



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
January/February 2005

A photograph of five people in whitewater gear (helmets, jackets, waders) on a rocky river. They are using ropes to assist a person who is in the water. The scene is dynamic with white water rapids and large grey rocks.

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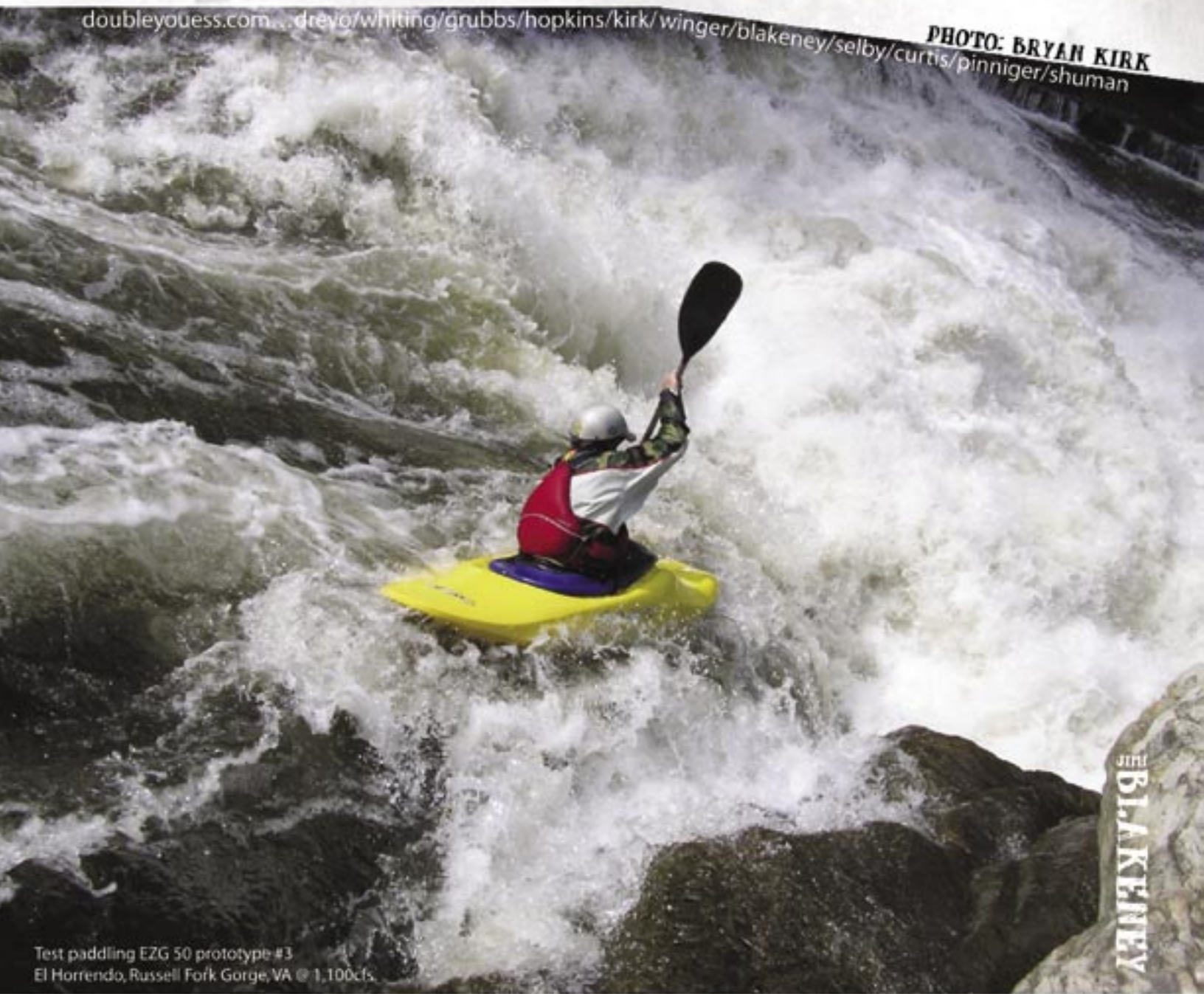
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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

Columns:

- **Safety First! Protect Your Head** by Eric Nies 4
- **Letters to the Editor** by Todd Hoffman 6
- **The Journey Ahead** by Mark Singleton..... 7
- **History: To PFD or Not** by Sue Taft..... 8
- **AW News: Taxes to Charity** 9
- **Safe Winter Boating** by Clay Wright 10
- **Big Water Surf Alert!** by Tanya Shuman..... 12

Features:

- **Accident Prevention** by Andrew Jillings 14
- **Compressed Air** by Dr. Thomas Johnson 18
- **Accident Summary 2004** by Charlie Walbridge..... 20
- **California Madness** by Fred Coriell 26
- **3 Girls are Better Than 1** by Nikki Kelly 30
- **River Story / Photo Contest** 38

Conservation and Access

- **Regional Updates**..... 40
- **River Stewardship Institute**..... 52

River Voices

- **Winter Creaking** by Sandi Metz 56
- **Politics** by Kevin Colburn 61
- **A Dog's Lament** by Barbara Wiedemann 62
- **Stone Valley Smackdown** by The Dogg 64
- **Don't be Afraid to Rock the Boat** by Adam Herzog.. 67
- **Charlotte WW Park - update**..... 68
- **Surviving the Winter** by Ambrose Tuscano..... 69

Events

- **National Paddling Film Festival** 63

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Bill Sheppel being roped into the water to biner off a pinned boat on the Russell Fork River. Photo by Jimmy Blakeney



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Volume XLVI, No.1

F E A T U R E S

Field Notes

Winter Boating

pg. 10

Seven Rivers Expedition

California Madness

pg. 26

AW River Story / Photo

Contest

pg. 38



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Purpose American Whitewater

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

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 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 Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1424 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone 1-866-BOAT-4-AW or 1-866-262-8429. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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Safety First Protect Your Head

by Eric Nies

Editor's Note:

American Whitewater is proud to unveil the newest section of the Journal: Safety First. In future issues, look here for discussions of the newest, most important issues in whitewater safety from some of the most recognized names in the field.

What's on Your Noggin'?

When I was a river newbie in the '70's, the mark of the hot boater was the old Ace helmet. This light, low-profile unit looked mighty sharp, and offered slightly more protection than a stout bandanna. Wearing the Ace sent a clear message: "I am so damn good that I will never, ever hit my head."

Nowadays the original Aces are hard to find. I lost mine when it fell off my head and sank. I bet that John Regan, godfather of the Upper Yough, still has one in a closet somewhere (clear green, very cool), but I notice that now Johnnie has upgraded to a lid with some heft to it.

So have I. The last time I bought a helmet, I went to every whitewater web page I could find and ordered the biggest, burliest thing I saw. Every company makes that one big, ugly helmet (usually called the "Creek Dork" or "Loozer"), along with about 20 other cool sparkly rodeo beanies. The big helmet is usually available in brown, safety orange, and gray. I bought gray.

What's on the Market?

There are lots of helmets out there, so how do you tell the good from the bad? I like a helmet with a thick, stout shell that I can't bend with my hands. Some of the older plastic helmets, in particular, are so flexy that you could hold the helmet with your fingertips and touch the earflaps together. Thank you, but no. Also, I've seen some super-skinny Kevlar or fiberglass helmets used by racers (usually brought back from the last Euro-trip) that just don't seem to have enough heft for real river-running. Most of the mainstream whitewater helmet-makers are building fairly robust helmet shells these days. If your helmet seems a little wimpy to you, it probably is. Chuck it, and buy something solid.

Next, look at the foam. There should be a lot of it, and it should be pretty solid. Some makers use minicell, the familiar gray foam used for kayak walls and hip pads. Minicell (so the thinking goes) is smoochy enough to fit well, but dense enough to absorb and disperse a hit. Minicell has a reasonable track record: I know of several instances when boaters have taken super-hard hits on Class V, busted a stout Kevlar and minicell helmet to pieces, and walked away with no significant head trauma. This tells me that a good minicell helmet can work pretty well.

That said, some helmet-makers have started using a layer of dense foam, usually EPP (expanded polypropylene) or VN (vinyl nitril), with a softer lining for fit and comfort. VN foam is black, and is noticeably firmer than minicell. EPP foam usually looks like regular Styrofoam, but is tougher and able to absorb energy by bending rather than breaking. These stouter foams are widely used in lacrosse and other sports helmets. No doubt about it, they do make a theoretically safer helmet. I think we'll be seeing more of them in the future.

Many helmets from other sports make good kayak helmets. Before you go this route, make sure you look into a few issues. Does it offer enough coverage? Bike and climbing helmets, in particular, tend to put the protection on top of your head, but aren't so good on the sides and back. Next, can it

take multiple hits? Some helmets (e.g. bike helmets) are built with light, brittle foam that's designed to crack and splinter with a hit. Not so good when you're still six miles from the take-out. Last, will it tolerate a soaking without either falling apart or turning into a Petri dish? Bike helmets do so poorly on all three of these areas that I will say it categorically: bike helmets make bad river helmets. Don't use them on the water.

There is a standard for whitewater helmets called CE 1385. If your helmet meets this criterion, it's probably a good helmet with a solid shell and decent foam. Just remember, a number on a label doesn't mean that the helmet fits you well, offers as much coverage as you need, or is the best option.

Helmet Fit

With my new helmet in hand, I spent the next few weeks getting the fit absolutely perfect. To me this means three things:

1. First, I want my helmet to protect my face as much as possible. We've all seen lots of black eyes and forehead whacks on the river. They are never pretty, and occasionally they are very bad. It's been my observation that these hits usually happen to people wearing thinner helmets, or helmets that leave a lot of forehead showing. So, I fit my helmet to ride low in the front, just above the eyebrows and I make sure the helmet has enough foam in the forehead to give at least an inch of overhang. To get better protection around my temples, I go for the helmet with some ear coverage, too, because the shell on these helmets tends to wrap around the face a bit. Obviously, to get good coverage in the back as well as the front, and to maintain a thick layer of foam all around, I need a pretty big helmet.

2. Next, I make sure the helmet padding, and not just the shell, comes down low all around. Having the padding this low provides more protection for low hits, and keeps you from being cut or injured by the helmet rim. It usually makes the helmet fit more solidly, too. Also, a bigger foam surface against your head will help your helmet absorb and disperse the energy from any hit. Some helmets have dots or strips of foam on

the inside surface, resting against your head. This can make fitting easy, but it's not as good as a smooth continuous layer of foam for dispersing hits.

3. Lastly, a well-fitted helmet shouldn't slide around on the head. This seems obvious, yet we've all seen boaters roll up after a thrashing with their helmet dangling off to the side or shoved back like a sunbonnet. Bottom line: your helmet needs to stay in place no matter what. This means it needs to fit you really, really, really well. A solid fit keeps your helmet covering your skull like it's supposed to, AND provides the best impact protection. When I plunk my helmet on--even before I buckle the chinstrap--it fits comfortably with no gaps, and it doesn't move when I shake and twist. Yours shouldn't either.

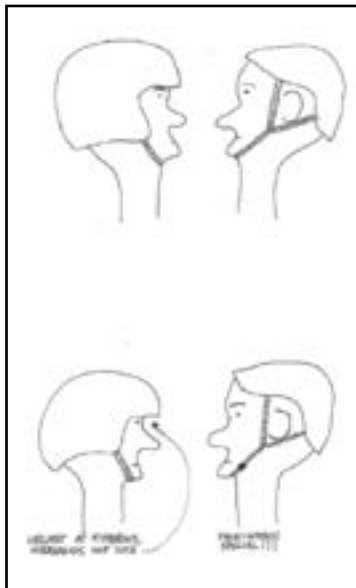
Sometimes you can find the perfect-fitting helmet right off the shelf. If you, like me, have a "funny-head," you will need to spend some time customizing. Helmet-makers are getting better at providing pads and kits for this, but the hard fact is that you may want to do some work with foam and glue to get the supreme no-wiggle fit. I generally use minicell foam to fill out and customize the helmet padding as needed, since it is readily available and easy to work with. (You can even sand it with regular sandpaper for serious fine-tuning.)

Again, minicell may not be the best helmet foam in theory, but it works so well for fitting that I still like it. Remember, the most important thing a helmet can do is to be on your head when the big bad rock tries to hit it. If minicell makes this happen, I'm for it.

Visors and Facemasks

On my old Romer helmet, I had less padding over my eyes than I liked, so I glued a foam bumper on the outside of my helmet. This was basically a blunt minicell visor that kept the sun out of my eyes and the rocks out of my face. Some helmets are built with a small front visor, which probably accomplishes the same thing.

I can't decide if I like the BIG visor on baseball-style helmets. It seems to me that a big unbreakable brim might be a lever for rocks and water to shove your helmet and head around. The jury is still out on this, but I just like the idea of big visors being floppy and bending with a hit. I've used homemade minicell and neoprene visors taped or glued in place, and at least one company, Salamander, makes soft brims designed for



whitewater helmets. Also, Cascade makes a helmet compatible with the light plastic bike-helmet-type visors, which would probably snap away with a bad hit. Again, this is just speculation on my part, as I've never heard of any bad problems with the baseball-type helmets.

For years I used a helmet/baseball cap combo, which worked okay, but does have some potential problems. If you do this, use a thin hat, take that silly button off the top, and make sure not to screw up your perfect fit. And remember, a hat under a helmet can wash down over your eyes, which looks pretty funny halfway down Pine Creek.

What about facemasks? Helmets with facemasks are probably safer than those without. There are three basic options here: the lacrosse-type face cage (available as an add-on for many helmets), the whitewater helmet with a chin bar (less common), and the other-sport helmet (motocross, football, etc.). I've heard talk about the possible risks of facemasks, mostly that a whack on the chin bar can really torque the neck. I've also seen a few facial injuries that wouldn't have happened with the use of a facemask. Again, who knows? Motorcyclists, football players, skiers, and downhill mountain-bikers seem to be doing fine with the full facemasks. If you want a facemask, get a facemask.

I've got a skiing helmet with a full chinbar. I've worn it for the occasional sick creek, and it seems fine. Skiing and motocross helmets tend to be fatter and burlier than the usual whitewater helmets, and this may be as much of an advantage on hard water as the facemask itself. The main problem with the full chinbar (other than the fashion-crime)


is that it's surprisingly hard to talk to other boaters on the water while wearing it. And it feels a little clunky. Still, lifejackets felt clunky thirty years ago when people started wearing them routinely.

The Future

What's next for helmets? Corrin Addison had an interesting helmet that he used on a Green River Narrows' trip a few decades ago. Instead of a chin bar, the shell was built with wide, sideburn-like bars that stopped at the mouth. This offered really good face protection, but didn't interfere with speaking. Plus, it looked macho and weird instead of geeky and timid. As far as I know, there's no patent on this. Anyone interested?

On a more serious note, the new extremes in whitewater are rapidly outpacing typical helmets. Most helmets today are built for Chili Bar or the Ocoee, the kind of run where you might fall over and maybe tap a rock at 5 miles an hour. That same helmet has a reasonable track record on "ordinary" Class V, like the Lower Meadow or Gore Canyon. At some point (maybe 25 mph?), these helmets probably become inadequate. I can think of several bad head traumas in the past 10 years, all of them involving rock hits at high speeds on steep runs. I can only imagine that such injuries will become more common, as more boaters huck off the taller, shallower drops. Some extreme boaters have switched to motocross helmets, and these may become standard fare in a few years. Still, the young bucks of today need to come to grips with a new truth, namely, that if you hit your head while sending an 80-footer, you will probably fare poorly regardless of what you are wearing.

So Be Smart

Helmets remain a profoundly personal choice. My choice is driven by the many head injuries I've seen and heard of, and by the painful fact that I like boating hard water but I'm not as good a boater as I used to be. In making your choice, I would encourage you to be smart, and to remember that paranoia can be a valuable part of intelligence. Buy yourself a nice big helmet, take the time to fit it right, and wear it low and snug, right over the eyebrows. It's a lot cheaper than a hospital visit. 

Eric Nies is the newest member of the AW Safety committee. Eric is a long-time river guide and rescue instructor, a mechanical engineer, and an ER physician in West Virginia.

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Letters to the Editor



Dear AW,

In the September / October issue of the Journal, several references are made to hydropower relicensing proceedings for the Spokane River, all of which list the river's location as Washington State.

While a major portion of the Spokane indeed flows through Washington, the actual dam site affected by relicensing, Post Falls, is located in Idaho near the river's source at Lake Coeur d'Alene.

From a flow perspective, many of the play features affected by discharge are located just across the border in Washington. However, from a conservation perspective, the areas most affected by the management of relicensing and releases are above the dam, extending well into Idaho. I believe it is very important to make a clear distinction regarding the location, lest paddlers be perceived as only taking concern with the non-conservation part the dam's management, with little concern for the "upstream" issues on the relicensing table.

I am quite familiar with the local political environment in Post Falls. I can assure you that the worst possible "brand image" that the paddlers could develop for themselves in relicensing discussions is "activists from out of state." To this end, I'd like to suggest that you discuss Post Falls relicensing as an issue related to both Idaho and Washington. I realize this might seem a bit trivial to some, but please consider this tiny drop of grease on the wheels of the PR machine.

Best regards,
Todd Hoffman
AW Streamkeeper

Dear Todd,

Thanks for the clarification for our membership. We have fallen victim to generically associating the Avista Hydropower Project Relicensing on the Spokane River with Washington. Like many of the hydropower projects American Whitewater works on, the impacts from the project are multifaceted radiating both upstream and downstream far beyond the project boundary and crossing resource disciplines. There are no simple solutions to these complex resource impacts.

The Avista project on the Spokane consists of multiple dams impacting instream flows on reaches in Idaho and Washington. Instream flows below the Post Falls dam, the most upstream dam in hydro project, are inextricably linked to power generation and seasonal lake level requirements in Coeur D'Alene. These fluctuating lake levels in turn cause impacts on the ecology of the lake and tributaries. American Whitewater is working closely with local volunteers located in Spokane, Washington and Coeur D'Alene, Idaho. As a team with American Whitewater staff, these volunteers are drafting instream flow recommendations that will balance whitewater recreation interests with other resource needs in the basin.

As we see in many of these hydropower proceedings, there are no silver bullet answers that mitigate all resource disciplines – compromises are necessary in the balancing act. In future updates on this project we will be sure to describe the geographic locations accurately and provide our readers with an understanding of the larger issues in the proceeding. We believe that our interest in hydropower relicensing should first and foremost be restoring the river a healthy river system – whitewater recreation is a byproduct of a restored system. Thank you for your letter.

Sincerely,
John Gangemi
Western Conservation and Access Director

New Executive Director

The Journey Ahead

Mark Singleton

As I assume the role of Executive Director, I want to share some of my thoughts and observations.



First and foremost, I want to thank all the great volunteers, board members and staff who have welcomed me into the fold and given so willingly of their time and talent. American Whitewater is a big family with common ties, but diverse personalities. As with most families, there are stories to be celebrated and passed on. Our organizational history is rich in conservation, access and safety success stories. These stories span the 50-year history of American Whitewater, establishing a legacy of accomplishment around the country. To celebrate this story, AW now has all the pages of the American Whitewater Journal available at the member section of the web site, www.americanwhitewater.org. If you have not had a chance to search through this new feature, take some time to surf these pages. They contain some amazing information and more history than most of us will ever have the ability to digest.

Because I'm new to the job, many members will want to know what plans I have for their organization and what my agenda looks like. Here's a rough outline:

Location

In March of 2005, American Whitewater will vacate the executive office in Silver Springs, Maryland. This will save AW the overhead expense of office rent in the Washington, DC market. Jason Robertson will stay in Silver Springs as American Whitewater's Managing Director. Jason will hold down a smaller office footprint and remain connected with AW's mission through critical public policy work.

The search for a new executive office location is underway. A request for proposals is being circulated. AW is looking to co-locate with a college or university that

can provide necessary office space and views our conservation, access and safety work as relevant to their academic mission. This will provide AW with the ability to tap into the technical resources of an academic institution as well as providing a ready-made base for internships and additional volunteers. Stay tuned as this process unfolds; there is genuine excitement about this opportunity from the institutions I have contacted.

The AW staff located in the Asheville, NC office will continue to be located in Asheville until a new executive office location is established. Once a new office location is identified, the Asheville office and the executive office will merge. The Bigfork, MT office location will remain unchanged and continue to represent the interests of members in western conservation and access projects.

Journal

I would like to welcome Ambrose Tuscano as the new Journal editor. Many of you know Ambrose from his work on the Journal during and after the reign of Bob Gedekoh. Editing the Journal is a volunteer effort; I want to extend my heart felt thanks to Ambrose for his willingness to give unselfishly of his time and talent.

Significant time and energy goes into producing each issue of the Journal to create a quality publication that connects with the heart and soul of the boating community. In response to recent complaints that members are not receiving the Journal, I am reviewing how the subscriber lists are produced and will be implementing new processes to manage those lists so that the Journal finds its way into every member mailbox.

Building the Membership Base


I have a keen interest in building membership in AW as a step toward maintaining a critical mass of whitewater paddlesport enthusiasts who support the conservation and access work of the organization and who will communicate the scope of that work within their local communities. Many of the successes we have enjoyed are due to committed local paddlers who are willing to speak up and attend meetings when their local rivers face critical issues. This community-based activism, supported by talented AW staff and backed by national membership, has proven to be an effective strategy in obtaining new whitewater resources and preserving old ones.

Events

Following on the heels of a very successful River Stewardship Institute (RSI) event in the fall of '04 on the Klamath River, I would like to distribute RSI information and tools at all AW events. The better we can be spreading conservation, access and safety, the more successful we will be in achieving our mission. Leveraging our current event mix to disseminate this information provides solid value for event participants and helps us spread our message.

Listen and Learn

One of the great pleasures of my new role has been the opportunity to reconnect with old and new friends. I've been spending lots of time talking with folks and listening to their individual comments and suggestions regarding the direction of American Whitewater. It's been a fun process, one that I would like to continue. If you have observations or comments that you would like to share with me, I can be reached at: mark@amwhitewater.org.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge all of the volunteer effort that gives AW the energy to keep running. If you are reading this, it means that you are making a contribution to the success of American Whitewater through your time, financial support and membership. The journey ahead will be a team effort. Thank you for your ongoing support. 

History To PFD or Not

by Sue Taft

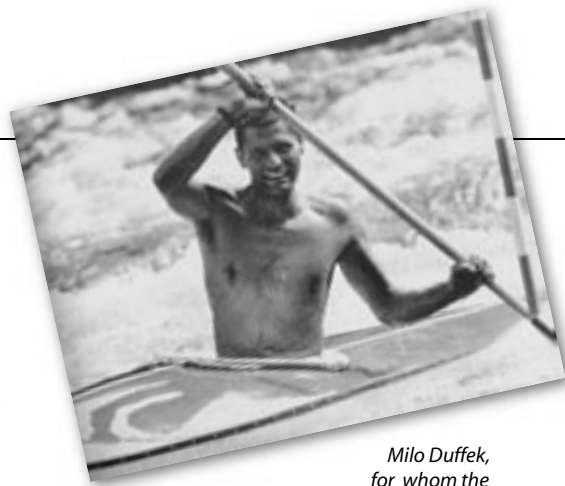
That Was the Question
While it may now seem absurd to think that a whitewater paddler might not want to wear a PFD, it was not always the case.

In 1956, when American Whitewater's Safety Committee solicited input for a safety code, the suggestion that PFDs be worn at all times garnered strong opinions both for and against. While many voiced concerns that the bulk of the PFD could hinder a paddler's strokes (PFD's available at the time were indeed cumbersome) or that the flotation itself could prevent a paddler's escape from a large hole, PFD usage was included in the first release of the Safety Code in 1959.

However, many of the European racers who visited and competed in the U.S. in the '50s and '60s did not wear PFDs (although they often wore helmets). Milo Duffek, for whom the Duffek stroke is named, was sponsored on a trip the summer of 1964 by AW affiliates across U.S. and Canada to provide instructional sessions. All photos of him in American Whitewater articles show him without a PFD or helmet whether he was instructing in a pool or on a river. This, along with photos of other paddlers without PFDs, prompted discussions concerning the hypocrisy

of publishing articles and photos that were contrary to what was written in the Safety Code. The response by AW's Safety Chairman summed up the wisdom of the time about safety and whitewater:

We are frequently prodded by not-so-good boaters as to why we do not raise a voice of disapproval about the fact that some of these experts do not rigidly adhere to our safety code in respect to lifejackets... These requests for our opinion arise every time the word goes around that one of our crack boaters negotiated a 80-foot-per-mile... without a life jacket. It also is brought up when participants in a class III-plus slalom do not wear lifejackets but only a helmet and wetsuit (sometimes). Before making any quick and harsh statements on this subject, we must look at these new approaches to our safety rules with consideration, because there may be good reasons that make these people deviate from our safety code... First, these people are experts, class IV (and up) boaters... Second, they can eskimo-recover under nearly any condition in rapids that most of us would not even consider running right-side up! Their need for a lifejacket is not as great as for the average boater- in fact, the lifejacket may interfere with their esquimautage [roll]. Thirdly, the type of water these people frequent contains vicious currents, souseholes,



Milo Duffek,
for whom the
Duffek stroke is named.

and whirlpools where a lifejacket can be disadvantageous, since it does not allow the swimmer to dive down and swim out. Fourthly, in a slalom, where the ultimate performance of strokes is required, a bulky lifejacket can obstruct a boater's movements... Fifth and last, our safety code is


Rob Lesser, Selway River 1976



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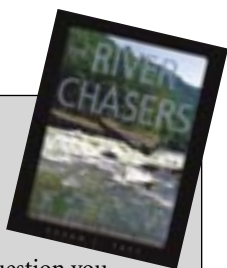
written for the benefit of the average of all boaters, beginners and experts... To our average boater we have to say, "Put on that lifejacket..." To our expert we have to say, "Remember your mishap will put a blot on our sport; please wear that lifejacket where possible..."

Wisdom regarding safety and PFDs changed considerably during the '70s. Walt Blackadar pushed the limits of big-water boating on the likes of Turnback Canyon on the Asek and Devil's Canyon of the Susitna. He developed big-water boating techniques that did not shy away from big waves and holes and he always wore a PFD that provided the most flotation available. His legacy was typified in the attire of an Idaho big water boater, which included a Mae West PFD, full wetsuit, and Illiad paddle.

The death of a slalom racer at the Icebreaker Slalom in Unadilla, New York, in 1975 stunned the racing community and demonstrated how even a Class I-II river with a swift current could be deadly. While a PFD was not a factor in his death (which was due to foot entrapment), it challenged the current wisdom regarding safety and helped to raise the overall safety consciousness of the sport. PFDs became a permanent fixture in safety equipment and very few, if any, whitewater boaters even considered not wearing one. With that, safety concerns and discussions shifted toward developing and equipping boaters with the latest knowledge and tools for river rescue, a practice that continues today. *AW*

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Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers*, the history of American Whitewater Paddling.

If you have a topic or question you would like answered, e-mail it to editor@amwhitewater.org and look for its answer in an upcoming issue.

AW News



We Love Taxes! That's the new motto around American Whitewater these days. AW has partnered with Frontier Tax Solutions and will be offering their Taxes2Charity program to the AW community for the 2005 tax season.

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Field Notes

Winter Boating

by Clay Wright



photo by Christie Dobson

Boating Safely in Winter

Christmas is such a great holiday, especially when Santa brings new gear! While winter rain is probably the ultimate present, it is important to remember that the days are much shorter and those rains are usually followed by a cold snap. Short days and cold nights require extra precautions, even when paddling in familiar terrain. Winter boating requires not only that we make sure we take out before sunset, but also come prepared for that dark day we don't.

To prepare for the short, cold days you've got to get rolling before it gets warm. You'll be much happier loading boats in the pre-dawn dark, before you're fully awake, than with cold, wet hands afterwards. That noon put-in thing? Regret sets in hard when you're watching sunset from the halfway point of your run. Predict the unexpected; new wood, a broken back band, or a simple little pin can burn your daylight and that straightforward paddle out will be agonizing after sunset. And what time is that – what time is it NOW, for that matter? Wear a watch and know the exact time of sunset. The best place to watch those rosy colors is from the warm car on the way home.

Since hiking out usually takes more time than paddling the river, those "rarely needed" items now take on greater importance. Think ahead. Boats, backbands, and paddles all break, sometimes in the most benign situations. While you might not normally take a breakdown, duct tape, cam strap, or tar-tape on Little River Canyon, Upper Yough, or Chamberlain Falls, once the temps fall below freezing at night you should probably reconsider. Unless you're boating roadside or within three miles of a riverside trail, pack these things in with your boating gear and get used to carrying them. Think ahead: what else might go wrong that would ruin your day? Lost contact/glasses, bulkhead screws unscrewing, dropping a drain-plug, numb hands causing a swim. The list is long and the remedies need to be considered before you are in a cold, wet, hurry.

When in doubt, walk out! There are so many things that can keep a party from continuing downriver (fatigue, injury, hypothermia) that serious winter boaters go in prepared to walk out. Plan the best routes by using tributary creeks and ridges as markers and know which way to hike at

different intervals along the way. Pushing downriver in dwindling daylight is an accident waiting to happen. Even familiar surroundings can prove lethal when you can't see a tree or when you choose the wrong channel. Prepare your hike-out options with a Gazetteer or TopoZone.com before your trip and share the information with your group so everyone knows the deal. If you split your party, carefully plan the reunion. Where will the hikers come out? Should they stay-put roadside or try to hitchhike to a gas station for warmth? If they get a ride to the car, do they know where your keys are? How are you to know whether they made it to the gas station, or are still struggling through the woods? Make a thorough plan before the group separates and stick to it.

Hmm, how to dress to bushwhack through woods? A flashlight, hat, and gloves are my preferences. The idea is light-weight warmth and a clear view of the terrain. I typically hike up a creek bed so I don't get turned around but even that can prove difficult after sunset. How about a compass? Cell phone? Food? Space Blankets? Water container and iodine pills? Consider everything you would want for a wintry night-hike and pack the minimum into your "winter prep dry bag." The extra weight is worth the protection you are providing yourself and your friends.

So now the party is over – you've hiked to exhaustion and are too tired to continue, or maybe it just feels safer to "stay put." Hope you brought a lighter, right? Unfortunately the chances of you lighting anything are slim. Even if cedar bark fires up, there is a shortage of dry wood after every rainfall. Hope you brought that space blanket! How else can you stay warm?



Clay's Kit: local gazettere, duck tape, screws, space blanket, head-lamp, marker stuff, lighter, knife, warm hat, gloves, iodine tablets, first aid kit, water bottle, cam-strap, cell phone, food, hand paddles, breakdown paddle, one dry bag to carry it all!


Photo by Clay Wright

- Stuff pine straw or leaves into your outer layers to 'fatten up' your insulation, creating loft like a down jacket.
- Dog-pile yourselves together in a wind protected depression or rocky alcove and cover yourselves up as best you can with leaves, grasses, and pine boughs.
- Wait for sunrise.

Hopefully it won't get to this. Perhaps just imagining this grim scene will create an incentive to avoid this whole situation in advance: that is certainly the idea.

Boating in winter isn't crazy, but boating in winter without preparing for the added challenges of short days and cold weather is. Expect to encounter the unexpected and you not only make the trips you do safer, but also open yourself up to trips and conditions you never thought possible. Boat whenever it rains!

One winter boating benefit: the beer left in the car will still be cold at the take-out.

See you there! 



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Big Water Surf Alert by Tanya Shuman

The New River Dries: big water, big surfing, possible Big Gun stuff. All of this went through my head when Katie J. called me and told me the Dries were running. Not only were they running, they were at optimal flow: **70,000 cfs.**



So there I was at a crossroad: either head for Nationals with a chance to capture the national championship, or turn around and drive six hours to the Dries. Well, I followed my heart and drove for the big surf on the Dries.

With a speeding ticket price tag of \$126 dollars and four points on my license, I was at the Dries in no time. I was fired up and ready to go. Safety and consequences never crossed my mind. It hadn't occurred to me that swimming could cost me my life.

And I swam. I swam the Dries at 70,000 cfs—major flood level. It happened on the first ride, on my first move of the day. My paddle was ripped out of my hands. I didn't even attempt to hand roll ... I was just tired from the drive and didn't give it a try. Stupid, I know.

Out of my boat, I swam to the closest shore. The closest shore was not the best idea. It was layered with trees and foliage. I was relaxed and calm as I entered the cluster of trees and carefully wove myself in between the plants to shore.

I was lucky. Swimming through the trees was utter stupidity on my part. The trees are pillars for debris to wrap around. As a swimmer, you either can be part of the debris or get stuck on the debris. Not safe at all.

It wasn't till later that night I reflected more on my swim and realized how lucky I was to make it safely. First off, no one can save you when you're in the trees, not by boat or by rope. No one wants to take their boat into the trees—boats make the perfect debris. And as for ropes, they also wrap around trees.


I was ignorant, and ignorance is not bliss. I had not assessed the situation before I got into the water. Please learn from my mistake. Big wave surfing is becoming more and more popular. Before you go out and surf your brains out, use your head.

Suggestions for big water surfing safety

1. Always have a plan. If you swim, which shore will you aim for? Remember, the closest shore is not necessarily the best. Can other boaters get to you? What is it like downstream (holes, whirlpools, debris, trees ...)?
2. Always have a buddy, someone who you can count on to pick you up when you swim. I know I often end up watching the person on the wave rather than the person who is downstream and might need help.
3. Most boaters don't wear a safety vest while kayaking. You should at least have a river tow—I highly recommend it! The river tow is designed to clip onto boats for retrieval. This gear makes rescue much faster, easier, and safer.
4. Having float bags in your boat will help those rescuing it.
5. Throw ropes really aren't really helpful on big water rivers. They can't reach out far enough to do any good, and when the water is in the trees you have to be really careful about entanglement! If you don't have a clear way to bring someone safely ashore, keep the rope in the bag!
6. Don't swim in the trees—remember my experience!
7. Make sure that you are strong. Usually we're exhausted on our last ride. It's best to save it for tomorrow because if you swim, you will need a lot of energy.



“Please learn from my mistake.”

More and more paddlers are kayaking on big waves. It is so much fun. But know the consequences and safety conditions before jumping into the water. Anything can happen – from a blown skirt, to a lost paddle, to a torn shoulder – just make sure you have a plan. 



Top: Tanya Shuman and Loyal Hound Kota

Right: First surf, just before the first move

Below: Tanya's big move before the big swim

Photos by Marlow Long



Using Lemons to Save the Day

Every time we're on the river, we run the risk of an accident. That's the difference between whitewater paddling and an amusement park ride. We know that given only the smallest slip – a change of boat angle or a missed stroke – a good day can turn bad very quickly.

Why do we take risks in the first place? Frank Farley of Temple University put forward the idea of the type T personality: the bigger the risk taker, the higher the T score. T types can be divided into T Intellectuals (Einstein, Galileo), T Physicals (extreme athletes, rescue professionals, kayakers) and T Negatives (bank robbers, delinquents, tubers?). You can take a short version of his test in Figure 1 to see how much of a sensation seeker you are.

Gerald Wilde's Risk Homeostasis theory provides another way to explain risk-taking behavior. Wilde said that individuals have a level of risk that they are comfortable with for a given activity and that, if life gets safer, they will act more dangerously in order to maintain homeostasis. He called it "target risk," meaning that we each have a target level that we strive to maintain. Some individuals' target risk levels are higher than those of others, but basically everyone will manipulate their actions and environment in order to meet—but not exceed or fall short of—their personal target. Activities that are lower than our target will feel

"boring," while those too high will seem "reckless." We won't feel comfortable with our actions unless it somehow meets the target we set for ourselves.

During a three-year study, cab drivers in Munich were randomly assigned to cabs with ABS brakes or cabs without. It was noted that the drivers of ABS cabs drove faster, braked harder, took more risks on the road, and in the end, had the same accident rate as those driving without ABS. Risk homeostasis proposes that the cabbies were adjusting their behavior to maintain their "target risk" level: when the risk of injury was reduced with ABS, the cabbies increased their dangerous behavior to compensate. The same thing happened with seat belts in this country. It was thought that when seatbelt use was made mandatory, that the injury rate would go down, but it didn't. People drove more recklessly when they wore seatbelts, in order to keep their target level of risk the same (the same thing happened with airbags).

How does this play out in the whitewater world? In the past few years, advances in kayak and equipment design have made paddling the same familiar rivers safer. However, with all these advances intended to make us safer, what do we do? Risk homeostasis suggests that we simply take more risks—paddling harder, more dangerous rivers and bringing the level of risk back to where we like it.

For example, Steep Creek Sven buys a breathing cylinder to put in his boat, so that if he gets pinned underwater, he'll have some air to breath while his buddies organize a rescue. With the comfort of having the air cylinder along, Sven decides he can run "Imminent Death Falls." The upshot is that he decreases the level of risk by adding a cylinder, and then returns it to his target level by attempting bigger drops with more pinning potential.

The conclusion we must reach, then, is

that regardless of what innovations come along in kayaking to make the sport safer, it will have no effect unless individuals consciously choose to lower their target risk level. The German cabbies only lowered their accident rates in the fourth year of the study, when the cab companies made the drivers pay for part of the cost of any damage to the cabs and threatened dismissal for anyone with a particularly bad accident record.

Similarly, we as boaters will best accomplish this when we understand all the risks involved, both by defining them ahead of time and measuring them at the time. The latter is where we will talk about lemons, but before then, you get to do another test.

The dictionary defines an accident as: "an unexpected happening causing loss or injury." In applying this definition to the real world, it's useful to understand that there are four types of loss related to paddling.

Physical: any kind of injury that causes even a temporary loss of freedom or independence

Financial: you lose your paddle during a swim, which costs money

Emotional: frustration or embarrassment over missing your line on the last rapid

Social: "If I don't run this drop, my friends will think less of me. If I can't paddle this stuff, they won't invite me next week."

These categories of loss can also be thought of as types of risk. How willing are you to take risks in each of these categories? Use the lines in Figure 2 to mark where you think you stand as a risk taker in each category. Remember to do this solely for paddling, as your value of risk in other areas may differ.

So what do these theories mean for you as a paddler? If you took the T-type test, you

will know how likely you are to take risks. Combine this with the knowledge you've gained from Risk Homeostasis theory, and you will know that regardless of equipment—or even skill level—there are certain types of risk you have a tendency to take.

In 1983, Alan Hale addressed the way accidents happen with the Accident Equation (Figure 3). Hale said that dangers in the environment must interact with a human behavior to produce the potential for an accident. Although this combination of environmental and behavioral dangers doesn't automatically produce an accident, Hale says that without this interaction, an accident can't happen.

Dangers can vary in size and number, but the more that accumulate, the greater the accident potential. Dangers may be physical (a strainer, for example), or behavioral (forgetting your pogies on a cold day, plus not drinking any water, causing you to feel chilly, which means you don't want to get out and scout the next rapid). There may be a few large or many small factors that combine to produce a real accident (running the drop blind and landing in the strainer). So, the Accident Equation is all very well, but like any academic theory, it has to be translated into something we can use on the river. Finally, here's where lemons come in.


Imagine a big slot machine. Every time you make a decision, you pull the lever and the wheels in the slot machine spin. Mostly they come up with harmless strawberries and cherries, but they may also come up with a lemon, which represents an environmental or behavioral danger. Each pull of the handle potentially adds another lemon to those you've already got, so the more times you pull the handle, the more lemons you might accumulate. Lemons can also be removed if you use specific skills or tools that counter that danger.

It might take a lot of small lemons or only a couple of large ones to win you an accident, but in general, the more lemons you have, the closer to an accident you are. How many lemons you are comfortable living with is up to you, and may vary from situation to situation. There is no magic number where you get X lemons and you win an accident.

You may go all day with three lemons and be fine, or you may get two and right away you're throwing ropes and praying that Charlie Walbridge is about to paddle around the corner. Collecting lemons is usually unintentional, but removing them requires a conscious decision or change in behavior. "Hey, I'm cold. Even though I'm not thirsty, I'd better drink something."


To apply the lemon theory to paddling, ask yourself during the course of your day, "How many lemons do I have now?" as a way of measuring the current level of risk. In my work teaching college students to be outdoor/adventure educators, I present this theory on the first day of training. Then, during the rest of our time together, I randomly ask my new leaders how many lemons they have, right here, right now.

Its effectiveness lies in its ability to detach from the moment and objectively assess the situation. Putting a number on what might otherwise be overlooked as subjective factors reminds us to be aware of our surroundings and the choices we make. If you're someone who tends to get carried along with the group or the moment and regrets it later, you may want to set yourself a lemon limit before getting on the water.

Managing risk on the river begins and ends with you, the individual paddler. Hopefully this article has made you think about your risk taking, and given you a way of keeping track of the risks you are running when you're on the river. How you manage those risks is, as always, up to you. 

Andrew Jillings paddles, mostly in the Adirondacks, mostly in his creek boat, and mostly lemon-free. He is an ACA kayak Instructor Trainer, river rescue and canoe Instructor with Zoar Outdoor in Charlmont MA. When not on the water he is Director of Adventure Programs at Hamilton College in Clinton NY.

[Sensation Seeker Test on next page!]



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Safety Accident Prevention

Are you a sensation seeker?

For each question, circle your choice, A or B, that best describes your likes or dislikes or the way you feel.

1. I would like a job that requires a lot of travelling
Yes / No
2. I am invigorated by a brisk, cold day
Yes / No
3. I get bored seeing the same old faces
Yes / No

4. A or B?
A. I would prefer living in an ideal society in which everyone is safe, happy and secure
B. I would have preferred living in the unsettled days of our history
5. A or B?
A. I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening
B. A sensible person avoids activities that are dangerous
6. A or B?
A. I would not like to be hypnotized
B. I would like to have the experience of being hypnotized
7. A or B?
A. The most important goal of life is to live it to the fullest and experiences much as possible
B. The most important goal in life is to find peace and happiness
8. A or B?
A. I would like to try parachute jumping
B. I would never want to try jumping out of a plane; with or without a parachute
9. A or B?
A. I enter cold water gradually, giving myself time to get used to it.
B. I like to dive or jump right into the ocean or cold pool

10. A or B?
A. When I go on a vacation I prefer the comfort of a good room and bed
B. When I go on vacation, I prefer the change of camping out
11. A or B?
A. I prefer people who are emotionally expressive even if they are a bit unstable
B. I prefer people who are calm and level-headed
12. A or B?
A. A good painting should shock or jolt the senses
B. A good painting should give one a feeling of peace and security
13. A or B?
A. People who ride motorcycles must have some kind of unconscious need to hurt themselves
B. I would like to ride a motorcycle

Scoring: Count one point for each of the following items you have circled:
1. Yes, 2. Yes, 3. Yes, 4.B, 5.A, 6. B, 7.A, 8.A, 9.B, 10.B, 11.A, 12.A, 13.B. Add up your totals and compare it to the norms below:
1-3 Very low sensation-seeker
4 -5 Low
6-9 Average
10-11 High
12 - 13 Very high



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	Low Risk				High Risk
Physical	1	2	3	4	5
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Cognitive	1	2	3	4	5

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Safety Compressed Air

by Dr. Thomas Johnson

The New Admiral of the River?

Extreme sports have evolved with various epiphanies in gear safety.

Parachuting discovered the anti-inversion net for round canopies in the mid 1970s, which greatly decreased malfunctions in canopy deployment. The subsequent development of the ram air square canopy then made the round canopy virtually obsolete to include reserve 'chutes. The kernmantle rope and the protection cam found their places in the climbing arena during the same decade, greatly improving climbing safety. The buoyancy compensator and dive computer improved safety in sport diving. Nomex fireproof suits improved survival for auto racing and military pilots. Radio beacons and the avalung improved avalanche survival for winter back country athletes. The list goes on and on.

What about white water kayaking? Shorter boats made out of super-strong plastics with keyhole cockpits and foam bulkheads were huge gains in boating technology that have increased safety. PFDs and closed cell foam have increased flotation safety. Spectra rope has strengthened throw bags. Unfortunately, it has not been enough. Very experienced boaters are still drowning.

As a former military flight surgeon and diving medical officer, I have always been aware of the hazards that result in drownings. Air crews have been drowning in water ever since aircraft were able to fly over water. The US Navy adopted submerged aircraft egress training for pilots back in the mid 20th century. They would grab a bulk head with one hand, release their seatbelt with the other hand and PULL (not swim) themselves to the

door and out of the submerged aircraft (similar to doing a wet exit in a kayak). A pilot's chance of survival was increased, but some were still drowning.

In the 1980's, flight crews were introduced to the HEED (Helicopter Emergency Egress Device), which dramatically increased survival rates in flight accidents that occurred over water. Numerous water crashes have been survived by pilots as a result of the HEED compressed air device. The HEED device is a 1.7 cubic foot compressed air bottle attached to a single stage regulator mouthpiece worn in the pocket of a flight suit. It instantly provides 20-30 breaths of compressed air. I was personally exposed to this technology back in the mid 1980's, and it has been virtually unchanged since its introduction. It is a well-proven device with hundreds of thousands of units sold around the world.

Since the development of the HEED device, scuba divers around the world have added small compressed bail-out air bottles to their gear bags. "Spare Air" is the civilian equivalent of the HEED bottle for the sport diver. Underwater technologies has been making this second breath technology for more than 20 years.

As a swift water rescue instructor, the basic tenets of safety instruction are about preventing the drowning of a boater or rescuer in a dire situation. Peruse Charlie Walbrige's back issues of his newsletter for confirmation. If that pinned boater or rescuer only had an extra breath or two... But perhaps an extra breath is possible.

For the past five years Jeff Bennet of Rapid Air Technologies has recognized the need for self-rescue with compressed air technology. Jeff has a broad background as both a whitewater kayaker and rafter. The Rapid Air Company has developed a small rectangular tank that fits in the front pocket of a PFD. It provides about 3000 psi of compressed air (15 breaths or so) to a submerged individual via an enclosed mouthpiece.

I ordered a Rapid Air unit in December of '02 and received it in January of '04. (The lawyers had to wrestle with the legal issues for a couple of years before the unit was given the go ahead for sale.) I bought a unit to take to the big water of the Futalefue in southern Chile. After diving in both the civilian and military environment for 30+ years, I was initially ambivalent about the device. All of this was forgotten on the second day on the Futalefue.

I was visiting Ken Whiting's camp for a week to brush up my skills in BIG water. Taking my own boat was out of the question because of the isolated (but very beautiful) location of Ken's camp. However, Ken had a wide selection of play boats for the clients. The biggest boat available for my 195-pound frame was a Wavesport Z. The Z had fold down foot pegs, which did not endear themselves to me. It almost took a human shoehorn to get me in the boat.

The second day while out on the "Fue" I was hit from behind by another boater while entering an eddy. I flipped. I could not roll up along the boiling eddy line and I ended up diving! I managed somehow to get one foot and leg out of the cockpit while my left foot was entrapped behind the fold down foot peg. The boat was hurling back and forth over me while going down through BIG water rapids. Everything went into slow motion. I realized if I did not relax and take the hits from the big waves that my hip was going to be dislocated. Ken was off to my side coaching me down through the rapids until I could get free. When the boat really put torque on my hip I noticed that if I just stayed under water and relaxed, the hip pressure would subside. That's where the Rapid Air unit came in handy. I took 2-3 submerged breaths while going down through the rapids. I never felt panic; I actually felt this calm come over me. I finally got free of the boat and was fine. I don't know if the RA unit saved my life, but I wouldn't want to ride the rapid again under the same circumstances without the RA unit.

Another company that makes the scuba diving Spare Air/HEED unit has also recognized the potential of compressed air for kayakers. It is developing the Xtreme Air unit for surfers and kayakers. I was invited to test a unit. The unit is about the size of a baseball. Any initial deficiencies the device had were quickly overlooked after a day on the Colorado River in April '04. I was taking a class through the Boulder Outdoor Center. The students got together and decided to go boating after the 3rd day of class. We were east of Glenwood Springs just below the dam. I was invited to boat down the Class IV Barrel Springs rapid with some of the younger hot shots. The first half of the rapid was no problem. I then flipped in a hole, tried to roll, swam, and was sucked under. I actually remember chuckling to myself that I was about to drown while attending a rescue seminar. Everything became peaceful and quiet. Then I remembered I had on my modified Xtreme air unit. I took 3 slow breaths from the Xtreme air unit and then was finally released from the hole. There is no doubt in my mind that compressed air saved my life.


We can debate about changing the circumstances that place us in a potential drowning situation: a better roll, or boating in class equal to one's skill level. The fact is that we are all just resting between swims ... as long as we are pushing ourselves to that next level.

My purpose is not to debate that point because the fact remains that people drown every year in whitewater. Nor am I here to debate the merits of the two companies' different units. My purpose is to have you think a little differently about your survival in an unexpected situation. Who would ever think that injecting bread mold into someone's veins would cure an infection. Back in the early 20th century someone thought outside the box and now we have penicillin. We need to think out of the box if we're going to affect your probability of drowning.



A compressed unit by 'Rapid Air'

The down side of both units is scuba qualification. In order to buy compressed air from a dive shop you must have a "C card" for a diving certification. You don't have to have a scuba certification to get your hands on a compressed air unit but in order to fill your pony tank that fills your bottle you must have a diver certification. Scuba certification is in the 300-\$350 range. This could be a real barrier to getting more units on the water. An alternate, less expensive certification must be developed that dive shops will recognize in order for kayakers to buy compressed air for their units.

I dream of a day when compressed air units will be as common as throw ropes. By the way if you see and hear an old gray haired dude whooping and hollering ahead on the next rapid its probably "Skunk" hitting his first stern squirt of the day. 

Dr Johnson, aka "Skunk" to his river friends, is a practicing ob/gyn surgeon in Elko, Nevada. He spent 14 years in the Army as a diving medical officer and flight surgeon before specializing in women's health care. He has been whitewater kayaking with his daughters for 5 years and is now an ACA swift water rescue instructor.



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Safety Accident Summary 2004

January – June 2004

Kayaking Accidents

On January 25th there was a death on the Russell Fork, near Elkhorn City, Kentucky. Many East Coast paddlers knew Jon Lord, 34, as the "Lord of the Fork." He was a local legend with over 300 runs down this Class V river. A report posted to *Boatertalk* by Jay Ditti, one of Mr. Lord's companions, states that the flow was roughly 700 cfs, slightly less than a normal fall release. The weather was bitterly cold, with air temperatures in the mid 30's accompanied by an icy wind and sleet. Mr. Lord was paddling his playboat, as he often did.

At Tower Rapids, the first Class V drop, Mr. Lord ran third and last. He took the main boof line and dropped out of sight behind

huge boulders. When his paddle floated free, his friends became alarmed. They scrambled upstream and saw him vertically pinned in the top drop, an 8' high ledge. Mr. Lord was completely under water, but had an air pocket and was fighting to keep his head up. The force of the water quickly overwhelmed him, and his life vest washed off about 20 minutes later. His companions attempted to reach him from both sides of the river with throw ropes. They managed to snag his boat twice, but could not pull it free. After 30 minutes of fruitless effort they paddled out cautiously and notified authorities. The Elkhorn City rescue squad rode a train up the gorge and reached the scene at dusk. Since they couldn't get to Mr. Lord from that side of the river they wisely postponed further recovery efforts until the next day.

Kayakers from all over the East joined local rescuers in an attempt to recover Mr. Lord's body. The intense search continued for several days despite frightfully cold weather. Rafts were used to ferry dive team members into place while kayakers ferried ropes and provided backup. Mr. Lord's boat was found quickly, but despite an intensive effort using scent dogs and an underwater camera, nothing more could be found. In the weeks that followed small groups of kayakers regularly patrolled the river. On February 24th his body was spotted in a river right eddy almost a mile downstream of the accident site.

New York's Class IV-V Metawee River is located northeast of Albany, near the Vermont border. The riverbed is slate, and big drops form where harder bands of rock are encountered. The rapids change often and frequently contain undercuts, potholes, and sieves. On April 10th, with the Granville gauge running at moderate 4.2 feet, an eight boat party put into the river around mid-day; most of them had been down before. Thirty-two year-old Linda Weiss was a solid class V kayaker and one of three paddlers making their first trip.

Dugan's Falls, the second major drop, has changed a lot since last year. There's a hidden sieve in the middle of the drop. It's scary enough that pictures were taken

and posted on American Whitewater's Streamkeeper Pages. According to a report sent to AW by James Tilley and Lauren Cooper, their group was not aware of the hazard even though the preferred lines get quite close to it. They approached the drop carefully, scouting and setting up safety before making their runs. The first seven paddlers got through without incident. Ms. Weiss, running last, was pushed off line and broached on the center rock. As she worked her way off that rock she dropped into the sieve on the left side.

Their safety man threw Ms. Weiss a rope, which she caught on the first try. Although she did have an air pocket, she was also being pushed deeper into the sieve. A stabilization line was set up across the river within two minutes of the pin, but she could not hold on. She quickly exhausted by the relentless, icy current and went limp after about ten minutes of desperate struggle. The group then switched tactics, trying to lift her free using a snag line. This was not successful, despite repeated attempts.

Roughly 90 minutes after the accident, a large group of conservation officers and rescue squad personnel arrived. Initially they provided backup for the kayakers; at about the two hour mark they set up two high lines about 30 feet over the river. A grappling hook arrived and the two groups worked together to guide it into position. Several radios were used to improve communication. On their third attempt they snagged her life vest and pulled it off. On their fourth attempt they were able to get under her body and pull her free. State Police divers who were waiting for her downstream recovered her body.

What's clear from this and other similar accidents is that sieves are often invisible, even to experienced boaters. Any skilled and prudent group could find itself in a similar predicament. The rescue was expertly attempted, and the group's ability to work with the authorities deserves special commendation. I've heard several accounts in which entrapped paddlers, wearing rescue life vests, were able to clip into a thrown rope with their pigtail so they could be pulled out. It's hard to know whether

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this would have been successful here. Since word-of-mouth passes information around slowly in today's large paddling community, I'd encourage paddlers to document hazards like this on AW's Streamkeeper Pages and in chat rooms that serve their region.

Tarrifville Gorge on the Farmington River is a popular Class II-III training and practice area just west of Hartford, Connecticut. On April 18th a kayaker drowned on bridge piers located at the start of this section. These are three concrete slabs spaced five feet apart with only 3" sticking above the waterline. Paddlers who frequent the area can easily spot these hazards and avoid them.

According to posts made to The Northeast Paddler's Message Board, Dean Forostoski, 49, was kayaking with a club trip when he washed into this hazard and pinned. Two local playboaters and two bystanders saw what happened and moved in to help. The bystanders struggled to hold Mr. Forostoski's head above water while the playboaters tried to release the boat. They were not successful; the abutment was quite slippery and both the boat and its occupant were sinking deeper. It was only when a rope was thrown from shore that a large group of paddlers applied enough force to release the pin. Mr. Forostoski, who had been under water for fifteen minutes by this time, was brought to shore where rescue squads waited. CPR began, and a helicopter transported him to Hartford Hospital where he later died. This incident reminds us that simple errors can be deadly. Keep alert and never forget the awesome forces you are dealing with!

Jack Spurlock, 64, was paddling a tandem kayak down the Class II+ "Chutes" of Paint Creek near Chillicothe, Ohio on May 22nd. The flows were about 1450 cfs, which is considered moderate by local boaters. According to the *Chillicothe Gazette*, Mr. Spurlock's partner reported that their kayak "filled with water" as they were going through the rapids. It sounds like this craft, like many tandem kayaks, had no sprayskirt. They broached and flipped. Two teenagers saw what happened and pulled Mr. Spurlock ashore, but were unable to revive him.

Fordyce Creek is a Class IV-V run in the Donner Pass area of the Sierra-Nevadas. The last rapid above the reservoir is pretty gnarly, and is known for sticky holes, strainers, and sieves. On June 17th a group of five was attempting the rapid when one of them got caught in a poulover and bailed out. According to a report posted on boof.com by Keith Kishiyama, Deb Martin, 34, quickly peeled out and gave chase. The swimmer got himself into an eddy quickly, but as the group collected his gear someone noticed that Ms. Martin was missing.

A search began. One of her group ran the rapid and found her paddle floating in the reservoir. She was finally spotted under water, still in her boat but barely visible. Her companions speculate that she may have been working her way across the river to pick up a pinned paddle when she flipped in a nearby poulover. She probably washed into a sieve while still upside-down. Ms. Martin was a self-sufficient Class V paddler. The group was preoccupied with the rescue; no one saw what actually what happened. It took them over an hour to recover her body, but they finally snagged her arm and were able to pull her free using a z-drag.

Two other people identified in the newspapers as "kayakers" were found dead on various rivers throughout the country. On March 19th two young paddlers on spring break discovered the body of a man floating in an eddy near Elbow Rapids on the Little River near Townsend, Tennessee. According to a report posted to *Boatertalk*, he was wearing a spray skirt, PFD, and ski goggles. A broken paddle was found floating nearby. Months later, May 29th, Erik Stern, 22, was pulled from the South Fork of the Clearwater near Grangeville, Idaho. Although identified by the *Idaho County Free Press* as a kayaker, he was found in street clothes. According to friends at NRS, the river was cresting at 5000 cfs, way too high for a run. They think that he probably slipped and fell into the river while walking on shore. Perhaps there was a kayak on Mr. Stern's car. Anyone with more information on these accidents is urged to contact the Safety Editor.

On June 9th Les Normandin, 53, was found floating face-down in a pushy Class III section of the Crystal River upstream of Carbondale, Colorado. According to the *Aspen Times* he was wearing a helmet and booties, but no PFD. Sheriff's deputies found a PFD in his truck at the takeout. Jake Menke is a local paddler who helped with the shuttle on his way to a hike. He said that Mr. Normandin had boated regularly with his father when both men were in their 20's. Although the man hadn't been boating for over 25 years, he had run the river successfully the previous day and had no qualms about another solo run. This confidence proved to be his undoing.

On June 26th Randall Anderson, 35, died on the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone near Crandall, Wyoming. This little known, but excellent stretch of roadside whitewater is upstream of the famous Class V-VI overnight section. At "Boulder Drop" rapid, a friend ran the rapid first. When Mr. Anderson failed to appear, the man ran upstream and saw him flip and bail out of his kayak. Mr. Anderson did not grab a well-placed throw line, and he floated out of sight downstream. His partner called 911, and authorities were able to locate the body miles downstream. Mr. Crandall was President of the Beartooth Paddler's Society; a newspaper report in the *Cody, Wyoming Enterprise* described the pair as "skilled" and "well equipped." Anyone with further information (particularly about whether head trauma might have been involved) is urged to contact the Safety Editor.

Canoeing Accidents

Only one canoeing accident was reported to us so far. Eric Roosa was reported missing after a canoe capsized on the Wakill River near Esopus, NY. His partner got ashore and notified authorities. Very little else is known about this accident, and anyone with more information is urged to contact the Safety Editor.

Safety Accident Summary 2004

Rafting Accidents

Eight fatalities involving inflatable boats were reported during the first six months of 2004. Four were flush-drownings. In two instances, despite plenty of backup, swimmers got past everyone and floated downstream to their death. Two incidents involved inflatable kayaks, the rest were rafts.

Early on the morning of March 7th two young men launched a small raft on the Smoky Hill River near Salina, Kansas. Neither was wearing a life vest even though the river was flooded and laden with debris. After their boat suddenly flipped one boy disappeared. The other was stranded on a mid-stream debris pile for about three hours. Firefighters used the current to lower a life vest to him, then sent a rescue swimmer out to grab him and bring him safely ashore. The second man, Adam Bruna, 18, was found several days later when the water receded. He was lodged under a logjam on the west bank of the river.

On May 22nd The mighty Cheat River Canyon in Northern West Virginia gave five private rafters from Harrisburg a hard lesson in the danger of high flows. According to an article in *Splashes*, the newsletter of the West Virginia Wildwater Association, this group had paddled the standard Class III-IV Eastern whitewater runs for many years. They paddled long, narrow SOAR inflatables that are sort of a cross between a ducky and a raft. They were wearing life vests and wet suits and used kayak paddles for propulsion. When the Lower Youghiogheny River in Ohio's State Park was closed because of high water the group decided to try the Cheat Canyon. An Ohio outfitter strongly advised against this and gave them directions to the much easier (but still challenging) Narrows section just upstream.

In Albright another outfitter warned them against launching. When they put in at about 1:00 pm the Cheat was running at 6½'. This is over 15,000 cfs, well past the cut-off point for commercial outfitters. Both of the group's boats flipped in huge

breaking waves in Decision Rapids, less than a mile from the start. Initially, two members of the party were missing: David Probst and his nephew. Several of the survivors worked their way back upriver to Teter's Campground and called 911. Since two members of the group were missing, local rescue squads asked guides from Mountain Streams and Trails and a group of local kayakers to help with the search. The two inflatables were found in Beech Run Rapids; the dead man and his nephew were found above Big Nasty on river left. This 48 year-old man, who weighed over 325 pounds and had a scar on his chest suggestive of heart surgery, was overcome by the violent water and washed downstream.

By now Mr. Probst had been in the water for over two hours. They did CPR for about 15 minutes before one of the kayakers, a physician, pronounced the man dead. The outfitters then loaded Mr. Probst on a raft and ferried him across the river. There they tied him to a backboard and carried him up a very steep slope to a trail. After meeting the rescue squad they returned to their rafts and finished the run just before nightfall.

Most of us know the frustration of being confronted with high water after a long drive. There are lots of stories about groups in this position who tried a river that, in retrospect, should have been left alone. This experienced group should have been carrying a guidebook. There were many Class III-IV rivers running at reasonable levels that day, including the Casselman, Laurel Hill, Upper Big Sandy, Dry Fork, and of course, the Cheat Narrows.

Ladle Rapid is the most formidable drop on Idaho's magnificent Selway River. The gauge at the put-in on June 5th read roughly 4.8 feet; not unreasonably high, but still big water. According to Vince Thompson's *Idaho Whitewater Page*, Gail Sparwasser, 58, was a part of a large party of 16 people in 13 rafts. She and her husband, both of whom had done the river before, ran first in a 14' self-bailing oar-frame boat. Their raft capsized in big waves and holes, throwing them into the water. Other rafts in the party gave chase, but at

this level Ladle is one of a long chain of drops with big waves and holes. The river is wide and turbulent here, so finding a single person is not easy. Although her husband swam safely ashore, Ms. Sparwasser washed past everyone. She was spotted and picked up by another party downstream. They attempted resuscitation unsuccessfully.

On June 22nd a tourist from Chicago died on a commercial rafting trip on Sixmile Creek near Anchorage, Alaska. This class IV river consists entirely of snow and glacier melt, and water temperatures are extremely low. One of their guests, Clarence Savage, 52, wore a drysuit, life vest, and helmet. He was thrown into the water when his raft hit a "rough spot" in "The Predator" rapid. He washed under a log before guides could get to him and was not breathing despite excellent gear and short immersion time. In an interview in the Anchorage, Alaska *Daily News*, State Trooper Greg Wilkinson reminded us that very cold water can cause breathing or heart problems in susceptible individuals. This includes many people over 50.

Two brothers died when their guided raft flipped in House Rock Rapid, a big class IV drop on Montana's Gallatin River. John Staley, 58, and Vernon Staley, 56, were in a boat that flipped on a mid-stream boulder near the top of this pounding, mile-long rapid. Water levels were near their seasonal peak. A safety kayaker helped two women reach shore, then took off after the men. He pulled one of them into shallow water, then chased the other. When the second man proved to be unresponsive, the safety kayaker bailed out of his boat, grabbed the man, pulled him to shore, and began CPR. But it was too late. And while this was going on the first man, probably overcome by exhaustion and cold water, slipped back into the river and also died.

On June 29th a guided raft flipped in Middle Keaney Rapids in West Virginia's New River Gorge. The flow was 8,000 cfs, a near-optimal level that creates huge breaking waves here. Five occupants of the raft, along with the guide, were picked up by other rafts. But Morgan Funk, 15, washed into a dangerous rock sieve at the top of Lower Keaney known

as Meatgrinder. These rocks, the site of a previous fatality, are very difficult to reach. Guides and private paddlers mobilized to help her, and were eventually joined by Park Service and fire-rescue personnel. They were not successful.

We have several rather sketchy reports of two other accidents. On June 19th Susan Payne, 52, was swept down Alaska's Portage Creek after capsizing an inflatable kayak. According to the Fairbanks, Alaska *News Miner* she was able to hold onto some bushes for a while, but let go before her friend who was paddling with her could provide help. Then on June 26th Derek Bell, 24, drowned on Oregon's Grand Ronde River when his raft capsized against a bridge piling near the confluence with the Wallowa River. Mr. Bell, who was wearing a PFD, was found floating some distance downriver. Anyone with additional information should forward it to the AW Safety Editor.

Livery Accidents

Two of this year's deaths involved boat rental operations, the first occurring on the Delaware River above Port Jervis, NY. This section has a nice mix of flatwater and Class I-II rapids and supports a number of many livery operations. On June 9th Shlomi Bgdadi, an Israeli national, drowned after capsizing a rental kayak. This happened in Shohola Rapids, just below the mouth of New York's Mongaup River. According to the National Park Service Morning Report, The victim and his companion had been issued PFD's but chose not to wear them. Both men were weak swimmers. His friend, who also flipped, managed to struggle ashore. Mr. Bgdadi's body was found the next afternoon.

The Nantahala River in North Carolina was the scene of a tragic foot entrapment. A 59 year-old man and his 14 year-old son were paddling a rented double duckie when they hung up on a rock in the left side of Patton's Run. According to an account posted to the Carolina Canoe Club bulletin board by Wayne Dickert, the man jumped into the creek to free the boat. His leg became caught between the two-to-three foot diameter boulders that litter the riverbed here and he probably went under instantly. His son, who was in the bow facing downstream, saw nothing. There were no other paddlers nearby to witness the event. Assuming that his father would meet him at the take-out the boy paddled downstream. Hundreds of people passed

by during the next few hours without ever suspecting what happened. When the boy's father could not be found, a search began. His body was located quickly, and was easily recovered when the water was turned off.

Failed Rescues

Although river rescues are routinely performed by groups of trained whitewater paddlers, it's important to remember that this activity can be dangerous. This year two paddlers died while attempting to help recover gear after a mishap. While taking risks can be justified when rescuing a living person, no gear is worth dying over. Both rescues were complicated by dangerous holes.

Big Laurel Creek is a scenic class II-IV four-mile stream that runs into the French Broad River west of Asheville, North Carolina. On June 14th a father and his teen-aged son attempted the run in two kayaks, one hardshell and one inflatable. Because the water level was very low, only - 4", the usual route down Suddy Hole Rapid was too shallow to run. Most of the water funneled into the horseshoe-shaped ledge that creates Suddy Hole. According to a detailed account in the Hot Springs, NC *News-Record and Sentinel*, Mark Simms, 52, ran first in his inflatable. He came through fine, but his son's kayak nosed deep, struck a rock, and got stuck in the hole. The boy floated free, but his kayak would not come out.

Mr. Simms decided to retrieve his son's kayak, and here he made a fatal mistake. He tied a rope around his chest, something that a trained whitewater paddler knows not to do. He entered the river and swam out to the kayak. Thirty feet from shore he was pummeled by the hole and pulled under. The boy tried to pull his father in, but the rope became snagged on the bottom and it wouldn't budge. By changing the direction of pull he was able to pull his father free, but by then he'd been under too long. After trying CPR he hiked back to the put-in where he met a family and notified authorities.

Rescue teams, assisted by a group of high school students, walked downstream and carried Mr. Simms out in his ducky. The next day several whitewater paddlers who trained in river rescue paddled the river and retrieved the kayak. It was still stuck in Suddy Hole. One of them waded out on a rock shelf and was able to clip a carabiner

onto the grab loop.

In another incident, 62 year-old Paul Butzen was paddling with his adult son on the Sheboygan River near Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin when they encountered a man who had attempted to run Riverbend Dam. According to the *Sheboygan Press*, the man swam free, but his kayak was still caught in the hydraulic. Mr. Butzen and his son, who portaged the dam, offered to help recover it. As they approached the boat from downstream they were pulled into the hydraulic and capsized. The two other men quickly washed free, but Mr. Butzen was held in the hydraulic for some time before washing out. Police and firefighters from nearby Kohler, Wisconsin found him floating face down in the river. They pulled him in, but resuscitation efforts failed.

In yet another instance of dam foolishness, two youngsters died after sliding down the face of a dam like a waterslide. The incident occurred on the Chippewa River near Watson, Minnesota. Brandon Dornbush, 12, went first and got caught in the hydraulic below. His older brother Justin, 14, first tried to reach him with a fishing pole before trying the chute himself and becoming trapped. Their 11 year-old

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sister pedaled a mile to town to summon help, but it was too late. Rescuers found the bodies of the two boys over a mile downstream. Both this and the preceding incident dramatize the real dangers of entering the backwash of a dam for any reason, even to help someone else.

And Some Remarkable Saves

Paddlers made several outstanding rescues this past spring. Veteran river activist Jerry Meral sent us a detailed account of an extraordinary rescue on the Chamberlain Falls run of California's North Fork of the American River. The incident occurred on March 6th. A group was scouting Bogus Thunder Rapid when they saw a cataraft and a paddleboat run the rapid without scouting, flip, and pin. Greg Judge paddled quickly down and arrived to find a man standing at the top of a rock holding onto a woman's foot. She was pinned head-first against the rock by the force of the water. Mr. Judge jumped into the river and swam onto the rock. He grabbed her life vest and pulled as hard as he could, but could not move her. Suddenly he lost his balance and fell into the river. As he did, he managed to brace and push on an underwater rock. He gave one final pull from a different angle. To everyone's surprise, the woman came free. She was still conscious when Mr. Judge pulled her into a weak eddy. His effort showed a remarkable ability to take quick and decisive action in the wild chaos of a true emergency.

But the situation wasn't resolved yet. The woman, who had been pulled onto a riverside rock, had no feeling below her waist. Several kayakers were sent to get help. The group built a flat spot with life vests and rocks, and then carefully moved her there. As she became chilled, they built a small fire, cut off her wetsuit, and gave her warm, dry clothing. Several passing kayakers left extra food and clothes. The group was preparing to spend the night when a California Highway Patrol helicopter arrived and picked the woman up. She was admitted to the hospital with three fractured vertebrae, a concussion, and hypothermia. The rescuers then

launched their boats and made it to the takeout as darkness fell.


On June 11th canoeist Curtis Ensley, 46, got into big trouble after he flipped in Tablesaw Rapid on Tennessee's Ocoee River. According to a posting to *Boatertalk*, his foot became trapped after he swam into the hole at the bottom. A steep drop can take you from a "foot-up" to a "foot down" position very quickly, and your best defense is to pull your knees up against your chest as you go over the drop. When Mr. Ensley came up his canoe was floating in the backwash nearby. He grabbed it and screamed for help.

Guides from Rolling Thunder and Outland Rafting moved in quickly. A raft lower was set up, and eventually others got into the water directly behind Mr. Ensley. They could keep his head above water, but could not release his foot. According to Charlie Miller, the owner of Rolling Thunder, one of his guides pushed himself under water and found the stern line of the canoe wrapped around Mr. Ensley's leg. Pressure from the rope was jamming the leg into the gap between the rocks. After a number of attempts the guide was able to cut the line. Afterwards, the leg came free easily. This entire rescue took 45 minutes. Mr. Ensley's leg was badly injured by the rope and rocks, but he is very grateful to be alive.

When two women jumped into the Chattahoochee River near Atlanta to rescue their dogs. On June 13th they were washed downstream and ended up holding precariously to the bridge abutments of I-75! Rescue workers were preparing to rappel down to one of them when kayaker Will Sutton saw the commotion. According to a posting he wrote for *Boatertalk*, he headed upstream and met a friend, Goeff Kohl. They sprinted downstream and eddied out at the bridge abutment. Firefighters had hold of one woman, but a second one was holding a much more precarious place at the next bridge pier over. After getting the go-ahead from the incident commander, Sutton was given a spare PFD to take to the woman. He paddled over and coaxed the woman into an eddy just upstream of a nasty log jam. She donned the PFD and got

on the back of Sutton's boat. He paddled her to shore as his friend provided backup. The story was on the 6:00 news on all the main Atlanta stations.

The majority of the accounts in this article came from postings to Internet bulletin boards and chat rooms serving the whitewater paddling community. They often include copies of articles written for local newspapers. Since I can't check all of these resources regularly I depend on AW members to forward useful material. I'm especially indebted to my regular correspondents: Slim Ray, Tim Bromelkamp, Vince Thomson, Aida Parkinson, and Joe Greiner. Without their support there would be a lot less information to share with you.

American Whitewater depends on its members and friends for the information that's contained in this accident summary. Remember that a full account of what happened cuts down on the inevitable gossip and speculation that follows a serious incident. Please post a copy on the American Whitewater Forum. Found at AW's web site, www.americanwhitewater.org, it focuses on our conservation, access, and safety programs. The forum is actually within *Boatertalk*, and it contains very little casual chatting. The information we acquire is also added to AW's Safety Database. Created by former Safety Chair Lee Belknap and found on our web site, it provides the real-world basis for our safety program. Please forward any accident descriptions, newspaper articles, personal accounts, and other material of note to ccwalbridge@cs.com (Rt. 1, Box A43B, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525). 

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I was a straight shaft guy so I was nervous about using a bent shaft on the Middle Kings. Once on the river the transition was instinctive and immediate. Durability wasn't ever a worry.”

– Tommy Hilleke, LVM – 7 Rivers Expedition

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Tommy Hilleke on the Lunch Video Magazine – 7 Rivers Expedition.



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California

One Account of
TDUB's Seven
Rivers Expedition

California madness

by Fred Coriell

Encased within towering granite walls above a raging torrent, I was trying hard to relax my mind enough to get some sleep. Light from the late June full moon reflected like daylight off the white faces of the gorge. The bowl was on fire.

After three long days of scouting, paddling, and portaging our way down the river's course we were tired and in the midst of solving its most challenging problem: the Crucible. From the highest branches of a solitary cedar tree living in a granite bowl 50 feet off the river the precarious route downstream could almost be seen. High water and the tales of other kayakers who had ventured to this place made even the bravest souls spend a couple of hours climbing the river right wall looking for a way around the series of rapids. It was clear the only viable option downstream was on the river; a tantalizing prospect that would have to wait until morning. So there we camped on the most primo piece of High Sierra real estate, deep in a crack on the Middle San Joaquin with sandy beaches and overhanging rocks. Tossing and turning as only someone wrapped in a sleeping bag can, my thoughts wandered and I began thinking about the binge of river travel TDUB had found themselves in California.

It all started on Dinkey Creek Waterfalls, a fine Sierra classic. Two days of slides, waterfalls, and some technical portages to train us with gear in the boats again. The

goal – to paddle as many High Sierra multi-day runs as possible – was becoming a reality. After a couple more days in the Kaweah drainage we headed toward the Royal Gorge of the North Fork of the American. It is typically the first high elevation river to run, but not this year. The weather was still cold and water too low. Plan B was Fantasy Falls. With a dangerous amount of snow upstream, we shoved off hoping the cold temperatures would hold. The upper section seemed uncharacteristically floatable. At the top of the Total Reality Vortex gorge the North Fork of the Mokelumne was not a creek, but a river, bank to bank with river wide holes and limited eddies. It was sweet and a little scary. From a few of miles above Fantasy Falls down to Salt Springs Reservoir is always the best paddling. The larger riverbed nicely handled the increased flow and added some excitement to the big rapids above the lake. After watching Mr. DeLaVergne, the man who started 7rivers.expedition.blogspot.com and who claims that anything not vertical in California is class III, take a tremendous whooping in the big hole at the bottom of the final slide we cleaned up the pieces and rode a nice tail wind back to the car.

The Royal Gorge was still low, but to keep with the goal we paddled it anyway making

the 35+ mile trip in two absurdly long days – a highly not recommended exploit. It was also the first river with this summer's Seven Rivers MVP Al Gregory. He is the man, driving all of the shuttles, offering moral support and encouragement when the group needed it most. Al made the whole thing possible as a Charlie Beaver's Memorial Expedition in memory of our good friend and the times we had with him on many of these rivers.

The uncharacteristically cool June made river levels hard to predict. First stop, the not so classic West Cherry Creek. Finally time to get our hike on. A brief but intense moment of speculation about the water level transpired from top of the ridge. Finally, Al G mentioned it looked like the Green at 200%. That did not seem too bad so we descended toward the river. Perhaps people were a little gun shy after Fantasy Falls. The level was pretty much optimal, about 434 cfs. Things got exciting as we portaged down to the confluence of Upper Cherry. It was going to be another high water adventure down to Cherry Lake. Some of the rapids were so good they had to be run twice. And there was "the nozzle," the second to last drop above the lake, normally a slide into a narrow crack. This time, it was like riding a tennis ball through a fire hose.

Fred Coriell sets safety as Daniel DeLaverne drops into a gorge on day two of the Devil's Postpile, Middle Fork San Joaquin.

Photo by Tommy Hilleke

The weather continued to cool off, dropping Upper Cherry into the good to go window. Fifty degree weather too chilly for mosquitoes made the hike up the Kibbey Ridge Trail almost enjoyable. Straight into Cherry Bomb fully loaded. Off the bomb, through the Weir, boof left, left, middle right, short pool, middle, center right, set up for the crux, left of the "Rock In The Middle," rise up, that was the bomb. Al G had watched the mayhem from high on river left. As part of his proposal for the Charlie Beaver's Memorial Expedition he hiked in and was going to hang out in that beautiful place for a while. During his stay many people who Charlie had known paddled through and Al passed a journal around for them to share their thoughts and memories of Charlie.

The sun rose just in time for some early morning mad bombing. Next was breakfast, and a few teacup rounds before cruising

TDUB - Daniel DeLavernge, John Grace, Nikki Kelly, Toby McDermott, Fred Coriell.
Photo by Tommy Hilleke

some of the best California granite down to Cherry Lake. It was so good, why not do it again? So we did and got to watch mad bomber Tommy Hilleke run the Cherry Bomb gorge six or seven times at juicy flow. He may have the most descents ever of that ½ mile stretch of whitewater.

The next task was nailing the Middle San Joaquin and the Middle Kings back to back, which meant compromising water levels on one of the runs. Since high water is better than no water it was decided to run the Devil's Postpile first. And here we were in the midst of a good adventure.

My eyes opened to see the sunlight begin its descent down the left wall of the Crucible. It was morning and time to go. Anticipation was high and breakfast was quick. We lowered into the river eyeing the unknown downstream. Three rapids to negotiate, "Pray to God but row toward shore." We sat on the beach looking back up the Crucible. It is an impressive place seeing the shear magnitude of its rocks and rapids. Another 8 hours of river travel and we were at Mammoth Pool.

For me the trip was ending. Injured, I

watched everyone load their gear on the mules and head up and over Bishop Pass. I was especially bummed not to be kayaking with two of the finest lady kayakers in the world, Miss Nikki Kelly and Mrs. Buffy Burge. Both were going for their second trip down the Middle Kings. Everyone tells me it is a trip of a lifetime. It has to be good because you cannot find someone that has been there who disliked the experience. After the Kings there was still one more river on the list. John Grace, Toby McDermott, and Nikki Kelly survived to the end to complete the entire Seven Rivers goal. Under the cover of darkness they ran the Grand Canyon of Tuolumne from Tuolumne Meadows to the reservoir. Of course they portaged around Hetch Hetchy, where it is illegal to navigate your personal watercraft, and made a crafty exit so not to disturb the peace in such a controversial place.

And like that the Seven Rivers Expedition came to an end. No bells, whistles, or finish lines just a long ride home, sore bodies, and good memories. There really is no place like the mountains of California in the summer—a great place to find hearty adventure the way TDUB likes it. *AW*

the crew



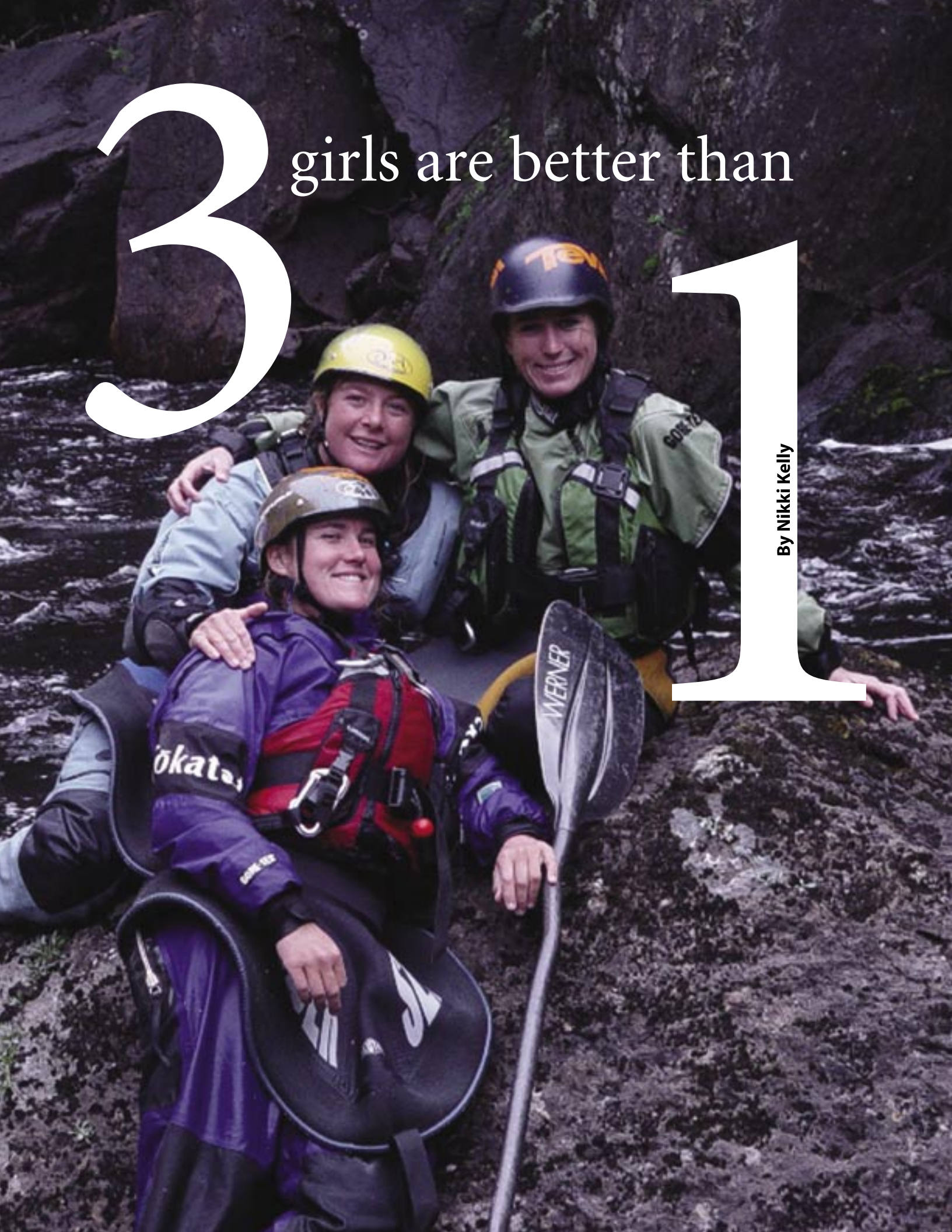


*Buffy Burge and Daniel DeLavernge
run the waterfall gorge of the
Middle Fork of the Kings River, California
Photo by Tommy Hilleke*

3 girls are better than

1

By Nikki Kelly



Australia: the driest country on earth. Knowing this makes it hard to leave the paradise of New Zealand for this hot, thirsty desert. However, the island of Tasmania, 120 miles south of the Australian mainland, is a luscious treasure. Only 25,000 square miles – the size of Ireland – Tasmania is not only full of ready rivers, it is a timeless place.

Tasmania's boatable waterfalls have lured kayaking nomads from around the world. This October I once again found myself at the airport, embarking on a kayaking trip to a country I had never seen. I wasn't worried though. I would be boating with two other kick @\$\$ chicks. As my teammate Georgia said, you will not be disappointed.

The team consisted of two Aussies and a Kiwi. Georgia Le Plastrier: native language Italian, Aussie to the bone, nickname Cobra. She is often found exploring rivers in Italy, Norway and Tibet. Tanya Faux: Pre-World Freestyle champion, taking the world by storm, the most athletic female kayaker I had ever meet. The third Charlie's Angel was me, the good-old kiwi. One thing was guaranteed: we were going to have a laugh, and at the end of the day, that's what makes a memorable trip.

We found our way down to Tasmania when a Teva sales manager in Australia, an avid kayaker himself, invited his female athletes to compete in the Levin River Extreme Race. We congregated in Melbourne Friday evening, piled into the hardy Land Rover and boarded the overnight ferry to Tasmania. We rolled up to a welcoming scene of more than 60 competitors loitering



Nikki Kelly finding the perfect line in Tasmania during the Levin River Extreme Race.

Photo by Tanya Faux

about the paddock. This was certainly a grass-roots event – the best kind. We said our quick hellos, took a fast practice run, then proceeded to race in pairs (something different) down the Class IV-V course. Having not paddled this river before, we were challenged by the many different routes. Tanya and I teamed up and though we had an early collision which set us back a few, we paddled 'hard out' for ten minutes and rolled in 2nd over all, bruising a few egos on the way. Not so bad for a couple of Sheilas. Later that night there was a big feast and party. Australians are famous for their beer drinking; there was plenty of dancing, drumming and singing to be had. Sunday morning we all rallied, racing again in our pairs but this time accompanied by a Swiss ball (the ones that belong in the gym). The race was a mass start, and the winners were the first team over the finish line with their ball in tow. I rate this as one of my favorite races of all time. What a shamble! It required fine teamwork and was rather exhausting.

Our tour carried on to the Levin River, where we were treated to 20 and 40-foot waterfalls. We followed that with a possible first descent of the upper Franklin which I do not recommend. However, we are telling

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PHOTO: Catherine Cook

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3 girls are better than 1

the local Tasmanian devils that it is “good to go” (pay-back for sending us in).

Looking back, I most enjoyed the countryside: driving through towns built by early settlers, paddling with genuine, good, fun people; and of course, the female company. I must give special thanks to Paul Karris, our Teva host; he outdid himself.

The best months to visit Tasmania and catch the rain are August and September; there is plenty to explore on this timeless island. 

Check out the low down on 3girlsbetterthan1.blogspot.com



Nikki Kelly in the Swiss ball race
Photo by Tanya Faux



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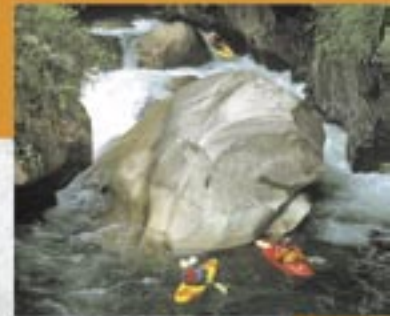
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Levin River Extreme Race meeting in Tasmania.
Photo by Nikki Kelly



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Image by Emily Grimes, Pillow Rock Rapid, Gauley River, WV

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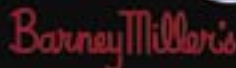
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A man in a blue long-sleeved shirt, khaki shorts, a black cap, and sunglasses is carrying a large, dark-colored kayak on his back. The kayak is secured with blue straps and has yellow and black foam padding on the top. He is standing on a dirt path in a mountainous area with a lake and snow-capped peaks in the background. The sky is clear and blue.

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Prize: Winner's choice of any whitewater kayak from Wavesport



River Humor

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Make us laugh! If you (and, more importantly, other people) think you're funny, send us something that shows it. Humorous stories need not include photos, though authors may include illustrations. Stories must involve whitewater rivers, at least peripherally.

Prize: Winner's choice of any whitewater kayak from Pyranha

River Conservation and Access

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Conservation & Access Regional Updates

North Fork Nooksack River, Washington

by John Gangemi

On October 8th, 2004 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued an order stating that licensing was not required for the Nooksack Falls Hydro Project. This order reverses an earlier decision by the FERC (March 2004) stating that licensing was required. American Whitewater has been tracking this proceeding closely because FERC's decision could potentially set a precedent nationally. In fact, the Nooksack jurisdictional issue was featured as one of the top river issues for 2004 in the September-October American Whitewater Journal.

A FERC license is required to construct, operate, and maintain a non-federal

hydroelectric project that:

1. occupies federal lands or federal reservations
2. is located on navigable streams
3. uses surplus water or water power from a federal government dam
4. was constructed after August 26, 1935 and is located on a non-navigable stream that affects the interests of interstate or foreign commerce (including providing power to an interstate power grid).

These jurisdictional criteria were established to protect public trust resources. Licensing a hydropower project requires environmental analysis as well as public review. Federal agencies, states and tribes have the authority to impose mandatory conditions to protect natural resources such as water quality, fish and wildlife. The procedure for licensing a

project is carefully laid out in the Federal Power Act and includes adherence to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Occasionally private hydro operators challenge FERC's jurisdictional authority. Hydro projects outside the FERC's jurisdiction require very little environmental review or permitting but the resource impacts can still be significant. Therefore, American Whitewater, along with our coalition partners, evaluates jurisdictional challenges very seriously.

The developer for the Nooksack project, Puget Sound Hydro, challenged the FERC's March order on two counts: 1) The conclusions in the FERC navigability report; and 2) the project's transmission line connection to the interstate electric grid. The FERC had previously determined the North Fork Nooksack had been used to float shingles at the turn of the

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century, thereby making the river federally navigable because of previous use for interstate commerce. Puget Sound Hydro challenged the FERC navigability report claiming the exact location for floating shingles was not specifically described in the historic journals. American Whitewater takes issue with this challenge and the FERC's categorical exclusion of whitewater boating on reaches with Class IV or greater difficulty as a determining factor for navigability. The FERC claims that Class IV and greater requires expert skills with specially designed craft making it non-navigable to the average person. The FERC claims Class III difficulty is the upper limit for a reach to be determined navigable. American Whitewater believes whitewater difficulty should not be the determining factor for recreational navigability but rather the transport of commercial clients. Commercial rafting occurs regularly on many Class IV reaches across the country. In fact commercial rafting occurs on the North Fork Nooksack just downstream from the hydro project. American Whitewater believes this commercial use would occur directly adjacent to the hydropower project if access were granted.

American Whitewater is investigating

challenging the FERC order in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The deadline is December 8th, 2004. For more information about the Nooksack visit the American Whitewater website using this address: http://www.americanwhitewater.org/toolkit/Hydro/FERC_procedures/NooksackJurisdiction.doc.

Carmen Smith Hydro Project Whitewater Boating Reconnaissance

by Jason Hartz

American Whitewater and the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) cooperated in a land-based reconnaissance whitewater boating study on the Upper McKenzie and Smith rivers, 70 miles east of Eugene Oregon. The Carmen – Smith Project is EWEB's oldest hydropower endeavor. EWEB has initiated the relicense process for this hydro project. The project includes three dams and two reservoirs, partially dewater a two and a half mile stretch of the McKenzie River and totally dewater a two and a half mile stretch of the Smith River.



A map of the project area by www.eweb.org

Although whitewater kayaking has been documented on reaches around the project, there is no documented use on the reaches actually affected by the project. Due to the difficulty of access and lack of information regarding potential whitewater opportunities, American Whitewater proposed a land-based reconnaissance boating study that would

Lower half of the reach on the McKenzie photo Jason Hartz

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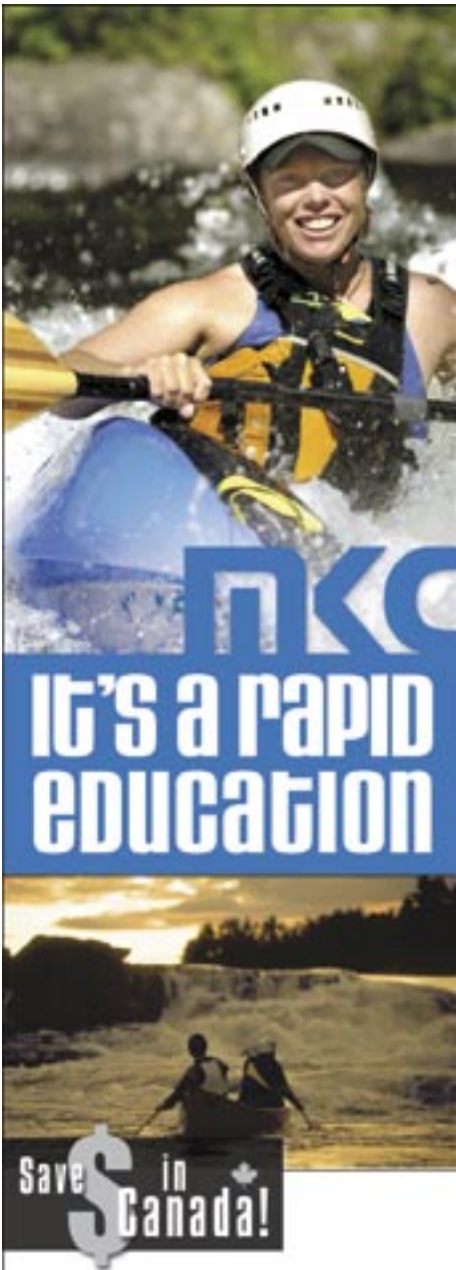
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be broken down into two phases: 1) Land-based reconnaissance whereby participants inspect river reaches for whitewater opportunities and answer pre-developed survey questions and participate in focus group discussions; 2) on the water boating study based on the results of phase one.

The land-based reconnaissance took place on Saturday, October 23rd. Doug Whittaker and Bo Shelby, representing Confluence Research, conducted the study. Boating participants in attendance included Kim Bates, Ed Fredette, Steve Stuckmeyer, Jim Reed and myself. We started with the Smith reach, which is totally de-watered by the Smith Dam, except for a minimal flow, approximately 10 cfs according to EWEB sources. We hiked along the reach starting from the top of Smith Dam. Overall it seemed as though the Smith River has whitewater potential. There is no flow regime for the Smith because Smith Dam is not designed to spill except in emergencies. Smith dam's sole purpose is to maintain the Smith reservoir for managing the flow regime between inflow from the Carmen Diversion Dam and outflow to Trail Bridge Reservoir. Spills over the dam only occur during very high water events.

After the Smith reconnaissance we drove to the Upper McKenzie and started the second part of the study at the Carmen Diversion Dam by talking about the hydrology of the reach. The section of the Upper McKenzie affected by the Carmen Smith Project extends from the Carmen Diversion Dam, down to the Trail Bridge Reservoir;

it is split roughly in half by Tamolitch Falls. Tamolitch Falls is approximately 70 feet high, according to Forest Service measurements, and dry except for spills over Carmen Diversion Dam caused either by high water events or project maintenance. We hiked quickly over the upper half, which is naturally dewatered by porous lava rock and has little whitewater potential. At Tamolitch Falls we explored the river bed thoroughly to examine the falls as a potential whitewater opportunity, and the short section directly above it. The group agreed that the falls has the potential to be run at higher flows. We examined access issues at this point and determined that there is the possibility of access from highway 126, which would greatly increase the run's accessibility.

We hiked the rest of the stretch, stopping frequently to examine individual rapids. Overall the stretch below Tamolitch Falls has some interesting rapids, and not too much wood. There is the potential for a solid Class III run interspersed with some Class IV. About halfway through this lower reach the gradient drops off and there are many downed trees along the banks with some crossing the river. The whitewater on this lower stretch was minimal at the observed level, but could perhaps become more interesting with increased flows. We finished the day at the EWEB project garage by debriefing the study and recording our thoughts and impressions with Doug and Bo. There was consensus among the boaters that there definitely exists potential for boating on the Smith reach and the lower



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half of the McKenzie reach, starting somewhere above or below Tamolitch Falls and finishing at Kink Creek, or perhaps going all the way to Trail Bridge Reservoir. The segment from Kink Creek to Trail Bridge Reservoir might become less attractive for boating because of the Forest Service's plans to put in downed trees for salmon habitat.

Three weeks after the formal study Andy Potterf, another local Eugene kayaker, and I went to Tamolitch Falls and explored the access possibilities from state highway 126. There is a dirt forest service road off of highway 126 that accesses a ridge directly above Tamolitch Falls. There is a steep but manageable trail from this forest service road down to Tamolitch pool. It took Andy and I ten minutes to hike down and we both agreed that it could be done with kayaks. The determination of whether to conduct the second phase of the study should be made by EWEB and American Whitewater before the end of 2004.

Departments of Interior and Commerce Propose Unfair Rules in Hydropower Proceedings

by John Gangemi

American Whitewater, working as a member of the Hydropower Reform Coalition, filed comments opposing proposed rulemakings by the Department of Commerce and the Department of Interior. Commerce and Interior are proposing in separate rulemakings to severely limit public participation in hydropower licensing proceedings. Commerce and Interior are proposing to give dam operators special privileges to appeal agency license conditions while at the same time excluding the public from this appeals process. Excluding the public from the appeals process on federally navigable waterways is fundamentally unfair. The Hydropower Reform Coalition consists of twelve member organizations on the steering committee and more than one-hundred general member organizations.

Joint comment letter submitted to the Department of Commerce and Interior, November 8th, 2004.



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Thomas Bigford
Chief, Habitat Protection Division
Office of Habitat Conservation / National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: RIN 0648-AS55, Procedures for Review of Mandatory Fishway Prescriptions

Dear Mr. Bigford,

The undersigned organizations are writing to comment on the proposed Procedures for Review of Mandatory Fishway Prescriptions Developed by the Department of Commerce in the Context of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Hydropower Licensing.¹

Our organizations generally support codifying the Mandatory Conditioning Review Process with the noted adjustments to accommodate the ILP and changes to all licensing processes under that rule. We are, however, concerned about the variance in the ways that the Departments of Commerce, Interior, and Agriculture review mandatory conditions and administrative (or fail to administrate) their appeals for those conditions.

Mindful of this variance, Commerce asks the public to comment on the addition of an appeals process,² and whether it should follow the framework adopted by the Department of the Interior.³ It also asks whether hydropower licensing legislation considered in Congress might also contain useful elements of an administrative appeals process.⁴ Our answer to both questions is clearly no.

While our organizations are generally supportive of an appeals process that bridges between a final condition and a lawsuit, the appeals process proposed by Interior is unacceptable. Should Commerce develop an appeals process, it should structure the appeals under the following guidelines:

1. The appeals process must be available to all stakeholders. Interior's proposed process would allow license applicants the sole right to initiate an appeal. Stakeholders with legal standing in the administrative proceeding would be denied access. Public participation is intrinsic to the Federal Power Act, which ensures equal access to the administrative proceeding. Privileging the dam owner with exclusive authority to challenge conditions is discriminatory and disadvantages all other stakeholders, undermining the balance of the licensing process.

2. The appeals process must defer to the original decision and include on-the-ground scientific staff on any review team; otherwise, the process will politicize what should be science-based decisions. The Department of Interior's proposed process would not lead to informed decisions regarding appropriate mandatory conditions. It would invoke a de novo review. Unlike Courts of Appeal, which would defer to an agency when reviewing its decision, the proposed process would eliminate such deference. Commerce would establish a Washington D.C. policy-level team to review the decision. Under its terms, none of the members of the review team can have previously participated in the development or approval of the condition or prescription – in other words, none of them would be familiar with the relevant resources or the rationale for the condition. And, this team would be expected to review a cabinet-sized record and render a decision within 60 days.

Tight timelines, unfamiliarity with the extensive record and our resources 3,000 miles away, and lack of direct expertise are insurmountable obstacles to quality decisions and to a realistic process.

3. The appeals process proposed by Interior would allow consideration of such factors as cost, air quality, and energy supply. Our organizations are adamantly opposed to reaching outside the resource mandate of the agency to incorporate inappropriate criteria such as those listed and anticipated in the federal legislation. The Federal Power Act charges FERC with the responsibility of equal consideration to beneficial uses as it decides whether and under what terms to issue a license. It is neither within the mandate nor the role of Commerce to consider these other variables in the development of a prescription.

In summary, we support codifying the Mandatory Conditions Review Process (MCRP) and establishing a non-discriminatory appeals process that is *equally available to all stakeholders*, but wholeheartedly oppose an unfair and unilateral appeals process, such as Interior's proposal, that threatens the quality of protections for our rivers and resources.

Sincerely,
John T. Gangemi
American Whitewater

Conservation & Access Regional Updates

Milltown Dam, Montana

by John Gangemi

NorthWestern Energy has requested the FERC's permission to begin the process of cleaning up toxic sediments trapped behind Milltown Dam on the Clark Fork River just upstream from Missoula, Montana. These toxic sediments pose a threat to public health through contamination of the Missoula aquifer—the municipal water supply. Removal of the sediments is the EPA's preferred alternative for clean-up of this superfund site. The EPA plan also calls for eventual removal of Milltown Dam as part of the clean-up. Relicensing of the Milltown Dam has been delayed for the past two years while EPA and the state of Montana negotiate a consent decree for clean-up of the Clark Fork River and Milltown Dam site. Northwestern's recent filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission requesting a license's amendment to start sediment removal signifies the licensee's commitment to superfund clean-up and dam removal.

Spokane Relicensing, Washington

by Chris Hoffer

The rare occurrence of flow in the south and center channels at Post Falls Dam produced a series of five to seven foot waves that two local paddlers were fortunate to gain access to. The wave disappeared the next day when the dam resumed normal operations, discharging to the north channel.

The wave showed us the potential high flow characteristics for a proposed whitewater park downstream of the dam. The City of Post Falls, Avista Utilities, and

local paddlers are working to gain access, establish recreation flows and to develop the site into a regional whitewater park as part of FERC's re-licensing conditions. The wave is named for Max, the dam operator who has been supportive of the local paddlers' efforts to gain better access to the area below the dam.

Snohomish PUD Announces start of Relicensing Process on the Sultan River, Washington

by Tom O'Keefe

Snohomish County Public Utility District (PUD) and the City of Everett hosted a site visit and public meetings to kick-off the relicensing of the Jackson Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2157). American

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Whitewater local volunteers played an active role in the site visit and public meeting communicating to FERC staff from Washington DC as well as the PUD whitewater boating issues associated with the project as well as fisheries and water quality issues. The current project license expires in June 2011 and the co-licensees plan to file a formal declaration of their intent to relicense the Jackson Project at the end of 2005. Hydro Relicensing offers the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the public to provide input on the future management of this river system.

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Jud Keiser at Max's Wave on the Spokane River at Post Falls, ID
Photos by Chris Hoffer



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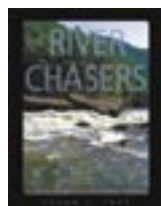
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The AW Safety Flash Cards are now available for those who wish to be prepared for wilderness whitewater emergencies. The Safety cards are waterproof and compact. Flashcards provide on-the-spot reminders of wilderness safety and emergency procedures. They can be purchased by calling (828) 252-0728 and will soon be available on-line

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Conservation & Access Regional Updates

Unfortunately, the boating opportunities once enjoyed on this river were significantly curtailed with the construction of the Jackson Hydroelectric Project in the early 1980s. While the lower run below the powerhouse provides great boating throughout the year, the upper gorge that constitutes the bypass reach has a minimum instream flow requirement of only 20 cfs and rarely runs. Although there have been some recent improvements, access to the river also remains as a long-term issue.

How to Get Involved

Throughout the relicensing process, American Whitewater will work in partnership with individuals, organizations and agencies at the local, state and national level including partner groups that have worked with AW on other hydro relicensings. Together these groups will work to restore riverine processes to the Sultan and represent the public interest in river access and flows to serve both recreation and river conservation needs. Formal recreation studies should begin within the next couple of years but planning will begin soon.

All interested boaters should join the PUD's project mailing list. Contact Dawn Presler djpresler@snopud.com with your name, address, email, and note your interest in the Jackson Hydro Project Relicense Proceeding, FERC No. 2157. Send a copy of your email to the following American Whitewater representatives:

Andy Bridge, Sultan River AW
StreamKeeper: andy@wernerpaddles.com
Thomas O'Keefe, AW Regional
Coordinator: okeefe@riversandcreeks.com
John Gangemi, AW Western
Access and Conservation Director:
jgangemi@digisys.net

If you'd like more information on how to participate in the process or have additional questions please feel free to contact the American Whitewater representatives listed above.

Significance to the Northwest Paddling Community

Through the relicensing process, American Whitewater has restored more than 1,000 miles of whitewater rivers nationally over the past 12 years. These efforts, with the assistance of volunteer paddlers and affiliated clubs, have resulted in agreements to remove dams (White Salmon, WA and Sandy River, OR), have opened new and never before run whitewater sections (Nisqually and Chelan Gorge), opened or improved river access areas, and have improved daily minimum flows for fish, wildlife and human use.

Each of these restored river sections has proven to be outstanding whitewater runs! Some are less than 2 miles long (Tallulah, GA), some restore entire watersheds (Kern, CA), all are critical in the effort to protect rivers and support whitewater recreation.

In terms of length, whitewater suitability, potential use and proximity to a major metropolitan area, the Sultan River relicensing could prove to be extremely important to whitewater boaters in the Northwest. Please volunteer to be a part of this effort!

Wild and Scenic Designations in Idaho

by Bill Sedivy, Executive Director, Idaho Rivers United

The Owyhee Initiative work group, the Owyhee County Commissioners and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, sent (Oct. 22) to Sen. Mike Crapo a proposal to designate 384 miles of Wild & Scenic Rivers (mostly wild), 517,000 acres of federal wilderness and provide for continuing dialogue to resolve conflict over public land management issues in Owyhee County, Idaho. Senator Crapo promised to draft legislation, introduce a bill as soon as possible (probably early next year) and advocate on behalf of this historic agreement in Congress.

Rivers proposed for designation include some of the most spectacular, unprotected rivers and canyons in the United States. All

river segments are located in Idaho. They include: The East Fork (also know as the Main Stem) Owyhee, The Bruneau, The Jarbidge, North Fork Owyhee, South Fork Owyhee, Little Owyhee, Little Jacks Creek, Big Jacks Creek, West Fork Bruneau, Sheep Creek, and key Owyhee tributaries Deep Creek, Battle Creek, Red Canyon Creek and Dickshooter Creek.

Lehigh River Flow Regime up for Negotiation in 2005 (PA)

by Kevin Colburn

The Army Corps of Engineers recently told American Whitewater that in early 2005 they will consider making changes to flow regime in the Class III Lehigh River, the signature whitewater run of Eastern Pennsylvania. These considerations come after changes were made to the Francis Walter Dam that may allow additional flexibility in the flow releases. Regional paddlers, including members of the Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, have been urging the Corps to improve the management of the Lehigh River for years. They now may have the opportunity to see those changes brought to fruition, however there are some significant challenges ahead. The primary hurdle that must be overcome is that the Corps has yet to offer any formal process to consider public comments or to facilitate meaningful negotiations with the various stakeholders. American Whitewater intends to continue working with regional paddlers and the Corps to assure that a fair process will be developed, and that the end result is an ecologically and recreationally sound flow regime in the Lehigh River.

[Conservation & Access continued on next page]

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Conservation & Access Regional Updates

Catawba Flow Study Inspires Local Interest (SC)

by Kevin Colburn

In late October of 2004, American Whitewater worked with Duke Power and over 30 volunteer paddlers to carry out a flow study on the Great Falls of the Catawba River. We paddled two parallel channels at three different flows, and were thwarted in our efforts to test a fourth flow by the failure of several flashboards (wooden boards atop a dam that raise the reservoir elevation). Our study received significant press coverage by several regional newspapers, and local citizens came out to watch and

chat with the paddlers. Our group found that the 1.4 mile channel provided a scenic class II+ whitewater trip on a broad river, and that the 0.7 mile channel provided some great surfing on large fast waves and other fun playboating in five Class III rapids. The Catawba remains a high priority in American Whitewater's work in the Southeast. Now that we have the flow studies behind us, we can focus on preparing access and flow proposals. Duke Power has already indicated a willingness to restore a dynamic and continuous flow regime to the currently dewatered Great Falls. We will be working with Duke and other stakeholders over the next 2 years to design a settlement agreement that helps the Catawba River function more naturally



and to become even more of a recreational asset to the region.

Chattooga Headwaters Appeal Response Delayed, Again (NC/SC/GA)

by Kevin Colburn


American Whitewater now anticipates an answer from the Chief of the US-Forest Service in April regarding our appeal of the paddling ban on the Headwaters of the Chattooga. The deadline for the Chief to respond to our appeal was September 23rd, 2004. The additional time will hopefully



grant the USFS enough time to analyze the large body of evidence in support of allowing whitewater recreation, and will hopefully lead to a positive response on this precedent-setting case. We would like to again extend a warm thank you to the many paddlers who helped support our efforts on the Chattooga, and to our pro bono attorneys at Patton Boggs.

Ausable River Access Saga Continues (NY)

by Kevin Colburn

Can a dam owner flat out say no to public river access downstream of their dam simply because they feel like it? We are about to find out. New York State Electric and Gas's Rainbow Falls Project completely blocks access to the Class IV Ausable Chasm, and they intend to keep it that way. Days after the FERC issued a new license for the project, which required additional study and potential mitigation of river access, NYSEG formally objected to the license and convinced the FERC to reconsider the license. It is uncertain what will come of this license rehearing, but AW is closely following the process and will file comments whenever possible. We expect to know the results of the rehearing by late in 2004 or early 2005. 

Footnotes:

1 69 Fed. Reg. 54,615 (Sept. 9, 2004)

2 III. NMFS solicits public comments and specifically invites commenters to consider differences relative to the Department of Interior.

3 69 Fed. Reg. 54,602 (Sept. 9, 2004)

4 III. NMFS invites comment about whether elements of the legislative proposal should be incorporated into this rulemaking.

Chris Hale and Richard Ellington lead a group down the Catawba River for the Great Falls Flow Study

Photo by Ben Edson / Courtesy of Duke Power



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River Stewardship Institute Update

by Emily Geery & Ryan Weiss



photos by Ben VanCamp

Since American Whitewater was founded in 1954, it has depended on the hard work on volunteers to solve the many problems that face our nation's rivers. In our 50th year, American Whitewater decided it was time to train a new group of river advocates, and so the River Stewardship Institute was formed. On October 9th, 2004, American Whitewater and the 6 participants in the RSI program traveled through the Klamath River Basin in northern California, learning important river stewardship tools. The RSI group participants spent their time studying the needs of various river user groups, learning about the hydropower relicensing process, and examining ecological impacts on rivers.

River Voices from the Klamath

"A watershed is a marvelous thing to consider: this process of rain falling, streams flowing, and oceans evaporating causes every molecule on earth to make the trip once every two million years. The surface is carved into watersheds – a kind of familial branching, a chart of relationship, and a definition of place. The watershed is the first and last nation whose boundaries, though subtly shifting, are unarguable."

-Gary Snyder, Coming into the Watershed

"What does a group of river stewards look like?" I wondered, when we arrived at the Sacramento airport from the high desert of northern New Mexico. We had just crossed hundreds of watershed boundaries, observed easily by airplane. We were now in an unfamiliar place, looking

The RSI program would not have been possible without the support of Kokatat Water Sports Wear and logistical support from The River Dancers and Dagger Kayaks. Now each of the RSI participants is serving as a regional coordinator for American Whitewater, focusing on issues in their local watersheds. Continue reading for a detailed account of two RSI participants from New Mexico.



for signs of river-savvy folks who would be accompanying us on our riverine trip through the Klamath Basin. It was only a matter of time until we saw someone carrying a paddle and knew that he was one of the people we were looking for.

As part of American Whitewater's first ever River Stewardship Institute, we weren't sure what or whom to expect. After meeting our fellow river stewards, five of us all together, we had a full day of travel to the banks of the Upper Klamath River, in southern Oregon, where we would begin our journey to learn about issues in the Klamath Basin and to draw parallels between our local watersheds throughout the country. This was an opportunity to learn about other efforts in river conservation and to start thinking like a watershed.

The Klamath Watershed encompasses a large portion of land and water in Oregon and California. It can take a lifetime to learn of a new place, its community, culture and natural history. Without American Whitewater's planning for an information-packed week, it would have taken years to attain insight into the complexities of the issues in this basin.

American Whitewater staff chose the Klamath for its dynamic characteristics. In addition to its whitewater, the basin has a long history of diverse user-group interests that make it a prime example for a collaborative stewardship model of engaging stakeholders to work together.



A side hike up Ukonom Creek shows the group the pristine water flowing out of wilderness areas

Photo by Ben VanCamp

River Stewardship Institute Update

Traveling through the Klamath Basin by boat, van, and foot introduced us to a host of issues and people. We were able to witness the natural beauty of the basin as well as man-made alterations that have affected the natural flow of the watercourse and consequently, natural patterns in the landscape.

Beginning with a hydroelectric power study, we learned of the engineered history of the Klamath River and its transformation into an organic machine. At the JC Boyle Dam and Powerhouse, we learned about PacifiCorp's harnessing of the rivers' flow to create hydroelectric power. The mechanics of a dam and powerhouse facility were observed and discussed among River Stewards including the short and long-term effects of such projects on the river and its many user-groups.

The hydropower re-licensing process was also discussed at length, as the 50-year license to operate the dam was in the process of renewal through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Stakeholders in the basin were currently engaged in the re-licensing process. American Whitewater and local boaters have been involved with whitewater flow studies on both the JC Boyle Bypass and Hell's Corner river segments to determine acceptable flows for safe recreational opportunities.

Locals refer to the water releases from the JC Boyle powerhouse as one gun or two. Not only does this determine velocity and consequently, which way to run the rapids, but it also has a definitive impact in the ecosystem. One gun was released as we rigged and launched into an incredibly beautiful Wild and Scenic River. The river rose one foot in less than an hour, reminding us of engineering feats that attempt to regulate natural systems.

Accompanying us on our journey was the BLM river ranger. As we maneuvered

through an exciting and challenging 11 miles of Class IV whitewater, we were privy to management ideals that the BLM, as a multiple-use regulatory agency, must adhere to when making land and river-use plans. After two exciting days on the Upper Klamath, we took out at the stateline and shuttled around Copco Reservoir to the base of Iron Gate Dam.

The next stop on our Klamath Basin tour was the Iron Gate Fish Hatchery, where we met with stakeholders in the basin, including local non-governmental organizations, state and federal regulatory agencies, private hydropower interests, private recreational businesses and tribal representatives. We talked about the effect of this dam and how it divides a lot more than the river. This engaging roundtable discussion provided us with unique perspectives that truly represented a multiple-use and diverse stakeholder representation of issues contributing to the complex FERC relicensing process.

A sobering sidetrip that afternoon was to the fish ladder at the hatchery, where fall-runs of salmon were climbing the man-made structure in efforts to complete their life-long journey to reproduce. Instead of reaching their spawning grounds, the salmon were scooped into a hatchery truck and taken to a facility near the Iron Gate Dam to be frozen and later processed for their eggs, sperm and flesh, never fulfilling their reproductive cycle. Dams disrupt natural rhythms, such as salmon returning to spawn. We can mitigate

the effects of these man-made obstacles that prevent nature from running its course, but at what price?

Traveling downstream to Happy Camp, we met with members of the Karuk Tribe, and those working with the tribe's fisheries department, in order to learn of the cultural impacts of dams on indigenous nations. Local customs and land-management strategies employed by the Native peoples of the Klamath have been based on balance and sustainability. When a dam is built, it disrupts the balance of not only the river, but also its watershed and all life within it. The Karuk way of life has been affected by the many dams and reservoirs that have altered the flow of the Klamath. Spiritual practices are on the verge of disappearing with the salmon if the basin cannot be returned to a healthy balance.

For the next several days, as we boated downstream, we were accompanied by the salmon, returning home to their place of birth to symbolically restore the river and the watershed to a health that has sustained the Karuk and others in the basin for countless generations. They provided hope and inspiration to us as we paddled down river.

On the Klamath, we observed and participated in an experiential journey that encompassed local knowledge with national skills and tools to help us all in restoring the balance of our local watersheds. American Whitewater's River Stewardship

Ryan and Emily learn some freestyle rafting moves from Kevin Colburn, eastern Access and Conservation Director

Photo by Ben VanCamp





Bear print
Photo by Kevin Colburn

Toolkit, an on-line resource available to anyone with internet access, was utilized in print for the first time ever to provide River Stewards with the background to participate in the Klamath Basin study. Beginning with AW's hydropower program extending through building collaborative initiatives at the state and federal level to conserve and protect rivers, the toolkit laid the foundation of the River Stewardship Institute. In addition to great whitewater boating and new friendships developed during our experience on the Klamath, we as river stewards can now build upon this foundation in our local communities and watersheds. If you are interested in effecting positive change in your local watershed, be sure to visit AW's River Stewardship Toolkit on their website.

Emily and Ryan live along the banks of the Rio Pueblo de Taos in northern New Mexico. When not in school studying water resource planning through the University of New Mexico's Community and Regional Planning program, they can be found in the mountains and rivers of the upper Rio Grande watershed. [AW](#)

Dave Payne from the U.S. Forest Service talking about grass roots river restoration and the various user groups of the Klamath River

Photo by Ben VanCamp



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River Voices

Winter Creeking

by Sandi Metz

A Learning Experience

April 3, 2004
Back Fork of the Elk. 5.8 ft, 49 degrees.

It is the first day of the Carolina Canoe Club's Advanced Creeking Clinic. The instructors, Sharon Myers and Spencer Muse, meet the students, Russ Scheve, Kurt McKissick, Michele Pagnotta, and me.

This is creeking class, so before we put on we talk about class-like things. I express an interest in leading. We put on and suddenly there I am, out in front.

It's Class II, easy reading, easy leading. I find unexpected pleasure in being in front. I want to do this to learn to feel ok about doing it. I want to be better at reading water, to be forced to be self reliant, to make my own decisions. I want to do this for serious reasons. I didn't realize how much fun it would be, how it would bring everything into focus, seeing nothing downstream but river.

I flip in the first small rapid. I roll up looking across the way at a potential undercut that would be easy to wash too close to. I paddle away and then look around to see if anyone noticed. Michele, who is behind me, must not have, because she takes the same line, flips the same way and rolls up looking across at the same undercut. An inauspicious beginning.

I also flip in the second rapid. This rapid is so small that I cannot even recall it now. Very inauspicious. Maybe it's the new boat. I'm paddling a borrowed boat and I'm confused by it. It's talking to me in a language I don't understand. I do little experiments, trying to find in this beast the sweet predictable reliability of my other boats. It continues to speak to me in Swahili.

We run perhaps two miles of repetitive but routine Class II's. Clean green water, shallow, all to ourselves. We know there are ledges. We are here on the Back Fork of the Elk because of the ledges – six or eight drops of five to 12 feet – and we are impatient for them. It should be enough; we are in our boats, in this place, wearing our fleece and our helmet liners and our

pogies and we want drops. We stop for a snack and Kurt starts a chant, Buddha like, low and rumbling in his chest. Lllllllledges, lllllllledges, lllllllledges. We laugh and agree that it's perfect; it can't help but work.

I am razzed for failing to produce any ledges and Russ takes over in the front. We round one bend, and another and then we hear noise, the one that makes your heart rate rise and your tongue stick a little in your throat: the noise of water losing gradient.

Now the story gets confusing, even to the teller. The steady even flow, the rolling moving picture of the river trip gets interrupted and chopped into separate, starkly outlined bits. Now it's not a movie it's a series of sudden snapshots.

What we hear is clearly the first drop. Sharon moves to the front of the group. The guidebook says to run this drop on the right and we intend to get out and scout on that side. Above the drop on river right is something, some river feature, maybe a shelf that's half the river wide. It requires us to approach the last pool above the drop from river left. From upstream, we must start on the left and catch the eddy behind this shelf to ferry across to the scouting spot on river right. It is not a difficult move. It seems simple and Michele and I (there's a

good reason why we are in this class) are far too casual.

I drop down into the top pool and initiate my eddy turn. I see Sharon on the bank, getting out of her boat to scout the rapid. I see Russ, in front of me and now above me, in an eddy that's half the width of the river. I realize with escalating alarm that I am far too low, that I am not in the eddy but instead on a leaky sheet of fast moving water that is washing me backwards toward the drop. I have made my turn a boat width wider than Russ and now I am fighting with every bit of strength in my legs and my back and my forward stroke to get up into the eddy and avoid being washed over. May the river gods forgive me, with what little breath I have to spare, I am cursing.

Michele comes in behind me. She makes her eddy turn; she is now a boat width to my right. I see her coming from the corner of my eye. I think we are going to collide. I watch her hesitate, just a fraction, that infinitesimal easing off that is part of our dance with boats, and I know, though she does not yet, that she will not make this eddy. She slips backwards, out of my sight. I fight forwards and in agonizingly slow increments make my way upstream. I hear,

Kurt, Russ and Shannon near the end of the run
Photo by Sandi Metz





Sharon Myers enjoying a winter paddle
Photo by Sandi Metz

over my right shoulder, an echo of my own curses, though louder and more emphatic. When I reach the safety of the eddy and turn and look behind me, Michele is gone.

Russ and I are frantic. We look to Sharon like frightened children and see her fumbling in her boat with glacial, crystalline hands, trying to make frigid fingers perform the surgery of unclipping a rope from a carabineer. She concentrates on the task at hand, ignoring our cries (what, did we think she hadn't noticed that Michele had washed over the drop?), emerges with the rope and stands upright, peering intently across the river.

But Sharon does not throw the rope. She watches and watches and watches and suddenly it's apparent, even though we cannot see what, that something down below has changed. She turns to us in the eddy. Kurt has now joined Russ and me. She calls to us, "You can get down right here. Go, go! Get Michele's boat!"

We react as if we are deaf. It looks very scary. It's making a really loud noise. Who knows what monsters lurk below? We are cold and huddled like barnyard chicks. We do not know how to go.

Sharon calls again, this time with more urgency. "Come here, come here, you can get down right here, you have to go and get Michele's boat!"

I have had many teachers. Sharon has always been one of them. She is a keen judge of skills and rivers and I have always depended on her to know where I fit. Time after time I

have been on rivers with her where the look of something scared me witless. I know she will tell me if something is too hard for me, and I also trust her when she says that I can do something—even when I am terrified.

So, her tone, that second command, breaks the trance I am in and I do it. I go. I paddle to river right, turn and point my boat over the lip, take a forward stroke and am gone, sliding down a set of bouncy steps, into the unknown, unseen pool below.

Ah. Not so bad. I am here. Here is a pool between two ledges. Yes, goodness, there is another ledge, right there, close, my perhaps faulty memory says no more than 15 yards downstream. I am relieved to see Michele standing on the shore on river left.

Her boat is nowhere in sight. I turn and look downstream. Her boat is still nowhere in sight. I raise my eyes to the downriver bend, convinced that I'm going to see it making its speedy way off into the distance. Still no boat. It's a cold day, it would be a nasty walk out, and I have finally caught it, I too, am infected with the urgent need to rescue this boat.

I look at this next ledge. The drop seems enormous. Sharon and Spencer and Russ and Kurt are coming, I know, but the boat, where is the boat? I look at the drop again. I call to Michele, "Come and scout this. Tell me where to run this drop!"

Michele has a thousand yard stare, the look of fresh adrenaline mixed with shocking cold and she is not quick to reply. I yell again, "Michele, come here, tell me where





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to go." She walks forward to the edge, looks over the drop and tells me sadly, "It's whitewater everywhere."

It's whitewater everywhere? Well I know that. Throw me a bone, woman, and give me something, please, just one little bit of useful information and I swear, I will get down this drop and find your boat.

I feel grumpy with her, and stressed and anxious, but then I realize that maybe she actually has given me useful information. I mean, she may not be thinking clearly, but if there were a massive hole or a tree or a house-sized rock, surely she would have noticed it, right? It must be all the same, this ledge, there truly is nothing down there but whitewater. And so I am going. I pick a spot and I paddle forward and my boat is in the air and I hold my paddle high and I land and the boat goes down and then comes up and I am down. It is done.

Her boat is right beside me, in an eddy. Stable too. She probably saw it from the top. She may already know that it is safe and not going anywhere. I have asked her the wrong question. There is a reason why I am in this class.

So all is well. They come, one by one, the other boaters. My attempts to move the boat to where Michele can reach it have been spectacularly unsuccessful. I have

dislodged it from the eddy and am wrestling it into the hole when the cavalry arrive and other folks take over. Sharon has somehow teleported herself across the river and down two ledges and she is here, right here, beside Michele. She is helping her drain the boat and we laugh and make fun of each other and tell Michele that she is a trooper.

And I remember something now, something that I had forgotten before I went. Even though I am afraid, I can go. I am good enough and strong enough and brave enough to go. I can do this. I am a paddler.

We paddle on. At the third drop, we acquit ourselves with a bit more style. It's a 10 or 12 foot drop, imposing to us all, but especially so to Michele, who, unlike the rest of us, has not yet run a drop. Well, at least not while looking forward. She went backwards over the first and then was reunited with her boat below the second, so she has not had the benefit of a gradual introduction. This is the first drop that she will stare right at and choose to go over and it's a doozy. Sharon goes first and we watch her carefully and she comes to no harm. It reassures us to imagine that our own runs will be similar. And at least this one time, they are. It is a long way down but it is easy. It requires just

Spencer, Michele, Kurt and a thoughtful Russ
Photo by Sandi Metz



courage, not skill, and we find, after varying degrees of self-examination, that we all have enough.

I go and then Russ and Kurt and finally Michele girds her loins and does it and comes up beaming and laughs and tells us that, o yeah, she definitely gets it now, these drops they are big, big fun.

There are more drops, but I have a mild form of river amnesia and so I don't remember them. We scout and pick lines and get in boats one by one and urgently search for landmarks that we cannot find and finally commit to something and go, long sliding falls into aerated pools below.

We are almost done, nearly at the takeout, when we arrive at the last rapid. We students scout it and agree upon a line. When Sharon arrives, she, of course, selects an entirely different line. She says that we are welcome to run our chosen line but predicts that if she runs it, she will flip and get trashed. We are kind of attached to our line and don't give it up lightly.

Sharon gets in her boat and demos her chosen line. She moves river right, comes down by the slanted rock, crosses the curling wave, launches over the drop and lands on the top of the big foam pile and is done. She runs a class IV rapid without splashing water on the deck of her boat.

We all take her line. It makes us look like better boaters than we are. This is the reason we are in this class.

*April 4, 2004
Middle Cranberry 3.7 ft, 29 degrees*

We wake – a painful hour earlier thanks to daylight savings time – to fresh snow. The Summersville forecast calls for more snow with highs in the low 30s and 18 mph winds. The Middle Cranberry is now above minimum. We are going.

Sharon reminds us that no one has to go. We drive to the take-out and get dressed in everything we own. I put my dirty clothes from yesterday in my dry bag for spares. It's snowing hard and windy, but the wind is blowing downstream and we console ourselves by saying that at least it will be at our backs. Sharon reminds us again that no one has to go.

She also tells us that the only reason we're able to go today, despite the snow and wind and extreme cold, is that the section we're running is only three miles long and the road runs beside it the entire way. We can get off if we need to. This is a teachable moment and she takes it. It is made clear to us that we cannot do this kind of trip under these conditions unless we can get off and get warm at any point. So, of course we all go.

I lead for a while. Eeek. This is far more intense than the Back Fork of the Elk. We go through class III's, one and another and then another. The break between rapids gets shorter and shorter. Sometimes I wait in the front for Sharon to catch me before running a line. I like this being out front, this feeling of leading, the one that climbers call being "on the sharp end of the rope." Everything is brighter and louder. I can taste and smell the river and I am completely in the present. But it gets harder and harder and I need more and more confirmation of my lines and a point comes when Sharon says that it's time for her to lead.

I am very grateful. Now we are in a long class III. I don't know how long. Perhaps the length of fifteen or twenty Nantahala Falls. Remember, I suffer from river amnesia, so I cannot be trusted about this, but we spend a very long time navigating this rapid.

We are finally creeking. We are doing the dance, passing each eddy back up the river, hand-to-hand, boat-to-boat. Sharon is leading; Michele is next and then me. Kurt is directly behind me, followed by Russ and then Spencer. We arrive in our eddies and then we check: Where do I go next? Is the person in that eddy ready to leave? Is the person who is linked to me from behind in their eddy? Can they see me? Are they ready to come to my spot? We make eye contact and nod and then we go, a looping ballet of peel-outs and ferries and eddy turns. We are a thing of beauty.

We finally exit the bottom of the rapid and the intensity of the river settles. There are still many rapids, but they have space between them and we have the opportunity to gather in groups of two or three.

Michele has been boating just nine months, if you can believe it, and she has found this

river to be just within her reach. To this point she has made a number of impressive combat rolls. She is pleased and we are all impressed, but she finally gets so cold that her concentration suffers and her paddle becomes a menace in every eddy.

I get whacked in the head and have a second very narrow escape and then Russ gets whacked and then, well, you only have to get hit in the head by someone so many times before you get a clue and realize that they are cold. And so it becomes clear to us that it is time for Michele to get warm and do the rest of this river another day.

Spencer hikes out with Michele and the remaining four of us continue on, but the worst (or best) is over. We have time now to notice the snow, falling all around us. The wind turns traitor and drives stinging sleet into our faces as we squint our way through unknown rapids.

We reach the last big rapid, S-Turn. All of us feel sluggish and cold. We look sloppy and we are no longer very smart, but we retain enough sense to know that we should not run this rapid. We take out on river left and carry our boats down to a big flat rock from which we can launch into a small pool and run a foamy seam to get below the rapid.

Sharon, who kindly goes first as probe, launches off the rock, paddles out of the pool, drops into the seam, does a brief mystery move, and is squirted, 60 gallon creek boat and all, nearly entirely free of the river.

I do not like this line. I look for another way, but I am tired and cold and I can't get my spray skirt on by myself anyway, so I tell Russ that I am going and he buckles me in and I stay high up on the edge of the wave, away from the crease and so my trip down is uneventful. Russ and Kurt do the same.

See, we are learning. We are learning from taking this class.

We paddle on. A few more small rapids, but nothing serious. We work at moving forward to stay warm. It never ceases to be fun but I am ready, more than ready, when we see Spencer and Michele and the havens of our cars.

River Voices Winter Creeking

When we load boats, the water dripping off of them freezes in icicles that hang from our cockpit rims and backbands.

As we drive through Richwood, the bank thermometer says 29 degrees. It is still snowing.

It's late and we've done it to ourselves again. We are cold and tired and wet and hungry and six hours and a meal away from home. It's Sunday at 5 pm.

We fall madly upon what snacks we have and drive with heaters blasting all the way to dinner. We arrive at 7, expecting to get in and out quickly, but we do not leave until almost 8 o'clock. We must, they are announcing their closing over the loudspeakers and sweeping up around us.

We sit; plates pushed away, chairs back, telling stories about each other, as paddlers do. We tell stories of hope and of fear and

of disaster averted. We tell stories of the foolishness of our younger paddling selves. We tell stories to remind each other about how far we have come and we tell stories so that others can imagine their future skill by what they see in our paddling. These stories are our talismans against harm. We laugh and we laugh until we nearly cry.


We tell stories so we won't have to part with one another and go home.

But finally we do. We get up and get coffee and drive. We are together on the road for a while, but one by one the others drift away.

The low beams don't cast enough light for my tired eyes and the brights are made impossible by mesmerizing flakes of oncoming snow. Somewhere in Virginia the skies clear, the full moon shines and the wind picks up again. It blows so hard that it forces its way in through the car windows. We are buffeted about the road

accompanied by a noise like the sound a child makes when squeezing air from the neck of a balloon. The motion and sound envelop us, and to my semi-delirious mind, it is almost comforting.

I am riding with Sharon and we pull into my driveway at 12:37 am. We gather what we can find of my gear and pile it on the porch and then we hug and she drives away. I stumble around, trying to be quiet, hanging clothes and rinsing muddy booties and emptying the cooler. I do only what is necessary and then I ease into bed, exhausted and jangling with caffeine.

When I close my eyes, I see snowflakes dancing. 



My husband and I were having... "difficulties" in our love life. Then...we got LVM. My husband's intimacy problems haven't gone away, but at least now that #@\$% doesn't get worked as bad when we run the gnarl!



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RiverVoices

Politics

by Kevin Colburn

Playing Politics in 2005 and Beyond

You and I are animals. We eat other animals and plants, recycling the carbon and energy in those organisms. We breathe the same air as every other animal – air that plants created and will again consume. We drink water that has cycled from ground to sky for millions of years – and return that water to the cycle. We are sheltered in houses made of tree and earth that will one day become tree and earth again. We experience weather driven by the sun as it filters through our atmosphere and hits our wobbly planet. We fight with other animals - from bacteria to humans – for our safety and security. We pass our DNA on just as elk and oak do, although a bit more discretely, and send our progeny into the future.


You and I are supported by cycles that flow through us and back to the world. If you don't believe it, ask yourself how often you've eaten something that never lived, breathed air that didn't come from the atmosphere, or drank water that was never rain. Somewhere deep in our subconscious we all know this and feel these connections.

My point, my fellow American animals is this: no matter whether you voted for the red team or the blue one, regardless of your financial status or aspirations, unrelated to your fear of terrorism, removed from your preferred house of worship, the environment matters. In 2005 and beyond, you will have to kick yell and scream, "I am an animal, and while I want all kinds of things, I need clean air, clean water, and healthy food!" Those lacking wisdom will undoubtedly seek to pollute and perturb the cycles that support us all. They must be stopped.

The bipolar politics of the day is like some bizarre sport where the two sides have divided up issues to battle over. We simply cannot not let them play sports with our basic human needs. It is not wise to let one team be anti-environment while another takes the role of pro-environment, and then to send them on to the field to play for

our planet and our lives. In this dualistic arena of winner-takes-all that we have created, the stakes are high, and the teams mismatched. We need a paradigm shift. We need the fans on both sides of the arena to rush the field and demand that both teams stop playing for the environment. Let them play for our wants but our needs are ours, and every organism on the planet shares them.

Rush the field. Call your governor, your senators, your representatives, your president, and tell them that you value life on earth. Tell them that no matter whether they are a democrat or a republican, you expect them to protect your basic needs and therefore the environment. Get specific; spell it out for them. We can help you.

American Whitewater is dedicated to protecting and restoring our Nation's whitewater rivers while enhancing opportunities to enjoy them safely. These mountain rivers and their watersheds are at the heart of the natural cycles that support us both as humans and as paddlers. The Karok Tribe in California believes that if the rivers and the land are sick, then the people are sick too. We share that belief and feel it in our pollution stung eyes, and in our sadness at paddling a river needlessly abused by man. We recognize that we are animals woven into the ecosystem. We will work with the willing and unwilling to protect our rivers, because we know in doing so we are also protecting ourselves and our quality of life. We will rush the field. We will lead the charge. We are proud to know that the paddling community is with us, acting with wisdom and solidarity. 



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A Dog's Lament

by Barbara Wiedemann

Come on please,
take me.

You're not going without me,
are you?

Paddle, life jacket—
and me.

Don't forget me.

Come on please,
take me.

If I stare at you
with my brown eyes,
you'll see how sad I am.

I promise
I'll be good,
I'll sit still,
you know I can swim.

You're not really
leaving me,
are you—
your best friend
who wouldn't leave you?

Barbara Wiedemann, a professor of English at Auburn University Montgomery, earned her B.A. from SUNY, Buffalo and her M.A. and Ph.D from the University of South Florida. She is the author of a critical study entitled Josephine Herbst's Short Fiction: A Window to Her Life And Times (Susquehanna University Press), co-author of Short Fiction: A Critical Companion (Locust Hill Press), and co-editor of "My Name Was Martha": A Renaissance Woman's Autobiographical Poem (Locust Hill Press). Her poems have appeared in Kaleidoscope, Kerf, Poetry Motel, Acorn, and other journals.



Drawing by Chris Conlin

Events National Paddling Film Fest

February 25, 26 - 2005

The volunteers of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association are proud to announce that the 23rd National Paddling Film Festival continues this February 25-26 with exciting new changes. For 2005, the competition, auction, and party will all take place in one location- the all new Lexington Convention Center! They made us an offer we couldn't refuse! The beautifully renovated LCC facility directly overlooks Triangle Park, in the heart of downtown Lexington, Kentucky. Convenient and with everything a demanding paddling film fest fan could ever need, including the adjacent Hyatt Regency Hotel and plenty of great restaurants all contained within the Convention Center.

Come and join with paddlers and film lovers from across the globe to Lexington and view the latest in paddlesport film video and images. In 2004, the NPPF attracted over 40 amateur, accomplished and professional competitors with entries depicting paddling footage of rivers and seas from virtually every corner of the world. Exciting action and awesome scenery combine with genius, satire, silliness, insight, instruction, humor, tragedy, drama and passion. The National Paddling Film Festival is a visual paddlesport feast and celebration that should not be missed.

The film festival's new change in location also means an all new schedule for the image and video competition, silent auction and awards party. In 2005 the show starts at noon with the films running into the evening - followed by the Awards Party - all in the same location! The new evening schedule will provide the ambience of a Hollywood premier that both the audience and the film makers will appreciate. Maybe even have the Film Makers arrive in horse drawn carriages! After all it is Lexington, KY!

If you are an amateur, accomplished or professional photographer or filmmaker reading this before January 21, 2005 then there is still time to enter your films and

videos. Still image competition deadline is February 18, 2005. Entering your stuff in the film festival is a creative and easy way to help conserve the rivers you love to paddle. Please visit the NPPF website: www.surfbwa.org/npff for more info and entry forms.

If you would like to help and would consider becoming a sponsor please let us know. Thanks to our volunteers, donors, contributing artists and audiences, to date the NPPF has been able to raise over \$100,000 in FUNds for American Whitewater and other river conservation efforts.

Thanks to the large LCC space there will also be lots of room for the NPPF's famous NPPF Silent Auction. Jam packed with awesome gear donated by our generous sponsors and manufacturers who will be well represented. Many of the industries finest manufacturers, outfitters and organizations will be represented at this year's Festival.

This year the Film Festival is honored to welcome festival guest host and speaker, Kent Ford, whose highly acclaimed books, videos and instruction have made him one of the most recognized paddlers in whitewater sport worldwide.

Kent will be presenting a talk titled: "How Condoms Make Paddling Fun" that explores how condoms are a common denominator to both the Olympics and to the history of instructional paddling videos worldwide. Kent's talks at the festival will provide a sampling of humorous highlights of instructional paddling video worldwide, from 1930's silent films, to contemporary instruction in canoeing and kayaking. In addition, he will share video footage of his foreruns at the Athens Olympic kayak events.

So, do something fun for conservation. Get the word out. Tell your buddies. Enter your stuff. Give it your best shot for the

rivers and then plan to join me, my fellow BWA volunteers, generous artists and donors sharing good times and celebrating great paddlesport images at the 2005 National Paddling Film Festival. www.surfbwa.org/npff

For more info contact:
David Margavage
NPPF Director
120 Jolomic Ln,
Georgetown, KY 40324 email:
OverflowXL@aol.com

To purchase tickets online and for more film festival info visit: www.surfbwa.org/npff



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River Voices

Stone Valley Smackdown

by The Dogg

The River Strikes Back

Every now and then, an event takes place that shakes our universe and rocks the world to its very foundation.

In 1969, man walked on the moon, a truly momentous occurrence. Then, for a long time, nothing spectacular happened. Then, the Dogg came along. Never before had there been such an electrifying individual ready to risk life and limb for the excitement of running SIK drops and the cheer of the fans. Well, folks, the Dogg is back and he is here to reclaim his title as the Sultan of SIKness, the Colossus of Clappers, and the Sovereign of Shweet Ones!

Now, I know what you're thinking, "What's going on here? When did the name change to the Dogg?" Well, you see, I switched sponsors so I figured that a change of name was unavoidable. It took some long contemplation to come up with a suitable name. My first inclination was to go with D-Fizzle since I write articalizzles for American Whitewhizzle. The second consideration was Hund, which is Deutsch for Dogg, since I paddle for a German company. After much debate, I decided to simplify and just go with the Dogg.

So, here we are, on a road trip to New York State to run the Racquette and Beaver Rivers. Being a famous superhero, I had never run the Racquette at a level lower than flood stage (+2,000 cfs). However, I decided that I was curious to see what the run is like when the mortals come out for the fall release level of 900 cfs. The group that was to receive the pride, the privilege, NAY I SAY THE PLEASURE of paddling with me was a solid crew of 4 intrepids from the Maryland/Pennsylvania area. Todd Baker is an up-and-coming young punk who loves low volume stuff. Martha Herzog is a hardcore chick who's always



game for firing up a big drop. Old Man Starrett (Jim) isn't your typical old guy. Most old people think that the shiznit is a high fiber cereal but Jim is down with the gangsta rap speak. He loves the thrill of firing up a big Class V rapid at an age when most guys are hitting the golf course. Last but not least was Ian Devine, who was riding with me in my hemi-powered Chevy Cavalier. Ian had been a stranger for much of the year leading up to this trip but it was nice to have him back on the river. No one is quite sure what he was up to but I think he was involved with an international ring of camel thieves. Just a theory.

After a quick run of the Taylorville section of the Beaver, an autograph session, and a photo shoot with the Maxim supermodels, we cruised the Doggsled up north for some whitewater action on the Racquette. Upon reaching the put in, we became entranced by the beautiful weather and the ominous roar from the mayhem that lay in the river down below.

The river starts off with a bang, as we were immediately faced with the chaotic run-out just below the dam. After a few small slides, we reached a substantial horizon line and a large crowd on the right bank eagerly waiting to see some carnage. This is where the toilet paper hits double red stripe! The first rapid (Colton Falls) is pretty impressive with a series of junky ledge drops leading into a big slide with a massive hole at the bottom that will likely slap the taste out of your mouth. The whole thing drops close to 50 feet and comes at you quicker than a fight in a NASCAR pitstop. You definitely need to have your game face on to negotiate this monstrosity.

The majority of my group opted to walk the rapid while Todd decided to take the high water route down the right. The

problem was that we didn't have anything closely resembling high water. As shallow as the right side line was, he'd have been better off taking a belt sander to the bottom of his boat. I had my new creek boat and I was looking to run something better than a wet rock face. I find that this fine piece of German engineering performs better when there is water underneath it, an experience referred to as fahrfegnugen or farfrompuken or skoboten. I wanted to run the main line but I wasn't sure just where to go to avoid the hole. I decided to ferry across to the right bank to consult with two of the New York gurus, Tim Kelly and Chris Koll. They explained the line and steered me down the right course. Being a smooth operator, I slid down the shallows on the right of center to an 8-foot boof over a bad horseshoe hole that had been the sight of some carnage earlier in the day. I launched a SIK one (Oh Yesh! It was SCHWEEEEEEET!) and lined up perfectly as I headed down the slide and skipped right over the hole. I waved goodbye to my adoring fans and headed downstream to catch up with my group, who received a stern pistol-whipping for not waiting for me.

After a steep ledgy rapid, we came to the Mushroom, which we boofed on the right to avoid a bubbly hole backed by a rock (the Mushroom). After a short pool, the river narrows considerably to the left and disappears from sight. This rapid is called the Narrows and consists of a slide into an 8-foot drop into a large hole that you don't want to end up in. To avoid it, you need to walk a tight rope down the right that leads you to a schweet boof. The group ran the drop one by one, executing niche launches. However, when it was Martha's turn, she flipped at the bottom and got shoved against the wall on the right. After getting beaten by the wall, she came out



of her boat. She got to shore fine but her boat kept going. Luckily, Jim took off after the boat and pushed it to shore before the next rapid, proving once and for all that old people, while slow and dangerous behind the wheel, can still serve a purpose.

The next rapid, called the Tub, had a shallow lead-in to two closely spaced 8-foot drops with big holes waiting to munch you at the bottom. I ran first, checking this rapid into the Smackdown Hotel as always. Ian was right behind me, catching air off the first drop and cleaning the second. Jim was next and ended up getting pulled back

into the large hole at the bottom of the second drop. After a brutal hole ride that nearly knocked the yellow off his teeth, Jim was able to escape the hole.

By this point, the release had been cut back significantly and we were starting to run thin on water. However, there is one last rapid before the run mellows out where most of the water funnels down to the right of an island. Appropriately named Island Falls, the rapid is a long slide that ends in a cascade of about 10 feet. The normal line is to stay right and bang down a shallow flow

Photos

Previous page from left:

1. The Dogg launching a schweet one at The Narrows.
2. Todd Baker running the Narrows.
3. The Dogg acing the Tub.

This page from left:

4. Jim Starrett running the Tub.
5. Ian Devine catching air at the Tub.
6. Martha Herzog running the Narrows.
7. The Dogg taking the SIK route through Island Falls.
8. The Dogg finishing the Mosier Dam on the Beaver River with 1/3 of a paddle.

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River Voices

Stone Valley Smackdown

close to the bank. Now, I'd have been better off firing a round of ammo from the Street Sweeper into my hull than beating my boat over that rock heap (Author's Note: the Street Sweeper is my sawed off pistol grip pump shotgun). Instead, I cut left and dropped through a narrow notch where a good flow falls 8-10 feet into a beefy hole. I went into the hole and came out on a SIK tailstand before cruising downstream. The other people in my group opted to take the high and nearly dry line down the right. From here to the end of the run we were greeted by continuous Class II-III rapids through a pretty wooded setting.

That evening, Ian kept flapping his gums about laying the smackdown on the dam at the put in for the Mosier section of the Beaver. I was interested to see if he would run it. Of course, the Dogg can't go to the Mosier section without running the dam,

having aced this mess of jagged rocks two times before. After putting in, we ferried across and walked up the right bank to scout the dam. To say that the dam is intimidating would be an understatement. It is a steep, high-volume mess of three cascades over jagged rocks, ending in a large hole with a massive rooster tail in the middle of it. The top drop falls 20+ feet and lands on rocks. I always skip this drop and run the remaining two-thirds of the rapid.

I waited for my group to set up video and safety and then I seal launched in below the first drop. I didn't keep my bow up off the 15-foot drop in and pitoned slightly. It was no big deal; I was lined up perfectly for the next 15-foot cascade. As I headed down the cascade, I caught a rock that sent my bow down and I pitoned very hard, causing me to flip. I fell over onto the slide and snapped my paddle. At this point, time seemed to freeze for a moment. I was upside down on the slide approaching the crux of the bottom part of the rapid with one-third of a paddle. For a second, I thought that this couldn't possibly be happening; it wasn't real. After all, I am the Dogg. Who did the Beaver River think it was anyway? At any rate, I quickly came to the realization that it was indeed happening and I'd better do something about it! I summoned up my superpowers and rolled with my mini-paddle, working hard to get to the right of the rooster tail. I was able to miss it but I hit the monstrous hole at an angle, causing me to do a helpless C-1 flip with no blade

on the other side to save me (Will those crazy C-boaters ever learn?). I rolled back up but the swirling water at the edge of the hole caused me to flip again. I exited my boat just before it went over the next 5-foot ledge and vertically pinned.

I climbed onto the rocks and lowered myself into the eddy next to my boat. I floated in the eddy, bruised and broken. The skin on my knuckles was almost all ripped off and my palm was sliced where my paddle shaft had broken. Where did things go wrong? Well, first I have to look at myself; all the great ones do. Since I know it wasn't me, I gotta blame it on other things: the river, the media, some bad guacamole that I had eaten the night before, global warming, the alignment of the sun and the moon, or the fact that every woman on the planet wants me. These kinds of things will weigh heavily on a man's mind. Hey, it's not like superheroes' lives are perfect! We face dilemmas too. Now, this type of ordeal would end the day for most kayakers. However, don't worry, because your Paddling Hero shook it off and hand-paddled the Mosier section. But that is another story.... *AW*

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Don't be Afraid to... by Adam Herzog

Rock the Boat: It May Save Lives

I have watched two kayakers die in the last four years. The cases were similar. First, I did not know either of the boater's well—they were "friends of friends." Second, I knew after the first mile they were not paddling solidly enough to be on the river. I said nothing to that effect, and they will never be coming home to their families again. Kayaking is an intrinsically dangerous sport, but there is no reason an unqualified kayaker should die on a difficult river. These tragedies can be averted if those of us on the river are willing to confront awkward, but deadly situations.

In the 14 years I have been kayaking the sport has undergone incredible revolutions, with both positive and negative results. I learned how to paddle with my dad and his 50-year-old buddies, and we always took it slow. In 12 foot kayaks we learned things one step at a time. It was impossible to catch eddies, peel out, or ferry without a strong forward stroke. No one put on the Ocoee without first feeling comfortable on the Nantahala, Nolichucky, and section 3 of the Chattooga.

Things have changed. Boat technology, mindset, and skill have contributed to kayakers becoming better faster. This has led to more aggressive kayaking. Rivers once considered unrunnable are now called class IV. The MTV culture has infiltrated kayaking. Young boaters are influenced by 5 second video clips that leave the carnage out (or glorify it).

Kayak deaths fall into four general categories. The first group can be attributed to a misunderstanding of water. Many examples of this occurred in the seventies and eighties on the Chattooga after the movie *Deliverance* showcased the river. The following onslaught of yahoos in inner tubes did not fair as well as Burt Reynolds character in the movie. Another

cause of river deaths is freak occurrences. A couple of years ago someone died on the Ocoee after friends tried to rescue him from an entrapped boat and severed his femoral artery. A third type of death occurs when good kayakers die on rivers they are qualified to paddle. Pablo Perez, a well known and accomplished boater in the southeast drowned in a strainer on the Rocky Broad several years ago. The fourth category involves unskilled boaters putting on rivers they should not be on.

The accidents I was involved with fell into this last group. One occurred on the Green Narrows, the other was on the Russell Fork. The difference in these two runs is notable. The Green is quintessential class V creek boating. The moves are technically demanding. Its reputation serves as a filter and keeps many people off the river. However, consistent dam releases assure water year round, and many questionable boaters are drawn to it. The Russell Fork, while less difficult, is equally dangerous. The lines are wider and more forgiving than other rivers, but the Russell Fork has proven itself to be one of the deadliest rivers in the country.

These incidents were similar in several respects, but there were also some differences. In one case it was the victims first time on the river. In the other, the person had run the river before, but was having an off day. This can happen to anybody. Both kayakers were obviously in over their heads, and they both had problems early in the trip. Most importantly, their friends (including me) failed to advise the paddlers that they were not strong enough to be on the river that day.


I am a paramedic, and I see death and sickness everyday at work. I am in touch with the frailty of human life. Watching these two men go from having a good time on the water to dead in a matter of minutes was infinitely disturbing. No matter how many sick people I take care of

in an ambulance, I will never become jaded enough not to be affected by these types of accidents.

There are many factors that contribute to river safety: pre-planning, river awareness, an understanding of hydrology, and possession of the proper safety equipment. Safe river trips require good judgment. Boaters must have the ability to look at a rapid and answer several questions:

1. What move do I have to make?
2. Can I make the move?
3. What happens if I miss it?
4. Am I willing to accept the consequence if I make a mistake?

Failure to think introspectively, and break down every drop attempted will result in beat downs, injuries, and death. It is not uncommon to see mediocre kayakers paddling extremely difficult runs. Luck will often take us very far, but it will run out eventually. When people run rivers they clearly should not attempt, the burden of responsibility falls on their friends and fellow river runners.

Don't be afraid of bruising egos when it is a matter of life or death. 

River Voices Updates

Charlotte Whitewater Park Update


The United States National Whitewater Center, slated to open in Charlotte, NC in spring 2006, moved significantly closer to becoming a reality this fall. On October 12 the Charlotte Observer reported that a consortium of local banks and charities has agreed to lend \$20 million to the non-profit in charge of building the park.

Construction began this fall on the 307-acre outdoor adventure park situated near the Catawaba River. In addition to the much-anticipated whitewater park, the area will also feature a mountain biking course and hiking trails along the artificial watercourse.

The site has already been named an official team training center by the U.S. Olympic Committee. Enthusiasm is also high in various sectors of the local community. Half of the money to fund the park is coming from seven banking corporations led by Bank of America and Wachovia, and the other half is from a group of eight local charities.

The National Whitewater Center is expected to pay for itself by charging river users. Commercial rafting customers are expected to pay anywhere from \$15 to

\$25 per person and private boaters will be charged \$8 per day for use of the facility.

Information about the park is available on the web at: www.usnwc.org. In addition to an overview of the park layout and a schematic of the adjustable, manmade rapids you can see a short promotional video for the National Whitewater Center. Stay tuned for updates on this exciting whitewater resource. 



FEATURE STORY
When it opens in the first quarter of 2006, the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, N.C. will set the standard for man-made whitewater courses.

FUTURE STORY
Its four channels will drop 20 feet over approximately 5,200 linear feet. Operators will be able to modify each channel for different skill levels. Recreational rafters, play boaters and Olympic kayakers, for instance, could train simultaneously on Class III and IV rapids. A conveyor system will then transport boats and paddlers back to the top of each run.

But the most amazing aspect of the U.S. National Whitewater Center may be that it is getting built at all.

Since its inception in 2000, the project has taken as many twists and turns as a whitewater slalom course. There was a recession, the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, a state budget crisis, a taxpayer backlash against raising money for a unique facility. But like Olympic kayakers, the leaders steering the project navigated around the obstacles and kept the project upright.

The result is a \$25 million riverfront park that will feature not only a state-of-the-art whitewater course, but 307 acres of water paddling, a conference center, an indoor and outdoor climbing center, a boat house on the Catawaba River for water paddling, a restaurant and primitive camping sites. Many now agree that the center will set the standard not only for adventure sports parks, but also for regional economic planning.

The idea was hatched one spring weekend in 2000 when an attorney and banker from Charlotte traveled to the Ocoee River in Tennessee to watch friends compete in trials for the U.S. Olympic kayaking team. They recruited USACK, the national governing body for canoe and kayaking events, to Charlotte.

The board determined that the biggest challenge would be building support for a facility that relatively few people had seen or could even imagine. They realized they were going to have to show how the project would enhance Charlotte, a major banking center eager to attain "world-class" status. The leaders recognized the need to build grass-roots public support by organizing a workshop to get input on how the center should be designed. A hundred people showed up, including several local television news anchors. When the local fire chief saw the news reports, he asked the board if there was a way to incorporate a swift water rescue-training program at the facility. The park's leadership also worked with the U.S. Olympic Committee to receive their commitment to designate the facility as an Official Olympic Training Site. They recruited USACK, the national governing body for canoe and kayaking events, to Charlotte.

Shortly thereafter Rabon and Howie concluded they could build a course like Penrith's in Charlotte for as little as \$5 million. It did not take long for obstacles to emerge.

The leaders of the project determined that the project would face serious difficulty trying to raise private capital for such a unique project. So, they formed a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation in April 2001, with the intent of pursuing public and philanthropic money via a public-private partnership. They recruited community leaders, architects, lawyers and marketers to their board of directors and an "advisory team" whose pro-bono work would help keep costs down.

In December of 2001 the Board hired Jeff Wise, an avid kayaker, attorney and entrepreneur then heading up a medical software company, to come on board as executive director. The project was originally conceived as a downtown venue but it was quickly determined that a facility offering more outdoor recreational opportunities such as mountain-biking, flatwater access and climbing would ultimately be a more successful business.

"One of the things I would tell other communities is don't go out and sell this as a 'kayaking facility,'" said Wise. "That won't sell. Now, we talk about it as this outdoor sports park on the river."

Wise had been working with the Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation staff regarding land acquisition when County Commissioner Ruth Samuelson suggested building the center on land already owned by the county.

"The county has plenty of land and not enough money to develop it," said Samuelson.

After reviewing over 450 different potential sites, the group chose a tract of land along a 1.5-mile stretch of the Catawba River, only 10 minutes from downtown Charlotte and with 74 miles of over 2 million people.

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28 American Whitewater
November/December 2004

29 American Whitewater
November/December 2004

River Voices

From the Editor

by Ambrose Tuscano

A Kayaker's Guide to Surviving Winter

Winter is upon us. Where I live, we've had snow on the ground for the past two months. Regardless of which part of the country you call home, by now you can feel that the time has come for long sleeves and wool hats, hot chocolate and warm fireplaces. While some whitewater enthusiasts continue to paddle right on through winter, barely pausing long enough to put on poggies and a helmet liner, others are lucky enough to escape the relatively cold, short days by traveling to the tropics or even following summer to the southern hemisphere. However, in the heart of winter many of us see our whitewater activity slow to an infrequent drip, and often dry up for months at a time.

When I lived within striking distance of West Virginia, I used to be part of the proud family of year-round boaters. We would take advantage of abundant rain and snowfall to get on our favorite creeks in the winter. A New Year's Day run on the local class III river became an annual event. No matter how easy or difficult the

rapids were, we almost always faced class V weather. Sometimes we'd get to a rapid that we had run dozens or hundreds of times and decide to portage just to get the blood flowing to the ice blocks at the end of our legs.

Sadly, I no longer count myself among the intrepid boaters who paddle on through the icy trifecta of December, January and February. And for those of you who share my shameful aversion to paddling in near- or sub-freezing temperatures, I would like to offer some practical advice: let go of your denial. You really shouldn't drive around with your kayak on top of your car for three or four solid months pretending that any day now you might head down to the local play spot after work. Get real! It's dark by 3:30 and your hands and feet go numb just thinking about full or even partial immersion in ice water.

Since your boat will probably be out of action for at least a couple of months, there is going to be a natural letdown. In fact, boats that become depressed during the off-season are often responsible for poor early-season outings. So, to avoid


that March swim, follow these simple guidelines.

Since your boat will not have an opportunity to be dragged down a put-in trail, dropped off the roof racks or ridden down an abrasive granite slab into a seal-launch, you will need to take measures to get it through winter in comfort.

If you're lucky enough to live in snow country, consider taking your boat out sledding. Hucking off jumps and crashing into trees should make your boat feel right at home and remind you why you aren't cut out for the Winter Olympics (did I mention that you should definitely wear a helmet?).

If sledding isn't your style, or snow is a geographic impossibility, try taking your boat out for long walks in the woods. Dragging it along a rocky trail can be a great bonding experience, while at the same time giving your boat the masochistic scraping and bumping feel that it needs to be happy. And, as an added bonus, you can walk off those extra holiday pounds. Just be careful on the downhill: last time I took my boat out for a walk, I ended up limping home with a softball-sized contusion on my lower calf. What can I say? The darn thing just can't wait to go downhill.

Finally, since you probably won't be able to spend as much quality time with your boat as you'd like, explore various ways of improving your boat's social life. One favorite is boat-sitting. If you and your boating buddies know that you'll be away from the rivers for a few weeks, invite their boats over to your garage for a while. The idea is for the boats to be able to kick back and relax together, without taking up any of your precious time. Just be careful of which boats you invite. Listening to Loopy McCartwheel brag about her tricks, or Professor von Boofsalot lecture about the critical relationship between gradient and water volume can be bad for boat morale.

So this winter, make an attempt to keep your boat happy. And remember: don't be depressed. All that snow and ice has to become water eventually. 



Affiliate Clubs

AW's Original Purpose

by Michael Phelan

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

For 2004, AW is excited to announce several programs for AW Affiliate Clubs.

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

2nd Flowing Rivers Grant Program, sponsored by Clif Bar

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

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Desert Paddlers Club, Tempe
Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assoc, Flagstaff

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

B.S.A. Durham Troop 16, Durham
Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
River Skills Center, Mt. Shasta
Sequoia Paddling Club, Windsor
Shasta Paddlers, Redding
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, San Jose
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Granada Hills

Colorado

Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood
FiBark Boat Races, Englewood
Gunnison Valley Paddle Club, Almont
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder
WATER, Grand Junction

Florida

Project Challenge Inc., Miami

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Association, Atlanta
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta

Idaho

Idaho Rivers Sports, Boise
Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Association, Cary

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis
Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville

Kansas

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky

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

Maine

AMC Maine Chapter, Hallowell

Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston

Maryland

Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Boonsboro
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

Minnesota

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater

Missouri

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

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Merrimack
Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Franconia
Waterline, Manchester

New Jersey

Hunterdon Canoe Club, Flemington
The Paddling Bares, Milltown

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

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

N. Carolina

Camp Carolina, Brevard
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Dixie Division of ACA, Tuxedo
Nantahala Racing Club, Gastonia
Triad River Runners, Winston Salem
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

Ohio

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

Oregon

Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

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

Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston

Utah

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

Virginia

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

Washington

The Mountaineers, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreation River Runners, Renton
University Kayak Club, Seattle

West Virginia

West Virginia Wildwater Assoc., Charleston

Wisconsin

Badger State Boating Society, Waukesha
Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, La Crosse
Northern Paddle and Trail, Rhinelander
River Alliance of Wisconsin, Madison

Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson Hole

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Canada, Ontario

Madawaska Kanu Camp, Ottawa

Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Carla Miner
Membership Coordinator

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact me and I would be happy to help your club set up this program. I can be reached at: 888-BOAT-4AW or membership@amwhitewater.org.

Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

"10" Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for a spot in the AW 2004 River Stewardship Institute.

For more information,
contact Carla Miner at
cminer@digisys.net
AW Outreach Office at 828-252-0728
or sign-up on-line at:
www.americanwhitewater.org/membership

Guidelines for Contributors



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Send your material to:
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1424 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring MD 20910
E-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org

The advertisement features a background image of a river with a waterfall. The text is overlaid on this image. At the top, it says 'Come Play With Us!' in a large, cursive font. Below that, it lists 'KAYAK INSTRUCTION • OUTFITTER STORE' and 'COSTA RICA • ECUADOR • MEXICO'. A central message reads: 'Our advice for winter blues avoidance: A trip to Costa Rica or Equador! It's all about warm weather, great rivers to paddle, and good people to paddle with! Rather than putting your boat away this winter, call us at 800-224-7238 for more information on this year's availability. We hope you can join us!'. At the bottom, it says 'Trips for all skill levels: Class II-III, III, III-IV, IV, and IV+'. The company name 'Endless River Adventures' is in a circular logo on the right, with a stylized eagle above it. The website 'www.endlessriveradventures.com' is written vertically on the left. The background also includes a map of Central America and the words 'MEXICO' and 'COSTA RICA'.



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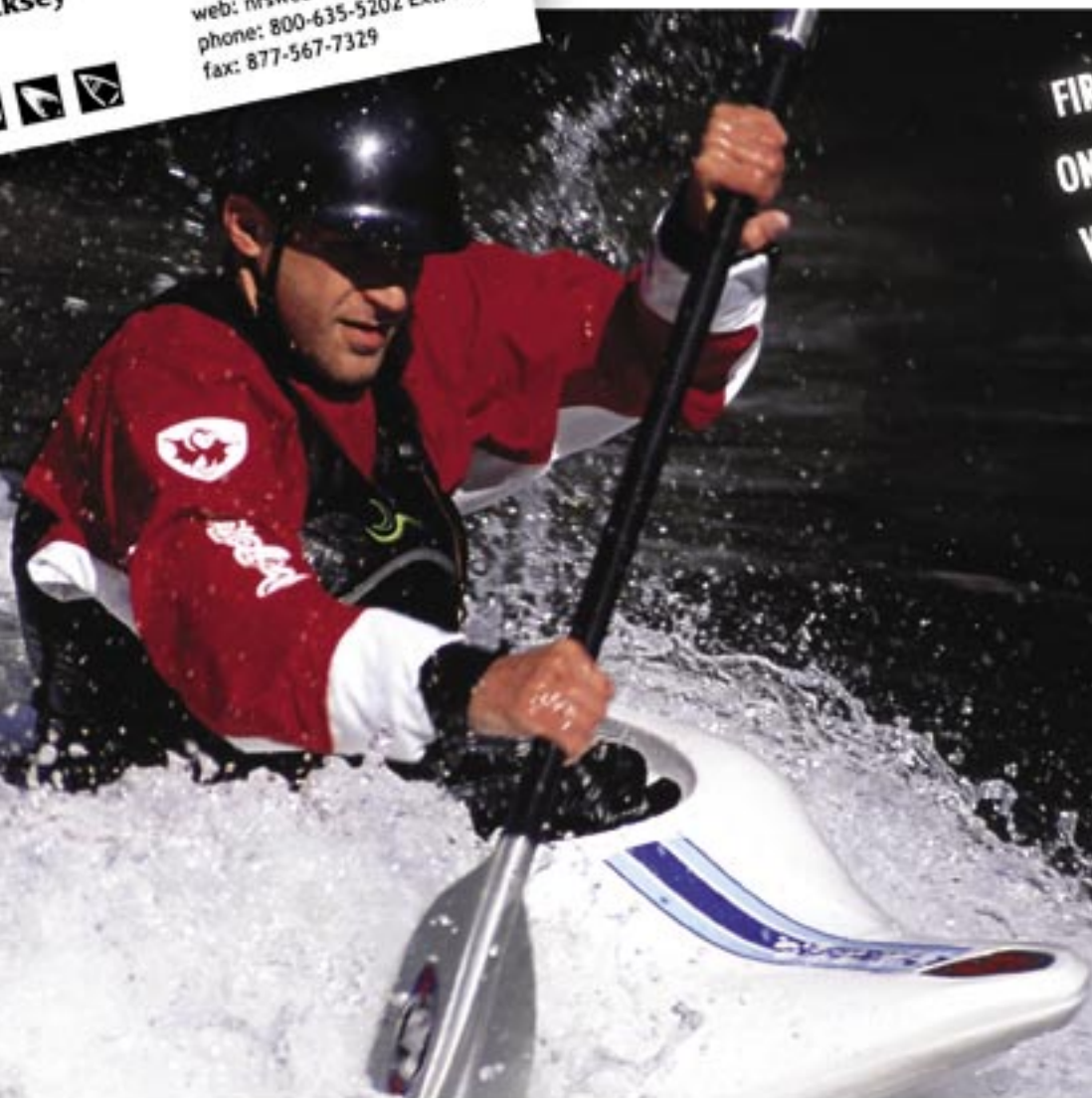
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