



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
May/June 2008

Summer Paddling

Relaxing in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison

A Caribbean Adventure

A Midsummer Overnight's Dream: The Selway in July

Gringos in Waterfall Wonderland

PLUS! How to do Overnight Trips Right



EJ
Trying to keep up with
his kids

Lauren
Team JK since
age 8

Spins a good yarn

Clay
World Cup Bronze
Medalist

Stephen
Hobbit King-Jumping
Bean combo, World Cup
Medalist

Jay
World Champ
Ultimate Fighter
looking for a
sparing partner

Dane
Beat Dad this year

Emily
World Champ
just got her starter
home (VW Van)

Pikey
Adopted by Kristine
as team mascot

Jason
National Champ
Hip Hop King
Boy Biscuit

Nick
World Champion
Keeping EJ on his toes

Devon
National Champ
D.A.R.E.S. to keep
kids off drugs

Reigning
World Champion
Black Dog

Outstanding in Our Field

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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

May/June 2008 - Volume #48 - Issue #3

COLUMNS

- 3 The Journey Ahead by Mark Singleton
- 4 Letters to the Editor
- 6 Mind Over Water by Doug Ammons
- 12 Safety First: The GPS Project Update by Eric Nies
- 58 News & Notes: Ron Stewart by Chuck Estes
- 59 Potomac Whitewater Festival
- 60 Review: Paddling Arizona Review by Cody Howard

STEWARDSHIP UPDATES

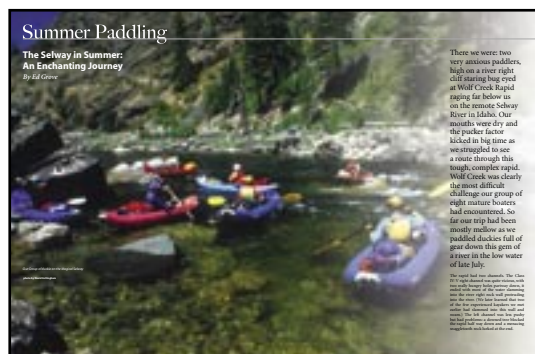
- 14 Ecological Improvements on the Cheoah by Kevin Colburn
- 16 Grand Canyon Floods by David Wilson
- 18 AW Visits Nation's Capital by Kevin Colburn
- 18 New Threats for Susitna River by Thomas O'Keefe
- 19 Milltown Dam (MT) Breach Celebrated by Kevin Colburn

SUMMER PADDLING

- 20 Linville Gorge, North Carolina by Adam Herzog
- 22 Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Colorado by Nick Wigston
- 28 How to Overnight by Eric Nies
- 34 The Selway: An Enchanting Journey by Ed Grove
- 44 A Caribbean Adventure of the Third Kind by Chris Port
- 46 Gringos in Waterfall Wonderland by Ilona Karow

RIVER VOICES

- 54 Losing Frank by Briggs Gilliam
- 56 Crusade Speedo, the "Belgararian" Way by Sebastiaan Luyssaert
- 62 Dropping in on Chile's 22 Teacaups by Janir Thorndike



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Black Canyon
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Purpose American Whitewater

River Stewardship: An Integrated Approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



American Whitewater Journal Staff

Editor Ambrose Tuscano
14076 Northwoods Blvd. Truckee, California 96161
e-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org

Assitant Editor Tim Catalano

Graphic Design/Production/Photo Editor Christie Dobson

Contributing Writers

Kevin Colburn, Ambrose Tuscano, Doug Ammons, Eric Nies, Nathan Key, Mike Dombeck, Thomas O'Keefe, Dave Steindorf, Bob Center, Charlie Vincent, Christine Boush, Jessica Bechhofer, Sara Hunter, Ken Cote, Justin Venable, Rocky Contos, David Hughes, Junior Olympic Committee, Charlie Walbridge, Carla Miner

Photo Contributors

Jack Ditty, Kate Udall, Scott Collins, Dave Steindorf, Nathan Fey, Thomas O'Keefe, Kevin Lewis, Casey Cash, Chris Boush, Holly Mann, Catherine Howard, Ben Brown, Steve Fisher, Desre Pickers, Rocky Contos, Alex Chong, David Hughes, Duane Diefenback, Lawrence Simpson, Jennifer Petosa, Pat McDonnell

Events / Advertising Coordinator Ben VanCamp
P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723
phone 828-713-5825
e-mail: ben@amwhitewater.org

Safety Editor Charlie Walbridge
Route 1, Box 329F, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525
e-mail: ccwalbridge@cs.com

Stewarship Reports Editor
Kevin Colburn, kevin@amwhitewater.org

American Whitewater Magazine Task Force
Jeff Espy, Dunbar Hardy, Dale-Marie Herring, John Mason, Tanya Shuman, Ambrose Tuscano

Missing Copies and Address Changes
carla@amwhitewater.org

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Board of Directors & Staff

Sutton Bacon
sutton@suttonbacon.com
Atlanta, GA

Chris Bell
chris@boatingbeta.com
Asheville, NC

Rich Bowers
nwdrivers@comcast.net
Bellingham, WA

Dave Cernicek
cernicek@cluemail.com
Jackson, WY

Adam Cramer
crameric@gmail.com
Washington, DC

Jennie Goldberg
jennie@nwwhitewater.org
Seattle, WA

Kristine Jackson
kristine@jacksonkayak.com
Rock Island, TN

Don Kinser
dkinser@ediltd.com
Marietta, GA

Evie Locke
evelynlocke@verizon.net
Charlemont, MA

Eric Nies
nies@runbox.com
New Paltz, NY

Aaron Pruzan
aaron@jacksonholekayak.com
Jackson Hole, WY

TOLL FREE NUMBER
866-BOAT4AW

Norwood Scott
wns111@sbcglobal.com
San Francisco, CA

Charlie Walbridge
ccwalbridge@cs.com
Bruceton Mills, WV

BOARD OFFICERS

President: Sutton Bacon
Vice President: Don Kinser
Secretary: Jennie Goldberg
Treasurer: Chris Bell

AW STAFF

Laura Blalock
Bookkeeper
Cullowhee, NC
laura@americanwhitewater.org

Kevin Colburn
National Stewardship Director
Missoula, MT
kevin@americanwhitewater.org

Carla Miner
Membership Manager
West Valley City, UT
carla@americanwhitewater.org

Thomas O'Keefe
Pacific NW Stewardship Director
Seattle, WA
okeefe@americanwhitewater.org

Mark Singleton
Executive Director
Cullowhee, NC
mark@americanwhitewater.org

Dave Steindorf
California Stewardship Director
Paradise, CA
dave@americanwhitewater.org

Nathan Fey
Colorado Stewardship Director
Ridgway, CO
nathan@americanwhitewater.org

Ben VanCamp
Outreach Manager
Asheville, NC
ben@americanwhitewater.org

The Journey Ahead

As I write this, I've just returned from an early-season roll session at the local college swimming pool. I took my kids so they could spend some time getting comfortable in their boats for the season. One thing I should tell you about taking my two girls (age 7 and 9) to the pool for a roll session: first, it has nothing to do with kayaking, and second, rolling is not something that is high on my daughters' list of things to do. Let me explain. Going to the pool with boats is all about having fun—boating is optional! One of the biggest sources of fun for my girls is discovering how many different ways they can sink their dad while he's in his kayak without a sprayskirt (one of these days I'll put in some air bags and it will be a different story). The girls love to climb onto the deck of my boat and rock it back and forth until enough water has spilled in to take me down for a deep mystery move. Once the boat is fully submerged, the girls sit on the deck and play seesaw. At the pool session today, this style of water play kept the girls in the pool for over an hour and a half of nonstop laughs.

It sometime seems to me that as adults we lose the ability to enjoy paddling for the pure fun of the sport. Unlike kids, we get wrapped up in worrying about technique or what type of craft we paddle. That thought was driven home after the pool session when I visited one of the many online message boards devoted to whitewater paddling and saw a post from a single canoeist who was not feeling adequately represented by American Whitewater. As whitewater boaters, what we all share is a love for moving water, open spaces and the sense of wilderness that is inherent in free flowing rivers. What hand-powered craft we choose to experience rivers in is a personal choice. I started paddling in a canoe and still enjoy spending time with a single blade. As I've gotten older, I find that I'm more comfortable with my butt firmly attached to the seat of a kayak. It is not what I paddle, but rather how I value my time on river that matters to me. Likewise, the mission of American Whitewater, "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to

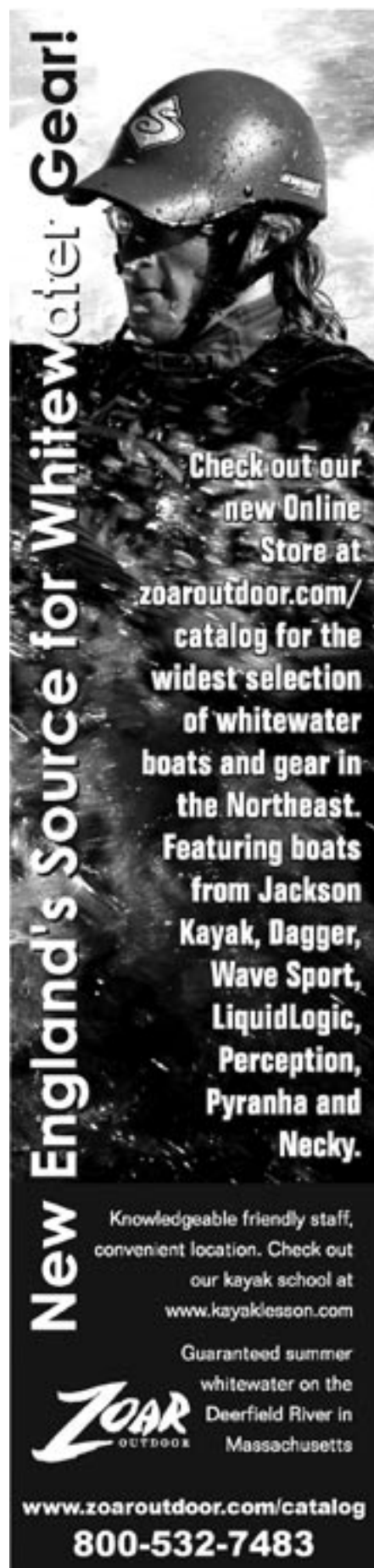
enjoy them safely" is designed to serve all whitewater enthusiasts, regardless of what craft they paddle—or even whether they paddle at all.

It's easy for paddlers to get to know their favorite rivers extremely well. We learn their moods, how to read their moving water, and how to reduce risks in traveling a river's surface. Through this in-depth knowledge of rivers it's easy for paddlers to become deeply attached to their local stream; it would be much harder if we had to love something that we didn't know as intimately.

Most of the material that appears in this very magazine is written by regular paddlers, like you and me, who write about the rivers they know and love, and about their experiences on those rivers. They are not told what to write about, and they're not paid for their writing or photography. Now it's true that what finds its way into *American Whitewater* seems to be largely submitted by kayakers. That's not because we want it to be that way; it's simply a reflection of the material we're given to print. If anyone wishes to provide a different perspective, *American Whitewater* is an open canvas; any and all thoughts and images are welcome as long as they aren't designed to offend. The mission oriented part of American Whitewater's work—that of river stewardship—knows no single craft. Rafts, canoes, kayaks, duckies, and river boards all benefit equally from sound river stewardship.

As my kids grow older, I hope they have the ability to paddle everything that floats (and maybe a few things that don't—squirt boats, for example) with single blades, double blades, or with no blades at all. Paddling has so much fun to offer if we can just keep our minds open and our rivers free flowing.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear American Whitewater:

I'm just a guy—a guy who loves whitewater. As such, I appeal to you, the folk who have the ear of many in the whitewater world, in this time of great need.

Actually, the time of great need isn't here as of yet, but owing to my fabulous foresight, I can predict that time coming, and coming fast.

I am referring to a matter of "river ethics," that apparently isn't generally discussed.

What I'm talking about is River Access Competence (RAC). Or "etiquette." Or "courtesy." Maybe "decorum."

Whatever you want to call "it," it is the way people represent themselves at river access points (put-ins and take-outs).

So why is there a need for this?

In the twenty years I've been whitewater boating, it seems to me that access point confrontations are cropping up with increasing frequency.

As our great sport becomes more and more popular, there will be more and more pressure put on these communal access points by more and more users.

These places can become quite chaotic when overloaded, sometimes leading to confrontations and even fist-fights. Typically these confrontations are caused by people getting in each other's way.

If these kinds of problems become common, governmental agencies may feel obligated to intervene.

In my experience, governmental intervention typically has negative consequences. In this case, I know of two places where intervention has already occurred.

On the Clark Fork River, the Alberton Gorge reach is probably the single most popular whitewater day run in Montana. There, the Forest Service has a ranger

directing people at the Cyr Bridge put-in on high-traffic mornings and at the Tarkio take-out in the afternoons.

So far, this has not been a detriment to boaters, but how long will the Forest Service provide this service? At some point, I think they will want the service to fund itself, and that means user fees.

On the Deschutes River, the Maupin reach is probably the most popular day stretch of whitewater in Oregon. There, the county sheriff maintains a presence at the Sherar's Falls take-out on heavy use days to keep the peace.

Someone has to pay for the government's presence, and in the end it will be us. There is already a fee to use any part of the Lower Deschutes including the Maupin day stretch; I worry that will become the norm on many rivers in the future.

I've been to both rivers at times when these governmental representatives were very much needed. I do appreciate their presence. But I think with better RAC, they wouldn't be necessary.

In my opinion, good RAC can be achieved by following three simple principles. First, never block an access point. Second, if you have to block an access point, get out of the way as quickly as possible. Do the vast majority of your rigging or de-rigging somewhere out of the way. Third, lend a hand and don't be afraid to ask for help: generally, it will be appreciated.

I think if people followed those three rules, access point problems would be negligible.

For the most part, I think the people causing the problems at access points are not "bad" people, they're just people who don't know any better.

As such, I think educating whitewater folk will go a long way towards keeping places like the Lower Deschutes the exception and not the rule.

What I'm proposing is nothing earth-

shattering, or even particularly difficult. Simply including RAC guidelines in all discussions of river-ethics should be sufficient.

Perhaps I'm overly optimistic, but the vast majority of people I see on rivers practice good river-ethics: for instance, they wouldn't consider dumping their empty beer cans in the river.

But RAC isn't thought of as a part of river-ethics, so for most people it isn't even considered. They don't know how to comport themselves at access points because there are no extant guidelines for RAC.

That's where you guys come in.

You are in a leadership position in the whitewater world, and as such have influence over the common discourse. Make RAC an issue.

It is in all of our best interest to keep the government out of our business: poor RAC is just the sort of unnecessary issue that gives "the man" an excuse to keep us down, and make our sport less fun (and more expensive) than it should be.

I don't want to sound like an anti-government activist. I'm not: I think the role of government in protecting its citizens and common resources is unfortunately both necessary and important. But without a genuine need, we should endeavor to keep government at bay. Better RAC is one step towards that ideal; poor RAC forces a step towards a nanny-state. And who wants that?

Respectfully,

dogscratcher

Dear Editor,

It was disappointing that *American Whitewater* omitted the Fee Repeal and Expanded Access Act of 2007 from its list of the Top 10 River Issues for 2008 (January/February issue). Also known as S2438, this federal legislation sponsored by Senators Baucus (D-Montana) and Crapo (R-Idaho) will stop the Forest Service and other federal land bureaucracies from charging access fees to public lands. Here on the Kern River, the Sequoia National Forest has been aggressively trying to impose access fees on kayakers since 1998. It's worthy to note that the same bogus claims of "environmental degradation" that have been used to prohibit paddlers from accessing the Upper Chattooga are being used against the small number of us who use the Kern River to justify bureaucratic fundraising. The federal land agencies have made little secret of their plans to expand this program to rivers nationwide.

Perhaps *American Whitewater* can take a leading role in helping to pass S2438?

Sincerely,

Peter Wiechers
Kernville, CA

Dear Editor,

I read the article about the amazing kayak prodigy, Brad Mann, in the March/April edition of *American Whitewater*. But what were his parents thinking (or were they), letting him run Bull Sluice at age 8? People have died there. And then there was Baby Falls ("I closed my eyes and wished I wouldn't die.").

I should hate to read that he died at too young an age ("Doing what he loved") because of his parents' hubris.

Sincerely,

Marcia Wood
Moab, UT

Dear AW,

What a great month to read so many insightful articles in the *AW Journal*... by paddlers under the age of 16! This was especially gratifying because I have paddled with just about every one of these young paddlers over the years (and some of their parents too!).

It is also gratifying to know that sometimes the extra steps we have taken—whether it was through our kids program, communicating through our kids blog, or by volunteering to have a young paddler stay at our own house has meant that they are turning into their own boaters. Anyone else in our position should take heart knowing that the extra steps are worth it when you see the spark not only ignited, but shining bright in a kid's eyes!

Sincerely,

Juliet Jacobsen Kastorff

Whitewater Kids

Kayak Kid
By Christine Brough

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

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

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

"I didn't want to get surfed again but, it was pretty fun," Mann said.

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

"The first time I ran Baby Falls was really scary," Mann said. "I closed my eyes and wished I wouldn't die."

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

Both Mann and Milton, known on the river as Miltymann and Littlemann respectively, kayak with hand paddles instead of a traditional paddle. The hand paddles offer less power than a traditional paddle but allow Mann more control over his boat and a faster roll. Mann has mastered his roll by spending hours practicing in the pool.

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

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

"When I was 8, I ran Bull's Sluice backwards and upside down," Mann said, referring to a difficult Class IV rapid on the Chattooga. "Another time I ran Wilson's Creek and flipped over and got cut on my face."

Both times, Mann rolled up after his watery beat-down, wide-eyed but calm. "Sometimes you get to see the show and sometimes you are the show," Mann said, shrugging off the memory with a laugh.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summer of 2008, Littlemann catches air diving a low rapids turnout run off the creek boat at Bull Sluice.

Photo by Chad Cook

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

Photo by Chris Brough

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29

Mind Over Water

Fear in Whitewater, Part III: Controlling Fear

By Doug Ammons

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

This is the third and final part of our discussion of fear in kayaking. In the first part we discussed the physiology of fear. We emphasized that it is a hard wired reaction to threats and an essential part of our ability to survive, creating a flood of physiological fireworks that overwhelm conscious action and tend to keep us safe despite ourselves. The key problem faced by paddlers is that these reactions evolved to work on land, and readily lead to disaster in moving water.

The second part discussed the psychology of fear and how excitement can change into fear or vice versa, depending on our interpretation of a situation. It also discussed how quickly and powerfully we can learn to fear almost anything, and that what is learned in one instant of fear can last our entire life. Fear is a serious emotion that can shackle us even when the thing(s) we fear are completely unrealistic. These topics lead us logically to the psychology of controlling fear.

Proactive Basics

One of the cognitive effects of fear is that the emotion takes over before you can have any conscious thought. Rational decision making is left far behind, struggling with tunnel vision, trying in vain to catch up to the freight train that's been let loose within the body and brain.

How do you deal with this? The best way is to be proactive, doing everything possible to prepare yourself solidly so you are less likely to be thrown out of control and feel threatened to begin with. Gaining greater competence, control, skill

and understanding are the best ways to deal with fear, because they allow you to avoid it in the first place. Here's a quick list of proactive basics before we go into specifics.

Get in decent physical condition. If you are out of shape, you are asking for problems. You will find everything to be easier if you are fit, strong and have good cardio conditioning.

Take small steps when choosing rivers and types of paddling. Do your best to stay within your ability and stretch your comfort zone carefully. It is very easy to overreach and quickly find yourself in the middle of some ugly experience. Taking smaller steps minimizes that chance while also expanding your experience.

Build your skills systematically, always working on discovering weaknesses and improving strengths. This shouldn't be some long and onerous list of things you dread—it represents all the fun you get to have while learning the sport. It means improving both physical and mental skills. The physical skills should be practiced in as many types of water as possible: rivers and creeks, big and small, steep and gentle. And do not shy away from lakes and the ocean, as they also have their challenges and pleasures. I recommend paddling as many different kinds of boats as you can buy, beg or borrow. Every single one will teach you something important. This is also a fun range of things you can do over one or multiple seasons as the runoff or rains or drought change water levels. You don't need whitewater to work on many important skills, or on your basic conditioning and paddle strokes. The general approach is to use whatever water and craft you have available, paddle as much as you can, and enjoy.

For whitewater, the skills that keep you safe have to replace or redirect your instinctive survival reflexes, because they are the only things that can deal with the dynamics of the river. This means you have to learn those skills very, very well. How well? As an example, look at one standard skill that deserves special mention for hardshell

paddlers—the “combat roll.” The classic fear situation is missing a must-make roll right above a drop, or when you're tired and distracted. The solution? Learning to mastery.

Learn to Mastery: The Combat Roll

Almost everyone who has ever paddled a kayak or C1 in moving water has found themselves upside-down and trying to roll, feeling that the end of the world is just downstream. In that situation almost inevitably we panic and rush the roll. The predictable result is either we don't make it up and suffer the consequences, or we struggle and feel like we made it by the skin of our teeth. Both outcomes provoke a feeling of insecurity and we start doubting our ability. This is the genesis of fear.

Saying somebody has a combat roll is just a statement that their roll is solid, and they can do it under pressure. My point is, if you've learned it right, your regular roll is a combat roll. It should be dependable, consistent, and strong. You should be able to crank it off from any angle, no matter where the paddle is. Many hardshell paddlers do not roll with this level of confidence, which indicates that they have not learned the technique well enough. The solution: keep practicing the roll, keep analyzing it, and shoot for perfection. Learn to mastery.

The way to approach this is to assume you have never learned your roll well enough, and to continually be working on it. Got a roll on one side? Learn it on the other. Throw the paddle away and learn a hands roll on both sides. Having trouble rolling in turbulence? Find a benign eddy line and practice rolling up in no-man's land. Try whirlpools. Keep going, and never stop practicing. Never assume that you've got it down and can simply rely on it, because that's when the river will throw a curve at you.

The roll is not just a technical skill that you learn once and then know forever; it requires constant training for stamina, strength, and timing. All that practice will

come to your rescue when you're tired, cold, or out of breath. Because I approached my roll this way from the beginning, I've only ever swum once in my entire career (out of an underwater pin), and the skill is so solidly learned it has probably saved my life several times. Over the last 25 years, at different times I've rolled up in the middle of manic Class V whitewater with broken ribs, a dislocated collarbone, dislocated and separated shoulders, and various other injuries. I assume that my roll is never good enough, and continue to work on it to this day. This behavior is obsessive from most people's standpoints, and admittedly it is aimed toward dealing with the most difficult runs, but I've found myself very impressed with how dynamic and powerful rivers are, and I've learned that it's foolish to take even an "easy" river for granted.

You don't need to go to these extreme lengths to train yourself to have a virtually fail-safe roll. Pursue the idea of rolling as a strength and endurance skill, and you'll find it vastly improved. With that comes increased confidence, increased fun, and a sense of freedom. To the limit of your time and motivation, apply this to all your river skills, learn all of them to mastery. Real, demonstrated control is the best defense against fear.

Proactive Mental Skills

Actually, it is wrong to separate physical and mental skills, because both come into play any time you're on the river. The discussion here is for convenience and it somewhat artificially stresses one or the other. Whitewater paddling requires all mental skills to be melded with physical skills, and vice versa.

Mental skills typically include tenacity, toughness, focus, keeping cool, but there are more whitewater-specific ones as well, such as learning to read water, scout, understand a line and how to stay on it, and judgment about what a river requires and whether you are up to the task. The most important mental skill you can possess is judgment, and specifically the ability to be honest with yourself. The best practice for all of these mental skills is lots

of paddling in as many circumstances and on as many rivers as you can, again taking small steps.

Three Versions of a Core Mental Skill

It's useful to consider three ideas that are closely tied together. They are so general they could even be called attitudes rather than skills, and actually, each has elements of all the mental skills I listed above. They are: not rushing, focus under pressure, and keeping your cool. Each assumes you might be feeling threatened and even fearful, but you are not allowing that to negatively affect your paddling. Not rushing emphasizes the physical movements a bit more, and that you maintain effective technique and timing. Focus emphasizes something a bit more mental—that even if you are feeling fear, you continue to deal with the situation in a clear and effective way. Both of them assert that you can't allow an impending threat to impair your technique or problem solving. The phrase, "keeping cool under fire" expresses something a little more general—not allowing yourself to be shanghaied by threat or fear. Obviously, it leads to the same end of not rushing and keeping your focus. I don't want to play with words here, but only acknowledge that they are overlapping ideas that are commonly discussed. Each idea suggests an emphasis on slightly different skills.

The proactive approach to this group of mental skills is to learn your techniques so well that even when you have to make a split-second decision, your response is sharp and effective, properly timed, and your technique does not falter. Further, that level of learning allows you to keep problem-solving effectively, not get distracted, or sucked into tunnel vision. Of course all these things are easy to say but difficult to do, so consider this an ideal to work toward.

All three skills assert the same basic fact: no matter how close you feel you are to disaster, you cannot give in to fear or allow yourself to be distracted by it. You must always focus on what has to be done, and do it. The instant you rush, lose focus,

or lose your cool, you have given up your control to the river. The following example illustrates this principle.

Twenty-some years ago on the first descent of a fantastic steep creek in North Idaho—600+ feet per mile of waterslides and boulderfields—I ran a big complex slide and got stuffed in the nasty hole at the bottom. A friend tossed a throw rope while I was windowshading and cartwheeling, and it unraveled all around me in the hole. I had loops around my neck, paddle, arms, and waist. The rope drag pulled me out of the hole and I had perhaps ten seconds across a fast moving pool before entering a nasty Class V+ rapid. Needless to say, entering a Class V+ rapid with a noose around your neck trailing a throw rope is not a good idea. In fact, it has death written all over it. I cranked a roll, felt the rope strands all around me, and started untangling myself. My brain was screaming at me as I watched the oncoming rapid out of the corner of my eye, while calmly and deliberately unwrapping each loop, right to the last instant with the current accelerating me into the first must-make move. I cast off the last loop and already had my boat angled for the drop, making the move and scrabbling into an eddy. Only then did I realize how heavily I was breathing.

The point: you absolutely cannot lose your head and you cannot rush things. You must stay calm and deal with the problems as required, improvising and keeping effective decisions coming—regardless of the looming threat. Control and focus are the only things that can keep you safe once you enter a situation. The instant you lose your cool, you have thrown away your best chance to come through safely.

Reality Training

Once fear has taken hold, it is a huge internal battle to get your control back. If the situation lasts for a little while, say more than 10, 15 or 20 seconds, you probably can catch your balance. The problem is, an awful lot can happen on the river in 10 or 20 seconds. Again, the best thing is to have very well learned skills, optimally they would be proactively

Mind Over Water

practiced in a similar situation.

In the martial arts, there are dozens of “reality based” self-defense schools that are set up to put people in simulated high-octane situations to train their skills, so they react optimally under pressure. Typically one or more attackers are geared up in scary looking paddled suits to simulate a scenario—an attempted mugging, robbery, car jacking, or attack with a knife—and the student can freely use the most aggressive defense techniques. What typically happens is that under pressure, all the fine points of technique disappear and the only things left are gross motor movements and primal emotion. It’s a real eye-opener to anybody who thinks he or she will clobber the attacker like Jean-Claude Van Damme does in the movies with that cool-looking roundhouse kick. It won’t happen. The practice scenarios show the importance of focusing on the critical aspects: keeping control of fear, making clear decisions based on a few principles of safety, and using simple, effective techniques. The key point is to experience as close as possible the same emotions and stress as in a real situation—but safely. Having practiced it, you can hone in on just a few effective actions and not be paralyzed. Once you have practiced the responses, you then have a chance to control fear, or fight through it while effectively defending yourself.

I don’t recommend you deliberately scare yourself on the river. However, you can do the same general kind of “reality-based” training on whitewater because paddling is fully “reality-based” all by itself. Running rivers generally gives us plenty of situations for proactive mental practice under some pressure. It’s the inherent nature of the river situation. Again, use small steps. Even on your local run you can set up moves that are difficult and require careful attention and control. Also, use the local run to practice swimming rapids, getting a throw rope to a swimmer, using a z-drag to peel a broached boat off logs or boulders in the current. Prepare as much as possible. You can call it preparation, but really it’s also a lot of fun.

Regardless of whether you are in Class I or Class V, a direct, clear response is essential. The difficulty is secondary; the key is being able to focus and act. The way to practice this is to make moves in everything from easy to more challenging rapids. Gradually work your way up according to your desire for challenge. The ability to make an instantaneous decision with complete commitment defines what river running requires as much as any physical or technical skill does.

Managing Fear Once You Have it

Fear ruins your appreciation of the sport. It makes paddling into an aversive experience instead of the fun it should be. Please don’t accept it as a fact of life on the river. If you are fearful of whitewater but still want to paddle, get some help and acquire the skills that make being on the river one of the best experiences you can have.

There are a number of standard ways to work with fear, as developed in various therapies.

First, when you feel fear welling up, learn how to relax and calm down. One effective method is deliberately breathing more slowly and deeply from your abdomen rather than from your chest. At the same time, relax all the muscles in your body. You can incorporate imagery as well, so this becomes a skill to reinstate relaxation. Practice enough so you can do it right there on the river. Many high level athletes do this for competition. There are courses in which this technique is taught for dealing with anxiety.

If the fear came from a mistake on the river, analyze the situation, identify how it came about and how it should have been dealt with. Understanding the dynamics of what happened will help you regain control of it mentally, and identify what you need to work on to prevent a repeat.

Replace unrealistic fearful thoughts with realistic constructive thoughts. Take control of your visualization. Often fear

takes this over and your imagination is set loose in the service of your fear. It takes conscious will power, practice, and attention to reverse this. The same thing can be done with positive imagery about what will happen, which is closely allied to the modeling I mentioned above. Again, there are many formal courses and ways to learn this.

Systematically desensitize yourself by gradual exposure to aspects of the fearful situation, done under control—safely and carefully—until you no longer feel the same intense reactions. This is a typical method used with phobias and will work better for unrealistic fears than realistic ones.

If you’ve had problems, take a step or two back and build your skills back up carefully using the kind of approach I mentioned above. All the things I mentioned earlier about practicing and building skills apply here. These increase your ability to cope with situations. It is the direct—and probably the most effective—way in the long run.

Use transfer of training. For desensitizing and stepping back, look around on your local rivers and find simple features that have some of the elements that give you trouble, and work to develop your skill, understanding and control. For instance, if you’re scared of holes, find a small hole or breaking wave with a big eddy below and practice on it repeatedly. What you’re doing is approximating the more difficult river experience. It’s called transfer. You learn a skill in one situation and apply it in another. The better learned it is, the better the transfer. This is true for both physical and mental skills. Doing it in a simpler setting allows you to gain the control needed to avoid fear.

Get support. Find friends who you can talk to and are willing to work through the problem with you. You’ll probably find that many of them have similar troubles.

Don’t let other paddlers, even if they are friends, goad you into making bad decisions. Especially don’t paddle

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with people who think it's funny when somebody screws up and gets blasted, because at some point that will be you. It's much better to find a group that will support its members instead of projecting their insecurities onto others.

Don't run rapids you're afraid of. If you build your skills carefully there will come a time when it makes sense to you to run something. There's no need to hurry the process. Impatience increases the likelihood of overreaching and having bad experiences.

I strongly suggest NOT using drugs or tranquilizers of any sort to control your anxiety. If you feel you absolutely need them to paddle, then you're probably trying to cover up some serious problems in the wrong way.

Avoid macho attitudes. The guys who paddle because they see it as a macho thing are often—though not always—fearful right underneath the bravado. If you are somebody who feels this macho attitude, I suggest you think really carefully about what you're trying to get from the sport. It has far more satisfying rewards than stroking your manhood, and the latter need is almost guaranteed to lead to a poor decision at some point.

Listen carefully to your own inner voices and feelings. Do what is right for you. Those inner voices reflect your intuition, which is an awareness that goes far beyond anything you can consciously identify. It is the sum of your personal experience and reflects everything you sense at the time. As you gain additional experience, your intuition will change because it always reflects your knowledge, and equally, the limitations of that knowledge. Bring it into your awareness. Never ignore it.

Find your own balance. It doesn't have to be anybody else's. There's no reason to attempt Class IV or V. If you feel compelled to try, then make as sure as possible you are prepared. This last point deserves special comment. Whitewater videos and magazines tend to glorify the most outrageous and difficult runs, which gives people the impression

that to be a real paddler you have to run 80-foot waterfalls or Class V whitewater. To be a paddler you only have to have fun. It doesn't matter at what level you choose to appreciate rivers. I love being out on the water—any water. I'm just as happy paddling on a lake or in Class I with beginners as I am paddling harder rivers. The quality of the experience is what I look for, and good partners are not just those who do hard runs with you, it's anybody you can share an enjoyable time with on a river. Skill level by itself doesn't say anything about a paddler except the amount of time they've spent on the water. My suggestion is, no matter what your level and no matter what you paddle, it's your thoughtfulness on and off the river that defines your path. There is no reason to hurry along a beautiful path; there is every reason to savor it.

Find the joy! The positive experiences are what draw us to rivers; the pleasure and sheer fun of moving with water, seeing the beauty of the river, and being with good friends keeps us coming back. Weave your sense of the river out of the joy you have in discovering and learning, and it will become a deep well you can draw from.

Putting it All Together

Blending all the physical and mental skills together is what defines whitewater paddling. The following should help integrate everything we've mentioned here.

Modeling: No matter what your skill level, strive for grace and smoothness in moving down the river. The smoother you are, the more efficient and effective your paddling is. If you are struggling, then you're doing something wrong. Watch other good paddlers. Play close attention in videos to the techniques and moves they use. Feel yourself into that motion. A good internal image of a perfect move or run will make you a better paddler. Actually getting there may be a long-term process of improving skills, but having a vividly imagined goal of how you want to paddle makes it clear what you need to do. Try videotaping yourself. There's nothing like an objective third person perspective to see what you are doing. It doesn't have

to be in whitewater—even a few minutes of seeing yourself paddling flatwater will teach a great deal. Most likely, you'll find the damndest little hitches and irregularities, and you'll be surprised and horrified you because you'll look like a spazz. That's good; use it for motivation, correct the errors and improve.

An important mental skill for river running is quickly deciding and making a particular move. There are some simple ways to practice this, which require you to rivet your attention on exactly what you're going to do and how it will be done. Depending on your skill level, you should make the move challenging by making the window of opportunity small, which mimics more difficult lines in whitewater. As paddling gets harder, those little windows get smaller and there are more of them threaded together. Class III assumes you have to control your line within a certain limit, which might be moving to miss a single hole or rock. Class IV assumes that you have several such moves and the consequences of missing them are substantial. Class V assumes that there are multiple difficult moves with small margins of error and severe consequences.

Slalom gates on easy whitewater are a great way to practice this aspect of focused movement. You have to identify and plan out what needs to be done, which is a general skill that comes into play in all whitewater. It might be only a simple eddy move, but you will find that with the gate there, suddenly you have to be in just the right place or else you won't make it. Without the gates, you might never realize how difficult it is to be so precise. Entering a foot too high means you hit one of the poles. Or, the gate itself may be set low in an eddy, forcing you to crowd the gate, because entering too low may get you swept out of the eddy behind. And gates show you this without harsh or dangerous consequences. Slalom teaches you not to be lazy about your moves, and trust me, that attitude will come in handy. Each such increment in your focus and skill is a step toward greater control and less fear.

Find and Practice Flow

Running whitewater is both intuitive and

analytic. The analysis is comprised of all the techniques you've trained and all the explicit decisions you've made. The intuitive realm is where it all comes together, culminating in the feeling of blending with the water. All the basic skills for balance, controlling direction and speed, reading ahead, must be integrated into your feeling of the flowing water. It's a beautiful experience, and the way you do it amounts to your style of paddling.

Flow should be practiced at each stage, each level of difficulty, and with each individual rapid. As the difficulty of the whitewater increases, keeping a nice flowing style is dramatically harder, because each of the skills must be that much better learned and integrated together, but the process is the same at any level from Class I to Class VI. The best way to practice this is on rivers well within your abilities. They should probably be at least one or two grades below your maximum, places where your timing is not forced and the current not so powerful that your strength is overwhelmed. Develop your sense of a nice flowing line, running in control. This is tremendously enjoyable and it is perhaps the greatest overall skill. As you develop, you can bootstrap yourself up by dealing with faster and more powerful rivers to whatever level you have the skills and desire to take on. But at each level you need to feel yourself into the flow. Every time you feel this, it will both be excellent practice, and also remind you why you love paddling.

What Paddling is Not

There are many psychological theories of "sensation seeking" and "adrenaline rushes" that have been applied by academics to whitewater recreation. Below are a few reasons I dispute this labeling.

You should use anything that helps you, but I would caution paddlers about using books talking about risk. In psychological research, fear and risk are talked about in a number of different theories, such as "sensation seeking," "thrill seeking," "risky behavior," "reversal theory," "Type A+ theory," and others. I'm not going to discuss them because frankly, I have not found these theories to be of much help in understanding paddling or any of the other adventure sports I've done. Each

makes incorrect assumptions, which I believe is largely because their originators never had any direct experience with such pursuits, and therefore do not understand the nature of adventure sports. Typically, such theories focus on surface characteristics; for example equating whitewater paddlesports with riding a roller coaster or bungee jumping. As one simple difference, the roller coaster and bungee jumping require no skill because participants have no control over the outcome. They passively put their life into the hands of people they typically don't know, and their "risk-taking" experiences are passively controlled by equipment whose quality and properties they can't assess. In contrast, the entire purpose of paddling is to actively control one's path down a river and interact with the water's flow. The researchers make the mistake of assuming the psychology of passive recipients is the same as that of willful, learning, active agents. That's one primary reason why I'm not using them to describe any aspect of fear in whitewater.

Last Words

Whitewater is capable of tweaking just about every phobia that humans commonly experience; it is likewise capable of giving us the most rewarding and moving experiences. Fear focuses on the dark side of the unknown, while mystery and inspiration focus on the light and beautiful side. Fear speaks to the dark threats hidden in the water and within ourselves. It can take the simple and powerful form of claustrophobia and the threat of being trapped inside a kayak or C1, of being upside-down unable to breathe, of being swept away by forces we can't control into some unknown disaster lurking downstream. The horizon line of every rapid is both a metaphor and a reality—you can't see what is ahead, though the roar of the rapid gets louder and louder. It's the very thing that Hollywood uses to evoke tension and get us on the edge of our seat: the hint of something bad, growing stronger, tension increasing, engaging every primitive reflex, and evoking a sense of impending threat.


It is within our power to shift all these from threats to beautiful possibilities. Awe comes when our emotions speak to the positive. Then, the horizonline becomes the doorway

to challenge, fun, and unfolding opportunity. When we make that shift, all the hints, potential threats, and darkness turn to their positive mirror images. This transformation is fully within our power.

Mystery and inspiration come from the same place fear does—from confronting something larger than ourselves, from reaching the brink of our understanding and not knowing what lies beyond. You cannot ban one of those emotions without banning the others. Those who narrow their world in order to control it at all costs will end up stifling mystery. They will feel barriers instead of sensing possibilities. They will feel weakened instead of strengthened.

Fear is a shackle. It prevents us from seeing that we can almost always do far more than we think. Left unchecked, it stymies our abilities, and gives us a false sense that the world is smaller than it really is, and that our skills are less than they really are or can be. Fear narrows our thinking, our relationship to the world and to ourselves. It is like the inverse of imagination. It is our creativity turned in a direction that hinders rather than helps us.

This is why the river is such a magnificent symbol, and why paddling is such an incredible sport. It projects us into a different world where our comfort and familiarity are taken away, and where we have to learn completely new skills. That world opens up in beauty and complexity, and at the same time it unveils our inner world and attitudes—weaknesses that we never knew we had, and strengths that we never thought we could attain.

The river is a fountain of inspiration. Fleeting, it gives us the experience of flowing effortlessly and leaves us with a glimpse of perfection. It is precisely in striving toward that sense of flowing perfection that our sport becomes such a wonderful game, a satisfying pleasure, a serious challenge, and a lifelong passion. Whitewater paddling is the ultimate flow sport, giving us the keys to balance solidity and change, reality and imagination. In that tension and release lie the beauty of the world. 

Safety First

The GPS Project Update

By Eric Nies, AW Safety Chair

In the September/October '06 issue of *American Whitewater*, I announced the GPS Project, a new initiative for the American Whitewater website. The intent of this project was to make the AW river database a repository for a new kind of river information, namely, the latitude and longitude of access points, major rapids, and other important river features. Boaters could collect data points as they ran a river, and then put this information on the website, much as they do with rapid descriptions and river photos.

This information would be available for all to do with as they pleased. Specifically, though, we'd want the AW website to become the go-to resource for Search and Rescue personnel. Ideally, they would use the AW website to figure out where a patient is on the river, based on the information that a fellow boater would usually provide—namely, a river feature on a particular whitewater run.

Right now, almost all of the rivers listed in the AW website already link to a Google or Topozone map showing the put-in, take-out, and shuttle. The latitude and longitude for the put-in and take-out are generally listed as well. What we at AW are gunning for is a way to have this kind of information available for all the major features for a given river run: rapids, access points, places a chopper could land, etc. My personal vision for this would be a list of features much like the list of rapids we currently have on the page. Click on a feature, and you get to an interactive map showing its location, as well as the coordinates for that point. Some of this info would also show up when you go directly to the "map" for that run. I also think we need an easy way for the Search and Rescue folks to navigate from our homepage to the info they need.

To see what some of this might look like, check out the AW entry for "Feather, S. Fork— 1. Little Grass Valley Reservoir to South Fork Diversion Dam." (To find

this, click on "River Info" at www.americanwhitewater.org, then go to the listings for California.) This site has GPS data in three forms. First, on the right side of the page, there are downloadable maps in .pdf format with the main river features labeled. Next, there is the usual "Map" button at the top of the page. Click on this, and an interactive map of the river pops up, with multiple markers for rapids and features. Lastly, you can click on the "Rapids" button at the top of the page, to see the list of rapids from put-in to take-out. Some of these have links to maps, with coordinates given as well.

At this time, only a handful of privileged users can input data like this, but we are looking to change this soon. Right now we're trying to sort out the best way to make this happen. Ideally we will support an automated download of your waypoints, so you can give us the info you've collected with a few mouse clicks instead of an hour of typing.

There will be a lot of issues here. How do points get verified? Before a point is verified, can others use it? (I think yes, we just say it's unverified.) How many points are enough? Do we distinguish between "serious" data points (like trailheads and hazards), and "fun" data points (like jumping rocks and nice lunch spots)? I think that most of these questions will yield to common sense down the road, but we'll see.

So, in the months and years to come, AW will need two things from you, the members. First, we will need your data to make this project fly. AW's website has become the most comprehensive source for whitewater information nationwide, because boaters like you have continued to add and update info on new runs, gauges, shuttle and access info, hazards, etc. The website is already dependent on you, and the GPS Project will be no different. The only way we will get GPS info onto the website is if you boaters go out and get it.

The other thing AW will need is your feedback. Right now we have a good idea of what the GPS Project should look like,

and what it should be able to do. As we start to implement this on the website, AW will need to know what is working and what isn't.

Your input will be invaluable here. GPS technology is evolving hourly, and the only way AW will keep up is if you make it happen.

To this end, we have started a GPS section at the AW Forum. Feel free to comment there or email me directly (nies@runbox.com), especially if you have some particular recommendations or expertise you wish to share. I am especially eager to hear from the Search and Rescue community. You know what you need, so tell us and we'll make it happen.

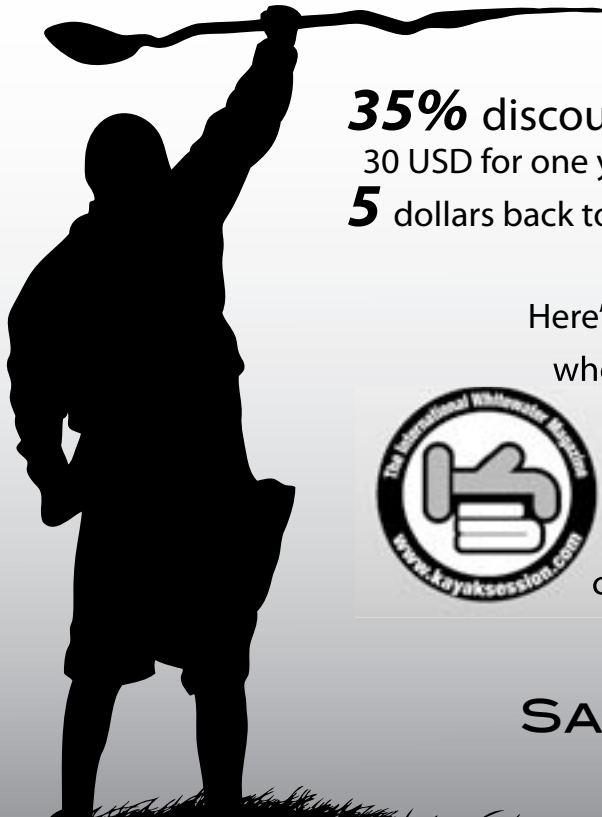
In the meantime, if you have GPS data that you want to share right now with others via the website, you can type it in on the Comments page for that run. I admit, this is far from optimal, but you are welcome to do this if you like. We'll be working hard to make this better soon.

To my fellow cyberboaters, thanks and happy paddling. 



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Stewardship Updates

Ecological Improvements on the Cheoah

By Kevin Colburn

The Cheoah River (NC) has experienced some changes lately that paddlers may have noticed. In 2005 water was restored to the Cheoah River based on several years of negotiations between the power company, paddlers, agencies, and others. Since then we have watched the river literally come back to life. While we like to talk about restoration in terms of “Just Add Water,” in reality there is often more to restoring a stream than just restoring flows. Because of historic dam operations, the Cheoah had too little water, too much woody vegetation in the channel, too little gravel, too many invasive species, and too few native species. Activities are ongoing to fix all of these problems.

Trees: Over the past two years, paddlers have assisted the U.S. Forest Service with removal of woody vegetation from the active river channel. Shrubs had encroached on the channel during the decades in which natural flows were impeded. The shrubs had especially clogged upstream areas of the Cheoah that receive water from


tributaries like Yellow Creek. Graham County and others are currently working on an environmental assessment of additional vegetation removal that could bring the Cheoah River channel back to its historic size.

Gravel: Paddlers may have been shocked recently by the sight of dump trucks dumping gravel into the Cheoah, and/or the resulting plumes of gravel in the riverbed. There was a concern that the dam has cut off the river’s natural supply of sediment and gravel from upstream. Gravel is a particularly important habitat for mussels and fish. To remedy this perceived problem, 101 cubic yards (160 tons) of gravel were added to the river in four locations.

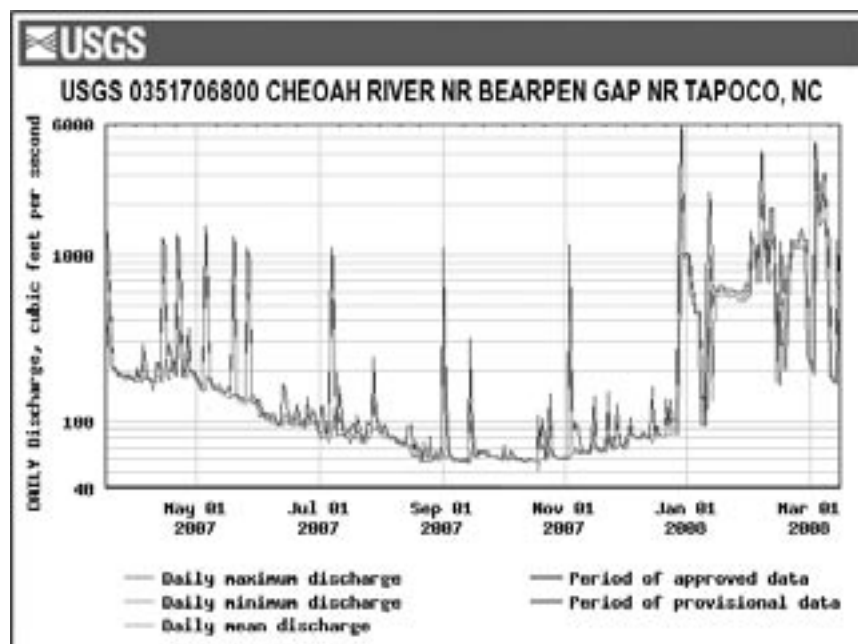
Water: This year the Cheoah River, and those who paddle it, got a great Christmas gift. The generators were turned off for maintenance and winter rains quickly caused water to spill over the dam and into the riverbed. The Cheoah has, at the time of this writing, experienced over 2 months

of nearly continuous naturally high flows (though controlled somewhat by gates on the dam). The ecological value of these flows is likely huge, and we hope paddlers are having a blast out there too!

Plants and Animals: In the coming years, the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service will be working to remove exotic species from the river corridor (like kudzu, for example). This will likely present a great volunteer opportunity for the paddling community. Government wildlife management organizations may also be reintroducing species of fish that likely once lived in the Cheoah but have been eliminated sometime during the past century of severe human impacts.

So far, the restoration of the Cheoah River is going really well. Initial reports are that the organisms in the river are responding positively to the changes. What is even more clear is that paddlers love having the river alive again. 

USGS gage of Cheoah flows. Note the intentional pulse flows and the bonus winter flows resulting from turbine maintenance.





Above: Gravel is being returned to the river to help compensate for reduced sediment content over the past decades

Photo compliments of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Right: A volunteer cutting encroaching shrubs from the Cheoah River channel

Photo by Ben VanCamp



Cheoah

Stewardship Updates

Grand Canyon Floods

River runners have noticed a decline in the number and size of beaches since the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation tested high flow releases in April 1996 and November 2004 to rebuild beaches and restore habitat that has deteriorated since completion of the dam in 1963. On March 5, 2008 Interior Secretary Kempthorne opened the bypass tubes resulting in a release of 41,500 cubic feet per second for about 60 hours. Field research related to high flows will continue through the fall of 2008, and initial formal reports should be available in late 2008 and 2009. A few boaters were lucky enough to be there for the event. Below are accounts from two different individuals.

A photo of River Mile 45 of the Grand Canyon taken during the high-flow experiment.

Photo courtesy of the USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center

From David Wilson:

On our second day, Thursday March 6th, we approached the “Roaring Twenties” with some trepidation due to the fact that the river had reached the scheduled flow of nearly 42,000 cfs. We scouted as needed, noting the extraordinary size of the upwelling boils and the eddy lines in the main rapids, which were acting as dangerous fences. Most of the group chose the main current lines, following laminar tongues at the top of drops and crashing through large wave trains dropping down into the pools with many squirrely boils, eddy lines, and currents. The biggest challenge of the day was the 24-mile rapid. We took the time to scout on river left, but two of the kayakers in the group still swam, and the third one needed to make at least one combat roll. We managed to get both swimmers in rafts and took a late afternoon break at Silver Grotto, but had a tough time climbing into the creek to get a good look at the interior of the grotto. Due to the inundation of new river water, the entrance of the creek was only accessible

by climbing a 40-foot wall or swimming in a swiftly flowing back eddy.

The third day our biggest challenge was the President Harding Rapid (see below for details).

By noon of the fourth day the river began ramping down and we spent two nights with our boat men getting up at all hours to push the rafts out in the river to avoid getting them stranded on a sand bar many feet away from the new river bank. After two nights of this we woke up at the lower Neville Camp and found all of our boats suction-cupped to sand 10-15 feet away from the new river bank. As a group of eight worked to move the first raft, we all began sinking into the saturated riverbank that was still draining, and sank to our knees as we moved the boat in 6-inch lurches toward the river. After that morning of effort we enjoyed three wonderful newly formed white sand beach camps over the next three nights. The river had receded roughly 8-12 feet from the high flows, but had blessed paddlers



with un-touched sand beaches as large as one acre in size. As the water drained out of the sand and the lateral waves from the river worked on the new banks, we could see that some of the beaches were shrinking already, but we enjoyed them for camping, volley ball, bocce ball and relaxing

From Pete Mattson:

Our four rafts floated in an eddy above President Harding Rapid. One book said that the line was left of the rock; the right line was no longer an option due to a slide. Then again, there was no rock today. In its place, a bus-sized hole tore at the sand-laden river. One of the kayakers downstream looked left and gave a tentative OK sign. Standing up on the raft, I could see an ugly eddy line feeding back into the tongue, pushing toward the hole. As we talked about it, another group began to pass us, lining up to take the rapid on the right.

"This should be interesting," someone said. We waved—the river was too loud to do more than that—and watched as six or

seven rafts began to queue up, positioning themselves for their run. It was our third day on the river, and our second day at 40,000+ cfs.


Despite not having rowed a raft in almost a decade and a half, I was glad I was not in my kayak that day. Its not that the rapids were so difficult, but some of the eddy lines were monstrous, clawing and sucking at the tubes of the 18-foot Sotar I rowed. We realized just how big the river was when we passed a surf wave where the rock in House Rock Rapid was supposed to be. I didn't even realize that we had run it until it was behind me. "So much for that scout," I thought. By the time we entered the meat of the "Roaring Twenties" I was starting to have fun.

But that had been yesterday. Today, the March sun had not yet climbed above the walls of Marble Canyon. The first couple of rafts of the overtaking group dropped over the right horizon line, eventually reappearing upright far down river. "Looks like the right goes fine," I said. "See you at the bottom."

I pulled out into the flow, timing my ferry to tuck in well behind their last raft, taking my turn. Except that last raft wasn't as far right as the others. I corrected my line, and double-checked it as my raft began to accelerate. "HOLY &%%\$@", my passenger

shouted, watching the raft in front of us pulled inexorably toward the monstrous hole. With its rower standing upright for one final heroic stroke, the raft 50 yards in front of us rose up over the entrance wave and crashed right into the center of the hole. I was too busy pulling toward the right to say anything.

It was a big yellow raft. I think it almost made it out. Then it flipped. A few seconds later, it cartwheeled. Later, I was told, it flipped several times.

With a final stroke I punched my raft through the right lateral wave, and flew past the hole into the crashing waves of the run out. Below me, the yellow raft was upside down, floating toward a large eddy at the camp below the rapid. Other rafts began converging on it. Then as we watched, a motorized skiff belonging to one of the scientific teams monitoring the high flows pulled out from the camp and towed the overturned raft to shore. Everyone was fine, although the Colorado River did claim the rower's hat as tribute. 

A photo of River Mile 45 of the Grand Canyon taken after the high-flow experiment.

Photo courtesy of the USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center

For more photos and more information on the research associated with the flood experiments visit the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC) <http://www.gcmrc.gov/>



Stewardship Updates

AW Visits Nation's Capital

By Kevin Colburn

American Whitewater has not had an office in Washington DC for several years, but we still visit the Capital when we can help our federal lawmakers make educated decisions on matters that affect our members. In order to best represent paddlers, we only go to DC with our partners in the Hydropower Reform Coalition or the Outdoor Alliance. In late February, we made one such trek with the Outdoor Alliance to educate lawmakers and agency staff on how national decisions affect boaters, climbers, bikers, hikers, skiers, and snowshoers. We talked about federal agency budgets that benefit recreationists and the wildlands where we play. We also talked about protecting Forest Service Roadless Areas, the BLM's special places, clean water in headwater streams, and about mitigating mining impacts on federal lands. All of these great places and resources may benefit from legislation that is currently under consideration. The outdoor recreation community is huge, and we are making sure that our voice is heard. [AWW](#)

AW National Stewardship Director Kevin Colburn (center) with Montana Senators Jon Tester (left) and Max Baucus (right).

photo courtesy of Senators Max Baucus and Jon Tester



New Threats for Susitna River

By Thomas O'Keefe

Devil's Canyon on the Susitna River (AK), one of North America's most challenging and iconic whitewater runs, has long been threatened by hydropower development and dreams of resurrecting this project persist. The Bureau of Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers examined opportunities for a project on the river in the 1970s followed by Alaska Power Authority in the 1980s.

A two dam project could power a 1620 MW hydropower facility, however construction costs in the 1980s were estimated at over \$5 billion. Now, flush with cash from North Slope oil, the State of Alaska is once again taking a look at the Susitna project. State legislation has been introduced (HB336/S246) directing the Alaska Energy Authority to prepare a proposal for an "appropriately sized Susitna hydroelectric project." This project would significantly expand generation capacity on the Railbelt, the corridor that extends through Seward, Anchorage, and Fairbanks along the Alaska Railroad.

According to a 2003 study by the Alaska Energy Policy Task Force, current generation capacity along the Railbelt is 1374 MW while peak load is only 721 MW. The reason for this excess capacity is due to inefficiencies in the transmission system and the need for 33% excess power to meet immediate demand needs that

the transmission system cannot reliably deliver. Additional new demand would come with major new mining operations proposed in the state. The Pebble Mine in Bristol Bay and Donlin Creek Mine along the Upper Kuskokwim River, for example, would require as much as 700 MW of power and a significant expansion of the transmission grid that would, in turn expand industrial development.

The hunt is on for power sources and construction of the Susitna project and expansion of the transmission system would have implications well beyond the Susitna drainage. American Whitewater will be tracking this project and we invite volunteers with an interest in this issue to contact us. [AWW](#)

Susitna: A paddler scouts the powerful rapids of the Susitna River

photo by Erik Boomer



Milltown Dam Breach Celebrated (MT)


By Kevin Colburn

On March 28th, Milltown Dam on the Clark Fork River (MT) was breached. The dam blocked fish, recreation and sediment from upstream mining for a century. Over two decades ago it was discovered that the sediment was loaded with arsenic and other heavy metals that were seeping into nearby drinking wells. Discussions regarding how to clean up the site dragged on until the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) classified the dam as having a high risk of failure, which raised the threat of toxic sediment washing far downstream. It became clear to many that the dam should be removed. American Whitewater played an active role in ushering the issue through the FERC process, which culminated in a call from FERC for the dam's removal. In the several years since that stage of this project, the EPA, Missoula County, the Clark Fork

Coalition, and other groups figured out an intricate plan for the removal of the sediment, the removal of the dam, and the restoration of the river through the reservoir site.

First the reservoir was lowered, and exposed sediment was shipped by train to a repository. Then an earthen coffer dam was built upstream of the right hand half of Milltown Dam and its powerhouse to dewater those structures. The structures were then removed. The Clark Fork River itself was then re-routed through a fully rock lined channel along one side of the floodplain so that it could not erode any toxic sediments when the reservoir was further lowered. With this completed, the coffer dam was breached on March 28th, 2008.

The breach was more of a process than an event. Crews dug a small channel across the top of the dam which stretched roughly 100 meters from up to downstream (see "Before" photo). With a few final scoops of the backhoe, water began to flow into the channel. A waterfall formed at the bottom end and slowly cut its way upstream through the ever widening and growing channel, in a phenomenon known as a head cut. Sometime in the night the waterfall reached the deeper reservoir waters upstream of the coffer dam and the new channel struck an equilibrium with upstream and downstream river. By the next morning the reservoir sediments were dewatered, and the Clark Fork flowed freely past the remaining half of Milltown Dam. Over the next few months and years, the rest of the dam and sediments will be removed, a new channel created, and the Clark Fork returned to a natural system.

AW staff shot a time-lapse video of the breach that has been watched over 6,000 times on YouTube. To view the video, go to www.youtube.com and search "Milltown Dam Removal." We are excited to celebrate and share this major river restoration milestone. 



Above: The Clark Fork River before the Milltown Dam coffer dam was breached

Right: The Clark Fork River after the breach of the coffer dam



Summer Paddling



View of Linville Gorge from above

photo by Adam Herzog

Make It a Double

By Adam Herzog

The second time I ran North Carolina's Linville Gorge I was passed by a group of three kayakers. They cruised by in one of the few flat sections of river and casually mentioned that they were going for two runs that day. Until the late 1990s, Linville was considered a mandatory two-day trip.

"Those guys must be crazy," I thought, stunned by the idea of running it twice in one day. We continued to Lake James, and the small group of hardcore paddlers hiked out at Connely Cove, a commonly used take-out. They succeeded in their mission, completing the first Linville double.

The Gorge can be split into several sections. Linville Falls to Lake James constitutes the entire, fifteen mile run. The meat of the whitewater lies between Babel Tower and Connely Cove, points that are accessed by foot. Traveling from Babel to Connely requires a couple of hours of difficult hiking. The trail out contains over 20 switchbacks. I have seen many good boaters smooth the whitewater only to emerge from the woods red faced and out of breath, cursing for not setting a shuttle and paddling to the lake.

With an average gradient of 150 feet per mile, Linville is not that steep, but it is

known as one of the most dangerous rivers in the Southeast. Massive, house sized boulders perch atop tiny piles of rocks, creating deadly hazards in nearly every rapid.

After my first few times down, I could only recall a blur of stout holes, green tongues, and sketchy sieves. The density of whitewater is overwhelming. But, in the spring of 2005, heavy rains brought the river to runnable levels for weeks on end. Before long I had the lines dialed, and a double sounded more reasonable.

After a dry summer, it finally rained in October. Everything was huge. Caleb, Joe, and I rose early in the morning. The river was 3.2 feet. We had never seen it that high. I plugged the middle of Babel Tower Falls (the first rapid) and subbed out for several seconds, my head several feet underwater. Rocketing out in a back-ender, I knew we were in for a serious day of kayaking.

It took us longer than usual to complete our first run due to extra portages, but when we arrived at the take-out, we committed to the second run. After a brutal hike out, and a never-ending hike in, we found ourselves back at Babel. It was getting late, and the level was still

over three feet. We dropped in again and landed in the zone, running the river in an hour and a half.

Since that day, I have become a Linville double fiend. When the river comes up I set my alarm for 4:30 a.m., but I awaken before I even hear its buzz. I head to the Gorge in the middle of the night and hike in, a headlamp illuminating the rocky trail. There is nothing like watching crimson and purple colors streak across the sky as the sun rises over the river.

The Southeast is known as a great area for year round, highly accessible whitewater. But every summer, hoards of Southern paddlers head west for multi-day trips. Doing laps on our shorter rivers increases the challenge of Southern whitewater and helps prepare us for more lengthy trips out west.

This boating style is catching on. A group of Chattanooga boaters ran the Green Narrows an unbelievable ten times in a day. A team from Asheville ran the Toxaway and the Horsepasture in the same day. Both of these creeks are cutting edge, Class V+ runs with arduous hikes at the end.

Last fall, on our second run of the day, my friend bonked deep in the heart of Linville Gorge. We stopped and drank some water. Sympathizing with his state of mind, I said, "We don't do this because it's fun." Hydrated and reenergized, he led us through Cathedral Gorge, the indisputable crux of the river.

On the drive home I wondered, if it is not fun, why do it? My answer is that I do it to step up to the challenge of combining endurance sports with Class V boating; to experience the flow of running hundreds of rapids in a single day; to provide

continued on page 50

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Summer Paddling

We Owned the Canyon

By Nick Wigston

It was nearing the end of the summer boating season in Colorado, and Labor Day weekend was approaching. My daughter, Zoë, was due to be born in November, and I wanted to do a memorable expedition before a long winter with the baby. This time of year in Colorado is normally pretty dry with only a few dam-controlled runs yielding good flows. The most notable is the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, which was running at a decent flow of 860 cfs. I had done the run twice before, once as an overnighter and once a seven-hour marathon mission. Both trips felt rushed, and I didn't feel able to really enjoy the canyon.

My favorite trips are overnighters, the more nights the better. So, I thought, why not run the Black in three days instead of two? Everyone is always trying to do these trips in less and less time. I say, screw that, spend more time and really make a great trip out of it. I talked to my buddy Jake, who was on a road trip from Montana, and immediately sold him on the idea. He had been paddling with "Squirt Boat" Lenny in Buena Vista, who was also into the plan (not in his squirt boat, of course). The trick was convincing Kyle to take the extra day instead of being home on Monday to greet his girlfriend on her return from a weeklong business trip. So, since Tina was out of cell service, Kyle left a message saying he would be back Monday night, and we blazed out of town for three days. It was one of those win-win situations.





Jake Zwicke in some boogie water

photo by Nick Wigston

Summer Paddling

Six hours and four red-bulls later, we arrived at the Chukar Trailhead, our hike-out point. Jake and Lenny were already crashed out, so we followed suit and tried to spend the few hours of remaining darkness asleep. In the morning we caught up with our friends, whom we hadn't seen in awhile. Jake said that he had talked to Milo, the local knowledge on the Black Canyon, and he would be meeting us at the put-in. We loaded boats onto Jake's car and headed to the East Portal launch site in Black Canyon National Park. On the way, we got a voicemail from Milo reporting that he was bailing on the trip due to a bruise on his shin. Apparently his girlfriend kicked him when he told her he was going kayaking. Not a win-win situation.

After rationing our food and over-loading our boats, we were finally ready to paddle. A few miles of flatwater and some Class

III-IV boogie water led us to Day Wrecker, one of the more notorious Class V rapids on the run. The drop is split into two channels by a large boulder. The right side is a death sieve, and the left is a sweet slot boof with a tricky entrance followed by a sketchy boulder garden. Regardless, this rapid deserves a thorough scout and good safety. I decided to run it first, and started the solo walk back to my boat while the "safety" team pulled out the cameras.

"The Walk" is always an interesting time for a boater. It's now that you start feeling a sinking in your gut. You know you are going to run it now, and you start thinking of all the bad things that might happen to you. What if I blow the entrance, what if I flip in the hole, what if I get pinned, and so on. You have already decided to run it, so you can't back out now.

"Oh crap, did I make the right decision?"

"Well it's too late for that, Wigston," I told myself.

So I squeezed a Honey Stinger down my throat, got in my boat, splashed some water in my face, and peeled out. Styled it. Sweet! These are the moments that we live for. It's not only the incomparable adrenaline rush, but the feeling of triumph over the rapid that had you scared to death only seconds before.

The canyon begins to deepen in the next few miles. The walls get steeper and narrower and the whitewater is awesome. This section is packed with quality Class V- drops. That is, until you get to Triple Drop. At higher flows this thing doesn't even look remotely inviting; it's pretty much a mandatory portage. At 860 cfs, the rapid looked surprisingly runnable. I scouted with the intention of running it. I looked at all of the hazards, and there were



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Stephen Wright, Team NRS, airborne on the Skookumchuck River, BC. ©Jessica Yurtinus

many. A huge toilet bowl hole flushing into a deep sieve on the second drop was very intimidating, not to mention the two sieves in the exit. Then I considered my potential line. First drop, boof, no problem. Second drop, well, as long as I am far, far left and get a good boof I'll be fine. The hole on the third drop was sticky, but easy to boof at this level.

So I'm thinking to myself, "I could really run this. I know I can make all of those moves."

I am now really considering it. Four years ago, this was all I needed to make my decision. Four years ago, I would be telling my crew to set up safety while I fired it up. Since my two shoulder injuries, I have become much more conservative. I get to the point that I want to run the rapid, and then I start second guessing myself. What if, what if, what if?

"But I know I can do it."

"Yeah, but look at that sieve. You don't want to end up in there."

"I know, but I can really make that line."

"It's just not worth it. There are more rapids downstream that aren't so dangerous."


As I've grown as a paddler and a person, I can choose to walk without regretting it. I may beat myself up a bit because I know I could have run it, but I always accept my decisions. It's always the right choice to follow your gut. So I walked.

After portaging Triple Drop, we put in above the Principal's Office. This is a long boulder garden rapid with several dangerous sieves on river right. Jake and I ran the entrance drop and eddied out

to wait for the others. Kyle came through and ran the next section to a good eddy past the meat of the rapid. Lenny passed us and headed into the drop below. I saw him get flipped and pushed right as he disappeared behind several large boulders. "This could be bad," I thought. So I peeled out and went after him. As I came around the boulders, I saw him upside down heading toward the sieve on the right. I ran the left channel and then headed to the right to try and help. He was nowhere to be seen. I pulled in downstream of the sieve to try to find a spot to get out. All of a sudden, Lenny surfaces out of nowhere right next to me. He had just swum through the sieve.

"Grab my boat," I yelled to him.

I tried pulling him to shore on the right only to realize that we were both being pulled into a large cave-like sieve.



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"If he doesn't let go, we are both going in there." I thought to myself.

"Lenny, let go and get to that rock!"

I narrowly peeled out around the sieve and caught the eddy behind it. Kyle was already climbing out of his boat to run upstream and help. Jake and I followed him fearing the worst. When we found Lenny, he was hanging on for dear life with his feet dangling into the entrance of the sieve.

"I can't hold on much longer," he screamed, as Kyle grabbed his hand.

"I've got you! Don't let go," Kyle said while he held onto him as if he were the one going into the cave.

"Nick, I can hold him, but I can't pull him out," Kyle shouted to me as Jake and I scrambled among the boulders to reach them. "The current is too strong."

"Jake, get upstream and get a rope to him." I yelled.

Once Lenny had the rope in his hand, Jake and I pulled him upstream while Kyle hauled him out onto the rocks. I'll never forget the look on Lenny's face when he made it to shore and realized he was okay. He'll not soon forget it either, I bet.

Once Lenny was safe, I headed upstream to see about his boat. I found it thrashing around in the first sieve like a coke can in a washing machine.

"Damn," I thought. "He swam through that? He's lucky to be alive."

I climbed out onto the rocks to attach a rope to the grab loop. Not being able to reach, I clipped into a log that was wedged in the sieve and lowered myself down to hook the boat. Once latched, I tossed the rope to Jake, and the two of us pulled the boat to shore. At this point, the only thing we were missing was Lenny's paddle—a small price to pay to have our team complete again.

While waiting on shore for us to gather everything, Lenny began to mentally

prepare for getting back on the water. Doing some stretching and moving around to warm up after his long swim and submersion in the water, he realized that his shoulder was hurt. He couldn't lift his right arm more than 30 degrees from his side. There was no pain, but he just could not summon the strength to lift his arm. At this point in the canyon, there was no way to hike out, so Lenny would have to brave the rest of the river with a near useless right arm. He walked anything that he could and ran the easier rapids. The rest of us scouted for him and let him know the best portage routes where walking was possible. It was hard work, and I knew it wasn't a fun trip for him anymore. Instead, it was all about getting to camp. But I never heard him complain once.

The next few miles of river brought us through the most spectacular part of the canyon. There are times when the river is only forty feet wide and the cliffs shoot directly out of the water, 1500 feet straight up. It is here that you begin to realize how small and unimportant we are compared to the river. Long after humans are gone, the Gunnison will cut through the dams we have created and continue to carve deeper and deeper into the bedrock of the Black Canyon. The effects of man will be a mere layer in the canyon walls.

In the midst of this part of the canyon, we arrived at the 15-foot waterfall that signals the beginning of the "Hell Portage." After boofing the perfect spout waterfall, we pulled over to river right at the top of the portage. Cave Camp was a mere mile of bushwacking and boulder hopping away. Since we were going to spend a layover day at camp, we decided to leave our boats at the top and return the next day to run laps on the waterfall. We grabbed our camping gear, food, and fishing rods and began the long poison ivy laden trek to camp. The words "poison ivy" bear a whole new meaning in the Black Canyon. I will leave it at this: It is impossible to understand the intensity of the evil plants until you have experienced it.

We were both overjoyed and relieved to make it to Cave Camp. I immediately jumped in the cold water and floated on

my back for about five minutes to cool down. We washed the poison ivy oils off our gear and then began to collect firewood. It wasn't long before we had finished some gourmet backcountry food and crawled into the cave for a long night's sleep. Out of sheer exhaustion, we slept through a native varmint stealing half of our food, just a few feet away from our sleeping bags.

Our first morning activity involved hiking around the boulder fields above camp searching for remnants of our stolen food. We recovered a couple of bagels, a salami, and a bag of beef jerky. We hoped to catch a fish or two so we wouldn't have to spend the next two days hungry.

Once we gave up on finding any more of our food, we were able to relax a bit. We were finally able to really look around and realize where we were. This is the deepest part of the Black Canyon. The Painted Wall, which at over 1800 feet is the tallest cliff in the canyon, lies directly downstream. The eddies and pools are thriving with trout that will jump at anything but our lures. You also begin to realize how remote this spot is. There was a lookout for tourists directly above us, but it felt like we were a hundred miles away from civilization. It's another world down there. The only sound was that of the river echoing off the walls. Accessing Cave Camp is impossible by anyone but paddlers and climbers. No one was there but us. It was our canyon for the day; we could do whatever we wanted.

We spent the first half of the day fishing and swimming in the emerald green pools. Fish were jumping everywhere, but we couldn't seem to catch one. We had a fly rod and a trout rod with a spinner lure. Lenny showed me how to cast the fly rod, and I spent a few hours dialing in the technique. Suddenly I heard Jake and Kyle hooting and hollering downstream. A fish? No way. Lenny and I ran down to where they were and saw Jake holding a 20-inch brown trout that he had caught with the spinner.

continued on page 51



Kyle McCutchen scouting Day Wrecker

photo by Nick Wigston

A full-page photograph of a person sitting on a large, flat rock ledge. The person is silhouetted against the bright, sunlit rock face. Below the ledge, a river flows through a deep, rocky canyon. The rock formations are layered and show signs of weathering. The overall scene is one of solitude and natural beauty.

Summer Paddling

How to Overnight

By Eric Nies

Enjoying the solitude of Atom Bomb Falls Camp on the Bald Rock section of the Middle Feather (CA).

Photo by Eric Nies

Camping out of my kayak? The idea seemed insane 20 years ago, when I found myself frantically stuffing food, a sleeping bag, and as much pile as I could find into the back of my Aeroquatic. We were at the put-in of the Middle Feather, a classic three-day run in northern California, and the put-in snowstorm didn't ease my mind.

Three days later, after a fabulous trip, I was hooked. Since then I've been back to the Feather a dozen times or so, and I've done self-support overnight runs all over the world, from the Sierras, to the Futalufu, to Costa Rica and Ecuador, to a two-person two-kayak trip on the Grand Canyon. Camping out of my kayak remains my favorite way to see a river.

The pleasures are deep and visceral. Wake up with the sunrise, pull on a hat and waddle over to the fire, make coffee, maybe catch a trout for breakfast. When the sun is high and your gear is dry, take ten minutes to pack up camp, then have a day of nothing but pure wilderness boating—no shuttle to set, no looking for cell service (there isn't any), no dirty looks when your poppyro stinks up the Laundromat (none of those either). Paddle into twilight, then pull over at a perfect beach, stuff your face with pesto and dried mango, and watch the fire die as you fall asleep under the stars.

The amazing thing about kayak camping is how cheap and easy it is to do. For the price of a dry-top, you can outfit yourself with great gear that will see you through years of trips. You can provision your trip in an hour at most any supermarket. And while your shuttle may be long and complicated, it can still work out cheaper than a weekend of day-trips. Think of a regular weekend of boating: drive two cars to the mountains, set shuttle each day, drive to town for supper, etc, etc. It adds up fast. For an overnight, your meals are cheap, there's no place to spend your money, and if you're hiring a driver for that fifty-mile shuttle, you might only need to bring one car.

The overnighter can be a nice option even on your regular day runs. Picture yourself driving out of Atlanta in Friday rush-hour traffic. The weather report is clear, and you know that people are boating Saturday, so you and your buds just drive straight to your Chattooga put-in. With two hours of daylight left, you get on the water. Sunset finds you cooking kabobs and sipping Foster's at what is usually your favorite lunch stop. The next day, at noon, you float into the take-out and one of you hitches a ride from the usual suspects, who are just getting to the river and setting shuttle. Life is good.

Light is Right

On overnighters where rafts are involved, I've seen folks hit camp and pull out lawn furniture, kegs of beer, even a full set of golf clubs (which was pretty cool). Camping out of a hard boat requires a more Spartan mindset. My philosophy is to have a comfy but lean camping setup, with just enough gear to survive unexpected bad weather, and enough food to feel happy at mealtimes. Hey, you're doing this for fun, right?

The buzzword in backpacking these days is "ultralight," and the new popularity of multi-day adventure racing has also pushed manufacturers to make lighter camping gear with a minimalist flavor. This kind of gear does great on the river. You can easily find this kind of equipment

on-line by searching under "ultralight backpacking" or the like. For typical California conditions in May (warm days, near freezing at night, rain rare but possible) my camping setup consists of:

Closed cell foam pad: I used to be a Thermarest guy, until I watched a buddy pull out his cheaper and lighter non-inflating closed-cell pad (he stored it behind a drybag, but otherwise loose in the back of his boat), and toss it down on the thorns and sharp rocks we were all carefully grooming out of our sleeping spots. Since then I've ditched my inflatable pad for closed-cell, and I've never looked back. It's a pad, a camp chair, and a groundcloth all in one, and it never leaks. You can custom trim the length and width with just a pair of scissors, too. Try that with an inflatable pad.

I really like the Thermarest Z-Lite pad, which folds accordion-style and has a great comfort-to-weight ratio. Poke a hole in it and tie in a rubber band or a thin piece of bungee, and you have an easy way to secure it in pack-up mode.

Ultralight sleeping bag: For a long time, down bags were the only way to go here. Fiberfill was just too bulky. Down bags do require meticulous camping and packing habits, but do work very well if you keep them dry. I have a 2-pound down bag with a Gore-tex shell and 800-fill down that has done me right for decades. In the past few years, though, ultralight and ultracompact fiberfill bags have come into their own. Now they are only slightly heavier and bulkier than the equivalent down bag. And since they insulate better than down when wet, they might inspire you to leave your tarp behind if the weather forecast is good. Down or fiberfill, what you probably want for usual California conditions is a high-tech 2-lb (total weight, not fill weight) bag rated to 32 F or so, with a Gore-tex shell if you can afford it.

Ultralight compression stuffsack: I thought this was a gimmick until I tried one, and now I'm sold. It really makes your stuff smaller and easier to pack. Line it with a lightweight garbage bag, and it acts

Summer Paddling

like a second drybag, keeping your stuff dry even if your drybag leaks a bit.

To get a watertight seal, line the stuff sack with a tall garbage bag. Stuff in your sleeping bag and clothes, while taking care not to rip the garbage bag with a zipper, etc. Snug up the drawcord, but leave the end of the garbage bag hanging out a few inches. Stand the stuff sack with the mouth up, and push down with both hands to squeeze out as much air as you can. Then twist the top of the garbage bag and snug up the compression straps. You're all set.

I use the small size "Air Compressor" stuff sack by Granite Gear (weight 90 grams, cost under \$20; they also make a seam-sealed version). It has an 8-inch diameter, and drops nicely inside a 9-inch round-bottom dry bag.

Tarp-type shelter: One-pound tarps can sleep three or four people in a pinch. If you know the weather will be bad, then you might want a tarp for every two people, and a ground sheet as well. Riverside camping almost always affords enough rocks, sticks and trees to rig up a tarp, so I generally leave the stakes and poles behind.

Cooking gear: My usual cooking set-up is dirt-simple, namely, a 1-quart backpacking pot for the fire, a big plastic cup, two lighters, and a spoon. If I'm cooking kabobs, I'll stick a metal kabob skewer into my wall. If I'm fishing, I'll bring aluminum foil. The last thing is a pump or bottle-type filter for drinking water. That's all you need.

Cooking on fires makes a lot of sense on the river. Driftwood can be plentiful, and you can usually put your fire either in an established fire ring, or on sand below the high-water mark. Whenever possible, try to put your fire within spitting distance of the water. This makes dousing and cleaning up your fire an easy chore when you strike camp in the morning.

One question you never want to have to ask is: "Didn't you bring the lighter?" Just

make a habit to bring a couple yourself, maybe one in your first-aid kit and one or two in your food stash. Lighters break, they get lost, or they just stop working for no apparent reason. If everyone has a couple, this won't be a problem.

Occasionally you might want a stove, to minimize impact in fragile areas, to be ready for harsh conditions, or to comply with no-fire regulations. Butane canister stoves are light, clean and hassle-free, but fuel is a bit pricey. White-gas stoves really put out the heat, but are generally a bit heavier and dirtier. When I've used these, I've carried them in a separate drybag, to keep my other gear uncontaminated by fumes, soot, and unexpected fuel leaks. Alcohol stoves have become the new favorite toy among backpacking minimalists. These are light, cheap, and—with no moving parts—100% reliable. Various commercial makes are out there, or you can build a surprisingly workable stove from a Pepsi can. (See the Wikipedia article: "Beverage-can stove" for details on this project).

Camp duds: Again I go pretty lean here: medium-weight long-sleeve tops and bottoms, socks, a beanie, cheap flip-flops for camp, maybe a lightweight baseball cap, and some super-light shorts. If I'm wearing river sandals instead of booties in my boat, I'll leave out the flip-flops. Total weight: about 2 lbs. And I've got my sleeping bag for a camp jacket/blanket.

If I'm worried about some grim weather, I'll bump this up a bit, with a rain jacket, superlight rain pants (an underrated item), a down vest or an extra piece of polypro, etc. More importantly, I'll also beef up the rest of my gear. I'll definitely bring a tarp, and maybe think about a stove. I'll also increase what I wear on the river (in the Sierras, this often means switching from a drytop to a driesuit). This way, when I pull into a cold, rainy camp, I can stay in my river duds while I set up shelter, gather firewood, and get supper going. Once that's all done, I can change into dry clothes, climb into my sleeping bag, stuff my face, and call it a night. If you know you'll be relying on your driesuit

to keep you warm, make sure it's in great shape, with solid gaskets and no pinholes. Whatever you bring, the point is to have just enough to survive the worst that might come your way. This usually means you will have plenty of gear to stay comfy under normal conditions. If the weather turns evil, staying warm becomes a matter of campcraft as well as clothing. The more savvy you are with this stuff, the less gear you need to bring. If you are a camping klutz, bring an extra layer of pile.

Dry bags: I usually go with the simple round-bottom roll-top style, one on each side of the stern center wall. A 20-liter bag (9 inch diameter, for a round-bottom bag) is about right. You can find tapered bags, but you want the weight of your load close to the seat, and not stuffed down in the end of your stern, so the taper is less useful than you might think.

One of my favorite dry bags was the nylon "Black Canyon" from Cascade, with no PVC's and a slippery outer surface that made quick work of sliding the bag into the boat. Sadly these are no longer made, but you can still find them at discount houses from time to time.

Total weight for all of the above items can easily be kept under 10 lbs. Add a small first aid and repair kit, duct tape, a headlamp, a toothbrush with a bit of floss wrapped around the handle, and maybe some DEET and a small Leatherman, and you are all set.

Where's the Beef?

Now we get to the fun stuff, namely the food. On a hard-core extended expedition you might need to be a bit lean, but on a two- or three-day jaunt you should expect to eat like royalty. My usual plan is to eat mostly fresh food early on, and transition towards dried food as the trip progresses. Along with planned meals, I'll throw in a bunch of random killer snacks (dried salmon, wasabi peas, homemade brownies, etc), along with a fistful of energy bars and some dry soup mix for emergency backup chow.

Breakfast: Oatmeal, toasted bagels and

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cream cheese, fresh fruit, dates, figs, etc. An easy way to make coffee is to buy the premade coffee pouches for espresso machines, and use these like tea bags. The real magic of breakfast comes from NIDO, a full-fat dried milk you can find in Mexican groceries (every town in California seems to have one), and sometimes in the “ethnic” food section of big supermarkets. This stuff is the bomb—it actually tastes like milk, and it gives your oatmeal and coffee that satisfying fattiness that camp foods so often lack.

Lunch: random snacks, fresh/dried fruit (I always stick a couple of oranges loose in my boat at the put-in), bagels/pitas/tortillas, PB & J (put these in ziplocks, or

buy the jelly in a squeeze bottle), hummus & avocado, salami and cheddar cheese, etc. On day one you can bring a fat deli sandwich from town.

Dinner: go all-fresh on day 1, unless you know you can’t afford the weight. A classic supper is:

Caesar salad—buy a bag or two of prewashed salad with included fixin’s, and stick them loose in back of your boat behind a drybag.

Pre-baked potato—cook at home (or buy at Wendy’s) pre-load with butter etc, then wrap in foil and pack in your boat. Toss into the campfire to reheat.

Kabobs—chop up and marinate goodies at home and put into ziplocks. Everybody brings their own skewer (stick it in your center wall to keep it secure and out of

the way).

Wine—select to match kabobs. Bring it in a wide-mouth soda or Gatorade bottle (you drank that at the put-in). This is also your water bottle for the rest of the trip. Even if you have a filtering water bottle, it’s nice to have this for making lemonade, etc. It weighs nothing and it’s free.

Dessert—go nuts. I like a little hot cocoa and Bailey’s, maybe with a mint Milano. Hey, it’s vacation.

Here are some supper ideas for later on:

Appetizers: sardines, cheese and crackers, dried salmon, chicken noodle soup. Even on a hot day, a little pre-meal soup usually hits the spot. It must be the salt.

Pesto tortellini or gnocchi: dried is lighter, but fresh is tastier. Buy the pesto pre-made

Camp on the Devil’s Canyon section of the Middle Feather (CA).

Photo by Eric Nies



in a plastic tub.

Burritos: tortillas, freeze-dried black beans, cheese, salsa (in a can, a tub, or a ziplock), avocado, fresh cilantro and lime.

Canned chicken and ramen: pimp up this staple with some fresh scallions, cilantro, and chili-sesame oil.

Mac & cheese: NIDO and some extra real cheese can turn this into something pretty yummy.

Life is a Beach

Here are some random thoughts on making camp life easy and hassle-free.

Keep track of your gear. When you hit camp, don't just hang up your gear to dry. Make sure that every little thing is tied down and absolutely windproof. I usually secure my paddle by clipping it to something with my helmet strap. Late afternoon is prime time for winds to shift and gust, and if you lose a skirt, paddle or helmet you are pretty much screwed. Just say no to lost gear.

Check your drybags when you hit camp. If your drybag leaked and your sleeping bag is soaked, the time to find this out is not just before you go to bed. Check all your stuff when you hit the beach, so you'll have plenty of time to dry out anything that needs it.

Sleep below your boat. I learned this one in Costa Rica, where evening rains can bump the river level 10 feet in a matter of hours. On one Rio General trip we had 14 kayaks at bedtime, and 8 at breakfast. Oops. This kind of action is rare on the Chattooga or Middle Feather, but I still pull my boat (and hang my gear) above my sleeping spot just the same. I sleep better.

On Grand Canyon trips, the winds, pulsing river levels, and slippery wide-open terrain all conspire to abduct boats in the night. It's good practice here to secure a throw rope to a boulder, raft, etc, and lay it out high on the beach for the hardboaters. As boaters come into camp,

they just drag their boats up to the rope and clip a grabloop into the line with a carabiner.

Cook by the water. This is good on three fronts. Environmentally, it's good to keep your mess, especially your fire, below the high-water line. Next, it's good form to keep your fire well-removed from the scrub and trees up the river bank. Lastly, it's nice to have water in your kitchen.

Keep your boat dry. If you take care to keep your boat extra dry, you'll do yourself two favors. First, you'll keep your boat as light as possible. A pound or two of water may not be a big deal when your boat is light, but when you're loaded it's more of a hassle. Second you'll keep your gear drier. All dry bags leak eventually, so don't make your drybag sit all day in a puddle in the back of your boat. A good trick is to lay each half of your spare paddle flat against the hull in the back of the boat. These become platforms that your drybags rest on.

Bring a break-apart. You do have a break-apart paddle, don't you? The good news is that most bigger creek boats can accommodate a regular 2-part break-apart paddle in the stern. I drill a little hole through a solid spot on the blade, and tie each half to the seat with a short piece of string.

Tune up your gear. A leaky skirt or a ripped drytop gasket is a pain when you're a few hours from the take-out. When you're days away, this pain escalates exponentially. So get your gear in good shape before the big trip to minimize these hassles.

Before you head out for an overnigher, make sure that your boat is good to go, too. Snug all the screws, and check your outfitting, backband and footbraces for any worn or broken pieces.

Be ready to repair. My minimum repair kit is duct tape, needle and thread, and a tool to work all the screws on my boat. Multi-tools like the Leatherman can work for this, but they tend to be a bit heavy, and

continued on page 53

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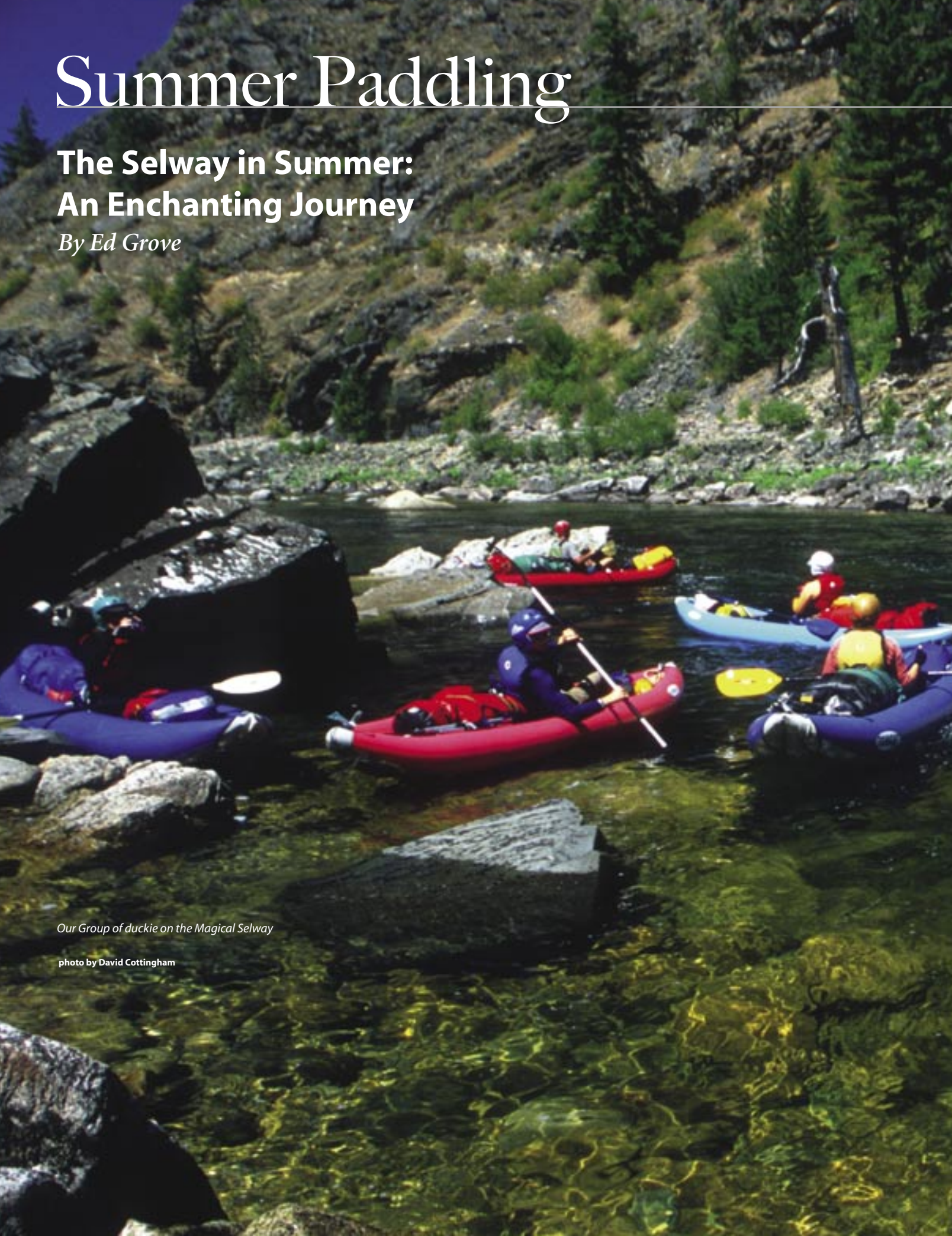
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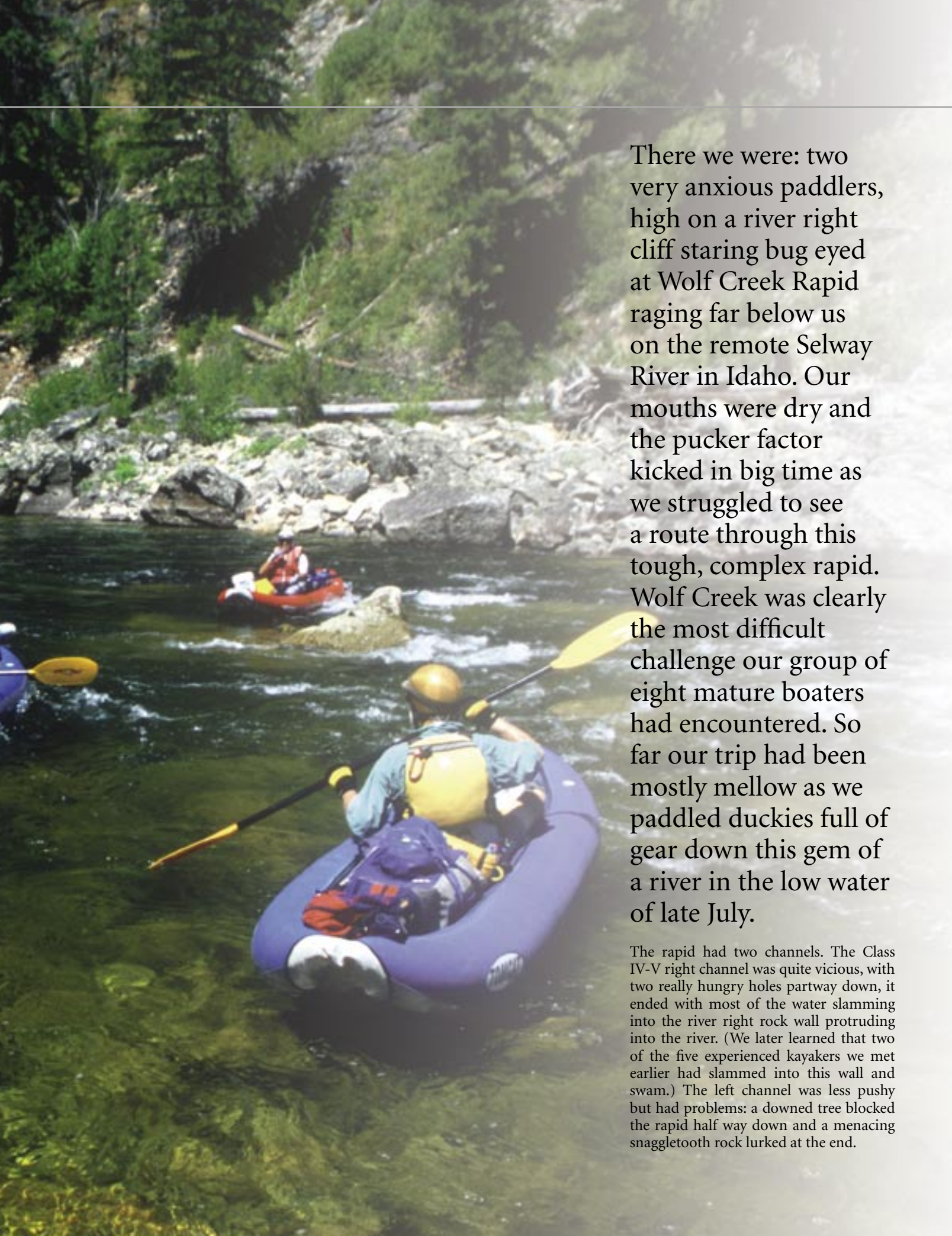
The Selway in Summer: An Enchanting Journey

By Ed Grove



Our Group of duckie on the Magical Selway

photo by David Cottingham



There we were: two very anxious paddlers, high on a river right cliff staring bug eyed at Wolf Creek Rapid raging far below us on the remote Selway River in Idaho. Our mouths were dry and the pucker factor kicked in big time as we struggled to see a route through this tough, complex rapid. Wolf Creek was clearly the most difficult challenge our group of eight mature boaters had encountered. So far our trip had been mostly mellow as we paddled duckies full of gear down this gem of a river in the low water of late July.

The rapid had two channels. The Class IV-V right channel was quite vicious, with two really hungry holes partway down, it ended with most of the water slamming into the river right rock wall protruding into the river. (We later learned that two of the five experienced kayakers we met earlier had slammed into this wall and swam.) The left channel was less pushy but had problems: a downed tree blocked the rapid half way down and a menacing snaggletooth rock lurked at the end.

Summer Paddling

At least there were no rattlesnakes. We were relieved because we had heard that an earlier group had paddled Wolf Creek without scouting for fear of them.

The Selway River begins in remote north central Idaho and joins the Lochsa River in Lowell where both rivers form the Middle Fork of the Clearwater. Paddling the Selway is truly a unique wilderness experience because the Selway is the only river in the United States that is both a Wild and Scenic River and a river in the Wilderness Preservation System.

Especially captivating is the special 47-mile stretch not accessible by road. The put-in is at aptly named Paradise (50 road

miles west of Darby, Montana), and the take-out is at Race Creek (20 road miles east of Lowell, Idaho). Although there are hiking paths by the river and four airstrips along the way, the best way to see this section is to paddle it.

An indispensable guide to the rapids, campsites, and points of interest on this remote section of whitewater is the *The Wild and Scenic Selway River* brochure published by the US Forest Service. Those contemplating a trip can get it for \$10 at the West Fork District Ranger Station (406-821-3269) in Darby on the way to the remote put-in. The brochure rates the Selway rapids at 4 feet on the Paradise gage and accurately shows where the 20 Class III and 6 Class IV colorfully named rapids are on its 6 USGS map panels. However, at 4 feet, the river is quite pushy and all boaters should have advanced skills. These

panels also show the airstrips, ranches, the Moose Creek Ranger Station and hiking trails next to the river. The last page lists 35 campsites, their size, and location. These are wondrous places in the Selway's small heavily forested canyon with classy sandbars framed by immense old growth cedars, hemlocks, firs and pines.

Unfortunately, getting a private permit to run this part of the Selway is tough. You can only get it by entering and winning a lottery run by the West Fork District Ranger Station. Applications must be made between December 1 and January 31. Lottery winners are announced in February, and winners must claim their launch date by March 15.

The lottery only allows one group to launch per day for the 78-day permit season from May 15 to July 31. The size for

Our last campsite

photo by Ginny Deseau



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commercial and private groups is limited to 16 people (including guides). However, because there are 16 fixed commercial launch days (mostly from mid June to mid July), private paddlers have just 62 days in which to win a launch. In the 2007 lottery season, only 545 private boaters and 178 commercial boaters experienced this incredible river. However, there are no restrictions on launches before May 15 (when the river is often high and cold from snow melt and when the road to the put-in across 6,587 foot Nez Pierce pass may be blocked by snow) or after July 31 (when the river may be too low to navigate).

Snowmelt can make the river quite chilly in spring—clearly the province of very experienced and adept paddlers. At 6 feet on the Paradise gage, the Selway is a pushy continuous Class IV and Ladle, the most difficult rapid, becomes a big water Class V flush. This is when most raft trips are cancelled. At 8 feet, numerous other stretches should also be considered Class V because of the Selway's speed and power. Kayaker Doug Ammons of Missoula, who knows the Selway well, reports that at 8 feet paddlers need to be on the lookout for errant western cedar trees (looking like submarines needing a shave) barreling down the river and that eddies can be jammed with these dangerous errant missiles as the water level drops. A swim at that level could be a flush of a mile or more, and one's boat could easily be lost for good.

However, in late July this busy river becomes a much less rambunctious and is mostly a Class III journey. The rapids are technical boulder gardens and wondrous huge rocky mazes. At this time the Selway is too low for big rafts but ideal for duckies, which can carry sufficient gear and food for a memorable mostly mellow six-day wilderness experience. This is the journey taken by our group of eight mature paddlers (five guys and three gals).

Indeed, several of us Blue Ridge Voyagers from Northern Virginia had unsuccessfully entered the Selway lottery for several consecutive years. However, lightning struck in 2007 when our own Rick Koller

got a permit to put in on July 22. A group was soon assembled beginning with Kim Buttleman and Jenny Thomas (who both paddled the Selway in August of 2006). Their knowledge was indispensable for a safe trip. Joining this trio were David (Cotton) Cottingham, Susan Claus, Ginny DeSeau, Lou Campagna and myself.

Logistics were a hassle but we soon had our plans sorted out. Trailhead Outfitters (406-543-6966) in Missoula had a full range of inflatable kayaks, paddles, and other gear for rent. Shuttle reservations to move our vehicles to the take-out were made with Karen Kidd of Selway River Shuttles (406-821-3560) in nearby Darby, MT.

On Friday, July 20, we all met in Missoula. Saturday morning we shopped for provisions at the Farmers Market in Missoula and then picked up our inflatable boats and paddles from the great folks at Trailhead Outfitters. Our craft were tandem duckies (Tomcats and Strikers), which we paddled solo with our gear tied in behind us. Paddling them was quite a new adventure for those of us who were canoeists.

We headed for the Paradise put-in Saturday afternoon with our van bulging at the seams. On the way we stopped at Nez Perce Pass (with its huge circular emergency helipad) to look wistfully at the rows of distant mountain ranges shrouded by forest fire smoke. However, the brilliant red and yellow flash of a western tanager in a nearby evergreen was a good omen. Descending to the put-in on Forest Service Road 6223, we were further heartened and watched with fascination as the infant Selway slowly grew in volume while it tumbled down the mountain. We reached Paradise and spent a delightful evening savoring this special place.

Sunday morning we turned our two vehicles over to Karen who moved them 245 miles by road to our takeout 47 miles downstream at Rainy Creek. We then launched on a glorious day. The gage was a mellow 0.7 feet (about 80 cfs), which ensured we would have good flow for



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our entire trip. The days were warm, the nights were cool, the river was a delightful temperature, and the smoke from nearby forest fires soon dissipated.

As we began our journey, Jenny (our group geologist) observed that the rocks forming the Selway's unique cobble bars and river bed had come from fiery igneous origins—primarily grey granite and rhyolite (a rock that cools and hardens almost quickly enough to become the volcanic glass of obsidian).

However, the many unnamed modest rapids made the Selway a busy trip. Indeed, on this first day our new duckie paddlers often pinballed off rocks as they careened down the river. We soon reached the first of many colorfully named Class III rapids as Slalom Slide and Galloping Gertie ended our day. We camped on in a river left field after a warm-up of four miles.

Three Class IIIs (Washer Woman, Cougar Bluff and Holy Smoke) challenged us Monday morning. We then took a pleasant break at the bridge by Running Creek Ranch and then passed North Star Ranch. Both ranches had airstrips. Below was Ping Pong Alley. We each took at least 15 minutes to bump and grind down this quarter-mile sparsely watered Class II cobble bar. After lunch, we successfully negotiated the zesty Class III Goat Creek and then camped at Little Goat Creek—a splendid place with a sandy beach graced by huge western red cedars and ponderosa pines at least a couple of hundred years old.

On Tuesday morning we were surprised by a bizarre sight soon after we launched. Biplanes suddenly popped in and out of the trees as they took off and landed on the hidden airstrip at the Shearer Guard Station. We then passed classy Selway Lodge, and the associated bridge and

airstrip. Below this was the Bear Creek Confluence and the rapid of same name, followed by bouncy Class II Rodeo Rapid. Several miles later we were treated to a pair of great Class III rapids honoring the classic children's book by Dr. Suess. Green Eggs came first and then Ham with its nice three-foot chute. We camped at aptly named Roots Campground—a sandy beach celebrating the network of exposed roots supporting huge ancient western red cedar trees.

Wednesday was the biggest day with a feast of rapids, but Kim's river knowledge ensured our safe passage. After passing the Moose Creek confluence, ranger station and airstrip, we warmed up on Class II Tony Point and Divide Creek. Then things

Rich Koller running a typical Selway rapid

photo by Lou Campagna



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got intense; we ran seven solid rapids (up to Class III-IV) in the next 2 miles as the river dropped 100 feet. Here our fully loaded duckies showed their incredible stability as nobody flipped.

First came Double Drop with its four-foot finale. Then we encountered complicated Wapots. Next came the infamous Ladle (a busy Class III slalom at this level that we entered on the extreme right). Little Niagra followed with its great five-foot final drop. In quick succession we then solved the four-foot riddle of Puzzle Creek, were fully alert in No Slouch, and ended with mellow Miranda Jane. Below these rapids, we had lunch at the charming river right grove of Cedar Lane. Our busy day ended as we ran Meeker and Osprey.

Tired but exhilarated, we camped on sandy Tango Bar. There were some memorable experiences that evening. At dusk, I was next to my tent and standing next to two huge trees—an ancient western red cedar and a ponderosa pine. Suddenly, a wonderful little bat started doing figure eights around their trunks. It passed within two feet of me on its rounds as I watched, transfixed. Later, a mule deer casually walked by on the woody side of our sand bar, and as we settled down for the night, we were treated to a chorus of snorting deer.

Early Thursday we stopped at Three Links Creek (named for a carving found in 1890 on a huge nearby spruce). The bridge and trail there allowed us to take a delightful short hike up the creek amidst huckleberry bushes in a small steep canyon. Here we saw some bear scat—as close as we would get to these large mammals during the entire trip.

Three miles below this creek and its mellow Class III rapid we encountered Wolf Creek—the eye-popping rapid described earlier. After our nervous scout on the cliffs above, we paddled to a rock island in the center of the river for a closer look. Here we saw how truly nasty the right side was. However, the left channel looked doable. After negotiating two cobble drops into pools, we encountered

the fallen tree trunk we had seen from above. It was jammed against an upstream rock, but we all squeezed under it safely. After beaching our boats on the rocks below, we saw the coup de grace of the left channel: the nasty snaggle-tooth rock at its end. However, after a careful look, we ran it unscathed, bouncing off its padded left side. Quite exciting!

Two miles below Wolf Creek was the last big drop—Tee Kem Falls. This short Class III+ appeared to be very difficult because the river dropped over a narrow entry chute and slammed into a huge padded boulder 15 yards below. However, the chute was actually quite friendly because its right side was a twisty slot of water which pushed us right of the big rock just below. After running Class III Cupboard Creek, we camped on a great river left sandbar.

We had some great bird sightings on our trip. Spotted sandpipers constantly zipped up and down the river while water ouzels bobbed their tails on nearby rocks. Quite memorable were several families of mother mergansers and their chicks, which scrambled by us single file, half swimming and half flying upstream to avoid our big inflatables. We also sighted bald eagles, ospreys and a great blue heron.

However, fishing was a disappointment. Although the river has several trout species, the fish we saw jumping were mainly tiny cutthroat trout. Our fishermen caught some of these small fry but only one as big as 12 inches. (Incidentally, everyone who fishes on this catch-and-release river must obtain a valid Idaho fishing license for the days they fish.)

For Friday we only had five miles to the takeout and mellow Renshaw rapids. However, we had quite a midway adventure. Rick spied a western diamondback rattlesnake enjoying the sun on a beach. We all pulled over to observe it from a respectable distance, but the snake soon reacted to our presence by retreating to a nearby shady bush.

After this adventure, we reached the Race




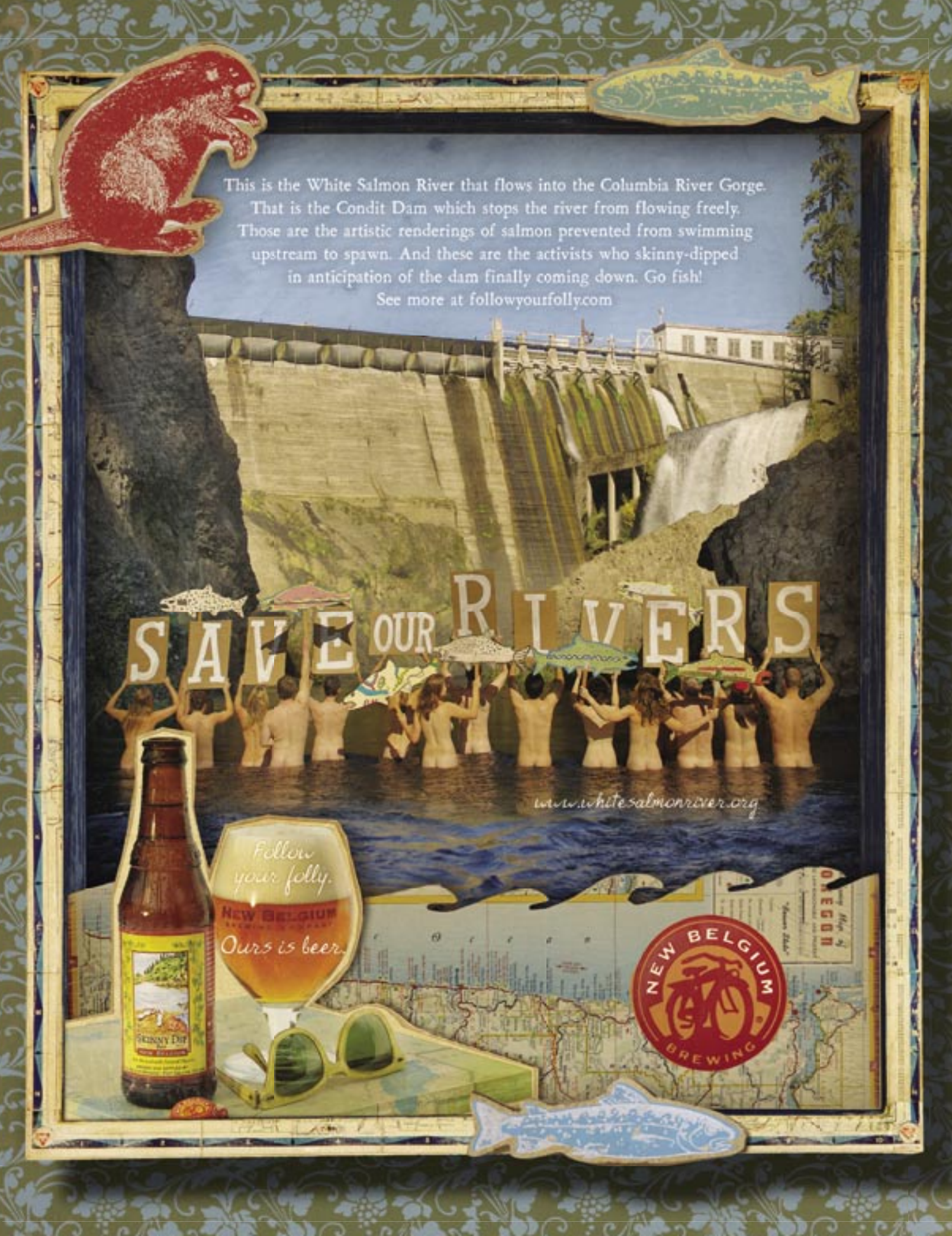
Our group on the river (from back left) David Cottingham, Kim Buttleman, Rick Koller, Lou Campagna, Susan Claus, Jenny Thomas, Ginny Deseau, Ed Grove

Creek take-out on a river now running over 500 cfs. After loading up, we headed downstream on US Forest Service Road 223 to nearby Selway Falls. Here we had a windy lunch on a rock perched high above this scary Class VI network of undercut rocks and boulder sieves. After lunch we then drove to Missoula, our trip nearly completed.

Early Saturday, after returning our gear to Trailhead, some of us were attracted by an exciting nearby river phenomenon. The Missoula Bridge crossing the Clark Fork River had a great surfing wave on river right framed by two large rock Vs. I later found out that this was Brennan's Wave, which was named for Brennan Guth (who perished on a Chilean river in 1991). It was constructed in his honor by his close paddling buddy and fellow Missoula native Doug Ammons.

About 100 yards away Pipestone Mountaineering had demo kayaks readily available for interested wave surfers. Three of us canoeists were sorely tempted to go to the dark side and try the wave with these nimble craft. However, our departure was imminent, so we all headed home in our separate ways.

Our Selway River experience was indeed a magical trip that exceeded all our expectations. 



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Summer Paddling

A Caribbean Adventure of the Third Kind

by Chris Port

I clung precariously to the smooth rock face with my left hand; my right shoulder, dislocated and full of pain hung limp at my side. I wasn't in the current, but I wasn't in an eddy either. My partner, recognizing the gravity of the situation, was struggling to attain back to my position, but the current was clearly pulling him into the next rapid. Once he committed, I would be on my own, the gorged-out walls and Class IV rapid below me making any effort to reach me a futile one. I heard him yell "You don't want to come this way" as he dropped over the horizon line.

"What do I do now?" This was the question I asked myself, a question that my tired

grip necessitated a quick answer to. Alone, with one good arm, and hovering dangerously above an unknown rapid on an unknown river, I made the only choice available to me

Our adventure began several days before with our arrival in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic. Jon and I were on a scouting mission, evaluating this tropical island's potential for NOC Adventure Travel Trips. We had been hunting for a Caribbean destination that was close to home and would offer the ideal combination of whitewater, adventure, beaches, and scenery. (Unbeknownst to us, we were about to find the first two in high abundance.) We had heard reports of beautiful warm rivers flowing off of Pico Duarte, the highest point in the Caribbean, with different sections of whitewater, ranging from Class II through Class IV, friendly people, and

incredible beaches. It was with high hopes that we loaded our rental car and drove off toward the mountainous center of the inland.

Our hopes faded slightly when word came from DHL that our boats had not arrived. With paddling postponed for a couple of days, we decided to scout potential beaches for use in our future programs. Driving our little Subaru Impreza in the Dominican Republic required an aggressive shift in attitude and the well-timed application of a few e-brake turns. After a harrowing Class V drive, we arrived at an incredibly beautiful beach with clear turquoise water. We snorkeled for a couple hours with the brightly colored residents

The author boofing on Rio Yaque del Norte

photo by Jon Clark





Henry paddling through a tropical gorge

photo by Jon Clark

of the local reef and then headed back to our head quarters in Jarabacoa, the Rancho Biauquate.

The following day we made contact with a local U.S. expatriate paddler who agreed to rent us some kayaks. Much to my surprise, a rat the size of a Chihuahua came scurrying out of the boat I had rented. Was this a portent of things to come? At least I did not have to paddle the Perception SPARK; I am certain that some one else would be writing this story if I had. With boats in hand and Henry, our local guide/ducky-master in tow, we loaded up and headed to the longest, largest volume river in the Caribbean, the Rio Yaque del Norte.


If you have never bombed down unknown Class IV rapids in a boat filled with rat feces, on an unknown river, guided by a duckier with cozones the size of grapefruits, then you are certainly missing out on a unique experience—of course, it probably wasn't the best way to explore an unfamiliar river. On the other hand, a duck does make a great probe, and most of the time we had ample warning after watching Henry's lines over the bigger ledges. In this manner we paddled some great sections of river, which included constricted Class IV gorges, Class III boulder gardens, and the occasional Class V drop. Two and a half hours into the run we

entered yet another gorge. I was setting up for a boof when I found myself off line and sliding towards an unseen rock. Locked in a low brace, I was able to save the boat from capsizing, but not my shoulder from coming unhinged. Since I was still upside right, I rode my momentum to the side of the canyon wall where I was able to grab the wall with my left arm.

Which brings us back to the initial question, "What do I do now?"

My partner was unable to assist me, my grip was tiring, and I was facing the prospect of floating through a large unknown rapid with only one working arm.

I did the only thing that I could. I let go of the canyon wall, thus committing myself to the rapid, reached over with my left arm and pulled traction on my right arm in hopes that I could re-locate it before I dropped over the horizon line. Thankfully, I felt it click in immediately and realized that I still had time to execute a jet ferry over to a river-left eddy.

In my paddling career I have witnessed many must-make moves, but this one certainly took its place at the top of that list. I was able to make the ferry, and Jon appeared shortly thereafter to aid me in scaling the 20-foot wall that I sat floating below. Upon reaching the top of the gorge I found a trail, which I followed, and was pleased to discover that it led to a bar. Despite my injury, the Yaque, with its great water quality, exiting rapids, and beautiful tropical scenery was a fantastic run. The next day Jon paddled a truly world class river, which shall remain unnamed for the moment, with our brave duckier Henry who had swam at least ten times by this point. This pristine wilderness river was everything a paddler dreams about. With smooth, white granite polished gorges, spectacular scenery, and high quality rapids, this river was an incredible find. Jon, who has paddled in six different countries, rated this river the third best he has ever paddled. Finding that diamond in the rough made the entire trip worthwhile. I know I will have to come back to the Dominican to paddle just as soon as I am able. 



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Summer Paddling



Gringos in Waterfall Wonderland

By Ilona Karow

This is a story about coming back into the sport of whitewater kayaking and a dream vacation in the stunning and pristine travertine rivers of the Huasteca Potosina, the northernmost rainforest of Eastern Mexico, in the State of San Luis Potosi.

In the summer of 2005 I was in a bad way. Profoundly depressed, my activities were severely limited by severe chronic plantar fasciitis that kept getting worse over the years. Runners know this ailment as heel splints, but it is actually an inflammation of the connective tissue that supports the bottom of your foot, and it feels like knives stabbing you in the heels. My weight had ballooned to 250 lbs from lack of activity,

depression, and a lifelong struggle with obesity. A concerned friend kindly suggested I try taking out his inflatable canoe.

“You won’t have to put any weight on your feet and at least you can get out in nature. Hey! It’s a sport you can do sitting on your (fat) butt!”

So I took him up on his offer, enlisted a friend to go with me, and paddled the Trinity River in Northern California. That was the beginning of turning my life around. After buying my own inflatable canoe, I was on the river every chance I could get and 2005 was a good year for water. The power company was still releasing water on the American River through November and I was still smiling, getting wet and losing weight.

But the releases were inconsistent now

The put-in for Rio Micros

photo by Ilona Karow

and the days were getting colder. I didn’t want to stop paddling and wait for spring run-off so I started surfing the Internet and there it was—a promising kayak vacation in sunny Mexico. I didn’t really find it by accident. In the back of my mind I remembered this guy coming to one of our kayaking club meetings in the early 1990s promoting his new company, Agua Azul, and describing the beautiful travertine rivers he promised to lead us down. That guy was Grant Amaral and there he was, still guiding commercial river trips in Mexico

So I placed the call ... could I bring my inflatable? Well yes ... but when I explained I used to kayak in a hardshell,

Grant strongly encouraged me to try getting back into it. I dragged out my old Dagger RPM Max. It was a squeeze but I could get in. Next I started bugging my friends and fellow paddlers but no one was interested in going to Mexico with me. I lamented this at Thanksgiving dinner and my stepbrother Stuart perked up: "I'll go with you, that sounds like fun!"

"But Stuart you don't kayak, you've only been in an inflatable"

Well that started a series of telephone negotiations. We would arrive early in Mexico, pay for private lessons before our trip started, take rolling classes in California, Agua Azul had inflatables we could use if necessary ... Stuart and I would get out on some rivers in California and practice Yeah, yeah, yeah, Stuart argued. He was a naturally talented athlete and learned quickly (where have you heard that before? I can spell k-a-y-a-k, therefore I can do it ... right????). I do have to give my brother some credit. When we took our rolling class in the heated pool he popped right up on his first try and succeeded in every attempt. I had never seen anybody roll up right out of the gate like that. I figured if he could do that in the river, that was half the battle. He was way

ahead of me. My roll was only 50%.

So at our next family gathering at Christmas I started badgering Stuart: was he willing to bring his video cam? He hadn't really thought about it.

"But it would be awesome to get some shots of us going over those 20-foot waterfalls"

"TWENTY-FOOT WATERFALLS? What 20-foot waterfalls?"

"Didn't you read all the stuff I printed up for you from the Internet? Well, did you read the stuff about the alligators??"

"ALLIGATORS? What alligators? You didn't say anything about alligators!"

"But Stuart, it was all there in the river descriptions and information that I printed up for you ... didn't you read any of that stuff??"

Of course by now the money was long since spent, the trip just around the corner and no, he didn't pay for trip insurance. Can you get a trip refund because you didn't bother to read the part about the alligators?

Well a few weeks later there we were on board a flight to Tampico, Mexico. Me scribbling diagrams on the back of the in flight magazine: how to catch an eddy, basic river hydraulics, what to do if you are stuck in a hole. Sketches right out of *Whitewater Tales of Terror* by William Nealy. I am sure by now Stuart was getting suspicious of his stepsister's motives for bringing him down to Mexico.

The next morning found us settling into our primitive cabanas nestled in a tropical jungle setting (somehow even I managed to miss the part about no electricity when reading the description) gazing into the incredible clear blue pools and lush green banks of the Micos River, complete with parrots screeching overhead and a hairy tarantula leisurely crawling along my windowsill. I decided not to mention the tarantula to Stuart.

We tried out several of the boats in the boat corral before deciding on the best fit and by 11:00 am Stuart was gamely running through all the drills assigned to him. Somehow we never did manage to get on a river and practice back in California but in no time, under Grant's excellent and patient instruction, Stuart was linking turns and strokes, dancing back and forth



Summer Paddling

across eddy lines.

After satiating our appetites on traditional Mexican fare served up by cooks from the local village, Grant decided to launch Stuart on the Rio Micos. So off they headed with another California couple, who was also taking lessons, and an indefatigable Mexican kayak guide named Polo.

Now you have to understand that Stuart's sole down river experience was in an inflatable kayak on a local California Class II river in a low water summer. Here he was at put-in on the Micos river looking at the first thing he was expected to do: nothing less than a 16-foot waterfall, a look-over-the-edge-and-straight-down-she-goes type.

"Nah, you're kidding me, right? You're just pulling my leg?"

"Yes, get in boat now," Polo cajoled. "We start here."

"Nah, this is a joke right? IT IS A JOKE!"

Slowly it dawned on Stuart that the scrappy little Mexican with the unflinching smile and "No worries, I show you, it easy, no worries," was for real. Concern spread across Stuart's blanching face as he looked at the other couple. They shrugged. Yep, this was real.

Put-in on the Rio Micos is a calm pool next to a power plant with a huge water fall feeding into it and a 16-foot waterfall leading out of the pool. Eventually all were convinced to follow Polo over the edge and into the next calm pool, which is exited by yet another waterfall. In fact the whole run is a series of waterfalls, slides and drops over travertine limestone ledges of heights up to 25 ft. When you look back upstream

you can't believe that you somehow came down all those waterfalls and that it was incredibly easy. There are almost no rapids and no hydraulics. The water is extremely clean and unpolluted, even by American standards, and a toasty 75 degrees thanks to underground springs. Take-out was our base camp and by the time we reached it we were hooked. As promised in the literature, the waterfalls of Rio Micos are extremely addictive. The Micos was like a "Disneyland" for kayakers.

Over the next six days we would run the Micos several times, as well as other rivers

Right: Rather than rapids the run on the Rio Micos is a series of waterfalls, slides and ledge drops. When you look back upstream you can't believe you somehow came down all those waterfalls and that it was incredibly easy.

photo by Ilona Karow



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Summer Paddling

in the area. Rio El Salto was similar to the Micos, but with a few more challenging drops including a Class IV and V that had cheat routes or could be portaged. La Luminosa, a 25-foot waterfall with a powerful but forgiving hydraulic, was everybody's favorite challenge. Intimidating to scout, La Luminosa was described by a friend as a Class III waterfall that requires Class V nerves to run. The hydraulic might recycle you a couple of times and you would hear the roar of the waterfall hammering the bottom of your boat; but it would quickly release you into a calm, warm pool. The take-out for this run is just above a huge 80+ ft waterfall known as El Meco that has been successfully run at least three times before.

The Rio Tampaon is a Class III run through a steep gorge with great play

holes and an incredible feature: a natural limestone bridge running over the Rio Tampaon. The locals call it "Puente de Dios" or Bridge of the Gods.

Stuart and I were not skilled enough to join the group on the famous Santa Maria River, an 18-mile Class IV/V run culminating at the base of an awesome 240-foot waterfall, Cascadas Tamul. Instead, we did a side trip to another attraction.

There are other sites to see in the area including the Edward James's house, the estate of an eccentric millionaire scion of British royalty, who was a patron of the surrealistic arts movement, and whose 11-acre property "Las Posas," is open to the public. One can wander along a maze of trails between bizarre and fantastical building structures with staircases that spiral into the sky and end in thin air. With larger-than-life surreal art sculptures set to a backdrop of dense rain forest and waterfalls, the whole effect is nothing less than mind blowing, and yet Las Posas is another little known jewel in this seldom visited part of Mexico.

We returned from our wonderland vacation with spirits soaring and hundreds of photos to cherish. I hope that by sharing this story you may be inspired to visit the area because the Rio Micos and the surrounding rivers are threatened by future hydroelectric projects and an ever lowering of the water table for agricultural uses, especially sugar cane, the area's main crop.

The region is remote and relatively undeveloped. Poverty is rampant and thus the area is vulnerable to development that threatens the local water resources. Yet it is this remoteness that offers the pristine scenery and greatest attraction to tourists like me. Every year the boating season gets shorter as more water is diverted from free-flowing rivers. When Grant Amaral started Agua Azul in 1993 he offered river trips through March. Now he must end his season in the first week of February.

Oh and about those alligators ... well,

though they do exist in the rivers, they are extremely rare because the locals typically kill them on sight. Lucky for us, we never encountered one. **AW**

Epilogue:

The author returned in January 2007 for another kayak vacation. She has since had gastric bypass surgery, lost a total of 102 lbs and is still actively kayaking.

Stuart is busy with his family and with remodeling his house and has never kayaked again but says it was the best vacation he has ever had.

Grant Amaral does not know how much longer he will be able to operate Agua Azul commercially in the area due to the continuing reduction in water resources.

Make It a Double

continued from page 20

memories to last through drought years; to prove performance in the face of adversity.

I ran several ultra marathons last year. They were incredibly painful and difficult, but with the suffering came a sense of accomplishment I had not previously known. Long distance running and cycling provide a feeling rarely attained in paddling. Paddling and hiking to exhaustion is the ultimate endurance test. So, for me, that's why the Linville double is an unparalleled experience. **AW**

*Random slot on Linville
photo by Adam Herzog*



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We Owned the Canyon

continued from page 26

"Sweet," I said. "Now we don't have to eat beef jerky and salami for dinner."

We fished a little while longer with no luck. By then the shade was starting to reach the portage. It was time to gear up and hike back to the boats to run laps on the waterfall. Once we reached our boats, we had to attain a little to make it upstream to the base of the falls. It took some rope work on river right to get our boats to the top. The seal launch in was interesting. It was a long rock slide with a kicker at the bottom. There was a strange swirly eddy line right in the landing. The whirlpool was actually flushing straight down under the rocks that formed the drop. A swimmer would be sucked down and most likely trapped under a car-sized boulder. This made things a little more exciting. We were now more nervous to put in than we were to run the falls.

It looked like we could land next to the whirlpool and paddle hard to get past it, but the slightest angle discrepancy could send you stern squirting right into it. We were scared. Kyle was ready to fire it up first. We helped him get in his boat and held his grab loop as he got into position. "One, two, three ... now." He slid towards the kicker and launched, landing right on the whirlpool. The circular flow of the hydraulic sling shot him straight past it and into the calm water above the falls.

"Phew. He made it."


Our heart rates slowed to a healthy level as we prepared for Kyle to run the drop. I'm sure he was pretty relieved that he didn't get sucked into the whirlpool. He spent some time above the drop catching his breath as I got the camera ready.

Jake gave me the "Here he comes" signal. Sick boof, as always. As he pulled into

the eddy where I was standing, he looked psyched. We each ran it two or three times before it was time to start the Hell Portage.

After trudging through poison ivy bushes and boulder hopping for the next 45 minutes, we finally made it back to camp. What a day! We still had enough daylight left to get in some more fishing. I figured I'd leave it to the experts, so Kyle and I went on a firewood hunt. When we returned, Jake had caught another large brown trout. We sat around the campfire and talked about how great the day had been. We didn't want it to end. We all wished we could spend another day at Cave Camp doing whatever we wanted.

The next day was filled with quality whitewater and more portaging. A six-mile Class II paddle out follows the last long portage and ends at the Chukar Trailhead. Here, we hiked our boats out one mile, uphill, to the truck.

The Black Canyon will never be the most popular run in Colorado due to the amount of hiking involved. Most people get to the end and never want to go back. Perhaps that is why I like it so much. It's always an adventure, no matter how many days it takes or who you go with. When you look past the negatives, you see an incomparable canyon packed with premium whitewater. I believe that the Black Canyon of the Gunnison truly is one of the best runs in the Rocky Mountains. 



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AW  **Teva** **Outside**

How To Overnight

continued from page 33


the screwdriver can be awkward to use on the seat screws. Check this on your boat—you may be better off with just a cheap Philips-head screwdriver. Some boaters bring a short camstrap to jury-rig a busted backband in a pinch. Another nice item is a 25-cent spare wingnut for your bulkhead screw, available at any hardware store. You might also want a spare drainplug as well, or you could be ready to improvise one by cutting a little chunk of minicell foam from your outfitting somewhere.

By the way, be ready for a broken boat. It happens. Duct tape works, but I've heard tell of some mysterious tarp and swimming-pool repair tapes. These tapes of legend are alleged to be heftier than duct tape with some serious sticking power. I have no experience here—if you do, please make a post on the AW safety forum. You'll see the thread.

Balance your boat. You want your boat to have a level trim, despite the load in the back. You can do this in two ways. First, keep your gear close behind your seat, with the heavy items (especially the food) forward in the bags. Second, you may want to move your seat forward an inch or two. Often, this also makes it easier to get gear in and out of the back.

Another nice trick here is to use a set of small, light float-bags in your stern, to fill up the very back. Load your boat, then blow these bags up. They will act to push your drybags forward (right against the backband, if you want it), and will generally snug up the load to keep things from shifting and wiggling while you paddle.

Some folks like to put part of the load in the bow. I usually avoid this—to my thinking, it increases the swing weight of the boat, making it harder to turn. I've always tried to keep the weight in one tidy lump behind my seat. If you do need to put something up front, go with something light, like a cookpot or that big bag of Sunchips.

Do a practice run. Loaded boats are just a little tippier and a little piggier than their empty counterparts. It's not a bad idea to do a practice run with a loaded boat on an easy day trip. It lets you get a feel for paddling loaded, and also serves to shake out the bugs in your packing setup. In my experience, most folks find that paddling a heavy boat is no big deal, and adjust to it quickly. 

Overnighting Tips for C1-ers

By Jack Ditty

In a C-1, having a lot of weight in the wrong place can ruin your day real quick. The trick is to pack the boat opposite of your double-bladed friends. Almost all of the gear should be up front, so that your center of gravity remains in the same plane as you, or just in front of you. It is very difficult to stay in control if the center of gravity is behind you. When stern-heavy, the boat will tend to spin out with the stern pointed downstream. Controlling your ferry angle becomes frustrating, and the backenders get old when you're in trying to keep it together on a hard run. A front-loaded boat is easier to steer and to control off a boof, and can plow through some stout holes that otherwise might take you for a ride. Most converted creek boats have enough volume up front to handle the extra weight.

I usually move my saddle back about 1/2 inch from its usual position, then pack the weight forward to compensate. (It's hard to believe 1/2 inch can make a difference here, but with most short C-1s, the front-to-back balance is critical.) I like to place the heaviest stuff (usually food if you're living right) in between my knees, topped off with the rope and rescue gear for easy access. Sleeping bag, tarp, and dry clothes go in the bow, and I usually put just a small bit of weight in the stern to balance it out more (usually a sleeping pad and half of a spare breakdown paddle, the t-grip variety of course). It helps to try this out before you commit to some deep wilderness canyon. Then you have a chance to rearrange things until you get your setup just right.



River Voices

Losing Frank

By Briggs Gilliam

I finally fixed him. After four years of breaking up periodic fights between my dog Frank and would-be challengers I had him neutered yesterday. Whether this will help remains to be seen though.

You see, Frank is a rather large and dominant minded red-nose pit bull with a little east Tennessee redneck thrown in for good measure—all of which means he has anger management issues. I rescued him at six months old from an unscrupulous breeder who, as the story goes, was going to shoot him because he had broken out of his pen and spread dog food all over the man's porch. Somehow I ended up with the puppy and the rest has been one misadventure after another.

Frank's first rafting trip started out as a six-day, 120-mile expedition down the French Broad River, the main basin for western North Carolina. The trip was uneventful and the river flat for the first three days. Frank settled nicely into the front of my oar rig and seemed to enjoy watching me do all the work. The weather was mild for January with no rain to speak of. On the third day we stopped to camp

just outside Asheville, NC at the low head dam in Weaverville.

We (my buddy Simon was with me in his cataraft) decided to portage the dam directly and camp below it so we could get an early start the next morning. Portaging required disassembling our rigs and then carrying the pieces, our gear, and finally the rafts up a steep bank to a set of train tracks and then down about 50 yards to our elected campsite. Needless to say we were soon consumed by this task, so much so that we all but forgot about the possibility of a train bearing down on us, which is exactly what was happening around the bend. This wouldn't have been a problem if only we could have heard it coming, but any and all sound from the train was drowned out by the deafening roar of the spillway.

Luckily Simon spotted the singular bright headlamp of the fast approaching beast as it rounded the corner. He yelled to me in time to get off the tracks, but where was Frank? I looked north and then south in a panic only to see him laid across the tracks napping about 20 yards away. He was utterly clueless. I yelled as I ran towards him. It was like a scene out of a Lassie movie, except I was saving the dog instead of the dog saving me. Frank finally jumped

up only to see me yelling and running at him like he had done something wrong. I could see confusion in his eyes as I lunged towards him. He deftly dodged my clumsy effort to grab him and that's the last I saw of him before the train was upon us. It was all I could do to roll off the tracks and pin myself against the bank until the train had passed.

We searched that whole evening for Frank but turned up nothing, not even a blood spatter. I didn't know if he had been hit and carried off by the train or was just traumatized and hiding in the woods above the tracks. We made camp and the rain finally came—a cold depressing rain that matched my mood. We searched until noon the next day but still no sign of Frank. What else could we do but shove off and finish our trip? We still had three days of rapids ahead of us with the Class IV gorge section looming on the horizon. I was positive I had seen the last of Frank but I couldn't let that distract me. The river was running high, the weather was turning windy and colder and I had to focus on the rapids. A flip in these conditions carried serious consequences.

Our run through the gorge and on in to Hot Springs, NC proved bittersweet. I had guided this section several times previously in a paddle raft, but this would be my first time facing major whitewater in an oar rig. From the start I realized the high water had changed the rapids along with their usual lines. Normally exposed rocks were now munchy holes; boat-pounding waves erupted everywhere. The great thing about whitewater though is that once you're in the rapids you don't have room in your mind for fear. Navigation becomes your sole mission.

My confidence swelled with each successful move and by the time we reached Kayaker's Ledge I felt elated. We ran the vertical drop with no problem and set our sights on Frank Bells, the last Class IV between us and the town of Hot Springs. Frank Bells is a long continuous stretch of whitewater

continued on page 61





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River Voices

Crusade Speedo, the “Belgararian” Way

By Sebastiaan Luyssaert

“We really like our employees to work abroad.” This was the sentence that triggered a paper avalanche for my work visa at Oregon State University for one year. Management gurus have developed an extensive vocabulary justifying these types of work-abroad experiences, but universities are a bit like fast food places: if you’ve seen one, you’ve seen them all. Although I know the buzzwords, I couldn’t imagine how my employer would benefit from having me live in Oregon—unless, there is some often-overlooked link between Terrestrial Ecosystem Science and paddling.

Before moving, I’d read about the Little White Salmon and the Rogue rivers, so it seemed like a good idea to take my speedo, helmet, pfd, and spray skirt with me to Oregon. Maybe I’d have an opportunity to paddle one of them or, who knows, maybe even both! Upon my arrival, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that there are almost as many rivers in Oregon as there are breweries in Belgium. In my internal list of paddling goals for my year on the U.S., I changed “two” to “as many as possible.”

Today, my visa is expired. I’m back in Waffleton, the fourth biggest city in Belgium, the country where, according to my U.S. paddling buddies, the “Belgararians” live. But my time living in Oregon was not wasted.

Paddling as much as possible required that I find people to paddle with. I joined the local paddling club and waited for the first mass e-mail. I got a place on a club trip to the Metolius River. The main attractions on the Metolius are the abundant bald eagles and the very long shuttle. Waiting for the shuttle gave me some time to get to know my new paddling buddies. They told me many stories, and by the time the


shuttle car arrived, I had heard anecdotes involving logjams, undercuts, window-shading, pins, broaches, Z-drags, and any possible permutation of the above things to avoid. I started to become nervous. My fear was unjustified, but it taught me the first universal law of kayaking: never rely on information from locals; they are the first to have carnage.

We exchanged phone numbers, and soon I was on the river almost every weekend. Life became quite simple: paddle on the weekends and work in between. An early-spring two-day self-support trip on the Illinois (OR) was among my all-time favorites. A wild and scenic section of this river guaranteed the absence of houses, roads, and power lines, and was spiced with diverse scenery, spring flora and fauna, and interesting rapids. Another favorite was the North Fork of the Payette (ID). Despite being sandwiched in between a major highway and a railroad, the NF is one of those rare rivers where it just doesn’t matter. Those who’ve been there know what I’m talking about, even if my English doesn’t make any sense.

Paddling comes with fear, and the Idaho trip also became one of my most fearful events ever. I’m European, so I wear a speedo. I feel confident enough to show the world my hairy legs and tightly wrapped bottom. Although rumor has it that speedos are no longer considered indecent exposure at airports in Idaho, waiting for the shuttle at the side of a backcountry road in Idaho dressed in just my speedo made me feel rather uncomfortable. The locals seemed to see something other than a guy in a fast-drying piece of swimwear. Although, I was prepared to die to promote this piece of versatile clothing, I was happy I didn’t have to.

The trip to the Smith River (CA) brought me to one of the Redwood groves. I’m a guy, so I don’t talk about emotions, but that doesn’t mean I don’t have them. It is hard to describe the feeling of insignificance and mortality. How else

can you celebrate these magnificent life forms than by becoming part of it? I searched for a healthy-looking Redwood and peed at its base. I hope my urine is now photosynthesizing.

It is easy to live and work in another country, but it is hard to feel at home. Especially when that nation serves round Belgium waffles (FYI: Belgian waffles in Belgium are rectangular, the batter is yeast-based, and they are served plain or with sugar). Anyway, I was privileged to meet a great group of paddlers who shared their best rivers with me, who made time-consuming detours to get me on the rivers and back home (I had no car), who taught me a whole new vocabulary, but, most importantly, who just treated me like one of them, despite the speedo. 



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Above: Typical Belgian behavior after 5 days in Austria without waffles, beer or chocolate

Right: Belgian Dress code on display during an international canoe polo tournament in downtown Waffleton



photos by Sebastiaan Luyssaert

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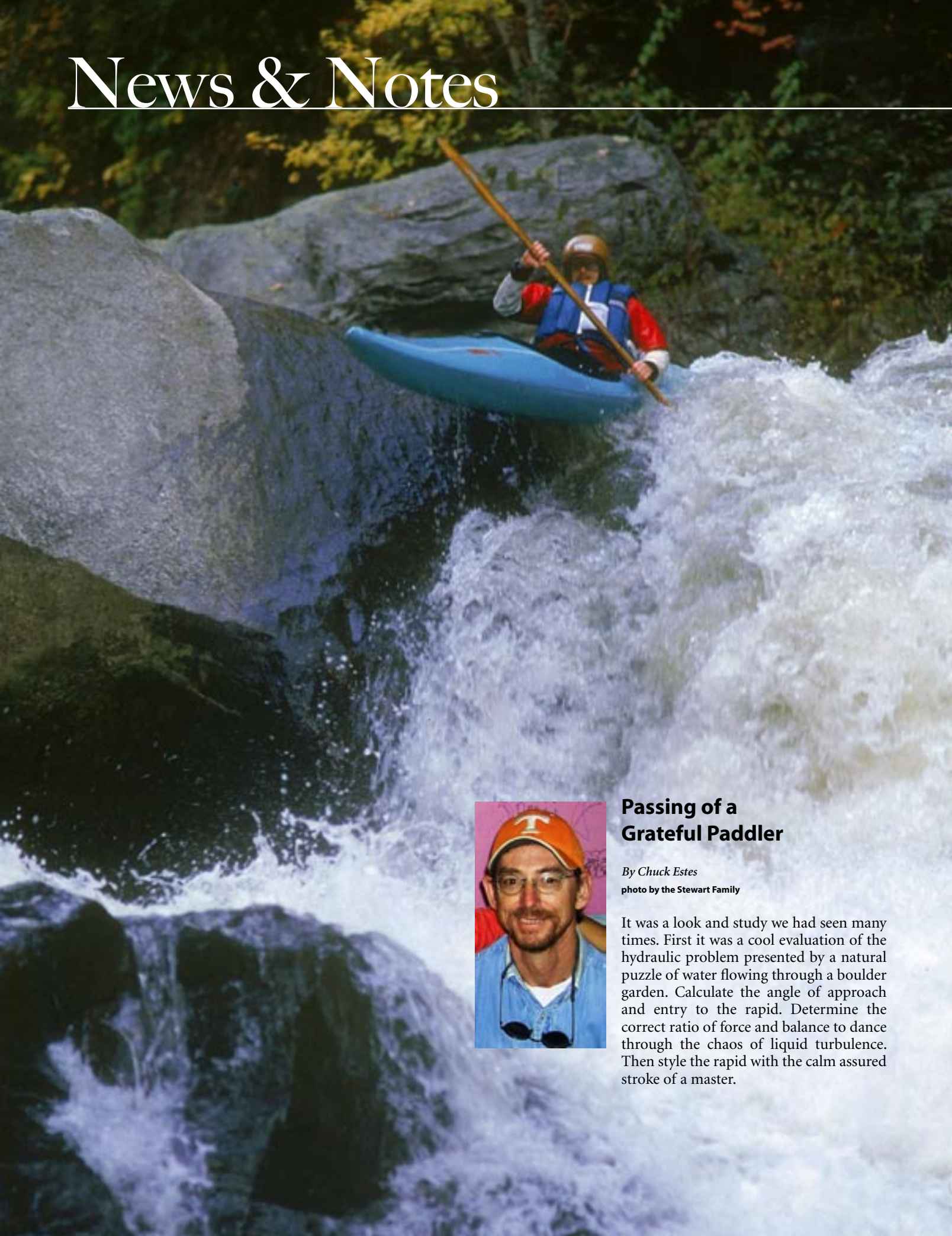
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News & Notes



Passing of a Grateful Paddler

By Chuck Estes

photo by the Stewart Family

It was a look and study we had seen many times. First it was a cool evaluation of the hydraulic problem presented by a natural puzzle of water flowing through a boulder garden. Calculate the angle of approach and entry to the rapid. Determine the correct ratio of force and balance to dance through the chaos of liquid turbulence. Then style the rapid with the calm assured stroke of a master.

These were the visions that flooded our memories as our friend and whitewater mentor, Ron Stewart, was remembered in Baylor School Chapel on March 25, 2008. Ron had ended his fight with cancer Saturday, March 22, 2008, and is now probing the next great adventure, as he had done so many times in his 58 years. Ron was a thoughtful, gracious man with a brilliant and naturally curious mind. He majored in math and physics at Tulane, won the senior physics prize, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa. He earned his master's degree in physics at the University of Maryland. During his 26 years at Baylor School, he taught math, was a baseball coach, kayak instructor, dorm parent, and was head of Baylor's math department since 1993. Ron's passion and dedication shaped Baylor School and thousands of young lives in a way that cannot be duplicated. He spent many of his last years working on the house he built on the mountain with wife Lorraine, daughter Michelle, and son Jeffrey.

For American Whitewater, Ron served on the Board of Directors for eight years bringing his clear, cool reasoning and passion to work on behalf of river preservation and access. He was renowned for his numerous first descents, some solo, in the Chattanooga, TN, area, including Cain Creek, North Chickamauga Creek, Bear Creek, and Big and Little Brush Creeks. Much of his energy was focused on preserving North Chickamauga Creek. Today thousands of acres in the North Chick gorge are protected largely due to Ron's efforts. Ron was also a primary force in opening Tallulah Gorge for whitewater. From the very first public meeting, to the first descent, to the yearly releases, Ron's quiet guidance helped push through the many bumps on the way to restoration. In October 2007, Ron received the rarely awarded American Whitewater Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his long-time dedication to the preservation and access of whitewater rivers.

Posts from some of you on the whitewater forum, Boatertalk, describe Ron best:

I thanked him for his impact on me and my boating as a kid at Baylor; kayaking had become a core part of who I am. I also told him that I had in turn taught and tried to foster the sport and the attitude that he passed on to me.

He was always helpful, humble, and totally interested in telling you everything he knew about whatever creek run you wanted to know about.

Ron just smiled. It's a look I will never forget; his smile was contagious. Ron had a lot of inner strength although his physical stature was small. He has left big shoes to fill and was a giant among paddlers.

My best memory of Ron was his environmental work and helping to stop the Pump and Storage Project that would have ruined the Rock Creek watershed on Walden's Ridge. He remained calm as usual in the meetings while everyone else was emotional. Ron helped them keep it all in perspective and stay on the job at hand.

...went up to meet the leaseholder on Little Possum a few years back. Ron's charismatic way led the guy to pass around the community bottle of moonshine, gave all three of us a key to the gate, and his personal cell phone number.

We knocked on the door of the landowner at Big Brush Creek takeout. He said: "Sure, haven't seen any of you guys around here in a long time. The first was this little skinny guy with big ears and big glasses." Together we all said: "Ron!"

Dr. Herb Barks, former Headmaster of Baylor School, gave these Words of Remembrance at the memorial service. "I

said 'Ron, did you have any idea the gift you had for paddling?' He said: 'No, I just knew it was what I should do. I mean to be able to teach and paddle that has to be something special. I am so grateful.' Ron's last days were days of gratitude. He wanted you to know that. Grateful for every teaching day, every moment with his family, with his students, with his colleagues. It was difficult to visualize the quiet, humble Ron Stewart on the edge of 30- and 40-foot drops, but that's what he did. He met the turbulent water of cancer with the same quiet courage. He just did it with skill and grace. All of you got to watch that every day in front of you. An example of love and gratitude and courage. Can't get better than that."


"Our last talk was about what the river taught us both. The river helped us experience a power larger than ourselves. That life didn't end in an empty drop. We talked about watching newcomers to the river trying to muscle it, not realizing that the key to paddling is surrender, not power. Great paddlers like Ron look effortless. They just put their paddle in the water and use the flow of the river for their power. 'I'm not afraid to die,' Ron said. 'I'm okay, I know there's more. I'm not this body.' Life doesn't end in tragedy and oblivion. It ends in homecoming, in love and gratitude. And so I leave you with Ron's words: 'Just tell them how grateful I am and how much I loved what I did.' 

photo by Scott Shoup



News & Notes




Potomac Whitewater Festival

18th Annual Event July 11-13

Great Falls, MD and VA) – This summer, beat the heat with a refreshing cocktail of whitewater paddling at the 18th Annual Potomac Whitewater Festival. The spectacular race over Great Falls will make your heart rush, as world-class paddlers venture down the rough waters of the mighty Potomac.

The Festival will also bring together paddlers of all skill levels through a number of events such as on-water clinics, the classic attainment (paddling upstream against the clock) and squirt boating events, the ever exciting boater-cross, the gravity-defying freestyle competition ... etc. All paddlers are also welcome to wear their most creative costumes to participate to the Community Downriver Paddle. Prizes will be given to the wildest and most original attire.

This festival supports American Whitewater, the nation's leading advocate for the protection of whitewater river resources. It is organized for and by the paddling community of the Washington DC area, with the collaboration of the C&O Canal National Heritage Park (MD), and Great Falls National Park (VA). Beyond the weekend events, paddlers and non-paddlers will be able to enjoy the amazing environment surrounding the Nation's River. Escape the city for an active or relaxing weekend in this little paradise located only miles away from the US Capital! 

For more information contact Sandrine Deglin Potomacfest08@gmail.com (303-241-5595) or Risa Shimoda risa@theshimodagroup.com (301) 502-6548.



Above: From left to right, Jason Beakes, Geoff Calhoun, Eric Jackson and Adam Johnson

Below: Geoff Calhoun flying down Pummel

photos by Thilo Rusche




Review

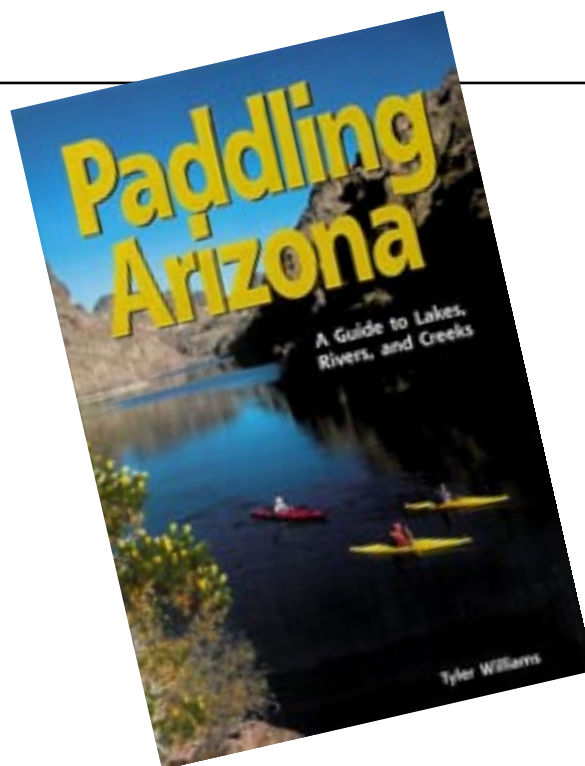
Paddling Arizona Review

By Cody Howard

Due to its famously dry weather, Arizona has always been high on the skunk factor ... and has, therefore, scared away many "long distance" travelers. But the locals of the state have been picking off first descents and exploring the flooded canyons of Arizona for the past 50 years. One paddler, Tyler Williams of Flagstaff, has kept a comprehensive record of all the runs he has completed over the years and compiled them for the state's first paddling guidebook. These elusive whitewater canyons are just half of what the book provides. The other half of *Paddling Arizona* includes a guide to Arizona's flatwater lakes and streams.

At first glance, the guidebook appears to be simple, lacking the jazz of action shots and full-page glossy pictures. But with a closer look, the reader will find a complete and extremely accurately detailed guidebook, written in an entertaining fashion, including past stories and history of the surrounding area. The flatwater section of the book takes off-season whitewater enthusiasts or beginning thrill seekers to Arizona's tame waters. With camping and fisheries included in these descriptions, one will find a secluded desert paradise just for them. While flipping through the pages, the reader will come to the mid-way point and the descriptions will shift to the whitewater stretches of the state. This is a compiled list of all the major whitewater runs in Arizona, ranging from Class II-Class V+. Although flows are never guaranteed in this parch land, the accurate gage and beta descriptions in *Paddling Arizona* will help lower the skunk factor for any long distance explorers.

Overall, this simple yet informative guide will steer any range of paddler to Arizona's premier waterways. The drawn-out maps may lack the detail of the runs or lakes, but will cut out any confusion you might have while staring at your Gazetteer. So if you are coming out to the Southwest or The Grand Canyon state, this is a guide you should definitely check out. 




Losing Frank

continued on page 54

replete with pinning opportunities and a very deep retentive hole at the end. There isn't a straight line through any of it until the bottom and then you have to run the hole. Undaunted, we plunged forward in our rigs reading and running as best we could. Half way through I found myself staring straight into a boat stopper of a hole. Simon was following my line as I made a last second cut and started ferrying my butt off to get around this raft flipper. We both made the move and then squared up and plowed through the bottom hole whooping and hollering in triumph.

After spending a frigid night stealth camping at the empty NOC outpost in Hot Springs we headed out on the sixth and last day of our journey. We had a 15-mile row to Del Rio, TN, which would have been cake if not for

the fierce and constant headwind. The wind was so strong it would blow our rigs upriver if we took even the smallest break from rowing. The towering rock cliffs and the numerous gentle ledge drops made this section the most scenic of the entire trip and distracted us a little from the drudgery. My thoughts turned to Frank and his whereabouts three days after his disappearance. I couldn't wait to get home so I could start looking for him.

After a full day of cursing the wind and rowing hard we finally made it to our take out at the infamous Barbarosa Saloon in Del Rio. There was no fanfare, only a few regulars catching an early buzz. The next day I drove back to Asheville thinking that if Frank was still alive he might be at the animal shelter there. As the attendant led me into the back to see the new arrivals all the dogs started barking at once vying for my attention, all except for one. And there he was, a big brown pit bull silently waiting for his owner to reclaim him. 

River Voices

Dropping in on Chile's 22 Teacups

By Janir Thorndike

"Alright psycho!" Frank shouts over the din of the first drop, already grinning, "You ready to grease it?" He looks eager and right at home, his big, blond ponytail shimmering with Andean snowmelt. Frank and our guide Nathan have arrived at the put-in and are in kayaks, floating in the small, calm pool above the first waterfall of the *Veinte Dos Saltos*. We've just finished hiking our boats for an hour along the edge of the Rio Claro, near Molina, Chile in 85-degree heat. After bushwhacking our way down a steep slope to the put-in, we've lowered the boats into the water with a throw bag and clambered down the slick rock to the surface of the pool, taking turns wedging ourselves into the boats while the stern and bow are stabilized by the other two boaters. I was the last one down, having lowered all three boats, and I was tight with nerves after eyeing the first drop for so long. An accident here a week earlier was also on my mind. I didn't know all the details but the gist was that a kayaker had mistakenly started his run well above this put-in, descending an unrunnable section of water. He had ended up with broken ribs and limbs, and the word was that he barely made it out alive. He had been evacuated by helicopter to Santiago, that part was certain.

I was in Chile on a month-long paddling trip and I had met Nathan and Frank a couple of weeks earlier while paddling in Pucon, where Nathan runs a guiding business. This was my second time paddling in Latin America, and a big step up from the rivers I had tackled in Costa Rica the year before. In the past two weeks we had run a handful of rivers—the Palguin, the Maichin, the Fuy and the

Llanquihue were just a few.

"Let's do it!" Nathan shouted, then reminded us again, "Climb out now if you don't feel up to it! There's no getting out after we drop in."

This statement seemed entirely for my benefit. On his current trip to South America, Frank had completed a solo descent into the deepest canyon in the world, Peru's Cotahuasi, as well as a successful descent of the harrowing Abismo section of the Apurimac River with Peruvian paddling legend Gian Marco Vellutino. He also had a couple of first descents to his name in Chile. The day before we had all run the Seven Teacups, another waterfall run downstream of this one that was similarly committing, but shorter, and far less consequential. This would be something different for me.

The first drop was only about eight feet high, but it angled into a sheer granite wall a couple of feet from the landing and a lot of water was pushing into a small pocket to the right of the falls. Nathan and Frank both ran clean lines to the left and I could see them waiting about 20 yards beyond the drop.

I came in with the same line but I only managed a weak boof stroke, perhaps due to my nerves, and it was not enough to get me past the falls cleanly. As soon as I hit the surface I felt the aerated water pushing me backwards toward the pocket. I paddled like mad as Frank and Nathan screamed encouragement to paddle harder, but it was futile. I was quickly exhausted and stuck on the wrong side of the drop.

I stopped paddling and braced against the granite, resting nervously and precariously in the swirling pocket while the waterfall thundered over the drop inches to my left. I could see that escaping along the edge of the wall was an impossibility given the feature of the hydraulic, and the only option left was to work my way across the seam created where the falling water converged with the river. I eyed the seam briefly, then went, putting in a strong left stroke to get out of the pocket, then working a right brace with the hull of my boat slightly angled and facing the falls. There was a little more space to maneuver than I had thought and after some aggressive paddle work I made it into the moving water. I was full of adrenaline as I paddled up next to a smiling Nathan.

"Nice work! I had to make the same move a couple weeks ago. We're lucky the water's a little lower now."

I guessed that the flow was about 230 cfs. Nathan had run it as low as 75, and he figured the maximum he would run it at was around 350. Above that it could be a trap. During a big snow year like this one water levels were too high until early January.

I rested for another minute and calmed myself down before we continued. The next waterfall was a clean 30-footer, the biggest of the run, with a narrow entrance

and a big pool at the bottom. We had been able to scout it from above during the hike but here there was no way to get out for a look and it was impossible to see the landing zone or any of the water near it. I watched Frank and Nathan paddle off, then approached the drop deliberately and put in one more stroke at the lip, going over slightly faster than the speed of the current. The drop was a quick blur of rock, water and another horizon line, and the next think I knew I was deep in the pool below. Even though I had a good paddle placement, held tightly, both of my arms were yanked above my head, and, as I struggled to keep a grip on my paddle, I felt a sharp stab in my right shoulder. I resurfaced quickly and paddled to the edge of the pool and moved the shoulder around in its socket. It made a few clicking sounds, but there wasn't too much pain.

Paddling on, here and there we came across pieces of equipment that we assumed belonged to the ill-fated paddler who had put in when the water had been too high: some chunks of foam in one pool, an elbow guard and sponge in the next. It provided an eerie reminder that, as fun as it was, the Rio Claro was nothing to take lightly.

We continued, navigating a section of shallow technical water before arriving at the next significant drop, a 15-foot slide ending with a nice auto-boof, after which the river dropped vertically another 15 feet. By now I was relaxed and feeling good. I ran first, sliding left and then angling towards the center of the landing into yet another huge pool. I over rotated and landed halfway upside down, then gave a big shout after rolling up. Frank and Nathan ran off to the left, both getting ended at the bottom. Now we were at one of only two spots on the run where you could get out of your boat



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An advertisement for Jack's Plastic Welding. It features a black and white photograph of a kayak on a river. The kayak is a Culebra model. To the right of the kayak are several dry bags. The text 'DIFFERENT BOATS for RIVER FOLKS' is at the top. Below it, 'FOUR CULEBRA MODELS TO CHOOSE FROM'. To the left of the kayak, '10 YEAR INFLATABLE WARRANTY!'. The company name 'JACK'S Plastic Welding' is in a large, stylized font. To the right of the kayak, 'PACO PADS'. Below that, the phone number '1-800-742-1904' and the website 'jpwinco.com'. The word 'DRY BAGS' is in a large, bold font on the right side.

River Voices

comfortably, and at this one you could actually take a look at the next drop, a twenty foot, semi-steep slide.

We were fully into the canyon now, and it was obvious why, once you began the run, it was absolutely committing. Other than the pool drops, most of it was narrow, and much of the time the granite walls extended straight into the water, giving the river the feeling of a steep hallway. Exiting without serious rock climbing equipment and skills was not an option. The walls at each pool bowed out, creating a concave feature. It resembled a cross section of a graduated cylinder, and made it impossible to climb to the canyon's edge, 40 feet above. Despite the summer heat in this region of Chile, the water is brisk

and a swimmer could quickly become hypothermic. Once into the canyon you have no choice but to finish the run, and a lost paddle or an injury would create a significant issue. Carrying hand paddles or a breakdown paddle is a good idea.

We stopped to rest and appreciate the run, stretching and checking out the slide. Directly after passing around a large boulder in the center of the river, it was a straight shot down the middle of the slide with a boof at the bottom. We hopped back in our boats and hit it in rapid succession. A little ways farther we encountered a three-foot drop entrance into a small pool, followed immediately by a totally blind 25-footer that led in straight towards a slick, slanting wall. We

could only see a portion of the wall, and the space we were dropping into was dark and misty.

Frank was already lined up for the drop as I entered the swirling eddy in the entrance pool. Nathan followed and I took off when I heard him shout. I couldn't see a thing below until I was at the lip of the drop, the wet, angled granite wall directly in front of me, the shadowed pool stretching out to the left. I leaned forward, pushing hard against my foot brace as the water rushed up towards me. A feeling of power surged through me as I accelerated into the pool, sticking my best landing of the day. I paddled over into the small patch of sunlight where Frank and Nathan were waiting.



We gave a couple yells, then just floated there, smiling at each other and appreciating the moment.

I couldn't help but think of what it took to do the first descent on this run. I'd heard it was Lars Holbeck and some others, but that's all I knew.


"Give a little space here!" Nathan yelled over his shoulder as he paddled on. The water picked up speed and I was working hard now to keep my boat tracked, following the only line there was. Suddenly I had a straight shot view of the next section. It looked like a slot canyon, the water coursing into a narrow gap, then disappearing around a corner. I didn't know what came after, but my focus narrowed to a pinpoint and a new surge of adrenaline helped counteract the fear I felt. I paddled hard as the walls closed in. The slot narrowed to only six feet and there was a hole at the bottom. I put in a decent boof stroke but was still sterned up, now upside down in a small hole in the narrowest part of the river. I rolled up quickly and found the current with my paddle blade, grateful that the hole released me without a fight.

The water flattened now and we could rest, floating down and watching the sun's rays light up the blue-green water.

It was a short respite, and the pace quickly picked up again, leading us through a series of smaller, clean drops, each ending with an easy boof. The river narrowed

once more, taking us off a five-footer onto a pushy pillow of water that sent us right, dropping another 10 feet. A few more simple boofs and we were rounded the bend to find some anti-Pinochet graffiti on the rocks, marking the end of the fun stuff. The take-out was another quarter mile after this, the same spot where we began the hike in. We paddled it casually, waving to the families and children sunning and playing in the water.

I ran the 22 Teacups once more while in Chile. It was amazing the first time and better the second. Although essentially a creek run, it can be run in a playboat as well. Punching holes wasn't really an issue, it was a good, aggressive boof that got you past the tricky parts. A few spots could be stickier at higher water. The landings on the drops are pretty well aerated at higher levels, but I would envision a harder impact with lower water.

Finally, it's critical to make sure you put in at the right spot. If you're at the river's edge and you haven't scrambled down a steep slope to get there, then you're in the wrong place, and even if you've done this, it's still no guarantee that you've found the put-in. It's a fairly well hidden path, so go with someone who knows, or be absolutely positive that you know where you are. If you bring a breakdown paddle, play it safe, and keep your head, this run will give you some sweet memories. 

22 Teacups Fact File

Flights to Chile

Most US flights originate from Dallas or Miami and arrive in Santiago. American Airlines
Delta Airlines
Lan Chile

Orientation

The 7 and 22 Teacups lie in the *Reserva Nacional Radal 7 Tazas*, about 200 km south of Santiago and 60 kilometers to the east of the Pan American Highway. The closest town to the reserve is Molina, 5 km to the east off the highway. From there, go 2 km until you reach the *Parque Ingles*. This is the entrance to the reserve, where you may need to talk with a park ranger concerning kayaks.

Park entrance is free, but once inside it is \$7 per kayaker for access to the 7 Teacups. No payment is necessary for the 22 Teacups. There is lots of free camping in the park as well as a *hospedaje* with a few rooms and a small convenience store. For accommodations further away, there are several simple hotels in Molina. Talca is also an option with nicer hotels that are pricier than those in Molina, and more restaurants. It lies 40 km south of Molina along the Pan American highway.

Put-In and Take-out

The hike to the put-in for the 22 Teacups begins just down the hill from the *hospedaje*. Keep the river on your right and begin hiking right above the bridge. This is also the take-out. On the way up you will cross over a fence, and the trail will take you away from the river's edge. The trail is hard to make out at points but you will pass across four dry washes along the way. At the last of these you can scramble down the wash to a viewpoint directly above the biggest drop of the run. After this wash there is a steep pitch. Go up it and the trail down to the put-in will be immediately on the right. Go down the trail and walk upstream another Fifty more yards and you're there. If you're relying on these directions alone to find the put-in, be very certain you've found the correct spot, or bring along a local guide.

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

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Clif Bar & Company in the Community

Clif Bar & Company was founded on the principle of sustaining the individual, the community and the planet. Since its inception, the company has supported non-profit organizations and events nationwide that focus on health, community, and environmental issues.

At the heart of Clif Bar's community efforts is the 2080 Program, Making Community Service Part of Our Workday. As an employee-run program, 2080 makes it easy for employees to identify, organize and participate in community volunteer efforts on company time. The 2080 Program name refers to the program's original goal of committing at least 2,080 hours to community service each year—the equivalent of having one full-time employee dedicated exclusively to volunteer work. Habitat for Humanity, Big City Mountaineers, the Santa Clara Diabetes Camp, Meals on Wheels and impoverished communities in emerging countries are some of the main beneficiaries of this program. As the company has grown, so too has the 2080 Program's annual hourly target. In 2008, employees plan to collectively donate over 4,000 hours to community volunteer efforts.

In addition to local and grassroots organizations, Clif Bar supports a number of national non-profit organizations. Committed to preserving the environment and the places that inspire adventure, we have partnered with a variety of outdoor advocacy programs, including American Whitewater since 2002. Each year Clif Bar provides financial support and bar donations for American Whitewater and its members. Because we know support on the grassroots level is so important, we've worked with AW to create the annual Flowing Rivers Grant Program, which promotes river stewardship and safety efforts in paddling clubs. We are honored to partner with American Whitewater and appreciate the strength and enthusiasm of its members.

Happy paddling! 



Join



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



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

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

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

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

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

Membership
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Cullowhee, NC 28723

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- ☐ \$25 Junior (*Under the age of 18*)
- ☐ \$25 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (*SAVE \$10 if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club*)
- ☐ \$35 Individual One Year
- ☐ \$50 Family (*Immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18*)
- ☐ \$65 (2) Year Membership
- ☐ \$75 Affiliate Club Membership
- ☐ \$100 Ender Club (*Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-Shirt FREE Circle Size: S M L XL XXL*)
- ☐ \$250 Platinum Paddler (*Receive AW's IR Platinum Paddler Polartec Basec T Circle Size: S M L XL XXL*)
- ☐ \$500 Explorer Membership (*Receive a Dry Bag from Watershed FREE*)
- ☐ \$750 Lifetime Membership (*Receive AW's Lifetime Membership NRS Paddlers Duffle FREE*)
- ☐ \$1000 Legacy Membership (*Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Knappster Shorty Top FREE*)
- ☐ \$2500 Steward Membership (*Thank you items will be arranged on an individual basis*)

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR SUBSCRIPTIONS

- ☐ \$5.00 ☐ \$10.00 ☐ \$25.00 ☐ Other \$ _____ ☐ \$ _____ monthly (*\$10 minimum via monthly credit card or checking acct. withdrawal. Send voided check w/check option.*)
- ☐ \$30.00 Kayak Session Subscription (*Includes a \$5 donation to AW*)
- ☐ \$40.00 LVM Subscription (*includes a \$8 donation to AW*)

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

- ☐ Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups
- ☐ Do NOT mail me the AW journal, I will read it online (*Helps us conserve and, saves AW money too!*)

PAYMENT INFORMATION

- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Check # _____
- ☐ Credit Card ☐ MC ☐ Visa ☐ Disc ☐ AMEX
- Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____
- Name as it appears on card: _____
- Signature: _____

Affiliate Clubs

AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

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

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

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

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

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

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

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

Colorado

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

Georgia

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

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Assoc., Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Chicago

Indiana

Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville
Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kansas

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky

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

Maine

Outward Bound, Newry

Maryland

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

Massachusetts

Brian White, Boston
AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers, Honover

Minnesota

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Missouri

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

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

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

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

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

N. Carolina

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

Ohio

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

Oregon

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

Pennsylvania

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

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

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

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

Utah

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Essex Junction

Virginia

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

Washington

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

West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Association, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
NE Wisconsin Paddlers Inc. Appleton

Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Discounted AW Membership for Affiliate Club Members

By Carla Miner, Membership Manager

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

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

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

Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

10 Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

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

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

Guidelines for Contributors



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

If possible, articles should be submitted on a 3-1/2-inch computer disk. (Microsoft Word if possible – others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

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

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints, or color prints or electronic, digital photos, 300 dpi tiffs, Photoshop or high res jpegs minimum 3"x5." Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we cannot guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. The better the photos the better the reproduction.

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

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled, or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to Class II, III & IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

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

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

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

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

Send your material to:

Journal Editor

P.O. Box 1540

Cullowhee, NC 28723

E-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org



PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723

www.americanwhitewater.org

Release for publication

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

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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

Send your material to:

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

A man with a backpack is hiking through a forest, carrying a blue kayak over his shoulder and a large red and yellow Werner paddle. The scene is sunlit with dappled light on the forest floor.

Grade A Premium Homegrown Paddles

Every Werner Paddle is handcrafted and fully homegrown in Sultan, Washington. We take pride in this and the fact that we have been handcrafting the best paddles in the world for over 30 years. We combine the highest quality materials, advanced manufacturing methods with craftsmanship to produce the lightest, strongest whitewater paddles on the market. To view our full line of homegrown designs log on to our website at www.wernerpaddles.com or visit your local Werner Retailer.

A close-up of a red Werner paddle with the brand name and logo visible on the blade.

The Powerhouse - Premium Whitewater

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

photo by Raphael Thiebaut

1-800-275-3311

www.wernerpaddles.com



WERNER

Ultimate Paddle Performance

REV

Team Paddler **Matt Hamilton** Location **McCoy's on the Ottawa River** Photos **Billy Harris**

MAN UP!

So it was the coldest day of winter so far...-15°C and the brand new Rev arrived at the Ottawa airport, got to man up and get out. How did it perform? The boat worked great! The high knee area made for more foot room and a more aggressive paddler position. All the goodies that come in the outfitting bag sure help to customize the fit quick too. The boat carved really well and edge transition was super easy. It accelerates much faster than the 4 Twenty on edge. The looseness of the hull made it easy to get around and the improved rocker made me feel very confident on the wave. All in all the boat is a great machine for some serious action. I am looking forward to warmer weather to play in too. Till then I'm going to enjoy the foot and a half of snow forecasted for tonight. Time to ski!

Available in 4 sizes S, M, L and the M-Long, a Pyranha first designed specifically for tall - mid weight paddlers!



For more info or to demo the new stellar smooth Pyranha Rev contact your local Pyranha dealer now
www.pyranha.com