



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS  
Sept/Oct 2011

## CELEBRATING WILDERNESS RIVERS

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FOUR OBSOLETE DAMS HAVE  
BEEN REMOVED





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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

## American Whitewater Journal Sept/Oct 2011 – Volume 51 – Issue 5

### COLUMNS

- 5 The Journey Ahead by **Mark Singleton**
- 16 Paddler Fitness by **John Amtmann and Meaghen Randall**

### STEWARDSHIP

- 6 Resurrecting the Klamath: A Gift to be Claimed by **Bill Cross**
- 15 Condit Dam to Be Removed! by **Thomas O’Keefe**
- 15 Elwha Dam Removal Underway! by **Thomas O’Keefe**

### WILDERNESS RIVERS

- 20 A Night on the Michimahuida by **Bob Daffe**
- 23 Detour on the Talkeetna by **Mike Good**
- 27 BackIKPacking: Adding New Dimension to Wilderness Exploration by **Nick Borelli**
- 29 iWilderness: Worry and Wisdom in the Depths of a Wild Canyon by **Brian Vogt**
- 32 First Successful Descent of the Upper Middle Fork Eel River by **Dan Menten**
- 38 Riding Out the Storm: Meadow Creek, Idaho by **Scott Sills**
- 45 Chattooga by **Bruce A. Hare**



AW's Pacific Northwest Stewardship  
 Director **Thomas O’Keefe** in the canyon  
 at the base of **Glines Canyon Dam**, site  
 of the nation's largest dam removal and  
 river restoration project, which is  
 now underway.

Photo by **Jeff Paine**



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# PURPOSE

## RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bimonthly *AW Journal*, a monthly e-news, [americanwhitewater.org](http://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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# THE JOURNEY AHEAD

**W**ELCOME TO THE September/October issue of the *American Whitewater Journal*. After an epic summer of flows in the west, the weather is becoming a touch chillier and the leaves are starting to pop. In West Virginia, the Gauley River has become synonymous with fall boating. Thanks to the drawdown of Summersville Lake by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, water in the Gauley is scheduled and predictable. Dropping more than 668 feet through over 26 miles of rugged terrain, the Gauley River's energetic rapids and scenic quality combine to make it a classic eastern whitewater run.

In California, the Feather River is scheduled for fall releases. Ten years ago, the first recreational releases took place on the North Fork Feather as a requirement of a new hydroelectric power license that was being applied for by the utility. The staff and volunteers of American Whitewater, Chico PaddleHeads and Shasta Paddlers spent thousands of hours negotiating through the hydropower relicensing process over more than five years to make recreational releases happen on the Feather. Now the boating community has a great river to enjoy. You can start at the top of the North Fork Feather and run the whole section or you can just do a couple laps on the part that best suits your skills and interest.

Both of these rivers represent significant milestones in river conservation and stewardship for American Whitewater. Each year, AW and our friends come together to celebrate these two rivers at Gauley River Fest and Feather Fest—we hope to see you there!

## Gauley River Festival

Established in 1983 to celebrate the derailment of a hydroelectric project that would have disrupted the flows on the Gauley River, Gauley Fest has grown to become the largest river festival in the world. Gauley Fest is American Whitewater's largest fundraising event, with all proceeds from the festival going to support American Whitewater's

national stewardship work. Festival dates are September 16-18, as usual, the third weekend in September.

The National Park Service recently purchased critical public access to the Gauley River at Woods Ferry and Mason's Branch. The site at Woods Ferry established a new public take-out for the upper/middle reach and a put-in for the lower reach. American Whitewater will again be leasing the Mason's Branch field at the top of the hill for boater parking from the local landowner (there is not enough room on NPS lands to accommodate parking demand). The leasing of this field is made possible through proceeds from the French Broad Music Festival which avidly supports American Whitewater stewardship efforts.

Demonstrating that what's good for the river and boating can also be good for the local economy, Gauley Festival is responsible for generating \$858,000 of economic activity, producing \$281,000 in wages to local employees and business owners and supporting 19 full-time jobs. Total direct spending in the local economy generated by the Gauley Festival weekend in 2007 was \$1,110,870. [Source: Crane Associates of Burlington, Vermont, Economic Impact Study on Gauley Festival 2007.]

*One note about Gauley Festival: The Summersville Police Department takes their speed limit seriously! Please drive at or below the limit through Summersville and have fun on the river.*

## Feather River Festival

This year, the 21st annual Feather River Festival in California will be held from September 23rd through the 25th. Event organizers are expecting over four hundred people from across the country to come out to support American Whitewater and celebrate one of the most iconic rivers on the west coast. With something to offer all boating preferences and skills—from flatwater and Class I/II to Class III, IV and V—the event is a perfect way for the whole

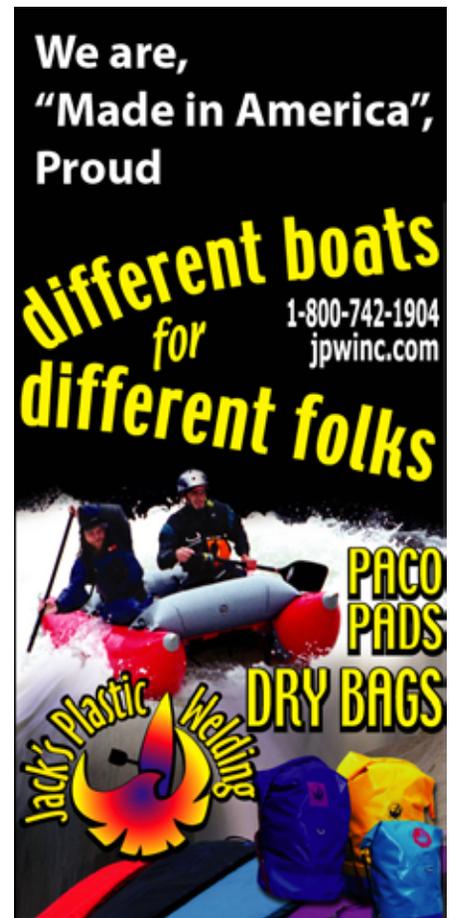
family to enjoy the Feather River. Events off the water are sure to inspire too—the National Paddling Film Festival will kick off Feather Fest on Friday night.

After the big water summer of the century, either of these two events is a great way to celebrate an extraordinary season of river running!

See you on the river,



Mark Singleton  
Executive Director, American Whitewater



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# STEWARDSHIP

## RESURRECTING THE KLAMATH: A GIFT TO BE CLAIMED

BY BILL CROSS

**F**OR ANYONE WHO loves rivers, removing a dam is a gift. So what would you call removing four dams at once? Well, that would be like having your birthday, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa all rolled up into one. Like that's ever going to happen ...

Yet in just under ten years, that's exactly what river runners could be doing: unwrapping the biggest dam-removal gift in history. In 2020, four dams may be demolished on the Klamath River near the Oregon-California border, helping to restore one of America's premier fishing and whitewater rivers. For the first time in over a century, more than 200 miles of the Klamath could flow free to the Pacific.

It's possible thanks to a complex deal hammered out between conservationists, farmers, Native American groups, utilities, and fishermen. The historic agreement, signed in 2010 by the dams' owner, PacifiCorp, along with the Secretary of the Interior, the governors of California and Oregon, and others, is unprecedented—and controversial. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar hails it as “the largest river restoration in the world,” yet some conservationists complain that it doesn't go far enough. And, perhaps surprisingly, many local raft outfitters wish one of the dams could stay.

The agreement contemplates a breathtaking possibility: removing four dams with a combined height of 400 feet; uncovering 17 miles of river flooded for half a century or more; and restoring flows to another 6 miles dewatered by hydropower diversions. In short, reuniting 233 miles

of river into one unbroken, unfettered waterway, restoring the Klamath as the West coast's longest whitewater river.

It sounds fantastic...but what would it mean for river runners? Would a restored Klamath be one of the West's premier whitewater rivers? Or is it possible—as some outfitters fear—that this brightly wrapped box actually holds a white elephant? River runners need to know, because while it might be fun to open a mystery gift, dam removal is serious—and irrevocable.

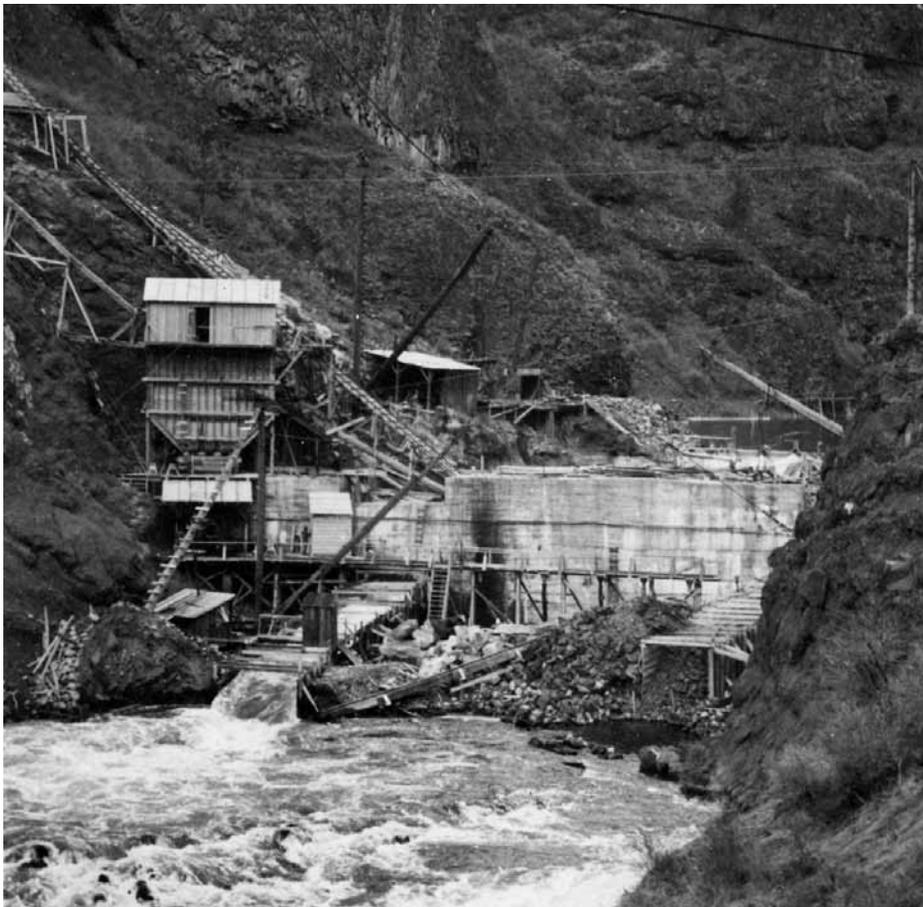
The dams were built long before boaters saw the Klamath, so there's no guide book to tell us what the pre-dam river was like. To predict what dam removal may reveal we need to “shake the box,” seeking clues to what a restored Klamath would look like. Doing so will help river runners prepare for the tremendous changes dam removal would bring, while securing key provisions like accesses, preservation of open space, and assistance for commercial outfitters who will have to adjust to new flows on existing runs, while gearing up to guide clients down entirely new stretches. If river runners don't know what a restored Upper Klamath would look like, they may, quite literally, miss the boat.

American Whitewater strongly favors removing the Klamath dams. The article that follows, *A River Runner's Guide to a Free-Flowing Upper Klamath*, helps explain why undamming the Klamath is a boon not only for salmon and the river, but for boaters too, as miles of lost whitewater will be restored. Clearly there will be challenges for outfitters, but there are things we can do to ease their transition. In the long run, undamming the Klamath will be one of the best gifts river runners have ever received.

Want to know more? Let's shake the box.

*Copco 1 Dam under construction in Wards Canyon, 1916. In 2020 this scene could be repeated—in reverse—as this dam and three others are dismantled.*

Photo courtesy PacifiCorp.



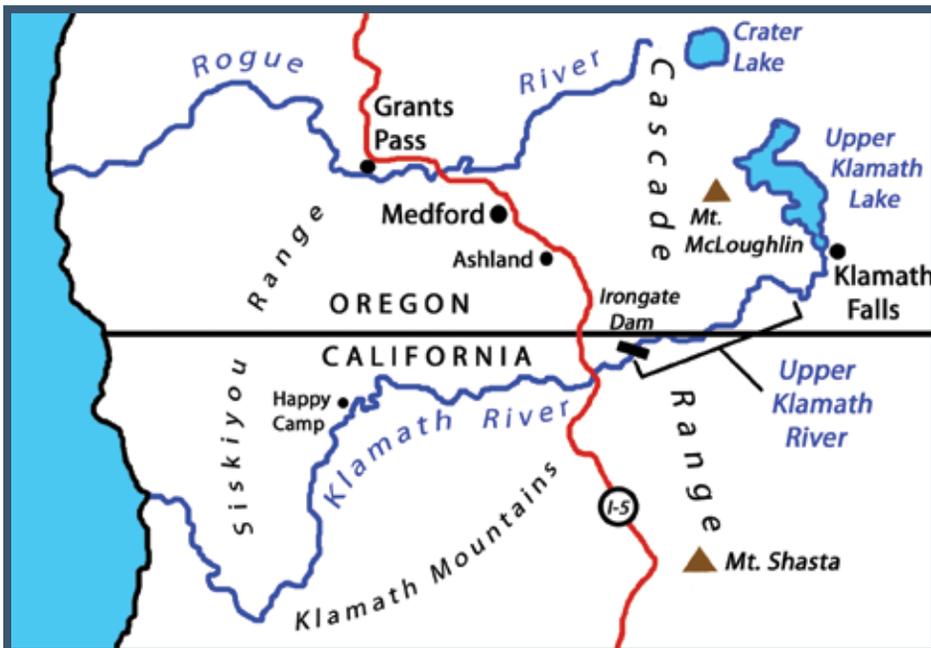
## A RIVER RUNNER'S GUIDE TO A FREE-FLOWING UPPER KLAMATH

forced a passage through the lofty Cascade Range. Near the Oregon-California border, the Upper Klamath makes a dramatic 45-

Klamath is not a mecca for multi-day trips. The reason is simple: the same geography that produces outstanding rapids is also ideal for producing hydroelectricity. Beginning in 1917, the river's frothy course has been repeatedly tapped to slake the West's insatiable appetite for electricity.

Today four dams block the river as part of PacifiCorp's Klamath Hydro Project: JC Boyle Dam, Copco Dams # 1 and 2, and Irongate Dam (see Map 2). Together they flood or dewater half the Upper Klamath, leaving only two boatable stretches—the lightly used 7-mile Keno Run, and a popular 17-mile Class IV+ stretch sometimes called Hells Corner. Even these remnants were once targeted for dams which, if completed, would have converted the entire Upper Klamath to power generation.

Hydroelectric development has profoundly harmed the Upper Klamath, decimating fisheries, degrading water quality and destroying some two dozen miles of whitewater. Before dams, the Klamath was the West's third most productive salmon river, with over a million fish spawning annually. Today dams block migrating fish from 420 miles of habitat and foster the



Map 1: The Klamath River region.

Map by Bill Cross

### Cleaving the Cascades

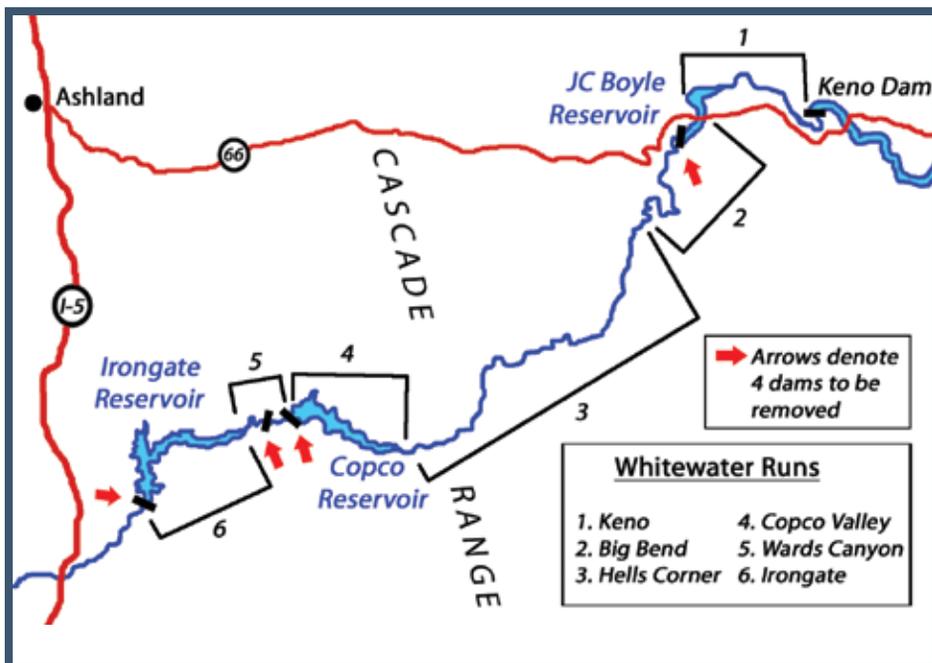
The Klamath is a rebel. Most rivers rise from mountains rather than cutting through them. From the Appalachians to the Sierra Nevada, America's mountains give birth to her greatest whitewater rivers. But these offspring usually flow away from the summits where they were born; only rarely do they breach the very heart of a range. When they do, the spectacular collisions between roaring rivers and towering peaks produce many of America's finest multi-day whitewater trips.

The Klamath is one of these mountain-cleaving rivers—one of only three to have

Map 2: Upper Klamath from Keno to Irongate. Four dams to be removed are marked with red arrows. Six whitewater runs are shown: two existing—Keno and Hells Corner—plus four potential new runs.

Map by Bill Cross.

mile cut through the Cascades (see Map 1). The river was here before the mountains, and held its course as volcanic peaks grew up on either side. Yet unlike other rivers that traverse mountains, the Upper



# STEWARDSHIP

growth of toxic algae. Salmon runs have plummeted, striking a terrible blow to the Klamath's indigenous peoples as well as to commercial and recreational fishermen. For river runners the effects have been more complex: the Klamath Project obliterates 23 miles of whitewater, but alters flows in a way that benefits commercial rafting on Hells Corner. As a result, dam removal has generated some controversy in the whitewater community. Adding to the tension is an almost complete lack of information about what a post-dam Upper Klamath would offer to river runners.

## Gathering of Waters

Geographers divide the Klamath at Irongate Dam: everything upstream is the Upper Klamath, everything downstream is the Lower. The upper basin is dry by Oregon standards, but big enough—twice the size of Delaware—to generate impressive runoff. Like many Cascades rivers, the Upper Klamath has a moderate flow pattern, with much of the precipitation percolating into the porous volcanic soil, then emerging as steady springs that help keep the river runnable year-round in all but the driest years.

The waters of the upper basin gather in broad, shallow Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon's biggest body of water, which acts as a giant solar water heater, warming to over 70 degrees in summer. Where water spills from the lake, the Klamath is born. For its first 21 miles the river winds placidly past homes, farms and ranches, its current slowed by a dam near Keno. At Keno the Klamath shifts abruptly from its pastoral beginnings to its pell-mell passage through the Cascades. Keno Dam is not part of the four-dam removal package, and marks what would, in future, be the start of the free-flowing river. If all goes well, in a decade the Klamath will run free from here to the sea.

Below Keno the Upper Klamath has all the makings of a whitewater classic: high gradient, ample flow, excellent scenery, and—if the dams come out—several days' worth of boating. These 45 miles are the

steepest on the Klamath, with an average gradient of 42 feet per mile and peaks of over 100 feet per mile. Where the river cuts down to bedrock it offers thrills to satisfy any expert, but there are milder sections as well, with gradients as low as 16 feet per mile. A restored river would offer runs to suit any taste, from mellow Class II to roaring Class IV+ or even V. The availability of more and longer runs would almost certainly boost the river's popularity with private boaters, and could help offset reductions in commercial use on Hells Corner. Currently most trips are single-day, but after dam removal boaters could enjoy multi-day journeys.

## The Undiscovered Country

At last we're ready to launch our virtual boats for a guided tour of two places: the Klamath that is, and the Klamath that may be.

But first, a disclaimer: what follows is a guide to a river that does not yet exist. As a guidebook author I've written about scores of rivers, but never about runs that are buried underwater. To meet that novel challenge I have sought the best available information to predict what dam removal might reveal: USGS maps and flow data, pre-dam surveys, historical photos and accounts, PacifiCorp documents, Bureau of Reclamation flow projections, and reservoir depth-soundings. Still, some mystery remains. I have tried to distinguish clearly between what is known, and what is educated guesswork.

One unknown is how long it may take for reclaimed stretches of river to recover. Bypassed reaches will heal almost instantly: restoration is a matter of "just add water." But where reservoirs are drained, no one can be certain how soon the landscape will recover—though much could be done to hasten revegetation. The good news is that the reservoirs hold only moderate amounts of sediment. Much is fine-grained and should flush out almost immediately, though it may take several seasons to fully restore the channel.





*Surfing the Keno Wave.*  
**Photo by Marsh Chamberlain**

Another key concern is future flows. At present, dam removal is linked to the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA), which allocates water between agriculture and fisheries. KBRA would allow more year-to-year flow variation than the present regime, depending on each year's rain and snowfall. The guide that follows presumes that flows after dam removal would be governed by KBRA, but that is not a political certainty.

I have divided the Upper Klamath into six runs (see Map 2), and my descriptions project what these sections will be like once the river has recovered.

**1. KENO RUN:**

Keno Dam (4,065') to Hwy 66 (3,785' est.) – see Map 3  
 Length: 7 miles  
 Gradient: 40 ft/mi; 50 ft/mi first 5 miles  
 Difficulty: III

Keno is where river and mountains first clash, as the Upper Klamath makes its initial cut into the Cascades with a quick sprint through a rugged canyon (see Map 2). A highway parallels this run but stays

far above the river, giving this stretch excellent solitude. The forested canyon is home to abundant bird life including eagles, cormorants, and pelicans.

**Present**

Exciting Class III rapids pepper the first five miles below Keno Dam, and not far below put-in Keno Wave offers outstanding park-and-play at the right flows. Although this run is technically boatable year-round, few use it in mid-summer since flows are skimpier here than on downstream stretches. Yet even during spring snowmelt, this run gets only modest use despite challenging whitewater and fine scenery. The culprit is the problematic take-out: JC Boyle Reservoir backs water over the final two miles, so boaters face a long flatwater paddle to take-out.

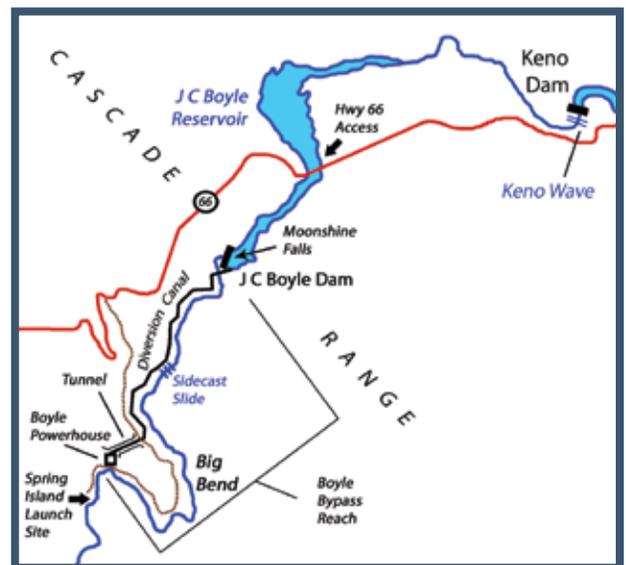
**Future**

Dam removal will eliminate this run's biggest drawback—the flatwater at the end. Based on pre-dam surveys and reservoir depth soundings, the last two miles appear to have a gradient of about 10 feet per mile, suggesting good current and perhaps a few riffles. With Boyle Dam removed, boaters could combine the Keno run with the thrilling rapids of Big Bend just downstream. As part of dam removal, river runners could seek improved access below Keno Dam, allowing easier put-ins and greater use of Keno Wave.

**2. BIG BEND:**

Highway 66 (3,785' est.) to Spring Island Launch Site (3,300') – see Map 3  
 Length: 6 miles  
 Gradient: 81 ft/mi, peaks over 100 ft/mi  
 Difficulty: IV, V at higher flows.

Big Bend is steep. These half-dozen miles drop nearly 500 feet, making this an expert paddlers' paradise. Below the Highway 66 bridge the canyon narrows and the Klamath knives into a deep gorge. The basalt bedrock is laced with subterranean water channels, and in this stretch the Klamath picks up roughly 250 cfs of steady spring inflow—most of it about a mile below JC Boyle Dam. In fact, anglers call this the Clearwater section in reference to the icy



*Map 3: Keno and Big Bend runs*  
**Map by Bill Cross**

# STEWARDSHIP



*Rafting Boyle Bypass Reach during the 2002 Recreational Flow Study. The diversion canal is visible above the right bank.*

**Photo by 2002 Recreational Flow Study**

spring water. Near the end of this reach a two-mile meander known as Big Bend marks the canyon's deepest point, with rugged slopes rising a thousand feet from the river.

## Present

This high-gradient stretch was an obvious target for hydro development. PacifiCorp's 68-foot-high Boyle Dam blocks the river a mile and a half below Highway 66, flooding the first part of the run and diverting the river into a canal for the next 4.3 miles. The dewatered "Boyle Bypass Reach" is reduced to fish flows except during rare high runoff. The water is returned to the river at Boyle Powerhouse, just below Big Bend.

## Future

With Boyle Dam removed, this stretch could be a classic advanced run thanks to challenging whitewater, rugged scenery and strong base flows. Information about the lower part of the run comes mostly from a 2002 Recreational Flow Study

*Moonshine Falls before construction of JC Boyle Dam.*

**Photo courtesy Klamath County Museum**

photos show a riverwide ledge known as Moonshine Falls near the Boyle damsite, but it's unknown whether the falls survived dam construction (see photo).

Big Bend should be boatable year-round in all but the driest years, thanks to strong mid-summer base flows plus spring inflow. The run is at its best above 1,000 cfs, and should flow at or above those levels throughout spring runoff in most years. Mid-summer flows would fall below 1,000 cfs in most years, but kayaks and small rafts could still probably navigate the run all summer except in dry years. Larger rafts—including commercial paddle boats—could use the run in spring when flows are higher, and possibly all summer in wet years. Mid-summer use could be enhanced by developing an alternate put-in at Boyle damsite, just above where springs add flow. Big Bend would make an excellent day trip, or could be linked with adjoining runs for longer trips.

## 3. HELLS CORNER:

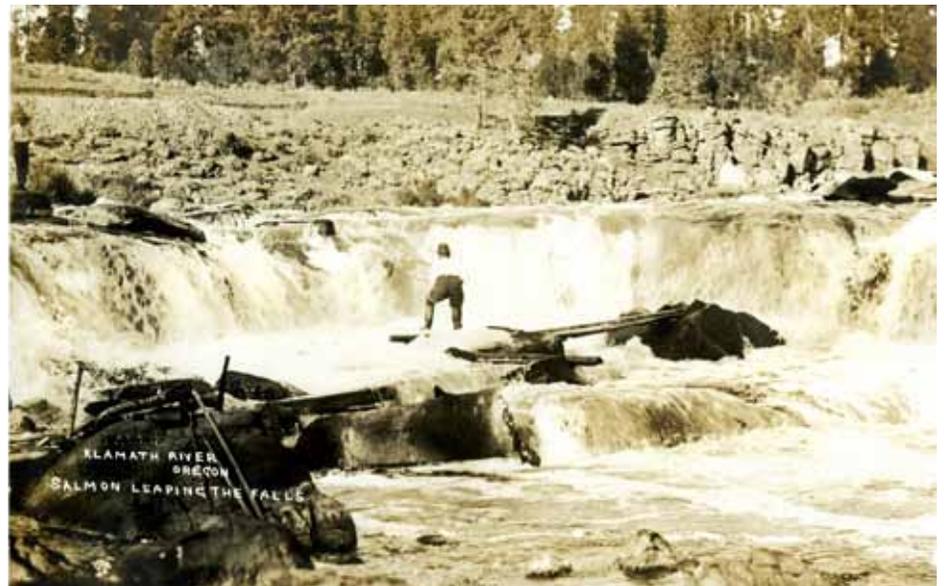
Spring Island (3,300') to Copco (2,605')

Length: 17 miles

Gradient: 41 ft/mi; peaks around 75 ft/mi

Difficulty: IV+

Hells Corner is by far the best-known section of the Upper Klamath. In fact,



*Paddle raft on Hells Corner.*

**Photo courtesy Kokopelli River Guides**

when most river runners say “Upper Klamath,” they mean these 17 miles. The reason is simple: this is the only section other than Keno that is not inundated or dewatered. Hells Corner marks the midpoint of the river’s descent through the Cascades, the landscape becoming gradually drier with each mile. As the river crosses into California (mile 11) the rugged canyon gives way to a broader valley with easy whitewater.

### Present

Hells Corner’s outstanding rapids make it a favorite of commercial outfitters. Most of the drops are packed into a five-mile gorge in the middle of the run where the gradient soars to 74 ft/mi and the river pounds through powerful Class IV and IV+ rapids. Boaters can take out at the state line or continue down six miles of Class II to the hamlet of Copco. Hells Corner is much less popular among private boaters, in part because of the arduous shuttle.

The key to this run’s commercial success is reliable summer flows, allowing outfitters to book several thousand clients every summer. Hells Corner’s consistent flows are not natural: they are the result of hydro development. JC Boyle generates electricity during peak demand from late morning through mid-afternoon. PacifiCorp stores up the Klamath’s flow every night, releasing a paltry 100 cfs of “fish flow,” then discharges the pent-up water through Boyle Powerhouse the next day in an oversized pulse. Thanks to these artificially enhanced flows, even in mid-summer rafters ride a powerful surge of 1,550-1,750 cfs.

### Future

The most obvious effect of dam removal would be a shift from peaking releases to a steady round-the-clock flow, partway between today’s peak flow and fish flow. And that has outfitters worried. Many fear that these intermediate flows won’t support rafting in summer—or at least not the adrenaline-charged ride that thrills



customers. Everyone agrees that the river will still offer great rafting during spring snowmelt, but opinions differ over whether commercial rafting would be viable after early July in most years.

Under KBRA, post-dam flows are projected to be at or above today’s peak-release levels until around early June on average, then gradually recede to mid-summer lows averaging about 1,000 cfs. Because KBRA allows considerable year-to-year variation, about one year out of four mid-summer flows would dip below 800 cfs, while in wet years they could stay above 1,200 all summer. That increased variability will be tough on outfitters, who relish consistency.

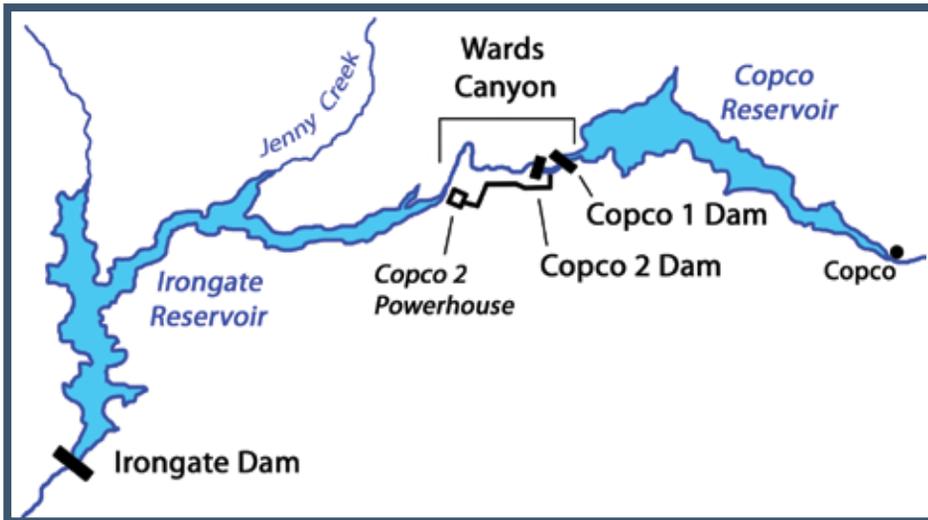
What would Hells Corner be like at the range of mid-summer flows projected under KBRA? In the 2002 Flow Study, boaters tested releases of 730, 1,060 and 1,360 cfs. They agreed that 730 was too low for commercial rafting, though the run was possible for kayaks and small inflatables. That suggests the run should almost always have enough mid-summer flow for boaters in small craft who don’t mind bony conditions, but the driest years will simply be too low for summertime commercial rafting. At 1,060 cfs—close to KBRA’s projected post-dam mid-summer median—the 2002 study found good technical paddling and the possibility

of low-flow commercial rafting, though several outfitters felt conditions were too rocky. At 1,360 almost everyone agreed commercial rafting would be viable.

Those findings make it tough to predict just how popular or satisfying mid-summer commercial rafting would be after dam removal. It’s safe to say that in most summers, Hells Corner would not be as attractive to clients—or as profitable for outfitters—as it is now. Outfitters could probably navigate the run in smaller rafts throughout most summers, but it’s hard to guess how many customers would sign up for these lower-flow runs.

One unquestioned benefit of dam removal on Hells Corner would be morning flow. At present, peak releases usually reach the primary put-in by ten AM, but it takes the water another couple of hours to reach the intermediate access at Frain Ranch, five miles downstream. Some outfitters and many privates would prefer to launch at Frain because it greatly shortens the shuttle, but few want to wait that long for flows to arrive. Without dams there would be no wait—the water would always be there. To maximize this benefit, river runners could press for improvements to the extremely rough road in to Frain Ranch. Morning flow could also make Hells Corner a more viable overnight trip by eliminating the long wait

# STEWARDSHIP



Map 4: Upper Klamath from town of Copco to Irongate Dam.

Map by Bill Cross

for releases to reach campsites miles below the powerhouse.

#### 4. COPCO VALLEY:

Copco (2,605') to Wards Canyon entrance (2,500' est.) – see Map 4

Length: 6 mi.

Gradient: 18 ft/mi

Difficulty: Probable II to II+

The six-mile Copco Valley run would be the gentlest on a restored Upper Klamath—thanks, ironically, to a dam. Not Copco



The dramatic entrance to Wards Canyon at the end of Copco Valley, before construction of Copco 1 Dam, circa 1910.

1 Dam, the 126-foot-high concrete plug that currently floods this stretch. No, the dam that produces this easygoing reach is far older. Six miles below the settlement of Copco a lava flow once blocked the river, backing up a five-mile lake. The Klamath gradually filled the lake bottom with sediment, then carved a deep outlet notch through the lava dam, creating the landscape that Native Americans once knew: the Klamath winding gently through a broad valley before knifing into a deep volcanic canyon.

#### Present

The lava narrows, known to settlers as Wards Canyon, was the Klamath's most obvious damsite, and in 1918 Copco 1 Dam was built, flooding the valley. The reservoir's straight channel masks the serpentine meanderings of the original river, and motorboats now skim over what was once the most fertile stretch of river below Keno: pre-dam maps show the river winding past ranches, pastures and orchards.

Today Copco Reservoir's stagnant waters produce a decidedly less appealing crop: toxic algae. When the Klamath's warm waters stagnate, trouble brews, and almost every summer blooms of blue-green algae coat Copco and Irongate Reservoirs, emitting a potent toxin that has forced swimming closures at the reservoirs and along the Lower Klamath. At times the State

of California has posted warnings for over 80 miles downstream, deterring some boaters—including commercial outfitters' customers—from visiting the Klamath. The river simply can't flush the reservoirs quickly enough to keep the algae at bay, but dam removal will dramatically improve water quality by letting the Klamath flow swiftly through these sections.

#### Future

Pre-dam surveys show a modest gradient, implying good current but easy whitewater—ideal for less experienced boaters or anyone who prefers scenery to thrills. Historic photos show a lush riverside forest, and once vegetation returns, wildlife should thrive. Draining Copco will expose 1,000 acres of riverfront land, much of it gently sloping benches ideal for camping and hiking. Outfitters and private boaters could use this run several ways: for gentle one-day trips; as an extension of the final five easy miles of Hells Corner; for camping after running Hells Corner; or as a prelude to the dramatic whitewater of Wards Canyon. The key to making this a workable run is to develop accesses just above Wards



Toxic algae in Copco Reservoir.

Photo courtesy of Klamath-Salmon Media Collaborative

Canyon, so less experienced boaters can take out before the big rapids downstream.

### 5. WARDS CANYON:

Wards Canyon Entrance (2,500'est.) to Copco 2 Powerhouse (2,330') – see Map 4  
Length: 2.0 mi  
Gradient: 85 ft/mi  
Difficulty: IV; possible V

Wards Canyon is a whitewater brawl. Bookended by the peaceful Copco Valley upriver and the moderate Irongate run downstream, Wards Canyon is an intense clash between the irresistible force of the Upper Klamath and the immovable object of a lava dam. The Klamath wins this geologic fracas by slashing a deep cleft through the dam, but the lava gets enough licks in to churn the river to foam in the turbulent passage. It's a natural collision guaranteed to quicken the pulse of advanced boaters. But Wards Canyon is more than just big whitewater: it is a scenic and geologic wonder, a 300-foot-deep defile bounded by sheer colonnades of columnar basalt.

#### Present

Wards Canyon is an engineer's dream: easy damsites, a steep descent and abundant flow. Small wonder that every inch is tapped for hydro production. Copco 1 Dam blocks the river a quarter-mile below the canyon entrance. Then 500 yards downstream, Copco 2 Dam diverts the entire river (except at rare high water) into pipes that bypass the channel for 1.5 miles down to Copco 2 Powerhouse. The dam releases a paltry 10 cfs to the bypass reach, which as a result is heavily overgrown with brush. All of which means that Wards Canyon has never been available for boating. The only documented runs were during the 2002 Flow Study, and even those only reconnoitered the bypass reach. No boater has ever seen the upper half-mile that is buried by dams.

#### Future

Wards Canyon has tremendous potential, especially given its proximity to I-5. To predict what the rapids will be like, our best



*Kayaking Wards Canyon during the 2002 Recreational Flow Study.*

**Photo by 2002 Recreational Flow Study**

modern source is the 2002 Flow Study, when paddlers tested releases from Copco 2 Dam into the bypass reach. At 1,200 cfs—barely higher than median projected mid-summer flows under KBRA—they found numerous exciting Class IV rapids. Historical sources offer clues to what lies in the uppermost half-mile, buried beneath the Copco dams. Engineer John Boyle's 1911 description of Copco 1 damsites speaks volumes:

The width of the canyon...was 70 feet, all of which was taken up by the water of the river. For 150 feet above the dam and 350 feet below, the river channel had a grade of 2 feet per hundred, producing a velocity... of about 20 feet per second.

Boyle's description tells us the river was narrow, very swift, and had a gradient near 100 feet per mile. Clearly Wards Canyon started with a serious bang—certainly Class IV, possibly higher. We simply won't know until the dams come out.

Wards Canyon has a lot going for it: big rapids, spectacular scenery, summer-long flows, short shuttle and location 20 miles from I-5. Outfitters could offer half-days,

or full-days in combination with adjoining reaches. Private boaters could do "laps" of this short stretch, while overnight boaters could continue downriver. The key elements needed are new accesses at the upstream and downstream ends of the canyon, along with brush removal—after 90 years of diversions the canyon is so overgrown that it could take decades to clear on its own.

### 6. IRONGATE:

Copco 2 Powerhouse (2,330') to Irongate Dam (2,170') – see Map 4  
Length: 7 mi  
Gradient: 24 ft/mi  
Difficulty: probable II+ to III+

In Irongate the river finds a happy medium between the mellow meanderings of Copco Valley and the hell-for-leather sprints of Big Bend and Wards Canyon. In this final stretch the Upper Klamath flows through a semi-arid canyon dotted with oak, juniper and pinyon pine. The run ends below Iron Gate, a scenic narrows for which the dam is named.

# STEWARDSHIP

## Present

Since 1962 this reach has been flooded by 173-foot-high Irongate Dam.

## Future

This reach has great potential, combining strong summer flows with enough gradient for good whitewater—most likely intermediate, though stronger drops are possible. It is long enough for a day trip, or could be combined with adjacent sections for longer runs. The first four miles descend at a brisk 30 feet per mile as the river courses through a narrower canyon. Three miles above Irongate the canyon broadens and the gradient eases to 16 feet per mile, suggesting good current but milder rapids in the final stretch.

Irongate could prove quite popular for both private and commercial trips. For outfitters, the run's proximity to I-5 makes it potentially fertile territory: take-out is just nine miles off the interstate. This stretch may hold the most accessible intermediate whitewater on the entire Klamath, along with good camping and solitude. As at Copco Reservoir, draining Irongate will expose 1,000 acres of previously flooded land, but unlike Copco there are almost no homes along the shore. With proper stewardship, Irongate could offer excellent scenery and seclusion just miles from I-5.

## Making the Gift Count

Removing the Klamath dams is great news for river runners—one of the biggest gifts the whitewater community has ever received. Spectacular reaches of river will be restored, new whitewater runs will emerge, toxic algae will cease to pollute the lower river, and the Upper and Lower Klamath will be reunited into the West Coast's longest continuous whitewater river. The transition will be challenging for local raft outfitters, yet even as they lose Hells Corner's predictable flows, they will find new long-term opportunities on a restored Klamath.

But the gift of dam removal won't mean much to boaters if they can't use the

river. That's why American Whitewater is working to secure access, eliminate boating hazards, preserve open space and ensure that a restored Klamath is fully accessible to both private and commercial river runners.

The BLM has completed a study of the effects of dam removal on whitewater recreation, and is seeking public comment. AW is urging the BLM to support dam removal while planning ahead to maximize future whitewater recreation on a restored river. We need your comments in support of these goals.

### 1. Claim the Gift: Undam the River

While many groups are focused on the fishery benefits of a restored river, there are also recreational benefits to free-flowing rivers. Paddlers are uniquely qualified to provide this perspective and register support for the removal of all four Upper Klamath Dams.

### 2. Demand the Accessories: A River Runners' Wish List

Removing the dams is great but to take full advantage of a restored river and enjoy a quality recreational experience there are a number of details that need to be addressed in the restoration plan. The time to weigh in with these specific needs is now, as restoration plans are being developed:

- **Public Access:** Access is vital, especially where the difficulty of whitewater is variable, so boaters can choose runs suited to their skills and tastes. Paddlers should request new or improved access at Keno Dam, Highway 66 Bridge, JC Boyle Dam Site, Frain Ranch, Above Wards Canyon, Below Wards Canyon, and at Irongate Dam Site.
- **Assistance for Outfitters:** The river has long supported a vibrant commercial rafting industry. Dam removal will mean changes but these changes can be positive if basic steps are taken to address outfitter needs. These include improved access at Frain Ranch, timely

issuance of permits for new runs, and restoration of a more natural flow regime just prior to dam removal to help outfitters evaluate the run and prepare guides, equipment and logistics for post-dam conditions. Following dam removal, continued access to flow information is important for all river runners.

- **Restoring the River Channel:** In removing the dams, all debris associated with the man-made structures needs to be removed from the river channel to facilitate safe passage. In addition, vegetation that has colonized the dewatered Ward's Canyon needs to be removed.
- **Preserving Open Space:** PacifiCorp owns 3800 acres adjoining the reservoirs. Management of these lands will profoundly affect river runners. AW supports permanent protection of all PacifiCorp lands, including restoration and revegetation.
- **Permanent Protection:** Finally, to protect the investment in river restoration, we support designating the entire Upper Klamath from Keno to Irongate as a National Wild & Scenic River.

Watch the American Whitewater website for additional details on providing comments. The public comment period will be open for 60 days starting on September 22. You will be able to file comments on the Klamath Restoration website, <http://klamathrestoration.gov>, where you can also sign up to receive future updates.

*Bill Cross is the co-author of Western Whitewater from the Rockies to the Pacific, an award-winning guide to over 150 rivers. He is an AW volunteer Regional Coordinator, and was named AW's 2009 River Steward of the Year for his work on the Rogue River.*

## CONDIT DAM TO BE REMOVED!

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE

**O**N SEPTEMBER 22, 1999 PacifiCorp signed an agreement to remove Condit Dam on the White Salmon River. Reaching the agreement turned out to be the easy part, however. More than a decade passed while the agreement ran the gauntlet of various regulatory proceedings.

Following consistent pressure by American Whitewater and our partner organizations, things finally started coming together over the past year. In October 2010 the Department of Ecology issued the long-awaited water quality certification required under the Clean Water Act. It took a couple rounds at FERC before the water quality certification was ultimately recognized—it took several months just to determine if documents had been filed on time. PacifiCorp quickly followed with acceptance of FERC's decommissioning order and things were underway.

Work began this August drilling and blasting a 13-foot by 18-foot drain tunnel in the base of the dam to within a few feet of the dam's face. In a dramatic event in late October 2011 the reservoir will be drained over a period of six hours after the remaining few feet of the tunnel are blasted. This is expected to quickly mobilize much of the sediment that has collected behind the dam in the reservoir. With the river flowing through the tunnel at its base, the dam itself will be deconstructed in spring 2012 and fully removed by August. Paddlers will retain access to the traditional run on the White Salmon that ends at the current reservoir, but are asked not to proceed down through the construction site during the year the project will take place. PacifiCorp will modify the river access at the Northwestern Park and if all goes according to plan paddlers will be welcome to explore the new section of river in September 2012.

## ELWHA DAM REMOVAL UNDERWAY!

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE

**A**N IDEA THAT began with a "crazy" notion to remove two dams on the Olympic Peninsula's Elwha River (WA) has finally become reality. While the Elwha River Restoration Act passed in 1992, it took another two decades to pull all the funding together to make it happen. Tireless efforts of Congressman Norm Dicks, a great friend of rivers and salmon, have finally paid off with the funding in place and the start of dam removal finally upon us.

Dam removal commences this September with the deconstruction of Elwha Dam followed by the removal of Glines Canyon Dam. While these dams played an important part in the history of the development of the Olympic Peninsula, they inundated the sacred creation site for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and largely extinguished the river's abundant salmon runs. Although the dams are big, they have never produced that much power relative to their ecological and cultural impacts.

The same powerful rapids and steep drops that created strong selection pressure for a genetically-distinct run of massive Chinook salmon—reported to be over 100 pounds—have also been attractive to whitewater paddlers. We eagerly anticipate new sections of river that will be restored for fish but will also benefit those who enjoy the recreational opportunities free-flowing rivers provide.

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# PADDLER FITNESS

## PADDLER HEALTH AND FITNESS: EXERCISES SPECIFIC TO THE PADDLER

BY JOHN AMTMANN AND MEAGHEN RANDALL

**W**E'VE ALL HEARD the saying, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I usually heard this from my parents—and they were spot-on. On the river, when we make the right decisions we won't have to take drastic measures to get ourselves out of trouble. The same is true regarding injuries: if we prevent the injury, we don't have to trade valuable paddling time for rest and rehabilitation.

Up to this point we have concentrated on general health and fitness, which is important, and appropriate enough for the average American whose idea of fun is to go tailgating on Saturday and rest on Sunday. However, if your idea of fun is to make laps on the local whitewater run on Saturdays and Sundays, we're going to need to add a few items specifically for paddlers.

According to an article published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, 50% of injuries to whitewater kayakers were due to traumatic stress and overuse. (Fiore & Houston, 2001). Out of 392 kayakers, over half (219) had suffered memorable injury events. Striking an object was the most common cause of injury (44%), followed by traumatic stress and overuse (25% each). The most common types of injury were abrasion (25%), tendonitis (25%), contusion (22%), and dislocation (17%). Understandably, the shoulder was the most commonly injured area of the body.

*Exercise 1 External Rotation demonstrated by Anaconda, MT paddler Samantha Barkell. Note: Support your upper arm in front of your torso at about 90 degrees, keep the elbow bent at 90 degrees, rotate at the shoulder (externally). Return slowly to the start position.*

Photos by John Amtmann

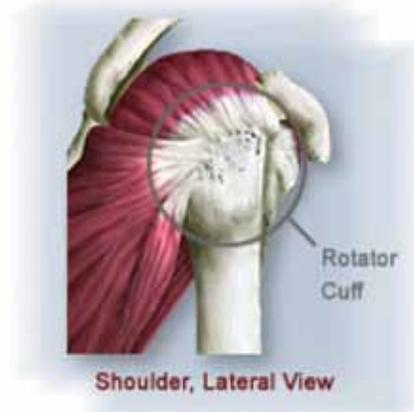


Figure 1: Rotator Cuff.

Proper paddling technique involves the use of much more than just the shoulder. Beginning with the lower body, power is generated that transfers upwards through the core and torso. This power propels the boat forward or allows the freestyle paddler to perform various tricks/maneuvers. For many paddlers the shoulders tend to be the weak link in the chain, and when overall strength is enhanced, any submaximal activity (working or exercising below one's maximum effort) becomes physically easier and overuse injuries, such as tendonitis, can be prevented.

The shoulder complex is made up of three bones: The large bone in the upper arm (the humerus), the shoulder blade (scapula) and the collarbone (clavicle). These bones are connected by muscles, ligaments, and tendons. The top of the humerus is shaped like a ball and sits in a socket on the end of the scapula called the glenoid

fossa, a relatively shallow cup-like surface. In medical terms the shoulder joint is called the glenohumeral joint—a ball and socket joint known for its mobility and lack of stability.

When the muscles that cross the shoulder joint activate, they cause the humerus to move. However, in order for any of the shoulder muscles to work with efficiency, the scapula must be held firmly in place. Muscles originating on the back attach to the scapula and stabilize the bone so the shoulder muscles have a stable platform from which to work. These muscles are appropriately termed the scapular stabilizers.

The muscles of the shoulder complex stabilize the scapula, as well as movement of the arm. The rhomboid, trapezius, serratus anterior and pectoralis minor muscles stabilize the scapula. The pectoralis major, deltoid, teres major, latissimus dorsi and the muscles of the rotator cuff allow for movement of the arm at the glenohumeral joint. The upper part of the trapezius muscle also helps "shrug" or elevate the shoulder. All of the muscles that are part of the shoulder complex work together in order to move the arm through its many possible ranges of movement.

The architecture of the joint, specifically the shallow glenoid fossa, allows for a great deal of movement; unfortunately this excessive movement means less stability. Many shoulder injuries involve the rotator cuff. Because of the shallow structure of the glenoid fossa, the rotator cuff is an





*Exercise 2: Internal Rotation demonstrated by John Amtmann. Note: Same as external rotation, only you're positioned so that you exert effort by rotating your shoulder inward.*

**Photos by Meaghen Randall**

important group of four muscles that helps to stabilize the head of the humerus within this fossa (See Figure 1, Rotator Cuff). These muscles have flat tendons that fuse together and surround the front, back and top of the shoulder joint like a cuff on a shirt sleeve. When the muscles of the rotator cuff activate, they pull on the rotator cuff tendons, causing the shoulder to rotate inward or outward, which is where the name "rotator cuff" comes from.

Due to the function of these muscles, sports that involve a wide range of shoulder movements or increased demand often put the rotator cuff muscles under a great deal of stress. These sports include baseball, volleyball, tennis, badminton, swimming and, of course, the paddling sports.

The most common symptom of an injury to the rotator cuff is pain. Injuries are often a result of a single traumatic event (acute tear) or due to the overuse of these muscles over a period of years (chronic tear).

*Exercise 3: Reverse Flies. Note: Situate the cables so they will cross. Move your arms apart and imagine your partner has his fingers placed along your spine between your shoulder blades. Squeeze the fingers with your shoulder blades at the end of the movement.*

**Photos by John Amtmann**

### Acute Tear

An acute rotator cuff tear tends to happen as a result of a sudden, powerful movement, which may include falling over onto an outstretched arm or making a sudden thrust with the paddle when kayaking. The symptoms will usually include:

- Sudden, tearing feeling in the shoulder, followed by severe pain through the arm
- Limited movement of the shoulder due to pain or muscle spasm
- Severe pain for a few days which may resolve quickly
- Specific tenderness over the point of rupture/tear. It is common to have a "referred" pattern of pain in the center of the deltoid muscle

- If there is a severe tear, you will not be able to abduct your arm (raise it out to the side) without assistance

### Chronic Tear

A chronic tear to the rotator cuff is most frequently caused by degeneration of the tendon due to long-term overuse of a weakened rotator cuff and muscular imbalance, rather than an acute injury from sports or trauma.

- Usually found on the dominant side
- Occurs more often with individuals over 40 years of age
- Gradual development of pain that is worse at night and can negatively affect sleeping
- Development of shoulder weakness with eventual difficulty in abducting arm (lifting arm out to the side)
- Some limitations of other movements depending on the tendon affected

If you suspect you have a rotator cuff tear, see a qualified medical professional for a formal evaluation and diagnosis. Your primary care provider should present you with appropriate treatment and rehabilitation options.

### Exercises for Preventing Rotator Cuff Injury

There are two factors of particular importance in maintaining shoulder structural integrity and preventing shoulder



# PADDLER FITNESS



*Though these exercises were demonstrated on a cable machine, other equipment (including surgical tubing) could be used if paddlers do not have convenient access to a gym.*

**Photo by John Amtmann**

injury. First, part of your fitness program should include exercises specifically for the external and internal rotators. These are a group of rotator cuff muscles essential to maintaining glenohumeral joint integrity. Incorporating exercises that specifically isolate the external rotators is essential to the paddler's fitness program because they are not addressed with a general strength fitness program.

Second, an exercise for the scapular stabilizers need to be included as well. Well conditioned scapular stabilizers hold the platform (the scapulae) steady more effectively so that the rotator cuff muscles, which are attached to the scapulae, can do their job more effectively as well.

## More To Think About

Remember, right after your mom would throw out the "an ounce of prevention..." quote then she'd tell you not to slouch? Well, poor posture not only increases your risk of back injury, but also reduces the efficiency of the scapular stabilizers and can lead to rotator cuff injury. This is especially important to the paddler who may paddle for long distances and is lulled into poor posture while sitting in the boat. Not only will good posture help maintain structural integrity of the shoulder complex, but good paddling technique requires good posture in order to engage the abdominals to make

paddling more efficient and less stressful for the shoulder.

Good posture requires maintaining the normal curvatures of the spine: shoulders should be pulled back and down, with the head held high. When standing it should be possible to draw an imaginary straight line from the earlobe, through the shoulder, hip, knee, and into the middle of the ankle. This is true when sitting in your kayak as well but the line would end at the middle of the hip.



*The internal and external rotation exercises could be done with the arm raised to the side (abducted) instead of to the front. Changes in position of the arm can add variety, and a different angle can strengthen the muscle group specific to that angle.*

**Photo by Meaghen Randall**

Musculoskeletal flexibility should be addressed in every health-fitness program in order to maintain a healthy range of motion for all body parts. Unfortunately, most people view the flexibility portion of their program as little more than a lay around and chit-chat session. Most experts agree that there appears to be an ideal range of flexibility that will help to prevent injury. In general, we lose flexibility as we age so the goal of a flexibility program for all practical purposes should be to possess the flexibility to be able to maintain proper posture.

Finally, a proper warm-up prior to physical activity is an essential tool in helping to prevent shoulder injury. Whether you're going out paddling for the day, going to the gym or just going bowling, preparing the body by performing low intensity forms of the exercises outlined in the photo captions will help prepare the body for the more intense shoulder movements that may, purposely or inadvertently, follow. Three sets of 15 to 20 each would be adequate in warming-up the shoulder prior to a day of paddling.

Paddling health, especially the prevention of injuries, needs to be part of a well-thought out plan that includes participating in a well-designed fitness program. If your fitness program is not taking into consideration rotator cuff injury prevention, you may be setting yourself up for a paddling injury in the future that could reduce the time you're able to spend doing what you love.

## Take Home Message

In the last issue, we outlined a basic strength program consisting of seven basic strength exercises that would be effective in promoting general musculoskeletal fitness. To make this program more paddler specific, add three simple movements targeting the rotator cuff and scapular stabilizers. With only 10 total exercises, the program is efficient if you just do one set of each exercise, but if you have the time, you could perform up to three sets of each exercise. Remember, each repetition is a quality repetition, eliminating momentum, so use a reasonable weight that can be handled comfortably.

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# WILDERNESS RIVERS

## A NIGHT ON THE MICHIMAHUIDA

BY BOB DAFTE

**T**HE MICHIMAHUIDA IS one of the most beautiful rivers that I have ever seen—and I've seen many rivers. It is a low water kayak run, considered impassable at high flows; walking out is not an option since there are no ways out of the steep valley other than following the river.

The river flows through steep mountains capped by glaciers. Hundreds of waterfalls cascade down the steep granite walls, carving their ways among the coastal vegetation. It is spectacular.

The clear turquoise water has been replaced by silt from the latest volcanic eruption. In May 2008 the Chaiten Volcano erupted in the middle of the night. It was an unknown volcano, a small hill in Northern Patagonia which caught the population unaware. The owner of the Amarillo Hot Springs told me the story: "A lightening storm and thunder woke us at 3 am. The noise was frightening and outside it looked like a snow storm. When daylight arrived we saw a meter of volcanic ash on the ground."

The Chilean government evacuated the population and all farm animals the same morning. Chaiten is a disaster area; the river took a detour through town bringing with it silt and mud, filling the streets and burying the houses; only windows and roofs of some vehicles were visible. The Chaiten volcano erupted again in 2009, two days after we had left and the Chilean government ordered the full evacuation of the valley.

We started the river at the usual spot, near a now abandoned farm. The trail was washed out, so we had to rope down to the river's edge. We were covered with grey silt and I could not figure out why. I thought that wind, snow, and rain would have washed away the ash. It started to rain and the ash took the consistency of toothpaste and stuck to everything.



*Michimahuida River two years prior, before the volcano blew, when the water was still clear.*

**Photo by Theresa Landman**

We wove our way through the rapids of the first canyon without any problems. My 2006 trip on the river had been more eventful. We had a swim in the first canyon and normally it is easy to catch the kayak but that time the boat got stuck under a rock and it took us a while to get it out, freaking out some of the group members. We passed the first few big rapids of the second canyon. In 2006, in one of those rapids, two kayakers swam at the same time and one boat took off down river towards the biggest rapid of the river with all the medications of its diabetic owner, Stephanie. Karine, who was portaging, fell on the rocks and sprained her thumb. She did not want to continue, but we all knew that it is impossible to walk out of the Michimahuida. We did eventually catch up to Stephanie's boat and the medications. Compared to 2006, this 2009 trip was easy so far...but it was about to change.

As we eddy-hopped our way towards the big drop Theresa flipped. I was already down when Olivier alerted us that Theresa

had dislocated her shoulder. As she was rolling up, her arm fully extended, her paddle blade hit a rock, and the force of the blow pulled her shoulder out, leaving her stranded in the middle of the river. We quickly reached her, set up a rescue on a tether, and got her to shore. Her boat was gone downstream with all her gear. The boys moved quickly, getting warm clothes and a small tarp to protect Theresa from the downpour, which had started as we put in. I tried and tried the new protocol I had been shown to set the shoulders back in but every time was unsuccessful. I sent the boys down the river telling them that we would catch up later or much later. They left us with some spare clothes, a bit of food and concerned looks. The river was rising.

I had to set her shoulder back so I went back to my old method. After all, this was going to be the eighth time for me setting a shoulder. Theresa was lying as flat as you can be on rocks; my foot was on the side of her chest, I was pulling her

arm straight, holding her wrist and elbow, applying traction and looking at her face. Typically when you release the pressure of a dislocation you can see the pain fade away on the victim's face. I talked to Theresa while pulling steadily. After a few minutes I heard the classic click; the arm was extending. I gently started to move the arm upwards increasing traction. I did not hear the usual clunk but I saw Theresa's face change as the pain went away and the relief was showing. She yelled, "my shoulder is back in," and she saw the relief in my look. She smiled even though we were on our own, in the middle of a cold rain storm with the river rising and only one way out: downstream.

Theresa started walking on the river's edge and I carried my boat to stay with her. Soon it became evident that climbing over rocks and around cliffs was not going to be possible with a boat so I started running rapids on my own waiting for her every hundred meters or so. It is funny how much more you notice when you have time and your attention is not so focused on the white-water. Some of the waterfalls are truly beautiful, stunning; the water rushed down the granite cliffs, splitting around some rocks, disappearing in the dense coastal foliage, reappearing and joining up again only to disappear. To go around some cliffs Theresa swam holding on to my kayak with her good arm; we crossed the river back and forth to reach easier walking shores. A forest of Nalgas, giant prickly rhubarb looking plant, which is the Chilean equivalent of Devil's club, blocked our way. I used my paddle to cut the stems and watch the giant leaves fall to the ground; it was kind of fun. A hummingbird came by feeding on a flower, totally oblivious to us or the pouring rain. Hanging on to my boat was the easiest way down and we started running harder rapids. I was worried about Theresa getting cold.

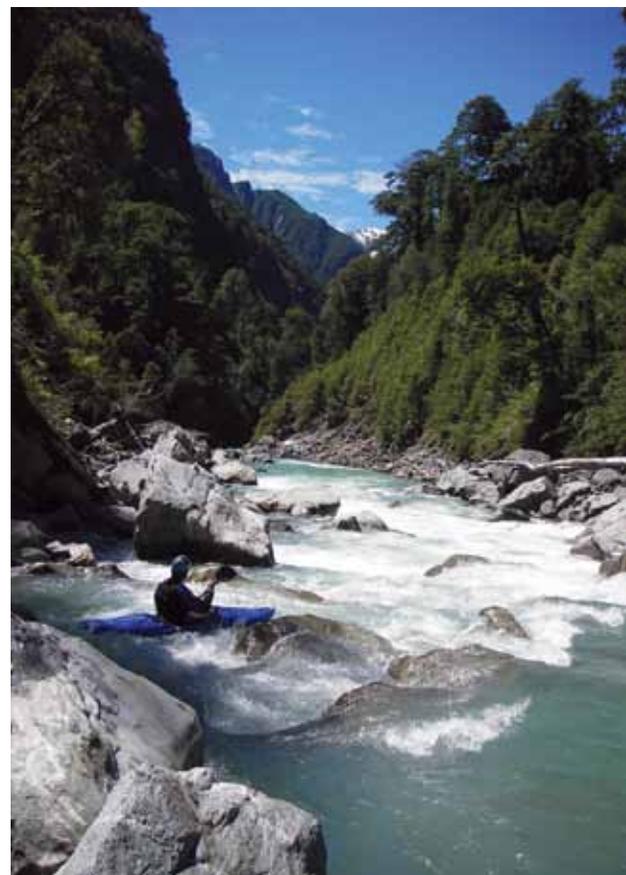
Here, two years ago, one of the kayakers in our group had flipped and swam. We chased her boat to shore only to see that another kayaker was swimming, and we

chased another boat. I had a chat with the group, telling them that they were better boaters and should not let the river freak them out. I had wanted to restore their confidence. After all, they had run much harder whitewater on other rivers. I entered an easy Class III rapid, I looked behind to see if everybody was fine and hit a little rock, flipped, and rolled up just in time to hit another rock and go down again. Up again just in time to flip again and finally roll up. After that, the group was freaking again; so much for building confidence.

Theresa was on the back of my boat when I spotted her kayak floating in an eddy. She got back in her boat and started paddling again in spite of her shoulder. It was getting dark when we reached a difficult rapid. I went down and spotted a cave right above the drop. I went back up to help portage Theresa's boat. The cave was huge and full of dry wood. It was going to be our home for the night. Sometimes, you curse the extra weight when you portage a boat full of safety gear, fire starter, and spare clothing. But let me tell you, when you need it, you are really happy to have the emergency food and gear. It was not exactly a romantic evening but we had a fire, we dried our gear in the shelter of the cave, and we ate one sandwich each and kept the remaining one to be split for breakfast. We tried to dream the rocks soft and warm but they stayed hard and cold. We slept in our paddling clothes and moved the kayak up because the water was still rising and I was afraid that our shelter would flood. The next morning the river was in flood, the Class V rapids were impassable, and now I had to portage two boats. It was not easy for Theresa either; she had to climb over house size rocks, around cliffs and over logs using

mainly her good arm. We reached a cliff where portaging was not a really good option, but the rapids were reasonable; we got back in our boats. She was back in her boat and started running harder drops. Once she flipped, tried a roll, flipped again, and then rolled on her left side. I was scared but she nodded that her shoulder was fine.

We reached a rapid where two years previously Stephanie had swam. BJ went to save her, dropped in a hole, and swam. Kevin took care of Stephanie's boat while I chased BJ's boat. Kevin and Dean came down to help me with the boat. BJ walked and swam down to catch up to us. The four most inexperienced boaters were behind; I walked up to see how they were doing and realized they were coming down solo, not in a group. From the opposite shore I pointed the far right route to Kim and signalled her to show the route to the next boat. Stephanie did not get the message and went down the second channel; she flipped



*Dave Collins on Chile's Michimahuida River on a previous trip.*  
**Photo by Theresa Landman**

# WILDERNESS RIVERS



*Dave Collins in the Michimahuida's continuous whitewater.*

Photo by Theresa Landman

and got rodeoed, she got shoved in an undercut and went under the rock, then popped up downstream. Kevin chased the boat. The girls started crying, they wanted out but everybody knew: there is only one way out of the Michimahuida.

Theresa and I worked our way down avoiding holes; no rocks were showing since everything

was buried under the flood water.

We reached the bridge at 10:30 am. The van with Olivier was waiting for us. The Chilean shuttle driver had notified the Carabineros (Chilean police). We arrived at the cop shop and they told us that a helicopter was on its way to rescue us. It took us 10 minutes to make them realize that we were out and did not need to be rescued. They were amazed and really helpful. As it turned out the helicopter could not fly due to the bad weather which did not clear up for a couple of days. The carabineros had tried walking in but realized that it is impossible.

Remote rivers are remote and we all know the risks. The beauty of the river is well worth it.

Michimahuida mi amor, if you could talk how many more stories would you tell us?

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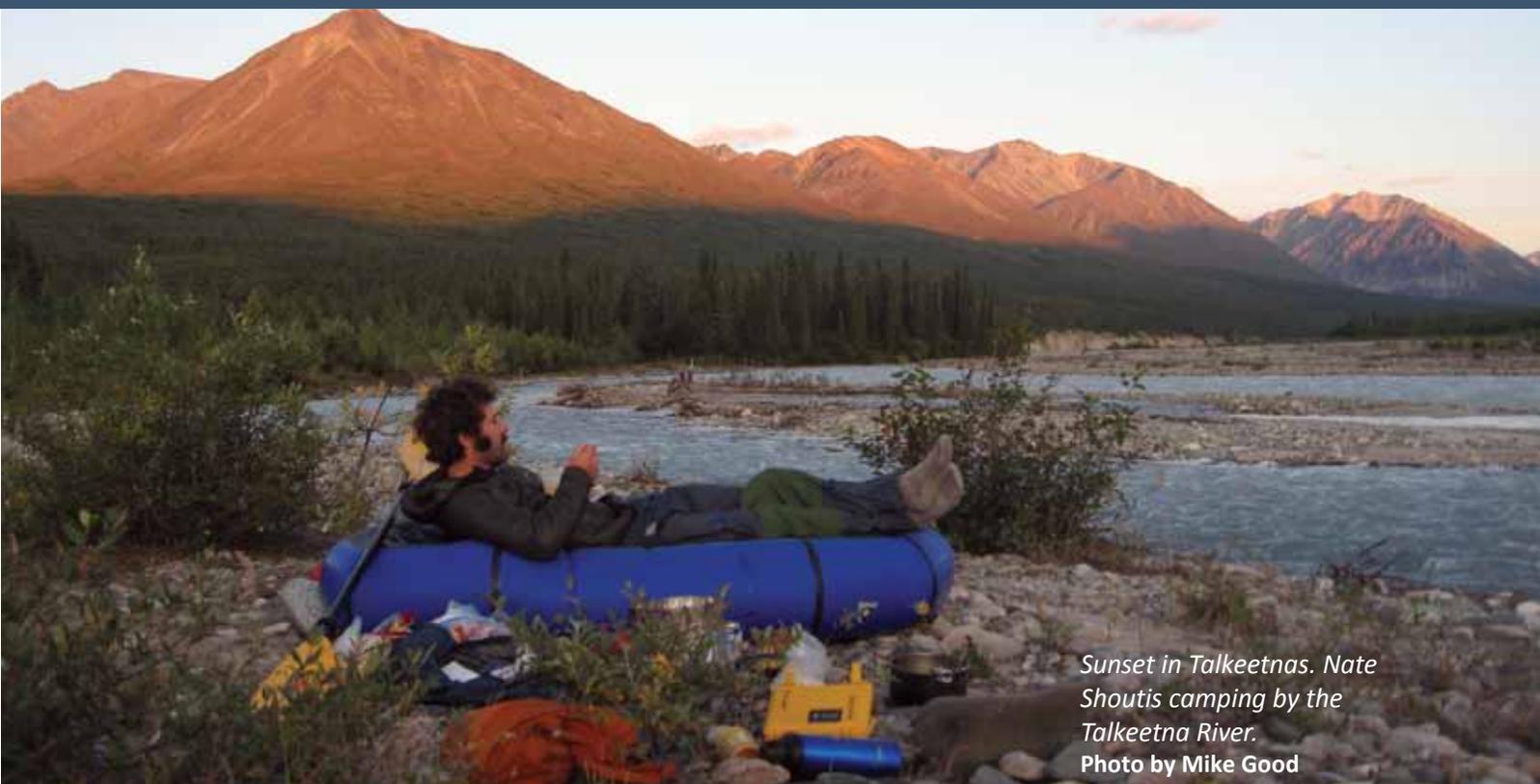
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## DETOUR ON THE TALKEETNA BY MIKE GOOD



*Sunset in Talkeetnas. Nate Shoutis camping by the Talkeetna River.  
Photo by Mike Good*

“**H**ERE WE GO!” Nate hollered as he pushed off from the gravel bar. Instantly, he was swept downstream by the swift current. I followed a short distance behind admiring the breathtaking views all around us.

Yesterday, our first day of paddling, was quite easy. The swift but rapid-free current carried us 25 miles in less than 6 hours. Today, the carefree section of river ended and the canyon began.

As we floated around the next river bend, we immediately saw where the canyon walls rose high above the river. Nate and I cheered and laughed with excitement and anticipation for the approaching rapids.

The Talkeetna canyon boasts 12 miles of nearly continuous Class III-IV whitewater set against a stunning backdrop of tall granite cliffs covered with thick green vegetation sprouting from every fertile speck of dirt.

“This place is beautiful!” I called out while swiveling my head around to gaze at the

surroundings. Nate nodded, his eyes fixed ahead on where the river gradient increased and the canyon officially began.

The first few rapids were easy Class III wave trains. The big, splashy waves made for easy lines and fun times. This was good because we were running these rapids in packrafts. I am primarily a kayaker and with only a few days in a packraft I did not feel quite as confident as I would in a kayak.

It is worth mentioning that packrafts are very different than kayaks. They are lightweight and portable; they weigh around five pounds and are easily deflated and stuffed into backpacks. Unfortunately, the packraft is more like a bathtub than a kayak; while they turn quickly, they are slow and bulbous. Later in the day, I discovered how these weaknesses can really inhibit a boater.

Gradually, the canyon walls rose high above our heads and the water necked down into a single, narrow channel. The gradient continued to increase, speeding up the

already swift current and the waves grew in size and ferocity.

At the next rapid, the river made a few turns and disappeared out of sight. The left riverbank was comprised of tall, dark granite cliffs that dropped straight into the river’s murky current. The right riverbank had a small gravel beach where we landed to scout the rapid. Scouting is imperative to being a successful packrafter and always a good idea when paddling a new river.

Scampering up the steep slope, we were able to walk along the rim and gaze at the rapid lying below. It looked easy enough. Simply paddle hard river left, punch a small curling wave and avoid the big hole on the right. Unfortunately, the cliffs lining the left side of the river looked like they could be undercut.

Walking a little further, we caught a glimpse of the next rapid called The Sluice Box.

“Dude, this is sweet,” I said, pointing towards The Sluice Box.

# WILDERNESS RIVERS



*Nate Shoutis entering the Talkeetna River Canyon in his packraft.*  
Photo by Mike Good

“Yea, we should run a few laps on that rapid for sure,” Nate replied. This plan sounded great but we had to get to The Sluice Box first.

I hiked back to the packrafts, glancing casually at the first rapid with the big hole.

“No big deal,” I thought. Nate hiked down below the first rapid to video and set safety.

Pushing off from the gravel bar, I pointed my bow upstream and paddled hard across the swift current holding a steep ferry angle. Snapping a glance over my right shoulder, I clearly saw my line. Digging my paddle deep into the slate gray water, I spun my bow downstream for my approach. As the curling wave got closer, I took a few deep, hard strokes to punch my way over the wave. It was not enough. The curling wave snatched the bulbous bow of the packraft and crashed me into the hole. The packraft flipped over quickly in the mighty re-circulating current, dumping me into the frigid glacial water.

Breaking the surface of the water, I swam towards the packraft which was now floating downstream. Nate was perched

on a boulder holding the video camera. His throw rope tied neatly around his waist. Struggling in the water, I managed to flip the packraft over and tried to climb back into the cockpit. As I slithered up on the side tube of the packraft, it flipped upside down again.

I looked at Nate, expecting to get hit with the rope soon. He was still holding the video camera. The current quickly took me out of throw rope range. I was on my own. Again, I tried to flip my raft and get back into the cockpit but it was to no avail.

The clock was ticking. The distance between me and the undercut rock wall was closing quickly. I absentmindedly let go of the packraft for a split second; the raft caught a small boil line that paused its movement downstream while I was swept away.

“Aw, crap!” I breathed through clenched teeth. My words were swallowed up by the roar of the river. The undercuts were only a few feet behind where I was swimming. Above the undercuts lay a crease of boils in the water. These boils are made by the current hitting and deflecting off the

cliffs. These boils sucked me closer to the undercut cliffs. My swimming turned to flailing in the water. The boils started to pull me down in the current. I swam hard, barely keeping my head above the surface.

It was precarious situation. Somehow, I was able to miss the undercuts and get away from the boils. Unfortunately, I was now swimming in the entrance of The Sluice Box. Waiting patiently at the bottom of the rapid was a large undercut boulder. The main flow of current bashed up against the boulder’s large girth creating a nasty pillow that would surely push any swimmer into the undercut.

“Get to the bank now,” I heard myself yell. Swimming hard to the left side of the river, I found a small gravel bar. Dragging myself out of the water and onto its rough gravel surface I gasped for air and momentarily enjoyed being out of danger.

Now that I was safe, my thoughts returned to the location of my packraft. Returning to stand in the river, I waded out as far as I could in the eddy hoping to be able to snatch my packraft before it went downstream. Helplessly, I watched as it floated amiably by, just out of reach.

Running out of the water, I watched as my raft, loaded with all my gear, ran The Sluice Box and bashed into the undercut rock before continuing downstream. The ice cold water sapped my energy but I summoned all my strength and climbed up the mountainside weaving my way through the brush along the cliff that followed the river. I watched in agony as my raft drifted out of sight. Needless to say, I felt totally out of control and helpless.

Unfortunately, it was more than a feeling. There was no way I could keep up with the packraft while bushwhacking along the canyon rim.

Not knowing if Nate had seen me get out of the river, I returned to the beach and

waited. It felt like forever until he paddled around the corner.

“Is it gone?” he yelled over the roar of the water. I nodded.

He paddled hard through the Sluice Box and out of sight. I retraced my steps up the cliff and followed bear trails along the rim of the canyon. Traveling as fast as the brush and terrain allowed, I pushed on, trying to keep my spirits up. I yelled often to warn bears of my approach. The mountainside was loaded with blueberry bushes and piles of bear scat. I felt slightly unnerved by the obvious presence of such large carnivorous creatures.

Once, while hiking, my group had not been yelling loud enough to warn bears of our approach. As we pushed through the brush alongside a large river, very much like what I was doing currently, our half hearted bear calls were drowned out by the roar of the river. As we stepped into a very small clearing, we distinctly heard a low menacing growl. On the other side of the clearing, hidden by the brush, was a grizzly bear. Now, I was hiking alone with no form of bear protection. I did not want a repeat experience.

My thoughts bounced between bears, lost packraft and Nate solo paddling. What if Nate doesn't catch my raft? What if Nate swims and loses his raft? Why didn't Nate just throw the rope when I swam? What if I lose all my gear? What if I have to solo hike through 40 miles of bear territory back to civilization?

“Stay positive,” I told myself. “Worrying and what ifs do not help.”

The travel on foot was difficult and slow going. A narrow ravine slicing down one of the cliffs allowed me to slide down to the river. I peeked out of the thick undergrowth and looked both downstream and upstream for Nate. I contemplated swimming to gain some time but the icy cold waters persuaded me to keep hiking. Even with full dry gear and warm air temperatures, the water was unbearably cold.

Climbing back up the ravine, I continued to follow the canyon rim calling out for bears. The river snaked around bends and the current, though devoid of serious rapids in this stretch, remained swift. The Sluice Box was now out of sight behind me and Nate was still nowhere to be seen. I had been hiking hard for about an hour and figured that I covered a little less than a mile. The brush slowed my pace but I needed to

find an easier way through this terrain or I would become burned out.

Occasionally, I stumbled upon well-matted bear trails that traveled along the rim. These trails would always weave and wind through the brush before disappearing as quickly as they appeared. When hiking on these trails, I could catch glimpses of the river below. It always looked the same: swift current, walled in river banks and no sign of Nate.

The cliffs broke again and I took the opportunity to slide down to the river. Wading out into the river, I was able to see farther downstream than I had been able to up on the rim. Slowly, I got the suspicion that I might be spending a cold, lonely night out in the Talkeetna Mountains.

My river booties' ribbed underside, while great for stepping on river rocks, proved to be almost useless when walking along the steep mountainside. I slipped and fell numerous times, tearing my dry pants on the brush. My morale was slowly falling but I pushed onward shouting all the louder for bears and Nate.

Another hour had passed. I reached a spot where I could catch a glimpse at the river below. The current was just as swift as before. Ahead, the river made a hard 90 degree turn to the right. I was on the left bank, meaning I had to walk a longer distance to cover less river miles than if I was on the right bank.

Noticing a small gravel bar below my highpoint, I descended to where I might be able to swim across the river and be on the short side of the curve. Not only would this mean less walking, it would also put me on the right riverbank which appeared to be flatter and more accommodating to hiking. My vantage point did not provide

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*Nate Shoutis navigating some boogey water on the Talkeetna.*

**Photo by Mike Good**



# WILDERNESS RIVERS



*Around the bend. Nate Shoutis approaching yet another rapid on the Talkeetna.*

**Photo by Mike Good**

me with a good view of the far riverbank but it was worth investigating.

Scampering down the slope to the gravel bar, I found the current to be much swifter than it appeared from above. Slowly, I waded into the current. The far shore seemed to have no gravel bars and the current against its banks was as strong and violent as the middle of the river. It would be a long, cold, dangerous swim. I decided it was not worth the risk.

Desperately, I clawed my way back up the mountainside to the top of the cliff and restarted my walk of solitude. Sighing in dejection, I trudged onward. Occasionally, I glanced over to the far bank, coveting the easier terrain. But the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. Regardless of which side of the river was easier to hike, I was on the South side of the river, and until a better option was available I had to deal with the trials and tribulations of the South riverbank.

The bear trail I had been hiking on vanished and the brush closed around me slowing my pace to that of a racing snail. Nate had been gone for a long time chasing my packraft. I needed to find him soon or we might not be able to reconnect.

Odd how these things happen. Earlier in the day, I had been the master of my domain, charging through the rapids with ease. One

mistake had put me hiking alongside the river in ill functioning footwear, keeping one eye out for hungry bears with miles of terrain to cover until the first hint of civilization.

There in the distance! It was another gravel bar. It looked short, thin and was about 400 feet below me. After a short weighing of pros and cons and being exhausted from bushwhacking I crawled down.

On a previous trip with friends backpacking in the Wrangell Mountains, some of us chose to stay high in the brush rather than descend to hike on a short, thin gravel bar. My group stayed in the brush and we arrived at camp three hours later than the group that hiked on the gravel bar.

Sliding down the slope, I discovered another bear trail. The trail weaved through the brush in the general direction of the gravel bar. I tried to call out loudly for bears but my voice was strained and hoarse.

“Mikel!”

It was Nate’s voice. He was walking upstream on the edge of the river and had heard me yelling for bears. I burst out of the undergrowth onto the banks of the river feeling quite relieved. To my surprise, Nate was dragging my packraft behind him. I was never so happy to see that green hulled bathtub in my life.

“Where’s my pack?” I asked hesitantly. Indeed, my backpack was no longer lashed on top of the packraft.

“Don’t worry. It’s downstream with my raft.” He replied calmly.

I said a quick prayer of thanks and we both jumped into the raft and paddled downstream to where the rest of the gear was stashed.

Collapsing on the beach, I spread out my arms and soaked in the warm sunlight. I was overjoyed to be reunited with my buddy, gear, and boat. Eventually, I pulled off my wet gear and laid it on the rocks in a vain attempt to dry it.

Fortunately, the rest of the canyon went smoothly. I regained my shaken packrafting confidence in the fun rapids that followed.

Before drifting off to sleep that night, I mentally reviewed the day and realized how thankful I was for being there in a warm dry sleeping bag. Mistakes are made, accidents happen but in the end I learned two lessons: Never underestimate any rapid, and video footage really is not that important.

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## BACKPACKING: ADDING NEW DIMENSION TO WILDERNESS EXPLORATION

BY NICK BORELLI

I'VE BEEN A boater for over 20 years, the result of an amazing transformation for a kid who failed 5 summers in a row of swimming lessons and was afraid of water. But someone talked me into a commercial rafting trip on California's Kings River and I fell in love just like that. Within a few weeks, I made it possible for the local rafting store to close early after purchasing a bucket boat, paddles, PFD, helmets and all the trimmings. My boating resume grew from Class III to IV and some V over the years as I racked up many of the runs in Cassidy's *Western Whitewater*. I was a day tripper...and I have distinct memories of trying to figure out why people would want to camp on the river when they could look forward to gourmet food and bottled beverages at the take-out and live the life of cushy air mattress goodness in the nearby campground, complete with running water and pit toilets!

I liked to sample the river quickly, getting as many miles and rapids in as time would allow during the day. A first transformation occurred around 15 years ago when I really got into Inflatable Kayaks, and quickly made them my craft of choice. That transformation was significant as it opened up runs I could not do in a raft (read, creeks) as well as running rivers I'd done before at lower flows and opening up new and technical lines. Moving from California to Washington exposed me to new rivers, creeks and a year-round season. It took a while to figure out that a dry suit is standard and not optional equipment in half of the Washington whitewater season, but that coupled with my love for rivers transformed me again into a four season boater. The IK also meant I could fly to venues with all my gear (ahh...the days of no baggage fees) and I did several



*Shaun Riedinger and Nick Borelli IKing the Gila (NM).*

**Photo by Brian Vogt**

ventures into Colorado with the help of this newfound mobility.

At this point in my career I was beginning to spend as much time looking into side hikes and other points of interest as I was on the rivers I ran, and they became integral to a great trip. Ruins, historical sites, old mining relics, geology, hot springs were getting a lot of my attention. Many of these opportunities and the runs that had those features were way too long for day trips. I started wondering, how can I get to see these runs? Enter Brian Vogt into my boating life. He was a guy who grew up on raft supported trips on the Rogue, John Day and, San Juan and knew what those experiences were like. He was very new to IK-ing when I met him and we soon began to boat together and trade experiences. Right off the bat, he thought it impossible that I had not done self-support overnight river trips.

So the next transformation was to unfold, as we planned a trip down Idaho's Bruneau River. But before I go there, I need to tell you that I had a serious weight problem. Not one that Jenny Craig or South Beach was going to fix either. Overnight and camping gear in an IK? A couple of minutes in the garage with some old school dry bags, my existing gear and a few cam straps and it became clear that a significant monetary setback from a REI visit was needed to get ready for this trip. I figured out a way to do it, but only if I had a raft to put all of my food in, along with some other gear. Brian, in his infinite wisdom to get me on this river, agreed. So Brian took on this huge load, and I mean huge, to support me and a friend to get down the Bruneau. Did I like it? It was amazing. Watching the sun dip down the canyon walls at night, the smell and crackle of the sagebrush fires, getting on the river in early morning with the amazing lighting...I was in love with whitewater rivers all over again! The concept of "lay over" day was a sharp contrast to my old

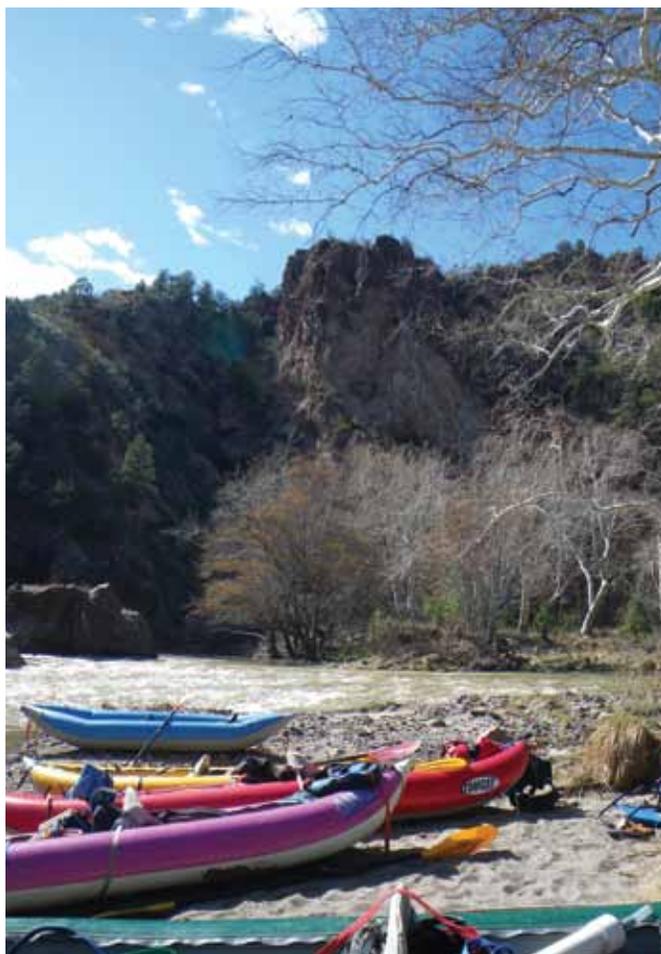
# WILDERNESS RIVERS

blitz mentality, but all of a sudden it made so much sense! Why hurry and leave when you can slow down to the river's pace and watch an entire day and night unfold before your eyes. We stayed riverside at Cave Draw...and I was thinking, wow wouldn't it be amazing to camp up there in the grotto by the caves? But alas, it was a mile up from the river.

That trip ended but then many overnights ensued over the next few years...the Rogue, Illinois, Deschutes, MF Flathead, EF Humptulips, Salt, Selway, and Verde to name a few. Over that time we perfected our goal to keep the food on the trips top notch. We converted a few dry bags to IK coolers and used ice so that we could have a few days of fresh meat and an ultra light grill for big meals, and then trail the menu off to shelf-stable foods and then even dehydrated meals at the end. It worked very well. We got our gear footprint down far enough to even carry camp chairs, which has raised a few eyebrows from other kayakers making their way down the river. It was then Brian suggested we go up another notch after seeing some cool featherweight backpacks online. Why not combine an overnight hike with a self-support mutli-day IK trip? I loved hiking, but hiking on a whitewater trip usually made for a bad memory... either with a long put-in or take-out, or worse, a *hike* out. But, I love hiking and combining the two activities would have been an impossible and laughable suggestion even four years ago. But the tuning and continual downsizing of our gear made it sound possible. Doable. So this spring at a 60-year high flow on New Mexico's Gila River, we put-in on the Wilderness run with hopes to base camp at the Turkey Creek confluence and then BackIKpack six miles up the creek to some amazing hot springs.

When you tell people in March that you are going whitewater kayaking in New Mexico, you should expect some funny looks. Most people don't think of New Mexico in that way. The Wilderness section is an eye-opener for sure. The Gila Wilderness itself has the distinction of being crowned the world's first wilderness area way back in June of 1924. Even getting there was very special...the twisty mountain roads through

of majestic white Sycamore and various pine including Apache and Chihuahua. The camping was very good, especially when we got to the confluence of Turkey Creek where you can find huge shaded campsites connected by fine sand trails, with sites on both sides of the creek. The party kept an eye out for the famed Gila Monster while selecting tent sites, but the shy beast made no appearances on our behalf.



*Gila River Camp.*  
**Photo by Nick Borelli**

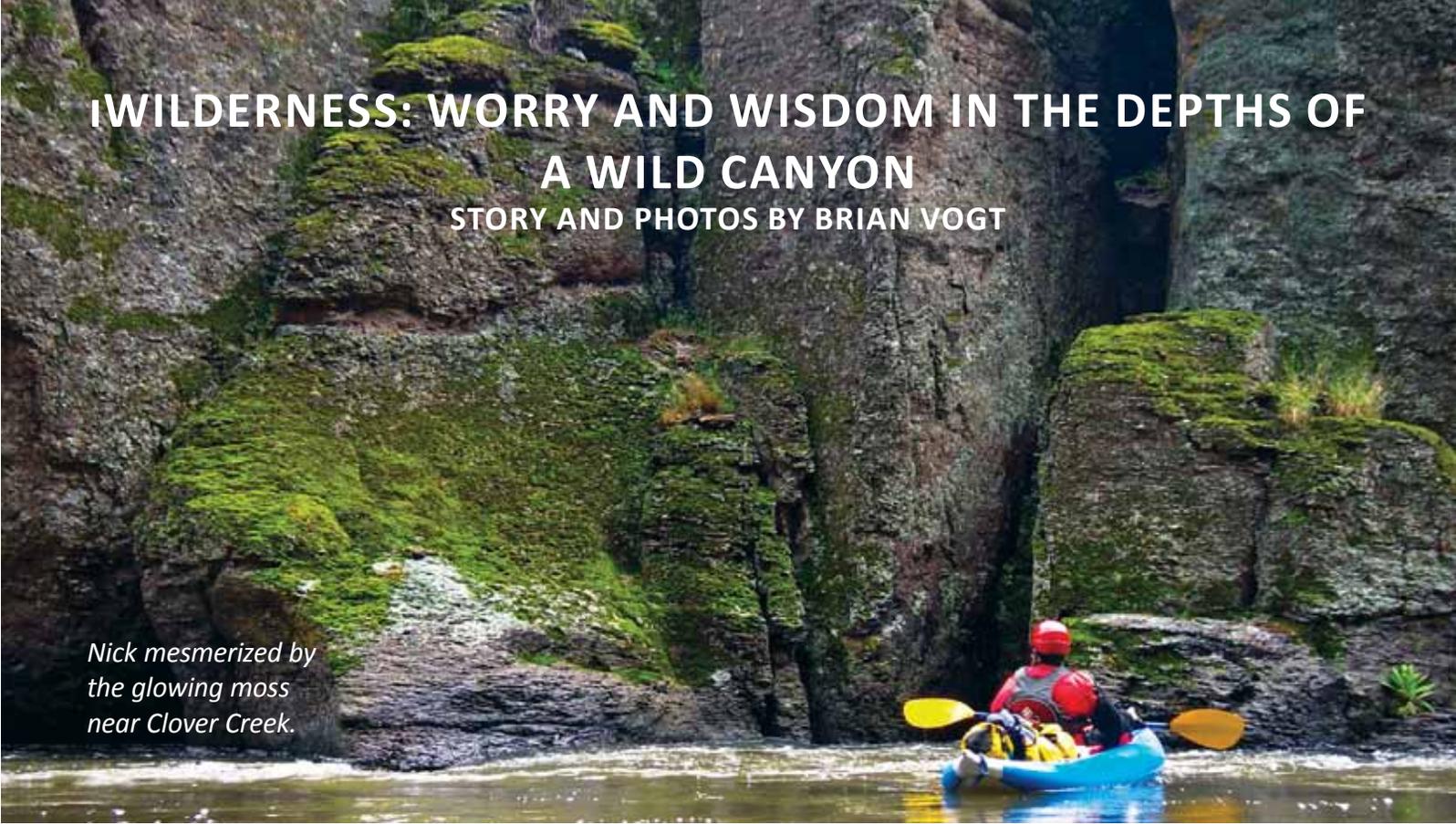
the Mogollon Mountains, the recent snow on the ground, which would be providing exciting flows for our adventure. We put-in on a beautiful day and were amazed by the great canyons and varied scenery. Unlike many rivers which hold a consistent flora, the Gila gave us alternating scenes

Four of us, out of a group of seven, decided to participate in the goal of backIKpacking up Turkey Creek. The looks from those who stayed at the base camp revealed a bit of amusement. Why we wouldn't just relax and enjoy a layover day? Part of me was thinking that, until we got started. After doing the 6th creek crossing with my pack on a beautiful day in a seldom seen side canyon, I could feel the next transformation taking place as we made our way to a spot where likely never an IKer has put down a tent. We had a tricky crossing at a tight pinch in the river at a small falls that required some contortionist gecko climbing in a slot of river left. Around a few corners the river ran swift and shallow over red bedrock for over a quarter mile. We took off our shoes and walked and stood in the creek for over an hour. It was cool, smooth and just so beautiful, that no one wanted to stop. After that we found that most of the hot springs were under

water at the higher than normal flows on Turkey Creek, but we still found one to get into that was warm. We set up camp. After the rush of experiences and success of the day, I knew I had a date in the near future, backIKpacking at Cave Draw on the Bruneau, contemplating the next goal and transformation...

# WILDERNESS: WORRY AND WISDOM IN THE DEPTHS OF A WILD CANYON

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BRIAN VOGT



*Nick mesmerized by  
the glowing moss  
near Clover Creek.*

FROM WHERE I'M standing, I can't see the boats. Sometimes on a river, that's unwelcome. It's deliberate this time, as we've stopped to hike up to a cave somewhere above Sheep Creek in the first sheer-walled gorge of the newly designated Wild Bruneau River. Its smooth walls very steep, this tall narrow alcove looks out on the river as do countless other caves, spires, hoodoos, grottoes, springs and arches in this canyon. Ahead, a perennially ungrazed slope vibrant with native grasses ends abruptly where the rain can no longer reach. Parched by the steep walls, the dry dust and rubble of the cave floor climbs less steeply back into an open cavern. From the mouth of this cavern, I can see not only the opening I've just climbed, but another second room with its own opening—and there they are: our boats, safe and secure in a bed of grass far below.

This is the fourth time I've floated the Bruneau. It's the third time I've run it self-support in my IK. It's the second time I've done it without also running the Jarbidge. But this is a special trip, because we plan to backpack from our boats up a side canyon so beautiful, it inspired us to change how we approach wilderness self support.

Last night, after dealing with the shuttle road into Indian Hot Springs, we floated the short section of canyon down to Cave Draw, a favorite camp of mine. Over a quick snack, drysuits were stashed, drybags sealed up, and light backpacks filled. We were actually going to do it—stash our river gear and spend the night exploring as far up Cave Draw as we could get. The hike isn't a long one, but the differences from the river camp are sublime. First, there is the wildlife, with birds filling the air with wing and song. Then there is the silence. One forgets, spending all that time near the river's dull roar how truly huge silence can feel. Lastly, there's the intimacy of a tight side canyon, our voices echoing from chamber to chamber, and no one within miles.

The Bruneau will always be a special river for me, as it has taught me so much. I can remember our first trip through here, Nick and I trying out a multiday trip. None of us on that first trip had ever done the river before. I had a bucket boat, a 1978 Avon, bought used from my college's outdoor program, laden with a pile of gear taller than my head, no less. All day-trip boaters, no one else on the trip had ever traveled self-support before. This was to be an

introduction, a shakedown in anticipation of future adventures. At the put-in, I'm handed glass bottles of beer to pack. A canvas duffel bag. A paper bag from the liquor store, complete with receipt and packaging. I begin to question what I've gotten myself into, whether my skills can make this trip run smoothly enough to convince my friends to take more self-support trips in the future. One bad experience here, I expect, and it'll be back to day-trip purgatory.

At Kendall's Cave, I blew a very simple line and ended up bench-pressing the raft down into the water to force that huge gear load under the logs that sometimes come into play between the rock and the wall at the bottom. I learned a great lesson about reading raft lines from those set by kayakers without any gear, and I'm very glad to get away with nothing worse than a little bruised pride. We don't let it dampen our trip, though. We have plenty of time to explore and enjoy the stunning canyons and grottoes, including a layover day at Clover Creek. That trip has become the foundation upon which we have built some truly special memories—and great adventures.

# WILDERNESS RIVERS

Those memories are in all our minds as we finish exploring the many alcoves and nooks in the main cave area of Cave Draw, and settle in for dinner. Out comes the rum, the cheese, all the little luxuries that are so much more special in a place like this. Shaun has a special dessert treat. I play with the camera. Nick turns the stove off, the roaring jet of flame replaced with a deafening silence. We are all startled at how loud the stove is, against that backdrop of gentle wind and birdsong. Nick looks around, and says in hushed tones, “We actually did it.” It’s a special spot, and the luxury of lingering is one we savor, with the rum, as twilight settles in around us.

Our second trip down the Bruneau found us attempting to add the Jarbidge Canyon’s whitewater. We had four days, 500 cfs and 70 miles of river. It’s 35 degrees and snowing on a 4wheeler and Coors fueled wedding at the put-in. The second day, we boat from Cougar Creek on the Jarbidge

to Cave Draw on the Bruneau. That’s 25 miles, all the Class V and most of the Class III and IV on the entire river except 5-mile and Sevy Falls—including the long portage at Jarbidge Falls. It’s a long day by anyone’s standards. I will never forget the feeling of relief as we completed the portages and pushed boats back in to the water, eager for a hot meal and dry clothes only a few flat river miles away.

But the Bruneau wasn’t done teaching lessons. No sooner had we decided to run the last Class III drop of Jarbidge Falls than one fully loaded IK wrapped solidly midstream, stranding the boatman on a boulder. Two hours, a z-drag, and a lot of sweat later the boat was recovered. But we weren’t done yet. Nick’s boat had grazed a rock and slit an 18” tear in a tube. The pump was somewhere downstream, in a boat we hadn’t seen since starting to recover the pinned boat. Standing in a field of poison ivy, racked with nausea and diarrhea from

the previous night’s dinner, I remember Nick giving me a look that could have meant “WTF are we doing here?” or perhaps “I’ll take a pitcher of Sierra Nevada—TO GO!” We got the boat put back together and we made it down to Cave Draw, before dark, with all our people, all our boats, and all our gear dry. As we tucked into a well-earned steak and rum feast, then wandered up the mouth of Cave Draw to watch the bats chase their dinner, we all pondered the close calls we’d faced, and the grace we’d found in working out the problems. The Bruneau had taught us many lessons this day, about pace, about communication, and also about the consequences of gear choices: the premium on a light maneuverable boat, the value of trustworthy drybags, and the importance of teamwork and poise when things go wrong.

We awake in Cave Draw, silence still raining down upon us. We pack our gear and then wander as far up the steep, boulder-

*Shaun drifts through the still water of the Bruneau Canyon above Sheep Creek (ID).*



choked draw as we can, until our progress is stopped by a dry fall. A fantasy, this, to be so isolated and enveloped by the canyon. When we speak, if we speak at all, we speak quietly, careful not to disturb the serene peace that so fills the place. We'd done something we'd longed to do, but never really expected we'd attempt. We'd stayed a night in Cave Draw, backpacked from our boats, deep in a river canyon. As we worked our way back down to the river, anticipating more side hikes and exploration, I couldn't avoid the sudden, sheer happiness that flooded me, thinking that the Bruneau River—schoolmaster, muse, artist, and bully—was now a federally protected Wilderness, and a Wild River. These canyons, so steep livestock never defile their grassy benches, so unchanged from our previous floats, felt different in every way.

If ever a river deserved to be wild, surely it is the Jarbidge-Bruneau. Almost the whole boatable length of this river system and its commonly run tributaries is now protected as a national Wild River thanks to the Omnibus Lands Act of 2009. The creation of the new Jarbidge-Bruneau Wilderness Area grants critical protection to this unique and truly stunning canyon system.

Standing in the mouth of the cave after our hike from the river, I look out at our boats nestled in the grass. I take a moment to be thankful for this new protection for the Bruneau. Wilderness is such a valuable resource, so fundamental to my own personal values, my own sense of balance in the world. We set out for the wilderness eager for adventure, hungry for new challenges, and the wilderness always delivers—sometimes with more

than we are prepared to find. But then, that's the intrinsic value of wilderness: not what is there, but what you find when you venture forth.

So let me encourage you to dust off that old drybag, find your smallest tent, and pick a wilderness river, the longer, the better. Call your friends, and go. Lose yourself in the timeless infinity of moments that slide gracefully past, now longer as you watch the sunlight dance on the canyon walls, now shorter as you commit to the blind horizon line and the world seems to stop. Let the river wash over you, let its wild, timeless flow move you at its own pace. And may the wilderness take you, refresh and remake you, until only the joy of living amongst such wild beauty fills you, and your laughter echoes off the canyon walls.

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# WILDERNESS RIVERS

## FIRST SUCCESSFUL DESCENT OF THE UPPER MIDDLE FORK EEL RIVER

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAN MENTEN

*John Warner paddles through the Recon Gorge, Upper Middle Eel (CA).*

**L**OCATED SMACK-DAB IN the center of Northern California, the Middle Fork Eel River has remained an unexplored paddling destination due to its notorious reputation for flat water and sketchy locals. After two trips to the Middle Eel this spring, I believe that reputation is dead wrong. With beautiful scenery, easy access, reliable spring flows, and two of the longest wilderness trips in California, the Middle Eel offers bona fide adventure.

The classic Class II-III (IV) 30-mile wilderness run was first descended solo by Bob Ehrman in 1952. This section has been included in the Cassidy/Calhoun guidebook, the Stanley/Holbek guidebook and Dick Schwind's 1974 *West Coast River Touring*. The river descriptions varied from "don't sound very enticing" to "run every spring classic." References to the ever-changing Coal Mine Falls added a major hazard that deflected paddlers' interest. The advent of self-bailing rafts, better equipment and whitewater techniques have enabled the current generation of boaters to enjoy this section of river much more easily than our predecessors could.

Likewise, on May 2nd, 1993 a group of kayakers attempted a first descent on the upper Middle Fork, which flows from the Yolla-Bolly wilderness. This trip resulted

in the fatality of young Czech paddling phenomenon, Jaroslav Mach, forcing his group to abandon their trip and generating a bad reputation for the river. There is literally no information regarding this 22-mile stretch of river or of the attempted first descent, merely a tragic legend. After one of the wettest Northern California springs on record, we decided it was time to revisit the Upper Middle Eel.

### History: Round Valley Reservation

The drive to the Middle Eel takes you through the beautiful Round Valley. Round Valley is culturally and geologically unique. The original inhabitants of the area were the Yuki tribe, who established themselves thousands of years ago. The Yuki lived in this harmonious setting for millennia until the arrival of white, gold-seeking settlers in 1854. Conflicts escalated in 1856, and the entire Middle Eel Watershed was designated "Nome Cult Reservation" to 'protect' local tribes. Probably due to its remote setting and a lack of gold-bearing rocks. By 1864 however, the reservation was reduced to 1/5 its original size and became known as the Round Valley Indian Reservation.

Because the land was considered to be of little use to the white man, other

displaced American Indian tribes from all around Northern California were forced to relocate here. This includes the Nomlacki, Wylaki, Lassik, Sinkyone, Pomo (Including Cahto, Kabeyo, Shodakai, Yokayo, Shokawa, Shanel, Kashaya, and Habenapo among others), Wappo, Concow Maidu, Colusa, and Achumawi. These tribes were relocated here prior to reducing the reservation size. The Nome Cult Trail was named after 461 Native Americans from various tribes who were forced to march a veritable "trail of tears," guarded by soldiers. Leaving from Chico on September 4, 1863 they marched across the central valley and over Mendocino Pass, reaching the Eel River Camp (the Black Butte River Confluence) on September 17. The trip resulted in 32 deaths, a few escapees, and 150 natives left behind, too sick to continue. Men, women and children were all forced to make this 100-mile march to the Nome Cult Reservation that finished a day later. Following these events, the Round Valley Reservation remained relatively unaffected for nearly a century, until water politics forced the re-appearance of government bureaucrats and legislation.

### Geology: Yolla-Bolly Mountains:

The Northern Yolla-Bolly Range marks the southern terminus of the Klamath



Mountains geologic sub-province. The higher peaks are volcanic with abundant granitic and basaltic formations. However, the southern extent of the range through which the M.F. Eel flows contains almost entirely coastal-origin metamorphic rocks. This river has some of the most unique rocks I have ever seen, from gorge walls lined with red and green chert to sandstone bedrock and enormous calcite boulders. In fact, the most similar scenery to that of the Middle Fork Eel lies along the coast. Though we expected to find menacing undercuts, man-eating sieves and gorged-out mandatory rapids, the river turned out to be amazingly clean and runnable. Passing through a sandstone bedrock gorge on one side, with a grassy hillside on the other is an amazing and beautiful experience. Nearly all of these grassy slopes are the result of active earth flow, rather than past logging practices.

This river is prone to massive high-water events, clearing the channel of any wood hazards. This also results in unstable rapids that may be likely to change annually. During the massive flood on December 22, 1964, the estimated discharge of the Middle Eel at Dos Rios was 270,000 cfs. This major event resulted in massive changes throughout the watershed. Early paddlers recalled, 'all the intermediate and

advanced runs on the Eel became easier by about one class. This resulted from massive deposition of sand and gravel into the river channel, which were the byproduct of countless landslides caused by clear-cutting. In fact, studies have shown that the average depth of pools in the Eel River watershed has decreased, reducing the abundant cold-water refuge that native Summer Steelhead and Spring Chinook Salmon require.

### **Eel River High Dam**

The Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Water Resources proposed the Eel River High Dam in April 1968. Located just upstream from Dos Rios, the impoundment was to be 730 feet high, storing 7,600,000 acre-feet, dwarfing Lake Shasta and Trinity Lake as the largest water storage in California. The impoundment would have drowned the entire Round Valley, displacing 1,500 people and was eventually abandoned due to the unstable nature of the geology, the lack of flood control on the main stem Eel, but mostly due to strong efforts by local recreationists and conservationists who understood the cost of losing an enormous salmon fishery. Two separate plans existed to transport water via tunnel to the Central Valley. Local Native Americans and conservationists battled the proposition, contributing to

its failure. In May 1969, Governor Ronald Reagan announced his position against the dam, advising the DWR to pursue alternative plans. This action protected the longest free flowing Class III wilderness river trip in Northern California.

### **Lower Classic Run**

This 30-mile stretch has been described in several guidebooks and is considered an excellent wilderness float, culminating with a large crux rapid, Coal Mine Falls. The first 20 or so miles are generally flat water, though the scenery, solitude, wildlife and excellent campsites are abundant and great. Though some work is required to portage gear and/or line rafts through the rapid, experienced boatmen have run it without consequence. The Middle Eel has reliable spring flows, even in dry winters, as the 7,000-foot Yolla-Bolly Mountains provide abundant spring melt. It has always been a huge irony that California paddlers make the long trek to Idaho for wilderness trips when we have excellent prospects close to home. No permit is required, and there are fewer people on the river than on the many well-known Idaho wilderness runs.

In April of 1970 Dick Schwind organized a two-day boat-in to protest all plans to dam the river (one of his favorites). Eighty-

permitted by 

# Feather River Festival



## Friday, September 23, 2011

- Film Festival at Indian Jim School, 6 - 11 pm
- River Clean-up

21st Annual  
Chico Paddleheads  
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**AMERICAN**



## Saturday, September 24, 2011

- Releases at Rock Creek / Tobin
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## Sunday, September 25, 2011

- Releases at Rock Creek/Tobin
- Rescue and Safety Demos



North Fork Feather River, CA - Hwy. 70 - Free camping at Indian Jim School/Campground, 1 mile upstream of Tobin Resort. **More information at:** [www.chicopaddleheads.org](http://www.chicopaddleheads.org)

# WILDERNESS RIVERS

seven boaters in kayaks, open canoes and oar-rafts enjoyed the 30-mile run, to date probably the largest group ever to descend the run.

## Recon Run:

On May 22, I picked up my friend John Warner and headed south to check out the Middle Eel, flowing 2,000 cfs. at Dos Rios. We made the long haul through Laytonville, Covelo, and beyond the Black Butte River confluence to where it leaves the highway. Much to our dismay, 7 miles up the road we were stopped by a locked gate. After making the journey however, we were committed to getting on the water. On our drive back we found a forest service road that descended towards the river, and we followed it to the end. This put us at a beautiful campsite above the final Class III-IV gorge, 4.5 miles above the Black Butte. We were able to descend a gorgeous grassy hillside all the way to the river (1 mile hike) for an easy-access run with a bike shuttle to boot. This only whetted our thirst for more adventure in the drainage. On our way out, John asked the Ranger when the gate would be open, and he informed us it was supposed to be open, but the fire crew had unnecessarily locked it.

## Upper Goods: Day One

Two weeks passed, and we returned with a solid posse of five. Mike Lee, Orion Meredith, John Warner, Silent Ed and myself made the haul beyond Covelo to get the goods. I called the Forest Service office to check on road access and was told that the road to Indian Dick was open. This would allow us to reach the headwaters of the Middle Eel above its confluence with the North Fork of the Middle Fork (NFMF). The logistical plan was to break the run up into two sections, hiking out at Pothole Crossing where the road comes close to the river. This would allow us to paddle without loaded kayaks, as we were anticipating lots of portaging.

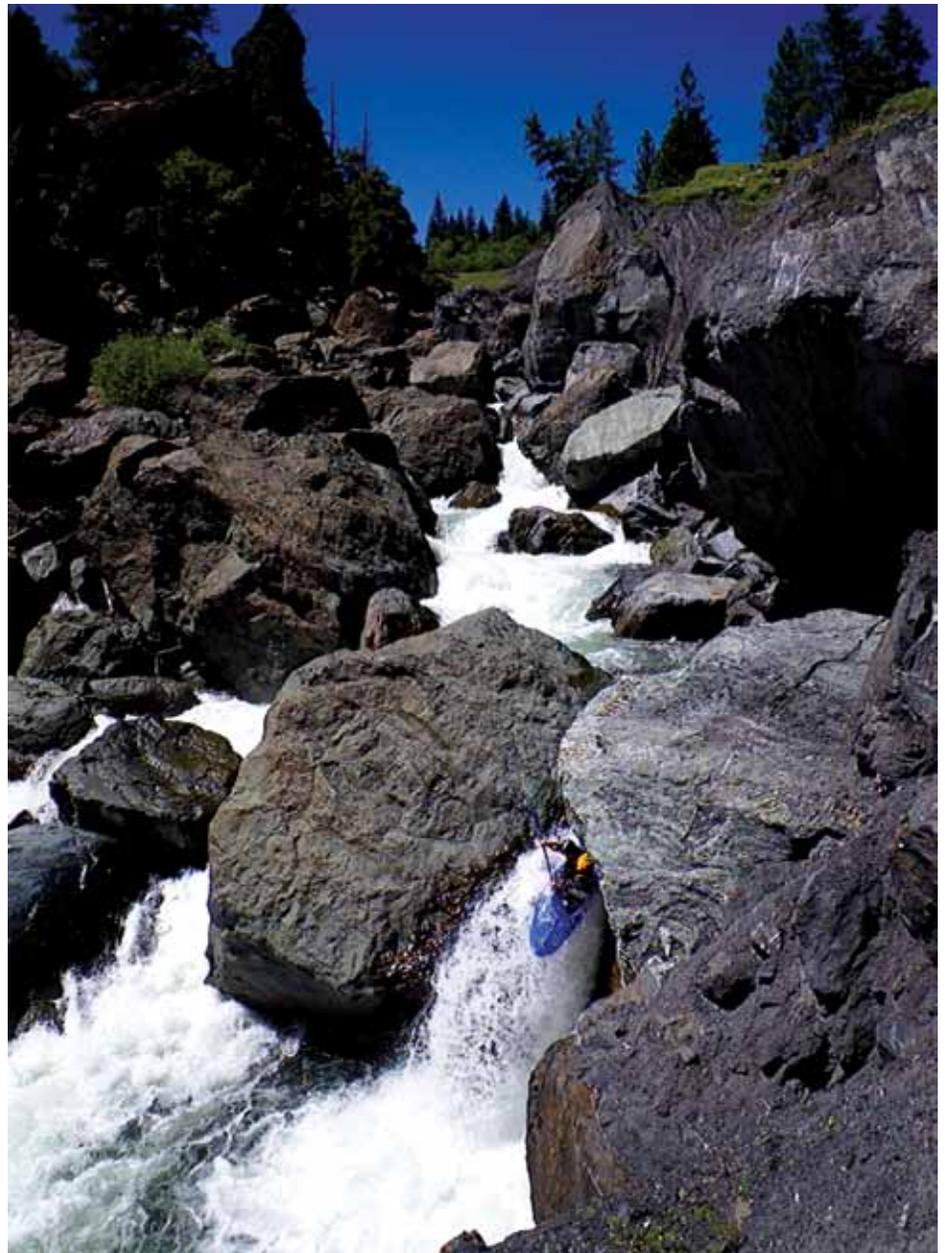
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*Ed launching Asa Bean Falls, Upper Middle Eel Day One.*

We made the long drive, eventually camping at Hammerhorn Lake. That first night the Scorpion King visited Orion, advising us to be on guard. We got a decently early start, setting shuttle, and arriving at Lucky Lake close to 8:30. This put us on the trail by 9, although we didn't reach the river until 11. We were excited for the reasonably early start as the ten-mile stretch averaged 105 feet per mile. This section required a 3-mile hike down a road and decent trail,

although we did note that the game trails are much more heavily traveled.

The first mile of paddling to the NFMF was small and creekly; approximately 200 cfs carried us through Class III-IV boulder gardens, culminating in a solid Class IV canyon above the confluence. The additional flow immediately opens up the riverbed, and after an easy mile of scenic water, we started dropping through continuous Class IV boulder gardens. The



# WILDERNESS RIVERS

canyon was incredibly open, and the river occasionally flowed around the base of enormous rock walls, despite an open grassy hillside along the other bank. After several fun miles of water and significant tributaries to add flow we arrived at Asa Bean Crossing. I recognized it immediately from a picture in the Wilderness Map and marveled at the stunning stretch of river that dropped through enormous sieves and house-sized boulders. Reminiscent of an Austrian landscape, we portaged through a field of waist-high grass. The ground was incredibly unstable, with cracks, fissures and slumps hidden amongst the grass. Lucky for us it wasn't totally moist shoe-robbing goo. Ed and John paddled the run-out from the portage that contained several large drops. Below here more fun rapids continue, including a major pinched out Class V drop that Ed and John paddled, until the gradient relaxed for a couple miles. By the time we reached Pothole Crossing it had been a long day on the water. The hike back to the road wasn't too difficult, as we

were able to follow game trails, and were happy not to be carrying our kayaks.

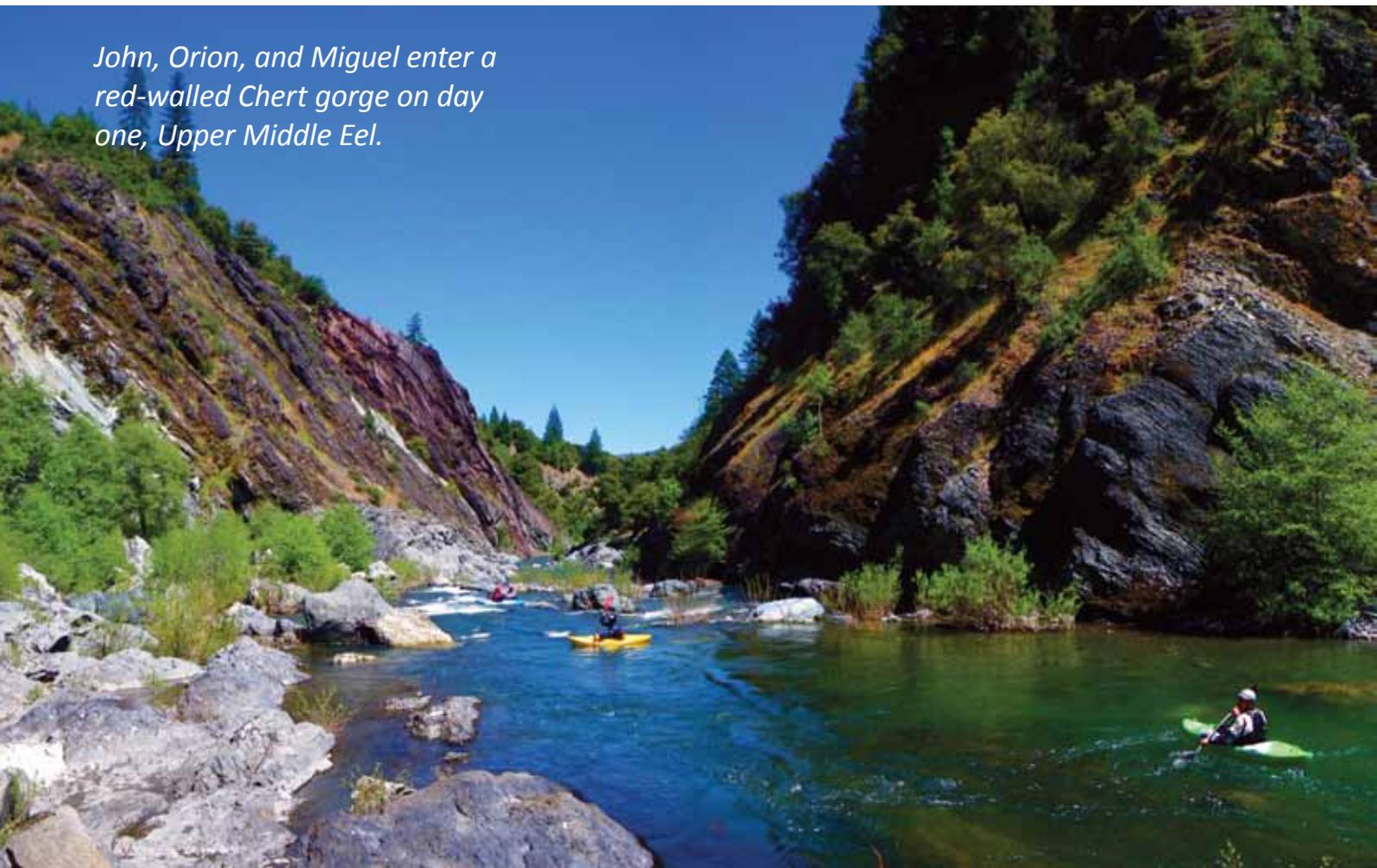
## Day Two:

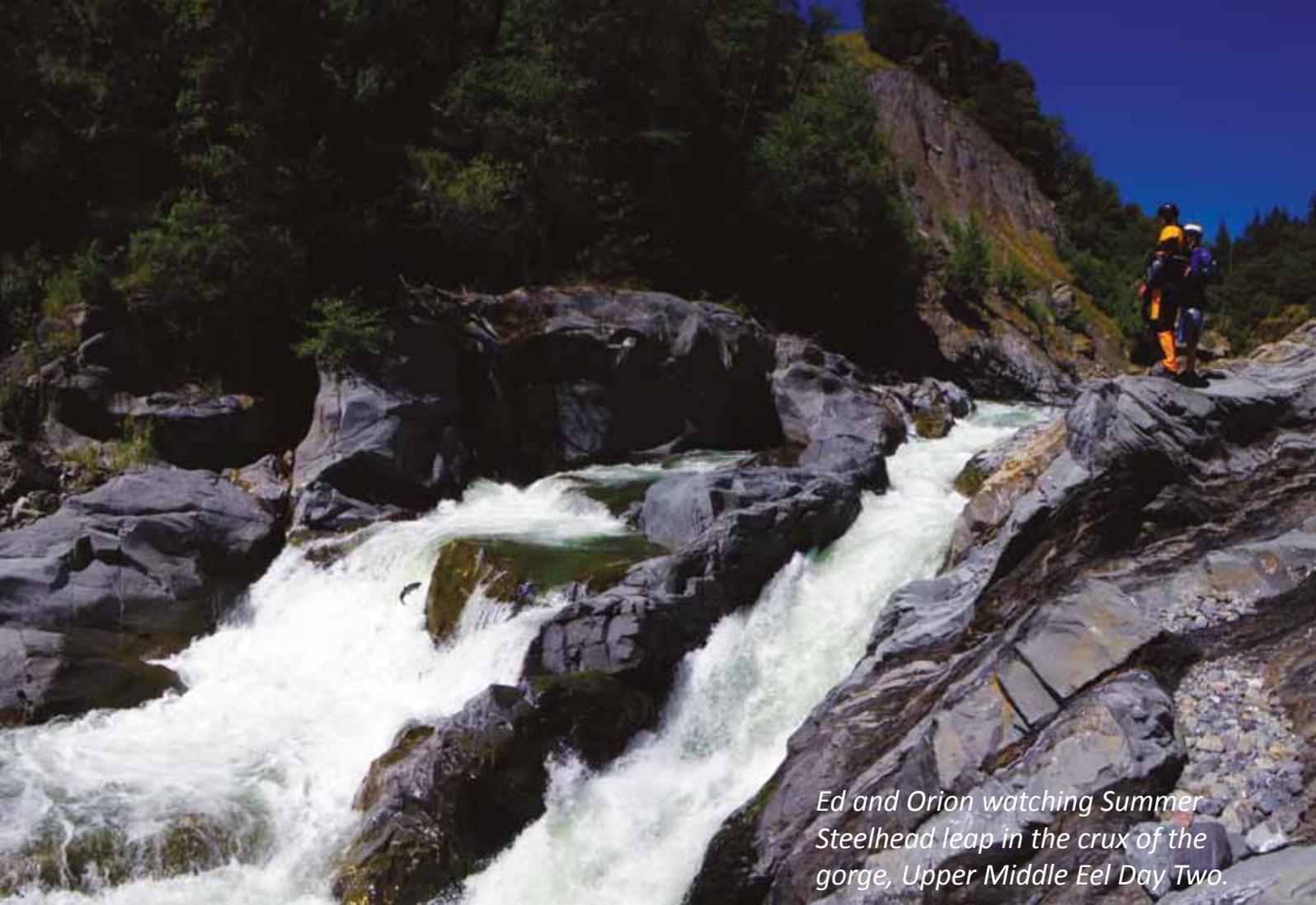
We camped at Hammerhorn Lake again, chowing down on food and going to bed early. The plan was to have a crew run shuttle, while a couple of people stayed behind at camp to cook breakfast burritos, and to make burritos for the river trip. The shuttle is incredibly long, so after nearly two hours, we returned to camp and hurried our breakfast along. Minutes later, the crew was tracking our way back down into the canyon, arriving at our boats close to 10:30. Mike had come down with a cold and elected to carry his boat back to the road. We were all bummed to be losing a member of the crew, but judging by his condition he made the right decision. Immediately we dropped into a great set of rapids with more water than the previous day. The first two miles of the day would drop 125 and 215 feet respectively, providing us with lots of action. As on day

one, we were able to boat scout 90% of the rapids that turned out to be cleaner and more fun as we went. Unfortunately, John boat-scouted a drop blind, landing on a sharp rooster tail-rock that cracked his boat under the seat. With a foam patch cut from his pillar that he wedged between the crack and the seat, he was able to continue to the end of the second mile, at Beaver Creek. It was here that John wisely elected to hike out, as 10 miles remained with one more section that dropped 111 and 242 feet in one two-mile stretch. Thus, the crew of five became three.

Two miles of relaxed whitewater with several spicy drops peppered in brought us to the confluence of Howard Creek, the beginning of the steepest gradient. It was here that we took a lunch break, mowing down the burritos and hydrating with the abundant water. The weather was 90 degrees, helping snowmelt to hold the river flow. Numerous tributary accretions had swollen the river to a healthy 800 cfs

*John, Orion, and Miguel enter a red-walled Chert gorge on day one, Upper Middle Eel.*





*Ed and Orion watching Summer Steelhead leap in the crux of the gorge, Upper Middle Eel Day Two.*

by this point, making for some powerful hydraulics and interesting seams. Despite my expectations of abundant deathtraps, the run remained incredibly fun and beautiful.

After lunch, we got into some steep and continuous boulder garden steep gradient sections that were very reminiscent of the Bottom Nine of the Middle Kings, or Golden Gate on the South Fork of the American. The difference was the type of rock, as there was absolutely no granite to be seen. Instead, we encountered house-sized boulders of chert, schist, gneiss, and mudstones intermingled with the predominant sandstone bedrock on river left. Amazingly fun boulder garden rapids continued one after another until we reached the crux of the gorge: Steelhead Falls. As we scouted this enormous, yet runnable slide, steelhead were jumping up the various channels, smacking into rocks and sometimes making it over them. At this point the significance of paddling on

a healthy salmon-stream occurred to me, as we were experiencing life in its fullest, a true adventure. The portage was mellow on the left, and downstream another huge, yet runnable rapid was portaged left as well.

After more great rapids the gorge opened up, yet still maintained a fantastic character for the remaining six miles. We arrived at the Black Butte Confluence at 5:00 pm after another long day on the water.

The Middle Fork exceeded all of our expectations and is a classic stretch of California whitewater that deserves to be on any Class IV-V paddler's list. The amazingly forgiving river, quality whitewater, spectacular scenery, and solitude make for one of the best rivers I've ever paddled. Friendly locals greeted us as we arrived at the take-out, another reputation bender.

Rattlesnakes inhabit the area, so I brought a snake kit. Some of the unique rocks were

incredibly slippery (soapstone) while others were incredibly sharp, so good footwear is highly recommended. Additionally, the Black Butte River Ranch Store will run shuttles for both sections if you arrange it with them: phone number (707) 983-9438. The Forest Service office was helpful in assisting us with access information, the Covelo Ranger Station number is: (707) 983-6110. Go out and enjoy wilderness paddling in some of the most remote areas of the West Coast.

*Currently located on the northern coast of California, "Nuskool" Dan Menten is an Idaho grown whitewater enthusiast of the highest caliber. Dan started kayaking in 1992 at the age of 11 and holds a long history of competitive success in slalom, rodeo and down river racing. Dan is a former U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team member, "Pro" kayaker, and is featured in whitewater videos including The Revolution I and II, and Valhalla.*

# WILDERNESS RIVERS

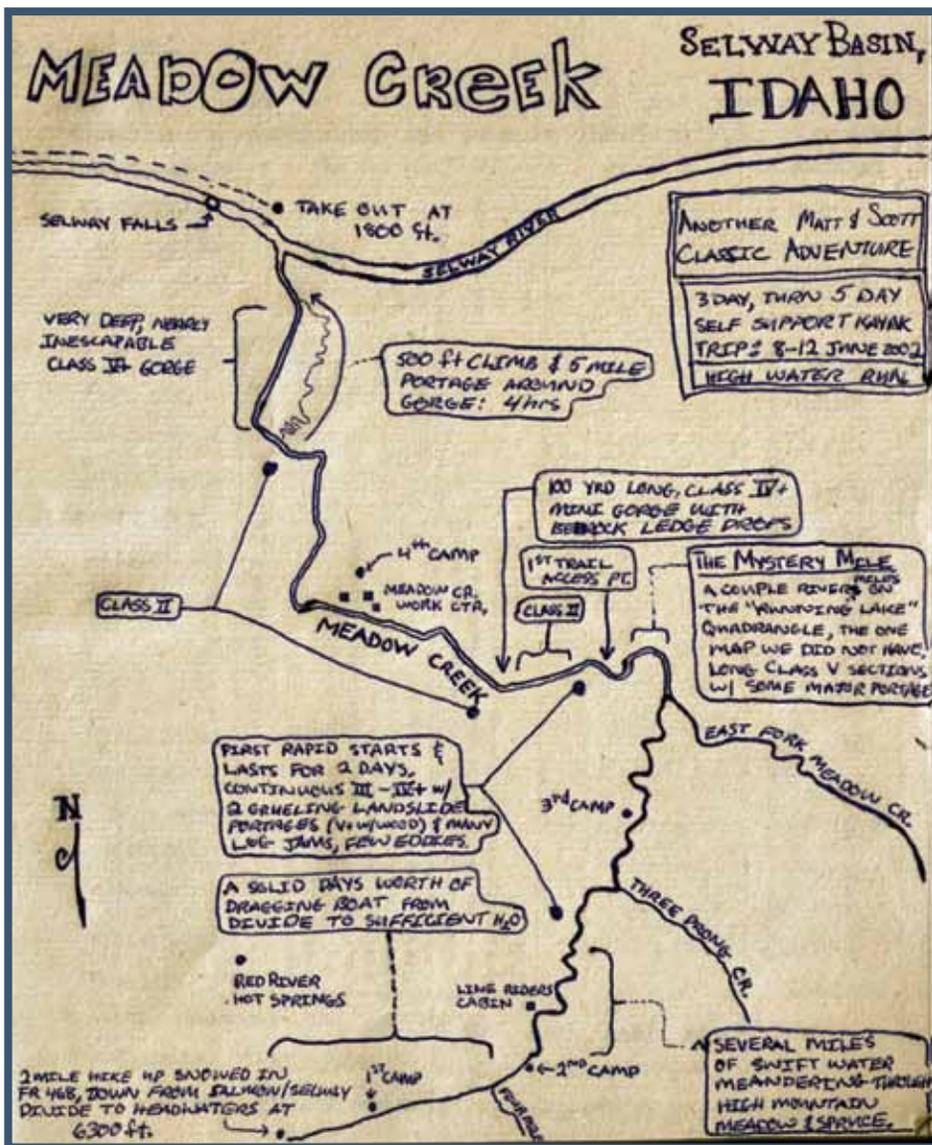
## RIDING OUT THE STORM: MEADOW CREEK, IDAHO

BY SCOTT SILLS

This is a story of two guys who embarked on a self-supported kayak trip down a wilderness river nestled within the largest remaining road less area in the continental United States. The trip started at the river's headwaters, at 6300 ft., on the divide between Idaho's Salmon river to the south, and the Selway River to the north. The trip ended forty miles downstream, at the river's confluence with the Selway River at 1800 ft. The journey was planned as a three-day trip, and turned into a five-day survival expedition, facing winter storm conditions, mind-blowing whitewater, and grueling portages.

**W**E HAD BOTH spent a lot of time paddling throughout Idaho back in the late 1990s. This year, I was living in Seattle, WA, and Matt was in Kalispell, MT. We rendezvoused at a friend's house in Kooskia, ID. The extravagant proportions of that night's "welcome back" (to Idaho) party laid the foundation for what we were about to encounter on Meadow Creek. As typical for most Idaho runoff tours, a winter storm had settled in, only this one bearing unseasonably cold temperatures and massive amounts of moisture. We headed out in the torrential rain, up the South Fork of the Clearwater, past the Mickey Mouse run, the South Fork Station, Golden Canyon, and Coyote Falls, toward Elk City.

We enlisted our friend Dan as shuttle driver to drop us off with our boats and gear somewhere along the Selway-Salmon divide, to the point where we could begin hiking down to the headwaters of Meadow Creek. On our way up the South Fork, the snow line seemed to be dropping. Before long, the rain had turned to snow. We made our last stop in Elk City to buy some match-lite charcoal for our first night's dinner of elk steaks, spuds, and grilled veggies, then we continued off into the snow. A newly downed tree blocked the



Meadow Creek Journal Log (or what to watch out for next time).  
Map by Scott Sills

road, but Matt made quick work of that with his axe. Onward, past the turn-off to Red River Hotsprings, we turned onto the Magruder Corridor, the dirt road running between the Frank-Church River of No Return Wilderness to the south, and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to the north.

As we continued to climb, the snowstorm grew more dense. The snow on the road grew deeper...three inches, then four, and before long, six inches. We were making reasonable progress in Matt's 2WD F150, but once the snow drifts started to exceed a

foot or so, progress slowed. We would have to get a running start to punch through the drifts, frequently backing-up for several attempts before breaking through. Finally, the truck ended up stuck in bumper deep snow. Automated progress came to a halt. Well, we weren't exactly where we wanted to be, but driving was no longer an option. The snowstorm had reduced

*Opposite: Post-holing our way down off of the divide, in search of a creek on day one.*

Photo by Scott Sills

visibility to about 100 yards. We could not spot any landmarks by which to pinpoint our location on the topo maps. That settled it: this was the dismemberment point. We hike it from here on out.

We were up over 6000 ft. and the temperature was hovering in the mid 30s. We dropped the boats down from the rack, and noticed an air leak in one of the truck tires. Dan was worried about making it back out. The shake-down was rushed, and we just threw gear into our boats. Considering the weather, we each threw in a couple of extra dehydrated meals, just in case we got lost in the white-out, trying to find the right spot to begin hiking down from the divide.

It took all three of us to get the truck turned around in the snow. Dan drove off with a leaking tire, down out of the snowstorm. Matt and I stood there with our kayaks and gear, unsure of our location. Moving

on up, into the storm, dragging our boats sled fashion, was the only option.

After a couple miles of sledging, we spotted the turn-off at FR 9562. In another ¼ mile or so, we spotted our first glimpse of Meadow creek, a 12 inch culvert beneath a defunct double track forest road. The creek appeared as a trickle through a boggy snow-packed meadow. We had reached the headwaters.

We were relieved to find the right drainage, and now the official hiking commenced. We continued dragging our 100 lb. boats across the headwaters at Mountain Meadows (6300ft.). The fresh snow made for easier dragging. After another mile or so, the open meadow cruising turned into narrow ravine slogging & post-holing through thigh-deep snow. At certain points it was easiest to let the boats drift downstream, while scrambling along the steep snow

banks, hoping to catch the boats in a snow bank somewhere below. This worked for a little while, but after Matt's boat broached on a rock, filled with water, and flipped upstream, we quickly realized the consequences. Since the haste at the drop-off, neither of us had all our gear stowed in dry bags. After the two of us wrestled the pinned boat free, the damage toll was tallied: one soggy bag of gorp and some wet boating gear...not bad...good thing the sleeping bag was stowed and dry.

After about two or three trickling tributaries joined, we were tired of dragging and ready to try boating. We spent about thirty minutes sheltered beneath some spruce trees, switching from hiking gear to boating gear. Our first paddling stretch lasted about 50 yards in a two-to-three foot-wide stream. Surprisingly, a series of log jams necessitated a 200 yard portage. Then maybe 75 yards of paddling between snow



# WILDERNESS RIVERS



*A morning snow launch from camp on day two.*

**Photo by Scott Sills**

banks and over little log drops, before the next  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile portage. We made one more 100 yard paddling stretch before the fading twilight convinced us to stake out a camp. So much for our grand vision of dropping the snow-line in the first day. There was about 3 feet of winter snow left on the ground, plus about six inches of fresh snow. The temperature was now below freezing; our gear was frosting up on us. We were without a tent, expecting sunny summertime weather. Our over/under tarp system sheltered us from the storm, down in a tree well beneath a spruce grove. We cooked and dried clothes beneath the tarp. By nightfall, the snow continued to fall, and we were secure within our bags, greedy for warmth.

We covered an estimated 3.5 miles down off of the divide that day, in whiteout storm conditions.

At first light the next morning it was still snowing; the same prognosis at second light. We weren't making any progress in our bags. Any wet gear was frozen solid; popsicle skirts and armor-plated lifejackets. We tried to thaw out any under garments in our sleeping bags as we ate breakfast. Donning the frozen gear was an experience

capable of making a man (or woman) out of any man. With camp broke, we set off hiking again, with intermittent stretches of paddling. The snow continued to fall, and we continued downriver, mostly by foot.

By afternoon, the paddling stretches between log jams became significant, and we spent more time in our boats than walking. We were hoping to reach the line-rider's cabin that night, with the idea that we may be able to camp sheltered from the storm. No such luck; the day's progress amounted to a mere five miles. Cold weather, snow, impending twilight, and physical fatigue drove us to our second snow camp beneath another spruce grove. We set up camp with specific orientation towards our fire. Again, we used the bottom, dead and dry, branches from the spruce trees for firewood. We further developed our drying system for improved capacity and efficiency. We could tell the air temperature had warmed a bit, and that it would probably not be as cold as the night before. However, the idea of frozen clothes again in the morning hastened our efforts. After two days, the snow was still falling. We had re-hydrated pollo verde for dinner and sipped on some tequila beneath our tarp, by the fire. We continually stoked the fire to maintain our drying operation. We were a little too efficient, as the fire got too big. I melted my only pair of synthetic socks, and

Matt caught two sparks that melted holes in his therm-a-rest. Again, we learn the severity of the consequences associated with relatively small mistakes made in a less than optimal wilderness setting: I used crunchy, semi-operable socks and Matt slept in contact with the ground for the rest of the trip. We continued drying gear until nightfall, then it was time to hibernate.

We awoke to a couple of inches of fresh snow. It was about 5-10 degrees warmer this morning, and our gear did not suffer from the popsicle syndrome. The temperature was probably right about the freezing point. We started rationing food, realizing our progress has been about one half of what we predicted. We wolfed down some gorp, jerky, and a fruit roll-up, while silt in the warmth of our bags. While we ate, we stuffed some of our critical paddling gear, anything that might come into direct contact with our skin, into our bags for some pre-heating, trying to take the edge off of the morning transition. It helped, but the dressing process still took courage. After about a minute of convulsive shivering, things settled down, or became sufficiently numb. Either way, we proceeded with business, as there was no viable alternative. We packed up our wet gear, then our damp gear, and managed, with icy stiff fingers, to cram all that gear into our boats.

With the snow still falling, we shoved off on day three. Our expectations were high: twenty-two miles to the Meadow Creek Work Center. The first five miles comprised a sinuous path, meandering arduously through the high sub-alpine meadows. The logjams, for the most part, had subsided, and what logs we had encountered were relatively easily managed without getting out of our boats.

About two miles past the Line Rider's Cabin, we approached our first horizon line. According to all the information we had gathered, the first Class III rapids were about to start. The same information indicated that the first day is Class III, the

second day is Class IV, and the final day has a Class V gorge, with some difficult portaging. This must have been at much lower flows. Below this horizon line, a long stretch of Class IV+ whitewater dropped at the rate of about 265 fpm, down 100 yards around the corner, and out of sight. The presence of fatal wood and lack of eddies upped the ante to Class V+, not to mention our 100-pound boats, the absolute isolation, and our location several miles from the nearest trail, in the wrong direction from civilization. The possibility of portaging this mess was not a question, but an obvious reality. The standard protocol here was one hundred linear yards of huffing the boats up, over, down, and around unstable boulder scree and car-sized boulders, which had slid down from the rock face high up the river-left wall.

After about an hour of clean-and-jerks with the 100 pound boats, we were beyond the nasty stuff, and at a point where we could launch back into the continuous Class IV-IV+ express route. Before we could launch, I had to take ten and eat a power bar to regain my composure and circulation. After a portage like that, a blatant hop back into the boat would have nullified the first half-mile of one's of paddle strokes. This would have been a bad idea, considering the scarcity of eddies and probability of fatal wood around every corner.

The falling snow began to transition into rain as we dropped the snow line. Back on the water, we swooshed away in the thrusting current, booming and zooming down around the corner. Our gradient map (constructed from the topos) indicated that after the initial 210 fpm spike, things would settle down to the 130-150 fpm range for the next 6 miles. The whitewater was continuous Class IV+, with intermittent V-V+ and river-wide logjams. We continued cruising at lightning speed, between what

eddies we could find. Most of these eddies were within an uninterrupted horizon line and just above blind corners. It was often necessary to get out and scout for the next eddy, scrambling up through the dense alder and brush thickets, over loose talus, to some vantage point where we could gain insight to the hidden mysteries obscured from river level. Some scouts were quick, but others required climbing 50-100 feet up, then traversing up to a quarter mile or so before we could spot the next eddy. We encountered two more brutal logjam portages, but neither quite as rigorous as the first one.

Managing a mental and physical balance within this mayhem was critical. We were faced with several close calls. In one incident, Matt broached solidly on an eddy line guard-rock, just above a strainer. I had to scramble out of my boat to pull him off. In another last chance eddy, I pulled in and managed to grab onto the trunk of a small alder, about a half-inch in diameter. The water level was up into the trees. It was a one boat eddy, backed up by another strainer. Matt entered the eddy just after me, bounced off of my boat, and with nothing to grab onto, was washed backwards into the strainer. The entire

stern of his boat was sucked down into the strainer beneath the wood, with the logs pinning him on the front deck of his boat. His boat was 45 degrees nose-up in the air. Just as he aimed at pulling the rip cord, I reached back with one hand, the other hand still with a death grip on the alder, grabbed his cockpit rim, skirt and all, and pulled him far enough out of the strainer that his boat was flat again. Using his paddle to push off the bottom, he inched up past me, back out into the main channel. Another close call ensued where Matt, in the lead, dropped into a chute where the exit was fully spanned by a chest-high log. Luckily, the log was a teetering one, pinned at a fulcrum on a bolder. Matt caught the log mid-chest, but upon impact, it pivoted like a turnstile, allowing him to pass through. I saw this and made all efforts to change course. I tried to boof up and over one rock at the entrance to the chute, but the rock was too far out of the water. The heavy stern of my loaded boat remained in the current, and I was pulled off, backwards, down through the chute. I caught the same log mid-back, the log teetered and pivoted, and I washed through. After these three close calls, within about 30 minutes, we red-lined the precautionary scale, and took

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*More trudging through the snow to reach our river.*

**Photo by Scott Sills**



# WILDERNESS RIVERS

an even more serious approach to more conservative boating.

As the gradient ebbed, we settled down to a continuous Class III-IV pace, requiring fewer, easier portages, and less frequent scouting. By now, it was late afternoon. We were exhausted. Finally, we were dropping the snow line. It was cool, ominously devoid of light, and still raining. We were running out of calories and our minds were completely obliterated by another full-day's worth of adrenaline, only not so much from the snow and elements, but from the whitewater and portaging.

We quickly decided to scope out a camp, knowing that within the next mile or so, the gradient kicked back up. We struck solid ground on a river-left bar offering ample spruce protection from the steady rain. By now, we had our over-under tarp system down to a science, and had further refined our clothes drying system by the fire. We ate re-hydrated chilli burritos for dinner, and a small ration of gorp for dessert. Once settled for the evening with all chores complete, except for the ongoing clothes drying, the rain had appeared to stop. We spotted one miniscule bluish spot up in the gray sky. This eased our nerves a

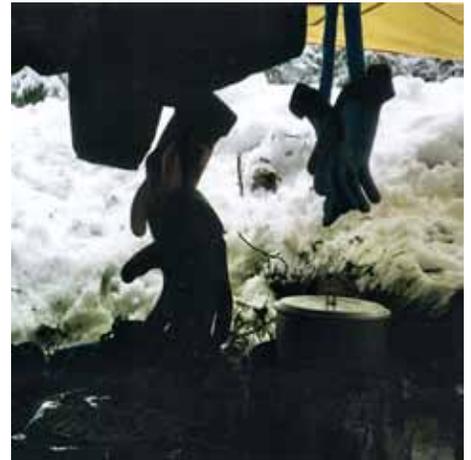
*Our cooking tarp/gear drying setup.*

**Photo by Scott Sills**

bit, but not enough to make any significant difference. We figured our daily progress amounted to about 10 miles, a wee bit shy of our anticipated 22 miles. Nevertheless, we turned in with dreams of good weather and an end to this three-day long winter storm. It rained like mad throughout the entire night and those dreams turned into high-water nightmares.

We awoke to find no more rain. The river level was roughly the same as last evening. By now, most all of our gear was wet; it was only a matter of degree. We ate a meager rationed breakfast of one fruit stick, one handful of gorp, and a couple of pieces of jerky. It was obvious that we were running on a calorie deficit and tapping into the beer-muscle reserves. We had high hopes for the day; the same destination planned for yesterday, the Meadow Creek Work Center.

According to our gradient map, the steep stuff was behind us, except for the final and steepest gorge, which was about 6 miles beyond the work center. However, there was a couple of miles of unknown gradient,



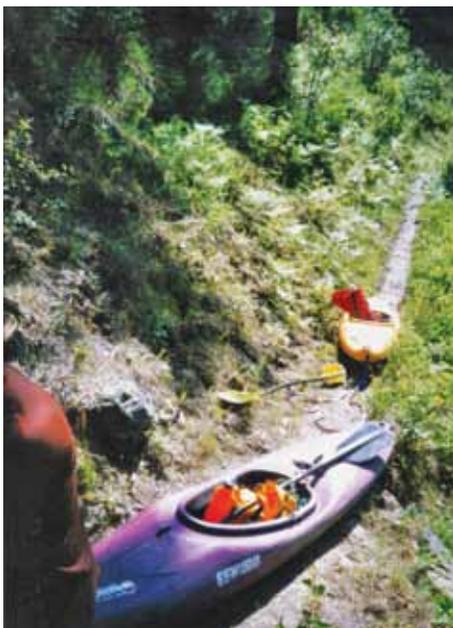
just below the confluence of the East Fork of Meadow Creek. Why unknown? Well, the section just below the East Fork confluence looped into the Running Lake quadrangle, for perhaps a mile or two. For such a short, seemingly insignificant stretch, we (I) did not bother to buy this extra topo map, in addition to the six we already had. I must admit, that when constructing the gradient map from the topos, it was apparent that the elevation change on the missing quadrangle amounted to some 300 feet. I blatantly assumed the gradient would be consistent with the miles preceding and following the missing quadrangle, in the range of 120-140 fpm. Consequently, the unknown distance should have been close to three miles, which seemed a bit too long. Anyway, I told Matt about the "Mystery Mile" while we packed our boats and shoved off.

Things picked up a bit as we approached the East Fork. At the confluence, the East Fork dropped in through a tight, lush gorge on river right. It was probably about one third the flow of the main branch, and crashed down through some impressive rapids. We cruised around the corner and into a pool above an enormous horizon line. We popped out of our boats to scout on river right; our hearts dropped straight

*Finally below the snow line in steady rain on the third night*

**Photo by Scott Sills**





The portage trail up and around the final gorge.

Photo by Scott Sills

down and out. As far as we could see, the river dropped down through a maelstrom of huge Class V+ whitewater, speckled with fatal wood, down and out of sight, around the corner. Portaging from this side was not an option. We looked up the canyon side for the hiking trail that was supposed to enter the canyon after the East Fork confluence. It was nowhere to be seen; somewhere way up on the ridge perhaps. Our situation offered only one alternative: a scary ferry across the lip of the horizon into a one-boat micro-eddy on the river-left. From this point, we began to portage the "Mystery Mile."

This portage, similar to the one at the initial gradient spike two days earlier, entailed an hour's worth of clean-and-jerks, with loaded boats, heaving them about a dizzying field of car sized boulders, which had fallen from landslides high up the canyon wall. Finally around the mess, we recouped, ate a power bar, and regained our composure for the remainder of the "Mystery Mile." We encountered a few more Class V ledge drops and two more grueling portages. Regardless, we made it past the "Mystery Mile" and the gradient started to relax.

Progress became measurable in miles, rather than yards. There were a few more in-and-out log portages, and we expected one more half-mile long steep section before settling into two-digit gradient.

The next anticipated steep section was a really neat shear walled Class IV+ - V- mini-gorge that I bombed through, nailing the last in a series of ledges backwards. After watching my escapades, Matt decided to portage one of the drops in there, and came bombing down shortly after. We cruised several more miles of Class II and finally made it to the Meadow Creek Work Center by mid afternoon. We had sunny blue skies and all the recent snow was melting and adding to the flow. The most difficult final gorge still lay down stream.

Finally, after four days, we had a chance to dry out our gear. It was like heaven, temporarily. We coked up our last two dehydrated dinner packets, and ate rice, beans, and pasta to replenish calories for the next day's five-mile portage around the final gorge. Yes, a portage of the entire gorge. At this point, we had decided that we had no business in the final gorge, based on the fact that what we expected to be Class III was continuous IV-IV+ with V+ and wood. Who knew what challenges the final Class V gorge had to offer. The water level was *really* high; we had sustained operation at our physical and mental limits in Class V whitewater and winter conditions for four days straight. From the scant reports we had, portaging within the final gorge was supposed to be notably difficult, compared to the rest of the run. We decided that conditions were less than optimal for our two-man team to take on the gorge.

Now that we had finally reached the *official* designated wilderness area (the previous four days of remote wild country was the *true* wilderness, within the National Forest), the Wilderness came complete with marked hiking trail, "non-motorized" travel signs, stock corrals, and work center dwellings. Our plan was to boat 6 miles down to the entrance of the gorge, pack

500 vertical feet up the trail, portage 5 miles around the gorge, and then paddle out to the Selway River. To minimize camp breakdown time the next morning, we slept on the front porch of the work center's bunk house, and stowed all our freshly dried gear in our boats. We were ready for an early start.

Up at 6 am and ready for punishment, we cooked up our last food, a batch of corn and black bean chowder with all the calories we could rummage: a half stick of butter and a couple of tablespoons of sour cream, garnished with the last fruit stick and the rest of the waterlogged gorp. We needed calories. We were cooking on a MSR pocket rocket stove, which, with a full pot, is top-heavy and unstable. Unfortunately, while packing his gear, Matt knocked over the pot and stove, spilling our grub over the porch. So much for our calories... We did

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# WILDERNESS RIVERS



*The Meadow Creek Work Center, where we finally arrived at the end of our fourth day.*

**Photo by Scott Sills**

what we could to reclaim the slop, before it all drained between the deck boards. We got about half of it. Matt insisted I eat it all because he tipped it over, but I insisted we split the remains. Matt obliged. Anyway, it didn't really matter because we because we both knew that, even with the portage, we were getting out today, no matter what!

By mid-morning, we paddled down to the transition point for the portage. Most of our elevation gain was right off the bat, switch-backing up 500 feet then leveling off to traverse high above the gorge. Matt had roughly a 15 minute head-start on me, as my transition was a bit more extensive: purifying 1 gallon of water, donning ankle brace (that's another story), donning sunscreen and boots, etc. I started out carrying my boat on my shoulder. That lasted about two or three switchbacks, until my arm fell off and I lost circulation in my feet from the 100-pound load. About when I was rigging up for the one-man mule team to start dragging my boat, Matt came down the trail with report of the top after two more switchbacks. Lucky for me, he helped me drag my boat, two-man mule team style, up to the top. After the climb, we ate some of our last remaining morsels of cheese, gorp, and jerky. Four hours after the start of the portage, we successfully made it around the gorge and back down to river level. We couldn't see much of the river down in the gorge, only a few glimpses

of pure white, which put our minds at ease with the decision to skip the gorge.

Within a mile of getting back into our boats, we had to portage one last, 100 yard-long, log-chocked, Class V+ monstrosity. It was a relatively quick portage along the Wilderness Area trail. Within another half of an hour, we were ferrying across the Selway River to the take-out above Selway Falls. We tapped a home-brewed keg of Spud Monkey Ale, which was patiently waiting in the cooler of our shuttle rig, and bathed in the freezing cold Selway, to wash away the turmoil and cleanse ourselves for the re-introduction to society. We just threw our boats up on the rack and began driving back into civilization.

It was a funny feeling, seeing people again. That keg of homebrew kept our nerves at ease (they were obliterated anyway). Along the drive, we started the recapitulation process, committing the voyage to the cerebral filing system. Actually, we were both astonished at what we had just accomplished: a true wilderness expedition, pushing both mind and body beyond limits only imagined from within the daily social grind.

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*A glimpse down into the final gorge from the portage trail.*

**Photo by Scott Sills**

*Authors note: Idaho's Meadow Creek is one of the most remote and challenging whitewater runs in the continental US, on par with, yet different from, some of the high Sierra Nevada runs in California. It remains absent from guide books, for good reason: it is best experienced from a raw, pioneering and expedition perspective. It is a trip after which expert local boaters aspire, and there are usually one or a few groups who manage its decent every spring. Before our descent, we knew it had been run, but did not know anyone who had been in there. We relied solely on information gathered from topo maps. During our run, the gauges on both the nearby South Fork of the Clearwater and the Selway reached their annual spring run-off peak. To date, the run described here remains one of the highest water descent made. Trip dates for the story told here were from June 8-12, 2002.*



## CHATTOOGA

BY BRUCE A. HARE

**S**OME FOLKS ARE gifted with great intelligence, some folks are gifted with a beautiful countenance, some folks are gifted with athletic abilities, and some folks are born to great wealth. I was gifted with a loving family and born on a farm in the country near a wild and remote river pouring down out of the mountains of Cherokee legend.

With parents, sisters, brothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins my family was a big conglomerate of individuals who cherished their kinship and always put family first. We shared our food, we shared our homes, we shared our work, we shared our sorrows, and we shared our joys. We were a family and our farm was our heritage in the same way that our genes were our heritage. Our farm sustained our bodies and bound our dreams together and we never questioned the value of that commitment because it had always been that way. We went to work, we went to school, and we went to church, and those values were mutually reinforced in ways that provided each of us with meaning and identity.



*Bruce Hare fishing Section 2 of the Chattooga River (SC), June 30 2010.*  
**Photo by Don Kinser**

To not produce good work would have been unfair to the farm that sustained us, to not produce good grades would have been undeserving of the costs of education, and to not have good faith would have degraded our worship. We needed and benefited from that sense of sharing and commitment because no one in our family or our community had money or education so we each gained from our association with and participation in something larger than the individual, and yet we were able, because of the appropriate size of family

and farm, to see our individual roles and appreciate our contribution to the whole.

Learning to care for the family, the farm, and the animals produced a kind of symbiosis that made it all seem natural and well-ordered in spite of the hardships and heartbreaks. When things went wrong there were grandparents to provide the wisdom of their years and there were parents to provide the loving and nurturing. When there were personal triumphs there were aunts and uncles to congratulate everyone and siblings and cousins to share the fun with.

In looking back at all we had and all we didn't have, I know we weren't rich and I know we weren't poor. Having people to love you, and people to count on you created strong personalities and made good citizens. We were proud of our family and proud of our farm.

There were two directions to go from the farm, down the road to town, to school,  
*Continued on page 50.*

*Raven Chute Rapid, Section 4 (GA/SC).*  
**Photo by Don Kinser**



# AW PARTNERS

## \$20,000 - Class V



## \$7,500 - Class II



## \$15,000 - Class IV



## \$10,000 - Class III



## \$2,500 - Wave



# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

American Whitewater is supported by members, donors, foundations, and partners in the whitewater and outdoor industries. In each edition of the *Journal*, we highlight one such partner in this space. American Whitewater urges you not to make purchase decisions blindly. We hope you'll consider a company's commitment to river stewardship when making your next purchase.



**K** EEN INC., MANUFACTURER of footwear, socks and bags, is a 8-year-old outdoor brand that brings its Hybridlife philosophy of "Create, Play, Care" to life through its innovative hybrid products, encouraging inclusivity and a fun and active lifestyle. Like most 8-year-olds, KEEN is all about having fun (with product), getting outside often and caring for the world around them. They consistently look for new approaches to creating the best products along the way. First recognized for the now-infamous, black bumper toe-protecting Newport sandal, KEEN has a full range of products and styles to take you from the beaches, to the mountains, to city streets and everywhere in between.

From the beginning, KEEN has demonstrated integrity and leadership, especially on social and environmental fronts, while promoting an inclusive outdoors community. Through its giving program, Hybrid.Care, KEEN gives back to a variety of social and environmental organizations around the globe that embody the ideas of HybridLife.

Based in Portland, Oregon, KEEN has sold more 20 million pairs of shoes in the last 6 years. The company's products are available in over 5,000 retail locations in

over 50 countries around the world. To learn more, visit [www.keenfootwear.com](http://www.keenfootwear.com).

## About Hybrid.Care

KEEN is about living the Hybridlife and its passion for outdoor pursuits has propelled the company to give back to a greater community. Through Hybrid.Care, KEEN strives to be a company with a conscience and to make a positive difference by supporting and working with social and environmental organizations around the world. In response to the 2005 Tsunami disaster, Hybrid.Care was established and since then KEEN has contributed monetary donations, products and volunteer hours to non-profit organizations around the globe.

KEEN's footprint is starting to make a difference. Since 2004, the company has distributed more than \$5.5 million to non-profit organizations. With limited resources and widely different goals, our Hybrid.Care partners have paved the way for change through the outdoors, community, education and understanding. What these organizations share is a philosophy of caring, conscience and sustainability. What they've already given back is invaluable.

KEEN's Chris Enlow talks about the partnership this way; "Relationships

like the one we have with American Whitewater are very important to KEEN. We feel fortunate to partner with AW, supporting the continued work it does for the environment, for responsible outdoor recreation and in building strong community."

American Whitewater is proud to be a core Hybrid.Care partner.



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ONE: COMMUNITY. ENVIRONMENT. CONSCIENCE.

# Join



# 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 US, AW currently has 5,500 active members. When you consider 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 AW! 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 (\$25 if you are a member of an AW Affiliate Club). This is less than a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

It's easy to join or renew an AW membership: Join or renew online today at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-aw/>; call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429); or complete the membership form provided in this Journal and mail it to:

Membership  
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PO Box 1540  
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\*Note: AW will never share your information with others

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Member Number: \_\_\_\_\_

↑ if you have one and know it

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Club: \_\_\_\_\_
- \$25 Student  
School: \_\_\_\_\_
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- \$75 Affiliate Club

- \$100 Ender Club (Shirt Size: \_\_\_\_\_)
- \$250 Platinum Paddler
- \$500 Explorer
- \$750 Lifetime
- \$1,000 Legacy
- \$2,500 Steward

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Feb. 2011

# WILDERNESS RIVERS

Chattooga, *continued from page 45*

and to the city; or up the road, into the mountains, into the forests, and down to the river. I was always forced to go down the road to school and to town, but I always yearned to go up to the mountains and down to the river. In spite of all the work and responsibility they shouldered, my father, grandfather, uncle, and cousins were all drawn to the mountains and the river.

The mountain fastness, primeval and serene, drew us to its hollows and vistas without explanation or justification. We went because we needed to go; it filled our imaginations and fed our desires for beauty beyond the struggles of our daily lives. And then there was the river of our dreams. Its mysterious allure, its wild beauty, and its dangerous rapids always pulled our hearts, like a moth to the flame, and at the same time, its still pools, hidden beaches, and rock cliffs gave life to our desires for sylvan beauty, natural harmony, and a power of life beyond the fragile world of humans.

The river took us to a world that was right and just, a natural world beyond the foibles of civilization, the excesses of humans, and the injustices of a society consuming itself with material greed. On the river, the laws of nature were obvious and sensible, even when they were harsh and dangerous. Respect is how we talked about the river, but enchantment was what we felt in our hearts. We each had our favorite secret place on the river; usually it was where we had caught a big mess of fish or had a memorable camping trip. Sometimes it was just a grand view of old moss covered logs, slick black rocks, and water dancing down the canyons.

Even as a child the magic of adventure found life in my dreams and flowed through my body like the rush of whitewater over rocks as old as time. To be within sight, sound, or smell of the river created an experience of profound tranquility, enchanting beauty, and unquenchable exuberance. Joy, excitement, fear, and love were all rolled into one unforgettable feeling of sharing life with generation upon generation and

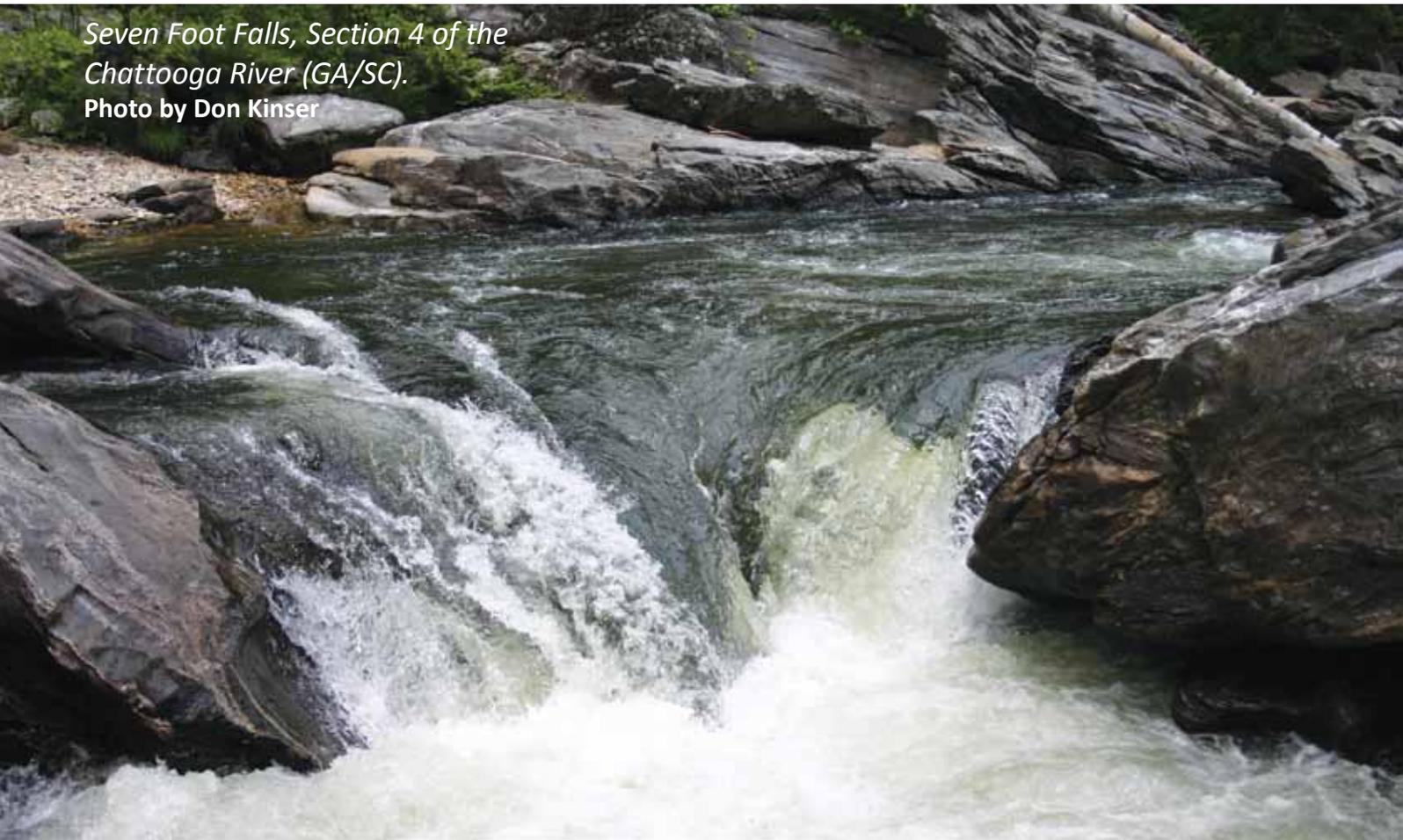
connecting a past to a future while enjoying a part of nature that can be touched, but never held, loved, but never owned, and shared, but never traded.

It is true that the river affected each of us differently, but it would take many years before I fully realized how much it affected all of us in the same ways, and how it left each of us feeling helpless in our love for it and hopeless in our fear for it. Each of us harbored a fear that we would someday not be able to go there, that the river would be dammed, developed, or destroyed by human greed.

And here I am, fifty years later, still in love with something that will never love me back. The river has given my life purpose and pleasure and I have spent thousands of days of my life watching, wading, fishing, and kayaking in the midst of power and beauty as wild as a summer thunderstorm, as free as falling water, and as secretive as an old bear. The joy and the beauty are always with me, but they can never touch the essence of the river's meaning

*Seven Foot Falls, Section 4 of the  
Chattooga River (GA/SC).*

**Photo by Don Kinser**



Stephen Forster

Photo by New River Academy

to me because it is the one continuous thread that runs throughout my life and connects my heart, my soul, and my desire with generations past and generations to come. The effect is profound, ethereal, and it transcends time and circumstances. The river is always there and always with me.

The forests, the wildlife, and most of all, those beautiful rocks; the black gneiss, white quartz, gray granites that have held their secrets for three billion years will inspire and fulfill people who seek their primitive beauty in the heart of this mountain wilderness. It is beyond the ability of humans to improve upon their beauty, because it is perfect and just as nature intended. All we can do is leave it alone—love, cherish, and respect it, but leave it alone. Mother nature guards and provides for her wonders beyond the ability of humans to understand or improve upon those designs and it is our responsibility to protect what we do not fully understand.

The water is not as pure and clean as it used to be due to all the housing developments in Highlands and Cashiers and all the timber harvesting in the National Forests, but the river will recover from these insults because it is as old as the mountains it flows from. But that does not relieve us of our responsibility to protect and enhance its outstanding and remarkable qualities.

My home and my heart has become a National Wild and Scenic River and has thrilled and rewarded over a million boaters, anglers, and tourists and will continue to do so as long as we love and respect its inherent beauty and wildness. We must never try to tame it, subdue it, or “make it safe” because that would destroy its essence. Our quest should be to fully understand and appreciate its natural beauty and resist all temptations to coerce or convert its natural wonders to our simple human needs.



## IN MEMORIAM: STEPHEN FORSTER

**S**TEPHEN FORSTER'S ENTHUSIASM for life was contagious and it shows in the memories and stories of his innumerable friends and loved ones. His personality, combined with his remarkable paddling skills, made him the kind of guy that lit up rivers with smiles everywhere he went.

Perhaps the best way to remember Stephen is for all the life he lived while he was with us. At just 19, Stephen was a veteran of paddling trips to Canada, Chile and all over the United States, just to name a few. More than just a traveler and paddler, he was that special kind of person that made friends and shared laughs everywhere he went, on and off the river.

Words aren't enough to convey the full breadth of a person, and no words can adequately say goodbye. What we can do, though, is remember the person Stephen was and hope we can live our own days with half as much enthusiasm and energy as he did.

We'll leave you with the parting lyrics from “River” by Bill Staines, a song that was sung at Stephen's memorial:

“Someday when the flowers are blooming still,  
Someday when the grass is still green  
My rolling waters will round the bend,  
And flow into the open sea  
So here's to the rainbow that's followed me here,  
And here's to the friends that I know;  
And here's to the song that's within me now,  
I will sing it where'er I go.”

*Stephen Forster passed away while paddling on the North Fork of the Payette on June 28th, 2011 at 19 years old. American Whitewater was deeply moved to be selected by the family as the receiver of contributions made in Stephen's memory. The substantial outpouring of support and kind words in Stephen's name is a true testament to a life well lived, and a person loved by many.*

## IN MEMORIAM: BOYCE GREER

**S**HORTLY BEFORE PRINTING this edition of the *American Whitewater Journal*, AW learned the sad news that Boyce Greer of Amherst, NH passed away on the North Fork of the Payette. Boyce was a consummate explorer, paddler and friend, not to mention long time supporter of American Whitewater. Look for more on Boyce in the next edition of the *AW Journal*.

# 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 1954 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. We have over 100 current AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club, consider joining one.

Our Affiliate Club Spotlight this issue is on the Keel Haulers Canoe Club an outstanding Affiliate Club and long time supporter of our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. The Keel Haulers Canoe Club donates money to conservation organizations they feel are worthy of their support and American Whitewater is fortunate to be included in these organizations.

The Keel Haulers Canoe Club is an organization of around 400 families from the Northeast Ohio area who share a common interest in the out-doors in general, and boating in particular. You will find all types of boaters at KHCC - whitewater, sea kayaking, canoeing, rafting, and racing. The Club's purpose is simply to provide the framework to enjoy doing things together.

All are welcome to join! A membership year runs from October 1st to September 30th with dues at an affordable \$20/year for an entire household. Club dues include a monthly newsletter and access to the Keel Haulers Canoe Club website where you will find various information including schedules for indoor pool sessions, outdoor roll sessions, and a yearly schedule of trips planned. To learn more about the KHCC or to join, check out their website at <http://www.keelhauler.org/>. And remember, current members of the KHCC receive a \$10 discount off their AW membership.

Thank you Keel Haulers Canoe Club for your continued support of American Whitewater!

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

### Alaska

Nova Riverrunners Inc., Chickaloon  
Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

### Alabama

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

### Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

### Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

### California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico  
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus  
RTS Sierra Club San Fran Chapter,  
Livermore  
Sequoia Paddlers, Forestville  
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers,  
San Jose

### Colorado

Avid4 Adventure Inc., Boulder  
Colorado Whitewater Assn, Englewood  
Dolores River Action Group, Mancos  
Friends of the Arkansas River, Canon City  
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs  
Grand Canyon Private Boat. Assn., Colorado  
Springs  
Lower Dolores Boating Advocates, Dolores  
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs  
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride  
Stand Up For Rivers, Telluride

### Connecticut

AMC - Connecticut Chapter, Waterbury

### Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
Wilmington Trail Club, Wilmington

### Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta  
Georgia Canoeing Assoc, Atlanta  
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta  
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

### Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Assn., Boise

### Indiana

Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

### Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des  
Moines

### Kentucky

Bardstown Boaters, Bardstown, KY  
Bluegrass Wildwater Asso, Lexington  
Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington  
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

### Louisiana

Sabine Whitewater Club, Lake Charles

### Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Troy

### Maryland

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Silver Spring  
Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Cockeysville  
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Boonsboro

### Minnesota

Minnesota Canoe Assn, Minneapolis  
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

### Mississippi

Mississippi Outdoor Club, Clinton

### Missouri

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

### Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

### New Hampshire

AMC New Hampshire Paddlers, Raymond  
Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover  
Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Intervale  
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Nashua

### New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
KCCNY, Flanders

### New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of NM,  
Albuquerque

### New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady  
Colgate University, Hamilton  
FLOW Paddlers' Club, Rochester  
Hamilton College, Clinton  
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining  
KCCNY, Flanders  
St Lawrence University, Canton  
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia  
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Buffalo

### North Carolina

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee  
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh  
Dixie Division, Tuxedo  
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee  
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Charlotte  
Triad River Runners, Winston-Salem

### Ohio

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

### Oregon

Eugene Kayaker, Eugene  
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland  
Northwest Rafters Association, Portland  
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland  
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton  
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

### Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown  
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre  
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg  
Conewago Canoe Club, York  
Holtwood Hooligans, Paradise

Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley,  
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Inc., Lehigh Valley  
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia  
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh

#### **S. Carolina**

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

#### **Tennessee**

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts,  
Limestone  
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville  
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge  
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis  
Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing  
Club, Kingsport  
Tennessee Scenic River Association,  
Nashville  
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

#### **Texas**

Houston Canoe Club Inc, Houston

#### **Utah**

Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

#### **Vermont**

Vermont Paddlers Club, Essex Junction

#### **Virginia**

Coastal Canoeists Inc., Blacksburg  
Creek Freak Paddlers of Franklin County  
VA, Rocky Mount  
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke  
FORVA, Roanoke  
Hollins Outdoor Program, Roanoke  
James River Float Co, Madison Heights  
Paddlers for Conservation, Vienna

#### **Washington**

BEWET, Bellevue  
EPIC Adventures, Cheney  
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle  
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane  
University Kayak Club, Seattle  
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle  
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

#### **West Virginia**

Dbl Z! Whitewater Club, Fayetteville  
West VA Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston  
WVU Whitewater Club, Morgantown

#### **Wisconsin**

Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, Madison

#### **British Columbia**

Vancouver Kayak Club, Burnaby

## **DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS**

*By Carla Miner, Membership Manager*

AW offers a discounted Affiliate Club membership of \$25, a \$10 savings. If you are renewing your AW membership or joining as a new member, select the Affiliate Club Discounted Personal Membership online at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/> Or, if you are renewing or joining by mail or telephone just mention the name of the Affiliate Club you belong to and you can take advantage of the \$25 membership.

A list of AW Affiliate Clubs can be found on our website at [www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Affiliate/view/](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Affiliate/view/). If you do not see your Club listed here please encourage them to renew their Club membership or to join AW as a new Affiliate Club. Your Club's membership and your personal membership enable our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. When you join or renew your membership your support is helping to meet the many challenges whitewater rivers face.

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

## **JOIN AMERICAN WHITewater AS AN AFFILIATE CLUB!**

### **AFFILIATE CLUB BENEFITS**

- Club members can join AW for just \$25 - a \$10 savings!
- Have your club listed in each AW Journal delivered to all AW members
- Post Club information on the AW website to help paddlers find you
- Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions and grants
- Most importantly, your financial support helps us save rivers!

Sign-up on-line at:

[www.americanwhitewater.org/  
content/Membership/join-aw](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-aw)

For more information contact Carla Miner at

[membership@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@americanwhitewater.org)  
or at 1-866-262-8429



# GAULEY

F E S T

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Biggest Fundraiser

THE WORLD'S LARGEST  
PADDLING FESTIVAL



Sept 16-17

Summersville, WV

More info: <http://gauleyfest.americanwhitewater.org>



# Px MY PADDLE PRESCRIPTION

PADDLER: John Grace

HEIGHT: 5'11"

OCCUPATION: Video Guru



I choose to support American Whitewater through the HealthyWaters Program.

Paddling forces me to focus, and the confusion of life subsides for a bit. My perfect fit ▶

— John Grace

**SHO-GUN**

STRAIGHT SHAFT  
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Discover your custom fit paddle

- < increase your performance
- < reduce your fatigue
- < and have more fun on the water



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**Fit Guide:** Answer a few questions and discover your custom fit Werner paddle.



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