

Journal





A CULTURAL NEXUS OF RIVERS, PEOPLE & BOATS

TOP 5 EPISODES

Highwater, Helicopters & Money

Food Packing for the River

Kanawha Falls Rescue 2020

History of the Groover

Part I: No Boat, No Paddle on the Big Susitna River



SPOTIFY



APPLE PODCAST

**AMERICAN
WHITEWATER
JOURNAL**



A volunteer publication
promoting river conservation,
access, and safety

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Publication Title: American Whitewater
Issue Date: May/June 2023

Statement of Frequency: Published Bimonthly
Authorized Organization's Name/Address:
American Whitewater
P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723



STEWARDSHIP

- 6 Horizon Lines**
Clinton Begley
- 8 Policy Achievements of 2022 and Goals for the New Congress**
Thomas O'Keefe
- 12 Rivers from the Sky**
Scott Harding
- 14 Eight Women, a World Wonder, and a Water Crisis**
Hattie Johnson and Kestrel Kunz



DEPARTMENTS

- 7 Letter to the Editor**
Re: Keep The Yough Wild
Paul Brager
- 24 Nahanni Mist**
Gary Storr
- 35 Solo Boating**
Teresa Gryder
- 38 How Long Can You Paddle? Peter Weingarten Proved It's as Long as You Want**
Evan Stafford
- 42 Disaster Averted at the Gauley Fest**
Pope Barrow
- 50 Community Events**



On the cover: The Grand Canyon faces an uncertain future, especially concerning the life-sustaining instream flows in this sacred reach of the Colorado River (pg. 14).
Photo: Nicola Gell

PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Our mission: "To protect and restore America's whitewater rivers 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.

Founded in 1954, American Whitewater is a national non-profit organization (Non-profit # 23-7083760) with a mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." American Whitewater is a membership organization representing a broad diversity of individual whitewater enthusiasts, river conservationists, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates across America. The organization is the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States, and connects the interests of human-powered recreational river users with ecological and science-based data to achieve the goals within its mission. All rights to information contained in this publication are reserved.

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in the features and editorials of *American Whitewater Journal* are those of the individual authors. They do not necessarily represent those of the Directors of American Whitewater or the editors of this publication. On occasion, American Whitewater publishes official organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

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

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

EDUCATION: AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press. Together, AW staff, members, volunteers, and affiliate clubs can achieve our goals of conserving, protecting and restoring America's whitewater resources and enhancing opportunities to safely enjoy these wonderful rivers. AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723; phone 1-866-BOAT-4-AW (1-866-262-8429). AW is tax exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service.

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UNLEASH THE VANGUARD

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL @DAGGERKAYAKS





Photo: Kevin Colburn

Horizon Lines

By Clinton Begley

A QUESTION POPULARIZED BY BRENÉ BROWN THAT IS USEFUL WHEN talking about organizational strategy is to ask “what does *done* look like?” It is an excellent question for projects and programs with the underlying assumption that “done” is achievable.

Writer James Carse and others talk about two kinds of games we all play in life. The first kind are finite games. In a finite game both the rules and players are known and fixed, there is a clearly defined end point, and there are winners and losers. Think of a football game, a hiring process, or hydropower relicensing. “What does done look like” is an excellent question that helps paint a picture of a desirable, winning outcome for those finite games.

The other kind of game is an infinite game. In an infinite game the rules are always changing, players can come and go at any time, and the objective is to stay in the game as long as possible. Besides life itself, there are not many familiar examples of infinite games. But for American Whitewater, the perpetual stewardship and enjoyment of our cherished rivers is the infinite game that matters most.

The tug of war for the right balance between resource conservation and utilization is baked into the human condition—struggling with that is just part of what we do as a species. As long as there are humans and rivers on this planet at the

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed reading Jesse Shimrock's article regarding protecting the Upper Yough canyon. I, however, take an opposing view to his and AW's negative position on the proposed river trail. His article was beautifully written, but misses the point about sharing access to our amazing river.

I have been fortunate to live close to the Upper Yough and have kayaked and rafted it with my family and friends well over 500 times during the past 40-plus years. There was a time during my marathon and triathlon days that I would run my shuttle on the primitive riverside trails, swimming across to river left below National Falls and wading back across above Gap Falls. I even spent summers carrying a saw and lopping shears in my kayak to improve the abandoned rail trail on river left so joggers and hikers could navigate it. I still ride my bicycle shuttle to Sang Run using the road, but I would prefer to bicycle back on a rail trail along the river rather than fight the traffic and hills on Rt. 42. More importantly, I would like to cycle on a rail trail with my grandchildren to share the beauty of the canyon and the river rapids that are such an important part of my life.

Most of us boating on a typical Saturday afternoon summer release do not see the Yough Canyon as a quiet, wild refuge. We share it with over 200 boaters and rafters who are also there to enjoy their time on a wonderful, and oftentimes, crowded river. I think we can be generous with our region's natural wonders and share the beauty of this canyon with others who are not Class IV boaters and rafters.

Paul Brager
Clarksburg, WV

same time, some humans are going to have to look out for those rivers. In other words, there is no "done" in river stewardship. We are players in an infinite game.

An infinite game does not end when you and I stop playing it. Long after we are gone, our children, our ideas, our memory, our money, and those we have uplifted and inspired as new leaders will all keep playing the game without us. The endurance of our priorities that persist beyond our ability to participate is the essence of what we call legacy. For 69 years now, members, partners, board, and staff at American Whitewater have contributed to a legacy that you can viscerally experience on thousands of miles of rivers and creeks across the country.

Some of our rivers still carry legacies from another era, with names like Hoover, Dworshak, and Ice Harbor etched in bronze and concrete across and along their reaches. Increasingly, older names are returning to rivers as Indigenous communities reclaim their heritage on the landscape. For people of all cultures who stick up for rivers together, the lyrics of our unique legacies are sung by roaring rapids, and ensconced in the growth rings of trees. Ours is a shared legacy that you can dip your paddle in.

In addition to work on the ground, part of our charge as an organization is to also ensure that, no matter the shape future threats to our rivers might take, American Whitewater and a diverse coalition of advocates will always be there to respond. The rules and the players will change with the seasons, but being committed and resourced to act on behalf of the rivers we love must be evergreen.

Thank you for being a contributing member and making the protection and enjoyment of whitewater rivers, and the resolute strength of American Whitewater, part of your enduring legacy. We truly cannot do it without you.

Enjoy the spring paddling season on your home rivers—I look forward to SYOTR soon!



Clinton Begley
Executive Director, American Whitewater

Policy Achievements of 2022 and Goals for the New Congress

By Thomas O'Keefe

THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS MEETS FOR TWO YEAR sessions and as one session of Congress comes to a close and a new one gets underway, it offers an opportunity to reflect on what we accomplished, work we still hope to advance, and new initiatives and opportunities we plan to pursue. With the support of our members we continue to be an effective voice for the interests of the whitewater paddling community in conserving rivers and enhancing opportunities to enjoy them.



Climate Legislation Success

Congress has recognized that climate change, protecting and restoring rivers and ecosystems, and creating recreation opportunities can go hand-in-hand. Reduced snowpack, impacts of drought, and increased wildfire severity all impact the whitewater boating community and the experiences we enjoy. The passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, which was signed into law in August 2022, represents the most significant action ever taken by the United States to address climate change. Many of the Act's investments come in the form of tax credits, grants, and other economic incentives intended to spur investments in clean energy and emissions reductions to 40% below 2005 levels by 2030. American Whitewater was among the organizations, along with our partners at Outdoor Alliance, that engaged on behalf of river runners and the broader outdoor recreation community.

In addition to the investments in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing carbon emissions, the legislation included specific measures of interest to whitewater boaters. We are pleased that the final legislation included \$4 billion in drought mitigation funding for the Colorado River Basin. This funding will help prioritize conservation measures that leave more water in the river with benefits for both aquatic ecosystems and river recreation.

Enhanced funding for the Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management will greatly improve the ability of these agencies that manage many of our nation's most iconic rivers to fulfill their missions and tackle climate change. The \$700 million investment in the Forest Service Forest Legacy Program, provides resources for a voluntary program for landowners to protect private forest lands from development. This program provides an opportunity to keep forests intact on rivers like the Little White Salmon that flow through private forest land. It's a program we have benefitted from where rivers flow through private forest land and we have an interest in keeping the riparian forest intact. An investment of \$500 million will go to the Department of Interior for conservation and habitat restoration. The legislation addresses chronic staffing issues at the National Park Service with a \$500 million investment and an additional \$200 million for priority deferred maintenance projects. The bill also provides \$50 million for completion of an inventory of old growth and mature forests on National Forests, and for developing conservation strategies for these forests that sequester carbon.

In the coming year we will be working with the Administration on the investment of funds from the Inflation Reduction Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and Great American Outdoors Act to protect river corridors and enhance opportunities for whitewater recreation.

Public Lands and River Conservation

Public lands and river conservation bills got off to a fast start last Congress passing as the very first conservation legislation of the 117th Congress. Among the bills included in the package were Colorado Wilderness Act; Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act; Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act; Central Coast Heritage Protection Act; San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act; Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act; Grand Canyon Protection Act; Southwestern Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act of 2021; and York River Wild and Scenic Act. While we made significant progress in the House, legislation moved more slowly in the evenly-divided Senate. Many of our bills had hearings and went to mark up in the Senate, but ultimately few passed into law. Two priorities we identified, the York River Wild and Scenic River Act and Kissimmee River Wild and Scenic River Act, were passed into law within the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (H.R. 2617; Public Law No: 117-328). We were working on a more ambitious recreation and conservation package through in-person meetings in Washington, DC in December 2022 with our partners at Outdoor Alliance and through the final hours of the 117th Congress. In addition to the conservation priorities, we were actively engaged in the discussions on Senator Manchin and Senator Barrasso's outdoor recreation package, America's Outdoor Recreation Act (S.3266), throughout the 117th Congress and provided extensive written testimony and technical input for the outdoor recreation legislative hearing on December 12, 2021. While the bill was favorably reported out of Committee in the Senate and placed on the Senate Calendar on September 21, 2022, it did not see action in the House.

We also supported the effort of the Karuk Tribe to return lands of cultural and spiritual significance along the Klamath and Salmon Wild and Scenic rivers through the Katimiñ and Aamekyáaraam Sacred Lands Act (S.4439; Public Law No: 117-353). We actively engaged the outdoor recreation and conservation community and provided technical support for several other groups who provided supportive public testimony entered into the record for hearings. We were also actively engaged in passage of the National Heritage Area Act (S.1942; Public Law 117-339), establishing the National Heritage Area System that provides long-term certainty for the system and allows for better planning efforts and investment of resources.

We have already had meetings with staff from both sides of the aisle on the House Natural Resources Committee and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. While passing wild and scenic river legislation will be a challenge this Congress, we see opportunities we will be actively pursuing. It's also clear that these important committees are motivated to pursue bipartisan legislation on outdoor recreation. Representative Curtis from Utah, who we worked with to pass legislation to protect the Green River in Utah as Wild and Scenic in 2019, is back on the House Natural Resources Committee. He had already teamed up with Representative Neguse from



American Whitewater joined the White House Conservation in Action Summit that included remarks from Secretary Deb Haaland. Photo: Tom O'Keefe

Colorado to co-sponsor bipartisan legislation that will benefit outdoor recreation. We were also pleased to meet with staff from Representative Westerman's office, the incoming Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, who made clear that outdoor recreation is important to Arkansas and will be a focus of the committee.

Water Resources Development Act

The Water Resources Development Act is authorizing legislation passed every few years that sets policy and establishes programs for rivers that we recognize as an opportunity. Two of the initiatives we pursued were ultimately passed into law: a low head dam inventory program and recognition of whitewater recreation as a project purpose for the Army Corp of Engineers Dam on the West River, Vermont.

American Whitewater staff had been engaging in regional work to identify and prioritize low-ahead dams for removal and retrofit. Several states have completed various levels of inventories of low head dam structures, indicating the ubiquitous nature of these structures. However, no reliable nation-wide inventory of low-head dams exists in the United States. Low-head dams affect fish and wildlife habitat by disrupting connectivity and water quality, and in addition, negatively affect recreation and public safety. Low-head dams can be difficult to detect by upstream water recreators, including drift boaters, kayakers, rafters, and anglers, and there is no coordinated federal response to addressing low-head dam concerns.

To address these concerns we drafted legislation and led coordination with Congressional representatives, in partnership with Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, for a nationwide low-head dam inventory, which was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support (with leadership from Senator Gillibrand and Senator Graham) as part of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (H.R.7776; Public Law No: 117-263).

We continue to engage Congress and staff at the US Army Corps of Engineers to ensure the program has funding appropriated and is completed. In our role as a co-chair of the National Low Head Dam Inventory Task Force, we are working to include the good work already done by states and NGOs to identify these structures so that they can be provided to the Corps in the implementation of this new law.

West River

Northeast paddlers and boaters across the country celebrated the passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) in the Senate last week. This legislation includes language American Whitewater wrote and advocated for, expanding the purposes of the Army Corps Ball Mountain Dam on the West River in Vermont to include whitewater boating specifically. Long a favorite of paddlers in the region, the West draws thousands of boaters and supports the outdoor recreation economy in the region. Unfortunately, dam releases on the West are rare and have diminished over the years, frustrating paddlers who treasure this river. We expect that the new designation will result in more boating opportunities on the river now that whitewater boating is an authorized purpose. AW worked in partnership with its affiliate Appalachian Mountain Club in advocating for this language. We are grateful to Senator Sanders for promoting whitewater boating on the West River through his support of our request for this designation. ■

Join American Whitewater at the Deerfield Fest at Berkshire East in Charlemont, MA.

Live music, vendors, and a silent auction supports river conservation and recreation in the northeast.



Deerfield River Festival August 5th, 2023

www.americanwhitewater.org/deerfieldfest

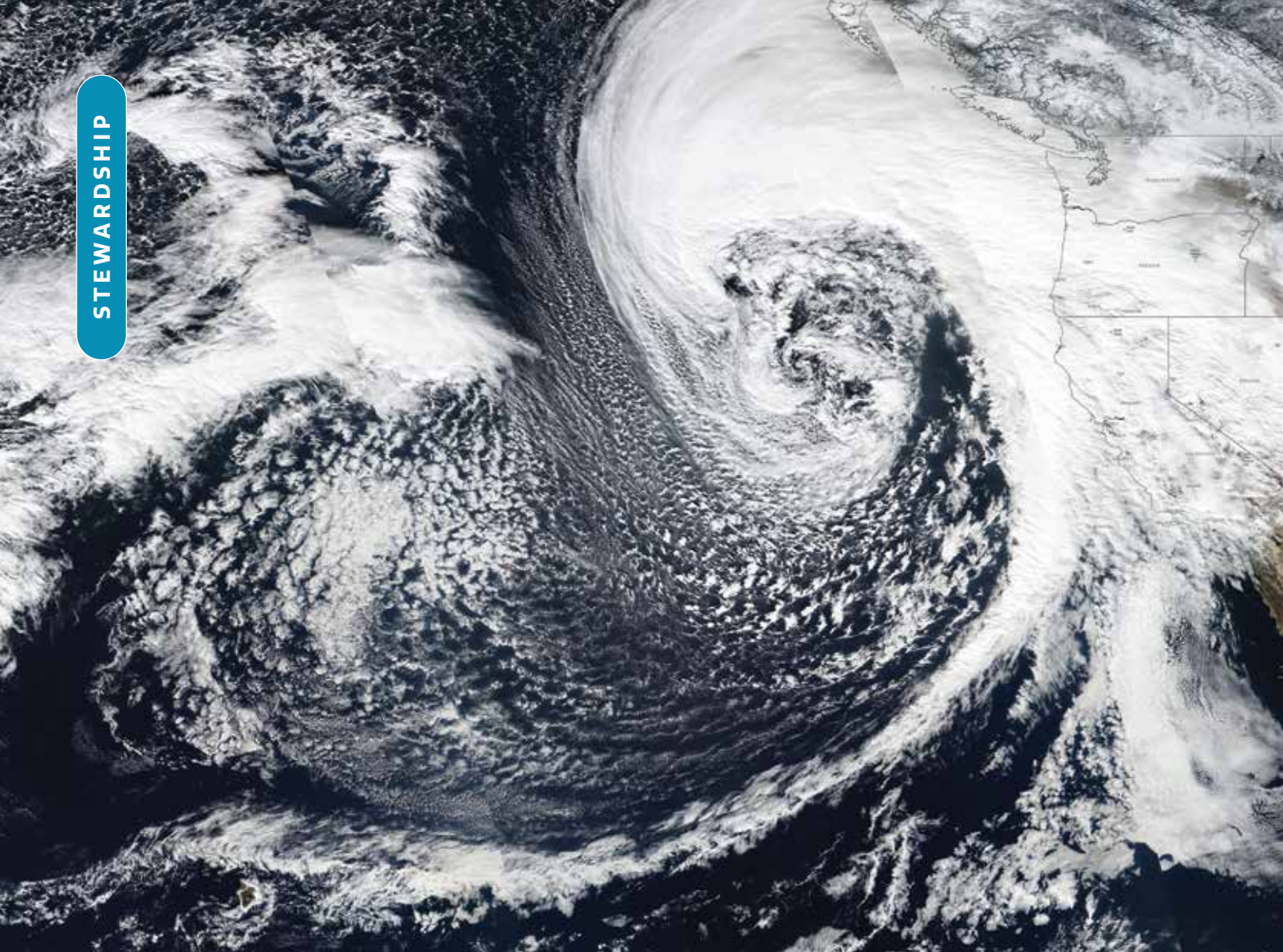
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Rivers from the Sky

By Scott Harding

FOLLOWING YEARS OF DROUGHT AND LOW RIVER FLOWS,

the winter of 2022-2023 brought extensive rain, snow, and flooding to California. A series of atmospheric rivers brought most of this precipitation, much of which is stored as snowpack and in reservoirs and will sustain river flows for months. Here's a look at these aerial rivers and their interaction with the rivers we all enjoy down below. ■

This page: From December 2022 to March 2023, California was drenched by a series of atmospheric rivers. This atmospheric river on January 4, 2023 carried moisture from Hawaii to California, where it rained and snowed heavily upon landfall. Credit: NASA

Next page, top left: The skies over Northwest California and Southwest Oregon cleared on March 15, 2023, two days after a significant atmospheric river delivered another round of rain and snow. The region's rivers rose rapidly, carrying plumes of sediment into the Pacific Ocean. The largest of these plumes is from California's Eel River which was flowing 165,000 cfs at its mouth. Credit: NASA

Next page, top right: California's Sierra Nevada received a record snowpack from the parade of atmospheric rivers and other storms in winter 2022-2023. In this image from April 15, 2023, the Sierra Nevada's snow coverage is deep and extensive. Further north, the Cascade Range and Klamath Mountains are also snow-covered. This snowpack will sustain river flows well into summer and will also lead to high water and flooding as it melts off. Credit: NASA

Next page, bottom: Atmospheric rivers bring essential rainfall but can also cause devastating floods. Their prolonged absence brings drought. Scientists have expanded research into this important meteorological phenomena. Credit: NOAA



The science behind atmospheric rivers

An atmospheric river (AR) is a flowing column of condensed water vapor in the atmosphere responsible for producing significant levels of rain and snow, especially in the Western United States. When ARs move inland and sweep over the mountains, the water vapor rises and cools to create heavy precipitation. Though many ARs are weak systems that simply provide beneficial rain or snow, some of the larger, more powerful ARs can create extreme rainfall and floods capable of disrupting travel, inducing mudslides and causing catastrophic damage to life and property. Visit www.research.noaa.gov to learn more.

A strong AR transports an amount of water vapor roughly equivalent to 7.5–15 times the average flow of water at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

ARs are a primary feature in the entire global water cycle and are tied closely to both water supply and flood risks, particularly in the Western U.S.

On average, about 30–50% of annual precipitation on the West Coast occurs in just a few AR events and contributes to the water supply — and flooding risk.

ARs move with the weather and are present somewhere on Earth at any given time.

ARs are approximately 250–375 miles wide on average.

Scientists' improved understanding of ARs has come from roughly a decade of scientific studies that use observations from satellites, radar and aircraft as well as the latest numerical weather models. More studies are underway, including a 2015 scientific mission that added data from instruments aboard a NOAA ship.

WATER
VAPOR
COOLS

CALIFORNIA



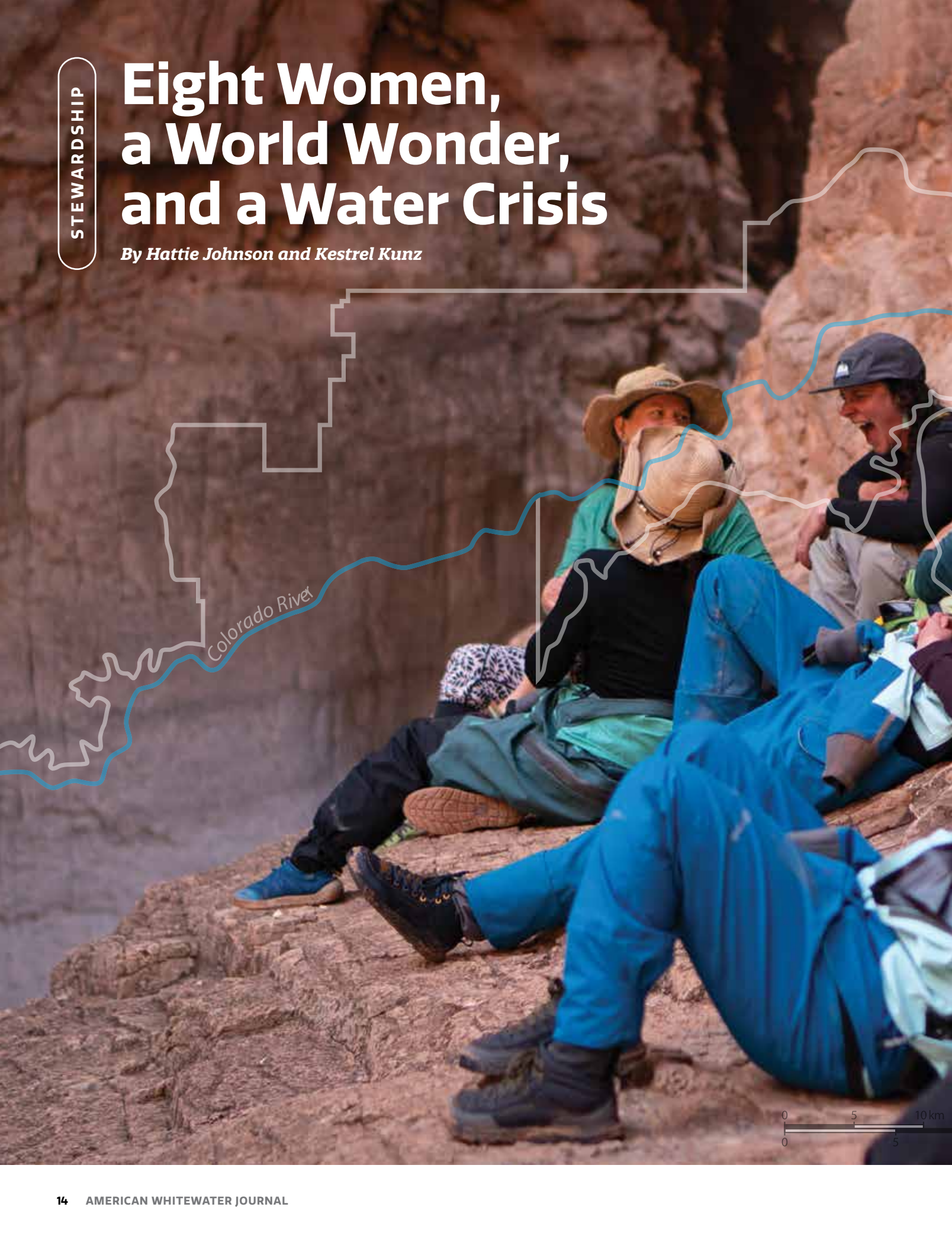
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NOAA

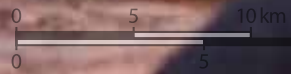
STEWARDSHIP

Eight Women, a World Wonder, and a Water Crisis

By Hattie Johnson and Kestrel Kunz



Colorado River





Grand Canyon National Park

Colorado River

Colorado River

★ North Rim

South Rim ★

67

64

Photo: Hayley Stuart
Map: iStock

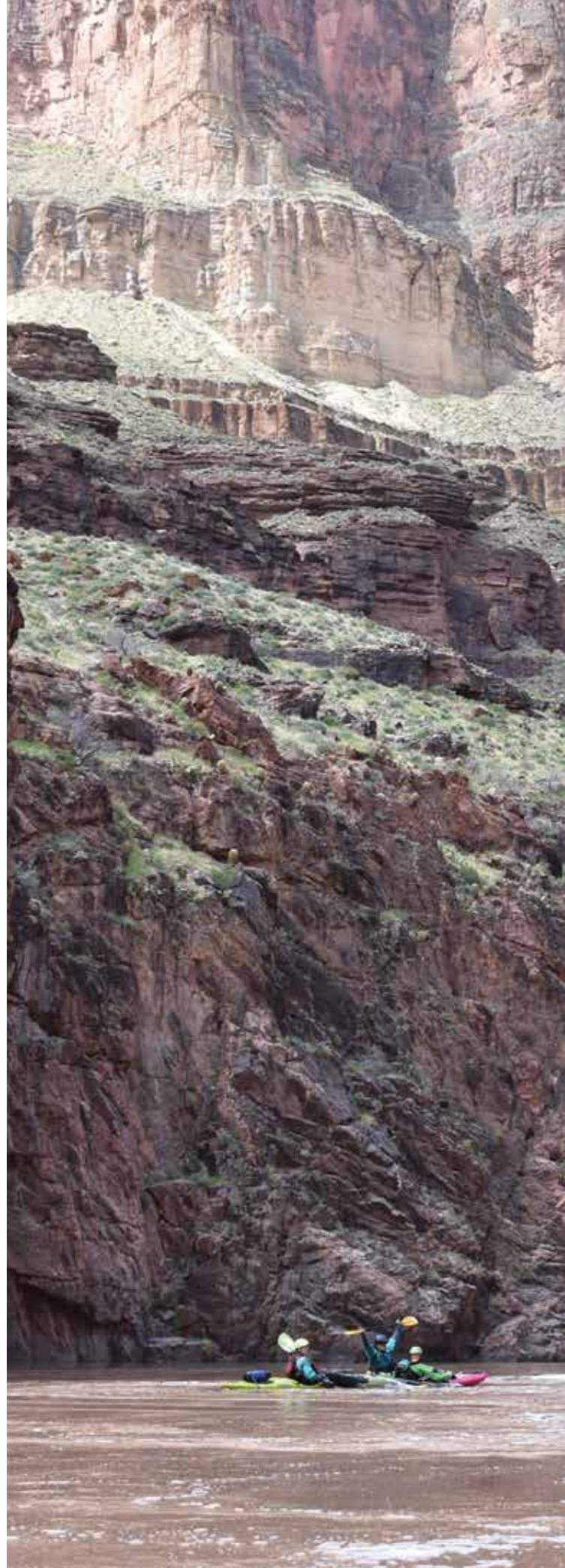
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THE PLAN TO DO A WOMEN'S SELF-SUPPORT KAYAK TRIP

through the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon was seeded when Southern Rockies Associate Stewardship Director Kestrel Kunz put together an all-female trip on the Middle Fork Flathead River (MT) in 2018 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The success and joy that the trip produced solidified plans for future such excursions. A shocking, yet successful bid in the Grand Canyon lottery put wheels in motion for this year's trip, led by Southern Rockies Stewardship Director Hattie Johnson. The timing turned out to coincide well with high level discussions and decision making around how we manage water throughout the Colorado River Basin specifically and the southwest in general. During our trip through the stunning canyon walls, we learn about what is at risk, what is on the horizon, and what we can do about it.

The future of the Grand Canyon is unknown. The Colorado River links two critical reservoirs—Lakes Powell and Mead—whose construction, filling, and management provided for growth and development of the arid southwest. Dividing up of the river's water was calculated during a wet period not experienced again in the 100 years since the foundational agreements were inked. Further, human-induced climate change has aridified an already dry southwest. Scientists, states, water users, river conservation organizations, and the federal agencies that manage the river don't have a clear solution to address the rapidly decreasing water levels in the country's largest reservoirs sitting behind Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams.

The federal government has asked the seven basin states—Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Arizona, Nevada, and California—to collectively conserve massive amounts of water to protect the plumbing that provides water to over 40 million people in two countries. Whatever the outcome of these negotiations, it is clear that failure to make significant cuts in water use and changes to how the reservoirs are managed and operated could result in drastic impacts to flows through one of the true wonders of the world, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River.



Regardless of the actions and developments of the past, we now have a system that supports the livelihoods of millions of people; but that system was built to support more than it can. For instance, there are 30 federally recognized tribes with water rights to the Colorado River. A 1908 U.S. Supreme Court ruling *Winters v. The United States* held that Tribes have a reserved right to water sufficient to fulfill the purposes of their reservation. However, Native American homes are 19 times more likely than white homes to lack indoor plumbing. Tribal water rights have been undercut and have lacked the necessary infrastructure to be developed across the Colorado River basin. About 20 percent of the river's historic flow is dedicated to quantified Tribal water rights, while many other Tribes lack quantification of their rightful and needed water supply.

The problem on the Colorado River is not a drought. Climate change is making the southwest more arid. Water supply and demand is drastically unbalanced and has been for over a century. The impact is a one-two punch and the still-changing climate makes that imbalance even harder to maintain. As water users in the Colorado River basin try to figure out how to cope, we have an opportunity to advocate for the health of the Colorado River, especially as it flows through the Grand Canyon.



The whole crew cheers for beautiful lines through Bedrock and Duebendorf rapids as we float the calm waters down Deer Creek for a much deserved relaxing lunch. Photo: Hattie Johnson

This past April, when American Whitewater's Southern Rockies Program staff—Hattie Johnson, Kestrel Kunz, and six of their female comrades—set out on an 11-day self-support¹ kayak trip through the Grand Canyon, a wet winter triggered river managers to send more water than expected down the river, despite imperiled reservoir levels that had led to significantly reduced releases from Glen Canyon Dam in 2022. We had expected flows to be on the low end, however, we got to enjoy healthy flows (8,500 - 17,900 cfs) and milk chocolate water below the confluence with the Little Colorado River. More lines opened up for us and our crew got the pick of punching the meat or skirting right or left of bus sized hydraulics.

The canyon left us with a heightened responsibility to protect this place for future generations, further fueled by half of our group being mothers to current and future river rats.

1. During our trip, our group decided that team-support is a much more worthy title for this kind of adventure.

We had some swims, gear malfunctions, and spilled dinners, but we left the canyon with so much more than we had when we put on. Traveling through 226 miles of one of the grandest canyons with a crew of women left us filled with so much love for each other and for the place that had brought us all together. The canyon also left us with a heightened responsibility to protect this place for future generations, further fueled by half of our group being mothers to current and future river rats.

On April 11, just as we were likely navigating Hance or Sockdolager rapid, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) released the draft supplemental environmental impact statement on alternatives for reservoir management in the short term. This planning process is specific to the operations at Glen Canyon and Hoover dams and is one of many public processes on the table right now that could have a significant effect on how the river flows through this special place.

The draft plan puts forward three possible alternatives for how the reservoirs are managed in the 2024 operating year through 2026, when longer term management decisions need to be

finalized. The first is the no action alternative. In this option, Reclamation lays out what happens if we keep operating the reservoirs as we have been. The other two action alternatives are very similar in how Glen Canyon Dam would be operated and vary in which lower basin states take cuts.

If nothing is done, meaning the no action alternative is selected, chances are much higher that water levels in Lake Powell will drop below minimum power pool levels (i.e., the reservoir height at which water would not reach the turbines that produce power and serve as the current outlet channels for flows below the dam) and would not come back up. Under that scenario, we would be releasing downstream flows through river outlet works that have not been tested to consistently pass water. This would significantly lower opportunities to send variable and high flows downstream, creating a much more static flow regime. Both action alternatives provide protections for power pool elevation, allowing for seasonal variability and high flow opportunities to optimize downstream recreation and ecosystem function.



We spared no important items while packing everything into our kayaks. The queen of the fun stuff, Vida Dillard, brought all the essentials such as a small guitar, gold chains, a silk robe, and of course, LED fairy wings. Photo: Hayley Stuart





Top left: Painting by Kat Jacaruso. "I sketched this on the last morning of our trip, not necessarily of one specific place in the canyon but rather of a scene that had unfolded flawlessly over and over throughout our trip: eight boats with eight women in them, canyon walls of many colors guarding our path us as cactus, wildflowers, and side canyons invited us to play."

Below: Kat shares some of her paintings made on the trip.



Bottom Left: The team at Phantom Ranch boat beach.
Photo: Thomas O'Keefe



Bottom right: We spent a long morning at the river's confluence with the Little Colorado River to appreciate the importance of that place to the many Indigenous peoples. This special place is the site of many proposed developments that would change its face forever. Some of these proposals, like a pumped hydropower project on Big Canyon—a side canyon to the Little Colorado—are still on the table despite vast and loud opposition.
Photo: Hayley Stuart



Southern Rockies Associate Stewardship Director, Kestrel Kunz, styles Hance rapid while taking a big milk chocolatey splash to the face. Higher than expected flows opened up multiple line options on a few of the larger rapids that the crew often ended up with different choices, but (mostly) successful runs. Photo: Hattie Johnson

When the government makes any decision that has the potential to affect the human and natural environment, this triggers the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). If an initial assessment determines the impacts could be significant, then a full Environmental Impact Statement is prepared. Between 2013 and 2018, the average time to complete these processes was 4.5 years.² Reclamation has committed to fast tracking these processes due to the current water crisis. American Whitewater has worked tirelessly to protect the integrity of the National Environmental Policy Act and to ensure that these assessments are thorough and include adequate time for public engagement, while also being efficient. The public comment period is an important chance for organizations like American Whitewater and our members to share our perspectives on the federal action being contemplated. Despite the pressures of the government and Mother Nature, we will have to act fast on this one.

The managers of the Colorado River Basin have a bold task ahead of them, with at least three big NEPA studies to complete between 2023 and 2026. We say *at least* three, because there are new, unanticipated issues affecting the Basin every day that could result in further public scrutiny, such as the appearance of smallmouth bass in the canyon, and the sedimentation of Glen Canyon, as well as the returning rapids and side canyons to that once drowned place.

We had expected Reclamation to release the supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for near-term (now through 2026) Colorado River Operations while we were on the river.

2. https://ceq.doe.gov/docs/nepa-practice/CEQ_EIS_Length_Fact_Sheet_2020-6-12.pdf

It was eerie to know that while we were enjoying the splendor of the Grand Canyon, there were very real decisions being proposed about its future. This step in the process is where we will need our community's engagement and the voices of many others who realize the importance of the Grand Canyon. As we tried to quickly adjust back to life above the rim, we began reviewing the proposed operations and will aim to provide specific guidance through our online channels by the time you're reading this with how you can make your voice really count. Subsequently, or more likely concurrently, we will be tracking a similar NEPA process for Colorado River operations that will be initiated after 2026. Please take this opportunity to engage!

On our trip, we missed a High Flow Experiment release by just a few days, and while it would have been really interesting, we were all a little relieved. From April 24 to 27, the Grand Canyon was running at 39,500 cfs (for 72 hours) for the first time since the last High Flow Experiment in 2018. If you've been lucky enough to go down the Grand Canyon in the past few years, you may have noticed that the beaches are in disarray, which is caused by diminished or non-existent peak flushing flows and the massive drop off of sediment in the upstream reservoir, Lake Powell.

Sandy beaches have shrunk in size, eroded, or in some places been replaced by cobble bars. For our small group of self-support kayakers we had no problem finding plenty of room to lay our weary heads. The High Flow Experiment comes as an unexpected relief for both the environment and for recreation in the Grand Canyon, especially in the midst of record low reservoir levels behind Glen Canyon Dam. Environmental, recreational, and Tribal interests are not represented on the High Flow Experiment working group like they are on numerous other



working groups for the Grand Canyon. However, we do have an opportunity to advocate for continued High Flow Experiments and other flow scenarios through the myriad of management processes underway this year.

Spending 11 days within the Grand Canyon gave us plenty of time to reflect on our desire, motivation, and vision for protecting this place. Circled around our Luci Light “fire” in the glowing canyon dusk, we talked about the uncertain future for the river that we enjoyed during this brief moment in time. Despite the omnipresent uncertainty of flows in the Colorado River, it was unimaginable to think about a canyon choked with encroaching vegetation, a result of little to no variation in a seasonal hydrograph. We saw the threatened humpback chub up close as they swam towards our dishwater just above the Little Colorado. If flow management continues as it has, predation from smallmouth bass would severely impact their existence. At Diamond Creek we chatted with Hualapai rangers who spoke about the importance of the health of the river and canyon which is their home, and also provides important income to the Tribe.

Looking toward the long-term future of the canyon, we will ensure that recreational flow preference studies completed by American Whitewater and our partners in the Upper and Lower Basins are available and included as a part of decision making processes. We will continue to advocate for management that fully considers the impacts to recreation and the environment, prioritizing flows that have overlapping benefits for both. Staying true to our values and mission, when the opportunity arises, we will push for a Colorado River that one day might flow free again. But what’s most clear is that an issue this complex and for a place this special will require a lot of different people coming to the table. River runners, Indige-

nous peoples, agriculturists, cities, and scientists need to work together to define both the probable and sustainable scenarios for the Colorado River and its grandest canyon.

Bouncing along Diamond Creek road provides one last journey, though this time in reverse, through the layers of rock that tell a long history. The changing vegetation, in full bloom this time of year, eased us back to “rim world.” Being on the river for an extended period is a gift that allows for self-reflection and connection to your team that cuts deeper than it does up here. If you are reading this, we hope you’ve received this gift and that, if you haven’t yet had that chance, a permit or invite is in your future. Being in the flow of life of the canyon, depending on and supporting those around you, provides a good reminder of how taking care of those around you is required for a successful journey through life. A trip through the Grand Canyon leaves a lasting impression on all who are so lucky. The river that carved it is one of the hardest working in the country. Keeping the river flowing and healthy is integral to protecting the safety and welfare of the people and who rely on it. It’s time to figure out how to work with what nature provides, and to do so together. ■



Nahanni Mist

by Gary Storr

The Gate and Pulpit Rock
Photo: George Armstrong

AN ELITE FRATERNITY OF ADRENALINE JUNKIES SEEMS

born to it. They stare into the maw of a grinding, spewing cataclysm and grin. They smell it and taste it; the rapid is theirs and they churn through and make it look easy. Behind them are the thrill-seekers who think they can do it...and the rest of us who know they can't but gamely give it their best shot.

It typically takes me several swings at the metaphorical piñata before I win the prize. I spent three weekends doggedly pinballing the rapids of Ontario's Mattawa River during spring runoff, the first of which resulted in a wrapped canoe. We banged through on the third try. Three times I've paddled the lower Credit River in April and twice went for an icy swim. On the last attempt my partner and I trashed a whitewater canoe, puncturing the hull in two places. Worse, I chickened out of paddling the Petawawa River's Rollway Rapid, not once, but twice. *Buk-buk-buk*. My whitewater skills languish at the bottom of the pecking order and I won't be going back. I was determined, however, to paddle Raymond Patterson's river, the Nahʔa Dehé, more famously known as the Nahanni. This splendid waterway is, without doubt, the gold standard of Canadian rivers.

It was the lure of gold that brought prospectors up through the canyons of the South Nahanni in the early years of the 20th century: Frank and Willie McLeod, Martin Jorgenson, Phil Powers, Albert Faille, Dick Turner and a host of others. Stories abound of gold seekers found dead, their heads mysteriously missing. Headless Creek and Deadmen Valley are named for these gruesome discoveries. The Funeral Range and Crash Lake are so christened for a series of unexplained plane crashes, a matter of grave concern for bush pilots.

Our expedition was three years in the making. In 2019, my wife Debby and I booked a 10-day guided trip on the South Nahanni River for the following summer. Raymond Patterson's epic tome, *Dangerous River*, had long been a favorite of mine and over the years I had read it again and again. I don't have a bucket list—I tend to take opportunities as they arise—but if my bucket were to overturn, the one thing to spill out would be the Nahanni.

In early 2020 the pandemic hit and travel immediately ground to a halt. The next year, Parks Canada came to an agreement with the tourism industry that would allow river travel in the Northwest Territories (NT) as long as clients could be flown directly from the border to their points of departure. Problem:

nobody told the NT government in Yellowknife. Travel into the Territories was still prohibited.

Fortunately, a third whack at the papier mâché brought the candy raining down. The pandemic loosened its grip and borders reopened. In late July of 2022, Debby and I flew from Toronto to Edmonton, and then on to Yellowknife and Fort Simpson. From there we boarded a De Havilland Twin Otter and droned through a lazy fog over the Mackenzie Mountains to the Nahanni. Below, a grizzly reared, spooked by the float plane. We banked for a landing and taxied to the Virginia Falls campground. Here, a complex maze of boardwalks and tent platforms is situated above the falls, built to protect the delicate ecosystem and to spare travelers from a wet and hummocky portage. The transient community busied itself as dozens of paddlers prepared for the journey ahead; I imagine Everest's base camps to be similarly infused with the buzz of anticipation.

Allow me to backpaddle here for a moment. In early July, Debby and I let down our guard and attended a concert. Three days later I tested positive for Covid. Two days after that, Debby joined me in seclusion. It was a mild case and we glided smoothly to the finish but two weeks passed before we tested negative, just days before our departure. We were going to the Nahanni in a Covid fog, the outcome being that my reminiscences are non-sequential: they comprise a collection of isolated memories which belong to no particular day. I will, however, with the aid of photographs and maps, try to jig these events back into place.

In the morning, we ferried the canoes across the river above the deadly Sluice Box Rapids to the base of Sunblood Mountain. We plucked blueberries along the trail and flushed a spruce grouse which darted through the undergrowth, drawing us away from its chicks. Reaching the lip of the waterfall our jaws dropped. Imagine admiring from above a cataract the height of two Niagaras and without the safeguard of a stone wall and iron railings! Mist rose from its base. Backtracking, we slipped down to the water's edge above the falls to a small cobbled cove shelved with limestone. The Nahanni roared past and disappeared over the brink. This was Last Chance Harbour, which to me seemed a misnomer, as I could see no way in and only one way out—as thrilling a ride as any for the remaining few seconds of one's existence.





Marengo Creek camp
Photo: George Armstrong

Náìlìcho, Dené for “big water falling,” thundered over the precipice and was knifed in two by a great limestone monolith called Mason’s Rock. It is the highest waterfall in the Northwest Territories and is commonly known as Virginia Falls, named by explorer Fenley Hunter for his daughter in 1928. I am not a pious sort but it seemed as if these falls of the Nahanni had been painted by the formidable hand of its creator who, when finished, stepped back and decided to add one final flourish. Dipping his brush into a kaleidoscope of color, he swept a wide arc across his canvas. Here was our pot of gold, exceeding the payoff granted the fortune hunters who had come before us. Later in the day, with the Virginia Falls portage behind us, our three guides went to work rafting the canoes. Many of our team of 11 were novice whitewater paddlers and, as often as not, the most junior member of an expedition could be outed as a pensioner. To compound matters, two of our crew had already gone for a swim before we joined the group (see sidebar). Better to be gulping air than water. We packed the catacanoes and cinched down the spray covers. As we prepared to launch, a guide whispered to me, “Your life jacket is inside out.” Crikey! Never in all my years of paddling! It was the first mental hiccup of many I was to experience in the coming months.

Rapids on the Nahanni are not like Ontario rapids. At home, we dodge rocks. Here, we reveled in a seemingly endless log flume ride, crashing and splashing through the massive wave trains of Fourth Canyon. Sheer walls towered 150 meters above us, constricting the flow and causing crosscurrents to jostle us from all quarters. Also called Painted Canyon, bright smears of yellow and rust adorn its walls. A combination of iron, mist and rain stimulated the oxidization process which created these striking murals.

We made camp at the mouth of Marengo Creek alongside an icy stream that flowed through a cobblestone trench from Marengo Falls, some nine kilometers to the west. That night, after feasting like royalty, I snuck away to score some alone time with a guitar that belonged to our trip leader. He had fashioned a waterproof case for it, an end loader, which due to the shape of the instrument could work only one way. After quietly fingerpicking a tune or three I attempted to return the guitar to its case—the wrong way! Flummoxed, I jammed away at it until a guide happened by and said, “It’s okay Gary, I’ve got this.” I watched in horror as he easily slid the guitar back into its case.

A few months later, two articles appeared in the Winter 2023 *American Whitewater Journal* that piqued my interest. In “What Could Possibly Go Wrong?” Teresa Gryder explains the human peculiarity of “optimism bias,” which leads the majority of us to overestimate the positive outcomes of life’s endeavors—while underestimating the negative. “YOLO!!” we yell as we slide down the tongue of a gnarly rapid—but if ropes and pulleys must be employed, we would be said to be optimism biased, the difference between lofty expectation and reality. In the second piece, “Seeking Joy,” Bethany Overfield discusses her retreat from crushing Class IV rapids to kayaking the

Reaching the lip of the waterfall our jaws dropped. Imagine admiring from above a cataract the height of two Niagaras and without the safeguard of a stone wall and iron railings!

relative calm of Class IIs and IIIs. Injury tempered her ability and judgment, and her optimism morphed into realism. The tie that binds these two articles might be: Know your limit; shred within it. As with Bethany, the combination of my years and newly acquired haze has led me to become more grounded in my objectives.

At sunrise one of the guides emerged from his tent to find himself face to face with a caribou; they were equally as startled by the encounter! While our man made tracks for his camera, the beast, too, made tracks—but not before a beautiful image was captured. After breakfast we took pleasure from the appearance of a second caribou swimming downriver toward our camp. Upon seeing a herd of humans on shore it quickly changed tack and headed for the opposite bank. For many of us, it was our first caribou sighting.

We paddled the lower Fourth Canyon shooting three more sets of rapids and approached Direction Mountain, which marks the mouth of Flat River and the place where the McLeod brothers, Patterson, Faille, Starke and Stevens, and others had set up shop. Some worked trap lines while others panned and sluiced for the elusive yellow ore that would make them rich. In his book, *Nahanni*, Dick Turner refers to the panning process as looking for color. In *Dangerous River*, Raymond Patterson admits that he and his partner, Gordon Matthews, didn't find gold but states with some satisfaction that they profited handsomely from the trap line. We raised our paddle grips to our ears and could clearly hear silt grinding against the blades. The catacanoes had been dismantled and we paddled apart now, Debby and I each with a guide. We floated past Mary River and entered Third Canyon.

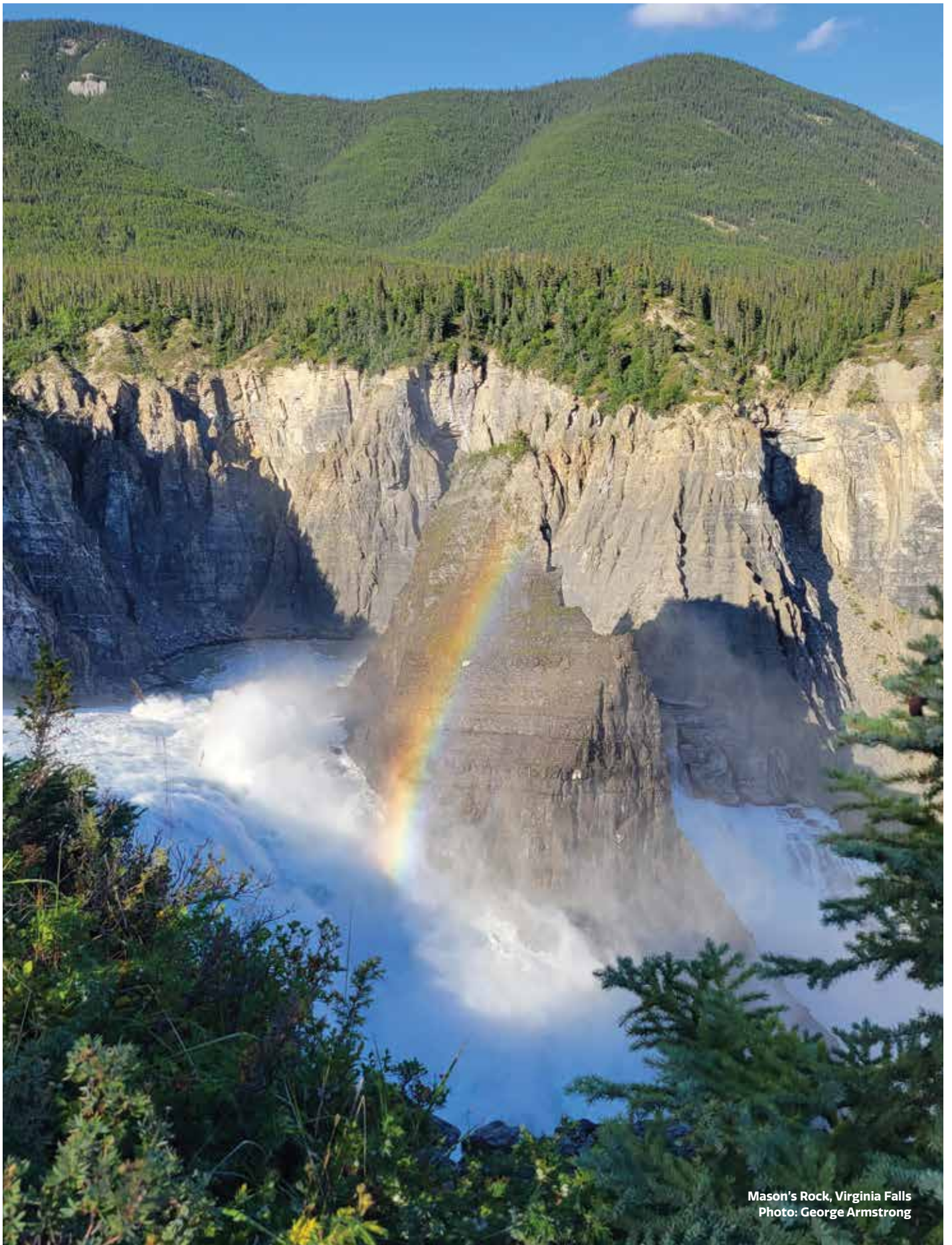
For two nights and a day, the Gate was ours. There had been reports of bear activity and the sprawling campsite had been temporarily closed by park staff. As we craned our necks in the canoes, our lead guide signaled for us to land: the site was reopened for business. Here we dined sumptuously, read, sketched, fished, photographed, napped and explored. In the evening our guides entertained us with story and song. A hike to the top of the Gate revealed new vistas: mountains were forested at their flanks by white spruce, lodgepole pine, aspen, poplar and birch. Dwarf birch and bearberry reigned on the

upper reaches. Below, the river made a tight U-turn through a slender gap; Pulpit Rock stood beneath us and we could imagine the land bridge that once joined the peaks on either side of the river. The original path of the Nahanni had meandered around the ridge but, over time, moving water gnawed at the base until gradually it broke through. An antecedent river, the Nahanni existed before the surrounding landscape rose around it, and so the ridge grew higher and the opening larger. Now the river flows through the gap and has abandoned its former path. Unable to support its own weight, the bridge collapsed, leaving the constricted channel we call the Gate.

After leaving the Gate we paddled past the Funeral Range and at Big Bend, entered Second Canyon. We scanned the mountainsides for Dall's sheep: small herds grazed on sub-alpine grasses and, on the higher slopes, shrub vegetation—but to us they seemed non-existent. Not one of our group made a sighting for the duration of the trip. Pulling ashore in a light rain, we trekked up Painted Rocks Canyon, wading back and forth across the shallow, serpentine creek until the walls rose above us. Rubbing stones from the canyon floor with our fingertips, we painted our faces orange-red in a failed attempt to appear savage. Instead, we looked cartoonishly like hockey fans hollering from the nosebleeds.

That evening we made camp at the foot of the Headless Range, on the western cusp of Deadmen Valley. Across the river, Headless Creek emptied into the Nahanni, and it was here the bodies of Frank and Willie McLeod were found without their heads in 1908. A third member of their party had vanished, possibly with gold lining his pockets. Another theory suggests that the fierce Naha peoples who dwelled in these mountains and conducted raids on Dené settlements had made short work of the McLeods.

At dinner our lead guide amused us with this anecdote: his uncle, who had guided trips for renowned Nahanni River guide and author, Neil Hartling, suggested to his boss that he ought to have a creek named for himself in recognition of his years of service. The guide had established a hiking trail alongside a dry creek bed to a limestone promontory...and so it was the hill—and not the creek—that was dubbed Morten's Knob. Be careful what you wish for.



Mason's Rock, Virginia Falls
Photo: George Armstrong

Mountains of dolomite soared above us to heights yet unseen. Cave entrances and rock slides were packed with snow, suggesting a modern day ice age. At its greatest depths, the walls of the gorge reached higher than those of the Grand Canyon.

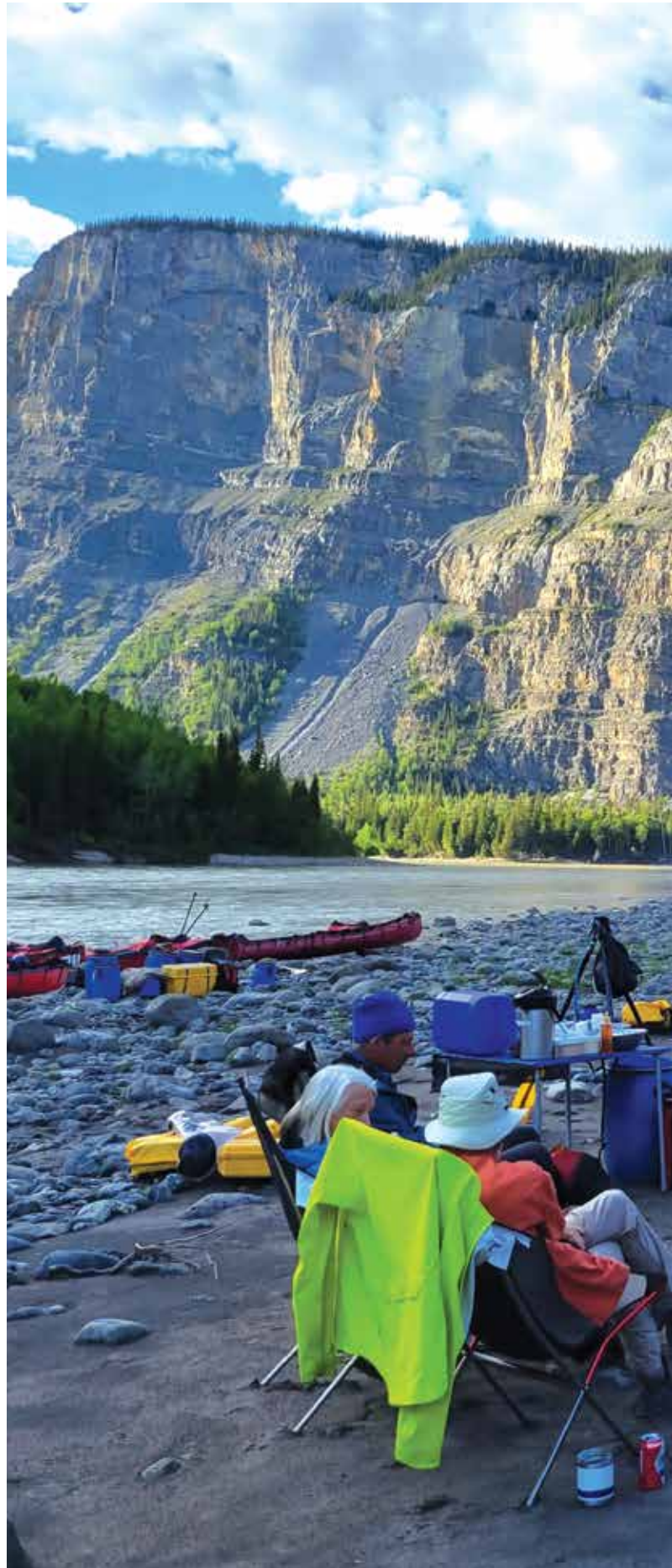




Photo: George Armstrong

The next morning, back in the boats, the current whisked us past a chain of islands that extended from above Meilleur River to Sheaf Creek, originally baptized Wheatsheaf Creek by Raymond Patterson for a favorite watering hole, and where he and Gordon Matthews built a cabin in 1928. The cabin's remains have long since washed away. Soon after, we ran our canoes aground on an island to scout George's Riffle and to take a refresher on boating safety and signals. Then we enjoyed a raucous ride through waves higher than our gunwales! George's Riffle marks the entrance to First Canyon and it proved breathtaking. Mountains of dolomite soared above us to heights yet unseen. Cave entrances and rock slides were packed with snow, suggesting a modern day ice age. At its greatest depths, the walls of the gorge reached higher than those of the Grand Canyon. The current carried us along in quiet reverence of the forces which had carved this magnificent tableau. As our day in the canoes petered out, so did First Canyon. We landed the boats on an expansive delta at the base of Lafferty Creek and staked out our living quarters.

Grotte Valerie, a table mountain, dominated the skyline to the northwest. Within it stretch two kilometers of tunnels and caves, one of which contains the bones of roughly 100 Dall's sheep. They had slipped into the cave over the millenia and, possibly due to ice, had been unable to climb out. The next day, against this backdrop, we donned our swimsuits and hiked across the delta and up the creek bed. Ice water pooled in smooth, sculpted basins which were fed in succession by trickling waterfalls. Occasionally, the sides of these pools extended upwards to become walls, effectively ending the path and necessitating our slipping into the water for a chilly traverse.

That evening, the guides again busied themselves with dinner preparations. Despite being highly trained in navigating white-water, rescue, and lifesaving techniques, 90 percent of a guide's job seemed to entail shredding cabbage and slicing carrots, a task they performed with cheerful aplomb.



After two nights at Lafferty Creek, we began our day in the canoes with a rollicking splash through Lafferty's Riffle and, soon after, we soaked in the luxurious stench of Kraus Hotsprings. We tiptoed across the stones into the cold Nahanni to rinse the sulfur from our bodies and then dried, dressed, and climbed back into the boats.

Debby and I paddled together the last two days. We were through the worst of it and she was confident to climb back in with me. The river widened below First Canyon and the Splits were shallow and fast; the river braided through a labyrinth of islands, shoals and gravel bars. Fallen trees stuck into the river bottom and their headless trunks pointed downstream bobbing in the racing current. The swiftness of our canoe forced us to take evasive action and turned our perceptions on their heads: the logs were now torpedoes being fired upriver at us! We dodged all but one...and it spanked us. Admonished, we carried on down the river.

Twenty-odd kilometers above Nahanni Butte we dragged our canoes up onto a cobble beach and fanned out in search of tent sites. A south wind was up and there was no protection from it. While I grappled with a flapping tent, Debby scouted behind the beach for a driftwood log with which to anchor it. To her dismay our compadres had scoured the area and stripped away every stick of driftwood, dragging them to the beach and setting them down along the windward sides of their tents to fasten the guy lines. Boulders sufficed nicely for our tent.

After dinner I was tossing back a cold one with a crew mate when my brain suddenly disengaged from my mouth and out tumbled a stream of nonsense syllables, random and unintelligible. Alarmed, I tried to halt the gibberish. The poor fellow stared quizzically as my lips and tongue continued as if

I don't have a bucket list but if my bucket were to overturn, the one thing to spill out would be the Nahanni.



possessed. Was I stroking out? I didn't think so—there were no other symptoms. Was I tipsy? No...well, maybe a little. Presently I regained control of my mouth and, mortified, muttered an oath under my breath: "Damned Covid brain cramps!..." What next? Was I going mad?

That night, as we lay in our sleeping bags, the wind died and the mosquitoes rose en masse. Then, from outside the tent, a high-pitched, mechanical *keee*. What on earth?! *Keee*. "What was that?" asked Debby. "Beats me," I replied. It sounded again. *Keee*. We knew not if it was man or beast...or some odd whirligig squealing for a drop of oil. In the morning the guides asked if we had heard the nighthawks. They'd been feeding over us in the nocturnal twilight.

On the last day of our adventure, Nahanni Butte appeared, solitary and grand on the horizon. "So near and yet so far," I marveled. "True that!" laughed a guide. "Wait five minutes—you'll be looking at it over your shoulder." A black bear ambled along the riverbank on our left. As Debby and I angled toward shore for a closer look it scampered into the bushes and was gone. A bison lay on the mudflats to our right, peering down his snout with a kingly air as we drifted past, camera shutters clicking.

At the Dené village of Nahanni Butte we landed the canoes and hucked our gear onto the steep, slimy riverbank. A barge propelled by a shining outboard chugged up against the muck and promptly conked out. The cowling was removed and the driver and one of our guides worked to effect a repair. After several more stalls, the engine caught and the scow was loaded with canoes and packs. Off they went, the river pilot and our guide, the engine sputtering and cutting out, to meet with the Liard River and there, to turn into the current toward the landing where our ride to Fort Simpson awaited. The rest of us were shuttled across the point of land to the Liard by pickup truck. There, we loaded the scows to cross the river and begin the long trip home.

Months later, my thought processes began to align themselves; the gears stopped grinding and started to turn smoothly again. My concussion-like symptoms faded and I no longer tried to pound square pegs into round holes. Scrolling through photos and scrutinizing maps had sharpened and shaped my memories into a cohesive whole. Once again, the world shone brightly. Here I give Jack Kerouac (*Big Sur*) the last word: "And when the fog's over and the stars and the moon come out at night it'll be a beautiful sight." ■



SOLO BOATING

By Teresa Gryder

NEVER BOAT ALONE. THAT'S WHAT YOU'LL HEAR.

Then you'll run into people who do. Then you'll hear others badmouthing them. Folks who boat solo often keep quiet about their solitary trips to avoid the judgment and lecturing. How dangerous is it? What should the messaging be around it? It's easier to say "never boat alone," but as a person who has, and probably will again, these questions linger in my mind.

The AW Safety Code says "*Boating alone is discouraged*. The minimum party is three people or two craft." The emphasis on the number of craft is important for rescue reasons. The code is under revision, but some advice about group size is likely to remain part of it. Let's look at the particulars. Who boats alone and why? What are the risks? How can you decide for yourself? And last but not least, what should we tell the world about it?

Who boats alone and why

There are lots of reasons why a person might launch alone. Some reasons I've heard include lacking a crew, wanting the freedom to socialize, using a boat for transportation, avoiding a troublesome crew, paddling jobs, racing, and philosophical or spiritual reasons.

Not having anybody to go with is the most common reason people launch alone. New boat owners may not know anybody who boats. Aging, injuries and relocation can shrink an established crew leaving someone tempted to go alone. Having limited time or unusual paddling preferences can reduce the number of possible companions.

Sometimes paddlers will launch alone on a crowded river like the Upper Gauley because they want the freedom to shift from group to group and socialize. They may feel that they are "never alone" because there are so many boats on the water.

My earliest solo missions were a commute to work on the Nantahala. Six miles of misty cold river before clocking in was a fine way to travel. I would have welcomed company on the water, but I was going regardless, and on a time schedule that worked for my shift.

Paddling alone can be safer than going with a group. Under-skilled or overly aggressive paddlers often require rescues—which incur risk. Whitewater boaters are famous for our willingness to save each other, but there are limits. If the only crew available is one that increases your personal risk, going alone may seem like a better option.

Racers, both downriver and slalom, often paddle by themselves. If you train for a distance race, it's highly likely that you'll be boating solo at least part of the time.

Jobs can require you to boat alone. I've worked as a safety boater and as a video boater. Both jobs entail running the largest rapids ahead of your group, often without support. My first video-boating job was on the Gauley. I paddled a borrowed Perception Mirage with the stern wall removed so a giant Pelican box would fit. I learned the sneaks and felt lucky to make it through a season without serious trouble.

Some paddlers find a spiritual connection with the river easier to access when alone. Doug Ammons soloed the Grand Canyon of the Stikine in 1992 and didn't tell anyone about it for five years. His motivation was not glory on social media. He wanted to be completely present, fully alive on a river that he loves. Putting his one precious life on the line enhanced his focus, and flow follows focus. A solitary boater can have an intimate connection with a beloved river.

Risks of boating alone

The risks may seem obvious but let's dig in a little bit. On the river, certain risks are there for everyone, all the time. These are called inherent risks, like those incurred by obstacles in the current and cold water.

If you get pinned when you are alone, nobody is going to help you get unpinned. You either get yourself free, or you are stuck there until the elements finish you. If you swim while boating alone nobody is going to drag you to shore or recover your gear. These risks are obvious to an experienced boater, but novices may not yet have a good sense of whether or how often pins and swims happen.

Inexperienced boaters don't know how to manage the inherent risks. They won't know what can happen when they try to stand up in a rapid, or when they end up immersed in frigid water. Enthusiastic rookies may launch on the wrong river in the wrong conditions, ignorant of low head dams, strainers, and difficult rapids just downstream. Preventing deadly mistakes caused by ignorance is a primary goal of all river safety efforts.

Experienced boaters know better. We know how to avoid foot entrapment and when to wear a drysuit. Any excessive risks we take are often due to complacency or human biases.

Consider the expert boater who has run their local gnar so many times that they're not worried when they launch alone. Human biases, in particular the Familiarity Heuristic and Optimism Bias, are often at play. Familiarity refers to the fact that we expect a river or rapid to go the same way as it has in the past. Optimism Bias refers to the fact that we like to ignore possible bad outcomes because it relieves our anxiety. Unfortunately these delusions can cause us to underestimate the risk. Challenging whitewater is unpredictable by definition. Things might not go as well as they have in the past. Experts who choose to solo should work hard to admit uncertainty and realistically assess risks.

Risk Homeostasis is another trap for experienced boaters. We tend to seek a certain level of thrill and challenge regardless of the setting. A strong paddler on easy water is likely to seek out difficult and dangerous moves in order to keep the run interesting. This risk-seeking behavior can cancel out any safety margin gained by launching on easy water.

Deciding for yourself

Most boaters are well-advised to follow the *never boat alone* rule. Clubs often have a three-craft minimum. The AW Safety Code suggests a minimum group size of two boats and three participants, which improves the odds that if something happens, there will be at least one person who can help, or go get help. For self supported expedition boating, four craft is a good group size, because the group can split into two teams of two boats, if needed.

To make a wise decision, there are lots of questions to consider. How well do you know the river? Are the current conditions good? Are your skills more than adequate for the run? Can you moderate your own tendency to take unnecessary risks on the water? How are you feeling today? Are you fit and strong? Is your equipment solid? How well do you swim? Are you prepared to sacrifice your equipment to save your life? How far can you walk in your river booties? What is your backup plan? Who will know if you don't come home? This is a good time to avoid Optimism Bias and really think about the "what if" questions.

Your mental state is also important. Are you good at making decisions? Are you honest with yourself? Are you clear and calm today? Do you know the hazards and understand the risk? What are your reasons for going solo?

It's probably best to not launch when you are distracted or upset. Noise in your head can cause you to do stupid things. Boating solo because you are hiding from something, or taking chances because you hate your life, can lead to disaster. Solo boating can be a bad idea even for a skilled paddler. People can help you make better decisions and survive until a time when the noise in your head lets up.

If you decide to go ahead with it, the shuttle requires serious consideration. Launching without a shuttle is a bad idea,

especially when the distance is far, transportation is uncertain, night is near, or weather is worsening. You could opt for destination boating which does not require a shuttle. You could hike, bike, or hitch your shuttle. The main requirement is that you think it through ahead of time and decide based on good information.

Public messaging

The population most in need of guidance are new boaters who might not realize the value of having backup. According to statistics from the AW Accident Database, Single Boat Trips account for roughly 15% of the fatalities on the river. True, a single boat can have several people in it, but when those people are children, brutal tragedies have occurred. If we can prevent these launches, we would be doing a service to society.

Experienced paddlers may enjoy solo boating, and we should be intentional about the messages we send to the world. The last thing we want to do is fuel an increase in single boat launches by inexperienced boaters.

Solo missions that are glorified on social media increase that possibility. Anyone who posts videos or photos of their paddling for public consumption should be extremely cautious not to glorify going solo. Videos of solo runs should include commentary about the risks involved and the necessary skills, if they are posted at all.

Those of us who do sometimes go alone should continue to publicly discourage solo boating, even if it is hypocritical. We should actively encourage inexperienced paddlers to take classes, join clubs, and seek training in safety and rescue. All of these activities will connect them with other paddlers and increase the odds that they will go together.

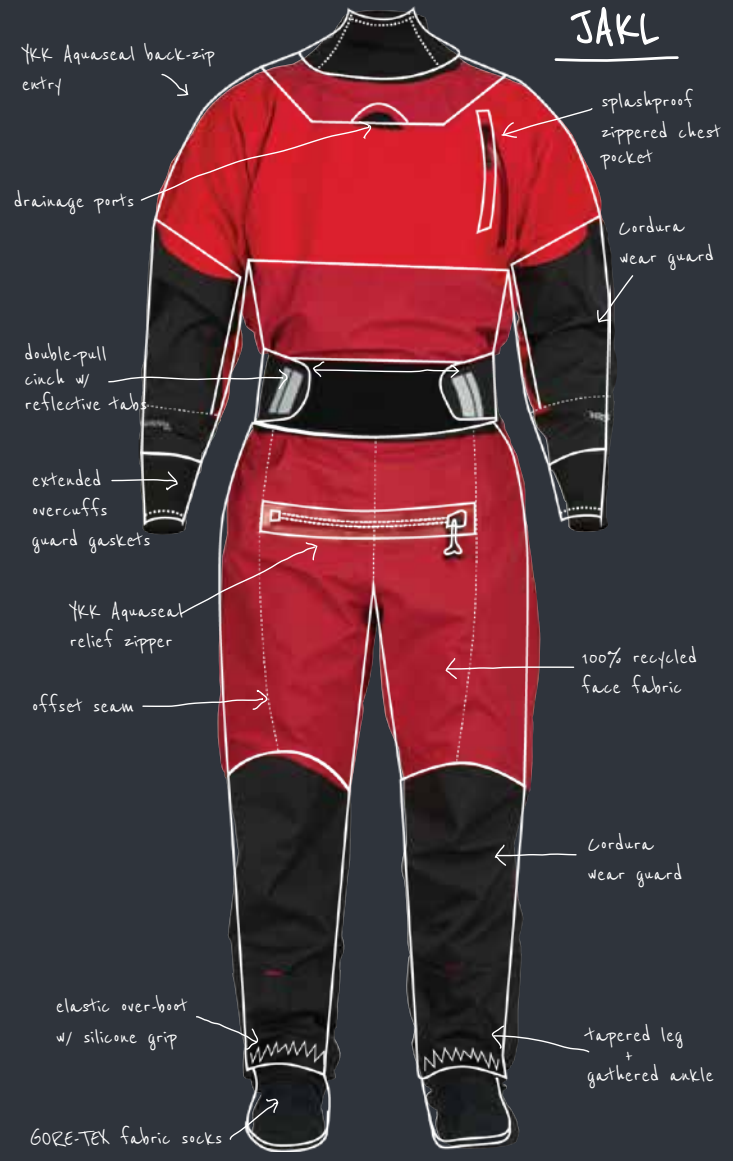
Conclusion

One can argue that when we're paddling together, we are mostly alone anyway. We pick our own lines and suffer the consequences if we lack adequate skills. Sometimes a quick rescue is possible, and sometimes it is not. Some groups don't stay close enough together to effect a rescue, causing people to effectively be soloing without having consciously made that choice. But for all the ways groups sometimes fail to provide good coverage for their members, just having someone around to see where you went increases the odds that you will get timely help.

It's a different scenario when you choose to go alone. Accurate self-assessment, adequate skills, acceptance of the risks, and knowledge of the conditions become crucial.

Most of us will, at some point, have the opportunity or reason to boat alone. It is a personal choice that should be made consciously, not a default decision. We also should be conscious about how we talk about it. As a community let's promote safe choices to newer boaters, and avoid tempting them into dangerous choices. ■

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How Long Can You Paddle? Peter Weingarten Proved

IT'S AS LONG

By Evan Stafford



Photo: Marty Cronin

BOTH INDIVIDUAL RIVERS AND INDIVIDUAL paddlers can be integral elements of a local white-water community. The North Fork of the South Platte River southwest of Denver, Colorado is one such river, and Dr. Peter Weingarten was one such paddler. His longevity, deep historical knowledge of whitewater sport, and pure love for the adventure of kayaking was an inspiration to multiple generations of Colorado boaters.

These places and people all converged for me one autumn day on the time-tested classic Bailey run of the NF South Platte. I was a very green, wide-eyed college kid being led by a few of my paddling mentors, already a decade older than me, when we ran into Dr. Weingarten, at the time three times my age. The reverence they had for him registered with just the looks on their faces and the enthusiasm with which they introduced us. His enthusiasm poured out in return, as he soaked in the joy of having such a perfect fall day on one of his very favorite local runs.

I was immediately impressed that a 60-year-old was still paddling at such a high level and with so much ease and joy. I also quickly connected the dots to my first experience “kayaking,” in high school at a party at my friend Jamie’s pool. Jamie (of the same last name) pulled the boats out of the garage to turn an evening of skinny dipping into K2 coed pool racing. A great party, maybe not with Dr. Weingarten’s direct approval, but in retrospect, I think he would have approved of this use of his boats.

Soon after that fall day, I found out that Jamie’s older brother Jed was an accomplished photographer and that Peter had traveled all over the world

AS YOU WANT.

to paddle and recreate with his friends and sons, and continued to do so. As I followed both of their kayaking missions—Africa, Asia, Australia, South America, Europe—I realized that Peter never slowed down or ran out of passion for travel and serious whitewater.

His son Jed said of Peter, “He had a great fondness for the Himalaya, and he spent time on rivers all across that range, from Pakistan to India to Nepal to Bhutan. He joined me for several missions in China, including first descents of sections of the Dulong



Photo courtesy Weingarten Family

(Irrawaddy) and the Yarlung Tsangpo. He was always game for a mission! He really appreciated the way traveling to run rivers provided a way to experience a place. He truly paddled all over the world—one year, Land Heflin (Tarkio Kayaks) joked (and it may actually have been correct) that dad had paddled in more countries that year than Steve Fisher.”

Keep in mind, this was at a time when Steve Fisher’s job was to travel around the world and film for kayak movies, back when DVDs were the thing, and at a time when Peter was well into his 50s and a full time orthopedic surgeon. And a fine surgeon he was, having trained at both Harvard and Columbia universities; many paddlers in the region sought his council regarding their injuries. Although he preferred not to operate on friends, he was happy to refer them to his partners and to help guide fellow paddlers through the healing and recovery process. Peter took his orthopedic work incredibly seriously but also never lost his zest for life outside his professional world, somehow managing to balance his work with his paddling and family time with an ease that any working parent would envy.

Crash, one of Peter’s best paddling partners had this to say, “I first met Peter, sometime in the mid 60’s, while among a group of other kayakers milling around along a river in Massachusetts (likely during the Westfield River Races)...since we were both living in the Northeast at the time, and while I was also able to

enjoy the four main benefits of teaching (Spring Break, June, July and August), we were therefore able to take whatever time was necessary for us join up on such New Hampshire rivers as the Pemigewasset, Ammonoosuc, Androscoggin, and the Saco. We also traveled to West Virginia to challenge rivers there, such as the Gauley, Tygart, New, Cheat, Youghiogheny and several other creeks and rivers. One technique I learned very early-on when kayaking with Peter, was to always keep his yellow helmet in sight, and to follow it closely, wherever it went, whatever route it took!

Crash further remembers, “When I eventually moved to Colorado, to Head the Vail Mountain School, Peter moved shortly thereafter to the Denver area. We were now both near some excellent Colorado rivers such as the Animas, Arkansas, Crystal, Dolores, and the Upper Colorado. We did eventually also take on the Colorado through the Grand Canyon...a total of three different times. Idaho soon became a favorite destination for Peter and me, along with our other occasional paddling companions such as Art Block, Randy Taplin, Walt Blackadar, Peter Skinner and Doug Wheat. Some of the top Idaho rivers we ran often were Big Creek through the Canyon of the Lower Middle Fork of the Salmon, the Selway, Lochsa, Owyhee, Bruneau, and the Payette. Regarding the logistics necessary for running many of the longer rivers in Idaho, Peter happily relied on me to arrange for food (and sometimes the shuttles as well)...Peter



and I were a team: he was the “River Guide” and I the “Outfitter.” Later on, he was happy for me to do both the travel logistics AND the food planning! Peter was ALWAYS so cheerful, a terrific traveling companion, and so much fun to be with!”

Another long-time paddling partner of Peter’s, Marty Cronin, said, “I literally have him listed as my only life hero. He’s a guy who’s just completely gone over the fence, just kept kayaking in the front row of his life, totally dedicated to it throughout his entire life, all the way through a pretty serious career and kids and family and he just kept it going. He was always concerned about his drag on the group as he got older and it got harder for him, but it was an honor for me to carry his boat when his knee got really bad, just to keep him in the water longer. He barely took paddle strokes, he’d just angle into everything but he never swam, I mean I don’t know if he never ever swam but I never saw him swim.”

Stuart Holbrook remembers, “Kayaking Class V well into his mid 70s, Peter refused to let up. Routinely paddling with much younger paddlers at that point, Pete was always the ‘old guy.’ The one who had seen it all. With it he provided us all a rich and storied past of what it was like back in the day. Everyone who knew Pete has a million stories, God knows I do. He is a book waiting to be written. After years of kayaking with him in some of the most remote places on earth our last time together

would be in Idaho. That last day on the Middle Fork, we paddled alone and side by side after five days to the confluence of the Main Salmon, talked about good days in the past and good days ahead, and looked back at the river together as we often do to offer thanks when about to take out. He then turned to me and said, ‘Stuart, is Redside Rapid coming up soon?’ I looked at him and laughed, “Pete, we ran that like an hour ago; this is the take-out!” He looked at me, rubbed his glasses, and smiled that grin I will always remember, replying, ‘Well, good to know I aced it. Burly.’”

Peter began paddling at a time before there were even boat kits, when you had to build your own wooden frame and fiberglass around it. Later, he got out to California with the early whitewater pioneers like Yvon Chouinard. Near the other end of his whitewater career, he paddled the Kern River’s tributary Brush Creek with a 9-year-old Dane Jackson; to this day, they are still the youngest and oldest paddlers to ever run it. Through it all, Peter maintained a strong conservation ethic and was a proud longtime supporter of American Whitewater. He passed away in 2021, leaving a legacy gift as part of our Enduring Rivers Circle program, and his memory undoubtedly lives on in the stories his friends and family continue to tell. Peter is survived by his wife Jane, two sons, Jed and James, and two grandchildren. ■

Disaster Averted at the Gauley Fest

By Pope Barrow



Photo: Kenneth Garrett

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from Pope Barrow's book, I Should Have Been More Careful. Pope is a legendary figure from an earlier era of American Whitewater's history, and his contributions to the organization have been many and positive. Below he describes a major shift in AW's (then called AWA) focus toward what the organization today calls River Stewardship. The story also repeatedly illustrates the theme expressed in the title of his book.

IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT.

Maybe not all that dark, but it WAS raining cats and dogs. Cars were stuck in the mud all over the place. A small bunch of kayakers in a rented field in southern West Virginia were trying to jump-start a festival for whitewater boaters.

There was a big dam on the Gauley River, run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Below that dam was a rocky gorge with a little water trickling down through it. Nothing special. But when the Corps released water from the dam, all of Summersville Lake began to flow into that gorge. It was one of the best whitewater runs in the entire United States. In the world, really.

The releases from Summersville Lake through the dam were made in the fall of each year to allow the lake to fill up again over the winter and spring, controlling flooding downstream. Rafters and kayakers from all over the eastern US and beyond would show up to take advantage of the fabulous whitewater produced on the Gauley by the scheduled releases.

At that time, a few kayakers, mostly from the east coast, were beginning to worry about the loss of the whitewater rivers they loved. There were multiple problems. Many older, hydroelectric-power dams, mostly in New York and New England, were up for relicensing by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Other dams, like the one on the Gauley, were not yet operating for hydropower but were the target of efforts to install generating turbines, which would end the dam releases needed for whitewater rafting and kayaking. A third category of rivers were not yet dammed but were being eyed with relish by power companies.

Another emerging problem was neighboring landowners and local authorities blocking access to the rivers.

A lot of great whitewater paddling opportunities were on the chopping block. These observant kayakers worried that the magnificent river resources they loved were going to be lost to recreational paddlers.

Some of those kayakers were members of a tiny, obscure organization, the American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA), which published a journal that contained stories of thrilling whitewater runs around the country. The organization had no other mission—especially not big-ticket river-conservation challenges.

A small but intrepid group of AWA members—including Pete Skinner and Chris Koll of New York, and me in Washington, DC—saw an opportunity to transform the AWA into a national organization with the mission of protecting and preserving whitewater in America. We wanted to make life difficult for the power developers and dam builders.

Our initial problems were money and membership. AWA had little of either.

Peter Skinner—a mercurial, persistent spark plug working as an environmental engineer—flew to California to try to raise some cash. After several misfires with environmental philanthropists in San Francisco, he went after Yvon Chouinard, the eccentric founder and owner of Patagonia. Pete tracked down Chouinard out back of his factory and store in Ventura, picking up garbage. Pete, a persuasive fast talker, swiftly filled Chouinard in on the situation. Chouinard replied, “How much do you need?” Caught off guard for the first time in his life, Pete replied, “\$10,000.” A few minutes later he realized he should have said “\$100,000,” because Chouinard immediately said “done” and invited Pete over for dinner.

That first grant got AWA going. With those initial funds, we launched our effort to protect whitewater resources, starting with those in New York. However, we knew we would need to find a continuous infusion of cash to wage a nationwide war with big, rich electric power companies and the Corps of Engineers.

We put our heads together and realized that whitewater enthusiasts had one large national gathering: the hundreds of kayakers and rafters that showed up at the Gauley River in West Virginia every fall. So, we mused, why not have a big festival there, and try to make a little money out of their

We both passed out on the stage, drunk as skunks, lying in rain and mud. When we awoke, the bag, with thousands of dollars in it, was nowhere to be found.

visits, while promoting AWA? The Gauley River Festival, now a famous annual event attended by thousands, grew out of those daydreams.

The Friends of the Gauley River, a small local group, was already holding a small fundraiser at the dam site every year, in an effort to save the Gauley releases. AWA members Steve Taylor, Charlie Walbridge, and I were working with that group. After some deliberating, a deal was struck: the AWA would take over the small fundraising event and promote it as a major national effort to save the nation's rivers—starting with the Gauley and the Black and Moose Rivers in New York.

Thus, AWA cut its teeth on a small festival in a field near the Summersville Dam, held jointly with the Friends of the Gauley.

That first festival was not much of a money maker. For the second festival, a small group of AWA members got to work on finding more space, entertainment, vendors, and volunteers. A band and a wrestling bear were booked to provide entertainment. My friends and AWA compatriots, Risa Shimoda, Jack Hession, and others, served barbecued chicken and corn on the cob for the hungry mob.

The bear never showed up. (It was stolen by a raft outfitter who offered to pay the bear's owner more for a party of his own elsewhere.) And it rained like hell most of the evening. Even with those setbacks, however, the event was a raging success in terms of the good times people had, the kegs consumed, and the thousands of greenbacks collected at the gate, for raffle tickets, and for the dinner.

Overall, the festival was going well. Then, disaster struck. Sometimes, one little incident changes history. In this case, alcohol was involved.

First, the Perception Kayak Company gave me an award for river conservation, and I saw an opportunity to take over the stage with my rant about the "\$*@%^& hydropower dams." I had consumed a vast quantity of alcohol, so I suspect that I raved on incoherently for a while. That could explain why the audience was throwing beer cans at me. Ultimately, I staggered off the stage into the mud.

Then, the two most inebriated AWA leaders—Chris and I—were entrusted with the money. We stuck it in a bag and continued our attempt to drink each other under the table.

Ultimately, we both passed out on the stage, drunk as skunks, lying in rain and mud. When we awoke, the bag, with thousands of dollars in it, was nowhere to be found.

Both of us had legendary hangovers. We sat in the mud in silent misery. We had really screwed up.

As the sun arose, Paul Breuer, an outfitter who was working with AWA on the effort to protect the Gauley flows, drove by the two sad-looking drunkards in his truck. Looking at our miserable expressions, he asked, "What's up guys? Missing something?"

We started to explain our misfortune. Then Paul raised an ammo box up from his truck seat.

Paul had seen us passed out, clutching a bag, and easily figured out what was going on. He lifted the money and stashed it in his safe back at his rafting headquarters until more sober individuals could be found to protect it.

At least that's the way I remember the incident. Paul was the unsung hero, the Deus Ex Machina, of the second AWA Gauley Fest. Those two clowns who passed out clutching the money would prefer to forget the whole incident. Their memories are suspect.

Despite the drunken debacle, the AWA survived and flourished, the Gauley Fest grew beyond anyone's imagination, and, best of all, the Gauley and other whitewater rivers have been protected from the depredation of power companies and other environmental villains. The Gauley River gorge is now a National Recreation Area. The Black and Moose Rivers are hosting thousands of rafters and kayakers every year. ■

Legendary American Whitewater Contributor Pope Barrow's New Book



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the mid-Atlantic

Photo by Kenneth Garrett

What to get for the paddler who has everything?

Photo by Cara Glanville

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Photo by Austin Seback

It's never too early to think about leaving a lasting legacy to the rivers that made a difference in your life.



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For more information about making a bequest to American Whitewater contact Bethany Overfield at 1.866.262.8429 or bethany@americanwhitewater.org

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Community Events

SOUTHEAST

Families Paddle Too

Smoky Mountain Meadows
Campground, Bryson City, NC
May 26 – 29
Host: Carolina Canoe Club/Foothills
Paddling Club

FPT aims to help families develop a network for future paddling trips. The event is open to paddling families of all ages and boaters who want to help foster the next generation of paddlers.

Web: <https://www.carolinacanoclub.org/events/11th-annual-families-paddle-too/>
Contact: Ben Fleming
Email: losflemings@gmail.com

The Russell Fork Trash Bash

Ratliff Hole Campground,
Elkhorn City, KY
June 2 – 4
Host: Bluegrass Wildwater Association

The clean up will be on Saturday, June 3rd starting at 11am. Camping opens Friday afternoon at the Ratliff Hole campground in the Breaks Interstate Park. Free camping, free food and entertainment on Saturday night and a chance for some boating and camping at one of the most iconic sites in the nation.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/events/250935734063698?ref=newsfeed>
Contact: Robert Larkin
Email: xsubdude1999@gmail.com

A.P.E.s 2023 Nolichucky River Clean Up

Blue Ridge Paddling
1001 S. Industrial Dr.
Erwin, TN 37650
June 10th
Host: Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts

Clean up of the Nolichucky river from U.S.A. raft to the Hwy 81 bridge. After party with food and prizes for volunteers.

Website: <http://www.riverapes.org/conservation.html>
Contact: James Bursleson
Email: monstertech74@gmail.com

ROCKIES

CKS Paddlefest

Location:
327 East Main Street
Buena Vista, CO 81211
May 26 – 29
Hosted by: CKS Main Street

Paddlefest is a celebratory festival for professional and recreational outdoor and river enthusiasts. This is a weekend full of on-water competitions, clinics, on-land activities, live music, gear sales and swaps and time spent with good people, family and friends. The proceeds of this event will go towards the River Fund and specifically towards the Pocketwave 2.0 project.

Web: <https://www.facebook.com/ckspaddlefest>
Contact: Cat Tobin
Email: cat@cksmainstreet.com

Animas River Days

Location:
111 S Camino Del Rio
Durango, CO 81303
Dates: June 3-4

Animas River Days is a river festival celebrating the free-flowing Animas River through Durango with whitewater events like BoaterX, Slalom, Downriver Race, and Freestyle. Some proceeds are donated to local nonprofits and also sponsor a few students to participate in the 4Corners Paddle School on sponsorship.

Websites: www.animasriverdays.com,
<https://www.facebook.com/animasriverdays>
Contact: Ashleigh Tucker
Email: animasriverdays@gmail.com

Diversify Whitewater Community River Float – Northern Colorado

Picnic Rock Natural Area
2777 Poudre Canyon Rd #1931
Bellvue, CO 80512
June 10th
Host: Diversify Whitewater

The 4th annual Diversify Whitewater Community River Float – Northern Colorado will take place on the Cache la Poudre River on June 10. We are excited to share the beauty of whitewater rafting with Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and allies during this inclusive, fun, and free event!

Web: www.diversifywhitewater.org;
<https://www.facebook.com/DiversifyWhitewaterOrg>
Contact: Lily Durkee
Email: lily@diversifywhitewater.org

15th Annual Ridgway RiverFest

Location: Rollans Park, Ridgway, CO
June 24th
Host: Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership

The Ridgway RiverFest is a free, family-friendly celebration of the Uncompahgre River, our watershed and river recreation with all-age river races, live music, local food and drink, kids' activities, watershed educational and cultural programs. The highlight of the day is the infamous "Junk of the Unc" race in which boaters maneuver their craft, constructed from scrap materials not intended for river travel, through whitewater rapids and others' junk, trying to keep it all intact until the finish line. RiverFest raises funds for the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, a Ouray County nonprofit watershed group dedicated to helping protect the economic, natural, and scenic values of the Upper Uncompahgre River Watershed.

Websites: <https://ridgwayriverfest.org/>;
<https://www.facebook.com/ridgwayriverfest/>
Contact: Tanya Ishikawa
Email: tanya@uncompahgrewatershed.org

Diversify Whitewater & Rocky Mountain Paddleboard SUP Skills Day – Denver area

Bear Creek Lake Park, Lakewood, CO
June 28th
Host: Diversify Whitewater & Rocky Mountain Paddleboard

The 3rd annual Diversify Whitewater & Rocky Mountain Paddleboard SUP Lesson will take place at Bear Creek Lake Park in Lakewood, Colorado. In past years this event has brought together the Denver community during a fun, free, and fulfilling after work event!

Web: www.diversifywhitewater.org
Contact: Graham Oakley
Email: graham@rockymtnpaddleboard.com

Diversify Whitewater Paddling Skills Day – Southern Colorado

Quail Lake Park, Colorado Springs
August 5th
Host: Diversify Whitewater

The 3rd annual Diversify Whitewater Paddling Skills Day - Southern Colorado will be held in Colorado Springs this year. Participants will learn skills in kayaking and SUP from instructors from Team River Runner and Badfish SUP.

Web: www.diversifywhitewater.org
Contact: Satya Wimbish
Email: hello@satyawimbish.com

NORTHEAST/MID ATLANTIC

Diversify Whitewater & Calleva Paddling Skills Day

Location:
Riley's Lock, Poolesville, MD
June 24th
Host: Diversify Whitewater & Calleva

The 3rd annual Diversify Whitewater & Calleva Paddling Skills Day will take place on the Seneca Breaks section of the

Potomac River. Participants can try whitewater kayaking or stand-up paddling and will learn essential paddling technique from expert instructors.

Web: www.diversifywhitewater.org
Contact: Ashley McEwan
Email: riverschool@calleva.org

Diversify Whitewater Community River Float – Maine

Location: Bangor, ME
Dates: July 8th
Host: Diversify Whitewater & Packraft Maine

Diversify Whitewater's first event in Maine will feature an introduction to whitewater pack rafting on the beautiful Penobscot River in collaboration with Packraft Maine.

Web: www.diversifywhitewater.org
Contact: Alejandro Strong
Email: acstrong@packraftme.com

Diversify Whitewater Paddling Skills Day – Washington, DC

Location:
Valley Mill Camp
15101 Seneca Rd
Darnestown, MD 20874
Date: July 16th
Hosted by: Diversify Whitewater

The 3rd annual Diversify Whitewater Paddling Skills Day - Washington, DC will be held at Valley Mill Camp. Participants will be able to take free lessons in kayaking, canoeing, and SUP.

Web: www.diversifywhitewater.org
Contact: Caroline Queen
Email: caroline@diversifywhitewater.org

CALIFORNIA

2023 Packraft Roundup

Location: Junction City, CA
Dates: June 7 – 11
Host: American Packrafting Association

Join us for what might just be the largest annual gathering of packrafters in the nation. The Roundup is in a new location this year, along the Trinity River in Northern California! Registration is required to

attend. This event serves as one of APA's annual fundraisers.

Website: <https://www.packraft.org/pages/2023-packraft-roundup>
Contact: Sarah Kilbourne
Email: sarah.kilbourne@packraft.org

Diversify Whitewater Community River Float – Northern California

Location: Arcata, CA
Dates: July 15th
Hosted by: Diversify Whitewater

Diversify Whitewater is excited to host the first annual Community River Float in Northern California on the Trinity River in collaboration with the California Watersport Collective.

Web: www.diversifywhitewater.org
Contact: Kayla Lopez
Email: kayla@diversifywhitewater.org

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Diversify Whitewater Paddling Skills Day – Portland area

Location: Sandy River, Gresham, OR
Dates: July 15th
Host: Diversify Whitewater

The 3rd annual Diversify Whitewater Paddling Skills Day in the Portland area will continue to bring together the paddling community to lay the groundwork for beginning BIPOC boaters in the PNW.

Web: www.diversifywhitewater.org
Contact: Adam Edwards
Email: Amichaeleswards@gmail.com

To amplify community events, American Whitewater is highlighting submitted events in each journal. Events will be limited to festivals, races, clean ups, and kayaking/rafting/SUP/river surfing clinics.

For more information, contact Bethany Overfield: info@americanwhitewater.org.

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

By Bethany Overfield

American Whitewater's original purpose since 1954 has included distribution of information among its Affiliate Clubs. 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.

American Whitewater has two levels of Affiliate Clubs - a Supporting Affiliate Club or an Affiliate Club. Affiliate Clubs that choose AW's \$100 annual level are recognized in the AW Journal, on our website club page, and in our annually published Honor Roll. In order to be recognized at this level, a Club needs to maintain an annual \$100 contribution.

Affiliate Clubs that choose AW's \$400 Supporting Affiliate Club annual level are recognized in the AW Journal, on our website club page, and in our annually published Honor Roll as well as being listed as sponsors of an AW stewardship presentation each year. In order to be recognized at this level, a Club needs to maintain an annual \$400 contribution. A Supporting Affiliate Club can revert to the \$100 Affiliate Club annual level at any time.

An Affiliate Club that is already being recognized as an AW Lifetime member is recognized in the annual Honor Roll as a Lifetime member. They do need to contribute either at the \$100 or the \$400 level annually to be recognized as an Affiliate Club in the *AW Journal* and under the Affiliate Club heading of the published Honor Roll. Is your club missing from this list? It might have expired. Contact me at membership@americanwhitewater.org to square your club membership away!

AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATE CLUBS

SUPPORTING AFFILIATE CLUBS

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

Colorado

Dolores River Boating Advocate, Dolores
Colorado Whitewater Association, Denver

Georgia

Georgia Canoeing Association Inc, Winston

Kentucky

Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington
Vikings Canoe Club, Louisville

Massachusetts

Appalachian Mountain Club, Boston

New York

KCCNY, Brooklyn

North Carolina

West Asheville Canoe and Kayak Organization (WACKO), Asheville

Ohio

Keelhaulers, Cleveland

Oregon

Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland

South Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Washington

Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Redmond
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

AFFILIATE CLUBS BY STATE

Alaska

Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

Coosa River Paddling Club, Wetumpka
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

California

Redwood Empire Paddlers, Santa Rosa
River City Whitewater Club, Sacramento
Smith River Alliance, Crescent City
Wildflower Sacramento River Trip, Sacramento
Cold Country Paddlers, Placerville

Colorado

Diversify Whitewater, Fort Collins
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
High Country River Rafters, Wheat Ridge
Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center, Buena Vista
Royal Gorge River Initiative Org, Canon City
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride

Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club, Longmont,
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Assoc., Glenwood Springs

Connecticut

New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association, Meriden

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

Kentucky

Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Freeport

Maryland

Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club, Baltimore
Blue Ridge Voyagers, Rockville

Minnesota

Northland Paddlers Alliance, Duluth
Rapids Riders, Eagan

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico, Albuquerque

New Hampshire

Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Merrimack
New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association, Contoocook

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

New York

Zoar Valley Paddling Club, East Aurora

North Carolina

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee
Mind Body Play, Asheville

Ohio

Friends of the Crooked River, Akron
Columbus Paddling Club, Columbus

Oregon

Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
North West Rafters Association, Roseburg
Oregon Whitewater Association, Portland
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg,
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Jonesborough
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Clean Water Expected in East Tennessee, Sevierville,
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Tennessee Scenic River Association, Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Knoxville

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Inc., Houston

Utah

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg
Canoe Cruisers Association, Middlebury
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke

Washington

Northwest Whitewater Association, Spokane,
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane,
Yakima River Runners, Selah

Washington, DC

Canoe Cruisers Association

West Virginia

Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Bolivar
WV Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

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

Wyoming

American Packrafting Association, Wilson
Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson

National

Team River Runner

CANADA

Ontario

Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers

DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

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 \$25/year Affiliate Club Member option online at www.americanwhitewater.org/join.

A list of Affiliate Clubs can be found on our website under the Community/Clubs tab. If you notice your club missing from our list, please encourage club leaders to renew their club membership or join American Whitewater as a new Affiliate Club.

Your Club's membership and your personal membership enable American Whitewater Staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship across the country. Your membership support helps to meet the many challenges whitewater rivers face. If you have questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please reach out to Bethany Overfield at 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 bimonthly *American Whitewater 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 Bethany Overfield:
membership@americanwhitewater.org
...or sign-up on line: www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.

AMERICAN WHITEWATER PARTNERS

\$20,000 – Class V



\$10,000 – Class III



\$7,500 – Class II



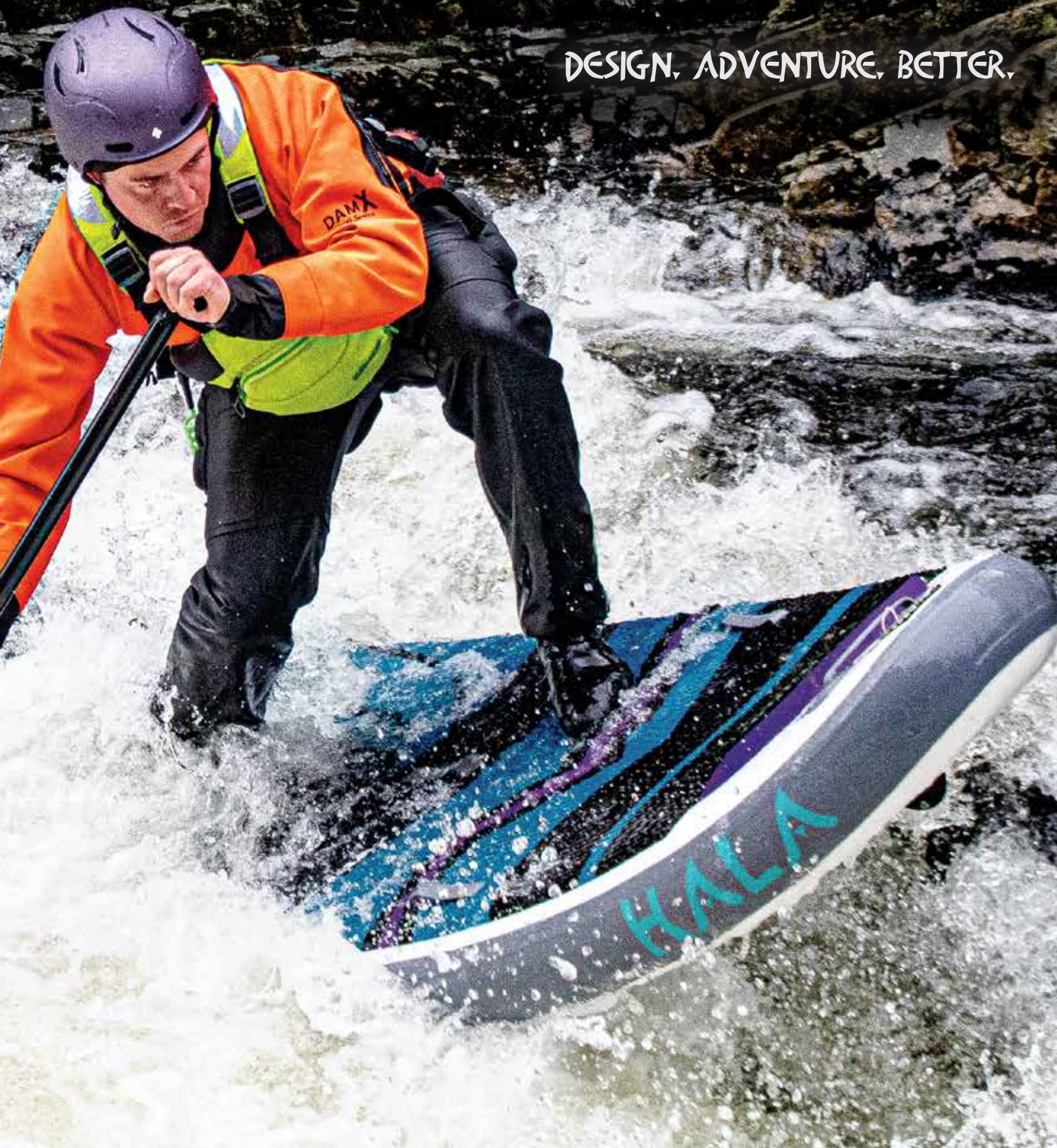
\$5,000 – Boof



\$2,500 – Wave



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