



**AMERICAN
WHITEWATER**

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
May/June 2014

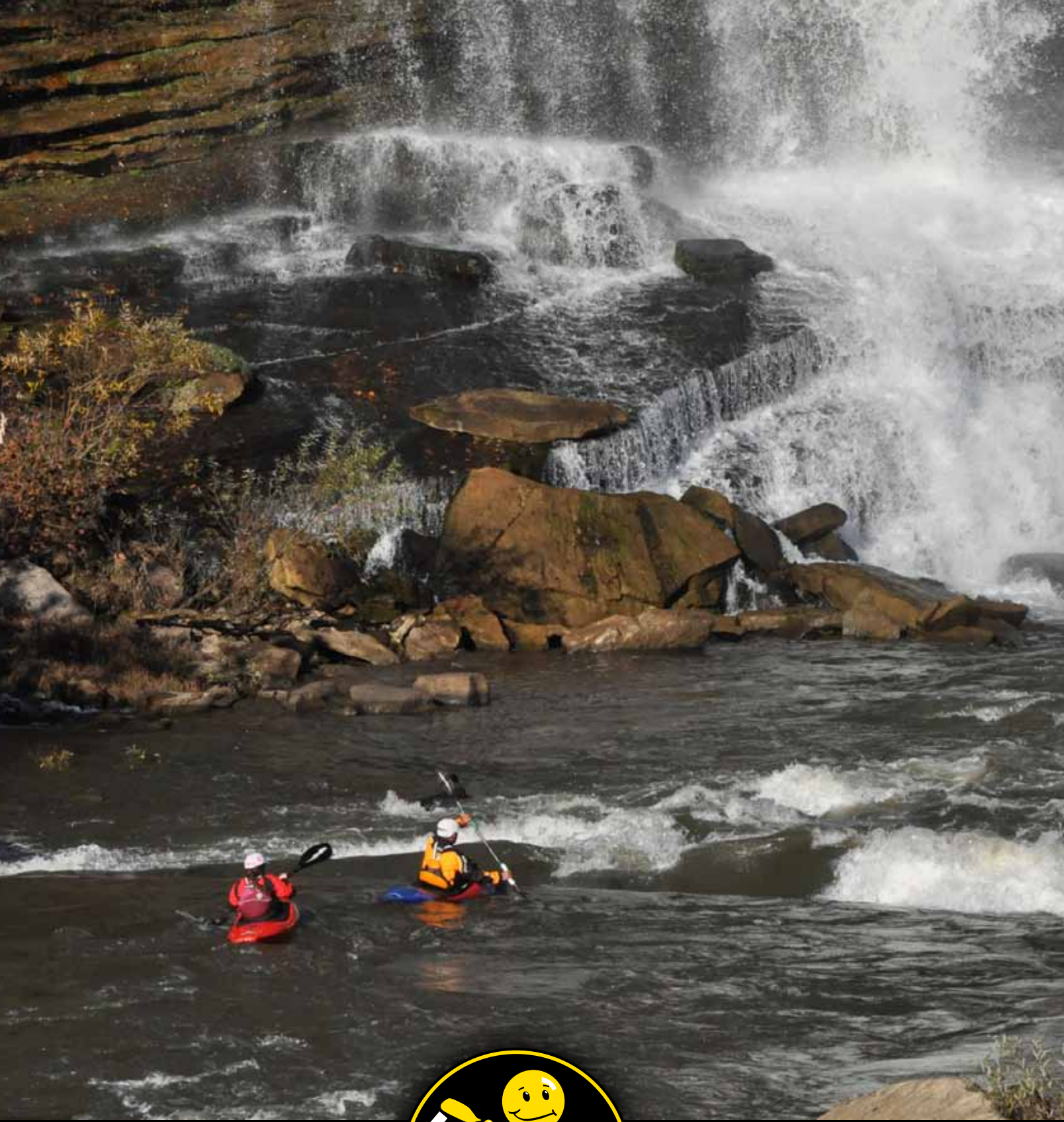
RE-OPENING YOSEMITE: A TALE OF TWO PLANS

Remembering the Romaine

Plus...

50 Years Along the Yough

Tandem Canoeing as Metaphor



Where will a



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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal May/June 2014 – Volume 54 – Issue 3

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Muir Gorge on the Tuolumne River, Yosemite National Park.

Photo by Darin McQuoid

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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

As part of our stewardship mission, American Whitewater works to secure permanent access to the rivers we love. Access is an important part of the river stewardship program and reinforces the notion that conservation and recreation are mutually dependent. With access to rivers, time spent paddling forms the basis for a conservation ethic that values these special places. Paddlers understand that you cannot love what you don't know. It's our love of whitewater that makes us fierce defenders of rivers and their flows. This intimate connection to flowing water has made American Whitewater a force in river stewardship for 60 years now.

Our stewardship ethic motivates us to go beyond simply securing access, but also to ensure that what we do brings long-term protections to the river. We do this through working closely with resource agencies for consistent river management, educating the public, providing tools that river advocates need to protect their home river and, when needed, we own or lease land for access.

Most river access is owned and managed by federal or state agencies, and sometimes by utility companies providing river access as part of their operating license for hydroelectric power. As a final backstop, American Whitewater will take on ownership for river access. When we do take on ownership we rely heavily on the local paddling community to help manage those access locations. Truth is American Whitewater is an absentee landlord and without the eyes, ears and local volunteer maintenance it would be difficult to provide quality access. We currently own or lease land at these river locations:

- Elkhorn, KY
- Watauga, NC
- Johns Creek, VA
- Blackwater, WV

- Gauley, WV
- In addition American Whitewater volunteers manage the put-in for the Upper Yough in Maryland (the land is owned by the Department of Natural Resources).

Each of these rivers has a unique access history where it made sense for American Whitewater to own, lease, or manage land. For example, on the Gauley, American Whitewater leases the Mason Branch take-out field because the National Park Service does not have adequate flat land at the take-out for boater parking. On the Elkhorn River, access was threatened due to lack of a take-out location and local clubs and paddlers rallied to raise funds for land acquisition and are engaged in ongoing maintenance. American Whitewater ownership of the Watauga take-out eliminates a long paddle out to a public access location on a lake downstream. We hold the Johns Creek take-out for a future time when Virginia river access becomes more clearly legal, and owning the land gives us leverage to help reach that goal.

Last summer, American Whitewater implemented a new tactic in river access on the Contoocook River in New Hampshire (a popular Class III/IV run for paddlers throughout New England). With the help of regional clubs and local boaters, American Whitewater completed efforts to acquire property along the Contoocook River. We then placed the property under a conservation easement and donated the land to the town of Henniker, NH, which maintains the title to the property and maintains it as conservation land.

Earlier this spring American Whitewater was approached by the town of Hendricks, WV about the property we owned for a take-out to the Blackwater River. The town was interested in maintaining the property for permanent access to the Blackwater and Black Fork Rivers (the land is located at the confluence of both). In March the American Whitewater Board of Directors approved a

transfer of the Blackwater access location to the town of Hendricks with the following caveats for management: a) the land be used exclusively for recreation and community purposes, b) the town may not impose any fees for access to the river or charge for parking, and c) these protections are permanent.

Engaging local communities in the ongoing management of river access opens a new chapter in stewardship for our organization. An access model that includes community ownership with conservation easements and land held exclusively for recreational purposes is an exciting step forward in access for paddlers.

Unlike stewardship projects with a conservation focus, where we can solicit foundation grants, our access efforts are paid for with membership support (that means your dues and donations). That support is critical for ongoing care and feeding of our access initiatives. As we look to the future, we continue to appreciate the importance of rivers and their role in supporting the health and wellbeing of the paddling community. Thanks to your membership support we can continue to maintain these access locations.

See you on the river,



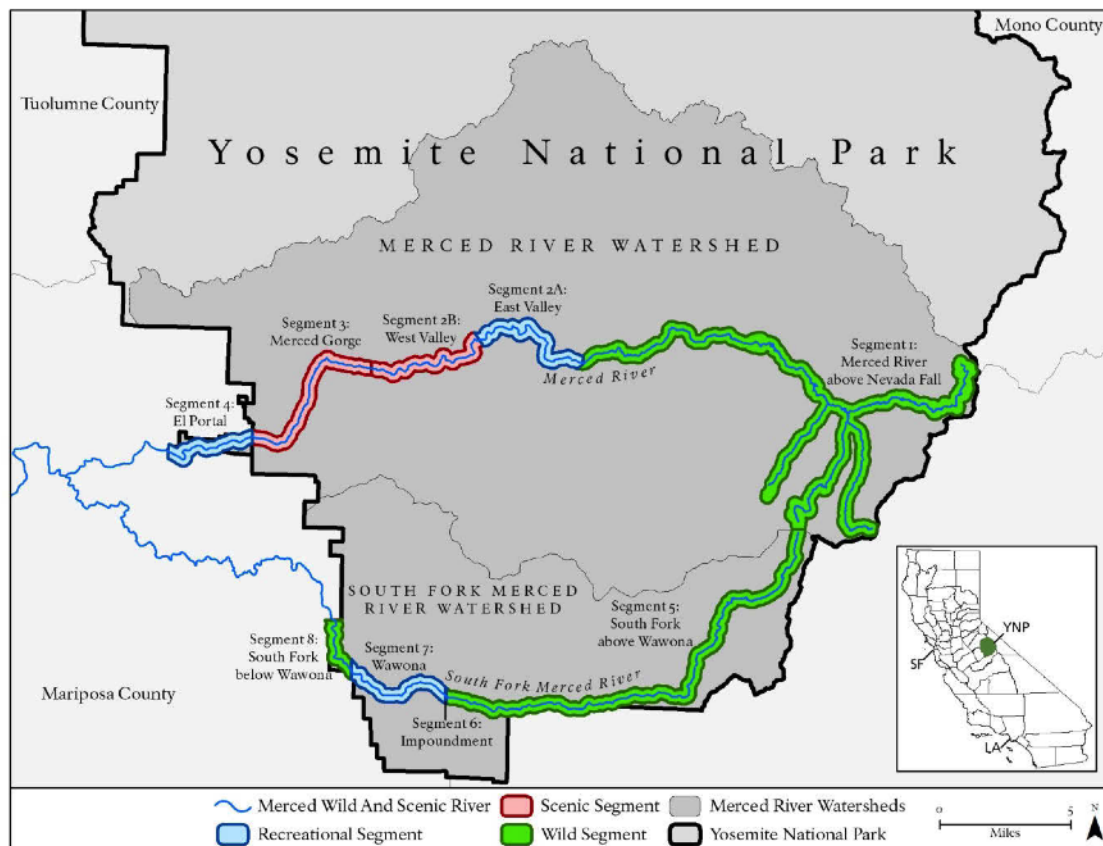
Mark Singleton

Executive Director, American Whitewater

STEWARDSHIP

AT LAST: PADDLING OPPORTUNITIES IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

BY MEGAN HOOKER



Paddling will soon be allowed on segments of the Wild and Scenic Merced River. Map courtesy of Yosemite National Park

EARLY IN OUR nation's history, river travel was one of the primary ways that people began to explore our country. Today, paddling on a river is one of the most powerful ways to connect with a landscape. As a recreational pursuit, paddling is human-powered, place-based, low impact, quiet, and unlike any other mode of travel.

Some of the best places to connect with breath-taking scenery and natural landscapes can be found within our National Park System—from the depths of the Grand Canyon to the pristine waters within the Great Smokies. At long last, people have the opportunity to enjoy portions of Yosemite National Park by boat. Earlier this year, the Park released its Wild and Scenic River Management Plans, announcing that the public can legally paddle more of the Merced River and the Grand Canyon of

the Tuolumne River. For decades, paddling was prohibited on most of the rivers in the Park. Several years ago, Yosemite began to develop its management plans for the Wild and Scenic Merced and Tuolumne Rivers. Throughout the management planning process, American Whitewater worked hard to educate Park staff about the importance of putting boating on equal footing with the climbing, hiking, and fishing activities that take place within the Park. On the Merced Plan in particular, Yosemite staff were open to hearing our concerns and thoughtfully developed a balanced plan that will allow for increased paddling opportunities and protect important Park resources.

Since many of these runs are open for the first time, there are many sections that we just don't know much about yet, including the runs above Nevada Fall and through the Merced Gorge on the Merced, and above

Wawona on the South Fork Merced. Those runs that require a significant hike might be better suited for packrafts. Still, if you have a chance to make a run, we want to hear your trip report so that we can improve and enhance the information that we have on our website.

For now, here's what we can share with you.

The Merced River Plan

On the Merced River, Park staff will now manage the number of boaters in the Park in the same way they do hiking and other backcountry uses. The new plan considers river segments as "water trails" or backcountry routes, and visitors boating in the Park will have to secure a permit or self-register, depending on the river reach.

As Yosemite ventures into opening more of the Merced for the first time, the Park has set initial limits on the number of boaters on each river reach to balance reasonable access with protecting river values. Within Yosemite Valley, the numbers of boaters on the popular reach between Lower River Campground and Sentinel Beach will remain similar to current levels. In addition, 45 private boaters a day will be able to run the river through the length of Yosemite Valley. Outside of the Valley, boaters can also enjoy the Merced River above Nevada Fall (25 boats per day with wilderness permit), the Merced Gorge (10 boats per day with self-registration), and the Merced River at El Portal (50 boats per day with self-registration). Use on the South Fork Merced is also limited (25 people per day with a permit above and below Wawona, and 50 people per day with self-registration at Wawona). Park staff anticipates that this will probably require little more management action beyond monitoring. The paddling season in the Park is short, where flows are typically optimal between March and May, and rarely boatable through the end of July.

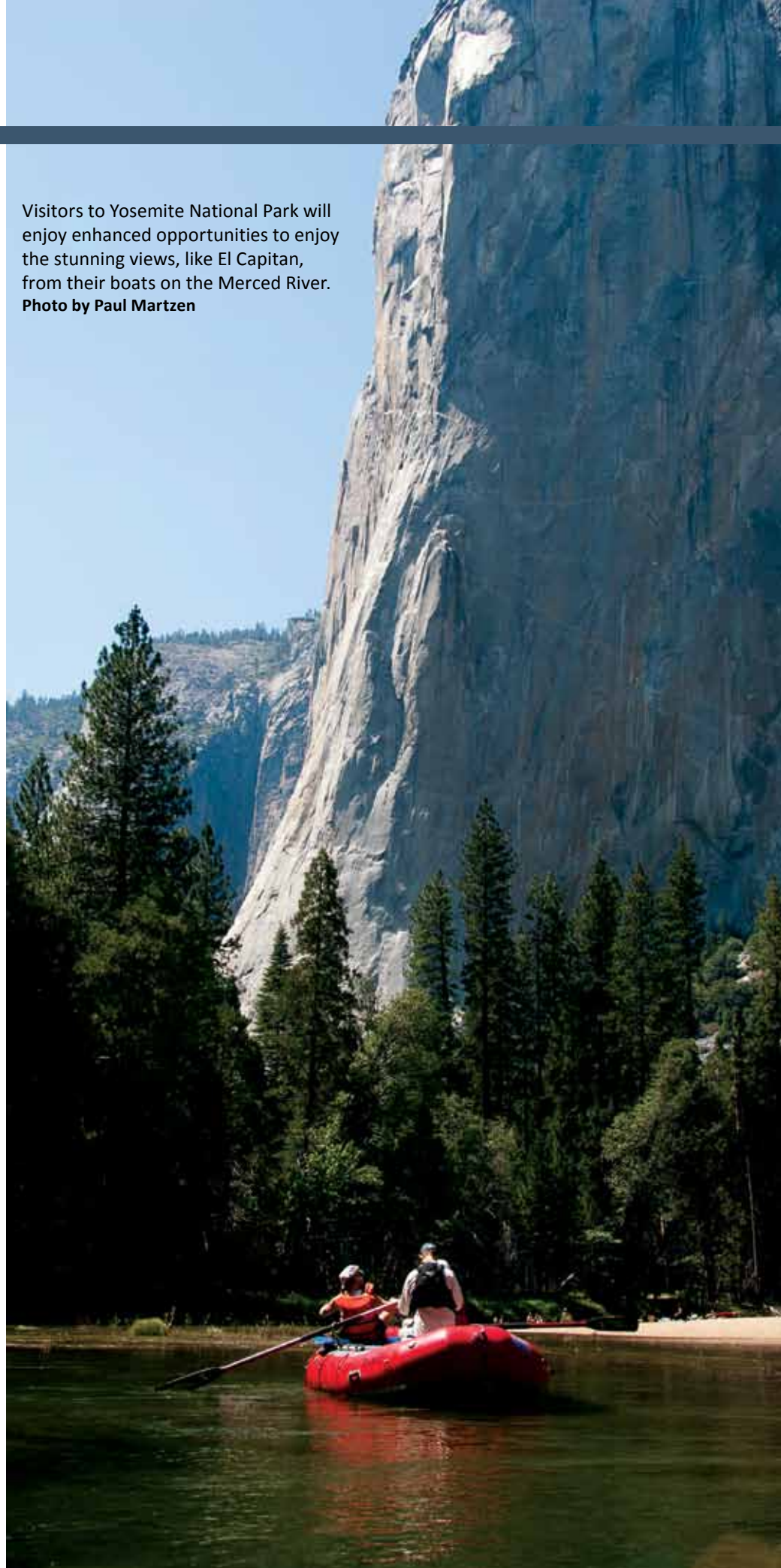
The Tuolumne Plan – Grand Canyon Run

On the Tuolumne River, the Park has opened up opportunities to boat the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne. Similar to the Merced Plan, boating on this reach will be managed under the established overnight wilderness permit system. The run will start at Pothole Dome, below Tuolumne Meadows, and end at Pate Valley. At press-time, the exact details about put-in, take-out, portage trails and landing/no-landing zone locations were yet to be determined. Check American Whitewater's website for updated information. The run will only be for advanced paddlers who also like to hike, as boaters will be required to carry their boats 8 miles from the take-out at Pate Valley to the White Wolf trailhead.


Boating on this run is being introduced on a trial basis, and the Park Service will monitor the activity and adjust the guidelines and

Visitors to Yosemite National Park will enjoy enhanced opportunities to enjoy the stunning views, like El Capitan, from their boats on the Merced River.

Photo by Paul Martzen



STEWARDSHIP



The Tuolumne River, just upstream of Cathedral Creek. The river through the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne will be open to boating under the Park's new management plan.

Photo by Darin McQuoid

management actions as needed through flow restrictions, seasonal closures, group size and equipment restrictions, and wilderness camping regulations. The Park has also made it clear that if boaters violate the prohibition on boating on Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, the Grand Canyon run may be temporarily or permanently closed.

Requirements for Boating in Yosemite

In order to paddle or row on rivers in the Park, boaters will be required to have high performance boats that will also be in good condition and designed to handle the class of whitewater on that reach. All boaters are required to have a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device in good condition and a first aid kit. Running reaches that are Class II and above will require additional safety and self-rescue equipment. This will distinguish those who want to boat from those who desire to swim and play in the water over a shorter length of the Merced River. American Whitewater supported these requirements, as they are the best way to ensure that visitors with the necessary skills and equipment will be enjoying the river safely.

As on every river, paddlers are responsible for protecting and respecting the natural environment, and this is especially true in Yosemite. Boaters will be required to use established put-in and take-out locations, and avoid sensitive riparian vegetation. Also, as part of the natural ecosystem, large woody debris in the river will remain in place. As a representative of conservation-oriented whitewater enthusiasts, American Whitewater worked at length to ensure that Park staff understood that paddlers will protect these sensitive areas.

The Tale of Two Plans

While we're very excited that the public will be able to legally boat the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne between Pothole Dome and Pate Valley, we're disappointed by the way that the Park has chosen to approach boating in the Tuolumne River Plan. Overall, where the Merced River Plan

treats boating as any other activity within the Park, the Tuolumne Plan continues to prohibit boating on the rest of the river, while failing to limit other activities that could have similar impacts.

The Tuolumne River Plan seeks to prevent impacts to meadow and riparian resources by continuing to exclude boaters from the Tuolumne River through the Meadows, below O'Shaughnessy Dam and on the Lyell Fork. The Tuolumne Plan assumes that boaters will trample riparian vegetation and create their own trails. Rather than develop a solution similar to the Merced Plan, the Park instead has chosen to prohibit the activity outright. Activities that could have similar impacts, such as fishing and swimming, are directed to less sensitive areas. The Plan fails to describe why the same isn't done for boating.

In contrast, the Merced River Plan treats boating as any other activity within the Park along the entire length of the river. The Park will manage the impacts to the Merced River from all activities, whether they come from visitors who are hiking, fishing, swimming or boating, to ensure that the Outstandingly Remarkable Values are protected. In order to protect riparian vegetation in particular, the Merced Plan directs boaters to specific put-in and take-out locations and requires that they stop only on open bars and beaches below the main high water mark.

The Park also justifies their continued ban on the Tuolumne River by stating that if boating is allowed, there would be too many people on the trails and not adequate parking. At the same time, the Park acknowledges that boating use will be small. Trail capacity limits and overnight wilderness permits are enough to manage this problem for all other uses. On the "hike in," boaters will be on the river, which will in fact reduce the number of people on the trail. And on the hike out, the only difference between a boater and a hiker is that their backpack will be a boat.



And finally, where the Merced River Plan requires specific craft, gear and safety equipment to ensure boater skill and safety on certain river reaches, the Tuolumne Plan continues to ban boating based on the assumption that boating is inherently unsafe.

“THE MERCED AND TUOLUMNE PLANS APPROACH BOATING IN VERY DIFFERENT WAYS, AND ALMOST SEEM TO COME FROM TWO DIFFERENT PARKS. WHERE THE MERCED RIVER PLAN TREATS BOATING AS ANY OTHER ACTIVITY WITHIN YOSEMITE, THE TUOLUMNE PLAN CONTINUES TO PROHIBIT BOATING ON MOST OF THE RIVER.”

The Merced and Tuolumne Plans approach boating in very different ways, and almost seem to come from different Parks. The Tuolumne Plan is a throwback to how paddling and other specific activities used to be managed within the Parks. The Merced is more in alignment with solid management practices now and in the future.

Why Opening Yosemite Matters

It's rare that river managers choose to ban paddling, and they do it most often when they view paddling as fundamentally different from other activities, like hiking, rock climbing and camping. Unfortunately, while these bans are local in scope, they have far-reaching implications. River managers across the country draw on the techniques and tools that their colleagues use to address a variety of management issues. It's significant each time a river manager opens his or her eyes to the value of the experience that people have on the water, and shifts their approach to managing their local river.

But this is not just anywhere—this is Yosemite. Paddling is not only about interacting with rock and water, but it is also about interacting with a place. For those who build the necessary skills, there is no finer way to experience a river, its valley, its wildlife, and its forests. It's a huge milestone that Yosemite National Park has loosened its philosophical objection to paddling, but the real success will come on the water, when the public can finally feel the bite of their paddles in the waters of the Merced and Tuolumne Rivers, and gaze at one of the most iconic natural landscapes on earth as they silently pass through.

STEWARDSHIP

NORTHEAST STEWARDSHIP UPDATES

BY BOB NASDOR

Wild & Scenic Northeast Rivers

AERICAN WHITEWATER IS supporting efforts to protect rivers in the Northeast under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. Efforts are under way in both Connecticut and Vermont to protect rivers that have outstandingly remarkable value. The Act recognizes that there are certain rivers that possess wild, scenic, or recreational characteristics that should be protected from degradation by hydropower or other forms of development. Designation under the Act can be an important step in protecting these rivers as a boating resource for future generations.

In Connecticut, Representative Esty (D-CT5) and Senator Murphy (D-CT) have introduced legislation (H.R. 2555 and S. 1253) to designate 27 miles of the Farmington River, including the popular Tarrifville Gorge section, as well as eight miles of the Salmon Brook, for protection under the Act. Tarrifville is the site of



the Whitewater Triple Crown, which draws regional and national competitors. The legislation follows extensive study authorized under the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Study Act of 2005, with votes of support from all of the communities where the proposed sections are located. The legislation is awaiting action by both House & Senate committees.

In Vermont, legislation has also been introduced to designate sections of the Missisquoi & Trout Rivers for protection under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. The

Upper Missisquoi and Trout River Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, S. 1252, introduced by Senator Sanders (I-VT), and H.R. 2569, introduced by Rep. Welch (D-VT0), would protect 46 river miles from encroachment and further development in order to protect scenic and recreational values. These rivers provide boaters with the opportunity to enjoy both flatwater and whitewater paddling.

American Whitewater is excited to be working on Wild and Scenic River issues in the Northeast. Stay tuned for more information!

Jessie Stone's NYC kids camp celebrates a day on the beautiful Farmington River, seen here in 2010.
Photo by Jeff Paine



*Opposite: Salmon Brook, CT.
Right: Boateater Rapid on the Farmington
River, CT.
Photos by Erik Eckilson*

Vermont “Low-Impact” Hydro

EARLIER THIS YEAR, American Whitewater testified before the Vermont House Committee on Fish, Wildlife & Water Resources on several so-called “low-impact” hydro measures. The Committee held hearings to receive testimony on Act 165, a measure that would streamline the approval process for new hydropower projects in the state. The Committee also considered legislation that would limit the ability of the state Agency of Natural Resources to fulfill its obligations under the Clean Water Act. American Whitewater urged the Committee to assure that all stakeholders, including American Whitewater and other conservation



groups, be given an opportunity to provide input to the state when considering the impact that a proposed project may have on the use and enjoyment of rivers. American Whitewater further urged the

Committee to reject efforts to undermine the Clean Water Act. We look forward to working with state agencies to assure that all river-related values are considered and protected.

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HISTORY

ROMAINE RIVER ROULETTE

BY DEAN FAIRBURN AND BOB GEDEKOH
PHOTOS BY BOB GEDEKOH

Editor's Note: In each 2014 issue of the Journal, we are celebrating 60 years of American Whitewater's history. This story originally appeared in the Jan/Feb 1988 issue of American Whitewater. There are many stories nearly as good that we could have chosen to represent this golden age of the AW Journal (late 1980s-mid 1990s), but this one holds special significance for several reasons. For one, the Romaine is a magical place, as several friends who have paddled it attest to. Sadly, the river is currently being inundated by four massive dams built primarily for exporting hydropower to Ontario and the Eastern United States, and will never again be experienced in the same way that Bob, Dean, and Mike did in the story below.



"No turning back now." Mike Bush and Dean Fairburn watch as the last ride to civilization takes off down the Romaine River.

For another, this story is a combined effort on the part of two good friends of mine. Bob Gedekoh has been a mentor of mine on the river and as a fellow editor of this magazine for 20-plus years. When I was first learning to kayak, as a scared pre-teen, Bob was often there leading me through drops, coaching me on what to do (and not do), and exemplifying a pure

passion for whitewater that has not waned all these years later. When I was in high school, Bob gave me my start in editing, sending me manila envelopes (usually somewhat battered on their second or third postal odyssey) full of stories destined for publication in American Whitewater. After I took my turn altering them, sometimes for the better, he would give me feedback that

undeniably helped make me better at what I do today. Bob's knack for recognizing and underscoring the unique voice and allure of a good story are unparalleled among editors of whitewater literature. His love of a great story is evident in his own writing, which appeared in American Whitewater and other fine whitewater publications, including the following tale.

Bob's co-author on this piece was Dean Fairburn. Dean was also a family friend and mentor to me growing up, but especially when, as a young adult, fresh out of college, I moved west to explore what I considered "real" wilderness. Dean lived with his wife Jenny and two sons, Kit and Kavik, in Garden Valley, Idaho at the time. They had lived all over the country prior to that, including suburban Knoxville, Tennessee, and remote Holy Cross, Alaska, where Dean taught high school math and fell in love with dog sledding. My girlfriend and I would visit Dean and Jenny on weekends away from

Bob Gedekoh portaging one of the Romaine's many large, powerful drops.



Mike Bush, expedition kayaker.

our Forest Service jobs, often camping in their front yard or crashing on their living room floor. We became fixtures in their lives for two consecutive summers, often listening to Dean tell hilarious stories deep into the night and waking to the cacophony of 10 Alaskan Huskies howling and yapping in the back yard the next morning. I once rode out a nasty case of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever on their floor, which probably illustrates the kind of interminable house guests we made for Dean and Jenny, but we were and are eternally grateful for their generosity, their company, and for everything we learned from them.

Dean died on the river while commercially guiding the South Fork Payette River in July 2007. This tragedy was one of the most shocking and sad events in my life, an accident that made no sense and yet had huge impacts on Dean's family, friends, and community. In some ways it reinforced the notion that anything can happen to anyone, anywhere, anytime, not only in whitewater, but also in life more generally. At the same time, it made me realize how wise Dean's modus operandi had been. He did more to



promote laughter in himself and in those around him than anyone else I've met, and he never seemed to pass up an adventure, no matter the size. In his final year, Dean had made concrete plans to send himself back to Alaska, this time to compete with his huskies in the 2008 Iditarod. While he never got to be a part of "The Last Great Race," as the following story illustrates, Dean sure knew how to embrace the unknown and have fun with it. It is an example I continue to strive to emulate.

And now, on with the story!

LAST AUGUST, DEAN Fairburn, Mike Bush and Bob Gedekoh kayaked Quebec's Romaine River, a 150-mile, 10-day odyssey through one of Canada's most remote and picturesque wilderness areas. The Romaine, which empties into the St. Lawrence, features Class I-VI whitewater. To their knowledge, no other parties attempted the river last year. This was the third Canadian trip organized by Gedekoh and Bush. They paddled the West Branch Magpie in 1985 and the St. Jean in 1986. Fairburn has been boating for less than

Mike Bush, fisherman extraordinaire.



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HISTORY



Scenes from the Romaine: Above: whitewater! Middle: unloading the float plane at put-in. Below: fishing, an unexpected highlight of the trip.

three years; this was his first wilderness kayaking expedition. The following is the story of the Romaine expedition, told from two perspectives—that of the veteran and the tenderfoot. Portions of the text written by Fairburn are italicized. Material penned by Gedekoh is in conventional print.

The Team

Every year it gets harder to recruit a team to tackle these Canadian Rivers. Our paddling companions have all heard about the brutal 11-hour portages, the monotony of the freeze-dried food and the 30-hour marathon drive to Quebec. They've heard that these expeditions are good places to get eaten, if not by hydraulics, then by blackflies.

Those who have never been laugh when asked, and those who have been resort to drastic measures to avoid going again. John Bolger doubled the size of his cattle herd. Dean Smith took a job. Jim Goddard fell in love. Jess Gonzales went so far as to become a father.

That leaves Mike and me. Not enough to tackle the Romaine safely. We need fresh meat.

The Whitewater Orgy, held every April in West Virginia, seems a good place to start. Plenty of enthusiastic boaters come from all over the East. Some may not have heard of our previous trips—at least not the gory details. Surely we can find a likely candidate among the crowd.

What are the qualifications? Solid Class IV boating skills, the physical stamina to complete the journey, the fortitude to spend 10 days in the wilderness with less than 25 pounds of gear, and, perhaps most important, an easygoing disposition—the ability to laugh in the face of adversity. Whiners and snivelers need not apply.



Scenes from the Romaine: Above: more whitewater! Middle: when the fish are biting.... Below: inspiring river scenery.

By the end of the Orgy we have someone in mind—an amicable 25-year-old industrial arts major from the University of Tennessee named Dean Fairburn. Still a little shaky on Class V water, but confident on Class IV. A competitive swimmer at the college level. That might come in handy—one never knows. A veteran camper. Says he can start a campfire in the rain. Enthusiastic, but not cocky. A bright conversationalist with a whimsical sense of humor that should mesh with our slightly skewed view of the world. The kind of guy you wish would date your sister. But is he naive enough to accept our invitation? A week after the Orgy, I call and pop the question.

I feel like doing backflips all over my house. Bob Gedekoh and Mike Bush have just asked me to join them on a Canadian kayaking expedition. Finally, after three years of boating, I'm going to get a crack at a genuine adventure. My old friend Dean Smith accompanied Bob and Mike on the St. Jean and the Magpie. His tales are exciting—horrendous rapids, giant waterfalls, deep canyons, tough portages, strange wildlife encounters and spectacular scenery.

This is something I only dreamed of doing. There's no need for Bob to ask twice. I'm going!

Second thoughts come later, while daydreaming in class. Now there is less excitement and more concern. I guess I knew that I would get nervous, have misgivings, but so soon? Mostly I'm thinking about dangerous whitewater. Mostly I'm thinking about recirculation.

At the Orgy I was recirculated in a gruesome pour-over on the Blackwater River. A good friend shared the experience—a friend who soon stopped boating and experienced a religious conversion. The very next day I was recirculated in a megahydraulic on



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the Shaver's Fork—it was in full flood. I can't help remembering that in both these instances I was following Bob Gedekoh. He escaped both of these situations unscathed.

What does this mean? I make a mental note. In Canada, I must not let Bob lead me into such predicaments. In Canada, I must be careful.

Netherlands

After carefully packing (and borrowing) my gear, meeting Bob and Mike, and driving a total of 40 hours from Knoxville, we reach the tiny fishing village of Harve St. Pierre. The road that parallels the north shore of the St. Laurence Seaway ends here. By now the sudden rushes of adrenalin are intense and sickening.

I try to disguise my anxiety, but apparently I don't do too well. Bob is eyeing me from the passenger seat of the Jeep.

"Wondering what you're getting into?" he inquires.

"Ya," I choke.

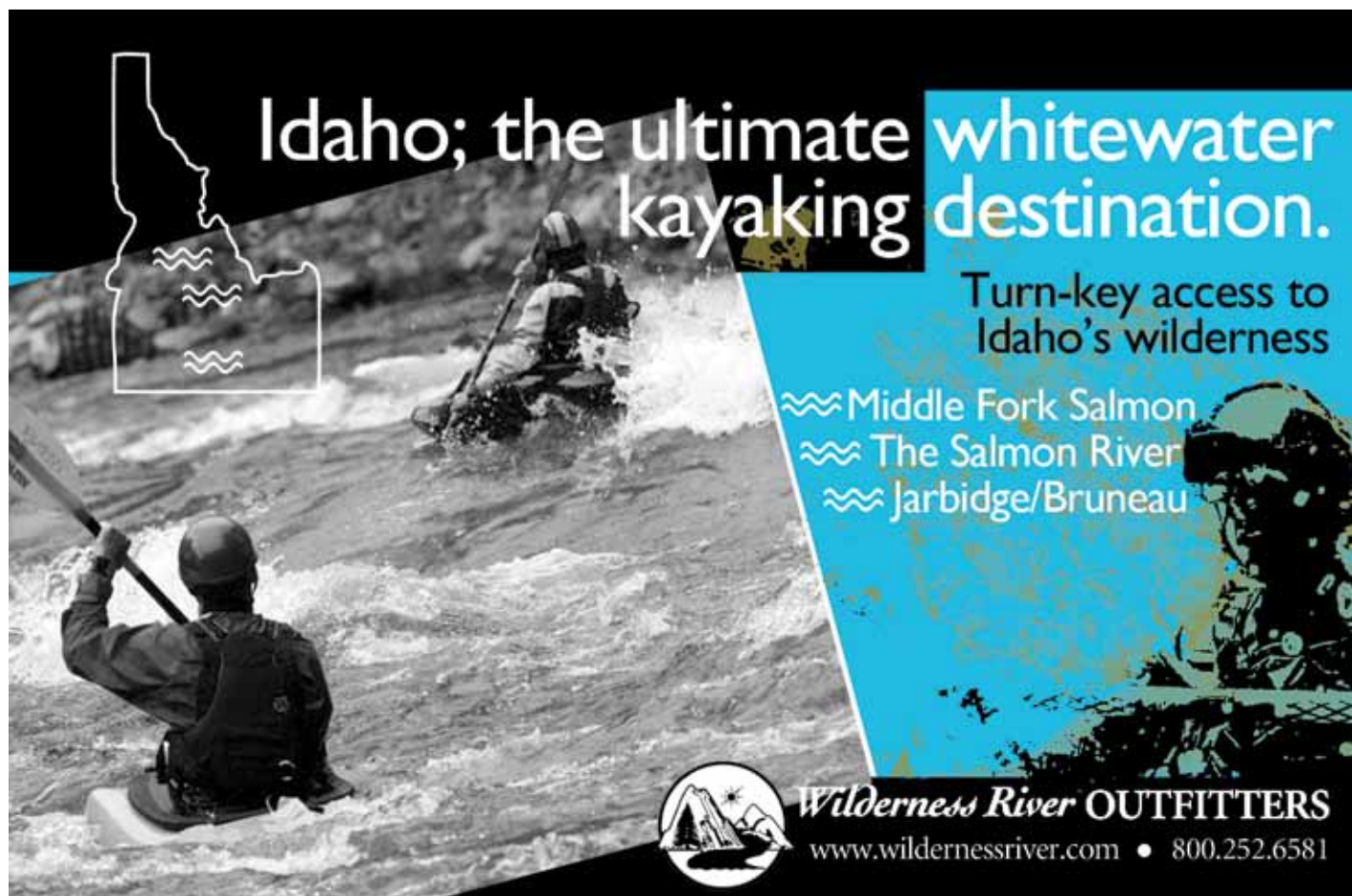
Bob and Mike seem unconcerned. I wonder if they felt this way on their first trip.

We reach the airport, a stagnant lake on the outskirts of the village. Again the adrenalin. Mike and Bob saunter into the office, a dilapidated shanty, to arrange the flight. I study the ancient single-engine floatplane docked in front. The monstrosity is supposed to carry us, our gear and our kayaks thousands of feet into the blue? God, I wish I weren't so afraid of heights.

We have some time to kill, so we ramble around the village and wind up at a restaurant. I keep checking the storm clouds billowing over the western horizon. "This may be our last supper," Bob announces mischievously. I find it hard to laugh until Bushie [Mike Bush's nickname] tries to order an ice-cream cone in French. He winds up with onion rings.

Back at the airport, we load up the plane. My last chance to back out is approaching rapidly. I tell myself that I must go through with it. I cannot let my nerves ruin a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

I strap myself into the seat. The garrulous French-speaking bush pilot fires the engine and we taxi across the lake. I can't help but notice how many gauges are missing from the pilot's control panel. I wonder what those missing gauges were for.



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With a deafening blast we accelerate into the air. The plane trembles and dips and pivots, and my heart is pumping. The engine wails and the exhaust is overpowering. Perched in the copilot's seat, Bob nonchalantly snaps pictures. Mike straddles the kayaks in the fuselage. It is impossible to communicate over the roar of the engine.

The scenery is so fantastic that I forget my apprehensions. At first lakes are everywhere, surrounded by desolate swamplands. As we fly north we cross a range of enormous mountains, with craggy granite cliffs that plummet thousands of feet into rivers. Finally, we pass the boundary of the permafrost and enter the tundra.

Our flight doesn't follow the Romaine so we can't scout from the air. Perhaps that's for the best. But I can see other rivers with rapids that look terrifying, even from this altitude. The specter of recirculation reenters my mind.

After an hour we descend. Finally I spot the Romaine. It is big. Very big. Much bigger than the other rivers we have seen. And it looks like we are going to land in a Class I rapid!



There are two-foot swells on the river. I brace for the worst, but our landing is smooth. I open my eyes as we taxi toward a beach. We start to unload our gear. Suddenly, a powerful blast of wind dislodges the plane and it starts to drift away. The pilot tosses Mike a rope, and he digs his feet into the sand and secures the plane with a deep brace. As we hastily retrieve the last

of our supplies I consider backing out again. This is absolutely my last chance.

The engine fires. I stand in a trance. The plane taxis away and soon is off. The plane hovers in the air, just beyond my reach. It is hard to describe what I feel right now, but I know I will never forget it. The word "abandonment" comes to mind. I tentatively wave goodbye as the plane disappears into the gloom.

"No turning back now," Bush observes grimly.

My mind races. Did we bring enough food? Did I forget any important equipment? Is my gear adequate? What lies ahead? Will anyone get hurt? Can I put my faith in Bob and Mike to see me through this ordeal? Have I made a serious mistake? Who has the toilet paper in their pack?

Mike and Bob are already in their kayaks. I scramble to catch up.



The view on the flight to the put-in.

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One of many scouts on the Romaine

Initiation

We drift past the remote-controlled meteorological station indicated on the map, one of the only signs of civilization on the Romaine. Around the bend the first Class IV rapid is waiting. It's a long one, nearly a kilometer, according to the Canadian survey. They lined their canoes down the right. We certainly don't intend to do that.

We pause at the top on river left for a strategy session and crane our necks to look downstream. The rapid doesn't look intimidating to me—just a long wave train that terminates in a placid pool. Only a few rocks break the surface; it won't be technical.

"I don't think we should waste time scouting it," I announce matter-of-factly. "That would take forever."

Mike nods his agreement. Apparently he's not impressed either.

More aerial photography enroute to put-in

anticipated. The magnificent scale of the Romaine had dwarfed them when viewed from upstream. I bob along cheerfully until I reach the crest of a particularly lofty one, perhaps 12 feet from trough to crest.

From this vantage I get a good look at what lies ahead. For the first time concern enters my mind. Not panic mind you. Concern. Not all of the waves downstream are as nicely rounded as the one I'm on. Some are peaked, and a few are exploding. Actually, more than a few are exploding. Some erupt intermittently, but others, like the monster coming up fast, explode continuously, forming a great big #!#!#*## hole.

Now concern is displaced by genuine angst. Not panic mind you. Angst.

I paddle vigorously (not frantically mind you, just vigorously) toward the middle of the river, hoping to skirt the edge of the hole. But the 15,000 cfs flow of the Romaine has its own itinerary, and my strokes don't seem very effective. Soon the possibility that I might slide smack into the vortex of the sucker crosses my mind.

The hole in question is less than a quarter of the way through the rapid. How many

Dean looks a little uncertain. "What the hell," I think to myself. "We can't scout every Class IV on the river. He's got to get his feet wet sooner or later."

I flash a knowing grin that is supposed to inspire confidence as I peel out into the current. I am pleasantly surprised to discover that the waves are juicier than I had





others lie below, just as big—or bigger? Now is the time for frenzied paddling. Now is the time for panic.

So inspired, I manage to clip the edge of the stopper. Nonetheless, it rockets me into a tailstand that could easily have been a backender.

I recover in time to avoid the second hydraulic. Then I select a beeline toward a river left eddy, dodging several more holes. It is not until I reach the sanctuary of the eddy that I have time to consider the plight of the others. It takes a while to locate Mike, side surfing the first hole, sometimes upright, sometimes not. Eventually he ends out and rolls, just in time to punch the second keeper. Even at this distance I can tell that Mike is impressed.

Dean is nowhere to be found. “Where the hell can he have gotten to?” I wonder, and then, “What the hell have we done? Surely we haven’t deep-sixed the boy on the first Class IV.” Notice the use of the pronoun, “we.” When things go well, “I” take the

Dean Fairburn, scouting one of the Romaine’s many big-water drops.

credit. When things go poorly, Mike shares the blame. That’s what friends are for. I scan the rapid again from top to bottom, but there is no sign of Dean.

Just when I am starting to feel confident, it happens. What I feared most—a giant hole. First it chewed on Bob, and now it has

eaten Mike. I’m still at the top, wondering what to do.

Up to now it’s been Class II and III, but not the kind of water I’m used to. These Class III rapids have eight-foot waves! The volume of the Romaine is greater than any I’ve seen, nearly three times that of the New at high water! The current is deceptively powerful. The weight in my boat makes me sluggish; catching eddies is a real chore. But I’ve started to get used to it, started to think that I had the situation under control. Until now.

I fight to catch a micro-eddy in the middle of the river, well upstream of the hole. I keep looking for Bob and Mike. Several decades later Bob appears two hundred yards downstream on river right. After a long time, Mike joins him. There has been pandemonium of some sort, and I remember what happened on the Blackwater and the Shaver’s Fork. I cannot afford a mistake this early in the run. Boat rescue here would not be easy. I try to think rationally.

Bob and Mike finally spot me, and they point to the right. With some trepidation, I manage the ferry to the shore. I know the



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Canadians lined their boats down this side, but I'm not taking any chances. I climb out of my kayak and scout.

A few minutes later I attain the eddy after paddling along the right hand shore. Bob and Mike look a little green around the gills. Once again, Bob perceives my anxiety.

"We'll have to be a bit more careful from now on. Those hydraulics were rather uncharitable," he observes. Bob is a master of understatement, but hearing him say that makes me feel a little bit better.

There is a sandbar beside the eddy, and we decide to break for the day. Bob and Mike pitch the tents while I start the fire. Then Bob dozes off while Mike explores the shoreline.

I get my map out and count the Class IV and V rapids. There are quite a few. I toss a sacrificial raisin into the river and worry some more. Tonight I get to listen to the rumble of man-eating hydraulics while I sleep. I hope there will be no nightmares.

The Fisherman

Mike is really looking forward to the fishing. He talks of little else. He extols the compact but sensitive virtue of his breakdown pole, the fidelity of his high tech reel, the

invisibility of his appropriately tested line, and the glamorous allure of his spoons and spinners. God only knows how much time and money he has invested in his tackle.

Dean and I brought fishing gear along as well. My entire outfit cost ten dollars at K-Mart. Dean's gear is comparable to mine.

Nonetheless, we're betting that we will catch just as many fish as Mike. We have good reason to believe this. We have inside information that we haven't shared with Mike. According to my Canadian sources, no one has ever caught a fish on the Romaine. As far as they know there aren't any to be caught. They offer no explanation. There surely isn't any pollution. The watershed is undeveloped. Pristine. And the Magpie and the St. Jean have lots of fish. They lie less than fifty miles away. Nonetheless, the Romaine is said to be void of fish.

We have not shared this intelligence with Mike for a reason. It might have broken his heart. Worse yet, he might have backed out. After all, he's still bemoaning the 63 blackfly bites he counted on his body one night on the St. Jean. The only reason we brought fishing tackle was to keep him from getting suspicious.

But this is the moment of truth. We've taken a break in the middle of a Class III rapid, and Mike is whistling optimistically as he assembles his gear for the first time. Dean and I exchange guilty looks as he makes his initial cast.

A few seconds later Mike hoots with delight as his pole bends abruptly. But his joy is short-lived; almost immediately his line goes slack. "Had a good hit, but he spit the hook," Mike explains disgustedly.

I nudge Dean knowingly. "Must have been a snag."

Mike casts again. Once again his pole bends abruptly, but this time it stays that way. While Mike eagerly reels in his catch Dean and I watch halfheartedly, certain that he will find a clump of weeds or an old hunk of wood on the end of his line.

Suddenly, a sizeable trout breaks the water just offshore. It has a lure in its mouth. Now we exchange looks of wide-eyed astonishment.

"Where did that come from?" Dean whispers.

"Beats me," I reply. "Probably the only one in the river."

But it is not. Within a few minutes Mike has landed three more trout, and Dean and I are scrambling to retrieve our tackle from the kayaks. We soon discover that the Romaine has more fish than Mrs. Paul. So many, in fact, that we establish a policy of keeping only those hooked in the gills or the eyes—those that would not survive if released. Even so, by the time the trip is over we will all be tired of eating trout.

This might be a function of the way we cook them, over the fire like marshmallows on a stick. Without a frying pan or even margarine, we have no choice. At least we're not eating them raw.

By Land or Sea

These portages are tough. We even scouted this one to select the best route, yet it has taken over two hours to come this far. Mike and Bob carry slings of climber's webbing to facilitate boat dragging. Next time I'll bring one, too.

The terrain is rugged. The vegetation is dense, the ground is covered with thick, slippery moss, and there are boulders and fallen trees everywhere. Now we must descend a 20-foot granite cliff. A fall could be disastrous.

The blackflies are particularly fierce here. My wrists itch, and I scratch them till they bleed. I have never seen blackflies until this trip, and I would not have believed that anything that tiny could inflict so much genuine misery. Mike and I are wearing

head nets, and we have bathed in repellent. Undaunted, the blackflies crawl into my clothing and bite me around the neck, waist and ankles.

Bob isn't wearing a head net. Sometimes he doesn't even wear a shirt. The blackflies don't bother him much at all. He jokes that he is immune to their bites, and I guess it must be true. He teases us unmercifully. Mike, whose right eye is swollen shut, and I don't think his blackfly jokes are the least bit funny.

We pause at a blueberry patch and start to forage. This happens often. Bob eyes the river downstream and mumbles, "Hmmm." I hate it when he does that. I don't know what he's thinking, and I'm not really sure I want to know. That doesn't stop him.

"I believe if we hang tight to the base of that cliff and stay clear of the main current, we could spare ourselves the next section of this portage. We ought to be able to nab that eddy above that next drop."

That eddy is about the size of a teaspoon, and that drop looks like certain death to me.

Just as I exasperate, "You've got to be sh—," Mike intercedes.

"Looks reasonable," he declares. I think he must be awfully tired of dragging his boat.

Oh well, here we go again. Bob will run first; Mike clambers downstream to intercept him at the eddy. The current at the base of the cliff is unruly, and Bob swirls through several 360-degree revolutions before reaching the



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Mike Bush in a pose of contentment.

eddy. Mike catches Bob's bow and steadies it while he climbs out. Now it is my turn.

The run isn't all that difficult, but by location it is quite unnerving. I am more than relieved when I reach the safety of the eddy.

We carry the drop, then line our kayaks another eighth of a mile. By the time we finish, I note that it has taken three hours to circumvent this single rapid.

Lining, boat catching, and these rugged portages are all new to me. A change of pace from carrying my boat to and from the Ocoee. But I must admit that sometimes the portages offer welcome relief from running the intense Class IV and V water. And there are always plenty of blueberries....

Wildwater

The Romaine features some of the most peculiar whitewater I have ever seen. Many of the rapids indicated on the Canadian survey are not single drops at all, but long, continuous series of Class IV, V and VI whitewater. As a consequence we have

been able to paddle portions of the river which the Canadians deemed unrunnable.

Often the Romaine is a half-mile wide, braided through islands and weird rock formations. It is difficult to decide which way to go. Midway through one rapid we encounter a 14-foot curling wave that forms a pipeline that would have knocked the socks off Gidget and Moondoggie. It would be a wild ride, but there is an imposing hydraulic, at least 20 feet deep, just below. "Big enough to surf the Titanic," I observe. "Terminally."

Sometimes the whole river starts to heave in its basin. Near the bottom of one mile-long series of falls the water surges and recedes nearly eight vertical feet on the boulder strewn shore. Dean spins into an eddy on a crest of water, then finds himself perched high and dry 12 feet from the water's edge. He leaps from his kayak and secures it just in time to avoid the next surge, one which might have carried him back into the rowdy main current and on to hell in a bucket.

We decide to scout the remainder of the rapid. Not far downstream a nine-foot deep, eight-foot wide hydraulic blocks our path. It is clearly impassable. As we catch

our breath I notice that the hole is evolving, decreasing in height and width. After about 40 seconds it is gone completely! Then slowly it rebuilds, soon reappearing, soon regaining its ominous proportions.

"It could be run if you hit it at the right time," Mike observes, but I notice he's not heading toward his boat.

"What if you hit it at the wrong time?" Dean inquires.

"Then you hold your breath for 40 seconds and come out squeaky clean," I reply.

We monitor the cycle several times, taking pictures to document this whitewater marvel. The longer we watch, the meaner it looks. In the end we all elect to portage. Every day Dean grows more confident. No longer is he intimidated by the powerful and unpredictable Class IV water. Though still wary of Class V rapids, he's running most of them after scouting. Someday soon he will be better than Mike and me. He's ten years younger and in a lot better shape. I wonder if he'll associate with us when we're old and decrepit.

I'm glad that Dean is having a good time. This kind of experience is not for everyone.





Only at river level is the scale of the Romaine possible to judge.

Dean has worked out perfectly. He does more than his share of the work, never complains and keeps us laughing. His alter ego, Harve St. Pierre, world famous whitewater adventurer, is a one-man riot.

Camping on the Romaine is more comfortable than on the St. Jean, where we slept in boulder fields and in bug infested swamps. Here the campsites are spacious sand bars, usually at the base of a rapid. There is a breeze to discourage the blackflies, and firewood is plentiful. So far we have seen bear tracks, but no bears. Last year we saw bears.

We brought a two-man tent and a one-man bivy sack. We take turns sleeping in each. This proves interesting. I talk in my sleep and Mike snores. Dean spends most of the night scratching his blackfly bites.

Tonight we camp beside a stunning waterfall. There is a jagged cliff behind the site that supports a lush, primeval, hanging garden. Behind that a majestic peak towers thousands of feet in the air. Not long after the sun sets a full moon creeps over the horizon. Sprawled around the campfire, we

start to bay like wolves. At first it is funny, then downright eerie.

I've lost track of time.

It seems we have been on the river a long, long time. Yet it seems we left Harve St. Pierre just yesterday. I check my watch. We have passed the half-way point. We have been on the river six days.

The Maelstrom

Day seven. I still hate it when Bob says, "Hmmm."

I hate it even more when he says, "I don't think it's as bad as it looks."

We are standing on an island in the midst of a series of falls, and Bob has just said both of these things. To our left the river plummets 45 feet onto a vicious rock jumble. To the right the river circles the island, dropping 25 feet in the process. Below the island lies an eddy, then an abrupt and 20-foot flume that looks like a killer.

A portage over the island would be miserable. It is covered by young spruce growing less than three feet apart. I study the proposed line through the sluice around the island. This time I have to agree, it



Bob in an eddy between big drops

HISTORY

doesn't look too bad—Class III—maybe IV. Provided we catch the eddy at the bottom. I'm starting to feel a lot better about following Bob. He leads down the initial slot and is tossed around a bit. I am kicked out of the same chute sideways. We are still near the top of the rapid, but already I suspect that we have seriously underestimated its difficulty. When will we learn? Downstream Bob is throwing fast and furious braces into oblique waves that come from all directions. Soon I am sucked into the maelstrom.

Every time I get my kayak oriented, another wave explodes and sends me off in another direction. Suddenly swirly water tips me on edge. I fight to stay upright, but to no avail. A robust swell finishes me off.

Now I am upside down, bobbing in the waves, wondering if I have drifted past the last accessible eddy. I manage to roll in time to avoid a sinister hydraulic. Then I drive into the eddy where Bob is grinning, sling and carabiner in hand, ready to initiate a rescue. Bushie arrives a few seconds later, turns upstream, and flips the rapid the bird.

"Are we having fun yet?" Bob sputters.

I look at the deadly flume not far downstream and shudder. "Ya, we're having fun!"

One day later we reach Le Grande Chute. We bushwack along the shore to get a good look. Here the Romaine tumbles more than 200 feet over one quarter of a mile. It is, beyond any doubt, the most incredible falls I have ever seen. The fury of the river causes the earth to quake and the clamor is maddening. We scramble across the face of the cliffs looking downward; nobody eager to get close to the edge.

We camp on a narrow beach at the top of Le Grande Chute. After eating and stoking the fire, I sit back to enjoy the celestial show. The atmosphere is clear, and the stars and moon are brilliant. Meteors pierce the sky.

A strange glow spreads across the northwestern horizon. Beams of yellow and green parade across the heavens, growing in intensity.

"Northern lights," Mike responds to my unasked question. We sit and chat quietly, but I cannot keep my eyes off the aurora. Eventually Bob and Mike turn in, but I am determined to stay awake as long as I can. The trip is winding down too quickly; I wish I could stay here forever. I want to enjoy every last minute. An hour later I awaken, shivering by a smoldering fire, ready for my sleeping bag. Just as I climb into the tent I spot something swimming offshore. I can't imagine what it is. It dives suddenly, but not before whacking the surface of the river with its tail. It is the largest beaver I have ever seen. Reassured that there are no sea monsters about, I hit the sack.

A Reluctant Farewell

Since mid-afternoon we've endured an icy northern gale that tears across the plateau, gusting to 30 miles per hour. The water, which should be flat, has been whipped into three-foot swells. Most of the time the wind is at our backs, pushing us toward the seaway. I feel like we are being expelled.

Usually we fantasize about pizza while paddling long stretches of flatwater, but after nine days on the river we fantasize about women. Mike observes for the thousandth time that all the women in Quebec are beautiful. How can that be? Maybe they shoot all the homely ones on their 16th birthday. It's a good thing that the women we boat with back home aren't listening to this!

I terminate this cerebral conversation by crooning Canadian Neil Young's "A Man Needs a Maid." Mike and Dean paddle away, muttering that I sing like Alfalfa.

After 30 miles we camp. It has been pouring for an hour and is nearly dark. We pitch the tents parallel to the wind and stack rocks on the stakes. I'm still not convinced they won't blow away.



Scouting the Grande Chute of the Romaine.

It is our final night on the Romaine. Dean has his heart set on a celebration. He wants to do it up right. Build a bonfire, stay up late, devour two or even three packages of freeze-dried food. He has even saved a package of chocolate pudding for the festivities.

It's not easy to make pudding without milk. Chef Dean has learned to thicken the concoction by adding instant mashed potatoes—voilà!—Chocolaty Spuds.

But the Romaine has other ideas.

The rain is incessant, and there isn't much firewood. What we find is wet. Last year on the St. Jean we ate freeze-dried beef stew moistened with cold water on just such a night. I'd rather not repeat that debacle.

Miraculously Mike manages to coax some flames from a cache of spruce twigs. But every time the fire starts to crackle, the wind and the rain do their best to extinguish it. Mike has to nurse it constantly. By the time we boil enough water to dampen our chow, we are chilled to the bone.

No one will be singing around the campfire tonight. Not even Alfalfa. The fire goes out and we retreat to our sleeping bags. Lying in the darkness, I try to imagine what this place must be like in winter. Even in August the Laurentian Plateau can be damned inhospitable. Small wonder the people of northeastern Quebec live right along the seaway. The inland region seems quite uninhabitable.

We can visit here, revel in the wildness of the place, but we cannot stay. The land would not sustain us.

I'm glad of that. It's good to know that there are still some parts of this world where we don't belong.

Not many people will see what we have seen. Not many would be willing to pay the price. No descriptions or photographs can do the Romaine justice. Only in our heads can the magic be preserved.

I listen to the wind and the rain and wonder once again whether the tent will make it through the night.

Mike and Dean are already asleep. After a time, I pull my sleeping bag over my head and join them.



Deerfield Fest: July 12



Charlemont, MA

More info: americanwhitewater.org

HARDCORE DANGER

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LEIF ANDERSON

DEAR AMERICAN WHITEWATER, I just read the last issue, and the whole way through, there was one word that I just couldn't get out of my head: HARDCORE. To be more precise, as I read every single article, I couldn't help but yell out loud that there was a distinct LACK of hardcore action in the pages of your magazine.

The biggest rapids seemed to be Class III and the most dangerous injury sounded like a soft tissue bruise. The stories were good, but I kept yelling that I wanted more HARDCORE ACTION! I usually read AW in the bathroom, so all the yelling really had my wife concerned. But I digress.

In order to inject a little HARDCORE in this issue, I have decided to share my shame and write about a bit of an epic that I was involved with. I'm not proud of it—nobody should be proud of mishaps. However, I didn't want your readers to forget what real hardcore whitewater action is about. Without a little reality check, people out there might start to think that every little thing is an emergency, and be ready to call in helicopter rescues at the first sign of a hangnail. I figured it was time to buck up, admit my mistakes, and provide some valuable perspective. A lot of intense situations can be alleviated with a good dose of common sense.

Dangerous situation? I'll tell you about dangerous...

Here's the scene. My wife Natalie (MAYBE YOU HAVE HEARD OF HER) was doing some geologic mapping in Honduras for the Peace Corps. I flew down around Christmas, just as she was finishing, so that we could take a bit of a paddling vacation. I didn't try to bring boats, since we were going to travel by bus and whatever means we could find from Honduras to Veracruz Mexico. We met up without a hitch, and spent a few days adventuring our way



Nailing my lines earlier.

up to Mexico. Everything came together perfectly, and we managed to hike and bus and hitchhike right to the Agua Azul waterfall run in Chiapas just as two other paddling groups happened to show up there. We borrowed a couple boats from Todd Richey (YES *THE TODD RICHEY*) and Dave Carey (WE HANG OUT—NOT A BIG DEAL), and hopped on the water with a big group of Team River Runner paddlers led by Ben Kwanli (WOULDN'T WANT TO NAME-DROP TOO OBVIOUSLY). We were amazed that these two large groups had happened to converge on the same run on the same day. There were about 20 people on the water.

The Agua Azul run is pretty sick. It's basically a whole amusement park of waterfalls. There are a bunch of slides and falls in the 20-foot range, as well as a couple big ones in the 50- to 60-foot range. Since it was the first day of paddling on our trip, and we were feeling very mortal, we kept it to the small/medium side.

The day unfolded beautifully. Since this is about a mishap, I won't go into the details

of how we were totally killing it and sticking awesome lines. I hadn't been on the water in weeks at that point, so this was a joyous return to life for me.

Ok, so the run has a bunch of waterfalls right at the start, then it flattens out for a few miles, then there is another big set, followed by a long flatwater paddle out. Right at that second set of waterfalls, right at the most remote part of the run, is where things start to get interesting.

Somewhere during the first flatwater section, I got the idea that we needed to split off and try to put on some miles to get ahead of the rest of the group. A little subgroup with Natalie and I and Seth Ashol (OH, YOU THOUGHT THE NAME-DROPPING WAS OVER) started to edge ahead. We got to the beginning of the second set of waterfalls and quickly scouted on the right. The first drop was a big dome with a log leaning on the right side of it, with the left side possibly dropping into a crack (although we couldn't see over the dome to be sure). It looked like maybe we could shimmy down the log to get to the bottom

of the drop, but the log was pretty long, and we were in a hurry. I decided to just run that @\$*%. The plan was for me to go off the nose of the dome, and look back up from the pool at the bottom to see if the easier crack line was ok or not.

I got my @\$*% together, hit the button on my GoPro, splashed myself in the face, and hit the button on my GoPro. Seth (YES, HE IS STILL THERE) also hopped in to follow me down. I lined up the entry slide, and drove up onto the top of the dome, then, in a horribly unreal moment, realized that I had carried too much speed and missed my angle, and was sliding off the right hand side of the dome instead of off the nose of the dome.

At this point, I should mention a few complicating factors. I believe I already covered the log that was leaning against the right hand side of the dome. What I left out was that there was basically no river over there. The water falling off the right side of the dome, under that log, was quite obviously landing in an ankle-deep channel that fed back into the real river. Also, for scale, this dome was definitely the smaller option, since there was a 60 footer over



The fastest and easiest portaging technique—using a boat as a sled.

on river left, but from the log down to the ankle-deep landing was still a good 15 feet or so.

As you can imagine, I freaked the #^!& out. I slid into the log, which hurt, then sort of

tried to hold on to it, which didn't work, and all too quickly squeezed underneath, between the log and the dome, and fell, perfectly vertical, into the wet rocks on the bank. When I landed, I was kind of stunned, and then realized that I was upside-down and some @\$*% was seriously not right. I thought about rolling, but decided that I would really prefer to exit the kayak and re-appraise the situation.

As I swam, I became further aware that MY ANKLES WERE BROKEN. My first thought was that I would never playboat again: *Oh good God, they are going to have to fuse my ankle and I will never fit in a playboat, oh God.* Then I surfaced and needed to signal my distress to the rest of the group, still standing at the lip. Even the main river was a little shallow, so I managed to sort of sit on an underwater rock and stop myself before floating over the 30 footer just downstream. (OH DID I NOT MENTION THERE WAS A 30 FOOTER LIKE RIGHT

Natalie Anderson nailing her lines.





"I got broken ankles" The log is just visible behind my massive head.

THERE? MY BAD. THERE WAS.) I was about to shout and lose my cool and stuff, but I was reminded of the cringe worthy video of pro skier Tanner Hall (I DON'T KNOW HIM, BUT THERE IS HIS NAME) breaking his ankles at Chad's Gap back in 2004. His crash was remixed into a highly amusing if slightly crass techno music video (this was back when techno was cool). I think his words were "AAAAAA! I got broken ankles! My ankles are broke!"

I definitely didn't want to sound like that. I calmly waved my arms a little and tried to hold up my legs to show them my horribly disfigured extremities. I swore that when I held up one leg it flopped over to the side, but then again, maybe not so much. The point was, it hurt, but I stayed calm.

To add insult to injury, I looked over my shoulder at the "crack line" that I had been avoiding, and it was totally good to go, which I signaled with a LEFT/OK signal to the group at the lip to pass back to Seth. He had a great line off the drop, and started helping me extract myself from the river.

This is where the huge group paid off. We were lost in the jungle, and I was incapacitated. Fortunately, we brought our waterproof SPOT satellite beacon

emergency distress device for exactly this sort of situation. Unfortunately, it was in my backpack in the car waiting at take-out. Someone had some ibuprofen, Brian Kush (A.K.A. MR. INTERNATIONAL) had a SAM splint, and everyone had chiseled biceps (one of the more useful ingredients in a smooth rescue).

We slowly winched and lifted me from the riverbed up to a plateau overlooking the river (did I mention the biceps part?), and started talking about options. This was the point on the run that was farthest away from any kind of road or anything. We could try to hike through the jungles and plantations and Zapatista territory to the road, cross country, we could try to hike and attain back upstream to put-in, or we could portage and work downstream. We opted for downstream, since the falls where I was injured was the last of the real rapids.

For those of you who haven't tried it, let me tell you: portaging with a broken ankle sucks. During the crawl up to the plateau, it became apparent that only one of my ankles was broken, and even that one

The aftermath.

wasn't as bad as I had thought. However, there was no way that I could walk. Stephen Evans (THAT'S SERGEANT EVANS, FORMER ARMY MEDIC) taught us how to effectively form human crutches (easy to do, hard to describe). The simplest and most effective strategy we found was to have me sit on top of a boat like a super lazy dude, and have two people use tethers to drag the boat. This covered the most ground the fastest. Despite our amazing innovations, the portage took forever, and we didn't get back to river level until dusk.

Let me pause here to remind you of the purpose of this article. AW needed a little more hardcore. This was some hardcore @\$*%. Nobody was waiting with the cocoa and the rescue blanket. Nobody suggested bringing the ambulance or the helicopter. This was not even the halfway point. But I'm not trying to brag about how hardcore I was. I was miserable. I cried like a little #*^!\$. And I was painfully aware that I had basically #^!&ed over the whole trip for our entire group, which was like 20 people. I was already planning the bribes I would have to make to erase this incident from the memory of everyone involved. For almost all of these people, I had gone straight from "I heard he was a pretty good paddler," to "oh, it's that



guy that broke his leg because he didn't scout." Even setting aside my massive ego and preoccupation with my image, there was also the basic fact that for most of my new friends here, their only interaction with me was a \$%&@!# enormous \$&@ face cluster#^& @\$*%show wings-fall-off @%#rabbits &%#* fubar epic. I don't think any of them would be eager to paddle with me ever again. Especially Seth, as it turned out, since the very next time I paddled with him, just two years later, I swam again. But that's a different embarrassing story.

So, it was now dark, I had a broken ankle, and we had about seven miles left to go. I loaded up with my legs on the deck of my borrowed boat (now with a big old dent in the bow) and started paddling out. After about a mile, it became apparent that whoever had said that the rapids were over had probably been paddling with a sprayskirt on, last time they did this run. A better description would be that the waterfalls were over. There were still a couple nice big water Class IV rapids left. There was no way that I was portaging or scouting, since I had that whole broken ankle thing, and it was dark anyway. I fell off the boat a couple of times, but managed not to bump my leg against anything serious

while swimming. By the way, swimming whitewater—especially big water—in the dark is an amazing experience. When you're underwater, there's no light to let you know which way is up and how close you are to the surface. It was so weird it was almost fun. Finally, at what felt like two in the morning, we came around one last corner and saw the welcoming single bare light bulb waiting for us at the resort at take-out.

We decided that the roads were a little too sketchy to risk the three-hour drive to the nearest hospital during the night (Ben and Gary had been ambushed and robbed by some guys with masks, machetes, and chains in this same region a few years back). Even once we got to the hospital, complications continued, but since we were off the river, I will end the tale here.

Summary (or, as the kids would say, tl;dr)

Mexico jungle. Didn't scout well enough. My ankles is broke. Paddled out in the dark. Sucked.

Lessons Learned

The spot device does no good if you don't bring it.

Using a boat as a sled is a great way to move leg injury victims.

You are never in such a big hurry that you can't scout twice, or take the time to hike to a different vantage point. Don't compare the time it takes to scout with the time it takes to run it blind. Compare the time to scout with the time it takes to have a \$%^&@!# epic like we had. Scouting is always faster than a #^!&ing huge rescue @\$*%show.

Hardcore Conclusions

Harden the #^!& up. This was embarrassing, but not really that big of a deal. We always could have camped out or something and sent the rest of the group to go try to get help. Always be as safe as you can be, but when @\$*% goes wrong, chances are, it could be worse. So keep yourself together. Oh, and scout better.

Leif Anderson is a kayaker who makes lots of decisions, some of them better than others. To learn more about his adventures with his wife Natalie, check out: LEIFandNATALIE.blogspot.com



RIVER VOICES

NOT JUST A NUMBER REFLECTING ON 50 YEARS ALONG THE YOUGHIOGHENY [YOK-UH- GEY-NEE] RIVER

BY ANNA BOYLE

THEY CALL ME number 11. In 1956 my grandmother stood on what is now known as the Ohiopyle Falls lookout, pregnant with her first child. As she watched water cascade over rocks, steam and fog rising from the Youghiogheny River below, little did my grandmother know that this place would hold memories and purpose for generations to come. Beginning in 1976, three out of her four children would set out to work for Wilderness Voyageurs in the summer months during college, while seven of her 11 grandchildren would find themselves called to the same fate, running rivers and waterfalls and working their summers in Ohiopyle.

The Youghiogheny River, more commonly known as “The Yough,” is one of the most accessible and versatile stretches of whitewater in the East. Tucked into the Allegheny Mountains, the headwaters of the Youghiogheny originate with the Upper and Top sections of the river, located outside of Friendsville, Maryland. The Yough then flows north from Maryland into Pennsylvania and West Virginia, providing pristine Class I-V whitewater along the Upper, Middle, and Lower sections of the river.

The word Youghiogheny is derived from an Algonquin word that means “contrary stream,” presumably because the Yough meanders and flows back upon itself. Contrary to most rivers, you can run parts of the Yough in a circle! Like the river, my family finds itself coming back to Ohiopyle, enfolding generation on generation. Last summer I became the 11th person in my family to return to the little town of Ohiopyle to work for the legendary outfitter Wilderness Voyageurs as they celebrated their 50th year of business.



Wilderness Voyageurs Staff, Ohiopyle, PA 1981. The author's Aunt Kathy is in brown.
Photo by Kathy Hamilton

Wilderness Voyageurs was the first established whitewater rafting company on the Youghiogheny River, as well as the first established whitewater company east of the Mississippi. In 1959 Lance Martin, “The Father of the Yough,” started to lead whitewater rafting trips as well as Boy Scout programs out of the small railroad town of Ohiopyle. Lance Martin officially established Wilderness Voyageurs in 1964, extended whitewater rafting beyond the Scouts, and has led whitewater trips down the river for the 50 years since. Wilderness Voyageurs has produced employees from within my family for the whitewater industry that range from professional whitewater guides, to expert kayakers, to agile adventure photographers, to an exceptional sales associate and aspiring kayaker: me.

My uncle, Jay Douglass, was the first member of my family to start working for Wilderness Voyageurs. In the summer of 1970 he took a trip with the company through his Boy Scout Troop, and in 1976, after his freshman year of college, he responded to a want ad in a Pittsburgh newspaper that was seeking guides on the Yough. During the ‘70s and ‘80s rafting and the whitewater world first began to develop, and the town of Ohiopyle was

as raw as it got in terms of boater culture and establishing what we now know as the whitewater industry. In his first season my Uncle Jay earned \$75 a week plus room and board, and he would eat at Falls Market, which was only open until 5 p.m. everyday. Each crew was organized into two rafters and two hard boaters (kayakers), but they wore no formal guide uniform. My uncle even admitted that they often got their guiding clothes from what was left in the customer change houses! After my Uncle Jay spearheaded river guiding in Ohiopyle, my mom and Aunt Kathy quickly followed in his footsteps as they drove from the suburbs of Pittsburgh to go work on the river.

Although the river culture of Ohiopyle seems to have remained the same with the common appearance of jorts (jeans shorts), river dogs, loop runs, porch talks, and blows of CSX train whistles as freighters barrel their way through the center of town many times each day, the town itself has undergone some drastic changes. It now has six ice cream shops, many places to shop, eat, and drink, a hotel, and The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) bike trail. The GAP trail extends all the way to the Georgetown district of Washington, D.C., and with the trail’s attendant publicity Ohiopyle has

expanded from an exclusive paddler's destination to a national biking Mecca. In addition to the town's distinct changes, the industry has also undergone some major upgrades in safety regulations and gear. For example, 50 years ago customers weren't even required to wear helmets. Safety is a huge focus on the river today, and guides are dialed in to all the new and improved gear on the market.

This past summer I made the decision to follow in my mother's footsteps and head to the river. I packed up my Chacos and PFD and jumped on a plane from my home in Lander, Wyoming to western Pennsylvania. I sold t-shirts and Gatorade, rented bikes and kayaks, and worked as a barista on the weekends. Being a river guide was my true passion, but because I was in school in Colorado earlier that spring there was no way I would have been able to make guide training before the start of the early season. Despite this minor detail, I dedicated any time that I wasn't selling lattes and gear to kayaking.

I had heard from my family and other local kayakers in Colorado that the Yough was a kayaker's dream destination: consistent dam releases, with great Class III-IV whitewater. I instantly took advantage of the area and did loop runs every day after work, sometimes twice a day, walking my



The author dropping Ohiopyle Falls, Summer 2013
Photo by Colleen O'Neil

boat to the put-in, taking out after Railroad Rapid, and then walking my boat back to the start again, just as my mom had done 30 years ago. This past summer I carpooled to work every morning with my two cousins Tom and Jon Hamilton (numbers nine and 10), who had both been working for Wilderness Voyageurs for the last five to six years. Every morning we would head to the store and I would start brewing up the staff coffee. They would sling on their flip lines and PFDs and head to the put-in to press rafts. Like years past, the roundup for trips operates similarly to the way it was done 50

years ago. Each trip consists of a trip leader, two to three guides in rubber boats, and two kayakers as safety boaters. Everything is color coordinated, from the boats, to the paddles, to the PFDs, and the sea of purple shirts that distinguishes Wilderness Voyageurs guides from everyone else.

Although the industry has evolved over the last 50 years, throughout the entire summer I couldn't help but compare my experience to that of the previous generation. Time and again I watched as 60-year-old men suited up and grabbed their wooden paddles, pulled out their 1970s long boats, and headed to the Yough. For every paddler the river remains the same and provides a sense of security as the years pass. The river keeps things grounded, in a town tucked among the woods of the Allegheny Mountains, where the train whistle echoes along the streams. Amongst the hubbub and busy lives of tourists and travelers who buzz in and out of town, the community continues. It is people who make Ohiopyle the special place that it was 50 years ago and continues to be today.



The author's Grandfather Jim Douglass and Uncle Jay shredding the Lower Yough.
Photo by Amy Douglass

ADVENTURES OF MAJOR BEITDOWN EPISODE 3: ASSAULT ON MOSHIER FALLS

BY MAJOR BEITDOWN



The major runs the first drop.

Photo by Norman R. Deets II

Background

THE BEAVER RIVER is a tributary of the Black River in the northwest corner of the Adirondack Mountains in northern New York. It is hydroelectrically dammed, but two weekend releases each year have been negotiated, and when the water runs, kayakers converge from the northeast and Canada to run it. The Beaver River has three sections: Taylorville, Moshier, and Eagle. Some say Moshier is the toughest, though the Eagle section has typically been bestowed that honor.

This being our second Beaver expedition, and wanting to avoid the mishaps of the previous one (Episode 1), we once again assembled a crack team of paddlers. Abbott, Benedict, Meyer, Hays and myself rose to the occasion. Ryan and Campbell joined up for Taylorville after the Beaverator, in the pool before the Big Slide. I couldn't have wished for a better group of paddlers unless I excluded me.

Taylorville, the Day Before – Saving Pvt. Ryan:

The Taylorville section is released on the first day, and is seen as the warm up act for the Moshier and Eagle Sections. It is a short run of holes, ledges, and slides, and is usually run two or three times, or until the water is shut off. Taylorville starts with the “Beaverator” hole (Episode 2) and after a good size pool, descends down the “Big Slide,” a 30-foot drop.

It is always reassuring to have a medic along on a river expedition—and easier than having to flush one out of a crowd of spectators. This trip, it was Ryan, so well versed in emergency procedures, we could not have asked for a finer medic.

On his first drop of the day, Ryan took a big hit on the Big Slide, getting waylaid by the ledge hole at the top. Pop went his shoulder, and Ryan was sporting one nasty dislocation for his ride all the way down the slide. Not missing a beat, Ryan set

up his MASH unit on a rock at the bottom and proceeded to self-diagnose, instruct his cohorts how to assist, and then reduce the dislocation. No painkillers. Not even a bullet to bite on. Doc Ryan is tough. Campbell hoofed his boat out, and Ryan ran shuttle before heading home. That doc feels no pain. Unfortunately, he was out of action for the rest of the season.

Hays, our ‘vet’ on many river adventures, was now our designated medic.

(Note to self: encourage the medic to walk every drop.)

Mayhem in the Moon Shine

That evening, we encamped below Moshier Falls, in a secure position. A parking lot to be exact, but with a berm toward the road, it was defensible. Upon darkness, we learned that the enemy had infiltrated the perimeter—and was within us. Pvt. Boucker kept us awake in a crazed stupor calling for Earl every half hour, like clockwork. Earl



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Meyer on the line, attacking the first waterfall.

pacified him at 6 AM. Next day, Boucker blamed it on some bad grub, not the combustible moonshine he swigged the whole night while extolling its virtues as a high octane racing fuel. Later, he confessed he drank on an empty stomach. Our suspicions were corroborated.

Moshier Section: Starting Out Solid, More or Less

We assembled at the put-in promptly at 10 hundred hours for the release. Our run down Moshier was going well. I fumbled the landing of the first waterfall drop, but made my first roll. All that roll practice on the Salmon River was beginning to pay off. We all ran the second waterfall nice and clean, including the face-plant ledges. The boogie water down to Moshiers was no problem. We were in control.

The Moshier Falls Follies

Moshier Falls isn't really a waterfall. There are two waterfalls on the Moshier section, but those are upstream. Moshier Falls is the last set of rapids on the Moshier section, a sequence of four Class IV drops in rapid succession. They are grouped together and classified as one Class V drop, and it's easy to see why, because uncorrected errors are compounded. Our mission was to finish the Moshier section uncompromised, nice and clean.

We took out to scout at the top of the rapids. As usual, it was a circus. The rapids were lined with spectators looking for a show, and I felt confident. No heebie jeebies during the scouting. I thought to myself, "Yes sir, I can run this. A piece of cake!" Meyer and Benedict were running

it. Hays and Abbott decided to walk. Can't fault prudence, or good judgment.

I've always run the first drop clean. No worry there. The only decision was whether to drive left, running left of the Vortex Hole at the second drop, or to eddy out on the right above it first.

I concentrated on studying this and the last two drops. In the past, I've done quality time in the Vortex Hole, and although I've always made the line at the third drop, my landings haven't always been clean, like the time I got my butt pummeled swimming the fourth drop underwater under the foam pile after not making my roll. During my scouting, I watched people running the fourth drop hard right, boofing over the hole. Heck, that looked do-able. So the options were wide open. I could run it

left or right. No worries about Meyer and Benedict. They knew what they were doing.

I started first, leading the troops. Running point with confidence, I paddled down the first drop, all going well until about 3/4 the way through it, then I flipped. (I'd go into detail here, but it went pretty fast.) Not even a brace stroke—just a quick over and under. I set up to roll in a snap, but then, WHAM—incoming rounds! I was taking hits in the shoulder, getting meat tenderized by one rock, then another. Now, I concluded that I was not going to be making that eddy on the right, nor did I want to roll up at the top of the slide down into the Vortex hole, because I would only flip again, and have to roll all over. Call me lazy. So I hunkered down, felt the slide down into the hole (rather smooth, by the way, no rocks there!) and then a bit of chundering. I knew I was in the hole, but after a few seconds, I was through it. So I set up and nailed my roll, first try, with no time to spare.

I rolled up about half-way toward the third drop, facing upstream, and when the water drained from my ears, I heard the roaring adulation of the spectators lining the creek, just in time to do an upstream ferry to river left. It was pretty clear to me that I was not gonna make the eddy, and there's no time to turn around, so I resigned myself to running the third drop backward. The third drop has a nasty hole on the right, a flaky boof line on the left, and a sieve beneath it. At this point, my goal was survival, not style. Not much of a boof, but I ran the line and landed nice, steady and most importantly, upright, looking upstream at my achievement. "Attaboy," I said to myself, as the crowd responded with another roar of approval. Meyer dropped down into the eddy on the left, nice and clean. Benedict did a flip after the hole, but cleared it and rolled up. Top notch paddlers!

As I back-paddled into a small eddy on the right to catch my breath, I thought I'd redeemed myself, at least in the mind of the crowd. Hey, I screwed up upstream, but it looked like I was set to pull this one out of

my butt. The only thing left was to do the fourth drop nice and clean, and I could run it left or right. Anything goes. And it did.

Ambush in the Hole

I've always run the fourth drop on the left, but I hate foam piles and my submarine moves there, so I decided to try the right side boof. I paddled up to gain speed, did the boof, and almost made it beyond the hole, but my stern was grabbed and slowly dragged back into it. I've seen this movie before and knew where it was going, so I settled into a comfy side surf, and got down to digging my way out of the hole. The plan was to end it on a high note, but it really wasn't so bad, I thought. I mean, what else could go wrong?

Then I caught a glimpse of something coming at me from upstream, from the corner of my eye. Bright blue, and it wasn't the sky. I turned my head to look, and BAM, a boat hit me right in the teeth! My friggin teeth! I felt sand-like crystals in my mouth, and since this was fast moving water, I knew it wasn't river sand. That &@S^@*% chipped my teeth! Over I went, and that flushed me out. Being a bit disgusted and concerned about my pearly whites, I punched out, stood up and walked to shore. Fini. No applause. An ignoble end to a glorious adventure. Why didn't the gaggle of spectators do any traffic control? Keep right!

The assault boater was in the eddy, all apologetic, but apologies weren't going to pay my dental bill. He was glad that he didn't crack my ribs. I had insurance for that, I thought, but not dental insurance. This was gonna cost me big-time, not now, but years down the road. Apology not accepted. It would take a bigger man than me—or a blank check—to set things right.

After Action Report

Ryan had his arm in a sling for a few weeks. A couple of months of PT, and he'd be back in the cockpit.

My back is back, and I'm standing up straighter. Can't quite turn my neck 180° yet, but then I never could. I developed a strange tingle in the shoulder. Kind of like a leg that has fallen asleep. I guess I can live with that.

My dentist says my teeth don't seem much worse than they looked before. He ground off some rough spots and told me to stop grinding them in my sleep. Root damage, if there is any, won't be known for years, if it ever shows up. Like it did last time, three years later, three-grand down the hole. Still waiting on that blank check, blue boater.

What remains is a question of whether to launch another attempt to master the Beaver next year, or to let it go, and live. Maybe if I run just the last drop until perfected, then the last two?

And what will it take to get the spectators to do some traffic control?

After Action Report filed by: Maj.Beitdoun

Disclaimer: This report is based on actual events. Incidents, characters and timelines may have been altered slightly for dramatic purposes. Characters may be fictitious, composites or coincidentally resemble actual persons, so don't hassle me.

AW STEWARDSHIP

BEAVER RIVER

American Whitewater's energetic volunteer and Board Member Pete Skinner negotiated the releases on the Beaver River in the 1990's. He signed the agreement in the summer of 1997 and releases began that fall. Since then the Beaver has become an annual pilgrimage for many regional paddlers seeking the Beaver's unique rapids and big slides.

RIVER VOICES

BETTER TO BE LUCKY THAN GOOD?

BY CDR TEAGUE "SWAMI" SWALM

SO IF WE'VE paddled together, you'll likely have noticed that only one of those qualities is even remotely possible, and it ain't the latter. I did, however, manage a pretty solid run of good luck; the waterborne culmination of which, a pretty respectable stretch of sans swim paddling. But alas, luck's arch enemy is Mr. Murphy, who's restless efforts to thwart never sleep, and who in cahoots with the considerable capability of Zwick's Backender, set my sun on several years above the waterline whitewater boatriiding.

Now to be honest, my exposure (read: river laps) compared to hard core paddlers with good access is minimal. Contrary to desirement, life commitments leave me a weekend warrior at best. And strictly considering odds, 50 laps/year on Mamma Green is a lot more probable to include some carnage than my 10. But then again, the cons of less exposure also present a uniquely frustrating challenge as well as an odds handicap. Half my laps on any run are rusty, desperate attempts to reacquaint with both boat and river; still fun, but not optimal for avoiding eyeball deep excursions.

More landscape—if there's a Green lite, I'm more akin to a Green lean AND lite paddler. I don't bold the big three at all, and the Class Vs I do run only get run the "sometimes" when it feels right. I typically embark upon the river armed with a complex matrix of goes, no-goes, and excuses, all revolving around everything from the flow level, to mouths-to-feed, to primal fear and nerves. Given the day, each rapid gets mentally racked-n-stacked, sorted and labeled with a probability of success. I walk the ones below the line. But one of my own personal Holy Grails has been Zwick's. With the allure of Reverse 7' just above, an emergency bailout line far left and reasonable chance of survival (if not recovery) below, it's

been too tantalizing not to run. Did I mention odds?

This particular sunny March day—you know, you were all lounging at Fishtop after first laps; beer iced, grills blazing, hand talking like WWII Aces—Jonsey and Elliot had managed to keep me alive through an obligatory purge lap, which true to form, was humbling if not a bit disappointing (in a hard-on-oneself sort of way). Though nothing about my lap had been appallingly wrong, it'd likewise not been terribly right. But the level was perfect and it was just too dang pretty a day not to shuttle again for a "certain to be smoother" victory lap.

Now's probably a good time for a trip to Swamiville – Disclaimer: this furball inside my head oftentimes only makes sense to its maker, but I'll share for entertainment purposes. Based upon personally acceptable risk vs. reward and factoring in what little talent and proficiency I may, Zwick's is about as sketch (perception is reality) as I'm willing to tackle of Mamma's Class Vs. At least it's the one [of my few] that creates a biggest jolt of amp-upperage. There's just something about "back-in-under" and not breathing that doesn't work well for me. Silly right? So suffice to say, this is my drop of relative apprehension and where calming breaths are a regular necessity.

But thus far, things were rolling along swimmingly (foreshadowing). In fact, until we peeled out above my nemesis, this was probably the cleanest and most relaxed Green lap I'd logged to date. Life rocked!

Even as a relative newby on the Green, I've not walked this one. I've squeezed the black outa my paddle a few times running it, but still it got done! But I've likewise really only run it a handful of times, only a handful of which have been free of at least minor miffs. This grocery list of SNAFUs includes everything from bailing out far left to dropping over the boof sideways to squirming on the eddy lines.

Late now in the afternoon, Jonsey and I played sweep as the privileged last indulgers of arguably the finest day to be on the water thus far this year. Despite lengthening shadows, uncharacteristic warmth lingered, the light breeze stilled to a whisper, and even the river seemed to quiet as it welcomed us along. Drops were smooth and we were in sync with the river. It was relaxing. In hindsight, this experience stirs memories of lining up for night traps with unnatural calm despite the pure insanity that was actually taking place. Only as I became an older and less bold Navy pilot did I realize that reindeer games behind a carrier at night weren't exactly the kind of thing you wanted to get too comfy with; a lot like Class V paddling methinks. Perhaps I shoulda drawn on those harsh lessons, but sensibility wasn't keeping up with the current, so it seemed kosher to pause briefly after a sweet Reverse 7' to relish the small victory; Wrong, Very Wrong (I'm sure there's quite a few chuckles and knowing head shakes right now. And I bet some of them are "with" me).

Drift left. Aw hell, this isn't where I wanna be. Happy time's over. Angle right and put the hammer down. OK, good punch of the first hole. Water all in my eyes (not to be confused with eye watering). Good recovery? Far enough right? Turn and burn! Back on line! Or so I thought. As the wiper blades cleared my windows to the world, what materialized out of the monsoon wasn't exactly what I'd envisioned, nor was it a line I might have had reasonable hope of salvaging. Be things as they were, I had about a millisecond to think one productive thought. I went with "oh &#!%."

For the sake of going down swinging (probably looked more like Paul Newman's last swing at George Kennedy in Cool Hand Luke), I DID give it one last "valiant" stroke in hopes of squirting across this vicious maw. For the uninitiated, the sweet spot of Zwick's boof is just right of its teeth. With the decidedly less optimal line I'd managed, all my effort did was pull the tiger's tail and

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RIVER VOICES



Swami paying his toll for running outa luck!
Photo by Trevor "Jonsey" Saylor

drive me even faster down the crease. But the pencil-in was textbook.

"So there I was"—having never heard anything but misadventure and buffoonery start with those words, seems appropriate—and after what seemed the only slow-mo part of this ride, the reject, Zwick's hyperdrive resumed and violently (did I mention violently?) slam dunked me forward onto my face. Now, clearly fight or flight didn't design us as well as aquatic mammals, or perhaps my rapidly firing brainstem would have given a "quick dummy, deep breath" order. It's amazing how important air can seem when there's not any. And perhaps this is just me, but when I'm playing human keel in the hydraulic, my breathing hole is poorly situated. So there I was in a place that I'm sure we can all laugh about together; you know the one, the one where you get to decide what and how bad the last

thing you saw was before you get delivered unceremoniously into it.

And my mind was doing hula hoops around logic. Things like "If Zwick's doesn't kill me, Chief might," followed by "Wow, it's dark," followed by "These guys are gonna raz the hell outa me." And I truly believe there was a voodoo doll of me somewhere gettin' dunked in the sink. Over the last year, I'd actually rolled up from a few minor carnages to find one of my crew (Thnx JT, love ya man!) licking his lips, pumping his fist and yellin' "swim f'er!" Considering the mêlée of jabs I was about to endure, not to mention the potential drowning (which would be significantly less brutal), I figured it prudent to at least give rolling a college

try before punching.

Over the years, I've bounced upside down through some pretty gnarly drops (i.e. Mamma's Scream Machine) and pulled off a few clinch rolls in the process. But I gotta admit, I haven't had a thrashing like what Zwick's was dealin' since a poorly timed double overhead in Puerto Rico. As quickly as I could set to roll, I'd get window shaded and re-circ'd, of course all sans breath—rinse and repeat. And to quote Jonsey, Zwick's is a no-carp zone. So any grand ideas of a sneaky gulp of O₂ disappeared in the froth. Reality didn't take long, discretion was gonna be the better part of valor, and I was [hopefully] gonna swim outa this one. Pretty day or no, Mamma was serving up a good size slice of humble pie and definitely washing it down!

I've no idea where the boat went (nor did I really care), but it disappeared like I'd pulled the handle on an ejection seat. The rockets fired and that thing was gone! Probably better, 'cause with seat/man separation complete, I started one of several more violent cycles in Acme's industrial sized washer/rock polisher. Up, sideways, down, hit the bottom, push off. Eventually I got oriented mostly North up and clawed my way through the bubbles and close enough to the light to think I might live. But before breaking the surface, another heaving surge from below took my feet over the back of my head, and me back deep enough to smack my grape hard on the bottom. In response to this last offering, I balled up tight like a Rolly-Polly, and I guess washed out the bottom. Not really sure how many more cycles I had in the lungs, but certainly not many before Jonsey got to drag me limp up the bank. And though I'm absolutely positive he would've revived me, I'm highly suspicious that there mighta been a few pics of my blue face on Facebook shortly thereafter.

When finally I broke daylight, probably every bit of 30 seconds after descent into the abyss, my first view was an ever loyal Jonsey driving hard upstream to my rescue. I've no doubt he woulda joined me in the fray had that been the ticket to my salvation, but I mighta earned the privilege of carrying his boat for life in the process. Ultimately, he politely tended my yardsale while allowing me some R and R on the bank for oxygen saturation and nerve settling.

In the end, we regrouped, knucklebumped and reattacked, finishing the day off without further incident and scoring some pretty sweet boofs along the way.

Oh, lucky or good? I'm gonna abstain from voting as clearly I'm deficient of both.

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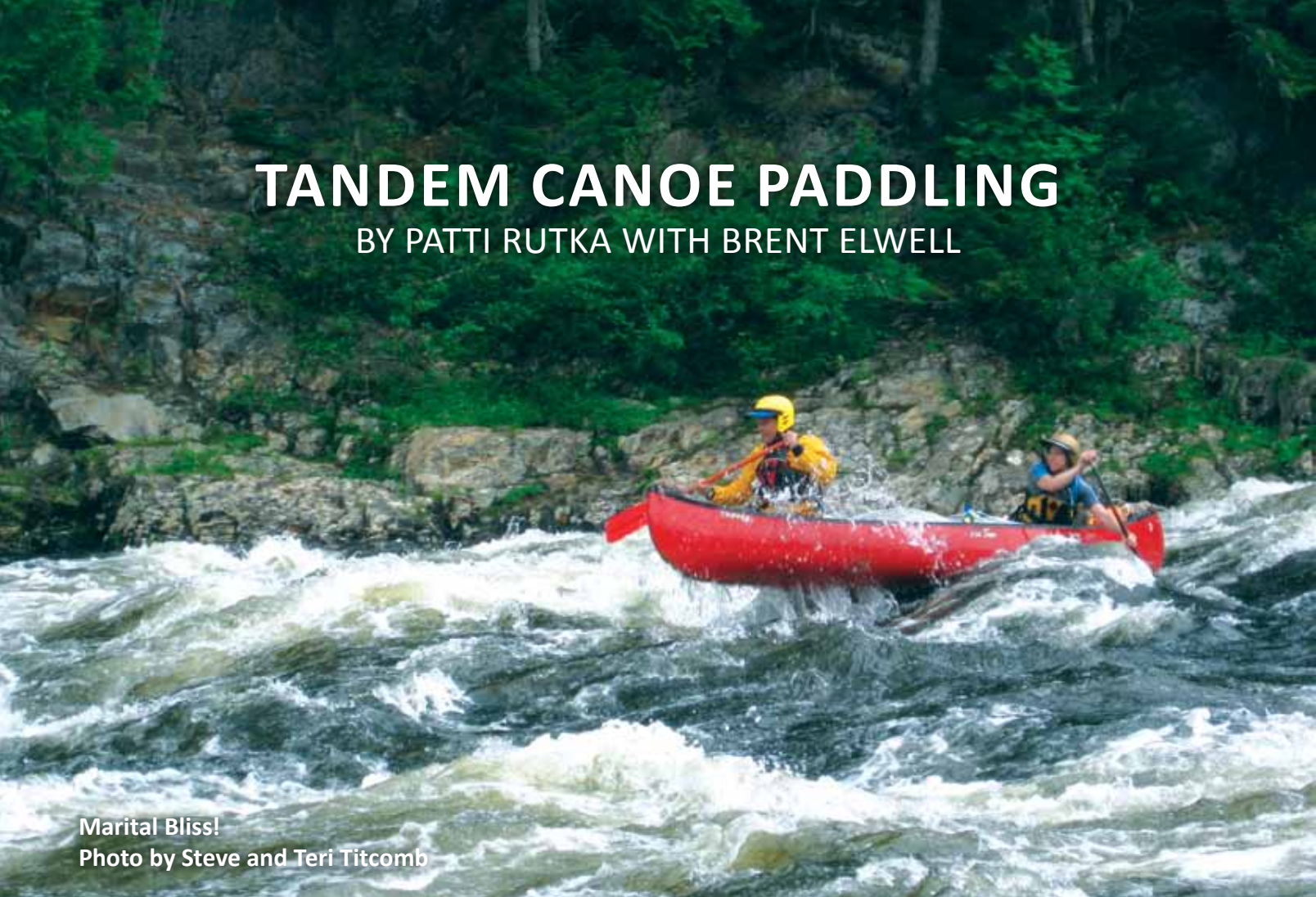
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TANDEM CANOE PADDLING

BY PATTI RUTKA WITH BRENT ELWELL



Marital Bliss!

Photo by Steve and Teri Titcomb

YOU KNOW THAT scene in *Avatar* when the hero entwines his hair with the fluorescent dragon-bird's mane and they both shiver at the hook-up? That's what the best tandem paddling is like.

And you know how a Halloween costume horse, with the front end disconnected from the back, galumps along like a caterpillar that can't sort out its legs? That's what the worst tandem paddling is like.

When I say tandem paddling I'm speaking of tandem canoeing, so I'll focus on its best aspects. Of course, it's possible to paddle tandem just about anything, including an inner tube. For those of us inclined to whitewater, there's the Shredder, otherwise known widely among paddlers as a divorce boat. Been there, done that. I've also paddled a two-person raft on the Colorado imprinted with chipped-off lettering on its bow so it read "Jello" instead of "Hello."

Aptly named, it marshmallowed its way down through even Crystal and Lava, wub-wub, wub-wub. I've never tried K-2 (not the mountain, the boat—are there any still out there?) and C-2, well, that sport is reserved for broad-shouldered gods with titanium knees, as far as I can tell.

Tandem open-deck canoeing is in a class all by itself because, well, it's classy. Airbags notwithstanding, why having 15 feet of yawning, gaping deck is classy I still haven't figured out. But as one 20-something with dreads said to me, an aging female in a tandem canoe, "Dude! That's cool!" Of course, there are those who believe that paddling OC-2 is nuts. I've never asked what goes through a kayaker's mind when s/he has to chase down a flipped tandem boat, but I wouldn't be surprised if it's something like, "Sheee-it, now I have to haul in TWO people AND that huge boat full of water." (BTW, we're grateful.)

Why would anyone choose such an obviously handicapped boat? Because that was the only boat I could afford when I was learning. My whitewater career began in a tandem canoe, an Old Town Tripper—an 18-foot boat designed to carry an eight-person tent, Coleman two-burner stove, and a cooler loaded with fresh meat and beer. That's what Outward Bound had available for its staff training in North Carolina in 1988. We didn't have the fresh meat or beer, but we did have free boats for learning whitewater down south.

So on a dewy May morning I crawled into my cold, slimy wetsuit to first learn self rescue on the French Broad, then basic strokes. Our exhausted evenings at NOC saw us in the classroom covering chalk-talk about water dynamics. Later in the summer, taking my skills back to Maine,

Opposite: Girls Rule!

Photo by Kenny DeCoster

RIVER VOICES

I snapped up my first solo boat: a green Perception HD-1, a 13-foot ABS canoe that had neither primary nor secondary stability. While I paddled other boats throughout the years, for the next 22 I paddled solo, with the exception of that divorce Shredder that bore out its name. Yet the brilliant development from the sad one was that I became free to seek my paddling soulmate. Eventually I married the right guy in Maine who knew it was better to stay in his own boat (he's wicked smaht, ayuh). We've been paddling happily ever after ever since.

Still, to satisfy my need for variety in paddling adventure, three years ago I turned my attention back to tandemming through vetting several partners in one of the best tandem whitewater canoes ever made, a Dagger Caption, robin's egg blue. With those partners, I have come to appreciate the beauteous metaphor of trust and collaboration that is tandem paddling. And while it's been a brutal winnowing process for my partners, they're better men for it, no doubt.

My Guys, I call them, even though one was a woman whose strong side is the same as mine—that's never happy-making. All in all, I've tested out six men in both bow

and stern. By necessity, on a twelve-day river expedition on Manitoba's Bloodvein River up in the Canadian Shield I had a rotation of partners, and I've paddled tandem in Trippers with newbie students on Outward Bound courses. So I *know* from tandem partners.

But back to My Guys. My Guys have included a Class IV open boater who looks like Abe Lincoln and has a tendency to flip at the bottom of a rapid Just Because. He's a powerhouse with an urge to volubility, fun, and laughter, so the pain of kneeling for five hours vanishes. There's a Class V kayaker, Brent, a spare and sharp-jawed Superman who gave me the idea for this article. He used to canoe back in the day, but then realized that the dark side offered two blades and a lot easier surfing. I have to breakfast on Wheaties and inhale Clif Bars to keep up with Brent. Another one of My Guys, a lanky Class V paddler who sports a hockey helmet and rolls like Raggedy Andy in any hole smaller than a bus, and open boats with just as much abandon as I do. When we seek an eddy or wave train we do so as one, communication ineffably distilling itself to body language. And the other Guy, well, he's Fred Astaire to my Ginger Rogers, a 73-year-old, elegant paddler who reads



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water so well he barely needs to paddle. He's my permanent tandem partner, my dragon-rider in the stern, the Captain of my Ghost Ship of Harpswell, Maine. It's been 25 years in a boat for me, but John's been paddling for 40 at least.

John and his beloved wife (and former tandem partner) Tee had returned to Maine late this year after a winter of good water down in the Carolina-Tennessee-Georgia axis. Come summer weather here, it was time for John and I to head for my nemesis, the Kennebec Gorge. I had successfully run the big-water river a couple of times in my HD-1 14 years ago, but I had swum during my brief stint in a kayak a dozen years previous. Anyone who's done that gorge knows it's a nasty swim. I wasn't too happy about being back, but John had talked me into paddling it tandem with him; he had

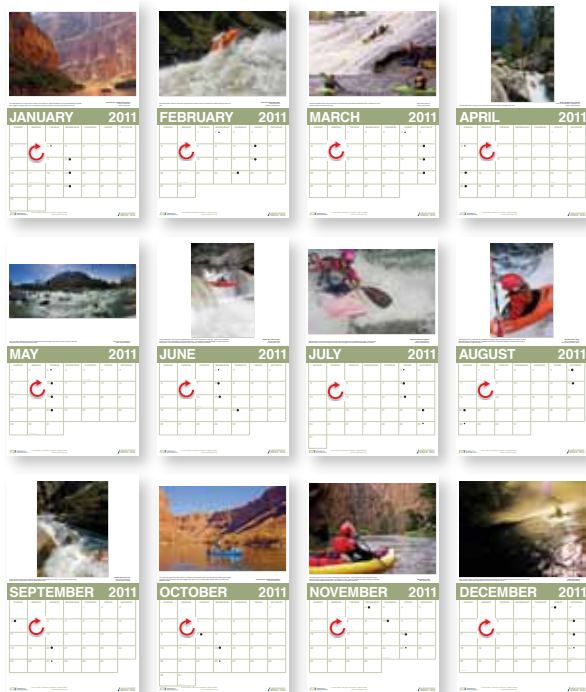
the lines wired in his XL 13. It was time to transfer the trust I had developed in him from the technical lines we'd been doing to big water.

Maine's Harris Station dam pushes 5000 cfs down the Kennebec Gorge through a 30-foot wide constriction that creates large standing haystacks, including Big Mama wave. Immediately behind Big Mama follows a series of waves historically called the Three Sisters. Nine-foot waves will fill an open boat and slap it around, tumbling paddlers into a long, exhausting swim down the following Alleyway, a continuous, lengthy wave-train that claims a rafter every few years by heart failure and/or drowning. Big Mama was where I had flipped in the kayak and been unable to roll, leading me to a heart-bursting swim and a tow on the back of some guy's boat

down the Alleyway. I never again wanted vertical current like that to slam me around, shove me under, and fill me to the gills.

So from our eddy line a hundred yards above Big Mama my 52-year-old, girly-heart looked down the yawning entry chute and went flippy-flop. The Caption rose and sank on its pulsing eddy current, crashing gunwale into rock wall, scraping off blue. My palm slipped on the recently waxed paddle shaft. I went through the equivalent of neurotic rituals baseball players exercise when up at bat, spitting, tightening Velcro gloves, kicking dust, but in my environment: snugging my helmet strap, cranking down my thigh straps, turning the T-grip. Uh, why was I back here, in this cavernous Gorge where the light didn't shine? No answer. I inhaled, exhaled. With a glance over my shoulder to John and a nodded agreement

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Fred Astaire Tips Over
Photo by Ron Chase

we peeled out, carving a wide arc as if to flatten the squirrely eddy line with the graceful lines of *our* boat.

John knew the open boat line just so: bite off the edge of the diagonal guardian wave on our left above Big Mama, power *hard* left, and with luck we'd catapult up the face then submarine down the backside of Big Mama into a large left eddy, no doubt fully loaded. If we missed the line, we'd get thrashed over the next three waves, knocked about, take on more water, and struggle to keep it upright, aiming for the eddy on the right in time to bail before heading down the Alleyway. This was all if we stayed upright.

The Caption gathered speed. The finesse of our tandem communication came into play. Telepathy would be nice, but let's get real.

The point at which communication becomes moot.

Photo by Kevin Rogers

Tandem communication is largely body language, which includes intonation ("Eddy OUT! Riiiiight!"). It includes feeling the lean of the boat, like Fred Astaire dipping Ginger Rogers. I listened with every fiber of my being for John's whisper strokes behind me as the bow came swooping down toward the guardian wave, and I gave it up to trust: I trusted him to make the line, because

only the sternman can be responsible for the initial trajectory of the boat; I simply couldn't yank the boat around from its front. Like an act of prayer, I let go this element of control every time I stepped into that boat with John.

Just as the bow licked the guardian diagonal, the pulse of 5,000 cfs surged. I



RIVER VOICES

dug my paddle in with a high brace sliced into a power stroke, pulling, straining my shoulders, as I felt the dragon tail crack its whip behind me. The guardian typewritered us right and we plunged into the maw of Big Mama. The bow surged up the face of the wave but I couldn't see, couldn't tell if John was still in the boat hanging on by his foot pegs, yet I felt the Caption levitate—he must have done something. With my brain on overload, I thrust my paddle in to grab the wave at its height. We pirouetted, shot down off the backside, and slammed across the left eddy line, the snarling wash of Three Sisters hungry, denied, behind us now. I erupted in a crazy-woman giggle, adrenaline-fueled, and drew us into the safety of the gorge walls. Shaking, I looked between my knees:

only a half-inch of water. I leapt out as the eddy heaved and pitched the boat on too much water crammed into too little space. John jumped onto shore, stood legs apart, hand up for a high-five, and with the glint of a 35 year-old in his eyes crowed, "That's some BIG SHIT!" (This from a man who virtually never swore.) Then, "We're partners!" Apart from being alive, I could have no better compliment. I grinned as wide as the river, and John and I clasped in a padded PFD-hug.

"What happened? We got shoved right! Did you throw in a pry?" I babbled to John, my crazy-woman relieved. "You guys *spun* on top of the wave," commented another kayaker in our party, also bobbing in the eddy with us. A fellow kayaker, Jonathan,

who had been setting safety for us in the eddy crowed out to us, "Hey, it's your dream!"

And so it was, and is. The good dream of collaboration. That's what the best tandemming is. Just like with any good partnership, it's a back-and-forth, give-and-take arrangement, and leans on trust like a good low brace. My Guys are all stellar—I've learned something from every one of them that makes me a better paddler. There's a special joy to making a partnership work, in a seemingly fragile craft, that requires a nuanced touch, corrects mistakes mid-stream, even handles the occasional upset. Can you spell m-e-t-a-p-h-o-r?

Fred Astaire Boofs
Photo by Mark Nelson





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

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

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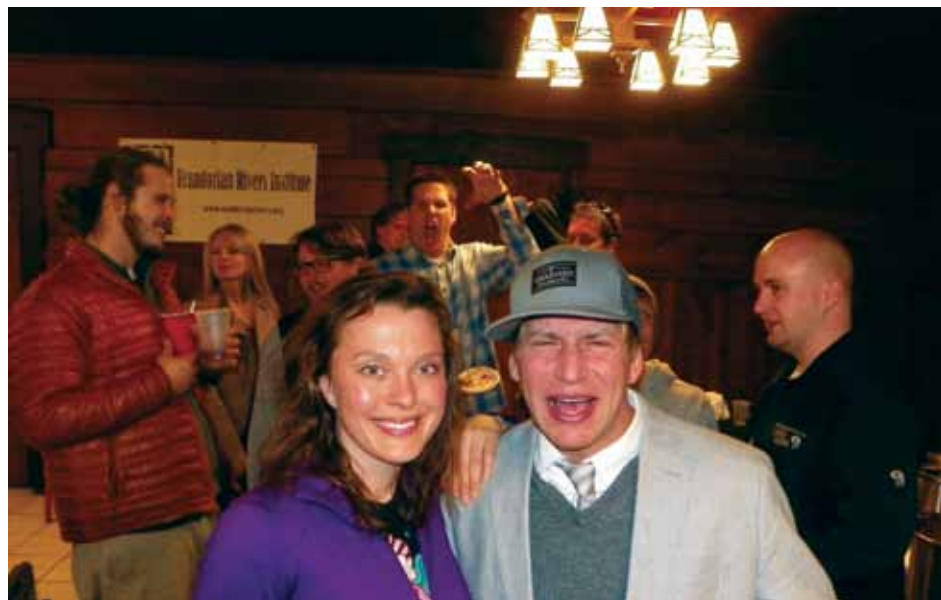
NATIONAL PADDLING FILM FEST 2014 WRAP-UP

BY BETHANY OVERFIELD

THE 2014 NATIONAL Paddling Film Festival was immensely successful! Scores of festival attendees saw great film and still image entries from all over the world, won amazing deals on gear in the silent auction, happily consumed 12 local craft-brewed kegs, and ate delicious food. To top it all off, donation amounts totaling over \$11K were given to organizations dedicated to river conservation and river access from the festival proceeds. Now, that's winning!

It all went down on February 21st and 22nd at the lovely Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort, Ky. The Bluegrass Wildwater Association (not your typical whitewater club) has been putting on this all volunteer-run, grassroots festival for over 30 years. This tradition keeps getting better and better every year, with over 60 volunteers working hard to make it all happen.

Fred Norquist, one of the founding fathers of Substantial Media House, was our guest host this year. He recently graduated with a film degree and has been cranking out some of the best whitewater footage out



there. Fred showed us some never before seen footage, talked about his equipment, answered questions, and was an all-around humble, approachable, and great guest host. "I had a great time drinking good beer, delicious bourbon, and enjoying the great company of the paddling community" said Norquist.

Submissions this year were remarkable, as usual. There were loads of entries and the competition was pretty fierce. Here's a list of the winners:

Best Professional Documentary

Walled In by Ben Stookesberry

Best Professional Safety/ Instruction

Handling Emergency Situations by Simon Willis for Sunart Media

Best Professional General Boating

The Puma by Evan Garcia

Best Accomplished Documentary

Nine Rivers by David Hartman, Matt Perpick, and Adam Biehler

Best Accomplished General Boating

High Atlas Kayaking by Hugo Clouzeau

Best Amateur General Boating

Beater Sessions by Daniel Patrinellis

Best of Show

Nine Rivers by David Hartman, Matt Perpick, and Adam Biehler

Best Still Image

"Lone Canoeist at Bald River Falls" by Mark Zakutansky





Brew-Off Winner

Polar Vortex Porter by Don Perkins

Chili Competition

Veggie: Cynthia Grimes

Meat: Crystal

Chili Queen: Mary Miller

The National Paddling Film Festival would like to thank all of its donors/sponsors, filmmakers, judges, volunteers, and attendees for a tremendous festival. A total of \$11,300 was donated to the following organizations that focus on river conservation and access:

\$8,500 to American Whitewater
 \$1,000 to Ecuadorian Rivers Institute
 \$1,000 to West Virginia Rivers Coalition
 \$400 to Friends of Cheat
 \$400 to Kentucky Waterways Alliance

If you missed the festival and are interested in hosting a road show, check out information online and give us a shout out: www.npff.org.

Keep those cameras rolling throughout the next year and start thinking about submissions for the 2015 NPFF!

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

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- **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 we accomplish. 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 the Utah Whitewater 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.

Utah Whitewater Club is a group of enthusiastic paddlers dedicated to promoting the sport of whitewater canoeing, kayaking, and rafting. Initially formed in Salt Lake City in 1991 by a small but persistent group of local paddlers, the UWC now has members statewide. Activities and interests of the club include instruction, safety, organized trips, river issues advocacy, and having fun.

UWC strives to have a club that works diligently to promote our sport, by engaging all opportunities to bring new boaters into the club and then support them in their development while catering to all skill levels, with challenging activities for all. Annual membership is \$45 for individuals and \$60 for families. Check out their website at <http://www.utahwhitewaterclub.org/> for additional information on membership and club meetings.

A big thank you to the Utah Whitewater Club for their continued support of American Whitewater and our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely!

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,
Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

California Floaters Society, Cameron Park
Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
Nor Cal River Runners, Chico
RTS Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Durate
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers, San Jose

Colorado

Avid4 Adventure Inc., Boulder
Colorado Whitewater Assn, Denver
Dolores River Boating Advocates, Dolores
Friends of the Arkansas River, Canon City
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
Western Association to Enjoy Rivers, Grand Junction

Connecticut

AMC - Connecticut Chapter, Waterbury

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

Georgia

Georgia Canoeing Asso, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

Idaho

Backwoods Mountain Sports, Ketchum
North Idaho Whitewater Boating, Post Falls

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
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Troy

Maryland

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Silver Spring
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

Massachusetts

UConn Kayaking, Amherst
UMass Outing Club - Whitewater
Kayaking, Amherst
Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont

Minnesota

Rapids Riders, Minneapolis
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Missouri

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

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings
Butte-Anaconda River Runners, Butte

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

AMC New Hampshire Paddlers, Raymond
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Nashua

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
KCCNY, Flanders

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico,
Albuquerque

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
AMC NY/NJ Chapter, New York
Colgate University, Hamilton
FLOW Paddlers' Club, Rochester
Hamilton College, Clinton
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq.,
Ossining
KCCNY, Flanders
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Buffalo

North Carolina

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Charlotte
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Keelhauler Canoe Club, Cleveland
Toledo River Gang, Toledo

Oregon

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

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg,
Harrisburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Holtwood Hooligans, Paradise
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, Oak
Ridge
Plateau Eco-Sports, Cookeville
Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing
Club, Kingsport
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

Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond
Creek Freak Paddlers, Rocky Mount
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke
Hollins Outdoor Program, Roanoke

Washington

BEWET- Boeing Employees Whitewater &
Touring Club, 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
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Berkeley
Springs
WVU Whitewater Club, Morgantown
West VA Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
North East Wisconsin Paddlers, Inc.,
Neenah
Rapids Riders, Minneapolis
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, Madison

Wyoming

American Packrafting Association, Wilson

Ontario

Guelph Kayak Club, Elora
Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, The
Kawarthas

British Columbia

Thompson Rivers Univ Adventure Studies,
Kamloops

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. Support river access and restoration through the AW River Stewardship Team.
2. Be part of a national voice for the protection of the whitewater rivers your club values.
3. Tap into the professional expertise of AW staff for river issues that come up in your backyard.
4. Your club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Receive the American Whitewater Journal, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
6. Your club is recognized in the list of Affiliate Clubs posted to the AW website.
7. Recognize your club in the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly AW Journal.
8. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
9. Gain Club satisfaction from lending support to AW's stewardship efforts.
10. Improve your club members river karma.

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



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Rok Sribar and friends, East Fork Kaweah, CA. © Darin McQuoid

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AW AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Contribute your text and photos to *American Whitewater*

American Whitewater is a member-driven publication. If you enjoy reading it, please consider letting its pages tell your story. We are looking for articles about whitewater rivers of any variety, so let your imagination flow free!

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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