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May/June 2012

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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

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The Green River is the largest Tributary to the Colorado River, and is enjoyed by tens of thousands of paddlers every year. Today, the Green River is threatened by numerous proposals to divert water out of its canyons for competing uses.

Photo by Kent Vertrees

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PURPOSE

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 bimonthly *AW Journal*, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

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

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



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THE JOURNEY AHEAD



American Whitewater's river stewardship program has legs! This spring we are rolling out a new position in the Northeast and celebrating an anniversary in Colorado. Our River Stewardship Team is in place to lead, train, and support community-based activism representing the interests of boaters and the rivers we enjoy. Based on the notion that all politics is local, our regional approach to stewardship combines professional AW staff with committed volunteers who work together to tackle sticky issues that impact the rivers we all enjoy paddling.

AW's National Stewardship Director, Kevin Colburn, provides leadership for our regional river stewardship directors. AW is very fortunate to have a highly respected group of professional regional directors. In the Pacific Northwest, Thomas O'Keefe provides oversight for a program that includes nationally significant dam removals on the White Salmon and Elwha Rivers. In California, Dave Steindorf has been at the forefront of hydropower relicensing efforts (some of the largest and most complex in the US). Nathan Fey has developed a unique skill set in water allocation quantification in the Southern Rockies. Megan Hooker, our Associate Stewardship Director, provides technical support to the entire team.

Anniversary of Colorado Stewardship Program

Five years ago, American Whitewater launched our Colorado Stewardship Program. Under the capable leadership of Nathan Fey, the Colorado program undertook a regional work-plan that focused on a handful of major areas that AW should tackle: water supply planning, river access, and membership development. We learned early on that methodologies developed for flow studies in hydroelectric relicensing worked well as a framework to identify flow needs in Colorado rivers where water supply planning is underway. With these analytical tools in place AW found a strong voice in water allocation issues that are critical to protecting water levels in iconic rivers in the Colorado basin. You can learn more about Colorado stewardship projects throughout this issue of the *AW Journal* on page 6.

New Northeast Stewardship Director

American Whitewater is excited to announce that we are launching a new regional river stewardship position in the Northeast. Based on the success of our regional model, we place staff in communities with active stewardship projects. We now want to roll that model out in the Northeast, where AW has an important set of historically important river stewardship initiatives and new river restoration projects that need attention.

Thanks to a very generous contribution in memory of Boyce Greer, we have the seed money in place to hire a part-time Northeast Stewardship Director. The northeast position marks the next step in AW's regional stewardship model, in which regionally based staff assist the paddling community with river conservation and access issues. Expect to hear more about this new position in the coming months; a job description for the new Northeast Stewardship Director position is posted on the AW website.

Call for AW Board of Director Nominations

All this growth in our regional river stewardship programs requires a Board of Directors that can work with professional AW staff within regions of active projects. American Whitewater is now seeking nominations of interested and qualified candidates to serve as Directors (see "Call for Nominations," this issue, page 54). We are seeking Directors to begin a three-year term starting January 1, 2013.

A healthy, vibrant, participatory, and functional Board is critical to the long-term stability and effective governance of American Whitewater. This requires Directors with a passion for our mission and a mix of appropriate skills to help guide AW and meet the challenges we face, both now and in the future. While we will consider all qualified candidates, the AW Board has specifically identified geographic diversity as an attribute for this nomination cycle.

Being an AW Director is not for everyone and not everyone is in a position to make the commitment of time and energy that is required. For those who can make the commitment it is a rewarding and fulfilling experience. If you or someone you know is interested in submitting a nomination, please check the AW website for a nomination package.

Our regional river stewardship program is made possible through your membership support. We continue to appreciate the importance of rivers and their role in supporting the health and well being of the paddling community. At American Whitewater, we remain committed to giving back to these special places through river stewardship.

See you on the river,

Mark Singleton

Executive Director, American Whitewater

STEWARDSHIP

AMERICAN WHITEWATER CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS OF RIVER STEWARDSHIP IN THE SOUTHERN ROCKIES

BY NATHAN FEY

IT'S HARD TO believe, but 2012 marks the fifth anniversary of American Whitewater's Colorado River Stewardship Program—it's amazing how time flies! For some of us, staff and partners included, it feels like only yesterday that we convened a Roundtable Discussion on the Arkansas River in Buena Vista, Colorado to contemplate a new American Whitewater program in the Southern Rockies. We evaluated the threats and opportunities facing Colorado's rivers, and strategized on how AW could best inform river management in the region and engage conservation-minded paddlers in decision-making. Our core supporters in the region developed an initial workplan for our Colorado Program at the Colorado Roundtable in 2006, and agreed on a handful of major areas that AW should tackle, including conservation, water supply planning, river access, membership development, and program support.

Happily, we reflect back on the past five years of work in Colorado and see that American Whitewater has accomplished more than we had first envisioned. Today,

AW has a number of key successes in the region under our belt and we've emerged as a leader not only in the core areas outlined at the Colorado Roundtable in 2006, but also in regional water policy. We have worked hard to develop new tools and expertise to inform river management at the local, state, and federal levels. Over the last five years, our dedicated staff, contractors, consultants, partners, and volunteers have navigated their way through some of the most convoluted river conservation and access issues in the country. Thanks to them, the Colorado Program has grown from a small-scale local initiative to a platform representing the interests of our members and affiliate clubs in regional and national decision-making. We are influencing river management at all levels of government.

In addition, we have developed stronger relationships with our members in Colorado, both at the individual level, and with our affiliate clubs. We're fortunate to be working with over 12 clubs on a variety of issues throughout the state, some of which are described in more depth in the following pages. Over the next five years, we look forward to building more effective relationships with groups across the Four Corners region. Club and membership engagement has been critical to the success of several flow studies that AW's staff and consultants have conducted



Colorado Stewardship Director Nathan Fey with Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar.

over the past five years, including studies on the Upper Colorado, Yampa, Dolores, and South Platte Rivers in Colorado, as well as the Green, Colorado, and Virgin Rivers in Utah. Looking back on all that AW has accomplished in the past half-decade, we are certain it wouldn't have been possible without the combined leadership of our staff, the passion of our members and volunteers, and the expertise of our consultants.

Today, AW's Colorado River Program continues to pursue the long-term goals we originally envisioned for the regional model, and we are making progress across the basin by fighting new trans-basin diversions, leveraging member input into state and federal policy, and reforming the way existing dams operate to ensure they meet environmental and recreational flow-needs. We also hired new staff in 2011, enlisted several regional volunteers to help with our strategies, and developed a robust funding model that ensures our Colorado Program will continue into the future to tackle issues in the region that threaten our rivers. It's been an amazing five years so far, and with these elements in place, we're looking forward to all that the next five will bring.

Colorado Stewardship Director Nathan Fey at the FIBArk Whitewater Festival.





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STEWARDSHIP



Senator Mark Udall.
Photo courtesy of Senator Mark Udall.

THE INDISPENSABLE COLORADO

BY SENATOR MARK UDALL (D-CO)

WATER IS EVERYTHING in the Southwest. If you live in the Colorado River Basin, you know this to be a fact.

Thirty-six million Americans, from Denver to Los Angeles, depend on the Colorado River for drinking water. The river irrigates

15 percent of the nation's crops and supports a multi-billion dollar recreation industry. It provides water for at least 15 Native American tribes and generates over 4200 megawatts of power.

Yet we have a problem in the Colorado River Basin: there simply isn't enough water in the basin to sustain our current growth

trajectory. For example, population in the basin will continue to expand, creating new demands for municipal water deliveries. Also, basin water supplies will be stressed by a changing climate as precipitation and snow melt patterns change. This water deficit poses a tremendous threat to the long-term success of the Southwest, and it requires attention from all types of water users: agricultural, municipal and industrial, recreational, and environmental.

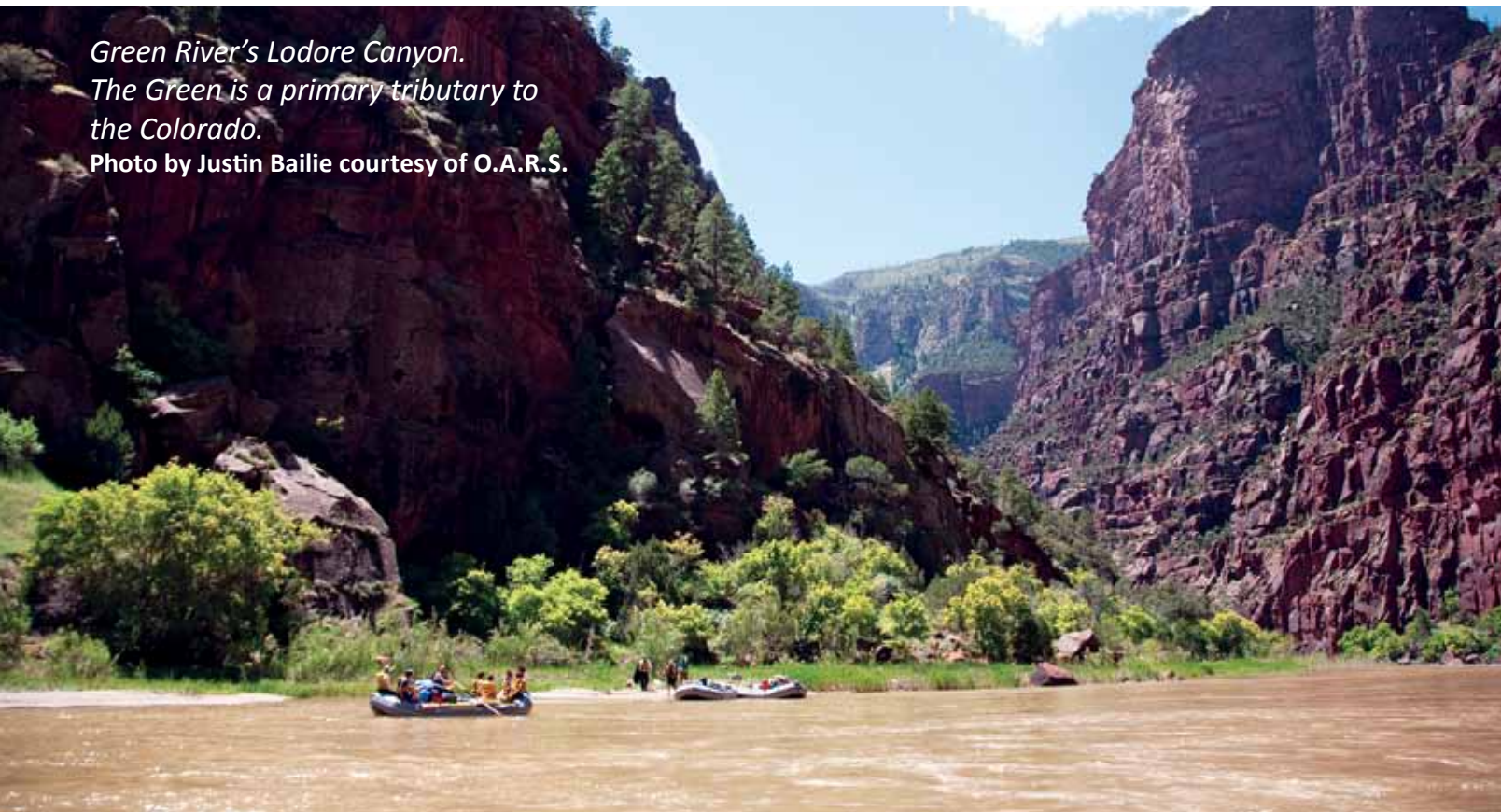
While so much of the attention has historically been on agricultural, municipal, and industrial uses of water, we cannot forget the importance of recreational and environmental uses of the river. As Westerners, the Colorado River, and the special places associated with the river throughout the Southwest, is in our blood, but it is also in our wallets.

The Colorado River is an indispensable part of the social, cultural, and environmental heritage of our region. Having access to this type of natural resource is a big part of why so many of us choose to live in the Southwest. It also supports a growing multi-billion dollar recreational economy

Green River's Lodore Canyon.

The Green is a primary tributary to the Colorado.

Photo by Justin Bailie courtesy of O.A.R.S.





Senator Mark Udall on Colorado's Upper Arkansas River in 1978.

Photo courtesy of Senator Mark Udall

of supply stores, manufacturers, guides, hotels, and other important businesses, which has been a bright spot in the Colorado economy even in recent years of economic uncertainty.

As we look ahead at the next 50-plus years of water management in the Colorado River Basin, we know there are many tough choices ahead. I am committed to sustaining the viability of agriculture and providing drinking water for a growing population, while honoring existing compacts and agreements that collectively make up the law of the river.

In addition, I am committed to keeping enough water in the river to support a healthy ecosystem and the recreation and tourism industries that depend on it. I know that is a goal you share as well, and I appreciate all the good work American Whitewater does on behalf of the nation's whitewater enthusiasts in this regard.

As the Colorado River weaves its way through mountain headwaters, open desert, and deep canyons on its journey to the ocean, it ties together the fabric of the Southwest. Each strand—economic, social, environmental, recreational—is an important piece of the basin's tapestry. Letting any one piece fray risks the whole.

There will always be controversy and conflict surrounding the Colorado River: a resource as precious as water cannot exist without being fought over. However, a resource as vital as water must ultimately unite us.

To meet our shared water challenges, we will have to replace controversy and conflict with consensus, comity, and collaboration. We can do that by ensuring all voices with a stake in the river are heard, including rafters, kayakers and other whitewater enthusiasts.

PROPOSED NATIONAL MONUMENT

BY SENATOR MARK UDALL

For me, and so many Coloradans and Americans, the outdoors is an important part of our quality of life. It's where we recreate, hunt and fish, and find excitement or peace of mind. And, for many outfitters, restaurateurs, hotel owners and other small businessmen and women, preservation of our state's majestic mountains and valleys is vital for our livelihoods.

The Arkansas River and Browns Canyon is a prime example. As one of Colorado's best-known spots for whitewater rafting, the continued success of its outdoor industry is closely linked with the continued protection of the landscape. That is why I recently launched a proposal to protect up to 22,000 acres between Salida and Buena Vista, Colorado as a National Monument with some area protected as Wilderness. This designation would literally put a star on the map, drawing more visitors to the area's world-class outdoor recreation opportunities and supporting the local tourism economy.

Activities such as paddling, hiking, skiing, and fishing contribute more than \$10 billion to Colorado's economy every year and support over 100,000 jobs. By protecting our public lands the right way—with a bottom-up rather than top-down approach—conservation will support jobs, our economy, and the quality of life that makes Colorado the envy of the world.

I've posted maps with a range of protection options at: <http://markudall.senate.gov/outdoorheritage> and I am holding public events across the state. Please join my collaborative process and share your thoughts about how Browns Canyon and the Arkansas River are used today and your vision for the future of this special place.

STEWARDSHIP

GREEN RIVER SPOTLIGHT

BY NATHAN FEY

THE GREEN RIVER flows through Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado, and has been the target of several recent development proposals, including campaigns to develop massive trans-basin pipelines, large-scale oil and gas leases, and nuclear power plants. American Whitewater has countered these proposals with conservation campaigns, and brought new information and tools to bear to help protect what little water remains in this iconic western river. Today, we are working in conjunction with a broad coalition of conservation and recreation groups at all levels of government to ensure that the Green does not become the poster-child for unhealthy rivers and un-balanced river management! Today, groups from across the country have recognized the Green River as one of America's Most Endangered Rivers, and American Whitewater is working to ensure that the Green, indeed ALL western rivers, are protected for the sake of their iconic river ecosystems, rare wildlife and native fish populations, and world-class multi-day paddling opportunities.

"Flaming Gorge Pipeline" Update

American Whitewater continues to track the ill-conceived Regional Watershed



Supply Project (a.k.a. "Flaming Gorge Pipeline"), which proposes to pump roughly 250,000 acre-feet of water annually from the Green River's Flaming Gorge Reservoir 500 miles over the Continental Divide to Colorado's Front Range. When the initial application and environmental review process was cancelled by the Army Corps of Engineers in 2011, the project's proponent, Aaron Million, decided to formally add hydropower to the proposal, rebrand his company as Wyco Power and Water, Inc., and try to push the project through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) instead.

Commercial Rafting in the Green-Yampa rivers generates over \$4 Million in economic benefit for local communities.
Photo by Justin Bailie courtesy of O.A.R.S.

The Flaming Gorge Pipeline would certainly stress the already over-tapped Green River, a waterway with exceptionally high resource values, including world-class recreation in Dinosaur National Monument, Lodore and Desolation Canyons, and Canyonlands National Park. In an effort to protect this resource, American Whitewater joined forces with American Rivers and the Colorado River Outfitters Association to

Green River's Echo Park.

Photo by Justin Bailie courtesy of O.A.R.S.



Peering into the Canyon of Ladore, Dinosaur National Monument.

Photo by Justin Bailie courtesy of O.A.R.S.

file a Motion to Intervene with FERC in the project's preliminary permit application. As a coalition of conservation and recreation groups, we urged FERC to reject Wyco Power and Water's preliminary permit application on the grounds that: 1) it does not fit with existing legal obligations, including land and water protections, 2) Wyco is an unfit applicant, and 3) allowing a licensing process to move forward with a slight likelihood of success is contrary to the public's interest.

Fortunately, FERC dismissed the project's preliminary permit application in February. Until FERC is presented with some certainty regarding the route and authorizations for the water pipeline, Wyco Power and Water cannot gather and obtain the information necessary to comply with the terms of a preliminary permit for a hydropower project. As a result, FERC determined there was no purpose for issuing a preliminary permit to Wyco Power and Water, Inc.

The final order from FERC followed the interventions of American Whitewater and other conservation groups and interested parties. And while this was a significant milestone for conservation-minded



paddlers and the recreation industry in the Colorado River basin, Wyco Power and Water, Inc. has not given up their quest to build the project. In March Wyco Power and Water requested a rehearing from FERC, asserting that the Commission's denial of the preliminary permit was inconsistent with the Federal Power Act. In addition, Wyco believes that the reasoning behind the dismissal of the preliminary permit application establishes precedents that will likely be detrimental to future development of hydroelectric facilities in the United States.

Today, American Whitewater and our conservation and recreation partners are preparing to tackle this most recent challenge to protecting the Green River, and will continue to track the issue. For more information on our efforts, visit: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Project/view/id/RWSP/>

Oil & Gas Leases in the Green River Basin

In March, the Obama administration decided to authorize nearly 1,300 new natural gas wells in Utah's Green River basin, including over 200 in the Desolation Canyon proposed Wilderness Area. It is anticipated that these new leases will degrade the region's pristine air quality, the remote character of Desolation Canyon, and the paddling opportunities that lie within it, hurting the state's tourism industry.

In approving the oil & gas development project, pioneered by the Colorado-based company Gasco, the U.S. Department of the Interior also rejected calls by the Environmental Protection Agency and tens of thousands of citizens from across the country to approve an alternative

Flaming Gorge Reservoir.

Photo by Bruce Lavoie courtesy of O.A.R.S.





Desolation Canyon.
Photo by Paul Martzen

to the proposal. This alternative would have allowed for significant development while protecting the Department's plan to designate Desolation Canyon as Wilderness and reducing the overall footprint and impact of the project.

"Secretary Salazar is making the wrong decision to approve the Gasco project in a way that creates irreversible risks to Desolation Canyon," said Peter Metcalf CEO/President of Black Diamond, Inc. "This decision is particularly disappointing in light of the fact that conservationists, and the EPA (with support of the leading companies in the American outdoor industry) endorsed an alternative drilling plan that protected the sanctity of the Desolation Canyon proposed wilderness, while allowing for robust drilling to occur on a huge parcel abutted to the proposed Wilderness Area. It is truly tragic that the BLM can't show some small degree of balance."

The Desolation Canyon proposed Wilderness is the largest unprotected roadless complex in the lower 48 states. Centered around the Desolation Canyon stretch of the Green River, the area's spectacular solitude and endless vistas are awe-inspiring. But now this remarkable place is once again in the crosshairs of destruction.

The Bureau of Land Management analyzed two alternatives to Gasco's proposed action, both of which would have barred drilling in the Desolation Canyon proposed Wilderness, while affording greater protections for the Green River and Nine Mile Canyon badlands. But the administration ended up supporting the company's plans to drill in these sensitive places.

"Secretary Salazar's approval of the controversial Gasco project stands in stark contrast to the agreements worked out over the past few years between industry,

the Interior Department, and conservation groups over several natural gas projects in eastern Utah," said Stephen Bloch, an attorney for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, one of American Whitewater conservation partners in the region. "There is a proven, better way to bring parties together and produce a win-win solution. It is inexplicable why the Secretary is turning his back on this approach."

At the time this goes to press, American Whitewater is coordinating its next steps with our partners across Utah and the Colorado River basin, and preparing for another round of public comment on the Final Environmental Impact Statement, which was released in April 2012.

Green River Nuclear Power Plant!?!?

Earlier this year, the State of Utah approved two water rights applications for a proposed nuclear power plant near Green River, Utah. The approval allows local water-rights from

STEWARDSHIP

Enjoying calm water and dramatic canyons along the Yampa River.

Photo by James Kaiser courtesy of O.A.R.S.

Kane County Water Conservancy District and San Juan County Water Conservancy District to be leased to Blue Castle Holdings to provide water from the Green River for nuclear power generation. The request and approval has raised many concerns, ranging from the safety and oversight of nuclear power, local water use interference, wildlife concerns including endangered fishes, and over-appropriation of Colorado River water. Many are also concerned about the economic viability of the project, and potential impacts to iconic western river canyons, and the family oriented trips they provide, such as Labyrinth and Stillwater Canyons in Canyonlands National Park.



53,600 acre-feet of water from the Green River will be allocated for the proposed nuclear power plant project. Among AW's concerns with approval of the application is that a water right does not guarantee sufficient water will always be available from the river to operate the plant. Plant design will need to address the possibility of interruptions in water supply.

Nuclear power plants in the United States are developed and licensed for operation by the federal government under the regulation of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The NRC is charged with promoting the use of nuclear energy to benefit public welfare and protect the radiological health and safety of the public. In pursuing NRC licensing of this

project, Blue Castle Holdings, the project proponent, plans to invest \$100 million. Billions of dollars more will be required to construct the facility.

The State Engineer's decision on these applications authorizes the use of water for the plant after NRC approves the project. Prior to any construction, NRC will oversee an exhaustive design process to make certain the proposed site is safe for a nuclear power plant and the project is in compliance with National Environmental Protection Act and Endangered Species Act requirements.

In late March, attorneys for Uranium Watch, Living Rivers, HEAL Utah, Center for Water Advocacy, and other plaintiffs filed a request that the Utah District Court review the State Engineer's decision to provide water for the Blue Castle Project nuclear reactor. The request and complaint is the only way to challenge the withdrawal of Green River water, and the significant impacts this project poses to water availability, the local agricultural and recreational economies, and to river ecology. Stay tuned to www.americanwhitewater.org for updates.

Lodore Canyon of the Green River.

Photo by John Saunders



STEWARDSHIP

A TALE OF TWO RIVERS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KENT VERTREES

LOCATED IN THE confines of Dinosaur National Monument, Echo Park is a classic Western riparian landscape. Its towering red and cream colored canyon walls give way to benched grasslands, willow and cottonwood forests, beach and, of course, the river.

In June of 1869, when the Powell Expedition arrived at Echo Park after a tumultuous experience in the Canyon of Ladore, the view was probably very similar to what paddlers see there today.

Standing above the confluence of the Green and Yampa Rivers, elevated on a rocky platform above the water, you'll find a commanding view of one of the most scenic, wild, and uncertain environments in North America.

With Steamboat Rock cutting in from the right and towering over the view, the Green River slithers in along this 1,000-foot peninsular wall of sandstone. Emerald green in color, the Green is barely visible behind the willows and flowering tamarisk.

In great contrast and in from the left, comes the Yampa charging. The river is in full flood and an earthy, tainted blood red color. It's full of mud and three times the size of the Green. Unlike the Green, which is tamed by the massive Flaming Gorge Reservoir, the Yampa only has a few small impoundments high up in its headwaters to block its path. And except for a few marginal diversions from regional domestic, industrial, and agricultural uses, the Yampa River still runs like it did a millennia ago—wild and free.

This makes the Yampa very unique in the modern American West. Where most rivers have been tapped, dammed, drained, and diverted to the point where they've lost certain primal functions, the Yampa continues to flow unimpeded, and is the last major river remaining in the entire Upper Colorado River system that retains



The confluence of the Green and the muddy Yampa.

its natural hydrograph. It's a sacred element to an amazing river system that has been left alone and allowed to run free.

Because of its free state, the Yampa is a river environment that still supports native and endangered fish of the Colorado Plateau and some of the most diverse communities of riparian habitats in the West.

In Echo Park, its banks, when not covered by floodwater, are strewn with healthy stands of multi-aged Cottonwoods and willow thickets supporting abundant wildlife populations. These riparian habitats depend and thrive on the annual peaks and lows of a naturally functioning river system, as well as providing slack waters that the endangered Pikeminnow and Suckermouth fish species require.

This flooding, or big water season, also supports one of the most sought after recreational river boating destinations of the Western United States. Though the rapids of Yampa Canyon hold less power than, say, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, this multi-day river trip rewards paddlers with an opportunity to float on a truly wild river. In its own right, this is an endangered experience and thus, securing a permit to float Yampa Canyon is one of

THE YAMPA RIVER AWARENESS PROJECT

BY KENT VERTREES

Last summer, during the historical June runoff in Colorado, I had the opportunity to help organize a group of boatmen from Adrift Adventures and O.A.R.S., along with select river advocates (Nathan Fey from AW was there), politicians, and press on an "awareness trip" down the Yampa River and below its confluence with the Green.

The Friends of the Yampa (on whose Board I sit), has developed the Yampa River Awareness Project in hopes of educating the general public and policy makers about the rare and endangered, environmental and recreational attributes of the Yampa River.

This was our second float trip in five years and we have produced videos about the Yampa and Green that you can view at: www.friendsoftheyampa.com.

We were fortunate enough to launch our 2011 trip at one of the highest levels that the Yampa River has reached in its recorded history.

Warm Springs Rapid, considered by many to be one of the top 10 big drops in our Western river system, was so big that Warm Springs hole could have swallowed a two-story home in its frothing water. It was a life changing experience for all of us to float this wild river in full flood.

With efforts like the Yampa River Awareness Project, and American Whitewater's commitment to them, we can only hope that rivers like the Yampa and Green will continue to provide these life changing recreational experiences for future generations to come.

the most difficult to attain of all the classic Western river trips.

In stark contrast to the Yampa, the Green River, known as the gateway river for John Wesley Powell's adventurous first descent of the Colorado River, is no longer wild and free but a modern day managed waterway. Controlled by the 3.8 million acre-foot Flaming Gorge Reservoir, the Green, which once was of equal or greater size to the Yampa, now represents a tamed down version of how our Western rivers look and function.

Because the Green is managed for its water supply in Flaming Gorge, it hasn't been able to annually flood its banks since being dammed in 1964, and has since entrenched itself in a forever course. The Cottonwoods you'll find along the banks of the Green are mostly old growth, sprouted from age-old floods when the river ran wild, like the Yampa. Its aquatic habitats are now degraded so much that the endangered fish that still exist in the Yampa no longer call the Green home.

Just upstream of the confluence, the Green flows thru the Gates of Lodore, its own multi day boating experience and brilliant red rock canyon. Disaster Falls, the infamous rapid that sunk Powell's boat, the No Name, is located in the Gates and is one of many challenging Class III rapids that modern river runners love to negotiate.

Because it is dam controlled, the Green offers a much longer river running season for boaters and allows for adequate flows even when the Yampa dries up in the early summer months.

These two rivers offer an interesting look into our downstream future. The Yampa with all its available floodwaters and the Green with its pool of available water in Flaming Gorge are currently, and will continue to be looked at as, possible resources for the growing gap in Colorado's water supply.

With populations in Denver and on the Front Range growing rapidly, water managers in the state view the Yampa and Green as the resources that could provide them with the essential water supply necessary to sustain this growth. Preliminary studies have been produced on the Yampa for an off channel reservoir and pumping station that would deliver hundreds of thousands of acre feet of water via a Trans Basin Diversion over the Continental Divide and into the Front Range. If this diversion and pump back occurs, the Yampa's natural attributes would certainly be destroyed. It would be a shame for us as a society to harness the last great river of the entire Colorado River system. When the Yampa's wilderness is degraded, there won't be anything else like it in the Southwestern Rockies.

Though the pumpback on the Yampa is now on the back burner due to the extraordinary cost of building the infrastructure and moving its water, the Green River is now being eyed as a more viable and cost effective approach. The bulls eye is now directly on this already highly managed system. Flaming Gorge was built to provide future water resources to the region and the reservoir has existing water available in it. Water planners are now deep in the

planning process to further tap the Green as the one great water supply needed to carry the state of Colorado into its prospering future.

A major project like this out of the Green would certainly continue to impact the river's capacity to provide adequate environmental and recreational flows below the reservoir and through the Gates of Lodore. It is an interesting and scary time for those of us who view river recreation as an equal value to supplying water reserves for agriculture, industry, and municipal needs.

As boaters, now is not the time for us to keep our voices quiet. We should all become more engaged in our river advocacy efforts. Rivers like the Green and Yampa of Northwest Colorado need you to step up for them and provide the voice that they cannot provide for themselves.

Back at Echo Park, where the two great rivers marry and blend into one, there is a brief battle of opposing currents and an obvious discolored seam where the two waters, at least for a moment, try to keep their separate paths. It's a reminder about how different these two rivers are but also that they are one in the same.

The next time you get the opportunity to float the Green or Yampa into Echo Park, step out of your boats, walk up onto this elevated view and accept the beauty and uncertainty that these two great American rivers retain.

Echo Park outcrop on the Green River.



STEWARDSHIP

UPPER COLORADO RIVER: GORE CANYON WHITEWATER PARK

BY NATHAN FEY

THE UPPER COLORADO River through Gore Canyon is certainly one of Colorado's most treasured whitewater runs. This reach not only attracts expert paddlers from around the state and nation for the annual Gore Canyon Festival, but the area is also extremely popular with regional Learn-to-Kayak programs, youth programs, and summer camps. Over the last five years, American Whitewater has been working tirelessly to ensure protection of the Upper Colorado River ecosystem. Along with numerous other stakeholders, we have actively participated in the development of a Wild & Scenic Alternative Management Plan, which is part of the Bureau of Land Management's Resource Management Plan for the Upper Colorado River. Through this process, the commitment to preserving and enhancing the recreational value of the area solidified, and plans for a Whitewater Park below Gore Canyon began to come together in 2010. If all goes smoothly and according to plan, it is possible that the project will be built by 2015.

The Gore Canyon Whitewater Park being proposed by Grand County will be located on BLM land near the Pumphouse Recreational Site, adjacent to the Headwaters National Scenic Byway (see map for details). The County proposes to construct two whitewater features—"Inspiration Point" and "Launch Counter"—



Map of Proposed Gore Canyon Whitewater Park and the Pumphouse Recreation site along the Upper Colorado River.

to create a "park and play" whitewater park for beginner, intermediate and advanced whitewater enthusiasts. The two features will be 1/3 of a mile apart and will be designed to create different experiences for all skill levels. Additionally, a new access road, parking lot, educational signs, vault toilets with screened changing rooms, benches, and picnic tables will be installed at the site.

The Pumphouse Recreational Site is already immensely popular with recreational river enthusiasts. The economic value of visitor day use in the area is over \$13,000,000 annually (ASU 2007), providing a tremendous economic boost to nearby towns. A new whitewater park in the area will bolster these numbers by attracting additional enthusiastic boaters in the area who enjoy "park and play" whitewater parks.

There is a synergy and new way of doing business on the Upper Colorado River with the collaborative spirit that has developed out of the proposed Colorado River Cooperative Agreement and the Stakeholder Group for developing a Wild and Scenic Alternative. Grand County

and American Whitewater's participation in cooperative efforts helped to lay the foundation for diverse partners to support the Upper Colorado River-Gore Canyon Whitewater Park.

The Gore Canyon Whitewater Park complements Grand County and American Whitewater's broader goal for the Upper Colorado River—to protect, restore, and enhance the river's ecosystem and provide nationally protected, outstandingly remarkable, diverse river based recreational opportunities. The project avoids increasing impacts to wildlife in this important migration corridor by keeping a wide variety of recreational uses concentrated in an existing developed and managed BLM recreational site. Additionally, protecting water quality, vegetation, and the natural channel environment will be at the forefront of the design and implementation of the project.

The Project can demonstrate a tangible accomplishment of bringing together East/West Slope and public/private interests that value river based recreation as an important part of why many of us live in Colorado. For more detailed information about the Gore Canyon Whitewater Park, including how it fits in the larger picture of water supply negotiations, visit: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Project/view/id/97/>



Looking upstream towards Pumphouse Recreation site and the end of Gore Canyon on the Colorado River.

Photo courtesy of Caroline Brandford

AW SUPPORTS IMPROVEMENTS TO ST. VRAIN RIVER CORRIDOR

BY NATHAN FEY

THIS YEAR, AMERICAN Whitewater has worked with the Town of Lyons, Colorado to demonstrate support to the State of Colorado for the Lyons Valley River Park Project along the St. Vrain River. The Town of Lyons, host of the internationally renown Lyons Outdoor Games, has made substantial efforts to restore instream habitat and riparian integrity of the St. Vrain River corridor, while providing safe public access to diverse recreational opportunities.

Through our members and affiliate clubs, we have worked to protect and restore the rich natural and cultural history of our rivers, and to foster greater understanding of their economic and ecological importance, and enthusiasm for their conservation. Interest in river-based recreation, such as kayaking and canoeing, fishing, or wildlife viewing is growing, and local efforts to create navigable, accessible, community-scale river parks are critical to

reconnecting Americans of all ages to our river resources. American Whitewater has helped advise the planning and design of the Lyons Valley River Park, and is now working in partnership with the Town to raise funds that match grants from the State of Colorado to support the project.

The Lyons Valley River Park will showcase the St. Vrain River and its surroundings in the area as a restored, thriving ecosystem, and advance the Town of Lyons as an active and vibrant destination for fishermen, walkers, bikers, paddlers, wildlife enthusiasts and people of all ages and abilities. The proposed Project will demonstrate that ecosystem restoration, improved recreational use, and preservation of natural and cultural values are complimentary interests in similar community-scale initiatives.

- The Park will provide critical linkages for both existing in-town trails and proposed future regional trails from the east (i.e. Longmont Greenway Trail, Lyons to Boulder, etc.)
- The Project will improve and maintain natural riparian habitats along the river, including continued restoration

of ponds, removal of invasive species, and replanting of native plant varieties in affected areas.

- Whitewater park improvements, including modifications to existing diversion structures, will address the impacts to fish habitat and longitudinal migration, and eliminate safety hazards for river users such as boaters and tubers.

American Whitewater is committed to supporting the Town of Lyons in this important project. In addition to continuing to provide technical expertise and stakeholder input, we will be working with the Town of Lyons to raise financial support from the local community and our broader membership to compliment funding from Great Outdoors Colorado, the City of Longmont, and Boulder County. If you're visiting the Lyons Outdoor Games this year, stop by the American Whitewater booth to donate matching funds in support of this important project!

*Lyons Outdoor Games, Lyons
Valley River Park.
Photo by Nathan Fey*



STEWARDSHIP

AW INTERVENES IN NEW HYDROPOWER PROJECT IN DOLORES RIVER BASIN

BY NATHAN FEY

THIS SPRING AMERICAN Whitewater filed a Motion to Intervene with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in the preliminary permit application for the Cortez Pumped Storage Project. The project would be located on Plateau Creek, near the town of Dolores, Colorado and affect streamflows in the Dolores River basin and the San Juan National Forest.

INCA Engineers, Inc., from Bellevue, Washington, filed an application for a preliminary permit from FERC to study the feasibility of the Cortez Pumped Storage Project (FERC P-14328-000). The sole purpose of a preliminary permit, if issued, is to grant the permit holder priority to file a license application during the permit term (36 months).

During the term of the preliminary permit period, technical, economic, and environmental studies will be conducted to determine the feasibility of the project. The studies will consist of both office and field investigations to refine preliminary dimensions, project arrangement, operating parameters, costs and environmental or institutional constraints.

American Whitewater is concerned with the impacts to flow regimes in the Dolores River watershed, as well as environmental and recreational impacts from additional water-supply related facilities development in the basin. The proposed Cortez Pumped Storage Project would consist of the following new facilities:

1. An upper reservoir, located on Dry Creek Mesa west of Plateau Creek, formed by a 130-foot-high by 6,500-foot-long dam, with a total storage capacity of 8,000 acre-feet



Running Snaggletooth Rapid on the Dolores River.
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

- and a water surface area of 275 acres at full pool elevation;
2. A lower reservoir, located in Plateau Creek Canyon, formed by a 270-foot high by 800-foot long dam, having a total storage capacity of 9,500 acre-feet and a water surface area of 200 acres at full pool elevation;
3. Two 15-foot diameter steel penstocks;
4. Two 27-foot diameter tunnels that would be 850-feet-long;
5. An underground powerhouse containing two reversible pump-turbines totaling 500 megawatts of generating capacity; and
6. A 7-mile-long, 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line that would connect from the switchyard with an existing 230 kV interconnection east of the project area.

Field studies, tests, and other activities to be conducted under the preliminary permit would include topographic mapping, geologic/geotechnical investigations, streamflow data collection in Plateau Creek, and surveys to support various environmental resource studies for preparation of a license application. American Whitewater has been granted party status to the proceedings, and our staff and volunteers will be working to defeat this additional threat to the Dolores as we continue to reform the way McPhee Reservoir is managed for the benefit of the downstream reaches of the Dolores River. For more information on our larger Dolores River Project, check <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Project/view/id/121/>

Opposite: Dolores River from Mountain Sheep Point.
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

UNLIKELY ALLIES

BY LACEY BLACK

I'VE NEVER BEEN on a river. I've never put myself in a vessel and floated down any river, anywhere—ever. (I seem to be the only one left here in Durango...please don't tell on me!) Not that I haven't been invited, mind you. The invitations usually go something like this: A bunch of my friends are leaving for a multi-day booze cruise down the San Juan or embarking on a town run down the Animas, and they have an extra spot, if I'd like to join them. They're always leaving in less than 24 hours (or 24 minutes, depending on the trip), making it impossible to rearrange my busy schedule to accommodate my spontaneous friends. And here lies the reason that to this day, I have not been in any type of boat on any river.

So, you might ask, how does a non-boater end up becoming a member of American Whitewater, the go-to organization for paddlers? How is it that a self-employed musician who has never been on a river ends up writing an article in the *Journal*



Lacey Black in her element hiking in the San Juans.

Photo by Morgan Matthews

for one of the country's oldest and most respected river conservation organizations? What could we possibly have in common? Why would someone who doesn't even use the river care about American Whitewater's mission or efforts? As it turns out, there are a lot of good reasons.

First of all, a few of my friends are members of American Whitewater. They have no problem telling me about all the great things that AW is doing nationally; they assured me that the 35 bucks I would shell out to become a member would go to good use. They talk about dam removals, environmental assets that have been protected, and they make the case that rivers existing in their natural, wild state are healthier, and that wild state also happens to be good for boating. For them, becoming a member of an organization advocating for healthier rivers is a no-brainer. That being said, the vast majority of my boater friends are not members of American Whitewater, which is a classic illustration of the slacker boater (or ski bum, cyclist, etc.) stereotype. We're all so busy enjoying what we do that we don't have time to get involved with the details of managing resources. That's for people who have extra time on their hands, certainly not us.

In the past, though, protecting resources like rivers was solely a grassroots, community-based volunteer endeavor, producing varied results. Sometimes the boaters would rally and get something accomplished, but more often than not, the efforts to make a difference died a slow death somewhere between the public service announcement on the radio at some ungodly hour and the coffee shop back wall bulletin board where the flyer was pinned. "People felt like they weren't being heard, they were getting burned out," said Jay Loschert, longtime river user in Southwest Colorado and current Dolores River Stewardship Assistant for American Whitewater. Involvement in management decisions has typically grown or dwindled based on the level of crisis perceived, and when boater involvement spikes, the message is not always a clear one. As AW Board member and Durango resident Kent Ford points out, "the results were presented in a statistical flow study report that allowed American Whitewater to quantify the needs of the boating community and represent them accordingly. When you can bring everybody together, get everybody calmed down, you realize that being contentious isn't going to work. When we go to meetings with all



STEWARDSHIP

the stakeholders, it's surprising how much common ground you find."

We're out of water in Colorado. We're facing a growing population, and very consumptive industries that need more water. Then there's the threat of climate change and drought scenarios, and the reality is that we're not left with enough water to meet everybody's needs. Without paddlers advocating for river health and recreation, the management decisions will fail to account for those needs. In 10 to 15 years, flows that we have come to enjoy today will no longer be in our rivers. Whitewater parks will dry up, and businesses will be unsustainable. Fish populations will decline, non-native species will invade, and what we enjoy today will become a very different thing in the future. I foresee amusement parks, rather than wild rivers. The adventure tourism economy that many communities

rely on is at serious risk, as is the health of our communities. So, as a self-employed musician (which really means I live out of a tip jar), I need my local river to be healthy from a purely economic standpoint (I'll save the intrinsic value standpoint for another time). I cannot write it loudly enough. THIS MATTERS. Knowledge, credibility, and an attitude of cooperation has brought about a lot of progress, especially here in Colorado. "There seems to be more hope," says Jay Loschert, but it doesn't happen overnight, and there's always a need for more resources. Yes, that is code for MONEY (though volunteering is always needed too). David Costlow, of Colorado River Outfitters Association has some advice for you, and yes, I mean you, dear reader. "Send them a check! Whether it's a membership or a donation, they need the money to keep fighting the fight."

So with that, I'm going to pass this *Journal* on to all of my boater friends who are not members of American Whitewater to point out the flaws in their logic, and then I'm going to pass it along to some of my other friends who are not boaters, and ask them to join me in my support. I hope you'll do the same.

Lacey Black is a full-time musician and American Whitewater member living in Durango, Colorado. When not behind a piano, she can be found taking in the great outdoors in her backyard of the San Juan Mountains. Many thanks to Andy Corra with Four Corners Riversports in Durango, Kent Ford, Nathan Fey and Jay Loschert with American Whitewater, and David Costlow with Colorado River Outfitters Association, and Marsha Porter-Norton of the Dolores River Dialogue.

The Lower Dolores River.
Photo courtesy of Nathan Fey



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SOURCE TO SEA

BEYOND THE TAKE-OUT

BY WILL STAUFFER-NORRIS

THROUGH THE FOG of sleep, I hear Zak yelling at something large splashing in the river a few feet away. I open my eyes to the familiar starscape and watch as a large cow moose strolls between our sleeping bags and our ice covered boats. This doesn't trouble me as much it maybe should, and I fall back asleep immediately. Welcome to Wyoming.

Zak Podmore and I are at the confluence of the New Fork and the Green Rivers, in October. Behind us are 11 days of hiking, packrafting, and kayaking, from the alpine snowfields of the Wind River Mountains down to the winding, shallow, and stunning upper Green. Ahead are 102 days of River Time, down through Lodore, Desolation, Cataract, and the Grand Canyon; then onto a series of reservoirs and diversions that eventually transform the river into a tamarisk-filled mudflat, sandwiched between lettuce fields.

We're trying to go 1700 miles from the source of the Colorado River to the Sea of Cortez, through some of the most spectacular landscapes in the world. We

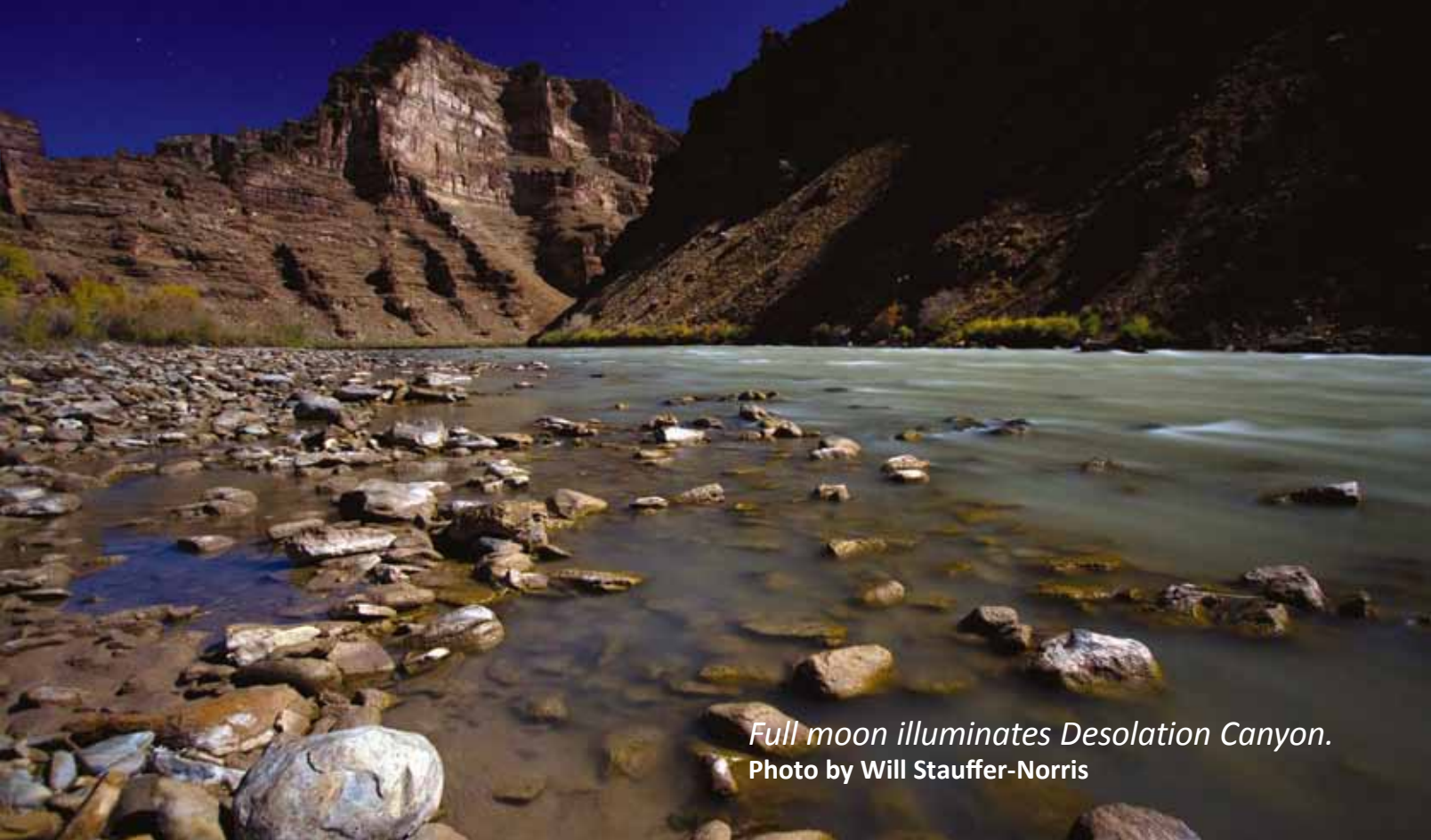


Will and Zak near the source of the Green River, Wind River Mountains, WY.
Photo by Will Stauffer-Norris (self timer)

decided to start on the Green for several reasons. Hydrologically, it's the longest tributary of the Colorado. Historically, what's now known as the Colorado River in the state of Colorado was once called the Grand, which joins with the Green in the heart of Canyonlands National Park to form the Colorado proper. And, of course,

because the Green flows through such a diversity of big, gorgeous country. It's a bit late in the season to be on the river in the high plains, and in fact, we haven't seen a single other boater for two weeks. Sometimes we pinball foolishly through the rocks, past surprised fly fishermen and an occasional hunter. The sole reason





Full moon illuminates Desolation Canyon.
Photo by Will Stauffer-Norris

we're here this time of year is the permit system—Zak was the winner of (and sole applicant for) a November 29th Grand Canyon launch. We planned the entire trip around that date, lining up the other canyon permits without too much trouble in the late fall.

Floating from source to sea is an approach to river running rarely taken. Every other river trip I've been on uses the river as transportation, but the real attraction is the topography around and under the water. Trips on the Salmon are enjoyable and sought after because the river traverses remote mountains; rocks wash down from the canyon walls to form rapids in the Arkansas; the bedrock waterfalls of Chile are known worldwide. But no self-respecting whitewater boater would be excited about a week paddling down the Mississippi, because it's flat farmland. We are starting from a different premise: follow the river, not the topography.

Opposite: Will and Zak paddle above Flaming Gorge Reservoir, site of the proposed pipeline.
Photo by Mike Podmore

We watch mountains move away, come closer, reveal their insides, and move away again. We see the Earth's crust warped over hundreds of miles, as the folding and faulting of rock changes faster than the elevation of the river. These desert landscapes that draw river runners have some independence from the water that flows through them. Who cares if the origin of Grand Canyon water is the Wind Rivers, the Sierra Nevada, Columbia River water piped in, icebergs floated from the Arctic? It would still be an amazing canyon. But we care where this river came from, where it's going, because we've tied ourselves to its fate with these plastic boats. We appreciate the bisecting of mountains, are humbled by towering walls, but also watch the cliffs recede and oil derricks, cattle, and irrigation infrastructure appear in their place. These lands, the flat lands and flat water, the cultivated, civilized places of working people and worked fields are not what river runners typically seek. But the river flows there, and so we see these places too. While conscientious rafters strain their dishwater, 50 miles upstream a herd of cattle defecates in the water, sewage is treated and dumped, a bulldozer moves earth and dumps sediment into the



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*Will in Havasu Creek, tributary of
the Grand Canyon, AZ.*
Photo by Sophia Maravell

water. This river originates from such a vast area and meets such an unbelievable end that it's hard to wrap your mind around when you sit next to it, bounded by banks, and if you're lucky, canyon walls.

The Flaming Gorge would have been spectacular, we conclude, if there were still a river here. For four days we paddle across the reservoir, through open parks and narrow canyons, all drowned by the Flaming Gorge Dam. Mike Podmore (Zak's dad) and Jonathan Cooley travel next to us in a motorized cataraft, ready to "run the rez." Jonathan tries to fill us up with round after round of French toast, deep fried in bacon grease, and we eat every scrap: paddling flatwater burns a lot of calories. The Flaming Gorge Reservoir is the site of a proposed 500-plus mile pipeline, Jonathan tells us, from the reservoir to

Colorado's Front Range. This would be the most expensive water project in Colorado's history, with a \$9 billion price tag. Using a series of fossil fuel powered pumping stations, the pipeline would suck away almost a quarter of Green River's flow

to water suburban lawns. It seems too absurd to be a threat, a vague problem that someone else will deal with. I can't imagine a river diverted to death, because I haven't seen the lower river yet.

*Zak at the end of the canal
system, Mexico.*

Photo by Will Stauffer-Norris



SOURCE TO SEA

As we travel down this river, the water changes from liquid snow to glacial blue to clear to darker to clear again, past the dams, to milkshake to green tea. The days blur together and I'm solidly in River Time, away from civilization for the longest I've ever been. At Desolation Canyon, Zak and I split up. We paddle the ninety miles of wilderness alone, over four days. It's November now and I see no one, for the understandable reasons that my shoes are frozen solid every morning and it takes the sun a long time to creep over the canyon walls. The rapids are mellow, but a fully loaded, 14-foot kayak keeps things interesting. I watch distant airplanes and mating bighorns. I start to think that I could live this way forever, but the canyon ends, as it always does.

There's only one direction to go, downstream, and we take it. A week in Labyrinth, Stillwater, and Cataract; a week across Lake Powell; 25 days in the Grand; and then a succession of reservoirs: Mead, Mojave, Havasu, Imperial. The Colorado River begins to dwindle: water is piped to Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tucson, Los Angeles, San Diego, the Imperial Valley. At the Morelos Dam, outside Yuma, Arizona, what's left of the river is diverted into the Mexican irrigation system, leaving a dry riverbed where the Colorado once flowed. Down here, the river loses its identity and becomes a resource to be used whenever it's profitable. It is no longer the runoff of the Winds and Uintas and San Juans and the cow fields, but a raw ingredient, measured in acre-feet, to grow vegetables or brew beer or flush toilets.

The Mexican irrigation canal we end up in is neither American nor whitewater, but it is downstream of both. "This is the worst place I've ever paddled," I complain to Zak. For five days we float down flat, straight, polluted, noisy, concrete-lined canals, with frequent portages around trash-filled sieves. At one point I splash a few drops of water into my mouth while getting into my packraft; my mouth burns. There is no water clean enough to filter, so we



Will and Zak at the end of the journey, Sea of Cortez, Mexico

Photo by Will Stauffer-Norris (self timer)

carry several gallons each. Eventually the canals get too small, so we fold up our rafts and start bushwhacking through dense, invasive tamarisk.

After a day of hiking with comically heavy packs, we find a tributary composed of agricultural wastewater to float on. We take this for two days until it, too, becomes too shallow to paddle. We are forced to wade through a runoff swamp and across cracked mudflats covered with shells, reminders of the massive delta that used to exist. Finally, after hours of slogging through knee-deep tidal mud, we reach a finger of the sea. The tide sweeps us out until our packrafts are tiny specks on the ocean. Just past nightfall, a school of dolphins glides by, their gentle exhaling the only sound amidst the star-silhouetted mountains of Baja. We make it to the sea, but the river does not.

This past summer, in a different watershed, we floated past the normal take-out. My friend Matt lives in the tiny town of Kimberly on the North Fork of the John Day River, Oregon, so we went an extra

15 miles to his house. "Rafters always paddle the wilderness sections," he said, as we cruised past earth movers and cattle. "No one ever sees what's beyond the canyon. But everyone should see this," he says, gesturing at the transformed and denuded landscape. Water, land, and people are more tightly bound than I ever imagined. Each new stress on the Colorado River ecosystem, from the Flaming Gorge pipeline to the nuclear plant in Green River, Utah, to Phoenix suburb construction, has implications for every other part of the watershed. Even in the deepest, wildest, grandest canyons, we cannot escape the interconnectedness that makes rivers so magnificent--and fragile.

In January, Will and Zak finished the 113-day journey down the Green and Colorado Rivers from source to sea. For more writing, photos, and videos, visit: coloradosourcetosea.coloradocollege.edu

HOW I GOT STARTED

THE BEGINNING OF THE BEGINNING

BY MOLLY ROBINSON

SOME PEOPLE THOUGHT May 21, 2011 would be the beginning of the end of the world. Luckily it wasn't, but it was a day that stands out in my life as a time when I began to change. That day I took a whitewater kayaking clinic, and it happened to be the beginning of the beginning of my world.

I was in a new relationship. We were getting to know each other, going on nice dinner-and-a-movie type dates, the kind for which you worry about what to wear and get nervous. It was going great. Then one day he asked me, "What do you think about whitewater kayaking?" I had been in kayaks before on lazy rivers and lakes as a kid. From lumbering, guided rafts I had watched brightly colored kayakers fly by on the Ocoee, carving in and out of the waves with such precision. But had I thought of doing it myself? No, not really. I am a cautious person by nature. I look to be comfortable and prepared for situations in which I have imagined the best and worst case scenarios and planned accordingly. Going through life like this does not lend itself to spontaneity. So in the spirit of the commitment I made to myself when I turned 30 to try new things, take some risks, and basically do the opposite of what my aforementioned cautious gut was telling me, I answered, "Um, sure...I'll give it a shot."

We decided to take a lesson, after hearing what amounted to, "Are you crazy?" to our inquiry at the local outfitter when we tried to rent boats and head to the river as whitewater kayaking virgins. We signed up for a full day clinic on the Pigeon River.

We drove to the river on a beautiful Tennessee spring morning, the kind that wraps you up and pushes you out the door screaming, "Go outside and stay there!" We met the instructor, got outfitted, learned about the Essential Five (kayak,



*The author on the Upper Pigeon River, September 5, 2011.
GoPro photo capture by David Green*

paddle, PFD, skirt, helmet), warmed up with stretching and wacky jacks, and then we were ready to hit the water. Slipping the boat into the clear, glassy water, I felt like a baby animal learning to walk, unstable and unsure. The first lesson—the Wet Exit—was a critical skill taught first to prove to new kayakers that they can get out of the boat if they are upside down. Flailing, splashing, and inexplicably gasping for air in the three seconds it took me to complete this task, I emerged at the surface. First skill...success!

From there, we worked on strokes. I'm not sure anything has ever frustrated me more than trying to paddle that kayak in a straight line. I went around in circles. I heard, "Look where you want to go, not where you don't!" and "If it feels natural, don't do it!" Eddy turns, peel outs, sweep strokes, braces—all of these terms are now part of my vocabulary but that day it was like learning a new language. I was a difficult student. When I can't figure out something quickly I get frustrated, and I don't want an audience—much less the audience of a guy I am just getting to know and trying to impress. Fear, weakness, lack of coordination, my repertoire of four-letter words, what I look like in a helmet & nose plugs...these were things I was in no hurry to reveal to him. I was mortified;

I thought, "I am never going to see this guy again." But there I was. I had committed to the day. I won't say I was having fun yet, but my curiosity was piqued and I am not one to back down from a challenge. "Just keep trying," I told myself.

We spent the first half of the day on flat water learning basic skills. After lunch and the classroom portion of the clinic, we were ready to test it all out on some moving water. The decision to take us on the upper or lower section of the river was based on whether there was a dam release, which our instructor determined was not the case that day. So up we went. As a tiny girl in a large river running boat, I was as protected as I could be. My strokes were all over the place but the boat kept me upright and the slow moving water kept me headed in the right direction. We practiced getting in and out of eddies and paddling through the small rapids we faced. This was finally starting to be fun! A little over halfway down, our instructor slowed and looked around, and said matter-of-factly, "Hmm. It looks like they've opened the dam." And what does that mean exactly? "Well, there's only one way down the river! So just stay behind me and let's give it a go and see how you do!" So we followed our leader down the river that was slowly

fulfilling its Class III+ potential. THIS was not in the plans! The run became more about us getting to the take-out as quickly as possible and less about verbal instruction. The ultimate hands-on, real time skills test! And we passed with flying (though no less shaken up) colors! I had faced an unforeseen change in plans and adjusted accordingly, trusted those around me to know what was best, followed directions and had an unexpected adventure, the first of many.

As we got off the river that day and headed home, I realized two things: 1) The world had, in fact, not ended. And 2) I couldn't wait to do that again.

I couldn't talk about the start of my whitewater life without talking about my instructor that first day. I have no doubt

that I would not have fallen in love with whitewater had it not been for him and his enthusiasm and passion for the sport. On the first day as he watched me struggle and become increasingly frustrated, he said things like, "You're thinking too much" (I was), and "You don't sleep well do you?" (I don't), and "There's this thing called awareness Molly...." (I don't have it). Among countless words of wisdom, he told me that "Kayaking is confidence." Nothing stuck with me more and I think about those words every time I get in my boat. I lack confidence in some areas, and searching for it and eventually finding it on the river changed me. As the spring and then summer went on he became a good friend. We continue to paddle together and each time down a river is a lesson. He never stops teaching.

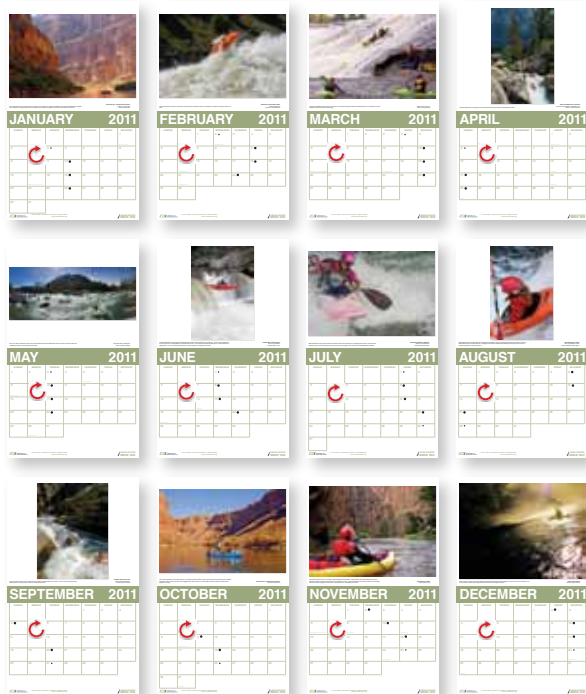


Showing off a flesh wound after a swim, on the Upper Pigeon River.

Photo by David Green

Possibly the best part of joining the world of whitewater is the people, the river people. From the day I started, I felt like I was a part of this new little world. I could speak the language. There was a common bond between the stars of the

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HOW I GOT STARTED



*French Broad River, Girls at Play Clinic,
September 10, 2011*
Photo by Jaime Heisserer

sport and me, on my first lesson, my first river. Experienced paddlers are not just tolerant; they are appreciative of the newcomers as if the organic continuation of the sport justifies their successes and solidifies their legacy. We all have close friends in our non-paddling life, but let's be honest—they don't really understand and that's OK. It is the river people who are there to share successes and failures, to answer questions, to run shuttle, and who just get it. I love the river people. I AM the river people.

There are several moments of my kayaking life so far that stand out; that even at the time seemed significant, when I could feel the riverchange.....

Our first solo mission. We rented boats and gear and went to the Hiwassee River. I will never forget how I felt at the put-in....the exhilaration of an adventure on our own. That Class II river might as well have been Class V. That day we started what would eventually become a well-oiled machine of efficiency in boat racking, gear loading, shuttle arranging, and the all-important post-river snacking. A pretty good team.

Our first day on the Nantahala. Just the two of us again. For the first time I was in a boat that fit me. I felt like the boat and I were one piece. I could control the movement with my legs and hips and not just my

spindly arms. Aha! Plus, we had shiny new dry tops! A perfect day.

My early claim to fame (or shame) was having the fastest wet exit on the river. I was out of the boat so fast when I flipped over that onlookers were concerned that I was not in there tight enough. I had learned how to roll in the swimming pool and at the roll clinic. My roll was flawless and graceful. And it never even crossed my mind to attempt it when I was under water! Just pull the grab loop and swim. I knew that would be my next hurdle. I had to learn to give myself a few seconds under there to at least try to roll, to suppress the panic instinct and stay calm. I count the day I flipped and tried four times to roll before eventually swimming as one of the most successful days I've had on the river.

And then the day I got my first combat roll. It was on a rapid called Lost Guide on the Pigeon River. I had swum it every other time. I will never forget the way it felt to come up out of the water, absolutely shocked that it had worked! Grinning from ear to ear, just maybe a tear in my eye, feeling like a superhero. Our group was waiting at the bottom of the rapid with paddle high fives all around. Seriously, that was the coolest feeling. Who am I kidding...I am new enough at this that it is still the coolest feeling every time I do it. Does that stop? I hope not.

I got the chance to paddle with some amazing women with Girls at Play in Asheville, NC. I learned some great techniques for female paddlers, like using my core to power my boat instead of my weaker arms. ALMOST as importantly, I learned how to strap my boat on my car by myself and paddle without the boys!

I went to my first Green Race this year. It was one of the most amazing things I have ever seen; I had never even heard of it six

All packed up for a winter paddle on Big South Fork.

Photo by Molly Robinson

months before. I was in awe of the Green, the paddlers, and the community as we sat dangling our legs over Gorilla watching the best kayakers in the world just feet in front of us. I was star-struck....rattling off names, statistics and accomplishments like I knew these people! I felt like I did. I may never run the Narrows myself but I am a part of it. Another perfect day.

I know I am forever changed by kayaking. I wasn't in particular need of changing exactly, but there was a space that needed to be filled. I just didn't know it until I found something to fill it. The need to get outside my comfort zone, to push myself past my self-imposed limits. To accept the possibility of failure, and to use it as motivation to succeed. To show weakness, but not submit. To respect the power of the river. I was urged recently to "walk slower." On the street that night, and in life in general. For the first time I can see that life is not about reaching a pre-planned destination or staying on a path that seems to be the quickest way to get there. Life is about everything that happens when you try something you never thought you could do, when you stop listening to the words and you let yourself feel the riverchange....



RÍO MULATOS-AROS: THE BEST RAFT-SUPPORT RIVER IN MEXICO

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROCKY CONTOS



Río Mulatos-Aros is filled with scenic beauty such as the high cliff walls in Cañon Los Arrieros.

SEE NEIL LINE up perfectly entering the big Class III-IV Morita, the most impressive cataract on Río Aros. As he plows down into the drop, the huge waves appear to nearly sink his cataraft, but he stays upright and comes out smiling! The rapid occurs in a limestone gorge known as Cañon La Bocana where the Aros, typically flowing with 8000 cfs this time of year, has a boulder field that backs it up. About 60% of the water goes over a single steep Class IV drop on the right, while the other 40% of the water goes over an easier multi-step Class III chute on the left. I go up to run the tougher right line in my kayak, and am impressed by the exhilarating ride through the huge waves. Pure fun!



Despite being almost unknown to the boating world, the Río Mulatos-Aros trip is on par with the best 7+ day trips that the Western USA has to offer—with no permit required. Located in Sonora, Mexico just south of the Arizona border, the 148-mile journey down the Aros offers subtropical savannah wilderness boating. With only one village midway down, you can count on experiencing solitude, beauty, and interesting wildlife on a generally relaxing scenic float with occasional rapids of up to Class III-IV character.

In mid-August our group arrives in Sahuaripa, a small Mexican town five hours south of the border and only 10 miles from the take-out. With me on this trip is my wife, Barbara, and two catarafters, Neil Nikirk and Lacey Anderson. We poke around town checking out the hotels and restaurants and the others settle in for a nice meal as I continue searching for my friend Pokis who will serve as our shuttle driver. Soon we are on our way to the put-in by Mulatos—on a road that is shorter than the total distance we'll be on the river!

At the put-in we befriend Ken Balleweg, an American geologist who has worked at the nearby Minas de Oro Nacional gold mine for 10 years. He says he never sees other Americans in the area. We chat a while and he points out the different ores from which they extract gold. Since some of us were a bit concerned about the risk of drug-related violence, I ask Ken, "Do you think it's safe to travel in the area?" He says, "Yeah, it's safe around here. Nobody will bother you on the river. Just don't drive on that one section of highway at night as some assaults have happened there." Ken longs to join us on the rafts, but has work scheduled. He's hiked into the barranca downstream on an exploratory mission, though, and says "I imagine it will be pretty rough in there, especially with all this water."

We take off on about 2500 cfs in our three rafts, zipping along quickly through Class II water punctuated by an occasional Class III drop. After a pleasant night on a small beach, the next day we enter the 10-mile long Barranca Mulatos, a scenic granite gorge in which I know there are several Class IV rapids: Amargosa, Saucito,

INTERNATIONAL WHITEWATER

This huge playa at Arroyo Pérdices in Cañon La Bocana is only one of many big beaches offering amazing camping opportunities on Río Mulatos-Aros

Unscathed, and the double-whammy Dos Más—all named by me on my solo kayak first descent trip in 2002. I am anxious to see how our rafts will handle them. As we get out to look at Amargosa, Neil seems a little nervous. I say, “Don’t worry, Neil, you’ll go right through. It’s easy Class IV.” After we witness Lacey’s cataraft catapult high on the side from one of the holes, I change my tune just a little, “OK, maybe it’s solid Class IV.” We all make it through fine.

Later we face Dos Mas, the most challenging rapid on the whole trip. Dos Mas is actually two Class IV rapids separated by about 100 yards of Class II-III water. We pull to the side before entering and I briefly explain what I recalled of the rapid from eight years earlier: “There’s big waves and some holes. Just remember as you get to the lower rapid to make your way to the right around the big whale-rock boulder.” I take off with Barb up front helping paddle the big cataraft. Up and down we bob over waves. Barb sits back to hold on tight as we hit a big one. The raft spins around. Soon I regain control as we crash through more



waves in the final rapid. Suddenly, we are through! I wait and watch as both Lacey and Neil have fine runs as well.

About 34 miles down from the put-in, we reach the confluence with Río Aros, and the flow jumps to around 5000 cfs. A few miles downstream, in the distance we see the Pirinolas—nipple like projections of the mountaintops around which the Aros flows in a great bend. We soon arrive at the one village along the river: Nátora. It is barely noticeable; there are casas near the river but they are hidden high up above the bank

and not obvious from the river. The town offers a small store where some basic foods can be purchased.

On day four we arrive at Arroyo El Aliso, which enters the Aros through a slit in the bedrock wall on the right. We swim in the deep clear 85-degree water—ideal on a warm summer day and much more appreciated than a hot spring. Perambulating upstream, we find several small waterfalls that provide free back massages. This is a must-do side excursion. Like the Grand Canyon, the Aros has a



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Barbara Conboy hikes into the Narrows of Arroyo Santa Rosa along Río Aros, one of many interesting side excursions along the river.

number of inviting side stops that are part of the attraction of paddling the river.

Another such must-do side-excursion is at Arroyo Santa Rosa, where we stop to hike up the side canyon leading to a shady narrows with another small pool that provides a cooling soak. Downstream we face the easy Class III Santa Rosa and Roca Roja rapids as we enter Cañon Los Arrieros. Walls rise straight from the river in scenic splendor. I hear the raucous calls of Military Macaws—amazing huge green parrots with long tails. Flying in pairs up high near cliffs by the river, they scream so loud that you can hear them miles away. In fact, this is the northernmost latitudes where such large parrots are found in the wild.

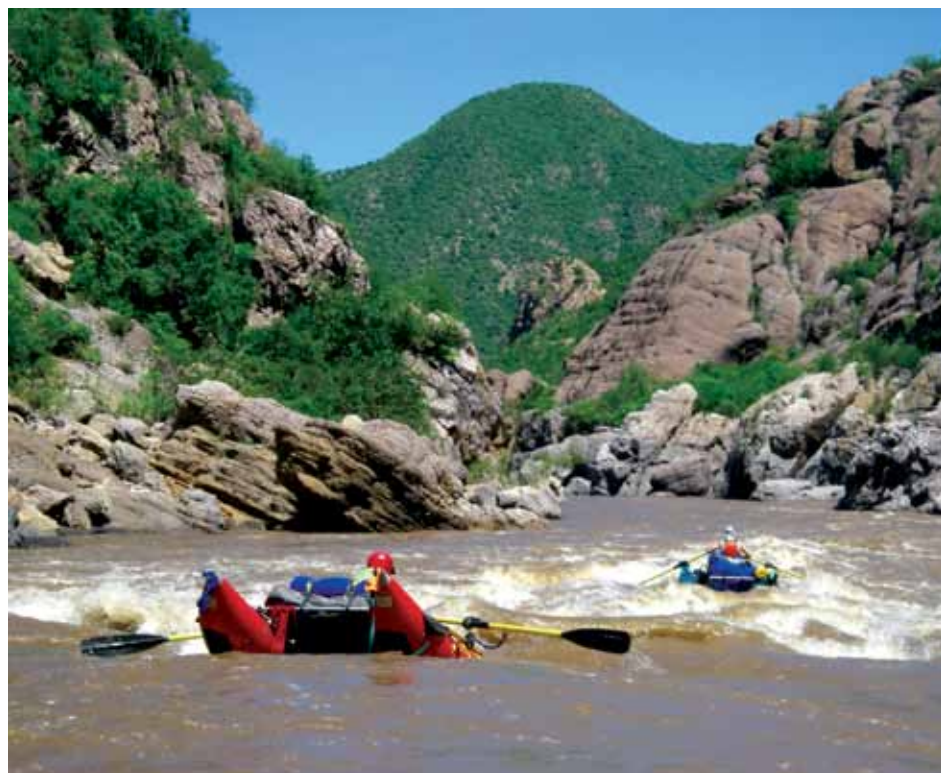
Lacey Anderson drops into a big wave in one of the fun Class III rapids in Cañon La Bocana.

Soon we are at the Estación Nácori Chico (a gauging station), where the attendant comes down to greet us. I ask, “Sabe el gasto en el río hoy?” He replies, “Sí—ayer y hoy es más o menos ciento sesenta metros cubicos por segundo.” That translates to about 5000 cfs, about 70% of normal August flow. Although a bit lower than normal, it is still plenty of water to make the river fast and the rapids great fun. We chat a bit more and he bids us “buena suerte” as we depart.

We set camp just before entering the final rapid-filled gorge on the Aros, Cañon La Bocana. The following day we are through the Morita rapid—the toughest rapid on the Aros—and then enjoying additional Class II-IIIs through a beautiful gorge. We stop for lunch at Arroyo Las Pérdices, the biggest beach on the river. Fairly level and measuring roughly 300 ft X 150 ft, the playa is the size of a football field and reminiscent of the biggest beaches in the Grand Canyon. But in the heat of summer, we all enjoy soaks in the warm clear pools of the arroyo much more.

Back on the río, we soon enjoy the final rapids in Cañon La Bocana, including Class III Cajones. After we pass the Río Bavispe confluence, the river officially changes name from Aros to Yaqui. The remaining Class I-II paddle to the Sahuaripa bridge is still pleasant through low canyon and offers some nice camps. Perhaps too quickly, we arrive on our seventh day of the journey at the take-out ranch of José Córdoba and are soon back in Sahuaripa, showering in the Hotel Casa Grande, a fine end to what is perhaps the best multi-day rafting river in Mexico.

About the Author: Rocky Contos, Ph.D., is director of the non-profit conservation organization SierraRios, has paddled nearly every river in Mexico, holds first descents on about half of all whitewater rivers in Mexico, is author of the guidebook Mexican Whitewater: Norte, and arranges raft support and kayak trips in Mexico and Peru. To learn more about Río Mulatos-Aros and future trips, please see the website www.SierraRios.org or contact Rocky [rocky@sierrarios.org].



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CREEKING

ARROYO SECO: CREEKING THE DRY STREAM

STORY AND PHOTOS BY

BRYANT BURKHARDT

“IT’S MIDNIGHT. IS it too late to call?”

That was the question on top of the ridge. The lights of Los Angeles stretched below us. The temperature was a comfortable 50 degrees and it was a dry and clear night. If not for the smog, the stars would have been shining brightly over our heads. It was hard to feel like we were in any real trouble. Then again, it had taken us four hours to climb the 1500 feet out of the canyon in the dark. We only had one functioning headlamp between the three of us. And the vehicle was still several miles away. It seemed like it might be a good idea to alert the wives that we were OK but that we would be getting home a little late.

When you talk of steep creeking in California you mention the Sierra granite, the high mountain runs in the middle of the state. Or maybe the coastal range with its redwoods and deep forests. The hills of Los Angeles, rising above the historic town of Pasadena, don’t normally enter the conversation. But that is exactly where my creeking career began. And it wasn’t some kiddie ride introduction. This was low volume, high angle whitewater with an average gradient over 150 ft/mile (with some miles well over 200 ft/mile). It was 12 miles of unknown wilderness, with steep walls and lots of wood. This was the Arroyo



“Honey, we’ll be a little late...”

Seco, Dry Stream, and it was full on. I had no idea what I was getting into.

“Should we get an early start?”

Of course we knew we should. But Paul had a newborn at home and sleep wasn’t something to be given up lightly. Andreas was joining us and could even get his wife to drive shuttle if we left at a reasonable hour. So we met in Santa Monica at seven a.m. Not a mountaineering start but it still felt early to us. After following Andreas through the streets of Pasadena, using a Thomas guide to find the take-out (the parking lot next to the Cal Tech Jet Propulsion Laboratory), making the transfer to the Volvo, and winding our way up to the Switzer Falls picnic area in the Angeles Crest mountains, it was almost noon by the time we started hiking down the trail.

“Should we just get in our boats here?”

The hike wasn’t bad but I had never carried a boat so far before. We had over a mile walk to get around the falls and where a side creek would hopefully add more water. It was winter but in Southern California that means sixty degrees and sunny. It was getting hot with the boats on our backs. Paul decided the creek running at our feet was the easier option but Andreas and I looked at the shallow trickle of water and thought we would see how it went for him before jumping in. At the first significant rocky drop Paul came down, bouncing as he went, and we pointed to the left. Halfway down Paul made the mistake of trying to take a stroke and his blade wedged between two rocks, only his quick reflexes allowed him pull it out vertically before it was ripped from his hands. But as he slid into the small pool below and held up his paddle one blade hung limply, cracked but not broken. His quick assessment was typical Kiwi: ‘it will be fine as long as I don’t pull hard on it’. The duck tape was brought out and he kept boating while Andreas and I walked on.



Hiking in, up and around Switzer Falls.

“OK, let’s take it slow and eddy hop.”

After we had all walked around Switzer Falls we reached the junction with Bear Creek. We were ready to start boating. The gradient here was over 300 ft/mile and while none of the drops were especially large, the narrow, rocky nature of the creek made it impossible to see what waited for you over the lip. The pattern became clear: boat 50 yards of forward progress, jump out to scout, quick portage or quick drop, repeat as necessary. As the junior member of the group I followed Paul and Andreas. When they said to walk I walked, when they said to scout I scouted, when they said to go left I went left. It was slow progress but we were boating and I was having fun. I started to gain some confidence. After one drop where Paul fed me the line from shore I decided to keep going and take the lead. Big mistake.

I had been lulled into complacency by a stretch of steady gradient that allowed me to read and run. That is until it turned a corner and disappeared into the thick woods. I saw the corner well ahead of time but I didn’t see any eddies. None. I made the rookie mistake of boating past my last

Opposite: Backtracking to find a portage route.

stopping point before I saw another one ahead. I quickly signaled the guys following me to eddy out and I tried to back paddle, tried to slow myself down, anything to keep from going around the blind corner. As I was getting a little desperate I realized I could use the shallow creek bed to my advantage and I broached myself sideways against a rock. Saved by a pin. I simply waited until Paul could come and grab my bow in the shallow water and pull me to safety. We all walked the drop and I wisely let the other two guys put in ahead of me.

"I think we can go up and around."

By then it was mid afternoon and we had reached Royal Falls. It was a tight and twisting lead in to a 15 footer. It looked like with a little speed and a good angle you'd be fine. It also looked like speed was unlikely and the angle would be random after bouncing down the rocky entrance. The cave behind the falls didn't look too inviting either, and I was happy when my leaders announced they were portaging. I didn't have to walk alone. But the walls were too steep to simply walk around so the climbing began. We went up one rope length but couldn't find a way across—still too steep and slick. So we went up another rope length. More technical climbing here, but still no route around. Time to rethink things and we headed back down to creek

level. What if we line the boats around? It took two ropes to reach from one solid anchor point to the other but we set it up and sent the three boats around. A couple of hours after reaching the falls we were safely past it. But it was getting dark, the sun long out of sight in the steep canyon, and the shadows grew thicker. If we could make it out of the canyon we expected to see a trail on river right—an easy escape route. We got back in the boats and tried to move as fast as we could.

"Can you see a line?"

But by this time we could barely see each other, much less a clean way down the significant drop. The discussion became *where* to hike out, not *whether*. The road and trail were on river right, but that side of the canyon was near vertical and rocky. We were on the left and our map showed a ridge trail high on this side that led all the way down to town. All we had to do was climb up and we would eventually reach it. But the walls were steep and covered with poison oak and Manzanita. We only had two headlamps between the three of us and only Andreas had the foresight to bring hiking boots. We stashed the boats but took everything else with us just in case we didn't make it back any time soon. We ate what food we had and loaded up on water to begin the climb.



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CREEKING

"It's midnight. Is it too late to call?"

The view was quite pretty from the ridgeline and more importantly cell phone coverage was strong. Paul made the call to his wife, waking their youngster in the process, but Katherine was relieved to know we were all right. She passed on the word of our safety to the other concerned parties while we started hiking, knowing that it was all downhill from there. We walked for over three hours on a delightful trail that returned us to the creek a couple of miles before the parking lot. The city lights were just enough to scout by and we noted that the riverbed was more open in this section and the paddling would have been good. It was four a.m. by the time we reached the car. We were tired, blistered and scratched up, and we all had to be at work in a few hours. But at least we were back in civilization.

"Do we want to wait for the Park Service?"

We had piled into the car and started heading out, but that innocuous gate we had noticed on our way in was now closed and locked. After braving the creek, portaging waterfalls, climbing canyon walls and hiking in the dark, we were trapped by a simple metal bar across the road. We could have waited a few hours for the sun to rise and a city worker to let us out but after all we had been through we weren't about to just sit and wait. The side of the road was lined with boulders to prevent people from driving around the gate. But the boulders were small and one was missing. We started the construction process and soon had a ramp of rocks heading up and over, the car at a precarious angle as it squeezed through the opening. We took the time to undue our handiwork and return the lot to its natural state and then hit the road. I got a couple hours of sleep before work and considered myself lucky.

"Do you mind if Lee joins us?"

That's what Paul asked on Friday as we made plans to return to complete the

mission. As crazy as it sounded, another friend actually wanted to join us. For as tale of our adventure spread through our local paddling circle, we made the trip sound so fun and interesting that people regretted not being part of it. Even as our blisters were fresh and Andreas broke out in a poison oak rash, we talked of all the fun we had. There hadn't been a single moment where we thought we were in trouble. We had to hike out as we expected we might but it was still just part of the plan. There had never been any heated arguments about what to do, no curses at our fate or complaints of whom had led whom into this mess. It truly had been fun and Lee wanted to be part of it.

"I guess we have to portage it."

We had made good time retracing our steps and getting Lee past Royal Falls. We had been moving well on the creek and gotten through the canyon without a problem and we had been cruising through the flat section. After a mile or two of this we came to a wood pile where steep walls closed in and the forest made it difficult to see what lay ahead. As I stood next to my boat to get a perspective from higher up I could see daylight through the trees but nothing else. As I walked forward I realized why: we had reached the diversion dam, a solid concrete wall that dropped over a hundred feet straight down. It had been completely filled in and we had paddled almost to the lip. Standing there was dizzying and we did not have a rope long enough to rappel. There was no way we were lining around this one so we started to back track to find a trail up and around. We clipped our boats and simply walked up the shallow stream and a half mile of hiking brought us to a detour up and around the dam. When we returned to the river at least it had less wood.

"Is that rebar?"

We had reached civilization but found the man made obstacles that went with it: old roads that had crossed the creek and now fallen into disrepair, crumbling

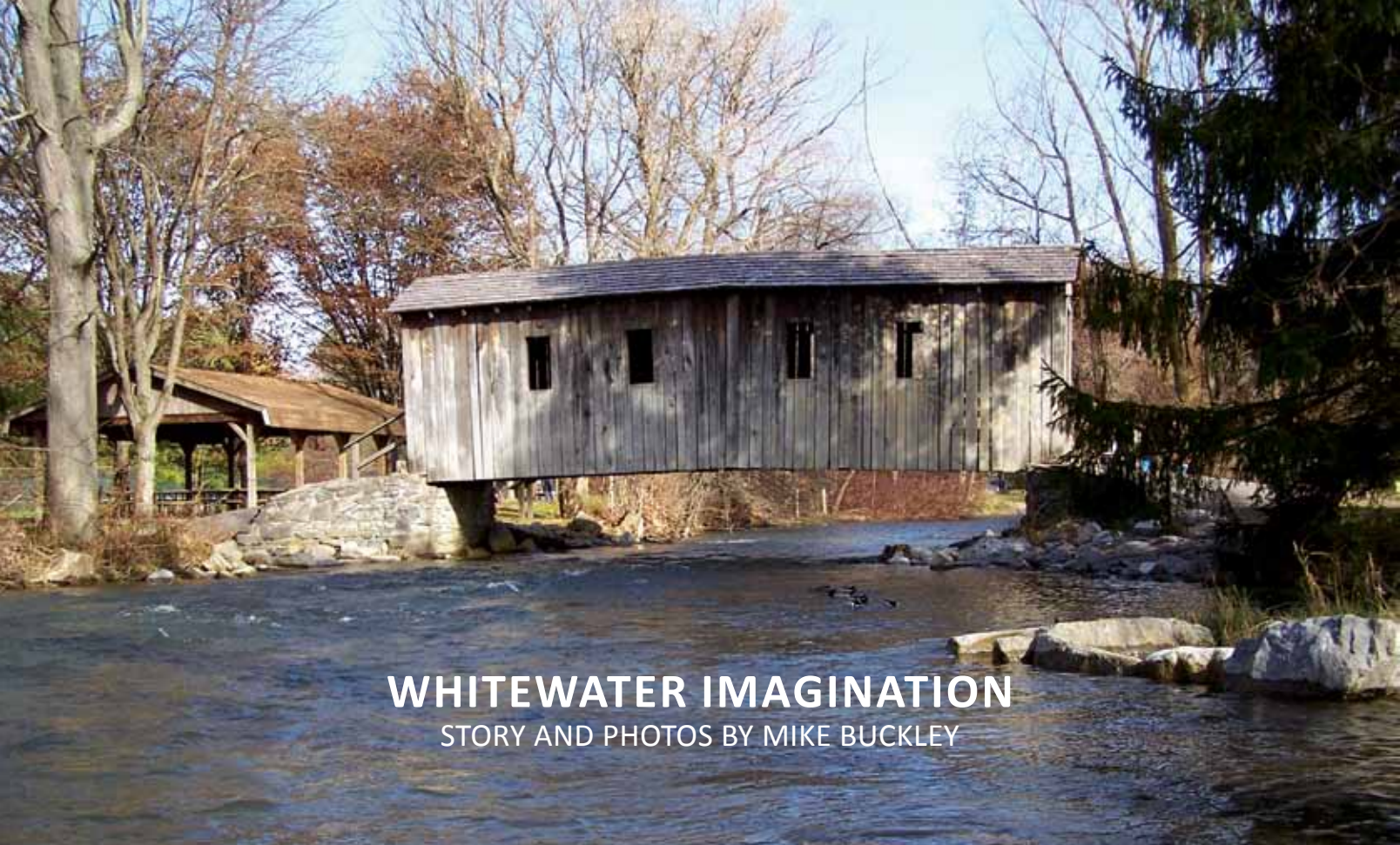


Attempting the high portage around Royal Falls.

diversion dams with rebar sticking up into the air. It soon became faster to walk in the approaching darkness than to try to pick our way safely past the unnatural obstacles. It was solidly dark when we reached the car, but this time we had parked outside the gate and no bridge building was necessary to escape.

It was early in the evening and the calls home did not wake anyone this time. We even stopped for tacos on the drive back, all smiles at the completion of our endeavor. Once again we had to hike out of a little creek on the edge of a big city, but this time it had been a complete success. The four of us had paddled a river that very few would ever get the chance to experience. No matter that it took twice as long as we had expected and that it involved walking as many miles as we paddled. We had a grand adventure in the wilderness within spitting distance of a city of millions. If this was creeking, I couldn't wait for more.

"So, the Piru next weekend?"



WHITEWATER IMAGINATION

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MIKE BUCKLEY

WHEN IT COMES to kayaking, I'm a legend in my own mind.

It's sad to say because there's nothing even remotely legendary about my paddling. History will record the highlight of my paddling career as the shining moment when I repeated as champion of the 30-something-guys-with-green-boats-and-red-helmets Class in the local slalom race. Other than that, I'm just your average weekend warrior.

But I haven't let the facts stop me from mythologizing myself into a living river god. Now, I know I'm not one of the major, cool gods like Thor. I'm more of a lower-middle-tier god, good for comic relief and that sort of thing. My power? Imagination—way too much of it. Inevitably, it runs faster than the current and at least twice, if not a thousand times, bigger.

Take, for example, my very first whitewater trip. It was a spring, dam-release run on the North Branch of the Potomac between Barnum, WV, and Bloomington, MD. At normal release levels of 1,000 cfs, it's

a splashy Class II (III) trip—unless you're me, stepping it up from Class I+ for the first time. Then, it's a raging, giant water inferno. I'll spare you the details of the first half of the trip. In fact, I paddled through the rapids in fine shape, upright the whole way. Nothing happened—outside my head. The crux move of the day came just before lunch. The most popular stop is on river left after a long Class II rapid on a left bend. In full beginner fashion, I ended up on river right. Getting to lunch—always crucial for me—meant negotiating a hole on the way back. And negotiate it I did—by plunging straight through, paddling as hard as I could, and popping up untrounced on the other side. To this day, I remember dropping in and assessing it as large enough to pay property taxes on. "Wow!" I thought, "I made it through that!" I learned on later trips it's not so big. Actually, it's a popular play hole that even I have surfed since then.

Or consider planning for a river trip. The planning stages often begin with a guidebook, and that's where my imagination starts to take off. Give me a description of a Class III river I don't know

and I'm incapable of conjuring up anything less than a ski-slope gradient and bank-to-bank holes. When I do get to the river, the mental drama builds. Every speck of white, every wave, every bit of foam hides some danger. Some days, I'll paddle back and forth looking for the cleanest line. If I were to bring a GPS with me on such a trip, it would probably explode from being overtaxed. If the GPS actually survived, and I plotted my course, it would be more tangled than an abandoned throw rope.

The curious thing is that by and large my kayaking trips have been uneventful. Most days on the river have been happy ones spent with friends. There's a dissonance between what I imagine and what really transpires, and that can be a problem. My mind probably makes rivers seem harder than they are, which can impede my confidence and progress. Sometimes, I feel like Columbus's sailors. They weren't afraid of the blank space on the map; they feared the dragons and waters plunging off the

Opposite: No whitewater temptation is too small....

WHY I PADDLE

edge of the earth that they imagined were beyond the borders of the known. I once spent a whole day on a creek wondering where a tricky hole mentioned in the write-up was. The whole day—and I never did see it. Perhaps the river changed, but if that hole was still there at those levels, it was significantly less imposing than I thought it would be. The happy side of the trip was that I found one of the nicest wave trains for surfing I've ever seen. In other words, a perfect day—except for worrying about my mystery hole.

So, what does one do? I would like to say I've found a way to keep my overactive imagination in check and reach new personal heights of paddling, but that's not the case. What I have learned, though, is to see that wild imagination in a different light.

Ironically, this insight came to me on dry land. Since becoming a father, I've spent more time visiting Spring Creek Park than parking by spring creeks. As many of you who have little ones know, they are never far from the water, and that means you

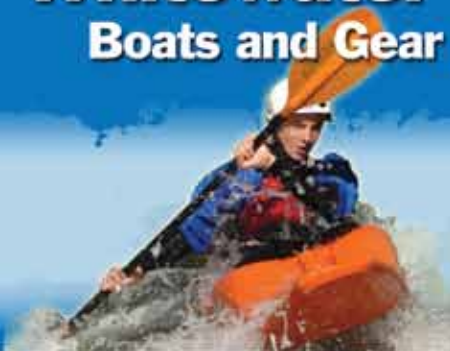
are there, too. That's when it happens. The air will be cooler, I'll feel the moisture on my face, and the sight of the water disappearing around the bend will catalyze my imagination. The six-inch waves under the footbridge will start to grow, getting bigger and bigger, until they are epic, and I will start to dream up a trip—maybe just a little trip, from here to the end of the park? Maybe a little further upstream? How about further downstream, too?

That's when I know, too, that my active imagination isn't such a bad thing. If it makes me overly cautious at times, it's also the force that brings me back to the water time and time again. I can't help but wonder what a new creek is like or if I can style a new line, even if it is named something like "Death Slot" or "Irish Wake" or "Swim and Be Eaten." I've learned that rivers are irresistible for more than what they are; they are irresistible for what I imagine they can be.

And that means I'm wrong: I'm not the legend in my mind; the rivers are.




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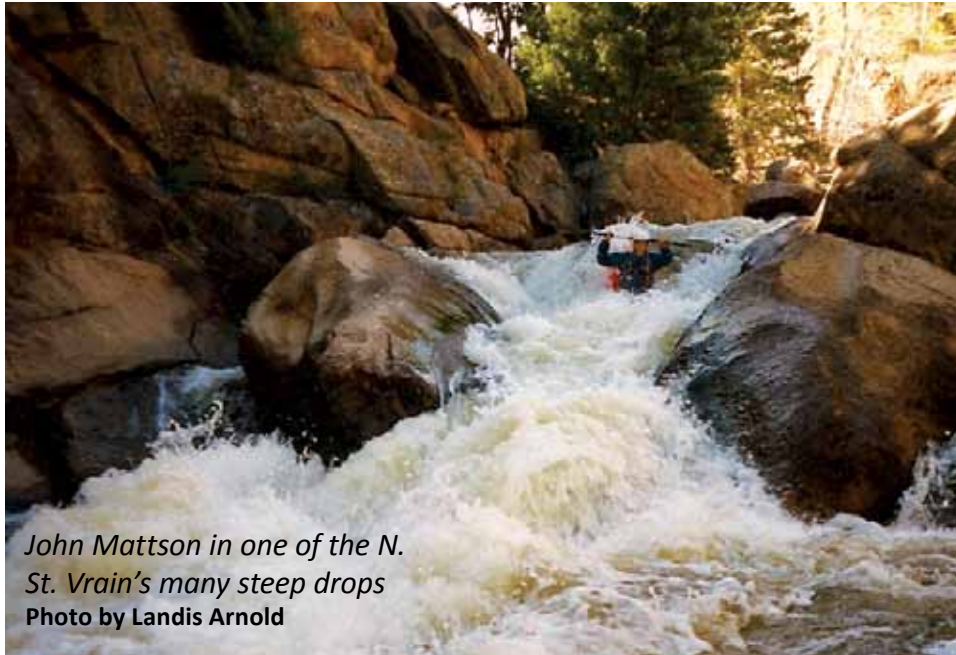
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CREEKING



John Mattson in one of the N. St. Vrain's many steep drops
Photo by Landis Arnold

STEEP CREEKING IN COLORADO: THE FIRST DESCENT OF THE NORTH SAINT VRAIN

BY JOHN MATTSON

"Exploration is really the essence of the human spirit."
- Frank Borman

"LOOK AT THIS!" Landis said excitedly, pointing to a map in his office at Prijon USA in Boulder, Colorado. "This river drops about 400 feet per mile in a couple of short sections, but most of it is about 150 to 200 feet per mile. It looks like an incredible canyon, and I don't think that anyone has ever paddled it."

Landis Arnold had studied geography at Dartmouth College and had developed a passion for kayaking at the same time. He was also a Nordic jumper, and had become good friends with the Prijon family while he was training in Europe. The friendship became a business partnership, and he founded Prijon USA to import their kayaks to the United States. A good portion of his business involved testing kayaks. It was a tough job, but somebody had to do it.

Prijon had just come out with a new boat called the T-Canyon, which means it must have been sometime in the late 1980s. It had been designed for the steep creeks on the Mediterranean island of Corsica, and Landis needed to test it on some rivers in the United States.

The river he had in mind was the North Saint Vrain, which flows out of Wild Basin in Rocky Mountain National Park. The only reasonable point of access for a kayaking run was a bridge on the Peak to Peak Highway, a popular scenic route that winds through the eastern slope of the Rockies between Nederland and Estes Park. From there, it was about 12 miles to another road below Button Rock Dam.

The team also included a very young Will Gadd and a seasoned ski patroller from Durango named Bo McWilliams. We met about dawn at the Prijon office, where we loaded all the gear into a large van and headed north and west toward the mountains.

"I think this is gonna be really cool, but we have to be careful because part of it is steeper than anything that I have ever done," Landis jokingly warned us on the way out of town.

We left a small car at the planned take-out, and continued onward in the Prijon van. The sky was clear, and the sun was just starting to show its brilliance as we reached the bridge where we'd planned to enter the river.

"The level looks perfect," Landis said, looking at the nearly dry stream bed. We quickly unloaded the boats, donned our gear, and headed downstream.

"The first section is really steep!" he informed us, as we headed down the heavily wooded creek. There was just enough water to float a boat, but that was plenty for an exploration run, and we descended quickly down the ever-steepening stream. Within minutes, we entered a very difficult rapid. But after a careful scout, we discovered that there

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CREEKING

were too many logs to make it feasible, so we felt no guilt walking around it.

The group was able to run all of the log-less rapids, and after about a mile, the gradient eased. We entered a spectacular and very remote canyon that had moderate whitewater and no signs of civilization. A few tributaries gradually increased the stream flow, but we were able to eddy scout most of the rapids and bounce down the exciting stream. A small herd of bighorns watched with expressions of surprise; it was hard to believe that we were so close to a major city.

"The map showed another really steep section somewhere around here!" Landis exclaimed, as we stopped to scout a very steep, quarter-mile-long rapid. We couldn't skip this one because of logs, and it looked

somewhat reasonable, but it was much longer and harder than anything that we had ever paddled. Most of the group decided to portage the top third, but Will was eager to try the whole rapid, so we set up safety and watched anxiously as he launched his boat into the turmoil.

"There he goes!" Landis shouted. "He jumped [Author's Note: This was very similar to what we now call boofing, but the word and technique were just being developed], that big rock and he's heading down that long, steep chute. Wow! Looking good." Will's achievement made Landis smile and shake his head in amazement.

Within seconds, Will passed the eddy that the rest of us had decided to start in and motored on down the mostly unbroken rapid. It was very difficult to stop because

the eddies were tiny, and a failed attempt could spin the kayak so it faced upstream, which is not very desirable. Will stayed focused and finally stopped at another bridge, where a lonely road headed off to civilization.

"Wow! That was really wild! I'm sure glad that I didn't tip over," Will yelled back to us, as he climbed out of his boat and grabbed his throw bag. The rest of us launched our boats from the lower eddy and found that two-thirds of the rapid was plenty exciting.

Just below the bridge was another, very steep, technical drop. "I'm gonna walk this one," Will said. "It doesn't look any harder than what we just did, but my adrenal gland needs a break."



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Landis Arnold running one of the North St. Vrain's many Class IV drops.
Photo by John Mattson

Bo thought he saw a line on the left and eagerly headed downstream. It was a very narrow and steep drop, and his *Dancer* was suddenly pinned vertically next to a large boulder. The three of us managed to pull

him out and rescue his gear, but we had lost valuable time, and the sun was quickly sinking toward the horizon.

The road looked tempting, but we didn't really know where it went, and we were quite sure that we had passed the steepest section of the river, so we continued our descent. The gradient eased a bit as the river entered another steep-walled canyon with some beautiful Class IV rapids and at least one more Class V. The daylight was rapidly waning — as was the energy of the group — but we paddled onward in the near darkness.

"Look out! It looks like another big drop," Will warned us, as he caught a small eddy. A quick scout revealed a short, technical rapid with flat water below it.

"I think we found the lake!" he yelled jubilantly. We quickly ran the drop and

Lars Holbeck on the second descent of the North St. Vrain, Colorado.
Photo by John Mattson



paddled across the reservoir in the near darkness. We were thrilled to be on flat water, but saddened to imagine the great whitewater that had been submerged by Button Rock Dam.

It was very dark when we reached the lake, but a short portage and half a mile of easy paddling brought us safely to our car.

*John Mattson is a ski racer, kayaker, climber, and all-around adventurer who has written a book about some of his adventures called *Dancing on the Edge of an Endangered Planet*. This article is an excerpt from that book. For more information about the author or the book, visit: danceonedge.com.*



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COMPETITION

JUNIOR OLYMPICS 2011: NEW CHALLENGES

BY DAVID A. KURTZ

JUNIOR OLYMPICS ARE a prime example of athleticism in sport. Within a week's time juniors competing have the opportunity to paddle whitewater in a variety of boat styles and in a variety of sport styles, including kayaks, decked canoes both singles and doubles, and, this year, open canoes. Then there is slalom, precise paddling through gates in eddy and offset moves, freestyle, maneuvering the boat in a hole to do spins, loops, cartwheels and the like, and wildwater or downriver, a flat-out race to the finish. Any athlete who can perform these disciplines, let alone excel in them, is a true athlete. At the 2011 events a number of the kids showed athleticism at the best levels. At Lyons, for instance, Sage Donnelly, a Carson City, NV cub cadet, earned seven first place and two second place awards in her class. She paddled all three boat types and all three sports, eventually earning the Paddlemeisterin Award in the process.

JP Griffith of Denver, a full junior paddler, demonstrated the same athleticism on the boys' side. It was his fourth junior Olympics, having paddled at the 2007 events in Golden, CO, the 2008 races in Wausau, WI, and the 2009 clashes in Ontario, Canada.



Ben Lapointe from Saskatoon and Darius Ramrattan of Innisfail, Canada
Photo by Julie Ramrattan

He earned five first places in all three classes and all three sports. Paddlemeister to be sure!

At Tariffville Sarah Douglas of Riegelsville, PA paddled in all four events and two boat classes to take four wins and two silver medals to capture the Rivermeisterin Award. cub cadet Jacob Mermelstein of Washington, DC paddled in the same events and classes and won all six of them to win the Rivermeister Award.

Events

The year 2011 was a signature year in that this was the first time that two junior Olympics Festivals were held in the same

year. The first was in Colorado, originally scheduled for Golden but forced to move to Lyons on the St. Vrain River due to high water. The second was on the Farmington River at Tariffville, Connecticut.

The Colorado event was chaired by Mike Hyde and his wife Gina Gilbert and ably assisted by Nate Lord and Russ Huff. Lyons was absolutely fantastic in its reception of these junior athletes and their families. There were multiple locations for all the major disciplines, slalom, downriver, and freestyle.

Pete Cassebeer chaired the Connecticut event with background by Jamie McEwan. The Tariffville town backed the entire event through Andy Kuhlberg, Frank Haviland, and Gary Grosclaude.

Having more than one JO resulted in cheaper travel by families, more practice by the young paddlers, and increased participation. As it was, we had a total of 61 kids at Lyons and 20 at T'ville. Eleven of those went to both JO Festivals and therefore got twice as much training as the others.

Character Awards

The Olympic Spirit Award has been given

Grady Kellogg looping in the K-1 freestyle.
Photo by Rfort Fotos





JO competitors Tyler Uthus, Darius Ramrattan, Evelyn Van Horn, and Sarah Mosier at JOs 2011, East

Photo by David Kurtz

over the past four Festivals and was continued in 2011, "To inspire and motivate the youth of the world to be the best they can be." Sage Donnelly showed that spirit and won this award at Lyons, while Maddie Kaplan of Washington, DC captured the award at Tariffville.

A new award was created by the staff at Lyons, the Kurtz Sportsmanship Award (Author's Note: Even though it's named for me, it took me by surprise, too!). At Lyons Spencer Huff of Lyons, CO showed great sportsmanship in setting wires and gates, among other generous behavior. At Tariffville Moriah Heaney of Bethesda, MD won this award.

Precious Moments: Lyons – JO West

Cub Cadet Battles

Henry Hyde and Jacob Mermelstein battled it out at the cub cadet level in K-1. Mermelstein was first at the zip slalom and the downriver while Hyde was first at the freestyle and championship slalom. Was it a draw? Ask them!

Versatile Slalom Girl

Samantha Cole-Johnson of Boulder, CO earned top places in both kayak and canoe

Darius Ramrattan came all the way from Alberta to compete.

Photo by Julie Ramrattan

classes in both the zip and championship slaloms.

Cadet Boys in K-1

Jordan Sherman of Rockville, MD Aaron Mermelstein, and Chance Blakeslee of Mingoville, PA battled for the top places in K-1 in the cadet Age class, but Sherman showed mastery by taking the gold in all four sport events.

Junior Boys in Kayak

JP Griffith, Ethan Van Horn of Bellefonte, PA, Dane Jackson, and Andre Sanborn of San Marcos, TX gave it a good shot in all four sports at Lyons. The first three places

at the zip were 1.2 seconds apart and at the championship only 2.4 seconds apart.

Open Canoe Wins a Place at JOs

The open canoe won a place at the junior Olympics when two boys showed up ready to paddle (Bryant Lord, Longmont, CO cadet, and Ethan Putnam, Boulder, CO junior-16). Although there were no open boats at Tariffville, with Dane Jackson's world gold in OC-1 it shows that even in a freestyle event the open canoe can do the job. We look forward to a broadened OC class in 2012.

The Slalom C-2 Class

Ben Young (Oakland, CA): "Getting to participate in the Junior Olympics was legit. I hardly ever get to paddle with lots of other kids; that was the best part. I also liked getting to race in the C-2 with Keegan McChesney (Lewistown, PA), and it was a bonus to make the national team. The coaches were awesome. People ask me all the time about my team sweatshirt. I hope I get another opportunity to go to JOs and other national competitions."

C-2W

Netherlands cadet girl, Lissy Methhorst says, "Wow—that's all I can say. It was an amazing experience and I couldn't have asked for any better way to spend my last couple of weeks in the USA. It was a blast;

continued on page 50



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Fluid has grown from a small start-up company in 2002 to a leading kayak manufacturer respected in the international paddling community. Our roots are in whitewater, but we are successfully utilising our expertise in the field of serious kayak playing for the benefit of recreational paddlers. Our full range of whitewater kayaks is complimented by a growing range of recreational kayaks.

Our headquarters is situated in the small town of Parys in South Africa. Our home waters is the Vaal, South Africa, the second largest river, which flows through town. The Vaal offers whitewater and flatwater sections for boat testing, including the infamous Gatsien wave. We are fortunate to be on the doorstep of the Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site, a magnificent natural phenomenon that is best experienced from the waters of the Vaal, only a few kilometres away from town.

Since February 2012, all our whitewater kayaks and most of our recreational kayaks are being made in the USA. Our full range of recreational sit-on-tops is still being made in South Africa for the SA and surrounding market.

Years of paddling on some of the world's wildest rivers created a strong sense of environmental consciousness. We do everything we can to minimize our impact on the environment, such as the: 1) use of super-linear polyethylene to produce kayaks, which can be recycled easily; 2) reduction of waste wherever possible; 3) recycling of all off-cut material.

Additionally, Fluid is a supporter of many different environmental organizations including American Whitewater. We're proud to support American Whitewater's river stewardship goals as a Class V partner.



Fluid Kayaks presents American Whitewater with a check for \$50,000 at Gauley Fest 2011!
Photo by Scott Martin

Paddler Andrew Kellett
Photo by Celliers Kruger

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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.

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COMPETITION

fun water, great people, and lovely weather. I really enjoyed the DR event and the slalom events, where Team PenHorst (with Hanna Penner of Alberta) dominated in C2. I'm very grateful that I had this experience."

Dane Jackson Organizes Freestyle

Dane arranged for skilled adult judges for the event and was thus free to compete himself as a junior paddler at 17. Fresh from World Championship honors at Plattling, Germany, he was the first and only person to ever compete in all four freestyle disciplines. He won gold in the Squirt, Canoe (C1), and Kayak (K1) classes and bronze in Open Canoe (OC1). He scored a 970 in the Lyons event. The next highest scores in K-1 were obtained by Evan Schehrer of Salida, CO, Max Karlsson of Erie, CO, and Grady Kellogg.

Family Involvement

The Kellogg family from Glenwood Springs, CO had four boys competing. Dally (9) was having a blast, smiling on the wave, and nailing his first clean loop. Kenny (11) was the rockstar. Brody (14) nailed his first sweet Space Godzilla. Finally, Grady (15), focused and determined, added serious style to his surfing by tossing his paddle, nailing a front loop, and catching the paddle.

New Zealand Freestyle Star

Courtney Kerin showed what paddling Down Under can do in the freestyle event. She created the best score in the freestyle of all the girls in the whole event.

Australian Girls in Jr.-16 Win Medals

Eliza Singleton and Krystal Davis showed what paddling Down Under is all about in winning the gold and silver, respectively, in the downriver and slalom events. Mariah Heaney did win the gold in the zip slalom at that age group, but slipped to the bronze in the final slalom behind the Aussie duo.

Alberta, Canada scores big in K-1, Jr.-16

Ryley Penner of Alberta, Canada won both the slalom events in this age group. At the zip slalom his score was 0.7 of a second better than Spencer Huff's. In the Championship slalom he won over the silver medalist, Henry Heyman of Boulder, CO.

Precious Moments: Tariffville, JO East The Girls

Moriah Heaney, Sarah Mosier of Port Matilda, PA, Kaja Coraor of Huntington, NY, and Sarah Douglas traded wins in kayak. Heaney was best at the zip slalom, Mosier won the championship slalom, Douglas won the freestyle, and Coraor won the downriver.

The Girls in C-1W

Sarah Douglas showed her mettle in C-1W by winning both the zip and championship slaloms, in 97.6 and 153.9 seconds, respectively.

Spectacular paddling in C-2

David Silk of Farmington, CT and Keegan

McChesney showed what one can do in a C-2 boat. Entering the downriver Race, they paddled all the way to the end where the famous T'ville hole is and ran the hole on the left side, thinking they had escaped its grasp. The river gods had other ideas, as the hole grabbed the bow and they spun to the right. McChesney lost his paddle in the hole while Silk calmly completed the spin and pulled them out on the right side with McChesney hand paddling to the finish. You can see it on the Mach One Facebook page.

Keegan writes, "I have been going to the JOs for two years now and I would have to say that paddling with my C-2 partner, David Silk, was the most fun of my paddling career."

Cadet Boys in K-1

Aaron Mermelstein won the zip slalom and the freestyle while Chance Blakeslee was second in both. Each of them won their class in downriver as Mermelstein raced in a wildwater kayak and Blakeslee raced in a slalom kayak. At the championship slalom Blakeslee stepped up the competition and scored fast and clean to win over Mermelstein.

Junior-16 Boys in K-1

The Uthus cousins of Maryland traded the top places in freestyle and the final slalom. Tyler won gold in the freestyle and Evan in the championship slalom.

Cadet Teams for 2011

At each of the venues complete cadet teams were named for slalom, freestyle, and downriver sports. Cub cadets and cadets were combined for the designation. A maximum of four boats (boys and girls each) were named in K-1, three in C-1, and two each in the C-2 classes. Team jackets, back packs, and a knit cap were presented to each winner. For the names in each team, refer to our website, jo.mach1team.org.



The whole group at the Tariffville JOs.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

AW BOARD NOMINATIONS

BY NORWOOD SCOTT, BOARD PRESIDENT

AERICAN WHITEWATER IS seeking nominations of interested and qualified candidates to serve as Directors. Candidates are needed to fill four Board seats that begin three-year terms starting January 1, 2013.

A healthy, vibrant, participatory, and functional Board of Directors is critical to the long term stability and effective governance of American Whitewater. Directors need to have a passion for our mission and a mix of appropriate skills to help guide AW and meet the challenges we face, both now and in the future.

While we will consider all qualified Candidates, due to the limited number of Board seats available, not all nominees will appear on the recommended slate of Candidates presented to the membership for vote this fall. The committee will notify selected candidates prior to the election.

Please carefully review the Board of Directors Recruitment Information Package. This package explains the role and responsibility of a Director, the required qualifications, the necessary commitment and the process by which Director's are nominated and elected to serve.

Anyone interested in serving as an AW Director should complete the Board Nomination Form and Questionnaire, which can be found on our website. The completed Nomination Form and Questionnaire, two (2) letters of recommendation and a quality digital photo are due to the nominating committee by July 1. Please email the required information to mark@americanwhitewater.org with a subject heading of "BOD Response."

If you have any questions or wish to discuss any aspect of the nomination process please contact Mark Singleton, AW's Executive Director.

It's Easy to Support AW!

American Whitewater is proud of the work we have accomplished in our stewardship program but we need your help to sustain our success. Your support through membership and donations enables our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. Donations don't have to be large; each person doing a small part makes a noticeable difference. Many donors fail to take full advantage of federal tax incentives specifically intended to encourage charitable contributions. Such incentives often enable a donor to make a larger gift to AW at little or no additional cost. For more information about maximizing your gift visit the IRS website dedicated to charitable organizations.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN# 23-7083760. To learn more about the Giving Options below, contact us at 866-BOAT4AW or visit the "Donate" link under "Support AW" on our website at www.americanwhitewater.org

- **Donate online today!**
- **Monthly Giving:** Contribute a minimum of \$10 via credit card or electronic transfer from your bank account.
- **Bequests:** Include AW in your will or living trust. Bequests to AW are generally exempt from federal or state inheritance taxes, and subject to an unlimited deduction.
- **Combined Federal Campaign:** Federal employees including federal civilians, military personnel and U.S. Postal Workers can donate to AW through the CFC a once a year charitable fund raising program. Look for AW (Agency #11351) in the official CFC listing of eligible donors.
- **Charitable Remainder Trusts:** Convert a highly appreciated asset (such as real estate or stocks) into a lifetime income while minimizing income and estate taxes.
- **Employer Matching:** Many employers will match your donations to non-profit organizations. This includes membership payments, as well as additional contributions. Check to see if your employer has a matching program.
- **MissionFish:** Sell your items through the MissionFish program on eBay and the proceeds come directly to AW.
- **Other Assets:** A gift of real estate to AW qualifies you for a tax deduction based on the property's fair market value. If it is not a river access point, AW will sell the property and use the proceeds to protect access and restore rivers. Acceptance of property is subject to certain conditions. You may also be eligible to receive tax benefits for gifts of real property. Art and jewelry are examples of personal property items that may be eligible. Interested donors should check with your financial and tax advisors and AW on the feasibility and tax considerations of such gifts.
- **Securities:** Donating appreciated stock to AW benefits both the donor and whitewater rivers. The donor receives two tax-related benefits. First, the gain on the stock is not subject to capital gains taxes. Second, the donor can deduct the value of the stock as a charitable contribution.
- **United Way:** All federal campaigns, and a few of the local campaigns will allow you to donate to AW. AW's UNITED WAY member # is 2302.
- **Vehicle Donations:** Turn that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefiting AW.

AFFILIATE CLUBS

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY CARLA MINER

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of American Whitewater's existence. American Whitewater's original purpose since 1954 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. Our relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. We have over 100 current AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club, consider joining one.

Our Affiliate Club Spotlight this issue is on Three Rivers Paddling Club an outstanding Affiliate Club and long time supporter of our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. Three Rivers Paddling Club is a Pittsburgh area club consisting of paddlers from Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, the Maryland panhandle and beyond.

TRPC organizes river trips and other social outdoor recreation; promotes safety and improvement of paddling skills through organized instruction; promotes river conservation and recreational access; and, exchanges information relevant to paddlers, such as river guides, trip reports, equipment ideas and safety advice.

The Club promotes impromptu trips that are organized through posts on the Club's website Message Board and scheduled trips that are listed on the Events Calendar. All trips and events are limited to TRPC members. The Club also publishes a newsletter that is mailed four times per year as well as being posted on the website.

Visit the TRPC at <http://threeriverspaddlingclub.com/Wordpress/> for additional information about the club. If you live in the Pittsburgh area consider joining - dues are an affordable \$10 per household for the calendar year. And remember, all TRPC members receive a \$10 discount off their American Whitewater membership.

Thank you Three Rivers Paddling Club for your continued support of American Whitewater!

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks
Nova Riverrunners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

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

Arizona

Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assn,
Grand Canyon
Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

California Floaters Society, Cameron Park
Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
Guides House, Laytonville
RTS Sierra Club San Fran Chapter,
Livermore
Sequoia Paddlers, Forestville
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers, San Jose

Colorado

Avid4 Adventure Inc., Boulder
Colorado Whitewater Assn, Englewood
Dolores River Action Group, Mancos
Friends of the Arkansas River, Canon City
Lower Dolores Boating Advocates, Dolores
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride

Connecticut

AMC - Connecticut Chapter, Waterbury

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Asso, Atlanta
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assn, Chicago

Indiana

Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des
Moines

Kentucky

Bardstown Boaters, Bardstown,
Bluegrass Wildwater Asso, Lexington
Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Louisiana

Sabine Whitewater Club, Lake Charles

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Troy

Maryland

Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Cockeysville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Boonsboro
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter Paddlers, Boston

Minnesota

Minnesota Canoe Assn, Minneapolis
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Assn, St Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Montana

Butte-Anaconda River Runners, Butte

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

AMC New Hampshire Paddlers, Raymond
Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Nashua
Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Intervale

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
KCCNY, Flanders

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
Colgate University, Hamilton
FLOW Paddlers' Club, Rochester
Hamilton College, Clinton
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq.,
Ossining
St Lawrence University, Canton
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Buffalo

North Carolina

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Triad River Runners, Winston-Salem
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

Ohio

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

Oregon

Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Northwest Rafters Asso, Roseburg
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Holtwood Hooligans, Paradise
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley,
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Inc., Lehigh Valley

Mach One Slalom Team, State College
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts,
Limestone
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
East Tennessee Whitewater Club
Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing
Club, Kingsport
Tennessee Scenic River Asso, Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

Utah

High Jim and the A.S.K., Salt Lake City
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners
Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke
Hollins Outdoor Program, Roanoke
Paddlers for Conservation, Vienna

Washington

BEWET, Bellevue
EPIC Adventures, Cheney
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

West Virginia

Dbl Z! Whitewater Club, Fayetteville
Redneck Kayak Club, Beckley
WVU Whitewater Club, Morgantown
West VA Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, Madison

British Columbia

Thompson Rivers Univ Adventure Studies,
Kamloops
Vancouver Kayak Club, Burnaby

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 <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/> 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 <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/>. 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. Gain Club satisfaction from lending support to AW's stewardship efforts.

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



Contribute your text and photos to *American Whitewater*

American Whitewater is moving from a theme-based magazine to a more diverse model. Starting in 2012 we will be producing issues that are not concentrated on a single topic, but rather offer something for everyone.

We're always accepting submissions and we hope you'll consider contributing. For complete submission details, story topics, deadlines, and guidelines, go to:

americanwhitewater.org > Library > AW Journal



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work. Or play. Or, if you're
like us, combine the two
and surround yourself with
drinking buddies. Clock out
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