

# american whitewater

November/December 1998

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PG&E says no boating on  
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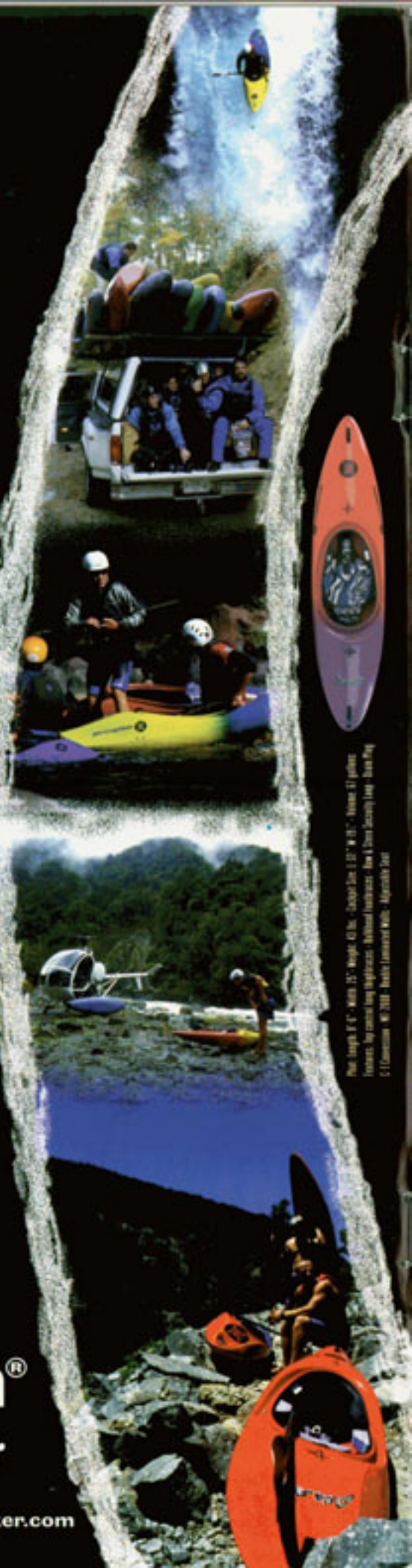


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# american whitewater

Journal of the American Whitewater

Volume XXXVIII, No. 5

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Cover Photo: Kayaking Freestyle, Merced River, CA. Photo by Shelby Thorner  
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# Forum

## Whose River Is It?

Drop by any riverside town. Talk to any landowner, angler or whitewater boater, and you will get different answers. Unfortunately, over the last century the answer to who owned a particular river was not those who enjoyed them, but those who controlled them — most often the dam owner, the company with the biggest bucks or the greatest political clout.

This version of "ownership" has seriously messed with rivers. If you doubt it, just drive along California's North Fork Feather, North Fork Kings, or Pit. Peer, on almost any day, into the upper gorge of Maine's awesome Penobscot or feel the surge and ebb of the Grand Canyon's flows. Sit beside Tennessee's middle Ocoee, and feel the energy and power literally drain away as the water is reduced at the end of the day. In fact, go to any one of the thousands of dams in this country, look over the fences, gaze into the canyons, and get a feel for what a hundred years of monopoly can do.

Some will say this is no longer the case, and that dam owners today must consider other needs, like fish, wildlife, water quality, and recreation, or that rivers can no longer be dewatered merely by throwing a switch just to make a buck.

But if you believe this, you don't get out enough. You didn't travel to this summer's



Rich Bowers and daughter Danna above the Snake River, Idaho.



Coosa Festival, where Alabama Power literally cancelled the event claiming they couldn't provide water, even though they produced power all summer and had more than eight inches of rain the day before (ultimately the event took place and was a blast). You weren't bumped out of the final releases on the Deerfield in Massachusetts,

where the company used all the water before selling to new owners. You haven't heard the similar threat on Maryland's Upper Yough, where the sale of the Deep Creek dam could reduce whitewater flows to only one day per week, and then only when there is an over abundance of water.

For a great contemporary example, read the outrageous letter in this Journal by California's Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E). Hidden among liability worries (like any landowner they are protected by a host of liability laws, including California's strong state recreational use statute), PG&E's true motive for this letter is quickly identified as loss of profit. "...PG&E receives no commercial benefit from increasing accessibility and participation in whitewater boating..." But this letter was sent to agencies that manage river recreation. The intent, to request that these agencies ignore recreation and river mandates and laws in order to allow PG&E to make more money!

So, who owns the river? Certainly, companies like PG&E and Alabama Power believe that the river is theirs, to do with as they will. That a river's life, or lack of life, is controlled by their power and that all other use must serve only at the company's pleasure. What is amazing about this version of ownership is not the greed, but the arrogance and just how far these companies are

## Staff

**Editor:** Bob Gedekoh, Box 228, R.D.#4, Elizabeth, Pa. 15037

**Emeritus Editor:** Chris Koll

**Contributing Editors:** John Weld, Pope Barrow, Ambrose Tuscano, Bill Sedivy

**Art direction/Graphic design/Production:** John K. Victor

**Contributing writers:** Carla Garrison, Jonathan Katz, Ed Ditto, Lee Belknap, Joe Greiner, Mark White, Bruce Farrenkopf, Nathan Lewis, Brik Miller, John Foss, Paul Tefft, Howard Davidson

**Production Assistant:** Richard and Teresa Augustin

**Advertising Director:** Phyllis Horowitz, Box 636, Margaretville, New York 12455 (914)586-2355

**Safety Editor:** Charlie Walbridge, 230 Penllyn Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422; Phone 215-646-0157; fax 215-643-0668; email 73514.1714@compuserve.com.

**Conservation and Access Editors:** Rich Bowers, Jason Robertson, John Gangemi, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD, 20910 Phone (301)589-9453 Fax (301)589-6121, email: richb@amwhitewater.org, jason@amwhitewater.org, jgangemi@digisys.net

**Missing Copies and Address Changes:** Contact Phyllis Horowitz

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On occasion **American Whitewater** publishes official organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

willing to twist the facts to get their way.

"... there are other aspects of whitewater boating that bear close scrutiny...such as environmental and economic impacts [including] degradation of wilderness values and overall costs of property damage..."

According to PG&E, building 68 dams and 100 major reservoirs on 16 California rivers is not degradation, but whitewater is!

American Whitewater doesn't subscribe to PG&E's version of ownership, we believe that rivers are for everyone. If you agree, then we need your support. Write to PG&E and tell them their views and arrogance are outdated. Send your letters to American Whitewater, because frankly, we want the pleasure of dropping these letters on their doorstep and telling them what they can do with their view of "ownership." And support our efforts to fight this type of viewpoint, because there are still dragons to be slain – and they want to control the rivers you paddle.

Rich Bowers

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## Accidents Happen, Tim Gavin Defended

Dear: Mr. Katz

I recently read your article, "No Laughing Matter." I read several other articles, but kept coming back to your article. After reading it several times, I felt it demanded a response.

First of all, I would like to tell you how fortunate you are to have not been involved in any river-related fatalities, and to not know anyone that has. It's an awful feeling to listen to someone talk about a fatal accident on the river. That was the extent of my "death" experience on the water.

That all changed on March 29, 1998, when Tim Gavin drowned on the Upper Blackwater. Never in my lifetime have I ever felt so helpless, alone, and desperate as I did immediately following Tim's accident. Nothing could have been done to change the outcome, unfortunately.

Secondly, don't overlook the fact that life-threatening elements such as undercuts and strainers do present themselves on class III & IV. Separating yourself by saying, "It won't happen to me" is a sure ticket to complacency, which could lead to your first river incident. You make it sound as if you've never had even as much as a broach or pin or anything. Where is your list of close calls, honestly?

Just a tid bit of information on Tim Gavin. Yes, up until 4 years ago he was a class V & VI renegade, running these rivers alone, often in adverse weather conditions, without hesitation. Tim and I started paddling together in 1994, about 15 months later, I had a son, Jamey. Tim and I had many conversations about safety, and our sons someday paddling together with us. I even went as far as to say I won't paddle with you anymore, unless you buy a throw-bag. He conceded, purchasing a throw-bag, take apart paddle, airbags, new helmet and life jacket. He had a whole new outlook on kayaking, enjoying the sport with friends, not paddling alone, not taking unnecessary chances.

His main objective was to spend time with his son, Eric (You remember him, you mentioned him in your article). John Mason, president of Mountain Surf coined a wonderful term for Tim, SOUL BOATER, HE WASN'T IN THE SPORT FOR THE GLORY OR FAME, HE DID IT BECAUSE HE LOVED IT — PLAIN AND SIMPLE.

I agreed with the majority of your article, what I don't understand is your callous way of describing Tim's son's loss. I feel it was not necessary and requires an apology to Tim's family and friends. Enough arm chair

quarterbacking on this matter. Tim had no intention of going out this way. ACCIDENTS HAPPEN.

Sincerely,  
Michael Moore

## No Easy Answers, Jonathon Katz

Okay. So YOU won't die paddling. Undress the hubris and think a minute. Accidents DO happen. And while I agree with much of your message (use your gray matter, try to paddle smart), what's smart? And haven't you separated yourself, like most paddlers, from what happened to Tim? It could happen to you. So you skipped the Hudson on a big day. Don't you think Tim has made similar decisions? Your not-so-subtle message was that his death was his own fault. And that it was stupid. Not every kayaking casualty is so easily dismissed. Nor should this one be. Tim was not a stupid paddler. He paddled the Upper B hundreds of times. And had run that particular drop many times. Yes, it's a hard river. But it wasn't a thoughtless paddler going for the glory that was lost that day.

The thing that struck me about your article was that although you mentioned Charlie Walbridge's message of (paraphrasing) "don't distance yourself from the accident by saying 'I won't make that mistake, I won't die.'" That's exactly what you did.

And you did it without compassion for Tim. For his family. And for everyone else involved.

Don't get me wrong, Jonathan, or the rest of the paddling community, I agree that when we think about paddling, we must THINK. Think about the consequences instead of being driven by ego, mob psychology or even habit (so used to a river that her impact no longer takes your breath away, or scares you like it should). But, people will die in this sport. Like they die in their cars. All I ask is that you think hard, paddle within your ability, respect the judgment others make for themselves, and don't, with snappy advice, dismiss what has happened to a paddler taken home by a river.

Carolyn Dick

## Kudos for Us!

Dear Bob:

Kudos for *Blame* (editorial, July / August '98). You make good points. And I like your wry humor.

When I finished *Portrait of a Whitewater Artist*, I felt like I knew a guy I wanted to know

better. Exceptional paintings. Again, I'm impressed how well *American Whitewater* reproduces graphics.

Quality writing in *AW*: Karen V' Soske's *River Essay*, Ken Strickland's *The Lek Hole*, to name a couple. You attract — without pay — writers far better than *Paddler* and *Canoe & Kayak* do. I wonder how...

Cheers,  
April Holladay  
Albuquerque, NM

## Hoyt Reel Praised

Dear Bob,

Great article! It broke up the endless horror stories of river talk and gave insight on how one can become and leave a legacy in the wake of the sport. They broke the mold on that boy! I have a lot of respect for Hoyt and by reading your article I learned a lot about his early days that I did not know. To see this man finally getting some respect honors the magazine, the author and the man for whom it is written.

I hope people will take the time to get to know Hoyt and his incredible sense of humor. Is the dog in the picture "old red eye?" And the topic of your next interview with Hoyt could be "The Pregame Show at Audra State Park in West Virginia."

Cynthia Alexander  
Pennsylvania

## John Foss Remembered: Some Thoughts on Death

Oct 8, 1998

Dear Editor,

You can remember me, or you can call me up. I'm still in the phone book in Denver, Colorado.

Today I returned from an early season morning of snowboarding at St. Mary's Glacier, an hour out of Denver, and picked up the latest *American Whitewater*, a magazine I've read for the last eighteen years. When I read "John Foss Remembered" in the table of contents, I could feel something inside of me... a physical reaction that I couldn't control. I also know that part of that reaction was anger.

I met John on the Bio Bio. I talked to him again at Gore Canyon in Colorado. He wasn't a friend, but I knew him. The same with Chuck Kern. The last time I saw him he was backsurfing a wave on the Rouge near Montreal. I was in an eddy, delighted to have just surfed the wave frontside. The list continues...

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Forty-five — John Foss' age — is too young to die. And that's part of what I'm reading about whenever I open up American Whitewater. One argument is that these boaters died "doing what they loved." My answer to that is they are dead. Dead. And unless you believe in another time around, that's it. And that means John Foss' 30 plus more years of *living* — boating, loving, living are gone. Gone.

Another argument is that they were expert boaters and knew the risk. My answer to that is that at some point you have to stop taking that risk. So I ran the Fataleufu, but I walked Zeta and the Throne Room. You have to know somehow that the next twenty or thirty of forty years of your life are too precious to take that risk. A very debatable response, I know, but it's what I believe.

I worked my way up to class V, eventually paddling "the beef" in Chile, Costa Rica, Alaska, Canada and Colorado. The Bio Bio, Reventazan, the little Su, the Taureau, Clear Creek outside Denver... And I haven't paddled any class V in two years. I haven't boated enough and I haven't found a group of boaters that I'm comfortable tackling difficult water with.

I guess that makes me a weenie. I guess I'm not on the cutting edge anymore, if I ever was. OK, I'm not. I may never be again. But I know this: the last two big kayaking trips that I took to British Columbia and Alberta with my old friends Bill and Joan Hildreth were two of my best boating trips. We paddled class IV primarily; exploring rivers based on a guidebook. No class V rivers, just working our way down new rivers and streams. Having fun with my oldest boating friends.

I've had the misfortune of dying when I was twenty-five, but I was lucky. They got my heart started again; they got my body back together. I'm thirty-seven now, and these last twelve years have been like a gift. I see myself boating, mountain biking, climbing, snowboarding and *living* for decades. Putting yourself in a position where you can die in a boat is not worth it. Life is short enough as it is.

Peter Cogan  
Denver, Colorado

## Remembering Jeff Alexander

Dear Editor,

This September I learned that a friend had drowned on the Illinois River last March. It is strange, I remember hearing about river deaths on the Illinois last spring. Although the Illinois is in the Pacific Northwest, it made national attention. There was even a Dateline NBC story about the incident. Jeff Alexander was named as one of the victims.

But I told myself "There is no way that could be the Jeff Alexander I know." To this day I am not sure why I rejected the possibil-

ity that it could be my friend. Not until recently, when I heard that an ex-guide for North American Rivers Runners had died on a river in Oregon, did I really start to entertain the possibility that the fatality involved the person I began kayaking with.

I posted a message on REC.BOATS.PADDLE and the news that I feared was confirmed. I was devastated. I could not accept that Jeff had perished doing what he enjoyed so much. I was in a state of denial. I had just paddled with Jeff on the Upper Yough last September. We had dinner in Friendsville and I met him again on the Gauley. I recall Jeff asking me to join him on a multiple day boating trip in the Spring of 98 on a river in Oregon. I had been planning on paddling in California, but I told him if my plans changed, I would give him a call. Jeff wrote his parents' address on a piece of paper. I still have that piece of paper in my wallet.

Jeff was such an easy going person. I had known Jeff for over seventeen years; we met at a kayak clinic held by a Columbus, Ohio boating club. The Columbus AYH was sponsoring a weekend kayak school on the Cheat Narrows near Albright, West Virginia. I was eager to learn to kayak so I signed up for the school. The first day the instructors divided the students into groups. Jeff and I were assigned to the same group. We hit it off immediately. Neither of us had a roll, but that did not impede our determination to master the sport. After a few wet exits and hassling with emptying our boats, Jeff and I concluded that if we could hold our breaths long enough, an instructor would paddle up to us and we could right ourselves by grabbing onto their boats. Our innovation worked! The award for the largest lung capacity was given to Jeff and myself that evening. The instructors picked Jeff and me, out of all the students, to advance to the Lower Yough the next day.

It was only the second time in a kayak for the both of us and we were paddling the Lower Yough. I was nervous, but I remember that Jeff seemed very relaxed. I eventually began to relax and we both paddled the river without incident. Over the next few years Jeff and I went on to paddle together throughout West Virginia.

Two years after the kayak school Jeff joined North American River Runners as a guide. After Jeff joined NARR I didn't paddle with him as much, but I did see him several times a year and would visit him whenever I went to the New and Gauley Rivers. Every time I would see Jeff on the river guiding, he would be smiling. His customers always seemed to be having a good time. Jeff will be missed by a lot of people.

There have been too many people dying on the rivers recently. Too many highly qualified and talented boaters have died. Jeff's death has touched home and has made me evaluate my reasons for boating and ask why

so many people are dying.

Whitewater paddling has risks associated with it. It always has and always will. Risk is integral part of life and part of our daily activities. I don't know all the circumstances surrounding Jeff's accident, but I do know that he was a very qualified raft guide and kayaker. All any of us can do is to try to use good judgment and hope that our decisions are the correct ones. There are some things in nature that we can not control. If you paddle whitewater, regardless of the class of difficulty, you have to accept the fact that there are inherent dangers. Yes, you can prepare yourself the best you can, but an accident can strike without warning and no one is impervious to it.

I have noticed dramatic changes in the sport of whitewater boating. One thing that is obvious is that there are a lot more people paddling these days. Also, the limits of navigability have been advanced. When I first started kayaking the Upper Gauley and the Upper Yough were the pinnacles of eastern boating. Today, there is the Upper Blackwater, Upper Red Creek, Mann's Creek, Laurel Creek and many others not yet mentioned in guide books. The risks have increased and today's aspiring boaters have higher goals. I am not condemning these rivers, they are being paddled safely on a regular basis by highly skilled people with state of the art equipment. But what I am saying is that the risks are there. The decision to run a particular rapid or river is the responsibility of the individual and no one else. This is not to say that input from members of a group is not important, but that the ultimate decision lies with each individual.

I believe each boater should evaluate a particular rapid or river and determine the risks involved and then make the decision to run or not run it. It is an individual decision and many factors come into play. When I look at a particular rapid, I don't just determine the best line, but I also evaluate the consequences of missing my line. Am I willing to take the risks involved? I'm not suggesting that this is a procedure that must be practiced, but it is an individual analysis process that works for me.

I have had several friends die on the river and Jeff's death has really set me back. It seems like there is an obituary in every *American Whitewater* magazine. I was extremely moved by Rosi Weiss's article in July/August 1998 edition of *American Whitewater*. Tim Gavin recently died on the Upper Blackwater. While I did not know him personally, I know that he had paddled the Upper Blackwater more than anyone. He was a very competent paddler and died on a river that he knew extremely well. Risks and dangers are insidious, they don't discriminate and they don't go away. All you can do is to trust your own judgment.

Please analyze all risks involved and make decisions you are comfortable with. Remem-

# Guidelines for Contributors

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

The editorial staff of American Whitewater carefully reviews all material submitted for publication. We are particularly interested in receiving full length feature articles, conservation and club news, special event announcements, articles pertaining to whitewater safety and short, humorous pieces.

Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, AW Briefs, River Voices, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines, Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater cartoons are also welcomed.

If possible articles should be submitted on a 3" computer cassette. (WordPerfect preferred - others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

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

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints or color prints. Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we can not guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self addressed stamped

envelope with your submission. Because we publish in black and white, photos with a lot of contrast work best.

American Whitewater Feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flatwater. The best features have a definite slant... or theme. They are not merely chronological recountings of river trips.

Open the story with an eye catching lead, perhaps by telling an interesting anecdote. Dialogue should be used to heighten the reader's interest. Don't just tell us about the river... tell us about the people on the river... develop them as characters. Feature articles should not be written in the style of a local club newsletter.

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

Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through and don't be afraid to poke a little fun at yourself... and your paddling partners.

Profanity should be used only when it is

absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not our intent to intentionally offend our more sensitive members and readers.

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

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

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

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ber that very good and extremely talented people have perished pursuing this sport. Years can go by without incident and then one day you can be caught off guard and an accident can occur.

I feel that whitewater paddling is a fairly safe sport and there are many good reasons for participating in it. But there are risks. No matter how prepared or how skilled, the risks can catch you unsuspectingly. All you can do is prepare yourself and make decisions that you are comfortable with and be willing to accept that there is the possibility for injury or worse: Death. Just living on this planet is a risk, but that doesn't keep us from existing. Nor, should risk keep us from enjoying the wonderful things offered by whitewater paddling.

Jeff will be missed for a very long time by all who knew him. If there are whitewater rivers in heaven, you can be certain Jeff is guiding a group of angels down one of them and they all have smiles on their faces. Time eases the pain of a death, but it doesn't bring the person back. For those just starting out in the sport, please don't lose perspective. Use good sense and good judgment and evaluate all the risks involved.

Goodbye Jeff. You have touched a great number of people and you are deeply missed.

Jerry Spence

Reynoldsburg, Ohio

## New Scale of Whitewater Difficulty Praised

Dear AWA,

I would like to thank you for the new scale of whitewater difficulty, and particularly for the listing of benchmark rapids. I mostly paddle in and around West Virginia. One of my favorite runs is the Big Sandy in Preston County. I have always enjoyed this run with the exception of Big Splat, which I have always walked. What a great surprise it was to find out that it has the same rating as Insignificant on the Upper Gauley. I have never even scouted Insignificant, never mind walking it. I have to tell you that I went out the next day and ran Big Splat. I had a perfect line, and now consider it one of my favorite drops. The new scale of whitewater difficulty is a great addition to kayaking everywhere. Please continue to rate more rapids in the future.

With some Garden Pathology,  
Eric "Class 5.0" Henrickson

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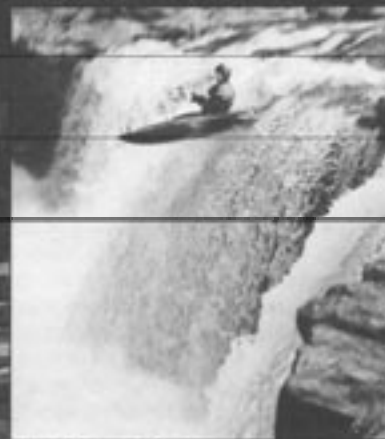
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# Big Sandy, Big Splat, Big Trouble

By: Eric Henriksson



Eric Henriksson at Wonder Falls, Big Sandy  
Photo by Radwan Hallata

The morning of the Fourth of July dawned with the promise of excitement. I was together with my friends Nick and Dag from Chicago, who had driven to West Virginia for the weekend. We were presented with the rare opportunity to paddle the Big Sandy and the Upper Yough, two of Appalachia's gems, in the same day. We arrived at the Sandy in the early morning, bouncing up and down eroded shuttle roads in the dawn hours. In Rockville we were even more excited to find the river running a reasonable 5.4 feet. What more could we ask for? Clear, abundant water, good friends and a classic West Virginia run—this was shaping up to be a perfect day!

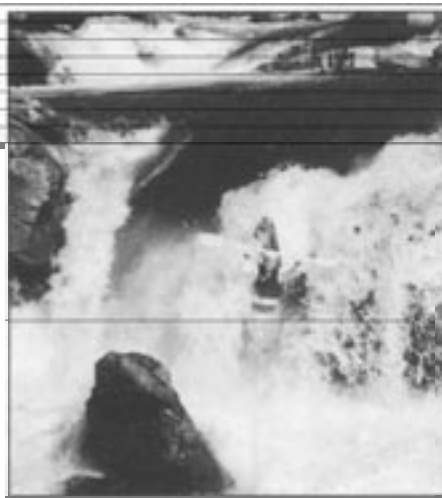
From the moment we put on everything was going according to plan. We had all paddled the Sandy before and we were making good time. Wonder Falls was punctuated by a rousing paddle through the curtain with a great view of the falls from beneath. I wasn't sure if I had seen Nick that psyched before.

When we arrived at Big Splat, Nick and Dag got out on the right. I had already decided to run the drop. As I headed for the left I noticed that Nick was not taking his boat with him on the portage route. After a clean run I turned around in time to see Nick heading back upstream. I knew that he had been contemplating a run and when I shouted up at him asking his intentions he gave me a thumbs-up. He had run this drop before. I indicated that I was going back to the top to run safely, and then headed up the left bank.

I don't know if Nick heard me, but it was here that things began to go wrong. I dropped my boat on my ascent and it fell in between

some rocks. A couple of minutes later, after rescuing my boat, I emerged onto the flat area on the river left side of the drop. Immediately I heard Dag yell from the right shore. I ran to the edge just in time to see Nick's Cruise Control edging out of the hole and around the splat rock, upside down. Nick was nowhere in sight.

Neither of us had seen Nick come over the



Top background: Big Splat at 5'6"  
Above: Nick Lipkowski on his 1st run of Big Splat at 5'6". Photo by Rick Burchfields

falls. While I had been carrying my boat back upstream Dag had been lowering his boat around the drop so that both our attentions had been off the falls for some time. At this point Nick could have been in there for half a minute. I began throwing my rope into the

hole at the base of Big Splat. It came back empty. Then it suddenly occurred to me that Nick could still be tangled in the undercut above the falls. I yelled for Dag to keep throwing a rope into the hole and ran upstream. The current was pushing against the undercut, but it seemed unlikely that Nick would be in there. I ran back down to continue throwing my rope. All I could see was churning water.

This was becoming my worst nightmare. It had been well over a minute at this point, maybe two. I didn't think that Nick could possibly have held his breath for so long, especially in such aviolent place. All I could think was, "Nick is dying and I can't do a thing to help him. I don't even know where he is."

Suddenly I heard Dag yell. He was pointing to the far end of the ledge on river left. Following his gesture with my gaze, I caught sight of Nick. He was just emerging from beneath the ledge, which is undercut across its entire face. We yelled and he slowly turned to look back at us. He was in really bad shape. His face and arms were covered with bruises and abrasions. He was barely moving.

I quickly ran the drop again, paddled over and got out of my boat. Nick had pulled himself onto a rock. His glasses and lifejacket were gone as well as his lace-up river shoes. He appeared to be in shock. I said, "I'm just glad you're here, Nick."

"I thought I was dead," he replied. "I wasn't going anywhere."

Further examination revealed bruises and lacerations covering his body. He was ori-

ented, but obviously functionally incapacitated. I couldn't detect any obvious facial fractures and his chest and abdomen seemed OK. He didn't indicate any spinal tenderness but his right leg had a large ragged laceration and his tibia was visible at its base. I quickly explored the wound but didn't find any bone ends. When Dag arrived, we attempted to move Nick. He said his leg was giving out and we assumed it was fractured.

Forty-five minutes later we had moved Nick downstream, ferried him across the river and carried him on our backs to where we thought we could climb up the steep bank to a trail a hundred feet above. While Dag went ahead to scout a route I splinted Nick's leg with an air splint that I fashioned out of a spray skirt, float bag, life jacket and throw rope. I found his lifejacket, with his car keys, floating amongst some rocks. At about the same time his paddle washed out and became stuck in some rocks. His boat was pinned in midstream. Nick was getting cold and the task ahead seemed insurmountable. His vital signs were remaining stable, but time was definitely not on our side.

As we pondered our strategy, another group of boaters arrived at Big Splat and began to scout. Dag and I waved, but they were focused on the rapid and did not notice us. I ferried back across and ran upstream to ask for help getting Nick up to the trail. I explained that we thought his leg was broken, and they offered their assistance without hesitation. One of them paddled off to call for EMS assistance while the rest gathered around Nick. They retrieved his boat from midstream only to find that it had acquired a bit of extra rocker in the stern. They also recruited another group of paddlers to help. We placed Nick in a ducky and secured him to it with a throwrope. One of the boaters had a space blanket that we covered Nick with. This seemed to make a marked difference in his condition. Using the straps around the tubes for handles and a rope

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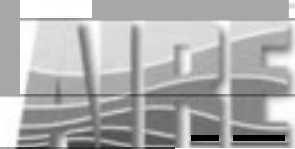
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on the bow belay with, we passed him hand over hand up to the trail.

From prior conversations with friends who had hiked this trail, I gathered that it would be similar to a four-wheel-drive road. It was anything but. The trail, once a railroad grade, was now an overgrown footpath, obstructed by fallen trees and eroded ravines.

Initially, I had requested help in getting Nick to the trail. When this was accomplished, however, the boaters who assisted us showed no signs of quitting. We spent several grueling hours bludgeoning our way back upstream to Wonder Falls.

A hundred yards short of the falls we were met by an EMS crew. They had a rough ride into the falls and were doubtful about moving Nick out that way. Fortunately, the EMS team had two way radios which they used to call for a helicopter transport. Within minutes the chopper arrived, making an impressive landing by the falls. The flight team worked fast and within minutes Nick was on his way to the hospital.

With words of thanks to those who had sacrificed their day to help, Dag and I headed back down the trail to our boats. Our paddle out was uneventful, and we soon joined Nick in the Emergency Department of the hospital in Morgantown. I am an anesthesiology resident at this hospital, and it was good to see familiar faces taking care of Nick.

Nick was looking much better. The color had returned to his face and he was smiling, and glad to see us. X-rays of his leg had ruled out a fracture, but a knee exam confirmed several torn ligaments rendering the joint

unstable. He had been resuscitated with intravenous fluids and was preparing to have his leg wound sutured. Nick was released from the hospital later that evening. He was able to get around on crutches and a knee immobilizer. I later hiked back down the river and paddled his boat out.

Nick's version of the incident at Big Splat went something like this: He had run the top part of the drop cleanly but had then flipped attempting to eddy out above the final drop. After a missed roll attempt, he decided to exit his boat rather than wash over the falls upside down. He surfaced just as he was going over the drop and had landed in rocks with the falls coming down on top of him. He remained stuck under the falls for some time. He thought that his knee giving way might have been what finally released him. This event could have easily ended tragically. The factors which decided the outcome probably amount to just a fraction of a second. Thankfully, time was in Nick's favor. He will paddle again, but only after a long recovery that may involve major knee surgery.

I would again like to offer my gratitude to those who offered their help evacuating Nick. They gave everything they had to make it work. And although we have differing opinions on which plants constitute poison ivy, I didn't come down with any and I hope they didn't either. Their actions speak volumes for the types of people who make up the paddling community. May it always be this way.

## The Lower Joke

Dear Editor,

It's a sunny day in July.

Ohiopyle State Park, Pennsylvania. Mid-afternoon.

A group of boaters relax at the take-out after a long day on the Lower Youghiogheny River. The theme song from "Mission Impossible" drones faintly from a car stereo in the background.

Suddenly, a park ranger pulls in, and the day becomes chilly. The tall, dark, ranger jumps out of his truck and stands hands on hip, his silhouette outlined by the bright colors of kayaks in the background.

The crowd quiets.

The ranger surveys the scene and walks closer.

RANGER: Y'all having some fun here?

GROUP: Uh, yessir.

RANGER: You know that is strictly prohibited.

GROUP: Yes, but...

RANGER: There are no excuses.

*Ranger whips a citation pad out of his pants, writes the group a ticket and then stalks away, laughing.*

While the above is obviously an overdramatization, I don't think that it misses the mark by much. When I first began going to Ohiopyle a few years ago, I really liked the area. There is rail-trail biking and walking; picnic sites; and the enjoyable, though heavily regulated, Lower Youghiogheny River. I couldn't understand why several boaters I knew referred to the area as the Lower Joke. They told me the more I came to Ohiopyle, the more I would understand their nickname for the area. I think I finally do, and trust me, it isn't exactly Jellystone Park.

The rangers at Ohiopyle leave a lot to be desired. In all the times I have been to Ohiopyle, I have never encountered friendly park rangers. In fact, the only time I have ever seen the rangers is when they are leaning out of their vehicles to ticket or yell at people. (For some reason, I have a strong suspicion that a Dunkin' Donuts would do good business in this area.) Based on their attitudes, it seems that the rangers view the people that come into the park as their enemies, and that they won't rest until they succeed in persuading them not to come back. What these rangers seem to forget; however, is that they are actually the employees of the people (Pennsylvania taxpayers) that come to the park. Instead of sitting in their vans, it would be nice to see the rangers out helping and talking with people. In addition, the rangers could walk or ride their bikes on the rail-trails, or kayak or raft down the river, offering assistance to those in need. Maybe they could even learn to provide their service with a smile.



The worst problem at Ohiopyle is the rangers' incessant ticketing. This is because Ohiopyle, for the most part, doesn't post signs to let you know what's legal (or illegal) in the park. Over the years at the park my friends have been ticketed for parking in a parking lot after dark (not marked) and for biking and jogging on certain trails (restrictions were not posted).

A recent event highlights this problem. One of my friends set up shuttle at the take-out for the Lower Yough (Brunner's Run). The parking lots at Brunner's Run consist of several interconnected gravel parking areas. Unfortunately, the gravel lots were full, but after driving around, he noticed a large, grassy, recently mowed field. My friend, along with several others, parked their cars in this area. There were no signs indicating you could not park in this area.

When we returned to the car at the end of our trip a ranger was in the lot writing parking tickets. No great surprise. When we questioned the ranger as to why we were being ticketed, he informed us it was because we were parked in a helicopter landing zone. Never in a million years would we have guessed this was a restricted helicopter landing zone. Needless to say, we thought it was unfair that we were being ticketed when there was no sign. We decided to question the ranger further.

The ranger informed us that Ohiopyle does not want to clutter up the park by posting signs for every little thing that is illegal. He had a point. However, it is not fair to ticket people for things they thought they could do. We had had enough and asked the ranger where we could go to protest the ticket. He said that proper procedure would be for us to not pay the ticket, then, in approximately two weeks, he would call us to see why we had not paid the ticket. At that time, the fine would be quadrupled and we would be provided with the name of a court where we could go. He haughtily informed us that there was no point in us going to the court because we would lose. Now that's what I call justice!

The ranger continued to ticket others in the parking lot, then drove off. Surprisingly, he returned about ten minutes and revoked our tickets. However, the point remains — if there is no sign, there should be no fine. Or, if there are no restriction signs posted, the rangers should issue written warning tickets on the first offense.

Another problem at Ohiopyle is that you have to bring two vehicles if you plan to run the Lower Yough to Brunner's Run, leaving one car at the put-in, and the other at the top of the hill about a mile from the riverside take-out. Then you must buy a bus pass that will take you from the take-out, up the hill to the parking lot, where you left your second car. Ohiopyle Park could help alleviate this problem if they would allow biking on the trails that run from the hilltop area back to

the riverside put-on. Traffic could be minimized as boaters biked their shuttles. At this point, there are no restrictions "posted" on these trails, but the thought of a \$75 ticket is enough to keep anyone off them.

The group packs up their gear and heads out. They had tried to obey the rules they knew were in place, and couldn't understand why the ranger was still mean to them. The group pools the last of their money to pay the ticket. The next time they come to the Lower Joke, they'll have to remember to bring more.

Jennifer Jones  
Morgantown, WV

*Editor's note: Relations between whitewater boaters and Ohiopyle State Park rangers have long been stormy. I personally avoid the Park completely between May and October because of the crowds, congestion and hassles. But this summer at least 20 boaters complained to me about "harassment" by the Ohiopyle rangers. Not one boater had anything good to say about the demeanor of the park staff. Apparently relations between boaters and rangers have tumbled to an all time low in Ohiopyle. Obviously, dealing with the public is not always*

*easy, especially in a heavily utilized park like Ohiopyle. But many of us deal with a "difficult" public every day — in countless occupational capacities. We are expected to be pleasant and professional. Shouldn't the same be true for state park rangers?*

Bob Gedekoh



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Raleigh, NC 27615  
joekayak@worldnet.att.net

**Barry Grimes**  
124 Hilltop Drive  
Richmond, KY 40475  
bagrim@pop.uky.edu

**Jay P.K. Kenney**  
1675 Larimer, Suite 735  
Denver, CO 80202  
jaypk@aol.com

**Chris Koll**  
352 Carneco Circle  
Liverpool, NY 13090  
ckoll23@aol.com

**Sue Langfitt**  
5 Martin Road  
Rye, NY 10580  
slangfitt@gwrr.com

**Jeff Leighton**  
2079 Reliez Valley Road  
Lafayette, CA 94549  
jeffleighton@prodigy.net

**Richard Penny**  
5050 Glide Drive, #B  
Davis, CA 95616-4419  
rpenny@friendsoftheriver.org

**Joe Pulliam**  
P.O. Box 1500  
Harriman, TN 37748  
72002.305@compuserve.com

**Ken Ransford**  
475 Sierra Vista  
Carbondale, CO 81623  
ransford@qcsn.net

**Jim Scott**  
3715 Jocelyn Street NW  
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scottj@qprb.org

**Bill Sedivy**  
Route 5, Box 714F  
Clarksburg, WV 26301  
sedivy@earthlink.net

**Pete Skinner**  
2 Snyder Road  
West Sand Lake, NY 12196  
skinnp@qprb.edu

**Ron Stewart**  
P.O. Box 1337  
Chattanooga, TN 37401  
ron\_stewart@taylor.chattanooga.net

**Paul Tefft**  
P.O. Box 4784  
Aspen, CO 81611  
enviro@qprb.net

**Mac Thornton**  
6467 Wishbone Terrace  
Cabin John, MD 20818  
potomac@qprb.com

**Barry Tuscano**  
RD 1, Box 32  
Bolivar, PA 15923  
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**Charlie Walbridge**  
Route 1, Box 2495  
Brunston Mills, WV 26525  
CWAL@compuserve.com

**Mark White**  
2034 E. Hubbard Ave.  
Salt Lake City, UT 84108  
mark@saltk.org

**Susan Wilson**  
18 White Oak Forest Road  
Fairview, NC 28730  
76017.3534@compuserve.com

## AW STAFF

**Rich Bowers**  
Executive Director  
1430 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
RichB@amwhitewater.org

**Jayne Abbot**  
Events Manager  
450 Ivy Hill Road  
Asheville, NC 28787  
jhabbot@aol.com

**John Gangemi**  
Conservation Director  
482 Electric Avenue Bigfork,  
MT 59911  
jgangemi@digisys.net

**Jason Robertson**  
Access Director  
1430 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Jason@amwhitewater.org

**Phyllis Horowitz**  
Administrative Director  
P.O. Box 636 Margaretville, NY  
12455  
74663.2104@compuserve.com

## AW OFFICERS

President: Ric Alesch  
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The American Whitewater (AW) is a national organization with a membership consisting of thousands of individual whitewater boating enthusiasts, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates.

**CONSERVATION:** AW maintains a complete national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors threats to those rivers, publishes information on river conservation, provides technical advice to local groups, works with government agencies and other river users, and-- when necessary-- takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

**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, resists unjustified restrictions on government managed whitewater rivers and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

**EDUCATION:** Through publication of the bi-monthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater, (AW) provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

**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 AW Whitewater Safety Code.

**EVENTS:** AW organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation, including the Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo in Tennessee, the Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), the Arkansas River Festival in Colorado, the Kennebec Festival in Maine and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AW was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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-Jack Nelson  
Owner, Cascade Outfitters

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Please direct inquiries to Ken Ransford, attorney and CPA, 970-963-6800, or by email at [ransford@csn.net](mailto:ransford@csn.net).



# Conserve

## Perception Rocks Salt Lake City

Mark H. White

In the name of river conservation, Salt Lake City rocked at the famous Zephyr Club on August 13<sup>th</sup>. The music blasted, the micro beer flowed and the crowd waiting to get in stretched two blocks. When the dust settled sometime well after midnight, nearly \$2,500 had been raised for the Utah Rivers Council.

The first annual 'Liquid Fusion' party was the brainchild of Perception's Communications Coordinator, Veronica Griner, who has long supported grassroots conservation organizations such as the Utah Rivers Council. Perception honored and thanked their dealers and special friends by hosting the hottest powwow in town during the Outdoor Retailer tradeshow, which had attracted 18,000 manufacturers, sales reps and retailers.

In addition to arranging for some great music and libations, Perception's Veronica Griner had assembled three major prize packages; each worth \$3,000. Party goers had the opportunity to win one of these prize packages by purchasing a \$1 ticket. All ticket sale proceeds were then donated to the Utah Rivers Council.

Zach Frankel, Executive Director of the Rivers Council could not have been more appreciative. "We owe a lot to the good people at Perception," stated Frankel, "they have donated several boats for past year's silent auctions and now this! Thanks to concerned organizations such as Perception, Utah's last free-flowing rivers have a greater chance of survival."

Whitewater retailers and other Outdoor Retailer tradeshow attendees are still talking about and already looking forward to the 1999 Perception Liquid Fusion party.

## Wild & Scenic Rivers Act – 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; North Carolina's Lumber River is Newest Addition

In early October, American Rivers and other river organizations celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. The act, signed on Oct. 2, 1968, is one of the most important pieces of federal legislation ever passed to protect rivers. It protects 155 miles of the nation's most outstanding rivers from dams and other inappropriate development.

In October, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt designated 81 miles of the Lumber River. The Lumber is a prime example of a blackwater, bottomland hardwood forest rivers. It supports endangered species such as the bald eagle, red-cockaded woodpecker, and American alligator and provides outstanding fishing and canoeing opportunities.

American Rivers, one of the the nation's largest river conservation organizations, was founded 25 years ago to add more rivers to the National Rivers System. To date, river segments covering 10,844 miles have been designated as National Wild and Scenic Rivers. For more information, contact American Rivers at (202) 347-7550.

## American Whitewater Position Announcement Development Professional

**Are you interested in — Rivers? Outdoor recreation and whitewater boating? Helping to conserve and restore America's whitewater rivers and streams? Do you have experience in public relations and fundraising, and a desire to put these skills to use improving natural resources and the effectiveness of American Whitewater? If you have top-notch writing and speaking skills, are able to articulate a paddler's vision for America's wild rivers and would enjoy life near the nation's capitol, there may be a job at American Whitewater for you.**

American Whitewater is seeking a development professional to create and implement long-term strategies. Responsibilities include planning and managing fundraising activities, including foundation and corporate grants, major donor development, and coordination with our events and membership programs.

Experience in fundraising or sales; excellent written and oral communications skills; strong organizational and management ability; computer literacy; and an ability and willingness to work at American Whitewater's headquarters in Silver Spring, MD (just outside of Washington DC and one block from the Metro) are required. A sense of humor is mandatory and an interest in rivers and outdoor recreation is a big plus!

Send letter, resume, and writing sample and salary requirements by January 10th, to Development Position, American Whitewater, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD, 20910.

# Destination Nowhere!

By Rich Bowers

Following accusations by our members that the American Whitewater Journal reports on only Class IV extreme runs and remote wilderness rivers, we are introducing a new focus on a current paddling rage "Destination Boating."

For those of you who have avoided this trend, destination boating is the absolute antithesis of those river trips that take you from point A to point B, or worse, that requires major resources or super human strength and stamina even to access them (like Corsica or Nepal). To be blunt, if you consider the perfect day to include hiking over Mount Whitney to run the upper Kern, or carrying nine miles in to run Washington's upper Elwah, then destination boating may not be your cup of tea!

Destination boating, on the other hand, is more a social endeavor (although difficulty runs the gamut and skills learned are applicable on any river). It's the place to be, where to hang, kind of the paddling equivalent to going to the local mall.

Paddling "destinations" lie mere minutes away from home or office, an equal distance from the local brew house, and require only a short carry from the parking lot. Examples include O-Deck or Rocky Island rapids on the Potomac (at least a mile paddle), or Blue Hill Falls off the Maine Coast, literally a few feet from the roadside pullout. While carrying a throw bag and a med kit is always wise, even these necessities seem extreme for destination boating. Leave the breakdown, lunch, GPS, and satellite phone at home.

Our selection for this edition is Tennessee's Rock Island Rapid. While located a little more than an hour from most populated areas, Rock Island fits the destination definition because it is a quick carry from the parking lot, and flows at less than a mile from below the Rock Island powerhouse to the lake. Between these boundaries however, lies a fine selection of surfing waves and a great play hole. Then once you've worn yourself out blasting and doing wave moves, a quick scamper over the rocks finds you back at your car, SUV, or motor home, chasing down a cool one while you feed your favorite CD's into your system (to be truthful, Rock Island is a favorite here at American Whitewater because it is a great example of hydro engineering at its best. Rock Island dam created an impoundment on a limestone canyon, and as a result, nearly 1000 cfs pours through the cliffs and into the river 24 hours a day, 365 days per year).

While some grizzled veterans complain that destination boating is "a waste," "un-sportsmanlike," or "for wimps," this new philosophy or boating attitude contains a fair amount of benefits. First, in clumping boaters in a small area, destination boating keeps people off the remote runs (a huge benefit if you subscribe that anyone else on the river is a crowd). In the future, as boating increases in popularity, this will play an important part in crowd disbursement (unfortunately, it seems that some entire rivers, like the Gauley and the South Fork American, are included in the "destination" description).

Perhaps the greatest benefit is that destinations allow you to paddle often, sometimes every day. And it allows all skill levels to join in. No worries about surviving the run. Often the worst scenario is being trounced, or swimming, from the local playhole. And no more saving up vacation days to paddle, or lusting after the next long weekend – just run down and start paddling.

We encourage others to submit photos on their favorite destinations, and to explain just why it's your favorite spot. No need to worry about hordes of paddlers descending on you, because there's a good chance they already there!

Rock Island, Background photo by Rich Bowers  
Rock Island, Top inset photo by Ron Stewart  
Rock Island, Bottom inset photo by Rich Bowers





# PG&E CHALLENGES PADDLER ACCESS AND WHITEWATER FLOWS

## American Whitewater Conservation and Access Programs Fire Back

Staff reports

Here's a snapshot of some recent frontline action defending our whitewater resources.

In July, Pacific Gas And Electric (PG&E) boldly attacked whitewater resources in a letter widely distributed to management agencies. In their letter, PG&E argued that whitewater paddling was an inherently dangerous activity and, as a result, PG&E should not be required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to provide access to rivers or flows for whitewater recreation.

American Whitewater first heard of PG&E's intentions while delivering a presentation on the value of whitewater releases at the annual hydropower industry conference in Reno, Nevada. John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director, was accosted by a PG&E executive before he got two steps from the podium. PG&E sent their best public relations man to try to cajole Gangemi into agreeing with PG&E's argument that whitewater paddling was inherently dangerous. Gangemi responded emphatically that American Whitewater did not share PG&E's position on whitewater flows and access. Shortly thereafter, the Conservation and Access Programs fired off a rebuttal to PG&E's letter.

Many of us underestimate the threat to our favorite runs. We assume that the paddle we put away today will be used tomorrow when we pull that same eddy or make that tough attainment above a big drop. The staff at American Whitewater doesn't rest easy. We've always facing tough moves in the trenches while defending our whitewater resources.

Take the time to write your own response to PG&E's attack on whitewater. Send it to our Silver Spring office and we'll distribute it to the mailing list. If writing responses to proposed threats isn't your preferred form of river advocacy then consider supporting American Whitewater with a donation so that our staff can wage the whitewater wars for you.

■ PG&E's letter appears below verbatim for your advocacy entertainment.

Pacific Gas and  
Electric Company

Terry Morford  
Manager  
Public Relations

PG&E Natural Gas Division  
10000  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
Attn: Terry Morford  
PG&E Electric Division  
10000  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
Attn: Terry Morford  
415.774.2000

July 31, 1998

### PG&E Comments Regarding Whitewater Boating as a Public Safety Issue

Addressee (See Attached List):

PG&E continues to be extremely concerned with the concept that a hydroelectric project license should be responsible for increasing accessibility and participation in whitewater boating as a condition of renewing its FERC license. While PG&E does not take issue with whitewater boating as a form of recreation appropriate to some river reaches, it does take exception to the notion that hydroelectric project licensees should be responsible for increasing public or commercial accessibility and participation in this inherently hazardous activity. For the reasons discussed in this and previous letters, PG&E urges your agencies to reconsider the approach of placing on PG&E much of the responsibility for whitewater boating development simply because it is a hydropower license under FERC.

Both the California Legislature and the courts have identified whitewater boating as a hazardous activity, and statistics regarding accidents and fatalities associated with whitewater boating bear this out. The danger and unpredictability of whitewater boating is emphasized by the emerging statistics from the deadly 1998 season. As reported in the attached article from the San Francisco Chronicle newspaper, by late June six participants in private outings and three participants in commercially guided trips, including one professional whitewater guide, had been killed while whitewater boating on California rivers. We understand that several additional fatalities now bring the total to at least thirteen.

PG&E has a strong commitment to public safety both as a public utility and as a FERC licensee, and wants to avoid promoting dangerous activities. Whitewater boating is far more dangerous to people than the recreational activities licensees have traditionally been required to provide or facilitate such as camping and fishing. Requiring a licensee to facilitate this hazardous activity is not only inconsistent with expectations that hydroelectric projects will be operated for maximum public safety, it also sends a message that contradicts the public safety programs advocated by PG&E and many other licensees.

Hydro project licensees should not be required to offer or promote recreation activities that are widely recognized as hazardous and inherently dangerous. Instead, whitewater boating opportunities and facilities should be provided and paid for by participants and

commercial outfitters, or by public agencies with specific responsibilities for public recreation and boating activities.

This approach makes sense for three distinct reasons. First, each of these groups are able to protect themselves from liability arising from participation in the activity. Commercial outfitters require their paying customers to sign enforceable waivers of liability, and California Government Code § 831.7 specifically immunizes public entities and employees from liability to persons who engage in hazardous recreational activities such as whitewater boating. Second, commercial outfitters are paid by their customers for providing whitewater boating opportunities and can, in turn, help pay for facilities they need to operate their business. Third, designated public agencies such as the California Department of Boating and Waterways and U. S. Bureau of Land Management have the mandate and the funding to providing whitewater boating opportunities and facilities.

Unlike commercial outfitters, PG&E has no ability to obtain a waiver of liability from every commercial and, perhaps most significantly, every private whitewater boater. Furthermore, PG&E is not a public entity. California Government Code § 846 provides PG&E certain liability protection. However, injured parties may sue PG&E as a potential responsible party when it is required to promote or facilitate whitewater boating in and outside the boundaries of its licensed hydroelectric projects. Additionally, PG&E receives no commercial benefit from increasing accessibility and participation in whitewater boating and has no mechanism for recovering such costs through market-priced electric sales into the recently restructured and highly competitive California power market.

Even beyond the public safety issue, there are other aspects of whitewater boating that bear close scrutiny by resource and regulatory agencies, such as adverse environmental and economic impacts. Such impacts can take the form of degradation of wilderness values and overall costs of property damage, rescue efforts and lost electric generation that can far outweigh the benefits. PG&E has provided detailed comments on each of these issues in previous correspondence and filings.

PG&E looks to your agencies to recognize the serious public safety issues involved in whitewater boating. We ask that you support a redirection of responsibility for increasing accessibility and participation in this inherently hazardous recreation activity away from hydroelectric licensees and toward the appropriate public agencies and commercial interests.

Terry Morford

Attachments



August 19, 1998

Terry Morford, Manager  
Hydro Generation  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
Mail Code 1111C - PO Box 770000  
San Francisco, CA 94177

## RE: PG&E's Comments Regarding Whitewater Safety (August 3, 1998)

*American Whitewater is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1957 to work on national whitewater issues. We have over 7,300 members and more than 150 affiliate clubs, representing over 45,000 non-commercial whitewater paddlers. Our mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.*

Dear Mr. Morford,

American Whitewater is writing to Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) regarding your July 31, 1998, comments on whitewater safety and the role of hydropower licensees. This July letter was sent to California's land managers and policy makers, hydropower staff at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and others. The content of your letter breaks down into concerns for PG&E's responsibilities regarding whitewater participation and recreation, liability, conservation, economics, safety, and as window dressing for an agenda in which you encourage public management agencies to, "support a redirection of responsibility for increasing accessibility and participation [in whitewater boating] away from hydropower licensees."

American Whitewater found your letter to be self-serving, inaccurate, and frankly, astounding! Your letter shamelessly seeks to persuade resource agencies to subvert their roles in the FERC relicensing process, and encourages FERC to abandon its responsibility under the Federal Power Act, 16 USC 797(e), Section 4(e). Under this law, the restoration of recreation is required and PG&E's opinions on whether river recreation is appropriate are irrelevant.

*"In deciding whether to issue any license under this Part for any project, the Commission, in addition to the power and developmental purposes for which licenses are issued, shall give equal consideration to the purposes of energy conservation, mitigation of damage to, and enhancement of fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat), the protection of recreational opportunities, and the preservation of other aspects of environmental quality." (Emphasis added)*

## Whitewater Participation and Recreation

PG&E states that it is concerned that "a hydroelectric project licensee should be responsible for increasing accessibility and participation in whitewater boating..." In your final paragraph, you ask the agencies to support a "redirection of responsibility for... recreation... toward the appropriate public agencies and commercial interests."

No one has ever asked dam operators to increase whitewater participation. What we have asked, and have successfully brought about on rivers impacted by dams across the country, is a return to the public of the use and enjoyment of resources that have been denied as a result of dam construction and operation. This includes the return of a natural and diverse flow regime that includes flows suitable for whitewater recreation. We see no reason why PG&E (and all of the



river miles impacted by your dams) should be treated differently from the many other companies who are providing recreational access and flows through existing or new license terms.

PG&E's letter demonstrates that it has little or no understanding of what is happening in outdoor recreation, including the realization that today some 94.5 percent of the population is involved in outdoor activities. Your letter suggests that your concern for stakeholder profits supercede the recreational interests of the nation, the state of California, and local communities. If this is the case, then Congress flatly rejected your position in 1986 when it adopted Section 4(e) of the Federal Power Act (FPA) and mandated that recreation interests be given "equal consideration" to energy production.

PG&E's project management affects far more than commercial whitewater interests, it affects all of those who would enjoy hiking, climbing, boating, or wildlife watching along the rivers impacted by your projects (including many within our National Forests or within Bureau of Land Management areas).

Each of the agencies that received your letter (including FERC) are deeply involved in outdoor and river recreation, and I am sure they also wonder why PG&E apparently believes that it should be exempt from the FPA and the rules that regulate so many other hydropower dams. Each of these public agencies is working hard to increase recreation use on public lands, but they would have much more success in California if so many public resources were not held hostage by the self-serving interests of PG&E.

American Whitewater does not expect, or want, PG&E to increase whitewater recreation. What we want is compliance with the FPA, and the return of the recreational resources that have been impacted by your projects for so many years. Your letter is a poor attempt to duck the social, economic, and environmental impacts that have arisen from managing PG&E's hydroelectric dams, and to evade PG&E's legal responsibilities.

## Liability

While PG&E claims that they have no protection from liability, this is not necessarily the case. Even the most simplistic and rudimentary legal research would have identified substantial authority providing for protection for private landowners facilitating recreational use of their property, especially where the landowner is required to follow license terms mandated by a federal license.

Less than one percent of the rivers in the United States contain Class II whitewater or better, and this number includes whitewater rivers which are only available during scheduled releases from Commission, Corps of Engineers, and other dams. In fact, rivers below dams include many of the most dependable, seasonal, and popular whitewater runs in the United States. In many instances, hydropower operators have provided flows for whitewater whether or not they were required by a FERC license (Maryland's Upper Youghiogheny [exempt] and Maine's Penobscot and Kennebec rivers are a few examples). In the past several years, FERC has issued many new license terms that require whitewater releases on numerous whitewater rivers.

## 1. Recreational Use Statutes

Virtually every state in the country has adopted a Recreational Use Statute intended to protect private landowners (including private hydropower operators) from liability for negligence arising from the use of their land for recreational purposes, thereby encouraging them to make their property available for public access. See Miller, "Effect of Statute Limiting Landowner's Liability for Personal Injury to Recreational User," 47ALR 4th 262 (1986).

California's recreational use statute (attached) protects PG&E from liability for whitewater recreation. California Government

Code § 843 and associated case law protects all landowners and easement holders from liability when their lands are gratuitously used for recreational purposes. Exceptions arise from the willful or malicious failure to warn against a dangerous use. Landowners can seek further protection through § 5123B.5, which indemnifies landowners against all claims arising from public use. Though these codes do not address PG&E's responsibility for returning water to the rivers below its dams, they do cover their rights as landowners.

To the best of our knowledge, there have been no successful challenges to the validity of recreational use statutes. In *Thomas v. Consumers Power Co.*, 58 Mich. App. 486, 228 N.W.2d 786 (1974) rev'd in part on other grounds, 394 Mich. 459, 231 N.W.2d 653 (1975), a Michigan court determined that there was a legitimate state interest in promoting tourism and opening lands for recreational use by the public, and that the statute for achieving this end was not unreasonable, arbitrary or capricious. In *Kantner v. Combustion Engineering* (plaintiffs sought damages arising out of drowning deaths near the base of the Pontook Dam in Dummer, New Hampshire, on the Androscoggin River), the Court found that, since no common law rights to sue had been extinguished, only restricted, the test described in *Carson v. Maurer*, 120 N.H. 925, 932, 44, A.2d 825 (1980), [which stated that on a right to recover in tort, the statute "must be reasonable, not arbitrary, and must rest upon some ground of difference having a fair and substantial relation to the object of the legislation" to be constitutional] is sufficient, and RSA 212:34 is constitutional.

Even if the dam developer/operator does not own the land on which the dam is constructed, a federal government license to build and operate a dam is enough to make a power company a "tenant" of property and thus subject to the limited liability provided to "landowners and tenants" by a recreational use statute. [State ex rel.

*Tucker v. District Court*, 468 P.2d, 773 (Mont. 1970)]. Other courts also have confirmed that "occupancy" of premises for purposes of a recreational use statute depends on whether that person was in control of the subject premises. *Sublett v. United States*, 688 S.W.2d 328, 329 (Ky. 1985); *McCain v. Commercial Union*, 592 F.Supp. 1, 2 (W.D. La. 1983). Thus, in *Kantner*, the Court held that defendants are "occupants" under RSA 212:34, by virtue of meeting the test established by case law, that they were "in control" of the premises where the accident occurred. In a similar ruling regarding New Hampshire recreational statutes, *Smith v. Sno Eagles Snowmobile Club*, 823 F.2d 1193, 1197 (7th Cir. 1987), "occupant" was defined as one whom possesses and has actual use of the premises. Most dam operators would easily qualify under this standard.

## 2. Elevated Flow Liability

We also believe that PG&E would not face a meaningful risk of liability even if the recreational user were injured downstream of the project boundaries as a result of recreational releases mandated under the FERC license, and regardless of whether it is within project boundaries. American Whitewater has not found any cases upholding claims against utilities by recreational users arising out of license-mandated whitewater releases.

Several well-established legal doctrines mitigate against any such liability, which perhaps explains why other licensees have cooperated in making such releases.

### A) Assumption of Risk

Whitewater boating is generally acknowledged to be a sport with some degree of inherent risk, like skiing, rock climbing, etc. Participants in the sport accept this level of risk and those participating in the sport assume the liability for injury.

"Assumption of risk means voluntarily incurring the risk of an accident, which may not occur, and which the person assuming the risk may be careful to avoid; it defeats recovery because it is a previous abandonment of the right to complain if an accident occurs. *Kleppe v. Prawl* 181 Kan. 590, 313 P.2d 227 (1957) A person who takes part in any sport accepts as a matter of law dangers therein, insofar as they are obvious and necessary. *Wright v. Mt. Mansfield Lift Inc.* 96 F.Supp. 786 (D. Ut. 1951)-(both cases involved suits by skiers against ski resorts)

The assumption of risk doctrine is always available to the defendant in any lawsuit involving damages to voluntary participants in sporting events and dangerous outdoor activities. A person who voluntarily participates in a sport, game, or contest assumes the ordinary risks of such activity, and if he/she suffers injury or death as a result, there can be no recovery.

### B) Negligence

In a whitewater accident occurring near a Dam project, or resulting from project releases, the Plaintiff must bear the burden of proving that the defendant was negligent and that the defendant's negligence was the proximate cause of the injury sustained. (This assumes that a recreational statute or the assumption of risk doctrine does not otherwise bar the claim.)

In situations such as whitewater sports, where there are known or obvious dangers, courts have consistently held that there is no duty to warn visitors of the hazards. Those projects with FERC licenses, where flow releases (for either project purposes or recreation) are part of the license purpose, would be substantially more difficult to prove negligence.

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## Liability For FERC Mandated Releases

In addition to protection under the recreational use statute, assumption of risk doctrine, and requirement of proof of negligence, it is doubtful that, in any event, a licensed hydropower operator would ever face liability merely by complying with the requirements of its federally issued license.

To the extent that the licensee is simply discharging its federally-mandated obligations, the pre-emption doctrine that is regularly applied to defeat products liability claims under state law should be equally available to the licensee of a hydropower project, especially if the licensee incorporates a whitewater safety plan. See *Cippollone v. Liggett Group, Inc.*, 505 US 504 (1992).

## Conservation

It is incredible that a company that owns 175 hydroelectric dams in California, and withholds 2,500,000-acre feet of water from free flowing rivers, could ever argue that recreation would have adverse environmental and economic impacts. (American Whitewater assumes PG&E is referring to economic impacts to their own profit margin?)

The construction and upkeep of PG&E's dams have come at enormous cost to California's rivers, including drastically reduced native fish and bird populations. Yet this public utility is concerned about the environmental effects of river recreationists? If PG&E is truly concerned for the environment and mankind's impacts upon the river as a resource, they should examine the possibility of removing or decommissioning some of their dams, which PG&E implies are inefficient and economically non-viable under current management policies in the "highly competitive California power market."

Despite PG&E's claims that boaters somehow reduce wilderness values and cause property damage near their hydroelectric dams, boaters actually have little impact on dam-controlled rivers. Boaters are generally limited to designated put-in and take-out locations, stay within the mean high water mark, rarely leave their boat except to scout (which is generally done on the bedrock or within the flood plain), and are not prone to the destruction of property. Boaters sponsor river clean-up activities and festivals, and actively support flows to establish or maintain fish and wildlife populations. American Whitewater has been very active during the FERC hydropower relicensing projects around the country in re-watering America's rivers and re-establishing viable riparian wildlife habitats.

## Economics

PG&E also asserts that, "lost electric generation can far outweigh the benefits [of whitewater boating]." However, this flies in the face of recent economic data that demonstrates that states and local communities can experience huge social and economic benefits from a thriving recreation-based industry.

In the last few years, several relicensings have demonstrated the opposite of PG&E's position:

The New England Power Company signed the Deerfield Settlement Agreement in 1997 (Deerfield River, MA). Since this signing, recreation has transformed the local community into a growing success. The August 1st Deerfield Festival (an American Whitewater event) attracted paddlers from across the country and from England. In the case of the Deerfield, the value of recreation over hydropower economics is estimated to be twenty-four to one.

On the Tallulah River in northeastern Georgia (a predominantly rural area), the first three weekends of whitewater releases (Nov. 1997) attracted more than 700 whitewater boaters and more

than 50,000 visitors to the town of Tallulah Falls and the newly established state park. This resulted in the formation of the first ever Tallulah Falls Festival that was held during the second set of releases in April 1998. This one-day festival netted over \$10,000 for the local community.

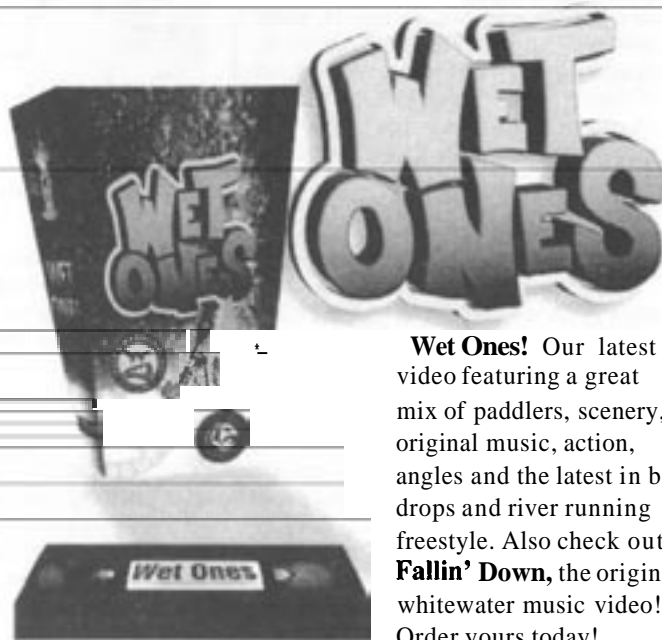
According to statistics from the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, more than 250,000 people rafted the Cheat, Tygart, Gauley, Shenandoah and the New River last year, pumping more than \$75 million into the local economy. Other states, including California, can document similar economic gains.

What PG&E failed to mention is that the number of river recreationists (24.2 million people paddled a canoe, kayak or raft in 1995), the associated tourism dollars, and the overall economic gains from outdoor and river recreation are enormous! The USFS (many of PG&E's dams are located on National Forest lands) estimates that by the year 2000, they will contribute \$130.7 billion to the Gross Domestic Product - 75% (or \$98 billion) of that will be generated by recreation and tourism. This will affect 2.5 million jobs. Perhaps more importantly, outdoor recreation and tourism are forecast to increase 60% by the middle of the next century.

Nowhere is the potential to grow tourism and recreation dollars greater than in California!

With over 1,300 rivers dammed, and with some 38 projects (nearly 160 separate dams) the opportunity to improve river flow is unsurpassed. According to the California Department of Boating and Waterways, "Recreation and tourism are (already) California's largest industries. And California's rivers draw more of these users than any other location, except its beaches." In the same memorandum, Boating and Waterways reported that whitewater rafting on the South Fork of the American River exceeded 130,000 visitors in 1992 and generated \$30,000 in revenue for the local economy.

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Private and commercial boaters bring tourist dollars to remote communities and support everything from hotels to museums, restaurants to gas stations, and commercial outfitters to outdoor retailers. PG&E may lose a little money when required to provide ecological and recreational flows, but this is offset by the economic gains enjoyed by state and local communities, and the recreational benefits enjoyed by the public at large

## Safety

**RISK** — "...an emphasis on self-sufficiency, individualism and personal achievement — preferably under adverse circumstances — admiration of risk taking, admiration for skilled performance, especially in competitive situations, and high regard for freedom from both authority and tradition." Sociologist David Klein

American Whitewater acknowledges that there are safety issues related to river running, as well as to other outdoor sports including skiing, rock climbing, and hiking. However, personal safety is predicated upon personal responsibility and best addressed through education and the use of appropriate equipment.

If PG&E is seriously concerned about safety, American Whitewater would encourage them to work with us in distributing our Safety Code and related safety material to boaters. PG&E could also work cooperatively with American Whitewater in generating appropriate signs at the river access points and educating the public about true river hazards.

PG&E attached a newspaper article in their letter documenting several drownings in California during this summer. They use this article to paint whitewater as "hazardous and inherently dangerous." However, American Whitewater has been gathering statistics on river accidents for years, and our records demonstrate that very few of these occur on whitewater. In fact, it is much smaller than the accident record compiled for traditional lake recreation.

While every death is a tragedy, whitewater recreation cannot be labeled "dangerous" when viewed within the total number of user days. With over 130,000 users per year on just one river, in one state, whitewater recreation continues to be far less dangerous than many daily risks.

## Conclusion

PG&E repeatedly makes the inaccurate statement that they are responsible for increasing participation in whitewater recreation. The truth is that PG&E and other hydroelectric companies are merely responsible for ensuring that the public can have access to America's resources. If PG&E's actions lead to an incidental increase in participation, that's great; however they bear no responsibility for actively encouraging new participation.

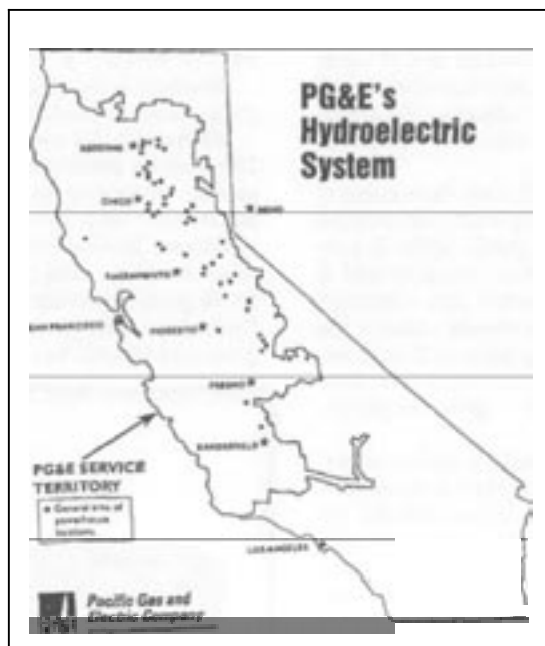
PG&E complains that they receive no commercial benefit from increasing accessibility and participation in whitewater, and that they have no mechanism to recover their cost. But the public should never be required to reimburse a private company for the use of the public's own resources. PG&E does not hold sole title to the river resources which they use, they are allowed through the FERC process to borrow them for a short time, not hold the public hostage when it is time to share these resources with other user groups.

Regardless, participation in whitewater recreation is growing rapidly throughout the country and much of that growth is centered

in California. FERC hydropower relicensing represents a unique and fantastic opportunity for providing re-watered whitewater resources, for distributing use, and preventing perceptions of crowding on the rivers. American Whitewater encourages river and recreation agencies to make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to restore rivers and increase recreation opportunities.

We hope that PG&E and California's land managers will work in cooperation with American Whitewater toward preserving and increasing access to California's rivers for the public, and striving to educate boaters and non-boaters alike about safety on our rivers and streams.

Sincerely,  
Richard J. Bowers, Executive Director  
Jason D. Robertson, Access Director  
John Gangemi, Conservation Director



cc: PG&E List of Addresses and cc Recipients  
Chief Dombeck, USFS, DC  
Gary Marsh, BLM, Washington, DC  
Bob Glanville, American Whitewater  
Richard Roos-Collins, NHI

### Attachments:

*California Liability and Immunity: Assessment of Landowner Risk for Recreational Injuries*  
*Safety Code of the American Whitewater Affiliation*, revised 1998

*California Relicensing Map, 1993-2015*  
*National Survey on Recreation and the Environment*, Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association and USDA Forest Service, Athens, Ga., *Emerging Markets for Outdoor Recreation*, 1997.

*The American Whitewater Affiliation Nationwide Whitewater Inventory*, a Geographic Information System for Whitewater Rivers in the United States, 1990, Barrow, Editor.

Some examples of rivers where recreational releases are supported are: Savage (MD) and Youghiogheny (MD/PA), Gauley (WV), Ocoee (TN), Nantahala (NC), Russell Fork (VA), South Fork American (CA), Nisqually (WA), Coosa (AL), Upper Kern

(CA), Tallulah (GA), Deerfield (MA), Pemigewasset (NH), Black, Beaver & Racquette (NY), and others.

In 1992, six weekends of recreational releases on the Gauley River in West Virginia, provided by the Corp. of Engineers, generated approximately 30 million dollars in income.

See cases cited in 57 Am Jur 2d, negligence @284 and 4 Am Jur 2d Amusements and Exhibitions @98.

*Kimbar v. Estis* (1 NY2d 399) ("There are certain risks incidental to camping, but these are part of an adventurous summer life and necessarily assumed by those who would participate therein.").

*Mann v. U.S.* 294 F.Supp.691, *Nehv v. U.S.*, 265 F.Supp. 210.

*Harmon v. U.S.* (532 F. d 6690) also *Smith v. U.S.* (546 F. 2d 872).

According to the University of California's Status of the Sierra Nevada, Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project Final Report to Congress (Volume II), "...virtually every stream of any size has at least one dam or diversion on it. The changes caused by such dams and diversions have been identified as a major cause of the declines of seven of the twenty declining species and as a contributing factor in most of the rest."

*Wonderful West Virginia*, July 1998, "A Rapid 30 Years," page 5.

1994-95 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE), USDA Forest Service and the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

According to the Sierra Nevada Wealth Index, "[Hydropower], unlike most other locally produced commodities, ... generates very little employment or tax revenue in the counties where it is produced."

Statistics from USDA Forest Service, *Recreation and Tourism in your National Forests*, 1996.

Memorandum to James T. Burroughs, Resources Agency of California, April 8, 1994 regarding the relicensing of Kern River #3, FERC No. 2290.



# BOUNDARY CREEK, IDAHO

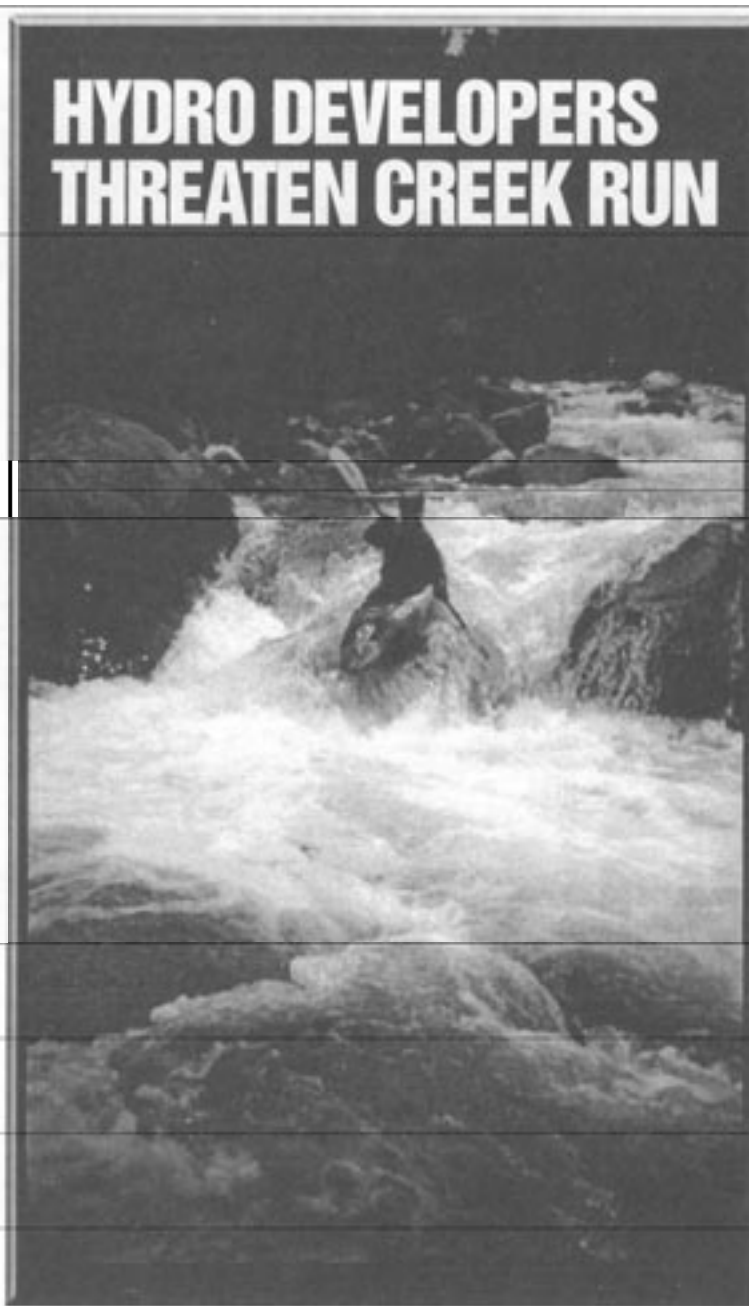
Mark Rist, AWA Regional Coordinator and John Gangemi, Conservation Director

In the northern panhandle of Idaho, lies a premier creek run called Boundary Creek. You won't find it in any guidebooks, it's that special. This class IV(V) creek has a single rapid, 10 miles in length with gradients fluctuating from 250 to 375 feet per mile. It's all runnable and it's all boat scoutable. Boundary Creek has an international flavor: Catch an eddy on river right your in the U.S., on the left you'll be sporting a Canadian accent. Hence the name.

Boaters aren't the only interest group with Boundary Creek on their radar screens. Continental Lands, a mining/hydro development group, also has a keen interest in Boundary Creek. Their interest, as you might suspect, is far different than the average creek paddler. Continental Lands is proposing a 37 megawatt hydro project on Boundary Creek. The project would divert water from much of the 10 mile paddling section. Continental Lands is soliciting congressional support to exempt their hydropower project from federal licensing procedures applicable to private hydropower. The company bribed the local Boundary County school board to support their exemption request by offering a percentage of their hydro profits to the school district.

Bribery isn't their only strategy: Continental Lands violated a court injunction by initiating illegal road repairs on a USFS permanent road closure. The USFS recently closed the road after public review to protect the creek from erosion and to

## HYDRO DEVELOPERS THREATEN CREEK RUN



protect threatened species such as grizzly bear, woodland caribou, and bull trout. The USFS placed a court injunction on Continental Lands after receiving threats that the government did not have the authority to limit public access. Continental Lands cut USFS locks, drove in, and began repairing the road. They were caught red-handed on surveillance cameras and confronted by the USFS. The courts filed restraining orders but are not prosecuting the company for offenses.

Incidentally, American Whitewater filed comments supporting the road closure in June 97. Kayakers typically access the run via a different road. Traveling the road in question is more hair raising than paddling the creek. Furthermore, American Whitewater felt that the road closure would enhance the wilderness character of this creek in addition to protecting critical wildlife habitat.

The proposed 37 megawatt hydro facility, if approved, will destroy this incredible wilderness Class V creek run, and open the drainage to logging and mining by Continental Lands. There is much to lose and little to gain in this proposed hydro scheme. Keep a wary eye on this project. For more information, contact Mark Rist, Regional Coordinator, at 208-267-7459, or by email at <riverm@dm.net>; or

John Gangemi at 406-837-3155, or by email at <jgangemi@digisys.net>.

# WHITEWATER RELEASES ANNOUNCED FOR LaGRANDE CANYON ON WASHINGTON'S NISQUALLY RIVER

John Gangemi, Conservation Director

After six years of effort, American Whitewater and Tacoma Public Utilities have set the dates for the first scheduled whitewater releases on the bypass channel for Washington's La Grande Canyon, a 1.7 mile spectacular Class IV and V river with its headwaters located on Mount Rainier.

- \* On November 21, 800 cfs of water will be released
- \* On November 22, 1000 cfs of water will be released
- \* On December 5, 800 cfs of water will be released
- \* On December 6, 800 cfs of water will be released

Flow levels were tested and agreed upon during a whitewater study conducted in June 1994. Releases are a part of American Whitewater's ongoing efforts to improve and restore whitewater rivers affected by privately-owned hydroelectric dams and those subject to conditions set by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Prior to this release, and except for dam maintenance and flood conditions, the LaGrande Canyon had been dewatered since 1912, the year the dam was built.

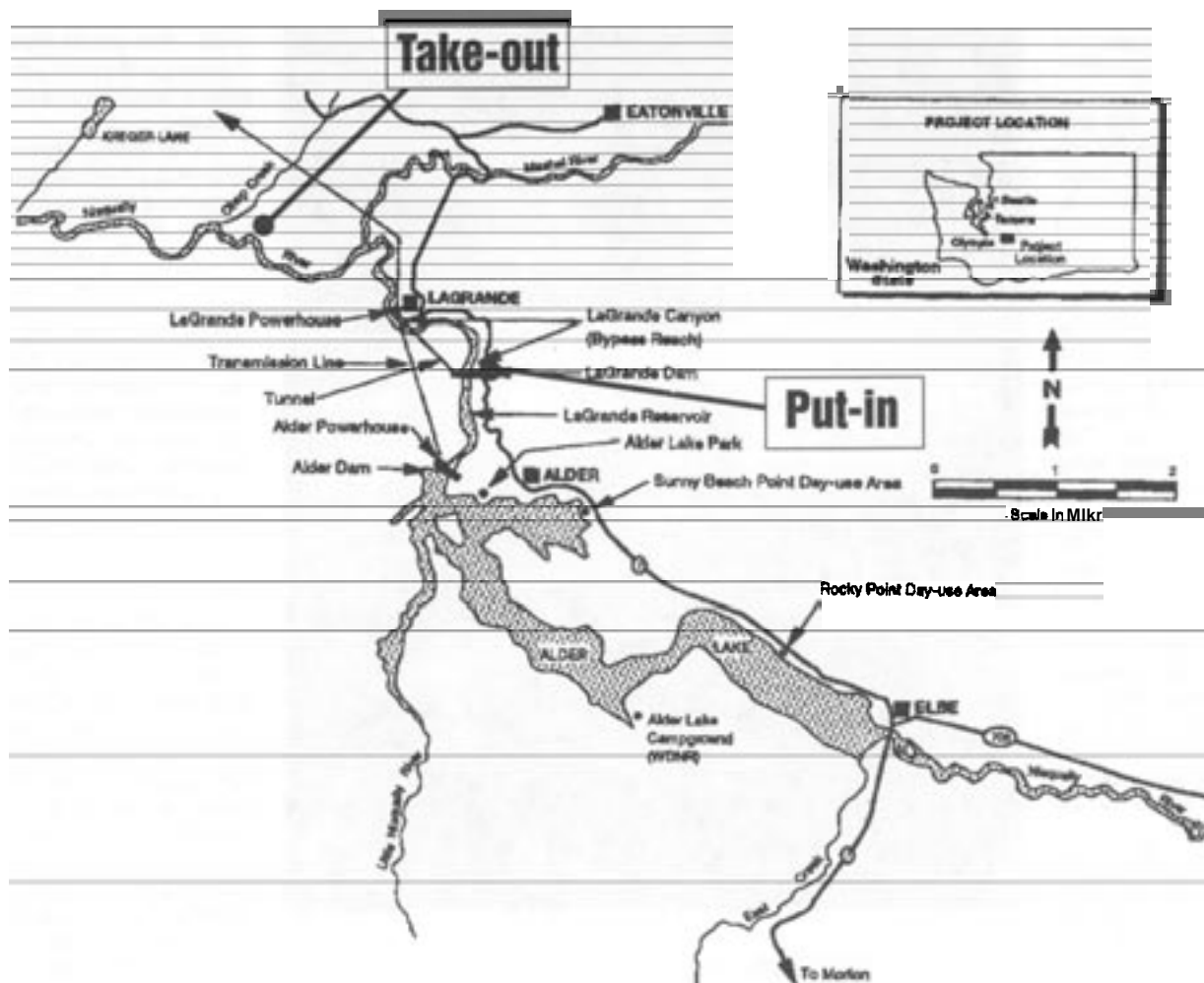
While short, this section of river runs through the spectacular

300-foot deep LaGrande Canyon, which is in some places no more than 20 feet wide. It offers advanced to expert whitewater rapids such as "Triple Slide," "Hammer Slammer," "X-Falls," "Boof and Boogie" and one of the best rodeo holes in Washington state.

Paddlers are required to sign a waiver and watch a video to get the "beta" prior to entering into the LaGrande Canyon. Tacoma Public Utilities will provide a shuttle to the put-in. Boaters are asked to complete a short evaluation form after each run.

Due to concerns over access and a pre-conceived lack of demand for this whitewater resource, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission required an initial three year monitoring study in this 30 year license. Future releases hinge on adequate attendance and safety. So come join us for laps on the LaGrande Canyon November paddling frenzy.

For more information contact American Whitewater's Conservation Office at 482 Electric Avenue, Bigfork, MT 59911. Phone: (406)837-3155-Fax: (406)837-3156 Email: jgangemi@digisys.net



# Ban on Personal Water Craft Use Within the NPS System

John Gangemi, Conservation Director

The National Park Service (NPS) is proposing regulations prohibiting Personal Water Craft (PWC) in specific units of the National Park System. This proposed rule prohibits PWC's in units of the National Park System where use conflicts with enabling legislation, park resources, visitor uses and enjoyment and safety concerns.

Interim measures direct all park units with water resources capable of being used by PWC, but where PWC are not being used, to designate such water resources closed to PWC use. In addition, superintendents in park with some level of PWC use continue to have the authority to close areas to PWC use while the rulemaking process is taking place. These interim management measures are intended to prohibit the introduction of PWC use into park units, which have not experienced significant PWC use before this year. Under this ruling, Grand Canyon National Park issued an order banning PWC from the lower Colorado. PWC were entering the Park from Lake Mead.

American Whitewater supports this ruling as a means of better managing park resources despite the fact that the NPS argument justifying prohibition of PWC hauntingly resembles the ban on kayaking in Yellowstone National Park. American Whitewater recognizes a number of significant distinctions between whitewater kayaking and jetski use. PWC, unlike kayaks, are a motorized activity thus designating them as a special use under NPS regulations. Furthermore, PWC cause air, water and noise pollution that impact park resources and visitor enjoyment. Whitewater kayaking has none of these effects on park resources.

In your comments on the PWC rulemaking identify specific park

units which should have immediate closures. Send a courtesy copy of your comments to the responsible NPS unit superintendent(s).

Due to existing use and enabling legislation, PWC use will be evaluated during the next two years in the following Park units:

National Seashores	National Lakeshores	National Recreation Areas
Assateague Island	Indiana Dunes	Delaware Water Gap
Canaveral	Pictured Rocks	Chattahoochee River
Cape Cod	Sleeping Bear Dunes	
Cape Hatteras		
Cape Lookout		
Cumberland Island		
Fire Island		

## ADDRESSES:

Mail comments to: NPS - Ranger Activities Division - PWC, Room 7408, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240. E-mail comments to [pwcomments.nps.gov](mailto:pwcomments.nps.gov) or by selecting Hotdocs and Personal Watercraft Use in the NPS System at <http://www.nps.gov/refdesk> on the NPS website.

## What's a River Worth?

By Bryson Tillinghast, Ken Ransford, John Gangemi and Don English

"When we reported that the value of whitewater for recreation outweighed by 24 to 1 whitewater's value for power generation, you should have just seen the look on the power company officials' faces. They knew they had lost," said Tom Christopher, AW board member, owner of a successful wholesale nursery business and Director of New England FLOW, the organization responsible for restoring recreation whitewater releases on the Deerfield River in western Massachusetts. After a decade of coalition-building with local fishing clubs and the chamber of commerce, and acrimonious meetings and hearings with power company officials, the Deerfield today has regular whitewater releases every summer and a burgeoning whitewater recreation industry generating several million dollars annually to the local economy.

The world is changing. First came the industrial revolution. Then came the information revolution. Today we are in the midst of the recreation revolution—recreation and tourism are among the fastest-growing sectors of the American economy because we are living longer and have more disposable income. In the West, social security and pension income contribute five times as much to local rural economies as the staid industries of mining, logging and ranching combined!

Continued page 26

continued from page 27

The boating community is facing an opportunity that comes along only once every 30 to 50 years as hundreds of dams are coming up for federal relicensing in California and the rest of the U.S. over the next 10 years. Each represents an opportunity to secure regularly scheduled whitewater recreation releases, *if we will stand up and be heard!* American Whitewater cannot tackle all of these dam relicensing efforts. We need volunteers to share the fight. Cooperative efforts between American Whitewater staff, paddling clubs and members will ultimately result in greater successes in hydropower relicensing.

One area in which local paddlers can assist in the relicensing battles is quantifying the value of whitewater recreation on rivers affected by hydropower. The primary obstacle in securing regularly scheduled releases is economics. To a large degree, each whitewater release is lost revenue for the utility. The fact that whitewater releases create tremendous economic opportunities for local communities is completely overlooked in the environmental analysis reports. Paddlers, functioning on a grassroots level, can quantify the value of whitewater releases. This information can be submitted as part of the record from which water allocation decisions for the new license term will be based.

In the past, power companies have had the upper hand by demonstrating the monetary value of water that runs through their turbines. It's not as great as you'd think — the recent 45,000 cfs beach-building flood release in the Grand Canyon is estimated to have cost \$500,000 to \$1,500,000, only half of one percent of the gross receipts from Glen Canyon dam operations. When you stop to consider that power sells for pennies per kilowatt hour and commercial rafting passengers are willing to pay \$75-\$150 per day to run a river, the Deerfield River's 24-to-1 ratio in favor of whitewater recreation no longer seems farfetched.

The high cost of research makes it impractical to hire a professional economist to study each river. American Whitewater is fostering a grassroots approach so that a major expense of recreation economic studies — surveying river users — can be borne by volunteers who are not economists by trade. The primary purpose of conducting an economic impact analysis is quantifying a recreation user's contribution to a local economy. A key aspect of this method involves surveying users to determine expenditure profiles. Local paddlers volunteering to restore their rivers can undertake this.

Over the summer of 1998, American Whitewater intern Bryson Tillinghast researched various methodologies for calculating the economic value of natural resources and in particular whitewater. This article compiles Bryson's research in the following topics: (1) How to perform a Trip Expenditure Survey to determine how much money boaters contribute to a local economy; (2) How to perform a random sample; (3) A thumbnail description of economic valuation models used to estimate the value of recreation; and (4) Lastly, some anecdotal advice from veteran river activist Tom Christopher. Tom has a unique and successful roll-up your sleeves approach to negotiating with utilities. This report is available on American Whitewater's web site (you can also request a copy of this report from the American Whitewater Silver Spring office (301-589-6121)).

In the future, American Whitewater plans to develop a web site allowing data input from economic impact studies. The results of these studies will be used to calculate benchmark values applicable to all rivers. You'll also find on the web site a bibliography of articles and research papers on recreation economics. American Whitewater is also assembling a list of economists who have volunteered to answer your questions via the web.

How long does it take to save a river? "At least several years," Tom

Christopher warns. "You can't do them all. Pick the ones that are most important to you." Tom's statement underscores the need for local paddlers to engage in saving their own river.

## How to Conduct a River Trip Expenditure Survey

A trip expenditure survey is designed to estimate how much ~~money~~ boaters in the specific community spend where the river is located. This is the most basic level of economic analysis. Surveying spending habits of recreational users is a fundamental component of the method. The survey is reprinted below.

Checklist for collecting the data:

1. Before starting, check the AW web site, [www.awa.org](http://www.awa.org), for updated information. Determine if local paddling clubs, outfitters, or government officials has already collected any data on user numbers and expenditure profiles. The local chamber of commerce may have supplemental data on visitor spending or the average cost of lodging, meals, etc.
2. Use the random sampling techniques described below to choose survey schedule and target audience.
3. Organize a group of 45 boating friends to help conduct the survey.
4. It is essential to clarify the geographic region in which visitor spending is counted. Delineate a map of the targeted economy and measure spending only in that mapped area.
5. With completed surveys in hand, average the cumulative expenditures per category. Be sure to note the range of answers as well (i.e. the highest and lowest figures). This can be done on an Excel spreadsheet. American Whitewater plans to have a data input layer in the future web site for this spreadsheet. In the meantime, contact John Gangemi for a spreadsheet template ([jgangemi@digisys.net](mailto:jgangemi@digisys.net)).
6. Approximate the number of boaters per year based on the surveys. You must keep track of the number of boaters you see at the access points, not just those agreeing to be surveyed. Contact local outfitters and various organizations, clubs, and government officials to see if the information already exists.
7. After determining the dates and who will conduct the surveys, print out 200 surveys and head to the pre-determined access points. A sample survey is printed below — it's designed for you to copy it!



# Trip Expenditure Survey Form

## Part One: Demographic information:

- 1) Age: \_\_\_\_ 2) Sex: \_\_\_\_ 3) Occupation: \_\_\_\_ 4) Zip code \_\_\_\_
- 5) Education level completed: H i g h school C o l l e g e G r a d u a t e School
- 6) Annual household income: \_\_\_\_\$20,000 \_\_\_\_\$20-40,000 \_\_\_\_\$40-60,000 \_\_\_\_\$60-80,000 \_\_\_\_\$80-100,000  
\_\_\_\_\$100,000 and over

## General Boating Questions:

- 7) How many years have you been boating: \_\_\_\_
- 8) Circle your level of expertise: Beginner intermediate advanced expert
- 9) On average, how many days do you boat per year: \_\_\_\_
- 10) How many boats do you own: k a y a k s \_\_\_\_ canoes \_\_\_\_ rafts
- 11) When did you last buy a kayak/canoe/raft (circle one): \_\_\_\_ Cost: \$\_\_\_\_
- 12) What did you spend on additional gear for paddle sports in the last twelve months? \$\_\_\_\_

## Specific to this Visit:

- 13) What section of the river did you boat today? Name \_\_\_\_ class \_\_\_\_ miles \_\_\_\_ flow \_\_\_\_
- 14) How long did you spend in the \_\_\_\_ River\* region for this trip: Days \_\_\_\_ Nights \_\_\_\_  
(\*Supply the name of your river here and in the blanks below.)
- 15) Was your main reason for this recreation trip to float the \_\_\_\_ River? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
- 16) If this river lacked boatable flows, would you still have come to this region? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
- 17) How many times have you boated the \_\_\_\_ River in the past twelve months? \_\_\_\_
- 18) How far is your home from the \_\_\_\_ River? \_\_\_\_ miles
- 19) How was your experience on the \_\_\_\_ River? \_\_\_\_ (1bad 10excellent),
- 20) What is the minimum flow you recommend to boat this river? \_\_\_\_ cfs or gage height
- 21) What specific improvements could be made for the boating community for this river?

- 22) What additional facilities/services would you like to see offered for the boating community on this river?

## Part Two: Trip Expense Survey

Report the total expenses made in each of the following categories during your visit to this river. Estimate to the nearest whole dollar. Do not double count: Only report expenses once.

2) Record the total amount of expenses you paid personally. If you are paying for more than one person (i.e., you are part of a family or couple) record the total amount spent by every member of the family or couple. If you are paying expenses for more than one person:

Including yourself, how many people boat in your family? \_\_\_\_\_

Including yourself, how many people are you paying expenses for on this trip? \_\_\_\_\_

Including yourself, how many people boated in your party on this river today? \_\_\_\_\_

### LODGING

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel/motels/bed & breakfast/cabin, etc.
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Public (government) camping site: (RV/tent/camper)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Private (nongovernment) camping site: (RV/tent/camper)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Rental home, cottage, or cabin

### FOOD AND BEVERAGES:

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Food and drinks consumed at restaurants and bars
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Food and drinks purchased at a store for carryout
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Liquor/beer purchased at retail

### TRANSPORTATION:

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Rental fees for vehicle
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Gasoline and oil
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Repair and Service
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Parking fees & tolls
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Taxi, bus, airline, rail, or shuttle fees

### RIVER RAFTING AND KAYAKING:

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Guide/outfitter fees (including tips)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Instruction
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Rental fees
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Repair fees
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Equipment/gear purchases
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Books, maps
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Put in/takeout fees

### OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Fishing (permits, guides, flies, bait, tackle)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Biking (rentals, guides, repairs, equipment purchase, trail use)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Horseback riding (outfitter/guide, trail fees, equipment)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Sightseeing (admission into tourist attractions)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other activities please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURES:

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Film purchase or developing
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Clothing and footwear
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Souvenirs and gifts (not clothing)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Personal services: laundry, barber, other
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Business services: telephone, xerox, fax, other
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Medical services: physician, dentist, other
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

# Developing a Sampling Plan for Obtaining Boater Data

Any effort to collect economic information from visitors to a recreation site must have a defined sampling plan. The plan assures that the data collected will adequately describe the 'typical' boater. The sampling plan provides explicit documentation for how information was obtained, and provides the information necessary to make any statistical corrections that may be needed. Not having a sampling plan provides an easy way for opponents to discredit or question the results.

Usually, there are two parts to the sampling strategy: (1) determine how many and which days to survey boaters at the river; (2) determine which boaters to survey.

## PART 1. Determining the days to do surveying

**STEP 1:** With a calendar in hand, estimate the amount of boating use that occurs on the river by day of the week and by season. For example, if you assume that over the whole year, 75 percent of all paddling use occurs on weekends and holidays, and that 70% of overall use occurs when the water is high, you might construct the following table. Note that the sum of the numbers must equal 100%. Factor in special events such as festivals, releases, and El Nino.

	Weekdays	Weekends/holidays	Total
High use season	20%	50%	70%
		25%	30%
Total	25%	75%	100%

**STEP 2:** Decide how many days of data collection will occur.

Based on the number of volunteers, determine how many days of surveying at the river that you can feasibly accomplish. At least 10 or 12 days are needed to give enough coverage across the types of days, and at least 200 surveys should be completed. If the volunteer interviewers can complete 3 surveys per hour (given a 10 to 15 minute survey, and a few minutes between groups), and are there for a full 8 hour day, that's about 25 completed surveys per day. To get 200 surveys would require 8 days of intense work. On many days, it may not be possible to get 3 surveys completed per hour, due to refusals, time between available people, weather, and so on. It may be better to schedule a few extra days of surveying.

**STEP 3:** Allocate the days of data collection in proportion to the expected use.

Take the number of days of data collection from STEP 2, and multiply by the percentages in the Table in STEP 1. That will give the number of days of surveying that should occur in each type of day. Note that it is important to have at least 1 survey day in each category. In our example, assume that the river group has decided to survey on 20 different days. This would result in 4 survey days on weekdays during the high use season (20% of 20 days is 4 days). The table of sample days could appear as follows:

	Weekdays	Weekends/holidays	Total
High use season	4	10	14
Low use season	1	5	6
Total	5	15	20

**STEP 4:** Select the days to sample.

It is best to randomly select the days in each season that surveying will occur. There are a multitude of ways to randomly select sampling days. One method is to simply assign numbers incrementally on individual pieces of paper corresponding to boatable days. Put the days into a hat and draw out the required number of days. Of course, volunteer availability may affect sampling days. If surveyors are not going to be available on certain days, remove those days from the set of possible survey days prior to random selection. The important point in this step is to avoid introducing bias into the set of days chosen.

## PART 2: Selecting individuals to survey

A good time to survey people is after they have completed their trip on the river. Often there is some down time as they wait for their shuttle. Take out points frequently have space for the survey crew to set up. Parking areas can also be good locations

There are a number of ways to select which individual paddlers to survey. Don't survey anyone under age 16, as they may not be able to appropriately answer the economic questions. No single method is best for every situation. Choose a method that will work for the targeted river, given the use patterns, physical constraints, and size of the survey crew. The point to this process is to avoid a systematic bias in who gets selected to complete the surveys. For example, you can choose every fifth person getting off the river, or a person from every fifth group getting off the river. The interval you select depends in part on how long it takes to do the survey, number of surveyors available, and number of boaters. Or, you can choose people getting off the river at random. For this method, you must select a number from a table of random numbers or roll dice and use that number to determine the number of intervening people between surveys. The simplest method is to take the next available person after completing an interview. This may be the most time efficient way to survey users. Since there is no predefined interval or method, it sacrifices some statistical reliability.

## Various Economic Valuation Analyses for Recreation Studies

The following is a brief description of various economic methods used by professional economists. American Whitewater is working with other river groups to raise money to hire economists who will perform studies on representative rivers. Ideally, the benchmark values derived from these studies will be applicable to adjacent rivers lacking economic information.

**I. Economic Impact Analysis.** An economic impact study focuses on tourism's effect on local business sales, income, employment and tax revenue generation. In short, this analysis attempts to unveil how non-local recreation users contribute to a region's economy.

An economic impact analysis addresses the regional distribution of economic activity. It tracks the flow of money into a region by measuring the gains to those involved in supplying the users with goods and services.

An economic impact analysis measures tourism's direct effects (first round purchases by consumers), indirect effects (second round purchases by local businesses), and induced effects (third round purchases by local employees and households). For instance, if tourists purchase \$50,000 of goods and services from a hotel, the hotel owner employs many workers who spend additional money in the region; plus, the owner must also purchase goods and services

from other businesses, many of which may be local. This example demonstrates the ripple effect of money flowing through a region's economy. Multipliers are used to gross up the total estimated spending to determine the economic ripple effect of the activity to a community, according to the formula below. Economists choose from various types of multipliers used to examine specific effects on an economy; the three general categories are gross output, income, and employment.

Economic Impact of Tourism = Number of Visitors x Average Spending per Visitor x Multiplier

No "off-the-shelf" multiplier is appropriate for use in all situations. Multipliers depend on the size of the targeted economy (bigger economies generally mean bigger multipliers), the economic structure of the targeted economy (the more self-sustaining the economy the bigger the multipliers, because imports are a smaller portion of production inputs), and what the average expenditure profile of the boaters looks like.

**II. Economic Valuation Analysis.** An economic valuation analysis measures the non-market benefits. These benefits represent value to an individual beyond the individual's actual expenditures (hence they are often referred to as *net* economic values). Such value measures are central to benefit-cost analyses, which indicate that a project or change is desirable if the value gained (benefit) exceeds the value given up (cost). In contrast, the economic impact analysis discussed immediately above tracks the contribution of recreation to an economy (i.e., the market effects).

There are two primary types of economic values: use values and non-use values. In this case use value is the amount that a river user would have been willing to pay for a recreation trip to the river, beyond what was actually spent, but didn't have to. Non-use values include values for preservation of the river, to have the option to visit in the future (option value), to allow future generations to use the river (bequest value), or simply to know the river exists in a preserved state (existence value). The two methods commonly used to measure these values are the Travel Cost Method (TCM) and the Contingent Value Method (CVM).

**A. Travel Cost Method (TCM).** TCM measures *use* value only. The method is based on the relation between the cost of visiting a recreation site (mostly the expense of traveling there, but also lodging, outfitter fees, and the value of the individual's time) and frequency of use. Unlike economic impact analyses, it makes no difference where the money was spent.

A sample of users provides information about their typical trip cost and the number of trips per year they take, as well as other factors that may influence the level of use, such as income, education, etc. Through a regression analysis, the effects of these other factors are controlled and the demand curve (price-quantity relationship) for a typical user is identified. A little more mathematical fiddling allows calculation of the net economic value for an 'average' trip.

**B. Contingent Value Method (CVM).** CVM has been used to measure all sorts of non-market values, both use and non-use, for a wide range of environmental goods and services. Examples have been as broad as estimating the social value of preservation of an entire species, or as specific as maintaining water quality at a specific lake or river.

In essence, CVM determines a resource's value by asking people how much they would be willing to pay to maintain the resource, or how much they would have to be compensated for its loss. CVM is an important tool because it incorporates the full range of non-market values, not just use values (as TCM does). Critics of CVM doubt that people are able to accurately state dollar values for environmental assets. Others are concerned that people may misrepresent their true value to try to influence a study's outcome. Despite these criticisms, CVM has seen increasing use and has recently become accepted in the legal system as a way to determine environmental damages.

## Notes from the Trenches: New England Flow's Battle for the Deerfield.

"Any public utility or hydropower generator that thinks dry riverbeds have a greater value to society than free-flowing rivers probably has an in-house electrotherapy shock center that is used by their executives regularly. The economic success provided by the Deerfield River has created a multimillion dollar economy which has rescued a poverty-stricken region of northwestern Massachusetts from financial oblivion."

- Tom Christopher, Director of New England FLOW, the non-profit created to fight for whitewater on the Deerfield.

Charlemont, Massachusetts today is a river town — its main business is the Deerfield River. Families and individuals working full-time in the whitewater industry have recently purchased at least 15 residences. The once devastated fishery has been largely restored through improved flows. The Deerfield is an example of where boaters and fishermen can coexist, both benefiting from the improved license conditions in the series of hydropower project relicensings along its length. But it didn't happen overnight, and it wasn't easy.

Here are Tom Christopher's suggestions for repeating the success of New England FLOW.

1. If you have a private hydropower dam on your local river then find out the project name, project number and license expiration. You can accomplish this one of two ways: Contact the dam manager/owner or call the public reference room at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) at (202) 208-1371. Dams are licensed for 30-50 year periods. Power companies cannot ignore the value of whitewater recreation in their renewal applications; if they do, the license is open for rehearing. Consider asking FERC to require power companies to foot the bill for a recreation economics analysis. In 1986 Congress passed the Electric Consumer's Protection Act. According to American Whitewater Conservation Director John Gangemi, "That Act requires FERC to give equal consideration to non-power values in relicensing proceedings. In theory, this equal consideration must include economic analysis of alternative uses of the river. FERC has been slow to require recreational economic studies in relicensing proceedings but persistence on this issue will eventually lead to adoption of this analysis by FERC in every relicense. In the meantime, our volunteer studies will have to serve as evidence of the economic value of these rivers for local communities."

2. FLOW did an economic impact analysis in the relicense process, the type presented in this article. "It was easy to quantify the value of whitewater to the power industry. It was harder to quantify the value of whitewater to boaters or to commercial outfitters," Christopher says. "In the end, we estimated the value to boaters equaled the cost a commercial company would charge for river trips. We used a multiplier of 2.5 as the number of times a dollar traveled through the economy. Our answer—a one-day release of whitewater for recreation exceeded its value to the power company by 24 to 1 — didn't even include the recreation value to tubers and fishermen."

3. If you are dealing with a de-watered river, it's essential to get a whitewater instream flow study. The most proven method is a controlled flow study, which tests a range of flows to determine minimum acceptable flows to optimum flows and downright scary flows. American Whitewater has conducted well over 20 of these studies on hydropower projects across the country. For assistance or



more information on controlled flow studies contact Rich Bowers (301-589-9452) or John Gangemi (406-837-3155). After identifying the optimum flows in the controlled flow study you will want to calculate boater demand for the resource. This is best accomplished by scheduling test releases for at least 3 to 4 weekends. It's crucial to tell local boaters about the dates, times and flows for the releases. After all, on dam controlled rivers boaters are unaccustomed to water in a bypass channel and therefore would not travel to the river unless the release is advertised. New England FLOW managed to get 500-600 boaters per weekend to the Deerfield test releases, which obviously increased its recreation value.

4. In dealing with power company officials, Christopher says, "Don't fear them. They act like they're smarter than we are, but they are only protecting their shareholders. We let them know that they couldn't walk over us. After a year of in your face struggling, they finally started to respect us, to the point where we could drink a beer together. After that, negotiations started to improve. Say what you want, do what you want, and hold your ground."

"If we did it over again, we would use more sophisticated valuation methods like the contingent valuation method. But the Deerfield was

just the beginning. We just keep winning — we're about to sign a settlement agreement on the Rapid River in Maine," Christopher said. The Deerfield, which was the subject of a front-page article in the Wall Street Journal in 1996, has been used as a model for negotiated whitewater releases. He concluded, "We just took a group of 6 Japanese officials down the Deerfield who heard about us in the New York Times. I just have no patience with these power companies. I'm very passionate about everything I do. I'm an ex-minor league hockey player, and I love a good fight."

Tom Christopher can be reached at 978-537-4285, tchris@tiac.net.

**About the Authors.** Bryson Tillinghast, a senior at Middlebury College in Vermont, did the bulk of the work on this article as an intern with AW Conservation Director John Gangemi in the summer of 1998. For more information on FERC's relicensing process, contact John Gangemi at 406-837-3155, jgangemi@digisys.net; Don English, an economist with the U.S. Forest Service at the Forestry Science Lab in Athens, Georgia, and a national expert on recreation economics, 706-559-4268, English\_Don@srs.athens@fs.fed.us; Ken Ransford, an AW board member and an attorney and CPA in Carbondale, Colorado, 970-963-6800, ransford8csn.net.

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PROBE 11	11'8"	28"	15.5"	45 LBS	ROYALEX	\$875	\$656.25
PROBE 12	12'8"	28.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	ROYALEX	\$875	\$656.25
PROBE 12 II	12'2"	27.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	5-BAY	\$875	\$656.25
PROBE 14	14'2"	30.5"	15.5"	58 LBS	ROYALEX	\$940	\$705.00
VIPER 11	11'8"	27.5"	15.5"	45 LBS	ROYALEX	\$875	\$656.25
VIPER 12	12'8"	27.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	ROYALEX	\$875	\$656.25
XL 13	13'3"	30"	15.5"	58 LBS	ROYALEX	\$920	\$690.00
XL 15	15'4"	35"	15.5"	85 LBS	ROYALEX	\$970	\$727.50
SHAMAN	12'2"	26.5"	15.5"	48 LBS	ROYALEX	\$925	\$693.75

## Five Boaters Arrested on Horsepasture River, NC

American Whitewater and ACA rush to rescue!

By Jason Robertson

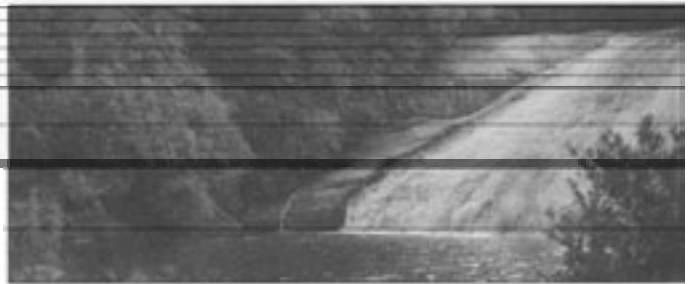
On September 22, five boaters, including the American Canoe Association's (ACA) Dave Jenkins, were arrested while trying to run Bust-Your-Butt Falls on the Horsepasture River. Earlier in the summer, American Whitewater's Access Director, Jason Robertson, and Dave Jenkins, were hassled by a security guard while hiking on Forest Service property by the Falls. The guard pulled out a pistol and tried to confiscate Jason's camera to prevent him from taking photo-

graphs of the snow fencing and "No Trespassing" signs along the river.

In a similar show of ridiculously superior force and at-



The picture they don't want you to see



Bust your Butt Falls, Photos by Jason Robertson

tempted intimidation, the five boaters that were cited with trespassing in September were surrounded by more than 20 miners from a quarry located beside this State and Federal Wild and Scenic River. The miners were carrying blunt objects and definitely appeared threatening, regardless of their stated intent.

American Whitewater and the ACA submitted a law suit

charging that the landowner's actions were illegal, and that he violated the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution by impeding the public's right to use a navigable waterway.

Contact Jason Robertson for more information on this lawsuit, or refer to the Aug/Sept (1998) Journal for greater detail.

## Wilderness in the Grand Canyon, AZ?

By Jason Robertson

**"In Wildness is the preservation of the World."  
- Henry David Thoreau**

American Whitewater submitted comments on the Draft Wilderness Management Plan in September supporting Federal Wilderness Designation for the backcountry in Grand Canyon National Park. However, we expressed our disappointment that the Park Service has deferred all discussion regarding wilderness designation on the river corridor to the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP).

The CRMP will be written next year; however the Park Service is collecting comments and public input at this early stage in the process. American Whitewater is very involved in this process since management decisions in the Grand Canyon are used as a baseline for managing other National Parks and Forests throughout the West. Jason Robertson is serving as a co-captain on one of the Park's workgroups and is taking an active role to ensure that our interests as private boaters are heard clearly and incorporated into the CRMP.

Our primary concern is that we expect the Park Service to properly discharge its duties and represent the American public. The issues being discussed in the Grand Canyon have little to do with specific commercial operations, individuals or organizations. Rather, this is about due process, and putting the rules of the game in place and abiding by them. These rules are clearly defined in the Wilderness and Organic Acts.

The Grand Canyon National Park contains one of our nation's largest and most sensitive wilderness ecosystems. Such a fragile system requires and deserves cohesive management as a single unit under an integrated wilderness plan. American Whitewater strongly believes that the Park's separation of the river corridor from the Wilderness Management Plan is inconsistent with the intent of the Wilderness Act and the spirit of the law.

Both the Park Service and the Wilderness Act were established in response to aesthetic concerns and arguments in a direct rebuttal of exploitative economic interests. Discussions regarding motors in the canyon, overflights of sight-seeing tours, and helicopter landings at Whitmore Wash are not new from a historical perspective. These discussions are based on arguments that have been revisited hundreds of times over the past 125 years. Economic interest should not be the yardstick by which our Parks are managed. The passage of the Wilderness act clearly demonstrates that the American people believe in preserving the sanctity of our few remaining wilderness areas.



Notably, American Whitewater's opposition to the use of motors within the Park does not represent an opposition to the limited presence of commercial outfitters. These outfitters perform a valuable service and assist the public in realizing the recreational and wilderness purposes of the Park as required by the Wilderness Act.

Checkout the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association (GCPBA) for more information on the Colorado River Management Plan and Wilderness designation at: <http://www.flagstaff.az.us/~gcpba/>

## Fighting for the Blackwater

By Jason Robertson

Several environmental organizations went to bat on October 7<sup>th</sup> to challenge the sale of the Blackwater Canyon to Allegheny Wood Products (AWP). The Sierra Club, West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, West Virginia Wildlife Federation, and others challenged the right of a public utility to sell a piece of "public" property without review by the Public Service Commission (PSC). If the suit is successful, logging operations will stop until the sale is reviewed by the PSC, otherwise AWP will continue its operations in the Canyon and the Forest Service (USFS) will finalize plans for a land swap.

John Gangemi and I toured the Blackwater Canyon on September 24<sup>th</sup> with AWP representatives and also met with the USFS. The Forest Service expressed their thanks for our work in support of the land swap, and largely credited American Whitewater with bringing the logging company to the bargaining table. The Forest Service described the terms of the swap in general terms, and promised to share more information with us regarding the nature of the property under consideration for the swap.

Later in the day, John and I toured the logging operation with AWP's spokeswoman, Donna Reckart, and Chief Forester Mark Sturgill. From Lindy Point, overlooking the canyon, we could see little evidence of the logging operation. We visited the logging operations firsthand. Yes, we saw muddy roads, stumps, and skid trails; but this damage was far less than we expected to see. AWP is

selectively logging the Blackwater. There is no visible break in the tree canopy.

We recognize that we received the sugar-coated tour, and I can only share my direct observations here. I would speculate that there are other locations in the canyon that have been significantly damaged; but I did not see them. My observation was that as logging operations go, AWP was being very conservative. We asked about AWP's plans for further development and whether they intend to clear-cut the canyon. AWP's representatives responded by telling us that they do not intend to develop or clear-cut the forest. American Whitewater is committed to preserving the unique qualities of the Blackwater Canyon, and would prefer to have the Canyon preserved without any logging. Therefore, American Whitewater will continue to support the premise of a land swap between the Forest Service and AWP, and we will also support the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations in their lawsuit. The logging company expressed their intent to continue permitting whitewater access in the Blackwater and the Forest Service stated that they would ask for and respect our comments regarding the land that they intend to swap when they have identified the appropriate parcels.

## Salt on the Wounds, AZ

By Jason Robertson

Thinking back to last April, I had been on the job for at least a week when I was asked to submit written comments on the revised Salt River Management Plan. So I sat down and started writing and writing and writing, until I finally had my arguments ready for the Forest Service. I was livid about plans for further limiting private use based on a couple of incendiary comments in their plan about how private boaters have trashed the river, such as, "A twenty person commercial group will generally leave the wilderness beach camps much cleaner than a non-commercial group of three or four with a lesser wilderness ethic."

Six months later I'd cooled off and in early October, I dusted off my notes and called the River Ranger, Kevin McComb, to ask him how American Whitewater's comments had been received and how the process was moving along. Kevin was kind enough to talk about the plan with me for half an hour before politely mentioning the tome that I'd written and that his skin had grown much thicker over the summer. Apparently, my comments burned holes in his desk, directly contributing to the rift within management over how to proceed with their planning. Now, I may be giving my letter too much credit, but it sure feels good knowing that my efforts weren't wasted and that American Whitewater is being heard by the Forest Service.

The scoping process has been completed, the Forest Service is evaluating the public's comments, and there's a huge internal debate over how to proceed. In one camp are the advocates for pure wilderness while the other camp advocates opening the river up to greater use. Kevin says that he's squarely in the middle, which is where American Whitewater would like to wind up.

The Forest Service held a meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup> to seek consensus within their ranks over how to proceed. They expect to release a draft Environmental Assessment in February 1999 for implementation in the year 2000. The management is waffling between the "preferred alternative," which American Whitewater opposes, and the "No Change" alternative, which is heading in the right direction.

In the meantime, enjoy the Salt River in the Winter, when it is largely unregulated. Apply for your Spring permits before the new year and use a groover and fire pan when you camp on the beach. Treat this wilderness with the respect that it deserves, and the Forest Service will come to respect private boaters in the way that we deserve!

# Returning to the River of No Return, ID

By Jason Robertson

*"The USFS has backed off. But as usual – and not surprising to any of us out there – there has been very little fanfare on their decision." –Paul Delaney*

The Forest Service has already received hundreds of letters and spoken to more than a thousand people at public meetings about managing the Frank Church River Of No Return Wilderness area; however you still have until December 1<sup>st</sup> to submit your comments. This wilderness in the heart of Idaho includes the renowned

Main Salmon and Middle Fork rivers, which have gained much of their notoriety because of their inaccessibility. These rivers are not inaccessible because of their remoteness, rather because it is virtually impossible to get a launch permit for either one. The Frank Church River Of No Return Wilderness might be more aptly named, the Frank Church River That Is Closed To Boaters.

The issues related to the management of the Frank Church Wilderness are not just about the rivers. The issues also include flights into the backcountry (which some kayakers use to reach the tributaries), paddling the tributaries which are the only unregulated portions of the backcountry at this time, carrying fire pans and toilets, the cancellation policy, so-called "opportunities for solitude," and more.

American Whitewater is asking the Forest Service to draft a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) addressing their stated changes in the Forest Service's "preferred alternative." Though an SEIS is not absolutely required under NEPA, the Forest Service has a unique opportunity for engaging the public in the



Jason Robertson and Danna Bowers, Lower Main Salmon, Idaho. Photo by Rich Bowers

planning process by releasing such a document. The Forest Service's point man, Ken Wotring, made several comments in May indicating a substantial shift away from the Forest Service's preferred alternative towards several management alternatives that are not included, described, or even referenced in the DEIS. If the Forest Service concludes the comment period and takes action on a so-called "6<sup>th</sup> alternative," then the omission of this alternative from the DEIS and public review will not be in accordance with law under the Administrative Procedure Act.

Please take time to read the letter from Paul Delaney with the Northwest Whitewater Association entitled "Option 6," and the letter from Greg Moore on paddling creeks such as the South Fork, Loon, Camas, and Big Creek in the Frank Church Wilderness.

The public comment deadline is December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998. Send comments to:

Ken Stauffer, Recreation Program Manager  
Salmon and Challis National Forests  
Attn: FC-RONRW Coordination  
RR 2, PO Box 600  
Salmon, ID 83467

## Option 6

By Paul Delaney (Northwest Whitewater Association) with substantial editorial liberties and comments by Jason Robertson (American Whitewater)

*Editor's Note: The following article and proposal were written from the perspective of a private rafter. Many of these issues may not seem relevant to kayakers or canoeists. However many of the use and crowding issues that the Forest Service is concerned about arise directly from the private use of rafts. These rafts are inherently larger and heavier than kayaks and canoes, are often linked to greater visual impacts, and carry significantly more gear. Therefore the use of the river by private rafters directly affects the regulation of kayakers and canoeists in the Frank Church Wilderness. Significantly, the greatest private-use groups on the Middle and Main Salmon are rafters and they really do have some pretty good ideas about how they should be regulated - though I'm not sold on the suggested user fee.*



## Option Six: An Alternative to Proposed Restrictions of Launches on the Middle Fork and Main Salmon Rivers.

The U.S. Forest Service is proposing severe limitations on the number of launches on the Middle Fork and Main Salmon rivers. The chances of drawing a permit on the Middle Fork are already extremely low at 1 in 14 and pretty marginal at 1 in 8 on the Main Salmon. If the proposed changes are implemented, and party sizes are reduced by more than half, then the chances of experiencing these rivers will become almost non-existent.

The Northwest Whitewater Association (NWA), a club of private, self-outfitted whitewater boaters based in Spokane, Washington, has proposed the following alternative, called Option Six. It is a combination of ideas from the NWA and Bill Parks of Northwest River Supplies. If introduced, it would help control use of the impacted rivers, alleviate campground overcrowding, regenerate campsites and open access for smaller camps. This is an initial draft. The NWA invites suggestions from the whitewater boating and outdoor community regarding this proposal.

The wilderness' namesake, the late Senator Frank Church, said in a 1977



speech that, "It was not the intent of Congress that wilderness be administered in so stringent a manner as to needlessly restrict their customary public use and enjoyment. Quite the contrary. Congress fully intended that wilderness should be managed to allow its use by a wide spectrum of Americans." We think he sums things up quite well.

### **The problem as seen by the Forest Service: Too many people impacting the river.**

### **The problem as seen by private boaters: Too few opportunities to draw permits.**

Solution: Limit party size from current level of four private launches with a maximum of 24 people to four launches with a maximum of 16 people, plus three extra launches with a maximum party size of 8. The smaller launches could be managed through a secondary lottery from the groups who were not successful in the primary drawing.

"Small Party" launch groups would be limited to "Small Party" camp sites to avoid conflicts with larger groups. This alternative would increase the chances of receiving a river permit by over 70%, as opposed to the Forest Service's DEIS Alternative 5, which cuts the odds of getting a permit in half.

### **Problem: Congestion at the Boundary Creek launch site.**

Solution: Re-open the Dagger Falls put-in for commercial use. This would leave the Boundary Creek launch site for private floaters. Funding for opening this launch site and for other improvements would come from a \$5.00 per person/per day "user fee" and from volunteer labor.

*Editor's Note: American Whitewater does not support a user fee for private boaters that will be used to operate or open a commercial launch site. Funding should come from fees generated by the concession operators.*

### **Problem: Campsite overcrowding**

Solution: Increase the number of campsites by surveying and clearing new sites following a minimal environmental assessment. Again, funds for improvements would come from the proposed \$5.00 per person/per day "user fee" and from volunteer labor who would be issued special "work party" permits.

Assign campsites throughout the permit season on the Middle Fork and Main Salmon rivers. This would allow for the periodic closure of camps for regeneration and site recovery.

*Editor's Note: Though the development of new campsites is appealing, it is also one of the issues that the Forest Service is unlikely to agree to. One of the primary reasons that the Forest Service began looking into management alternatives for the wilderness was based on the unsupported expansion and development of campsites. Ken Wotring has specifically repeated his belief, which he backs up with scientific reviews, that it is better to concentrate use in specific existing sites that have already been impacted than to open up new sites.*

### **Problem: Managing use on the tributaries:**

Solution: Tributaries such as the South Fork of the Salmon or Big Creek would be subject to self-issue permits. The difficult nature of floating these tributaries will limit their use. Should use escalate to a higher than acceptable level, a contingency plan would be implemented to control launches. All existing environmental rules (such as requiring toilets, fire pans, etc.) would be observed.

*Editor's Note: Consideration should be given for kayakers and canoeists that wish to avoid carrying fire pans if they are not going to build fires, and industrial groovers if they have an alternate toilet system which they will carry in their boats (for instance, a paper sandwich bag inside a Zip-lock works well).*

Allow boaters using the tributaries to paddle out onto the Main and Middle Fork as long as they "run out" and do not camp on these rivers.

*Editor's Note: Alternatively, dedicate one camp on the Middle Fork and one on the Main that non-permitted boaters can use while quickly paddling out of the canyon. Damage to a single site from greater use would be minimal relative to the size of the wilderness. Ken Wotring has told me several times that he does not believe that it is possible to paddle from the junction with the Loon or Camas Creek to the take-out in a single day regardless of water level. Therefore, this concern needs to be addressed in comments to the Forest Service.*

If you have any questions of comments regarding our proposal please contact the Northwest Whitewater Association at:

Voice Mail: (509) 299-2777

Fax: (509) 928-6998

e-mail: [pwd@thefuture.net](mailto:pwd@thefuture.net)

## **Protect The No Return Wilderness in Idaho**

Dear Editor:

Some additional points need to be made about the proposed management plan for the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness in Idaho (American Whitewater, July/August 1998). The plan affects not only the Middle Fork of the Salmon but the South Fork as well. The South Fork is an excellent one to three-day, semi-wilderness trip. In the spring, it has probably the biggest whitewater in Idaho. The river is currently unregulated for non-commercial boaters and closed to commercial outfitters.

The Forest Service proposes to limit launches on the river to

three per week and to open the river to commercial outfitting. Both those proposals are a serious mistake. The limitation of launches is needless — the river is not overcrowded. The proposed requirement of obtaining a permit ahead of time and the proposed penalty for canceled trips make getting on the river much more difficult for people who want to do so at short notice, which is often the case in May and June with Idaho's notoriously inconsistent weather. Since the South Fork is a shorter trip than the Middle Fork, many people run it over a weekend or as an unplanned part of a longer boating vacation in Idaho.

The Forest Service proposes to adopt a "freedom-of-choice" policy on the South Fork, meaning that anyone who obtained a permit could then either run the river on their own or hire an outfitter. The "freedom-of-choice" concept is terrific — but only for rivers that already have commercial vs. non-commercial conflicts, such as the Middle Fork or the Selway. Commercializing the South Fork will induce outfitters to advertise their services there, persuading people to run the river who would otherwise never have considered it. Demand for permits will increase and opportunities for boaters to run the river will become as limited as

they are on the Middle Fork and the Selway. There should be one major, multi-day river trip in Idaho without that scenario.

The Forest Service needs to hear from more boaters on this issue. Comment deadline is Dec. 1. Comments should be sent to: Salmon and Challis National Forests Attn: FC-RONRW Comment Analysis Team, RR 2, Box 600, Salmon, ID 83467.

Greg Moore  
Ketchum, ID

*Editor's Note: Greg Moore is a well known hair boater, river conservationist and the author of a popular guide to the rivers of Idaho.*

# Applications for the 1999 Tallulah Releases Accepted Starting January 1, 1999

The November, 1997, and the April and November 1998 releases for the Tallulah Gorge releases have taken place with great enthusiasm and excitement! The town hosted a successful festival during the first weekend of April 1998, and will repeat the party on April 3-4, 1999. Great cooperation among Georgia State Parks, Georgia Power Company, American Whitewater, local boating groups, and the boaters ensures the agreement over a 30-year period will continue in effect.

Tallulah Gorge is an advanced/expert whitewater run involving Class IV and V rapids. In addition, it has severely limited access in and out of the canyon in case of accident, and is further restricted due to the fragile nature of the gorge and the existence of several federally endangered species, including "Persistent Trillium."

If you are unsure of your whitewater skill, do not attempt the Gorge. Boating accidents are always unwelcome, but are even more unwelcome during such limited releases. Besides hurting yourself, you may jeopardize future whitewater releases in this incredibly beautiful canyon.

Tallulah Gorge State Park is administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Access is limited to 120 boaters per day, in groups of no more than three. The permit system has been changed slightly to better serve the needs of the boaters. Please follow all instructions exactly when making your application. Call American Whitewater at 301-589-9453 for further information.

## PLEASE READ AND FOLLOW ALL OF THE INSTRUCTIONS.

### FAILURE TO COMPLY MAY RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION OF THE APPLICANT'S PERMIT REQUEST.

1 Only persons paddling qualified whitewater craft will be permitted to paddle Tallulah Gorge. Qualified whitewater craft are defined as follows: Kayaks (one or two person); whitewater canoes or open hard boats; decked canoes, including C-1s and C-2s; and qualified inflatables. Per Georgia Parks, qualified inflatables (one or two person only) mean inflatable craft owned (not rented or borrowed) by the applicant or a boater on that permit. Determination of eligibility will be made by American Whitewater's representatives, according to established DNR guidelines.

2 Permits allow access for both days of the release weekend. Each permit holder, or one of two alternates listed on the application, must check in by 12:00 noon on Saturday, or the permit will be released to those on the waiting list. Change: if the permit holder does not check in by noon on Saturday, the permit is cancelled for both Saturday and Sunday. **Change: a permit allows a maximum of three people paddling qualified whitewater craft.**

3 An applicant may apply for a permit for each of the scheduled release weekends. The dates for 1999 are April 3-4, April 10-11, and November 6-7, November 13-14, and November 20-21. A separate request must be submitted for each scheduled release weekend.

4 Requests may be submitted after January 1, 1999 for the 1999 season. The drawing for April permits will be held on

Monday, February 1, 1999. The draw for November permits will be held on Wednesday, September 1, 1999. Mail your requests at least ten days before the drawing.

5 Permit holders will be notified of a successful draw by mail from Tallulah Gorge State Park. You are encouraged to confirm that the scheduled release has not been postponed or cancelled due to adverse or emergency conditions. Call 1-888-GPC-LAKE to note whether a postponement or cancellation message has been added to the recording.

6 Camping for boaters is available at the state park campground. The charge is \$3.00 per person per night. Call the Park at 1-706-754-7970 and identify yourself as a boater to obtain the special rate; you will be directed to the special boater camping area. Boaters arriving in RV's or motorhomes will be required to pay the regular overnight fee of \$12 per night; call ahead for reservations.

7 The Boater Parking Area is not a campground; do not put up a tent or build a fire. Dispose of trash properly. Be discreet about your choice of beverage.

8 Each group and boater must check in on each day of the release at the Boater Registration Table. This table is also used for sharing reminders, rules, lost and found articles, and so on.

9 Walk-ons: The rules allow 20 walk-ons each day of the release on a first come, first serve basis. The line starts at the Boater Registration Table. Additionally, names will

## PERMIT INSTRUCTIONS

- I All permit requests must be mailed in a legal-size envelope.**
- II The outside of the envelope must contain the following:**

- A The applicant's name and return address in the upper left corner.
- B The date of the permit requested and the number of people in the group, including yourself (maximum of three), in the lower right corner.
- C Adequate U.S. Postage for First Class Mail (reminder: the rates go up in January 10, 1999).
- D The correct address: Tallulah Gorge State Park Boating Permits, P.O. Box 248, Tallulah Falls, GA 30573.

- III The envelope must contain:**

- A A legal size return envelope bearing the applicant's name and return address, and adequate U.S. postage for first class mail.
- B A 3 x 5 inch index card containing the following information:
  - i the applicant's name, address, and daytime phone number;
  - ii the name and daytime phone number of another member on the permit.
  - iii the date of the scheduled weekend release being requested; and
  - iv the number of people in the applicant's group (not to exceed three, including the applicant).

- IV A person may apply for one permit for each weekend, but each request must be made separately.**

be taken for cancelled permits on a first come, first serve basis, and will be made available at noon on Saturday and again on Sunday. This means that all 120 slots can be filled each day.

10 Boaters are reminded that much of Tallulah Gorge State Park is extremely rugged and potentially hazardous. It is also an environmentally sensitive area. To protect the visitor from the gorge, and more importantly, the gorge from the visitor, all regulations and laws are strictly enforced. Remember that polite, responsible and safe behavior is expected.

# VOTE for Directors

## Candidates for the Board of Directors of American Whitewater, 1999

Here are candidates for American Whitewater Board of Directors. Approval by the general membership is the next step. The candidates statements are published here for your consideration.

### Risa Shimoda Callaway Easley, SC

The majority of our nation's paddler days are now spent on artificially controlled water. Like it or not. We have no choice but to take care of our dwindling access to these resources and to do our part to make sure our kids will be able to use them decades hence. To this end, I would like to continue to grow American Whitewater via ... our events! We have by now developed an incredibly rich, nationwide calendar of whitewater festivals



and competitions. Their popularity has created an exciting and fun 'platform' from which we can tell our friends, families and the larger public about the need for whitewater stewardship.

I have been an active member of American Whitewater since the mid-eighties, serving as Executive Director from 1988-1990, and as President from 1990-1996. I started the Gauley Festival Marketplace in the late eighties, revived the Ocoee Rodeo ten years ago under the American Whitewater banner and started the National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos in 1988, for this same basic reason. I will continue to support the creation of popular events to publicize American Whitewater's mission.

I am humbled to be a part of the neatest non-profit on the face of the planet.

## REPORT ACCESS PROBLEMS Trouble on the Waters

If you had trouble getting to the river, let us know. Use this form to report access problems so that AW can convince legislators and government authorities where and when river access is a problem. If you have met an irate landowner, noticed signs forbidding access, or were stopped by a landowner, barbed wire fence or a locked gate, tell us about it on this form. If several boaters are arrested or involved, only 1 form should be filled out per incident naming a boater available for future contact.

River \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident \_\_\_\_\_

Access code categories: List below or circle the categories, multiple categories are ok.

Brief description of incident:

Boater contact \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
email \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner/Agency/Sheriff contact (if known)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
email \_\_\_\_\_

1. Trespass. Ticket, warning or arrest for:  
1.01 Trespass on private property  
1.02 Trespass on public property  
1.03 Criminal trespass  
1.04 Civil trespass

2. Public Access Closure  
2.01 Denied by federal law  
2.01.01 Denied by BLM  
2.01.02 Denied by Forest Service  
2.01.03 Denied by Nat'l Park Service  
2.02 Denied by state  
2.03 Denied by local authority  
2.04 Denied by administrative edict

3. Injury from manmade obstacles  
3.01 Barbed wire or fence  
3.02 Low head dam

4. Obstacles running river, scouting or portaging  
4.01 Fence or chain on land blocking access  
4.02 Fence, wire, or tree on river blocking access  
4.03 Posted no trespassing sign  
4.04 Vehicle towed, ticketed, or vandalized  
4.05 Threats or acts of violence

5. Closures: Rivers closed that were once open  
5.01 Closed by private landowner  
5.02 Closed by government agency  
5.02.01 Federal  
5.02.02 State  
5.02.03 Local  
5.03 High water closure

- New access fees  
6.01 Charged by private landowner  
6.02 Charged by government agency  
6.02.01 Federal  
6.02.02 State  
6.02.03 Local

- Dam controlled rivers  
7.01 Water turned off  
7.02 Inconsistent flow: too much or too little  
7.03 No notice of releases

Send to Ken Ransford, 475 Sierra Vista, Carbondale, CO 81623, 970-963-6800, FAX 970-963-6700, ransford@csn.net

Access is a constant struggle. The AW Access Committee needs your help.

# VOTE for Directors

## Brooke Drury Seattle, WA

I cannot imagine my life without whitewater. I moved to Seattle in 1993 and embarked upon a major career shift because of whitewater. I met my husband on whitewater, have traveled all around Washington in search of whitewater, and have already started scheming over how to best introduce my two-month old daughter to the joys of whitewater and whitewater rivers. For all of these reasons, I want to further the mission of American Whitewater.

For the past five years, I have had the privilege of being associated with American Whitewater, first as a volunteer and then as a director.

I have been involved in a number of American Whitewater-led conservation and access projects in Washington, including successful efforts to kill ill-advised hydro projects on Canyon Creek and the Cispus River and to obtain whitewater releases on the Nisqually's La Grande Canyon. I have also seen this organization grow from a small river conservation group made up of whitewater enthusiasts to a nationally recognized non-profit organization looking out for boaters' inter-



ests in river conservation, recreational river access, river safety, and beyond.

As a member of the Board of Directors, I would like to continue contributing to American Whitewater's success. I believe I can use my law degree, my experiences fighting for rivers in Washington and in the Southeast, as well as my experience working for and with other non-profit environmental and recreation organizations to help bring

American Whitewater even more successes in the years to come.

There's still a lot of work to be done and who better to do it with than a group of people who share the same passion and who have demonstrated time and again that they can get the job done.

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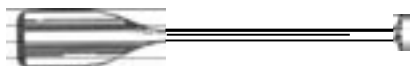
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# VOTE for Directors

## Kevin Lewis Anderson, CA

I was introduced to whitewater as a Cub Scout in 1962. Little did I know that thirty-eight years later this sport would still thrill me as much as my first river trip on Goose Creek in northern Virginia.

I have paddled nearly every type of craft available. I achieved success as national junior slalom champion and later as national wildwater champion racing with my brother, Brent. In the seventies and eighties I paddled C-1 and took up rowing a raft so my bride-to-be could experience that Class V rush! Nowadays, I entertain myself with steep creek thrill-seeking, kayaking, class V catarafting, and whenever possible, an autumn Grand Canyon trip.

The one thing that has not changed over the years is the continuing threat to our waterways. Hydropower development, loss of access, and government regulation constantly threaten to destroy what precious few rivers we have left. As a Regional Coordinator I have worked extensively on hydro relicensing, navigability, and public access to waterways.

I have also helped represent American Whitewater in the formation of the California Hydropower Reform Coalition and a national electronic mail list serve for whitewater conservation, access and safety issues.

I am deeply honored to be nominated for a position on the board of American Whitewater and will work hard to further its mission.

## Chris Kelly Columbia, MO

For me, the first priority of American Whitewater is the preservation of our riparian resources. The protection of our rivers is more important than my use of them. I am also committed to American Whitewater's aggressive access policy. These two goals are interrelated because every river user is a potential environmental ally: the more a person paddles, the more likely it is that she will bestir herself to defend the resource.

I also believe that American Whitewater ought to be perceived as the advocate for a wide spectrum of boaters. Our organizational commitment to conservation, safety and access should make us attractive to the entire whitewater community. Conversely, membership by a greater number of boaters will provide American Whitewater with the resources to be even more effective.

I am committed to helping expand our membership by finding ways to attract intermediate boaters.

I have a strong understanding of the governmental and political processes which so often affect our sport and our rivers. My

performance in public office demonstrates my commitment to our shared goals: Conservation Federation Legislator of the Year in 1987 for my work in establishing the KATY Trail and twice the recipient of the Sierra Club Outstanding Legislative Award.

I paddle an open canoe and get out on whitewater 40-50 times a year. My wife and son both paddle kayaks but are otherwise nice people.

I would be grateful for your support and, if chosen, will do my best to be a productive and ethical board member.

## Charlie Walbridge Bruceton Mills, WV

I have been paddling canoes ever since a 1962 trip at a New Hampshire summer camp. I discovered the C-1 in 1970 and have been on the river ever since. I have written for the American Whitewater Journal since 1973, and have reported on accidents and near misses since 1975. The former owner of a whitewater mail-order catalogue (Wildwater Designs), I currently serve as American Whitewater Membership Chair. During the past two years I have worked with staff members to upgrade software and improve the efficiency of membership mailings. I currently serve as a field representative for Extrasport and Northwest River Supplies, write books and articles on paddling, consult on river safety issues and teach river rescue.

## Eric Weiss Stanford, CA

I started working for the Nantahala Outdoor Center as a raft guide in 1977, and have never left my love for paddling. Work in those days included positions as Head Guide, Director of Health and Safety on the Chattooga and Ocoee for Southeastern Expeditions and whitewater photographer.

I have continued my contribution to rivers and boaters by publishing research on paddling-related injury, specializing in emergency and wilderness medicine, and serving in such capacities as Senior Medical Advisor at the 1996 Summer Olympics.

My companies include Adventure Medical Kits and Wilderness and Travel Medical Seminars, as I enjoy providing products and services to paddlers and wilderness medicine practitioners. Understanding safety issues relative to paddling and the implications of its growing popularity are important, and I hope that I can help American Whitewater as it supports the communication and clarification of safety-related issues. I have tremendous respect for American Whitewater and its work and am honored to have been asked to run for a seat on the Board.

## American Whitewater Board of Directors Election Ballot

Please indicate your approval or disapproval on this ballot and return to:

**American Whitewater**  
**P.O. Box 636**  
**Margaretville, NY 12455**

Candidates require a minimum of 50% approval from the general membership to be named to the Board.  
Ballots must be postmarked by February 20, 1999.

Ballot-1999 American Whitewater Board of directors

Approve		Disapprove
	Risa Shimoda Callaway	
	Brooke Drury	
	Kevin Lewis	
	Chris Kelly	
	Charlie Walbridge	
	Eric Weiss	

by Jayne H. Abbot

## American Whitewater/NOWR Event Manager

What other sport could you find such an inspiring range of events packed with so much for the enthusiast to enjoy. There are fun competitions, cutting edge rodeos, downriver races, festivals with huge marketplaces and exhibitors, festivals just for fun, and festivals to put you on the water in the hottest new boats around. And who brings you all this, American Whitewater.

American Whitewater is dedicated to your rivers through our conservation and access programs. We're dedicated to your safety and well being while on those rivers. And, we provide the best in competitions and celebrations off the river. Check out some of this summer's and fall's event highlights below and look for articles on the Russell Fork Rendezvous, Gauley River Race and Ocoee Rodeo also in this issue.

## Black River Festival – Watertown, NY – July 25-26

The Black River Festival was back and bigger than ever. All the major manufacturers and local retailers came with boats, boats and more boats for the paddler looking to test out the latest designs. A downriver race on Saturday and an amateur rodeo on Sunday were some highlights of the event.

## Deerfield River Festival – Charlemont, MA – August 1

From the Black, it was a hop, skip and a jump to the Deerfield the next weekend. The booths were busy all evening as an estimated 1,000 boaters came off the river to enjoy an evening of entertainment and scoop up some of the best buys of the year in the silent auction. The event raised \$7,000 for American Whitewater river conservation programs.

## Wausau Whitewater Rodeo – Wausau, WI – August 29-30

Providing an excellent volunteer base and organization from their slalom background, the Wausau Canoe and Kayak Corporation (WCKC) sponsored the first annual Wausau Whitewater Rodeo this summer. When I entered Wausau, I began to see signs of whitewater; a billboard advertisement with a



Me (Jayne) surfing ii up at the Black River Festival. All photos above are from the Black River Festival

kayaker in it, stain glass kayakers in shop windows and then, as I came close to the whitewater park, a larger than life bronze statue of a kayaker! This town is into whitewater.

With a convenient downtown location, built in bleachers, lots of easy to reach parking and controlled water, this event was

unique to the rodeo scene. And the organizers really knew how to treat the competitors. They were spoiled with free fresh coffee every morning, free lunches, free dinner, free parking and camping... hope they don't expect this from all the events! And the icing on the cake, the organizers spent two days working with the competitors working on creating a

better hole. The dam operators are amazing. For one day, they let us "play" with the water level; put it higher, lower, in different channels, etc. When we figured out the optimal level, there was still some more work to be done that could make the hole even better. So, Carla Westcott, the lead organizer of the event, came though with sandbags which the competitors placed in strategic locations to help create a stronger hole. These organizers are truly dedicated to putting on a great event.

The hole proved to be excellent although slightly shallow and narrow. Wausau has said they will work on it more this winter. Saturday was preliminaries and a Freestyle through a Rapid event. Lots of the locals came out to see this new breed of event in the Midwest. On Sunday, Young America Outdoors showed up to film the finals for a national TV program airing in 90% of the country. Unfortunately, I fell victim to the Northwest pilots strike and had to leave before the competition began on Sunday, but all reports are that the event was excellent.

## Don't call this a Festival River Rendezvous – Belfort/Beaver River, NY – Sept. 5- 7

Really, this was not a festival but rather a call to boaters to come check out the Beaver River and bask in American Whitewater's success at getting flows in this river. For not being a festival, it sure had the atmosphere of one. Over 100 people attended during the 3-day Labor Day weekend.

## Gauley Festival – Summersville, WV – September 26

The Gauley was HUGE beyond our wildest expectations. Finally blessed with a dry weekend, the first in four years, over 4,000 paddlers attended scooping up deals, enjoying friends and checking out some hot booths. Voted "Most Creative Booth" by American Whitewater was Savage V who set up a ho down party complete with hay bale sofas for video watchers to lounge their weary paddling bones. The event raised over \$50,000 for our river conservation programs. It was definitely the party to be at and will only get bigger and better.



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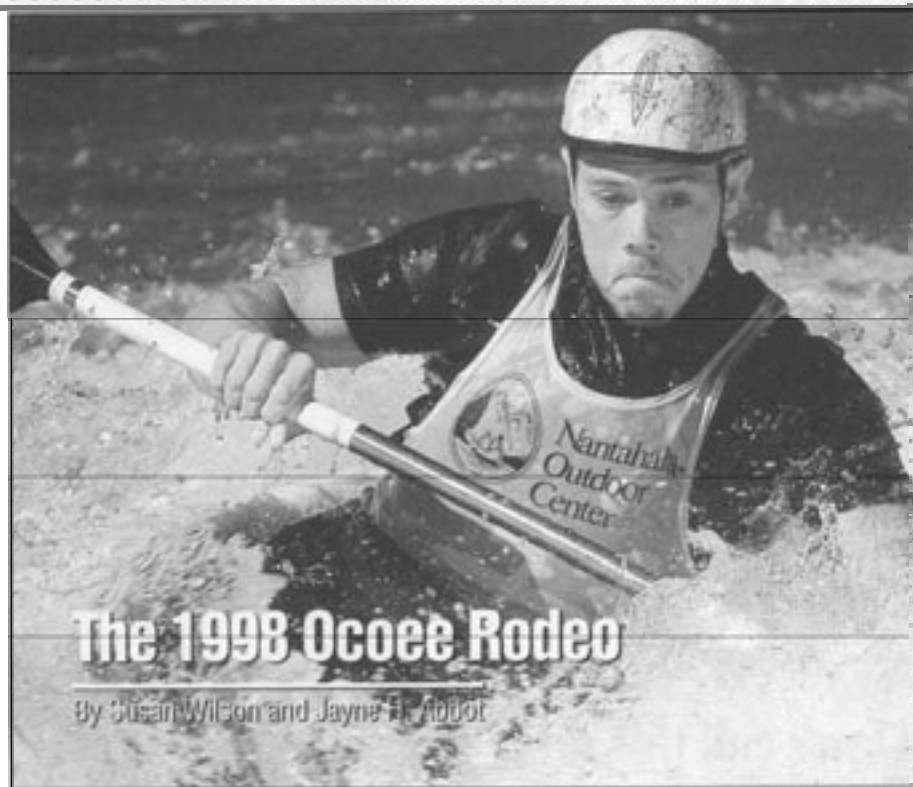
The 1998 Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo started off with a rush as a record number of expert competitors registered Thursday evening. Joe and Nancy (a.k.a. the Bib Nazi) Criener smoothly registered 200 competitors over 2 days while not even batting an eye. The expert classes were bigger than ever with 66 K-1 men, 20 C-1, 17 K-1 women and 21 Open Canoes. This is a serious game the experts are playing these days.

Other classes were no slouches either with 22 K-1 intermediate men, 25 K-1 advanced men and a total of 19 juniors competing in three skill levels (intermediate, advanced and expert). The competitions ran smoothly and fun was the name of the game. The event earned over \$16,000 for American Whitewater's very successful river conservation and access programs. Thanks to all who came to watch, participate and volunteer for making this event such a success!

We dedicated this year's rodeo to the memory of our wonderful friend and top-notch competitor Pablo Perez. Friends of Pablo provided red ribbons for spectators and competitors to wear in honor of his memory. A collection was started for a memorial fund for Pablo with the funds being donated to American Whitewater. Over \$150.00 was donated at the event for this fund. As a fitting tribute, Pablo was given his last 60-second ride just before the expert men's finals to the tears of many and huge applause as the whistle blew. It was a touching moment for everyone. The rodeo T-shirt was dedicated to Pablo with his words; "no worries." His memory reminded us all that it wasn't who won the rodeo or what the rules were that mattered, it was the experiences we had with the friends we care so much about.

## The Nitty Gritty:

The expert preliminaries were held on Friday for C-1 and K-1 men's expert classes. There were so many competitors we ran out of water on Friday and had to hold the K-1 women and OC-1 expert classes Saturday morning. The advanced, intermediate and junior classes finished up the day at Hell Hole and set the stage for the finals on Sunday. Many thanks to Wayne Gentry and his com-



PHOTOS ■ Bill Burger/MAGINARY PRODUCTIONS

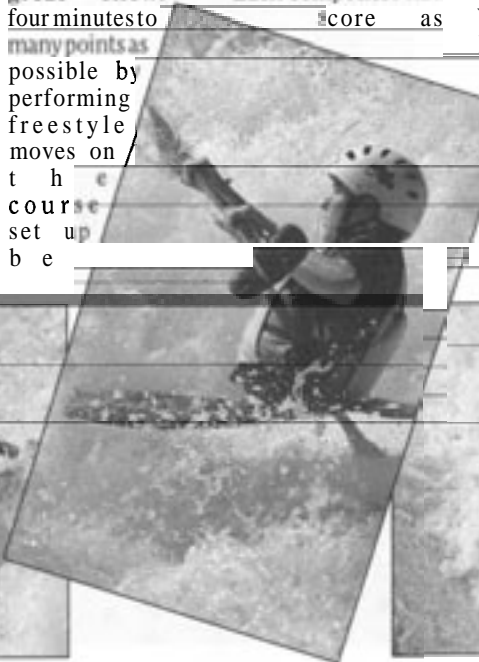
puter scoring program for keeping the scoring straight and working well into the night to fix the computer glitches!

Saturday bloomed with spectators as a record-breaking day was set on the Upper Ocoee. The Whitewater Center reported more visitors than ever at any event held here since the Olympics. Risa Shimoda Callaway coordinated Saturday's Freestyle through a Rapid competition that was renamed "Free Riding." We like the new name so it may just stick. Due to logistics, the event was organized for experts only and they sure put on a great show. Each competitor had four minutes to score as

many points as possible by performing freestyle moves on the course set up by

tween Best Ledge and Slam Dunk. Competitors described the competition as fun and challenging, plus they really enjoyed the site since it was so spectator friendly. Overall winners were also chosen by combining the results from the free riding with the results from the hole riding at Hell Hole. The overall winners were: OC-1 – Frankie Hubbard; Junior – Jeremy Adkins; Women's – Brooke Winger; C-1 – Austin Crane; Men's – Eric Jackson. Thanks to Risa's hard work, this event is really taking off and making a big impression.

Sherry Sparks, Assistant Director of the Whitewater Center, organized the Ocoee River Days Festival on the Upper also on Saturday. The event had fun activities for the kids plus a festival site where Ocoee Rodeo sponsors set up Booths, tunes were provided by the X-Ray's of Atlanta, and the Atlanta Center of Excellence set up a boat demonstration area. Much synergy has been gained between American Whitewater volunteers and the Forest Service and State





Park Officials that make this event such a success. It takes a team to organize the Ocoee Rodeo and we really appreciate all the help.

Saturday also featured the Ocoee Rodeo Squirt Competition with a new format designed by Eric Zitzow and our distinguished head judge Jimmy Snyder. Eric's format was designed to separate the true squirt boaters from the plastic playboat world with the qualifier of "downtime" making the difference. Competitors participated in six mystery moves with downtime and exit points averaged. These scores were added to the eddyline score to come up with our expert winner Nathan Mills. Squirt boaters like to have fun so Jimmy Snyder awarded a move of the day to Barry Kinnen who won with a no paddle stroke or hand touch eight-ended cartwheel! With the many new designs in the squirt boat market, it appears squirting is making a strong come back.

Saturday's festivities continued into the evening at the 1998 Ocoee Rodeo Party hosted by OAR (Outdoor Adventures Rafting). The party featured a spaghetti dinner, Atlanta band Tumbleweed Junction, huge raffle, silent auction and free beverages provided by Sweetwater Brewing Company and the Beverage Research Center. A record crowd of 800 people attended the party. Unfortunately, the only unfriendly people at the party were the Polk County Police who threatened to haul us all off in buses should we cross a fence into the cranky neighbors yard. We cruised the campground and party to inform everyone of the situation and found out that paddlers are amazingly cooperative. We had no further problems with the locals and everyone had a great time at the party. We really appreciated everyone's cooperation! A huge thank you goes to Doug Simmons (owner of OAR) for hosting the event for two years. He's one of the key reasons for the success of the event.

Sunday started off with a head-to-head wildwater sprint race on the Upper Ocoee organized by Chris Hipgrave. No rules just pump it from start to finish and the first boater across the finish line advances to the next heat. The Man of Rubber Raft Race, organized by Gary and Beth Harper, also took place in the morning on the Lower Ocoee with the stern man launching into the air at

hell hole to retrieve a Man of Rubber bow tie hanging from the bridge.

Sunday's finals started off with the intermediate and advanced classes and then moved into high gear with the experts. Jeremy Adkins wowed the crowds by taking 1st place in an awesome ride in the expert junior class. Allen Braswell took the



Free style through a rapid on the Upper Ocoee  
Photo by Jayne Abbot

C-1 class again beating out nineteen other C-1 boaters. The Open Canoes entertained the crowd in their impressive new boat designs with Eli Helbert winning the class in one of these cool little numbers. The women are definitely upping the ante in the women's class with Brooke Winger leading the pack. Brooke pulled off an impressive ride starting off with a wave wheel and sticking it in the hole racking up a point total similar to the men's expert class.

The expert men's finals then got underway. One special competitor took the hole first. Keith Lyles announced Pablo Perez to take the hole as we gave him his minute and sat in silence remembering the wonderful times at Hell Hole with Pablo and missing his presence. A whistle blew at the end of his ride and the crowd went wild with cheers. Pablo's paddling friends then took the hole and gave

it all they had as a tribute to him.

The men's final was amazing with incredible rides from all the competitors. But one man must win and this year that man was Jimmy Blakeney. Jimmy's smooth, fast and precise style impressed the judges and the crowd and made him the men's winner of the 1998 Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo.

The event was a great success thanks to the coordinators Jayne Abbot and Susan Wilson plus many other volunteers. Thanks to a few special people without whom this event would never have run so smoothly: Catfish, LeRoy Robbins, Oren Kennedy, Wayne Gentry, John Payne, Dave Jeffries, JoEllen Dickie, Risa Shimoda Callaway, Chris Hipgrave, Elizabeth and Don McNealy, Nancy and Joe Griener, Matt McOske and fiancée, Todd Zarns, plus many more. The money earned at this year's event is being donated to American Whitewater in memory of Pablo Perez. May his smile live on forever.



Smokey the Bear visits the Upper Ocoee  
Photo by Jayne Abbot





# NOWR Event Results

The following are brief event highlights and the results from the top classes at each event through the end of the season. Full NOWR competition results are located on the web site at [www.nowr.com](http://www.nowr.com) or can be obtained by calling the events office at (828) 645-5299. The 1998 Point Series Championship winners will be announced in the next issue of the journal.

## Gorge Games Whitewater Rodeo 1 July 11-12

### Expert/Pro K-1 Men

1. Andy Bedingfield
2. Shane Benedict
3. Eric Southwick

### ExoerVPro K-1 Womeq

1. Brooke Winger
2. Shannon Carroll
3. Erin Miller

### Expert/Pro K-1 Junior - no class

## Derby Creek Days / July 25

### Expert/Pro K-1 Men

1. Javid Grubbs
2. Jason Warstrath
3. Ted Keyes

### Expert/Pro K-1 Women

1. Allison Smith
2. Kelly Murphy
3. Tanya Shuman

### Expert/Pro K-1 Junior

1. Kyle McCutchen
2. Nathan McDade
3. Brandon Lundberg

## Kootenay Whitewater Festival 1 August 1 - 3

### ExoerVPro K-1 Men

1. Eric Southwick
2. Sam Drevo
3. Andy Bedingfield

### ExoerVPro K-1 Women

1. Brooke Winger
2. Saskia Van Mourik
3. Tanya Shuman

### ExoerVPro Junior - no class

## Wausau Whitewater Rodeo 1 August 29 - 30

### Expert/Pro K-1 Men

1. Eric Southwick

2. BJ Johnson
3. Keith Liles

### Expert/Pro K-1 Women

1. Tanya Shuman
2. Katie Nietert
3. Karen Mann

### Expert/Pro K-1 Junior - No Class

## Ottawa River Rodeo 1 September 5 - 7

### Exoertmro K-1 Men

1. Ken Whitting
2. Shane Benedict
3. Eric Southwick (tie)
3. Kevin Varette (tie)

### Expert/Pro K-1 Women

1. Aleta Miller
2. Nadine Griffin
3. Jamie Simon

### Expert/Pro C-1

1. Chris McDermot
2. Luke Martin
3. Joe Langman

### ExoerVPro OC-1

1. Mark Sriver
2. Gigi Roux
3. Cody Neal

### Exoert Sauirt

1. Shane Benedict
2. Dan Gavere
3. Brad Sutton

## American River Festival 1 September 12- 13

### ExoerVPro K-1 Men

1. Jason Bates
2. Rusty Sage
3. Clay Wright

### Expert/Pro K-1 Women and Jun- ior - no class

## Outer Banks Surf/Kayak Rodeo 1 September 19 - 20

### ExoerVPro K-1 Meq

1. Jimmy Blakeney

2. Eric Southwick
3. Bo Wallace

### Expert/Pro K-1 Women

1. Tanya Shuman
2. Polly Green
3. Aleta Miller

### ExoerVPro Junior

1. Andre Spino-Smith
2. Trip Jennings
3. Patrick Methany

## Coosa River Rodeo 1 October 2 - 4

### Expert/Pro K-1 Men

1. Eric Jackson
2. Eric Southwick
3. Javid Grubbs

### Expert/Pro K-1 Women

1. Tanya Shuman
2. Polly Green
3. Kim Jordan

### ExoerVPro K-1 Junior

1. Nathan McDade
2. Jeremy Adkins
3. Andre Spino-Smith

### ExoerVPro C-1

1. Brian Miller
2. Eric Jackson
3. Walt Lynch

### ExoerVPro OC-1

1. Eli Helbert
2. Frankie Hubbard
3. Phil Foti

## Ocoee Rodeo 1 October 9 - 11

### Hole riding results

### ExoerVPro K-1 Meq

1. Jimmy Blakeney
2. Jeff West
3. Eric Jackson

### ExoerVPro K-1 Women

1. Brooke Winger
2. Jamie Simon
3. Erica Mitchell

### Expert/Pro Junior

1. Jeremy Adkins
2. Nathan McDade
3. Andrew Holcombe

### Expert/Pro C-1

1. Allen Braswell
2. Austin Crane
3. Shane Benedict

### Expert/Pro OC-1

1. Eli Helbert
2. Lyle Dickieson
3. Frankie Hubbard

### Expert/Pro Sauirt K-1 Men

1. Nathan Mills
2. Eric Zitzow
3. Blake Turner

### Expert/Pro Sauirt C-1

1. Dirk Young
2. Barry Kennon
3. Chris Manderson

### Freestyle through a Rapid (a.k.a. Free Riding)

1. Frankie Hubbard
2. David Simpson
3. Eli Helbert

### ExoerVPro C-1 Meq

1. David Hepp
2. Bo Wallace
3. Austin Crane

### Expert/Pro K-1 Junior

1. Lane Rankin
2. Nathan McDade
3. Jeremy Adkins

### Expert/Pro K-1 Women

1. Brooke Winger
2. Aleta Miller
3. Jamie Simon

### Expert/Pro K-1 Men

1. Shane Benedict
2. Raymond Cotton
3. Ollie Grau

# 1999 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS

(schedule subject to change)

Come join American Whitewater in **1999** as we celebrate whitewater rivers across country through our world famous festivals, *rac*es and *ro*deos. *Hope to see you there!*

## AMERICAN WHITEWATER EVENTS

National Paddling Film Festival – East	February 27	Lexington, KY	Barry Grimes	606-623-9067
Black River Festival	July 24-25	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Deerfield Festival	July 31	Charlemont, MA	Mike Coleman	781-646-2012
"Don't call this a Festival River Rendezvous"	September 4-6	Belfort, NY/Beaver River	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Gauley Festival	September 25	Summersville, WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355
Russell Fork Rendezvous	October 1-3	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011
Moose River Festival	October 16	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397

## AMERICAN WHITEWATER CASCADE SERIES

a series of American Whitewater premier level races from mild(er) to wilder held across the country

Canyon Creek Race	May 6	Clarks Country, WA	Andrew Wulfers	503-285-0464
Potomac Great Falls Race	May 30-31	Great Falls, VA	Ricky Rodriguez	703-742-8742
Black River Race	July 24	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397
Upper Yough Race	August 26	Friendsville, MD	Jess Whittemore	301-746-5389
Gore Canyon Downriver Race	August 21-22	Kremmling, CO	Paul Tefft	970-923-3955
Russell Fork Race	October 2	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011
Gauley River Race	October 4	Summersville, WV	Donnie Hudspeth	800-950-2585
Moose River Race	October 16	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397

## NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WHITEWATER RODEOS (NOWR) CIRCUIT

(schedule through early-may 1999)

Kern River Festival	April 16-18	Kernville, CA	Linda Ivins	805-871-6790
New River Rodeo	April 24-25	McCoy, VA	Roanoke Co. Pks/Rec	540-387-6091
Merced River Rodeo	Date not yet determined	Mariposa, CA	Susan Scheufele	408-459-7978
Oregon Cup				
Maupin Daze	May 1-2	Maupin, OR	Dave Slover	541-395-2201
Sunset Falls/Wheel Rodeo	May 7	Clackamas County, OK and		
Bob's Hole Rodeo	May 8-9	Clarks County, WA	Andrew Wulfers	503-285-0464

## OTHER EVENTS

Carolina Paddlesports Film Festival	(Various dates around the southeast from Dec – Jan)	Clay Brennecke	803-777-9181	
High Country Triple Crown				
Watauga Gorge Race and Rodeo (Exp/pro)	April 10-11	Watauga County, NC		
Nollechucky Rodeo (Adv/Exp)	April 17-18	Erwin, TN		
	Contacts:	Spencer Cooke	828-297-1257	
		Clem Newbold	828-295-4441	
Cheat River Festival and Race	April 30-May 2	Albright, WV	Dave Bassage	304-379-3141
South Yuba Pedal-Paddle	May 8-9	California	Dave Good	916-265-9653

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# SOUTH YUBA GATHERING - May 1998

By Dave Good

*The South Yuba is a California classic. A quick easy shuttle puts you on one of the most accessible high quality class V runs in Northern California. With unpredictable flows, running an event on the South Yuba is always a challenge. In 1997, the river level dropped to an unrunnable level just days before the event. In early May of 1998 the rain pushed flows over our cutoff the day before our class V Chuck's Race, named in memory of Chuck Kern, who loved this canyon. A wild time was had by all as the spirit of Chuck was felt in the walls of the Yuba canyon.*

The FTR was held on Initiation Rapid. The water was high and the holes were meaty. The run started on a nice wave train where you could spin and get vertical. The top five finishers were Clay Wright, Lars Holbek, Brad Brewer, Robert Hogg and Nonwood Scott.

The relay consists of an 8 mile mountain bike ride with an awesome single track descent through forested switchbacks to the river where a four mile class IV run, Edwards to Purdon is paddled. The competition in the men's solo class was intense. We had

some incredible athletes going hard at it. Davidson Collins beat Lee Wilhelm by less than a minute although Lee is at least 10 years older and had a much shorter boat. Third place went to Lars Holbek followed by Dieter King and Tom Waclo. Evans Phelps and Hiedi Biber who tied for first led the solo women. The fastest coed team was Greg Weber on the bike and Wanda Shiotsuka on the river. The men's team event saw Jason Mogschler sizzling the single track so that Jeff Martinez could paddle without looking over his shoulder into first place. Natalie Kanvowski set Mela Breen in position to capture the top women's team honors.

Look for the South Yuba Gathering next April 24 and 25 just a week after the Kern River Festival. We will conduct Chucks Race and The Pedal/ Paddle Relay.

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# ng the Whoopy the Do!!!

## Paddling the North Fork of the Payette

By Bob Gedekoh

American Whitewater Editor

Having endured four airports, three flights and fourteen hours of hassles, I was no doubt a sorry sight. But I was not prepared for the question posed by the cheerful young lass working the midnight shift behind the counter of the Boise Motel Six.

"Do you have a discount card?" she asked sweetly.

I didn't know what she meant, but, like most kayakers I am not one to pass up a bargain, so she had my interest. "A discount card?" I inquired.

"Yeah .... An AARP card," she replied.

A...A...R....P... It took me a while but then it kicked in. American Association of Retired Persons! My God, she thinks I'm old!

"No, I don't have an AARP card," I sputtered indignantly. "I'm only 47!"

"Oh, I'm sorry," she replied as she looked me over again. But I could tell she was



Back photo: An unnamed rapid on the Lower Five. This is the easy stuff between the real rapids. Photo by Jennifer Yewer. Above insets: Left, Paddling the North Fork is not about finesse... it's about power. Photo by Doug Nicholson. Right, Ken Ryan up to his ears in Disneyland. Photo by Doug Nicholson. Back photo page 51, Doug Nicholson boofs the start of Hound's Tooth. Photo by Jennifer Yewer. Insets page 51, left, Greg Schackel in Disneyland showing off that Otter Bar form. Photo by Doug Nicholson. Middle, Bob Gedekoh drifting into a hole sideways... can't he see? Photo by Doug Nicholson. Right, "Mayor" Ford Honeyford exerts his authority in Crunch. Photo by Jennifer Yewer.



# Paddling the North Fork of the Payette

thinking that 47 is pretty damned old.

I probably wouldn't have been so touchy if I hadn't been thinking the same thing the whole way from Pittsburgh.

Maybe she was right. Maybe I was too damned old.

One thing for sure, her query was not the confidence builder I needed the night before I was to paddle the North Fork of the Payette.

I was no stranger to the North Fork; 1998 marked the fifth year I had traveled more than 2,000 miles to challenge it. That is unusual; I generally like to try new things. I paddled the Grand Canyon — once; the Selway — once; the Middle Fork of the Salmon — once. Although I had a wonderful time on all of those rivers, I doubt that I will ever do them again. So what keeps me coming back to the North Fork of the Payette?

I could give a lot of reasons. The Payette drainage, located in the mountains an hour's drive north of Boise, is a magnificent place to visit. During August, prime North Fork season thanks to releases from the Cascade reservoir, the water runs crystal clear and is delightfully warm. Nearly every day is sunny and the air temperature typically soars into the 90s. The mountain biking is good and the camping is better. All of these would be valid reasons for returning year after year.

But it's not the scenery or the weather or the camping that keeps me coming back to the North Fork. It's the river. Or, maybe, the fear of the river. I think the North Fork of the Payette may be the best class V river in the country. But it scares me... albeit in a way that feels really good. With sixteen miles of booming class IV+ and V whitewater and a

105 foot per mile gradient, the North Fork of the Payette is one of the toughest rivers I have ever paddled. That's why even though I love it, after five years I'm still not really sure I *belong* on it.

I am sure of one thing — The North Fork of the Payette is no place for sissies. It sends them home crying to their mammas.

And the North Fork does not abide posers. It gnaws on them till they're not so pretty, then spits them out.

But if you are an honest class V boater, with a taste for extremely long and tumultuous rapids, the North Fork of the Payette may give you time of your life. On the other hand, it might kick your ass, just for the fun of it.

If ever a river demanded respect, it is the North Fork.

Almost every one of the twenty named rapids on the North Fork is harder than the most difficult rapid on West Virginia's Gauley. And several of the rapids on the North Fork are as long and tough as the entire Pine Creek Canyon section of Colorado's Arkansas River.

The North Fork of the Payette is where the hurly turns burly. The North Fork is where the boogie ends and the woogie begins. And on the North Fork you've got to take the whoopy with the do.

This August the North Fork was running 1,400 cfs when I met my friend Doug Nicholson at the takeout in Banks, Idaho. A physician from Tucson, Doug fell in love with the Payette watershed and decided to relocate there two years ago. Since then his

whitewater skills have increased phenomenally, no doubt as a result of paddling the North Fork.

The local big dogs will tell you that 1,400 is on the "low side." Some even maintain that the river is not worth paddling at less than 1200 cfs. Don't believe it. Fourteen hundred may be on the "low side" for Rob Lesser or Grant Amaral or Greg Moore or Doug Ammons. But your last name is not Lesser, Amaral, Moore or Ammons. So, 1,400 cfs is probably be more than enough for you.

Several years ago Gary Ward of Harrisonburg, Virginia and I paddled the river at less than 800 cfs and, while I'll admit it was a trifle bony, it was still plenty challenging. At levels less than 1,000 the North Fork is reminiscent of an eastern steep creek. But the reputation of the North Fork is based on its "big water" character and that is what most visiting boaters will want to see.

I have paddled sections of the North Fork at 2,000 cfs, a "moderate" level according to the big dogs. I found it intimidating and I would not go higher. Especially since most high water flows occur during the spring run off, when the water is cold, thereby increasing the danger. The really big dogs claim that the river does not reach its prime until 2,500 cfs. But remember, these guys rank among the world's best big water paddlers and most of them have tackled the North Fork hundreds of time. They are also tough, game and willing to take an occasional thumping. A few of them have hand paddled it from top to bottom and several have tackled the river at more than 6,000 cfs!

The truth of the matter is that, in spite of



# Paddling the North Fork of the Payette

what you might have heard, there aren't that many boaters attempting the North Fork at *any* level. No commercial raft company operates on this section of the river; the rapids are too long and dangerous. Even on a busy summer Saturday, when there are hundreds of boaters paddling the neighboring class III-IV South Fork and hundreds more on the Class II-III Main Payette, there are rarely more than thirty boaters on the North Fork. And a significant percentage of these will not venture beyond the last five miles above the take out at Banks, the easiest section, known to the locals as the "Ladies' Run."

I know... I know... I can already hear the hue and cry of the PC police. How dare these chauvinists imply that women boaters are not capable of paddling the more difficult rapids upstream? And how dare we repeat such blasphemy? Well, I have been told that a number of women have tackled the entire river and I know many are capable of it. But during my five visits to the North Fork, all a week long and all in prime season, I have never seen a woman paddling above Hound's Tooth, the start of the "Ladies' Run." (I will be happy to compile and publish a list of women who have paddled the North Fork above Hound's Tooth in an upcoming issue.)

## Start at the Bottom

At any rate, male or female, if you are paddling the North Fork for the first time, or if you need to get reacquainted with the feel of big water, the eddy above Hound's Tooth is the place to start. There is no warm up, within seconds boaters slam into an oblique wall of water that demands an authoritative brace. Or you can choose Doug Nicholson's route, which starts with a resounding boof over a river right ledge. Both lines lead directly into a booming train of waves, some of which explode erratically. Like all of the North Fork, it's a lot bigger than it looks from the road.

After a couple of miles of unnamed but more or less continuous class III and IV water, full of surfing waves and play spots, the road crosses overhead. The next rapid, Otters Run, is located just downstream as the river turns left. This is one of the few rapids which can not be scouted from the road, but it is also one of the easiest named rapids on the river, especially if you hug the inside of the curve. And, yes, there are otters in the pool above the rapid.

In recent years the primitive campground along river left at Otters Run has become the North Fork's Kayaker Central. Maintained

and operated by the folks at Cascade Kayak School, it is a good place to connect with other North Fork boaters. Part of the fun of paddling the North Fork is swapping war stories with newfound friends. For much of this summer Doug "Ford Honeyford, a gregarious rascal born to be a pirate but forced by circumstance to be an airline pilot, served as "mayor" of this motley community. Of course Ford maintained perfect order and

heroic sidesurf, he was forced to abandon ship. So began the swim of a lifetime. Juicer is at least a half-mile long. It is steep and mean and the tiny eddies are few and far between. If you are swimming at the top of Juicer, you will probably still be swimming at the bottom. And because the river is shallow, you are going to take a licking.

Sorry, Charlie! There wasn't much we could do for the boy, except paddle along

beside him and shout words of encouragement like, "Swim for shore." When Charlie finally made it to terra firma he was pretty scuffed up. There was not a single part of his body the size of the palm of your hand that was not bruised, abraded or bleeding. After Charlie caught his breath he crawled up the bank to the roadway. An adoring audience, who had pulled to the side of the road to watch his misadventure, greeted him. One elderly couple, whose pickup was plastered with rodeo stickers, seemed particularly amused.

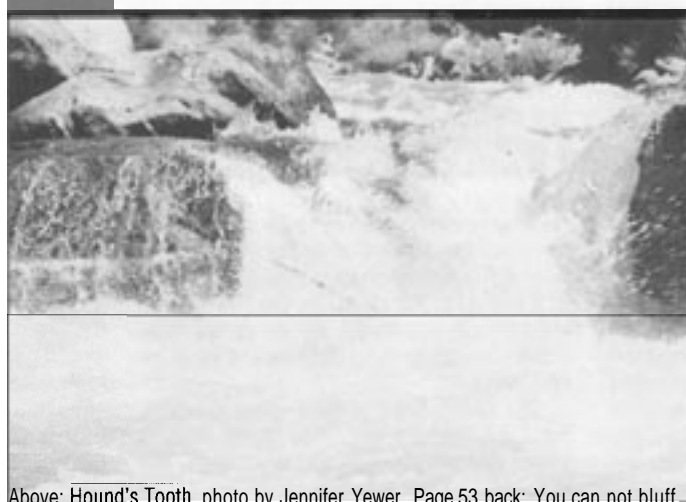
"I just have one question, sonny," the old cowgirl announced after she ascertained that he was not likely to die. "Was that fun you was havin' down there? Cuz' it sure looked like you was havin' a passel of fun!"

Before Charlie could reply the old cowboy, who looked like he had ridden a few bulls in his day, chimed in. "You boys ever dun this before?" he chuckled. "Cuz if n you ain't, I reckon there might be easier places to lairn." In spite of Charlie's pain, we all had to laugh.

Charlie was not to be the last of my buddies to fall victim to that cursed hole. Just a year later my friend Mike from Ohio toppled into the same pour over with more or less the same results. Fifteen minutes later, near the bottom of Juicer, we reunited Mike with his boat and paddle. To our surprise he started to climb back into his boat. He still hadn't realized that the hole had torn the helmet right off his head. When we pointed this out and reminded him that Crunch, the last of the four big drops on the bottom, was not far downstream, Mike hit the tracks. Walking down the tracks to Banks is not uncommon; in fact "Mayor" Ford Honeyford has a name for it. He calls it the "March of Shame."

**Crunch** is a steep, narrow rapid with the same general configuration as Juicer, though it is less severe. Even so, a rapid does not earn a name like "Crunch" by being inconsequential. Crunch packs a wallop.

By the time you reach Banks after your first trip down the bottom, you will have a pretty good idea whether the North Fork is your cup of tea. Boaters who prefer eddy hopping down technical pool drop rivers often find the North Fork disconcerting. A few



Above: Hound's Tooth, photo by Jennifer Yewer. Page 53 back; You can not bluff

your way through a rapid like Juicer. Photo by Jennifer Yewer. Insets: left, The Taffy Puller screw up at Jake's and this is your fate. Photo by Jason Davis. Middle: Matt Elam of Boise below the Nut in Nutcracker. Photo by Doug Honeyford. Right: Hank Zachary of Tennessee powers through the crux in Steepness.

decorum.

The next major rapid, Juicer, located not far below a railroad bridge, is the most difficult on the lower section of the river. In Juicer the gradient is particularly severe and the river is compressed between the rock fall from the train tracks on river right, and the roadbed on river left. You can not snivel down the edge of a rapid like Juicer. If you try that tactic the enormous oblique waves and hydraulics will throw you right back into the maw at the center, more likely than not sideways or backwards.

The correct way to paddle a rapid like Juicer, veteran North Fork boater Bozo Cordozo once told me, is toward the center, right through the big stuff. North Fork novices soon learn that punching large holes is not as difficult as they expect. Because the river moves so swiftly boaters attain incredible momentum. And most, *but not all*, of the holes which look menacing are aerated and forgiving, provided you hit them head on. Here is a general rule to follow on the North Fork. If you can't miss it, hit it head on. And hit it hard. Paddling big water is not about finesse. It's about power.

Unfortunately, sometimes in a violent staircase like Juicer this "head on" principal is not so easy to follow. A few years ago, Charlie, a friend of mine from Virginia, was knocked off line and plopped into a virulent pour over near the top of Juicer. After a long,

# Paddling the North Fork of the Payette

years ago a friend of mine from North Carolina, who had a flawless first run, pulled his boat onto the beach at Banks, shook his head and vowed never to put on the North Fork again. Nothing we said could make him change his mind.

Fortunately, there are alternatives available to those who discover the North Fork is more than they bargained for. The popular Cabarton Run, a popular and scenic class III float, lies just upstream of the classic "hair" section of the North Fork discussed in this article. And, not far away, the Deadwood River and the South Fork Canyon provide challenging whitewater in spectacular settings.

Certainly many boaters who negotiate Juicer and Hound's Tooth with aplomb will want to sample the more difficult rapids upstream. But if you have trouble on the bottom, you should think long and hard before attempting the river above Hound's Tooth.

## Ready for the Top?

Most North Fork regulars suggest that it is best to challenge the top section of the river before tackling the most difficult middle section. The top begins just downstream of the peaceful community of Smith's Ferry. Here the river is wide and placid, flowing so gently that it could easily be mistaken for a lake. Children swim at sandy beaches as ducklings float by. There is nothing to suggest the maelstrom that begins just around the corner. Woe to the precious duck baby that carelessly drifts around that bend in the river!

It is a good idea to stop and scout the four named rapids, Steepness, Nutcracker, Disneyland and S Turn, before you decide to launch. We followed this protocol on the first day this year and by the time we got to the put-in two of our party of four decided to leave their boats on the pickup. That left Greg Schackel, an surgeon from Santa Fe, and me. I had not paddled the top in several years and Greg had only seen it once, two days before.

I checked my guidebook one last time. Years ago I had scribbled in the margin, "Look out for the ugly hole in the long approach to Steepness." This brought back an unpleasant but vague memory.

Yeah, there was a nasty hole somewhere in the half-mile long class IV approach to Steepness, but where?

Sometimes the locals refer to this magnificent wave train as False Steepness, because no one can say where False Steepness ends and Steepness begins. And if you swim False Steepness you will likely swim Steepness, as well.

Because I had paddled the North Fork more often we decided that I should run first. Never mind that Greg is a better boater. Or never mind that he recently had corrective eye surgery and so has excellent vision, whereas without glasses, I can hardly see the nose in front of my face.

For the record the hole is center left about midway through the rapid. I know. That afternoon I explored it exhaustively. Greg watched from a boiling eddy just downstream. After I finally window shaded out of it and rolled, I fought my way to Greg's side. I was

winded and rattled.

"Maybe you had better go first. I can't see that well," I shouted above the din of the rapid.

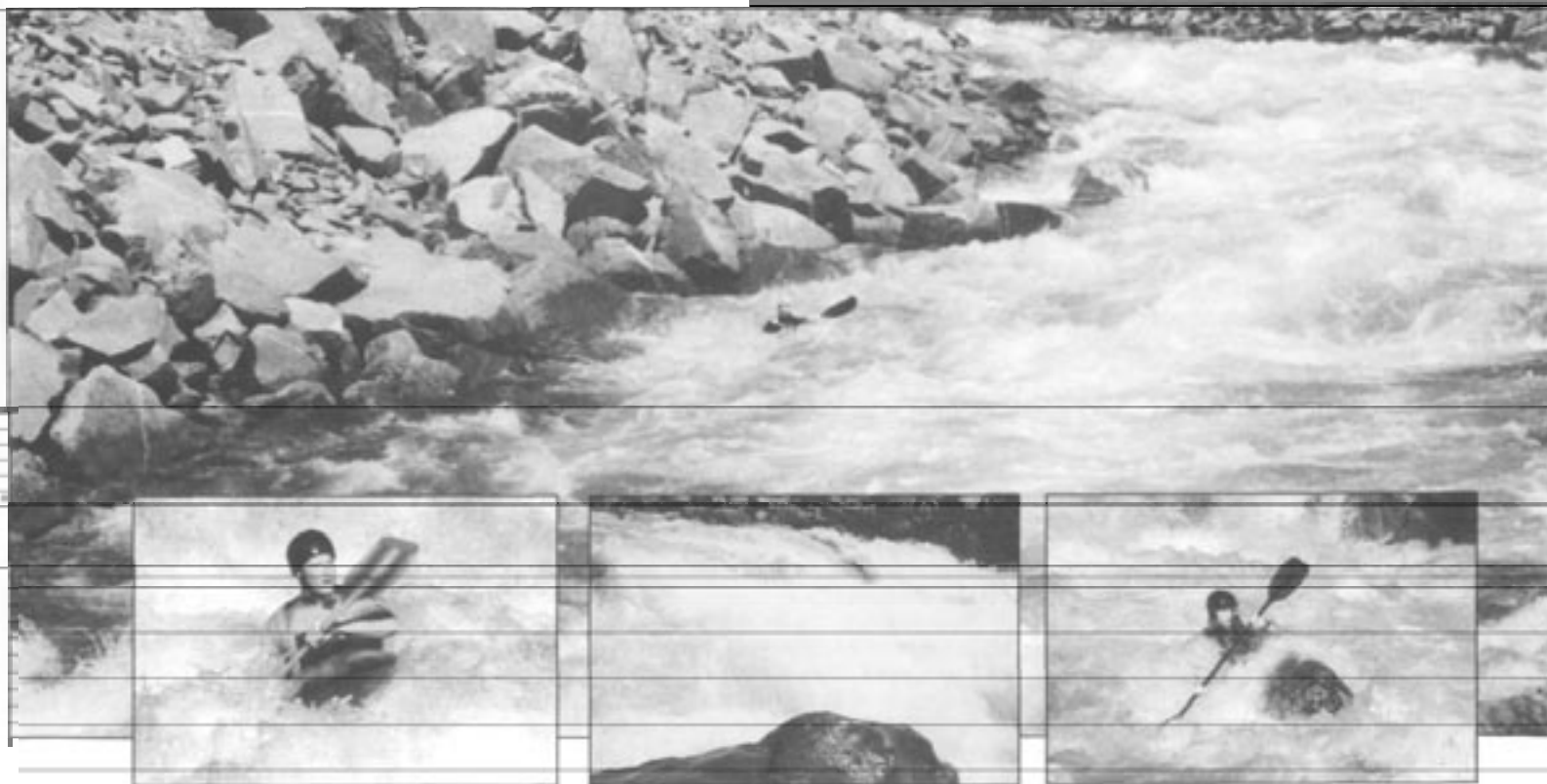
"How bad is your vision? Greg shouted incredulously.

"Well... I just drifted into a hole the size of the space shuttle! How bad do you think it is?" I answered.

Greg grinned and nodded, then took the lead.

Paddling Steepness is like careening down a long, aquatic escalator, except that midway, at the crux, the escalator turns into an elevator... with a broken cable. The bottom drops out and you plummet about ten feet. Fortunately, the approach on river right is straightforward and the landing pad is soft and forgiving. It is not as intimidating as it looks and it is a lot more fun.

The same can not be said for Nutcracker, the next rapid and the second most difficult rapid on the North Fork. It is long, turbulent and complex. Nutcracker has several ugly features near the bottom; a swim here would almost certainly have dire consequences. A few years ago I witnessed such an event, the swimmer got off easy but his new boat was demolished by the outflow. Here is another rule to follow on the North Fork. No matter



# Paddling the North Fork of the Payette

how good you are, use flotation.

This year, as always, I chose the river right route past Nutcracker, up on the road. But, after a careful look, Greg demonstrated the honest line.

When we reached the bottom of Nutcracker my friend Ken Ryan, an ER doc from Pocatello decided to put on. Ken had pulled a night shift, then sped across the state to join us. Although he grew up in Idaho and spent summers boating for Forest Service on the Middle Fork of Salmon, this was to be his initiation to the upper reaches of the North Fork. He was nervous, but game.

Ken was baptized in Disneyland, the next screamer. An Eticket for sure, Disneyland is one of the wildest looking rapids on the river. Offset mountains of water crash into one another at oblique angles, necessitating a series of robust braces — some on the left, others on the right. Disneyland is a thriller. The outflow is dynamic, but forgiving.

After a stretch of enjoyable unnamed class III and IV water, you must paddle across a long pool to reach S Turn, the last big rapid on the top section. S Turn is one of the longest rapids on the river. The very top of S Turn is a bit tricky — water cascading over a shelf creates an unpleasant looking recycle mid-river. But beyond that, S Turn is mostly a friendly giant. The outflow of S Turn dissipates in another large pool, known as Big Eddy. This, by tradition, is the end of the top section.

## Finally, The Middle???

Aswining bridge near the bottom of Big Eddy marks the start of the middle and most difficult section of the North Fork. If you are paddling the middle section for the first time, it would be wise to scout all of these rapids, even if you will be following a North Fork veteran. Following someone who knows the river is a commendable idea, since these rapids are long and complex and it is easy to lose track of where you are.

A few years ago we arrived at Banks to discover the North Fork running at 2,000 cfs. After several eventful runs on the bottom section I had all but given up on paddling the rest of the river. Then the legendary Rob Lesser, a Boise resident whose mastery of big water boating dates back to the Blackadar era, materialized and agreed to lead me down the upper sections. Rob has been around so long that he is even older than I am! I think.

At any rate there were several other anxious North Fork newcomers milling around at

the put in. Staring at the water rushing by, one of the other novices asked me if I had a strategy.

I pointed to Rob. "That man over there is Rob Lesser. He's ungodly good and he's probably paddled this river more times than anyone. My strategy is to get right behind him and stay there all day."

"In fact, I'd like to carabiner the bow of my boat to the stern of his," I continued, "but

hydraulic that demanded a combat roll worked Ken.

My turn came when I was bowled over somewhere in the next sequence of whitewater that includes three rapids. The first of these is Bad Jose. I suppose those of you less than 40 don't know who Bad Jose was. Let me enlighten you. He was a real mean hombre with a good-looking girlfriend in a Jay and the Americans song from the early 60s. Bad Jose made Bad Leroy Brown look like a pansy. The only think meaner than Bad Jose was the rapid they named after him.

The second of these rapids is Know Where to Run. It is also spelled No Where to Run. Guess why?

The final rapid in this sequence is named Chaos. Enough said.

In past years when I paddled these rapids at low levels they seemed distinct, but at higher flows they coalesce into one great big confusing mess. Fortunately this year, with Jason as our probe, we arrived at the fast flowing pool above Bouncer Down the Middle intact.

Bouncer is considered one of the most formidable rapids on the river. A couple of big, ugly holes stand sentinel at the top of Bouncer. It is possible to thread your way between them

with a demanding ferry from a tiny eddy on river right to another on river left. Jason and Ken made it look easy, but I weened out and hauled my boat over the rocks about 50 feet to dodge the move. Hey, everybody's entitled to weenie once in a while. And I'm not the one who skipped Steepness. Besides, there was still plenty of Bouncer ahead.

About a half mile downstream, around the second bend near the bottom of the Bouncer, lurks another nasty crux hydraulic — one that can not be seen from the road. Do you think the stuff in between the top and the bottom is easy? Not!

Ken and I had scouted the bottom carefully and planned to circumvent the hydraulic to the left. Jason said he intended to skirt it through a narrow slot on the right. The right hand line looked a little iffy to us, but as we careened down through Bouncer and I lost track of where we were I began to see the wisdom of staying behind Jason. It was fortunate that I saw that wisdom because I damned sure couldn't see where I was going. Jason came through for us again; Rob Lesser could not have provided a better line.

The next named rapid in the middle section is Pectoralis Major. It must not be too difficult since I have paddled it several times and don't remember much about it. On the other hand, maybe the reason I don't remem-



Jaws I-II-III, the quintessential North Fork Rapid, long and tough.

I don't think he'd let me."

This year we didn't have Rob to follow down the river. I think he was off first descending in Alaska. My philosophy in this situation is, if you can't find a grizzled veteran who can keep you out of trouble, look for a big brawny kid who can get you out of it. So we latched on to Jason Davis, an amicable college student who is built like a steer wrestler and may well be, since he hails from Helena, Montana. We had paddled with Jason the preceding day on the bottom section of the river; he was punching a rodeo boat thorough the big stuff and making it look easy. When we discussed tackling the middle, Jason said that he had only paddled it a few times and that he couldn't make any promises, but that he thought he knew the location of most of the trouble spots. My buddy Ken and I were reassured to learn that, in spite of his youth, Jason had been to several river safety courses. And, although his rodeo boat was small, Jason still packed the requisite rescue gear. He even had an ACA instructor certification!

A good thing, too, because the first rapids in the middle section were more difficult and congested than I remembered. The middle starts with a precipitous but relatively straightforward bang named Slide. I made it through unscathed, but an oblique

# Paddling the North Fork of the Payette

ber it is because by the time I got to it I was shell-shocked.

At any rate, the first consequential rapid below Pectoralis is difficult and I do remember what it looks like. It is Jacob's Ladder, the most intimidating rapid on the North Fork. I have never paddled Jacob's Ladder and, barring a painful terminal illness or a hopelessly broken heart, I probably never will. At Jacob's the river is tightly constricted, steep and swift. A long turbulent approach through exploding waves leads to the crux move, a difficult boof into a boiling eddy behind a big pyramidal rock on river left. The boof is critical because it sets you up to skirt the Taffy Puller, a mid-river slide into a big, shallow, carnivorous hole. If that were the end of Jake's it would be bad enough. Unfortunately, the outflow of Jacob's Ladder is the beginning of Golf Course, one of the longest and meanest rapids on the river. If you "Eat at Jake's" you are in for one hell of a dessert.

This summer we watched Jason Davis hammer Jacob's Ladder. His line was perfect, but it still didn't look easy. We also saw a young Boise boater knocked off course above the boof; he flushed through a narrow slot between the pyramidal rock and the shore that I thought was impassable. He was lucky. Earlier this summer another young westerner died while attempting Jacob's Ladder.

Some boaters argue that Golf Course, so named because it has at least eighteen holes,

is the third most difficult rapid on the North Fork. I suppose that might seem true if you flush into the maw of it after swimming at Jake's, but I don't think it's all that bad if you start in one of the river right eddies at the top. Along the right side the river tumbles over and between a gauntlet of boulders, creating countless sluices and pourovers. As long as your nose is headed downstream and you paddling with authority it's nothing but fun, but sooner or later nearly everyone spins off line and winds up side surfing a feisty ledge hole. Fortunately, most are escapable. Golf Course seems to go on forever and you are no sooner out of it then you are into Back Nine, which offers more of the same.

A lot of class enjoyable III-IV water and two big brawlers remain. The first is Screaming Left Turn, so named because... well, you should be able to figure that out. The portion of the rapid above the screaming left turn is dynamic, but straightforward. The second portion of the rapid is decidedly more complex, but negotiable, provided you nail the eddy on the outside of the turn. Just downstream the North Fork tumbles over and through a long rock jumble. A fan shaped rock creates an impressive fountain in mid river, the best line is just to the left of the fan, But not too far to the left... an enormous tree is broached there.

The last named rapid in the middle section, and, to my mind, the third most difficult

rapid on the North Fork, is Jaws. It should be carefully scouted.

A long, relentless stretch of whitewater that defies description, Jaws may be the quintessential North Fork rapid. There may be an easy line through Jaws, but I haven't found it. There are said to be three voracious landmarks to be avoided; Jaws I, Jaws II and Jaws III. Jaws I is a riverwide ledge at the very top of the rapid. It can not be seen from the road and is a blind drop. It can be punched on the right or skirted via a microeddy on the far left. Neither route is a sure thing. The backwash in the center is grisly.

Not far below Jaws I the North Fork turns right into more than a quarter mile of furious whitewater. There is no straightforward line through this; you take what you get and improvise. Jaws III, a nasty ten-foot pourovers, lies near the bottom of the rapid on river left. But the approach to III is tricky.

To avoid a series of ledges upstream on river right most boaters charge down the left, directly towards Jaws III. Then they ferry to the right just above it. It is a ferry you would not want to miss.

But what of Jaws II? How can it be avoided? Don't ask me. There are countless obstacles between Jaws I and Jaws III. Which is Jaws II? I have no idea!

*Continued on page 56*



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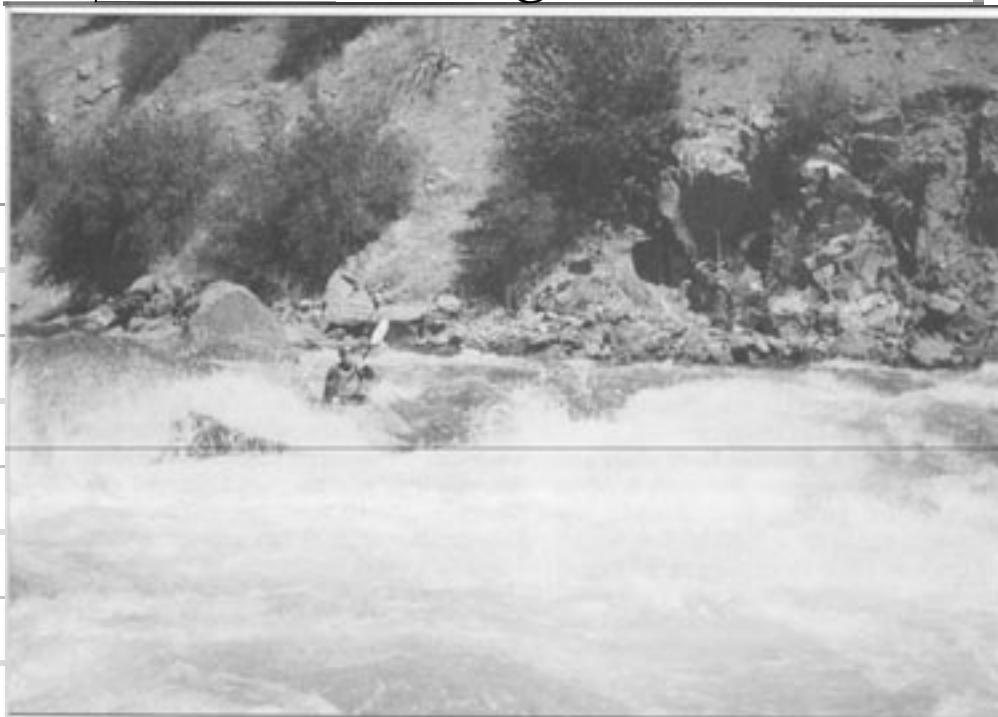
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# Paddling the North Fork of the Payette



to the good folks at Idaho Rivers United, one of the finest and most effective local river conservation organizations in the country. Over the years the North Fork has been threatened with hydropower development. Idaho Rivers United has helped keep the hydropower wolves at bay. No one can guarantee your safety on the North Fork, but I'm pretty sure the river appreciates the work of IRU and treats its members more charitably. That's why I send IRU money every year before I go. (P.O. box 633, Boise, Idaho 83701; phone 208-343-7481)

Two excellent guides to boating in Idaho are available. Buy one or both, they are invaluable. They are Idaho Whitewater by Greg Moore and Don McClaran and Idaho: The Whitewater State by Grant Amaral. All of these authors are North Fork regulars.

Finally, when you get to the North Fork look at the river and make up your own mind. Don't let anyone goad you into attempting whitewater that is beyond your ability.

There are nearly sixteen miles of whitewater on the North Fork. Besides the twenty named rapids, there are countless class III and IV rapids. Even if you decide to portage several of the big drops, or to skip an entire section, there is still plenty of fun to be had. More fun than a lot of folks can stand.

Take a good look — then decide for yourself.



Top to bottom: Gary Ward tackles Hound's Tooth. Jason Davis punches his way through the big stuff. Going for the Eddy at Jake's.

## Logistics (Serious Stuff)

Over the years the North Fork of the Payette has attained legendary status. Its reputation is well deserved. It was considered hard twenty years ago and it is still considered hard. The North Fork is one of a handful of rivers that sets the standard for class V boating. If you have the requisite confidence and skill paddling the North Fork will be a rewarding experience. If you don't, it may be a regrettable one.

You can not bluff your way down a river like the North Fork. Most of the time you should be in control, but there will be times when the North Fork is in control. You have to accept that. Paddling the North Fork can be a bit of a head-trip. Confidence and humility must go hand in hand.

To paddle the North Fork you must be

able to read big water quickly and react appropriately. You must be ready to deal with the unexpected. You must know how to get out of big holes. No matter how good you are, you will almost certainly be knocked over. You must be able to roll in extremely turbulent water. And you must be willing to take an occasional hit. A North Fork regular once told me, "If you swim on the North Fork you probably won't die. But you may wish you had."

The North Fork plays rough. Ask any of the local old timers. Most of them have scars to prove it. The staff in the ER at St. Luke's in Boise is no stranger to the North Fork's handiwork. Often these injuries are facial lacerations or shoulder dislocations, but there have been several fatalities.

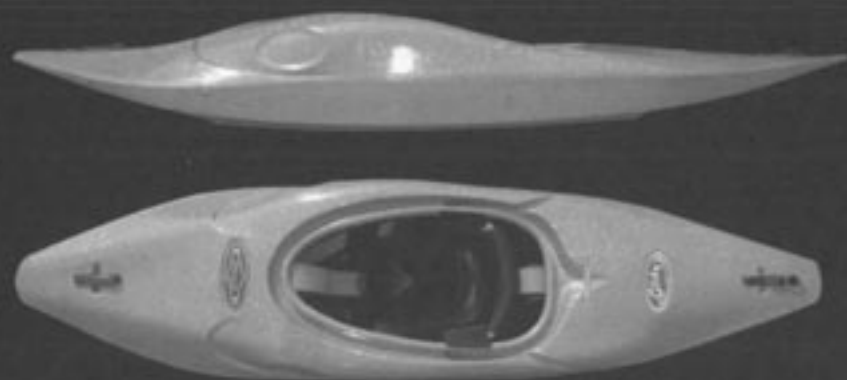
If you decide to paddle the North Fork the first thing you should do is make a donation



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Our cats proved even more stable than we thought possible. Utopia was ours... glorious days full of fabulous river cuisine, soaking up the sun, and singing the words to Jewel's "Pieces of You" as we floated along. But life in Utopia was about to change. A surprise was about to unfold, and it would not be a good one.

As Gregg carried the "day five" ammo can off a cataraft the unthinkable happened. He felt a soft pop beneath his foot and noticed the rigid black cone now hung loosely over the tip of the tube. The air poured forth until our tube hung quietly in the sand and water, our belongings weighing it down. We were but a day's float from the part of the canyon where the fury of water unleashes like a devil's rage and our boat already looked like it had taken a devil's ride. While the cooking crew worked miracles with canned chicken, cream cheese, salsa and tortillas, we spent the afternoon killing brain cells by sniffing adhesive. By evening, with duct tape and a modicum of raft repairing ability, our craft was deemed seaworthy, but for how long? As the sun crept below the sheer sedimentary sandstone walls, we wondered what we had done to anger the river gods.

The next morning we traveled several miles to Phantom Ranch, mailed postcards, sipped cold glasses of lemonade, but were disappointed by the lack of famous Phantom Ranch ice cream bars we had heard so much about. While we reveled in our surroundings, eating lunch on the beach, the air was slowly seeping from the tube. We doubted the wisdom of heading into some of the biggest rapids of the trip with the air fighting to escape from the cat.

After reading the 800 number boldly printed on the tube, we called NRS from the pay phone at Phantom Ranch and informed them of our predicament. Without wasting time asking what happened, NRS went right to work to solve our problem. Could we fix it well enough to finish the journey? What were our time constraints? How good were our repair skills? Waiting at Phantom for reinforcements was not an option. Time would not allow it. We truly believed that our best option was to somehow make do with our bandaged raft.

Brad Anderson, an NRS associate, assured us that he would do everything possible to remedy the situation and immediately faxed us the pattern, along with some tips for the repair. Modern technology had enabled us to feel as though we were not alone, but when we returned to the shrinking cataraft, the sense of doom returned. More sanding and gluing ensued and duct tape was again wrapped heavily around that pesky cone.

On day seven we pushed off shore and let 21,000 cfs carry us down river. Every few moments I reached nervously underneath the aluminum frame to check the firmness of the tubes, expecting the worst. Thankfully we bounced and bobbed through Horn Creek, Granite, and Hermit without incident. At Crystal, we navigated the rock garden partially obscured by the water. Finally, stopping to rest at Shinamu Creek, we checked our maps for the



evening's campsite and reflected on the river's fury. We had made it through some of the trickiest rapids, but we were a mere seven days into our eighteen day trip. Lava Falls lay ahead and it had been known to eat up and spit out the most seaworthy crafts and the most talented river runners. Would our repair hold long enough? We were running out of spare hypalon.

As the sun bore down on us the sounds of the canyon were interrupted by a Western Rivers Commercial Expedition craft as it pulled up to the beach where we had stopped for lunch. The immense J rig docked and identified us as the damaged raft owners. Two young guides beckoned us aboard. We climbed aboard their vessel as they revealed a tattered four foot long cardboard box that appeared to have survived an extensive journey.

The box had been given to them by a ranger at Phantom Ranch. From the addresses on the box we retraced its travel. The box had originated from Washington. It had been sent by express air to Phoenix. Once unloaded from the plane it was driven from Phoenix to the rim of the Grand Canyon, a several hour drive. It was carried down the windy, hot trail to Phantom Ranch by mule train. Unloaded from the mule by the Ranger at Phantom Ranch, it was handed off to the guides on the Western River Expeditions raft with instructions to find us.

They motored down the river highway until they found the group that fit our description. We tore into the box and were amazed to find a bright blue tube with the logo "NRS" proudly displayed on its front right side. It had been a mere thirty hours since we had spoken to Brad at NRS headquarters from the Phantom Ranch pay phone. Two hours later the new tube was secured underneath our worldly belongings. With a renewed sense of confidence, and a toast to NRS, we resumed our travels.

Lava Falls, the most infamous rapid on the Colorado River was our next big conquest. With our new air tight tube, we ran the gauntlet and celebrated our flawless run with a traditional Lava Follies Party. Outlandish outfits that had been tucked neatly away at the bottom of our dry bags just for this evening of frivolity. We continued our journey through the canyon, which was beginning to feel like home. On day eighteen, we reached the takeout at Diamond Creek and bid the Canyon farewell.

Jobs, house chores, and other commitments awaited our arrival. Once back in the comforts of flush toilets and electrically powered refrigerators, a call was made to NRS to thank them for "Operation Tube Rescue." We recounted the details on our end and they told us of the race against time that ensued our call for help was made.

The stories of our summer spent floating down the Grand Canyon are of wild whitewater, good company, fine river cuisine, and of being rescued from harm's way by a wonderful rafting supplier that, it seems, stands behind their warranty, wherever their products may be.







# The Maine Attraction

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By Katie Nietert and BJ Johnson

The first ever Gillman Falls rodeo in Old Town, Maine was the perfect opportunity for me to get one state closer to completing my goal of visiting every state in the union. My northeastern adventure began when four of us from team Pyranha packed it into Brent Toepper's truck to go look for some alternative whitewater. We had eight boats stacked on top of the Toyota and Dinver just shook his smiling head when we gave the "load up" command in the Starrk Moon parking lot. Tomichi coiled his tail into the last remaining space and we headed north for the twenty-hour drive.

We'd heard that Maine was good to the whitewater fiend. We had seen some interesting geography in Wayne Gentry's video, "Creekin USA," and even if it sucked, I'd get to cross off another state that I've visited. When we passed New York I started telling Shannon that we would probably eat lots of fresh seafood. She told me she had never eaten lobster. I said that the first one to spot a moose would be awarded a six pack of the finest beer in Maine.

# The Maine Attraction

my boyfriend I figured there was a good chance that he would share his loot). The moose novelty almost wore itself out that week, they were everywhere and a common Maine adieu was not "good-bye" or "drive safe" but "Watch out for moose."

Gulf Hagas was exactly what we needed to get the rodeo blues out of us. Clean waterfalls, easy class V rapids and one of the most photogenic gorges that I've ever been in. We ran into friends up from Boston at the put in. Everyone was psyched for the blue skies, sunshine and whitewater. It was a regular tea party as we took our time, capturing the day and soaking in Maine.

A steady rain started the night before the rodeo. I crashed early under the setup tent and woke up surrounded by fellow surfing sardines. It was a hard rain by game time and a shallow hole still proved to be entertainment. The sound system rocked out techno and other awesome tunes from the back of a U-haul and the casual, yet motivated, organizers had this rodeo rolling. There was a large noncompetitive crowd because almost everyone in Old Town had some kind of vessel. I sucked. Shannon sucked less and won the Women's K1 paddling her Storm. The expert men had an exciting competition. Brent finished fourth and BJ also "stormed" into first. Peter Lataille was the hometown favorite and ripped up his home hole to finish second. We all agreed that he was quite possibly the nicest human ever.

"That guy is fartingsunshine!" exclaimed Brent.

With the water pooling we began to make plans for tomorrow's boating. We were hosted by the Old Town YMCA, and were not only provided with a dry floor to sleep on but also an evening in the climbing room and swimming pool! They fed us, awarded the deserv-

ing, and then set the kids loose to play.

It was still raining at dawn, (it would continue for the next six days) when we hit the favorite local breakfast spot. We had arranged to meet Jarred (Jar Head) and Mike, a couple of inlanders milling about in Millinocket, who made their living on whitewater instead of tree farming. These guys had all of the beta, the big drops, the put-ins, the take-outs, free camping, dry sleeping, etc.. Plus they had a van and a cell phone; all we had to do was put our gear on. We marched north out of Millinocket while a steady rain fell on the 70-degree day. It was perfect weather. It wasn't long before we entered Baxter State Park and exclaimed, "blue sky!" About 5,000 feet of Mt. Katahdin appeared for a brief moment while I sat along the road, feeling amped by the big mountain's appearance. We passed the rangers who had just opened the road to the park. They were friendly and not too curious.

Appalachia's northern-most mountain hosted our favorite form of fun. Floating upon the old range's bedrock, riding the juicy currents, our tale of Maine away from the "mainstream" unfolded.

The primary whitewater rivers in the Lobster State are the Pennobscot and the Kennebec. Our hosts began the tour of the tributaries.

With a more southern Appalachian twang we stumbled through the pronunciation of the first treat, Nesowandehunk Stream. It was tannin laden and reddish colored. It introduced itself with a casual meander through the moose. We knew that there were two big falls on the run. Little Niagra had been run once by Scott Underhill while Big Niagra was as of yet un-probed. Soon, our first major horizon line heralded the approach of Little Niagra. Our first big

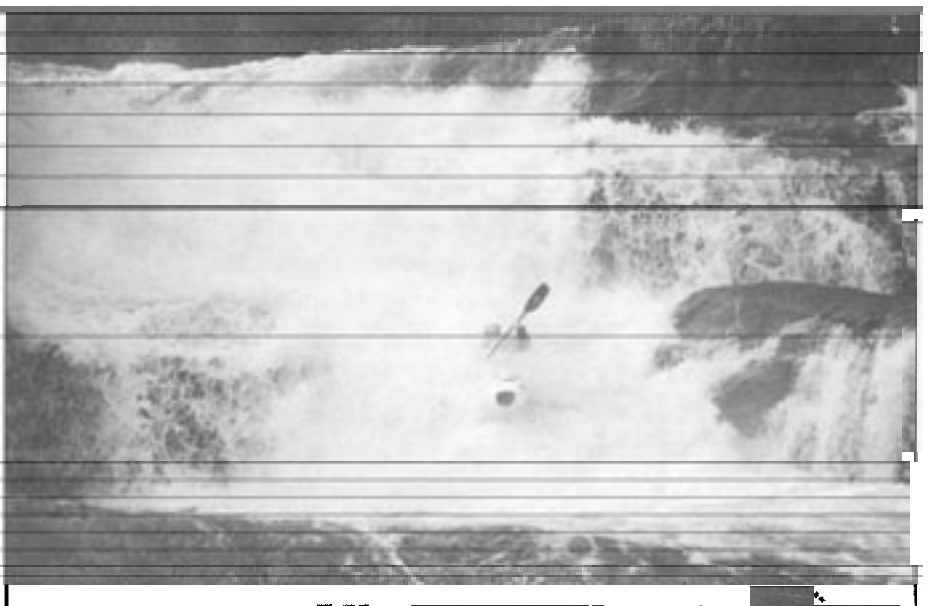
Arriving in Gillman Falls we were greeted with an exclamation familiar to most boaters. "You should have been here last week!" Peter Lataille and John Milligan, the event organizers, reported. "It was perfect."

According to the records, this was a freak of nature and it was the first time in 90 years that the hole hadn't been huge on this first weekend in May. They showed us photos of a perfect hole about fifteen feet wide with a deep backwash and big shoulders — it didn't even resemble the shallow, steep hole that we saw before us. Our Canadian friend, Brad, was in the hole hitting rock but performing some tricks on the shoulder. Shannon went in for her first run and beat the rock with her knuckles. I did my flat water warm up and took out. Twenty hours in the car didn't leave me feeling like rock bashing.

Frustrated, we got directions from the locals and headed north out of Old Town to go find some gradient. It was Gulf Hagas that we were directed to, one of Maine's more popular creek runs. Before we had even left town we realized that a shallow hole wasn't going to spoil our adventure. Our first stop was for beer — what a selection! There was going to be one lucky moose-spotter!

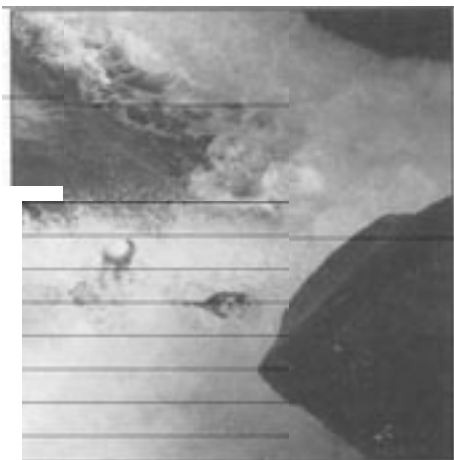
Sometime around dusk we heard an excited slur from the back of the truck.

"Mammaaaaaammooooose!" BJ blurted out. We all saw it about the same time but I gave him the benefit of the doubt (and since he was



Page 61 photo. Brent Toepper at Little Niagra, Nesowandehunk Stream. Top photo this page, B. J. Johnson at the 1st drop on Pierce Pond. Above, Shannon Carroll at Big Niagra, Nesowandehunk Stream. Top photo page 63, Katie Nietert on Katahdin Creek. Bottom photo page 63, Shannon Carroll on Pierce Pond.

## The Maine Attraction



chore of the day was to access the falls. We did all of the usual things that one does to access a rapid and BJ hiked backup along the Appalachian Trail to get in his boat. It was a fast, twisted, and chunky entrance, down a ramp and off of a rooster tail. Our logs were having nice lines and soon, so did BJ. Six of us ran it that day, mostly with convincing lines.

We continued riding the flow, anxiously awaiting the next horizon line. As soon as we saw it we knew what it was—it was huge! We knew that it must be Big Niagra, the grand daddy of the creek. The drop consists of about 100 yards of exploding water, twisting and churning before sliding over the lip of the vertical drop. Three drops piled on top of each other accounted for about forty feet of vertical distance. We paced the bank repeatedly to size it up. I couldn't figure out the entrance and how I could get myself perfectly to the fun part. BJ said that he'd probed the first one, it was someone else's turn. Shannon felt the urge and I headed down for a photo. She was where she needed to be when I saw her and landed each drop expertly for a perfect first descent. Brent and BJ followed the redhead's line. All of them confessed to scrambling at the lead in but all three of them remained poised for setup of the crucial vertical descent. After Big Niagra, we were all delighted to find hundreds of feet of windy, sliding, high volume, creeking all of the way to the Pennobscot.

Tempted by the fat blue line on the Delorme Gazetteer, (which is based in Freeport, Maine) we choose Katahdin Stream to explore the next day. The big mountain's south flowing namesake teased us all day. We put in on a nice sized stream only to watch it disappear into the moose bogs. Like kids on bigwheels we scooted through the trees until they clustered so thick that we were sent walking. Soon, there was no water to be found at all. We carried our boats through the bogs, trying to thread all of our gear between the thick trees, sometimes sinking up to our knees in the soft earth or tripping on a tangle of roots. Eventually the water puddled again in the form of a pond and we could paddle our boats. The pond led to a

stream and with Mt. Katahdin looking over us we began to descend. The multiple ways of getting over trees, the limbo, the crabwalk, the stuff, the roll over, the roll under and etc. occupied our energies as the river took off through beaver dams and logjams. When we'd nearly had enough of this we found some steeper gradient that took us into more trees, this time left from an old burn.

The rapids that we did find were impressive. The bedrock was an amazing seam of granite that carved wide undercut walls in many instances. For a couple of rapids it was portage déjà vu. We got back in our boats for a giggly slide that carried us spinning and laughing for a half mile down the mountain. For an eight-hour effort we were rewarded that slide and a twenty-foot cascade where we could stay out of the overhanging redundancy. Scratched, stiff, and silly we reached the Pennobscot to pour New England's finest ales into our portaging souls.

Awakened at dawn the next morning by park rangers we were told that we had broken all of the rules, not only by camping in the park before May 15<sup>th</sup> but also by bringing our favorite four legged friend. Before they jogged off we were asked to leave immediately. Not to be discouraged by the stern couple we loaded the Toyota and headed west to the Kennebec side of Maine. A few more moose sightings later, our directions from local explorers deposited us above our next mission. This pond was 'locals only.' The stream flowing between two ponds, Parlin Pond, took the elevator straight down. Get in quick and ring the bell for assistance! We ran a 60' slide, and a couple of class V rapids for — of a mile before we rang for the bellhop (who must have stepped out back) to carry our boats out of the basement and up to our cars. We focused our video camera between the fat raindrops and captured the action to share with fellow junkies in a future production.

Somewhere along the way the roof racks on the Toyota broke. We had to replace the broken parts with foam and then tie the racks to the truck before we could tie the boats to anything. The starter had gone out as well. Being more resourceful than rich we left every scene with a push start. We couldn't leave yet though, there were more ponds to paddle. The next stop was Pierce Pond with a three-mile section at nearly 200 ft. per mile and rumors of a gorge with several large falls. Our first attempt to paddle this pond took us up the Appalachian Trail in search of the put in. We lost Jarrod somehow along the way and decided that his sore knee must be bothering him for the hike. Unguided we continued uphill for two miles until we found what we felt fit the description of the put-in. When we got to the Kennebec we had only found one 20-foot cascade and many goods rapids, but no waterfalls. Jarrod, who had ascended another trail, later came paddling down with video evidence of the good stuff that we had

missed just upstream.

The next day we elected to use fossil fuels to get us to the top of the creek and we drove around to put in. After a short paddle in rumors became reality as we pulled out just above Pierce Pond Falls, four drops actually, building from 10 to 30 feet, dropping deeper into the gorge. After nearly an hour of scouting, scaling the steep canyon walls in our trusty 5.10's, it was time to drop in and see how the Micro 240 could handle the steep, shale, drops. With successful runs on this series of falls we paddled around the corner to face our next big drop, a 30 foot vertical falls with a large shelf rock protruding about — of the way down and almost all of the way across. This falls with several steep and sticky ledges as a lead in put this drop at the top of our list of favorites. As most of us prepared to hit the trail BJ prepared to hit the narrow line along the right wall and thread through the ledges into the pool at the bottom. His line was convincing as Shannon followed suit for another smooth line. We were pleased with two more miles of great whitewater before we made it to the Kennebec and could hear the resident loons, our hosts at the New England Outdoor Center.

We paddled for six days straight and not a single one was wasted. The creeks were steep, the beer was delicious, and our hosts were magnificent. The whereabouts of the black flies was a mystery and the rednecks were friendly. Many beers were awarded for moose sightings and all of those giants stayed out of our radiator. As we began our gargantuan drive south I put a star next to Maine in the check list in my mind.





Both photos are  
Sherwood in the  
Elk River Gorge.

*Last July Dr. Shenvood Horine, a long time supporter and friend of American Whitewater, died while training for a mountain bike race in North Carolina. Sherwood was an emergency room physician at the Watauga Medical Center and the father of two sons, Zachary and Joshua. A gifted athlete, he was an expert kayaker, biker and snow boarder. But, more importantly, Sherwood was widely respected for his zest for life, selflessness and integrity. He touched many lives in the paddling community and is remembered here by his wife and some of his closest friends.*

# Celebrating the Life of **Dr. Sherwood Horine**

## **A Husband Remembered**

by Joni Horine

Where do I begin... Should I tell you what a great lover, friend, caregiver and provider Shenvood was... or do I tell how numb, lonely, lost and sad I feel since his untimely death. Being the wife of Dr. Larry Shenvood Horine was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. Through him I learned so many things. One of the most important ones was to focus on the positive and to be happy. So, that is what I will try to do.

So many of you remember Shenvood as the adrenaline laden, thrill seeking, super human boy that he was. (He didn't like being referred to as a man because it made him feel old). The Shenvood I will remind you of is the soft gentle giant that gave unconditional love to his family and friends.

As ironic as it seems, Shenvood and I met while climbing a crack called "Romance the Stone" on Grandfather Mountain. Our lives continued on that path from then on. He proposed to me on top of Dragon's Tooth and we were married on top of the Peaks of Otter, both in Virginia. I will never forget when Shenvood first saw me in my wedding dress. He was smiling his beautiful smile with tears running down his cheeks and he told me I was beautiful. He always knew how to make me feel as if I was all that mattered. He continued to build my self esteem by teaching me his sports and how to

live life to its fullest. There wasn't a season or a day that Shenvood couldn't find something fun to do. Our promise to each other was never to hold the other one back. If one



Sherwood, Joni and the kids...

couldn't do it and the other one could, we would support each other. So many times I would be at the takeout with our boys and the guys would say that they wished their wives would come with them. I enjoyed running shuttle, because it allowed our children and me to be a part of his true love - kayaking. Plus, I would get a lot of Brownie points to use later!

When my father was sick for six months, I traveled to Hatteras every other week for a week at a time. Shenvood never complained; he only provided his support. I called Shenvood at 4:00 a.m. to tell him my dad had died. Within eight hours Shenvood had arrived. He cried like a son who had lost his own father. As we held each other he laughed and said he had come to give me support and to look for the turnaround. He knew I always needed to be helping or caring for someone.

When Shenvood cried it was never for himself, it was always for others. He enjoyed being a physician and working with people. But, after he became a father he said it was harder seeing little boys hurt, because he could see his own children in their faces. He would sometimes come home from work and cry as he told me about a case that he had managed that day. One instance I remember well involved an accident victim so severely burned that he did not survive. When I got home, Shenvood was vomiting and tearful, saying how young the guy was and how hard it was to tell his wife and children their Daddy was dead.

Being a father was the greatest and most important part of Shenvood's life. When we delivered our first son, Zachary Shenvood Horine - that was his proudest moment. He cried with Joy! I took pride when Sherwood

# Celebrating the Life of Dr. Sherwood Horine

was able to show his father his first Grandson and his Dad hugged him and told him how proud his Mother and he were. Eighteen months later we gave birth to Joshua Boyd Horine. Shenwood was again overjoyed. Now our family was complete. Daddy (as Sherwood will be referred to from here on out) loved doing everything with his boys. He took them swimming, kayaking, skiing, biking, hiking and tractor riding. With every adventure a lesson was learned about nature and life in general.

Once, Zakary wasn't doing what Daddy asked and after a great deal of debate Shenwood decided to spank him. He explained why he was going to give him this spanking and then followed through. Zakary cried and so did Daddy. He held Zakary and said he was sorry and continued to love him. Needless to say he never gave another spanking and yes, it does hurt you more than it does your children.

Daddy also taught his boys to love their Mommy. Whenever they went out together they would always bring Mommy something. It could be anything from a flower to a rock or a bug, but regardless, it was precious to me.

As I said in the beginning our life began on a mountain and as fate would have it our life together here on earth ended on a mountain. We were going on our first family camping trip to Wolfe Laurel so Shenwood could compete in a mountain bike race. We had a fabulous trip there - singing and talking along the way. We were carrying on like two high school kids in love for the first time. It was GREAT! When Daddy left on his mountain bike that day he kissed us all as he usually did whenever he left or returned from someplace and said, "I love you. Thanks for letting me go, Honey." I didn't know it was going to be forever.....

## A Question... but No Answer

by Buddy Glasscoe

This story begins with a question. It will not end with an answer. The question is why? Why are we born, why do we die, particularly by the circumstances that Shenwood did. Why do some live a life of good fortune while others, no matter how they live, are dealt misfortune? Who knows?

I do know that the energy that gives us life and identity also gives us the ability to reason and to feel. With reasoning and feeling comes the acceptance that birth and death are out of our control and understanding, but the freedom to fill the space between the two is the true blessing of life and not to be wasted.

And this is what ranks Shenwood as one of the pros. He set a fine example of living life to its fullest. He lived with love as his guide, always thoughtful of others. Shenwood seemed to understand the power of positive thinking and of making the most of all life experiences. He seemed to understand that life is precious and alarmingly short. He did not live searching for the meaning of life, rather he was occupied with pursuing the very experience of being alive.

"The thing that makes us live may kill us in the end." I heard that line by Neil Young a few days after Shenwood passed from this world. Those words certainly applied to Shenwood and the way in which he danced his dance. Shenwood's life was an ever evolving passionate work of art. The boy had style, charisma, natural intelligence (the best kind), and an aura of quiet power. Brilliant to unexplainable plateaus, and curious like a child. Like the Native American Blessing, he was on the pollen path. "Beauty to the front of me,

beauty to the back of me, beauty below me and beauty above me, beauty all around me, I'm on the pollen path." Sherwood took notice of all the beautiful little things and in sharing them with us he painted magic with song and word.

Shenwood, Dogwood, Hardwood, Ironwood, Boxwood.... Cynthia, my wife enjoyed thinking of nicknames to call him. He loved them all. The first time she met him she immediately liked him, as did I, as did most. Sometimes after the tenth or even the hundredth meeting we realize we really don't know a person. But that was not the case with Shenwood. You knew him well after the first encounter. He had a sparkle in his eyes that made you feel good to be in his presence. There was a substance to Shenwood you could trust, whether it was on the river, in the wilderness, at the mountain, in the hospital, or at the bank.

I knew Shenwood for five or six years. We met on a snowboarding trip in Colorado. It was a cold-ass, lung freezing, sharp, pitch-black night in January with more stars than I had ever seen when I was greeted with a hearty hug by this tall, lanky dude wearing a bold flower print short sleeved shirt and a beaded necklace. He looked like Hawkeye or BJ from the movie "Mash". Shenwood made dinner for us. Salmon and the fixin's. He didn't look anything like I expected — the individual I had heard so much about — but that's okay, because the real Shenwood turned out to be much better. I spent five outrageously fun and laughter filled days with him and Joni and my buddies, Brian Wham and



Sherwood on the Elk.

Dale Adams. Shenwood was easy to relate to. He graciously laughed at my horrible jokes. I suppose because it set me up to listen to his, which were even worse. We became close, life-long friends. Crossing paths with Shenwood is a blessing I will treasure.

Shenwood's death has troubled me as I think it does many in our tribe, in ways I can't yet express. A boating accident? Yes. A biking accident? No. His young children will have more questions for their Mommy than she will have answers. Joni? Feeling numb and flat. Probably too soon for real loss. A song the other day said, "When we lose someone we love, we lose them slowly, in pieces." Sherwood's parents? I can't imagine dealing with the death of one of my children. That's all out of order. But who said this is a world of order? Shenwood left us with a profound and powerful lesson: Take nothing for granted and live this day as if it is the last. Live by the guidance of love, and always consult our constant companion, death.

As I said this story does not have any answers. Only memories. Good sweet memories of one that lived well and died taking charge. Sherwood, you made some real good history while you were here. You left good tracks and set high standards for us all. If you're out there, how about dropping me a hint. Paint me another picture. I miss you my friend. I love you.

Taped to my refrigerator is a quote that says, "LIVE SO THAT WHEN YOU ARE GONE IT WILL HAVE MATTERED." It matters that Sherwood was here and it matters that he is gone.

Peace.



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# Celebrating the Life of **Dr. Sherwood Horine**

## This Must Be The Place

By: Michael Mayfield

It may seem odd to some people that the Watauga Gorge was Shenwood's favorite local run. Numerous streams in the area are more difficult than the Watauga. The Elk has a much steeper gradient and some great waterfalls to run. The Doe is less crowded and has individual drops that are nearly as challenging. Wilson Creek has cleaner water and a much easier shuttle. Linville Gorge is a true classic, with a combination of remote beauty, water volume, and technical difficulties not found on any of the other creeks around Boone. At two hours, the drive to the Green isn't a bad one from here. Despite all of that, many of us find ourselves on the Watauga every time we get a chance. Its appeal is undeniable but, at the same time, somewhat hard to explain in light of the appealing characteristics of all those other creeks. The only way that I can explain it is to say that it is home. Home in the best sense of the word: familiar, comfortable and comforting, and often full of loved ones.

Jon Nelson called recently from Seattle to tell me a breathless story about another under-funded multi-day trip on some crazy river in British Columbia with nonstop rapids and hot springs. Then he got kind of quiet and asked "have you run the Gorge lately?" I didn't have to ask. He meant the Watauga. Chip Hogan just sent me an e-mail from Oregon with an understated account of his latest big waterfall photo session. He asked about the Watauga. I have friends who have been on the rodeo circuit in Colorado, the summer whitewater circuit in Idaho, and first descent hairball trips in Chile who just couldn't wait to get back home to run the Watauga. Donnie Hudspeth asked me this morning if I planned to head up to the Gauley this fall. My answer: "Of course. Unless the Watauga comes up." The next time it comes up, we will take Sherwood for one last run. Joni has asked us to spread his ashes in the Gorge.

It was always a treat to pick up the phone and hear his enthusiastic voice: "Mike: Shenwoodooooood. Let's paddle." It didn't matter if he was coming off of a 48-hour weekend shift in the emergency room or a ten-day vacation. He was always up and happy to be alive on a day with water in the river. If the rivers weren't running, a bike ride would do just fine. If it was too cold to ride, a half day of snowboarding was just the ticket. At his funeral, someone said that Sherwood lived life to its fullest, as someone who was ready to die because he had LIVED. How true. He lived exuberantly and those of us lucky enough to be along for the ride were



Left: The day...Brown's Canyon, 5 1/2 feet, 26 squirt boats. Sherwood, sitting bottom right. Right: East Coast goes West! The first Torque-athon in Colorado. Sherwood's in the back.

caught up in his love of life and the river.

I've been trying for weeks to think of some great stories about Shenwood on the river. It has been hard to do. I can think of a hundred river trips made memorable by my own messed up lines and blunders. I can think of plenty of heroic deeds by other top boaters. The problem with Sherwood is that he was just too smooth. When I play back memories of big rapids on rain-swollen rivers, I see myself gripped and shaking in an eddy at the top of a big drop like Hydro. I see Shenwood make a seemingly effortless run right on the line that he had chosen. I see myself blow the line, cartwheel in the hole at the bottom and eventually swim. Shenwood was always there to pick up the pieces and afterwards, to encourage the rest of us who were less athletic, skilled, or practiced.

Leading up to the Watauga River race last spring, I asked Shenwood for some race tips. We talked a lot about what boats to paddle, where one could save a second or two by taking nonstandard routes and how to prepare. In the end, we were both too busy to do much serious race training, but managed to convince ourselves that knowing the best lines was more important than youth, strength, or conditioning. We paddled the river together half a dozen times in the weeks leading up to the race. Instead of trying to find the perfect boof at one of the warm-up rapids, the best surf at Edge of the World, or one more eddy at Heavy Water, we tried to perfect fast routes down the river. Sherwood would take one line while I took another. His route was usually the better of the two. At the bottom of the rapid we would see which line was faster and discuss other options. I learned a lot about the river during those sessions.

The week before the race we had a wonderful practice run down the river with Woody and Risa Calloway. Shenwood never hesitated to share his race lines with anyone who

asked. Risa hadn't paddled the Watauga in several years, so Sherwood gave her the clearest, most concise description of the big drops and fast lines that I've ever heard. We got out above Hydro to talk race lines and appropriate high-water cut-off levels. Woody talked about all the funerals he had attended over the past year and how much it sucked to say good-bye to so many good people. The next time I saw him was at Sherwood's funeral. In a week of many crushing blows, nothing touched me so much as seeing so many big, strong, hard-core boaters with red, swollen eyes and big tears running down their cheeks.

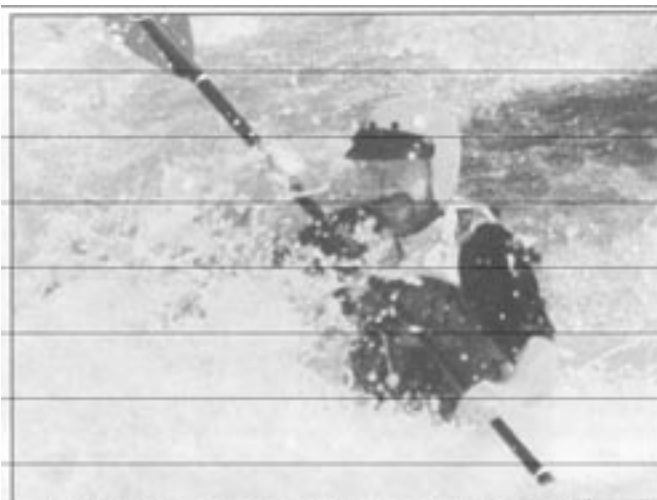
Our last pre-race trip down the Gorge was done at simulated race pace. I could barely keep Shenwood in sight. I knew then that the rest of us would do well to finish within a minute or two of his time. Shenwood drove an old Subaru station wagon with the cheapest roof racks you can imagine. He used an old set of Quick 'n Easy racks with half rotten two-by-fours on them. Because the car didn't have full rain gutters, he had screwed the rack mount right into the roof. On the drive back to the put-in, we listened to Morphine. I think that it was his only tape. Either that, or the tape was stuck in the cassette player. He had his priorities right. He preferred to spend his money on toys than on fancy vehicles.

Shenwood won his division of the race and finished second overall, missing first by only a few seconds. He wouldn't even consider the possibility that his cracked seam had let in enough water to slow him down by that

# Celebrating the Life of Dr. Sherwood Horine

critical margin. He was too good a sport to make excuses. He was just pumped to be on the river with so many of his friends. At the post-race picnic Shenwood was beaming, but not because of the race results. He was pretty sure that he had lost. He had his family with him. Little Joshua (9 months) was in his arms, with Zakary (2) walking on one side and Joni on the other. Shenwood was the consummate family man. Nothing thrilled him so much as to show his boys something new about the world around them.

Shenwood wasn't perfect. He wasn't a saint or without fault. He was just a lot closer to those things than the rest of us. He enriched the lives of all of those who paddled, biked, and boarded with him. Shenwood lived his life with gusto, enthusiasm, and grace.



Sherwood Horine at the Second Droop of Lost Paddle in the 1997 Upper Gauley Race. Photo courtesy of Whitewater Photography.

glowing accounts of trips with his "adventurer" friends. He then said that he hoped that Shenwood felt nearly as strongly about his co-workers as he did his posse of boating buddies. He did. His co-workers, "adventurer" accomplices, and most of all, his family, will miss him dearly. Home will never be the same.

## ***This Must Be the Place (David Byrne)***

*Home is where I want to be  
Pick me up and turn me round  
I feel numb - burn with a weak heart  
So I guess I must be having fun  
The less we say about it the better  
Make it up as we go along  
Feet on the ground*

## ***Head in the sky***

*It's ok I know nothing's wrong. . .*

## **A Treasured Friendship**

by Donnie Hudspeth

Where do I begin to describe the meaning of Sherwood's friendship over the years, or the terrible loss, I feel in my chest after his untimely death? I will be positive, because Shenwood was always positive. I will think of him and smile, because he always made me smile...

I first met Sherwood Horine in Poplar, NC. It was the put-in for the Nolichucky. Shenwood and I were both raft guides there that summer, the summer of 1979. Shenwood was fresh out of high school and I was a student in Boone at Appalachian State University. We became quick friends. I had been kayaking a few years, and Shenwood was just getting started at the sport. Man, was he determined to learn! He would practice his roll, miss, swim, dump his boat. Over and over and over again. His fierce determination led him and soon he became one of my favorite, and strongest, paddling buddies. He was a pleasure just to be around.

Over the years we paddled a lot. The 'Torque-a-Thon' in Colorado brings back fond memories. We shared uncountable trips on the New, the Gauley, and the Lower Meadow. As time went by we both traveled and did our own things, but our friendship didn't fade. We always crossed paths and made time to 'play' together. Shenwood, (and Joni and Zak) became regulars on our annual 'Utah Snowboard Extravaganza'.

Just this January, Shenwood joined us in Utah again. I was late picking him up at the airport- and when I got there he was just sitting and reading. Totally relaxed, he wasn't

stressed at all that I was late. Shenwood didn't worry about the little stuff. As the week passed it snowed over 100". We laughed like school kids at our great fortune. Shenwood was an expert boarder (he was an expert at everything he did) and we shared some unforgettable days.

One fond memory still makes me smile. On one of the last days we spent in Utah together Shenwood and I did a little exploring. I had spotted an area from a chairlift that looked promising. All I had to do was mention it to Shenwood and he gave a big ole smile and said, "Let's do it". Ducking a rope we dropped into an untracked and unfamiliar tree pitch. Being a gentleman, he let me lead at first. Then things got tough. We spread out a bit trying to find a way through the trees. We were in several feet of fresh, soft snow, hiking was NOT an option. We worked our way out at last into an untracked open area.

We were both just standing there. Shenwood was farther downhill and on the edge of a big gully. He decided to drop into the gully, hoping to ride it out. He quickly disappeared. I decided to stay up higher and

inch my way out. As I passed the end of the gully, I started laughing. The gully had huge cornices hanging from both sides. There was no way out. As I slowly made my way to the chair lift, I was still shaking my head. If it had been anyone else I would have been worried. But I knew Shenwood would be fine. Nevertheless, I waited at the chair for my friend. Fifteen minutes went by. Then 30 minutes. Finally, I saw Shenwood heading my way. He came up grinning, but covered with sweat. He asked if I had made a couple more runs in the interim. I said no, that I had just waited for him. He just smiled and said, "Thanks, my friend..." That was the last day I boarded with Shenwood.

Shenwood Horine was my friend. I called on him for advice about many things. I trusted him to save me if I got in trouble on the river. I treasured our friendship. He was always so positive. He found good in everything and everybody. He inspired the people around him to move out of their comfort zone and perform at a higher level. He was an inspiration to everyone who knew him. Thanks for the laughter, the lessons and the memories. Shenwood.... I miss you...

## **Good Friends Remember Sherwood Horine**

It was the early eighties. Shenwood was the new kid on the block, showing up by himself to join us on the Watauga. At that time there were so few good boaters that we welcomed new friends. He was a foamer: he'd get so excited about everything new, everything challenging, everything accomplished. Everything! He had dropped out of high school and spent some time getting his

priorities back on track, and in the meantime had traveled all over the place. He'd travel with nothing, better at being frugal and resourceful than anyone I have ever met. His approach to life was interesting. He sometimes stepped out of one activity, and plunged into another (like hang gliding), excelling in it so quickly it would blow my mind.

I guess our special connection was that

# Celebrating the Life of Dr. Sherwood Horine

together we were 'Shenvood and Forrest.' On the road, it was great fun to introduce ourselves. When you have a good friend and have names which go together in such an unusual way, you just feel a special bond.

I am sad about his two sons. Their dad would have exposed them to so much, and would have encouraged them to go in their own direction, with that boundless enthusiasm.

## Forrest Callaway

I guess I first met Shenvood at Wilson Creek, but really got to know him on the first Torque-a-Thon (annual eastern squirt boater assault on western rivers during the mid-late eighties) in Colorado in 1986. I was cheering as he paddled down Pine Creek Canyon on the Arkansas at a wild level, in glass, and making it look like a cinch.

He encouraged me to push myself, so I learned a lot while paddling with him. I got the impression he enjoyed watching me learn, too. He was a leader, so passionate and giving. So giving. I never saw him down, and will always remember his perpetual smile, good mood and enthusiasm. And those prescription paddling goggles. Crazy.

## Andy Zimmerman

I just remember that big smile. He had an unbelievable attitude, always upbeat. An incomparable love of life. I will always remember paddling with him at the Gauley in those old, long, glass boats - challenging himself, encouraging others, to work the river hard and celebrate its wonder.

## John Sheppard

Shenvood was a study in focus and re-focus. He loved to learn and had come to excel in matters of the body as well as the mind - a seasoned athlete and professional - he was quickly honing his skills as a parent of two young sons. He was as interested in a new emergency medical procedure as he was in discovering a new slot on a favorite run. What always intrigued me was that he was truly his own person: he was NEVER particularly concerned about what people thought about him. He didn't need to worry: he was such an intense storehouse of energy that those around him could not help but sense and benefit from it.

This cannot be better illustrated than by a rescue of a mutual friend, Diana Holder, on the Watauga at what is now called Diana's Ledge. Diana ran the same line as she had just a couple of weeks before, but higher flow had turned the benevolent ledge into a deadly hole. After a long time Diana exited her boat, then proceeded to recirculate while a group of friends watched helplessly from shore. Shenvood dove into the frigid spring water,

pulled her to shore and administered CPR until she revived.

My favorite memories of Shenvood are of scouting tough drops. He is one of very few boaters I have known who would simply assess the situation, briefly discuss his plan, and go. He spent little time debating his route with

others. He always encouraged me to not let others influence my plan, once set. Think I will remember that advice for awhile.

*Risa Shimoda Callaway*

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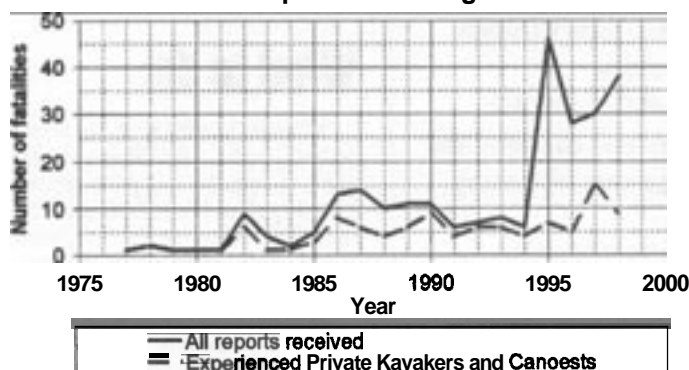


## What Happened in 1997

The whitewater community has been talking about it. In 1997 there were more fatalities in this sport than ever recorded. In early 1998 the trend seemed to continue with so many accident reports that even Newsweek was writing about it. Closer to home, the spring update of the AW Whitewater accident database had to be put off and this writer had to take a computer on vacation just to catch up. The resulting analysis showed both good news and bad news.

The good news is that so far in 1998 (it is mid July at the time of this writing) the fatality rate among experienced private kayakers and canoeists has dropped since the record year of 1997. The bad news is that our friends are still dying in whitewater accidents.

Fig. 1 Annual Whitewater Fatalities  
Accidents Reported Including Rafters



To make matters worse, 1998 brought us an extraordinary number of whitewater related fatalities among rafters and untrained individuals in all types of boats. Due to the nature of this group, reporting is not as reliable as among whitewater kayaks and canoes. However 1998 was the second worst year on record (Fig. 1).

Of all of the reported rafting fatalities, 5 experienced rafters perished this year. This compares to 10 in 1995 and 1 or 2 in any other year since data our data began.

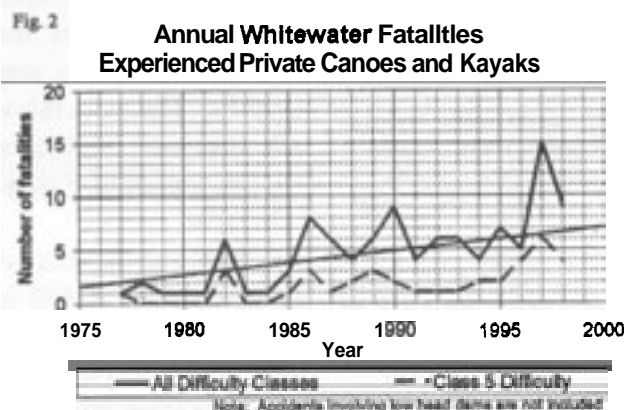
Among inexperienced rafters, commercial rafting customers, swimmers, and other whitewater related accidents, fatality reports have increased considerably starting in 1995. Much of this is because starting in 1995 the internet became an important tool in gathering accident reports. Had the internet been around before this, it is likely that more reports among this group would have been recorded.

**Experienced kayakers and canoeists:** Because experienced kayakers and canoeists are more likely to report accidents among themselves, the data regarding this group is much more complete. From this data we can find several trends.

First, four times in the history of the sport, during the years 1982, 1986, 1990, and 1997, the fatality rate shot up (Fig. 2). With the exception of the current time period, each of these years was followed by several relatively calm years.

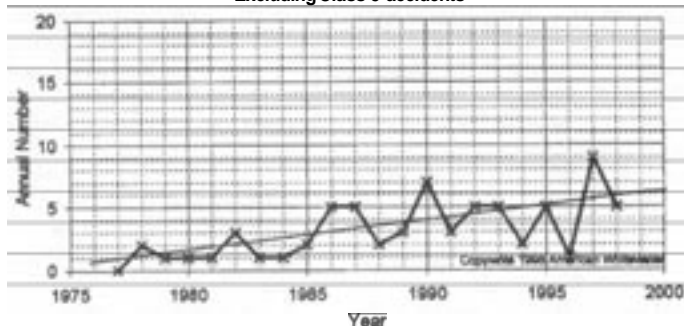
It should be noted that accidents at the top end of the sport (class 5 as estimated by today's standards) tended to parallel these 4 years and contributed to their high rate.

Second, until the spike that began in late 1996 and lasted through the beginning of 1998, class 5 fatalities had never exceeded 3 in any single year.



Third, if class 5 accidents are NOT counted, the sport seems to be on a slow but steady upward trend (Fig3). Without class 5 accidents 1997 would still have been a bad year, but not excessively so. When class 5 accidents are included, the numbers swell, and when the remaining reports are counted, even the media and general public start to notice.

Fig. 3 Annual Whitewater Fatalities  
Experienced Private Kayakers and Canoeists  
Excluding Class 5 accidents



It has been well known that some of the bad years coincided with high water years that followed prolonged droughts. It's also important to note that after each of the previous years there were several relatively calm ones. Also, 2 of these years coincided with a large number of participants crossing an important skill level milestone. For lack of a better term, I'll call it the "ceiling".

In 1986 a large group of paddlers suddenly graduated to class 5.0 rivers. Ten years later, in 1996, a large number of boaters suddenly started paddling class 5.1 and 5.2 extreme runs, especially steep creeks. At the top of the skill curve, a larger than normal group of pioneers seem to have pushed through the next barrier resulting in the suddenly large number of accidents in class 5 whitewater and an unusual number of high profile boaters dying.

All of this suggests that education, practice and complacency are important factors. During the course of a drought, many newer paddlers became good boaters without confronting the difficulties that become available during normal and high water years. At the same time more experienced paddlers became less well practiced. It's very difficult to hone survival and first descent skills when stuck on familiar rivers. By recognizing this fact, we can take more care when high water finally returns and enhance our chance for survival.

# It's up to each of us to learn the limits of our boats and how to work around them as we push ourselves to our own limits.

The fact that so many calm years follow a bad one suggests that complacency is a factor. This phenomena also proves that education through accident reporting works. Accident reports, word of mouth, and publications like American Whitewater have paddlers to learn from these tragedies and avoid them in years following the bad ones.

Unfortunately, while the paddling community learns from the bad years, it eventually forgets. On top of this, many newer boaters have had the time between bad years to get very good without ever experiencing one. With exception of the remarkable, sometimes high water period between 1991 and 1996, our collective memory seems to relax about every 4 years. Hopefully, the next period will be even longer, but we'll all have to work hard to make it happen.

The 'ceiling' is a tougher problem to crack. The sport progresses for a number of years and then suddenly finds itself at a point where it's not business as usual anymore. After a year or so goes by, those on the edge of the sport seem to step back, learn ways around the problems, and then continue pushing at the edges of the sport. Perhaps someone currently involved with these explorations would care to explore this in a future article. Any volunteers?

The bigger question is how do we make the next 'ceiling' less deadly. It's easy for conservative boaters to think "I told you so", but this writer learned almost 2 decades ago that what seemed dangerous at one time might, with time and innovation, become asafe,

reasonable (for those with the right skill and equipment), and fun run. Today's steep creek runs contain many examples of this.

As 1997 begins to fade, the paddling community must do what it can to remember the results of each of those 4 bad years. The longer we do this, the longer it may be before we have another such year. In general there are 5 conclusions to be made. We must continue to educate, we must continue to report accidents, we must be careful when we're out of practice, we must avoid complacency, and we must remain aware that explorations may uncover unpleasant surprises and continue looking for ways to avoid them.

## What to do:

Education among experienced boaters works. Accident reports, word of mouth, and publications from American Whitewater and others have allowed paddlers to learn from these tragedies and avoid them in years following the bad ones.

Learning the limits of each boat and how to paddle within those limits. Older longer boats may wish to keep more distance from vertical pin spots, shorter fatter boats may wish to keep a tighter line through bad holes. Shorter, lower volume boats, may wish to keep a little more distance from similarly sized undercuts. Safety writers may wish to avoid this whole subject altogether as they know how attached we all get to our favorite friends, I mean boats.

### Important considerations:

- 1. After a bad year, the fatality rate drops for several more years, implying that education works. The most recent iull lasted for 6 years.**
- 2. Bad years often correspond with high water years, especially if they follow a bad, multi-year drought.**
- 3. Risk and difficulty do not seem to be proportional. As the sport grows and harder rivers are conquered, there seem to be thresholds through which the sport passes. When a large group of boaters pass through that "ceiling", a bad year occurs.**
- 4. Since 1975, the overall fatality rate for experienced private kayakers and canoeist has been increasing at an average rate of 1 every two and a half years.**

In general there are 5 conclusions to be made.

- 1 We must continue to educate
- 2 We must continue to report accidents
- 3 We must be careful when we're out of practice
- 4 We must avoid complacency
- 5 We must remain aware that explorations may uncover unpleasant surprises and continue looking for ways to avoid them before disaster strikes.

In recent months, a debate has begun relating to boat size and high profile accidents. This issue was recently visited in a previous issue. In most of the prominent accidents of the 1997 cycle, anecdotal evidence can be found to SUGGEST that boat size may have played a role. Whether or not this is true is less important than the idea that all boats have their limits and short boats are no exception. They don't cure the common cold and they may not always be safer than other choices in every circumstance, despite the fact that they are often the best choice for the paddler and river. This debate is not about changing boat design, and as far as this organization is concerned, never was. This debate is about learning the limitations of our boats and paddling accordingly. Unfortunately lessons like these may sometimes come at a very tragic cost.

We may never know if boat size mattered in any of these accidents, but it's conceivable that in some or many of these cases limits were crossed that contributed to some of the accidents of 1997. Shorter boats have made some runs possible that weren't before and have made other runs safer or easier. It's no secret that some of these boats are known by their loving owners as hole bait, that some of the play boats are known for surprise cloud watching opportunities, and it should come as no surprise that smaller boats might fit neatly into correspondingly smaller undercuts. Compensate once and awhile for these often entertaining characters (except for the undercuts) and your boat will be a friend for life, or at least until the next great design comes out.

NEW VIDEO!  
by Kent Ford

# Whitewater SELF DEFENSE

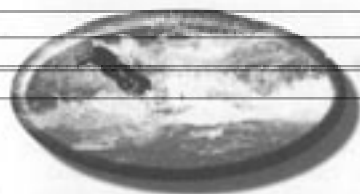
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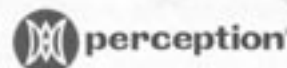
*This video  
recreational paddlers  
tackle their most  
worrisome question:  
"Will we have the  
knowledge, skill, and  
equipment to help if  
someone in our  
group gets in trouble  
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# Coming of Age

## on the Middle Feather

By David Wallace

Your body is made up mostly of water, but that does not mean you can breathe it.

Approximately 10 seconds ago I was looking at my buddy Lee Welhelm while I was perched rather precariously against a boulder with Sierra snowmelt crashing against it. The flow was sweeping downstream and behind me, so I just went with it. It seemed best at the time and I thought that I would just flush out into midcurrent.

*One second:* I'm under water, and it's beautiful, clear, and cool—the Middle Fork of the Feather, jewel of the Sierra—but now I've stopped. I'm not moving downriver, and I'm upright but against the boulder, head under water. I Drop my paddle.

*Four seconds:* I push against the rock with both hands. Solid, smooth, granite. I love the granite in the Sierra, but right now I'm pinned under this boulder and I can't push off and I can't get to the front of my cockpit or sprayskirt grab loop. In these situations thoughts pop into your head with incredible clarity: I think about my wife, my young daughter, my young son, and that this is how kayakers drown. I've read that drowning is a peaceful way to go, but I'm not ready to test that. I've already taken two gulps of water. It's been a hot day and it tastes good, but I make a note to not swallow any more, at least for the time being. For some reason, I think that if I get out of this, I might get Giardia.

*Ten seconds:* I really explore my options to get free—push hard! Nothing. Can I wet exit? Nope.

*Fifteen seconds:* I look up and see light and the top of the boulder. Lee knows I am here and if help is going to come, it's going to be from above, literally. I raise my right arm and my hand clears the water. That's a small victory. I think that Lee and the rest of my friends need to know I'm here. When I raise my arm it creates a water/air vortex and with effort I can get some air mixed with water.

*Thirty seconds:* The water is roaring around my head, and it's a real chore to get any air, but I'm holding on.

*Forty seconds:* I look up toward the light and then see Lee's face loom into view as he grabs my hand! He pulls me up so that my head clears the surface and grabs me by both life jacket shoulder straps. Yeeehaaaa! I'm wiped out, and breathing is still a chore, but

at least I'm breathing air. I know now that I'm going to make it. I can't really see, but Lee is on his stomach, and not in the best position to affect a rescue. He talks to me, but I can't hear him. I try and just remain calm, and suck in the Oooos.

*Two minutes:* Lee yells for David Cox to attach a carabeiner and throw over a rope from river right. David nails the throw the first time. Lee tells me he's going to have to let me go, then he will clip the beiner to my stern grab loop and David, Rick Martin, and Zack Lanoy will pull me off. I don't hear any of this.

*Three minutes:* Lee lets me go and I slide back under the water. What the F! Just about the time I realize I'm no longer in the realm of the living, my boat is pulled free off the rock. I'm elated. I remember floating upside-down, no rocks, and light streaming through the water, thinking how great it is to be free from the boulder. I'm so caught up in how great it is to not be pinned that I forget to wet exit. The next thing I know Rick flips me upright. I've got my eyes closed. I'm breathing slowly, just trying to get some energy back. I know they are wondering if I'm conscious so I tell them I'm OK, just give me some time.

I came around after 40 minutes but still felt only 60%. I felt like someone was sitting on my chest. I was lucky I was not in worse shape for we were in the heart of Devils Canyon, with several class V rapids and two portages yet to negotiate. The next 5 hours were probably the hardest of my 19 years of boating.

Before my pin I had been boating very well. This was my third day on the Feather and I hadn't even flipped once. This was a "Team Geez" trip with old friends from California, Colorado, and Georgia. The median age was over 40, I am 45. Like a lot of aging funhogs, my friends and I work hard at keeping in shape by paddling, running, biking, what ever, so that we can still feel confident about running class V rivers. I love a good adventure with close friends and the 3-day self-support Middle Feather certainly delivers as an incredible wilderness experience. I had done this trip 6 years ago and knew what I was in for. I made one small mistake on one of the easier rapids—not even a class V. But for all my 19 years of experience, I still found myself in a life threatening position. Were it not for my highly skilled, quickacting friends, I probably would not be writing this.

There are some lessons to be learned. Obviously, having very competent paddling partners who know how to act quickly is important. Lee is a very accomplished Class V+ California kayaker, he was holding back to watch me clear the drop. His positioning, judgment, and skill were critical to my quick rescue. I was paddling a Freeride LT packed with overnight gear. I'm thankful it was not any lower in volume, or I might not have been as close to the water surface. I also kept my cool and did not panic while underwater.

Could this incident have been prevented? Yes. I lost my focus by taking pictures of everyone running the drop and I did not thoroughly scout the bottom of the rapid to evaluate the risk of missing a boof move. From now on I will make sure I scout all the way to the bottom if there is any doubt.

This brings up a good question: is 45 too old to paddle class V rivers? For some, maybe, but not for those class V paddlers who keep in shape, are healthy, and continue to paddle regularly. I certainly see plenty of "old geezers" paddling the Gauley (admittedly "easy" class V), even in rodeo boats. Am I too old to paddle Overflow Creek at a juicy level? Maybe. Probably. Blind, steep, runs like Overflow have many unknowns, so while I still had the desire and skill last winter, I probably have made my last trip down that special creek. Every expert boater will face such decisions, at some point in time.

This incident on the Feather has had a profound effect on me, and likely on others who were on our trip. One of my friends announced at the takeout that this was it—he was retiring from kayaking. He said he had too much to live for and too much to lose. I also have much to live for, and while I'm not planning to retire, I am going to dial down the difficulty a notch or two.

All of us have loved ones, wives, husbands, children, parents, relatives, or friends who would be saddened at the least and devastated in some cases if we were to be killed prematurely. I know that we all must go sometime, but most of us later is better than sooner. Running wild rivers is a fantastic sport—a mix of religion and lifestyle for many—but it is not worth dying for. Running Class V whitewater & dangerous, and while it is rarely life threatening, mistakes or unforeseen circumstances can turn fatal. In light of the rash of kayaking deaths over the last two years, everyone who paddles Class V rivers would do well to carefully evaluate their own priorities.

# Whitewater and Politics: A Personal Perspective

By George Brown

In a recent issue of AWA, an article appeared about a river experience that inspired reflection and captured my imagination. In her essay, *Killing Her Softly*, Karen L. V'Soske weaves a wonderfully poignant and poetic a description of a river experience as I have ever read. She then ends her essay with a metaphorical statement that could just as easily have been framed as a question, "because we love her, we cannot stay away and I worry that by our presence, like star-crossed lovers, we unwittingly wound her."

While very few boaters indeed, if any, could match Ms. V'Soske's sensitive and richly imaginative metaphorical style, I imagine that we can all relate to her description in a very personal way. It is for this reason primarily, that I believe her concerns about "wounding her" are unfounded. From my own personal experience, boaters and hikers alike leave their typically urban environment to enter the natural world for the purpose of enjoying it for what it is, fully realizing that to alter it in any way would compromise not only this national treasure but their own experience as well. In this writer's opinion, it is NOT the number of people who visit the world we love who pose the threat that concerns Ms. V'Soske and many others, rather it is the attitude of only an egocentric few whose perspective is very different from our own and these folks are generally very well financed and understand the political process only too well. Honestly speaking, who among us would deny Ms. V'Soske and other like-minded souls (in reasonable numbers) access to property we owned for fear of their compromising it?

Because there has been much discussion during this past year about reducing the number of people and permits on the Middle Fork and Main Salmon in Idaho, I felt compelled to write on this subject that finds strong differences of opinion. Clearly, if what was proposed in Idaho were to go unchallenged, it would have serious implications elsewhere and, I believe, this would set the stage for more and even stiffer limitations to – you guessed it – the private boater. Though it is perhaps contrary to mainstream thinking, I believe that there are both personal and political advantages to the private boating community by actually INCREASING access as much as is reasonably possible.

Ms. V'Soske described boaters as "avid –

if not rabid – environmentalists!" Who among us would this describe BEFORE exposure to the natural world as compared to AFTER? Would any of us believe that John Muir's mission in life was inspired by his looking at pretty pictures? My point is simply this: while greater access by more people does contain some inherent risks to the environment, it seems a small price to pay in order to create the obvious advantages that would be realized by greater numbers of involved boaters and correspondingly better funded advocates such as AWA. Indeed it oftenseems that the most challenging water that needs to be negotiated is the political cesspool.

Because money and politics are the key factors in the outcome of most, if not all, of the power struggles being waged between the environmentalists vs. industrialists, it

seems a sensible course of action to make those organizations that serve as our collective voice as well funded and politically powerful as possible. That ain't ever gonna happen by allowing policies of unreasonably limited access to occur! Rather instead, from this writer's viewpoint, that means introducing a whole new generation of boaters to the truth and beauty of Ms. V'Soske's statement "our day on the river fills us with a contentment bordering on the spiritual."

P.S. If AWA membership rose to 70,000 (compared to the present 7,000), with the obvious political clout and funding advantages this would create, would their Regional Coordinators still feel like David vs. Goliath or, perhaps, that the previously uneven playing field had been considerably leveled?

## D.C. Whitewater Pioneer Mourned

On Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, John Seabury Thomson suffered a massive heart attack in the parking lot at Lock 10 on the Potomac. He had just come off the river after a delightful evening run from Anglers Inn with a group of five other paddlers – John Stapko, Ed Pilchard, Kathryn and Erin Mull and John Heidemann. He was exchanging a few pleasantries with us as we prepared to run shuttle, when he suddenly collapsed. It was immediately obvious that this was serious. Kathryn had a cell phone and called 911 as the rest of us began CPR. At the outset, there was no pulse nor breathing.

By the time the EMTs of the Cabin John Fire and Rescue Squad arrived some ten minutes later, a faint pulse and sporadic breathing had been restored. The EMTs took over, and a special coronary unit sped up a few minutes later. John was taken to Suburban Hospital where he was put in the intensive coronary care unit. He never regained consciousness. John died just after noon, August 3.

**John Seabury Thomson**  
**In all truth**  
**we'll miss him.**

John had had a heart problem for many years. He underwent a quadruple bypass operation some 15 years ago and a serious heart attack about seven years ago.

John Thomson was born in Nanking, China on March 13, 1921. His parents were missionary educators. As a youngster he was present when Nationalist soldiers looted his parents home during the Nanking Incident of 1927. He learned Chinese as a boy, and right up to the end he used to startle Asian passersby on the C & O Canal towpath by inquiring, in his Nanking accent, after their "native place". If the Asian was a Chinese, a spirited conversation in Chinese followed. He graduated in 1939 from the Shanghai American school and came to the US in 1939 to attend Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.

In World War II, he served as a US naval officer, first in the Atlantic and then seconded to the OSS in China where he served





under Bishop Meeghan.

John graduated from Swarthmore (class of 1943), and, after the war, was awarded an MA and PhD by Columbia, where he taught for a brief time. He then became a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin, from which he moved in 1957 to take a position with the Central Intelligence Agency. There he was a current intelligence analyst on Southeast Asia, specializing in Burmese matters. He had spent a year in Burma as a Ford Foundation scholar.

His local paddling career began when the Agency moved from Foggy Bottom to Langley. His reaction to the move was typical of John; he and friends organized a 'canoe pool' to avoid car pooling over the traffic-jammed Chain Bridge. (This was before the Beltway and the American Legion Bridge.) The canoe pool paddled through all seasons and weathers from Sycamore Island to the Virginia shore just below the new CIA building. Note was taken of this novel means of getting to work by the New York Times.

At the same time, he became an active member of the Sycamore Island Canoe Club and of the newly formed CCA. It may be no more than coincidence, but both clubs enjoyed spurts of growth in membership shortly after he brought to them his infectious en-

thusiasm and organizational gifts. He was chairman of the CCA for four years, a time the Club greatly expanded not only its membership but its sphere of activities. An avid racer, he ran the club's Petersburg Whitewater Weekends for five years, during which time it changed from being a perfectly normal whitewater race to, virtually, a West Virginia 'rite of spring', attracting hundreds of racers, spectators, college kids and others to the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac. In fact, it got to be so bothersome to some of the locals that the race was moved elsewhere (Lost River, Harpers Ferry) before lapsing altogether in the early 1980s.

But above all, John was interested in getting others into paddling. For many years, he led CCA trips on a wide range of streams, from the Lower Yough to the Paw Paw Bends of the Potomac. In 1974 he wrote an early guidebook, 'Potomac Whitewater: a Guide to Safe Canoeing above Washington'. (It's out of print now, but copies can occasionally be found at local outfitters.) He taught our whitewater classes for decades, going back to the days when the classes, three to a summer, attracted 40, 50 and more boats, mostly tandems. He was one of the CCA's first certified instructor of instructors. He also taught our basic canoe classes.

In recent years, John shifted more to our introduction to paddling sessions at Swains and Fletchers, which he ran almost from their inception in 1972. These beginner classes have in their time attracted up to 60 boats on a summer's night. If attendance seemed slim, John would stop passersby with, 'You paddling with us tonight?' An surprising number of surprised people did. Over the years, it is safe to say John brought literally thousands of new paddlers to the river, and therein lies his chief contribution to the CCA.

John was also a great hiker and backpacker. But as the years wore on his right knee and left hip began to interfere, and he turned more and more to his first interest—paddling. It was something he could still do, and with his bulldog spirit he kept at it to the very end. He loved the Potomac, often marveling at our luck to have such a gem right at hand. No matter that it might be pouring icy cats and dogs, to John it was a "glorious day for a paddle".

Here, then, was man who not only touched our lives, he filled them. In the words of one admirer, he had become 'everyone's favorite grandfather'.

In all truth, we'll miss him.

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# LIFE AND DEATH in the Grimsvotn Caldera

By Bill Hay

Let's cut to the chase. I shall skip all the logistical stuff. Suffice it to say I arrived in Reykjavik on October 29, 1996, boat and gear in hand. Iceland? Late October? Surely I jest. I do not. It was Grimsvotn. She was erupting and the caldera was filling. The flood, or jokulhlaup, was imminent.

Iceland, great Nordic home of fire and ice, is subject to both volcanic eruptions and floods. Rarely, however, do they occur in conjunction with one another. A jokulhlaup, or great flood, happens when they do. Grimsvotn was erupting under the great southeastern glacier. The ice cap was melting from underneath. A giant lake under the glacier (a lake that was always there due to persistent volcanic activity, a lake that periodically filled and produced minor floods to the southwest) was filling rapidly. It would push the very glacier upward, burst forth all at once, and send a great flood down the valley to the sea. I planned to be there.

But I was speaking literally when I said, "Let's cut to the chase," for a team of Rhinemaidens was equally determined to make a first descent of the jokulhlaup. They, six lovelies led by my old nemesis (and KGB spy) Ursula, had arrived in Iceland on October 25 and were already encamped at the base of the glacier where the floodwaters would burst forth from their watery cavern and begin the 35 mile descent to the sea.

I knew this for I am not without my own espionage resources. In fact, I had cleverly hidden a geopositioning device in the glove compartment of Ursula's pink Dodge pleasure van (where it would never be discovered) not three years ago and had been tracking her movements ever since. Strangely, the device had gone inactive when the Soviet Union broke up, confused, I think, by the new geopolitical realities. Luckily, just a few days previously it had miraculously reawakened and I realized Ursula, damn her, was headed to Iceland.

I had heard of the eruption but circumstances had detained me in the States. Fortunately, I was able to arrange bail, I mean backing, and followed the wily Ursula to the frozen North determined to make the first descent of the jokulhlaup. Now, though, there was a logistical problem: Ursula and her raft crew of burly Rhinemaidens (Barbie, Vanya, Ludmilla, Stella, and Alessandra) were ensconced in the pool just below the glacier's terminus. How was I to get ahead of them?

My solution was brilliant, if flawed. To

understand, you must know the physical construction of the caldera. When Grimsvotn erupted, a subsidence formed in the glacier. A great ice dome eventually collapsed leaving a 500 foot deep chasm in the ice. Below lay the underground lake. It was filling at a rate of 60 feet per hour! Steam, sulphurous gas, and noxious odors filled the deep blue Icelandic sky. All air traffic had been diverted from the site. The roads had been closed in anticipation of 300,000 cfs of water coming down the valley. Iceland was ready. But I was not.

Oh, I had my trusty C-boat and my paddle and my life jacket and helmet and all the rest of my gear. What I didn't have was a plan or a shuttle. The two arrived, as if by miracle, simultaneously.

Like boaters everywhere faced with a lack of shuttle, I drank and sulked. This time in a seedy bar called the Gladsheim on the Reykjavik waterfront (or should I say icefront?). I was nursing a tankard of mead musing over my plight when, can you believe it, a young boater friend from Virginia, Dennett Dwyer, walked in. He was accompanied by a blonde goddessette (or Norn) from the great Northern wasteland, Krissy. Opportunity struck me on the head with the hammer of Thor.

"Dennett, old friend (he was 19 at least), old buddy, wanna paddle some jokulhlaup?" I looked at Krissy and flexed my own hammer of Thor. She winced, in fear and awe, I am sure.

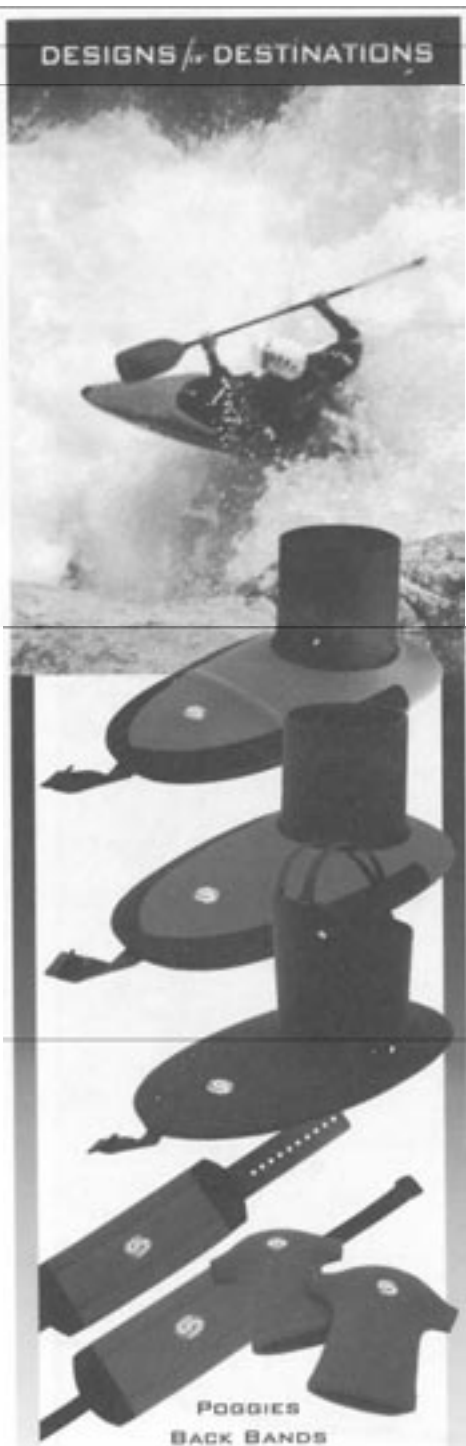
"Paddle? In Iceland? In October? Jokulhlaup? You old fool, you must be kidding. I only do play rivers like the Ocoee. We're headed to Munich for Oktoberfest."


Well, today's youth is timid and would prefer revelry to adventure. I sighed and made one more attempt, "Well, Krissy, would you be interested in being MY shuttle bunny?"

Her lovely Teutonic eyes flashed and she agreed, "Sure, Bill. Why don't you go jump in a lake."

Odin spoke, the sky opened, and I saw the path to overcoming Ursula's lead in the race to be first to paddle jokulhlaup. Jump in a lake. I had to jump into the great caldera, paddle under the ice and burst forth with the flood in order to beat Ursula and her crew of wily river consumers.

It was easy to convince Krissy to drive me up to the fissure in the ice and drop me in the great lake. What was hard was finding a vehicle that could get us there. Fortunately, I was not without resources in this regard



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and I called in an old favor over at the NATO base and borrowed a Humvee. You think a pink Dodge pleasure van (Ursula's vehicle of choice) is a great shuttle vehicle (I admit that the water bed and Dolby stereo system playing Mantovani continuously is nice), you should see a Humvee with Krissy driving.... Well, never mind, I said I was cutting to the chase and I will.

"Not so hard, Krissy," I had to protest. She seemed awfully anxious to help me get my spray skirt on. The seemingly endless ice spread around us like the end of the world. But the end of the world was not in emptiness; it was in the fissure just behind me. There, the Grimsvotn spewed forth noxious fumes of sulphur and brimstone. There, my future lay.

She finished with my skirt and I slid into my trusty c-boat. Krissy pushed and pulled and finally dragged me to the edge. "This is what you wanted me to bring you to?" she asked. I nodded and she continued, "Well, it's all that you deserve." And with that I entered the Grimsvotn Caldera.

The descent into the fissure is difficult to recount. Ice and smoke are all that I remember...and falling, falling, falling. It was 500 feet, after all, a major boof even for a c-boater. But I leaned back and held my paddle away from my body and relaxed—big drop skills. I entered the water like a stiletto in the back of a victim, and, when I resurfaced, I was in another world.

Smoke bubbled out of the milky water like farts in some noxious giant's bathtub. The water hissed, not from boiling (it was only about 50), but from the icy chunks dropping from the cave's ceiling and striking the warmer water. They were falling fast and furious and I was fully occupied dodging debris.

The water was visibly rising, too, and in the distance I could see it lapping at the roof of the cavern. This was not a good omen and I thought a minute about how to approach the thirty miles of underground river below the fissure and above the glacier's terminus.

I basically had three options: I could sit there and wait for the river to burst free from the glacier. The sudden drop in water level would allow me to be sucked the thirty miles underground and spat out the other end. I could paddle the thirty miles and hope the river did not trap me against the roof of the ice cave and drown me. I could get the hell out of there.

Option Number 3 was ruled out when I heard a faint cry, "Good luck" (or was that "riddance") and the roar of the Humvee heading back toward Reykjavik as fast as possible. I considered Option Number Two, but the river gods made the decision for me.

With a giant sucking sound and a sudden surge upward, the water burst (I must assume) the icy dam thirty miles below me. Then, with an unimaginable roar, the entire

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Grimsvotn Caldera emptied under the ice and into the flood channel below. Boating? Easy. I just held on and watched as the sculptured ice cave whizzed by like New York's underground on a fast A train at rush hour. Oh, I had to make a stroke here and there to dodge an iceberg, and I had to surf an occasional back surge as the water, like any giant backlog of water, spit and sputtered at the other end. But, all and all, it was no harder than the Grand Canyon at 1,000,000 cfs (not 300,000 as I had been led to expect) in the dark.

I laughed and whooped and blasted a wave here and there. I had beaten the devilish Ursula and her crew of vikings. I had gotten on the jokulhlaup before them and could claim a first descent. My testosterone was bigger than their...well, never mind.

And, as I rounded the final bend before the glacier's terminus, as the icy opening appeared before me like the giant oak doors of Valhalla, as I prepared to reenter the world of light and make my final descent to the sea, I looked around for Ursula's paltry raft. I figured it had not made it out of the eddy at their put in. But it was not to be seen and I knew I would have to save my final trium-

phant look for the take out in the North Sea downstream.

Then, I felt my boat slow and my heart stopped for a moment. No, it couldn't be! I was running out of water! I was falling behind the surge. I could literally see it ahead of me, a wall of water retreating in the distance. And, there on the crest of the surge, I caught a glimpse of a pink raft and heard the obviously female cry of triumph and, as my boat scraped to a halt on a cobble bar below the cave's mouth, I despaired.

I have appealed to the American Whitewater Association for a ruling on this matter. Lee Belknap and Charlie Walbridge came to see me in the home just yesterday and I argued my case persuasively and passionately. They saw my point, I am sure. They will rule in my favor and judge that I, indeed, made the first descent of a jokulhlaup. I shall triumph over Ursula once again. I know as well as I know the icy depths of the Great Grimsvotn Caldera and the rushing underground waters of the jokulhlaup.

"Dear Mr. Hay:

We hope you are comfortable in your new home. We have reviewed your applica-

tion for a first descent declaration on the jokulhlaup of November 1996 in Iceland's Grimsvotn Caldera and, unfortunately have discovered that your trip does not meet the qualifications for a first descent.

To begin with, you did not complete the trip in question whereas another team, captained by one Ursula, did.

Second, your section of river cannot be truly classified as a river and certainly meets none of the AWA criteria for whitewater. In fact, it is flatwater. And it more properly can be classified as a lake.

Third, you did not descend the river first. At the terminus of this run, in the North Sea, the first watercraft to arrive was a raft piloted by the aforementioned team of Rhinemaidens. Your boat, a battered and antique C-1 never reached the North Sea at all and presently rests in the basement of your new home.

In conclusion, we the First Descent Committee of the AWA declare and avow that the first descent of the jokulhlaup was completed by Ursula and the Rhinemaidens. They have a hit CD now available at our website....

Sincerely,  
Lee Belknap  
Charlie Walbridge"



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on Life itself  
as it dances  
through rock gardens  
sculpted by Time  
and  
sounds a symphony  
that soothes  
and excites  
the Spirit  
that  
listens.

Mary Brockman Collins  
Mountain Rest, SC

# More Delight, Less Machismo

By Sue Richardson

**For many of us, river running becomes the quest for the perfect wave. Each rapid is picked over to find the best play spots: the best front surfing wave, the best side surfing hole, the best ender spot. And if a rapid contains few of these features, it loses its charm rather quickly. The danger here is high-tailing it to the playground, at the expense of appreciating the beauty of the ride.**

**T**his summer's been a kayakcopia of paddling events for CWA members! Between the bump & grind on the Wolf (the Peshtigo? Fahget about it!) and numerous trips to South Bend, we've had another successful Paddling in the Park, a couple of trips to the Yough, a rare weekend run on the Vermilion, a near miss on the Big Sandy, a trip to Costa Rica, a happy camper at the Obst's kids camp, and a terrific Swiftwater Rescue workshop. The promise of the joys of whitewater drew us hither and yon, and rarely disappointed.

What keeps you going in this quest for paddling rivers? Is it that satisfying feeling of planting your blade in the water and feeling your boat glide across the surface, hip thrusting forward, twist in the torso, flicking the blade out in perfect time to catch the next stroke that keeps you moving steadily forward? Is it that clear, quiet pool where, just beyond, in the horizon, the water begins leaping up ever so slightly, mist rising, thrum of the approaching rapid increasing, causing you heart to leap in anticipation? Do the rapids themselves pull us toward them, daring us to find our way around rocks and house-sized boulders, testing our knowledge and skill, inviting the challenge of a sharp eddy turn or a must-make ferry in front of a treacherous drop?

For many of us, river running becomes the quest for the perfect wave. Each rapid is picked over to find the best play spots: the best front surfing wave, the best side surfing hole, the best ender spot. And if a rapid contains few of these features, it loses its

charm rather quickly. The danger here is high-tailing it to the playground, at the expense of appreciating the beauty of the ride.

Some boaters are definitely in it for the adrenaline rush. Some boaters have said they don't bother with rivers that don't have a couple of class V's on them. Some boaters have died on rivers with intense whitewater, making unfortunate mistakes in unforgiving places. And even those boaters whose skills are equal to running class V water are not immune to the hazards inherent therein. Rosi Weiss's article in the recent *American*





Whitewater is a sad reminder of the consequences of a senseless death such as Rich Weiss's: a young widow, and a little boy who will only hear about his sweet father.

I guess the point I'm trying to make here is that the purpose of our club, and the purpose for what we do, should be to enjoy whitewater. It should be to enjoy the whole enchilada, from the feel of that first glide across a calmeddy, to the success of hanging on to all your gear in a swim through the big stuff. How good does your body feel when you do this? Where's your head at? Are we having fun yet? It's great to be out there with my friends who whoop and howl and have big silly-assed grins on their faces when they're surfing some dinky wave. It scares me to see some of these others, shredding it up with the intensity of a shark, making a day on the river look like a bad day at work. Not that I don't like to see a really good boater shreddin' his brains out- I'd just like to see more delight and less machismo. Macho is what gets you killed.

*Editor's note: Sue Richardson is the president of the Chicago Whitewater Association. This article is reprinted from their newsletter with Sue's permission.*

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# The Selway: A River Revisited

By George Brown

**O**n June 5, 1990 Randy Kraft of St. Helens, Oregon and I were lucky enough to pick up a cancellation on the Wild and Scenic section of the Selway river. However, because of a June 7th Middle Fork of the Salmon permit we were forced to run it in one day—if we were to do it at all. Ever since then, I have been looking for an opportunity to get back and see what I missed that day. As it turns out, it was quite a lot.

The opportunity came this spring when Lee Thompson offered me a chance to travel with his group on the Selway on June 25th. Because I live in Texas and was running short on vacation time, NWRA members Bill Devereaux and Leon Doar of Boise, Idaho helped me manage the logistics of getting from the Boise airport to the Paradise (an accurate description) launch site and then later back to Boise. Understandably, I am grateful to both of them and to Dr. Joel Courtial as well, who loaned me his pet Cougar (a twin tube cat). Without their gracious help, the trip would have been impossible for me.

We arrived at the launch site under overcast skies on the afternoon of June 24th. The light rain, which fell through the night was an ominous forewarning of what we would see for the first half of the trip. Mercifully, the Selway river gods only rained on our parade at camp and never on the river. Our party consisted of three rafts, three catarafts and five kayakers—16 boaters in all. After waiting TEN years for his own permit, it was our party leader's wish to extend to everyone possible the chance to go. If this writer ever gets a permit of his own, he plans to do the same.

River levels (from the West Fork Ranger District office in Darby, Montana) for the trip ranged from 3.45 to 4.05 and should serve as reference points for my description of rapids throughout the run. Although we were expecting gauge readings more in the neighborhood of 2 feet, the higher level proved to be advantageous as we often found ourselves on the WRONG side of the river in the technical upper section. For example, as any experienced Selway boater knows, running Washer Woman on river right is a hell of a lot more exciting than is really necessary!

We launched with everyone in high spirits. One of our rafts experienced a minor wrap in one of the first class III rapids while another broached a rock in Washer Woman.

Not an auspicious beginning, to say the least. It was at this point that we came to an unavoidable conclusion: our signaling system between the lead kayakers and the rafts was NOT working. We regrouped and improved our communication and our performance. At Goat Creek, our last class III of the day, the Selway had grown considerably in size and power but the line was clearly visible between large boulders.

The rain followed us into camp and only seemed to gain intensity throughout the night. The next morning we noticed, with a bit of alarm, that the river had jumped eight inches overnight. Concern became more visible as we launched knowing that the river was bigger and pushier. The class II (according to the guide) above Ham seemed unusually powerful and included a large pour over at the bottom. There was even momentary confusion as to whether it was Ham. Of course we were soon disabused of this notion (some of us more gently than others) as we entered the true Ham. At the bottom of the rapid, we regrouped and moved downstream to a campsite on river left near Divide Creek which, despite its inconvenient access, turned out to be a great camp. Though we experienced rain in the early evening, we were

spared an all-night downpour and the river appeared to have dropped slightly the next morning.

We launched in high spirits the next morning as we watched the sun burn off the low-hanging clouds to reveal our first beautiful day. It could not have come at a better time, as we approached Randy's and my nemesis, Double Drop. The previous time (no, we didn't scout), he damn near flipped and I was so out of control, I had to abandon the oars to highside at the bottom. I silently vowed that this time things would be different. And they were. Our scouting skills, so conspicuously absent in the upper section, were now working well and proved to be crucial as we approached Double Drop, scouting on river right.

The rapid begins by pouring over a ledge before it sweeps powerfully river right, following the curve of the riverbed. The final danger is the large hole at the bottom on river right. The trick is to break through the upper drop with enough momentum to carry you as far river left as possible before the main current catapults you toward the hole. I chose a diagonal rear ferry to break through the upper ledge, which set me up to pull away from the hole. In retrospect, I believe that to

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have been the best choice. Other boaters using a push stroke appeared to have more trouble maintaining their line. In one instance, we all watched in horror as the largest boat in our group (an 18-footer) rose nearly vertically before falling back to the water. Fortunately, both boatman and passenger hung on for dear life and stayed with the boat.

The next major rapids were Ladle and Little Niagara; amazingly, we managed to scout both! At Ladle, the right hand sneak that I gladly took in 1990 was unavailable. It looked like a mine field of boulders and pourovers as did the far left. That left us with only one option, a run right of center. While none of our lines were impressively clean, they were all thankfully uneventful. At Little Niagara, the left channel beside the huge boulder—a very runnable route at lower levels—now appeared far too risky and we opted for the sneak on the far river right.

Although we missed our next intended campsite on river left, we still managed to find a fine, shaded site on river right at Pinchot Creek. Here, we gave our bodies and nerves some much-needed rest and spent our layover day. I watched the sun rise the next morning behind an opaque mist that sent surreal echos of light bouncing through the canyon. It was like watching the canyon being born from the very elements.

We passed our extra day in camp reveling in the beauty and relaxation of the place, although occasionally our anxieties would convince us to take the short jaunt downstream for a look at Wolf Creek, our last class IV rapid. Our first look at the drop revealed a huge boulder on far river right at the bottom, which formed a large pourovers. But by the time we ran Wolf Creek, a day and a half later, the boulder had emerged from the water to offer a pillow on its left side.

While not everyone had smooth runs here, all six rafts made their way to the bottom of the drop unscathed. Two kayakers found themselves doing some unintended swimming but fortunately no gear was lost. Had our group elected to run Wolf Creek two days earlier with water streaming over the large boulder, things could have been much uglier.

None of the rapids below Wolf Creek required scouting, although they proved to be among the most enjoyable that we encountered on the trip. Though easier than some of the rapids that had clearly been a challenge, they nevertheless offered much of the size and power that had held us on the edge of our seats for the past several days. These rapids along with beautiful weather made our float to the takeout both exciting and relaxing allowing us to appreciate the magnificent canyon through which we had passed.

# Quantum Rodeo

By Daniel Holzman

If you're tired of watching the same old rodeo moves, and you want to move on from flat spins, cartwheels and enders, you should plan to attend the first annual Quantum Rodeo, to be held at Dirac Falls on Heisenberg Creek, West Virginia. This event is guaranteed to exceed your wildest expectations, and will feature the hottest boaters from the past and the future, competing for virtual prizes in a highly charged atmosphere.

The rodeo features a non-gate race, followed by a positive and negative hole riding competition. Competitors are encouraged to use semiconductor boats, typically made out of carbon fiber or boron, but superconducting high temperature plastic boats are also allowed. Judges will score boats in the rodeo competition based on a series of mandatory (forced oscillation) moves, including the following:

1. The Spinnazolo (and Reverse Spinnazolo), 5 points. The competitor enters the hole, and attempts to spin his or her boat so rapidly that the shape changes from an ellipse (more or less) to a torus. In The Reverse Spinnazolo, the competitor attempts to convert the torus back to a more or less conventional shape.

2. The Transcriptase (and The Reverse Transcriptase), 10 points. In this move, the competitor enters hole facing the bow of the

boat, and emerges from the hole facing the stern. By utilizing a Reverse Transcriptase, the competitor reverses the process.

3. The Schroedinger's Cat, 25 points. In this move, the competitor enters the hole in one boat, and emerges in a different boat. As in all quantum mechanical transformations, the competitor is not allowed to leave his (or her) boat during the transformation.

4. The Heisenberg Uncertainty Transform, 50 points. In this exciting move, the competitor enters the hole from the upstream side, and emerges approximately 50 yards upstream, not less than 10 minutes earlier than they entered the hole, chugging a beer. After consuming the beer, the competitor reenters their boat (at the start of the move, of course), and completes the required five minutes of hole riding.

5. The Virtual Particle, 100 points. This tour de force of quantum hole riding requires the competitor to convince the judges that they are actually in their boat performing aerobatic maneuvers, when actually they are sleeping off last night's hangover in the back of a pickup truck. The technique is to use astral projection to "throw" the image of a hot rodeo boater into the cockpit, all the while catching some Z's in anticipation of the wicked cool party sure to be happening later in the evening.



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By: Hal Herzog

Department of Psychology

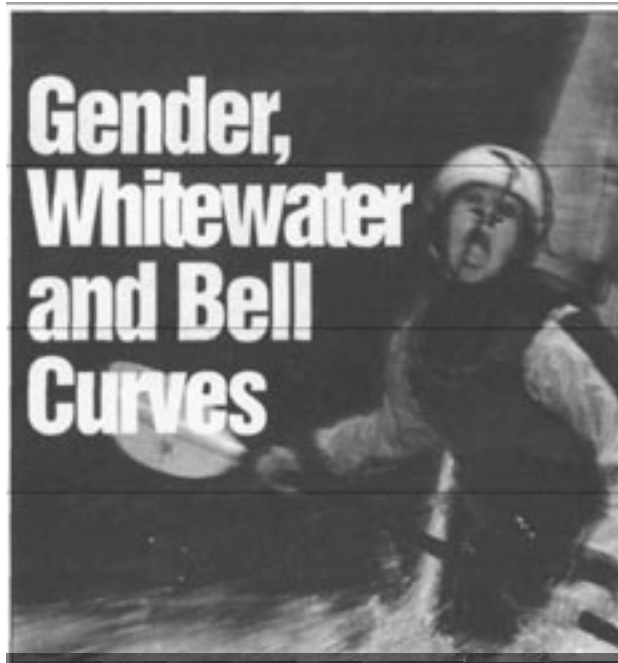
Western Carolina University

Of the roughly two dozen participants who entered the 1997 Fall Citizens' Whitewater Rodeo sponsored by the Nantahala Outdoor Center, there was only one female, my 14 year-old daughter. Most boaters have noticed that a lot more men than women seem to show up at put-ins, canoe club meetings, rodeo holes, and kayak instruction clinics. Gender differences in interests in paddle sports have recently been the subject of debate in the pages of *American Whitewater*. The fact is, however, that there is no readily available data indicating the magnitude of male and female involvement in different types of whitewater activity.

As both a psychologist and a paddler I am interested in the origin of these sorts of gender differences. Christy Barbee, a psychology major at Western Carolina University, and I recently examined the extent of male/female differences in various types of river sports. We gathered our data from a number of sources. Here I describe some of our findings and briefly review some possible explanations of sex differences in whitewater sports.

#### Gender Differences Among Commercial Raft Passengers

The class II/III Nantahala River, located in western North Carolina, is arguably the most popular whitewater river in the United States, with approximately a quarter of a million commercial rafters enjoying its clear, cold



and crowded waters each year. On a typical summer Saturday (July 25, 1998), Christy sat at Nantahala Falls for four hours, recording the number of males and females in rafts, duckyies and kayaks as they ran Nantahala Falls, the class III rapid at the end of the river.

During this time 1,557 individuals were observed going over Nantahala Falls in various commercial crafts: 1,027 in rafts, 42 in single duckyies, and 88 in double duckyies. Figure 1 shows the percentage of males and females in each category of watercraft. Among raft passengers, there were only slightly more men than women:

56% of rafters were males and 44% were females. The situation was quite different for ducky passengers. Males were more than twice as likely as females to travel down the river in a single ducky. Double duckyies, in contrast, were actually more likely to contain females than males — 55% of these passengers were women, making this the only class of white water activity in this report where women outnumbered men.

A possible explanation of the "double ducky phenomenon" can be found in a more detailed analysis of who rides in them. Forty-four double duckyies went over Nantahala Falls during our observation period. In 82% of these, there were both male and female passengers. In 14%, the passengers were both female. However, in only 4% (two boats) did two males share a ducky. Males seem to avoid riding in tandem duckyies together. While one of my colleagues suggested homophobia as a possible explanation, we suspect that the phenomenon results from the fact that males each want to call the shots — that is, steer the boat.

Another clue to the psychology of

whitewater who's-the-boss games can be found by looking at who is in the driver seat (e.g., the back) of commercial rafts in which there are a mix of male and female passengers. (Note that for this analysis we excluded professionally-guided rafts). Males were almost inevitably in the back of the raft steering the boat, more often than not, poorly. Indeed, in 95% of the 135 unguided mixed gender rafts we observed, males steered. (While there were 22 rafts in which all the rafters were men, there were only 4 "all female" rafts. In addition, of the 30 professionally-guided rafts Christy observed, 23 were piloted by men and 7 by women, a gender ratio of roughly 3 to 1.)

#### Gender Difference Among Canoeists and Kayakers on the Nantahala

In the spring of 1998 the United States Forest Service instituted a fee for private boaters on the Nantahala

River. Each boater now pays either a one-dollar daily use fee or a season permit for five dollars. As of July 25, 1998, 72% of the 672 season users were male, a ratio of 2.6 male paddlers for each female.

The proportion of males and females among the kayakers who ran the Falls during our observation period is also shown in Figure 1 and roughly mirrored the Forest Service permit data. We observed 26 males run the Falls and 7 females for a gender ratio of 3.7 to 1. However, this data is somewhat misleading. Going over Nantahala Falls and playing in the Falls are two different things. The Nantahala is essentially a novice level river. The Falls, however, also attract more advanced boaters who use the rapid to practice cartwheels and enders between trips to the nearby Ocoee.

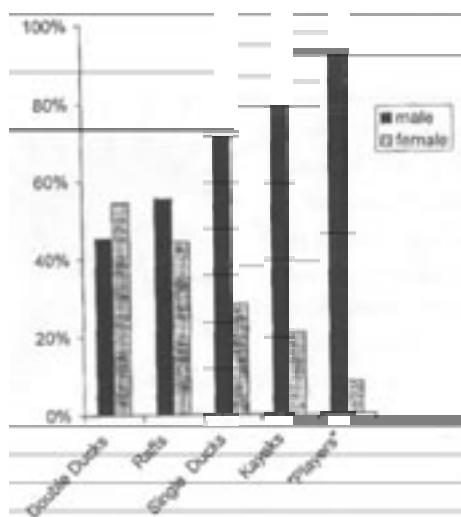
During our observation period, we noted whether each boater played in the Falls after running them. Here, a much larger gender bias emerged. Of the 26 male kayakers that ran the Falls, 43% paddled back over Rooky's Ledge to try for a cartwheel or an ender. Only one of the seven females who ran the Falls went back to play in rapid. In all, there were 11 times as many rodeo cowboys as cowgirls.

Similar results may apply elsewhere. I persuaded my friend and colleague Maurice Phipps to record the number of males and females jumping into Hell Hole on the Ocoee recently after he injured his arm and was killing time while the rest of our party ran the river. During the hour and a half he watched, 31 different men cavorted in the Southeast's most renown play spot compared to 3 women, a 10 to 1 sex ratio that was virtually identical to data Christy collected at Nantahala Falls.

#### Gender Differences in Kayak Instruction

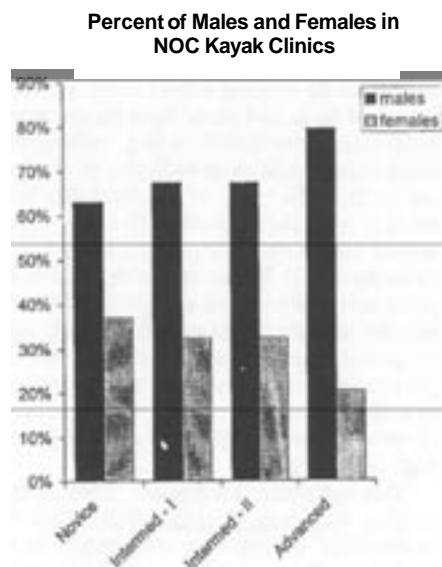
The ratio of men and women enrolling in

Figure 1  
Percent of Males and Females Going Over Nantahala Falls



kayak instruction also offers a window on sex differences in river activities. The Nantahala Outdoor Center generously allowed us to examine lists of individuals enrolled in all of their 1997 kayak clinics. Three hundred twenty males and 190 females participated in Novice clinics, 135 males and 65 females were in Intermediate I clinics, 120 males and 58 females attended Intermediate II clinics, and 105 males and 27 females enrolled in Advanced clinics. The percents of men and women in the clinics are shown in Figure 2. In general, as the

Figure 2



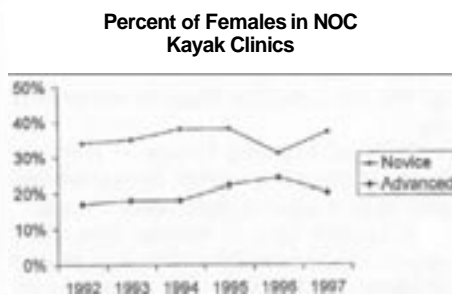
level of the clinics increased so did the proportion of men — from roughly one and a half males per female in the novice clinics to two males per female in the intermediate clinics to four males per female in advanced clinics.

Surprisingly, there is little evidence to suggest that the proportion of women enrolling in kayak clinics has substantially increased in the last six years. We examined the gender ratio of past NOC clinics by obtaining the number of men and women in a sample composed of one half of all the kayak beginner clinics and all of the advanced clinics from 1992 through 1997. These data are shown in Figure 3. Note that the proportions of women in the clinics at both levels were fairly stable.

#### Gender Differences as Reflected in American Whitewater Articles and on the AWA Homepage.

In order to assess gender differences at more extreme levels of kayaking, we turned to *American Whitewater* and the AWA Homepage. We used all six issues of the 1996 volume of *American Whitewater* for our sample. We first looked at the gender of

Figure 3

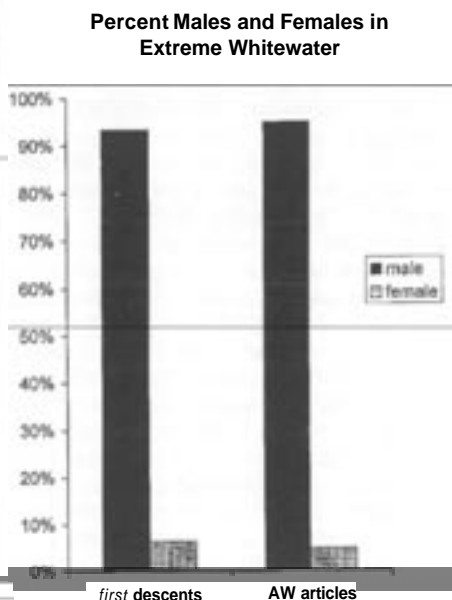


participants in extreme kayak races as described in the race results as published in the 1996 volume of *AW* on five difficult rivers (Bottom Moose race, Upper Gauley race, Upper Yough race, Cheat River race, Russell Fork race.) One hundred and fifty-seven boaters participated in these events. Of these, 132 were men and 25 were women, a ratio of 5.3 males for every female racer.

In these *AW* issues, there were 17 articles in which the participants' names were given that described hair runs. We tallied the number of males and females as indicated by the names of the boaters. In all, there were 181 males listed as participants on difficult runs as compared to 10 women, a gender ratio of 18 to 1.

Finally, we examined the proportion of males and females involved in twelve first descents as described on the AWA Homepage. There were 61 boaters involved in these descents; 57 were men and 4 were women, for a first descent sex ratio of 14 to 1. These data are shown in Figure 4.

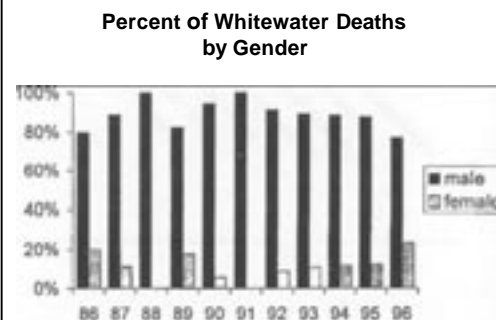
Figure 4



#### Whitewater Deaths

Although morbid, information about gender differences at more extreme levels of whitewater activities can also be gleaned from an analysis of fatal accidents. We obtained the number of male and female whitewater fatalities in the years 1986 through 1996 from the American Canoe Association River Safety Reports (the 1986-1988 volume and the 1989-1991 volume) and the U.S. Whitewater Accident Data Base as posted on the American Whitewater Affiliation Internet site. These data are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5



There were 228 deaths described in this data set. Two hundred men died as a result of these accidents as compared with 28 women; men were seven times more likely to die in whitewater incidents than women. We did not categorize factors involved in the accidents. It was apparent, however, from reading the accident reports that males were disproportionately likely to die in accidents involving stupidity (e.g. being drunk, not wearing a life jacket) and/or difficult conditions (flood stage rivers or Class V rapids). Females, on the other hand, were more likely to die from bad luck (e.g. being fallen upon by a bridge jumper, drowning after being ejected from a commercially guided raft, etc.).

#### Causes of Gender Differences

What trends emerge from these numbers? First, as shown by the roughly similar proportion of males and females among Nantahala River commercial raft passengers, there seems to be a relatively small difference between men and women in their general interest in outdoor experiences involving moving water. Second, as summarized in Figure 6, as the level of difficulty increases from being passenger in a guided raft on a Class II river to making a first descent down a difficult river, the

proportion of women dramatically decreases.

There is no shortage of possible explanations of the robust findings that the ratio of women to men declines as skill level and river difficulty increase. Here are some contenders:

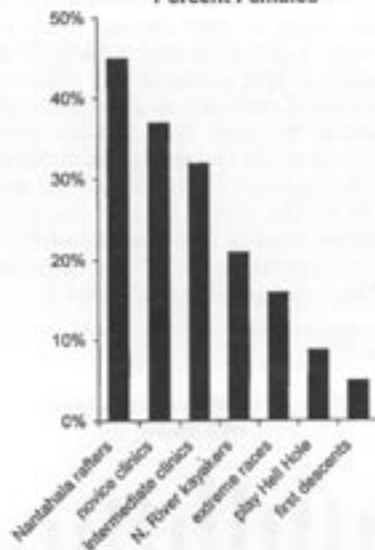
1. Psychoanalytic Theory—Long and thin,





Figure 6

## Summary of Trends—Percent Females



kayaks, like the male afflictions of guns and cigars, are substitutes for anatomical insecurities.

2. Jungian Theory — Male kayakers are acting out "The Hero" archetype that inhabits our collective unconscious. (I am skeptical but my colleague Maurice swears it is true.)

3. Social Learning Theory — More extreme whitewater is macho. Society teaches men to be macho via dads, peers, TV, etc.

4. Leisure time — Women have more serious concerns in their lives (e.g., raising children), leaving men with more time on their hands for outdoor thrills and chills.

5. Hormones — Males suffer from testosterone poisoning.

6. Evolution — Our minds carry the imprint of millions of years of evolutionary history. Risk taking behaviors can have high costs (e.g., death), but also potentially high benefits in terms of increased reproductive fitness. Successful male risk-takers would pass down lots of genes to the next generation, making them evolutionary winners as compared to wimps. This applies less to women because of their more limited reproductive potential. (While it seems silly at first glance, this idea deserves to be taken seriously and was expanded upon by Perri Rothemich in a recent *AW* article.)

7. Physical differences — There are more male than female linebackers because men have more muscle mass. Ditto boating. (I don't buy this theory. It seems to me that finesse is much more important than sheer strength in kayaking. My 95 pound daughter can out-rodeo me and most of my male buddies any day of the week.)

8. Differences in intelligence — Kayaking is a stupid and dangerous sport, and men are dumber than women. (My wife likes this theory; I don't.)

In reality, I think there may be a simpler explanation lying in the geometry of statistical distributions and the inevitability of behavioral variation. Take, for example, gender differences in SAT tests that are the bane of college juniors and seniors. There is a small but "statistically significant" difference in SAT math scores of males and females who take the test in high school — males, on average, score a bit higher than females on the test. While this difference is real, it does not mean much. If the only thing you know about a person is that they have an average math SAT score, you cannot guess with any accuracy if they are a male or a female. This changes at the extremes. Over the past 20 years, thousands of extraordinarily bright 13 and 14 year-olds have been given the SAT as a way of screening for "giftedness." While all of these kids are smart, some are off the map when it comes to math. Of the small proportion of the little geniuses that score in the top 2%, the ratio of men to women is 13 to 1.

What does this have to do with boating? I suggest that gender differences in SAT math scores merely reflect a fundamental attribute of what statisticians call "normal distributions" — bell-shaped curves in which most people fall in the middle with many fewer at either extreme. The shape of the curve makes for a general principle — small differences in group averages will inevitably make for big differences at the extremes; the greater the extreme, the larger the disproportion of representation of the groups.

This may be what is happening with gender differences in whitewater activities. Assume for a moment that there is a set of factors that make up a hypothetical trait related to enjoyment of whitewater activities. Let's call it "aquaphilia." Assume also that the trait is distributed along the bell curve. That is, most people have some mild attraction to moving water, some are very attracted to it, and some have an aversion. Mild whitewater activities (e.g., rafting the Nantahala) would be an indicator of moderate levels of the trait. At this level, like SAT math scores, males are slightly more represented than females (roughly 55% vs 45%). As in the case of SAT scores, as we advance to more extreme levels of aquaphilia, the proportion of men increases substantially and the proportion of women decreases. Indeed, the ratio men to women in an activity such as first descents is quite close to the 13 to 1 level of over representation of males among junior high math prodigies.

This argument is not sexist. Whether the origins of group average differences in "aquaphilia" among men and women lie in environment or biology or some combination of the two is irrelevant to this model. Certainly, both culture and learning are involved in gender differences in whitewater activities. On the other hand, I think that it would be naive to discount the role of hormonal, genetic and evolutionary factors.

But even biology is not destiny. Gender differences in SAT math scores are not as large as they were 20 years ago, and while there are still more males than females among math prodigies, the ratio is changing. My guess is that the same trend will hold true for whitewater. For example, it used to be rare to see a woman playing in Hell Hole. This year, on each of the half dozen or so trips I have made to the Ocoee, there have been more and more women patiently waiting their turn in the inevitable line. The bottom line is that more females on more rivers will make for a better experience for us all.

I would like to thank Linda Dyke, Janet Smith, James Jackson, and Gordon Black of the Nantahala Outdoor Center for allowing access to NOC data. Special thanks to Christy Barbee for the hours she put in gathering data at Nantahala Falls and from the pages of *American Whitewater* and to Maurice Phipps for counting the Hell Hole hawks.



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# Back on the Water

by April Holladay

The day starts at 1:30 in the morning. It's twilight here on the Mackenzie River above the Arctic Circle. On the 9th of July, it never gets dark. A good thing because Dick and I are paddling by 2:15 a.m. to escape early-afternoon winds. The water—calm and beautiful—subtly repeats the sky display in blues, mauves, and lavenders. Gradually peach and yellow creep into the palette.

The sun comes up about 4:30, then sets, then rises as we pass hilly banks. Precipitous hills run right to the shore. We paddle past spruce and an occasional grove of birch trees for nine hours then stop at a snow-melt stream gushing into the river. Lunch! Clear streamwater, jerky, granola, and dried apples. Then back to paddling for another five hours. We reach a burned-out area before the winds come up. Too tired to go any farther. We made fifty-five miles today.

That was 9th of July 1994—four years ago. I have not paddled since. That July, my husband and I canoed the Mackenzie alone from its source at the Great Slave Lake a thousand miles to the Arctic Ocean where it splits into hundreds of channels. Now I'm on my own and it's time to get back on the water. Paddling a canoe alone, though, presents a balance problem. I must sit next to one side of the canoe, rather than in the middle, to reach my paddle in the water. So I'm tipping the canoe to that side and raising the other side out of the water, which makes the canoe less stable and exposes more area for the wind to catch.

"Why not a kayak?" asks John, a Canadian cousin.

A superb idea—kayaks: low to the water, a narrow hull, built for solo paddling, and a cockpit balanced in the middle.

Centuries ago Eskimos created the kayak and plied it among ice floes stalking seals. It was a hunting craft used also to intercept migrating caribou as they crossed lakes and rivers. The ancient Eskimo kayak was resilient, durable, light, and swift. Many were about 18 feet long, two feet wide, and less than 26 pounds. The Eskimos stretched seal-skin over a frame of bone and driftwood. They lashed the skin to the frame with sinew and rubbed animal fat into the skin to waterproof the covering. An Eskimo sat in a small cockpit in the middle of the kayak, fastened his waterproof parka around the cockpit rim, and stayed dry even when huge icy waves broke over him. Today Eskimos use motor-boats.

Kayak design varies with function: sea kayaking or whitewater kayaking. The kind of kayak I choose depends on what I want to do. Do I want to slip effortlessly through the water charting my way across vast seas? Then a sleek 17-foot stable kayak that tracks well with plenty of storage sounds good. Or does careening a wild course among boulders, souse holes, haystacks, and rollers appeal? In that case, I need a shorter, maneuverable one. I decide to start on a quiet lake and rent while I check out the sport. A rental sea kayak weighs about 55 pounds, a far cry from the 26-pound Eskimo design.

"Modern technology is not keeping up with the ancients," I mutter as I wrestle our 57-pound canoe on top of the 4-Runner. I'm in training for kayaking. I figure if I can get our canoe up, I can load the kayak. Two men have no trouble loading a kayak. A man and a woman can do it fairly easily. A lone man has to work at it and a lone woman struggles but she can manage, especially with a boat cart. A step stool provides better leverage pushing the kayak on the roof and reaching the fittings and buckles up there. I make it.

Now, do I just put in? All by myself? Maybe a course would help. Kayaking, however, is simple.

"You don't need a course if you're just kayaking on a lake even if you've never been in a kayak before," Mike Hanselman says. He runs the Wolf Whitewater School in New Mexico. "Kayaks are stable. I'd be surprised if you \*could\* tip one over on a lake."

I wonder about wet exits—a maneuver for getting out of a kayak if it tips over—but learn I do not need a course.

"You'll just fall out," Mike assures me, "sea kayaks are roomy and easy to get out of." I need common sense about the weather and a few paddling strokes. Maybe I'll take his class later when I'm ready to run rivers again. I read up on kayak paddling and then practice strokes with a canoe paddle while sitting on a kitchen chair.

I check with REI about renting. REI rents an Aqua Terra Spectrum Expedition kayak for \$25 a day. It comes with a good-fitting life jacket, a paddle, a kayak skirt, flotation fitted into the kayak, and a kit for mounting the kayak to your car. That takes care of basic equipment, except for adding a throw bag—a float bag containing a long length of bright orange and yellow rope. You throw it to a swimmer in trouble and tow him to shore. What to wear: shorts or fast-drying long

pants, long-sleeve shirt (the summer sun gets fierce on a lake), jacket, fast-drying socks, tennis shoes, broad-brimmed hat with strap, sun screen, sunglasses with strap, and a change of clothes.

At 4:45 a.m. my alarm goes off. The plan: get on the water early and get off before the winds come up. My daughter, Betty, a non-boater, says she will go with me as a safety back-up but only this once. We get to the lake about 8, unload the kayak, put it on the boat cart, and roll it down to the lake. I don the kayak skirt—tricky. Balancing myself half on the shore and half on the boat with each blade of the double paddle, I swing my rear end aboard the kayak. A quick fasten of skirt to kayak and I am ready. We launch from the beach by 9:30. I dip my paddle into the water and sweep into a nearby cove. Turning this way and that, now forward, now backward, a sideways draw. So different from a canoe, more responsive, similar strokes. Swirling and dancing, on the water again—indescribably grand. I return to Betty. "You want to try?" I ask. "Yes." Mixed emotions flit across her face. I bring the kayak around to the cove. Betty settles into the craft. I push the stern afloat. Her blue eyes look tremulous. I push the bow afloat. She gingerly pokes her paddle in the water. Within ten minutes she is paddling down the cove full speed, brown hair fluttering in the breeze.

"It's interesting," she says as she copes with making the kayak do what she wants it to do. "I like it! It's an adventure." Her eyes sparkle. She wants to come with me the next time and the next. Totally hooked.

We made only a mile today but it's a start...

---

*Biographical Information — A couple of years ago April retired early from computer engineering to canoe down Canada's largest river, the Mackenzie. For forty-six days she and her husband paddled alone a thousand miles through remote Canadian wilderness to the Arctic Ocean. Now she writes two columns — one on the outdoors and the other about nature and science — for New Mexican newspapers.*

# Briefs

## Red Creek West Virginia Boaters Beware

Veteran West Virginia creeker Mike Moore has reported that a new sieve/ undercut has appeared about half way down the class V+ section of Red Creek. The "deathtrap" is immediately preceded by a 200 yard long slide. The boulders that created the sieve were previously located upstream in the slide, but were apparently moved downstream by floodwaters. As of the spring of 1998 several trees were lying across the river just upstream of the slide/ sieve, warning of the impending danger.

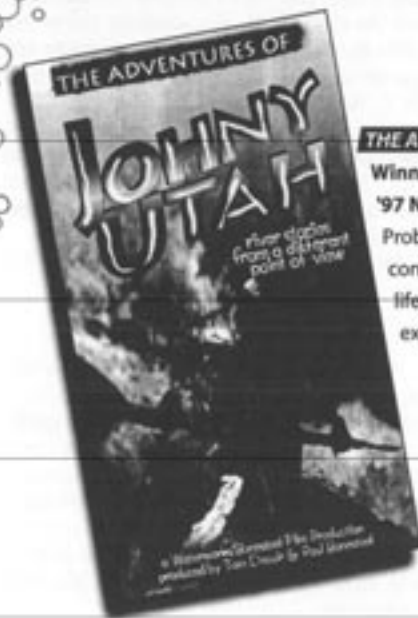


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# The Upper Yough Race

## 1998 Results

### Sorted by Finish Time

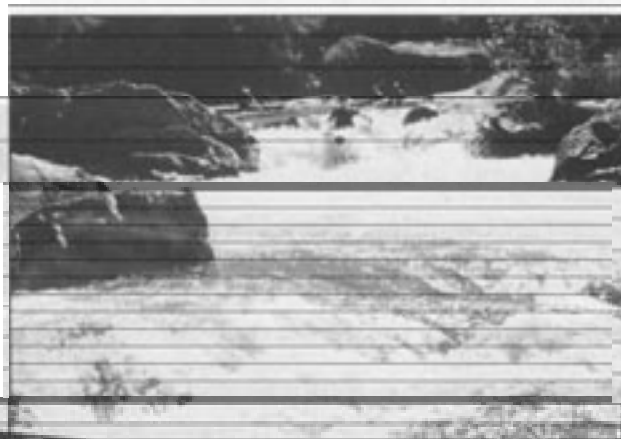
wwk1 ..... Traditional composite wildwater boat (14'9")  
 wh ..... Perception Wave Hopper (13'2")  
 Beluga ..... Prijon's plastic touring/wildwater design (14')  
 k1 ..... Kayaks 11' to 13'2"  
 c/p ..... Creek/Play kayak under 11'  
 k2 ..... Two person kayak  
 duk ..... Single person duckie  
 dbl-duk ..... Two person duckie  
 oc ..... e n canoe

### RESULTS

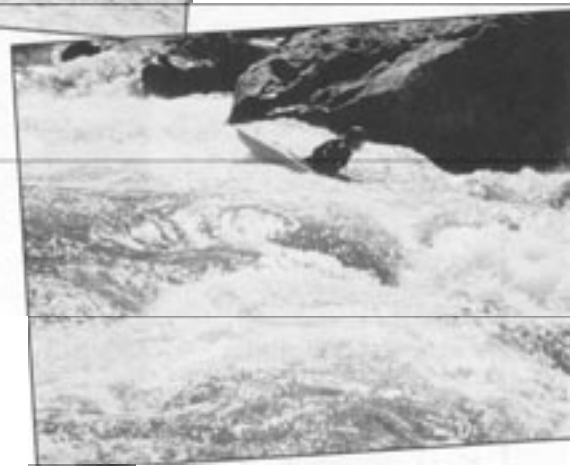
1- Roger Zbel	28:25	wwk1
2- Ted Newton	30:30	wh
3- Jess Whittemore	30:52	wh
4- Brian Homberg	30:57	Beluga
5- Steve Kauffman	31:08	wwk1
6- Phil Coleman	32:57	k1
7- Charles Stump	33:18	wh
8- Scott Stough	33:22	wh
9- Mike Herrera	33:25	wh
10- Ken Kyser	33:29	k1
11- David Persolja	33:53	k1
12- Colleen Laffey	34:36	wh
13- Marc Harman	34:51	wh
14- Curtis Rohrbaugh	34:58	c/p
15- Bill Heller	35:17	k1
16- Jeffery S. Nelson	35:20	k1
17- Jarion O'Carroll	35:50	c/p
18- Don Huber	35:59	k1
19- Shannon Carroll	36:10	k1
20- Allen Sughrue	36:46	k2
21- Tracy Hines	37:03	k1
22- Bob Wallace	37:05	c/p
23- John Edmunds	37:47	duk

24- Nick Zervos	38:12	c/p
25- Ron Whitney	38:21	k1
26- Bob Opachho	38:29	c/p
27- Bill Young Jr.	38:31	c/p
28- Chris Walton	38:36	c/p
29- Eric Henrickson	38:43	k1
30- Jamie Simon	39:12	c/p
31- David McFaden	39:12	c/p
32- Matt Muir	39:32	k1
33- Blauvelt Hamlin	39:37	k2

34- Zach Davis	40:07	c/p
35- Lisa Nolan	41:20	c/p
36- Chaney Howell	41:31	duk-cbl
37- Steve Frazier	41:37	oc
38- Hanley Lotier	41:54	k1
39- Nolan Whitesell	42:22	oc
40- Ron Alexander	42:57	c/p
41- John Dordorf	45:52	oc
42- Tim Spangler	46:27	oc
43- Lindsay Blauvelt	46:28	c/p (hand paddled)
44- Paul Jeffrion	58:03	oc



Lindsey Blauvelt became the first woman to hand paddle the Upper yough Race in 1998. Here she paddles Meat Clever on the Upper Yough. Photo by Bill Young







# Pennsylvania Dams for Sale

By Scott Cuppett, Regional Coordinator

How often do 5 reservoirs within a two-county region go up for sale on the public market? Not too often. Yet, that is exactly what is happening in Southwestern Pennsylvania in Cambria and Somerset Counties. Manufacturers Water Company, a subsidiary of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, is selling their assets. These assets include 5 reservoirs that were once important to making steel in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and helped fuel this county's industrial revolution. Those who have paddled the Stonycreek River (Pennsylvania) have paddled over one these reservoirs, Border Dam, which forms an annoying pool half way through the

Bethlehem Steel because of the need to maintain water quality for human consumption.

Numerous local groups have persuaded public officials from Cambria and Somerset Counties to try and purchase the reservoirs. This would allow the public to have input into how the reservoirs will be operated. These groups fear that the reservoirs might fall into the hands of private developers, who would likely exploit and degrade the watershed. Enough public support was mustered to convince the local officials to place an offer to buy the reservoirs. Unfortunately, the offer was recently turned-down by the steel giant, but negotiations continue.

The change of ownership of these dams from private industry to the public sector would allow local grassroots groups and American Whitewater to promote recreational paddling. Occasional recreational releases from the Quemahoning Dam into the Stonycreek River could be a part of the new permit and the reservoirs could be open to leisure canoeing and kayaking.

As is the case in many old water allocation permits, the permit for the Quemahoning Dam provides no provisions for conservation, yet alone recreational purposes. But there is plenty of water in this dam to provide occasional recreational releases to the Stonycreek River. The Stonycreek River is a nice class III, and at higher water, class IV. The Quemahoning Dam holds back 1/3 of the Stonycreek watershed. As it now stands, water that does not go over the spillway does not go into the stream below.

We hope that whoever buys these reservoirs and the surrounding property (1200 acres of land under water and 4,000 acres of land surrounding the lakes) will consider conservation and recreational paddling. Stonycreek could be a huge asset to paddlers, many other outdoor enthusiasts, and the local economies. The local paddling and conservation communities are united in the effort to obtain, promote, and conserve this valuable asset.

The "gem" of these 5 reservoirs is the 12.5 billion gallon Quemahoning Dam. It empties into the Stonycreek about 2 miles upstream of the Stonycreek put-in. This dam covers 880 acres with water, while the surrounding property is over 2,300 acres. Currently, the Quemahoning Dam retains water for a handful of industrial and commercial customers, but this demand is less than half what it was at the turn of the century.

The Quemahoning Dam and the other reservoirs remain relatively pristine with no development on their banks or power boats and jet skis on their waters. Members of a small sports club on the Quemahoning Dam are the only individuals who have access to any of the reservoirs. They are allowed to fish with small electric-powered boats. Keeping these reservoirs void of development and exploitation has been a priority for the



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# First Tygart race a great success

Valley Falls State Park, located near Fairmont, West Virginia, provided the perfect setting for the first annual Valley Falls Downriver Sprint, hosted by the Clarksburg Kayak Club, based just down I-79 in Clarksburg, W. Va. The idea for the event developed over a year ago when Park Superintendent Ron Fawcett approached club members with the idea of putting together a race at the park. To many whitewater boaters, an approaching state park ranger is not an experience to be relished. But for those who know Ron Fawcett, such an approach is always welcome. Ron regularly shuttles boats and boaters back from the takeout on this Class IV run on the Tygart River and always has time to chat with

paddlers. Ron's attitude toward boating on the Tygart and toward boaters is a far cry from the days not too long ago when state park officials had banned boating through the park. Club members Bill Sedivy (an AW director), Todd LaNeve and Dave Berry spearheaded the efforts to gain race sponsors and see to administrative details. With the assistance of other club members and generous donations from several area paddling shops and other businesses the first race was a great success. By race time, 28 kayakers, including two women had registered. Participants came from as far away as Cleveland and Chillicothe, Ohio, the Pittsburgh area, Maryland, New Jersey, and, of course, from West Virginia. A number of racers were first-timers on the run, but that didn't slow the field at all as practice runs were allowed so that racers could find the fastest and safest lines. The course covered about 3/4 of a mile and featured two waterfalls, nine and 14- feet respectively, a Class III boulder garden and two Class IV drops with tight lines. Of the entire field, only one racer ran into trouble when his kayak washed into a dangerous pinning slot in the last rapid, Twist and Shout. However, boaters and local volunteer firefighters stationed at the drop for safety were able to get the paddler out of his boat in quick fashion, after which he dove back into the water and swam across the finish line! Prizes were awarded to the three boaters with the fastest time. First place, a \$350 gift certificate for Mountain Surf of Friendsville, Md, was awarded to Steve Kauffman of Friendsville. Second place, a \$250 gift certificate to Mountain State Kayak & Canoe of Fayetteville, W. Va., was awarded to Mark Harman, also of Friendsville. Third place, a \$100 gift certificate to Staark Moon Kayak Company, also in Fayetteville, was awarded to Mike Herrera of Martinsburg, W. Va. Other major sponsors of the event included Big Dog Publications of Clarksburg, Berry Energy Consultants of Clarksburg, Hometown Hot Dogs of Grafton, W. Va., Microsystems of Buckhannon, W. Va., the Law Offices of Todd LaNeve, Clarksburg, the Three Rivers Paddling Club of Pittsburgh and the American Canoe Association. Proceeds from the event — although there wasn't much money left over this first year — were donated to American Whitewater and the Valley Falls Park Foundation.



All photos are by Bob Shaw, Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram, at the second big drop, a 14-footer, in the Valley Falls section of the Tygart. Above, Andy Rice of Chillicothe, OH, tries out his rodeo boat in the race.

## Veteran Kayaker Doug Gordon Killed in Tibet

Doug Gordon, an experienced expeditionary paddler and a former member of the U.S. Whitewater Slalom Team, died October 16 while attempting to traverse a 140 mile section of the Tsangpo River in eastern Tibet. Gordon was reportedly swept into an immense hydraulic in a lethal set of rapids and was never seen again. His companions, brothers Jamie and Tom McEwan and Roger Zbel, spent several days searching a ten mile segment of the rugged gorge downstream, but were unable to locate his body. Veteran explorer Wic Walker, who was providing ground support, joined them.

As this issue of American Whitewater goes to press the team is returning home, having decided not to attempt the river downstream of the accident site. The expedition had been funded by grants from National Geographic and Malden Mills and was being covered by National Public Radio via satellite linkage. The Tsangpo, which is fed by melting glaciers, was reportedly running two to three times higher than the team had anticipated. The river has been described as the Everest of Whitewater and has never successfully paddled. Flows range from 10,000 to 100,000

cfs with an average gradient of 65 feet/mile. Surrounded by mountains towering to 25,000 feet, the Tsangpo is located in an extremely remote region that is exceptionally difficult to access. Doug Gordon's wife, Connie, and two children, ages 2 and 5, survive. Doug was currently working on doctorate in chemistry at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Gordon had been a member of the U.S. Slalom Team from 1981-87. He had also participated in expeditionary runs in northern Quebec, Mexico and British Columbia.

# 1998 Gore Canyon Race Results

## Flow was 930 cfs.

### Womens K-1:

1	Kelly Murphy	25:09
2	Marcia Ready	25:17
3	Bradley Richmond	25:47
4	Courtney Lynch	26:02
5	Christina Spring	26:13
6	Niki Mehall	26:41
7	Andi Burnite	27:21
8	Rebecca Hynes	30:19

### Greater than 12' K-1:

1	Nelson Oldham	19:53	Wavehopper
2	Charlie MacArthur	20:34	Wavehopper
3	Bryn Dreher	21:23	Wavehopper
4	Chris Webster	22:15	Mistle
5	Arlo Grammatica	22:15	Mark V
6	John Placek	22:35	
7	John Mattson	22:56	Tai-fun
8	Andrew Waters	23:01	
9	Charlie Beavers	23:05	
10	Jed Shelby	23:06	
11	Scott Fraser	28:47	
12	Make Pagel	DNF	Wavehopper

### 9' - 12' K-1:

1	A.D. Fog	21:16
2	Tim Kennedy	21:42
3	Ted Keyes	21:45
4	Billy Matteson	21:45
5	BJ Johnson	21:59
6	Andy Oreilly	22:01
7	Sean Vierling	22:10
8	Paul Byars	22:22
9	Charlie Ebol	22:25
10	Ali Donald	22:44
11	David Dill	22:46
12	Dave Zinn	22:51
13	Jono Stevens	22:58
14	Wayne Amsbury	23:01
15	Chris Adelman	23:05
16	Shane Robinson	23:05
17	Thomas Aex	23:05
18	Mark Hoverdestad	23:22
19	Jason Boyer	23:35
20	Todd Gilman	23:38
21	Craig Kisker	23:55
22	Terry Delliquadi	23:56
23	Brett Ziehmke	24:22
24	Sam Cox	25:34
25	Ken Ransford	26:01
26	Randy Kennedy	26:32
27	Scott Eckert	28:02

### Less than 9' K-1:

1	Alexander Nicks	22:58
2	Brent Toepper	23:05
3	Craig Bishop	23:17
4	Andy Bedinsfield	23:35

5	Jeff Parker	23:38
6	Ken Hoeve	23:50
7	Carl Lavtar	23:59
8	Jason Mommer	24:01
9	William Finnoff	24:32
10	John Banker	24:44
11	Matt Mehall	24:53
12	Dan Mitchell	24:58
13	Keith Fortin	25:00
14	Forest Luna	25:01
15	Jim Foley	25:09
16	Sean Glackin	25:14
17	Greg Francis	25:24
18	Jeff Deutsch	25:32
19	David Brittan	25:43
20	Jonathan Fugua	25:45
21	Robby Dastin	25:46
22	Steve Tegtmeyer	25:49
23	Tony Quinn	25:59
24	Nathan Seeby	26:22
25	Todd Andrew	30:50
26	Joe Blar	30:58
27	Ed Lucero	33:33
28	Gary Pera	DNS

### C-1:

1	Barry Harden	32:32
---	--------------	-------

### Boogie Board:

1	Matt Young	34:25
2	Gary Pera	DNS

### Rafts:

1	Fiddlestix	26:53
2	No Substitute 4 Experience	27:56
3	Black Diamond Exp.	28:15
4	Nova Guides	29:37
5	Kind Line	30:52
6	Punk Ass BWR #2	31:44
7	Brek WW #1	36:22
8	Mad 1	36:25
9	Earli Birds	36:48
10	Chickenheads	39:40
11	Team Tabernash	42:10
12	Team Bart	DNF

### Cataracts:

1	Los Pistoleros de Ska	??:??
---	-----------------------	-------

### SOTAR Cup Regional:

1	Rob and the Rookies	27:33
2	Big Blue Poon	27:57
3	Riff Raft Aspen	28:07
4	Oh Mierda	28:31
5	Timberline Flashback	28:47
6	Riparian Spirit	32:40
7	River Runners	57:14

## Kids Corner



From left to right: Brent Reitz, Austin Krissoff, Nathan Krissoff, Andrew McEwan, Tom Weir, Sven Hoosen

## U.S. JUNIOR WILDWATER RACERS COMPETE IN AUSTRIA

By Austin Krissoff

I came around the blind corner in my 14' fiberglass race boat and practically rear ended my brother in front of me, frantically backpaddling above another blind drop. In an effort to avoid a collision I went in to a flurry of backpaddling, fueled by sheer adrenaline. My brother was able to catch an eddy on the left, but I was forced to take the drop as the river swept me right, through a chute, and directly toward a huge boulder. Without any time to fight the current, I was against it... WHACK! Suddenly, I was broadside, upside down, against the up side of the river. Off came the spray skirt and I was swimming... in the chilly Salaach river. Thus began my first day of training for the Junior Wildwater Championships in Lofer, Austria.

Last June, 5 juniors were selected from the USA to attend the 'Worlds,' slated for July 11th and 12th. My brother, Nathan, and I, Andrew McEwan, Sven Hoosen, and Tom Weier (C-1) made the trip. Brent Reitz, seven-time National Wildwater Champ, our coach, was also able to go.

The training week that led up to the day of the race was busy and exhausting. The first day that we put in on the river, the top section was very creek, with just a trickle running through, making it difficult to maneuver around obstacles. That afternoon, it began to rain. We sadly watched the river rapidly rise to almost flood stage by the middle of the week. Daily, we struggled to find our lines, amidst logs, trees, and the Japanese boaters,

who didn't want to miss any training opportunities. In fact, three of the women paddlers lost their boats and nearly, their lives. The river raged. We slogged through our runs... did fiberglass repair when needed and hoped that the skies would clear by race day.

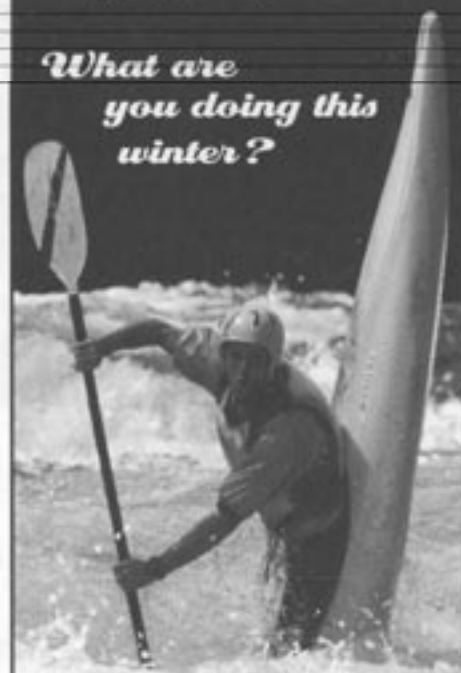
By the day of the race, Austrian officials had shortened the course considerably, eliminating a diversion dam and a tricky top section, but leaving the bottom rapid as a finish, below a grueling flat section. Race day was damp and drizzly but a great improvement over the preceding week. We all felt confident about our conditioning and our lines. The training week was tough, but critical. Even though the level of the river was radically different from day to day, we became familiar with the nuances of every section and were able to map out a very precise strategy. We all paddled well and made a decent showing for the USA, especially Andrew, who finished 11th. The Slovenians, Germans, French and Croatians, who came with A and B teams, men and women, dominated the individual and team races.

We were impressed with the widespread popularity of boating in Europe. Racing teams are well funded and enthusiastically supported. We came away hoping to generate more interest in our country in wildwater racing. In the meantime, we continue to train and plan to attend the pre-Worlds next summer in France.

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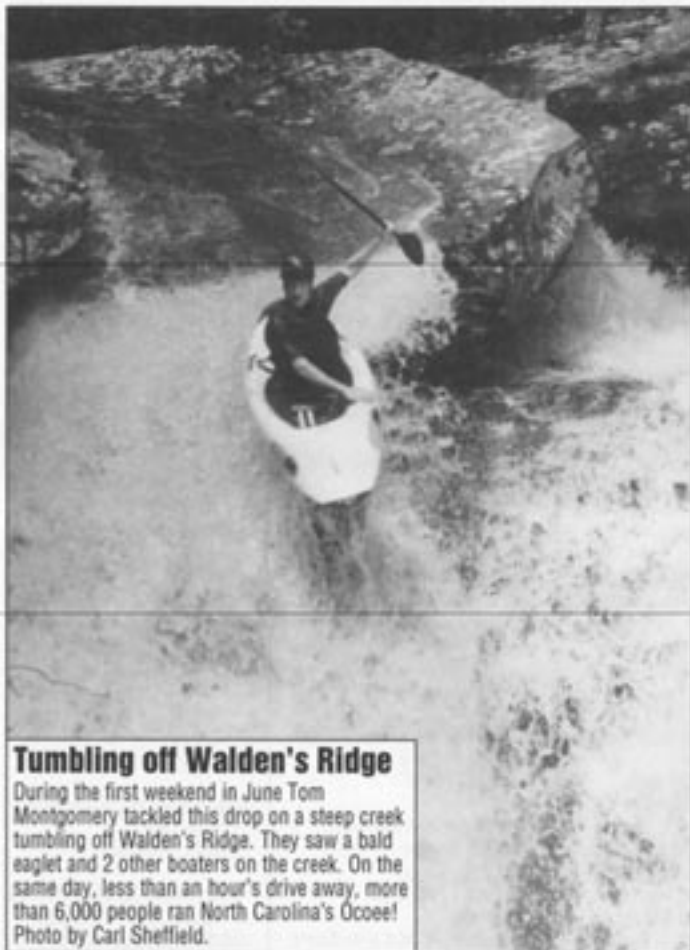
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# □ Photo Feature □



## Tumbling off Walden's Ridge

During the first weekend in June Tom Montgomery tackled this drop on a steep creek tumbling off Walden's Ridge. They saw a bald eaglet and 2 other boaters on the creek. On the same day, less than an hour's drive away, more than 6,000 people ran North Carolina's Ocoee! Photo by Carl Sheffield.



## Leaving the Eddy

Rush Peace running Bald River Falls, Tellico Plains, TN. Photo by Julie Keller



## Scouting Iron Ring

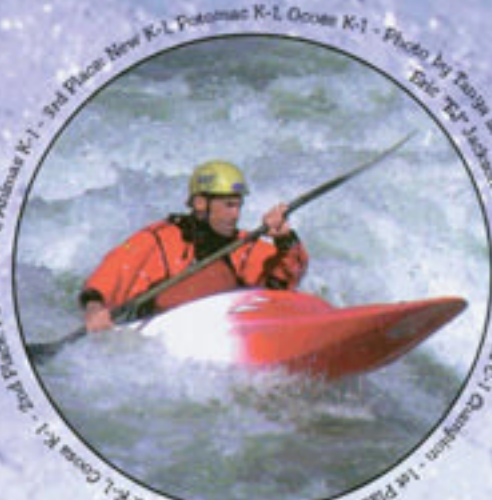
Veteran Gauley River paddler Colleen Laffey shot this photo at Iron Ring Rapid several years before vandals stole the artifact for which the rapid was named. © C.M.Laffey 1983



# WAVE SPORT



1998 NOWR Point Series Champion  
Photo by Tanya Shuman



1st Place: New K-L Potomac K-L Ocoee K-L - Photo by Tanya Shuman  
2nd Place: Potomac C-L Annapolis K-L - Photo by Tanya Shuman  
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1st Place: Santa Cruz Surf Slits - Photo by Tanya Shuman  
2nd Place: Kanawake Kootenay - Photo by Tanya Shuman  
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1st Place: NOWR Point Series - Photo by Tanya Shuman  
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1st Place: Wausau Outer Banks Ocoee - Photo by Tanya Shuman  
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1st Place: Kanawake Kootenay Wausau - Photo by Tanya Shuman  
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1st Place: Annapolis K-L Ocoee K-L - Photo by Tanya Shuman  
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Congratulations to all of Team Wave Sport for a rippin' '98 season. WS results include a clean sweep of the top three places in both Men's & Women's NOWR Point Series Championships. Individual rodeo wins: 42 first places, 33 second places, 26 third places. For more about Wave Sport, call (970)736-0080 or surf [www.wavesport.com](http://www.wavesport.com)





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