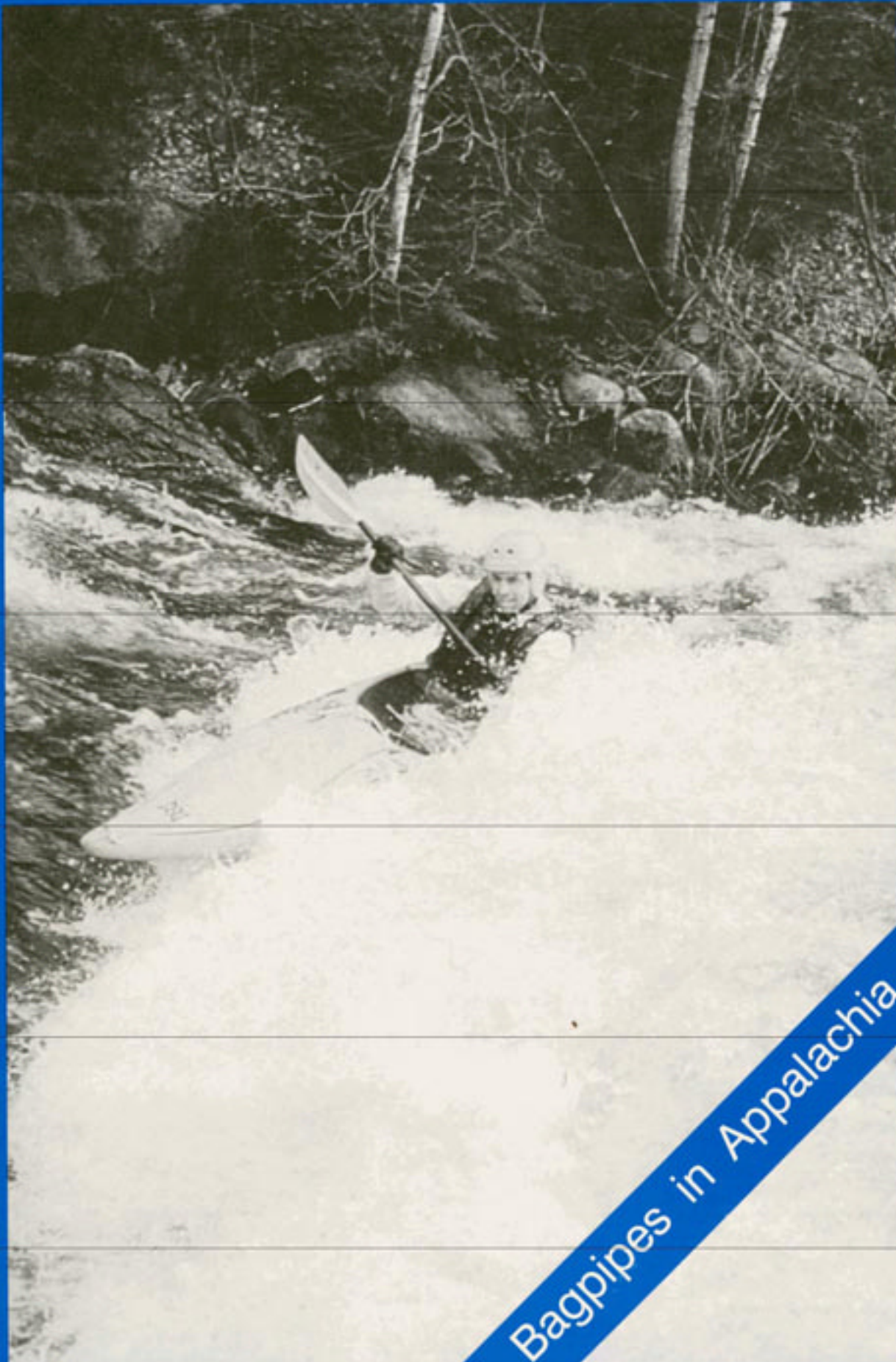


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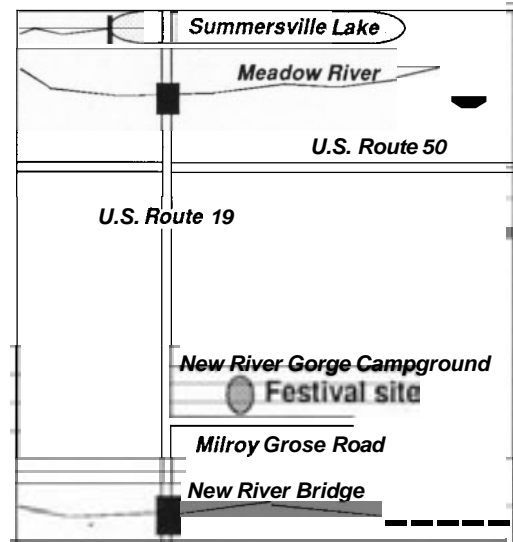
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JOURNAL OF THE
AMERICAN WHITEWATER
AFFILIATION

July/August 1990
Volume XXXV, No. 4

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Get involved with AWA

It is with great pleasure that I announce the AWA Board of Directors have chosen one of their own to become the new Executive Director of the American Whitewater Affiliation. Phyllis Horowitz of Phoenicia, N.Y. has been named Executive Director of AWA and is already digging into a mountain of projects that are sure to help AWA maintain its stature as the leading whitewater advocacy organization in the country. Phyllis will focus on fundraising, increasing AWA membership, and managing the new nationwide cadre of AWA Regional Coordinators as her three most important duties. Please welcome Phyllis aboard and send her any suggestions or comments on our service to you, the AWA members.



I would also like to ask you to become more involved in river advocacy. It doesn't take that much time, in most cases its simply a matter of keeping your eyes and ears open to events that affect your backyard (and not so backyard) whitewater runs. Call the closest AWA Regional Coordinator or AWA Director with News on: FERC relicensing hearing announcements and issues, unlicensed dam issues, riverside development issues, road reconstruction announcements, water quality issues, river access issues, news of water releases, news of new descents.

In many cases, power companies try to be as discreet as possible about announcing the location and time of their FERC public hearings. I attended one hearing on the shores of Moosehead Lake in Maine with less than a dozen other interested parties--mostly camp owners, company officials and fishermen. I was one of only two boaters there.

So let us know how you feel. Don't prove the theory that I have heard so many times before from non-paddling environmentalists and conservationists--that whitewater boaters are always the last the act. Get involved!

In response to what proved to be a mandate from our members, **American Whitewater** is now printed on recycled paper. Additional costs were insignificant and quality remains unchanged. We're still the best semi-professional whitewater magazine in the world.

American Whitewater Staff

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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.

AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Don't whine

Dear People,

In relation to the Forum's asking if FERC staff is brain dead, we, as a (hopefully) focused organization should do more than editorialize. As a loyal soldier to many environmental groups, it is our obligation, at the very least, to send an organizational letter, group petition, or letter writing campaign to the trusted souls who our taxes support. Please forgive me if I missed some call to action, but if we are content ONLY to bitch, stating that "The guilty FERC staffers should enjoy...(a negative reaction)", then we truly have nothing beneath our Farmer-Johns and deserve the **DAMMED** inevitability.

Sincerely,
Gary Glick
Portland, ME

More Carla Garrison

Dear People,

That **Garia Carrison** or Garrison Carlleror, or, or whatever that hermaphrodite's name is, is sick, perverse, demented, and above all...**BRILLIANT!!!** You ought to dump Carlson; he's too main stream.

Sincerely,
Gary Glick
Portland, ME

(editor's note: Gosh. I wish you hadn't said that. It's been like waving a red flag in front of a bull. Gary Carlson swears he's ready to plunge down some bizarre tributaries in an attempt to out-do his perverse cousin.)

Recycle 1

Dear Chris,

The **May/June** A.W. contained:
1. the question; should A.W. be printed on recycled, unbleached paper and 2. an

article on teaching children. Is my point clear?

We have extened much effort fighting paper mills and logging operations head on while at the same time are buying their products. (Does this remind anyone of the cocaine problem). Personally I feel A.W. is a high quality journal: the way journalism should be (maybe a little one-sided though). Content and format are more important than the paper it is printed on. Would this change to recycled paper affect membership or advertising? If so, are those who drop their support worthy of the AWA? Americans have some difficult choices to make and soon. Garbage journal ("the practical journal of the environment") addressed this point in their Sept/Oct 1989 issue. They have opted to use Cross Point Troy Book paper, 50%-70% recycled, and the quality is excellent. Recycled paper manufacturers are nearing bankruptcy presently because of too many recyclers and too few customers.

It is our responsibility to teach our children to do the right thing (by example) and to leave them a world which is in better shape than we found it in.

Sincerely,
Mark Venable
Salt Lake City, UT

Recycle 2

Dear AWA,

In reference to Peggy Dwyer's letter (**May/June 90**), please cast my vote in favor of converting the AW to the least environmentally offensive medium possible, whether that be unbleached paper, recycled paper or something else. The quality of the magazine is in its content, not its composition. It only makes sense that paddlers work together to protect the rivers and environment they enjoy so fully.

Sincerely,
Cliff Morgan
Essex Jct., VT

Recycle 3

Dear Chris,

With regard to your question following Peggy Dwyer's letter, the answer is: absolutely yes! How can we ask OSM to deny a mining application or FERC a hydro permit if we are unwilling to make the very minor sacrifices resulting from printing AW on recycled paper?

Chris Bell
Upper Hominy Valley, NC

(editor's note: Okay, okay--I get the picture. These letters are just a few of the responses that have rained down on my desk. And frankly, I'm grateful. To be perfectly honest, I previously never thought about the importance of using recycled paper before our readers beat the significance into my hard head. Initially, I was concerned that the quality of the paper would suffer--but I've learned that doesn't necessarily need to happen. A quick call to my printer revealed that recycled paper was indeed available and the price increase was not substantial. And for the quality...well, judge for yourself. This issue is printed on recycled material. Personally, I think it looks positively semi-professional!)

Congratulations

Dear AWA,

Congratulations on an outstanding magazine and organization. Once the newest issue arrives, I find myself reading it from cover to cover before I put it down. My only regret is it's not published monthly. Congratulations for all the efforts of the W.D.P. My donation is all I can afford and totals only a few cents per day paddling in a year. I encourage friends to join as much as I can.

Keep up the great work.

Phil Sapala

The other side

My husband is preparing to kayak Idaho. He is packing to take on the entire state, every mile of wet whiteness, every nook and eddy. Of course, he swears on his Werner paddle that he is traveling 2,000 miles across the country only to give me quiet for writing. In fact, he is so sensitive to my need for space that I will not be able to find him for three and a half weeks. He has no itinerary but the Idaho River Tours guidebook and a sleeping bag.

Weeks ago he started packing boxes of granola bars, pop tarts, bags of gorp, Neely cartoon books, sun screen and seal saver. He adds to the ripening pile every evening: a hacky sack ball, camera, Pink Floyd for the car ride. He can't forget anything because New York will be too far behind. Besides, if he gives me directions to mail a forgotten spray skirt, I'll know where he is. That will detract, somehow, from the wet, foaming gusto of Idaho adventure.

This Spring was spent in anticipation of Idaho. New York's Upper Hudson, once a goal, became a practice run. I remember when the Esopus made his heart pound and he kissed me goodbye as if we would meet in heaven. Then he did the Colorado, the New, the Gauley. Now I detain him for a quick peck on the cheek, whisper "call me", and wave as he drives away with buddy and boats. He barely looks back. He loves me more than the river. He loves me not.

I tried to share his calling. I embraced the boat he gave me at Christmas. I bravely turned upside down on the Nantahala. I flew all the way to Oregon to turn upside down on the Rogue. I tried every popular, guaranteed-to-work roll technique known to certified instructors until, finally, my husband and I agreed. I have a bad attitude. I hate to put my head underwater and that dampens the enjoyment of riding those waves, surfing those holes, and leaning into a 7-foot slap in the face.

So, as an outsider, I watch my husband pack for Idaho. He tries to include me in his passion for kayaking, really he does. He shares the details of every new rapid over supper. We scout miles of water together so that I can

identify standing waves in my dreams. I memorize the CFS of every river he runs, or **dreams** of running. Last week he taught me to **Z-drag** the cat across the living room floor with pulleys and prusiks and butterfly knots. We both know, however, that kayaking is something we can never fully share. My fear is his rush, my apprehension is his anticipation, my bad attitude is as strange to him as his **whitewater** goals are strange to me.

The Idaho pile expands to include dry gear and wet gear, flashlight and coffee mug, toothpaste and shaving cream. Shaving cream? That's for the final stop on the journey home. He will look at the weeks of growth on his chin and remark to his buddy that he has to shave "so she'll take me back". Of course I'd take him back no matter what, but when he comes home clean-shaven, I can be sure he thought of me once, at least once, midst Idaho whitewater.

Lynnette Leidy
Athens, New York

(Editor's note: I've included Lynnette's contribution in the letters section because it was too short to fit into any other section but too good not to print somewhere. And by the way, Lynnette, do you have a single sister somewhere who has a similar understanding of a boater's obsessive mentality?)

Pudgy puss

Dear AWA,

... You folks present the edge: hair white-water, uproarious end notes, the conservation hot line... Luv'd C.K.'s pudgy puss on page 4 of May/June '90 issue...


Bill Waickman

(editor's note: Pudgy puss? Damn! I knew I shouldn't have used that wide-angled lense for the mug shot.)



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Phyllis Horowitz fills top post

AWA names new executive director

Phyllis Horowitz of Phoenicia, N.Y. has been named Executive Director of the AWA to replace Risa Callaway, who resigned in March to pursue other endeavors. At the same time, the AWA Board of Directors reformulated and greatly expanded the duties of the Executive Director position.

"This marks a new era for the AWA - acquiring a professional staff member means we can function much more effectively as the leading advocate for whitewater."

-Pope Barrow, director

The new Executive Director will focus on fundraising, increasing AWA membership, and managing the new nationwide cadre of AWA Regional Coordinators as her three most important duties. Her other duties include improving communications to AWA Board members, setting up Board committees for Finance, Membership, etc., representing AWA to outside groups and occasionally to Congress, and supervising a part-time assistant. "The idea of the assistant," said AWA Vice President Mac Thomson, "is to free up the Executive Director to spend her time on truly professional level activities."

Most Board members were enthusiastic about the great expansion of the duties of the Executive Director. Said Pope Barrow, "This marks a new era for the AWA -- acquiring a professional staff member means we can function much more effectively as the leading advocate for whitewater." Another director observed that having an Executive Director should not detract the free-wheeling volunteerism which has been the hallmark of the AWA.

Pete Skinner, a director from New York State added, "This should jumpstart AWA's efforts at fundraising and



Phyllis Horowitz of Phoenicia, NY, was named as the new AWA executive director. Horowitz takes over from Risa Callaway who resigned last spring.

membership. The new Executive Director position will provide the structure to allow us to respond to crises and to take advantage of fundraising and membership opportunities like never before."

Following a nationwide call for applications, a Nominating Committee of three AWA Board members conducted in depth interviews with Phyllis and another highly qualified candidate. In the end, Phyllis got the nod because of her deep involvement with AWA affairs over the last several years, and her familiarity with the issues facing the AWA.

Phyllis was elected to the AWA Board in 1986, and took over managing advertising for the Journal -- at a time when it had exactly one ad. The Journal now averages about 40 advertisements per issue from a pool of about 70 regular and occasional advertisers. She also took over development of the highly successful Gauley Festival Marketplace and Auction. All these activities have given

her great contacts in the whitewater industry, which is AWA's best source of potential grants.

Phyllis has also contributed several ideas for increasing AWA's membership, and has had a lot of experience working in non-profit organizations, serving as the newsletter editor of the Canoe and Kayak Club of New York, and Membership Coordinator of the Hudson River Maritime Center.

The Board set compensation for the Executive Director at \$12,500 per year (\$1043 per month) for half time work (20 hours a week), with a possible bonus for outstanding performance of up to \$2500 at the end of the year, if AWA finances permit. In addition, the Board authorized up to \$2000 for a part-time assistant.

Open letter from the executive director

Dear AWA Member:

It is with nothing less than absolute delight that I take my seat at the AWA Executive Director's desk. While a volunteer member of AWA's Board of Directors, I often felt frustrated by the demands real life imposed on my volunteer efforts. There was just never enough time to really dig in to pursue ideas for expanding current AWA projects or to do much more than contemplate and discuss new ones.

But now the clock has stopped ticking so loudly. Thanks to a vote of confidence by my fellow AWA Directors, I'm finally in a position to devote all of my workday energies into what I enjoy doing most -- helping develop the American Whitewater Affiliation into the nationally active organization it wants to be. And I hope this challenge agrees with you to, as members of the ever-growing, increasingly responsible whitewater community of the 90's.

We all have an important mission before us. Whitewater can no longer be perceived in strictly rec-

reational terms. It is an irreplaceable treasure to be protected from environmental, economic and political threats. No one who enjoys the beauty or excitement of whitewater can simply shrug and walk away. Not any more. But then, you already know all this. That's why you support AWA.

And that's why I'm looking forward to working with you to further our mutual interest in whitewater recreation, conservation, safety and education. These concerns are the foundation of AWA, upon which we will continue to build and grow. As more and more paddlers and river lovers learn about AWA and its programs, new doors will open to all of us. The level of information exchange we could then establish would be the best possible basis for action. So I'm counting on you to help spread the word. Together we can make things happen.

Phyllis Horowitz
Executive Director

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Chattooga's future studied at symposium

By MARK LEVINE

A distinguished group of river enthusiasts, professional outfitters, environmentalists, civic leaders, United States Forest Service (USFS) representatives, and other interested parties gathered on the campus of Clemson University in March for a first-ever symposium on the future of the Chattooga River.

The Symposium's goal was to achieve a consensus of values for river use, tools which the USFS can use for the long-term management of the Chattooga River.

Sponsors of the project were American Rivers, the American Whitewater Affiliation, Atlanta Whitewater Club, Chattooga Whitewater Shop, Georgia Canoeing Association, Nantahala Outdoor Center, REI (through the National Rivers Coalition), Southeastern Expeditions, and Wildwater, Ltd.

The USFS played no role in funding this project; they were, however, extremely receptive to its concept and participated in its planning. USFS representatives from the local, regional and national offices turned out in force to listen to ideas on how this precious and pristine natural resource should be managed.

The Symposium opened with remarks from Committee Chairperson Andy **Warshaw** of the Georgia Canoeing Association, Dr. Gordon Howard, Clemson Professor of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management (a noted authority on river carrying capacity) and Donald Eng, USFS Regional Supervisor.

Additional keynote speakers provided background and some insight into the complexity of this river's management needs.


Symposium issues concerned past management of Wild and Scenic river segments, values for river use as they have been set for other day-use whitewater rivers, the psychological and social aspects of river experiences, the concept of carrying capacity, the physical limits on river use, the effect of river usage on the environment, and the usage level at which environmental damage occurs.



The Chattooga River Symposium attracted a broad cross-section of private and professional whitewater enthusiasts to discuss the future of the popular river.

Following the background presentations, symposium invitees were divided into three workshop groups, representing private boaters, clubs, outfitter

management, river guides, instructional organizations, environmental groups, and schools. They addressed two issues/questions:



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1. What limits should be placed on boaters and groups of boaters to assure that each has an opportunity for a high quality river experience?

2. Within the limits agreed upon in the first question, how should river use be apportioned among the various types of boaters?

Each workshop group listed all possible solutions, discussed these options, and ranked their suggestions through voting. The solutions with the greatest consensus were then presented to the Symposium as a whole the next day.

These points were forwarded to the USFS for consideration:

- An annual meeting should be held by the USFS to review the policies governing use, allocation and limits.

- The existing allocations for commercial rafting is acceptable.

- Private group size should be limited.
- Limits should be used to protect the river.

- Organized non-profit groups and clubs should be treated as private paddlers.

- USFS should drop the 70% rule for out-

fitters.

- The total capacity for boaters on the river should not exceed the current limits.

- For water levels above 2.3' (76 Bridge Gauge) non-commercial boating should be allowed below Burrells Ford (Section 1).

- Current restrictions on floating above Hwy. 28 (Section 1) should continue to be enforced.

- User fees should be collected from all users to establish a trust fund for river protection and administration.

- Commercial use should continue to be apportioned to three outfitters.

- Private boater allocations should be increased so that the ratio of commercial to private allocations is 50/50 when use equals 100%.

The Symposium was not without controversy, however. In the spirit of cooperation and compromise, it succeeded as a forum for interest groups with a wide range of perspectives to provide input into the management of a resource we cherish. The Chattooga River will face many challenges into the 21st century, and this Symposium, hosted by Clemson

University's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, was the first step in providing a unified voice to address these challenges.

Mark Levine is a member of the Georgia Canoeing Association and the steering committee for the Chattooga River Symposium

EPRO names new director

EPRO (the Eastern Professional River Outfitters Association) has named William L. Callaway as its new Executive Director.

Callaway served for the past four years as an aid to Senator Jim Sasser, specializing in environmental and natural resource issues. "Will" Callaway, as he is known, will work out of the current EPRO office in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Callaway replaced David Brown, who resigned December 31st of last year.

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Volunteers needed for whitewater events

AWA plans to organize national rodeo circuit

Call it what you will -- The Tour de Splash, the Tour de Chills, the Tour de Spills -- a national circuit of whitewater rodeos could help illuminate the sport of recreational kayaking -- not just kayak racing.

At several sites across the country, recent whitewater rodeos have proven successful drawing large crowds of spectators and participants.

However, most of the organizational and promotional energy for these events radiated regionally from the site and the group/club/retailers personally involved. Participation by the AWA in scheduling the events into a national circuit could focus even more attention on the sport.

This national coordination could:

.Assist and thereby lighten the load of local organizers (and perhaps encourages new events in regions where they currently don't exist)

•Minimize the chances of schedule conflicts, as happened this year (Chili Bar/Bob's Hole, Animas River Days/Ocoee)

•Importantly, create an opportunity to broadly recognize the talents and impressive athleticism and flair exhibited at these events.

Transforming the current schedule of independently organized rodeos into a well-oiled series will take some time, cooperation, and compromise. It will be well worth it. We need volunteers who would like to help us out with this new and exciting challenge!

If you want to sign up as a volunteer, if have any ideas, suggestions, marketing angles, sponsorship contacts -- anything that could help AWA form a National Whitewater Rodeo Circuit, please contact:

Risa Shimoda Callaway, P.O. Box 375, Denver, NC 28037.



Doug Wellman hand surfs at last year's Ocoee Rodeo sponsored by AWA.

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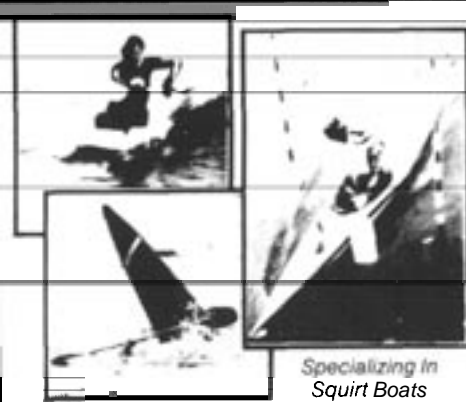
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Great Falls reopened again--with new guidelines

Following discussions with the AWA and other paddling groups, the National Park Service has decided to revert to the Great Falls access policies which existed prior to last August. (At that time, former Superintendent John Byrne tried to ban access to the Potomac for Great Falls paddlers, but this policy was successfully challenged by paddlers and the State of Maryland.

Here are the "Great Falls Guidelines."

1. **HOURS.** Great Falls should not be run during the midday hours. Specifically, runs on the Falls section should be completed by 9:00 a.m. year round. Evening runs are acceptable only if the park is not crowded. Specifically, summer runs after 7:00 p.m. are acceptable Monday through Thursday. Summer runs in the evenings on weekends are not acceptable because the park is generally still crowded.

2. **NOTIFICATION.** Boaters should notify Maryland Park Rangers at

the Visitor Center in person or should call (703) 285-2966 the day before the run. This is a courtesy which allows the Park Rangers to handle later reports of "people going over the Falls."

3. **PUT IN.** Direct access to the Potomac River from Great Falls Park, VA is closed between Great Falls and the Washington Aqueduct Dam, and this park regulation is enforced by the U.S. Park Police. Boaters wishing to run the Falls may use the "O-Deck" or Fisherman's Eddy put-in and portage around "O-Deck" rapid and up and over the rocky island ("The Flake") which separates the river from through Great Falls. Access to the river is not restricted from the C&O canal on the Maryland side of the river.

4. **SAFETY.** Boaters should practice accepted safety precautions, such as posting persons with throw ropes at appropriate points. Running the Falls should be considered only by teams of experts and only after close study, consultation with other experts familiar with

the Falls, and after appropriate safety precautions have been taken. Know your ability, and do not underestimate the hazards of the river. When boating on the Potomac River, set a professional demeanor to the public by wearing an approved lifejacket and helmet. Be prepared in the event of a mishap.

5. **COOPERATION.** Boaters should cooperate with reasonable requests by Park Rangers, DNR Police and the U.S. Park Police based on circumstances which may exist at any particular time.

6. **REGISTRATION.** Boaters must be registered with the State of Maryland and comply with their regulations.

Negotiations result in better Contoocook access

In what first was a fund raising and is now a fund reimbursement effort, whitewater boaters on New Hampshire's Contoocook River have a new parking area after months of verbal wrangling with officials in the town of Heniker.

According to AWA Contoocook River Coordinator Dr. Roger Belson, the new site is west of the old take and provides space for approximately 30 cars. The town is even paying for the upgrade to level off the site. The new parking area allows car to be moved completely off the road surface, reducing a hassle that has existed with a few of the crankier townspeople for years. Boaters are asked to use only this new parking area, and to avoid blocking any neighboring driveways or access roads. The take-out from the river cuts across private property, and the owner has graciously allowed boaters to use his property to get to the parking area. This right could be rescinded if the area is abused or litter is found -- respect that landowner's rights and please pick up any trash you see -- even if it isn't yours.



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New paddle design gives "wings" to kayaking

By **MIKE McCORMICK**

The **paddle**, a basic tool of transportation virtually unchanged since pre-history, has finally been re-designed for the modern era.

The new paddle, called the "wing", was developed as a result of the competitive demands of sprint kayak racing. A Swedish coach, Stephen Lyndberg, saw a connection between a bird in flight and a **kayaker's** stroke. To help his athletes increase their forward speed he incorporated the principles of flight into boating.

Traditionally, a paddle blade is **planted** in the water and the paddler pulls their body straight towards it. With the "wing", the kayaker pulls the blade in a slight angle away from the side of the boat. A "wing" blade is shaped like a wildwater blade with a curled lip along its upper edge.

Eric Haught is studying the

capabilities of the "wing" paddle as part of a research project for the Olympic Sprint Team. He explains that as the paddle initiates lift it moves forward, pulling the paddler along with it: "If you are achieving lift, the paddle blade should **exit** the water ahead of where it entered."

The "wing" was introduced in 1983, but its value wasn't legitimized until Briton Jeremy West used it to win the 500 meter and 1000 meter sprints in the 1986 World Championships. Until that time he was considered a good paddler with an unorthodox style. The "wing" fit his stroke and he made a huge performance jump in a sport that measures progress in tenths of seconds.

Greg Barton was one of the first Americans to master the radical new paddle. With it he won two gold medals at the Seoul Olympics. Currently the "wing" is used by all of the men and women who race sprint kayaks internationally.

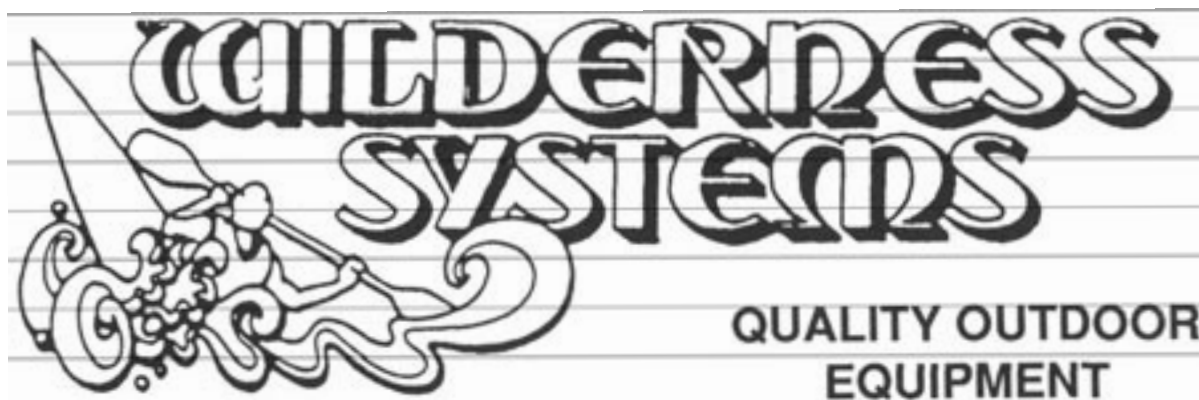
Barton, who joined Haught at

the Traycor Hydronautics Ship Model Basin in Laurel, Md. to help with the research project, says "I'm always fiddling with my own equipment. Here we have test facilities and a lot of experts. When you are splitting hundredths of seconds and you've got a slightly better piece of equipment, it's going to help."

The tests were carried out in an indoor tank about 150 meters long and seven meters wide. An elevated carriage towed the kayak down the tank as Barton approximated his racing stroke.

He tested several prototypes of wing paddles, including one of his own design. An **underwater** video camera recorded flow patterns around the blades. In addition, the paddles were hooked up to a panagraph motion device, which Haught describes as a series of sensors attached to the paddle to compute its efficiency.

According to Haught, "nobody has ever done this before from a scien-



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"The wing paddle's value to whitewater river runners may be limited. It's a highly specialized tool which won't adapt well to a variety of whitewater situations. I'd hate to use a wing paddle to put on the brakes and back up at the lip of a beefy drop."

tific standpoint. We had to come up with a lot of our own methods." He's hoping to answer questions about blade thickness, camber and shape. "We try to look at the whole package, find each component's attributes, and then go for optimization."

The project is funded by a grant from the Sports Equipment Technology Committee of the U.S. Olympic Committee. Traycor assists with reduced rates and free use of equipment after hours. The Traycor engineers also help by donating their time.

Haught says the results of the tests were calculated this spring. He hopes to have the first paddle available for athletes competing in the World Team Trials in Lake Placid, N.Y. in mid June.

Haught is optimistic. "We'll go through athlete testing. By the end of this summer we feel we'll have our final design."

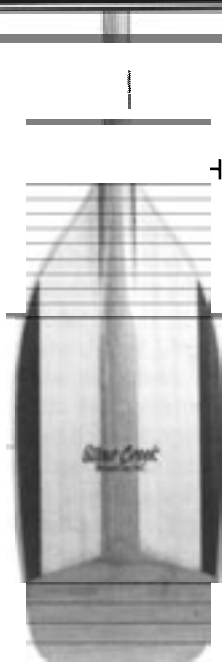
While the "wing" was designed for sprint kayaking, it does have some application to whitewater. Marco Previde of Italy raced with a wing paddle on his

winning downriver kayak run at the 1989 World Championships, although the majority of downriver racers continued to use traditional wildwater paddles.

The wing paddle's value to whitewater river runners may be limited. It's a highly specialized tool which won't adapt well to a variety of whitewater situations. I'd hate to use a wing paddle to put on the brakes and back up at the lip of a beefy drop. Unless kayakers know they will be paddling straight down the river for a while (as in a downriver race) I would suggest that river runners pass on the wing paddle. Also bear in mind that Previde of Italy had his fastest split times towards the end of the Savage River course. If the wing paddle made the difference, it did so on continuous chop where maneuvering wasn't so important.

Paddling a slalom, squirt or cruising design would be very difficult with a wing paddle. Because the stroke angles away from the side of the boat, it would resemble a sweep on every stroke. The extreme "vee" hulls of flatwater and downriver boats can transform that sideways push into forward speed. Sea kayakers might want to consider using it.

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No creel limit for Yough hydro

The National Hydropower Association likes to claim that 90% of the new hydro projects undertaken in recent years was at existing dams and therefore, "the environmental cost was very small."

Tell that to the fish on the Yough. Thousands of fish who used to roam about peacefully in the tranquil waters of Youghigony Lake no longer feel like renewable resources. After experiencing a wild involuntary death spiral down into the new power turbines installed at the Youghigony Lake Dam upstream from Ohiopyle, PA, they feel more like -- well -- cat food.

Next time you go boating on the Lower Yough, be sure to take your feline pets. It may be that the new Youghigony hydro project produces more chopped fish than it does electricity! According to a recent press release from Congressman Nick Rahall (D-W.VA), "Their bladders have exploded. Many were decapitated. Others were beaten to a pulp."

The sad fact (sad at least for the underwater denizens of Yough Lake) is that, when the license was issued for the new project at Yough Dam, the developer (the borough of Seven Springs) was required to do NOTHING to prevent the massacre of fish as a result of running the new project.

How could this happen? After all, didn't American Rivers, the commercial outfitters on the Yough, AWA, the State of Pennsylvania and everyone else and his brother ask the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to be sure that all recreational resources were fully protected when the license was issued? Doesn't Federal law require that damage to fisheries and recreational values be "mitigated?"

The answer to both questions is "yes, but...."

As usual with FERC, the "but" is where the Catch-22 occurs. Lots of groups DID protest the license, and FERC IS required to make the licensee mitigate these kinds of damages, but....WHEN?

The situation at the Yough is just like the situation at hundreds of other new hydro projects across the nation. FERC follows its own Golden Rule: "issue the license now and mitigate environmental damage later (maybe)". The massive fish kills at the Yough illustrate just how this system works...or rather, how this system doesn't work.

In a nutshell, here's what happened.

In 1983, the Borough of Seven Springs, a ski resort in Western Pennsylvania, applied for a license to build a hydroelectric project at the existing Corps of Engineers

dam upstream of the lower Yough whitewater run. Almost immediately, the entire whitewater community -- both commercial and private -- sounded a call to arms. The effects of construction of the project, and its subsequent operation under a 50-year Federal license -- were uncertain, and whitewater interests wanted assurances that the whitewater flows would not be destroyed by power development interests.

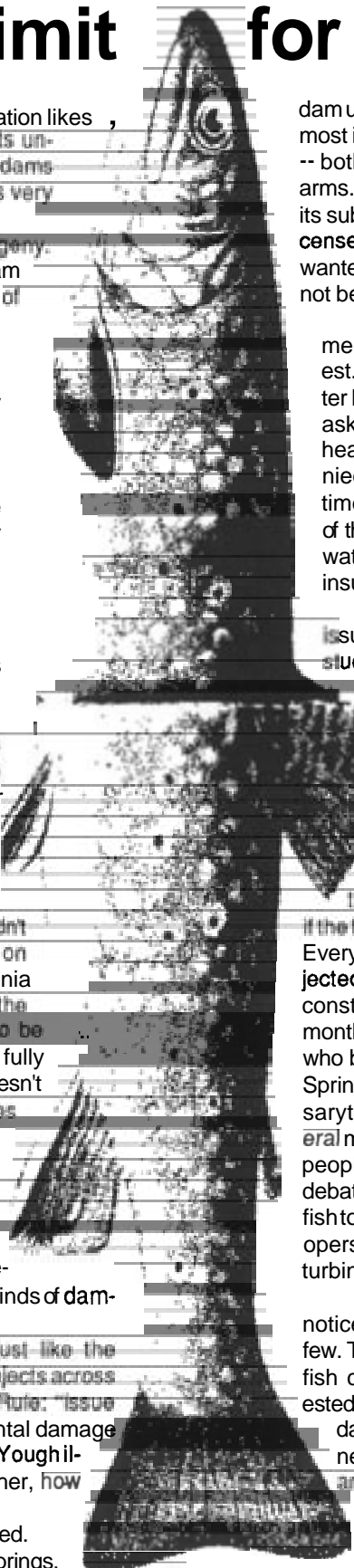
The Pennsylvania Fish Commission commented on the application, but took no further interest. Meanwhile, American Rivers and 17 whitewater boating organizations and environmental groups asked that the license not be issued without a full hearing on the environmental effects. FERC denied their request, and because of a legal glitch, the time for appeal had expired. Privately, employees of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission labelled whitewater groups victims of alarmist hysteria who had insufficient trust in governmental agencies.

On August 23, 1985, the license was issued. It required only that the developer do a study and prepare -- one year before starting construction -- a plan to minimize fish kills at the project and agree to a schedule for making any modifications necessary, based on the study -- if State or Federal fishery agencies so recommended. Whitewater interests were effectively locked out.

The developer submitted a report in 1987 recommending, among other things, that the fish kill problem could most easily be handled if the fishery agency just stocked more fish in the lake. Everyone bitched about the report, and FERC rejected it officially. Nonetheless, FERC allowed project construction to begin in March of 1988. About a month later the developer (now another company who bought the project from the Borough of Seven Springs) suggested that fish screens might be necessary to keep the fish in the lake alive. For the next several months, FERC, the Pennsylvania State fisheries people and the developer engaged in interminable debate about whether the state should stock more fish to blow through the turbines or whether the developer should install fish screens to keep fish out of the turbines in the first place.

Then in December of 1989 people began to notice dead fish downstream of the project. Not just a few. They were everywhere -- thousands of mutilated fish carcasses -- even the newspapers got interested. Ultimately the whole thing became a big scandal. In western Pennsylvania, it's almost as big news as the S&L mess or Donald Trump's divorce and financial problems. Finally, pressured by public opinion more than anything else, the developer has agreed to suspend power production at certain times deemed to be especially high

risk for fish entrainment. Those "high risk" times seem to correspond with periods of times when whitewater flows are



needed downstream – not only do we have dorsal fins and gill slits floating in the eddies -- we don't have enough water to wash them all downstream. Still, no fish screens are in place -- or even on the drawing boards.

The moral of this tale? If someone tells you

"the check is in the mail", or "trust me -- you'll like it", or "I'll still love you in the morning", or "we'll just build this hydro project and take care of the environmental problems later"...just remember the cat food that lines the banks of the Lower Youghieny.

"Fruitbasket" threat blocked by Rahall

In the last AWA Journal, AWA detailed the twin threats to the fabulous rivers in West Virginia's "Fruitbasket" area -- a hydro project which would divert the flow of the far upper Gauley into the Elk River near Parcoal, and a strip mining application which would devastate the pristine headwaters of the Cranberry and the North Fork Cherry Rivers.

Congressional staffer Jim Zoia and Congressman Nick Rahall (D.-W.V.) were outraged, and have introduced legislation to temporarily protect these three river sections under Section 5(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This would designate the rivers as "study rivers" and would protect them from adverse development for three years. By that time, Monongahela

National Forest will surely have forwarded its recommendations for Wild and Scenic Rivers to Congress, hopefully with favorable recommendations for the Cranberry and North Fork Cherry.

In a related development, Congressman Rahall survived a stiff challenge in the Democratic primary in his district mounted by Ken Hechler, a former Congressman. After a personal and bitter campaign, Rahall won with 57% of the vote, much to the relief of the whitewater community.

In another related development, AWA has joined American Rivers, Inc. in formally intervening in FERC proceedings regarding the Parcoal hydro boondoggle on the Gauley.

Hydro industry whines over NOC conference

The National Hydropower Association has taken issue with a training session for National Park Service Riverwatch employees that was held at NOC in March. The power lobby, upset that now it has to deal with a federal agency that represents whitewater boaters, fired off a letter complaining about the preferential treatment it claims the NPS is giving whitewater rafters. Bern Collins, chief of the NPS Rivers and Recreation Policy branch, responded "Our intent was to train our own people on instream recreation and not to train hydropower people. It was not to educate our people on hydropower...we already have a background on reservoir recreation."

Elaine Evans, Executive Director of the National Hydropower Association, feels the NPS should not be involved with FERC dam relicensing. "I think the existing consultation process is very thorough...what I don't understand is why the National Park Service has a separate [relicensing] program? Why doesn't the

Fish and Wildlife Service have a separate program? Why doesn't the Park Service participate in the normal process?"

Bern Collins responds by saying that if the NPS waited for the intervention stage after the hydro-power license is filed with FERC to affect the EIS study, then it would miss out on all of the hard-and-fast decisions. "If we made our input through the normal environmental review, it would be too late in the process. The intent of pre-filing consultation is to get in early and work out a program before the operator is too committed...in stream recreational use has increased dramatically in the past 10 years and has had little or no representation and expertise in government. Thus, we have much to catch up on in order to provide equal consideration for this recreation activity."

If the present process that the power lobby alludes to were followed, then you and I, the boating public would be excluded from the FERC relicensing process. Without the Riverwatch program, whitewater boaters would not be represented by a federal agency (such as the fishing lobby's representation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Federal representation is key to influencing the decision making process in the second stage (agencies only) of the relicensing process.

Support the NPS Riverwatch program by writing your congressman in support of increased funding for the program.

Clarks Fork promoted as "Wild River"

A Senate bill now before a congressional committee would designate a 20.5 mile stretch of the Clarks Fork River in Wyoming as a wild river. The sponsor, Republican Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming says of the branch of the Yellowstone: "For thousands of years its cold, clear waters have roared and cut their way through a remote canyon in northwest

Wyoming where, at times, the granite walls tower 1,200 feet straight up from the water's edge. Its waterfalls, rapids, cascades and boulder floodplains are outstandingly remarkable for both their scenic and recreational values."

The bill authorizes \$500,000 dollars for land acquisitions from willing sellers only. A snag in the legislation, however, centers

on water rights and state's rights vs. federal rights in that area. The bill, according to Wallop, is not intended as a means for the federal government to interfere with the state's exercise of, and administration over, existing water rights. The bill is also worded to not interfere with the development or operation of dams downstream of the area designated for wild status in the bill.

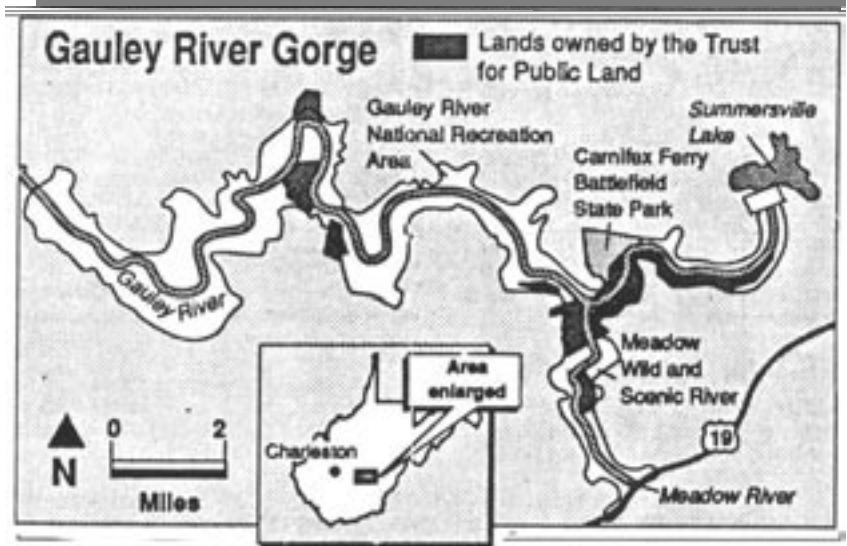
Paddlers pressure for Gauley gorge buyout

In 1988, Congress created the Gauley River National Recreation Area; however 99% of the Gauley River Gorge is still in private hands. Unless Congress appropriates money to buy the land in the Gauley Gorge, that land will still be open to threats from strip mining, logging and unchecked road construction.

In 1989 alone, new roads into the Gorge were completed by insensitive commercial outfitters, and timbering contracts were leased for areas on river left between the Summersville Dam and Carnifax Ferry at the confluence with the Meadow River.

Congress is currently considering a plan to appropriate 2 million dollars for Gauley land acquisition. You, as a paddler, should write your congressman immediately in support of the land acquisition for the Gauley River National Recreation Area.

Letters to West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee are also needed. Byrd is key to convincing Congress of the merits of the 2 million dollar appropriation. If you know any paddlers in West



Virginia, please contact them and ask them to write to Senator Byrd urging him to pursue the funding.

Half of the appropriation is earmarked for purchase of lands already held by a non-profit public interest group, the Trust for Public Land (see map). The other million dollars could be used by the National Park Service for direct land acquisitions.

For further information on this important and timely issue, contact AWA Director Mac Thornton at (202) 543-4923.

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Congress to examine Grand Canyon erosion

Congressman George Miller (D - CA) Chairman of the Water and Power Subcommittee has introduced legislation that intends to protect the Grand Canyon National Park from further harm during the duration of the EIS study of Glen Canyon Dam operation. The bill, HP 4498, states:

"The problems at Grand Canyon are the direct result of the way the Secretary of the Interior operates Glen Canyon Dam. By dumping almost unimaginable volumes of water through the dam's turbines every day to generate peaking hydroelectric power, the operators of the dam are unnecessarily risking the

resources of the Grand Canyon National Park." Miller's bill, if passed, would order the Secretary of the Interior to within 90 days after the date of enactment, develop and implement emergency interim operating criteria for Glen Canyon Dam, that would create a power release schedule that minimizes fluctuating water releases and establishes rates of flow changes that will minimize adverse environmental impacts in the National Park.

Spearheaded by Friends of the River and American Rivers, efforts to begin the Environmental Impact Study for the Glen Canyon Dam at the headwaters

of the Grand Canyon are underway. The study, ordered by the Secretary of the Interior and aimed at the Federal Bureau of Reclamation (the dam licensee) seeks remedies to the environmental damage caused by the present operating plan for the dam.

A five year study just released by Glen Canyon Environmental Studies put to rest the issue of whether or not the dam was causing damage downstream in the National Park. All sides agreed that operating the dam as a peak load power facility damages, perhaps permanently, the environment downstream. This damages includes beach erosion, loss of fish and wildlife, and a possible violation of National Endangered Species Act concerning the threatened native Humpback Chub. The study also mentioned that river recreation was degraded, in part by beach erosion.

In a statement before the Secretary of the Interior, Kevin Wolf of Friends of the River testified to reduce the effects of peak load fluctuations (water discharges) from the dam during the year long study. Wolf also testified to lengthen the study period, claiming the December 1991 deadline as "unrealistic given the complexity and detail of the research and analysis needed to do a thorough E.I.S."

Many options have been offered to offset the beach erosion, believed caused by a lack of sediment carried downstream of the dam. The dam blocks the sediment's passage, contributing to the reduction of usable campsites along

the Colorado's watercourse. These options advanced by CREDA, the association of utilities that receives the subsidized and underpriced power from Glen Canyon Dam, have been opposed by Friends of the River and other environmentalists as quick-fix solutions that don't deal with the real problem caused by fluctuating levels.

CREDA's EIS position statement contains several alarming recommendations: although erosion is caused primarily by water fluctuations, CREDA suggests limiting paddler access to the canyon or placing fees on canyon recreational use to rectify damage caused by the utilities.

In any case, CREDA attempts to shift responsibility to paddlers rather than addressing the real problems.

What's scary is that some of these half-baked schemes could become reality if the whitewater boating public doesn't speak on its own behalf. That's why we need you to help express your views on average water levels, water level fluctuations, private boater access to the Grand Canyon, and quality of life issues (such as camping alongside the Colorado).

You are asked to help determine the future use of the Grand Canyon as it applies to whitewater recreation. Write your Congressmen and Senators, identifying the bill (HR 4498), asking for co-sponsorship, and comment on the damage occurring in the Grand Canyon during the EIS period (which ends December 1991).



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Animas and South Platte

Setbacks for dams on two Colorado rivers

Work on the 589 Million dollar Animas-La Plata water diversion project has been put on "indefinite hold" following a finding by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that it would endanger the survival of the threatened Colorado squawfish. The finding postponed groundbreaking for the huge water diversion project being built by the Interior Department's Bureau of Reclamation. The project's concept would involve pumping water from the Animas River and storing it in a reservoir for agricultural and water supply use. The new dam and diversion project would also affect a thriving tourist/rafting industry on the nearby San Juan river. The

project could be delayed for as long as seven years, if study estimates hold true.

"It's a major milestone..another one of those turning points in history where people will look back and say, 'the way water is regarded in the West changed in 1990.'" That's according to Lori Potter, an attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

"Obviously, the project is on indefinite hold." Mark Stephenson is a spokesman for Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan, Jr. "There is cause for concern that it [the dam] would drive them [the fish] to extinction."

While squawfish won for whitewater, the squawfish didn't win for the

squaws, braves or chiefs of the Ute indian tribe. The Ute would benefit the most from the diversion project, the tribe hoping to receive the water under a 1986 agreement. A spokesman for the dam's Congressional proponent, Representative Ben Nighthorse Campbell (D-Colo.) says the government is renegeing on promises made to the Ute Indians 120 years ago.

The squawfish was the focus of a 1960's eradication program by the Interior Department. A member of the minnow family that can reach six feet in length, Interior officials acknowledged that the fish was then considered a threat to trout. Now its a threat to whitewater threat-

ening dams.

Colorado paddlers had more good news as the EPA is moving to swiftly veto an Army Corps of Engineers permit to build a mammoth hydroelectric dam that would flood 7,300 acres of prime recreation area on the South Platte. Secondly, President Bush has told outdoor reporters that "...I would be disinclined to overrule a decision that's been given this much study."

The EPA study was led by EPA official Lee DeHihns. He says the loss of that recreation area did not justify the construction of that dam, nor did the argument by Denver and 42 other communities that say they want the dam for water.

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National Recreation Area proposed for American

In a fight against the proposed Auburn Dam project that would flood 48 miles of the North and Middle Forks of the American River in California, the American River Coalition has proposed an American River National Recreation Area.

This recreation area would include the two threatened stretches, preventing close to twenty four miles of pristine whitewater from being inundated by the proposed flood control lake. The recreation plan offers alternative flood control measures that would comply with the existing Sacramento Flood Control Plan and save the two stretches from a watery grave.

These measures could include an alternative 100-year flood control project, which would include the strengthening of levees, better utilization of upstream reservoir capacities in the spring, and an earlier Fall **drawdown** of upstream flood control projects, which could provide off season whitewater

boating. The state of California's recreation department is against the federal designation of the site; it feels it alone can manage the area. But without the BLM endorsement and the creation of the federal area, protection will not be granted to the 48 miles of river, half of which is whitewater.

The recreation area would include almost 100

miles of the American River system, from near the headwaters in the Sierra to its confluence with the Sacramento River not far from the state capitol. It would include 80,000 acres of wildlife habitat, recreation lands, and historic and cultural sites. The recreation area is currently under study by the Bureau of Land Management, who intends to complete the study and issue a report in September.

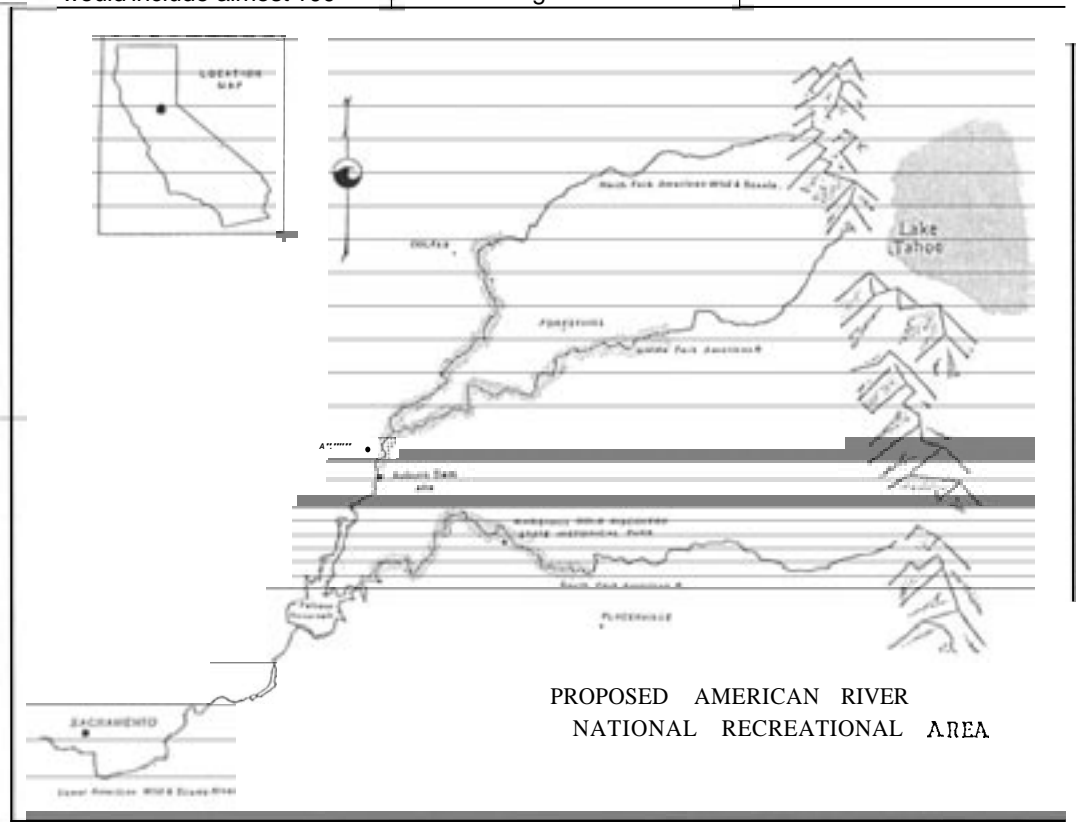
ARC is asking you to write to the Bureau of Land Management at the

address below before July 15th to submit your comments on creating a recreation area out of the threatened river segments.

Comments after July 15th will not be accepted by BLM.

It is doubly important for out-of-state boaters to write to BLM, to express concern for the project and to express intent on visiting the Sacramento region just to go whitewater boating.

Send your letter today to: Edward L. Hasty, BLM, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-2841 Sacramento.



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AWA moves to protect New England rivers

The bankrupt Public Service Company of New Hampshire finally got around to holding a public hearing on the Ayers Island Dam Project on the **Pemigewasset** River. This dam controls one of only two off season whitewater paddling spots in the Granite State.

AWA and local clubs including the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Merrimack Valley Paddlers testified before PSNH company officials on the need for standardized recreational flows between 1500 and 3000 cfs. PSNH officials have cooperated with the dissemination of river flow information at the Bristol, New Hampshire hydro project, but have been uncooperative in granting

special releases to hold a river festival. Over 200 people attended the hearing. The two-and-a-half mile Class II - III stretch sees intensive use during the summer and fall months when natural flow runs have dried up.

Pemigewasset Loon Mountain Ski Area's hopes of expanding its ski operations into the White Mountain National Forest was shot out from under them when the National Park Service withdrew its support for the expansion plan. The plan called for additional National Forest acreage to be turned into ski slopes at the cost of diminished flows in a 6-mile stretch of boulder filled Class IV whitewater.

The Forest Service undertook a supplemental study to assess concerns raised by environmental groups which protested the plan to pump water from the East Branch of the Pemigewasset River to a pond for the purposes of snowmaking. Also of concern were the inadequacies of the present sewage treatment facility in Lincoln, New Hampshire to handle the plan's expanded condominium development, and damage to the surrounding forest, including erosion issues. The decision means Loon Mountain has to go back to step one in the lengthy approval process required for commercial ventures on National Park Service lands. The East Branch of the Pemigewasset

offers 12 miles of continuous Class III-IV whitewater.

Deerfield Relicense The battlelines have softened somewhat over the FERC relicensing process of several hydro projects on stretches of the Deerfield River in Vermont and Massachusetts...the Franklin County Commission has taken final comments on its river management plan that is expected to be released in final form by the end of June. This management plan will then be submitted to state agencies that will use the plan as the basis of the 2nd stage FERC meetings which happen between state and federal agencies and the dam operator. Norm Sims of the Berkshire Chapter of the



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Appalachian Mountain Club feels there has been positive movement in the talks, which started out months ago at the "shouting match" level and have now coalesced into positive sessions.

A whitewater suitability study is underway with boaters used to evaluate test flow levels on each of the five whitewater segments under the FERC license. A second study, a whitewater recreation study, is in the proposal stage with different consulting groups involved with making proposals to New England Power Company. Sims expects movement on that study in the near future, with the study taking about six

months to complete.

The power company has installed a river level information line: (413) 625-8414. This line will give you flow information in cfs for current operations at three of the five sections. The major section, Monroe Bridge, offers Class IV whitewater while segments downstream, such as Fife Brook, offer Class II - III challenges. Sims says boaters have really made a difference in the proceedings there, showing up in consistently strong numbers. If you would like to help out with the relicensing effort on the Upper **Deerfield**, contact AWA Regional Representative Bill Hildreth at (617) 383-2785.

Court rules for FERC

Rock Creek decision sets dangerous precedent

The Reagan-legacy U.S. Supreme Court has ruled unanimously that states seeking to protect natural resources do not have the authority to impose more stringent restrictions on hydroelectric projects than those regulations defined by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

In a case that concerned the state of California's efforts to assure the survival of trout in the American River and the Rock Creek tributary, the court rejected California's attempts to impose stricter flow rate structures after it determined that standards established between the hydroelectric producer and FERC were not adequate. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor said

federal regulations [established by FERC] setting minimum flow rates preempt state standards in such situations.

The decision is another in a series of **pro-industry** stances taken by the Reagan Court and a blow to conservationists. John Echeverria, general counsel for American Rivers, says the ruling "declares open season on state fish and wildlife resources." **American Rivers** joined the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society and other environmental groups in support of state's authority over their natural resources. California was supported by all 49 other states in its attempt to exert control over minimum discharge rates to protect its natural resources.

Savage legislation

The Congresswoman from Western Maryland, Beverly Byron (D-Md.), has announced her intention to introduce legislation in Congress to forever declare the Savage River "off limits" to hydropower development. Byron's decision was the culmination of an intense campaign by paddlers allied with the Savage River Defense Fund, in which approximately 200 letters from Byron's constituents were obtained through **door-to-door** canvassing. Even more significant was the support of Maryland State Senator John Bambacus and other key local officials from Western Maryland.

Paddlers have long considered Byron's support for saving the Savage to be the linchpin of getting a bill moving in Congress to assure that future releases of water on the Savage are not jeopardized by more competing uses for the water. As a member of the House Interior Committee, Byron is in an excellent position to get the bill passed.

Paddler Mike Fetchero of Cumberland, MD, played a key role in getting the state and local officials on board, and D.C. paddler Gary Steinberg masterminded the successful canvassing effort.

The Savage River Defense Fund defeated a hydro proposal from Reed Hydro in 1988, and beat off another hydro proposal in 1989 from **Synergics, Inc.** Rather than wait for yet another hydro filing, Savage River Defense Fund Chairman Mac Thornton went first to the State of Maryland and then to Byron to get a permanent solution going.

The Savage was

the site of the 1989 World Championships, and World Cup races are scheduled on the Savage in early July of this year.

AWA opposes Lost River dam plan

The American Whitewater Affiliation, American Canoe Association and the Canoe Cruisers Association have signed on as plaintiffs in a lawsuit challenging the construction of a flood control dam near Lost City, West Virginia. The dam is located on Kimsey Run, an important tributary of the Lost River. The principal plaintiffs are the Cacapon River Committee, Lost River Committee, and residents of the Lost and Cacapon River valleys. The dependents will include the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, several state agencies in West Virginia and others.

The suit alleges that the environmental impacts of the dam have not been adequately studied or accounted for, that unlawful procedures were used by the Soil Conservation Service, and that the engineering and economic justifications for the dam are flawed. The case is regarded as a test challenge by environmentalists of pro-dam forces in West Virginia, which have been using fear of a repeat of the Great Flood of 1985 to justify dam boondoggles through the state.

The case was filed in U.S. District court in West Virginia by pro-bono Washington attorney Natalie Black.

conserve

Landowners oppose Michigan wild rivers bill

Private landowners are objecting to an omnibus Michigan wild rivers bill that seeks to protect almost 1,000 miles of rivers, nearly 40% of which is bounded by private land. The bulk of the rivers to be protected under the bill are found within four national forests on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The U.S. Forest service agrees with the designation of 540 of the 959 miles proposed.

Chuck Cushman, president of the National Inholders Association, says the long term impact on the local tax base of federal designation is more insidious than the condemnation of inholders who would be affected by the bill. It appears 26 miles of rivers that extend outside of the national forest boundaries will not be included in the latest version of the bill.



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New York suffers four whitewater deaths

Fatal accidents on intermediate water and a bizarre episode at Niagara Falls mar the first half of the boating season

By CHARLIE WALBRIDGE
AWA Safety Chairman

The first half of the 1990 whitewater season has, as usual, claimed a number of its participants. The weekend of March 17-18 brought extremely high water to New York State, and this was a major factor in the death of two paddlers connected with the Adirondack Mountain Club. The best publicized fatality occurred on the Salmon River near Pulaski, N.Y. This class III run was just beginning to overflow its banks and was very fast and continuous. The victim was Dean Middleditch was a novice kayaker just beginning to learn to deal with moving water. At the Fairgrounds Middleditch flipped and swam. He was carried into a log jam where he disappeared under water. Group members got to the jam but could not reach him. The rapid was right in the town of Pulaski, so a member of the group was sent for help.

Rescue personnel responded immediately. The water level was lowered somewhat by cutting back releases at an upstream dam. Even with this help, it took over four hours to recover the body; the victim's life vest had apparently snagged on a branch. Rescuers sent the group "downstream to their cars" even though the accident occurred in the center of town. This was a bad move, as the group was certainly cold and badly shaken by this time. Another swim resulted. The authorities and the group should have anticipated this and offered the group the option of being driven downstream by car.

One of the greatest challenges for those running flooded rivers lies in avoiding log jams and other flow-through obstacles which lie in the fast-moving current. These are on dry land at more modest flows. While the actual river difficulty was not great, the high water and its danger for swimmers made the

run inadvisable for novices. Indeed, several other groups with beginners had numerous swimmers on the previous day. Why the great lottery pulled Middleditch's number and not someone else's is not for any of us to understand, but given the number of swimmers on that stretch over the weekend it's not surprising that someone got into trouble.

Information is sketchy on the other accident, which claimed the life of George Leshner, a 64 year-old medical researcher on the Normans Kill near Guilderland, New York on March 17. My information comes from newspaper clippings and second-hand reports, and I am still looking for more information. The victim was making the run with a partner when their canoe, an aluminum boat with an inner tube under the center thwarts for flotation, swamped. His partner escaped easily; the victim caught his feet under the seat and stayed with the boat. At this time it's unclear what kind of shoes he was wearing. The inner tube being used for flotation popped free, and the canoe began to sink. As the group struggled desperately to keep Leshner's head above the icy water others went and got help. Officers Mark Jones and Dan McNally, an experienced paddler and police paramedic, came on scene and with shore backup from local firefighters were able to release the body. The victim was transported to nearby Albany Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

On April 29 there was a commercial rafting fatality on the Hudson River. Details are sketchy, but this much is clear: The Hudson was running at 6.5', a high level. The victim's raft swamped on the Indian, a tributary which most groups use for access, and was carried to the Hudson where it slammed against a

cliff. The victim, a woman in her mid-twenties, fell out of the raft. Somehow she got caught between the raft and the wall and hit her head. The company she was running with does not provide helmets. When she was brought back into the boat it was clear that she had massive head injuries. Although they were close to the road, the evacuation took 5 1/2 hours. A helicopter was called, but could not land. CPR was administered during the entire time. She was alive when she reached the hospital, but died some time later.

Nantahala Outdoor Center personnel reported a foot entrapment at the base of Nantahala Falls on May 18. The victim, Ian Jenkinson, was part of a competent group of Texas intermediates running a number of rivers in the area. His boat capsized, and he and his partner went over the falls on the left hand side. Shoved under water feet first, his foot became caught in a submerged ledge just beyond the backwash of the bottom hole. Rescue was attempted by NOC guides, who were able after about twenty minutes to tie a rope to the victim's arm and pull him upstream and out. Strong resuscitation attempts were made by two doctors who were on the scene, but they were insufficient.

Study of the rapid by NOC guides after the water was turned off revealed a split in the bedrock probably uncovered by recent flooding. It was refilled with rocks and stones which have remained there since. It's unclear if the victim was trying to stand when he got caught.

C-1 paddler Jessie Sharp died on Tuesday, June 7 following a deliberate attempt to run Niagara Falls. He attempted this enormous (181 feet) drop on this huge, high-volume (250,000 cfs) river without a life vest or helmet. Sharp, 28, was an experienced paddler who lived in a tent by the Ocoee River in Tennessee. A loner known to only a few buddies, he was obsessed by the idea of running Niagara Falls. He had made the trip up there twice before. Once, ten years ago, his parents found out about his plans and called police. On another attempt he was talked out of the idea by a newspa-

per reporter. This time he was accompanied friends who apparently believed that he could succeed, and who were set up to film the descent. He was sure enough of his success that he left his car downstream and made dinner reservations. After running the falls he expected to solo the gorge below, a piece of Class V+ big waster which has tested the skills of some of the country's top experts. But clearly that was the least of his worries!

His run was witnessed by hundreds of tourists in addition to his friends. Putting in on the Canadian side, he ran down through some scrappy spots (he had to get out and refloat his boat once), then through some huge, hole-strewn big water leading to the ledge. He twirled his paddle confidently as he went over the lip, but below there his "run" fell apart. The drop was so huge that he could not hope to launch himself clear of the falling water as is done on smaller falls. His bow caught the water below, causing him to pitch pole end for end until he hit the bottom. His paddle appeared fifteen minutes later; his boat took an hour to surface. As of this writing the body has not been recovered.

The advances of the past three decades have made me uncomfortable telling someone that a drop is unrunnable. This case is an exception. Sharp's boating experience should have given him a better understanding of the nature of his undertaking. His friends, when interviewed by police, said that "until someone's tried it, you can't say for sure it can't be done." Its true that we're running rapids considered impossible a decade ago, but that doesn't make any cascade, however crazy, sensible sport. New paddlers may not understand that the advances of the past thirty years did not come all at once, but rather as the latest steps in a progressive series of calculated risks. Some people take larger and faster steps than others, but knowledge and skill, rather than blind courage, is the basis for successful runs of difficult rapids.

The AWA has long championed the right of boaters to take calculated risks in pursuit of their sport. I personally feel that people should be allowed to try any damn fool stretch of river they want so long as it does not endanger others. But clearly this attempt clearly went beyond the bounds of prudent risk taking, and was more on par with playing Russian Roulette with a fully loaded

pistol and hoping for a misfire. The only people to survive Niagara Falls have been in fully enclosed capsules with the exception of a young girl who was swept over the falls with her father when their canoe capsized upstream. Even she was wearing a life jacket, which probably saved her life. Although Sharp had done considerable training, including a run over a 60' waterfall, nothing in his experience could have prepared him for a drop three that size on a river with the huge volume of The Niagara.

My own experience with runnable drops has heightened my own appreciation for waterfalls and cascades encountered when hiking or sightseeing. I'm astonished that Sharp's own experience didn't give him more of an appreciation of what he was looking at. I'm also surprised that his friends didn't give him a better "reality check", but I doubt that it would have made any difference. Sharp was clearly totally committed. I've heard tales of friends physically restraining paddlers, refusing to run shuttles, or carting off their gear when an extreme drop was contemplated. Many of these "crazies" came back to make the run successfully later.

Needless to say, the media has gotten a lot of mileage out of Sharp's foolhardiness. This is the worst possible publicity for our sport, and I suspect it may have compromised the AWA's effort to gain permissions for skilled boaters to attempt the big water of the gorge downstream. I find it hard to understand why his crazy stunt made the evening news and countless papers throughout the country while a year ago while Jon Luginbill, our five-time World Champion, made his dazzling winning run at the Savage River last July with little public notice outside his home state of Maryland. Apparently senseless death, not cool skill, sells newspapers.

The general public likes to think of us all as crazy thrill-seekers and this sort of activity reinforces their image. To the average person most rapids look impossibly dangerous. It must be hard for them to imagine river running as a physically and mentally challenging sport played on a fascinating, ever-changing liquid medium flowing through uniquely beautiful surroundings. Films and videos taken by Sharp's group were confiscated by police. If they are returned, expect to see them in a tabloid at a supermarket near you.

On a more positive note, there was an astonishing rescue on June 7 of Lincoln Williams, an expert kayaker, on "The Numbers" section of the Arkansas River in Colorado. Several guides were running this section at high water (4'; 2500 cfs) on a day off when one of them flipped and swam. The victim, while attempting to push the kayak to shore, noted that it was trailing a throw line which had apparently come loose. This was very dangerous situation; the ensuing narrative will make clear. Ropes must be carefully and thoughtfully stowed. As Williams ducked under the rope to facilitate the rescue it snagged, tangling him and his paddle and pulling both underwater. The kayak was stripped from the victim's body in seconds. Bobbing at the end of the line in fierce current, he was held under for almost five minutes until his paddle broke, setting him free. He was picked up downstream by one of his buddies and, assisted by a commercial raft trip, brought to shore.

The group performed full CPR for over 45 minutes. At one point they were ready to give up, but a passing kayaker came along and encouraged them to continue. Shortly thereafter Williams miraculously began breathing on his own. The ambulance arrived, and he was taken to a local hospital where he was put on a life flight for Boulder. There despite the pessimism of doctors he developed none of the complications connected with near-drowning incidents. Two days later came out of his coma, apparently intact neurologically. As of this writing he is able to recognize friends and family and seems well on his way to recovery.

Although the official "line" is that you should never stop CPR unless a doctor declares a victim dead, those of us involved with wilderness activities have not been impressed by the poor success rate experienced in the field. No one I know of has undergone CPR for that long under those conditions and lived to tell about it. Clearly this is "one for the books"; a cold-water near-drowning story with a happy ending. It provides the motivation to continue resuscitation efforts for at least a full hour and longer if possible. If the ambulance had arrived earlier these efforts might well have been stopped, and the victim would not have survived. Williams' youth and fitness, along with the competence and persistence of his rescuers, made the difference.



Bagpipes in Appalachia!

Three Scottish paddlers twigged that the Appalachians in spring would offer some **stonking** whitewater. Chris Dickinson provides an account of three weeks on the backroads of the eastern U.S. pursuing the region's top runs while asking questions, "Are squirt boaters suffering from **T.O.A.D.S?**" and "What are all these **Grockles** doing on the river?"

.....
**Andy Jackson guffaws over American idea of a kayak. The
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Dear U.S. Paddlers,

Yes, we're back home in bonnie Scotland once again after a brilliant visit to the Appalachians. Here, it is spring (May 1990) and unusually sunny so the rivers are draining away and everyone is polishing up the hulls of their sea kayaks and thinking of weekends cruising through islands and tide races on the west coast. With luck we'll also get one or two downpours to give us a quick hair run on one of the local spate streams (creeks to you!).

In the U.S. we met and made many friends, and also failed to meet some of you folks who had been in touch earlier and might be interested to know what we got up to in our three weeks of non-stop action. If you didn't meet us (or write to us before our tip) then you are probably wondering who on earth is writing all this drivel. Well it's Chris Dickinson, Andy Jackson, and John Hough from Cowal Kayak Club in the west of Scotland, just back from a whitewater "William Nealy" pilgrimage to Appalachia.

Circumstances (people, weather and whims in that order) dictated where we ended up going. If we were to draw on a map the route we traveled, it would look a bit like the Napoleonic campaign of a drunken soldier ant! All in all, we had a great time and we'd like to think that we were not a burden to any of those folks we met -- we hope we actually enriched their paddling lives (just a little) by seeing our outlandish approach to the sport of kayaking. *So*, here goes.

We arrived on March 25th in a cold, sunny Boston to a welcome from Andy's uncle Quentin who was staggeringly good to us, driving all the way from Delaware, putting us up, helping us get supplied, and most of all lending us a Honda Civic in which we went searching for whitewater. Next day we drove out the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Ohio pyle and camped overnight in -10 Celsius weather (who knows what that is in Fahrenheit -- but it felt a bit brass monkeys, I can tell you). Paddled the Loop on the Lower Yough twice for a warm up. Next morning (after the brass monkey visited us again), Bob "goin' to the Canyon" Broadbent from Philadelphia arrived with Jim "get outa that hole I'm coming in" Keresztesy from New Jersey and we paddled the Lower Yough with them. Jim paddled open boat, and we paddled our trusty Mountain Bats. That night we drove a megadrive to Erwin, Tennessee via a load of back roads and via North Carolina (thanks for the navigation, Andy!).

Chris and John get together with Bob Broadbent of Philadelphia in a friendly hole on the Lower Yough to exchange ideas about Scottish and Appalachian kayaking.



The Nolichucky River was running good and we joined up with Ken "Corsica" Sanders and his "mob", Charlie, Pete, Pete, Pete, Don and company. The upper section seemed in a wee hurry and was fun. Notable was a playhole of the play-with-you variety which sucked 'ol Charlie out of his skimpy wee squirt boat like a high-powered Hoover and gave John a couple of warning swims. The next day, after another mega-drive, saw us at the New River Gorge at a level of 7 feet.

To squirt or not to squirt...that is the question (Bill Shakespeare).

For days before it seemed the debate had been raging about whether the lads would squirt this run, and in the end only "Mystery Move" Pete went the whole hog. Great run, big holes...eh Jim? Especially enjoyed The Keeneys. Andy and John enjoyed their first taste of squirting, running Fayette Station Rapid at around 15,000 cfs...great moves John (for Pete's sake get me the **** out of here!!!!).

31st March was cold and the highlights of the Arden Section of the Tygart helped to warm us up. The last big rapid was a cracker, the undercut drop was a nutcracker, and the lemmings who poured over Moats Falls were clearly crackers. But there wasn't anyone around in white coats, so what the hell.

We said bye to the part timers whilst the serious boaters moved onto the Cheat Canyon. There are plenty of memories of many pleasant but easy rapids and a great deal of rubber projectiles (no, we don't have rafts in Scotland!). Included was our first sight of a pair of duckies being almost trashed. John deftly skirted Recyclotron and drifted down into the Cloud Chamber with his smile temporarily absent from inside his faceguard. Great rapids and lots of "grockles" to watch...and perform for! A bunch of squirts came down with us; mind I didn't they were all that small - just their boats. We bade farewell to them all and set out on our own to the dreaded Upper Yough. Ken's words were ringing in our ears, "Yu guys'll luv de Upper Yock" and "if you try to scout the run it'll take you two days". Red rag to a bull so said the guidebook, so let's get there and get on with it.

Sang Run to Friendsville took us three hours and we checked the last ledge of

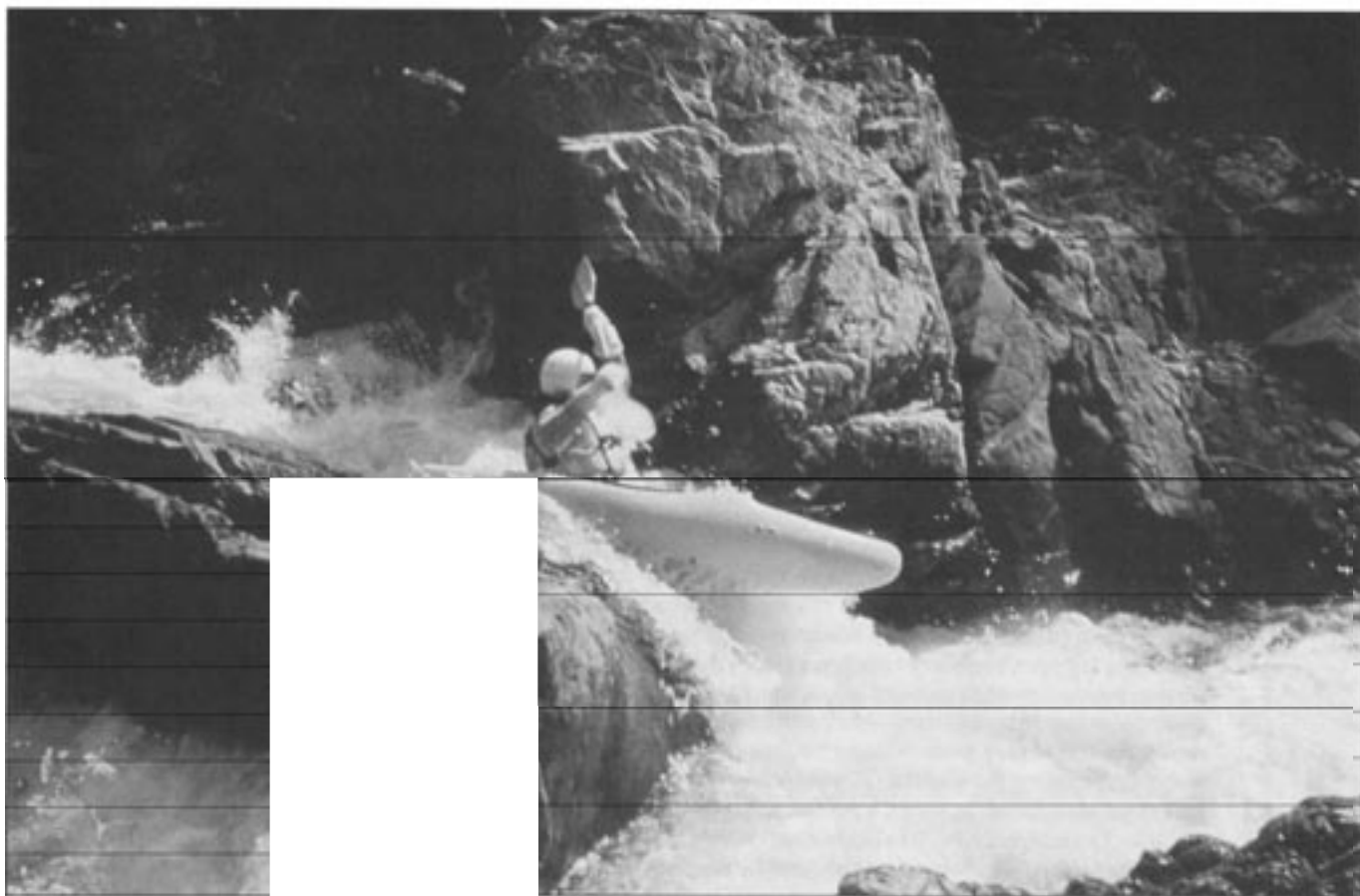
National Falls, Heinzerling and Meat Cleaver. It was right up our street, definitely one of the highlights of our trip. We spent much of our time in Scotland on small, tight, steep runs and the Upper **Yough to us** was excellent boat scouting territory, having no major waterfalls. We couldn't resist the Top **Yough** the next day, starting above Little Swallow Falls for "more of the same". Finished the run in **sub-zero** (Celsius) conditions (32 F and below, Editor) and with snow beginning to fall we cursed the northerly wind and decided there and then to go south until the sun came out again (sorry Sterling).

Driving into the night through snow and ice down the Interstate (when John and I were driving and into the ditch when Andy was driving) we skidded through Maryland, West "by God" Virginia, North Carolina and finally to Wilson Creek Gorge in the early hours. We awoke to blue sky and sun...right on. Pancakes for breakfast (again). Why is life so good?

Wilson Creek, running a bit **lowish**, was a unique run through a series of superb granite drops and rapids. Ten Foot Falls is an outstanding place, although it's a shame about the garbage. Granite has to be one of the loveliest rocks for water to flow around, over, and occasionally under.

A drive over the mountains dropped us at the put-in for the **Watauga**, which looked low to us, although we didn't quite know what level qualified as low. A phone call to Pete in Atlanta (of the Ken "Corsica" Sanders mob) beckoned us down to the Ocoee, reputedly running 3,500 cfs. When we arrived, the water was off and running a meager 1000 cfs or so. A nice sunny day, but arguably the least memorable river run of the entire trip.

The Ocoee run that day was in stark contrast to our run on Section IV of the Chattooga River the next morning. Pete was our guide, accompanied by our crew and a couple of mature fellows in a C2. **Bull Sluice, Woodall Shoals, Raven Rock Rapid, Seven Foot Falls** and the Five Falls area were gems in anyone's book and we were lucky to get a nice level as well.



The author running the Roy Gorge in a Topolino. This extremely short boat is becoming more popular on steep rocky rivers in Britain.

Next was the Upper Tellico in low water with frost on the windshield. We'd heard lots about this river. Dan and Tom from Chattanooga (home of the choo-choo?) joined us and hey -- presto Dan was in a Mountain Bat! The Tellico is a waterfall freak's delight and a nightmare for any sane, vertigo-suffering non-swimmer. A side stream cascading in on the left bank part way down had more "lemming fun" for the vertically addicted, which included Andy, Dan and Tom. Andy, you see, is still suffering the last effects of a dose of T.O.A.D.S (take off and die syndrome) whilst it was clear that Dan and Tom also had the full blown symptoms of this terrible affliction which has swept Europe and now seems to have gotten hold in the U.S. You can always spot the sufferers...a glazed look in the eyes, a head which looks to sit uncomfortably close to the body, and a limp. Tom was also nursing a back injury from a car smash and soothed it by taking one of the biggest falls backwards! We spent the afternoon on a scouting mission in wildest Carolina to look for and look at Slickrock Creek, which seemed kinda fun at the time as it mirrors the sort of thing I get up to back home.

The guys we paddled with spoke well of the Watauga, so we hammered the Honda Civic back up there the next morning, getting lost for the umpteenth time in Johnson City, the town with no road signs. The Watauga Gorge is brilliant --take it from us. It's tame appearance at the put-in belies the fun to follow. We bank scouted three or four drops and ran the rest from our boats. At the main falls we ran the rocky left side (wrong way to Tennessee?) not knowing the feasibility of the central drop. Nice Mountain Bat country this with all the rapids runnable. I can't imagine how you guys can do these kind of rivers in Dancers, let alone boats like the Reflex and Screaming Meanie. Must have a death wish or acute T.O.A.D.S syndrome, I suppose!

Time to drive north again as the water's dropping in Tennessee. Back to the fog shrouded New River Gorge and bridge again, this time at 8 feet. The highlight of this encounter -- a Sleepy Shuttle. "I guess this one's on me guys..I've had kayakers from all over the world before, but I ain't never had kayakers from Scotland before." Big fun in the New River Gorge the second time around, so we decided to extend the fun (and the run) and headed over to the New River Dries, which was carrying around 7000 cfs.

For those of you who haven't done this stretch of the New, the Dries is a scenic and fun section with an easy shuttle, well worth the effort. A lot of water finds its way round some pretty mega boulders between occasional rock walls.

The Meadow River looked really high so we headed for the top section, encouraged by the description of THE rapid in the guide lent to us by Bill Blauvelt. Eight miles of flat water precede the goodies, but the scenery was nice and the continuous rapids were continuously continuous once they arrived, one requiring bank inspection. The Meadow was honking down the hillside (over 2,000 cfs) and so we twigged that it would be feeding the Gauley from the confluence down, even though there was no water to speak of escaping from Summersville Dam.

Being our only chance to see the Gauley, we drive to the dam and put in and scraped down the upper section, literally, and hit water just above Lost Paddle. Scouting from our boats, this was the most enjoyable rapid of the day. We walked Iron Ring, which looked like a go but it was freezing out and we had a long way to the takeout at Swiss. The "Hi! we're from Scotland...which road do you run along to get back to Summersville" ploy seemed to work a treat!

Thursday the 12th was to be our last paddling day. We bumped into Jody Dixon and Mike Feldman from Northville, New York and a couple of guys from North Carolina, one of whom we knicknamed "Gauge". "Gauge" seemed to be more concerned with checking the gauges than running the rivers. With snow falling onto a Christmas card landscape, we tracked down the Upper Cranberry which was stonking down. How did I know? I could see it! The top section heads downhill fast and is fun, fun, fun! The cold start was soon forgotten, along with our disappointment at not getting onto the Big Sandy. Andy and John led a merry Mountain Bat dance down the Cranberry with "Gauge" in hot pursuit. The rest of us danced our way down more sedately, enjoying the wonderfully intricate rapids and drops against the backdrop of sun, snow and rhododendrons. In short, a memorable river and a memorable trip.

On our drive back to Boston we called in to see Great Falls in high flow and were quite impressed. Low flow would be fun, maybe another time.

Appalachia was good to us, even if it was a bit cool at times for us vagabond canvas

dwellers. We paddled every day on a different section for nearly three weeks and enjoyed exploring some of the harder runs on our own as well as running some Eastern classics with some classic Easterners! Thanks to you all for your help and don't think badly of us if we forgot to give you a mention. Scotland is here and waiting for any of you who fancy a taste of something (completely) different. Why pay the Nantahala OC a small fortune to be guided round when you could pick up the phone and call Chris, Andy or John? You will certainly get a warm (hee-hee) welcome so don't forget your drysuit!!!

Very best wishes and good paddling.

Chris Dickinson

Telephone From U.S.A: 011-44-36981-292. Scotland is +5 hours (from Eastern Standard Time)

Post Script:

A guy called John Porterfield phoned me up a couple of nights ago and muttered something about writing a letter for publication in "American Whitewater" and putting in something about the differences between paddlers and paddling in Scotland and the USA. Well, I guess I have already alluded to some of the differences in the letter above but it might help I mentioned a few other things it is helpful to understand.

When in Scotland, use this helpful glossary:

Boating--planking about in a wee rowing boat.

I CFS--not a lot because we measure rivers in cubic metres per second.

PFD--flotation aid, often with an integral rescue harness.

Rafting--a game played by executives tying poles and barrels together.

River Kayak--a boat with rounded ends and as many safety features as possible.

Squirt Boat--a low volume sardine can which does wondrous submarine manouvers.

Dancer--vertically pinning machine (no-one here buys a Reflex!)

Topolino--fun steep creek boat=ultimate backlooping machine.

Backlooping--backendering to you.

Stonking--excellent flow level.

Honking--another excellent flow level.

Twigging--figuring, as in using a stick to divine for water. For example, "We twigged the level of the river".

Grackles--birds (you know, ladies)

T.O.A.D.S--take off and die syndrome

L.O.B.S--loss of bottle syndrome.

S.L.O.B.S.--serious loss of bottle syndrome (i.e. s**t scared).

Cowal Kayak Club--bunch of extremists with an unhealthy interest in steep whitewater and canoe polo and an ambition to paddle in every continent (only Africa to go - that's planned for 1991).

Thanks to Bob Broadbent, Jim Keresztenyi, Ken Saunders, Charlie Moyer, Don, Sleepy, Dan, Tom, Pete,

Tex at Watauga, Bill Blauvelt, Sterling Bouxman, Pope Barrow, Mrs. Simms Duffy and Sherrie Kuntz at Swiss, Jody Dixon, Mike Feldman, Kurt, Quentin, and Sue Jackson, and a special thanks to Pete Schonlager (sic?) of Atlanta for telling us where to get out at Sock 'Em Dog. Thanks America.



photo: No place this for a pointed boat. Mike Sullivan runs a drop on the River Etive in the west of Scotland.

The West Branch

P·E·N·O·B·S·C·O·T

Place of the Descending Rocks



By JOHN PORTERFIELD

Its cool, clean waters carve their way down out of the north woods through layers of glacial debris, through conifer and deciduous forests, through slate and granite bedrock. In the shadow of Maine's highest peak, Mt. Katahdin, it drains a huge watershed of lakes, tumbling streams, and placid wetlands nestled between four and five thousand foot mountains. It lies just beyond the edge of civilization on the gateway of Baxter Park, a natural setting for moose, bear, deer, coyote, bobcat and the rest of the north woods food chain. There's no electricity, few improved sites, just miles of logging roads, including the Golden Road--this region's link with Canada and with Maine's version of civilization. This is the region of the West Branch of the Penobscot--that "Place of the Descending Rocks"--a region which today faces a series of threats that rival the evolutionary changes that have occurred along its banks for a millennium.



Scott Underhill photo

The Cribwork-feature rapid of Maine's West Branch Penobscot River.

It has always been a hard way of life for the people who have lived here, from the Red Ochre man believed to have lived here 7500 years ago, to the Native American Penobscots -- hunters and gatherers -- to the nomadic Micmacs and the early French fur trappers that entered what's now known as Maine from the Rue Chaudiere. The rivers were the highways for these people -- and the canoe was to the horse in the American West. Life had a cycle that matched the long hard winters, bug and mud-filled springs that lasted briefly from ice-out to fiddlehead season, the abbreviated summer that brought no-see-ums, mosquitoes, shad, salmon and trout to the Penobscot's waters, and the long slow decline of fall, the hunting time when the bugs mercifully disappeared and there was a brief period of warm Indian Summer sunshine before Mt. Katahdin's long white beard grew into winter again. No much moved up here during the early winters.

The Penobscot Indians knew this special place for the abundant shad, salmon and for its deer and moose population. It also was the land in the shadow of their

great spirit, Kati, whose presence was felt on the highest nearby peak, Mt. Katahdin -- literally, the spirit mountain. It was on Mt. Katahdin that warriors were buried, and even to this day, there is a 100 mile warrior run to the top of Katahdin by the youth of the Penobscot Indian tribe to pay homage to their ancestors.

The Penobscot Indian names you hear mentioned with this river sound like tongue twisters: Nesowednehunk, Ambejackmockamus, Pockwockamus, **Debsconeag**. In fact they are each detailed descriptions of river or riverbank features, used to identify where they were on the river. Carrol Dana, a Native American who is trying to preserve and record the old ways, helped me through the pronunciations and interpretations of the language the Penobscot Indians spoke. For example, Abol was short for **Apalbcehkamikehso** which meant "small bare and rounded place." There is a rock on river right which clearly reflects this description. Nesowednehunk meant "to go between two features (two rocks) at the mouth of the stream." (There are two

sets of boulders at the outflow of Nesowednehunk Stream.) **Ambejackmockamus** Falls (apicehkemakamess) meant where eddy or reversing current and a steady stream or flow met - the rapid is on a sharp corner with a large eddy and a strong flow down the center. **Nesowdnehunk** means "to go between the two features", the "hunk" part signifying rocks at the mouth of the stream. **Pockwackamus** (**pakwakamohs**) meant "old, shallow and turbid lake" the shallow deadwater at the bottom of that rapid. And finally, **Debsconeag** - a rock that juts out -- a word that later became slang within the Penobscot language for a sexual organ and wasn't to be spoken in the house!

When the economic expansion of the 1800's put demand on lumber and paper making, the search for trees that could be easily cut and driven down the same rivers drove droves of whitemen to Maine. They came on the form of lumberjacks, cooks, walking bosses, scalers, and rivermen. Lumberjacks were paired between two-handed saws, cooks and camp boys stocked the wanigan of the

winter camps, the same wagons that carried the rivermen's trappings – tents, blankets, cooking gear, clothing -- during the spring log drives. The winter months were now periods of mobility. The **lumberjacks** cut and hauled the timber to side streams, where they were stored until the spring rains **and snowmelt** raised the watercourses enough to float out the timber. In the spring, the log drives to the mills began; initially the drive went as far as **Bangor**, but as years progressed civilization slowly crept north to Millinocket, where Great Northern Paper built its mills.

The log drives of the mid to late 1800's changed how the "Place of the Descending Rocks" was seen and used. Instead of seeing the beauty of the river's tumble as through the eyes of the Native Americans, white settler's eyes saw the same granite boulders as an impediment to bringing their **livelihood** to market – the logs and pulpwood of the north woods. With that change came a change in the course of the river at the spot where Appalachian Trail hikers today traverse the rapid by bridge. Seeking a way to stop the careening descent of logs driven down the West Branch, loggers blasted a new channel, creating an almost dead-end **cribwork** to catch the logs, creating **Cribwork Rapid**. It must have taken quite a few sticks of dynamite to blast through the solid granite and create the jagged and challenging Class V rapid that gives rafters and kayakers fits.

Driving logs was no easy task; the logs would often jam up in long rapids with plenty of exposed boulders. Iron rings had to be set in the boulders in other places to control the descent of the drive, with the **rivermen** using a peavey to roll the logs into place, all the while stepping from floating log to floating log, running down the river. These early **rivermen** – literally "river runners" were proud of the job they did.

There's a passage from Ron Rathnow's "Great American Flip Map Series Guide to the West Branch of the Penobscot" published by Menasha Ridge Press that focuses on the courage of the men that worked the West Branch of the Penobscot during the late 1800's.

"These Penobscot men were proud of their heritage and were not about to be outdone by anybody. An Indian **riverman** called Big Sebat [was] one of the best boatmen on the river...During a log drive in 1870 three

West Branch of the Penobscot Vital Statistics

Section:	Ripogenus Dam (McKay Station) to Debsconeag	
County:	Piscataquis	
Nearest Civilization:	Greenville, Millinocket	
USGS Quads:	Harrington Lake, Katahdin	
FERC License #:	02572A	
FERC License Expires:	12/31/1993	
Initial Draft Filing:	7/1990	
Suitable For:	Whitewater Boating, commercial rafting, camping, fishing	
Skill Level:	Intermediate through Advanced	
Months Runnable:	April through October	
Scenery:	Spectacular to Inspiring -- semi wilderness	
Difficulty:	Class I - V+	
Average Width:	200 feet	
Length:	17 miles	
Runnable Water Levels:	Bare minimum:	1500 cfs
	Reasonable minimum:	1800 cfs (kayaks) 2200 cfs (rafts)
	Maximum:	not established (has been run over 5500 cfs)
Company Contacts:	Georgia Pacific, Millinocket, ME Jim Carson (207) 723-5131 x 1204	
AWA Contacts:	John Porterfield (AWA New England Director) (207) 825-3566 (W) John Frachella (AWA Field Representative) (207) 941-0256 (W)	
NPS Contacts:	EEPRO Contact: John Connelly (207) 695-2248 Dan Haas, Riverwatch Program Mid Atlantic District Philadelphia, PA	

crews of boatmen arrived at **Nesowadnehunk Falls**. Two of the boats had already been **portaged..[but]** Big **Sebat..convinced** his bowman that they could make it over the falls...Big **Sebat** shot the falls and made it. Being Penobscot **rivermen** and not about to be outdone, the two other crews carried their 32 foot long bateaus back over the dam and also ran the falls. They weren't as **lucky..both** boats were smashed to kindling and one man drowned. But damned if they would ever let it be said that a Penobscot **riverman** backed down from a challenge."

Being modern day Penobscot rivermen, we too have a challenge before us. Access to the lands surrounding the river, access to the river itself and the continued flow of the remaining **free-flowing** sections have often been issues. (See "Tenobscot Cliffhanger" and "Bad Boy Mountain Biker".) The **paper/power** company now charges a gate fee to all who enter the company's lands. In some

cases, commercial rafting customers get charged twice -- once at the gate and again as part of their trip fee that the outfitter must then pay to the **power/paper** company.

American Rivers recently named the Penobscot River as the third most endangered river in the United States. Their ranking is the result of a present dam proposal known as the Basin Mills Project on the main stem of the Penobscot. American Rivers is also concerned with preventing a reoccurrence of the Big A dam project on the **Ripogenus** to Debsconeag section of the West Branch. Great Northern **Nekoosa** was the company in the mid eighties that attempted to build a new hydrogenerating facility, the Big A Dam, in the midst of the twelve mile Class **II-V** whitewater stretch. That dam fight was won when Great Northern withdrew their Big A dam proposal after a long knock down, drag out battle with state and national conservation organizations, AWA, and a strong fish-

eries lobby. The fight polarized the state's river outfitters, conservation groups and political structure. A polarity that today in state government is pro-industry, **pro-jobs** and pro-development, with very little if any agencies siding with downstream recreationalists.

While the Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department has designated the stretch "a precious fishing resource" the state Critical Areas Program listed the rapids between McKay Station and Big Ambejackmockamus Falls as of "greater than statewide significance" with the CLASS V Cribworks as a "one-of-a-kind rapid, stateofficials are slow to come to the river's defense. They had their chance this spring when a State Rivers Reclassification bill would have granted the endangered West Branch with a Class AA rating. Despite the favorable testimony from over one hundred witnesses and the unanimous backing of the Maine Board of Environmental Protection, that bill was stripped of protection for the West Branch. That AA rating would have protected the 12-mile stretch from future dam construction. Insiders say the legislators didn't want to go head to head with Great Northern.

With little if any state help to be found, as AWA's New England Director I began negotiating with the paper company to preserve your rights as private whitewater boaters on this wonderfully scenic and challenging stretch of **white-water**. The forum for this work was the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's license with Great North Nekoosa Corporation for the **Ripogenus** Dam and McKay Station. That dam controls the flow through the 12-mile whitewater stretch and provides power for the company's paper mills. The license (FERC #02572A) expires 12/31/93; initial license filing by the dam operators, now Georgia Pacific, is expected to happen this month.

In a boardroom-to-backwoods move that featured publicity campaigns by Georgia Pacific to assure millworkers that their jobs were safe, Georgia-Pacific leveraged Great Northern Nekoosa Corporation into a buyout that was finalized this spring. In a now infamous TV commercial, Georgia-Pacific attempted to positively portray its public citizenship through an ad that showed a man holding a fish up to the camera, showing that indeed fish life in the north woods was doing fine with the present level of paper



Penobscot cliff-hanger

By JOHN CONNALLY

President, Maine Professional River Guides Association;
Eastern River Expeditions

After driving eighteen hours from the Gauley to Northern Maine, I stand 80 feet off the water, on the edge of a granite cliff looking into the Penobscot River's Ripogenus Gorge. I'm trying to figure out how to get me and my C-1 safely to the water's edge so that I can paddle this challenging stretch of Class IV-V whitewater.

Across the river is a parking lot next to a power station, all of which is surrounded by high wire fencing to prohibit access by anyone without a key.

It is October, 1977 and I was just told by the local campground owner that rafts are lowered over this 80 foot precipice; he also told me in an accent that replaced r's with a's that this is the only access that Great Northern Paper Company, the riverside landowner, will allow.

I'm a competent Class IV-V boater and feel right at home in that environment. However, due to a fall while rock climbing, I have a real problem with being on the edge of something high up, exposed and crumbly. Gulp.

I'm paddling by myself today because no one from West Virginia wanted to make the long drive

north and as of yet there are no boaters in this part of the world. Not a safe practice, boating alone, but I really wanted to see Maine's major whitewater rivers before winter settled in.

With sweaty palms, shaky knees and grab loop in hand, I made my way down an almost vertical slippery series of handholds and footholds eighty feet to the water's edge. Shaking off the vertigo, I looked up and across the narrow gorge to see a couple of guys in work clothes leaning against the parking lot railing smoking cigarettes. They were pointing at me and kind of laughing between themselves.

I didn't think my situation was very funny at all, and at that moment I made it a resolve to find out why safe access was flaunted and yet denied to the whitewater boating public. After calming myself down from the "goat trail" put-in descent, I strapped myself in my boat, stretched the sprayskirt over the combing and ferried across the power station discharge and down into the narrowing slanted-wall gorge. A few bends below I slid down a long chute and into the now infamous Cribwork Rapid. But noth-

...conditions improve: but not without a price...

ing on the river concerned me as much, or bothered me as much as what I had to go through to get on it to paddle.

To make a long story short, I found the river both challenging and beautiful. I was impressed with the Kennebec Gorge as well, a two hour drive to the west. And with Moosehead Lake situated right between the two whitewater rivers, I made up my mind to expand my new rafting company's operations to Maine for the summer season.

I discovered the answer to my question of safe access to Ripogenus Gorge when I went to Great Northern's offices that winter to let them know that we intended to start river trip operations on the West Branch of the Penobscot the next summer. It was simple: this was their power station for their paper mill, their property and their road system to bring their logs to their paper mill, and they didn't want anyone else using their improved access site to their power station in their gorge. Period. We were, however, welcome to take our chances on the other side of the river.

For anyone who thinks commercial boaters and outfitters get a better deal than private boaters in river politics, think again. For years, we lowered rafts and boats on the end of ropes belayed from the cliff's edge to the water below. Rafts were dropped and torn, guides had rafts land on top of them, and trip guests tumbled down the "goat trail" and took a ride to the hospital instead of a ride down the river. And even then, when an outfitter had an injury, we couldn't ferry that person across the gorge and out the easy access road -- no -- we had to carry that person back up eighty feet of



Scott Underhill photo

Efforts by river activists have turned an access problem into a whitewater opportunity—but there is still plenty to fight for to ensure whitewater access in the future.

granite.

The situation did improve, however. But it took quite a while. After Great Northern went through a six year battle against the Coalition to Save the West Branch of the Penobscot -- a coalition that included boaters, outfitters, fishermen, environmentalists, concerned citizens and others -- the power company/paper company withdrew their application from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to build the "Big A" dam in the middle of the whitewater run. Millworkers had faced off against outdoorsmen, many of whom weren't too sure whether to side with saving jobs or saving their vanishing wilderness. We had won, but won at a cost.

The very next summer, toll booths went up on all of the access roads to GNP lands. Coincidentally, those lands contain a vast array of public waterways, great ponds, reservoirs, and public lands used by boaters, outfitters, fishermen, Appalachian Trail hikers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. Rafting outfitters were charged at these tollbooths what amounted to 10-15% of their trip receipts, and the parking lot with the railing and the smoking power plant workers and the high wire fence was now unlocked for boaters and the outfitted public -- but again, for a fee.

With the bitter taste of the dam fight in our mouths we now forge ahead in the 90's with a wary eye on the new kid on the block, lumber and paper giant Georgia-Pacific, a company that bullied its way into Maine's

north woods and leveraged GNP into a buyout. And now there is a new issue between Georgia Pacific and whitewater recreationalists -- dam relicensing.

The issue of Federal relicensing of the Ripogenus Dam Project is well underway and offers an opportunity to work with Georgia-Pacific to optimize downstream recreation and still meet Georgia-Pacific's generating needs. As president of the Maine Professional River Guides Association, I am presently working side by side with AWA, fishing interests, and the National Park Service's Riverwatch Program to ensure downstream recreational interests are represented.

Now that ECPA has mandated consideration of multiple recreational uses of these hydroelectric projects and the rivers they control, we as recreationalists and citizens have a role in the relicensing process. Nationwide, river use groups are forming partnerships with hydropower developers to manage public rivers for multiple use, rather than exclusive use, by dam operators.

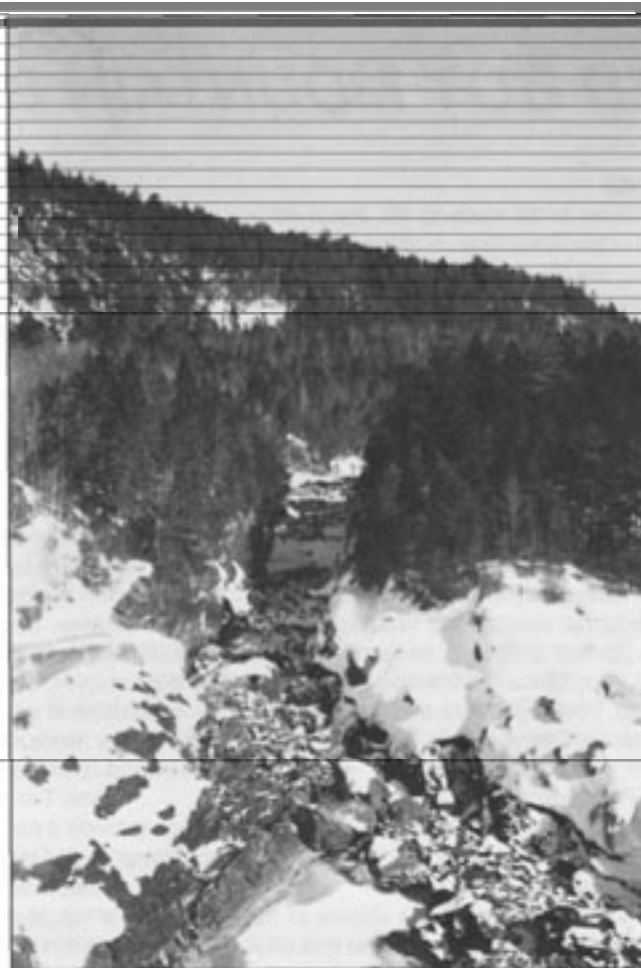
This uneasy relationship is new to the hydro developers, who for years haven't had to consider anything other than serving their own needs. Now they have to consider the National Park Service's Riverwatch program, the association representing professional outfitters, and AWA, who represents you, the private boater.

mill discharges. The only problem was that the fish the man on TV was holding was a striped bass, a **sea** fish!

The FERC Relicensing process started last fall even before a public hearing date was **announced**. **Calls were** placed to boaters who **frequented** the West **Branch**, boaters who I knew would be interested in the outcome of the FERC relicensing process. I asked for input and I asked for help, receiving much more of the former than the latter. Assisted by AWA Field Representatives we rallied **the** troops and had an impressive boater turnout at the public hearing held by Great Northern and required by FERC. At the hearing, I requested daylight water releases through McKay Station seven days a week at a level no less than 1800 cfs with an average flow of 2400 cfs from the last weekend in April to the 2nd weekend in October. Notification of **deep-gate** tests which divert 2400 cfs of flow down a Class V gorge for nearly a mile were requested, along with notification of full-power testing which unleash 3600 cfs - a lot of water for the bouldery and **ledgy** section. Also requested were further improvements to the access at the McKay Station put-in in Ripogenus Gorge. **Last** season, the barbed **wire-topped** gate that leads into the McKay Station compound had been found locked on Wednesdays and after 4pm the remainder of **the** **week-**days. AWA argued that public safety for boaters as well as fishermen was jeopardized by the **lock-out**; the gatekeeper position is funded through fees paid by commercial outfitters.

Most importantly, AWA requested that Great Northern, the dam **operator** at the McKay Station generating site, prepare an **socio-economic** study of commercial and private boating's affect on the **North** Woodseconomy. Maine's **six-month** boating season attracted 35,000 commercial boater user days - more than 50,300 rafters. That's in addition to thousands of private boater visits, countless **fishermen**, and a plethora of canoe outfitter customers, fishing guides and paddling schools who use the West **Branch** and surrounding tributaries that drain **Moosehead** Lake. By comparison, the Gauley River in West Virginia attracts 28,600 boater user days in a **21-day** season, providing West Virginia's economy **with over** sixteen million dollars indirect and indirect income from commercial and private boaters.

The National Park Service's



John Frachella photo

The Ripogenus Dries: This section could run more frequently if the FERC relicensing process favorably recognizes whitewater recreation.



Smtt Underhill photo

*There's plenty of playing to be had between Ripogenus Gorge and the Debscon-
neag Deadwater takeout.*

BAD BOY MOUNTAIN BIKER

By John Frachella, DMD

I moved to Maine to be close to Mt. Katahdin in Baxter State Park and to the West Branch of the Penobscot River. I've been boating the Ripogenus Gorge to Debsconneag Deadwater stretch of the West Branch since 1976, and for the first eight years, I never once had the displeasure of confronting the major landowner of this region, Great Northern Paper. But in 1984, GNP began rearing its ugly head about the Big A Dam which after much fuss was deflated and defeated by a strong environmentalist campaign. Great Northern withdrew its dam application, assuring everyone that the dam issue was dead.

During that bitter fight, boaters got hassled in little ways by GNP. For a spell, we were denied the same safe access to the Ripogenus Gorge section at McKay Station that was afforded commercial raft companies. We had to lower our hard boats down 75-foot cliffs and descend billygoat trails with loose rock -- your typically unnecessary Class VI put-in to a Class V Rapid. We fought back and regained safe access, but the hassles continued in new forms.

In 1987, GNP began charging a user fee for day use and for camping. GNP even tried to keep private boaters off the river after 5 p.m. because "we bothered the fishermen." But the most insane hassle that occurred to me had to do with my mountain bike.

I've been a mountain biker on the shores of the West Branch for years. Being a C-boater, I found that after a hard day on my knees praying to the River Gods the mountain bike helped relieve the stiffness and pain. I had my favorite spots, but mostly I'd weave in and out of the rocks and trees near my campsite at Pray's (Big Eddy). This was great fun, balancing between slippery tree roots, picnic tables, washed out gullies, a little mud and the occasional lawn chair. My wife, "Lets-GO-Camping" and my son, "Yea, LETS-GO" (neither of whom are Class V boaters) took to the mountain bikes like some of us take to whitewater. So after a few hours in the gorge I'd get the chance to do something exciting with my family -- like cruising our wooded campsite-obstacle course without going over the handlebars and into the river.

Then, on Memorial Day 1988, while paying my \$24 Season User's Fee at the GNP checkpoint, the gate attendant pointed to my bike and said "unload it".

I said "Nope. I've been bringing this in here for years."

"Off!" he said.

Having already paid my money and received my sticker, I flipped him the bird and laid some rubber on the pebbles in his parking lot. He shouted something about a sheriff but I couldn't hear him very well by then. I paddled the gorge that day and never even took the bike off the truck.

When I got back home I called GNP and asked them what was going on. Seems like they added a new policy: "All terrain vehicles, bicycles and motorcycles are prohibited anywhere on GNP land. Snowmobiles are al-

lowed on unplowed roads only."

I said that I biked the trails only, the same places where the snowmobilers go. Again, they said "no dice." So I began sneaking my mountain bike in (and my wife's bike and my son's bike..) until I was caught red-handed by a deputy sheriff, and boy was he mad! The checkpoint supervisor had been spying on me and she called the sheriff early one Saturday morning, got him out of bed, and rushed him off to the perpetrators at our campsite. When he arrived, he was half dressed, his nose was beet red and the radiator on his cruiser was boiling over. His mood matched his radiator.

He was beside himself, but **wouldn't** arrest me. As I was trying to convince him to cuff me so I could make an official public scene of GNP's foolishness, one of my white-water buddies traced "PENOBSCOT BAD BOY MOUNTAINBIKER" on the dust covered windshield of his overheated cruiser. My family and I were escorted to the GNP checkpoint and were told **never** to try that again, because as bikers, we were "dangerous to ourselves and to GNP's woodland operations."

Now, I'm not stupid. I wouldn't ride my bike on the logging roads if you paid me. Messing with a fourteen wheel **fully overloaded** logging truck careening down the mountain-side on a road in which they own and know they own is not my idea of fun. But not one to give up, I sneaked the bikes in again and this time GNP got the state game warden in the area to ignore the salmon poachers and to spy on me, the PENOBSCOT BAD BOY MOUNTAINBIKER.

I got caught this time while I was in my boat, surfing Troublemaker a half-mile above the Class V Cribworks. I was just getting into a really good surf in the turbulent sousehole when I heard my son on shore calling my name. He was hollerin' that I better get out of there. I brushed it off and kept surfing, but he hollered again and again. I began to worry that perhaps something bad had happened to one of my paddling buddies, so I pulled out of the hole and over to the rock ledge along the bank. On shore stood a deputy, this time with a gun! I was definitely carrying this a little too far -- I never imagined that mountain bikes could instill so much concern and leveraging power.

I was again escorted to the GNP checkpoint and told that I had one more chance. If I screwed up again by trying to sneak in "**that** damned mountain bike," then I would never again be allowed to enter the West Branch Region.

But I won't give up. This year I'm going to tell 'em my bike isn't a bike at all. It's a self-propelled snowmobile with a really thin, double cylindrical track, and I'm going to use it on nothing but unplowed roads. Got any question, Mr. Supervisor? (Ask my lawyer.)

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Riverwatch program joined the relicensing process midstream, coming in at a time when not much communication was occurring between the relicensing players. The Riverwatch program helped get things rolling, and provided an expert analysis of draft copies of the socio-economic study before it was finalized.

In early June we finally ironed out the scope and make-up of this socio-economic study which by the time you read this, has already gotten underway. A cross section of commercial raft customers, private whitewater boaters and fishermen will be surveyed. The study focuses on the travel costs you incur and the type of experience you had boating in the West Branch region. Without sounding like a tour guide, the West Branch is world renowned for its top-notch salmon fishery, and is a summer mecca for whitewater enthusiasts - both private and commercial. I want everyone that can make it to come up to the north woods this summer and try out the West Branch of the Penobscot. It is a great whitewater, camping, hiking and sight seeing experience. Besides this stretch of the Penobscot, there are several other challenging whitewater rivers nearby that offer summer-long paddling fun.

As we enter into the second phase of the negotiations in which we as the whitewater boating public is effectively locked out, the NPS Riverwatch Program will be there representing in-stream recreational interests. This balances the line-up of players somewhat, a line-up that allows fishing interests to be heavily represented on the Federal level by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and on the state level by the Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department. But without continued funding of the NPS Riverwatch program by Congress, that representation that we now have may fade away.

It remains to be seen what effect this takeover by Georgia Pacific will have on the FERC Relicensing progress made between AWA, MEPRO, the National Park Service, and Great Northern. As whitewater boaters, the best thing you can do to preserve and enhance your whitewater opportunities on this river is to paddle it and fill out the study questionnaire some of you will receive. The study period will last until September 30th-- plenty of time to come up and enjoy the river. Fill out the questionnaire accurately -- don't inflate it, don't devalue it.



Jim Crane photo

C-1 paddler John Franchella catches major air at Bonecrusher Ledge on the West Branch of the Penobscot River.

This data will be useful not only now during dam relicensing, but later when Georgia Pacific starts thinking about building another dam on this precious "Place of the Descending Rocks".

John Porterfield is a national director of the AWA; editor of American Whitewater; and author of Appalachian Whitewater: The Northern Mountains. A resident Maine paddler, John is particularly active in New England river conservation issues.

EPIC SWIMS

*More episodes in our series
of whitewater tales of **terror***

Swallowed alive on the Top Yough

By DAVID GUNTHER

Spring of '76 found me running the Top Yough and the Upper Yough with Carl Lungren, Al Lowande, Jim Muhlar. This particular day started at Swallow Falls and proceeded through a series of pushy drops.

Soon we came upon a drop known as "Suckhole". This was scouted and revealed a considerable hazard. This took the form of a boulder with a triangular opening, yawning at river level with water rushing in under it. The undercut
please turn to page 44



Jerry Meral guiding through Hance Rapid, Colorado River.



David Gunther at a more pleasant moment above the water.

San Joaquin swim... at 18,000 CFS

By JERRY MERAL

I suppose the memories are fading now, but there are still a few oldtimers who recall the Sierra Nevada Spring runoff of 1969. I was working in Costa Rica that winter when my friend Jim Sindelar warned me that the snow was piling up to record heights in the Sierra, and that every roadside ditch would soon be running Class IV.

Sure enough, as the snows began to melt in the heat of May rivers rose to unprecedented heights. California rivers of the Sierra Nevada typically have two peaks: winter rains from November through March, and snow runoff from April through June (or even August in big years). The year 1969 saw snow depths of twenty feet or more in April, and a very warm Memorial Day weekend brought river volumes to rarely seen levels.

Dick Sunderland, Cliff Cordy and I decided to take a Memorial Day weekend tour of two of the major snowmelt rivers: the Merced and the Kings, and to check out another river that is almost always dewatered by a string of Southern California Edison powerplants: the San Joaquin.

The Merced was a good warm up (if you can warm up in 38 degree snowmelt). It was running more than 11,000 cfs (in contrast to the normal 1500 cfs) and the normal put-in near

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...San Joaquin

El Portal (just outside of Yosemite) looked like one continuous set of giant holes and waves. A safer start at a campground downstream seemed wiser. We roared down the eddy-less river, whose current measured more than fifteen miles per hour through some of the drops. The waves were Grand Canyon style, which is just what we were looking for. Cliff and I were to join one of the first Grand Canyon canoe/kayak trips later that summer.

The next day took us to Willow Creek, just where it joins the San Joaquin. No one had ever run the San Joaquin as far as we knew, so we relied on topographical maps which revealed that through the "Big Bend" section, the gradient was about 50 feet per mile. Not too bad, although not many runs we did in those days were much steeper.

For this big water trip Jim Sindelar had loaned me his "Mae West" kapok life jacket to replace my lower volume model. I was glad to have it as we looked over what little we could see of the San Joaquin. It was tremendous. We later found out it was running more than 18,000 cfs through a river bed that almost never had any water at all.

We ran down Willow Creek and quickly joined the main San Joaquin. A short way downstream we encountered our first major obstacle. Although the river was probably 100 yards wide at that point, a huge hole blocked nearly the entire width. We had gotten out to scout the left bank, quite near the hole, but the only open places were a slot in the center and a sneak along the right bank. Cliff and Dick opted for the somewhat safer right bank, but I was not sure my C-1 would get over quickly enough, so I (barely) made it through the center slot.

Large waves, holes and other features greeted us as we made our way downstream. Finally, we came to the beginning of the "Big Bend" section where the river makes nearly a complete U-turn. As we rested in one of the rare eddies, we looked into a maelstrom of whitewater stretching down to the bottom of the turn. For some reason scouting didn't seem necessary, at least to Sunderland. He shot downstream, making his way through the haystacks until he reached a very small eddy just before the turn. He then began to fight back and forth, trying to stay in the eddy and not

be washed downstream.

After a few moments of this he stabilized his position and waved for us to come. As I entered the beginning wave train I wondered what was around the corner in case I swam. Although I had run the Upper and Lower Tuolumne, this stretch was the most difficult boating I had encountered to date. The waves were huge and extremely irregular, with breaking crests. It was hard to see what was coming next. At one point I did something I didn't know you could do in a C-1; I braced into a wave that was actually behind me, over my head.

Finally I made it down to Dick's eddy, and Cliff soon joined us, wide-eyed. We couldn't see around the corner,

Just downstream was a sight that I have never seen before or since on a supposedly runnable river. The entire 18,000 CFS entered a slot no more than twenty or thirty feet wide. Or rather, it tried to, but couldn't.

so we got out to scout. Good thing. Just downstream was a sight that I have never seen before or since on a supposedly runnable river. The entire 18,000 cfs entered a slot no more than twenty or thirty feet wide. Or rather, it **tried** to, but couldn't. There was so much water dropping so fast that the water **couldn't** all get through at once, so it surged, sort of like a twenty foot tall washing machine. It was possible to walk right up to the slot and get a good look, so we decided to eat lunch there.

Maybe staring at that horrible feature took its toll, but none of us were feeling **too great** as we prepared to tackle the second leg of the trip below the "washing machine," going back up the U. Dick got in his kayak, paddled across the boiling river and got out a bit downstream to take some pictures. I got in, went a short way downstream, and ended up upside down in one of the river's many holes. Maybe it was too soon after lunch, or maybe it was the indelible sight of the "washing machine", but I missed my roll and was on my way downstream, out of the boat, holding my boat and paddle. Dick looked up in horror from

the opposite bank, camera in hand; I was alone; Cliff had not yet begun to get in his.

My boat has full air bags and lots of volume, but it wasn't going anywhere near shore. The river was quickly gaining gradient, trying to figure out how to surpass its Class V rating. I was washed into holes that seemed to have no bottom, but I never lost hold of my boat. The forty degree water was making me quite cold (even with a wetsuit) and I was still nowhere near shore. Finally, I made a very difficult decision. I decided to abandon boat and paddle, and swim for shore. I **presumed** that I would have to self rescue, since there was no sign of Dick or Cliff. At that moment I was very grateful for Jim Sindelar's big Mae West lifejacket.

Swimming without my boat was truly frightening. The holes got a lot deeper, and I got colder and colder. The current was so strong and the river so wide that the shore did not seem to be getting any closer. I found it harder and harder to see which way to go, probably as a result of hypothermia. I was also swallowing great quantities of water, and it was hard to breathe.

Finally it seemed that I could not see at all. I was probably losing consciousness. At that moment my right hand hit a rock. Not knowing or caring where I was, I grasped that rock so hard that it probably still has my fingerprints. I had washed to the right bank in a small eddy.

At that moment Dick paddled up; he had paddled the same very difficult Class V water looking for me. I told him I was OK, but that my boat was downstream and he went looking for it. I dragged myself out of the water and lay exhausted on a rock near the shore. At that point it seemed like a good idea to put some of the gallons of water I had swallowed back into the river.

I was still very cold, but the rock was warm and the day was quite hot. My black wetsuit helped me warm up, and soon I had gone from cold to hot, so I decided to get into the shade of a nearby boulder. The problem was, I didn't have the energy to move. **So** I lay there and cooked for a while until I could get to the boulder.

After about a half hour I made my way downstream to where Dick and Cliff had found my boat. I can't say I was thrilled with the prospect of paddling

again, but there was no other way out. I unlimbered my spare paddle and headed for the takeout.

The only way to recover from an experience like that is to go out and paddle again, so the next day we ran the Kings at 25,000 cfs, still the highest level it has ever been paddled. A few weeks later we tried the Tuolumne at 12,000 cfs, and that's **when Meral's Pool** got named. But that's another story.

Lessons to be learned from the San Joaquin "Big Bend" trip? First, Walt

Blackadar **notwithstanding**, three people is not enough for a huge water exploratory trip. Even if Dick and Cliff had been there when I swam, rescue would have been difficult. Second, wear a bigger lifejacket than usual for a trip like that. Finally, be sure the party is ready at all times for a swim; they happen at the most inconvenient moments!

Editor's Note: Jerry Meral is currently the Executive Director of the Planning and Conservation League of

California, an organization that lobbies for passage of conservation legislation. PCL handles a number of issues that affect whitewater boating. Jerry was also the Perception Conservationist of the Year in 1984.

Another in an occasional series on epic whitewater swims. Be a hero: send your "Big Swim" article to Mac Thornton, Big Swim Editor, 322 Tenth St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003

"Immediately, I was swept under the rock..."

passage was gulping approximately 60% of the river! The clear passage, on the left, was possible to make by back paddling into **an eddy**, a route I had taken successfully before. However, my decision to bypass the eddy this time was to prove highly dangerous.

I powered my boat to the safe route on the left but the river had its way. My kayak was pushed broadside against the unfriendly rock, with great quantities of water rushing beneath it — I was being drawn nearer to the triangular opening which resembled an open drain with a vortex disappearing beneath the rock. Rather than waiting until the boat was pulled against this point sideways, and possibly into a clamshell entrapment, I popped my skirt and bailed out upstream.

Immediately, I was swept under the rock. To my surprise, I did not feel the expected power of the river dragging me down; instead I was moving very slowly under water **with my helmet** dragging along the underside of the rock. In order to conserve breath, I did not move a muscle, expecting at any moment to be dragged into the underwater current. The thought went through my head: conserve your air, you have about a 50/50 chance if you don't panic.

After a time that seemed like years (probably 30 seconds) I popped up in an air chamber under the rock. A look around revealed a wedge shaped chamber with a slice of sunshine through an overhead slot in the rock. A short time later I suddenly discovered that I had an unwelcome company. The bow of my boat emerged from the depths and proceeded to force me out of the air pocket

and back underwater. I pushed the boat down as far as possible and it disappeared from sight. A minute later I spotted my boat downstream through a small crack in the rock. There was an underwater downstream escape route! Alone again in my cave, I began to calculate other possible exits from my trap. An upstream trip, with help, might be possible through the vortex on a rescue rope. I might squeeze through the crevice overhead, although at first examination it looked much too small to negotiate.

With me out of sight for approximately five minutes, my companions feared the worst. I found a foothold in the underwater rocks that enabled me to thrust my hand up through the slot. I waved until I heard Jim's voice shout, "He's all right!"

Carl crawled out on top of the rock and peered into my small prison. We speculated on the possibility of pulling me through the slot. First I took off my helmet and worked it through the crack. I was still too fat! Next, off with the life jacket. Now with a heavy pull from Carl and a lot of wiggling I was out in the sunshine.

The shock of the preceding events was easily read on the faces of my companions. It also caught up with me in a few hours. At the takeout, after marveling at my good fortune, I offered a new name for that drop: "Wildman's Carry".

Another in an occasional series on epic whitewater swims. Be a hero: send your "Big Swim" article to Mac Thornton, Big Swim Editor, 322 Tenth St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003



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Boaters assist moose population

*It's not drugs or alcohol--
It's just the brainworm*

New York game biologists have expressed confidence that a viable resident population of moose can be re-established in the Adirondack Mountains. A recent survey indicates that over 20 of the giant animals now survive along the region's isolated lakes and waterways.

Native moose were eliminated from the Adirondacks on the mid-1800s by intense hunting pressure. Subsequent attempts to reintroduce the massive mammal fell victim to poachers and the "moose sickness"—a malady caused by the brainworm.

A roundworm the size of a human hair, the brainworm is a parasite carried by an infected snail or slug. Should a moose accidentally eat one of these gastropods, the parasite attacks its nervous system.

An infected moose stumbles about the woods like a boater with a particularly desperate hangover before eventually succumbing.

Nevertheless, wildlife managers are optimistic about the moose's comeback chances. Enlightened sportsmen have reduced the threat of poaching while land acquisition programs have established wilderness areas well-suited for sustaining moose populations.

As for the threat of the brainworm, state biologists attribute the presence of whitewater boating as a key mitigating condition.

"We always wondered why Maine supported such a large moose population—particularly in the Penobscot region—despite the brainworm problem," said one wildlife biologist. "We were finally able to isolate the heavy whitewater activity as a beneficial factor. With all these whitewater boaters out thrashing around, they're accidentally ingesting these brainworms that otherwise would have gone in the moose. That's a real plus in maintaining a healthy moose herd."

The whitewater factor in Maine game management was only recently discovered.



"We should have recognized it long ago," confessed one game manager. "You see other-wise normal people who drive three hours up a dirt road and get eaten by bugs just to float down wild rivers in uncomfortably small boats. Hell, there's no TV up there, no movies, supermarkets, laundries, bars or restaurants—nothing that normal people need. But Maine paddlers rhapsodize that it's the best place on Earth. We should have figured there was something strange going on. The brainworm explains a lot."

The Maine moose population may also be assisted by the alleged harvest and export of brainworm-bearing snails by local entrepreneurs. The sale of snails to restaurants in France and California has boosted local economy.

Game biologists insist that with the help of the whitewater community, the moose may be reestablished throughout the eastern United States.

"Just look at boaters in New York, West Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and all over the East. For years, we thought boaters acted the way they do because of drugs or alcohol. Now we know that all along, paddlers were just helping control the brainworm."

Research has been inconclusive to whether the brainworm is ultimately as fatal to human as to the moose. However, severe cases of brainworm in human paddlers have resulted in a distinct preference for squirt boats.



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the
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me
in
the
water...

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