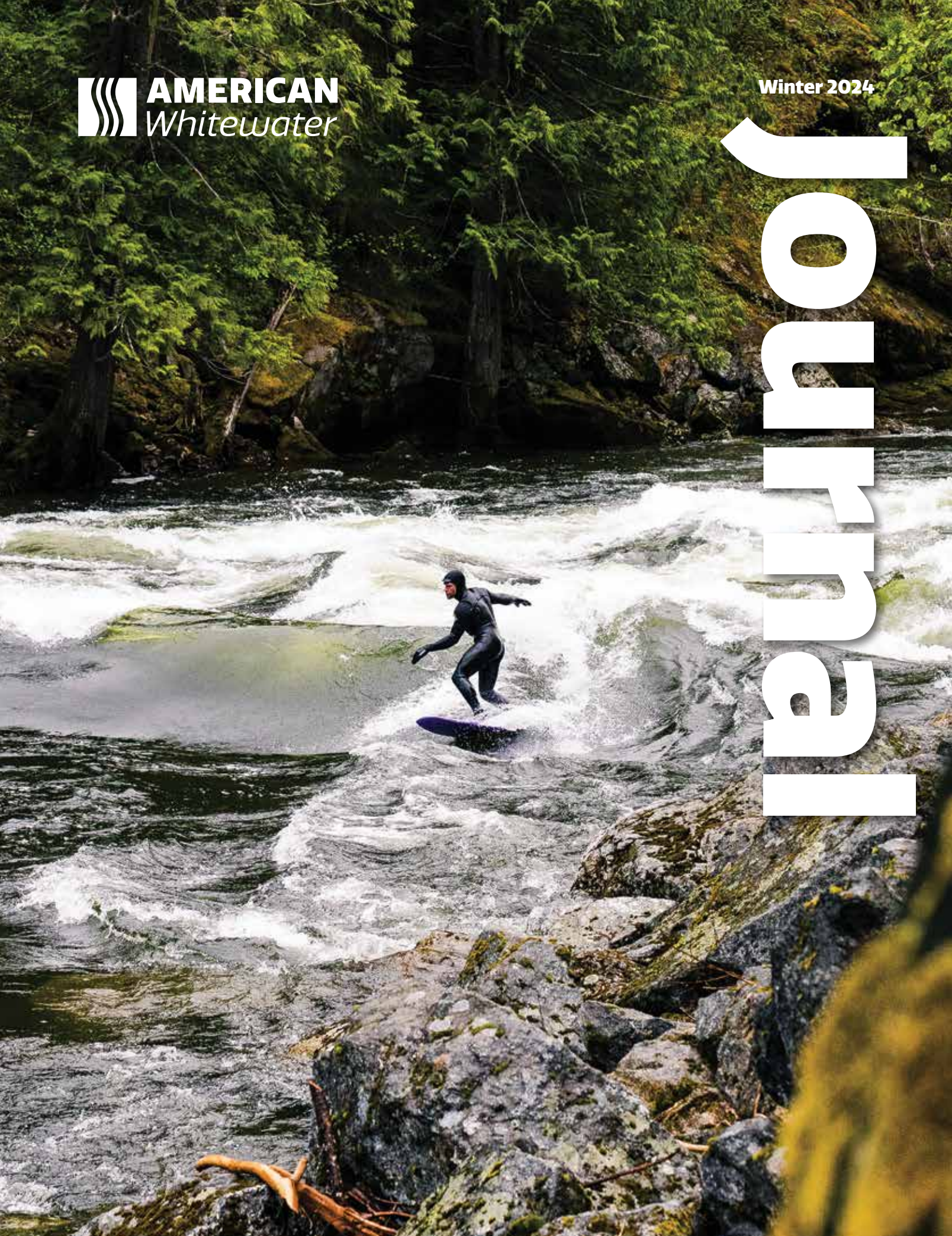




AMERICAN
Whitewater

Winter 2024

Journal



"Benny at Skook" by Rush Sturges, 2023 Still Image Winner



JOE REA-DICKINS



JUSTIN HARRIS



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AMERICAN WHITewater JOURNAL



A volunteer publication
promoting river conservation,
access, and safety

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Publication Title: American Whitewater
Issue Date: January/February 2023
Statement of Frequency: Published Bimonthly
Authorized Organization's Name/Address:
American Whitewater
P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723

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On the cover: Nearly 1,000 miles of the world-renowned whitewater, surf waves, and spawning fish habitat of the Lochsa and greater Clearwater watershed are in jeopardy of losing longstanding Forest Service protections for their documented outstanding values. Their essential delisting as "eligible" for Wild and Scenic designation under a proposed forest management plan would open them up to logging and other resource extractive activities. American Whitewater is gearing up to legally challenge the stripping of these stream's protections in 2024. Pipeline Wave on the Lochsa River. Photo: Josh Vanderhaar

PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Our mission: "To protect and restore America's whitewater rivers 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 85 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.

Founded in 1954, American Whitewater is a national nonprofit 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 Journal* 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.

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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Horizon Lines

By Clinton Begley

AS I REFLECT ON THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN WHITEWATER, IT IS remarkable to see how we execute on our nearly seventy-year-old mission, and how it has evolved since the 1990s. That was a pivotal period in the history of river conservation that created a unique and transformative moment for American Whitewater with an amendment to the Federal Power Act. The new language mandated for the first time in history that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission consider the impact of hydropower projects on recreation and the environment when issuing licenses to operate power producing dams. This was American Whitewater's foot in the door to not only reduce the impacts of hydropower production but to improve the quality of our rivers and restore lost balance in many systems. This key legislative change has helped us to restore access and flows to scores of rivers nationwide over the last three decades.

Decades earlier the so-called Big Dam Era, spanning from the 1930s to the 1970s, witnessed the rise of many hydropower and flood control dams. Conceived in a very different period of our nation's history, dams like these were designed to last maybe 50 to 100 years.

Some of these infrastructure investments still dutifully serve the public interest and will be part of our strategy to achieve energy independence from fossil fuels until they too reach the end of their useful life. But an increasing number stand now, in part, as relics of a faded understanding of progress and power. Some simply should never have been built.

As many of these structures age we find our culture at a crossroads. The decisions facing dam operators, to spend untold millions of ratepayer dollars rejuvenating these aging giants or to let them go, is not just a structural dilemma. These tough choices are reflective of a larger conversation about our relationship with the natural world. The repercussions of these dams, once symbols of progress, now unravel into a story of ecological and cultural disruption. It is a complex legacy punctuated by their negative impacts on aquatic species, Indigenous communities and cultural resources, water quality, and recreation. Given enough time and neglect, all dams will remove themselves. History shows us the catastrophic consequences to peoples' lives and livelihoods when they do.

The evolution of our culture's awareness and contemporary values for the natural world stands in stark contrast to the static nature of these concrete behemoths. Over 2,000 hydroelectric dams are licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and most of them were constructed over 60 years ago. Thousands more dams do not require licensing and quietly damage our rivers in relative obscurity. In the time since these projects were built our society's understanding of science and culture has evolved significantly. Many of these dams operate under outdated assumptions that no longer align with our current values and priorities, especially concerning ecological resilience in a quickly changing climate.

We have entered a new period in our nation's relationship with dams: The Deadbeat Dam Era. It is an era that I hope is short lived, and that through decisive action gives way to an era of reciprocity and renewal for our rivers.

We have entered a new period in our nation's relationship with dams: The Deadbeat Dam Era. It is an era that I hope is short-lived, and that through decisive action gives way to an era of reciprocity and renewal for our rivers.

The ongoing threat posed by these deteriorating concrete structures to biodiversity, public safety, and our right to access our public water resources, demands our urgent attention. The need to realign our national infrastructure with our current values, to ensure it serves not just our energy needs but our ecological and moral imperatives, is the asymmetry that defines this Deadbeat Dam Era.

What is also true is that when things are urgent, it is seductively easy to spend a lot of time focusing on the problem, the threat, or what will be lost if we fail. It is vitally important to rejoice in what we stand to gain. The alewives returned to the Penobscot, and salmon to the Elwha after dams blocking those rivers were removed. Paddlers now routinely pass through and over the old dam sites on the Tuckasegee and White Salmon rivers where impediments to paddlers once stood. And now on the Klamath, a coalition of Tribes are waiting to welcome their relatives back to lands and waters impaired for generations, as the four dams that blocked the river come down.

There are plenty of threats to focus on with deadbeat dams. But let us see this era for the opportunity it represents to get right with our rivers and ensure our values are visible on the landscape.

As an organization, we are uniquely equipped to act and help nurture society's response to its aging dams. American Whitewater and partners have already been at the forefront

of removing dams that no longer serve the public interest. The success we've had with our partners is not just on well-known projects like the Condit Dam or Iron Gate. We have also achieved quieter victories over smaller barriers that are also damaging to our rivers and their health. We have also worked both behind the scenes, and judicially, to influence legislation and policy that set the stage for the work ahead.

As a member of American Whitewater, you understand that rivers are more than just a means of conveyance, or to spin a turbine. They're part of our family, and we are part of theirs.

By participating as a member, you are adding your voice to a broad coalition of river users advancing this critical cause, ensuring your priorities are represented in this national conversation, and investing in a brighter future for the rivers we treasure and the generations ahead that will come to love them.

Not all dams are deadbeat dams, but there are far too many that no longer benefit the public or our rivers. The era of the Deadbeat Dam is upon us and the work has already begun. Thank you for being a part of this critical period in our nation's history and our future.

I hope to SYOTR soon!



Clinton Begley
Executive Director

Member Spotlight



Photo: Kyle Koeberlein

Name: Hanley Garrison Loller

Location: Lexington, KY

Years as an AW Member: 20+. On and off in the 90s when I was an impoverished whitewater videographer.

Why American Whitewater? Conservation and access. Most boaters don't realize how much they depend on AW and how often AW goes to bat for us all over the country. Dams get removed, scheduled releases, rivers and access preserved, put-ins and take-outs...we all owe a big debt to AW and its tiny staff. Plus you get cool stickers.

What is your "home river"? The Nolichucky. It's where I first felt at home after leaving home, where I learned to guide a raft and to kayak, and where I started my first video business. The Noli even used to keep me alive through the winter when trout was most of my diet. With any luck, it's also where I'll start my kayaking school when I retire.

What piece of gear will you not get on the water without? My first aid kit. It's bigger than most, but I've been very glad to have it on a number of occasions. It even has a branch saw in it.

What's your boating motto? We are all between swims, but not all swims are inevitable.



Name: Kanako Iwata-Eng

Location: Redmond, WA

Years as an AW Member: 11

Why American Whitewater? The river information; great conservation work.

What is your "home river"? Middle Sauk

What piece of gear will you not get on the water without? Cell phone – In case of emergency, it is a great tool to call for help. Even where we don't have cell access, carrying it on me can make my walk shorter and make a life-or-death difference.

What's your boating motto? Paddle as many days as I can! (Today 11/30 is my 180th river day in 2023.)



Top10

river stewardship issues 2024



Photo: Evan Stafford

1

A New Clean Water Act

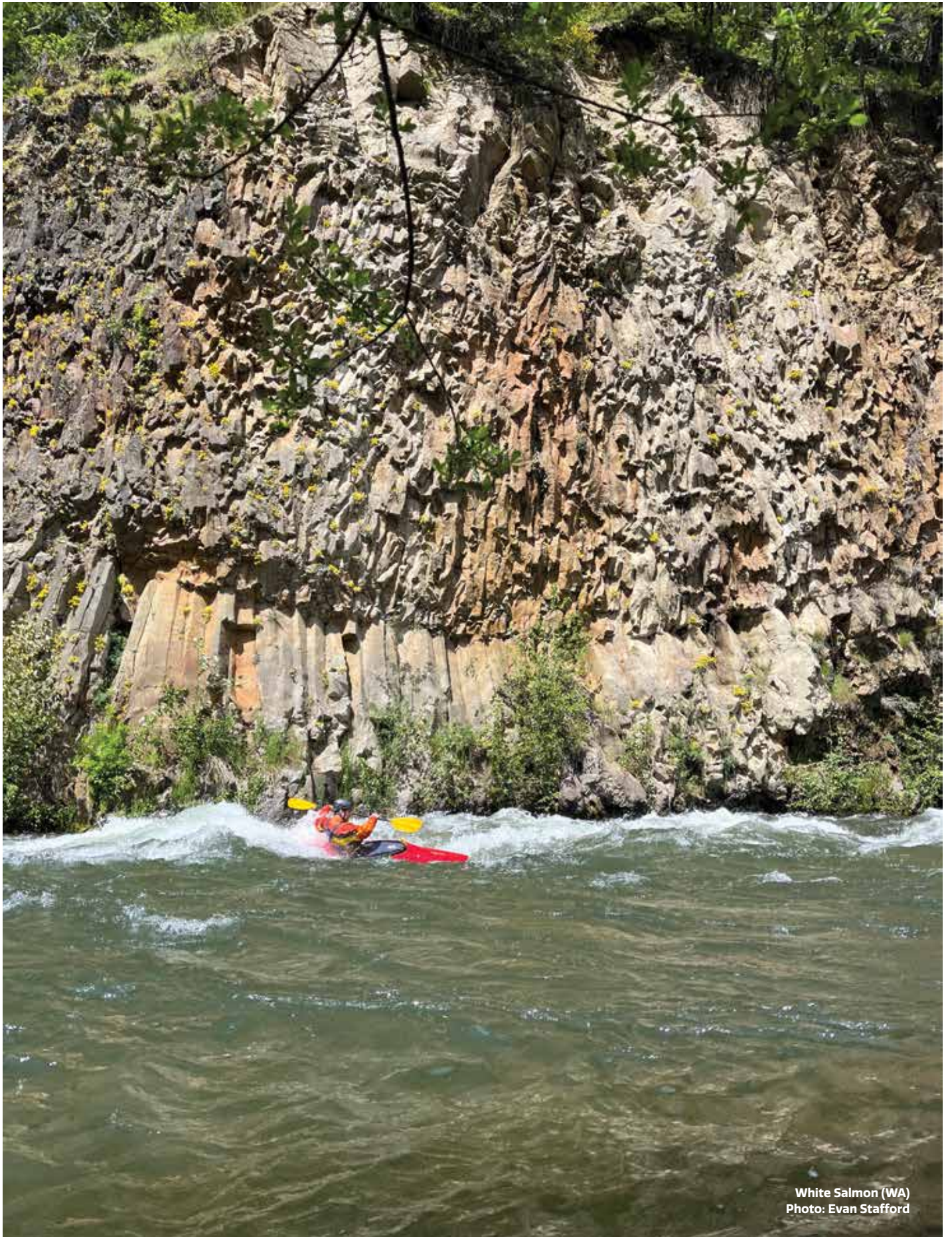
In a 2023 Supreme Court ruling, Clean Water Act protections for a majority of our nation's streams and wetlands were effectively removed. This single action makes it very likely that without intervention we are currently experiencing peak clean water—the time when the 50-year trend of improving water quality in our country's rivers reverses. It will take a vast popular and political movement to push Congress to restore the scientific integrity of the Clean Water Act and its ability to keep our rivers safe.

In 2024, American Whitewater and our river community will play an important role in pressing for the restoration of the Clean Water Act. River runners are at the heart of river-recreation-based economies; we are directly exposed to pollution and flooding, and we are the evidence for many rivers' navigability and public value. We have stories to tell about rivers at their best, and at their worst, and we'll need to tell them in the coming year. Passing a new Clean Water Act explicit in protecting all water bodies connected to our nation's rivers will take nothing short of an act of Congress signed into law by the president. Raising your voice in support of a new Clean Water Act will be extremely important as we advocate for Congress to take immediate action to protect the water quality in our rivers.





North Fork Salmon River (CA)
Photo: Evan Stafford



White Salmon (WA)
Photo: Evan Stafford

Big Sandy River (WV)
Photo: Jeff Macklin



2

White Salmon River Access (WA)

In 2018, American Whitewater had the opportunity to testify before Congress and make the case for the value of the Land and Water Conservation Fund's ability to invest in river access projects in communities like those along the White Salmon River. Shortly thereafter, the Land and Water Conservation Fund was permanently authorized and fully funded. We immediately got to work lining up projects like the Crooked River Access (OR) that was brought into public ownership last year. We are now actively engaged to do the same with Northwestern Park on the White Salmon River. In the coming year, we will also continue our ongoing efforts to develop a long-term plan for put-in access to the Green Truss segment of the White Salmon, which was recently acquired by a conservation buyer.

3

Mid-Atlantic River Corridor Protection

American Whitewater is proactively involved with efforts to purchase and protect large portions of at least two iconic river corridors. We intend to spend significant time in 2024 leveraging paddler donations, matching grant funds, and partnerships with land trusts and other groups to assist with large-scale river corridor conservation in the region. We are perhaps in the last generation that can still purchase large portions of river corridors from willing sellers in order to protect them. What we do now will benefit the river experiences of countless generations to come. These are rapidly developing projects that will demand our time and attention throughout this year, and that we are excited to share more about in the coming months!

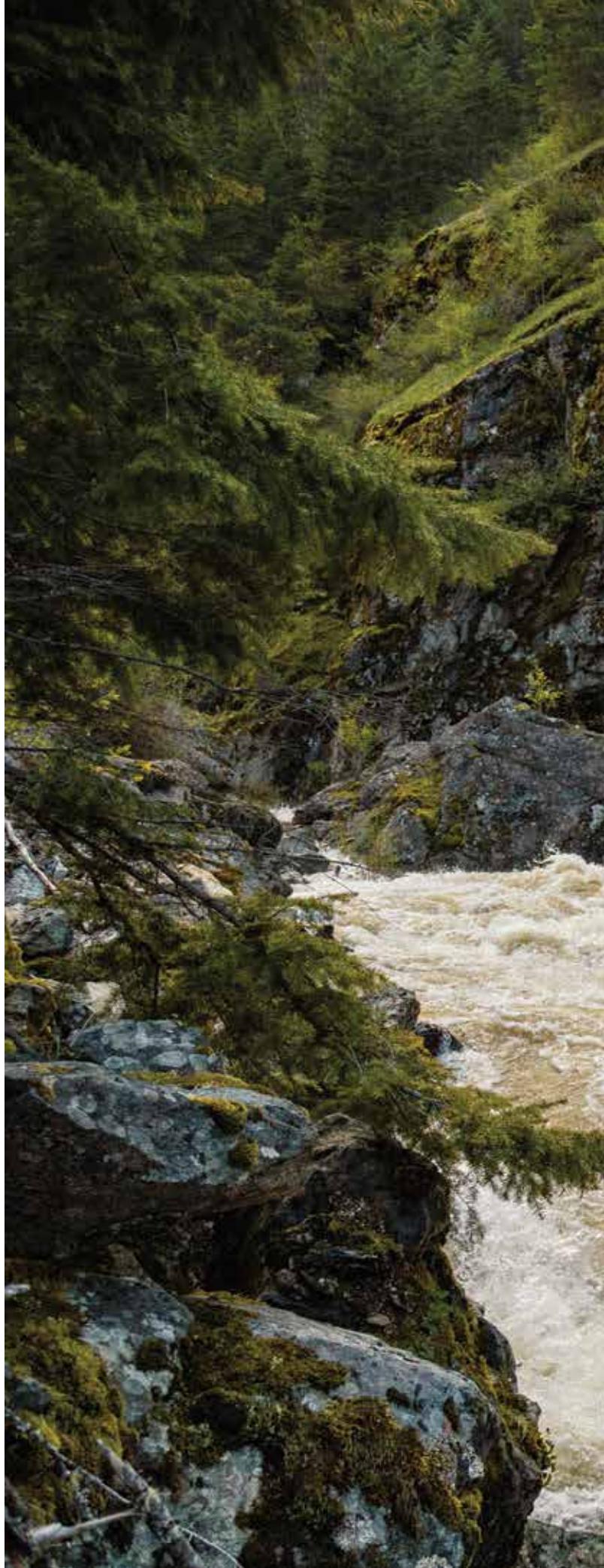
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Lochsa Area Wild and Scenic Protections (ID)

In the final days of 2023, The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest released their final plan to release almost 1,000 miles of whitewater rivers and streams from protection. These streams span the Lochsa, Selway, Clearwater, and Potlatch watersheds and are some of the finest whitewater streams and salmon habitat in the United States. We've been pushing back against the agency's diabolical plans for over a decade to no avail. All indications are that the vast majority of the 89 rivers in question will be left unprotected in the new forest management plan to allow logging or other activities in these sensitive areas.

Under federal rules the Forest Service is directed to find and list free-flowing rivers possessing at least one outstanding value as "eligible" for Wild and Scenic designation and then protect those outstanding values in their new forest management plans released approximately every decade. National Forests in Idaho and Utah are seeking a way out of these river conservation commitments by permanently releasing their eligible streams from protection with another analysis that includes unregulated opinions and predictions of potential future designation based on their views of current political winds. This looks likely to result in almost no eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers in these forest plans. The Ashley National Forest in Utah was the first national forest to try this scheme since a 2012 federal rule was enacted that we believe forbids the practice. They did so in November of 2023, and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest followed closely behind.

American Whitewater will likely need to legally challenge these decisions in 2024, and we'll need your support. Filing appeals and potential litigation is time consuming and costly. When long-standing protections for some of the finest streams in the whitewater paradise of Idaho are at risk, however, we know it's officially time to rally the legal team.





South Fork Clearwater River (ID)
Photo: John Webster



5

Dolores River Protections (CO)

American Whitewater is pulling out all the stops to protect the Dolores River in southwest Colorado this year. The Dolores River, known as...the River of Sorrows, has been a priority landscape for American Whitewater for over a decade, and it has been a beloved river in the boating community for over half a century.

We are working to secure durable protections for the river and its surrounding landscape through both legislative and administrative action. American Whitewater, alongside our local partners' persistent grassroots efforts culminated last year in a bill to designate the southern part of the river as a National Conservation Area (NCA). The NCA, introduced in the 118th Congress, would preserve the many values of the river and prevent future dams and development that would threaten an already overburdened river system. In addition, there has been growing momentum to protect the entire Dolores River landscape with a National Monument, a desig-



Dolores River (CO)
Photo: Mike Hagadorn

nation that would require the Biden Administration to take action. Both of these efforts will take us one step closer to ensuring the Dolores River can be enjoyed by future generations. In 2024 we will be calling on you to help us realize these protections.

Our partners recently completed a study finding that the Dolores River Canyon Country is the largest, most biologically diverse unprotected area in Colorado. For those who have had the opportunity to boat the Dolores, you know firsthand how the river travels through a splendor of varying topographies, from the San Juan Mountains to the Colorado River. With worsening drought in the southwest, combined with the over allocation of its instream flows, the river rarely sees boatable conditions. For the first time in four years, the Dolores River was enjoyed by many for a long, robust boating season in 2023. In addition to securing landscape-wide protections, American Whitewater is exploring all the available options to improve flows downstream of McPhee Reservoir.

6

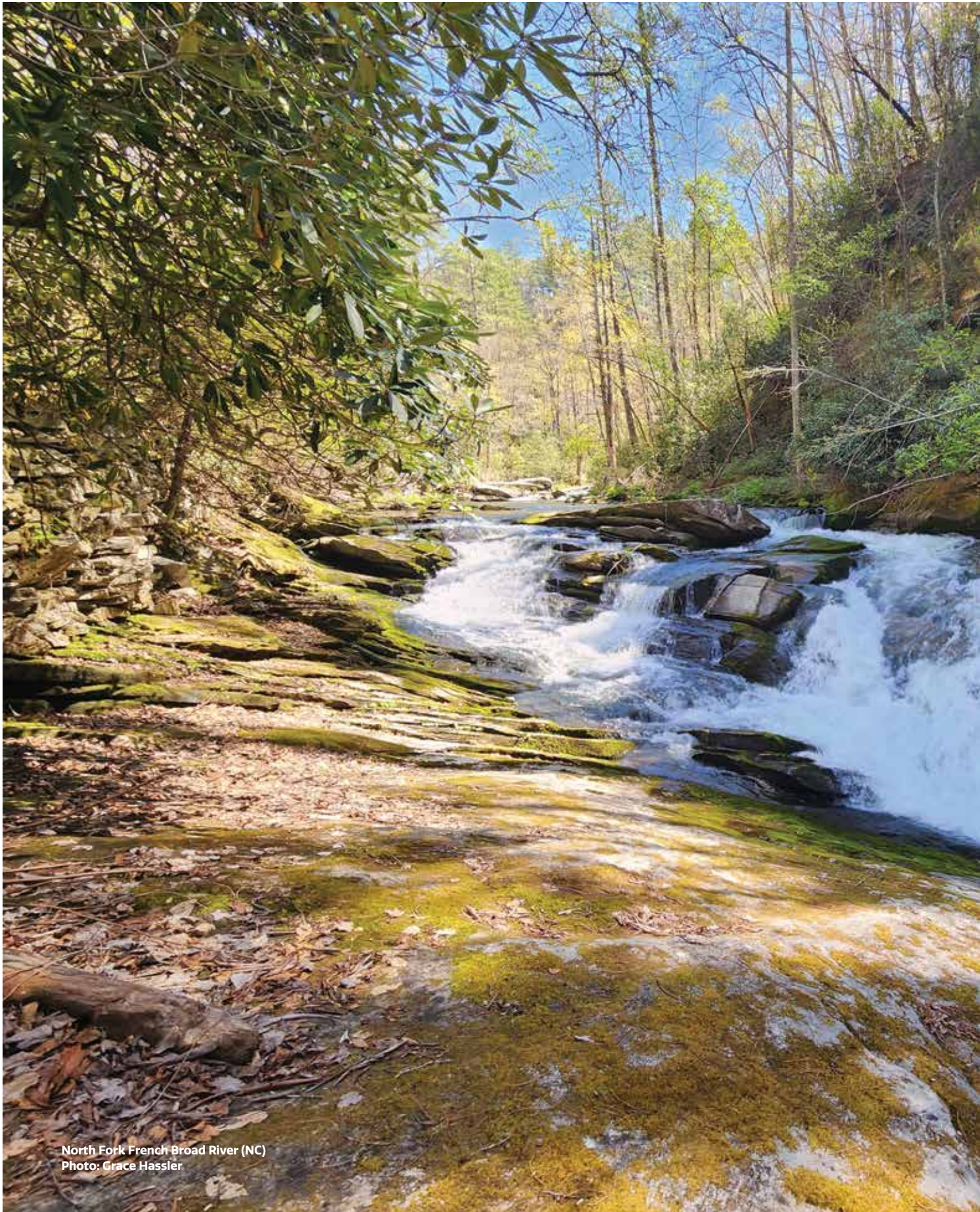
Hundreds of River Miles in California at Risk from Proposed Hydropower Sell-Off Plan

In California, 500 miles across multiple well-known rivers would be put at risk under Pacific Gas & Electric's proposal to transfer 49% ownership of all of their hydropower assets to a separate subsidiary. Minority investors of this new subsidiary would retain voting rights that could change the dynamics of these projects to maximize profit over the health of our rivers. American Whitewater has worked nearly 30 years to protect these watersheds, advocating for the return of ecological and recreational flows. American Whitewater will be taking action to oppose this proposal unless strict conditions and accountability for the public interest, dam safety, and the protection of our rivers are instituted.





Pit River Falls (CA)
Photo: Scott Harding



North Fork French Broad River (NC)
Photo: Grace Hassler



7

Wild and Scenic North Fork French Broad (NC)

It's been over 20 years since the last Wild and Scenic River was designated in North Carolina. We think that is more than long enough and are supporting local citizens in pursuing the designation for the North Fork of the French Broad. The North Fork is a classic creek run that features distinctive bedrock and boulder rapids, and most notably the superbly fun slide-to-boof Boxcar Falls. American Whitewater worked to have the river found eligible in the new Nantahala and Pisgah Forest Plan, which required filing a successful appeal of the final plan. We've worked with local citizens and the Transylvania County Natural Resources Council to host a public meeting, earn media attention, and bring the idea to the County Commission in 2023.

Now it's time to organize support for the designation throughout the business community and citizens of the watershed, which includes Asheville, NC, and dozens if not hundreds of river-dependent businesses. We are hopeful that the North Fork has the right mix of supporters to inspire the county and then Congress to vote to give the river honor of a Wild and Scenic designation. We'll need your help. Check out www.wildandscenicwnc.org to voice your support.



Copco 2 Dam, Klamath River (CA)
Photo: Shane Anderson/Swiftwater Films



8

Klamath Dam Removals / Restoration (CA/OR)

The dam removals for the Klamath are on track with the removal of Copco 2 Dam this past year and the removal of the three other hydropower dams set to get underway in the coming months. American Whitewater engaged in the process and took a leadership role in developing a vision for how the public will interact with and enjoy a restored river. In 2024, there is considerable work ahead completing the dam removals and restoration of the river in this Indigenous-led effort. We are focused on ensuring that the public has the ability to experience the restored river in a sustainable and respectful way. The settlement for dam removal calls for the management of project lands for “public interest purposes such as fish and wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement, public education, and public recreational access.” We will be working hard to ensure these objectives are realized.

Lower Colorado River Basin Dam Operations

The Colorado River is controlled by a series of dams, pipelines, and reservoirs that provide the critical lifeline of water to over 40 million people. The operations of these water development projects have direct and significant impacts on the recreation and river health of the Colorado River and its tributaries. During 2024, the Bureau of Reclamation will be analyzing how Hoover and Glen Canyon dams should be operated in the future in light of significantly decreased (and according to climate modeling, still decreasing) water supplies. American Whitewater is actively involved to ensure alternative management plans thoroughly include their impacts to river recreation. By the end of 2024, we expect future dam operation alternatives to be open for public comment. There will be important opportunities to share your stories about the importance of a healthy and flowing Colorado River and we'll aim to make it easy for you to participate in this process.

An imbalance of water supply and demand has long been baked into the Law of the River, the series of compacts, court rulings, and federal legislation that dictate how the waters of the Colorado River Basin are used. This imbalance, coupled with increasingly arid conditions across the southwest, has put "the system" of the Colorado River into a serious crisis. It is foreseeable that without significant change, all those who rely on the river would be forced to cut their use of its water. Colorado Basin states, US federal agencies, Tribes, and Mexico have been negotiating how to move demands into alignment with realistic water supplies.

The amount of water flowing in the Colorado River is highly variable and shows all signs of being reduced. As humans put that water to use, we will continue to see drastic changes in the mainstem Colorado and all of its tributaries in ways that affect how the public can enjoy these rivers. American Whitewater is asking that these widespread impacts be included in all analysis of how the basin manages water moving forward, including looking seriously at what could be done if water is too low to pass through Glen Canyon dam and into the Grand Canyon.

10

Salmon Falls River Dam Removal (NH/ME)

New England has more deteriorating small hydro dams than anywhere else in the country, and dam owners have been allowed to leave their deadbeat dams in our rivers. American Whitewater is challenging a decision by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission allowing the owner of the failed Somersworth Hydroelectric Project to abandon two dams in the Salmon Falls River, blocking fish passage, recreation, and creating a safety hazard.

New England is littered with the remnants of dams that once powered mills. When hydro dams fail or are deemed no longer useful by their owners, dam owners typically seek to surrender their federal hydropower license and walk away from the project without removing their dams and other facilities. FERC is required to ensure that any surrender plan is in the public interest and complies with the Clean Water Act, but it failed to do both at Somersworth. This case seeks to require FERC to meaningfully consider dam removal and comply with the Clean Water Act during license surrender. ■



Salmon Falls River (NH/ME)
Photo: Bob Nasdor



Napeequa River (WA)
Photo: Thomas O'Keefe

Top Ten Updates from 2023 Issues

1. Klamath River Dam Removals (CA/OR)

Update: In 2023, boaters celebrated a final summer season on the Upper Klamath with artificially high flows provided by the J.C. Boyle Powerplant, even as Copco 2 Dam was removed downstream. We provided significant input on the summer 2023 operations schedule to ensure predictability for outfitters and the public. We also worked to develop plans and secure \$3.5 M in funding funding for recreational infrastructure that will allow the public to access and enjoy the river following dam removal.

2. Catawba River Restoration (SC)

Update: We did it! The Great Falls of the Catawba River finally saw restored instream flows and a full suite of access enhancements to help the public enjoy this special river. The new flow releases were a big hit, with hundreds of boaters descending the innovative man-made channels through the dam, running the river below, and utilizing the new access areas and trails which reportedly, “worked like a charm.”

3. White Salmon River Access (WA)

Update: American Whitewater provided significant support to our partners working towards conservation outcomes that include opportunities for public use and recreation on private lands along the river corridor that were at risk of development and conversion away from public access. We've made progress but continue to work towards a robust long-term access solution.

4. Outstanding Resource Waters Designations (WA)

Update: Washington designated its first Outstanding Resource Waters on December 19, 2023! American Whitewater was among the leaders in a coalition pushing Washington State to include the Cascade River in the Skagit watershed, Napeequa River in the Wenatchee watershed, and the Green River in the Toutle watershed in Outstanding Resource Waters designations. We were able to raise significant public support for this effort through the public comment period, including robust participation from the whitewater boating community, and we are happy to report these designations were announced in the final days of 2023!

5. Lochsa and Clearwater Area River Protection (ID)

Update: In the final days of 2023, the Forest Service did the exact bad thing we predicted, releasing hundreds of miles of pristine streams in the Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest from necessary protections. We are now in the process of crafting our legal appeal of the decision.

6. South Fork Salmon River (ID)

Update: As our partners continue to analyze the devastating effects a massive gold-antimony mine project in the headwaters of the South Fork Salmon River would have on the protected water quality of these treaty-reserved Indigenous fishing grounds and classic whitewater in the watershed, we are awaiting the release of a Final Environmental Impact Statement from the Forest Service. When it is released, American Whitewater will work to inform the public and rally our community to make a giant ruckus during the public comment period.

7. Gila Wild and Scenic (NM)

Update: As promised, the M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act was reintroduced in the 118th Congress on March 14, 2023 and passed favorably again out of committee in the Senate in July. We continue to see roadblocks in the House, but we're committed to moving this bill forward.

8. West Canada Creek (NY)

Update: We continue to fight for flows and access at West Canada Creek, as Brookfield intends to keep two sections of the river dewatered and opposes virtually all public access to the dramatic waterfalls and canyons that rival the Ausable River. American Whitewater intervened in Brookfield's federal court appeal challenging New York's ability to assure that their hydro dams meet Clean Water Act requirements.

9. South Fork American River Flows (CA)

Update: American Whitewater participated in El Dorado Irrigation District's (EID) Recreation Stakeholder Outreach meeting. We continue to monitor EID's proposed project modeling that will provide information regarding the true impacts to recreational flows on the South Fork American River. American Whitewater proposed thresholds for the Draft EIR, provided factors to consider in the analysis for whitewater impacts, laid out a definition for "boatable day" and identified optimum boatable flow ranges for seven river reaches on the American River.

10. Colorado River, Grand Canyon Flows (AZ)

Update: The Bureau of Reclamation kicked off a number of parallel environmental review processes of alternative operations for the reservoirs at Lake Powell and Lake Mead. American Whitewater provided comments and has met with federal and state agencies, as well as congressional offices to push for the inclusion of robust analysis of recreational flows in the Grand Canyon. American Whitewater will be on a panel at the Colorado River Water Users Association, a gathering of all water officials throughout the Colorado Basin, discussing the available recreation data that should be considered as a part of new operations at the two main reservoirs on the river. The planning horizon for the basin is through the end of 2026. This will remain a top stewardship issue for American Whitewater in 2024. ■

Upstream Race Results

Greg Akins

ANOTHER SPECTACULAR EVENING IN OHIOPYLE, PA MARKED

the start of the annual Upstream Nationals race on the Youghiogheny River. Twenty racers lined up for the 6:30PM start with the sun starting to set and crowds gathering on the river left rocks near Bryson's Hole. At the signal to start, all 20 began furiously paddling towards the bottom of Entrance where they would turn around and come back to the put-in beach.

This 43rd occurrence of the Annual "Keith Backlund Memorial" race¹ was different from the first when, as Phil Coleman described, the race started in the eddy at Cucumber Falls and only included an upstream portion. But it was no less exciting as the 20 racers raced against the clock, each other, and a slightly elevated water level to complete the unique race.

The final winner was Matt Pascal, but everyone who made it through the course should be proud of their achievement. Even those who didn't finish should be applauded for having the bravery to attempt this grueling event.

If you're interested in racing next year, follow the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/374571656015379 or just show up at the Lower Yough Put-In at 6:00PM, August 24, 2024. ■

1. Keith Backlund promised a New World paddle to the first winner, John Lichtner, in 1980.

2023 - 8/26/2023 -- 2.18 ft

	Last Name	First Name	Time
1	Pascal	Matt	11:06
2	Greenbaum	Jake	12:28
3	Wick	Martin	12:30
4	Anderson	Rob	13:40
5	Craig	Nate	13:48
6	Webb	Isiah	15:30
7	Friday	Noah	16:55
8	Burns	Mark	17:40
9	Joly	Brian	23:35
10	Loughney	Roger	24:40
11	Akins	Greg	25:28
12	Barket	Art	27:30
13	Cowles	Travis	30:10
14	Vesey	Alex	30:30
15	Zalewski	Jason	32:20
16	Natural	Mark	??
17	Crosby	Timmy	??
	Barket	Erin	DNF
	Joyce	Jesse	DNF
	Best	Rich	DNF

Little River Accident Report

James Cox

ON DECEMBER 16, 2022, TWO KAYAKERS RAN A SECTION of the Little River in Tennessee, inside Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The pair had been paddling together for years and both kayakers had good experience with the run.

This section of the Little River is known in the area as a great, road-accessible Class III-IV+ creek run. Whitewater boaters often run this section when rainfall brings the level in, which was the case with the two kayakers on December 16. They put in upstream of a section known as “The Meanies” at approximately 2:40 PM that day. The Meanies consist of two drops with right and left eddy opportunities between them. Below the Meanies is a Class IV drop known as “The Sinks”. According to the relevant USGS gage for the run, the river level at 2:45 PM on December 16, 2022 was 2.78 feet, which is considered to be an easy level.

Kayaker 1 led and Kayaker 2 followed his partner through The Meanies. Kayaker 2 watched Kayaker 1 go over the first drop, which appeared successful. When Kayaker 2 went over the first drop, he could see that his paddling partner was not in his kayak; he was instead in the water above the second drop. Kayaker 1 went over the second drop out of his boat. Once Kayaker 2 was over the second drop, he saw his partner’s paddle and boat moving downstream but did not see Kayaker 1. Kayaker 2 immediately caught an eddy and began looking for his partner. A short time later Kayaker 2 saw his partner’s personal floatation device (PFD) and helmet come from the rapid indicating that Kayaker 1 was likely pinned underwater at the second drop. Another kayaker arrived at their location and also set up safety below the second drop.

At the time of the incident, witnesses who were at The Sinks taking photos told investigators they saw one kayak go over The Sinks with no one inside. A few minutes later witnesses saw a PFD, paddle, and helmet go over The Sinks as well.

Rescuers and first responders attempted to rescue/recover Kayaker 1 on December 16, but water level and flow complicated search efforts. Rescuers attempted to locate Kayaker 1 with various tools but were unsuccessful. At approximately 8:14 PM that evening rescue operations were stopped for the night. On

December 17 rescue resources were deployed again. Search team members were deployed in rafts and on shore, and rescue divers were deployed below The Sinks. Kayaker 1 was not visible in the water and responders were unable to locate him. Responders continued to search for Kayaker 1 on December 18 and monitored the water level throughout the day.

On the morning of December 19, 2022, responders were able to occasionally see a yellow color in the water where Kayaker 1 was last seen, which was assumed to be his drysuit. National Park Service swiftwater rescue team members utilized a tethered boat, stabilization line, and rope system to recover Kayaker 1 from entrapment at the second Meanie feature.

Analysis:

Please note, this analysis is a chance to make objective statements and provide context for safety considerations on a given run or river. It is not intended as a judgment or critical commentary on the decisions made by paddlers or other recreational boaters.

The AW Gage Description for this run indicates 2.4 ft as a “good minimum” and 3.5 ft as “high”. A gage reading of 3 ft is considered a classic level and 2.8 ft is considered the easiest. As noted above, the gage reading on the day and time of this incident was very near that 2.8 level. There were no other unusual or unknown hazards in the rapid on the day of the incident.

The kayakers in this incident had both paddled this section of river numerous times and the section was within their ability. They had paddled the run together at a similar level the week before the incident. They both scouted and discussed their lines the day of the run before paddling.

An AW report from March 2013 describes an entrapment incident at the second Meanie and appears to be the exact location of this incident. We cannot know exactly what contributed to Kayaker 1 exiting his boat after the first drop. This incident is an unfortunate reminder that even with experienced, calculated decisions our sport carries inherent risks. (AW Safety Committee) ■

Point A to Point A: Packrafting in the Southeast Without a Shuttle

Brandon Jett

WAY BACK IN 2014, I PURCHASED MY FIRST PACKRAFT, specifically for linking up desert canyons via Lake Powell in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. I was going solo and wanted to spend five days in remote areas combining my two favorite passions: backpacking and paddling. The trip was a success, and the extra weight with packraft, breakdown paddle, and PFD came in around seven pounds. The seed was planted.

I had been whitewater kayaking for ten years before buying my first packraft, paddling up to Class IV regularly, but I was losing my confidence after a few bad swims. Throwing myself into backpacking and photography, whitewater was starting to take a backseat to other passions. As the years went on, packrafts started to get more and more specialized and I started pouring over maps, looking at my favorite rivers and creeks with trail systems nearby. I spent 15 years in the cartography/GIS field, so maps were another passion of mine. I enjoyed staring at lines and daydreaming of my next adventure. Options abound for those willing to put in extra time planning and route finding.

I started to map out runs that wouldn't require a shuttle, where I could either hike to the put in and paddle back or vice versa. I was interested in areas I was very familiar with and

whitewater I was comfortable on in order to do some solo trips. I didn't know anyone in my area who had a packraft or would be into some of these less traditional ways of getting from point A to B...or, in this case point A back to point A. Locally, here in Kentucky where I live, options are limited but I accepted the challenge. My first hike/paddle combo was in the Red River Gorge, which has a nine-mile section of National Wild & Scenic River. Although this one did require a shuttle, I was able to combine 15 miles of paddling with 10 miles of hiking back to the car. I was hooked. The Rockcastle River narrows was next, a short hike in and a beautiful section of Class III whitewater before the longer flatwater paddle back to the car. My first no shuttle river trip in the books. Game on. One more caught my eye in Kentucky, a double waterfall trip. This route had two scenic waterfalls in one adventure, Cumberland Falls and the ominous sounding Dog Slaughter Falls. The Sheltoewe Trace National Recreation Trail in Kentucky is a long-distance trail that offers a few options for packraft multi-sporting fun. You can put in below the massive Cumberland Falls and paddle five miles of the Cumberland River. The take-out is after the last rapid and the stretch is ideal to run in late summer when they draw the lake down to get in more Class II-III rapids. One then hikes the Sheltoewe Trace NRT with a lunch stop at Dog Slaughter Falls before finishing the hike back to the car. It's a perfect no shuttle hustle day trip.

After these adventures, I had the paddling bug back. It was time to step it up and, fortunately, the packrafts were getting more and more advanced just as I was wanting to get back into whitewater. I purchased a more whitewater specific packraft and kept on mapping, dreaming, and scheming. The Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area in Tennessee and Kentucky was next, an area I knew well as I had kayaked and hiked all over it back in the day. The Big South Fork is a stunning free-flowing river on the Cumberland Plateau, a real southeast gem. It also has a large trail system, and many sections of river from flatwater to Class IV. Numerous no-shuttle options abound, and I've overnighted and day-tripped a few sections via the (lesser-known) John Muir Trail. Leatherwood Ford in Tennessee is a great place to either start or end an adventure-filled packraft epic. Upstream are the Gorge and Canyon sections, with world-class whitewater and scenery with rugged trail options for linking it up. Downstream is much calmer, with two Class IV rapids easily portaged and great for an overnight trip. Another bonus with these ultralight boats, they make portaging great again! No more carrying an awkward heavy plastic beast. Your shoulders will thank you. Anywhere from five to fifteen pounds, packrafts are easy to pick up if you're not feeling up to running the drop.

Another Cumberland Plateau classic in Tennessee is the Obed National Wild & Scenic River. Often overlooked outside of the climbing and paddling communities, this area has it all. The Cumberland Trail, when complete, will extend about 300 miles. A very wild and rarely maintained section cuts through the area. I mapped out a route starting and ending at Nemo Bridge, a well-known take-out for paddling in the area. Nearby was also a great campground at Rock Creek. Here you can hike the Cumberland Trail 15 miles to Daddys Creek and paddle the last two miles until it meets the Obed River. From here it's a fantastic Class III-IV section of beauty back to the bridge. Another no shuttle gem. There is a shorter option by hiking seven miles of the Cumberland Trail and putting in where it meets the Obed, but you miss a few overlooks and the last two scenic miles of Class II on Daddys Creek. For a step up you can paddle the meat of Daddys Creek from Antioch Bridge, the classic Class IV section and one of the most beautiful runs on the Plateau, and hike eight miles of the Cumberland Trail back to the put-in bridge.

I started to look further east to the Appalachians for an overnight trip. The Nantahala River, the well-known North Carolina classic where beginner kayakers flock in the summer, has the Appalachian Trail nearby. Another route I spotted on the map was beginning and ending at Wesser, the take-out and hangout for Nantahala paddlers. This route holds a total of 14 miles up the mountain, stopping at Cheoah Bald and a great camp spot. Then you'd head back down the mountain using the Appalachian and Bartram trails to get to the put-in for the Nantahala Gorge. Stow your gear, inflate your boat, paddle back to the car. No shuttle required.

From Class V multi-day epics to calm water day trips, the only limits to packrafting are your skill level, gear, and imagination. If you have a packraft or access to one and you're interested in adding some more spice into your paddling and hiking then grab some maps, plan some routes, and start adventuring! ■

One more caught my eye in Kentucky, a double waterfall trip. This route had two scenic waterfalls in one adventure, Cumberland Falls and the ominous sounding Dog Slaughter Falls...It's a perfect no shuttle hustle day trip.



Photo: Michael Deckert

Remembering John Stormon

Thomas O'Keefe

THIS PAST SUMMER, PACIFIC NORTHWEST PADDLERS mourned the loss of John Stormon, a long-time member of the region's river family and a generous contributor to American Whitewater both financially and through his volunteer time.

Volunteers represent the fabric of our organization, and John was one of those individuals who stepped up and made a difference by living the values of our mission to protect and restore America's whitewater rivers and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

I always say that our best volunteers are those who identify a need and then run with it. John was an integral part of one such group of volunteers who wrote letters to federal regulators, took time off work to attend meetings with the local utility staff, and worked to secure a commitment from Lewis County PUD to follow through on their commitment to build a river access site on the Cispus River as mitigation for the construction of the Cowlitz Falls Hydroelectric Project, a commitment that went unfilled for 30 years.

As an individual who worked at a public agency, the Washington State Department of Ecology, John was always one to hold the utility to task in ensuring that opportunities for public comment were being honored, meeting invitations included all the necessary details, documents included all the required information, and appropriate filing procedures for documents were being fulfilled. He was a stickler for the details and was quick to call out facilities that were not being maintained, a gate that was locked when it should have been opened to the

public, or incomplete methodology for compliance reporting with recreational mitigation requirements.

Here is a typical passage from one of John's comment letters:

"Lewis County PUD did not provide the required review and comment period on 'Final Design Plans' as defined in the FERC Order but instead provided a minimal draft that failed to meet the Order requirements. The draft was so minimal that it prevented interested parties from providing review and meaningful comments on the specific items subsequently included in the plan Lewis County PUD submitted to FERC."

Without John's tenacity, and that of the group of dedicated volunteers he worked with, we would not have the public access to the Cispus River that was finally secured.

John left a legacy that extends beyond the contributions of his time and skills during his lifetime. When he passed after a battle with cancer, John left a significant bequest to American Whitewater. Through this contribution, he will continue to support our work to protect rivers and opportunities for all to enjoy them. Through his generosity, the next generation of paddlers will be able to continue to benefit from his ongoing commitment.

Time spent on the river brought John joy and I feel lucky to have shared moments with him surfing a wave on the Cispus River or celebrating the "opening day of boating season" on January 1st as we trudged through knee-deep snow to the put-in. ■

RIVER SAFETY

Trip Report From a New Middle Fork Salmon River

Courtney Wilton

Photo: Courtney Wilton



MANY AMERICAN WHITEWATER MEMBERS HAVE HAD the privilege of boating Idaho's Middle Fork of the Salmon, one of the original National Wild & Scenic rivers. The designation is for good reason. Those fortunate enough to get on are treated to breathtaking wilderness and about a hundred miles of a classic Class III river. It's one of the premier multiday whitewater trips in the country.

I was lucky to pick up a canceled permit this year, and Ken Ambrosini and I put in Labor Day Weekend. The plan was to paddle twenty-five miles over two days and meet three friends rowing a raft at Indian Creek. From there, we'd spend five leisurely days getting to the take-out.

Ken and I had both done the river many times without incident. Low water, while technical, is generally easier to paddle, so we were pretty confident. But this year was different. In the first five miles, there had been some major blowouts the month before that deposited tons of rock and wood—and required portages that made raft runs virtually impossible. The Forest Service was allowing kayak and packraft launches but also “strongly discouraging” them. Thus, just about all launches had shifted to Indian Creek. Boundary Creek, our put-in, was a ghost town as a result, and Ken and I were the only ones camping there the night before. The isolation was eerie but also exciting. It's not often you get a world-class river all to yourself.

We launched the next morning and all was well until we hit Sulphur Slide rapid, a blow-out of epic proportions. There was a line through the debris, but it was sketchy, so we portaged as planned. A few things were immediately obvious about the portages—they were hard! Sulphur was really long, the ground uneven, and the loaded boats heavy. We got through it all fine, albeit with some slips and minor falls. But it was dangerous in its own right and also very physically demanding.

Next up was Hells Half Mile rapid—chock full of wood and a mandatory portage. It was shorter in length but very uneven and essentially required a bushwack. Again, we got through it but not without challenges and major exertion.

We then came upon the third and final potential portage, Velvet Falls. Velvet's appearance has completely changed as a result of another massive debris flow of rock and wood. But there was a kayak line through it, albeit one with complications—a reversal at the top, some wood to dodge midway, and a large rock at the bottom to skirt. But it looked doable to me and was certainly way easier to run instead of one more portage. Ken, who is a better boater than me, wasn't so sure. We discussed and Ken ultimately acquiesced and ran. That's when the trouble began.

In short, Ken flipped in the reversal, bounced off some rocks when upside down given low level and new debris, bailed out, and immediately hit a rock hard with his left leg. I didn't exactly style the rapid but got through it mostly unscathed and

pulled over to help Ken. He immediately said, “I think I broke my leg.”

Ken couldn't put any weight on his left leg but was able to pull himself up on a log above river right. He was in some pain though also incredibly stoic. But it wasn't a good situation. In short:

1. There was no one else on the river. We were the only launch that day and the next.
2. Boundary Creek, five miles upriver, was also empty. The Forest Service had vacated and moved their operations to Indian Creek given blockages and a road project set to start September 5th.
3. There was no cell service.
4. There was no road nearby and the hiking trail from Boundary was on river left up a very steep embankment. We were on river right.
5. Ken let go of his boat during the swim given injury and it had washed downriver. With it was his phone, wallet, keys, and Garmin—also all his clothing, camping gear, and food.

Now what? Basically, the Garmin and some incredibly skilled rescue professionals saved us. I luckily had my Garmin still and was able to activate the SOS function. It worked like a charm. Garmin's central dispatch sent me over to the local sheriff office who immediately started coordinating a rescue. I was able to communicate specifics and also contact Ken's wife. It took a long time and was not without some complications, but Ken ultimately was rescued early evening by a helicopter that winched him off the river. He was taken to the Boise hospital later that night and his dislocated ankle was put back into place. Imaging also identified several broken bones that required a subsequent surgery. It was a serious injury though his prognosis is good. He should be back on the river in late December.

I paddled twenty miles solo to Indian Creek the next day without seeing a soul. It was nerve racking, beautiful, and exhilarating. Solo boating when no one else is on the river is not a good idea, but I felt like it was the best of many undesirable options. Good news is (in addition to surviving) I was able to locate Ken's boat, get it off a log and onto shore—and retrieve his valuables. More good news followed when someone somehow got the boat and some gear down to Indian Creek a couple of weeks later. From there it was flown out to Salmon, Idaho to be picked up by another good Samaritan and driven back to Portland.

We were obviously in a very dangerous situation given Ken's injury, his immobility, and our isolation. We certainly didn't completely dodge the bullet so to speak, but it could have been way worse. Ken should make full recovery and got almost all his gear back (a notable exception was his drysuit which was scissored off at the hospital). So, what are some lessons learned?



1. This one is pretty obvious—think hard about consequences if things don't go as planned. When you are doing a wilderness run with two people and no one else around it clearly is a good idea to be very conservative and portage if there's any doubt about a rapid. We could have easily portaged Velvet and had we done so very likely would have had a perfect week. Instead, our week trip ended after about four hours.

2. Don't be lazy when it comes to safety. I'm pretty sure I let the difficulty of portaging affect my judgment and was more inclined to run Velvet because of it.

3. Don't underestimate the difference and challenge of maneuvering a fully loaded vs. your normal day trip boat. I had a Prijon that I'd multi-day'd before and it was pretty well suited to the river conditions. Ken rented a larger boat with a back hatch that was great for storage but likely better in bigger water than the low, technical conditions. He just wasn't used to it and that may have led to his flip.

4. Be aware of river condition changes. The Velvet blowout was impressive and completely visible. But I should have realized that all the new debris created a much more hazardous river in the event of a swim—as in lots of jagged rocks just under the surface. That never dawned on me until later.

5. Trust your gut. Ken saw the kayak line and could easily do it with his regular boat. And, yet, his gut said portage. That was the right decision obviously and I regret my role in thinking we would get through just fine.

6. Always carry a satellite communications device when in the wilderness.

7. Consider carrying your valuables on your person vs. in your boat when doing wilderness runs. Otherwise, a lost boat means lost valuables and potentially no communication. I shifted phone, wallet, keys, and Garmin to my PFD the next day when paddling out.

8. Consider getting helicopter evacuation insurance. We had two helicopters respond. One wasn't able to land given rugged territory. The other had to winch Ken off the river. The second is funded by a Montana philanthropist (thank you!), but the first understandably charges for its service. Ken received a huge bill and was fortunate to have medical insurance which protected him financially. Others without medical insurance are vulnerable in these situations.

Kayakers are by their nature resilient and also calculated risk takers. While some risk is inevitable as a result of participating in the sport, this trip was a good reminder at how quickly things can go wrong, and how complicated a rescue can be in an isolated location. I found that out the hard way and regret my over-confidence given the conditions. ■



BUILDING SURF WAVES AND REMOVING DAMS ON THE ARKANSAS RIVER

Mike Harvey





Photo: Badfish SUP

THE STEEL TRACKS OF A VOLVO 340 D EXCAVATOR

make a high pitch screech as they crawl along our high desert environment in Salida, CO. When an end dump truck drops a load of granite boulders on the ground you can feel the ground shake from 100 yards away. For me, these are familiar sensations and the soundtrack to the process of building river projects.

For the past 23 years, I have worked as a whitewater park designer for Recreation Engineering and Planning (REP, www.repwaterparks.com). Whitewater Parks are sort of a generic brand name that have been assigned to a wide variety of river improvement projects that all share the goal of increasing access to public waterways. The vast majority of rivers in the US have been impacted by industry and development. From dams to flood control projects, rivers in most towns are, “working” rivers, modified to suit the needs of the humans that live along their banks. Whitewater Parks are a solution some communities turn to to reimagine their river corridors as hubs of recreation that bring people closer to their river environment and drive economic stimulus.

I started working on developing a whitewater park in Salida back in 1999. Salida has a long history of whitewater paddling, sitting in the middle of the Upper Arkansas River Valley and surrounded by over 80 miles of world-class whitewater. Salida also hosts North America’s oldest whitewater competition, the FIBArk Festival.

In the early days, Whitewater Parks were designed around whitewater kayakers. In 2009, I was working with the City of Salida to plan for two new whitewater features. At that time, my friend Zack Hughes had already started to shape river surfing boards in his garage. We were playing around with river surfing, looking for waves to ride all over the State of Colorado. I had the idea that instead of designing the typical, foamy-style hole favored by kayakers, we could try to make a wave that would stand up and have a green face to ride on a board.

The two features were completed in the spring of 2010 and were named the Office Wave and Scout Wave. Both waves worked well and the combination of these waves and Zack’s boards were the inspiration for us to start our company, Badfish. While these waves were successful for the era, they only really worked well at high flows, which limited the surf season in Salida to years with big snowpacks and long runoffs.

Over the past 12 years, river surfing has exploded and it’s fair to say that in most whitewater parks around the Country, river surfers have become the dominant user group. There have also been improvements in the technology used to create the waves. In places like Bend, OR, Boise, ID, and Denver, CO, there are modern waves that allow surfers to ride shortboards and make more powerful, ocean-style turns.

The downside to these modern features is they have operable elements that require constant attention and semi-regular



Photo: Evan Stafford

maintenance. There are also increased capital construction costs associated with this type of structure.

In Salida, this type of feature was a non-starter for reasons related to the costs and permitting requirements. So, when we set out to come up with a design plan for the Scout Wave 2.0, which would replace the structure built back in 2010, we had to meet the challenge of designing a modern surf wave that wouldn't require a bunch of moving parts. Additionally, the Arkansas has flows between 250 cfs-1000 cfs for 85% of the year. Instead of a wave that only functioned at the highest range of flows, what if we could have a rideable wave during most of the year?

For this project, I was working with Spencer Lacy and his brother Mason Lacy. Spencer and Mason are the sons of the REP founder Gary Lacy, who is a legend in whitewater park design, as well as my mentor. Spencer was able to travel to Europe to check out some waves, including the legendary Eisbach Wave in Munich. I did a couple of trips to the CityWave at Lakeside Surf in Lake Chelan, WA. This is a completely artificial wave pool, but we were interested in studying the hydraulics up close and it ended up serving as a major source of inspiration.

Our team took all this research and combined it with our understanding of the existing structure and the local conditions in the Arkansas River in Salida to develop a design we thought would work. Thought is the operative word here. Ultimately,

ivers are unforgiving to mistakes and we never know for sure what we've built until we have water flowing over a structure.

We started the Scout Wave 2.0 project construction in early September 2022, with a team of contractors we have worked with extensively over the years. Working in a river channel requires some very specific techniques, including the construction of temporary cofferdams to "dry out" your work area. Spencer and I were on site nearly every day working with the contractor to ensure that the geometry of the structure was achieved, and our contractors were a great check against ideas that we had that weren't very easily constructed.

One of the coolest parts of the project was working with Spencer who is 18 years younger than me and someone I have watched grow up. In addition to being a world-class paddler, Spencer is an engineer with a master's degree from UC Berkeley. I come to the table with a lot of experience all over North America in building structures in rivers, but Spencer had new ideas and a fresh perspective that helped push me out of my comfort zone.

The day we turned the water loose was among the most stressful days of my life. We had invested so much into this design and we were about to see if our assumptions would be borne out by the water flowing downhill over our concrete and rock feature. Seeing the results is never automatic. You have to shape the pool below the drop and the run in above,



Dangerous Low-Head Dam on the Arkansas Finally Removed!

While the Scout Wave has attracted a lot of attention over the past year another project has gone a long way to improving conditions for river runners on the Upper Arkansas River. The Mt. Shavano fish hatchery dam was built in the 1950s to divert water for the hatchery. The dam was classic low head dam, 6' high and river wide. The shape of the dam created a "drowning machine" style hydraulic at the base and was the location of multiple drownings over the years. In 1988 the State of Colorado modified the dam to include a boat by-pass and the City of Salida built a boat ramp in an effort to encourage boaters to float into town.

In the 1990's the rise of whirling disease, an ailment that impacted rainbow trout grown in the State's hatchery, became such a problem that essentially all the rainbows died out of the Arkansas. A state law prevented hatcheries from using river water so the dam became obsolete. Throughout the early 2000's there were conversations regarding the need to remove this dam. I wrote a report in 2008 for the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area that

detailed the remaining impediments to downstream navigation and proposed solutions at each structure. The "Silver Bullet" irrigation diversion downstream of Buena Vista was the first to be improved and in 2019 the diversion structure in Granite was improved to include safe boat passage. The Salida low-head dam was the last to come out, but this fall it was finally removed along with the boat passage. From the Stone Bridge takeout below Browns Canyon to Salida we now have ten miles of Class I-II. This section of river has grown in popularity with anglers and boaters alike over the years and the dam continued to be a hassle at best and a deadly hazard at worst.

The river through this reach has been restored in the character of the reach, Class I-II moving through large granite boulders. While it will take a few years for vegetation to move back into the overbank areas that were inundated by the dam; in a few years most people passing through the area will not be able to tell there ever was a dam.

to get the proper hydraulic response. The result was about a day and a half of Spencer and I chewing our fingernails and running back and forth waiting for the magic moment when the wave would (hopefully) appear.

I always pour myself into these projects. There's really no other way, but this one had so many layers of meaning for me personally. Salida is my home. My friends would be riding this wave and my kids love to surf and they have grown up playing in the Arkansas. So yeah...I was a nervous wreck. And then, when the last scoop of cobble had been moved out of the pool, we saw it. The wave popped. It literally changed from a foamy hole to a green wave in a matter of seconds, and I was euphoric.

I hugged Spencer and called my son Miles and Zack to get down there and surf. When I saw Miles rip across the wave the first time it was just pure joy. The river was only running 350 cfs. If we had a wave at this flow, I knew it was possible that we had achieved what we had set out to do.

The Scout Wave 2.0 worked extremely well over a large range of flows from 300 cfs to 1600 cfs. At high flows last summer, for a short period, the wave turned into a powerful hole and posed a hazard for some crafts, especially fishing rafts that often run this stretch of river through town. Spencer and I spent the better part of five weeks minding the feature and testing modifications to the drop in real time with large sandbags placed by a crane and smaller sandbags placed by hand. We also continually tested the safety of the feature by swimming through the hole and running it in a variety of craft.

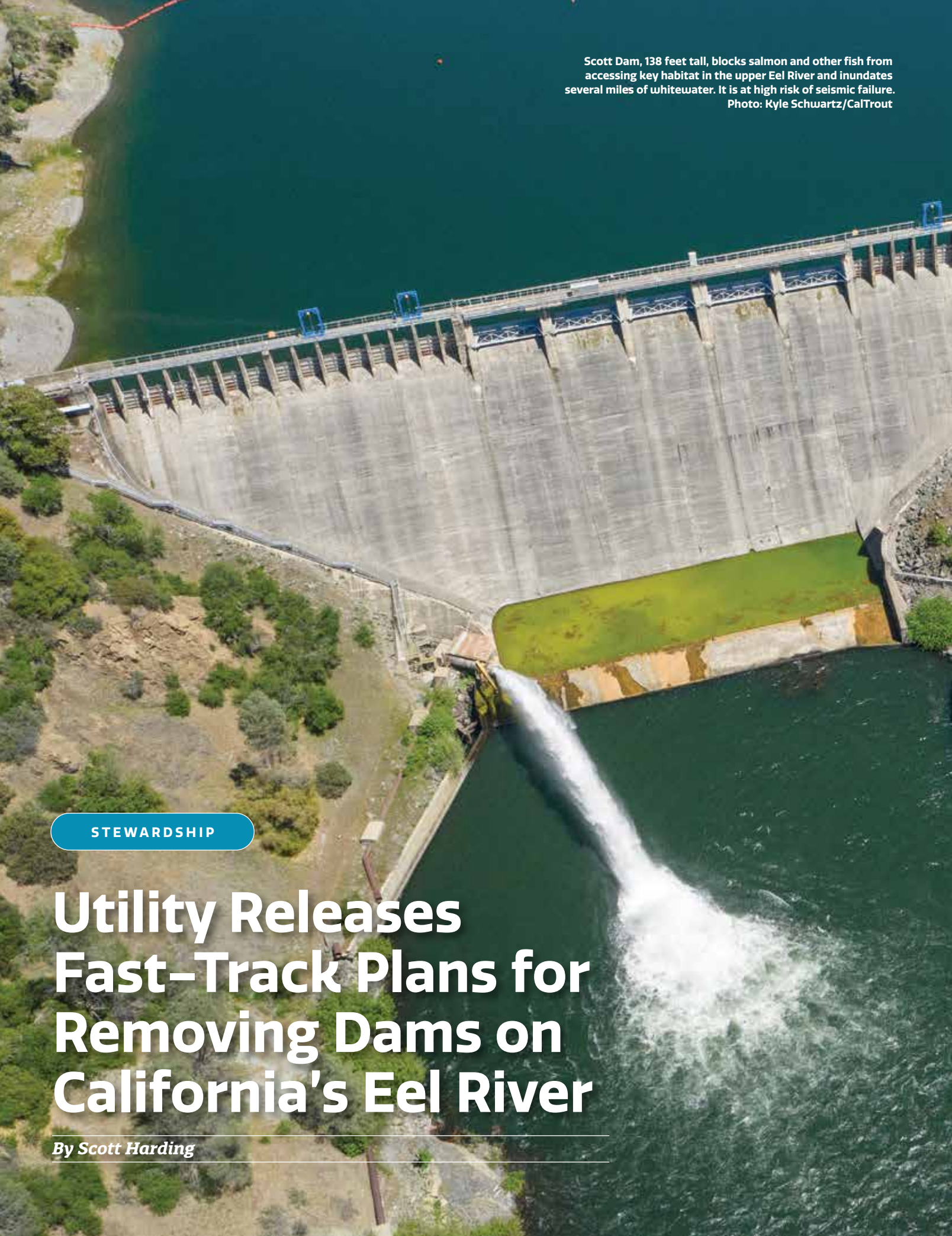
Anytime you try something new, you know going in there will be a learning curve and the Scout Wave taught us a lot. The opportunity to do 1:1 modeling of modifications to the drop at higher flows was a powerful learning experience for us and we have a project planned for January 2024 to revise the drop to address the issues we experienced at high flows.

Over the past season, the river surfing community has descended on Salida to experience the Scout Wave 2.0. River surfers are by far and away the fastest-growing segment of river users here in Colorado. River surfing is bringing an entirely new population of people to the river and this is both exciting and raises some challenges. Traditional whitewater paddle sports have a degree of mentorship built in and a longer learn-

ing curve, which promotes a culture of safety. River surfing has a much shorter learning curve with some people achieving a level of competency in the first few days. This means as we welcome these users to the river communities like Salida and Colorado Parks and Wildlife face new challenges around safety and creating regulations that address the needs and concerns of a completely novel user group. The most exciting aspect of river surfing for me to witness is the way that it has energized local kids. I raised two whitewater paddlers in Salida, and I know first hand the investment of time and money required to teach a kid to be a whitewater paddler is not realistic for many families. However, river surfing's lower barrier to entry has allowed a diverse group of local kids to develop a passion for the Arkansas. A common site in Salida in the summer is a local kid riding their bike with a PFD on and a bodyboard under one arm. I am encouraged that river surfing is helping to grow the next generation of river advocates.

The Upper Arkansas River has been a working river since the late 1800s when Europeans first settled this valley. From the mines near the headwaters in Leadville to ranches along the river between Buena Vista and Salida, the Upper Arkansas River served the local industries through the late 19th century through the first half of the 20th century. Salida, or "exit" in Spanish sits roughly in the middle of the valley between the high alpine headwaters and where the river spills onto the eastern plains downstream of Canon City. In 1949 a new "industry" was born when the town of Salida put on a parade and race for some traveling European kayakers. The first FIBArk (First In Boating on the Arkansas) festival is in many ways a watershed moment where the extractive industries of the past began to fade from prominence and a new economy around the recreational opportunities afforded by the Arkansas began to take center stage.

Few locals watching competitors launch their canvas-covered fold boats into the Arkansas that June in 1949 could have imagined a future where local kids ride surfboards in the river just as dam builders a few years later could not have imagined that their work would someday be removed to accommodate hundreds of thousands of people floating the river. While the Upper Arkansas River continues to face the challenges of water availability and overuse; the transition to a healthier river and local economy continues. ■



Scott Dam, 138 feet tall, blocks salmon and other fish from accessing key habitat in the upper Eel River and inundates several miles of whitewater. It is at high risk of seismic failure.
Photo: Kyle Schwartz/CalTrout

STEWARDSHIP

Utility Releases Fast-Track Plans for Removing Dams on California's Eel River

By Scott Harding



THE REMOVAL OF TWO OUTDATED DAMS BLOCK-

ing Northern California's Eel River is one step closer to reality. In November, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), the owner of the dams, released its initial draft plan for dismantling the Scott and Cape Horn dams and relinquishing its federal license for the 113-year-old Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project. Once the dams are gone, the Eel will be the longest free-flowing river in California.

PG&E's plan would remove both dams as early as 2028—a remarkably rapid timeline that is cheered by Tribes, conservation groups, and commercial fishermen. But PG&E also released a more complex alternate dam removal plan put forth by a group led by Sonoma Water, a public water agency in an adjacent county. While still removing the dams, the alternate plan would also construct a new diversion system to continue sending Eel River water south to irrigators in the Russian River watershed.

This news comes as the removal of four dams on the nearby Klamath River is underway, with one dam there already removed and the others to follow in 2024. American Whitewater is engaged in the dam removal efforts on both rivers.

As with the Klamath, the Eel River dams have contributed to a significant reduction in the river's salmon populations and have negatively impacted water quality. These impacts disproportionately affect local Tribes, commercial fishermen, and affect many others who depend upon the health of the river system and its native fishery.

The two Eel River dams work in tandem to store and divert a significant amount of the river's water through a tunnel to a powerhouse in the adjacent Russian River watershed. This diminishes the flow of the Eel River, affecting its water quality and temperature, in turn affecting the river's native fish. Additionally, the dams flood several miles of the mainstem Eel River and its Rice Fork and limit boaters' ability to access and enjoy the 12-mile-long river reach between the dams.

The Potter Valley Hydroelectric Project is in critical condition. Its 138-foot Scott Dam is at such a high risk of failure during an earthquake that its reservoir can no longer be filled. The 62-foot Cape Horn diversion dam lacks effective passage for salmon and steelhead. The project hasn't generated electricity since 2021, and PG&E has decided not to invest in costly repairs to bring power production back online. Faced with



Cape Horn Dam, 62 feet tall, backs up the Eel River so it can be diverted into a tunnel. Photo: Kyle Schwartz/CalTrout

this situation and the mounting financial losses, PG&E no longer wants to own these obsolete dams.

American Whitewater and other Eel River advocates welcome PG&E's accelerated plan for dam removal. The five-year timeline is ambitious but also not fast enough to ensure the survival of the river's imperiled fishery. The alternative plan by Sonoma Water, while potentially feasible, is more likely to result in delays due to its added complexity. It would perpetuate diversions of Eel River water and, depending upon how it is built, its new in-stream diversion infrastructure may not be passable for boaters.

The removal of these dams will make the Eel the longest free-flowing river in California, with nearly 200 miles of boatable river between its Coast Range headwaters and the redwood-lined Pacific Ocean. The full length of the Eel River downstream of the dams, about 155 miles, is already designated as both a state and federal wild and scenic river. Dam removal is essential for restoring the health of the mainstem Eel and enabling the recovery of its anadromous fishery.

PG&E is scheduled to submit its final draft for license surrender and dam removal to federal regulators by May 2024, followed by the final surrender application in January 2025. American Whitewater is participating in the review and comment process for each of these steps. Our goal is to see the dams removed as quickly as possible, that the river be restored to its pre-dam condition, and that the public will be able to safely access and enjoy the undammed sections. ■



BALD ROCK, 1980

BY RICHARD MONTGOMERY

HOW MUCH OF CLASS V PADDLING IS JUST ANOTHER DRUG, AN ALTERNATIVE to alcohol as a way to avoid feeling? Why was I doing the hardest river runs of my life just six weeks after my mother had died?

The manzanitas, with their tiny white-pink blossoms, had come out early that year. It was just a few days after Valentine's Day, 1980. Back along the rim of the Stanislaus Canyon, Gar Dubois had taught me you could eat them. They have a slight sweet taste with a hint of bitterness. I had picked one and was eating it as Judith and I walked to class, coming towards the dip in the dirt road into Protein Farms where a trail split off from the road and led to the log bridge we'd put across Copeland Creek to cross on into the Sonoma State University Campus. Judith announced, "It's not right. It's not right spring is coming again."

Judith did not mean, "This is too early for the flowers, spring has come too early," even though that was true. Judith meant that it was not right for the world to keep on going, the seasons to simply progress as if nothing of monumental and universal importance had happened. My mother had died.

The Golden Gate had been on the list for Chuck and me ever since reading in Charlie Martin's guidebook that attempting this run would be, "a novel substitute to jumping off the Golden Gate."

We had seen my mother the weekend before Valentine's Day down in Berkeley. She and Judith made Valentine's cards. My mother's last words to the two of us, standing in front of my Datsun, were, "Take care of each other."

Four days later, my mother died.

Watching my mother plugged into the machines up on the tenth floor of Kaiser Hospital in downtown Oakland, the flat brain line, the red lights beeping and the doctor's whispering, watching my mother comatose, about to die, Judith and I thought for the first time to get married. My father had to make the decision to pull the plug.

I did not like my father then. That's another story. But by the time I was 16, I never called him 'father' or 'dad'. Only 'Roger'. My reaction to his rages and judgment would drive my life. Watching my mother dying in that hospital I knew for damn sure I did not want Roger having the power of my next-of-kin, the one deciding whether or not to unplug me from the machines keeping me breathing if that time came. I would much prefer Judith be my next-of-kin. And Judith certainly would not trust her parents with such a decision. She preferred me as her next-of-kin than anyone else she could think of.

We got married nearly a year later.

A month after the memorial for my mother I went to a movie with Chuck Stanley and Judith. It was about a guy getting old who didn't take good care of himself. An actor, life of the party type, well-loved. And a smoker. He was dying in the hospital, making one last friend, another guy on his deathbed, as he dies. There was something about an escape from his room in the middle of the night, one last party, one last smoke with his new friend, in the empty midnight cafeteria of that hospital. I beat the dashboard of my Datsun senseless on the way home, screaming and crying about the unfairness of the universe while I was driving. Chuck, ever attentive and fearful of strong emotions, said nothing. For the rest of that car's natural life, it had a split in the dashboard where the foam showed through.

Our big week of first descents came during Spring Break of 1980. We were gunning to be the first to run Bald Rock on the Middle Fork of the Feather and The Golden Gate run on the South Fork of the American. These would be the hard first descents that made us famous in California kayak circles and launched Lars Holbek's whitewater career.

Chuck and I were attending Sonoma State, both of us living at Protein Farms, a kind of unintentional commune a half-mile walk from the SSU student union. Chuck lived in a bus, Judith and I in a camper shell that had been taken off of a pick-up and placed on cement blocks. Lars Holbek would come and go in his VW van, often eating with us and spending days at a time sleeping there. He taught a climbing class at Sonoma State and had a key to the gym. While I was in classes, Lars would go to the map room at Sonoma State with thread and a notebook and take out topographic maps to count off topo lines along rivers. He was looking for Sierra rivers with gradients between 80 and 250 feet per mile. A section of the Bear below Highway 49, and the Golden Gate made the cut and were on our list for Spring Break. The Golden Gate had been on the list for Chuck and me ever since reading in Charlie Martin's guidebook that said attempting this run would be, "a novel substitute to jumping off the Golden Gate," - hence our name for this run. The more challenging Bald Rock, below the well-known, hard, three day Devil's Canyon run on the Middle Feather was Lars'



Lars Holbeck fired up about California multi-day camping.
Photo: Michael Schlaw

discovery. The Bear would have been better left undiscovered.

We left Protein Farms in Lars' vintage 1956 VW van as usual. We were a self-contained unit: Chuck, Lars, and I, a bicycle, boats, and gear. Chuck and Lars felt at the top of their game. They had been training for slalom racing on the Sonoma State duck pond all spring and lifting weights. I had an algebraic topology take-home exam with me from Dr. Ledbetter, a guy who had taken a mucky-muck administrative job at Sonoma State but was a category theorist at heart.

I felt invincible on the river back then. None of our friends had drowned yet, stuffed underwater into boulder piles, trapped in their boats on steep rapids. Lars and I would chase each other down the river for the glory of the lead. Occasionally Chuck would steam out ahead into the lead but he was generally content to watch our lines and learn from our mistakes. He was not much interested in the glory Lars and I seem to have invented of being the absolute first human down a rapid, and of doing it on the wing.

We could not always see what we were running. We never ran completely blind — we'd always see a pool or eddy below the unseeable part of the drop, safe pools where we could stop and in all likelihood scramble out of our boats to scout if nec-

essary. If no such refuge was in sight, we got out of our boats, or at least one of us did, scrambling out onto granite or mud banks and scouting the rapid below. Would it go?

But sometimes I'd see a flat line indicating the lip of a big drop, and I'd see that pool below indicating a clean run out, and I'd just take a chance. It was a spiritual feeling. Me and the river, we're partners. Chuck scoffed at my fifth sense, my hidden belief that I have some psychic connection to the river — that I can sense what is happening in the unseen sections of water and rock between my boat and the safe pool below, the section hidden behind a horizon line.

Those gambles worked out. Most of the time. In the first quarter of the Golden Gate run I had just passed Lars for the lead and saw a big drop and what looked like a clean line, about a ten foot ledge with a pool below. I went. My boat hit a rock on landing and I sprained my ankle and bent the nose of the Hollowform.

After that hit it became painful to get out of my boat and walk around to scout. Lars or Chuck would scout when necessary and I would follow their line or their verbal instructions. On one particularly big rapid Lars came back from the scout, and yelled down at me sloshing about in the marginal eddy at the lip of the

Why did I do the hardest runs of my life a month and a half after my mother died? How much of Class V paddling is just another drug, the adrenaline a novel substitute to alcohol, opioids, or gambling as a way to avoid feelings?

drop, "It's a straight shot, Richard, right down the middle." Those words sounded great! I didn't have to get out of my boat.

But it wasn't as straight a shot as Lars let on. The river narrowed down to less than regulation slalom length in the middle of that rapid and just above the narrowing lay a strong diagonal wave. Regulation slalom length, the length of the Hollowforms we were all paddling was four meters or 13 feet, 3 inches. The wave spun me sideways and I bridged, one end of my boat against one shore, the other end wedged into the other, my Hollowform making an unstable white plastic bridge with the water coursing through and into and around it say 30 miles an hour. The pressure bent my boat in two. My lean was good so the bending spat me right out of the cockpit in folding, rather than folding with me inside the boat if I'd had an upstream lean. "One taco to go", as Lars would later say of my boat. The swim was short and uneventful. The plastic could be bent back into a shape resembling a kayak. But I stopped taking Lars' word on rapids after that. I hobbled out more often to make the scout. That rapid got named "Straight Shot".

That night, after the run, my ankle really hurt. Hypochondriac that I am, and having signed up for amazing health insurance at 98 dollars a semester from Sonoma State University, I insisted that Lars and Chuck take me to the emergency room to get my ankle X-rayed. They were pretty grumpy about my hospital visit come midnight. I was relieved to learn my ankle was not broken. We slept in the hospital parking lot that night.

The next day we started off to drive to our planned Middle Fork Feather descent. Just about to leave Placerville, Lars' clutch went out. This failure ended up being convenient for my academic career. Lars coasted the van into a Dairy Queen parking lot. He had to replace that clutch. While Lars pulled out his bike, cursing about VW clutches, I set out my books on the concrete table outside the Dairy Queen. Lars biked around Placerville, scouring junkyards for a clutch. I started in on Ledbetter's algebraic topology exam. Lars, sometimes alongside with his brother Suren, had worked intermittently for years at the Ferrati brother's junkyard in Santa Rosa. The two brothers were proficient scroungers and ancient VW maintainers. I was halfway through the exam by the time Lars came back with the clutch. While Lars was putting in the salvaged clutch I was computing the homology groups of a genus g surfaces from first principles. By the time Lars got the clutch in I was done with Ledbetter's exam.

Salvaged clutch installed, off we started again for the Middle Fork of the Feather. We set shuttle on the way to put-in: Lars' bicycle, stashed in the bushes at the junction of the highway and the dirt road going to Milsap bar. The plan was that after the run, Lars would hitchhike from put-in to that junction and then coast his stashed bike down to pick up the van. We got to sleep late at the put-in at Milsap Bar, the roar of the river in our ears.

That morning we found that the river was higher than we wanted. We were all scared. We left the campground tentatively. As the canyon started closing in and the rapids got bigger and the sky got darker, Chuck and I got more and more scared. We conferred with each other at the bottom of a particular rapid beyond which it looked like our commitment to the ensuing canyon would be total. We told Lars, "The water's too big. We're going to bail." Lars' face turned red with anger and his countenance was grim. "Go ahead. I'm going, whether you come or not." As Chuck would report in their guidebook, "Democracy failed, once again."

The run was big and scary. We all had inadvertent backenders and hole-thrashings. The crux of the run was the portage which we named Atom Bomb Falls because of its size. It took over an hour to suss out a portage route. We would not have made

it through that canyon without Lars' climbing prowess and attention to detail. He had brought rope and a sling. He improvised protection using a rock as a chalk, set the sling in the rock, and lowered us down with our boats one at a time into a small eddy. From the eddy behind that boulder, we had to ferry right above the lip of the falls across to an eddy on the other side. It was very exposed. If we slipped out on the lowering or screwed up the ferry it sure looked like a guaranteed death, into the sieves that led into the waterfall.

The portage on river left at Atom Bomb was one of the most beautiful places on Earth. Huge sculpted rock all around. Little pot holes, perfectly round, a few feet in diameter, filled with gravel and growing small flower gardens within them. Tiny Zen gardens out in the middle of nowhere. And then below, at the end of the portage, huge beautiful breathtaking rapids cascading through the clean granite. We would come across Curtain Falls, a 30-foot waterfall, and above it, a rapid we named Sliding Falls. Sliding Falls is a 20-foot ramp into an almost river-wide hole which recycles water from fifteen feet downstream. Scouting that first day, Lars announced he would go over Curtain Falls sideways before he'd run Sliding Falls.

We all ran the Sliding Falls the next year but we still carried Curtain Falls. Curtain Falls would go the year after that and became a standardly run falls. That first run we carried a lot. Chuck recorded 19 portages. We got to Lake Oroville at dusk. Lake Oroville is the murdered remains of the Feather River which is made by the massive Oroville dam.

It was a 13-mile paddle out on Lake Oroville. We would slipstream each other, like bicycle racers, the lead boat paddling full out for a half hour, then we would rotate. It took us between three and four hours to make the bridge. I had worn the skin off my right thumb and several fingers from the paddling. It was all just peeling off. Remember the shuttle plan: hitchhike to where the bike was stashed? It was midnight when we got to the bridge. We weren't going to be getting any rides. Chuck had the sense to bring a sleeping bag. Lars and I burnt

a creosote-soaked road sign we found trying to keep warm, sleeping in ten-minute fits under the bridge, then rotating to warm our other side to the burning, stinking four-by-fours, while Chuck snored in comfort nearby.

Why did I do the hardest runs of my life a month and a half after my mother died? How much of Class V paddling is just another drug, the adrenaline and requirement for full attention a novel substitute to alcohol, opioids, or gambling as a way to avoid feelings? Or is perhaps the reason that I needed to do these first descents an attempt at manufacturing some form of immortality?

The Golden Gate and Bald Rock did become classic runs—the hard test runs for California paddlers back in the day. Those runs are still deemed hard today. And Chuck and Lars' guidebook, filled with stories of me (often as comic relief) did give me a kind of limited guarantee of immortality. Often I run into young boaters who know my name. But the sense of accomplishment and fleeting fame within our funny whitewater subculture garnered by those twin runs did nothing at all to bring my mother back.

My mind drifts back to the wildflower gardens growing in the gravel of the ephemeral perfectly round potholes scoured out above Atom Bomb Falls, scoured by high water millennia before, and the beauty the three of us moved through that day, and the clear blue water. I remember a particular gentle playing hole that beckons, just below the put-in launch at the end of the carry—around Atom Bomb, but above the next carry—a just-perfect small playing hole with enough slow water downstream that one could afford to try to spin in it before the next scout or carry. I remember the sense of being a part of an inseparable team, moving through hard steep clear water falling through deep granite canyons. I felt home again. ■



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Photo by Austin Seback

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For more information about making a bequest to American Whitewater contact Bethany Overfield at 1.866.262.8429 or bethany@americanwhitewater.org

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

By *Bethany Overfield*

American Whitewater's original purpose since 1954 has included distribution of information among its Affiliate Clubs. We have over 80 current AW Affiliate Clubs 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.

Is your club missing from this list? It might have expired. Contact me at membership@americanwhitewater.org to square your club membership away!

AMERICAN WHITEWATER AFFILIATE CLUBS

SUPPORTING AFFILIATE CLUBS

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Smith River Alliance, Crescent City

Colorado

Dolores River Boating Advocate, Dolores
Colorado Whitewater Association, Denver

Georgia

Georgia Canoeing Association Inc, Winston

Kentucky

Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington
Vikings Canoe Club, Louisville

Massachusetts

Appalachian Mountain Club, Boston

New York

KCCNY, Brooklyn

North Carolina

West Asheville Canoe and Kayak Organization (WACKO), Asheville

Ohio

Keelhaulers, Cleveland

Oregon

Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland

South Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Washington

Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Redmond
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

AFFILIATE CLUBS

Alaska

Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

Coosa River Paddling Club, Wetumpka
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

California

River City Whitewater Club, Sacramento

Colorado

Diversify Whitewater, Fort Collins
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
High Country River Rafters, Wheat Ridge
Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center, Buena Vista
Royal Gorge River Initiative Org, Cañon City
San Miguel Whitewater Assoc., Telluride
Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club, Longmont
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Assoc., Glenwood Springs

Connecticut

New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association, Meriden

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

Kentucky

Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Freeport

Maryland

Baltimore Canoe; Kayak Club, Baltimore
Blue Ridge Voyagers, Rockville

Minnesota

Northland Paddlers Alliance, Duluth
Rapids Riders, Eagan

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico, Albuquerque

New Hampshire

Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Merrimack
New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association, Contoocook

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

New York

Zoar Valley Paddling Club, East Aurora

North Carolina

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee
Mind Body Play, Asheville



Ohio

Friends of the Crooked River, Akron
Columbus Paddling Club, Columbus

Oregon

Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
North West Rafters Association, Roseburg
Oregon Whitewater Association, Portland
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Bridgeville

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Jonesborough
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Clean Water Expected in East Tennessee, Sevierville
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Tennessee Scenic River Association, Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Knoxville

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Inc., Houston

Utah

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg
Canoe Cruisers Association, Middleburg
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke

Washington

Northwest Whitewater Association, Spokane
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
Yakima River Runners, Selah

Washington, DC

Canoe Cruisers Association

West Virginia

Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Bolivar
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

National

Team River Runner

CANADA

Ontario

Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers

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 \$25/year Affiliate Club Member option online at www.americanwhitewater.org/join.

A list of Affiliate Clubs can be found on our website under the Community/Clubs tab. If you notice your club missing from our list, please encourage club leaders to renew their club membership or join American Whitewater as a new Affiliate Club.

Your club's membership and your personal membership enable American Whitewater Staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship across the country. Your membership support helps to meet the many challenges whitewater rivers face. If you have questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please reach out to Bethany Overfield at membership@americanwhitewater.org.

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 longest 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 bimonthly *American Whitewater 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:
membership@americanwhitewater.org

...or sign-up on line: www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.

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\$10,000 – Class III



\$7,500 – Class II



\$5,000 – Boof



\$2,500 – Wave





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