

american whitewater

May/June 1998

Borneo

Trans Borneo
Whitewater
Exploratory
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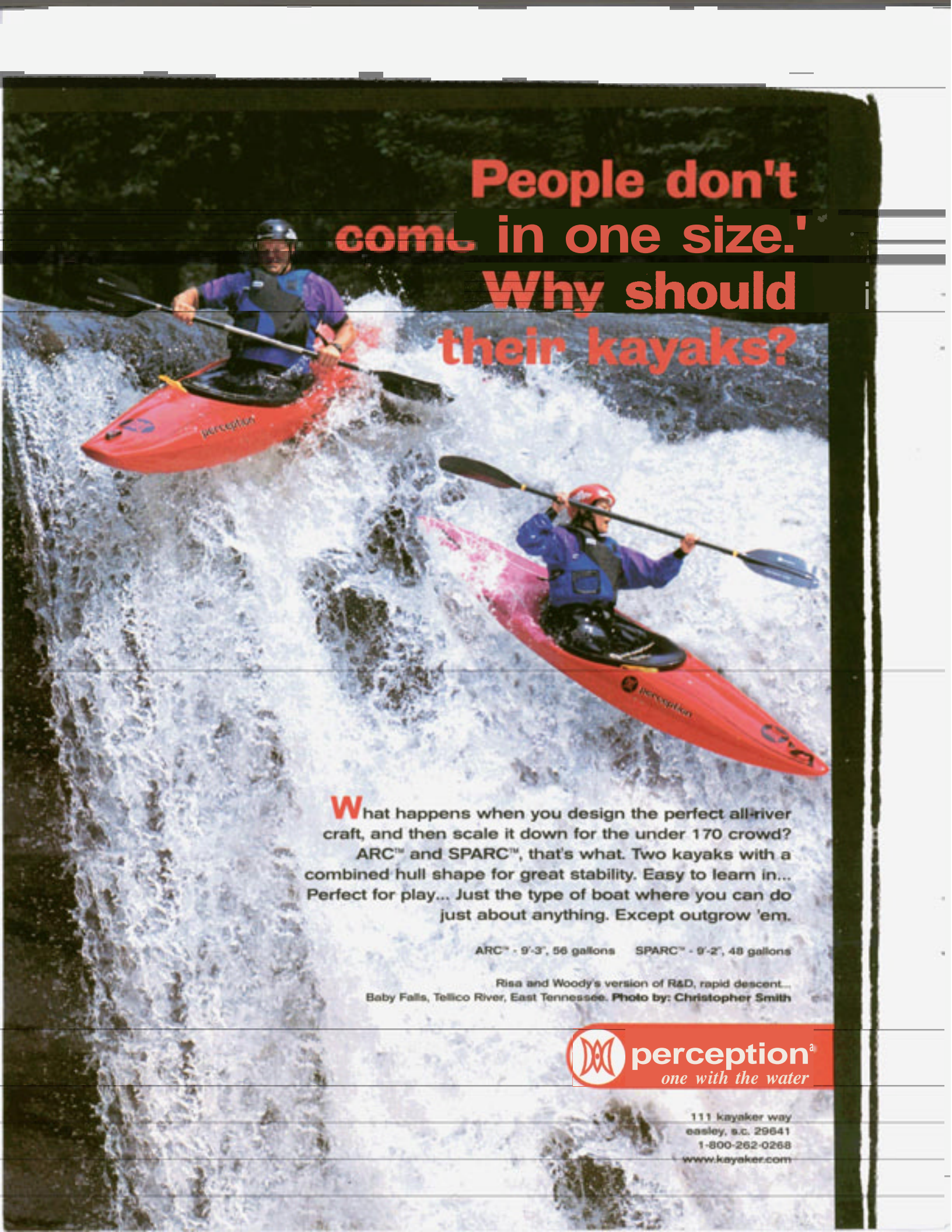


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A photograph of two kayakers in red Perception kayaks navigating a turbulent waterfall. The kayaker in the foreground is wearing a blue jacket and a red helmet, while the one in the background is wearing a purple jacket and a black helmet. Both kayakers are using black paddles. The kayakers' names, 'Risa' and 'Woody', are visible on the side of their respective kayaks. The water is white and foamy, creating a dramatic backdrop for the kayakers.

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Risa and Woody's version of R&D, rapid descent...
Baby Falls, Tellico River, East Tennessee. Photo by: Christopher Smith



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Director's Cut

By Rich Bowers, American Whitewater Executive Director

With a winter of El Nino storms, paddling has continued pretty much without letup throughout the past eight months. After watching homes sliding off their foundations and tornadoes ripping through the south, I think it's safe to say that only whitewater boaters and surfers have enjoyed this weather phenomenon.

But while El Nino has offered good (often outrageous) water levels, it has had its downside for whitewater also. It has exacerbated the river access problems related to high water closures — from southern to northern California, into North Carolina, and beyond. And far more importantly, the extended season has offered no breaks in on-river accidents.

With multiple fatalities on Alabama's Little River, on Oregon's Illinois, and a recent death on West Virginia's Upper Blackwater, this is quickly becoming a hard year for good boaters. For those who paddle difficult rivers, including many here at American Whitewater, it is easy to explain this away by reminding ourselves that boating is a risk sport. Often we rationalize that river accidents occur on a sliding scale, always coming in waves, and that the current trend will soon change or go away.

Unfortunately, following the numerous and high profile accidents in 1997 and this spring, this "explanation" can no longer be accepted. Even if true, it's time for boaters and everyone involved with whitewater sports to step up to the plate regarding river safety and safety education.

It's not easy to balance safety with personal responsibility — something that we very much believe in here at American Whitewater. We have no intention of telling boaters to stay off of rivers, or to stop testing their skills. These are the things that make this sport so important to us and to our friends. But we also don't want to lose our members and our friends.

To address this issue, American Whitewater will invest more resources into a push for river safety. What will we push? The basics: having good equipment, carrying a throw rope, training, knowing your skills and making good decisions. As an organization, we will get more safety information, including the newly revised ratings for rapids, out to those who boat. While this revision has been discussed pro and con for months, we now believe it is needed more than ever — and by every level of boater.

Will this reduce accidents? Absolutely! Being safe and being prepared will reduce many incidents. Education works, and American Whitewater intends to do all it can to emphasize safety and minimize the potential for accidents.

But it won't eliminate all accidents or remove the inherent risks found on rivers. Nor will it reduce that freak situation — that unseen tree — that one-in-a-hundred pinning rock. It won't take the risk out of this

sport. If you look at the past year, many of the deaths that occurred seem to have nothing to do with poor decisions, with bad judgement, or with inadequate skills — they just happened. The paddling community has learned that it can usually get away with hitting that rock or tree, or barely missing that undercut, or paddling just a little more out of control than we used to.

Reducing the accident rate is going to be up to each individual boater. Personal responsibility means more than our right to run a river, or a particular drop. It means setting an example for others, demonstrating skill but also sometimes restraint. For awhile, maybe it means backing off the "cutting edge" stuff and giving the sport a break? American Whitewater isn't here to tell paddler's what not to do. But some introspection and self-criticism is needed if we are going to pull away from the current accident rate.

I'd like each of you to think about this when you're out there — and before the paddling community is faced with another tragedy involving a friend and fellow boater.

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Perri Taken to Task

Dear AWA Journal:

Regarding Perri Rothemich's article on women and boating, [It All Comes Down to X's and Y's]. I couldn't decide which was more confusing: her feeble theories or the creative punctuation. Over the years I have noticed a dramatic increase in the number of female paddlers on the river and women have been holding their own on difficult rivers since little Perri was choosing sea green over sienna for her coloring book. Also, I haven't noticed the lack of femininity in female boaters. Last time I checked, most women were just being themselves, not "like one of the guys." We're still wearing lace underwear and plucking our eyebrows.

I was amused by the blanket statement, "Men do not take time to help women boaters because women do not listen." Huh? Is Perri speaking for all female boaters or just herself? I don't hesitate to ask male boaters for advice and I've never had one brush me off because I'm a woman. If anything, they seem glad to see a woman on the river and are eager to help.

The most wildly inaccurate statement in the article is that a woman must care for a child after procreation, while a man does not. Does this mean that if something happens to me on the river my husband is absolved of raising our children because he is a man? I hope not.

Perri should limit her statements to specific events and people, instead of painting the entire paddling community with such broad strokes. As an expectant mother who wears earrings on the river, listens to instructions well, and recently paddled the New River at 30,000 cfs while three months pregnant (the fetus likes big water), I can emphatically state that she does not speak for me, much less all female boaters.

One more piece of unsolicited advice: someone who describes her skills and techniques as "still that of a beginner" probably does not need to be running the Narrows of the Green quite yet.

Sincerely,
Anne Daniel Vereen
Huntington, WV

Deep...Deeper...Deepest?

Dear Editor,

I was enjoying the latest issue of American Whitewater (as I always do) when I read an interesting piece of information in Rich Bower's article on the Tallulah Gorge. It states that at 1,000 feet in depth, the Tallulah is the deepest gorge east of the Mississippi. I don't usually nitpick about small stuff but this seemed like a rather egregious blunder.

I have also heard and read that Little River Canyon (AL) is the deepest east of the Mississippi, as is the New River Gorge, the Russell Fork, Linville, and so on. What's the deal here; which one is the deepest? Do you know? Honestly, I don't really care either way.

Perhaps it's time to come up with new, more creative, descriptive phrases to express the impressive nature of the gorges in which we paddle, i.e. ...the deepest gorge in Georgia, ...the deepest gorge on U.S.G.S. quadrant map# (insert number), ...the deepest gorge north of Atlanta, south of Asheville, west of Greenville and east of Birmingham. You get the picture. Suffice it to say that the Tallulah gorge is pretty deep.

Sincerely,
Rob Howell
Greenville SC

Editor's note: This subject is too deep for me! Can anyone out there resolve this issue?

Pablo Perez Remembered Farewell Good Friend

Dear Pablo,

Not a day will go by that you won't be missed by friends and family. I still can't believe you're gone. Life is so crazy. I would do anything to open the pearly gates of heaven and bring you back. You were more than just an excellent paddler, but a good friend as well. I know you're at peace now and definitely in a better place, but we still miss you terribly. Thank you for all the great times and laughs we had together.

Rest in Peace

Love,

Brad and friends.

P.S. See you when I get there.

Brad Sutton

Ontario, Canada

Editor's note: Pablo Perez, a member of the US Whitewater rodeo team, died paddling the Upper Rocky Broad River in North Carolina on February 18th. See this issue for a more detailed account.

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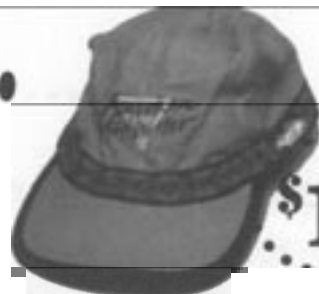
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Decimal Point Dilemma

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to Andy Bridge's concerns regarding my article, "Chose Your Weapon."

somewhere between my writing the article and your printing it, some 0's seem to have been added into my numbers. I would like to clear these up.

The figures I have state kevlar's elongation is 3% (three), and not thirty percent as the article read. This seems to concur with Andy's 2.4% to 3.6%. Secondly, the elongation of the polyester resins that I have charts for are 1.2%, and not 12%. This also concurs with Andy's 1%-5%.

As Andy also points out, rubber has an elongation of 400%. Try breaking a piece of rubber with a hammer, or compare a blade of grass to a stiff twig by bending them. While elongation is not the only factor, it is a very important one.

But we do seem to agree on the basic premise of the article, in that the resins and the fibers need to match. Given that I have straightened the errors, I think we now agree on much more...

Sincerely,

Corran Addison

RIOT Kayaks

St. Augustin

Quebec

Editor's note: I don't know who moved those decimal points, but if it was us, we're sorry.

Attention Upper Yough Boaters

Help American Whitewater avoid access problems on the Upper Yough.

The Garrett County Humane Society has expressed concern about dogs left at the Sang Run put in (running loose, tied to bumpers, locked in closed vehicles.) As a consequence, DNR has announced that unattended dogs will be taken to the pound and their owners will be fined.

Also, locals living along the road through Sang Run have expressed concern about boaters speeding through their residential community. The speed limit is 25. There are many small children living in houses close to the road. Please drive through Sang Run slowly and do not use private drives as turnarounds. Thank you.

So, You Want to be a Whitewater Writer!

By Ambrose Tuscano
Assistant Editor

So, you've learned to back-surf, mastered the duffek, can boof like nobody's business and run every steep creek on the East Coast (most at flood stage). You've paddled everything in the Rockies; you haven't run all of the rivers in China (just the class V's); you have toured extensively in Europe and you've exhausted all of the small, tropical third world countries. What's standing in the way of your brilliant stardom? Could it be that you just have trouble putting your exploits into words?

Do you remember the time you sent a story about running some class VI river in Uganda to that outdoor magazine? The one that was going to put your name on the map of extreme sports. Well, what happened? Oh, that's right. The editor sent it back to you with a letter attached. Remember what it said? "If you're a 25 year old hair boater, then my name is Elvis Presley. Why don't you send your article to *Sports Illustrated for Kids!*"

So that's the problem: how to improve your whitewater writing skills. Let's look at some of the most common mistakes novice writers make while trying to tell a story. The biggie is tense. Most articles submitted to this magazine take the form of a story (a story that, one might assume, took place in the past). So, in keeping with solid logic, write your story in the past tense — all of it. Writing a story in the present tense, as if the story were unfolding as it is being told, is difficult even for experts. When amateurs try to write in the present tense they inevitably drift back into the past tense about every third sentence. This is a glaring mistake, which will be very obvious to most readers.

Even when a story is correctly written in the present tense, it often comes off sounding like a segment from the movie *Clueless*. "So, like I'm sitting in this eddy and some loser in a squirt boat comes pulling in with his bow all bobbing around and the next thing I know, it comes down right on top of me and flips me over. So I set up to roll and I tear a nail and then when I come up my mascara is running all over..."

The best way to avoid using the present tense unintentionally is to read over your article between the time you type the last letter and the time you seal it in an envelope addressed to an editor. Believe it or not, it is fairly easy to detect, especially if you read the

article out loud to yourself. If you think you're starting to sound a little like Alicia Silverstone, take a big red pen to the paper and do something about it.

Another common problem is agreement. The problem here is that when there isn't agreement between a noun and its modifier, things can get pretty confusing. Suppose you write the following sentence: "Boofing the falls, the frothing hydraulic seemed to beckon to me from below." Someone reading it for the first time will, if you're lucky, (1) assume that it has some deep metaphorical meaning that they don't understand or, (2) wonder how a hydraulic could run a waterfall. This problem is exceedingly common and yet so easy to correct if detected. With minimal editing the illogical sentence above can become: "Boofing the falls, I suddenly became aware of the hungry hydraulic that lay below." By placing the "I" in the sentence, you are letting the reader know that it is indeed you who are conquering the stupendous waterfall. This can only serve to heighten your glorious fame.

One final error that we often see is the improper use of punctuation at the end of a quotation. The rule for this: punctuation goes inside the quotations. Always. . . . Except for the times it doesn't. Like when you punctuation is a colon or a dash. This shouldn't be a problem, however, because if you don't know that rule, chances are pretty good that you shouldn't be using a colon or a dash. "Period."

Actually, punctuation errors aren't that big of deal for us. We correct those we see and ignore the rest! But tense errors made throughout an article are miserable to fix.

I hope that this has been helpful. Of course, no one can tell you everything you need to know about writing in a few hundred words. Luckily, writing is not like hair boating. There are more than five people in the world qualified to teach you. In fact, there are probably more than you realize. So the next time you write something that you want to publish, try reading your submission to other people first. If no one wants to hear it, read it out loud to yourself. Most bad writing sounds bad. If it sounds bad, fix it!

If you keep at it, you may soon discover that you've become a competent writer. And the world of whitewater fame and glory will be yours.

Guidelines for Contributors

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

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, AWBriefs, River Voices, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines, Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater cartoons are also welcome.

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

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

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints or color prints. Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we 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. If you don't want us to edit your article, don't send it to us! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes we make prior to publication.

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

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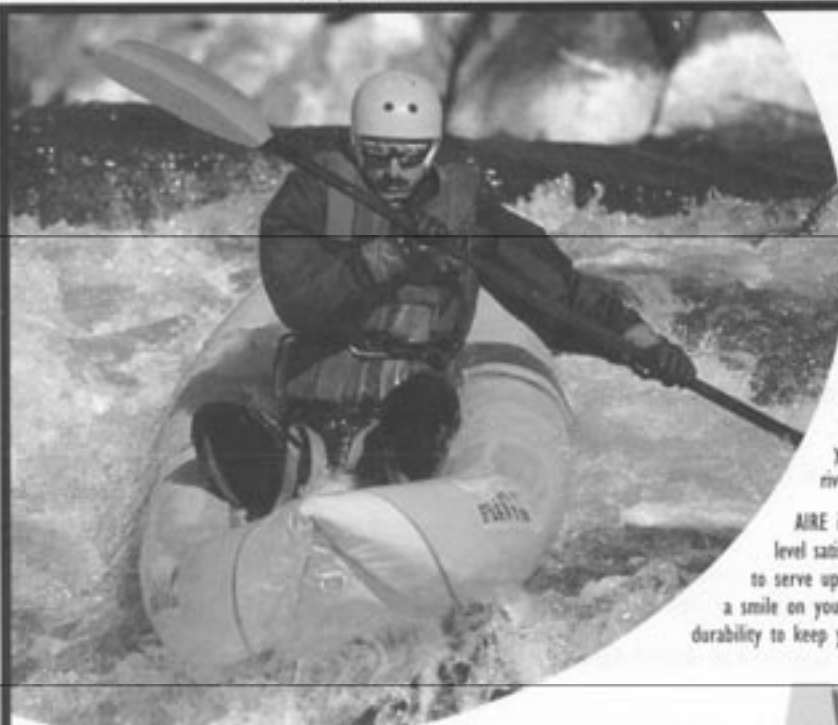
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Purpose

American Whitewater

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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



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Conserve

Ideas in River Education: The Headwaters Institute

By Tom Hicks, Director, Headwaters Institute

Two days ago I was paddling down a river in Costa Rica renowned for its dense jungles, emerald pools of water, and dazzling birds that flaunt their colors with casual glides from tree to tree. The sounds of rapids condense rainfall into narrow chutes and slots, while easy meanders wind and twist through tight, steep gorges that quietly scream with the intensity of the rainforest. The raw edges of "el bosque" were as distinct and defined as the bridge that separated the jungle from a highway back to San Jose.

Six years ago a similar trip on the Pacuare provided a disturbing awareness that many of the world's best whitewater runs are also coveted for their excellent hydropower potential. As a river guide I asked myself, "Can river conservation be connected with the rafting public in a way that fits into the flow of each day's trip down the Rio Grande's Taos Box?" Was there a valuable message that was being left out of my daily interpretation of the river?

The Headwaters Institute was created two years ago to bridge

the gulf between the reality and potential of river guide outreach. The solution to the complex labyrinth of river education became a personal search for educational objectivity and a tough realization that there are few clean answers when balancing the conflicting demands of economic development and environmental integrity. All too often, rivers like the Pacuare are voiceless innocents caught in the crossfire of competitive values. To save, or not to save? Can we afford not developing a resource? Or can we afford to lose an irreplaceable one?

The Headwaters Institute delivered four educational seminars for river guides in 1997. Over four hundred guides from the Rio Grande, Kern, American, and Arkansas Rivers came together to learn the various dynamics of rivers and their watersheds. Combined these guides had direct exposure to approximately 150,000 commercial passengers.

Wildlife, conservation experts, historians, archeologists, botanists, and ornithologists

were among the many featured presenters that helped polish off old knowledge or stirred up new interests. In addition, environmental educators were gathered to introduce interactive activities and educational techniques that make the teachable moment a valuable window for active interpretation.

For many guides, this emphasis on naturalist interpretation is a redundant exercise in obviousness. For others, it is not. As a guide with over an hour's drive between Santa Fe and the river, something was expected to help broaden our client's narrow strip of world that connected the road to a put-in and a river to a takeout. For some guides it was a routine extension of their repertoire and for others it was "fluff" on the fringe of a heart-pounding adrenaline tour. Either way, there were clients who appreciated the effort and some who didn't, even with the full beauty of the land and river around them. Often, I found the tone of my approach made the difference in client interest.

In the last six years, I have constantly been reminded that the best way to educate people about rivers – is through those who spend their lives boating, fishing or otherwise enjoying these resources. I have seen this demonstrated time and again when whitewater boaters get an opportunity to speak to agencies, landowners, developers, etc.

Tom's article about the Headwaters Institute reminds us that educating others about rivers is not an issue limited to either commercial or noncommercial interests. It is the responsibility of each of us if we are to play a part in protecting and restoring the places we paddle and love.

I have been involved with Tom on and off for the last two years. I support the Headwaters Institute, and its goals, because I want to do everything I can to improve rivers and to increase river awareness. In this way, the goals of American Whitewater and the Headwaters Institute are the same.

American Whitewater members can support this organization by volunteering time, finding out more about what they do, and passing the word along to friends who may also be interested. For more information, give Tom a call.

Rich Bowers, Executive Director, American Whitewater

The Headwaters Institute is presenting seminars on these rivers and dates in 1998:

Colorado River/Moab

Rio Grande/Taos Box

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American River

Arkansas River

Pacuare River

April 17th, 18th, and 19th

April 22nd and 23rd

May 13th and 14th

May 19th and 20th

June 2nd and 3rd

November 30th and December 1st

You are invited to explore your curiosity and discover that continuing your river education is a rich combination of asking and answering questions that can be overlooked in the regular hustle and pace of the summer season. Come renew your appreciation of the complexities and intricacies of watersheds and their ecology. At the very least, discover how easy it is to make a difference for rivers from the back of your boat. Please call (916) 442-3155 x 208 for information.

American Whitewater Receives D.I.R.T. Grant

PowerBar announced that they have presented \$47,000 in grants to 16 organizations across America working to preserve outdoor areas for recreational use. One of the organizations to receive a D.I.R.T. grant was American Whitewater of Silver Spring, MD. The \$5,000 grant will be used for its Black Canyon of the Bear River Project. With this grant they will seek to restore recreational and additional

river flows to improve the health of Idaho's Black Canyon of the Bear River. Funds will be used to build a coalition and support efforts to participate in the Grace/Cove Hydroelectric relicensing process.

PowerBar's Direct Impact on Rivers and Trails (D.I.R.T.), is a nationwide outdoor recreational grant program that supports organizations working directly to preserve outdoor areas for recre-

ational use.

Among the other organizations that received grants were several other boating and river organizations including F.L.O.W. Paddlers Club, Rochester, and New York Rivers United, Rome, NY. Through 1997 PowerBar has donated \$87,000 in D.I.R.T. grants to 27 different organizations across the country.

Brian and Jennifer Maxwell,

cofounders of PowerBar, balance their active lifestyles with trail runs and hikes with their children in the San Francisco Bay area. "Don't run out of trails before you run out of energy," said Brian Maxwell, president of PowerBar. "PowerBar wants to help protect, restore and preserve land and rivers for responsible, recreational enjoyment."

"DAM-NATION"

An update on dams affecting whitewater in the United States

Rivers systems in the United States are the second most heavily dammed in the world, behind only China. There are over 5,000 large dams and an estimated 96,000 small dams in the United States - affecting some 500,000 river miles. American Whitewater seeks to improve conditions on those dams affecting whitewater, and is especially involved in the 2,100+ dams generating hydroelectric energy. The following is an update on dam issues affecting the rivers you paddle! For more information on dams and rivers, contact John Gangemi at (406) 837-3155 or at jgangemi@digisys.net

American Rivers Lists Kern as Nation's Fourth Most Endangered River (CA)

Although National Wild and Scenic River designation protects 151 miles of southern California's upper Kern River, much of the lower Kern (from the Johnsondale section down) is dammed and diverted by six small hydro projects. The Kern is one of the state's most popular recreational rivers, offering camping, hiking, biking and fishing. In addition, the Kern provides over 110 miles of Class III, IV and V whitewater.

All six dams together average only a mere 18 megawatts of power output, which is minuscule (especially for western dams). The largest capacity dam on the river, the Fairview (Kern #3) Dam, must divert 30 to 90 percent of the river's water (depending on the season) for over 16 miles. All 16 miles are Wild

and Scenic, but this dam was "grandfathered" in when the river was designated in 1987.

Other dams include: the Isabella Dam; the Borel Project, which diverts flow for seven miles of the lower Kern; the Democrat Dam (Kern #1), which diverts flow from over 10 miles of river including the "Cataracts of the Kern"; the Kern Canyon Project; and then the Rio Bravo Project just outside Bakersfield.

In addition to affecting numerous whitewater runs, the dams on the Kern have destroyed the blue ribbon trout fishery and reduced wild trout populations by 98%.

American Whitewater has been involved in relicensing both the Kern #3 and #1 projects, as well as with each of the other dams (Boral and Kern Canyon

are up for relicensing in 2005). American Whitewater is working with Friends of the River, Kern River Alliance, Kernville Community Consensus Council and commercial outfitters to improve conditions on this river.

In addition to the direct affect dams have on the Kern, these six dams demonstrate another problem — right now, hydropower producers are attempting to list small dams (less than 30 megawatts) as environmentally benign "green" power. California's newly deregulated electricity market is leading this move. The dewatered Kern is a great example of the fallacy of this thinking.

For more information, contact John Cangemi or Margaret Bowman at American Rivers (202) 347-7550.

Milner Decision, Snake River, ID

In 1997, Idaho Power Company and Milner Dam Inc. filed an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to amend the license for the 1.6 mile-long Milner Bypass Reach located in south central Idaho. License terms require flow releases for whitewater boating and also require the licensees to determine whether flows are meeting whitewater needs.

The amendment, which was approved by FERC in March, 1998: reduced the daylight hours of bypass flows from eight to five hours per day (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.); deleted the month of April from the release schedule; eliminated weekday releases; and reduced the number of releases in May and June to 12 weekend days.

FERC Public Outreach Meetings

The FERC is hosting outreach meetings to familiarize the public with their dam licensing and compliance program. FERC will describe the various processes associated with relicensing as well as identifying upcoming relicensings adjacent to the meeting area.

American Whitewater encourages members of the paddling community to attend these public meetings. Our presence sends a strong message to FERC that the paddling community has a vital interest in hydropower relicensing. Hydropower relicensing can be the key to future whitewater runs in your area. The dates below are tentative. Contact FERC to confirm meeting dates and locations (202) 208-1371. Alternatively you can contact American Whitewater Conservation Director John Gangemi.

Date	State
March 26, 1998	Denver, CO
April 23, 1998	Augusta, ME
May 19, 1998	Portland, OR
May 21, 1998	Tacoma, WA
June 25, 1998	TBA, Michigan
July 21, 1998	Boise, ID
July 3, 1998	Missoula, MT
September 1, 1998	Juneau, AK
September 3, 1998	Anchorage, AK
September 17, 1998	Wausau, WI

Dams in Maine and Idaho found Non-Jurisdictional

On January 28, 1998, the FERC issued an order that eight unlicensed storage projects on Maine's West Branch of the Penobscot were non-jurisdictional. In layman's terms, FERC found that hydropower generation was not dependent on the upstream water storage reservoirs, therefore the reservoirs were not subject to the rules and regulations of the Federal Power Act. The reservoirs include Dole and Long Ponds, Penobscot, Loon, Umbazooksus, Harrington, Nesowadnehunk and Rainbow Lakes. FERC based its findings on the fact that, individually, the storage capacity of the reservoirs is inconsequential relative to the cumulative annual hydrograph. FERC's analysis overlooks the fact that during late summer and fall, seasons corresponding to the river's base flow periods, hydropower generation is entirely dependent on releases from water stored in the reservoirs.

American Whitewater, along with Appalachian Mountain Club, American Rivers, the Conservation Law Foundation and New England FLOW, petitioned for a rehearing of this order. The petitioners filed their rehearing request based on two reasons: One, the petitioners believe these storage projects are useful for power generation at downstream projects and two, FERC's analytical criteria substantiating the order is fundamentally flawed. Because of the flaws in the analytical criteria alone, the petitioners felt it was necessary to request a rehearing. Otherwise this order and accompanying analytical criteria would likely be applied universally to other water storage jurisdictional issues across the country.

Curiously, on February 12, 1998, FERC issued a finding that Bear Lake in southeast Idaho was also non-jurisdictional. FERC's analytical criteria mirrored that described for the water storage projects in Maine. American Whitewater along with Idaho Rivers United petitioned for rehearing. Like the hydroelectric projects on the Penobscot, downstream hydropower generation on the Bear River during base flow conditions (July-February depending on the water year) is entirely dependent on water stored in Bear Lake. The Bear Lake ruling will affect potential terms and conditions of three downstream

hydroelectric projects currently undergoing relicensing; Soda, Grace-Cove and Oneida (FERC proj. nos. 20, 2401, and 472 respectively). American Whitewater and Idaho Rivers United are actively pursuing whitewater releases in the Black Canyon of the Bear River as a condition of a new license for the Grace hydroelectric project (see July/August 1997 issue). Bear Lake is a fundamental component of future whitewater releases in the Black Canyon. Whitewater releases must coincide with releases of irrigation water stored in Bear Lake.

Rehearing petitions have been served in both cases. American Whitewater will keep readers posted on FERC's response.

Bigfork's Swan River (MT) up for Hydropower Relicense

The Bigfork Hydroelectric project in northwest Montana is currently undergoing relicensing. The Bigfork project is located on the Swan River, site of the annual Bigfork Whitewater Festival. The festival takes place entirely within the boundaries of the hydropower facility. As such, American Whitewater will seek a license article guaranteeing permission to hold the Bigfork Whitewater Festival annually for the term of the new license. In recent years, a motor vehicle restriction on the north side of the river shifted boaters to the south side of the river for access.

Historically, the licensee has prohibited the public from accessing the river on this side due to liability concerns with the flume. At present, boaters must paddle across the reservoir to portage around the dam or run the dam itself. The new license needs to accommodate this shift in use by allowing the public access to the river on the south side, directly below the dam.

American Whitewater is also requesting access to real-time flow data via an Internet web-site. Stay tuned for future developments on this relicensing.

Hydro Relicense: Chelan County Public Utility District, Washington

Chelan County Public Utility District is in the initial stages of relicensing their hydropower generation facilities. The facility diverts water from Lake Chelan to a powerhouse four miles downstream. In that four mile distance the river drops approximately 400 feet. More than likely, American Whitewater will request a whitewater flow study in the relicense process to determine appropriate flow volumes, duration and timing for future whitewater releases in the river channel. Any persons with direct experience paddling this river reach between Lake Chelan and the Columbia River are encouraged to contact American Whitewater Conservation Director John Gangemi.

57 New or Enlarged Dams Proposed in California Water (Comments needed by April 15th)

The California Department of Water Resources has recently released the California State Water Plan Update, Bulletin 160-98. The report presents a statewide overview of current water management activities and provides recommendations to policy-makers and water managers for fulfilling the state's supposed demand for water through the year 2020.

C O N S E R V E

As drafted, the California Water Plan is one of the most substantial and expansive threats to California's rivers and watersheds. It advocates the single largest and most destructive public works project currently under consideration in the United States.

The Department of Water Resources identifies 43 new dams and reservoirs and 14 enlarged dams and reservoirs. These proposals would destroy many of the rivers and watersheds that other state and federal agencies, community groups and property owners are working to protect and restore.

The Water Plan proposals would: condemn thousands of acres of public and private property; inundate much of the last spawning areas for endangered salmon and steelhead; force current California residents to subsidize water for agribusiness and new development; and authorizes tapping the state's remaining groundwater reserves.

In addition, this plan endangers some of the best whitewater in the state. Here are just some of the recommendations affecting California whitewater in this plan:

- Build Auburn Dam on the American River
- Build up to three dams and reservoirs on Cache Creek in the Coast Range
- Build the proposed New Los Padres dam and reservoir on the Carmel River
- Build the proposed Nashville dam on the Cosumnes River
- Build up to five dams and reservoirs on the various forks of Cottonwood Creek
- Enlarge the existing Camanche and Pardee dams on the Mokelumne River and build two new dams the Middle Bar and Devils Nose
- Build a proposed new dam and reservoir in San Mateo County's Pescadero Creek Redwood Park
- Enlarge Shasta dam and reservoir on the Sacramento and drown miles of the upper Sacramento, McCloud, and Pit rivers
- Enlarge the existing Friant dam and reservoir on the San Joaquin River and the popular Millerton Lake State Recreation Area
- Build Parks Bar dam on the Yuba River and propose the Waldo project, which would divert more water from the Yuba.

Whitewater boaters need to write in on this plan: Let the Department of Water Resources know how you feel about the protection of California rivers! Write your letter today. You can send your written comments on the California Water Plan by March 30, 1998 to: Jeanine Jones, Chief, Statewide Planning Branch, Department of Water Resources, P.O. Box 942836, Sacramento, CA 94236-0001.

For more information, or to find out how you can get involved, call John Gangemi or Maureen Rose at Friends of the River at 916-442-3155. To see a full copy of the California Water Plan on-line, go to: <http://rubicon.water.ca.gov/pdintro.html> or order a copy of the Water Plan: Paul Hutton, Chief, Resources Evaluation Section at (916) 653-5666.

U.S. Senate Bill Planned to Relicense Dams Faster

Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) plans to introduce legislation to speed up the relicensing of hydroelectric dams. "We are looking at the possibility of some limited legislation that would set time lines, reasonable and responsible time lines, around state and federal agencies that have responsibility in the area of relicensings," Craig told reporters.

The lawmaker, whose state depends heavily on hydropower, has been a strong critic of how long it takes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and state regulators to act on dam relicensing applications. "Most agencies want the luxury of taking whatever time they want," he said. Craig said his legislation would streamline the process for relicensing dams to just one year, instead of the current three to four years. However, he said dam projects that raise complicated issues would be subject to a longer review.

American Whitewater and others in the Hydropower Reform Coalition are already at work with FERC and the hydropower industry to streamline this process. "The FERC process can certainly be improved," says American Whitewater's John Gangemi, "but it is more important to protect the affected rivers and assure public participation in this process."

Housatonic Hydro

By E.J. McCarthy, Regional Coordinator

The relicensing process continues, as does the debate, over how best to manage hydro-operations on the Housatonic River in scenic northwestern Connecticut. Recreational boaters and commercial outfitters are working to preserve summer water releases on the popular Falls Village section and also seeking recreational releases on the class III-V rapids at Bull's Bridge.

A recreation study will be undertaken at both sites throughout this summer. If you're paddling on the Housatonic this summer please take the time to thoroughly answer survey questions. Be sure to emphasize the importance of the Housatonic as a paddling resource. Paddlers are also asking that economic studies be included as well. To date, those requests have been denied by the utility that operates the dams.

Both runs are located less than two hours from major population centers and thousands of boaters flock to Falls Village each year because of dependable flows from the Northeast Utilities hydroelectric plant. These flows also support an active whitewater slalom-training site that has produced numerous National Champions and U.S. Team members. These flows are in jeopardy due to pressure from other river users.

West Branch Update (ME)

By John Frachella, Regional Coordinator

On Jan. 26, 1998 representatives of American Whitewater attended a meeting held by Great Northern Paper (Bowater) at their paper making facility in Millinocket, ME. American Whitewater was invited based on its request for water releases at Nesowadnehunk and Ragged Streams. (Nesowadnehunk Lake Dam is not a FERC licensed dam. Ragged lake dam is.) Great Northern agreed to:

1) Notify a designated American Whitewater representative (most likely myself) when the outflow from Nesowadnehunk or Ragged is projected to be greater than 50 cfs or if an otherwise significant increase in outflow is projected. (This is new.)

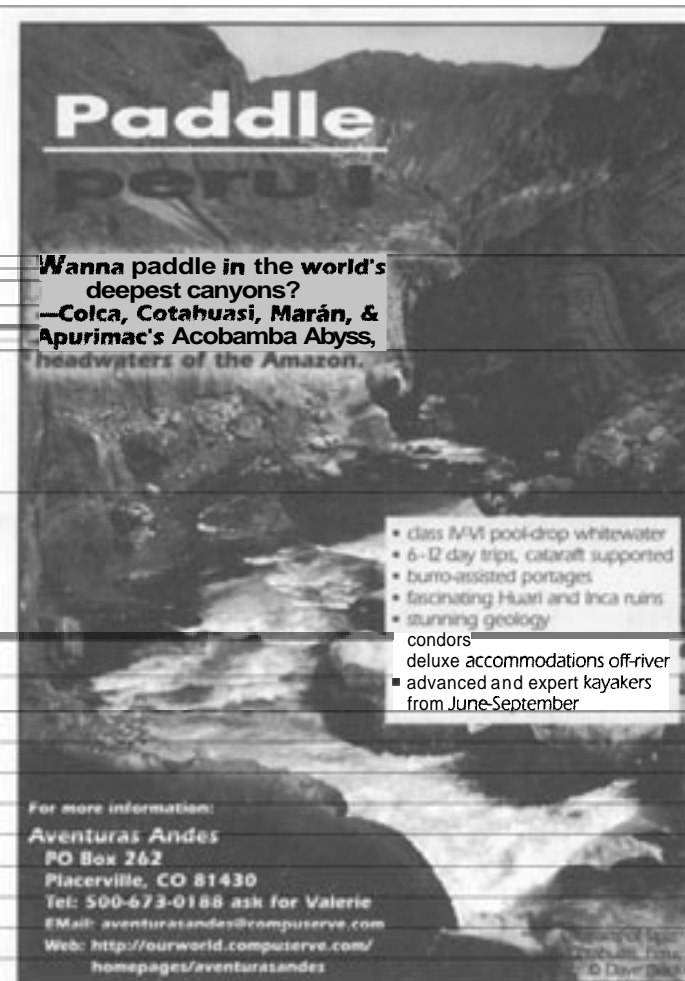
2) Hold back increases in outflow until the weekend whenever that's possible and when dam safety dictates. (This is new.)

Increases in flow here are a function of lake elevation and will not be made specifically for recreational boating use. (This is not new). Flow information will be updated twice daily on Great Northern's recorded telephone message (207-723-2328) from May to October. (This is not new).

On Feb. 10, 1998, Great Northern held a Conflict Resolution Meeting in Bangor, ME, where recreational boating releases on the

Seboomook section of the West Branch of the Penobscot River and the Canada Falls section of the South Branch of the Penobscot River were discussed. For Seboomook, Great Northern specified that recreational boating releases prior to September 1 would negatively impact the fishery, however, from September 1 to October 15 they propose a target flow of 900 cfs. Flows for recreational boating would be made available periodically during average and wet years from ice-out through September 1. Generally, from ice-out to July 15, outflow would equal inflow so it's very possible that, after heavy rains (which are common) the resulting increased inflow would provide additional boating opportunities. For Canada Falls, when sufficient water is available, one 12-hour scheduled release will be provided during the period from July 15 to July 31 and another during the period from August 1 to August 31. The maximum release will be the lesser of 400 cfs or five times the existing flow.

During wet years and, generally after heavy rains, more water may be released at Canada Falls Dam. Great Northern will contact a designated American Whitewater representative at the beginning of July and August annually to discuss the availability of water and to schedule mutually agreeable times and dates for the releases. These releases at Seboomook and Canada Falls are still negotiable through American Whitewater's intervention in Great Northern's License Application (FERC No. 2634). As usual, there are many competing interests (fisheries, camp owners, aquatic furbearers, etc.) for any and every given flow scenario. Nonetheless, we did receive this information on Nesowandunk, Seboomook and Canada Falls in writing from the kind folks at Great Northern, who appear to be trying to make everyone somewhat happy within what seems to be the spirit of compromise.



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Robertson Named as Access Director for American Whitewater

On March 23, Jason Robertson began his tenure as the new Access Director for American Whitewater. Jason follows Rich (Rainey) Hoffman, who will be pursuing a law degree next semester.

Jason was selected from a distinguished pool of applicants because of his dedication to river access issues (Jason helped American Whitewater in last year's efforts to identify individual state laws on navigability), and for his background in negotiation and team building with the Environmental Protection Agency.

"We are extremely pleased to have Jason with us," said Rich Bowers, Executive Director for American Whitewater. "More and more, access means the ability to work with diverse interests, from corporate officers, to agency staff, to local landowners. Jason brings this expertise to our River Access Program."

The American Whitewater River Access Program locates and secures river access to whitewater rivers through negotiation, tracking and influencing legislation and policy that affects river access, advocating for stronger rights of passage on rivers that flow past private land, and when necessary, acquiring strategic land for access.

"The ability to enjoy our nation's rivers is more threatened than ever," says Jay Kenney, Board member and Chairman of American Whitewater's River Access Committee. "Fees, restrictions, and outright closure are eliminating the public's ability to recreate in many of our most beautiful natural areas."

"I agree," says Jason, reviewing the numerous issues he will be working on. "Access issues run the gamut, from individual high water closures in California and North Carolina, to national issues such as Fee Demonstration, and agency decisions on the Grand Canyon, on the Main Salmon and on the Middle Fork, and within Yellowstone National Park."

Jason received a B.S. in Environmental Science and Engineering from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and has worked as a Chemical Review Manager with the EPA's Office of Pollution, Prevention and Toxic Substances, Special Review and Reregistration Division. In addition to this background, Jason has excellent computer skills and has been an avid whitewater paddler for the past 10 years.

American Whitewater is pleased to add Jason as our River Access Director. He can be reached at the Silver Spring, Maryland office at (301) 589-9453, by fax at (301) 589-6121 or by email at access@amwhitewater.org.



Jason Robertson on WV's North Fork Blackwater

Jason Robertson on River Access

When I left for my annual kayaking pilgrimage to Mexico in February, I was fairly certain that Rich Bowers was going to offer me the Access Director's position with American Whitewater.

However, as I spent the next two weeks exploring rivers in Oaxaca and Veracruz, I found myself reflecting over whether to accept. I would be leaving a comfortable job with great benefits at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and accepting a position with a small, nonprofit organization in order to pursue my love for whitewater and an agenda protecting my rights to access rivers and creeks throughout the United States. Then, on the last day of my vacation, as I was rappelling into the Rio Tomate, I caught myself singing one of Leo Kotke's songs, "Happy. Contented. Stuffed with dollar bills. I stood out like a taxidermist elk upon the hill," and I realized that I was confusing job security with job satisfaction and knew that I needed to leave the bureaucracy for a program where I could really make a difference. I am bringing a working knowledge of whitewater access laws and policies, an education in aquatic ecology and natural resources policy, and four years of experience working on risk mitigation issues for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to American Whitewater.

I am very excited about working with American Whitewater over the coming years and am looking forward to sinking my teeth into the access issues. I will be picking up Rich Hoffman's projects and trying to fill his shoes as quickly as possible. I intend to focus my initial

efforts on: regaining access to the Blackwater River in West Virginia; continuing negotiations for new user fee scenarios in the Grand Canyon; assisting Rich Bowers in negotiating access to Yellowstone's rivers; helping to fight high water closings in California, North Carolina, and elsewhere; developing American Whitewater's property on the Watauga river in North Carolina; raising funds to support my program's expenses; bringing new members into American Whitewater; helping Jay Kenny complete a state-by-state survey of river access laws; and working closely with other organizations such as the Access Fund, Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, and American Rivers on issues protecting the environment and resources that we share in common.

As you can see, I am starting with a pretty full plate. However, I look forward to meeting, working, and boating with American Whitewater's members and Board of Directors over the coming months. Furthermore, I'd like to extend an offer to each of you, paraphrasing Jerry Maguire: I want you to help me to help you. I have been hired to represent your interests, and can not do this effectively without your support or input. Please take the time to introduce yourselves to me on the river, at festivals, and public meetings. I'd also like you to inform me if you are aware of developing access issues before they've become problems, or if you know of some other way to support our efforts. Finally, I am interested in discussing your concerns for whitewater access and working them into American Whitewater's five-year strategic plan.

Jason Robertson, Access Director

Middle Fork and Main Salmon River Management Plan Update (ID)

Due to public response and congressional interest, the Forest Service has extended the public comment period to December 1, 1998 for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and associated operational management plan for the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.

In addition, the Forest Service is hosting public meetings in western states this spring to address public questions and comments on the DEIS. Please attend the meetings in your area, the Forest Service needs to hear comments from the boating community.

The DEIS proposes new changes in commercial and non-commercial river permit allocation system for the Main Salmon and Middle Fork of the Salmon Wild and Scenic Rivers. Under the Forest Service's preferred alternative, the number of launches would remain the same for both Wild and Scenic Rivers for non-commercial and commercial boaters (non-commercial launches are 4 per day for both rivers, and for commercials are 4 per day for the Salmon and 3 for the Middle Fork). Proposed party size reductions for the Main Salmon are from 30 to 20 for both commercial and non-commercial boaters. Currently, before proposed reductions, private boater's chances of getting a permit are approximately 1 in 23.

On the Middle Fork, commercial party size would be reduced from 30 to 15. Non-commercial party size would be reduced from the existing 24 to 10.



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A C C E S
You can get a copy of the Executive Summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the web at the Payette National Forest web site: <http://www.mccall.net/pnf/fcrnrwpp.html>

You can also get a copy of the DEIS on CD by calling or writing the Forest Service at:

FC- RONR Wilderness Coordinator

RR2 Box 600

Salmon, Idaho 83467

Phone (208) 756-5100

Fax (208) 756-5151

You can also contact the Forest Service for an update of public meetings. As *American Whitewater* goes to press, the Forest Service

has committed to public meetings through April only, although additional meetings are planned in May and June. American Whitewater will post public meeting dates on their web site (www.awa.org) under the Hotnews button as the Forest Service confirms them. A proposed meeting in the Seattle area is listed below. Confirm the date, time and location with the Forest Service.

Tentative Public Meeting Information:

When: Thursday May 21, 1998 at 7:00 p.m.

Where: 21905 64th Ave. W., Mount Lake Terrace, Washinton at the Mount

Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest offices - 425-775-9702.

As we went to press, American Whitewater had just returned from a meeting with the Monongahela National Forest (MNF) and Allegheny Wood Products (AWP), and the discussion of a formal easement to provide foot traffic access to West Virginia's Blackwater Canyon. We are optimistic that this will be approved and that boaters, anglers, and others will have access by early April. This easement will provide a legal takeout for the North Fork Blackwater, the Upper Blackwater, and a put-in trail for the lower Blackwater. Currently, the put-in for the North Fork lies outside of AWP's property and is open; the put-in for the Upper Blackwater is Blackwater Falls State Park; and a permanent takeout for the lower was purchased by American Whitewater in 1996.

If enacted, this easement would provide legal access for one full year or until AWP and MNF work out the details for a permanent land exchange. In early March a bill was introduced in the West Virginia Senate that advocated the purchase of AWP land by the state, even though AWP insisted that the land was not for sale. When this was introduced, AWP withdrew all offers to meet with outside groups regarding interim access to lands on the north side of the canyon. When this was defeated in late March, AWP reopened discussions with MNF and American Whitewater.

AWP and MNF continue to negotiate a land exchange that would pass the north side of the canyon from the rail trail to the high-water mark on the south of the river into public ownership. This land exchange, although viewed as a compromise by some, is a step forward for public ownership of lands in Blackwater Canyon. This will benefit paddlers and the larger recreational community utilizing the canyon. American Whitewater encourages paddlers to support this land exchange. The MNF is required to provide public involvement in the process. In the least, the MNF will hold public meetings and develop an environmental assessment for public review and comment sometime this spring. As mentioned in previous updates, American

Whitewater supports the concept of a land exchange but reserves the right to comment on the specific lands offered in the exchange.

Look for updates on the web page under the Hot News button (www.awa.org) as well as the journal. Once locked

Blackwater Update (WW)



Top: Left to Right-Liz Roat, USFS, Donna Reckert, Allegheny Wood Products, Jason Robertson, American Whitewater



Liz Roat with Monongahela National Forest mapping the Blackwater

in, signs posted at boater parking areas, along the rail-trail road and along the river will indicate legal access for whitewater boaters and others. For more information contact American Whitewater's John Gangemi or Jason Robertson.

Victory on the Lower Cispus (WA)

By Brooke Drury, American Whitewater

In March, 1998 FERC required Lewis County PUD to provide a boater take out with road access to the Lower Cispus whitewater run (Class II-III), replacing the one flooded by the Cowlitz Falls reservoir. This was originally a requirement in the PUD's license for the Cowlitz Falls Hydro Project but the PUD had asked FERC to delete the provision upon finding that providing access to the site had become more difficult than anticipated. FERC denied the PUD's request.

Although the decision may still be appealed, FERC's ruling reaffirms what boaters have been saying all along. A deal is a deal. FERC allowed the PUD to build and operate the Cowlitz Falls Project, subject to certain conditions, including providing this access point. (This was a very small consolation to boaters who lost not only two-three miles of Class II-III rapids under the reservoir but also Cowlitz Falls, a legendary "big-water" rapid which was dynamited to make way for the dam structure.) The PUD cannot come back now that the dam is built and try to change the terms of the deal.

There's still a lot of work to be done on finding a solution to the issue. Nevertheless, I think it important to give thanks for this access victory to a number of individuals and organizations. I would particularly like to thank Carol Volk and Gary Korb, Mike and Becky Deckert, Mark Jobson, and Rich Hoffman for truly Herculean efforts in favor of the Lower Cispus take out.

Particular thanks is also due to American Whitewater which spent considerable time and effort on written documents associated with this proceeding and which sent then Access Director Rich Hoffman

to our neck of the woods to meet with PUD officials and other interested parties in person. Thanks also to Doug North and the Rivers Council of Washington (formerly Northwest Rivers Council), which championed the boater takeout provision back in the early 1980s and which spearheaded efforts to have it enforced in 1995 and 96.

Update on the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program

By Rich Bowers

In February, American Whitewater presented written comments to the Oversight Hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, regarding the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. Also in attendance at this hearing, and speaking on the issue, were the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association, American Hiking Society and others.

The Fee Demonstration Program was introduced in 1996 as a test program, and was intended to continue as a test program until the end of 1999. However, some legislators would like to see this program made permanent immediately. In 1996, American Whitewater supported this program because the fees were fair, were consistent with fees charged to other park users and were developed with public input. We supported the Fee Demonstration Program because the majority of funds would stay on site, improving the resources we enjoy.

However, our testimony made it clear that American Whitewater cannot support making Fee Demonstration a permanent program at this time. We cannot support permanent fees until managing agencies can:

- Coordinate with other existing and proposed recreational funding agencies

- Coordinate among different managing agencies

- Coordinate fees within individual agencies

- Solve existing Fee Demonstration problems

- Guarantee that this program will not replace needed natural resource appropriations

American Whitewater can also not support permanent fees because many of river management plans that have been introduced lately limit, eliminate, or discriminate against whitewater boaters. Examples include the Grand Canyon fee and allocation system, the Middle and Main Salmon plan, and the Salt River Canyon Wilderness Plan.

For a copy of American Whitewater's Testimony, please call the Silver Spring, MD office at (301) 589-9453.

Grand Canyon Update (Rich Hoffman)

American Whitewater has been continuing to work hard on river management issues, such as fees and permit allocations, on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park. With respect to fees, Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) has indicated that it may be willing to change the current fee program that was announced during the winter of 1997. American Whitewater attended the recent oversight hearing sponsored by Rep. Jim Hansen (R-UT) on the fee demonstration program. At the hearing, John Bachrach of the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association expressed his concern with the new fees system. With respect to allocation, American Whitewater is putting together a brain trust to address how to gauge demand for river trips and how to structure a demand-based allocation system. Finally, American Whitewater has been involved with the outfitters' bill that is currently circulating through Congress, which may have the effect of locking in allocation levels for commercial outfitters.

Yellowstone Update

By (Rich Hoffman)

American Whitewater has finished its proposal for whitewater boating in Yellowstone National Park. In the proposal, we outline our thoughts on why we believe whitewater boating is an appropriate use in the park and make suggestions on its management. We advocate that the originality of Yellowstone and a deep appreciation of its beauty can best be experienced by getting out of the car. Edward Abbey, writer and former Park Ranger in Arches National Monument states that "A man on foot, on horseback or on a bicycle will see more, feel more, enjoy more in one mile than the motorized tourists can in a hundred miles." Whitewater boating allows visitors to have this original experience with Yellowstone — one of the reasons why our membership has such deep conservation roots. Indeed the backcountry experience is discussed in the Master Plan for Yellowstone National Park as providing a "vital introduction to wilderness" and a place where the "visitor can test not only his desire but also his muscles." Rivers are — and have historically been — a medium for travel.

American Whitewater recognizes the difficulty facing YNP staff in attempting to balance resource preservation with a variety of public uses. In this regard, American Whitewater believes that the management of public resources should be based on objective science and a fair standard of management. Our proposal presents compelling arguments and data that illustrate: 1) whitewater boating is an appropriate use in Yellowstone National Park — both from a resource

protection and public policy perspective, and that 2) whitewater boating on a limited basis can be managed according to accepted protocol. In short, we believe that the current ban on river running in YNP discriminates unfairly against this form of recreation.

In seeking to explore Yellowstone rivers by boat, we do not wish to cause resource damage or degrade the park experience. We believe that the preservation and sustainability of Yellowstone's resources must take precedence over access. This proposal directly addresses the concerns of resource protection by discussing the nine environmental parameters evaluated in the 1988 Assessment. While some river segments may not be appropriate to whitewater boating because of resource concerns, American Whitewater believes that whitewater recreation will not have an impact beyond those other activities currently allowed — and in many circumstances, much less of an impact, particularly on the stretch of the Yellowstone River from Tower Junction to Gardner.

We believe that Park staff can best manage whitewater recreation by working in partnership with paddlers, clubs and organizations. While we sympathize with the complexity of balancing recreational use on public lands, we feel strongly that an equitable solution to protect park resources is to guide use through effective management and education, rather than an arbitrary and complete ban on one particular use.

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by Jayne H. Abbot

American Whitewater/NOWR Event Manager

The long awaited 1998 season of American Whitewater supported paddling competitions, festivals, races and events is quickly coming upon us. I attended the first 1998 event, the National Paddling Film Festival East, and it rocked. Hot new videos, lots of great silent auction gear and, even though the weather was warm and the water flowing, more dedicated boaters than ever put down their paddles for the day to enjoy armchair boating thrills. The videos then traveled West to spread the thrills from coast to coast. The next event of the season, the Tallulah Festival, was a great success with an estimated 5,000 visitors for this one-day event.

The National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos (NOWR) Circuit News:

It's the beginning of April as I write this article and pack my bags to head out to the Kern River Festival to kick off the first of 24 NOWR rodeos of the year. The 1998 circuit covers the entire country, from California to Maine, Canada to Tennessee, and everywhere in-between. It's going to be a jam-packed rodeo season.

NOWR is getting more attention than ever. With tightened standardized judging rules (see this issue), a Point Series Championship and a judging training video, NOWR is stepping into new grounds of dare I say, professionalism. While the competitions will still be fun and friendly in the amateur classes, the judging for Expert/Pro classes is set up to address the growing number of rodeo paddlers who are looking to make a living as professional whitewater rodeo athletes. What a concept, making a living doing a sport you love and having the time of your life! I think I'm jealous.

The strength of the NOWR circuit and American Whitewater events is traveling quickly among boaters and press of all kinds. Check out the April issue of Shape Magazine where the last page article provides a glimpse into women and whitewater rodeos. The 1998 "space alien" NOWR national poster (*see the poster in this issue and how to order your own copy*) is quickly becoming a collectors item and is newsworthy enough for Paddler Magazine to publish. Outdoor Life Network was on hand to film the first spring release of the Tallulah River in Georgia and all the hoopla of the first annual Tallulah Festival. Keep your eyes peeled for more media attention as paddling really begins to take hold in the hearts and minds of outdoor enthusiasts everywhere and American Whitewater leads the way with a line up of exciting and innovative events.

Ocoee Rodeo Hole Update:

The April/May issue of the journal provided you with information on a project to build a rodeo hole on the Upper Ocoee. This proposal is designed to provide better recreation "up top" and avenue for much needed growth of the Ocoee Rodeo. These plans are still in the works and it is expected that in the beginning of May, the initial temporary work will be completed and testing will take place. Once the temporary work and testing is completed and the hole is exactly what is needed, a faux rock contractor will be hired and the work completed to make this hole a reality.

Watch the next issue for results from the Kern, New, Merced, Canyon Creek/Bob's Hole and Gillman falls rodeos plus an update on building the hole on the Upper Ocoee.

OCOEE RIVER PARKING UPDATE

The park service is making changes to where visitors and boaters can park in the Ocoee River Gorge. Please read this information carefully and be aware that when you head to the Ocoee this summer, you may find your favorite parking area is now unavailable.

Over the next several months, the Tennessee Department of Transportation will begin work on the first phase of the parking plan for the Ocoee River Gorge. The parking plan includes Hwy. 64 from the Greasy Creek Bridge to the Ocoee Whitewater Center. In the first phase, information signs will be placed at both ends of the gorge and designated parking areas. Instead of signs where vehicles cannot park, there will be signs posted where you can park. The East-bound shoulder from the exit at the Caney Creek take out to the bridge at #2 Powerhouse will not be a designated parking area. In addition, the guardrail on the West bound shoulder, across from the Caney Creek take Out, will be relocated to allow more room and will be designated and signs placed for commercial use only on busy river use days. There will also be areas designated for "Emergency Vehicles Only." The first phase should be completed by Memorial Day weekend. These changes will be a departure from the free-for-all parking situation that has existed in the past. Due to the increased popularity of the gorge by visitors and recreational users these changes are necessary for the safe and efficient flow of traffic on Hwy. 64 and for the safety of all the visitors to the area. Visitors that are accustomed to using the areas mentioned above will find safe and adequate parking available at the Big Creek take out.

1998 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS

Come join American Whitewater in 1998 as we celebrate whitewater rivers across country through our world famous festivals, races and rodeos. Hope to see you there!

AMERICAN WHITEWATER EVENTS

Kennebec Kiver Festival	C A N C E L L E D - new organizer needed - interested call			704-645-5299
Sacandaga Festival	July 11-12	Hadley, NY	Pete Skinner	518-474-2432
Black River Festival	July 25-26	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Deerfield Festival	August 1	Charlemont, MA	Mike Coleman	718-646-2012
"Don't call this a Festival River Rendezvous"	September 5-7	Belfort, NY/Beaver River	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Gauley Festival	September 26	Summersville, WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355
Russell Fork Rendezvous	October 3*	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011
Moose River Festival	October 17	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397

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Canyon Creek Race	May 2	Clarks Country, WA	Andrew Wulfers	503-285-0464
Potomac Great Falls Race	May 30-31	Great Falls, VA	Kicky Rodriguez	703-742-8742
Black River Race	July 25-26	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Upper Yough Race	August 27	Friendsville, MD	Jess Whittemore	301-746-5389
Gore Canyon Downriver Race	August 22 -23	Kremmling, CO	Paul Tefft	970-923-3955
Gauley River Race	October 5	Summersville, WV	Donnie Hudspeth	800-950-2585
Moose River Race	October 17	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Russell Fork Race	October 3*	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WHITEWATER RODEOS (NOWR) CIRCUIT

Canyon Creek Rodeo & Race/Bob's Hole Rodeo	May 1-3	Clackamas County, OR and Clarks County, WA	Andrew Wulfers	503-285-0464
Gilman Falls Rodeo	May 2-3	Old Town, ME	John Miligan	207-827-4652
Maupin Daze Whitewater Festival	May 19-10	Maupin, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201
Bigfork Whitewater Festival	May 16-17	Bigfork, MT	Derek Thompson	406-862-4926
Kananaskis Whitewater Rodeo	May 23-25	Calgary, AB	Mark Taylor	800-656-8288
Jackson Hole Rodeo	May 30-31	Jackson Hole, WY	Aaron Pruzan	307-733-2471
Potomac Whitewater Festival	May 30-31	Great Falls, VA	Ricky Rodriguez	703-742-8742
Taylor River Rodeo	June 12-14	Almont/Gunnison, CO	Gunnison Chamber Of Commerce	800-274-7580
Skyfest	June 13-14	Index, WA	Randolph Pierce	206-789-0444
Headwater Championship/FIBARK	June 18-21	Salida, CO	P.T. Wood	719-539-3174
Willow River Paddlefest	June 19-21	Prince George, BC	Rick Brine	250-964-7400
Animas River Days	June 26-28	Durango, CO	Johnna Jacobson	970-259-3893
Gorge Games - WW Rodeo	July 11 -12	Hood River, OR	John Trujillo (TREE)	541-386-4286

Rated at class 3-4.

BLACK

Free rodeo and surfing clinics for AWA members.

RIVER

The Black River Bay Campground has a special section for Festival camping. A Saturday night bonfire has been scheduled with beverages. Admission is free to AWA members.

FESTIVAL

July 25-26,
1998 at
Watertown,
New York's
Riverwalk Park

- Featuring two days of "on the water" activities—the Black River Festival promises to be an exciting change from the AWA's typical festival format.
- The celebration includes two days of instructional clinics, a novice rodeo competition, on-the-water equipment demos and other events.
- Demo all the "Hot New Boat" Designs

Registration for the weekend clinics and rodeo will be made on a first-come, first served basis on the day of the Festival at the AWA booth starting at the Adirondack River Outfitters put-in.

■ For more information, contact Chris Koll at (315)652-8397 or by e-mail at CKOLL1234@aol.com. A festival newsletter featuring maps and detailed schedule of events will be available in mid May—call to receive more information.

(NOWR) CIRCUIT continued

Derby Creek Days	July 25	Burns, CO	Chris Emerick	970-736-0080
Kootenay Whitewater Festival	August 1-3	Castlegar, BC	Gerry Hawmon	250-362-7259
Wausau Whitewater Rodeo	August 29-30	Wausau, WI	Julie Walraven	715-845-5664
Ottawa River Rodeo	September 5-7	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223
American River Festival	September 12-13	Placerville, CA	Larry Goral	916-621-1224
Outer Banks Surf/Kayak Rodeo	September 19-20	Nags Head, NC	Pam Malec	919-441-6800
Coosa River Whitewater Festival	October 2-4	Wetumpka, AL	Lonnie Carden	334-272-0952
Ocoee Rodeo	October 9-11	Ducktown, TN	Susan Wilson	704-628-1791

OTHER EVENTS

Nike World Masters Games August 9-16 Oregon Dave Slover 541-395-2201

Nike World Masters Games include both whitewater slalom and rodeo events. You must be 30 or over to compete in the games

*NOTE: CHANGE IN DATE FOR THE RUSSELL FORK FESTIVAL AND RACE



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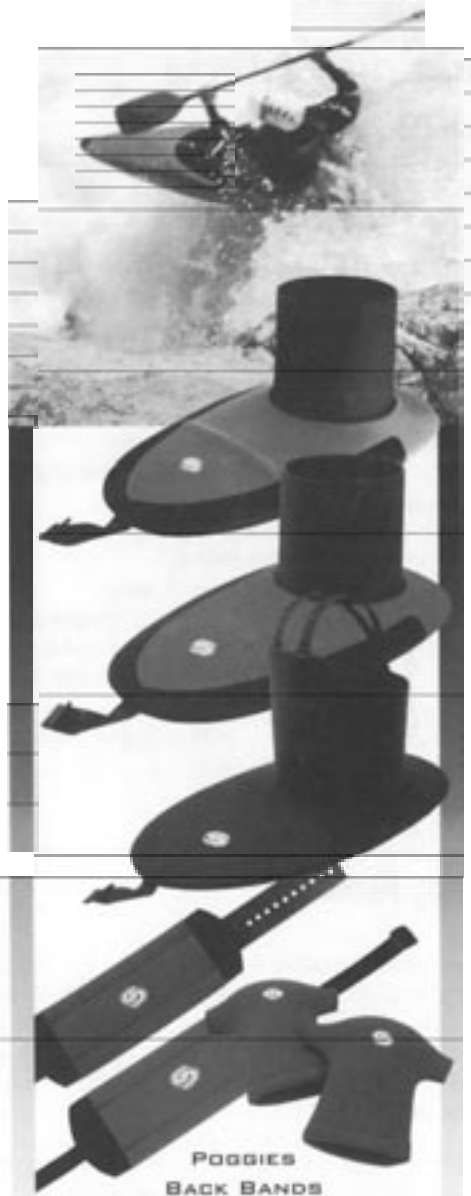
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National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos (NOWR) 1998 Judging

Not a full version, event formats and Freestyle Through a Rapid rules are eliminated to save space—see web site or call (828)645-5299 to order a full copy.

All NOWR events are required to follow these rules for the Expert/Pro rodeo K-1M, K-1W, K-1J, OC-1 and C-1 classes. Other classes may be judged using these rules or they may be modified.

Judging Criteria Point Values

Move	Point Value
■ Entry onto wave* and window shading	0
■ Each 180-degree directional change (both in a hole or on a smooth wave)	1
■ Front Surf and Front Blast	1
■ Back Surf and Back Blast	2
■ Off vertical** retendos/cartwheels (both in a hole or on a smooth wave)	2
(points given for each end)	
■ 360-degree flat spin (both in a hole or on a smooth wave)	2
■ Vertical** retendos/cartwheel (both in a hole or on a smooth wave)	3
(points given for each end)	
■ Split Wheel (<i>must have one vertical end to count</i>)	4
(points given for each DIRECTIONAL CHANGE)	
■ Clean 360 (<i>360 degree spin taken on a smooth wave with only one stroke per 360-degrees</i>)	3
■ Pirouette (180-degree turn)	4
■ Pirouette (360-degree turn)	5

Trophy Moves

Airwheel Cartwheel	+2 additional points
(added to vertical end points; ex. 3 + 2 = 5 total points for move)	
Loop	8 (+ vertical end points)
360-Degree Retentive Pirouette	+3 additional points
(added to 360-degree pirouette points; ex. 5 + 3 = 8 total points for move)	

* Classes other than Expert/Pro may give one point for entry onto the wave.

** Off vertical = 20 to 70 degrees and 110 to 160 degrees.

Vertical = 70 to 110 degrees.

*** Off vertical on a smooth wave = 45 to 70 degrees without use of the break.

Style/Quality Score

From 1 to 10 for K-1 Women, Junior, OC-1 and C-1
From 1 to 15 for K-1 Men

This is a score given by each of the five Technical/Style Judges following each run, based on:

Boat control, timing and rhythm – quality of the moves performed.

■ Use of the wave (more points are given for using all features of the wave/hole).

■ Artistic impression and choreography.

Variety and difficulty of moves is **not** included in this score.

Variety Score – applies only to Expert/Pro classes – does not apply to OC-1

Competitors are required to perform a number of moves from the Variety Move List (see below). The Variety Judge notes the number of different moves each competitor executes. In order to receive the full score, competitors in the K-1 Men's class must perform a minimum of four different moves and in the K-1 Women and Junior classes must perform a minimum of three different moves. If the competitor does not perform the required number of moves, their score is cut by the following amounts:

Men (4 different moves are required)

Performs 4 moves	100% of score
Performs 3 moves only	Score cut by 15% (85% of score)
Performs 2 moves only	Score cut by 25% (75% of score)
Performs 1 move only	Score cut by 35% (65% of score)

Women and Junior (3 different moves are required)

Performs 3 moves	100% of score
Performs 2 moves only	Score cut by 15% (85% of score)
Performs 1 move only	Score cut by 25% (75% of score)

*It is expected that these deductions will increase in the following years as the events become more comfortable using this judging system and judges become more knowledgeable.

1998 Trophy Move Definitions:

Ainwheel – A Cartwheel where the paddler's weight is only supported by the first end of the cartwheel. Second end can be in the water but not supporting the paddler's weight.

Loop – Front or back 360-degree vertical somersault in the hole without edging the boat and with no rotation or directional change.

Retentive Pirouette (360-degree) – A 360-degree-or-better pirouette that lands back in the hole without the paddler washing out of the hole.

1998 Variety Moves List

Each competitor must perform four (men) or three (women, junior and C-1) moves from this list to obtain their full score.

- Front surf or back surf
- 360-degree spin
- Cartwheel to the right
- Cartwheel to the left
- Any move from the Trophy Move List
- Split Wheel
- Pirouette (360-degree minimum)
- Directional change on a wave

Judges

There are six judges: one scribe is assigned to five of the judges; the variety judge keeps track of his/her own scores. It is highly recommended that every judge view the NOWR Judging Video prior to the event. The video will be available in April 1998 to all Event Organizers through the Events Office.

Technical/Style Judges: Five of the judges focus on technical moves and give an overall style score for each run. As each move is performed, the judges verbally give a point value to their scribe who records that number. The judges should be close enough to confer, if necessary, but far enough away not to hear each other as they call scores to their scribes. The technical and style scores are added and the 'high' and 'low' judges' scores are eliminated.

Variety Judge: Competitors are required to perform a number of moves from the Variety Move list. The Variety Judge only notes the number of different moves but is in a very powerful position and should be well-versed in rodeo moves.

Variations

If six judges can not be located, four may be used – 3 Technical Style Judges (all judges scores count) and 1 Variety Judge. It is highly recommended that 6 judges be used, however, for the Expert/Pro classes.

Scribes are needed only for Expert/Pro classes and are not necessary for lower level classes (with the exception of the Men's Advanced classes at some of the more competitive events) as the moves are not as numerous or performed as quickly. The Variety Judge and scoring can also be eliminated in lower level classes at the Event Organizers discretion.

Classes

Junior classes must be offered and it is highly recommended at the larger events that two classes be offered; expert and intermediate. Juniors are defined as being under 18 for all events with the following exception: for juniors registered for the NOWR Point Series Championship, the following applies: if the registered junior turns 18 after the start of the season (April 17 at the Kern River Festival), they will remain in the Junior Class throughout the entire season. If they turn 18 prior to April 17, they must enter adult classes.

All upper level classes will be labeled Expert/Pro or Expert. Other classes such as Advanced, Intermediate, Beginner, etc are at the event organizer's discretion.

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THE DAY I BECAME A MANN

by Bobby "Blackwater" "The Mann" Miller

I became a "Mann" on Wednesday, January 7, 1998. Jeff and I had spent the previous night in Fayetteville, West Virginia, at our buddy, Dinver McClure's house. I had broken my wood Silver Creek paddle the day before on the Blackwater, so Dinver loaned me a paddle so we could do Mann's Creek.

Photo by
Dave Garcia

BJ Johnson looks on as Dinver McClure takes off on the first boof of Pillage and Plunder Rapid.



Bobby Miller at the bottom of Liquid Drano -ALIVE!

I had heard a lot of hoopla about Mann's Creek. Everyone was saying that it was tons tougher than the Upper Blackwater (which was the toughest run I had done). They also said that a Sleek really wasn't a good boat for Mann's, but, then again, they said the same for the Upper B. With our shuttle run, we headed to the putin at Babcock State Park.

The putin is on Glade Creek, which flows into Mann's Creek about a third of the run. The run was flowing at -3 inches on the putin gauge, a perfect first time level according to Dinver. The group of 9 boaters consisted of myself (no longer THE MAN with this crew!), Jeff Nelson, Dinver McClure, Eric Morshell, Rob Dobson, Joey Beck, and three paddlers that I admired from the video "Falling Down", BJ Johnson, Katie Nietert and Clay Wright. Jeff and I were the only Mann's Creek first timers that day. My Sleek was surely out of place on Mann's — everyone else had MicroBats (7.5 foot long creek boats).

Mann's Creeks is five miles long and drops at 280 feet/mile, for a whopping 1,400 foot total vertical drop. The run starts at a beautiful Grist Mill. Beside the mill is a slide into 15 foot Grist Mill Falls. I decided to putin below it because the approach was tricky and the bottom of the falls is shallow.

The next drop was a 10-foot dam that we boofed on the right. Then, we faced a narrow slide that carried us into a beautiful utopian wilderness, away from civilization. Early on, there were a few tight 5-foot drops that sewed as a warm up for the first major rapid, Gladiator.

Gladiator is a series of 5-foot ledges running into a pillow, then falling off another 5-foot drop. Soon, we reached Pillage and Plunder, another series of ledges leading into an 8-foot drop, with a nice boof on the right. I was a little mixed on the directions and went down the center of the 8 foot drop. I melted down and came skyrocketing out of the

water on my tail.

Goliath starts out with a 10-foot drop that had a sweet boof ramp, then tumbles over some tight drops and turns to the right over a 5-foot drop that must be boofed left (to avoid an ugly pin). Soon, we were at Lunatic Fringe, a 10-foot drop into a rock that looks like a sure piton. Katie led Jeff and I on a sneak around a rapid called Mystery Hole. It was an ugly, pinny sneak and Katie hurt her shoulder and walked out. Luckily there was still a trail along the run.

Soon, we reached the foot bridge which signaled the last place to walk out. From here on, there would be no way to walk out except by blazing a trail through dense wilderness. We were in a section of boogy "Class 3-4" water when we reached the point where Mann's Creek entered. There was a 10-foot boof at one drop (I launched a SCHWEEEEEEET ONE!), another drop that reminded me of Lunatic Fringe, and a 5-foot boof with a tree sticking up above it. My dry top caught the tree and it ripped a large hole.

On another section of boogy water we came upon a tight slot. Clay, Dinver, and Jeff banged through but told me to go to the right. I tried to get right, but spun and went down the drop backwards. The low volume stern of the Sleek pinned instantly. I had water hitting me dead on in the face, leaving no air to breathe. I reached for the loop to pull the skirt but it was stuck under the cockpit rim. The water power was so great that I could not run my hands around the rim looking for the loop. I tried frantically to pop the skirt with my knees, but my skirt was on cement tight!

I was trapped and couldn't get out of the boat! I was too scared to even think of coming out through the skirt tunnel. Water gushed over and around me. It felt like I was swallowing gallons. I could lay on the back deck and catch small breaths, but the water would surge and come over me again. My dry top filled with water, holding my arms down. I remember thinking that I was going to die.

Right here on Mann's Creek! The creek I had wanted to



Photo by Dave Garcia

Katie Nietert navigating the boulders of Pillage and Plunder Rapid.

run for so long. I wished that I was some place, any place else. But if wishes were horses, beggars would ride.

Finally, Dinver got out on a rock. He told me to give him my hand. I did and almost pulled him into the river. Finally, Dinver pushed on my tail and worked it free. I flipped and washed through the slot. The borrowed paddle was long and gone and I was hanging half out of my boat. I slid back into the seat and hand-rolled.

Now I was headed downstream, backwards again. I was almost drowned and there was another drop right below me. I tried to hand paddle but I was weak and I fell over again. I was setting up for another hand roll attempt when I felt hands grab me. It was Jeff. He pulled me and my boat up on the shore to safety. I got out of the boat, shivering and out of breath. I burped gallons of Mann's Creek. The paddle was gone and the walk out was on the opposite bank.

After regaining some of my strength, I used Dinver's paddle to ferry to the other side. I was starting to walk out when Clay said, "Wait! You can use my paddle and I'll hand paddle the rest of the way." He said that he had hand paddled the run before and it wasn't a big deal. I wanted more than anything to get back into that boat and redeem myself. I had run all of those hard drops and almost drowned in what was essentially a Class 4 rapid.

So I took Clay's paddle and we kept on going. The river didn't get any easier. We were soon at a rapid called Bouncing Betty. It was similar to Lunatic Fringe because it went off a 10-foot drop into rock that I was sure I would piton into. But, I came through fine.

Finally we reached the last big rapid, Liquid Drano. It has a sketchy entrance through some tight slots. It then tumbles down a 6-foot sloping ledge into some rocks; followed by an 8-foot drop into a 90 degree right turn, followed by another 6-foot plunge. If you are upside down here, you will be drug across a shallow, 50-yard runout. I

scouted and was thinking about walking. Dinver ran the wrong slot and went into an undercut. (One of the first boaters to run Mann's got stuffed here and swam out the other side of the rock. He never saw his boat again.) Dinver grabbed on to a strainer that was jammed under the rock. He was able to pull himself out, but he had lost his paddle and had to hand paddle the meat of Drano. Even after all this Clay didn't want his paddle back. He paddled through Liquid Drano with just his hands!

I finally decided I could make the line. I ran the entrance fine and then headed down the 6-foot slope. I ran straight into a rock right above the 8 foot drop. I started to splat it, then fell deep over the 8-foot drop. I don't think I resurfaced until I was at the bottom of the 6-foot drop that followed. I headed down the slide to the congratulations of all the guys.

I slapped Eric a high five. I had paddled Mann's Creek! Well actually, we weren't done. We still had another half mile of really hard drops until we reached the New River. But I was ALIVE!

Mann's Creek is extremely scary and tough. There are many rapid drops harder than anything on the Upper Blackwater. It is incredible!

Will I run Mann's Creek again? You bet. It has replaced the North Fork of the Blackwater as my favorite run. I couldn't have gone with a better group. I feel that their advice is definitely worth taking. I am going to be back, but I will have a creek boat when I return.



Photo by Dave Garcia

BJ Johnson landing the first boof on Pillage and Plunder Rapid.

YOU CAN'T TAKE A RAFT DOWN THAT!

A raft descent of the Lake George section of the South Platte

The notion to raft the Lake George section of Colorado's South Platte River took form in July of 1996 at a Clear Creek Rafting Company party. Rumors were flying about the run. It was said to be tough, remote and steep. I didn't know anything about the Lake Fork Section except what I'd read in the Colorado Rivers and Creeks guidebook. "Two miles of this section average 240 feet per mile, and two long stretches exceed 400 feet per mile." Additionally, the "fun fact" was "thorn bush portaging." God knows there is nothing like dragging an oversized innertube through a thicket!

By Rob Rostermundt

Photos by Matt Terry (copyright 1996)

YOU CAN'T TAKE A RAFT DOWN THAT!



Mike Wertz running typical Lake George class V.

There was also an awesome picture in the guidebook of a beautiful 25-foot slide. But there was one statement in the guidebook that screamed a defiant "YES!" to my friend Jed Ward and me. Next to the category titled "rafts:" was printed the word "NO!" You see, in 1996 Jed and I had been systematically going through the guidebook attempting to raft all of the runs that had been rated "unraftable."

Jed Ward does not look like the kind of guy who would be at home rafting class V whitewater.

He's small. Not skinny or emaciated, but not likely to appear on the cover of *Muscle and Fitness* magazine. Jed's a seasoned 12 oz. lifter and leader of pre-trip safety meetings. Mellow and undirected, he waddles like Big Bird from Sesame Street. So, when I first started guiding for Clear Creek Rafting Company and was told that he was the best guide they had, I was doubtful. But that was only until I paddled with him on a post-work "fun" trip down the class V section on Clear Creek. After that evening I decided I would paddle with him anywhere.

Jed started boating early with his dad, who was a legendary rafter in the old days on the Arkansas. I don't know if it's true, but I was told that Jed's dad pioneered the left side run at the dam on the Narrows section of "the Ark," just above Buena Vista. There must be something to be said for genetics, because Jed is the only person I know to have run a raft down the 35-foot dam

on South Boulder Creek.

When our buddy Matt Terry suggested to his friend Bobby that he had some guide friends who wanted to run the Lake George Section in a raft, Bobby scoffed and said, "You can't take a raft down that." Matt assured Bobby that we were good, but Bobby remained skeptical. This, of course, only fueled our fire. We had to defend our honor as rafters.

We met at the putin the next morning at 11 o'clock and then proceeded to wait for what seemed like days as the shuttle was set to Terryall Creek. Being in a raft, technically a Stinger made by Colorado Headwaters, Jed and I started to run the flat water ahead of all the kayakers, or "real boaters." We figured we would be playing catch-up all day, and there was no need to look the fool before the run even started.

Now, good fortune comes in funny disguises. The initial mile or so floats through the private property of the Sportsman's Paradise Fishing Club. There was supposed to be a passable weir through a diversion dam that we would be able to pass through, so as not to set foot on their land. (See "Fear and Loathing on the South Platte") But the good ol' boys at the paradise had filled the weir with steel posts and cables, making it an impassable death-trap.

Good fortune you say? Certainly! After the commotion of bargaining with the sportsmen for passage across their private land, which eventually led



Mike Wertz in a rapid Jed and I called Reverse Rigor Mortis.

to a group decision to take the dam by storm, which resulted in angry shouts telling us that this was "their water" – the kayakers forgot about us "damn rafters." But that only lasted until our first portage. We had paddled the initial class IV rapid and caught an eddy,

only to discover we faced a boof move into an eddy right above an unrunnable slot bounded by a nasty undercut. As we carried, we figured that nobody there that day was taking us seriously. And they weren't! Not until we came to "Zap Yo' Mama Falls."

We had taken off ahead of the group, scouting and running a lot of steep, low-volume (240 cfs) class IV to V- whitewater, trying to keep up the pace, when we came upon this, the biggest drop of the day. There was a class III entrance to this beautiful twenty-footer, which landed in a nice pool above some more class III-IVish stuff. Our buddy Shane said it looked like we should portage on the right side, and then took off downstream with most of the rest of the group. That sounded fine with me.... I've always hated waterfalls. But Jed wanted to run it. I had to admit the hydraulic at the bottom looked harmless enough. (The only thing I hate more than the dropping over a falls is the thrashing that can occur in the hole at the bottom.)

So good old Matt Terry stood at the base of the falls with his waterproof camera as we plunged into the pool. I heard hoots of applause as I pulled Jed's butt into the raft, just before we floated into the next rapid. I don't think Jed even held on. After this demonstration of bravado we were probably still considered inferior, but at least the kayakers started directing us toward lines as we worked our way through the tight boulder gardens.

In fact, this section of the South Platte is a maze of gigantic granite boulders. Sometimes the river even disappears from sight. Inside this maze, as the boulders lean against each other, there are many convoluted slots that the kayakers could fit through. Slot far too narrow for us, so we were forced to opt for the "wide" line.

There were numerous spots which could be considered semi-portages. One slot in particular was easy, but also really tight. I climbed out of the stalled raft, stemmed across the slot, while Jed low-sided.



Hank Bevington running through a tight place.

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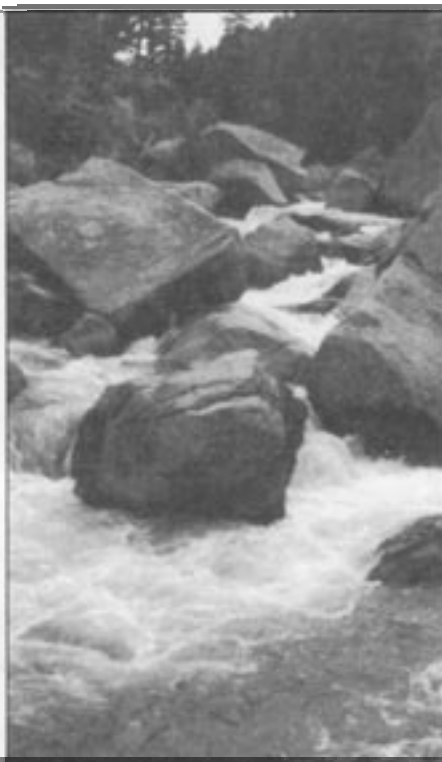


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YOU CAN'T TAKE A RAFT DOWN THAT!

As the raft popped through the slot, I jumped in. Do you call this a portage? Maybe... compared to the easy passage of the kayaks. But, all in all, we were able to cleanly run most of the rapids. We even had a opportunities gloat, because the kayaks had mandatory portages too.

But Jed and I were getting bummed. We had paddled most of the difficult whitewater, and tackled astonishing rapids in an awesome wilderness canyon. It has been one of the finest runs I had attempted. But we still hadn't found the big slide we had seen in the guidebook. We were afraid it was located in the lower five miles of the run, which we weren't doing because the portages in the lower gorge were supposed to be too heinous. Then, just as we were finishing our longest portage, Jed saw the kayakers in an eddy on river right, just above the famed slide. Jed and I quickly started re-portaging upstream so we could ferry across to

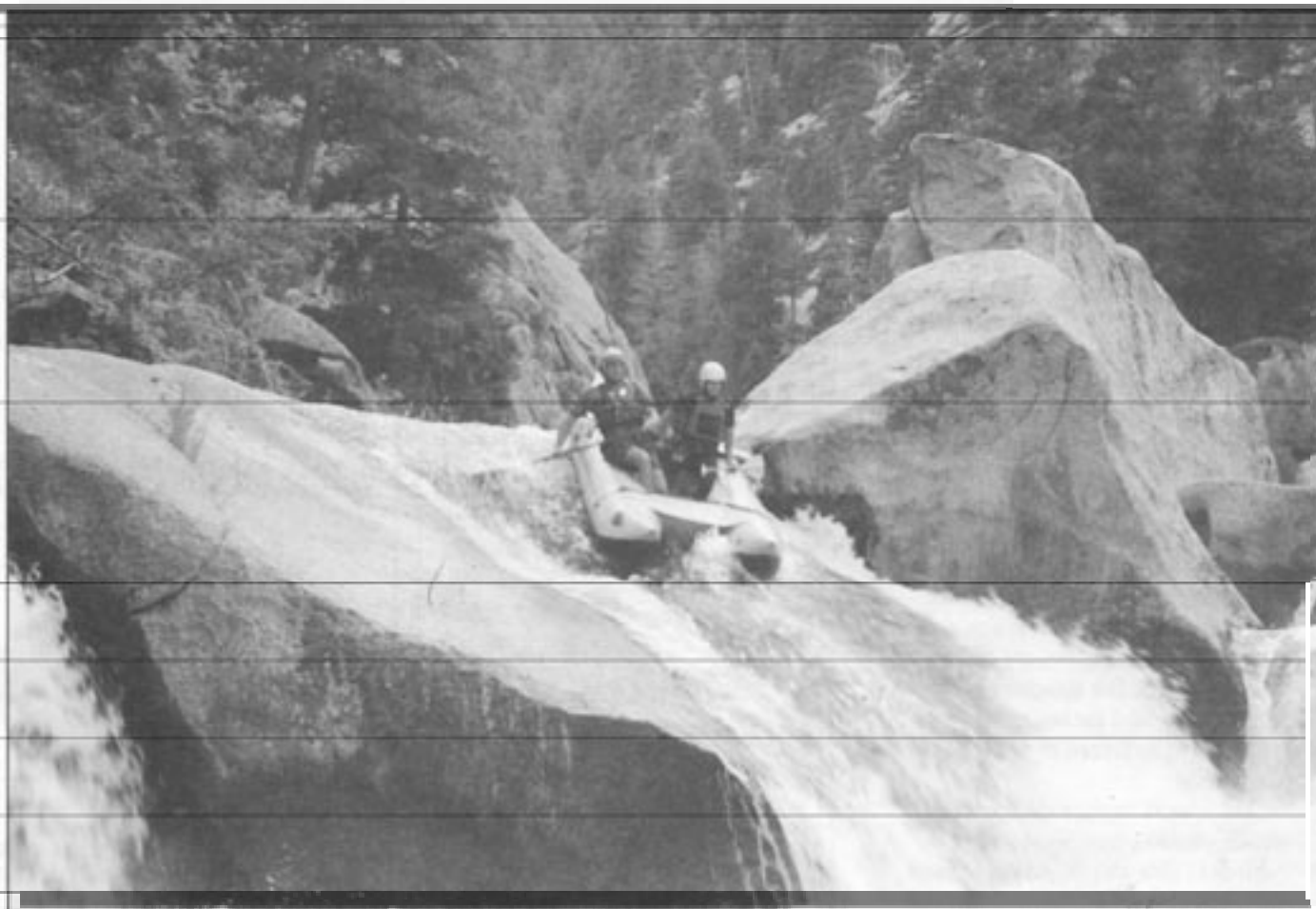


Lake George portage material.

run the drop.

Just at the lip of the falls, Jed turned to me and asked if this was the big one. Before I could answer we were rocketing downward, hoping we wouldn't piton into the rock which was said to be right under the surface. But our landing was clean and, this time, Jed was still in the boat. Not that swimming in this pool would have been a big deal. In fact, the South Platte water was so warm that we took turns jumping in and swimming as we drifted out of the canyon. This is unheard of in Colorado, where river water temperatures usually rival my icebox.

We were far behind the kayakers by the time we reached the takeout. We could have easily floated right past it. The "boaters" certainly weren't looking for us as they enjoyed their beers on the tailgates of the trucks. They had apparently forgotten about us already. Damn kayakers!



The famed slide from the guidebook picture.

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Zamboom

PADDLING AFRICA'S ZAMBEZI IN FLOOD!

by Johnny Snyder

Editors note: Johnny Snyder has worked as a guide and video boater on the Zambezi since 1992. He established permanent residence in Zambia in 1997. In 1997, and now, again, in 1998 the Zambezi is cresting at unusually high levels. Here he describes an incredible high water kayak descent of one of the world's most fearsome rivers.

It's hairy every time you paddle the Zambezi River. But the scenery on the way to the put-in is so phenomenal it almost takes your mind off the impending chaos. Hiking through the palms in the over grown rain forest which is nurtured by the spray from Victoria Falls, we could use a sharp machete. We are walking down a small stream that once was the trail. I jokingly called it "the head waters of the Zambezi." Actually, the headwaters are far away in a newly formed country – The Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire.

It is late in the day. We spent the morning and afternoon chasing tourists that had flipped out of rafts, sending e-mails to incoming boaters and dispensing the porter's wages for the month. Although Africa has a slow and nothing in a hurry pace, when you are a professional paddler working with tourists, something always needs to be done.

But Steve Fisher (South African), myself (American) and the glare on the river are the only things that matter now. The park officials think we are out of our minds... they don't paddle! The porters who carry the boats love

the extra pay. Our girl friends insist that we carry a two way radio-in case the unthinkable occurs. We know a swim would probably not be fatal, but equipment recovery could be difficult. Steve once said of our mutual high water paddling adventures, "When I look back to you at the end of a rapid, it's for humor, not to see if you are alive."

There is a small 2-foot surf wave in the launch eddy, we laugh as we surf it. The Zambezi River goes ballistic soon after we reach the main flow. No place to stop, I look back and see an incredible rainbow as Steve paddles out of the mist of Victoria Falls (mois-o-tunya... the smoke that thunders).

Rapid #1. When we are next to each other it seems we are standing still, but one glance to shore proves we are really cruising. Here comes #2 — 5-foot diagonals from the right... wave wheel on the second wave, then get bashed by the next. #3 is next; again giant diagonals right to left. We must surf them because there is a lot of water pushing from left to right into a nasty pour over thing that I don't even want to look at. Even #3&1/2 is XL. The waves are easily 10 feet from the backside and are surging to a crashing roll of foam. The pile surfs me side-

ways, then I turn and cartwheel (two points) and go under the foam pile. I roll up and paddle through two more big waves, heading left.

Finally, an eddy to catch my breath and sponge out my boat! It's a hot evening, I splash water over my head as I wait for Steve. We started together, but I have not made eye contact with him for some time. I did see the tip of his paddle once or twice. He screams into the eddy as hot as I am. He pops his spray skirt to ventilate.

#4 has opened up. What is usually a house size hole on the right wall is now a large ramp with a diagonal, just asking to be ridden. We paddle up the wave going warp 5, then along the wall, coping with some pounding reactionaries. The eddy lines are surfing 3-to-4-feet and then are big whirlpools. The corridor down #4&1/2 is massive. The river narrows for about a mile and giant waves form, one after another. Wave wheels on command, surf if it has a pile. Freedom of expression!

#5 is too big. Steve runs first and I'm four boat lengths behind. Boom, he is thrown into the air by a big wave and disappears behind a wall of water! Now I'm airborne too. The feeling of free falling has never been so protracted. I continue to drop even after I'm under water. I surface-roll and struggle to recover my momentum. I spot Steve... Big Smile.

#6 has flattened out. We make the most of a surf spot on river left, but forget about a re-feeder eddy.

#7 is plenty big, even at low water. Now it has tremendous power. We decide to run a 3-meter waterfall that has formed on the right. It's an up hill approach with little time to boof. I go deep. Steve laughs as I resurface and refit my nose plugs. We move left into the main flow as the waves peak at twenty feet down the middle. As the waves subside we make a hard right turn into the Narrows.

In the Narrows, the Zambezi flows through a 50-foot-wide gorge. At low levels the Narrows is benign. But at this level the day before, when Steve and I decided to try a surf, Steve had his paddle ripped from one hand and

What is usually a house size hole on the right wall is now a large ramp with a diagonal, just asking to be ridden. We paddle up the wave going warp 5, then along the wall, coping with some pounding reactionaries.

got cartwheeled uncontrollably. He eventually washed out into 10-foot chop that lasted for about 100 meters. Today, we decide to run a three-meter waterfall just to left of the Narrows. Steve runs first and signals from below that he didn't even get wet. I go deep. Now we must peel out into the middle of the Narrows. It takes some serious low bracing and momentum to get me through.

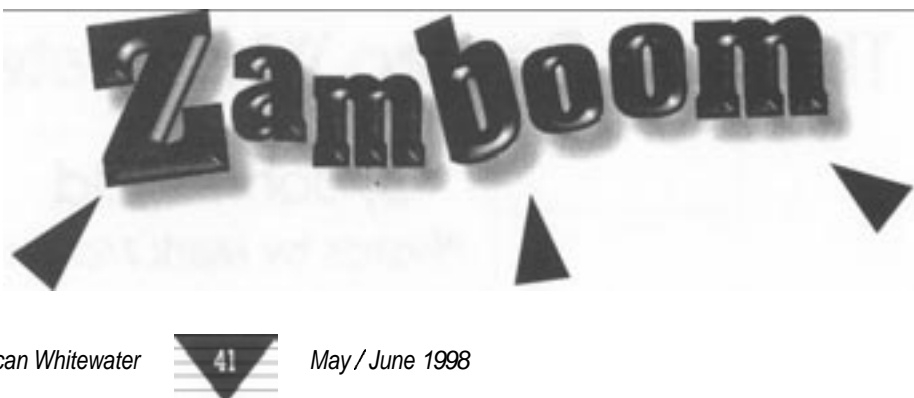
There is a nice wave above #8 that we both ride. #8 is even bigger than #7! Nearly a half mile long with a wave train right down the middle. We make it through with some hard paddling and a couple of under water immersions.

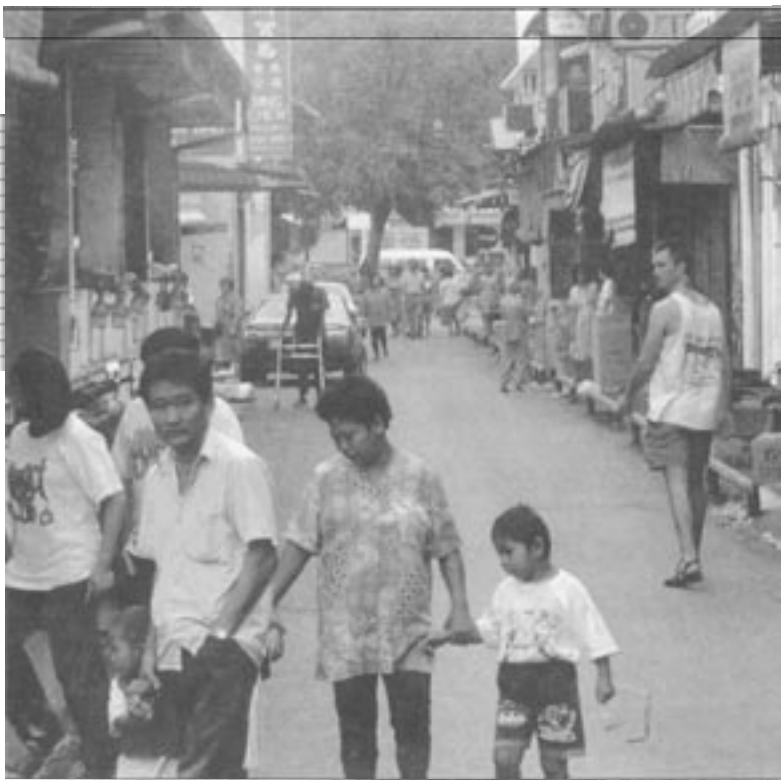
We scout #9 on the left. Here the Zambezi does some amazing things. At most levels #9 has to be portaged by the commercial rafters. But we run it daily; at each different level it offers a different challenge. It is never easy! Now it is XXXL, to say the least! There is a 30-foot breaking wave from the center to the right side. No need to hit it, but you must ride up its backside to

get to the right side of the wave train. There is a nasty eddy down on the left; I was trapped there once last season and that was enough. It tried to kill me! To escape from that eddy you have to commit to a bashing from a cushion wave at the bottom.

I go first. I go up and up and up until I'm on the backside of the wave, then bye, bye! The river just opens up and swallows me. I'm deep, the pressure feels strong, but I'm not stuck in any hole. It's solid water, not air white. I roll quickly when I sense the surface. Then BOOM! Another 30-foot crashing wave. It tumbles me again, this time I roll up and paddle hard right. All of the sudden I see Steve two feet from me in a huge tail stand. We paddle just right of the rest of the waves, looking at them wide-eyed as they roll toward a monstrous cushion train crash. We cut hard left to avoid a menacing eddy on the right. And now it is over!

We are both breathing heavily. We are both smiling. We have paddled the entire 12-km run (7 miles) in just 34 minutes!





What are the limits of whitewater kayak exploration? How far out in the middle of nowhere can a small team of expert paddlers get while living out of their kayaks? What exactly do these remote places look like? Who or what lives there, and how many unrun whitewater rivers surround them? ►

Trans Borneo

The Trans Borneo Whitewater exploratory

By John Weld
Photos by Mark Moore

Trans Borneo

Answering these questions is my hobby. And this past winter, my hobby took me to a place with a reputation as being one of the most remote and untraveled place on Earth.

On Dec. 29, 1997, I met three friends at Dulles airport in Washington D.C. — all of us carrying our kayaks and gear and the idea of crossing the Indonesian island of Borneo from coast to coast by whitewater kayak.

Our plan was to start on one side of the island, use rivers to travel up and into the interior, cross the heart of Borneo on foot and then find an unrun river on the other side to paddle out to the coast. It would be a 600 mile odyssey that would put the idea of exploratory kayaking to test under some of the most strenuous conditions on the planet.

The guys accompanying me were old paddling friends who all share my interests in one form or another. One important common bond is that each of us is, more or less, a professional paddler. There was Nelson Oldham, 30, a current U.S. Kayak Team member; Andy Bridge, 34, who builds kayaks at Dagger and was eight times the national champion in downriver C-1; and Mark Moore, 36, who teaches kayaking in St. Albans School in Washington D.C. I am a 29-year-old whitewater apparel manufacturer who has spent the last eight years teaching paddling at Riversport on the Youghioughney River in western Pennsylvania. Between the four of us we had an impressive background of paddling experience, and either together or in separate groups we have traveled all over the globe in search of the world's best whitewater.

But this particular trip, which was two years in the making, was perhaps the most ambitious any of us had undertaken.



Left page: Nelson on downtown Miri
Above: Andy, Nelson & John on the express boat

But why Borneo? Every guidebook on the island mentions a roster of biblical-like plagues that travelers into the interior encounter: leeches, bees, ants, torrential rain, snakes, freshwater crocodiles, parasites, worms, bacteria, bodily fungus. Then there are the mosquitoes, and the textbook of diseases they carry — four strains of malaria, two types of dengue, and my personal favorite, Japanese encephalitis, where your brain swells and you die.

And why did we have to cross the island? What's wrong with just a quick first descent, and then a flight home, hopefully before some parasite can squirm its way into our bloodstream?

By crossing the island, we hoped to give Borneo plenty of chances to give us everything it's got. And to really get a feel for what we were thinking requires an understanding of what a small group of kayakers call "Alpine Style" whitewater exploration.

This is going to be a tough concept for some boaters to grasp, especially as the sport of whitewater kayaking begins to revolve around park-n-play boating. But the premise is that kayakers were, at one point in their history, actually meant to go somewhere off the beaten track, and under the right circumstances, they're really, really good at it. One analogy to what we do can be found in the world of mountaineering. Back some years ago, mountaineering expeditions usually involved hundreds of porters, and literally tons of excess gear, including things like tables, Dutch ovens and crates of wine. Then, around the 1930s, climbers



The chartered longboat on the Baram River

like Eric Shipton and Bill Tilman started to tackle peak after peak with small teams (no more than four) of expert climbers using minimal gear. They would summit a mountain in a fraction of the time the big expeditions needed, at a fraction of the cost. This is essentially what my friends and I do in whitewater boats.

Typically, most whitewater river exploration trips use rafts as their vehicle of choice. The reason for this is obvious. Rafts have the ability to not only carry lots of gear, but also inexperienced personnel — typically film crews, paying customers or the obligatory non-paddling scientists — who often times are footing the bill for the trip. Of course, the problem is that to cover much distance in rafts, the conditions have to be just right. Not too much flat water, but not too much whitewater. It can't be too shallow, and the portages can't be too long. Forget about going upstream and substantial overland crossings. On top of that, big rafting trips seem to make the same mistakes over and over again. For one, they tend to bring everything but the kitchen sink in their boats, verifying the old adage "if there's extra space, it will get filled with useless gear." Things like four-burner stoves and camp chairs are my personal favorites. Furthermore — and I know this is a stereotype — it always seems

like one, if not all of the inexperienced "sugar daddies" in the crew are in terrible shape, or terrified of whitewater, or both. Every rough spot becomes a psychodrama. The result is that many extended raft explorations have either failed, were brutally difficult, took way too long, cost way too much, or most likely, all of the above.

Our alpine style kayaking trips are inherently different, and by adhering to two key principles, we have negotiated first descent after first descent in super-remote rivers all over the world. First, we work in small teams (usually four or less) of expert whitewater paddlers who are in top physical condition. Second, we only take what we can fit into a large whitewater kayak. This allows us to run up to Class V whitewater, execute portages with ease, negotiate lengthy overland crossings, scrape down almost dry river beds, and generally kick ass in any place where there is even a minute amount of water.

The downside is that we have to turn down any kind of entourage that might otherwise bring in money (like clients), and we are somewhat limited in how long we can live out of our boats.

By weighing everything, and excluding any gear not absolutely necessary, it's possible to live comfortably and totally

self-supported out of a whitewater kayak for over two weeks. Not as long as a raft or canoe will allow, but it's still not too shabby. In general, food is the heaviest and the most limiting variable. Eat less, or develop a lightweight super-food, and you can extend the time out in the field considerably.

The list of rivers that we have collectively run in this manner is impressive, but one trip stands out as a particularly important predecessor to our most recent excursion in Borneo. In the summer of 1994, three friends and I, including Andy Bridge, paddled our whitewater kayaks up and over Baffin Island in Arctic Canada, and by doing so crossed the world's fifth largest island. (You can read about this trip in the January/February 1995 edition of the *American Whitewater*, and in Bill Sedivy's book, *River's End: A collection of bedtime stories for paddlers*.)

Our Baffin Island trip was interesting from a scenic standpoint — the high Arctic is beautiful place to visit if you have the money — but it also had resounding implications in terms of the alpine style of exploration and travel. In Baffin, not only did we descend two unrun rivers loaded with Class IV and V rapids, but we also paddled up another river for 100 miles. And it really wasn't that tough. That's not to say that we weren't well prepared for the trip with the best, newest and lightest gear, and a group of veteran whitewater paddlers in top shape. But all things considered, we described an overland route that would be very, very difficult, if not downright impossible on foot or in rafts or canoes, we did it in less time than we expected, and for the most part, we had a pleasant time doing it.

The motivation for paddling up and over Baffin started out as a monetary consideration. Charter plane flights in the Arctic cost a fortune, and by paddling up the second of three rivers on that almost uninhabited island, we could do our own shuttle. But in the end, it turned out to be a pretty good marketing device as well. While the paddling community knew that attaining rivers in kayaks wasn't all that hard — just masochistic — the non-paddling world thought what we planned to do in Baffin was absolutely unbelievable. In the end, we were mentioned in a number of sponsor-friendly magazine articles and we landed two substantial grants.

After we finished the Baffin trip, I started thinking about the next place I could go for a large-scale kayaking trip and, as a D.C. resident, I turned to a familiar resource: the map room in the Library of Congress. Accompanying me was my local paddling friend, Mark Moore. We started combing through maps of the globe with no exact idea of where we wanted to go, but we did know that crossing a body of land had been helpful in raising money for the Baffin trip. If we were to do a similar trip, we would need a couple of geographic features besides mountains and water. First, an island made sense, because it set convenient boundaries for the trip. Also, we would need a reliable source of water to ensure that the rivers would be paddleable as close to their source as possible, thereby reducing overland dragging to a minimum. In Baffin, for instance, we had the convenience of one of the world's largest ice caps feeding water into the rivers strong and fast from the very beginning. To recreate

First, an island made sense, because it set convenient boundaries for the trip.



Above: Andy, Joe, Nelson & John on the chartered longboat

Trans Borneo



Boat guide in helmet

those conditions, we would need either another ice cap, or lots and lots of rain.

The idea of actually crossing Borneo coast-to-coast is not new. For some reason, certain types of people look at Borneo, and decide that it's not enough to skirt around the edges, or to go up a river and come back down. Explorers seem to have to cross it. In 1897, a Dutch team crossed the vast interior of the island with a 110 porters. In 1982, a trekker named Eric Hansen crossed Borneo on foot in a remarkable journey documented in a book called *A Stranger in the Forest*. And then in 1983, four adventurers, led by mountaineering legends Rick Ridgeway and John Long, crossed Kalimantan the long way: from Pontianak to Tanjungselor. Interestingly enough, Ridgeway's itinerary had them finish on the same river that we would end up on — the Kayan. I imagine that all of these teams felt the same thing that we did when we looked at the vast, unknown, unmeasured, unstudied expanse of dark jungle described on the maps spread before us that day in the Library of Congress. Our desire to see what it looked like up close and in person really defied all common sense.

But at least in theory, Borneo has several selling points as a paddling destination. About the size of Texas (making it the third largest island in the world), Borneo gets about 400 cm of rain annually. Unlike the other islands of Indonesia, the mountains are non-volcanic, and (with the exception of the 13,000-foot Mt. Kinabalu) they rise gently from

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the sea to about 6,000 feet in the middle of the island. This means the island is big enough to host a wide variety of river sizes — from steep creeks to Potomac-sized rivers, and the grade allows for thousands of miles of navigable waterways. The temperature (except on Kinabalu) never falls below about 65 degrees, and while there is a rainy season, this usually means that it's raining most of the day, rather than part of the day.

The response was: "When you get sick around here, you usually die."

But statistics are just numbers. In reality, Borneo is basically one huge, hot, remote jungle, and even though there are more first descents on the island than you could run in a lifetime, there is no easy way to get to them. In fact, there is no hard way to get to them. There are only a small handful of almost impossibly difficult ways to get to these virgin mountain creeks. Why? Because jungles hate people. As for the indigenous people who have lived in the interior for centuries, I would consider them to be so tough, that they're not really people anymore. I'm reminded of a question Eric Hansen asked one of the native villagers the interior: 'Why don't I see any sick people in any of the villages?' The response was: 'When you get sick around here, you usually die.'

Anyone who has been to a real jungle knows what I'm talking about. The primary forest is like a dark sauna choked with vegetation, and the secondary forest — what's left after logging — is an impenetrable mass of brambles. And everything living in the jungle is poisonous, or will give you a rash, or bite you, or suck your blood, or generally make you miserable. It's like evolution at flood stage. This is not to mention the host of tropical diseases that you can get while poking around in this labyrinth of life. If you ever plan a trip to this area, get ready to read about dozens of medical horror stories, like this entry in the [Traveler's Medical Resource](#):

Filarisis. A disease caused by several species of round worms, *Brugia malayi*. Found only in humans, and is spread by many species of mosquito, Filarisis is widely distributed throughout Africa and Southeast Asia. Infected larvae from the mosquito bite pass into the human lymphatic system where they develop into mature round worms in 12 months... Chills, fever and headache may be the prevailing symptoms, but other presenting symptoms are infections of the testicles, skin surfaces, or any portion of the lymphatic system. Severe infections cause the development of elephantiasis, an extreme swelling of the scrotum and legs.

Mark and I compiled all of the information we had on Borneo, and like experienced adventurers, we made a short list of features a paddling trip there would have. On the "pros" side, we had a reliable source of water, mountains, and no hypothermia. On the "cons" side, we had: dangerous heat, snakes, disease, we didn't speak the language, poor or nonexistent maps, assurance from previous rafting trips we couldn't make it, we were probably going to end up crossing an international border with no paperwork, constant warn-



Negotiating for porters in Long Moh



Some locals from Long Moh

Trans Borneo



One of the porters

ings of flash floods, leeches, and the potential of someone getting hurt or sick in someplace where, even if we could radio for help (unlikely in thick canopy), no one could get to us anyway. Then we threw the list away, and by the fall of 1997, we had picked our route.

The Trans Borneo Whitewater exploratory was to have four phases. In the first part, we would land in Miri, Sarawak, and make our way up the Baram River as far as we could using the standard mode of travel in the Southeast Asian rain forest — motorized longboats. We figured that with cooperative water levels, we could get within 20 to 50 miles of the Indonesian border (which is also the watershed divide). The second phase would involve hiring local guides who would help us drag our boats and equipment over the divide into the nearest paddlable river on the Indonesian side of the island. The major problem here was that in the course of this "hike," through primary rain forest, we would also make over a 4,000-foot jump in altitude.

The third phase would start when we would leave the security of our porters, and enter the more or less completely unmapped Kayan Mentarang Reserve, and then descend the Iwan River for 90 miles. At this point, we would be completely on our own. The fourth phase of the trip started where the Iwan hit the Kayan River, where we could resupply if we needed at Data Dian, the first village we would see in over a hundred miles. After Data Dian, we had over 100 miles through more primary forest on the Kayan before we entered the last part of the trip, an attempt to descend through the unrun Giram Ambun gorge on the Kayan.

In a place where the rivers provide the only reasonable access to the dark interior, Indonesia's Giram Ambun is a 20-mile section of rapids of particular geographic significance because it has successfully kept the upper reaches of the Kayan (the "Apo Kayan") remote and unlogged. In the beginning of this century, the Dutch (Borneo was a colony



at the time) realized that commercial navigation of the gorge was impossible, and they cut a three meter wide trail around the entire length of the gorge to facilitate trade to the upper villages.

This, of course, did not stop people from trying to run down through the rapids. In the 1930s, nine Dayak boatmen tried to run the rapids in longboats. All of them were killed. The next attempt we heard about was by Ridgeway's group in 1983. John Long (Ridgeway had contracted typhoid earlier in the trip, and had to be evacuated) led two rafts up to the gorge, took one look at the first rapid, and then started to look for what was left of the Dutch trail. We had every assurance from the few people we found who had been near the gorge that it was unrunnable, and certainly every guide book described the gorge as "impassable."

Stateside, Mark and I recruited the rest of the team for this endeavor. In this particular case, it was not just a matter of finding a couple of guys who would serve as assets to a trip of this kind, but primarily finding good, mentally healthy paddlers who would even be interested in going to a place like Borneo in the first place. Andy and Nelson, both of whom are experienced expeditionary boaters, and friends of ours, were obvious choices. We knew that they would have the essential personal qualities to help make this trip a success. Solid boaters with years and years of Class V experience, top physical condition, many multi-day trips under their belts, and most importantly, they had jobs and spouses that would allow them to disappear for up to six weeks into the heart of one of the Earth's most remote locations.



Above: Lunch time on the Moh Creek
Below left: Nelson dragging through the jungle
Below right: John and Joe hiking through the jungle

Trans Borneo

On Dec. 31 we landed in Miri, Sarawak with four kayaks, and met up with Joe Yaggi, an American video boater living in Bali, who had arrived in Miri the day before. Joe had arranged at the last minute to come along with us to video the trip. And because he spoke fluent Bahasa, he would act as a much needed translator. With the strange mix of Malaysian, Hindu and Chinese culture as a backdrop, we spent the next three days in Miri taking care of the usual expedition stuff. Finding Ziplocks, distributing gear, packing boats, getting used

to the heat, learning how to order food, figuring out what noise on the phone was a busy signal and what noise was a ring. We also spent a lot of time sitting in the air-conditioned hotel room watching bad Malaysian TV, which as far as I can tell consists entirely of shows dedicated to children in fezzes singing Muslim chants. The plan in Miri was to take care of any last minute business because we knew that as we started to move upstream, we would be essentially going back in time.

Four days later, on Jan. 3, we loaded our kayaks on the local phenomena known as "express boats" and started to motor upstream on the Baram. Many of the villages in Borneo are accessible only by river, and the larger upstream towns are serviced daily by these water busses. The express boat is essentially a gigantic metal eel made from a discarded airplane fuselage that's about 60 feet long and seats about 40 people. While you have to credit these guys with





Andy gets a leech

taking a wrecked plane and making it into a power boat, the problem is that when you climb into this thing, you go down through a portal below water level, and besides the door you came in on, there's no way out if it flips over. The passengers long ago realized this was a problem, as a result, most passengers nowadays ride up on the roof, making the boat even more unstable, and more hazardous for the people below. Understanding that you might be concerned about this, the pilots play a video tapes of karate

movies and women's wrestling during the trip.

We started up the Baram at the junction of the South China Sea, where the river is about a quarter mile wide, deep and brown. It looked like the Potomac at the Kennedy Center. As we moved upstream, pushed by two enormous engines, I climbed up on the top of the boat and watched the scenery. Soon after leaving Miri, the banks turned to mile after mile of secondary jungle growth and was littered with stacks and stacks of logs. Even here, I thought, just a few miles from a city, I could wander up from the river and into the jungle and be lost in a matter of minutes. For three hours the banks didn't change, until we pulled up to the

tion of two rivers, as opposed to long boats and long houses, where "long" is an adjective). As we approached Long Lama, we were a little concerned about this charter, because we had been told by several people back in the states that it would be very costly and difficult to find someone to do that for us. We also had heard that the Baram upstream of Long Lama was a pretty technical run, and you had to look around to find someone who knew the river. Typically, my experience in other expeditions would say that this would be the point in the story where we lose days and days messing around in town trying to find a charter and then end up paying a fortune for the service. But almost immediately after getting off the express boat we were approached by a guy named Mok Chow Ming, who not only had a long boat that would hold five kayaks and gear, but also lived up that direction. He and his boatman knew the river as well as anyone.

We spent the next two days cramped in Mok Chow Ming's long boat with our gear, watching the river roll by. Besides the occasional Class III rapid that forced us to jump out and pull the boat along the shore, the trip was pretty uneventful. Gradually, the slow, wide, muddy 8,000-cfs river dwindled down to a quick, shallow, muddy 1,200-cfs river. Except for the heat, which we only felt when the boat stopped, the weather was pleasant. To anyone thinking that expeditionary kayaking is all fun and excitement, I have to admit that my experience does not bear that to be true. So far, our Borneo trip had been just what we had expected, and we pretty much had done nothing but sit for the past week, as we got shuttled from planes to express boats to long boats,

The boat stopped here for two hours, and we hung out in town, suffering through the scorching heat of the interior.

next town of Marudi. The boat stopped here for two hours, and we hung out in town, suffering through the scorching heat of the interior. At 4 p.m. we climbed back into the boat and headed up to Long Lama.

Express boat service ends at Long Lama, and from there we had to charter a long boat to take us the 16 or so hours upstream to Long Moh, the town at the junction of the Moh and the Baram rivers (the term "Long" meaning the junc-

generally moving down the technological ladder the closer we got to the interior of Borneo. In fact, most expeditions that I have been on involve the following pie chart of activity: 75% sitting around waiting for cars, porters, shuttles, etc.; 22% carrying my kayak full of gear over hill and dale; 2% sheer terror; and 1% fun and excitement. The only thing we were expecting to be different about Borneo was torrential rain and disease.



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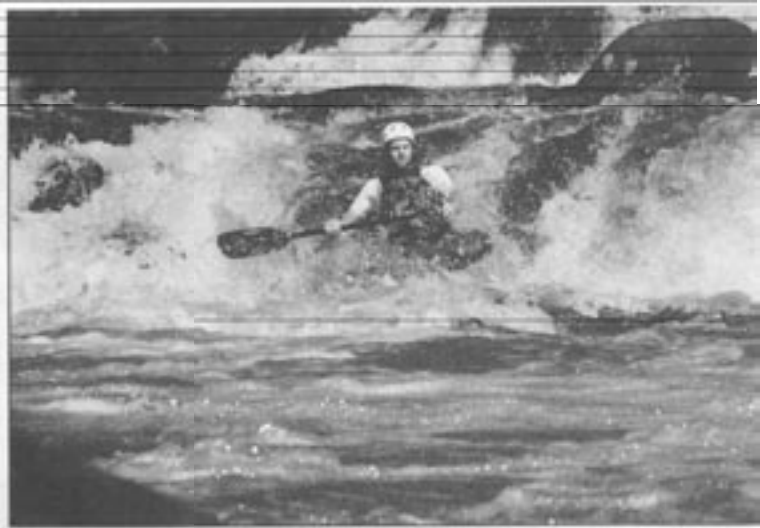
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Top left: Portaging on the Pok
Top right: Andy on the Iwan
Bottom left: Rapids on the Iwan
Bottom right: John on the Iwan



In the afternoon of Jan. 6, we pulled into the Moh River and the town of Long Moh. The size of the Moh River was of particular interest, because that was the route we were going to follow up toward the Indonesian border. The bigger the Moh, the easier it would be to go upstream. Because of El Nino, and the fact that every other river on the island seemed to be dry, we expected the Moh to low at best. We were pleasantly surprised to see that the Moh river was not only plenty big, it was also startling clear, signifying that we were at the threshold of virgin forest.

The town of Long Moh was also equally as pleasant. It was made up of a few houses up on stilts surrounding a somewhat modern-looking long house. True to what we had seen so far of Borneo culture, the town was simple, but efficient and immaculate. We were immediately welcomed into the town, and shown to our own room in the long house.

Our arrival at Long Moh signaled the beginning of the second phase of the trip. Although we saw that we could paddle at least part ways up the Moh river, we knew that for a majority of the 30 miles between us and the Iwan drainage in Indonesia we would be dragging our loaded boats overland. Our boats, by the way, were full of two weeks worth of food and paddling gear that we would need when we hit the Iwan and they were as heavy as anvils. We were also planning on carrying external frame backpacks filled with

enough food and gear for the 30 mile hike. This, on top of the fact that we would most likely get totally lost trying to find our own way through the forest, prompted us to hire porters.

Negotiations for a price on porters began the next morning and went on and off throughout the day. The problems of what we wanted to do were explained to us over and over again. First, no one from Long Moh had been where we wanted to go since they had migrated over from the Iwan/ Indonesian side of the island over 40 years ago. Only a handful of the town elders remembered the way. Also, the route up to the Iwan involved a 4,000-foot climb in altitude. As the village chief, called "Bapak," described the route, his hand kept jabbing upward as he said, "Nik! Nik! Nik," meaning "Up! Up! Up!" We would need 12 porters all together — 10 to help carry the boats (two to a boat)

Trans Borneo

Irans Borneo

While I poured hot water into my freeze dried dinner, I watched them boil the turtle.

and two of the town elders to lead the way. The trip would most likely take about five days one way, and then take them two more to get home.

Because it was rice harvesting time, it would difficult to pull this many able-bodied villagers from the patties. In the end, however, money overcame all obstacles, and we ended up securing a team to help us at the rate of \$10 per porter per day. Not much money for us, but a princely sum for the people of Long Moh.

Sleep is not a priority in a long house. After being woken up at 11 p.m. for last minute porter negotiations, we fell asleep by midnight, only to be woken up every 15 or 20 minutes by cats screaming, dogs barking, roosters crowing or lizards cackling. Keep in mind that there is no furniture in long houses either. You just sleep on the floor and it's usually about 100 degrees for the first part of the evening. At day-break, the roosters go berserk. By 6 a.m. people start milling around the house. After two days in this relaxed but loud environment, I was ready to start moving into the woods.

By 8 a.m. on the morning of our departure, we had assembled our crew, loaded our gear into four small longboats, and started to motor upstream into the heart of the forest. At lunch, we ditched the motors in the jungle and continued upstream by paddling and poling. By 5 p.m. we had gone as far as you could navigate by water and we set up camp. We would head off into the jungle on foot the next morning.

Right away, we began to get a feel of the how the next five days would progress. As we set up camp, I realized why the porters had brought so little stuff. Two of the porters went hunting to catch dinner and the other 10 immediately started to clear cut a little patch of forest to make a shelter. By the time

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they had built a hut big enough to accommodate a dozen people, the hunters had returned with a snapping turtle the size of a sewer lid, which pretty much freaked me out. Evidently, the two hunters had started diving around in the creek bed with a face mask, and had seen this

monster under some tree roots and had speared it with a knife. While I poured hot water into my freeze dried dinner, I watched them boil the turtle.

The next morning, we entered hell and we remained there for the next five days. After experimenting with a few different innovative methods of carrying loaded kayaks and 80-pound packs through the jungle and up a mountain, we settled on just clawing and dragging our way through the forest like fugitives being chased by dogs. Although I had been looking forward to this part of the trip because I had always wondered what the real primary rain forest looked like, I was disappointed to find out that the jungle, for the most part, is not that interesting of a place, unless you're interested in misery. A large part of the reason for this is that any wildlife that we may have seen was scared away by our large and noisy entourage. What was left behind, however, was plenty of biting insects and leeches.



Andy, John, Joe and Nelson at a campsite on the Iwan

The toughest part was the tremendous heat. The floor of the rain forest is a dark, living, breathing sauna that made us sweat so much that, in my lifetime of disgusting hygiene moments, I reached an all-time low about 20 minutes into the hike. And because we had left the river and started up hill, drinking water was not abundant. At times, we were four hours away from

the nearest water source. Even the porters were having a tough time. While I was amazed at how tough these guys were (most of them didn't even bring shoes), after the first day there were rumors of a possible mutiny, especially among some of the younger guys, who for the most part had a "I don't need this" look on their face. Also, because we were making so much noise, it was tough to hunt in the evenings. The porters lived on nothing but rice for two days, until we started breaking out our extra rations to feed them.

The days in the jungle went like this — wake up, and drag, carry, throw and kick at the kayaks and packs for four hours. Stop for lunch and avoid leeches. In the afternoon, repeat what we did in the morning. Stop at about 4 p.m. and clear a patch in the jungle for camp. Start again in the morning.

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Typically, we would cover about four or five miles in a day. That's 1/2 mile an hour for those of you keeping score. At times, we were basically pushing our boats up cliffs. This went on for five days, and by lunch on the second day, any interest in "experiencing" the jungle had been purged from my mind. I couldn't wait to get into my boat and start paddling, provided that there was anything left of my boat to paddle when we got to the Iwan.

On Jan. 11 we crossed the border into Indonesia, and after that things started to ease up. The only way we knew it was the border was because the Indonesian government had clear cut a 30 foot wide path through the jungle along entire border, presumably from one end of the island to the other. Also, at this point, we started to drag the boats down hill for the first time in four days. That evening, we camped along the Poh river, a tributary of the Iwan. At camp, the Poh was no more than a drainage ditch, but by noon the next day, we felt the Poh was large enough to navigate in kayaks (or at least large enough to drag the boats down the middle).

We decided it was time to take leave of the porters. Our thinking was that since we were in the Iwan drainage, we couldn't possibly get lost. Just keep going downstream, and we'll end up on the coast sooner or later. After repacking our boats, we gave the porters our packs and hiking boots, shook hands, and took off into the wilderness on our own. After a day and half of dragging our boats down the Poh, we hit the Iwan at about 11 a.m. on Jan. 13.

Our goal at that point was to use our kayaks to travel downstream due south for 90 miles on the Iwan, to the junction of the Kayan. At the junction of the Iwan and Kayan is the village of Data Dian, an excellent resupply point, and most likely the first village we would see after Long Moh. While the hike was probably the most physically demanding part of the trip, in many ways, our descent of the Iwan was one of the scariest. As far as we knew, no one had ever run that section of river before, and the only topographical map that we could find of the region has a gigantic, white "terra incognita" spot that encompasses a blue line that only suggests the probable path of the river. We did find a record of a Dutch ethnographer who traveled on the lower portion of the river in the 1930's, and he described an impassable gorge.

So there we were in the most remote part of one of the most remote islands on Earth, surrounded by one of the world's largest rain forests, which is about as familiar and friendly a place as the surface of Venus. The nearest help was a five day hike back the way we came, assuming we could even begin to find our way. The fact was, that if something went wrong in the next week, there was an excellent chance someone would end up dead.



Above: The canyon on the Kayan (Andy)

Although the Iwan had marginal flow for the first couple of days (200 cfs), it was infinitely better than the hike through the jungle. The kayaks really came into their own. First of all, we started to cover 15 to 20 miles a day, no problem. Leeches — maybe because they're a favorite fish

food — were nonexistent along the river banks. Also, because

we were moving so much more quietly through the water, in every slow section of the river we began to see wildlife. Things like barking deer, monitor lizards, rhinoceros hornbills, countless fish and monkeys became common place. The idea that we were in the middle of the most remote, wild, dangerous and uncharted places on earth all on our own slowly became an electrifying thought.

In a nutshell, the six days we spent on the Iwan were mostly uneventful. There were a couple of reasons for this. For one thing, the weather was cooperative beyond our greatest expectations. We had heard over and over that we would experience rain of unearthly quantity and force, but in fact it had only drizzled a handful of times in the whole time we had been on the island. The result was that the river was obviously really, really low. While this may not be ideal conditions for big whitewater, it was just fine for scraping by. This also allowed us to do what we had heard repeatedly not to do — that is to camp by the river. The idea is that the rivers regularly rise 10 or more feet overnight, and, camping by the river is tantamount to sleeping



Kids and kayaks at Data Dian

Trans Borneo



John in the canyon on the Kayan

in the river itself. What you're supposed to do is to paddle past all of the wonderful sandy beaches along the river banks and when you come to camp time, you're supposed to carry your stuff up the bank at least 10 feet into that god-awful jungle and camp there with all of your blood sucking, stinging and biting buddies. Thanks to El Nino (which makes dry weather patterns on the western Pacific), we camped right along the river. Most of all, though, the Iwan was uneventful because kayaks were so good in that kind of environment. Portages, shallow water, and the occasional Class 5 rapid were no problem.

On Jan. 18 we hit the junction of the Kayan. At its mouth, the Iwan was about 1,200 cfs, and the Kayan was around 2,000 cfs. Together, they made a pretty sizable river. For some reason, I was surprised to see that the Kayan was as clear as the Iwan. I had heard that the Giram Ambun canyon 120 miles downstream had kept all logging traffic out of the upper Kayan, but I guess I just didn't believe it. As of right now, the Kayan still runs free of logging silt. Just a few miles downstream of the junction is the strange little town of Data Dian. As we paddled into the town of about 200 Kayan natives, the entire population ran down to the bank to check us out, and any possibility of a productive day for these guys ground to a halt.

Right away, dozens of kids start playing in the boats. I'd like to mention that the "kids in kayaks" scene seems to be a fixture of the third world paddling experience. I suppose

Portages, shallow water, and the occasional Class 5 rapid were no problem.

There were some steep sections on the Iwan and of course the whole idea of what we were doing was pretty cool, but true to many long distance exploratory trips, there were plenty of less than exiting parts. Hours and hours went by where we did nothing but put our heads down and paddle at a mile-crunching pace.

Here's a journal entry from January 17th:

24 miles of mostly flat water today. Boring. Temps in the high 80s, and the usual assortment of wildlife. Tonight I ate two Pepto Bismol tablets because I thought they might taste like candy. Nelson and I set our tent up directly underneath a tree with a huge dead log stuck in it right over our head. We're too tired to move, though.

it's a token gesture on the paddler's part to show the locals that they're regular, fun loving guys. As we walked up into the small town to talk with the unofficial village chief (as opposed to the appointed government official), the entire town followed us up, and then stared in through the windows of the chiefs house as we discussed what we wanted to do. We were interested in traveling downstream to the Giram Ambun, and then negotiating it with our kayaks. From there we wanted to hitch a ride to the coast. We explained that we understood that it's mostly flat water between here and the gorge, and we were interested in finding someone who may want to take us by long boat to the mouth of the gorge and drop us off.

Irans Borneo

As usual, the village chief explained to us that we couldn't do what we wanted to do. The gorge downstream, he said, was absolutely impassable by boat. Moreover, finding long boats to take us down there would be very difficult, as the one large motor in town was broken. I'd like to mention again that the "doubting local" phenomena also seems to be a fixture in the third world paddling experience. That is, either by attempting to run an unrun gorge, or by explaining that you just came through the unrun gorge you are inevitably going to run into locals who think you're crazy — or, a liar.

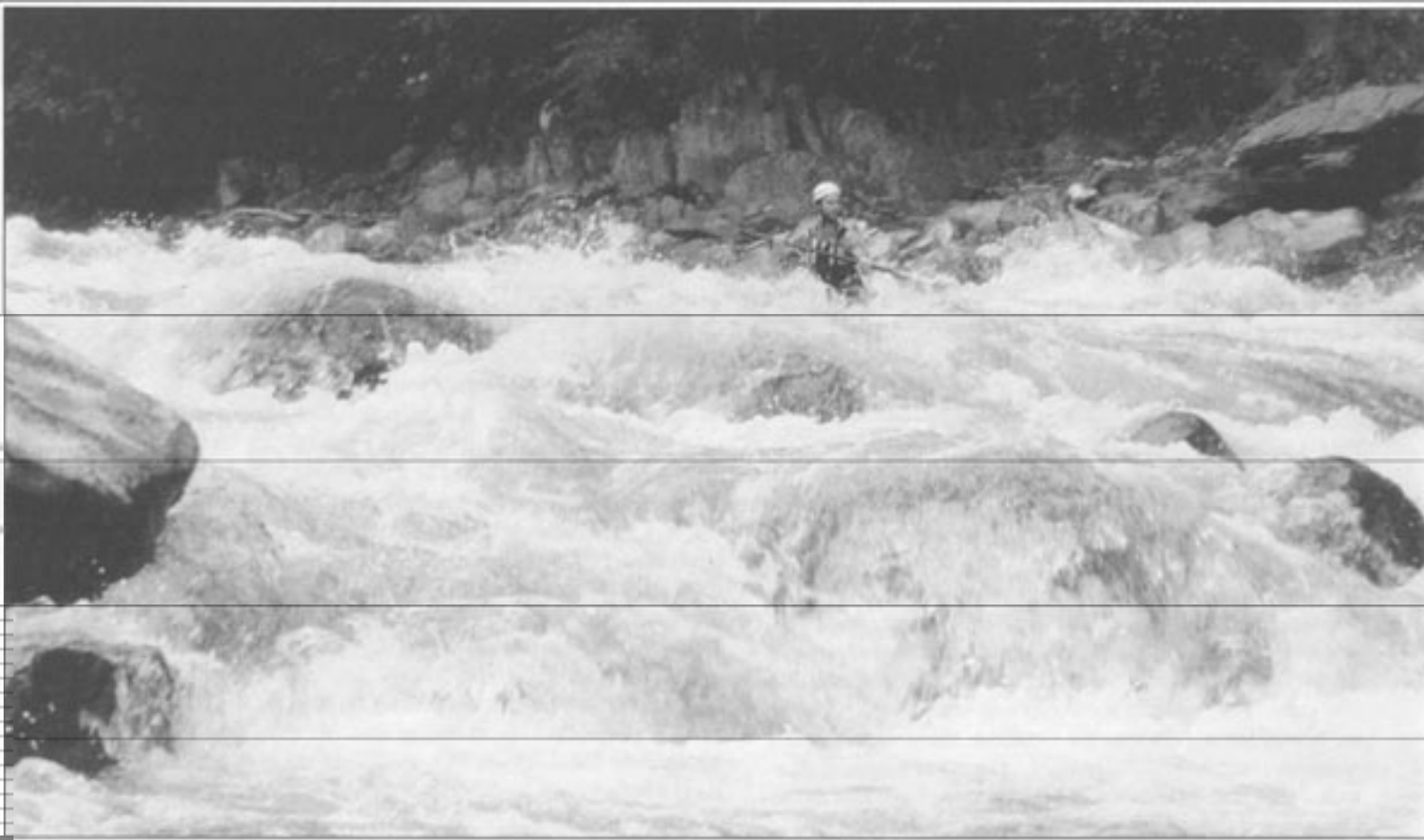
Anyhow, we said that would just have to see about the Giram Ambun, but the chief was correct about the long boat. After some late night negotiations with a couple guys with smaller boats, we decided that it would just be easier to paddle the 120 miles ourselves down to the canyon. As it turned out, the paddle wasn't that bad. The river gradually grew to about 3,500 cfs, and the gradient was sufficient that we hardly ever went more than a half mile without hitting some kind of whitewater. To make it even more pleasant, right after we left Data Dian we reentered the wilderness and found more great camping spots. Three and a half days of serious mileage later, we hit what had to be the first rapid of the Giram Ambun.

As I mentioned, this was not the first time in modern whitewater boating history that a party of paddlers had attempted this canyon. Rick Ridgeway's party (minus Ridgeway at this point) had come down the Kayan from its headwaters, past the junction with the Iwan and down to

Data Dian. I'm assuming that because these guys were in rafts, they had managed to hitch a ride from the village down to the gorge, rather than push a raft down 150 miles of Class II river. I had talked one of the guys a year or so before our trip and he described the gorge as almost impossible. Certainly, the video they made of the trip, and the few scenes they included of the gorge made it look very difficult. Evidently, they had flipped a raft in the first rapid and after that they portaged (with the help of porters) the entire twenty mile gorge. However, our trip had a few advantages. For one, we were in whitewater kayaks. Secondly, the water was considerably lower. I would guess by the video of Ridgeway's trip, the river was a muddy, exploding 8,000 cfs — almost 5,000 cfs more water than was in the river when we were there. The result was that when we got to the first rapid in the canyon, we breathed a huge sigh of relief. It just wasn't that bad.

This was fortunate. If we had to carry our boats around that canyon it would have been a nightmare. There is nothing left of the trail the Dutch made on river left 60 years

Nelson in the canyon on the Kayan





On the longboat on the Kayan at the end of the trip (Joe)

what you're going to see around the corner has you pretty jacked up to begin with.

On Jan. 23 and 24 we descended the Giram Ambun, and on those two particular days, it was a delightful Class IV and V run, much like the Upper Gauley in West Virginia at really high water. Around every corner we kept expecting to see something horrendous, but the river — certainly because it was so low — was very manageable. We only snuck two or three rapids (that certainly could be run under the right circumstances) and we made one 20-yard portage.

Thanks to the remoteness of the gorge, we also encountered some new and strange wildlife, including many, many wild boar and thousands of flying foxes, the world's largest bat with a wing span of over three feet.

At about 10 a.m. on Jan. 24, we came across some bankside huts that signified the end of the gorge.

By noon, we had come across some logging camps and at 1 p.m. we found a couple of guys fishing out of a long boat. We asked these folks for a ride to the nearest town with a hotel.

"Sure," they said. "We can take you. It's just a few hours downstream to Long Bia." That sounded great because we knew that from Long Bia we could get back on another express boat, and be at the coast the same day. Suddenly, after 250 miles, the paddling portion of our trip was over. After we loaded the kayaks into the longboat, there wasn't nearly as much room left as we thought. The other problem was that at the last second, the fishermen pulled out this gigantic dead and gutted boar, and an equally enormous dead

ago, and the thought of having to drag boats through the jungle again was unthinkable. Another, equally distasteful scenario was the possibility of coming across a vertical-walled canyon that required extensive reconnaissance before we entered it. The general message here is that on these extended, remote paddling trips, big whitewater isn't always such a good thing. You want to run challenging rapids, but your boats weigh a lot, evacuation is impossible, and the fact that you have no idea

fish, and explained that they need to come with us, too. So, we tied two of the kayaks together and we towed them behind the boat. We were still cramped and a "few hours" quickly turned into "7 or 8 hours." It wouldn't have been so bad, except at nightfall, these guys didn't seem to see the need to slow down. We continued boogying downstream at about 15 miles per hour, pretty much in total darkness. Before too long, we hit a rock head on going full speed in the middle of a Class II rapid. This didn't slow them down one bit. After 10 minutes of standing in the river, prying the long boat off the rock, we were at it again going full bore downstream into the darkness, at times running through the middle of steep, powerful Class III rapids.

Mercifully, we pulled into Long Bia at about 8:30 and found a hotel room for about 80 cents a night. We had a round of beers, ordered some rice and noodles and took a shower. The next day we hopped on the express boat to the coastal city of Tangjungseler and the day after that we took large ship out to the coast and the Celebes Sea. The trip took 23 days from coast to coast, and we traveled almost 600 miles.

I'd like to be able to tell you that our crossing of Borneo was a heroic ordeal and that only through our remarkable strength and personal fortitude did we make it across. But it wasn't anything like that. For the most part, we were lucky enough to have great weather, perfect water levels, no one got malaria or dengue fever and we always found a crew of locals to help us exactly when we needed them.

This is not to say that we didn't train hard, research every aspect of the trip as thoroughly as possible, or that we're not really experienced in every aspect of expeditionary boating. In the end, we did what every explorer does — we started moving without looking back and tried not to get too overwhelmed with the big picture. It's cliché, but it works.

I returned home and right away I began to hear the familiar question: "What's the next trip?" I have to admit that I'm starting to find that tough to answer. At age 29, just by putting off having any lofty goals like a "career" or "responsibilities" in order to paddle, I've managed to see and do a lot of interesting things. I've crashed in a plane above the Arctic Circle, I've weeded cotton fields in Australia, I've sailed in a freighter ship along the coast of Patagonia, I've run countless rivers all over the continent, and now, I've been to the heart of Borneo.

It's getting hard to justify leaving once more on a dangerous trip to a foreign land, and I understand that the price of free time gets higher and higher every year. At some point, I guess, I'll have to realize that one day I'll be too old to continue this lifestyle. But, to answer the question, Siberia is where I want to go next. It will be worth every second of planning and portaging.



Nelson, Joe, John, Mark and Andy at the completion of the trip

By John Weld

Trans Boat

So, you want to go on a multi-day kayak trip but you don't know how to pack, or what boat to bring? Here's my advice, and personal picks for gear.

On what boat to bring

I've always worked on the principal that a typical three or four day self supported kayak trip requires about 30 pounds of gear. So, I chose a boat made for someone 30 pounds heavier than me. That way, the boat will still perform like a whitewater boat when fully loaded. Otherwise, an overloaded boat will sit too low in the water, and as result, the water line is going to be much longer and the boat will be very difficult to turn. I weigh about 170 pounds, so I look to the boats made for the "full-figured" paddler, like Prijon T-Canyon, the Prijon Tornado, the Perception Overflow X, or the Dagger Freefall. Generally, for me, I like a 75+ gallon boat. I think that it's important to distribute gear in both the front and back of the boat, so I like to either have my boats retrofitted with foot pegs that I can move out of the way, or use a Prijon boat that allows you to pull the bulkhead all the way out. The idea is that when your boat is packed, you should be able to heft it up on your shoulder like you're about to portage, and it should balance there like an empty boat. Other suitable boat choices, in my opinion, are: Perception Corsica or Corsica "S," Wave Sport Descente, Dagger Freefall LT or the Dagger Response.

How to I keep my stuff dry?

Once you have your boat, you need to order a set of Voyager Sto-Floats. Any whitewater store can order them for you. Sto-floats are a combination air bag and dry bag. If you're using a Prijon boat, you need to get the one big bag for the back, and the one little bag for the bow. Any boat with foam walls requires "split bags," and they come in the bow and stern sizes as well. Once again, for the sake of keeping your boat balanced, I think it's important to figure out how to get gear in the front end of your boat. For the most part, this requires taking the foot plate out, and installing foot pegs. If you bought your kayak from a reputable dealer, they should help you with this service. Sto-Floats are made with a coated nylon, and while they look kind of flimsy, I have never worn a hole in one. In addition to the Sto-Floats, I like to bring a smaller dry bag that I can fit right behind my seat. In this bag, I put the three or four items I need throughout the day — things like a lunch, camera, toilet paper, etc. Finally, I like to put my sleeping bag into a seam sealed stuff sack inside of the Sto-float. If everything goes wrong, at least I'll still have a dry sleeping bag.

What gear do I bring?

Clothes

I like to bring one set of on-river clothes, and one set of off-river clothes. Exactly what I bring depends on the conditions, but in any event, avoid cotton. A typical off-river clothes set: a complete set mid-weight Capilene long underwear, a pair of dry river shorts to wear over the under wear, a silk-weight Capilene t-shirt and a hat. Paddling gear will depend on the conditions, but once again, try and make it so you only have exactly what you need.

Sleeping Bag

Go with a synthetic bag. A few years ago, down bags were a serious consideration because they pack down so well, and they are so light. The problem was that they were useless if they got wet. Nowadays, there are synthetic bags that rival any down bag.

Shelter

There are two methods that I use. One is to bring a light two person tent (under five pounds), and split the gear between two people. The North Face Starlight, Sierra Designs Flashlight, or the Walrus Arch Rival are good choices. The other way (especially if

Trans Borneo

So, you want to go on a multi-day kayak trip but you don't know how to pack, or what boat to bring?

Here's my advice, and personal picks for gear.

your not expecting a lot of rain) is to go with bivy bags. These are basically waterproof sleeping bag covers. As a connoisseur of bivy bags, I can't praise the Outdoor Research Gore-Tex bivy enough. It's expensive (about \$200 the last time I looked) but it's an awesome piece of gear that will give you many years of service. Get a ground cloth for either the bivy or the tent. I like to use a square poncho for my ground cloth, that way it can double as a rain coat.

Water Pumps

A must anytime there might be chemicals in the water (otherwise you can use iodine). I have used a number of pumps, but have found the Pur Explorer to be the best of it's kind.

Stoves

Generally, we rely on campfires. But if you must, the MSR shaker jet is my pick. Get the "international" model, which basically burns everything from unleaded gas to vodka. The MSR is loud and simple, but built like a Volvo.

Food

I have always packed my food for these trips in "units" — that is each day I have a breakfast and lunch unit in a Ziplock and a freeze dried dinner. The reason for this is that before each trip we calculate how many days we'll be out, and then take the pre-packed units out of a box in the trunk, and throw

them in the Sto-Floats. This way, we're ready to go in no time and there is no argument at dinner time about who ate more macaroni.

For the lunches, I bring stuff like Stoker bars, gorp, jerky, breakfast cereal, granola bars, cheese and crackers, etc. For dinners, I have been using Backpacker's Pantry brand lately. Note: the dinners say "serves two" on them, which is a joke. They barely serve one paddler, and in fact, we often bring a Naglene bottle full of minute rice to beef them up.

Extra stuff that makes life pleasant

- Use a head lamp rather than a flashlight
- For extra gear, bring a breakdown paddle and a nylon spray skirt
- Therm-a-rest makes a lightweight 3/4 length sleeping pad that is expensive (\$60), but a truly superior product
- Bring a piece of 12 foot webbing to use as a leash for dragging your boat on long portages
- Figure out what gear is "personal" (sleeping bag, food, etc) and what stuff is "group" gear (water pump, stove, etc), and distribute the group gear equally before you pack to put on the river.
- Practice packing your boat before you go, and pack heavier stuff close to the seat. Leave room for group gear. Packing your boat might seem like a task at first, but you'll get good at it in no time.

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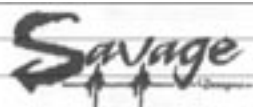
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The Weight Is Worth It! Winter Paddling Safety

by Bill Young

After having read Mr. Daniel's recent letter in *American Whitewater*, "Ocoee Death A Wake Up Call," I thought I would offer a few thoughts on safety and survival preparedness. As the old adage goes "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This certainly applies in many river situations. The tendency among many boaters is to stick to the bare essentials and carry as little weight as possible. In doing this many paddlers not only put themselves at risk, but also those who paddle with them. The new low volume kayaks so prevalent today seem to contribute to the attitude that less is better. Less than half of the boaters I encounter even bother carrying a rescue rope, let alone any emergency or survival gear.

Here in the Appalachians the weather from October through April can be life threatening; hypothermia is a real risk. As Mr. Daniel's letter suggested a space blanket is a handy item, but will do little good, by itself, other than to shield from the elements. Heat must be generated and as most paddlers know, it must be supplied from an external source... since the victim's body temperature will be substantially lowered from exposure to the elements. Dress according to weather conditions. I learned early on from experienced and safety conscious paddlers that you can always take excess clothes off but you can't put it on if "ya ain't got it with ya!"

It boils down to this! You must carry some weight gain if you want to be able to help in an emergency situation. The gear that one packs need not occupy so much area or weigh so much that it will handicap your boat, but it will require some space. As little as 3 pounds of emergency gear can be worth its weight in gold. To generate heat one should pack two butane lighters and 2 dozen 1-inch squares of bicycle inner tubes in a waterproof container as a firestarter. Candles also work, but not nearly as efficiently as burning rubber.

Survival gear can be stored in a wide mouthed plastic jar with a screw on or snap on lid. To attach the container to the boat I wrap a nylon loop of rope around it and then secure it inside with a carabineer. Most paddlers probably believe that it's a simple matter to start a fire, but in wet, cold condi-

tions as encountered in the mountains, this is far from the truth. Small, dead twigs and material shielded from the elements, small ends of twigs broken from standing timber and inner layers of bark make the best fire tinder. Fire starting is a skill best learned through experience, before it is actually needed. While someone builds a fire, another person should try to warm the victim with their own heat by body contact. If someone in the group has extra clothing or can shed some dry layers, put them on the hypothermia victim.

Depending on one's knowledge of a river, a little time spent going over a map can save a lot of grief if hiking out becomes necessary. Make sure someone in the group has a good working knowledge of river to road coordinates. The crowds that you see in summer won't be there in the winter. Winter paddling depends on being self-sufficient.

I know that most of this information is very basic in nature, but it seems a subject seldom addressed in paddling circles. I have seen paddlers show looks of disgust when asked if they are carrying a rescue rope. I have also seen paddlers look insulted because they were asked to share in packing rescue gear in a group situation. Maybe we have evolved to a point where style and finesse seems more important than the need for safety and responsibility. I will conclude with a list of paddling gear I feel would fit most situations, without adding too much weight or bulk for winter paddling.

- 1 roll Duct Tape; 2 butane lighters
- 2 dozen, 1-inch squares of inner tube
- 1 space blanket; 2 candles; 1 rescue rope
- 1 knife; 1 whistle
- 1 small pulley; 8-foot nylon rescue rope; 10-foot fluorescent tape (to mark trail or strainers)
- 1 permanent magic marker (to leave messages etc.)
- 2 large gauze bandages and pain medicine in separate zip lock bags
- 1 small saw (I use a keyhole saw)
- 1 breakdown paddle per group; energy bars; water

Editor's note: Bill Young is a handy, year round boater who lives in Bruceton, West Virginia, home of the Big Sandy River.



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This code has been prepared using the best available information and has been reviewed by a broad crosssection of whitewater experts. The code, however, is only a collection of guidelines; attempts to minimize risks should be flexible, not constrained by a rigid set of rules. Varying conditions and group goals may combine with unpredictable circumstances to require alternate procedures. This code is not intended to serve as a standard of care for commercial outfitters or guides.

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I. PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Be a competent swimmer, with the ability to handle yourself underwater.

Wear a life jacket. A snugly-fitting vest-type life preserver offers back and shoulder protection as well as the flotation needed to swim safely in whitewater.

Wear a solid, correctly-fitted helmet when upsets are likely. This is essential in kayaks or covered canoes, and recommended for open canoeists using thigh straps and rafters running steep drops.

Do not boat out of control. Your skills should be sufficient to stop or reach shore before reaching danger. Do not enter a rapid unless you are reasonably sure that you can run it safely or swim it without injury.

Whitewater rivers contain many hazards which are not always easily recognized. The following are the most frequent killers:

HIGH WATER. The river's speed and power increase tremendously as the flow increases, raising the difficulty of most rapids. Rescue becomes progressively harder as the water rises, adding to the danger. Floating debris and strainers make even an easy rapid quite hazardous. It is often misleading to judge the river level at the put in, since a small rise in a wide, shallow place will be multiplied many times where the river narrows. Use reliable gauge information whenever possible, and be aware that sun on snowpack, hard rain, and upstream dam releases may greatly increase the flow.

COLD. Cold drains your strength and robs you of the ability to make sound decisions on matters affecting your survival. Cold water immersion, because of the initial shock and the rapid heat loss which follows, is especially dangerous. Dress appropriately for bad weather or sudden immersion in the water. When the water temperature is less than 50 degree F., a wetsuit or drysuit is essential for protection if you swim. Next best is wool or pile clothing under a waterproof shell. In this case, you should also carry waterproof matches and a change of clothing in a waterproof bag. If, after prolonged exposure, a person experiences uncontrollable shaking, loss of coordination, or difficulty speaking, he or she is hypothermic and needs your assistance.

STRAINERS. Brush, fallen trees, bridge pilings, undercut rocks or anything else which allows river current to sweep through can pin boats and boaters against the obstacle. Water pressure on anything trapped this way can be overwhelming. Rescue is often extremely difficult. Pinning may occur in fast current, with little or no whitewater to warn of the danger.

DAMS, WEIRS, LEDGES, REVERSALS, HOLES, AND HYDRAULICS. When water drops over a obstacle it curls back on itself, forming a strong upstream current which may be capable of holding a boat or swimmer. Some holes make for excellent sport. Others are proven killers. *Paddlers who cannot recognize the difference should avoid all but the smallest holes.* Hydraulics around man-made dams must be treated with utmost respect regardless of their height or the level of the river. Despite their seemingly benign appearance, they can create an almost escape-proof trap. The swimmer's *only exit* from the "drowning machine" is to dive below the surface when the downstream current is flowing beneath the reversal.

BROACHING. When a boat is pushed sideways against a rock by strong current, it may collapse and wrap. This is especially dangerous to kayak and decked canoe paddlers; these boats will collapse and the combination of indestructible hulls and tight outfitting may create a deadly trap. Even without entrapment, releasing pinned boats can be extremely time-consuming and dangerous. To avoid pinning, throw your weight downstream towards the rock. This allows the current to slide harmlessly underneath the hull.

Boating Alone is discouraged. The minimum party is three people or two craft.

Have a frank knowledge of your boating ability, and don't attempt rivers or rapids which lie beyond that ability.

Develop the *paddling skills and teamwork* required to match the river you plan to boat. Most good paddlers develop skills gradually, and attempts to advance too quickly will compromise your safety and enjoyment.

Be in *good physical and mental condition*, consistent with the difficulties which may be expected. Make adjustments for loss of skills due to age, health, fitness. Any health limitations must be explained to your fellow paddlers prior to starting the trip.

Be practiced in self-rescue, including escape from an overturned craft. The Eskimo Roll is strongly recommended for decked boaters who run rapids Class IV or greater, or who paddle in cold environmental conditions.

Be trained in rescue skills, CPR, and fist aid with special emphasis on the recognizing and treating hypothermia. It may save your friend's life.

Carry equipment needed for unexpected emergencies, including foot wear which will protect

your feet when walking out, a throw rope, knife, whistle, and waterproof matches. If you wear eyeglasses, tie them on and carry a spare pair on long trips. Bring cloth repair tape on short runs, and a full repair kit on isolated rivers. Do not wear bulky jackets, ponchos, heavy boots, or anything else which could reduce your ability to survive a swim.

Despite the mutually supportive group structure described in this code, individual paddlers are ultimately responsible for their own safety and must assume sole responsibility for the following decisions:

The decision to participate on any trip. This includes an evaluation of the expected difficulty of the rapids under the conditions existing at the time of the put-in.

The selection of appropriate equipment, including a boat design suited to their skills and the appropriate rescue and survival gear. The decision to scout any rapid, and to run or portage according to their best judgment. Other members of the group may offer advice, but paddlers should resist pressure from anyone to paddle beyond their skills. It is also their responsibility to decide whether to pass up any walkout or takeout opportunity.

All trip participants should consistently evaluate their own and their group's safety, voicing their concerns when appropriate and following what they believe to be the best course of action. Paddlers are encouraged to speak with anyone whose actions on the water are dangerous, whether they are a part of your group or not.

II. BOAT AND EQUIPMENT PREPAREDNESS

Test new and different equipment under familiar conditions before relying on it for difficult runs. This is especially true when adopting a new boat design or outfitting system. Low volume craft may present additional hazards to inexperienced or poorly conditioned paddlers.

Be sure your boat and gear are in good repair before starting a trip. The more isolated and difficult the run, the more rigorous this inspection should be.

Install flotation bags in non-inflatable craft, securely fixed in each end, designed to displace as much water as possible. Inflatable boats should have multiple air chambers and be test inflated before launching.

Have strong, properly sized paddles or oars for controlling your craft. Carry sufficient spares for the length and difficulty of the trip.

Outfit your boat safely. The ability to exit your boat quickly is an essential component of safety in rapids. It is your responsibility to see that there is absolutely nothing to cause entrapment when coming free of an upset craft. This includes:

Spray covers that won't release reliably or release prematurely.

Boat outfitting too tight to allow a fast exit, especially in low volume kayaks or decked canoes. This includes low hung thwarts in canoes lacking adequate clearance for your feet and kayak foot braces which fail or allow your feet to become wedged under them.

Inadequately supported decks that collapse on a paddler's legs when a decked boat is pinned by water pressure. Inadequate clearance with the deck because of your size or build.

Loose ropes which cause entanglement. Beware of any length of loose line attached to a whitewater boat. All items must be tied tightly and excess line eliminated; painters, throw lines, and safety rope systems must be completely and effectively stored. Do not knot the end of a rope, as it can get caught in cracks between rocks.

Provide ropes which permit you to hold on to your craft so that it may be rescued. The following methods are recommended:

Kayaks and covered canoes should have grab loops of 1/4" + rope or equivalent webbing sized to admit a normal sized hand. Stern painters are permissible if properly secured.

Open canoes should have securely anchored bow and stern painters consisting of 8 - 10 feet of 1/4" + line. These must be secured in such a way that they are readily accessible, but cannot come loose accidentally. Grab loops are acceptable, but are more difficult to reach after an upset.

Rafts and dories may have taut perimeter lines threaded through the loops provided. Footholds should be designed so that a paddler's feet cannot be forced through them, causing entrapment. Flip lines should be carefully and reliably stowed.

Know your craft's carrying capacity, and how added loads affect boat handling in whitewater. Most rafts have a minimum crew size which can be added to on day trips or in easy rapids. Carrying more than two paddlers in an open canoe when running rapids is not recommended.

Car top racks must be strong and attach positively to the vehicle. Lash your boat to each crossbar, then tie the ends of the boats directly to the bumpers for added security. This arrangement should survive all but the most violent vehicle accident.

III. GROUP PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Organization. A river trip should be regarded as a common adventure by all participants, except on commercial instructional or guided trips as defined below. Participants share the responsibility for the conduct of the trip, and each participant is individually responsible for judging his or her own capabilities and for his or her own safety as the trip progresses. In other words, no person is responsible for the safety of other persons on the trip. Participants are encouraged (but are not obligated) to offer advice and guidance for the independent consideration and judgment of others.

River Conditions. The group should have a reasonable knowledge of the difficulty of the run. Participants should evaluate this information and adjust their own plans accordingly. If the run is exploratory or no one is familiar with the river, maps and guidebooks, if available, should be examined. The group should secure accurate flow information; the more difficult the run, the more important this will be. Be aware of possible changes in river level and how this will affect the difficulty of the run. If the trip involves tidal stretches, secure appropriate information on tides.

Group equipment should be suited to the difficulty of the river. The group should always have a throw line available, and one line per boat is recommended on difficult runs. The list may include: carabiners, prussick loops, first aid kit, flashlight, folding saw, fire starter, guidebooks, maps, food, extra clothing, and any other rescue or survival items suggested by conditions. Each item is not required on every run, and this list is not meant to be a substitute for good judgment.

Keep the group compact, but maintain sufficient spacing to avoid collisions. If the group is large, consider dividing into smaller groups or using the "Buddy System" as an additional safeguard. Space yourselves closely enough to permit good communication, but not so close as to interfere with one another in rapids.

A **point paddler** sets the pace. When in front, do not get in over your head. Never run drops when you cannot see a clear route to the bottom or, for advanced paddlers, a sure route to the next eddy. When in doubt, stop and scout.

Keep track of all group members. Each boat keeps the one behind it in sight, stopping if necessary. Know how many people are in your group and take head counts regularly. No one should paddle ahead or walk out without first informing the group. Paddlers requiring additional support should stay at the center of a group,

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and not allow themselves to lag behind in the more difficult rapids. If the group is large and contains a wide range of abilities, a "Sweep Boat" may be designated to bring up the rear.

Courtesy. On heavily used rivers, do not cut in front of a boater running a drop. Always look upstream before leaving eddies to run or play. Never enter a crowded drop or eddy when no room for you exists. Passing other groups in a rapid may be hazardous: it's often safer to wait upstream until the group ahead has passed.

Float plan. If the trip is into a wilderness area or for an extended period, plans should be filed with a responsible person who will contact the authorities if you are overdue. It may be wise to establish checkpoints along the way where civilization could be contacted if necessary. Knowing the location of possible help and pre-planning escape routes can speed rescue.

Drugs. The use of alcohol or mind altering drugs before or during river trips is not recommended. It dulls reflexes, reduces decision making ability and may interfere with important survival reflexes.

Commercial instructional or Guided Trips. In contrast to the common adventure trip format, in these trip formats, a professional (i.e., paid) instructor or guide assumes some of the responsibilities normally exercised by the group as a whole, as appropriate under the circumstances. These formats recognize that commercial instructional or guided trips may involve participants who lack significant experience in whitewater, and who wish to place themselves under the care of professionals. However, as a participant acquires experience in whitewater, he or she takes on increasing responsibility for his or her own safety, in accordance with what he or she knows or should know as a result of that increased experience. Also, as in all trip formats, every participant must realize and assume the risks associated with the serious hazards of whitewater rivers. It is advisable for professional instructors and guides or their employers to acquire trip or personal liability insurance:

A "commercial instructional trip" is characterized by a commercial (i.e., for-profit) enterprise and a paid instructor, where the primary purpose of the trip is to teach boating skills, and which is conducted for a required fee. This does not include a non-profit organization conducting instruction with unpaid volunteers.

A "commercial guided trip" is characterized by a commercial enterprise and a paid guide conducting trips for a required fee.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR RIVER RESCUE

Recover from an upset with an Eskimo roll whenever possible. Evacuate your boat immediately if there is imminent danger of being trapped against rocks, brush or any other kind of strainer.

If you swim, hold on to your boat. It has much flotation and is easy for rescuers to spot. Get to the upstream end so that you cannot be crushed between a rock and your boat by the force of the current. Persons with good balance may be able to climb on top of a swamped kayak or flipped raft and paddle to shore.

Release your craft if this will improve your chances, especially if the water is cold or dangerous rapids lie ahead. Actively attempt self-rescue whenever possible by swimming for safety. Be prepared to assist others who may come to your aid.

When swimming in shallow or obstructed rapids, lie on your back with feet held high and pointed downstream. Do not attempt to stand in fast moving water; if your foot wedges on the bottom, fast water will push you under and keep you there. Get to slow or very shallow water before attempting to stand or walk. Look ahead! Avoid possible pinning situations including undercut rocks, strainers, downed trees, holes, and other dangers by swimming away from them.

If the rapids are deep and powerful, roll over onto your stomach and swim aggressively for shore. Watch for eddies and slack wa-

ter and use them to get out of the current. Strong swimmers can effect a powerful upstream ferry and get to shore fast. If the shores are obstructed with strainers or undercut rocks, however, it is safer to "ride the rapid out" until a safer escape can be found.

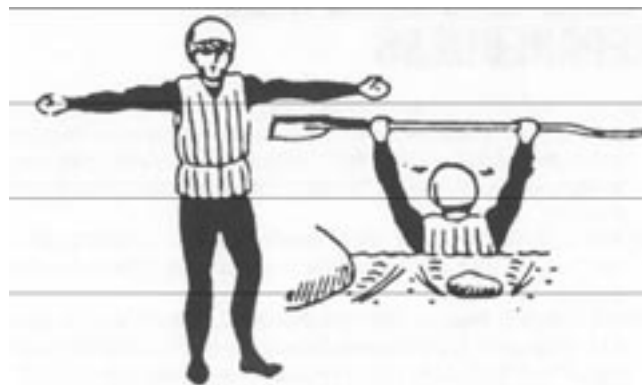
If others spill and swim, go after the boaters first. Rescue boats and equipment only if this can be done safely. While participants are encouraged (but not obligated) to assist one another to the best of their ability, they should do so only if they can, in their judgment, do so safely. The first duty of a rescuer is not to compound the problem by becoming another victim.

The use of rescue lines requires training; uninformed use may cause injury. Never tie yourself into either end of a line without a reliable quick-release system. Have a knife handy to deal with unexpected entanglement. Learn to place set lines effectively, to throw accurately, to belay effectively, and to properly handle a rope thrown to you.

When reviving a drowning victim, be aware that cold water may greatly extend survival time underwater. Victims of hypothermia may have depressed vital signs so they look and feel dead. Don't give up; continue CPR for as long as possible without compromising safety.

V. UNIVERSAL RIVER SIGNALS

These signals may be substituted with an alternate set of signals agreed upon by the group.



STOP: Potential hazard ahead. Wait for "all clear" signal before proceeding, or scout ahead. Form a horizontal bar with your outstretched arms. Those seeing the signal should pass it back to others in the party.



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HELP/EMERGENCY: Assist the signaler as quickly as possible. Give three long blasts on a police whistle while waving a paddle, helmet or life vest over your head. If a whistle is not available, use the visual signal alone. A whistle is best carried on a lanyard attached to your life vest.



ALL CLEAR: Come ahead (in the absence of other directions proceed down the center). Form a vertical bar with your paddle or one arm held high above your head. Paddle blade should be turned flat for maximum visibility. To signal direction or a preferred course through a rapid around obstruction, lower the previously vertical "all clear" by 45 degrees toward the side of the river with the preferred route. Never point toward the obstacle you wish to avoid.



I'm OK: "I'm OK and not hurt, are you?" While holding the elbow outward toward the side, repeatedly tap the top of your head. Whenever this signal is seen, it should be answered with the same signal so that all involved know that everything is OK.

VI. INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY

This is the American version of a rating system used to compare river difficulty throughout the world. This system is not exact; rivers do not always fit easily into one category, and regional or individual interpretations may cause misunderstandings. It is no substitute for a guidebook or accurate firsthand descriptions of a run.

Paddlers attempting difficult runs in an unfamiliar area should act cautiously until they get a feel for the way the scale is interpreted locally. River difficulty may change each year due to fluctuations in water level, downed trees, recent floods, geological disturbances, or bad weather.

Stay alert for unexpected problems!

As river difficulty increases, the danger to swimming paddlers becomes more severe. As rapids become longer and more continuous, the challenge increases. There is a difference between running an occasional Class IV rapid and dealing with an entire river of this category. Allow an extra margin of safety between skills and river ratings when the water is cold or if the river itself is remote and inaccessible.

Examples of commonly run rapids that fit each of the classifications are presented in the "INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY - STANDARD RATED RAPIDS". Rapids of a difficulty similar to a rapids on this list are rated the same. Rivers are also rated using this scale. A river rating should take into account many factors including the difficulty of individual rapids, remoteness, hazards, etc.

THE SIX DIFFICULTY CLASSES:

Class I: Easy. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.

Class II: Novice. Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. Swimmers are seldom injured and group assistance, while helpful, is seldom needed. Rapids that are at the upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class II+."

Class III: Intermediate. Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required; large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large-volume rivers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare; self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims. Rapids that are at the lower or upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class III-" or "Class III+" respectively.

Class IV: Advanced. Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Depending on the character of the river, it may feature large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast maneuvers under pressure. A fast, reliable eddy turn may be needed to initiate maneuvers, scout rapids, or rest. Rapids may require "must" moves above dangerous hazards. Scouting may be necessary the first time down. Risk of injury to swimmers is moderate to high, and water conditions may make self-rescue difficult. Group assistance for rescue is often essential but requires practiced skills. A strong Eskimo roll is highly recommended. Rapids that are at the upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class IV-" or "Class IV+" respectively.

Class V: Expert. Extremely long, obstructed, or very violent rapids which expose a paddler to added risk. Drops may contain large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools, demanding a high level of fitness. What eddies exist may be small, turbulent, or difficult to reach. At the high end of the scale, several of these factors may be combined. Scouting is Recommended but may be difficult. Swims are dangerous, and rescue is often difficult even for experts. A very reliable Eskimo roll, proper equipment, extensive experience, and practiced rescue skills are essential. Because of the large range of difficulty that exists beyond class IV, Class 5 is an open ended, multiple level scale designated by Class 5.0, 5.1, 5.2, etc... Each of these levels is an order of magnitude more difficult than the last. Example: Increasing difficulty from class 5.0 to class 5.1 is a similar order of magnitude as increasing from class IV to Class 5.0.

Class VI: Extreme and Exploratory. These runs have almost never been attempted and often exemplify the extremes of difficulty, unpredictability and danger. The consequences of errors are very severe and rescue may be impossible. For teams of experts only, at favorable water levels, after close personal inspection and taking all precautions. After a Class VI rapids has been run many times, Its rating may be changed to an appropriate Class 5.x rating.

INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY (see section IV of the "Safety Code of American Whitewater" for complete descriptions).

This is the American version of a rating system used to compare river difficulty throughout the world. This system is not exact; rivers do not always fit easily into one category, and regional or individual interpretations may cause misunderstandings. It is no substitute for a guidebook or accurate, first-hand descriptions of a run.

Paddlers attempting difficult runs in an unfamiliar area should act cautiously until they get a feel for the way the scale is interpreted locally. River difficulty may change each year due to fluctuations in water level, downed trees, recent floods, geological dis-

turbances, or bad weather. Stay alert for unexpected problems!

As river difficulty increases, the danger to swimming paddlers becomes more severe. As rapids become longer and more continuous, the challenge increases. There is a difference between running an occasional Class IV rapid and dealing with an entire river of this category. Allow an extra margin of safety between skills and river ratings when the water is cold or if the river itself is remote and inaccessible.

Below is a list of examples of commonly run rapids that fit each of the classifications.

Rapids of a difficulty similar to a rapids on this list are rated the same. Rivers are also rated using this scale. An overall river rating should take into account many factors including the difficulty of individual rapids, remoteness, hazards, etc. Each rapid is rated at a specific range of levels. Note that under some circumstances a paddler may find that similarly rated rapids seem to differ an extraordinary amount due to unusual factors that may include boat type, weather, fatigue and limited experience on certain types of whitewater.

INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY — STANDARD RATED RAPIDS

Rapid name (s)	River, section (s)	State	Level	Class III -			
Class I				North East			
North East				Dartmouth	Youghiogheny, Lower	PA	1.8-2'
Ramcat	Youghiogheny, Middle	PA	1.8-2'	Eddy Turn	Youghiogheny, Lower	PA	1.8-2'
Piddley	Youghiogheny, Lower	PA	1.8-2'	Rocky Mountain			
South East				Smelter Rapids	Animas, Durango	CO	1000
Powhite Ledges	James, Downtown Richmond	VA	5'	Yankee Jim's Revenge	Yellowstone	MT	3000-5000
Class II				South East			
North East				Roller Coaster	Nolichucky Gorge	NC	1500-2000 (2-2.2')
Staircase	Shenandoah	WV	3.5'	Nemo	Emery	TN	1500-2000
Lambertville Rapid	Delaware	PA/NJ	Sum-2'	Powerline	James, Downtown Richmond	VA	5'
Rocky Mountain				West Coast			
Salida	Arkansas, Salida Race Course	CO	med	Row Boat	Cache Cr., Ramsey Run (Bear Cr. to Ramsey)	CA	450+
South East				Class III			
Delabar's Rock	Nantahala, Gorge	NC	3.25	North East			
Needmore	Little Tennessee River	NC	1000	Dimple-Swimmers	Youghiogheny, Lower	PA	1.6-2
Pony pasture	James, Downtown Richmond	VA	5	Railroad	Esopus	NY	Summer
West Coast				Slalom Rapids	Tohickon Cr.	PA	1.8
New or Main	Payette, Main	ID	Reg	Entrance	Youghiogheny, Lower	PA	1.8'-2'
Play Wave				Zoar Gap	Deerfield, Fife Brook Sect.	MA	900-1000
San Juan	American, Lower	CA	Normal	Railroad	Youghiogheny, Lower	PA	1.8'-3.5'
Class II+				Rocky Mountain			
North East				Raft Ripper	Arkansas, Browns Canyon	CO	1000-3'
Camel-Walrus	Youghiogheny, Lower	PA	1.8-2'	Seven Steps	Arkansas, Browns Canyon	CO	2500
Bull Falls	Shenandoah	WV	3.5'	Pinball	Arkansas, Browns Canyon	CO	2500
Skinner's Falls	Delaware	PA/NJ	Summer (1200)	Government Rapids	San Juan	UT	5000
Rocky Mountain				Lunch Counter	Snake, Alpine Canyon	WY	10,000
Thibodeau	Blackfoot	MT	1'	Split Rock Rapid	Yellowstone	MT	3000-5000
Access No. 10 Rapid	Green	WY	.5'-1'	South East			
Fool Hen	Flathead, N. Fk.	MT	1'-1.5'	Nantahala Falls	Nantahala, Gorge	NC	3.25
Spotted Horse	Hoback	WY	3"-6"	Double Trouble	Ocoee, Middle	TN	1200-1600
South East				Diamond Splitter	Ocoee, Middle	TN	1200-1600
Patton's Run	Nantahala, Gorge	NC	3.25 (800)	Narrows	Chattooga, Sect. III	GA/SC	1.8'-2.3'
West Coast				Grumpy/Snow White/Entrance	Ocoee, Middle	TN	1200-1600
S-Turn	Mokelumne, Electra Run	CA	600-2000	Double Suck	Ocoee, Middle	TN	1200-1600
Row Boat	Cache Cr., Ramsey Run (Bear Cr. to Ramsey)	CA	450+	On the Rocks	Nolichucky Gorge	NC	1500-2000 (2-2.2')
				Wooten's Folly	Clear Creek	TN	2000-3000

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Dick's Creek Ledge (First Ledge)	Chattooga, Sect. III	GNSC	1.8'-2.3'
West Coast			
Meat Grinder/ Quartermile	American, S. Fk., Chili Bar Run	CA	1800
Wolf Creek	Selway	ID	2.8'
Railroad Bridge Drop (Meadworks)	Green River Gorge, Upper	WA	low-mod
Trouble Maker, S Turn	American, S. Fk., Chili Bar Run	CA	1000
Oak Creek Falls	Deschutes	OR	mod
Rubber	Salmon, Middle Fork	ID	2'
Badger	Colorado, Grand Canyon	AZ	15-22000
Triple Threat	American, S. Fk., Chili Bar Run	CA	900-5000
Rock and Roll / Satan's Eyeball	Wenatchee, Lower	WA	6000
Class III+			
North East			
Maze	Cheat Canyon	WV	2.5-3.5
River's End	Youghiogheny, Lower	PA	1.8'-3.5'
Big Nasty	Cheat Canyon	WV	3'-5'
Fayette Station	New River Gorge	WV	1-2.5' (3500-5100)
Gap Falls	Youghiogheny, Upper	MD	2-2.2'
Rocky Mountain			
Zoom Flume	Arkansas, Browns Canyon	CO	1000-3'
Snaggletooth	Delores	CO	med
Santa Rita Hole	Animas, Durango	CO	6000
Smelter Rapids	Animas, Durango	CO	6000
Black Mountain	Hoback	WY	3"-1.5'
South East			
Broken Nose (Veg-0-Matic)	Ocoee, Middle	TN	1200-1600
Rooster Tail	Nolichucky Gorge	NC	2400-3000
Quarter Mile	Nolichucky Gorge	NC	1500-2000 (2-2.2')
Table Saw	Ocoee, Middle	TN	1200-1600
Double Drop	Cumberland, Big South Fork Gorge	TN	2000-2500
The "El"	Cumberland, Big South Fork Gorge	TN	2000-3000 (2.5')
West Coast			
Trouble Maker, S Turn	American, S. Fk., Chili Bar Run	CA	1800-2000
Blossom Bar	Rogue R., Grave Cr. top Foster Bar	OR	1500
Guard Rail	Skykomish, N. Fk.	WA	1500
House Rocks	Snoqualmie, M. Fk., Middle-Middle	WA	1500
Ledge 1	Green River Gorge	WA	1200
Hance	Colorado, Grand Canyon	AZ	15-22,000
Powerline/Cable Drop	Skykomish, S. Fk.	WA	2-3000
Pipeline	Green River Gorge	WA	3000
Class N-			
North East			
Blue Ledge	Hudson River Gorge	NY	5.5'
Staircase	Swift River	NH	1.5'-2'
High Falls	Cheat Canyon	WV	3'-5'
Double Z	New River Gorge	WV	1-2.5' (3500-5100)
Wonder Falls (including approach)	Big Sandy Cr., Lower	WV	6- 6.5
Rocky Mountain			
Zoom Flume	Arkansas, Browns Canyon	CO	2500

Jaws	Flathead, M. Fk.	MT	5'
Lunch Counter	Snake, Alpine Canyon	WY	6000
Big Kahuna	Snake, Alpine Canyon	WY	10,000
Spotted Horse	Hoback	WY	1.5'
South East			
Entrance	Chattooga, Sect. IV	GA/SC	1.8'-2.3'
Frank Bell's	French Broad, Sect. 9	NC	2000-3000
Rattlesnake /Fang	Daddy's Creek Canyon	TN	700-3500
Boat Buster	Wilson's Creek Gorge	NC	1-3"
West Coast			
Ned's Gulch	Merced, Redbud to Suspension Bridge	CA	1500
Mercury	Green River Gorge	WA	2000-2200
The Nozzle	Green River Gorge, Upper	WA	2000
Rubber	Salmon, Middle Fork	ID	5000
House Rock	Colorado, Grand Canyon	AZ	15-22,000
Blossom Bar	Rogue R., Grave Cr. top Foster Bar	OR	3000
Class N			
North East			
Fayette Station	New River Gorge	WV	6' (2600)
Sweet's Falls	Gauley, Upper	WV	2400-3200
Mash (upper & lower)	Gauley, Lower	WV	2800-3200
Pure Screaming Hell	Gauley, Lower	WV	2000-3200
S Turn or Z-Drop	Tygart Gorge	WV	4.5'
Middle Keeney	New River Gorge	WV	1-2.5' (3500-5100)
Rip Gorge (Ripogenious Gorge)	Penobscot R., W. Br., Ripogenious Gorge	ME	2000-3000
Bastard	Youghiogheny, Upper	MD	2-2.2'
Heinzerling (Pillow route)	Youghiogheny, Upper	MD	2-2.2'
Rocky Mountain			
Number Four	Arkansas, The Numbers	CO	1000 (<3')
Sunshine	Arkansas, Royal Gorge	CO	2000-3200
Pine View Falls	Cache La Poudre, Pine View Run	CO	1500
Skull	Colorado, Westwater Cyn	UT	3500-5000
Zoom Flume	Arkansas, Browns Canyon	CO	3000
Number Three	Arkansas, The Numbers	CO	2000-2500 (3.5-4')
Number Two	Arkansas, The Numbers	CO	2000-2500 (3.5-4')
South East			
Corkscrew	Chattooga, Sect. IV	GNSC	1.8'-2.3'
Seven Foot Falls	Chattooga, Sect. IV	GNSC	1.8'-2.3'
Jared's Knee	Tellico, Ledges	TN	500-800 2'-3'
Ten foot falls (Including Entrance)	Wilson's Creek Gorge	NC	6'
West Coast			
Chamberlain Falls	American, N. Fk.	CA	1000
White Lightning	Cispus, Upper	WA	1200
Ned's Gulch	Merced, Red Bud to Suspension Bridge	CA	2500
Granite	Colorado, Grand Canyon	AZ	15-22000
Hermit	Colorado, Grand Canyon	AZ	15-22000
Class IV+			
North East			
Pillow Rock	Gauley, Upper	WV	2400-3200
Meat Cleaver	Youghiogheny, Upper	MD	2-2.2'
Rocky Mountain			
House Rock	Gallatin	MT	5'-1'
Eye of the Needle	Piedra, Lower	CO	m/h
Number Four	Arkansas, The Numbers	CO	2000-2500 (3.5-4')




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Sawtooth	Delores	CO	hi
Number Five	Arkansas. The Numbers	CO	2000-2500 (3.5-4')
Number Six	Arkansas, The Numbers	CO	2000-2500 (3.5-4')
<u>South East</u>			
Bull Sluice	Chattooga, Sect. III	GNSC	1.8'-2.3'
<u>West Coast</u>			
Husum Falls	White Salmon	WA	1200-1800
Clavey Falls	Tuolumne	CA	900+
Lava Falls	Colorado, Grand Canyon	AZ	2000
(Right Side)			
Boulder Drop	Skykomish	WA	5000
Surprise	Payette, S. Fk.	ID	2000
<u>Class V</u>			
<u>North East</u>			
Insignificant	Gauley, Upper	WV	2400-3200
Lost Paddle	Gauley, Upper	WV	2400-3200
Cribworks	Penobscot R., W. Br., Ripogenious Gorge	ME	2000-3000
Charlies Choice thru National Falls (far left)	Youghiogheny, Upper	MD	2-2.2'
<u>Rocky Mountain</u>			
No Name	Animas, Upper	CO	2000
Damnation Alley	Encampment	WY	1000-1200
Broken Bridge	Animas, Upper	CO	2000-2500
Pine Creek	Arkansas, Pine Creek Canyon	CO	1500- 2100(3.5')
Rock Garden	Rio Grande, Lower	NM	2000-3000
Canyon	Taos Box		
No Name	Animas, Upper	CO	4000
Big Drops	Colorado, Cataract Canyon	UT	30,000
<u>South East</u>			
Sock'em Dog	Chattooga, Sect. IV	GNSC	1.8'-2.3'
El Horrendo	Russell Fork, Breaks	VA	800-1250
(Right Side)			
Tower	Russell Fork, Breaks	VA	800-1100
Watauga Falls	Watauga River Gorge (sect 4)	NC	-6"-0 (200-400)
Hydro, The Hole	Watauga River Gorge (sect 4)	NC	-6"-0 (200-400)
<u>West Coast</u>			
Vortex	Kern, Forks of	CA	moderate
Starts with a bang and Bridge Drop	Cascade River	WA	mod
Mushroom	Tuolumne, Cherry Cr.	CA	1200
Lava Falls	Colorado, Grand Canyon	AZ	15-25,000
(Right Side)			
Hounds Tooth	Payette, N. Fk.	ID	1800-2000
Screaming Left Turn	Payette, N. Fk.	ID	1800-2000
<u>Class 5.1</u>			
<u>North East</u>			
Big Splat	Big Sandy Cr., Lower	WV	6.2'
<u>Rocky Mountain</u>			
Gore Rapids	Colorado, Gore Canyon	CO	1200
Double Suck	Clarks Fork	WY	1200
Kirschbaum	Colorado, Gore Canyon	CO	1200
Pine Creek	Arkansas, Pine Creek Canyon	CO	high-2900
Slaughterhouse Falls	Roaring Fk., Slaughterhouse run	CO	hi
Lower Narrows	Cache La Poudre, Narrows	CO	2.5', 500
Upper Provo Falls	Provo	UT	300
<u>South East</u>			
Pinball	Little River Canyon	AL	6"-1'

Pinball	Overflow Creek	GA	1-1.5'
<u>West Coast</u>			
Straight Shot	American, S. Fk., Golden Gate	CA	1000
Drain Pipe	American, S. Fk., Golden Gate	CA	moderate
Jacob's Ladder	Payette, N. Fk.	ID	1200-2500
<u>Class 5.2</u>			
<u>Rocky Mountain</u>			
Snolic Sister	Clarks Fork	WY	1200
Lower Barrel Springs	Colorado, Glenwood Cyn	CO	3000
Pine Creek	Arkansas, Pine Creek Canyon	CO	4.5'
Slurry Pipe	Eagle River, Gillman Gorge	CO	4'
<u>South East</u>			
Gorilla Falls/Green	Green River Narrows	NC	1-4 tubes
Scream Machine			
Sunshine	Green River Narrows	NC	1-4 tubes
<u>West Coast</u>			
Lumsden Falls	Tuolumne	CA	moderate
Juicer	Payette, N. Fk.	ID	4000
<u>Class 5.3</u>			
<u>Rocky Mountain</u>			
S Turn	Lime Cr.	CO	
Upper Narrow	Cache La Poudre, Narrows	CO	2.5', 500
Rigormortis	Clear Cr. Cyn	CO	900
<u>West Coast</u>			
Jacob's Ladder	Payette, N. Fk.	ID	3500
Nutcracker	Payette, N. Fk.	ID	1800-2000

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Lee Belknap	<i>Safety Chairman</i>
Charlie Walbridge	<i>Safety Vice-Chairman</i>
Mac Thornton	<i>Legal Advisor</i>
Rich Bowers	<i>Executive Director</i>
Joe Greiner	<i>Rating Scale Committe</i>

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American Whitewater is a national organization with a membership of over 7,000 individual whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 100 local canoe club affiliates, representing approximately 30,000 whitewater paddlers. American Whitewater was organized in 1957 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America. American Whitewater is dedicated to safety, education, access, and the preservation and conservation of America's free flowing rivers.

Let's stop losing friends on the river

Lee Belknap

Chairman, American Whitewater Safety Committee

Late last fall, an interesting email came across my desk here at the American Whitewater Safety Committee (my living room/office). It was from a reporter who wanted to know what precautions we were recommending for our members as we faced off with the certain doom known as El Nino. Well, I thought, cognizant of the pending tragedies that were sure to occur in other areas of civilized life, I might want to get that next coat of varnish on my paddle before the good water gets here. But I didn't tell him that and I politely explained the following (and this is a quote):



In many ways, whitewater boating is a sport of opportunity. When and where there is water, we go. With exceptions, there is normally enough variety of whitewater and river flows during most years that paddlers are already well practiced for the kind of paddling that typically occurs during a wet year. The exceptions to this seem to have been in particularly high water years immediately after several severe years of drought.

In general, portions of the past three years have had excellent flows in the Southeast, Mid Atlantic, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific coast. This covers most U.S. paddlers and should minimize any impact on accident rates that El Nino might otherwise have.

American Whitewater will continue its efforts to educate paddlers in river safety. Regardless of the effects of El Nino, these educational efforts are necessary to maintain and improve on the already safe record that this sport has been able to maintain so far.

End Quote.

Looking back at that response, I am wondering what I might say today. Was my positive outlook naive? Shortly after that our fatality data started showing how bad things had become. We became aware that starting in 1996 the sport hit a wall and paddlers were not always surviving it. 1997 was a really bad year, then, in 1998, it got worse. By the end of February, we were already half way up to a "normal" year's fatality rate. We normally see no more than one during these months. By March we had 6! And, like 1997, many of these were well known paddlers. Everywhere I went it seems someone knew one of these victims.

El Nino? Well, perhaps only a little. Most (not all) of this year's accidents have been at moderate levels in moderate weather. The effect seems to have been more simply the extension of the normal spring boating season backwards into the mid winter.

So, what should we expect for the rest of the year? Business as usual? Business as usual isn't working. The sport has done well over the past half century with the aid of a healthy amount of caution and fear of the unknown. As time has progressed we have learned to tame that fear and relax that caution. In 1996 we reached a milestone. That's when the rate of Class 5 accidents launched. We can't just go back to the "good ol' days." We know what we know and it's fooling us. It's becoming obvious that what seems safe to us as individuals is no longer as statistically safe as it once actually was. We can't simply go back and rely on fear that we no longer have, so we must come up with something else. I don't begin to claim I know what that something is, but I refuse to believe that each of us, rational people that we

are, can't come up with some way to replace that fear with some other form of caution or judgment change to improve our chances and thus reduce the accident rate.

This is a complicated issue with many different ways to look at it. For instance, let's face it, safety is a pain in the cockpit. Stopping to look at something we've run many times is inconvenient and rarely, and only very occasionally yields vital results (look at that hidden tree!). Stopping when we see others hit hidden objects will help, so will looking for hidden sieves and pins. The list is large. We must all pay attention to the nature of the accidents that have been happening and take steps in our own paddling, regardless of our skill level, and back off in similar situations. Sure, that's a lot of situations for many of us, but it needs to be done.

What, it's too good of a move to pass up? I can sympathize. But aren't there more good moves to be done in the future if you're still alive? And what about the family and friends? Are we so isolated from death that we don't really understand the depth of the effect it would have on our loved ones? These are all broad questions that are too big to be discussed here. Perhaps they aren't even the core questions that need to be asked. All I know is that we have to start somewhere.

I've personally lost a half dozen friends to the river over the past two decades, I don't particularly want to lose any more. Some may suggest that it's a better way to go, but it sure isn't the best time to go. I could go on and on, debating with friends and even myself, often sympathetic with both sides of any argument. It doesn't change the stark facts. We're losing too many friends.

No, I don't think El Nino is the cause of all of this, and I don't know the solution. But I do suspect that I'm as much a part of the problem as any other paddler. We paddlers know from long experience that it is possible to safely paddle most of these rivers despite the record. But there are many non-paddlers, river managers, etc., who think they know a solution, and it has already started to become a problem. If we don't collectively figure out how to get back to where we were a couple of years ago, then at some point someone else will decide that they will have to take over for us, whether we like it or not.

Lee Belknap
Chairman, American Whitewater Safety Committee

Ed's note,
Lee's been *paddling* 100 trips a year long enough to be legal to drink and boat — but thankfully he doesn't,

Briefs

Extreme Paddler Dies on Upper Blackwater

On Sunday, March 29, Tim Gavin, one of the premiere extreme boaters in the mid-Atlantic States, died in an entrapment. The accident occurred in the Sticky Fingers Rapid on the class V+ Upper Blackwater River near Davis, West Virginia.

While many who knew Gavin were not surprised that he perished in a kayaking accident, the circumstances surrounding his death have left his friends puzzled and shaken.

For many years Gavin kayaked the most difficult and dangerous rivers in the East. Not uncommonly, he boated alone, even under adverse winter conditions. Gavin made solo runs down menacing rivers like West Virginia's Lower Meadow and the Upper Blackwater. He helped pioneer hair runs like Upper Red Creek and Seneca Creek. But Tim Gavin's paddling accomplishments were not limited to the Appalachians. In fact, he solo boated both the Black Canyon of the Gunnison in Colorado and the "forbidden" class V Canyon of the Yellowstone.

But while Gavin was known to be a daring risk taker, no one could have foretold that he would die paddling a river that he knew well, at a low to moderate level, on a warm, sunny spring day in the company of a close friend — who is also an accomplished steep creeker.

"Tim had probably paddled the Upper Blackwater more often than anyone," one friend said. "He knew every inch of that river." Ironically, Gavin had reportedly been referring to the rock sieve where he died as "Only a Matter of Time" — because he believed that it would eventually claim the life of a Blackwater boater. Equally ironic is the fact that during the past year Tim Gavin appeared to have been paddling more cautiously and conservatively.

"He was thinking a lot more about safety," said one of his friends, who helped recover his boat and body. "In fact there was full floatation, a throw rope, pulleys and a first aid kit in his kayak when he died."

The Davis Gauge on the Blackwater was at three feet (about 300 cfs) when the accident occurred. Blackwater regulars consider this a low to moderate level, one that is considered ideal for first-timers. The Sticky Fingers Rapid lies roughly mid way through the exquisitely technical two plus mile steep creek, which has a gradient of about 250-feet-per-mile. Sticky Fingers is the second major rapid below Tomko Falls, a prominent

landmark. Although Sticky Fingers is not one of the most visually distinctive rapids on the river, it is difficult and dangerous. It has



been the site of other close calls.

At low to moderate levels the conservative line starts with an upstream ferry from river right to a tiny eddy against the shore on river left. After leaving this eddy headed downstream the boater crosses back to another eddy on river right, skirting a pour-over and an undercut rocksieve. The initial right to left ferry is made in front of a slot that drops over a ledge

just above the sieve. Gavin died attempting this slot. The center slot is known to be runnable at higher levels and is regarded by some as a high water sneak. But one expert boater who helped recover Gavin's body emphasized that the "slot line" is still potentially negotiable at 300 cfs, albeit risky. Reportedly Gavin often ran the slot line, even at lower levels. There is no doubt that Gavin was familiar with the "slot line" and that he chose to run it.

Mike Moore, an accomplished extreme boater and Gavin's close friend, was running the conservative low water line when he realized that Gavin was in trouble. When he reached the bottom eddy, Moore left his kayak and scrambled upstream. But by the time he reached the site of the entrapment most of Gavin's boat and his body had disappeared beneath the water. The entrapment and subsequent submersion of the boat and its passenger had occurred within seconds. Moore managed to attach his throw rope to a grab loop. He struggled for forty minutes attempting to dislodge the boat, unable to ascertain if Gavin was still trapped inside.

Moore then left the canyon and recruited several other boaters who were in the area. They hiked into the canyon that evening but were unable to extract the boat. The kayak and, later, the body were recovered from the undercut sieve the next morning by a team that included local volunteers, state park authorities, as well as a number of Gavin's boating friends. They including Mike Moore, Gary Ward, Ed Rader, Roger Zbel, Jesse Whittemore, Terry Peterson, Ben McKean, Mike Januszka and Andy Horton. Jeff Snyder handled the difficult and dangerous in-water component of the recovery. Gavin's body was subsequently removed from the deep, rugged canyon by helicopter.

Many of Tim Gavin's boating friends at-

tended his funeral on April 2 in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. He was buried in a cemetery high on a bluff overlooking the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah. Years ago he learned to kayak on these rivers. Tim Gavin worked in Harper's Ferry at his family's business, the Cliffside Inn. He is survived by his parents, brothers and sisters and a four-year-old son, Eric.

Tim Gavin's death is causing many of his friends to reexamine their motives for kayaking extreme whitewater. Last year twenty canoeing and kayaking deaths occurred in the United States, more than twice the usual number. Many of these fatalities involved well-known experts challenging difficult rapids.



Tim Gavin: A daring risk taker

"This just proves, once again, that running extreme whitewater is inherently dangerous, even under the best of circumstances," one acquaintance observed. "If you tackle difficult whitewater frequently, there is a good chance that you, or one of your friends, is going to get nipped. If it happened to Tim, it could happen to anyone."

"Being good helps, but it is no guarantee," another friend continued. "Within the last year... Dugold Bremner, Rich Weiss, Chuck Kern, Pablo Perez ... and now Tim Gavin. These were all cutting edge paddlers. And when you consider how many 'wannabees' are attempting the same runs... the prospects are frightening."

A Spring Day Turns Tragic

submitted by Mike Moore

March 29, 1998 started out as a wonderful day — 75 degrees, bright sun and a good water level on the Upper Blackwater. My early morning run gave way to a relaxing afternoon, awaiting the arrival of my good friend, Tim Gavin. Those who knew Tim will tell you that he was always late, an endearing quality that we all grew to expect and accept. Tim finally arrived at about 3:30, just as I was about to give up on him.

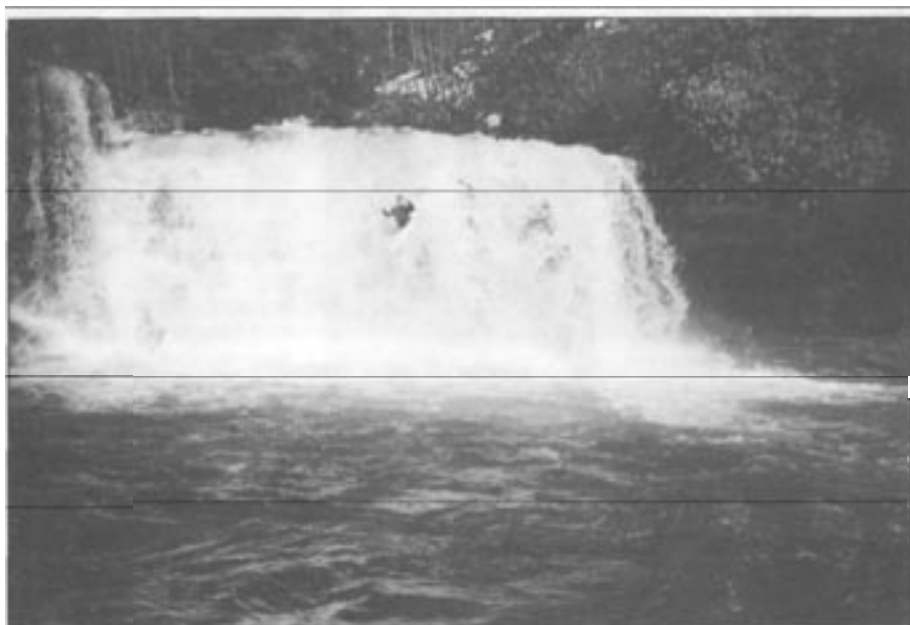
Our 4 p.m. put on had the usual feel to it: pure pleasure.... excitement. We even agreed to go slower than usual, "to soak it all in," as Tim put it.

This wonderful day turned tragic in an instant when my friend was engulfed by an undercut sieve. In that instant the Upper Blackwater claimed her first victim and her most loyal subject. Ironically, a year and a half ago, Tim predicted that such a lethal accident would occur at that very location... a line through a rapid known as Sticky Fingers, where a severe undercut, worsened by Hurricane Fran in 1996, lies adjacent to a slot route. Tim named the spot "Just A Matter of Time."

Tim's accident was not caused by inexperience. He had paddled the Upper Blackwater at least 200 times and the North Fork of the Blackwater at least 100 times. His accident was not caused by faulty gear or a dangerous level. The river was running about 300 cfs that day... an optimum level. Tim's death simply illustrates the potential consequences of paddling class V-VI whitewater, where mistakes can sometimes be deadly. All boaters running class V-VI steep rivers need to remember that by definition in the event of a mishap "rescue may be extremely difficult or impossible."

The Upper Blackwater has long been underrated as evidenced by the alarming number of mishaps, close calls and lost boats (at least five in the last two years... never seen again!) When that many boats are lost, never to be found, it says a lot about the character of the river.

If you are in the area and the Blackwater is running low (150-200cfs), do yourself a favor and bang down it and see for yourself why the Upper Blackwater deserves and demands respect. What you see at low water may surprise and scare you. But knowing where those scary spots are might come in handy, or even save your life, when you paddle the river at "normal" water levels.



Tim Gavin in his element — creeking in West Virginia

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River Network Awarded 1998 Conservation Alliance Grant

Perception Kayaks has announced that the River Network has been named a recipient of a 1998 Conservation Alliance Grant. As a grant recipient, the River Network will receive \$35,000 toward its work in ensuring that the Clarks Fork River through Alberton Gorge in Western Montana will remain free flowing and without residential and commercial development.

"We are excited and delighted to hear that our proposal was selected for a Conservation Alliance Grant," says Susan Doroff, Northwest Director/Riverlands Conservancy for the River Network. "This grant money will be instrumental in helping us purchase an option on the land...essentially buying us the much needed time to generate the financial resources for this prime property situated in the heart of the Gorge."

The Alberton Gorge, one of the best and most heavily used whitewater resources in the inland Northwest, was originally slated for a dam and a reservoir. By purchasing this river front property, River Keeper will be able to put a stop to the threat of development which would ultimately compromise the quality and character of the Gorge.

"Over the years we have supported the River Network's mission primarily through their Watershed program," said Veronica Griner, Communications Director for Perception. "By sponsoring their grant proposal, we were able to strengthen our commitment to their overall mission, which encompasses more than just helping people organize to protect and restore rivers and watersheds."

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Upper Rocky Broad River Claims Life of Pablo Perez

Excerpted from an Internet Posting by Bryan Jennings

Pablo Perez, a well known and accomplished kayaker, died while paddling the Upper Rocky Broad River near Bat Cave, North Carolina on the afternoon of February 18th. Perez was a member of the U.S. Rodeo team and a member of Team D (Dagger). Perez, who was new to the Upper Rocky Broad, was paddling with Scott Albright, Phillip Curry and Hugh Kelly, all experienced paddlers who knew river well, when the accident occurred.

At about 5 p.m. the group approached an unnamed rapid. Perez was given a verbal description of the rapid by Curry while watching Albright run the rapid. As Albright came off the bottom drop of the rapid, which is bordered on river left by an undercut rock parallel to the main flow, he felt his boat's hull hit a submerged log. He immediately eddied out and turned upstream to warn the

other paddlers, but Perez was already taking a final stroke into the drop. At the bottom of the drop Perez's kayak disappeared beneath the surface.

When the kayak and its passenger failed to surface, Albright climbed out of his boat and ran upstream with a throw rope. When he arrived at the base of the drop neither the kayak or Perez was visible. Albright threw his rope into the drop and Perez's hand surfaced briefly. Albright threw the rope again, but there was no response. Albright then dove into the water and grabbed Perez's body, but he was washed downstream by the powerful current before he could free it. Subsequent attempts to free Perez using a rescue harness/belay system and a snag line were unsuccessful.

The body was eventually recovered at 3:30 a.m. on February 19.



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"River Rage" for Maryland Boaters

If you are currently the inhabitant of any major metropolitan area, you are well aware of the current issue terrorizing motorists – Road Rage! Road rage is a growing problem wherein irate, freaked out drivers lose their cool and attempt to destroy fellow drivers in whatever method is most expedient. In really big cities like New York, LA and DC, this may include gunplay, kidnapping, and sabotage.

However, for Maryland members of American Whitewater, there is good news! Now, before you cut someone out, force someone into a ditch, or just flip off the driver beside you, you can make sure they are not a fellow whitewater boater. How? Just by looking to see if they are sporting the new American Whitewater license plates pictured here.

Since we are all forced to take our boats off our rigs some time (weddings, funerals, or on rivers with really bad access problems). And since sometimes we even remove our racks (those affluent boaters who wash their cars), we may find ourselves at the tender mercy of our own stressed out friends who may not be logging enough time on the river. Now identifying our interest right up front (and in the back too) with Maryland plates can protect us!

These plates are available to all Maryland members of American Whitewater, and they offer several great benefits:

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They help promote the sport and identify you as a rabid whitewater addict

They help spread the message on river access, conservation and safety issues

They help support American Whitewater

There is one additional benefit. In the rare instance that you are run off the road by one of your fellow members, you can, for just a small donation (thousands at least!) call American Whitewater and we can tell you who the \$%*! was! (Actually we can't, but we can at least tell you what kind of boat they paddle).

For more information on how to get custom American Whitewater plates in Maryland, or if you have some volunteer time and would like to set up a similar program in your state, please call (301) 589-9453 and ask for Kate Gribskov for information.

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Andreas Fischer to Make the First Descent of the Rio Acari River in Peru

Project sponsored by the Polartec Challenge

Malden Mills announced that in March of 1998, German kayaker **Andreas Fischer**, accompanied by Americans John Foss (American Whitewater Regional Coordinator), David Black, and Kurt Casey, would attempt the first descent of the upper canyon of the Rio Acari in Peru. The kayakers are winners of the Polartec Challenge, Malden Mills' annual international awards program designed to encourage the spirit and practice of outdoor adventure. This year, 15 teams of kayakers, climbers, adventurers, and bicyclists comprised of 43 people from 11 countries will share the \$70,000 prize. Individual awards range from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

Located 90 miles north of the deepest canyon on earth, Rio Cotahuasi, the Rio Acari begins at the continental divide, at 20,000 feet of elevation, and drops more than 100 feet per mile as it makes its way to the Pacific Ocean. Team member John Foss expects that



it will take 10 days to descend the river. This will be the second time the group will attempt to paddle the Rio Acari. When they arrived in 1997, the canyon was dry. The beginning of March marks the end of the

rainy season in Peru, and the only time of the year when it will be possible to kayak the river. This team has previously run rivers together in Europe, South America, and New Zealand.

Malden Mills evaluates projects for the Polartec Challenge on the basis of their originality, credibility, responsibility, and their ability to serve as a role model for outdoor enthusiasts worldwide. The company encourages small, frugal teams who can push the standards of contemporary adventure and contribute to the local environment and/or culture. For an application, write: Polartec Challenge, P.O. Box 582, Jackson, NH, 03846, USA. The deadline for projects taking place in 1999 and beyond is October 1, 1998.

Based in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Malden Mills is the worldwide producer of high-quality Polartec and Polarfleece branded products for apparel, home furnishings and footwear. Founded in 1906, Malden Mills is privately owned by the Feuerstein family.

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"Paddlemania" Video Review

by Greg Kopp

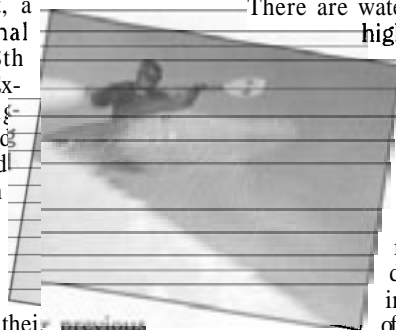
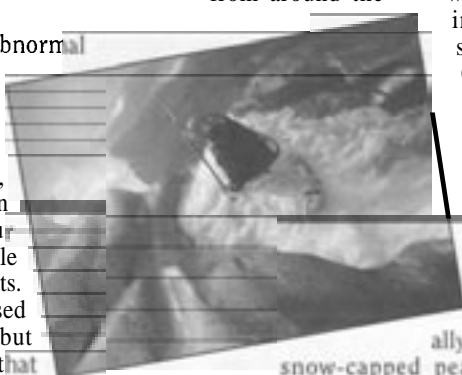
"Paddlemania - An abnormal obsession with paddling characterized by excessive enthusiasm which can become borderline craziness"

This impressive video, a fund-raiser for American Whitewater, will expand your horizons on what is possible with kayaks and open boats. No, not just for the increased level of difficulty in rapids, but for the variety of media that can be boated. Why limit a terrific sport to water? Snow, rocks, roads, trees, and air open up new ways of using (abusing?) your boat! Not many people can claim to have shudder ruddered in fresh powder; the same goes for 360's and airborne half-pirouettes while carving first tracks down snow-covered Colorado peaks.

The 48-minute video is directed and produced by Paul Tefft, a former professional snowboarder (placing 8th in the 1993 World Extreme Snowboarding Championships) turned extreme kayaker, and Charlie MacArthur, an expert instructor certified in skiing, snowboarding, telemarking and kayaking. Compared to their "Meltdown Madness," this video has less dia-

log and a greater variety of spectacular rivers from around the

world. The inspiring "Paddlemania" scenery comes from Colorado, New Mexico, Hawaii, Canada, New Zealand and multiple states on the video circuit.



ocean, and doesn't stop for much that's in the way! From put-ins under snowfields or 3-foot wide creek sluices to the Skookumchuck tidal wave in British Columbia, there's some section of river or ocean that will appeal to anybody. There are lots of waterfalls; most with direction-reorienting rock bounces part way down. There are waterfall portages too high for seal launches,

so boater and boat separately drop into the river and reconnect before the next tree-infested waterfall. There's a K-2 surfing the Colorado River's Big Sur with a dog as bow paddler. And an insanely steep "controlled fall" of a rapid in New Mexico that have you questioning the mean-

ing of "runnable."

Then just about the time you're feeling that rivers are extremely forgiving, they start showing some of the "oops-es" generally left out of hair boating videos. (Many of these are courtesy of Colorado's annual Gore race.) Luckily, none are too serious — at least from the viewer's armchair!

This video is very entertaining, in no small part because the rivers are too difficult to take seriously. "Paddlemania" is a great addition to your collection, whether used for "Wow,



no way!" at parties or for relaxing and appreciating the great scenery.

It retails for \$26.95 plus \$5 S&H through paddlesports outlets or the Paddlemania Hotline at 800-388-9590. Best of all, proceeds support American Whitewater efforts for river conservation, education, safety and access.

Clockwise: Bill Mellemthin w/smoke enhances backdrop during filming at Grottos. Bill Mellenthin dropping Grottos (Roaring Fork) during filming. Charlie MacArthur launching a mini-cornice. All photos by Biege Jones

New Whitewater Adventure Book Emphasizes Humor

Travels with a Kayak, by Wilt Deschner, 255 pages. The Eddy Tern Press, HCR 88 Box 169, Baker, Oregon 97814. \$19.95 + \$2.00 S and H.

Author Wilt Deschner was introduced to kayaking in 1968 by his parents, he writes, "in the mistaken belief that it would keep me out of trouble." Kayaking appears to have done anything but! It has gotten him into a lot of bizarre situations, in the company of a number of eccentric companions. And now the payoff to all of Deschner's misadventures has taken the form of *Travels with a Kayak*, an off the wall and hilarious account of his boating experiences in such out of the way places as Turkey, Nepal, India, Japan, New Zealand and Alaska.

During the past three decades the author has paddled with a number of whitewater luminaries

including pioneer hair boater Wally Blackadar, who kayaked with him in New Zealand, and Peter Knowles and Dave Allardice, authors of *White Water Nepal*. Deschner's compadres have also included a rogue's gallery of lesser known, but no less eccentric boaters.

Buyer beware, this is not a book intended to serve as a guide to paddling or canoeing locations; to flatter the egos and reputations of prominent boaters. In writing the book, Deschner clearly had one purpose in mind... to make his readers laugh. He succeeds admirably! *Travels with a Kayak* is one of the funniest adventure travel books I have ever read.



Writing in an irreverent style reminiscent of Rolling Stone's P.J. O'Rourke, Deschner takes on the foibles of his co-travelers, referring to them with monikers like Green Slime, Millionaire Skinflint and the All Touristic Doctor. No one is spared his biting commentary, including himself. Deschner takes on cultural idiosyncracies with equal relish — no

nation that he has visited or ethnic group he has encountered escapes his barbs. All this is not exactly politically correct, but it is inarguably funny.

In describing his escapades, he effectively conveys the importance of flexibility, tolerance and a good sense of humor in surviving and enjoying international adventure travel. Deschner comes across as the kind of guy we would all like to travel with. His approach to whitewater adventure seems to be that no matter how miserable you may be at any given moment, it will all be worth it in the end — as long as you survive to laugh about it.

I've never met Wilt Deschner, but I'll bet he's a lot of fun. Reading his book sure was.

Prize Winning Video Features Open Boats, Southern Hair

Tales of the Paddlesnake, produced and directed by Milt Aitken.; Trout Lips Productions, 811-H Livingston Ct., Marietta, GA 30067

Like Rodney Dangerfield, open boaters constantly complain that they "don't get no respect!" But while these traditionalists are still in the minority on most whitewater rivers, there are more and more competent open canoe paddlers tackling difficult whitewater every year. Witness Tales of the Paddlesnake, a new video that captured several major prizes at this year's National Paddling Film Festival.

Although this video includes footage of a few token kayakers, most of the action involves open boaters running difficult class IV and V whitewater, located far to the south of the Mason Dixon line. Some of the most exciting sequences come from Oceana Falls in the Tallulah Gorge; where open boaters and kayakers alike plunge down a long, precipitous slide into a monstrous wall of exploding water. Running Oceana appears to be like playing Russian roulette, you pay your money and you take your chances! But at Oceana the open boaters seem to fair as well as their kin in closed boats. Which is not to say that everyone fairs well!

The video also includes quite a bit of footage from popular rivers like the Tellico in Tennessee and the Little River Canyon in Alabama. Here open boaters challenge a

number of class V drops, with variable results. The lengthy section on the Little River includes the names and lines through specific rapids, as well as pertinent information about river levels. This would prove useful to boaters planning a first run.

Less known steep runs like Johnnie's Creek, Teddy Bear Creek, Wolf Creek, Cain Creek and the North Chickamauga are also included... proving that open boaters can tackle the extremely technical stuff too.

Unlike many whitewater videos, the carnage has not been edited out of Tales of the Paddlesnake. According to the video, vicious paddlesnakes lurk beneath the surface of major rapids everywhere, waiting to ambush unwary boaters. In the course of the production the paddlesnakes have their way many, many times. There is a lot of flipping, quite a bit of rolling, and more than a little blood letting.

Maybe open boaters do deserve more respect. At least now they have their own video.

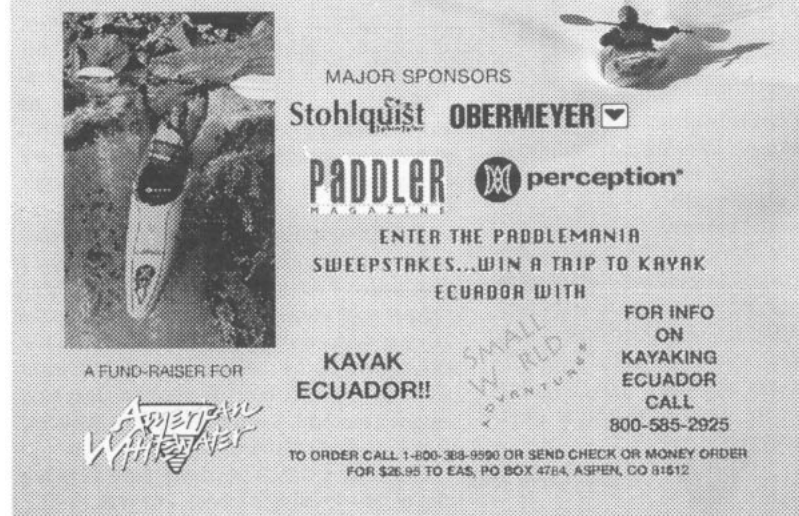
Reviewed by Joe Hatcher and Bob Gedekoh




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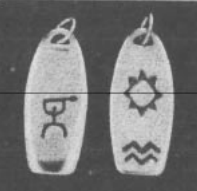
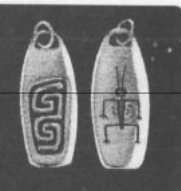
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B r i e f
Below: The 1998 National Paddling Film Festival Best Paddling Image winner was chosen by the NPFF-East (Lexington, KY) and NPFF-West (Bakersfield, CA) audiences as the best of the fest.

The photographer is Scott Harding, PO Box 826, Fort Jones, CA 96032. The boater is Chris Bassett, widely known as the River Ranger on the South Fork Payette. The photo was taken from a small ledge on the nearly vertical basalt gorge of Chile's Rio Claro (Siete Tazas). It took some fancy footwork to reach the ledge. The drop is the next to last of the Siete Tazas, which, of course, translates to Seven Teacups.

Whitewater Film Fest bigger, better than ever

By Barry Grimes, AW Director



After the spinning stopped, and the bubbles gave way to sky and trees, you take a deep breath — your first since approaching the edge of that big drop. Then you grab another handful of popcorn and settle back to watch more of the action of the National Paddling Film Festival.

Since you're not really paddling, this remarkable non-profit event, where all of the latest in paddling images gather each year to compete before panels of judges and East/West audiences is the next best thing.

Begun 15 years ago by a rabid group of paddlers in Kentucky, the National Paddling Film Festival (NPFF) to date has raised and given away over \$30,000 dollars for river onsevation causes.

Over the years, the NPFF has grown and developed into a sophisticated, multimedia showcase of paddlesport creativity. As it enters its 16th year of competitions, the NPFF is putting on its sunglasses at the possibilities as paddlers learn to use their home computers to create new, and exciting paddlesport image art.

Way back in 1983, the very first NPFF was made possible through the encouragement and financial backing of Bob Sehlinger, publisher of Menasha Ridge Press. And today, the NPFF continues to enjoy a tradition of generous cooperation and support from the paddlesports industry as donations of equipment and other items stock the very popular NPFF silent auction — the main source of festival revenue.

The sponsor contributions, artist involvement and hard work of volunteers

from the Bluegrass Wildwater Association of Lexington, Ky., and the Kern River Alliance of Bakersfield, Calif., benefit American Whitewater, the American Canoe Association and a host of river conservation projects.

In the 1998 competition there were 14 motion image entries covering both amateur and professional divisions, as well as 25 still entry images and 21 River Safety posters. The NPFF audiences of about 300 in each Lexington and Bakersfield, plus eight professional division judges representing paddling organizations from across the U.S. and nine amateur division judges consisting of professionals from the paddling and media industry, had some very tough choices to make.

For a complete 1998 entry list, see the NPFF website at <http://www.surfbwa.org/npff>. But for your reading pleasure, here is the list of 1998 NPFF winners:



Above: The control booth between the theatres. We can virtually display any kind of media here, John and Rex, Univ. of KY technicians, were kept busy during the show.



Left: The hall of show boats from major manufacturers at the NPFF. Above: The second theatre where the silent auction was held.

"Tales of the Paddlesnake"

Winner of the audience voted Paddler's Choice Award as well as the judges pick for Best of the NPFF: Amateur Division.

In a stunning and unprecedented NPFF win, "Tales of the Paddlesnake" by Milt Aitken of Marietta, Georgia was the favorite of the NPFF-East and West audiences who voted it to receive the coveted Paddler's Choice Award. Milt combined impressive and inventive digital effects, produced on a home PC, to create the NPFF's first ever amateur Paddler's Choice winner. Agreeing with the audience, the judges also scored it as their 1998 Best of the NPFF: Amateur Winner. "Tales of the Paddlesnake" combined top to bottom runs showing every major rapid in Alabama's Little River Canyon and Georgia's Tallulah Gorge with rapid names and levels superimposed on screen.

Weaving excellent river shots with a humorous story line that included "actual footage" of attacks by the vicious Paddlesnake, "Tales of the Paddlesnake" was entertaining on every level. Congratulations to Milt on an outstanding entry!

"Thule Bheri: Himalayan Whitewater"

Winner of Best of the NPFF: Professional Division

In the Fall of 1995, an international team of six kayakers set off for the kingdom of Dolpo in Northwestern Nepal to attempt a first descent of the Thule Bheri River. Two of the boaters had scouted the river previously but were turned back by high water levels. This is the story of their successful return expedition, which was not only an intense whitewater journey, but a journey back in time as they encounter the cultures and peoples of this remote region whose way of living has not changed significantly for thousands of years.

Congratulations to American Adventure Productions of Aspen, Colorado on winning the 1998 Best of NPFF: Professional Division.

The 1998 panel of judges representing paddling organizations throughout the U.S. voted "Thule Bheri: Himalayan Whitewater" as their top pick from a large field of excellent professional entries. Gorgeous whitewater, some very exciting shuttles and a fresh and respectful encounter within a remote and colorful culture gave "Thule Bheri: Himalayan Whitewater" the winning edge.

"Essential Boat Control"

Winner of Best NPFF Instructional

A music-filled instructional video pushing the foundations of good kayaking, created for the intermediate to expert paddler, this video is not a topical smattering of tricks to impress your friends. This is the REAL THING.

Competing in one of the toughest and most competitive categories in the 1998 NPFF, the team at Waterworks Productions, Paul Bonesteel and Tom DeCuir of Topton, North Carolina took top honors. Superb camera work and editing with direct, easy to understand narration, puts this video among the greats of paddling instruction videos. From the same folks who brought us last year's 1997 Best of NPFF: "The Adventures of Johny Utah." Well done Paul and Tom!

Thanks for your continuing excellence of paddling productions and support of the nonprofit NPFF! Keep this video working for the rivers by purchasing it from the NPFF!

"Spreading The Disease"

Winner of Best NPFF Humor

Buzzellmania Productions is back and wishes to apologize ahead of time for this video's lack of plot, clean kayak lines, big "name" rodeo stars and environmental awareness. Other than that, the video is not bad! Get ready for 13 short stories that explore the sport we know as "kayaking." Really, no apologies are necessary for this outrageous winning entry from Rick Gusic of Aspinwall, Pennsylvania. The judges and audience loved the irreverent tone from the same videographer who won the 1997 Best of the Amateur Division with "Beyond The Missionary Position." In "Spreading The Disease" Ric takes aim at the pretensions of whitewater paddling culture as never before.

Paddlingly incorrect, "Spreading The Disease" is a breath of fresh attitude for boaters who take themselves too seriously.

"Wave Sport 1998 Promotional Video"

Winner of Best NPFF Commercial.

This is an action packed, high adrenaline, whitewater kayaking video. The purpose of this video is to showcase Wave Sport whitewater kay-

aks. All of the models are depicted and various clips of each model are present. Wave Sport is bringing the reality of extreme whitewater kayaking to the general public with this fast paced, exciting video. Taking the promotional video and turning it into high energy fun and enjoyment, videographer Chris Emerick and Wave Sport of Oak Creek, Colorado make you forget the old definition of a commercial. Packed with awesome drops, incredible aerial stunts, and surfin' tunes, this video is a winner in anybody's category.

Scott Harding, Fort Jones, CA

Winner of Best Paddling Image Competition

His crystal clear 35mm slide taken from above a kayaker flying over a rapid's drop was a runaway winner in both the East and West showing.

New for 1998 was the highly successful "River Safety Poster Contest." In an effort to raise safety awareness, the NPFF awarded \$100, age category prizes to the following winners:

16 to Adult Category - Scott Strohm & Kathy Brown Hilliard, Ohio.

9-15 year-old category - Jade Vantrees, Lexington, KY.

8 and under Category - Rachel Moore, Lexington, KY.

Congratulations to this year's winners. Be sure to see the Best Paddling Image and Safety Poster winners on the NPFF web site and on posters near waterways everywhere. Thanks to the following folks who help create the funds the NPFF generates, please support them to keep the karma strong:

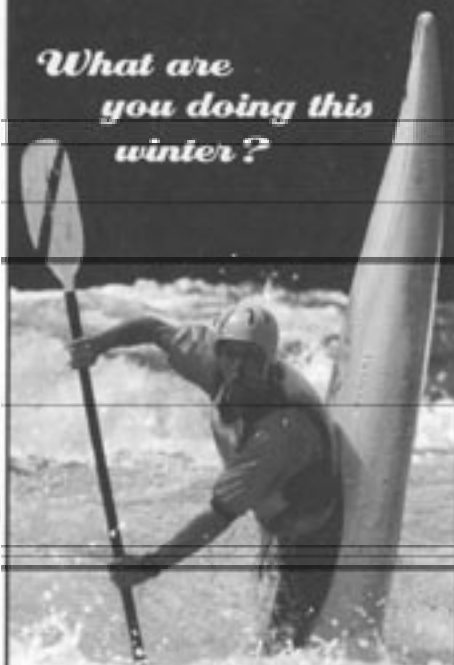
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Please visit the NPFF website, <http://www.surfba.org/npff>, for information on entering the 1999 NPFF, buying videos and checking out hundreds of entries from 15 years of festivals.

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High Tech Whitewater Film Fest draws crowds, Raises big bucks for rivers

The 15th annual NPFF-East event continued the tradition of providing the latest paddling images, great gear deals and an outstanding party. There were about 250 paddlers and 10 judges (5-professional/ 5-amateur) in attendance from all over the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest and Southern U.S.

In addition to the 21 River Safety Posters located in the gallery outside the main theater, projection of the 14 motion entries (videos) and the 25 still images ran basically nonstop from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. This year, we were able to employ two back-to-back theaters with the ability to project huge video images simultaneously. The main theater, which holds 350, was a traditional, very large format RGB TV projection system, was a darkened, sit down, popcorn munching experience. The adjoining theater was left lit, open and was filled with all kinds of paddling gear and boats. While folks pondered the incredible deals available, the videos continued to be shown on the 15' X 15' screen on stage.

So no one would have to miss any of the presentations, we also served a box lunch in rooms located above the theaters where "quiet" and "talking" rooms were designated. You could watch every moment sitting in the main theater or be free wander, shop or eat without missing a drop of the action.

The facility at the University of Kentucky is first quality and is fully networked for digital display as well. During the short breaks between videos we ran a Powerpoint slide show, running on a Mac, that employed a countdown clock to announce the start and title of next video as well as give up to date silent auction bids.

This digital projection capacity the NPFF now has is paving the way to an exciting future. This year we continued to see more and better video entries from new and very creative paddling minds. We initiated a wonderful and potentially very useful new River Safety Poster Contest that will help us spread the word of safety in these times of rising river fatalities. The volunteers of the NPFF

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envision 1999 as a watershed year for the NPFF and paddlesport imagery.

With the explosion of cheaper, faster, and easier to use computer image software, and the proliferation of inexpensive computers, we can expect to see many more entrants in 1999. The theaters and digital projection capability of the UK Health Science building will allow us to accept virtual paddling images from an ever widening variety of creative paddlers. Just as film was replaced by video, we predict video will be replaced by digital images.

Suddenly anyone with a creative urge is

able to produce a stunning paddling image or movie or animation and send it in to the NPFF via the internet. What fun it will be to see what turns up.

The Film Festival was a great success and with thanks to the image artists, our volunteers and contributors, we were able to raise about \$8,000 for the American Canoe Association, American Whitewater and river conservation.

Hopefully, this offering pleases the River Gods and we can all look forward to great paddling in 1998 and an even bigger party in their honor in 1999!

Be sure to join us in 1999 — please contact us at:

www.surfbwa.org/npff
NPFF @ 124 Hilltop Dr.
Richmond, KY 40475
bagriml@pop.uky.edu,

or,
Barry Grimes
1998 NPFF Coordinator
124 Hilltop Dr.

Richmond, KY 40475
phone: 606-623-9067
email: bagriml@pop.uky.edu
web: <http://www.surfbwa.org/npff>



Canoe/Kayak Featured In 1998 Nike World Masters Games

by Adina Filipoi

Be part of sports history by competing with athletes from around the globe in the 1998 NIKE World Masters Games. The

Games will be the largest international participatory multisport competition in the world.

The 1998 NIKE World Masters Games will make its first appearance in the United States in Portland, Oregon Aug. 9 to 22, 1998. The Games are a quadrennial celebration bringing 25,000 Masters athletes from 100 countries together to compete in 25 sports. Athletes will share in world-class competition that embodies the original ideals of the Olympic movement. Other than a minimum age requirement of 30 years for Canoe and Kayak competitors, there are no qualifications. Athletes participate as individuals or teams, and not for their country. The World Masters Games is a non-profit organization, with NIKE as its title sponsor.

The registration deadline for the Games is May 31, 1998. A one-time registration fee allows registered athletes to compete in multiple events within the Canoe/Kayak Marathon, Sprint and Whitewater disciplines. The Marathon events will be held at Vancouver Lake in Washington and will include Mixed C-2 3x27 (Pro boat), Mixed ICF K-2 (high kneel), Women C-1 Solo (Cruiser boat), Women ICF K-1 (high kneel), Men C-2 3x27 (Pro boat), Men ICF K-2 (high kneel), Women C-2 3x27 (Pro boat), Women ICF K-2 (high kneel), Men C-1 Solo (Cruiser boat), and Men ICF K-1 (high kneel). Sprint events, featuring the 500 meter, 1000 meter, 5000 meter, will also be located at Vancouver Lake. The Big Eddie Rapid on the Upper Deschutes River in Bend, Oregon will

be the setting for the down river and freestyle whitewater competition. Slalom will be held at the First Street Rapid on the Upper Deschutes River. More Canoe/Kayak-specific information and all necessary registration forms can be downloaded from our website, www.worldmasters.org.

All athletes who participate in the Games will reap the true rewards of Masters competition. The first three place finishers in each age category will receive gold, silver or bronze medals. The main incentive for being a part of this Olympic-like experience is the camaraderie and friendship that comes with competing in an international event. Athletes will realize the satisfaction that

comes from a lifelong commitment to sport and physical fitness.

The May 31 registration deadline is rapidly approaching and registration is handled on a first-come first-serve basis.

For additional registration and Games information, contact the 1998 NIKE World Masters Games headquarters at:

Website: www.worldmasters.org

Email: info@worldmasters.org

Address: 1998 NIKE World Masters Games
55 S.W. Yamhill St.

Portland, Oregon USA 97204

Phone: (503) 226-1998

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1998 Whitewater Open Canoe National Championships Slated

Richmond, VA has been selected as the host site for the ACA 1998 Whitewater Open Canoe (WWOC) Downriver and Slalom National Championships. The event will be held June 18-21, 1998 on the James River in downtown Richmond. This will be the first time the WWOC National Championships have been held in an urban setting. The skyline of the city of Richmond will serve as the backdrop for this national championship event, which should be exciting for spectators and participants alike. The downriver course will run from Huguenot Bridge to Mayo's Island and consist of 8 miles of class III-V whitewater. The 1+ mile sprint course will start just above Belle Isle and continue down to Mayo's Island. The slalom course will take place in the infamous Hollywood

Rapids adjacent to Belle Isle.

The MidAtlantic Paddlers Association (MAPA) and the Metropolitan Richmond Sports Backers are working together to host the event. A special race for Scouts (boys & girls) will be held in conjunction with the Nationals. Ed Sharp from MAPA is the chairman for the downriver & sprint competition and Jon Lugbill, Executive Director of the Richmond Sports Backers, serves as the chairman for the Slalom events. Additional information can be obtained at the WWOC 98 Nationals web-page at <http://www.acapaddle.org> by clicking on Special Events & Programs, then WWOC. For questions not addressed on the web-page contact Ed Sharp via email at e.sharp@worldnet.att.net or at 14 Winslow Rd, Fredericksburg, VA 22406.

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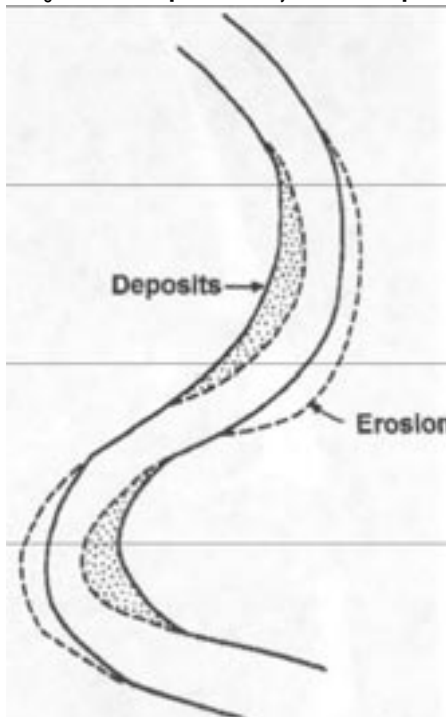
Why rivers meander...

by April Holladay

Why do rivers follow lazy loops and bends? The Rio Grande, the Animas, the Pecos, and especially the goosenecks of the San Juan.

—Eloy Marquis

Figure 1. A meandering stretch showing deposits of sand and gravel along the inner bends and erosion along outer bends. [Illustration by M. Morisawa].



Why are rivers crooked? Even Einstein and Leonardo da Vinci wondered. Streams and rivers follow winding paths downhill. Pure, icy rivulets snake across glacial ice. The Gulf Stream flows north along the coast from Florida to North Carolina and then meanders in great sweeping curves northeast across the Atlantic. You almost never see a straight stretch of river longer than ten times its width. The San Juan, more meandering than most, is 6 miles long through the Goosenecks but only travels a distance of 1.5 miles. That's crooked. Even where banks are straight, the deepest part of a river wanders from side to side. All this suggests meandering is an intrinsic property of streams.

Meanders usually appear wherever a river goes down a gentle slope, flowing around obstructions, through fine-grained soil that easily erodes but sticks together well enough to make firm banks. Apparently, the Goosenecks of the San Juan formed eons ago on such a flood plain. Then the land uplifted while the stream cut down to shape the 1500-foot chasm the Goosenecks course through now.

A river bends as it adjusts to disturbances, such as increases in water volume or obstacles that deflect its current. The diverted current follows a new path, bumps into a bank, encounters bank resistance, and erodes the bank — eventually carving a bend. The greater the curve, the faster the water rounds the bend, takes off on a tangent across the river, collides against the opposite bank and starts carving another bend. (See Figure 1.) This pattern repeats over and over as the current bounces off the banks on its way downstream — creating swings in the river almost as regular as a clock's pendulum.

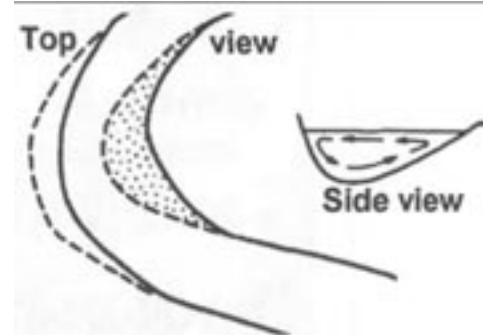
Curves enlarge because of water flow downward toward the riverbed. At the outside of the bend, water flows down and toward the center — like tea leaves as you stir tea in a teacup. The downward flow deepens the channel on the outside of the bend. The silt-laden water moves across the riverbed

toward the inner bend and drops sediment in the slower-moving water there. This forms sand and gravel bars. (See Figure 2.)

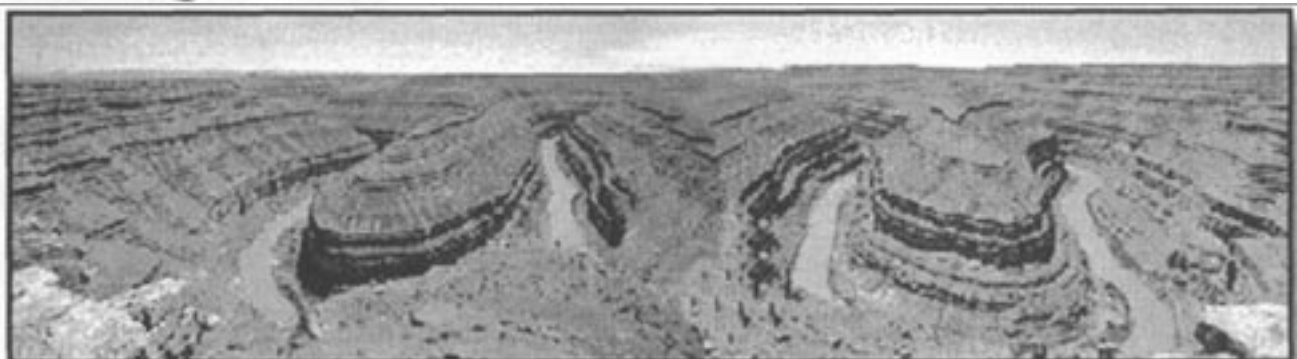
Current moves downward at the outside of bends because water slows near the riverbed. The bank at the bend contains and turns the water — both surface and bottom water. But there's a difference. Bottom water slows due to riverbed friction, like a canoe scraping across a hidden shoal. The bottom part of the bank doesn't have to push so hard to get the slower moving water around the bend. So a pressure difference develops between top and bottom water and that difference pushes the top water down toward the riverbed. The top water carves out a deeper bend as it flows downward.

You asked a good question, Eloy. The answer is: rivers meander because it's their nature — just as it's our nature to wonder why. ----- Please send your questions to April: Happenings — Why?!, P.O. Box 75106, Albuquerque, NM 87194. Or email her at April@swcp.com.

Figure 2. The top view shows a bend in the river. The side view shows an underwater view of the river at the bend. Note the water flowing down toward the riverbed at the outer part of the bend.



Below: The Goosenecks of the San Juan in the Four Corners area near Mexican Hat.



Lesser (But Not Least) Wesser

by: Jeanine K. Allen

"Let's run Lesser Wesser today," my friend Liz said enroute to the Nantahala River. We had run the "Nanty" before but had never attempted Nantahala Falls (otherwise known as "Lesser Wesser"), a class III rapid located just above the takeout at the Nantahala Outdoor Center that has humbled many good paddlers in the past.

Arriving at the river, we became a little apprehensive when we realized that our paddling partners Bob and Shirley were not there. This would be our first time paddling without them. We decided that communication, teamwork and eddies would be our keys to success. With this in mind, we drove to the putin where I would wait with the boats and the equipment. Liz was going to drive the car down to the takeout and hitch a ride back up. However, while I was in the car changing into my wetsuit, I notice this guy hovering around nearby. Normally, this wouldn't annoy me, but I was already naked, trying to squeeze into a damp piece of rubber, somehow managing to flash the entire parking area. I got out of the car ready to confront the guy, but he totally disarmed me with a question.

"Can I ask you a favor?"

I was thinking, "Buddy, your favors are all used up after that peep show!"

But instead, I said "Sure." He said that he'd never ran the Nanty before, and he wanted to try. But (pointing to this huge boat) said he was afraid of flipping on Patton's Run and wanted to run it with Liz and I. Patton's Run is a class II+ rapid that most first-timers botch because it comes right after the putin. Having swum it myself on my first run, I immediately sympathized with him. I said "Sure, no problem." He then pointed to his truck where a woman was waiting patiently inside and said his lady friend could run shuttle for us. Quickly adopting a new plan, Liz, "Marvin" and his lady friend all took off for the takeout to drop off our car. Fishing into my dry-bag, I pulled out my paperback that I carry for such occasions and settled down for a good read while they ran shuttle.

When they returned, we all flew into action securing our tow ropes and stowing important gear (Diet Cokes, energy bars and paperbacks) in our dry bags. Liz and I carried down to the slip and waited for Marvin to drag his pig boat down the ramp. As he approached the slip, I started to have second thoughts. He had on a bicycle helmet, a Yamaha life vest, and had a pieced together canoe paddle lashed to his boat with rope. "Oh well," I thought, "this isn't a fashion show runway." Marvin then produced a spray

skirt from the inside of his boat and asked what would be the best way to wear it. (On your head?) It was then that I decided to secure the tow rope to the front of my boat for easy access. After five minutes of Liz and I tugging on Marvin's skirt, we finally got it secured to his boat.

"Just don't breathe, Marvin!" I said. He laughed. I wasn't joking.

I then said, "OK, Marvin, when we pull out to go downstream, just follow Liz and I through Patton's Run. If you flip and come out of your boat, we will be waiting in the eddy just below with throw ropes. If not, then just hit the eddy on the left with us and we'll all go down together." Marvin gave me a puzzled look and said "Who's Eddie?" "Just follow us, Marvin," I shouted over my shoulder, then I muttered under my breath "this is going to be a long day."

Liz and I peeled out into the current and started downstream. My heart was pounding in anticipation of the large waves and hidden rocks above the rapid. The current picked up and Patton's Run approached rapidly. I clipped the side of the rock that had flipped me once before and corrected just in time to crash through the waves and veer aggressively into the eddy on river left. Then I looked back upstream only to see Marvin sideways on the rock I had just grazed. Sure that he was going to flip, I scrambled out of my boat and reached for the throw rope. But miraculously, Marvin righted himself and went blazing by smiling and waving. I looked at Liz and said, "we'll catch up before the next rapid." So we started down, hitting all the eddies and playing all the waves. We approached a calm spot and I did a couple of successful rolls and braces. As we rounded a bend we found Marvin waiting for us at the lower putin.

He said "I've been waitin' for you."

"We would have hated to miss you," I replied. We paddled up and found that his lady friend was there too. She had been following his progress from the road and was obviously concerned for his well being. This time she helped Marvin with his skirt and the three of us took off downstream again. Later, I told Marvin that the next rapid had a BIG rock on the left that is slightly undercut and that he needed to stay away from it. (I didn't know this for sure but it kept Marvin away from it all the same.) After going through the rapid, Liz and I hit the eddy below the rock and wait for Marvin. Once again, "what's-an-eddy?-Marvin" goes blazing on by, only this time throwing a look of apprehension toward the rock (he obviously knew what an

undercut was).

As we drifted further downstream, the old familiar "falls clinch" hit my stomach. I was nervous about running Lesser Wesser, but I was sure that I could do it. I was afraid of totally botching the approach and running the drop on my face, but I knew that the trip would never be complete until I had done it. It didn't help seeing Marvin waiting for us at the Bar-B-Q as we came around the next bend. We paddled up and he said "Are we going to run the falls together?" Liz and Marvin looked at me as if I knew the meaning of life and suddenly I felt like it was solely up to me to make the decision. I sighed and said, "OK, I'll go first. Marvin, you follow Liz and remember to stay 5 boat lengths apart!" As we passed the "last chance" takeout above the falls I fervently wanted to pull my boat out and say "I'm not doing it!" Approaching the falls, the current picked up and I tried to stay river left. Rapidly descending, I suddenly saw the nose of my boat heading straight for a rock. I didn't know what to do. Afraid that it would tip me if I attempted to veer to the side, I ran right over top of it. My boat spun around and slid off and all of a sudden I was facing upstream, about to go over the falls backwards. I managed to spin around and correct myself just as I went over the lip, but I had very little momentum. "I'm over!" I thought joyously as my boat plunged past the falls, "that wasn't bad at all!" But an instant later, the current grabbed the back of my boat and said "not yet!" I flipped and attempted to roll, once, twice, three times before ripping my skirt off. I surfaced with a gasp, just in time to swim out of the path of a BIG rock.

"Whoa, almost hit that, OWWWWCH!" I looked upstream and saw Liz's head bobbing in the water beside her overturned boat. Further upstream, Marvin dramatically flipped right at the lip of the falls. We were all being swept downstream towards the commercial raft takeout like fish bait.

I managed to drag myself and half my water logged boat out of the water just as I saw Liz drift by. I scrambled for my rope and pulled her in. I had just enough time to get her settled and confirm that she was OK when Marvin came floating by. I scrambled for the rope again and finally we were all safely on dry land. Sitting on the shore, still huffing and puffing from his swim Marvin said, "When we gonna do it again?" I just looked at him and said "never!"

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PROBE 12-II	12'2"	27.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	R-44	\$875	\$656.25
PROBE 14	14'2"	30.5"	15.5"	58 LBS	ROYALEX	\$940	\$705.00
VIPER 11	11'8"	27.5"	15.5"	45 LBS	ROYALEX	\$875	\$656.25
VIPER 12	12'8"	27.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	ROYALEX	\$875	\$656.25
XL 13	13'3"	30"	15.5"	58 LBS	ROYALEX	\$920	\$690.00
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The Zero Angle Paddle

by: Dana Castro

The idea that I wish to put forward is that for playboating and general river running, that the zero degree rotation paddle is, all things considered, superior to rotated paddle, regardless of the degree of rotation.

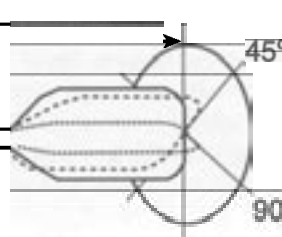
The difference is not overwhelming but it does exist. It is most noticeable to the intermediate and advanced paddlers, or for that matter any paddlers who are actively trying to push or refine their skills. Certain very advanced paddlers who have, over the years, unconsciously developed a very fine degree of compensation for the deficits of the rotated paddle, and who are no longer concerned with advancing or refining their skills, would perhaps find no benefit in this issue. It is for each of us to determine where we fit in this regard.

The development of the rotated paddle for whitewater use has much to do with the history of the sport. In the earlier years of the development of whitewater kayaking, slalom racing had a big influence on equipment and technique. Until about the early or mid 1980s, racers were the only ones who had any real level of sophistication in terms of boating skills. Hence all serious non-racers looked to them for direction. Much of what we learned was right on the mark and many of the skills that originated in slalom racing still form the basis of high performance play boating and river running. A paddle with a 90 degree angle or something very close to it was, and still is, important for racing because of the critical 4 inches it saves over the zero degree paddles in terms of gate clearance while forward stroking. However, today non-racers have learned to discriminate and to find some of our own different solutions for certain things. An example of this is the playboat's drastic departure from the basic slalom design that most cruisers suffered with until recently. In my own case, natural curiosity and creativity, which had been fanned and nurtured by my squirt boating experience led me to experiment with "de-rotated" paddles in approximately 1989. Here's what I found...

Firstly, the paddle seemed to become more firmly an extension of my body. There are several reasons for this. One is that there is no longer one control hand and one non control hand. Both hands share the job, and as such each hand only has to grip approximately half as tightly. The hands and fore-

arms become less tired and control remains more precise. (Imagine the concert violinist who holds the bow precisely but as lightly as possible.) Also, by virtue of both hands sharing the control job, force peaks associated with violent water are more easily managed without losing control of blade angle. (Imagine play fighting with a large dog for control of a stick, with one hand versus two hands.)

The second issue involves an assortment of advantages associated with eliminating the constant rotating of the paddle back and forth. For one, with a zero degree paddle, the wrist and forearm soreness that some paddlers experience is a thing of the past. A second difference (that I enjoy immensely) is that it allows me to speed up my stroke rate in high-speed surfs. Getting rid of that little unnecessary movement helps when your rpm's are maxing out. In addition, in really high rpm situations, the blade angle control is also more predictable without the constant back and forth rotation and the adjustment it requires. Finally another small but very "sweet" little advantage is that because the paddle does not have to rotate back and forth through the non-control hand, the shaft oval can be much greater than typical on rotated paddles. This, again, increases the control over the blade rotation with a lighter grip. It also makes figuring out your paddle rotation




while upside down pretty much a thing of the past.

The third main difference involves the ad-

vantages associated with having both sides the same. After a short adjustment, the issue of the on-side vs. off-side roll pretty much disappears. By eliminating the differential control of paddle rotation right and left end up being the same and it becomes easier to use them interchangeably. Duffecks, sweeps and draws now involve identical motions for both right and left and so the "weak" side slowly begins to feel the same as the "strong" side. Very critical is the difference in the low brace, (a key hole playing move which is under-utilized by most intermediate and many advanced paddlers.) A true low brace (forearm near vertical) on the off side with a rotated paddle either requires shifting the grip of both right and left hands on the paddle, or holding the paddle at an angle that is awkward to the wrist. Learning esoteric play boat techniques that one does not often get a chance to practice is also dramatically easier with a zero angle paddle. Back surfing, or back blasting in a squirt boat, with the seemingly reversed rudders, is easier to learn.

The above are some of the main differences that one will begin to appreciate after a temporary adjustment period. It is not exhaustive. There are some minor additional points that I have not mentioned and also



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some other minor issues that can "cut either way".

Now let me point out that I am not saying that a good boater with lots of time and energy cannot learn to do everything that I am talking about here just fine, even with a 90 degree paddle. In fact, I openly admit that there are many, many paddlers who do better than I in all areas of paddling performance. What I am saying is that relative to the amount of time, energy and inherent physical ability of the paddler, the (play boating and general river running) skills can be developed more efficiently with the zero angle paddle. This allows the process to be not only be more pleasurable, but for those of us whose time on the river is limited, will also allow a higher level of skill development.

In my many years of experience with the zero angle paddle, I've been involved in many discussions about paddle angle with competent boaters. Most of the people I've spoken with hold a skeptical view of my design, but, I would argue, only because they haven't spent sufficient time with it. It IS different, and the benefits I've described DO show up rather quickly, but certainly not the first time one tries the zero angle paddle. If one tries the zero angle paddle with an open mind and then lets experimentation and experience be the judge and jury, then I'm sure that its popularity will grow immensely.

PRACTICING THE MOVES

by Paul Lange

Though I'm sure it comes as a surprise to many readers, there are indeed whitewater enthusiasts in SE Michigan. I am living proof. And although my beloved state is blessed with many wonderful things, abundant whitewater is not one of them. The closest challenging river is at least six-hours away. Nearby, however, we have the "mighty" Huron, a pretty float, which during spring flows can be a raging class II ride. As a novice I spent many a day practicing my skills on a simple rapid called "the trestle." As its name indicates, this is a gradient drop between cement pilings of a railroad trestle. At high flows, surfing waves and testing dynamic eddy lines offer a challenge, and at lower water levels eddy turns, peel outs and ferries rule the day. Here my paddling partners and I practiced back and forth, throwing in a couple Eskimo rescues and swims and, when we got good enough, current rolls (intentional of course). We'd tip upstream and downstream, practice on-side, offside and hand rolls.

Later, on class III rivers, I realized how many useful skills I had gained through my

endless practice on this "measly" class II. Every rapid had its own set of "MOVES." THE MOVE range from an easy ferry to a difficult attainment. I started getting cocky on my class III river, the Lower Yough in Pennsylvania, because I had mastered all my sets of MOVES. One sunny day, while front surfing a small wave at the top of Entrance Rapid on the Lower Yough, I thought I had the river in the palm of my hand. An experienced paddler with a faded PFD, old Corsica-S and chipped paddle flopped into the eddy with me.

"Good surfing today?"

"Of course. I'll show you." I replied arrogantly.

After I spent a brief time on the wave he congratulated me, then paddled onto the wave himself. Backward. Gracefully. Back in the eddy again he told me he had been paddling fifteen+ years on the Yough. He has fun every trip by practicing his MOVES. Back surf here, attain up through the wave train there. His theory, with which I heartily agree, is to make class V moves on class III water. He said if it becomes easy, challenge

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yourself: backwards, forwards, opposite direction, smaller eddies, etc. . . . Later he demonstrated this philosophy in the hole at 'Swimmer's Rapid.' While balanced on a hand surf, he reached into his PFD, removed three stones and proceeded to juggle. He told me he learned to juggle just to do that trick while side surfing. What was even more amusing than his trick was the astonished faces of the boaters in their brand new, top of the line boats, paddles and PFDs who watched from the eddy.

This notion of difficult MOVES on easier rivers broadened my horizon of fun. I can do these MOVES on the Huron or the Lower Yough and simulate more difficult maneuvers on other rivers without the increased risk. Even though I still haven't mastered the backwards ferry/surfs and back peelouts, attempting those MOVES has made me more comfortable in my kayak. Practice allows us to be better paddlers. And when you only have limited whitewater nearby, you have to use it to your advantage.

In addition to building skills, practicing THE MOVES fixes them in your memory so

that they can be referred to later, at different rapids on totally different rivers.

"Hey Karen, THE MOVE here is to hit the

times the gradient on the Gauley, but THE MOVE is the same. I don't know if that helps when it comes to new rapids but Karen made

THE MOVE just fine. Now, the other new person in our group hadn't run the Yough, and he had a tough time with THE MOVE. Does the mental imagery of THE MOVE help?

Kayakers should try to enjoy and challenge ourselves on all the rivers we paddle. When I teach novices at "the freestyle," we play follow the leader with constant ferries, turns and rolls, and when they get good enough we

do it all backwards. Because, when it comes time to make THE MOVES those actions are ingrained whether on the Upper Yough, Lower Yough, or the Huron. If you make the easier stuff harder then the harder stuff should be easier. So if you are not blessed with great whitewater nearby, take advantage of what you do have and create your own challenge. This is much more enjoyable than staring at your boat in your basement counting the days to that weekend when you have time for the 10 hour drive. Kayaking is a great sport and I hope everyone enjoys making MOVES as much as I do.

This notion of difficult MOVES on easier rivers broadened my horizon of fun. I can do these MOVES on the Huron or the Lower Yough and simulate more difficult maneuvers on other rivers without the increased risk.

four eddies above the drop" I say to my wife above Cucumber Rapid. "I've only hit three but I know you can get the fourth."

Okay, so she and I have paddled that rapid on the Lower Yough four years and counting but we keep practicing that MOVE. Her first time down the Lower Gauley I made comparisons to THE MOVES we had made on previous rivers. Cliffside rapid, for example, is very similar to THE MOVE we make at Rocky Road rapid on the Lower Yough: eddy high left, ferry across to the eddy behind the big rock in the center. Of course there are huge holes and an undercut rock and ten

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In The Shadow of the Andes

by Nathan Krissoff

photo by Bernd Sommer

It was a dream come true... an opportunity to kayak rivers whose names I could barely pronounce and whose emerald waves and breathtaking waterfalls I had only seen on video. Chile, in all its natural splendor, was mine to explore for 12 days in December.

After a relatively painless flight from San Francisco, my father, brother and I met our good friends and guides, Brennan Guth and Bernd Sommer, in Santiago. Without a moment's delay, we loaded up our boats and crowded into our rented, distinctly Chilean, Chevy "Luv" truck and set out in search of whitewater. Our first putin was on El Rio Claro, home to the seven picture-perfect waterfalls, "Las Siete de Tazas." We were immediately dazzled by the turquoise brilliance of the pools beneath the falls and awed by the steep, confined walls of the overgrown canyon. We plunged over the first twenty-foot falls, dropping into the froth below and into the heart of Chile itself. Our journey had begun.

Following the "Ruta Cinco", the transcontinental highway that runs the entire 2,600 mile length of Chile, we headed south, spending the majority of our traveling time on the mud and gravel rural roads, through the rains of "El Nino" and the sapping heat of the summer sun. We were constantly moving, camping at night against the backdrop of the snow-capped Andes, beneath the stars of the Southern Hemisphere. As we paddled remote waters, we were given a true sense of the land. Chilean rivers wind through the countryside, through agricultural communities and deep into the natural majesty of the country's forests and valleys. Farmers and their families were curious, but very friendly and hospitable, allowing us to set up our tents in their fields in exchange for a bottle of wine.

We spent Christmas Eve along the banks of the Rio Nuble with an elderly "vaquero" who had joined us to celebrate the holiday and offer his hospitality while we camped in his field. We were able to converse in our halting Spanish, but mostly enjoyed each other's company as we watched the sun slip slowly behind the mountain, resigning itself to the darkness of the night. The warm smile that glowed in the flicker of the fire upon his weather worn face is etched in my memory forever.

The second half of our stay was centered around the "Lake District," near the popular southern city of Pucon. We enjoyed incredible runs on Los Rios Trancura, El Maichin, El Fui and El Rio Palguin, where we had a chance to boat with one of the 'locals,' Felipe. Due to the fact that there are only a handful of kayakers in all of Chile, he was delighted to join our group for the day. On the Palguin, our putin required a several hundred-yard descent into the canyon, a carry over a naturally formed bridge that spanned the river and a twenty-foot seal launch off the height of the bridge. The thrash was well worth it when we found ourselves floating toward the drops and falls that lay ahead.

The highest runnable waterfall on the Palguin is a twenty-five foot drop in which you can boof either right or left of the shallow island that separates the spouts. Bernd ran right while the rest of us ran left. The group ran through safely, but we were forced to carry around a sticky ledge hole that recirculated ominously just beyond the corner. Felipe flipped in a hole and went for a cold swim. His boat drifted downstream and was not recovered until after our portage around the 70-foot falls. His 'Sleek' had careened over the falls and surfaced below with only a small crack in the bow. He had been forced to trudge along the bank and make his way downriver, occasionally crossing in calm sections on the back of Brennan's boat.



Later, the river forked into three tight slots as it plunged to a pool 20 feet below. Bernd snapped his composite paddle as he dropped the far right slot. We followed his lead, but were careful to keep our blades parallel to the river high above our heads. Forced to manage with only one blade and half a shaft, Bernd limped into port. The river made it's last show for us with a confined rapid we nicknamed 'The Narrows.' The water picked up speed as it accelerated through the tight canyon, aerating the river with foamy bubbles. The rapid raced under an ancient oxen bridge, from which Chilean spectators watched curiously. The Palguin carried us proudly the last length of the stretch to our takeout where we reluctantly hiked our boats up and out to the bridge. We ate lunch on that bridge and soaked up the warmth of the Chilean sun as the river roared under us, bidding us its last farewell.

As our trip drew to a close, I reflected upon our time in Chile. There, in the rural regions of this beautiful country, I not only experienced the thrill of challenging whitewater but, through our meanderings, I was touched in a deeper sense. The song of the river, the roar of the waterfalls, the sweet silence of the countryside: these are the sounds of an untouched land. And, the Chilean people, bound to this land, follow its relaxed, unhurried rhythm. Experiencing this kind of pristine beauty, peace and tranquillity was well worth the journey.

Editor's note: Nathan Krissoff is a 16-year-old kayaking enthusiast who enjoys rodeo and wildwater competition, as well as exploring scenic rivers.

An Ohiopyle Landmark

Falls View Market and Inn

by Marion Boyer

There's a consistency about a whitewater river. Except in times of serious flood, the riverbed doesn't change much, even as the river flows over it. In much the same way, people may move through Leo's Falls View Market and Inn; meals are served and cleared, items bought and sold. But the place doesn't change. For decades it's been a constant on the map for any paddler coming to the Lower Youghiogheny River in Ohiopyle, Pennsylvania.

I sit at the formica lunch counter of the Fall's View Market and Inn on a bright fall day, stir hot tea and watch the waitress wipe down an empty table. Behind me small clusters of people eat late breakfasts of homefries with plenty of ketchup, ham and fried egg sandwiches called Egg McLeos. They're wearing hooded sweatshirts, camouflage jumpsuits, and everyone's sipping coffee from styrofoam cups. Overhead are festoons of T-shirts clothespinned to rope strung under a

yellowed, water stained ceiling of acoustic tiles. The shirts have slogans like "The Road Kill Cafe—You kill 'em, we'll grill 'em" or, "Bones Heal, Chicks Love Scars, Pain Is Temporary, Glory Is Forever" or, "Paddle or Die."

Behind the lunch counter a brownish, water stained wall paper, that may have come off the rollers in the 1950s, runs halfway down the wall from the ceiling. It's a drab print of locomotives and winter sleds drawn by horses. Below the paper is wood paneling. There's a coffee maker, a stack of three freshly baked pies, blueberry muffins and sweet rolls. The cherry pie is cut and missing three slices. You can buy breakfast, lunch or dinner — order off the menu or the wall hung posters covered in plastic. New prices are glued over the old ones — who knows how new or how old.

Time flows around this lunchroom and market combination like a stream flows

around a boulder. Items of all sorts line the walls, every space is pressed into service. Beside me are pop cans, peanut butter jars, Christmas collectibles, salad dressings, pine crafted mailboxes that dispense postage stamps, mugs, seashells, belt buckles, wooden plaques with burned, scalloped edges and shellacked prints of deer or bears. You can find anything here.

The entrance is on the market side through a narrow pathway bordered by racks of soft drinks, including Yoo Hoo. No beer. You have to go six miles to a liquor store for alcohol. The other side of the pathway holds a deep freeze of ice cream treats. Then there are candy bars, gummy worms in a bin, Halloween costumes and tobacco tins. In the center of the market, behind the big rectangle of waist-high glass cases, is a woman who takes your change patiently. She looks to be in her late seventies and will sell you a postcard or a hunting knife, a T-shirt or boomerang, a packet of fishing lures or camera film, or a compass and an atlas. She's got key rings, Chapstick, cubes of fudge, birthday cards, first aid kits, rope, flashlights, decals, Bazooka bubblegum and candy roses on plastic stems. All coated with a fine layer of dust, but still good.

The market boasts a deli counter. Through the milky glass you can dimly make out a big hunk of some sort of meat and

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several hunks of variously colored cheese. The deli counter is squeezed against the back wall near the shelves of canned soups, mayonnaise, barbecue sauce and canned vegetables. You can find toy doctor kits, sweat shirts, whistles, stomach aches, jigsaw puzzles, Frisbees, duffles, first aid kits, hunting heater pillows, blaze orange jumpsuits, fly-fishing vests, all manner of lines, wires, hooks, worms, lures — all located by the frozen pizza and boxes of frozen winter squash. It's near the screwdriver sets, rack of white socks, hammers, car jacks and one man plastic outdoor tents complete with cord and plastic flooring (the package advertises the tent alternates as a good ground cloth) and the gaily colored toothbrushes hanging on a big rack with personalized names stamped on their handles. Corn chips, beef jerky, nail polish, hair spray, sunglasses, tuna fish (in oil or water), chewing tobacco, pancake syrup, refrigerator magnets, American flags, framed prints of John Wayne, windchimes, "inspirational" stickpins, tie racks, hurricane lan-

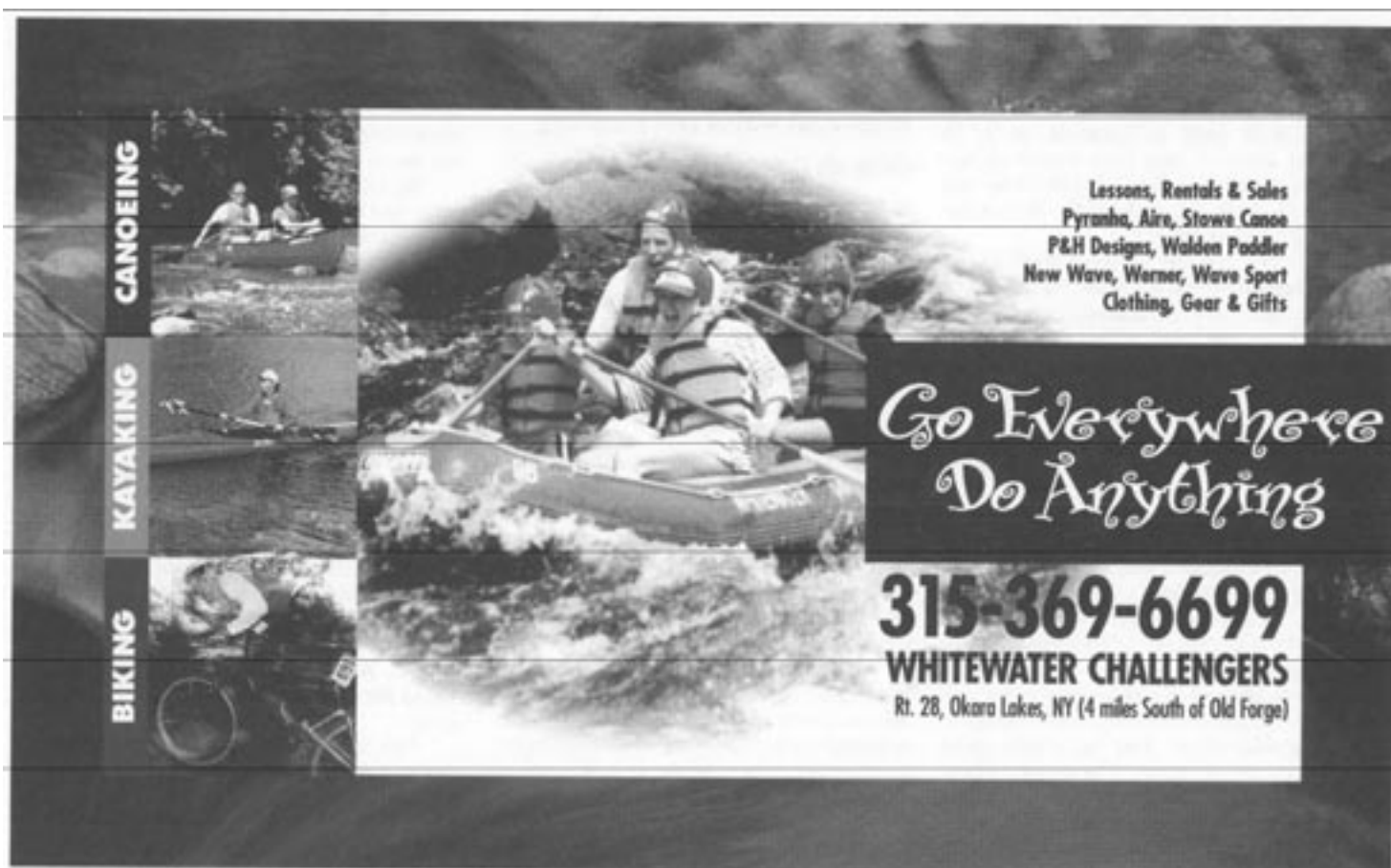
terns and car batteries all share space companionably.

The jukebox, while leaning heavily toward Guns and Roses, can also play Beach Boys, Elvis and the Beatles. Flies move about as smoothly and busily as the green smocked waitresses. Leo's wife rents the rooms above the market. The room keys dangle from hooks on the wall behind the glass case counter between camera film and the big rack of cigarette packs. There are no designated smoking/nonsmoking areas in the market. Custom made boots are advertised by a yellowed newspaper clipping, the contact number is blacked out with marker but the old wood and glass case nailed to the center pillar still displays a cowboy boot above the ad.

Chairs scrape against the wood slat floor. The park ranger's leaving, his coffee cup drained. He heads out saying, "Tell Sue I'll talk to her later." Someone else says, "Wanna go?" and another answers, "No hurry, let it warm up out there."

The kayakers I traveled here with have left. Their boats are once again bobbing on the Yough. They ate earlier, talking over eggs and french toast, stirring coffee and discussing putin times and shuttle logistics and the outcome of last night's world series game. They settled their bills with Leo's wife and turned in their room keys. The older woman at the counter rings up a newspaper sale and the waitress goes by to trade syrup filmed plates with a fresh plate of a chicken burger and a bowl of homemade chili. Breakfast is ending and lunch is starting. Otherwise, it's hard to see time passing in this place at all.

Editor's note: Marion Boyer is a regular contributor to American Whitewater who teaches college in Kalamazoo, Michigan.



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(Almost) True Confessions A Maturing Hair Boater Gets Philosophical

by Mark H. White, AWA Director

Ignoring the ancient pine forest and impossibly blue sky that surrounded us, our collective focus was on a frigid torrent of water thundering past like a freight train. Rick and I intently examined the jumble of garage-size boulders and exploding white froth that stretched as far as we could see. Of peculiar interest was an extraordinarily large ponderosa that had lodged itself at the entrance of this remarkable rapid. The mighty branches of the fallen giant shuddered spasmodically as rushing water tried to force it further downstream. Rick and I would soon be kayaking this leviathan drop, as we had during past runoffs.

As we wriggled into our boats and prepared to test our middle-aged mettle, I began to think. Not about what waited below in the form of cold water, big rocks and serious gravity, but the concept of "sport" and what draws some, such as ourselves, to it. A passing observer may have perceived our actions as suicidal. But it was that very risk which, in my mind, qualified the day's activity as legitimate 'sport.'

Well into the rapid, flashes of yellow and blue erupted from the aquatic maelstrom in front of me. Rick had dropped into a sizable hole, but displayed admirable skill in cartwheeling his boat back on line. How does a sport differ from an activity benignly labeled "hobby" or "pastime," I wondered? As I dug my paddle deep to propel myself through the hole Rick had just vacated, it occurred to me that kayaking was much more than a pastime. Merely "passing time" doesn't usually initiate adrenaline flow or place the "time passer" in imminent danger.

Icy water clawed at my exposed face and hands. To exit one's boat in this river-particularly this rapid—would likely prove painfully fatal. Indeed, we were assuming a respectable degree of risk so our activity of choice could legitimately be classified as sport.

Consider chess. Very few people would refer to chess as a sport. The reason? There is an extremely minute amount of danger associated with the movement of small objects across a two dimensional board. It's possible one's head could fall onto the board

after falling asleep, resulting in a broken nose. But barring such an unlikely event, chess is practically without risk and, therefore, not really a sport.

In all this philosophical daydreaming, I had lost sight of Rick, but sensed he was somewhere ahead of me. Keeping an eye on one another is, of course, a primary safety rule, but the possibility of an aided rescue would be extremely remote in such violent water. Bracing against monstrous waves and punching through powerful holes, I worked my way down river. I was reminded of a rapid on the North Fork of the Payette in Idaho that boaters call the Golf Course — due to its vast number of deep holes.

Holes provide excitement for both whitewater enthusiasts and golfers — the drastic difference lies in the level of risk presented by the holes they respectively encounter. Facing a number of threatening holes at the moment, it occurred to me that golf is not a sport. It is a "virtual sport," a predictable and rather expensive pastime.

Golf is practically void of risk. The adoring fans who line the fairways and occasionally encounter an errant ball assume a greater potential for bodily harm than do the players. Golf possesses the ingredients for adventure; spiked shoes, metal clubs and an outdoor setting. But the contrived, highly tamed nature of this mundane activity diminishes the potential for injury, fun and an honest-

to-goodness claim to "sporthood."

It's possible that golf could lay claim to sport status if it were played as a timed event with style points being awarded for creative negotiation through the roughs and water hazards. (Something like a Freestyle Through a Rapid event.) Extra points could be awarded to those who play with only one club in extremely foul weather. A two-hour solo round of 36 holes during a severe thunderstorm begins to approach respectability.

My philosophizing about chess, golf and other benign activities came to a startling halt as I found myself on the edge of a gigantic reversing abyss. Riding high up the pillowing shoulder of water, I stroked like a crazed windmill in hopes of maintaining some semblance of downstream momentum. My desperate efforts proved futile and I began sliding backwards into the monster's jaws.

Finding one's self in such a ferocious hydraulic is a very unpleasant, but not an unusual occurrence when kayaking big, steep rivers. A hole of this magnitude doesn't easily release victims foolish enough to place themselves in it. This hole proved to be not only large, but nasty as well. Getting a breath of air was almost impossible. I wondered if chess players ever gasp for air.

The boat's plastic hull was torquing and bending as the reversal repeatedly tossed me back into the maw. Indescribably cold water burned my skin and blasted its way into my so-called drysuit. The aquatic tumbling was so fierce a footpeg inside the boat snapped off, then violently tumbled around the boat and against my leg. Between the pummeling revolutions, I realized something else — something big, yellow and blue was sharing my space.

So, there we were. Two fathers; one over forty and the other not far behind, sharing their Saturday afternoon in what could be accurately called a Maytag Moment. What, I wondered, might my friend be thinking about? Could Rick also be pondering the wisdom of our collective situation?

As the spin cycle continued, my enthusiasm for "real" sport began to fade. Maybe weekends should be spent at golf, croquet or bowling. Maybe I could find a new circle of friends, sell my kayaks and undergo adrenaline withdrawal therapy. In time, maybe I would achieve fulfillment through "pseudo-sports" like golf.

Sometime during the rinse cycle, I was finally ejected from the hole and quickly took refuge in an eddy. Once safely in this gentle haven, I set down my paddle and blew into my cupped, frozen hands. Seconds later Rick found his way into the refuge and did the same.

"Do you ever think," Rick questioned, "we should bag this kayaking stuff and take up golf?"

I stared at my friend with disgust and shook my head. "You make me sick," I sneered, and paddled away without admitting anything.

Ain't No Boatman

by David Regela

This is a horror story with a pretty standard format. There are heroes and heroines in mortal danger. There's a beast, a wild, untamed thing that can't be conquered, can't be stopped. And a mostly happy ending. Of course, as with many an effective tale, we leave room for a gruesome sequel.

Now that's a story that I don't want to have to write.

It all began with a telephone call. A guy that I know had learned that I was going to be in Taos, New Mexico over the Memorial Day weekend was going to raft the lower box of the Rio Grande River. He and a rather large group were planning a similar trip and he asked if they could follow my lead through the rapids, as none of his bunch had ever rafted the canyon.

"Well," I said, "makes sense. I don't have a problem with it. See you on the river."

That was all. Real innocuous. And I sort of forgot about the conversation until I stumbled down to the put in with Ken and Pablo and our wives.

"Oh, yeah," I said quickly to my friends, recognizing the other group, "might be some people running with us today. That's them over there."

"Nice equipment," Pablo decided, eyeing a slick-looking boat trailer well stacked with fourteen-foot rafts. "Ever boat with these guys before?"

"No," I admitted, "but they got nice equipment."

I suppose it's significant to add that it's been a long time since I've had a notable problem on a river trip. Pablo works as a professional river guide. Ken is a real horse. And when the water gets serious, we run pretty close. We play by the rules, stay out of trouble. Which is not to infer that we totally avoid all the exigencies of the river. That's impossible.

I remember Pablo having a tense moment at Skull rapid in Westwater canyon one year. Ken took a classic non-stroke on the Middle Fork of the Salmon that made for a dramatic, exciting photograph. And me? Hell, I may even have popped an oar once upon a time. (But if you haven't got a picture, I won't admit to it.)

This scenario, then, was a bit of a departure for us. We normally avoid crowds; launch mid-week; get on the river early, camp early. We had become insulated, had very little exposure to other boaters. (Trust me, there are places in the Southwest where that is still possible.) It is not possible, however, on the Taos Box on Memorial Day weekend. We were about to get exposed.

The river, was flowing at about nineteen hundred cubic feet per second. Mellow level. Below a thousand cfs it gets technical, above three thousand it starts getting big. With the unseasonably warm temperatures, this day promised to be a Cadillac.

We made the effort to get introduced.

But how do you remember the names of twenty new people? Everyone secured their ranger-issued permit and we launched as one big, happy mob. Turns out that one of their guys had quite a bit of experience, so he captained a paddleboat and assumed the sweep (last) position. Either Ken or Pablo or I led the informal parade in oar-boats, taking turns, sandwiching between us several boats (both paddle and oar) that contained some folks with some suspicious credentials. (In my opinion.)

This segment of the Rio Grande doesn't contain 'killer-fang' falls. It does have some big drops and a long, three-mile stretch of reasonably continuous whitewater that is

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generally rated Class IV. A competitive, commercial rafting industry calls it the 'best whitewater in New Mexico.' They're not wrong.

It's fun and it's challenging.

I opted to stop and scout the first named-rapid of the day, a short, straightforward drop with a large boulder at the bottom-center. Let's see if there's enough volume to eliminate the rock as a hazard. Let's see how everybody handles this. Since I don't know most of these people, a frame of reference would be nice.

'What are we stopping for?' "Is this necessary?" "C'mon, let's go." "Hi-ho, hi-ho, it's down the middle we go." Snicker. Snicker.

I know when my manhood is being impugned. I've seen this rapid before....just thought somebody else might enjoy seeing it. But I kept my mouth shut. Not my place. After all, I'm not the old-man-of-the-river. Pablo, always the Samaritan, couldn't contain himself. "Y'all might want to watch the poison ivy," he called to a pack of them. "Where?" "That stuff you're standing in."

Oh.

In fairness, a couple of the boaters did scurry up for a look, and appeared receptive to a few low-key comments. Okay. Stopping was a good decision.

Nobody flipped. Nobody fell out. Not yet. That's as charitable as I can be. We continued downriver.

Seemed that most of the hecklers were in one boat. Six or seven adult men in a paddle raft.

Good-sized guys, too. Brain dead.... that's how I came to think of them. The brain dead boat.

They tolerated my lead for another quarter-mile or so and then rocketed off into the distance, out to find their final frontier.

"What about Powerline? What about the Widowmaker? Do they know about Powerline?" The haunting voice belonged to Pablo. My conscience incarnate. He had a point. The three of us (Pablo, Ken, me) had floated this stretch the day before and discovered a tree wedged sideways below the top of Powerline rapid, a 17-foot pourover with several entrances. If you're not familiar with the rapid, all you see from above is a horizon-line. If you just happened to enter above the Widowmaker strainer, well.... you know the rest.

Since all but everything 'was just happening' to the brain dead boat, and a quick check with the captain of the sweep boat confirmed that "they don't know about Powerline, but they're expendable," we proceeded to give chase.

We caught them about a half-mile above the falls. They were polite in the way an adult is polite to child. That is, they patronized us, and waited for the rest of the boats to regroup.

The Widowmaker strainer was gone. A change in river level had released it and I felt



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a little foolish. Everybody had a decent run.

It got worse. Below Powerline the river accelerates to fast-forward mode. There are rapids that require maneuvering at any water level. There are consequences.

So I tried to break it down for the first-timers by catching an eddy or two. Naive, very naive. People blew by, unable to grab even the easy ones. The brain dead boat described the flight path of an arrow through a rock garden that is the very definition of a Class IV rapid. All I saw were flailing feet and airborne buttocks. If they took a paddle stroke in anger, I missed it. If they attempted a stroke at all, it was token. They most certainly did not influence the path of the raft. How's it feel to float like garbage in a gutter during a rainstorm?

Pablo, Ken and I were standing on a rock pile downriver, scouting a rapid immediately below us. Steep entry. Narrow. Good-sized hole inconveniently hidden midstream.

One of 'them' walked over to our position. "Is that it?" he said, unimpressed. He turned abruptly, got into his boat, got behind his oars.

"He didn't see it," I said to my friends. "He has no eyes."

"I know," Pablo said sadly, shaking his head. "Nice boat," Pablo repeated, echoing his earlier sentiments, "but he ain't no boatman."

The guy flipped. Big time. Put a bunch of people into the river, one of which would later require numerous stitches to close a head wound.

During the minutes it took to collect everyone, we were infested by a wave of merry madmen who had launched behind our group.

We watched. Three consecutive flips. I was stunned. Was this the state of the art?

A group of commercial boats rounded the curve and ran the drop competently, without incident. Then more private boaters. Flip. Near-flip. Flip. Near-flip. Not one of the private boaters understood the dynamics of that particular rapid. They advanced to the rapid's lip like lemmings filing their tax returns, convinced that a visit to the hole was inevitable. The carnage was complete.

Nobody died. And if that's your definition of a successful run....

Damn. My apologies to Fletcher Anderson and Ann Hopkinson, authors of the guidebook *Rivers of the Southwest*. You see, for years my friends and I blatantly disparaged the admittedly arrogant postures expressed in the book; got a lot of laughs quoting a few of their most patrician opinions.

To paraphrase the book: True expertise in rafting is less common than most rafters are willing to admit. Rubber boats don't belong in Class IV water. Period.

Based on what I witnessed that weekend, the authors make a valid if overstated point. Certainly there are many qualified Class IV

rafters, yet most of the private boaters that we observed were badly overmatched by the river. Many would probably have launched regardless of conditions. I shudder to imagine what might have occurred had the water level been much higher or the weather unseasonably bitter.

Technology has created a serious potential problem in our sport. With the improved and forgiving equipment now available, people seem to lack respect for the river. Self-bailing boats allow marginal intermediates to run where the brave dare not go. Affordable wetsuits and drysuits reduce the life-threatening implications of many spontaneous swimming adventures, perpetrating the illusion of safety.

Equipment is not a substitute for skill. Bravado is surely a corruption of respect. Sign up for one of the several excellent whitewater schools that are currently offered. Take a course in advanced rescue techniques. Learn something. It couldn't hurt.

Perhaps respect is an acquired condition reserved only for the elite. Mastering the difference between experiencing a river and surviving a river is the first step. Take it.

An appropriate postscript to this article came to me the other day by way of another telephone call. Same guy that set up the original trip. Seems that the fellows in the brain dead boat were somewhere up on the Arkansas river in Colorado. They gutted their raft. Figures.

Unfortunately, I understand that the boat is repairable.

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Ice Paddling

By Dr. Surf

a.k.a. Scott Campbell Reuman

"On or under?" was the cry heard across the river's banks.

"Under!" came the definitive answer, and the paddlers slid down the snowy embankment, tunneled through the frazzled crust near the shore and disappeared into the dark current below the white ice layer.

For years, others thought the sport of winter river running, or ice paddling, was for suicidal crazies. According to a recently published book, 'crazy' is enough, suicidal is unnecessary.

The sport has become popularly known as Paddlin' the Blues for the color of light that penetrates the river's ice cap. This year the sport has taken off after the recently released book by the same title. Written by me, Dr. Surf, renowned paddler of the absurd, the book and the sport have taken the underworld by storm; ice storm. I figure I've spent more than 15 of my 35 years paddling under the ice and my explorations and advice to the beginner ice paddler are essential. "Don't do it!" But I and other devotees continue the sport unabated. During a recent interview with the AWA Journal, I was asked about my recommendation.

Here is a transcript of that interview:

Journal reporter: Dr. Surf, you've been paddling under the ice for years now and yet your recommendation is that no others try this proven sport. Can you explain?

Surf: Certainly. Consider fishermen. They find a spot on a hidden creek where the trout are especially fine, easy catches of great weight, laudable scenery, and easy access. What's the first thing they do? Why, they start bragging about it, telling everyone they meet. Soon the spot has all the attraction of another K Mart at river's edge.

Rivers are crowded now, and permits are

nearly impossible to obtain except through subterfuge. Why would I want anyone to know about this sport. Unless, of course, I planned to profit from it.

JR: So, if you had no plans to profit, why the publication of your latest book?

Surf: Could you mention the title, please?

JR: Uh, yes, I suppose so. Why the publication of your latest book, Paddlin' the Blues?

Surf: Profit, of course.

JR: But I thought you said...

Surf: Easy to explain, chap. You see, I'm a nonprofit organization. "Dr. Surf's Beneficial River Scoundrels' and CleanUp Association," or "SURF'sUP."

JR: And just what does this purported organization accomplish?

Surf: Well, I've had several nice months on delight-filled rivers last year.

JR: But, I thought you said it was 'non-profit'?

Surf: It is, lad, it is. I don't have a single cent left from last year's dues. Spent every last penny and showed no profit at the end of the year.

JR: I see. And what "cleanups" is your organization involved in.

Surf: Oh, that. That refers to the river scoundrels' cleanup on those silly enough to send money to me.

JR: Let's go back to your book and this new sport you've created. Do you really paddle under the ice pack on winter rivers, and what preparations are required?

Surf: As to the first; yes, of course. Been doing it for almost two decades now. I've gotten quite good at it, actually. As to the necessities, one must, of course, be prepared for the freezing phenomenon. Paddling under the ice cover on most rivers will take place during winter and there are times when the splashes can freeze you eyes closed. It took a while to ferret a solution to this, but I now recommend dipping your face into the water upon first arrival. Lift your face from the water keeping your eyes open, and turn toward a brisk wind. Your eyelids conveniently freeze open. Voilà, no more worry.

As to other specialized gear. None that I'm aware of. Perhaps a nice pair of mitts will

help those paddlers of lesser fortitude.

JR: You mention winter...are there rivers you've paddled under ice in summer?

Surf: Why, yes. Glaciers, of course, you booby. One approaches the glacier from a crevasse in its surface, descends by rope to the subterranean river, and paddles to the terminus of the glacier. Care should be taken upon exiting for the calving of icebergs is an ever-present threat. But I dislike it for another reason. The warmer temperatures of summer boating mean constant dripping from the interior of the glacial walls. One can become unbearably wet. It's depressing, and sometimes the drips contain minerals that soil my clothing.

JR: What about technique? Are there any special strokes you've found valuable in under-the-ice paddling?

Surf: Yes, quite. There are times when stalactites hang from the cavern's ceiling and these can close off the passage to but a few centimeters above the water's surface. Typically, I now use false fingernails to deal with this.

JR: False fingernails?

Surf: Those long, dagger-like fingernails that fine ladies worldwide are wearing these days. You can find a set at almost any drug-gist or women's trimmings shop. They're to be applied with Super Glue and filed to acute points. Then you have at the ready finger-borne crampons. They're wonderfully strong. There are even some graphite-reinforced models available. My use of these has jumped to the climbing fellows now using them in place of ice axes.

When approaching the stalactite, simple fuse with the ice, gripping tightly with your false fingernails, swing your body around the obstacle while your boat is forced under it by the water pressure, and continue merrily on your way. Quite simple, actually.

JR: Have you ever had any serious threat to your life in practicing this sport.

Surf: None. Well, depends on your definition of 'serious'. I do suppose one occasion would count in most minds. It was in Chile, running the Rio Blanco on the island *Isla Desolación*. The river is named for it's near-permanent snow cover, of course, but the

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Ice Paddling

continued

light that filters through it to the river below is particularly lovely; deep cerulean blue. I was admiring this sight while navigating my way around caverns and marvelous tentacles of ice suspended from all manner of interior gargoyle-like formations when I was forced into a dead-end. Treacherous, I must say; up against a wall of ice, most of the river churning underneath, tenacious fingers of death attempting to suck my down.

JR: Sounds dramatic!

Surf: Well, I do want to offer a flavor of my writing style so that I sell more books, you know.

As I was relating, with my boat now stationary I noticed that ice was forming on the surface of the kayak. If I did nothing, in short order I'd be part of the glacier itself, not likely to resurface until well after spring thaw, 6 months hence. I did not relish having someone extract me with an ice pick, all that hacking and chopping likely to spoil my complexion. So, I maneuvered my stern to catch the current forcing it down. Simultaneously I brought the bow up to climb against the ice wall. It was quite a strain, I assure you — a bit of boat gymnastics that I've employed periodically since. Soon enough, I found myself vertical. To others it would appear that I had generated less clearance between the gloomy depths and safety than a moment before. But, I had a plan.

Every sinew in my body worked to submerge my boat further, while I clung to the wall. The forces were tremendous as I was pushing down against both the buoyancy of the boat while straining to keep the current from pulling me under the ice to certain death, and a chilly one at that. When I was submerged to my waist I took a last deep breath and forced myself, boat and all, completely underwater. It was thrillingly beautiful under there, though quite cool. I was reminded of foolish childhood consumption of excess ice cream.

Well, when I judged that I had driven the boat deep enough I let go my grip on the ice wall. The boat rocketed to the surface, performing the best of... of, what do you chaps call them?

JR: 'Endos'.

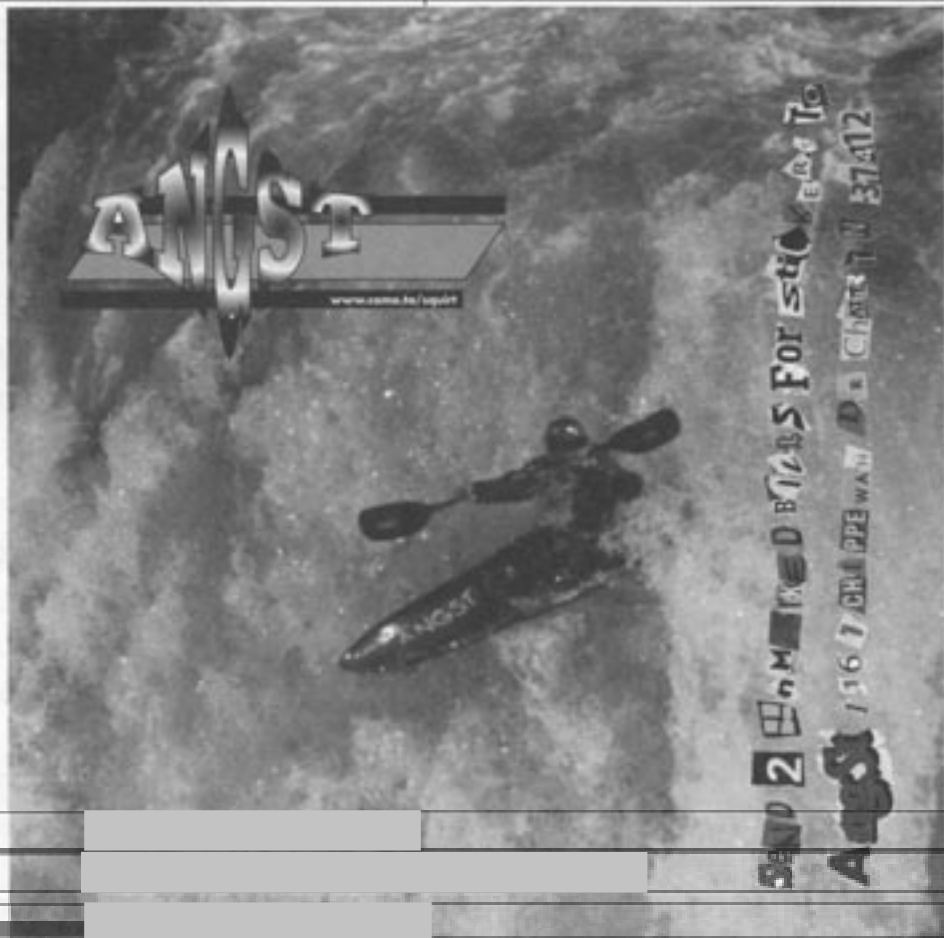
Surf: Quite. Performing the best of endos, although purely vertical, without rotation. I reached the ceiling of my river's cave. There I quickly grappled the glacial ceiling with my sharpened fingernails, cuticles strained and turning bloody well blue. By rather brazenly bracing myself in this inverted position I was able to scoot toward the entrance to this untoward icy trap and plop boat and body back into the proper main stem of the current, continuing on my way. Quite a delightful adventure, I assure you.

JR: Well, Dr. Surf. It's been a thrill talking with you. Do you have any last words for readers of your book?

Surf: Could you mention the book's title, please?

JR: Oh, sorry... your book, Paddlin' the Blues?

Surf: Buy my book. But... don't do it!



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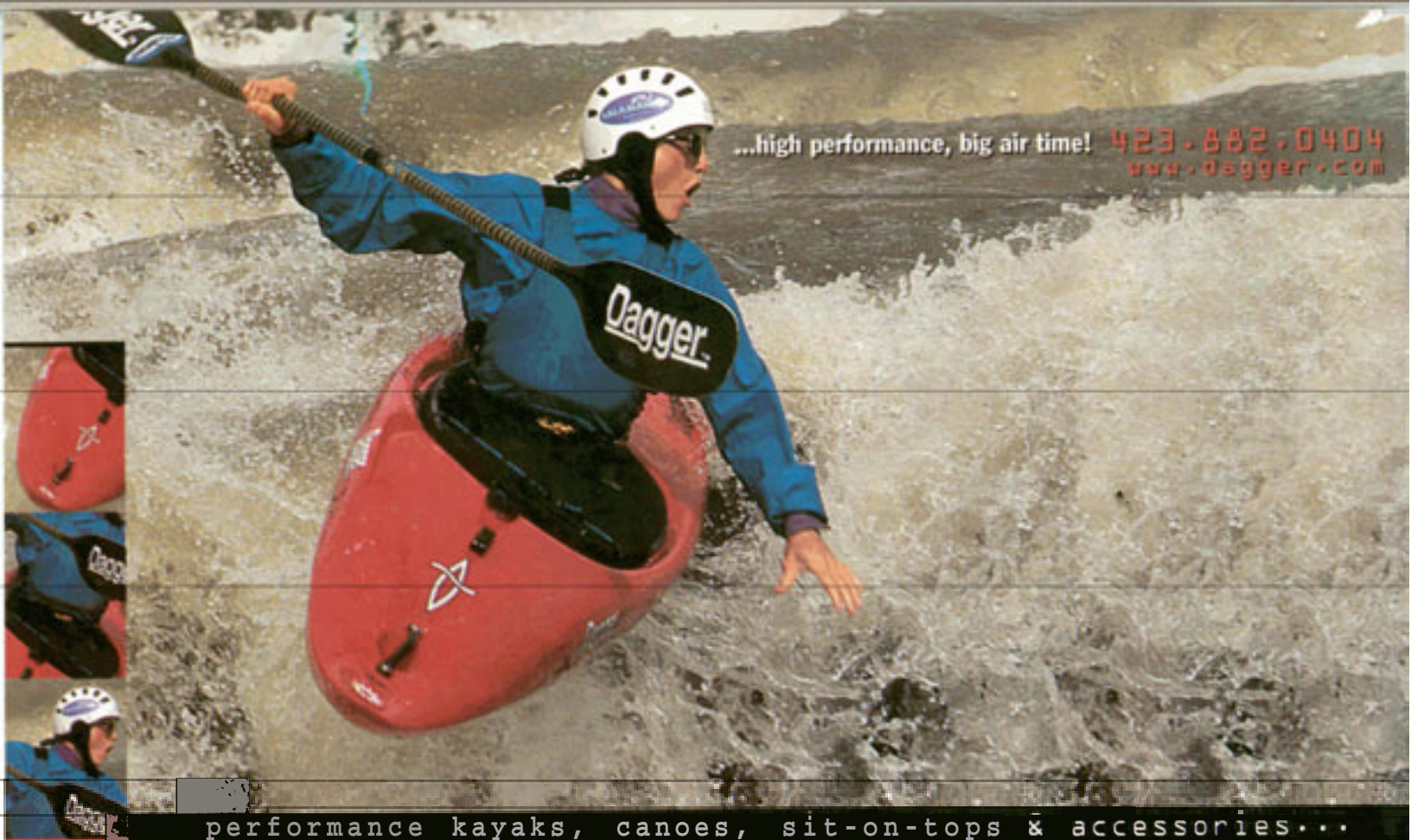
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