



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

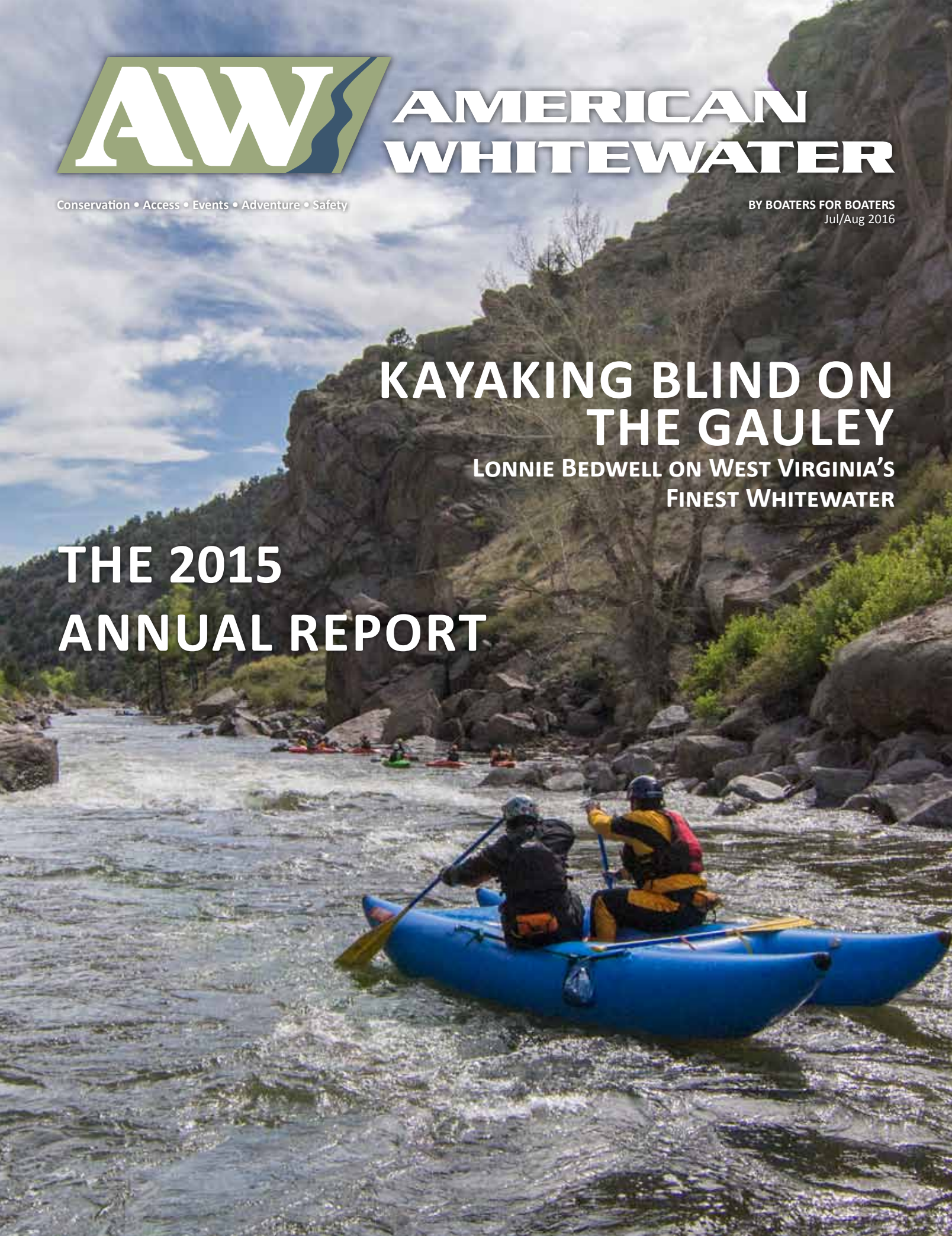
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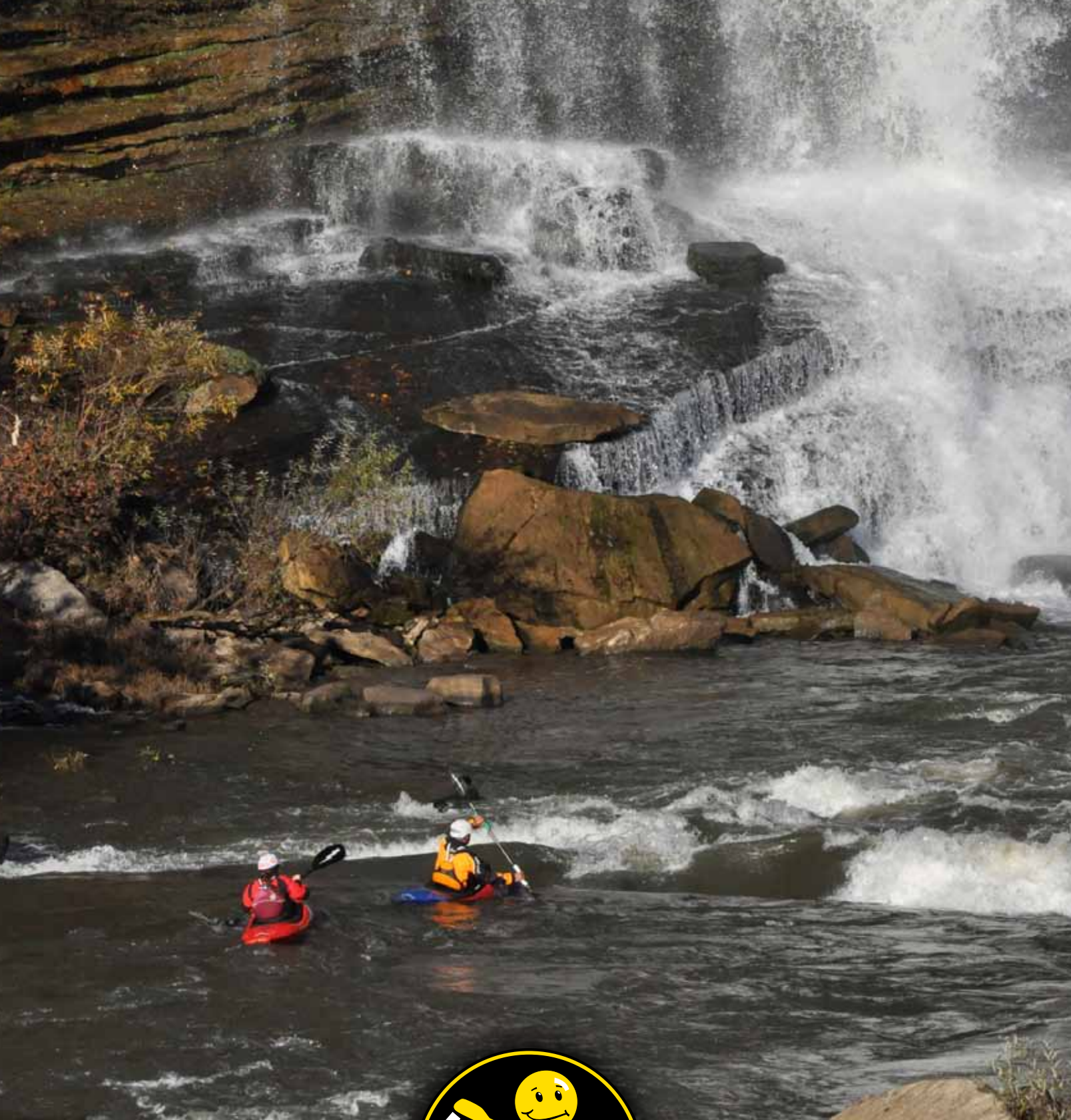
BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
Jul/Aug 2016

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THE 2015 ANNUAL REPORT





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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal
Jul/Aug 2016 – Volume 56 – Issue 4

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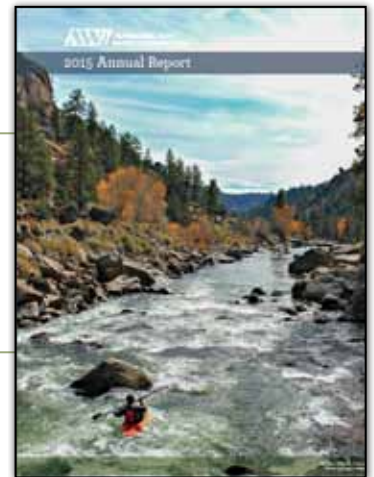
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AW Colorado Stewardship Director **Nathan Fey** and
Director of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry
Office, **Luis Benitez**, paddle down the newly minted
Browns Canyon National Monument.

Photo by **Evan Stafford**

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PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Our mission: "To conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely," is actively pursued through our conservation, access, safety and education efforts under the umbrella of River Stewardship. The only national organization representing the interest of all whitewater paddlers, American Whitewater is the national voice for thousands of individual whitewater enthusiasts, as well as over 100 local paddling club affiliates.

AW's River Stewardship program adheres to the four tenets of our mission statement:

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision-making

processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

EDUCATION: AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding

whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

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

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



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

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

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

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THE JOURNEY AHEAD

THE STAFF AND Board of American Whitewater are using this issue of the *American Whitewater Journal* to share our 2015 Annual Report with you. These reports are one of the more important tools that nonprofits use to communicate program success and financial performance to constituents. Our 2015 Annual Report begins on page 13. One of the most read sections of our Annual Report is our Honor Roll, a list of our major donors, partners, foundation supports, and regional projects. As the Honor Roll demonstrates, our base of support is extremely wide and starts with the core whitewater paddling community at the center of our universe. Support radiates outward to include the outdoor industry, foundations, individual donors, and partners. Few organizations our size have such a broad base of community support, and it is this wide base of support that provides a solid underpinning for our river stewardship programs.

Looking back at our success in 2015, American Whitewater achieved the following important stewardship milestones:

- New “eligible” Wild and Scenic River reaches secured: 9
- New and/or improved river access areas secured: 14
- Number of rivers with hydropower dams with improved downstream flows and river access: 30
- Collaboratively managed river access: 16
- Opened banned rivers in National Parks: 2, Merced and Tuolumne Rivers in Yosemite NP (CA)
- New National Monument designations: 1, Browns Canyon (CO)
- Volunteer hours contributed in 2015: 12,598

We take the financial management of our resources seriously; Charity Navigator (the leading independent charity watchdog organization) recently released its new evaluation formula of nonprofits. American Whitewater received a 100% score in financial transparency and also retained our four-star rating (the highest possible). Our evaluation from Charity Navigator demonstrates our commitment to best management practices and open communication. This is the sixth year American Whitewater received a four-star rating; only 3% of the nonprofits Charity Navigator rates have received six or more consecutive 4-star evaluations. This independent assessment of our work confirms that we are on the right track and providing important, measurable services to our supporters.

In keeping with our attempt to provide full disclosure, it is appropriate to provide an update on the American Whitewater website. Back in 2012, American Whitewater entered into a contract with an external vendor to rebuild our organization’s website on a contemporary technology platform. AW staff worked diligently with the vendor to provide a comprehensive Request For Proposal and technical documents. After a year and a half of effort and expenses, the product provided by the vendor did not meet our organization’s requirements. Late in 2014, American Whitewater entered into binding arbitration over the failed website project and attempted to claw back our investment in the new website project. Despite excellent legal representation and aggressively pursuing a judgment to make the organization whole, the arbitrator’s binding ruling did not include any financial settlement for American Whitewater. The vendor asked the arbitrator to require American Whitewater to pay their legal fees and that request was also denied. As a result of the arbiter’s ruling, in 2015 American Whitewater wrote down \$132,274.25 in related website project expenses. Due to the costs associated with arbitration, the administrative

and fundraising ratio in relation to total operating expenses increased from 17% in 2014 to 22% in 2015. This is a one-time increase in staff time and organizational fees associated with arbitration. Litigation in this matter was an important process for American Whitewater to go through as a forceful advocate for our membership.

As unfortunate as our website experience was, it’s important to note that, overall, few organizations accomplish the same level of results with the limited resources of American Whitewater. Each membership dollar that American Whitewater receives is leveraged to generate \$4 in total funding directed at supporting river stewardship. This \$1 to \$4 leverage is achievable because American Whitewater is able to attract support from foundations, private donors, advertising opportunities, events,



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THE JOURNEY AHEAD

and partnerships. As the financial section of our Annual Report illustrates, American Whitewater is quite fortunate to have a highly diversified stream of revenue (no source of revenue is greater than 27% of our total – see page 18). This diversification enables your membership dollar to go four times as far in the protection of whitewater rivers.

It's your membership support that allows American Whitewater's River Stewardship Team to work on important projects in their respective regions. Our River Stewardship Team consists of professional staff supported by board members and volunteers from communities across the country. Last year, total volunteer hours added up to 12,598 hours (the equivalent of six additional full-time staff members). American Whitewater's regional approach to stewardship work requires a long-term

view. Many of our stewardship efforts take decades to complete: political campaigns, hydropower relicensing, and building community support are all long-term investments in our stewardship program. American Whitewater has been doing this work for over 60 years; we formed as an organization back in the 1950s to encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of America's recreational waterways for human-powered craft. Rivers today face many threats, and the challenges are real. With engaged community volunteers, supported by professional staff, we have the team in place to lead to long-term success.

As we look to the future, we continue to appreciate the importance of rivers and their role in supporting the health and well-being of the paddling community. We remain committed to giving back to these

special places and have a great story to tell right now. Our stewardship projects are making a real difference to rivers and local communities, while providing flows for recreation and habitat. If you are reading this publication and you are not a member, please consider supporting this work. If you are a member, thanks for your support; please pass this issue onto a friend, and let them know what we are doing. There has never been a better time to support American Whitewater.

Take care of our wild rivers and they will take care of you,



Executive Director, American Whitewater

No more renewal notices!



Sick of renewal notices in the mail?

Sign up for auto-renewal on your AW membership and you'll never get another. Your membership won't lapse and you'll be helping us save our limited funds and trees!

New and renewing members:

americanwhitewater.org/join

Current members:

1-866-262-8429



STEWARDSHIP

PUNCHBOWL FALLS ON THE HOOD RIVER (OR) IS NOW A COUNTY PARK

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE



*Jennie Goldberg enjoying the Hood River below Punchbowl Falls County Park.
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe*

PROTECTING PUNCHBOWL FALLS near the confluence of the East and West forks of the Hood River in Oregon was long recognized as one of the most important river access projects in the Pacific Northwest. Local residents had advocated for a park at this site for more than a century. This dream recently became reality this past April with the leadership of Western Rivers Conservancy and Hood River Valley Residents Committee and the participation and financial backing of several American Whitewater members. Used for decades as a dispersed recreation site, the property will now be managed as a County Park.

Punchbowl Falls is one of Oregon's iconic scenic and recreational sites, and the Hood is the go-to river for boaters in the Columbia River Gorge. Above the falls, the West Fork of the Hood flows through two beautiful gorges. It provides an opportunity for boaters to test and strengthen their Class IV skills with consistently fun rapids

at a variety of flows. Below the falls, the West Fork joins the East Fork to form the Hood River, where boaters can enjoy Class III water on a newly free-flowing river following the removal of Powerdale Dam. The area around the falls is not only an important access point for boaters, but is significant to the broader community, as well. Located in a stunning canyon, it provides a sanctuary for salmon, access for swimming, and is a great day use site.

Western Rivers Conservancy, a conservation non-profit that acquires land to conserve critical habitat and provide public access for compatible use and enjoyment, began purchasing parcels from Longview Fiber and PacifiCorp in 2006, ultimately assembling a 103-acre property where the forks of the Hood River join. While Western Rivers Conservancy led the effort to acquire the land before it was sold off for private development or other uses that would likely not have included

public access, they were not in a position to manage the property long-term.

Purchasing the property and developing it as a park was a \$1.2 million project with \$575,000 from Western Rivers Conservancy, a \$470,000 grant secured last year from Oregon Parks and Recreation District, and individual donations including those from many American Whitewater members who contributed. We thank local American Whitewater member Ron Reynier who served on the advisory committee that developed a concept plan for the site, which proved critical in securing the public funds for the acquisition.

While acquiring this site and bringing it into public ownership represents an important achievement worthy of celebration, American Whitewater views this as the start of developing a more comprehensive recreation vision for the Hood River. When an opportunity to save a piece of land like this emerges, we need

STEWARDSHIP



The confluence of the East and West Fork Hood in the new PunchBowl Falls County Park.

Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

to seize the opportunity, but we also recognize additional work needs to be done. Despite the regional significance of this river for whitewater recreation, it has very limited public access. With the exception of Punch Bowl Falls and Tucker County Parks, some marginal access within bridge right-of-ways, and Port Marina Park, the river corridor is in private ownership. Access is inconvenient at many sites along the river with rafters finding it particularly challenging. The best access at Dee Bridge is private land; trails planned for Punch Bowl Falls will serve kayakers but are not great for rafts; Tucker Park is often closed during boating season; and access at Tucker Bridge is sensitive with local landowners. We are proud to celebrate this success but recognize more work remains.

An advertisement for Landmark Learning Outdoor Specialists. The background shows a person in a black wetsuit holding a red Life Guard bag with a Landmark Learning logo. The text is overlaid on the image.

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WASHINGTON GOVERNOR SIGNS NEW LAW TO ENHANCE ACCESS AT STATE BRIDGES

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE



Photo courtesy of the Office of the Governor of Washington State

ON MARCH 25TH, 2016 Washington Governor Jay Inslee signed a new bill into law that will help encourage improved access to rivers at bridge crossings. The new law requires that the Department of Transportation assess the feasibility of providing public river access when a bridge is built or re-constructed.

The new law states in part:

During the design process for state highway projects that include the construction of a new bridge or reconstruction of an existing bridge across a navigable river or waterway, excluding limited access highways and ferry terminals, the department must consider and report on the feasibility of providing a means of public access to the navigable river or waterway for public recreational purposes. The report must document whether the proposed project is in an area identified by state or local plans to be a priority for recreational access to waterways. If the proposed project is in an area identified by state or local

plans to be a priority for recreational access to waterways, the department must coordinate with other relevant state agencies or local agencies to ensure consistency with the identified recreational plan.

The idea of drafting a bill to address access at bridges was in direct response to recommendations by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force to Develop a Transportation Strategy for Outdoor Recreation in Washington State. Specific actions identified by the Task Force included involving state agencies beyond those already involved in recreation, improving state government services to make access to outdoor recreation easier, and enhancing transportation investments that serve recreational purposes.

Our original bill was adopted from the California State Highway Code but was modified in response to input from the Washington Department of Transportation. Maryland also has a law requiring an evaluation of access at bridge projects, and Virginia has a formal agreement in place

among agencies. To develop our legislation and successfully move it through the state legislature, we worked in partnership with Northwest Marine Trade Association, an organization devoted to growing boating and improving the quality of the experience for all who enjoy time on the water.

With this project we mobilized our membership to weigh in and provide input to the Governor's Outdoor Recreation Task Force, drafted legislation to respond to the need, and worked with partners to build bipartisan support. Many of our members weighed in through the legislative process. With new advocacy tools we have available through the Outdoor Alliance, we were able to strategically target key legislators with specific messages. Many volunteers assisted us along the way and we hope to use this as a model in other states where we might be able to institute similar policies to enhance access at bridge crossings.

STEWARDSHIP

IMPROVEMENTS TO ACCESS ON CLACKAMAS RIVER (OR) NOW A REALITY

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE



Launching rafts on opening day at the Hole in the Wall access point.

Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

THE CLACKAMAS RIVER in Oregon is well known as one of the classic whitewater runs of the Pacific Northwest with plenty of great Class III whitewater and tributaries with challenging Class V. It is the backyard run for paddlers living in the greater Portland area, with a long season that extends from the first winter rains to the tail end of snow melt.

Several sections of the river are also a source of hydropower for Portland General Electric (PGE).

In 2006 American Whitewater signed a settlement agreement with PGE that established the guidelines for the future operation of the hydropower project. Among the provisions of the agreement,

we advocated for improved gage information, support for events including the Upper Clackamas Whitewater Festival, improvements in river access at three sites, and enhanced law enforcement within the corridor. With this agreement, whitewater recreation is formally recognized as an activity that PGE manages their hydropower project to benefit.



Our goal was to improve the quality of the experience for whitewater boaters along the Clackamas River and make it easier for visitors to find the put-ins and take-outs, with formalized sites providing sanitation, good access to the river, and clear signage. After extensive review of potential sites and design work over the past 10 years, we are pleased to report that two of the three new access sites have now been completed.

Hole in the Wall Access.

Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

Moore Creek is a newly improved site about a mile downstream of Bob's Hole. It serves as a take-out for those paddling the best segment of whitewater on the run and is also a put-in for those looking for more of a mellow float. Hole in the Wall is a newly improved access just upstream of Hole in the Wall Rapid that serves as a put-in. Work is now underway on the third improved access point upstream of the Three Lynx powerhouse. PGE will manage all three of these sites for the term of the hydropower license.

In the coming year AW will also be working to develop a river map with access points and rapids that can be posted at access points along the river corridor and make it easier for first-time visitors to find the section of river they want to paddle. We appreciate the leadership of local members Pete Giordano and Luke Spencer who have



Moore Creek Access with new toilets and changing rooms.

Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

spent many hours in meetings and on site visits that were essential in bringing these projects to successful implementation.

17th AW Ohiopyle Over the Falls Festival October 1, 2016

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Photo by Kent Noble

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special places that made
a difference in your life.*

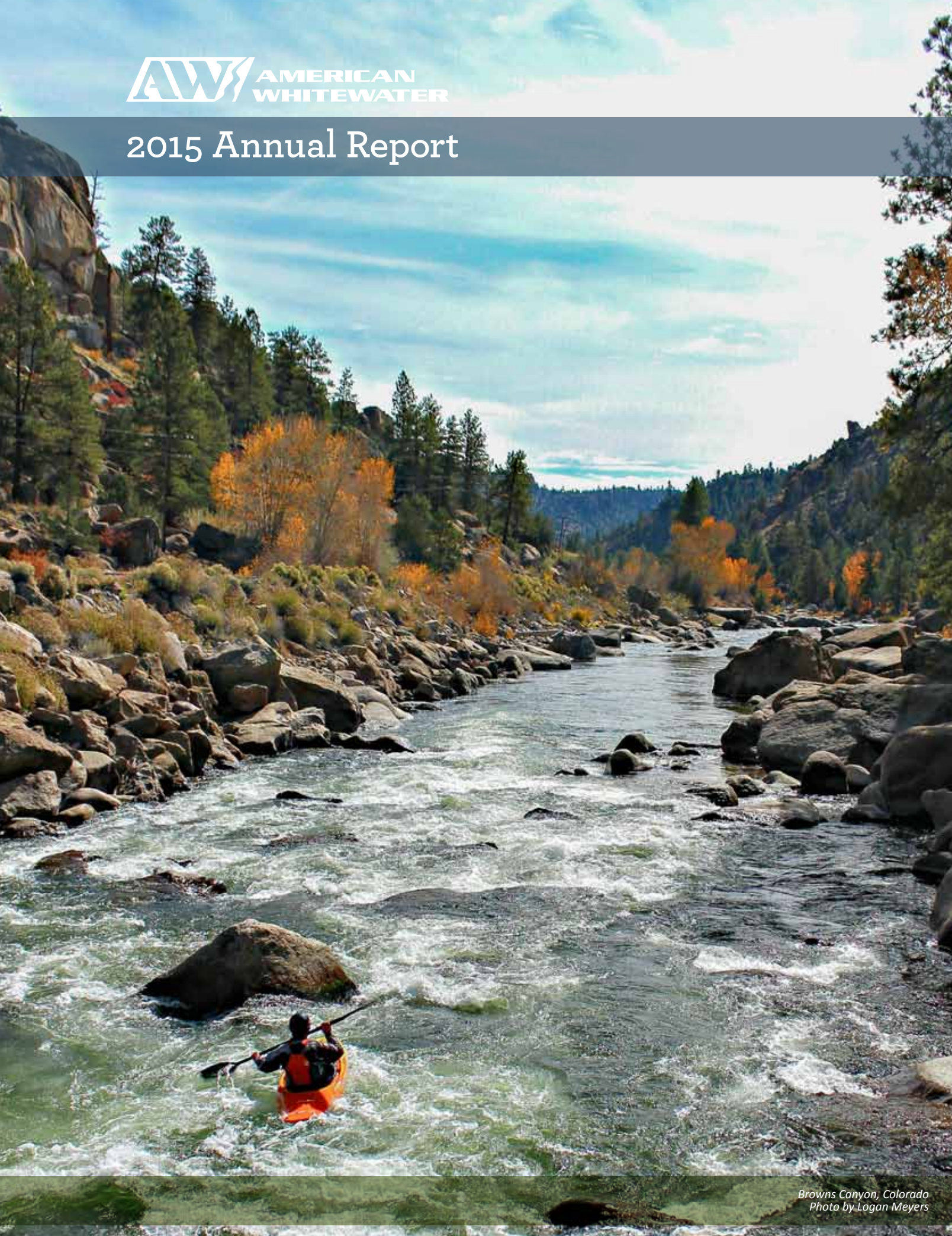


Become a member of the American Whitewater Enduring Rivers Circle, created exclusively to honor and recognize people who have helped to continue our river stewardship efforts through a gift to American Whitewater in their estate plans.

For more information about making a bequest to American Whitewater
CONTACT Carla Miner: 1.866.262.8429 or carla@americanwhitewater.org



2015 Annual Report



Dear Members,

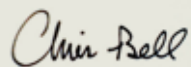
American Whitewater is the only national non-profit organization exclusively focused on conserving and restoring whitewater rivers. Each day, we work to protect free flowing rivers, restore flows to rivers impacted by hydroelectric projects, secure access, and advocate for new Wild and Scenic rivers throughout the country. Your membership is a key part of what makes our efforts possible.

On behalf of the American Whitewater Board of Directors and staff, we are pleased to report that we achieved another year of solid stewardship success for our members in 2015. American Whitewater directly participated in management decisions that improved flows and river access associated with dams on 30 rivers across the country. We led efforts to secure new Wild and Scenic River protections for rivers and streams in CA, CO, ID, MT, NC, VT, and WA in 2015. We also secured 14 new and/or improved river access areas on streams nationwide, and collaboratively managed river access on at least 16 rivers. This includes sites we own, like the Watauga (NC) and Elkhorn (KY), and on land leased for access to the Gauley (WV). All told, these efforts brought positive outcomes for several thousand miles of spectacular rivers, and benefited thousands of river enthusiasts.

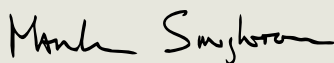
In 2015, American Whitewater received our sixth straight 4-Star Rating (the highest possible) from Charity Navigator for our financial management. Only 3% of the charities Charity Navigator rates have received at least six consecutive 4-star evaluations, showing that American Whitewater outperforms most other charities in America. This designation from Charity Navigator means that your membership dues and donations will be put to good use and result in tangible gains for river stewardship!

At American Whitewater, our river stewardship program takes the long view. The key to long-term success is the strong backing of our members; it is only through your support that we can continue to tackle sticky ongoing conservation and access issues. As we all know, no other group understands the headwater reaches of major river systems better than paddlers. It's that intimate knowledge that provides relevance to our river stewardship efforts and helps to keep the conversation real with policy makers and river managers. Because of this, we were able to accomplish a lot in 2015.

Thank you for supporting us along the way,



Chris Bell
President, Board of Directors



Mark Singleton
Executive Director



Stafford Gulch in the new Browns Canyon National Monument.
Photo by Logan Myers

Stewardship

American Whitewater made great strides in river conservation and access in 2015 through nearly 100 projects on headwater rivers across the nation. We celebrated the designation of Browns Canyon National Monument while advancing other promising river conservation initiatives like the Wild Olympics and Montana Headwaters initiatives. We infused public land planning efforts with firsthand knowledge from paddlers, resulting in new Wild and Scenic River protections in Colorado, Montana, and California. We worked to restore flows to dammed rivers in the Northeast and nationwide, and celebrated the return of flows to Washington's Sultan River.

The paddling community is a strong river conservation force because we know and love rivers through recreation, and American Whitewater worked hard for responsible river access in 2015. We secured new access areas on over a dozen rivers in 2015, defended the right to paddle rivers in South Carolina, and shared a celebratory float down the newly opened Merced River through Yosemite Valley with our National Park Service partners. It was, by all accounts, a great year for American Whitewater and the rivers and people we represent.

KEY METRICS FOR 2015

Volunteer hours contributed in 2015	12,598
Members at year end	5,375
Affiliate Clubs	130
New designated Wild and Scenic river reaches	9
New "eligible" Wild and Scenic river reaches secured	14
New and/or improved river access areas secured	14
Improved downstream flows and river access on rivers with hydropower dams	30
Opened banned rivers in National Parks - Merced and Tuolumne Rivers, Yosemite (CA)	2
New stream gages negotiated and installed	1
Collaboratively managed river access	16
Unique website users and over 9 million page views per year	1 million

Paddlers gathered for the first formal whitewater boating opportunity on the Sultan River (WA). Photo by Thomas O'Keefe



Pacific Northwest

American Whitewater reached several critical milestones in our efforts to enhance public access and protect free-flowing rivers in the Pacific Northwest in 2015. After more than 35 years of advocacy, whitewater recreation on the Sultan River (WA) was recognized by resource agencies and the utility. The public enjoyed a new trail into the gorge, and the utility initiated ecological process flows that provide whitewater boating opportunities.

While we celebrated improvements to operations at existing facilities in 2015, we continued our work to prevent new dams and tear out older deadbeat dams. We were successful in our efforts to defeat a hydropower project proposed for the Talkeetna River in Alaska. Additionally, with increased interest in hydropower development in the Cascades of Washington and Oregon, we continued to work with our Congressional champions to introduce legislation to protect free-flowing rivers. Among the bills introduced, our Wild Olympics legislation would protect major river systems on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. Also, the Oregon Wildlands Act would add important tributaries to the Wild and Scenic Rogue, designate the Molalla River as Wild and Scenic, and expand protections on the Chetco Wild and Scenic River.

Finally, in 2015 we completed access improvements to several rivers throughout the region, including Canyon Creek (WA) and Clackamas River (OR). We worked with partners to complete a new recreation plan for the Nooksack River (WA) and work towards developing new access at Punchbowl Falls on the Hood River (OR). We also continued planning and construction on several additional projects that will be completed in the coming year.

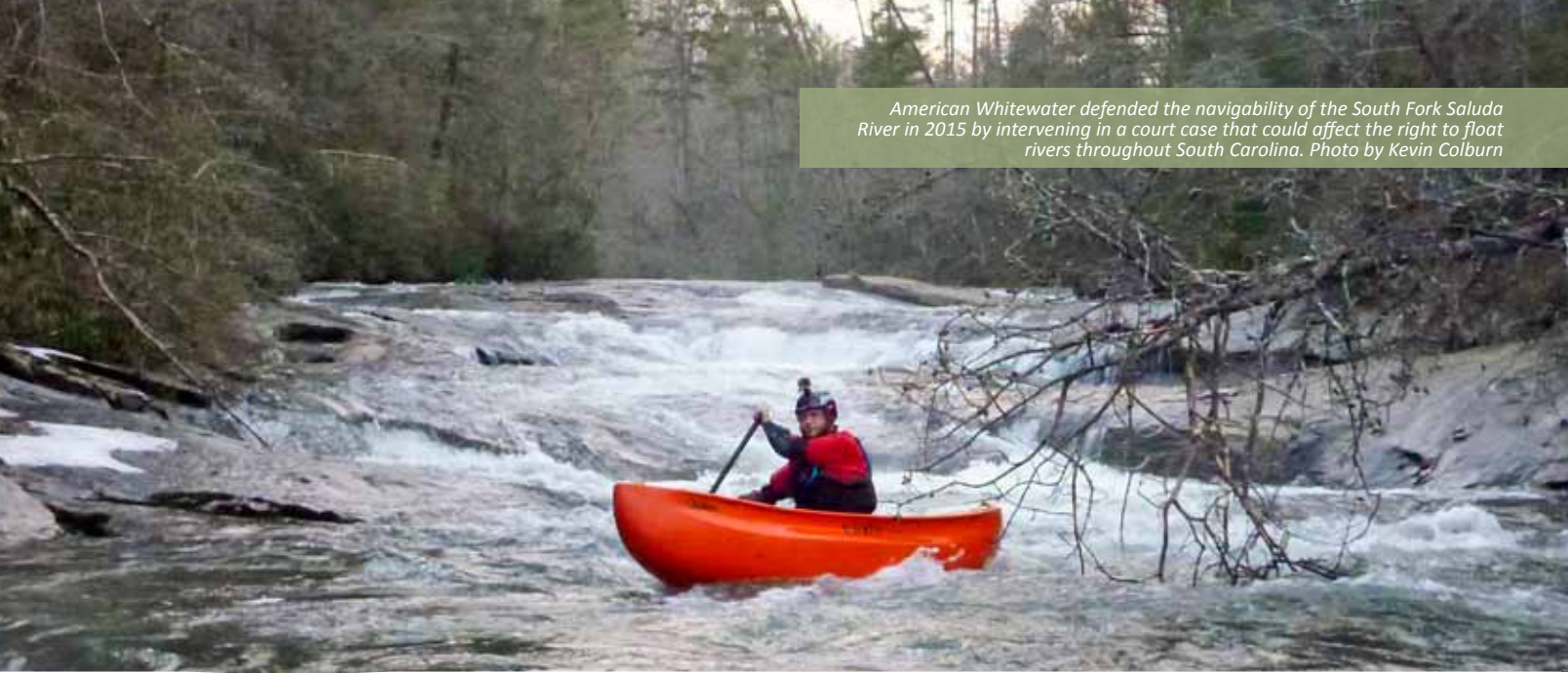
California

2015 was a big year for American Whitewater in California. In April we celebrated the official opening of the Tuolumne and Merced Rivers to paddling within Yosemite National Park. Since then, hundreds of paddlers enjoyed the spectacular float through Yosemite Valley for the first time and two groups made the first runs from the Merced headwaters down to the Valley. We improved river access last year by removing physical and regulatory obstacles to our California rivers. On the Middle Fork American we convinced State Parks to lift an overnight camping restriction on the popular Tunnel Chute run. And on the Cosumnes River, we worked with our pro bono legal counsel at Ropes and Gray to finally convince El Dorado County to remove a fence that



Enjoying a paddle through Yosemite Valley for the first time. Photo by Michelle Francesco

American Whitewater defended the navigability of the South Fork Saluda River in 2015 by intervening in a court case that could affect the right to float rivers throughout South Carolina. Photo by Kevin Colburn



blocked access for years. American Whitewater also worked to improve paddling conditions on South Silver Creek and advocated for access components for the 2016 Slab Creek recreational releases.

Finally, as the state faced its fourth year of drought, American Whitewater educated the public and lawmakers about a number of ill-conceived water storage projects. Temperance Flat Dam is among the worst, as lawmakers ask state and federal taxpayers to shoulder the \$2.8 billion price tag for a project that would yield very little water and drown a river recommended for Wild and Scenic. No doubt, this and other battles will continue into 2016 and beyond, and American Whitewater will be there protecting the interests of rivers and paddlers.



*Latrobe Road Bridge on the Consumnes River (CA).
Photos by Dave Steindorf*

Southern Rockies

American Whitewater achieved a number of successes in 2015 after years of work across the Southern Rockies region. At the top of this list is the designation and protection of Browns Canyon National Monument on Colorado's Arkansas River. Our team worked on the Wilderness and National Monument campaigns since 2007, and played an important role in writing legislation with U.S. Senator Mark Udall. We also recommended key protections that were included in the President's Proclamation, which finally protected 22,000 acres of the Arkansas River

Canyon in February 2015. At the statewide level, we secured important policies that will support and enhance river based recreation through the first ever Statewide Colorado Water Plan. American Whitewater was also selected to advise Colorado's Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry on river related issues that our residents and visitors face.

In Utah, we secured new boat passage and a water right at the Tusher Dam in 2015. The project eliminates the last obstruction to fish and boaters between Wyoming's Flaming Gorge Reservoir and the Green River's confluence with the Colorado River in Canyonlands National Park and Cataract Canyon. Additionally, on the Dolores River as it flows into Utah from Colorado, we helped secure new streamflow protections that help to sustain paddling, fish, and river health from new proposed water projects. We also helped communities protect themselves from the dangers of flooding, and supported the creation of new river parks on the Colorado and Eagle Rivers. Today, American Whitewater is recognized as a leader in river conservation, water management, and stewardship throughout the region.

Southeast

Our Southeast staff dove deep into planning the future of the 1-million acre National Forests in Western North Carolina in 2015. Through a collaborative process, we pitched new protections for a treasure trove of more than 20 Southeastern rivers. This multi-year effort is likely to protect the water quality, natural flows, scenery, and access that make paddling in the region awesome. American Whitewater also assisted with the purchase of a new public put-in on the Watauga River to compliment the take-out we own, and defended the right to paddle in South Carolina through a lawsuit on the South Fork of the Saluda River. Late in 2015, we celebrated the issuance of a new federal license for the dams on the Catawba River that is based on a settlement agreement we helped to craft a decade ago. The new license will trigger new releases, gages, and access along the river as it flows through North and South Carolina.

The Boulder River is one of over 50 outstanding streams in Montana that American Whitewater sought protection for in 2015. Photo by Evan Stafford



Mid-Atlantic

Following many years of grassroots advocacy the Commonwealth of Virginia determined that the iconic Johns Creek fell under their jurisdiction in 2015. This was enough to break a legal stalemate that kept paddlers off the water for over a decade, and in 2015 paddlers restored and reopened American Whitewater's takeout on Johns Creek and enjoyed many descents. American Whitewater also continued our proactive effort to improve access to the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers near Harpers Ferry, WV and published a collaboratively developed river access plan for the area in 2015. Restoring flows to the New River Dries was a major focal area of our program, and in 2015 we developed analysis and a proposal in support of restoring this spectacular Class III/IV run. Gauley Festival also had an exciting activism component in 2015. Paddlers at the Fest, in collaboration with KEEN Footwear, signed hundreds of petitions and postcards in support of protecting the Gauley's headwaters as the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument.

American Whitewater is working on the federal relicensing of hydropower projects above Zoar Gap on the Deerfield River (MA). Photo by Zoar Outdoors



Northern Rockies

American Whitewater and our partners released our carefully crafted and broadly supported Citizen's Proposal to designate over 600 miles of new Wild and Scenic Rivers in 2015. Many great whitewater rivers are in our proposal including the Madison, Gallatin, and North Fork of the Blackfoot rivers. This was a major milestone on the way to securing the first Wild and Scenic River designations in the state in 40 years, as was securing introduction of bipartisan legislation to designate East Rosebud Creek, and getting favorable Forest Service rulings on the eligibility of numerous rivers and streams. We also helped put a nail in the coffin of a large proposed new dam on the Bear River (ID) when the regulating agency found that the dam was not in the public interest based on our participation in the process. Finally, in keeping with our long track record of restoring flows and access below dams, we began working on the relicensing of a dam on the Weber River (UT) where significant improvements are possible.

Northeast

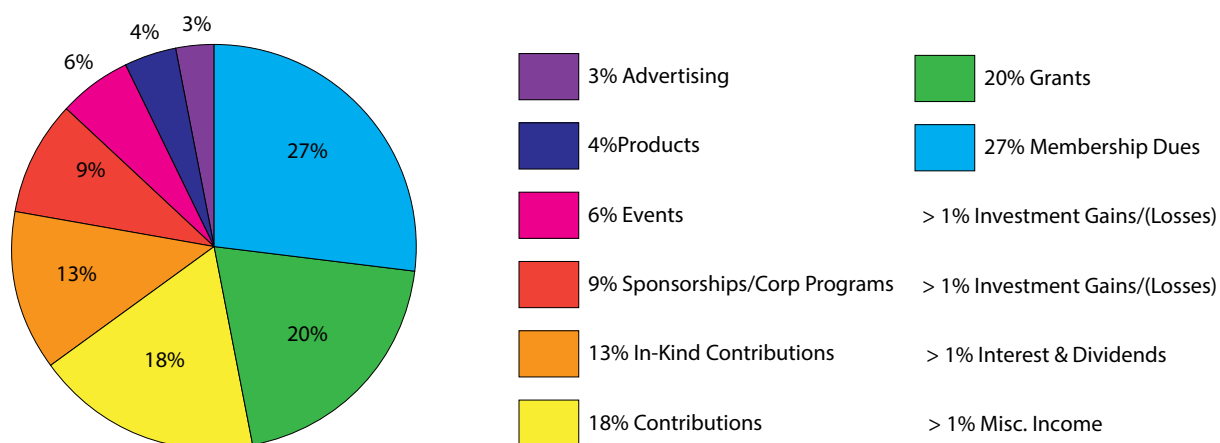
In 2015, American Whitewater focused our efforts on the relicensing process for five hydropower projects on the Connecticut River. At Bellows Falls, Turners Falls, and Sumner Falls, we completed controlled flow whitewater boating studies that demonstrated the potential boating opportunities at each location. Through these efforts, we expect to restore 3.5 miles of river, remove a low-head dam and secure scheduled boating releases. On the Deerfield River, we obtained federal approval for whitewater flow and recreation studies, with the goal of expanding boating opportunities and access on this highly valued river. We also continued our efforts to protect boating opportunities on the Green River in Vermont, the Little Androscoggin in Maine, and the Schoharie Creek in New York.

We celebrated the new Wild & Scenic designation of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers in northern Vermont, and continued our efforts to protect the Farmington River and Salmon Brook in Connecticut. We also began to explore opportunities to protect headwater rivers and streams in Vermont's Green Mountain National Forest.

2015 Statement of Activities

Revenue	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total 2015	Total 2014
PUBLIC SUPPORT				
Contributions	\$185,458	\$62,069	\$247,527	\$213,847
OTHER REVENUE				
Membership dues	\$358,508		\$358,508	\$358,508
Advertising	\$36,584		\$36,584	\$36,584
Grants	\$-	\$271,474	\$271,474	\$463,272
Events	\$84,861		\$84,861	\$86,440
Sponsorships/Corp Programs	\$117,171		\$117,171	\$83,120
Products	\$51,914		\$51,914	\$52,667
Investment Gains/(losses)	\$760		\$760	\$2,648
Management Fees & Services	\$-		\$-	\$-
In-Kind Contributions	\$180,740		\$180,740	\$235,847
Interest & Dividends	\$903		\$903	\$973
Misc. Income	\$1,270		\$1,270	\$1,022
Net Assets Released from Restriction	\$539,197	\$(428,330)	\$110,867	\$-
Total Support and Revenue	\$1,582,464	\$(94,787)	\$1,366,056	\$1,534,928
EXPENSES				
Program Services:				
Access & Conservation	\$627,805	\$-	\$627,805	\$860,774
Public Education	\$407,763	\$-	\$407,763	\$410,164
Total Program Services	\$1,035,568	\$-	\$1,035,568	\$1,270,938
SUPPORTING SERVICES				
General & Administrative	\$186,865	\$-	\$186,865	\$134,603
Fundraising	\$109,851	\$-	\$109,851	\$122,939
Total Supporting Services	\$296,716	\$-	\$33,772	\$257,542
Total Expenses	\$1,332,284		\$(132,274)	\$1,528,480
Change in Net Assets	\$250,180	\$(94,787)	\$98,502	\$6,448

2015 REVENUE SOURCES

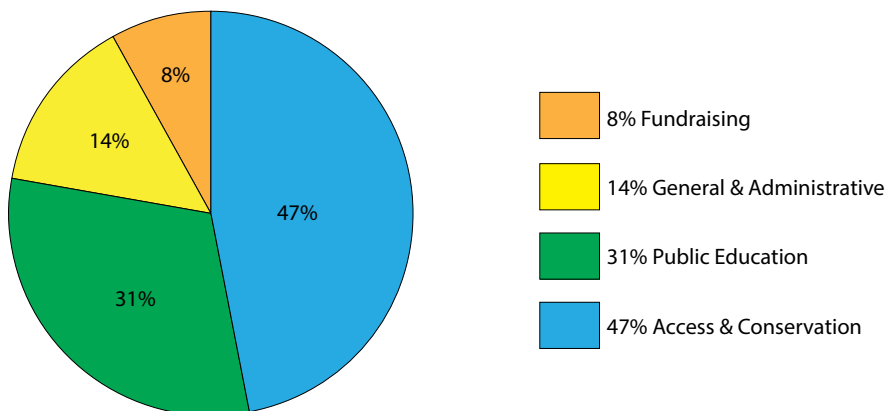


2015 Assets and Liability


Assets	2015	2014
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$486,643	\$547,192
Accounts Receivable	\$17,550	\$11,211
Grants Receivable	\$53,800	\$43,652
Investments	\$193,725	\$151,668
Prepaid Expenses	\$15,622	\$14,005
Direct Deposit Funds Advanced		
Inventory	\$8,638	\$13,433
Total Current Assets	\$775,978	\$781,161
LONG-TERM ASSETS		
Lands held for protection	\$58,317	\$58,317
Computer equipment, net	\$25,608	\$159,704
Total Long-Term Assets	\$83,925	\$218,021
Total Assets	\$859,903	\$999,182

Liabilities & Fund Balances	2015	2014
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$13,210	\$22,626
Other liabilities	\$529	\$9,425
Deferred Revenues	\$-	\$1,641
Payroll Liabilities	\$1,737	\$22,561
Total Current Liabilities	\$15,476	\$56,253
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$615,512	\$619,227
Restricted Net Assets	\$228,915	\$323,702
Total Net Assets	\$844,427	\$942,929
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$859,903	\$999,182

2015 FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES



2015 Honor Roll



American Whitewater Enduring Rivers Circle

Leave a lasting legacy to the rivers that made a difference in your life. American Whitewater would like to thank the following individuals for making legacy gift commitments.

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Laura Blalock	Christopher Hest
Rich and Stephanie Bowers	Chris Hipgrave
Bob Brewer and Jonna Hussey	Karl and Jo Ann Koenig
Thomas J. Christopher	David Mason
Jennie Goldberg	Douglas Pineo
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	Peter Stekel

For more information about planned giving opportunities visit:
www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Wiki/aw:planned_giving_program

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Brian Madsen
Erica Madsen
Brenda and Bryan Mahoney
Peggy and David Mainer
Jane A. Majeski
Craig Mallery
Jerry Malloy
Bill Mandler
Tom Marshall
Christiaan L. Martin
Mike Martini
Michael Marusich
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers
James Mathews
Chris Mattox
Ben R. Maxwell, Jr.
Jade Mayer
Oscar Mayer
Dwight Mayo
Robert Mayo
Corey McAlevey
Jason McAllister
Frank McCann
Mike McCarty
David McCatty
Andrew McCawley
Steve McClelland
John McClenny
John McClester
David McConnell, Jr.
Beth McCullough
Melissa McCune
Ricky McDaniel
Doug McDonald
David A. McGovern
Joanne McGrew
Scott F. McIntyre
Bill McKnight
John McLaughlin
Michael McWhirter
Chuck Meakin
Yonton Mehler
Scott Meininger
Sandy Melville

Robert J Menard
Gerald H. Meral
Gregg and Karen Merchen
Zina Merkin and Bob Milgate
William P. Merrick
Ingrid Meszoely
Noah Metzler
Lowell Meyer
Jim Michaud
Tony Miely
Brenna Miletich
Don and Audrey Millard
Gary Miller
Jason Miller
Mark Miller
Mark Miller
Peter Mills
Brad Milner
Nicholas Milo
Carla Miner
Christopher Moczydlowski
Joe Mollica
Rowan Monington, Jr.
Derick Moore
Jeff Moore
Charles E. Morgan
Suzanna Morris
Stephen Muck
Matt Muir
Everett Mulkeen
Daniel Murphy
Ed Murphy
Marianne Musitelli and Cecil Lesley
Robert Nasdor
Doug Nechodom
Robert Neily
Alexander Nekrasov
Carol Nelson
David Nelson
Scott Nelson
Chris Neuenschwander
Linda Newman and George Wilhelm
Alex Nichols
David Nichols
Drew Nienstedt
North Creek Rafting Company
North East Wisconsin Paddlers, Inc.
Robert North
Ronald S. Novak
McKay B. Nutt
Brian Oblander
Christine O'Connor

Cliff O'Connor
Mark and Kate O'Handly
Frank Ohrt
John Orsini
Lanson Oukrop
Dennis and Molly Overly
Lee A. Owen
William Owens
Ozark Wilderness Waterways Club
Tom Pace
Paddling.net, Inc.
Jeffrey Paine
Russell Paine
Thomas Palka
Kevin Parker
Gayle and Richard Parry
Alan Pasnik
James Patrick
Daniel Patrinellis
Daniel Patrinellis
Jesse Patterson
Russell H. Patterson
Scott Patton
Danny, Vaso, Nayada and Orpheas Pavli-Stock
Dan and Amy Pearse
Warren Pechan
Edgar Peck
Robert Pearson
Melissa Pennscott
Joseph R. Perella
Kurtis Perkins
Ann Petersen
Kurt Peterson
Harriet Phillips
Randolph Pierce
Tim Ploss
David Plott
Chris Poli
Mark Poljak
Rebecca Post
Rick Potts
Jeremy Poulin
Martina Pounds
Chris Prangley
David Prestia
Frank Preston
David Price
Dixiemarree Prickett
Wes Prince
Brannen Proctor
Douglas Proctor

2015 Honor Roll

James Proctor
Leonard Prosnitz
Gregory Provenzano
Chris Puchner
Scott Puthoff
John Putnam
James Quigley
Andrew Quinn
Knut Radloff
Paul and Sarah Raffaeli
Doug and Allison Ragan
Joseph Rand
Judith Ranelli
Rapids Riders
Tom Rapp
Kurt Reidinger
Kurt Reidinger
Paul Reilly
Suzanne Remien
Eli and Liana Ren
Harry Rhett
Len Rice
Craig Richards
Jeff Richman
Craig A. Richter
Mark and Carol Jean Rickman
Shaun Riedinger
Kalon Riehle
Kevin Riley
Patrick Rivers
Jason Rizzolo
Matthew Robertson
Bill Robertson
Michael Rock
Steve Rock
Mack L. Roebuck
Richard Roehner
Lee Roehrdanz
Ron Rogers
Dale Rogerson and Sarah Stanley
Robert G. Rohwer
Edward Roseboom and Donna Weber
Dona Ross
Janet Rossi
Trey Rouss
Ollie Royer
Steve Ruhle
Janet Russell
Patti and Tom Rutka
Ken Ryan
Kevin Ryan
Marianna and Aleksey Safronova

Jeff Sarsfield and Antonia Chadwick
Carrie Sawtell
Richard Scaffidi
Chris Scalisi
Mark Scantlebury and Audrey Bergsma
Bill and Kary Scarborough
Steve Scarborough Family
Scenic River Tours
Steve Schaefer
Mark Schaffer
Tom Schiff
Daniel Schlager
Keith Schloss
Paul Schmitz
J Schoendorf
Scott Schreiner
Kurt Schroeder
Bruce and Sharon Schumacher
Aaron Schwartz
Alan Scott
Cody Seal
Jayson and Kim Seaman
Chuck Seidler
Matt Selby
Tom and Beth Semptimphelter
Don Sessions
Susan Sestak
Richard Shands
Patrick Sheehan
John Sherman
Hank Sherrod
Charles B. Sherwood
Sierra Rescue Inc.
John Sills
Roger Singer
Paul Siratovich
Gary Skiba
John Skorpen
Brandon Slate
Julia Smith
Steve Smith, MD
Mowry Smith
Patsy Smith
Rick Smith
Todd Smith
Topher Smith
Stephen R. Smyth
James Sneeringer
Sojourner Communications, Inc.
Larry S. Sokol
Shannon Solomon
James Sparks

Greg Spencer
Sandra Spoon Bruno
Kendall Springer
Matthew Staker
Mike Stanley
Paul Steffy
Steven T. Steinberg
David Stenger
Gary Stenger
Tom Stevens
Larry Stewart
Daniel Stillman
Thomas Stineman
John Stormon
Edward Pettus and Amy Stout
Sue Strang and Paul Carlile
Ken and Fran Strickland
Douglas Sughrue
Chris Summerville
Matthew Swaim
Douglas Swartz
Michael Szymanski
William Szymanski
Susan L. Taft
Alan Tango
Mark Taratoot
Elizabeth Tarr and Calvin Diller
Clare Tattersall
Kate and Bob Taylor
Steve L. Taylor
Zachary Price Taylor
Ian Tefft-Meeker
Rick Tegethoff
Stephen Tegtmeier
Kyle Terrell
Matthew Terry
The Seattle Foundation
Eugene Thomas
Karrie and Culley Thomas
Scott Thomas
Mac and Molly Thornton
Three Rivers Paddling Club
Ann and Cecil Tickamyer
John Tillema
David and Maureen Timm
Lee Timmons
Helen Todd
Chris Tonozi
Patrick D. Tooley
Town Tinker Tube Rental
Christopher Tracy
John Trembley

2015 Honor Roll

Diane Troje
Kerry Trojnar
Christopher Tulley
Boo Turner
Carrington Tutwiler
Brad Udall
William Van Haren
Timothy VanFleet
Derek and Amy Varble
Robby Venn
Vermont Paddlers Club
Butch Vision
Maria Viterisi
Linda Van Vleck
Craig Waddell
Monte Wagner
Michael Walenta
Brad Walker
Christopher Wall
Susan Walls
Brian Walsh
Cody Walsh
Sam Walton
Curtis Warner
Gary and Joan Warner
Al Warren
Gary Weatherford
Bucknell Webb
Deborah Webb
Andrew Webberley
Allan Weber
Greg Weeter
Honey Weinstein
Michael Welch
Joel Wenblad
Joey West
Sally Wetzler
Daniel White
Dane White
Will White
Susan and Karl Wigdal
Kent Wigington
Brian Wilcock
Christopher Wilcox
Steve Wilcox
Joseph Wild
Clayton Wiley
Jenny Wiley
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club
Douglas Willenborg
Jason Williams
Sarah Zapolsky and David Williams

David J. H. Wilson
Ethan Winger
John Wiser
Mike Wodzianski
Wolverine Publishing LLC
David Wood
Thomas and Christina Wood
Heather Woodward
Mark Wray
Steve and Wendy Yeager
Pat Younger
Frank Yulling
Fred Zacherl
Aaron Zettler-Mann
Michael Zimmer

Lifetime Members

Michael and Susan Abernathy
David Ackerman
Milt Aitken
Charlie Albright
Dick (Jon) Almquist
Jon Almquist
Doug Ammons
Jay Anderson
Walt Andry
Mike Aronoff
Eric Arons
Brian M. Aubin
Brent Austin
Stephen Bachelor
Sutton Bacon, Jr.
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Colton Baker
Scott P. Barnes
Pope Barrow
Kim Bates
Keith Beck
Craig Bedard
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Alison Bermant
Peter R. Bernstein
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Ted Bilek
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Preston Blake
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Dave Bowman
Sandra Boynton
Steve Braddom
Larry Brammer
David Brauer
Jeffrey Brennan
Alan and Suzanne Bressler
Charles Brewer
Brian Briant
Peter Bross
Alex Brown
David Brown
Elizabeth Buck
Mike Buechler
Curtis and Buffy Burge
Victoria Butler
Margaret R. Caldwell
Stewart Caldwell
Alp Can
Stephen Canale
Carolina Canoe Club
Les Case
David and Mary Cernicek
Arnold Schaeffer and Deborah Chandler
Yvon and Malinda Chouinard
Thomas J. Christopher
Ed Clark
Emerson J. Clauss, III
Jeff Clewell
Chuck Cloninger
Cloud Mountain Foundation
Cal Coetzee
Christy Coleman
Trey Coleman
David Collins
Kim Collins
Morgan Colonel
Hope Concannon
Luke Coop
Gretchen Cornell
Jesse Costello-Good
Lora Cox
Kevin B. Coyne
Adam Cramer
Joshua Crossman
Magdalena Dale
Rebecca Dameron
Daniel Kanner
Stephen H. Daniel
Lyle Danielson
Brent and Dawn Davis

2015 Honor Roll

Paul and Downing Denison
Jack Ditty
Mary Dombey
Stratford Douglas
Jack and Barbara Doyle
Peter Dragon
Chip Duckett
Phil Duff
Scott P. Duffens
Kenneth H. Duncan
Christine Eckel
Susan Eckerly and Terry O'Donnell
Robert Eckhardt
Ben Edson and Emily Mahowald
Anthony Edwards
Clint Edwards
Mike Eiseman
David Elliott
Ted Engelhardt
Donna K. Ennis
Vann and Laura Evans
Stephen Fabrey
David Fallside
George M. Feinberg
Nathan Fey
Frank J. Fico
Bill Finger
Charles Fiveash
Jacob Fleisher
Ian Foley
Kent Ford
Debbie Frye and James Fore
Robert and Andrea Forster
David Fosdick
Gary Franks
Stuart Fraser
Ken Frederick
Joel E. Freedman
Allen Freeman
Michael French
Friends of the Yampa
Mort Fuller and Sue Langfitt Fuller
Nathan Galbreath
John Gangemi
Holley and Brian Gardel
Ken Garrison
Bruce M. Genereaux
Ross George
Keith Gershon
Ken Gersten
Claire Gesalman
Steven J Getz

Ken Gfroerer and Lisa Smith
Nancy Gilbert
Brian Ginsberg
David Glickerman
Jennie Goldberg
John C. Goodwin
George and Clarice Gordon
Karl and JoAnn Gordon
Shawn Graham
Anne Greer
Joseph Greiner
Shawn Griffin
Robbie Griffith and Jeff Redding
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Mike Gunter
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H. H. Hancock
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Robby G. Hansen
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James A. Hardee
Marc Harkness
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John B Harris
Robert W. Harris
John Harvey
Ron Healy
David Carter Hearn
Francheska Hebden
Robert Heineman
Eric Henrickson
Hermann Family
Martha Herzog
Christopher Hest
Jason Hightower
David Hillman
George Hodges, Jr.
Todd Hoffman
Dan Hoheim
Paul Holmes
Jason Huber
Werner Rod Huck
Watts Hudgens
Rick Hudson
Ben Huneycutt
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Kristine and Eric Jackson
John Jamnback
Janet McLaughlin and Kurt Konolige
John Jerger
Kevin St John

Jeff and Susan Johnson
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Eric Kaufmann
KCCNY
Joseph Keck
Jeff Keim
Charles Keller
Chris Kelly and Nanette Laughrey
Stephen Kelly
Jay P.K. Kenney
Dave Kersey
Patrick Kessler
Don Kiely
Jim Kilkenny
Leah Kindree
Earl King
Don and Nanci Kinser
Keith Kishiyama
Mike Klaiber
Hank M. Klausman
Cameron and Kerri Klinger
Scott and Devan Koehn
Karl and Jo Ann Koenig
Chris and Caron Koll
Wendy Krause
Bill Krissoff
Bradley Kulbaba
Ken Kyser
Andy and Wendy Laakmann
Landmark Learning
Jeanne Langan
Troy Langley
Enriched Learning Center / ELC
Outdoors
Matt and Nicole Leblanc
Brent Lehman
Jeffrey R. Leighton
Debbie and Todd Leonard
Ben Levy
Stephen Lex
Charles Ligocki
Kevin W. Lindberg
Douglas and Marie Liu
Frank Lorch
Tony Lunt
Brooks Lutterloh
Mike and Michelle Mahaffey
Greg Mallory
Robert and Debora Martz
David Mason
Bill and Anne Masters

2015 Honor Roll

Graham Matthews
David May
Mike McKay
Scott McKay
Mark McKinstry
Victor Kress and Dawn Meekhof
Steven Miller, MD
Robert Mingus
Daniel Mongno
Phil Montgomery
Joshua C. Moore
Pete Morey
Megi Morishita
Arianne Morrison
Scott Murray
Timothy Narron
Chris Neuenschwander
Doug Nicholson
Eric Nies
George Noe
Nova River Runners Inc.
Laura Nugent and Ian Bailey
Frank Ohrt
Thomas O'Keefe and Rie Yamazaki
Keith T. Oldham
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club
Philip O'Rourke
George Orr
James Oxford
Steven Pack
Eric Panebaker
Janet and Dave Panebaker
Aida M. Parkinson
Bill and Donna Holmes Parks
Thomas Pasquarello
Nicholas B. Paumgarten
Tim and Annie Payne
Lee G. Van Pelt
Melissa Pennscott
James Pepin
Jeff Perizzolo
Stephen Perkins
Lance Petrack-Zunich
Don Piper
Patrick Polan
Rebecca Post
Chris Prangle
Aaron and Tamsen Pruzan
Joe Pulliam
Peter Quayle
Justin Rae
Pete Rainey
Chris Ramko

Morgan Randell
Ken and Emily Ransford
Mark Rasmus
Harrison Rea
Paul Reavley
Brett Redfearn
Brian Reeder
Will Reeves
Robert Reiterman
Timothy Reynolds
Eric Richardson
Dave Robey
Barry Robinson
Corey Robinson
Stephen Robinson
Karl Rogers
Richard Rollins
Brett Russell
Lee Rust
Roman Ryder
Tim Ryle
Lawton Salley
Chanchal Samanta and Deborah Reichert
San Miguel Whitewater Association
Jody Schaeffer
Patricia Schifferle
Johanna Schneider
Tom Schneller
Rick Schoen
Norwood Scott
Mark Sriver
Roberta A. Scull
Leaf Seabrook
David Seay
Pat Sheridan
Ed Sherwood
Jim Silavent
Jim Sindelar
Tom Sitz
Peter N. Skinner
Brady Sleeper
Edwin Smalley
Mike A. Smith
Stephen L. Smith
Thomas Smith
Chris Sneed
Keirith Snyder
Sean Snyder
Matt Solomon
Marv Sowers and Amy Pearsall
David Spiegel
Eli Spiegel

Joel Spiegel
Aaron Stabel
Kurt Stalnaker
Roger L. Starring
Mary E. Starzinski
Chris Stec
Dave Steindorf
Gordon Steindorf
Peter Stekel
Sarah Stephenson
Bryan and Michelle Stewart
David Aries and Margot Stiles
Jason Stingl
Edward Stockman
Andrew Stuart
Dave Su
Mark Sullivan
Michael Symonanis
John Tarpey
Jeffrey Taschler
Charles E. Taylor
Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club
The Arches Foundation
Richard Thistle
Rick Thompson
Howard (Bud) and Joan Thullbery
Newton Tilson
Marc Tohir
Eric Tollefson
Nick and Emily Troutman
Glen Tsaparas
Barry and Kitty Tuscano
Kenny Unser
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Association
Craig L. VanDeList
William VanderKooy
Jim Veltrop
Charlie Vincent
Stephen D. Vitale
Josh von Szalatnay
Joan and Kurt Wade
Charlie and Sandy Walbridge
David Wallace and Betsy Frick
Duke Warner
Gordon Warren
Glenn Watt
Scott Weems
Sebastian Weiche
Kate Wempe
Werner Paddles
Michelle White

2015 Honor Roll

Gregory Whiteaker
Collin Whitehead
Natalie Whiteman
Martin Wick
Greg Widroe
Kurt Williams
Lisa Williams
Cheyenne Wills
John R. Wilson
Julianna Wilson
Courtney Wilton
Brandon Woerth
John D. Wolken
Brandon Woods
Candice Clark Wozniak
Carter Wray
Brad Xanthopoulos
Mark Zakutansky
Art Zemach
Craig Ziegler

In Memory Of*

**in memory of friends that passed
in the reported Honor Roll year*

Russel Aron
Guillaume (Frency) Bonnot
Richard (Scott) Brafield
Angela Dooley
John Foss
Richard (Richter) Franklin
Taylor Hunt
Beth Kelly
Alan Proctor
Aaron Russell

In Honor Of

Jason Beakes
Chuck Brabec
Marilyn Freedberg
Kimi and Luke Hanson
Jennifer Koermer and Andrew Douglas
Joan Monnig
Jeff Scott
John Simpkin
Rick Steeves

Foundations

Ajax Foundation
American Express Foundation
Bailey Family Foundation
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Bright Funds Foundation

Cloud Mountain Foundation
Community First Foundation (Colorado Gives Day)
Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley
Conservation Alliance
Denison Family Foundation
Firedoll Foundation
Foundation of the Carolinas
GE Foundation
George & Miriam Martin Foundation
Ironman Foundation Inc
John Deere Foundation
Johnson & Louise H. Clark Charitable Foundation
Jubitz Family Foundation
Pruzan Foundation
RDH Foundation
Sam & Peggy Grossman Family Foundation
Seattle Foundation (GiveBIG Day)
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Stangler Family Foundation
Strangler Family Foundation
The Arches Foundation
The Hooter Fund II of The Oregon Community Foundation
The Jean Thomas Lambert Foundation
The Rust Foundation
The Seattle Foundation
The Virginia & Charles Brewer Family Foundation
Walbridge Family Foundation
Walton Family Foundation
Western Conservation Foundation
Winston-Salem Foundation
Outdoor Alliance

CFC and Workplace Giving Campaigns

Anonymous
Julie Alsberge
Leif and Natalie Anderson
Charles Arning
Grace Bagley
Nolan Banish
Donald Barnett
James Baummer
Craig Bedard
Gustaf Belt

John Blackshire
Christopher Bodner
Ed Bourguignon
David Brauer
Patrick Brennan
Macy Burnham and Amanda Marusich
Chris Campbell
Jim Cavo
Peter Coho
Terry Conning
Juliet Cox and Thomas Mutchler
Mark D'Agostino
Jason Darby
Daniel Davis
Nom Deavers
Bruce Delaplaine
Larry and Christine Dunn
James D. Ellis
James Everett
Richard Fernald
Frank J. Fico
Robert and Andrea Forster
Ken Frederick
Brian and Carrie Freeman
Joshua Gaffney
Jeffrey B. Gartman
Edward J. George
Claire Gesalman
Shawn Graham
David Greenwald
Shawn Griffin
William Griffin
Damon Healy
Michael Henderlong
Christopher Hest
Lance Hill
Charles R. Hubbard
Jeffrey Hunt
Henry Jackson
Kevin St John
Matthew Jones
Seth Kaufman and Susanne Rublein
Dana Kopf
Chris Kelly and Nanette Laughrey
Matthew Kirsch
Brock Krizan
Glenn Lamson
Brian and Mari Little
Jerry Malloy
John McClenny
Scott McKay
Mark McKinstry
Lowell Meyer
Timothy Narron

2015 Honor Roll

Jerod Nowicki
Roger Peka
Hunter Reed
Dale Rogerson and Sarah Stanley
Tracey and Eric Roush
Jody Schaeffer
Cathy Schilling
Johanna Schneider
Eric and Tera Schreiber
David Scott
Amy Shipman
Daniel D Short
Tim Shults
Don Simmon
Debby Singleton
Mark A. Smith

James Sprouffske
Roger L. Starring
Bryan and Michelle Stewart
Travis Strickland
Tom Sutton
Tracy Tackett
Michael Tehan
Dean Tipple
Rob Tosatto
Scott Alan Trogdon
Christopher Tulley
Lorn VanSteenbergh
Stephen D. Vitale
Matthew Wallace
Mark Whiteside
Sue Whitney
Joanna Wolf

Corporate

A.D. Edwards Group
AIG Matching Grants
American Express Philanthropy
Employee Giving Program
AT&T
Bank of America
Bank of the West
Benevity
First Giving
GE Foundation Matching Gifts Program
Hewlett Packard
HopeLab
IBM Charitable Contribution Campaign
J.M. Huber Corporation
JP Morgan Chase & Co
Medtronic

Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
Network For Good
PG&E Corporation
Schwab Charitable
The Boeing Company
The Standard
Thomson Reuters
United Way of California Capital Region
United Way of Central and
Northeastern Connecticut
United Way of Central New Mexico
United Way of Southwest Colorado
United Way of the Columbia-
Willamette
United Way of the Greater Triangle

Affiliate Clubs

ADK Schenectady
Adobe Whitewater Club of New
Mexico
AMC - Connecticut Chapter
AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers
AMC - Boston Chapter Paddlers
AMC - Delaware Valley Chapter
AMC NY/NJ Chapter
American Packrafting Association
Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts
Arkansas Canoe Club
Atlanta Whitewater Club
Backwoods Mountain Sports
Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club
Bardstown Boaters
Base Camp Cullowhee
Beartooth Paddlers Society
Benscreek Canoe Club
Birmingham Canoe Club
Blue Ridge River Runners
Blue Ridge Voyageurs
Bluegrass Wildwater Association
Boeing Employees Whitewater &
Touring Club / BEWET
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club
Butte-Anaconda River Runners
Canoe Club of Centre County
Canoe Club Of Greater Harrisburg
Canoe Cruisers Association
Carolina Canoe Club
Chicago Whitewater Association
Chico Paddleheads
Chota Canoe Club
Club de Canoë-Kayak d'Eau Vive de
Montréal
Coastal Canoeists Inc
Colgate University
Colorado Whitewater Association
Columbus Outdoor Pursuits
Conewago Canoe Club
Coosa River Paddling Club
Davidson Outdoors
Dbl Z! Whitewater Club
Dolores River Boating Advocates
East Tennessee Whitewater Club
Elkhorn Paddlers
EPIC Adventures
Eugene Kayaker
Fairbanks Paddlers
Float Fishermen of Virginia
Flow Paddlers' Club

2015 Honor Roll

Foothills Paddling Club
Friends of the Crooked River
Friends of the Yampa
Georgia Canoeing Association
Gold Country Paddlers
Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assn
H2o Dreams
Hamilton College
High Jim and the A.S.K.
Hollins Outdoor Program
Holtwood Hooligans
Hoofers Outing Club
Hoosier Canoe Club
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq.
Huntsville Canoe Club
I.R.I.E. Rafting Company Inc
Idaho Whitewater Association
Iowa Whitewater Coalition
Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers
Kayak and Canoe Club of New York / KCCNY
Keelhaulers Canoe Club
Landmark Learning
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club
Lower Columbia Canoe Club
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers
Merrimack Valley Paddlers
Missouri Whitewater Association
Next Adventure
Nor Cal River Runners
North East Wisconsin Paddlers, Inc.
Northwest Rafters Association
Northwest Whitewater Association
Nova River Runners Inc.
Ocoee River Council
Ohio Valley Paddlers
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club
Oregon Whitewater Association
Outdoors Unlimited
Ozark Mountain Paddlers
Ozark Wilderness Waterways Club
Paddle Trails Canoe Club
Paddlers4Christ
Palmetto Paddlers
Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society
Philadelphia Canoe Club
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club
PNWKayakers.com
Rapids Riders
Redneck Kayak Club
RTS Sierra Club Angeles Chapter
San Miguel Whitewater Asso
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter
Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club
Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club
Tennessee Eastman Hiking & Canoeing Club
Tennessee Scenic River Association
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club
The Mountaineers
Thompson Rivers Univ Adventure Studies
Three Rivers Paddling Club
Thunderbeard Outdoor Restoration Organization
Toledo River Gang
Triad River Runners
University Kayak Club
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Association
Utah Whitewater Club
Venture 8 / Troop 8
Vermont Paddlers Club
Viking Canoe Club
Washington Kayak Club
Washington Recreational River Runners
West VA Wildwater Association
Western Association to Enjoy Rivers
Western Carolina Paddlers
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club
Wilmington Trail Club
WVU Whitewater Club
Zoar Outdoor
Zoar Valley Paddling Club

Events and Festivals

Animas River Days
CKS PaddleFest
Deerfield Festival
Dolores River Festival
Feather Festival
FIBArk
French Broad River Festival
Gauley Festival
Gore Canyon Festival
Gunnison River Festival
Lyons Outdoor Games
National Paddling Film Festival
Ohiopyle Over the Falls Festival
Opening Day on the South Fork American
Wenatchee River Festival

STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

National Policy

Clean Water Act
Federal Agency Partnerships
Hydropower Policy and Legislation
Hydropower Reform Coalition
Land and Water Conservation Fund
National Forest Planning
Outdoor Alliance
River Management Society
Wild and Scenic River Management

Southeast

Chattooga River (NC, SC, GA)
Cheoah River (NC)
Nantahala River (NC)
Ocoee (TN)
Potential Tennessee Scenic Rivers (TN)
Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers (NC)
South Fork Saluda River (SC)
Tallulah River (GA)
Tennessee Wilderness (TN)
Tuckasegee River (NC)
Watauga River (NC)
West Fork Tuckasegee (NC)

Mid Atlantic

Gauley River (WV)
Johns Creek (VA)
New River Dries (WV)
Ohiopyle Falls (PA)
Savage and NB Potomac Rivers (MD)
Shenandoah and Potomac Access (WV/MD/VA)
Susquehanna River (PA)
Upper Yough (MD)
Virginia Access (VA)

Northeast

Connecticut River (MA, VT, NH)
Deerfield River (MA)
Green River (VT)
Little Androscoggin River (ME)
Presumpscot River (ME)
Potential Wild & Scenic Rivers (CT, VT)
Schoharie Creek (NY)
West River (VT)

2015 Honor Roll

Midwest

Fox River (WI)
Wisconsin River, Grandfather Falls (WI)

Northern Rockies

Bear River (ID)
Weber River (UT)
Boulder Creek (ID)
Potential Wild & Scenic Rivers (ID)
Ross and Callahan Creeks (MT)
Sullivan Creek (WA)
Lightning Creek (ID)
Wild & Scenic Rivers Campaign (MT)

Southern Rockies

Animas River (CO)
Arkansas River (CO)
Boulder Creek (CO)
Cache la Poudre River (CO)
Colorado River (CO)
Colorado River (UT)
Colorado's Water Plan
Dolores River (CO)
Dolores River (UT)
Escalante River (UT)
Green River (UT)
Gunnison River (CO)
Potential W&S Rivers (CO, UT)
River Access in Colorado
River Access in New Mexico
River Access in Utah
Salt River (AZ)
San Miguel River (CO)
San Juan River (UT)
San Rafael River (UT)
St. Vrain River (CO)
South Platte River (CO)
White River (CO/UT)
Yampa River (CO)

Pacific Northwest

Chehalis River (WA)
Chelan (WA)
Chetco River (OR)
Clackamas River (OR)
Crooked River (OR)
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RIVER VOICES

GUIDING LONNIE ON THE LOWER GAULEY

BY ALLYSON CONNER



Lonnie and the group at the UG takeout" The Upper Gauley crew, from left to right: Helene Scalliet, Alex, Lonnie, Allyson Conner, Fern Abrams, Shannon Orcutt, Burton Greer, and Chris Glazner.

Photo by Chris Glazner

"H EY, CALL ME back. I got a favor to ask." These are not words that I ever imagined would lead me to the chance to guide Lonnie Bedwell, a blind kayaker, down the Gauley River. In 2013, Lonnie had been the first completely blind person to paddle down the Grand Canyon. My good friend and owner of OKC Kayaks, Dave Lindo, had full confidence in Lonnie's and my abilities. I was shocked, excited, overwhelmed, and nervous about such an opportunity. Me? I am not a sponsored kayaker. I flip a lot and I swim on occasion. Didn't they want someone more professional? Nevertheless, Dave passed my number on to Lonnie so we could talk about it. When Lonnie called, I told him that I would be happy to lead him down the Lower Gauley, but leading him down the Upper was a whole other ballgame that I felt required someone with more experience to guide him. During that phone call, Lonnie told me that his guides from his first Grand Canyon trip, Alex Nielson and Mike Bradley, would be coming to the Gauley. So all I would have to do was lead them down the Gauley and they would lead Lonnie. This was a task I was definitely up for! I was totally on board with leading Lonnie's guides and I thought this would be a cool story to tell my friends. I love taking people down my favorite river in West Virginia.

Gauley Fest is always an exciting weekend, but Gauley Fest 2015 was about to become the most unforgettable kayaking trip I'd ever had. Saturday morning of Gauley Fest, as Lonnie was still on his way to West Virginia, we learned that Alex and Mike were not going to make it due to a flight delay. Holy crap! So now, I was gonna be Lonnie's eyes on the Lower Gauley. "Ohmygosh, ohmygosh, ohmygosh," were just a few of the panicked thoughts I had as reality set in. Lonnie said I could back out if I didn't feel comfortable leading him. But I did not want to let him down. He had come several hours from Indiana with a huge goal in mind, and I knew I wanted to be a part of it. And seriously, how cool was it that a blind kayaker was going to paddle the Gauley? I knew I did not want to back out now. Thankfully, I had some excellent friends with me who were willing to be part of the adventure.

All morning long, my nerves were alive and kicking, as I frantically directed Lonnie to our backwoods location by phone and arranged for a friend to pick up his loaner boat in Summersville. To my surprise, when Lonnie got to the Woods Ferry put-in he was calm and even excited about going down the river with six complete strangers. I introduced myself, and then he met the rest of our group: Helene

Scalliet, Fern Abrams, Galen Vandergriff, Sheila Chapelle, and Shannon Orcutt. Then Lonnie pulled out two orange jerseys that

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RIVER VOICES

read “Guide” and “Blind Kayaker” so that people would not get in between us. This felt like a badge of honor. I put mine on as we all finished getting ready, and then we made our way down to the water. This was really happening! On the water, Lonnie gave us a few instructions to make sure we knew what worked best for him. My voice would be his eyes, so it would be very important for me to keep talking to him on the water, especially as we were going through the rapids. The key words were, “On me.” I needed to repeat them over and over as loud as I could because that was how he figured out which direction to go. We decided Fern, Shannon, and Sheila would be out front, then myself and Lonnie, then Helene and Galen as the sweeps and backup guides if I got separated from Lonnie. Lonnie said hearing directions from multiple people was confusing so only one person at a time should be guiding him. And he told us he would definitely flip more than we would, so not to worry about it. After this all-too-brief introduction to how to lead a blind kayaker down a river, we quickly reached the first rapid, Ender Waves.

As we headed into the rapid, I realized I’d have to look over my shoulder while yelling at the top of my lungs so Lonnie could hear me over the sound of the whitewater, all the while trying to stay upright and keep Lonnie on a good line. We also had to navigate the flotillas of rafts that overtake the Gauley River every season. This would be interesting.

We got through the first rapid and I was starting to feel the nerves settle down. And then all of a sudden I was upside down – dang those eddy lines! I hurried to get up so I could check on Lonnie. He made it through without catching the same eddy line, so he was upright, and from what my friends told me he was asking where I was, not realizing I was upside down. That made some of them giggle. Everyone was settling into their roles, with the excitement of being part of something truly historic. When we got to Backender Rapid, the

discussion about the hole at the bottom ended with Lonnie saying he wanted to go right through it. So we did, and Lonnie got a fun, unexpected ride. He seemed to like that!

I was feeling a bit more relaxed with each small rapid. Next up was Koontz Flume and Five Boat Hole. My main goal was to keep Lonnie out of the undercut rock on the right and Five Boat Hole on the left. I got a little unsettled when Fern, who was ahead of me, unexpectedly caught an eddy, but I knew not to make any sudden change of course with Lonnie behind me. I was yelling at the top of my lungs while looking over my shoulder to keep an eye on Lonnie, all the while trying to stay on line, which was not easy to do. I saw Lonnie flip and get right back up as I was cresting the final drop – all good so far. And then I saw the right edge of Five Boat Hole a little too close for comfort, and yelled over my shoulder, “Hard right!” multiple times because Lonnie was a bit left of where I was. And then my worst fear happened: he was in Five Boat Hole! I led the blind guy into one of the biggest holes on the Lower Gauley. Now I was feeling very unworthy of my orange guide jersey. To everyone’s surprise, he was surfing like a champ. People quickly realized there was a blind kayaker in the hole, so they got ropes ready and paddled closer to the hole to help rescue him. However, Lonnie looked like a pro working himself out of the situation. After a good long surf, he realized he was gonna have to flip to get out of the hole. So he did, and sure enough, he rolled right up, and the crowd erupted in cheers. I did too, but I was also to blame for him being in there. I apologized profusely for that, and he graciously did not give me too hard of a time. After seeing him handle this mishap with so much grace and skill, our crew knew Lonnie was going to be fine on the rest of the river.

More than once I heard Lonnie say, “Ally, where are ya?” on the flat water between the rapids. I would be lost in my thoughts about how cool an experience this was, such that I would forget I needed to

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RIVER VOICES



Lonnie and Allyson at the end of their run on the Upper Gauley.

Photo by Chris Glazner

regularly give Lonnie audible clues about my location.

Next up was Canyon Doors; Lonnie handled the laterals and swirly water impeccably. He could tell by the way the river sounded that there was a huge wall on our right. It was fun hearing him talk about what he feels and hears on the river. That is all he has to go on, but as a result he seems to experience the river in a way that is so much more intimate than you or I because we rely so heavily on our vision. As I was watching Lonnie, I realized that he was the most beautiful art in motion I would ever see. It was this incredible experience that I was so humbled to be a part of—that Lonnie trusted my friends and me to get him safely down the river. He was also quite the entertainer with several blind guy jokes and stories from his life. This guy was something special!

I tried not to think too much about downstream rapids before we got to them. I wanted to be focused only on the next rapid coming up. The next ones looming

large in my mind were Upper and Lower Mash. Upper Mash is a junky, shallow rapid with some holes and then a small eddy before Lower Mash, which is a huge roller coaster rapid with a very strong left eddy line and a big wave-hole at the bottom. I felt like Lonnie and I were getting in sync as I settled into my role. He did perfectly in Upper Mash. We caught the eddy on river left between the two rapids and he had a great ride down Lower Mash. I was so pumped that he had a clean run through those two.

The next big one was Heaven's Gates, AKA, Heaven Help You. I had heard that the hole at the bottom right was no longer an issue because rocks had shifted, so that was one less obstacle to worry about. There are lots of holes all throughout the top of the rapid, which also meant I was getting splashed in the face. That definitely made yelling in the rapid a bit more challenging, but we were making our way through just fine. About half way through, I saw people scooting left of center, so I started to move us that way. I didn't remember any big holes except for

the bottom one, which was now gone. And then I suddenly dropped into a big hole on the right and flipped; then I felt Lonnie come into the hole. I thought, "Oh no, not again!" Lonnie rolled up first, and Galen got his chance to take over the role of guide. He didn't miss a beat, and as soon as Lonnie rolled up, he swung by his side yelling, "On me!" and took him down the second half of the rapid safely. For the second time, I'd led Lonnie straight into a big hole. I was beginning to think I should have an early retirement from leading blind kayakers down whitewater. Thankfully, we both laughed it off and kept on going. Lonnie still trusted me and didn't request one of the others to take over guiding him.

The next really fun ones were Upper and Lower Staircase, more big, fun, roller

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coaster waves. Lonnie loved those and we somehow convinced Galen to paddle backwards on Lower Staircase to film Lonnie and me. Galen said that was quite a challenge but he did great. On one of the next smaller rapids, Lonnie wanted to go backwards. So at the top of one that I could see all the way to the bottom, I agreed. Since Lonnie went backwards I felt like I had to go backwards because I still needed to guide him. That was quite a different experience, for sure. We each had a great time and stayed upright, too. No holes to speak of!

Pure Screaming Hell was soon on the horizon—our last big rapid of the day. And it has the massive Hell Hole at the bottom. I needed to be at my best for this rapid so that Lonnie could have a great ending to the Lower Gauley. I gave Lonnie a brief explanation of what we were going to do and then off we went. We moved from left to right at the top until I could see the ledge on our left. Lonnie was following perfectly. Then my directions changed to “hard left! hard left!” as we passed the ledge on our left in order to pass Hell Hole on our right. Lonnie later told me that he could tell when we passed the hole because the tone of my directions changed—the urgency was gone and excitement took over. He did it! He had a perfect run in Pure Screaming Hell. He felt like we were totally in sync on that rapid because we did exactly what I told him we would do at the top of the rapid. I was on this incredible high thinking about what an amazing thing Lonnie had just done. I was in complete awe of his abilities. Every moment of that day I felt sheer amazement for this man. He was such a joy to be around. I wanted to spend more time with him talking about anything and everything. But after yelling at the top of my lungs through rapids all day long, my voice needed a break. Thankfully, Fern is a talker, and she took over for the last two miles. And if you know her, then you won’t be shocked that, yes, she told Lonnie two miles of cat stories!

Saturday evening, we got to meet Lonnie’s Grand Canyon guides Alex and Mike, who had finally arrived in West Virginia. We discussed plans for the next day, and based on Lonnie’s stellar run of the Lower Gauley, we agreed that Lonnie would be up for the Upper Gauley the next day if Alex was there to lead him. On Sunday, I got to watch from behind as Lonnie followed Alex down the Upper Gauley. I was much more comfortable being his sweep on the Upper. I know my limits, and guiding him on the Upper could have put him in harm’s way. I am so thankful that Alex was there and I was in the back. Alex did an amazing job.

When I think back now on what Lonnie accomplished on Gauley Fest weekend, I am in complete awe. He taught me that I should not ever let anything get in my way. He showed me that if I want to do something, I absolutely can do it. He is fierce, he is a warrior, he is a pioneer, he is incredible, he is capable, he is positive; he is simply amazing. We talked on Monday after his weekend of Gauley paddling for about an hour on the phone. I wish I could have recorded the conversation. He told me more stories about his life, but what I remember most was how he talked about the lessons the river has taught him. He has learned the fact that we all need each other to get through life. Whether you are blind or sighted, you need good people in your life to help you get through the crazy times as well as the boring times. He talked about how life is like a river; it is full of excitement, challenges, lulls, and uncertainty. Yes, Lonnie, paddling with you was completely exciting and totally challenging in the best way possible. I sure hope we get to do it again!

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RIVER VOICES

GUIDING LONNIE ON THE UPPER GAULEY

BY ALEX NIELSON



*Alex Nielson and Lonnie Bedwell
on the Gauley River.*

Photo by Megan Mornini

LONNIE BEDWELL AND I met through a national non-profit called Team River Runner in 2013. I was volunteering to help teach disabled veterans how to kayak in Washington, D.C. and Lonnie was a blind paddler who wanted to paddle whitewater. Lonnie is well known for being the first blind person to kayak through the Grand Canyon. Not long after we met through Team River Runner, I was able to help guide him on that trip. During those 12 days we spent together on the Colorado, Lonnie did not portage a single drop, and he had remarkable control through every rapid on the river. More importantly, Lonnie proved that blind kayakers are capable of paddling challenging whitewater successfully and safely.

Since that first trip we have continued to paddle together when we get the opportunity, and I have watched Lonnie become an incredible kayaker. Our confidence has increased as we have gotten better together, and it is this confidence that brought us to Gauley Fest 2015.

I knew Lonnie had the ability to run the Upper Gauley. The only question was whether I could keep him on line and away from the more dangerous places on the

river. Luckily, at the festival we were able to link up with an outstanding group of kayakers who were willing to help support us on the water, and together we put on the river just below the infamous Summerville Dam outflow.

It immediately became clear that the boiling eddy lines of the river would pose a real challenge for us. Peeling in and out of powerful eddies can be very frustrating for blind kayakers and their guides because it is difficult to anticipate the transitional forces of the water. As a result, Lonnie capsized a few times in the early part of the run, but we soon found our rhythm, and we continued downstream to the major drops with calm, confident strokes.

In the swirling pool above Insignificant, I grabbed the bow of Lonnie's kayak and briefly described the rapid to him. This is our routine: above large drops we come together so that we can talk quietly, I tell him what the line is, and then ask him if he has any questions. We do not discuss the sieves, the undercuts, stories of near-drownings, or any of the other terrible things that could possibly happen. We simply focus on the moves ahead of us. Lonnie and I understand our limitations

and the risks of paddling whitewater, but once we have decided to run a rapid the only thing we really care about is staying together with our boats aimed in the right direction.

After we finished discussing Insignificant, I shouted, "On me!" and paddled over the horizon line into the roaring white chaos below. Lonnie followed me, and for a second the river swallowed us both, but then it spit us out laughing and whooping into the eddy below. We high-fived each other, dug our paddles into the current, and continued down to Iron Curtain.

Lonnie styled Iron Curtain as well, and soon we were in the eddy above Pillow Rock. As we peeled out into the current we could hear the roar of the crowd below. I could see mist rising over the horizon line. Unfortunately Lonnie and I collided in the lead-in to Pillow, and Lonnie was thrown into a hole sideways. Looking back upstream, I watched helplessly as he fought his way out of the hole, only to flip again. I was worried that he would be pushed toward the Room of Doom upside down, but luckily the side currents pulled him away from that hazard and into the main flow. He finally rolled up for the third time

just as he flew into the meat of the pillow, completely disappearing in the white chaos. Lonnie rolled up below Pillow Rock, surrounded by our group of safety boaters and the cheering crowd of onlookers. I sent a prayer of thanks to the river gods and congratulated Lonnie on his first time through Pillow Rock Rapid. He looked at me and asked if we could run it again. I said no.

Near Lost Paddle a kayaker from another group came over to me with a worried look on his face and asked if Lonnie was blind. I told him, "Yes, but it's okay because he just thinks he is floating in a big Jacuzzi anyway." Lonnie smiled and sat there quietly while the other paddler looked at us like we were insane. Lonnie loves to make people laugh, and he never misses a chance to play a trick on an unsuspecting passerby.

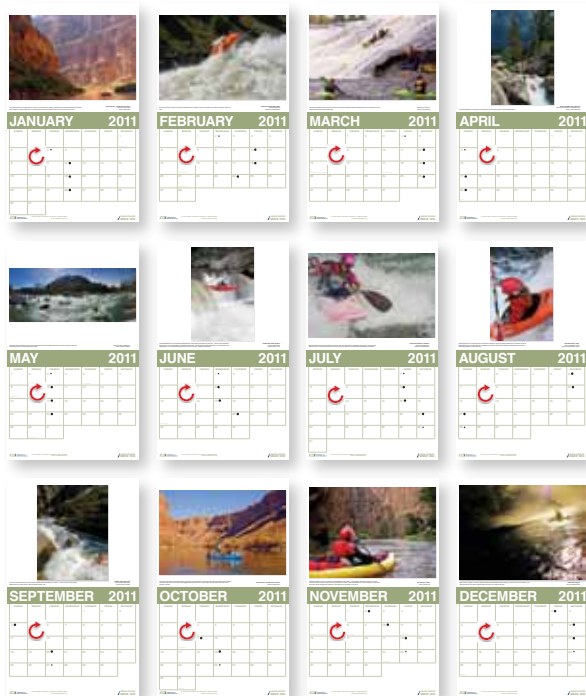
The reality was that even though we were both wearing bright orange vests clearly labeled "Blind Kayaker," most people early in the run did not realize that Lonnie was blind. This was partially because Lonnie is good enough at paddling that he blends in with everyone else on the river, and partially because people simply couldn't believe that a blind person was kayaking the Gauley. Soon word began to spread, however, and by the time we reached Iron Ring, nearly every paddler and every raft we came across was cheering for him.

Lonnie cruised right through the rest of the rapids without a problem, and at Sweets Falls he impressed the crowd by barely even getting his face wet. When we finally pulled up to the take-out, we were met by a small group of friends and onlookers. We hugged each other, thanked

our new friends, snapped a group photo, and jumped into our separate cars. Lonnie headed back to his home in Indiana and I headed back to school in Oregon.

Helping my friend experience the Upper Gauley for the first time is something I will never forget. He earned it after years of hard work teaching himself to kayak and traveling all over the country to find guides and the rivers to train on. Despite the obstacles he has faced, Lonnie is one of the most humble and positive people I have ever known. But what I admire most about him is that he never allows himself to be coddled and protected from the dangers of this world. Instead, he finds a way to be out in the midst of everything, experiencing his life to the fullest and inspiring those around him as he does.

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WITH BORROWED GEAR and the strong vision of river guide, Zachary Collier, Northwest Rafting Company (NWRC) was established in 2009. Throughout the years, NWRC has come to fruition, maintaining the foundational commitment to explore, protect, and lead trips on beautiful and remote rivers. NWRC offers multi-day

wilderness trips on Oregon's Rogue, Chetco, and Owyhee Rivers as well as Idaho's Middle Fork of the Salmon. In addition, NWRC leads international rafting and cultural tours in Bhutan and Chile.

NWRC is fueled by passionate and adventurous guides ready to explore and share the rivers they know and love. Zach

and his team have led expeditions for government officials and conservationists into threatened areas needing awareness and protection, such as the Kalmiopsis Wilderness and the Owyhee Canyonlands. We believe the best way to protect a place is to show off its value and need for protection first hand. Each year NWRC hosts Wild Rivers Night, a celebration for the river community that highlights these spectacular rivers and supports several non-profit organizations that work to protect them, including American Whitewater.

Partnerships promote progress and Northwest Rafting Company is proud to partner with American Whitewater throughout the year in order to reach state and local governments, advocating for our favorite, wild places. NWRC and AW also get together for an annual AW fundraising trip on the Rogue River where we all get to explore, play, and remember exactly why we love what we do.



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Over the years, American Whitewater volunteers have participated in numerous hydropower meetings as well as instream and recreational flow studies; filed comments and assisted with an uncountable number of filings; appeared as expert witnesses; lobbied; worked to fight new dams, remove existing dams, deny licenses, and improve public access to rivers and streams. In nearly every river stewardship issue AW has been involved with, the outcome has been favorable to paddlers. Not only has AW secured favorable decisions for the paddling community, but we are the only national organization representing paddlers as these decisions are being made.

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the U.S. American Whitewater currently has 6,300 active members. When considering the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join American Whitewater. If you are a member, please be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

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

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HUMOR

THE HIGH POINT

BY BOB WOODWARD

Normally, the high point in a paddler's career might be running something he never dreamed they would be able to do, like making a first descent, or perhaps winning a slalom or downriver race. Mine came in a café.

In July of 1979, three of us traveled from Bend, Oregon to kayak sections of Northern California's Klamath River. We started with the moderate "Trees of Heaven" run close to Interstate 5 and then began looking for bigger challenges. We found them and had two days of exceptional Class III+/IV runs.

On our last morning we decided to skip another campsite breakfast in favor of a huge meal at a riverside café we'd passed by the day before.

We rolled into the parking lot to find it packed with logging trucks and pickups. But what was this? There, wedged in between two big rigs, was a sporty new European sedan with two very new kayaks on top. Eureka!—we'd found potential paddling partners and an easy shuttle.



The author wrangling a Hollowform, circa 1979.

Photo by Dennis Oliphant

We strolled in, sat at a table, and perused the menu. All the breakfast specials had names related to timber harvesting. For example, the "Loggers Special" consisted of two eggs any style, hash browns, two flapjacks, and a strip of sirloin steak. We jumped on that one big time.

And as we waited for our specials to arrive, we scanned the place to find out who our fellow kayakers might be. And there they were, a middle aged couple tucked way back in the corner. It was decided that I would approach them about paddling with us and setting up a shuttle. I walked over and introduced myself and popped the question—run together and shuttle?

They looked at me silently and then the male half of the duo asked: "What class water are we talking about?"

"The run we have in mind for today is Class III+ with two Class IVs," I said.

"Sorry," he replied, "we're really only interested in Class V water."

"Oh," I stammered, "you two are a bit above our talent level. We've only been paddling for a couple of years. And you?"

"We started paddling three weeks ago and progressed really fast," he said, excusing himself and diving back into his "Logger's Special."

I said good luck, then retreated to my Class III-with-the-occasional-Class IV world with a Class V "Logger's Special" to finish.



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By Carla Miner, Membership Director

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If you have any questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please contact me. I can be reached at 866_BOAT-4AW or membership@americanwhitewater.org.

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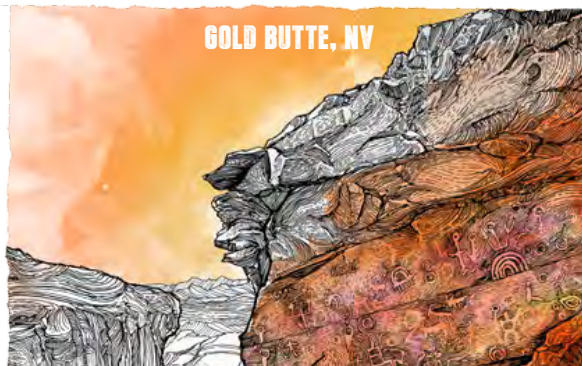


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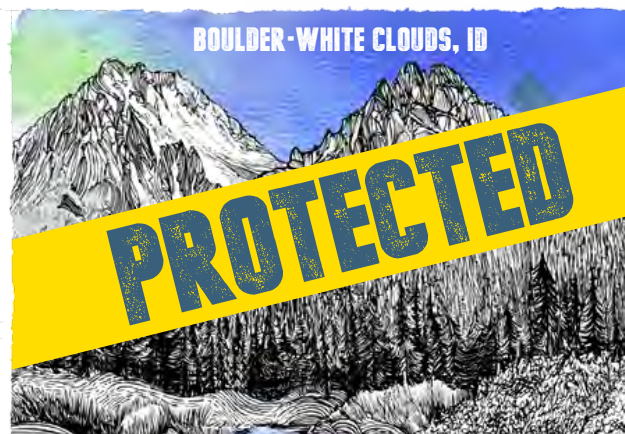


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