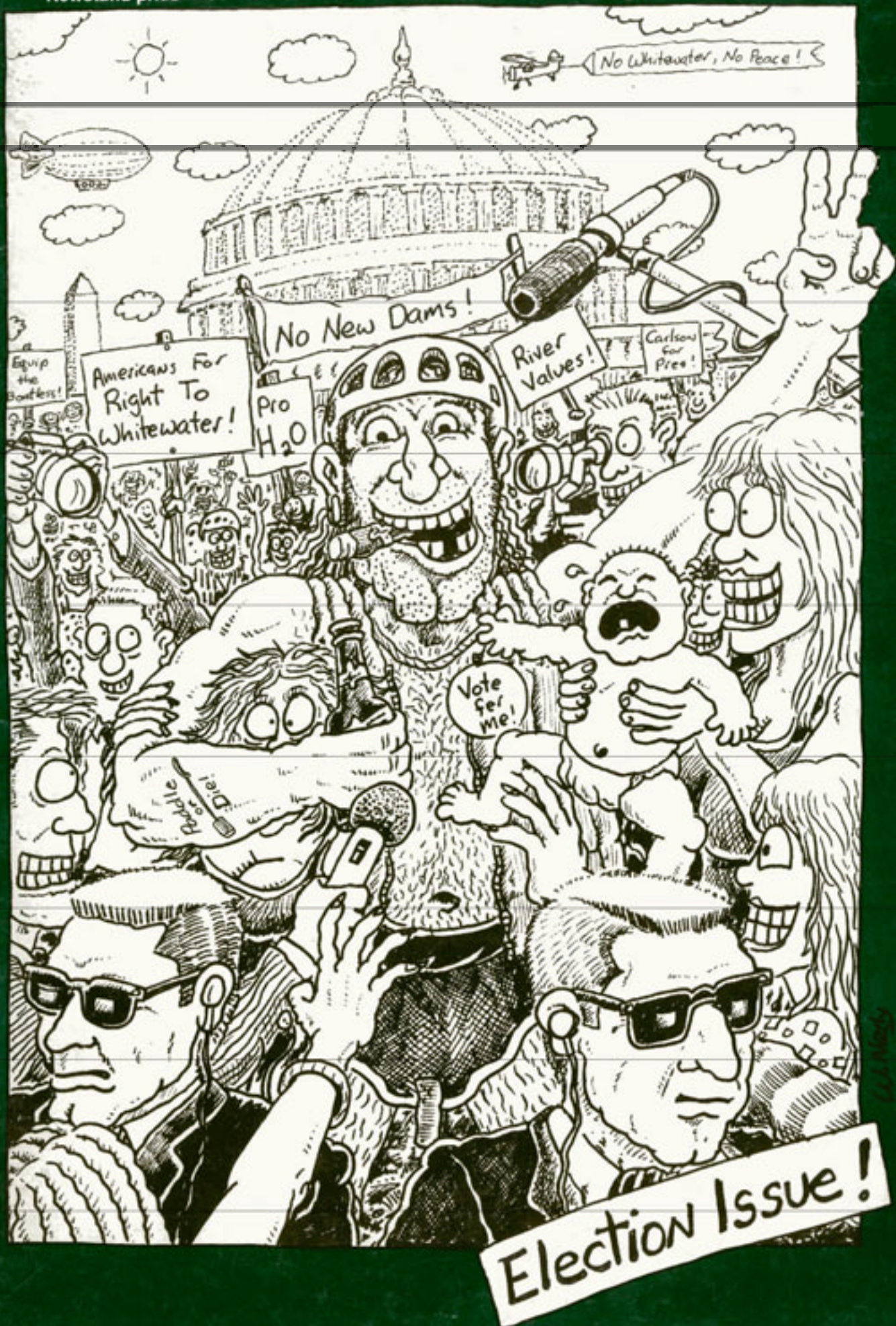


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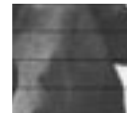
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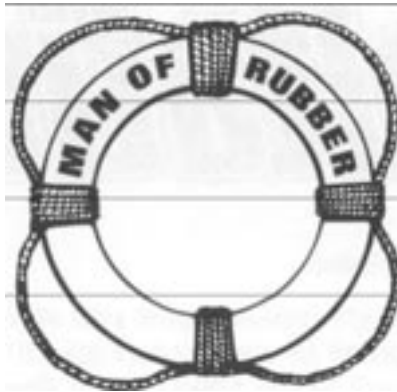




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american whitewater

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AMERICAN WHITewater
AFFILIATION

September/October 1992

Volume XXXVII, No. 5

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Option #2 is the first Big Wrangler, Bonanza or Ponderosa Steak House they pass that offers an "all-you-can-eat" buffet for under ten bucks. The kind of place where the busboys clear the tables with shovels and hoses between settings.

And the decision is...

Are you kidding? Paddlers always opt for **quantity** over **quality** when it comes to matters of taste. And with that in mind, faithful readers, you ought to be in Hog Heaven over this issue of American Whitewater.

Weighing in at 90-plus pages, this is the longest issue of the world's best semi-professional whitewater magazine on record. And with articles about boating in such diverse locations as Idaho, California, New York and Virginia as well as our annual "Top 40" river issues and summary of river accidents--I think you'll find it contains some meaty reading.

Bone appa-teet.

Speaking of quantity...this issue also doubles as our annual Gauley Festival souvenir edition--and the Festival continues to grow by leaps and bounds.

Our new location at the Nicholas County Memorial Park in Summersville, WV has enabled our Whitewater Marketplace to develop into a major trade show exhibiting the latest advances in paddling design and technology.

And our regular features--whitewater videos, great food, foot-stomping music, valuable door prizes and the silent auction with an enormous inventory of whitewater goodies--remains the same. Quite simply, the Gauley Festival is the biggest non-racing whitewater event in the world.

Hope to see you there. I'll be in the rear tent (which doubles as the silent auction).

And one final note. Perhaps you've noticed that the address of American Whitewater's official editorial office has changed again. It's now 352 Cameco Circle, Liverpool, NY 13090.

I wasn't evicted. No--it's worse. I'm getting married.

Now--I know what you're all saying..."Married? Huh! That's the last we'll see old Koll on the river."

But no...My fiance **Caron** is a boater. And a pretty good one, too!

I like to think, I haven't lost my bachelorhood...I've gained a probe.



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Missing Copies: Contact Phyllis Horowitz

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PURPOSE

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

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

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

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

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

ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES: AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

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

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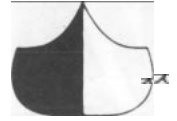


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LETTERS

More courtesy

Dear Editor,

You might remember me--I'm a person who submitted an article to American Whitewater some months ago. While I recognize your prerogative not to publish my submission, I don't understand your lack of courtesy in failing to forward even a rejection notice.

So what gives? You're always complaining about lack of material. Perhaps if you would treat your contributors with more respect, you would solve the problem.

Name Withheld Upon Request

(Editor's comment: Your criticism about our failure to acknowledge submissions is valid. The stuff I think is appropriate I usually pop in the magazine immediately. The stuff I'm not sure about gets filed--but then forget about it and eventually it gets lost.

Now, I'd like to write a thank-you note to every contributor because I do appreciate everyone's efforts. But I get about 20 odds and ends for every issue. Figuring half an hour per reply--that's an extra 10 hours of work that I'm not prepared to donate to the AWA. Remember, Bob Gedekoh and I don't get paid for serving as editors--we do this magazine at home after work. So there's a lot of things that normal publications can do that we simply don't have time or energy for.

Now as for your submission...I liked it! But it didn't really fit into our normal format of Conservation, Briefs, Safety, River Features, Big Swims or End Notes. I get a lot of articles like yours, usually in the form of "musings" or "observations" on the boating scene, and when space allows I include them in the Briefs section.

Come to think of it, there are a lot of other articles I receive that never makes the pages of the magazine. Sometimes they are feature articles that are too short to be feature articles (2000 words is usually the minimum). Or they're features without photos. Or features about rivers we've recently covered.

And finally there's humor pieces. We do receive some good humorous selections, and from time to time they supplant Gary and Carla in the End Notes section. But then I have to put up with the bitching from Garrison and Carlson.

But anyway, we really do need

Silver Creek



Photo by Juan Pablo Izquierdo

Ken Kastroff at work on the Bio Bio

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LETTERS

more feature stories. But be aware that they need to be long enough to spread over four pages and include photos. And they should also tell a story--not just serve as a trip log.

I've always felt that in any *good* story, there has to *be* a change in *perception*--the author and the readers need to experience a change in the way they understand themselves or the river. And it's the events that lead up to that changed vision that makes the story.

About Ohio Pyle

Dear Chris,

After reading your article "You Can't Go Home Again" in the July/August 1992 issue, I felt compelled to write my own unique experiences with the Lower Yough.

I started kayaking in the winter of 1991 after a mountain biking accident had left me with a badly broken foot that previous fall. I just walked into our local outfitters and bought a Perception Corsica and was ready to learn. The college which I attend, Virginia Commonwealth University, has an outdoor adventure program (OAP) which offered pool sessions during the winter months so I signed up and became hooked. That spring I took the 2-day beginner clinic and was well on my kayaking way.

After that initial clinic, the OAP made me an offer that I couldn't refuse; if I would raft guide for them on the 3-4 trips a year to the Lower Yough, they would continue to help me hone my kayaking skills on the local rivers as well as other out of state rivers, including the Lower Yough. So, after a Labor Day weekend training trip, I started to guide for the OAP. It is important to note that this program is run by a student council and is non- (or more accurately, negative) profit provided for the student body. The goal of the program is to provide an affordable way for the student body to get involved in outdoor recreation. We charge around \$48 for our Yough trip which includes transportation, camping, food, etc. and the actual rafting. Most of the guides on these trips are **unpaid** students with a couple paid school staff members to keep the insurance companies happy. It is through this program, and my first hardboat trip down the river this spring, that my disgust with the whole situation has formed.

I too fell in love with the river on my first trip down, and the water level was only 1.1'. After a raft trip at 3.6' and hardboating at 3.0', there is no other river that I would rather run at this point in my kayaking "career." The \$1.50 for the shuttle

at Bruners Run I don't mind parting with, but the \$2.50 "reservation allocation fee" is a total joke. If the fee was used "for" the river (i.e. for a study of the river's ecology and ways to protect/enhance it), it could **maybe** be justified. But, to pay that money to use something that was given to us all by nature and then be harassed constantly by the park rangers, at both the river and the campground, with the money just going to the state has to stop.

My initial reaction is to try to get the OAP to stop running trips to the Lower Yough, but this is not the answer. A lot of the people who come on our trips have never had an outdoor experience. These are the people we must start to convince of the importance of getting this blatant user fee rescinded. The small boating community recognizes the problem, but with the help of the rafting companies throughout the East, we can start to educate the general public. With a public outcry, perhaps the politicians will take notice and change will occur.

Is this idea a bit idealistic and naive? Yes, but, our other options are limited. The protests are a good idea, but they reach a small audience. Putting on after 3:00 p.m. just isn't logistically an option for the raft trips run by my school, but for our hardboat trips we can wait. I feel the AWA should put forth some sort of unified front to oppose this type of fee on all rivers, not just the Yough. The arrogance of the park rangers in Ohio Pyle and at the state campground also needs to be addressed, but my guess is if we get rid of the user fee, a large part of the ranger staff will follow!

Sincerely,
Roland Owens
Richmond, VA

Dear Chris,

I enjoyed the July/August issue of American Whitewater. (Any issue that extols the virtues of an open boater has to be good!) I particularly liked your "You Can't Go Home Again" article on the Yough. In my opinion, you handled a touchy issue very reasonably. Although you may have an emotional attachment to the river, your article seemed well presented and unemotional. I personally do not object to nominal fees for river use IF the fees are applied fairly and buy something useful for the paddler, even if continued river access.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
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L U N A T I C



AWA's "Top 40" river issues

By POPE BARROW

First, the good news. 1992 has been a year of outstanding whitewater conservation opportunities. Hydropower relicensing has been picking up steam throughout the country, but whitewater interests, for once, have been ahead of the curve, anticipating the issues. AWA has been bearing down hard on the relicensing effort. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and **it MUST be dealt with NOW!** If we are successful there **will be** some fabulous new whitewater runs to float (like the Pine in Wisconsin), and some of the old standbys (like the Deerfield) will have better flows, better recreational access, and more conservation-minded management.

All the action has not been with relicensing, however. Statewide wild and scenic campaigns reached their goal in Arkansas and Michigan and are getting started in earnest in Washington State and West Virginia. Now even Pennsylvania has a Statewide wild and scenic bill in Congress.

Federal wild and scenic no longer enjoys a monopoly in river conservation news. Other river protection ideas and techniques are also beginning to take hold in Idaho, Alabama, and elsewhere. In fact, the best opportunity ever to protect whitewater rivers arose in an unlikely context—the National Energy Act—where river advocates convinced the U.S. House of Representative to

pass an amendment allowing State's to protect their rivers from Federally licensed hydropower projects. This amendment has an excellent chance of being signed into law in October if key Senators can be convinced to go along.

The bad news is that battles with harmful hydropower development continue on the Klamath in Oregon, the North Fork of the Payette, the Falls River in Idaho, the Kern, Clavey, and Mokelumne in California, and in several other locations.

Equally as disturbing as the hydropower problems we face are the threats to river access which we are now encountering throughout the country. If there is one major theme among the top 40 whitewater issues for 1992, access is it. Our rights to enjoy free access to whitewater runs is threatened in one way or another at numerous locations, including Letchworth Gorge and the Mongaup in New York, the Youghiogeny in Pennsylvania, the Kennebec in Maine, the Upper Blackwater in West Virginia, the Mokelumne in California.

Through our regional coordinators, affiliate clubs, and through a growing network of ties with river conservation groups in various regions, AWA has been keeping close tabs on whitewater issues around the country, and throughout the world. Here are our picks for the "top 40" whitewater issues in 1992.

1. Kennebec, Maine

Issue: Access

Current Status: The Central Maine Power Company, which owns the access to the **Kennebec River**, began this summer's boating season by imposing a new fee on private boaters for access to the river. (Commercial raft companies long ago agreed to pay for their for-profit use of the river.) **Initially** the private boater fee was \$5 per day, but after several weekends of vocal and determined resistance from private boaters, the fee was reduced to \$1 per day. Private boaters are still resisting on the grounds that CMP is specifically required by its FERC license to provide free public access to the river. The battle lines were drawn when CMP threatened to arrest any boaters refusing to pay the fee on charges of "theft of services". (The "services" apparently refers to the water releases.) Boaters who refuse to sign waivers will also be charged with trespass. After receiving repeated complaints, FERC enforcement staff finally decided to investigate whether or not CMP is in violation of its license. Information: contact Tom Cristopher (508-537-4285)

2 West Branch Penobscot, Maine

Issue: Relicensing of hydropower project.

Current Status: The relicensing of a paper company hydro project which controls flows in Ripogenous Gorge has now become one of the "Flagship" relicensing cases in the nation. Groups of every ilk are involved, from the AWA to the National **Park Service**, New England Flow, the Conservation Law Foundation, and the Appalachian Mountain Club. Whitewater flows in the Gorge seem secure at the moment, and most of the groups involved are looking to achieve much more from the relicensing of this project, including flows in other whitewater reaches impacted by the project (like the Back Channel), protection of streamside lands and scenic easements on thousands of acres of forest lands owned by the paper company elsewhere in Maine. This is an ambitious effort which is already out in front of the relicensing tidal wave. Whatever happens, this case will be a landmark in the relicensing process for years to come. Information: contact Rich Bowers (301-236-0436)

3. Moxie Stream, Maine

Issue: Relicensing of hydropower project.

Current Status: Moxie has been described as the best **class IV** run in Maine. it has at least 4 **runnable class IV** rapids and an exciting take out above the 80 foot drop of Moxie Falls. The whitewater is all in a 2-mile reach of the river downstream of the dam which is normally has no **runnable** flow. Boaters are asking for 6 weeks of whitewater flows. So far the licensee is not cooperating, but FERC has ordered that a recreational study be conducted. Information: contact Rich Bowers (301-236-0436)

4. Deerfield, Massachusetts

Issue: Relicensing of hydropower project.

Current Status: After many public and private meetings and an extended period of negotiation, an agreement has been reached between **recreational/environmental** interests, led by New England Flow (a coalition of all concerned groups), and the New England Power Company. The agreement will provide for flows for recreational use and will establish a fund, which the company will pay into annually, to be used for environmental mitigation and scenic enhancement. It is expected that FERC will include this agreement in a new license to be issued to the power company for three dams on the Deerfield. Information: contact Tom Cristopher (508-537-4285)

5. Mongaup, New York

Issue: Access, flows.

Current Status: In a surprising success, Ken Fischman of



Scott Underhill photo

Bob **Dellert** surfs on the West Branch Penobscot

the Kayak and Canoe Club of New York, with a little help from others in AWA and KCCNY, has reached an agreement with FERC to require the power company to provide access and flows on the Mongaup for whitewater boating use. The first release was on June 18. There will be 8 releases this year and 15 per year in future years between April and October. So far, the levels are limited to 430 cfs. because the local Delaware River National Park Superintendent convinced the FERC that higher water levels would **produce** dangerous conditions on the Delaware. This **claim** is totally ridiculous, but FERC was convinced by some bogus "studies" cooked up by the local park service superintendent in a **clumsy** attempt to regain the support of local residents who have dislike the park service ever since they first showed up in the area. Release dates can be determined from a **hotline** 914-577-2911. Information: contact Ken **Fishman**, (212-228-5753)

6. Moose, New York.

Issue: Right of passage through canoeable segment.

Current status: A \$5,500,000 trespass action has been brought against 5 boaters who paddled a section of the South Branch of the Moose which flows through posted property owned by the Adirondack League Club. The boaters are being defended by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund. This will be a precedent-setting case. Information: contact Tom **Kligerman** (518-457-5920)

7. Youghiogheny, Pennsylvania

Issue: Access

Current Status: Like the Genessee in New York. the

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Lower Yough in Ohiopyle State Park has become a case study in over-regulation. There are astronomical fines now in place for running Ohiopyle Falls and private boaters are continuously persecuted and subjected to a humiliating tangle of fees and red tape by the State Parks authorities who seem determined to bleed every last dime - and good will - from the boating community. Things got so bad this summer that many clubs and individuals boycotted the river and several boat-ins were staged to demonstrate opposition to the new fees. The boat-ins were covered by local TV stations, but park authorities have - so far - shown no signs of easing up. Information: contact Tom Irwin (412-537-6363)

8. Gauley and New Rivers, West Virginia

Issue: Expansion of National River and Recreation Area.

Possible hydro development at Gauley Dam

Current Status: The House of Representatives held hearings and passed a bill sponsored by NICK RAHALL of West Virginia to expand the GAULEY RIVER National Recreation Area and the NEW RIVER Gorge National River by more than 12,000 acres. Most of the land, 8,819 acres, would be added to the Gauley NRA. The State park at Carnifax Ferry would also be included. Pipestem State Park would be added to the New River National River. The possibility of hydroelectric power development at the base of the Summersville Dam is still alive although any hydro plant built at that location will have to comply with very stringent terms and conditions to protect the recreational usage of the river. The put-in for private boaters, as well as for commercial boaters, may have to be moved slightly and improved and the astounding sight of water pouring forth from the tubes would disappear forever, but otherwise the river would remain the same. *Informa-*



Youthful boater surfs Swimmers Hole on Lower Yough.

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tion: contact Jim Zoia (202-226-7761).

9. Thirteen rivers in West Virginia (including the Blackwater, Williams, Cranberry, and Shavers Fork).

Issue: national wild and scenic protection.

Current Status: A coalition effort led by the West Virginia **Rivers Coalition** working hard to build a political consensus for wild and scenic designation for 13 rivers in the **fabulous** Monongahela National Forest. The coalition's mission is "to seek the conservation of West Virginia's exceptional rivers and streams". This is the first major statewide river conservation group in the eastern United States. It is modelled to some degree on an extremely effective western group, Idaho Rivers United. (Activists in new York are now also trying to replicate the idea for new York State.) The Forest Service had completed the first phase of its study. The only opposition so far has come from the State Department of Natural Resources which has adopted a hostile and antagonistic attitude. Information: contact Roger Harrison (304-472-0025)

10. James, Virginia

Issue: Possible wild and scenic designation

Current Status: The city of Richmond is considering asking the Governor of VA to designate the falls of the James as a wild and scenic river under section 2(a)(ii) of the Federal wild and scenic rivers law. This would eliminate the persistent threat of hydropower development at various sites on the James in Richmond. Information: contact Charles Ware (804-231-0118)

11. New, Virginia

Issue: Hydropower relicensing

Current Status: The **Appalachian** Power Company's Buck Dam on the New River in Virginia has a 1,700 foot bypass reach with a 76 foot drop. Whitewater boaters are asking that

water be released into this potential class IV play spot and that public recreational access be provided. Information: contact Charles Ware (804-231-0118)

12. Russell Fork, Virginia and Kentucky

Issue: Recreational flows

Current Status: In June of this year the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a Draft Environmental Assessment of proposed operational changes to **Flannagan** Reservoir. Unfortunately the recommended alternative in this document was that episodic flows for whitewater be provided at 800 cfs for 4 weekends in October. This generally will result in about 860 cfs in the Russell Fork, far short of the 1,000 -1,500 cfs that whitewater boating interests deem optimum. The official excuse given on paper was that an endangered plant, Virginia Spirea, which grows on the banks in several locations, would get wet and be damaged if flows were in the 1,500 cfs range. The real reason, however, was that misguided pinheads in the Annapolis, Md., office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office decided that they liked 300 cfs because, at that level, the river is easier for fishermen to wade in an attack fish with vengeance. They have been hammering on the Corps not to allow whitewater flows, which are clearly not "wadeable" for fishermen, on any weekends. Information: contact James Stapelton (606-754-9779)

13. French Broad, North Carolina

Issue: Flood Control

Current Status: Flood control dams have been proposed on the North, West, and East Forks of the French Broad River in Transylvania County. Studies are now underway. The projects would destroy whitewater runs and trout fisheries. Information: contact: David Whitmire (704-966-9257)


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Terry Peterson photo

Brian Holmberg at Russell Fork's El Horrendo

14. Tallulah, Georgia

Issue: Hydropower relicensing

Current Status: The Tallulah Canyon below the Georgia Power Company's Tallulah Falls Power Project is an incredible place. Before the project was built, it was the most popular scenic attraction in north Georgia. In addition to the scenic beauty, this gorge has 2 miles of class IV whitewater which is bypassed by the project diversion. The run includes 15 and 20 foot runnable waterfalls, as well as a 90 footer. AWA is asking FERC to require whitewater flows in this section as a condition of relicensing the

project. Information: contact Rich Bowers (301-236-0436)

15. Little, Alabama.

Issue: New National Preserve

Current Status: The bill to make Alabama's LITTLE RIVER CANYON a National Preserve passed the House easily but has an uncertain future in the Senate where Alabama's Senator Shelby is either reluctant or asleep at the switch. Southern boaters need to light a fire under Senator Shelby to get behind the Little River bill. Now is the time to do it. Information: contact Ken Burst (205-733-0131)

16. Eight rivers in Arkansas.

Issue: national wild and scenic protection.

Current Status: A Federal wild and scenic rivers bill for ARKANSAS was enacted into law in April of this year, designating 8 rivers for a total of over 200 river miles. This bill included 6 whitewater rivers for permanent Federal protection, PINEY CREEK, the BUFFALO, the COSSATOT, the LITTLE MISSOURI, the MULBERRY, and RICHLAND CREEK. Information: contact Bill Kennedy (501-835-8583)

17. Fourteen rivers in Michigan.

Issue: national wild and scenic protection.

Current Status: After a lengthy struggle with recalcitrant State agencies, an omnibus Federal wild and scenic rivers bill for MICHIGAN was enacted into law in February. This bill designates 7 whitewater rivers for permanent Federal protection, including segments of the Black (14 miles), tributaries of the Ontonagon (157.4 miles), the Paint (51 miles), the Pine (25 miles), the Presque Isle (57 miles), the Sturgeon (43.9 miles), and the Brule (33 miles). Good whitewater is not overabundant in Michigan (the entire State has only 250 miles of whitewater) so enactment of this

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bill is a big plus. Information: contact Rich Bowers (301-236-0436)

18. Pine River, Wisconsin

Issue: Hydroelectric relicensing

Current Status: Boaters and river conservationists are trying to improve the recreational opportunities at the Pine River in the FERC relicensing process. A recreational flow study was conducted by the National Park Service technical assistance office (which local boaters enthusiastically enjoyed); however, the power company did not **include** any flows for whitewater in its license application. This may mean that a fight at FERC is unavoidable. Even dam removal is an option. Information: contact Rich Bowers (301-236-0436)

19. Arkansas, Colorado

Issue: Almost everything.

Current Status: With more than 190,000 commercial passengers and an additional 18,000 private boaters floating the Arkansas every year, the Arkansas is not only the most popular whitewater run in the nation, but one of the most troubled. Commercial use has been growing at 18% per year in recent years. With so many river users, the management plan must now be rewritten to allocate outfitter user days. Private boaters are indirectly affected since the system for commercial boaters will one-day be regulated. BLM has determined the river to be eligible, but Royal Gorge was not included in the study. There are other problems. Several dam proposals (City of Colorado Springs and Aurora) are pending, a wild and scenic study is underway and local boaters are working to **improve** private boater access. Nothing in the State river management plan prevents dam construction and the city of Colorado Springs has proposed 2 different dams (the Mount Princeton and Elephant Rock dams) above Buena Vista,

each of which would divert up to **1/3** of the river. The BLM wild and scenic study ignored the incredibly scenic Royal Gorge section. Meanwhile, there are access problems for private boaters to boot. Information: contact Ric Alesch (303-985-8620)

20. Clear Creek, Colorado

Issue: New dam and quarry under consideration.

Current Status: The Colorado Water Resources Agency is studying a new water supply dam which could destroy this popular whitewater run just northwest of Denver. A permit to construct a quarry next to the river (increasing noise, traffic and pollution in the canyon) was denied by Jefferson County and now appears dead. Information: contact Bill Baker (303-972-8437)

21. Gunnison, Colorado

Issue: Possible water diversion; hydro proposal; wild and scenic

Current Status: The AB Lateral Project proposes to divert water from the river near Montrose for hydropower, reducing early spring and fall levels in the Ower Gunnison gorge. In December, the Bureau of Reclamation approved the AB Lateral Project, but developers still need financing for the project and a section 404 permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, Arapahoe County proposes to divert water from the upper Gunnison to the front range for municipal water supply (lawn sprinklers). Meanwhile a preliminary permit has been issued by FERC for a hydro development which would flood the Dominguez Canyon and 3,000 acres of BLM wilderness study area. Still pending in Congress without action so far this year is a bill, introduced by Colorado Congressman Ben Nighthorse Campbell, to designate several sections of the Gunnison as Federal wild and scenic. Information: contact Todd Robertson, Colorado Environmental Coalition




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22. Yampa, Colorado

Issue: Cross Mountain and Juniper Mountain Dams; wild and scenic

Current Status: The Colorado River Water Conservation District continues to push for these 2 dams in northwest Colorado for hydropower and water diversion. Meanwhile, as a result of a lawsuit filed by the **Colorado** Environmental Coalition, the BLM is studying 83 miles of the river above Dinosaur National Monument for possible wild and scenic status. Three segments of the river have been found eligible and "suitability" study is now underway. The **Yampa** is the last undammed river in the Colorado Basin and has excellent whitewater in Cross Mountain Canyon. Information: contact Ric **Alesch** (303-985-8620)

23. Animas, Colorado

Issue: Possible irrigation diversion

Current Status: The proposed \$640 million Animas La Plata Project would divert water from the Animas near Durango into the **LaPlata** to provide agricultural water to farmers south of Durango and for the Ute Indian Reservation. A groundbreaking ceremony was recently held although funding for the project is not yet available and the whole project is temporarily jammed up by a lawsuit brought by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund to require the Bureau of Wrecklamation to study the effects on fisheries in the San Juan River. Information: contact Bill Baker (303-972-8437)

24. Freemont, Utah

Issue: Proposed water project

Current Status: The Wayne County Water conservation District plans to build a 3.5 mile long reservoir behind a 108 foot all dam on the Freemont just west of **Capitol Reef National Park**,

flooding out part of a class III-VI section featuring fantastic scenery, technical whitewater and numerous portages. Information: contact Mark White (801-582-3445)

25. Colorado, Arizona

Issue: Flows from Glen Canyon Dam

Current Status: The Grand Canyon Protection Act has passed both Houses of Congress, but final language dealing with the protection of environmental, cultural, and natural resources affected by flows from Glen Canyon Dam is now being debated by a House and Senate conference committee. Information: contact Dave Conrad (202-797-6697)

26. East Fork of Owyhee, Idaho

Issue: Environmental degradation due to bombing range

Current Status: The latest proposal for an Air Force bombing range in Idaho (supported by governor Ceal Andrus) would threaten all of the unique and wild Owyhee country desert rivers with two impact zones, one on Deep Creek and the other south of the **East Fork Owyhee**. Live bombs will not be used under the latest plan, but dummy bombs and flares are expected to burn up plenty of native grassland. Local groups, led by Idaho Rivers United, are vigorously opposing the Air Force plans. Information: contact Wendy Wilson (208-343-7481)

27. Falls, Idaho

Issue: Hydropower

Current Status: Despite belated efforts by recreational interests and the State of Idaho, the 9.1 MW Falls River hydro plant was licensed by FERC in Freemont, Co. Idaho. Construction is 75% complete. The project will dewater 7 miles of **class III** whitewater (and trout habitat). Whitewater groups were caught off-guard by a quiet developer, but project opponents predicted



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that water would leak from an old irrigation canal and make the penstock unstable. FERC ignored the warning, but sure enough, that is exactly what happened. On June 11, the penstock collapsed and 20,000 tons of silt washed into the stream, **creating** what Idaho Governor Cecil Andrus has called "an ecological disaster". Information: contact Wendy Wilson (208-343-7481)

28. Salmon, Idaho

Issue: national wild and scenic protection.

Current Status: A bill to designate the Lower Main Salmon in Idaho as Federal Wild and Scenic is **pending** in Congress as this issue **goes** to press. Information: **contact** Wendy Wilson (208-343-7481)

29. **Eighty-six** rivers, Washington

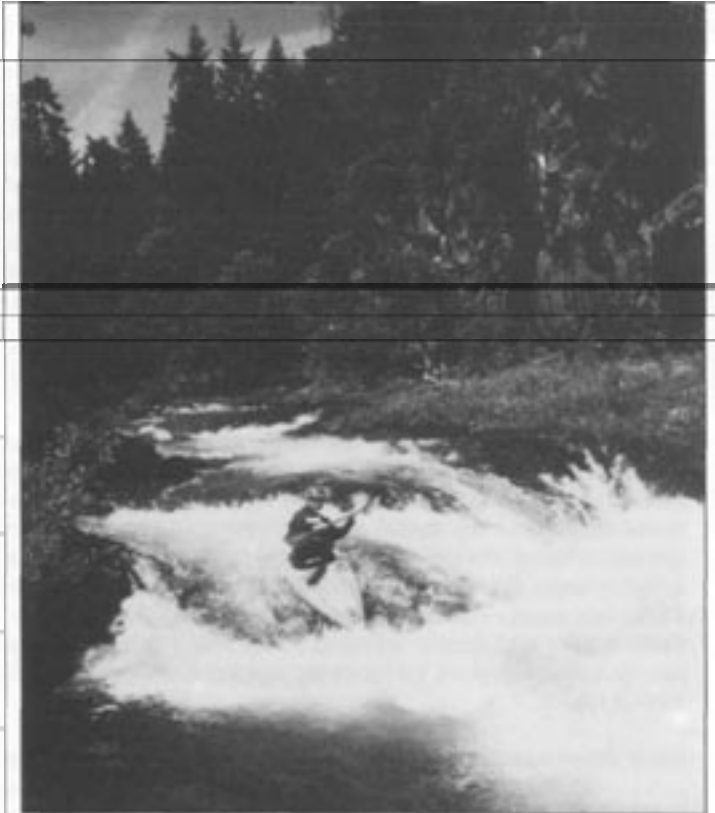
Issue: national wild and scenic protection.

Current Status: A bill — which looks like a real long shot for this Congress — to designate 86 rivers in Washington State as Wild and Scenic was introduced by retiring Congressman Miller. A large number of the rivers in Miller's bill have whitewater runs including Canyon Creek, the North Fork of the Skykomish, the Nisqually, the **Methow**, the Wenatchee, and Icicle Creek. Information: contact Doug North (206-284-2466)

30. White Salmon, Washington

Issue: Relicensing of hydropower project.

Current Status: Below the existing popular whitewater run is a 1.7 **mile** reach which is bypassed by the hydro **diversion** at the Condit Project but which may have additional high **quality** whitewater. AWA is asking FERC to require Pacificorp to **do** whitewater recreation **feasibility** studies for this reach **before** relicensing the project. Information: contact Rich Bowers (301-236-0436)



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31. Elwha, Washington

Issue: Possible removal of 2 existing hydropower dams

Current Status: Numerous environmental groups are asking that 2 existing hydropower dams (Glines Canyon and Elwha) on this fabulous whitewater river be removed. The park service has studied the removal option and found it feasible. This would set an exciting national precedent which might be followed elsewhere. Environmental groups and the park service argue that one project cannot be relicensed by FERC since it is inside a Olympic National Park. But, FERC is clinging to its reputation for hydromania, and refuses to cede authority to the park service. Information: contact Carol Volk (206-876-6780)

32. Klamath, Oregon

Issue: Possible hydropower development (Salt Caves Project)

Current Status: The City of Klamath Falls continues to push ahead with this heavily contested project and numerous environmental groups continue to fight on all fronts. The State has denied a 401 water quality permit on technical grounds (water temperature), but the denial may be overturned by courts on appeal. Although the affected segment of the Klamath is off-limits to hydro under State law (enacted by Statwide referendum), the FERC has announced that its license would nullify the State law. Federal Wild and Scenic status is still a possibility, but only a remote one at this point. Information: contact Bob Doppelt (503-345-0119)

33. Deschutes, Oregon

Issue: River management; *private/commercial* permit allocations

Current Status: The debate of establishing river use limits for the popular Descutes River and how to allocate use among commercial outfitters and between commercial and non-

commercial users has intensified. This river now has as many as 1400 boater on a single summer weekend day so it seems inevitable that the Bureau of Land Management will establish some kind of daily limit and allocate slots among competing users. Many private boaters, including AWA Director Ric Alesch, are asking that a "freedom of choice" system be established to provide flexible and fair allocations among all users. Some agency and Wasco County officials are pushing for rigid monopoly use allocations for commercial rafters. Information: contact Ric Alesch (303-985-8620)

34. Mackenzie; Oregon

Issue: Relicensing of hydropower project.

Current Status: The Leaburg Project, owned by the City of Eugene, controls flows in the McKenzie for 20 miles of class II water above the town of Springfield. In addition, there is a 5-mile bypassed reach of the river which may have good whitewater if flows were provided. AWA is asking FERC to require whitewater feasibility studies as a condition of relicensing this project. Information: contact Rich Bowers (301-236-0436)

35. Kern; California

Issue: Hydropower relicensing; access.

Current Status: One relicensing case is now pending before FERC with 3 others due in 1996. The minimum streamflow in the Kern is now 0 cfs in winter and summer flows for whitewater are not what they could be. It is clear that changes in power plant operations to provide minimum streamflows, together with episodic releases for recreation, would improve this river's ecosystem and recreational potential. Meanwhile, on the wild and scenic section of the river a new Forest Service management plan has raised commercial limits from 125 passengers to 180 per day.

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That plan also established new private and commercial limits for the North Fork of the Kern. The plan increases private and commercial per day levels from 15 boaters each to 18 each. Permits are first come first served. Information: contact Ron Stork (916-442-3155)

36. Clavey; California

Issue: hydropower proposal; possible wild and scenic.

Current status: The Clavey is a scenic class V whitewater run in the Sierra Nevada mountains, a tributary of the Tuolumne. The Turlock Irrigation District, one of California's most dangerous dam building agencies, has applied to FERC for a license to build a dam on the Clavey inundating about 8 miles of river and diverting water from an additional 14 miles. This project is a real threat since it is considered by some to be one of the few hydropower projects still on the drawing boards in California which may actually be financially feasible. Friends of the River, AWA and others have intervened in the FERC case. In an exceptionally gutless reaction to the hydro application, the Forest Service concluded its wild and scenic study of the Clavey by finding it eligible for inclusion in the system, but "unsuitable" due to the cost of managing such a remove wilderness river and because the hydro developer has already spent so much money developing his dam and diversion plans. Information: contact Richard Roos-Collins (916-442-3155)

37. American, California

Issue: Possible construction of Auburn Dam

Current Status: The Auburn Dam proposal continues to plague river conservationist in California and throughout the nation. On July 22, 1992, extensive hearing were held on two proposals, both opposed by river conservationists. Although one (the Fazo proposal) would be slightly less damaging than the other



Dean Fairburn in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.

(the Doolittle proposal), both would flood out large segments of the North and Middle Forks of the American and greatly damage the scenic, ecological, and recreational qualities of the river. The flood control benefits are highly questionable for technical and economic reasons. The Congressional hearings did not resolve any of the issues or answer any of the questions raised by conservationists opposing these projects. Information: contact Ron Stork (916-442-3155)

38. Merced River, California

Issue: Possible wild and scenic protection for Lower Merced
Current Status: Designation of 8 miles of the Lower

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Merced as Wild and Scenic (in addition to the existing 71 miles on the main stem and 43 miles on the South Fork) is still pending in Congress, stalled by personality disputes between Congressional staff egos. This section of the Merced as good whitewater (class II-IV) and the best wilderness camping on the whole river. If the designation does not pass the dam, which would drown the river up to Briceburg, may be built. Information: contact Friends of the River (916-442-3155)

39. Mokelumne, California

Issues: Proposed hydropower projects; access restrictions, water projects.

Current Status: **Amador** County's license application before FERC to build the Devils Nose Dam is still pending and San Joaquin County has obtained a preliminary permit to investigate construction of a Middle Bar Dam. Both dams are environmental nightmares. The Middle Bar dam would wreck a 2.5 mile class II-III whitewater section just downstream of the Electra run while the Devil's Nose project would ruin a class II-V segment. Meanwhile the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EMUD) has closed the shoreline of the Middle Bar run to all recreation although this is a navigable waterway and the shoreline is subject to FERC authority. Friends of the River plan to ask FERC to make the EBMUD open up access to the Middle Bar run. EBMUD is reluctant to let boating get a serious foothold on this run since they want to raise the Pardee Dam to bring more water to Oakland. This would completely flood out the Middle Bar run. Information: contact Ron Stork (916-442-3155)

40. Stanislaus. Main Stem and North Fork, California

Issue: **Water** project and possible **hydropower project**

Current Status: Irrigation districts in the San Joaquin

Valley have plans to divert water from the Main Stem of the Stanislaus just upstream of the **Goodwin** Dam run, a class IV-V run. The whitewater character of this run would be dramatically altered if these plans go forward. The Calaveras Co. Water District and Northern Cal. Power Agency have applied for preliminary permits to build the Ramsey-French Meadows hydro project which would eliminate the Boards Crossing Run on the **N. Fork** of the Stan. This project really has conservationists worried since, at an estimated 4 cents per kilowatt hour, this would be the cheapest big hydro project built in California in recent years. The U.S. Forest Service has recommended the affected section for Federal wild and scenic designation, but the agency is under a lot of political pressure to reverse the decision. Information: contact Steve Evans (916-442-3155)

MEALS RANS

A number of significant whitewater rivers with issues pending did not make the top 40 category this year, but deserve HONORABLE MENTION. Among these are: the Saco in Maine, the Little in Massachusetts, the Genessee, Raquette, Black, Beaver, Mohawk, Sacandaga, and Hoosic in New York and Sespe Creek in California. Details are as follows:

Saco, Maine

Issue: Relicensing of hydropower project.

Current Status: On the **Saco** River boaters are asking FERC to require whitewater releases in a 4,000 foot bypass reach with a 46 foot drop known as the "New River Channel". Information: contact, Rich Bowers (301-236-0436)

Little, Massachusetts.

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Issue: Limited access and poor flow information.

Current Status: AWA regional coordinator **E.J. McCarthy** continues his persistent effort to press the Town of Springfield to allow private boaters access through Springfield Water Dept. property to this class III-IV run in Massachusetts (just east of the Farmington). The Town continues to stonewall **E.J.'s** efforts. Information: contact: **E.J. McCarthy** (RR 380-A, W. Cornwall, Ct. 06796)

Genesee, New York

Issue: River Access Restrictions

Current Status: NY State Parks authority has overregulated the Letchworth Gorge section of the Genesee to an unprecedented degree. Paddlers are required to sign up 2 days in advance of paddling the river, pay fees to boat the whitewater section, and navigate an absolutely incredible maze of liability waivers (which vary depending on water levels). At levels deemed "to high" by park bureaucrats, all kayaking is prohibited. This situation may be the ultimate in benighted public land management. **Information:** contact **Jerry Hergrave** (716-663-3888) **Raquette**, Black, Beaver, Mohawk, Sacandaga, and Hoosic, New York

Issue: Relicensing of hydropower projects.

Current status: Whitewater boaters are struggling with Niagara Mohawk to provide whitewater releases, access, and scenic improvements at a large number of hydro projects owned by NIMO and now engaged in relicensing. NIMO has released a statewide recreation plan which falls far short of expectations. Realizing the odds are against success, whitewater boaters have joined with a number of other groups throughout the State in a new coalition called "New York Waterways" to broaden the political

base and establish a better funded and more powerful Statewide river conservation effort, which will include relicensing as a major component. The first meeting was held in Watertown on July 25. The organization will be modelled on Idaho Rivers United, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and other successful State river conservation groups. Information, contact Pete Skinner (518-585-7580)

Sespe Creek, California

Issue: national wild and scenic protection.

Current Status: As part of another law, signed on this summer **31.5 miles** of SESPE CREEK in Southern California was designated as a national wild and scenic river. Information: contact **Keith Beck** (213-546-1780)

Twenty-eight rivers in Pennsylvania

Issue: National Wild and Scenic

Current Status: Congressman Peter Kostmayer, a key congressional river conservation advocate, has introduced legislation to designate 28 rivers in Pennsylvania for study for possible inclusion in the wild and scenic rivers system. Numerous whitewater runs are on the list, including the Lehigh, Muddy Creek, and Stoney Creek. Information: contact **Brian Dixon** (202-225-4276)

Blackwater, West Virginia

Issue: Access restrictions.

Current Status: Due to West Virginia Park rules, access to the class V-VI section of the Upper **Blackwater** through Blackwater Falls State Park is in doubt. Local boaters have been meeting with the local park Superintendent who is very cooperative, but he may be hamstrung by the rulebook. Both sides are looking for a creative solution. Information: contact **John Regan** (301-746-5290)



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North Fork and Middle Fork Snoqualmie, Washington

Issue: Access problems

Current Status: Stormy relations between boaters and the Weyerhaeuser Company have led to access problems for boaters at the put-in and take out on the North Fork. Another private landowner temporarily blocked the take-out for the Middle Fork run. Boaters are looking for a new take out to avoid future problems. Information: contact Sandie Nelson (206-547-7886)

Armuchee Creek and other rivers, Georgia

Issue: River access problems

Current Status: A trespass case against boaters will be heard by Georgia Courts in February. The State Supreme Court has already upheld a lower court opinion that Armuchee Creek is non-navigable and can therefore be dosed to recreational boating by landowners. The case was brought by a river-side landowner against kayakers and canoeists who allegedly behaved badly on streamside lands. This **decision** suggests that no whitewater river in Georgia would be considered legally open to recreational boating. In a prior case, the popular Chatahoochee River was found **non-navigable**. Even State agencies are ganging up on canoeists. Recently, on Notchaway Creek, boaters were arrested for boating through private property posted as dosed by the State DNR. The legislature is no help either. Legislation has been proposed which would guarantee boaters the right to paddle, but it currently has no chance of passage. The bottom line: Georgia has the worst access situation in the nation so far as river runners are concerned. Information: contact Andy **Warshaw** (404-373-6683)

INTERNATIONAL RIVER ISSUES MOVE FRONT AND CENTER IN 1992

Unfortunately, the United States does not have a **monopoly** on river abuse, and with whitewater enthusiasts becoming increasingly willing to travel long distances to experience the ultimate in river running, international river issues have become a much greater concern. For whitewater boaters and wilderness river trippers, the foreign rivers which are currently most threatened are the Bio Bio in Chile, the Tatshenshini and Great Whale in Canada, and the Pacuare in Costa Rica.

Here is a quick run down on these.

Tatshenshini, Alaska.

Issue: Environmental damage from proposed mine.

Current status: Legislation has been introduced by Congressman Wayne Owens of Utah and Senator **Al Gore** of Tennessee to **voice** Congressional opposition to the proposed Windy Craggy Mine mine on the **TATSHENSHINI** River in Canada upstream of where it flows into **Alaska**. The mine would severely impact the wilderness quality of this amazing wild and beautiful river by dynamiting the top off Windy Craggy Mtn, creating a huge open pit mine, storing 18,500 tons of highly acid waste rock each day in a 4 1/2 mile long reservoir with an earthen dam located on 3 earthquake faults, construct 65 miles of road and two pipelines in a wilderness. Information: contact Tom Cassidy (202-547-6900)

Great Whale and other James Bay Rivers, Quebec

Issue: Hydropower

Current Status: Several mammoth hydro power proposals are being pushed by the **Quebec** political leadership, adding to the already immense destruction wreaked by existing Quebec Hydro projects on James Bay rivers. The Great Whale Project, for example, would destroy whitewater rivers, canoeing streams, and



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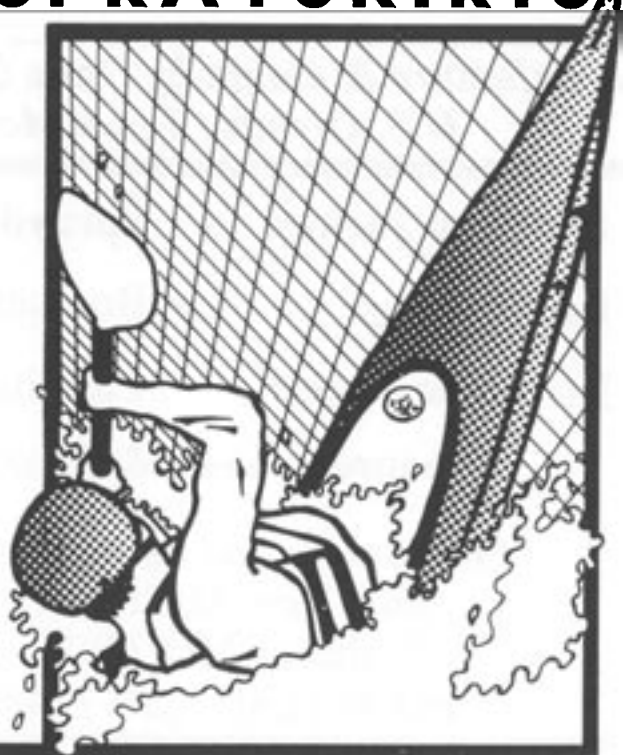


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fisheries as well as move the Cree Indians from their historic hunting and fishing areas. The power would be sold to New York and New England. In a stunning setback for Quebec Hydro, after a highly publicized river trip by Bobby Kennedy and Pete Skinner, New York cancelled its power purchase contract. Information: contact Pete Skinner (518-585-7580).

Bio Bio, Chile

Issue: Hydropower

Current Status: River conservation groups in the United States and Chile have succeeded in temporarily stalling the financing for the first of 6 huge dams to be built on Chile's premier whitewater river, the Bio Bio. The project, known as the "Pangué Dam" is not yet dead, but prospects that the Chilean electric company, ENDESA, will receive funding from the World Bank (IFC) in 1992 have dimmed considerably. This is partially due to effort by AWA which helped bring Grupo de **Acción Por El Bio Bio**, a Chilean environmental group, and a Peheuenche Indian leader, to Washington, D.C. in May of this year. They created quite a stir at the Bank when they explained to bank officials, up close and in person, the environmental and economic harm that the Pangué Project would do. Information: contact Steve Gates (202-463-4378)

Pacaure, Cost Rica

Issue: Hydropower

Current status: An environmental impact statement will be begun in December. Thus far, boaters have had little influence over the proposed dam plans and the feasibility studies now being carried out involve almost no public input. Financing has not yet been approved. Information: contact: Rio Tropicales 011-506-338455.

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Boaters resist Kennebec fees

Boaters in New England are now paying for the privilege of accessing one of the region's premier whitewater resources, the Kennebec River. **Kayakers**, boaters, sitedeers, and picnickers are all being charged \$1 for access to this resource.

If they refuse to pay, the Central Maine Power Co. has Somerset County Sheriff's deputies on guard at the gate--ready to arrest kayakers and boaters for "theft of services." The local Assistant District Attorney, William Bagdhoian refused to recognize FERC's sole jurisdiction in this access fee issue and has informed New

England FLOW's attorney that he intends to prosecute any individuals that try to access the waters of the Kennebec River or Indian Pond without paying the \$1 fee.

The local media has extensively reported the issue. Reprinted below is an article written by Betta **Stothart**, Associate Editor of the Maine Times, **Topsha**, Maine:

After protesting kayakers said they wouldn't pay \$5 for access to the Kennebec Gorge, Central Maine Power (CMP) reconsidered and lowered the rate to \$1.

But kayakers are not



Scott Underhill photo

Magic Falls in the Kennebec Gorge.

satisfied, and last weekend, those unwilling to pay the entrance fee were met by a sheriff's deputy at the gate.

CMP owns the dam at the entrance of the gorge and the land where the kayakers put into the class III and IV waters.

"The sheriff was

passing out warnings and said we would be arrested for theft of services if we tried to pass through again without paying or signing the release forms," says Wolfgang Kaiser, chairman of the Appalachian Mountain Club Canoe Committee in Maine and member of New England



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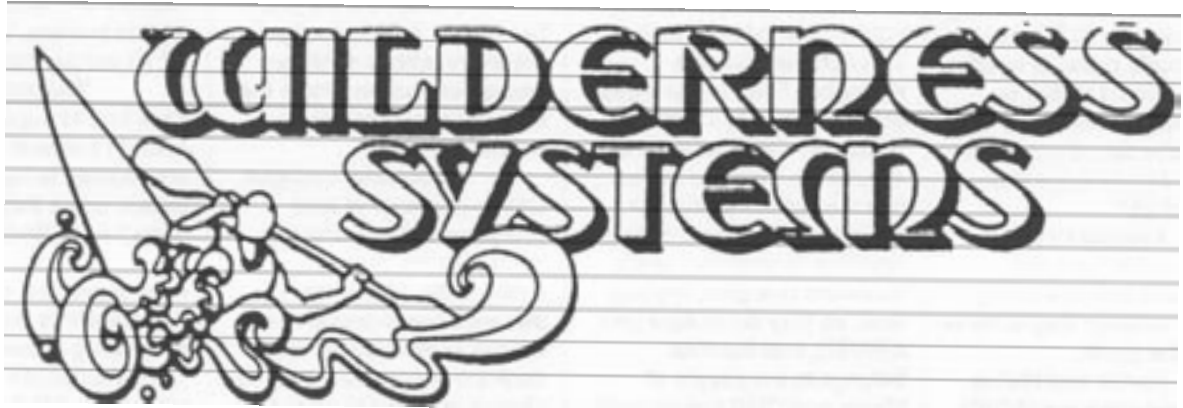


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FLOW, an affiliation of whitewater enthusiasts.

Kayakers say they should not have to pay anything if they park along the road and walk in, citing a May 19 interview on Al Diamon's WGAN radio show, in which CMP President Matthew Hunter said, "The \$1 fee is for parking the car...If you want to walk in...I know there is no charge at all."

Kayakers say Hunter's rules have not applied and they are being charged whether they drive or walk to the put-in.

Hunter told **Maine Times** that since the WGAN interview, the rules were changed since the fee has been lowered to \$1 per person. He says the charge goes toward costs to maintain facilities used by kayakers.

Hunter says the original plan was not to charge kayakers who float the entire river without stopping to

use facilities half-way down at Carry Brook. "It turned out it wasn't practical so we changed the fee."

The stand-off raises questions of accessibility to publicly-owned resources. Through the dam, the Kennebec River is managed but not owned by CMP. However, CMP owns the land around the river and feels it has the right to charge for maintenance of the facilities it provides recreational users. Kayakers disagree, arguing now, as they did in April (MT, 4/24/92), that the river belongs to the people of Maine and CMP has no right to charge for access. They also believe that CMP would raise the rates over time.

"The Federal Power Act guarantees free access to any navigable waters," says Tom Christopher, secretary and co-director of New England FLOW, representing 11 user groups including the

American Canoe Association, American Rivers, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the AWA and the U.S. Whitewater Team.

"CMP will tell you 'we have a right to charge,' but the residents of Maine and private boaters have the right to access, granted by federal statute."

Normand Rodrigue, CMP's manager of land management and development says his company sees it differently. "We disagree that we have to provide free access in every case. We think our license allows us to charge reasonable rates for the facility."

Rodrigue says land improvements, including roads, parking lots, changing rooms at Harris Station and downstream are maintained, and most were installed specifically for kayakers and rafters.

Capitol investments

projected for facilities statewide were 3 million dollars. Rodrigue says it costs approximately \$23,205 annually to maintain the facilities at Harris Dam for private boaters, alone, or \$2.73 per person.

"Our ratepayers have had to support these costs in the past. This year we decided to require that private users help defray the costs," says Rodrigue.

Christopher says ratepayers are not the issue. "What CMP is doing in effect is developing a scenario that pits recreationalists against the ratepayers." But, says Christopher, "there is no statute in the Federal Power Act and no article in CMP's license that allows them to benefit the ratepayer at the expense of any other user group." Christopher says CMP stockholders, not ratepayers, will benefit most

Please turn to page 86

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Paddlers go home!

Boaters endure angry fisherman, irate local citizens and a reluctant utility to open a whitewater river

by **KEN FISCHMAN**

1. The Midnight Telephone Call

As our kayak-laden cars pulled up to the bridge, we were greeted with the sight of angry faces and signboards stating "Whitewater Boaters Go Home". Policemen, reporters, and picketers milled around. Some of the protesters greeted us with obscene gestures emanating from their upraised middle fingers. We had come to the Mongaup to conduct a whitewater test as part of a study being made by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission



Open canoeists test Mongaup rapids during whitewater feasibility test.

(FERC) to determine the suitability of this dam-controlled river for recreational boating. What in the world had we done to deserve this furious enmity, and what had

brought us here to this confrontation on the Mongaup river?

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"I had no time to whine for 3 days!!!" said SEN WAK after bizarre incident



The Hunt For

IRON RING

Outfitters and paddlers join in search for lost Gauley River artifact.

By MAC THORNTON

IRON RING -- Class VI -- . . . a particularly dangerous rapid. As a result of blasting a channel for logs to float through, a jagged, terminal obstruction was created midstream! What happens here is that the river necks down just above the jagged rock. About 1/3 of the water keeps going down the right side -- the rest recirculates above the obstruction before flushing over, under, around and through it. Below the obstruction there is yet another hole that makes Woodall Shoals look comical. To add to the objective danger of Iron Ring, we also have a situation where normally sane, mild-mannered paddlers decide to do a tango with the grim reaper.

Whitewater Home Companion, Southeastern Rivers I. (1981)

IRON RING -- *The rapid is named* for a huge eye ring set in the rocks. . . . Class 6. Carry on the left or run tight right and upright.

Wild Water West Virginia (1980)

All but a few Upper Gauley paddlers run Iron Ring rapid these days. Thus, it's hard to imagine the intense psychological grip the rapid had on paddlers up until a few years ago. True, Iron Ring has an obviously dangerous, grossly undercut rock in the middle-left at the bottom, with a nasty, semi-terminal hole just below. True, the traditional right hand route tends to push errant paddlers up to and over the obstruction and into the hole.



Divers enter pool above Iron Ring rapid (at low water) to search for lost artifact.

In the mid-1980's, someone discovered a route that now seems equally obvious. Start top left. Paddle towards the middle skirting two shallow holes. Run the crux of the rapid headed right, cross-cutting the main current, and exit bottom right.

So many marginal Gauley paddlers manage this route without getting their hair wet that the old guidebook descriptions now seem comical. One first-time Gauley paddler even wrote an article entitled, "Iron Ring -- Piece of Cake." An excessive show of bravado there for sure.

But this article is not about the rapid itself, but about the article that gave Iron Ring its name, a name with a mystique that brought abject terror to paddlers for years. About 30 years ago, exploratory paddlers named the awesome rapid after the heavy iron eye ring set ominously on a rock shelf above the rapid. Local historians believe the iron ring served as an anchor point for a safety rope suspended above the rapid for lumberjacks trying to break up log jams around the turn of the century. It could also have served as an anchor for a suspension bridge which existed within the memory of older denizens.

Sometime in the spring of 1988, someone sawed off the iron ring and all that remains is the stub protruding uselessly from the rock shelf.

That's when I met Dave Arnold, a co-owner of Class VI River Runners, one of the most successful rafting outfitters in the area. We put up a \$100 reward and distributed WANTED -- IRON RING post-

ers all over the area, but nothing happened for a couple of years.

Finally a lead came forward through an intermediary. The intermediary told us the ring had been taken by a local who was angry about having his fishing disturbed by boaters. Noticing the interest in the iron ring, he sawed it off and tossed it in the river, it was said.

Dave then contacted "Sarge's Dive Shop" on Summersville Lake and told the saga of the iron ring to "Sarge" Adams, the former sheriff of Nicholas County, Mark Allen, and two other divers. On a beautiful summer day, Conrail lent the group a "high railer," a pick-up truck which can run on railroad tracks, and they headed down the railroad for Iron Ring.

The Gauley was running about 400 cfs, but the water was cloudy due to a shower the night before. However, Sarge was experienced looking for drowning victims, and the group started a grid search on the river bottom. At one point, a shout went up -- one of the divers pulled up a heavy rounded object to the surface. But it was an old machinery wheel -- not the iron ring.

They did not find it.

The reward for iron ring now stands at \$500. If it does not turn up soon, negotiations will start with the Park Service to fashion an exact replica and have it welded onto the stub. Contributions to the reward fund or the fund to replace iron ring are welcome -- please send to the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, P.O. Box 606, Buckhannon, W.V. 26201.



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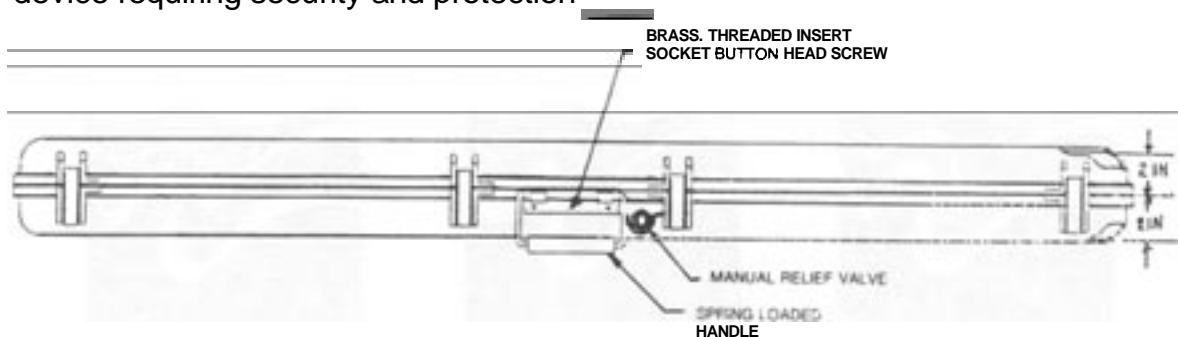
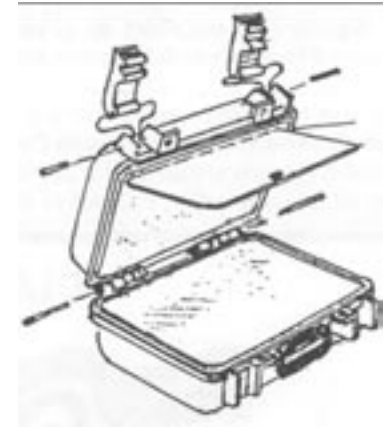
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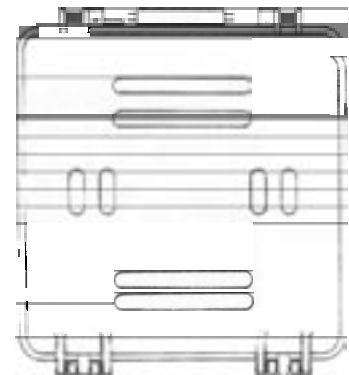
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Boaters improve Saluda put-in path

The Lower Saluda River flows 11 miles from the Lake Murray Dam in Columbia, South Carolina to the Congaree River. It provides local paddlers with unique whitewater not commonly found in the midlands of South Carolina. Water levels vary widely from 200 CFS to 67,000 CFS, allowing for a wide variety of "play spots."

River access is a problem as the Lower Saluda is surrounded by private property and flows into a metropolitan area with a population of 500,000. The most popular and frequently used put-in site is on property owned by the Riverbanks Zoological Park. Boaters are allowed to use the parking lot which is within 100 feet of the

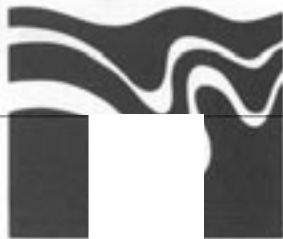
river. The pathway leading to the river was actually an eroded gully that drained into the river and became more treacherous each rainy season. A few local paddlers attempted to ease the erosion in various ways but a major amount of work and money was needed to properly do the job.

Two local Palmetto Paddler Club members, Laura Parker and Ricky Odum, instigated the put-in improvement project in late 1991. It was felt that as habitual users of this site, paddlers contributed to the erosion and should make an effort to control it. Also, although the Zoo historically had been gracious in allowing boater access, improvements to the area couldn't



hurt future access availability. Lastly, perhaps boater/fisherman relations, which are a bit tenuous, could be improved.

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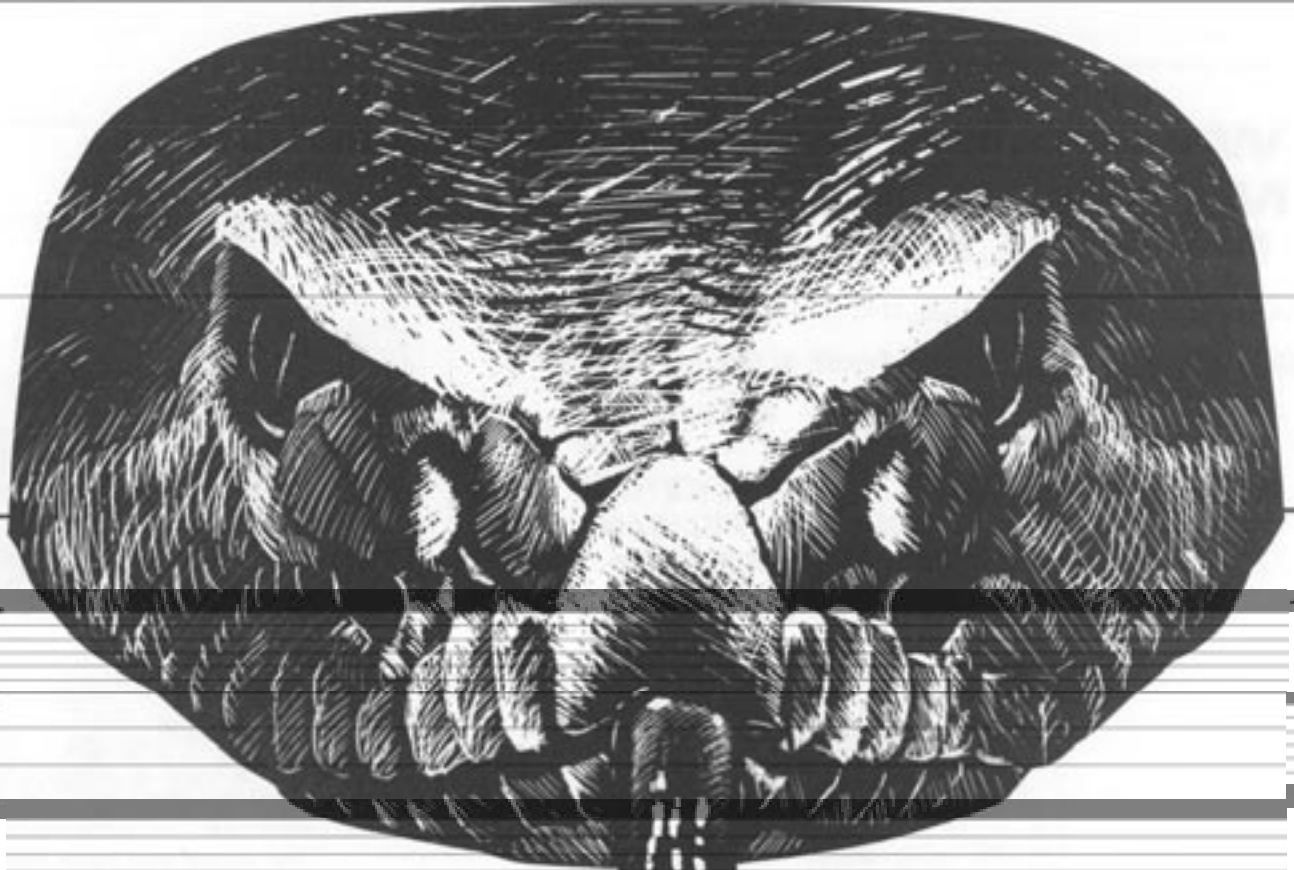
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BRIEFS



The project was made possible by seed grant funding from the AWA and supplemental funding from the Palmetto Paddlers. Club and non-dub members pitched in for the labor.

The pathway constructed has eliminated the erosion problem and received many positive comments from the public. The Zoo administration continues to work with us and enough interest has been generated to draw Eagle Scout projects to further improve the area, which is undeveloped property. In general, the paddler image has been upgraded.

Hopefully, in the future this project

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Volunteers are urgently needed to assist in the development of an international **netwok** of boating dubs and individuals. AWA and River Conservation International need this information to mobilize international opposition to World Bank and International Finance funding of **river-**destroying projects, such as the Pangu Dam on Chile's Bio Bio River. We particularly need people to take on the task of building a list of names in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the countries of Europe.

If you can help this effort by "adopting a country," or if you have names and addresses (or phone numbers) of foreign boaters **and/or** boating organizations, please contact Pope Barrow, AWA Conservation Director at (202) 225-6060 or Steve Gates of RCI at (202) 463-4378.



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Dismal year for river safety

River fatalities increase during 1992

Accidents strike novices and experts alike as 15 deaths are recorded during 1992 paddling season

By CHARLIE WALBRIDGE
AWA Safety Chairman

1992 was one of the worst years ever for river fatalities. A wet spring in the Southeast, record rains in Texas, and heavy late spring and summer rains in the Northeast all resulted in unusually high water and trouble for paddlers. While the Western drought curtailed boating activity, there were still a number of deaths. I still have trouble getting information on whitewater fatalities, and I urge paddlers who know of a fatal accident, serious injury, or near miss not covered in this article to send details.

San Marcos River, Texas

On January 3, following an unusually wet December, the Class I San Marcos River was running five feet above normal. Bruce Reynolds, a local kayaker and firefighter with swiftwater rescue training, was soloing the river when he arrived at Martindale Dam, a 12' high, 60 degree angle sloping drop. He elected to run the drop, and became caught in a large stopper wave (not a hydraulic) which develops at the base. He dropped his paddle on impact, and ended up hand-surfing the hole for over two hours!

Bystanders saw Reynold's plight and called the fire department. Firefighters stretched a tag line across the river and lowered it to the victim, who tried to use it to pull himself into a side eddy. As the victim approached the eddy line he flipped, letting go of the line. Either he hand rolled or the hole pushed him back up instantly. Tom Goynes, a canoe outfitter who runs with the fire company, attempted a tethered raft rescue with the help of two experienced local kayakers. Before he could complete the maneuver, his group was

ordered to stop by the Incident Commander, a firefighter placed in overall command of the rescue. A helicopter had been called, and the plan was to wait for it.

The chopper arrived at about 6:00 PM. A 19 year old crewman on his first rescue mission was lowered down on a jungle seat. He hit the water and was pushed downstream; the helicopter pulled up to compensate, slamming the crewman into the dam. At this point the victim, who outweighed his rescuer by 70 pounds, grabbed him in a bear hug. Now the rescuer could not secure the victim to the harness or signal the chopper! The extra weight forced the pilot to pull his machine up, and the winch operator began reeling in the two men. As they got close to the end, the victim lunged for the chopper, let go of his rescuer, and plunged to his death.

A little knowledge can be dangerous. The victim and his rescuers were very aware of the dangers of dams and hydraulics, but could not distinguish a large playable stopper from a deadly hydraulic. If this had been a true hydraulic, a person couldn't hand-surf for two seconds, much less two hours! Had the victim understood what he was dealing with, he would have turned over, bailed out, and washed out downstream. Had the firefighters been able to read the water, they would have realized that a tethered raft rescue would have worked. Helicopters are always slow to arrive and a lot more dangerous in rescues than they appear! Savvy rescuers use them as a last resort, and should continue to try other techniques while they wait.

Little River, Alabama

On February 15, a group was running Alabama's Little River Canyon, a steep, pushy class IV-V stream running high from recent rains. One of the party, Chris McGee, was having a tough day. Towards the end of the run, below the major drops, he flipped at the end of a class III rapid and bailed out. No one could get to him in time, and he was carried across a short pool into the next rapid. There he sluiced into a chute up against a cliff blocked by a broached log. McGee was initially alive, but it was a horrible pin in an inaccessible location. The group tried hard, but could not reach him. When it was clear that nothing could be done, they

paddled out. The body was recovered later by a local rescue squad. This incident underscores the importance of aggressive self rescue, since assistance may not be available even in easier rapids. A letdown after running difficult rapids upstream may have contributed to the problem.

On March 8, California's class II-III Russian River claimed the life an experienced female paddler and tripler. During the trip a novice flipped and swam. No one saw the victim, Kit Rice, get caught in an upstream log jam and disappear from view, but it probably happened then. Perhaps she got distracted by the rescue and didn't notice the deadly trap; perhaps she flipped and washed into the mess. We'll never know. After the novice was secured, Ms. Rice was nowhere to be seen. After searching the area, the group felt that she had probably continued downstream. Arriving at the take-out, they realized something serious had happened and called the Sheriff. Her body was discovered by rescue teams the next day.

Bushkill Creek, Pennsylvania

On March 28 a solo kayaker died attempting to run a 10' high dam on Bushkill Creek near Easton, Pennsylvania. This run is a class I float; the dam should be carried. Witnesses say that 23 year-old Robert Bauchspies pulled over and scouted the dam before running it. Family members stated that it was the only dam on the creek he'd never run; they also said that he had joined a local canoe club but never gone on trips with them because he felt that they were too conservative. Newspaper photos showed a big drop into a nasty-looking backwash; I believe that no experienced paddler would choose to run it. The victim failed to punch the hydraulic and recirculated in the boil for ten minutes, calling for help. Then he disappeared. His battered body and badly gouged helmet was recovered downstream, battered by the rocks on the bottom of the river at the base of the dam. The kayak remained in the backwash and had to be pulled out by the rescue squad. I believe that running solo, while not smart, was not the critical issue; dam rescue at this site would have been difficult even for trained paddlers. Poor judgement was the issue; once Bauchspies made the decision to run the dam, he was as good as dead.

Carrabasset River, Maine

On April 27 two couples **padding** in the same canoe flipped in a rapid on Maine's Carrabasset River. All but one person, Patricia Faticanti, 33, made it to shore. No one was wearing a life jacket or any kind of cold water protection; four floating seat cushions were found at the scene. This and the fact that the canoe was badly overloaded suggest that inexperience was the cause of this tragedy. A Navy helicopter found the victim floating in the river several miles downstream.

Commercial rafting incidents

May 1992 was a dreadful month for the outfitters in the Middle Atlantic States. On Friday, May 8 a rental customer tied a series of lines across his raft "to hold on to" before running the Lower **Youghighenny** River near Ohiopyle. The **lines** worked too well; the raft pinned at Dimple Rock and the man found himself entangled in the lines. He was held underwater for some time before he and the boat washed free. Paddlers on the scene pulled him and the boat to shore and began CPR,

but had no success. On Saturday May 9 a customer with one of the state's most experienced outfitters fell out of her raft during a high-water (13,000 cfs) run of the New River's Lower **Keaney** Rapid. She washed onto a large boulder (**Flint Rock**) and pinned solidly. The combined efforts of several companies could not extricate her in time. On Saturday May 16 another rafting guest fell out of a raft in Upper Coliseum Rapid and drowned following a long swim. Water levels were moderate; the victim apparently recirculated in several holes.

Esopus Creek, New York

On June 6 New York's Esopus Creek was the setting for a frightful pinning and the desperate rescue attempt that followed. The action was witnessed by dozens of paddlers on the scene for the annual slalom races. With the river running bank-full, the races had **been** cancelled and paddlers were enjoying high water on this class II-III stream. The victim, **Gordon McKinney**, was paddling tandem with his wife accompanied by fellow club members from Rhode Island. As the group approached the take-out the **McKinney's** took on a good bit of water.

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SAFETY

Continuing on towards the take-out without **bailing**, they broached on a bridge pier. Their downstream lean did not save them; the pier was a steel girder and the boat folded instantly and settled in completely under water. Although the victim's wife was washed **free** at once, McKinney himself was pinned with terrific force between the bridge abutment and the canoe.

Realizing that someone was trapped inside the canoe, two **AMC** paddlers eddied out behind the bridge abutment to offer assistance. Climbing onto the framework of the bridge, they attempted to hold the victim's head above water. One of the rescuers used a knife to try and cut thigh straps and free **McKinney's legs**, but almost all of his body was underwater making it difficult to tell what was going on. Observers believe that the canoe folded despite the downstream lean because of the narrowness of the girder, and that the folding boat and girder combined to trap his legs. Eventually the river, which was surging 10-12 inches at a time, pushed McKinney under, and he lost consciousness.

As the two men under the bridge struggled against the rising water, a rope

was lowered down to them from the road-bed. It was hooked in, and after considerable communication problems force was applied from shore. The seat which the rope was fastened to broke and the line pulled loose, cutting the hand of one of the rescuers. A raft was lowered, and more manpower was brought to bear. They tried to give mouth to mouth resuscitation to the McKinney, who was by now mostly under water. Firefighters arrived, and a man rappelled down the abutment. A steel winch cable from a fire truck was attached to the boat. This powerful device pulled **the canoe** right up the abutment, out of the water, until McKinney could be freed. He was hauled to the top of the bridge where **CPR was initiated**. A faint **pulse was found**, and **he was** transported to a hospital where he died that night without regaining consciousness.

Bridge pilings are easy enough to **see** and avoid. Pinnings, while rare, are

frequent enough to cause paddlers to give them a wide berth. The way all the groups on the river pitched in was impressive. A lot of people put themselves on the line. Communication was difficult and better leadership might have helped get things done faster. But I'm not sure how you take charge and establish a chain of command with unrelated groups on short notice. When **firefighters arrive** they expect trouble and have a leader already picked. Paddlers have no such hierarchy. Certainly if the **McKinney's** had dumped their boat prior to continuing downstream they might not have lost control of their canoe; I suspect that the extra water made the pinning worse. But with the takeout close by, I'm not sure that their decision to "ride the river out" was unreasonable.

Richland Creek, Texas

In Texas, paddlers have enjoyed the best river running season in a decade. Dick Bowers, an experienced boater from

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the Dallas area, was running **Richland Creek** with his son Ben on Saturday, June 13 when they arrived "low water crossing" for County Road 30. **This** type of structure, common in arid areas, consists of a concrete berm built across the entire river which **allows** cars to cross in **low** to moderate flows. At high levels it looks and acts like a low head dam with a drop of 4-5 feet. The rest of the group portaged the drop. In a decision founded in ignorance

or overconfidence Dick and Ben did not scout; they just ran it. No downstream safety was in place. The canoe tipped, spilling both into the hydraulic.

The situation was desperate. Ben Bowers was trapped; his father washed free but apparently went back into the hydraulic to help his only son. Ben, still in his life jacket, floated free a short time later, face down and unconscious. He was picked up by other members of the party

who dove into the creek and with great difficulty swam him to shore. CPR was started without success. Dick Bowers, also with his life vest in place, was rolling sideways in the hydraulic like a barrel. His shorts had slid below his knees, hampering any efforts to swim or stand. There he stayed until a rescue squad arrived 30 minutes later. They strung a tagline across the river and a team member was able to use this line to wade into the hydraulic and retrieve the victim. A faint pulse was detected. CPR was initiated, but proved fruitless.

Lochsa River, Idaho

Western boating activity was greatly restricted due to a seven year drought. On July 3 two very experienced paddlers met death in Idaho. One of these fatalities occurred on the Class III-IV Lochsa River at the Surfing Wave. When the water is low, as it was then, this "wave" becomes a nasty hole. The victim, Paco Barrens, was paddling bow in a Tuppo Duo K-2. He was a Class V boater, but still very nervous about water and especially of being trapped in a kayak. The two were at their rear of the group when they elected

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SAFETY

to surf the hole. They got stuck and the victim popped his sprayskirt and jumped out. The kayak flipped, and his partner swam for shore.

On reaching solid ground, his partner looked for Barrens. She found to her horror that he was still in the hole! She threw him a line, but he was unconscious and did not respond. When he washed out of the hole moments later, she swam into the river, pulled him to shore, and started CPR. As she did this, she was able to attract the attention of a passing motorist who

sent for help. Assisted by her group, she maintained CPR for two hours until EMT's and a local outfitter arrived. The victim was carried across the river on a raft and taken to a hospital in Missoula; he died the following day. The survivor, whose heroic effort should be a model for any of us who find ourselves in similar circumstances, does not think that the hole was primarily responsible. She believes that either a blow to the head or panic may have caused him to swallow water and lose consciousness.

North Fork Payette, Idaho

At about the same time Jim Yetter, a guide for an outfitter on the Lochsa, died on the raucous, Class V "S-Turn" rapid of the North Fork of the Payette. The 1100 cfs level "about as easy as it gets" on this river, but it's still hard. He apparently became caught in a pourover and bailed out. He appeared stunned, and was drifting passively sideways when he washed into a partially-submerged log. His PFD caught on the log, pinning him solidly. One person believes that his neck may have been broken. He was retrieved by Alan Hamilton of Aire, who was lowered down in a cataraft to this inaccessible location. The victim's boat was found with the bow "accordioned", suggesting a high-speed impact with a rock.

Cherry Creek, California

There was a private rafting fatality on California's Class V+ Cherry Creek in Mid-July. Details are not fully worked out, but it appears that the victim was in a four-man raft on the "Miracle Mile" section. The raft broached against "Coffin Rock", spilling the entire party. Regrouping, they came up one short. The victim was found pinned under the rock.

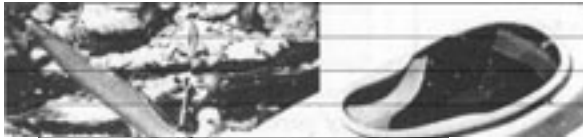
On a happier note I am pleased to report the rescue last April of veteran kayaker Paul Lozier, 61. He was running the rain-swollen Kayaderosseras Creek near Albany, New York with a friend when both became entangled with a nasty water-level strainer. Lozier was held under water for several minutes before being pulled to the surface and given mouth-to-mouth resuscitation by his quick-thinking son, Kelly Lozier, 22, who had been following the pair downriver by car. He was evacuated to a local hospital by firefighters where he was held overnight. His friend was treated and released. Lozier knew the river well, but the run is apparently notorious for its strainers and may have been too high for safe sport.

Reading this list over, I am shocked by the number of fatalities (15). There were (4) dam-connected deaths; each case revealed a cavalier attitude on the part of the victims. (2) others fall in the category of "Class Five Things"; the consequences of making errors in very difficult whitewater. (5) show the potential for serious problems in intermediate whitewater. In (2), inexperience was a key factor; there were (2) commercial deaths. Let's learn something from these tragedies: no matter what you are boating, never forget what you are dealing with! Keep alert, and stay safe.

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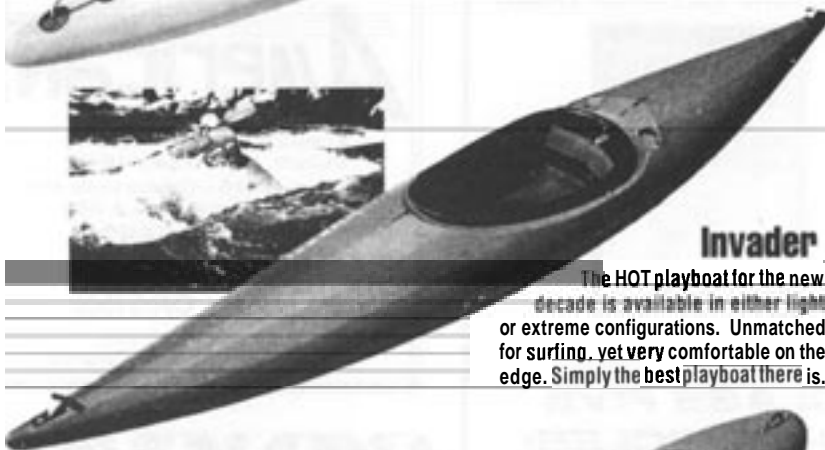
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Larry Vermeeren running Tunnel Falls, Gore Canyon, Colorado. Photo: **TIM BROWN**.

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Surviving the "Seven Sisters"

By IMMANUEL BRAVERMAN

I was resting comfortably, breathing deeply at a leisurely pace. Seated on a small step of a steep slab on river right, inches from a gentle eddy just upstream of the last falls on the "Seven Sisters" run on Quebec's Rouge river, I noticed my spray-skirt float by heading for the falls. The kayak safety guide for one of the raft companies recovered it for me. Mac Masson, head of the Propulsion raft company appeared on a cliff above and yelled over the roar of the falls— You OK? and on the affirmative shouts that he's going back to tell Barbara about it.

I've made it!

There was a small diagonal crack above me leading to a dirt filled ledge—a couple of class 4 climbing moves and I was on the portage path leading upstream. My Corsica appeared, carried by friendly guides followed by Barbara, carrying her Dancer. She hugged me, crying.

We were at the seal-entry cliff above the river; I notice my paddle beached on river left just upstream and another guide retrieved it for me. We portaged, me laboriously, the two of us one kayak at a time. For I am exhausted. Below the last falls we have a long rest, a lunch and hot tea. Barbara suggested that we continue portaging but I refused. I felt that if I didn't paddle the +500 meter, class III-IV rapid now, I would not have the courage to paddle again. We put in and continued happily to the takeout.

A week later, Barbara, our friend Derek, my wife Shirley and I returned minus the kayaks to the Nouveau Monde (New World) reception center and walked down to the falls. The water level was at least a foot lower, and the falls showed lots of jagged edges. We had never seen the falls in detail, only glimpses through the woods from the portage trail. Impressive! In retrospect, I was happy not to have seen the details before my swim. It would have been more difficult to keep calm and cool and concentrate on breathing and survival.

Though Gilles Fortin in his definitive Quebec guidebook described the falls as being a series of two falls followed by one drop, another falls and a final class V drop, this was not what I saw.

From the eddy at our usual por-

tage takeout, there is a short drop leading to a pool followed by two very closely spaced falls. After a very turbulent eddy on the right, there was a pool and a 12-foot falls, a pool, a falls, then a steep, turbulent and sharp turn left followed by a horizon line.

We walked downstream, some fifty feet above the river and the horizon line turned out to be another falls, below which the river gradually calmed down to pass the seal-entry cliff as a fast flowing current with only streaks of white. Finally, after a small entry drop, the river entered the pool (with eddies on both sides) above the last falls.

We didn't time the walk, but it took at least twenty minutes. The swim was much faster....

I judged the water level by the appearance of the put-in, and went down river under conditions not appropriate for a gentleman approaching his seventieth birthday.

Sunday, May 31, 1992. The rafting companies had begun to run the Seven Sisters only the week before. The water was still cold and we had our dry suits on. Family rapids, the put-in for the Seven Sisters looked great. First error of the day: I judged the water level by the appearance of the put-in, and went down river under conditions not appropriate for a gentleman approaching his seventieth birthday.

The unexpected happened at "Slice and Dice". I tripped, capsized, and my bombproof roll didn't materialize. I tried on my right side—couldn't setup. I tried on the left—again unsuccessfully. I was on a very turbulent eddy line and just couldn't roll. Finally, a disgraceful wet exit and a very long swim, through the "Washing Machine", through the "Surprise" below it and through the class II-III rapids below, all the way to a sandy island

bordering flat water.

Barbara appeared at my side—to catch up with me she paddled furiously and didn't even remember what the key passages were like. She suggested we take out at New World, a few hundred feet down river. I objected, firstly because of a long uphill portage and secondly, because that is about 4 miles from where our cars were at the takeout.

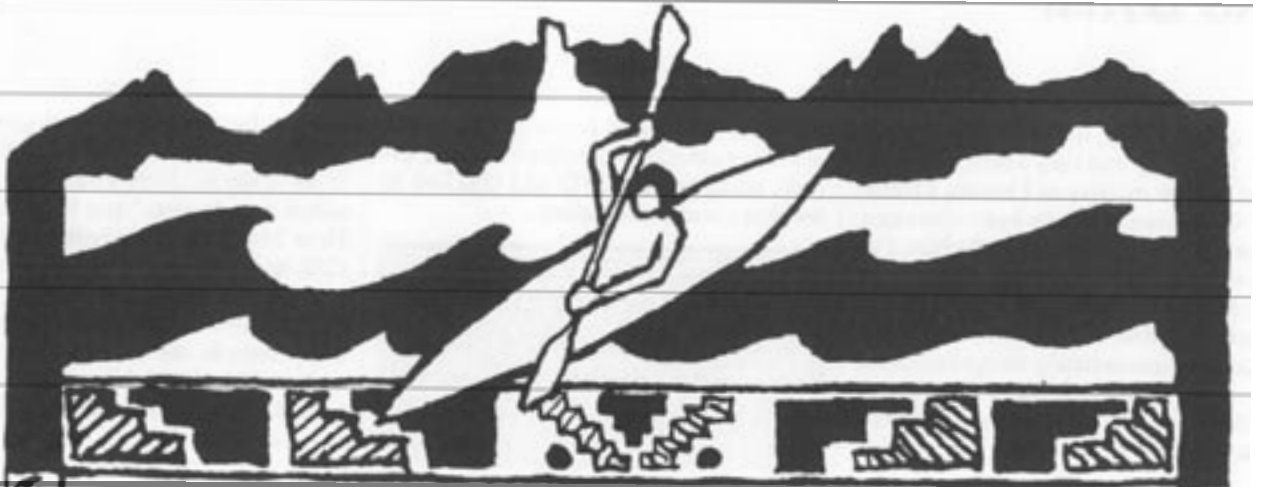
We continued on flat water to the eddy at the portage. The second error of the day—continuing before full rest and a few confidence building rolls and I was well on towards the third error of the day and the epic swim.

At medium water levels, the portage eddy forms on river-right at the beginning of a turn to the left. A gentle diagonal wave divides it from a very small drop leading below. A sharp, pyramidal rock sits on the shore in line with the gentle diagonal wave.

I approached what I thought was the usual gentle wave, and noticed that raft guides had discharged their clients above it; very unusual but it failed to ring the alarm in my brain. I cut through the diagonal to enter the eddy and execute a Duffeck. Crunch! I broached on that pyramidal rock totally submerged at this water level, and find myself stuck on a strong upstream lean! My desperate effort to change the lean fails and after a loud groan I am upside down again... and my roll is gone.

I bailed out hoping that a throw rope will materialize from the multitude of guides. Barbara came to get me but was unable to pull me into the eddy, and yelled to let go. I obeyed instantly. A rope landed some ten feet out of reach. Spectators yelled to let go of the paddle and swim—they didn't realize that I am a breaststroke swimmer, and that my legs were trying hard, and the paddle didn't slow me down. I realized that the swim through the falls was inevitable and was beginning to concentrate on survival.

Get into the middle of the vee and stay in it—check. Legs downstream—check. Inhale deep, slowly. Exhale to make room for next breath. White water covers my face. I feel a drop but do not remember having a sensation of a free fall. Another



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BIG SWIM

drop, then after a while the white mask is gone and I breathe, to be swept into more froth I come up and I see a falls. My brain reacts in slow motion: as I breath, I think: falls? One doesn't see falls from upstream, only a horizon line. Hey! I see the falls, I've gone through! I am in one piece! Hey! I see the falls, this means my head and my feet are not pointed forward! I execute an about turn and am immediately swept into more wild rides, exercising minimum movements to conserve oxygen and breathing when possible. At one point the interval between breaths becomes painfully long. I see white light above me but do not break through. Am I being recirculated? My spray skirt begins to travel down my legs and lodges itself around my knees. I dislodge it and swim downwards toward the darkness and then pop up clear. I recognize the seal-entry cliff above me. Uff! I've am still in one piece and I am close to the nice eddy! I've made it or almost! Now only the eddy where two guides are busy with their rafts.

A young lady guide saw me swim in and stand on wobbly legs in knee deep water. She came closer and asked

where I had come from. Her eyes grew as big as saucers upon hearing my answer and she rushed over, helped me to a the rock, unzipped my PFD and checked to see that I was indeed alive...

A young lady guide
saw me swim in and stand
on wobbly legs
in knee deep water.
She came closer and asked
where I had come from.
Her eyes grew as big
as saucers upon hearing
my answer...

Later Barbara told me of being chastised by some individual for "bringing me .. to this run, and "who is that man to you, anyway". She described how, when retrieving my kayak circulating in an eddy, she noticed in a panic a helmet floating

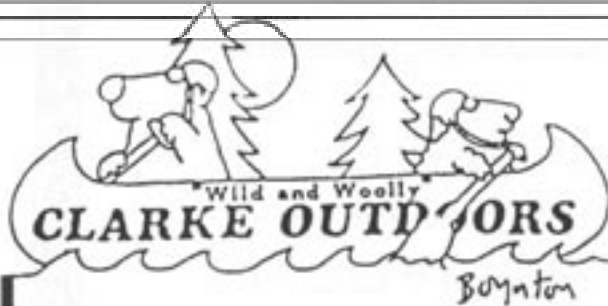
next to it and, until she recognized it as being a hockey type helmet used by the rafters, was afraid to look lest there be a body under it... How a nudist on river left asked if she's seen "that body" float by... How Marc Masson organized posses of CPR trained guides to locate me in the various eddies...

I've returned to the Seven Sisters twice since in my boat-at low water level on June 28 and at high level, with the sharp trianglerock sticking about 8-inches out of the water, on July 12. My roll and my confidence is back, thank you, and I have no plans to hang up my paddle.

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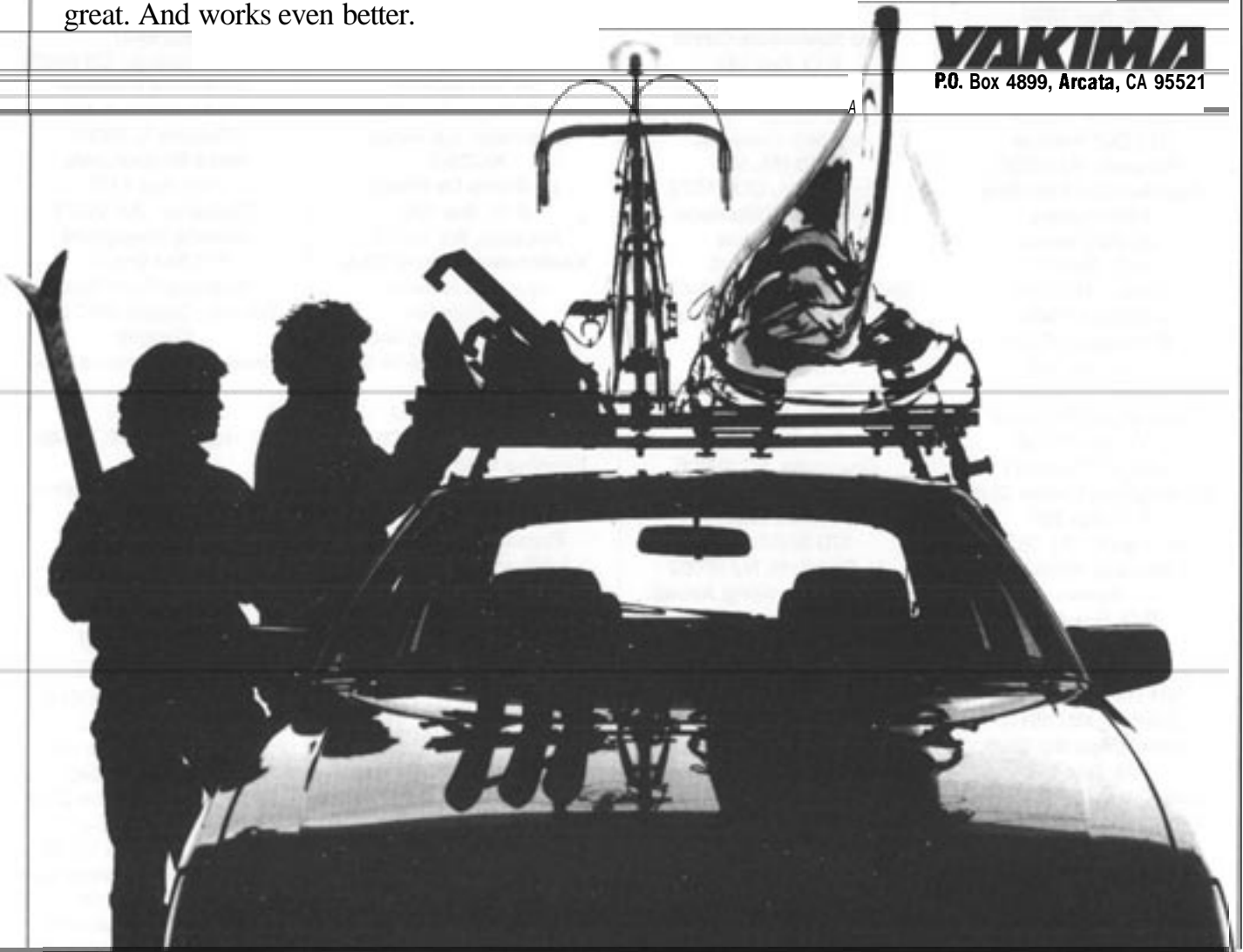
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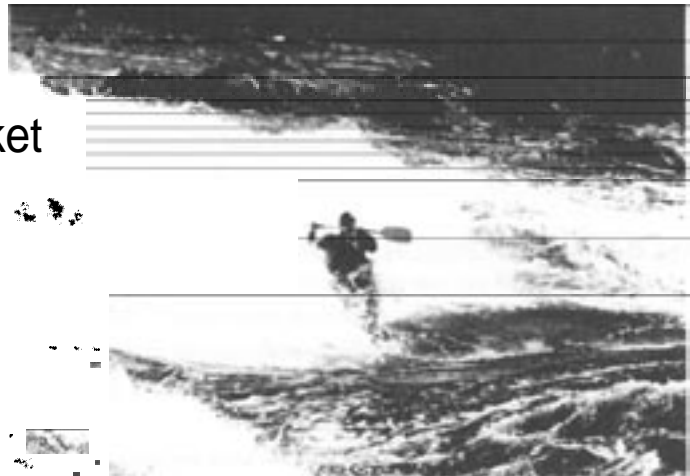
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Clearwater Basin basics

Rivers with a history of kicking butt

By **BOB GEDEKOH**
American Whitewater Editor

October 8, 1805. Clearwater River, Idaho

"As we were descending a rocky rapids at **the foot** of an island, on which some Indians were camped, one of the canoes struck a rock and wheeled around, then struck again and cracked the canoe and was near splitting her in two. Threw the steersman, Gass, overboard, who with **difficulty** got to the canoe again. She soon **filled** with water and hung on the rocks in a doleful situation. Some of the men on board could not swim, and those that could had no chance for the waves and rocks.

An Indian went out in a small canoe to their assistance. Our little canoe went out also and took **some of the load** and carried it to shore. We unloaded one of the other canoes and went into the rapid and took all of the load out of the canoe which was stove. All got to shore below the rapid and camped at dark. Found **everything** wet which was in the canoe that was stove. Some small articles lost."

Diary of Whitehouse, Member, Lewis and Clark Expedition.

June 25, 1985. South Fork Clearwater River, Idaho

"Midway through our run we were swept around a bend at great speed, only to be confronted by a river wide horizon line. There were **no eddies** and it was coming up fast. I dug in and managed to power my boat over the five foot ledge with enough momentum to escape the boil at the bottom. But my buddies were not so lucky.

For nearly a minute kayakers and kayakers were endoed and recirculated in the turbulence. Finally John **flushed** out, but Paul disappeared into the foam for another interminable thirty seconds before popping to the **surface about fifty** feet downstream. His boat recirculated for another five minutes.

An old lumbe jack, who had witnessed this performance from the road, joined us as we reassembled our gear on **the bank**.

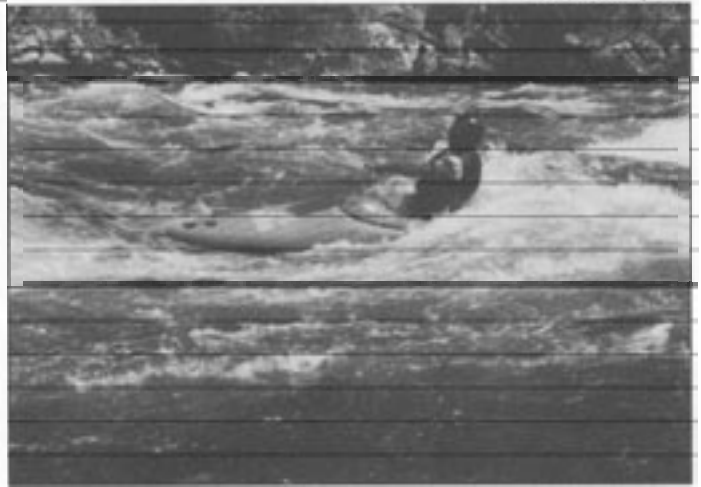
"That was quite a show! Ain't never seen the like!" he grinned. And then, "Tell me, have you boys ever done this before?"

"You mean this river?" I asked impatiently.

"No," he replied, without hesitation. "I mean whitewater in gen'ral. Looks like it be your first time!"

Diary of Bob Gedekoh, Member, 1985 Fun Dogs' Wild West Tour

Bob Gedekoh photo



Surfing a glassy wave on the Lochsa

The Clearwater Basin

And so the river flows.

Some things never change.

The whitewater of the Clearwater Basin has been kicking the white man's butt since Lewis and Clark first explored the region in 1805. No doubt it had been kicking the Indians' butts long before that.

The Flathead and Nez Perce, who inhabited north central Idaho, **utilized** canoes as transportation throughout the lower reaches of the Clearwater Basin. Apparently they were competent canoeists, but to reach their buffalo hunting grounds in Montana they judiciously chose to travel by foot and horseback up the **Lolo** trail, which parallels the turbulent Lochsa River.

Lewis and Clark paddled the Clearwater and traversed the rugged **Lolo** trail as well during their explorations; they considered it one of the most formidable and intimidating segments of their journey to the Pacific.

The Lochsa is but one of the Clearwater's four major tributaries. The others are the South Fork of the Clearwater, the Selway and the North Fork. Together, these rivers offer a virtual cornucopia of whitewater; with recreational opportunities to match every interest and skill level. The Clearwater basin offers river segments ranging from flat water through class 6, roadside runs and long wilderness trips, steep creeks and booming high volume rivers. **All** in the context of one of the west's most spectacular and least inhabited wilderness areas, a region with a colorful history as well.

The Clearwater basin is one of Idaho's premiere whitewater playgrounds; which is saying a lot, since Idaho contains some of the best whitewater in the nation. Moore and McClaran's Idaho Whitewater describes more than fifteen runs

Mike Bally photo



Continuous Class 3 fun on the Brushy **Fork** of the Lochsa.

in the basin, while Grant **Amaral's** definitive Idaho. The Whitewater State outlines more than twenty-five. And some of the smaller tributaries are still being explored.

The boating season in the Clearwater basin is a relatively long one. Generally, the boating is best in the spring and early summer when the snow in the Bitterroot and **Clearwater** Mountains is melting. The smaller tributaries usually peak in late May and June, but, as the waters recede, boaters can still find plenty of action on the larger branches, especially the Lochsa.

Each of the tributaries has something unique to offer whitewater enthusiasts. The Selway features one of the nation's premiere wilderness trips. Each day only one group is allowed put on the section of the river which traverses the Wilderness Area; the lottery generated permits for this run are among the most difficult to obtain in the country. But despair not, permits are not required to paddle other segments of the Selway or for the remainder of the rivers in the Clearwater basin, so there is plenty of the whitewater treasure for everyone.

Consider the Lochsa, a 60 mile long big booming whitewater roller coaster, located in a spectacular canyon with a convenient riverside shuttle. Essentially the Ocoee multiplied tenfold.

Those wanting to get away from the "Lochsa Crowd",

and I use that term loosely, since by eastern standards this river seems deserted, head toward **the North Fork**. Because **the North Fork** is the furthest away from the larger population centers, it is paddled the least, and although it reportedly features some fine pool drop class **III-IV** whitewater, quite often boaters find they have the river to themselves. But be forewarned, the area surrounding the **North Fork** is reportedly so unpopulated that many carry spare five gallon cans of **gas**, so that they don't get stranded.

Those looking for thrills head for the Golden Section of the South Fork, which at high water is said to be one of Idaho's most difficult roadside runs. But there is quality class **II-III** water on the lower South Fork as well, something to suit every taste. In this issue I can offer only a sample of the rivers of the Clearwater watershed, enough, to whet your appetite.

In upcoming issues of American Whitewater we **will be** featuring additional articles regarding rivers in the Clearwater basin, in particular editor Chris Koll's account of his recent expedition on the Selway, as well as an account by Grant **Amaral** of his descent of **Lolo** Creek, said to be one of the finest wilderness steep creeks in the west.

There is still a lot of white gold in the Clearwater Basin that we have yet to mine, but we have sampled enough to know that we want more.

South Fork Clearwater River, Golden Run

River levels really do make a difference!

Profound, huh?

But I don't mean a little difference. I mean a great, big difference!

I have experienced the Golden Section of the **South Fork** of the Clearwater two times, at radically different flows, and I feel as if I have paddled two entirely different rivers. I can not think of any river whose character changes at different water levels as much the South Fork.

The first time I tackled the Golden Section, or to be truthful, that it tackled me, **was in** 1985. On that occasion the river was running at 1200 cfs, which is considered to be a moderately high level by the local boaters. Moore and **McClaran** consider the Golden Section of the South Fork to be one of Idaho's toughest runs; and at higher levels the river merits that description.

Actually, my friend, Ohioan John Bolger, and I were not particularly impressed by the river as we scouted it from Route 14 on the way up the canyon to the put-in. Oh, we could **see** that the river offered steep, near continuous whitewater action along most of its 13 miles, but for the most part it appeared to us to be class **3+** without much technical difficulty. Dodging obstacles didn't appear to be much of a problem... scarcely a rock was visible in the winding ribbon of white just over the bank. And the gradient was said to be only 80 feet per mile, give or take a few depending on where one chose to launch.

Mostly there appeared to be lots of wave trains, **punctu-**

ated by holes, but these appeared to be quite punchable. Note that the key phrase in all of this is "appeared to be". It was only at the first drop, Coyote Falls, that we spotted a specific menace, a rock weir with definite pinning potential. Sobered by the fact that Chuck **Rollins**, a well-known boater, had drowned in this rapid, we decided to launch midway through Coyote Falls, below the rock jumble. We figured we could run it later if we wanted, when we came back to retrieve the truck

I had already climbed into my kayak and was ready to go by the time that Farmer John carried his boat to the river's edge. It was a hot day and we had been driving a long time.

"I'll just bouncedownstreamtothefirsteddy," I shouted nonchalantly above the din. "We can draw up a game plan there." I figured I'd paddle a few hundred feet and find a nice friendly wave to surf until John was ready.

You probably can guess the rest of the story. About a mile downstream and several spine-tingling minutes later I managed to spin into a microeddy at **the edge** of the torrent. I was still shaking, huffing and puffing when wide-eyed John bounced into the eddy beside me. I noticed that his knuckles were every bit as white as mine.

In the animated discussion that followed we both conceded that perhaps we had seriously underestimated the difficulty of the ten mile run from the road. I have since learned that this is often the case with Idaho's roadsiderivers, the North Fork of the **Payette** being another example. The holes, which looked innocuous from the front seat of the truck, packed a real wallop, and eddies were few and far between, offering little respite from the turbulent wavy gravy.

So enlightened, we peeled back out into the current, resolving to paddle as cautiously as possible and to pause in every eddy we could find to facilitate boatscouting. This philosophy served us well, at least until the incident at the riverwide hole described in the introduction of this article. There was just no avoiding that.

And so it was with some trepidation that I returned to the South Fork this summer, detuned by a mellow and blissful week on the Selway. But as we drove up the canyon to the **put-in** I was lulled, once again, into a false sense of relaxation. As a result of the less than stellar **snowpack** in Idaho this year, the South Fork was running a just under 600 cfs, the lowest flow recommended in **either** guide to **the area**. But there weren't many other options, and we had not traveled 2000 miles for naught. Low water be damned, we decided to give it a **try**.

This time there were plenty of rocks showing; in fact it was apparent that we would be **paddling** down a very technical maze. But there were **bizillions** of eddies and pools as well. Besides, we fancied ourselves to be experienced eastern steep creekboaters... here we should feel quite at home. By the time we reached the put-in several members of our party were yawning and scratching their heads. Hell, the damned thing hardly looked worth doing. I was hard pressed to explain to them what



Approaching a big one on the Lochsa...one of Idaho's premier whitewater playgrounds.

the fuss was all about.

Coyote Falls answered that question definitively less than a **minute** after **we hit** the water. That's all the time it took for the river to snare its first victim.

One of the more stalwart members of our party, Dean Fairburn, had taken the lead. He rounded a bend and found himself descending a steep water staircase which terminated **with a blind ledge**. There were two chutes pouring over the ledge; Dino had to make a snap decision... to take what was at the base of door number one or take what was at the base of door number two.

He chose door number two, and soon found himself pinned vertically with water pouring over his head and shoulders. Fortunately, he was able to extract himself from his boat, which eventually **kicked** loose and lodged against a boulder not far downstream. Before long boat and boater were reunited, but we were **all** considerably sobered by this close call and everyone quickly developed a healthy respect for the South Fork that was sustained throughout our ultra technical four hour descent.

What **the South Fork** lacked in oomph that day, it gained in subtle treachery. Virtually every member of our group recounted some harrowing experience at the take out; we all agreed that the run had taken our **creekin'** skills to the limit.

My close call came bouncing atop a turbulent pillow against the face of an undercut rock on river right. Don't ask me how I got there; it certainly wasn't my idea. I spent about a year and a half trying to pull myself back into the free current without flipping, thoroughly appreciating the virtues of the large volume Corsica I was paddling.

I learned later that I had not been alone; New Yorker **Caron** Stanford, who witnessed the fiasco from an upstream eddy, reported that a very animated and apparently bemused otter was not fifteen feet away from me, apparently **thoroughly** enjoying my predicament.

"He looked like he thought you had come to play," **Caron** laughed later, though I can assure you that playing with

Mike Bally photo



Paddling through a mini-canyon on White Sand Creek...a wilderness tributary of the Lochsa.

otters was not terribly high on my agenda during those tense moments. I was more concerned about become fodder for trout!

By the end of the day I was convinced. Be it running high or be it running low, the Golden Section of the South Fork is just no place for sissies.

South Fork of the Clearwater, Lower Run

Downstream of the Golden take-out the South Fork continues to provide plenty of whitewater action. While we were occupied on the Golden Section, a number of the strong intermediate and advanced boaters in our group tackled this section. Even at low water, they reported that the run was challenging and fun. Here the river tends to be less continuous and can be readily scouted from the road, allowing boaters to choose an appropriate launch site in consideration of their desires and skill levels.

There are several lengthy rapids here, and, at least at low water, a number of technical ones as well, but the river is pool drop in character. At higher levels it might not be a bad place to test the waters... and your skill level, before moving upstream in search of the Gold.

Local Color

While in the vicinity, take time to visit the riverside town of Kooskia. The name of the town is likely a permutation of the Nez Perce phrase Koos Keich Keich, which means clear water. This is an authentic western town, catering to the needs of ranchers and loggers, with several old fashioned dry good stores selling cowboy boots and hats and hunting and logging gear.

As befits a small western town these stores serve a multitude of functions, on the day that we visited local voters were registering at the counter, all the while hotly debating the merits of Bush versus Perot versus Clinton. After listening to their animated discussion, I can safely report that the rural

Idahoans are every bit as dissatisfied with the electoral options this year as the rest of us.

There are a couple of rowdy cafes and bars here as well where you can get an authentic taste of the wild west in more ways than one.

Take note as well, the supermarket in Kooskia is a good place to stock up on supplies... believe me, such amenities are few and far between in this part of the world.

Cleanwater Chow

'While at dinner, an Indian fellow very impertinently threw a halfstarved puppy into my plate, by way of derision for my eating dogs, and laughed very heartily at his own impertinence. I was so provoked by his insolence that I caught the puppy and threw it with great violence at him, struck him in the breast and face, seized my tomahawk, and showed him by signs if he repeated his insolence, I would tomahawk him! The fellow withdrew, apparently much mortified, and I continued my repast on dog without further molestation.'

Diary of Lewis, May 5 1806

"Men all cold and hungry. Killed a second colt, which we all supped heartily on, and thought it fine meat."

Diary of Clark, September 16, 1805

The Selway

Judging by their diaries, Lewis and Clark were not fussy eaters. During the time they spent in the Cleanwater basis, they could ill afford to be. When a horse went lame, it went into the pot. And their dogs didn't fare any better. Meal planning was easy, they simply wolfed down their pets!

Jenny Fairburn and Kitty Toscano, who did the meal planning for our five day trip on the Selway, were not as fortunate. Packing food for 16 normal people would have been hard enough. But preparing a menu that would satisfy each and every member of our crew was nothing less than a nightmare.

In every respect except this one, ours was an amicable and agreeable party. We agreed upon the shuttle arrangements (250 miles) ... we paid \$30 a head to have it done. We agreed on our pace on the river... leisurely, with plenty of time to fish, hike and relax. The choice of campsites, the necessity of scouting rapids, the time we got up and time we hit the sack... none of these things caused the slightest bit of consternation. But in regards to matters dietary... Ouch!!!

Actually, all things considered, Kitty and Jenny did an amazing job. Jenny is a down home southerner, an excellent cook who graduated from the Fry It in Butter and Douse it with Sugar School of Culinary Arts. Kitty, on the other hand, owns one of the largest health food stores in western Pennsylvania.. an organic vegetarian who actually believes that Tofu and soy milk taste good. But the divergence of opinion regarding the appropriate preparation of chow between Kitty and Jenny was only the tip of the iceberg.

By my reckoning our party included four junk food addicts, two reformed junk food addicts (currently subsisting on rice cakes and Nutrasweet), three vegetarians, one macrobiotic, lactose intolerant seaweed eater, six low fat fanatics and three old fashioned meat and potato types. I know, that adds up to more than sixteen people. But some people were more than one thing! From the outset it was clear that meal preparation would be interesting... to say the least.

But Kitty and Jenny managed the impossible... they satisfied everyone. Prior to our departure a menu was circulated among the participants, then modified to accommodate the expressed concerns of the divergent groups. A tightly controlled squadron of three did all of the shopping in Missoula, while the remainder of the party was purposely distracted by other preparatory tasks.

On the river a team was assigned to prepare each meal, including a representative of each of the major dietary minority groups. Meat was cooked separately. **Mayonnaise**, butter and salad dressings were added last. Chocolate, corn chips and cookies were made available to those who indulge, and hidden from those who do not, but would very much like to.

And finally, and perhaps most critically, there was plenty of beer to whet everyone's appetite. Interestingly enough, there was universal agreement about the beer. As long as it was cold and it was wet, it was wonderful.

The Selway... Wilderness Wonderland

As wonderful as the Selway experience itself. The most remote of the **Clearwater** tributaries, the 46 mile long wilderness section of the Selway is indisputably one of finest whitewater trips in the nation. **The Selway**, which flows through the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area, has been designated a Wild and Scenic River.

During the optimal boating season, from late May through July; the Forest Service permits only one party of sixteen boaters to launch each day. The odds of drawing a permit in the lottery are said to be less than one in thirty per individual, making **the Selway** one of **the most** difficult rivers to access in the country.

What makes **the Selway** so special? Not the whitewater... at the usual levels the run is class III-IV, entertaining but not exceptional. Rather it is the river environment, which is one of **the most** pristine in the nation. If I were asked to choose **one word** to describe the Selway, I would, without hesitation, opt for the word "Green".

The Selway does for the color green what the Grand Canyon does for the colors orange and red. Hence the Colorado, which flows through the Canyon is a Kodachrome kind of place. But the Selway, which features fauna of every imaginable shade of green, just begs to be photographed with Ectachrome.

Firs, cedars and ponderosa pines direct one's attention past the craggy mountainsides to the sky above. In late May wild flowers of every shape and hue line the trails which emanate



A class 4 section of Idaho's Brushy Fork

from each of the riverside campsites. The air is ripe with the **fragrance** of the pines and flowering plants. The Selway is a botanist's dream.

And perhaps a herpetologist's dream as well. Nearly every day members of our party spotted rattlesnakes along the river.

But, after the initial shock, no one seemed to mind. At least they didn't mind enough to forgo our daily five to ten mile hikes up the spectacular side canyons and mountainsides.

In short, everything you ever heard about the Selway is true. Paddling the Selway is a unique whitewater experience, and even if it takes ten years to luck into a permit, the river is worth the wait.

Indian Wars

"After the engagement between General Howard and Chief Joseph near Stites, the Indians retreated to Weippe. They arrived July 15, 1877.

At Weippe the Indians held a war council. Some of the Indians, including Joseph, wanted to negotiate a peace treaty. Others, particularly those who thought they might be hanged for murder, wanted to continue the fight. They were faced with deciding whether they should negotiate a peace, flee Canada, or seek aid from the Flathead and Crow, who had always been their friends. The Nez Perce, particularly Looking Glass, had always been on the friendliest terms with the white people in Montana and the Crow, and had every reason to believe that they would experience no difficulty there, a hope that led to bitter disappointment.

Joseph's band consisted of about 250 men, 40 women and children and two thousand head of horses. They followed the Lolo trail (along the Lochsa)... which was choked with fallen timber. The Indians jammed their horses along, breaking legs and leaving the crippled and dying animals on the trail."

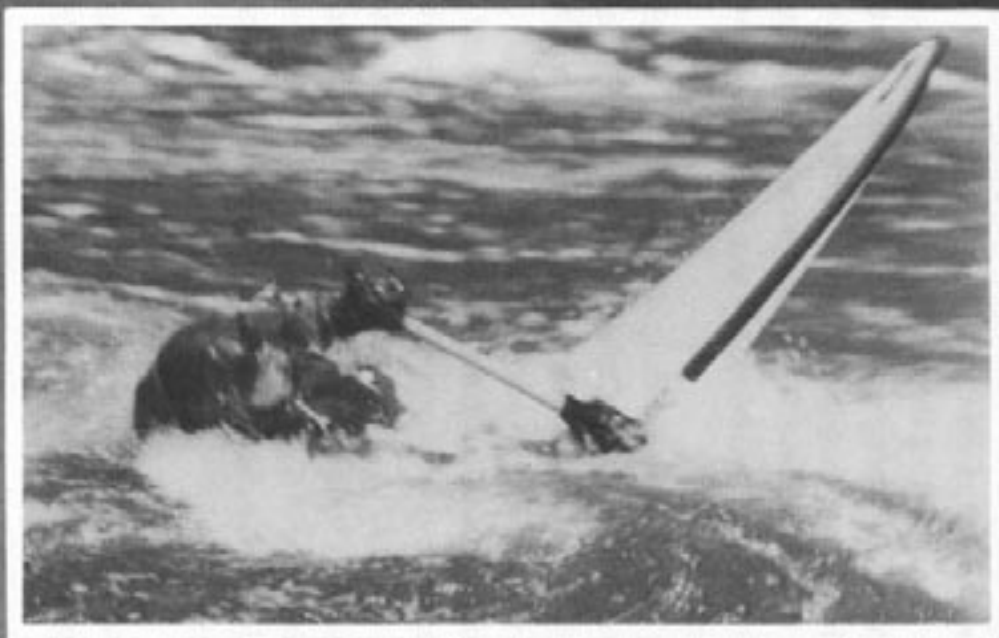
from The Lolo Trail by Ralph S. Space

The Lochsa

By all accounts the frantic trek the Nez Perce made along

Penobscot River Boatworks

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the Lolo Trail during the Indian war of 1877 was a brutal one. Not surprisingly, Native Americans have not forgotten the injustices inflicted upon Chief Joseph and his people.

Small wonder that, even after one hundred years, once in a while they seek a small measure of revenge. So my friend Ronnie discovered several years ago while hitchhiking the Lochsa shuttle. The road follows the Lochsa along its entire length, approximating the course of the Lolo trail. Usually there is a fair amount of traffic, **so** Ronnie, who is usually very conscientious about such matters, had decided to forgo setting a shuttle and take his chances finding comfort in the company of strangers. After a long day playing on the river, he climbed the banks, put **on his** best Good Ole Southern Boy Grin and stuck out **his** thumb.

Before long his efforts were rewarded, a pickup filled with Native Americans pulled over, and he figured he was set.

We do not know whether these were descendants of the very Nez Perce who had suffered on this very route a century before and we do not know whether Ronnie looks like General Howard, but we do know that Richie was about to go for the shuttle ride of his life.

Since there was no room for Ronnie in the cab he climbed into the bed of the truck and they were off. Ronnie had carefully explained to them that he was parked at the Wilderness Gateway campground, an easy landmark to spot, **so** he was surprised when the truck careened past it without even slowing down. First Ronnie tapped on the window, hoping to attract the attention of his benefactors. but the truck sailed on. Soon he waved his arms, but to no avail. Finally, he started to yell and pound on the bed of the truck.

The driver of the truck and his passengers paid little attention to the distraught paleface to their rear, in fact, it seemed to Ronnie peering through the window that they were having one hell of a good time. Soon Ronnie came to realize that they were enjoying one hell of a good gag, and that he was the brunt of that joke.

The pickup soared up the mountain along the Lochsa, past its origin where the Crooked Fork and White Sand Creeks meet, and up and over **Lolo** pass, accomplishing in minutes what had taken Chief Joseph and his band many days. Now Ronnie found himself headed down the mountain toward Missoula, Montana, more than thirty miles from where he wanted to be.

We can not say how far the Native Americans intended to transport their captive, or what the intended to do with him when they got there, because eventually, when they were forced to slow down on a curve to about twenty miles and hour, Ronnie bailed out.

And, as the pickup roared on down the road, its occupants hooting and howling, Ronnie pondered the plight of Chief Joseph, then philosophically stuck out his thumb again.

The Lochsa... Whitewater Playground

It is no wonder that the Lochsa is one Idaho's favorite



The Brushy Fork...a turbulent staircase.

whitewater playgrounds. **Its very name says it all**, "Lochsa" is the Flathead word for "rough water". The river features more than twenty miles of pool drop class 4 whitewater and, for the less experienced, more than thirty miles of class 3. Shuttles are a simple matter, Route 12 parallels the river along its entire course, in fact most of the rapids can be scouted from the seat of the shuttle wagon.

Some might argue that the proximity of the road detracts from the ambience of the Lochsa, but no one will deny that this is still a spectacular river valley, in many respects comparable to that of its sister, the Selway. Rugged mountains define the tower on both sides of the river and stately cedar groves and inviting hot springs are scattered along its course.

Deer and elk are **so** plentiful that driving after dark requires considerable caution. Moose are frequently spotted in the upper limits of the run, and recently there have been unverified reports of wolf sightings. The Forest Service maintains a number of campgrounds along the river. The one at Warm Springs is popular with boaters because of its proximity to the Jerry Johnson Hot Springs, a delightful natural spa where boaters can nurse their aching muscles after a strenuous day or river running. The campground at Wilderness Gateway is also popular because it is located near the middle of the class 4 section of the river.

The Lochsa is a big river and **so** has a long boating season. Flows generally peak in late May or June at about 11,000 cfs depending on weather and snowpack, but the river remains navigable through much of the summer. At higher levels there are long trains of rolling haystacks, explosion waves and, for the unwary, an occasional megahole. The river is pool drop and **so**, at moderate levels, is **reasonably benign**. There are literally thousands of surfing waves of every shape and size. At high water the rapids flow into one another and swims are said to be long and unpleasant.

The 22 mile stretch of class 4 water with an average gradient of about 35 fpm lies sandwiched between two class 3 sections, the upper a 20 mile run with a gradient of 28 fpm, the lower a 15 mile run with a gradient of 19 fpm. Since the road

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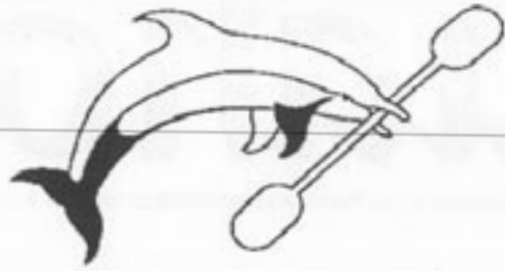
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follows the river, it is possible to put-in and take-out almost anywhere. Although Route 12 is well maintained, there has been little development along the river; gas and groceries are available only at Lowell, where the river joins the Selway, and at the tiny community of Powell, near the river's origin. Several raft companies operate on the river and it is popular with private rafters as well, but the raft traffic is not so heavy as to be annoying.

On the Lochsa there is more than enough space and excitement to go around.

1806. Lochsa River. Idaho

"Last evening the Indians entertained us by setting the fir trees on fire. They place a good number of dried limbs near the trunk, which when set on fire creates a very sudden and intense blaze from bottom to top of these tall trees. They are beautiful in this situation at night. The exhibition reminded me of a display of fireworks. The natives told us that their object in setting the trees on fire was to bring fair weather for our journey."

"I observed a tippet worn by Hohhostillpilp, which was formed of human scalps and ornamented the thumbs and fingers of several men which he had slain in battle."

Day of Lewis, 1806

The Lochsa Tributaries

The Lewis and Clark expedition was on its way back east when the Indians entertained them with the fir tree fireworks. Frustrated by persistent spring snows and heavy brush along the river, Lewis and Clark had spent a number of days at the Indian's encampment, waiting for the snows to melt and for guides to become available.

In his book The Lolo Trail author Ralph Space recounts an Indian claim that Clark fathered a child by a Nez Perce woman who was a sister of Chief Red Grizzly. This red haired Indian, who was named Tzi-Kao-Tza, reportedly was proud of his heritage. As an adult he would, "Straighten his body to his full height and strike his chest, exclaiming as he did so, 'Me Clark'".

With this in mind one might conjecture that perhaps the patience of the Indians with their guests was wearing thin, especially if igniting the trees really was intended to hasten their departure. Considering the misery that the whites were eventually to bring to their people, they would have done well to have tied the eaters of puppy dogs to those firs before setting them ablaze.

It is hard to imagine what Smokey the Bear would have had to say about the antics of the explorers' hosts. Fires still rage across this portion of Idaho on a regular basis. Some are fought aggressively, in fact the national school for fire jumpers is located over the Lolo Pass near Missoula. Others are allowed to burn, arguably leading to a healthier forest due to the clearing of underbrush.

Evidence of this approach is apparent in the Selway

basin, where many of the trunks of the large Ponderosa Pines exhibit old black scorch marks, though otherwise they seem none the worse for the wear. Life in these recently burned areas seems particularly diverse, with wild flowers of every shape and hue blooming in profusion.

Large tracts of the forest surrounding several of the Lochsa tributaries has also been denuded, though not by fire, but rather by man. Patches of clear cut forest were visible when we paddled the Brushy Fork and White Sand Creek, two runs located near the very top of the Lochsa watershed. In spite of this deforestation, challenging these small alpine tributaries remains a scenic treat as well as a genuine adventure.

White Sand Creek

Just getting to put-in for the lower run on the White Sand required nearly an hour of four wheeling through a serpentine, steep maze of logging roads that featured some spectacular views of the snow covered peak of Elk Mountain, part of the Bitterroot Range. We soon discovered that the White Sand shuttle was not as straightforward as the maps in the guidebooks might suggest; apparently logging access roads have been added to the system recently. A recent set of topographic maps proved to be a godsend while negotiating this shuttle.

On the way an enormous bear dashed up the road ahead of the car, moving at least twenty-five miles an hour, since there was no way we could keep up with him on the sculpted gravel road. Would observing this bear at close range have been as amusing had we not been in the safety of the shuttle vehicle?

Perhaps not. The French trapper Lolo, for whom the trail and creek are named, died a slow and painful death after a cranky bear that he had wounded nearly tore his leg off.

Several deer and elk foraged along the road as well, as did a plump snowshoe hare.

We paddled the bottom 16 miles of the White Sand to its junction with the Crooked Fork, there forming the Lochsa proper near Powell. The Lochsa at Lowell was running about three feet; at this level the flow on White Sand appeared to be low to moderate. This was early June of a very low snowpack year, other popular Lochsa tributaries, including Fish Creek, had already dropped to unrunnable levels.

White Sand is a wilderness run; the overall gradient is 70 fpm. But this is not evenly distributed, since the tiny creek is considerably steeper and more technical on the first several miles near the put-in than in the miles of class 2 water that lead to the take-out. The most challenging section of the run is at the top, we took turns leading, boat scouting the drops from the small eddies, ever vigilant for strainers. Fortunately we were able to find a way around all of these, but at higher levels fallen timber would clearly be a significant hazard here.

White Sand Creek flows through an intricate mini-canyon with waterfalls tumbling in from the sides, a place of intimate beauty but, even during a mid afternoon in June, a good

place to get a chill. By the time we reached the White Sand take-out most of us were shivering, having paddled in the shade for several hours.

At the takeout we negotiated the remnants of a river wide fish weir which had been destroyed during a recent burst of high water. While the shuttle wagon was being retrieved we visited the salmon spawning station at the **take-out**; workers there told us that the weir had been worth \$100,000. **All** to artificially assist the fish in doing what used to come naturally. Ah, yes... Your tax dollars at work!

It was nearly dark by the time the shuttlers returned to the take out and the boats were loaded and everyone was quite exhausted. Fortunately the tiny restaurant located in the Lochsa Lodge, located in nearby Powell, was still open, and soon our batteries were being recharged with generous portions of steak and home made pie. A menagerie of stuffed animals peered at us from the walls as we ate; this facility serves as the headquarters for an active hunting operation during the fall and winter, when elk hunters charter guides and horses for multi day trips into the high country.

The Lochsa Lodge has an authentic feel to it and is well worth visiting. The operation includes a small grocery store and gas station, a bar and several rustic cabins available to rent. During the summer a small raft company also makes its headquarters there.

Brushy Fork

Though located within a few miles of White Sand Creek, the Brushy Fork of the **Lochsa** has a distinctly different character. We anticipated that it would take nearly an entire day to make this 13 mile wilderness run; so we were quite surprised when we rounded a sharp bend and found ourselves at the take-out, less than three hours after putting on. Not that paddling the Brushy Fork was easy, these were not easy hours spent drifting along gawking at the birds and **bees**.

The overall gradient of the Brushy Fork is said to be 51 fpm, but once again it is not evenly distributed. In this case the flat water **lies near** the top of the run. We thought the water level on the Brushy Fork marginally low with the Lochsa at the Lowell gauge reading 2.5, but we encountered a number of unfortunately placed strainers **along** the creek's twisting course that could cause serious problems at higher levels. Most of these strainers and **logjams were** located in the class I and II water that extends several miles below the put-in. Ten of these were river wide, necessitating portages of variable length through the underbrush where the creek lived up to its name.

This situation led to characteristic grumbling about a "kayaking trip from hell" from my Managing Editor and companion on this venture, Chris Koll. I attempted to distract him by pointing out and identifying the many species of alpine flowers growing along the banks of the Brushy Fork, but this seemed to

do little to ease his pain.

I would make clever observations like "The Mariposa Lily is the state flower of Utah," or "The blossoms of the Syringa and the **Bunchberry** look very much the same, except one has five petals and the other only four," To this he would only snort.

Some **folks** just don't appreciate the finer things.

Fortunately once the gradient increased and the run assumed a **class IV character** the strainers posed less of a problem. The swifter current in these sections apparently sweeps the trees to the sides of the stream, lodging them in positions more or less parallel to the flow.

Nonetheless rounding the acute bends in the river in the midst of swift difficult whitewater proved downright unnerving. Fortunately we were in the company of **Mike** Bailey, an accomplished Pittsburgh paddler who was in a feisty mood and willing and able to act as our probe.

From a bouncing micro eddy atop a steep serpentine drop, "Is that a tree down there?... Can we get around it?... Catch the eddy above it to the left?..."

And then the response, reminiscent of a certain famous cereal commercial, "Let **Mikey** try it..."

Without **Mikey** our transit time on the Brushy Fork might **have been** quite a bit greater, especially since the creek lives up to its name and scouting from the banks is less than a treat. In river running, as in all sorts of adventures, a good guide can certainly make the difference between an "interesting" versus a "miserable" experience.

June 13, 1806... Brushy Fork Headwaters

"Today we said farwell to our Nez Perce guides. It is but justice fosay that are the most friendly, honest and ingenious people that we have seen in the course of our travels..."

Diary of Gass, Lewis and Clark Expedition
Clearwater Memories

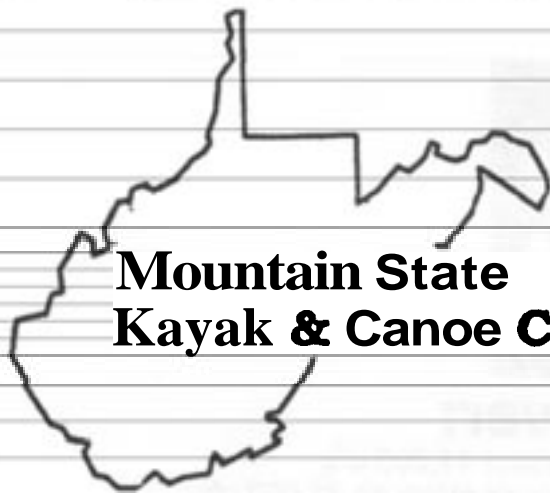
Lewis and Clark started their expedition in St. Louis in May of 1804. They did not finish their explorations until September of 1806. By the time they returned they had been presumed dead.

History records their route, their observations and the hardships they endured. But did they enjoy themselves? Did they have fun?

The historical record does not say, but I like to think that they did.

Considering the quality of the environment of the Clearwater watershed, it is hard to imagine that they didn't at least appreciate the wonder of place.

Today, the **Clearwater** basin still beckons whitewater adventurers to north central Idaho. Those who answer that call will not be disappointed.



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What River:

- *has an average flow of about 11,000 cfs;*
- *is free-flowing, and has discharges as much as 33,000 cfs;*
- *has in its most popular section, twice the gradient of the Grand Canyon;*
- *contains five class IV or better rapids within a four-mile section;*
 - *provides a home for osprey and eagles, and has*
 - *hosts national bass-fishing tournaments;*
 - *has three national presidents buried on its banks;*
 - *has a ten-lane, high speed shuttle route and;*
- *runs directly through the center of a major east coast city [and state capital]?*



A:

Urban whitewater on the James River

By CHARLES V. WARE

Meteorologists have speculated that the 1969 Hurricane Camille produced more rain, in one spot, within a 24-hour period, than has fallen on earth within recorded history. Nelson County, Virginia was devastated by this natural disaster, and more than one hundred of her residents died in massive floods which swept the Tye and Piney Rivers, tributaries of Virginia's James River.

As the flood crest passed Virginia's capital, Richmond, it released a great river from the constraints which had been imposed by hydropower dams and diversions. A century's worth of sedimentation, debris accumulation, and vegetation overgrowth in formerly dewatered channels of the James vanished overnight. Hydropower dams were breached, and the James was released from diversion canals.

Richmond grew from an Algonquin trading village at the foot of the falls of the James, to industrial seaport. George Washington, and others, envisioned Richmond as the terminus of the transcontinental canal system extending to the Rocky Mountains. His James River and Kanawha Canal Company constructed the first of America's great canal systems westward, towards the Blue Ridge. Although a water link was never completed

to the West Virginia's Kanawha River, and thence the Ohio, the canal carried ore to Richmond's foundries, and grains to her mills for export abroad. Immediately prior to the Civil War, Richmond was America's

War's destruction and postwar economic stagnation saw Richmond eclipsed by other cities, including many in the south. Ironically, Richmond thereby escaped the fate of America's "rust belt"

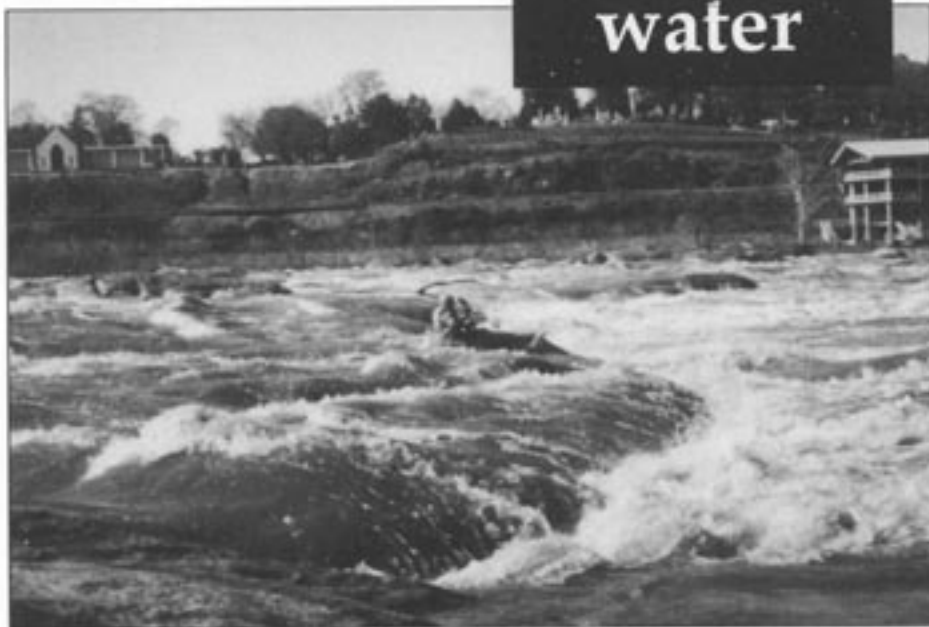


The James River at extremely low water flowing through the center of Richmond.

third wealthiest city, the leading port for grain exports, among the top in manufacturing. More than 11,000 industrial workers toiled in factories along the banks of the James by 1861.

industrial centers and has enjoyed a modest renaissance in today's post-industrial America. Factories along the James are being converted into residential condominiums, have been transformed into

Urban white water



headquarters facilities for multi-national corporations, and in the notable instance of the old Tredegar Iron Works are to be developed into a museum complex on the scale of Henry Ford's Greenfield Village.

Another component of the modern transformation of the James was the implementation, in the late 'sixties, of wastewater treatment for municipal and industrial wastes. The James River was a fetid sewer, in and below the City of Richmond, until a system of truck sewer connectors was completed in 1974. Almost miraculously, anadromous fish, such as herring and striped bass, returned to the falls of the James, and in less than two decades fish have returned in such great numbers that, on any given day, many scores of fishermen may be seen along the riverbanks. Richmond hosted the national Bass Masters tournament in 1989 and 1990.

Most American Whitewater readers will be little interested in bass fishing, but the cost of federally-mandated anadromous fishery restoration has been the primary bar to reactivation of the hydro facilities knocked out by Hurricane Camille. The elements that make the James attractive to hydro developers, flow and gradient, also create a haven for whitewater boating.

Indeed, here is found the nation's best urban whitewater. Although a modest commercial rafting operation has been in existence since the late 1970's, the James has not achieved the level of recognition it has deserved, and is generally under-utilized.

The James River's major urban whitewater rival would have to be Washington D.C.'s Potomac. The Class VI Great Falls, and the Potomac's Little Falls are, together, rather less interesting than the lower Section of the James in Richmond. The Potomac is dirtier than the James, and is degraded by incessant low-level jet traffic operating out of Washington's National Airport. The climb into Mather Gorge is arduous and dangerous, and the walk out below Little Falls is fairly long. **And the Washington Traffic...**

In Richmond, on the other hand, shuttle driving at the busiest time of day is a matter of no more than ten or fifteen minutes. There is no need to carry a boat more than fifty feet under most circumstances. Parking shuttle vehicles can be a problem, but is usually not a major difficulty.

There are three recognized sections of the James River within the city of Richmond. The western most has the four-foot-per-mile gradient characteristic of the

James throughout most of its extent. If the parking lot at the popular Pony Pasture Park access point is jammed full, boaters can use the Huguenot Woods Section is flatwater, at the least seventeen people have drowned on it in recent years, most at the deceptively innocuous-looking Williams Island Dam [aka "Z-Dam"]. A fish passageway notch that is to be cut into the Williams Island Dam by the City and the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries. This might provide a safe route through the dam hydraulic the has been fatal to fifteen inexperienced rafters, tubers, and canoeists.

The Upper Section of the James is three miles of Class I-II rapids, and a mile of flatwater, within a wooded and scenic corridor through the inner suburban neighborhoods of the City. The Pony Pasture Parkriver access area was exactly that—a private pasture for a few ponies and horses—before land for the James River Parks was purchased in the 1960's with money obtained through the National Park Service's Land & Water Conservation Program. The Pony Pasture Park is poorly maintained, generally unsupervised, and in frequently over-run by beer-guzzling teenager sunbather. A few yards out in the river, and the scene is one of tranquillity Osprey and eagles have been nesting in the area recently. Watch what you leave behind in your car, though, and don't forget that you are inside a major city—and a rather crime ridden and racially-troubled one, at that.

The upper section is a scenic trip extension for expert and advanced paddlers, or an alternative to the more difficult Lower Section of the river for less competent paddlers. One of the non-frequent occasions in winter and in spring when the James is running bank-full, or higher, the upper section can provide exciting Class III, big-water paddling. The James is about a half-mile wide throughout the city, so paddlers must expect to watch out for themselves. City police check for the required high-water permits when the James is higher than nine feet on the Westham Gauge [see below]. If the City is

Urban white water



called to rescue folks without the \$10 High Water Permits, those fished out are to be billed \$155 per hour. One unlucky fellow whoslipped from the bank into a floodstage river was billed more than two grand for the Coast Guard helicopter dispatched from Norfolk.

Three bridges cross the upper section of the James. The names of each have been stenciled in on yellow lettering, which is also intended to mark the normal routes for paddlers [it is generally necessary to follow the suggested route in low water conditions]. There are some great play waves below the arched railroad bridge at river levels above six feet. For out-of-towners using existing guidebooks or road maps, you might wish to be aware that the Boulevard Avenue Bridge is to be closed and rebuilt after July this year.

After one passes beneath the Boulevard Bridge [where construction will be taking place], a solitary high-rise brick apartment building will be visible on river right. This should alert paddlers that they are approaching the upper section takeout, also on river right, at Reedy Creek. Miss this at high water, and the consequences could be grave. The on-river signs for the takeout were destroyed by flooding this year, so the unfamiliar with the James could easily overlook the small side channel into which Reedy Creek [a small tributary stream] flows.

There is a James River Park Visitors Center at the Reedy Creek River access, but this is generally closed. Paddlers should avoid doing some of the things which have strained relations with the park neighbors, such as changing clothes on the street, public urination, and blocking driveways. The area residents already have to put up with the thugs who test fire their weapons into the river at night, and with the sister boys who prowl the parks the day and night. Valuable objects are probably safer out on the river with you than behind in your car.

The Lower Section commences below the river-wide Hollywood Dam, at the western tip of Belle Isle [NOT Belle Island, please]. The James drops about

seventy feet over the next two miles. The south channel of the river is dry until the James exceeds six feet on the Westham Gage, and if you see water flowing past the south side Belle Isle, then you should carefully weigh your paddling options.

The Hollywood Dam, which fed a hydro plant on Belle Isle, had been eroding away steadily since the breach formed in 1069. This "First Break" into the north channel once formed a Class IV rapid, as most of the river flowed through a twelve-foot-wide gap in the dam, and a concrete section of the dam which had fallen forward. This gap is more than a hundred feet wide today, and there is another large breakout a few yards of the north ["Variation" Rapids]. A modern concern is the river's erosion of the extreme tip of Belle Isle, and the possibility that the river may break through the old hydro channel and de-water the Hollywood Rapids in the north channel. Virginia paddlers have been debating the appropriateness of rip-rapping the tip of the island to slow erosion. The old Hydro dam was anchored on portions of Belle Isle built up of iron mill slag dating from the industrial age.

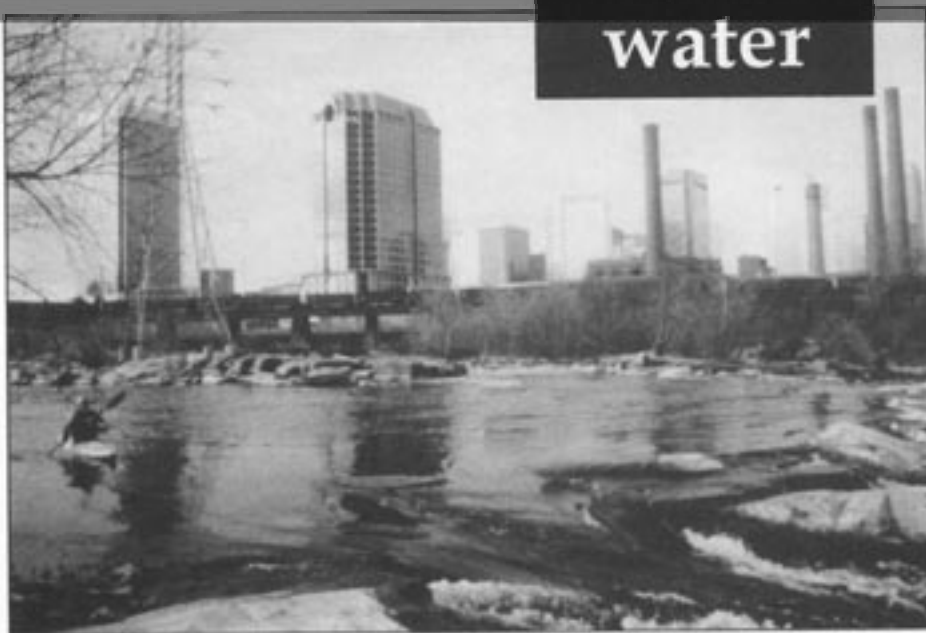
The normal route through Hollywood Rapid is described in the Roger Corbett and Ed Grove guidebooks, and

need not be repeated here. Hollywood is a generally forgiving Class IV, since the hard Petersburg Granite does not tend to undercut. There is a horseshoe-shaped ledge forming hydraulics which become grabby at six feet [Westham Gage] and pretty damned serious at levels much above that. The main six-foot drop is just below this set of hydraulics [called "Corner," "Upper" by area paddlers].

The name Hollywood is taken from the north bank cemetery which is the "Valhalla of the South." Buried here are Jefferson Davis, J.E.B. Stuart, George Pickett, and 30,000+ Confederate soldiers, some 12,000 of whom rest under one granite pyramid. Belle Isle was the temporary home of some 15,000 federal troops captured at Chancellorsville. This notorious POW camp site is to be marked by low earthen berms. The Tredegar Iron Works structures across the river includes the gun foundry, which cast many of the cannon used by the Confederate States, and the plate used on CSS Virginia I and II.

As paddlers approach the eastern end of Belle Isle, they will see on the horizon scaffolding which once supported the tainted gates of the Browns Island Dam. High water creates an inescapable, lethal hydraulic below the right half of the

Urban white water



dam {aka "Vepco Levee"}. The dilemma facing high-water paddlers is that the easiest route through the dam hydraulic, the cutout created to provide fish passage, leads directly into Pipeline Rapids. Pipeline is a Class VI when the James is over nine feet Westham [21,000 cfs], and is pretty unforgiving above eight feet [16,000 cfs], as the river pushes hard under the pylons supporting a train trestle. The City of Richmond has removed a section of the walkway atop the scaffolding, so you won't be able to scout from atop the dam [people kept falling through the metal grating

which forms the walkway].

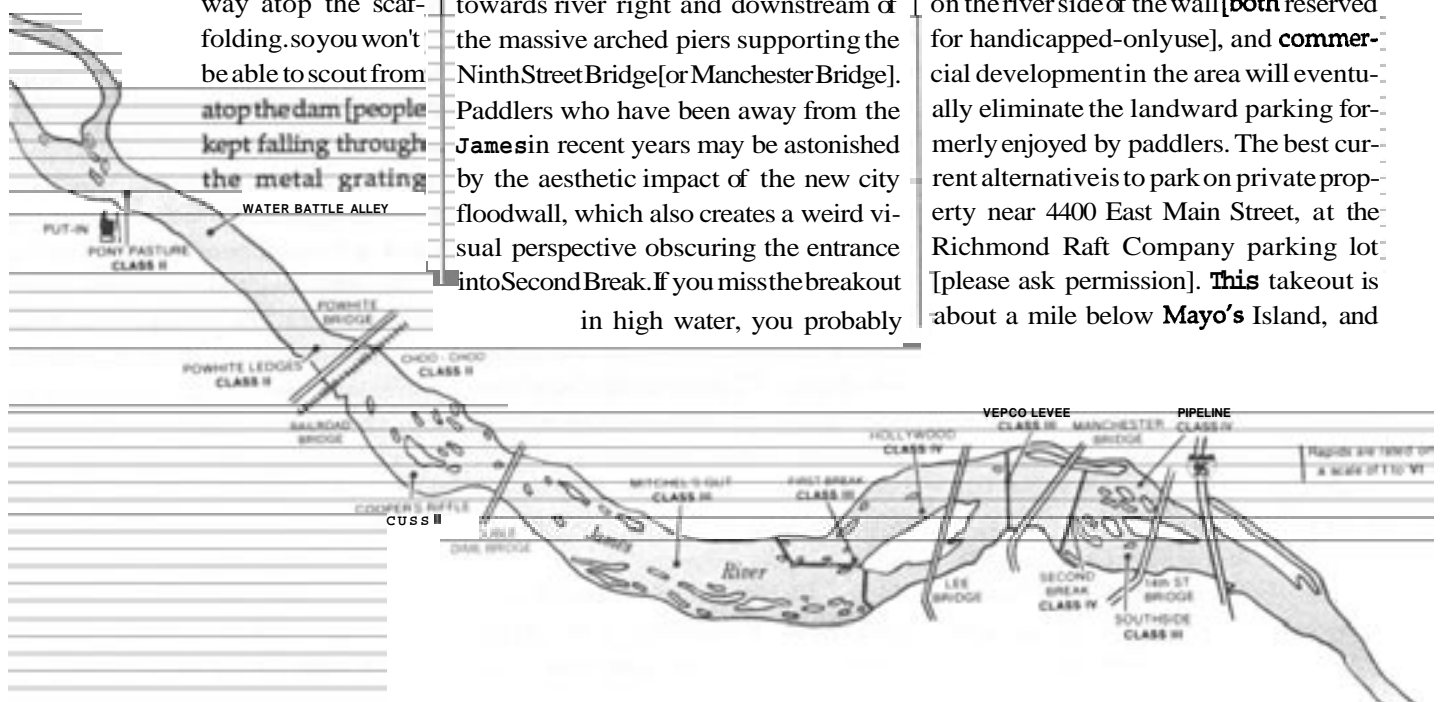
If the river is high, look for a faint "X" marked near the center of the dam, rum immediately left of that, and then paddle like hell for the "Second Break" slot in the downstream Manchester Dam. This is the preferred route at low and moderate levels as well, but you may be more relaxed.

"Second Break Rapids" is a breakout in the Manchester Dam, located towards river right and downstream of the massive arched piers supporting the Ninth Street Bridge [or Manchester Bridge]. Paddlers who have been away from the James in recent years may be astonished by the aesthetic impact of the new city floodwall, which also creates a weird visual perspective obscuring the entrance into Second Break. If you miss the breakout in high water, you probably

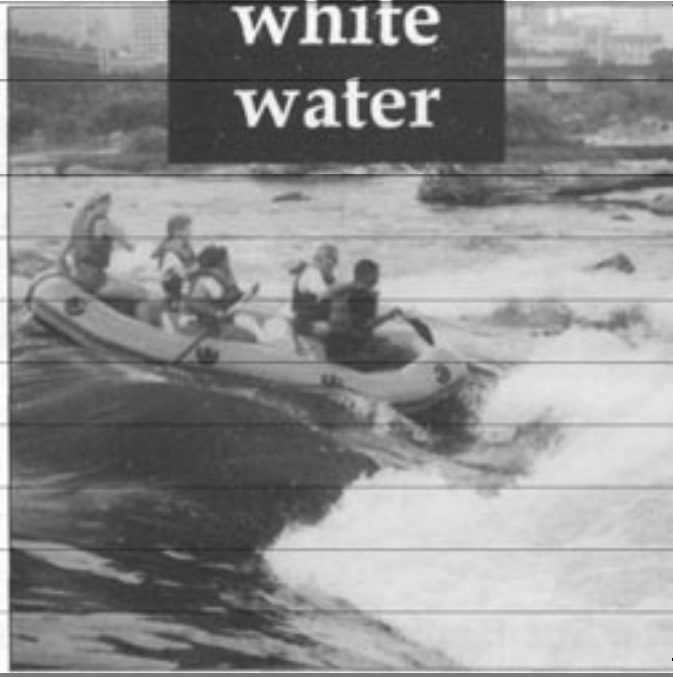
won't come out of the dam hydraulic for a while.

There are three interesting rapids downstream, but paddlers will have to select one per trip. Few paddlers have run "Triple Drop," which is entered on the south side of the mid-river electric power pylon. "Southside Rapids," appropriately located on the south side of the river, is the tamest selection, and the sensible high-water alternative. Watch out for those railroad bridge abutments in high water, though! "Pipeline," over the other end [north] shore, is composed of four drops, the third of which is a kicker. This general area, just west of Mayo's Island, contains innumerable small islets which shelter birds and wildlife. I've recently seen more than fifty blue heron here at one time, this in the shadow of central business district sky scrapers.

The river guide books published to date all describe the "Reynolds Metal takeout" adjacent to Pipeline Rapid. Construction of the new city floodwall has closed this takeout. If you try to carry out through the construction zone, you'll probably be arrested. When the floodwall is completed late in 1993, there will be a takeout pathway and a pedestrian gate through the 10-foot high wall. Unfortunately there will be only two parking spaces on the river side of the wall [both reserved for handicapped-only use], and commercial development in the area will eventually eliminate the landward parking formerly enjoyed by paddlers. The best current alternative is to park on private property near 4400 East Main Street, at the Richmond Raft Company parking lot [please ask permission]. This takeout is about a mile below Mayo's Island, and



Urban white water



that mile is all flatwater. There's a Game Commission landing, **Ancarrow's Marina**, on the other [south] side of the river, but I wouldn't leave a car there unattended. If you don't mind carrying your boat across a narrow canal lock gate, the Great Ship Lock Park is an alternative take-out.

Here in Richmond, truly, there is something for everyone. The James is enjoyable as a tight, technical run at the minimum possibility flows of around 2,000 cfs. It has been run successfully at awesome levels exceeding 200,00 cfs. What Richmond offers is the chace to put on after work, play and paddle, and **con-**

clude the day with a decent dinner [A FEW SUGGESTIONS: Millie's on East Main Street; Joe's **Tnn**, on Shields Avenue; Texas Wisconsin Border **Cafe**, on West Main Street; Bottoms up **Pizza**, on Dock Street; **Farouk's** house of India, on Carry Street].

AWA has played a role in thwarting hydro development proposals which would screw up every thing described this far. We intervened in FERC proceeding affecting the Belle Isle Hydro plants. Paddlers helped discourage the plans to reactivate the **12th Street Hydro Station**, and in doing so obtained designation of the Falls of the James as a Virginia Historic and Scenic River [in 1983]. **12th Street Hydro** is marked by the gray smokestack towering above Pipeline Rapids, and was fed by the Brown's Island Dam via the **Haxall Canal**.

City fathers have had an ambivalent attitude about recreation on the James. The city may be liable for as much as a half-billion dollars in costs associated with elimination of combined sewer over flows (CSOs). How much easier it would be to ban swimming in the dangerous river, where several young **Richmonders** drown every year [only one person in twenty years has drowned while wearing a PFD, though, this a squirt boater who probably had a heart attack while on flat water]!

On the other hand, envious glances have recently been casting the direction of San Antonio, Texas, where a rather dinky stream was diverted into the artificial canal system which is such a great downtown amenity. Richmond has, largely intact, an historical canal, within a stones throw of its Shockoe Slip and Shockoe Bottom historic districts. After

the Director's position was eliminated effective July 1, 1992, so the entire permit system is up in the air for the moment. However, you'd better check around if your planning a high-water run. Richmond Raft Company is a good source of information— (804) 222-RAFT.

many decades of neglect, Richmond has turned to embracing its great river, although the riverfront is, today, something of an unpolished gem.

STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

The City of Richmond has a river permit system incorporating some fairly sensible regulations. PFD's are required to be worn when the river is above five feet **Westham**. If the river is above nine feet, paddlers must wear helmets, paddle in a group, carry a rescue rope, [good enough so far] and must have purchased a \$10 permit, good for two years, from the Direc-

RIVER LEVELS:

Levels on all sections are measured in feet on the Westham [Bon Air] USGS Gage. A recording providing current readings and a forecast may be obtained by calling [804] 226-4423. The Westham Gage readings are printed daily in the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

POSSIBILITY MINIMUM FLOW:

3.9 feet Westham, Lower Section [1,900 cfs]

4.2 Westham, Upper Section [2,620 cfs]

BUT YOU'LL WANT THIS MUCH IF YOUR DRIVING FROM OUT OF TOWN:

at least five feet Westham [4,620]

HER'S A NICE LEVEL:

6 feet Westham [7,569 cfs]

THE LOWER SECTION GETS TOO PUSHY FOR INTERMEDIATE PADDLERS AT:

roughly 7 feet Westham [11,340 cfs]

PIPELINE RAPID SHOULD BE AVOIDED AT:

roughly 8 feet Westham [15,930 cfs]

PERMIT REQUIRED AT:

9 feet Westham [15,960 cfs]

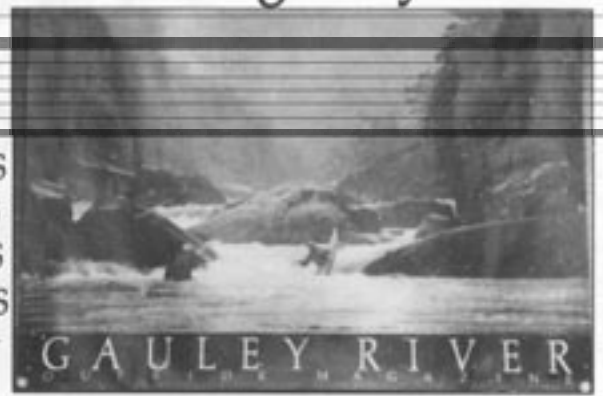
FLOODSTAGE:

12 feet Westham [40,100]

It's not how good you paddle...it's how good you look!



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Presenting an excerpt from...

CLASS FIVE *CHRONICLES*



Jeff Bennett photo

CHERRY CREEK

*Jeff Bennett shares a chapter from
"Things Mother Told You 'Bout Whitewater"*

CHERRY CREEK



(Above) Mike Boyle below Toadstool. (Facing page) Rick Croft somewhere in the Miracle Mile.

Jeff Bennett photo

"It was like a dream come true. To our amazement, we found that we were able to run one after another of these fearsome chutes and drops. The rapids that later became Mushroom, Lewis's Leap, and Flat Rock Falls caused us the most hesitation. (At the time, we referred to them as Number One, Two and Three.) But we made it every time, and at the bottom of the rapid we'd just look at each other and laugh. We could hardly believe we were actually doing it."

Marty McDonnell, as quoted in *California Whitewater*, by Jim Cassidy and Fryar Calhoun

The Cherry Creek section of the Upper Tuolumne River is the seventh wonder of California's whitewater world. A design in perfection, laid out across a deep, V-shaped Sierravalley as if the river gods themselves were taking up Class V

boating.

In some ways, Cherry Creek is not much different than other classic class V California rivers like the Upper Kings, or Forks of the Kern. There are long pool-drop rapids, chock full of car and van-size boulders, and just enough time between rapids to rejoice in victory, or to regroup and collect gear. But in other ways, Cherry Creek is much more of a boater's river - access is easier, information is available, and dam release flows provide predictable water levels and longer seasons.

My introduction to Cherry Creek came from the front of a 14-foot SOTAR, cohabited by Tom Dallinger, Rick Croft, Jim Foust, and Dawn Martin. From the back tube, Mike Doyle alternated between casual enjoyment of the canyon's solitude, and blaring, staccato drill sargent commands.

I walked away from my intro-

duction run duly impressed. As a first timer, Cherry Creek seemed to descend through its valley with all the subtlety of **Godzilla** making his way through Tokyo. Even today, I can shut my eyes and feel the same rush of uncertainty any boater feels when dropping off a Class V falls, and the disconcerting vertigo experienced when being sucked out of partially wrapped rafts.

But it was my second run down Cherry Creek that leads me back to the typewriter, sharing again ridiculous adventures that skates the edge of the lunatic fringe.

It was the summer of '87, the peak of California's drought season. I had been traveling up and down the state, connecting guiding rigs or renting out inflatable kayaks to pot-bellied weekend warriors on the Lower Stanislaus. By mid-Summer, much of the water that nurished our wal-

CHERRY CREEK



Mike Lewis in Lewis' Leap

Jeff Bennett photo

.....
The confusing display of twisting currents, foam and rock at our feet had me completely bewildered. "How are we gonna' run that?" I asked one of my colleagues. "Just go with the flow," he replied.
.....

ets, carefreelifestyles, and mental stability had slipped westward, mixing with the salty waters of the Pacific. We were starting to feel like lost sailors in reverse—stuck on dry land, looking for water.

The more desperate we became, the more outlandish our plans became. There was talk of clandestine runs down the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, trips into the hinterlands of Canada, and dreamy chats of Chile and Peru. But in the end, our next adventure laid in our backyards. An inflatable kayak descent down Cherry Creek.

At first, an inflatable kayak descent seemed absurd. These were not today's high-performance Thrillseekers. And Cherry Creek was no place for tiny "wannabe" river boats. But there was always the possibility of portaging unmanageable rapids, and long days of sunshine if we had to portage the whole damn thing. It was this extra margin of comfort and safty that pushed Mike Doyle, Rick Croft, and myself toward the put-in, and kept our pulses in check while paddling into the first set of rapids.

As my body slowly melted into the rhythm of the kayak, my mind slipped back to my freshman years of rafting. On an earlier-and-much-easier-trip, I had stood upon a cliff, shoulder to shoulder with veteran boaters. The confusing display of twisting currents, foam, and rock at our feet had me completely bewildered. "How are we gonna' run that?" I asked one of my colleagues. "Just go with the flow," he replied.

I must've heard that same phase a thousand times over the years. And often, it carried with it almost prophetic sense. But now, just two miles into our nine mile run, I realize that I'd found a river where going with the flow was all but out of the question.

We were in our first serious rapid—Corkscrew—and all of the current was going exactly where we didn't want to be. "Going with the flow" in Corkscrew would've wrapped our boats like hypalon bandaids around some fossilized dinosaur's toe. So, we chose the least haz-

CHERRY CREEK

ardous routes, shucking and jiving across the current, and paddling like hell for clean slots and soft landings.

In the next mile we became more attuned to the personalities of our IK's. Their usefulness extended far beyond simple glory boating. When our route finding technique failed us, we could easily step out of the craft, up onto a rock, and back into the river on the other side. When **the river** was too far below a portage route, the IK's became a big pillow to jump into, and when the water was too deep to step into between distant boulders, the IK's became tiny land bridges.

One of the most useful aspects of these craft was as balloon armor. Since staying aboard a tiny inflatable boat in a boulder strewn river while plummeting toward the Pacific at 105 feet per mile wasn't always easy, we devised new techniques to preserve our hides. The second our IK's would flip, we'd pull them in front of us like a catcher's vest to cushion the rocks, and climb onto the flipped craft even while dropping down steep chutes. It was an adequate safety measure, and a surefire way to ward off rocks, major **dunkings**, and gnarly bruises.

We'd perfected these techniques by the time we arrived at Mushroom Rapid. This Class V behemoth is one of the Upper Tuolumne's legendary drops. In the first 50 yards, the river drops 30 vertical feet as it tumbles through a series of sharp ledges and big holes, ending with an unnerving plunge toward a severely undercut rock. The consequences of a flip or a swim would be unthinkable...which is exactly what I was thinking as I approached the drop.

With **Mike** and his camera poised on the left bank, I jammed myself into my boat, took a deep breath, and reached for the current with my paddle. In a moment I was bouncing through the first series of ledges, inching my way toward Mushroom's heart-pounding finale. The kayak steadfastly bucked through each hole, leaving me squarely set for the last drop. Then, like a kid on a carnival ride, I **felt my** stomach stay in one place while the rest of me hurled downward with eye-



Rick Croft above Mushroom

Jeff Bennett photo

.....
Since staying aboard a tiny inflatable boat in a boulder strewn river while plummeting toward the Pacific at 105 feet per mile wasn't always easy, we devised new techniques to preserve our hides. The second our IK's would flip, we'd pull them in front of us like a catcher's vest to cushion the rocks...
.....

CHERRY CREEK

watering speed. Before my mind even processed the blur of spray and wind, the rapid was over, I'd avoided the undercut rock, paddled into the eddy above the next drop, and sat there, pinching myself to see if it was real. Soon, Mike and Rick sat in the eddy next to me, pinching themselves, and smiling with the intensity of some lucky lottery winner.

Downstream, the Upper Tuolumne grew steeper by the yard. The familiar routine of running pool-drop rapids gave way to survival paddling in drop-drop rapids, and friendly gatherings in the safe harbor of eddies became an event sorely missed. Within a half-mile of Mushroom, we were in the **Mircle Mile**. This section of the river drops over 200 feet in a single mile, leaving kayakers pointed perpetually downhill as they slide through a barrage of Class IV and V drops.

About 6.5 miles into the trip, the Tuolumne disappeared over another horizon line as **Lewis' Leap** stepped into the chorus line of awe-inspiring rapids. This time, **Mike** went first, lining up on a central chute and dropping four feet onto a barely submerged rock. A few determined paddlers drove his kayak in a zig-zag pattern through the next few small drops, and set him up for the final leap. **Mike** spun to the right, paddled hard, and leaned back. From my vantage point, all I could see was the tail of his boat snap skywards, followed by an other disappearance of anything but the water. By the time I jumped onto a boulder to see what had happened, Mike paddled away from the rapid with his paddle spinning in a victory twirl.

"No big deal," I thought, as I boarded my IK. "Follow Mike's line and you'll be fine." I duplicated his every stroke, entering the chute straight as an arrow, curving around the submerged rock, and diving headlong toward the falls. But Mike was bigger than me, and stronger. My strokes weren't what his were, and I wasn't able to get my boat set straight in time for



the last drop.

The river blasted open like a big trap door, leaving me hovering two feet above my rapidly escaping kayak. "Balloon armor," I thought. "Balloon armor!" I reached for my boat and belly flopped onto the vacant floor. *Thwack*. The boat slapped the water like a giant beaver tail, my extra weight acting to amplify the sound. I rode the rapid out like that, sprawled across the floor of the boat with my fingernails deeply embedded in anything grippable. It was an amusing scene to say the least.

Lewis' Leap marked the summit of our Upper Tuolumne adventure. Just downstream, Flat Rock Falls contained a severely undercut boulder, which attracted water-and anything floating on it-like a huge, morbid funnel. We chose the only sane route, scurrying along the right bank with our boats in tow.

When we arrived at Lumsden Falls, our elation nearly rose to a narcotic level. We began talking of inflatable kayak decents down its 30-foot staircase. But the closer we got to the edge of the falls, the

more sensible we became.

We left Lumsden Falls behind-something to talk about at the next campfire-and floated to our take-out at Lumsden Bridge Campground. Before our kayakers were even rolled up and in the back of the truck, talk started to fly on new rivers. We'd found a new form of amusement and a world of adventures beckoned.

Tuolumne River, California

Section: "Cherry Creek," Holm Powerhouse to Meral's Pool

Region: Tuolumne County

Class: V

Miles: 9

Gradient: 105 avg; 200 in the Mircle Mile

Water Levels: 600-2,000

Season: March to mid-May and July through October (don't try it during peak runoff!)

Gauge: Get the flow at Meral's Pool by calling (916) 653-9647, then figure that most of that is coming from the Holm Powerhouse info Cherry Creek. The dam usually releases more water during weekdays than on weekends, and releases the least water on Sundays.

USGS Maps: Lake Eleanor NW, Duckwall Mtn, Jawbone Ridge, Lake Eleanor, Tuolumne City

Description:

This is where all California Class V stud-boaters go to prove their machismo to their buddies. The run starts on Cherry Creek below the Holm Powerhouse, dives through some Class III+ and IV boulder gardens, then joins the main Tuolumne one mile into the trip. Another mile downstream, things begin to get serious with Corkscrew, the first Class V rapid. Here, big granite boulders and sharp drops present obvious, albeit difficult, routes. A

CHERRY CREEK

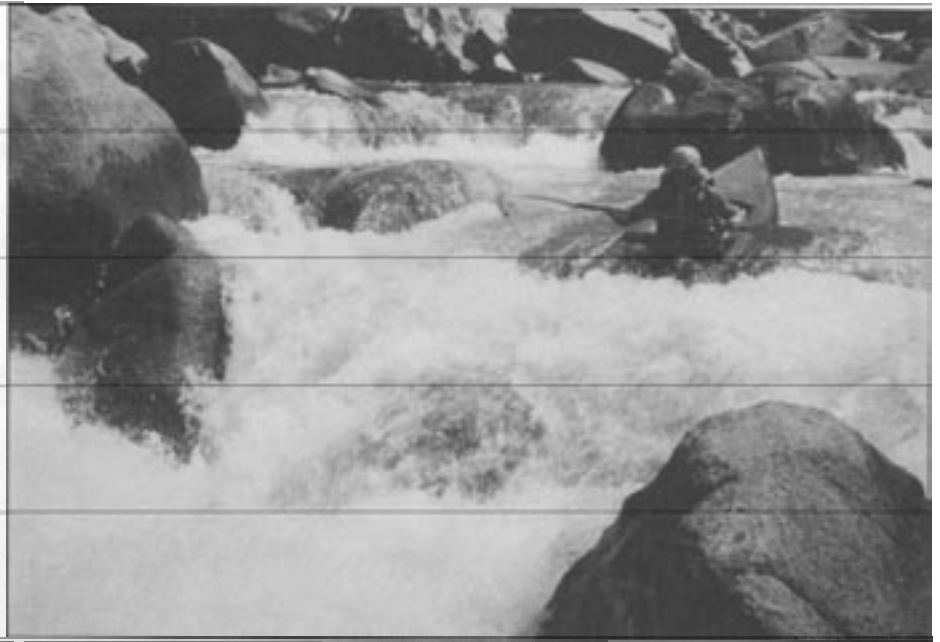
half-mile downstream is Class V jawbone. Again, big boulders appear everywhere in the main current, whipping up a myriad of complex hydraulics and boat crunching drops.

Mushroom and **Toadstool** (both **Class V**) start **3.2 miles below** the put-in. In the first 50 yards of the rapid, the river drops **30 feet** through sharp ledges and big holes, then plunges toward a huge, undercut flake of rock that could seriously damage an inattentive paddler's forehead. After the big flake, the river twists, then drops another six feet around a big rock and into another foamy hole. The next drop, **Catapult**, a half-mile downstream of **Mushroom**, and contains an awesome slalom route that ends with a sharp plunge into a right-hand chute.

The **Miracle Mile** (Class V) begins just after **Catapult**, and drops over 200 feet through a myriad of complex, **boulder-choked** rapids. **Airplane Turn** (Class V) at mile 6.1 ends with a big hole that can be a nasty keeper at some flows. At mile 6.4, one of the river's rapids, **Class V Lewis Leap** is a Class V-VI rapid, **Flat Rock Falls**, that is usually portaged due to a severe undercut into the main channel.

About a quarter-mile below **Flat Rock**, the entire river plunges **30 feet** down giant steps at **Lumsden Falls**. Yeah, it's been run, but that doesn't mean you ought to do it. Portage on the left. Just beyond the bridge at **Lumsden Falls** is a possible take-out at **Lumsden Campground**. If you continue toward **Meral's Pool** you'll have three more **outstanding Class IV rapids**... Against the Wall, **Horseshoe Falls**, and **Meral's Pool Table**.

Logistics: **To reach** the put-in, take Hwy 120 toward **Yosemite** then turn north onto **Cherry Lake Road** 14 miles east of **Groveland**. Then, go **seven miles** to a bridge across the **Tuolumne**. **A mile-and-a-half** later, turn right and follow the road to the put-in. To find the **take-out**, head back to Hwy 120 and turn back toward **Groveland**. Turn right off of Hwy 120, 6.5 miles from the **Cherry Lake Road** intersection, onto **Ferretti Road** and go about a mile. When you cross the second cattle guard, turn



Jeff Bennett at Mushroom

Doyle photo

right onto **Lumsden** road and follow it five **bone-rattling** miles to the put-in. (Best Guidebooks: A Guide to the Best

Whitewater In The State of California; California Whitewater; Western Whitewater)

Publishing Info:

Title: *Class Five Chronicles, Things Mother Never Told You 'Bout Whitewater*

Description: This is the "Ultimate Guidebook"! Contains 32 outrageous tales of extreme whitewater exploits, Class V misadventures, and humorous looks into the sport. PLUS, it contains a great guidebook to some of the best expert trips around!

Publisher: Swiftwater Publishing Company

Contributing Editor: Jeff Bennett

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Info on Jeff Bennett's other book:

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A trip to Uzbekistan proves that

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is less hazardous than

CLASS VI HOSPITALITY



By **MICHAEL SLOAN**

When the short, nervous acting man in the rumpled suit **walked up** behind me and tugged on my sleeve, I assumed that he was trying to sell me souvenirs. When he pulled his wallet out of his pocket I was certain of it. But when he flashed an identification badge, I was completely clueless about what was going on. And when he started **talking** faster and louder, grabbed my arm with one hand, and my camera with the other, I started to get concerned.

I was walking in downtown Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan in Central Asia with my friend Melissa Andrews, and our Russian friend Sasha Bondar. We had been in Central Asia touring the ancient cities of **Samarkand** and **Bukhara**, and were on our way to the **Chatkal** river in the **Tien Shan** mountains for a six day river expedition. Everywhere we traveled

in Central Asia, we were approached by locals, either asking where we were from, or trying to **sell** us something.

When the man in the rumpled suit tried to **pull me in** a different direction from where my friends were headed, I decided **it was** time to take decisive action. Being a **self** sufficient man of action, I took the only course open to me. I yelled for help. Sasha came back, and for the next 10 minutes, he and the man in the rumpled suit conducted a rather intense discussion with each other in Russian. Finally, the man shrugged and left.

At first Sasha would **only say** that the man had given him directions to a good restaurant, and that it was time for dinner. Later, over a bottle of **Uzbek** wine, he elaborated. The man claimed to be a KGB agent. He had seen me take a picture of a woman working a jackhammer on a

road construction site, and wanted to know if I had a permit to take photos. He was inviting me down to KGB headquarters to discuss the issue.

Sasha did not believe him. He thought it more likely that rumpled suit was trying to lure us to some out-of-the-way place to be mugged. Nobody needs permits to take pictures in the public areas of the Soviet Union anymore, so his reason for harassing us was suspect. In addition, his identification looked pretty cheesy. So **Sasha "explained"** to rumpled suit that we had a plane to catch in a couple of hours and had no time for discussing pleasantries with the "KGB".

When our Russian friends invited us to join a river expedition in Central Asia during September 1991, they didn't tell us that we would become international celebrities. They didn't mention class six

hospitality, KGB shakedowns, or gasoline shortages. There **was no** mention of vodka, or Chinese Beer, or **Stalin-era** death camps. They also failed to mention things like mile-long class five rapids, and holes big enough to swallow buses. All minor omissions.

Instead, they talked about a six day trip down a pristine class four river never before paddled by Americans. They talked about beautiful sheer canyons, and the clean cold water from the Himalayan foothills. They talked about four man cataracts and an introduction to paddling and expeditioning Russian style. They talked about exotic names such as Uzbekistan, Kirghiza, Samarkand, Bukhara and other Central Asian cities straight out of the Tales of the Arabian Nights.

We said yes. Wouldn't you?

The river expedition was organized by an adventure travel company just getting started in Russia. Geosoft **Adventure Travel** wanted to do a trip with a full complement of guides and "customers" to make sure that they could pull off a successful trip. So they invited a group of their friends (eight Americans, two Swiss, and two Germans) to join them on the Chatkal river in Central Asia.

The Chatkal River

The Chatkal river starts at an elevation of about **13,000** feet in a **subrange** of the **Tien Shan** mountains. The **Tien Shan** mountains combine with the Himalayan mountains to form a giant U shape mountain range effectively isolating Central Asia from the Indian Ocean, and creating the Central Asian desert. The Chatkal runs from these mountains out into the desert. Today, the water of the Chatkal never reaches the ocean. Once, the Chatkal fed the Syrdar'ya river, providing the lifeblood for the ancient civilizations of Tamerlane and others before draining into the **Aral Sea**. Now the river is swallowed up by the massive irrigation system developed by the Soviets to grow cotton in the Central Asian desert. The river disappears into a series of reservoirs and canals near the city of Tashkent, the capital of

Uzbekistan.

The whitewater section of the Chatkal runs through a series of five canyons splitting a range of **12,000-14,000** foot mountains. These mountains form the border of **Uzbekistan** and Kirghiza. At the time of our trip, these were two of the republics of the Soviet Union, today they are moving towards independence. **Geographically**, the river is about 500 miles from Iran, 200 miles from Afghanistan, and 75 miles from China

The whitewater section of the river runs from the hamlet of **Yangi-Bazar**, eight hours by bus from Namangan, to the **Charvaks** water reservoir, a three hour bus ride from Tashkent. The river drops from 5,800 feet to 3,300 feet over a distance of about 70 miles. **Length**, size and gradient of the river are similar to the Middle Fork of the Salmon.

Traveling in Central Asia

Melissa and I planned to incorporate the river trip into a five **week excursion** covering much of Soviet Central Asia. We were traveling with our good friend Sasha Bondar, many time Soviet Union national champion in C2 slalom, and also the unofficial two man cataract champion of the world. Melissa had hosted the Soviet Whitewater Slalom Team, including Sasha during several trips to the U.S., and this was his way of returning the favor.

Most of the internal travel within the old Soviet Union is by air and train. In Central Asia, the trains have a disturbing habit of pulling into sidings for several hours or days, making passenger travel unreliable and extremely uncomfortable. Hence, most people travel by air. In the old Soviet Union, air travel was very similar to traveling on Trailways buses, except there is never an empty seat. Internal flights are heavily subsidized, and we saw many merchants carrying loads of fruits, vegetables, pots and pans, and other basic articles from **Central Asia** to **sell** in Moscow. The profit on a **crate** of melons more than justified the cost of the airline ticket from Tashkent to Moscow.

However, there is no service on

the domestic flights, hence passengers bring their own food and drinks. No one brings water or other nonalcoholic drinks on these flights. Maybe they think anything nonalcoholic beverages might spoil on the flight, but my guess is that they believe that serious anesthesia is **needed** to make the flights tolerable. Regardless, the drink of choice on every flight was vodka. And as soon as our fellow passengers found out we were American, we were obliged to toast with them. We toasted each other. We toasted Americans in general. We **toasted George Bush**. In **Russia** we toasted in the Russians and Boris Yeltsin. In Kiev, we toasted the Ukrainians. In Central Asia, we toasted the **Uzbeks**. We toasted toasting. **All** with vodka. All the time.

There is nothing quite **like** taking shots of warm vodka in a bumpy plane smelling of jet fuel and tobacco smoke at twenty thousand feet to develop a tolerance for straight alcohol.

Class Six Hospitality

We left our friend Sasha in Tashkent. He was leaving to guide a separate and smaller river trip. We were flying from Tashkent to Namangan, a city of about **350,000** people which was to be our jumping off point for the **Chatkal** river trip. **This** flight was uneventful other than being delayed a couple of hours due to mechanical problems. Since we were international travelers, we were loaded on the plane first, where for two hours we watched the Aeroflot pilots and mechanics take apart and reinstall equipment inside the plane beneath the floorboards just in front of our seat. I think they were rebuilding the navigation system.

The navigation system worked correctly, and after a two hour flight, we arrived in Namangan at about **11:00 PM**. We were met by our head guide Sergei **Papush**, and by the assistant manager of the hotel where we were staying. **Sergei's** first words were "I hope you're **hungry**". We said "no". We had eaten in Tashkent, and were very tired. Sergei responded that "the hotel chef has prepared a special welcoming dinner for you. You can't just go to bed, you are the guests of honor and

must show your appreciation." (Sergei's English was not quite this good, but his intent was **clear**). - **Namangan** is a major mining and **silk/satin** producing area in Uzbekistan. The local people are largely **Uzbeks** and transplanted Russians. The Uzbek people trace their culture back more than a thousand years and have a rich and distinctive national culture. The Uzbek people are rightfully proud of their reputation for hospitality.

The hotel manager told us we were the first American visitors to Namangan that he had heard of. In fact, the English teacher at the local high school told us that she had never spoken with an English speaking person other than a couple of Kenyans that had passed through the area several years earlier. They felt obligated to demonstrate to us the traditional Uzbek hospitality. Now, let me warn any fellow travelers to this region. Hospitality here is *serious* business. On the boaters scale, I would definitely rate this as the class six variety. Serious risk of injury or loss of life is definitely possible, and once you get in, there is no possibility of portage. (Cagey travelers can sneak a few of the hospitality obstacles by surreptitiously pouring vodka into the potted plants.)

The morning after arriving in Namangan we met Dima, the manager of the hotel. After joining us for a special welcoming breakfast, Dima announced that he had arranged to take us on a tour of Namangan. We spent the day meeting with one set of Uzbek dignitaries after the next. At each stop, our current host set incredible spreads of food. The food was wonderful, the vodka was copious, and I could find no polite way of turning down either without offending our current host.

At one point, Dima asked if we enjoyed beer. I saw an opportunity to switch from vodka to something less potent, so I said that I preferred beer. He took us to **see** his friends at the local brewery, where we were again fed. We also sampled several types of the local beer (good brew), and we found that **true beer** drinkers don't drink beer **without** shots of vodka.



Bottoms up! Sergei shows the effects of too many toasts while attempting to return the Central Asian hospitality.

The rest of the river trip group arrived later that night. The group was met at the airport by Sergei Papush. While I was not there, I'm sure this must have been interesting. Sergei also had been a victim of Uzbek hospitality all day long, and I know he was reeling by the end of the evening. I am glad that I did not meet Sergei for the first time under those circumstances. After a very long day of **travel, being introduced to a vodka soaked trip leader** would not have inspired confidence in me for the rest of the trip.

On The River

Melissa and I met the rest of the crew the following morning. I used to think that I was something of a **gearhead** until I met these folks. The other six Americans all came from the **Virginia Beach** area. Nancy and Lily are co-owners of the local outdoor store, and had met many of the Russians during a number of previous exchange trips. **They** brought along four of their Virginia Beach friends. **All** were outfitted with the latest gear including dual action double pump water filters, color coordinated casual wear, and wonder of wonders, foldable camp chairs.

In addition, we were joined by four Euros. Ian and **Bernhard** came from Switzerland and Horst and **Ernst** came

from Augsburg, Germany. These guys arrived fully equipped with stubby little steep **creekin** plastic boats, combination rescue harness life jackets, heavy duty helmets and hiking boots instead of booties.

While the four Euros would paddle kayak, the rest of the group would paddle Russian made four man catarafts. We had three **four-man** catarafts for eight Americans, five Russian paddlers, our translator **Anna**, and gear and food for eighteen people.

I think the Russians found our group to be quite a surprise. The Russians have not yet developed appropriate float and bloat technique (**see** the **May/June** 1991 issue of American Whitewater). Instead they try to travel fast and light. Americans on vacation generally do not travel fast and light. Our guides were shocked by how much luggage eight Americans and four Europeans brought for a six day river trip. I was a bit surprised myself frankly.

We had all heard that **the Russian** river runners tended to live on Spartan provisions (which was true), so everyone brought excessive amounts of extra food. We had also been told that the Russian boating and camping equipment would not be up to Western standards (not true

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for this trip), hence most of the group brought their own lifejackets, helmets, **wet/dry** suits, dry bags and tents. Our Russian friends brought enough equipment to outfit the entire party.

In addition, communications between Moscow and Central Asia proved to be difficult. In Moscow, several people in the party had been told that arrangements had been made to store excess gear in Namangan, for retrieval after the trip. In Namangan, we learned otherwise. Everything brought to Central Asia had to be brought down the river, or jettisoned. I think this explains why we took a **full** sized Tourister suitcase down the river with us. (I found out after the trip the suitcase did not even belong to anyone on the trip.)

First Look

After an eight hour bus ride from Namangan over the mountains, we took a side road down to the river to look at the first major rapid on the trip. **We would** not get here until the second day, but our guide wanted to check the drop and the water level before getting started. I think he also wanted to be sure about the location of the takeout eddy above the drop.

The first major rapid is a **frightening** class five. The river narrows to about 30 feet wide entering the first major canyon on the trip and is then backed up behind a river wide rockslide. The rockslide creates a 20 foot drop in two stages over a 200 foot section of river. At the bottom of the first stage, the river drops eight feet into a deep recirculating river wide hole. The rescue pool between drops is only about 50 feet long, and moving rapidly downstream into an ugly class four boulder garden.

The Guides

Just a word about Sergei and his guides. Our tripe leader, **Sergei Papush** has been running rivers throughout the Soviet Union for years. I would like someday to write some of the stories he tells about his river expeditions. **Sergei's** experience has made him an amazingly resourceful trip leader. From directing emergency raft repairs to locating gasoline in the middle

of a **gasoline shortage**, he always appeared to have the situation in hand. I will admit that he had difficulty with the class six brand of Uzbek hospitality.

Sergei trained the other Russian paddlers on the trip (Sasha, Misha, Lev, and **Dima**) from young pups, teaching **them** to paddle, and acting as their coach. His group of paddlers includes several high **ranking** slalom paddlers in both **kayaks** and catarafts. Sergei and his group of paddlers will form the nucleus of a highly qualified group of professional guides in the Soviet Union as this part of the world is opened up for more travelers.

Cataracts

The Russians have developed their own river running tradition completely independently from the rest of the world. Their attitude is probably similar to the attitude of the boaters opening up the classic whitewater runs in the Western U.S. twenty to thirty years ago. Their objective is more getting down the rivers.

There is very little commercial whitewater boat construction in this part of the world. Most **boaters make** their own equipment, including boats, dry bags, paddles, and lifejackets.

For our trip, we used handmade four-man catarafts. These appear to be the **boat of choice** for **expeditioning**. The four-man cataraft consists of two 15 -16 foot pontoons held together by aluminum frames and paddled with two people **knelling** on each tube using canoe paddles.

These boats are amazingly maneuverable and, for an experienced crew, easy to handle. **The boats** handle big water so easily, that when **the water** is big enough to generate adrenaline, the water is so big that falling out might be life threatening.

After the eight hour bus ride, we camped on a small ranch just downstream **from Yangi-Bazar**. We spent the afternoon with the usual preput-inlogistical hassles, sorting gear and figuring out how to pack suitcases and other extraneous equipment. In the evening, **the local** rancher came over to check us out. As he rode over to **see** the visitors on his land, he looked like a Mongolian warrior. Except for the wide smile

on his face, he could have ridden straight out of Central China with Ghengis Khan.

In the **morning**, the horseman came back with several of **his** friends to send us off. After loading the rafts and discussing boat control with our Russian friends, we drifted out into the current and set off downriver. The **Kirgizian** horsemen raced their ponies down alongside the river **bank**, waving their peaked hats and yelling encouragement as we disappeared around the corner into the Central Asian wilderness.

Vera's Falls

Shortly after lunch on the second day, we arrived at the top of the class five drop we had scouted from the road on the way in. We were joined here by a second group of seven Russians. Three weeks earlier in Moscow, Melissa had mentioned the trip to a **second** group of Russian friends including many times Soviet national woman's kayak **champion Vera** Panfilova. They had decided to join us on the river. For much of the rest of the trip, we shared campfires, sang songs, and told stories with this second group of paddlers.

The pictures tell the story of Vera's Falls. The kayaks all portaged this drop. The hole at the bottom swallowed the four-man catarafts, leading to several **anxious** moments waiting for the rafts to reappear.

No one on the trip knew if the rapid had been named before, so we christened the rapid Vera's Falls, in honor of Vera Panfilova, to our knowledge the first woman to run this drop.

Memorial Rapid

The third night out, we camped near a number of Stalin-era signs that warned travelers that travel **further upriver** was forbidden without special permits. The signs warned of 50 Kopek fines for transgressors. In our American way, we used these signs to hang laundry from, and planted 50 Kopek coins in the dirt (less than one cent at today's exchange rate).

The next day, our hubris in passing through "forbidden" territory caught up with us. While no Soviet authorities were around to collect the 50 kopek fine,

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the river gods ensured that the fee would be paid.

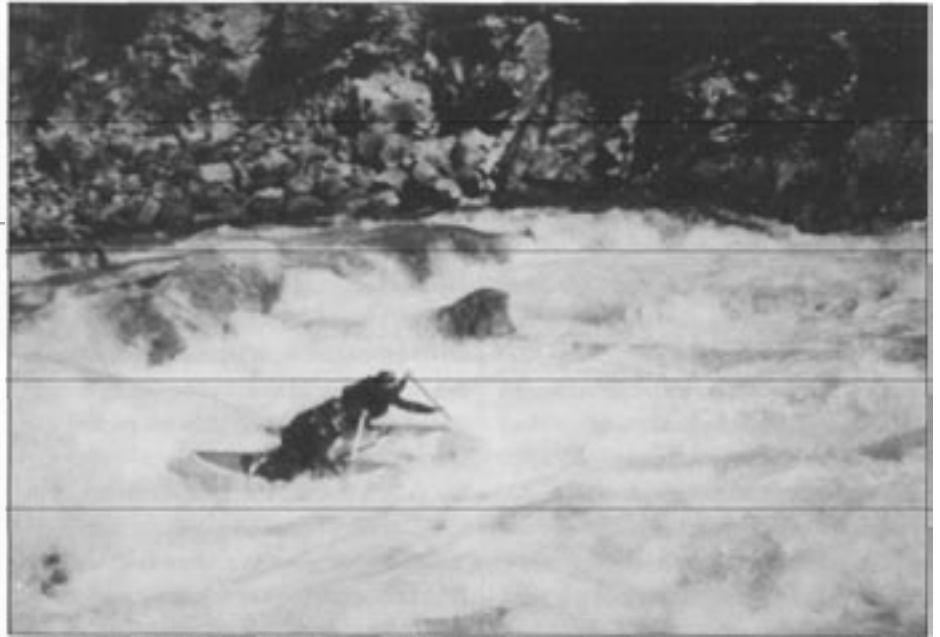
On this day, the trip ended early for most of us. After drifting on easy water for a couple of hours we pulled up to a beach just above a large horizon line. We could **see** nothing of the river, but could hear the roar of a major rapid. This was Kishlaksai rapids, the toughest drop on the trip. Here the river dropped roughly 75 to a 100 feet through a half mile long boulder garden, with four or five class five drops **linked** by difficult, technical class four water. There were no eddies large enough for the cataracts to catch.

The rapid was marked by a memorial to a young woman who had drowned here in 1976. The eerie memorial included the picture of an attractive 20 year old woman, with crossed paddles signifying the end of her journey. Our friends did not know the full story of the accident, but believed that few paddlers wore life jackets during that time period.

We would portage most of the gear around the rapid to our campsite just below the last drop. The Russians would **then run the rafts** through the drops. Back home, I would have agonized about whether or not to run this drop. It would have been **the most** difficult single rapid in my portfolio. Great adrenaline rush to do it cleanly, but serious risk of screwing up and serious risk of injury. Here, the decision was easy. In a long, technical class **five/six** rapid it just didn't make sense to have three guys communicating in Russian, with the fourth man unable to **understand**. I walked around, as did the rest of the Americans and the four Europeans in kayaks.

Sergei guided the first two rafts through following a tight line slaloming through a **boulder** garden next to the shore. Neither **run was** clean as the rafts pinballed through the boulder garden, but they didn't have any substantial problems either.

The other cataract was not so fortunate. Sergei and I set safety ropes in the midsection of **the drop while** Sasha, Misha,



Dima and Lev prepared to run the rapid. In the first difficult section, the cataract came over a six foot ledge and one tube **pitoned** on a submerged rock. The frame on this raft included aluminum stays going all the way to the front of the tube. The impact bent these stays downward at a ninety degree angle about three feet from the bow of the boat, pulling the front of one tube under water.

The raft careened downriver, bouncing off of midstream boulders, and spinning in circles due to the drag caused by the submerged portion of the bow. I was very happy I was walking instead of running the drop. At the same time, we were somewhat panicked. The raft was completely uncontrollable with the most difficult sections of the class five rapid still to come. We were several days out in the wilderness in Central Asia, with three cataracts for fourteen people. Four paddlers were drifting into the teeth of a class **five/six** rapid aboard a badly damaged raft. I think we **all** had visions of building a second memorial at the top of the rapid, and then **walking** out of the canyon.

Our concern heightened as the raft crashed into a series of boulders just above the most difficult section of the drop. As the raft washed against the boulders, the upstream tube caught the water and started to submerge, pushing the

downstream tube into the air above the boulders. Misha, Sasha, Lev and Dima scrambled onto the **upper** tube and lunged onto the boulders as the broken tube of the raft caught the current and swept the raft downstream into the heart of the rapid. As the raft disappeared around the corner, we all started thinking more seriously about what would happen next.

In these circumstances there is a moment of decision. Do you rescue the people on the rocks in the middle of the river, or do you chase the raft, your only comfortable means of escape from the canyon, down river and come back for the people later. I think the natural inclination is to go after the gear. The correct answer is almost always to rescue the people. In this case, it quickly was obvious that the raft was moving too quickly, and was too far out into the river to recover easily. The paddlers clearly came first.

The four paddlers were separated from the shore by about **30 feet** of class four water. They were within easy throw rope range, but separated from the shore by a difficult section of water with several hydraulics and jagged underwater boulders. Immediately downstream was the class five section of the drop with a substantial amount of the water flowing through a series of boulder sieves. Sergei Papush and I threw throw ropes out to the **pad-**

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dlers on the rocks and pendulumed them over to the shore. Due to our concern about rescuing the boat downriver I think we took more chances here than we should have. The pendulum technique entailed substantial risk to the paddlers that could have been avoided through a thoughtful approach to the situation.

As we rescued each of the paddlers, they scrambled out onto the bank and took off downstream to find the cataraft. Fortunately, completely unloaded catarafts tend to bounce off of rather than stick to rocks. While we focused on rescuing the guides from the mid stream boulders, the broken raft had the best run of the day through the lower section of the rapid. Ian, one of our Euro kayakers, had been playing at the bottom of the rapid just before the accident. He managed to get back into his boat and reach the raft in the class 2 water at the bottom of the rapid. Ian clipped into the raft with his safety harness lifejacket, and towed the raft into the

last eddy before the river dropped into the next canyon.

Our Russian friends spent much of the evening crafting replacement parts for the raft and allowing their egos to heal.

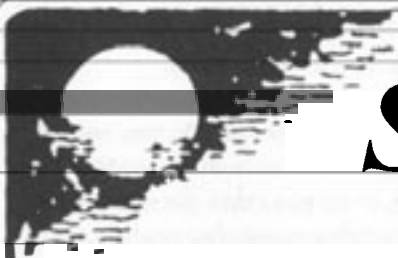
Returning Home

The river hip ended much as it began, with great uncertainty concerning the workings of the bureaucracy of the old Soviet Union. Memorial Rapids represented the most exciting section of the trip. One final day of continuous class three/four water remained after Memorial before the takeout.

We then spent eighteen hours in the Tashkent airport waiting for our flight back to Moscow. We were told that all flights into and out of Moscow, including all international flights were being canceled. While we later found out that the delay was caused by dense fog throughout the Moscow region, no one in Tashkent knew why the flights were delayed. I think we all suspected that there had been

another coup in Moscow, and that we might all be stuck in Central Asia for much longer than we had planned. While we were not able to stay longer on this trip, I can't wait to get back to this part of the world to run more exotic and unknown rivers.

Overall, I thought this run was similar to many of the classic Western river runs such as the Middle Fork of the Salmon. The river was cold and clear, passing through an arid mountain range with five major canyons. Each of the canyons cut through a different ridge of mountains with rock types and coloration ranging from nearly black basalt with vertical canyon walls, to the bright red and orange of iron ore and other minerals exposed on steep scree slopes leading down to the river. Beautiful scenery, great water, and exotic location. I certainly couldn't ask for anything better.



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Little did I dream of this outcome when I answered a typically frantic midnight telephone call from AWA Director Pete Skinner back in the winter of 1988. "Ken, you gotta _____ (fill in the blank)" was the way he started most of these conversations, and this one was no different. There was nothing in his desperate tone, which usually heralds a typical Skinnerian crisis, that even hinted of the trials, tribulations, and other such angst that was to follow. "Ken, you gotta do something about the Mongaup!" Why? What was wrong with Mongaup? Had it been stolen? Had it been swallowed by an earthquake? Had they poured radioactive PCBs into it? No, none of the above. Skinner explained that Orange and Rockland (O&R), the giant Utility, which had barred boaters from the Mongaup for the past 12 years, although allowing fishermen free access, had applied to FERC for a hydropower license. This could be an opportunity for my dub, KCCNY (Kayak and Canoe Club of New York) to help boaters get back on this exquisite river. So began a Class V conservation adventure.

The Mongaup is a beautiful little river that flows south from the Catskill Mountains through New York's Sullivan County plateau before finally plunging into the Delaware River just north of the town of Port Jervis. It passes through some of the most beautiful land in this part of the country, flowing through forests of mature hardwoods and evergreens. In its course it is interrupted several times by O&R's hydroelectric projects, which back its waters into narrow, deep reservoirs. In its final segment it flows (when the turbines are turning) through a lovely deep gorge for three miles from the Rio Dam (pronounced Rye-oh) to its confluence with the Delaware. This section of the Mongaup contains stunningly beautiful boulder-studded Class III rapids.

Skinner explained that KCCNY, of which I was Conservation Chairman, was uniquely placed to do the job. We were local paddlers and therefore there was a good chance that FERC would recognize us as having a legitimate interest in the river and would allow us to legally intervene in the Licensing Procedure (This was crucial because FERC is a quasijudicial body and if they do not allow you to intervene, you literally do not exist as far as they are concerned). John Humbach, Dean of Law at Pace University, dedicated environmentalist, is a man of many talents and enormous energy. He and I would be the local point men. I got to work and contacted Nana Bockalie, who was a lawyer and



A WA director Pete Skinner surfs a wave during the Mongaup test.

President of the Columbia University Kayak Club and persuaded her to help us. Nana began investigating the situation and hit pay dirt almost immediately. For one thing, the Federal Power Act, which is enforced by FERC, and whose rules govern to a large extent the operation of hydros, had been recently amended so that environmental, aesthetic, and recreational concerns have to be given equal consideration with energy needs in these projects. FERC was now forced by law to pay attention to boaters. Also, another company, Rio Hydroelectric Associates had filed a competing Licence Application, charging that O&R had let a 7,000 foot penstock (the tube that brings water from the dam to the powerhouse) rot away in 1979 and therefore had been producing no electric power for the last nine years! Nanci's strategy was to play Rio Associates against O&R, and it worked beautifully. Although O&R refused to even talk with us, Rio rolled out the red carpet, and included our arguments for opening the Mongaup to whitewater boating in their Application. Nana filed our Intervention. Suddenly, O&R was willing to talk with us. Things were going our way. This began to look easy. And then the roof fell in.

2. Surrounded and attacked on all sides

All of a sudden, angry letters-to-the-editor began to appear in local newspapers, attacking boaters for trying to destroy this "pristine" river. They castigated us for being "Madison Avenue boaters"

who were going to take away the peace and quiet from the "woodchucks". It was a thinly disguised and quite vicious "locals against outsiders" mentality. In short order, the Upper Delaware Council (the UDC was local advisory body to the National Park Service, who control the Delaware River adjacent to the Mongaup), the local umbrella organization for hunters, several local town councils, assorted politicians, and the local chapter of the Audubon Society (!) had come out against whitewater boating on the Mongaup. Of these, only the UDC had the courtesy to listen to our side of the story. The reasons given for opposing whitewater boating were that we would ruin the fishing (one letter stated that our colorful boats would scare the fish away), fill the river with our trash, drown in the rapids, thus presenting an impossible rescue situation in this "inaccessible gorge", and attract thousands of drunken canoeists, tubers and other disreputable types of our ilk to their idyllic little river.

The unkindest cut of all however, came when I discovered that even some kayakers were opposed to our efforts! For years a few kayakers who lived near the Mongaup had been paddling the river illegally. Sometimes, when they would pass the river on their way home from work during the week they would find that it was running. Since the Powerhouse was unmanned, they would simply put in there. Most of the time, the local police, who knew them, would not hassle them. Some of them were angry at us, fearing that our efforts to open up the river to all boaters

would upset their cushy little arrangement. Although the more fair-minded ones recognized the essential selfishness of such an attitude, others did not give a damn that their fellow boaters could not get on the river. For the first time I began to have second thoughts about the wisdom of our efforts (As you will see, it would not be the last time). I resolved these doubts with the thought that our duty was to look out for the interests of the paddling community as a whole, not this self-involved little group.

After recovering from our initial shock from these attacks, John Humbach and I counterattacked. We fired off lots of letters and spoke at meetings, trying to set the record straight. But, it was like trying to hold back the water from a broken dam. The level of irrationality was so high that we realized that boaters had been pinpointed as scapegoats for the local's accumulated frustrations with an unresponsive Federal Government as represented by the Delaware River National Park. The National Park Service (NPS) had in their eyes been riding roughshod over their "property rights" for years. We discovered that most of this campaign had been orchestrated by a single individual, a politically active local fisherman by the name of Phil Chase, who had been a thorn in the sides of boaters for years. For some unknown reason he had an almost congenital hatred for boaters. Chase was head of the Fontanellis Fly Fishing Club, a small group who had fished on the Mongaup for years and who had grown to feel that they owned the river, and wanted no others on it.

3. How to Kill a Fly with a Sledgehammer

In the midst of this maelstrom, I received word that the NPS, in the person of one John Hutsky, the regional Park Superintendent, was insisting that the Mongaup must be "managed", complete with a permit system! His rationale was that the Mongaup would be overrun (overpaddled?) by hordes of boaters and someone had to direct the traffic and issue permits. In addition he claimed that there was a safety hazard in letting boaters on the Mongaup and someone must therefore make sure that they had the proper equipment and make them sign waivers. Thus, the bureaucratic mentality that has given us the horror of permits on western rivers was reaching for this tiny creek in upper New York state and trying to apply the same logic as for the Grand Canyon, Arkansas, etc. John and I insisted to whoever would listen to us that the

Mongaup did not need this overkill. Fortunately, O&R was listening. They did not want the duties and expense of administering this river, and we found that we both agreed that less is more in this case. Nevertheless, Hutsky continued for the next few years, trying to convince people that the Mongaup fly needed to be smashed with the management hammer.

4. The Hydro (Un)Fairness Bill

Well, by this time we thought that we had built up a relationship of mutual respect and trust with O&R, and we really had, with certain individuals. However, we still had some things to learn about how corporations work. A call from John Echeverria, the General Counsel for American Rivers, the Washington D.C. river advocacy organization, put us straight. O&R had pulled an end run on us by convincing Senator McClure, the anti-environmentalist from Idaho, to sponsor a bill that would exempt the Mongaup, together with an estimated 350 other pre-1935 hydroelectric projects from Licensing competition and from the environmental, recreational, and wildlife protection provisions of the Federal Power Act. This bill, entitled the Hydroelectric Fairness Bill (I have noticed that in Washington things are often labelled just the opposite of what they really are) would have granted these hydro owners a perpetual government monopoly on a precious and ever-dwindling public resource, without any concomitant responsibility to the Public. This contemplated exemption would have had a devastating effect on whitewater boating and fishing opportunities at these projects! We had set out to help boaters and now it looked like we had instead stimulated an environmental disaster. I began to wonder again about the wisdom of our efforts. However, this was no time for faint hearts. To quote Shakespeare, "I am in blood stepped in so far, that should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er". So, we transformed ourselves into Washington lobbyists and again counterattacked.

Senator Bill Bradley, who headed the Subcommittee on Energy and Power had already held hearings on the bill before we even became aware of its existence. Reading the transcript of the hearing was an eye opener to me to see how biased our Congress is toward the powerful and influential. Bradley and the other senators fawned on the hydroelectric industry's representatives, accepting all of their unsubstantiated (and of course unchallenged) statements with a credulity

that was astonishing. They even went so far as to characterize as "claim jumpers" the businessmen who were competing for licenses with the original hydroelectric owners. What happened to the sacred American concepts of free enterprise and competition? John Humbach and I went to work, writing letters, gathering petitions etc., while Echeverria and Pope Barrow of AWA, kept us informed of what was happening to the bill in Washington. I formed a coalition of interested groups, calling ourselves the North Eastern Rivers Environmental Coalition (NEREC). We arranged a meeting with Bradley's "environmental" aid who listened gravely and promised to inform the senator of our concerns. It was all to no avail, as the bill passed in the Senate by voice vote UNANIMOUSLY!

But, thank god for the bicameral legislature. The bill still had to pass the House of Representatives. We redoubled our efforts, writing more letters, meeting with my congressman, Rep. Green of New York, and gathering more petitions which were presented to Phillip Sharp, Bradley's opposite number in the House. Hearings were set, and Echeverria requested that since I was particularly knowledgeable about the Mongaup that I be given the opportunity to testify. The request was turned down. They did however, allow him to speak, along with David Conrad of the Wilderness Society, and they did a splendid job. Then came a break. I wrote a Letter to the Editor of the New York Times attacking the bill and it was printed! Due to our combined efforts the bill had become "controversial" and it was quietly allowed to die in committee. Thus we learned something about the workings of the US Congress.

5. "Please Don't throw Me into that Briar Patch" (or how yours truly played Brer Rabbit to FERC's farmer John)

At about this time, FERC requested some basic information from O&R about whitewater opportunities on the Mongaup, and O&R, not being knowledgeable in this area, asked me to answer them. Among the questions was the obvious one of what class river the Mongaup was. I was about to fill this in with "Class III of course" when an idea struck me. Officially, we did not know the Class, having been kept off the river for many years. "We do not know what Class the Mongaup is. We would have to paddle it to find out" I wrote.

I am a great believer in momentum. If we could get on the river just once legally to do a whitewater test, it would put

us one step closer to our goal and prove that this "dangerous" river could be safely paddled. Besides, it would energize the paddling community on this issue. Boaters do not particularly like to testify at hearings and write letters (some unkind souls might claim they cannot write letters) but they sure do like to **paddle!** The strategy worked like a charm. Back came a letter from FERC, requesting that O&R work with us to set up a "Whitewater Test". O&R suggested we do it in December, and I, shuddering at the idea, countered with **May** (Why not paddle, I thought, after all the other rivers have dried up?). May, 1990 it was, and I began enthusiastically to organize a flotilla of all kinds of boaters. Little did I realize what was just around the bend....

6. The Attack of the Killer Fishermen

As the date of the Test approached, our anticipation and good spirits grew. All we had to do, we thought, was have a good time on the river, fill out some forms, avoid someone getting drowned, and it would be a success. However, we had not reckoned with Mr. Congeniality himself, Phil Chase, the friendly fisherman. In a newspaper interview he promised a

confrontation on the day of **the Test**, threatening to "fill the river with fishermen" and strongly suggesting that we might find some trees blocking our passage. Naturally, you can imagine the fear this struck into our hearts, kayakers being known for their docile natures and willingness to turn the other cheek. On the morning of the battle, er Test, I carefully strapped my river knife so that it was prominently displayed on my **PFD** (You know, we might have to chop our way through some of those obstructing er trees). I was excited. What a beautiful day to paddle down a river and what other challenges would we find? My thoughts were of Knights in full armor riding their magnificent chargers into **battle** (I decided to wear my red helmet, red PFD, and red T-Slalom).

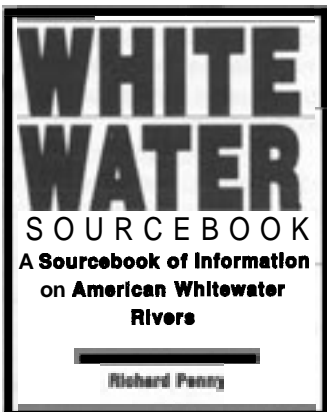
This brings us full circle, back to the bridge. The police were successful in keeping the fishermen and ourselves separated while we went about our business. We presented a colorful sight (probably scaring away the fish), and included a broad range of paddlers, from Class V kayaker to recreational oar boaters. Ann Cali, KCCNY Chairperson, who was unable to paddle that day due to an injury, and some others, tried to engage the fishermen

in a dialogue. As far as I know, nobody converted, leaped into a boat, and paddled down the river shouting **halleluia**, but it was a good try. The rest of us had a glorious day paddling the "forbidden" river. Our conclusions about the river were **practically** unanimous. It was beautiful and a solid Class III when both turbines were flowing. No blood was shed and no trees were found in the river.

The next day, all the newspapers around the Port Jervis area were filled with articles and **photos** of what must have been the most exciting event to **occur** in that area in a long time. One of them featured a full front page color photo of a kayaker. We filed our report and waited for FERC to make its final ruling.


7. The Notorious Mongaup Wave

Among the notables who witnessed the Test was the omnipresent Mr. **Hutsky**, the NPS Superintendent. He prowled the banks of the river, glowering. Mr. **Hutsky** had lately brought up yet another issue. Now he was insisting that the water flow produced by a two turbine release, would, when it reached the Delaware, push boats going down that much




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larger river, into the notorious Mongaup Wave, **capsizing** them and drowning their hapless crews. The Mongaup Wave, of local fame, was a delightful surfing wave, that boaters flocked to especially during the summer when there was a dearth of other water to paddle. There they could while away many pleasant hours, alternately plying the wave or resting on a large adjacent flat rock watching their friends playing the wave. The wave was situated on the opposite side of the Delaware from where the Mongaup spilled into it, about 50 yards downstream from the confluence. **Mr. Hutsky** insisted that a test be performed on the Delaware at the same time we were on the Mongaup. For this purpose, he selected two canoeists, who were part of the volunteer Delaware River Patrol whose course down the Delaware was to be videotaped. Their conclusion was that they felt no effect. That finished that controversy, right? Wrong! **Mr. Hutsky** then decided that the Delaware had been too high and threw out the test results. He demanded a retest during the summer when the river was lower. He chose two other canoeists and reported to FERC that they had felt a perceptible push toward the notorious Mongaup wave. When he was asked for a copy of the canoeist's report to him, he stated that there was none. Their report had been verbal.

8. "The Eagle has Landed"

While all this had been going on, another drama that would effect the outcome, was unfolding. In February, 1991, Commissioner Jorling of the New York DEC announced that New York State was acquiring the land on both sides of the Mongaup River from **O&R** for use as wintering habitat for the endangered Bald Eagle. It seems that our national symbol had taken note that the Mongaup, unlike most rivers neither froze nor dried up during the winter but continued to flow due to the running of its turbines. Not only that but the turbine blades nicely chopped up the fish, something like a Cuisinart might do, making tasty little bite size pieces available. Not being stupid, about a dozen of our national symbols had settled down on the Mongaup. Jorling further stated that DEC was in favor of using the Mongaup as a whitewater boating resource, and he opened **access** to the river for boaters. This action was consistent with Jorling's position that New York rivers are a public resource and as such should be open to ALL the public. DEC had previously backed up this policy with actions helping us to open

access to the Class IV Neversink River gorge. Due to this policy we had learned that we could count on DEC people like Doug Sheppard and Verne Husick to support our efforts on the Mongaup.

9. The Promised Land

In the Spring of this year FERC issued **O&R** a licence for Project # **9690-004**, the Rio Dam. Incorporated somewhere in the thousands of pages of that very large document is a provision giving whitewater boaters the right to paddle on the Mongaup, and ordering water releases one day per weekend on every other weekend from April through October. We did not get everything we wanted. **Hutsky** prevailed on his spurious safety factor and we will get only single turbine releases. This makes the Mongaup less enjoyable for advanced dosed boaters, being a little scratchy, but still excellent for open boaters. The situation will improve in 1994, when the installation of necessary plumbing at the dam itself will send an additional 100 CFS down the hitherto dewatered old riverbed to the powerhouse. This will open up a new 1 1/2 mile segment for fishing, a move that we whitewater boaters supported from the beginning. Since they cannot stop that 100 CFS at the powerhouse, the 23% augmentation of the 430 CFS we will already be getting should markedly improve the boating.

Well, was the effort worth it? John Humbach has bought land in New Mexico to retire to (out of exhaustion?). It took a lot of sweat from a number of people to bring this about. Looking back, I can also see that we needed some lucky breaks, which we got. With that combination of sweat and luck, you can produce, not something grandiose, but some minor **miracles**. I know that I gained a tremendous amount of **knowledge** that I can put to good use on my next river conservation project. Now, about that dam they built above the Grand Canyon...

Kennebec continued...

from user fees.

The current controversy recalls another one, that lasted from 1983 to 1989, **when** whitewater outfitters challenged **CMP's** right to charge rafters a per person "head fee" to float the river. The case went to the First Circuit Court of Appeals and **CMP's** right to charge was upheld. Today, the "head fee" is \$6 per rafting customer, and 30,000 rafters take on the Kennebec each year.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is investigating and has asked **CMP** to provide information regarding recreation at Harris Station. FERC may intervene if it finds the fees unreasonable.

"**We** have provided FERC with the information they requested. Now we are waiting to hear," **says CMP's** Rodrigue. "If they come back and say we can only charge 10 cents, we would have to do that, unless we decided to pursue it further."

Some kayakers have suggested that whitewater outfitters never should have given up the fight to abolish head fees. Nonetheless, rafters have been paying for years.

Kayakers, on the other hand, set themselves apart from commercial rafters. They don't pay \$90 for a one-day guided trip of the gorge, they don't require the 15-minute safety lectures that the rafting customers receive, and they don't stop for steak lunches beside the river. While kayakers must use the same road as anyone to get to the river, they say they never needed the \$3 million in capital investments that went into "providing access." They say they would be just as happy taking to the woods to change and relieve themselves.

CMP's Rodrigue sees it differently. "If we didn't have the facilities to handle the 50,000 to 60,000 people that come through here each year, it would be pretty messy," he says.

"We equate it to a small state park. Tomorrow there will be over 1,000 people in the yard. It takes a lot of people to keep things orderly up there."

As for the immediate stand-off at the dam, Christopher says he has contacted his affiliates and warned them they **would** be arrested if they tried to enter the gate without paying.

"We have encouraged them to **pay** the fee," says Christopher. His group is **also recommending** that kayakers visit other areas, primarily the Rapid River in **Maine/ New Hampshire** and the Deerfield River in **Western Massachusetts**, until the matter is **resolved**.

New England **FLOW** has filed **complaints** with **FERC** during the past **several** months on this issue and **FERC** has **begun** an investigation. **FLOW** is currently **documenting** each aspect of this issue for **FERC** and has submitted a massive body of evidence against **CMP**.

complaining. **So**, to solve the problem, I'm proposing we give every homeless person in the country a kayak and a **used** van with roof racks.

UNEMPLOYMENT—F.D.R. had the right idea: people want work if they **have a chance. So bring back the old C.C.C. camps!** There's plenty of clean-up that can be done around rivers. Hell, skilled workers can design and construct artificial whitewater courses in places **like** Iowa or Mississippi.

Of course, there will always be a minority of people without the responsibility or drive to accept a real job. They can be raft guides.

WELFARE — You won't get old Gary to say that folks should go hungry. But if I'm going to pay for welfare programs, I figger I oughta get somethin' back. Some private services. Like letting able-bodied welfare recipients carry boats on portages...or drive shuttles. Or better yet...perform fiberglass work on my busted boats. I'll bet after a few kayaks get ground and the fiberglass dust is flying, then the nation's welfare rolls will diminish significantly!

DRUG ABUSE—Here's an **innovative** program designed to handle the drug problem once and for all! A whitewater camp for **folks** convicted of drug offenses!

It's located on the banks of the Russell Fork—that mean-spirited class V run down in Kentucky. And unlike other drug rehabilitation programs, participants in my camp can ingest as much of the poison of their choice whenever they want to. The only requirement is: they need to run the river once a day for a solid month.

I figger the river will separate the users from the abusers. Those that can last a month on the Russell should be able to function in society and will be released. The others will simply be buried in mass graves marked only by toxic waste warning **signs**.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS — I'm all for women's rights. They have the right to carry their own boats. The right to pack an equal amount of gear during a float trip. The right to probe a nasty drop. The right to pay for half the beer.

Hell, I figger the only real advantage the male gender enjoys is that it's easier for us to make a **piss-stop** during a shuttle.

In addition, I think that what a woman does with her body is her own **business**. Now what a lot of women actually do with their bodies **should be** a crime. But you can't arrest someone for **gittin' fat**

and ugly.

Now, I don't want our female readers getting their knickers in an uproar. Lord knows I'm not **talking** about them. Female boaters are **typically** fit as **Amazons** and I'd never say nothing bad about females with shoulders bigger'n mine.

ENERGY — Here's a real dilemma. You can talk about cutting down on fossil fuels, but then how the Hell do you drive to a put-in? My mountain bike doesn't have roof racks.

You can **hate what hydro-electric** power does to rivers, but how do you chill your beer without electricity? And sure, burning coal and wood pollutes the air, but who wants to see your breath when you're sitting at home **watching** Monday Night Football?

Now don't go talking about solar power. Hell, I hate the sun. Give me rain from Monday through Friday...hardly enough light to power solar cells. Admittedly, I don't mind nukes much. I'd just as soon dump the waste in Kansas or some other worthless state that doesn't have whitewater. But then we do need wheat to bake important things—like pretzels.

So what to do?

Geo-thermal power! Hell, they run the whole **country of Iceland** by **tapping** in hot water trapped in the Earth's innards. And besides, there's a worthy by-product of the used-up steam. We **dump it** into the Adirondack rivers! I'm looking forward to paddling on **80-degree** water in April!

WORLD AFFAIRS — The new location of Camp David is key to my conducting international **diplomacy**. I just invite world leaders to Friendsville and while we're there, I suggest we take a little raft ride. Just a little pleasure cruise. Hah!

Say we're hung up on a few key issues. Well, at the top of Triple Drop, I give my disagreeable counterpart a little shove. **Splash!**

I figger he'll be **seein'** things my way real fast in exchange for a helping hand. Specially with the hole at National Falls looming ahead.

TAX RELIEF—For **the last** twenty years, I've watched while the chowderheads in Washington and in our state capitol of Albany have frittered away the **pounds** of flesh they rip from **my** paycheck every week. And now to sustain their extravagant spending habits, they tell me they need to tax my boats and charge user fees every **time** I cross a put-in.

Well—I'm changin' that! I **sez...we** tax every person in the country who don't

own a kayak!

After all—who is it that **runnin'** up the cost of health care in this country? It's the leadbutts who spend every weekend rooted in their **Laziboy's chompin'** chips and dip and raisin' their cholesterol levels **like** mercury in a Death Valley thermometer.

Sure, boaters may call in sick from work on Fridays when **the Upper Yough** is running, but have you ever seen a paddler stay sick for the weekend? Never! At least, not when there's water.

And who is that trashes the countryside by flinging empty bottles out the window of their cars? Again, not kayakers. Paddlers respect the environment too much, and besides, they're too cheap to throw away the nickel deposit.

And who is it that lives in our cities that suck government aid like a ravenous black hole? Who is it that needs expensive artificial lakes built by the Army Corps of Imbeciles for water-skiing. And who wants street lights on every corner and **parkin'** lots big enough to turn an RV around in?

Again, not **kayakers**. It's the other people who are a drain on the economy...the people that don't own **boats**. So, let 'em pay their fair share.

The system is simple: if you don't own a boat, you pay an extra **\$1,000**. But if you own a boat, you claim a **\$1,000** deduction. Or as in **my** case, if you own 10 boats, you get back 10 grand.

What a deal! Most boaters won't have to work anymore. They can just live off their tax returns.

Now that you've seen my platform, I figger paddlers across the country will flock to my banner. I've already sent change-of-address cards to the post office.

And, Hell...you're all invited to my inaugural bash. **But** don't come expecting some wimpy black-tie affair where glad-handing political hacks buss cheeks and smooze with champagne and canapes.

Instead, picture a Gauley Festival on the Mall. Thousands of celebrants clad in river shorts and pile clutching cans of Milwaukee's Best. Kayak demos in the Reflective Pool. The Grateful Dead playing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. **Slam-dancing** on Pennsylvania Avenue. A whitewater rodeo at Little Falls of the Potomac. Whitewater videos projected on the side of the Washington Monument...

Jeez... turns out I'm heading up a real party after all!

Ask what you can do to your country...

By GARY CARLSON

Normally, I wouldn't share my tailgate with no geeky, stringbean of a boater. Specially one that was president of a major metropolitan paddling club. But since it was *his* case of ice-cold Rolling Rocks sittin' between us, I figgered I could let him have his say:

"You know, Gary, many of us young, urban professionals who paddle feel totally disenfranchised since we no longer have Perot as an option..."

Well, I'd heard you couldn't buy that Perot Water no more. Something about that French spring where they bottle Perot water contaminated with gasoline or benzene or somezene. But I never figgered people'd be that upset. Never made any sense to me to actually pay for water when you could go into any public restroom and fill up a bottle from the back of a toilet.

"...so we're searching for someone who can head up our party. Someone unafraid to make a yunch. Someone who knows his country and can lead the new dance. Someone who understandsthe lines it takes to end up on top. Someone like you, Gary."

"Say," I said. "Am I gonna hafta pay for this slam-bang party?"

"Of course not. There will be contributions, and PAC money and matching funds to cover expenses."

Well, I couldn't deny the logic. I did know the recipe for a punch guaranteed to leave you in the gutter, I'd been listening to country music on the radio and I'd just learned the dance steps to 'Achey, Breaky Heart,' and although my lines more often resulted with a slap in the face than me on top—it wasn't for lack of effort.

And—what the Hell—the party was free!

"You've found yer man," I said, and reached for another Rolling Rock.

So that's how I ended up being the presidential candidate for the Paddlers' Party.

Now, I know a lot of you people are sayin':

"Gary—have you been paddling class 5 water without a helmet? You gotta be crazy to want to be president!"

At first I thought so, too. But after I got over the disappointment of running



for a major political office instead of organizing a wild party—I began to see some advantages to being the "paddling president."

Take shuttles, for instance. You don't think you couldn't jama whole bunch of boats into that presidential helicopter? No more walks up that steep Panther Creek Trail on the Gauley—just jump into the hovering whirlybird at the base of Sweet's Falls and zip up to the dam for another run.

Now—I know you're saying: "What about security, Gary? The president can't go *nowheres* without *his* secret service agents."

Of course not! They'd be damned useful.

Picture this: I'm in an eddy above an especially nasty drop. The left side looks particularly ominous. So I just say, "Agent Smith, would you care to probe the left side?"

Thunk!

"Well, boys, looks like we want to run down the right."

And then there's the benefit of freedigsoverfour years: the White House—the world's ultimate guide shack. A pool in the basement for roll sessions. And with kayaks mounted on the presidential limo and a police motorcycle leading the cavalcade—the class 5 Great Falls is only 10 minutes away.

Of course, residing in an inner-city like Washington, D.C. has a down-

side—you're constantly surrounded by the dregs of humanity. It's the underbelly of civilization—a subculture where rape and robbery are considered the norm. But then, I figger I can get used to it. You just have to stay out of the parts of town where you'd find lawyers...around ambulances, or where slush fund money is being diwed out, or golf courses.

Besides, what president actually spends time in Washington? Most of the time it seems they're always hanging around at Camp David, Maryland. Where the Hell is Camp David, anyway? Does anyone really know for sure?

Well, since the camp's location is somewhat obscure...I'll just move it to Friendsville—right on the banks of the Upper Yough. And we'll have water releases every day until Deep Creek Lake is sucked down to a mud puddle. Now, the folks in the million-dollar homes on the lake might bitch about the level going down, but the threat of an I.R.S. audit ought to shut 'em up

So, you're probably thinking: "Well, the presidency might be a good deal for you, Gary...but what's in it for us? There's gotta be some reason to vote for you other than just improving your paddling plans."

Well, to paraphrase John Kennedy—ask not what your country can do for you...ask what you can do to your country. And I can do plenty!

In fact, just last night, me'n a panel of select advisors circled around a campfire to put the final touches on the campaign platform for the Paddling Party. It wasn't easy 'cuz a couple of the boys were squirt boaters who'd suffered some minor brain damage from oxygen deprivation during mystery moves. In fact, it took the better part of the night and all of a quarter keg to complete—but by the time the tap fizzled and spat the last of the brew, we figgered we'd licked the world's problems.

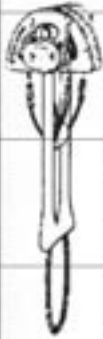
Here's what we came up with: THE HOMELESS — I figger, homelessness is mostly a state of mind. Hell—half the paddlers in the world don't have a permanent address and they're not

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B.D. Shell Glove reg 63	\$49.95

Free Mount With Ski & Binding Purchase



CLIMBING

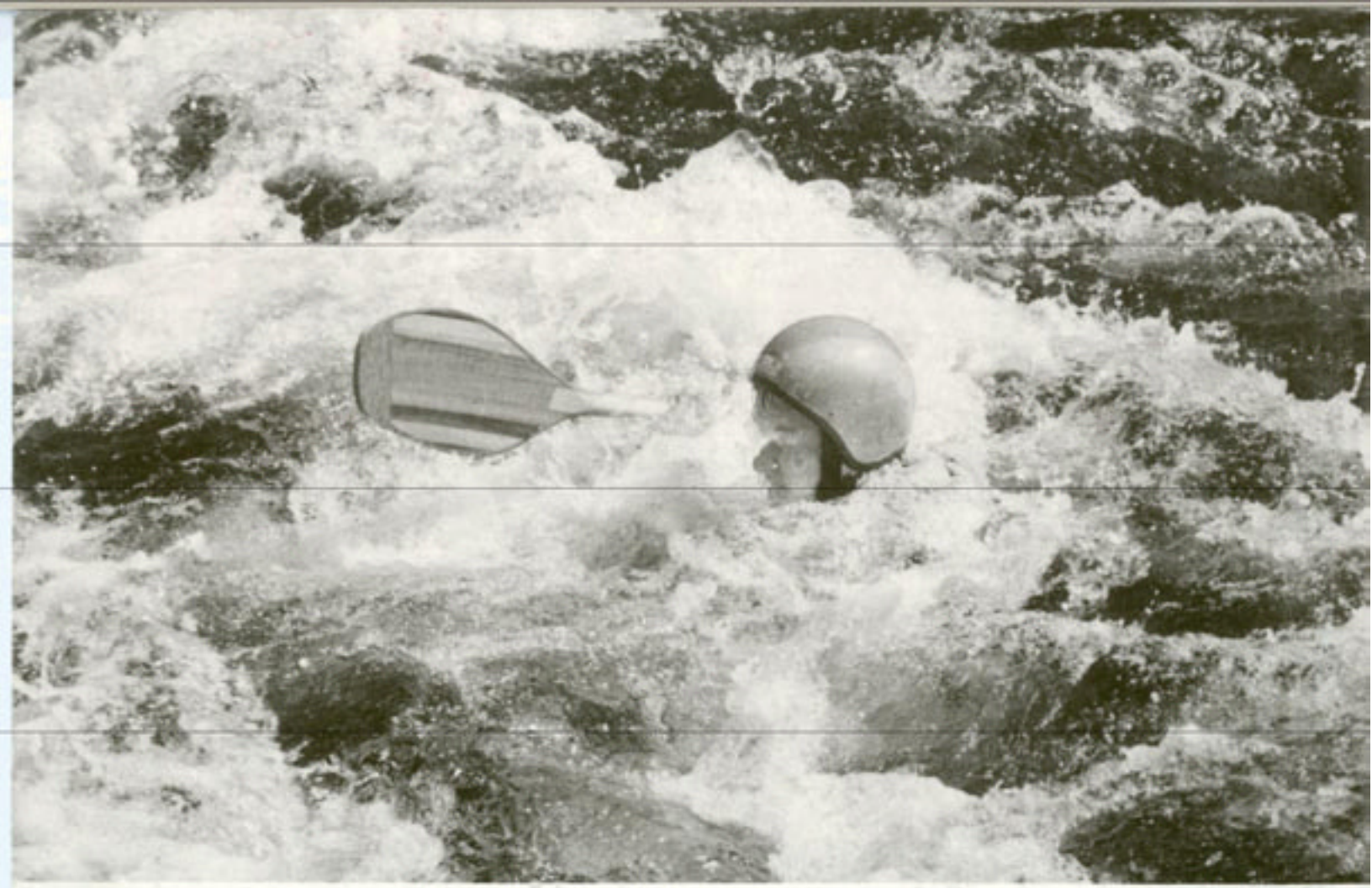
Omega Pacific Oval or D Carabiners	doz \$49.95
Low Quantum IV reg 485	\$449
Low Denali w/Alpine liner reg 330	\$299
Low Denali w/Red Hot liner reg 425	\$399

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