



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS  
Jan/Feb 2012

## THE TOP TEN RIVER STEWARDSHIP ISSUES OF 2012

Plus...

Keeping *Salmon* in the Middle Fork Salmon

Father+Son+Tandem Canoe=Fun?

Returning to Whitewater as a Parent







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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

## American Whitewater Journal Jan/Feb 2012 – Volume 52 – Issue 1

### COLUMNS

- 5 The Journey Ahead by **Mark Singleton**
- 43 News & Notes by **Susan L. Taft and Bethany Overfield**
- 51 Letter to the Editor by **Chuck Koteen**

### STEWARDSHIP

- 6 2012 Stewardship Top Ten by **The Stewardship Team**
- 14 Renovated Diversion Dam a Big Hit on Montana's Big Hole River by **John Amtmann**
- 16 Keeping the Salmon in the Middle Fork Salmon by **Kevin Colburn**

### FEATURE ARTICLES

#### Best Beginner Runs

- 21 Washougal River (WA) by **Dick Sisson**
- 23 The Lower Hood River by **Zachary Collier**

#### Canoeing

- 25 Tandem Time by **Matt Looze**

#### Humor

- 27 When The Rain Falls, the Mid-Atlantic Brings the Goods! by **the Dogg**

#### Rivers of Nepal

- 32 Nepal's Wild West by **Stephen Cunliffe**

#### Mental Game

- 36 Can You Teach the Mental Aspects of Whitewater Kayaking? by **Steve Dougherty**
- 39 The Source of Light by **Emily Nicole Zebel**
- 41 Learning How to Paddle by **Melissa Bertenthal**



Omar Jepperson and Laurel Hansen absorb the splendor of the Green River (UT). This multi-day wilderness trip—along with other recreational opportunities, endangered fish species, and downstream water users—is threatened by developer plans to remove massive quantities of water from the Green, making it one of American Whitewater's Top Ten River Stewardship Issues of 2012 (see pg. 6).



Photo by Thomas O'Keefe



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# PURPOSE

## RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bimonthly *AW Journal*, a monthly e-news, [americanwhitewater.org](http://americanwhitewater.org), paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

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

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

### American Whitewater Journal Staff

**Editor** Ambrose Tuscano  
P.O. Box 913, Soda Springs, California 95728  
e-mail: [editor@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:editor@americanwhitewater.org)

**Graphic Design/Production/Photo Editor** Megan Seifert

**Assistant Editors** Erica J. Seifert, Barry Tuscano

#### Contributing Writers

Mark Singleton, Stewardship Team, John Amtmann, Kevin Colburn, Dick Sisson, Zachary Collier, Matt Looze, the Dogg, Stephen Cunliffe, Steve Dougherty, Emily Nicole Zebel, Melissa Bertenthal, Susan L. Taft, Bethany Overfield, Chuck Koteen

#### Photo Contributors

Thomas O'Keefe, Paul Martzen, Kristen Podolak, Kevin Colburn, Dave Steindorf, Nathan Fey, John Amtmann, Dick Sisson, Maggie Busto, Donna Looze, Matt Sloan, Bryon Dorr, Melissa Masters, Logan Masters, Shawn Yingling, Stephen Cunliffe, Steve Brooks, Stacey Ulrich Gricks, Emily Zebel, Paige McThena, Melissa Bertenthal, Dan Demaree, Kevin O'Brien, Chuck Koteen

**Events / Advertising Coordinator** Jeff Paine  
phone 828-398-0321  
e-mail: [jeff@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:jeff@americanwhitewater.org)

**Safety Editor** Charlie Walbridge  
Route 1, Box 329F, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525  
e-mail: [ccwalbridge@cs.com](mailto:ccwalbridge@cs.com)

**Stewardship Reports Editor**  
Kevin Colburn, [kevin@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:kevin@americanwhitewater.org)

**Missing Copies and Address Changes**  
Carla Miner, [carla@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:carla@americanwhitewater.org)

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### Board of Directors & Staff

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Bell  
[chris@boatingbeta.com](mailto:chris@boatingbeta.com)  
Asheville, NC

Rich Bowers  
[rich@hydroreform.org](mailto:rich@hydroreform.org)  
Bellingham, WA

Dave Cernicek  
[cernicek@cluemail.com](mailto:cernicek@cluemail.com)  
Jackson, WV

Adam Cramer  
[crameric@gmail.com](mailto:crameric@gmail.com)  
Bethesda, MD

Leland Davis  
[leland@brushmountainpublishing.com](mailto:leland@brushmountainpublishing.com)  
Swannanoa, NC

Kent Ford  
[kent2003@performancevideo.com](mailto:kent2003@performancevideo.com)  
Durango, CO

Jennie Goldberg  
[jennie@nwwhitewater.org](mailto:jennie@nwwhitewater.org)  
Seattle, WA

Chris Hest  
[kayakasia@yahoo.com](mailto:kayakasia@yahoo.com)  
San Francisco, CA

Don Kinser  
[dkinser@editd.com](mailto:dkinser@editd.com)  
Marietta, GA

Evie Locke  
[evelynlocke@verizon.net](mailto:evelynlocke@verizon.net)  
Charlemont, MA

Eric Nies  
[nies@runbox.com](mailto:nies@runbox.com)  
New Paltz, NY

Norwood Scott  
[wns111@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wns111@sbcglobal.net)  
San Francisco, CA

Charlie Walbridge, Honorary  
[ccwalbridge@cs.com](mailto:ccwalbridge@cs.com)  
Bruceton Mills, WV

#### BOARD OFFICERS

President: Norwood Scott

Vice President: Chris Bell

Secretary: Jennie Goldberg

Treasurer: Don Kinser

At Large: Kent Ford and  
Evie Locke

#### AW STAFF

Laura Blalock  
Finance Manager  
Cullowhee, NC  
[laura@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:laura@americanwhitewater.org)

Kevin Colburn  
National Stewardship Director  
Missoula, MT  
[kevin@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:kevin@americanwhitewater.org)

Nathan Fey  
Colorado Stewardship Director  
Longmont, CO  
[nathan@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:nathan@americanwhitewater.org)

Megan Hooker  
Stewardship Assistant  
Portland, OR  
[megan@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:megan@americanwhitewater.org)

Jay Loschert  
Dolores River Stewardship  
Assistant  
Dolores, CO  
[jay@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:jay@americanwhitewater.org)

Carla Miner  
Membership Manager  
West Valley City, UT  
[carla@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:carla@americanwhitewater.org)

Jeff Paine  
Outreach Director  
Asheville, NC  
[jeff@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:jeff@americanwhitewater.org)

Thomas O'Keefe  
Pacific NW Stewardship Director  
Seattle, WA  
[okeefe@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:okeefe@americanwhitewater.org)

Mark Singleton  
Executive Director  
Cullowhee, NC  
[mark@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:mark@americanwhitewater.org)

Dave Steindorf  
California Stewardship Director  
Chico, CA  
[dave@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:dave@americanwhitewater.org)

**TOLL FREE NUMBER**  
**1-866-262-8429**

# THE JOURNEY AHEAD

**W**OW, WHERE DID last year go? It's hard to believe that we are already into the New Year, a time for resolutions about opportunities in our lives. While I'm usually not a big fan of resolutions, I do have one for the upcoming year that relates to rivers: I want to get out and paddle more!

Paddling more means having access to good rivers. As a destination for recreation, rivers need to have three things; 1) flows, 2) access, and 3) reasonable management. Not surprisingly, these elements are key to American Whitewater's river stewardship efforts. In a natural environment, the ingredients of flows, access, and reasonable management motivate me to spend more time on the water. Not all rivers share these ingredients. When they don't, American Whitewater staff and volunteers may give these rivers some extra attention.

It's been an exciting time for river stewardship throughout the nation. In the last year, we saw the largest dam removals in this country's history get started, new Wild and Scenic River legislation was shaped, and flow levels were identified for quality river recreation and habitat. As much success as we had, there is still plenty of work left to do.

In this issue of the *American Whitewater Journal* we introduce you to American Whitewater's top ten river stewardship issues of 2012. We expect these issues to be important themes in the coming year as American Whitewater staff plays a leadership role in driving issues affecting rivers across the country. Starting on page 6, our top ten river stewardship issues of 2012 take into consideration

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*Dave Steindorf rows while discussing the river corridor with park service biologists. Sentinel Rock looms above them in the background. AW is working to open the Yosemite Valley and rivers throughout much of the park to boating.*  
**Photo by Paul Martzen**

a broad geographic cross section of the country and identify some of the pressures that face our nation's whitewater rivers.

The rivers that make up the stewardship top ten list are geographically diverse representing various regions of the country and offer a wide range of paddling opportunities from Class II/III multi-day floats to steep Class IV+ runs. Yet all river stewardship projects share common elements.

**Constant pressure evenly applied over time:** Many of our project's successes are spread over a multi-decade timeline. For example, the removal of Condit Dam on the White Salmon River (WA) that took place in October of 2011, was first suggested as part of the federal dam licensing process in a letter written by then Executive Director Rich Bowers in 1992 (Rich is now an AW Board member). After two decades of pressure from various American Whitewater staff and local volunteers, Condit Dam is now part of history and

we are witnessing one of the largest river restoration and habitat recovery efforts on record (plus additional river miles for paddling). Having the ability to maintain our project involvement over that length of time is key to our success.

**A deep connection to rivers from the boating community:** No group of individuals has as deep a connection to the headwater reaches of rivers as whitewater paddlers. As a community, whitewater boaters know headwater river miles through their passion for exploration and boating. Paddlers are often the first group to recognize issues that impact larger river systems and we have the unique ability to mobilize quickly and share information. Sharing information is key to establishing 'best practices' for river management at the agency level.

**Support from American Whitewater membership:** The river stewardship efforts of American Whitewater are supported directly through your membership dues. Without membership, there would be no American Whitewater river stewardship program.

In the coming year, the staff at American Whitewater will be pushing for new opportunities to reconnect rivers with paddlers, habitat, and local communities.

As I work to stick to my New Years resolution, I hope to see many of you out on the water paddling more and enjoying rivers!

Happy New Year,



Executive Director, American Whitewater





# The Top Ten River Stewardship Issues of 2012



*Site of proposed dam for the Sunset Falls hydropower project upstream of Canyon Falls on the South Fork Skykomish (WA). Photo by Thomas O'Keefe*

**T**O SAY THAT 2011 was an exciting year for American Whitewater would be an understatement. The largest dam removals in this country's history finally got under way in Washington; the idea of restoring spring runoff flows to rivers regulated by dams gained more traction in California; and in Colorado, boater surveys continued to gain more respect in the river management community, rising above just defining flows for particular reaches on the Colorado River to be used in a seven-state initiative to protect some of the most iconic places in the West. That's great momentum for AW heading into 2012. In the coming year we will stay the course on some projects that are many years in the making, and apply the lessons learned from them to the new challenges we face.

Our momentum and drive to keep going would not be nearly as strong without you—our supporters and volunteers. You are the key to our success, bringing a powerful voice to what you experience in the places you love to play and find solitude—whether by kayak, canoe, or raft. Your passion comes from an intimate

connection to the rivers we work so hard to protect and restore.

Two qualities any river advocate needs are persistence and patience. Our work often doesn't show immediate results, but through our ongoing efforts, we secure long-standing and tangible river protections. On October 26, 2011, we celebrated 20 years of work toward freeing Washington's White Salmon River. After persisting for so long, the mere hour it took to blow a hole in the base of the dam and drain the reservoir seemed like a blink of eye. If you hadn't been tracking the entire process (which is still ongoing), you might have thought it was a quick and easy thing to do. But behind the scenes, American Whitewater and many of our partners had our heads down for a good long while, working toward a common vision. And so, many of our Top 10 priorities carry over from years past. Our work requires continued focus on the vision of restoring and protecting the rivers that we all love. These projects are key to American Whitewater's mission, and we'll stay with them until they're done.

## 1. Green River (CO/UT/WY)

If developers have their way, about 250,000 acre-feet of water will be diverted from the Flaming Gorge Reservoir on the Green River and piped over 500 miles to Colorado's Front Range. If American Whitewater has ours, we'll keep that water in the Green to protect flows, the riparian habitat, and stunning landscapes of Lodore Canyon in Dinosaur National Monument, Split Mountain Canyon, and Desolation and Gray Canyons farther downstream. The Green is a main tributary of the Colorado River, and the project would also have an impact on one of the most iconic rivers in the country.

One of two Flaming Gorge Pumpback proposals, the "Regional Watershed Supply Project" first surfaced in 2008. The project had been under permitting review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for more than two years, but the agency canceled its environmental review this past year. In late summer, the project proponent decided to add a hydropower component and filed an application for a preliminary permit with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.



# STEWARDSHIP



*Gary and Mune Hall floating the Green (UT) in summer flows. If water is piped around this iconic wilderness section of whitewater, recreational opportunities and this beautiful natural environment will suffer.*

**Photo by Paul Martzen**

The proponent's new company, Wyco Power, seeks to sell and deliver water from the Green River to Colorado's Front Range communities, while producing about 550 megawatts of hydroelectric power. The plans, however, include using natural gas-powered pump stations to lift the water up and over the Continental Divide through a 120-inch pipeline spanning Southeastern Wyoming and Colorado's Front Range. Additional water storage reservoirs would need to be built, including a new 185,000-acre-foot reservoir near Fort Collins, Colorado. Estimates of completing the Flaming Gorge pipeline range between \$7 billion and \$9 billion—a pricetag that could make it the costliest water project in Colorado's history.

If the proposed project becomes a reality, it will have severe consequences not only for the whitewater recreation opportunities below Flaming Gorge Dam and the local economies that thrive because of them, but it will also harm habitat for four endangered fish species and intensify the scarcity of

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*Boater access to the stunning landscapes along the Green River (UT) is threatened by proposals to pump a quarter of a million acre feet of water out of the river.*

**Photo by Thomas O'Keefe**

an already over-tapped resource. Even without this project, the Colorado River rarely flows to its delta in the Gulf of California. Keeping water in the Green is a key priority for American Whitewater in 2012, and will likely continue to be for many years to come.

## 2. Green River (VT)

In fall 2011, American Whitewater and the Vermont Paddlers Club held a flow study on the Green River—Vermont style. After four descents through technicolor foliage and 40-degree rain, 30 paddlers gathered amid emus, llama, turkeys and cows at



Applecheek Farms to fill out surveys and discuss our experience. Our assessment unveiled another awesome New England creek run, featuring three Class V drops and many Class III and IV rapids, all set in a lush and remote gorge. We're excited to see that the dam owners are open to working with paddlers to bring new paddling opportunities to the region, and in 2012 we will continue to develop a relationship and lay the groundwork for relicensing negotiations. Our flow study will shape the river's flows for the next 30-50 years through scheduled releases on the river, creating a new recreational treasure and hopefully bringing some tangible environmental benefits to the system.

## 3. Susquehanna River (PA)

While it's an exciting time for river restoration through dam removal in this country, keep in mind that with over 85,000 dams out there, only about 1,000 have been removed. While taking down dams that no longer make sense is an inspiring outcome, we spend the majority of our time working to improve operations at dams that are not candidates for removal any time in

# STEWARDSHIP



*Steve Graybill heading out for some epic high-water surfing at Holtwood. This is the kind of opportunity that might have disappeared without the efforts of AW and its regional partners to ensure surfing features didn't disappear with powerhouse modifications.*

**Photo by Kristen Podolak**

the immediate future. Most of our work happens through the federal hydropower relicensing process. There's a lot of pressure on small rivers, creeks and streams as the push for new hydropower responds to the call for carbon-neutral sources of energy. Upgrades and improvements to existing dams can relieve this pressure (as can conservation, of course).

At the Holtwood Dam on Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River, the power company is in the process of adding more turbines to make more electricity. At the same time, the new configuration of turbines is expected to do a better job of attracting American shad and other fish species to the existing fish elevator that lifts fish up and over the dam. This win-win project had only one big problem - the new turbines and significant

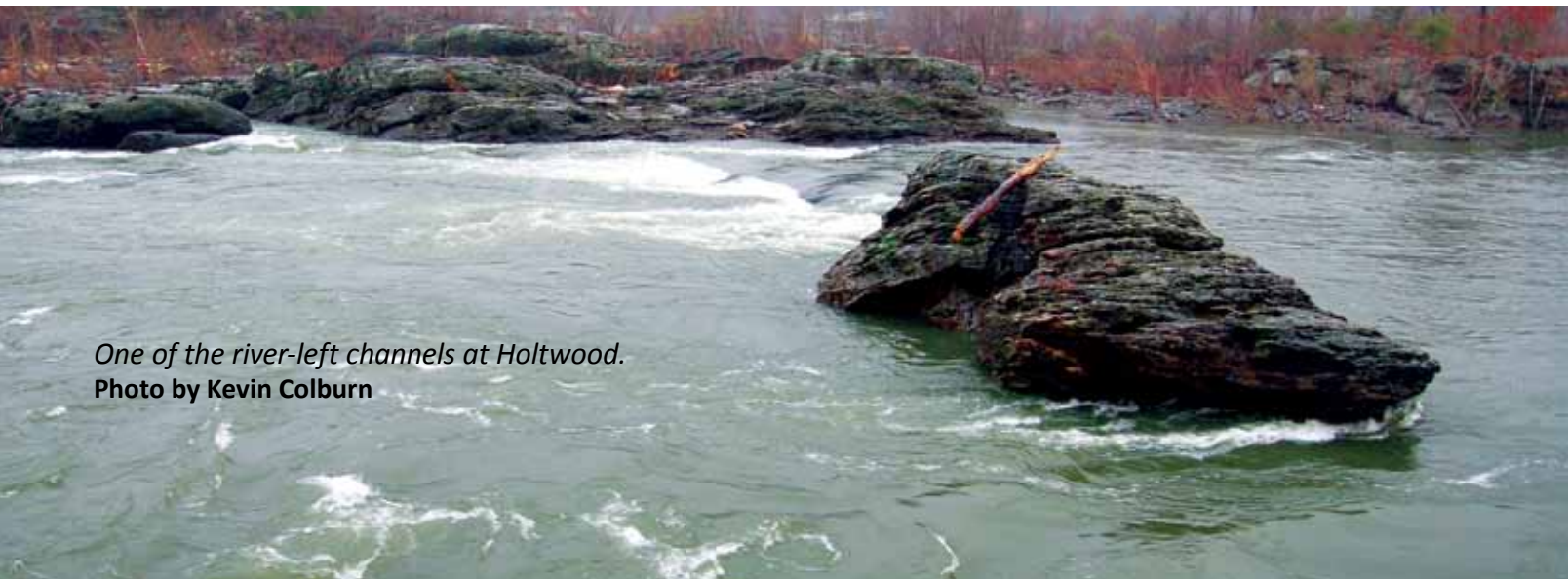
channel excavations would destroy and/or de-water the Susquehanna's last best rapids. American Whitewater has worked for the past few years with the Conewago Canoe Club and other regional paddlers to protect this freestyle paddling treasure.

In 2009 we reached a settlement agreement that requires the power company to protect the rapids that are possible to protect, replace some destroyed features with new man-made features, and provide regular flows targeted at optimizing the river's waves and holes. Two years of careful engineering and negotiations followed and we are currently finalizing the plan. In 2012 the power company plans to create two high quality freestyle features in the Susquehanna and initiate flows. American Whitewater and our regional partners

will be reviewing the final designs and negotiating the final flow regime in early 2012 and we look forward to seeing the results of this win-win-win project by year end.

## **4. Chattooga (SC/GA)**

We expect that 2012 will be a pivotal year on our work on the Chattooga River. Since 1995, American Whitewater has been the leading advocate for lifting an outdated and illogical ban on boating on the river that was implemented in the 1970s. After years of navigating a maze of administrative processes with the Forest Service, in 2009 we joined with the American Canoe Association and a number of our affiliate clubs to challenge the Forest Service in court. In 2010, we successfully defeated an attempt to have our case thrown out of court, and fortunately the judge in the case agreed with our argument that floating is an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) of the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River that must be protected. This is a good sign, because ORVs have a lot of teeth under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In 2012, we expect to have our next—and hopefully decisive—day in court.



*One of the river-left channels at Holtwood.*

**Photo by Kevin Colburn**

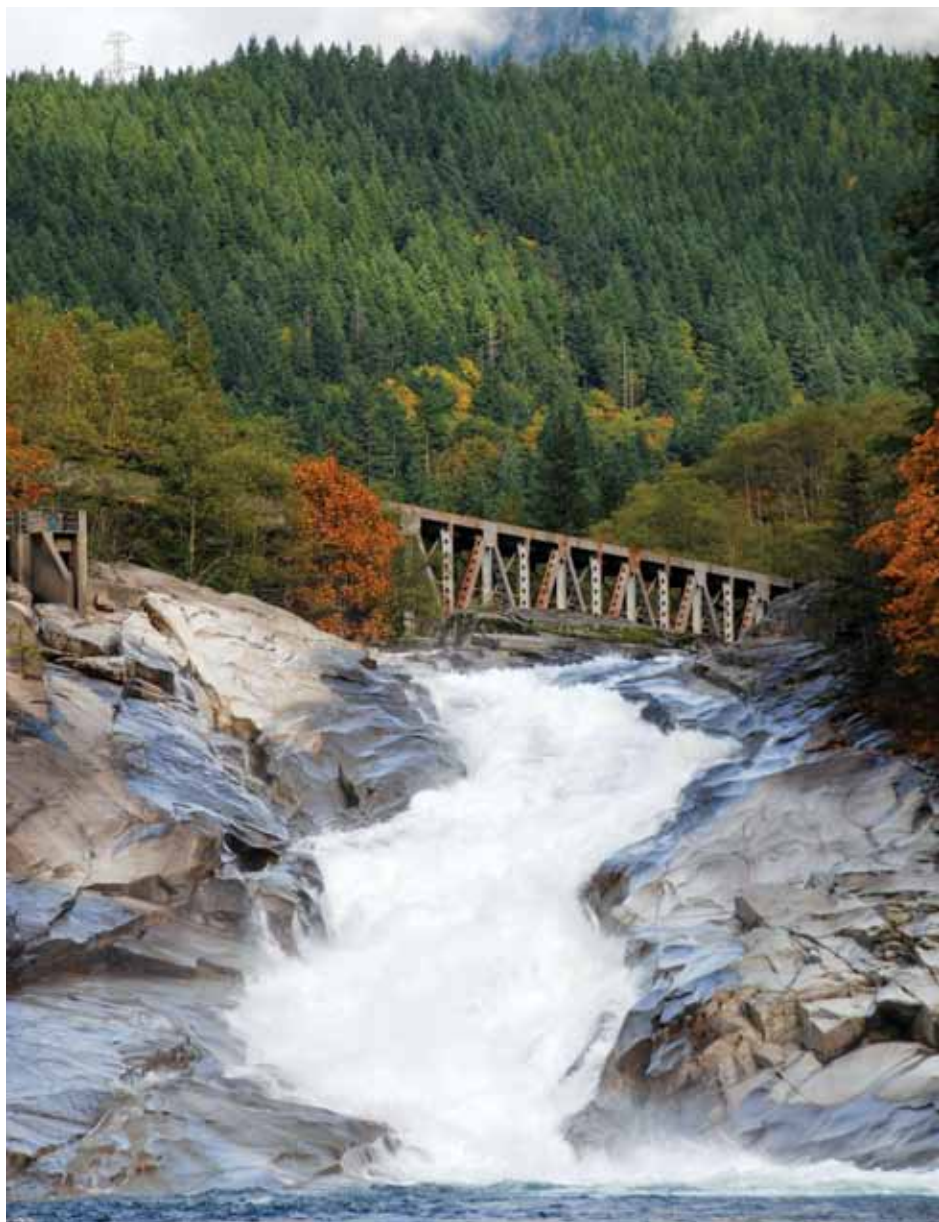


## 5. Opposing Small Hydropower (Pacific Northwest)

As the pressure to find carbon neutral sources of energy rises, the push is on for new hydropower. Two proposals in Washington will have our focus in 2012 and beyond. In 2011, developers dusted off two tired old ideas for hydropower at Sunset Falls on the Skykomish River and in Ernie's Gorge on the North Fork Snoqualmie. These proposals didn't make sense more than a decade ago when first proposed, and they still do not make sense today. Small hydro projects not only cause a great deal of harm to rivers, but are also economically unsound. There are similar proposals on Montana's Madison River, West Rosebud Creek, and East Rosebud Creek. These proposed sites are known for their scenic beauty and importance to the whitewater boating community.

On the Skykomish, a local public utility wants to divert the river approximately one half-mile around Sunset Falls and blast out the bedrock to build a powerhouse at the spot where paddlers enjoy a seal launch into the pool below the falls. The Skykomish is a Washington State Scenic River and has been recommended as a federal Wild and Scenic River. On the Snoqualmie, a private developer seeks to build a dam, diversion intakes, penstocks and a powerhouse in Ernie's Gorge. Ernie's is a regionally significant Class V whitewater run, has also been recommended for designation as a federal Wild and Scenic River, and borders state and county protected areas. The Montana proposals would de-water significant stretches of high quality whitewater as well.

These Washington rivers are also designated as Protected Areas from hydropower development by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPPCC). The NWPPCC develops and maintains a regional power plan and a fish and wildlife program to balance the Pacific Northwest's environment and energy needs. Protected Areas are part of the Council's Fish and



*Sunset Falls on the South Fork Skykomish (WA). AW is fighting a proposed hydropower dam at this site.*

**Photo by Thomas O'Keefe**

Wildlife Program, which seeks to defend and rebuild fish and wildlife populations affected by hydropower development in the Columbia River Basin. Protected Areas also safeguard the investments made by Bonneville Power Administration as they seek to mitigate the impacts of the Columbia River Hydroelectric system. Historically, new hydropower has never been allowed in a Protected Area, and one

function of the designation is that it directs would-be developers away from critical areas with sensitive wildlife and habitat.

Although the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has never issued a license to construct a hydropower project in a Protected Area, they continue to issue preliminary permits to would-be developers, allowing them to file license



# STEWARDSHIP

*Matheney Creek is one of the many rivers that could benefit from the protection AW is seeking for the rivers of the Olympic Peninsula.*

**Photo by Thomas O'Keefe**

applications. As developers explore the feasibility of their projects, they do so at great expense.

In 2012, the Council's Protected Areas will likely be updated for the first time since 1992. While the intention of the update is to bring listings and their associated maps into the 21st century, a top priority for American Whitewater will be to ensure that a Protected Area designation remains the stronghold that it has been historically.

## 6. Bear River Releases (ID)

As a key participant on the Environmental Coordination Committee (ECC) for Idaho's Bear River Hydroelectric Project, American Whitewater continues to make progress towards improving the health of the system. The ECC was established to oversee an adaptive management approach to implementing the project's 2004 license conditions. Since 2008, scheduled releases have provided whitewater opportunities, and during that time monitoring was done



to assess whether there were any impacts to channel habitat, fisheries, and aquatic insects. In 2011, a report outlining the findings was released.

Wind and water-related erosion result in large sediment inputs to the Black Canyon. Before pulsed flows were implemented, these deposits built up, presumably because natural flows are diverted around this section of the river. The releases scour out the sediment and mitigate the combined impacts of high sediment inputs and the hydropower diversion, and result in decreased sand and silt on the river bottom and increased cobble and gravel. These conditions provide more spawning habitat for fish and improved habitat for aquatic insects. The releases had no effect on the total density of aquatic insects, however, they led to a significant increase in the three types of insects most commonly associated with cold, clear, healthy streams. Overall,

*Finalizing release regimens that are scientifically based and paddler friendly on the Bear will be one of AW's top priorities in 2012.*

**Photo by Kevin Colburn**

the result of the pulse flows is a healthier, more natural river, which has a better insect species assemblage and better fish habitat. It is also a recreational treasure for whitewater paddlers.

In 2012, American Whitewater will continue to work with other Bear River stakeholders to finalize the release program. The outcome of the aquatic insect report will be considered in conjunction with water quality, fish stranding and recreation data to create a final plan for future releases.

## 7. Keeping Washington's Olympics Wild

Washington's Olympic Peninsula is home to a number of incredible rivers, with dozens of whitewater runs that pass through towering old-growth forests. Some watersheds on the Peninsula get several feet of precipitation each year, and the rivers here represent important opportunities for river conservation. Conservation of these rivers has long been a priority for American Whitewater, and our local volunteers were involved with a Wild and Scenic Rivers campaign in the early 1990s. While this previous





*The springtime flow patterns of rivers downstream of a dam, like this one—the South Yuba (CA) between Washington and Edwards Crossing—have traditionally not resembled those of a naturally flowing river, a trend that AW hopes to reverse.*

**Photo by Dave Steindorf**

effort was not successful, we joined with numerous conservation and recreation organizations in 2010 to launch the Wild Olympics Campaign, which focuses on a dozen major river systems on Washington State's Olympic Peninsula. While many organizations are involved, American Whitewater has taken on a leadership role with the river conservation elements of the proposal. In late 2011, our efforts began to bear fruit when Representative Norm Dicks and Senator Patty Murray released a draft proposal for Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Preserves. Several public workshops were also held to give local citizens and communities the opportunity to provide additional feedback.

The Olympic Peninsula is also home to the largest river restoration project in the country on the Elwha River with the beginning of the removal of the Glines Canyon and Elwha dams in Fall 2011. This project took over two decades to finally get underway, and while it's an exciting time for river restoration, protection is always economically and ecologically preferable. The Wild Olympics Campaign seeks to protect healthy watersheds now. Future generations will benefit from the increased

protection of the watersheds and forests that make the Olympic Peninsula such a magnificent place.

2012 will be a busy year as we proceed from a conservation vision to actually rolling up our sleeves and developing the legislative strategy. We are currently involved in legislative efforts to conserve Northwest Rivers that include the Wild Rogue, Illabot Creek in the Skagit River system, and the Middle Fork Snoqualmie. Moving any bill through Congress is a challenge these days, but opportunities will emerge and our efforts in the coming year will be focused on promoting public support for river conservation on the Olympic Peninsula and building the case for a comprehensive watershed conservation strategy.

## **8. Restoring Spring Runoff Flows (CA)**

In California, American Whitewater has been working for several years to restore spring runoff to rivers that have an artificial on and off switch. Rivers that are regulated by dam operations often miss out on the spring runoff, and our work with U.C. Davis hydrologists has shown that spring is a critically important time in the hydrograph

and natural functioning of a river. It's when the river comes alive, and has a chance to flourish in between stressful erratic winter flows and low summer flows. The period of the spring runoff triggers age-old breeding cues in riparian species, keeps cobble bars free of vegetation encroachment, and provides whitewater enthusiasts with several weeks of runnable flows.

In 2011, American Whitewater secured flows using these principles on the Rubicon River (CA), and increased momentum on bringing it to other rivers throughout California. In 2012, we will continue to ride this momentum, bringing the concept to the table in key flow negotiations on the South and Middle Forks of the Yuba, Fordyce Creek and Canyon Creeks. In 2012, we hope to share our work with other river enthusiasts outside of California.

## **9. Upper Colorado Flows (CO)**

The Upper Colorado River continues to be the centerpiece of the current debate over how we will manage Western rivers in the future. It is the largest source of supplemental water for Denver and Colorado's East Slope, where numerous reservoirs, pumps, and pipelines lift water up and over the Continental Divide. It also provides the base for a thriving recreation economy in Western Colorado. As water managers look to secure water supplies for the future, current environmental and recreational needs are already over-tapped.

In 2007, a group of 80 stakeholders, including American Whitewater, came together to discuss the future vision for the river. We developed a new management plan that

# STEWARDSHIP



*Healthy flows in Gore Canyon.*  
Photo by Nathan Fey

sought to allow for the development of future water supplies while also protecting the river's habitat, wildlife and paddling and fishing opportunities. In 2011, years of effort and negotiations resulted in a Draft Management Plan, which was submitted to the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Participating in the development of the Stakeholders Plan has been a large part of American Whitewater's Colorado River Stewardship Program since 2007. We have worked hard to define recreational flow needs, and fought to protect the existing quality and quantity of paddling opportunities in Gore Canyon, State Bridge, and Glenwood Canyon. We've collaborated with state and federal agencies, water providers and conservation partners to balance the needs of communities with those of fish, wildlife, and paddlers.

In Fall 2011, the Kremmling and Colorado River Valley BLM Field Offices released their Draft Resource Management Plans/ Environmental Impact Statements (RMP/ EIS). Combined, these Field Offices manage

*The excitement of Gore Canyon depends on a continued healthy flow regime.*  
Photo by Nathan Fey

nearly 80 Miles of the Upper Colorado River including Gore Canyon and Glenwood Springs. The plans will impact precious flows in the Colorado River.

Both documents outline two options within the agency's Preferred Alternative. These options address segments of the river and its tributaries that are suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Option 1 would determine that segments

of the Colorado River and its tributaries are Suitable for Wild and Scenic River Inclusion. Option 2 would defer any suitability determination, and adopt and implement the Stakeholder Group's Management Plan in order to protect the free-flowing nature, Outstandingly Remarkable Values, and tentative classifications of the river segments.

The release of the RMP/EIS charges the Stakeholder group with formally developing Flow Management Guidelines for the Colorado River. These Guidelines need to protect the existing range of whitewater boating opportunities and world-class trout fishing on nearly 80 miles of the Colorado River. For the first time in Colorado's era of water development, paddlers have a real say in what the future of Upper Colorado River flows look like.

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is scheduled to be released in the summer of 2012. This year, American Whitewater will be working alongside other stakeholders to decide how the river will be managed under the guidelines established by the Stakeholders Wild and Scenic Alternative Management







*Bridal Veil Falls between the Three Brothers on the left and the Leaning Tower on the right. AW is working to open the Yosemite Valley, and rivers throughout much of the park to boating.*

**Photo by Paul Martzen**

Plan. Will the Bureau of Land Management determine that the River is Suitable for inclusion into the Wild and Scenic Rivers system? Or will the agency identify the stakeholder's plan as a preferred alternative for river management? Our efforts will focus on ensuring that additional development of water supply in the Colorado River protects and enhances whitewater boating and recreational fishing values, including establishing legal water rights for recreational uses, and protecting flows needed to sustain the world-class Gore Canyon races.

A lot is riding on our efforts in the Upper Colorado River Basin—stay tuned in 2012 to learn more about our progress!

## 10. Opening Yosemite to Boating

No matter your preference for type of craft or class of whitewater, one thing is certain—traveling through a landscape by way of river can be one of the most awe inspiring experiences you'll ever have. It can bring peace and solitude, and allow you to interact with the world in a way that no other experience can. Paddling (or rowing, as the case may be) is a low-impact way to

*Opening the Merced through Yosemite Valley to boating would provide an amazing scenic and recreational experience for many paddlers each year.*

**Photo by Paul Martzen**

explore some amazing places, and we're one step closer to being able to do just that in one of the most beautiful places in the country: Yosemite National Park.

American Whitewater has been working with the National Park Service for years in an effort to lift the age-old ban on boating throughout most of the park. By working together, we've been able to take steps towards providing opportunities for people to experience one of the most amazing places on the planet by boat—while also protecting the Park for future generations.

The Wild and Scenic River Management Plans for the Merced and Tuolumne Rivers

are in the ongoing process of development, opening the window for an opportunity to lift the ban. In 2010, we were able to take National Park Service staff down the river, and we also provided extensive comments and suggestions on how to manage use in the park. In 2011, we continued to participate in the public process, and late last year we were pleased to see that the park is seriously considering allowing paddling on parts of the Merced River. American Whitewater provided additional comments, supporting their efforts and emphasizing that the entire length of the river should be open to paddling.

2012 will bring more opportunities to continue to work with the park. This year, we expect that the Draft River Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement will be released. We're hopeful that we'll continue to be able to work with the Park Service and we'll soon be able to experience the beauty of Yosemite Valley by boat.



# STEWARDSHIP

## RENOVATED DIVERSION DAM A BIG HIT ON MONTANA'S BIG HOLE RIVER

BY JOHN AMTMANN

ON NOVEMBER 10, 2010 the City and County of Butte-Silver Bow completed the replacement of a century-old diversion dam in the Dewey Canyon of the Big Hole River. The Big Hole River Diversion Dam and Pump Station was constructed in the late 1890s, and diverts and pumps water to Butte, supplying a major portion of the city's drinking water. The project replaced the original structure, which was a threat to the river's health and was the site of many accidents and a few fatalities.

The general purpose of the project was to provide a reliable source of drinking water for the Butte area, and to improve safety at the site for maintenance personnel and the public. The specific goals of the project included:

- Reduce the risk of dam failure or malfunction
- Provide a reliable source of water for the Butte area



- Reduce maintenance requirements
- Reduce icing problems
- Provide fish passage
- Provide safe boat passage
- Minimize impacts to environmental resources
- Improve safety for maintenance personnel
- Minimize project costs

*The Renovation.*

**Photo by John Amtmann**

The engineering company in charge of the project, DOWL HKM, took the proper steps to ensure the ecosystem was a priority during the project, and published a newsletter on a regular basis during planning and construction to keep constituents updated on the progress of the project. DOWL HKM conducted a scoping process, an analysis of alternatives, an environmental assessment, and a public review and comment period. They then held a public hearing and provided a final opportunity for all stakeholders to voice concerns, comments, questions, and suggestions. The new diversion dam is a chevron shaped structure constructed of native stone materials and features a boat channel and fish passage in the middle of the river. The intake structure was reconstructed on the shore and no longer presents an obstacle in the middle of the river. The new diversion dam is low profile with a series of stepped pools downstream providing safe passage for the recreational public, ice floes, and fish during all stages of river flow. A passive portage path was also constructed on the south shore. The

*The original structure – at mid flows the recirculation at the dam was deadly.*

**Photo by John Amtmann**







Photo 1 and 2 Aidan Amtmann and Hannah Amtmann respectively surfing Wave 2 at about 1,000 cfs. Photo 3 John Amtmann on the same wave at about 10,000 cfs.

Photos by John Amtmann

dam withstood a very severe test during the winter of 2010-2011 without any ice buildup problems. During the spring of 2011, river flows exceed 11,500 cfs and the new dam performed as anticipated.

The Butte whitewater community is appreciative of the efforts put forth by everyone involved in this project from the engineers and construction workers to the river users who were involved in the process. Local paddlers are also very happy with the friendly play waves that replaced the deadly river-wide recirculating hydraulic that the previous structure presented.

What we get to deal with now is bouncy surf waves at higher water and friendly side-surfing holes at lower water. There are two primary waves, currently referred to as Wave 1 and Wave 2, and the surfing is fantastic from 10,000 cfs down to about 600 cfs. What the paddlers really appreciate is the fact that there is never a level where these two waves become recirculating hydraulics; they are always flushing and safe for recreationalists whether in kayaks or on river boards.

How to get there: Take I-90 west of Butte about 5 miles to I-15 South at Nissler Junction. Continue for about 20 miles to

the Divide/Wisdom Exit 102. Head West on Montana 43 (aka Big Hole Road) for about 2.5 miles. Turn onto Pump House Road; about 1/2 mile down this road you'll come to the pump house. We have been able to access the waves right from the pump house, but access issues are currently being ironed out. Another option is to travel another 1/2 mile up the Pump House Road where you can put on at the Silver Bridge and float the 1/2 mile down to the pump house and spend hours surfing.

It may not be worth a special trip to the Big Hole just for these waves, but if you happen to be in the Butte/Divide area then I'd recommend stopping by for an enjoyable surf session.

## AW STEWARDSHIP

### DAMS: IF YOU CAN'T REMOVE, IMPROVE

BY MEGAN HOOKER

While it's an exciting time for river restoration through dam removal in this country, keep in mind that with over 85,000 dams in the United States, only about 1,000 have been removed. In addition to taking down dams that no longer make sense, American Whitewater spends a great deal of time working to improve operations on dams that aren't likely to come down anytime soon. Most of our work happens through the FERC relicensing process. While AW was not involved with the Big Hole project, we are happy to see a variety of stakeholders come together to improve conditions where dams still provide a public benefit.

# STEWARDSHIP

## KEEPING THE SALMON IN THE MIDDLE FORK SALMON: PADDLERS' ROLE IN RESTORING A ONCE-GREAT MIGRATION

BY KEVIN COLBURN

DAHO'S MIDDLE FORK of the Salmon River is a primordial and sacred place with an expansive and open power that can only exist in a wide swath of natural space and time. Here, you feel small and free in an infinite and wild world. Paddlers traversing the 100-mile river corridor are awed by the sublime vistas, the hot springs, and the ever present chance of seeing a dazzling array of wildlife. The elk become companions, golden eagles become pleasant visitors, and you feel certain that large predators have watched you float by. Perhaps one of the most important wild inhabitants of the Middle Fork however, is largely absent. A Wilderness with its teeth knocked out, the Middle Fork Salmon is missing most of its once abundant Chinook salmon.

In August of 2011, I joined a group of salmon experts on a float trip down the upper



*Forest Service River Rangers Jen Seabury (foreground) and Paul Santana row down the Middle Fork Salmon (ID) searching for salmon redds.*

**Photo by Kevin Colburn**

reaches of the Middle Fork to investigate the river's missing link. The trip was to be a challenging one as we planned to take a deep dive into the many hurdles facing salmon, including potential recreational impacts. We met for the trip in Challis, Idaho at "O Seven Hundred," a fact I found unsettling both for its military edge and its early hour. I knew from the start that this was going to be a work trip—not my normal rejuvenating Middle Fork vacation.

"We got a creamer!" someone yelled shortly after we launched at Boundary Creek. We all pulled over and gathered around a rotting 30-plus-inch salmon carcass that one of the fisheries biologists first located by smell, then by sight. Far from being grossed out by rotting fish (called creamers because of their consistency), salmon biologists appear to relish working with them. First the crew took several length measurements from the eye of the fish to various parts of the tail. Next a pencil-eraser-sized portion of

*University of Idaho's Brian Kennedy conducting a post-mortem investigation of a salmon carcass on the Middle Fork Salmon.*

**Photo by Kevin Colburn**

a fin was cut from the fish for subsequent DNA analysis back in the lab.

Then things got messy. A saw was pulled out and an adjoining vertical and horizontal cut were made to remove the fish's forehead. With tweezers, a University of Idaho fisheries professor, Dr. Brian Kennedy, carefully extracted two tiny calcite "bones" from the fish's inner ear. These are called otoliths, and when cut in half reveal a growth ring for every day the fish was alive. Even more amazing, the chemical composition of the rings results in a unique elemental signature providing insight into the chemistry and temperature of the body of water in which the ring grew. This information allows biologists to track a fish's life from its specific birth stream, down the Middle Fork, out the Columbia, into the ocean, and back. With the otoliths stored in a labeled ziplock, the salmon was opened up. In female "creamers" the remaining eggs are counted, while for males the amount of remaining milt is estimated to reveal how fully the fish had spawned before it died. Lastly the tail is cut off so our group, or any others, do not create a duplicate record of the same fish.



This post-mortem process would play out a half-dozen times, once for each of the dead salmon that we found. The location of each fish was recorded with GPS, and painstaking notes were taken on standard forms that are common to all the agencies working on regional salmon issues.

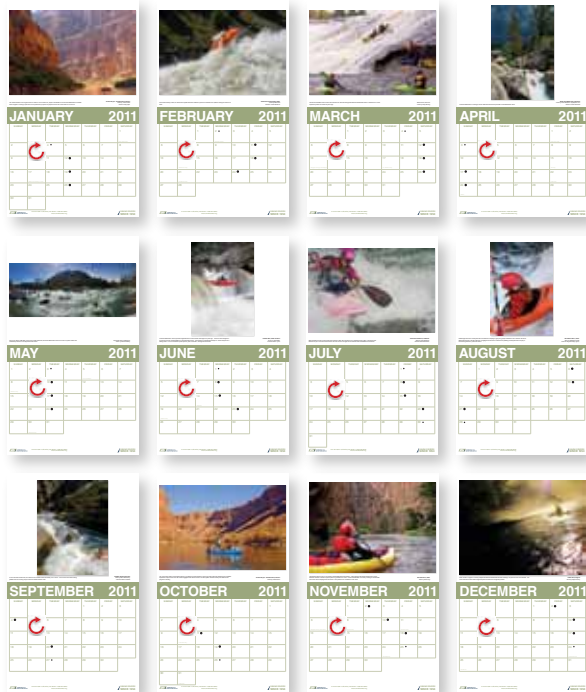
Not long into the first day our crew spotted a salmon redd—or fish nest—along the right bank of the river. Salmon use their powerful tails to wash away fine sediment to create a light colored circular area one to four meters in diameter. When they are ready to spawn, female salmon then use their tails to dig an egg pocket in the gravel where they release their eggs as the male fertilizes them. The female then begins a series of covering digs just upstream of the egg pocket to bury the eggs and begin excavation of the next egg pocket within the redd. While our paddling crew easily

avoided the redd, some of the biologists watched a subsequent large group obviously float over it while splashing each other. The salmon guarding the redd, or perhaps awaiting a mate, left the redd and presumably returned shortly thereafter as has been witnessed elsewhere. This event would provide for much discussion and debate for the remainder of the trip. The location of the redd was noted with a GPS unit, as were the handful of other redds seen on our trip.

Dinner that night, thankfully, was not salmon. As darkness fell at Trail Flats Hot Springs, the organizer of the trip, Middle Fork District Ranger Chris Grove, circled us all up for a conversation. Teddy Roosevelt would have fit right into the scene, a throwback to how conservation problems were solved in his era—through shared experience, observation, and discourse.

In some ways, the impetus for the trip was a change in Forest Service policy that was aimed at reducing recreational use on the Middle Fork during the spawning period by not re-issuing cancelled permits between August 15 and September 15. Paddlers questioned the scientific basis for the decision—observations in the Upper Salmon River. Paddlers also questioned the equitability of the policy because it appeared to impact non-commercial paddlers far more than commercial customers. The policy was based on a concern that a large number of boats floating over spawning salmon could cause them to repetitively leave their redds. This in turn could lead to a reduction in reproductive success or complete reproductive failure if the salmon expended too much energy in their repetitive avoidance behaviors. This phenomenon, called “pre-spawn” mortality can occur naturally and has been

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# STEWARDSHIP

experienced at low levels throughout the Columbia River Basin, but is of particular concern when only a dozen or fewer mature fish return to a section of river as is the case on the Middle Fork Salmon.

The discussion at Trail Flats was spirited. NOAA fisheries biologists Bill Lind and Chad Fealko shared the fact that only 1.5% of salmon returning to the watershed spawned in the mainstem of the Middle Fork. The rest spawn in eight major tributaries—especially Marsh and Bear Valley creeks. There is a chance that the mainstem fish are genetically distinct

from the tributary fish, making them of special concern. The biologists on the trip estimated that the salmon runs in the Middle Fork Salmon watershed are at 5% of their historical grandeur, with dams on the Snake and Columbia rivers responsible for a vast portion of the devastating 95% reduction in salmon populations. The biologists stressed that any impact to these few fish in the mainstem, no matter how small, was a serious concern, in part because only 4% of the historical habitat for Chinook salmon still supports wild, native fish. While concern was expressed about potential recreational impacts, stories were

also shared of successful salmon spawning rivers in Alaska that are under pressure from constant jet boat traffic, floating, wading, and fishing. While many involved in the conversation presumed the impacts of recreation were not severe, in cases like the Middle Fork Salmon, where there are extremely few fish, which are of extreme biological importance and imperiled by dams, even small potential impacts are enough to raise concern.

From the paddler's perspective, Bill Sedivy of Idaho Rivers United and I shared our commitment, and the paddling

## AW STEWARDSHIP

### SUPPORTING SALMON

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE

American Whitewater has joined organizations from all across the Pacific Northwest that have a stake in the future of salmon. Together we're calling for a stakeholder-based approach to help address the serious problems faced by Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead. These fish are an irreplaceable ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational resource for the people of the Pacific Northwest. Salmon and steelhead make vital contributions to our rivers, lands, and wildlife, and to scores of communities throughout our region. Unfortunately, after nearly two decades of activity, federal agencies have so far failed to craft an effective strategy to protect and restore imperiled Columbia Basin stocks. In the summer of 2011, a U.S. District Court ruled that the Obama Administration's 2010 Salmon Plan is "arbitrary and capricious." This is the fourth federal salmon plan ruled illegal since 1995. It is time for a new approach.

River runners are among the thousands of citizens who are directly impacted by the failure to address the true problems impacting salmon populations—a series of four dams on the Snake River. We have joined river conservationists, fishermen, and business leaders in asking the Administration to work with the people of the Northwest to convene a settlement process where regional stakeholders collaborate directly with each other, with relevant federal and state agencies, and with the Columbia River Tribes to develop a recovery strategy that is lawful, based on rigorous science, and meets the needs of affected communities. In order to succeed, such a process must be inclusive, transparent, and place regional stakeholders (e.g. fisherman, farmers, utilities, ratepayers) on equal footing with state, federal, and tribal governments that have been conducting closed negotiations for years.

Effective multi-party collaboration—specifically a process that includes the stakeholders impacted by salmon restoration efforts and considers all scientifically credible recovery alternatives—would help move the debate beyond the courtroom while greatly improving the resulting plan's chances of success. The following members of Congress have called for a Solutions Table to help resolve long-standing issues surrounding the protection and restoration of salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest. If they represent your district please let them know you appreciate their work:

McDermott (D-WA), Blumenauer (D-OR), Petri (R-WI), Levin (D-MI), Honda (D-CA), Stark (D-CA), Lee (D-CA), Kucinich (D-OH), Schiff (D-CA), Capps (D-CA), Woolsey (D-CA), Thompson (D-CA), Speier (D-CA), Slaughter (D-NY), Farr (D-CA), Conyers (D-MI), Hinchey (D-NY), Grijalva (D-AZ), Olver (D-MA), Van Hollen (D-MD), Eshoo (D-CA), Miller, Geo. (D-CA), Connolly (D-VA), Johnson (R-IL), Filner (D-CA), LaTourette (R-OH), Lofgren (D-CA), Price (D-NC), Markey (D-MA), Chu (D-CA), Maloney (D-NY), Kildee (D-MI), Tonko (D-NY), Waxman (D-CA), Norton (D-DC), Cohen (D-TN), Berman (D-CA), McCollum (D-MN), Hirono (D-HI), Holt (D-NJ)



community's commitment to supporting salmon recovery in the watershed. We shared the perspective that the Snake River dams are the real problem with Salmon recovery, and that it is important to keep salmon advocates in touch with the river through the paddling experience. We cautioned the agencies against alienating the river conservation community from rivers—and reiterated that paddlers and anglers together are the river conservation community. I also encouraged any use limits to be doled out equitably to both the general boating public and commercial outfitters. We proposed and discussed management alternatives that could meet both biological and recreational goals—since in many ways the two are inseparable. That night I slept fitfully, as I suspect others did, my mind running over the science and its management implications.

The next day on the water passed uneventfully, aside from our group finding a few more adult salmon and a few more redds. Upon reaching camp we took turns donning snorkels, masks, and drysuits. The moment my mask pressed through the reflective surface of the Middle Fork a new world was revealed. Big cutthroat

trout were feeding on the eddy line as I swam past them. The water was flashing with juvenile Chinook salmon (called parr) that were darting about, feeding, and likely very slowly working their way downstream. Endangered bull trout lurked here and there. Brown ornate sculpins clung to a large rock, and just downstream whitefish were lined up along an angled cliff wall, eating whatever came their way. The Middle Fork, just below the surface, is a brilliant aquarium.

That night we once again circled up for conversation, this time around a small fire (in a fire pan of course). Lytle Denny, a Shoshone-Bannock tribal member and fisheries biologist had been quiet the whole trip except while enthusiastically dissecting fish. As the fire was built he told us the story of how as a small boy he speared his first salmon, and fed his family, as his ancestors had done for countless generations. This was more than a good fishing story. Salmon in his home river were elusive, and quite literally mythical. Spearing salmon was and remains a sacrament to his culture. This life changing and life affirming rite was followed up the next year with a trip to the vastly more productive tribal fishing grounds in the South Fork Salmon River where fish (although hatchery raised) were more abundant. His story revealed that the tribal connection to salmon is not cerebral. It is experiential, a spiritual connection through both spear and stomach that



*Fisheries biologists investigate a Chinook salmon carcass on the Middle Fork (ID).*  
**Photo by Kevin Colburn**



*A deep pool on the Middle Fork Salmon (ID) where snorkeling revealed an impressive diversity of fish, including many juvenile Chinook salmon.*

**Photo by Kevin Colburn**

is a fundamental part of their culture. Today, wild Chinook salmon returning to Bear Valley Creek at the Middle Fork's headwaters remain culturally important to the Shoshone-Bannock tribe.

A long day on the water, snorkeling with salmon parr, and this story around the fire got us all thinking. The biologists recognized the value of keeping people connected to rivers through direct experience, and we discussed the value of keeping people



# STEWARDSHIP



US Forest Service Middle Fork River Ranger Chris Noyes rows as District Ranger Chris Grove and NOAA's Bill Lind (seated) search for salmon redds on the Middle Fork (ID).  
Photo by Kevin Colburn

focused and educated on the massive threat to salmon recovery posed by the lower Snake River dams. The paddlers recognized that no matter how small the potential impact boating may have on the few salmon spawning in the Middle Fork, we should work hard to make it even smaller. Ideas started flowing.

We discussed ways of alerting paddlers at the put-in to the specific locations of redds and encouraging paddlers to float at least 20 feet away from them. We discussed how if paddlers float over or by redds as one tight group with minimal splashing any impact could be minimized. We explored the possibility of granting special permits to paddlers willing to volunteer to camp with a redd for a day or two in order to direct other paddlers around it and possibly to collect information from salmon carcasses. We talked about reviewing the use data from this year to assure limits were equitable. We then talked long into the night about the potential of the Middle Fork to serve as a classroom for people to learn about salmon and their plight. About 10,000 people float the river each year, and few paddlers are aware of the opportunities to restore vast numbers of salmon to the

watershed. Expect some big things to come out of this campfire discussion.

On the third morning of the trip we were joined by Russ Thurow, a fisheries biologist with the Forest Service who has been studying salmon populations in the Middle Fork for 25 years. We pulled over on a gravel bar where a wildfire followed by an intense rain storm resulted in a massive blow-out of a tributary. Russ explained that debris flows like the one we were standing on create otherwise rare spawning habitat in the Middle Fork. We discussed how fire suppression over the past century may have limited spawning sites in the Middle Fork by reducing the number of natural debris flows. The conversation revealed yet another level of the astoundingly complex relationship that exists between salmon and the landscape.

By the last night of the trip a sense of peace had settled on the group, and we were able to just relax into our camp chairs, and wrap things up over an incredible Dutch-oven meal provided by the super competent and chill river rangers who oversaw the logistics of the trip. The planes came early in the morning and wrenched us from

the wilderness. If the flight wasn't so spectacular I would have been inconsolable. The Middle Fork is a hard place to leave. I never feel better than following a long soak in a hot spring, some sage rubbed into my skin, the sun warming me, and the vanilla sent of ponderosas on the air.

I dream of the day when I'll be able to paddle into camp, catch a massive Chinook, and feed my friends and family fresh salmon right there on the banks of the Middle Fork. I hope that the paddling community can share this dream, and that we help make it a reality. Next time you are on the Middle Fork take a pair of goggles and stick your head under water. Wish the young salmon a swift trip through the dams, and promise to help them on their return journey. Salmon don't have biological problems, they have political problems, and we can fix that.

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# BEST BEGINNER RUNS

## WASHOUGAL RIVER (WA)

BY DICK SISSON

LITERALLY MY BACK yard run, I've paddled the Washougal over 600 times in the last 24 years. Considering it is only 20 miles east of the Portland, Oregon metro area, it seems to get little whitewater use. The Washougal rises on the south side of the Silver Star Mountain range and flows about 25 miles into the Columbia River, between the towns of Camas and Washougal, Washington.

While it's a little too easy for a lot of boaters it is a great run for beginning and intermediate paddlers. It has more features—eddies, tongues, mid-stream rocks—than most of the other beginner runs in the area.

One drawback: in the past it was hard to tell what level the river is at. But it has had an Internet-reported gauge since 2005, making it a lot easier to plan a run. This Washington Department of Ecology gauge is at: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/wrx/wrx/flows/station.asp?sta=28B080>

Because it's rain-fed, the Washougal rises and falls quickly. Trips are likely to be different one day to the next. What is a

rock one day will be a wave the next, and a hole the day after. To me, that's a big part of the fun. Sadly, the river is likely to be too low from June through September. Because I know the lines, I've enjoyed paddling it as low as 4.5 feet, but most paddlers would find flows of about 5.5 to 7 feet most enjoyable.

I am focusing on the lower 13 miles of river here. Above river mile 13, the river and its tributaries are punctuated by waterfalls and Class IV and V rapids. These parts are less frequently run, and usually by advanced boaters. I have tied my opinions to the DOE gauge readings. At most levels, there will be occasional playspots.

Probably the most popular put-in for experienced boaters is the fisherman's access about a half mile above milepost 8. Another access, on river left 200 yards downstream from the bridge by the Washougal River Mercantile at MP 10, gives the boater two miles of scenic cruising before any excitement. Many years I've seen bald eagles hanging out in this stretch.

Several Class II+ rapids in this section are likely to have playspots. When you reach the large pool at the confluence with Winkler Creek, you have reached the

entrance to Big Eddy rapids, usually Class IV, flowing out to the left. The right bank is now a Clark County park. Most boaters will take at least a quick look from the road on the drive up, since the logical routes change dramatically with flow. At low flows, gauge readings of around 5 feet or lower, there are many eddies in this rapid that can provide an exciting slalom challenge, but there are also lots of pinning opportunities.

Below Big Eddy, the river swings to the right into Class III rapids. A powerful hole forms just below where the river turns back to the left. Most paddlers avoid it by cutting sharply left. The next mile of Class II+ water can be pretty playful. There is a good 'easy day' put-in right by the milepost 7 marker, feeding into the last of the Class II+ section.

At the Vernon Road Bridge, the river eases up. This bridge can be a put-in for intermediate boaters, since there is just the one straightforward Class III rapid below.

Just below the bridge, on river left, there is a good, easy spin reversal, with a nice service eddy on the left, at gauge readings of about 5 to 6 feet. Plan to spend some time there, especially if you're with a large group.

In an easy two miles, as the river sweeps right, it splits around a gravel island, and Class III Cougar Creek rapids begins. About 30 yards below the end of the island, as the river swings back left, a rock ledge extends out from the right bank. Usually there is a strong reversal behind it, but there is a tongue near the left bank.

At moderate to low levels, below about 6 feet on the gauge, you can catch the eddy on the right, and then peel out crossing the river. First timers should scout this rapid from the road on the way up. Often there are a couple surf waves part way down the little gorge, and there are almost always lots of eddies to zigzag through.

*Big Eddy rapids in high water.*  
Photo by Dick Sisson



# BEST BEGINNER RUNS

*A paddler negotiates Rock Island Drop on the Washougal.*

**Photo by Dick Sisson**

Past Cougar Creek, the river eases up to mainly pool and drop Class II. There is a good put-in for beginning and intermediate paddlers at the corner below Cougar Creek, MP 5. Some of these rapids have a lot of definition and are good practice for intermediate paddlers. In fact, this section has been popular with the local canoe club for its whitewater canoe classes.

But in a mile, there is a notable drop. At Rock Island, most of the river flows right, creating a play hole as it passes over a small ledge. But then the river turns blindly back to the left, dropping over a large, but shallow, ledge. The best run is down the left bank. It is easy to stop on the island and scout. So when I am with beginning boaters, I often do just that, to give them an opportunity to get more experience scouting rapids. It's also a great lunch spot.

Below Rock Island there are a few nice rest spots where I'll sometimes stop, enjoy the sun, and have a snack and drink. A popular take out for experienced boaters is the fishermen's access at MP 3, right at the



bottom of a Class II+ rapid. This point is also a good put-in for newbie beginners.

Beginning and intermediate boaters likely will enjoy continuing down to town. When the flow is high, there will be a number of surf waves. Otherwise, this is a mild beginner run, although there are still a few play spots. About a quarter of a mile below

MP 3, a large hole forms at the remains of the Upper Cottrell Dam. Easy passage is on the left.

Several waves and holes form just below the confluence with the Little Washougal River, and a few more on the way down to town. These can be pretty playful when the level is up to the 7 to 9-foot range. Being an old school kayaker, I love surfing glassy green waves, so I'm likely to be out here when the water is high.

There are several take-outs in the town of Washougal: at Hathaway Park, the Sandy Swimming Hole Park and the skate park. The Sandy Swimming Hole also accesses a renowned squirt feature know as The Buffet. None of these take-outs requires a parking permit.

Note that the access points at MP 10, MP 8, and MP 3 DO require a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Access Permit, available wherever fishing licenses are sold for about \$12 annually.

*Spin wave offers paddlers a relatively easy play spot at which to hone their skills.*

**Photo by Dick Sisson**





# THE LOWER HOOD RIVER

BY ZACHARY COLLIER

**T**HE HOOD RIVER in Oregon's Columbia River Gorge is a wonderful run for beginners. It's overlooked by many paddlers due to its proximity to the famous White Salmon River, which flows year-round. From 1923 to 2010, the Copper Dam blocked the Hood River, and made for an intimidating put-in especially for beginner paddlers. The dam was removed in the fall of 2010, making access to the river much easier. You can also now make this a longer run with a few fun Class III rapids by putting in a mile above the former Copper Dam site at Tucker Bridge.

The Class II section of the Lower Hood starts at the old Copper Dam site. The rapids are all Class II-II+, but the action is consistent for nearly the entire stretch. The rapids are long and rocky, allowing you to challenge yourself with some complicated moves within the rapids, or simply take the easy route. There are some fun waves to catch on the fly, which will keep more advanced paddlers entertained.

*Mount Hood towering over a raft on the Lower Hood River (OR).  
Photo by Maggie Busto*



# BEST BEGINNER RUNS

Perhaps the best part of the Lower Hood is the scenery and wildlife along the river. The Hood flows through a forested canyon with occasional glimpses of Mount Hood and there's even an eddy you can catch for a glimpse of Mount Adams. Birds are everywhere. We almost always see a Great Blue Heron, and in the spring we paddle alongside rare and unique Harlequin Ducks.

I keep telling my paddling friends that the Lower Hood is the best kayaking river in the Gorge, which is a bold statement to make with the White Salmon, the Little White, the Wind, and Klickitat Rivers all nearby, but I almost have some of them convinced! The Lower Hood is now accessible to paddlers of all levels and its continuous, rocky nature makes it fun for even the Class V types. I know I always have fun on this river, and more people should give it a try.



*Rafters enjoy the scenery and the Class II rapids of the Lower Hood (OR).*  
Photo by Maggie Busto

## AW STEWARDSHIP

### A SERIES OF DAM REMOVALS MAKING WAVES IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

BY MEGAN HOOKER

The removal of Copper Dam (a.k.a Powerdale Dam) from the Lower Hood River in Oregon is just one of five dam removals in as many years in Oregon and Washington's Columbia River Gorge. As part of the decommissioning of the Bull Run Hydroelectric Project in Oregon, Marmot Dam was removed from the Sandy River in 2007, and the Little Sandy Dam was removed from the Little Sandy River in 2008. In Washington, Hemlock Dam was removed from Trout Creek in 2009, and the process of removing Condit Dam from the White Salmon is expected to be complete in the fall of 2012. The removal of Copper/Powerdale Dam and restoration of the Hood River is a piece of a larger restoration effort throughout the Columbia Gorge. While each of these restoration efforts is an exciting story of its own, the larger restoration picture is pretty incredible! Access to well over 100 miles of salmon and steelhead habitat has been restored in the region, and as Zach and so many other paddlers can attest to, the experience of getting out on these rivers has clearly improved.

American Whitewater has played a role in all of these removals, serving in a leadership capacity as a steering committee member of the Hydropower Reform Coalition. Through our work we have been able to complement the efforts of other organizations focused on fishery restoration by highlighting the public benefits of enhanced recreational opportunities on restored rivers. The restoration of the Columbia Gorge's rivers represents a pinnacle example of what can happen regionally when you take down dams that no longer make sense.



# CANOEING

## TANDEM TIME

BY MATT LOOZE

I WAS EIGHT YEARS old the first time I wrapped a canoe around a rock. Twenty-eight years later, it is still out there, mocking me. My whole family started boating at once, so we all got to make those same canoeing mistakes together. It was somewhat costly, both monetarily and emotionally.

Out in Idaho, like many parts of the West, there are not many open boaters. Most rivers we went to had not really been done by other canoeists, and our friends from Kentucky had a full time job pulling out our water logged bodies from whatever river we were in (not on). From all those many runs and swims over the years, the day I lost my Mohawk XL12 stands as the best day of my life by far. I am not trying to rip on the ol' XL. That day will just always stand out as not a day of infamy, but a day of much more than just whitewater.

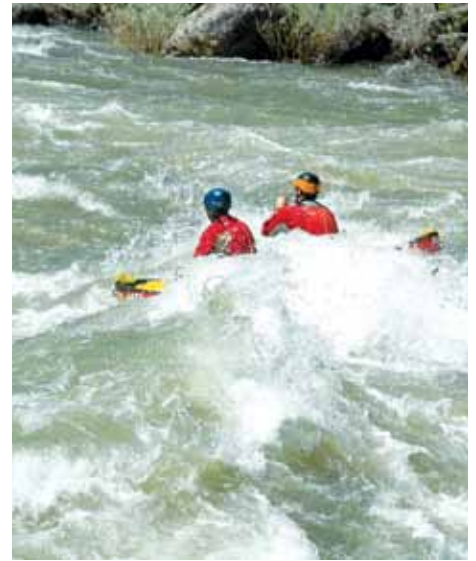
I came home from college for the summer to Pocatello, Idaho, where my family lived at the time. I needed to try to unclog my brain, which was filled with leftover classes and malted barley. Part of summer tradition at that time was to go run the Teton River. It is a remote canyon full of Class V that had been routinely scaring the

living crap out of me since I was 17. Other canoes had been left behind on that river already. One Whitesel formed a particularly smooth ledge drop.

So two kayakers, my father, and I all set out early that morning paddling down the canyon. I was only on the second rapid when I pinned my boat across the entire flow of the river. It sank faster than I could comprehend as I scrambled to get out of it. The pinning and sinking of the boat, however, is not the story. What happened next is what will be with me forever.

Having kayakers with us was almost a favor to them, as they had become experts at Z drags. When we all gave up on saving the canoe, I stripped out what I could and took a knee next to it as I said goodbye. It was like putting down a lame horse. I felt like I had let that poor boat down. But now I faced a new dilemma. Down inside a canyon, with no way out, how would I get down the river? My Dad had the answer. We deflated the bow bag in his Blue Hole, turned the boat around, then he climbed behind. It was an instant tandem!

The yaks gave us some questioning looks and stationed themselves up and down stream of us. We had miles of Class IV and V to go and were not exactly equipped



*The author and his father make their way down the Main Payette (ID).*

**Photo by Donna Looze**

or stable. I was not a big tandem boater. The definition of tandem boating, to me, was something along the lines of, "the use of obscenities and various swimming techniques to guide you and a partner down a river." This was going to be one hell of a challenge.

As soon as we got in the water, I learned a primary characteristic of a tandem: I have never moved so fast in a canoe in my life. The yaks could not begin to keep up. Finding a route was unnecessary. Most of the boulders that choked the Teton saw us hurtling downstream and dove out of the way. We might have actually carved a new channel as we went. This whole debacle culminated on the last big rapid of the day. Having survived the Sieve, Tsunami, and hiking around the Boulder Dam, we only had one rapid between us and the mile-long hike out. A mile hike never sounded so good.

The last rapid is about 50 yards of huge ledge-holes. There is really no point in picking a line when you have no ability to

*John (bow) and Matt (stern) Looze C2 the Main Payette (ID).*

**Photo by Donna Looze**



# CANOEING



*Staying in the boat is way more fun than some of the other river running strategies we've tried over the years.*

**Photo by Donna Looze**

turn. About half way down the yaks had all been left in the distance and I tried to raise the periscope to see what lay ahead. It was useless to even try. All we could do was keep the boat straight and hope everything we hit would give in before the boat did. As we came to the last river wide pinch point hole, we disappeared. I really think I saw fish at one point. But as the leviathan breached, we started to tip right.

Now, my dad is no spring chicken. But he did what only canoers really know how to

do. I call it the pretzel. It puts high-siding to shame. He wrapped his paddle all the way around the hull of the boat on the left and clung on like there was no tomorrow. He was not going to be the first to fall out. I had no saddle and no pegs, was mostly underwater, and refused to go in the river yet again. I laid out onto a brace and let out a primordial, guttural noise, the likes of which that canyon had not heard for millennia. Miraculously, the boat righted. My father and I made it to shore where we proceeded to celebrate. The yaks

showed up moments later and had colorful descriptions of their own about witnessing the descent, but none of them did it justice, just as this story doesn't. We named that rapid that day, Amazing Brace. Corny? Yes. Truthful? Very. But it gets at the heart of this story.

This story is my favorite not because it is one of the few times I have made it down a river without getting the crap kicked out of me. It is my favorite because I was at an age when boys don't always get along with their dads. I was drifting apart from him and the Teton did something that I have cherished every day since: it made me love tandem boating, especially with my dad. Whenever we are in doubt, we tandem. I am 36 now, and he is 69. This spring we tandem canoed Upper Oak Creek in Arizona. We embrace every chance we get to tandem, and have had so many great experiences and adventures because of it. Yes, we do our fair share of solo adventures, but it is nothing like the tandem. All my kayaker friends know that when they want a goofy adventure (no banjos), they should climb in one of our tandem boats. I really encourage everyone to learn to solo, and then climb in what most couples call the divorce boat, but what I call a bonding boat.





# WHEN THE RAIN FALLS, THE MID-ATLANTIC BRINGS THE GOODS!

BY THE DOGG



*The Dogg running Eyes  
on Deckers Creek (WV).*

**Photo by Matt Sloan**

**R**AINS DURING THE spring were some of the best in recent history on the East Coast, providing ample opportunity for a SIKman such as myself to go out and fire up the stouts. Running the biggest and baddest drops is something I am known for, but my testosterone driven bro-journalism is what has made me famous. I appreciate all my faithful readers so, of course, I am going to risk my own good health because I know how much you have been patiently awaiting my next literary masterpiece.

In late February, the snowpack started to melt and rain storms popped up each week. I began my season with such classics as the North Fork of the Blackwater, Upper Seneca, and Deckers Creek but knew that there were bigger and better things in store. Many years ago, Dinver McClure tipped me off to Moore Run, which he claimed was one of the more extreme runnable creeks in West Virginia. Being a likely first descent, I kept the creek cloak and dagger until a hike in the fall of 2006 revealed the boulder-

strewn creek of my dreams. I paddled the creek twice in the next year. On each trip I ran out of light and had to hike out in the dark. The second trip resulted in my friend Steve getting separated from me, breaking his nose, losing his boat, and spending a night in the woods. So, after two less than stellar attempts on the creek, I began to set my sights on successfully completing this run. Many would consider it a mistake to keep going back to such a foreboding area that had defeated me twice before. Well, there are no mistakes when heading out on a kayaking mission, only adventures! In early March, the predicted forecast for Saturday was a major rain event so I knew the time was right to hit the creek. After all, you gotta make hay while the sun is shining! Huh? What does that even mean anyway?!?!

Early the next morning, the gauges were rising in a Fibonacci sequence. My crew of intrepid creekers, including Steve Graybill, Seth Chapelle, and Matt Sloan, were amped up about this adventure. After all, if a

kayaker gets SIK on a creek and there is no one there to get stoked off it, did that kayaker really get SIK? Geoff Calhoun was also interested but couldn't decide if he felt the creek would be running. I told him that we were committed to the creek and that he was welcome to join us but he had to make the decision—no nay-saying allowed. After all, a house divided against itself can not stand! Huh? Who says stuff like that?

We checked the level on Otter Creek at the take-out, which was at a low level. Figuring that it had to be on the rise, we decided to go for it. I couldn't remember all the logistics of the roads to the creek since I hadn't been there in a few years. Luckily, I remembered to grab my West Virginia map that I keep in my file cabinet next to the tupperware container with my late grandma's ashes in it, and we made our way to the put-in. Unfortunately, I had left my CD's at home so we had to search for some music to pump us up for the run. Radio stations are scarce in this area but I was able to find a clear station where

some smooth talking casanova was singing, "Hot tramp, I love you so!" But I digress. We finally arrived at the put-in and a new obstacle began to present itself: snow. With a few inches of snow already on the ground and the snow coming down hard, those paddlers of lesser drive and spirit would have tucked tail and run like scalded dogs. However, nothing is ventured nothing is gained. No one ever discovered new oceans without first leaving the sight of shore! What in the world am I saying!?!? So, we bundled up in our warmest gear and began the 1.5-mile walk to the put-in. I was supremely confident in the success of this mission because I had eaten cinnamon raisin biscuits brought to you by Carl's Jr. for breakfast and no evil was going to be able to penetrate the force-field of sugary goodness that I had built up. My wife Melissa dropped us off and we told her to wait until 7 or 8 that night before she was to start worrying and think about calling Search and Rescue.

We completed the hike and were excited to see that the creek was running a nice, lowish flow. Well, not being one to look a gift horse in the mouth, I locked on my sprayskirt and headed downstream. What? Has anyone ever actually seen a gift horse and what is in his mouth that you don't want to look at?!? After a short warm-up, the creek dropped out of sight to signal the first major rapid, Piss Test. You better run it clean or you're in big trouble! This rapid features a series of ledges with some gnarly sieves to avoid on the left. I entered the first sloping drop, angling right to slip into the right channel. However, I got denied by the small boulder that separates the left and right channel. I spun around backwards and fell down the five-foot drop in the left slot. Luckily, my high volume stern stayed near the surface and I came out just fine. The flow on the left drops into a narrow crack/sieve that is too small for a boat to fit through. Since I



was facing upstream, I was able to paddle hard to get away from the crack of evil and finish out the rapid on the right, going off a four-foot boof.

The next drop goes over a steep series of drops into a six-foot boof on the right. The flow heads left and slams into a wall, making the right hand boof all the more crucial. We all had nice runs through here and headed downstream through a steep junky drop. This rapid feeds into another steep series of junky drops complicated by undercut and logs. I ran first, launching a five-foot boof and avoiding the tree on the right. My paddle snagged the tree on the right and caused me to nearly flip—it was time for fast reflexes! Running the next series of rocky drops upside down would knock the rust off your tin roof! Don't worry, reader, your kayaking champion wasn't going to

*The Dogg on the Upper Blackwater (WV): a different day, another story.*

**Photo by Bryon Dorr**

let a small paddle snag ruin his day. I righted my kayak and proceeded to check the next several drops into the Smackdown Hotel! Geoff followed and vertically pinned in the junky drops momentarily before sliding through.

Soon, we arrived at one of the most challenging series of drops in all of West Virginia. We call it Duracell, and it features complex zigzag moves as the creek drops about 50 feet over a pile of boulders. I flew through the rocky approach and off a 10-foot drop onto a pile of boulders. I bounced through here and caught the last eddy before the crux of the rapid. I cut to the right bank in front of a sievy drop and cascaded several feet down, cutting back to the left. Once I reached the left bank, I boofed off a rock and headed back across the creek to the right shore where I went through a slot and off The Dream, a 12-foot boof ramp! I launched a big West Virginia boy

boof off this drop, landing with a huge POW that caused an avalanche of snow that nearly took out my entire crew on the bank! Luckily, they had their avalanche beacons with them and I was able to dig them out with my paddle. Oh Yeah! My line through Duracell was so beautiful it even made Chuck Norris cry.

Heading downstream, we all had nice runs through The Rooftop, a steep boulder drop with some sharp turns and were making good progress. The boulder drops kept coming in a seemingly endless fashion, accompanied by many SIK boofs. This creek throws everything at you but the kitchen sink! What? What does that even mean? Soon, we had to portage a drop where the entire creek flows under a boulder sieve. Attempting to run this rapid is about as good of an idea as going to the bathroom



*Bobby Miller, Seth Chapelle, Steve Graybill, Geoff Calhoun, and Matt Sloan at the put-in before the hike on Moore Run (WV).*  
**Photo by Melissa Masters**

in a steaming porta-john. We rounded a bend and I boofed off a five-foot ledge only to land on a log. I eddied out and tried to direct the others where to go. Steve was too far left and pinned under the log. I got out to try to help him and Geoff came down on top of him and pinned. Soon Matt also dropped in and we had 3 boaters pinned against/under this log. Luckily, all three boaters were safe with their heads above the water and we got the boats out one at a time.

We felt a building sense of excitement that we were actually going to complete the run as we neared the end of the creek. Soon, Otter Creek loomed in the distance and we knew that we had completed most of our goal. However, we still had close to 7 miles of Otter Creek and several Class 5 rapids to run. With just over an hour of light left, we bombed through the Class 5 section of Otter, launching several schweeit boofs and booked through the Class 3-4 Lower Otter run. The snow had fallen all day long and by this point over 6 inches had accumulated. This created a beautiful scene that added to the surreal



feeling of this incredible day. As the last bits of light started to fade, we spied the take-out just ahead. A true sense of accomplishment came over the group and the celebration began. We had gone into a remote area of West Virginia in winter conditions, ran some of the most difficult rapids in the state, and worked together to make sure that we accomplished our goal as a team of friends. It was one of the greatest days I have ever spent in a kayak and the magnitude of this accomplishment is unmatched by any stream I have ever run. It truly was the best day EVERRRRRRRRR!!!

It was wonderful to see Melissa and our dog, Mogi, there at the take-out, ecstatic to see us. To celebrate this momentous occasion, we headed to Hellbender Burrito, where we all rocked huge burritos. As soon as I got into Wi-Fi range, I Tweeted all my fans and posted an account of my day on several message boards. After all, what good is the Internet if you can't let all the millions of readers out there in cyberspace know that your day was better than theirs! Of course, I got anonymously slandered by several cowardly trolls on some of the message boards. No one insults my intellectual property so I did what any courageous man desiring to confront his critics would do, I got my computer geek friend to access their IP addresses. Upon

*The Dogg running Hinckston Falls (PA).*  
**Photo by Logan Masters**

figuring out their location, I toilet papered each and every one of their houses when they weren't home. That'll teach them to mess with the Dogg! But I digress.

The rains continued, bringing flash floods later that week. I went to Cunningham Falls, the biggest cascade in Maryland. I had been visiting this falls since I was a kid and had wanted to put the smackdown on this falls for a while. The time was right to get SIK. After all, a sleeping fox catches no poultry! Huh? What does that mean?! I had all the prerequisites for dropping the falls: water in the creek (check!), Coach Smith to set safety (check!), Melissa to shoot photos (check!), Jason O'Neil to shoot video (check!), and my helmet cam for capturing first person video (check!). The total drop from the top is 78 feet but there is a tree across the slide about 1/3 of the way down so I had to put in below it (getting around 55 feet of drop). Nailing your line is very important and the penalty for a mistake can be high. Sure it is a risky venture, but the secret of reaping the greatest fruitfulness and enjoyment from life is to live dangerously!

I climbed into my boat and prepared to slide in. The sight of the creek cascading out of sight in front of me was pretty intimidating but I am an experienced championship creek boater and I have been in this kind of situation countless times. With the smoothness that I ace tough and scary drops, people know that I've been

# HUMOR



*The Dogg on the bottom drop of Cunningham Falls on Hunting Creek (MD).  
Photo by Melissa Masters*

there before. Oh yeah! I rock. And roll. All day long. Sweet Suzy. I've been acing stout drops since before Bob Dylan knew how to blow more than an open G on his Hohner! I dropped in and accelerated toward the first steep part, banking off a pillow on the bank. Here the creek falls steeply down a two-tiered 15- to 20-foot drop into a miniature pool (about five feet long) before dropping again. I decided to drive left and come off the drop with a hard left angle to pause briefly in the pool. I ended up driving too far left and landing sideways in where the sides of the mini-pool had pinched together. The sides of my bow landed wedged between two rocks so I came to an abrupt halt. Luckily, I keep lightning fast reflexes tucked away inside me in case I need them, like a monkey in a piñata hiding amongst the candy. I was saved from the certain disaster with some well-timed strokes. I lined up and finished the remaining part of the cascade, dropping cleanly into the pool at the bottom. It wasn't the most graceful run but I made it with no real issues so I was pretty stoked. It meant a lot to me to finally run this drop. To commemorate this occasion, I downed five cans of Monster energy drink and headed to the personal art studio to get a tribal design tattooed on my face. But I digress.

*The Dogg running Hinckston Falls (PA).  
Photo by Melissa Masters*

Since I had conquered the state of Maryland and its biggest drop, we headed back to West Virginia to the Seneca Rocks area. On the agenda this day was Jordan Run, which has a particularly stout waterfall halfway through the run. Like a Milk Dud, it is sweet on the outside but poison in the center! Just before putting on, I munched on a 100 Grand Bar and, let me tell you reader, when I tasted all that chocolate and caramel goodness, I felt like 100 Grand! Soon, we were out scouting the crux drop of the run, Jordan Run Falls. Here, the creek necks

down in a steep walled gorge and goes over a 25- to 30-foot spout falls into a deep, boiling pool. The water on the right folds over onto the main flow on the left. The left side of the flow also hits a boulder as it enters the pool. Tagging this rock would really knock the gizzard off your turkey! Scouting was intense as we climbed up a slippery slope of solid rock, mud and small trees. The falls is unportageable without expert climbing skills and equipment, so our options were to run it or walk back to the put-in. I decided that I was going to run the drop and then the guys could make their decision based on the results of my run. My only concern was how anyone could assist me if something went wrong. Matt Sloan climbed down to the lip of the falls and he told me he would jump off into the presumably deep pool and help me if needed. I'll admit that this was far from the safest situation but it was good enough for me so I walked back to my boat to fire up the drop.

I know what you are feeling right now, reader. You are feeling butterflies in the pit of your stomach. You want to put the







*Bobby Miller below Jordan Run Falls (WV)*  
Photo by Shawn Yingling

story down, you are afraid for your hero. Well, you need to harden up, milquetoast! The ignominy of quitting now will haunt you forever. I implore you, good reader, have faith. You must be brave and continue on! After all, I couldn't in good conscience write a story where I ran like some namby-pamby ham n'egger back to the sanctuary of the put-in! Imagine the ridicule that a superstar of my profile would receive for a maneuver such as that! Just to be safe, I threw on my full-face helmet in case my face were to come closer than expected to the rocks in the landing. After all, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! What! Who says stuff like that! I flew down the wave train in the approach and took a big lefty boof stroke. I got swallowed by the water coming off the right and melted into the pool at the bottom. I was sucked off the surface the way a kid sucks down a Slurpee on a hot day! After a quick roll, I celebrated with my usual fist pumps and screaming. The success of my run was good enough for Seth and Matt to want to fire up the drop. They both came down and melted into the fold like I did. Matt flipped and got pushed into the left wall as he rolled. He had to work a little to fight his way out of that pocket of doom. Seth resurfaced upright

but his hand slipped off his T grip and he flipped. His T grip hit him in the mouth, which caused some bleeding and knocked a few teeth out of position. On a brighter note, he now possesses the ability to eat corn on the cob through a chain link fence!

The next day, we met up with Matt and Bob Norr and headed to Johnstown, PA to huck 60 foot Hinckston Falls. A series of roads more confusing than the lyrics to Blinded By The Light carried us to our destination. The falls was running at a low but adequate flow. I had promised myself after my last spectacular wipeout off a low volume falls that I would never run anything big at low water again. However, is a promise made in haste still a promise? Hmmm? The drop did look sweet so we all decided we were going to fire it up. Melissa and her daughter Logan set up the cameras and Bob got in his boat at the bottom for safety. Bailey (my step-son), Matt and I went up top to check things out. After a quick scout, I prepared for battle. As YOUR paddling hero, I only use the best equipment, donning my high tech time trial full face helmet to cut down on wind resistance and locking my shoes into my Shamano clipless bulkhead for extra control. I paddled down the riffly approach and lined up. With a wall on the left and some junky shelves on the right, it was very important to stay in the main flow to the free fall. The falls cascades steeply down 30 feet before freefalling another 30 feet into the pool at the bottom. I aced the cascade and tucked once I started freefalling. I entered the water at a nice angle and resurfaced tipping over. After a quick roll, I celebrated like normal but quickly noticed that something was wrong. The impact had bruised my shoulder and it was pretty tender. The impact had also knocked my Go Pro off my helmet and had raked it over my face, causing a scrape on the bridge of my nose followed by subsequent bleeding. I shook my fist at Hinckston Falls and vowed revenge because nobody makes me bleed my own blood! NOBODY! I went back up to the top to discuss my findings with Matt. He decided that he didn't want to risk the

impact. The flow was enough to run the drop but didn't provide a ton of aeration to soften the landing. The resulting impact was pretty stout. More water will be better for next time but I'm glad I fired it up. After all, the drop was a lot of fun! My shaman healer was taking the weekend off to spend time with his spirit guide so I had to rely on good old ibuprofen to help with the shoulder pain. But I digress.

I saw a doctor two weeks later and she informed me that my scapula (shoulder blade) was broken and that I had to take two months off to let it heal. However, there's no use crying over spilled milk! Time heals all wounds! Tough times never last but tough people do! My shoulder has since healed and I've already fired up 80-foot Sahalie Falls in Oregon along with several other SIKies since then. But that is another story...



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# RIVERS OF NEPAL

## NEPAL'S WILD WEST: FIND BEAUTY AND ADVENTURE ON THE KARNALI RIVER

TEXT & PHOTOS BY STEPHEN CUNLIFFE

**S**EASONAL SNOWMELT DRAINING off Mount Kailash in neighboring Tibet gives rise to the Karnali: Nepal's longest and largest river. During its tumultuous descent through the Churia Hills, the river cuts a jagged swathe through stunning Himalayan landscapes. Steadily gaining in volume and intensity as it snakes its way southwards, the Karnali boasts some potent rapids interspersed with stretches of mellow water that permit boaters to relax and soak up the classic mountain scenery. The Karnali is high volume and pool-drop in character, with some big, but relatively straightforward rapids, making it an ideal river for novice rafters and intermediate kayakers alike. It's an entertaining river journey with plenty of continuous Class III and IV whitewater action during the middle stages, followed

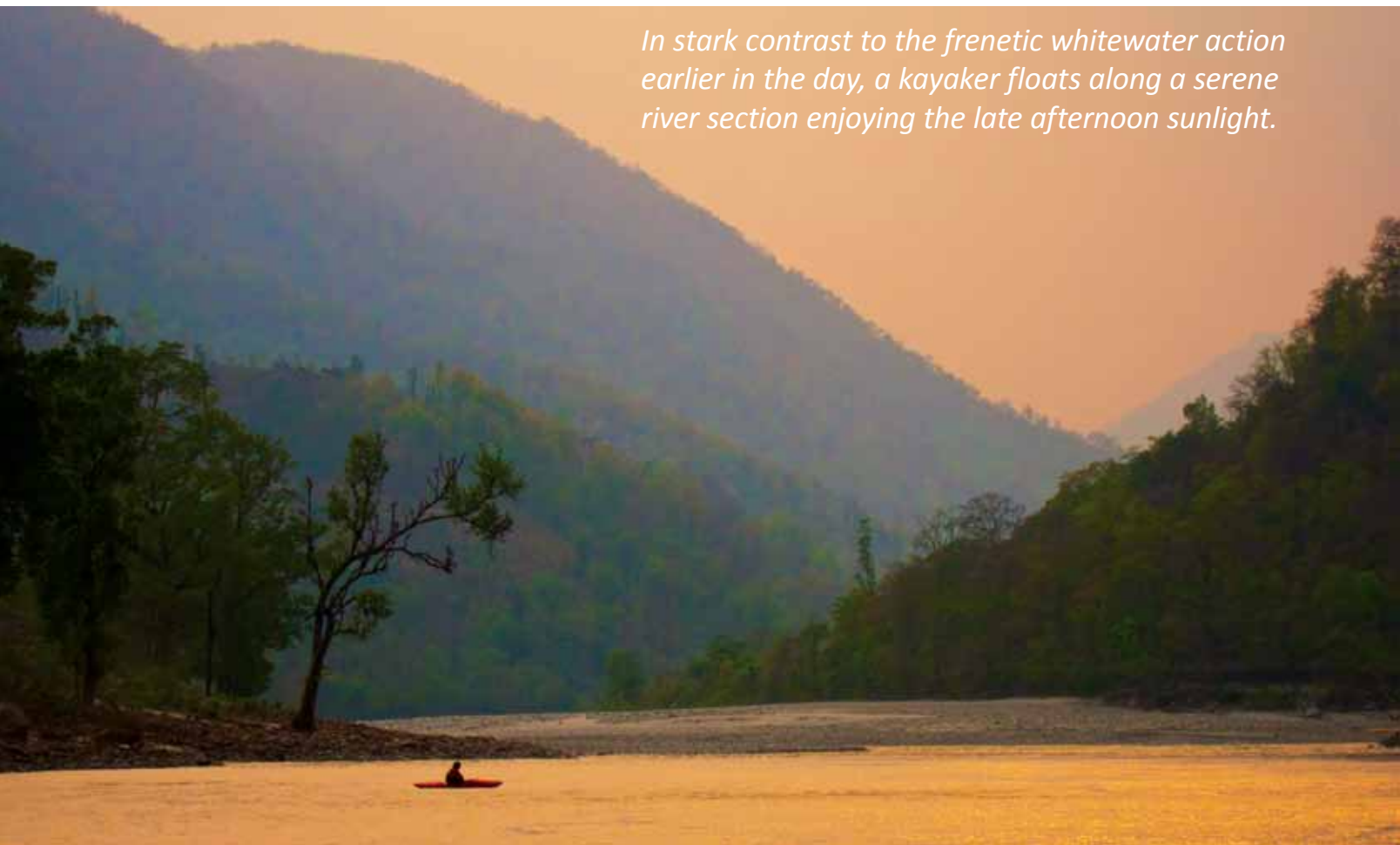
by a tranquil float into wildlife-rich Royal Bardia National Park on the Gangetic plains of the steamy-hot Terai lowlands.

The hot, dusty overland journey to reach the river requires stamina, but the rewards are sweet: a chance to sample one of the finest multi-day river adventures available in all of Asia. After enduring a long two-day bus trip, the rocky beach put-in below Sayuli Bazaar was greeted with weary smiles and deep sighs of relief from the team. Soothed to sleep by the reassuring noises of the rushing river and rejuvenated by a decent night's rest, we awoke sprightly and raring to go. A fairly relaxed first day on the water eased everyone into the adventure with some splashy rapids that merely hinted at the excitement and challenges that lay ahead. The forgiving nature of the river and its mellow start were a good thing, as a couple of the kayakers hadn't climbed into a boat for quite some time. Francis, a rambunctious Irishman on the trip, mused, "It must be 17 years since I last paddled a river." He was in for a rude awakening.

We didn't have to wait long. Next morning the river entered a picturesque jungle corridor, carving a series of imposing gorges through the breathtaking scenery and, in the process, producing long uninterrupted stretches of broken water. Little did we realize at this early stage, but this punchy whitewater would dominate the next three exhilarating days!

On day two, as we paddled towards Jungle Ghat, a labyrinth of whitewater obstacles and challenges confronted the expedition team. After making a thrilling run through Sweetness and Light and overcoming the notorious Jailhouse rapid, we embarked on what is, without doubt, the most sustained section of river action on the Karnali. The maelstrom began at the infamous God's House rapid and continued through a series of canyons with 15 more rapids crammed into an unrelenting 7-kilometer stretch of high-octane, near-continuous Class III+ whitewater: an entertaining and demanding expanse of raging river. During this exhilarating ride, we threaded some

*In stark contrast to the frenetic whitewater action earlier in the day, a kayaker floats along a serene river section enjoying the late afternoon sunlight.*





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# RIVERS OF NEPAL

## LOGISTICS BOX: KARNALI TRIP PLANNER

**When to go:** The best months to tackle the Karnali are March-May (low water) and October-November (high water season).

**Flights and Visas:** Most major airlines connect US cities to Kathmandu via New Delhi or European hubs. US passport holders require a visa, although this can be obtained at the airport upon arrival. Visitors have a choice between 14-, 30- and 90-day tourist visa options. Payment must be made in US dollars cash and two passport photos are required.

**Getting there:** Upon arrival at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport, you can connect with one of the Nepali operators for the two-day bus ride to the river.

**Recommended operators:** Three Nepali companies advertise Karnali expeditions: Equator Expeditions ([www.equatorexpeditionsnepal.com](http://www.equatorexpeditionsnepal.com)), Paddle Nepal ([www.paddlenepal.com](http://www.paddlenepal.com)) and Ultimate Descents Nepal ([www.udnepal.com](http://www.udnepal.com)).

sweet lines through quality rapids, such as Juicer and the aptly named Flip and Strip.

Pulling into the swirling, surging eddy just above Flip and Strip, we were greeted by a thunderous roar and pulsating plumes of spray up ahead. It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that some serious action lurked a stone's throw downstream. The usual laughter and banter between expedition members vanished. A nervous silence descended as the raft crew and rusty kayakers retreated into their thoughts and mentally prepared for the whitewater trials that lay around the corner. After a thorough scout of the rapid, our experienced river guide, Arun Gurung, returned and, with

*Picture-perfect riverside campsites are a highlight of any Karnali descent.*

his usual economy of words, announced, "Tighten your lifejackets, listen very carefully to my instructions and paddle hard!" The kayakers grabbed the initiative and set off, while the rafters clipped on helmets and checked PFDs. As we pulled on our paddles and propelled the raft towards the rumbling beast, I looked up to see how the kayakers were faring. Not far downstream, I spotted the unmistakable yellow kayak of Francis being worked in a particularly nasty hydraulic.

Arun barked paddle commands and we responded. Under the expert guidance of our imperturbable captain, the raft threaded a near-perfect line through the angry whitewater mayhem of the rapid. Adrenalin surged through our veins as we dodged rocks, skirted a ghastly-looking hole—henceforth to be known as FUBAR Francis's hole—and dominated a thrilling roller-coaster ride over a massive wave train. The nervous tension evaporated, replaced with yelps of enthusiastic delight as big waves crashed over the bucking boat. It was an electrifying joyride under bright blue skies and blazing sunshine.

At the bottom of the gauntlet we discovered a wide-eyed Francis spluttering and gasping



*Local children paddle in a dugout canoe to inspect the unusual-looking colorful boats floating past their remote village.*

**Photo by Steve Brooks**

for breath. We hauled the doughty Irishman onto our raft, only to be greeted by the humorous sight of his bare bottom: the rapid had not only flipped him, but stripped him of his swim shorts too!

After the team bonding experience of sharing a wild day on the river, Arun cracked a rare smile and briefly opened up to share some of his opinions about the Karnali. With 46 successful Karnali descents since 1996 to his name, his knowledge and experience is beyond question. "This is my favorite Nepali river," he began. "Western Nepal remains wild and unspoiled with only a handful of paddlers running the Karnali each year. There is no doubting







*Local knowledge is invaluable to intermediate kayakers wanting to tackle the Karnali's Class IV river action. American kayaker Bob McPherson follows his Nepali kayak guide through a sweeping bend of frothy whitewater.*

that this river has some really excellent rapids, although I prefer to run it during November when the water level is higher. The weather's really nice then too, plus the scenery is also greener and more vibrant after the monsoon."

Heavy monsoon rains cause the Karnali to swell dramatically during late September and October, transforming the river into a raging torrent and making it a seriously challenging undertaking. Late in the season—during April and May—lower water levels produce a more technical run down a constricted, bolder-strewn river. The bottom line is that the Karnali can entertain rafters and kayakers of the appropriate skill level during any season.

Sadly, though, like so many rivers in power-hungry Asia, dark clouds are gathering on the horizon for the Karnali. Arun reported: "Eighteen months ago they began work on the first of two dams to span the Karnali. The first dam site is above Sayuli Bazaar, so, although it will alter the river's flow patterns, the lower gorges and most of the rapids will remain. However, the second proposed dam will flood all of that and rob the river of pretty much all its whitewater." Still, the good news is that nothing happens quickly in Nepal. With at least ten years until the first dam comes on line and even longer for the second, the Karnali's whitewater should survive at least another decade or so.

After three days of regular rapids and non-stop whitewater action, our flotilla of rafts and kayaks exited the final gorge of the western bend. The hills retreated, the river broadened dramatically and the rapids abated as the gradient mellowed. We paddled past pristine white-sand beaches that became bigger and increasingly more beautiful as we approached the lowlands. These idyllic sweeping stretches of sand made for awesome riverside campsites, while the warm weather and dazzling star-studded skies convinced most of us to forgo tents in favor of sleeping around the campfire. As we lay on the sand, spotting shooting stars, we relived the exploits and frenetic river action of the preceding days. Eventually, one-by-one we drifted off and enjoyed a refreshing night's rest in the fresh air of the great outdoors.

After the trials and tribulations of the preceding action-packed days, our crew welcomed the tranquil two-day float past the confluence with the Seti and Bheri rivers en route to the take-out at Chisopani, on the outskirts of Bardia National Park. We spent lazy days drifting slowly downstream, spotting exotic birds and playful monkeys, while cooling off with long swims alongside the boats. Endangered Gangetic dolphins still swim in these waters and we kept a

*A local craftsman cunningly uses a waterwheel-powered lathe to ply his trade and carve wood on the banks of the Karnali River.*

beady eye out trying to catch a glimpse of these rare creatures. For the more energetic and adventurous rafters, there was also an opportunity to test drive a kayak under the watchful eye of the safety boaters.

Remote western Nepal receives only a smattering of adventurous visitors each year and there is no better way to sample the "best of the west" than on a self-contained multi-day river expedition. The quintessential Karnali itinerary includes a couple of days of overland travel to reach the put-in at Sayuli, followed by a week paddling the Western Bend, a superb 180-kilometer stretch of wilderness boating.

Of course, while you're in the area, it would be great to spend a couple of extra nights exploring Bardia National Park after your trip down the Karnali. What better way to sign off on your wild west adventure than by spotting tigers and rhinos from elephant-back? It's the perfect grand finale to an epic river adventure.



# MENTAL GAME

## CAN YOU TEACH THE MENTAL ASPECTS OF WHITEWATER KAYAKING?

BY STEVE DOUGHERTY

**B**ETWEEN WHAT HAPPENS to you, or the stimulus, and your response to it, is your freedom or power to choose that response. (Stephen Covey)

According to paddling legend Mary DeRiemer, 90% of whitewater kayaking is mental (*Editor's Note: she actually says this in her article in the Nov/Dec 2011 Journal!*). Kayaking instruction too often focuses on physical skills (e.g., strokes, bracing, rolling, safety, and reading water) and gives little attention to the mental aspects of the sport. If Mary DeRiemer is even close in her estimation of the importance of the mental aspects of kayaking, then instructors are typically neglecting a huge instructional opportunity.

### Obstacles to Successfully Learning Whitewater Kayaking

In 2002, several instructors for Colorado Whitewater (CW, an American Whitewater affiliate club) recognized that a lot of students were stuck at the flat water and Class II moving water level and wanted to progress to Class III water, but lacked the confidence and know-how to get there. Many of these “stuck boaters” could successfully perform skills in the pool, but were unable to consistently perform the same skills on moving water. For many of the boaters, fear was a major contributing factor to their being stuck. Too often, their fear emanated from a bad experience on rivers—frequently the result of friends taking them on runs for which they were not ready. This situation initiated development of CW’s “Mental Toughness Class,” which provides instruction on both the mental and physical aspects of whitewater kayaking with the goal of helping students build confidence on moving water. This article provides instructors (and those who feel “stuck”) with an approach that balances the mental and physical aspects of

whitewater kayaking instruction, provides some resource materials, and shares successes and failures learned from 10 years of implementing CW’s program.

It can be helpful to view learning this sport through the eyes of a beginner. This perspective can provide insights into what students see and do not see and how students are mentally processing the sport. Beginners to whitewater kayaking are greeted by the following hurdles:

- The sport is not intuitive; for most beginners, little that they have done in other sports prepares them for whitewater kayaking.
- You cannot readily see what is going on below the spray skirt, but a significant component of kayaking skills happen from your hips down.
- Rolling, the skill you typically use the least, is critical for advancing on moving water. For most students, rolling is challenging to learn and even more challenging to execute when really needed.
- Not only do you need to learn and develop your boating skills and overcome the challenges listed above, you also must learn to integrate these skills with reading water.
- This is a sport you must do with others to be safe, but when beginning, it may be difficult to find others wanting to boat runs suitable for beginners.

All of these challenges complicate successfully progressing to boating on Class III water and building confidence. Ultimately it is a cycle of success that builds confidence, and confidence damps fears, which allows students to progress. The CW Mental Toughness Class was designed to overcome the physical and mental obstacles to becoming a confident and successful boater on moving water and

addresses the hurdles discussed above using the approaches shown in Table 1.

### Class Components

CW’s course is advertised as a class for boaters who have previously had instruction, but are having difficulty transferring skills they have learned on flat water to moving water. They must have some ability to roll. It is not an introductory kayaking class. The class is comprised of:

- Four 2-hour pool classes beginning in the winter, each scheduled about one month apart;
- Discussions at the beginning of each class addressing mental topics (e.g., how we learn, techniques to control fear, when are we comfortable/uncomfortable on the river, and what gives us confidence on the river);
- “Homework” assignments to be done at the pool weekly between classes; and
- Three or four moving water classes on Class II+ and building to Class III water.

### What We Have Learned

CW’s course has evolved over the 10 years it has been offered and the following lessons have been learned:

- The course is basically a desensitization process that is progressive and takes time. If students do not do the work or come in and out of the class, they will not be successful. Getting the group to gel from the beginning encourages participation and leads to greater success for the individuals involved.
- The class needs to be fun and occur in a safe environment (e.g., start in the shallow end of a warm pool). It is particularly important in the beginning for students to gain confidence in the class, instructors, and themselves.



**Table 1. Addressing Mental Issues and Obstacles to Learning.**

Issue	Mental Approach	Drills
<b>Fears</b>	Get the fear out in the open and discuss as a group. Instructors first share their fears and how they gained confidence. It is important to show how each fear can and will be addressed by the class. Discuss and acknowledge the fears, but do not make it a "fear fest." Mantras, ways to envision success, desensitization, and adopting a persona when you are on the water are all proven techniques for overcoming fears.	Duplicate the fears in a safe environment, like the pool (e.g., have the student flip over and attempt to roll while you pull the boat with a rope to simulate current or have the student roll and immediately knock them back over again).
<b>The sport is not intuitive</b>	Some basic concepts do transfer from other sports. Staying over one's boat is similar to being centered on skis, a snowboard, a skateboard, or a bicycle. Using a boat's edges is similar to the concept of edging a ski or snowboard. Tilting (edging) a boat to the inside of the turn when catching an eddy or performing a peel out is similar to leaning a bicycle into a turn.	Power circles (paddling with a boat continually on edge) and exploring different degrees of boat tilt (static and dynamic) help students feel what the boat is like on edge and that it can be stable on edge.
<b>What is going on below the spray skirt?</b>	Show the video of a cut-away kayak, and how the actions of your knees and hips are linked to your head and spine and your success in bracing and rolling ( <a href="http://www.performancevideo.com/the_kayak_roll">http://www.performancevideo.com/the_kayak_roll</a> ).	Employ the above edging/ tilting drills and have the student learn to relax the knee that is not engaged (e.g., if tilting the boat to the left, relax the left knee somewhat and engage the right knee to tilt the boat).
<b>Rolling</b>	Discuss how it is generally safer to be in one's boat than swimming. This is where a mantra can help short circuit the impulse to immediately panic or pull the spray skirt. Whitewater kayaking is an underwater sport; new paddlers must get used to being upside down when they least expect it. Beginners should be rolling every time they paddle to push themselves.	Perform disorienting rolling drills in the pool that force the student to slow down and focus on performing the roll in a different or awkward situation. Then take the drills to a large safe eddy on the river and roll in the current or on the eddy line.
<b>Reading water</b>	Explain what creates water features and how the various features can affect your boating and be used to your advantage. Scout rapids on the river and discuss. Is the rapid full of obstacles to avoid or features you can use to help you make your line through the rapid? Break running the rapid into doable steps with a Plan A as well as a Plan B.	Perform numerous eddy turns, peel outs, and ferries on moving water in safe conditions.
<b>Boating with a group</b>	From the beginning of the class explain the importance of the group gelling and working together throughout the entire class. In the past, many of these groups have stayed together beyond the duration of the class.	Assign one of the students to be the coordinator who schedules class pool sessions for homework. Make sure students support one another in the pool and on the river.

# MENTAL GAME

- It is important to regularly point out progress to the group and individuals. This can be done by videotaping the first time you meet and comparing the first videos with later ones.
- It is important to continually work on mental issues and check in with the group and individuals to make sure their concerns are being addressed. It may require personalizing some instruction (e.g., a mantra or how to replace a particular negative thought with what needs to be done). It is very easy, though unproductive, for the instructor to fall back into the more comfortable area of physical skills instruction.
- There are some students who, for whatever reason, will not make much progress (e.g., poor attendance, not

there as a result of their own initiative, or mental or physical constraints that are challenging to overcome).

CW's course has had mixed success. Some course graduates have become excellent boaters and certified instructors who have gone on to teach the course themselves, and others were unable to confidently progress to boating on Class III water. CW has consistently received positive feedback from the students, and most students have experienced substantial positive progress with their boating.

## Resources

The following resources have proven very useful for CW's Mental Toughness Class.

- <http://www.performancevideo.com/book/print/122> (A great article by Mary DeRiemer on Mental Kayaking)

- [http://www.performancevideo.com/the\\_kayak\\_roll](http://www.performancevideo.com/the_kayak_roll) (A good video for working on the roll by Kent Ford and Mary and Phil DeRiemer; great cut-away view of a kayak allows students to see what is going on below the spray skirt and roll troubleshooting tips)
- <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Journal/show-page/issue/2/page/4/year/2008/> (Mind Over Water by Doug Ammons discusses the basis of our fears, realistic versus unrealistic fears, and how to overcome our fears)
- <http://www.watergirlsatplay.com/category/kayaking-tips/> (Anna Levesque has numerous articles on tips and drills as well as the mental aspect on kayaking)

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## THE SOURCE OF LIGHT

BY EMILY NICOLE ZEBEL

**T**HE LIGHT IS leaving. In three days' time, daylight savings will end.

I am standing at the put-in for our local whitewater gem, suited up and anxious. I haven't paddled in quite some time; I notice how new neoprene feels against my skin, which fits better now that my 42-week belly bulge has calved into a wiggling three-month-old baby girl who lies a few feet away. I also take note to the west, where the sun is tucking itself into the horizon's blue-black envelope. I look at my watch. Where are they? The passengers in passing cars regard me with a curiosity reserved for wild animals or wild-thatched hitchhikers. In our competing glares, I hear it loud, the resounding question, the gasping, gaping *why*. The temperature is dipping; the moon is rising.

The *why* is louder now that the baby is here. I had never questioned my passions—the running, the paddling, the cycling before her. They used to be part of me. I did them like knee-jerk reactions; it was nothing at all to crawl out of a pre-dawn bed for a cold morning run or shimmy into fuzzy rubbers for a 30-degree paddle or drive through the tiny blue hours of the night to be at the put-in by dawn. But now it isn't so easy. In my naivety, I did not expect a lull. I expected to do all of these things still, without hesitation, just with a pint-sized person in tow. Friends and family offered caution that the change would be drastic, but in my denial I decided not to rely on secondary sources. Also, I am stubborn. Really, is it that big of a deal to toss in a few diapers and changes of clothes? Is it really that big of a deal to keep track of those socks, all those tiny, tiny socks?

In a word: yes. How is the day going to interrupt her naptime? How long is the drive? How will we coordinate her feedings around said activity? What weather will we have to insulate her against? Who, what, when, where, how and, of course, why—



*Willow contemplating her first descent in a kayak.*

**Photo by Emily Zebel**

who knew these basics of information gathering for such a small companion would become the dominant and defining checklist to make or break a plan? A plan that could, with a sneeze or gurgle, still be curtailed before we even set foot out the door.

Stacey and Mike tumble out of his truck at a quarter past six o'clock, a half hour past the drop-dead put-on time that gets us to the rapids with any smattering of light. Traffic. Fair enough. They aren't even suited up. The passing cars have lost their passengers to headlights and taillights—they're occupied by phantom drivers now. My husband bounces little Willow in his arms, eyes up the pair of fast, long boats Stacey and Mike are unloading and then glances down at the river running kayak I'm paddling. "You might want to get a head start," he urges.

Put on? Alone? After a year of placing paddling on the shelf? This would normally be the place where I hesitate, refrain from impulse. This is the near-dark space where I ask myself *okay, what's this worth?* And even though it's not a difficult stretch of creek by many standards, I am tugging against the ingrained safety of groups that my well-seasoned Class V paddler-father

instilled in me. Don't paddle alone. No matter what. That's the rule. But there's my baby. There's my generous, patient husband. There's the last of the sun this late in the evening. There's this new life, this new house of windows that face in new directions. New light. They're willing to run shuttle for me. This is *my* window. In the blur that the days have become—in their stillness, the quiet of breastfeeding, of diapers, of laundry, of the motionless morning hours and the weight of having someone so small and so helpless and so beautifully new rest and rely on you, I decide to make a concession. I hoist the boat onto my shoulder, trot to the riverbank. I peer back to see Mike and Stacey just now wiggling into their gear like vertical trout, silvered by dusk. I snap the spray skirt over the cockpit and dip my blade into the darkening water.

I am David James Duncan's Gus, hoofing it to the source of the Tamawanis, not to ask God to show her face but instead seeking a purpose. What compelling reason is there to put on in the half light to paddle a four-mile footnote of creek? I'm not going to be doing any first descents. I'm not training for any race, looking to hone my skills to any external measure. The baby could be wailing now—she could be crying for me,

# MENTAL GAME



Father and mother getting some seat time, a few weeks before delivery day.

Photo by Stacey Urich Gricks

for milk. My husband, I know, is weary from a day of work, and here I am, making him run our shuttle, cradle and calm the baby by a riverbank in the onrushing night so that I can get this thrill, jump through this window, embark on this brief, trivial, self-indulgent endeavor.

The river knows the *why*. I let my mind quiet. I listen.

I paddle quickly, swiftly, not with my arms but with my whole body. I pretend I am a centaur with this boat-body. Only when I reach a new bend do I glance back over my shoulder, expecting to see the long snouts of Mike and Stacey's wildwater boats. Nothing yet. I am the lone human on this pulsing water. On river left, where the bank hatches to gain steepness and height, I hear the crackling of leaves under hoof and turn to see a lone whitetail buck tight-roping his secret animal trail. The water unravels me like a sweater, threads me into its white foam, the white foam that is all I can see of the linear world. The stars swing open their shutters, call out their light. They

are small and bright. I think of my baby, small and bright. And then I think—how silly a question we adults ask, this constant question of *why*. My baby doesn't ask it. She doesn't know how to. Each day to her is too brilliant to be bothered with such a marginal, distracting adverb. The *why* is not the point. It is not the purpose of something. It is only used to talk about the purpose of something, and that carries no weight when you cannot yet speak.

I eddy out when I hear the rumbling of the first rapid worthy enough to bear a name. I wait. The trees are all a chatter with their new, brittle leaves, like school girls giddy with new wardrobes. The bend downstream makes a hook, an inverted question mark. Can landscapes ask questions? It's possible. Can landscapes offer answers? Maybe. Can a thing contain both; can the question contain the answer? Could the impulse itself be the purpose, and nothing more?

I see a figure emerge suddenly upstream—one first, then two, like a pair of birds

flushed from the brush. Mike and Stacey, moving swiftly. "Whoop!" We exchange hoots to measure the space between us. I peel out of the eddy, follow down the stern of Mike's boat to gauge the entry for the green tongue of the rapid. I feel a rush, feel the vibrancy of memory coming back, reminding me *yes, this is why you do this, this is your source.*

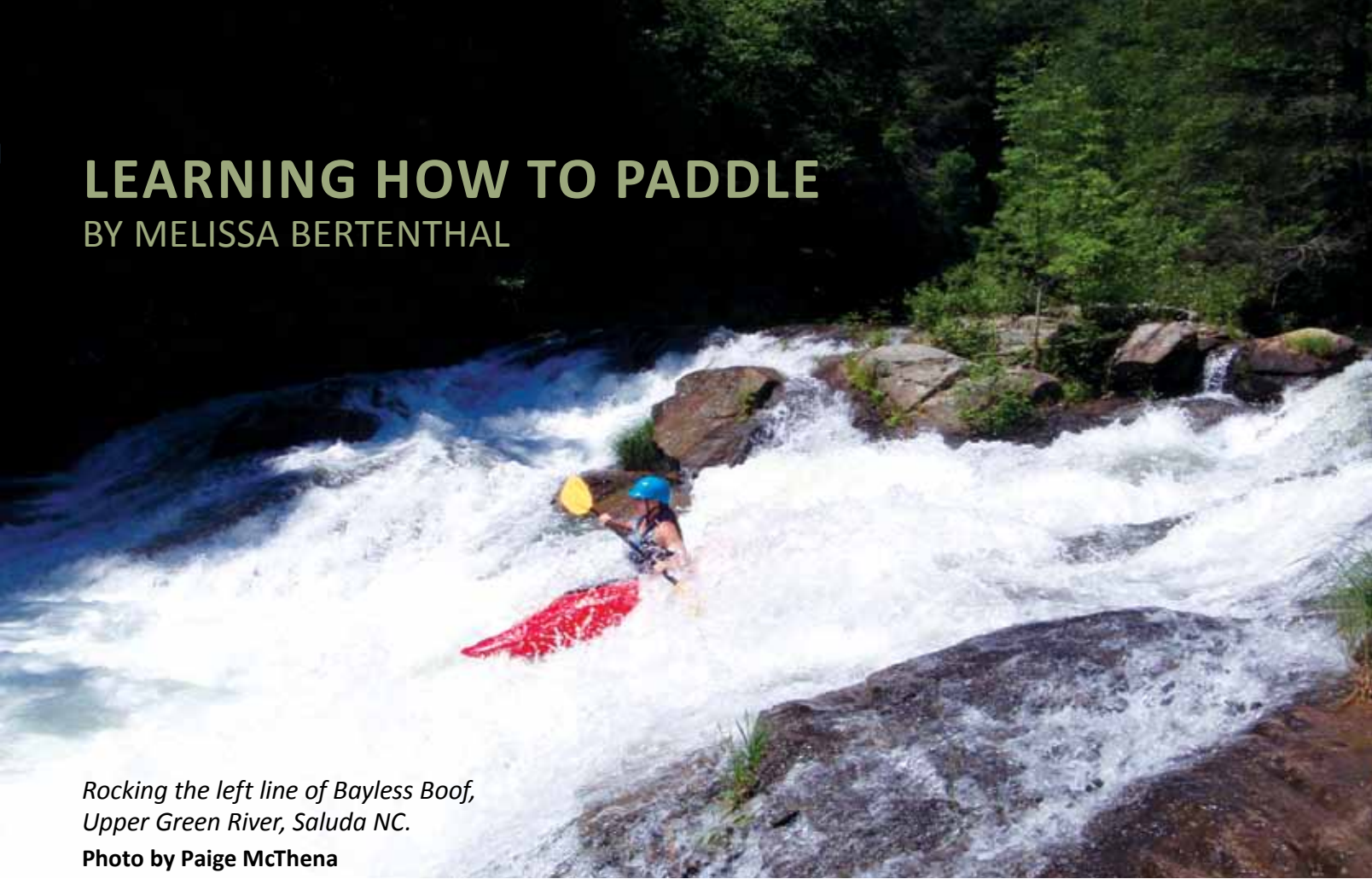
My mother tells me that life will resume to its former place, its familiar pace, eventually, once Willow has grown, gone through the gauntlet of growing up, just as the evening light will return come spring. Things do have a tendency to circle back. In the steady, downward rhythm of water, I trust in a truth that the rivers know—that we will get there someday, to whatever destination or answer we're after, aware or unaware of, deployed not by the terminus of the sea but by the impulse of the source to move out past what can be known and named. There, I imagine, the *why* is blown open—there, I imagine, we become small again, with no such language to stand between us and our experience of the world. No questioning. No more of this constant work that we do to keep our lives current, keep it meaningful through a litany of distractions. I did not choose these passions, after all, as an avenue of distraction, of escaping reality—I chose them so that I would be able to experience reality more deeply. I chose them so that I would be able to be more attentive to the life cycles beyond my own. I chose them so that I would be able to stay.

The three of us grow quiet—we are through the rapids now and only have a mile or two of flatwater left to cover. Stacey glides beside me. For now, I halt the cycle of questioning. The midwife moon is behind me, coaxing animals and truths from their hiding places. For now, this space, this answer, will suffice.



# LEARNING HOW TO PADDLE

## BY MELISSA BERTENTHAL



*Rocking the left line of Bayless Boof, Upper Green River, Saluda NC.*

**Photo by Paige McThena**

**W**HEN I MOVED down to Asheville, NC three years ago, pregnant with my first child, I would drive over the many rivers that dot the outskirts of town, sweaty from a hike in the mountains, and hear myself say, “I can’t wait to paddle these rivers.” To be honest, I am not sure why I felt such desire to get into a boat. I hadn’t been in a kayak in over ten years. Or maybe that is exactly why I felt so drawn to boating. As a young girl and teenager, I dabbled in kayaking. A fearless girl who cared less for technical strokes than the exhilarating thrill of riding each rapid, maneuvering through each wave without stopping to analyze, scout, or panic myself into paralysis.

I brought this same attitude into my relationships and subsequent marriage. I never stopped to figure out a good line and started getting trapped in some sticky holes. I was like a survival paddler, taking quick exhausting strokes that failed to gain any traction and just left me feeling tired and defeated.

After my divorce, I found myself yearning for the river. At first, I think I was motivated by the memory of the young, unscathed girl bouncing through the rapids and gliding off ledges. However, as soon as I pulled the skirt tightly over my deck and took my first paddle stroke out of the eddy, I knew that it would be a much deeper and longer process to rekindle that carefree spirit.

To my disappointment, that fearless girl was long gone and had been replaced by a woman gripped and terrified by the prospect of being in a boat, on a river that was running me. I left my first trip on the river feeling deflated.

My next two attempts were equally frustrating. The night before I would fantasize about how strong I would feel after a good run. I would imagine myself paddling confidently, effortlessly finding the green tongues, and landing every roll.

*Missing the perfect line on Pinball, Upper Green River, Saluda NC.*  
**Photo by Paige McThena**

I desperately sought the ability to control my boat, knowing that if I could successfully learn to navigate a river, then I could start transferring these skills to my life. But, each time I launched my kayak into the river, my confidence would vanish. I complacently followed my friends’ lines, clenched my teeth, and counted the rapids that I needed to endure before I could get off the frothy and unpredictable water.



# MENTAL GAME



*Looking forward to sharing my love of boating with my son.*

**Photo by Melissa Bertenthal**

And then, something miraculous happened. I let go. I realized that I had been approaching each river with the unrealistic idea that I could control everything, including the water. But that is not what boating is about. Water is fluid and changing; in a river, there are obstacles everywhere. Rather than thinking that I could control the water, it dawned on me that the only thing I could control was my own reaction to it and its shifting pull and twists on the boat. Armed with this mentality, I pulled the skirt over my deck, and smiled for the first time as I paddled out of the eddy into the moving water. It was a fantastic run. I didn't hit every line, and I might have had a few swims, but I felt exhilarated and happy.

I would like to say that I am no longer a survival paddler. I try to take every stroke with intention, firmly grasping the water, understanding how it will shift my boat to gracefully move me through the changing current and clear of troublesome rocks. I am also not the teenage girl who I was so desperately seeking to reclaim. Rather than launching myself into a rapid, eager for a thrill and naïve to the consequences, I like to scout new rapids and find good lines. I feel confident enough in myself to pull my boat out of the river and stumble along the side when I know that the approaching rapid is not something I am comfortable with. Slowly but surely, I have started to do this in my own life too.

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# NEWS & NOTES

## INNOVATION IN WHITEWATER

BY SUSAN L. TAFT

**M**IT'S SLOAN SCHOOL of Business and the Copenhagen Business School asked the whitewater kayaking community last year to participate in a survey for a study of innovation in whitewater kayaking. The subject of the survey specifically dealt with equipment, technique, and infrastructure innovations as a follow-up of an earlier study associated with freestyle kayaking. The most recent study is now complete and published in a paper titled *Innovation as Consumption: Analysis of Consumers' Innovation Efficiency* and can be accessed at [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1916319](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1916319).

I participated in gathering the data over the last year and found the results pretty interesting. It puts our sport, and often what we take for granted, into a different perspective within the larger business world. It also tells quite a bit about all of us as an industry and as paddlers.

What is perhaps most telling is that over the last 50 years 73% of the most important equipment innovations, 91% of the most important technique innovations, and 100% of the most important infrastructure innovations were developed by the paddling community (the household sector). Paddlers are largely responsible for the sport, not manufacturers as is more typical in other industries. While I knew this on an intuitive level from my study of the history of our sport, the numbers really drove the point home.

The process we have used, and taken for granted over the last 50 years, is called open collaboration innovation. In this model users collaborate and openly share what they are creating. This type of open collaboration is evident from the earliest days of our sport. In the design of fiberglass kayaks one user-designer might flatten the deck, another might add knee

bumps to a knock-off of the same design, another might shorten the overall length of the next iterative knock-off, still others would see the changes and incorporate them into entirely new designs — all of this freely shared with no expectations of profit. The result is that each contributor incurs a fraction of the cost of the innovation, yet shares in the additions and improvements contributed by others.

The study found that the household sector is actually 7.8 times more efficient in developing equipment innovations and 3 times more efficient in developing technique innovations than the business sector. And although patents are in principle applicable for equipment innovations, with few exceptions no one patents their innovations.

Household innovators are also “willing to undertake the full scope of innovations needed for the development of whitewater kayaking as a sport.” This is in contrast to a narrower scope of the business sector:

.... only kayakers themselves develop innovations that are or quickly become public goods. They also are the only developers of important innovations having only small potential markets. Both of these types of innovation are important to the development and thriving of the overall field of whitewater kayaking and related markets. The need for public goods has long been used as a fundamental justification for public sector investment in a wide range of fields. What is interesting here is that we find the household sector to be also an important source of public good innovations. Consumer innovators, however, develop public good innovations in response to their own needs, using their own private resources of time and money, rather than in response to public subsidy.



*Dan Demaree designing the Slipper slalom kayak, circa 1974.*

**Photo courtesy of Dan Demaree**

That the business sector is not active in producing infrastructure innovations actually makes sense given that much of whitewater's infrastructure is based on information such as playspot locations, descriptions, river characteristics and the like, which is (and always has been) freely revealed to all. There is no clear way where the business sector could make a profit from developing public goods. The authors conclude that if it was not for the household sector involvement in producing public goods, the development of the entire sport would be limited. In other words, we wouldn't be where we are today as a sport without the free and collaborative efforts of user innovators in the paddling community. What makes this even more impressive to me is that a conservative estimate of direct and indirect expenditures on whitewater kayaking worldwide (for gear, travel and other services) is \$1-2 billion annually,



# RIVER HEROES



## National Paddling Film Festival

Be one...  
enter your best shot!  
[www.NPFF.org](http://www.NPFF.org)

Be there...  
Feb. 24 / 25, 2012  
Frankfort, Ky

2011 NPFF Still Image Winner "Pillow Rock Saviors" by Emily Grimes



# NEWS & NOTES



Jesse Whittemore working on his first squirt boat, the Millennium Falcon squirt, circa 1983

Photo courtesy of Kevin O'Brien

dependent on the infrastructure developed as public goods.

So who are the user innovators in the household sector? It is split into two groups, lead users and all others. Lead users have two main characteristics — they are at the leading edge of an important market need and have a high level of need for solutions for that need. They are the best of the best and push the boundaries of the sport. They spend significantly more time and money innovating than others. Not so coincidentally, many of their innovations also appeal to other users and therefore become the basis for new commercial products. For equipment and technique we can think, historically, of paddlers like Tom Johnson (equipment design), Jim Synder and Jesse Whittemore (squirt design and technique), Chan Zwanzig (design), Corran

Addison and Eric Jackson (playboat designs and technique), all lead users—and some were/are also lead-user manufacturers.

So what actually motivates all of this innovation? Perhaps not surprising is that motivation for profit plays a fairly small role. The largest motivations are personal need and process rewards, that is, the fun of the creative process itself. However, helping others is also a significant motivation, particularly for infrastructure innovations, and less so for equipment and technique. This also makes sense since infrastructure innovation inherently creates public information about publicly accessible infrastructure while equipment and technique innovations are often customizations for the innovator himself. For infrastructure we can think of early paddlers like Wolf Bauer (maps, terminology, and river descriptions),

Randy Carter (river level gauges), Carl Trost (maps and river descriptions), and so many others who were members of clubs who contributed to the growing information about whitewater and which contributed to the infrastructure, the foundation of the sport itself.

Of course American Whitewater (AW) has been, and continues to be, an important partner for infrastructure innovation for the public good sector. The original intent of AW was the distribution of information among affiliates (clubs and individuals). This service was instrumental in providing for user innovators to freely share their innovations, whether it was establishing river and technique terminology, river descriptions, river rating systems, and safety tips as infrastructure innovations, or disseminating technique and equipment innovations such as how-to-make fiberglass kayaks and other gear like sprayskirts, paddles and helmets. AW continues in this role facilitating the dissemination of user

innovator information for the public good sector on its website.

To summarize, the results of the study reinforce what many of us already knew — that our sport and industry do not fit into the traditional economic innovation model. We, the paddlers, invented our own sport and continue to be integral in innovations that continue to shape it. We, the paddlers, are also critical to the public good innovations that the entire whitewater kayaking marketplace depends on.

Susan L. Taft is the author of *The River Chasers: A History of American Whitewater Paddling*.

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# PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



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



**C**elebrating 40 years of innovation, Kokatat is an independently operated, US manufacturer of technical apparel and accessories for water sports. Handcrafted in Arcata, California, Kokatat employees are focused on building the finest functional product for people who work and play on water. Our gear is designed for paddlers, by paddlers, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience on the water all year long and in all weather conditions.

Kokatat firmly believes in AW's advocacy for the preservation and protection of whitewater resources throughout the United States and its ongoing stewardship of responsible human powered access.



# Join



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!

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

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

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the US, AW currently has 5,500 active members. When you consider the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join AW! If you are a member, please be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual annual memberships are only \$35 (\$25 if you are a member of an AW Affiliate Club). This is less than a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

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

Membership  
American Whitewater  
PO Box 1540  
Cullowhee, NC 28723



\*Note: AW will never share your information with others

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

↑ if you have one and know it

## Membership Level

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\$25 Member of Affiliate Club

Club: \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 Student

School: \_\_\_\_\_

\$50 Family

\$75 Affiliate Club

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\$250 Platinum Paddler

\$500 Explorer

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\$2,500 Steward

**For current member rewards  
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americanwhitewater.org**

## Donation

Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Additional Subscriptions

\$30 Kayak Session Magazine - 4 issues per year (KS donates \$5 to AW!)

## Journal Options

Do NOT mail me the AW Journal, email it to me <- Saves AW money, and trees! :)

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# NEWS & NOTES

## NATIONAL PADDLING FILM FESTIVAL TO CELEBRATE 30TH YEAR, STEVE FISHER TO GUEST HOST

### SUBMISSIONS CURRENTLY BEING ACCEPTED

BY BETHANY OVERFIELD

**T**HE NATIONAL PADDLING Film Festival has been around longer than the internet, cell phones, the Doppler radar, and Viagra. It's most likely older than your creek boat, and upon its inception, the McNasty was a reference to something totally different than it currently is in the freestyle boating world. This year marks our 30th anniversary as host to a competition determining the best in paddle sport videos and images. NPFF was born in a barn in October, 1982 at the Kentucky Horse Park in central Kentucky. It was a rowdy first-time event in which 23 film, slide, and video presentations debuted. The 8 and 16 mm films were shown on two homemade screens and mattresses were used as sound barriers for the theaters. Much has changed since that first festival; however, the camaraderie and the excitement of viewing the films for the first time remains the same.

We are stoked to announce Steve Fisher as the guest host of our 30th year anniversary festival. Steve has had his paddle on the proverbial pulse of the boating scene for a good chunk of the last 30 years. He started paddling when he was a tyke, began kayaking full-time on the Zambezi when he was 21, and turned pro in 1999. Fisher has an all-encompassing background: he started out on the South African Sprint, Slalom, Marathon, Down River, and freestyle teams, won a number of big water competitions early on in his career, and has, over the last several years, shifted his focus to exploration and expedition kayaking. His film (under Fish Munga--a turn-key production house specializing in outdoor and action sports) Halo Effect won the Best Professional Award last year at NPFF in

the general boating category and was also awarded Best of Festival. Steve recently successfully completed the Fish Munga/Red Bull Congo River Grand Inga Project with some of the world's top kayakers in late October in Uganda. He'll fill us in on all those details in person at the festival.

Entries are currently being accepted for the 2012 NPFF, so keep those cameras rolling and enter early for your chance to win. Professional, Accomplished, and Amateur submissions for the following categories will be accepted through January 18, 2012: Documentary, Instructional/Safety, and General Boating. In addition, there will be a still image competition (submission deadline January 27, 2012). Judges will score each entry and feedback from each judge will be provided to the entrant. Festival attendees will vote and select the Paddler's Choice Award and the Best Still Image winner. Entry forms are available on the Festival Web site: [www.npff.org](http://www.npff.org).

NPFF is a 100% volunteer, not-for-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to river conservation. Over \$50,000 from festival profits have been donated to American Whitewater, the U.S.'s largest river conservation organization, in just the past ten years alone. Donations have also been made to other regional conservation groups dedicated to water quality and

access such as the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, the Green River Access Fund in North Carolina, and Elkhorn Acres in central Kentucky. In addition to this, recent support has been given to the local chapter of Team River Runner, which is a national paddle sport organization established to assist with the recovery of those injured while serving in the U.S. military. Although we love throwing a big party, the greatest reward comes from supporting so many great organizations and it's the reason we've put so much effort into this festival over the past 30 years.

The festival will remain at Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort, Kentucky. With over 5,000 square feet available inside, and a full wrap-around covered porch, there's more than ample room. There is also sufficient parking for festival attendees. Tours of the stunning distillery grounds will be available as well as bourbon tastings. Festivities will include film viewings, a silent auction, a chili cook-off, and a still image contest. A downriver race that is unaffiliated with the festival will take place on Elkhorn creek the Saturday of the festival.

Tickets can be pre-ordered on-line at a discount. Additional information about the event will be posted at [www.npff.org](http://www.npff.org) regularly so check back often for all the latest updates.





# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**D**EAR AMERICAN WHITEWATER,

Thank you for your efforts to restore flow to the Rubicon River (CA). When I was a young paddler in the early '70s, the Rubicon was a source of fascination to me - a line on a map which none of my boating buddies were interested in running.

I made the first descent of the Rubicon solo in the fall of 1975. I paddled the river in an inner tube with my gear on a second inner tube. The trip took five days. Truth be told, I walked a lot of it, but I do not think that portaging disqualifies my run as a first descent. An account of my run appeared in a local paddling newsletter. I submitted an article to Canoe Magazine. It was rejected because the editors didn't think there would be much interest in a trip few would want to duplicate.

The members of the Stanley expedition were all much better boaters than I was - I've paddled with all of them. Their contribution to the sport was much more significant than mine. But theirs was the second descent of the Rubicon, almost a decade after my first descent.

Chuck Koteen



**Above:** Chuck Koteen's 1975 descent of the Rubicon was made with an inner tube and ample confidence.

**Opposite:** Documenting flows during Chuck's descent.

## It's Easy to Support AW!

American Whitewater is proud of the work we have accomplished in our stewardship program but we need your help to sustain our success. Your support through membership and donations enables our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. Donations don't have to be large; each person doing a small part makes a noticeable difference. Many donors fail to take full advantage of federal tax incentives specifically intended to encourage charitable contributions. Such incentives often enable a donor to make a larger gift to AW at little or no additional cost. For more information about maximizing your gift visit the IRS website dedicated to charitable organizations.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN# 23-7083760. To learn more about the Giving Options below, contact us at 1-866-262-8429 or visit the "Donate" link under "Support AW" on our website at [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)

- Donate online today!
- Monthly Giving: Contribute a minimum of \$10 via credit card or electronic transfer from your bank account.
- Bequests: Include AW in your will or living trust. Bequests to AW are generally exempt from federal or state inheritance taxes, and subject to an unlimited deduction.
- Combined Federal Campaign: Federal employees including federal civilians, military personnel and U.S. Postal Workers can donate to AW through the CFC a once a year charitable fund raising program. Look for AW (Agency #11351) in the official CFC listing of eligible donors.
- Charitable Remainder Trusts: Convert a highly appreciated asset (such as real estate or stocks) into a lifetime income while minimizing income and estate taxes.
- Employer Matching: Many employers will match your donations to non-profit organizations. This includes membership payments, as well as additional contributions. Check to see if your employer has a matching program.
- MissionFish: Sell your items through the MissionFish program on eBay and the proceeds come directly to AW.
- Other Assets: A gift of real estate to AW qualifies you for a tax deduction based on the property's fair market value. If it is not a river access point, AW will sell the property and use the proceeds to protect access and restore rivers. Acceptance of property is subject to certain conditions. You may also be eligible to receive tax benefits for gifts of real property. Art and jewelry are examples of personal property items that may be eligible. Interested donors should check with your financial and tax advisors and AW on the feasibility and tax considerations of such gifts.
- Securities: Donating appreciated stock to AW benefits both the donor and whitewater rivers. The donor receives two tax-related benefits. First, the gain on the stock is not subject to capital gains taxes. Second, the donor can deduct the value of the stock as a charitable contribution.
- United Way: All federal campaigns, and a few of the local campaigns will allow you to donate to AW.
- Vehicle Donations: Turn that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefiting AW.

# AFFILIATE CLUBS

## AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY CARLA MINER

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of American Whitewater's existence. American Whitewater's original purpose since 1954 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. Our relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. We have over 100 current AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club, consider joining one.

Our Affiliate Club Spotlight this issue is on Colorado Whitewater Association an outstanding Affiliate Club and long time supporter of our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. Colorado Whitewater Association is an all-volunteer organization based in Englewood, Colorado.

Colorado Whitewater promotes the sport of whitewater kayaking in the Rocky Mountain Region. They introduce new kayakers to whitewater, teach paddling techniques, promote and teach whitewater safety, and support racing and freestyle kayak competitions. In addition, their mission is to inform the public about river access, conservation, and other general issues concerning rivers and wilderness while working to resolve problems related to those issues.

If you live in or around the Denver area, consider joining Colorado Whitewater. Annual dues are \$30 for an individual and \$40 for a household. Check out their website at <http://www.coloradowhitewater.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=27772&orgId=> for additional information.

Thank you Colorado Whitewater Association for your continued support of American Whitewater!

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

### Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks  
Nova Riverrunners Inc., Chickaloon

### Alabama

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

### Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

### Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

### California

California Floaters Society, Cameron Park  
Chico Paddleheads, Chico  
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus  
RTS Sierra Club San Fran Chapter, Livermore  
Sequoia Paddlers, Forestville  
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers, San Jose

### Colorado

Avid4 Adventure Inc., Boulder  
Colorado Whitewater Assn, Englewood  
Friends of the Arkansas River, Canon City  
Grand Canyon Private Boaters. Assn., Colorado Springs  
Lower Dolores Boating Advocates, Dolores  
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs  
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride

### Connecticut

AMC - Connecticut Chapter, Waterbury

### Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

### Georgia

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

### Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

### Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assn, Chicago

### Indiana

Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

### Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

### Kentucky

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

### Louisiana

Sabine Whitewater Club, Lake Charles

### Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Troy

### Maryland

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

### Minnesota

Minnesota Canoe Assn, Minneapolis  
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

### Missouri

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

### Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

### New Hampshire

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

### New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
KCCNY, Flanders

### New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of NM,  
Albuquerque

### New York

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

### North Carolina

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

### Ohio

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

### Oregon

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

### Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown  
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre  
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg  
Conewago Canoe Club, York  
Holtwood Hooligans, Paradise  
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley,  
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Inc., Lehigh Valley  
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia  
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh



**S. Carolina**

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
 Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

**Tennessee**

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

**Vermont**

Vermont Paddlers Club, Essex Junction

**Virginia**

Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond  
 Creek Freak Paddlers of Franklin County  
 VA, Rocky Mount  
 Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke  
 FORVA, Roanoke  
 Hollins Outdoor Program, Roanoke  
 Paddlers for Conservation, Vienna

**Washington**

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

**West Virginia**

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

**Wisconsin**

Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, Madison

**British Columbia**

Vancouver Kayak Club, Burnaby

## DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

*By Carla Miner, Membership Manager*

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

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

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

## JOIN AMERICAN WHITEWATER AS AN AFFILIATE CLUB!

### AFFILIATE CLUB BENEFITS

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

Sign-up on-line at:

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

For more information contact Carla Miner at [membership@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@americanwhitewater.org) or at 1-866-262-8429

The logo features the letters 'AW' in a large, bold, white font. The 'A' is set against a green background, and the 'W' is set against a blue background. A stylized white wave graphic is positioned between the two letters. To the right of the logo, the words 'AMERICAN WHITewater' are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with 'AMERICAN' on the top line and 'WHITewater' on the bottom line. The background of the entire page is a photograph of two people in a blue raft navigating white-water rapids.

# AMERICAN WHITewater

## Contribute your text and photos to *American Whitewater*

*American Whitewater* is moving from a theme-based magazine to a more diverse model. Starting in 2012 we will be producing issues that are not concentrated on a single topic, but rather offer something for everyone.

We're always accepting submissions and we'll hope you'll consider contributing. For complete submission details, story topics, deadlines, and guidelines, go to:

**[americanwhitewater.org](http://americanwhitewater.org) > Library > AW Journal**





# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Saving Rivers Since 1954

Rok Sribar and friends, East Fork Kaweah, CA. © Darin McQuoid

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