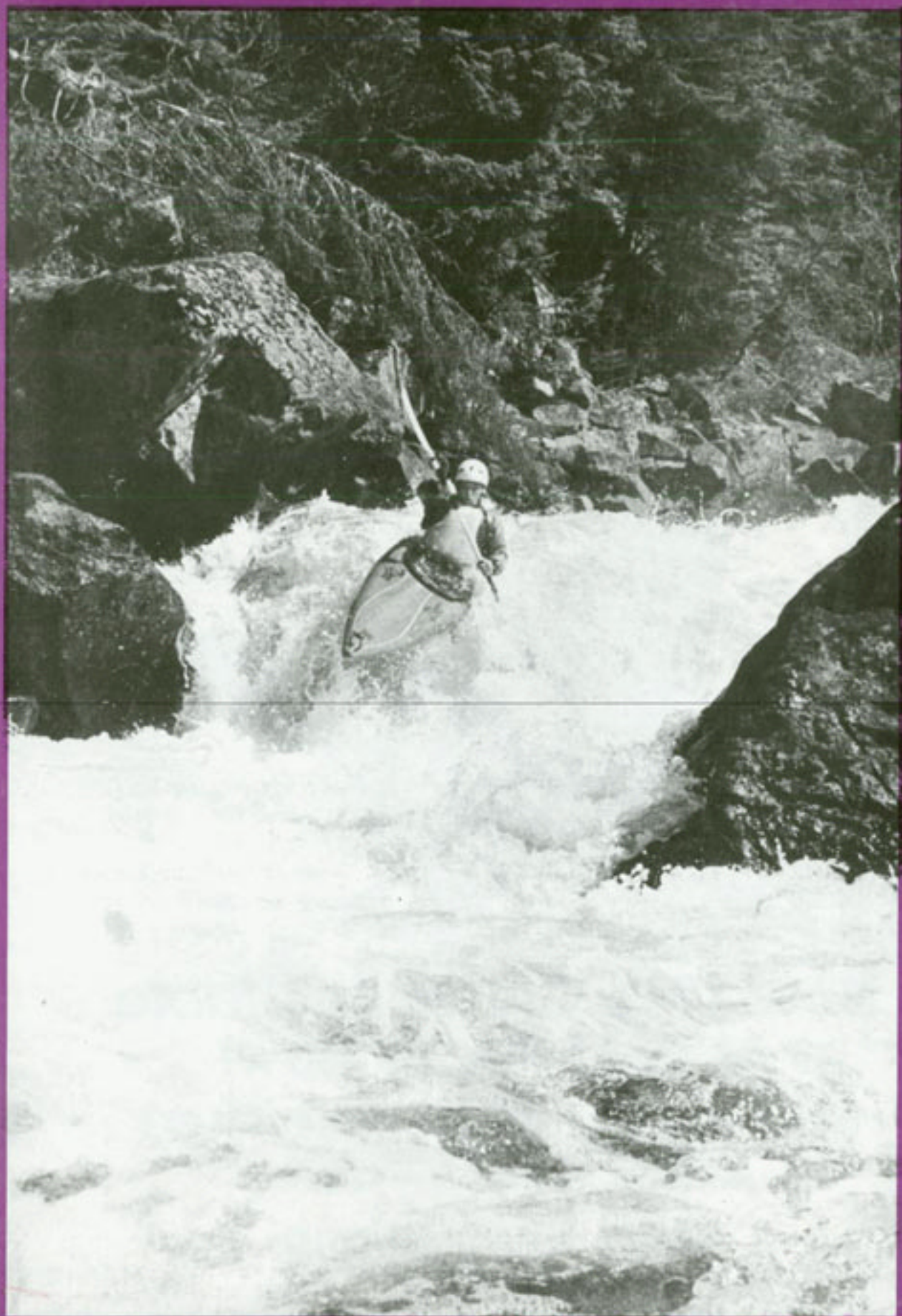


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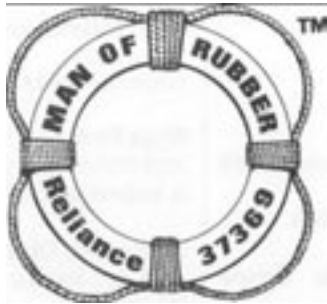
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AFFILIATION

September/October 1988
Volume XXXIII, No. 5

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editor's forum

'When there's no time to roll

During the late spring, I was up
in Quebec, preparing to run what turned
out to be the most difficult and exhilarat-
ing class 5 river I've ever experienced.
At breakfast the day of the descent, my
partner and I privately worried about a
third member of our party--a volunteer
we had met just two days before.

"What really concerns me,"
my friend said, "is that yesterday he told
me, 'I might flip over a bit, but I stick in
there and roll up.' That's fine on most rivers, but there's some places you don't want
to have to roll."

That's particularly true on many of the technical class 5 rivers currently
being attempted. An ill-timed flip can delay the paddler in making a critical move,
prevent him from catching a crucial eddy or place him head-down where a shallow
stream bed can play pinball with his cranium.

The bottom line here is: a bomb-proof roll is not the sole qualification of
an expert paddler. Sure, even the best boaters occasionally flip--and when they
do, they roll in the blink of an eye. But the simple fact that you do not come out of
your boat does not necessarily mean you're ready to tackle hair streams.

That message can also be applied to the subject of river conservation.
When dealing with upcoming relicensing of hydro projects or moving to
prevent future river developments--paddlers often don't have time to thrash about,
trying to find the right line through the rapids of state and federal bureaucracies.
If boaters keep their heads down too long, they may find themselves flushed too
far downstream to make a difference in preserving their favorite whitewater river.

Private developers can mobilize projects too quickly for private paddlers
to stop unless boaters make all the right moves and remain upright. That's where
the AWA comes in. We're in the forefront of educating local groups to the tactics
of stopping unwanted water projects.

When it comes to saving rivers, you don't have time to roll.



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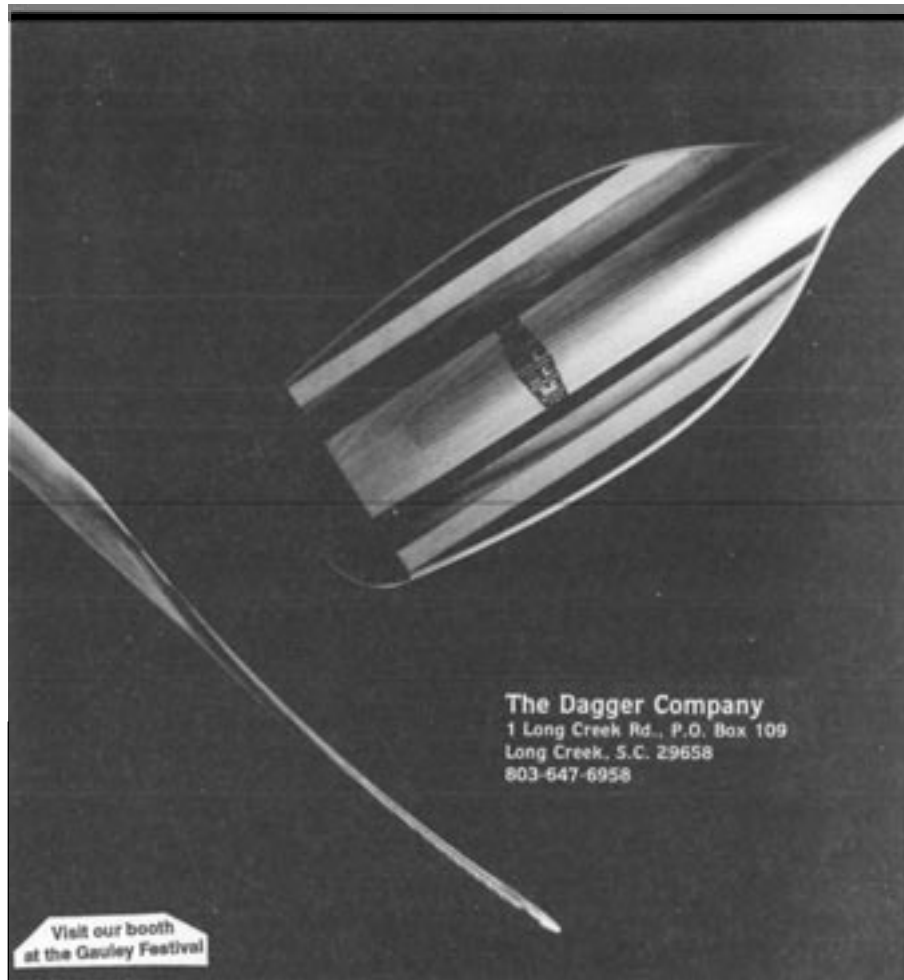
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awa briefs



Don Cochran photo

Jon Lugbill powers his way to a C-1 championship at the Maryland Classic

Maryland Classic:

A first-class affair

by Ron Burke and Mac Thornton

The 1988 Pre-world Slalom and Wildwater Races ("the Maryland Classic") held in June on the Savage River in Western Maryland were a huge success. Promoters and State officials involved in planning the races went through a lot of pre-race anxiety, but the event went off almost without a hitch.

The entire event was a practice run for the 1989 World Championships to be held at the same site. This year the crowd was huge. The number of visitors attracted to the race site during race week almost equaled the entire population of Garrett County, Maryland (pop. 27,000).

It was clearly the biggest whitewater race ever held in North America. Logistics were carefully planned. Traffic control was awesome. The Savage is located in a narrow canyon with a single-lane road on the river left. Parking is severely limited. Buses and a train (dubbed the "White-water Express") brought all spectators and volunteers to the site. No automo-

bile traffic was allowed except for racers and people working at the site. With 20,000 people in attendance over the duration of the races, this solution to traffic management problems was essential. It worked well, even during the slalom race on Saturday when crowd estimates went as high as 8000.

An unusual feature of the event was the frontier "theme". With people in Indian costumes and frontier garb wandering about the race site and with teepees located throughout an extensive food concession area, the atmosphere was entirely different from any other whitewater race ever held. The costumes and carnival atmosphere must have been a real eye-opener for international competitors coming to this normally sleepy Appalachian farming and resort area from 22 different countries.

During race week the only sour note was the accidental injury of a New Zealand Team paddler. This unfortunate person suffered arm injuries after being entangled in testing equipment being used on the river by the

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Don Cochran photo

Jim Beyer and Joe Palumbo crank downstream as part of the U.S. team in the C-2 wildwater event.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Aside from the incident with the New Zealand paddler, the races were run with a great deal of skill and sensitivity to the racers and the public. So far as safety was concerned, accidents were virtually nonexistent.

In fact, it was almost boring from the point of view of safety volunteers under the direction of Charlie Walbridge. They had almost nothing on which to exercise their considerable skills throughout the entire week.

The hoop-la, the traffic control and crowd management, and the \$1 million in site improvements were impressive to say the least. But this all became secondary when the races started. At that point all attention focused on a 20-yard wide maelstrom pouring swiftly out of the Savage River Dam at 1,000 cubic feet per second and flowing wildly downstream through one of the best slalom and wildwater race courses in the world, the 4 and 1/2 miles of the Savage River. And the racers, or most of them, were up to the challenge.

U.S. Sweeps C-1 Slalom

The premier event at the Pre-World was the C-1 slalom, which pitted Washington, D.C. paddlers Jon Lugbill

and Davey Hearn. Lugbill has won the World Championship in this event four times dating back to 1979. His reign was interrupted only once in 1985, when Hearn won the title.

When Lugbill has finished first, Hearn has finished second, and vice versa. It was the performance of these two paddlers which established the United States as a power in international whitewater competition. This fact, in turn, led to the World Championship being held in the USA on the Savage next year.

In this year's Pre-World competition, it was Lugbill vs. Hearn again. In the first heat, Lugbill flew down the roaring Savage course with the best first time of the day, 195.76 seconds, but picked up a 5 second penalty on Gate 4 for a total time of 200.76 seconds. Hearn stood in second place with a clean run of 201.19 seconds, and Frenchman Thierry Humeau in third with a clean run of 204.49.

On the second run, Lugbill was a bit more cautious and finished with a clean 199.66, good enough to win. Hearn was very close to his first run time, but picked up a penalty on Gate 14. His first run was good enough for second place.

Hearn's housemate in Brookmont, MD., Jed Prentice, produced a clean 204.49, which put him in a flat tie with the Frenchman. Prentice was awarded the bronze medal because his other heat was faster than Humeau's. VOILA--a U.S. sweep! U.S. paddler Bruce Lessels was fifth.

After the race, Hearn spoke glowingly about the novel experience of racing before the cheers of 6,000 "hometown" fans.

"When I hit Gate 14 on my second run, I heard the whole crowd go, 'Ooohh!'" Hearn said. "We love that. The crowds here were the most vocal, cheering crowds we've ever experienced."

"You're sprinting down, not holding anything back, and hearing, 'USA! USA!'" Lugbill added.

The best American finishers in the men's K-1 event were Chris Doughty in fifth and Rich Weiss in 10th. U.S. women finished in the same spots, Dana Chladek in fifth and Jennifer Stone in tenth.

Jamie McEwan and Lecky Haller led the C-2 slalom competition after the first heat by more than a second, even though they accumulated 10 seconds in penalties for hitting two gates. The U.S. duo again hit two gates in the second heat, leaving them victim to a clean run by the French pair of Jerome Daille and Gilles Lelievre. The Frenchmen won by just over three seconds.

In other events, American Andy Bridge took a silver in the four and one-half mile wildwater competition, events long dominated by the Europeans. In the slalom team events (3 boats from a country racing as a team), U.S. teams won the C-1 (natch), took second and third in C-2, and picked up a third in women's K-1.

What about for the Worlds next year on this same course, which got universal approval as a tough, world-class challenge?

"We've got 365 days to go; 52 weeks and we'll be back," Lugbill said.

So should anyone whose pulse quickens at the sight of cold, crashing water being mastered by the world's best paddlers.

AWA sponsors Gauley Festival

During the past eight years, as the tradition of the Gauley River Festival has grown, September has become a very special time for members and friends of the American Whitewater Affiliation.

A time to test one's skills against the Gauley, one of this country's most challenging popular whitewater rivers.

A time to renew old friendships and make new friends, as boaters congregate from across the nation for what has become the Grand Finale for the eastern boating season.

A time to celebrate the fact that not too long ago a coalition of concerned boaters, outfitters and environmentalists successfully defended the Gauley from a hydroelectric project that would have stripped the river of much of its punch.

A time to eat, drink, dance and raise Hell, all in the name of a good cause. River conservation...an important issue for all of us...one that surely justifies some debauchery.

As Festival Coordinators and members of the AWA Board of Directors, we want to welcome everyone to the 1988 Festival; we hope that it will be better than ever. Ours has not been an easy task, the Festivals of years gone by are remembered fondly by those who attended and they are not easy acts to follow.

The 1988 Festival, scheduled for Saturday evening, September 24 at the **Burnwood** Campground, will feature all of the traditional attractions as well as some innovations. There will be plenty to eat and drink, live entertainment, and of course, the world-famous Women in Rubber. This year's equipment raffle and silent auction promises to be bigger and better than ever.

More than 30 outfitters, paddle and boat makers, paddling schools, raft companies and related concerns will occupy booths in the Festival Marketplace. Many of the booths will be manned by the country's best boat designers and craftspeople, giving participants a chance to share

their needs and desires with those who manufacture our toys.

This year's whitewater video and slide presentations should be better than ever. Barry Grimes, guru of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association's Paddling Film Festival, has selected the best and most exciting material to be shown at the Festival mini-theater. A visit to the mini-theater will define the cutting edge of the sport and should more than satisfy those with a taste for exotic adventure.

An important aspect of the Festival has always been river conservation; funds raised are utilized to protect free flowing rivers across the United States. An article included in this issue of American Whitewater contains specific information about where the money goes.

As always, many prominent river conservationists will be on hand to talk informally with those in attendance, and media presentations highlighting efforts to save our rivers will be presented. And it goes without saying that AWA volunteers will be manning a booth, working hard to enlist new members and activists. Take the time to talk to us.

The year's Festival will be

more activity oriented than ever, with competitive events between whitewater clubs and raft companies, and games of skill where macho and machette boaters can demonstrate their skills, or lack of it, to their peers. We're shooting for lots of excitement and more than a little hilarity. We're also shooting for some surprises.

We have high expectations for the 1988 Festival...to raise lots of money for river preservation, to attract new members to the AWA, to educate and mobilize those in attendance regarding important environmental issues. But the truth of the matter is that our biggest priority is to make sure that everyone has one Hell of a good time...ourselves included.

We want the 1988 Gauley Festival to be one that people will talk about for a long, long time.

So kick back, let your hair down and put on your dancing shoes. Don't be afraid to hoot and holler. Just don't forget to take some aspirin before you go to bed.

And don't blame us if Pillow Rock and Iron Ring look a little more intimidating than usual on Sunday morning. We'll probably be in the same boat.

Where our money goes

AWA's low overhead combined with its specificity of conservation projects provides economic efficiency in conserving whitewater resources.

Composed primarily of volunteer river activists, the AWA's budget is not drained by the salaries of a full-time staff or the need to cover the overhead of an upscale office.

But although we lack the trappings of a "professional" nonprofit organization, the AWA has enjoyed a remarkable string of successes in the whitewater conservation arena: two of our members have been named as Perception's River Conservationist of the Year—primarily for their work on West Virginia and Maryland rivers—

while in 1988, AWA won two resounding victories on the Black and Housatonic.

One primary reason behind our good fortune is that the AWA concentrates solely on protecting whitewater rivers. With organizations like American Rivers looking out for wild and scenic and flatwater rivers, the AWA is left with its own specific niche—saving rivers vital to whitewater recreation.

Still, the AWA requires funds to operate. Our executive director, Risa Callaway receives an embarrassingly small stipend to coordinate AWA's far-flung activities. American Whitewater, although now nearly self-sufficient through advertising sales, still requires

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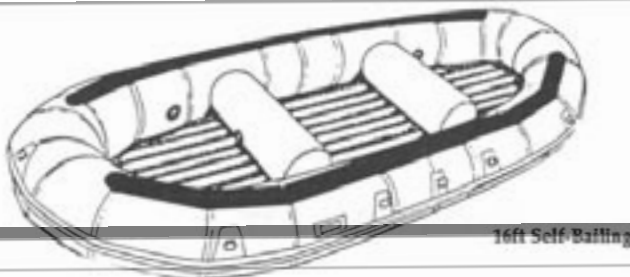
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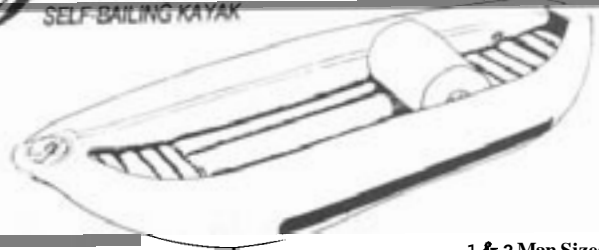
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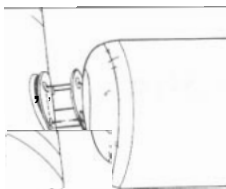


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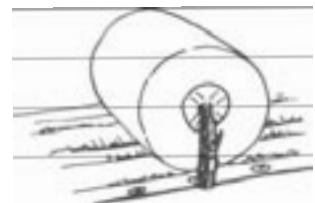
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AWA battles for nation's whitewater

Across the country, the AWA is participating in some of the toughest battles to protect our whitewater resources. The map above pictures just a few of 1988's conservation activities:

•Arkansas River, CO

The AWA is helping Colorado paddlers maintain private access to the Arkansas by using its presence in Washington, D.C. to lobby the BLM not to relinquish control to the State Parks Bureau.

•Black River, NY

The AWA's efforts resulted in a favorable FERC decision in 1988 that inhibits future hydro development.

•Chatooga River, GA/SC

The AWA is pushing the Forest Service and Rabun County to find alternate airport sites and has located free legal services for concerned local opposition groups.

•Cheat Tributaries, WV

The AWA is studying the Army Corps flood control proposals.

•Crystal River, CO

The AWA is currently trying to organize local opposition to proposed hydro project.

•Housatonic River, CT

The AWA's intervention and support of HACKS caused the hydro developer to turn tail...saving the Bulls Bridge section.

•Gauley, Meadow and Bluestone Rivers, WV

The AWA continues to push for HR900--the West Virginia Rivers Bill--which will permanently protect these rivers.

•Klamath River, OR

The AWA awarded the town of Klamath Falls its annual Hydromanla Award and continues to support local opposition.

conservation

•Lower Youghiogheny River, PA

The AWA is monitoring installation of a hydro plant and meeting with state officials regarding minimum flow requirements and river use levels.

•Mokelumne River, CA

The AWA is soliciting local opposition to a hydro project.

•North Fork of the Payette, ID

The AWA is preparing an intervention and working with the Idaho Whitewater Association to prevent the loss of this classic stream.

•Rio Chama, NM

The AWA is pushing for Wild and Scenic status to permanently protect this river.

•Savage River, MD

The AWA is supporting an intervention and the Savage River Defense Fund.

•Upper Youghiogheny, MD

The AWA is monitoring land acquisition in river corridor, working to control river usage and restrain environmental devastation in the corridor.

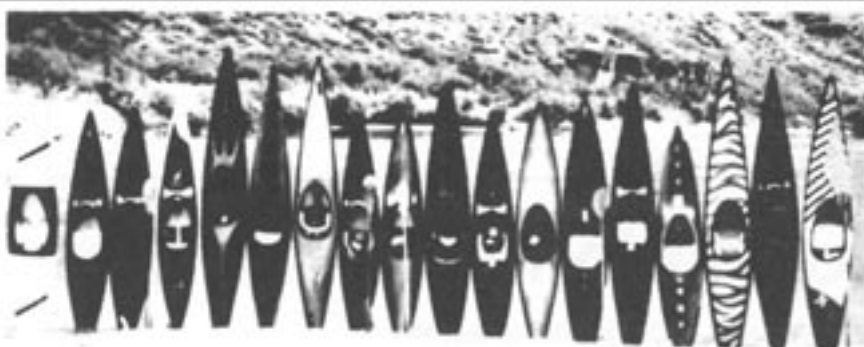
Arkansas boaters react

State railroads river policy

The proposals of the Colorado State Parks Division to take over the Arkansas River have recently mushroomed into a major plan to make the Arkansas the most highly regulated river in the country. But the take-over still hinges on approval by the federal government, and on funding from the Colorado State Legislature, so the nation's river runners can still derail the takeover.

At issue is nearly 100 miles of river between Granite, Colorado, and Canyon City, Colorado, in which rapids are never far apart, and provide excellent

whitewater boating. The river is highly accessible, and is bordered at all points by a highway, a railroad, or both, as it runs by towns and ranches. Virtually all river running is done as day trips. About 40% of the river-front land is federal land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, part of the U.S. Department of Interior, and the remainder is private, with virtually no state-owned land at present. The Arkansas was rated as one of the top ten whitewater rivers in the nation by readers of River Runner magazine in a poll published in May 1987, which



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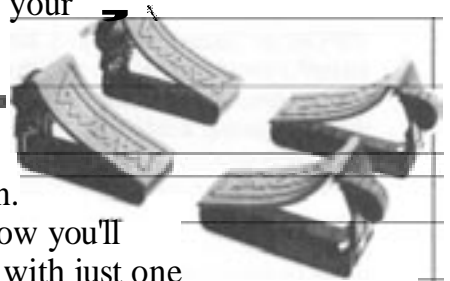
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conservation

praised its "accessible excellence," and noted that "the Arkansas belongs to all,"

But that could change soon. When the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR, or "State Parks Division"), circulated its original proposal in 1987, it was suggesting a relatively innocuous program of expanded launch sites with restrooms, picnic tables, and parking lots. It said these facilities would help handle the large volumes of commercial raft traffic on summer weekends. As for actually limiting river traffic, the Division said that at most it **would** set up a schedule of outfitter launches to spread out large commercial groups. It said it did not believe a

system of actual limits or allocations was necessary "at this time."

But in January the Division got a bill introduced in the Colorado State Legislature to give itself complete authority to limit all recreation on the river itself, including noncommercial boating (H.B. 1253). When the State Senate held a committee hearing on the bill, NORS Board members Gary Lacy, Ben Harding, and Eric Leaper, and Colorado Whitewater Association president Mike Seckar, all testified in favor of an amendment to not allow limits on the number of noncommercial boaters on the river. The state senators on the committee voted 5 to 1 in favor of such an amendment. But in

the following days the Parks Division staff lobbied other legislators intensively, at taxpayers' expense, to remove the amendment, while NORS continued efforts to preserve it. Finally the legislators rewrote the amendment, directing the Division to: "to the maximum extent possible, keep the regulation of the recreational uses of the river to a minimum." The bill passed in April. But the Division had already written a plan filled with restrictions on river running, and made no changes in response to the amendment.

At present the Division's main parks are reservoirs, where the emphasis is on man-made recreation: motorboats, motorhomes, and facilities provided by the Parks

Division and concessionaires, funded by sizeable admission charges. The reservoirs are divided up into different zones for different recreation, such as the boating area, the water-skiing area, the swim beach, the fishing area, etc., all supervised by the Division's rangers.

The Division thinks the same approach should apply to the Arkansas River: the river should be divided up into "primary use zones" where one type of recreation would predominate and others would be restricted or excluded—a zone for commercial rafting, a zone for kayaking and noncommercial rafting, a zone for fishing, etc. Rangers with authority to fine or arrest offenders would patrol the river and

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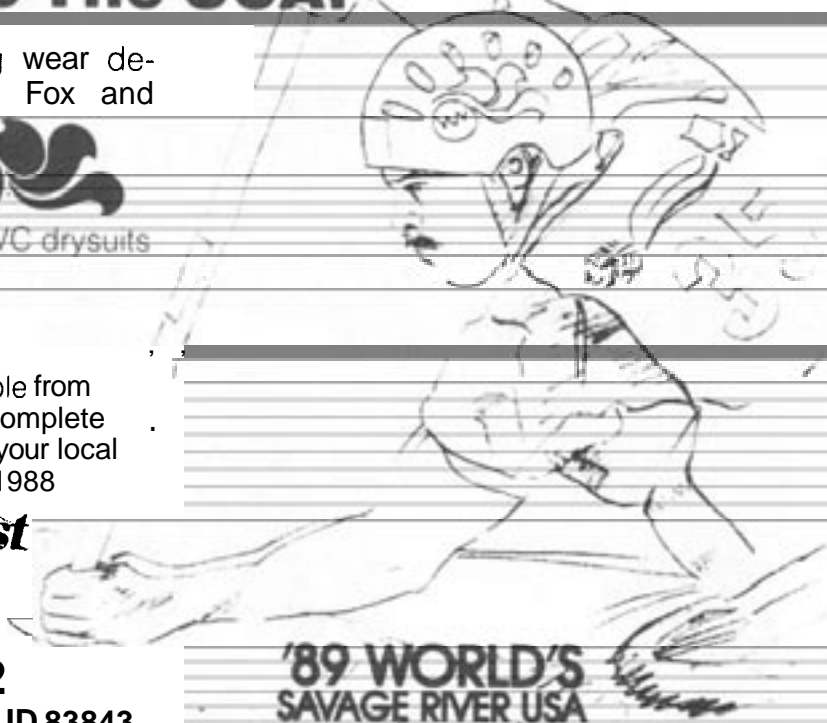


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adjacent public lands. The Division would install parking lots, picnic tables, bathrooms, and other facilities along the river, with toll booths at the entrances. Anyone entering the area or running the river would pay sizeable fees to the Division, even those getting on and off the river on private lands and not using any Division facilities. (At present some of the major rafting outfitters put in and take out, and provide their own facilities, on private land, and many kayakers put in and take out on private land, such as that at "Rapid One," which is leased by the Colorado Whitewater Association, as well as on Forest Service land and at highway turn-outs.)

The State Parks

Board oversees the Division's programs, and approved the plans for the Arkansas. The chairman of the State Parks Board, Hubert Farbes, is also on the Denver Water Board, promoters of the highly-criticized Two Forks Dam proposal. Some of the Parks Division staffers are leading members of a national association of state parks officials, and at recent association meetings they have advocated methods for lobbying state legislatures to approve registration fees for kayaks and canoes and various restrictions on river running.

In January the Division appointed an "Advisory Committee" to review and approve its proposals on the Arkansas

River--a committee on which the majority of the members were local cattlemen, landowners, outfitters, dam-builders, and other interests traditionally hostile to noncommercial river running. Of the 22 people on the committee, only 4 represented noncommercial recreation. The Division presented the committee with a highly restrictive plan they had already drafted, and told the committee that limiting the number of noncommercial boaters on the Arkansas was necessary in order to make the plan "complete," as were other restrictions. Then, instead of merely collecting advice from the various committee members, the Division made this "Advisory Committee" into an actual policy-making board,

requiring it to formally vote on every item in the plan.

The result was that these dam-builders, cattlemen, and other non-recreationists ended up casting the deciding votes in such matters as allocation ratios and permissible launch times for commercial and private boaters. Of course these non-boaters were happy to approve a long list of restrictions on river running, which would not affect them anyway. The allocation ratios were set arbitrarily, since there was almost no data on the number of river runners, and there was no provision for adjusting the allocations in the future to reflect public demand. The NORS representative on the committee, Gene Evans, opposed the restrictions but was vastly

please turn to page 64

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Niagara Gorge remains closed

As many of you know, the New York State Department of Parks; Recreation and Historic Preservation amended their regulations dealing with access for paddlers to the Niagara Gorge rapids--i.e. it's closed--period. As a result, AWA Director, Bob Glanville created a multi-pronged attack to reopen the waterway to limited river use.

He first began quiet diplomacy and negotiations with state officials basing his arguments on the success of the 1987 runs and AWA's

access, safety and paddler evaluation program as his foundation. In spite of these carefully prepared plans, the state refused to budge.

Bob then drafted and filed another lawsuit against the state which was heard in the spring by a local Supreme Court judge in Buffalo. This judge ruled against Bob without opinion. Glanville's subsequent appeal was also unsuccessful, thereby blocking any legal "Niagara Season" this fall.

After discussions with AWA, NY assemblyman William Hoyt offered to



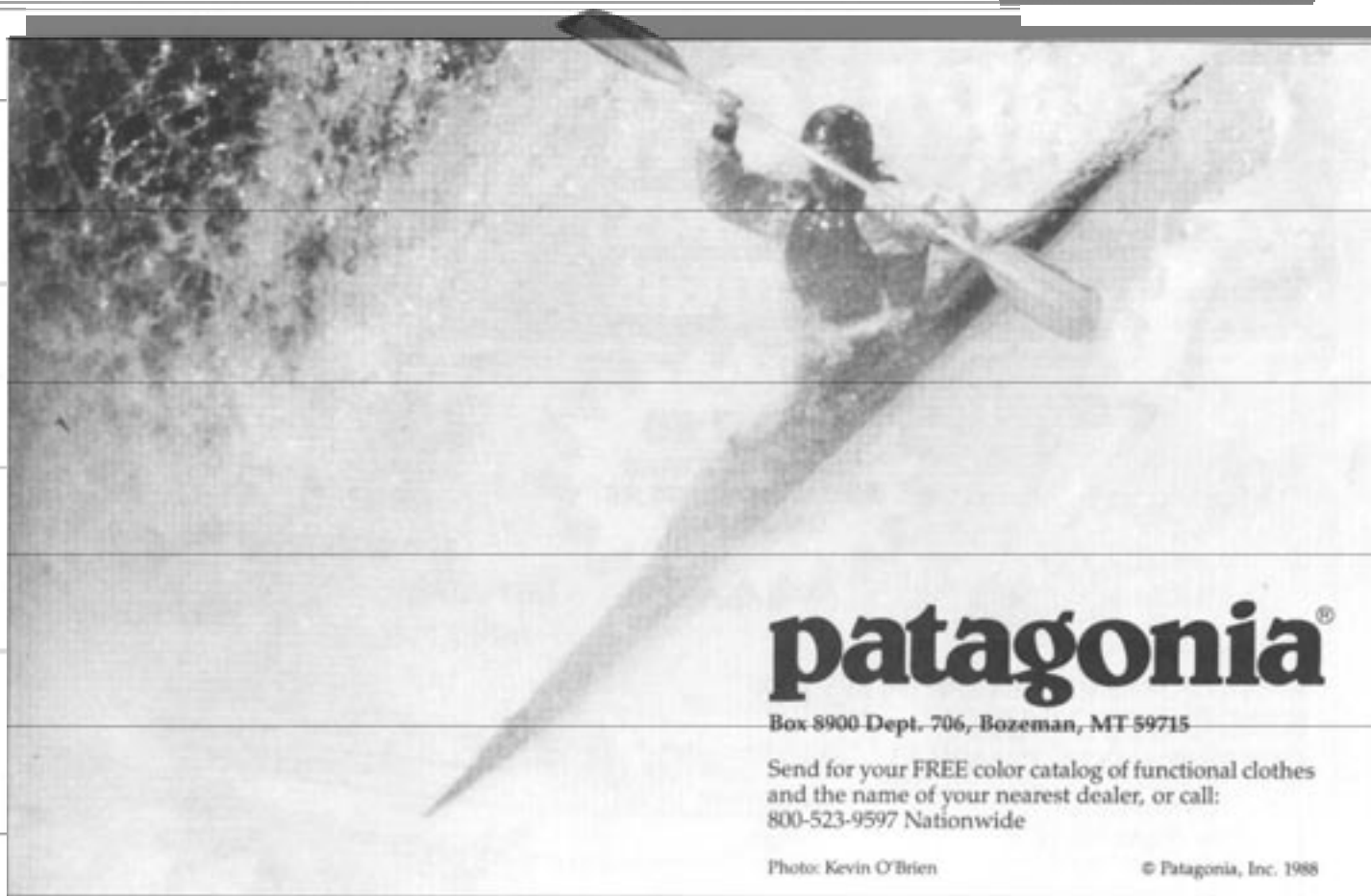
Sue Glanville photo

Nolan Whitesell negotiates the Niagara Gorge during last year's legal descent.

introduce legislation to reopen the waterway to recreation. Bob authored a first draft which awaits at this writing a bill number in the Assembly.

However, until leg-

islation is passed by NY law-makers that supercedes the Parks' authority, the biggest whitewater in America is officially closed to paddlers.



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Opposition mounts to Two Forks

reprinted from Currents magazine of National Organization for River Sports

The latest round of public hearings on the proposed Two Forks Dam project in Colorado has brought out an unprecedented surge of public opposition.

At issue is whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service, and other agencies should issue permits to the Denver Water Board to build a major dam on the South Platte River southwest of Denver.

The agencies held

a series of hearings around the state and in Nebraska recently, which were filled with opponents of the dam. Area newspapers, radio and television have become generally critical of the proposal, and even economic-booster groups are questioning the wisdom of the billion-dollar dam as opposed to a new Denver airport and other projects.

The agencies were also waiting for a decision on the dam from Colorado Governor Roy **Romer**, who as governor had veto power over the dam. But **Romer's** long-anticipated decision was simply that the permits should be issued, although other water-supply measures should be utilized first.

The Denver Water

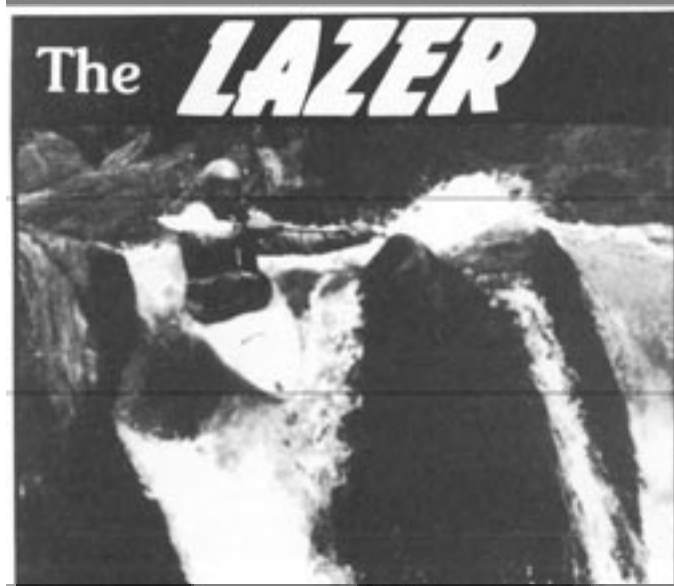
Board has been proposing the dam for decades, to supply water for new suburbs. Critics of the proposal have always pointed out that water supplies can be obtained from less-expensive, less-destructive sources.

The giant dam would be just downstream from the confluence of the South Platte River and the North Fork of the South Platte River, so it would flood both rivers. It would flood the South Platte upstream nearly to the base of the existing Cheeseman Dam some 20 miles upstream. Just downstream from the proposed dam site is Strontia Springs Reservoir, which covered the expert whitewater of **Waterton**

Canyon when the Water Board completed it a few years ago. The area is one to two hours' drive southwest of Denver.

The remnant of the South Platte that would be flooded is a popular class II and III run frequented by canoeists and kayakers, as well as all manner of fishermen, campers, and general excursionists. The dam would be filled by pumping additional water through an existing tunnel from the Blue River, a tributary of the Colorado. It would thus eliminate most whitewater boating on the Blue and impair that on the **Colorado**.

The dam would also deplete flows on the South Platte downstream



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from Denver, specifically in Nebraska where the river is critical habitat for sandhill cranes and other bird species.

The project is becoming something of a symbolic confrontation between traditional western dam-building politics and an increasingly skeptical public.

Appeal on Tuolumne

In July of this year the American Whitewater Affiliation filed an appeal of the new Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. The appeal concerned the management of boating in the 16-

mile section downstream from Merals Pool ("Lower Tuolumne").

The new management plan placed kayakers and canoeists in a category entitled "publicboaters" together with all other non-outfitter users. This category is limited to a total of 90 persons per day. The entire 90 **person/day** quota can be used up by advance reservations. No provision was made in the plan for casual use by hard boaters without advance reservations.

In its appeal, AWA objected to the boating categories used by the Forest Service for management purposes, the failure to adequately notify private noncommercial boaters of
please turn to page 64



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Whitewater for racing: the hard way

In late May, Ron **Lugbill**, one of the U.S. Whitewater Team coaches, requested help from AWA in his effort to obtain a small release program during the summer of 1988 to facilitate team practice on the Saranac River near Lake Placid, NY, downstream of the Union Falls Facility operated by Synergetics.

The AWA fully supported Ron's request and pressed the company and the NYS DEC for releases. Whitewater use

of the bypassed section certainly would not be inconsistent with a comprehensive plan for this part of the Saranac and create a valuable training site for our national team.

Thanks to urging from Assemblyman William **Hoyt** and others, the company agreed to the releases needed. Sadly, fishery experts associated with Region V of the NYS DEC refused to authorize the releases, arguing the extra water would endanger downstream trout fishermen, lower the elevation of the Union Falls Reservoir, and upset the ecology of the river.

Faced with the intractable opposition from DEC, the giant utility Niagara Mohawk, stepped

in and made arrangements for special releases from its nearby **Piercefield** Facility on the **Raquette** River near Saranac Lake, NY. The company even provided helicopter support for media coverage of the training sessions.

The problem of NYS DEC opposition to water releases will be the subject of a series of meetings between AWA and specialists from the agency in the months to come. AWA hopes to work with DEC to develop site-specific study protocols to measure if, in fact, the adverse ecological impacts DEC alleges actually occur when releases are issued.

No money?

The House Appropriations Committee recently decreed that there would be no money next year to start construction of new water projects.

Committee members said it is the first time in their memory that all requests for new dams, harbors and irrigation systems--costly items that give lawmakers bragging rights back home--had been refused by the panel.

The no-new-starts position was adopted when the committee gave voice-vote approval to its first fiscal 1989 spending bill, a \$17.8 billion plan to finance the Department of Energy, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation.



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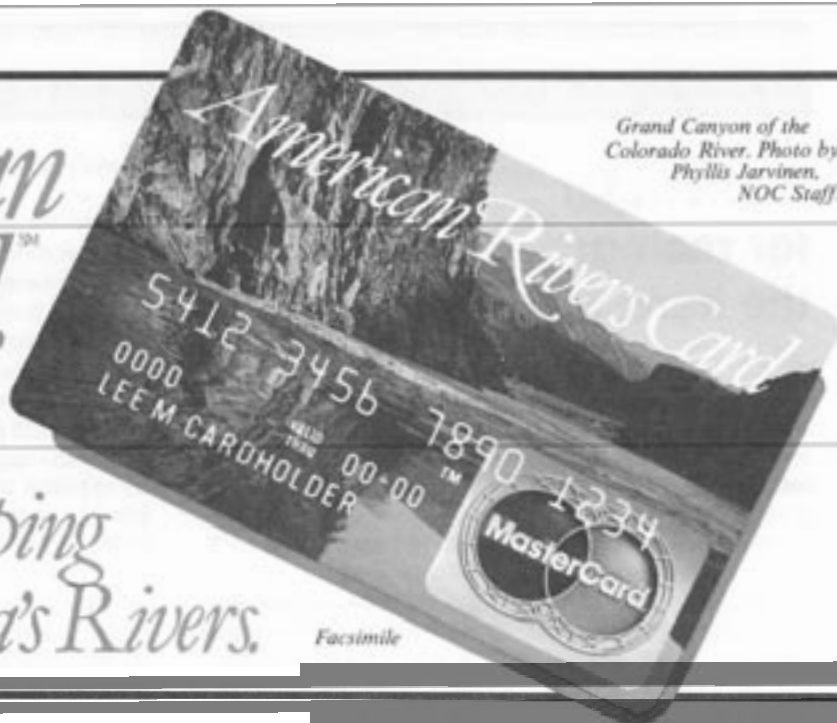
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Whitewater regulation is often arbitrary

The result is "Soviet-style" central control of recreation, it cannot react to the evolving needs of our sport and often penalizes the experienced paddler...

By Charlie Walbridge
AWA Safety Chairman



As river **running** has grown in popularity, the pressure for government intervention has increased to keep the actions of some from interfering with the rights of others. This has been a **two-edged** sword, doing harm as well as good. Indeed, the greatest challenge for the boating community for the rest of the century is to develop effective ways of dealing with the regulatory bias of government agencies.

Government **rule-making** is at best a crude process. Even when not guided by prejudice or political expediency, it is too often an effort by people unfamiliar with our sport to impose simple solutions to complex problems. The result is "Soviet-style" central control of recreation; it **cannot** react to the evolving needs of our sport, and often penalizes the experienced paddler without improving safety for the general public.

Take the "Coast Guard Approval" of life jackets. This was originally a good idea. Prior to the **1960s**, most life jackets were made for large ocean-going vessels. They were purchased in quantity and stowed in bulkheads until needed for lifeboat drills or real emergency. Price was an **overriding** consideration, and protection against shoddy workmanship was needed. Enter the Coast Guard. By setting minimum standards, they prevented price considerations from endangering the lives of commercial passengers.

Who could foresee the outdoor recreation boom that exploded in the next two decades, and with it the need for comfortable, wearable life vests. The bulky type I (Mae West) and type II (**horse-collar**) USCG-approved devices were not suited to the needs of whitewater paddlers or any other active water sportsman. These devices were designed to "turn an unconscious

wearer face-up in the **water**". While this "turning moment" may be important for someone who has fallen overboard **in an** open ocean far from help, it is not practical to river paddlers who are **frequently** thrown head-over-heels by powerful currents. And, unlike ocean-liner passengers, small-boat users have no prior warning of capsizes and no time to don a life preserver. For users of small, non-powered boats, a life jacket which is not worn does them no good.

As a result of this regulation a stalemate **developed**. Manufacturers could not design a comfortable life jacket for active paddlers and still meet Coast Guard requirements. And the Coast Guard, which was and still is not focused on the needs of non-powered boaters, would not compromise its "turning moment" **requirements**. It was not until Maurice O'Link, president of Stearns Manufacturing, took the courageous step of manufacturing and selling unapproved vest-type "**swimming aids**" that the Coast Guard came up with the "type III" category of wearable jackets. They have since found that 50% of all fatalities could have been prevented had victims been wearing a "Personal Floation Device," or "TFD," and today work with ACA, AWA and other responsible canoeing organizations in getting this message to the public.

A happy ending? Not quite. Any "approved" life vest must undergo considerable testing by Underwriter's Laboratories. Many of their standards are worthwhile; others are unwritten and arbitrary. For example, pullover-style life vests, which are inherently stronger and cheaper to construct, were disallowed until recently because they might be put on backwards in the dark! Even now zip-pers are not permitted on type V life

jackets designed for commercial rafting because the strength test is set at more than double that of type III devices, and no zipper can hold under that strain. Buoyancy distribution requirements make it difficult to design a jacket with foam in the lower back, a critical feature for whitewater paddlers who float rapids on their backs and need protection from rocks. Minimum buoyancy requirements make designing PFD's for small adults and children extremely difficult. Few manufacturers will take the time to hassle with these regulations, and simply do things the way the Coast Guard wants. This often results in an inferior product.

But assume an excellent jacket is designed, the next hurdle is testing. The going rate is \$2,500 a size, or about \$10,000 for a full size run. This hefty "up front" cost does not include time spent filling out paperwork, preparing engineering drawings, submitting samples for "destructive testing," and dealing with the U-L bureaucracy. The biggest part of this testing involves pool work with models who represent "all body types." Failure here can be costly, so most manufacturers design in a margin for error, yet another constraint on their work.

Once a jacket passes these tests, it cannot be manufactured without quarterly "inspections" by U-L personnel. The costs of this service: over \$2,000+ per year for salaries and travel expenses, plus company time to assist the inspectors when on site. Nor can a PFD be modified without more testing. Want to take in the sides, add a pocket, or lengthen the front zipper in response to consumer suggestions? It can't be done without submitting paperwork and samples to U-L. Because of this most manufacturers simply put improvements aside "for later," and nothing gets done. The consumer is left with fit and function well below optimum. And to add insult to injury, the costs of this "testing" is added to the price of the life vest.

This burdensome process gives the advantage to manufacturers familiar with the paperwork jungle, and discourages **competition** from other reputable firms. Furthermore, it makes it extremely difficult to justify the costs of constructing limited quantities of life vests for highly specialized

groups of users as well as for unusually small or large people. One of the reasons that **rescue-style** whitewater life jackets commonly used in Europe have not been available in the U.S. has been that the costs of approval cannot be recovered by selling to this tiny segment of the market. Many top outdoor equipment firms will not touch this market because of all the built-in hassles, especially when unregulated markets are so profitable.

Is all this red tape necessary? Although it may serve a function for the uneducated user purchasing low-end gear, for the performance-oriented

But the challenges of places like Great Falls and Niagara Gorge bring out characteristics which form an important component of the American spirit.

sportsman's usefulness is questionable. The manufacturing of mountaineering equipment, for example, is totally unregulated by government and only minimally effected by industry standards. The only reason that the whitewater industry does not rebel is that this program seems credible and thus offers considerable protection against lawsuits.

Regulation can be equally crude when dealing with on-river activity. Local politicians, often inspired by a single, well-publicized accident, frequently over-react when called upon to protect the public safety in and around rivers. For example, following the well-publicized drowning of five **off-duty** military men at Brookmont Dam on the Potomac, the **State** of Maryland declared areas hundreds of yards upstream on the Potomac off-limits to all boaters. Never mind that in high water with inexperienced paddlers these distances are insufficient, and at low water for experts they are excessive. Forget that these deaths have occurred regularly since the dam's construction, and that its design and placement are the most significant factors in these accidents. Forget that no warning signs were in place due to agency bun-

gling. The fact is that these politicians have the power to regulate but **no direct** knowledge of river activities. And they are most likely to listen to the "advice" of police and fire personnel who are equally inexperienced! It's only due to efforts from members of the Canoe Cruiser's Association that the result was not the complete end to river access at high water.

Once laws are in place, they are often subject to over-zealous enforcement by waterways officers. People have **been** cited for not having life vests while boating in water less than six inches deep, while unprotected tubers and fishermen **frolicking** near dangerous dams are **ignored**. Paddlers have been pulled off "dangerous" class III-IV rivers closed due to high water and arrested after rescuing inexperienced floaters a few **minutes** earlier. Some waterways officers are openly hostile to kayak, canoe and rafting activity; they often regard it as a nuisance which may periodically require lengthy rescues and reams of paperwork. Few are truly familiar with whitewater sport. In a few states this problem is **being** alleviated with training and exposure to paddlesport, but in other areas the enforcement or orientation of boating agencies makes educating their personnel an uphill battle.

On the other hand, river managers are faced with some serious dilemmas. Take, for example, the plight of the chief ranger with an accessible class V-VI waterfall in his domain. He's probably been involved with numerous rescues of inexperienced paddlers blundering over the drop, and if the encounters with week-old bodies wouldn't make him wary—the hassles with newspapermen, accident report forms, and his superiors' will. In today's climate, chances are the victim's family will try to sue the park. Although the ranger may be a boater of sorts, he's not exactly on the cutting edge. And **it's** not surprising that he reacts strongly when he finds a group of experts trying to run the **drop**. **Not** only does he have no way of knowing their **skills**, but if something goes wrong he is left to clean up the mess.

I fully believe that everyone has the right to confront nature on its own **terms**, even if this means taking risks that some paddlers would not feel

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are appropriate. I do, however, have considerable sympathy for the inexperienced person who is not **looking** for trouble, yet stumbles into a situation he cannot handle. The duty of the river manager is to inform and to warn so that novices who are not fully aware of the river's dangers will think before grappling with a life-threatening rapid. This means excellent signs, pamphlets, and other materials. It means setting up "filters" to discourage the inexperienced, such as the two-mile hike required on the Niagara River or the downstream approach **required** at Great Falls on the Potomac. In our legalistic society it may mean a check-in to read published warnings and to sign a liability release. The key is to inform potential boaters as fully as possible, then allow them to make their best individual judgement about the feasibility of the run.

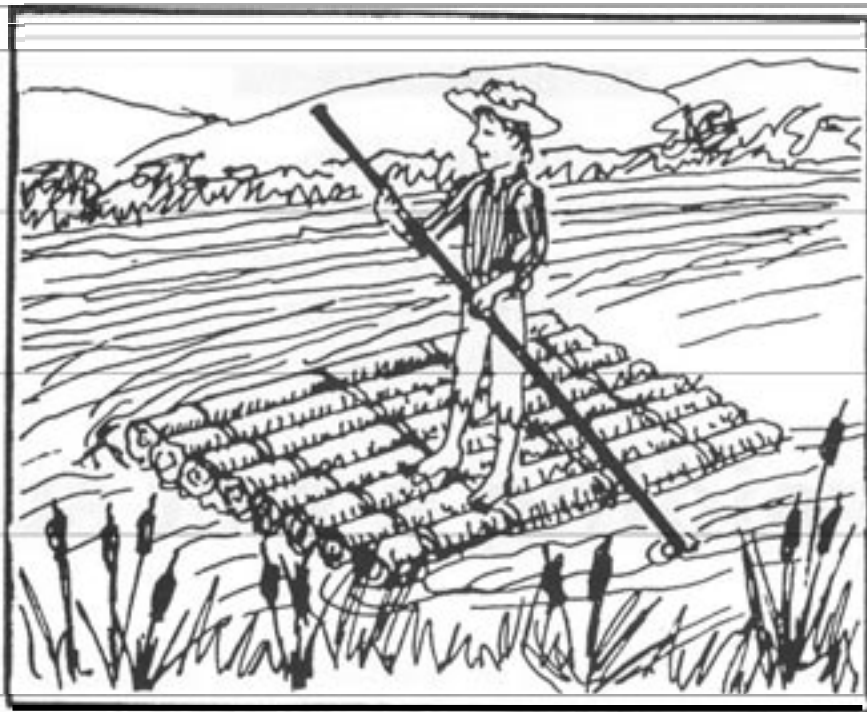
Government agencies, when properly inspired, do an excellent job of education. The recent push against alcohol abuse, the result of similar campaigns on the highway by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, has greatly increased awareness of behavior which is a factor in over half the accidents which occur each year. Many managed rivers have excellent signs and printed materials available at the put-in, and knowledgeable rangers can redirect inexperienced users to a section of river within their ability. The states of Pennsylvania and Ohio, among others, have done a lot to publicize the dangers of low-head dams, resulting in a greatly reduced fatality rate. Most people are not stupid: provide them with the information they need to make an educated choice, and they'll stay out of trouble. The heavy hand of law enforcement is seldom needed.

One sensitive area is timing. River managers are concerned that mid-day runs of spectacular drops invite imitation by inexperienced paddlers. Unlikely as it seems, this "monkey see, monkey do" problem really exists. After a spate of midday falls runs, Ohio's State Park rangers reported catching several tubers and "kamikaze" rafters trying to emulate the kayaker's success. They use this to justify a total ban on falls running. I can't support this policy; although falls are dangerous, so are other areas of the

park. Most accidents occur on **class I-III** water and drowned hikers outnumber boaters along most rivers by 2:1. Fatal accidents in extreme water are rare. Indeed, a trained expert intent on their line in a difficult drop is much safer than an untrained person floating out of control towards a mild rapid..

However, I always recommend keeping a low profile in public areas to avoid confrontation with authorities, and limiting runs to off-peak periods is a sensible compromise. We are all concerned that as time progresses, the **skills** of those attempting an "outer limits" run will **drop** until someone gets hurt. In **risk sports**, periodic reassessment by participants is inevitable. The recent spate of fatal accidents involving boaters in the **San Francisco Bay Area** has prompted considerable soul-searching in that community. **It's** important to remember that while time and increasing **skills** have allowed more people to **attempt** tough drops, the power and danger remains. Anyone who lets themselves get "sucked in" over their head could pay a heavy price for their carelessness.

Active outdoor athletes like canoe, kayak and rafting enthusiasts are ready to take full responsibility for their actions, whether in equipment selection or in choosing to run a difficult drop. In this we differ from the general public, which often demands a "safer than safe" environment in parks. we must continue to press this basic philosophical difference in our dealing with river managers, and demand that their efforts to protect the general public not restrict free access to the river by experts. Perhaps some form of "risk zoning" in parks, with protected and natural areas, will be in order. But the challenges of places like Great Falls and Niagara Gorge bring out characteristics which form an important component of the American spirit. **This** must not be lost.



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Avoiding a wet suit

By Mac Thornton

We join in progress the trial in the case of Bozo v. Goodpaddle. Trip leader Gary Goodpaddle is on the witness stand:

MR. GOODPADDLE: "No, I did not check Bob Bozo's kayak to see if the walls and other safety features were OK."

BOZO'S ATTORNEY: "Thank you. Now, **let's** talk about your training. **It's** a fact isn't it, that **you've never** had any formal training in leading kayak trips or in whitewater safety?"

MR. GOODPADDLE: "That's correct."

BOZO'S ATTORNEY: "And you've **never** seen fit to take any first aid or CPR classes, right?"

MR. GOODPADDLE: "Well, that's right."

BOZO'S ATTORNEY: "**Here's** a document from your Paddling Club, entitled 'Trip Leader Responsibilities.' **Let's** go down this list of seventeen items and see how **you** did. Item number one..."

MR. GOODPADDLE: "Gulp."

THE JUDGE: "**Be** sure to speak up, Mr. Goodpaddle, so the jury can hear your answers."

All Gary Goodpaddle had done was to volunteer to "lead" a trip for his club. Bob Bozo was on the trip, and had

managed to get himself badly hurt. A nefarious plaintiff's attorney had shown Bozo how easy it would be to collect big bucks from Goodpaddle, and Bozo had convinced himself that Goodpaddle really could have prevented his injury. So now Gary Goodpaddle sits on the witness stand.

Unfortunately for Goodpaddle, his paddling club has a long, idealistic list of "Trip Leader Responsibilities." According to the list, he should decide whether each paddler is qualified for the trip and whether they are bringing the right equipment. On the river, he is responsible for their safety, telling everyone when to scout and how to run rapids. The list even says that Goodpaddle should check **topo** maps for evacuation routes, and get the phone number of the local rescue squad! Bozo's attorney will have a field day with **the list**. All the **items on** the list that **Goodpaddle failed to do** will make him look bad in the jury's eyes. Goodpaddle's salary and the equity in his **house are** in real jeopardy, unless he has lots of personal liability insurance.

This is not **L.A. Law**. These very real problems were the reasons why Charlie Walbridge and I redrafted the AWA Code to emphasize (1) assumption of whitewater risks by trip participants and (2) a "common adventure" trip format. This legal format places legal responsibility for personal safety on each participant, rather than having the legal load borne by a "trip leader!" The Code still contains complete discussions of safe whitewater practices. Charlie did a great job explaining these concepts in his recent article in Ameri-

can Whitewater.

But how can **clubs best** dovetail their trip policies into the new AWA Code? And how can they best protect their members from potential liability?

First, clubs would be well advised to have each member execute an assumption of risk and waiver of liability, when they apply for membership. The waiver of the **Washington D.C.'s** Canoe Cruiser's Association (see box below) was carefully developed after consultation with recognized legal experts. Notice how explicitly the waiver describes whitewater risks and clearly indicates that legal rights are being waived.

Contrary to popular belief, such waivers **are** effective in most states where the activity is voluntary and no fee is charged. Thanks are due to Three Rivers Paddling Club, Betty Vandermissen (a professor at Bowling Green State University in Ohio) and Leslie **Hastings** (of California Western Law School) for their help with this waiver.

Second, clubs need to get rid of those old, idealistic "Trip Leader Responsibilities" lists. The Canoe Cruisers replaced our list with the modern "Trip Policy Statement" reproduced below. If your club has a trial lawyer, it might be a good idea to have him or her check these materials for conformance with any peculiar laws of your state. Your attorney may be interested in reading "**Playing with Liability: The Risk Release in High Risk Sports**" in the California Western Law Review, Vol. 24, page 127 (1988).

CCA Trip Policy Statement

A. General Policy

Club outings are cooperative adventures among participants. The group is collectively responsible for the conduct of the outing, and each participant is individually responsible for judging his or her qualifications and for his or her safety on the river. By participating in a Club outing, you release the Club, its members, trip coordinators and fellow paddlers from any injuries due to any negligent act or omission or to any intentional act intended to promote your safety or well being.

B. River Hazards

You must understand and accept that whitewater boating exposes you to various hazards, for example, boulders and other obstacles, strainers, undercut or entrapping formations, changing conditions, cold, high water and other hazards, mostly in remote locations. Injuries and deaths occasionally occur due to these hazards, among other things.

You are responsible for learning to

recognize river hazards and **learning** and practicing the **techniques for avoiding** these hazards. You are also responsible for acquiring boating safety and rescue skills commensurate with the level of difficulty of the river you are paddling. One excellent source book is **River Rescue**, by Bechdel and Ray, available at most outfitters.

Don't endanger your life and the lives of others by trying to boat on water beyond your ability. Remember—most good paddlers develop by very gradually increasing the difficulty of rivers they run over a period of several years.

C. River Decision Making

You are solely responsible for the following decisions at all times:

1. The decision to go on any trip.
2. The decision to put-in the selected river (which may not be the scheduled river) under conditions existing at the time of the put-in.
3. The decision as to what equipment to take with you.
4. The decision whether to scout any

rapid.

5. The decision whether to run any rapid.

6. The decision whether to participate in any rescue or recovery of any equipment.

7. The decision to pass up any walk out or take out opportunity.

D. River Rescue

Trip participants usually assist each other when someone appears to need assistance, but only so long as they can do so, in their own judgement, without significant risk to themselves. Some participants may choose to accept greater hazards to rescue a fellow paddler. However, trip participants and the coordinator are under no legal duty to assist anyone. In other words, although you are not legally obligated to assist you, either.

E. Other Responsibilities of Participants

1. Telephoning the trip coordinator well in advance of the trip you are planning to go on.



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2. Asking the trip coordinator about his or her training and experience, if these considerations are significant to you.

3. Informing the trip coordinator of your skills, experience, training, and rivers run.

4. Not bringing unexpected guests to the trip.

5. Bringing appropriate equipment and making sure it is in good repair, specifically, life jacket, helmet, protective footwear, knife, whistle, throw bag, extra clothing.

6. Observing good safety practices on the river.

7. Informing yourself of the difficulty of the river under existing conditions.

8. Sharing the optional group responsibilities.

F. About Your Trip Coordinator

Trip Coordinators are volunteers and they receive no pay. Their functions are to get the group to the same river at the same time, to arrange the shuttle, and to respond to inquiries to the best of their knowledge. However, your trip coordinator may never have run the scheduled river under the conditions encountered on the trip day. Indeed, the scheduled river may not be runnable on

trip day, and the trip may be switched to an unfamiliar river on the spot.

Your trip coordinator may not have had any organized or formal training in whitewater boating skills, boating safety skills, first aid, or CPR. If you prefer to go on a trip only with a trip coordinator who has had organized or formal training in these areas, or who has had a lot of experience, it is your responsibility to ask him or her about his or her training and experience. It is solely your decision whether the trip coordinator's qualifications are satisfactory to you. Bear in mind that your trip coordinator is not responsible for judging your qualifications or for your safety on the river.

G. Trip Coordinator Responsibilities

1. Finding a substitute coordinator if you are unable to go on the trip and notifying the Cruise Chairman of the change.

2. Familiarizing yourself with the put-in, take-out, shuttle, major obstacles and rapids on the scheduled river.

3. Determining the rendezvous place and time.

4. Responding to participant inquiries to the best of your knowledge about the river, your training and experience, and

the participant's training and experience. You have the authority to refuse a particular participant on any reasonable grounds, but it is not your responsibility to determine whether a participant is qualified for the trip. See "Note to Trip Coordinators" at the end of this section.

5. Decide if you want the participants to sign a liability waiver.

H. Optional Group Responsibilities

The group may wish to consider the following suggestions. Which of these suggestions is adopted on the trip is solely a group decision, and is not the responsibility of any particular person.

1. Obtain river stage or flow data.

2. Obtain a knowledge of the difficult parts of the run and emergency take-out routes.

3. Equipment: throw rope in each boat, duct tape, first aid kit, extra paddle, flashlight, fire starter and matches, pruning or wire coil saw, survival suit, extra clothing, carabineers, prusik loops, map, guide book.

4. Keep group compact enough for communication, but not so compact as to interfere with each other.

5. Consider dividing a large group into smaller groups, or having "buddy

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boats."

6. For further information, consult **River Rescue**, by **Bechdel** and Ray.

I. Instructional Trips

In this format, a person assumes the responsibilities of a traditional trip leader. He or she may pass judgement

on a participant's qualifications, check equipment, and assume responsibility for the conduct of the trip including the appointment of a lead or sweep (rear guard) boats and other duties listed above as taken by the individual or the group as a whole. Any trip not explicitly

labeled in the **Cruiser** as an "Instructional Trip" does not fall under this paragraph, as these trips could expose the leader to legal liability. Trip or personal insurance is recommended.

Member's mutual agreement for protection from liability

I, _____, (please print or type the names of each person over 18), desiring to join my fellow paddlers in the Canoe Cruisers Association, (the "Club"), do hereby declare that I fully understand and accept the following facts of life on the river:

(1) Boating on whitewater rivers exposes participants to various hazards;

(2) No one but myself is responsible for judging my qualifications for my safety when I choose to challenge my capabilities by boating on a particular river, or a particular rapid;

(3) I may assist my fellow paddlers to the best of my ability if they appear to need such assistance—but only so long as I can do so, in my judgement, without significant **danger** to myself. I further understand that this does not imply any legal duty for me to do so, nor for any one else to render such assistance to me.

Now therefore, Intending to be legally bound, I hereby waive, for myself and for anyone else claiming through me, my right to sue the Club, its members, trip coordinators, or any of my fellow paddlers, for any injuries to my person or my equipment which may occur during, or in preparation for any club outing. This waiver applies to any negligent act or omission, and to any intentional act intended to promote my safety or well-being.

This waiver is given in the interest of permitting the Club to exist and to serve the paddling community, and **to enable** myself and my fellow paddlers to feel free to donate our services and to **help each other** without **fear** of liability. My waiver is given **in** exchange for similar waivers to be granted on my behalf by other members of the club. My waiver has no expiration date.

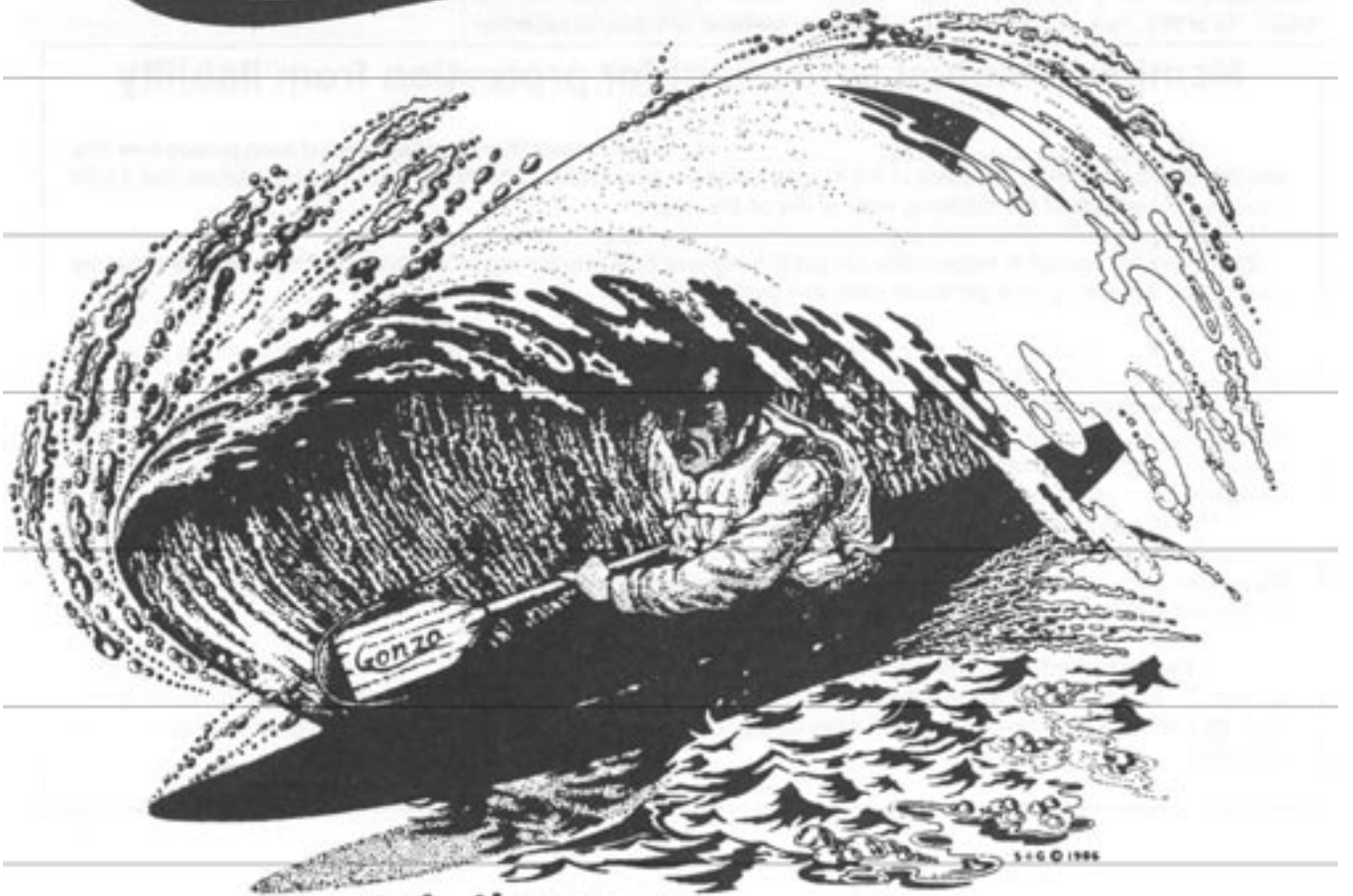
Parents of minors: I give permission for _____ to participate in Club outings. I waive the rights described above with respect to the named **minor(s)**, and I further agree to indemnify the Club, its members, trip coordinators and other outing participants from any claims arising from the participation of the named **minor(s)**,



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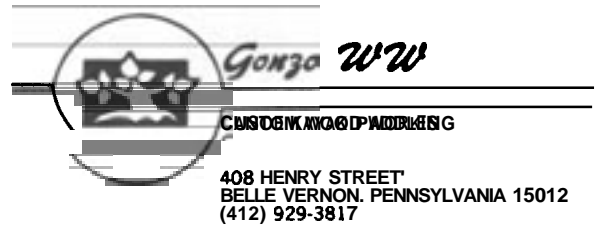
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If you plan to be doing any whitewater boating in the 1990s or afterwards, it could pay big dividends to look over the hydropower projects in your area. Chances are good that all of these projects are scheduled for relicensing in the next 10 years or so. And chances are also good that some of these projects could be operated to generate whitewater flows along with electric power. After all, it usually takes a good gradient and good average flows to make a hydropower site, the same ingredients needed for whitewater.

Unless all of the good stuff is buried under the impoundment, there is likely to be at least several miles of river bed downstream of the dam or diversion with the potential to provide good whitewater if only the right flows can be obtained. If whitewater boaters are on their toes when relicensing happens, there is a good chance that a lot of really outstanding "new" whitewater runs can be developed.

50 years of hydroelectric development

What is hydroelectric relicensing anyway? And how can we get back any of the whitewater ruined by old hydropower projects? First, a little background.

About 70 years ago Congress got tired of authorizing electric utilities (and other people) one-by-one to build dams on navigable rivers. At that time, no one could impede the flow of a navigable river without Congressional approval. When power companies really got going in a big way with hydropower projects, the workload was just too much for Con-

gress on a case-by-case basis.

To solve this problem, the Federal Water Power Act of 1920 was enacted and the Federal Power Commission was created. Congress gave the Commission the authority to issue a hydroelectric power license to any project found to be in the public interest.

As most people know by now, the Commission found just about any ridiculous dam to be in the public interest. Along with a binge of hydropower development resulted. This has continued up until the present time, with pauses every so often when cheap fuel made the economics of hydropower look especially dubious.

Whitewater lost to hydromania

In 1977 the name of the Federal Power Commission was changed to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, but not much else changed. The Commission kept right on issuing electric power licenses like there was no tomorrow. Tragically a lot of fabulous whitewater went down the drain,

even before whitewater boating was popular.

A lot of great fisheries also went down the tubes. In 1978 in response to the oil crisis, Congress made the situation worse by encouraging small power companies to join the gang rape of America's free flowing rivers. A second wave of hydromania got underway. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of river miles were buried beneath the onslaught.

The river conservation movement

All this hydropower development was generally viewed as good for America. It was progress. Until recent years, most people applauded any cheap, clean, domestic renewable power source. Some still do, no matter what the cost in loss of natural resources. But in recent years many people have become increasingly aware that, in the power generation business, there is no free lunch.

As environmental awareness grew, many people began to question the loss of free-flowing streams. First the fisher-

Chouinard funds relicensing effort

Yvon Chouinard, founder of Patagonia, has stepped forward to assist the AWA's nationwide hydro project relicensing effort with a grant of \$10,000.

Last year Chouinard made a similar contribution to the AWA's battle against small hydro projects. The funding reaped a significant return. AWA's efforts and some good fortune have forced developers to abandon literally hundreds of proposed small-hydro projects which would have decimated whitewater resources.

Although the fight still continues against small hydro, the AWA is preparing for the biggest push ever—taking on the utilities and their huge portfolio of existing dams now facing FERC relicensing.

AWA's appreciative letter to Chouinard set forth the organization's hopes for the future of the relicensing project:

"Your support will light a new fire under our program and make it possible to create a nationwide awareness of the unique opportunities relicensing offers paddlers and hopefully demonstrate in several cases that new recreational resources can be created with existing dams."

men and environmentalists, then even whitewater boaters (always the last group to wake up to something like this), asked the question: do we need to dam every free-flowing stream in America to squeeze out every last kilowatt of **electric** power? Or should we consider preserving a few of the best, most beautiful, and most popular rivers in their natural condition?

The river conservation movement was born. It quickly became a crusade. The movement was successful in obtaining the adoption of the national Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1968.

Hydroelectric licenses expire

Meanwhile, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission continued to issue hydropower licenses on every stream not designated a Federal wild and scenic river. Since only a few of the very finest and most popular streams made their way into the protected harbor of the wild and scenic system, a lot of excellent whitewater rivers continue to be dammed— even today. But hydroelectric power licenses **are only good for 50 years**. At the end of that time, they expire and the license holder has to reapply. The dam does not get torn down, but other companies can apply to take over the project under a new license. As you might imagine, this gets to be quite a mess.

No electric utility wants to give up its hydropower projects to a **competitor**. The licenses for a number of the older hydro projects began to expire in the early 1980s. A lot of conflicts developed and wound up in court as various power companies fought among themselves to take over each other's projects. With 320 licenses expiring between 1986 and the year 2000, the situation looked like a disaster waiting to happen.

AWA asks Congress to restore whitewater

To clear up the legal conflicts surrounding the relicensing mess, Congress passed a new law governing the relicensing of old hydropower projects. This was named the "Electric Power Consumers Protection Act of

Relicensing: Its effects on three rivers

Anglers vs. boaters on Salmon?

Central New York's Salmon River doesn't enjoy a national reputation as a top-notch whitewater stream. The Salmon's class II-III water attracts novice and intermediate paddlers on a regional basis looking to hone their skills or simply enjoy a leisurely day on its unimposing rapids.

For years, beginning boaters have been able to take advantage of the water releases from an upstream hydroelectric facility operated by Niagara-Mohawk. Every weekday, res-

ervoir level permitting, a surge of water is pumped into the Salmon, transforming the rocky riverbed into a playground of gentle waves and mellow hydraulics—a perfect learning atmosphere.

In addition, two commercial rafting outfitters operate on the Salmon, offering what is billed as "family style" raft trips that place no limitations on age or physical condition.

With Niagara-Mohawk's
please turn to page 40

Can the Dries run again?

The consequences of irresponsible dam building and water diversion sometimes go far beyond the disruption of the river environment and the loss of precious **white**-water. A case in point is the creation of the New River Dries.

At least 426 laborers perished of silicosis during the construction of the Hawk's Nest Diversion Tunnel between 1930 and 1932. Many were buried in unmarked graves. Another 1500 employees suffered irreparable lung damage in what is regarded **to be one of the most**

sordid chapters of American industrial history.

The tunnel, which diverts as much as 10,000 cfs five miles from the dam at Hawk's Nest to a power plant, begets the Dries, a snake-infested, rock strewn, barren riverbed that stands as testimony to whitewater lost. Because of this diversion of water the Dries can only be kayaked on those rare occasions when the New gauge at Fayette Station registers over four.

The tunnel was drilled
please turn to page 67

Who will claim Upper Yough?

In 1993 the Federal license for the Penn Elec hydropower project at the Upper Youghiogheny River in **Western Maryland** expires. This event presents an opportunity to improve whitewater flows on this immensely popular river.

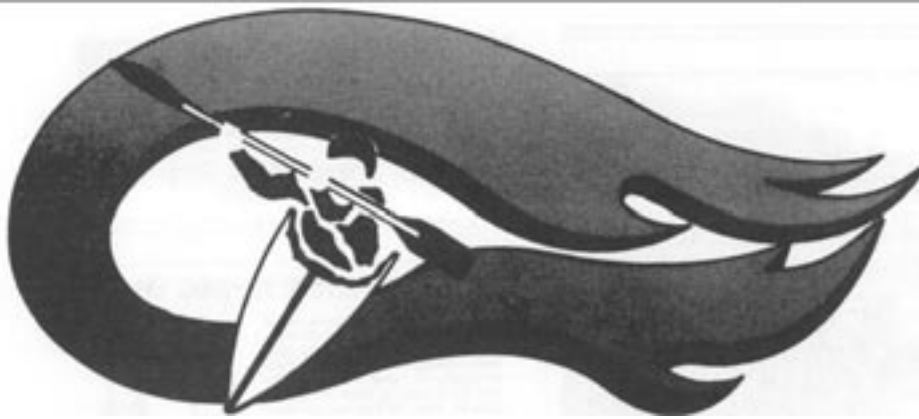
Whitewater boaters are already eagerly anticipating a major effort to improve whitewater flows at the Upper Yough. The American Whitewater Affiliation is monitoring the situation and plans to file an official "intervention" to participate in the relicensing of this project.

The same story will be re-

peated at hundreds of other existing hydropower projects on hundreds of other whitewater rivers throughout the nation.

1993 seems a long way off, but the relicensing process actually starts 5 years ahead of time. Fishing groups have already been testing the waters downstream of the dam to see if operational modifications would improve the fish habitat. What these groups want may, or may not, be compatible with whitewater. At some hydropower projects involved in the relicensing process conflicts

please turn to page 69



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photo Rod Walker

1986". When the bill was under consideration in Congress, environmental groups, fishing groups, and even the American Whitewater Affiliation saw a window of opportunity. They realized that the bill presented a chance to take back some of losses suffered by rivers over the past 50 years.

They lobbied hard to get provisions inserted in the new law to **protect** and restore fisheries and river recreation opportunities. Pete Skinner represented AWA and made the case for trying to restore some of the **white-water** lost when these projects were built.

Equal consideration for whitewater

Despite Skinner's vigorous efforts and the efforts of Friends of the Earth and the Audubon Society, most of what AWA and the environmental groups asked for in the relicensing bill was rejected. However, a few **key** provisions from the river groups' wish list did survive.

Unfortunately, the lobbyists for fishing **organizations** were by far the most successful. Congress inserted several provisions giving State fish and wildlife agencies a chance to make changes in the projects to help bring back fisheries. But, as a result of Skinner's efforts on behalf of **whitewater**, Congress also adopted a provision requiring that "recreation opportunities" (including whitewater recreation) be given "equal consideration". It is primarily this provision which opens the door to new opportunities in the relicensing game.

How to get involved

AWA stands ready to help any local whitewater organization which would like to participate in the relicensing of a **hydro project**. Anyone interested in doing this should look over the list of projects coming up for relicensing to see if whitewater opportunities might exist at a project in their neck of the woods.

If a dam up for relicensing looks promising, AWA will file the **necessary legal** papers and provide assistance to local **boaters** and **boating** clubs to help guide them through the process. Since the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission starts **work-**



The Salmon River in central New York with the water turned off, Relicensing could spur a battle between paddlers and anglers.

ing on these projects 5 years ahead of time, boaters need to get involved as early as possible.

Identifying the projects

The first step towards getting involved in the relicensing game is to identify the projects where whitewater may be a possibility. The list sounds promising. In 1988 and 1989 projects are up for relicensing on the Ontonagon River in Wisconsin, the Rogue River in Oregon, the Tule and San Joaquin Rivers in California, and the Montreal River in Michigan.

In 1990 licenses expire at projects on the Wisconsin River in Wisconsin, the Renobscot, and Squam Pan Stream in Maine, the Connecticut River in Massachusetts and in 1991, a PG&E project on the Yuba River in California is up for relicensing.

Later on projects on the Upper Yough in Maryland, the White Salmon in Washington, the Chattahoochee in Georgia, the Rock in Wisconsin, the Menominee in Minnesota, the Sacandaga and Raquette in New York, the Deerfield in Massachusetts, Clear Creek and the Arkansas in Colorado, the Kern in California, the Androscoggin in New Hampshire and Maine, the Kennebec in Maine. The complete list can be obtained by writ-

ing to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Public Information Office, Room 1000, 825 North Capitol St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426. Ask for the most recent "Relicensing Application Forecast". Then contact the company and ask for information about the projects relicensing. Finally, contact AWA at 136-13th St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Salmon cont.

Salmon River hydro facility up for **relicensing** in two years, the paddling situation on the river could be improved: better notification of releases, the amount of water released to insure optimum levels, the timing of the release to include water on weekends and improved access to the river are all conditions that could be written into the new license to facilitate whitewater recreation.

Unfortunately, other recreational interest groups want a say in determining future Salmon River flows--and that translates into bad news for paddlers.

Because while the Salmon may hold only a regional interest to whitewater boaters, the river holds a national reputation as a fishing **hotspot**. In the fall and spring, anglers please **turn** to **page 65**

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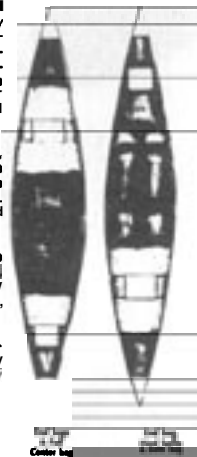
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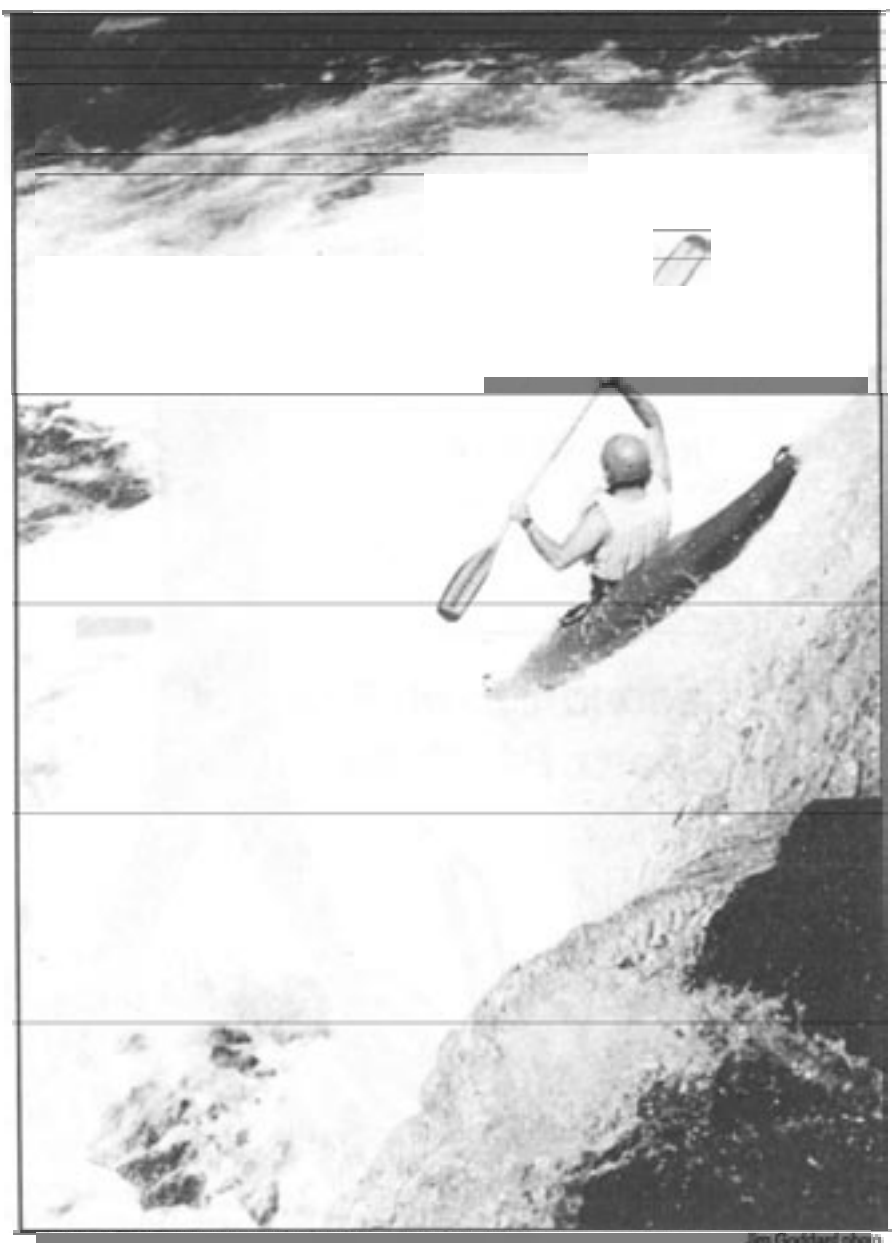
Gidawmader
PADDLES

Appalachian TOP 10

Seems like
every boating
magazine needs
to print its own
"10 Best" list.
But don't be
deceived...our
version is the
real thing.

By Bob Gedekoh

with **Wic** Walker, Lee Belknap
and Chris Koll



Jim Goddard photo

Are you bored with the Black? Tired of the Tygart? Nauseated by the New? Do you feel cheated by the Cheat?

Have the Ocoee and Chattooga lost their thrill?

Maybe even the Gauley seems a bit tame.

Don't despair; we have the cure.

For your consideration...the Ten Best Hair Rivers in the Eastern United States. Spread geographically from upstate New York to Alabama, these rivers offer state-of-the-art class V and VI whitewater and represent the cutting edge of Appalachian paddling.

Each of the contributors to this article has experienced at least five of the choices. As a group we have paddled them all.

But we know our choices are sure to elicit dissent. What better way to stir up controversy than to ask a group to choose the ten best of anything? Be it pizza parlors, rock songs, presidents, rivers...everyone has their personal favorites.

Our choices have a lot in common. All are steep, dropping more than 100 feet/mile. Most are technical and small, at least at conventional levels. And, by virtue of relative inaccessibility, most are unspoiled.

But there are differences as well. The Upper **Yough** is forgiving, the Lower Meadow uncharitable. The Watauga is continuous, the Russell Fork pool drop. The Moose features spectacular stunts, the Blackwater non-stop action.

Each has its own charm, and each its own mode of intimidation. Because of their difficulty most are not over-utilized. These rivers belong to advanced boaters, and at extreme water levels, even experts shy away.

Ten years ago this list might have included icons like the Tygart, Cheat, Black, Chattooga, New and Gauley. But these rivers have lost their mystique to familiarity and improved

boating skills and they have been displaced by more difficult rivers.

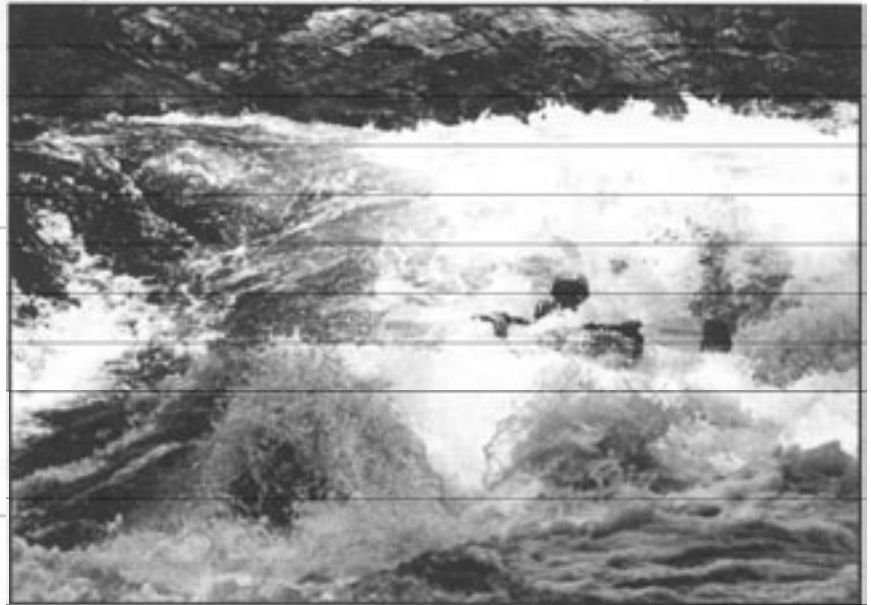
Of course a few old standbys remain; rivers like the Upper **Youghiogheny**, Russell Fork, **Blackwater** and Lower Meadow have stood the test of time. At least so far.

There are, of course, rumors, whispered around campfires late at night, of newly discovered challengers. Most are tributaries of larger, well-known rivers; the Elk empties into the **Watauga**, Laurel Run into the Tygart,

when the **McKeever** gauge registers five feet or better.

Most boaters elect to pull off the river at Fowlerville Bridge, shuddering at the downstream sight of mist rising above an ominous horizon line. But when the river drops below five feet, adventuresome paddlers push on to challenge New York's premier hair stream—the Bottom Moose.

The Bottom Moose, between **Fowlerville** and Lyons Falls, is a class



Jim Michaud photo

Dave Stanley drops through The Funnel on New York's Bottom Moose.

Glade Run into the New, and **Daugherty** and Otter Creeks into the Cheat. Some have already been attempted while others are waiting...for an appropriate water level...and a party of boaters gutsy enough to make that first descent.

No doubt in some deep Appalachian valley, the granddaddy of them all flows undiscovered.

But for now we offer on-ly proven commodities, ten thrillers guaranteed to satisfy even the most discriminating class V boater.

THE MOOSE

Located in the in central **Adirondacks** of New York, the Moose features two runs of interest to hair boaters. The Lower Moose, running from **McKeever** to Fowlerville, is an eleven mile class IV river with five major rapids. It is best run in April and May

V-VI screamer that features waterfalls, severely inclined slides, tight, technical drops and gigantic holes. Many boaters portage several rapids including **Fowlerville Falls**—the drop lurking below that initial horizon line. **Fowlerville** is a precipitous sixty foot, forty-five degree slide into a river-wide hydraulic that has been known to recirculate unfortunate heroes for disturbing periods of time.

Not far downstream Knife Edge challenges boaters with a twenty foot descent bounded by steep granite walls. In the spring of 1986 an unfortunate paddler drowned here.

During the two-week process of recovering the body, a small channel was blown through solid rock on the right just above the drop in an effort to divert the flow. The channel now serves as a sneak for the more sensible—particularly since the rescue squad is rumored to have left some grappling hooks still in the river.

Double Drop provides a fifteen foot complex drop, Agers Falls an eighteen foot plunge, Shurform a nasty thirty foot sliding drop between potential pinning rocks and Crystal, a series of cascades totaling forty feet.

Several years ago a power project threatened to permanently divert water around the last two miles of the Bottom Moose, but negotiations between the developer and the American Whitewater Association resulted in a compromise which guarantees water twenty days a year.

Thanks to the vigilance and dedication of these whitewater activists, Agers Falls, Shurform, Powerline and Crystal Rapids stand ready to challenge advanced boaters with a taste for adrenalin.

THE YOUGHIOGHENY

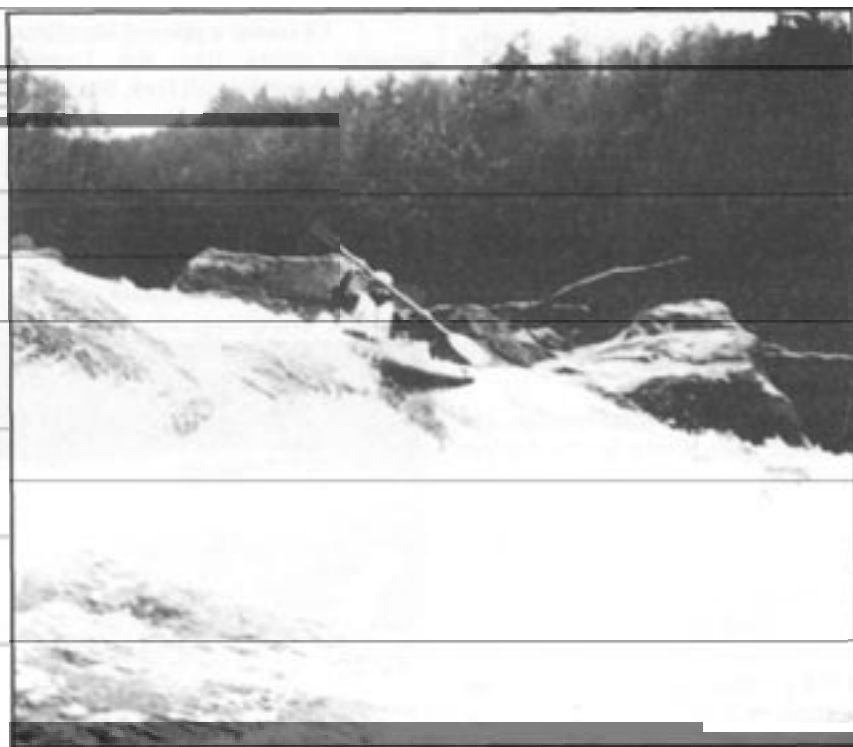
No, not the section of the Youghiogheny that flows through Pennsylvania's Ohiopyle State Park. Although this class III+ is the most heavily utilized stretch of whitewater in the nation, it hardly represents the cutting edge of the sport.

We mean the Top and Upper Youghiogheny, located twenty-five miles away in the Maryland panhandle. The Top Yough, spanning two and one-half miles from Swallow Falls to Sang Run, is paddled far less frequently than the Upper, since it must be run on natural flow. But when there is adequate, or God forbid, more than adequate water, the Top is pure excitement.

Most put in at the base of Swallow Falls, a twenty-five foot steep slide over craggy rocks, but a few hardy souls risk decapitation for a moment of glory.

Next comes Swallowtail, an eight foot river-wide ledge with a tendency to recycle the unwary into a subtle undercut on river right. Follow this with continuous class IV and V whitewater with a gradient of 130 feet/mile until you reach Suck Hole, a maneater that vacillates between a class V and VI rating depending on whether the entrance to a siphon is blocked by logs.

Sneak the final rapid down the right or...if you dare...navigate the



George Mower photo

Bob Gedekoh tackles Cheeseburger Falls on Maryland's Upper Youghiogheny.

Time Warp, a ninety degree drop/turn into a twenty foot long, four foot wide rock-walled corridor.

Ten miles downstream the Upper provides four miles of class III, IV and V fun that has become the standard by which eastern expert boaters and rivers are measured.

Rumble throughout the summer thanks to the release of water from the hydroelectric dam on Deep Creek, the Upper Youghiogheny has been rafted commercially for several years. But don't be misled, these are experienced customers in four man rafts with expert guides. It is probably the most difficult commercial raft trip east of the Mississippi, dropping 116 feet/mile over four miles.

Too complex to describe, we offer instead twenty class IV and V reasons why the Upper Yough may be, all things considered, the best of the best: Gap Falls, Bastard, Charlie's Choice, Triple Drop, National Falls, Tommy's Hole, Zinger, Doughnut Maker, Heinzerling, Boulder Dancer, Offset Ledges, Meat Cleaver, Rocky I, II and III, Powerful Popper, Lost and Found, Cheeseburger Falls, Wright's Hole and Double Pencil Sharpener.

Enough said?

THE BIG SANDY

Its headwaters lie in Pennsylvania, but West Virginia lays claim to the class V section of the Big Sandy, the most spectacular Cheat River tributary. From Bruceton Mills, located on Interstate 48, to the ramshackle bridge at Rockville, a ghost town, the Big Sandy offers a scenic class III+ run favored by intermediate paddlers.

But from Rockville to its confluence with the Cheat in Jenkinsburg, another ghost town that serves as the takeout for the Cheat Canyon as well, the Big Sandy struts its stuff, dropping 380 feet in six miles.

One mile below the bridge a tricky class IV terminates in a small pool, immediately followed by an eighteen foot wide river-wide falls. This is runnable...provided one has the nerve...and a veteran along to identify the appropriate point of departure. Miss the line and the bow of your boat may find a rock and you may find yourself with very sore, if not broken, ankles. No West Virginia hair paddler

worth his or her salt considers life complete until they rocket over this drop.

Zoom Flume, a swift, shallow sluice over a lengthy washboard of rock, provides an exhilarating thrill, provided you stay upright. But a flip is sure to result in a bad case of rock rash, usually on the knuckles but occasionally on the face. Just downstream is Little Splat, a technical class V rock garden featuring several greedy hydraulics and one midstream boulder that a novice is hard pressed to avoid.

Having survived Little Splat one faces its magnificent sibling, Big Splat, arguably the most beautiful and unnerving rapid in the East. A mélange of ledges, undercuts, jagged boulders and fallen trees that climaxes with a sixteen foot drop into a cauldron of foam and rock.

For mere mortals this di-

water...more than 7.5 on the Rockville gauge. Now the creek has become a river, non-stop continuous class V+ water that makes the Gauley look trivial.

But be sure and bring a high float vest and a boat that you're willing to lose.

THE BLACKWATER

The Blackwater, a Cheat River tributary draining north-central West Virginia's Canaan Valley, provides not one but two wilderness challenges.

The Blackwater plummets a phenomenal 230 feet/mile between Blackwater Falls State Park and its confluence with the North Fork River. This two and one-half mile stretch of continuous class IV, V and VI whitewater has been designated the Upper

Blackwater Run...appropriate for advanced boaters. From the North Fork junction to its confluence with the Dry Fork in Hendricks, the Blackwater mellows a bit, flowing through a pristine wilderness unmarred by civilization. Although primarily class III and IV, there are several distinctive class V rapids. At higher water levels the Lower Blackwater becomes more difficult, continuous class IV and V water best suited to experts familiar to the run.

Those who have not paddled the Blackwater for several years are in for a surprise. The flood that ravaged the **Monongahela** River basin in November of 1985 radically altered the stream bed.

The put-in, a mile long trek along a deserted railroad siding followed by a 500 foot vertical climb down the face of one of the state's steepest mountains, was the site of a major avalanche, **making** the approach to the river more terrifying than ever.

Krackatoa...Krackatoa, the first class V, lies about a quarter mile downstream. Adventurous boaters punch two megaholes in succession while their less reckless comrades carry on river left.

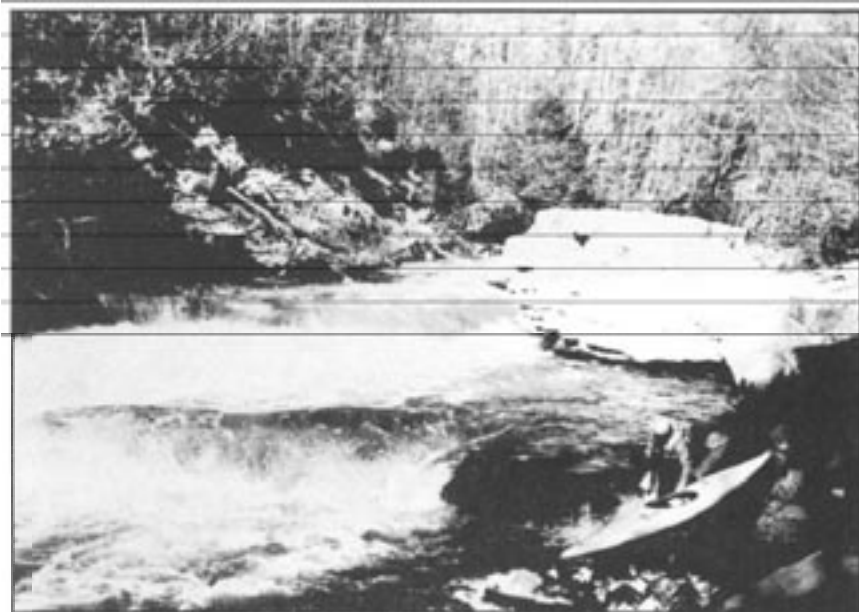
The second class V, formerly an exquisitely technical **rock** garden, has been tom away completely. In its place a straightforward sluice terminates in an eight foot falls with a recycle that is very, very potent.

A new rapid, Rock and **Roll**, follows. This long, steep gauntlet of rocks, pourovers, holes, and oblique hydraulics terminates with a unnerving plunge through a vicious rock funnel. It probably requires more skill than any other rapid on the Lower Blackwater.

Another new rapid, Hot **Dog**, looks innocent from above, but features a ruthless **pourovers** that has brought a number of competent boaters to shame. It can be negotiated on river right, but a badly undercut rock makes the approach disconcerting.

Downstream the famous Washing Machine Slide and the Broken Down Falls remain unchanged, but most of the other class III and IV rapids have been altered by the **flood** and the massive **avalanches** that followed.

All in all, the Lower **Blackwater** retains its character; the gradient is



Jim Goddard photo

Many choose to portage these two ominous holes on West Virginia's Blackwater River.

lemma is easily solved...with a portage. But during the past few years a select number of hair boaters have mustered the courage to challenge Big Splat. No one has been seriously injured to date, but there have been close calls, and it seems only a matter of time...

The best of the Big Sandy is yet to come, three and one-half miles of steep, technical class III, IV and V whitewater.

But if you reach **Jenkinsburg** unconvinced, come back at high

Blackwater by the handful of expert boaters that have survived the run. Close calls, lost gear and minor injuries are a matter-of-course on the Upper Blackwater.

Nestled within an inaccessible canyon, the Upper Blackwater was named one of America's "Impossible Challenges" by Outside magazine. It should only be attempted by teams of experts with adequate equipment and advanced rescue skills.

Downstream lies the classic

still 110 **feet/mile** over the first five miles, the stream bed still littered with boulders of every imaginable shape and size.

Unpredictable and wild, the Blackwater is unquestionably one of the East's premiere expert rivers.

THE MEADOW

The Meadow River between the Route 19 bridge and its confluence with the Gauley is the quintessential hair river of the Appalachians. No eastern river has a more ominous reputation than the Lower Meadow, one that is well deserved. Thousands of boaters challenge the Meadow's sister, the Gauley, every year, but only a handful venture onto the Meadow. Most want no part of it. Those who do always return with interesting tales to tell.

Some will say the Lower Meadow is more dangerous than they expected, or more continuous, or more

scenic, or even more fun. But no one will ever say that it is easy. For many years paddling the Lower Meadow was considered suicide, but during the past five years several gutsy boaters have made the Meadow their specialty, identifying the best routes through the class V and VI maze. Go in their company or go prepared to scout...and scout...and scout...

The first class VI, Watt Rock, looks deceptively easy from the Route 19 Bridge. But running the main channel can result in prolonged submersion beneath the massive rock on river left. This is typical of the Lower Meadow, a river ripe with subtle danger. Unlike the Upper Youghiogheny, which is difficult but forgiving, the Meadow shows no mercy. On the Upper Yough experts seek out more difficult routes, on the Lower Meadow experts choose the easiest way possible.

Not far downstream **two class V** rapids straddle a class VI, the Home of Sweet Jesus. This menace, which is

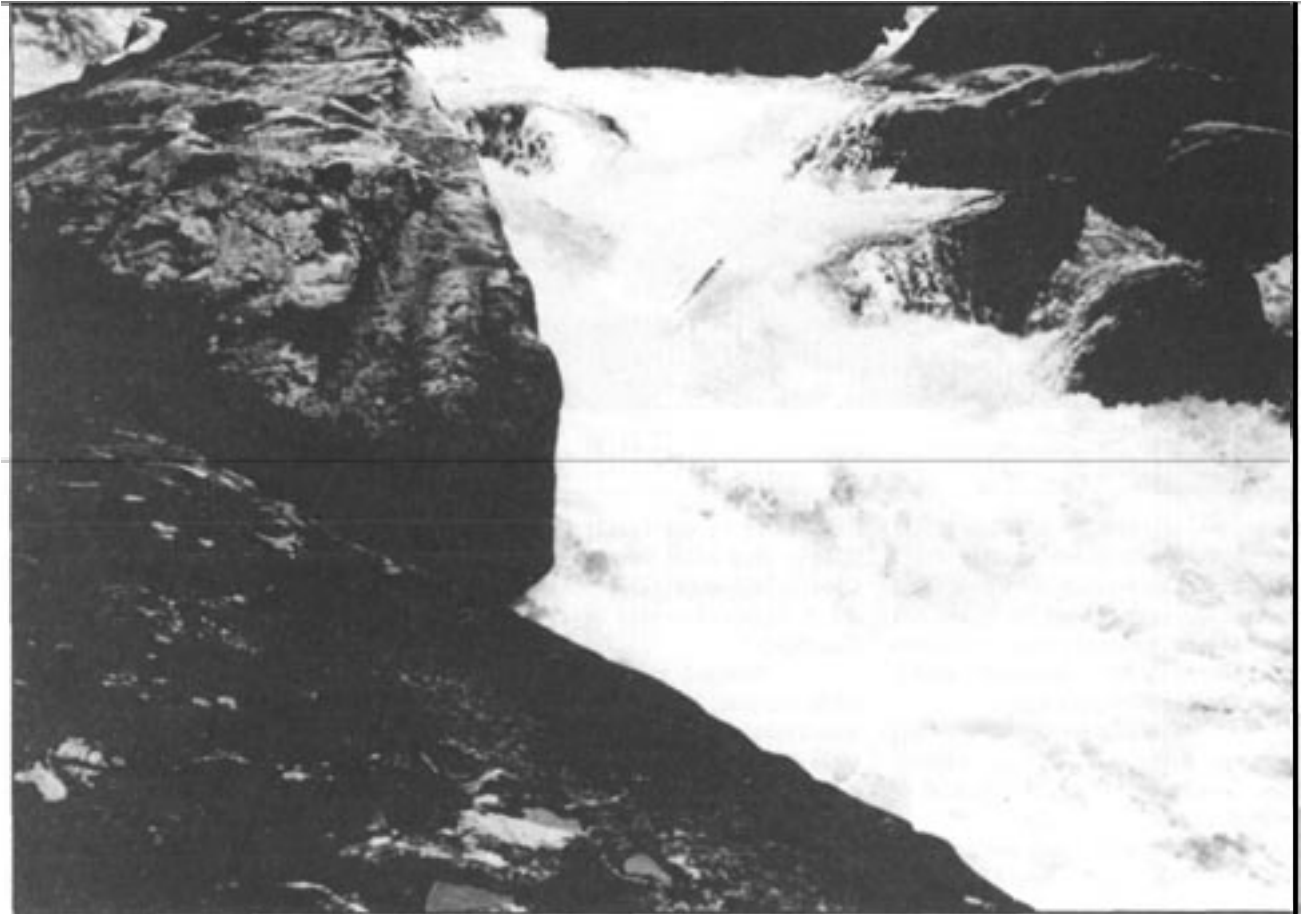
almost never run, consists of a steep rock garden that tilts towards river right. Midway most of the flow disappears down a humongous siphon and follows a subterranean course to God knows where. The rest spills off to the left over a precipitous, shallow slide reminiscent of a cabbage grater.

After a few more miles of treacherous class V+ water the river turns abruptly to the right, revealing the Double Undercut, a three tiered class VI that features two vertical chutes, several greedy hydraulics and, you guessed it, a number of badly undercut rocks. Currently a log blocks the approach to the Double Undercut, and we're glad of it.

The remaining mile to the Gauley is class IV anticlimax. Though the overall gradient of the Lower Meadow is 95 **feet/mile**, less than that of several others listed here, it certainly seems steeper. It is **runable** only after heavy rains and its drops quickly, which is probably just as well. Even for

Buried in whitewater, C1 paddler Dean *Tomko* measures his ability against West Virginia's Meadow River's infamous Home of Sweet Jesus.

George Mower photo



the most courageous, paddling the Lower Meadow a few times a season is enough.

THE RUSSELL FORK

Though only two miles long, the class V section of the Russell Fork is so intense that it renders **most** boaters psychologically and physically exhausted. The Russell Fork more than compensates for its brevity with a precipitous, gnarly course that is **one of** the most menacing stretches of **white-water** in the **country**.

There are six class V or VI rapids on the run and they are all mean. Turbulent hydraulics recirculate and backender the unwary. Undercuts and siphons swallow the unfortunate. Tight chutes entrap those **with less** than perfect boat control.

Consider Triple Drop, a protracted sequence of voracious hydraulics, wave trains and ledges. Punching the first hole is perhaps the most formidable obstacle, those who fail to escape its recycle face a very long, very **unpleasant** swim. Near the bottom of the rapid much of the current spills around and onto a jagged rock that looks anything but inviting.

Or consider El Horrendo, a seventy-five foot slide that drops twenty-five feet. Boaters start on river left, then drive across the slide to river right to avoid recirculation or **pitoning** at the bottom. If successful they plunge into a hole so large that it sucks birds right out of the sky. The water...and **boaters**...boil out of this cauldron, **only** to bounce off a rock wall on river right. Those who fail to regain their **composure** quickly may find **themselves recirculating** in a mid river hydraulic just downstream.

The Russell Fork lies within Breaks Interstate Park, on the border of Kentucky and Virginia. Flow is adequate only after heavy rains or when the Corp releases water from the Flanagan Dam on the Pound River, a Russell Fork tributary. For years scheduled releases every fall attracted a small, elite **corp** of expert boaters.

Last year, for the first time, a large number of less than expert boaters-attempted the river. **The** ensuing circus is whitewater history. Suffice it



Jim Goddard photo

Steep, technical and **powerful**...the Russell Fork is one of the East's premier hair runs.

to say that fewer than half the boaters who tested the Russell Fork on Saturday returned on Sunday. Sometimes discretion really is the better part of valor.

THE WATAUGA

Surrounded by the Smokey Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, the Watauga River is one of the Appalachian's most picturesque rivers. **With a gradient of 100 feet/mile** the Watauga offers a six mile continuous descent through intricate rock formations and over dramatic ledges. The Watauga is the epitome of a tight, technical stream.

Pause and look back over your shoulder, and trace the river bed up the mountainside. You'll find yourself **asking**, "Did I really make it through that?" Then face downstream and gaze into the tops of trees only a few hundred feet ahead and wonder how much longer your luck will hold out.

Hydro, the first difficult rapid about a mile below the put-in, consists of a train of ledges with a rocky weir near the top and a violent hole at the bottom. Do Se Do, an extravagant rock garden, offers innumerable opportunities to catch eddies or broach, **depend-**

ing on ability.

Watauga Falls, a class VI, is usually portaged but occasionally tackled at moderate water levels. Heroes negotiate a technical approach, punch two mischievous hydraulics, then **plummet** over the lip of the fourteen foot falls, skirting a boulder on top **right** and a pile of jagged rocks on **bottom left**.

It is no place to lose one's line.

Densely forested mountainsides and jagged cliffs make the **Watauga** one of the most beautiful **Eastern** rivers. The river rises and falls **quickly**, but on a fairly regular basis. Low water runs, less than 300 cfs, are **excruciatingly** technical. Highwater runs, more than 700 cfs, feature padded but turbulent routes.

Irrespective of level, the Watauga is never easy.

THE LINVILLE

It was the **early** 1970s when North Carolina's **Linville** River was first attempted, and 1985 before a team put in at the top of the magnificent gorge and emerged intact at its mouth, 18 miles and 1800 vertical feet downstream. That hiatus was not accidental; the Linville is no cakewalk.

The Park Service has built a

fine parking lot near the launch site, the Linville Falls Overlook, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. The take-out is a convenient bridge, complete with flow gauge. **Between lies three or more days** of paddling in the most rugged and scenic canyons in the Appalachians.

Mountainsides tower 2000 feet on either side of the river. Capping the left wall is a series of cliffs including Table Rock, one of the most popular climbing areas in the southeast. On the flanks of **Brown Mountain** mysterious lights flicker at night, giving rise to ghost stories for more than a century.

It is the opportunity to **paddle** day after day in this National Wilderness Areas that raises the Linville beyond the category of a weekend trip, aesthetically, but also logistically.

Hiking trails lend access from the canyon rims, but many portages must be made across cliffs, landslides and rhododendron jungles. Boaters **must pack** gear in or walk out each night.

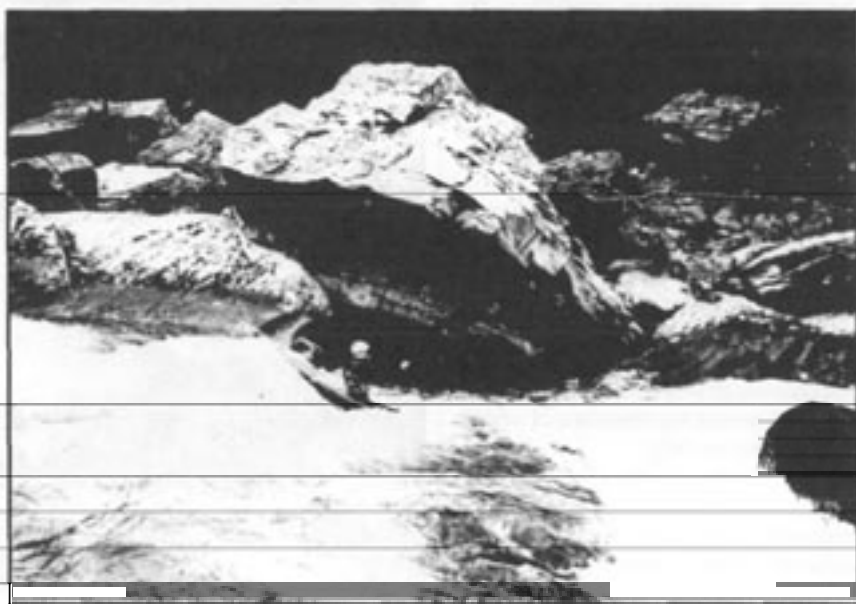
The gradient ranges to 240 feet/mile. Undercuts and pinning opportunities abound. Fifteen to twenty difficult carries must be anticipated. There is no other eastern equivalent to this succession of drops, back to back, or to the stress produced by constant decision **making**. Paddlers and gear endure relentless punishment on the Linville.

As befits a wilderness river, the Linville must be paddled on natural flow. Finding ideal water levels for three consecutive days has been a major obstacle to exploration. Every prospective paddler should hike to gorge in advance to be sure that he or she is willing to pay the price of admission.

OVERFLOW CREEK

Overflow Creek is an intricate, tiny class III-V tributary of the West Fork of the Chattooga River. Comparing this four mile gem with most other runs is like comparing rock climbing to hiking. Located in the corner of Georgia flanked by Alabama and Tennessee, Overflow runs infrequently, but is a favorite target of rebel hair boaters.

At lower levels, above 2.2' on the Chattooga gauge, 1' on the takeout



IN Eichorst photo

(Above) Mark Altman on Alabama's Little River Canyon. (Below) Howie Baer negotiates a tight squeeze on the Linville River.

Bob Oost photo



gauge, Overflow is only a few feet wide at the put-in. But sidestreams soon add more water. Half way through the run, two larger streams join Overflow to form the West Fork of the Chattooga.

Within the gorge the scenery is fantastic, but who has time to notice? With a gradient of 158 feet/mile, drops of ten to thirty feet are common.

The highly skilled boater is kept constantly busy avoiding obstacles, vertical pins and overhanging vegetation. The stream is often shallow, making rolls unpleasant.

Shoulder dislocations, broken paddles and precarious entrapments are all too common. Spending the night

in the gorge is a distinct possibility.

But those who have experienced Overflows wear that it's exquisite beauty and rugged thrills justify the risk.

LITTLE RIVER

A whitewater classic should consist of more than difficult rapids. The Little River Canyon of Alabama, perhaps the southernmost hair run in the Appalachians, has more than its share of memorable features.

It is best to arrive at the put-in

psyched and ready. The initiation is a fifty foot rappel directly into a pool below a wide, unrunable waterfall. The timid may elect to walk a quarter mile down the left bank for a ropeless start.

The canyon gets progressively deeper and more scenic. The upper miles, seldom run, contain five rapids reminiscent of the Meadow or Upper Blackwater. One has probably never been run; the others may mandate a portage, depending on water levels.

It is possible to start below the steep upper section. Two miles of class III-V water remain. One drop has devoured several boats. Now the vertical walled gorge is 500 feet deep, with stunning cliff faces and side canyons.

The sense of isolation is total until a chairlift that once lowered hikers to the river signals the beginning of a five mile run-out tapering from class IV to II.

Sadly a flood devastated the lower half of the canyon in June of 1985, stripping the river banks to forty feet above normal water levels and damaging the park at the take-out. But time heals most, if not all, wounds, and the Little River Canyon remains a unique whitewater experience.

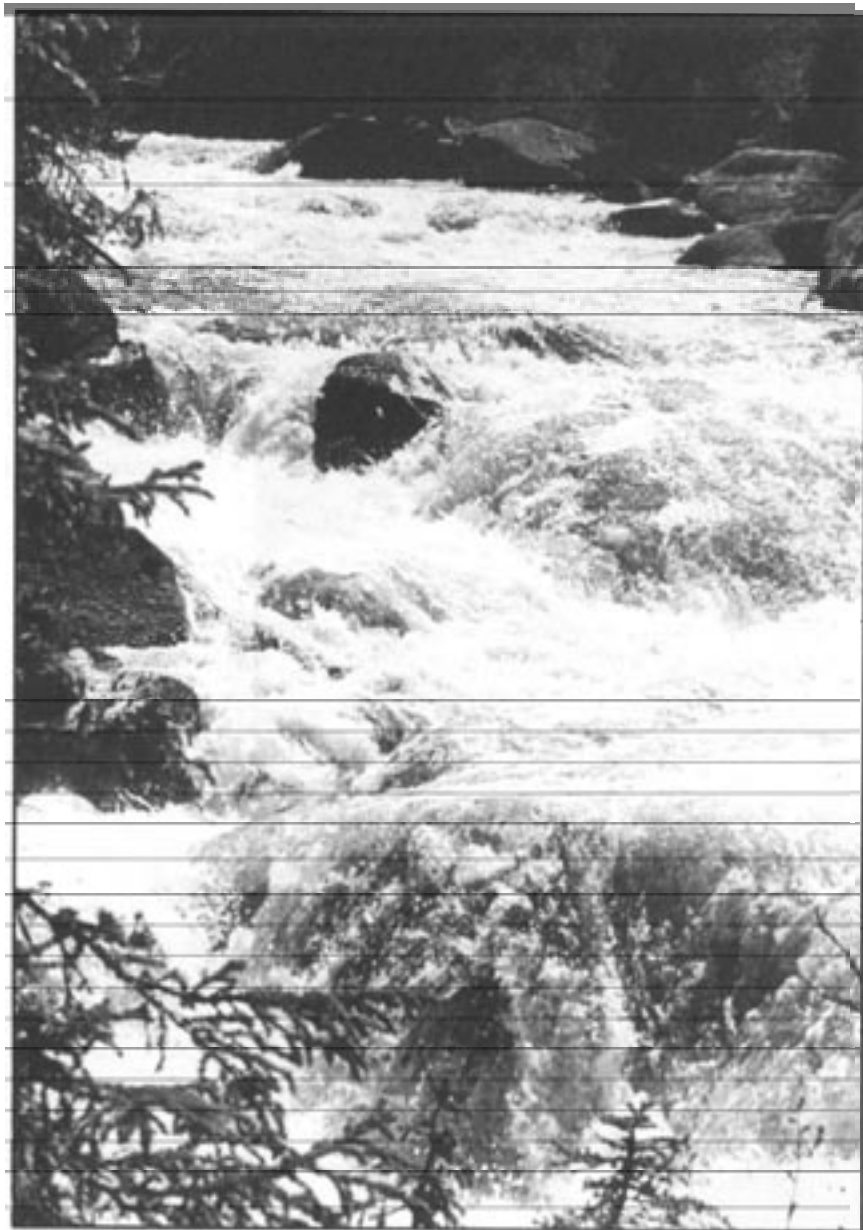


Ron Mullet challenges Blind Falls on Georgia's Overflow Creek, a tributary of the Chattooga.

Rusty Dunbar photo

"perfect"

After paddling le Taureau on Quebec's Jacque-Cartier, boaters ponder: "Can a river get any better than this?"



Chris Koll photo

Mykl Messer carefully lifted a thick book with a blue cover from a box on the floor of the car, dusted the jacket with his hand, and pushed the volume under my nose.

"Take a look at it," Mykl said. "I want your input about what runs to hit."

I glanced at the title: Guide des Rivières Sportives au Québec.

"It's all in French," I objected. "I can't read that."

"You can look at the maps, there's charts and there's pictures," Mykl said with an exasperated tone. "You should be able to get a general idea what a river's like from that."

So I opened the book at a page flagged with a marker—a particular portion of a river called la Jacques-Cartier. Except for the language, the Québec book resembled every river guide I've seen before—there was a map indicating major drops, and sections entitled "accès" (which I translated to mean "shuttle") and "description," (the meaning of which even I could interpret).

And like many guidebooks, a handy summary of river conditions preceded the description of each run. I scanned down the columns listed under le Taureau section of the Jacques-Cartier, reading them aloud to Mykl as I went:

"Difficulté: expert—that's what we're looking for. Cotation: R-IV+V(6) (eau basse). What's eau basse, anyway?"

"Low water," Mykl said, "but it should be at least a medium level now."

"Oh..." I said, looking back at the book a little more closely, "Tortage: 20 et plus. That means 20 carries?"

"I've heard it can probably be done with only three mandatory portages," Mykl said.

"Durée: 3 jours. What's a jour—probably an hour, huh?"

"A day. But I know it's been done in nine hours."

"Tente: 2.6%-7.5%?"

"That's gradient," Mykl explained. "They figure it in terms of a percentage!"

I quickly began the computation: let's see, that's 5,280 times .075, that works out to... Jesus, that's 396 feet per mile!

I looked up. Mykl just sat there, smiling, with a weird light in his eyes. I knew then I was in for an interesting trip.

Even if the province of Québec didn't boast some of the wildest whitewater rivers in North America, I suspect Mykl would find some excuse for going up there: he is a closet Francophile.

I should have guessed something was odd about Messer right from the start. A resident of Valley Point, West Virginia, a tiny hamlet five min-



Chris Koll photo

Mykl Messer, momentarily hung up in a *narrow*, rocky slot on le Taureau.

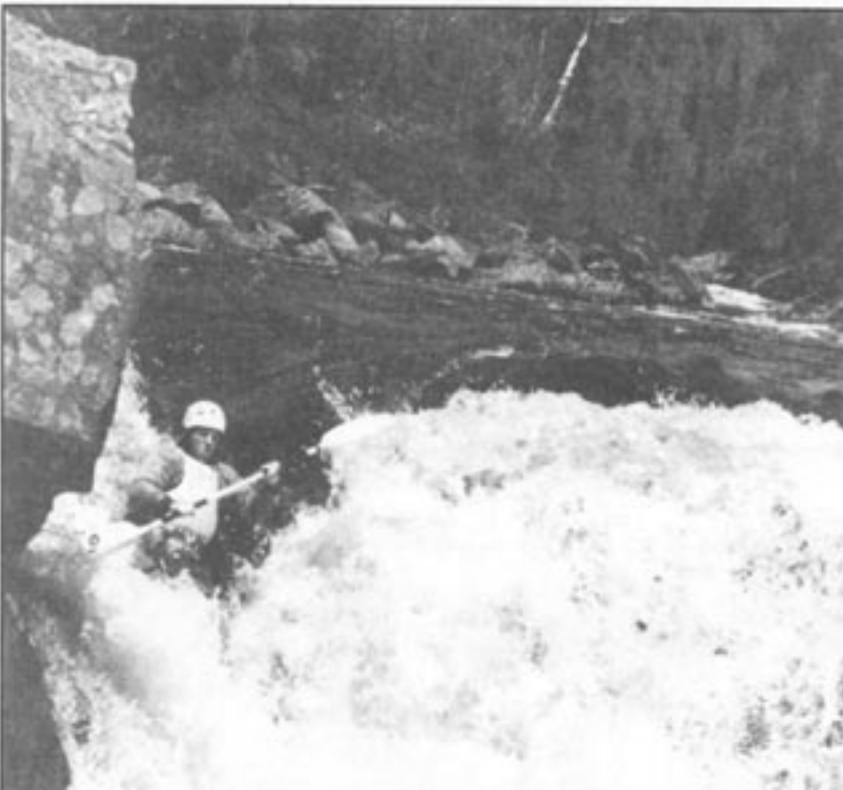
utes removed from the Cheat and Big Sandy, Messer makes his living crafting Rainbowwave custom paddles and occasionally guiding on the local rivers. But while describing our potential itinerary prior to the trip, Messer assumed a distinctly **unWest** Virginian accent.

"I'd like to get up to the **Batis**-can in the Reserve Portneuf and then make our way to the Rivière Jacques-Cartier," Messer said over the phone, pronouncing Portneuf "Tort-new" and Jacques-Cartier "Shock-Cartea-a." I felt **abashed**. If I saw those names on the map, I would have called them **Portnoof** and the Jack Carter.

But there were other tip offs. Messer's appearance is like you'd expect a Frenchman to look: slender, wiry



By Chris Koll, pictured above on the I.C.



build; thin face and narrow nose; and dark hair **worn** on the long side, carelessly swept back on his forehead. He exudes a definite Gallic demeanor: aloof and distantly polite one moment, then animated and expansive the next. When I looked in his cooler, I found a bottle of wine that had a cork instead of a cap. Hell, he even drives a Citroen.

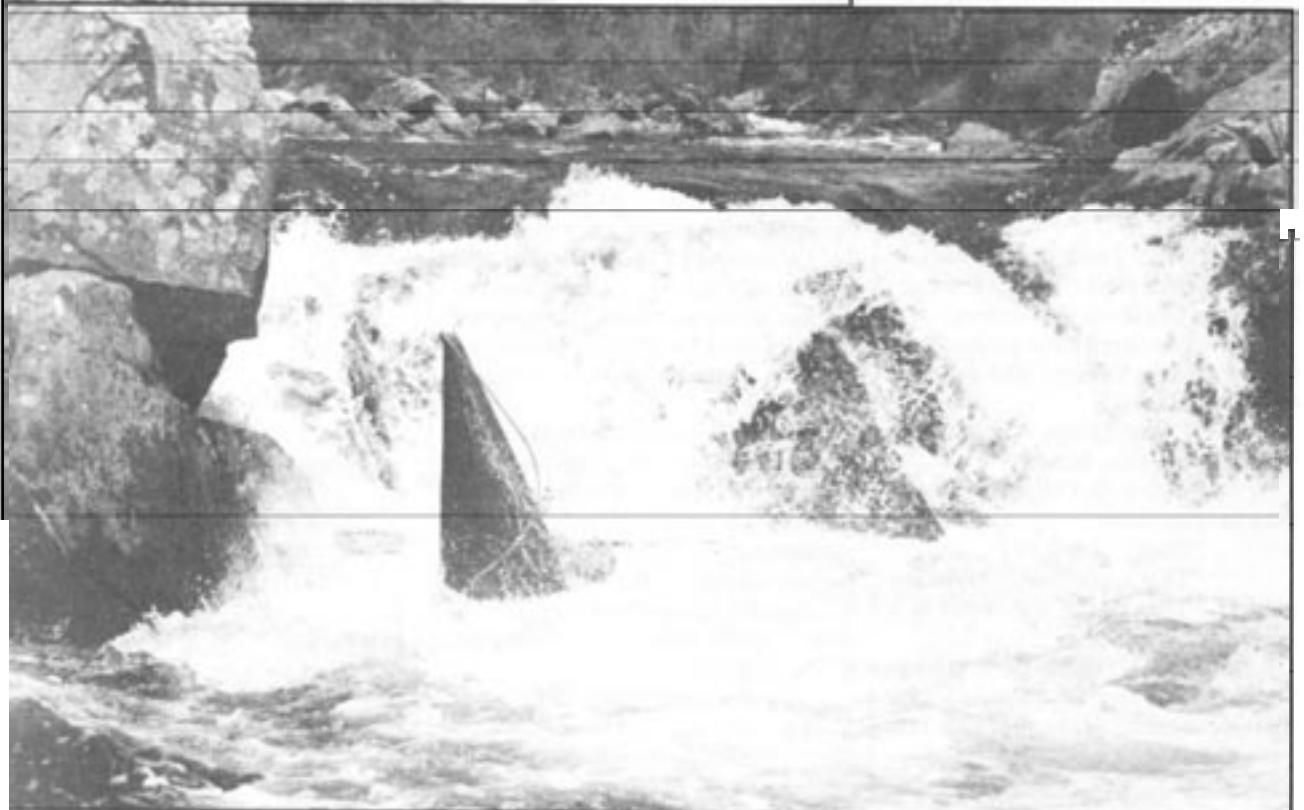
It turns out that Mykl's mother was a first-generation American and that **Mykl** didn't learn to speak English until **kindergarten**. Naturally,

it's French is flawless. In fact, he claims with a note of pride, "most people tell me I have a slight Parisian accent."

Small wonder Messer looks forward to his annual paddling trips to **Quebec**. He revels in what would prove to be a foreign culture to most **American** boaters.

"What I really like about the area is the way people will arbitrarily switch from one language to the next," Messer said. "They really aren't locked in to French—it's more of a combination and they use any word that serves the **purpose**. You really have to keep on **your** toes when you're **talking** to

(Right) Claude plunges down steep chute then (Below) returns to catch an eddy.
Chris Koll photos



them."

Well, since my mastery of French was limited to the filthy lyrics to a song popular in the seventies—what better travel partner to have than Mykl?

Most American paddlers associate Canadian whitewater with distant rivers accessible only by float planes or an extended **bushwhacking** expedition. That simply isn't the case. Three hours after meeting **Messer** in Watertown, NY, we were comfortably ensconced on bar stools at the Nouveau Monde Rafting Expeditions outdoor center, located at the takeout of the **Riviere Rouge**, sampling some of the country's finest lager.

Our preliminary plans called for a warm-up day on the Rouge's intermediate class **3-4** rapids before forging deeper into the province. Our opportunities were almost endless. The **Quebec** guide detailed dozens of potential runs—all within an additional four hour drive from the Rouge.

But despite his insistence upon my input—I sensed Mykl was secretly hoping I'd buy in to his scheme of running le Taureau section of the Jacques-Cartier. It had long been a target during his previous paddling trips to Quebec, but low water or unenthusiastic companions had always seemed to thwart Mykl's plans.

In the end, Mykl didn't need to flag the section to **catch my** attention. From the start, I had a morbid curiosity in discovering what a **400** foot a mile river looked like. The Upper Yough, which is still considered pretty much an expert run around the Eastern U.S., only drops **116** feet a mile—and that only during a blood-and-guts **three-mile** stretch. If the book was to be believed, le Taureau's gradient varied from **137** to **396** fpm for **10** continuous miles.

Now, I've had some experience on steep creeks. West Virginia's Daugherty Creek, for instance, hits **400** fpm while screaming straight down the side of a mountain in a series of long slides and sharp drops. But Daugherty's flow, even after a summer thunderstorm, probably never exceeds **100** cubic feet per second. We could expect, at medium water, **1,500 CFS** of water on le Taureau—a level greater than any eastern U.S. hair stream.



Chris Koll photo

Claude emerges from the bottom of a typical le Taureau cascade.

"Lay Toro," I announced, butchering the pronunciation, "**that's** definitely the run we want."

Mykl's eyes burned a little brighter, and he immediately scampered off to query the local Rouge guides for the latest dope on levels, lines and **landmarks—speaking** French, no doubt, with a slight Parisian accent.

The Laurentians are ancient mountains—steep sided slopes with rounded tops. Covered with spruce, the hills were intensely green, even in the spring. We wound our way up and about the mountains, veering around the frequent bicyclists, like **skiers** traversing a field of green moguls.

The Tewksbury section of the Jacques-Cartier (or simply the J.C., as we came to know it), lay only 20 miles north of Quebec City, but despite its proximity to a metropolitan area, the land showed no signs of urban sprawl. It seemed as if the Quebecois, showing uncommon wisdom, allowed that development **should be** held to the flatland bordering the St. Lawrence while the Laurentians should be reserved for hiking, fishing, bicycling, **skiing** and yes, thank **God**, boating.

We had come to Tewksbury to camp in comfort at another Nouveau Monde outdoor center for a couple of days while mobilizing our attempt on

le Taureau. It was nearly a tactical error—boating at Tewksbury was just too damn comfortable.

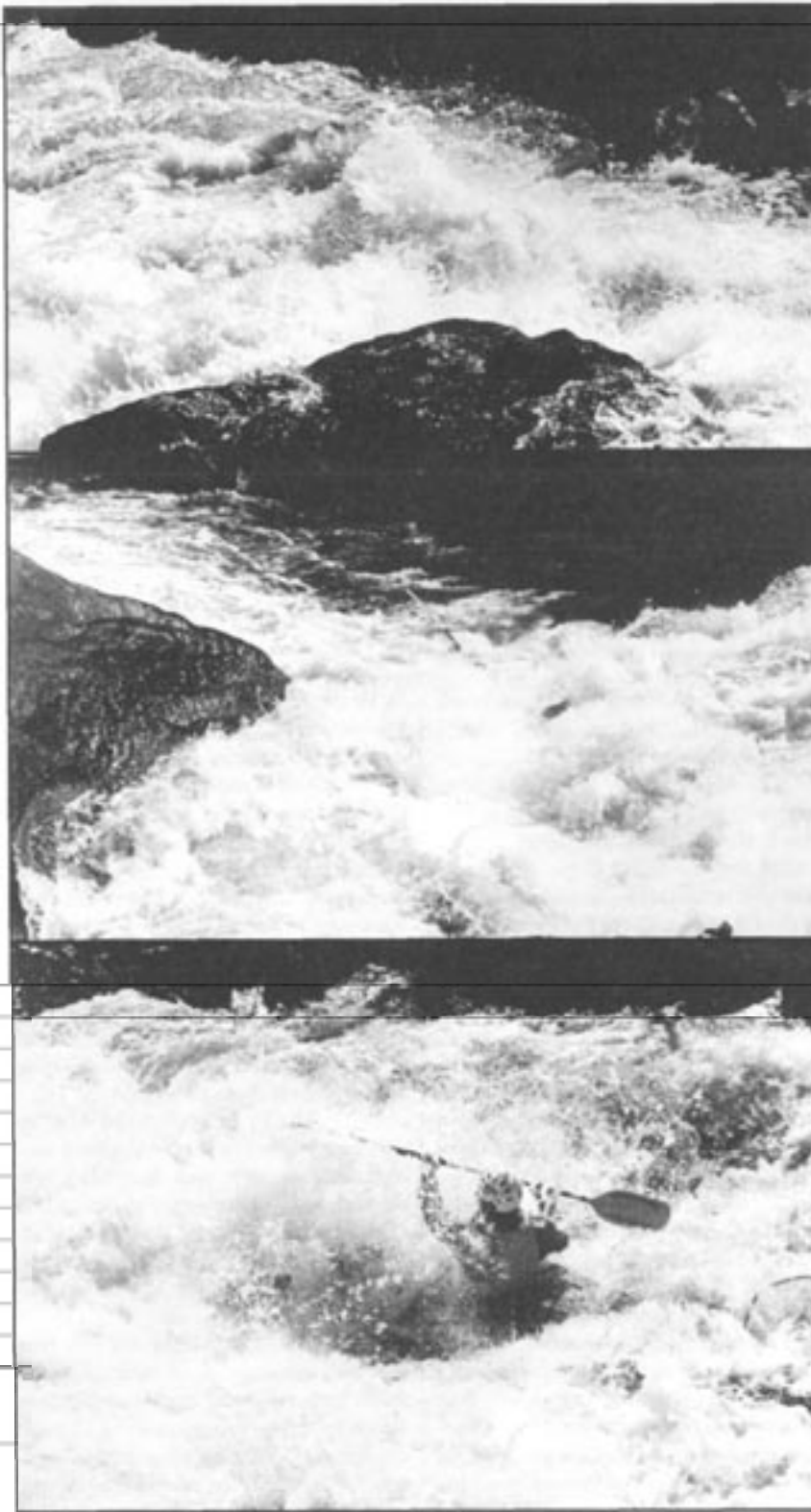
We lazed in the shade under the tall spruce trees at a corner of the outpost. A placid backwater of the J.C. lapped the shore before us. The **much-maligned** Canadian bugs were **nowhere** to be found during the day.

Finally, when activity across the compound indicated that the **Nouveau Monde** guides were preparing to launch their commercial raft trip, Mykl and I would shoulder our boats, hike across the road, and slip into the J.C.

The J.C. is a full-sized river by the time it reaches the Tewksbury section. Although it was late May, the stream was still flowing a healthy **5,000 CFS**. Starting wide and slow at the **put-in**, the J.C. necks down as it slips into a small gorge and begins to pick up gradient.

The Tewksbury section was simply a fun river. Approximately five miles long with five rapids of the class IV variety, Tewksbury offered enough challenge to keep us on our toes without further graying our hair. And the strong eddy lines made the water between the rapids a squirt boater's dream.

Mykl paddled his Silon, a Wittemore design, while I boated in my Magnum, a Snyder invention. Many of



ACTION ON LE TAUREAU: (Top) Claude is buried in froth as he punches through a hole. (Middle) After negotiating a tough approach, Claude drops over final steep slide. (Bottom) Claude threads his way past a sharp ledge near the bottom of the le Taureau run.

Chris Koll photos

the Nouveau Monde guides were also boaters, and they made it a point to drift their rafts close during the trip to inspect the boats with covetous glances.

It must be tough to be a white-water boater in Canada. The Quebec guides had as much good whitewater in their backyard as any location in North America, but import duties push the price of equipment to nearly double the U.S. rate and squirt boats were virtually unobtainable. During the day, Mykl and I were propositioned about the availability of our boats, paddles and spray skirts. It seemed that one of life's ambitions for most of the guides was to someday own a Jet.

But the finest part of the day was after the run was done and Nouveau Monde had graciously shuttled us back to the center. We'd belly up to the center's open-air bar where we'd be served ice-cold Molsons by a girl of uncommon beauty to whom Mykl would speak French, damn him, with his Parisian accent. Then, after the paying customers had drifted away, leaving just us and the guides drinking in the twilight, talk would turn to le Taureau.

Mykl and I were anxious to increase the size of our party. Joe Goff, an American from New Hampshire we had met in the parking lot had expressed an interest in joining us, but we hoped to enlist some local talent.

All if the guides at the bar were familiar with the Taureau—a reverent expression passed over their faces at the mention of the name, as if the section represented some kind of Holy Grail, a quest they all longed to someday make. But we only had one recruit: a quiet, sandy-haired kid named Claude. A safety kayaker for Nouveau Monde, Claude grew up just a few hundred feet from the Tewksbury take-out. He was already a fine paddler.

We discussed the logistics of the run:

Our main concern was completing the section in daylight. The trip detailed in the Quebec guidebook took place over three days several years ago, but that was an exploratory descent made in fiberglass kayaks. That party traveled fully-provisioned, including extra fiberglass cloth and resin for emergency repairs. It was needed. The party was forced to patch boats at

night, turning them over a campfire like a pig on a spit to aid curing.

A group of strong paddlers had made the trip at higher water in nine hours three weeks prior to our attempt, but they were familiar with the river—where to scout and where to walk. Although Mykl was already in the process of copying a rough map from the guidebook, we would not have that advantage.

"All we can do," I said, "is just make sure we're on the river by eight or nine in the morning. We'll have at least 12 hours on the river. And if it gets dark, we'll have to sleep in our drysuits. If we wear extra pillows, it will be something like a bivy bag."

"And we'll bring some extra food," Mykl added. "And a plastic six-pack ring."

What?

"It's a trick I learned in Guatemala," Mykl explained. "I was trying to start a fire with wet wood and one of the guides I was with said, 'Wait a minute, I'll show you a trick.' I thought he was going to use some traditional technique, but he just whipped out a six-pack ring and lit it up."

The discussion continued: what boat to use, food to bring, gear to bring when simultaneously the realization struck us: the shuttle for le Taureau is an hour and forty-five minutes long, and it's nine o'clock right now. If

please turn to page 71



Mykl and Claude pause for lunch beside thundering waterfall.

Quebec rivers:

Untapped treasures



Mykl Messer on Tewksbury section of Quebec's Jacques-Cartier.

From class 2 to class 6, Quebec offers a greater concentration of whitewater than anywhere in eastern North America.

That might be a hard pill for native West Virginians to swallow, but there's no denying that the high plateaus of Quebec physically contain more surface water than the mountains of the Appalachians. And when the rivers, creeks and lake flows drop down into the plains of the St. Lawrence, the result is a incredible variety of whitewater runs.

Paddlers can be best introduced to Quebec whitewater by Gilles Fortin's fine guidebook: *Guide des Rivières Sportives au Québec*. There's only two drawbacks to Fortin's book: it's available only in French, and it's damned hard to find.

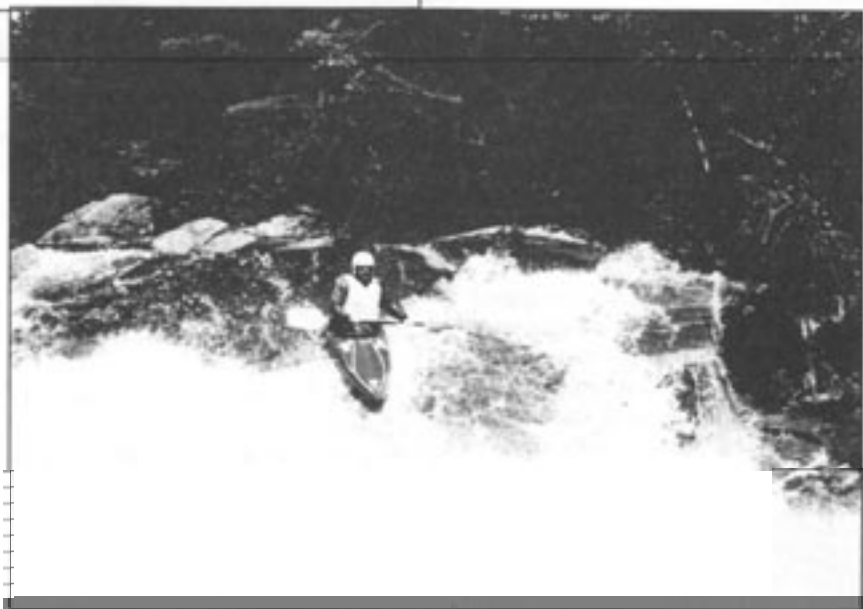
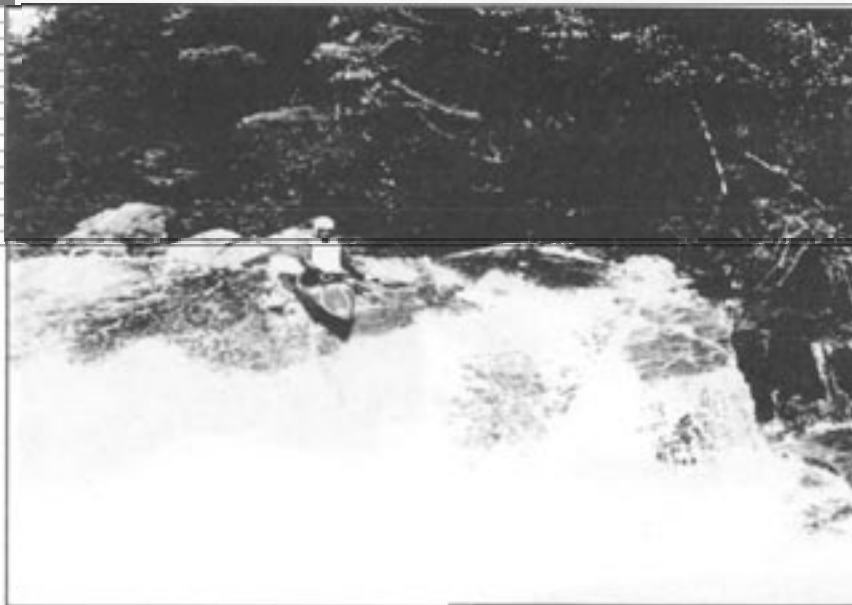
But if you can acquire a copy, you're on your way. The book breaks down the province's top runs by region, describing nearly 70 different runs. And that only scratches the surface—the area contains a considerable number of other possibilities that are not included in the volume due to lack of accessibility or infrequency of adequate flows.

Still, a top end boater could make a career of only paddling the rivers listed in the guide; there are dozens of runs profiled with gradients exceeding 150 feet per mile. But if there are less-skilled members of the party, intermediate runs are just as plentiful.

One of the misconceptions about Quebec whitewater is accessibility. Americans tend to believe that simply getting to the put-in of top Quebec runs is an expedition in itself.

But the truth of the matter is that Quebec is not that far away. For American paddlers outside of New England, it's faster to drive to Quebec City than it is to reach the popular Maine rivers. And once in the province, put-in roads are usually no worse than what is found in the states.

What's the bottom line on Quebec boating? Paddlers can enjoy a variety of expedition-style descents on a day-trip basis...or they can savor non-intimidating floats through unblemished wilderness. With U.S. rivers rapidly crowding from eddy to eddy, the rivers of Quebec are a boater's dream.



**It's appropriate that the
Appalachian Trail runs along part
of northern Maine's
Nesowadnehunk Stream, because
when the water starts to drop at 200
feet per mile, it's time to...**

Scout or die

Nesowadnehunk Stream

"When you peel out of an eddy, you get so much momentum going that you become committed to the next two to three hundred yards of Class IV+ ledges, hydraulics, and cascades....yo u feel like a hockey goalie at slap shot practice."

Scout or Die. That's the credo of the slowly-growing number of hard boaters who have had the opportunity to run Nesowadnehunk Stream's whitewater section. It is a Class IV-V foray into the steepest of unknowns, a pounding, cascading cauldron of pitches, an unrelenting, pushing, surging, churning battle with gravity and H2O.

Found in remote Baxter

State Park in Northern Maine, this stream forces your abilities, stamina and guts to the edge of the horizon line, then blasts you into yet another froth hole. The 200-foot-per-mile gradient plays tag with boulders, slides, ten-foot ledges and with the edge of 50-foot unrunnable cascades. A river where common sense ensures you finish the run. A run where 'to portage' isn't a wimpout, it's a necessity.

"Around Trail"

"The term 'A.T.' (Appalachian Trail) takes on a different meaning....along Nesowadnehunk Stream, it means 'Around Trail'."

To fishermen, Nesowadnehunk Lake and Stream (pronounced sourd-na-hunk) is known for its great brook trout fishing. To adventurers who manage to venture far, far off the beaten path, this region is akin to Thoreauian lore of Pre-Industrial America. Spectacular mountain views of the Baxter Range include the thirty-four hundred-foot Doubletop Mountain and Mount Katahdin, just 13 feet shy of a mile high. Osprey and kingfisher compete for dinner, while wood ducks paddle their brood past ruminating moose to the safety of marsh grass.

The first five miles of the run from the Flat Rock put-in mixes these sylvan Beatrix Potter scenes with occasional Class II/III warm-ups; the following four and a half miles from the Toll Dam to the outflow into the West Branch of the Penobscot rival Dante's Inferno for

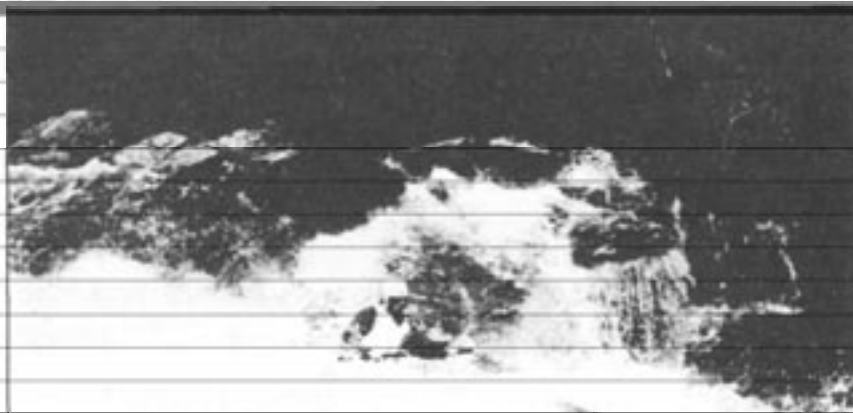
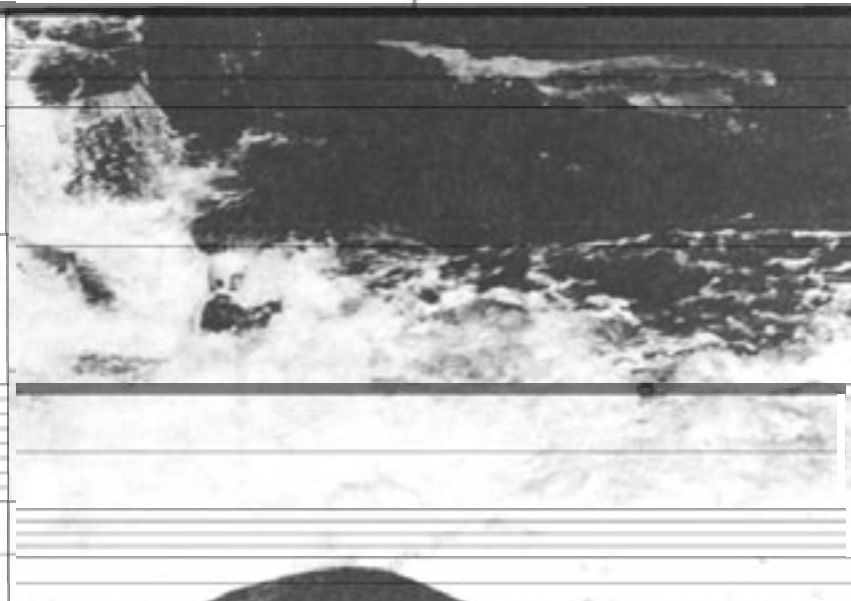
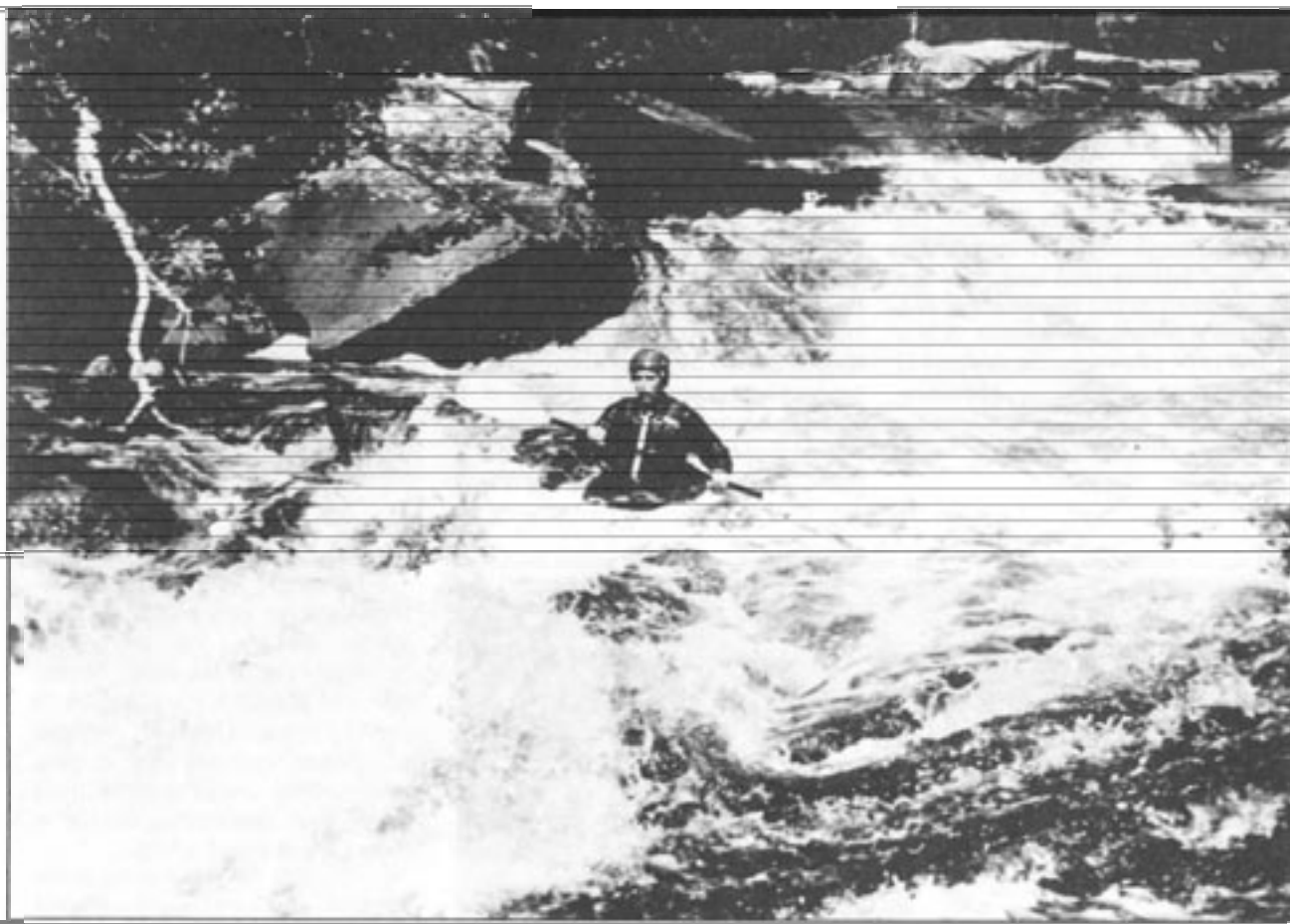


Photo series: Boater approaches and drops over a ledge of one of the easier rapids on the Nesowadnehunk. Even the simpler drops require scouting on this Maine stream.



By John Porterfield.
Photography by Scott Underhill and Joe Damboise.



Nepal in northern Maine

*"An exotic, awe-inspiring place...it's hard to believe you are in Maine...when it looks like Nepal"--
John Connelly, Greenville, Maine.*

Finding Nesowadnehunk Stream is half the fun of running it. A network of dirt logging roads owned and maintained by Great Northern Paper Company offer the general public access (for a fee) to the "Golden Road", which runs parallel to the West Branch of the Penobscot, a 21 mile run featuring everything from the Class V Cribworks to miles of deadwater. This run is reason enough to make the seven hour drive from the Boston area; Nesowadnehunk Stream, when running, is the icing on the cake for an extended weekend adventure.

Take along a copy of DeLorme's Baxter State Park Map when venturing near Mt. Katahdin; this is the most detailed map available for the region. The run starts downstream of the Nesowadnehunk Gate, and ends in the Abol Deadwater section of the West Branch of the Penobscot along the "Golden Road".

Camping is found at a number of private campsites, including Pray's at Big Eddy.

You can't get there from here

(These directions should be used with a DeLorme Map of Baxter State Park - all roads are dirt logging roads.) From the Telos Road at the Cribworks on the West Branch of the Penobscot, go past the bridge at the Cribworks, heading northwest (away from the "Golden Road") for approximately six miles (you are now near Harrington Lake).

Look to the right for Baxter State Park signs for the Nesowadnehunk Gate of Baxter State Park. Take this obscure road for approximately four miles, past Williams Pond to the Nesowadnehunk Gate. Head through the gate and cross over Nesowadnehunk Stream.

Take the first road

on the right—you are now driving parallel to the stream, heading downstream on river left. Look for the first section of whitewater—this put-in is called Flat Rock. This road continues parallel to the stream until Daicy Pond, the start of the truly continuous section.

Here, the Appalachian Trail joins stream on river left, mercifully following the stream's course for four and a half miles until the mouth at the Abol Deadwater on the West Branch of the Penobscot. The take-out is found on the West Branch of the Penobscot along the "Golden Road" in the Abol Deadwater section.

Length: 9 miles from Flat Rock to the West Branch of the Penobscot River. Time to Run: 4 hours

A Fireside Story...

One group of newcomers to Nesowadnehunk Stream found out about stream velocity and the importance of scouting the hard way. After making the necessary Appalachian Trail portages around the Toll Dam (a man-made dam full of strainers terminating in a 25-foot cascade onto a boulder pile) and a quarter-mile trudge around Little and Big Niagara (cascade after cascade after cascade) the four boat group scrambled down a steep bank below to run a steeper twenty-five foot slide.

According to their fireside account, the next "little boulder garden" contained a number of four to six foot ledge drops, interspersed with more waterslides. Horizon lines leading into bigger drops and frequent

scouting along the left bank followed, throw ropes at the ready as the drops were run one-at-a-time.

After another section of continuous bouldering down the 200-feet per mile gradient, an even tougher section called Windy Pitch followed. Scouting uncovered a kayak bow pinned in the first six foot vertical drop, with two throw ropes trailing underwater.

One group member decided to portage around the whole mess, while the other three ran the first falls and slide. Three ten-foot falls followed; unable to make a micro eddy at the brink of the first ten-footer, one paddler spun out into the torrent and dropped over the edge into a gaping hole. Flushed free, success was only momentary as the second lip boiled under his Dancer and over he went.

Luckily, the river gods had

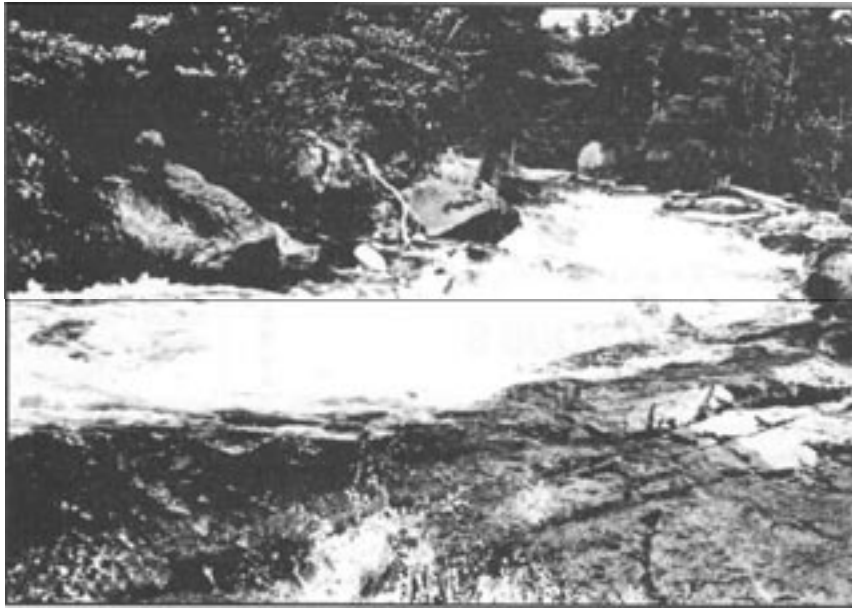
some mercy left and he flushed free, with the third fall run without incident, run just to the right "one of the deepest holes" he had ever seen.

Fireside story or not, it is important to remember that Nesowadnehunk Stream isn't a well-traveled run with a time-proven track record—it's a jumble of boulders, big ledges and

unrunnable cascades, with six to eight goad reasons to exit and portage. Bow pins are common at lower water levels, and stream flows are difficult to gauge.

It is a very remote area where the only terra firma escape is on your feet. Medical evacuation is a foreign term; outside help is hours to days away. Compound fractures splinter

friendships when they happen in areas as remote as Nesowadnehunk Stream. When in doubt, scout.



Stream Levels

Nesowadnehunk Stream can be run on chilling natural flow generally from April through May and

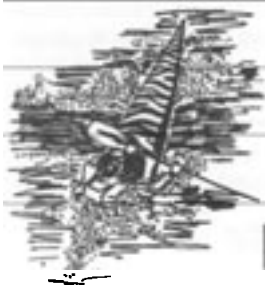
after big rainstorms. Dam releases may occur during the summer months; information concerning these releases can be obtained through the Baxter State Park authorities.

To see if there is enough (or too much) water to run, head to the run's take-out on the "Golden Road" along the Abol Deadwater. Paddle to the mouth of Nesowadnehunk Stream and check out the last waterfall drop. If there is a consistent "curtain" of water across this drop (enough to run it anywhere) then there is sufficient water for the run, with approximately 6-8 portages for mortal boaters.

If there is considerable flow, there may be less portages to make, but greater consequences to weigh.

Required Equipment

- Bug Protection (black flies, mosquitoes, noseeums, deerflies - depending on the time of year)
- DeLorme Map of Baxter State Park
- Throw Ropes
- Footwear (there are some portages)
- Strong Class IV Paddling Skills
- Common Sense (scout what you can't see)
- Guts (brass balls or brass ovaries!)
- Determination
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River Rendezvous 6 is a gathering of private and commercial boatmen in the tradition of the mountain men's rendezvous of the old west. A chance for river runners to gather, to visit with old friends, to tell tall river tales, to compete in river-related games, and to exchange information about the rivers, which are the main focus of the rendezvous.

The entire event is dedicated to river conservation, with any proceeds being donated to river conservation groups. The majestic mountain box canyon at Telluride, during the fall color season, gives the Rendezvous a setting in which the mountain men of old would feel at home.

On Friday, Oct. 7, 1988, a Wilderness Emergency Skills outdoor seminar will be presented by Jim Bergstrom of Rescue 3. Friday evening will feature films about river expeditions in Chile, Corsica and the Niagara River Gorge. Friday night's 20th Birthday party for the Wild and Scenic River Act will be complete with boat drinks, band, beer, cake and a good time to be had by all.

On Saturday, Oct. 8 a Medical Health Screening will be available for boatmen. This is a chance to talk with doctors about medical problems. The popular three-ring river circus will complete the afternoon.

Saturday evening's program will feature Richard Bangs presenting his trip to Tiger's Leap Gorge on the Yangtze in China and a rare 1956 big-water Grand Canyon Trip.

Sunday's events include a picnic and river games at the magnificent Skyline Guest Ranch. Past River Rendezvous have enjoyed chilly fall weather with the gold of the aspens reflecting off the early snow on the high peaks.

River Rendezvous 6, a fun and education gathering for river runners in Telluride, CO. will raise money for river conservation. For more information, please write River Rendezvous 6, PO Box 1838, Telluride, CO 81435.

money cont.

a percentage of the membership dues. Volunteer staffers are reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses--primarily longdistance and postage bills.

But by far and away the largest portion of the AWA budget goes to paying for professional services that our volunteers don't have either the time or expertise to provide.

There's costs for lawyers; legal fees for processing interventions; expenses for compiling photographic evidence; for conducting geologic survey work; for performing technical research; and a variety of other tasks required to mount a conservation campaign.

The AWA's conservation plan recognizes both long and short range goals. The long-range activities include:

- **Creating** the U.S. Whitewater Inventory, which will ultimately list and begin to protect any significant run, notably those that are not currently covered by Wild and Scenic status.

- **Developing** the AWA relicensing project, whereby over the next several years the AWA can influence the relicensing process on every federally-managed hydro site in the country.

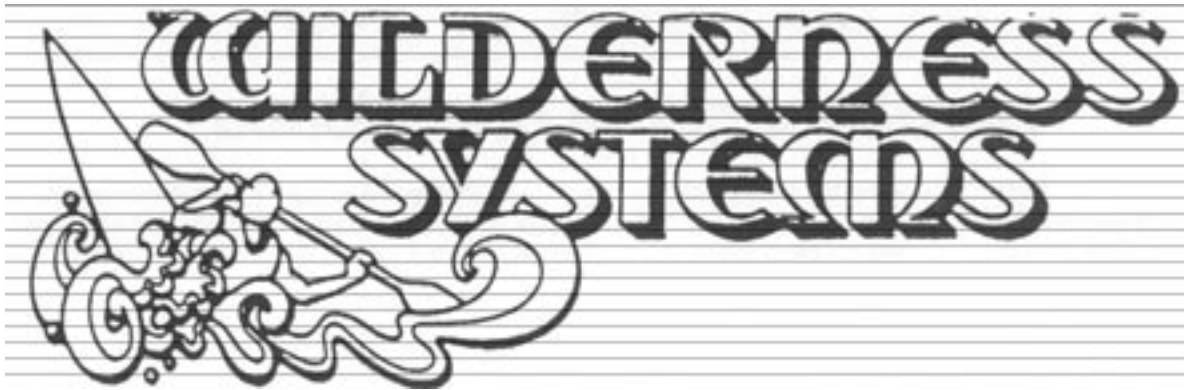
- **Managing** the River Early Warning System which alerts local citizens of impending water projects on their home streams.

Regardless of the importance of its long-term projects, the AWA **doesn't** stand by while developers ravage our rivers now. The AWA is willing to climb down in the trenches and go to battle with dam and diversion builders.

It's not always a pretty sight, AWA directors have been slandered in newspapers and subpoenaed to court, but over the years, we've learned a few tricks how to put a halt to water projects. The Conservation Currents section of **every American** Whitewater is filled with reports of AWA case histories from across the country. For example, in this issue, there are reports ranging from California to Colorado to New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Georgia.

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Lower Yough controversies continue to boil

Hardboat quota questioned

Larry Adams, Superintendent of Ohiopyle State Park in Pennsylvania, announced a new procedure for "filtering" hardboats (canoes, kayaks) onto the Lower Yough on summer weekends. The overall quota of 192 hardboats per day was met six times during the 1987 season, which resulted in some people being denied access altogether on each of those days. Paddlers then felt pressured to show up at the put-in early to avoid being skunked for the day. This has reportedly resulted in some congestion on the river in the morning hours on weekends.

Adams announced a new policy that only **30** hardboaters **will** be allowed to put-in each hour, until the daily quota of **192** is reached. Space is on a **first-come, first-served** basis with a sign-up sheet maintained by the Launch Area personnel. Only people who are suited up and ready to run the river will be permitted to sign up. No advance reservation of any kind will be permitted. In other words, you can't show up at **9:00** a.m. and "reserve" a place for **11:00** a.m.

This new restriction has been met with considerable dismay in the paddling community. The pressure to show up early

still exists because the overall daily quota of 192 has not been raised. It would seem that the new policy will result in considerable milling around, congestion, and ill-feeling at the put-in. On a busy **week-end** day, a paddler ready and suited up at **10:00** a.m. may have to wait until **2:00** p.m. to put on.

Adams also emphasized that the existing prohibition on loop-only traffic prior to **3:00** p.m. "will be strictly enforced."

Ray Yutzy of the Three Rivers Paddling Club of Pittsburgh has taken the lead on Lower Yough access issues and has expressed paddlers' concerns about these problems at Ohiopyle to Adams.

Yutzy has made two concrete suggestions to Adams which make a lot of sense. First, Yutzy a "late paddler" option to allow hardboaters on the entire river after **3:00** even if the quota of 192 had been reached for that day. The original study which served as the foundation for establishing the quota of 192 was based on river capacity during the peak midday hours. Late in the afternoon, raft traffic falls off dramatically and there is no valid traffic reason to keep private paddlers off at that time.

Paddlers over the quota could be issued different color bus passes (for the park approved take-out shuttle) and be limited to putting on **after 3:00**. They would also be limited to buses leaving Bruner Run after some given hour, like **6:00** p.m.

Second, Yutzy urges Adams to allow early morning loop runs, i.e., before **9:00** a.m. Again, very early in the day, traffic is

light and there is no valid traffic reason to close the Loop to private paddlers, such as those who want to do a fast run and leave for home early.

Those who wish to support these proposals, or who wish to make other proposals, should **write** to Larry Adams, Superintendent, Ohiopyle State Park, Box 105, Ohiopyle, PA 15470.

Yough Lake hydro proposed altered flows

Early this year, the hydropower developer at Yough Lake Dam in Pennsylvania had initially proposed plans to construct the project over the summer, and pump only 125 CFS over the dam. This would have devastated whitewater recreation on the Lower Youghiogheny River which annually accommodates over 100,000 rafters, canoeists and kayakers.

Under heavy pressure, the developer backed off, step by step, until he has now **abandoned** plans to construct his project this summer. He plans to install the project next winter.

Paddlers owe a debt of gratitude to the Pennsylvania Department of Environ-

mental Resources, Congressman Austin Murphy and Larry Adams, Superintendent of Ohiopyle State Park. Pennsylvania state officials held firm in their insistence of a minimum flow of 650 CFS on the Lower Yough. To give credit where credit is due, the Army Corps of Engineers and FERC also helped rein in the renegade hydromaniac.

The fact that the hydro developer has been so difficult to deal with is not good news for the future. After the project is built, he may try to alter river flows in a manner unfavorable to paddling.

Rock Creek decision could set important precedent

The right to remove water from western streams and rivers has been an emotional issue since the settling of the west. (According to Mark Twain, whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting). As a result, western states developed a system of water rights that places the use of water under the control of the states. An important, but by no means paramount, concern of state water law is to protect the beneficial uses (fisheries, wildlife, recreation) of the stream.

In 1920, Congress

placed the authority to license hydroelectric power plants in the hands of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Since that time hydroelectric developers have generally gained dam operation approval under both state and federal law.

However, in recent years some hydro-developers have challenged the authority of a state to issue water rights prescriptions that differ from those issued by FERC. The Commission, which has always argued that its actions took precedence

over state authority, supported that assertion.

As a result in 1987, the State of California brought an action in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals defending the legality of the dual/federal hydroelectric permitting roles.

Because of the importance of preserving state authority in these matters, American Whitewater Affiliation, Friends of the River, American Rivers, the National Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club and the Environmental Policy

Institute filed an amicus curiae brief this spring supporting the State of California.

We are optimistic that we'll win. The dam is on Rock Creek (tributary to the South Fork American River). Like the Sayles Flat Project, the dam developers chose to build the dam after receiving a FERC license but without seeking to obtain a state water right.

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Park status for Arkansas?...cont.

outnumbered.

The Parks Division staffers chaired all the meetings, allowing the committee to make changes in their draft plan but constantly pushing for approval. They often hustled the process like auctioneers, saying, for example, "A limit of 400 boats on segment C, going once, going twice..." They kept telling the committee it was doing a "great job" as it passed more and more restrictions.

The result was an orgy of over-regulation. Under the plan, the Arkansas would have more regulations than any other river in the country, or perhaps in the world. Even on the river segments that run right beside the area's main highway, where semi-trailer trucks roar by day and night, the number of noncommercial boats would be restricted, as would the times of day

they could be on the water. Noncommercial boaters would also have to buy permits and display identification numbers visible from shore to aid in enforcement of the restrictions. Rangers would count boaters from shore, and would patrol the river to prevent people from putting in except as allowed. **Noncommercial** boaters would have to apply for limited numbers of permits to run popular stretches, although fishermen and hikers would be allowed on the same stretches with no limits.

Meanwhile, the plan calls for increased commercial rafting on all segments of the river. At existing public access points, the Division would spend taxpayer money to build additional facilities designed primarily to handle commercial raft traffic (parking lots, launching ramps, large restrooms, etc.) Outfitters would have to help pay for these facilities whether they used them or not, which would dry up the present incentives for more outfitters to use private land. Noncommercial rafters and kayakers would also have to help pay for these facilities, whether they used them or not. The plan would not create new public access points that would be of interest to noncommercial boaters, but rather would focus on serving commercial raft traffic.

Neither would the plan serve in any way to protect the Arkansas from proposed dams. On the contrary, the Division is openly in favor of damming the river, and appointed representatives of three different organizations interested in damming it to the "Advisory Committee." The committee specifically voted down a proposal by river runners to add a sentence to the plan about "working to maintain a free-flowing Arkansas River." The stretch most likely to be dammed is the one upstream from Buena Vista—the best stretch for experienced kayakers, and the only stretch where other recreationists do not have "priority" in the Division's plans.

Tuolumne access contested...cont.

the new plan, and the inclusion of all single-day hard boaters under a 90 person per day limit which can be entirely filled by advance reservations.

AWA argued that hard boaters not accompanying a raft trip are **low-impact** visitors not requiring extensive regulation and advance reservations. Hard boaters at the Tuolumne do not camp overnight, carry large amounts of gear and supplies, or congest the launch site for **long periods of time** while unloading trucks full of pumps, oars, ropes, etc.

The appeal emphasized **AWA's** continuing opposition to river congestion and support for preservation of the river environment but questioned the need for extensive regulation of casual hard boat usage at the Tuolumne.

Although some hard boaters travel long distances to get to the Tuolumne and would prefer to make advance reservations, **AWA** pointed out that others are on a spur-of-the-moment trip. The management plan permits advance reservations for all public use slots. This could entirely eliminate casual trips to the Tuolumne except at undesirable times.

AWA asked the Forest Service to modify the Management Plan to establish separate categories for hard boat use and raft use and to permit hard boaters without **reservations** to pick up a permit for single day trips on the way to the launch even if the 90 **person/day** limit is reached by reservation holders. The appeal suggested that numerical limits could be placed on casual **non-reservation** hard boat usage in the future if that kind of usage is shown by any data or observations to have reached a level which causes adverse effects.

AWA also protested the lack of notice to noncommercial users of management plan changes and requested that noncommercial visitors be notified of changes in the management plan through direct mailings to persons who obtained permits within the preceding 3 years.

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Salmon cont.

line the banks literally shoulder to shoulder while attempting to hook on to one of the big fish from which the river takes its name.

It is a bizarre scene. An army of fishermen pack the shoreline, casting and retrieving, casting and retrieving. Suddenly, the pole of one fortunate angler will bend nearly double as a fish hits (or is snagged).

Proper angling etiquette calls for the fisherman to holler, "Fish on!" and the surrounding sportsmen to clear a space for the battle to be waged. A salmon is an amazingly strong fish, and often the angler will be dragged downstream or out in the river as the fish makes a run.

In many cases, fishermen and whitewater boaters would be allies in preserving the free-flowing nature of a river and protecting its quality of water. But on the Salmon, boaters and fishermen are pairing off to battle over the level of future releases.

The fishing interests, represented by the state Department of Environmental Conservation, hope to eliminate the fluctuation of water level. The surging of the river, the DEC claims, tends to "strand" fish in small pools and also washes to "microfauna" (a scientific name for natural fish-food), off the rocks. In addition, the fisherman claim there is a safety factor to consider. Nearly every year, fishermen are caught in the rising water of the release and drowned.

Aside from the personal tragedies involved with the drowning—the accidents create considerable liability problems for Ni-Mo. The utility has blanketed the entire area with hundreds of warning signs, citing the presence of fast-rising water and releases are accompanied with a siren. Still, fishermen either ignore the warnings or are caught in "a fish-induced trance" and are oblivious to the obvious threat of danger. Due to past litigation, Ni-Mo now starts its release at midnight so that the levels have risen on all sections of the river by daybreak.

The DEC would prefer Ni-Mo to instead release a constant flow of 250 CFS until what time its upstream reservoir is drained down. Unfortunately for whitewater boaters, 250 CFS is inadequate for boating.

The Jersey Paddler

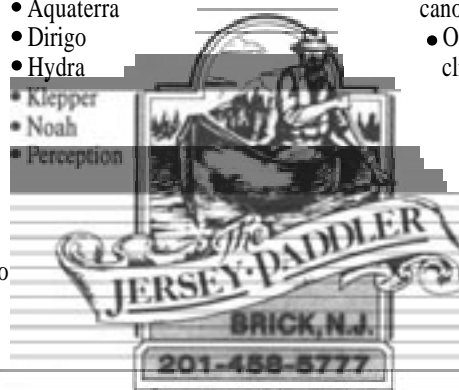
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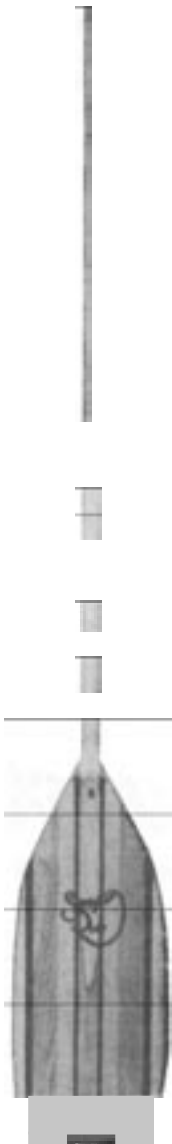
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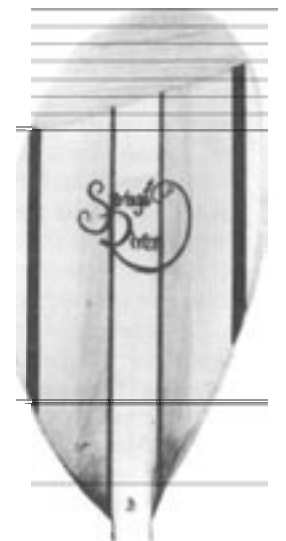
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Paddlers have an unusual ally in battling this proposal. Normally, boaters find themselves fighting to prevent a utility from destroying a section of whitewater with a dam, but in this case, Ni-Mo is lobbying for the surges that make the whitewater possible.

The utility has its own self-interest in mind, of course. Ni-Mo stands to make more money if it can utilize the water by generating during peak hours. But water politics make strange bedfellows, and on the Salmon, whitewater paddlers are snuggling up to the utility.

Dries cont.

through sandstone that was 99.4% silica using compressed air jackhammers that were operated "dry" in an attempt to speed up the work. Laborers on the project were paid as little as twenty-five cents an hour. So much white silica dust was created that the workers could not see ten feet in front of them and by the winter of 1931 rumors were already circulating through Fayette County regarding the untoward number of deaths.

Many of the 2000 employees had been recruited from throughout the south and three-fourths of them were black. The project was completed during the bleakest days of the Great Depression.

The tunnel was built by the Rinehart and Dennis Company of Charlottesville, Virginia for the New-Kanawha Power Company, a Union Carbide subsidiary. The chief of the West Virginia Department of Mines inspected the tunnel in the spring of 1932. He suggested that improved ventilation and respirators would protect the health and lives of the workers from the ravages of the silica dust.

Company doctors responded by saying that the workers had "tunnel pneumonia" and the suggestions were ignored.

Between the summer of 1932 and the following year 300 silicosis lawsuits were filed. The first resulted in a hung jury when the chief of the



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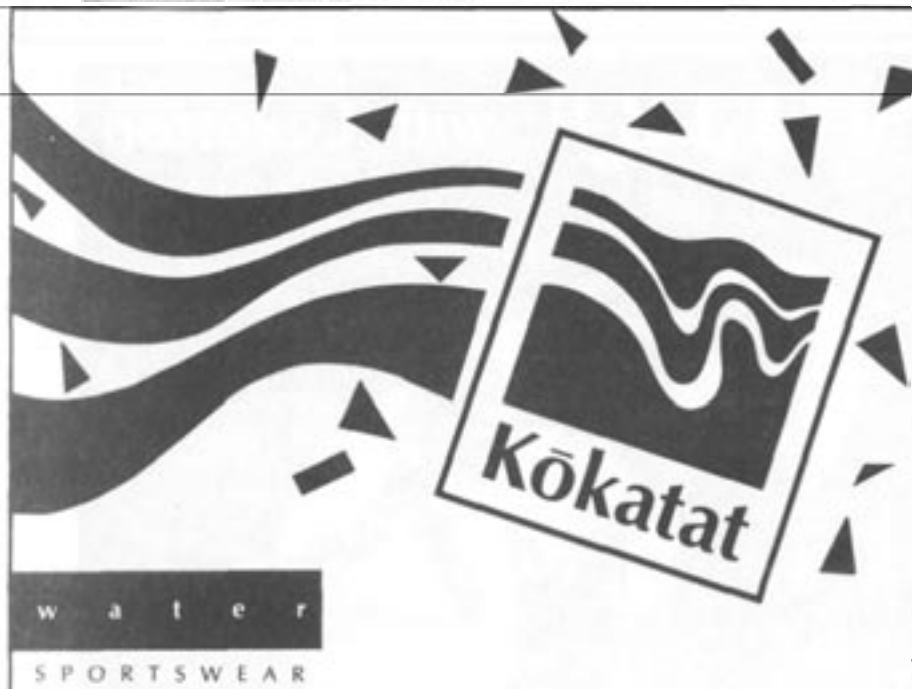
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Department of Mines testified that he had been misinformed regarding the unhealthy conditions in the tunnel during his 1931 inspection and that he had orally withdrawn his recommendations after conferring with Rinehart and Dennis officials.

Rinehart and Dennis settled these cases for \$130,000; just \$430 per plaintiff after legal fees were paid. An additional 200 cases filed later were settled under the same terms after the West Virginia Supreme Court ruled that the one year statute of limitations for personal injury actions dated from the last date of employment for each plaintiff.

As part of this settlement the plaintiffs turned over all evidence to Rinehart and Dennis. Additional attempts to investigate this incident were repressed for years. The tragic story resurfaced recently in a June, 1985 article by Paul Brodeur in the New Yorker.

Since the Dries can be run infrequently, it ranks high on many Eastern boaters' hit list. Small wonder. The canyon of the Dries is wild and spectacular on the grandest of scales.

At low levels, 4.5 - 6 feet on the Fayette Station gauge, many of the gigantic boulders are exposed, creating a moderately technical descent. Some of the rocks are dangerously undercut. At moderate levels, 6-9 feet, large hydraulics and wave trains characterize the run. At levels greater than 9 feet the river is exceptionally powerful requiring expert boating skills.

Those challenging the Dries soon learn to expect the unexpected. At any level boaters should keep an eye out for exasperated serpents who have been flushed from their dens by the unexpected torrent of water.

But more than that can be learned from the Dries experience. Like serpents, bureaucrats, administrators and politicians were once driven to a frenzy by the sound and fury of free flowing water on the New. The consequences were most unfortunate.

Whitewater boaters would do well to contemplate this harrowing tale of corporate irresponsibility and wanton disregard for human life and the environment when the Dries is wet enough to paddle.

U. Yough cont.

may develop between fishing groups and whitewater boaters over the issue of flows. Early signs indicate that the Upper Yough may be one of these situations.

On the nearby Savage River, for example, fishing groups are still conducting a continuing rear guard action against whitewater releases for the 1989 World Championships. One State fish biologist was quoted as opposing any pulsing of flows at any dam where there was a fishery downstream.

Pulsing of flows (raising the flows to high levels for certain periods of time) is what makes whitewater possible on rivers like the Upper Yough, the Savage, and the Gauley. Some fishing groups oppose pulsed flows on the theory that fish habitat can be damaged or that the temperature changes associated with high flows from the top or bottom of a lake can injure, or even kill, certain species of fish.

This may be true in rare situations, but in other cases good fisheries can coexist with good whitewater just as they do on streams with natural flows.

The releases at the Penn Elec Project also affect the water levels at Deep Creek Lake, a popular resort where water skiers and motor boat enthusiasts worry about maintaining lake levels within a few inches of the top of their docks. The Deep Creek Lake property owners association will be a critical player in the relicensing of the project.

It is too early to tell whether their interests will be compatible with improved flows for whitewater or not. Only one thing is certain. As with anything involving the Upper Yough, relicensing of the Penn Elec Project is sure to be a contentious battle.

Second Chance for Rivers

by Pope Barrow

with river features by George Mower (the New), Ron Burke (the Upper Yough) and Chris Koll (the Salmon).

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"perfect" cont.

we're going to put on by nine, we've got to leave tonight.

Our laid-back paddling trip suddenly erupted into a frenzy of activity. I ran off to tie down boats and collect food and gear and alert Joe Goff. Claude went to find his equipment. Mykl disappeared in search of a six-pack ring.

The morning dawned clear and cool—a reminder that spring arrives late in the mountains of Canada. We had slept in our vehicles at the takeout—a dead-end of a dirt road deep within the Laurentides Provincial Park. After a 45 minute drive back to the paved surface of Route 175, we stopped for a quick breakfast.

Mykl had reservations concerned about Joe. He had handled the Tewksbury section easily enough, and he had logged previous experience on the Upper Yough and Gauley, but Mykl acidly observed "he was a floater—not a boater. He's not real aggressive"

"I talked to him earlier," Mykl said over his eggs, "and he told me that he'll roll a lot, but he'll hang in there. What you have to realize is, on some rivers, you don't even want to flip. There's no time to roll."

Mykl just shook his head. "I don't need this extra anxiety. I'm nervous enough for myself."

After breakfast, we sped north up Route 175. The road rose steadily. On both sides of the pavement paraded a constant procession of lakes, creeks and rivers. Each body of water was marked by a sign that also listed the elevation. We had climbed 1,500 feet from the put-in.

I remembered Messer's observation: "Quebec is half water...it's because of the soil. It's so sandy, it just sucks up water. Nothing runs off. You can tell when you take a piss—it soaks right in."

Finally, we turned off the pavement, still climbing, up a dirt road marked Jumeaux. We drove slowly over the rutted surface, catching glimpses of mountain lakes through the trees. After five miles, the road flattened out and here, at the top of the world, lay the river.

We parked beside a small

pond that fed into the Taureau, changing quickly into our dry suits against the chill. I elected to paddle my higher volume Sabre, slid down the sandy bank into the pond, then paddled through a corrugated steel culvert under the road and into the river. Claude followed close behind.

"What a way to start the trip," Claude said, looking back at the pipe. "For years I am dreaming of doing the Taureau, and now I am here." He was all of 20 years old. Looking downstream, I wondered when it was in my paddling career that youthful exuberance faded into the caution and self-doubt of middle age.

According to the guide, we could expect easy water for the opening three kilometers. We covered the distance quickly, pressing to make time. Gradually, the gradient began to increase and the rapids quickened to easy class threes. We slowed before each little drop, expecting the look over the edge and see the world fall away before us.

Then came a rapid that didn't stop. It started like the other easy threes and we plunged forward, but the intensity climbed a grade as the river rounded a bend. Here we go, I thought, sitting a little straighter in my boat.

Suddenly, one boat ahead, I saw Joe flip. As I struggled to catch up with him, watching him attempt several rolls, I was conscious of the ruins of an old swinging rope bridge pass overhead. The alarms went off in my head. That first bridge was mentioned in the book—there's a waterfall just ahead.

Joe was out of his boat now. Mykl was trying to help him to shore. The horizon line appeared along with the other portents of disaster: a cloud of spray and the roar of tumbling water. Somehow, Joe braced his legs beneath himself in four feet of swift-flowing current a boat length's away from the lip. His kayak vanished below.

Joe stood rooted to the spot for several minutes as we bounced several throw ropes off his hands. He was clearly shaken. Finally, he caught a line and the three of us hauled him in hand-over-hand. He planed across the water.

We quickly inspected the 10-foot cascade and then ran the drop to where Joe's kayak was pinned 100-yards downstream. The boat was easily retrieved, but Joe needed little persuasion



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The Eternal Juggling Act



sion from us—he was **walking** out back to the cars.

Now we were down to three. And the trip had just begun...

The past couple of years, I've noticed a change in my attitude: sometimes on difficult rivers, runs that threaten to exceed the upper end of my ability, my mind stops and asks itself, "What the hell are you doing here?"

In those situations my elbows seem to fuse to my ribcage...I don't get after my stroking...and consequently I sometimes find myself in trouble.

After Joe's hasty departure, I caught myself slipping into one of those moods. The rapids came faster **now**, a class IV drop every fifty yards or so. Nothing real tough—the drops were steep and blind, but not exceptionally technical. The river carved its way into the earth, slicing a deep trench with steep walls. The water ran deep and swift in the narrow sluice. There were few moves to make. We simply held our breaths and punched forward.

Still, I felt out of sync. Tight. Or maybe a touch intimidated.

My trepidation was heightened when we eddied on the right above a precipice where the water

dropped out of sight. Mykl reached inside the latex neck seal of his dry-top and fumbled about before extracting his **hand-copied** map, protected in a zip-loc bag.

"I think this is the first mandatory carry," Mykl said. "We better

We scrambled up the steep bank, clawing through the thick vegetation. Before us, the river constricted to fifteen feet, then plunged an abrupt 30 feet. Clouds of spray billowed from the base of the falls where the water smashed against large boulders. We didn't take a second look before turning back for the boats. We would be carrying.

I heroically attempted to carry my kayak for all of 10 yards before I thought, "Screw it," and dragged the boat by the grab loop the rest of the way. There were no portage trails on le Taureau. Every step was an effort through undergrowth and over uneven rocks. By the end of the portage I was huffing and puffing with exertion.

At the bottom of the falls was a small pool followed by a five-foot slide through a narrow chute. Back in my boat, I drifted casually down the slide. **Chunk!** The nose of my Sabre

wedged into an underwater crevice. My feet drove against the foam braces as the kayak abruptly halted. **Pitoned!**

Water pillowed against my back and over my head. I could breathe easy enough—the water spilled around my head creating a pocket of air. Still, holding my paddle, I pushed up against the cockpit ring. Yes, I could exit if I had to—but there was still the matter of my \$400 camera sitting unsecured on my lap in its **drybag**. I settled in and tried to rock the boat free.

I might have been more concerned if I had viewed the incident from **Mykl's** perspective.

"I went by this mound of water, and then I saw just a paddle sticking out. There was no sign of you," Mykl related. "My first thought was, the clock's running...we have five minutes."

I rocked the boat once, twice, then three times before the kayak finally shot free. I struggled to reach an easy eddy at the bottom of the chute. I was suddenly exhausted. My breaths came in quick gasps. As I sat there, my boat drifted downstream, pinning again between a pair of rocks near the edge of the river.

This time Claude came to res-

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cue. I was too tired to lift my boat off the boulders. Claude easily pried up one end and I scraped into the still water below.

Mykl appeared immediately.

"Are you okay?" His tone and eyes were solicitous. But I could read his mind. He was really thinking—"are you sure...?"

"I'm alright," I said, and I meant it. The river had given me just what I needed—a swift **kick** in the ass. It was time to stop floating and start boating.

"Well, okay," Mykl said with a smile. "But that's your quota of pins for the day—no more."

How do you describe a semi-nal boating experience: the bright sun in a cloudless blue sky, the air clean and fresh with a hint of fragrance from the surrounding spruce forest, the sparkling water—brown with tannic **acid**—yet as clear as slightly tinted **glass** or the river—never still—spilling, falling, dropping over countless 10-foot ledges; tumbling back upon itself in foamy hydraulics; flushing down steep slides through narrow constrictions.

Running a river like le **Tau**-reau, you slip into a certain **mindset**. Rapids you would normally stop and examine with due consideration became commonplace. Mykl or Claude usually would drift up to the edge of a drop, and if they could see the bottom, would look back and shout "Looks like you can do it on the **left**" or "The right looks okay." And down we would go.

Sometimes the bottom that was visible ended up as only a 10-foot eddy with the rapid continuing unabated down out of our line of sight or a dangerous cascade. But we were all boating well—we would make the "must eddies," hop out of the **boats** and take a look.

The only signs of civilization were the long-abandoned swinging foot bridges that spanned the gorge. There were five of them and they served as our reference marks. Mykl's map would warn of a perilous waterfall a **kilometer** past a bridge and we'd jump out and look, then run or carry, although we ended up portaging a few times—a total of six drops.

The action never ceased. There were no pools, no calm stretches to pause to stretch back and admire the

beauty of the canyon or reflect on the intensity of the river. Every fifty yards there appeared another rapid—always a class IV, class V or class VI.

It was around midday—I blasted through a hole that **backen**-dered my Sabre. While still erect, I pirouetted the boat 90 degrees to avoid a pinning rock, then "**boofed**" over a five-foot ledge to **join** Mykl and Claude in the eddy below. Suddenly, I realized that I might never boat a better river...that I might never be the paddler to boat a better river.

Jesus. A middle-aged river crisis: it's all downhill from here.

We ate lunch perched on a huge boulder beneath the fifth swinging bridge. To the right, the river plunged over a 30-foot cascade into a cauldron of foam. We stripped down to our polypro in the bright sun. For the first time all day, we had the opportunity to talk about the run.

"The rapids remind me of Triple Drop on the Upper **Yough**—except they're longer and steeper," I said.

"Except that there's more water here," Mykl said. "The rapids are actually as big and pushy as anything on the Russell Fork...but there's only five real drops on the Russell Fork. Here, you have a Russell Fork rapid every fifty yards for 10 miles.

What's amazing is the river can have this gradient and so much is still **runnable**," Mykl continued. "It's more open than the Upper—there aren't the huge boulders and the little slots you have there. And most of the holes don't seem to want to hold you—that has kind of surprised me."

"Maybe at a different level," I said. "We seem to have hit it at the perfect level."

Perfect. There was that word again. Would paddling ever get better than this?

After the break, Mykl and I were both stiff and more tired for the rest. Only Claude showed the boundless energy of the young.

"I knew this would happen," Mykl said. "If we didn't need to eat, I wouldn't have wanted to stop."

It was not the time to be weary. The rapids showed no sign of diminishing in fury. We continued to primarily boatscout—a practice that led

us into the day's fiercest rapid without preliminary warning.

Mykl disappeared over a horizon line. Claude and I followed, like ducks, expecting to rejoin him 100 yards downstream. But instead of the anticipated eddy, the rapid increased in gradient and continued around a bend. There was no stopping now: the river sloped at 25 degrees, sluicing between sheer rock walls, dropped over a six-foot ledge, funneled through a narrow slot, pillowed up against a cliff face, then plummeted over a broken 15-foot cascade.

We collected ourselves a full half-mile below the start. I panted to Messer, "I think I'm ready for the beer."

Although two miles of class IV-V and one carry remained, the river again never matched that fury. I was not disappointed. As I dragged the boat around the final obstruction, I noticed Mykl was also drooping noticeably. Only Claude retained a spring to his step and I cursed him for it.

"You young pup, hell, when I was 20, I would have carried all the boats...at the same time...and I would have sprinted the whole portage."

Claude simply smiled.

"This is great," Claude said. "I

wish I did not work so I could kayak le Taureau every day."

I shook my head and cursed again. At myself this time...cursed the fact that I didn't think like that anymore.

The river taunted us. We knew the run's final seven kilometers were only class II water and we entered every calm stretch expecting the end to be in sight. But just as we would be lulled into complacency, the J.C. would throw another class 4 at us.

Finally, we rounded a bend to find: la Vallee. The river stretched straight out before us as far as the eye could see. On both banks, sheer mountain walls rose 1,500 feet above the level of the river. The sun had dropped below the top of the peaks and the base of the valley was cloaked in shadow but the uppermost cliff faces still glowed red with the light of the failing day.

We wearily paddled down the la Vallee section of the J.C., bumping over easy ledges. For the first time all day, the river was overshadowed by the magnificence of the surrounding scenery. Far above our heads, small tributaries spilled off the bordering plateaus, tumbling over rock terraces,

freefalling 500 feet in their descent to the valley floor.

A camp appeared on the left. Our vehicles were just beyond. We had been on the river just eight hours—including our lunch stop and the rescue of Joe—the quickest descent Mykl was aware of. If that is the case, it was not a record I'm proud of. Claude was right—le Taureau is a river to spend days on.

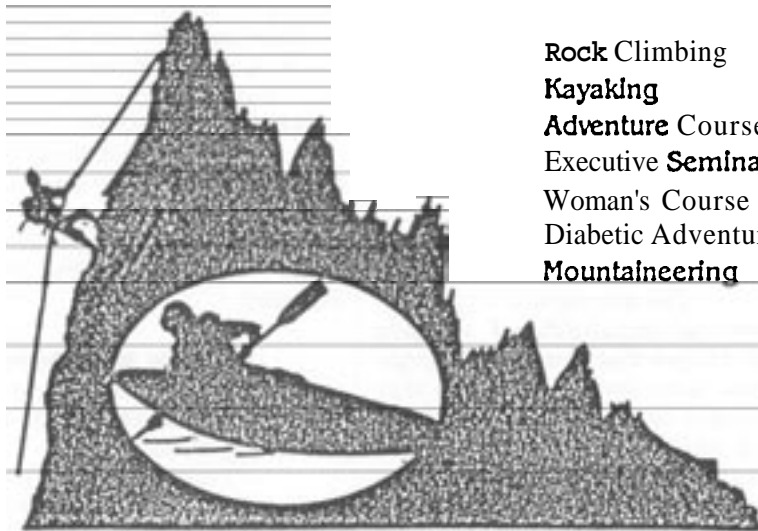
I have my own copy of Guide des **Rivieres Sportives** au Quebec now. I can't read a damn word of it, of course, but Mykl was right: the pictures, maps and charts are enough. I look through it often.

There are dozens of class 5 runs described. Some of them appear as frantic as le Taureau. I start thinking...maybe I'm not washed up, yet...maybe there's still better days to be had, up in Quebec.

And I finally got around to cleaning out the debris of the trip from the back of my truck—two months after the fact. At the bottom of a drybag, I found a plastic six-pack ring.

I think I'll keep for next year.

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Do you have a bad attitude?

I've got this **low-**float slab vest I persist in wearing. I had it for over a year before somebody observed that it looked rather unsubstantial and inquired about its **floatation** rating.

Checking the label inside the lining, my eyes were drawn to the warning, "This is a buoyancy aid—this is not a life jacket." The vest boasted all of 12 pounds of floatation.

Now, I'd like to report that in the interest of my personal safety, I **stripped off** that inadequate PFD, never to pull it over my head again. But that's not the case. I still wear it all the time. It's comfortable, it looks great, and more importantly, it's a sign of good attitude as opposed to bad attitude.

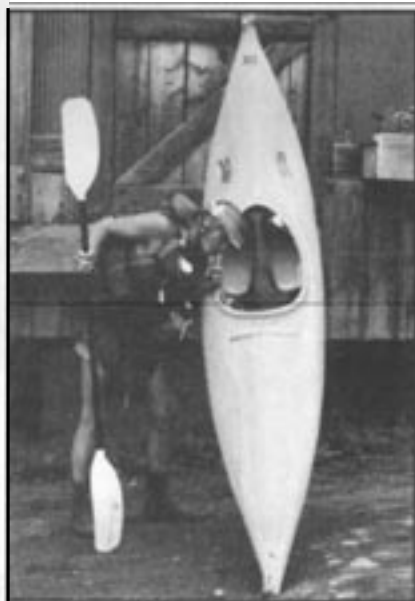
Like whitewater boaters everywhere in the country, we're conscious of image up here in New York. Regardless of your **skill** level, no one wants to appear like a geek. So during one spring's interminable paddle out of the Hudson Gorge's final four miles of flatwater, we compiled the following indicators of bad attitude...just to keep ourselves straight.

•**NOSE PLUGS**--Whether they're dangling around a boater's neck or perched on the bridge of the nose, nothing defines bad attitude better than a pair of nose plugs. An open confession that the boater expects to spend significant time upsidedown, there is only one legitimate situation in which nose plugs can be worn without the serious loss of reputation: in a shuttle vehicle the morning after an evening of abusive beer consumption.

***"HIGH-WATER GOT YOU DOWN" BREATHING TUBES**--You've seen these snorkel devices composed of a tube attached to the spray **skirt** that allows a boater to breath air trapped in the boat. They're normally marketed by small ads in the back pages of magazines--kind of like a solicitation in the classified personal section. That's appropriate--there's a definite pornographic overtone to the device.

***TENNIS BALL NOSE**

CAPS--You've just thrown down a grand for a **needle-nosed** squirt boat all duded up with a metal-flake deck. Naturally, your first move after you take it home is to wrap a tennis ball to the nose using 10 feet of gray duct tape. Why? A new squirt **move--once** you execute a bow pivot, the boat can pogo down the river **bed**.



Bad attitude! "Now *where'd I* put the *face guard* for *my helmet*?"

However, attaching a tennis ball to anything other than a squirt boat indicates the boater expects to slam nose-first into boulders. A definite mark of bad attitude.

•**FLOATATION BAGS**--Every boater has a set of float bags **kicking** around somewhere. You buy your first boat, and naturally you pick up a pair of bags to go with it. But then you purchase your second, third and fourth boats--and somehow you never get around to transferring those bags. After all, you never swim. Right?

-**COMPASS, KNIFE, WHISTLE, CARABINEERS AND ASSORTED PARAPHERNALIA HANGING FROM PFD**--A word of explanation here: all of these items have legitimate uses. A brace of biners are damn handy for a little riverside

S&M...a knife is **indispensible** when you encounter a **ringless** beer can...with rivers as crowded as they are today, a whistle is essential for directing traffic at popular play spots... the needle of a compass, once disassembled, can double as a toothpick for hors d'oeuvres.

Fortunately, the number of paddlers who insist on burdening their PFDs with every accessory known to man is rapidly dwindling--when they do come off their boats, the weight of the gear pulls them beneath the surface, never to appear again. Would-be rescuers search for their bodies using metal detectors.

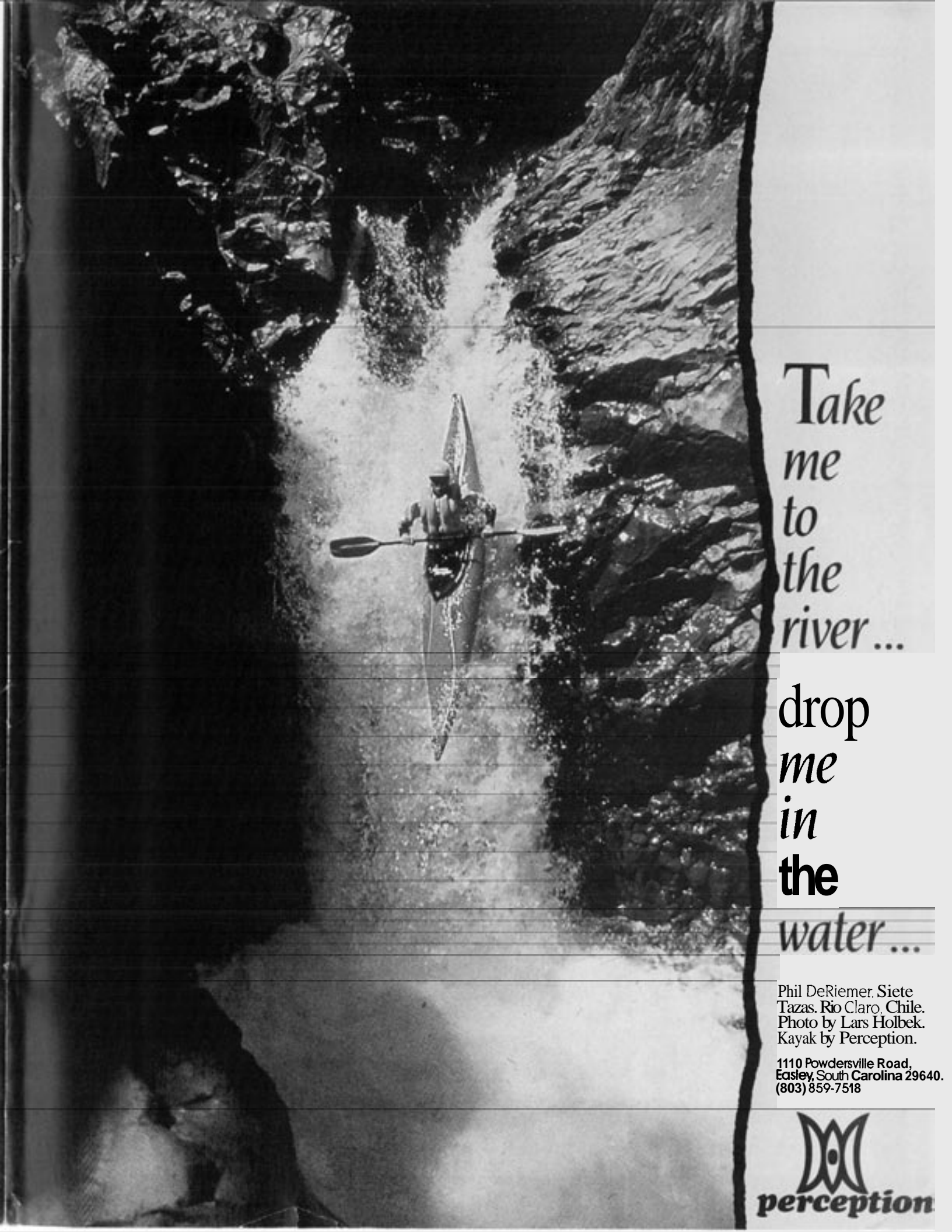
***SYNTHETIC PADDLES WITH NAME AND PHONE NUMBER PRINTED IN MAGIC MARKER**--Really...if you lost your paddle, would you want everybody to know who you were? Here's a piece of advice to beginning boaters--when you buy your first paddle, print the name **Jon Lugbill** on the blade. You'll be spared any public humiliation for losing your stick while playing a tremendous practical joke.

***RIVER MAPS TAPED TO DECK**--There's nothing wrong with carrying a guide book on the dash board of your car, just for a little extra help in finding those obscure shuttle routes, but **zip-locking** a copy of a river map into a plastic bag and taping it to the deck is a sure sign of bad attitude. "Better eddy out here, Jim, the map says there's a class **III** ahead!"

Of course, it's a sign of even worse attitude to lose a boat filled with water, watch your paddle float off never to return, drown because you couldn't free yourself from an entanglement, aimlessly wander for hours in the wilderness or drift over an unexpected waterfall.

But why be concerned about potential emergencies. Accidents only happen to people with bad attitude.

—by Gary Carlson, a whitewater personality of questionable attitude



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