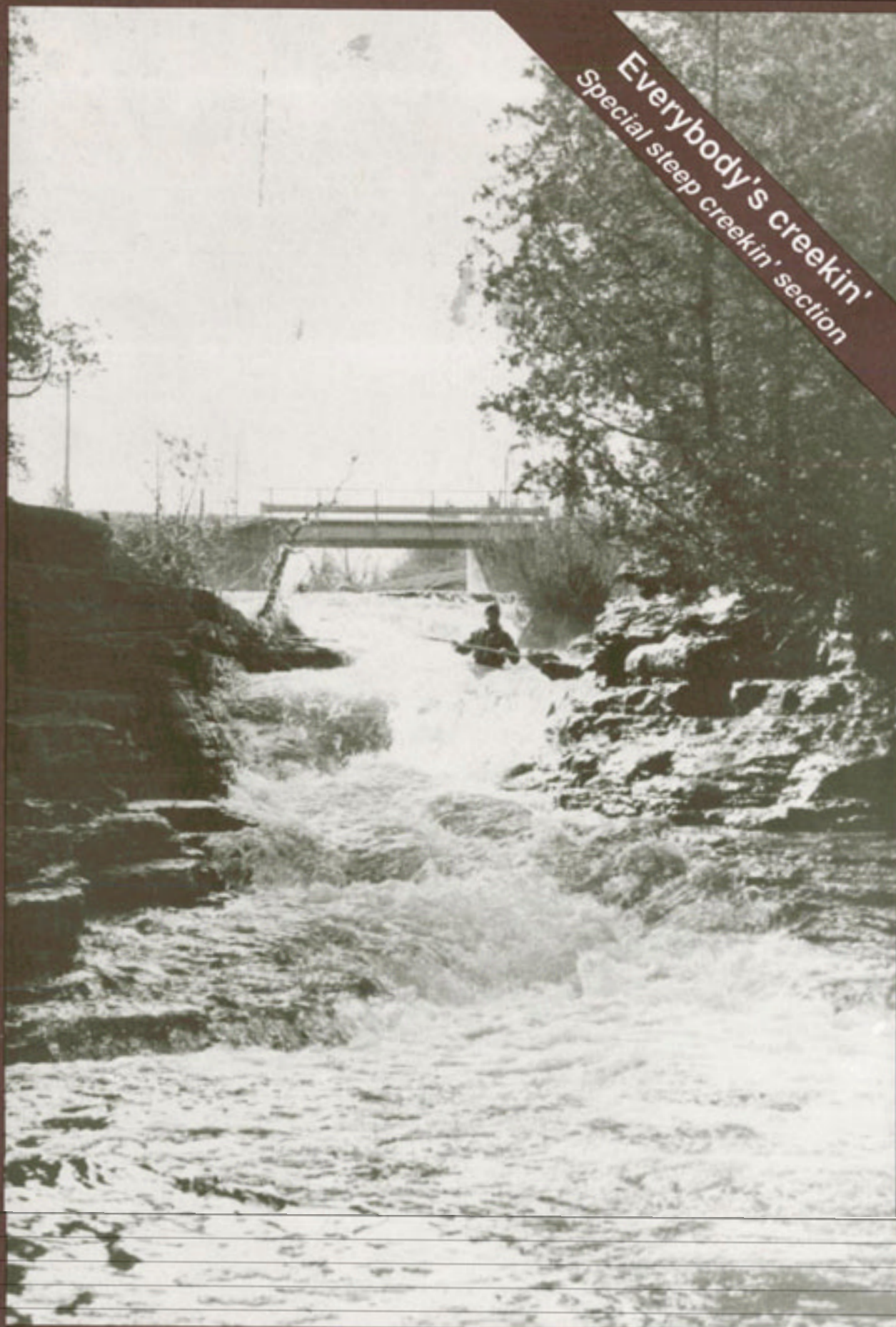


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Eastern Steep Creekin'—a special report

•New York's Mill Creek: what lies out of sight of the road

by Chris Koll

•West Virginia's Glade Creek: a steep gem in the shadow of WV's premier rivers

by David R. Brisell

•North Carolina's Upper Nantahala: the upper reaches seldom flow--thank God!

by Risa Shimoda Callaway

•North Carolina's Slickrock Creek: it's a mile and a half hike to the put-in--and that's the easy part

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front cover: Steep creekin' on New York's Mill Creek

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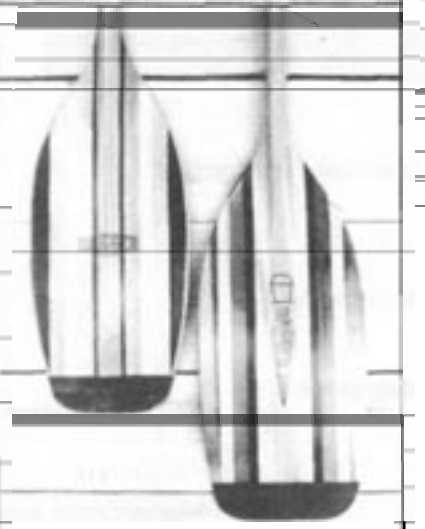
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editor's forum

Don't follow me



While at breakfast during a recent paddling trip in Canada, I was engaged in a lively discussion.

The debate centered around running the 15-foot waterfall on my home stretch of whitewater during the summer. I was taken to task by one of my companions for my habit of running the falls straight down the middle--a route that demands strong familiarity of water levels and a certain ability to "boof" a boil.

"Of course, you know the safe levels," my companion argued, "but you set a bad example for others who don't know the river. People have already been recirculated. Sooner or later, someone's going to get in bad trouble and the falls will be closed to us all."

His solution was to post a sign warning of the danger and recommending a safer route further right. And he went as far as to suggest that in the future, I select the right line. Just to set an example, of course.

Well, hell. I don't like the right route. It's scrappy overthere. So instead, for the record, I'll just officially state to any perspective paddlers I meet on a river: "Don't follow me."

I mean, if you really were aware of my paddling history, you wouldn't want to follow me anyway. My back pages are filled with near catastrophes. I wouldn't want to follow myself.

But for that matter, a paddler shouldn't blindly follow anyone. Take a look for yourself. Don't trust someone else's judgement. Make up your own mind. Choose your own line--and make sure it fits your ability and the level of the river.

We don't want boaters bobbing in the boil at the bottom of the falls. Especially since the only method to extricate them would be with weighted treble hooks--the kind used to snag salmon. But we don't want any signs on my summer river, either. Or any other river, for that matter.

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WHAT IS THE AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION?

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over 1300 whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 50 local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

EDUCATION: Through publication of a bi-monthly journal, the AWA provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique, and equipment.

CONSERVATION: AWA maintains a national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through its "River Watch" system, publishes information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers, and provides technical advice to local groups regarding river management and river conservation. AWA also gives annual awards to individuals to recognize exceptional contributions to river conservation and an annual "hydromania" award to recognize the proposed hydroelectric power project which would be most destructive of whitewater.

EVENTS: AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation. Since 1986, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual Gauley River Festival in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation, other than at international racing events.

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

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES: AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 146 N. Brockway, Palatine Illinois, 60067. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 401(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF: Except for membership services and the Executive Director position, all AWA operations, including publication of the bi-monthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.

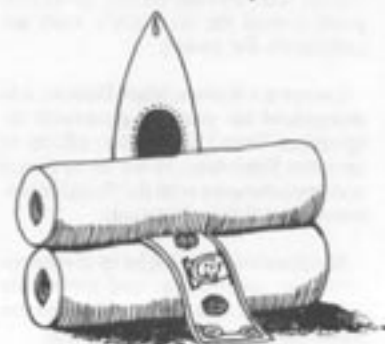
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Give us your nomination for Perception's "1989 River Conservationist of the Year" award, and help make things happen. In it's ninth year, the Perception award is given annually to a group or individual who has made a significant contribution to the preservation of free-flowing rivers. A \$1,000 grant toward the recipient's work accompanies the award.

Last year's winner, Mark Dubois, was recognized for years of grassroots inspiration; from his dramatic efforts to save the Stanislaus, to his more recent accomplishments with the fledgling International Rivers Network.

Nominee's work must be in river conservation specifically, and preferably within the recent past. Nomination forms can be obtained by writing:

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letters to awa

Benscreek kudos

Dear Chris,

A few of us paddlers from Philly attended the Stony Creek Whitewater Weekend (April 1-2) and were delighted with the results. The Benscreek Canoe Club, who sponsored the event, did a marvelous job organizing a race, a rodeo, and a spaghetti dinner for all. Although the B.C.C. was unable to obtain a release from the Quemahoning Reservoir, there was sufficient water for the weekend (3'5" Saturday, 3' Sunday).

Snow all day Saturday and 30 degree temperatures did little to dissuade our paddling. The Stony was up, and the play spots were great! Sunday was a bit warmer, and that was much appreciated.

I would like to express thanks from our group, to the Benscreek Canoe Club for their efforts and hospitality. We hope that at some future date release from the reservoir can be obtained.

Sincerely,
Bill Pearlstein
Philadelphia Canoe Club

Surprise! Candid cover

Dear Chris,

I was extremely pleased with the March/April issue of American Whitewater, my first issue after having joined the affiliation in February. So many factors contributed to my pleasure of reading the magazine, whether I was content with the abundance of information, concern for safety, interesting tips or subtle humor. Or perhaps I was primarily pleased from the realization that the paddlersurfing the Kahuna in Coliseum on the Ottawa River bore a hardly mistakable resemblance to my

18 year old brother, Robb. Whatever I was truly happy with, please keep up the professional work.

A new avid reader,
Scott Gaffney
Canton, NY

One note: It may be one minor detail that justifiably goes unnoticed in producing the magazine, but I feel that a mention of the front and back cover photos on the contents page is always an interesting piece of information. I realize that in most issues the caption is present, but it is slightly aggravating when one is really curious as to the location of the photo but cannot find out. I'm sure many people would be pleased with that minor adjustment.

(editor's note: Okay, okay...so I forgot the cover credits again. The fact is, I took the picture and being sort of a geekster photographer, I didn't want to accept the blame. But I promise to try to acknowledge the cover shots in the future.

Go West, AWA

Dear Editor,

I am appalled at the lack of geographical balance found in the editorial content of your magazine. Let me assure you--there is whitewater west of the Mississippi.

While I note the general improvement in the quality of American Whitewater, you would better serve the paddling public by including increased reports from the western boating community.

Name not included

(editor's note: No kidding. I'm painfully aware of the lack articles about western whitewater. But what the heck can I do--make stuff up? The fact is, I don't receive any suitable submissions from

letters

the west. By suitable, see the writer's guidelines included on this page. But short of quitting my real job and relocating to California and writing articles myself, I don't know what to do. Come to think of it--that's not a bad idea--there's some great water out there.

But just for the record, here's another request--no make that another plea: aren't there any literate Westerners who have access to photos who wouldn't mind sharing some of their great runs with us effete Easterners?)

Bag the affiliation

Dear Chris,

I'm with Mike Polzin who wrote to you in the May/June issue: bag the "Affiliation" from the American Whitewater Affiliation.

"Affiliation" is such a wimpy word. Who needs it, anyway?

Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
an anonymous paddler

(editor's note: most responses have indicated a preference for a shortened name. Are there any traditionalists out there?)

Writers Guidelines

American Whitewater welcomes submissions from its readers. Proposed articles should relate in some way to whitewater...river conservation...expeditionary boating...safety...interviews with river personalities...paddling techniques. Our readers are most interested in new rivers, not previously described in well-known guidebooks. Most of our read-

ers are intermediate to advanced boaters, they do not need instruction on how to brace or roll, but they are interested in innovative designs and styles. We try to be receptive to any and all ideas.

The readers of American Whitewater are interested in whitewater...unlike some boating magazines we do not publish articles regarding flatwater canoeing or sea kayaking.

Submissions should be double spaced and neat. Correct spelling and grammar are appreciated.

Photos should be included when appropriate. Black and white prints or color slides are accepted. Photos with pronounced color contrasts reproduce best.

Stories must be edited as necessary to fit the format of American Whitewater. Remember that even the work of professional writers is usually heavily edited before publication. The editor of a major outdoor publication recently revealed that he rarely deals with amateur writers, not because their work is inferior, but because they are unwilling to accept appropriate editing. Expect to see some changes in your story.

Story length should rarely exceed 3000 words...twelve typed pages..double spaced. The best stories have a distinct focus or slant. This aspect of the story should make it unique and should catch the readers' interest. The focus should be introduced in a clear way at the beginning of the article.

It is often better not to use chronological order in telling the story of a river exploration. Our readers rarely care about what kind of vehicle was driven to the put-in or which interstates were traversed. Avoid extraneous details and cliches. Open the story with an exciting anecdote that will catch the readers' interest, then fill in the details later.

Humorous stories and articles with a different point of view receive special consideration.

The editors and writers of American Whitewater do not receive financial compensation. Every effort will be made to return submitted materials but we can not guarantee their safety.



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Ocoee Rodeo slated for August

The 1989 Ocoee Rodeo, sponsored by Watauga Laminates and the American Whitewater Affiliation, will be held August 5-6 on the popular waters of the Ocoee River.

The featured event of the Rodeo will be the National Squirting Championship along with the traditional hole-play competitions for decked and open boats.

While major western whitewater rodeos have recently included squirting contests at their events, the Ocoee competition—held in the squirting stronghold of the east's Appalachians—promises to offer the best demonstration of squirting in the world.

Prizes donated from major whitewater manufacturers and retailers will be offered to winners of various events.

A cookout and raffle will be hosted by Wildwater, Ltd., at their Ocoee Outpost. All proceeds from the rodeo will support AWA efforts to preserve America's whitewater.

For more information, contact Brent Cochran, Watauga Laminates, Rt. 4, Box 74, Banner Elk, NC 28604, (704)963-4093; or Risa Shimoda Callaway, PO Box 375, Denver, NC, (704)483-5049.

Reflex dividend

Wilderness Systems, a North Carolina based custom boat manufacturer, has hooked up with a program offered by Perception, the world's largest plastic whitewater boat producer—and the AWA is the recipient of \$500 as the result of the combination.

Perception offered custom fiberglass kayak manufacturers the opportunity to produce a total of 10 boats from its new Reflex mold at no charge. The only stipulation was that the custom boat maker would donate \$50 a boat—a total of \$500—to a worthy river conservation group. Wilderness Systems designated the AWA as its beneficiary.



Vinta's MI 370 offers low volume in plastic

Keelhaulers Slalom

The 24th Annual Keelhaulers Slalom Race will be held September 9, 1989 on Pennsylvania's Lower Youghiogony River. The race will also serve as the 1989 ACA Ohio-Pennsylvania divisional championships.

The course will be set at the class II-III Dartmouth Rapids on the Yough's Loop section and is accessible by foot from the main area of Ohiopyle State Park.

Expert, intermediate and novice classes will be contested as well as divisions for junior and senior racers. Separate classes for kayakers of all kinds and open and decked canoes will also be established.

For more information write or call: Ron Montgomery, 6550 Glenallen, Solon, OH 44139; (216)248-6084

New: bow volume in plastic

By Tom McAndrew

Vinta's MI 370

Your marketing professor assigns you the task of breaking into the U.S. kayaking market. After conducting surveys you conclude that a high performance design coupled with a competitive price would guarantee a market foothold. Your professor agrees and you get an "A" for the project.

Apparently the folks at Vinta USA read your paper. Recently they began importing the MI 370 kayak from Great Britain. This plastic kayak features a slalom design and a price lower

Perception's Reflex

Suppose you wanted to create the ultimate recreational kayak. The design would feature speed and maneuverability, and perform well in play situations. To minimize maintenance it would be made of plastic. When you were done the boat would probably look like Perception's new Reflex.

Former world champion Richard Fox designed the reflex for competition. The only change Perception made to the design was to shorten the boat to 11'9 1/2". Though it feels and paddles

please turn to page 9

please turn to page 10

than any other whitewater boat in the U.S.

The 370 is 12 feet long and weighs only 29 pounds. Optional end caps, which screw on, are available to make the boat a regulation slalom 13'2". The cockpit is quite large with the seat molded into place. Your feet rest on a minicell platform, though plastic adjustable footbraces can be purchased. Unlike any other kayak, the MI370 is available in either a linear-linked or cross-linked polyethylene.

During a period of a month, a team of kayakers reviewed the 370. These experienced paddlers ranged in height from 5'2" to 6'1". Their weights ranged from 128 lbs. to 175 lbs. This review is a compilation of their opinions.

The 370 is a high performance boat. It tracks like it's on a rail line, yet performs pivot turns. It is highly maneuverable and will catch any eddy it encounters. It attains (climbs upstream) very well and also is great for boofing rocks and drops.

Surfing is an absolute pleasure in the 370. The boat slices onto most waves quite crisply. The stern deck is very low so you can really lay back on it when necessary.

The heavier paddlers were able to stern and bow squirt the boat. Its extra low volume deck created "on demand" pop-ups; just stick the nose in a pour-over and the stern will rise. However, the low volume caused the boat to dive during ender attempts.

The speed you can attain in the 370 is shocking. Some felt it was the fastest plastic boat they had ever paddled. If you want to be the first to reach each rapid (or the take-out), this may be the boat for you.

While the boat's performance was lauded, everyone had some gripes about the outfitting.

The seat is molded into place, and resembles a hanging fiberglass seat. This may be an enhanced safety feature, but it limits the boat's adaptability to various sized paddlers. Shorter paddlers wanted the seat moved up; taller paddlers wanted it moved back. This feature also restricts your ability to adjust the weight bias of the boat.

The boat came equipped with

an optional thigh brace. This feature should not be selected, as the boat was more comfortable when the brace was removed. The cockpit region can be made more comfortable, but it takes a lot of outfitting to accomplish this.

A short screw connects the seat to the front minicell beam. After a month of use it began to pull out of the foam. Since the front and rear beams are held in place by similar screws through the deck of the boat, concern was raised as to their stability. The manufacturer should switch to a more robust method of wall support and/or some blocks should be glued around the foam beams.

Despite a large cockpit, spray-skirts do not pop off the 370. The coaming is quite wide, a feature that other large-cockpitted boats would be wise to adopt.

Although the boat tracks well, once you lose your line or start carving on a wave, it takes a large degree of muscling to correct the boat. This may be caused by the high railed "wings" located behind the seat whose only purpose seems to be to meet slalom width specifications.

Vinta USA has spent the past half year setting up a dealer network. They have had particular success in the East, and hope to expand their dealerships in the West. To find the closest dealer to you, contact the distributor at (717)374-2618.

Vinta USA is also importing three other boats from the MI line. In addition, they are now selling MI's paddles and sprayskirts, and plan to expand into MI paddling accessories.

The 370 is a kayak that offers features not found in any other plastic kayak. Beginners could learn to paddle in the boat, but it will be most appreciated by experienced paddlers who are looking for a high-performance boat that does not need to be constantly patched. Paddlers over 200 lbs., or with wide hips, or with really short legs probably will not be happy with this boat. However, if it fits you, you will get quite a bit of performance at a great price.

(Contributing to this review were Mark Berry and Bill Huber)

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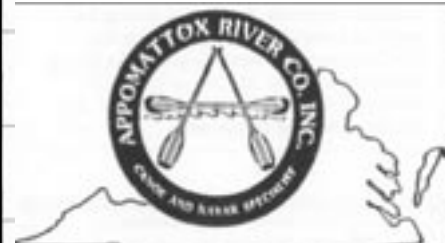
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lighter, the boat weighs 34 pounds.

This review reflects the collective opinions of a former U.S. slalom team member, a squirt boater, and several Dancer aficionados. They vary in weight from 125 lbs. to 175 lbs. Heights ranged from 5'2" to 6'1".

Two unique design features affect the Reflex's performance. They cockpit it further forward than the norm, and the pivot point of the boat is in front of the seat. The result is a boat with a

short bow, a long stern, and great maneuverability.

The long stern is responsible for the boat's swiftness. The speed and acceleration of the boat are beyond belief. Reviewers who had previously tried the MI 370 switched their "fastest plastic boat" designation to the Reflex.

The Reflex has a relatively flat deck. However, it has enough volume, 59 gallons, that it does not dive during enders. The boat's edginess enables

one to perform a wide variety of vertical acrobatics while doing enders.

The boats knives onto waves and then surfs up a storm. Several people thought this was the best surfing boat they had ever paddled. It is such a great play boat that it may be the boat of choice for rodeo contestants.

In holes, the Reflex performs surprisingly well. Despite its sharp rails there is a wide zone of stability before the water catches the boat's downstream edge. The low volume stern enables you to squirt out of deep holes.

The cockpit is quite comfortable. It features a newly designed seat that is a pleasure to sit on. The thigh bracing is excellent. The footbraces are also new and feature the easiest latch system on the market. The stern beam extends into the cockpit and is cut vertically at the rear of the seat, providing lower back support.

The Reflex tracks like it can't be turned and then nimbly responds to a sweep stroke. It can crisply catch

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eddies three ways: by conventionally paddling in, by turning on an upstream edge and **cutting** in, or by planting the boat with an off-side lean. The boat's maneuverability is its best performance feature, and can be attributed to the placement of the cockpit.

This boat does so many things well that only a few minor problems were cited.

The flat, low-volume deck and the relatively forward cockpit mean there is not much room for feet. If you wear a men's size 7 shoe or larger you'll have to remove a portion of the center beam to enable your feet to lie flat on the footpegs. In addition, the seat does not move as far back as other Perception seats, so paddlers over 6'3" are probably too tall for the boat.

The rim of the cockpit is positioned much higher than the stern deck. When entering and exiting one frequently has to sit on the coaming, causing it to flex. Only time will tell how long the plastic will withstand this abuse.

The low volume of the stern eliminates the ability to carry a spare paddle. In fact, it is tough to fit more than a few items, like lunch, throw bag, sponge, waterbottle, first aid kit, etc., in accessible positions.

Those not used to an edge boat found the Reflex rather tippy and difficult to roll. However, after a few days of paddling, everyone adjusted their technique, and felt quite stable.

The Reflex is a quantum leap

forward for plastic kayaks. Only serious squirters, nervous beginners, or very tall people will **be** unhappy with the boat. Interest in this boat is quite high. At every put-in, eddy, take-out and roadside stop, paddlers would stop us to inquire about the Reflex. With this much curiosity, it seems likely that Perception has come up with a popular and profitable design. (*Contributing to review was Mark Berry, Dave Curran, Bill Huber and Elizabeth McAndrew*)



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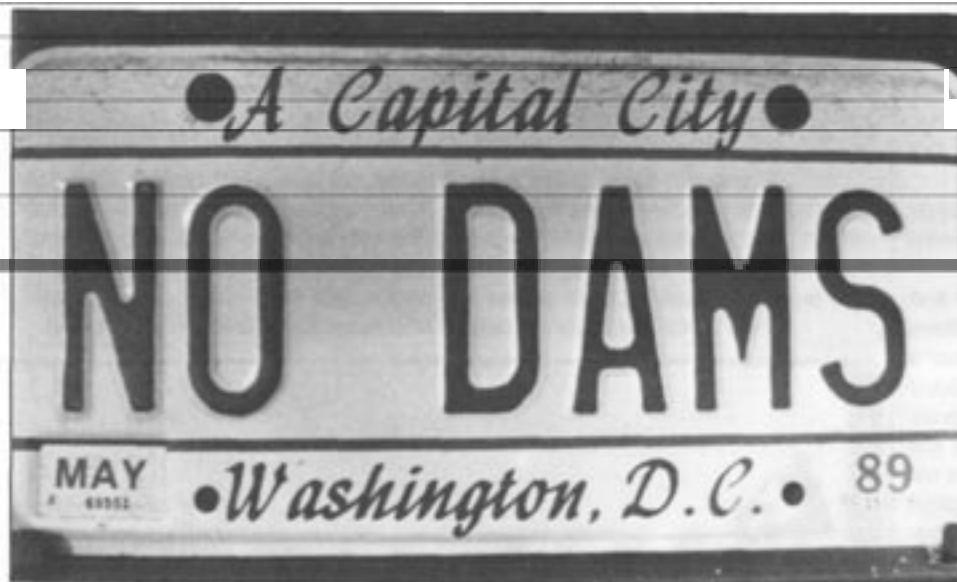
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AWA director Mac Thornton's license plate reflects an appropriate view point for a river conservationist

Wild and Scenic: an inappropriate stragedy for protecting whitewater

by Pope Barrow

The national wild and scenic rivers system is running out of gas. It is a victim of expectations that it cannot meet. In an ironic twist of the knife, the enthusiastic focus of many well-meaning river conservationists on wild and scenic rivers may actually be doing more harm than good.

This is a serious indictment, but the time has come to say it... the emperor has no clothes.

Most of our best -and some of our most endangered- rivers will never obtain that magic green card allowing entry to the wild and scenic promised land, that heaven of milk and honey where no hydropower developer ever

dare tread. These rivers may be condemned to alien status as forever unprotected. Under current laws, the failure of a river to achieve wild and scenic status is essentially a license to plunder--to mine, timber, and build hydroelectric projects.

The wild and scenic system creates a stark world of black and white, a world in which a few fortunate rivers are granted enormous status, prestige, protection and management (some may say over-management). These few rivers lead privileged lives-- like lords and ladies in great castles. Meanwhile other more popular and more beautiful rivers are treated like homeless derelicts, cast outside the castle walls and preyed on every avaricious

river abuser in the area.

A Cruel Hoax for Whitewater

For readers of this magazine, the cruelest hoax of all is the whitewater hoax. This is the dream that wild and scenic protection may someday come to your favorite whitewater river. Well ...if you live east of the Mississippi it will never happen. Wild and scenic just doesn't work well for whitewater and it barely works at all for eastern rivers. For advocates of eastern whitewater this is a double whammy.

Wild and Scenic Doesn't Work for Whitewater

Why doesn't the wild and scenic rivers system work well for whitewater? One reason is

that wild and scenic designation usually means Federal river management and Federal river management has little appeal to State governments, commercial whitewater businesses, or even to many **noncommercial** whitewater river users. The permits and regulations and intensive **park**-type management which comes with the wild and scenic system can be a problem for whitewater users.

River users are tired of wars over commercial and noncommercial quotas on Federally managed rivers, and some resent the unsympathetic attitude towards whitewater adopted by a few Federal river managers, such as Park Superintendent John Byrne at Great Falls in Virginia. State governments

are not always happy to have the Federal government move in on recreational resources which the State tends to view as its own fiefdom. This helps to explain why rivers like the Pensobscot or Kennebec in Maine, the Savage and Youghiogheny in Maryland, and the Cheat in West Virginia are not currently candidates for addition to the wild and scenic system.

Wild and Scenic Doesn't Work In the East

Why doesn't the wild and scenic rivers system work well for eastern rivers? The problem here is not actually an eastern problem; it's a private land problem. But since most of the public lands are in the west, and most good

whitewater rivers in the east are on private lands, the problem is more pronounced in the east. It is a well-kept secret that almost all existing wild and scenic rivers have been carved out of national forests or other land areas previously owned by the Federal government. This is how 26 rivers were added in Alaska and 39 in Oregon; most of them were already Federally owned; adding them to the wild and scenic system merely changed the management rules. In some cases designation as wild and scenic meant only drawing a line on a map.

Nationwide, few rivers which flow through private lands have been added to the wild and scenic system. Wild and

scenic whitewater rivers are also few and far between. In the east the combination of whitewater and private lands has been the kiss of death. In the 21 years since the inception of the wild and scenic rivers system only 3 eastern whitewater river segments have been included in the system: the Chatooga, the Obed-Emory, and the Bluestone. All 3 were already within national forests or other Federally owned areas.

Although attempts were made to include the Gauley and Meadow in 1987 and 1988, fear of the wild and scenic backlash caused supporters of the legislation to establish a recreation area instead. No eastern white-

water river flowing through private lands has been included in the wild and scenic rivers system in 21 years! This is not much to boast of after all the money and effort whitewater advocates have put into the wild and scenic fight.

Even if 3 more eastern whitewater rivers were added to the system in the next 20 years, the best whitewater in the eastern United States would still be exposed to river abuse for another generation to come.

This is a serious threat.

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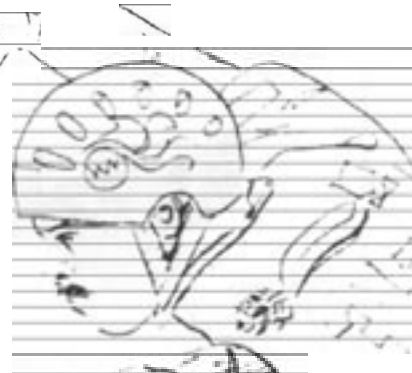


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projects on rivers throughout the United States. Many of these were built on rivers with important recreational values.

Whitewater resources are increasingly scarce. Only 1% of the nation's total remaining free-flowing river mileage contains whitewater. On the other hand, 15% of that total mileage has already been dammed, mostly by Federal projects. It is not unlikely that significant whitewater recreation resources in the United States will continue to be threatened.

What's the bottom line? If your interest is whitewater rivers in the eastern part of the nation, the wild and scenic rivers system is unlikely to be of

any help to you.

Conservation Groups Continue to Focus on Wild and Scenic

All this negativity may come as a surprise to some readers. National and local river conservation groups are pushing full steam ahead with proposals to add oodles of new rivers to the wild and scenic system. Plans are being laid to add hundreds more, including another big Statewide rivers bill, this time for Washington State. The key organization pushing for wild and scenic rivers, American Rivers, has recently grown more powerful and effective as a lobbying organization and has been flexing impressive

new muscle in its river conservation efforts. Last year American Rivers cut a historic deal with the forest service to study thousands of river miles for potential addition to the system. Enthusiasm and motivation within the organization is high.

The same is true of other ambitious river conservation organizations, particularly those in regions with lots of Federal lands. In the April issue of Northwest River News, the Northwest Rivers Council argued for taking the wild and scenic approach, even going so far as to say that "the best means to have local control of rivers is to get them designated as State or national Wild and Scenic rivers".

True, the Federal system has been expanding. From the first 8 rivers in 1968 the system has grown to 108 rivers, an average of 5 new rivers a year. Every several years, in a kind of spasm of legislative effort, a bundle of rivers is added to the system. Just last year 43 rivers were added, 39 in one big gulp in a single State (Oregon).

So amidst all these hopeful signs and all this ambition on the part of river conservation groups, how can anyone say that the wild and scenic rivers system is not doing the job that needs to be done?

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lies in defects in the basic idea behind the system. It was flawed from the beginning. The wild and scenic rivers system was originally designed to provide special management for rivers on Federal lands and to strengthen the authority of the land managing agencies to prevent other Federal agencies from building or licensing hydroelectric projects on those rivers. As afterthought, the legislation was expanded to cover the situation where rivers flowed through private lands. But how to handle private-land rivers was not well thought out.

In the intervening years since the founding of the Federal wild and scenic system, it has

proved immensely difficult to include private-land rivers in the system. The addition of almost each one has been an all-out battle. Some conservation groups have not even tried, recognizing that the effort was clearly hopeless. For example, even after defeating the Big A project at the Maine's Penobscot River, the powerful Penobscot Coalition made no push to obtain permanent wild and scenic protection for the river. Why not? Because with all the private lands involved and with no national park or Forest within 100 miles, it was hopeless to try for Federal wild and scenic designation.

It is quite clear that, like a nuclear weapon, the wild and

scenic law cannot be used to fight all river conservation battles. For some politicians, wild and scenic can be a fright-inducing concept. In a recent meeting in with a powerful State Senator, river conservationists noticed the Senator turn pale and nearly lose control of his bowels when the words "wild and scenic" were mentioned. Obviously, this law carries a lot of negative baggage.

Landowners are concerned about their property rights. Localities are concerned about their tax base. States are wary of Federal interference. And the park service is not enthusiastic about managing numerous miniature new parks, essentially small ribbons of water, far

removed from any other Federal lands. Even the name "wild and scenic" can scares people; to some it suggests rigid wilderness-type restrictions, with no trapping, no hunting and no motorized access.

A New System is Needed

River protection advocates need new tools for saving rivers. Between the privileged elite in the wild and scenic system and the impoverished vulnerability of all other rivers, we need a middle class river category. The middle class river may be a bit tacky, without the glamorous finery of wild and scenic status. But under a less privileged system, many more rivers could lead the good life with



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conservation

more shelter from river abuse than is now available to them.

A new river protection system should be different from the wild and scenic system in 2 ways: (1) it should have less aggressive management and less absolute protection and (2) it should offer easier entry.

Less Aggressive Protection

The protection afforded rivers under a new system should be much more "down-home" than the Federal wild and scenic system. It should have no Federal land acquisition, no Federal management of private river use, and no Federal control of private property. River

management should be in local hands without a flat ban on development, even hydropower development. Federal involvement should be confined to providing money and establishing a Federal river conservation advocate to take issue at the Federal level with other Federal agencies, such as the Corps of Engineers, which promote river abuse.

Easier Entry

The system should not require an act of Congress to gain entry to the promised land. With less absolute protection from river abuse, it should be possible to add rivers to the system without going to Congress for every single one.

The Future?

Is this the future of river conservation? Possibly. The only thing **which** can be said now for sure is that the wild and scenic system is not

doing the job that needs to be done. Until something different is developed, most of American's best **white-water** rivers will continue to live under the gun.

OSM threatens Obed

The Federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) has proposed a regulation that could open up the Obed Wild and Scenic River and the Big South Fork Recreation Area to strip mining.

In passing the 1977 Federal Surface Mining Law, Congress prohibited mining within the boundaries of Wild and Scenic rivers, national

parks, national recreation areas and national forests, as well as land within 100 feet of a public road and cemeteries, or 300 feet of an occupied dwelling, public building, school, or public park. These protections, however, were subject to "valid existing rights" to mine in those areas. OSM up to now has interpreted that term to mean that an owner of

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mineral rights must have made a good faith attempt to have obtained all permits before the August 3, 1977 cut-off date. In effect, that means none of the protected areas can be mined today.

However, OSM now wants to redefine "valid existing rights" in such a way to allow persons who owned mineral rights before the federal law was enacted to contract now to have their minerals stripped—even if the surface is located in areas that are otherwise protected.

More than 150 people attended a public hearing February 16 in Knoxville, TN on the proposal. Senator Jim Sasser, through an aide, urged

OSM to withdraw the proposal. "Regardless of OSM's intentions, apparently of clarifying valid existing rights, this proposal represents a clear threat to our park lands and is a poor comment on the stewardship of OSM... You can be sure I will fight this proposed ruling to the end," Sasser's aide said.

This proposal could affect over 728,230 acres in Tennessee alone.

Dingell helps AWA acquire hydro info

The spirited debate between AWA and American Rivers with FERC over whether the

public should be consulted during the pre-relicensing period has gotten hotter. Letters to FERC from Escheverria of American Rivers and the National Hydropower Association became heated over the question of public access to information state agencies have had for years prior to utility submission of the licenses in 1991.

Hydro project owners have argued that other competitors would have an easier job of taking over their facilities if the public was allowed site related information in advance. Sadly, without this information, the public will be unable to play a real role in determining what rivers will look like after relicensing.

Suddenly, Congressman Dingell got wind of the debate and wrote a series of letters to FERC demanding fair treatment of the public. In the January 31 st. letter he demanded to learn why the AWA representative and NY Audubon Society President [Ron Dodson] was asked to leave a FERC/Niagara Mohawk relicensing meeting back in November of 1988. He went on to complain that: "I am also troubled about the allegations in the Audubon letter regarding consultations and the rather secretive aspects of that process. I request your response in 30 days after the receipt of this letter."



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Nine whitewater fatalities reported

Tragedies mar spring season

The 1989 whitewater season has started inauspiciously. With the Eastern high water period almost at an end there have been four deaths within the paddling community. There is also word of a commercial rafting fatality in California and reports of two private

rafting deaths. Almost without exception these events involved serious errors in judgement by experienced whitewater paddlers.

On the warm, sunny weekend of March 25 a group of four expert paddlers put in for a run on the North Fork of the Blackwater in West Virginia. After several hours of portaging unrunnable drops the group then climbed back up a steep slope hundreds of feet to the railroad tracks and hiked to the put-in of the Lower Blackwater, a half-mile further downstream,

lowering boats back into the canyon. They arrived at 3:30 p.m. with the river running about 8 inches. The victim, Charlie Deaton, 59, had recovered from colon surgery and chose not to eat lunch because he was afraid it would upset his stomach. Despite what must have been an exhausting day, he chose to begin an 11-mile run down an isolated class IV-V canyon.

Once on the river it was clear that he was having a bad day. He missed key eddies above two class V drops, swimming in one and pinning in the other. Finally he flipped in the approach to a rapid above the Giant Slide, hitting his head in a hole. The lightweight Ace helmet he was wearing provided limited protection, and probably contributed to the seriousness of his injury. Coming out of his boat, he made a

strong attempt at self-rescue before getting washed down the slide. The group reacted quickly, but lost sight of him momentarily as he was carried downstream. They finally spotted the victim some distance below and gave chase, but they would not reach him in time. When they finally caught up to him he was caught underwater between two rocks. There was evidence of massive head injuries, and CPR was ineffective.

On Saturday, April 1 a commercial outfitter ignored the advice of his fellow professionals and put in on the California Salmon at Bloomer's Falls. The river was running at four feet above a level normally considered high, and other outfitters were pulling off the water. Two out of three paddle rafts capsized immediately, putting 10 people into the river. One person was not recovered, and washed some distance downstream. The outfitter, a man with 10 year's experience on the river, chased the victim down the river and attempted a swimming rescue at a downstream access point but was forced to let go to avoid being swept into a huge rapid downstream. The victim did not survive the experience.

On April 22 there was a fatality at Coliseum Rapids on the Cheat River. A group of paddlers from the Columbus AYH, consisting of a four-man raft and several knowledgeable boaters, put in at Albright with the gauge reading about 3 feet, a moderate level. They did not scout Coliseum Rapid or set safety below. The raft blundered into the top hole (Recyclatron) and capsized. The victim, Michael Lowendick, was a 27 year old man with a history of asthma. He was recirculated a number of times, then washed downstream through a half-mile of ledges and boulders to the base of Pete Morgan's Rapid before several kayakers from another group made the re-



By Charlie Walbridge
AWA Safety Chairman

covery and began CPR. Despite good care and a helicopter evacuation called in by the outfitters, the victim did not survive.

The weekend of **April 30** saw a number of fatalities in New England involving high water, improper equipment and inexperience. A man was drowned on the Pemigewasset River near **Campton**, New Hampshire when he and his small raft washed over 20-foot Livermore Falls. Another man was **killed** in a canoe accident in Vermont. Neither person was wearing a life jacket or had the necessary training to realize what they were getting into. Information on these incidents is sketchy, and more facts are needed by your safety chair.

There was another death "up north" that did not fit this pattern. **Mimi Lebeau**, 19, a freshman at **Dartmouth College**, was **killed** on a class I-II section of Vermont's West River below Salmon Hole Bridge. A flatwater racer with limited river experience, she was

paddling with a novice group from **Ledyard Canoe Club** which included several strong paddlers. The Ball Mountain Dam was holding water back, keeping the level at 1600 cfs, which is very reasonable. The group approached a curving rapid with a large uprooted tree on the inside which posed a known hazard. On the outside of the turn there was a recent strainer. The experienced paddlers motioned the group towards the inside of the turn, and many of the novices responded by moving too far over. Several hit the tree; Mimi came out of her boat and was pinned under three feet of water. Flow was cut back at the dam, allowing recovery an hour later. She was pronounced dead after resuscitation efforts failed.

Lastly, in one of the most senseless and preventable accidents which this author has heard about in some time, KCCNY paddler Ken Kashuahara was **killed** at a low-head dam on the **Pequanock River** near **Pompton Plains**, New Jersey. This trashy, **concrete-chan-**

neled, dam-studded stream is run after work by local boaters who catch the small eddies and reaction waves which form along its course. The river was running at near-flood stage on May 17. Two members of the group eddied out above a low-head dam. Ken was waved over to portage but elected to go over the dam. He finished the drop upright, but was drawn backwards into the froth where his brace failed and he was forced to eject. He was pummeled into unconsciousness by the hydraulic before his body was recovered. There was a faint heartbeat, but he never regained consciousness and died the next day.

It's easy to point out the errors in judgment which lead to these fatalities. But none of us are really immune. How many of you racers and squirt boaters are using ultralight helmets and life vests in tough, technical water? How many of you have continued a run even though poor physical condition was keeping you from boating well? And who hasn't put in on a river that was too

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high for safety, run a rapid blind which should be scouted, or attempted a low-head dam despite well-publicized warnings? Stupid mistakes are not limited to untrained or ignorant paddlers. My own club has experienced two near-misses involving dams among members experienced enough to know better. I'd suspect that everyone, including your author, has made mistakes similar to those described above.

Safety depends, first and foremost, on your judgment. There are no cops on the water to arrest you for taking foolish risks nor should there be. We play **by-nature's** rules, and the relentless power of the river which can either help you or hurt you depending on the circumstances. You ignore the guidelines listed in the Safety Code at your peril. You alone must make the **decision** to participate based on your equipment, physical condition, and **skill**. While your paddling buddies or trip leaders can make helpful recommendations, you must be responsible

for your actions. And this means **being** willing to back down when necessary.

We must also never forget that there is a random element of uncontrolled risk at work here, too. **Mimi Lebeau** was doing everything **right**; she was properly equipped and trained, running a river within her **skill** supported by experienced paddlers. She was prepared to survive a swim. Certainly anyone who has worked with beginners knows that they tend to overreact to instructions as to where to run. By placing an experienced paddler on top of the strainer the route would have been more clear, but putting "a cop on every rock" is seldom practical and those "signpost" paddlers cannot participate in **recovering** swimmers and their gear downstream. All of us have run drops "a bit too far to the right", mixed it up with a strainer or undercut, and come out **fine**. There are no **guarantees** even for the trained and **prudent**. At times both on the highway and on the river a person can simply be in

the wrong place at the wrong time.

As the season progresses, remember that the Privacy Act severely limits access to records of **drownings**. Send your reports, clippings, and other **information** to:

Charlie **Walbridge**, Safety Chair
American Canoe **Assn.**
Box **1900**
Newington, VA **22122**

I am especially in need of someone to ferret out information in the Intermountain and Pacific Northwest regions. Any volunteers?

(Since the filing of Charlie's report, two more whitewater deaths have occurred in the East. Both fatalities involved rafters on commercially outfitted trips. On Maryland's Upper Yough, a male victim was pinned in the undercut rock on the left side of Lost and Found Rapid. The second victim, a female, reportedly died of hypothermia after an extended swim on a lower section of Quebec's Montmorency River.)



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Dislocations require immobilization

By Stanley B. Burbank

I read somewhere that dislocations of the shoulder are one of the most common whitewater injuries.

While I have never seen one on the river, I've seen enough on the slopes to know dislocations are one of the worst injuries to deal with.

A dislocation is what happens when the bone ends are forced to move beyond their normal range of motion at the joint. The pain is severe and the chances of circulation or nerve impairment makes this type of injury dangerous and difficult to treat.

Some individuals have numerous shoulder dislocations. Each dislocation stretches the joint capsule further making it easier to dislocate again. One fellow in our paddling group has had to have both shoulders operated on to tighten up the over-stretched joints.

One of my skiing companions used to dislocate his shoulder every time he went skiing. He became so used to this situation he could align it himself. Usually, however, alignment should not be considered unless in a wilder-

ness situation where proper medical care is not available.

Emergency care consists of splinting the injury in place or against the chest if possible with a sling and
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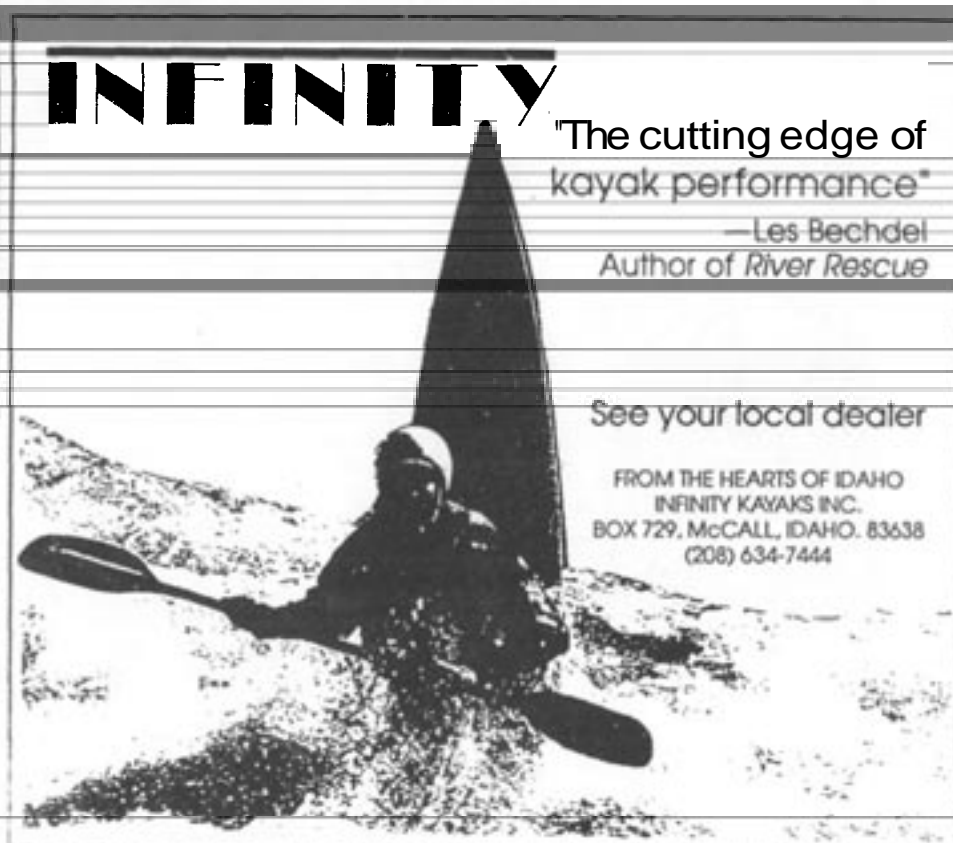
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Boating is going downhill *fast!*

below: Tennessee's Chickamauga Creek



Steep creek fever

by Chris Koll
Editor

I've crossed Mill Creek dozens of times, driving up New York's Route 12 from the Moose River to the Black River Gorge.

Upstream of the bridge, the creek appears to pour from a cleft in the face of a rocky wall. More than once, I've nearly veered off the road trying to peer up the narrow chasm, my eyes drawn by a glimpse of white foam in the recesses of the defile.

After crossing the creek, Route 12 abruptly commences a two-mile climb up the Tug Hill Plateau, rising 400 feet above the river valley. There is no sign of Mill Creek until the land flattens on top of the plateau and suddenly there it is again--now no more than a lazy stream, winding through the cow pastures.

I often wondered just what the hell happened on that creek where it was hidden from the road.

The scene is repeated with hundreds of paddlers in locations scattered across the country. While traveling to a recognized whitewater run, poring over topographical maps or running shuttle on an obscure mountain road, boaters seem to stumble over previously neglected tributaries that just might be runnable.

In growing numbers, paddlers are yielding to their curiosity, unstrapping boats from the roof racks, and alternately sliding, scraping, squeezing and shooting down tiny streams that heretofore have not been touched by the bottom of a boat.

The activity has its roots in the



***Don't look
in your
guidebook
for these
backyard
gems***

heart of the Appalachians--notably West Virginia--where it was dubbed "steep creekin'". But now practically every state where water runs downhill possesses a population of "creekers" who harbor a secret list of neighborhood creek runs.

Which is not surprising. By nature, creekin' is limited to the local boating population. Typically, steep creeks are tiny affairs with limited watersheds. A summer thunderstorm can bring them to runnable levels in a matter of hours only for the flow to diminish just as quickly. Local boaters own a distinct advantage in catching a steep creek with adequate water.

In addition, most steep creeks

New York's Mill Creek

are pretty well hidden. Dropping out of isolated hollows and often accessible only by back roads or jeep trails **known** to natives, many steep creeks remain "undiscovered" by the general boating population.

So, what is the big attraction in running these tiny streams? Well, they're not called "steep creeks" for nothing. To qualify as the genuine item, the gradient of a steep creek usually checks in at 100 feet per mile...or 200...or more.

The result are tortuous, **boul-**der-strewn channels where the narrow stream leaps over abrupt ledges and plunges down rocky slides. Even a tiny stream can hold your attention when a horizon line beckons around every bend.

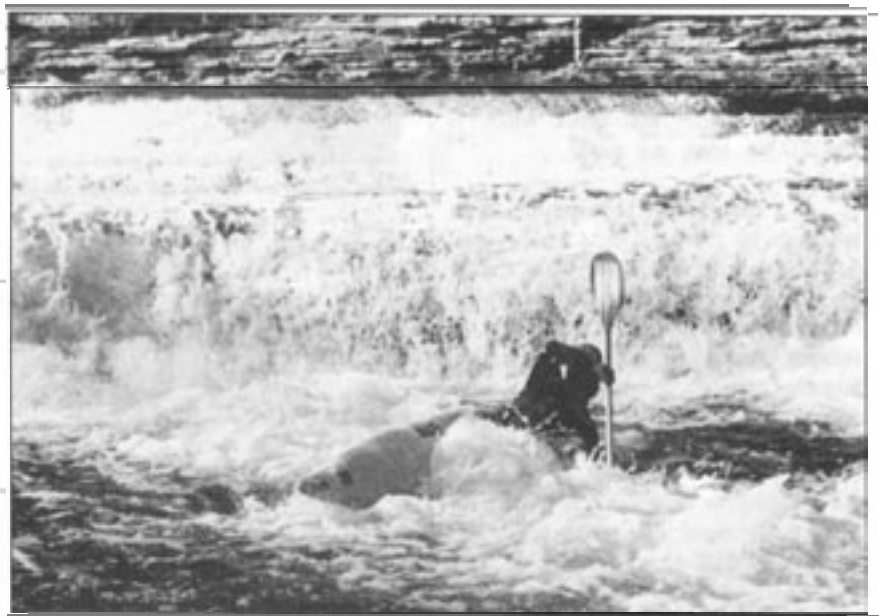
In addition, while financing an expedition to explore unrun rivers in other continents remains out of reach for the average paddler, the presence of a steep creek allows a boater the opportunity to log a first descent or at least experience the sensation of going where few have gone before--without leaving his own backyard.

But perhaps the most compelling aspect of a steep creek is its intimacy. While the number of paddlers swell on popular rivers, small groups of boaters can share a sense of isolation on these overlooked creeks. Often funnelling through gorges with walls a paddle's length apart, or cloaked with willow or rhododendron thickets, a steep creek tends to close in around a paddler, separating him from the outside world.

I finally ran Mill Creek. As often is the case with steep creeks, I was with a **small** group of paddlers who finished an early run on the Black after a hard night's rain, and with plenty of daylight remaining, the 30 mile jaunt over to **Lowville** seemed eminently feasible.

We put-in in the middle of a cow pasture, ducking under an electric fence and dragging our boats to a placid stream **10-feet** wide at best. Despite the recent rain, the water ran cold and clear.

Downstream, the placid creek



pooled up against a huge boulder. A crack the width of a boat length was the only outlet. Below, we could see the creek tumble away in a dance of white foam. I was about to find out what was hidden out of sight of the road.

For the next two hours, we rocketed down slide after slide before exiting the creek below Lowville. The streambed of Mill Creek is a solid slab of limestone and the creek races along at a feverish pitch. Every couple hundred yards, the creek cascades down 45 degree slides--one racing unabated for 60 yards--and the boater half-floats, half-scrapes at break-neck speeds with only a semblance of control.

The creek eases for half a mile as it enters the village but hidden away in the center of town, the creek makes its final jump off the Tug Hill in the form of a sheer 15-foot waterfall. Cars and pedestrians passed across a bridge overhead without even a thought of glancing down into the 50-foot deep gorge. After all, nothing could be happening down there...

And nothing did. We ran the drop uneventfully, boofing over the left side and through the boil below.

We had to paddle a quarter of a mile down the creek before finding a spot to climb out of the miniature gorge and onto a residential side street. Villagers gaped open-mouthed as if we were some kind of aliens, emerging from the creek, dragging our boats behind us.

But that's the attraction of creekin'. Even when the run ends in the middle of a town--creekers are in a world of their own.



Glade Creek

A classic steep creek in WV's big-water region

By David R. Brbell

The mountains of southern West Virginia keep their secrets well. So do the local paddlers. It is hard to fault them for this attitude as many of their finest rivers like the New and Gauley have become neoprene-choked tourist attractions for most of the paddling season.

In the summer of 1988, however, state politicians dedicated, amidst considerable election-year hoopla, the last remaining link of Interstate 64 between Virginia and I-77--the Glade Creek Bridge. Nearly as high as the nearby New River Gorge Bridge, this span suddenly called attention to what had been a treasure trove of a few Beckley and Charleston area paddlers. Inevitably, out-of-state boaters on their way to the New and Gauley began slowing down, swerving out of the drive lane, and peering over the cement guard rails of the new bridge in an effort to see what kind of river had cut this immense

rugged canyon which so spectacularly appears in the plateau country east of Beckley.

Glade Creek meanders placidly for much of its length, draining isolated farms, several lakes, and even a posh resort before pooling behind Beckley's water supply dam. After this insult it sulks amid the laurel and hemlock for a few miles before finally venting its frustration by knifing through the timeless sandstone of the Fayette Plateau on a relentless plunge to the New River.

Less than ten miles long, yet nearly as deep as the gorge of the New, this defile contains almost continuous top quality class IV+ technical white-water. It averages nearly 120 feet of drop per mile and in on short section drops at more than twice that rate. Yet it is entirely runnable with the exception of one short portage around a scenic double waterfall.

Glade is, however, a very dif-

Mill Creek photo credits: Tim Kelley and Pete Skinner float, scrape and slide down Mill Creek's inclined drops. All photos by C. Koll

West Virginia's Glade Creek



In the section of Glade Creek above interstate 64, Doug Ackerman crashes down through Whiplash Falls.

difficult creek to catch at a reasonable level. The difference between not enough and too much water is very slight indeed. If there is enough flow to prevent its tortuous boulder gardens from exacting an unreasonable toll on your equipment, it is probably pushy enough that most of your party will be testing their reflexes and paddling skills, or **hiking** out. Even local boaters consider themselves lucky to enjoy one or two trips on Glade in a paddling season.

I was fortunate enough to find myself part of a typically memorable descent of Glade Creek one balmy early summer day several years ago. Several days of steady rain had the local creeks flowing nearly **bankful** yet fairly clear and debris-free.

Our group, all paddlers from Charleston, West Virginia area, included Greg Anderson, Steve **Erskine**, Kim Casto and Greg Ackerman. We put in below the **Beckley** water-supply reservoir. The

creek is almost insignificant at this point and slow moving. In fact, the first mile or two is flat and overhung in places with dense vegetation. On this particular trip the air was filled with the heavy perfume from masses of blooming wild azaleas. We paddled single file, moving brush as necessary to make progress.

A few years before, this same group had run this section of Glade Creek for the first time. Greg, who had topo map "scouted" the **run**, promised us that **this** section of Glade had roughly the same total overall drop as the lower run which begins at the mouth of Pinch Creek, in roughly the same distance. As the flatwater continued we waved to an occasional trout fisherman, enjoyed the lush **beauty** of the laurel and hemlock cluttered banks, and tried not to **think** about the gradient deficit we were developing. We hoped the bottom would drop out of the creek before the gradi-

ent figures reached unrunnable proportions. We knew only that immediately above the put-in for the lower section there was an unrunnable double waterfall. We had not seen the creek above that point. How many more might there be?

The tiny stream soon began **picking** up dropping between brush-choked islands and gradually **picking** up gradient. We negotiated the **first** real rapid, a sharp s-turn descent against a car-sized boulder, without incident. The next major drop, another s-turn emptying onto a boulder pile with two possible routes of descent, proved more troublesome. Several of us chose the more open right chute over the rocks. It was steeper and required a tighter turn but seemed **clearer** once you were in the drop. One of us tried the left chute and promptly pinned vertically on an unseen underwater boulder. Kim made a quick throw-rope-assisted swimmiig

West Virginia's Glade Creek

rescue and averted disaster.

Immediately below this rapid, which we dubbed Kings Island Falls because it reminded Greg of an amusement park ride he'd once taken, lies a high ledge and more boulder drops. In fact, once the rapids start they don't stop until you reach the New River five or more hours later.

One particularly steep and high velocity rapid contained a submerged slab rock at the bottom which moved the center foam wall of my boat forward six inches and left me with whiplash and sore Achilles tendons. Surprisingly, the nose of my boat escaped permanent deformity.

The next major drop below that slide/waterfall is a bona fide waterfall (12+ feet) with a very nasty hole. We dubbed this Copperhead Falls. On an earlier trip a less fortunate member of our party had gotten stuck in this hole after running the falls. He was surfing very defensively while another member of our party rushed to get in to throw-rope range. As three of us watched from a rock directly above the hydraulic a copperhead lazily slithered from beneath a rhododendron to a point directly in front of us. A quick whisk of a paddle lofted the snake off the rock and almost around the neck of our buddy in the hole. Someone commented that he had enough problems without being showered with venomous reptiles. On this run we ran the falls unevenly.

After the scheduled portage of the double waterfall we stopped for lunch at the mouth of Pinch Creek, almost directly under the site of the interstate 64 bridge. Counting stones on an ancient bridge pier here provides the only gauge in existence on Glade. This point is roughly half way into the trip and is the start of the Glade Creek run described in the Wildwater West Virginia southern streams volume. This lower section was first run in the seventies by local paddlers Emie Kincaid,

Leo Bode and Brian Bills from Richwood, Fayetteville and Dunbar respectively.

On this particular trip Glade was littered with construction debris beneath the bridge, including sharp newly dynamited rock and shattered trees. High water has since redistributed this debris so river runners should watch for strainers on this as any small

shorter and fatter next time.

Near the end of the run the river spreads out over a hallow sloping rock bed bounded by a stone wall on the left, where a railroad once followed the river, and terminating in an eight or ten foot falls. A small hole almost at the brink of the main drop grabbed my bow and turned me sideways. With no time to get pointed the right direction



Fifty yards below Kings Island Rapid, Glade Creek plunges over a steep ledge.

steep stream.

From 1-64 to the New River the creek opens up slightly. It begins with wide shallow ledges but soon progresses to steep boulder gardens. This is perhaps the most enjoyable section of the river. The rule is constant, almost rhythmic, maneuvering. The gradient is so evenly distributed that it is often easy to forget how rapidly you are dropping until you stop in an eddy and look behind you, uphill.

No trip on Glade, and this was no exception, is uneventful. At this gradient, in a rock strewn riverbed, even a momentary lapse of concentration can be critical. We had several minor vertical pins. One of our members, paddling a low volume slalom boat, vowed to bring something a little

before dropping over the ledge I opted for contingency plan B: I ran it backwards. Other members of the party chose more orthodox approaches. This falls drops evenly over a wide ledge into probably the largest pool of the creek--a deep, clear, but invariably darkly shaded swimming hole. Below here there is still a mile of good continuous whitewater with at least one more high ledge. Our slalom boater once again provided entertainment by pinning vertically in that drop. Kim called our attention to his predicament by noting "I think he is in trouble". The boat then flipped so that he was hanging upside down under his boat with one end on the ledge and the other wedged against a shallow rock in the pool below. Kim remarked that "he's okay now" since

he obviously once again had access to air, the water parting neatly around the hull of his boat. His stern soon washed free of the ledge and he was able to roll up much to our collective relief.

At one point in this last mile, we looked up at the red shale cliffs to see a goat standing on a ledge 150 feet above us and looking down at us. Falling wildlife is not generally a hazard of this run.

Paddling out on the New from Glade is an experience in perspectives. Suddenly there are no rocks but the waves look like ocean swells. There is flatwater, great expanses of it, though it is moving at a fair rate of speed.

We paddled to the mouth of Piney Creek at the official Park Service access ramp where we had set shuttle. It is always a good idea to leave a car at the mouth of the Piney. That way, if Glade doesn't have enough water at the put-in, you can backtrack and run Piney Creek instead.

Glade is certainly one of the most enjoyable steep creeks in West Virginia. It is a rare treat for those willing to invest the time and equipment in running it. It should be stressed, however, that it **runs** in a very deep, rugged canyon. Early and late in the season the sunlight seems to reach creek level for only a few precious hours. For the unprepared it can be a cold, dark misery. Nevertheless, I can sincerely recommend it for well-prepared technical boaters.

Respect it, enjoy it, and please be courteous to the trout fishermen. Glade Creek is one of southern West Virginia's finest trout fisheries, and they were there first.

Nantahala's Upper Cascades

Not where the NOC holds roll sessions



Forest Callaway at the entrance to the second drop of the Cascades. Notice the "microsplat" rock lurking in the middle.

After a wonderfully wet spring in the Southeast, boaters have been reacquainted with many favorite but **long**-since-run creeks...the **Tellico**, the Little Rivers, both in Tennessee and Alabama. North Chickamauga Creek, etc. We have also managed regular runs on those which simply have never before seen much action! One such **doozie** is the "Cascades" section of the Upper Nantahala River.

Yes, the Nantahala River: the Nanny. Land of the Noonday Sun and more Class III boating than anywhere else in the world.

Well, drive just a few miles up the road adjacent to the turnoff from highway 19/74 to the regular put-in, and you'll be astounded to see a mile-long section which drops roughly 200 feet and looks like it would be "pretty wild with some water in it."

It is.

In April and early May, an unusual combination of snow and rain created a constant flow on this section. and the locals...Bob **McDonough**, Kathy Bolyn, Ken Kastorff, Denise Handrich, and Tom Visnius were found running it a couple of times in the evening, or up to six times in a day. Is it really worth it?...You bet. Why?...Three reasons.

First, it is likely that your water level on a given day will be different than the last time you saw it. The difficulties on the run range from low water pins, boat scraping and having little maneuvering room, to the high water sensation of flying out from the end of a gunbarrel with no eddies to catch, and several horizon lines at the top of ten-to-twelve foot drops, some accompanied by deep, fairly unforgiving holes.

So. There is experiential variety to be had, perhaps all in one day, should storms bring the level up while you are there (not an uncommon **occurrence**).

Secondly, because there are so many opportunities for, shall we say, "misalignment," it takes several trips before feeling like you've got the moves wired. There are basically three drops, of very different character. The first, an irregularly broken shelf one-quarter mile from the put-in (on Road 308 just upstream of the White Oak Creek Falls bridge), looks **unrunnable**. However, there's an easy "boof" between two rocks in the center into a river right eddy: the hard part is being lined up **correctly** after two tight ledges (i.e., holes) just above.

The second rapid is a few hundred feet downstream. It's a long series of should-to-must-catch eddies laced with at least one sticky hole, terminating in "Microsplat." a rock below a creek-wide ledge on river right. Boof LEFT. Just below, there's a hole which is best run far right.

The last drop involves one move over a ledge, to the left of a central rock. At low water, just get some speed up and head over and down, down,

down. **Jetis**, **Corsicas**, and **AQ's** have been known to disappear for seconds here. At high water, the same move will put you down, but you may not come out with your boat; the deep hole becomes a **violently aerated** deep hole. Run it safely far left, over the shelf. A couple of Class III boulder piles, a few hundred yards, and voila...ready to go again....?

Finally, the Cascades run right beside the road. It has taken as little as six minutes (feel free to establish a more leisurely pace) to paddle, put-in to take-out. You can literally WALK back up for another **run**; it's so easy to make "just one more," ...that, depending on how humble you feel, you usually do!

One word of **warning**, since the **run** is so accessible and prone to accumulating large spectator crowds: if you screw up, stories of your misadventure will be common knowledge at the NOC by the time you've barely had enough time to dry off and run shuttle. Get ready for the grief.

At least one humbled boater now attaches a lot more to the concept of "running the Nanny." Next time you're down that way, you **MUST** drive by and take a look!

--by **Risa Callaway**

Slickrock is worth the hike

By **Dudley Bass**

Wanna hammer down a creek few have ever paddled? Flush through crooked, boulder strewn chutes and delicately pick your route down class 5 Wildcat Falls as you drop off the edge of the world into forever? Then throw away your guidebooks and come south prepared to hike in with your boat. You won't forget this big open secret as you rattle with the River Gods to turn it loose. This little bugger roars.

April 4, 1989. We were deep in the lush virgin forests of Joyce **Kilmer-Slickrock** Wilderness putting onto a stream we knew very little about. None of us had hiked it, and we only knew a handful of other NOC boaters who had paddled it. Rain had been falling steadily and we were looking for something different. Steep **creekin'** in Appalachia is a Southeastern tradition, and part of the **fun** is seeking out and paddling remote and seldom run descents.

Slickrock Creek cascades out from the heart of Joyce Kilmer to form the border between North Carolina and Tennessee. It's rarely been **runnable** due to the droughts of recent years, and few boaters make the effort to hike in. Slickrock has long been the domain of backpackers and fly fishermen.

From Big Fat Gap we hiked a mile and a half down to the put-in. There were six of us from the area with a visitor from England. Along with me were George **Snelling**, Tom **DuCuir**, Paul Mason, Nick Williams, Nancy Doherty, and the Englishman. Graham Wardle. I was a wee bit nervous, because running steep technical creeks was a whole new **ballgame** to me. I'd tasted enough to know I wanted to paddle more of the same. Besides, it was Graham's **first** descent in America and was his birthday to boot. He wasn't the only one in for a surprise!



Bob McDonough in the third drop. A sticky hydraulic lurks below.

North Carolina's Slickrock Creek

Luckily, the hike was downhill most of the way. There was not a graceful porter among us. We grunted and sweated along the humid, muddy trail, dragging our boats without shame. Kayaks caromed off the trail and whipped around trees and the bow of my Dancer once stabbed me in the calf. We had a variety of plastic boats, and visions of Sherpas nimbly carrying kayaks **crucifixion-style** uphill mocked us.

Thunder rumbled across the **Unicoi** Mountains as black clouds surged over us. Nick realized he'd forgotten his helmet and raced back to the van. We snickered, because we knew how much he loved to hike. It began to rain again, and we decided to split into two groups. Tom, Paul, Graham and I put on **first**, and then I realized I was even dumber than Nick—I'd forgotten my camera! Left it at home like a fool.

Immediately we were eddy hopping and caroming over rocks and ducking logs. The **run** itself was 6.5 miles long followed by a mile and a half of flat Lake Cheoh. Although the gradient averaged 105 feet per mile, during the first two miles we were dropping at almost 200 feet per mile. It was a steep **creeker's** delight, miles and miles of continuous class 3 rapids with several hard 4s. Add one class 5!

Rain poured and streaks of lightning snapped through the trees.

We hammered down steep, jumbled chutes and dropped into blind, corkscrewing s-bends, banging off rocks, dodging branches and zipping into eddy after eddy after eddy. We scouted by boat and we scouted from shore. As the storm intensified we crept and darted among huge boulders and squeezed beneath fallen trees lodged across the creek. As we passed more **tributaries** the creek got bigger and meaner. Graham grinned ear to ear while I petted the butterflies in my belly. Tom and Paul in their Noah boats were **ballet-like** as they flew over drops **duffecking** into tiny eddies between rocks and logs. I bumbled along half blind with **fogged-up** glasses. Yeah, they were all experts, but as far as I was concerned I was hairboatin'. Even though I drank a lot of water. I never had to piss once. I sweated it all out in my **drysuit**.

Tom and Paul ran everything. Once Paul got lodged beneath an undercut, but he was able to reach up over the lip of the rock and muscle his way out. Never flipped. There were many waterfalls and nozzle rapids, and Graham portaged a few of them to set up safety for us. My boat even ran a rapid without me, a 4+ called the Nozzle. A series of broken ledges dropped steeply over boulders where the currents swirled against undercuts to flush through an offset gap barely wide enough for a

kayak. I was peering rather intensely at it when my kayak slipped from the rocks and raced upright all the way upright through the Nozzle to plop into an eddy at my feet. Aha, a message from the River **Gods!** I didn't have to **run** that rapid.

Wildcat Falls was the most dramatic rapids. A series of four waterfalls close together dropping 45 feet. The last two form a double drop totalling 25 feet with a turbulent **pool** halfway down only a boat length to the next edge. To make it more challenging, the last two drops were offset. It was a deceptive run, for if one paddled the correct route it was easy. If one screwed up, however, the consequences of error were serious. Tom thought the technical moves required made Wildcat more challenging than El **Horrendo** of the Russell Fork.

One paddled the **first** drop right to left, **boofing** off a weird V-shaped curler on the way down about 10 feet into a nice pool. Then one ran the second drop, a particularly gnarly 12 **footer** with rocks scattered across the bottom, by paddling left to right, **boofing** off a large boulder halfway down into a short but good pool. So far OK. **Then** came the third drop, the **crux** of Wildcat Falls. Screw up here and it's a long, wet goodbye. Even if you flipped and rolled up, you would be blown out of line onto barely submerged rocks far below. One had to bump over a short drop, surf a diagonal wave onto a launching pad that jutted out from the center of the falls, then plant a hard left stern draw to throw your boat toward the right. You land in a turbulent pool more hole than pool with the main current shoving you toward the right onto the rocks below. So one must immediately pivot back toward the left and run the last, highest and narrowest drop from right to left. A large pool waited below, comforting because the rest of **Slickrock** is continuous. Tom and Paul had great **runs**, even portaging back to **run** the double drop again. Graham portaged the **crux** falls but ran the rest. Me? I ran all four drops just **f i e**, surprising myself amid the drumming of my heart. Except I backended into the hydraulic of the bottom drop and got sucked down out of sight. Deep. Real deep.



After the "tough stuff" on the Nantahala's Cascades, boaters ride out the easy class 4's at the end.

Popped out and rolled up grinning.

We continued on downstream. I wondered how Nancy, Nick and Gwrge were faring. It was getting late and the water was starting to rise. There were more endless boulder gardens and undercut chutes and trees to duck or ride over. The dense spring vegetation closed in over us from beautiful stone walls and mossy banks. We startled one lone camper, a gray-bearded dude standing in the rain who didn't quite know what to make of a bunch of paddleheads ramming down out of the wilderness on such a wicked little creek. The four of us sprung over the massive Lower Falls without any trouble and kept going. I even took a swim. Yep. Missed a must-catch eddy and slipped backwards into a steep, corkscrewing drop terminating in another nozzle. I got hammered on rocks **everytime** I tried to roll. As I felt myself dropping onto more boulders I realized my boat might spin sideways across the nozzle even if I did roll. Deciding to risk a swim instead of folding myself into a plastic sandwich, I bailed out. Luckily, it was short, and I was soon back in my boat. With mixed feelings of gonzo excitement and exhausted relief we finally hit the lake. It had taken us

roughly an hour per mile to get there.

The others paddled in an hour behind us. They had gotten caught in rising water levels with the creek quickly jumping into the trees. **Slickrock** took on Ocoee-like traits within its narrow banks. They portaged some of the falls and rapids. Nick, an expert boater who happens not to care for waterfalls, made a good point that no big deal should be made of carrying around a rapid. That suited Nancy just fine, because she found herself among the rhododendrons more than once. And I felt better when I discovered that George, a better boater than I, had swam, too. He'd got trapped in a keeper hydraulic and battered on the rocks. Wet-exited and recirculated around and around. At one point his legs stuck straight up out of the water before he flushed out as Nick fell on the rocks trying to toss him a rope. It was dark by the time they reached the lake.

And that's **Slickrock** Creek, a great introduction to **hairboating** the steep creeks of the American Southeast. Remote, beautiful wilderness protected by the government. Seldom run, hard to find. A great birthday gift for the Englishman and a delight for the rest of us. Catch it if you can, paddle it if you dare.

Hot stuff!

North Chick challenges expert creekers

by Ron Stewart

"North Chick" is one of those special rivers. Running off Signal Mountain, just north of Chattanooga, Tennessee, North Chickamauga Creek stands as one of the premier difficult runs in the Southeast.

The lower portion of the creek, running through Hixon, is a popular easy paddle for family style canoe trips. The difficult gorge section, beginning atop Walden's Ridge is a totally different experience.

After two or three miles of relatively mild class II/III rapids, the paddler is treated to over nine miles of continuous III/IV/V rapids until the takeout at the Highway 27 bridge in Soddy Daisy. The physical and mental demands of the run, especially at higher water, cannot be overstated. But the quality of the rapids and the spectacular beauty of the gorge make it one of those rare streams that represent the best in wildness and natural beauty.

Mike Culbertson was a close friend and excellent kayaker. We had run North Chick many times together before his death on Suck Creek in 1987. North Chickamauga was his favorite run. We were once talking about why this particular stream seemed so special. Maybe it was because of those adrenaline-spent moments, tired, cold, but exhilarated beyond words, when we peeled out of an eddy, looked downstream as far as we could and saw choppy whiteness, boulders and ledges that gave way to fast chutes and then disappeared into what we knew was more of the same.

Kayak manufacturers join creekin' craze

Now that "steep creekin'" has entered the mainstream of whitewater boating, it's not surprising that kayak manufacturers have responded by offering creekers a number of models specifically designed for negotiating rivers with high gradient and low volume.

Typically, a creek boat ranges from 11-12 feet in length with significant volume up front so the bow doesn't dive while plunging over steep drops. It is built with a relatively flat bottom or with defined chines so as to keep its line in tortuous water. And often, the boat features an oversized cockpit to allow escape in case of a pin.

Noah has been building boats that match that description for years. Consequently, Noah designs like the Jeti, Grande and the AQ have proven the early favorites of many creekers.

However, for many Eastern boaters, paddling a plastic kayak is inconceivable. Enter the custom creek boat.

Designs like Jim Snyder's Screamin' Meanie and Phil Coleman's New Vision, available through custom boat manufacturers, provide high-end performance on the smallest of creeks.

Finally, even Perception has entered the steep creek field with its Corsica--a boat with an optional port for a rope and bliner for use in case of a pin.

Tennessee's Chickamauga Creek



Roger Scott, Ken Strickland and Tom Parson about the run. The following weekend he led them to the famed "rock house" on Cain Creek where they put in. This was just below the wild boulder sieve section that had almost cost them their lives. From there it was a short run to the confluence.

Word began to spread. Rusty Dunbar and Mike Miller from Atlanta

came charging after her and ran the falls as well. Ah, true love.

They survived and in doing so became the first paddlers to make it down the drop. Their feat is not often repeated. The falls is a rarely tried double ledge, complete with a definitely heinous undercut. Today paddlers usually portage or run the class V cheat to the right of the falls.

On another occasion, when they arrived at the put-in, Roger and Tom were casting doubts about the run because of high water. Greer wasn't about to repeat the horrendous drive they had just made. "Are you going to paddle or not!" she declared. She knew it would be easier to paddle out than drive out. What she didn't know was



In the late 70's and the early 80's, a few talented expert boaters made some of the earliest descents of the gorge. Lewis Bralley and Mike Stoker were the first paddlers to attempt the run.

For Lewis, this was the fulfillment of a life-long desire to make the run. He had made countless trips into the area, hiking, fishing, passing the old moonshine stills and eyeing the non-stop whitewater. On November 3, 1979, they put in at an old bridge on Cain Creek, about four miles above the confluence with North Chickamauga. They almost drowned.

At one point Lewis's boat was drawn into a stem pin situation. Lewis was trapped in his boat, an old Hollow-form River Chaser. After a fight for his life, he escaped. They were able to retrieve their gear and managed to finish the run.

Lewis was 53 years old when he made this first run. It was his only run in the gorge, but he was quick to tell

took interest in the gorge and would call to check on water levels. By now boaters were using an old four wheel drive road that led to a power line clear-cut on the other side of the gorge. The put in was now from the Signal Mountain side of the gorge directly into North Chickamauga. Dave and Greer Bromel, Tom Kinney, Charley Cornelius, David Brown, Charley Sturdevant, Pete Shaw, Bob Slayden and Bob McClelland made some notable descents.

Greer, probably the first woman to run the gorge, recounted their first run in January, 1980. At one point she missed a critical eddy and washed backward over the "Falls". Dave

that the Soddy Daisy bridge was about to wash out.

The bridge washed out twice in the early 80's. Mark Lyle and Marc Hunt from Sunburst were on the water after one of those downpours. Mark described "eddying out in holes bigger than anything I have ever seen in order

Tennessee's Chickamauga Creek

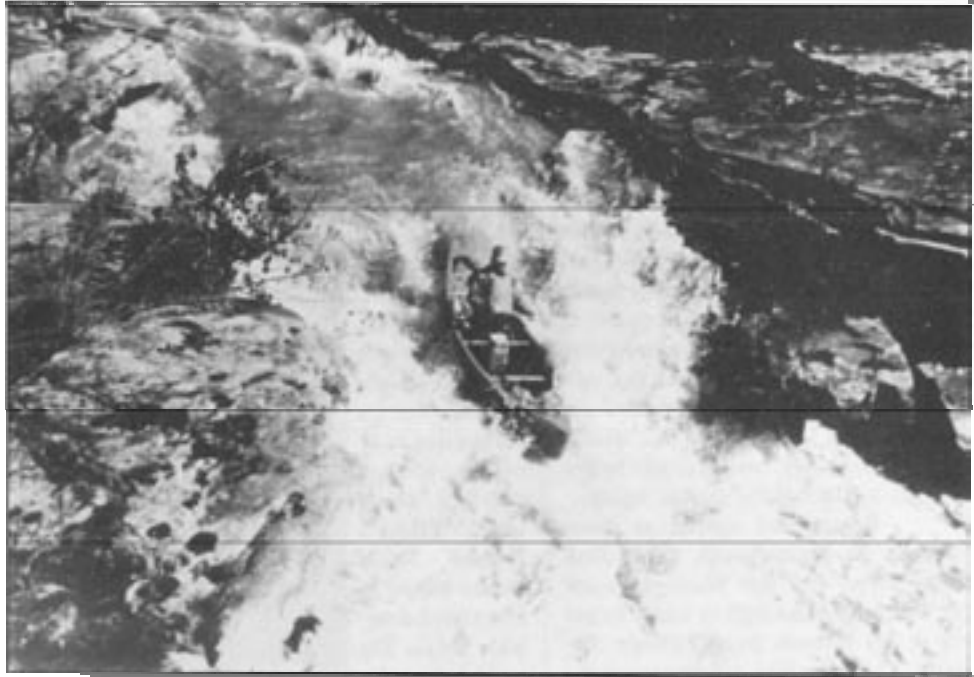
to rest from the big stuff." The day the bridge washed out the second time was the first instance I ever saw North Chickamauga. Walking through the woods to glimpse the rushing waters was like witnessing a scene from Dante's Inferno.

I first attempted to boat the creek in the spring of 1983 at extremely low water. Even though a companion had to cancel out at the last moment I decided to make the run anyway. It was a foolish venture and at the time I was certainly not qualified to make the run. I probably walked half the river, pinned several times and was lucky to come out alive. It was a long time before I saw it again.

One day in the winter of 1985, Mike and I were thinking about going up to Daddy's Creek. We couldn't find other people who wanted to go so we decided to scrape down North Chick instead--"just to see what was in there."

Eight hours after putting on, exhausted but exhilarated, we took out at the Highway 27 bridge. That was the day that began a love affair with this remarkable river. Over the years, our familiarity with the run increased. More and more boaters began to make the run. Terry Harris painted a gauge on the center bridge piling. We made endless trips to check the gauge, always hoping for favorable levels.

The return of winter and spring rains into the Tennessee Valley has given us an excellent boating season. Numerous boaters from around the southeast have been calling and showing up to get in on the North Chick experience. The general feeling has been that North Chickamauga Creek is undoubtedly one of the finest runs for sustained, quality rapids to be found. But again, it must be stressed and underscored that the run is extremely difficult and has a high danger potential. To make matters worse, this past summer three murders occurred near the put-in. The incident, which has been widely publicized, involved three wheelers and is yet to be solved.



As often happens when a new run begins to be popularized, a lot of boaters decide they want to get in on the action and make the run. The unfortunate side of this is that marginal advanced paddlers who are not qualified for the run show up, have trouble and create a dangerous situation.

Compounding the problem is that egress from the vertical walls in the rapid is almost impossible. The continuous nature of the rapids requires precise maneuvering through tight congested boulder mazes and punching big holes. A mistake in one of the milder III/IV rapids could result in being swept into one of the difficult rapids and a nightmare incident on the river. At high water, particularly with water rising, it is impossible to describe the intensity, the pushiness and difficulty of the run. It would be a good idea to go with someone who knows the river well on a first descent.

Bordering the creek along its last two miles is an old four-wheel drive road. For some time the Sierra Club has sponsored clean-up activities and hikes into the gorge's lower section using this access road and trail. There a trail leads to a popular "blue hole" and is the scene of many a summer's swim as well as being the access path for late afternoon runs through the last set of

rapids.

The watershed used to be known as a popular fishing area though upstream mining has greatly lowered the pH of the water and until recently had resulted in a largely sterile stream. In the last couple of years there has been some improvement in this situation and a few hardy fish and aquatic animals have been seen. The Cain Creek watershed, which drains into North Chickamauga, has as yet not experienced upstream mining and still supports a viable aquatic ecosystem.

There is a hand-painted gauge on the middle bridge piling at the Highway 27 bridge over North Chick. However, changes in the river at the takeout, probably caused by overall erosion and rock taking, has resulted in altering the meaning of the readings from past levels. A good level, particularly for a Fist-tie run, would be between 1.2 and 1.6. A reading of .8 is probably about the minimal though it has been run at lower levels.

Once I hiked in to retrieve a boat someone had wrapped and had to abandon. After a bit of creative stomping and duct taping, I managed to paddle out at well below 1 foot. At these runs the run is extremely technical and the chances of a pin in any of the congested, steep rapids is greatly increased. Some

Tennessee's Chickamauga Creek

of the most serious incidents in the gorge have occurred at low water.

Above two feet things begin to get real pushy and at levels near three feet or higher the North Chick can be a religious experience. At these levels the run is serious, often continuous, high class V. There are some places where most of the water goes one way but which the paddler must absolutely avoid. One of the most difficult aspects to describe about the run is the endurance factor. North Chick just never lets up--the rapids go on and on. Paddlers are often so spent in the upper and middle sections that they are drained before they get to the bottom sets of rapids.

Rapids are similar to those found on the Upper Yough. Caney Fork in the **Obed** and the Wautaga except that North **Chickamauga** is much longer and in my opinion more difficult. Recently, I had my first experience on the Lower Meadow. There are similarities between the two runs, though the Meadow is much steeper. North Chick's gradient is fairly sustained at about 80 to 110 feet per mile after the **first** few miles and reaches a maximum near 150 feet per mile just above the confluence with **Cain/Mossy** Creek (which more or less doubles the volume).

Most of the large drops are from four to ten feet and most of the rapids are broken-out ledges and boulder gardens. Many have large, sticky holes which could prove terminal at high water.

A particularly beautiful set of **drops** occurs about a mile above the confluence with Cain Creek. The river has substantially picked up the pace and in quick succession one negotiates "The Welcome Center" and "Nasty," leaving the paddler in a small pool perched above a 12 foot sheer drop called "Mystery Falls."

On a left side run the boater **runs** parallel to the lip and boofs onto a steep ramp into a **boiling** hole that more or less guarantees a squirt type mystery move even for big volume boats. Immediately below is the "Back Alley," one of the tightest slots on the river. This one's for keeps, so run tight and upright and don't screw up.

Downed trees have been a problem on the river. Some of us have

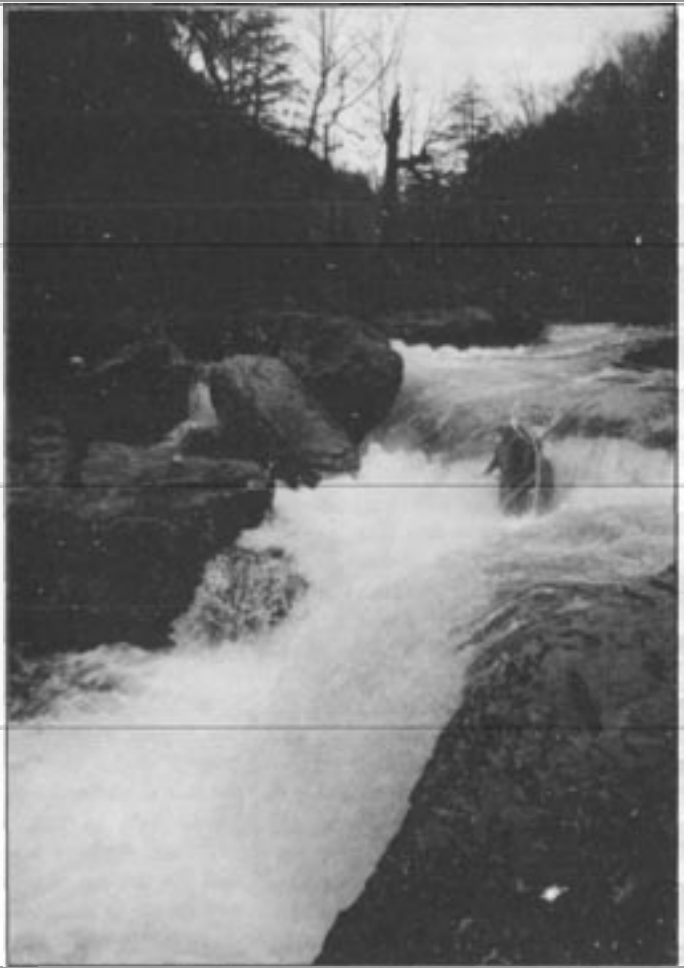
hiked in and removed some of the more dangerous ones. I remember working several days on one which had caused several near misses. One infamous story involved a long complex rapid which comes immediately below a fast twisting chute called "Banzai". Banzai leads immediately into a large river-wide ledge. The rapid below this is a beauty, but unfortunately contained a large tree, wedged into a broken ledge.

The only way to run the rapid was to make a tight

eddy turn in pushy water just above the tree and into a side eddy. From there one could **ferry** below the tree, above a large boulder into a **narrow** channel. On one particular day a paddler flipped and swam above the tree. He was able to make it to safety after being swept past the tree but his new boat had wrapped around the tree and was perforated in several places.

He managed to walk out, but it was then I decided the tree had to go. I'm sure that rappelling down the cliff walls with ropes for **Z-drags**, axes, buck saws and so forth would have seemed pretty funny, not to mention the hot pink little girl's bicycle I used to ride along the rim of the bluff. After three days of afternoon work the tree was out. We call this rapid "Amazing Grace," replacing the earlier name of the unfortunate swimmer.

North Chick stories are always in abundance. There's a particular river-wide ledge just below a fast, pushy



drop that became infamous **one** winter's day when Karen Morton decided it was an interesting place in which to hang out. Later she was to remark that she just wanted to see whom of her male companions were gentlemanly enough to come in after her. Before it was over she had plenty of company checking out the generously, recirculating hole.

Paul **Pruett**, in a Whitesell, was the first open boater to make the run. Dave **Simpson**, who has led several Overflow Creek trips, was also to make an open boat run and recently John **Tobin** became the first canoeist to attempt the middle run on "The Falls." Those of us who watched with ropes were impressed enough to prefer our normal class V "cheat" on the far right. John took a beating but managed to roll his Starburst II in the pool below the drop.

On a recent trip, Dave **Bromel** showed us that the falls could be

Tennessee's Chickamauga Creek

run. Wow! It was impressive to watch. Still, when Dave rolled up at the bottom, none of us were convinced enough to follow. However, after several recent close calls and a couple of nasty swims on the cheat, some of **us** are considering cheating the cheat by running the falls.

Not far below the falls is one of the most adrenaline filled sections of the run. "Let's Make a Deal" is a series of long steeply dropping rapids which involve precise maneuvering, riding big curlers and punching some big holes. It leads quickly into the "Black Hole" and "Double Barrel". Be certain you know where you are and where to run in this section.

In the spring of '88 a strong group of paddlers was running the river at 3 feet. Doug **Wellman** was out front on this particular section. Chuck **Waynick** and I had just punched the left corner of the "Black Hole," without doubt the worst hole on the river. Terry Harris was the only person still to clear the hole. But when we looked back he was doing cartwheels and he didn't seem to be smiling. By the time I was out of my boat with a rope he had flushed free.

Terry made it to the bank quickly, but in the ensuing rescue of his boat. Gibbs Johnson had managed to put himself in a position where he could check out the underside of a log jam. Finally we got it back together and proceeded on our way. Things happen quickly on North Chick.

There are always tales of more excitement than some of us wish to remember. Broken paddles, lost boats and nasty swims have been a regular part of the North Chick experience. Needless to say, caution and good **judgement** is a must on this run.

We've made more runs now than we can count, but each chance to get on it is special. During the last couple of years North Chickamauga has received much attention and it is not unusual to hear conversation about the run from numerous places scattered

around the country. The North Chick regulars are growing.

North Chick well deserves attention, particularly now that there are many boaters hearing about the river, and to support momentum to have some sort of protection for the watershed. It is also paramount that boaters, particularly those who are not aware of the touchy issues associated with the river, be fully informed about the run and the area. A major incident or trespassing situation while making the run could result in real problems for the river. So, again, please use good judgment and discretion when entertaining thoughts of making the run.

Rock Creek drainage held up mining in that area. Recent information indicates a similar seam may be located in the upper reaches of the North **Chickamauga** watershed. The Sierra Club and Guardians of the North Chickamauga have filed papers and a court date has been set to challenge the OSM ruling. Momentum is also being generated to have the river and its watershed considered as a study river under the Wild and Scenic River's Act. The gorge is undeveloped and most certainly should qualify as a study river under the act.

Robert **Pyle**, local attorney for the Sierra Club, along with Gini Springs and others have been instrumental in



The Guardians of North Chickamauga Creek and the Sierra Club have been involved in attempts to have the creek protected. A recent OSM petition to have the lands set aside as unsuitable for surface mining was denied. That was disheartening given the overwhelming support from the public on the issue. However, the state Tennessee recently denied a water control permit to **mining** in the watershed and the issue is likely to stay there for the time being or at least until political pressures are brought to bear one way or the other.

The discovery of the toxic "Sewanee Seam" in the neighboring

pursuing protected status for the gorge. One of the principal landowners has indicated a willingness to entertain responsible suggestions **regarding** the land's usage. As always on complex issues such as this, time is of the essence. Other landowners would clearly like to take advantage of the area's unique offerings.

North Chickamauga Creek is without doubt one of the true gems for creek boating. It is one of the best of those wild and beautiful places that enrich our experiences and elevate **life**.

GRAYHAIR BOATING



If age can't slow you down... responsibility will

By Peter Skinner

Getting out of the kayak is at best awkward--sometimes it can be damned dangerous. **Like** Dave's predicament right now. Only his deft hand-jam in the crack **on** the wall separates him and his boat from **being flung** violently around the corner, over more steep ledges and boulders, and then almost immediately thereafter, a 40 foot nasty falls. At that very moment up on the shore, I'm really glad I eddied out before the going got so crazy.

You see, we are all on the Cachee, Quebec's approximation of a hydraulic elevator. Its last mile or so drops 400 feet per mile in some parts--probably 250 feet per mile **on** the average. It never ceases to amaze me how difficult and threatening only 500 cfs can be when it is tumbling down a boulder strewn rock canyon. **Jeez**, these steep creeks are certainly not for the faint of heart!

The grey, but warm rain which has already swollen this rarely **run** tributary to the mighty Jacques **Cartier** just outside Quebec City in Canada now begins in earnest. The portage beside the falls is an amalgam of slippery bedrock, heavily rotted stumps, and intertwined brush. But to be safe, Eric and I rush down to the brink of the falls and set up throw ropes for the two other more experienced steep creek aficionados.

Looking upriver, the river looks for all the world **like Jacob's** Ladder on the **North Fork** of the Payette. **Downriver**, the Cachee looks like the Bottom Moose. As the others **contemplate** potential routes and **likelihood** of floating out of control over the falls, I have time to reflect on paddling vs. portaging.

Paddle or portage... when Quebec's Cachee River starts dropping at 300 feet per mile, thoughts of family influences your decision

Most people think that people who spend gobs of their spare time on risky recreation like steep creek paddling must have something inherently wrong in their psyche. Hell, why don't they just play tennis, sail a dingy, or pop another beer and watch other idiots it all on the **tube**? Such risk takers must suffer from low self esteem and need to show the world they're tough and can master a difficult sport and nature **her(him)self**.

Some paddlers will run just about anything without much thought, eternally optimistic about the outcome, just to tell others that they did it. They don't last too long or drop out of the sport after their threshold of abuse and pain is exceeded. Some paddlers just are curious to explore the edges of hydraulic "**doability**." Still other paddlers, relish the opportunity to exercise their skills and muscles, enjoy the outdoors, hang out with their old pals, and see the sights. I'm not sure what I started out as, but now fit more or less into the latter group. Regardless of which group you represent, inevitably you find **yourself** making that all-important decision--do I paddle this drop or do I portage?

*It was exactly 12:37 AM. November 15 after three excruciating sleepless days of hard labor for my **long-suffering** wife Bonnie when **William finally** arrived. It was unclear who was more surprised, me or William, but we both smiled at each other as I cradled his entire head in my hand--his whole body on my forearm. You see, the doctors had given Bonnie and I a zippo chance to conceive in the first place. Then, when, instead of Katherine*



*On the upper section of the Cachee, this steep drop resulted in a bow pin momentarily **after** the photo was snapped*

*Grace, a William arrived, **BOY**, were we **SURPRISED, DELIGHTED, EXHAUSTED, EXULTANT, etc.***

*William hardly cried at all as I gave him his first swim (warm water, **no wetsuit** needed). In a sleep deprived daze, I **kept** stopping by the hospital nursery all night, checking out our ~~new~~ kid. Heck, I even changed him once! He weighed only 5 pounds 15 ounces and, let **me** tell **you**, he was obviously totally helpless. **His** survival **was** in **Bonnie's** and my **hands...period**. When the sun came up and Bonnie seemed stable, I drove home, an amazed and thoroughly **humbled** first-time biological father. I fell asleep at the wheel in my driveway.*

Huh, how strange. The other two have decided to **carry** the cascade. "Hmmm, I think to myself. I could have done that drop." But, then again, I hadn't even given it a thought. Am I getting soft, or what?

We carry around the falls and put in again. The drops are steep, the eddies tight, the velocity high. and 500 feet later, another horizon line appears and treetops beyond. A quick scout determines that the falls is a delightful one, a perfect left sneak, but below it. more extraordinarily steep riverscape. But, my fingers are already firmly attached to the **grabloop** as I and my boat tumble, pin and broach on tree branches and rocks up in the woods. Hmmm.... Portaging again?



Below the cascades, the Cachee opens up into "mellow" class 3/4 rapids.

On this very day, William is 25 weeks old and weighs about three times more than he did on his birthday. Although he still wakes up every 2 hours at night, he smiles with such appreciative happiness almost all the time, one can't help but rejoice that both he and you are alive. He has a full vocabulary of incomprehensible sounds and shouts Daa, Daa, Daa, Daa, constantly (just got to get him to add another 'D' and he will be right on the money!).

You know, I wish William and the rest of my family were here right now to see this. I wonder how old William will have to be to hike in here with me....or paddle it (with me? God, will I really be pushing 60 years old?).

We do some more drops, but the bottom drops out again a few hundred feet further. Scout this? Heck, no. I'm booking through the woods again with the greatest degree of ease. If they want to run it, let 'em do it. This is nuts. Through the murky rain, I can barely make out Dave and Myke up-river peering at the hydraulic staircase whose steps are closely spaced eight or so foot falls ending in a big rock pile 500 feet beyond their perch on the wall.

Dave is so young, I think--maybe 25 or 30. I remember years ago when that age gave rise to unbridled river optimism

and a fatalistic view of mortality. Who would really be bereft if I left the planet? No-one! So let's run it! The adrenaline fix is worth the risk. But nowadays, one fix too many, and William won't have me around show him how to do a hands roll and make a crisp eddy turn.

Two of my New York buddies never came home; one of them just last week. One failed to stay in shape and maintain his skills; the other began to take a liking to bad hydraulics--the last hole, a quintessential killer, was a low head dam in

flood. Both passings were great losses as friends and loyal companions. Other friends have had some close calls too. But come to think of it, I haven't lost a single skier friend or ice hockey pal.

Knee deep in familial responsibility, should we hang that Rainbow Wave paddle on the wall as artwork now? Should we badmouth the antics of younger or freer paddlers experimenting with new routes, smaller boats, more radical drops? Should we take up mah jongg or cribbage instead? Well, I don't know about other family paddlers, but I'm not gonna capitulate that easy! Where is that middle ground?

Wow, what a show! Dave and his boat literally fall, step after step, into the rock pile in front of me. Marvelous moves, fluid strokes and great route choices make it all look easy. "Jeez, I could've done that too," I think. We all cheer anyway.

But a second later just downstream. Dave is bow pinned in some relatively non-threatening rock jumble. Water piles onto his life jacket, enveloping him in a cocoon of froth. Concerned about his predicament, we begin to set up a rescue. The jam isn't life threatening (at least, yet) and we debate how to approach the boat. But ever the steep creeker, however, Dave wiggles himself free and finds a nice eddy below in which to celebrate his earlier accomplishment up in the staircase.



Make that eddy! In the cascade section, lead-in rapids often terminate in waterfalls up to 40 feet in height.

Back on Friday, as I run out the door, throwing gear in the car for the trip, William is on the floor, mimicking a sky-diver—or perhaps, a startled **snapping** turtle you have just picked up to move off the road. His **tummy** a pedestal, my boy's legs and arms point **straight** out and up, waving wildly. A huge laugh tumbles out to add audio to this incredible sight, his tongue folded up and **sticking** out like a toucan's. I can't help it, I drop the junk to pick him up and hug him again. **I just** can't get enough of this kid. Boy, I'll miss the family this long weekend.... hope the junker they will drive up to the Lake will hold up....

We haven't gone another 500 feet, and another big falls. This baby is so high, there aren't any tree tops to be seen at all—just grey Canadian sky. It's getting late, we can't **tarry** here checking out the view, so I and my boat are back in the woods again, no need to even look at the falls. The Jacques Cartier gorge is just ahead and dinner beckons.

But this time I'm not alone—everyone is stumbling through the woods somewhere or other. With a little time to spare now. I make my way to the side of the falls. Instead of a vertical death-trap, I am rewarded with the view of a three tiered 45 degree slide; small pools in between. It must drop 70 feet or so. Boy, if this was near home, I'd do it anytime.....

It's not that William alone is such a joy. It's the entire **package**—**Christopher**, my new six year old and **Bonnie**, my good and kind wife who puts up with me. Christopher is no slouch either. He beats me at all our video games and reads stories **to me** that most people didn't read until they were nearly done with elementary school. He swims **underwater** like an otter and is always the first person into Lake George, last year before the ice war out! He already pilots my kayak around the lake with great skill and wraps himself around the boat like a leech as we do eskimo roll after roll together.

Bonnie welds us all together. Spiritual, but practical, she valiantly **fought** the hydropower wars in New York's north country and taught college at the same time. Once ensconced in our home, she is transforming the disreputable dump into a showplace. In spite of our different views



William Skinner, looking blissfully unaware of his father's battles with his conscience.

on mundane things like **laundry**, cleanliness, **surprise paddler** crashpad artists, cars which look and operate like junkyard escapees, a dog which drags in dirt, dead animals and horrid smells, etc. (old dirt baggers never die, they just get lost in their own debris) she accepts my whitewater wanderlust as part of the baggage and hugs me a lot. A damned nice family, now that I think about it. I'm a pretty lucky guy! Gotta be a little more careful now....

But, what a fabulous falls. Well, hell, why not. Bet no one else ever tried it! Just gotta do it. Although portaging back up through this **puckerbrush** is tough, it'll be worth it.

The view from the brink is awe inspiring indeed. The valley spreads out below and Myke has his video cranked up. I'm out here! A couple of quick rushes and I'm back in boulder drops again at the bottom. HOT! Just as I thought—relatively safe and real easy.

Still kicking.... guess I'm not "old and in the way" quite yet!



The upper section of the Cachee serves as a warm-up for the Cascades where the river really starts to drop.

AWA CONSTITUTION

(As Amended in 1988)

1. NAME

The name of this organization is the American Whitewater Affiliation. The initials are AWA.

2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of the American Whitewater Affiliation is to:

- a. Encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways for man powered craft;
- b. Protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources;
- c. Promote safety and proficiency in all aspects of white-water activities such as the navigation of moving water, teaching, teamwork leadership, and equipment design, by publishing and demonstrating developments in these and related fields;
- d. Promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

3. MEMBERSHIP.

Membership in this affiliation is open to all individuals interested in the recreational use of American waterways who will subscribe to the above purposes.

4. AFFILIATED CLUBS

All clubs or organizations which share the above purpose are invited to affiliate as member clubs.

5. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The powers, duties and responsibilities of proper management of the affairs of this organization shall be vested in a Board of Directors, to be elected to staggered terms by the affiliated clubs and the individual dues-paying members of the organization. The Board of Directors shall consist of not less than 9 nor more than 25 individuals who are each members in good standing of the organization. The Board of Directors shall specify the number of members to serve on the Board before each election. The Board may also appoint up to 10 Honorary Board Members. Honorary Board Members shall be individuals who, by reason of special expertise, experience, or other qualifications, are especially qualified to advise and assist the Board. Honorary Board Members shall be nonvoting.

Meetings of the Board may be conducted in person or by telephone, including conference calls. Voting and other Board actions may be taken at a meeting, by telephone polling, or by mail.

The Board of Directors shall be

assisted by a four-member executive committee composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and the Executive Director for the organization. The executive Director shall be chairman of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be in session at all times, and shall exercise all powers of the Board of Directors, subject only to such restrictions as the full Board may from time to time impose.

The Board, as a full Board or through its Executive Committee, shall have the power to manage all of the business affairs of the organization; to elect or appoint officers or committee chairmen; to fill all vacancies on the Board, or any committee, or in any office if any when the same occur; to remove from office any officer, Director, or committee member for good cause shown; to appoint the Editor of the official publication of the organization; and to do any act reasonably necessary to the attainment of the purposes of the organization.

Item 6. NOMINATING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Before an election the Board of Directors shall prepare and publish in the journal a list of nominees to fill vacancies on the Board, together with their names and address, a brief summary of their background and qualifications, and a printed ballot to be used for the election. The Board may accept suggestions from any member or affiliate for nominations. To the extent possible, the list of nominees should include individuals residing in different geographic areas throughout the United States. The Board should be generally representative of the geographical diversity of the membership of the organization.

The Executive Director shall be Chairman pro tem of the organizational meeting of each new Board.

Item 7. [Deleted In 1988]

Item 8. OFFICERS

The Board of Directors shall elect the following officers of the organization from the members of the Board; a President, Vice-President, and Secretary. The Board shall likewise appoint from the general dues-paying membership, the following additional officers, an Executive Director, an Editor of the official journal, a Treasurer, and such other officers, committee chairmen, and agents of the organization as the Board deems advisable.

The Executive Director shall be the administrative head of the organization and

shall coordinate the activities of the various officers and committees. He or she shall serve as general manager of the business of the organization, and shall chair the Executive Committee. The Board may delegate additional authorities and functions to the Executive Director and, notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution, authorize the Treasurer to pay compensation to the Executive Director (and to any support staff which the Executive Director may employ with the approval of the Board)

The Treasurer shall receive all funds and manage all finances of the organization and shall be responsible for keeping the books and records of accounts, in accordance with generally accepted accounting procedures. All other officers or committees shall have such powers and obligations as the Board may delegate to them. Any member may be both a director and an appointed officer of the organization, so long as he is a dues-paying member in good standing. A member of the Nominating Committee may be nominated for a position on the Board of Directors.

9. VACANCIES

Any vacancy in any office, or on any committee, or on the Board, whether it be occasioned by the inability, disqualification, removal, resignation or death of any officer, Director, or committee member shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by appointment by the Board of Directors, the replacement to be selected from the dues-paying members of the organization.

10. TERMS OF OFFICE

Directors shall hold office for a term of four (4) years.

Terms of office will begin on January 1 and end on December 31. All other officers and committee members shall be deemed reappointed by the incoming Board of Directors to serve until the next Board is elected, unless sooner removed.

Any Director, officer, or committee member may be elected or appointed to successive terms in different offices.

11. REMOVAL

Any Director may be removed from office only by the affirmative vote of all of the remaining Directors. Any officer, appointee or committee member may be removed from office by the Board of Directors on the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members then comprising the Board of Directors, except that the Editor of the official publication may

only be removed by a three-fourths vote.

In all cases of removal from any office, the party to be removed shall receive fifteen days notice in writing of the pending motion to remove and of the specific reasons why removal is being considered. A written letter from the President, or Vice-president of the Board, properly stamped and addressed to the last known address of the party in question, shall be sufficient notice, provided that it is mailed at least 18 days in advance of the final action of the Board. Within that fifteen day period the party whose removal is being considered may mail to the Board of Directors a written statement in opposition or explanation. At any time after the expiration of the fifteen day period the Board may act on the motion to remove, and shall immediately notify the party in question in writing of the decision of the Board, and, if removal is ordered, of the **name and address of his successor**. Upon being duly removed from office it shall be **the duty** of the party so removed to immediately forward to his successor all files and materials of his office.

12. FINANCE.

This organization shall at all times be a non-profit organization dedicated to the purposes set forth in this Constitution and no person or organization shall ever profit by or through this organization. All money received by the organization from any source whatever shall be used for the circulation and publication of the official journal, for membership processing services, for conservation and education purposes, or for specific contributions toward whitewater sport and river conservation. The Treasurer may pay salaries and expenses of the Executive Director and other employees of the organization and the Treasurer may also reimburse officers or members for ordinary expenses incurred in furthering the purposes of the organization, upon presentation of **records** of the expenses.

The Board may authorize special items of expense if it believes that the purposes of the organization will thereby be furthered, without penalizing the regular programs of the organization.

Upon the winding up and dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation or corporation, which is organized and operated, exclusively for charitable, educational, **and/or** scientific purposes related to **whitewater** or to river conservation and which has established its tax exempt status under **section 501(c)(3)** of the Internal Revenue Code. If this corporation holds any assets in trust, such assets shall be disposed of in such manner as may be directed by decree of the superior court of the county in which this corporation's principal office is located, upon petition therefor by the Attorney General or by any person concerned in the liquidation.

13. VOTING.

Each individual who is a **due-paying** member for the current year, in good standing, shall be entitled to **one vote** for each of the Directors to be elected at the election, and shall be entitled to **one vote** in any election to amend the Constitution. Every fully affiliated club or organization, as a group, shall have two votes for each of the Directors to be elected at the election, and two votes on any election to amend this Constitution, such two votes to be cast for the affiliated club or organization only by its duly appointed representative.

Votes may not be cumulated. The Board of Directors shall make fair and reasonable provisions for the receipt and counting of ballots in all election so as to guarantee that all votes cast are properly **counted** and the election duly certified. Each ballot must state on its face the date by which it must be received in order to be counted. Ballots received after that date **will** be rejected. The Board, at its option, may provide in the By-Laws for special or junior classes of affiliates, paying lesser dues, with restricted voting privileges.

14. QUALIFICATION FOR OFFICE.

No person shall hold any office or be nominated, appointed or elected to any office unless he is a bona fide due-paying member of the AWA. Failure to keep his dues currently paid up shall be a mandatory ground for removal of any officer or director.

15. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT

In the event that no elections are held, or that final tabulation of ballots is incomplete on January 1, or if for any reason the new members of the Board of Directors are not ready to assume office on January 1, or in the event that any office, appointed position, or committee assignment is not properly filled by the time the **incumbent's** term expires, then the incumbent shall hold over in office and be fully empowered to act and discharge the duties of the office until a successor has been duly elected, appointed, or qualified.

16. AMENDMENTS.

Amendments to this Constitution must first be approved by a **majority** of the Board of Directors, and published in the official journal **along with the** Board's explanation of the same. In the same issue of the journal a ballot may be published for use by the members. Amendments shall pass if **two-thirds** of the ballots actually received back from the members and affiliates are in favor of the amendments proposed. The ballots shall state the date by which they must be received in order to be counted. Any group of affiliates or members may submit proposed amendments to the Board with a petition that they be submitted to the membership.

AWA Bylaws (As Amended in 1988)

1. MEMBERSHIP:

Membership for one year will be **granted** upon written application and the payment of dues in the amount established by the Board.

2. AFFILIATION

Bona fide boating clubs, conservation organizations, and organized groups who subscribe to the purposes set forth in the Constitution of this organization may affiliate **with** AWA by applying to the Membership Chairman and paying annual affiliate dues in the amount established by the Board.

The application for affiliation shall name the Representative of the affiliate, give his address, and shall state the nature of the **organization** and the approximate size of its membership. All notices, correspondence and publications sent to the affiliates will be deemed properly sent if sent to the last known Representative of the affiliate.

Affiliates may change their Representative at any time, upon thirty days written notice to the Executive Director.

3. ELECTIONS.

The Board shall have its slate of candidates for the new members of the board of Directors for the upcoming year completed and in the hands of the editor in time so that the ballot, the list of nominees, a brief summary concerning each nominee, and the instructions concerning the mailing of the ballots can be published in the official journal.

All members and affiliates who desire to vote must mail their ballots in to the designated polling places as soon as possible. Ballots not actually received at the designated polling place before the deadline printed on the ballot, will not be counted. A majority of the ballots actually received within the deadline and properly marked will determine the new members of the board of directors for the coming year.

Each member may cast one vote for each of the directors to be elected. Each affiliate, as an organization, may cast two votes for each of the directors to be elected. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall constitute the incoming new members of the board of directors.

In the event of a tie vote between any two or more candidates, the president of the board of directors then in office will **immediately cast one vote**, or such votes as may be necessary, in order to break the tie without advancing any candidate receiving his vote ahead of any other candidate who received more votes but was not involved in a tie vote. In the event that the president is required to **exercise** this power, the next issue of the journal shall, in addition to the usual election results and notices of appointed by the board, carry a brief explanation of the status of the

candidates at the time the deciding votes were cast by the president to break the tie.

4. PROCEDURE UPON ELECTION.

As soon as possible after the balloting ends, the **incoming** Board of Directors will organize itself, elect its officers, and decide whether to adopt, in whole or in part, the appointments made by the previous board or to make new appointments in all or any positions. The Executive Director shall be chairman pro tem for the organizational meeting of each new board of directors.

New members of the Board of Directors will take office immediately following their election (or as soon as a vacancy occurs if no vacancy exists **at the time** of the election).

Any officer, committee members, or director who is removed from office or replaced by a duly elected or appointed successor, shall immediately forward and deliver to his successor all of the files, equipment, and property of the organization in his possession or control.

5. VOTING

All nominations shall be by signed letter, submitted by a member in good standing. Where printed ballots are used, as in

voting for directors, instructions for properly marking each ballot shall be plainly printed on the ballot. All voting in elections for directors or to amend the Constitution must be done on official printed ballots furnished to the membership, and informal ballots will not be **accepted**.

Voting within the board of directors or nominating committee may be informal, and letters will suffice. The chairman of the nominating committee and the president of the board of directors may receive and **count** informal ballots within their respective groups, or the members may decide on any other reasonable manner of procedure.

All official ballots shall have the date by which they must be received plainly printed on the face of the ballot.

6. DEPARTMENTS AND COMMITTEES

The Board may at any time establish such Committee or Departments as it deems necessary to conduct the business of the organization.

7. FISCAL AND ELECTORAL YEARS.

The **books** shall be maintained on a calendar year basis and audited at least annually.

8 PROCEDURE ON NEW MEMBERSHIP

When a new member of affiliate is enrolled, the dues shall be sent to the Treasurer. The Executive Director shall see that (1) the name and address of the new member or affiliate is promptly placed on the list of new members and affiliates, (2) the next issue of the journal is sent to the new member or affiliate, and (3) the new member of affiliate receives any new membership materials which may be available.

All enrollments shall be for a one year period beginning on the date of the enrollment unless the Board establishes other membership periods.

9. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these By-Laws may be made by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. Any group of members of affiliates may petition for an amendment. The changes made by the Board shall be published for the benefit of the membership in the next issue of the Journal.

dislocate cont...

swathe.

If it's possible, try to move the injured arm across the chest so that it can be placed **in** a **sling**. If because of pain or a grating sound or feeling this is not possible, you must **splint** the arm in the position found. Many times the arm will be found up away from the body with the hand over the head. The hand can be bandaged to the head **while** a paddle can be bandaged to the arm and body to give the necessary support.

This **type** of injury requires imaginative splinting. Remember, whatever arrangement you decide on, make sure the hand is visible so that the pulse can be checked frequently. Loss of circulation demands immediate action to relocate **bone** ends. **This** doesn't necessarily mean a **full** alignment. It may be possible to renew circulation by merely rotating bone ends.

Dislocations are no **fun**. The best first aid is to avoid the possibility of such **an** injury. A great reason to practice your low brace **instead** of the old high brace.

See you on the river.

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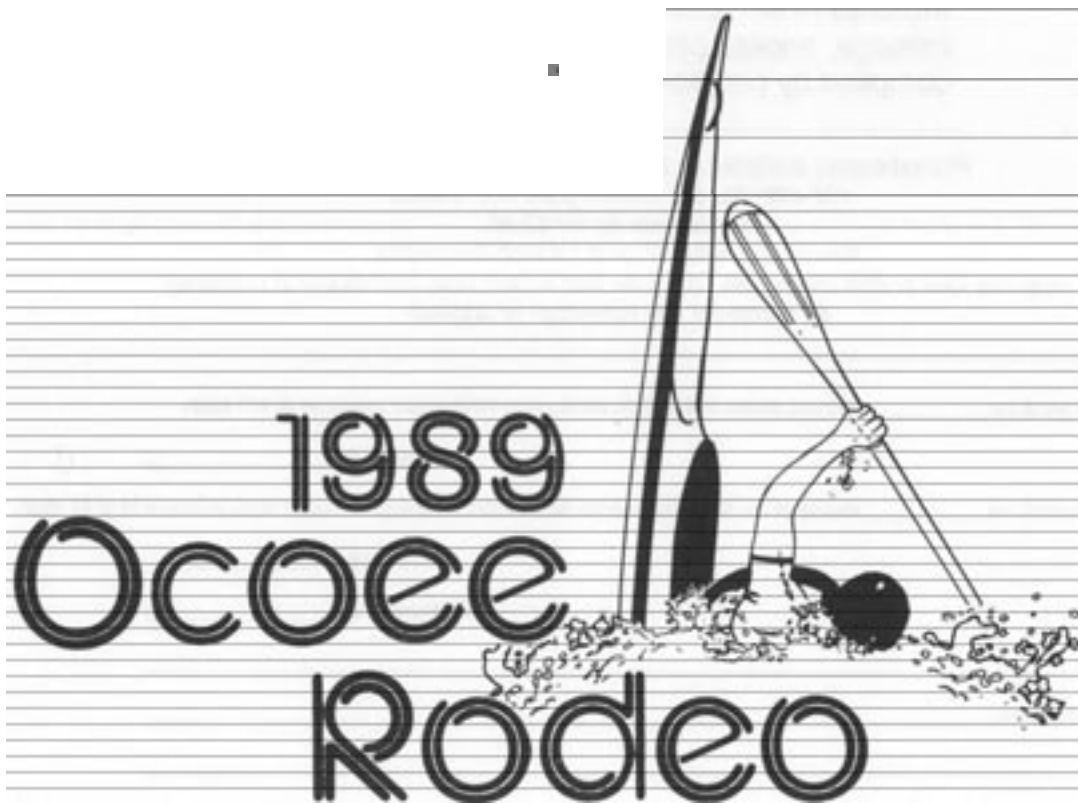
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Whitewater rabbit license

Legitimate whitewater behavior

"A raft guide is like a prostitute...

•First you did it for fun.

•Then you did it with friends.

•Now you do it for money."

--taken from the t-shirt of a commercial outfitter

"When the going gets weird,
The weird turn pro..."

--Hunter Thompson

I never like to think I **work** for a commercial rafting outfitter. Granted, I often tag along in my kayak and I'm always willing to assist hysterical swimmers, retrieve abandoned paddles and perform feats of skill and daring for an appreciative audience--but it isn't like I get a paycheck for it.

Under stiff cross-examination, I'd have to confess to accepting some remuneration. I'm a sucker for free beer. My plate is always full at the post-trip barbecue. My entire summer wardrobe bears the logo of an outfitter. And I haven't driven a shuttle for years.

But it isn't like I'm a **professional**. Professional guides are competent at all sorts of various tasks of which I have no ken: inflating boats, **shucking** rubber, cajoling intimidated guests, sizing wet suits, patching boats, grilling steaks and picking up the outpost. The only picking up I like to help out with is with the ladies at the cook-out.

Besides, professional guides have to be **licensed**. At least they do up here in New York state. That means acquiring CPR, first aid and water safety certifications. It means an affidavit from an outfitter attesting to your knowledge of a river. And it means passing a test given by the NY Department of Environmental Conservation.

Now like all hardboaters, I like to think I've **forgotten** more river savvy than any rubber driver will ever **know**. But who would ever need to hassle of taking a test--even if I wanted to be licensed.

Besides, what if you were **licensed**...your name, address and picture on file **forever** at the state capital. And then what if America was invaded by Communists, for God's sakes, and boating was banned. Those Russkies would be banging on your door in a second and your boats would be history, mister.

Well...I don't know why I broke down and got the damned license. I **figgered** it would be handy, just in case the outfitter booked a convention of stewardesses or a tour of Swedish coeds.

And I've got to admit--I was a tad anxious when I showed up for the written NY DEC whitewater test. Lord knows what **kind** of abuse would have been heaped upon my shoulders by the raft guides if a hardboater failed the test.

In retrospect, I needn't have worried. After all, how much does the New York DEC--or for that matter, any state's DEC--actually know about **whitewater**?

Don't get me wrong, I don't have anything personal against the NY DEC.

The **fishin'** is great up here in New York thanks to the DEC. There's times in the fall when I'm paddling and **salmon** as big as my arm jump right **over** the boat. The spawning salmon **add** a degree of difficulty to drops during the autumn...you can slide down a chute **only** to slap face-first into a 20-pound **Chinook** executing an upstream leap.

The **huntin'** ain't bad, either. I haven't gone out with a rifle for several years no--but I know there's a healthy number of deer out in the woods. Hell, **over** the last seven years, I've managed to kill five of them with my car. That makes me a "whitetail ace"--especially in the eyes of my local body shop.

And the DEC is doing some other neat things, too--like introducing the lynx and moose back into the **Adi-**

ondacks. They're even considering **reintroducing** wolves, which I don't **fully** understand. Hell, I see packs of them every Saturday night when the **river** crowd hits the bars.

But on the whole, I think the DEC does a great job on all that animal **stuff**. Which is how the DEC probably **got** involved with whitewater.

I figger some DEC big-wig over in Albany heard that raft guides were **shooting** whitewater rabbits. So he told **some** subordinate. "You better license those whitewater rabbit hunters."

When the DEC discovered it **was** whitewater rapids--not rabbits--the agency was in a real bind. All the DEC really knew about whitewater was that fish live in it and fishermen often **unsuccessfully** try to swim in while **wearing** waders.

Still, they managed to put together a whitewater test. **Challenging**? Well, let's say it was a class II **exam**, at best. You were in big trouble if you didn't know rapids flow **down-river**.

So, now that I'm a professional, licensed guide, has my lifestyle changed for the better? Well, I sleep in the back of my truck every weekend, wear the **same** pair of baggies for 48 consecutive hours, drink generic beer, peel **sun-burned** skin off my shoulders like a **moulting** lizard and still blow off every opportunity to actually guide a raft in order to stay in a kayak as a safety boat.

In other words, my life hasn't **changed** at all.

But, hey, now I'm **licensed** to **act** this way.

By Gary Carlson, who ~~may~~ only have recently been licensed, but who has been certified for years.



*Take
me
to
the
river...*

*drop
me
in
the
water...*

Phil DeRiemer, Siete
Tazas, Rio Claro, Chile.
Photo by Lars Holbek.
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