaj, current head coach). And so I developed the Mega Plan. The idea was that I was going to be in 4

World Championships: slalom, flatwater, wildwater and rodeo.

Kind of ambitious, don't you think?

If it was done properly, it would have been fine. I set up all of the training for the whole year, and that's what I called the Mega Plan. Everything was perfect. The volume (of training) was perfect, physically it was totally perfect. The problem was that because I didn't have a coach working on my technique, I pretty much didn't have a single technique workout in there.

And what happened was that... everything I was doing was based on power and being physically strong, and my technique went all to hell. I was jerking the boat all around, and I was very inconsistent in the spring races.

How did the Mega Plan turn out?

The first team trials was rodeo, and I made the rodeo team. And then I went to wildwater trials, and I was 6th the first day and 4th the second day. I wasn't that good at wildwater because I never trained in it. It was kind of like I borrowed a paddle, borrowed a boat and ran down the course.

And then I was at the slalom trials and I was third the first day, and on the second day I blew this move and got eighth that day. It ended up putting me 7th over all. So I totally blew the slalom team trials in '93. And in flatwater, I heard my time (for the 500 meters) wasn't good enough to even qualify to race in the trials, so I didn't even go. But in reality (I later found out) I would have been close to making the team, based on the times I was posting in practice. So all I did that year was the rodeo worlds.

So out of the Mega Plan, the only team you made was the rodeo team. Was '93 the first year

of the Rodeo Worlds?

Actually, **the first** one was in '91, but I didn't go. I didn't know about it then.

The 93 rodeo worlds were at Hell Hole on the Ocoee, and despite the fact that you almost didn't make the rodeo team, you went on to win the rodeo world championships. Did you get any funding for being on the on the Rodeo Team?

No. I am sponsored by Dagger, and for that I get a number of play boats each year. But **essentially** there is **no** additional money for making the rodeo team. But that wasn't the idea (of making the team) anyway. But of course winning the Rodeo Worlds, made me worth a lot **more** to Dagger.

Do you think that the Rodeo Worlds was a pretty tough competition or was it a joke?

No, it wasn't a joke. The best people in rodeo end up going to the Rodeo Worlds. I guarantee that there is nobody that **was** not there that could have won. There were a lot of good people who weren't there, but they were not good enough to win.

Who from other countries has a good rodeo team?

Jan Kellner from Germany was good. He was the only one from another country who made **the finals**. You see the **Ocoee** hole is a really wimpy hole. It doesn't have that much backwash. And the way the Worlds work is that it's not subjective judging. You have 60 seconds to earn as many points as you can, and **if you** get washed out of the hole more than once, you're screwed. And it's really hard to do moves for big points and stay in that hole.

If you weren't there a week ahead of time, you had very little time to learn what you needed to learn to earn big points. I had 10 training days on the hole prior to the competition and that was with a brand new boat. So people from Europe were at a disadvantage.

So who else is good in rodeo?

The British have a good team, but Jan Kellner... has been to races in England and Austria and all these places. And I asked him "How come there are seven Americans out of eight in the rodeo **worlds finals**? Where are all of the other people from other countries?" You'd think they would **be good** too... and he says they just don't exist. They (European boaters) didn't know that you could do all these things in a hole. They thought rodeo was twirling your paddle. They never went for the hard

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moves. I talked to Jan recently and he says now they are much better than they were, and they can do all of the moves that we could do in '93.

But do think that America still has an edge in rodeo?

Yeah, we're better in rodeo.

Finally, America has an edge in some paddling sport. Usually Europe dominates the sport. Who is good on the U.S. team, besides yourself?

Shipley is good. Slalom racers have an advantage because we paddle more... we have a better feel for the boat, we're stronger, we're quicker with a lot of things...

So there is definitely a fitness factor involved in rodeo.

Sure. 60 seconds is a long time to be in a hole trying to get as many moves as possible. You're tired after **60 seconds**. But Corran Addison (who is not on the slalom team) is also really, really good. You see, Corran Addison and Bob **McDonough** are technically, in practice, or out surfing, as good as me. But there is that choke factor. They tend to choke in big competitions. And that's another advantage for slalom racers. The rodeo almost seems like 'Hey man, this is just a fun time', so we're a lot more relaxed than the other guys.

How does rodeo competition compare to slalom competition? Is it as physically difficult? Is it as difficult overall?

No, it's not as physically difficult, because it's only **60 seconds** long. If it were as long as slalom it could be as **difficult**, depending on how hard you try. Rodeo isn't as difficult either because the competition isn't as strong. There is lots of room for improvement in rodeo. It's not that

people aren't that good, it's just that it's a young sport, like slalom was in the '60's. When I have to train two times a day for rodeo, it will be as **difficult**.

To change the subject, who do you think is going to make the slalom team this year?

Well, I think this is finally going to be my year to win the team trials. This has been my best year of training ever. I'm going to win, Scott is going to be second, Rich (Weiss) is going to be third and fourth is up to Giddens (Eric), **Weisel** (Brent) and Beaks (Jason).

Do you think there is a tendency in this country for racers to be too concerned about technique and not enough about training volume?

Well, let's just say that everyone teased me about my Mega Plan in '93. They were saying, "Oh, you're over-training". **All I** ever heard from everyone **was** "Think about when you were training with Fox (Richard, time world champion in slalom) Fox doesn't do that". And the reality was they were wrong. Fox does more. I was doing 406 minutes of on-time a week, and Fox was doing 411 minutes. So in reality, everyone was clueless. The amount of volume (Europeans) were doing was much higher than everyone thought.

When you say 'everyone' you mean...

I mean everybody who I got feedback from... mostly people in D.C. I don't think Shipley, Giddens and Weiss (who all train outside of D.C.) really cared what I was doing. They know what they want to do, they're not worried about what I'm doing. Let's just say that a lot of **people** still come up to me and say, "Now that you made the team again in '94, now you know that you were over-training in '93." And I say, "No, Silvan has me doing more work than when I was on the Mega-Plan." But there are a lot of **people** who think that my biggest deficit is my technique. And they will get so they can do moves technically well, but they can't do moves well from the top of the course to the bottom of the course fast.

How do you rate your technique in terms of other U.S. Team boaters?

In '93, I would have rated it 6th in the country. In '94 I would have rated it second in the country, next to Shipley. This year, from everything I've seen from training with Scott and Rich and Giddens, and

those are the three I would consider with great technique, I would say that **Shipley** and I have the best technique, and then probably Giddens. But he's not in shape yet. Then Rich. I owe all of it to **Silvan**. My technique has improved 100% since '93.

Ok. Lets talk about with what happened to you the day you were front page of the **Washington Post**. From what I know about it, in 1993, right before the slalom team trials, you were on a street corner in downtown D.C. with your team uniform on and your kayak in front of you and you were panhandling...

I wasn't panhandling, I was selling autographed pictures of myself.

...Selling autographed pictures of yourself, and after about three days of doing this, you happened to make the front page of the **Post**, along with a story describing what you were doing. What set people off about that piece? I know that it created a lot of controversy.

The problem with the **Post** article was that it was coupled with a story about "Operation Gold" that the USOC (United States Olympic Committee) had just announced. (Operation Gold is a program that the USOC devised to give cash to medalists, \$5000 for a first place in the worlds, \$4000 for second, etc.). That article was about the USOC saying "Look what we are doing for athletes now."

In my article, the **Post** suggested that all kayakers were in my situation financially (that is, poor). Many paddlers were offended by this, especially the ones who were furthest from my situation. The ones closer to it tended to sympathize.

A few months later, the whole issue raised it's head again in a story that appeared in **paddler**.

It was 6 months later, in the next calendar year. The problem was they **paddler** wrote two separate articles covering five pages without ever talking to me. They were basically saying that I didn't need money, so why was I out there? When the reality was that I had 40 dollars to get me to the team trials. I needed money, and that's why I was there.

They talked to lots of people who knew nothing of the situation. They made statements about being on Connecticut and K

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streets like they were there, and they were not there. The article was total slander. They were saying that it wasn't just what I did that was wrong, but that I was a bad person as well. I also feel that as a magazine about paddling, they should have taken on a more supportive role.

So what did the U.S. Olympic committee say about all of this?

People were telling me that the Olympic Committee was pissed, but then when it came down to it, and when the Olympic Committee was no longer hearing just rumors, they were not only no longer pissed, but they realized that what I did was totally legal. I wasn't panhandling like some people said, but selling pictures of myself.

There are some people who think that you should not get any money if you are an amateur athlete, so those people aren't going to like it one way or the other, just like they aren't going to like it if you have a sponsor. And there are people who are friends of mine who say that they don't agree with what I did because it hurts the names of the sponsors whose names are on my boat.

But for me, the only thing that's important is that I have a job to do. I am here to train. I am in this sport come hell and high water. And I am going to do what ever I have to do. Period. As long as it's within the letter of the law and what I feel is ethical and I feel comfortable with myself, I don't care what these other people think.

And the bottom line is that you raised what, \$1400.00?

I raised enough money to drive out to Colorado and go to the team trials. It wasn't enough to keep me in my house; I still got evicted. And the day that I left that house was the day my wife went to have Dane (Eric's second child).

And on top of it all, this was in 1993, the year of the Mega Plan, and you didn't make the team.

Right. When I went to team trials, first thing there was a lot of athletes who were totally pissed at me. And some of them verbally told me that they were pissed at me and some of them wouldn't talk to me. Everyone was pretty much shying away from me it seemed like. But then Bill Endicott (who was team coach at the time) told Christine (Eric's wife). "Don't tell Eric until after trials, but on Monday after the trials

there is going to be a meeting to decide whether E.J. should be punished for what he did in D.C."

On what grounds were they going to punish you?

Well, there were no grounds, but that's not important. That's what they were planning on doing anyway.

Who's "They"?

"They" meaning the athletes and the U.S.C.K.T. (United States Canoe Kayak Team). And Endicott told Christine and Christine couldn't tell me, even though she was not supposed to tell me (until after the trials). I was like, "What the hell is wrong?" and she told me. So the night before the trials I was sitting there writing my defense. I knew that there was nothing they could punish me (for). I am totally allowed any day I want to take my box of 8 X 10 photos and solicit funds for my training, as long as it goes through proper channels.

So those stories of you getting \$1000.00 checks those three days are totally false?

That's totally B.S. I got none of that.

What finally came of the whole thing?

It faded out. Basically, everybody that I cared about that I felt were mad at me and were shying away from me... I talked to them individually to straighten it out and clear the air. I could deal with people on a one to one basis. And that was fine, so I was 100% comfortable with everybody.

Would you do it all over again?

Of course. Except next time I would bring more 8 X 10's. And make a better sign, too. There are still good friends of mine who think that I shouldn't have taken that approach, but in four days, you figure out how to make that much money.

It seems to me that this is a really tough lifestyle to have, especially when you are married and have two kids. It seems almost impossible.

*I could have a different lifestyle. I **could** have a full time job that I train around. And I've gone that route before. But for me, right now, I want to be the Olympic Gold medalist. And I'm competing against people that don't have jobs; some of them have never had jobs. These people are totally focused on training and doing what they have to do to win.*

*Now **Lugbill** (Jon) was one of those people who could hold a job and win World Championships for example. But **he** was World Champion long before he had a job **like** that and then he was able to carry on that lifestyle with a job later on. But it got to him after a while. He could no longer do what he needed to do with the responsibilities that he had. And that is part of the **reason** why he is no longer in the sport.*

But responsibility is looming up around you. I mean in light of all this training, perhaps you should have held off on having kids until you were done with all of this.

*There are a lot of ways at looking at it. There are two people in a marriage... in a partnership. My deal is that **I am** going to kayak. My **wife's** deal is we're going to have kids while **we** are young. Christine never gets in the way of paddling. She is **100%** supportive of my training, and without her it would be harder to do what I am **doing**. I don't get in the way of what she wants to do. She wanted to have kids. We have two kids, and the kids live the ultimate **lifestyle**. They do not suffer for my paddling. Christine might suffer for my paddling, because she goes through the stress of "my god, we have no money in the checking account, we have no foreseeable income and rent is due": and whatever else.*

*Since the day I started training in **1984**, I have been trying to figure out a way to support myself through paddling. My objective **is** to support myself and my family through kayaking. In **1995**. I've got it **figured** out.*

How many major sponsors do you have right now?

*Basically, I've got twenty people that make my life work, that **make** this whole thing work. Lets put it this way. **1994** was*

I was watching these cruisers there who were running all of the rapids, and they were making it. But they were going 30 miles per hour down these 45 degree slopes with their downstream paddle dragging in the water... to turn. They were just about to trip on their paddle at any second and rip their faces off.



running, what's the hardest river you've ever done?

Overflow at three feet, or Bear Creek at high water.

More specifically, what is the hardest rapid you've ever run?

*I would say probably the most intense rapid is Stairway To Heaven on Bear Creek. Its **higher, and** harder than Gorilla (on the Green). **25 ft** vertical drops into two feet of water... that type of thing.*

Who would you say is the best cruiser in the country?

*That depends. If you ask what cruisers can run the hardest water most successfully, the safest, and do the most things on it; I would say the best I've seen would be Brian Homberg, me, and, uh, **Corran** Addison. But there are a lot of other boaters with bigger balls than I have. **Shipley** is good also, but he is too conservative to be at the top. I am citing a lot of slalom racers, because **if you** watch some of the (non-racing) cruisers, they bomb down these rapids and they make it, but I'm cringing the whole time. Because they're running the rapid, but they're not necessarily in control.*

Let's take Stairway to Heaven (Bear Creek), for example. I was watching these

*the first year in my career that I balanced my budget. In **1992**, the Olympic year, I borrowed **\$25,000** to get to the Olympics. Which is due in **1998** at **10%** interest, which is **\$44,000**.*

*So in '92 and '93 I made it only because I was able to borrow all of this money. '94 was the first year that I was totally self-sufficient. In '94 I had two kids and I did all the major races. In '94 I supported myself in my sport **100%**.*

To get back to general river



Boy Wonder Eric Jackson- Kayaking since age 6, determined to be the best!
Photos courtesy of Christine Jackson



cruisers there who were running all of the rapids, and they were making it. But they were going 30 miles per hour down these 45 degree slopes with their downstream paddle dragging in the water... to turn. They were just about to trip on their paddle at any second and rip their faces off.

It's things like missing eddies, and tipping over in major rapids. If I were at their skill level, I wouldn't run some of these rapids, because I would be afraid.

How long do you plan to stay in slalom?

Currently everything is second to slalom. And after '96, everything is second to making money.

What are you going to do to make money?

I am going to promote kayaking. I am going to do a lot of things, some of them are top secret. I am going to build up my kayak school, and centralize on vacations and a lot of other money making deals with that. After '96 I am going to get on the track, where soon we will be owning a house. The whole idea is that in 2004 I am going to be retired, financially independent and rich. All of that good s t u .

So I have given myself eight years in business and my objective is to make a million dollars by 2004.

You are very goal oriented.

Yeah. Well I want to win the World Championships or the Olympics in kayaking, and I want to win the World Championship for making money. The gist of this is that I am a goal-oriented person in the sport of kayaking. And in this sport, the goal is the Olympic Gold Medal. In order to get that, you have to surround your whole life with paddling and make it work. You are not going to win if you don't. You could be in the top ten maybe, or even on the team, but you are not going to win. So that's what I am doing.

Everything you hear about E.J., like being downtown and in the center of controversy. All of that is because I've surrounded myself with the sport. I've got to do what I think I have to do to win. And my situation is slightly different, because I'm married and have kids. It takes more money for me to get through the year than the average person.

When it comes to money I have to do what other people don't have to do. When it comes to training, sometimes I do things that other people don't do.

The reason why I am always in the center of controversy is because I try to do what ever it takes to win. The bottom line is that I've got my shirt sleeves rolled up and I am doing everything I can possibly do to win, every day. After '96, there is going to be a hell of a lot more controversy than there is now. because right now I am only

in this sport as an athlete. But after '96 I am going to be in this sport as a business person. There are not that many whitewater millionaires right now, so when I become one, there is going to be controversy. The details of my plan aren't important, but my general vision is that kayaking will be a sport that will be on

television on a regular basis, where kayaks are sold at K-Mart and Sports Authority, where Corran Addison is a professional athlete on a specific team, and I am the guru of the whole thing.

Editor's note: Contributing writer John Weld is an accomplished cruiser who never misses eddies or drags his downstream paddle when running 45 degree slides.

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The Creek Boaters of Chattanooga

by Scott Shoup

Neatly tucked away in the southeastern corner of Tennessee, just East of the Cumberland Plateau, lies the city of Chattanooga. If you stood by any major thoroughfare there on a cold, wet, winter morning you would no doubt see one of the gang headed out with one of those plastic, missile shaped things on their car.

It might be Ron Stewart, or Doug Wellman, or Terry Smith, or Andy Turner, or Bo Eakens, or Tim Williams, or Clay Wright, or Howard Tidwell. He probably would be craning his neck out his car window, trying to ascertain how much rain had fallen, or theorizing on the philosophical ramifications of fear on the meaning of life. Eventually he would disappear onto one of the many rain slickened back roads that surround Chattanooga, only to return after dark with a stupid grin, a voracious appetite and an unusual ability to find hot tubs.

What few locals realize is that these scraggly philosophers are some of the top whitewater boaters

in the country, and have been great contributors to the sport of whitewater boating. A combined resume of their qualifications would include notable performances in world class whitewater rodeos and hair races, involvement in environmental battles and appearances in many notable video productions. But the true forte' of this elite cadre are creeks: the really steep creeks that surround the Chattanooga area.

In the mid 1980's boaters from all over the country came to test their skills on North Chickamauga Creek, usually in the company of a local guide. Often this mentor was Ron Stewart, who's name has become synonymous with North Chick, or his partner, Doug Wellman. Together they savored the wilds of North Chick Gorge, while keeping a constant eye out for new runs.

Soon the Green River in North Carolina was pioneered by Tom Vishnus and John Kennedy. It became the new testing ground, with technically demanding rapids such as Frankenstein, and the monster drop, Gorilla. During the following

summer you could often find Ron or Doug up at the Green, learning the nuances of this new breed of steep creek. Not far behind, a second generation of Chattanooga boaters was closely watching and

learning. The availability of shorter, safer creek boats, like the Corsica S and the Freefall, came in response to the demand for boats capable of tackling the Green.

By the early 1990's the creek boaters of Chattanooga had opened several cutting edge runs that pushed the envelope to new extremes. The Chattanooga crowd made the first descents of Bear, Soddy, and Richland creeks. Soon to follow came North Pole, Henderson and Falling Water. These creeks, along with new runs by other groups in North Carolina and West Virginia, redefined class V creek boating; with steeper, tighter rapids like Gargoyle (Bear), Skywalker (Soddy) and Mind Bender (North Pole). Of note were three monster drops: Stairway to Heaven (Bear), the Falls on the Little and Hair of the Dragon (Fallingwater).

Quoting Doug Wellman, "If you

can follow the water, it can be run."

So why do these guys go out in the dankest of weather to go paddling? Normal folks consider them "just dang crazy". Why? Well, maybe this is best left unasked, unless you want to listen to an oration on the interplays of life and death (try not to get Tim started).

But a lot can be learned if you look at North Chickamauga Creek, the mother of Chattanooga creek boating. If you ever manage to paddle (or walk) this eleven mile run, you will see the relatively undisturbed mixture of beauty and rapids that helped forge modern creek boating technique. It is the consummate creek run and it is here that most of the Chattanooga creek boaters learned about the misery and ecstasy of steep creeks.

It's all there: the thrill of personal success, the focus of fluid motion, the human connection to nature, and the obvious potential for death and destruction. Some of these boaters have had experiences on North Chick that can only be described on a personal and intimate level.

However, being on the cutting

edge has brought with it a basketfull of responsibilities. With new runs come new problems

regarding access, protection, and the ever present what if's. Originally the approach was to sneak on and sneak off or these new runs. But this

attitude is beginning to change, as a consequence of careful negotiations with land owners. (Editor's note: And more recently state park officials.)

Yes, the guys actually do go up to those scary farm houses and ask. (But they usually send Ken, who is known for his tact, first!)

Sometimes this has extraordinary results - at the end of one new run the paddlers were greeted by a property owner and fed pizza!

Of more importance, though, are the politics that are being played out by the Chattanooga boating crowd. They have involved themselves in promoting events that help to inform the public, they have engaged in cleanups, and they have donated personal time to the slow process of negotiation.

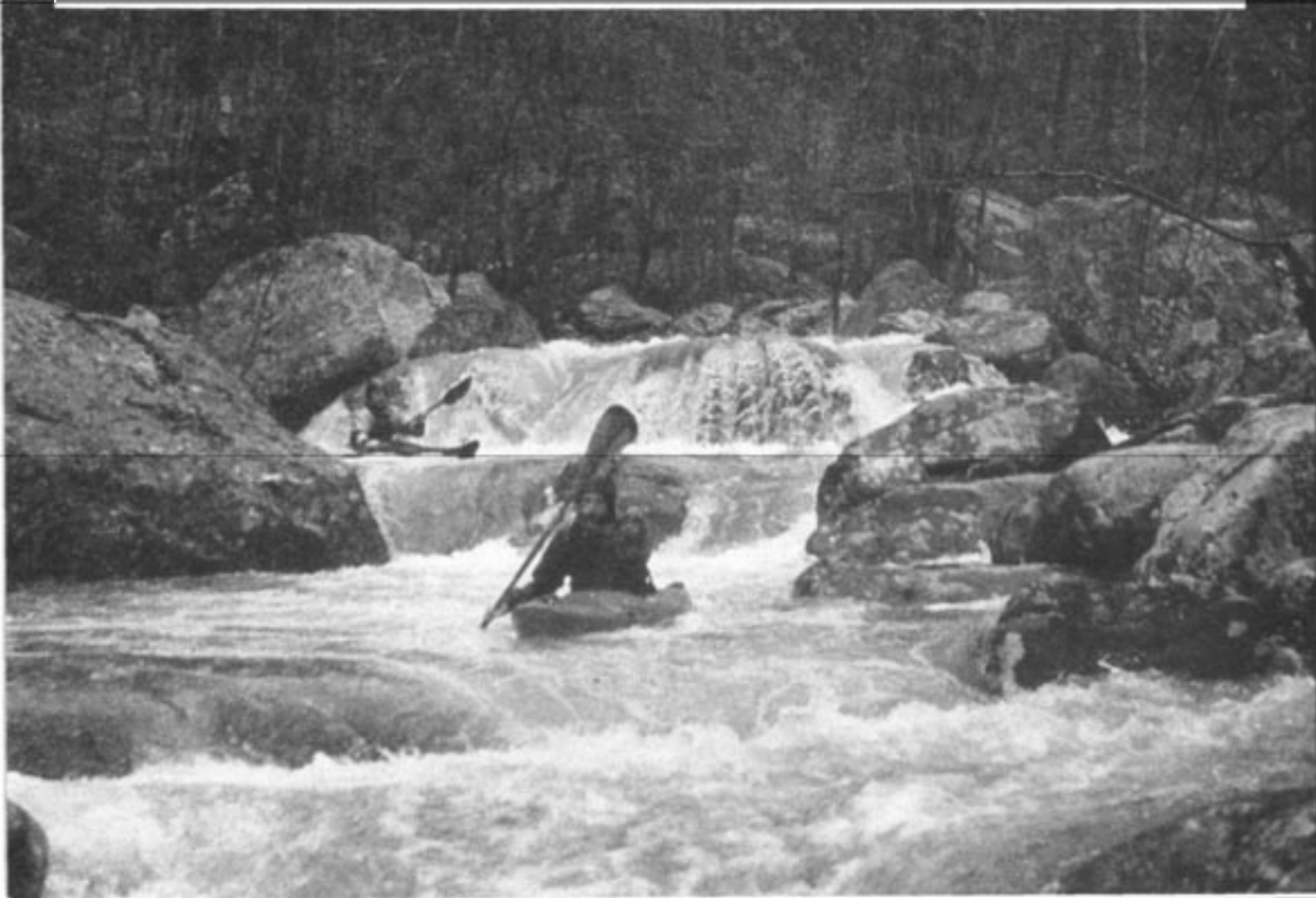
ment planning access agreements help insure pristine futures for

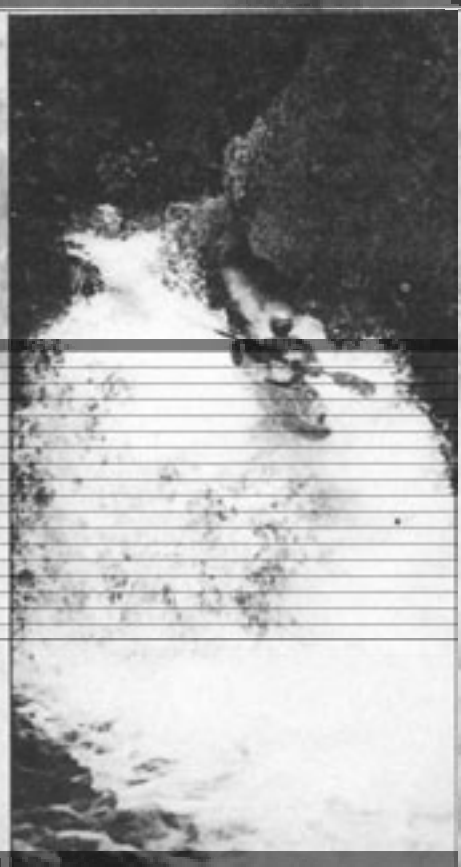
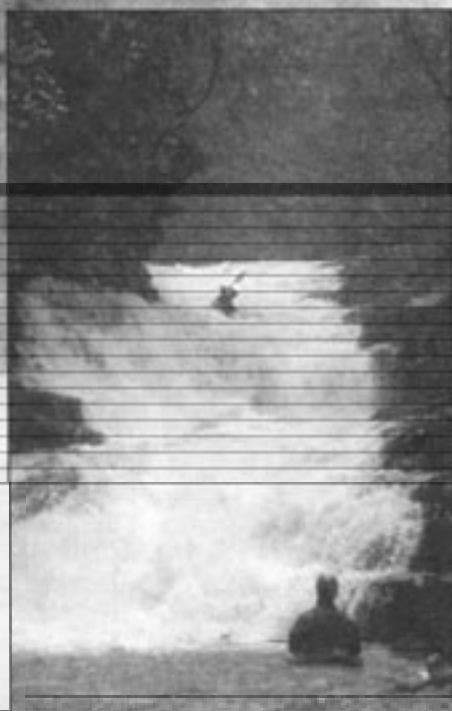
creeks in the area. The attention given to North Chickamauga Creek for Wild and Scenic status, along with the creation of a new Bowater Pocket Wilderness area, is largely due to the hard work of these boaters.

It takes a lot of effort to protect a creek in an area that is dominated by old southern values, the private land ownership ethic, and big companies. It is important to acknowledge

what these accomplishments are giving back to the sport. Not all of this involves politics; it also means passing on years of acquired skills and experience to those ready to step into the art of steep creeking. The kayakers and canoeists of Chattanooga have nurtured the surrounding area into one of the premier creek boating havens because they have been responsible in not looking for more than just a good time out on the water.

(Editor's note: Tim Shoup's photograph, featured on the cover of this issue, won first prize at this year's IVA National Whitewater Film Festival.)



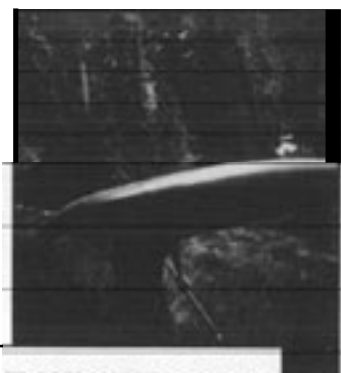


Photos by Scott Shoup

Page 43: Terry Smith middle drop Stairway to Heaven, Bear Creek;
 Page 44: Bear Creek; Page 45 back: Doug Wellman first drop Stairway to Heaven, Bear Creek;
 Bottom Left to Right: Doug Wellman middle drop Stairway to Heaven, Bear Creek; Stairway to
 Heaven, Bear Creek; Ron Stewart Red Hot Chili Pepper, North Pole Creek

TSHLETSHY CREEK

Left: Looking back up at one beautiful Class IV & V rapid after another
Below: Mike Deckert near the Summit
Right: One great bedrock drop after another. Day 3



THE BEST WHITEWATER IN WASHINGTON?

A guidebook author and his buddy launch a three day, class V expedition through the wilds of the Olympic Peninsula.

by Gary Korb

Hanging from my perch 80 feet above the river, I was thinking we could have **run** the class VI canyon with less risk than we were taking on these crumbly gorge walls. And I was facing my own worst nightmare—a flooded class VI canyon with no apparent portage.

This whole nerve racking trip had started two years earlier when I had seen slides from Scott Matthew's and **Sprague Ackley's** exploratory trip. "The best whitewater in Washington," they claimed. I was seduced by shots of spectacular ledge drops in amazing gorges.

Scott sent me some notes from his trip:

Tshletshy Creek

Class IV-V logged at 150-200 cfs

Length 12.8 miles + 7 miles on Queets River

Gradient 143 feet/mile (50 to 340)

Time required 3 to 4 days

1 day to hike in (11 miles)

2 days to boat the river (20 hours)

Number of rapids **Class III** 104

Class IV 67

Class V 20

Class VI to unrunnable 10

I showed this to my buddy Mike Deckert and we were off. Tshletshy Creek is a tributary to the Queets River on the west side of Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Not only is Tshletshy hard to say and spell, it's even more **difficult** to access. There are no roads anywhere near this watershed, which lies within Olympic National Park—an untouched temperate rain forest. The world's largest Douglas Fir and Alaska Cedar are attractions along the trip.

First we hiked the empty kayaks seven miles and **3100** vertical feet to the divide separating Tshletshy from the Quinault. It was April and the snow made sliding the boats through the upper meadows very easy.

Two weeks later we returned with three day's worth of self support gear and we headed for "the best whitewater in the state." When we reached the boats we loaded some gear in them and carried the rest in packs. Once we started into the Tshletshy drainage, the trail went from bad to non-existent. After traversing several blowdowns and avalanche chutes we were exhausted zombies.

We sat and rested, staring at the headwaters of the creek. Small chutes of snow fed several tiny tribs. We scrambled down about a half mile and reached the creek; it was about **15 cfs**!

We stared in stunned disappointment, wondering how far we would have to walk before there would be enough volume to paddle. We were so exhausted we made camp, just as the rain began. No surprise in one of the wettest valleys in the U.S.. We each had small tarps and soon we were resting comfortably and cooking ramen on Mike's stove. We joked about waking up in the morning with ample water to paddle. Soon I was asleep on my bed of moss.

The next morning we discovered our dreams had come true. About **75 cfs** of rusty brown water was flowing past our camp. An amazing flow, considering the drainage area was only about 4 square miles!

We put on and after a half mile we came to the first gorge. Scouting revealed a **100 feet** of drop over five falls. An easy portage on river left put that gorge behind us.

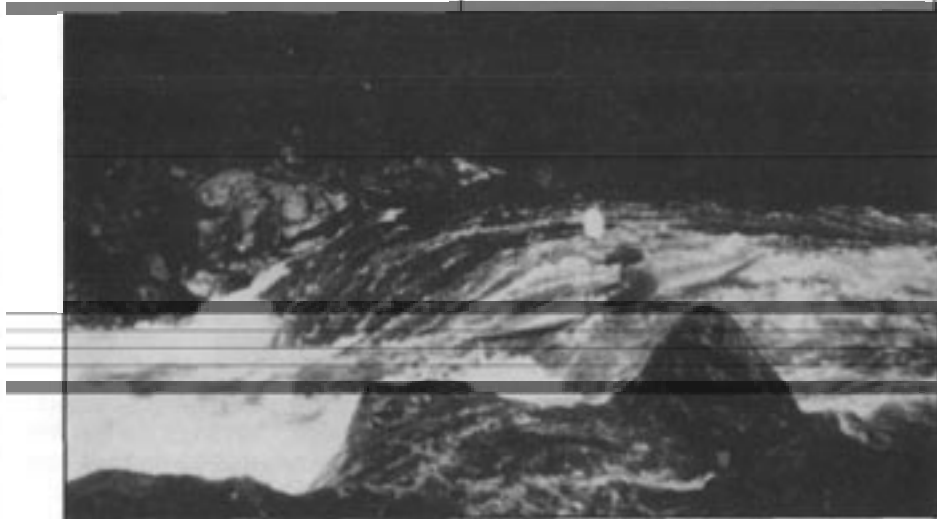
At the second gorge we scouted a

big rapid that went around a turn to the right. I walked down and scouted the turn; there was a clear route along the left wall. Looking down from above, I didn't realize that it dropped about ten feet. I told Mike it was okay along the left and headed down. I eddied out just in time to see Mike's eyes bulging as he flew around the corner and plunged over the drop.

We were starting to have some

ued to fall. As we sat cooking our dinner, knowing that the river would continue to rise. I was terrified, thinking, "You got yourself into this mess and now your going to have to get yourself out."

The next morning the river was huge. Brown exploding waves carried debris speeding off around the corner. We estimated the flow to be about **1800 cfs**. As we ate breakfast we talked about laying over a day or



real fun. Just below the second gorge we spotted a huge bull elk whose antlers were adorned in rich velvet.

Another mile brought us to the "Tshlasm." This is the third gorge, which drops about **150 feet** in several falls. Another easy portage on the left and we were back in our boats, making good time through endless class **III - V** drops. The water level was now about **500 cfs** and the creek was starting to have a real punch.

By afternoon several close calls had left us tired and scared. The water level was at least **750 cfs** and the holes were becoming a real terror. At one point we braved a trashy boulder-choked mess on the left, just to avoid a small falls with a benign hole on the right.

Our judgment was warped. We needed to find a camp, but we hadn't seen anything but gorges for hours. Then, there it was, a perfect spot. This turned out to be the only campsite in six miles of demanding canyon. At lower water levels it would take quite a push to get there in one day.

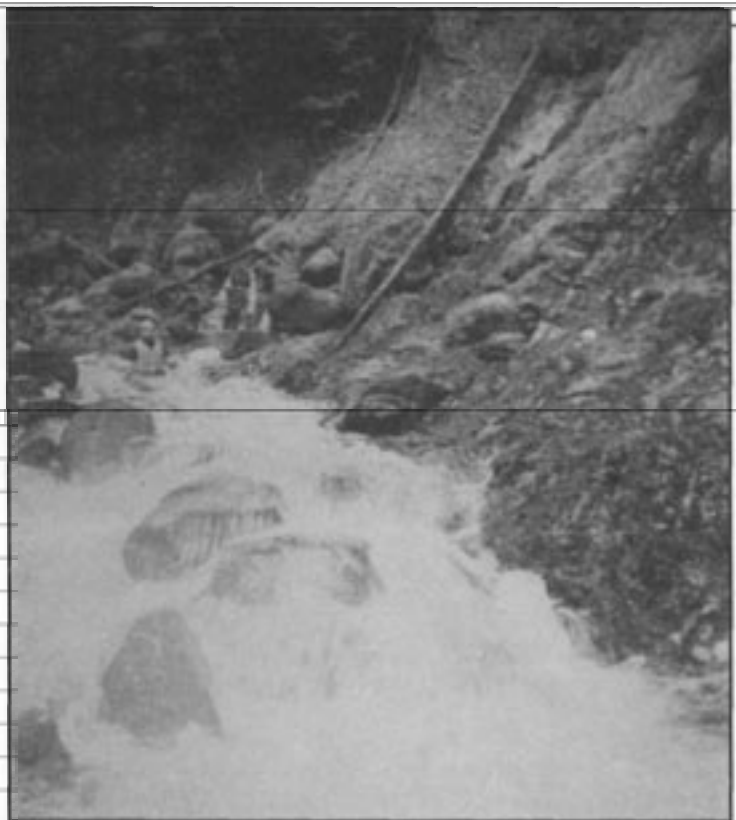
We set up while the rain contin-

so, but decided if we didn't show up on schedule, our wives might initiate a rescue.

We put on and blasted the first mile of brown raceway, only stopping to scout one giant rapid ending in a huge hole. We stopped to scout a class **IV** drop that slammed into and under a **logjam** with amazing force. I wanted to portage, but the cliffs were vertical or worse. There was one place to go under the logs on the right, but the current was moving to the left.

As I got into my boat I felt I was taking a big chance. My fear made the rapid seem class **VI**. One missed stroke and I'd face my demise. I watched Mike hit a few holes and pull right safely. This gave me more confidence, and I made the move easily.

But after ducking under the trees, I saw Mike scrambling along the left, trying to get into an eddy. I pulled into the slow water on the right and started treading water along the wall. Mike could get out of his boat but he couldn't see much. He signaled the right looked better.



*Left: Near the headwaters, small & steep
Bottom: Ducking one of Tshletshys giant trees*

It didn't matter; I couldn't tread water any longer, so I headed down the right side. Bumbling through the class V drop that followed seemed anti-climactic after all our close calls.

We burned off another mile of great water, even stopping at several playspots, easing our anxiety a bit. Then we came to a narrow gorge with a severe horizon. Scouting revealed a ten foot falls ramping into a violent flush around a blind turn. Smooth high walls kept us from seeing much around the corner, but there appeared to be another significant falls ahead. I couldn't even think of running these drops.

A small crumbly gully headed up on the right, so up we went. After a horrendous workout roping loaded

boats up the cliffs, we dead ended about twenty feet from the top. We were so exhausted we just sat, supported by a Yew tree that was threatening to tear loose from the fragile walls.

Mike decided to go back down and attempt another route. We hoped he would be able to lower a rope from above. Hanging from this perch, I was thinking it would have been easier to flush over the falls, as compared to crawling along those cliffs, tooth and nail. After about twenty minutes I heard Mike yelling from above.

He lowered the rope and pulled the boats up. His route had been exposed and scary, so I decided to use the rope for the last pitch also. With nothing but flaky rock to climb on, I

went hand over hand. But about 3/4 of the way up my strength ran out. I hung for a while with my foot **stuffed** into a root hold.

Looking up at Mike, I could see he was concerned. I thought about going down, but I was too tired. I had about a five second talk with myself and then I went for it, using all the strength I had left to reach the top.

From here we started what was to be an hour long trudge covering about 200 yards. When we got back to the river it treated us to a great mile of boating, class III and IV with a couple of class V's. In one of the bigger drops Mike was pushed left into a big hole. A long ride followed by a rear ender into an ever bigger hole. After another long ride, Mike wound up at the bottom, laughing.

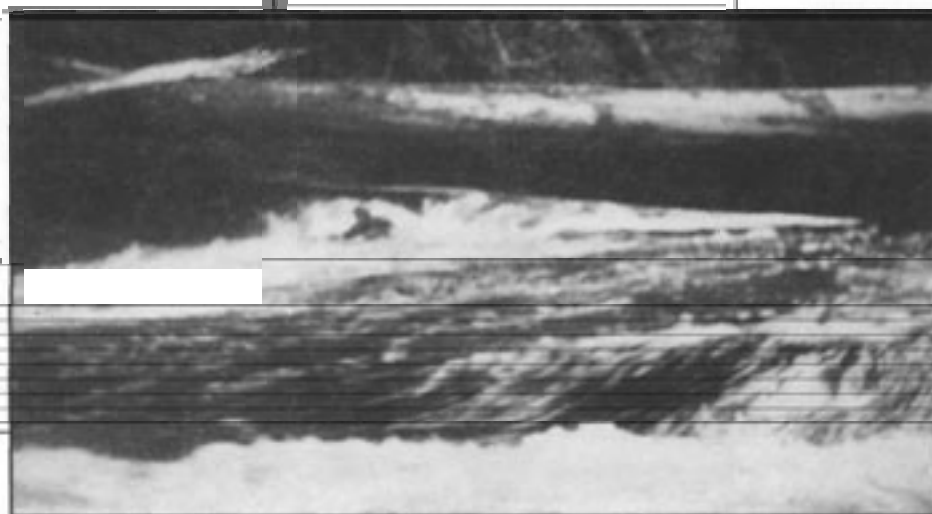
This was some great boating. As the river eased up a bit we found some dynamic playspots. Soon kayaks were flying and paddles were twirling.

Confident grins accompanied us as we flushed out into the mighty Queets. We enjoyed the last few miles of big water, while we tried to spot the world's largest Douglas Fir.

By the time we reached the take-out we were flying high. As we drove the shuttle we relived the events of the last three days. I had really pushed myself, both physically and mentally. Neither of us had ever experienced a watershed so untouched, so remote, so special. The world we had traversed was enchanted. The gorges were stunning and the whitewater was humbling.

Someday, I'll do it again.

EDITORS NOTE: Gary Korb is an accomplished kayaker and the author of [A Paddler's Guide to the Olympic Peninsula](#).



The Real McCoy

by Michael G. Deckert

Nestled in the mountains of southwest Washington State, McCoy Creek had long posed a mystery to me. Having seen the creek pour out of its canyon at its confluence with Yellowjacket Creek (a tributary of the Cispus), I could only wonder what the rest of McCoy Creek was like. My imagination ran the full spectrum from dozens of beautiful runnable rapids to miles of unportable and unrunnable Killer Fang Falls. On the map the upper section looked reasonable. The three hundred foot contour lines were about three miles apart.

But questions of reasonability were raised by the remaining mile and a half above the confluence. It was impossible to discern from the map if the last mile and a half dropped three hundred feet, four hundred and fifty, or closer to six hundred feet! Intrigued, I told my friend Tom Wolf about McCoy Creek.

Finally, over a two week period, Tom and I paddled McCoy Creek three times. In the course of these adventures, we conned several others into paddling with us. Shawn and John were our first victims. We roped David and Pete into our second trip. Finally, we conned Gary, Bill, and Jeff into running the creek with us. Even Shawn came back for some more fun on our third trip. With progressively higher water on each of our three trips, the following story arose.

Over the years I have discovered that yawning on the shuttle is directly proportional to my level of apprehension. As we drove toward McCoy, I found myself constantly yawning. Driving up to and beyond snow line, we eventually walked the last several hundred yards to a bridge across the creek.

Bad news, we were way too high in the watershed and the water was way too low. Back in the cars, we drove downstream, looking for an appropriate put-in. Several miles downstream, where the road over-





Page 49: Tom on McCoy creek
Above: Tom Wolf on Tom's Slide
Right: Shawn, McCoy Air

looked the creek, we could see that it had grown to about **100cfs**. That looked much better.

We plunged off the logging road, scrambled through the forest, and slid down the side of the mountain several hundred feet to the creek. Sunlight splashed through the trees as we donned our gear. "A beautiful Day for a paddle," I said, still yawning.

The water was a bit thin in the beginning. Open boulder gardens were interspersed with beautiful mini-gorges through bedrock. The creek raced through sluices with canyon walls formed by vast blocks of rock. It hurled itself off ledges at the end of those sluices into pools.

Logs forced us to limber up on our limbo as we passed through narrow gorges. Boof moves over logs were also needed to negotiate the canyons. Missed boofs led to impromptu and innovative machinations... such as flipping and flushing under logs. Fortunately, for us, no one got pinned.

Small ledges provided playspots and holes for donuts. The drops became bigger as we paddled down the

creek. The intensity increased when the creek corkscrewed over a ledge into a pothole. Visions of corkscrewing into the pothole followed by a vertical washing machine thrashing danced in my head. A clean run was possible by riding the water banking down and off the left wall. Deposited in the main current, furious paddling avoided the trees at the bottom of the drop.

Trees also completed the approach to Tom's slide, a beautiful 20 vertical foot slide. The debris threw Tom off-line during his approach. The ensuing action proved interesting, especially since it wasn't happening to me.

Yes, **Dagger FreeFalls** can do mystery moves. Tom and his boat disappeared in a folding hole in the approach. Tom proved he could roll in a small pool immediately above the main drop. Coming up facing upstream, he hit the rock forming the lip of the slide, and immediately flipped again. He grabbed the rocks and held himself, nearly upside down, in the middle of the creek at the brink of the slide, with his paddle in one hand. After **contem-**

plating his fate for a few moments, he let go of his paddle, hand rolled, and successfully explored a new line.

Around the corner from Tom's Slide I saw an Extreme do a bow squirt. A tight pair of falls, each about 5 feet, provided passage through a short boulder choked gorge. When David ran the first falls his boat buried vertically in the pile. The boat then proceeded to do a bow squirt through the slot of the second falls. More amusing action, especially since it wasn't happening to me.

The creek continued with manageable ledges and chutes and we started to think we might make it home free.

Premature Thoughts. McCoy disappeared down a series of andresite water slides. Chinook Slide consisted of four different sections: the approach drop, the "serpentine", a ten foot slide, and a twenty foot "finale". Section four, the finale, had two routes. The right was a water slide. The left was a ten foot falls into a pothole followed by another ten foot falls. Most of the current went toward the left hand route.

Portaging looked unreasonable. So did running it. Even scouting provided unexpected entertainment at Chinook Slide. David fell into the water and flushed into a deep pothole eddy in the serpentine. With the sides of the pothole polished absolutely smooth, he could not climb out. Swimming downstream would have been a very poor option. After a little creative rescue work, he was back on terra firma.

Pete furnished some entertaining action, especially since it wasn't happening to me. He flipped at the bottom of the ten foot slide and rolled up at the brink of the twenty foot finale. Being pushed left, he ran the first ten footer backwards. He ran the second ten foot drop upside down and backwards.

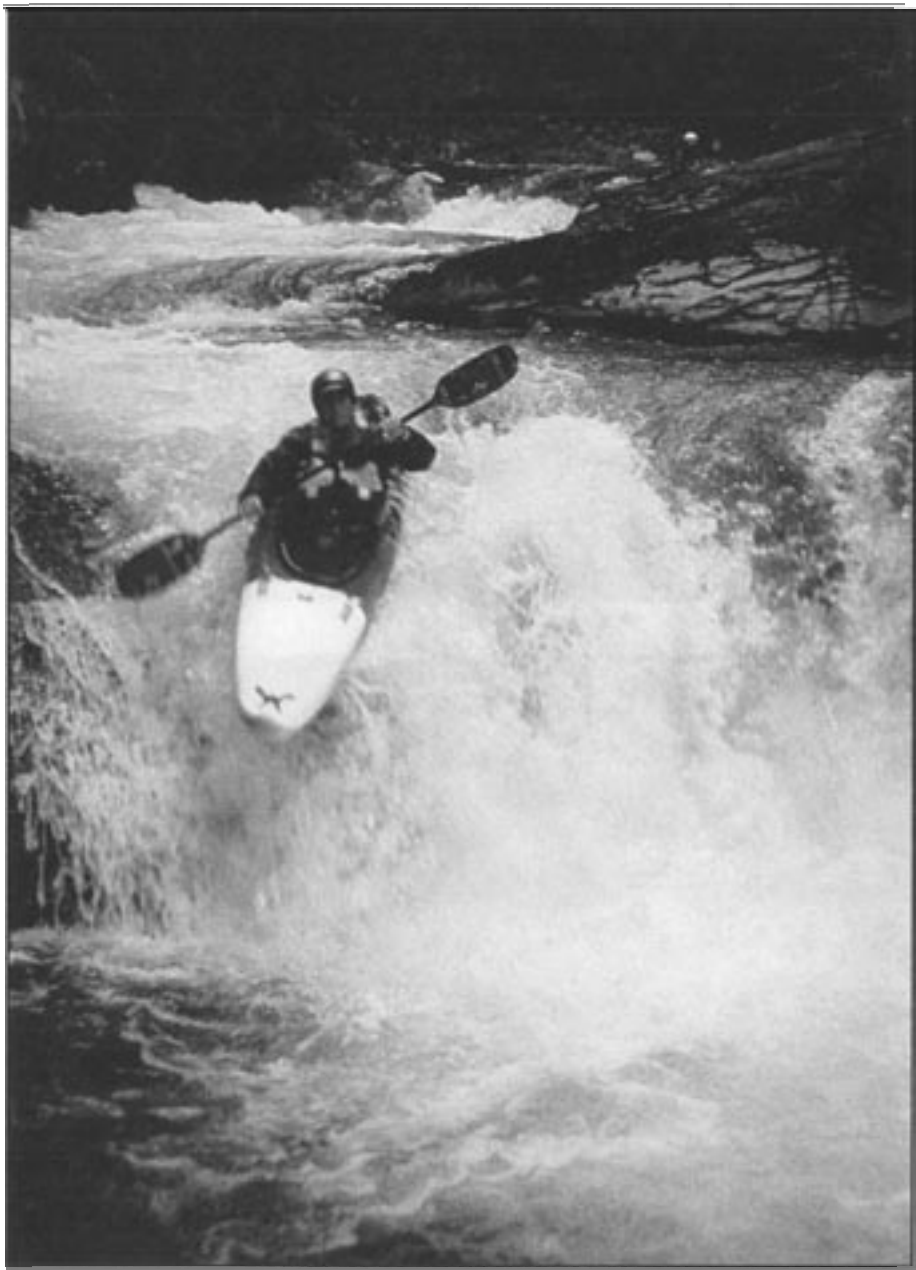
But, now it was my turn to supply the entertainment. My plan after the serpentine was to run the ten foot slide and then head for the extreme right side of the finale. But the bottom of the ten foot slide completely blew my plan. By the time my boat and I surfaced, still upright, I had no

time and no choice other than to improvise a new plan for the finale. Flying at warp speed toward the lip of the left side pothole falls, I had time for one paddle stroke before being launched over the brink. Two new friends, Sudden Deceleration and Rousing Sidesurf, waited for me at the bottom.

Fortunately, Chinook Slide ended in a large pool. After extracting ourselves from holes, or doing whatever other little things (such as rolling) needed to be done, the pool allowed us to regroup and collect our thoughts.

We started to get a feel for McCoy. It seemed determined to lose almost all of its gradient in large chunks. Within the confines of one beautiful gorge we paddled many five to seven foot ledges. The day seemed to slip quickly away. Visions of getting caught by nightfall started to trickle through our heads.

Rounding a corner, we were confronted by a 20 foot falls. Below the falls the canyon looked foreboding and appeared inescapable. Should we commit ourselves to the canyon below? The falls looked clean, but was it? Tom and David repelled



down the cliff past the falls. We were going to portage.

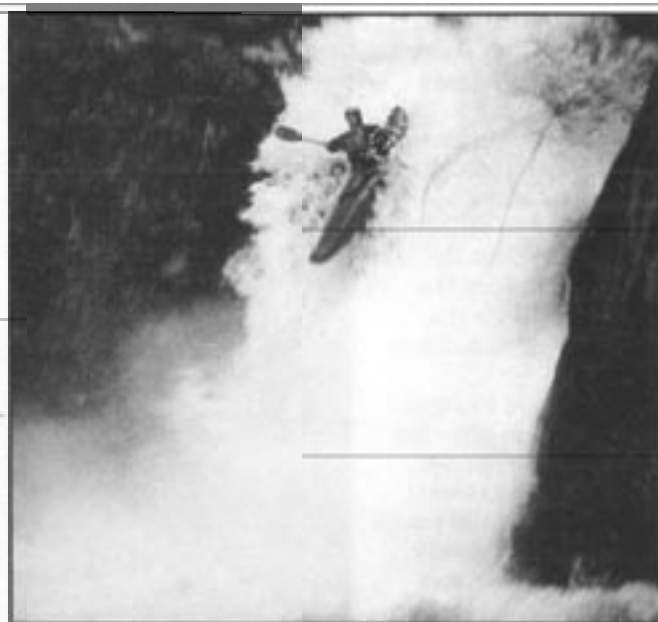
I threw my boat into the pool below the falls and prepared to rappel over the cliff. But after one more look at the falls, Pete and I decided what the hell, lets just run it. Unfortunately, my boat was already gone. So, I crammed myself into Toms boat and ferried it over the falls for him. Rolling up at the bottom, the adrenaline was coursing through my veins. Coho Falls ...just ride the silver and hope you can still spawn when its over.

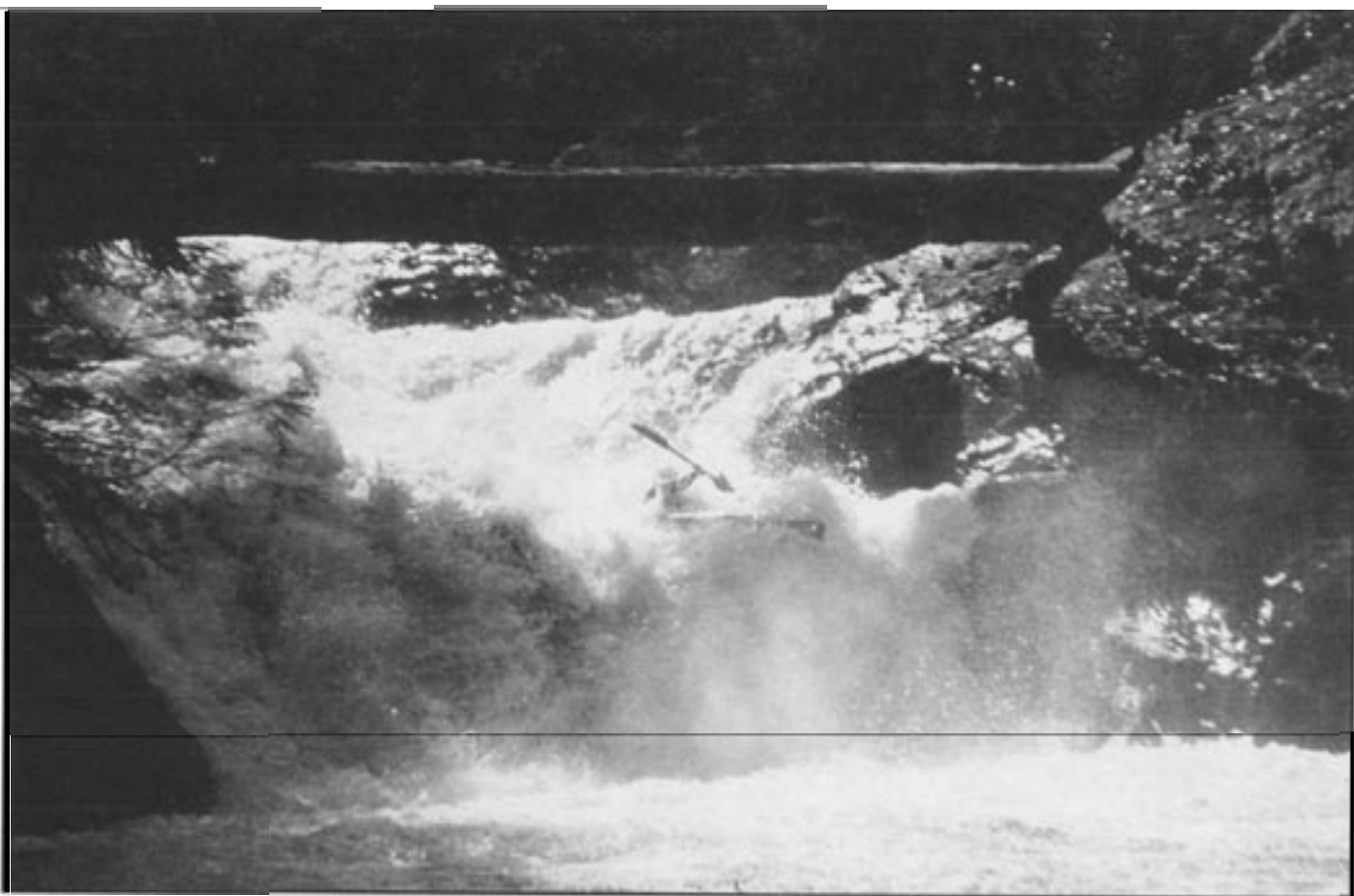
The next corner presented a steep ledge drop that funneled into the left hand cliff, then into a hole. After a small pool, there was an ominous horizon line.

We all had clean runs through the funnel, but there were a few endos in the hole.

At the horizon line we were confronted with a 50 foot drop. A steep chute led to a tiny pool formed by a rock ridge across the creek. The water then spilled onto a steep water slide. David thought maybe there was a line on the far right, if you could get into it! Fortunately, Tom had 75 foot of climbing rope. A short carry and a little rope work brought us to the base of the slide, so we were not forced to test Dave's theory.

Another slide, 12-15 feet vertical,





waited for us around the next corner. McCoy Creek was still determined to dissipate its gradient in large chunks. But only one six foot ledge drop remained before the confluence with Yellowjacket Creek,

We got to paddle the best of Yellowjacket Creek with night falling. In the gathering darkness, we contemplated our exploration of McCoy Creek. A beautiful warm up led to Class V fun. Excluding the limbo moves in the approaches, all the big drops were clean and were run, except one. In the darkness, we took out smiling.

Left top: Gary Korb running Coho Falls

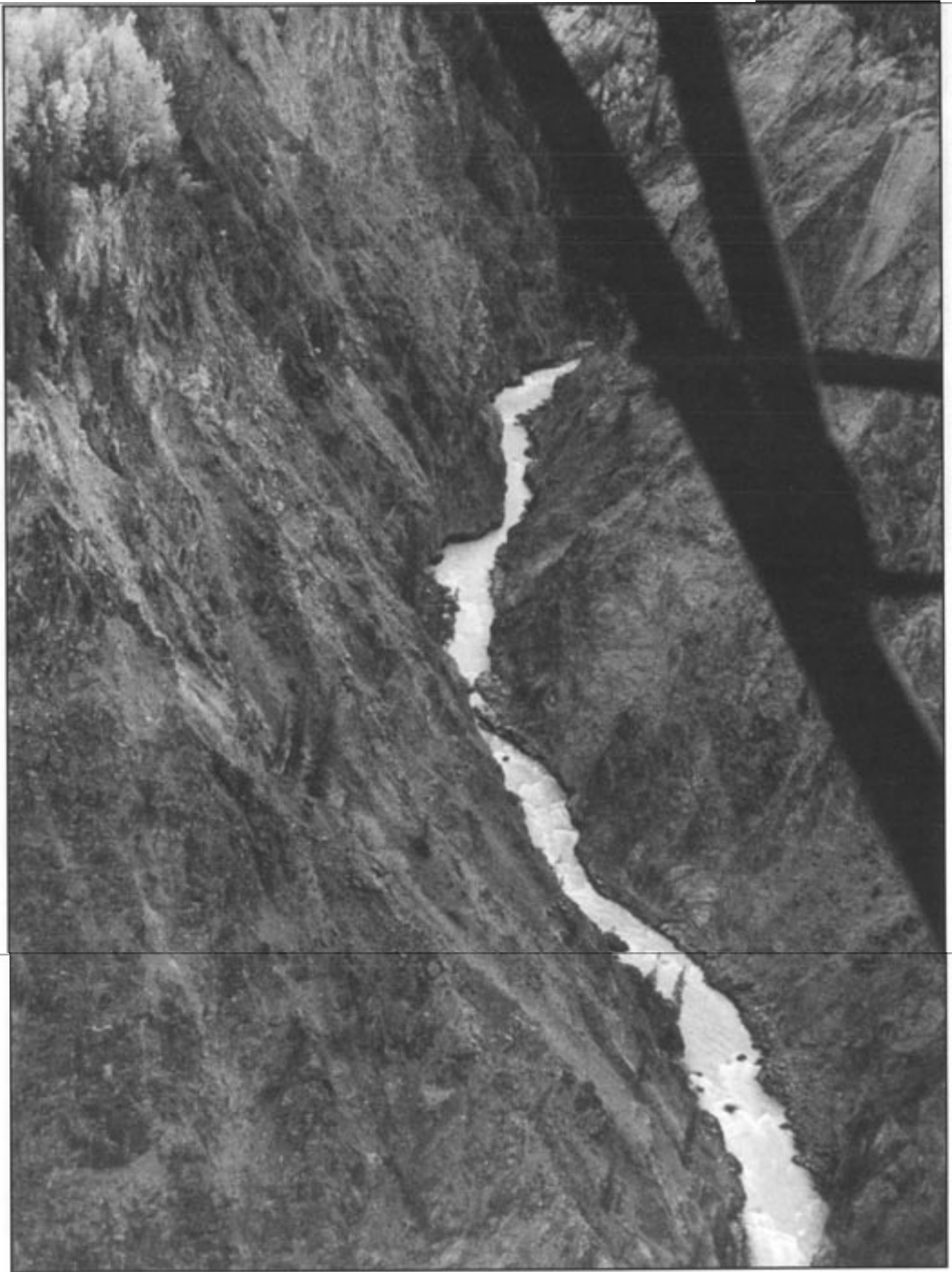
Left bottom: Shawn on McCoy Creek

Right Bottom: Tom Wolf running Coho Falls

Top: Bill exiting Pothole on Chinook Slide

Bottom: Jeff finishing Tom's Slide





KUSKULANA!

AN ALASKAN WILDERNESS ADVENTURE



Left: They always look easier from the seat of a plane

Above: Shuttle by air on the Kuskulana

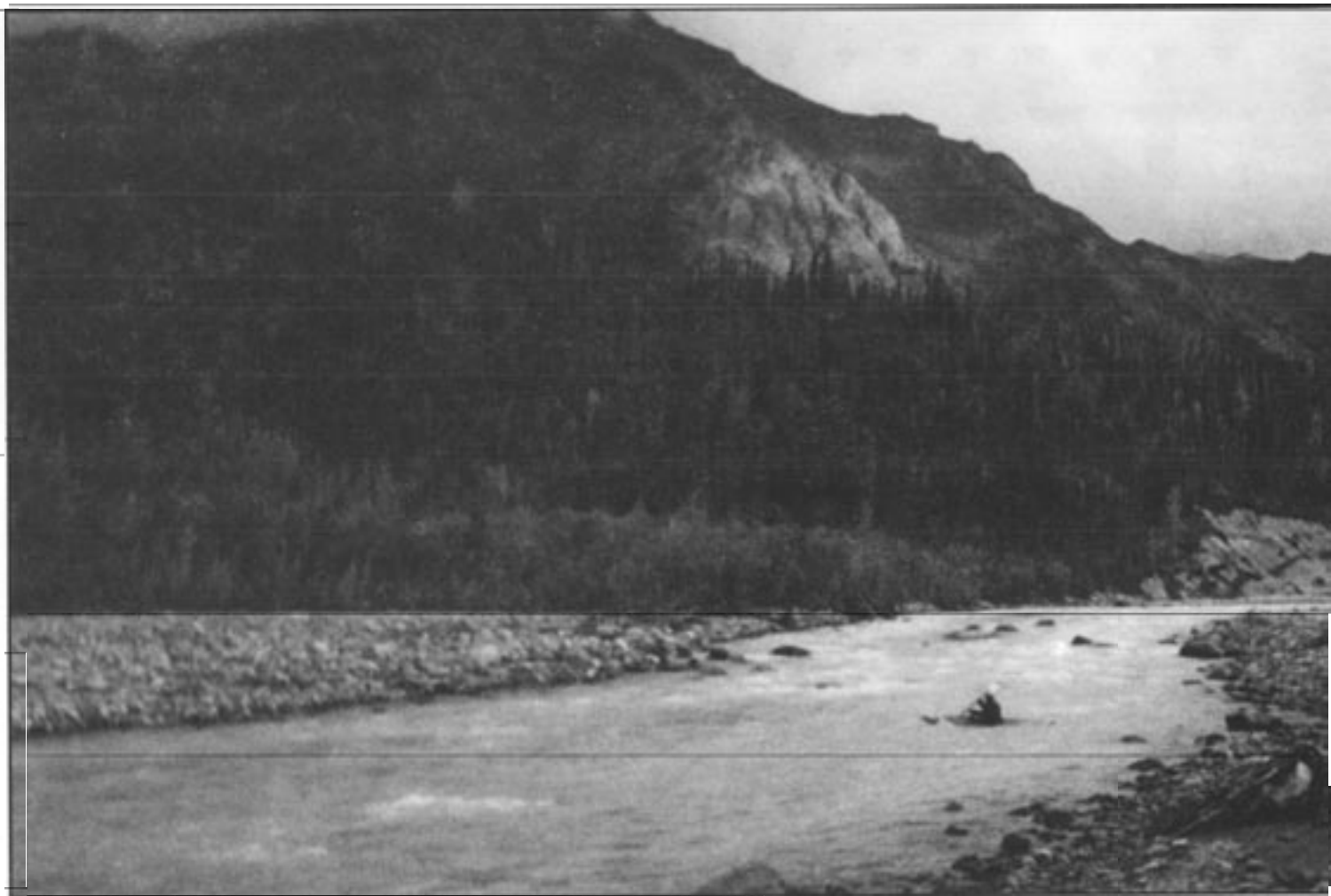
 by Roger Pollard

It was almost too funny. Above, a bird of prey, symbol of American freedom, circled overhead, while an elderly tourist filled his gas tank in Valdez. The passenger's side door of the Winnebago opened and out popped a little Yorkshire Terrier, a tiny canine the likes of a hairy Chihuahua. As the spoiled little creature pranced about the vehicle with the confidence of a wimp being protected by its bodyguards, a hurling shadow moved across the pavement. Within seconds the bald eagle swooped down, snatched the dog from its oil-stained earthly bond and disappeared into the nearby valley.

Brian Teale and I laughed at that newspaper story as we bounced down the washboard road toward the small town of Chitina. It was a conversation that centered around wilderness and how lucky we were to have it so close to home. Like two kids whose backyard is an open field, we were going out to play. We talked about all the rivers **still left** to be done in the Wrangells, many of them second descents. The Cheshnina, Chetaslina, Dadina and others; all found in Andrew **Embick's** guidebook, Fast and Cold.

Until the book's recent publication, little information was available about many **of the** rivers in Alaska. But even before the book reached print, Andy had been kind enough to share data about the rivers he had paddled. His highly detailed first-hand descriptions, typed and copied by computer, were the secret codes to adventure, circulated among a small group of boaters who fed on the wild runs.

For Brian and I the file on the Kuskulana Upper Gorge was an eye-catcher: a gem buried in the stack of seemingly endless river options.



Above: Near the putin on the Kuskulana

A typed page from the **book's** draft and a copy of an article from a British canoe magazine titled Dare the Wildest River contained quotes like, "The Kuskulana Gorge is close to the top of any list of "all-time" rivers, not just for Alaska, but for all of North America", and, "Four years of prior scouting efforts by road, by air and by laboriously hiking along the canyon rim (repelling part way in at intervals) had laid the groundwork for the run." These suggested the Kuskulana would be a superlative adventure.

Since I first drove across the bridge above the gorge and looked up stream, the Kuskulana had, for me, become the icon of wilderness Alaskan rivers. There were certainly more **difficult** runs and others which were known to contain primo whitewater. But as it disappeared around a corner upstream, the Kuskulana seemed a mysterious and tantalizing enigma with a unique character, hidden in the heart of my favorite area of Alaska.

Adding to its mystique was the fact

that our descent was, by chance, destined to occur exactly ten years to the day after the first descent.

Once in Chitina we met a wildness of our own... in the form of the Chitina Bar. A Twilight Zone-like establishment at the edge of the world, or as Brian aptly put it "where pavement meets the wilderness". Chitina is the epitome of a modern day wild west town. A quiet main street wisping with dust, facade building fronts bleached from the extremes of climate, a post office, and a liquor store represent its commercial end. Over a small knoll a huge and wild waterway, the Chitina River, converges with the Copper River, forming a glacial waterway who's silt is so dense that a kayaker can hear it sifting off the bow of the boat.

A place where state residents can drop a net in and pull out up to 30 sockeye Salmon for the price of a ten dollar license.

From the telephone outside the bar I struggled to hear the dial tone as

Guns and Roses "Welcome to the Jungle" blared from a speaker just over my head. I struggled to communicate with our bush pilot, Dave King, from Gulkana Air Service, to confirm, as previously planned, that we wanted him to meet us at the Chitina Airstrip in the morning.

"Bad news Dave, the water's a little high because of the rain," I said. "We're going to have to get up early and make up our mind. We'll call you at seven o'clock. If it clears up tonight and gets cold, we'll probably try it."

Because the Kuskulana is in a very narrow canyon, the smallest amount of precipitation could make the river a dangerous inescapable ride. One rapid was particularly troublesome. We had been warned by Chris Roach, who was



on the first descent, to "Scout it good from the air. And if you can't get out on the right above it, then don't run the river".

The rapid, he said, was distinguished by a big boulder which had fallen in from river left, forming a huge undercut.

Embeck's notes said the river was not "bank to bank" below the bridge on his first descent. Prior to our phone call to Dave we scouted from the bridge and found that the river was currently, in fact, bank to bank. Our hope was that the river would drop overnight as the glacier froze.

So we needed cold weather and the rain had to stop. Running the Kuskulana took on the aura of a mini expedition, condensed and encompassing many variables: weather, aircraft, timing and remoteness. A mini adventure tailored to the needs of a self-employed carpenter and a family man with limited time.

In Alaska days are long in mid summer, but by mid September, night

sets limits on boaters. When we woke at 6 a.m., we squinted from the bridge to see what the water level looked like, 250 feet below. We both agreed that the level didn't look much different than the night before. But the sky was clear, the stars were out, and it was cold.

The importance of our decision rested in the fact that once we entered into the gorge section, eight miles upstream, it would be difficult, if not downright impossible, to escape. After some consternation, we decided to go for it and fly in. We reasoned that if it was too high, we would stash our boats, fly back out and return a week later and hike back in (15 miles) to do the run.

We called Dave and he agreed to meet us at the Chitina Airstrip. He showed up at 8 a.m. with his Super Cub, the ultimate bush plane, capable of landing on the smallest of strips and able to fly at incredibly slow speeds for aerial scouting. Ten to fifteen minutes after take-off I was getting a bird's eye view of the magnificent Kuskulana

Gorge.

Below, as usual, the river was difficult to read. Was it too high? It didn't look bad, but then again they never do from the air. From above, the lines were clean, gradient and water speed were non-existent and the canyon walls didn't look steep at all. Everything looked easy.

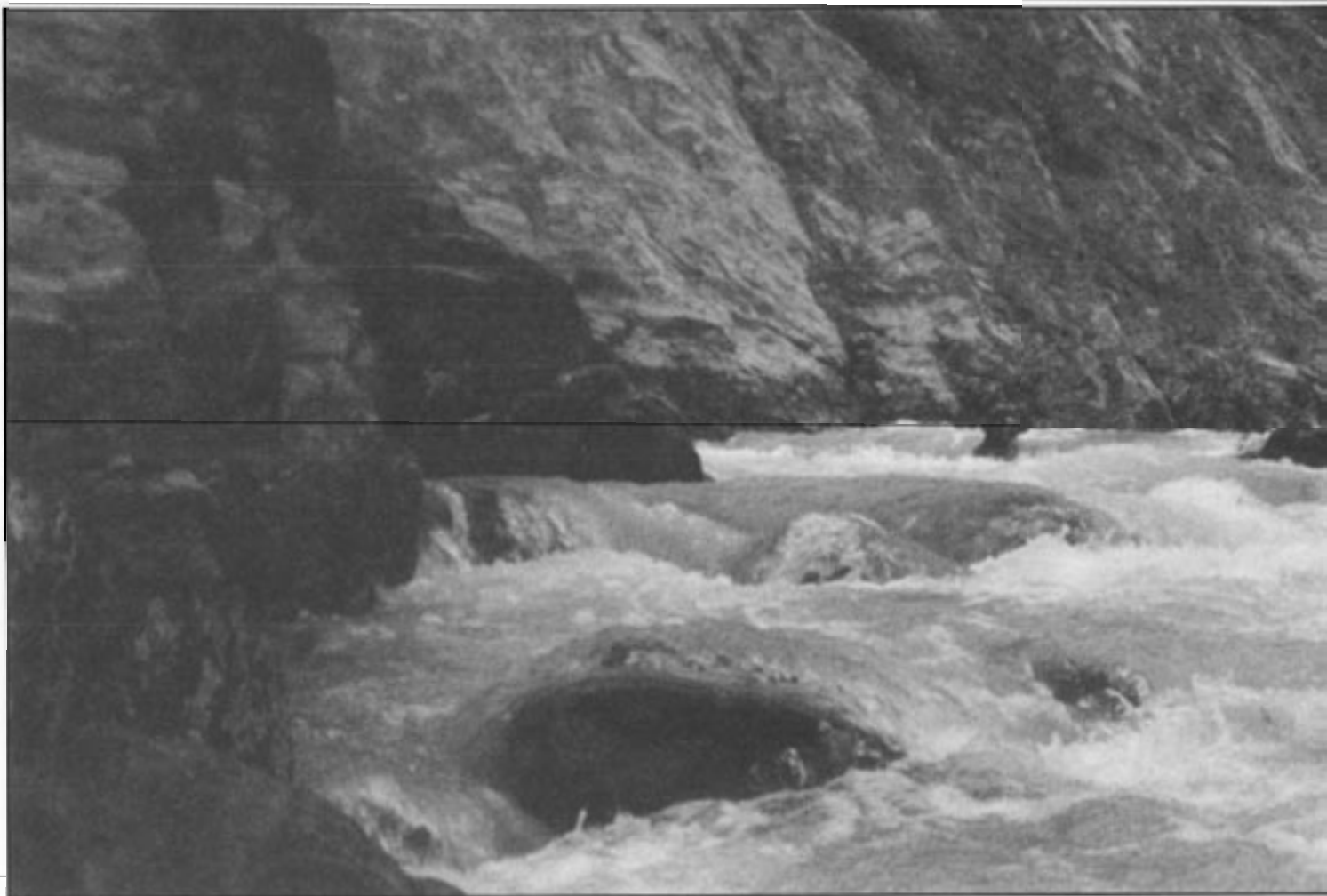
"Man, this is a hell of a narrow canyon," Dave turned and said as we banked to get a better view. "River doesn't look too bad though," he said with the confidence of a bush pilot who will not be battling the river in less than an hour.

"Yeah, right." I thought to myself. "You just stick with the flying, I'll worry about how hard it is."

One concern towered over the rest in my mind.

The undercut! Where was it? Where was this critical place? I simply couldn't see it anywhere.

I searched in vain and came up with nothing. Further and further up the gorge we went. At one point we



Above: Kuskulana excitement
Below: Kuskulana Gorge

spotted a stump on the river-left side of a narrow constriction, but passed it off as not being a problem, since there appeared to be a clean route on the far right, along the canyon wall.

Once past the Gorge the river changed character and became a ribbon of gray-blue, descending an open glacial valley at the base of enormous 16,390 foot Mount Blackburn, whose lofty summit towering through the sifting clouds. A major mountaineering challenge, Blackburn and its glaciers are the source of a constant summertime water supply. I could only imagine the power it would unleash on an 80 degree mid summer day; the wide graveled valley covered by a torrent of liquid cement, grey

with heavy sediment.

But now, with winter closing in, the river was relatively small, fast, cold, and unobstructed, as it weaved its way through the wide gravel bars.

Concerned about time, I asked Dave if he could land on the gravel bar below Nugget Creek. This would allow us more time in the gorge.

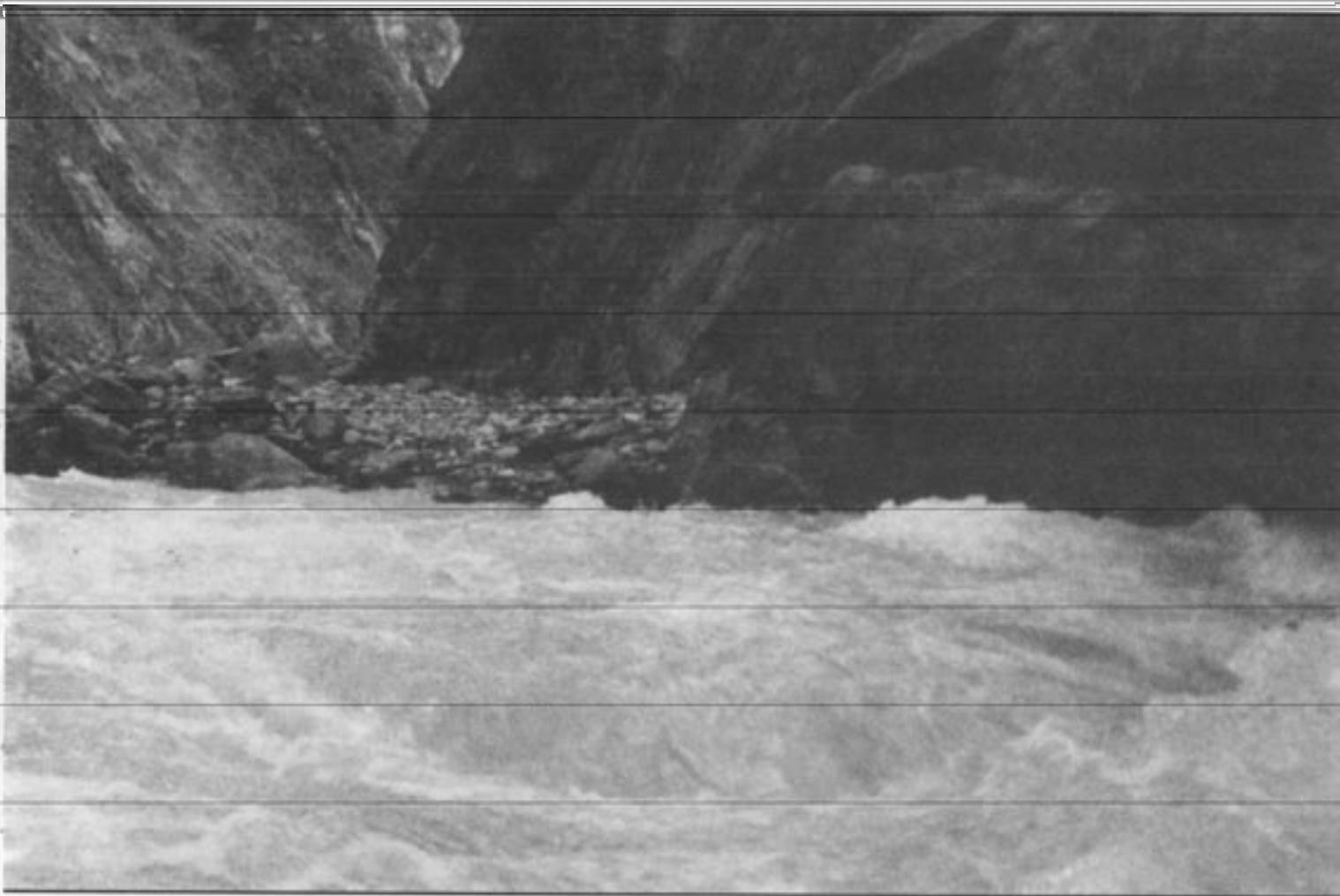
"No problem," he said. "Let's take a look." From above he pointed to a spot about three miles below the glacier, a small, consistent strip of sand on the rock strewn river bed. In expert bush flying fashion, he planted the plane right on the numbers.

"Ask Brian to look for the undercut rock as you fly him in. Tell him I couldn't find it," I told Dave, emphasizing the word undercut, which I figured meant nothing to him.

As I waited for Brian to return, I noticed two miner's cabins high on the opposite hillside. The tiny dots were barely visible; it was difficult to tell that they were buildings.

It's hard to find a place where someone hasn't been, I thought. Virtually





every mountain has been climbed, every valley hiked, if not mined. If you can get there by airplane, four wheeler, snow mobile or foot, you can be guaranteed someone has been there. After all, man has even been to the moon.

We like to build things, put things in order. I remembered a quote from some radio interview I had heard. The guest said that chaos is the law of nature and order is the dream of man. Like wild animals we lay claim to our territory in one way or another; it's an innate thing. For some, it's building structures; for others, it's pounding mining claim signs. For the true **redneck**, it's wrecking havoc with a bulldozer. And for the political power wielders with friends in the construction business, it's erecting dams.

Today, though, geography would remove us from all of this. We would be leaving the land of the nail pounders and four wheelers to go where only a kayak could (or would) venture.

I bent over and began **stuffing** gear into the boat. Eventually, the red airplane returned, landed, and deposited

Brian. He hadn't seen the undercut rapid either.

From the river bank we tossed rocks into the opaque water, hoping to ascertain its depth and estimate the CFS... as if two wild-eyed Alaskans would even know what that acronym means. "Looks like a lot more than 300," I said in a confident tone, hoping that Brian would agree.

"Yeah, I'd say there's a lot more than 300," he muttered with his usual nonchalance.

We found the upper stretches of the river fast. With several sections of boulder-strewn rapids it was an ideal warm-up. Huge piles of logs lined the banks high above, indicating the amazing level the river reaches in summer.

We came upon the Gorge abruptly and, once in it, we were lost. My memory of the flight reconnaissance was gone and nothing was recognizable. In places giant boulders clogged the river almost completely, leaving small unscoutable slots on their sides. From the rotten walls above a large rock fell, careening into the water. It

just missed Brian, who called out a warning.

I scanned the walls anxiously, as if we were in the middle of a lightning storm, about to get nailed by a bolt. In many places the walls were vertical.

Brian was leading as we rounded a corner: he turned frantically and began a ferry toward one of the walls. His face had a look of immediacy as he stalled his progress with the ferry, hoping to find an eddy that wasn't there. Ahead, I could see the problem. A large tree stump rose from river left and disappeared below the horizon to the right.

As I mimicked Brian's evasive ferry I remembered the stump from the aerial **recon**. But was it the same one? The walls were beyond vertical, they were overhanging. There was simply no way to portage, or even get out and scout. There was **no choice** but to run it far right.

"This way," I called to Brian as I passed him. I lined up along the right wall and dropped over the edge, trying my best to keep the nose of my **Freefall**



Above: Brian Teal deep in the Kuskulana Gorge

up and praying that the log was not lodged under the surface.

Brian soon joined me in the eddy below.

"I remembered it from the air," I panted.

He smiled. "Jesus," he said, "I thought you were a dead man. So I reckoned I might as well join you".

There was no turning back now. The gorge was an austere place, grey-black bands of rock devoid of color and fauna. Drop after drop, blind turn after blind turn... and always in our peripheral vision were the vertical walls. Occasionally I managed to climb out on tiny ledges and snap pictures to show my friends.

From a gravel bar on river left we could only see the top of an obvious drop. We could not scout the meat of the rapid from the gravel bar. Just downstream was a large jumble of

rocks forming the inside of a bend of the river. We figured the rapid could be scouted from those rocks, but because of an overhanging cliff wall, the only way to reach the rocks was by swimming across an eddy.

We decided to jump into the icy glacial water and swim the 50 feet. Brian held the throw rope as I swam across and climbed up onto the sharp jumble of rocks. Brian joined me after tying the other end of the throw rope around a large rock. He pulled his way across the eddy using the rope as a sort of Tyrolian Traverse.

As we stood silently on the talus heap I could see that Brian and I had truly found what we had come looking for - adventure! Adventure in the form of an inescapable rapid, deep in the Upper Kuskulana Gorge.

It was like any rapid of difficulty: steep, violent and a good place to get hurt. It was a solid class 5 by our standards (whatever that means these days).

And we were not paddling on our hometown river, but in a place where

nature, not the local power company, controls the flow. And we were very much alone.

Negative thoughts, magnified by the claustrophobic surroundings, flashed into my head. In that moment I was on a 727 about to crash at the end of the runway. My wife and daughters were asking why?

I could hear my parents, consummate worriers, saying, "I tried to get him to stop that dangerous kayaking crap. But all he cared about was himself. Why wouldn't he listen?"

These are the excuses and guilt trips that usually allow me to rationalize portaging.

Brian had his own thoughts. At this point there was probably no better person to be with. Brian is truly a hard man; one of Alaska's most accomplished ice and rock climbers. He has several wilderness river runs under his belt and, being a Valdezian, he is used to boating alone on difficult rivers. As a consequence, he has tremendous decision making skills.

Brian and I surveyed the opposite



canyon wall. If it had been possible to portage there, we probably would have. But we agreed the rock was too steep and scaly to traverse and the eddies were too marginal.

Below us the glacial water accelerated to a point just above a sharp turn to the left. There it split into three slots, plunged into two large holes, then piled against an overhanging wall on the left. Then the river made a sharp turn to the right and raced out of sight.

If nature is chaos, this was nature at its penultimate.

Conceding that we had to run the rapid, we swam back to our boats. I only remember three things about my run through the rapid: the texture and shape of the boulders defining the crucial upper slot, slamming into a submerged rock in the lower hole, and getting whacked in the nose by my paddle in the middle hole.

Once past the bottom hole I struggled to catch an eddy that would allow me to view the entire rapid from the bottom. But the current was too swift and it swept me around the cor-

ner before I could get a good look at the monster. A few seconds later Brian shot past the overhang and made the eddy.

My relief of seeing him round the corner was only overshadowed by the fact that we still hadn't identified the dangerous undercut rapid that we had been warned about.

But as it turned out, we never encountered it. Apparently time and the tremendous forces of nature had done away with it.

As we continued downstream the difficulty of the rapids diminished and the gorge walls suddenly changed character. The rock became highly fractured and shotty. We suspected that no piece of it could ever be large enough to form much of a hole.

The steep walls re-



Above: Brian Teal at the putin, Mt. Blackburn 16,320' in background
Below: Brian Teal deep in the Kuskulana Gorge





mained, but were now only 200 feet high. We continued down class two water for three more miles. I was more than happy to be nearing the end of our adventure, but I kept my feelings to myself. I could tell that Brian would have liked even more action.

Toosoon the McCarthy Road Bridge came into view. A group of young kids peered down at us and made their way to the catwalk below the bridge. It seemed hard to believe that just ten hours earlier we had stood on the same bridge, our nervous breath steaming in the darkness. The adventure that took one single day to complete left us feeling like we were returning from a month's journey.

At the take-out we cracked open a few beers I had stashed the night before and sat by the river's edge. The kids departed and the stillness of the Wrangell Mountains was broken only by the steady sound of the Kuskulana. The bright, late afternoon sun was piercing and in a tree above the canyon rim an eagle glared at us. Perhaps it was the one who had snatched the dog.

We tapped our bottles together in a toast. "To the mighty Kuskulana" I said, grinning.

"To the mighty Kuskulana" Brian nodded.

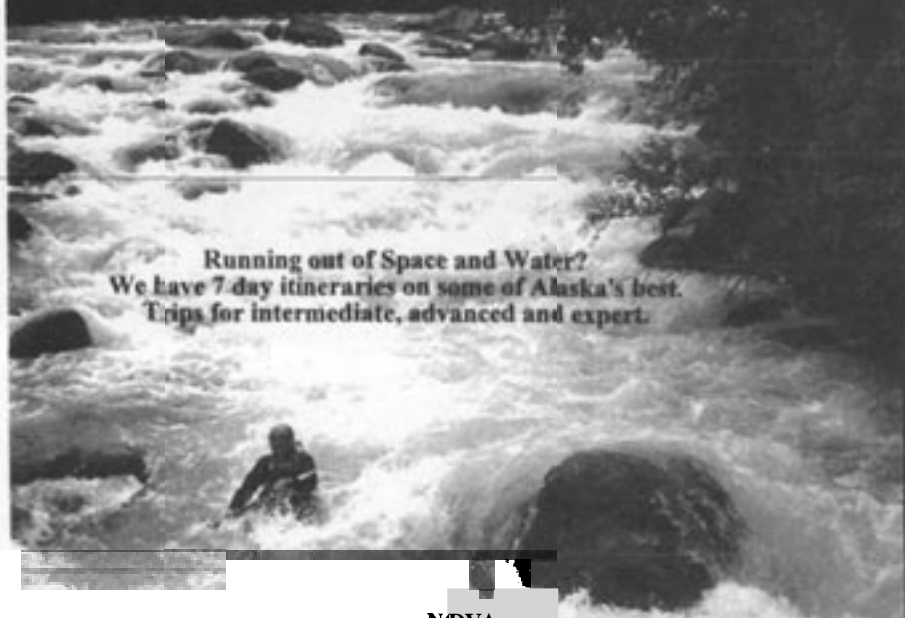
It was September ninth and the Alaskan winter was just around the corner.

(Editors note: Roger Pollard rents boats and leads whitewater trips for Alaska Kayak in Anchorage... (907) 349-4588. He wants to encourage more AWA members to come and test the whitewater of the Last Frontier.)

Photos by Roger Pollard



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HER HANDS

by Ret Talbot

There is something about her hands; strong hands. She's lived... living... alive. Powerful hands. But hands that could play the piano... stretch. Octaves, depressing keys at opposite ends; extremes. Hot or cold, black or white... wet or dry.

The kayak cuts the water, slices it like a spear-glow through ice. Rushing. Orange in the heavy green water, pushing forward and downward and onward. Freedom of movement—powerfully free.

Her hands on the paddle are an elegance of autonomy captured in five slender motions. Moving, the bones rise against the skin and press it up like ridges. Ridge lines rising and falling and shifting. It is a simple motion; unplanned, thoughtless. Complexity of process dancing now, up and down, rise and fall.

Rapids pour through gaps and drops, around rocks and up against walls... down and away. To safely negotiate a rapid you need to relax and feel the current. I learned this first of all. Without knowing this, you can never be a good kayaker. I learned this first, but I still can't do it well.

I see her hands not only as part of her, but as her. They represent her, the way she could touch me—hold me—stabilize me. Like righting a capsizing vessel, floating me. She would carefully draw me to her with those hands, draw me up and out of the water and dry me.

I see her wrap me in a gray, wool blanket and draw me in. She dries me. Her hands against the dark wool, her strong hands, they envelope me. I can see this... I want this.

The electric colored canyon walls are above us and around us and we are inside them, deep inside this place. And the smells of dinner... onion and garlic, and the mosquitoes and the river—the ever present



river, passing by camp all night. All night I hear the river.

I dream of her hands. I dream that her hands are autonomous—the way they move so fluently, so carelessly, but with such beauty. Beauty from autonomy... and their freedom.

In my dream her hands are never still. They move and move and never, not even for a moment, do they stop. Faster and faster, they blur and no longer can I pick out their intricacies. I want to stop them, to hold her hands in mine; study them. The scars tell stories: actions manifested, frozen. The texture is rough and it caresses me.

But I stop... Don't reach for them, don't stop them, don't hold them, don't contain them. I am afraid to do that.

Through trees at the river's edge, the sun pockets of morning wake me. A bird in a willow, the sand beneath me and the smell of baking bread... and the sound of the river. Always the sound of the river. The boats lie at the edge of the mighty current in a

row of obscene colors against the innocuous sand. And I am there, just waking up and still thinking she might be there too; with me... But she is not, never has been.

There are big rapids ahead and I know I should feel the exhilaration in the center of my belly. I know I'm looking for the gut-churning fear and the racing pulse and the pumping blood. I know all of this, but I don't feel it. Knowing and feeling are so different. I wonder which is more important. And all I feel is of her and for her and my desire to be with her.

My passion for her is a brimming, opulent, love sickened emotion which I want to pour out at her feet like a pitcher of milk on black tile. The loving is the feeling, becomes the emotion: A Thing. And this I know.

In my dream I did not stop her hands. Didn't. To be misconstrued, misunderstood, taken for what I am not, for what I don't want to be to her; in her eyes—in her hands. And so I don't; I hold myself within, contain myself against myself... for her.

And so, very quickly, reality closes in. A horizon appears on the river ahead. The pounding and crashing is still distant, but the sound is distinct. This is very real. I take several strokes and then stop and allow my boat to drift with the quickening pace of the river. I strain upwards, comparing what I can now see with the image etched in my mind from scouting. A huge hole to the right, undercut wall to the left, a series of diagonal waves just off the wall.

I point the bow of my boat into the huge wave train in the center of the river. The waves are gigantic, some of the largest I've ever paddled. The exhilaration is complete, the fear becomes intense.

Diagonal wave pushes, brace

HER HANDS



hard and lean! Still up. Paddle deliberately, quicken my cadence. The sound of crashing water is everywhere, but there is only silence in my head. Large boulder that looks like dog on river right. Gotta catch the eddy. No mistakes. Must catch the eddy. Coming fast, pushing, surging, breaking, running. Eddy line, swirly waters... choose my angle, good solid hard strokes, now.

Break the line of current; line between the utter chaos and unsettled calm.

Paddle hard, keep the angle, lean. Then the counter-current catches me and spins me, snapping my boat around like the thrashing of an alligator's tail. I paddle forward into the protection that the rock offers; a liquid island sanctuary amidst the raging rapid on either side. "Half way there," I say to myself.

We make camp and she leaves a note in my boat. How strange, I think. How lovely and crazy and wonderfully strange. My eyes devour carefully formed letters; script in blue ink.

"I make a metaphor out of kayaking rapids. Thought you might be interested."

I am.

"The rapids aren't safe—you have no control over them, but you can be safe in them. The danger is in yourself. If you're scared you'll end up hurt. It is just a matter of creating your own reality."

Reality, I wonder. Reality?

On the river again. She paddles gracefully ahead of me with confidence. Her poise is born of awareness: awareness born from herself. Her hands manipulate the paddle. Blade rising and falling through the

water. Feathered movement entrancing me on the calm of the early morning river. Very quiet, I think. Very quiet. We dance together on the surface of the river, moving freely and blindly with no apparent purpose.

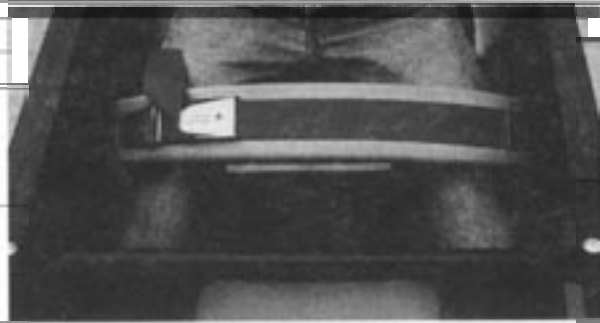
And then it's there and this is it. The mere thought of this rapid makes me shutter. The RAPID.

"Sylus's Suckhole" they call it. A big drop into an ugly hole, a huge hole. The biggest I've ever seen. "Get through this one, kid, and you're off the river." I say to myself.

Thinking about portaging. Really Scared. Sneak is on the right but you have to enter from river left. Enter and paddle hard—and with purpose. Big drop. Bigger hydraulic. Powerful water throwing itself back on itself in a torrential wave of heaviness driving at the unseen bottom. Don't hit the-hole. Fear. Can't get sucked. "Sylus's Suckhole"... stupid name. Stupid.

"The rapids aren't safe, but you can be safe in them."

We are one hundred yards above the drop. It is my run. I glance at



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"Mohawk's new thigh retainer is great! Really holds you in the boat, yet so quick and easy to get in and out of: It quickly adjusts to fit all sizes of our students. The pull-one-strap release for both legs is the easiest release I've seen and it sure is comfortable." (Bob Latham - Longtime ACA Trainer).



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her. She isn't looking at me. She knew I'd look at her. She knew. She has such control.

Paddling hard and crossing current. Enter the drop far right—right on target. And then the river careens downward; Fervently lewd Kayak plunging the drop. Lean back, get ready to brace. Hole is right there. Churning in ear and I fight fear. Hitting water...missed rock, hole pulling and me paddling hard.

"Gonna make it!" But then I flip, caught off balance. Fighting back up.

Feel paddle in hand... Grab shaft and swing. Snap. Roll. And then I am knocked down again. The liquid world begins to disintegrate around me.

"Gonna have to bail." Paddle thrusting again. Swing, Snap, Roll and... UP. I'm up! And breathing hard and paddling and "Good God I pulled it off... and paddling still.

From the pool below the rapid I watch the drop. I wait for her. I imagine her above and paddling. I imagine her seriousness, I imagine her. She is pushing nearer to the edge—not being pushed-but directing herself. Her head appears and then her shoulders and then her hands on the paddle and then the boat. She has a good line. She begins

her move; the entry into the river right sneak. Like a bird, graceful, she arcs her back and pulls herself around a rock and crests the drop. My eyes drop with her boat, transfixed. "The danger is within yourself," I mutter to myself.

As she paddles out the bottom of the rapid I wave excitedly. She maneuvers her boat in beside mine behind the rock.

"Nice run. I almost swam," I say.

"Were you scared?"

"Didn't have time to

be," I lie.

"So you didn't?"

"Didn't what?"

"Swim".

"No. But that diagonal caught me off balance and rolled me."

"Were you scared?"

"Of what?"

"Uh..." Thrown off guard by her tone, "The rapid." I say looking at her face.

"No. Not the rapid." And then she paddles forward and curves out of the eddy. I watched her as she paddles away down stream. It is easy paddling from here on out. The pull-out is only two miles down river.

We have done it, the river is ours. She paddles around a corner and out of sight.

Editor's note: Ret Talbot is an instructor at the National Outdoor Leadership School, an English teacher and a free-lance writer. He currently resides in Lakeville, CT.



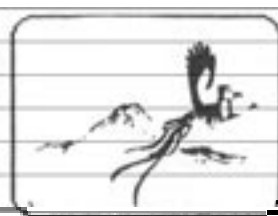
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ESCAPE FROM VERTICAL PINS AND ENTRAPMENTS

by Richard Penny and Paul Martzen

A boater's worst nightmare. Over a steep drop, and then thunk, your bow strikes rocks lurking in the froth below. All forward movement stops. Pain radiates through your feet, ankles, and knees. Frigid water cascades over your back and head; your chest is forced to the cockpit. You can see almost nothing: only froth and partial darkness. It's hard to breath. Time to get out, now! You let go of your paddle. And then what?

Photos by
Richard Penny &
Paul Martzen

▼ "And then what?" is the crucial question that we want to discuss here. The dynamics of the vertical pin with entrapment can be easily simulated by leaning a kayak against a grassy vertical slope of 45 degrees or steeper. Climb in the boat and you will discover that *gravity can be sufficient to entrap a paddler in a vertically pinned kayak!* When we first tried this exercise as part of a river rescue clinic, we were astonished by this discovery. According to conventional wisdom, a kayak must be slightly folded in the bow, snaring the paddler's legs, in order for entrapment to occur. Not so! Gravity alone can prevent many paddlers from escaping a vertically pinned kayak.

Cockpit size makes all the difference. Many of the boaters in our clinic that tried this simulation could not escape a *Dancer* (presumably an old model... Ed.), and some could not escape a vertically pinned *Infinity*. On the other hand, everyone could escape from boats with keyhole cockpits, such as the *Prijon* boats and the *Perception Corsicas*. In these boats both legs could be bent, then withdrawn simultaneously. Both feet could then be placed on the cockpit rim, allowing the paddler to dive or climb from the boat.

In the *Prijon* boats, the forward end

of the cockpit is slightly more narrow, initially allowing only one foot to be extracted to the cockpit rim. As the first leg is straightened, the second could be withdrawn, and the foot extracted. Standard C-Is, such as the *Gyramax* and *Slasher*, were easy to escape as well.

We found a great difference too in the ability of our participants to escape from simulated pins. Smaller, more agile boaters could usually work their way out of the small cockpit boats. Larger, less adroit folks were doomed. Practice helped, and many who could not escape at first were successful after several tries. We had several participants who were excellent rock climbers, with strength and agility honed on the big walls of Yosemite. These folks set the standard for escape from the tighter watercraft, using heel, toe, and knee to chimney their way from the narrow confines of the pinned kayak.

We created a more challenging predicament by having two assistants press on each paddler's back as he attempted to escape his entrapment, thus simulating the pressure of water coming over the drop. Now here was a difficult and exhausting simulation, even though it was practiced in a warm, dry environment! Under such awkward conditions, only a handful of the participants could escape a pinned *Dancer*, and then only after a prolonged struggle. In some of the boats with medium-sized cockpits, many boaters found they could extract their legs only as far as the middle of their shins before they would topple from the cockpit, an obvious scenario for bilateral tib-fib fractures.

Remarkably, despite the simulated water pressure, even the most clumsy and chubby of us could escape safely from the large cockpit craft! Most modern large cockpit designs have the added advantage of forward bulkheads, reducing the risk of broken ankles secondary to impact. Our conclusion: **large cockpit boats are the only safe choice for steep rivers and creeks.**

Escape aids can make the difference on boats with marginal cockpits. German boaters developed the idea of tying a piece of one inch tubular webbing to their stern grab loop and then leaving the forward end dangling in the rear of their cockpit. A vertically pinned boater could hope to push himself back into the current, reach over his head to the webbing, and then pull himself from the cockpit. Various stern-mounted tow systems might be substituted for this rig.

We tried the German system, and some of us found that it helped us escape from small cockpit kayaks. But other boaters still could not escape. Many of those that benefited had to engage in a lengthy struggle. Every paddler that tried



Bill Murphy exiting a large cockpit boat after a simulated vertical entrapment



Exiting despite simulated water pressure



Exiting with the aid of a German escape system

the German system was forced into a position that would have prevented an air pocket from forming around their head and upper body.

Practice with the snag tag rescue method can be incorporated in a vertical pin and entrapment simulation. Two line handlers, standing as if they were stretching a rope across a river, bring the line up from downstream of the entrapped boater. As it reaches his chest, he can lift his arms over the line and use it to stabilize himself. Providentially, *almost every participant in the clinic could escape a small cockpit boat, despite simulated water pressure, with the assistance of a snag tag line.*

Based on this discovery, the snag tag should be viewed not only as an aid to stabilizing a boater entrapped in a vertical pin, but also as an aid to the boater's extrication.

A paddler in a vertically pinned boat has two choices as to what to do once he has his feet on the cockpit rim. One choice is to dive or jump downstream. A less risky choice, if there is a boulder or exposed rock near the lip of the drop, is to can climb back up the boat onto the



Remarkably, despite the simulated water pressure, even the most clumsy and chubby of us could escape safely from the large cockpit craft! Most modern large cockpit designs have the added advantage of forward bulkheads, reducing the risk of broken ankles secondary to impact.

rock. A German escape system, a tow rig, or a rear broach loop can be a tremendous aid in climbing the boat to safety.

One of the authors (Richard) has been foolish enough to vertically pin twice in his paddling career: once in a **Gyramax C-1** on the North Fork of the Kaweah and once in a Corsica Matrix on Sespe Creek. Both times he was able to climb without assistance up the boat onto dry rock. On the occasion of the C-1 pinning, his body was engulfed in water, with only his head protruding from the flow. Nonetheless, the escape from the roomy cockpit and the subsequent climb back up the stern aided by a stern tow system, were easy feats.

Practice some of these exercises the next time you are hanging around, waiting for a shuttle. If you can't escape your kayak or C-1 quickly and safely, try adding an escape aid. If that doesn't work, retire that outdated boat and get a large cockpit craft!

(Editor's note Richard Penny and Paul Martzen are well known California boaters. Penny is also the author of The Whitewater Sourcebook, published by Menasha Ridge.)

NEW YQRK'S CROSS-STATE RACE BACK FOR '95

After a year's absence one of the most popular paddling events in the East will be back on 1995's summer schedule. The New York Cross-State, an eight-day, 200-mile competitive cruise from Tonawanda, NY to Amsterdam, NY, will return to its accustomed place as a rite of summer in late July. A part of the Chicago to New York City Finlandia Vodka Clean Water Challenge, the Cross-State will allow paddlers to sample the Erie Canal, one of the country's most historic and scenic waterways, and to partake of the hospitality of the picturesque communities along the route.

The "cruise" is designed for paddlers who don't have either the "guns, the desire, or the time" to enter the full Chicago to New York event, according to the American Canoe Association's race director Marty Grabijas. Participants in the eight-day canal crossing can opt for the challenge of head-to-head competition or set a more leisurely and laid back pace, whichever suits their desires. In either case the scenery of the upstate New York course and the special events planned by canal-side towns along the route guarantee an exceptional week. In addition, serious racers will be able to test their times against those of the world-class athletes competing in the full-length Finlandia.

The dates for the Cross-State portion of the monster marathon are July 25 to August 1. Entry categories will be offered for recreational, USCA and ICF canoe and kayak classes. An entry fee of \$300 includes basic land support services and lodging. More information can be obtained by writing: Finlandia Cross-State, American Canoe Association, 7432 Alban Station Blvd., Suite B226, Springfield, VA 22150. Phone 703-451-0141.

(Nice to know that you can leave your "guns" at home for this one!...Ed.)

VALLEY MILL TO HOST INSTRUCTORS' CERTIFICATION WORKSHOPS

These workshops, to be held on the Potomac near Washington, D.C., are designed to prepare instructors in flatwater, moving water and whitewater; leading to American Canoe Association certification. The emphasis is on what to teach and how to teach it effectively.

Open Canoe—Solo and Tandem, May 25-29—taught by canoe-sport writer and noted trip leader, Bob Foote.

Kayak—June 8-10; 17, 18—

taught by Mark Moore, whitewater instructor for National Outdoor Leadership School and St. Albans' Voyager Program.

Certification on flatwater: first 3 days, cost of \$200; 4th day on moving water and 5th day on whitewater, both for an additional \$85.

For registration and information, call or write: Valley Mill Camp, Attn.: Tom, 15101 Seneca Rd. Darnestown, MD 20874, (301) 417-2994.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL EXPERTS TO SPEAK AT CHESAPEAKE PADDLEFEST

Several national kayaking experts will speak at the Chesapeake PaddleFest at Elk Neck State Park May 12-14. Boat designer Andy Singer will share his expertise. Author Ralph Diaz will speak about folding kayaks. Researcher Moulton Avery will present information on cold water immersion. Other presentations will focus on paddle building, boat building, waves and currents, local paddling, exotic paddling destinations and wilderness medicine.

The Chesapeake PaddleFest is sponsored by the local sea kayaking community in association with retailers, outfitters and manufacturers. Major sponsors include the Trade Association of Sea Kayaking (TASK) and the Chesapeake Paddlers Association (a local sea kayaking club). There will be a variety of activities during the day, including the opportunity to

try out sea kayaks from various manufacturers, classroom presentations and discussions, on-water instructions and special events. Instruction is available for all skill levels, but the event is primarily designed for novices.

Several special events are planned to add to the fun! The cardboard kayak race was very popular last year. Teams of five people receive limited supplies and have 45 minutes in which to construct a kayak from cardboard. The cardboard boats are then raced to determine the winning team. A silent auction at the PaddleFest will raise money for Chesapeake Bay natural resource organizations. On Saturday night there will be an optional dinner and party.

For detailed information including fees, please write to: Chesapeake PaddleFest, P.O. Box 745, Greenbelt, MD 20768-0745 or call (703) 968-9047.

USCKT SLATES "SHOOTOUT"

Your Chance to Challenge the Champs!

WHO: Three 1994 National Champions and members of the 1992 U.S. Olympic Whitewater Slalom Team • Scott Shipley (men's kayak); David Hearn (in men's canoe); and Cathy Hearn (women's kayak) vs. recreational paddlers.

WHAT: The U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team Whitewater Shootout.

WHEN: Saturday, May 20, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

WHERE: On a stretch of whitewater on the Pigeon River near Hartford and Newport, Tenn.

WHY: For the opportunity to win \$1,000 as well as experiencing the thrill of competing against world-class whitewater slalom athletes. Prizes also will be awarded to the top three places in three age categories: 17 and under; 29 and under; and 30 and over.

How: Any recreational paddler whose score over the 15-gate course is better than the Olympian in his or her class will receive \$1,000.

NOTES: The only restriction on entry is that current and former members of the U.S. Slalom National Team are not permitted to enter... Advance entry is \$5; late registration is an additional \$5 for anyone entering the day of the race... The 15-gate course for the USCKT Shootout is shorter than the standard course used in international slalom competition, which is 25 gates long.

For more info: USCKT • (317) 237-5690

PARK SERVICE ANNOUNCES CHANGES AT NEW RIVER

Visitor opportunities **continue** to expand in the New River Gorge National River. The most recent addition to the array of visitor attractions is the renovation of the Thurmond Depot, slated to open to the public in May 1995. Space is limited in the Thurmond area, requiring the following changes which will affect both river users and traditional park visitors.

The parking area at the confluence of the New River and **Dunloup** Creek will be used for visitor parking for the Thurmond Depot **ONLY**. All non-commercial boaters will now park at the Dun Glen Day Use Area and carry their boats and gear down to the launch area. Any boater who needs a vehicle or trailer to launch their boat must now use the **Stonecliff** Area. No ve-

hicles will be allowed to drive down to the launch area at the Dun Glen Day Use Area except for permittees.

Non-commercial boaters that launch at Stonecliff will park in the Visitor Parking Area and launch from the Lower Launch Area. There will be a ten-minute time restriction on launches and takeouts because of the heavy congestion.

Commercial outfitters will use the Staging Area at Stonecliff to unload and prepare equipment and carry their boats to the Upper Launch Area for all **DAY TRIPS**. The exceptions to this are:

1. If the Upper Area backs up, outfitters may **CARRY BOATS** to put-in at the Lower Launch Area without **STAG-ING**.

2. "Special" commercial trips that require rigged boats, i.e., overnight trips, fishing trips, etc., will launch at the Lower Launch.

3. The **primary TAKEOUT** for commercial outfitters will be the Lower Launch.

Stonecliff will be a very busy and congested area, all **users will have to cooperate** to make the launch/takeout run smoothly.

Thank you for your interest in the New River Gorge National River. With the continued cooperation and support from all user groups, we feel that this interim plan will facilitate the orderly flow of river traffic in the Thurmond Area.

If you need **further** information, please feel free to contact Rick Brown at (304)465-0508.

1995 OCOEE RELEASES

s = 6 hour day (10am-4pm)

e = 8 hour day (9am-5pm)

t = 10hour day (9am-7pm)

May 6e, 7e, 13e, 14e, 20e, 21e, 27e, 28e, 29e

June 2s, 3e, 4e, 5s, 8s, 9s, 10e, 11e, 12s, 15s, 16s, 17t, 18t, 19s, 22s, 23s, 24t, 25t, 26s, 29s, 30s

July 1t, 2t, 3s, 4e, 6s, 7s, 8t, 9t, 10s, 13s, 14s, 15t, 16t, 17s, 20s, 21s, 22t, 23t, 24s, 27s, 28s, 29t, 30t, 31s

August 3s, 4s, 5t, 6t, 7s, 10s, 11s, 12t, 13t, 14s, 17s, 18s, 19t, 20t, 21s, 24s, 25s, 26t, 27t, 28s

September 1s, 2t, 3t, 4e, 6s, 7s, 9t, 10t, 16t, 17t, 23e, 24e, 30e

October 1e, 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 6s, 9s, 10s, 11s, 12s, 13s, 14e, 15e, 21e, 22e, 28e, 29e

November 4e, 5e



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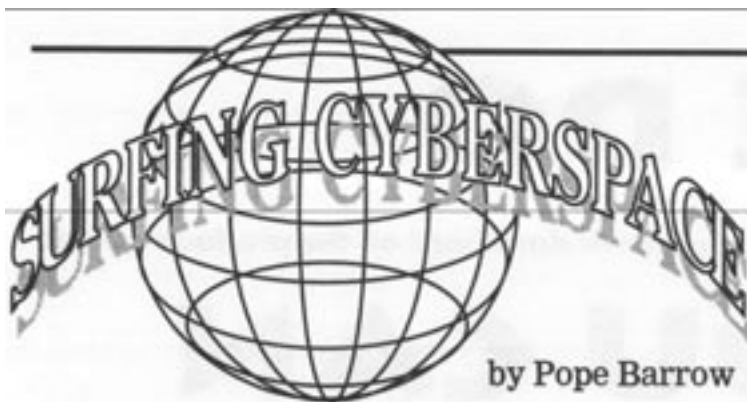


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Gaging stations transmit readings every four hours, so the latest available data is generally one to five hours old.

FOR RIVER LEVELS

by Pope Barrow

Most whitewater boaters I know think that computer bulletin boards are only for geeks or freaks, computer nerds who get all hot and bothered by downloading dirty pictures and X-rated stories from on line sex libraries.

Of course, by and large, that IS true. There are at least 500 sexually oriented computer bulletin boards in the country according to Billy Wildhack, author of "Erotic Connections" (Waite Group Press, 1994). Millions of computer weenies around the world are downloading nasty pictures and filthy stories all the time. They also use these bulletin boards to talk - in computerese, of course - to other hypersexed electronically adept perverts.

But, of course, all this downloading of bauds and broads is of no interest whatsoever to the average kayaker.

What the average river rat wants is information about river levels. To hell with the on line swingers, filling up their hard drives with X-rated garbage. The real question is: "IS THE RIVER UP?"

Thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (of all people!), for the last three years paddlers have had 24-hour computerized access to the latest river state and flow information through a bulletin board (known to computer hackers as a "BBS") in Pittsburgh. The system allows you to get the most current information available about flows in the Cheat and Youghiogheny watershed. This is not the traditional voice answering system with a recorded list of gauge readings. With this BBS, you can capture the gauge readings on your computer, study the trends, print readings, or save data for future reference.

River stage readings come from field gaging stations through satellite telemetry and are automatically posted. Gauge readings are in feet; flows are measured in cubic feet per second. Gaging stations transmit readings every four hours, so the latest available data is generally one to five hours old. Readings are arranged from upstream to downstream by location. Data files are updated every three hours; latest reports become available at 2:00, 5:00, 8:00, and 11:00, am and p.m.

Data is not checked or verified before posting, so use common sense if things don't look quite right when you show up

at the river.

Learning to use the BBS takes some of the guesswork out of whitewater river trip planning.

The old system I used was: look at the sky at home. If it was raining, I would drive out to West Virginia and try to find a river that was up.

This only worked sometimes. I got to know the West Virginia roads really well, but I did not always get to go boating.

Now you can be absolutely sure the river is up. And the BBS works just the same as all the other bulletin boards around the country. So once you get familiar with it, you can join one of the sex bulletin boards and get a couple of partners to drive out to the river with you in your van and run shuttle.

Here's what you need to plug into this system.

You need a computer and a telephone. We are talking about \$1,000 here for starters (unless, of course you already have a computer and we just wondering what to do with it). Then, unless your computer has a built-in (internal) modem, you need to hook up a modem which can connect at either 1200 baud or higher. This could cost anywhere from \$50 to \$200.

You also need a communications program of some kind, like ProComm Plus or QModem Pro for Windows- if you have an IBM compatible system. If you don't have Windows on your IBM compatible computer, you can use the "Terminal" program in the "Accessories" window as your communications program. Apple systems can be tied in as well, but with different software. Starting from scratch, you can get the computer and all equipment and software you need for under \$1500.

Setting things up the first time around is the techie part. After that, you just tell your computer to call the BBS, and everything is pretty easy.

Here's the techie part. Turn on your communications program, find the "settings" menu and fill in the phone number for the bulletin board: 1-412-644-6562. In the communications program, check the settings. Your baud rate should be either 2400, 4800, or 9600. Use the highest rate your modem can handle. The usual setup on a Windows system seems to be Com

Port 2. The other settings are: data bits=8, parity=none, stop bits=1, duplex=set FULL or turn LOCAL ECHO off, and emulation=ANSI or VT-100. Don't ask me what that all means (because I have no idea.).

Now you are ready to call in and check out the river flows. Tell your computer to call BBS (usually by way of a menu item). Your computer will connect up. Bang on the "Enter" key and the computer on the other end will ask you for your first name, then your last name, and ask you to make up a password. Make up any easy-to-remember password and fill it in. Be sure to remember your password or you will not be able to get in again.

Next you have to answer a questionnaire about yourself. The good news is that it is much less detailed and personal than the questionnaires on the sex bulletin boards. And you don't have to be over 18. Finally—the computer will say:

"Good morning, you are caller number 9,856. WELCOME to the River Recreation Bulletin Board operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District (412)644-6562. Now running under Wildcat! 3.0 The following bulletin(s) have been updated since your last call:

[Clontinue, [N]onStop, [S]top? All

You enter the letter "C"

The BBS answers: "Would you like to

view the bulletin menu [Y/N]?"

All you need to do is enter "Y" and

hit the "enter" key on your keyboard.

The BBS computer will respond with:

STAGE READINGS by River Basin

- [1]...Upper Allegheny
- [3]...Youghiogheny and Cheat
- [2]...Lower Allegheny
- [4]...Tygart and Monongahela
- [5]...Beaver and Ohio

CORPS OF ENGINEERS PROJECTS

- [6]...Youghiogheny Weekend Recreation Outlook

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INFORMATION

- [7]...River Stage Forecast

GENERAL INFORMATION

- [8]...How to use the Youghiogheny Release Forecast
- [9]...Other sources of information

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BRIEFS

[10]..About this bulletin board
 11]..FAQ: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions
 Bulletins updated: all
 Pause- [C]ontinue, [N]onStop, [S]top? C

Enter bulletin # [1..11], [R]lelist menu,
 [N]ew, [ENTER] to Quit: ?

ALL you have to do is pick one of the bracketed numbers, 1 to 11, write it in and hit "enter". You will then see all the information listed under that number. Number 3 and 4 are best for whitewater.

After looking at the river data, if you hit "enter" again, the computer will respond with "No new personal mail found. Press [ENTER] to continue?" If you do, the main menu will come up. It looks like this:

MAIN MENU:

[M].....Message menu
 [C]....Comments to the sysop
 [B].....Bulletin menu
 [I]..Initial welcome screen
 [V].....Verify a user
 [Y].....Your settings
 [S].....System statistics
 [U].....Userlog list
 [G].....Goodbye & Logoff
 [H].....Help level

[?].....Command help
 [J].....Join conference

Conf: "[O] - General Mail Folder", time on 2, with 28 remaining.

MAIN MENU:
 [M C B I V Y S U G H ? J] ? G

You can enter whichever letter you want to keep playing with the BBS, or enter "G" to leave. Although the BBS does not offer file uploading or downloading, it does have several hundred users. Check the User List for friends and send them a message from the Message Menu. You can leave a message for the system operator as well. To disconnect, enter " G. The computer will respond: "Are you sure you wish to log off [Y/n]?" Enter "Y" and hit "enter"—and you are off.

The information provided on this BBS is not yet available on the Internet so you still have to call to Pittsburgh every time you tie into the BBS. The board administrator, Louis Kwett, plans to set up a World Wide Web server connected to the Internet sometime soon. This will provide graphic and audio information as well as text. (Music with your gauge readings!). To use the WWW server, you will have to have "browser" software

(like Mosaic) on a fairly sophisticated home computer.

For the ultimate electronic gauge surfer, several government offices have set up World Wide Web (WWW) servers with river information. These can be accessed on the Internet by using a "browser" program such as Mosaic or Lynx. They are: USCAE Prototype Water Management Server (<http://www.wrc-hec.usace.army.mil/xxx-wc>), USACE Louisville District (<http://orl62.orl-wc.usace.army.mil/>), USCAE Albuquerque District (<http://www.swa-wc.usace.army.mil/>), and the United States Geological Survey (<http://www.usgs.gov/>).

[Note to readers: Louis Kwett very generously contributed technical information for this article and checked the accuracy of the technical data. He did not review, and is not responsible, however, for the politically incorrect drivel and degenerate asdies inserted by the author. To comment on the technical information, Kwett's email address is kwett@orp61.orp-wc.usace.army.mil. Complaints about the depraved and irresponsible portions of the article should be sent to the author at 72702.1552@compuserve.com.]

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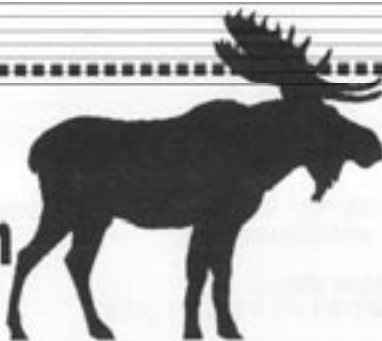
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BRIEFS

Moose River Festival Scheduled by American Whitewater Affiliation



Highlighting the 1995 fall season of recreational whitewater releases on the Moose River, the American Whitewater Affiliation will sponsor the first annual Moose River Festival to be held Saturday, October 21 in Old Forge, New York.

The AWA already sponsors or co-sponsors a series of popular river festivals across the nation, including events on the Gauley and Cheat Rivers in West Virginia, the Kennebec in Maine, the Deerfield in Massachusetts, the Ocoee in Tennessee, the Russell Fork in Kentucky, and the Arkansas in Colorado.

Like other AWA events, the Moose River Festival will feature live music, continuous showings of whitewater videos, displays of whitewater equipment and raffles for boating gear. The Festival is scheduled to start at approximately 6 p.m. at the North Street Pavilion in Old

Forge—an Adirondack village approximately 50 miles north of Utica, NY.

AWA coordinator Chris Koll anticipates visitors from throughout the eastern United States and Canada.

"The Moose River is particularly attractive as a paddling destination because it contains three sections of varying difficulty within a 30 mile reach of the site," Koll said. "Boaters from expert to novice can plan a trip to the Moose, confident they'll find a section of river appropriate for their ability."

The fall paddling season on the Moose stretches over the final four weekends in October when a **drawdown** of the upstream **Fulton** Chain of Lakes provides predictable optimal water levels for whitewater recreation.

"Dependable water levels in the fall are one of the Moose's best features,"

Koll said. "Boaters who have to travel some distance can plan their trip well in advance, knowing they'll find good conditions."

The final six miles of the river known as the Bottom Moose has been rated by paddling publications as one of "the top 10" expert rivers in the eastern United States. The run is a series of navigable waterfalls and sheer rock slides ranging from 10' to 50' in height.

In 1987, a hydroelectric project dewatered the final two miles of the run, but negotiations chaired by the AWA provided for 20 days of whitewater releases in that stretch, including the October season.

More moderate whitewater can be found above the Bottom Moose including the class 3-4 section known as the Lower Moose and the class 2-3 section known as the Middle Moose.

For more information about the Moose River Festival or Moose River whitewater, contact Koll at (315)652-8397 or Steve Uzdavinis at (315) 369-2581.

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Lee Houtgill running Shagwauk Falls, Wild River, WA. Dave Sloner photo.

KENNEBEC & RIVER PADDLE PARTIES DEERFIELD

SPLASH AGAIN
IN 1995!!

THE KENNEBEC FESTIVAL WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY JULY 1, 1995 at Wilderness Outfitters, Route 201, The Forks, Maine and will include a whitewater trade show, barbecue, and music for all to enjoy. The Central Maine Power Company has once again agreed to provide a Big Water 8,000 cfs release on Monday July 3rd to give boaters the thrill of a lifetime as they roar through the Kennebec Gorge.

In addition CMPUs affiliate, the Kennebec Water Power Company, will also be providing recreational releases on the Dead River on July 1st and 2nd to make the entire weekend a grand opportunity to boat some of the wildest

whitewater and most scenic wilderness in the Northeast.

Last years riverside festival drew over 500 people to this remote part of western Maine and thirty exhibitors set up displays of boats, paddles, gear, and whitewater apparel for equipment-browsing boaters. A great chicken barbecue fed the crowd and bluegrass music throughout the evening provided a comfortable laid-back atmosphere after a hard day's boating. **BLAH-BLAH-BLAH.. NOW FOR THE BAD NEWS...**

Bad News for the Kennebec Riverfest....

A warm dry winter with very little snowfall in the Kennebec River watershed is forcing the Central Maine Power to seriously restrict releases for whitewater boating in 1995. At this writing reservoirs are at 50% capacity and commercial outfitters will be affected as well as private boaters. Festival coordinator Tom Christopher states, "It is not fair or practical to ask vendors to travel to a festival that can produce only low-level releases of two or three hours duration, so we decided to cancel this year's event".

THE DEERFIELD RIVERFEST WILL BE HELD ONE MONTH LATER ON AUGUST 5, 1995 in the large field across the street from Zoar Outdoor on Route 2, Charlemont, Massachusetts. The Deerfield River relicensing story is fast becoming the glamour child of the environmental and recreational community as the publicity from the Deerfield

The American Whitewater Affiliation is pleased to announce the continuation of two major river festivals to be held in New England in the summer of 1995.

Settlement Agreement continues to focus on this landmark agreement between the New England Power Company and a diversity of river interest groups.

The Deerfield River has been the site for national championship races in both canoe and kayak events and continues to build its reputation as the next major league whitewater mecca in the northeast as thousands of boaters now travel to western Massachusetts each summer. Through the cooperation of the New England Power Company boaters now have the opportunity to enjoy great whitewater just a short distance away from most of the large population centers in New England.

Last years Deerfield Riverfest was HUGE, with over 1,200 people attending this event. Like the Kennebec, people and vendors again came from all over the U. S. to sample the newest whitewater resource and celebrate its rebirth at the festival. The trade show at the Deerfield drew fifty-two exhibitors, many who had been at the earlier festival on the Kennebec and realized that the New England boater market was hungry for whitewater products. They just had to make a second trip back to New England and they were not disappointed at the Deerfield.

The addition of environmental exhibits and childrens games during the afternoon brought in many families to enjoy the festivities. The availability of the latest in boats developed a longing gleam in the eyes of many ten and twelve year olds. This event also had a chicken and

rib barbecue and a rock-a-billy band provided the music throughout the evening during the entire trade show.

Tom Christopher, festival coordinator for the New England events said, Last years festivals were significantly more successful that we had ever hoped for. It just goes to prove that boaters are hungry for opportunities to get together with each other in a festival atmosphere to talk about what they enjoy the most -- whitewater. He continues We had so many local people helping out to make these events work and the fact that boaters were welcomed into their communities not only fosters a positive image for us as a user group, but provides us with an opportunity to increase our constituency when their kids take an interest in our sport. AWA gets to build its membership and the people of these communities enjoy the economic benefits of a non-consumptive activity in their towns. It makes a great partnership for AWA.

With so many dams in New England up for relicensing these river festivals play an important role in establishing the American Whitewater Affiliation and our members as important players in this process. The more positive economic impact we present to communities near whitewater resources, the easier it is to generate local support in our negotiations with public utilities. The more credibility we establish as an important user group, the greater our chances for future success.

Get out to the New England festivals this summer. When you support the AWA you're never disappointed.

BRIEFS

SHENANDOAH RIVERFEST '95 SLATED

The Friends of the Shenandoah River, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the Shenandoah River, will be hosting it's third annual Shenandoah River festival, SHENANDOAH RIVERFEST '95 on Saturday, August 5.

The excitement of last year's festival, coupled with many new program additions, promises to make RIVERFEST '95 an even bigger success. Again being hosted riverside at the Poe's South Fork Campground, RIVERFEST '95 offers you a great day of competitive racing and festival excitement.

Shenandoah Riverfest '95 will feature: River Fun and Games, Canoe Races, Fishing Tournament, Water Rodeo Events, Historical Watercraft Rides, Balloon Rides (weather permitting),

Living History Encampment, Environmental Midway,

Wildlife Displays, Continuous Live Music, In Water Tug of War, Arts and Crafts, Canoe & Tube Rentals, Free Kids Corner, Great Food and more.

Recreational Race- This class was created for all you "Weekend Warriors." For the price of the entry fee we supply the equipment, you supply the muscle power with a chance at your first Gold Medal.

Marathon Race- This 10 mile race, under U.S.C.A. rules is for the serious racing enthusiasts. Awards for all classes. Pre-registration is available.

River Clean-Up Day will be Sunday August 6th. Its ALL FREE -Canoe Trip • T-Shirt • Riverside Lunch.

Don't miss this opportunity to experience the beautiful Shenandoah River by Canoe. For this second river clean-up day we'll provide; Canoes, life vests, paddles, maps, orientation, transportation, parking, T-shirts, lunch and trash bags. You provide the trash pick up power First come, first served!

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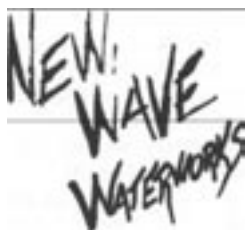
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A STAR IS BORN — THE FIRST FILM FESTIVAL

By Barry Grimes

In 1981 the Russell Fork was the holy grail of the hair boating set. BWA club member Sam Moore, one of the most intrepid paddlers ever produced by that organization, decided his time had come to score a personal first descent. Terry Weeks and Barry Grimes — two amateur photographers — felt that the historic run should be documented for the club membership. The result was the 15 minute, super 8mm film creatively titled "The Russell Fork", a TBS (Terry, Barry

& Sam) production.

When shown at a monthly meeting in 1982, it created an uproar — partially because everyone loved it, and at least one mother present with her eight year old son hated it. (It seems that she became perturbed at a three second flash of a topless woman with three breasts.)

Boating films in those early video days were mostly 8mm, 16mm or 35mm film, a difficult and expensive medium to work with. Consequently, paddling films tended to be documentaries, usually depicting expeditions where whitewater rapids played the role of menacing impediments to be portaged or simply endured by the foolhardy and brave. (Russ Nichol's excellent film "Fast and Clean" was a notable exception.)

"The Russell Fork", however, was pure whitewater with steep drops, throbbing music, great wrecks and club hero Sam makin' it look easy. T, B, & S were heartily congratulated (and vilified).

Present at that meeting was Bob Sehlinger, BWA member, paddler and Menasha Ridge Press publisher. Bob was inspired and later put forth a visionary idea: if the BWA would host and work it, his company would financially back a film festival that would bring together other paddling shows from across the country.

A core group of high energy BWA people including Sam Moore, Terry Weeks, Barry Grimes, Don Spangler, John Davis, John Lovett, Dave Weiland and Beuren Garten met with Bob. It was decided that the BWA couldn't pass up an opportunity to have a huge party paid for by someone else, where they could invite the world to bring and show their boating home movies and slides. Not only would it be out-there fun, but it would be a unique opportunity for amateur and professional filmmakers to exchange ideas and strut their stuff before an audience of paddlers. The National Paddling Film Festival splashed into existence.

The BWA had no idea how many films could be attracted or if anyone would even come. October 22 and 23, 1983 was picked as the date (at the end of Gauley season); and buoyed by a \$1,000 full-page ad in Canoe magazine paid for by Menasha Ridge, calls and letters be-



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gan to come in.

The film committee found that the newly completed Kentucky Horse Park had not heard of the BWA and so welcomed the club to use their "party barn" — a huge, empty, former tobacco barn set in the middle of a cow pasture.

Only one problem still faced the club — the need to actually build two the-

aters within the barn. BWA construction magnate Mike Weeks volunteered himself and two unsuspecting members of his crew to complete the task. Using roll after roll of black plastic, thousands of staples and innumerable 2x4s the theaters were completed.

Dave "Dad" Weiland, the BWA chef of "Dad's Dinner Theater" fame agreed to cook breakfast, lunch and dinner for all the masses. Popcorn poppers, TV's, slide and film projectors were moved in. A couple of hundred folding chairs were unfolded.

TV stations were notified and since it had been built — they came.

The barn was adjacent to the campground and folks started rolling in that Friday night. By the time the competition began on Saturday morning, there were about 150 people (including BWA) and 23 film, slide and video presentations.

It had been decided that everyone who entered would get a showing. There were no time limits established and the competition was set up so that video was paired with 16mm film and slides competed with 8mm film. There were six judges, and they were required to judge all 23 entries — or roughly six hours of presentations!

Entries included footage on the Suwanee, Gallatin, Yellowstone, Nantahala, Bio Bio, Russell Fork, Dolores, Ocoee and Colorado rivers. Also there were shows on the Pacific Ocean, Mill Creek, hypothermia, the lowhead dam thriller "The Drowning Machine", a 7,000 mile expedition across Canada and Alaska and the first Ocoee Rodeo. Eleven states were represented with nine entries from Kentucky and eight from the BWA alone.

Barry Grimes was charged with showing the 8mm and slide shows and John Davis was the 16mm and video tsar. Since the theaters had been built back to back with only thin plastic and a couple of mattresses for soundproofing a small sound level war developed as John and Barry tried to drown out the other's encroaching audio.

Then, just before lunch, both theaters were further raising their volume in an effort to overcome the torrential down-

pour that was hammering away on the barn's tin roof. The rain Gods had visited the Festival in a big way and were the BWA's honored guests. They stayed all day and turned the cow pasture outside the barn into a quagmire. It continued to rain hard as the competition wound down and Dad's Dinner Theater served up steamship rounds of beef, ham and chicken and dumplings for dinner inside the barn from the attached kitchen.

It was raining so hard that the Horse Park people were persuaded to allow the Festival to have the party in the lobby of the Visitor Center. A strong Bluegrass band named Stoney Creek picked and the Women in Rubber made everyone grin as the first Film Festival Party blasted deep into Sunday morning.

Dad Weiland, the hardest party animal that the BWA has seen to date, did not slack off that night and eventually stumbled to his truck at the campground just before dawn on Sunday morning. Not long after Dad had drifted off to C-boat dreamland, he was awakened by a camper demanding the promised biscuits and gravy for breakfast. Evidently the gravy would fit where Dad told the camper to put it, but the biscuits would not, and neither was happy about it.

Sunday morning had been scheduled to include the presentation of awards and a reshooting of the winning entries. At

10 a.m., the allotted start time for the Awards Ceremony, there were about 20 people present. Half were BWA members clinging to coffee cups, and the remaining 10 or so consisted of a few winning filmmakers and folks who had come to the Festival but left their boats at home. Everybody else had gone boating on the leftover bounty of the Rain Gods.

The slide/8mm Best of Show winner was aptly titled "Kayaking in the Bluegrass", with "Whitewater Rodeo" and "Liquid Madness" sharing video/16mm Best of Show honors. Of the 23 entries, 13 went away with awards.

The BWA has evolved and hopefully improved upon that original Festival. The current facility at the University of Kentucky was added in 1984. In '85 the date was changed to the last weekend in February, and the Friday/Saturday format was instituted.

Thanks to suggestions from members, participants and you, the audience, the Film Festival has become a much anticipated event and a significant contributor to conservation. It has been instrumental in raising the quality of paddling films and has been a fertile meeting ground for paddlesport filmmakers from across the world. Thanks to the ongoing strong support from the boating community, the National Paddling Film Festival will continue to endure, inspire and thrill audiences for years to come.





THIS YEAR'S WINNERS

PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY

Best of Show — Wave Warriors (Adrienne Ciuffo/National Geographic)

A wild ride through the surf zone off the northern California coastline with the United States' most eccentric ocean kayaking club — the "Tsunami Rangers" — and their newest initiate. Threading their way through boulder gardens and kayak thrashing swells to explore the area's abundant sea caves, the Rangers guide an East Coast river paddler on her first unforgettable ocean adventure.

Runner Up — Whitewater Groove (Larry Granger/Wildside Productions)

The latest in high adrenaline, adventure paddling, featuring the Thompson River, an exciting tributary located in North and South Carolina's Lake Jocassee watershed. The video begins with the Cullasaja River, moves on to the West Fork of the French Broad and concludes as Britt Gentry, Larry Granger and Steven Matz make the first descent of the Thompson.

Endor Award (The People's Choice) — Vertical Addiction (Wayne Gentry / Gentry Video Productions)

A look at the addiction to whitewater paddling through the eyes of expert paddlers hooked on steep creeks which crash off the Cumberland Plateau between 600 and 800 feet/mile. Filmed near Chattanooga, Tennessee, the video shows footage from Henderson Creek, Falling Water Creek and the "North Pole".

Commercial Winner — The Wilder, The Better (Dan and Jennifer Murphy/Steep Creek Films and AWA)

The American Whitewater Affiliation's mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. This video has been pro-

duced to illustrate AWA's message. It is informative, entertaining, intense and informal — just like AWA!

AMATEUR CATEGORY

Best of Show/Club Winner — We will All Gulp Together When We Gulp! (Randy Klein/Wasatch Mountain Club)

A 35mm slide presentation with original lyrics describe the fast-paced antics of the Wasatch Mountain Club members as they paddle and/or swim various Rocky Mountain Rivers.

Hairboating — Up High, Hard and Behind (Rick Gusic/Three Rivers Paddling Club)

A fast and furious paced look at some of the best crash and burn kayaking (and rafting) footage ever shot! The video includes shots of the Cheat, Big Sandy, Upper Gauley, Meadow, Green, Great Falls of the Potomac and the Russell Fork, just to name a few.

Recreational/Scenic — Faultline (Will Reeves/ORGT/Georgia Canoeing Assn.)

National Paddling Film Fest Director Scott Smalley presents Phyllis Horowitz with award for AWA's new promotional video. *The Wilder the Better*

Faultline is an entertaining video of the Piedmont Rivers in Georgia and Alabama which flow over the Brevard and Towaligia faultlines and their resulting whitewater.

Conservation — North Chickamauga Creek Gorge (Robert Campbell, Linda Hixon/Friends of North Chickamauga Creek Gorge)

A model watershed protection plan for the North Chickamauga Creek Gorge is currently being prepared. a partnership of the Friends of North Chickamauga Creek Greenway, Inc., The Conservation Fund, National Park Service and American Whitewater Affiliation are working to prepare and carry out the plan. This video was produced to help increase public awareness of the importance of preserving this unique gorge near the City of Chattanooga.

SLIDE COMPETITION

Winner — Scott Shoupe
An amazingly scenic ender on the Caney Fork. (See front cover of this issue.)



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BRIEFS

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FESTIVAL JUDGE or

COME FOR THE FILMS — STAY FOR THE FUN

Late February is becoming to Lexington, Kentucky what Gauley Season is to West Virginia — a mecca for paddlers in search of primo whitewater action. Maybe you won't get wet, and guaranteed you won't see the light of day, but you will find yourself smack in the midst of your peers — hundreds of salivating, adrenalizing hair junkies — enjoying the newest and hottest paddling productions around.

Sponsored and organized by the Bluegrass Wildwater Association (and this year co-sponsored by the American Canoe Association), the 12th Annual National Paddling Film Festival was no exception. An audience of close to 300 film fans, volunteers and judges crammed into the Medical Sciences Auditorium at the University of Kentucky for the all-day

Saturday show.

And there was a little something for everyone among the 10 professional and 9 amateur entries, ranging from club trips and conservation pieces to cutting edge whitewater (and saltwater!), plus the slide competition which was a people's choice decision.

But there's more. Film Festival Head Honcho, BWA's Scott Smalley, has continued in the Club's fine tradition of transforming what could be a fun one-day event into a howling weekend extravaganza.

Beginning on Friday evening with a viewing of last year's winners, Film Festival highlights and amenities went on to include a catered pasta lunch at noon intermission, an impressive big-ticket and accessory auction following the show, an

enthusiastic party into the wee hours (featuring Utterly Rudderless - a local, mostly-paddler band which may be joining us at the Gauley Festival) and (if you hit it right) plenty of paddling options on Sunday.

And, if you were lucky enough to be invited as a judge, there was even a sumptuous buffet dinner in store at the home of BWA superhosts Don and Chris Spangler.

Well, it took me years to get there, but it won't take much to get me back. The Film Festival is an excellent, superbly run event. Kentucky hospitality is endless. The BWA's reputation as party animals is definitely understated. Don't miss it.

Guidelines for Contributors

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

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

If possible articles should be submitted using Wordperfect on a 5 1/4" single sided flexible disc. Please use the standard Wordperfect default settings; do not alter the margin or spacing parameters. If you use a different word processing program and/or smaller disks, send us one anyway... we may be able to transfer it to our files. Send a printed copy of the article, as well.

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

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints or color prints. Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we can not guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you

want us to return your pictures, include a self addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Because we publish in black and white, photos with a lot of contrast work best.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Articles will be edited at the discretion of the editors to fit our format, length and style. Expect to see changes in your article.

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

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WHITEWATER RODEOS

1995 EVENT SCHEDULE

Risa Shimoda Callaway (803)855-7518

DATE	EVENT NAME	LOCATION	CONTACT
April 29-30	New River Rodeo	Salem, VA	BMI Sgrinla 703-387-8172
April 29-30	North Idaho	Moscow, ID	Willie Accola 208-882-2883
May 5-7	Bob's Hole Rodeo	Portland, OR	Dave Slover 508-285-0484
May 13-14	Lochsa Rodeo	Missoula, MT	Amy Smith 408-728-7800
May 20-21	Coosa River	Montgomery, AL	Lonnie Carden 205-272-1207
May 20-21	Big Fork Whitewater Festival	Whitefish, MT	Kelly Mull 408-882-5841
May 20-21	Potomac Whitewater Festival	Silver Spring, MD	Rich Hoffman 801-588-8453
May 20-22	Kananaskis Whitewater Rodeo	Calgary, Alberta Canada	Mark Taylor 304-260-1527
June 10-11	Ocoee Rodeo	Asheville, NC	Susan Wilson 704-258-3886
June 15-18	Fibark Headwaters Championship	Salida, CO 719-538-2472	PT. Wood
June 18-18	Willow River Paddlefest	Prince George, BC, Canada	Rkk Brino 804-884-7400
June 28-25	Animas River Days	Durango, CO	Janet Wiley 808-258-8888
July 7-8	Payette Whitewater Roundup	Boise, ID	Bruce Bistline 208-845-8654
Sept. 8-10	American River Festival	Lotus, CA	Susan Debret 018-626-3435

1995 NATIONAL RACES (NSWC)

DATE	RACE NAME	LOCATION
March 25-26	USOF South Regional Trials	NOC, NC
April 15-16	USOF West Regional Trials	Seattle, WA
April 22-23	USOF North Team Trials	South Bend, IN
April 29-30	USOF East Team Trials	Webster, NH
May 6-7	Junior Team Trials	Zoar Gap, Mass
May 12-13	Slalom National Team Trials	Ocoee, Tenn
May 29	CIWS #1	Vail, CO
June TBA	Wildwater National Team Trials	Arkansas River, CO
June 3	CIWS #2	Durango, CO
June 10	CIWS #3	Carlton, Mine
June 25-July 16	World Cup races #1-4	Europe
July 5-9	Junior Pre-Worlds, SL & WW	Czechoslovakia
July 22-23	Jr/Sr/Masters Nationals, SL & WW	Boise, ID
July 30	Olympic Festival	Boulder, CO
Sept 1-3	Slalom World Championships	Great Britain

USOF = United States Olympic Festival

CIWS = Champion International Whitewater Series

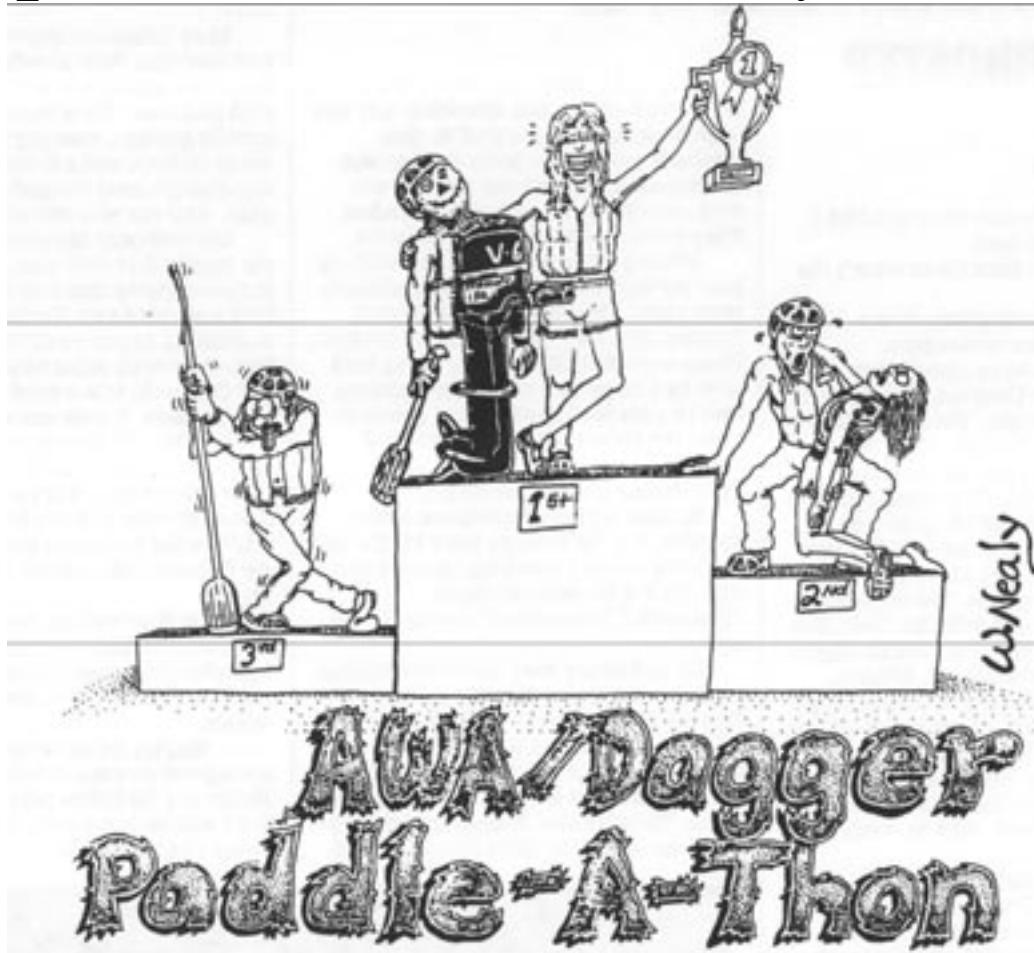
NSWC = National Slalom and Wildwater Committee

(Slalom arm of the United States Canoe and Kayak Team)

1995 Pacific Northwest Whitewater Race Schedule

Date	Race Name	Race Difficulty	Location	Race Director	Other Info
Feb. 18-19	State of Jefferson Championships	Class 3-4 Slalom & Downriver	S. Fork Smith River, Gasquet, CA	Scott Bowman 707-457-3019	4 hrs. N. of Eugene, OR
March 4-5	Chilliwack Novice Race Chilliwack, B.C. 604-858-9359	Halfwater	Chilliwack Slough, Vancouver, B.C.	Dan Norman	45 min. E. of
March 11-12	Cedar River Race	Class II Slalom	Landsburg, WA	Jennie Goldberg WA Kayak Club 206-933-1178	Good race for novice
March 18-19	"Kits" Pool Slalom	Novice Interm., Expert	Vancouver, B.C.	Matt Kelly 604-688-1928	Outdoor Swimming Race
March 25-26	Chilliwack Race	Class III-IV	Chilliwack River, Chilliwack, B.C.	Patrice Gagnon 604-794-3637	B.C. Team Selection Race
April 1	Mamquam Novice Race	Novice	Mamquam River, Squamish, B.C.	Don Jamison 604-898-5498	1.5 hrs. N. of Vancouver
April 2	Mamquam Novice Race	Class II	Mamquam River, Squamish, B.C.	Don Jamison 604-898-5498	BC Team Selection Race
April 1-2	Smith River Races	Class III-IV	S.F. Smith River, Gasquet, CA	Scott Bowman 707-457-3019	NW Cup Series Race #1
April 15-16	US Olympic Festival West Regional Trials & Citizen Race	Class III-IV	MF Snoqualmie River, North Bend, WA	Jennie Goldberg League of NW WW Racers 206-933-1178	also, BC Team Selection Race
April 22-23	Capilano River Race	Class II-IV	Capilano River, N. Vancouver, B.C.	David Kerr 604-731-9894	B.C. Team Selection Race
April 29-30	N. Idaho Whitewater Festival	Class III Slalom Downriver and Wildwater	Little Salmon River, Riggins, ID	Willie Accola 208-882-2383	NOWR
May 5-7	Bobs Hole Rodeo	Class II + half course slalom, downriver and rodeo	Clackamas River, Estacada, OR	Dave Slover 503-285-0464	NOWR; slalom on Sat., downriver on Fri.
May 13-14	Lochsa Rodeo	Class III-IV	Lochsa River, Lowell, ID 1hr. from Missoula	Amy Smith 406-728-7609	S1, DR & freestyle; about 9 hrs. from Seattle
May 21	Mamquam Citizen Race	Class II	Mamquam River, Squamish, B.C.	Don Jamison 604-898-5498	4.5 hrs. N. of Seattle
June 3-4	Salmon la Sac	Class III	Cle Elum River, Roslyn, WA	Werner Furrer WA Kayak Club 206-348-5935	Good novice race; kids race; downriver Sat.
June 17-18	Training Camp	Novice, Interm. & Expert	To be announced	Joey Yeaple 206-528-1557	a river in Washington
July 8-9	Fayette Whitewater Roundup	Class III-IV	South Fork Fayette River, Banks, ID	Bruce Bistline 208-345-3654	S1, DR, freestyle; NOWR; NW Cup Series #3
July 15-16	Nugget Rodeo	Class III	Roque River, Galice, OR	Scott Larson 503-772-9743	Slalom half-course, DR, freestyle
July 22-23	White Salmon Races	Class II+ Slalom; Class I Downriver, Class III Wildwater	White Salmon River, Husum, WA	Bill Bowie OK Kayak and Canoe Club 503-281-7765	Downriver & wildwater on Sat., Slalom Sun.
Aug. 19-20	Jackson Hole Showdown	Class III	Grays River, Jackson Hole, Wyoming	Aurele LaMontagne 307-733-2471	Slalom and Freestyle
Sept. 16-17	Ble Eddy River Festival	Class III	Deschutes River, Bend, OR	Rich McBride 503-383-3911	Full course slalom, DR, & freestyle; NW Cup Series #4
Sept. 30-Oct. 1	Clackamas Fall Classic	Class III	Clackamas River, Estacada, OR	Jim Daly OR Kayak & Canoe Club 503-281-5042	Second Annual
Oct. 7-8	Nooksack Races	Beg/Int.	North Fork Nooksack River, Glacier, WA	Peter Koci 604-324-1401	Chili bake-off and costume party Sat. night

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For official rules and entry forms, contact:

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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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FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ED

THE HAIRBOATER

by Joe Greiner

"Hey!! Ed!! We sure have paddled a long way. Are you sure that the bridge back there wasn't the takeout?"

"Nah!! Let's keep going, Bruce. It's got to be down here somewhere."

Ed and Bruce were charging downstream on the Rio Cahabon into the falling Guatemalan night. They didn't know it yet, but they had missed the takeout.

You remember Ed. Ed Lucero, hairboater, made his first appearance on these pages in the **July/August 1994** issue. Ed's Central American adventures started when Ed heard about an exploratory trip to Guatemala. The trip south was in a school bus that broke down five times on the way and required an engine transplant in Tierra Blanca, Mexico.

Finally, the expedition limped into **Antigua**, Guatemala, about two weeks behind schedule. After a month of arid travel across some very desolate landscape, Ed had been high and dry and frustrated for a long time. He was ready to boat!

After spending one day on the Upper Lanquin, Ed met Bruce and Jeff, who hailed from Capetown, South Africa. They had their own **4WD** pickup truck with boat racks. Bruce and Jeff were only going to be in Guatemala a few more days. Then they were going on to El Salvador for some surfing. Then they planned on heading to Nicaragua and Costa Rica for more boating.

Ed soon decided to go to Costa Rica with the guys from Capetown.

But first, Ed and Bruce decided to run a section of the Cahabon. Jeff would pick them up at their takeout, then they would be off to El Salvador.

Play on the Cahabon was fine. But somehow they missed the takeout. They saw a bridge but they thought it came "too soon". Bruce and Ed started to paddle even harder downstream, hoping to make "the takeout" before nightfall. Finally, eight miles downstream, in total darkness and fearful of blundering into the unrunnable Chuloc Falls, they stopped.

They had no food or camping gear; this was supposed to be a day trip. The night was dark and they had no flashlight. With visions of scorpions and fer-de-lances in their heads, they decided to spend the night on a very small island, where these evil creatures would not bother them.

To past the time they told stories. Around **3:00 a.m.** the clouds parted and a full moon came out. By this time they had

concluded that they had missed their takeout by a long shot. Knowing they had to go back upstream to find it, they started to paddle the pools and portage the rapids. Even with the moon it was dark, and the vines looked like snakes. They were nervous. They talked a lot.

Around **5:00 a.m.**, after a particularly loud portage, they heard a commotion to river right. The jungle was alive with fireflies. No, wait! Those weren't fireflies. Those were **FIREBRANDS**... being held aloft by a large mob of farmers, coming fast! In a scene reminiscent of Frankenstein, the shouting farmers swarmed down to the river bank, brandishing their firebrands and machetes.

Neither Ed nor Bruce knew much Spanish, but the farmers were Indian and probably weren't speaking Spanish anyway. Ed did his best, shouting "Tranquilo!! Tranquilo!!" over and over again.

Ed and Bruce were terrified as things started to whiz past them in the night. Fearful that they were under a poison blow gun attack, our heroes jumped out on the opposite shore and hid in the trees until the farmers dispersed and morning came. They decided to abandon the trip upstream along the river. They stashed

their boats and walked overland on the side of the river away from the irate natives.

They hiked out wearing their helmets and carrying their paddles. Ed had stashed a machete in his boat and he carried that also. They were two bearded, scruffy gringos, wearing shorts, booties, spray jackets, and a helmet, both carrying strange, long weapon-sticks with flat ends. And one was carrying a machete!


One can only imagine the terror of the people that they met. Ed said later that everybody that saw them took one look and ran away. No doubt the legend is growing as stories of "the aliens" are told and retold. After two days the hungry duo made it to a road and some Spanish speakers. It took one more day to hitch a ride to Lanquin and tell their worried and incredulous friend, Jeff, about their adventures. This was followed by two more days to drive back, hike in, and retrieve the boats and gear. Their day on the Cahabon had turned into a week-long epic!

Ed will be back in the states shortly. I can't wait to find out if his travels in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica went as well as Texas, Mexico, and Guatemala.

Maybe, Ed can come East this spring and do some creeks. He's a good boater and I'd follow him on the river. But I will be damn sure that I know where the takeout is.

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The Amu Darya Incident

PART III of III

SOVIET PORN TODAY



by Jonathan Katz

[Author's note:

In the summer of 1994 Dr. Theodore "Bam Bam" McBride shut down the McBride-Omaha chemical factory on the banks of the Deerfield and took a group of his closest associates on a RaftFriends paddling vacation to Russia, to run Asian whitewater with the legendary Soviet boater Dimitri Vasilevitch Ubenko. What follows is the story of that trip, pieced together from the shattered memories of the survivors.]

Ken Omaha's mission was to provide cover fire while his friends frantically paddled away from the ambush and into the hell of Stalingrad Gorge. While McBride's vacationers cowered in the rocks under unknown gunfire, Omaha sprinted up the beach to Dimitri Ubenko's position. There he wasted no time convincing the Russian he was the better shot.

"You bet me a grand against a night with my woman that you could outshoot me, remember?"

"Yes," Ubenko replied.

"Did you get laid?"

"No."

"Give me your guns."

Omaha shot the automatics hot, pumping pistol bullets into the rim of the canyon far overhead, firing just enough to keep the enemy pinned down. He didn't know who he was shooting at—Russian troops? Afghan guerrillas? Wide World of Sports camera crew?—and he didn't think he hit anyone. But he kept firing, and McBride's party broke cover and made their getaway into the Stalingrad maelstrom. The Russian

boys also managed to launch two of the rafts. The third had been riddled with machine gun fire and would never float again. They abandoned its cargo of hashish and paddled over the Anvil, the triple drop that opens Stalingrad rapid. Alone on the beach Omaha shot up all the ammo, tossed the useless Makarovs into the river and sprinted for his open canoe. Just as he slid over the first ledge he took a round through the outside of his thigh.

He ran the triple drop upright, finding a one-in-a-million soft spot in the boulder pile at the base of Anvil, and caromed down the middle of Dancing Bear on instinct and blind luck. Swamped full and bleeding, he passed the second Russian raft, pinned in the middle of the rapid. Its cargo of hash was awash in river water, but its crew was gone. He caught an eddy, bailed, and headed downriver searching for Russians, Americans, anybody. Then he saw the body on the rock.

It was Vasily Alexeev Ubenko, Dimitri's giant father, alive and conscious and grimacing from the pain of broken ribs. "Leave me!" he gasped. "I'll live. Save them! And watch for Avalanche."

"Avalanche?" Omaha shouted.

"Waterfall!" the big man screamed over the roar in the canyon. "Now go!"

Omaha boofed and surfed his canoe down the long, blind rapid. Then he turned the corner around a huge monolith and the view opened. At the base of the rapid far below he could see the American raft pinned in the river, Chopper and the others on shore. Just ahead of the raft was the horizon line that had to be Avalanche. And in the foreground, thirty yards ahead of him, the last Russian raft spun out of control. There were a dozen people jammed into it, and nobody was steering. They were headed for the horizon, river right, over the lip and into the maw of Avalanche.



Omaha's pickled, **dope-soaked** brain sent his body a message. Go for it! He pulled hard and fast on his paddle, gaining speed, ignoring the pain in his leg, the bloody water sloshing in his boat, closing the gap between his canoe and the raft. Twenty yards, ten yards, none! His Impulse slammed into the side of the packed Soviet rig. Like a giant frog Omaha leaped out of his boat and into the air. He landed on the edge of the raft, teetered for a moment, then sat down hard on the tube. He dug his paddle into the rushing water behind the raft, wrestling for control, screaming at the terrified occupants to Paddle! Paddle!

Using all of his strength Omaha fought the raft into line with the current just as it floated to the lip of the falls. It hung for a moment as if fighting for life, and slid over the edge, into the abyss. Omaha's empty canoe followed.

McBride, Chopper, Gunsmith, the women and the three Russians Rachel had rescued watched in horror as Omaha overtook the raft and jumped in. They rushed down the trailless riverbank to the base of Avalanche. They moved in shock, stunned by the sight of Omaha leaping from his boat to certain death in the makeshift Russian raft. They searched the riverbanks and the heavy **runout** from the falls, but found no sign of Omaha, the Russians or their **equipment**. Their bodies were gone, trapped in the huge hydraulic at the base of the falls, or washed down the river.

McBride and his people searched for an hour. Then, as the shadows lengthened, they climbed back up to the top of the falls. It took two brutal hours of hard labor to unpin Gunsmith's raft and carry their equipment along the nonexistent portage trail to the put-in at the base of the falls. The sky was darkening and they needed to make camp on the Russian side, out of reach of the ambushers on river right. Somberly they pressed downriver, studying the shore for signs of their lost comrade and the other victims of Stalingrad. But they paddled an easier river. The Amu Darya flattened to class **two-three**. The river had spent itself at Stalingrad.

They paddled a cheerless mile through easy water as the sun sank and gloom descended in the awesome canyon. Just as the light failed, from the deep shadows on the shore, came the familiar, derisive voice of Kenny Omaha.

"Yo **Bam Bam**! You didn't **walle** that rapid, did you?"

The maniac had survived again.

The **RaftFriends** expedition made camp on a rocky beach a couple of miles below Avalanche. They set up the small shambles of shredded equipment that had survived the gun battle on the beach, and the ghastly run through Stalingrad. The two lost Russian rafts had held the

tents and most of their food and water. The remaining raft was overloaded with baseball sized chunks of Afghan opiated hashish and a case of vodka. McBride's party could party till the yaks came home; they just couldn't get the munchies.

Omaha was drunk, stoned, relentlessly cheerful and typically **blas_** about taking the raft and eleven Russians over Avalanche falls, an act of whitewater lunacy that rivalled his legendary Niagara run.

"Your basic waterfall. Once I got the raft straightened out we just went over the edge. Didn't have any trouble till we got to the bottom."

Once there, the grossly overloaded makeshift raft came uncorked in the hole at the base of the falls, dumping a dozen swimmers into a cosmic washing machine. Omaha stayed with the raft and managed to rescue everyone, **marshall** them into some sort of cohesion and paddle them to camp. He had wounded: two with broken ribs, one dislocated shoulder and **half** a dozen more with various bruises, contusions and lacerations.

P.T., the expedition doctor, triaged everyone and started treating the wounded in order of priority. She reduced the Russian's shoulder dislocation (an act for which he was almost disgustingly grateful) and was taping a lacerated forehead with butterfly bandages when Omaha limped up and revealed for the first time that he'd taken a round through and through the left thigh. Till then the grim battle for survival in Stalingrad had put the **firefight** out of their minds.

P.T. finished taping the dressing on Omaha's wounds. She gave him his orders. "You lost some blood. Drink plenty of fluids."

"Oh good." Omaha replied, taking a long swig from a bottle of vodka. With his river knife he pared a long, thin slice of hash from one of the balls, broke off a piece, put it in his mouth. "**O.K.** if I eat solid foods?" he asked.

Between them the Americans managed to put together enough dried rations and river water to make a thin, hot soup for everyone. But Dimitri Ubenko was weeping bitterly and could not eat.

"Two," he cried. "I lost two."

McBride knew **Ubenko's** father was alive upstream, and he believed all the Russian boys were accounted for, but he suggested a search party to work back up the shore.

"You don't understand," Ubenko told him through his tears. "Not boys. Dead boys are replaceable. I can get all boys I want. I lost two **rafts**. Two rafts **full** of hashish! Two thirds of profit for trip!"

McBride's temper blew, volcanically. "You! You anus! Hijack our **equipment**, drag us down this **godawful** blind

canyon smuggling **filth** and **drugs**, damn near get us shot dead on the beach, force us to run the worst rapid I've ever heard of under machinegun fire, nearly kill six or seven of these nice **kids** and you have the gall to bitch about losing a couple boatloads of hash! I ought to kill you!"

"You still don't understand. Its not hash. You see, I make porn books for living. Print cheap in Moscow. Bring down here, trade to Afghan natives who have no skin mags. They give me hash, worthless to them. Then I take back across border, trade hash to Russian troops for guns, rockets, mortars, heavy weapons they don't want. Take guns. Load on **rafts**. Paddle downriver to Pakistan, trade guns for gold! They give quarter pound of gold for **AK-47**, whole pound for rocket! I don't cry for hash. I cry for gold!"

McBride looked disgusted and turned away, staring into the **fire**, wishing Ubenko had drowned in Stalingrad the first time he ran it. When he looked back, Ubenko was lining up all the Russian boys who could walk.

"We get rid of hash," Ubenko said. "Carry up trail to Russian fort. Trade there. Come back with guns later. Maybe I break even."

"Just let the creep **go**," Rachel said to McBride. "Maybe he won't come back."

Bewildered, McBride stepped away **from** the campfire and urinated into the burbling waters of the Amu Darya. Then he crawled into the small tent he carried in the stern of his kayak and passed out from nerves and exhaustion.

Hours later Chopper and Omaha zipped open McBride's tent and bulled inside, filling it. It was four a.m. McBride was snoring in short, loud bursts like an Uzi. He-woke disoriented and in a fog. Omaha was blind drunk, reeking of vodka and hash. Chopper just smelled unwashed. He spoke:

"Wake up, **Bam Bam**. We have to talk. We have to trade with these people."

McBride's voice was thick with sleep. "No talk. Go trade. Swap T-shirts and let me sleep."

"Wake up dammit. These people have something wonderful."

"What do they have? Hash? Porn? **AK-47's**? You can get all that **crap** for free at the Gauley Festival."

"No. They brought back ordinance. Wonderful, wonderful munitions."

Omaha spoke for the first time. "Don't tell him, Chopper. He doesn't need to know."

Now McBride was awake, "What don't I need to know?"

"Just tell me what you have to trade."

McBride bristled. "Don't play games with me Chopper. What the hell **kind** of weapons can these kids have that you can't get back in the good old U. S. A.?"

"They've got the big one."



"Your mother got the big one."
Chopper whispered intensely, "McBride, you may have a Nobel Prize but sometimes you're so dense you wouldn't get it if I drove it down your throat with a sledgehammer. These people want to trade me a weaselpopper."

"What the hell is that?"
Omaha leaned in, "Chopper you're a dope telling him."

Now Chopper was humming Pop Goes the Weasel, and he smiled. "Satchel charge," he said, "Five kilotons."

"Kilotons? You're trying to tell me Dimitri has the Bomb?"

"Yeah. Nice bomb. Real clean, all blast, no fallout. Nice package, fits in an open boat. For infantry use on obstacles, bridges, exit ramp stacks, highway junctions, big structures you want to destroy."

"What the hell you want that for? No big structure's bothering you."

"Wrong."

"Like what?"

"What bothers a river runner? What blocks the flow of the wild and the free?"

Light dawned in McBride, like noon-day sun in the eyes of an infant, "You can't be serious. That's insane."

Chopper grinned a grin like the Cheshire cat and spoke five words, "Rio Bio-Bio. Pangué Dam."

Twenty minutes later the three of them surveyed the pile of trade goods they'd collected on the tent floor. A New York Giants fingernail clipper, a **Mag-Lite**, a Timex **Ironman** wristwatch, a Saint Christopher medal Omaha's mother had given him, **McBride's** prized American Express Platinum Card, Omaha's even more valuable **Keystone KeyCard** and the free beer it represented.

Omaha was scornful. "Junk, all junk. I wouldn't trade you a **Carlisle** raft paddle for this **crap**. No way they gonna give up any A-Bomb for this junk."

"Maybe I can convince them," said Chopper, and he slipped out of the tent.

Half an hour later he was back. "We can do it," he said, "But they want Arden."

"To keep?" McBride asked.

"No. To photograph. Dimitri wants to shoot her for 'Soviet Porn Today'. Naked. With Yvonne and Omaha."

"That pervert!" swore Omaha.

But Chopper continued undeterred.

"For this they give us the Bomb, Kenny. Three of them, with instructions and extended warranty. You got to do it!!"

"Flashing my trash don't bother me. Its Arden and Yvonne you have to convince."

Chopper waited till breakfast to broach the subject with the women. It was not well received. "You keep your hands off Omaha," Yvonne said to Arden. "I wouldn't touch him with a raft oar," Arden said to Yvonne, "And I don't want my booty being shaken by yak herders in every yurt from here to Siberia. Disgusting."

But Chopper begged relentlessly. "Do it for me, Arden," he pleaded, "You know how I love explosives."

"No."

"**Then** do it for the corporation. Just think. **McBride-Omaha** Chemical Company will be the only private industrial nuclear superpower in the world."

"No."

"Do it cause if you don't do it Dimitri will have the Bomb."

Not even this brilliant reasoning moved her.



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"Then do it for the Colorado, the Bio-Bio, the Yangtze, the dammed rivers, and the rivers to be dammed." Chopper was on his knees now, weeping. "Do it for the wild and the free."

Arden softened. "OK. If Yvonne is in, I'm in. But you can't watch."

Chopper and McBride took a walk. Dimitri fed his models vodka and hash to loosen them up, then astonished them with the variety of pornographic images he created with three good, willing bodies and a pile of whitewater gear. Arden, Yvonne and Ken draped themselves naked over the raft, festooned with throw ropes, Arden nibbling seductively on a gleaming black drysuit gasket, Yvonne spreadeagled in an outrageous hot pink sprayskirt while Omaha stood hard and poised with his paddle cocked. Dimitri shouted encouragement in English and Russian, slicked them with suntan oil, blasted away with his camera, shot ten rolls of film, told them they were beautiful and pronounced himself satisfied. He promised them copies of the next issue and went to meet Chopper.

The weaselpoppers gleamed in their aluminum cases. Each one weighed about seventy-five pounds. They had

padded straps and waistbands and were designed to be backpacked. Chopper hefted one, let out the straps, slipped it onto his massive shoulders and smiled. "Hotter than a Coleman stove," he said.

Dimitri reverently handed McBride a felt case. "These are detonators," he said. "Insert detonator into receiver, twist to lock, set timer, push start button and leave. To disarm, enter ten digit sequence. Try area code and phone number. Your choice. Use wisely. Or sell. They are worth fortune, but I cannot sell to Pakistanis. Only paddlers. It is moral issue."

The small group of men shook hands. Ubenko embraced Omaha, kissed his cheeks. "Thank you," Dimitri said. "Thank you for saving our lives. I will watch papers for news of explosions."

Amid the ageless boulders of Asia, beside the swift and terrible Amu Darya and under a clear blue sky, weapons of unimaginable, inhuman power passed from the hands of a crafty and amoral Cossack into the private arsenal of a group of elite paddlers. Are they safer there?

Dimitri Ubenko's student lackeys were lashing bundles of assault rifles and

cases of ammunition into their remaining raft when the mujaheddin cavalry invaded the camp. Nobody heard the hoofbeats over the sound of the river and suddenly the stony beach was overrun with heavily armed men on horseback. There was no question of resistance: not even Omaha reached for a piece. The river runners stopped what they were doing, and stared and waited. McBride was scared, and when he saw how frightened Dimitri looked, he grew terrified. If the little creep was that shook, they were really in trouble.

The guerrilla leader wore a black turban and a red sash, and carried an AK-47. He spoke from his horse in a loud voice, in a language that McBride barely recognized as speech. He got no answer. Then, in heavily accented English, he repeated himself.

"Ubenko. Give Ubenko, we no kill."

McBride was pouring sweat. Should they bargain with the mujaheddin? Try to save the Russian? McBride thought about the theft of their equipment, the bad food, the porn and drugs he'd been forced to smuggle, Ubenko's gun pointed at that poor scared Russian boy, McBride's terrifying, near-death run through Stalingrad, the stinging hole in Omaha's left thigh. The he smiled. At last. Payback. "That's him over there."

Dimitri bolted, sprinting up the loose, rocky trail as fast as he could run. Amazingly, none of the horsemen fired. One made to give chase, but the leader held up his hand. "He'll be back," he said.

"What do you want him for?" asked Omaha.

The horseman met McBride's eyes for a long moment, then looked down at his crotch and made a chopping motion with his hand.

"Koranic law," said McBride. "No bones about it."

"They're going to shorten his paddle!" Omaha exclaimed.

"He'll never surf the hole again," observed Chopper.

"Serves him right, the little creep," said Arden.

"Yeah. Bobbitt," Yvonne grinned.

Suddenly another horseman rode up. A man, gagged and bleeding, was tied across the back of his horse. It was Dimitri. His eyes were huge with fear.

"Rearguard," said the lead horseman. "Guns stay. You go. Take raft. Ten miles down river is road. Wait there. Tomorrow truck come. Take you Kabul. Get plane, go home. No come back. Ever."

Dimitri's eyes rolled, fear-crazed. He stared at McBride, making unintelligible noises, begging. McBride was moved. Should he reach out to the Russian? Put his life, his friends lives on the line? Hell no. Get while the getting was good. Make hay while the sun shines. 23

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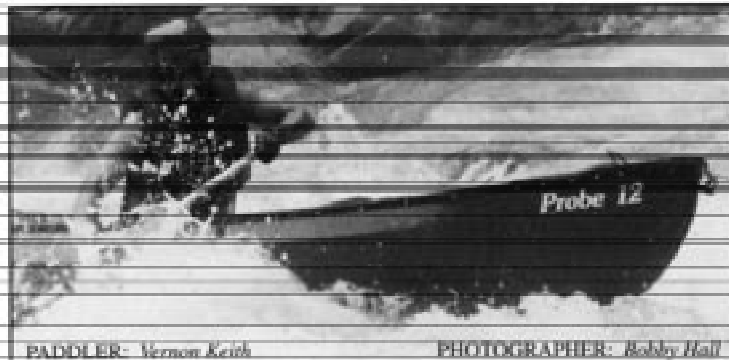
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(See chart at right for prices & specs)

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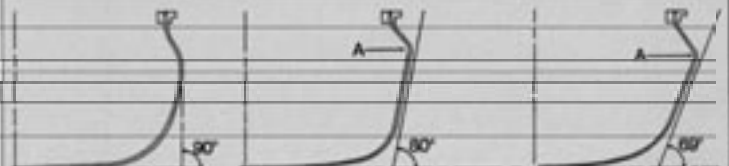
XL14... For large paddlers or tandem paddling. It can be outfitted with two position outfitting for tandem paddling or three position for both tandem and solo paddling. rocker 3"

XL15... A tandem whitewater boat and favorite of outfitters, schools or anyone doing tripping or playing on whitewater rivers. Available bare, with web seats, with kneeling thwarts or foam saddle (2 or 3 position). rocker 3"

WHITewater PLAYBOAT DESIGNS... Below are drawings of cross sections through the center of a Mohawk Viper, Probe and our XL series. Note the difference in flared angles. Where the bottom and side of the canoe meet, the Viper has a sharp chine or edge. This edge enables the paddler to carve turns and to judge the angle of their lean. However, it can catch cross currents and flip a boater who is not used to the edge. Also, when side surfing, the Viper is "grabbier" than the Probe. Advanced paddlers who master this edge love the control it gives them. But for many paddlers we believe the Probe is a more forgiving boat that will suit their paddling needs better, without giving up the quick acceleration and turning of the Viper.

As you can see from the center cross section, the Probe has more flare than the Viper. This is accomplished by lowering point A one inch and making the boat one inch wider at this point. The tuck-in above point A allows for a narrow gunwale width and a pocket for your hand. The extreme flare. (more than any other whitewater playboat) results in fantastic final or secondary stability, yet still maintains a sleek bottom that makes upstream moves, ferries and getting on surfing waves surprisingly easy. In summary, the Probe is a performance boat that is user-friendly.

All Mohawk whitewater playboats have symmetrical hulls. Why? Because, if properly designed, they will hold a ferry angle and track as well or better than an asymmetrical boat. Back surfing, back ferries, side surfing and spins will all be easier and smoother in the symmetrical boat because both ends react in the same way.



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SPECS	LENGTH	BEAM	DEPTH	WEIGHT	MATERIAL	MSRP LIST*	FACTORY DIRECT
RODEO	10'6"	26.5"	16.5"	42 LBS	R-84	\$825	\$577.50
PROBE 11	11'8"	28"	15.5"	45 LBS	ROYALEX	\$825	\$577.50
PROBE 12	12'8"	28.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	ROYALEX	\$825	\$577.50
PROBE 12 II	12'2"	28.25"	15.5"	46 LBS	R-84	\$825	\$577.50
PROBE 14*	14'2"	30.5"	15.5"	59 LBS	ROYALEX	\$850	\$595.00
VIPER 11	11'6"	27"	15.5"	43 LBS	ROYALEX	\$825	\$577.50
VIPER 12	12'6"	27.5"	15.5"	49 LBS	ROYALEX	\$825	\$577.50
XL 13	13'8"	30"	18.5"	56 LBS	ROYALEX	\$850	\$595.00
XL 14*	14'3"	32"	15.5"	60 LBS	ROYALEX	\$850	\$595.00
XL 15*	15'4"	35"	15.5"	65 LBS	ROYALEX	\$875	\$609.00

*Tandem or Solo

+Prices do not include freight

WHITewater OUTFITTING... Whitewater playboats are available fully outfitted and ready to paddle. This outfitting includes: *Foam saddle or pedestal, knee pads, thigh straps or retainer(s), yakima footbraces, air bags & quick disconnect lacing kit.*

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