

Request for Proposals American Whitewater Basic Whitewater Safety Films

With a recent grant from the United States Coast Guard, American Whitewater is launching a project to produce two films on basic whitewater safety. We are issuing this Request for Proposals for assistance in this effort.

1. Background and Issue Project Seeks to Address

Founded in 1954, American Whitewater is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission “to protect and restore America's whitewater rivers and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.” American Whitewater is a membership organization representing a broad diversity of individual whitewater enthusiasts, river conservationists, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates across America. Our organization shares river safety, conservation, management, and logistical information with over 1 million people who access our website annually, through our social media channels, and through email and print media channels including the American Whitewater Journal. River safety is a core component of our mission, message, and advocacy. We have collected and shared accident reports for the whitewater community for the past 50 years, representing the most comprehensive documentation of boating-related accidents on whitewater rivers and their causes. Our National Whitewater Inventory is an interactive database that provides paddlers of all abilities with current flow information and detailed descriptions of 5760 river reaches across the country; this database includes difficulty ratings, known river features and hazards under different flow conditions, and crowd-sourced alerts notifying the public of changed conditions. River safety is a central component of our river stewardship work and since the beginning of our organization’s history we’ve striven to increase whitewater paddler awareness of safety as an integral part of river running.

American Whitewater publishes the American Whitewater Safety Code that was originally developed in 1959. While the Safety Code is widely accepted and has been integrated into instructional programs across the country, many individuals visit rivers without exposure to, or awareness of, current whitewater rescue techniques and the hazards associated with whitewater boating. Building interest in river safety and educating paddlers in basic river safety skills, proper river running technique, and where and when rescue situations typically arise is a part of American Whitewater’s mission to enhance opportunities to enjoy rivers safely. Building on our experience and history as an organization committed to safety education, our relationships with river users who view us as a trusted source of safety information, and our leadership role within the boating community, we believe we are uniquely qualified to produce films that communicate whitewater safety basics and expose them to a wide audience of river users.

American Whitewater is an equal opportunity employer.

2. Project Goals and Scope of Services

Through compelling and cinematic short films covering basic whitewater river safety, our project is designed to inform the boating public about the inherent risks associated with whitewater boating, to persuade the public to adopt safe boating behaviors, and to encourage their further education in safe river practices. This is a request for proposals to produce two (2) short films covering basic whitewater safety concepts and skills. Project anticipates approximately ten (10) days of shooting and scouting, at three (3) distinct and varied whitewater river locations. Contract firm will lead and complete pre-production, production, and post-production of films, alongside co-producer American Whitewater Communications Director Evan Stafford.

Among the specific priorities identified in this Area of Interest, our project will address the importance of boater education (especially of safety in whitewater), choosing (understanding the label) and wearing the appropriate life jacket, cold weather/water, consequences of irresponsible behavior on the water, boating under the influence, common hazards, safe river running techniques, and common rescue scenarios.

This project will respond to the growing popularity of paddlesports and the need to encourage safer recreational boating practices through exciting safety focused films that support further development of a safety culture within the paddlesports community. While very experienced whitewater paddlers are generally trained in whitewater safety, rivers attract individuals representing a wide range of skills and experience; this includes paddlers familiar with flat water or coastal boating, and those who may have picked up a recreational kayak or inner tube earlier in the day, both of who may have no familiarity with the inherent risks associated with boating on whitewater rivers or best-practice safe river running skills and techniques.

Widely distributed basic whitewater safety films will serve as an important educational tool to encourage safer boating practices by raising awareness of positive boating behaviors, identifying potential hazards, and by providing basic training for dealing with common rescue situations. This project will augment existing efforts to encourage river users to wear life jackets and will provide a tool for stakeholders to effectively educate the recreational boating public via easily-accessible online sources and at events with video showing capabilities.

Too many avoidable deaths have been caused by dams, strainers, and other knowable hazards, boaters not having the proper equipment, and paddlers not being educated in basic river running techniques and safety skills. The current challenge is to communicate basic whitewater safety messages to individuals who are likely to, or who already are, recreating on our nation's whitewater rivers. Current boating safety films cover flat-water river, lake, and coastal boating situations but do not adequately cover safety topics specific to whitewater rivers. Hazards and rescue situations specific to whitewater rivers exist on all whitewater rivers, even those rated the least difficult to paddle (Class I-III on the International Scale of River Difficulty). Currently no catalog of safety films addressing safety issues specific to whitewater is available

to boaters. Distribution of current boating safety films have also had a hard time reaching the greater whitewater community. Creating films that not only cover essential safety topics, but also contain exciting and interesting imagery of whitewater paddling and rescue scenarios, along with completion and execution of a well researched and thought-out film distribution plan, will ensure our films reach the widest audience possible.

Recreational boaters who are unfamiliar with the hazards present on whitewater rivers, safe boating practices, and basic whitewater rescue techniques will have access to vitally-important information that will enable them to make smart boating choices before, and while recreating on our nation's rivers.

Thousands of novice, beginner, and intermediate paddlers will:

- Understand pre-trip planning for whitewater rivers
- Understand essential equipment and clothing for whitewater river running, including basic rescue tools and how to use them
- Understand basic river running technique (i.e. paddling safely and efficiently as a group)
- Understand how to identify and avoid hazards specific to whitewater rivers (i.e. low-head dams, wood strainers, undercut rocks, recirculating hydraulics etc.)
- Understand how to self-rescue, and safe techniques for swimming in whitewater rivers (i.e. risk of foot entrapments)
- Understand how and where to set-up to provide safety for other paddlers at rapids and hazards (i.e. where to stand for throw-rope rescues, easy techniques for rescuing swimmers, stranded paddlers, and their equipment on the fly, etc.)
- Understand the value of continuing to practice and develop safe boating practices and rescue skills with their peer group and through licensed safety and rescue courses.

These films will be entry level oriented and will apply specifically to whitewater river running, however they will have themes that will be transferable to boating on oceans, lakes, and flat-water rivers. This project aims to lower preventable paddling-related deaths and injuries by improving the quality, effectiveness, and accessibility of safety messages for whitewater paddling using short films. We will measure the success of these outcomes by quantitatively measuring the reach of project films and their adoption by our partners and other relevant stakeholders. We expect wide adoption of these films by agencies who manage whitewater rivers, and anticipate that this project will be shared pro-actively by a vast array of river related organizations and industries across the nation.

Along with reaching thousands of individual river users with these films, adoption by a large number and wide range of river related non-profit groups, river and outdoor recreation manufactures, outfitters, rescue instructors, industry partners, river management professionals and government land management agencies is one of our overarching goals. The project's success will in part depend on their participation in our distribution plan, and in their buy-in to the relevance and educational value of our films. Our ultimate goal is to reduce boating fatalities

and accidents under the premise that making compelling, concise, and clear whitewater safety messages more widely available will result in a greater percentage of individuals engaging in safe boating practices.

3. Necessary Personnel and Associated Tasks

American Whitewater will retain the services of a contractor with vast experience in short film production and in working on whitewater rivers.

- Director: The Director will lead the pre-production and production days, and will manage the films' creative vision. They will give direction to the cast and crew to capture our vision on film. Director, with assistance from the Producer/Communications Director, will secure all necessary crew, permits and equipment for shooting. Days listed should include travel, scouting and shooting costs/days.
- Director of Photography: The Director of Photography will be responsible for making artistic and technical decisions related to the images captured and will decide equipment needs for production. Days listed should include travel, scouting and shooting costs/days.
- Post Production Editor: The Post Production Editor will, with the help of the Producer/Communications Director, storyline edit, and will video edit, sound edit, revise coloring, insert animations and visual effects, license music, create the deliverable films, and stay on through the viewing and start of airing phases of post production.
- Whitewater River Safety Experts (Talent): Talent will provide expert and recognizable faces to appear on film and deliver safety messages.

4. Skills and Experience of American Whitewater

We expect the successful applicant to utilize the skills and expertise of American Whitewater. American Whitewater staff have worked on dozens of river safety projects and have produced numerous films on river issues across the country. Evan Stafford is American Whitewater's Communication Director and will oversee the project. He has over 15 years of professional experience with communications (video, print, online, and email), whitewater safety instruction, whitewater racing event safety, and project management; he also has 10 years of experience camera operating, and producing and directing short films. Kevin Colburn is American Whitewater's National Stewardship Director and will provide technical expertise for this project; he has over 16 years of professional experience with river safety, risk management, and project management. Charlie Walbridge serves on the American Whitewater board and is a nationally recognized expert in whitewater safety and the organization's Safety Editor. Charlie, who led our most recent update to the Safety Code of American Whitewater, will provide editorial assistance in a volunteer capacity.

5. Anticipated Selection Schedule

The Request for Proposal timeline is as follows:

- Publication of Request for Proposal: August 10, 2020
- Deadline for Bidders to Submit Questions: August 24, 2020
- American Whitewater Responds to Bidder Questions: August 31, 2020
- Deadline for Proposals: September 11, 2020
- Selection of Top Bidders / Notification to Unsuccessful Bidders: September 18, 2020
- Start of Negotiation: September 18, 2020
- Contract Award: September 30, 2020

6. Time and Place of Submission of Proposals

Responses must be received no later than September 11, 2020. Responses should have the subject "Basic Whitewater Safety Films" and be emailed to Evan Stafford

<evan@americanwhitewater.org>

7. Timeline

American Whitewater needs the project completed by September 30, 2021. Applicants should provide an approximate timeline for the project that can meet this deadline with review steps.

8. Elements of Proposal

A submission must, at a minimum, include the following elements:

- Cover Letter – Summarize your firm's interest in working on this project and outline the firm's strengths and distinguishing skills or capabilities as they relate to American Whitewater and the project.
- Firm Information and Key Personnel – Describe the firm, individual, or team and fields of expertise. Identify the proposed project team. Supply names, brief summaries, roles for each team member, and qualifying experience.
- Previous Experience – Provide a representative selection of projects created for current and past clients that best illustrate qualifications for the project.
- Project Approach – Provide a narrative statement demonstrating an understanding of the overall intent of the RFP, as well as methods used to complete assigned tasks.
- Project Budget – Submit a proposed project budget itemized by task and total project cost.

7. Evaluation Criteria

The successful Applicant will:

- Demonstrate in the submission a high level of cinematic expertise and ability to create to completion films on basic whitewater safety.
- Demonstrate extensive prior experience in relevant film work.
- Have some experience with nonprofits and working on a nonprofit budget.

8. Budget

American Whitewater's budget for this project is ~\$25-35,000.