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American Whitewater Journal

Volume XLVI, No.5

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Cover Shot:
Pat Keller in the Second
Act of Tragedy, Day
Three Homathko River
Photo by Johnnie Kern



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Purpose American Whitewater

River Stewardship, an Integrated Approach

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

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

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished

through direct participation in public decision making processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

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

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

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



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Executive Director The Journey Ahead

River Stewardship Toolkit: The New Tool in AW's Arsenal

by Mark Singleton

I am happy to announce that American Whitewater's River Stewardship Toolkit is now available online! This resource will provide users with more than 10 years of top-notch expertise in river conservation and restoration. The Stewardship Toolkit allows AW membership to use the scientific and technical expertise of our staff to become more effective river stewards; thus, turning individuals who enjoy whitewater recreation into activists who can make a meaningful and lasting contribution to river conservation. The Toolkit is one of the cornerstones of AW's new River Stewardship strategy. This policy embraces a regional approach, leveraging the capacity of our membership and volunteers at the community level to advocate for the whitewater resources we all enjoy.

One of American Whitewater's signature achievements has been its ability to engage diverse groups of grassroots volunteers at the watershed level. History reveals that the ethic characterizing our nation's greatest conservationists often grows out of their initial outdoor recreation experiences. This is especially true in river conservation, where river runners (including many American Whitewater volunteers) have emerged as true leaders in our nation's river conservation movement. Our work

demonstrates that, when given the tools and education they need to become effective, those who take the time to enjoy our nation's rivers become their strongest advocates.

These efforts have long-term implications for the addition of new places to paddle, as well as the preservation of old ones. Many of the whitewater resources we take for granted are available today thanks to years of work from grassroots volunteer efforts. These include rivers around the country that are now considered classic whitewater runs. This work takes place at a cost; membership and partner support must be maintained to fuel these efforts. Member dues and donations fund river Stewardship and a growing membership base helps ensure AW's future success.

If you are reading this Journal as a non-member, please give serious consideration to becoming a member. If you are a member, thank you, and please consider a donation to American Whitewater to reinforce these efforts. Thirty-five dollars in annual dues and a donation to AW are the best investments you can make to enhance the places you love to paddle and play.



Editor's Note: For a more detailed look at AW's River Stewardship Toolkit and future online resources, see page 49 of this issue or our website, americanwhitewater.org.



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Safety First!

Safe Wilderness Paddling

by Ambrose Tuscano

Heading out into the wilderness in your boat anytime soon? If your answer is yes, there are a few things you should think about that will make the experience safer and, in the long run, more enjoyable.

Pack Smart

There are many people who can suggest better wilderness paddling packing strategies than me. However, since they often disagree about exactly what to pack, I won't muddy the waters further by proposing my own laundry list. Instead, let me suggest a few general principles of packing for a boating trip in the wild:

- First, the classic safety staples (throw bag, breakdown paddle, First Aid, pulleys) should certainly be included. In fact, you should always paddle with these items in your boat, so that at the outset of a wilderness day trip or a multi-day excursion, safety equipment isn't making your boat any heavier than usual.

- Second, in a very serious way, consider the possibility of spending a night in the woods. If you are packing for a multi-day trip, you already have sufficient gear for this. However, if you plan to finish your trip in one day, make sure you have enough gear to keep you warm and dry, or else make sure you know you can survive the night with the clothes on your back and whatever insulation and fuel Mother Nature provides. If your choice is the latter, be absolutely certain you can live with the consequences of your decision.

- Third, bring more than enough food for the trip. Unless you thrive on an empty stomach—mentally, as well as physically—don't put yourself in a situation where you could run out of food. While this may seem like a less-than-critical point, consider the impact running out of food might have on your experience. If the thought of getting "out" to food is informing your decisions late in a trip, you may decide to run marginal rapids in order to expedite the run. Any time you let some factor outside of objective information about the river and your paddling ability play a role in your on-river decision making, you put yourself and your team in unnecessary danger.

- Fourth, despite the above warnings, when packing for multi-day trips, don't overstuff your boat to the point where it is not responsive. While cutting down on items that are not absolutely necessary may deprive you of some creature comforts, remember that you are traveling into the wild. If you are disturbed by the idea of wearing the same set of smelly paddling gear for several days running, perhaps the wilderness experience is not for you. If you worry about your ability to paddle a loaded boat, practice. It's not too hard to put 20 pounds of stuff in a drybag in the back of your boat for a few comfortable day runs. Like my suggestion about safety gear, once you get used to the extra weight, you will at least know what you are capable of.

Paddle Smart

Regardless of your paddling ability, you need to be absolutely honest with yourself about what you are (and are not) capable of in a boat before you head off into the wilderness. While it is wise to be honestly appraised of your own situation before you get on any river, the wilderness environment makes it absolutely essential. When you have little or no alternative to paddling yourself out, the stakes rise exponentially. An obvious conclusion, then, is don't rely on someone else to tell you which run you are ready for—especially a wilderness run. If you don't feel qualified to make that

decision, keep practicing on frontcountry rivers before you venture further away from civilization.


Once you're in the backcountry, make sure you adjust your on-river decision making for the environment. If a rapid looks like it would be marginally runnable for you under normal circumstances, you might be best to leave it alone on a wilderness river. Even something as innocuous as a swim could have devastating consequences on a wilderness run. Any injury or loss of critical gear (let alone your boat or paddle) could have a huge impact on the trip and perhaps require an embarrassing rescue operation. While backcountry rescues have saved boaters' lives in the past, it is best to make on-river decisions as if rescue were not an option. Unless someone is immobile or in mortal danger, a backcountry rescue will only support claims by bureaucrats and special interest groups opposed to paddling that paddlers should not be given access to wilderness and that they should not have a voice in river management decisions.

The mindset that I prefer on any river—but especially in a wilderness setting—is that of a first descender. I try to make a decision about running a particular rapid based solely on my ability and the difficulty of the rapid as I see it. This sounds painfully obvious, but it becomes more useful when you consider the factors that this eliminates. Most importantly, it assumes that you do not make decisions based on other paddlers' runs. Namely, if all your buddies make a manky rapid look easy, you should ignore their smooth runs when making your own decision. Granted, there are many rapids all across the country that would never see a second descent if this rule were widely observed, but it is an excellent guiding principle in the wilderness. Pretending to be first when you come to a questionable rapid should also eliminate peer pressure from the equation. Supposedly, there is never peer pressure involved in whitewater paddling, but I think it is unwise to pretend that this is always the case. Even if your friends don't verbally encourage you to run a rapid, you still may

feel pressure to run something you are not comfortable with simply to impress them. The wilderness demands a moratorium on peer pressure and egos. When you scout a rapid on a wilderness run, try to make your decision to run or portage it before you engage in any conversation with your team. Once you do compare notes, stick to your guns. Don't let someone talk you into running something if your initial reaction was to walk it.

So much cautionary material does require balance. While recklessness is a more common cause of problems in the wilderness, it is possible to get yourself into trouble by being too cowed by a river. In some cases, an inexperienced group will end up on a wilderness river at a level where the average rapid is too difficult for them. The resulting portage-fest can

be dangerous in the same way as running out of food. The realization that they are going too slowly can push a team back onto a river that is too difficult for them to run safely. So learn the ropes of wilderness paddling with experienced companions and stay well within your limits. While the pros often get away with pushing the envelope in remote wilderness locations, that's no reason for you to do the same. It is entirely possible to enjoy and appreciate wild rivers as much—or even more so—if you're not wide-eyed and white-knuckled.

If you're planning to head to a wilderness river this year, be sure to do plenty of homework, spend plenty of time packing and surround yourself with good paddlers and good friends who will respect and enjoy the places you see. And most of all, be smart and safe. 



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AW News & Notes

Whitewater Symposium Schedule Released

Glenwood Springs, CO - Curious what industry leaders predict for the future of whitewater paddlesports? Want to share success stories with other paddling clubs, paddling schools or retail shops?

The third annual Whitewater Symposium is a three-day event that seeks to advance the sport of whitewater kayaking by bringing together instructors and program leaders, industry representatives and top paddlers. This year's panel discussion on the future of whitewater features Woody Calloway of Liquidlogic Kayaks, ACA Executive Director Pam Dillon, American Whitewater Executive Director Mark Singleton, and Bruce Lessels of Zoar Outdoor Shop and Paddling School.

The focus of the symposium is on generating new ideas to support the continued health of the whitewater industry through building and maintaining the quality of instruction and gear and promoting a positive media image of the sport. The Symposium is a meeting of the minds that helps take kayaking into the future. It's a stimulating and exhilarating event for every store, school, or program.

The keynote speaker is John Norton, paddler and longtime veteran of the ski industry, most recently as CEO of Crested Butte Ski Corp. His talk will draw provocative parallels between paddlesports and the ski industry, including steps taken in the ski industry to make the sport more attainable to a wider audience.

This year's symposium also offers a new program and panel on decision-making. This model for teaching the decision making process is presented by Nicole Greene of the San Juan Outdoor School, and is based on the Avalanche School Model. The follow-up panel discussion on leadership training in whitewater will feature Gordon Black of the ACA, Andrew Jillings of Hamilton College and Sam Drevo of Northwest River Guides on how we can permeate the whitewater community with more of a decision-making ethic.


Many of the topics are relevant to every instructor and program leader. "We need to do a better job of enabling all paddlers to achieve a better voice in group dynamics and river decisions," comments Symposium organizer Kent Ford. "There is something here for everyone, including ACA instructor updates as part of attendance."

No visit to Glenwood Springs would be complete without a stop in the world's largest hot springs pool, where symposium attendees will hear kayak roll instruction tips from Mary DeRiemer, Eric Jackson, Ken Whiting, and can capture their own rolls on video. [AWW](#)

For more program schedule details, visit www.whitewatersymposium.com or contact Kent Ford: 970-259-1361 kentford@gobrainstorm.net. Early registration ends September 1st.



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Team River Runner Offers U.S. Troops New Challenges

by Phil Sayre

As whitewater boaters, we do what we do for a number of reasons: challenges, hydrotherapy after a long day at work, and the enjoyment of nature experienced through the pulse of the River. But, what if you had major medical problems, such as those that U.S. troops of the Iraq and Afghan wars have experienced? Would boating help?

This very question led two Washington, D.C. boaters into a series of eddy conversations which resulted in a great new volunteer effort known as Team River Runner. Since last August, Joe Mornini and Mike McCormick have put about 50 wounded veterans and some of their family members into kayaks in the physical therapy pool at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) and on the Potomac River. Since a good idea sells itself (with some hard work thrown into the mix), a bevy of local paddlers have stepped up to help over the past year.

At present, Team River Runner is an all-volunteer apolitical effort lead by a council of about nine kayakers that works closely with the medical staff from Walter Reed and with local commercial whitewater outfitters (who provide critically-needed equipment and transportation). All are giving back something to those who sacrificed much in the recent wars.


Improvements to protective clothing and equipment for the U.S. military have led to fewer combat deaths, but also to an increase in the rate of severe injuries, such as loss of limbs. As a result, many military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan wind up at WRAMC, which is the U.S. military's premier medical facility for amputees. Most of these troops at WRAMC are young, gung-ho individuals from around the country who have had to endure many months of surgeries, physical



Photos by Adam Fenster

therapy, prosthetic fittings, and other life adjustments prior to release or return to active duty. They welcome a chance to pick up a new challenge and, as one wounded veteran said, get out of "ground hogging" at WRAMC for a day.

New students start at the WRAMC physical therapy pool, where we cut massive amounts of foam to compensate for missing legs and other injuries (and you thought that custom outfitting was a dying art). Often, after just two pool sessions, they have a roll. Yes, these men and women learn quicker than most of us due to attitude, military training, and a technique for teaching perfected by Tom McEwan's Liquid Adventures Kayaking School and delivered most effectively by Joe Mornini.

One double-leg amputee of the Vietnam War noted in a CBS News interview that vets of his era had nothing like this when he came home in the early 70s. A second Iraq veteran from New York noted in a *Washington Post* article "Anything that could get you killed is a lot of fun." A third veteran of Team River Runner recently completed his first run on the Lower Youghiogheny River in Pennsylvania prior to redeployment, proving that these veterans can handle pretty stout rapids. Boating is not only helpful to those at WRAMC and their families, but also to those still overseas. Captain Matt Scherer, a kayaker and physical therapist, observed: "This program really helps the guys still on the front lines, as well as our patients. When soldiers ship out with their injuries, they're in pretty bad shape. But, then their buddies in country see pictures of them a few months later when they're healed up and sitting in a kayak, and it really helps them." 



If you are interested in finding out more about Team River Runner, visit <http://www.teamriverrunner.org/>, e-mail us at info@TeamRiverRunner.org, or see press articles such as the one in the 5 June edition of the *Washington Post*.

Corrections

In our July/August issue, we incorrectly attributed two photos (pgs 14-15) to Tim Catalano. Our apologies to Bobbette Schaefer and Steve Schaefer, photographers of the first and second pictures, respectively.

Etowah Scenic River Proposal

by Dan Centofanti

The Etowah Scenic River Committee has been formed as a grassroots organization to protect 21 miles of the Etowah and Amicalola Rivers in North Georgia. The group is lobbying to have sections of these rivers designated State Scenic Rivers in accordance with the Georgia's State Scenic River Act. The Etowah Scenic River Proposal includes 14.4 miles of the Amicalola River, from Lindsey Ford to the confluence of the Etowah River and 6.8 miles of the Etowah River. Much of the length of these streams flows through the City of Atlanta tract of Dawson Forest. The proposal follows the requirements of the Georgia Scenic Rivers Act, which protects the river corridor and does not allow dams or other obstructions to affect the free-flowing nature of the river.

These two streams are located in Dawson County within a one-hour drive of most of Metropolitan Atlanta. The area surrounding these streams is heavily wooded and there are no cabins or decks on the banks for the entire 21 miles! This is indeed rare in our rapidly-developing area just outside the urban sprawl of Atlanta. The Etowah is home to 76 species of aquatic life making it one of the richest rivers in aquatic diversity in the southeast, according to Candace Stoughton, Etowah River Project Director for the Nature Conservancy. The Amicalola is a popular canoe and kayak run, with several sections ranging in difficulty from Class I-II on the Upper Amicalola to Class III-IV on the Lower Amicalola.

In the early 1970s, the City of Atlanta purchased 10,000 acres in Dawson County with the thought of building a second airport. When the property was deemed too hilly for the project, the area was left undisturbed and eventually came under the management of the DNR's Wildlife Resources Division and the Georgia Forestry Commission. Public access and recreational facilities were improved and a forest stewardship program was established. The area has become a lush haven for hikers, campers, canoeists, hunters and fishermen.



Edge of the World on the Lower Amicalola

Photo by Dan Centofanti

But, the City of Atlanta still contends that the land is reserved for a future airport. The Etowah Scenic River Committee came together after an article was published in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* in January about renewed interest in a second airport and a high-speed rail link along Highway 400 to the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. Due to the rapid development of North Metro Atlanta and the tremendous increase in land value, this 10,000-acre tract is again being eyed for future development projects. Some local real estate brokers have aggressively opposed the Scenic River proposal because they have a large developer interested in purchasing the land. Designation of the Etowah and Amicalola as State Scenic Rivers would offer the rivers some protection even if the Dawson Forest is developed.

Leading the Etowah Scenic River Committee is Bill Hess, a retired U.S. Forest Service employee who now lives in Dawson County. In his 30 years working for the Forest Service, Hess was responsible

for wild and scenic rivers studies in the southeastern states. The committee has completed the first step of the process, which is local education and support of the proposal. Accomplishments to date include the creation of an informational web site, a town hall meeting attended by more than 200 people, and a petition drive that garnered over 1,500 signatures encouraging the county to take action to protect the rivers. The petition was presented to the Dawson County Commissioners at their April 7, 2005 meeting. The commissioners agreed to endorse the proposal but have not sent it to the governor. The committee has also hosted a canoe trip and hike where local commissioners, Representative Amos Amerson, Atlanta City Council member Felicia Moore, Advisor to the governor Terry Demeo-King, media representatives and others were present to tour the rivers and discuss the proposal.

A major obstacle to the efforts of the committee is the City of Atlanta. As owners of the tract, the entire Atlanta


*Georgia Canoeing Association trip on
the Lower Amicalola*

Photo by Dan Centofanti

City Council must approve any proposed action. The Georgia Scenic Rivers Act was passed in 1969, but has rarely been used. Designated waterways must be found to have outstanding scenic and recreational qualities. There are only four rivers that have made the list: The Conasauga and Jacks Rivers in the Cohutta Wilderness in northwest Georgia, a portion of Ebenezer Creek near Savannah and the Chattooga River in northeast Georgia. The Chattooga is also a National Wild and Scenic River.

Here is what you can do to help protect these great rivers:

1. Call, write, and e-mail Governor Sonny Perdue, Dawson County State Legislature Representatives (Chip Pearson, Amos Amerson, and David Ralston), Mayor Shirley Franklin, and all the Atlanta City Council Members, epically the transportation committee. Tell them how much you value these rivers and you support the proposal of making them State Scenic Rivers.

2. Help us spread the word. Tell family, friends and others about the proposal. We need strong public support to get this passed. 

*For additional information, contact information,
sample letters, and on-line petitions visit
www.EtowahScenicRiver.org.*

*Many AW members are familiar with these wonderful
rivers. The AW webpage for the Amicalola River is
full of great information. We request that everyone
does their part to help get this proposal passed. For
additional information or opportunities to volunteer
please call Dan Centofanti at 770-380-1488.*

*Charles Clarke enjoying lunch at
Lap Rapid on the Lower Amicalola*

Photo by Dan Centofanti



History River Issues

by Sue Taft

Then and Now

As whitewater paddle sports have evolved in complexity over the last fifty years, so has the complexity of river issues. Where we once cruised rivers, raced slalom or downriver in the same folding kayak or Grumman canoe, we now select our boat of choice from a wide array of plastic or composites designed specifically for river running, free-style, creeking, slalom or downriver. Where we once initiated letter-writing campaigns to voice our opposition to new dams, we now enlist professional help to actively shape a multitude of issues from river access and recreational releases to the removal of dams themselves.

American Whitewater's humble beginnings in conservation-related river issues began as an integral part of the organization's

mission, "to protect the wilderness character of our waterways." In 1955, that meant notifying its membership of the issues raised by pending construction of dams like the Echo Park Dam on the Green River in Colorado and Bruce's Eddy Dam on the North Fork of the Clearwater in Idaho. AW initially struggled to establish a firm position on issues regarding dam construction—preservation versus satisfying future water needs—however, it was decided that continued access and use for whitewater also went along with river preservation. This remained AW's position into the 1970s when increased dam-building activity centered on California rivers regularly paddled by its members, such as the Stanislaus and the Feather.

The growing popularity of whitewater in the 1970s also contributed to a different sort of river issue that went beyond simply fighting dam construction. This new issue involved river access and navigability rights of whitewater enthusiasts. It pitted public use against landowner rights and, in allocation cases, it often set commercial interests against private boaters. Use restrictions surfaced in California regarding access to the Russian River and in Pennsylvania on the Lehigh. Allocation restrictions were implemented on the Rogue in Oregon, the Middle Fork of the Salmon and Selway Rivers in Idaho and the Lower Youghiogheny in Pennsylvania. During this time, AW continued its more passive role in voicing opposition to these restrictions, relying on affiliate clubs to take

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on issues directly affecting their local rivers. However, it was access issues at the put-in for the Upper Yough in Maryland in the late 1970s that led AW to take a more active role and to work with other conservation- and river-oriented organizations. By 1979, AW had taken the lead role in conservation efforts among the five national paddling organizations.

Access and congestion with use restrictions continued to grow into the 1980s, but so did other issues, notably those surrounding the Public Utility Reform Act of 1978, which spurred renewed interest in the development of hydropower and specifically in new dam construction. Through the efforts of AW (largely carried out by Pete Skinner), interventions became a powerful tool to impact the FERC's re-licensing requirements, which in turn affected access and recreational releases. This activism by AW and other conservation-oriented organizations across country resulted in the passage of the Electric Power Consumers Protection Act in 1986, which required equal consideration to recreational activities. However, to deserve consideration, recreational groups were required to intervene, meaning that AW suddenly had a full plate for recreational releases and access-related issues.

In 1992, AW hired a professional as the Conservation Program Director to coordinate a network of nearly 30 regional coordinators, indicating AW's commitment to river conservation. AW took on an even higher level of involvement in the umbrella of "river issues" identified by the local coordinators to include conservation, broader access, hydropower re-licensing, and safety. A new, complex issue facing conservation and preservation groups again surfaced, putting AW's philosophies regarding the protection of rivers in their natural state versus modification for the sake of safety or recreational releases to the

test. The decisions the organization made often put AW at odds with organizations that were allies under different circumstances. While AW did not support the removal of rocks on the Snoqualmie in Washington, for instance, the local supporters of Wild and Scenic Preservation did. AW was also against the addition of the Hays Dam on the Russell Fork in Kentucky although it had the potential to provide better recreational releases. In regard to the controversial modifications to the Ocoee River for the 1996 Olympics, AW chose to take no position.

In the late 1990s, AW took on an even more complex role in activism by actually acquiring land, permission, or leases for put-ins and take-outs to ensure access. With the help of other organizations, AW obtained land purchases and leases in West Virginia, Colorado, and North Carolina—and such practices continue today, as does AW's efforts in dealing with the ongoing challenges "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." 

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Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers*, the history of American Whitewater Paddling. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, e-mail it to editor@amwhitewater.org and look for its answer in an upcoming issue.



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Interview from the Field

Daniel DeLaVergne

Sure you're familiar with LVM and maybe even Team Tdub's exploits on the "7 Rivers Expedition" or the Stikine, but you probably don't remember the long-haired guy who would calmly drift into Gorilla at 200%—in a Riot 007.



An Interview With Expedition Boater, Daniel DeLaVergne

by Clay Wright

The same guy who ran BJ Johnson's Colorado test-piece, the North Fork of the Slate and the Upper South Boulder at 1,200 cfs with no portages—in a Glide—and who pioneered playboating—even held a rodeo in the Watauga's infamous Hydro. Daniel DeLaVergne hit the kayaking scene as a punk from the Florida flatlands with a skate-boarder's respect for both authority and his own body. The fact that he's still kayaking is a testament to both his natural abilities and a surprising determination (and perhaps some luck). But why I'm interviewing Daniel for this issue has nothing to do with his steep-creek accomplishments, his progression through the freestyle scene, or even his recent work in video, magazine and, yes, video-magazine production. Daniel is fast becoming one of the most accomplished expedition boaters (and leaders) on the planet. So here he is:

Name / Age / Work

Daniel DeLaVergne

27 years old

Penstock Productions, LLC—we produce LVM and *Kayak Journal*, DVD Video magazines about kayaking.

Notable accomplishments:

The Seven Rivers Expedition

The Mosley Creek Expedition

Surviving the "Stupid Years"

What's the difference between a multi-day trip and a single-day trip?

On a multi-day trip, when you're done, you set up camp; when you wake up you just put

First night of the Mosely Creek Expedition - drying out with no help from the snow and rain

Photo by Tommy Hilleke



back on—no need to run shuttle. Multi-day kayaking is the best experience ever, IMHO [In My Humble Opinion]. There is nothing like the freedom of living on the river. All of life's petty stresses fade away and you focus entirely on the complex puzzle of the river. Overnighters bring a great deal more logistics to kayaking: packing the perfect food and gear, coordinating a shuttle sometimes hundreds of miles long, hitting the water level just right. All those great challenges thrown into one trip. Awesome!

What gear do you bring on a multi-day trip?

Sleeping pad
Bivy sack (for weather and bugs)
MSR Miox Water filter
Tarps for BC
Ipod Shuffle for long hikes
Satellite phone for BC
Good maps of the area in case of an emergency evacuation

What are your favorite overnighter foods?

Potato gnocchi
Chocolate
Beans and rice
Chicken sausages

What are your favorite multi-day river trips in the US?

Middle Fork of the Kings, CA
Devil's Postpile of the San Joaquin, CA
Upper Cherry Creek, CA
Fantasy Falls of the Mokelumne, CA
Royal Gorge of the American, CA

What are the hardest/best rapids you've encountered on a multi-day wilderness run?

Cherry Bomb Gorge, Upper Cherry Creek
Heath Springs Falls, Royal Gorge of the American



Daniel DeLaVergne in the Third Act of Tragedy, Homathko River, British Columbia

Photo by Johnnie Kern

What are some good trips for more average paddlers to try multi-day paddling on?

The Chattooga
The Linville River
Devil's Canyon of the Middle Fork of the Feather
I've heard there is some good stuff in Idaho, too. [Daniel doesn't know his Salmon from his Selway.]

Any revelations from doing the "7 Rivers" trips in terms of what you need that people may not think of?

Bring bug juice and a sleeping pad. A good night's rest is what it's all about. Also wear good shoes for hiking. Carrying a 90-pound awkward load over long distances can really damage your feet and ankles, and make it even harder to portage once on the river.


How is doing a multi-day in say, BC, different from Cali, and how does it affect the trip overall?

Multi day BC runs are a battle against the

environment. Rain and weather can affect water levels, comfort levels, and directly impact your willingness to run the stuff. In California the weather and water levels are generally predictable once you are in the High Sierra season. This sets the stage to have the perfect conditions for running the big, beautiful granite of the Sierra, and it also allows newbie expeditioners a certain level of comfort.

Thanks, Daniel! And now just one more thing: If you could be at any place in the world right now—any river, time of year, at any water level—where would it be?

I am putting on Upper Cherry Creek July 26th at 8 a.m. for the first one-day descent. Should be awesome.

Keep those LVM's flowing, good luck popping Upper Cherry in a day, and we look forward to seeing you on the water. 

Wilderness Runs Family Vacation

by Barry Tuscano



Hundreds of Miles from Anywhere

I was standing at the lip of a waterfall, staring into the violent recirculation at the base. It was fascinating to see what 20,000 cfs dropping 30 feet could do to a boat.

That was my boat, a fully loaded Prijon T-Slalom, doing those end-for-end gyrations, being thrown clear of the water, and then going back deep. I watched as the boat folded in half and the contents were spewed from behind the cockpit, dangling from short tethers. I quickly glanced at my wife and son who were standing above me observing the same scene. It was the look of panic on Kitty's face that jolted me into stark realization of our situation. We were over 100 miles from the nearest road in the far north of Quebec and without that boat I was going to have to walk out through



Top: The endless Quebec Wilderness
Bottom: Father and son cooking up
some dried rations

Photo by Kitty Tuscano

some of the thickest forest on the planet. Then I looked down at my feet in thin rubber booties and amended the previous thought: barefoot, with no mosquito net, no sleeping bag, no tent, food, or first aid equipment. My thoughts turned briefly to the implications for Kitty and our 14-year-old, Ambrose, who still had boats but were somewhat dependant on my whitewater expertise. This had become an exercise in survival. And then it dawned on me that without that boat and its contents there was no chance of survival for me. Even if I could walk out and get Kitty and Ambrose to safety, I would never withstand the terrible vengeance of my mother-in-law. Grandma is normally the sweetest person in the world, but her warning to me about what would happen if I endangered her daughter or her grandson was crystal clear. The ultimate family river trip had just

become the family vacation from hell!

We were in our fourth day of a fly-in wilderness trip on the Romaine River, working our way through the first 100 miles of run-able whitewater, portages, and flatwater. We had just portaged the upper drop of a double waterfall on river right, then paddled across the pool to portage the lower falls on the left. I spotted an eddy tucked behind a boulder right at the lip of the falls. I decided to paddle into it to avoid having to drag my boat over the boulder. I instructed Kitty and Ambrose to take out above the boulder, and then neatly drove into the eddy. After dragging the boat up on the rocks and scampering up the boulder to assist with their portage, I met Ambrose who had just come over the other side.

"Uh dad... your boat."

I turned in time to see the boat sliding down the rock. I desperately leapt down but the loaded kayak had enough momentum to carry it across the eddy and into the current. That put the boat in the huge hydraulic below, and me in the quandary of trying to decide on a course of action.

It didn't take much time to decide, seeing as how there was only one option. I had to retrieve that boat; I could deal with Grandma later. As I quickly lowered Ambrose's T-Canyon down the cliff I watched my boat emerge from the hydraulic and finally enter the downstream current. It had disappeared around the bend in the river before I was able to get down to water level. My state of mind was bordering on despair as the chase began. Around that bend, an island split the river with continuous class III-IV rapids visible in both channels. I chose the right side and was soon crashing through big waves and skirting nasty holes, all the while desperately searching for a glimpse of the boat. Things were happening fast for a half a mile until the river rejoined below the island and I realized that I would have to pull in and check the other channel.

I was near tears as I beached the boat at the lowest point of the island. My mind was racing through the possibilities. The

runaway boat could be more than a mile downstream before I finished my search of the left channel. Hell, it could be stuck underwater against a rock in the channel I had just paddled. And I had left my wife and son to fend for themselves until I returned. The weight of my stupid mistake was crushing me. Why did I ever think that this was any place to bring the family? I deserved everything that Grandma was going to mete out.

Actually, this was not an out of the ordinary vacation for the Tuscano family. Kitty and I had been taking Ambrose into wilderness settings since he was born. Before he could walk he had hundreds of miles of skiing and hiking under his belt. When we could no longer carry him, the pace slowed down for a while, although, when he was two, we went backpacking on the Olympic Peninsula and it snowed up to his armpits. It took us three days to carry him back to civilization on that adventure.

As our son grew in size and maturity we continuously expanded our excursions into the backcountry. Our traditional Thanksgiving weekend was a backpacking trip in our western Pennsylvania mountains. Over Christmas break, we usually would migrate north for some cross-country skiing. In 1991, when Ambrose was 12 and Kitty and I were 40, we spent two weeks backpacking in Iceland. The year before, we went to Banff over Christmas break and skied in the Canadian Rockies at -40° Fahrenheit.

Ambrose had his first kayak when he was six. It was a kid-sized fiberglass slalom boat and it's no wonder he didn't like it. I doubt that I could get that boat down a river, but this was 1984 and there wasn't anything better available. Most of his early exposure to rivers was in a raft or on canoe camping trips. By the time he had outgrown the fiberglass boat and moved up to a Dancer, he had basic paddling skills, but still lacked the mental maturity to take on whitewater on his own.

It was in the summer of his eleventh year that all this changed. Through the intervention of a friend, Ambrose caught

the bug. Kayaking became fun, and he soon learned to play on the river as only a kid can. His progress spurred Kitty to try new things, as she didn't want to be left alone when her guys were out enjoying a day on the river. Our family outings increasingly became river trips and we began to define ourselves as a kayaking family.

The natural progression for us was a wilderness river trip. I was beginning to toy with the idea of a fly-in river trip as a family vacation, but I needed to find a river that was remote, but not too difficult. When *Paddler Magazine* published an article about canoe camping on the Mistassibi River in Quebec, everything fell into place. This was a river that I knew well. It had nearly killed me.

In 1989, Bob Gedekoh loosely organized a weeklong trip to Quebec. The other three participants were Neal Dana, Dean Fairburn, and Dave Shannon. It was a whirlwind tour of some of the classic rivers of La Belle Province. We sampled several sections of the Jacques Cartier, the Monmerency, and the Malbaie. Towards the end of the week, water levels were dropping, so we consulted my trusty guidebook for some larger rivers with dependable water. That's how we ended up on the North shore of Lac St. Jean where a variety of choices presented themselves. The only problem was that, of the five of us, I was considered the expert on the French language because I had taken French in high school. I remembered just enough to get us in trouble. Everyone should have known not to trust my interpretations after a couple of funny miscommunications with waitresses and other incredulous locals. But the big snafu came when I read the description of the Mistassibi River in the French language guidebook. I almost got it right, except that I mistook the take-out for the put-in. Instead of taking ten miles of back roads upstream on river right to a remote access point, we went five miles up river left. The book described pool drop class IV rapids. We got waterfalls.

We weren't too far into the run when we realized that this wasn't what we were expecting, but by carefully scouting, we



"But you should have seen the one that got away..."

Photo by Kitty Tuscano

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Wilderness Runs Family Vacation

managed to find routes through all of the drops. The biggest drop was just upstream of the highway bridge where we had left our take-out vehicle. It was a long, multi-tier waterfall that was a series of vertical drops and cascades. The river was at least 400 yards wide at this point and must have had nearly 10,000 cfs crashing down to the large pool at the bottom of the falls. The drop was big enough to break into a series of routes maneuvering from shore to shore and picking runnable lines. A couple of hundred yards into the rapid, I cleared a ledge and could see the the left side of the river ran out the last 30 feet of drop over broken cascades. Bob, Neal, and Dean were sitting in the pool at the bottom and if I had a lick of sense I would have picked my way down to join them. But Dave was in his boat, beached on an exposed rock in the middle of the river, right at the lip of the last falls. The look on his face intrigued me enough to compel me to drive my T-Slalom onto the rock just to his right. I was hoping to get a good look at what lay over the horizon, but the river had other plans. Although Dave was safely beached, just to his side the rock must have been slightly more sloped. My boat slid back and the current caught my stern. Despite desperate clawing at that rock, I wasn't able to fight gravity, and I slid backwards down the edge of a 75-degree waterslide that terminated in the biggest most perfect hole I have ever seen.

From the inside of that hydraulic, my view was severely limited. Although I could see Dave above me on his rock perch, I would have had to grow several feet to see anything downstream. Side surfing was surprisingly smooth and allowed me to catch my breath and consider my options. Dave was out of his boat with his throw bag, but was hopelessly out of range for a rescue. The hole was over a hundred feet wide, with no breaks, and much too deep to paddle out of. I knew my only hope was to swim, but thought I might try flipping and reaching deep to escape. Dumb idea. That smooth surf was only a mask for the river's true power. When I rolled over and extended my paddle to catch the downstream current, my arms were nearly pulled from the sockets. I hung on and was torn from my boat, ripping the cockpit in the process. I briefly surfaced out of the

hole, but was immediately drawn back into it. Now I was surfing the hole with an empty boat bouncing off of me, only occasionally grabbing a breath. Knowing that the only way out was to swim deep, I was resisting having to confront the raw power of the river again. Finally I caught a breath and went down. I can't describe the feeling of being slammed to the bottom, but at last I was rising and I broke the surface free of the hole, but still in the backwash. I immediately started stroking away from the hole and must have made some progress, because Bob ventured into the backwash to offer me the grab loop on the stern of his Dancer. I was overjoyed to firmly latch on to that little piece of security, but the feeling quickly faded as Bob began paddling and the knot in the grab loop came untied in my hand.

As I helplessly watched Bob paddle away, I realized that I was firmly in the clutches of the recirculation. In the seconds before I was back in the hole, it became clear to me that my next attempt to swim out would be my last. Nearing exhaustion I went straight down. As the violence subsided, I actually continued to swim down in hopes of clearing the backwash. Finally, totally out of air, I rose. I didn't know if I was completely out or not, but I wasn't taking any chances. I swam downstream until Neal and Dean

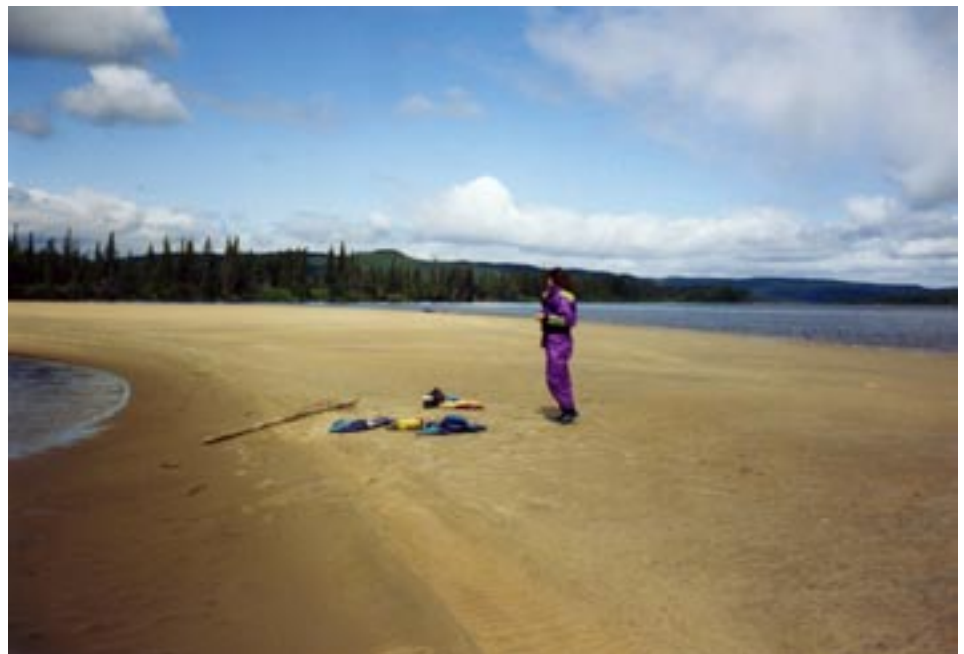
got to me and drug me up on a rock in mid river, where I collapsed. I lay there for quite a while, coughing up water and thanking my lucky stars for having survived.

A normal person would have crawled away from the Mistassibi River and never looked back. I don't know how to explain my thought processes, but no one has ever accused me of being normal. Armed with the *Paddler* article, I convinced Kitty that we could fly into the source of the Mistassibi and paddle it to Lac St Jean... except for the last five miles. I already knew where the take-out was.

Once the idea of a family vacation/wilderness river trip took hold we all began preparations. Our evenings were spent assembling the equipment and discussing the methods that we would adopt. I was carrying on conversations in broken French with the operator of the flying service mentioned in *Paddler*. The logistics of a shuttle required some creative thinking because the airstrip was located almost 100 miles from the take-out. I secured the

The Romaine River, 200 miles from civilization

Photo by Barry Tuscano



loan of a dirt bike from a friend to get me back to my truck. I called the Federation Quebecoise de Canot-Kayak to see about maps. There were detailed maps available only for the northeast branch of the river. By looking on my Quebec road map, I judged the Northeast branch to be about half the total length, and thereby came up with an approximate distance of 200 miles. We decided to carry provisions for 10 days.

After an experimental overnighter on the Youghioghene River, we realized that the limits on carrying capacity were going to be space even more than weight. With our extensive backpacking experience, we knew the basics needed to survive in the wilds, but I felt that every item needed to be evaluated and, if not absolutely necessary, eliminated. This exercise in minimalism was very productive. We decided to cook on an open fire and leave the stove and fuel at home. Toilet paper and towels would just absorb water and become a burden. Layers of river clothes would suffice on shore.

Planning our menu became a family activity every evening in the weeks before the trip. We decided to carry real food, rather than prepared freeze dried, but put several limits on what we would carry. First, almost every item had to be dried. Second, the meals for a day for the three of us would fit in a one-gallon Zip-lock bag. Third, the meals had to be prepared in our three-piece cook kit. This was a four-quart pot, a two-quart

pot and a lid that doubled as a frying pan. Breakfast was always tea and cooked cereal with dried fruit; lunch was always some variety of ramen noodles. But dinners really got exotic. We searched the local health food store for dry ingredients, and carefully measured everything into plastic bags. Since we knew that fuel would not be a problem and that there was plenty of time in the evenings for cooking, we carried a lot of whole grains and beans. Spices and herbs were an easy way to add variety and make our creations unique. Dinners ranged from hearty soups to rice and beans to pasta and sauce. We also added three Power Bars to each day's Zip-lock.

To supplement our diet I bought a lightweight telescoping fishing rod and reel that would fit in my boat beside the seat. I assembled a small tackle box with a few lures, a stringer and some hooks. We also carried a bag of seasoned flour and a small container of frying oil.

We decided to carry two lightweight two-man tents rather than our roomier three-man, so we would have some duplication if there were a problem. Kitty sewed up a nylon bag for our cook kit, with a drawstring and foam flotation, so it could be secured to the boat or at least retrieved if it came out. We put together an extensive first aid kit in a small Pelican box. We bought a small weatherproof camera, which could be carried in a plastic bag in



Preparing to fly into the Romaine

Photo by Barry Tuscano

the pocket of my life vest. The film fit in the first aid kit.

The moment of truth came when we loaded the boats. At the time, our boats of choice were my T-Slalom, Ambrose's T-Canyon, and Kitty's Pirouette. The Prijon boats were considered the best self-contained wilderness vehicles available. With no center walls, and easily removable bulkheads, Ambrose and I could carry very large loads. Kitty's boat was more problematic. Removing the front bulkhead required virtually disassembling the outfitting. I practiced the process a couple of times to see if it could be done with a Swiss Army knife, and stowed three days of food in the bow. That way we only needed to take it apart once, near the end of the trip. We used the bow of the Prijon boats mostly for food also and filled large stow floats in the stern with sleeping bags, Thermarests, and dry clothes. Tents, and the cook-kit were stored outside the bags. When fully loaded with ten days provisions, our boats weighed in at 65-80 pounds each and were crammed to capacity. I felt confident that we had prepared well in every respect and that we could meet any challenge, and I tried to convey that to Kitty's mom. This was when I was sternly warned for the first time. In truth, although it was my idea originally, Kitty and Ambrose were just as excited to go as me.

The air shuttle service was used to hauling open boats and hundreds of pounds of gear in their floatplanes, so they a little surprised when we showed up with mom, dad and a 13-year-old in kayaks. We were able to fit everything in the hull of the twin engine Otter, and the flight to Lac



Barry Tuscano in action on the Romaine

Photo by Kitty Tuscano

Wilderness Runs Family Vacation

Machisque took less than an hour. As we approached our destination I could see the river below us. Except it wasn't a river. More like a bubbling brook. And then we were coming down on the large lake surrounded by dense forest.

We paddled our boats to a small beach to dress as the plane turned and glided back across the lake to disappear over the trees. As the sound of the engine was replaced by the silence that only true wilderness possesses, we were sobered by the thought of what lay ahead. Scanning the opposite shore, I realized that there was no obvious outlet to the lake. Where was the river?

My stature as trip leader took a dive as we spent hours searching the approximate area of the shoreline for an outlet. Finally I detected a slight current into a swampy finger. Water that was leaking through numerous small channels soon collected into that bubbling brook and carried us on our way. The rest of that day was spent maneuvering through easy riffles and small rapids, but a feeling of euphoria descended on us collectively. This was the essence of kayaking. The skills to negotiate whitewater were only a tool to bring you to places like this. That night we camped on a beach on a small lake, and after a dinner that included wild trout, we retired to the tents for the night. Kitty and I lay with our heads towards the netted door to admire the clear night sky. Before we could fall asleep we were treated to an amazing display of Aurora Borealis. This wasn't the subdued glow that I had seen on other occasions, but a virtual fireworks display. Bright explosions of color rippled across the sky all night long. We hardly slept and we didn't care. This trip was already fantastic.

Although we didn't see the northern lights again for the rest of the trip, the next eight days were incredible. We saw loons, and bear, and beavers. We picked wild blueberries and wild flowers. We paddled lakes and flat water and cool rapids. We watched beautiful sunrises and sunsets, and saw the surrounding forest make subtle changes as we descended altitude and latitude.

There were times of discomfort too. We typically spent eight hours a day in our boats with hourly breaks. We became

intimate with the northern black fly, although we soon learned how to avoid situations that encourage them. We had a violent thunderstorm that drove us off the river for a few hours. The river itself, at times, would slow our progress. One day was spent negotiating numerous braids and shallow channels just upstream of the confluence with the main river. Once we were past the confluence, we were without a map, although by then we began to see signs of civilization. Despite all of these difficulties, this trip had boosted the confidence levels of everyone on the trip and we were buzzing with the high that comes from immersion in wilderness.

By the time we reached our take-out, we were already talking about our next trip. The Mistassibi had given us a taste of true wilderness, but we were all eager to take it to the next level. Over the next year I consulted with Bob Gedekoh about the rivers of the northern St. Laurence. He had done fly in trips on several of them and suggested that the Romaine would be the most appropriate to attempt with my family.

The Romaine is one of the largest drainages flowing south out of the Laurentides into the St. Laurence near Havre St. Pierre. Although civilization is very sparse even near the mouth of this river, the logistics for this trip were infinitely simpler than on the Mistassibi. Where the main highway crossed the river just above the St. Laurence was only a few miles from the airstrip. There would be no need to haul a motorcycle this time. We also had the advantage of a complete set of maps on the Romaine, thanks to Bob.

A close study of those maps revealed that this was going to be a much more challenging trip. The Romaine starts out as a grown-up river and keeps putting on muscle the whole way down. There was obviously more challenging whitewater and portages here and from start to finish there wasn't even a hint of civilization. The air service typically flew in two or three trips a year and had no other trips scheduled near ours, so we knew with certainty that we were totally dependent on our own resources to get ourselves home. The flight into the Romaine confirmed the situation. From take off in Sept Isle, there was nothing but expanses of forest

blanketing the ever-larger mountains. On the approach to our landing in a large pool in the river, we flew low over the first rapid. A close inspection showed lots of room through the middle of a busy class IV. What a fun way to start a trip!

Well, even when flying low, an airplane is still a couple of hundred feet up and that wide-open route proved to be fraught with difficulties. After scrambling through a couple of near encounters with large holes, we pulled over and reassessed the situation. We were two hundred miles from help, totally dependent on our own wits to survive, and this was a big gnarly river: we would be wise to start treating the Romaine with the respect it was due.

From there on we were much more cautious, portaging drops that we would have liked to challenge under different circumstances. At one point we waited too long to start a portage, and had to deal with a very difficult climb. Then we were overly cautious and did some unnecessary walking. By the fourth day we were starting to get in a rhythm where we were exercising good judgment on what to run and where to start portages. This brought us to the infamous double waterfall where my colossal screw-up had suddenly put my family in peril. Whether it was my decision to go for the eddy at the lip of the falls, or just not securing my boat well enough, it was a case of extremely poor judgment and it all belonged to me.

As I hopped out of Ambrose's kayak at the bottom of the island, searching for my lost boat, I was busy heaping blame on myself. I was promising anyone who would listen that I would never do another reckless thing for the rest of my life. Assuming that my life would soon end made it easy to make that promise. Some of my friends may say that I now do fewer really dumb things than in the past, but as I ran back up the shore I saw something that made all of that moot. Calmly bobbing in an eddy on the left bank was a red kayak. My boat, my deliverance, my life. I know I was crying as I ran back to get Ambrose's boat. My luck held and the boat stayed in that eddy until I could get there and secure it. Amazingly all of the gear was still attached and, although there was a crease where the boat had folded, it appeared to be usable.

All that was left was to reassemble the family. Kitty had started down river after me, but was still trying to find a safe way through the rapid near the top of the island. I signaled for her that I had the boat and proceeded back upstream to get Ambrose. I encountered him a short way back, calmly picking his way through the underbrush. After informing him that everything was okay, I realized that he wasn't carrying a paddle—which meant it must be still sitting at the top of the falls. It certainly wasn't my place to blame him—he was only 14. I willingly hiked back to the falls, donating an ounce of flesh to the black flies as penance.

We found a good campsite a short way downstream and pulled in to lick our wounds and dry my gear. The next day would include the biggest portage of the trip up a cliff above an unrunnable gorge. Needless to say, we were shaken by our near-disaster and remained focused on safety throughout. Although we covered only six miles that day, it was by far our hardest. It was drizzling and warm, but we needed to wear full dry suits and head-nets to protect us from the most furious onslaught of biting insects I have ever seen. As we hoisted the heavy boats up, bushes laden with ripe blueberries surrounded us. But any temptation to pick them was soon drowned by the realization that you would need to remove your head-net to eat them. As it was, the flies were finding ways to penetrate our protective gear, especially on Kitty. Ambrose and I soon found that if we stayed near her, most of the flies would leave us alone in preference of her. It was a small family joke, but I could tell that she was getting eaten alive.

Any excursion into the north woods has to take into account the insect population. Their normal prey is usually covered with fur and has a thick hide, so when something as tender as you or I pass through they become manic. I fully believe stories of people being driven insane by the black flies. We were lucky to be spending most of our day on the water, where we could outrun them. A brisk wind helped too, so we always tried to find camps or lunch spots that stuck out into the river. If there was a breeze and we didn't have to venture into the bushes, sometimes we could sit outside the tent and not wear a net. Or Ambrose and I could sit next to Kitty who always needed a net.

At the end of the seventh day we arrived at La Grand Chute de Le Romaine. This is a sixty-meter waterfall (almost 200 ft) with more than 30,000 cfs. We were only 30 miles from the highway bridge and we had three days of supplies left, so I was figuring we had two easy days to the take-out. After examining the falls, which ranks up there with the most impressive in the world, we set up camp near the lip and made dinner. Despite an updraft from the falls, the insects were especially bad and Kitty was forced to retreat to the tent to eat dinner. I could tell from the tone of her voice when she announced that this was her last night as fly bait that she was dead serious. Although we still had many difficult rapids and I had heard stories about a vicious head wind at the end of the trip, I accepted Kitty's judgment without argument. We would get an early start and figure on a very long day.


Next morning we portaged the falls, ran a rapid that was labeled Class V on the map and started ticking off the miles. There were several smaller waterfalls that were runnable and by early afternoon we were within 10 miles of the take-out. Several large tributaries had nearly doubled the volume of the river, but the gradient had exhausted itself. When the wind picked up, I began thinking about pulling over for the night. Kitty was resolute though and I knew there was no arguing with her. What ensued was a battle with the elements that I have never experienced anywhere else. The wind grew in intensity to over fifty miles per hour, and the waves grew proportionately. We needed to paddle hard just to keep from going backward, and we were constantly getting creamed by breaking waves. We tried hiding from the wind along the shore, but there was no getting away from it. Pulling over was no longer an option because it would be impossible to set up a tent in that wind.

Here, I was again in a difficult situation with my family and I wasn't sure of the outcome. I knew how my muscles and joints were aching from the exertion and we were making scant progress. I was figuring it was going to be nearly dark before we were out, if we could keep up the pace. I kept a careful eye on Kitty and Ambrose. Ambrose was young, but very strong, and seemed to be far from exhaustion. Kitty had less strength but was getting by on

determination. Finally I realized that if I could make myself stay at it they would too. The worst part was when the bridge appeared in the distance, but just didn't seem to get any closer. The specter of that bridge teased us for two hours before it became real.

That night in the relative comfort of a cheap motel, we took our first shower in ten days, and slept the sleep of exhaustion. In the morning, I was amazed to find that the wind had increased to near hurricane force. My feeling of accomplishment at what we had done was somewhat tempered by the realization that we were extremely lucky.

Looking back you are probably asking yourself the question that I have asked myself many times. Was it worth endangering my family to experience that degree of wilderness at that time in our son's life? Would I recommend that path to a young couple with children? Remember that this was the culmination of Ambrose's exposure to wilderness, not the introduction. He has gone on to achieve a comfort in the outdoors that is rare among young adults today. This confidence has led him to numerous adventures of his own, both on the river and on land. And he has learned well the responsibility that we all have to protect wilderness and the rivers that take us there. So yes, I would say that it was worth every minute we spent with him in the outdoors, and yes, if you have young children get them in the wilderness to whatever extent you are able.

I waited twelve years to write this story, partly to avoid any repercussions from my mother-in-law. She never knew the details of our close brushes with disaster, but now that she is on the back side of 80, I have less to fear from her in physical retribution. And now that Ambrose is 26, and is showing great promise in her eyes, I think that she may agree that we did a wonderful job of preparing him for life in this world. 

Wilderness Runs

Rio Huataracu

by Steve Frazier



Volcano Sumaco (12,241 ft) is an isolated peak in the Amazon jungle that is offset from the main Andean cordillera. There is excellent paddling on several steep creeks which drain from its slopes.

Photo by Matt Terry

Rio Huataracu: The Whole Empanada

I woke up at 6:00 a.m. sharp to start my big adventure, a second descent of the Rio Huataracu (pronounced wah-tah-rah-coo). My group consisted of myself and four other paddlers who just happened to be in Ecuador at the same time. I wanted the group to be no smaller than four people but no larger than five. With fewer than four people, some types of rescue become tricky or even impossible. More than five people can make a small river like the Huataracu feel crowded.

Doing a second descent is a strange thing, I discovered. It is very different from a first descent. I found out about the river, a three-day, two-night journey at the base

of the Sumacu Volcano, from Matt Terry and Dan Dixon. Matt and Dan have lived in Ecuador six months out of every year for several years now.

Naturally, they are very familiar with the local rivers in this tropical paradise. They have done a lot of first descents there, including the Huataracu, and are very accomplished and experienced paddlers. They were able to give me put-in and take-out locations, as well as information about the river, camping, and the trail to the put-in. I didn't have to do any of the research involved in a first descent. However, we were going to get to experience some of the aspects of a first descent. Obviously, none of us had ever done the river and we had no idea about the water level and were going to be in a remote, extremely inaccessible wilderness area.

As soon as I learned of the Huataracu, I was instantly interested. I had done a lot of the "guide book" rivers in Ecuador, but wanted to get off the beaten path and do something more remote. This river seemed to fit the bill perfectly. I was sure we wouldn't see anyone else on this trip.

I was hoping to be on the road by 7:00 a.m., but that proved to be an unrealistic goal. The only detail I had failed to work out was the ride to Diez de Agosto, the small village near the put-in. I figured it was about a four-hour ride. I was hoping to get the same shuttle driver used by the first descent team, but numerous calls the night before had produced only busy signals. "Oh well," I thought, "we'll find someone to take us in the morning."

We did. Around 7:00 a.m., Drew Austell, the only team member fluent in Spanish, called the Tena area's most famous shuttle driver, Luis, and he was there in five minutes. Saved! Even with the delay on the shuttle, people buying last minute food and eating breakfast, we were still on the road by 8:00 a.m.. Okay, only one hour behind schedule. No big deal—especially since I knew from previous trips that Luis drives very fast; I was sure he would help us make up some of the lost time.

One important detail I had managed to take care of was my food for the trip. Three breakfasts of dry cereal as well as lots of bread, peanut butter and jelly were packaged for the trip. I decided on these because they were light in weight and heavy in calories. I also bought 12 empanadas and had frozen them for my two dinners. Finally, I had stowed additional packs of crackers, candy bars, cookies, and power bars for extra energy. I felt good about my food supply.

My plan was for a three-day, two-night trip, but we all agreed to try to do it in two days and one night if possible. At this point it seemed very feasible. We made it to Diez de Agosto by 11:20 a.m.. With that task behind us, I had two main concerns left: first, finding the trailhead and subsequently finding our way down to the river; and

second, finding the river at a good water level. Fortunately, Luis had been a surveyor in the area and had a good idea of where the trailhead was located. Dan had also drawn us a map before we left the hotel. Between these two sources of information, I was pretty sure we had the correct trail. We waved goodbye to Luis and started organizing our gear. About ten minutes into the process, I realized I needed to make a trip into the jungle to commune with nature. When I returned I was informed that Drew had left his helmet in the shuttle vehicle.

Drew quickly started waving down cars in the hope that he could find someone that could help him catch up to Luis. He had already been gone 15 minutes and no one on the road seemed interested in helping. Evidently Luis was well known in the area and everyone there was aware that he wasted no time on the road! It was time for another plan. The next vehicle that came by was a construction truck. Drew got in and they took off. I had no idea what he had in mind or even if he had a plan. I just knew he was on his way to try and solve the problem.

I had already decided I was going to gut it out and carry my canoe and all my gear down the trail in one trip. It was reportedly somewhere between a 30-minute and one-hour hike to the river. I certainly wasn't looking forward to it, but had decided it was worth it to save time. I thought one slow trip would definitely be faster than carrying my gear and then retracing my steps to get my canoe.

Well, once Drew was gone, I decided this was a good chance to wimp out and carry the gear and canoe separately. Plus I could make sure that we had the correct trail. I told the group of my decision. Greg Speicher from California and Amy Conger from Friendsville, Maryland decided to come with me, with Rob Barham from North Carolina staying back to wait for Drew and to guard the remaining gear and boats.

So off into the jungle we went. Amy was carrying her boat and paddle while Greg and I were carrying just gear. It was hot and nearly noon when we started up the trail. That's right, up. The first decent team had informed me it was uphill for a while before we made the top of the hill and the decent down into the gorge.

Greg and I alternated taking the lead. Our main goal was to stay on the trail and find the easiest route to the river. We only got lost once for a short time and were at the top of the gorge in about 25 minutes. It was literally all down hill from here. The path was now steep and narrow. The good news was that it was also very easy to follow. It was a very deep canyon and we went down hill for what seemed like forever, but it was really only about 30 minutes. The jungle was so thick that we couldn't see the river until we were practically right next to it. We actually heard it before we saw it. I was so hot that when I saw the water I set down my gear and went for a well-deserved swim. The water was cool, clear and refreshing. And although it looked a bit low, the water level appeared to be adequate. We were good to go! The three of us had a quick lunch and Greg and I started walking back up the hill.

We had only been walking about 10 minutes when we were met on the trail by one of the local teenagers. Evidently Rob was talking with him while waiting for Drew. He told Rob it was a twenty-minute walk to the river (yeah, if you're a teenager, know the way, and aren't carrying anything!) and he got worried since we had been gone about an hour. When Rob told him how long we had been gone, he went looking for us. Although this was a really nice thing for him to do, I was not surprised. The Ecuadorian people I have met were generally very friendly and helpful.

As the three of us began to walk back up the trail toward the road, Greg tried to start up a conversation with our new friend. I only knew the Spanish I had learned in the past five or six weeks since I had been in Ecuador, but Greg had taken a few classes and actually knew a little of the local tongue. I was walking behind them, trying to pick out a word or two here and there so I could at least understand what they were talking about.



Matt Terry and Gynner Coronel look downstream on the Huataracu River.

Photo by Dan Dixon

Wilderness Runs

Rio Huataracu

I should mention that at the beginning of the trip Rob, Amy, Drew and I all knew each other and had paddled together a little bit before this expedition, but we had just met Greg a couple of days before, so we really didn't know much about him. One thing we found out about him early on was that he is scared of snakes. As I listened to him and our new Ecuadorian friend talk, I kept hearing the word *serpiente* (serpent). I figured Greg was asking about the local snake situation.

As we were crossing an open, marshy sort of area with a narrow path through it, both of them stopped in front of me. Apparently Greg had misunderstood our friend. He told Greg snakes were not a big problem, but I guess Greg thought he said they were a big problem. As we stood there clearing up this misunderstanding I noticed a sudden sharp burning/stinging sensation on my feet. We were only wearing sandals and were standing in a spot where a huge line of fire ants were crossing the path. They were highly irritated with our presence and let us know by biting our feet with a vengeance (well, Greg's and mine—our new friend had on high top boots—smart guy). Needless to say, we started smacking the ants off our feet and took off running. Our new friend probably thought we were crazy.

When Greg and I got back to the road we saw Drew sitting on his boat working on his new helmet. He bought a construction hard hat from a guy on a nearby road crew and had attached a cam strap as a make shift chinstrap. It was perfect! We were calling him Construction Boy for the rest of the trip.

Unfortunately, Drew had more bad luck on the hike to the river. One of his sandals blew out and he had to stop to fix it. I caught up to him while he was repairing it, but he said he was going to be okay and that he would be right behind me. When I finally got to the river, I went straight into swim mode again. The sky was pretty clear by jungle standards. It was great weather for the start of a multi-day paddling trip!

As we all completed packing gear, changing clothes, and getting ready, I noticed Drew still hadn't made it down the hill to the river. We waited a few more minutes and just as we started getting worried, he showed up. While he was lowering his boat down the hill, it got away from him and had gone deep into the jungle. He said it was all he could do to get it back to the trail. He also said he was almost ready to give up and come down for some help, but was finally able to manage it by himself.

Well, the optimistic noon put-in had now slipped to 3:15 p.m., but I remained optimistic we could still do the 25 mile run in two days. Obviously the second day would have to be a long one.

Fifty yards from the put-in we scouted the first rapid. It was pretty steep and tight; my kind of boating! As we moved down stream it was mostly read and run, with the occasional rapid that required one person getting out and pointing out the best line. As is so often the case in the jungle, the weather changed very quickly. It started to rain as we all scouted one scrappy, boulder-filled rapid. I was seriously considering the first portage of the trip until Rob spotted a line down the right-hand side of the drop. He successfully ran the line and we all were able to duplicate his success.

Up until now the river seemed low. It wasn't too low, but a sort of low that seemed like it might be a good minimum level. We ran a few smaller drops before we saw a horizon line that indicated another sure scout. The drop we were now looking at was a big two stage falls. The first ledge was 6-7 feet tall. It was steep with a big hole at the bottom on the right side and a shallow slide on the left. From there it was about twenty feet downstream to the big drop—a 15-foot vertical falls. The landing reminded me a little of Gorilla on North Carolina's Green River Narrows. The water going over the falls created a big hole, but it looked shallow. It was raining even harder now.

As we continued to scout and discuss the possibility of running the falls, I noticed a small flume of brown water coming off the opposite wall of the river gorge. The previously-clear river water coming over the falls was turning brown on the left side of the drop. Another glance upstream revealed more little flumes coming in. The river was rising pretty quickly now. The drop was getting beefier and pushier by the minute.



Dan Eccleston boofs a drop on the Huataracu River.

Photo by Dan Dixon



Duncan Eccleston hitches a ride at the take-out for the Huataracu River.

Photo by Matt Terry

By my estimation we had gone about one and a half, maybe two miles. We were standing beside a really big rapid that was only getting bigger as the river was quickly rising. Not only that, we couldn't see the end of the gorge and there was no obvious place to portage. It was still pouring down rain. The gorge we were in was completely sheer rock wall on the left. It was steep on the right also. Rob gave climbing up the

right side a brief try while some of the rest of us pulled the boats to the highest ground we could find (not very high) and tied them together.

When I saw Rob's attempt to climb up the gorge had failed, I began to think impure thoughts. I imagined what I consider to be the ultimate paddler's nightmare. You know the one. You're in a gorge that has

steep walls on both sides so portaging isn't an option. You enter the gorge not really knowing what is in store. You get to a horizon line and get out to scout. The rapid is unrunable. Basically, you can't go downstream, you can't go upstream and you can't climb out. You are screwed! But then you wake up. Right? Unfortunately, it seemed like that was exactly where we were. And I was awake already.

Just as I came out of my little negative moment, I looked up to see another one of my team members at the top of the gorge. Before I knew it we had a throw rope attached to a tree and the rest of us climbed up. Sweet! I was really glad everyone else in the group was not as inept at and threatened by climbing as I am. We untied the boats and quickly got all the gear and people out of the gorge. We were still stuck, but at least we were not at river level any more. It was now 4:20 p.m.. Although a safety meeting normally would

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Wilderness Runs Rio Huataracu



have been in order, we didn't have time for that now. We still needed to find a suitable camp and get set up before dark, which happened at about 6:30 p.m. We removed our gear from the boats and began beating our way through the jungle with a machete. Or should I say the rest of us followed Drew who had the machete? We soon discovered that the falls and boily area after it were the only features in the short, steep walled gorge. That was a big relief if we were going to try to run the falls in the morning. Once we were back down to river level we walked downstream about 200 meters and found a campsite. It was rocky and basically undesirable, but it was the best we could do under the conditions. It was about 5:00 p.m. and still raining, but not as hard.

There was certainly no sense in changing out of wet gear in the rain, so we went straight to work making our campsite more livable. We cleared out a big fallen tree and some other limbs from the only flat area. Then we cut banana and palm leaves for about an hour and a half and made a makeshift sleeping pad big enough for two tents. It had finally stopped raining, so we quickly set up the tents and changed into dry clothes in the waning daylight. We ate dinner in the dark, but that was okay, since we only had cold food anyway.

As I mentioned earlier, we were initially planning on three days and two nights, but were hoping for two days and one night. This hope had completely disappeared now and I was actually thinking that if the rain continued and our progress was slowed even more it could easily end up being four days and three nights. I had heard a few stories about people getting stranded on multi-day rivers in Ecuador because the water got too high in the middle of the trip. Starting to ration food now seemed appropriate to me. I had planned on six empanadas per night. I cut that to four. I was so tired it didn't seem to matter. We were all in bed by 8:30 p.m..

The next morning we woke up to gray sky, but it wasn't raining, nor had it rained during the night. The water level had dropped a good deal, but since it was low before the rain began, we were

glad to have the extra water. After a quick breakfast we broke camp and started the hike/climb back to our boats. We had all hoped somehow that the falls would look better this morning so we could all run it, but no such luck. To me and probably most everyone else, it looked runnable. Had it been in the United States, near a road and accessible to rescue, maybe it would have been different. But on a wilderness river in Ecuador it just seemed like a chance none of us were willing to take. Like *The Kayaker's Guide to Ecuador* says, "There is no flight for life in Ecuador." We finished the portage we had essentially started the day before. We were on the water by 9:30 a.m.

My readjusted goal for the day was to make it through the difficult whitewater and camp where the gorge opened up and the gradient eased. The guys from the first descent told me that the last 10 miles or so was Class III or less with a more open feel. There were also supposed to be better places to camp down there.

The rapids started out easy. We were eddy hopping and boat scouting for a while. But the gradient picked up soon and our downstream progress was slowed because we were scouting more. Rob and Drew ran an ugly rapid that the rest of us portaged early on. About 11:15 a.m. we came to a rapid that was a perfectly flat horizon line on the left and a rocky, unrunable mess on the right. We all got out to scout.

Usually in situations like this I generally focus on the task at hand. I want to find the best line and go run it, or portage. But as I got out of my boat and started making my way downstream toward the rapid I was totally taken back by the extreme beauty of the gorge we were about to enter. It had a sheer cliff wall that went straight up on the left where the horizon line was. Below the unrunable right side was an eddy that ended in a house size rock. And I mean a big house. The rock blocked the entire right side of the gorge, forcing all the water left, up against the wall. It also overhung the water below, almost touching the gorge wall on the left.

continued on page 60

SUMMER IS HERE..



Paddler: Allan Ellard // Shooter: Liz Bell // Location: Uganda 2005



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Wilderness Runs

California's Clavey

The Archetypal Wild and Scenic River



by Brett Valle

“It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition”

- *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Section 1 (b), P.L. 90-542*

Saturday 6 p.m.

Standing atop a house-sized, mid-channel boulder, two miles into the Lower Clavey, our destination, Hunter Bend, was lit in Sierra summer orange along the canyon ridge several miles downstream. The geologic folds, large oaks, and sunlit spouts of the Upper Clavey had given way to late afternoon shade and a demanding mile of Class V water. Having attempted the run earlier in the year (and having been rejected by high water with a tempo comparable to killer bees evicting trespassing animals), Brad, myself, and two others had returned to find the elusive “perfect flow.” Scouting several chutes, I decided the best option was the outflow downstream of our eddy, a thin green sheet that split two large boulders and funnelled into an eight-foot falls. The chute was just wide enough to get the necessary angle and an aerial turn to avoid a wall at the base. Our group, which by this point had the look of dazed sheep desiring greener pasture in the form of camp and dinner, took verbal cues and dropped off the falls one-by-one. Following suit, I jumped in my boat, snapped on the skirt, and paddled toward the chute, sneaking a last glance of the ridge before dropping off the horizon.

In the 38 years since Congress passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, only six Sierra Nevada rivers have been designated Wild and Scenic: the Kern, Kings, Merced, Tuolumne, North Fork American, and Middle Fork Feather. Nomination for Wild and Scenic status requires the identification of at least one “Outstandingly Remarkable Value,” according to Section 1(b) of the Act. The purpose of the Act, as mentioned directly in its text, is that “the established national policy of dam and other construction needs to be complemented by a policy that would preserve other selected rivers or sections thereof in free-flow conditions.” Investigations of the Wild and Scenic values of the river have noted the Clavey has “one of the most biologically and ecologically rich watersheds in the Sierra. Flowing from more than 9,000 feet in elevation to 1,200 feet, the river canyon encompasses all but one of the ecological life zones of the Sierra Nevada.” Despite a recommendation of Wild and Scenic status in 1998 and treatment of Wild and Scenic status in the Stanislaus Forest Land Management Plan, Congress has refused to act on the advice.

Photo by Brett Valle

In part, the lack of designation is due to the remoteness of the river. While several thousand people descend the Wild and Scenic Tuolumne each year, including infamous Clavey Falls at the confluence, the Clavey Canyon is largely inaccessible and unknown. In *The Best Whitewater of California*, Lars Holbek and Chuck Stanley describe the Clavey as “a stretch that no high gradient/low volume whitewater enthusiast should miss.” In typical Holbekian fashion, the Upper Clavey is summarized as “a difficult and beautiful run in a wild setting” that has potential to be Class IV and IV+ if the Class V “teeth” are portaged. Lars notes several major Class V drops on the 8.8 mile lower run, with 100 IV+ rapids “defy[ing] storage in the limitless gray matter file labeled Class IV pool/drop.” The description includes a famous photo of Gordon Patchin pinned—and looking distraught—on the Lower Clavey, with the authors noting the opportunity to forego rescue and take photos since Gordon was deemed “stable.”


The Clavey is one of three entirely free-flowing rivers in the Sierra Nevada. Rather than cutting west like most Sierra Rivers, the Clavey flows south for nearly 50 miles, running parallel to the historical “architecture” of the Sierra foothills. Several million years ago, seafloor was subducted under the North American plate, scraping off sediments, volcanic flows, and even island arcs onto the leading edge of the plate. The rocks themselves were squeezed against the North American plate, similar to the squeezing of an accordion. The “baffles” of this accordion are all aligned the same direction in the western Sierra, and make up the Tuolumne region from Meral’s Pool to Ward’s Ferry. As the Clavey River dissected its landscape over the past few million years, it worked parallel to, rather than against these baffles, taking advantage of the architecture. Thus, the southerly path offers a different view—and play between water and geology—than other Sierra Rivers.

Not all groups support Wild and Scenic designation for the river. In a 2002 article on the Clavey River in the *Los Angeles Times*, Tony Walker, a spokesman for the Turlock Irrigation District (TID), “said naturalists are guilty of their own misinformation. He said the Clavey runs not as a river, but as a trickle for most of the summer and that,

at the very least, a dam would regulate the river’s flows.” In a classic example of the disconnect between law and science, the designation of Wild and Scenic is not inclusive of tributaries. Thus, the myriad “Save the Clavey!” stickers on Central Sierra pickups are remnant from a previous push by TID to construct a 114,000 acre-foot reservoir—about a third the size of Hetch Hetchy—on the Clavey. The Clavey River Project was shelved in 1995, but remains a possibility so long as the river is not designated Wild and Scenic.

Sunday 6 p.m.

The Lower Tuolumne, including Clavey Falls, are within view. The last few miles have been superb, with sequential “multi-move” Class V rapids, requiring precise lines through big holes and tight slots. The largest rapid throws up so much mist that strands of algae have grown three feet down from the wall. To our left is the last big rapid on the Lower Clavey, Roxanne. A demanding Class IV+ entrance leads to a small, boat-width wide rock tongue piercing bad holes encompassing most of the river’s width. To this point, Brad and I have managed to not portage—though not without event—but decide to do otherwise on this drop. Standing with our boats shouldered, downstream of the main ledge, we have one last look. The genetic resolve to get through a hard run unscathed is perhaps only equaled by the temptation to run a difficult drop cleanly. In this case, genetic resolve loses. We hike back to the top, put in, and head toward the Tuolumne via water rather than land.

Several hours later, we reach the flatwater of New Don Pedro Reservoir, which is littered with debris and trash. On the right bank is a sign noting motorized craft are prohibited from continuing upstream, beyond the boundary of the “Wild and Scenic” designation of the Tuolumne River. Having descended every listed Wild and Scenic river in the Sierra—and most of the potential reaches—I’m left wondering what “outstanding remarkable values” those rivers possess that one of California’s wildest and most scenic free-flowing tributaries does not. 

Brett Vallé is a professional kayaker and photographer who has spent more than two decades in the outdoors. He is the founder of boof.com, the largest website dedicated to California whitewater kayaking. When not paddling, Brett works in river restoration.

Get Involved

The Tuolumne River Trust will personally deliver letters supporting the Clavey to Senator Diane Feinstein and Congressman George Radanovich. Please send letters to:

Monica Weakley
Tuolumne River Trust
P.O. Box 612
Groveland, CA 95321
monica@tuolumne.org

www.tuolumne.org/takeAction_sierraNevada



Shawn Graham enters one of the ubiquitous Class V drop of the Lower Clavey.

Photo by Brad Brewer



Wilderness Runs



Lessons From an Unintentional Overnighter

The beta was simple: a class III-IV with two Class Vs that are easy to portage—
NO WORRIES.

by Christie Dobson

Jesse Rice and I were stoked; we could break this river down and scout the lines ourselves instead of following along like we so often do. It was an opportunity for us to use our skills and get some real experience California creekin’.

We put on the West Branch of the Feather and coordinated shuttle with the boys who were running nearby Kimsheew Creek. We dropped them at their put-in and after their run they would meet us at our take-out. The plan seemed solid.

Jesse and I cruised down to the first hard rapid, a 25-footer, which wasn’t so clean. We climbed down a sketchy rope ladder and roped our boats down. So far the beta was right on. The run continued through some manky Class III-IV, and was still fun until 7 p.m.. We thought we had just one more portage before the take-out. At 8:00 p.m. we came upon another big horizon line, but the portage was far from easy. The canyon walls turned vertical and the river was now plunging through a tight, vertical gorge, weaving its way through several sieves. Under an orange sky, the realization of being “nighted out” began to set in. By the time we roped our boats up

the first pitch of the portage, the sun was gone. We knew from studying topo maps at the put-in that we could hike out on river right, but only after a large tributary. We hadn’t seen it. We hiked to the top of the ridge and got a view that you can’t find in fancy hotels: mountains, valleys, trees, and a full moon. With no electric light on the expansive horizon, we settled in for a long, cold night.

We weren’t completely unprepared. Some dry clothes meant for the take-out and a space blanket discovered in Jesse’s First Aid kit would see us through. We found a grassy spot and tried to get comfortable for the upcoming night. We talked about all kinds of things. Girls do this at most slumber parties or get-togethers. We talked about adventures, boys, and mostly how we wished they knew we were okay. Little did I know that somewhere in those mountains they were driving most of the night looking for us, wondering if we had hiked out or were waiting for daylight to make a move.

Jason Hale and Taylor Robertson had already begun to make a move. At 11 p.m., they put on the river and ran down to the first rapid. They pulled over, built a fire and

camped. At first light, they paddled, in just over an hour, what had taken Jesse and I almost five hours to do.

I was roping our boats up the second pitch when I saw a red PFD. Then I saw another one—the boys had found us. Good timing too; in another 10 minutes we would have been on the top of the canyon and out of sight. We would not have seen them and they would have missed us. A sigh, a moment of relief—our heroes! After the reunion, our new team began to formulate a new plan together. We all believed that after this portage we were home free and would be having breakfast at the local coffee shop within an hour or two.

As we paddled off, our group of two now four, I looked back over my shoulder, sort of laughing at the gorge that had kept us out all night. But little did I know what was downstream... it wasn’t the bridge we were hoping for.

We came into another harder, steeper and more dangerous walled-out canyon. Obscenities echoed off the sheer walls. We would again have to portage and it was going to take energy and time. A long hard


Left: Christie Dobson paddles an 'intentional' overnigher on the Great Bend of the Yangtze River

Photo by Alley Fontenot

hour later, we put back on the river, then, again another canyon. We passed through four more canyons and our spirits grew tired, but I couldn't help but be in awe of this place. I'd never seen whitewater like this; I'd never had to do river-work of this nature; I was overwhelmed by the scenery, the experience and caught in the moment. Jason and Taylor were amazing. Their skills and patience were fantastic. We kept charging and wondering if this bridge was a reality. At this point, the beta was useless; we were obviously on the wrong section... but how?

The morning had begun at 6 a.m.. It was now 11:30 a.m.. We finally reached the bottom of the fifth canyon and Taylor gave us the "wide open" sign. But we had all fallen for that trick miles back, and we weren't easily convinced. However, Taylor was right. The bridge turned up just around the corner. The rest of our group was there and relieved to see us. As I paddled into the eddy under the bridge, Scott who had given us the bunk beta, was more than apologetic. He had made a mistake about which section of river we were on. The bridge we were at was actually the put-in for the stretch we wanted!

As I washed the poison oak off in the river and stared upstream I knew I was lucky. I was lucky to have gotten to see a place where few people go; I was lucky to have such good friends to come help us out; I was lucky to have made it out with only a good story to show for it; I was lucky because deep down I sort of liked it.

I don't plan to venture back to the West Branch of the Feather, but it stays with me. The lessons learned (like knowing that the beta in life ain't always 100%) keeps me on my toes. It makes me ask questions of the world around me and makes me more aware of the adventures that are just downstream of here. 

Right: Kimshew Crew later known as Rescue Crew: Clay Wright, Jed Weingarten, Jason Hale, Taylor Robertson and Scott Lindgren

Photo by Christie Dobson



Jesse Rice creeking in California's Sierra Mountains

Photo by Taylor Robertson



Wilderness Runs

by Geoff Jennings

The Wilderness of
GIANT Gap



Just Beyond the Suburbs

I hiked into Giant Gap for the first time with a healthy mix of caution and excitement in my blood. I'd recently sold a boat to a fellow who was looking for a replacement kayak. When I met him, I learned that his identical kayak had been lost just a few weeks earlier during a high water attempt on this very same section of the North Fork of the American. The logical part of my brain knew that flows were lower now, that I'd been paddling well this year and that I was paddling with a strong partner. Another part of me kept remembering his tale of hiking out—members of the group hiking in opposite directions, unable or unwilling to risk crossing the river to walk out together. The hike out sounded grim—up an incredibly steep ravine through brush and poison oak. He'd lost his boat downstream, while another member of his group had abandoned his, favoring a hellacious hike over continuing paddling.

Left: Nuckcracker, one of Giant Gap's most intimidating drops

Photo by Geoff Jennings

Mostly, though, I was excited. I'd paddled the lower section of the North Fork American, a fun Class III-IV, known as Chamberlain's Falls, many times. It's a gorgeous run, and I'd heard the upper stretches of river were even prettier, with harder, steeper and more numerous rapids. Feeling good about my paddling this year, I had Giant Gap on my hit list. I'd heard 900 cfs was a good flow, so I was a little surprised when Albert called and said "Geoff, The Gap is at 1300 cfs. Let's go!" but I tossed my boat in the truck and drove to Albert's anyway.

Driving east from Sacramento on I-80, you'd hardly expect to find wilderness runs in the area, but shortly after pulling off the freeway you're bouncing down a dirt road through amazing pine forests, and it starts looking more and more like wild country. At the trailhead, the views are almost overwhelming. In front of you is a deep canyon, with steep, forested slopes on both sides; you can easily imagine yourself much, much deeper in the mountains.

As I loaded my gear into a small daypack, I carefully itemized the equipment I would carry: spare paddle, first-aid kit, extra warm clothes and filtering water bottle. On a map we were only 60 miles from the state

Albert Romvari entering a classic North American drop

Photo by Geoff Jennings

capitol, but in terms of being prepared, we might as well have been 600. Not quite paddling in the interior of Alaska, but help would be a long time coming if problems arose that we couldn't handle.

We are a team of two. I've never done the run before. Albert has, but not in many years. The flow is still on the higher side, higher than he's seen before. We both know that paddling in a group of two reduces our options and back-ups if something goes wrong, and we talk about this. I've paddled with Albert a fair amount over the last six months, and we normally go pretty all out. Boat scouting, not much stopping; paddling, not floating through the flat spots. I've set several personal speed records with Albert. But we've talked, and we both agree we need to play it safe. We'll definitely be scouting things today.

Albert's wife drops us off, we shoulder our boats, and start the steep hike down to the river. The gradient of the trail reminds us of the terrain we're heading into. It's gorgeous, and though my shoulder aches



a bit, I reach the river in about 50 minutes. We know we've got a long way to go, so we dress quickly and slide into the sparkling clear water. Euchre Bar, our put-in, has a small bridge crossing the river. It's the last sign of development we'll see for 14 miles.

Not much warm up before we head into the first walled gorge, filled with fun Class IV rapids. Even these need some attention. Albert and I are working well together as a team. We're boat scouting these drops, and I'm feeling pretty good. It's steep and gorgeous. We stop in a few pools, but mostly we're cruising. Fun paddling, and we move quickly downstream.

The water is high—even the Class IV rapids feel pretty solid—and I can't help but remember the guidebook's description of miles 2.5 to 5.5:

"Giant Gap. Here the river has cut a narrow chasm between spectacular 2000-foot walls. There are several Class V rapids in

this stretch. Even experts should make their first trips at flows below 1000 cfs; above that level, the pools between drops are so swift that rescue is very difficult. Scout at every opportunity."

- Cassady & Calhoun,
California Whitewater, 1990

Before long we're in Giant Gap. At points, I wish that the paddling were easier so I could better appreciate the amazing scenery. Instead, I'm pretty focused on the river. At times Albert and I both scout, but we also do a lot of single person scouts, which, in hard water like this, require a lot of trust and confidence in your partner. There are plenty of unnamed rapids that on other runs would be the most memorable part of the day. We run the Class V, Nutcracker, without scouting—which is an eye-opener—followed quickly by Locomotive Falls. At Locomotive there is an abandoned orange kayak to serve as a nice reminder: "Don't get overconfident." I look around as we scout: sheer walls of rock overhang

Above: Albert Romvari scouting one of Giant Gap's numerous horizon lines.

Photo by Geoff Jennings

slightly, and the tops of the gorge are some 2000 feet above us. I shudder at the thought of hiking out from here.

But we're both paddling well, and the rapids pass without much incident, although that's not to imply that they are trivial. Several have critical lines, many have serious consequences. The horizon lines are amazing, a line across the river, and the next thing you see is treetops—of trees that are only a few hundred feet downstream. Before long, we're scouting "Dominator," where we decide to make our only portage of the day. There is a line, but it's tight and the consequences of not making it look severe.


As we pop our skirts back on, Albert

confidently announces “well, that was Dominator, the last big rapid until the very end.” I know we’ve only covered five of the 14 miles, and I’m a bit disappointed that the hard paddling is over. The gorge is opening up a bit, and I ready myself for the paddle out.

We haven’t gone far when I hear the roar of whitewater. We see a pretty strong horizon line, some huge boulders, and an obvious steep drop. With no clear line, we hop out and scout. It’s solidly in the IV-V range. We run it, and in the eddy below, Albert says, “Hmmm. That must have been the last big one. I don’t remember anything like that below Dominator.”

We round another corner, and are greeted again with a similar view. Another scout, another solid rapid, and I look at Albert a bit dubiously when he announces “Okay, that must have been the last big one.” I can’t remember how many times this scene is repeated, but it’s enough that before long, Albert and I are joking about it. At each new horizon line, I ask, “Is THIS the last big rapid?” and Albert replies, “Yeah—the 34th last big rapid.”

For six miles or so we get into easier terrain, though some rapids would still clock in as Class IV. Albert is a former racer—very fit—and I’m tired from playboating a bunch the day before. He pulls ahead, and I occasionally catch a glimpse of his helmet in the distance. The paddling is easier, and I get lulled into that groove of just paddling down the river. The last rapid catches me by surprise. I’d seen Albert paddle into it, but hadn’t noticed where he went. I’m tired, and not really thinking. I charge right in. As I get into the boulder-choked rapid, I realize I’ve made a mistake. I catch an eddy behind a rock and start trying to evaluate where I am. Below me is a big rock fence. There is water flowing through it, but it’s impossible to see what’s on the other side. A cleaner line exists far to the left, but I’ve missed it, and there’s no way to get back there. I’m alone, and my heart is pumping. I look for an escape. I ferry across to another eddy. It puts me further from the clean line, but it gives me a better view. I see a line through the rock fence, cross my fingers and take it. It is an educated guess, but I still feel lucky when it works.

Albert’s wife is relieved to see us at the take-out. We’re a bit late for our optimistic meeting time, and she had started to worry. We drive to a Chinese restaurant. My legs are sore from the hike in, and my back and shoulders sore from the previous days of paddling. The padded bench at our table looks like a good nap spot, but I’m riding high. Amazing paddling, incredible views in a wilderness canyon, only an hour’s drive from my house. I feel privileged to be a paddler. 

Geoff Jennings lives in the Sacramento Area, where he works for kayaking.com, theriverstore.com, and currentadventures.com.



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Wilderness Runs



On September 10th,
2001, a group of
American kayakers
prepared to run the
legendary Homathko
River in British
Columbia, Canada.

When Ignorance Was **BLISS**

By Lila Marie Thomas

The Homathko River, September 2001

The headwaters of the Homathko drain into Tatlayoko Lake. The river then drops into a canyon bordered on both sides by the Hamathko and Waddington ice fields, which lay frozen year-round under vast sheets of ice. The Homathko winds through the impressive Coastal Range and then cuts into Mount Waddington, the highest peak in BC, looming 13,260 feet above sea level. This scenic backdrop was used to film the movie, *Seven Years in Tibet*. The only way out of this spectacular river is by plane. Unwittingly, these boaters were deep in the heart of North America's wilderness when the nation suffered the infamous attacks of September 11th.

Left: John Grace running the "Bet" below Trifluence, circa 2003

Below: John Kern taking a moment to scout at the "Third Act of Tragedy"

Photos by Tommy Hilleke



September 10th

The crew, consisting of exploratory kayakers Willie Kern, Daniel DeLaVergne, Polk Deters and several others, put-on the cold, clear Homathko River at its lowest seasonal flows. The Homathko rushes out of a natural lake and builds in power and volume as a result of its glacier-fed tributaries downstream. The first day, however, consisted of low volume Class II rapids, which allowed the group to relax and enjoy the scenery.

Early morning mist peeled away revealing blue-bird skies with scattered wispy clouds. The Douglas Fir forest gave way to a patchwork of exposed bedrock. The landscape and geology of the river revealed evidence of ancient glacial lake overflows: smooth boulders mimicked mammals with long, slender necks, swollen bellies and praying hands; dimples in smooth rock surfaces made holy grails, sculpted from the timeless caress of water.

Polly Green
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PHOTO: CHRYSTIE GILLES




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RUSTY SAGE getting tubed on the Zambezi Photo: Deb Pinniger

Wilderness Runs

The one sound marring the sensual beauty of the wild river was the roar of overhead planes. The Homathko wilderness happens to lie in the flight path connecting Yellow Knife, Northwest Territories with Vancouver, BC. Commercial planes with wide, white puffy contrails webbed the sky and their roar drowned out the gurgling entrance rapids. One kayaker noted, "Great wilderness trip—except for the sky." The clear weather signaled the approach of a low-pressure system, so the group picked up their pace to make it to the first camping area. The Homathko is prone to fluctuations that can triple its volume; at flood stage, many of the rapids become unrunnable.

September 11th

They awoke to a hard frost at Twin Glacier Camp. The Homathko joins Nude Creek, its first glacial tributary, on day two, doubling its flow. From this point forward, the water was muddy brown and very cold. Over a quick oatmeal breakfast, DeLaVergne noticed that there were no planes overhead. But as soon as they put on the river their focus became directed toward the upcoming whitewater and they paid no more attention to the skies.

Downstream of the first campsite, the Homathko changes character. "The rocks are more permanent and the river becomes channelized with more defined drops," says Kern. The group successfully navigated Birthday Canyon, which is so narrow you can jump across; the water is incredibly deep in this section. The canyons are short gorges 20 to 150 feet high and sculpted of smooth bedrock that turns to dense forest above.

After successfully navigating some of the hardest whitewater on the river, the group stopped for the night at the Great Trifluence—the confluence of Mosely Creek, Tiedemann Creek and the Homathko River. Group member Daniel DeLaVergne calls it "a spiritual trinity." At the base of Mosely Creek the alluvial

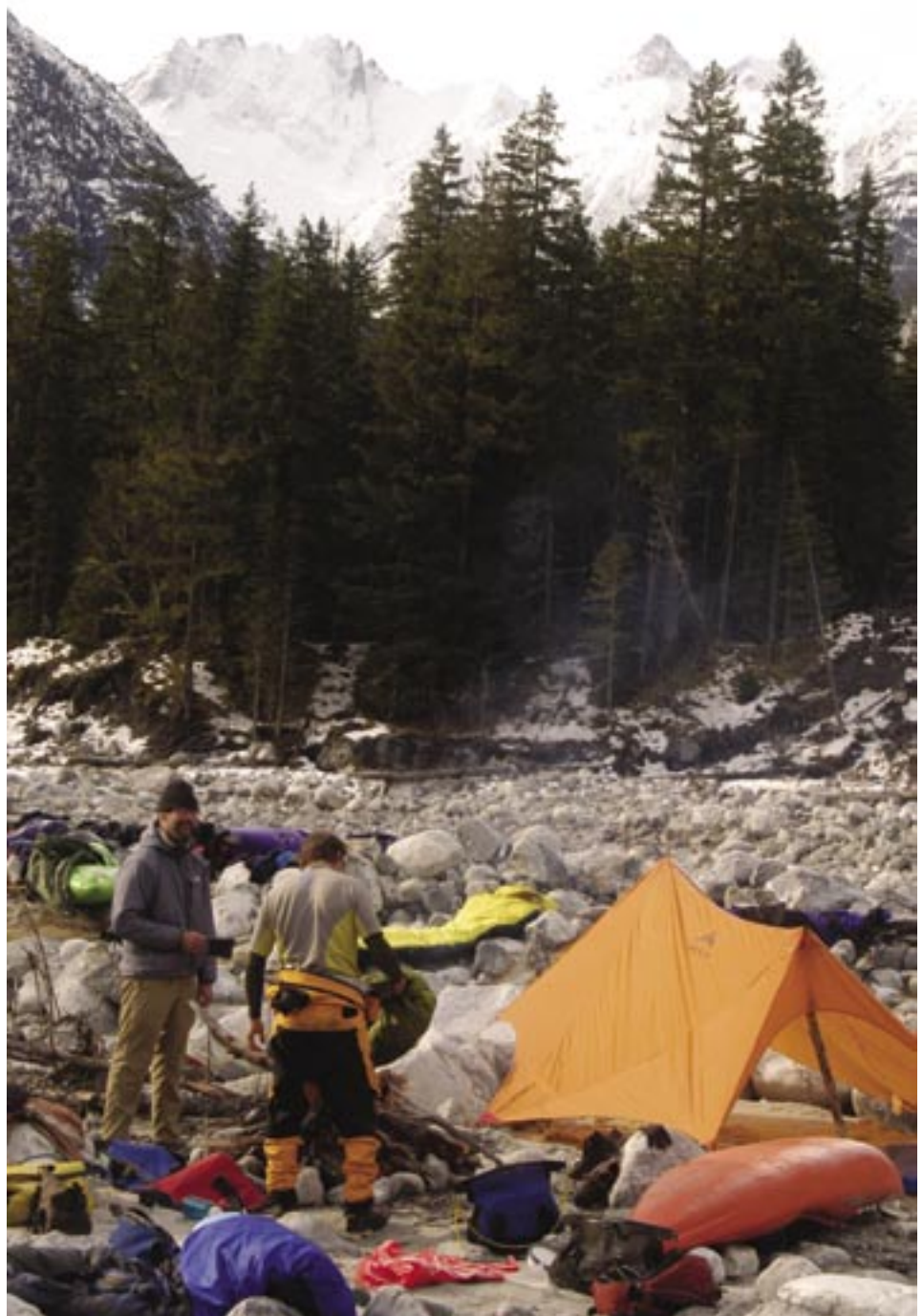
deposits of the three rivers combine to form a beach bordered by calm water.

"The presence of animals is everywhere," Kern says. "We saw scat and tracks of bears." To him, however, the most impressive feature is, "when the rivers lose energy and settle before they meet up and rip out downstream." It was that calm

moment where the water stilled, upstream from the hardest rapids on the river, that the kayakers relished.

September 12th

"The last day on the river is hardest," says Kern. First comes The Bet rapid: "It's a craps table for humans. You paddle in and



Camping at the Great Trifluence, the confluence of the Homathko, Mosley Creek and Tiedemann Creek.

Photo by Tommy Hilleke

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Wilderness Runs

you're the dice. Huge laterals come in at you and there is a big turn and a big hole at the bottom."

Then there is Tragedy, Act I, II and III, named not for kayaker carnage but for the fate of a work party led by Alfred Waddington. In 1864, his crew of road builders was attacked by disgruntled Tsilhqot'in natives on a gravel bar at the mouth of the last Tragedy canyon and 14 of Waddington's men were killed.

The first Act is a huge boulder garden where the main flow pushes into a dangerous sieve on the right-hand wall. The rapid ends in a beautiful boxed-in canyon. The second Act is the longest walled canyon on the river. The rapid is made-up of three parts: a narrow channel with grabby water, a river-wide ledge sporting a multitude of consequences and a long rapid ending in a daunting "death hole." By Act III the water had increased to 8,000 cfs (from only 700 cfs at the put-in).

The group successfully maneuvered through the last rapids and had the choice of camping or continuing on. They decided to keep trucking to the take-out, which required a 40-kilometer flat-water paddle. They arrived at their final destination at around 7:00 p.m., completely exhausted.

Surprisingly, it was when the crew pulled their tired bodies from their boats at a small heli-logging camp at Bute Inlet that tragedy struck. Six loggers rushed to meet them at the end of the dock, urgently talking in unison and holding up a newspaper with shocking images glaring from the front page.

"It was so surreal to return from the heart of the North American wilderness and find that our world had turned upside down," says DeLaVergne.

The crew was grounded. The typically bustling heli-logging operation was shut down in the wake of the September 11th

attacks and the seaplane flight the group hoped to meet was postponed due to the "no fly" ordinance. They spent the next three days at base camp with loggers and helicopter pilots. They had no phone to contact loved ones back in the States; their only connection to the outside world was a television broadcasting a Canadian news channel. Fortunately, no one in the group had family or friends in close proximity to the attacks.

"We didn't have the same emotional attachment that everyone else did from seeing what really happened that morning," recalls Kern. "We were trying to make sense of something that made no sense."

"Oddly enough," says Deters, "we were safe and protected on the Homathko, which could be considered a life-threatening experience, while the rest of the world was experiencing the trauma of September, 11th. I felt grief that I was not there to experience the tragedy with everyone else."

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Everyone in the group faced the upheaval in different ways. Some crew members returned home to mourn with the rest of the country. Willie Kern and Polk Deters went deeper into the wilderness. They remained in Canada running rivers until mid-October, 2001.

Each of us carries with us a different memory of what happened on that tragic day in 2001. For a group of kayakers gathered in British Columbia, they will forever remember a river that challenged their bodies, minds and souls, and eventually returned them to a civilization more complex than the one they had left. 

National Security and River Access

The attacks of 9/11 caused America to redefine security measures within its own borders. Some of the steps taken in response to September 11th included the closure of the Monguap River in New York and the Sultan River in Washington. The Ausable River (NY), South Fork of the Flathead (MT), Lower Blue River (CO) and Green River (WA) were all threatened with closure. And although no evidence exists that recreational canoeing and kayaking downstream of America's dams pose a security threat, river access throughout the nation continues to be affected.



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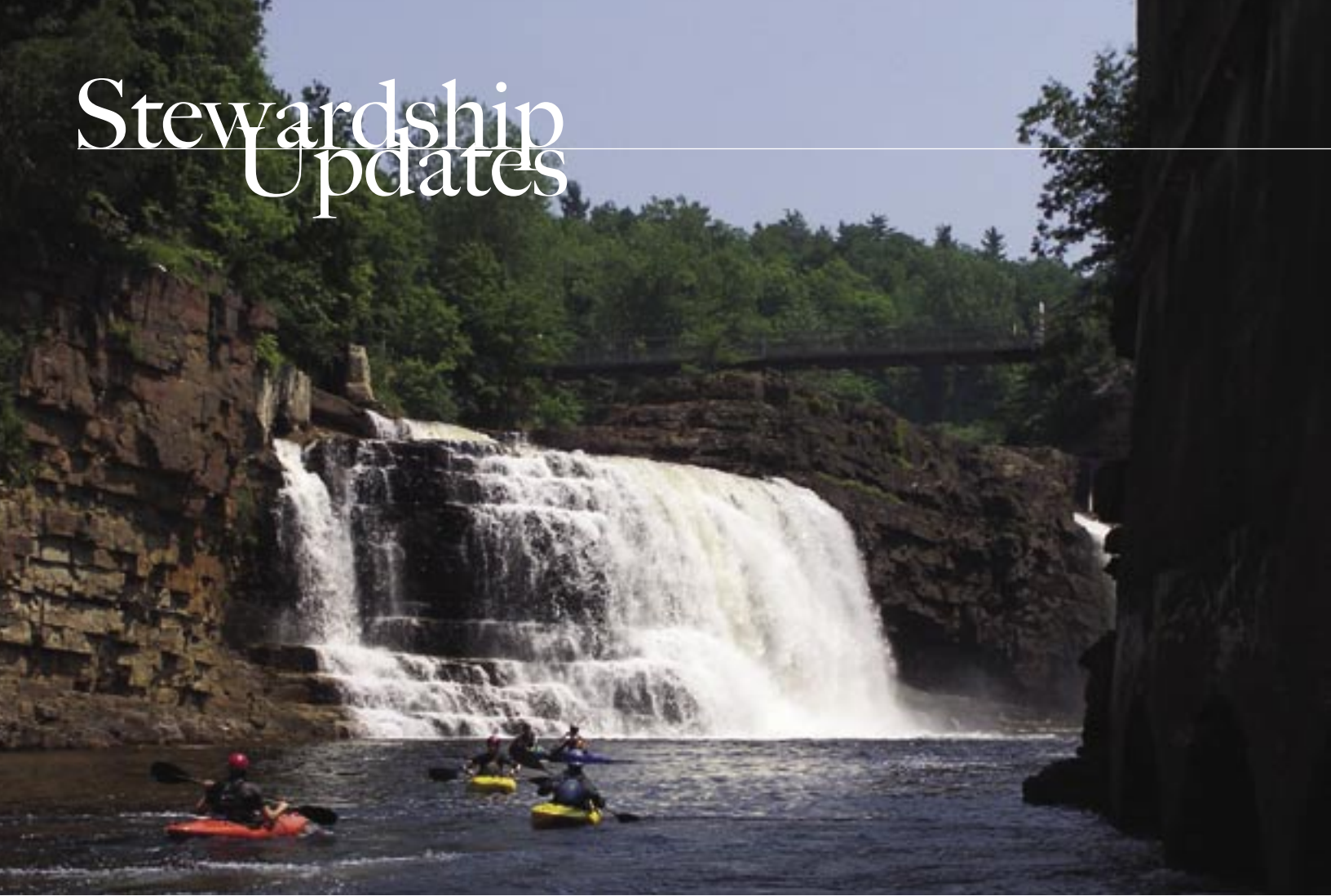
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Stewardship Updates



by Kevin Colburn

Ausable Chasm (NY) Flow Study a Blast

The Dogg called again. It was a familiar question. “Hey Kevin, can I run that big falls?” Erring on the side of caution, I suggested that he was welcome to drop the big falls into Ausable Chasm on any day other than June 25th. That day marked the second time that paddlers have ever been allowed to paddle the Upper Ausable Chasm—not a good day for stunt boating. It was wicked hot out as 28 paddlers walked down to the river and put in for what felt like a first descent. The Ausable Chasm turned out to be a stunningly beautiful and unique gorge, featuring a half dozen fun, romping Class IV drops beneath towering vertical walls. It took AW at least four years of constant negotiations to get the river considered for study, and we hope to have the Chasm open to paddlers by next spring. After all the hard work, it felt great to see paddlers smiling as they crashed through

holes and gazed up at the small sliver of sky visible high above the canyon walls.

Local Groups Try to Torpedo West Fork Tuck Releases (NC)

Ironically, within days of American Whitewater moving our main office to Jackson County, the county publicly called for the elimination of the forthcoming whitewater releases on the West Fork of the Tuckasegee. The request came in the form of a settlement agreement filed by three local counties and the notoriously anti-boater, Friends of Lake Glenville. This local settlement directly opposed the settlement signed in the fall of 2003 by AW and almost all other stakeholders. The new local settlement requested massive cash

handouts, land give-aways, privatization of public resources, and other gems totaling at least \$709 million! In response, the State of North Carolina blasted its own counties: “The State submits that the Jackson Filing is, in general, unfair, unwise, and unlawful, and should not be approved.” The state further noted that, “such an ‘agreement’ is more akin to a criminal conspiracy.” Also of note, an attempt to allow Lake Glenville residents to cleanse the reservoir of nude sunbathers was rebutted by an attorney who assured the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that topless female sunbathing is a legal activity in North Carolina. Who knew? American Whitewater is confident that the local settlement will be dismissed by the FERC and that our interests (in the river) will be protected in the new dam license due out next February.

Paddlers admire the scenery at the put-in to the Ausable Chasm

Photo by Willie Kern

Cheoah River (NC) Release Dates Set!

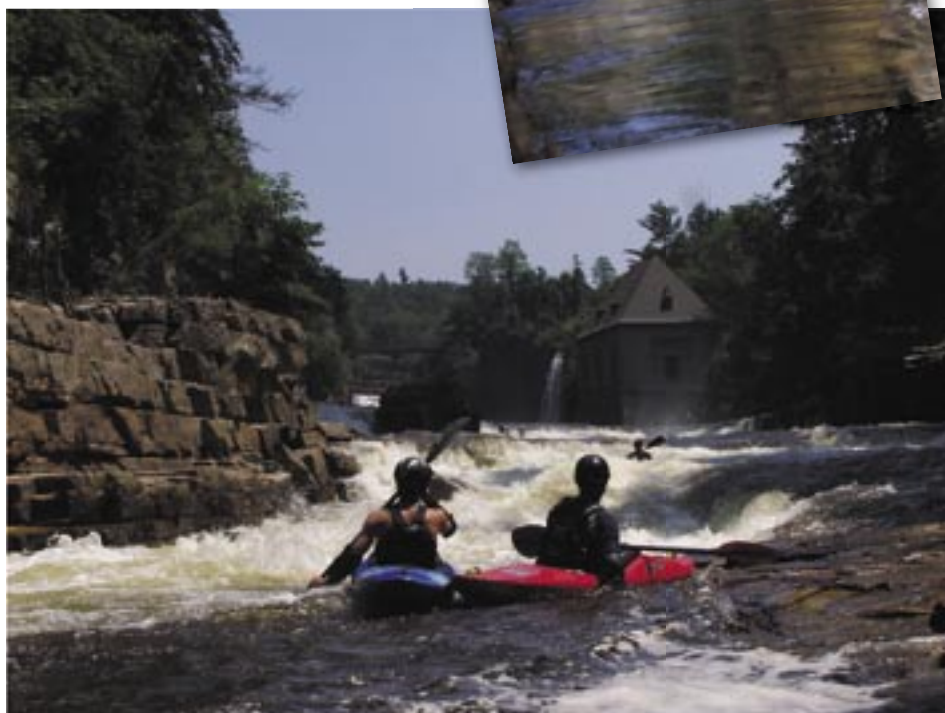
This September will mark another major milestone in the history of American Whitewater's river stewardship efforts. The Cheoah River will get a new lease on life, and will begin flowing every day for the next forty years. On at least 16-18 of those days each year, the river will be running at levels high enough to support whitewater boating. The first boatable releases will be this fall, on September 17th, October 1st, and November 2nd. The 2006 schedule is as follows: February 8 & 9, March 21 & 22, April 1 & 2, April 8 & 9, April 15 & 16, May 6 & 7, May 27 & 28, June 3 & 4, October

1, and November 1. One day releases and the first day of all consecutive release days are at 1000cfs, whereas the second day of consecutive release days will have flows of 850cfs (the exception is the second March release day, where flows will be 600cfs). The US Forest Service has not had time to build the access areas yet, so the releases this fall will require some creative management and cooperation from the paddling community. AW will post recommendations on our website regarding how to safely access the river prior to the releases. See you on the river!

Right: Feasibility study participants were among the lucky few to ever paddle between the towering walls of the Chasm.

Below: Ausable Chasm is stacked with fun Class IV drops like this unnamed rapid just below the put-in.

Photo by Willie Kern



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Stewardship Updates

Alberton Gorge (MT) Protected, Volunteer Recognized

Wednesday, June 29th was a classic Montana summer evening at the Alberton Gorge. If you are not sure what that means, picture this: blue skies, dry air, purple-spined cliffs rising off the water, wisps of aquatic insect getting snatched by swooping birds and jumping trout, and of course there is the Clark Fork River flowing calmly between rapids. It was with this backdrop that American Whitewater celebrated the conservation of the lands surrounding Alberton Gorge with the many other groups and individuals that made it all possible. As part of the celebration, American Whitewater and the Missoula Whitewater Association gave volunteer Peter Dayton an award for "Outstanding Contribution to River Conservation." Peter

was given a plaque commemorating the successful conclusion to his years of hard work, and a Werner Shogun paddle. AW would like to thank MWWA and Werner Paddles for making this award possible. Peter is a role model for all of us, and many future generations of paddlers will enjoy the results of his efforts. Thanks Peter!



Chattooga Headwaters Still In Limbo

River stewardship work is as frustrating as it is exhilarating, because with almost every success there is a "but...." AW worked tirelessly with our superb attorneys at Patton Boggs to appeal the bizarre boating ban on the Upper Chattooga River. We found out this summer that our appeal was absolutely successful, but we still can't go paddling (legally) and the precedent temporarily sits like a rotten apple in a

Spencer Bradford, president of the Missoula Whitewater Association, and long time AW Conservation Director John Gangemi (in cowboy hat) present Peter Dayton (right) with an award for "Outstanding Contribution to River Conservation."


Photo by John Scibek, Five Valleys Land Trust

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bushel of shiny fruit. The Chief of the US Forest Service agreed will all our points and reversed the Sumter National Forest's ban, however he called for up to two years of "user capacity analysis," during which time boating may or may not be allowed. We are working on it, but for now paddling remains illegal. The good news is that the Chief agreed with us that there is no justification whatsoever for a ban. We are confident that ultimately our interests will prevail and we look forward to the day when we'll have the same right to enjoy the Chattooga as all other backcountry users. 

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Stewardship River Access

River Access Begins With You!

by Bryan Griesemer

Dropping from the top of the Taconic Ridge, Bash Bish Brook has a watershed that extends into three adjacent states: New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. It is a place of extreme beauty, mystery and, lately, a place of controversy. Local legend has it that the 50-foot Bash Bish falls was run once by a local Indian woman in a canoe. Charged of adultery by a jealous friend, the Indian woman, named Bash Bish, was strapped to a canoe and sent over the falls to her death. It is believed that as Bash Bish cascaded over the falls, rays from the sun formed a halo around her body and colorful butterflies surrounded her head. Although remnants of the canoe were found in the pool below, the body of Bash Bish was never recovered. It is believed that, to this day, the fleeting image of Bash Bish can be seen flickering in the falls.

That's the legend, now comes the controversy. Paddling on Bash Bish Brook is entirely forbidden and illegal. Although Bash Bish is an obscure southern New England gem that only a handful of paddles have run, the hemlock-lined gorge is a place of certain beauty and of recreational significance. The run at Bash Bish is only a quarter of a mile long, boasting two Class V rapids, which mellow into a continuous series of Class IV ledge drops. There is an existing hiking trail directly adjacent to the brook making it easy to do multiple runs. While it is hardly a destination steep creek, the run is an important piece of whitewater to Housatonic area boaters, a group of paddlers consisting of religious steep-creekers, ex-Olympians and committed beginners. Housatonic boaters are also no strangers to challenges to their ability to paddle. Despite efforts from local businesses, paddlers and even American Whitewater, releases on the nearby Housatonic River have been recently terminated, severely limiting whitewater recreation in the area.


So the question remains: what does one do when access to a favorite river or creek is denied? The answer to this question largely depends on the response of local paddlers.

Once an access issue arises it will not simply go away. Bash Bish Brook was run dozens of times before a polite, but stern park ranger forbade us from paddling it. Gaining access to a forbidden river means gaining access to those who govern the waterway. So, first, find out who the landowner is, whether private or public and request a meeting. Although opinions and priorities differ, sometimes non-boaters simply need to be educated about whitewater paddling. A rapid that may look extreme to the untrained eye may be straightforward to an experienced whitewater paddler. Being able to explain potential hazards, or the lack thereof, may help to ease landowner concerns regarding safety and liability.

Secondly, be an ally not an adversary. It's easy to be emotional and defensive about being told not to do something we are passionate about. Nonetheless, it is critical that, as paddlers, we respect the concerns of landowners and managers. Politely and respectfully explain the potential benefits of waterways being open to whitewater paddling. In places such as Great Falls of the Potomac, whitewater paddlers have actually assisted in the rescue of hikers who have accidentally fallen into the rapids. In other situations, the opening of a whitewater resource has brought increased economic activity to the area. Whatever the case may be, be sure you are considerate of local concerns. Remember, listening is an integral aspect of dialogue, and imposing your beliefs with the sole intent of getting your way will surely be received as offensive and will likely end in conflict.

Finally, be organized. Difficult though it may be at the time, securing the long-term use of a whitewater resource may mean sacrificing a day or two of boating. As paddlers, we have the added responsibility of being whitewater ambassadors. Confronting an access issue may be as simple as knocking on the door of a landowner and asking for permission to pass through their property. However, more complicated issues may involve research, phone calls,

letter writing, and attendance of meetings and public hearings. If this sounds like an overwhelming responsibility, consider the effect of doing nothing at all. The fact of the matter is, the earlier you can become part of the solution to issues of access and conservation the more your voice will be heard. Furthermore, there is a plethora of resources available to the whitewater boater in need of help defending their rights to run rivers.

If you are not already a member of American Whitewater, become one! If you even associate with paddling unfortunates too cheap to spend the equivalent of a case of beer on an annual membership, invite, harass, and threaten them to become members of AW. The American Whitewater web site provides information regarding access, navigability and liability, and the AW staff is more than willing to receive phone calls regarding river access and conservation. Kevin Colburn, in particular, was kind enough to provide me with ideas on approaching the Bash Bish situation. He was quick to point me in the direction of potential resources and recommended ways to research cases in which paddling was allowed in other state parks in my area. A few hours of work may be all it takes to ensure our favorite rivers and creeks remain open for us to enjoy for years to come. Whether it is a quick fix or a lifetime battle, river stewardship is the responsibility of all boaters. Help protect your rights and be sure that your voice is heard. Most importantly, do your part to make sure that our rivers and our spirits alike remain free to flow. 

Ted DeVoe running Bash Bish.

Photos by Bryan Griesemer



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Stewardship Online Tools

by Lila Marie Thomas

AW's New River Stewardship Toolkit

American Whitewater is undergoing a year of tremendous change. There is a new Executive Director, new headquarters at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC and a redefinition of the way AW protects the nation's rivers. This shift is most clearly defined in a 250-page document called The River Stewardship Toolkit. It is AW's new Bible. The Toolkit contains information on river access, hydropower licensing, public land management, environmental advocacy, legislation, safety and events, as well as numerous case studies and links to regulatory information. It is a document intended to fuel a grassroots movement. It aims to educate river enthusiasts at a local level to be able to protect the resources in their backyard.

Mark Singleton, AW's Executive Director, says the Toolkit is essential to the AW mission due to the rise in threats facing whitewater in our nation. In addition, he says, "the stewardship responsibility of [government] agencies has been diminished in the last five years and continues to be reduced at a national level. As the volume gets turned down on government agencies' ability to provide strong stewardship guidelines, there is a natural void created. AW sees its role as engaging our core constituency [volunteers] to become active."

AW is developing three online tools to effectively utilize the vast network of volunteers that supports the organization: 1) The River Stewardship Toolkit, 2) a Project Tracking Database, and 3) a Volunteer Management System. The Toolkit offers volunteers access to resources they will need to resolve specific river issues. The Project Tracking Database will enable American Whitewater staff to track river issues geographically and categorize

those issues. The Volunteer Management System will allow staff to find qualified volunteers to match the needs of river issues in their area.

Coinciding with the unveiling of the above tools to aid volunteer support is a revamping of AW Stewardship staff positions. In the past, there has been

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an Access Director and a Conservation Director. Now, with efforts focused on Stewardship, AW staff will work within specific regions handling both access and conservation. Kevin Colburn is heading-up the program as the National Stewardship Director. Thomas O'Keefe is the Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director and Dave Steindorf is the California Stewardship Director. Inter-Mountain West, Southeast and Northeast Directors will follow as resources become available. Stewards, or educated river advocates, will work with AW's regional staff to pinpoint and address issues affecting rivers locally.

The Toolkit has been several years in the making—a task primarily undertaken by AW staff members Jason Roberson, John Gangemi and Kevin Colburn. Board and Safety Committee Members Tim Kelley, Charlie Walbridge, Lee Belknap and Kevin Lewis also helped construct this enormous river policy self-help guide.

The goal is to release the Toolkit in usable online format by September 1st, 2005 (which means it should be there now, so check it out at: americanwhitewater.org). As the Toolkit is officially unveiled, Singleton says it is important to keep in mind that it is a dynamic document that has no final form. The Toolkit will continue to grow to meet the changing needs of AW members, volunteers and staff.

The Toolkit is designed to educate a broader section of river-users and hopefully unite the whitewater community under a single mission, "to restore rivers, eliminate water degradation, improve public land management and protect public access for responsible recreational use."

The new stewardship model is designed to carry AW into the future with a clearer vision and a more effective way carrying out its mission. "Five years from now," says Singleton, "strong Stewardship teams will represent all areas of the country. Their goals will be to provide recreational opportunities for users, enhance the riparian environments of river corridors and build the economy and quality of life in the surrounding communities." 

Please direct all questions regarding

Stewardship to:

Kevin Colburn

Email: Kevin@americanwhitewater.org

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Stewardship Volunteer Clean Up

West Fork Tuck Log Clearing a Success

by **Josh Egenolf,**

AW Southeastern Regional Coordinator

The logjam clearing on the Tuckasegee River on Saturday, April 16th was a huge success! Thirteen generous volunteers came out for a great day of work. As a participant in AW's 2004 River Stewardship Institute, it was an excellent opportunity for me to put my newly-acquired River Stewardship skills to good use.

The day began with the group meeting at the Thorpe Powerhouse where we were received by Bunny Johns and George Galleher; many thanks to them for the critical coordination of the tree cutting crew and landowner contacts. The McRaes were the unfortunate landowners who had seen hurricane rains deposit tons of wood

and dirt on and adjacent to their property. They graciously supplied moral support, some great Louisiana-style cooking, and plenty of drinks for the day.

When we got to the work site, there was an impressive amount of material that needed to be moved. An upstream landslide of 200-300 yards in length had literally delivered a floating island of trees (roots, dirt, and all) into the river during high water from hurricanes Ivan and Francis. The floating island came down the Tuck, struck a mid-stream group of trees, and formed a natural earthen dam. The blockage redirected 100-year floodwaters over the adjacent banks, ripping out smaller trees and rhododendron, and scouring out the sand and cobble beneath. The resulting debris/tree jam and its destruction was quite a sight! I estimate 12 trees, roots and all, came to a dismal rest at this point, making the river totally impassable.

Fortunately there was a professional tree crew on hand to work the heavy power equipment. Our job was to move the material that they freed from the logjam into orderly piles on shore. Don McRae showed us where to stack the material that the tree crew had been working hard since 7 a.m. to remove. The volunteers, now with a fair bit of coffee and a few hours of consciousness under their belts, threw themselves at the task. They dragged, heaved, and stacked the material in piles under the dense rhododendron canopy along the river. The logjam was quite a mess, but the sturdy AW group gloved up and started slinging slash. The crew fired up chain saws and an electric winch to separate the tangle of trees and root balls. The AW volunteers formed a human chain, passing and heaving the portable chunks to cleared areas for piling; root balls were burned where they lay.

A black and white photograph of a person in a helmet and gear navigating a turbulent white-water rapids in a Star inflatable. The image is used as a background for a promotional advertisement. Text is overlaid on the image in various positions and sizes.

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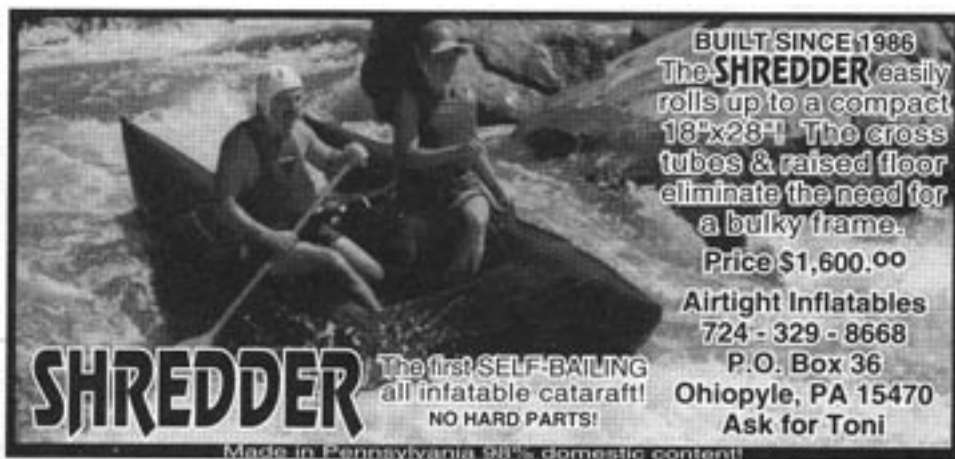
It took 10 hours of backbreaking soggy work from the tree crew and the volunteers to remove 90% of the blockage. We also removed a smaller log/root ball jam just downstream, consisting of five trees and dismantled yet another strainer, consisting of three logs. At day's end, over 200 yards of impassable river had been cleared. We had laid waste to the entire mess, hernia-free!

The day was a critical success in the mission of improving dubious landowner-paddler relations in the gorge. Don McRae had been previously less than excited about the recreational flows starting in April 2006. After the day's work Don was exuberant, saying he would be at the put-in serving lemonade next spring when the flows begin. He also said he would let other locals know what a great group of people we are, not the beer-chugging, homeless vagabonds they take us for (where did those stereotypes come from?).

We packed up and headed out as the shadows grew long in the Tuckasegee Gorge, with the stream clear and the McRae family and the Duke Power folks very pleased and impressed with what had been accomplished. Special thanks to the AW volunteers: Shaun Moore, Natosha Shipman, Will Lyons, David Hepp, Zed Mansfield, Dennis, Ansley Chappell, Trish Stewart, Ryan Sherby, Ryan Hyman, and Eric Stalow (my apologies if I missed anybody).

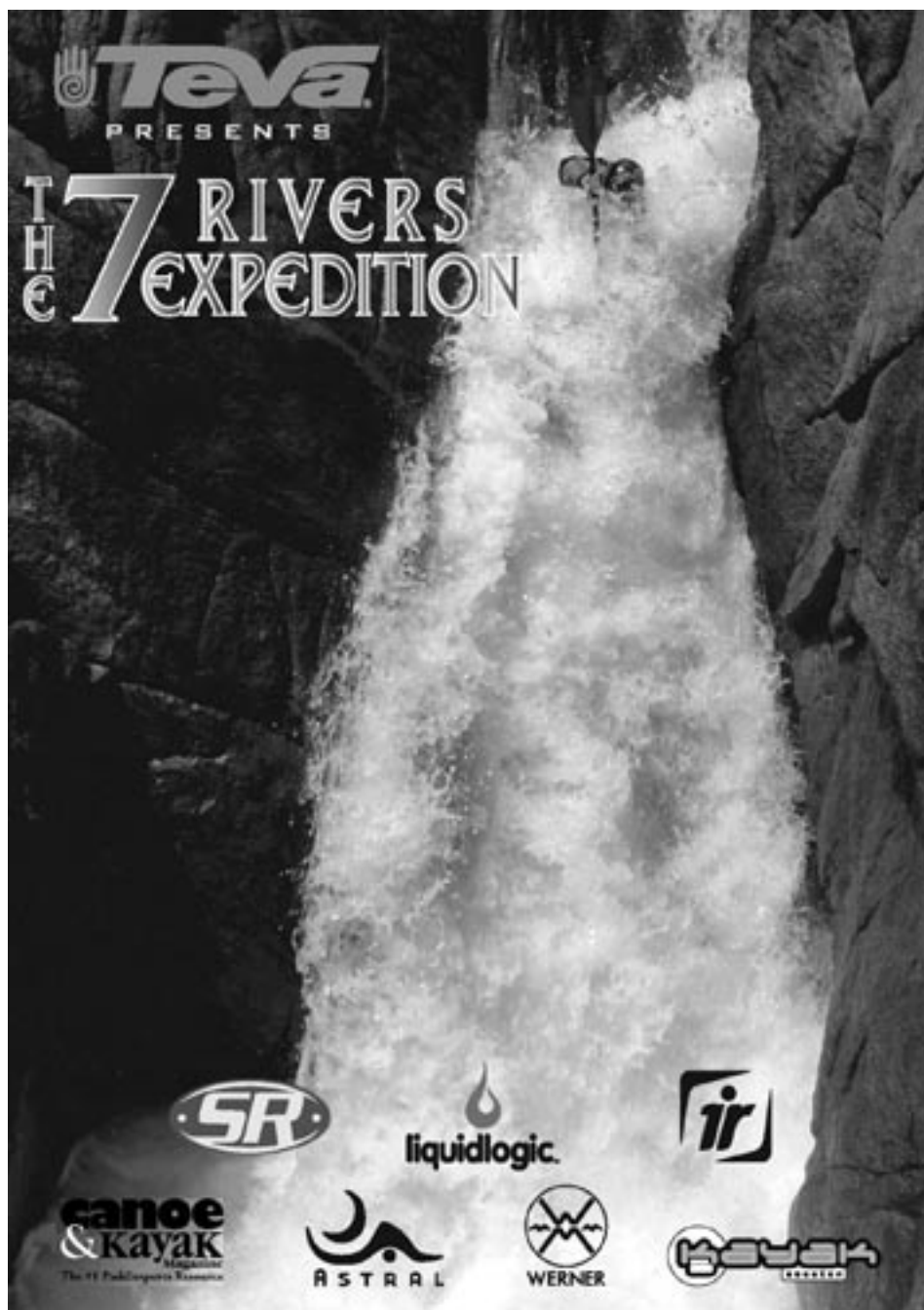
The West Fork of the Tuckasegee is the next creeking gem of Western North Carolina. However, the daunting task of clearing the rest of the wood remains. The construction of access trails and removal of more debris are also on the slate. This is just another critical step to ensure next year's releases go off without a hitch. Thanks for the hard work and thanks to the AW staff, especially Kevin Colburn, for making upcoming releases on the West Fork Tuckasegee possible. Let's continue to project a positive image of the paddling community through volunteer projects like this. Be on the lookout for future projects in your area and get involved. I'll see you all downriver....

"Lynn and I cannot begin to thank all of you enough for what you accomplished. Outstanding job!!" AWV
- Landowner, Don McRae



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Donor Profile



The Grand Canyon Initiative: Amazing Adventure, Unique AW Fundraiser

Trip leader Shelton Steele, Andrew Bell, and Caleb Coaplen (left to right) choosing the goods for the day.

Photo by McNair Evans

By Jamie Saul

Prologue

Were we fools to launch down the Grand Canyon in December, into that mystical chasm where the sun can be a stranger for days on end? We knew it would be cold, and yet we had faith that our spirits would warm us, fueled by some inner kindling, its source unseen. And yet part of me wondered if the all-knowing River would choose to snuff the fires of the soul and swallow us whole...

The Mission

A private trip down the Grand is a wondrous thing. People emerge from the bottom with an entirely reshaped vision of the world, the personal change so quick and palpable that one can almost touch the lifeless shells of former selves cast off and strewn along the beaches within her glorious walls. We were determined to make our journey extraordinary, we sixteen friends, young men putting our lives on hold to experience the magic of this place. Most of us had known each other for many years, paddling together at Camp Mondamin, forging the physical

skills and kindred bonds that would sustain us on our Canyon adventure.

We wanted to give back to those who had worked to prepare us for this experience. We elected to create a fundraising project—dubbed the Grand Canyon Initiative—to raise money for three organizations that had paved the way for us to reach the Grand. The Frank D. Bell, Sr. Scholarship Foundation, named for the Mondamin and Camp Green Cove founder and early whitewater canoeing pioneer, provides scholarships for kids with economic need

to attend Mondamin and Green Cove Camps. The Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association, works to advance the interests of private boaters in gaining fair access to the Grand. The third organization, American Whitewater has worked tirelessly for many years to promote river conservation and access, on the Colorado River and in all corners of the nation. In fact, it was a lawsuit brought by American Whitewater against the US Park Service that made our launch date available. AW has stayed passionately involved in the Grand Canyon access issue during the past several years, which has proved to be critical in determining the future management of the Colorado River. Pressure brought by AW and other organizations forced Grand Canyon National Park to revise its Colorado River Management Plan, with a favorable outcome expected soon.

We knew that the generosity of Mondamin and Green Cove alumni would run deep, as does their love for rivers. We decided to solicit donations by sending a brochure to them describing our upcoming trip,

Approaching camp on December 23, Day 9.

Photo by McNair Evans




explaining our goals and focusing on the accomplishments of these three organizations. The response was fabulous; some folks sponsored us by the river mile, others gave a flat donation. Most reveled in the chance to relive adventures of years past through their participation in our Initiative. Upon completion of our journey, we took pride in our fund-raising efforts as we accepted the gratitude of AW, GCPBA and the FDB Scholarship Foundation on behalf of all Mondamin and Green Cove alumni.

As for the trip itself ... well, it was simply amazing. It cannot be fairly described in words; those of you who have been there know this already. The vast expanse of sky, the towering buttresses of limestone and granite, the pure, smooth, liquid power of the river itself; you must immerse yourself in the Canyon, deeply and completely, to comprehend it. (In the oft-quoted understatement of a Camp Mondamin trip report: "It's a really great trip, and if you can get on it, I'd recommend it.")

AW still needs your support. Their small but dedicated staff, supported by a team of highly committed volunteers, is constantly fighting for your right to safely boat unspoiled rivers across the country. There

are endless creative opportunities to raise money for this organization, and I hope you will join us in ensuring the future of American Whitewater.

Epilogue

"Now I'm accompanied by the laughter, voices, and personalities of each of you ... the time of stories and sharing photos seems to be passing, but it's the two minute day dreams, waiting on a friend at a chair lift, or the early morning bus rides to work that keep all of you vivid in my mind. While on the river, I wondered if, after everyone had packed up and gone their way, I'd be haunted by a noticeable absence of the sound of moving water, if after twenty days and nights on the river, I'd be spooked by my change of environment. When I focus on this noise that permeated our activities and existence, an overture rises of distant laughter, the clanging of horse shoes, and the low hum of gas stove tops. I remember the smell of the griddle, the smooth pink of the Doll House, the sound of rain hitting my rice bag on Christmas morning ... I'm doing my best not to let this trip slip into history. I'm squeezing these memories here in the present. I'm working hard to keep telling stories and showing photos, to keep all of you living. Thanks all of you, for the best trip I've ever had." 

- McNair Evans in an email sent to fellow participants

For more information on and photos of our journey, please visit www.grandcanyoninitiative.org.

Navigating House Rapid, an introduction to the "Roaring 20s."

Photo by McNair Evans





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Events Get Ready For...

The 20th Annual Gauley Festival

What: The Gauley River Festival
When: September 23rd – 25th, 2005
Where: Nicholas County Veterans Memorial Park, Rt. 19 Summersville, WV

Ahh, September in West Virginia ... the leaves are beautiful shades of orange and red, the days are warm and the nights bring perfect sleeping temperatures. Then there's the bonus: the legendary Gauley River releases and the epic American Whitewater Gauley River Festival.

Some may ask, what makes the Gauley Festival so special? Why is it the largest collection of paddlers anywhere in the world? Here are some reasons why people keep coming back to the Festival year after year:

The River:

You cannot have a great event without a great river, and the Gauley delivers that each and every season. With legendary play features and infamous rapids, the Gauley has something for boaters of every level. Learn more about this stellar river at:
Upper Gauley: www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2378/
Middle Gauley: www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/3128/
Lower Gauley: www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2379/

The Marketplace:

With over 100 booths, Gauley Festival offers great deals on whitewater boats and equipment, not to mention the largest silent auction of paddling and outdoor equipment anywhere! This is the ideal place to stock your gear closet for those cold winter days on the river.

The Entertainment:

The Gauley Festival always has something going on at the main stage. This year the Festival will host the public premier of the IR Big Gun Show, the whitewater lifestyle film Wet-House, and the presentation of the Wave Sport Open. Not only are there great films to catch, but we also have some terrific live music lined up. After opening acts A Rooster for the Masses and Misty

Mountain Highway, you'll be ready to dance by the time Big City Sunrise takes the stage. Here is what bluegrassjam.net has to say about Big City Sunrise, "Few young bands blow your central spinal nodes clean out the first time you see them, but these guys smacked it down with lightning ... I was literally blown away, you could say my Tevas are still scorched into the concrete."

Check out Big City Sunrise at
www.bigcitysunrise.com

The People:

Let's face it when 5,000 paddlers get together in one location to let their hair down, good times are bound to follow! Walking through the Festival, you will meet paddlers from all over the US and Canada; everyone from professional athletes to beginners attends this event. Paddlers make the Gauley River and the Gauley Festival their fall paddling pilgrimage.

The Cause:

What makes this event so different? It is not organized by some big marketing firm or designed to boost a big city economy. The Gauley Festival is run by paddlers who want to help our rivers. The Gauley River Festival is American Whitewater's largest fundraiser each year. Without this event, American Whitewater would not be able to provide the high quality leadership that we do in River Stewardship. This year, The Gauley Festival will host the largest American Whitewater membership drive in history! AW has set a goal of signing up 250 new members that day, so come to the festival to support your rivers and American Whitewater.

For more information about the Gauley River Festival, including how you can volunteer to make this memorable event possible, please go to www.americanwhitewater.org/events.

6th Annual Napo River Festival January 13-15, 2006 Tena- Napo - Ecuador

Arts & Crafts Workshops – Rafting & Kayaking Competitions – Dugout Canoe & Balsa-Raft Races - Kid's Painting - Election of the Festival Queen – Prizes - Traditional Music & Dancing – Kayak Rodeo – Watershed Forum

Napo Festival Celebrates Outstanding Watershed Resources

The Napo River Festival is a special annual event organized by the Ecuadorian Rivers Institute to raise awareness of the Napo watershed and its importance to everyone. This unique gathering seeks to educate the public about watershed issues, preserve cultural traditions, and promote sustainable forms of development and resource management. The spirit of the Napo River Festival is about sharing between people and cultures toward the common thread of water and life.

The Napo River is important because it is the last major tributary of the Amazon River in Ecuador which remains free-flowing and has minimal development and contamination in its headwaters. This watershed hosts some of the greatest levels of biodiversity found on the planet. Indigenous Kichwa and Huaorani Indians depend on the rivers for important sources of food, water, and transportation. The rivers and creeks in the Napo watershed are world-class paddle sports destinations. Altogether, rafting, kayaking, birdwatching and jungle tours in the Napo watershed form a sustainable and significant local economy.

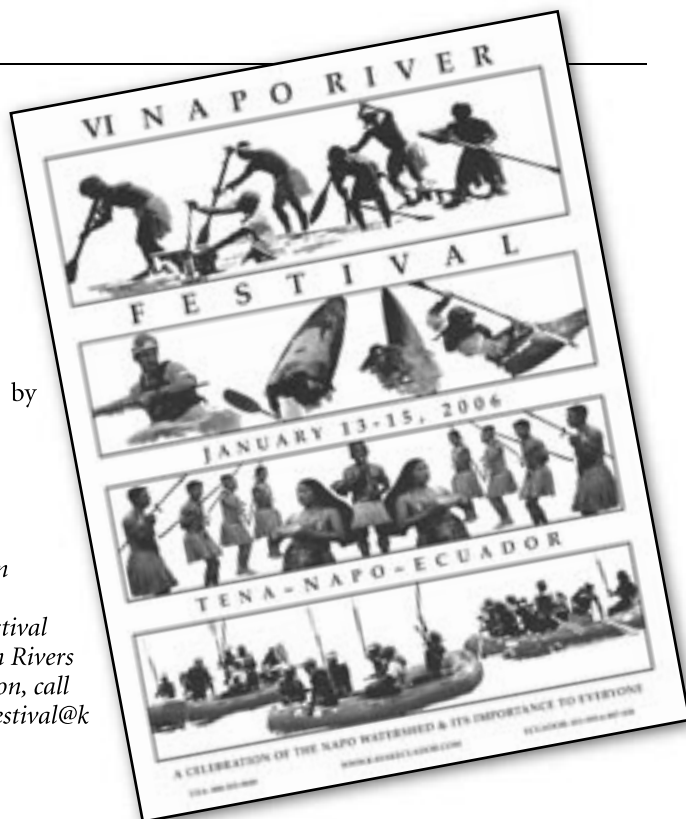
Attention is desperately needed to ensure that the Napo watershed receives appropriate recognition and management. Oil and mining development, road construction, deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, uncontrolled growth, and improper waste management systems all threaten the future integrity of the Napo watershed. You can help raise

awareness of these issues by supporting this event.

Help Support the Napo River Festival

Go to www.kayakecuador.com to make US tax-deductible contributions to the Napo Festival Fund through the Ecuadorian Rivers Institute. For more information, call 1-888-353-9849 or write to festival@kayakecuador.com.

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River Voices

Raymondskill Creek

by The Dogg



Huckin' the Meat

Some of the greatest creeks on the East Coast are located in the Delaware Water Gap of Pennsylvania. This rarely visited area features water cascading down to the Delaware River from steep mountainsides. With many creeks to choose from, it is a great place to go after a heavy rain. So, why then would I possibly have been apprehensive about going there? Well, it's a four-hour drive from western Maryland and, with the rising price of gas, these long trips are getting expensive. Ultimately, I decided that I needed to stop being a financial girly-man and head out for some steep creeking action! You have to be willing to spend the money to get to the SIK creeks, that's just the facts. And anyone who says that money can't buy you love has never been to Reno on a Saturday night... but I digress. Joining me on this demonic ride were Jeff Wolfram (aka Stinkfoot) and Sean Devine (aka Lumpy). The trip was

dominated by rap metal music and the stench of Jeff's Teva's, which not even Extra Strength Arm & Hammer can get rid of, but we made it on time to meet up with Jeremy Laucks for some creeking fun.

We decided to begin our trip with a run down Hornbecks Creek. Hornbecks is extremely steep and features some of the best slides/waterfalls I've ever run. The creek is beautiful, flowing through a gorge that reminds me of a mullet, savage and free. However, on that day, we found the stream to be extremely low. It appeared that all the water had up and gone, like a fart in the wind, like a runaway bride jonesing for a cross-country trip. Sad, isn't it? Don't worry, citizen, as YOUR Paddling Superhero, I was determined that lack of water was not going to hold us back. We had a little water to lather up the rocks and gravity was on

our side. To get ready for this run, I popped several Flintstone vitamins. I was all hopped up on thiamin and riboflavin; let me tell you, reader, I was firing on all 8 cylinders! We had the fortitude to complete the run but we lost a fair amount of plastic in the process. We may as well have taken a buzz saw to the bottom of our boats but that wouldn't have been as much fun. Luckily, Hornbecks was not the end of our weekend.

Raymondskill Creek was the main attraction that we had come for. We headed over there and put on, at what appeared to be a very high level. High water on a steep creek can be very dangerous and certainly has its risks. Much like the song of the Sirens, we know that nothing good will come of it, yet who among us can resist? The stream is deceptively calm at the start. Raymondskill, however, is like a Milk Dud, sweet on the

Photo by Bobby Miller

outside but poison in the middle! The creek flowed along placidly until we came to a major horizon line. Upon seeing the first rapid, we all agreed that the water was indeed high. Raymondskill at high water is one of the best runs on the planet. Oh yeah, it is top drawer, first cabin!

Still, high water is always a challenge. As a Superpaddler, I hold a distinct advantage over the creek. When the odds makers make their prediction, I am always favored in the spread. Victory was mine and I intended to take it like Grant took Richmond! And unlike some people from these parts, I know how to hold onto an advantage and defeat my opponent. You see, citizens, the Delaware Water Gap is not all that far from New York City. And, if you will recall, the New York Yankees had a three games to none lead on the Boston Red Sox in last year's baseball playoffs before folding like a cheap umbrella and losing the series in what will surely be remembered as the biggest and most embarrassing choke in sports history! It's TRUE! It's TRUE!

We got out of our boats to have a look at this burly waterfall. The first drop is a small ledge dropping into a narrow folding hole, followed immediately by a 20-25 foot waterfall. It is nearly impossible to boof the big drop, so you have to plan to go deep. Luckily, the pool itself is extremely deep because a piton off a drop of that height would really knock the lead out of your pencil! The locals love to jump off the rocks into the pool and there was quite a crowd there on this particular day. To get fired up for the drop, we started a mosh pit where we were all slamming into each other. Before we knew it, the locals had joined in and there were more than 20 people jumping around and slamming into each other. The best was the Montana Militia Man who really got into it—he was awesome! Unfortunately, we had to end the session when the guy with the disgusting hammertoes joined in.

The next plan of action was to decide who would run the falls first. Jeremy was tired of Go Fish so we decided that we would Ro Sham Bo for it. Jeremy won that battle using the element of surprise. He had an interesting run of the falls, sub-ing out in the approach ledge and never fully resurfacing until the bottom of the falls. Since Jeremy is getting his masters degree in geology, I believe that he was just studying the rock

structure of the riverbed. I went up to run it and I was set to hop in my boat when I felt a tap on the shoulder. Instinctively, my background in guerilla warfare kicked in; I did a rolling dive and dropped one in the chamber. I lowered my gun when I saw that it was just Lumpy. He had some questions about the falls and wanted to follow my line. Of course, it is my duty as a Superhero to help out a citizen in need, so I allowed him to follow and we both laid the Smackdown 1, 2! AND THE DOGG MEANS 1, 2! Lumpy was so fired up from acing this drop that we had to give him a shot of hemoglobin just to calm him down! Jeff was a little nervous about running the drop and I can't say that I blame him. It was a burly falls and Jeff's creek boat is old and beat up and his paddling gear is more out of date than Betty Boop! I could tell that he was unsure about what to do. His thoughts were tumbling around in his head, making and breaking alliances like underpants in a dryer without Cling Free! Ultimately, he decided to run the drop and everything went smoothly.

Not long after the falls is a long slide that was very exciting with all the extra water. It is not very steep but it is about 100 yards long and is a high quality rapid. The high water resulted in a minimization of friction and we flew down the slide at a rate of 864 miles per hour (using actual VASCAR measurements). After the slide, things were calm for about a half mile until the bridge.

The bridge marks the start of the real gradient. Here, the run breaks it loose for a very steep mile, climaxing in Raymondskill Falls. Things get crazy like Prozac, sonic like a hedgehog, ill like repute, hype like a perbole down in this gorge and only experts complete with expedition equipment should even consider it! You'd better tighten up your helmet and choke up on the ash handle if you are bold enough to venture there. Jeff decided he wanted no parts of this section so he scrambled up the bank faster than a basketball player running into the stands to beat up a fan!

The slides start immediately under the bridge and they culminate in a 10-foot broken falls into a shallow pool. A piton here'll knock the cork out of your bat! That was just what Lumpy got when he was a little off line and went straight down. The next drop necks down into some heavy water and ends in a nasty pour-over with a hole so dark that light cannot escape its surface! I was a little too far right and pitoned hard into the bank, causing me to slide abruptly forward in my seat. I fell into a slight surf before escaping

the clutches of the boiling hydraulic. My plan for running that rapid successfully had gone up in flames faster than Miss Havesham in Great Expectations! Lumpy didn't have much success with the rapid either and ended up stuck in the hole. That hole beat him down like he owed it money! Finally, it let go of him and he floated into the eddy looking like death eating a cracker.

I could tell that he was worried about what lay ahead and his confidence wasn't real high. I told him that there were lots of fun drops left and that he should continue. However, I think I scared him when I said fun drops. His imagination started to bop and drop and do the funky chicken all over his nerves! Lumpy said he had seen enough and decided to hike out at this point (still within sight of the bridge). Jeff was glad to have someone joining him. Jeff and Lumpy headed off to go play "Dance, Dance Revolution" and whatever else people do after walking off of a run. I wasn't about to walk out. If I was a quitter, I would have ended up playing hockey instead of kayaking. It's TRUE! It's TRUE!



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River Voices Raymondskill Creek

The Dogg laying the smack down on Raymondskill Falls!

Photo by Jeff Wolfram

Now that Jeff and Lumpy were out of the picture, we could really book down through the steepes. We had ditched the fat man and were running lean! Jeremy and I jammed on downstream through the next cascade of 15 feet into a beefy hole. Next up was a 10-foot falls with a complex approach. We skipped over the junky ledge at the top and fell off the falls, shooting through the hole at the bottom. Soon, we were out portaging a junky-lipped 35-40 foot falls onto rocks. Even with tons of water going over it, the lip didn't clean up much. Blowing your launch off this one would result in the piton of the century—there would be nothing left of you but hair, teeth, and eyeballs! Let me tell you, reader, this drop is scarier than the bearded lady I saw at the circus!


We portaged the falls on the right and walked downstream to scout. The next drop is a slide into an 8-foot diagonal ledge with a beefy hole that is gorged in at the bottom. Jeremy and I cleaned this drop and continued downstream with a 6-foot boof and some boogie water between us and Raymondskill Falls. Jeremy had heard that there might be a log wedged somewhere in the boogie water so we were being careful. However, the swift current pulled Jeremy into the drop with the log and he had no choice but to try to bust through. He got splatted on the log and decided to exit his boat. I knew that at this point there was big trouble in Little China! I jumped out to try to offer some assistance but luckily Jeremy and his gear were free from the strainer and in an eddy on the left bank. Needless to say, I was scared for him and very glad to see that he was ok. My group was falling apart on me; I was unsure if I should continue and the uncertainty was really harshing my mellow. The situation reminded me of the Helsinki Affair of 1818, and I think we all remember how that one turned out....

I decided that I would portage the log and then try to get to the other side to check on Jeremy. Unfortunately, I was on the right bank and the creek was gorged up so that I couldn't put back in easily. I had to carry out through the woods and around and ended up coming out at a cliff near the bottom of Raymondskill Falls. I needed to get to the top of the falls to reach the path. I then worked my way back through the woods and was able to ferry across above the falls to where there was a trail. Jeff and Lumpy, worn out from their dancing session, had come down

to the falls to meet up with Jeremy and me. Jeremy decided that he was done so he went up to the car. I, however, was still interested in Raymondskill Falls.

Raymondskill Falls is a three part falls dropping nearly 150 feet. It goes over a 50+ footer into a short pool, followed immediately by a 40-foot near vertical cascade with some of the water slamming a rock outcrop on the left. After another pool, the creek plummets off another 50-footer, this one with a junky lip into a shallow pool. You would need to approach this with the reckless abandon of Fire Marshall Bill to attempt all three drops. This series of falls will replace the whale as the thing that haunts my dreams!

The first falls would be runnable if it wasn't clogged with trees on a fairly regular basis. The second one is doable and is one of the best drops in the whole Water Gap. Oh yeah, it is top drawer! However, it requires a sketchy carry down a gully to put in. The whole area is extremely intimidating. I decided that I wanted to run the middle falls so I ferried back across and carried down the gully. It was the highest level that I had ever attempted this drop and the pool between the two falls was a mess of exploding waves. I got in my boat, a little nervous since I knew that if I made a mistake... well, I don't have to tell you what would happen! I ferried out into the mess, and cascaded 40 feet cleanly into the pool at the bottom. That drop is awesome, certainly worthy of such an awesome paddler! Oh yeah! I was grinning like a possum eating a sweet potato, happy as a loon, triumphant as someone who just won something, a fine ending to a spectacular day!

We packed up our stuff and prepared to head home. Just as we were about to head out, a boater came running up the hill asking if we had a throw rope and some carabiners. A boater from another group had taken a swim above the falls and his boat was stuck against a log at the lip of the first 50-footer. Being the Superpaddler that I am, I knew it was my duty to use my powers for the forces of good, so I headed down to the river to help get the boat back. Things didn't exactly go as planned—though we did get to witness a full descent of all three falls by an unmanned kayak—but that is another story.... 

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Wilderness Runs Rio Huataracu

continued from page 24

Drew showed us the line on the first ledge and we all followed. While we were walking back to our boats, Drew had climbed all the way to the top of the house-size rock. He said he could almost touch the gorge wall and it was a little scary up there. He pointed where to run the second drop and everyone but me had a good line. I had to roll in the flat pool as we exited the gorge. It was one of the most spectacular places I have ever been.

Drew and Rob seemed to be leading most of the time, which was fine by me. They seemed to be comfortable probing drops and pointing the lines to the rest of the group. Greg was usually third, then me, followed by Amy.

Not long after leaving the gorge I came around a corner and saw Greg getting out of his boat, but Rob and Drew were nowhere in sight. Then I noticed him quickly grab a throw rope and start running downstream. I followed him, realizing there was a problem in progress. I looked downstream and saw Drew out of his boat. He was wading from river left out to Rob who was pinned on a log! Rob was doing a great job holding himself stable. Once Drew got there, he was able to free Rob. Greg tossed him his paddle and he made an eddy below the rapid.

As Greg and I walked back up stream we decided we needed a different line! Greg pulled a couple of small trees out of a slot on river right and the rest of us ran it there. It was now 12:30 p.m. and we stopped for lunch. Rob didn't seem any worse for the wear, but we were all pretty hungry.

Lunches consisted of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, power bars, plantain chips, cookies and candy bars. As we ate, we were all guessing how far we had gone since the put-in. Guesses ranged from two to eight miles. Basically we had no idea how far along we were, so we decided to get going and keep moving.

After our lunch stop, the river got a little easier and our downstream progress

seemed faster. We stopped to scout only a few times. The biggest drop of the afternoon was a boulder garden that only Drew ran down the gut. Rob and Greg cleared a downed tree with a machete and the rest of us ran the sneak. Sadly enough, I even made the sneak look difficult, as I ended up against the big boulder at the bottom. I had to hop out of my boat and line it into the eddy below.

After a short stretch of easy rapids we entered another gorge. I figured things were about to pick up again, but the river had fooled me. It was all flat water in the gorge. Normally this would be a disappointment, but not this time. We were in another extremely tight scenic canyon with smooth verticals walls on both sides. The rock was black with some reddish brown streaks evidently caused by iron deposits rusting down from the top of the gorge. It was even more beautiful than the canyons upstream.

We didn't know it then, but it turned out that we had now seen our last Class IV whitewater on the Huataracu. By 3:00 p.m. we were having a snack under a covered walking bridge. The bridge was fairly wide and well built for a bridge that apparently went nowhere on either side. While snacking, we discussed our progress and prospects for camping that night. My fears of an extra day on the river were now completely gone. We were lucky that it hadn't rained any more. I felt we had made good progress and was actually ready to camp right there. In the end we decided to go down stream with the intention of looking for a camp site by 4:30 p.m.. Unfortunately after about another 45 minutes of paddling I realized I was whipped. I was so tired that maneuvering through Class III rapids was becoming challenging. Everyone agreed to help me out and we began to look for a place to camp.


Rob and Drew noticed a clearing on the right. Greg and I found a nice beach on the left, but we decided it was too close to the river. Another big rain and it would be underwater. Meanwhile, Drew found our spot. It was a field about ten vertical feet

off the river level. The field was evidently a product of the jungle being logged. The grass was about 4 feet tall. On top of a nearby hill there was what turned out to be an old, abandoned building, just dying to be used. But, in the end, setting up tents on the soft grass beat out lugging our gear up a pretty big hill and sleeping on a hard floor.

We walked around on the tall grass for a few minutes, matting it down for a make shift sleeping pad for the group. Pretty soon we had a nice soft, flat area for the tents. We set up camp and actually ate before dark! We watched the bats fly around for a while after dark, but the strenuous day coupled with a lousy night's sleep the night before put us all out early. We agreed to start moving at the first light in the morning. I was dead asleep by 8:00 p.m..

I got out of the tent at 6:20 a.m. and everyone else was up within 15 minutes. We ate, broke camp, changed into our gear and loaded the boats. We were on the river by 8:00 a.m.. I thought to myself, "I am looking forward to a nice easy paddle today." But we didn't know how far we had to go. The scenery was wide-open meadows and some jungle. The river was easy, only getting to Class III+ in a few places. We arrived at the take-out bridge a little after 10:00 a.m. and Rob caught a bus before I was off the river. I scrambled up to the road with my boat. Everyone else tied down the boats while I went back for the gear. I quickly ran back up and we all boarded the bus for Tena.

On the long ride back I had a lot of time to reflect on the past three days. It was one of the best experiences of my life. I got to see a great river that only two groups of boaters had ever seen from end to end. The whitewater was great. The group of boaters made a superb team and had a great time together.

About half way back to Tena, I ate the empanadas I had rationed for a possible third night. Empanadas are really good hot. They are even good cold—sort of like left over pizza. But after this trip I don't want to see another empanada for a long time! 

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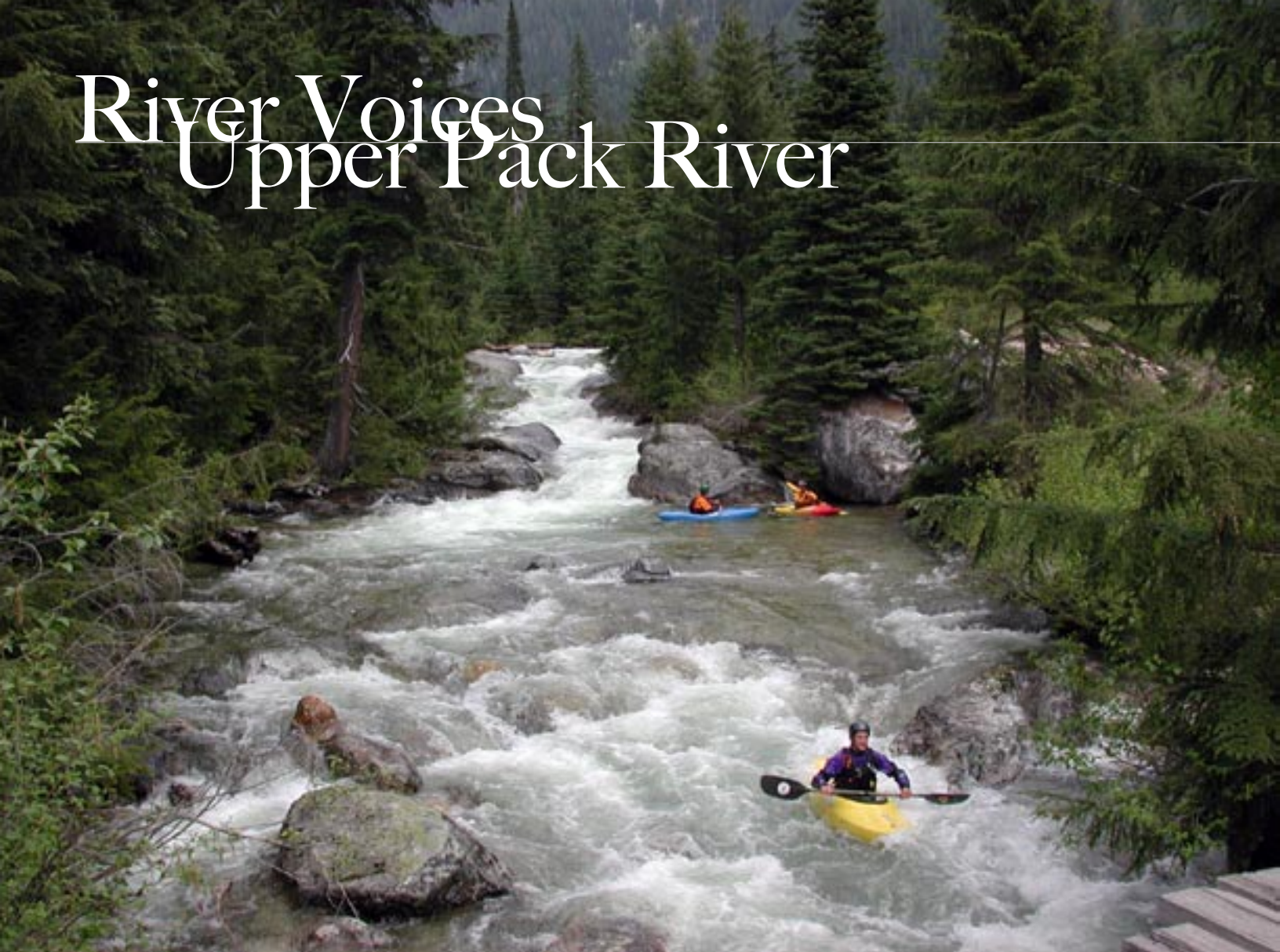
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River Voices Upper Pack River



The Upper Pack River at the put-in for the Grottos Section.

Photo by Justin Miller, Shadystream Productions

Discovering The Upper Pack River (ID)

by Natty Role

Editorial Disclaimer: *American Whitewater has not verified the information in this description for accuracy. We do not typically publish articles of this nature because we have no interest in competing with the many good guidebooks available nationwide. However, since this run appears to be omitted from the usual local guides and because it seems like a river that would appeal to many of our readers, we have provided this account of one paddler's impression of the Upper Pack River.*

Somebody has been trying to keep the Upper Pack a secret: although people have been running this section of river for over 20 years, it has never been described in any guidebook. Interestingly, both Idaho guidebooks devote ample pages to numerous, vastly inferior creek runs. Despite its lack of publicity, the Upper Pack has come to be regarded by many as one of the finest creeks in the area. The Upper Pack River is exceptional for a number of reasons: first, it contains Class III- through V+ whitewater, with a section for everyone; second, it is unusually accessible for an Idaho creek (only 20 miles and 40 minutes from the town of Sandpoint); third, it is practically strainer-free and has close to a three month window of navigability.

In northern Idaho, clean water and great scenery are a given, but steep, consistent gradient and smooth, granite slabs are more commonly found in the Sierra Nevadas or the Rockies of British Columbia. These granite slabs give the Upper Pack geological and whitewater characteristics that set it apart from the rest of the state. Although one could easily run the entire Upper Pack in one day, boaters are more likely to divide the run into different sections according to difficulty. The uppermost portion of the Pack, the Grottos, is the steepest and most difficult (Class V-V+). The next section, the Slides, eases up into three miles of Class IV-V. Following the Slides is the Gorgette, another three miles of Class II-IV+.

More creekin' action on the Slides Section.

Photo by Justin Miller, Shadystream Productions

My personal first descent of the Pack was quite memorable. The Pack typically reaches a good, navigable level long before the snow melts on its access road, making vehicle access impossible (unless you have a snow machine). We had been keeping close tabs on the road to the put-in for weeks (the skiing wasn't that great at the time) and were excited by the prospect of starting creek season early. Since the other north Idaho creeks were even less accessible this time in April, the Upper Pack was our goal. It finally got to the point where only one, long patch of slushy snow was separating our '72 Land Cruiser from a long, snow-free descent. We got as much momentum as possible in attempt to plow through the deep slush, making incremental progress as our repeated charges eventually packed down the soft surface. The snow ultimately prevented us from making it all the way to the put-in, but we got to within an easy half-mile downhill hike. Our passage through the knee-deep snow was aided by the presence of fresh moose tracks (plus we were able to sled a portion of the way on our kayaks).

Once at the river's edge, we seal-launched off the snowy bank into the river below. Some scouts took a little longer because the riversides were covered in waist-deep snow. Although it looked like winter, we enjoyed sun and 70-plus degree weather throughout the day. Afterwards, we were so stoked on the quality of the run we intentionally paddled past our original take-out so we could spend more time on the water.

The fun really begins on the drive to the put-in as the scenery becomes increasingly breathtaking, offering views of Chimney Rock and the Selkirk mountains with their rugged spires and smooth granite slabs. Moose are commonly seen either trotting alongside the road or feeding in the clear, emerald pools. The whitewater action begins immediately after the put-in for the Grottos.

The Grottos section of the Pack contains serious, high gradient, Class V-V+ steep creeking. If you're up for it, this is one of the most exciting and challenging



sections of navigable water in the region. Its three main rapids are long, complex combinations of waterfalls, rock slides, and boulder drops. Each series of rapids is demanding and committing, containing multiple hazards and requiring extensive scouting. The canyon walls are only 10-30 feet high but there is no easy way out from the river. The first grotto begins with a very straightforward 20 foot waterfall. Immediately after the first waterfall is a 10-foot drop requiring a precise boof in order to avoid a huge, old-growth log lodged at the base. Just beyond this log hazard lies a three-foot ledge/10-foot ledge combo. The final big drop of the first grotto is a 17-foot right-to-left slanted chute that looks like it plummets under the river-left wall. Although this drop has been run forwards and backwards without incident, this would be a bad place to swim because the entrance to the gnarly second grotto

lies just below.

The second grotto is full of places you don't want to be. The entire section is essentially one long, steep, undercut-filled boulder drop leading into a 30-foot slide. Most people portage this section because of the multiple hazards.

The third and final grotto is called the Super Slide. The Super Slide is about 45 feet high and 200 feet long, with a 90 degree turn at the bottom. Starting out wide with lots of lines to choose from, it increases in intensity as one picks up speed and negotiates the sharp corner while attempting to avoid piton rocks. The Super Slide is the last hairy drop on the Grottos section, and the whitewater becomes less hazardous and committing as one approaches the Slides.

River Voices

Upper Pack River



Looking down on the Gorgette Section of the Upper Pack River.

Photo by Justin Miller, Shadystream Productions

The Slides start and end with a mile or so of technical, continuous Class III-IV boulder drops. A jumble of large boulders constricting the channel marks the beginning of the steeper, bedrock rapids. Here the whitewater changes character as the continuous boulder drops are suddenly replaced by a series of clean four- to five-foot ledges punctuated by two clean rock slides (15-20 feet high, and 30-60 feet long, both quite easy) that are separated by the section's crux rapid, the Guillotine. Longer and more technical than the other ledges and rock slides, the Guillotine is the only rapid within the Slides section that approaches Class V, and it is easily portaged. After the final slide, the bedrock disappears for good and the river turns back into fun, continuous Class III-IV boulder drops for the final 1.5 miles to the take-out. The Slides section is probably the most popular section of the Pack, in part due to its easy-to-portage nature. It enables non-expert paddlers to experience beautiful, alpine, steep creeking without having to run committing rapids. You can end your day after the Slides or continue to the Gorgette. The Gorgette is essentially one big Class IV-V rapid in a small, short gorge, followed by continuous Class II+ the rest of the time. This section is a good option if you want to extend your run or if there is too much water for the Grottos and Slides.


Directions

The Upper Pack is easy to find. Drive north from Sandpoint toward Canada and turn left onto the Pack River road just after you see the meandering and well-marked Lower Pack pass under the highway. Drive up the dirt road until you come to a small wood bridge spanning the Pack River. This is where the gauge is—just upstream from the bridge on river left. If the river looks high and/or is past the second line on the marker, you'll probably want to reconsider running the Grottos and the Slides. Conversely, if the river is looking a little bony and is closer to the first marker you may want to forego the Gorgette, but the steep sections will still be good. Incidentally, the foundation on river right

is all that remains of a once highly regarded drinking establishment, Buck and Edna's. Buck and Edna's was a classic backwoods North Idaho roadhouse, with PBR for \$4 a pitcher and plenty of colorful locals in all their glory. Ah, the memories

Anyway, keep following the main road upriver to get to the put-in(s). If you plan on running the Gorgette section, keep your eyes peeled for an access point before the road begins to climb away from the river. There are many potential take-outs, as the river runs close to the road for several miles. When you come to a second vehicle bridge, you have come to the put-in for the Gorgette, and the take-out for the Slides. The road gets rowdier past this second bridge, and 4WD and relatively high clearance is recommended.

If you plan on running the Slides but not the Grottos keep climbing for 1.5 miles and start looking for a narrow dirt road that splits off to the left back toward the river. Don't actually drive down this road though, just park next to it (it washes out before it gets to the river). Walk down this side road to put-in. If you are going all the way to the Grottos keep driving until you come to a "Y" in the road and go left down to the river, and park at the small wood bridge that is the trailhead to Chimney Rock.

To run the Grottos hike upstream about ¼ mile to the beginning of rapids that end at the bridge. This section starts off with some sweet slides and crazy exfoliated granite slabs to get you warmed up. If this section seems a little over your head then maybe you should get out at the bridge and run shuttle. Below the bridge starts with lots of continuous Class II-III rapids with an occasional Class IV+ slide thrown in. There can, and probably will, be log hazards on this run so keep a close eye out. After a about a mile or so you will encounter the first Grotto. Take out at the second bridge if you want to run the Gorgette, or the first bridge if you don't. 

Natty Role is a Sandpoint local who has worked as a raft guide and safety kayaker in that area for more than eight years. He was most recently employed as a science and math teacher and assistant kayak coach at Huge Experiences Kayak Academy.



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From the Editor

The Last Word

by Ambrose Tuscano

Get Your Family “Lost” in the Wilderness

Many people have the idea that true wilderness, remote and rugged, is a great thing—so long as it never gets any closer than the inside of their *National Geographic*. While this has not always been the case, we are increasingly becoming a nation that fears wild lands. There is surely no shortage of explanations for this trend. As levels of obesity rise and fitness plummets, there is a growing segment of the population that is probably unqualified to venture further into the wild than the town park. Sadly, though, far more people are missing out on wilderness experiences due to disinterest than to inability. And if more and more people grow up without any exposure to what's beyond the light pollution and off the beaten path, it stands to reason that the wilds will become a place shrouded in mystery and fear. In this day and age, fear of the unknown is more common and insidious than cell phones.

Parents will object to their children playing outside for fear of poisonous snakes (which may not even exist in that area) or virus-toting mosquitoes but think nothing of routinely strapping them in a car, which, for all its safety features, is still just tractor-trailer fodder. And who doesn't fear that emblematic wilderness experience—spending a night in the wild; it's so creepy to be surrounded by ... all that silence. All things considered, I'll take my chances in a sleeping bag. As long as I don't accidentally leave an open vat of honey under my pillow, I'm much safer there than in my own bed, surrounded by dangerous, unpredictable humans.

While I have never hunted or fished (except on wilderness kayaking trips), it is troubling to see a decline in young people taking up these activities. As kids replace these venerable pastimes with Xbox and Instant Messenger we are losing generations of people who achieve a high level of comfort in and respect for the wild at a young age. The decline of these mainstream gateways to wilderness is doing real damage to our national character.

The real challenge we face in getting America to take renewed interest in its astounding, beautiful wild lands is overcoming inertia. How does an overnight canoe trip compare to a weekend playing Grand Theft Auto? Not well, simply because of the instant gratification that children have become accustomed to. In the time it takes to whine, “Are we there yet?” a kid could text-message his vote for the next American Idol.

However, there is hope for future generations. The deeper into the wild you venture, the more powerful the experience, so start early. Get those easier, less spectacular expeditions under your belt before your children are old enough to really complain. Then, when it's time to compete against all the destructive things that hormone-crazed teenagers are wont to do, you will be able to offer them something better: a true wilderness experience. If you think that sounds cheesy, you haven't really had one yet.


As whitewater enthusiasts, we are lucky to have the perfect vehicles to explore some of the most remote, unspoiled places in the world. While there are risks and dangers associated with paddling far away from civilization, there are also vast rewards. The night dance of Aurora Borealis, the haunting cries of a tropical forest and the irresistible rush of a mountain creek are sensations unknown to the vast majority of our fellow citizens. Those of us lucky enough to experience these luxuries of life should make every attempt to share treasured places with the people we care about.

I have met many whitewater paddlers who consider the time they spend on rivers to be a well earned break from family life. While paddling is an escape from the stresses, responsibilities and troubles of life, we should all understand that it does not have to exclude family. There can be many difficulties in involving children and spouses in whitewater pursuits, but they

can all be overcome with patience and a legitimate investment in the process.

If you are able to include your loved ones in your whitewater experiences, my best advice is to attempt rivers that increase in isolation and wilderness beauty, rather than in the Class of the rapids. This will make it clear to your family that you are not simply an adrenaline junkie, and will likely be a far more appealing introduction to them than a series of swims and unpleasant experiences on the local Class III run. Even if you see kayaking as the pinnacle of whitewater paddle sports, canoes, rafts and inflatable kayaks all have a place on the river, too. Often, a multi-person craft is less threatening to a beginner than a solo boat.

A rafting trip on a local easy water run can also be great to introduce your children and their friends to rivers and to wilderness. One of the biggest barriers between kids and whitewater is the lack of other youths to paddle with. If you can help create paddling companions for your kids when they're young, they will be far more likely to enjoy their wilderness experiences (and later on they'll have someone to paddle with when you're too old to keep up).

Finally, don't forget to give your kids at least a taste of the great wilderness rivers our country has to offer. While they can be expensive and logistically challenging, multi-day trips on the Salmon (ID), Grand Canyon (AZ) and Gauley (WV), just to name a few, will almost certainly be worthwhile. Whether you have the equipment, experience and time to organize a private trip, or whether you go with an outfitter, these trips will be sure to form powerful, lasting memories for your family and show them why you love rivers so much. Remember, a family that paddles, swats insects, sleeps on the ground, cooks over a campfire and enjoys majestic views together ... at least has something in common. 



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AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!

American Whitewater has been extraordinarily fortunate in our ability to leverage a strong grassroots base—members and other volunteers—to assist our limited staff with many whitewater river conservation and restoration efforts.



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

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

understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

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

Join on-line today at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership>, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723



P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723 • 866-BOAT-4AW

Membership Application

Our Mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Club Affiliation _____

Individual Membership Levels

____ \$25 Junior/Senior (under the age of 18 and over the age of 65)

____ \$25 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (SAVE \$10 if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club)

____ \$35 Individual One Year

____ \$45 Family (immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18)

____ \$65 Two Year Membership

____ \$100 Ender Club* (Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-shirt FREE)

____ \$150 Five Year Membership

____ \$250 Platinum Paddler* (Receive AW's exclusive Patagonia Platinum Paddler Polo Shirt FREE)

____ \$750 Lifetime Membership (Receive AW's Lifetime Membership Stained Glass FREE)

____ \$1,000 Legacy Membership* (Receive AW's exclusive Paddling Wet/Dry Gear Bag FREE)

* A portion of your contribution may be tax deductible. If you would like information about the tax deductibility of your contribution please speak with an AW Staff Member.

Organizational Membership Types

____ \$75.00 Affiliate Club (Join our growing network of paddling organizations across North America)

Additional Donation

____ \$5.00 ____ \$10.00 ____ \$25.00 \$_____ Other

____ \$24.99 Kayak Session subscription (Add Kayak Session to your membership at a 40% discount)

Amount

Membership subtotal \$_____

____ Do NOT Mail me the AW Journal. I will read it on-line.

Donation subtotal \$_____

____ Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups.

Total \$_____

Indicate Ender Club or Platinum Paddler shirt size (S M L XL XXL)

Transaction Type

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Card Type: MC Visa Discover AMEX

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Affiliate Clubs

AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1957 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over 100 clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club consider joining one.

For 2005, AW is excited to announce several programs for AW Affiliate Clubs.

2nd River Stewardship Institute: A week-long conservation and access training program designed to prepare river activists with the tools necessary to successfully save their rivers.

2nd Flowing Rivers Grant Program, sponsored by Clif Bar

BRAND NEW Affiliate Club section of the AW Journal dedicated to promoting your club and its events with the whitewater community at large. If your Affiliate Club would like to be one of the first to begin listing your club's major events in the Journal, please email ben@amwhitewater.org for more details.

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham
Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

Arizona

Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assoc, Flagstaff

California

Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
River Skills Center, Mt. Shasta
River Touring Section, Angeles Chapter
Sierra Club, Los Angeles
Sequoia Paddling Club, Windsor
Shasta Paddlers, Redding
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, San Jose
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Granada Hills

Colorado

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood
FiBark Boat Races, Englewood
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West
Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, Englewood
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

Florida

Project Challenge Inc., Miami

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Association, Atlanta
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay
Peachtree City Paddlers, Peachtree City

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Evergreen Park

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis
Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kansas

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky

Bluegrass Whitewater Association, Lexington
El Rio Loco Paddling Club, Barbourville
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine

AMC Maine Chapter, Hallowell

Maryland

Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Smithsburg

Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter, Lunenburg

Minnesota

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Merrimack
Mitchell Paddles, Canaan

New Jersey

The Paddling Bares, Milltown

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

FLOW Paddlers Club, Rochester
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia
Whitewater Challengers, Old Forge
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk

N. Carolina

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Dixie Division of ACA, Tuxedo
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Indian Trail
Nantahala Racing Club, Gastonia
Triad River Runners, Winston Salem
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Keel Haulers Canoe Club, Westlake
Outdoor Adventure Club, Dayton
Toledo River Gang, Waterville

Oregon

Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton
Pacific Outback, Forest Grove
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
KCCNY, Philadelphia
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Pine Creek Valley Wilswater Association, Jersey Shore

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Elizabethton
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport
E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
McCallie School Outdoor Program, Chattanooga
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville

Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston

Utah

University of Utah, Salt Lake City
USU Kayak Club, Logan

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station
Blue Ridge Voyageurs, McLean
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke
Richmond Whitewater Club, Mechanicsville

Washington

The Mountaineers, Seattle
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreation River Runners, Renton
Whitman College Whitewater Club, Walla Walla

West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Assoc., S. Charleston

Wisconsin

Badger State Boating Society, Waukesha
Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
Pure Water Paddlers, Eau Claire
River Alliance of Wisconsin, Madison
Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, LaCrosse

Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson Hole

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Canada, Ontario

Madawaska Kanu Camp Inc., Ottawa

Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Carla Miner
Membership Coordinator

In the recent past, AW has been offering discounted AW memberships to whitewater enthusiasts who are also members of one of AW's Affiliate Clubs.

We now have the ability to offer this discounted membership online! For each club, AW will create a unique URL that will automatically offer the discounted membership and/or we will provide a coupon code that is specific to your club that will allow individuals to receive the discount on the normal AW Membership Page.

Both options work equally well and help make life easier for members of your club.

Several clubs have already set up the program and their members are enjoying the benefits of joining AW for only \$25!

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact me and I would be happy to help your club set up this program. I can be reached at: 866-BOAT-4AW or membership@amwhitewater.org.

Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

"10" Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for a spot in the AW 2005 River Stewardship Institute.

For more information,
contact Carla Miner at
membership@amwhitewater.org
or sign-up on-line at:
www.americanwhitewater.org/membership

Guidelines for Contributors



Please read this carefully before sending us your articles and photos! This is a volunteer publication, please cooperate and help us out. Do not send us your material without a release—signed by all authors and photographers (attached).

If possible, articles should be submitted on a 3-1/2-inch computer disk. (Microsoft Word if possible—others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

Those without access to a word processor may submit their articles typed. Please double space.

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints, or color prints or electronic, digital photos, 300 dpi tiffs, Photoshop or high res jpegs minimum 3"x5." Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we cannot guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. The better the photos the better the reproduction. American Whitewater feature articles should

relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water.

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled, or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to Class II, III & IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not our intent to offend our more sensitive members and readers.

Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies, and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally responsible for the accuracy of such material. Make sure names

are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

Articles will be edited at the discretion of the editors to fit our format, length, and style. Expect to see changes in your article. If you don't want us to edit your article, please don't send it in! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes made prior to publication.

American Whitewater is a nonprofit; the editors and contributors to American Whitewater are not reimbursed. On rare occasions, by pre-arrangement, professional writers receive a small honorarium when they submit stories at our request. Generally, our contributors do not expect payment, since most are members of AW, which is a volunteer conservation and safety organization.

Send your material to:
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E-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org

American Whitewater River Festivals

DEERFIELD RIVER FESTIVAL

JULY 29th - 31st
CHARTERMOND, MA

GAILLEY RIVER FESTIVAL

SEPT. 23rd - 25th
SUMMERSVILLE, WV



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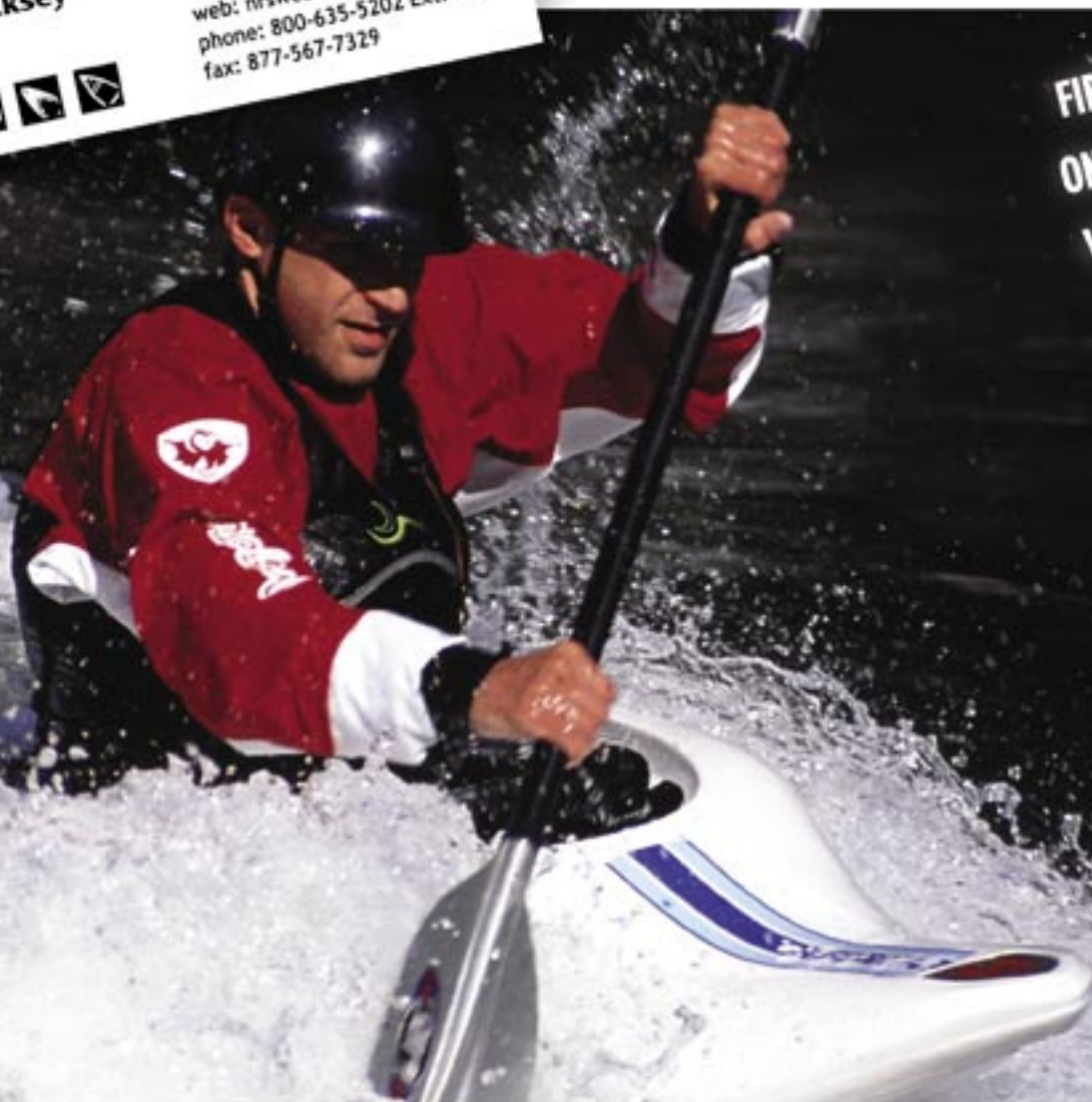
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