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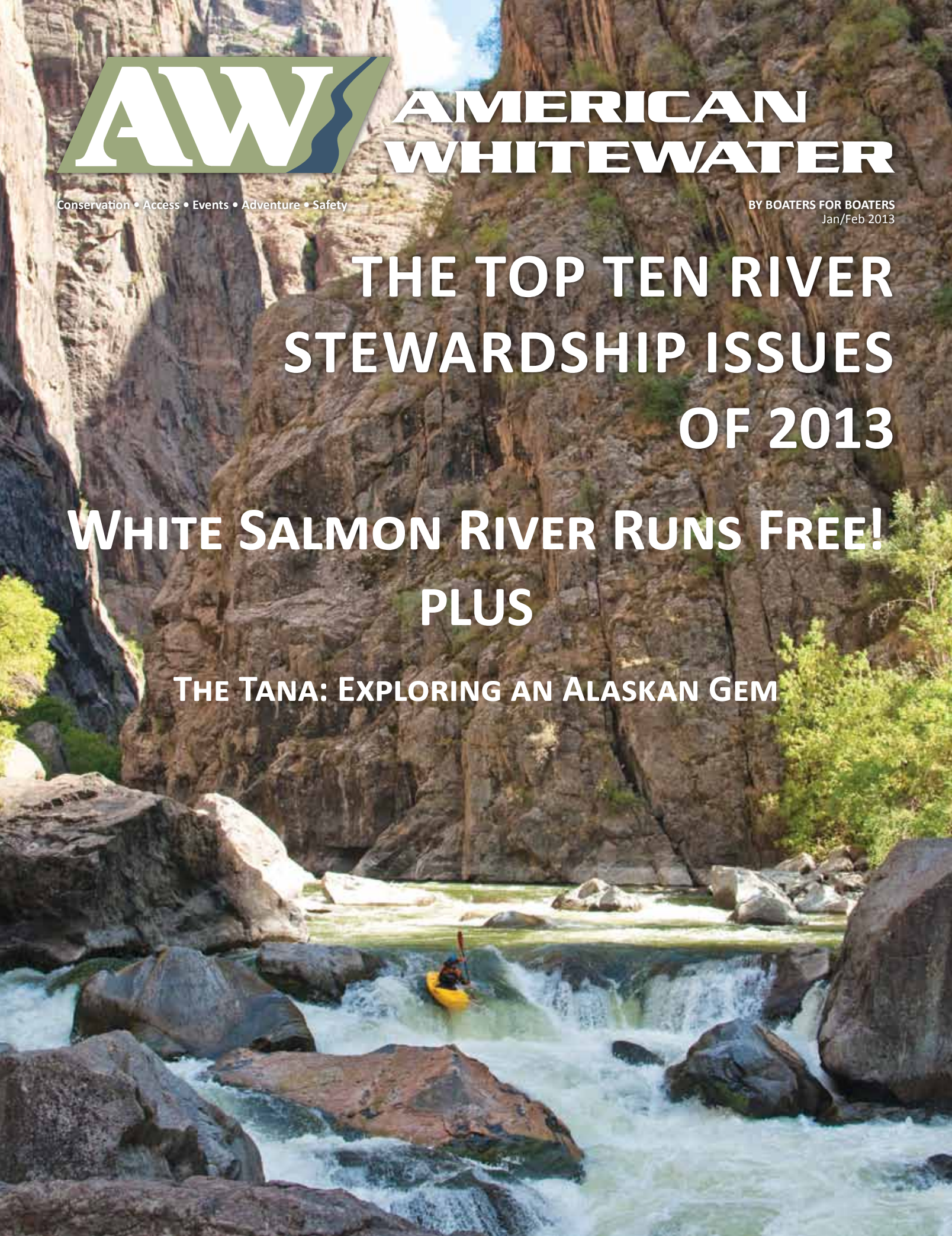
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Jan/Feb 2013

**THE TOP TEN RIVER  
STEWARDSHIP ISSUES  
OF 2013**

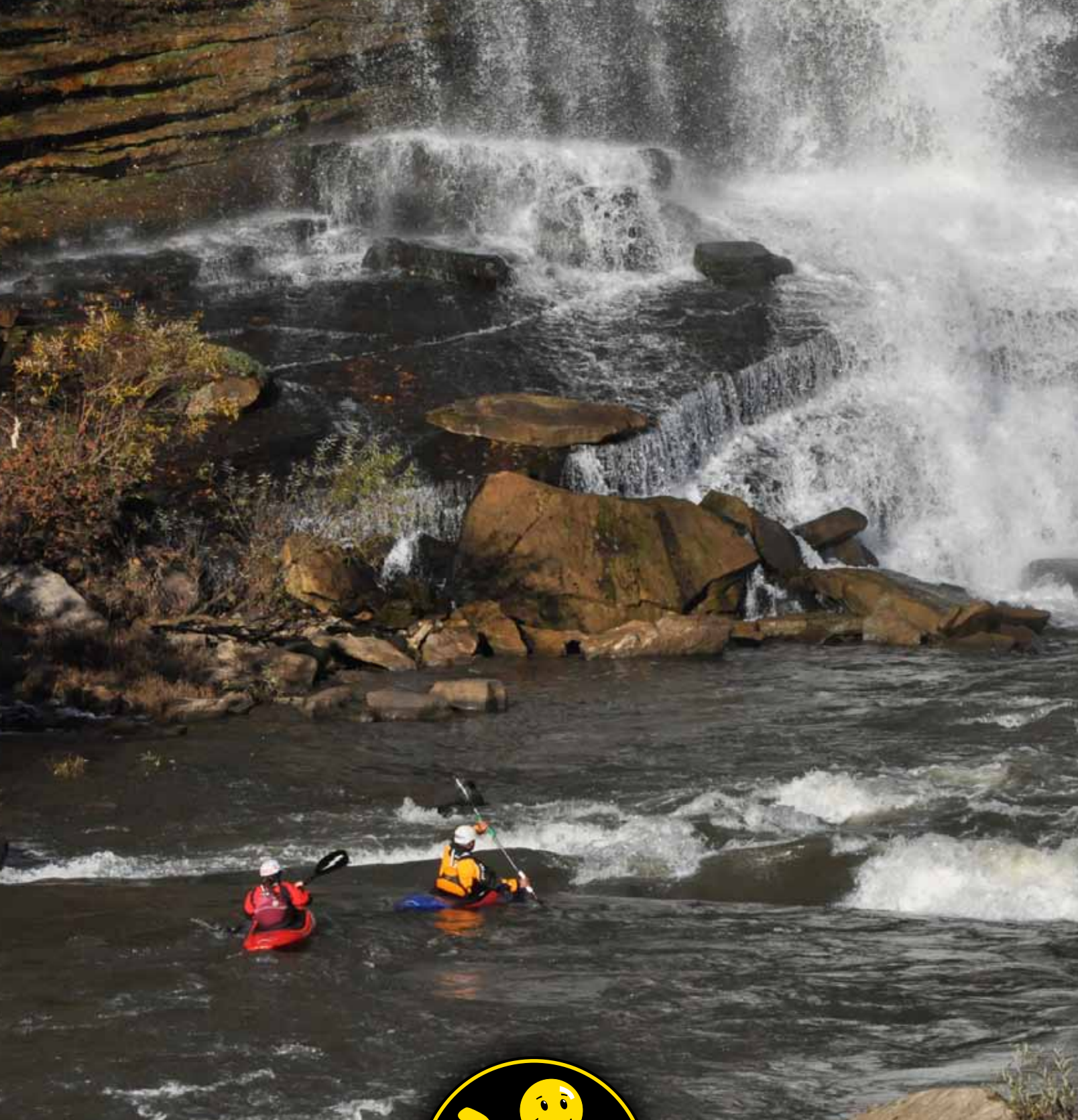
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**THE TANA: EXPLORING AN ALASKAN GEM**







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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

## American Whitewater Journal Jan/Feb 2013 – Volume 53 – Issue 1

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*A paddler negotiating the Black Canyon of the Gunnison's formidable whitewater. In 2013 AW will be working to evaluate flows throughout the Gunnison River Basin (CO) to help define water levels needed for recreation there.*

**Photo by Tom Janney**

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# PURPOSE

## RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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# THE JOURNEY AHEAD



**W**ELCOME TO THE first *American Whitewater Journal* for 2013! In this issue of the *Journal* we explore the Top Ten River Stewardship Issues of the coming year. We expect these issues to be important themes in 2013 and American Whitewater staff plans to play leadership roles in these issues affecting rivers across the country. Our Top Ten River Stewardship Issues take into consideration a broad geographic cross-section of the country and identify some of the pressures that our nations' wild rivers confront.

Paddlers know that you cannot love what you do not understand, and it is our love of whitewater that makes us such fierce defenders of rivers. This intimate connection to flowing water has made American Whitewater a force in river conservation for close to sixty years. At the core of our stewardship program is the understanding that conservation and healthy human-powered outdoor recreation are mutually dependent. Whether it's time spent outdoors as a child or paddling rivers as an adult, interacting with nature forms the basis of the American conservation ethic. Whitewater boaters appreciate natural landscapes, and those special places need stewardship-oriented paddlers to help preserve and protect these treasured natural resources.

One of the ways this deep stewardship connection plays out with our members is the amount of volunteer support American

Whitewater can leverage for projects. Last year in 2012, we tracked volunteer hours and found that volunteers contributed a total of 15,242 hours of their time to American Whitewater efforts. That's like adding eight full-time equivalent staff (FTEs) to AW's organizational capacity. Having another eight FTEs essentially doubles our staff and expands our grassroots outreach significantly beyond that (especially since many of these people are in key communities where we don't have staff). Few organizations have a model that empowers volunteers as effectively and it's a great story for us to tell about how we are expanding our reach by engaging volunteer support. This story is one of the secrets to American Whitewater's ability to be engaged in over 100 active projects across the country with a lean administrative model and a staff of ten.

For an example of volunteer effectiveness look no further than the Chattooga River (NC, SC, GA) where, after 37 years, it is now legal this winter to paddle a 15-mile portion of the Upper Chattooga Wild and Scenic River. Just last year the Washington Office of the U.S. Forest Service gave the final agency green light allowing the public to paddle this previously off-limits river. While the current management plan still includes unfair and illegal limits on paddling, including bans by flow, season, and reach, American Whitewater and our volunteers and partners will push to resolve these remaining issues through the court system. We would like to thank our many volunteers and members for all the support it took to reach this major milestone and we look forward to paddlers enjoying the Upper Chattooga this winter.

While it is a particularly high profile case, the Chattooga is only one example of how volunteer engagement enables AW's river stewardship efforts at the community level. From dam removals in the Pacific Northwest to water allocation initiatives in the Colorado Basin and hydro-power relicensing in Northern California, American Whitewater volunteers teaming up with

professional staff allows us to punch way above our weight.

As we move through the coming year the staff at American Whitewater will be pushing for new opportunities to reconnect rivers with paddlers, habitat, and local economies. As we look to the future, we continue to appreciate the importance of rivers and their role in supporting the health and well being of the paddling community. At American Whitewater, we remain committed to giving back to these special places.

Happy New Year,

Mark Singleton  
Executive Director

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# 2013 TOP TEN STEWARDSHIP ISSUES

Chris Ennis and Kevin Colburn celebrate reaching the depths of the North Fork of Deep Creek's limestone canyon, one of many under-protected streams in western Montana for which AW is exploring conservation opportunities. Photo by Nathan Johnson

**2**013 IS GOING to be a year to remember at American Whitewater. While we will collectively work on well over 100 river conservation and access projects this year, these are the top ten that we will focus our efforts on, bringing awesome new dam releases, Wild and Scenic River designations, new access, and much more to rivers across the country. We're looking forward to tackling challenges and celebrating victories in the year ahead, and hope you are as excited about these projects as we are!

## Colorado River Basin - Gunnison

The Gunnison River Basin in Colorado is rich with whitewater opportunities, including Escalante Creek, Black Canyon of the



Gunnison, and Oh Be Joyful. With over 20 whitewater runs, the Gunnison Basin is the last major watershed in the seven-state Colorado River Basin that is missing defined flow information for recreational needs. In 2013, American Whitewater will be working with local paddlers and visitors alike to evaluate flows on rivers throughout the Gunnison Basin, and to build support from water managers for policies that sustain recreational needs. The project is a big one for American Whitewater—we've added new staff and will be recruiting

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*The Black Canyon is just one of many reaches where recreational flow needs will be defined in the Gunnison River Basin in 2013.*

Photo by Matthew Hopkins





several leading volunteers to tackle this ambitious project.

Our work in the Gunnison River Basin will ride on our successes over the last five years in defining recreational flow needs throughout the entire Colorado River Basin. The information we've gathered has helped to protect streamflows in the Yampa and Upper Colorado Rivers, restore spring boating flows to the Dolores River, and define safe paddling opportunities in the Virgin River. Our work has also changed how federal agencies review the impacts that large reservoirs and drought conditions have on rivers across the West. As we tackle the Gunnison River Basin this year, we'll be gathering the information we need to develop a more complete picture

of the recreational flow needs for the entire Colorado River Basin.

### **Northern Rockies Wild and Scenic**

2013 will mark a major turning point for wild rivers in the Northern Rockies. American Whitewater will be advocating for interim protection for special rivers on public lands by having the Forest Service find them eligible for Wild and Scenic designation. We expect big decisions from the agency in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming in 2013 in response to the robust river advocacy efforts of American Whitewater staff and volunteers. Four of the rivers we hope to protect—Boulder Creek (ID), Boundary Creek (ID), East Rosebud Creek (MT) and the Madison River (WY, MT)—are currently threatened by hydropower dam proposals,

which we are also challenging directly through the federal dam licensing process.

At the same time, we are working with dozens of groups in Montana to develop ambitious river conservation legislation that will protect hundreds of miles of the state's and the nation's wildest rivers. This legislation is likely going to contain a mix of new Wild and Scenic River designations on public lands as well as voluntary restoration and conservation incentives for rivers on private lands. We will be reaching out to paddlers all year for input on which Montana rivers are most special to them and why. We can't wait to work with paddlers to create and pass the most exciting river protection legislation the state of Montana has ever seen!



# STEWARDSHIP

## Pit River - California

In 2010, PG&E, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) successfully lobbied for the suspension of summer pulse flows at PG&E's Pit 1 Hydroelectric Project in California. Citing a severe decline in endangered Shasta crayfish populations and an alarming uptick in invasive crayfish in the area, PG&E's consultant concluded that the pulse flows were the cause, and USFWS and FERC followed suit without doing a careful analysis.

The science being used to defend this position is weak at best. As Shasta crayfish populations decline and invasives increase in the Pit 1 Bypass Reach, the very same trend is taking place throughout the entire Pit River Basin—where no summer pulse flows occur at all. Unfortunately, this is a common theme in our work—inadequate science was also used to cancel flows on the North Fork Feather in 2005, and is being used today to reduce private boating on the Middle Fork Salmon.



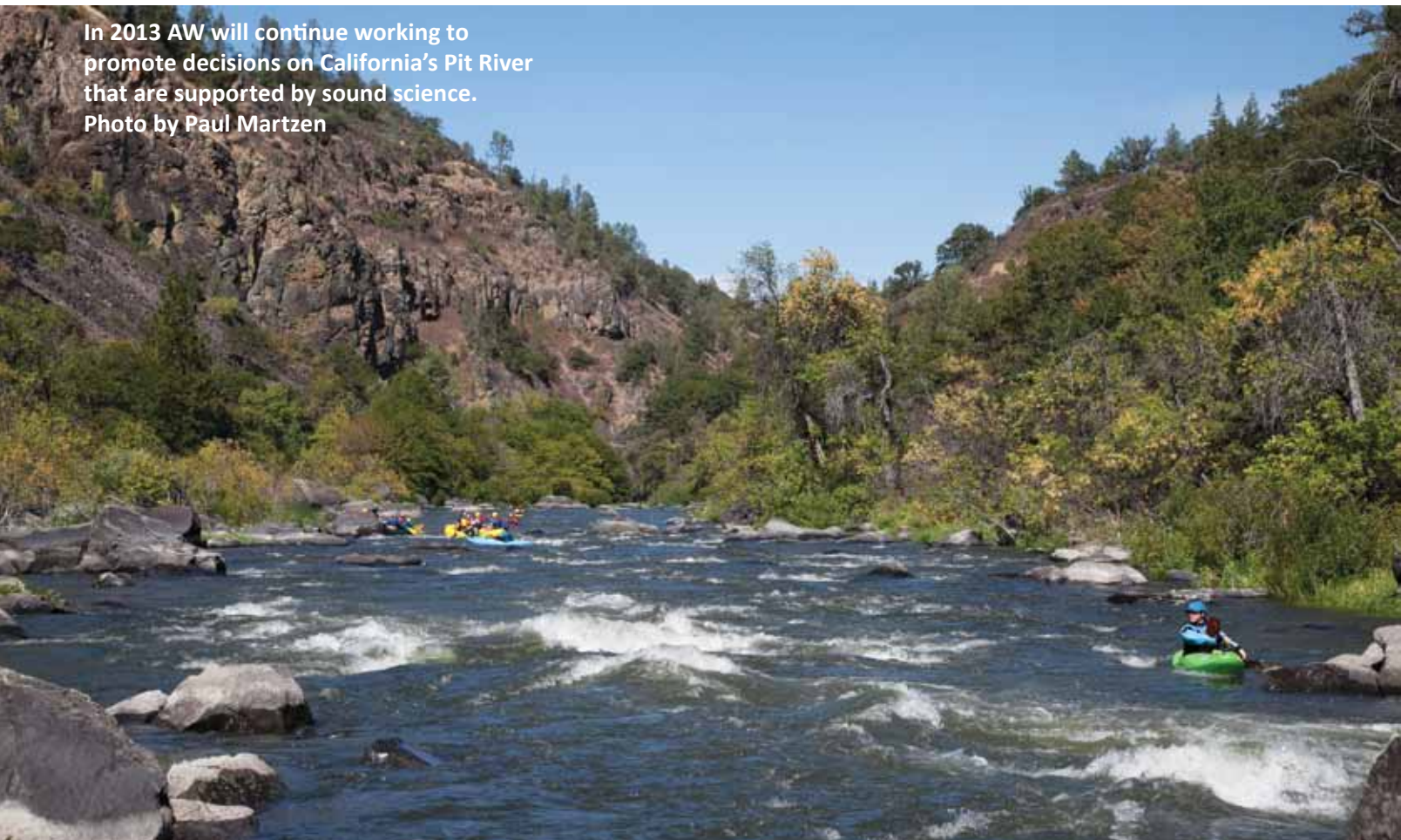
*The West Fork Tuck (NC) will help paddlers fulfill their need for speed in April of 2013 when recreational releases begin.*

**Photo by Rob Siegel**

In 2013, the utility and federal agencies will continue their push to have the flows permanently cancelled. American Whitewater knows this is a lose-lose situation—canceling pulse flows does little to protect the Shasta crayfish and

harms recreational opportunities. In 2012, American Whitewater threatened litigation to compel the agencies to do the right thing. While the two Federal agencies, FERC and USFWS, refused to meet with us, we were encouraged in late 2012 when State

**In 2013 AW will continue working to promote decisions on California's Pit River that are supported by sound science. Photo by Paul Martzen**





agencies and PG&E were willing to discuss the science, or lack thereof, on which decisions are based. American Whitewater will stay on top of this issue as it makes its way through various state and federal agency processes, and continue to push to see sound science as the foundation for making sound decisions.

### **West Fork Tuck - North Carolina**

In 2013, paddlers in the Southeast will finally get to enjoy consistent releases on the West Fork of the Tuckasegee River. American Whitewater and the Carolina Canoe Club secured recreational releases through intense negotiations that spanned the years 2001 to 2003. Following countless delays over the last decade, it's finally time to celebrate and go paddling!

We're excited about the completion of a new hiking trail that leads from Glenville Reservoir to the base of High Falls. In the spring, paddlers will hike the trail for the first time and put on the creek while being blasted by the spray. Once on the water, they will be treated to a barrage of slides and boulder gardens, barreling through the rhododendron on releases of the perfect flow. There will be eight such releases in 2013 and every year for decades to follow.

Celebrating is not our only task for the year ahead. We'll also be working with Duke Energy to finish the access areas, with federal agencies to monitor fish, with private landowners on any issues that arise, and with paddlers to ensure use of this soon-to-be-classic is undertaken safely and responsibly. We encourage only solid teams of Class V paddlers who are comfortable with exploratory creek boating to tackle the initial releases—especially the very first one. It is going to be a big year in Western North Carolina!

### **Dolores - Colorado**

This is the year that new guidelines for managed releases from McPhee Dam and Reservoir will take effect—restoring flows to over 100 miles of the Lower Dolores River. Like any Rocky Mountain stream,



*This year, thanks to the efforts of American Whitewater, spring flows in the Dolores River will be restored.*

**Photo by Nathan Fey**

the Dolores's flows in are dependent on sufficient snowpack over the winter. As the spring run-off and boating season approaches, American Whitewater will be working with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Dolores Water Conservancy District to identify how much water is available to meet the needs of recreation on the Dolores River, and we will negotiate a release of water that provides predictable flows at or above 900 cfs for at least five consecutive days.

In 2012, a new plan for managing the Lower Dolores River was released, outlining new goals for flow releases at McPhee Dam that will benefit native fish and recreational users. As part of the plan, American Whitewater will work with local water managers to develop clear expectations for the spring boating releases, and to collect input from paddlers on the success of these releases in meeting recreational needs. The plan will be in place for three years while these monitoring and evaluation efforts are being undertaken. While the extreme drought in Colorado forced the cancellation

of a managed release from McPhee Dam in 2012, we are excited to provide advanced notice of predictable boating flows in 2013. Bring on the snow!

### **Merced - California**

Legislators have had their sights set on rolling back the Wild and Scenic designation on California's Merced River for a few years, and we expect things to pick up in 2013. In 2012, the House passed legislation that would allow the Merced Irrigation District to raise the elevation of McClure Reservoir behind New Exchequer Dam. The section facing inundation is not only part of the best wilderness paddling experience on the Merced below Yosemite National Park, but also supports biking, hiking and camping—which will all be lost if the project is allowed to move forward. The area also provides important habitat for eagles, trout, and the state-protected limestone salamander. When the reach was designated in the early 1990s, 90% of California's Central Valley low elevation riparian habitat had already been lost to human activities. We can't afford to lose more.



# STEWARDSHIP



*The Briceburg to Bagby reach of the Merced offers some of the best wilderness paddling below Yosemite National Park.*

**Photo by Dave Steindorf**

The fact that legislators would be so willing to roll back a Wild and Scenic River designation is the most frightening piece, particularly in California, which is normally considered to be at the forefront of environmental protections. As we work to protect the Merced, we're also working to preserve the intent behind the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for rivers across the country. In 1968, Congress specified that the free flowing nature of special rivers throughout the country should be protected for current and future generations. American Whitewater will keep a close eye on this proposal as it moves through the Senate.

## **Opposing New Hydropower Dams and Promoting Alternatives – Pacific Northwest**

Throughout the Northwest and in other parts of the country there is a renewed

*Puget Sound Energy hard at work repositioning the rock work adjacent to the Powerhouse on the Snoqualmie River to enhance public access.*

**Photo by Thomas O'Keefe**

interest in hydropower development. In some cases, this can be a good thing. Of the nation's existing dams, only 3% produce hydropower. Oak Ridge National Laboratory has identified opportunities to generate an additional 12.6 gigawatts of new hydropower on existing dams, while an additional 8 gigawatts of

additional capacity could be generated just by improving efficiency at existing projects (this represents an approximately 20% increase over existing installed hydropower capacity). Unfortunately, an increasing number of developers are also looking at new dam construction as the preferred approach. It's a troubling trend in the energy industry—all too often the regulatory and policy framework creates incentives for new development while old projects are not optimized to the extent they could be.

American Whitewater is working with our colleagues in the conservation community and through the Hydropower Reform Coalition to change this. We want to hold the line on the few rivers that remain free-flowing while improving project operations for environmental benefit and increasing energy production at existing dams. In 2013 we will continue our efforts to fight the construction of new projects in the Cascades of Washington State, like the Black Canyon Hydro Project on Ernie's Gorge and a new dam and powerhouse that will desecrate the dramatic Sunset Falls on the Skykomish River. At the same time, we will be working hard in 2013 to ensure that policies are established that





encourage developers to invest in existing infrastructure by bringing it up to modern environmental and engineering standards to both benefit the environment and increase energy production.

### **Improving Access to Rivers in the Pacific Northwest**

Thanks to the strong support of our membership, American Whitewater is gearing up to provide new and improved

access points at several rivers throughout the Pacific Northwest in 2013. Access will be improved at a number of hydropower projects, with a new trail set for construction on the Sultan River, a new access developed at the Powerhouse on the Snoqualmie River, and a new take-out for Canyon Creek.

Improvements are coming to other non-hydropower locations as well. In

Washington, we will improve access on the Skykomish by investing resources from the SkyFund, which was originally established with proceeds from SkyFest, and thanks to a generous contribution from Werner Paddles. The effort is part of a joint project with the Forest Service to improve the access trail at Cable Drop. And on the Snoqualmie River we will seek funding from the State of Washington to invest in river access improvements.



In Oregon, we are partnering with the Western Rivers Conservancy to protect a critical access point on the Hood River. Through generous contributions from our membership, land that was once owned by power company PacifiCorp will be transferred into public ownership. And on the Crooked River, the Trust for Public Land has acquired critical access at Hollywood Road. We will continue efforts to secure Land and Water Conservation Funding to bring this access into public ownership.

We have an ambitious work plan for improving public access to rivers in the Pacific Northwest in 2013, and it's all part of our goal to enhance opportunities for whitewater recreation and inspire the next generation of river advocates.

### **Developing and Growing the New England Program**

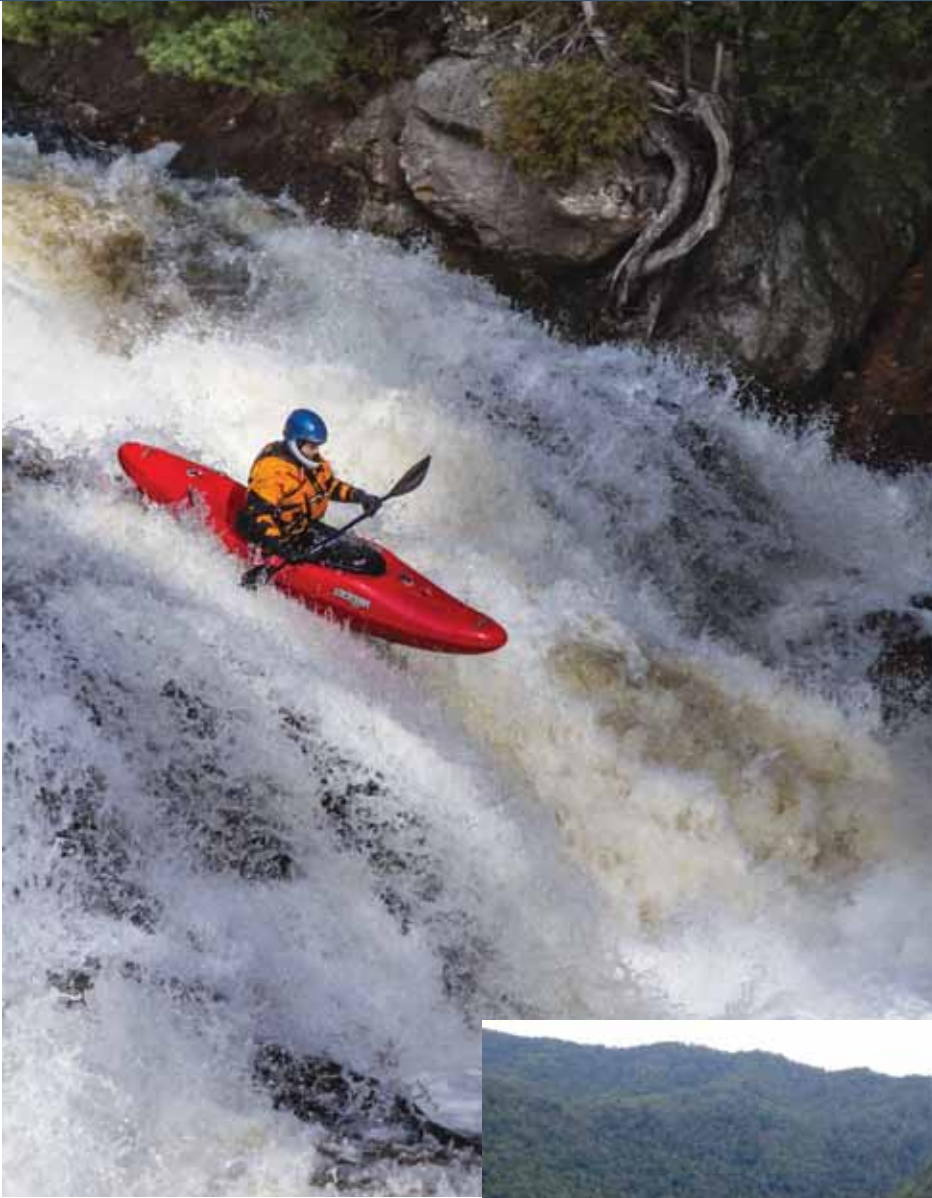
Launching a new regional stewardship program is a big deal for American Whitewater, and we'll be focusing on supporting our new Northeast program in 2013. We were deeply saddened by the death of American Whitewater Northeast Stewardship Director, Alan Panebaker, in September of 2012. In early 2013 we'll fill the position again. Our Northeast Director will be working on issues including the restoration of dam releases on the West River, Wild and Scenic designation on the Farmington River, and maintenance of

*Hans Hoomans and Scott Waidelich maneuver through one of the last drops in Ernie's Gorge.*

**Photo by Kira Watts**



# STEWARDSHIP



*The Bottom Moose is a great example of what AW can pull of when we put our minds to it. A new emphasis in the Northeast will undoubtedly yield other exciting outcomes.*

**Photo by Ed Williams**

moves on massive waves. Unfortunately, the 5.6 mile “Dries” are almost always dry because the Hawk’s Nest hydropower project diverts up to 10,000 cfs from the river. But now the hydropower project is up for re-licensing, and American Whitewater is hoping to restore significant flows and recreational opportunities to the New River, just like we’ve done on countless others across the country. We’ve requested that a whitewater flow study be completed in 2013 to scientifically determine the flows needed for different types of paddling opportunities, and we will be collaborating with the dam owner when that moves forward. This project has the chance to create an incredible new natural resource for freestyle paddlers, commercial rafting, instruction, and plain old river running. It is not going to be easy, but with your support, we are up for the challenge.

access at Fife Brook. The support of the paddling community for this program has been awesome, and we look forward to working with paddlers to do great things for the rivers of the Northeast.

## **New River Dries - West Virginia**

Read the words “New River Dries,” and you probably see images in your mind’s eye of paddlers launching epic airborne freestyle

*AW is working hard to secure improved flows for the New River Dries, which could create new summer paddling opportunities for Class III and IV paddlers.*  
**Photo by Kevin Colburn**





## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? AN UPDATE ON 2012'S TOP TEN



IN JANUARY 2012, we outlined our Top Ten Stewardship Issues for the year. Here's what we accomplished.

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

Aaron Million's proposed 500 mile long Flaming Gorge Pipeline, which would have stressed an already over-allocated Green River, was stopped in its tracks. American Whitewater intervened in the preliminary permit application before the FERC, and in a rare move, FERC denied Million's permit. Million isn't the only one with his sights on the Green, and we'll keep working to prevent the Front Range Cities of Colorado from sucking this river dry.

### Green River (VT)

The Green River is a key opportunity to bring a new paddling experience to New England. In 2012, American Whitewater continued to build relationships with the dam owner and lay the groundwork for relicensing negotiations.

### Susquehanna (PA)

Construction on two whitewater waves at the base of the Holtwood Dam began in the summer of 2012. The features are part of

a larger effort to expand the hydroelectric project, and were negotiated by American Whitewater, the Conewago Canoe Club, and regional paddlers. Each year, starting in 2013, there will be 264 hours of scheduled releases, plus opportunities to get out on the water during spills.

### Chattooga

Twenty twelve was a huge year in the effort to lift the decades-old ban on paddling the Upper Chattooga. A new management plan was finalized that allows the public to paddle a portion of the river for the first time in 36 years, under strict seasonal and flow level restrictions. While we celebrate this milestone, our work is far from over. The new management plan is still heavy on prohibitions and restrictions on paddling, and we continued to seek resolution of these issues in court through the end of 2012.

### Opposing Small Hydropower (PNW)

In 2012, American Whitewater continued to stay involved in the public process with hydroelectric projects proposed at Sunset Falls on the Skykomish River and in Ernie's Gorge on the North Fork Snoqualmie. Stopping new hydropower proposals doesn't happen overnight, and requires involvement with numerous federal, state and local processes. We'll keep at it for as long as it takes to keep these rivers free flowing.

### Bear River Release (ID)

American Whitewater and our partners re-negotiated the whitewater releases on the Bear River so they will work better for paddlers. We traded zero to sixteen unscheduled releases that were triggered by inflows for nine guaranteed scheduled releases. More importantly, the results of ecological monitoring were reviewed in detail in 2012 and the release program was found to have significant benefits and negligible negative impacts.

### Wild Olympics

The effort to bring Wild and Scenic protections and designate additional Wilderness on the Olympic Peninsula took a huge step forward in 2012. In June, the Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was introduced by Congressman Norm Dicks and Senator Patty Murray. In 2013, we'll keep working to pass this important piece of legislation.

### Restoring Spring Runoff Flows (CA)

In 2012, American Whitewater finalized flow negotiations on the Yuba, Rubicon, and Middle Fork American Rivers making more predictable flows in the midst of a "spring runoff" release and ramp down. These flows will be implemented in the new licenses for these projects, and will be protective of frogs and other species in the river.

### Upper Colorado Flows

In 2012, we continued to work towards a final river management plan for the Upper Colorado that will protect baseline environmental flows using the State of Colorado's in-stream flow program, and provide annual guidelines for good boating levels between April and October. In 2012, the Colorado Water Conservation Board approved the first In-Stream Flow water right for Colorado to protect base flows, as defined in the new plan, and we are continuing to negotiate final boating flow guides.


### Opening Yosemite to Boating

In 2012, we were pleased to see that Yosemite National Park considered lifting the age-old ban on boating on some rivers within the park in their Draft River Management Plan. We're happy to see steps in the right direction, and will continue to advocate for opening all river reaches in Yosemite throughout the ongoing planning process.



# THE WHITE SALMON RUNS FREE!

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE



Paddlers float through the former site of Condit Dam on an inaugural run down the White Salmon River's Lower Gorge. Photo by Ben Knight

**M**ANY OF US wondered if the day would ever arrive, but after years of waiting it finally came in the form of a text message from PacifiCorp staff one Saturday in November: "It's official. The White Salmon is open! Spread the word. Safe paddling to all." And with that, paddlers hit the water to experience a truly remarkable treasure—a new section of river that for the past century was buried beneath the placid waters of Northwestern Reservoir.

On an overcast morning a week later, we gathered on the banks of the White Salmon giddy with anticipation for the opportunity to experience a new river. Just a year before, many of us stood on the lip of Condit Dam and watched the dramatic results of the explosive blast that breached the dam and drained the reservoir in a little more than an hour's time—a reservoir that had been there for a century vanished before our

very eyes. It was easy to view the scene before us as a wasteland of mud and debris, and hard to imagine it would ever look like a river again. But as we've observed at dam removal projects across the country, rivers have an incredible capacity for self restoration.

Over the months that followed the dam breach, contractors chipped away at the dam. It slowly shrunk in size while the mud washed away and the river began to flow clear again. This past September, the dam was completely gone, and as amazing as this may sound, you could hardly tell where it once stood. Agonizing days then became weeks as the contractors continued their work to restore the river channel below the dam, which included removing massive logs that had once been buried in the reservoir sediments and then became wedged in the White Salmon Narrows. Finally, the most hazardous logs to navigation were

removed, and PacifiCorp declared the river open for public use. Our day to experience the river had finally arrived.

We began the day's journey from Wet Planet in Husum, Washington, launching as a flotilla of more than a dozen kayakers and at least as many rafters. The day began on the mild Class II section of the run known as the Lower White Salmon, which historically ended with the slackwater of Northwestern Reservoir. The river continued on at a good pace with fun Class II and a couple good features as we slowly descended below the surface elevation of the former reservoir. Old stumps appeared that had been buried beneath the reservoir sediments for a century, and we could see vegetation starting to colonize the newly exposed banks, while the basalt outcrops along the banks were scrubbed clean of the thick coat of mud that had buried them.



# STEWARDSHIP



*Entering the White Salmon Narrows, one of the most scenic stretches of the Lower Gorge.*

**Photo by Thomas O'Keefe**

Halfway down the old reservoir the river flowed past a dramatic basalt cliff on river right, with a bathtub ring stain marking what had been the surface elevation of the Northwestern reservoir. Here the gradient picked up and the river crashed through some great Class III whitewater as it followed a serpentine path through an incredibly beautiful section of basalt gorge with waterfalls cascading in from either side. The scenic beauty of this section will only be enhanced as maidenhair ferns and mosses colonize these walls. Floating through this section, our anticipation built as we passed through the bedrock gates that marked the site of Condit Dam. We could hardly remember that a dam once towered over 100 feet above this point, but whoops of joy echoed between the gorge walls as we pulled out on a gravel bar on river right to savor the moment. A spontaneous celebration ensued as Pat

*Susan Hollingsworth fires up Steelhead Falls, the challenging entrance drop to the White Salmon Narrows.*

**Photo by Thomas O'Keefe**

Arnold, representing Friends of the White Salmon, popped the cork on a bottle of champagne.

Just 40 years ago the White Salmon River faced a grim future with a proposal to develop a series of seven dams to harness the entire length of the river for hydropower. Friends of the White Salmon, a locally based advocacy group for the river, successfully fought off that proposal and in the early 1980s began to advocate for restoration of salmon on the White Salmon River. At first the discussion focused only on fish passage around the salmon-blocking Condit Dam, but when PacifiCorp filed an application in December 1991 to renew their license for the hydropower project, the idea of dam removal began to germinate.

American Whitewater and Friends of the White Salmon made the first formal requests for a study of dam removal in 1992 as part of the federal licensing process. Rich Bowers was hired as American Whitewater's first Conservation Director thanks to support from the Conservation Alliance and member companies, including Patagonia.

In comments filed that first year of the licensing process for Condit Dam,

Rich wrote that a study was needed to "determine the recreation, fishery, flood damage mitigation, power production and other impacts associated with the removal of impoundments and in returning the White Salmon River to its truest sense of 'run-of-river.'" In 1993, during scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement, Rich requested "a detailed analysis of the whitewater boating opportunities in the lower White Salmon River that would be reestablished under a dam removal alternative, as well as the economic value associated with those expanded opportunities."

In 1996, federal regulators completed a review of PacifiCorp's license application and determined that keeping the dam in place and upgrading facilities to meet "modern environmental standards" was the preferred alternative. During the time when John Gangemi represented the interests of whitewater boaters for American Whitewater, it became apparent that the required upgrades were going to be much more costly than dam removal. The dam produced very little power and it became clear that the dam could not produce this power economically. Katherine Ransel, working for American Rivers, represented a coalition of conservation groups including American Whitewater and successfully





# STEWARDSHIP

secured a settlement agreement between dam owner PacifiCorp, resource agencies, and river conservation groups for dam removal. The agreement was signed in 1999 and called for the dam to be removed in 2006.

Federal regulators analyzed this agreement and recommended dam removal as the new preferred alternative in 2002. The plan was not without controversy however, and at a memorable public hearing Daniel Dancer launched into his song extolling the glories of salmon returning to a free-flowing White Salmon River, to the tune of Neil Young's "Long May They Run." Foes of dam removal raised their collective voice in an impromptu "God Bless America" and pandemonium ensued as federal regulators threatened to shut down the meeting. Order was restored and Daniel was allowed to finish his musical testimony, but that was not the end of the controversy.

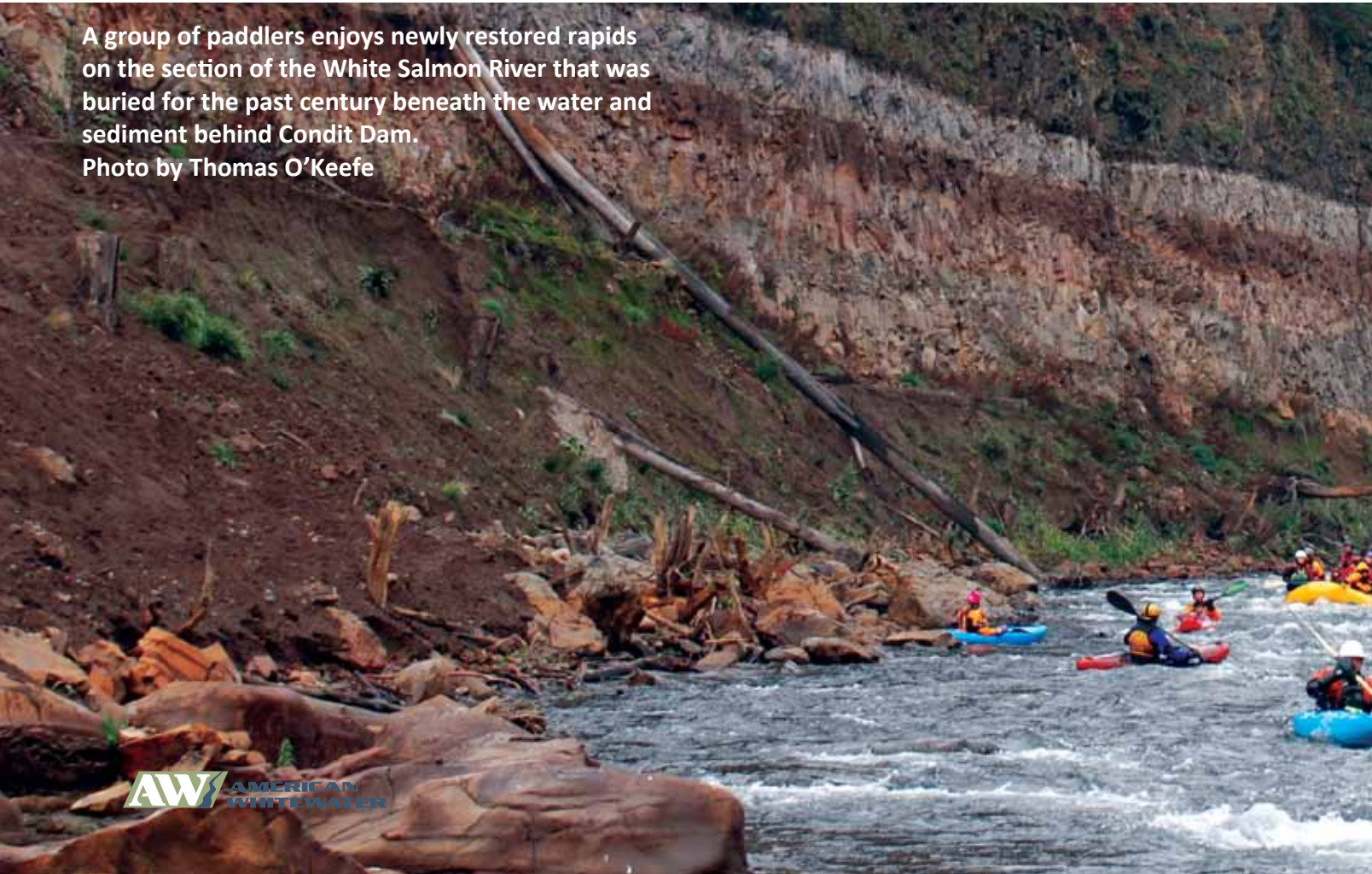
Despite the objections, the removal plan moved forward. As the date for removal approached in 2006, however, it was clear that the project was languishing, and the County even mounted an effort to acquire the dam from PacifiCorp. The necessary regulatory steps were not proceeding in part due to continued opposition from the County and a pending threat of litigation. It was around this time that Keen Footwear stepped up to support American Whitewater's effort to launch a stewardship program based in the Pacific Northwest. With a regional office in close proximity to the project, American Whitewater was able to take on a leadership role in moving the agreement through the final steps of the regulatory process. Working with our partners in the Hydropower Reform Coalition—a true team effort involving several local, regional, and national organizations—we got the project back on track and applied the consistent pressure that was necessary to bring the

project to fruition. As we all stood near the bank of the river above the dam that day a little more than a year ago and felt the ground shake with the blast of 700 lbs. of dynamite we knew there was no turning back—Condit Dam was a thing of the past.

Drinking champagne at the base of Condit Dam a year later, it was rewarding to reflect back on the long journey that had brought us to that day. Watching the joy and excitement on all of the faces around me, it quickly became apparent what really brought Condit Dam down. It was not the poor economics of the project, the power of the Endangered Species Act, or even the fishway prescriptions resulting from Section 18 of the Federal Power Act. It really came down to a simple fact—people care deeply about this river. It was the whitewater enthusiasts who went out to enjoy the river on their free weekends, the fishermen who have a spiritual connection to the river, members of the Yakama Nation

**A group of paddlers enjoys newly restored rapids on the section of the White Salmon River that was buried for the past century beneath the water and sediment behind Condit Dam.**

**Photo by Thomas O'Keefe**





whose connection to the river predates all of us, the school kids who acted out the dam breach at countless public hearings, and others who just enjoyed hanging out by the river. For all those people, the White Salmon mattered and it was this community of folks who ultimately brought the dam down.

Standing there at the former dam site, our celebration wasn't done—we all had more new river to run. Soon we were back in our boats in nervous anticipation of Steelhead Falls a short distance downstream. The mile and a half below Condit Dam had been largely dewatered over the past century as the flow of the river was routed through a pipe to the powerhouse downstream. While some had explored this section of river over the years, it was largely characterized by a series of stagnant pools harboring the debris and detritus that occasionally washed over the dam. This section now contains the most

significant whitewater on the run as the river plunges over Steelhead Falls, a ledge drop that feeds into a meaty hydraulic that is Class IV to V, depending on flows. About half the group portaged the falls—including the rafters, but several folks fired it up and everyone styled it. Those considering their first run are advised to go with someone who can recognize the drop because it comes up quick at the end of a Class III rapid. As flows increase, the intensity of the hydraulic builds and the portage route closes out. Below Steelhead Falls the river passed through one of the most dramatic sections of river anywhere—the White Salmon Narrows, where gardens of mosses and ferns spill in over the high gorge walls that are beautiful organic formations of pillow basalts.

Emerging from the Narrows, we passed by the old powerhouse on river left; it was in this section that we saw the most spawning salmon. Massive fish made good use of

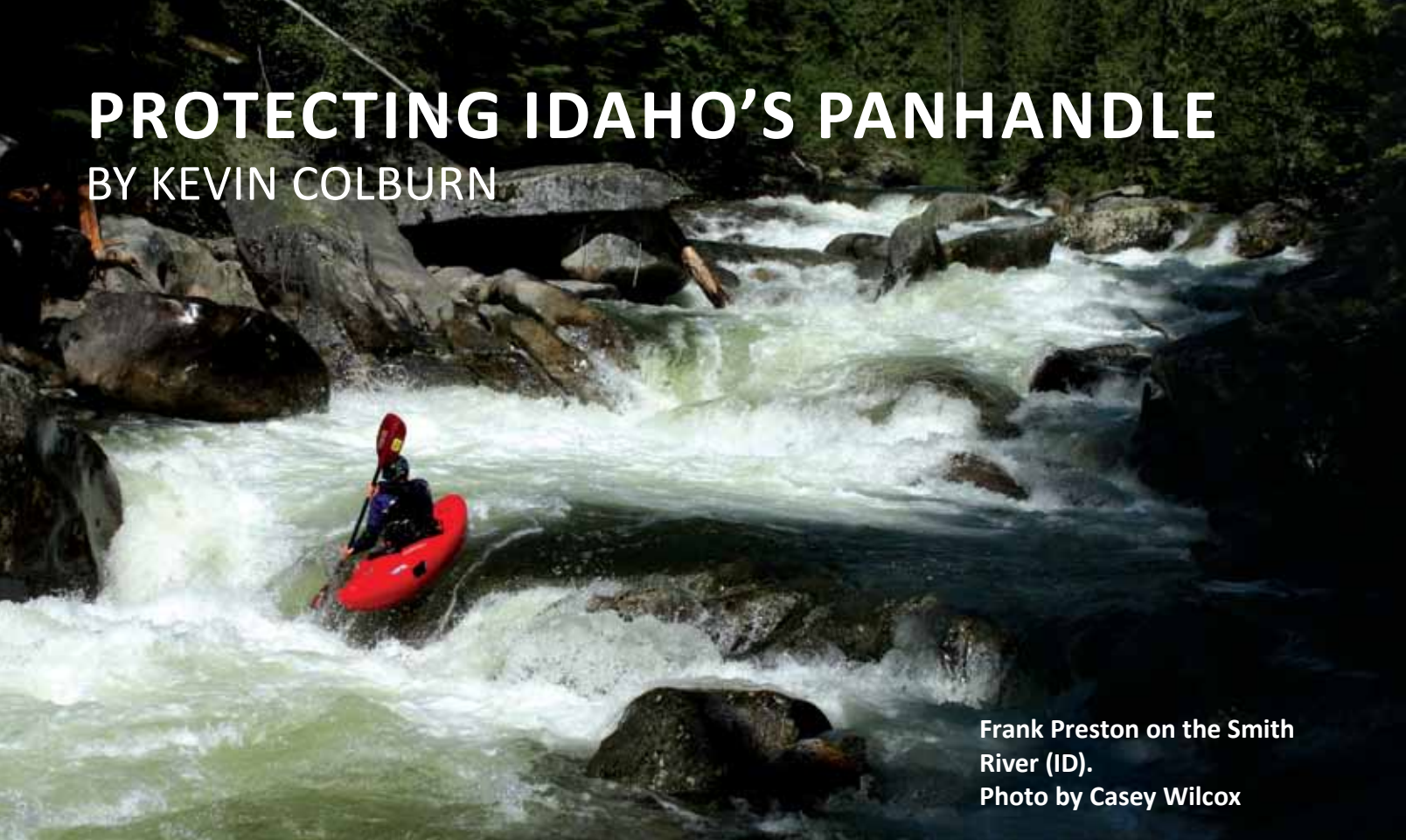
the abundant supply of gravel that can now move downstream and is no longer held back by Condit Dam. All of us on the river that day were deeply moved by the presence of these majestic fish that were so quickly taking advantage of the benefits of this restored river. A short distance downstream, the river cascaded through one final Class III sequence before settling in to the calm waters of the pool held back by Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River. It was only about a half mile of flatwater paddling down to the point where the White Salmon joins the Columbia, which was also our take-out. While the take-out marked the end of the day's journey it was really much more than that. It was the end of a long road extending over decades to see this project come to a successful outcome, and it was the start of a new beginning for a restored White Salmon River.





# PROTECTING IDAHO'S PANHANDLE

BY KEVIN COLBURN



Frank Preston on the Smith River (ID).  
Photo by Casey Wilcox

**T**HE IDAHO PANHANDLE has a knack for burning paddlers. Flashy flows, dams, late season snowpack blocking roads, and a dearth of gages all contribute to shutting down paddlers who make the drive up to this remote region. When the stars align though, paddlers are treated to clean bedrock slides, falls, and rapids, beautiful scenery, and the chance to see just about any animal native to the northwestern US. Mountain caribou even stalk the area—yes *caribou*.

American Whitewater has been helping regional paddlers protect and enhance the Idaho Panhandle as a special place to paddle. We have been advocating for expanded protections under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, with a decision about whether numerous streams are “eligible” expected sometime this winter. This interim protective status would help save streams like Boundary and Boulder creeks from current hydropower dam proposals. At the same time we are directly challenging

those proposed high-impact hydropower projects. In addition, we have reached out to the owner of the existing hydropower project on Smith Creek and requested that they work in collaboration with us to

provide improved public flow information. Together, we hope these actions help the Idaho Panhandle remain a wild and special place for paddlers to explore.



Smith Creek: Wild...check, scenic...check.  
Photo by Frank Preston



# STEWARDSHIP

## FIRST UPPER NANTAHALA RELEASES A SUCCESS

BY KEVIN COLBURN

**A**MERICAN WHITEWATER WAS part of a team of stakeholders that spent three years together learning about and negotiating the future of the Nantahala and Tuckasegee rivers, then another nine years working towards implementation. After over a decade of effort, releases began this fall on the Cascades and Upper Nantahala River. The Nantahala Outdoor Center and Endless River Adventures provided shuttles that went smoothly, and the US Forest Service was there to monitor the releases. Duke Energy owns the dams and did a great job of providing the correct flows. Next year, and every year thereafter for decades to come there will be eight annual releases on the Cascades and Upper Nantahala that provide a range of flows and experiences.

At American Whitewater we are thrilled that the rivers are finally beginning to flow. We are working with Duke Energy on trail construction into the West Fork of the Tuckasegee this fall, and anxiously await the first recreational releases on this long and committing Class IV+ run in April of 2013. We are encouraging only paddlers with strong exploratory Class V skills to tackle the first release or two next spring so the paddling community can learn gradually and safely about the wood and other hazards in the gorge. There will be seven optimal West Fork releases each year!

As we kick off a year of celebrating these awesome restored recreational opportunities AW would like to recognize several individuals for their contributions. As AW's staffer on the project, I spent thousands of hours with a group of folks working on this project. Among them were some wonderful partners and some outrageously cantankerous and deceitful adversaries. Two of the paddling community's biggest friends were Maurice and Motty Blackburn, who represented



*The "Horns of God" serve as the starting gates for many paddler's wild ride down the Nantahala Cascades, where AW successfully negotiated 8 annual releases that started in September of 2012.*

**Photo by David Dorsch**

the Carolina Canoe Club as volunteers and scarcely if ever missed a meeting. They did a great job and paddlers owe them a big Thank You (and many shuttles)!

Two people who were critical to our success have since passed away. John Wishon's roots permeate the Nantahala area: he was born in a cabin above the gorge in Tallulah Bog and his grandparents ran a mill at the upper falls on Whiteoak Creek. John worked for Duke Power, based out of the Nantahala powerhouse, and was the Company's project manager for the dam relicensing. John was thoughtful, open-minded and had a deep love for the Nantahala area and its people. He also supported whitewater recreation as an appropriate and valuable use of the area's rivers, and was a true friend to the paddling community and to those of us lucky enough to work with him. Steve Reed also passed away prior to witnessing the first releases, while hiking on the Appalachian Trail in 2012. Steve represented the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources in the negotiations

and was the instigator behind the entire collaborative process. He was a champion of solutions that worked for the rivers and their enjoyment, and he calmly, rationally, and strongly supported your interests as whitewater paddlers.

Lastly, we would like to express our great gratitude to our newest friend in this project. On the first weekend of the upper Nantahala releases, NOC guide Rob Kelley was running shuttle when he watched a paddler disappear under a log in the river and become pinned underwater. Rob pulled his vehicle over and executed a daring rescue of the unconscious and fully submerged paddler who was subsequently revived and is recovering. Rob is a hero by any definition. His quick rescue and the support and great CPR efforts of others present undoubtedly saved a life.

Be careful out there as you enjoy the two newest contributions of AW and our partners to the Southeastern paddling scene in 2013.



# WILDERNESS WHITEWATER

## STORIES FROM EXPLORE SIX RIVERS :

### THE UPPER UPPER SOUTH FORK SMITH

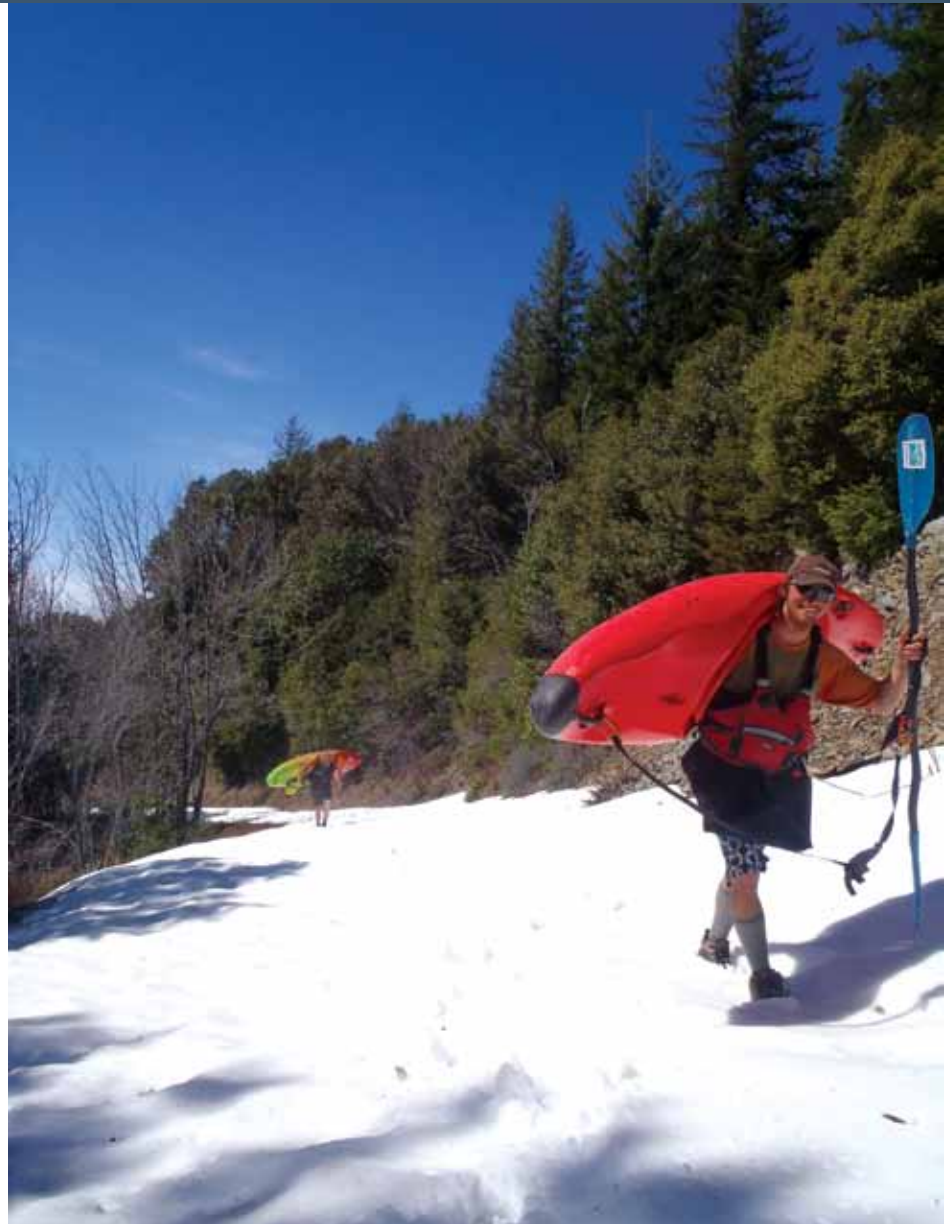
BY PAUL GAMACHE

**S**NOW HAS FILLED the undercarriage of Wes's smoking diesel truck and the beast refuses to budge. After a few minutes of digging with paddles we manage to back the truck out. It is now time to face a major crux of the Explore Six Rivers expedition.

The main issue that keeps the Upper Upper South Fork Smith off nearly every paddler's radar is that the flow range has yet to be nailed down. The gauge is far downstream and combines the flow of the south, middle and north fork plus all their tributaries. There is also a drastic discrepancy in flow correlation in the upper reaches depending on snowmelt versus rainfall. Flow confusion mixed with a seasonally gated Forest Service road makes the Upper Upper South Fork Smith a skunked mission waiting to happen.

Thankfully Dan has done this one before, twice actually. He knows the road, the rapids, and what to expect. Once again his presence comforts the group's fear and trepidation. Apprehension aside, we're all in good spirits as we strip down in the hot spring sun. Most of us opt to hike in our underwear since wearing a dry suit or even synthetic layers sounds too hot to bear. Fueling up on an enormous ball of pesto cheese bread and some of Wes's chocolate chip cookies, group members pick up their boats and take the first steps of an eight-mile hike up the snow-covered road.

At first it is easy. The excitement for adventure pulls us forward. Miles come and go and eventually the road becomes dangerous. A banking slope of snow makes a fall potentially deadly. The thoughts of barreling over a snow covered guardrail and falling hundreds of feet keeps everyone



*Dan Menten and Jon Hyland early on in the hike.*  
**Photo by Paul Gamache**

on guard. Dangers aside, there are streams of ice water running down the occasional patch of road. At least this makes it easy to stay hydrated.

"I should have worn socks", I think to myself. My feet have begun to freeze below me. Socks are vital. When leaving the truck I was concerned with having to deal with soaking wet socks from the hike. The luxury of having dry socks inside my drysuit and a clean dry pair for camp outweighed the

"temporary" discomfort of hiking through the snow. Not sure where the logic was lost on that one.

Finally it's time to stop. The sun is setting and there is no longer any warmth from the bluebird sky. In the shade the temperature drops quickly. Sitting down on my boat I pull out the long needed socks, drysuit and a bottom layer. Dan has gone on ahead while Jon, Wes, and Will move steadily along. By the time I'm packed up again the sound



of Wes dragging his boat along the snow catches up to me.

Almost in harmony, the road drops down to the river as the sun goes behind its final horizon line for the night. When I find him, Dan is quick at work building a fire. Fire is key. We quickly collect sticks; the routine is something that we excel at as a group. There is no discussion; we all know our roles. Whoever starts a fire works on building it while everyone else collects wood. As the fire comes to a roar, Will and Jon arrive, putting down their boats. They are as happy as the rest of us that the hike is over with.

The next morning we wake early. Hiking the final hundred yards down to the start of the river, it's painfully obvious the water is high. There isn't much conversation; we just do as we've done at every put-in prior.

We check our gear, check each other, and head off knowing we are in the company of solid paddlers and good friends.

Wood. It's one of, if not the most, unpredictable aspects of paddling. It is a constant variable of danger. Even the best paddlers can be caught off guard by wood in the river. The fast pace of the high water makes eddies few and far between. Pools of flat-water are almost non-existent. Thankfully, the moves are mostly Class III/IV with the occasional Class V. That said, any flip, swim, or missed line could instantly turn into a V+ situation. Logs are everywhere. We go under, over, and around them.

The blade of a once trusty Werner paddle slips through a hand and dives deep underwater. Wes swims. After bracing and catching his paddle between rocks, he flips,

snapping his paddle instantly. Following a brief but rock-bashing swim he is safely on shore. Thankfully, we have more than one breakdown paddle. Attaching the two halves of the spare paddle together, Wes is ready to head downriver. Like most Class V boaters after a nasty swim, Wes shakes it off, hoping it's the last one for a while.

Soon after Wes's swim we arrive at "Logjam Meadow." The next several hundred yards is a complex maze of seasonally changing log hazards. During the portage Dan mentions that the logjam he witnessed in years past was worse than what we are experiencing. We aren't sure whether to be relieved or terrified of what is yet to come. There is only one direction the logs could have gone, and soon enough we will see for ourselves.



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# WILDERNESS WHITEWATER



*Wayne's World.*

Photo by Wes Schrecongost

What we encounter next is our first large rapid, a walled-in semi-complex Class V-drop. After a quick look I scan the hillside for a way around. The portage looks more difficult and dangerous than the line so I head back to my boat and prepare to go first. There is no point standing around talking about it. Setting safety is nearly impossible until someone goes first and sits below the drop to clean up the result of any gloriously botched lines. Luckily, my left-to-right line works out and I am soon below the drop, engulfed in vertical canyon walls. Right then it hits me: this is a very special and seldom visited place. The rest of the guys make it through clean and we all paddle away knowing that the retreat back to put-in has become that much more difficult.

Something about this section pulls you in. I could eddy out and wait but how often do you get to just go fast on the river? The estimated speedometer on my GPS clocks us at 18 mph in some sections. Like a Siren's Song the river plays its irresistible music and I cannot stop myself. Then, like a cold hard slap in the face I realize I've been lured into danger. Full-sized vertical trees

are lying diagonally across the drop ahead of me, an enormous X screaming for me to stop. Spotting a small eddy on river left I charge hard and temporarily manage to halt my downstream progress. I feel myself being pulled out of the bottom of the eddy and suddenly everything around me stops. Time stands still as the reality of the must-make eddy is hammered home. There is no second chance, do not mess this up. I claw with my paddle on rock and water to attain far enough into the eddy feel safe and stable. Then I immediately reach down for my whistle, hanging from my lifejacket, and make three long blasts, the universal sign for danger ahead. With the warning call out it is now my job to get out of my boat and grab my throw bag. The thought of the micro eddies upriver being too few and far between for the rest of the group to stop in time rushes through my head. If someone gets hurt, it's because I was being reckless rather than moving safely downriver as a group.

Thankfully, everyone is able to eddy out in time. Like after Wes's swim the group is once again slightly shaken. Another close call, and we haven't even hit the major

rapids. We work together to portage around Xenodeath Falls and then take a break before putting back on.

The sun has been shining all day. The thought of countless snow-melting streams running down the road, hillside, and river puts us in a difficult position. The water is high and for all we know it is only coming up. The longer we take to get downriver the more difficult and dangerous the increased flow will make it. In some ways we are racing against the danger, and in doing so facing even greater risks. This may also be the last chance of the season to complete this section. Once the snow is gone, flows will be gone too until it rains again in the fall or early winter. It is a constant balance between moving quickly and moving safely, and more than a few times I was guilty of erring on the side of speed.

Within a couple of hours we arrive at Wayne's World. The horizon line is unmistakable. It's one of the few rapids we had knowledge of prior to putting on and is the single largest drop in this section.

A few years ago, Dan paddled this section with Ben Hawthorne. Ben, who is a phenomenal paddler, lost his dad in a paddling accident when he was younger. He had paddled countless runs with his dad on the Smith River while growing up in nearby Crescent City. It seemed only fitting that Ben name this spectacular rapid in honor of his father, Wayne.

Looking at the rapid we see a clear line, however, the consequence of being worked in the boil line and pushed anywhere but to the right side of the bottom drop make the consequences too high for our group. At lower flows the rapid is more runnable but for us it is a water level portage on the right.

An hour later Prescott Fork enters on river left. The flat area nearby urges us to call it a day. We know that this is our best option for camping. A mile and a half downriver we will face a mile-long Class V(+) boulder



garden at high water. Better to stop here for the night than to continue on. Dropping in tired doesn't usually work out so well.

No one says it but we are all nervous about the boulder garden ahead. We take our time loading up the next morning and by 9:30 we are on the water about to find out how much more difficult the rapid will be at high water. The water feels exceptionally cold in the brisk morning air. We paddle on knowing we have work ahead of us.

In less than an hour we are at the start of the boulder garden. For the next 90 minutes we scout, paddle or portage, and work together to keep moving downriver. The rapid is substantially more difficult than when Dan was here last. Fun boat-scoutable rapids have turned into a maze of holes and occasional logs. The danger of swimming and losing your boat instantly makes us walk more than we would normally. In reality most of the boulder garden is good to go, but the consequences and time it takes to maneuver safely makes portaging the quicker, safer option. For the portions we do run, the force of the river is noticeable. Staying on line is manageable but you can feel the river wanting to pull

you elsewhere the second you get lazy or don't boof a hole hard enough.

Getting past the boulder garden is a major milestone. For a long stretch below we are able to cruise and enjoy the beautiful scenery around us. Once again, miles pass smoothly with only a couple of wood scouts here and there. We pass a memorable beach and can see the South Kelsey Trail coming in on river left. The flow for this Class IV/V section is far above the suggested maximum. For us it doesn't make much of a difference. At this point we're excited to be able to run clean rapid after rapid. We find lines that normally never go. Off what would normally be a rock 6 to 10 feet out of the water we stick huge sky boofs sending us flying through the air.

One final rapid remains, Exit. I turn the corner and drop in. Getting worked momentarily in a monster hole I find my way out through the bottom and paddle away stoked to have run it blind. The group drops in one after the next. Everyone is cheering and paddles away with the same ear-to-ear smile on their face. It is with this final rapid that I am reminded of the reasons I love paddling.

## About Explore Six Rivers:

*Six Rivers National Forest in Northern California is named after the Smith, Klamath, Trinity, Eel, Van Duzen, and Mad Rivers. In February of 2012, a team consisting of Will Parham, Wes Schrecongost, Dan Menten, and Paul Gamache began their goal of paddling all six rivers from source to sea in a single season. The purpose of the expedition was to explore and promote paddling in and around the North Coast. This is one story, from one section, of one river. For more information and an online video of this section please visit: [ExploreSixRivers.com](http://ExploreSixRivers.com)*

*Paul Gamache is currently in Cameroon on a Sperry Top-Sider sponsored expedition. [ChutesDuCameroun.com](http://ChutesDuCameroun.com)*

*The Smith River Alliance (SRA) protects and restores land in the Smith River watershed, advances projects that restore salmon populations throughout their range, and operates Rock Creek Ranch—one of the watershed's most successful environmental education facilities.*

*SRA was founded in 1980 to provide long-term protection, restoration, and stewardship of natural resources in the Smith River watershed. Their work takes place across the watershed and Del Norte County including the Smith River National Recreation Area, Redwood National and State Parks and the Lake Earl Wildlife Area. The Smith River Alliance was recently awarded a grant from the Conservation Alliance to permanently protect the Hurdygurdy Creek watershed, a key tributary of California's Smith River, one of the crown jewels of the Wild and Scenic River System and a nationally recognized "Salmon Stronghold."*

[www.smithriveralliance.org](http://www.smithriveralliance.org)



*The author hits a fun boof.  
Photo by Wes Schrecongost*



# TANA RIVER 2012

BY ANDREW GUNNOE



*Looking down on the braids of the Chitna River.*

**Photo by Andrew and Stacy Gunnoe**

**D**URING THE FIRST week of July, 2012 a group of river runners from various locales across the United States—eight in all: three from Arizona, two from Tennessee, one Alaskan/Arizonian hybrid, and one each from California and Colorado—drove into the backwoods community of McCarthy, Alaska. Their plan was to run the little-known Tana River, a glacial melt river that has been described as the “crown jewel” of remote Alaskan whitewater.

The Tana River begins at the base of Tana Glacier, a 17-mile-long glacier that flows northwest along the eastern slope of the Chugach Mountains. In mid-summer, the Tana reaches peak levels at somewhere in the range of 20-30,000 cfs, producing a handful of Grand Canyon style rapids that are sure to raise the neck hairs of even the most experienced river runners. From its source, the Tana River flows for approximately 40 miles before joining the Chitna River, doubling its flow and continuing northwest for another 50 miles

before reaching the first signs of civilization at the town of Chitna along the mighty Copper River. During the summer months the Copper River flows commonly exceed 100,000 cfs!

Due to the remote location of the Tana, its freezing cold waters, and some notable disasters on early descents, it is estimated that fewer than 100 individuals who have descended this magnificent river. Considering the overall quality of the Tana, including its whitewater, scenery, and mind-blowing scale, this is a remarkably low number. In years to come, I would not be surprised to see this river increase in popularity and take its rightful place among the “classic” wilderness whitewater runs in North America. The fact that there is no permit required for this river only increases its appeal.

Our journey began in Anchorage during the final days of June, 2012. The crew arrived over the course of several days and were soon joined by Nik Merlino, our unofficial

“trip leader” and the owner/operator of McCarthy River Tours and Outfitters, based out of McCarthy, Alaska. Nik (known locally as “Mr. Toe”) started McCarthy River Tours in 2010 and has quickly established a high-quality river running outfitter that offers various day trips down local runs, including the Kennecot, Chitna, and Copper rivers. The Tana, however, is a different beast and this summer’s crew was just the second in as many years to explore this largely unknown river.

Once assembled in Anchorage, the crew piled into Mr. Toe’s van and headed north out of Anchorage for the eight-hour drive to the town of McCarthy, Alaska. Before departing Anchorage we stopped at a grocery store to purchase food for the trip, including sufficient libations for our seven days on the water and various other river necessities that we would not be able to purchase in an outpost like McCarthy. The road to McCarthy was anything but boring. There were stunning views of the Chugach Mountains as they spread Northward from



# WILDERNESS WHITEWATER

Anchorage. At Palmer we headed east along the Old Glenn Highway, which winds its way up the Matanuska Valley. Numerous glaciers and snow-capped mountains lined our path as we made our way through the valley, towards the town of Chitna (our take-out), where the road turns to gravel for the remaining 80 miles to McCarthy.

Upon arriving in McCarthy the crew stayed at the Aspen Meadow's B&B, which is owned and operated by a couple of local McCarthyites. This year we arrived a day early in order to take the opportunity to experience the local attractions. There are numerous options for exploring the area, including visiting the historical Kennecott Mine, an early 20th century copper mine and principle impetus behind the construction of the Kennecott Rail line and, eventually, the town of McCarthy. Several members of the crew used their day to go ice climbing on the Kennecott Glacier, while others chose to save money and go for a hike along the glacier's Western edge and visit the town of Kennecott. Still others stayed behind to help Nik prepare the river gear for our departure the following morning. We all enjoyed our day and rendezvoused at the local watering hole in McCarthy later that evening.

## July 2: Take-off!

We awoke early in the morning in order to begin hauling the first of two loads of gear to the local airstrip for our shuttle flight out to the glacier. Our shuttle flight was handled by Wrangell Mountain Air, a bush pilot service based out of McCarthy. This year's crew—including eight people, three fifteen-foot NRS rafts with full rigging, food, gear, etc.—required three flights to get us all in there. Our pilot, Don, a river runner himself and a first-class bush pilot, was incredibly accommodating: he hardly even sneered at our large assortment of beers, only inquiring whether we were “planning on opening a liquor store out there?”

---

*Scouting the entrance to the big rapids.*  
Photo by Andrew and Stacy Gunnoe

“Of course not,” we replied, “we’ll need those!”

With over 13 years of river running experience, this was my first fly-in shuttle. Along with most avid river runners, I have long desired to get the “fly in” experience. The quick flight up and over the Chitna River Valley and up the Tana did not disappoint. The views were incredible and flying up the river valley and looking at the seemingly small ripples below (which were in fact huge rapids!) was an experience I will not soon forget.

Our landing spot was along a pebble beach that stretched along the left shore of the river just a couple of miles below the river's source at the base of the Tana Glacier. After a smooth landing, we unloaded the last of our gear and watched as the pilot drove the plane to the far end of the beach, before turning, throttling up, and taking to flight just above our heads as we energetically cheered him on.

The rest of the day was filled with boat rigging, dinner, and a couple of friendly games of croquette. A more hurried crew could have shoved off into the to the river to knock out of a few miles, but considering our schedule (seven days, six nights) there was no need. We were more than happy to relax and enjoy the scenery and solitude of the upper Tana.

## July 3: River Braids and Sand Dunes

The following morning we awoke at a leisurely pace, ate breakfast, and finalized the rigs before pushing off into the river sometime around noon. At this point, the river is fairly mild as it winds its way down the braids of the upper Tana. The relatively calm waters were welcomed by several of the crew members, particularly those of us who are less accustomed to paddling heavy rafts with oar-rigs. The primary obstacles during this stretch of the river are the gravel bars that extend out into the river and are difficult to see due to the opaque, glacial silt water. Beaching a loaded down raft on one of these gravel bars could be a real pain, however we were able to avoid the worst of them and make good progress down river.

After several river miles we came upon a large sand dune that dominates the left shore and marks the beginning of the Tana gorge and the larger rapids that lie below. We stopped to check out the first sizable rapid, a big water Class III wave train with a large crashing wave in center that is easily avoided. We also had lunch and took the time to hike up the sand dunes. The hike is relatively easy and takes you up along a ridge to the point where the tops of large conifer trees are sticking out of the dunes. The sand dune ends abruptly at the edge of a forest, from which point you can observe the wind slowly carrying the sand over the





# WILDERNESS WHITEWATER

top of the ridge as it continues the slow process of moving across the landscape. It is well worth the time to get out and explore this rare Alaskan sand dune.

After our hike, we climbed back into the rigs and shoved off into a strong downstream wind sweeping down off the glacier. Getting out of this massive eddy took some muscle and we pulled hard on the rigs to bring the boats back towards the center of the flow near the river right bank. The first rapid was completed without incident and we continued downstream another mile or so before arriving at our second camp. This camp was located on river left, just upstream of where Gravel Creek flows into the Tana. Just below is a large bend in the river that marks the beginning of the large rapids. From our camp at Gravel Creek we could see the bend in the river, and with the aid of binoculars could barely make out a series of large waves that were forming at the outside of the river bend. From this vantage point there is no way of knowing what lies beyond.

During an exploratory run of the Tana the previous summer, a crew (including four members of this year's crew) experienced some unexpected carnage while running the first series of rapids. After missing a

planned eddy stop for a scout, the crew stumbled into the rapids without any knowledge of what lay below. This mishap resulted in two of three rafts flipping and a long, cold swim for several individuals. In fact, according to Mr. Toe, these rapids were described as "unscoutable" in several accounts from previous runs. But not to be deterred by the previous years' experience, we agreed that we would once again try to catch an eddy in order to scout the rapid and avoid any unnecessary carnage. We decided that the best spot for a scout would be along the river right side and, again, with the aid of a pair of binoculars located a workable eddy on river right, just as the river turned around the bend and out of sight. The fast current, and the experience of last year, made for a long night in camp as we all mulled the possibilities of missed eddies and the uncertainty that lay below.

## July 4: Big Water Fourth of July

After a restless night we awoke early to blue skies and the sound of rushing whitewater below. Camp was unusually quiet this morning, reflecting that eerie feeling that haunts river runners who camp just above a large rapid, or a committing gorge. Nevertheless, we went through the motions, rigged our boats, and readied ourselves for the rapids below. Before

pushing off, we all gathered for the customary safety meeting and discussed our plans for the rapids below. Plan A was to pull out into the river and immediately start pulling towards river right, in order to set ourselves up for catching the eddy that lay just downstream. We all agreed that Plan B would be activated if any of the three boats failed to catch the eddy, and would include all boats continuing downstream in order to face the rapids together. There was no Plan C.

After (too) many hours of building tension we shoved off. Several minutes later we all pulled into the eddy just upstream of the river bend and gave a collective sigh of relief. We would not have run the biggest rapids on the river blind after all.

The boats were all tied off and we headed downstream to scout the rapids below. The scout required some bush-whacking through bear infested forests. We made sure to make plenty of noise to announce our presence. After a short while we began to hear the roar of the rapids and cut back towards the river to begin the scout. Although we did not see any bears, there were numerous grizzly tracks in the sand, which kept us on our toes and added to the excitement of the river.



*Hanging out among the skeleton trees on the Sand dunes of the Tana River.*

**Photo by Andrew and Stacy Gunnoe**

In total the rapid is roughly a half-mile long and consists of two major drops and several must-make moves. The first drop is called On Ramp. It begins with a series of pour overs on river right, which means that upon exiting the scouting eddy you have to pull hard left in order to steer clear of the pour-overs and set yourself up for the main drop. The line is down the middle with a bit of a right hand angle. The crux here is to stay right of the large exploding waves on your left, while also staying left of a large seam coming in from river right that could easily flip a 15-foot raft (they believe that this was the spot of the first flip on the previous year's trip).



After making it through the “On Ramp” you have to pull hard to the right in order to avoid a massive hole in the middle of the stream, which is backed up by a large, nasty looking boulder. Once past this boulder you need to pull the boat back to the left in order to set up for the bottom drop, Freeway. At this point the water is really moving and you need to get left in order to avoid a series of pour-overs and shallow water on river right. The Freeway is a long wave train with enormous exploding waves that are on par with Hermit on the Grand Canyon. The preferred line is to enter center and push right in order to avoid running the meat of the wave train—what we called True Violence. If you are not able to skirt to the right of the wave train, the only option is to square up and hope for the best.

In all, it took about two hours to scout the entire rapid. After discussing the lines with the crew and locking in the crux moves we returned to our boats. Wishing each other “good lines,” we pulled out into the current. All three rigs made it through the top drop without incident and were able to avoid the large hole in the washout. As we approached True Violence, the intensity began to pick up.

The first two boats were able to thread the needle and avoid a direct encounter with True Violence. The third boat (the one

*Mr. Toe sizing up True Violence.*  
**Photo by Andrew and Stacy Gunnoe**

I was in) was not so lucky. As we entered the bottom of the rapid we were beginning to pull right when we encountered a large wave that pushed our bow back left and put us directly in line with the center of the wave-train. Realizing that we had lost our chance to skirt True Violence we squared the boat up and readied ourselves for the exploding waves below. Just as with running Hermit, we came over one wave, then another—each building in size—before arriving at the largest wave, which was somewhere in the range of 15-20 feet tall and exploding unpredictably. As we rode up the face of the wave we saw it getting ready to explode in front of us. The two of us in the front threw our weight onto the bow as we smashed into the wave. I was on the left and as we came over the top of the wave the boat leaned hard left, nearly throwing me overboard. My foothold and one hand remained secure, but my bulk of my weight was now hanging out of the raft. The other passenger (my wife!), quickly helped pull me back into the boat. We made it! After a brief moment of relief and celebration for having run the meat of the rapid without flipping I turned to throw a high five to our oarsman, only to find that he was no longer there! I looked down and found him holding on the side of the boat, like a wet dog and not saying a

word. I quickly grabbed him and pulled him back into the boat as we washed through the final waves of the rapid. We made it, all of us! What a ride!

After Freeway the river mellows out for a short stretch and enters a large granite canyon. It's not quite time to relax yet, because the second large rapid of the day sits less than a mile downstream. This rapid is called “Tubby's Tilt” and although it is possible to scout on river right, the river is really wide and you cannot get close enough to appreciate the size of this beast. The line on Tubby's is down the center-left. Once you enter the main flow the current pushes you hard right at lightning speed toward a large cliff on river right where the water piles up and then pushes you back to the river left. There is little that can be done to avoid the large pillow of water as it pushes off the wall, except trying to control your angle and using your weight to high-side upon impact. One of the oarsmen was nearly thrown from his boat at the point where the water hits the wall, but he managed to pull himself back in. In all, we all had good runs and were now all ready to celebrate our nation's founding.

The day's rapids represented the bulk of the whitewater on the Tana River. Although



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they are few in number they do not disappoint and will excite even the most seasoned river runners. We continued on downstream and after several miles entered the Chitna River, where the flow more than doubled to approximately 60-70,000 cfs. We camped on river right at a site called "Jake's Bar" where there is an old hunting cabin that is still standing, complete with a sweat lodge. This site used to serve as a staging site for miners in the region, but today it is only accessible by boat or bush plane.

In fact, to our surprise there were two men staying in the cabin who had flown in to celebrate the 4th of July out in the Alaskan Wilderness. We asked if they didn't mind sharing the camp and they happily obliged. We spent that evening enjoying a few drinks and deploying our arsenal of fireworks. Our Alaskan camp-mates soon joined in: as our fireworks exploded in the

air, one of the Alaskans pulled a large hand cannon out of its holster and began firing into the air. It was one hell of an Alaskan Fourth of July!

## July 5-8: Jake's Bar to the Copper River

We took a layover the following day in order to recover from our patriotic celebration, relax, and enjoy the indescribable beauty of the Alaskan landscape. We heated up the sweat lodge and several of us were able to take a bath in the frigid cold waters of the Chitna. That evening Mr. Toe arranged for a friend of his who owns a small bush plane to pick him up and fly him back to McCarthy, so that he could get back to work and make the most of the limited season that is available to him up there. Seeing our friend fly out of camp in a small single prop plane with duct tape on the wings was an experience in and of itself. But that's a story for another time. For now, there

were seven of us left for the final three days downstream to our take-out along the Copper River in the town of Chitna.

The final three days down the Chitna did not contain any rapids per se, but we kept busy reading enormous water flows as the river wove its way through a maze of braids. Taking in the scenery and enjoying each other's company are the things that make river trips such as this so rewarding. Although many of us had never met before this trip, we were all fast friends and within days of knowing each other I think it is safe to say that there was a strong bond between us all. We were a crew and we were all working together to accomplish the same goal. It is meeting people like this and having these kinds of experiences that make river running such an important part of my life.



**Cruising down the Chitna River.**  
Photo by Andrew and Stacy Gunnoe





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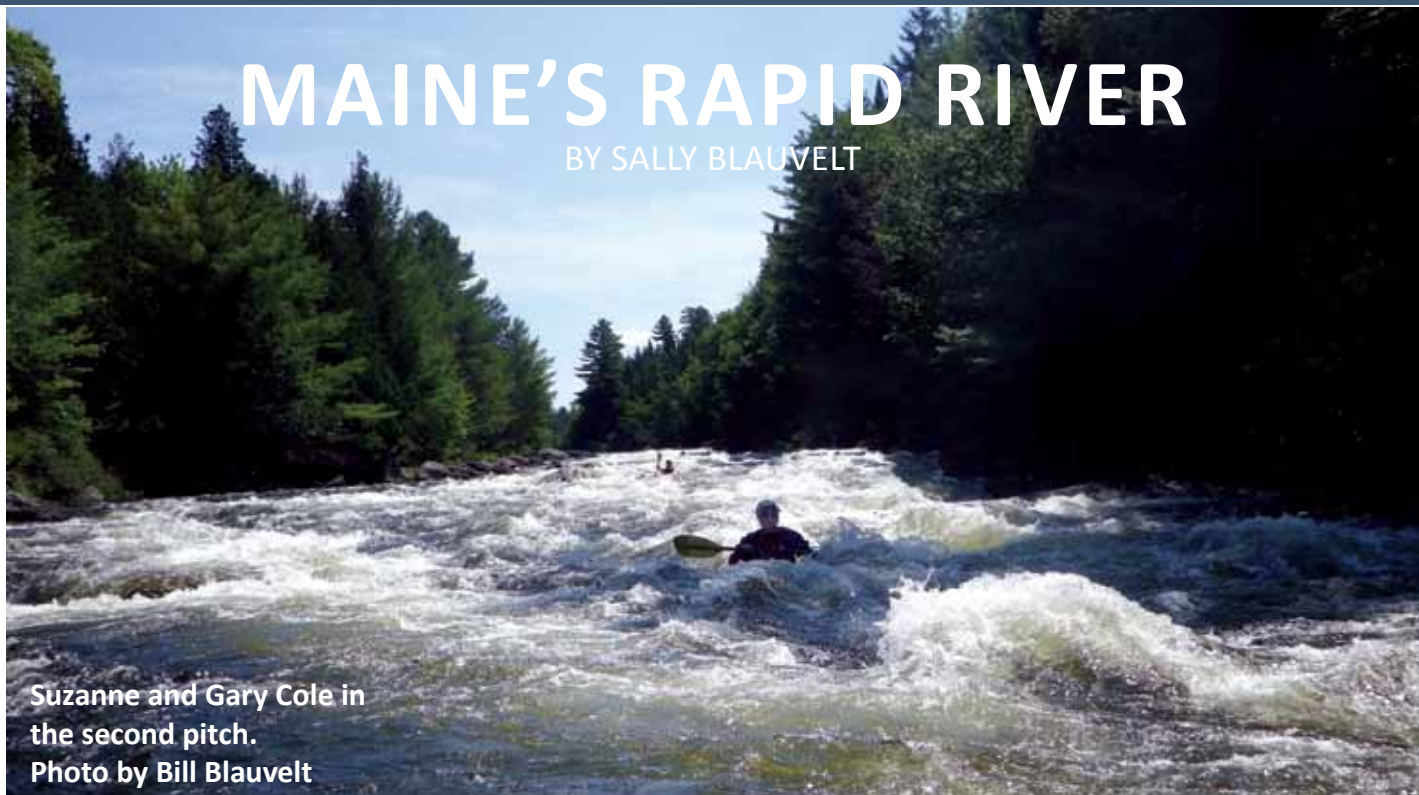
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# RIVER VOICES

## MAINE'S RAPID RIVER

BY SALLY BLAUVELT



Suzanne and Gary Cole in the second pitch.

Photo by Bill Blauvelt

**T**HE BEAUTIFUL STATE of Maine provides some of the premier whitewater in the country. Thanks to American Whitewater, there are consistent, reliable releases during the summer months, but there are also numerous rain dependant streams available all year, all throughout the state, from the great north woods, to the south, even in close proximity to the hip and happening town of Portland. But more importantly, Maine is home to an abundant supply of old school open boaters. For someone like me, unsure if I'd ever get back into boating after an absence of over six years, there is NOTHING so welcoming as knowing you can follow an open boater down the dry lines of a scary or unfamiliar river. Especially if you're following a female open boater, all of whom rock just by default! It feels a lot like the comfort of sucking your thumb holding tight to a blankie nestled next to your bosom. Yes. Bosom.

My husband, Bill and I moved to Maine last June as a change of pace to the hustle and bustle of the Baltimore/Washington DC lifestyle, and the drab routine of running

the standard circuit of rivers—Upper Yough, Lower Big Sandy, Lower Yough, and Cheat in a playground like atmosphere attended by hundreds and hundreds of fellow boaters jockeying for the same eddies, boofing over the same drops. Long gone were the days when I would join Richard Hopley to look for water in the highest part of a watershed in West Virginia, or explore rivers rarely run. After a series of life altering catastrophes, boating became scary beyond my ability to manage, and I couldn't find anyone willing to drop it back to Class III. So, rather than dread yet another weekend of boating, I left the scene and explored other outdoor options.

Prior to our arrival in the beautiful state of Maine, my husband, Bill, who needs no introduction—since as an old school boater, you should all know him already—did some research to find boating clubs that might be inhabited by like minded people. We came across a curious sounding club called the Penobscot Paddle and Chowder Society. I was skeptical, since I wasn't even sure I wanted to boat again, but I changed my mind instantly when I saw the

picture on the front cover of their recent newsletter—a picture of some handsome men dressed in nothing but their tool belts. Bring it on BIATCH!!! As an aside, Bill knew he wanted to move to Maine when he located an old news clip of hundreds of nude women parading down the streets of Portland demonstrating for the right to go topless, just as men have the right to do. I'm down with that.

One of the streams Bill and I really took to in our first year of boating in Maine, was the Rapid River. The Rapid River flows from the Pond in the River to Lake Umbagog, which straddles the Maine/New Hampshire border. This is one of the first rivers I paddled in Maine. It was on the shuttle road that I saw my very first moose, and the first time, I've paddled along side loons, my favorite bird on earth. This was the first time I've paddled from lake to lake (or pond to lake) and it's the first time Bill was able to drink a beer at the take out completely nude. Nothing makes Bill happier.

So, this year, we agreed to be the trip coordinators on the Rapid River for our

new friends from the Penobscot Paddle and Chowder Society. As trip coordinators, we are urged to write trip reports so everyone has the benefit of “staying connected.” The following is my trip report. And, in honor of my southern California heritage, I composed it around the theme of a Grateful Dead song. To plug in every lyric, I was obliged to take creative license, but I assure you, every event is true. You best come to Maine to see for yourself:

We awoke to the sound of a barred owl hooting in the forest behind our campsite. The pink bloom from the *Sugar Magnolia* flowers invited a hungry hummingbird that looked to be stocking up for his feverish flight south to warmer climates. After coffee, and breakfast, Jim, Bill and I packed up our boats in the truck and headed off to meet Suzanne and Gary Cole, Tom Meredith, and John Brower at the turn off to the Rapid River. We were excited—the *blossoms were blooming*, the sun was shining, the river was beckoning, and the early morning sounds of life promised a day of collective effervescence. I can be anxious on rivers, even those well within my capability, and this morning I was not—*my head’s all empty and I don’t care*. Not a care in the world. Mindful meditation helps with this. Really.

I drove the shuttle and left Bill behind at the put-in with Jim and a crew of rafters. Bill and Jim both suggested that they get started paddling across the pond, but selfish person that I am wont to be, I asked Bill to stay so I could see him upon my return. I love him just that much. When I did return, I was a little concerned, because I *saw my baby down by the river*, and he appeared to be under the water for quite some time. But, I was in a good space, and I *knew he’d have to come up soon for air*. He did. Life was good, and the paddle across the lake got started in earnest.

Once we got to the first set of warm up rapids, we came together again to collect our spirits and coordinate our thoughts (or is that coordinate our spirits and collect our

thoughts?). I needed to take a break and since I could *smell the sweet blossom come on* to me, wafting and dancing around my nostrils, I stepped out of my boat and *under a willow*. Bill came with me and I whispered to him, “*we can have high times, if you’ll abide*,” but then we laughed, because if we said that out loud, our new friends might think I was referring to a product rather than a state of mind—a place brought on by clean living and positive presence. After the break, Bill and I contemplated a discussion on safety, but we had skilled boaters among us, this was our first attempt at playing Trip Coordinator for this awesome club, we wanted everyone to have a really good time, and so we set the tone by suggesting to all that *we could discover the wonders of nature, today, rolling in the rushes down by the riverside*. And off we went!

There are three “pitches” as they are called in the first stretch of this three-plus-mile run. All three are similar—you enter center left, and read and run your way down. The water is Class III+, possibly IV-. The rocks below are shallow and sharp making a swim potentially unpleasant. There are holes throughout, many of which you can really just blast your way through, but there are some, especially in the ledge drops to look out for and avoid.

The first pitch was super fun—*she’s got everything delightful*, including bouncy wave trains, cross-pitching diagonals, and an eddy or two to catch if you’re so inclined. Gary caught a sweet eddy at the top of the rapid. I followed, and Suzanne came in behind me. This first rapid—*she’s got everything I need* to get me warmed up for an enjoyable ride downstream. I headed downstream, but Suzanne and Gary caught a couple of more eddies. John styled it as he always does. Thank God for open boaters. They rock. It’s always good to have an open boater on the trip. It brings the requisite purity to the river. Jim likes to take a good hard look at a new river before making the decision to hard boat it, so Bill volunteered to be his partner in the shredder on this fine day. You may have noticed, Bill is

dependable in this way. I know I can occasionally get in a bind, and like he was for Jim this day, he is there for me everyday, no matter what the circumstance. Even, for example, when we go out late to a bluegrass show and I accidentally have one too many to drink. Bill, well, *he takes the wheel when I’m seeing double, and pays my ticket when I speed*. For the record, I’ve done the same for him!

The second pitch is also pretty interesting. I learned after the second day paddling that entry to the left of center is the way to go, but meander your way to river right to avoid some holes at the bottom. It’s a pretty straightforward wave train at the top that you can clip the left of if you want a more marshmallow experience. I got down first so I was able to watch John come down in his open boat. I remember following him down the Canada Falls section of the Penobscot last year. It doesn’t matter what

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# RIVER VOICES

river he's on. It's almost as if *he's skimming through rays of violet. I bet he could wade in a drop of dew.*

The third pitch is busy. There's a river wide ledge hole beginning about a boat length off the right side at the bottom. You can creek around this on far river right, which makes the line interesting, but the main line is left of center again for a happy wave train all the way down. At the end of this, Bill got hungry and so we stopped briefly above the play wave so he could get some quick carbohydrates into his body. It was good we did, since we might have otherwise missed the rainbow arching across the sky. Have you ever seen a rainbow form on a cloudless day? Me neither. But, it's true! Suzanne then confessed to us that she had seen some elves sitting complacently on the backs of some nesting loons up at the pond where we put on. Almost as if they were

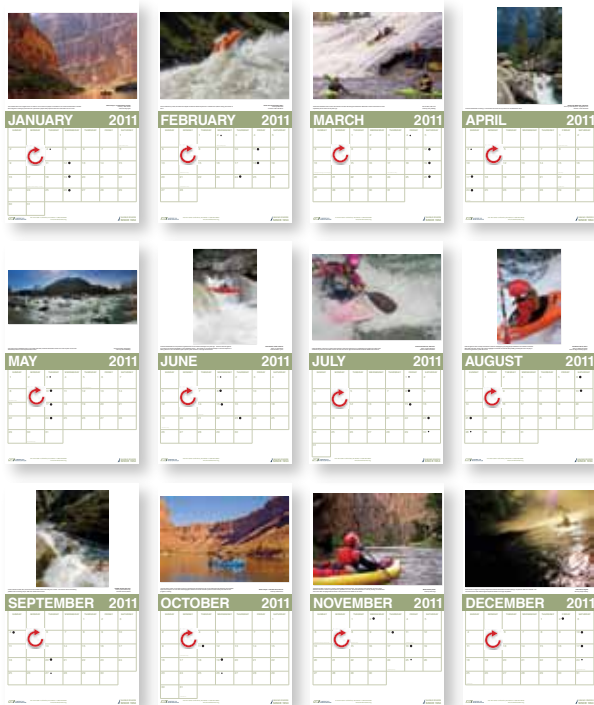
race ready (Gary opined in retrospect). Suzanne did wonder (at the time) what they were doing, and actually beckoned to one of the female elves to come hither. The elf did not oblige nor did Suzanne attempt an approach or in Suzanne's words, "*she don't come, and I don't follow.*" After all, mindful observation was the theme for the day. For any other strategy might otherwise break the magical mystic that seemed to pervade our experience. We felt right with the elements. We were on a roll.

We stopped at Smooth Ledge for about an hour. We talked of many things; we confessed to our dreams, and to our hopes, and to our fears. We reminisced about the club and told tall tales of the times we'd all had. Tom Meredith didn't have his guitar but if he had, I bet he would have sung some tunes for us. I remember once a long, long time ago, in my youthful days

when I was a groupie of Albert Collins. He's the greatest blues guitarist on earth, in my humble opinion. He died of cancer when I was living in Hong Kong. Super bummer. I remember having a drink or two (or three) in his honor. As a groupie, I once snuck backstage to meet him after a show in San Francisco. He was really humble and gracious. I'm not going to say I hooked up with his drummer, because that wouldn't be true. His name was Soko, which I found interesting because this means "market" in Kiswahili. I didn't hook up with him (as I said!), but what would you do if on the first backstage date, a cool musician asked if *I would wait backstage while he singed to you?* HELLO! But, I digress...back to the river.

At smooth ledge, we met up with a feller who swam two of the three pitches. He was pretty bloodied up and looking forlorn. It

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upset our equilibrium. We all wondered what had happened. Remember the elves I mentioned earlier? Well, it appears as if a griffin flew down looking for the gold at the end of the rainbow, too. Since the elves bagged that pot of gold first, the griffin could only conclude that she failed in her quest, at once becoming confused (at her rare defeat) and irritable (as a result). One might even say she was so beside herself she appeared to a casual observer as if she was *dancing a cajun rhythm, jumping like a willys in four wheel drive*. But then, hope appeared when she spotted this poor random boater and so she reverted to the next best option to satisfy her lust for power and victory. She asked this poor guy in a canoe to answer a riddle, warning him that if he failed to answer satisfactorily, he would experience the worst carnage on the river that day. In fairness to the boater, it was a difficult riddle—something to do with a paddle snake. I personally don't know what a paddle snake is, but I've heard (from open boaters) that they exist. As we all felt a great deal of compassion for our new friend, we offered to put him in the shredder with Bill volunteering to take his boat down the rest of the way. Our new boater friend agreed.

My husband was so happy he did a little jig. He got into the RPM and immediately went and practiced in the smooth ledge hole. Bill had the biggest smile on his face after playing in that hole. He said it was *his new summer love for spring, fall and winter*. WHAT?! I pouted a little bit when he said this, just because I'm a girlie girl with the best of them and shouldn't I be his love all year long? But he came over to me and reminded me how happy he is with me as his wifey and assuring me that *I can make happy any man alive*. I'm not sure about all that, but who am I to argue with my husband.

So, on we went down through S-turn, which was super fun. Suzanne, Gary, Bill and I talked later about whether we thought S-turn was the hardest rapid on the river. Some felt it was, just by virtue of its length,



*John Brower on the third pitch.*  
**Photo by Bill Blauvelt**

especially given that it's shallow, with a lot to maneuver around. A swim here would be unpleasant and long. I proffered that all three pitches were harder, because they were steeper and faster and thus, a little more difficult to navigate, but this probably has something to do with how I was raised up as a creek boater and not a big water boater.

Anyway, in the middle of S-turn there's an eddy on river right. Last year, Bill, our friend Ken, and I stopped at this eddy. I wanted to again, because last year when we stopped we were both mystified and awestruck by some dancing flowers. There were some blue bells and some other wild flowers all of whom (not which) seemed alive as their petals caught the sunlight. It was as if they were dancing to a ditty and whispering to us in the wind—beckoning us with *“hey, Sally, Ken, Bill, look around you, enjoy this moment and I'll walk you in the sunshine, come on honey, come along with me.”* At the time we laughed this off as happy imagination using creative license, but now I wonder....

The next rapid was Devils Hopyard. John told us this was because the rapid was set up almost as if the devil himself reached up, grabbed a handful of rocks and lofted them

into the air where they landed at random in this short but interesting rapid. This was really fun for those of us who like rocks.

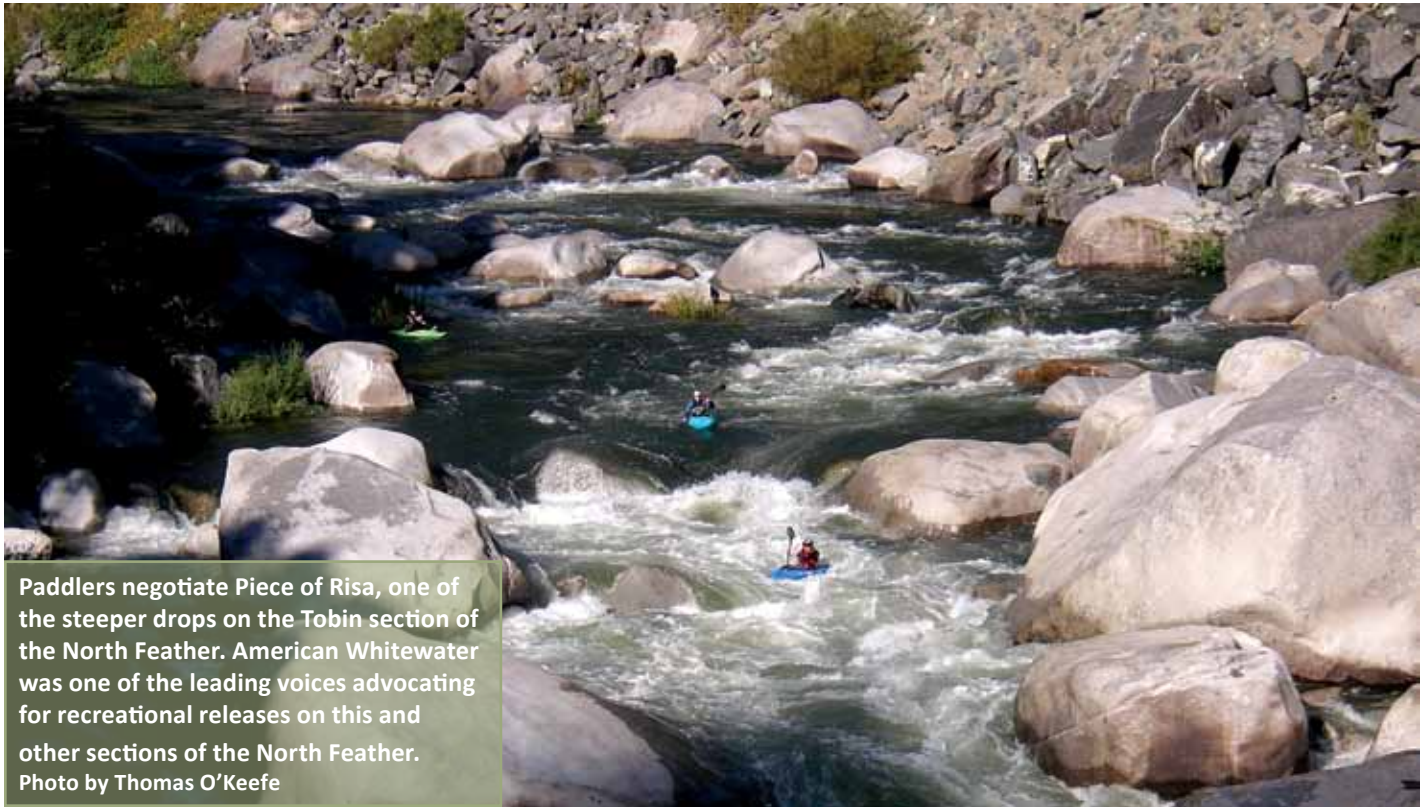
We ended the day watching a group of more than 20 baby mergansers following mama merganser on the lake near our take-out. We all concluded that this river has got everything delightful, she's got everything we need. On the walk out there was a *breeze in the pines and the sun and bright moonlight* (well, maybe not that). We ended the day as Bill and I discovered the club likes to do—with a beer and a happy chat, *lazing in the sunshine- yes indeed*.

So, that's a little sampling of the beautiful state of Maine. I finish this by noting that sometimes when the cuckoo's crying, when *the moon is half way down, sometimes when the night is dying, I take me out and I wander around, I wander round*—and you should do the same. Because, I know I'm helped enormously in life when I'm on or even near the river, basking in the *sunshine, with the daydreams, walking in the tall trees and going where the wind goes, blooming like a red rose, breathing more freely*.

*Sunshine, daydream, sunshine, daydream, walking in the sunshine.*



# LOVE & WHITEWATER



Paddlers negotiate Piece of Risa, one of the steeper drops on the Tobin section of the North Feather. American Whitewater was one of the leading voices advocating for recreational releases on this and other sections of the North Feather. Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

## THE FIRST DAY OF FALL

BY JONATHAN ANGSTADT

**R**ECENTLY, I HEADED down to California for Feather Fest, the largest whitewater festival on the West Coast, with some friends. The weekend was more than I could ever have hoped or dreamed of. Chris Korbolic and Dustin Knapp, two world famous kayakers, showed my best friend and me the lines through the boulder strewn and dangerous Tobin run on the North Fork of the Feather. We ended up doing three heart pounding and smile inducing runs of the Tobin section. After a day of kayaking a large party was scheduled for the evening.

It was the first day of fall.

I had heard stories of how awesome and wild the festival was. Being under aged, however, I had no intention of partaking in the more adult activities of the evening. Around ten in the evening, my best friend and I followed the sound of the live band

to the party. Hundreds of kayakers were dancing and just having an all around drunken good time.

Suddenly from across the crowd I spotted a girl who looked to be about my own age. She was one of the most beautiful and amazing girls I had ever seen in my life and I told myself that I would dance with her. My heart was beating fast, my vision was cloudy, and my knees felt as though at any moment they would buckle, and I would fall to the ground. I walked over to where she stood at the edge of the crowd as calmly and nonchalantly as I could. With a final breath of courage I shouted over the noise of the crowd, "You wanna dance?" Her dark brown eyes met mine and a smile came to her face. "Yeah!" she shouted back at me. The first few songs played, and we danced, just joking and laughing while my best friend did a sort of half country, half paralysis victim dance next to us.

At some point during the dancing she reached over and brushed my curly blond hair out of my eyes. At that point I knew

this would be the best night of my life. We danced and talked for the next hour. The more she talked the more I fell for her. Not only did she kayak, she also ran cross country, and had been rafting since she was little kid. It was as though we were practically the same person. It came up that she knew how to swing dance and she very gamely tried to teach me. While the impromptu lesson was fun, I doubt I was the dancing virtuoso girls dream of. After my brief foray into swing dancing, I looked over to where my friend, Jared was standing in the back of the crowd. He gave me a coy little smile knowing I was going to have a very memorable night.

The moon moved lower and lower in the sky and more people started to leave the party, but she kept dancing closer and closer to me. "What color are your eyes?" she asked as the band played a pink Floyd song in the background. "They're sort of a bluish green" I responded moving closer. "Mine aren't that great...they're sort of poop colored" she replied with an air of self-deprecation. "I think your eyes are

amazing,” I said as I pulled her into me and embraced her softly. When I pulled my lips away from her, a smile came across her face and she just placed her head on my shoulder. We spent the rest of the night slow dancing as the band continued to play even though we were practically the only ones there. I kissed her goodbye when she had to go, but just beyond the joy I felt, there was an ache in my stomach that told me I would never see her again.

The next morning I awoke in the cold. It felt like a dream, but I knew it was real. The guys I had come down with made jokes all morning about how much of a “ladies man” I was, but all I wanted was to find this girl and be with her for the few short hours I had left in California. I hurriedly ate breakfast then walked around the festival site looking for where she was camped.

But it was in vain; she was nowhere to be found.

After two more Tobin runs we drove back to Grants Pass.

I knew I had to see her again. There was a feeling of pure uncontained joy I got when I was with her that I had never felt for a girl before, and it was hard to explain. Earlier that year three girls had rejected me in as many months. My confidence was down, though I never showed it, and I needed something to feel good about. She was the perfect way to end a less-than-perfect summer and I wanted to see her one more time. I can still feel my hand on the small of her back as we moved across the dance floor, the smell of her hair as she rested her head on my shoulder, and the happiness inside as she smiled at me.

When I got back to Oregon I searched for her on Facebook. As I hit “View Profile,” a terrible realization came into focus: she had a boyfriend. Worse, it had become Facebook official only minutes before she accepted my friend request. I slumped back in my chair, feeling an almost physical blow.

After I explained the whole story to my dad, he said, “you are the better man, and if she doesn’t realize that then it’s her loss.” I liked those words, and I have never forgotten them. A week later I went on a date with a girl I had liked for most of the summer and we had a great time. Having a relationship now lessens the shock, but almost every day a little voice asks me, “what if I had found her the next day?” I will continue to wonder that for a while.



# I WANT YOU TO ENTER It's Free!

THE 2013 National

PADDLING

FILM FESTIVAL

Feb.22-23 Buffalo Trace Distillery Frankfort,KY

motion entry deadline:Jan.23 /still entry:Feb.1



# LOCALS' FAVORITE



*Nick Borelli and Shaun Riedinger enjoy the solitude of Oregon's White River.*

Photo by Brian Vogt

## OREGON'S HIDDEN GEM: THE WHITE RIVER

BY DREW EASTMAN

**T**YPICALLY WHEN I think of high canyon walls rising straight from the river, continuous whitewater in a remote setting, and white sandy beaches with the smell of Juniper in the air, I think of the classic multi-day runs of Idaho or Utah. However, the run that I've just described is only an hour away from my hometown of Hood River, OR. The White River in Oregon tumbles off the eastern flanks of Mount Hood before draining into the popular Deschutes River just north of Maupin, OR. Receiving its name from the silt that gathers in its glacial waters, the White River is often overlooked by whitewater enthusiasts because of its proximity to other classic runs in the Northwest like the Deschutes, Clackamas, White Salmon, and Hood River. Anyone who has ever paddled in the Northwest can attest to the spectacular scenery that abounds but until I paddled the White

River I had been cheating myself out of an incredible experience!

Driving down to the put-in at Keeps Mill Campground in the Mount Hood National Forest starts the trip off in a true "wilderness run" fashion. The Forest Service road is steep, narrow, exposed, and full of jagged rocks. Once at the bottom you can appreciate the intimate nature of the river, as it is only about 20 feet wide at the put-in. Be sure to bring a lunch and some water because from Keeps Mill down to Tygh Valley is about 23 miles and typically takes at least four to five hours. With constant Class III+ action for the first 12 miles down to a bridge on Victor Road, the White River will keep intermediate paddlers on their toes and advanced paddlers entertained. Below the bridge the forest peels back and towering walls of basalt emerge from the river. For the next eight miles the whitewater becomes easier and the scenery is surreal. Floating by sandy beaches, caves, and springs along with a collection of hawks, butterflies, and bear, your camera will get a workout capturing

the beauty of this run. When the canyon walls taper off be prepared for a few more miles of good Class III action before you reach the take-out at the bridge in Tygh Valley, OR. The infamous White River Falls State Park (aka Celestial Falls) is just three miles downstream of the take-out. This impressive waterfall plunges 90 feet over a basalt shelf before falling again 45 feet into an amphitheater-like pool and yet another 20 feet just downstream! Unfortunately kayaking in the park is illegal so be prepared to get questioned if you arrive with boats on your car. Hopefully efforts like those of whitewater advocacy groups at Ohiopyle

## AW STEWARDSHIP

### WHITE RIVER

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE

Designated in 1988, the Wild and Scenic White River is recognized for its outstanding geology, fish habitat, wildlife, recreation and scenic resource values. American Whitewater has worked to protect this wild free-flowing river and we have a long-term goal of restoring legal paddling opportunities to Celestial Falls. Historically Celestial Falls has been recognized as one of the best waterfalls in the country for paddlers to sharpen their skills on big drops. In 2001, Tygh Valley State Park "closed" the falls to kayaking citing safety concerns, although recreational use of the lower falls for kayaking is specifically referenced in the river management plan and does take place. American Whitewater has long regarded this closure as inconsistent with state and national river management practices, and will continue to watch for opportunities to open the falls in the future.

Falls will lead to future possibilities for kayaking in this dramatic landscape.

The best time of year to do the White River is in the spring just after the peak runoff when the weather is warming up (April-June). The flow range is from a minimum of 500 cfs to a maximum of 2000 cfs and can really change the run. If you go at higher flows (>1,000 cfs) be prepared for a nonstop run with few eddies and some Class IV. The average gradient is 43 feet per mile and the riverbed is narrow, more resembling of a creek. Having a solid roll is strongly recommended due to the lack of recovery time in most rapids. In some years wood has been a problem and has even caused the run to not be worth the trouble so be sure to get a recent report and be comfortable ducking, scouting, and portaging wood.

It's worth noting that this run can be done in a few different ways. You can do the run as described for a full day of kayaking. The option is available as well to break the run into two shorter day trips by utilizing the bridge on Victor Rd. The bridge over the White River defines the border for what most people call the Upper and Lower sections. The Upper section typically has



*Shaun Riedinger (front) and Nick Borelli on the White River.*  
**Photo by Brian Vogt**

the more exciting whitewater while the Lower contains the breathtaking scenery. There is primitive camping at this bridge or you can opt for the Forest Service camp at the put-in with a toilet. One other way to do

this run, and my favorite choice, is to turn the stretch into an overnight adventure and enjoy camping on one of the sandy beaches while you let the night sky light up the untouched White River canyon!





# REMEMBRANCE

## REMEMBRANCE: ALAN PANEBAKER

BY ADAM HERZOG

**O**N SEPTEMBER 19TH, 2012 Alan Panebaker died on the Upper Pemigewasset River in northern New England. I was with Alan when he drowned. It was the worst day of my life.

Our friendship was short but intense. We went to the same high school in North Carolina and had some distant ties, but had not talked in years when we were re-acquainted via Facebook. I was manically searching for a partner for a last minute Taureau trip. I stumbled across Alan and we spoke briefly on the phone.

“What’s your wilderness experience?” I asked.

“I ran the Susitna a few years ago when I was living in Alaska.”

“That’s good enough for me.” I said. “Can you meet in an hour?”

We met on the side of I-91, shook hands and drove our two cars six hours to the Bull. Camping out that night, we drank warm beer and stared at my lantern. We hit it off immediately, Alan telling stories with the self-deprecating edge he was known for.

The air hummed with a more serious vibe in the morning. Quebec is cold and heartless in May, and we were the first on the river that year. Tenacious snow patches lined the road. The water was high.

The day would go down in infamy. It led to what may be the only solo run of the Taureau after Alan swam in an innocuous looking but sticky hole a few miles from the put in. The swim was a fluke, but Alan made the right call and hiked his boat for five hours through the world’s densest boreal forest.

We nearly parted ways that evening after we reunited. “I’m thinking about going



*Alan Panebaker on the Mosier section of the beaver river, NY.*

**Photo by Ryan Mooney**

home. I have never been so demoralized.” Alan said, feeling pretty low.

I was on a high, though. “Look, man. Let’s camp out, drink some whiskey and do something more reasonable tomorrow.”

I talked him into it and we stayed up late into the night drinking, while a massive porcupine grubbed around our semi-legal campsite.

The following day we ran Tewkesbury, a classic Class IV big water run. Alan looked smooth and strong in his boat, more than qualified to run the Taureau.

Our friendship intensified as we continued to paddle. There were many more trips to Quebec. Since that first Taureau run, he was with me almost every time I went to Canada. The only trip he missed was during his bar exam.

Before the bar, he went to the Taureau with us and studied while we shuttled cars and boats around the back roads of Quebec. The bar is hard enough to study for without black flies, but he dutifully put a bug net over his head and dug into his books.

We shared a two-man tent on our Magpie trip last September. Quarters were close but we joked that we were “tenties for life.”

On the same trip Alan brought a five-pound bag of couscous and ate barely cooked gruel with hard, freeze dried peas five nights in a row. I was feasting on sausage and jambalaya. I offered him some of mine, but he refused.

He assured me before we left that he was good with a compass. When we were on the river, looking at maps and trying to get oriented, I reminded him to figure in the declination. “What’s declination?” he replied.

Like all overnights, one day was incredibly hard. Lake Magpie is a 40-plus-kilometer flatwater paddle that separates the upper and lower sections of river. We caught a dreaded headwind and paddled furiously in a peloton-style line, fighting our way across the lake. We bounced through three-foot waves. We hoped for respite, but it never came. Alan kept our heads out of the pit by making light of the brutal situation.

“All that couscous is really good fuel for this totally mellow lake paddle,” he told us.

“You guys must be so jealous.”

Usually when we paddled together, I probed the big stuff. On the Magpie I was feeling timid and Alan stepped up, running the big lines first and making them look easy.

Our hardest Quebec expedition was an ill-fated attempt at the North West, a Taureau tributary. We floundered around in the woods for a couple of days before tucking tail and hiking back to the put-in. Alan’s twisted sense of humor helped us through the weekend. He kept the mood light by allowing us to laugh at ourselves.

We did not have to be out in the wilderness all the time though. Alan was one of the few people who would rally for after-work Downtown Hair, the ugly and manky set of rapids near my house.

He was also the only person I know of to bridge the gap across the US/Canada border. He befriended many Quebecois paddlers, especially those with apartments close to Lachine.

His name is synonymous with northeast kayaking. I will never surf a big wave or eat poutine again without thinking of my buddy Alan.

### By Elizabeth Powers

I heard about Alan Panabaker’s accident while en route to Missoula, Montana, where we used to live. While in Missoula, I took a trip over to the house we rented in college. I could still see all our paddling gear drying on the line, his white truck parked out back, all our toys scattered in the pantry as if we had just returned from one of our many trips. I could almost hear

our goofy laughs as we playfully picked on each other.

Alan was the first kayaker I met in the dorms in Montana. Naturally, we became great friends. We shared a lot of great adventures on the water and snow, and of course, a lot of laughter. Alan has a witty sense of humor that often sent me into uncontrollable giggle fits. We shared a very playful, sibling like friendship. He was one of my closest friends among a very tight knight community of paddlers in Montana. He took me creek boating for the very first time and was there to drag me out of the river after I messed up my line. When we got to the take-out, Alan pulled out an old tape video camera and picked on me while asking what happened. I tried explaining, but all I could do was laugh. It seemed like no matter what happened, every trip to the river with Alan ended with laughter. I will never take the time spent with him for granted.

When we lose a great friend on the river, we often take time to reflect on friendships, whitewater and the reasons why we paddle. People are drawn towards the river for a variety of reasons. In Alan’s eyes, “Paddling difficult whitewater is about being alive. It is the most pure and true experience that I have ever known, and it has brought me more joy, pain, and satisfaction than anything else.”

Anyone who spent time with Alan knew that his passion for the river extended well beyond the thrills and challenges of kayaking. Paddling was never a means to boost his ego by running difficult whitewater. Throughout our time in college, it became obvious that his passion for kayaking was matched by intelligence and a passion for conservation. Similar to the way he could pick apart difficult rapids and run them with style and grace, he could navigate a variety of complex

*Alan shooting photos on the North West, Taureau tributary, Quebec.*

**Photo by Adam Herzog**





# REMEMBRANCE



*Alan California Boatin' on the Middlebury.*  
Photo by Adam Herzog

conservation issues and bring light to them through writing. He had a fun-loving way of sharing adventures on the river while raising awareness about the importance of protecting rivers.

His ability to see outside of himself was one of the qualities that I appreciated most about Alan. There is so much more to Alan than a Class V kayaker who could make anyone laugh. He was a paddler who saw more than just a rapid. He learned something from the rivers and utilized his talents as a paddler, writer, and lawyer to make a difference. Alan was one of the few who took it upon himself to preserve the rivers we all love. His drive, charisma, and intelligence present a remarkable suite of characteristics that provide a voice for the paddling community. His greatest gift to us all is the passion he carried for river conservation and the example he set for us all as a paddler and friend. May his voice

for conservation be carried on among the paddling community.

## By Andy Blakeslee

Alan Panebaker lived everyday to the fullest, fueled by a strong passion for the outdoors and the sports he loved. He was very intelligent and an extremely skilled kayaker. At the same time he was humble and genuinely cared for others around him. Always smiling, Alan fostered love and respect for the people and places in his life. The Colorado community is lucky to have known such a joyful soul and he will live on in the great memories that he gave us.

## By Mike McDonnell

I had never run the Middlebury this high—that much I knew as soon as I saw the gauge rock. Usually draped in a thin, translucent veil of water, the big boulder now formed a thick curtain, opaque and juicy. You could boof it without scraping.

“Baller!” said Alan. “Looks like the same level as Saturday...”

Moments later I was tugging at the zipper of my drysuit, eager to seal out a raw wind that was trying to follow me inside. It was December 1st.

Heading up to the put-in, we talked about the high winds that had accompanied heavy rain the previous night; mentally we worked our way downstream and discussed blind spots that could hide a windblown tree. Back in May, a late-season deposit of heavy wet snow had knocked several dangerous snags into the river. Those had been cleared, but any wild weather event, like the previous night's, could result in a new crop.

The roadside section was free of the clanky little rock touches that are typical of a regular day above the gorge. Down in the ledges we grinned at each other after each drop. “Great level,” I shouted, and the words recalled a tidbit of information, long filed away. A memory of my early runs on the Middlebury, and the understated admonition of a veteran: “Beware good boating in the lead-in.”

At the North Branch confluence we paused to stare at the boatable volume tumbling in from the tiny tributary. “Remember what I said about Saturday's level?” Alan asked. “Pretty sure I was wrong...this is a good bit higher.” Just below, we checked the junky ledge for wood and from there had a peek downstream to Fallopien Tube, and on into the Birth Canal. No need to pick your way down to the waterfall, no skirting the guard rock while lining up the boof...it was just a wave train down the gut, curling at the lip and twisting out of sight into the cauldron below. Capsizing in the landing can put you in a dicey spot at any flow. Today was a day to stick it.

Early afternoon, but a dark gloom filled the gorge; fine spray spun up through those narrow chambers and blew full in our faces. I cast one glance up and to the left, looking

past the slick, moss-covered slabs, past the steepening gullies, past the fractured crags, past the old-growth hemlock guarding the upper slope, and on up to where the road, unseen but still known, awaited deserters. A glance was enough—I'd crawled up that way once before and would never do it again by choice.

We ran the junky ledge and regrouped, planning a close team run down through Fallopian. As Alan held his position in the eddy and looked over his shoulder toward the lip, I could see the fear in his eyes. That did not worry me—I knew this look, and how Alan operated when it appeared. Normally a real chatty Kathy, Alan could clam up when things got business-like. His attention—his focus—would be downstream, on the task at hand. His fear was not debilitating, not crippling, did not portend disaster. It just meant go-time.

We ran swiftly through the four drops in the Birth Canal, leap-frogging the lead, without words. Water thundered all around us, detonations confined to small spaces. The sheer-walled stretch was a continuity of boils: staggered, stacked, layered, overlapping. Some of them surged up the concave walls with new ones close behind. We carved through the boils, boats on edge, in surgical arcs. It was a focused triumph of balance. Below Rebirth (apropos!), we were changed.

The inner gorge, so tightly wound, ends abruptly. The river loosens up and becomes real again. The walls laid back and showed the sky still charcoal, but the gloom all gone. We whooped it up like schoolboys, hootin', hollerin', charging down through rapid after juicy rapid, energized by the healthy flow. In mere minutes, we came skidding into the take-out, all smiles. To save face, I raised the notion of another lap, but felt relief when Alan laughed, pure gold, and said, "I think I'm good!"

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*Alan on a slide on the Neilson River, Quebec.*

**Photo by Adam Herzog**

## By Kevin Colburn and the American Whitewater Staff

The AW staff is a small, tight-knit group of people who share both a love of rivers and the many frustrations and celebrations that come with being tenacious underdogs. Our work consistently pushes our intellectual and creative boundaries, and we often help each other overcome hurdles. While we joke around a lot, we all really care about the work we do, about the organization, and about each other. We were thrilled to welcome Alan Panebaker to our team earlier this year as Northeast Stewardship Director, and are deeply saddened by his untimely death.

Alan's dirtbag sensibilities, mischievous streak, and deep passion for rivers and mountains were the perfect fit for American Whitewater. He didn't run with ideas, he sprinted. His quick wit, self-deprecating sense of humor and positive attitude permeated all of his writing and his other work. His background in law and journalism gave him all the tools he needed to be a force to be reckoned with in negotiations. He was really fun to work with, and was a young man of immense potential. I think we all recognized that we were lucky to have hired Alan, and that he was poised to do some seriously cool things for rivers.

More than that though, he was our new friend. Those friendships really grew at Gauley Fest, only the week prior to his death. We had assured Alan he would not get to paddle and that the Fest is five days of backbreaking manual labor for AW staff. There was plenty of hard work and long hours, but thanks to our awesome volunteers we were also able to get in a few quick runs on the New and Gauley Rivers. Alan was an incredible paddler, and we will treasure those sunny days on the water with him in West Virginia. We also all shared meals, bunked in the staff one-room cabin, and talked a lot of shop over the glow of laptops. Gauley Fest is like a team building boot camp for American Whitewater staff, and it helped us really get to know Alan. We were all in shock when we learned of his death just a few days later.

Alan joked about how much he moved around, but the fact is his mobility built an incredible network of friends spread across the country. His passing was felt deeply in New England, Colorado, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, Alaska, and in other places that he had lived. While we are grieving over the tragic and untimely loss of a new friend, our hearts go out to Alan's many close friends and family members everywhere.





# REMEMBRANCE

## REMEMBRANCE: JEFF WEST

BY KAT LEVITT

**W**HEN I THINK of Jeff West, 15 years of memories stir up a combination of emotions. While my heart aches for the loss of my friend and mentor, I can't help but shake my head, smile, laugh out loud, and reflect with pride on what he was able to accomplish and inspire others to accomplish. As displayed outwardly by the paddling community he mentored, the list seems infinite! But perhaps the most inspiring thing of all is that Jeff never made outward statements defining his personal accomplishments. He did it all *for the love of it...*

"For the Love of It" is the name of a waterfall on Dukes Creek. Although Jeff is known for pioneering this crazy Georgia steep creek and running laps on it, he didn't get the first descent of this particular drop. In fact, no one really wanted to run it, as it wasn't really the kind of clean drop you look forward to. Yet, one day, the group decided they would run it anyway...for Stan, a friend and teammate who tragically lost his life in a rafting accident. This time, Jeff stepped aside to let his friend Mark Bowman run the drop first. It went better than expected, and they later named it, "For the Love of It" over a Subway sandwich. That same year, Jeff led the Stanley Steamers to another Total Vertical Feet (TVF) victory. Jeff never seemed to claim victory or reap its benefits alone; he always shared it and gave credit to his immense circle of trusted friends.

No doubt, Jeff would want to be remembered as an encouraging mentor, but also as a warrior who fought courageous battles. I dare say he would deny the title of super hero, and though it may fit, he would simply shake his head and smile as he charged into the next battle, leading the way. That being said, below is a list of his accomplishments and his Vertical Miles in a single day. When he wasn't teaching, he charged hard and often, as there are



Jeff West boldly taking the center line at Little River Canyon Falls.

Photo by Matt Wallace

countless other days he came close to a vertical mile, and paddled Class V from dawn to dusk for one simple reason: *for the love of it!*

- 9 vertical miles in all; 8 on Class V:
- Tellico River: 21 Ledges laps
- West Prong: 6 full laps
- Suck Creek: 15 laps (Knucklehead 10 times)
- Oh-Be-Joyful: 17 full laps
- Bear Creek: 7 laps (Stairway every lap)
- Green Narrows: 11 laps (Triple Crown every lap)
- Green Truss: 9 laps
- Little White Salmon: 10 laps
- North Fork Payette: 3 top to bottom laps + Jacob's Ladder 5 times
- 4 TVF 1st places
- 1 Eddyflower 1st place

- Grand Canyon 7 times; once in 5 days
- Cataract Canyon 3 times
- Grand Canyon of the Stikine in a single day

### By Adam Goshorn

When I relocated from Virginia almost a decade ago, one of the main factors in my decision was that I wanted to be closer to a reliable, dam-released river so that I could continue to feed my paddling obsession year-round. I ended up settling in Mentone, Alabama about an hour and a half from the Ocoee River in Tennessee. It wasn't long before I met one of the Ocoee's most famous sons, Jeff West. One day, a mutual friend pointed out Jeff while he was playing in Hell Hole in his Perception Lucid (a boat that never looked quite as good with anyone else paddling it!). Later we were introduced at the take-out and Jeff's smile and easygoing attitude made an immediate impression on me and our paths crossed frequently over the decade that followed.

Over the years I can't think of a single time when Jeff and I actually made plans to paddle together. We ended up on the river together plenty of times as groups of

mutual friends would merge or as we would stop to talk and catch up with each other. Jeff was always willing to take the time to talk and we would trade stories about whatever paddling adventures we had each had recently. I don't think Jeff realized the inspiration that I drew from those talks or how much I looked up to him in many ways. Perhaps he did realize it, but was so comfortable in his role inspiring others that he never acknowledged it or used it to boost his own ego.

Jeff was an atypical combination of someone with extraordinary paddling talent who devoted the majority of his days on the river to instruction. In any given year, I would guess the ratio of days Jeff spent teaching others versus paddling for his own recreation was easily 5:1, probably higher. It's a rare combination indeed,

considering how capable he was of running hard whitewater and how much he loved doing so. I don't think it's a secret that top-level paddlers often have top-level egos to go with it. Running difficult whitewater requires high levels of self-confidence. But Jeff was able to separate his confidence from his idea of his own self-worth. I don't know of anyone as capable who was so uninterested in pursuing external validation. When he wasn't instructing, Jeff was interested in pushing his own limits, not one-upping others, and not shopping for sponsors. It was just as true when he was doing attainments on the Ocoee as it was when he was seeing how many laps he could do on any number of Class V creeks. Jeff's interest seemed mainly in pushing himself and measuring himself against his previous personal best.

In the early days of his paddling instruction business (Ace), Jeff was working other jobs to make ends meet. As the business grew over time he was able to spend more and more of the year on the river and support himself doing so. I'm sure he knew the path to monetary wealth was not through paddling instruction. His interest and motivation was to introduce others to the sport that he loved so much. Jeff was a paddling evangelist, preaching the virtues of the river life to anyone who would listen. Sure, he had goals for his business, but he understood that their success could not be judged by profit alone. However, for those of us who measure our wealth in days on the river, nights by the campfire, and laughter shared with friends, Jeff was one of the richest men I've known. We should all hope to live so well.

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# NEWS & NOTES

## NATIONAL PADDLING FILM FESTIVAL LANDS RUSH STURGES AS GUEST HOST SUBMISSIONS CURRENTLY BEING ACCEPTED BY BETHANY OVERFIELD

**W**E ARE SUPER stoked to announce Rush Sturges as the guest host of the 2013 National Paddling Film Festival. Rush, currently one of the preeminent whitewater filmmakers in the world, is the founder of River Roots, a whitewater film production company that has produced a number of award-winning kayaking films.

Early in his professional paddling career Rush made a name for himself in freestyle competitions and down-river racing and over the last several years has developed mad creek boating skills and spends much of his energy expedition paddling. He has traveled and kayaked in over 30 countries and has a knack for capturing not only the best whitewater footage, but the behind-the-scenes stories that exemplify what it takes to succeed in planning and executing expeditions.

Rush was recently named an “Adventurer of the Year” by Outside Magazine for CONGO: The Grand Inga Project. We’re eagerly anticipating hearing about Rush’s perspective on the ins and outs and trials and tribulations of filmmaking.

Entries are currently being accepted for the 2013 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 23, 2013: Documentary, Instructional/Safety, and General Boating. In addition, there will be a still image competition (submission deadline February 1, 2013). Judges will score each entry and feedback from each judge will be provided to the entrant. Festival attendees will vote and select the



*Rush running Outlet Falls (WA).*  
**Photo by Matt Baker**

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). All submission entries are free this year.

NPFF is a 100% volunteer, not-for-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to river conservation. In just the past ten years alone, over \$56,000 from festival profits have been donated to American Whitewater, the U.S.’s preeminent river conservation organization. Donations have also been made to other regional conservation groups dedicated to water quality and access, such as the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Friends of Cheat, and Elkhorn Acres in central Kentucky. In addition to this, recent support has been given to Team River Runner, 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

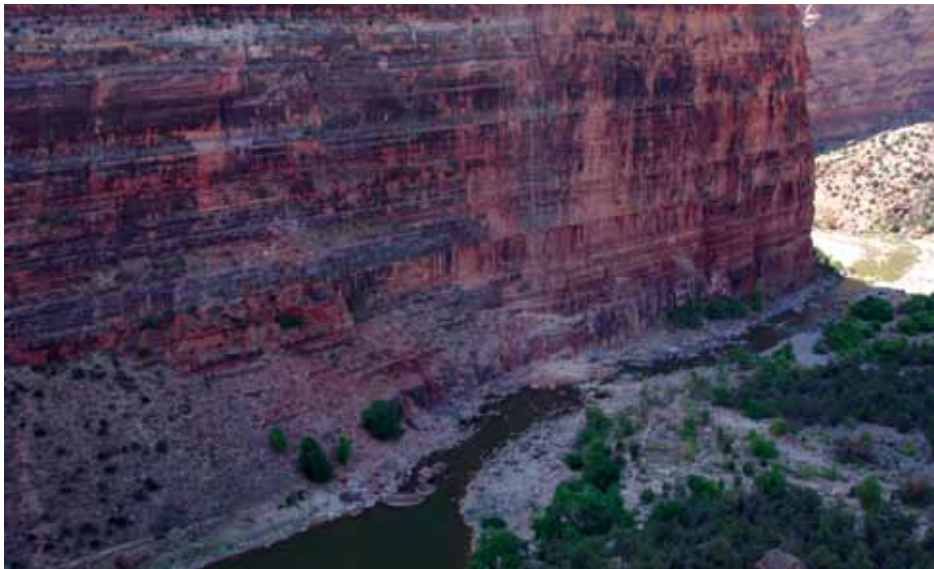
we’ve put so much effort into this festival over the past 30 years.

The festival will remain at Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort, Kentucky. Festivities will include film viewings, a silent auction, a chili cook-off, and a still image contest. In addition to all the festivities offered at NPFF, this year we will be hosting our first Annual NPFF Brew Off. Check out our website for information on how to enter to win homebrewing bragging rights! 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 online 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.

## A 2012 WARM SPRINGS ROCKSLIDE INVESTIGATION AND THEORY

BY ERIK AND RON FEELEY



*Slide Scar.*  
**Photo by Ron Feeley**

**O**N AUGUST 26, 2012 Erik Feeley, Ron Feeley, Jeff Enyart and Brad Rutledge hiked in to Dinosaur National Monument from Echo Park up the Yampa River to Warm Springs rapid to investigate a new rock fall previously reported by Pete Williams. Our initial findings confirmed what Pete had reported, and from our exploration we were able to expand our understanding of the event. When we reached Warm Springs, we found the river flowing at 72 cfs, allowing easy crossing, when necessary. We wanted to see the results of this rare event before it was modified by increased flows by the 2013 spring runoff. We also hoped to understand the dynamics of the incident. Erik and Ron have joined together to give their perspective on what transpired. The following summary, non-academic in nature, and coming from the focus of rafters and river enthusiasts, is intended to advise boaters of what challenges they may experience during the 2013 season.

The rock slab originated on the wall river left, downstream from and at approximately

*Crater two.*  
**Photo by Erik Feeley**

*Overview of Warm Springs.*  
**Photo by Pete Williams**

the same elevation as the “coke bottle” scar (approximately 750 feet elevation), perhaps slightly higher. In the river, in line with the new scar is the debris from the rockslide. Coincidentally, it is also where there was a washout from river right due to side stream floods in 2011. The debris is between the bottom of the tongue entry point of the rapid and the large boulder downstream known as Godzilla by commercial guides.

It appears the rock slab fell in two separate stages. The first stage was a triangular section from the lower part of the scar. As it fell, it hit the ledge slightly below the scar and broke apart. A large portion was projected out farther from the cliff than the accompanying debris. This large boulder created Crater One (approximately 15 feet in diameter). The rest of the debris would have come down in various sizes of rocks and boulders, some of which were pulverized into sand. The combination of Crater One (located at the 2011 washout on river right) and the ensuing debris dammed

*continued on page 50*





# AW PARTNERS

## \$20,000 - Class V



## \$15,000 - Class IV

## \$10,000 - Class III



## \$7,500 - Class II



## \$5,000 - Boof



## \$2,500 - Wave





Each day American Whitewater faces new challenges that threaten our whitewater rivers. To aid us in this fight, we rely on support from members, donors, foundations, and partners in the industry. Companies throughout the whitewater and outdoor industries are stepping forward to support AW's River Stewardship work. American Whitewater urges you not to make purchase decisions blindly. When you buy your next piece of outdoor gear there are many factors to consider: quality, dependability, comfort, safety, and fashion. American Whitewater hopes you will add one more consideration to this list: corporate responsibility. Support companies that support your rivers.

**K**OKATAT HAS BEEN manufacturing paddling gear in Arcata, California for more than 40 years. At a time when many technical apparel brands were moving manufacturing offshore, Kokatat continued to invest in infrastructure in the United States. Kokatat founder Steve O'Meara was committed to the development of the finest and driest paddling apparel in the world and recognized the need to control and continually evolve the development of our dry wear. In the early days, Kokatat worked closely with W.L. Gore & Associates, makers of GORE-TEX®, to refine the sewing and sealing techniques required for full immersion suits and tops. Today, our hands-on approach to manufacturing continues to set the standard in paddling apparel.

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.



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# 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 U.S. American Whitewater currently has 6,300 active members. When considering 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 American Whitewater. 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. If you are a member of your local paddling club and your club is an Affiliate Club member of AW, join as a Club Affiliate Individual for \$25. 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.

Join on-line today at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/>, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership  
P.O. Box 1540  
Cullowhee, NC 28723

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

↑ \_\_\_\_\_ if you have one and know it

### Membership Level

\$35 Standard

\$25 Member of Affiliate Club

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

\$25 Student

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

\$50 Family

\$75 Affiliate Club

\$100 Ender Club (Shirt Size: \_\_\_\_\_)

\$250 Platinum Paddler

\$500 Explorer

\$750 Lifetime

\$1,000 Legacy

\$2,500 Steward

**For current member rewards  
go to:  
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! :)

### Auto-Renew (No Renewal Notices!)

Auto-renew my membership each year on the credit card below

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# NEWS & NOTES

the river long enough for a pool to form above the barrier. This newly formed dam of Weber debris/sand was saturated with water, creating a “cesspool” of Weber mud.

Before the river could break through the newly formed debris dam that created the “cesspool”, the second stage fall occurred, with the large rocks from the top of the scar breaking away from the cliff. The falling boulder careened off the ledge above and fell into the “cesspool”/dam area, creating a 25 foot crater. Widespread evidence of this event surrounded us.

A homogeneous spray of Weber mud thickly coated the area surrounding Crater Two, appearing to have radiated from it. This mud was evident on the rocks in Crater One. The trees to river right of Crater Two, onshore, were covered by mud only on the side facing the crater. These trees had been broken and shredded into pieces. They had been bent over as though having been hit by a blast from Craters One and Two. Approaching the impact zone from downriver, we saw multiple “Weber bombs”—baseball-sized sandstone surrounded by a two-foot diameter halo of



*Looking Upstream, Godzilla Front Center.*  
**Photo by Erik Feeley**

mud among the cobblestone. They were evident up to 75 yards downriver of the impact zone.

This crater is river right and approximately thirty yards offshore from the devastating splash of the second crater event. The mud tsunami from Crater Two does not appear evident on the huge boulder that split apart in Crater Three (~15 feet in diameter). The rock that created the impact broke apart with the remnants resting around the crater. The mud spray does not appear in the area as far up as Crater Three except in the form of scattered “Weber bombs,” leading us to surmise that this was the finale of large boulders falling from above. The rock forming Crater Three may have been catapulted off the top of the rock that formed Crater Two, propelling it the greatest distance from the river. The Weber mud may have been too heavy to be thrown as far as Crater Three in any sizeable mass.

The new barrier in the river is comprised solely of Weber sandstone rock. The cliff side of the barrier is comprised of pebbles and sand, resulting from pulverized rock.

*Rock Barrier.*  
**Photo by Erik Feeley**



The river channel at the 2011 washout now includes two “smart car-sized” rocks with very sharp frog eyes that are unavoidable at low water flows.

To our rafting friends: it remains to be seen what changes will occur with the runoff in the spring of 2013. In prior years, the rapid should have been scouted because of changes due to flow fluctuations. The traditional run was to break through the small lateral at the top of the rapid and then adjust the run to avoid Godzilla and Maytag. That line will no longer exist, and scouting will now be necessary! The introduction of large boulders now confines a boatman’s entry into the rapid, especially at medium to low flows, thus eliminating the sneaker run to river right. Presently it appears as though the river flow will be funneled directly into the large rock in the middle of the rapid, Godzilla. At certain flows there was a run on the left of Godzilla and then to the left of Maytag. The new rockslide may very well have created a situation where a left run through Warm Springs is a norm. At high flows above 10,000 cfs, it is hard to guess what will happen to the small lateral at the top of the rapid. Perhaps the river right run will still be there, but we believe big waves will hamper any mid-rapid corrections. At low flows (4000 cfs and below) many of the sharp-edged rocks, two in particular, are capable of shredding rubber. We want to emphasize the seriousness of this event and its implications for rafters on the Yampa. Additionally, the rapid will continue to change in coming years as the new rocks shift positions and smaller debris on both sides of the river channel are washed away. Finally, observing the slide origin through binoculars, it seems likely to us that various rocks around the scar that appear precariously positioned may fall off in the spring as a result of the freeze/thaw cycle.

Seeing the Warm Springs Rapid at low water was quite a treat. As the river changes, so must we as boatmen and Yampa River enthusiasts. This adventure and documentation were collaborated by many, and by their love of the canyon.

### 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 866-BOAT4AW 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. AW’s UNITED WAY member # is 2302.
- 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 we accomplish. We have over 100 current AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club, consider joining one.

Our Affiliate Club Spotlight this issue is on the Idaho 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.

The Idaho Whitewater Association is for whitewater boaters, those with a passion and experience and those that want to learn about that passion. IWA promotes the appreciation, understanding, and safe recreational use of the whitewater river resources within the State of Idaho, and informs members of issues affecting whitewater rivers and the use of those rivers.

Club membership is only \$15 a year. . . a small price to pay for parties and entertainment during the cold months and great river trips during the warmer months! Check out the club's website at <http://idahowhitewater.net/> to learn more.

Thank you Idaho 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  
Guides House, Laytonville

Sequoia Paddlers, Forestville  
Shasta Paddlers, Redding

### Colorado

Avid4 Adventure Inc., Boulder  
Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assn,  
Colorado Springs  
Dolores River Boating Advocates, Dolores  
Outdoor Pursuits, Durango  
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

### 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, Baltimore  
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Boonsboro  
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

### Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter Paddlers, Boston  
UMass Outing Club - Whitewater  
Kayaking, Amherst

### Minnesota

Minnesota Canoe Asso, Minneapolis  
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

### Missouri

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

### Montana

Butte-Anaconda River Runners, Butte

### Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

### New Hampshire

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

### New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
KCCNY, Flanders

### New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico,  
Albuquerque

### New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady  
AMC NY/NJ Chapter, New York  
Colgate University, Hamilton  
FLOW Paddlers' Club, Rochester  
Hamilton College, Clinton  
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq.,  
Ossining  
St Lawrence University, Canton  
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Buffalo

### North Carolina

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

### Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus  
Keelhauler Canoe Club, Cleveland  
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  
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre  
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg,  
Harrisburg  
Conewago Canoe Club, York  
Holtwood Hooligans, Paradise  
Lehigh Valley Whitewater Inc., Lehigh Valley  
Mach One Slalom Team, State College  
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia

### S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

### Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts,  
Limestone  
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville  
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak  
Ridge

Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club, Kingsport  
Tennessee Scenic River Association, Nashville  
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

#### **Utah**

High Jim and the A.S.K., Salt Lake City  
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

#### **Vermont**

University of Vermont, Burlington  
Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

#### **Virginia**

Blue Ridge River Runners  
Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond  
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke  
Hollins Outdoor Program, Roanoke

#### **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  
WVU Whitewater Club, Morgantown  
West VA Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

#### **Wisconsin**

North East Wisconsin Paddlers, Inc., Neenah  
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, Madison

#### **British Columbia**

Thompson Rivers Univ Adventure Studies, Kamloops  
Vancouver Kayak Club, N Vancouver

## **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 <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/>. 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 A CLUB AFFILIATE!**

### **10 REASONS TO JOIN AW AS AN AFFILIATE CLUB**

1. Support river access and restoration through the AW River Stewardship Team.
2. Be part of a national voice for the protection of the whitewater rivers your club values.
3. Tap into the professional expertise of AW staff for river issues that come up in your backyard.
4. Your club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Receive the American Whitewater Journal, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
6. Your club is recognized in the list of Affiliate Clubs posted to the AW website.
7. Recognize your club in the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly AW Journal.
8. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
9. Gain Club satisfaction from lending support to AW's stewardship efforts.
10. Improve your club members river karma.

For more information, contact Carla Miner at [membership@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@americanwhitewater.org) or sign-up on line at [www.americanwhitewater.org/membership](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership).



**JOIN THE  
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The logo features the letters 'AW' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a green and blue background that resembles a stylized river or wave. 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 a member-driven publication. If you enjoy reading it, please consider letting its pages tell your story. We are looking for articles about whitewater rivers of any variety, so let your imagination flow free!

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

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



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