



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

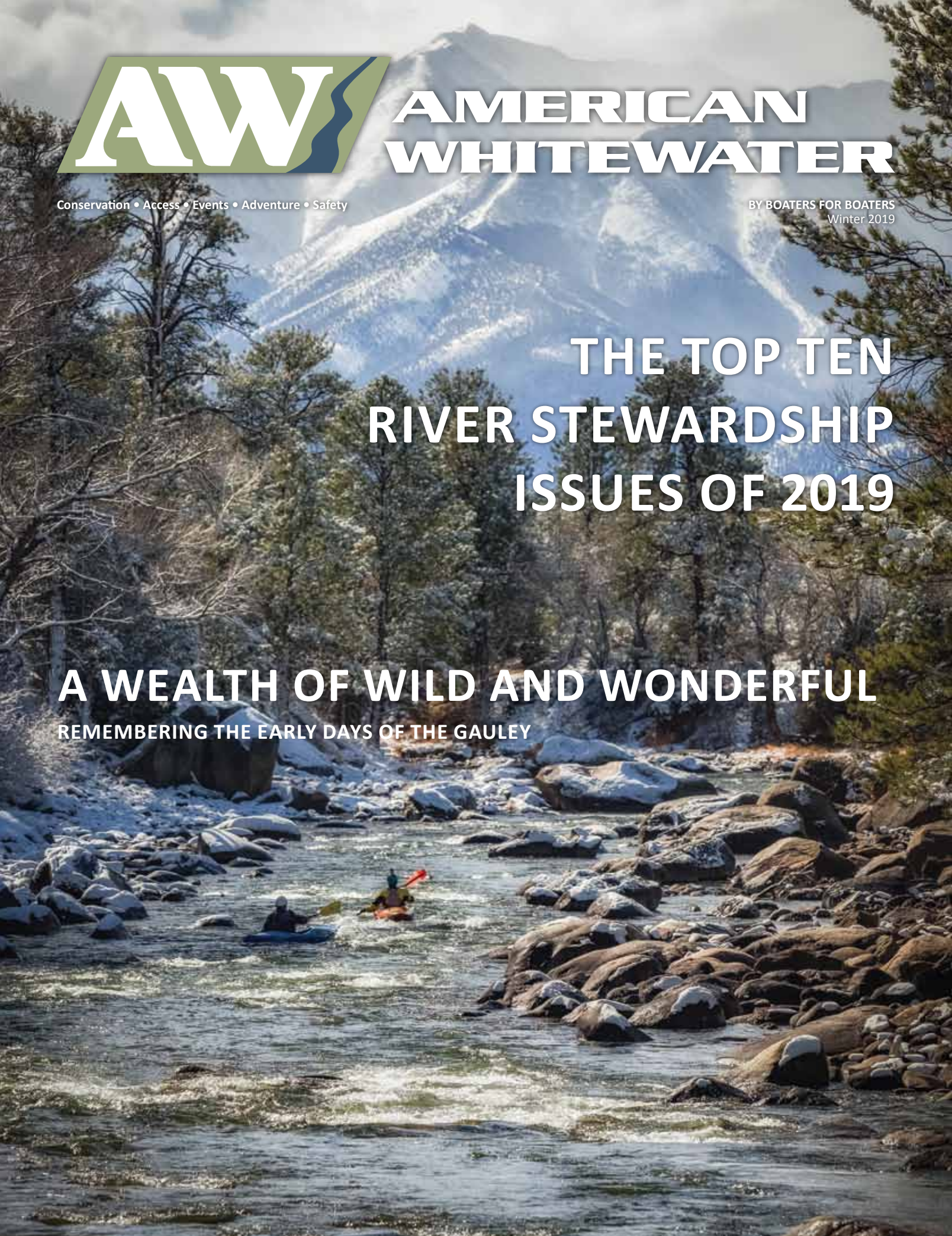
Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
Winter 2019

THE TOP TEN RIVER STEWARDSHIP ISSUES OF 2019

A WEALTH OF WILD AND WONDERFUL

REMEMBERING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE GAULEY





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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal Winter 2019 – Volume 59 – Issue 1

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Winter ELF-ves on the Arkansas River (CO) with Mt. Princeton looming.

Photo by Logan Myers

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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 bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, 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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Founded in 1954, American Whitewater is a national non-profit organization (Non-profit # 23-7083760) with a mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." American Whitewater is a membership organization representing a broad diversity of individual whitewater enthusiasts, river conservationists, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates across America. The organization is the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States, and connects the interests of human-powered recreational river users with ecological and science-based data to achieve the goals within its mission. All rights to information contained in this publication are reserved.

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in the features and editorials of American Whitewater are those of the individual authors. They do not necessarily represent those of the Directors of American Whitewater or the editors of this publication. On occasion, American Whitewater publishes official organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

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THE JOURNEY AHEAD

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Welcome to the *American Whitewater Journal*, 2019. For over 60 years, American Whitewater has worked hard to protect rivers that are important to the paddling community. At the core of the American Whitewater River Stewardship Program is the connection paddlers have with wild rivers. In this issue of the *American Whitewater Journal*, our staff looks to the coming year and identifies top issues our whitewater rivers will face (starting on page 6). Our plans account for the need to further protect high value rivers and address current threats faced by smaller streams and creeks, as well as basin-wide water challenges.

The American Whitewater River Stewardship Program appreciates that conservation and healthy human-powered outdoor recreation are mutually dependent. Whitewater boaters value natural landscapes, and our country's treasured natural resources need conservation-oriented paddlers to help preserve and protect them for future generations. As we move into the coming year, 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.

In other organizational news, the end of 2018 was a time of transition for American Whitewater. We said goodbye to our longtime Membership Director, Carla Miner, who retired at the end of the year. Carla worked at American Whitewater for over 20 years and was instrumental in providing a high level of service to our members. While we wish Carla all the best in her forthcoming world travels, we also welcome our new Membership Director, Bethany Overfield. Bethany is no newcomer to the paddling community. She is a past event director for National Paddling Film Festival, held each February in Frankfort, KY. Bethany lives and works

out of Lexington, KY and has worked closely with Carla to ensure a smooth transition of membership services. Please join with me in providing a warm welcome to Bethany. As members you will all have the opportunity to interact with her on membership issues.

There is also new leadership on the American Whitewater Board of Directors. Susan Elliott is our new Board President, stepping into the big shoes left behind by Courtney Wilton, who will still provide his perspective as a Director. Susan brings a comprehensive knowledge of Wild and Scenic rivers as the author, along with her husband Adam, of *Paddling America*, a Guide to the Country's 50 best Wild and Scenic rivers compiled from two years exploring rivers via the Wild River Life van tour (on Instagram @WildRiverLife). In other officer seats on our board, Chris Neuenschwander is our Vice President, Brian Jacobson is serving as Treasurer, and Brent Austin is Secretary. Erin Savage and Melissa Driver both serve as At-Large members of our Executive Committee. We are welcoming Greg Lee as a new incoming Director. If you have used any of the American Whitewater mobile apps you have interfaced with Greg's work. He and a small team of designers/developers built the apps as a volunteer project. Our organization is much stronger thanks to the many contributions of time and knowledge provided by all of our board members.

As the new year unfolds, all of us at American Whitewater are embracing

change that brings fresh ideas and new ways of addressing longstanding sticky issues. Our stewardship project work delivers tangible results that provide healthy rivers for future generations. We've never had a better team to advocate for paddler interests and our Stewardship Top 10 demonstrates the vision and ambition at play as we dive into the new year.

Onward,



Mark Singleton
Executive Director, American Whitewater

PS - If you happen to be looking for a way to deepen your connection with wild rivers, join me on the American Whitewater Rogue River trip on June 20-23, 2019. Thanks to support from Northwest Rafting Company, American Whitewater members have the opportunity to join staff and Board members on an exclusive four-day trip down Oregon's Rogue River. We invite you to come learn more about what we're up to while having a great time enjoying one of our nation's first Wild and Scenic Rivers. Learn more by visiting the Northwest Rafting Company website > Rogue River > Book Now > select the American Whitewater Trip June 20 - 23. I hope to see you on the river!





**AMERICAN
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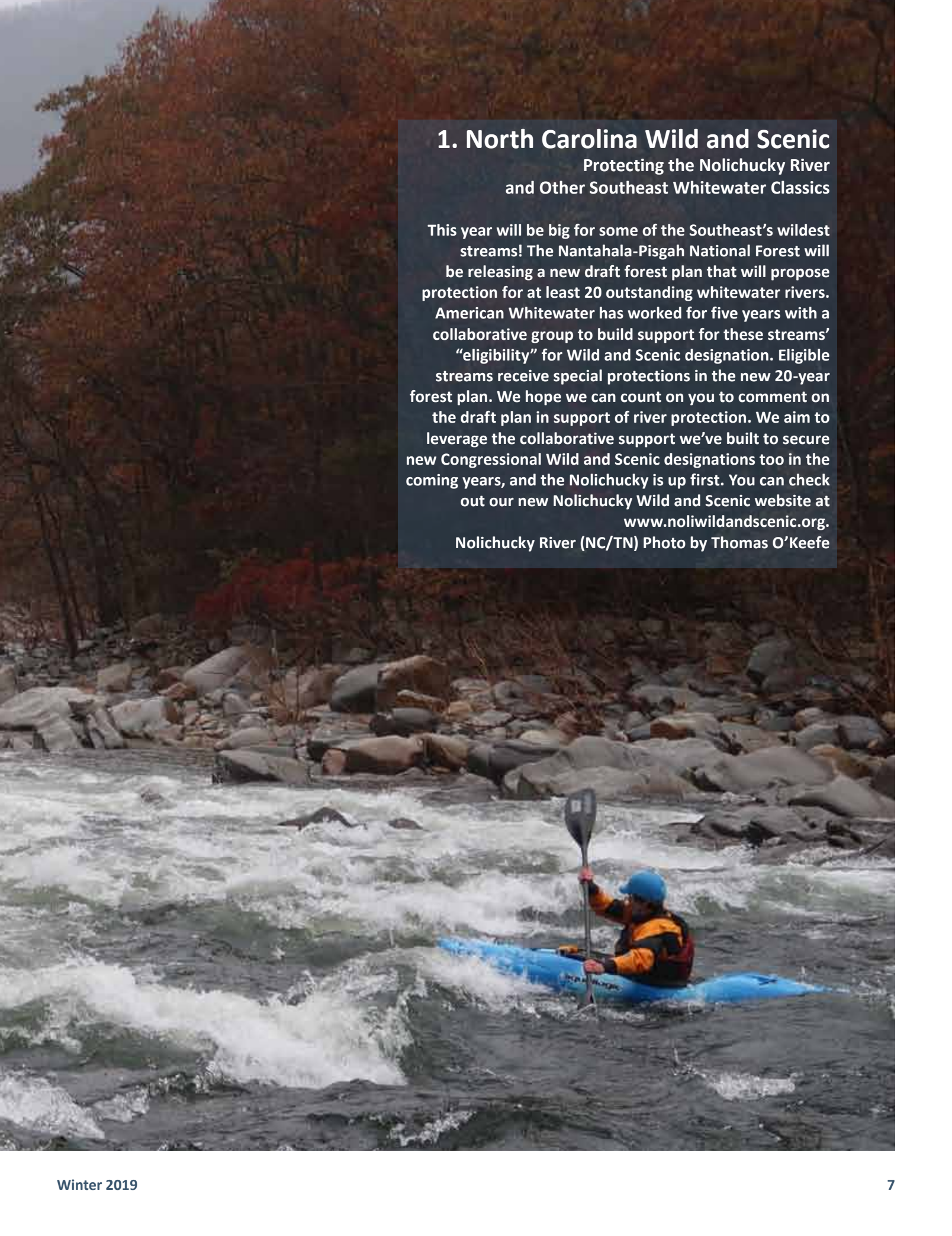
TOP 10 *RIVER STEWARDSHIP ISSUES FOR 2019*



1. North Carolina Wild and Scenic

Protecting the Nolichucky River and Other Southeast Whitewater Classics

This year will be big for some of the Southeast's wildest streams! The Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest will be releasing a new draft forest plan that will propose protection for at least 20 outstanding whitewater rivers. American Whitewater has worked for five years with a collaborative group to build support for these streams' "eligibility" for Wild and Scenic designation. Eligible streams receive special protections in the new 20-year forest plan. We hope we can count on you to comment on the draft plan in support of river protection. We aim to leverage the collaborative support we've built to secure new Congressional Wild and Scenic designations too in the coming years, and the Nolichucky is up first. You can check out our new Nolichucky Wild and Scenic website at www.noliwildandscenic.org.
Nolichucky River (NC/TN) Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

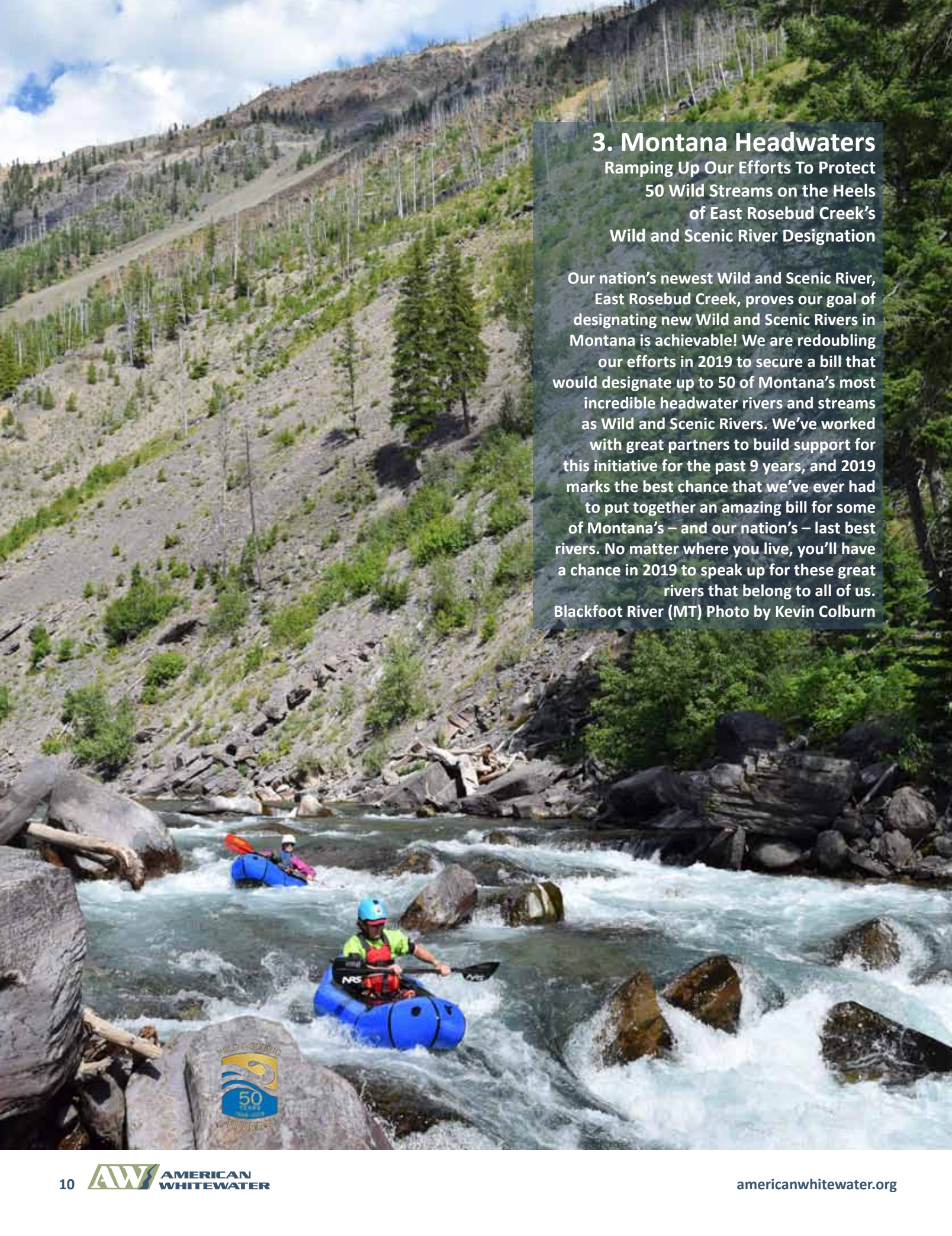


2. Defending Idaho's Wild Rivers

The Forest Service is Illegally Removing Protections from Several Lochsa and Salmon River Area Whitewater Streams, While a Massive New Mine Threatens the South Fork Salmon River

Idaho may be whitewater paradise, but political and economic forces are vying to change that. First, the Forest Service is trying to strip protections for almost 1,000 miles of streams that they admit are "eligible" for Wild and Scenic designation in the Lochsa watershed. They propose to do this with a political process they call "suitability." American Whitewater is pushing back against this abuse of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act with some great regional and national partners. We asked you to speak up in 2018 and almost 800 paddlers sent in letters! There will be more chances to get involved in 2019 and we'll need your backing. The Forest Service is considering the same bad move in the Salmon River watershed and we'll be opposing it there too. Of special concern is a proposal to build a massive mine in the South Fork Salmon watershed, which would threaten the incredible South Fork for millenia. We'll keep you informed, and when there is a chance to speak up for the river we'll let you know. South Fork Salmon River (ID) Photo by Evan Stafford





3. Montana Headwaters

Ramping Up Our Efforts To Protect
50 Wild Streams on the Heels
of East Rosebud Creek's
Wild and Scenic River Designation

Our nation's newest Wild and Scenic River, East Rosebud Creek, proves our goal of designating new Wild and Scenic Rivers in Montana is achievable! We are redoubling our efforts in 2019 to secure a bill that would designate up to 50 of Montana's most incredible headwater rivers and streams as Wild and Scenic Rivers. We've worked with great partners to build support for this initiative for the past 9 years, and 2019 marks the best chance that we've ever had to put together an amazing bill for some of Montana's – and our nation's – last best rivers. No matter where you live, you'll have a chance in 2019 to speak up for these great rivers that belong to all of us. Blackfoot River (MT) Photo by Kevin Colburn





4. Upper Colorado

Taking a Lead Role in Protecting Wild and Scenic Values

As we move into 2019, efforts to finalize the Upper Colorado Wild and Scenic Alternative Management Plan (AMP) ramp up. American Whitewater has been elected to serve as Chair of the 80 member Stakeholder Group that is working to establish the AMP to preserve and enhance the paddling and angling experiences from Gore Canyon to Glenwood Springs, Colorado. These complex negotiations include stakeholder governance protocol, establishing an endowment to fund restoration and enhancement projects, and monitoring programs that measure the success of the Plan. By mid-2020, a suite of instream flow protections, and a menu of options that stakeholders can tap into to ensure recreation is not degraded in the future, will be complete. Among these protective measures are two Recreational In-Channel Diversions (RICD), or recreational water rights, that American Whitewater has helped secure for the river. As we welcome a new year, we can celebrate a new decree from the Colorado Water Courts for an RICD within the City of Glenwood Springs, closing a five-year long campaign to acquire water rights that will protect the river, and ensure the Upper Colorado's Wild and Scenic values can be enjoyed into the future.

Colorado River (CO) Photo by Evan Stafford



5. California Access

Securing River Access on the South Fork American River

In 2007, American Whitewater and stakeholders signed the Upper American River Project Settlement Agreement with Sacramento Municipal Utility District that laid the ground rules for a new hydropower license issued in 2014. This agreement prescribed improved instream flows, including for recreation, and comprehensive access to the sought-after Slab Creek run on the South Fork American River. During the last four years American Whitewater has worked on an interim access for scheduled recreational flows, reviewed long term access plans for the put-in, secured permanent long term access at the midpoint of this run with El Dorado County, and advocated for appropriate solutions for a take-out access point. In 2019, we will continue to work with our colleagues to ensure take-out access plans are developed and implemented true to the tenets of the Settlement Agreement. Our goals include suitable road access, safe river egress, and the preservation of access to the lower Class II-III section of the run on the South Fork American River below Slab Creek.

South Fork American River (CA)
Photo by Trevor Croft



6. Colorado State Water Plan

Making a Big Impact in Multiple Colorado River Drainages Through Statewide Effort

As Colorado moves towards achieving its goal of putting 80% of its streams and watersheds under Management Plans, American Whitewater is working with several planning groups to ensure that recreation is fairly and fully represented through these efforts. In 2019, we will be working with local paddlers and recreational interests on the Rio Grande and Conejos Rivers, Eagle River and Gore Creek, and the Saint Vrain where paddlers and outfitters will help define the full range of flows that support recreation, and identify projects that can improve river health, access, and public safety. American Whitewater will also be working with a team of policy-makers in the state to create a mechanism to fund projects that benefit the environment and recreation. Once projects are identified by plans, our goal is to secure \$100 million per year to assist the State in paying for those projects and improve our communities and economies.





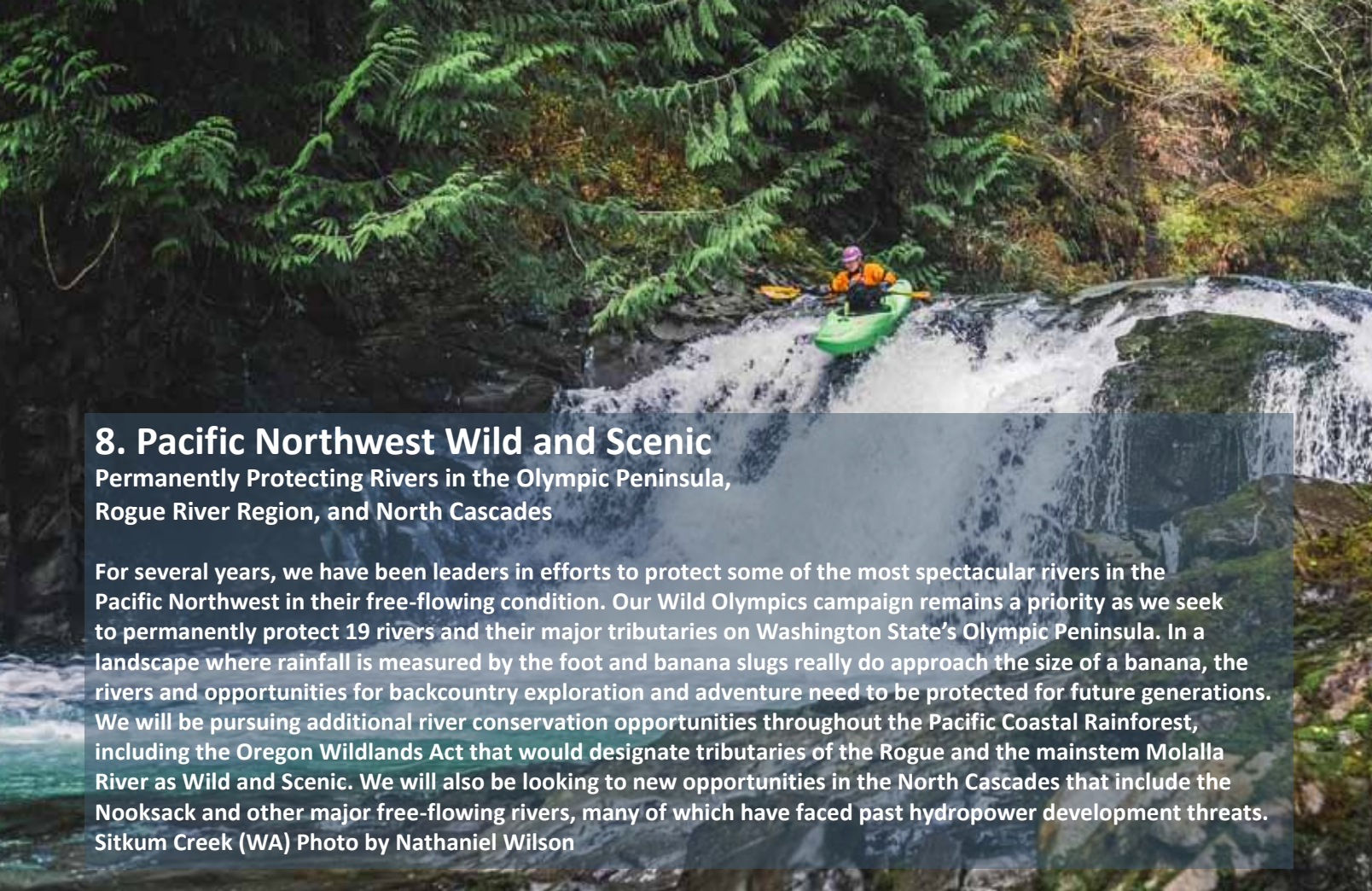
7. Protecting Rivers on Public Lands

Improving and Safeguarding Access to Whitewater Rivers Across the Country

Ensuring public access to rivers so paddlers can enjoy them remains a cornerstone of our work and in the coming year we will focus our efforts on protection of public lands that provide access to rivers and enhancement of the user experience. Over the past several years a few members of Congress have initiated efforts to sell off public lands. Among the lands that are always first on the list are small parcels found within a patchwork ownership of private lands. When they are within river corridors, these public parcels can be among the most important in providing legal access to rivers.

Over the coming year we will support efforts to keep public lands public, seek opportunities to acquire key parcels that provide public access through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other conservation tools, and work to develop guidance that can be used by river managers to improve the user experience at sites that provide access to waterways.

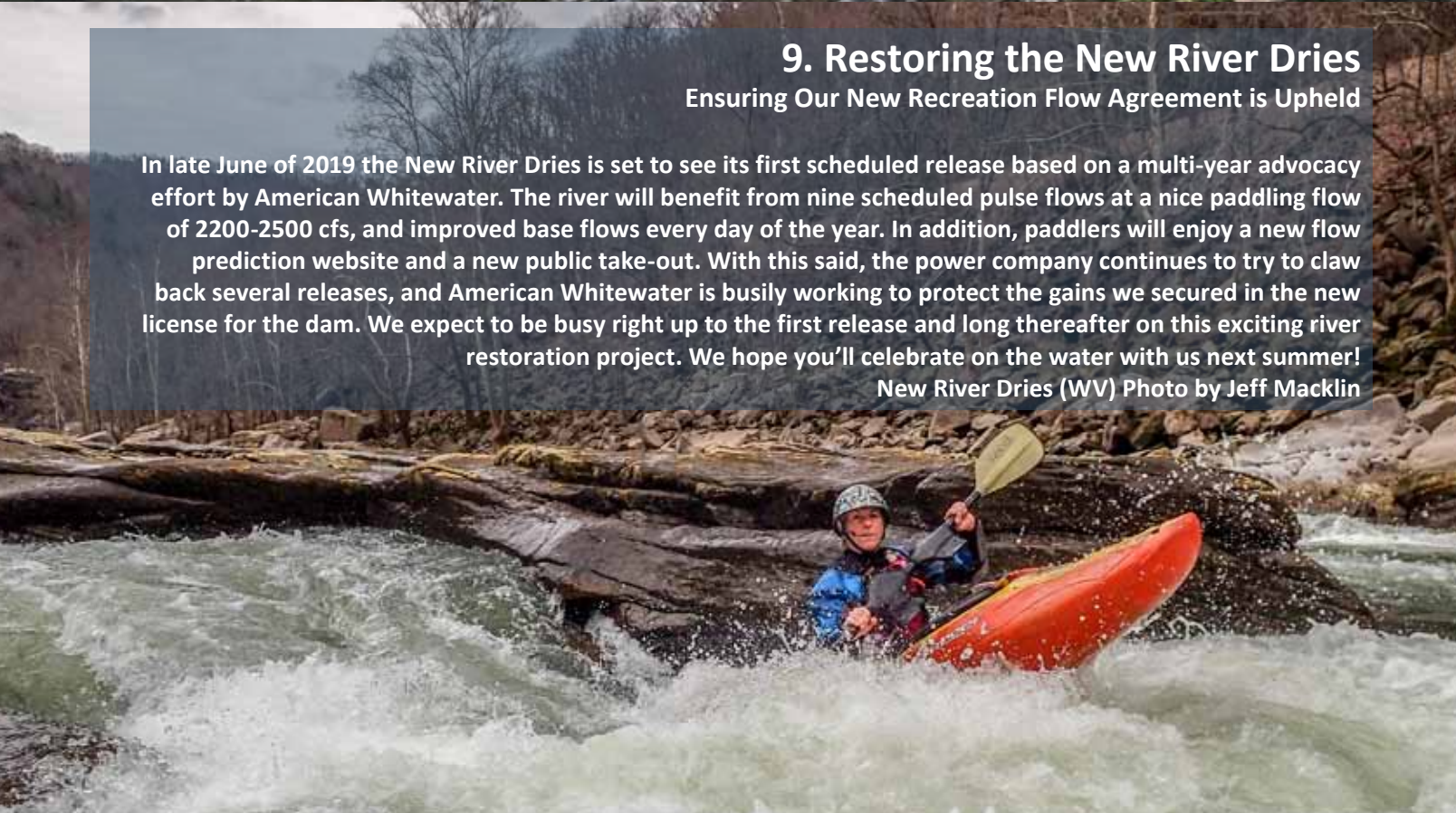
Snoqualmie River (WA) Photo by Thomas O'Keefe



8. Pacific Northwest Wild and Scenic

Permanently Protecting Rivers in the Olympic Peninsula, Rogue River Region, and North Cascades

For several years, we have been leaders in efforts to protect some of the most spectacular rivers in the Pacific Northwest in their free-flowing condition. Our Wild Olympics campaign remains a priority as we seek to permanently protect 19 rivers and their major tributaries on Washington State's Olympic Peninsula. In a landscape where rainfall is measured by the foot and banana slugs really do approach the size of a banana, the rivers and opportunities for backcountry exploration and adventure need to be protected for future generations. We will be pursuing additional river conservation opportunities throughout the Pacific Coastal Rainforest, including the Oregon Wildlands Act that would designate tributaries of the Rogue and the mainstem Molalla River as Wild and Scenic. We will also be looking to new opportunities in the North Cascades that include the Nooksack and other major free-flowing rivers, many of which have faced past hydropower development threats. Sitkum Creek (WA) Photo by Nathaniel Wilson

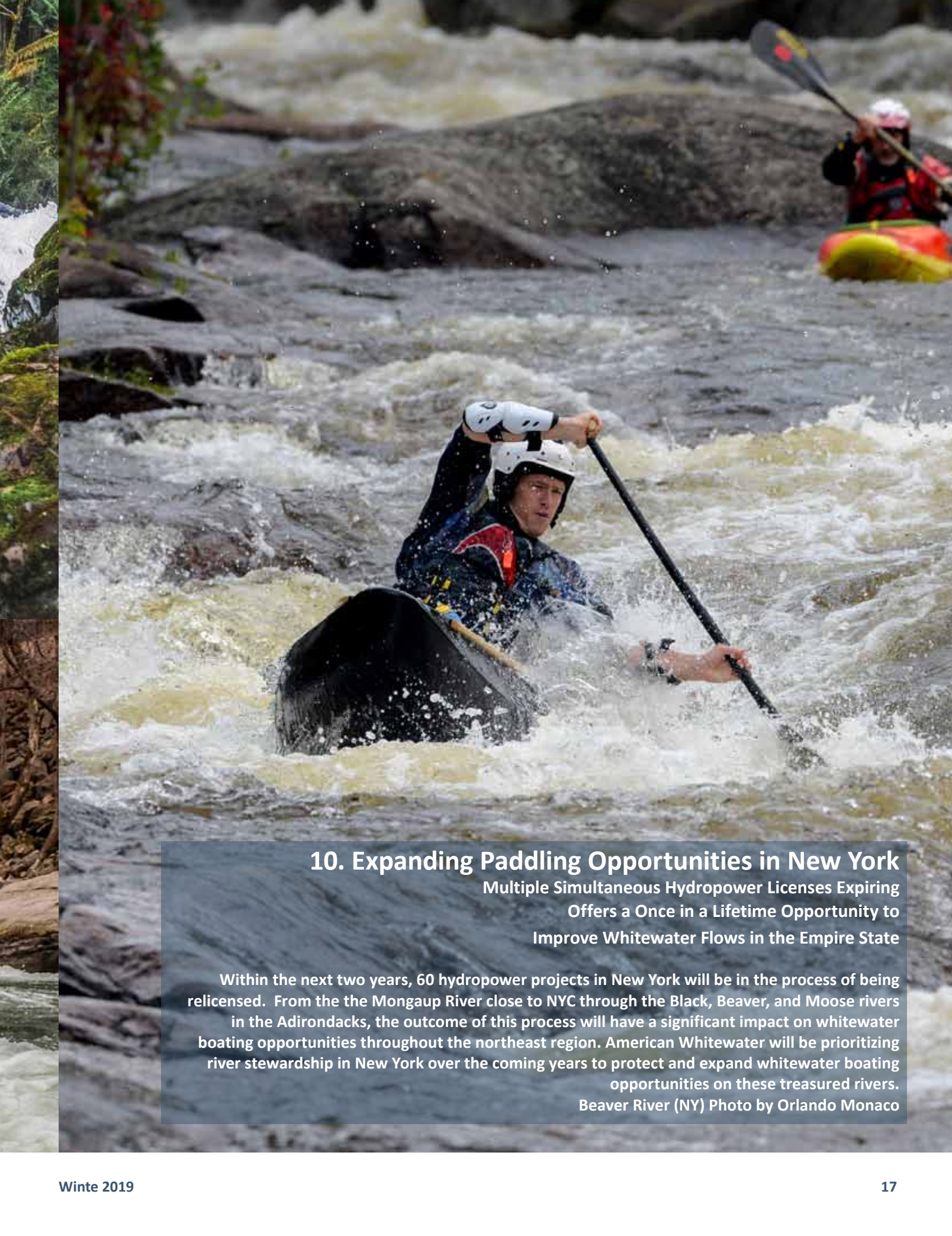


9. Restoring the New River Dries

Ensuring Our New Recreation Flow Agreement is Upheld

In late June of 2019 the New River Dries is set to see its first scheduled release based on a multi-year advocacy effort by American Whitewater. The river will benefit from nine scheduled pulse flows at a nice paddling flow of 2200-2500 cfs, and improved base flows every day of the year. In addition, paddlers will enjoy a new flow prediction website and a new public take-out. With this said, the power company continues to try to claw back several releases, and American Whitewater is busily working to protect the gains we secured in the new license for the dam. We expect to be busy right up to the first release and long thereafter on this exciting river restoration project. We hope you'll celebrate on the water with us next summer!

New River Dries (WV) Photo by Jeff Macklin



10. Expanding Paddling Opportunities in New York

Multiple Simultaneous Hydropower Licenses Expiring Offers a Once in a Lifetime Opportunity to Improve Whitewater Flows in the Empire State

Within the next two years, 60 hydropower projects in New York will be in the process of being relicensed. From the the Mongaup River close to NYC through the Black, Beaver, and Moose rivers in the Adirondacks, the outcome of this process will have a significant impact on whitewater boating opportunities throughout the northeast region. American Whitewater will be prioritizing river stewardship in New York over the coming years to protect and expand whitewater boating opportunities on these treasured rivers.

Beaver River (NY) Photo by Orlando Monaco

A photograph of two people on a river, likely kayakers or stand-up paddleboarders, positioned in the lower third of the frame. They are on a calm, light-colored river. Behind them is a towering, dark brown rock wall with vertical fissures and ledges, extending to the top of the image. The lighting is soft, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

REVISITING 2018'S
TOP 10
RIVER STEWARDSHIP ISSUES

1. Forest Planning Suitability

This issue blew up in 2018, requiring American Whitewater staff to attend meetings, draft numerous rounds of comments, and leverage the support of our members and partners. So far the Forest Service is plowing ahead with their scheme to lift Wild and Scenic protection for worthy streams.

2. Wild Olympics

We continued to successfully build support for our Wild Olympics legislation over the past year and secured a successful hearing in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. While the bill stalled in Committee and was not voted on, we remain optimistic that a window of opportunity will emerge when Congress decides to assemble the pieces of a public lands package.

3. Montana Headwaters

East Rosebud Creek was designated as Montana's first Wild and Scenic River since 1976 in August of 2018. East Rosebud is a thrilling bipartisan success, and hopefully a sign of more wins to come.

4. Ocoee River (TN)

The stars aligned on the Ocoee in 2018 and another 15 years of Upper and Middle Ocoee releases were agreed to and approved. American Whitewater helped secure this outcome and restore a much-loved week of fall releases to the agreement, thanks in part to the partnership we forged with the Southern Environmental Law Center.

5. National Monuments

Following an extensive "review" of National Monuments, the President ultimately reduced two: Bears Ears and Grand Staircase - Escalante in Utah. These National Monuments include whitewater resources on the San Juan, Colorado, and Escalante rivers that flow through a landscape known for its geologic wonders and rich cultural heritage. While we believe the President does not have the authority to reduce or rescind National Monuments, that case is now in federal court. Over the past year we worked with our colleagues at Outdoor Alliance to highlight the importance of outdoor recreation, including whitewater paddling, to experience the objects of scientific and cultural interest on these Utah Rivers and recently filed an amicus brief in the case.

San Juan River (UT) Photo by Evan Stafford

6. Colorado Water Plans

American Whitewater is moving ahead with studies designed to allow paddlers and river enthusiasts the opportunity to provide clear input into the Colorado Water Plan through individual Stream Management Plans. We continue to work in the Rio Grande Basin, while expanding our study efforts to other watersheds in the State - each of which will fairly represent the needs of recreation as Colorado seeks to balance declines in water supply and increased demands statewide.

7. Hydropower Legislation

This past fall, America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 was signed into law and included the most significant changes to hydropower law enacted in more than a decade. The bipartisan legislation will encourage utilities to upgrade their dams and improve operations before licenses expire, promote the responsible electrification of federal dams that currently do not have hydropower, and make it easier to generate electricity from conduits, all without undermining fundamental environmental protections. Given some of the proposals we saw for hydropower legislation that would have severely undermined environmental protections and opportunities to restore flows downstream of dams—and the opportunities to paddle them!—we are pleased that Congress elected to work together on common sense proposals that were broadly supported.

8. Protecting Clean Water

The application of the Clean Water Act to our nation's headwaters remains as confusing as the chaotic currents of a wild mountain stream. American Whitewater actively supported the 2015 Clean Water Rule given the importance of clean water for the health of rivers and those who recreate in their waters. Following recent court action, this Rule is now in effect in 22 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories. The other 24 states are subject to two other court decisions staying the Rule. The issue will continue to play out in the courts and within the Administration over the coming year as the Environmental Protection Agency works to repeal the 2015 Rule and replace it with an alternative.

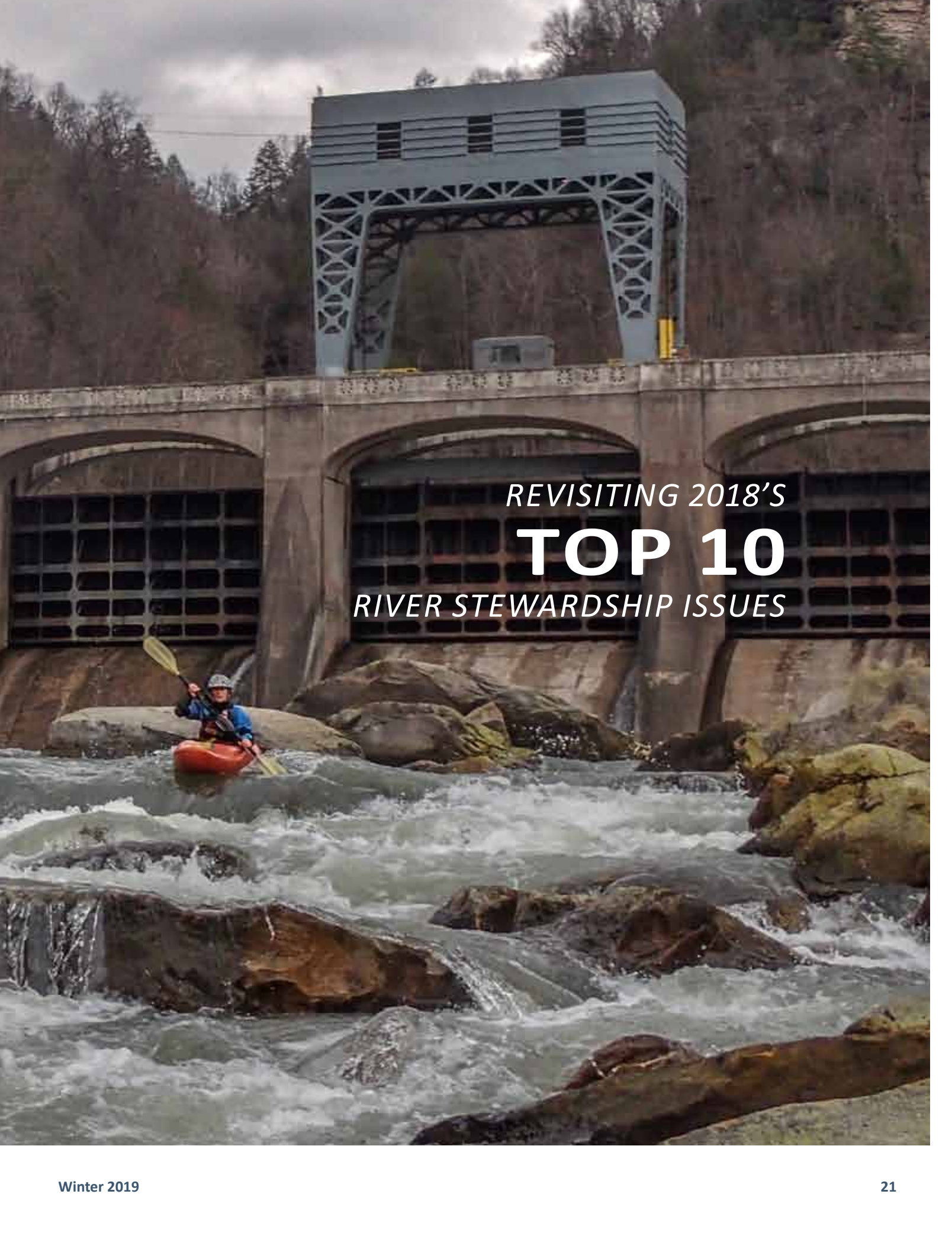
9. California Hydropower Relicensing

In 2018, whitewater study plans to evaluate the impacts of the hydropower projects on recreational whitewater boating were approved for the Eel River and Piru Creek. These studies will combine a robust hydrology assessment, stakeholder focus groups, thorough site visits, and potential on-water recreational flow studies. Currently these studies are engaging paddlers on both of these Wild and Scenic rivers in detailed focus groups. As these studies progress it is our hope to gather quality information that will help us to advocate for outcomes that are inline with the tenets of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

10. Connecticut River Dam Operations

Our efforts to restore the Connecticut River continued throughout 2018, as American Whitewater, along with state and federal resource agencies, has been working to restore flows, protect habitat, and provide recreation opportunities harmed by five hydropower projects impacting nearly 90 miles of the mainstem. Our efforts to reach settlement on recreation flows, access, and information will continue in 2019, and we will ultimately succeed in our efforts to provide new and improved whitewater boating opportunities at Sumner Falls, Bellows Falls, and Turners Falls.

New River Dries (WV) Photo by Jeff Macklin



REVISITING 2018'S
TOP 10
RIVER STEWARDSHIP ISSUES

PARADISE (SOON TO BE) LOST

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KEVIN PARKER



Stephen Wright surfing the Nile Special wave, with the local “pro” handling the tow-in rope.

IN MARCH 2018, I had the incredible opportunity to travel to Uganda and paddle on the Nile with world class paddlers Stephen and Clay Wright, and Sam Ward. This trip was especially memorable, as this will be possibly the last year much of this incredible place will exist in its natural form. Soon much of this section of river, along with the vibrant tourism industry that is built upon it, will be flooded with the opening of the newly constructed Isimba Dam. Not only will it flood the lower portion of this incredible section of the

Nile River, it will also displace thousands of local people who have little to begin with, as well as do away with hundreds of local jobs that depend on the vibrant recreational economy created by the rafting and kayaking along this section of river. For me, to have the opportunity to visit this special place and paddle on the famous rapids before they are lost was truly the chance of a lifetime.

The trip was organized by Stephen Wright, and as soon as I heard about it, I signed on.

With a group of 12, Stephen brought on fellow paddler Clay Wright to help instruct, which meant we would be paddling with two of the best play boaters in the world. To make this trip run seamlessly, and be the ultimate African adventure, Stephen worked with Sam Ward for local logistics. Sam set up all of our local accommodations, meals, shuttles, and local guides to make it safe and hassle-free. Sam also jumped in and assisted with instruction, which really pushed this into a top tier learning experience.

INTERNATIONAL WHITEWATER

One of the biggest impacts of the future loss of much of this recreation economy will be recreation businesses and all the locals they employ. During our stay, I became good friends with our regular shuttle driver and tour guide extraordinaire, Meddy. As a local, he knows that with the impact on the river tourism industry in this area, work for him and many others who enjoy good jobs in the recreation industry here will soon dry up. Meddy is already making plans to move to Dubai for work, leaving his wife and young children at home for up to two years before he can hope to return. It is these sad stories, bringing this terrible loss to a human level, which made this trip so poignant for me.

Meddy, shuttle driver and tour guide extraordinaire



No more renewal notices!



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Sign up for auto-renewal on your AW membership and you'll never get another. Your membership won't lapse and you'll be helping us save our limited funds and trees!

New and renewing members:

americanwhitewater.org/join

Current members:

1-866-262-8429



INTERNATIONAL WHITEWATER



With the knowledge that this could well be the last season to experience many of the Nile's famous rapids, we were motivated to make the most of the river's beauty and power. Spending our days alternating between running the river one day, and staying at a single, epic play spot the next, we were able to make the most of the invaluable instruction we got from Stephen, Clay, and Sam. Each of them brought a different perspective and instructional style to the river, but it is easy to see the passion for kayaking and the river that they share. Each time we moved to a new feature, with names I had read about and seen in videos, we became more enchanted and immersed in the magic of the Nile.



On our fifth day we moved down the river to the legendary Hairy Lemon, part of the section that will be lost. This was to be our home for the remainder of the trip. The Lemon, as it is commonly known, lies directly across from the world class Nile Special wave, which is where we would be "schooled" for the next week. These lessons were administered by a combination of our great instructors, and the Nile Special wave itself, which was much more impactful, in many ways. One great treat was celebrating Clay Wright's 51st birthday at the Hairy Lemon and on the Nile Special. Marking a milestone with such a legendary paddler on a legendary wave, followed by a gourmet dinner prepared by the incredible local staff of the Hairy Lemon, was the ultimate way to cap off an epic adventure in a paradise soon to be lost.



Top: Stephen Wright holding class on the Nile

Middle: Nile bliss

Bottom: Our talented local safety boaters. Way better boaters than most of us.

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WHITEWATER HISTORY

WILD WONDERFUL GAULEY

BY JERRY SPENCE



The author getting ready to splat Pillow Rock Rapid
Photo by Melissa Spence

IT WAS EARLY September, and once again I found myself driving down West Virginian country roads with fiberglass squirt boats atop my Volkswagen Rabbit. The moon was full and illuminating the road so brightly that I could almost drive with my headlights off. The road began bending left and right in gradual turns and landmarks started to come into view. There were the A-frame houses on the right and the overlook pull-off and then the Dairy Freeze. Past that, the road turned left and then became a perfect geometrical straight line. The sign that came into view sent chills through my body: "Summersville Dam." Ahead was one of the most dramatic views whitewater paddlers anywhere in the world can see. On one side of the road was a placid lake that was still with the glow of the moon reflecting off its surface; on the other side was a deep chasm of darkness:

a juxtaposition of calm and excitement. I drove to the center of the dam and turned my lights off. A very quiet calm. There was a river down there but it could not be seen or heard because it was dormant with a paltry flow of 80-100 cfs coming from the three concrete outtake tubes. But in several hours, the river would come to life because Gauley season had begun.

The first time I paddled the Gauley was in 1981. I continue to paddle there to this day, but not with the frequency as I once did. Back then, I dedicated every September and October to paddling the Gauley and was able to paddle 28 seasons in a row before missing one. I have many memories of paddling the Gauley and many more have been lost to time. The ones I do recall represent how special the Gauley is and the many moods of the river. There have been

many changes around the Gauley over the years but the river has remained a constant. Once upon a time, for instance, there were no guaranteed flows and the river's put-ins and take-outs were very primitive. I do not think many people hike in or out of the railroad tracks along Peters Creek anymore or leave boats near the railroad tunnel when doing the upper and lower sections over two days. The Gauley Festival did not begin until 1983 with the efforts of Citizens for Gauley to prevent the dewatering of three miles of prime whitewater on the upper Gauley. The monumental discharge from the three tubes, the great flumes exploding into the pool at the base of the dam, have been replaced with the construction of a power plant, but a federal law to guarantee scheduled releases was written and passed and guarantees the Gauley Season exists in perpetuity.

There was a time when you had to trust (or hope) that the lake was full enough to allow the Army Corps of Engineers to perform the fall draw-down of Summersville Lake to accommodate the spring snow melt and rains. There was no guarantee of releases, but they generally did occur and attracted boaters and rafters from afar to learn what Wild Wonderful West Virginia meant Gauley style. During the early days, camping was allowed about anywhere you could find a spot on the road leading down to the base of the dam. Battle Run campground belonged to lake boaters until after Labor day and then the kayakers and private boaters took over for the next several weekends. It was not uncommon back then to wake up and find that you were surrounded by skunks—many skunks. But they seem to have had a truce with boaters and there were never many confrontations until one year it seemed like they just disappeared. Maybe they didn't like the smell of boating gear.

The Gauley was also a gathering or reunion location for paddlers who would come across each other once in a while during the spring and summer on other rivers but would always meet during Gauley season, a sort of brotherhood and sisterhood. It seemed like everyone knew everyone.

Today, the river still throws down all its fury and fun for all who attempt it—with the exception of one missing rapid: the tubes. Yes, the discharge tubes presented a challenge if you tried to put in where the water came crashing into the pool at the base of the earthen dam. I saw a number of boaters flip putting in by the tubes and many more walk down further to avoid them. But the rafts had no alternative to challenging the maelstrom. Many raft guides strained their voices at the put-in. On several occasions, I paddled my squirt boat across the oceanic turbulence where released water met the pool water; it was a true Class IV-V ferry. If not for my boat's ability to knife through the turbulence, it would have been hopeless.

In the years of 1982 and 1983 the Gauley was under threat of the construction of a tunnel for power generation that would dewater three miles of the upper Gauley, including Pillow Rock rapid. Paddlers from around the country rallied and Citizens for Gauley was established to thwart the project that would have destroyed a classic whitewater river. Raft companies, kayakers, and locals all joined in the fight to save the Gauley. The first Gauley Festival I recall was in September 1983 and was held at a campground on the rim of the New River Gorge near the New River Gorge Bridge. It was a wet night of mud, music, and a shared passion for protecting a special river. There was also a slalom race held in the first rapid below the dam, in which elite US paddlers participated. The Gauley festival returned in 1984 and was held at Mountain River Tours campground and in the following years found its current location at the Nicholas County Veterans Memorial Park in Summersville. Then the fight for the Gauley continued in earnest. In October 1986, with the efforts of West Virginia congressman Nick Rahal, a federal law was written that included whitewater recreation as a purpose of the Summersville Dam and guaranteed 20 days of whitewater releases annually, starting the first weekend after Labor Day. Around that time, I remember answering survey questions for WVU students who had been contracted to do an economic study of the revenue brought in by the Gauley releases; their results put the economic impact at around \$16 million, and I am sure that number has only grown in the years since.

In 1988 a severe drought affected much of the United States, including West Virginia. That summer, a handful of paddlers discovered a summertime Gauley season of 1000 cfs releases that lasted for weeks on end. One of the purposes of Summersville Lake is flow augmentation into the New River for the chemical and metal plants in and around Charleston, WV. It was surprising that more people were not aware of these releases; it was generally the same groups showing up weekend

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Tallulah Race 2016. | Photo: Emrie Canen

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WHITEWATER HISTORY

after weekend. The ambient temperatures would be near 100 degrees, but the water in the Gauley was cold and provided a great temperature balance. The Gauley at 1000 cfs is a much more technical river and you get to see how undercut it is in places. The crux moves were at Pillow, which developed more hydraulics to work around, and also Tumble Home and Iron Ring rapids. Worthy of a scout, most walked Iron Ring at the 1000 cfs level. Rafting companies continued to operate trips, and when you would arrive at Iron Ring it would often be a traffic jam of people carrying rafts around the rapid. It was at these low flows that some friends of ours from the Washington, D.C. area showed us a very fun flume on the left side of Iron Ring that, when you jumped in, it would propel you underwater and downstream about 30 yards before you

would resurface. Every time we paddled the Gauley at 1000 cfs we would spend an hour launching ourselves from this natural human torpedo launcher.

I heard this phrase once and thought it was fitting: “the Gauley is a place you go to strut your stuff or get stuffed strutting.” While the river has many challenging rapids, Initiation has an especially ominous reputation, and rightfully so. Before we knew the undercut danger existed there, our group would always surf the top wave in our squirt boats and fortunately never had an issue. But years later I witnessed and tried to help rescue paddlers who had fatal outcomes surfing that wave. Ultimately, signs were posted at the put-in warning of Initiation and the danger of the surf wave, helping it gain the notoriety it deserves. For a reality

check, hike down to Initiation at low water and view the obstruction; it will cure you of any desire to surf that wave again.

One year three of us were paddling through Pillow Rock in our low volume squirt boats; my friend Steve was last. Don and I had eddied out on the right near the crowds and the photographer. We watched Steve make his run and knew right away he was off line and in trouble. Steve went into the hole at the convergence of the two channels and did a back ender face first into the rock creating the hydraulic. We could see the bottom of the boat rocking back and forth and we knew he was exiting. When Steve surfaced we saw that his face was bloodstained. I looked up at some raft guides standing on shore and asked if they had a first aid kit and they said yes. We got

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Colorado River, Grand Canyon. | Photo: Evan Stafford



Rafters portaging Iron Ring Rapid at 1000 cfs
Photo by Jerry Spence

as well. We would bring our kids to Battle Run campsite 21 in the trees on the hill overlooking the playground, where their grandmothers would watch over them while we spent time on the river. It was a family affair and we met many friends at the Gauley. At the end of a day the parents would talk about the river and the kids would talk about the swing sets and playing at the beach. Eventually our kids grew into boats and started to join us on the river and left the swing sets behind. Everyone that I took to the Gauley, whether in a kayak, canoe, or raft, always left with a smile and a desire to return. Even after 37 years I still get the same warm sensation paddling the Gauley, the feeling of doing something special in a very special place. West Virginia's slogan is "Wild and Wonderful" and the Gauley is truly both of those things.

Steve to the guides and then took off after his boat and paddle. When we made it back into the eddy where Steve was, his face was completely wrapped in gauze and you could only see his eyes, nose and mouth. The whitewater photographer offered to give him a ride to the hospital and the three of us began hiking up the steep goat trail to Carnifax Ferry battleground to wait for the ride. One day each year there is a Civil War reenactment at Carnifax and, of course, it was being held that day! People kept coming up to us and asking if Steve was part of the war. We just told them he had a battle down on the river and had not been victorious. Steve took 48 stitches and did not boat the Gauley again that season but did return the next year and many years afterwards.

We grew as paddlers during the many Gauley seasons and our kids grew up there



The discharge tubes at Summersville Dam
Photo by Jerry Spence

WHITEWATER HISTORY

GAULEY PIONEERS DINNER

BY CHARLIE WALBRIDGE



L to R: John Sweet, Jimmy Holcombe, Jack Wright, Norm Holcombe, Charlie Walbridge at the Gauley Pioneers Dinner at Adventures on the Gorge, September 16, 2018
Photo by Jeff Macklin

ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1968 John Sweet, Jim Stuart, Norman and Jimmy Holcombe, Jack Wright, and Miha Tomczik made the first hard-boat run of West Virginia's Gauley River from Summersville Dam to Swiss. Although the river had been rafted seven years earlier,

the reports were so frightening that seven full years had elapsed before the second descent. This was a strong team; their number included several national champions and notable first descenders. Using modern closed-deck kayaks and C-1s, the team ran the full 26 miles in a single long day. The level was 1200 cfs. John Sweet ran both Iron Ring and Sweets Falls, making him the first to run all of the Upper Gauley's rapids.

This groundbreaking trip created great interest in the Gauley because of its outstanding scenery and marvelous whitewater. Many paddlers retraced the steps of the original group. Jim Stuart organized club trips through the Canoe Cruisers Association in 1969 and 1970. John Dragan, the first outfitter on the New River, ran the first commercial Gauley River trip

in 1971. That trip was by invitation only, for guests recommended by their guide! Many others followed, and the rest is history.

The original trip was a campfire legend when I started paddling in West Virginia in 1971. I knew the entire team except for Miha Tomczik, a Czechoslovakian paddler doing graduate work at Penn State. They were people I looked up to when I was starting to paddle, who taught me a lot, and with whom I ran rivers many times over the years. So last spring I talked with Dave Arnold, one of the founders of Adventures on the Gorge, about bringing the original team together to celebrate this iconic run. He shared my enthusiasm, and we planned a dinner at their facility. Four of the first descenders agreed to come, and the event was on! The 150 audience seats sold out in just three weeks!

On September 16, 2018 we gathered to celebrate this remarkable trip. Attendees heard first-hand accounts from John Sweet,



Jack Wright showing off the bib he made for a run 25 years ago!

Photo by Jeff Macklin



Gauley pioneert Jack Wright making a 50th anniversary trip down the Middle Gauley
Photo by Jeff Macklin

Norm and Jimmy Holcombe (Jimmy still runs the Upper Gauley), and Jack Wright. We also recognized Barbara Brown, the first woman to attempt the Gauley. She was on the 1969 “rapid naming” trip led by Jim Stuart when she lost her paddle in the big rapid below the Meadow River. She hiked out, but returned a few weeks later to finish the run. Years later her paddle was found and returned to her. Pioneering outfitter Paul Breuer told us how his group made rafts from earth mover inner tubes with roped-in wooden floors for another 1969 trip. Although the boats fell apart partway down the river, they were, in fact, the first self-bailing rafts ever built. Melanie Dragan and Imre Szylagyi, both old-time outfitters, joined Wildwater West Virginia author Dr. Paul Davidson to share their stories. It was a great reunion for many paddlers from that era, including Tom Irwin, Wick Walker, Barb McKee, Bill Kirby, and Ed Gertler. And the river tales just kept coming!

Tom Irwin (left), Norm Holcombe (center), and John Sweet (right) discuss gear featured in the blow-up
Photo by Jeff Macklin

The Gauley River was eventually protected, thanks to the work of many people. After that first exploratory expedition, Jim Stuart led a number of trips and did much to publicize the beauty and challenge of the canyon. David Brown, who became executive director of Citizens for Gauley River, gathered support from paddlers, businessmen, and conservationists to make the case for protection. West Virginia



Congressman Nick Rahall was deeply involved in forming both the New and Gauley River National Recreation Areas. Both men were scheduled to attend, but were called away at the last minute. Today Gauley Season has become a real economic asset to the area. Recognizing this, our host Dave Arnold presented congratulatory proclamations from the Governor Jim Justice to each member of the first descent team.

The day before the event, a group led by Lee Belknap and Jeff Macklin joined Jack Wright for a run down the Middle Gauley, his first in many years. Back in the ‘70s Jack was an independent computer consultant who took six months off each year to run rivers. He was well known throughout the Appalachians and Rocky Mountains for his skills as a paddler and boatbuilder. Jack and I shared many runs on the Gauley and it was a pleasure to be on the river with him once again.

Rivers bring people together, and the Gauley has been an important meeting place for paddlers for 50 years. Friendships made there last a lifetime. And it all started because the first descent team showed us the way.

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REMEMBRANCE

REMEMBERING JAY EVANS

BY JOHN BURTON, BILL AND ABBIE ENDICOTT, JOE JACOBI, AND WICK WALKER



Robert Jay Evans, July 17, 1925 – April 20, 2018, first coach of the US Whitewater Team

WHEN JAY EVANS died in Concord, NH, this past April, just as the Ledyard Canoe Club at Dartmouth was convening its annual Riverfest weekend, that club and the whole of American whitewater sport lost a great mentor and visionary. Jay wrote three of the first books in the US on kayaking and was best known as the first coach of the U.S. Whitewater Team. He coached both slalom and wildwater for the 1969 and 1971 World Championships and then slalom at its debut in the 1972 Olympic Games, where Jamie McEwan won a Bronze Medal in C-1. Yet to those paddlers whose lives he shaped, and to the sport whose horizons he so expanded, Jay was so much more.

The U.S. Team Grows Up by Bill Endicott

Jay was always involved in the outdoors, be it skiing, mountaineering, camping, or Outward Bound instructing, and this included whitewater canoeing in open Grummans in the late 1950s, when he taught school in Virginia. His interests transitioned to kayaks in the early 1960s in Massachusetts, where he learned the Eskimo Roll by himself without instruction in a neighbor's swimming pool. In 1962 he moved to Hanover, New Hampshire to work for Dartmouth and connected with the Ledyard Canoe Club. With Dartmouth students, Jay started competing on the

eastern whitewater circuit in homemade fiberglass kayaks with cloth decks.

In the late 1950s and 60s on the east coast, slalom racing in canoes and kayaks was led by two groups: Scouts and Outing Clubs (Penn State most notably), and white-collar professionals, many with alpine skiing backgrounds (Washington D.C. and New York were prominent epicenters). All were essentially on the weekend warrior plan: head to a river for a weekend, camp out, hang a few gates the next day, run a slalom, and then, later in the weekend, run the rest of the river in the same boat you raced in.

"What to you is part-time recreation, in Europe is a full-time sport," commented

REMEMBRANCE



Jay Evans, West River Slalom, VT

Paul Bruhin of the Swiss 1963 slalom and wildwater teams. The idea of daily mid-week training sessions was just beginning to cross the Atlantic. Jay picked up on this early, and when he got to Ledyard he and his paddlers became athletes first. The camping experience was secondary, almost irrelevant. It was during the period when he coached first Ledyard and then the U.S. Team that the athlete/sport/training model became the whitewater racing norm.

Reaching for the Gold

by Abbie Endicott

In 1972, Bill (Endicott) and his C-2 partner, Brad Hagger, narrowly missed selection to the Olympic team. I thought our Olympic dream had died! But Jay had previously recruited me to assist him in Munich and Augsburg, and now he took a step further. He persuaded Bill to come as his assistant coach. This Olympic experience marked the

beginning of our awareness that Bill might be able to make a far greater contribution as a coach than as an athlete.

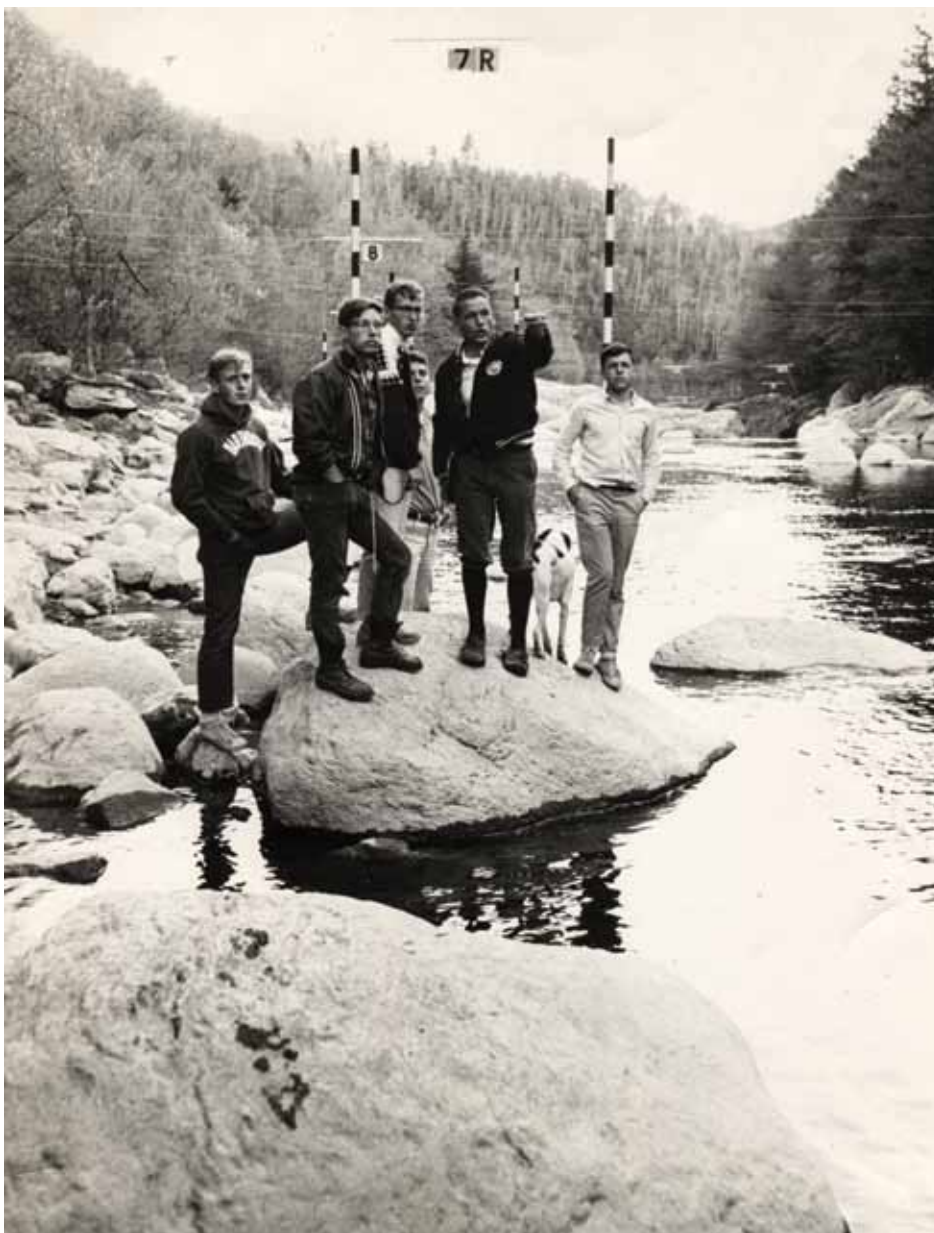
Without that quiet, confidence-inspiring nudge, so typical of Jay, Bill may never have stepped into his mentor's shoes, coaching the U.S. Team when U.S. C-1s Jon Lugbill and Davey Hearn dominated world rankings, and when the team won its first gold medals in the World Championships and then gold and bronze medals in Olympic slalom. Bill has also authored several books on the sport, founded the Slalom World Cup, and advised developing slalom programs in Europe, Australia, Chile, and China.

Jay continued to shape my life as well. Then commodore of the American Canoe Association Dusty Rhodes realized that the U.S. racing program needed to become more than its athletes and coaches, that it was important for Americans to serve on international governing committees as well. That Olympic experience with him, and Jay's trust in me, gave me confidence to accept appointment to be the US Representative on the International Canoe Federation's Promotion and Information Committee. Later, capitalizing on that experience, I joined in efforts to get slalom reinstated in the Olympics, which came to fruition in 1992.

Reaching for the Sky

by Wick Walker

Jay played no less a role in shaping my life. From the moment I arrived at Dartmouth in 1964 on through the Munich Games, I lived that "growing up" described by Bill. Even more than a coach, for me, Jay was an "enabler." In 1965 he took me aside and convinced me to accept a suddenly vacant slot for the World Championships in Austria that summer. I had been paddling C-1 less than a year, and without Jay's unbound enthusiasm and (totally unwarranted) faith that I could do it, I would never have attempted racing at that level.



Course Walk, West River VT, mid-1960s with Jay (pointing) and (left to right) former and future US Team paddlers Wick Walker, Sandy Campbell, Jo Knight, Eric Evans

That pattern was to repeat many times, for me and others. Shortly after the Olympics, I confided in Jay my vision of expedition paddling in the Himalayas—and my doubts. The whitewater would be scary, the logistics of organizing such a thing halfway around the world equally daunting. Jay’s quiet message was: this goal is worthy of great effort, and you are exactly the right person to accomplish it. Encouraged, I

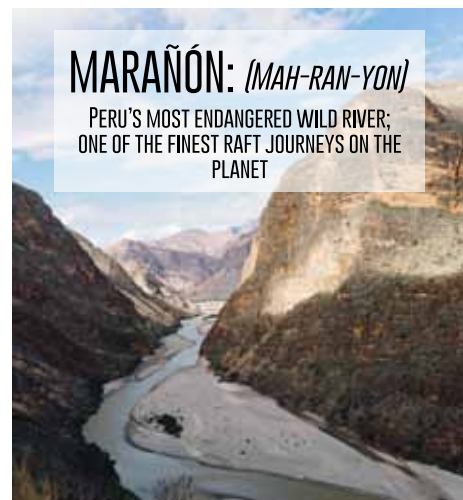
trained for three years in the Alps with the Alpiner Kanu Club, then launched to Bhutan in 1981—the start to a lifetime of international exploration.

Broadening the Base

by John Burton

The first two people I met when I showed up at Dartmouth in September 1965 turned

out to be two of the most influential people in the rest of my life. Jay Evans and Wick Walker were manning the Ledyard booth on activities night, recruiting green (very green—18-year-old) freshmen into the birthing of the Ledyard juggernaut (Who knew? No one!). Jay was the best mentor I could have asked for. He was disciplined, focused, competitive, and creative; we never stopped working on technique and conditioning, all the while maintaining an attitude of positivity and optimism. Jay taught us to welcome adversity (not hard to find in spring conditions in northern New Hampshire). If the snow was blowing sideways, we always knew we had an advantage over those negatively affected by the conditions.



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REMEMBRANCE

May 13, 1971

Memo #6 From: Jay Evans
To: The 1971 U.S. Whitewater Team

It is the time now to either fish or cut bait. As a member of the U.S. Whitewater Team from now until after June 23 you will no longer fit your training in and around other activities, but rather you will consider your training first, and then plan for other things if time and energy are available.

You have a distinct obligation to yourself; to your team-mates; to those volunteers on the Slalom Committee and the coaching staff who have been working hard over the past two years; and to the many hundreds of people across the country who have donated generously to the U.S.I.S.C.A. and to the Olympic Fund which is supporting you. We have all given 100% of ourselves -- we will expect no less from you.

Since the U.S. Team this year numbers 34 athletes, in order to be an effective force at Merano, instead of naming assistant coaches I shall appoint a Squad Captain from each of the five classes. These will be experienced, senior members who will act as an advisory committee in planning and carrying out each day's schedule and in working out any problems that arise. The Squad Captains will be given administrative assistants to help in such duties as shuttling, stop watching, and general support of the daily training program.

***** Policy Guidelines *****

#1. Attendance at all practices and team meetings will be mandatory. Only the team physician can excuse you from an appointment. Report all injuries -- however slight - to the team physician directly following practice.

#2. We will use "Vince Lombardi" time, i.e. if a meeting is called for 7 P.M. you'd better be there and ready to go by 6:55!

#3. Even the mildest form of boisterous or irregular behavior via alcohol and/or drugs is more than ample grounds for instant dismissal from the team.

#4. No U.S. Team member will use tobacco while in uniform or in public.

#5. Your relations with the townspeople of Merano will be impeccable, always keeping in mind that as a United States team member you are an ambassador of goodwill. All local laws and regulations will be cheerfully and scrupulously observed.

#6. All contact with the local, national and international press, media, or even free lancers must be referred to John Wilson or Bill Riley. Individual team members will not talk to the press, magazines, radio or T.V. at any time without prior clearance.

#7. International rules forbid your corresponding with race officials during the World Championships. If you have a question or a complaint you report this to the team manager.

#8. The U.S. Team will be quartered at Hotel Rosengarten St. Georgenstrasse from the evening of June 9 through the evening of June 23. At least two meals per day will be taken there and team meetings will be held there. Be sure to check the team bulletin board at the Rosengarten frequently. You are responsible for all information posted there.

#9. Personal Appearance. As a member of the U.S. Team receiving Olympic subsidy, you will be expected to be neat, clean, and well-groomed at all times. There will be no place for slob or slovenly dress or appearance at Merano.

#10. As in past years, this will be a cooperative effort. We have come together from 12 different states - which is a beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together means success. Slalom specialists will be expected to help with wildwater and vice versa. This will be a Team effort.

Jay's timeless memo to the US Whitewater Team from May 1971

Tom Southworth, Les Bechdel, and I tried to fill Jay's shoes after 1972, as U.S. Team coaches for the 1973 Worlds in Switzerland. That time foreshadowed the end of my brief banking career, which had started in 1971, when I moved to Philadelphia to train with Tom for the Olympics. Our first training camp for the 1973 Worlds was in North Carolina, hosted by the Nantahala Outdoor Center, the visionary outdoor enterprise founded just the year before

by Horace Holden, Aurelia Kennedy, and Payson Kennedy. Molded by Jay's idealism, his embrace of lofty goals, and his example of behind-the-scenes service to the sport, in 1975 I moved to the NOC to continue my river journey. Jay could not have been prouder!

In the years since, I've been privileged to participate in the growth of the NOC from guiding a few hundred folks in rafts down

the Nantahala and Chattooga Rivers, and teaching a few kayak and canoe classes, to becoming one of the premier outdoor adventure providers in the world. Forty-five years later, the NOC provides about 700 outdoors-related jobs at the summer peak; 108,000 rafters splash down eight southeastern rivers; and the center trains hundreds of aspiring paddlers, from beginners to Olympians and swift-water rescue professionals. All, staff and customers alike, are led to places of courage and accomplishment they didn't know they could access. Jay would have said he expected no less.

Looking Back

by Joe Jacobi

Scott Strausbaugh and I had never met Jay Evans when we won America's first Olympic slalom gold medal, in Barcelona. Yet we knew his name and felt his influence through our coach Bill Endicott and our teammate Jamie McEwan. Wick recently showed me a memo Jay sent the US Team in 1971, as he set out to forge the team for whitewater racing's future. Wick asked me what I saw in it from my vantage point as a racer two decades and more into that future. I could only say that Jay's memo outlined more than just rules for being a Team USA athlete. It was a guide for developing as the person that would serve the U.S. program in ways we could have never seen then. I could only suggest that we consider striking a line through "May 13, 1971"; replace that, I said, with the word, "Timeless."

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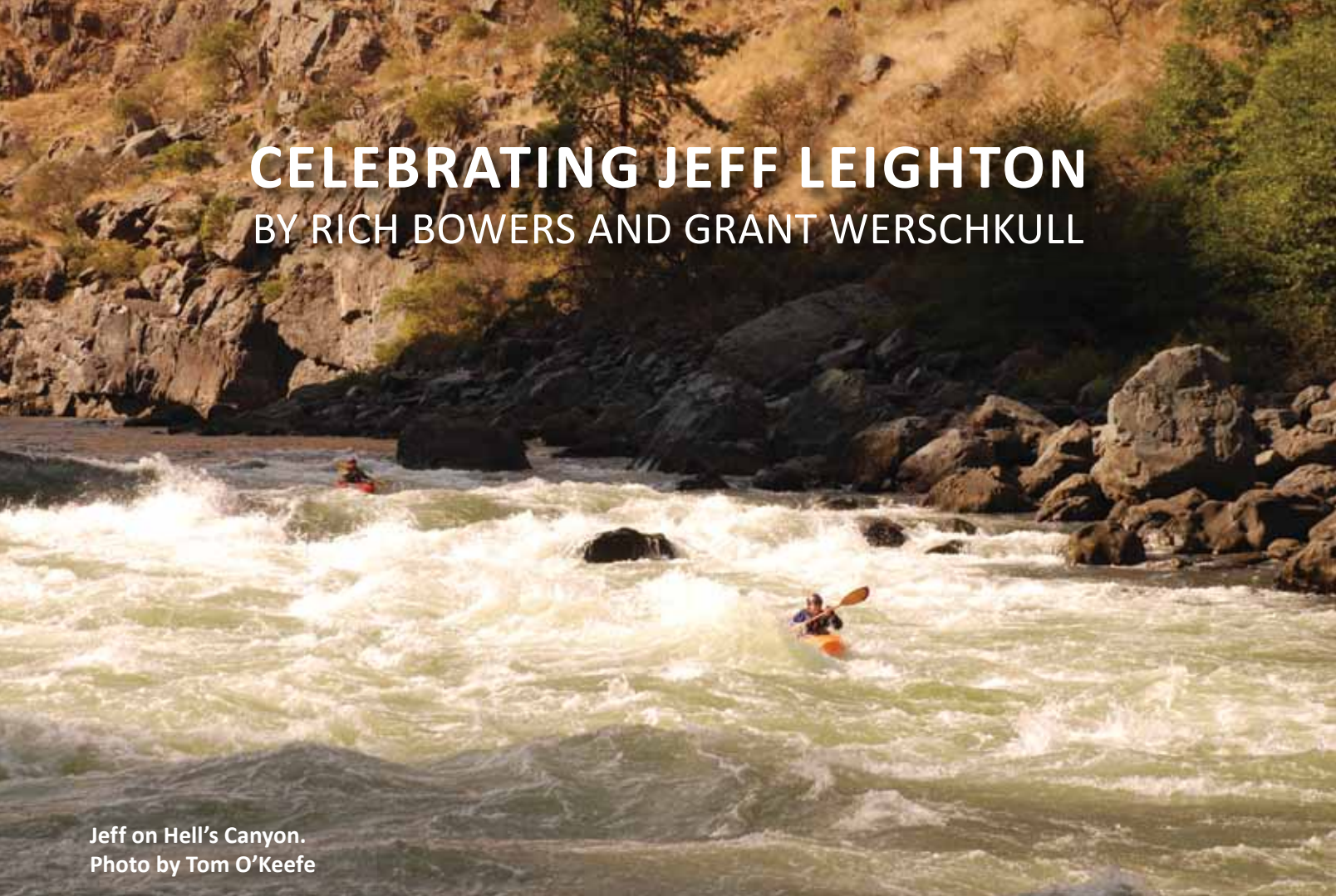
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CELEBRATING JEFF LEIGHTON

BY RICH BOWERS AND GRANT WERSCHKULL



Jeff on Hell's Canyon.
Photo by Tom O'Keefe

PADDLERS, WHITEWATER RIVERS, and so many others lost a very good friend on Friday evening, October 5, 2018 with the passing of Jeff Leighton. Jeff was a past board member and officer with American Whitewater, and my good friend. Jeff and Tamera Leighton have spent many years living in Crescent City, California, and on Friday Jeff passed from complications related to ALS.

When I first started working to protect rivers and manage small nonprofits, I met Jeff as he stepped up to become Treasurer for American Whitewater. We quickly became friends and together we have faced deficits, downturns, and water way too big for our paddling skills. And while I am no wizard with numbers and spreadsheets, Jeff taught me the value of budgets and how to tell if you are in trouble or not.

Jeff introduced me to the west coast paddling community, foundations, corporations, and was largely responsible

for helping American Whitewater grow from a rag-tag collection of river lovers to an efficient, successful organization that today remains a leader in conservation, access, and the link between recreation and the wonderful rivers that network this country. Through his work and love of water and rivers, Jeff became a friend to many river groups, including Smith River Alliance, Idaho Rivers United, Friends of the River, River Network, and many more. This past April Jeff was given a lifetime achievement award from both the Smith River Alliance and American Whitewater.

One of my favorite memories was running a California river with several friends (including Jeff), and Jim Compton. Jim was the principle of a major foundation, and this was American Whitewater's (and my) first fundraising trip. Jim hit a big hole, flipped, and tried to roll for an extremely long time, only to eventually bail. I immediately sped after Jim, missing that Jeff had also found the same hole, but had decided to stay

there awhile. After getting Jim to shore, Jeff paddled in (looking much worse for wear), gave me the eye, and said, "You know, I have money too!"

Jeff and I paddled rivers together in West Virginia, California, Idaho, Costa Rica, and many other places that I can't remember. Together, and with other friends, Jeff and I managed to make each trip wonderful and, too often, epic.

Jeff is one of many who, over the decades, stamped his mark on each of us he came into contact with. I am sure that I will remember Jeff every time I take a strong pull on the paddle, watch the swirl of the eddy line, and remember how I have come to enjoy the excitement, serenity, friendships, and contemplation that comes from my close relationship to water.

-Rich Bowers

REMEMBRANCE

OUR LONG-TIME FRIEND and colleague Jeff Leighton passed away last night. Back in April, when we teamed with American Whitewater on the Smith River paddling weekend, Jeff was unable to join us at the Ranch for a group presentation of the award. However, it was a special moment to be able to share it with him a few weeks later.

On the personal side, we had many work and recreation adventures with Jeff over the years, including float trips (Illinois, SF American, and many journeys on the Smith River) and mountain biking outings around California and the Siskiyou region. We always found it a bit amazing that we somehow ended up moving to Crescent City around the same time, after many years of working and playing together from points south. Jeff was one of our most frequent house guests at our Kadema Drive home in Sacramento, where he'd show up and work into the wee hours—usually helping us work through Smith River Alliance financial management matters. In exchange, I'd do his laundry and we'd usually find time for some type of recreation activity. Of course, Jeff was always working simultaneously for



Jeff on Rio Pejibaye
Photo by Bill Sedivy

multiple clients so we were a great landing and launching pad for work and play.

Patty and I had been visiting Jeff and Tamera pretty frequently and we saw him the previous afternoon. Tamera called us later

in the evening to let us know he was gone. His health declined very rapidly toward the end. He was having extreme difficulty breathing and he basically couldn't eat. He'd lost more than 60 pounds over the last several months; we're glad he's in a better place now.

Thank you, Jeff, for the years of support and companionship. We'll see you on some future magical river trip!

There's some beautiful light over the river and the redwoods right now, and everything is a bit wet but clean. It rained most of yesterday.

-Grant Werschull



Group shot from a 2015 Idaho Rivers United paddling week, Pacuare River, Costa Rica. Jeff Leighton (back left, blue shirt) is standing next to Tamera Leighton (red helmet), then Rich Bowers and Bill Sedivy.
Photo by Rich Bowers

COLD WEATHER PADDLING TIPS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JEFF MACKLIN



The sublime beauty of cold weather paddling, Muddlety Creek, Summersville, WV

Editor's Note: What follows was originally printed in the Three Rivers Paddling Club's newsletter, Volume 30, Number 11 (2008). It is reprinted here with a few updates.

LATE FALL, WINTER, and early spring paddling can be surreal in its beauty. But, it's hard to appreciate this beauty if you are not warm. Here are a few winter paddling tips that work for me.

Dress to swim

If you are dressed to swim, you are dressed to aid in a rescue, maybe your own! Wear

a dry suit with booties (recommended) or a well fitted dry top dry pants combo for cold air or cold water days. Of course, you should never wear cotton in these conditions! Use only synthetic fabrics or wool. Wear insulation layers as needed. (Layer description below works for me. You may require something different.)

Layers

Depending on weather conditions, I usually wear a combination of two to four layers beneath my dry suit. The base layer (against skin) is always a thin wicking layer. On really

cold days, my choice is one or two thin, wicking layers, one medium to heavy-weight poly, one heavy-weight fleece. I think of the fleece as a "sponge" to wick/hold perspiration away from skin.

Bring gloves

Pogie wearers, where are your gloves? What happens if you lose your paddle and pogies and your buddy gives you his breakdown on a snowy, windy day? Your hands freeze! What happens on a cold and windy day when your buddy is broached in the middle of a river and needs some rope

work? Your hands freeze! **POGIE WEARERS, ALWAYS BRING GLOVES** in your dry bag.

Over-pack

A good practice is to take one extra article of clothing in your dry bag: a hat, a poly top, gloves, etc. This can be used by you or loaned to one of your buddies, if needed.

Below 32 degrees

If you are paddling in sub-freezing temperatures, there is even more to consider. Protect yourself from ice. **RESCUE PFD wearers, DO NOT WEAR** your quick-release harness and tether. Your quick-release harness will not work when frozen. If you need to tow a boat, use a flip-line loosely looped on your **DOWNSTREAM** shoulder. If you run into trouble, you can easily shed the flip-line, as long as it's not attached/clipped to you. By the way, I have never had my flip line or carabiners freeze, when worn around the waist.

Where are your car keys?

Are they in your PFD pocket with the zipper frozen closed? Plan ahead! Having multiple spare keys is a really smart idea. I purchased a few, less costly, non-chipped keys that



Fog rising from the relatively warm water into the 4-degree Fahrenheit air on Fike Run, PA. End-of-run air temperature was 14 degrees.

only open the vehicle door. I keep them in my PFD, in my dry bag, and hidden outside of my car. The key that starts the car is hidden in a really obscure place, inside the

vehicle (let your trusted paddling buddy know where, just in case). Is your whistle made of metal? Have you ever pressed your lips against a freezing cold flagpole to see what happens? You may want to keep your plastic whistle tucked between you and your PFD, to keep it from freezing.

Your throw rope

If your rope is frozen into an icy lump, it does not "reach" very far. Carry your (dry) throw rope in a dry bag, to keep it from getting wet and freezing. It will take a little longer to get to, but it will be usable as a throw rope.

Protect your ears

Severe ear damage can result from repeated exposure to cold water. Ear plugs are a simple and effective way to avoid paddling-related ear problems.



Winter conditions at Swallow Falls, Top Yough, Swallow Falls State Park, Maryland

SAFETY



Forecasts

Know the weather and water forecast for the AREA WHERE YOU PLAN TO PADDLE. It will help you make a good decision about dressing properly. It may also tip you off that paddling is not a good idea on a particular day. Will temperature rise or fall? Will it be windy? Will it be sunny or overcast? How much precipitation will fall? Will it be rain or snow? Will water levels change as a result? Know the answers to these questions, before driving to the river! Generally, the harsher the weather conditions, the shorter length and the less consequence for errors I choose in a run.

Check road conditions

Even if the shuttle roads are passable before paddling, what about after paddling?

Head, hands and feet

What works for me on cool and COLD days may not work for you. When it comes to what to wear on extremities, it is a matter of personal preference AND personal experience.

On cool days, I'll wear a thin fleece beanie under my helmet. I like pogies with easy to access over-sized hand openings with loose flaps for my hands. For feet, I choose to layer one or two thin polypropylene socks beneath my drysuit. For shoes, I choose to wear thin, non-insulated "low tops" with laces and high-traction rubber. Shoes with laces allow for pseudo-width adjusting, to accommodate a variety of foot insulation layers. To avoid squeezing my feet, my winter water shoes are one to one and a half sizes larger than my summer water shoes.

On really cold days, I'll switch to diver's-style headwear with full head and neck coverage (face not covered). I may combine the thin fleece beanie with the diver's headwear and then re-shim my helmet. In addition to pogies, I wear THIN seamless polypropylene glove liners and latex dry gloves. The drysuit wrist gasket goes on your skin, flat with no folds. Fit the dry glove gasket, flat with no folds, on top of



Top: Thin polypropylene glove liner with the wrist cuff tucked under

Middle: Finished look of dry glove gasket flat on top of drysuit wrist gasket

Bottom left: Close-up of flat seal overlap
Bottom right: The final product

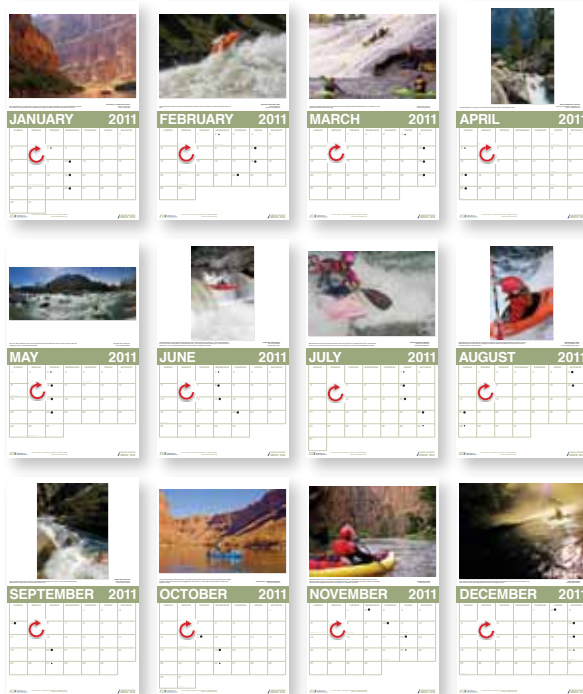


Hiking in to the put-in on a sunny February day, Fike Run, Pennsylvania.

the drysuit gasket. For my feet, I may add an additional third or fourth pair of thin polypropylene socks and loosen the shoe laces to accommodate. I have tried thicker socks, but for me, these tend to squeeze my feet too much and impede blood flow. However, try them out; thick socks work for my daughter and they might be best for you.

Once you're on the river and are warm and comfortable in your boat, look around, take it all in. After all, this is why you went to such lengths to gear up to paddle safely in the winter. Your friends who packed away their boats and gear for the cold months are missing out on this special experience.

Membership Installment Plans!



Big support, small payments

Now, you can choose to pay for any \$250+ membership in four or twelve payments. It makes that \$750 Lifetime membership just \$62.50 a month. Easy as \$62 pie :)

New and renewing members:

americanwhitewater.org/join

Current members:

1-866-262-8429



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NEWS & NOTES

AW ROGUE TRIP 2019

BY MARK SINGLETON



FOR THE PAST several years, the staff of American Whitewater has joined with a number of our members to participate in a four-day float trip on the Rogue River in Southern Oregon. This trip has been a great opportunity to connect with members in ways that build a lasting understanding of the role of recreation in fostering a stewardship ethic. As one of the original eight Wild and Scenic rivers in the country, the Rogue is an outstanding classroom for American Whitewater's river stewardship program. Staff members share current projects, their challenges and successes, as well as highlights of national policy work that affects Wild and Scenic rivers like the Rogue. The trip is made possible through the support of Northwest Rafting Company. They provide professional guides, exceptional food, transportation to and from Galice (the put-in), and group equipment.

In June 2018, American Whitewater members will again have an opportunity to join American Whitewater staff and board members for this exclusive trip on the Rogue. We invite you to come learn more about what we're up to while having a great time enjoying one of our nation's first Wild and Scenic rivers. You will have the option of bringing your own boat, renting a boat, or joining as a passenger on one of the rafts. The price for the trip will be \$1045, with a portion of the trip proceeds going to American Whitewater to support our work.

The trip, which will take place June 20 - 23, 2019, will be fully outfitted by Northwest Rafting Company with professional guides and all group equipment. The trip is suitable for all skill levels. Last year we had paddlers representing the full range of skill levels from experts who are out every weekend, to folks who had not been in a boat for

a while, and some who were just getting into an inflatable kayak or raft for the first time. Everyone is welcome on this trip—the only experience you need is a love of rivers. One of the most important concepts the Rogue trip will reinforce is what we all know firsthand—it is our common love of whitewater that makes us such passionate defenders of rivers. Oh yeah, and the food is excellent and the camping superb. Last year, we had a full trip, so make your reservation soon to ensure a spot on the Rogue trip with American Whitewater this summer.

Make your reservation directly through Northwest Rafting Company's website today at www.nwrafting.com/rogue and selecting the June 20 - 23 trip with American Whitewater under "Dates and Prices." We hope to see you on the Rogue River this June!

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

\$100 Affiliate Club

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

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special places that made
a difference in your life.*



Become a member of the American Whitewater Enduring Rivers Circle, created exclusively to honor and recognize people who have helped to continue our river stewardship efforts through a gift to American Whitewater in their estate plans.

For more information about making a bequest to American Whitewater
CONTACT Carla Miner: 1.866.262.8429 or carla@americanwhitewater.org

WHITEWATER POETRY

WHITEWATER JOY

BY NORMA SIMS ROCHE

It might be enough to drive northwest
red and yellow boat atop my car
iPod playing "Take Me to the River"
through farm fields, over swelling brooks, under dripping trees,
past unfortunate people stuck doing lesser things

And the greetings of friends
the cluster of bright boats
the first slap of water on my face
might be enough

But a day's long duet of warm sun and cold water
the feeling of slipping over a drop,
falling and being caught again
of riding high on a wave
with the balance of a Buddha
of a friend's shout, "Sweet move!"
of the catch of a strong stroke
steering a sure course through foamy chaos

Photo by Evan Stafford

AFFILIATE CLUBS

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY CARLA MINER

American Whitewater's original purpose since 1954 has included distribution of information among its Affiliate Clubs. 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.

American Whitewater has two levels of Affiliate Clubs - a Supporting Affiliate Club or an Affiliate Club. Affiliate Clubs that choose AW's \$100 annual level are recognized in the AW Journal, on our website club page, and in our annually published Honor Roll. In order to be recognized at this level, a Club needs to maintain an annual \$100 contribution.

Affiliate Clubs that choose AW's \$400 Supporting Affiliate Club annual level are recognized in the AW Journal, on our website club page, and in our annually published Honor Roll as well as being listed as sponsors of an AW stewardship presentation each year. In order to be recognized at this level, a Club needs to maintain an annual \$400 contribution. A Supporting Affiliate Club can revert to the \$100 Affiliate Club annual level at any time.

An Affiliate Club that is already being recognized as an AW Lifetime member is recognized in the annual Honor Roll as a Lifetime member. They do need to contribute either at the \$100 or the \$400 level annually to be recognized as an Affiliate Club in the AW Journal and under the Affiliate Club heading of the published Honor Roll.

Supporting Affiliate Clubs

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

California

Gold Country Paddlers, Placerville

Colorado

Dolores River Boating Advocates, Dolores

Kentucky

Bluegrass Wildwater Asso, Lexington

New Jersey

KCCNY, Flanders

North Carolina

Mind Body Play, Asheville

Ohio

Keelhaulers, Cleveland

South Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville

Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

Washington

Washington Kayak Club, Seattle

Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

Affiliate Club by State

Alaska

Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

Coosa River Paddling Club, Wetumpka

Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Southern Arizona Paddlers Club, Tucson

Thunderbird Outdoor Restoration

Organization, Glendale

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

River City Whitewater Club, Sacramento

Shasta Paddlers, Redding

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers, San Jose

Colorado

Colorado Whitewater Assn, Denver

Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs

High Country River Rafters, Wheatridge

Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center, Buena Vista

San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride

Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club,

Longmont

Upper Colorado Private Boaters Asso,

Glenwood Springs

Connecticut

Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq, Lakeville

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oak

Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

Georgia

Georgia Canoeing Asso, Atlanta

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg

Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

Kentucky

Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington

Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Freeport

Maryland

Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club, Baltimore

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Rockville

Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Hagerstown

Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston

Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont

Minnesota

Rapids Riders, Eagan

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Assn, St. Louis

Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield

Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Whitewater Kayak Club at Montana State

University, Bozeman

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

AMC New Hampshire Paddlers, Raymond

Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico,

Albuquerque

New York

Flow Paddlers' Club, Rochester

Outdoor Education/Base Camp, Hamilton

Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Machias

North Carolina

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh

Landmark Learning, Cullowhee

Providence Day School Paddling Club

Tuckasegee Paddlers, Cullowhee

Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Friends of the Crooked River, Akron
Keelhaulers Canoe Club, Westlake

Oregon

Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Hells Canyon Shuttle, Halfway
Northwest Rafters Association, Roseburg
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Portland
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oak
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Centre County, Lemont
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Mach One Slalom Team, State College
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Limestone
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Clean Water Expected in East Tennessee,
Sevierville
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Eastman Recreation Club, Kingsport
Tennessee Scenic River Association, Nashville

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

Utah

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia

Float Fishermen of Virginia, Sandy Hook

Washington

BEWET, Bellevue
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
The Mountaineers, Seattle
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

West Virginia

DbI Z! Whitewater Club, Martinsville
WV Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

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

Wyoming

American Packrafting Association, Wilson
Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson

Ontario

Guelph Kayak Club, Elora
Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, The Kawarthas

Quebec

Montreal Kayak Club, Montreal

DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

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.

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 Bethany Overfield at membership@americanwhitewater.org or sign-up on line at www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Saving Rivers Since 1954

Photo: Alexander Clark's Port, Bay © Ewan Stafford

\$35 Cheaper than anything in your gear bag, twice as important.
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AW 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 > Library > AW Journal



BETTER WHITEWATER TAKES PROTECTING RIVERS

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TAKE ACTION, CALL 202-224-3121

**“MY NAME IS [YOUR NAME] AND I AM CALLING FROM
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This year is the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and I am calling to request your leadership in advancing legislation to establish new Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Expanding our system of Wild and Scenic Rivers is increasingly important as many of our most iconic fish and wildlife species are dependent on rivers, and opportunities to enjoy healthy rivers directly support the \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy.

Please support the protection of our nation’s most treasured free-flowing rivers.

Thank you!”



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