



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS  
March/April 2005

## CREEK boating

**The Magpie: Saving a Canadian Gem  
Quebec Province: Paradis D'eau Vive?  
Sleepy? Relaxing?: Corsican Whitewater  
Defies Mediterranean Stereotypes**

*Warm Winter Paddling Way Down South  
Memories of the Beaver River Rendezvous*

CFC United Way #2302

\$4.95 US  
\$7.70 CAN

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



# WAVE SPORT

Connecting you to the liquid realm.



Luke Hopkins running Grace Under Pressure in a Diesel center line of Great Falls, Potomac river, MD @ 3.7 feet.



Do you ever try something new and say to yourself: this just feels right? Well, we do too, and when we designed the Diesel that's exactly what we felt from day one. This boat has surpassed all of our expectations and become an instant classic. Whether you're a total newbie learning to roll or a seasoned expert pushing your limits, the Diesel offers an amazing platform from which to build confidence. Surfing, river running or creeking, the Diesel is ready to roll (and easy to roll for the record!).



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

**A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY**

**Columns:**

- **Safety First! Solor Boating** by Tim Kelly ..... 4
- **Letters to the Editor**..... 6
- **The Journey Ahead** by Mark Singleton..... 8
- **History: Olympic Medals** by Sue Taft ..... 9
- **The Late Boof** by Clay Wright..... 10
- **Off-Season** by Nikki Kelly & Tanya Shuman ..... 12
- **AW News & Notes**..... 15
- **From the Editor: Last Words** by Ambrose Tuscano ..... 68

**Conservation and Access:**

- **Going Green Begins with You** by Mefford Williams..... 18
- **Pittston Farm & Canada Falls** by Tom Christopher..... 20
- **Victory for the Ashlu** by Tom O'Keefe..... 23
- **Western Updates** by John Gangemi..... 57
- **Partner Spotlight**..... 58
  - **Crooked Fork Creek**..... 58
  - **Iowa Whitewater Coalition** by Nate Hoogevenn... 59
- **Eastern Updates** by Kevin Miller & Kevin Colburn..... 60

**Features:**

- **Saving the Magpie** by James McBeath ..... 26
- **Quebec WW** by Alden Bird & Simon Wiles..... 40
- **Corsica's Upper Vecchio** by Ambrose Tuscano..... 49

**River Voices:**

- **Tribute To A Friend** by J.A. Hinton ..... 62
- **Beaver River Rendezvous** by Bryan Griessemmer ..... 64


**Reviews:**

- **Book Review: Laugh of the Water Nymph**..... 66
- **Video Review: Twitch V**..... 67

**CFC UnitedWay #2302**

Support American Whitewater through CFC or United Way

All the federal campaigns, and a few of the local United Way campaigns will allow you to donate through them to AW. Check to see if yours in one of them. Also, check to see if your employer will match your charitable contribution - double your money , double your fun!

 **The Magpie River.**  
*Photo by Lisa Utronki*



Printed on Recycled Paper



**American Whitewater Journal**

Volume XLVI, No.2

**F E A T U R E S**

Field Notes

**Off-Season**

**pg. 12**



Conservation & Access

**Victory for Ashlu**

**pg. 23**



Feature

**Quebec WW**



**pg. 40**

Publication Title: American Whitewater  
Issue Date: March/April 2005  
Statement of Frequency: Published bimonthly  
Authorized Organization's Name and Address:  
American Whitewater  
20 Battery Park Suite 302  
Asheville NC 28801

# Purpose **American Whitewater**

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

American Whitewater (AW) is a national organization with a membership consisting of thousands of individual whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates.

**CONSERVATION:** AW maintains a complete national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors threats to those rivers, publishes information on river conservation, provides technical advice to local groups, works with government agencies and other river users, and-- when necessary-- takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

**RIVER ACCESS:** To assure public access to whitewater rivers pursuant to the guidelines

published in its official Access Policy, AW arranges for river access through private lands by negotiation or purchase, seeks to protect the right of public passage on all rivers and streams navigable by kayak or canoe, resists unjustified restrictions on government-managed whitewater rivers and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

**EDUCATION:** Through publication of the bi-monthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

**SAFETY:** AW promotes paddling safely, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, maintains a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater

Difficulty) and publishes and disseminates the internationally recognized AW Whitewater Safety Code.

**EVENTS:** AW organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation, including the Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

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



## American Whitewater Journal Staff

**Editor** Ambrose Tuscano  
20 Battery Park, Ste. 302, Asheville, NC 28801  
phone 828-252-0728  
e-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org

**Assitant Editors** Tim Catalano and Mike Hoffman

**Graphic Design/Production** Christie Dobson

**Photo Editor** Scott Collins

**Artwork Editor** Chris Conlin

### Contributing Writers

Tim Kelly, Ed Briercheck, Charlie Walbridge, Stuart Smith, Mark Singleton, Susan Taft, Clay Wright, Tanya Shuman, Nikki Kelly, Mefford Williams, Tom Christopher, Tom O'Keefe, John Gangemi, James McBeath, Alden Bird, Simon Wiles, Ambrose Tuscano, Turtle Mac Dermott, Nate Hooegeven, Kevin Miller, Kevin Colburn, J.A. Hinton, Bryan Grissemer, Ken Strickland, Mike Hoffman,

### Photo Contributors

Patrick Levesque, kaitiaki.co.nz, Alex Nicks, Marlow Long, Mefford Williams, John Gangemi, David Vican, Aaron Berg, Lisa Utronki, Simon Wiles, Rok, Sribar, Ambrose Tuscano, Tom O'Keefe, Don Cochran, Charlie Munsey

### Events / Advertising Coordinator

Ben VanCamp  
20 Battery Park, Ste. 302, Asheville, NC 28801  
phone 828-252-0728  
e-mail: ben@amwhitewater.org

### Safety Editor

Charlie Walbridge  
Route 1, Box 329F, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525  
e-mail: ccwalbridge@cs.com

### Conservation and Access Editors

Jason Robertson, jason@amwhitewater.org  
John Gangemi, jgangemi@digisys.net  
Kevin Colburn, kevin@amwhitewater.org

### American Whitewater Magazine Task Force

Jeff Espy, Dunbar Hardy, Dale-Marie Herring, John Mason, Tanya Shuman, Ambrose Tuscano

### Missing Copies and Address Changes

cmminer@digisys.net

*American Whitewater is printed by  
Spencer-Walker Press, Inc., Newark OH.  
All rights reserved.*

## EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

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

## Board of Directors & Staff

Sutton Bacon  
sutton@suttonbacon.com  
Atlanta, GA

Chris Bell  
chris@boatingbeta.com  
Asheville, NC

Rich Bowers (Honorary)  
nwrivers@comcast.net  
Bellingham, WA

Dave Cernicek  
dave@losalamos.com  
Jackson, WY

Tom Christopher  
tom.christopher@comcast.net  
Lancaster, MA

Adam Cramer  
adam@cramerlawgroup.com  
Washington DC

David Ennis  
enndo@aol.com  
Bryson City, NC

Steve Exe  
steven.j.exe@boeing.com  
Mercer Island, WA

Liz Ferrin  
lferrin@deckers.com  
Santa Barbara, CA

Jennie Goldberg  
jennie@nwwhitewater.org  
Seattle, WA

Joe Greiner  
joekayak@worldnet.att.net  
Raleigh, NC

Kristine Jakscon  
kristine@jacksonkayak.com  
Rock Island, TN

Andrew Jillings  
ajjilling@hamilton.edu  
Clinton, NY

Chris Kelly  
ckelly1022@aol.com  
Columbia, MO

**TOLL FREE NUMBER  
866-BOAT4AW**

Tim Kelley  
tmkelley@clarkson.edu  
Potsdam, NY

Don Kinser  
dkinser@ediltd.com  
Marietta, GA

Mark LaCroix  
mwlcx@worldpath.com  
Thorton, NH

Jeff Leighton  
jeff@jeffleighton.com  
LaFayette, CA

Kevin Lewis  
kevin@idahorivers.org  
Anderson, CA

Evie Locke  
evelynlocke@verizon.net  
Charlemont, MA

Eric Nies  
ericnies@mac.com  
Morgantown, WV

Aaron Pruzan  
aaron@jacksonholekayak.com  
Jackson Hole, WY

Norwood Scott  
wns111@sbcglobal.com  
San Francisco, CA

Dave Steindorf (Honorary)  
davidsteindorf@sbcglobal.net  
Paradise, CA

Patricia Supanich  
patricia@achievepeakperformance.com  
Vail, CO

Charlie Walbridge  
ccwalbridge@cs.com  
Bruceton Mills, WV

### BOARD OFFICERS

President: Sutton Bacon  
Vice President: Don Kinser  
Secretary: Norwood Scott  
Treasurer: Jeff Leighton

## AW STAFF

Mark Singleton  
Executive Director  
20 Battery Park Ave., suite 302  
Asheville, NC 28801

Jason Robertson  
Managing Director  
1424 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Kevin Colburn  
Eastern Conservation and  
Access Director  
20 Battery Park Ave., suite 302  
Asheville, NC 28801

John Gangemi  
Western Conservation and  
Access Director  
482 Electric Avenue  
Bigfork, MT 59911

Carla Miner  
Conservation Assistant and  
Membership Coordinator  
482 Electric Avenue  
Bigfork, MT 59911

Ben VanCamp  
Events / Advertising Coordinator  
20 Battery Park Ave., suite 302  
Asheville, NC 28801

 Teva Presents:

# TORRENT

*"The photos in Torrent are an inspiration to those of us who are exhilarated by photography of the outdoors."*

- KARI STEIN, PHOTO EDITOR, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

Jock Bradley is one of the most published and respected whitewater photographers of all time, and Torrent is a journey through his camera lens; an eye that has beheld many of the world's greatest paddlers in some of the most exotic locations.

Resplendent in its quality of reproduction, this coffee table style book is the first of its kind. The 160 full-color pages, bound by hard cover, draws the soul of whitewater to the surface, stimulates the senses, and captures the imagination.



Torrent is an American Whitewater fundraiser. \$5 from the sale of each Torrent book will go directly to AW in support of their efforts towards river conservation and access issues. Join AW this summer during their membership appreciation tour. Visit [www.amwhitewater.org/events](http://www.amwhitewater.org/events) for details.

*"Jock's incredible images are as close as you can get to experiencing extreme kayaking without actually getting wet."*

- ROSS PRATHER, EDITOR, CANOE AND KAYAK MAGAZINE

Brought to you by:



THE HELICONIA PRESS

## ORDER NOW:

1 888 582 2001

[WWW.HELIPRESS.COM](http://WWW.HELIPRESS.COM)

\$44.95 + shipping

160 Pages, Hardcover, Full Color

Special Thanks To:



# Safety First!

# Solo Boating

by Tim Kelly

## It's Time To Talk About It

Almost everything written about solo paddling either glorifies it or condemns it. The fact is people boat alone. So, no matter what your position on the subject, we need to collectively focus on making boating, which includes solo boating, as safe as we can. While I feel boating alone should remain a very scrutinized act, discussing how to make it safe is the responsible thing to do.

Each person has unique reasons for paddling the things they do—both as part of a group and solo. Paddling is essentially unregulated, which is one of the most appealing aspects of the sport. Such freedom comes with a responsibility to watch out for each other. In a paddling

group we seem to have no problem respecting each other's decision to paddle or portage a rapid. We don't take offense when someone asks us if we are sure about a decision. That mutual respect should carry over when we discuss boating alone. If we really listen, everyone's safety will improve.

Whether paddling solo or in a group, the individual paddler is still the single biggest factor in paddling safely. Group dynamics and group safety can and do make paddling safer. Some argue, however, that "the group" can also detract from safety; that solo paddling is as safe as paddling in groups. Such rationalization doesn't make solo paddling any safer; it only means we

need to improve group paddling safety.

Make no mistake: paddling solo does increase objective risks. To say otherwise is misinformation or denial. Rationalizing the risk away only changes one's state of mind and perceptions of risk(s). Your individual feelings are up to you, but we should not influence others into thinking the same.

Safety ultimately depends on sound judgment and good decision-making. The illusion of safety can provide a mental edge that translates into improved physical performance, but confusing the illusion of safety with the reality of risk can be deadly. Perception and reality can blur even with

**Come Play With Us!**

**KAYAK INSTRUCTION • OUTFITTER STORE**  
**COSTA RICA • ECUADOR • MEXICO**

Our advice for winter blues avoidance: A trip to Costa Rica or Equador! It's all about warm weather, great rivers to paddle, and good people to paddle with!

Rather than putting your boat away this winter, call us at 800-224-7238 for more information on this year's availability.

*We hope you can join us!*

*Trips for all skill levels:*  
**Class II-III, III, III-IV, IV, and IV+**  
Endless River Adventures • Bryson City, North Carolina

www.endlessriveradventures.com

a group of trusted friends. “Group think” is often more dangerous than individual uncertainty. In the end, good decision-making comes down to simple honesty with the man in the mirror: honesty about skill, honesty about risk and most importantly, honesty about motive.

The actual reason that someone chooses to boat alone is a personal decision and as long as one is honest about the real motive(s), then paddling solo can be safe. The one exception to this is boating alone because you can’t find a paddling partner. We should not “back” into solo paddling. Choosing to boat alone should be deliberate in the same way choosing the group you paddle with should be deliberate.

Inherently, solo paddling depends far more on individual judgment than paddling as part of a group. Judgment and good decision-making come from experience, and our experiences include both good and bad results. Making mistakes when paddling with a group probably won’t kill you. Making those same mistakes when paddling alone has a greater probability to end in tragedy. Don’t mistake paddling skills for good judgment.

I believe that if you have to ask about solo paddling, you’re probably not ready to do it safely. You’ll know when you’re ready. I think the peer pressure not to solo paddle helps keep it safe. It is not something to be taken lightly and seeking the experience too soon is unsafe.

The acute awareness one has when solo paddling is what helps make it safe. Complete concentration elevates performance and decision making if we remain honest with ourselves. Intense focus is often much easier to accomplish solo and when combined with other safe boating practices greatly reduces the risks of boating alone.

Safety whether paddling alone or in a group still comes down to applying the proven practices outlined in the AW safety code, which is based on 50 years of accident analysis. Emphasis on the following areas can reduce the risks of paddling alone:

1. Be honest about your ability and judgment.
2. If you find yourself rationalizing away the risks, know you’re only fooling yourself.
3. Use the AW Safety Code as a guideline. By ignoring guidance to boat with a minimum of three, you should adhere even more strictly to the other proven risk reducers.
4. Don’t take any shortcuts! Just because something is a “normal” paddling habit on a river you’ve run hundreds of times, doesn’t make it a safe practice.
5. Paddling in control means knowing what is around the corner or beyond the horizon line...take a quick look.
6. Be prepared; only you can’t help yourself.
7. Tell someone where you’ve gone and when you expect to return.

Solo paddling can be done safely, but the margin of error is reduced. If you choose to paddle alone it is even more important to follow safety guidelines.

I’ve stayed “in the closet” about my solo experiences for more than 20 years. Not for fear of being considered irresponsible, but rather over concern of pushing someone who otherwise wouldn’t boat alone into trying it. Given the number of people who say they are soloing now, maybe discussing how to make it as safe as possible—whitewater’s version of sex education—is the best thing. Be responsible, be safe, and enjoy. **AW**

We're going places.

Ecuador  
Grand Canyon  
M.F. Salmon  
Jarbridge/  
Bruneau  
Rogue

Join us for one of our  
multi-day paddling  
adventures.

DeRiemer



Adventure  
Kayaking

*Quality guiding and instruction*

www.adventurekayaking.com  
info@adventurekayaking.com  
(866) kayak 66 (529-2566)



## Dear Editor,

I just finished reading Kevin Colburn's trip report (Nov/Dec2004), Confessions of a Surfing Zealot. I've always been impressed with American Whitewater's emphasis on boating safety. Thus, I was surprised to read an article on a potential human popsicle, boating by himself (a bad idea anytime), in killer water in February. This stuff falls squarely in the middle of the stupidity/irresponsibility continuum, no matter how good you are or how many neoprene suits you put on. How about common sense on this one??

Ed Briercheck  
York, Pa.

## Dear Ed,

Although the AW Safety Code cautions against solo paddling, we also recognize that some experienced paddlers like to run rivers alone. This is just one of the choices we make that will increase the risks on a river trip. Other matters include your choice of boats and gear and your decisions to scout, run, or portage drops. We must each try to find a balance that keeps us out of trouble.

I always suggest that paddlers who are "cutting corners" in one area compensate by closely following safety guidelines in others. Kevin was paddling in excellent gear on a river that is well known to him and several grades under his proven ability. It seems like a reasonable thing for him to do, but other people—myself included—might not be comfortable doing the same.

Charlie Walbridge  
Safety Editor,  
American Whitewater

## Dear American Whitewater,

I would like to be among the first to congratulate you for the historic agreement you have reached and thank you for the extensive effort I know this had to take. You have achieved a goal that will have a long lasting, positive impact on the river running community.

I've been a river person all my life, and feel very strongly that the people who have chosen river running as an avocation are truly special.

In the past, all discussions about our common ground and mutual love of rivers had something hanging over it, like a cancer that held us back from our true potential: always, beneath the surface, there was the problem about the Grand Canyon.

You have now taken a major step towards removing that, and our community will be healthier and better due to your work.

I've been involved in many public and political processes involving public lands issues, and know how hard it is to reach consensus—especially when the issue is something we care about with such passion. Throughout the process the doubters say, "It can't be done!" But you have done it!

It's so easy in our free society to sit back and criticize, to denigrate the efforts of others, to hold out for one's own true knowledge of the truth. Rarely do statesmen step forward and put their differences aside and focus on the real issue—for instance, our ability to protect and enjoy that special place we call "The Grand".

You have done that, and demonstrated true leadership.

You have given a wonderful gift to the river community, a gift that will echo in a positive tone for generations of river runners. I hope that your membership remembers this and supports American Whitewater generously.

May the blessings of the River Gods be with you.

Always Look Downstream,  
Doug Tims  
Maravia Corporation  
Boise, Idaho

## Corrections



On page 8 of the January/February issue of American Whitewater, we mistakenly captioned a photo: "Rob Lesser, Selway River 1976." The photo is actually of an unknown paddler and is taken by Rob Lesser. As far as we know, the location and year were correctly listed.





## Whitewater Kayaking Association of British Columbia

Phone: (604) 515-6376  
Web Site: [www.whitewater.org](http://www.whitewater.org)  
E-mail: [admin@whitewater.org](mailto:admin@whitewater.org)

PO Box 91549 West Vancouver  
Postal Outlet, West Vancouver, BC  
V7V 3P2

January 12, 2005

To: American Whitewater Affiliation

Attention: John Gangemi  
Thomas O'Keefe

Dear John and Thomas:

On behalf of all of the paddling community members in the Sea to Sky area, throughout British Columbia, and across Canada, in all the areas where concerns about the future of Ashlu Creek were voiced, we are writing to express our sincerest appreciation. We are all very thankful for the efforts made by the paddlers from the United States, in support of our work to help save Ashlu Creek from a power project.

We would like to express a special thanks to John Gangemi, and Thomas O'Keefe for all of their assistance over the last few years, as this battle has unfolded. Your efforts were timely, and we believe they were very important in bringing home the message of the value of this stream.

For all the paddlers involved, this was a particularly long and difficult fight, due to not only the high value of the Ashlu, but due to the tactics we faced from the proponent. At times when we tired of this, it was refreshing to see continued efforts from the paddlers in the Pacific Northwest, and we appreciate all the efforts of the American Whitewater Affiliation to assist us.

From all of us, to the American Whitewater Affiliation, to John and Tom, and to all the American paddlers who helped make a difference, we extend our gratitude.

For now Ashlu Creek has been set aside, and though we fully expect that the proponent will not go softly after the denial, for now this is a tremendous victory and will establish precedents in all the other reviews to come. Each of the efforts from everyone who contributed cumulatively allowed us to succeed.

We look forward to showcasing this stream again at this years Ashlu Festival (August 18-21), and will be extending a warm welcome to those from south of the border that attend.

Sincerely, on behalf of all British Columbia paddling community members;

Stuart Smith  
River Projects Coordinator

A member of Whitewater Canada, the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, and Sport BC  
Incorporated as a non-profit Society under the Society Act of BC



**Wilderness  
medical  
training  
you can  
count on**



**WILDERNESS  
MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATES**

Emergency training  
for outdoor professionals™

www.wildmed.com  
1-888-WILDMED

office@wildmed.com Bryant Pond, ME US  
office@wildmed.ca Hamilton, ON Canada

# Executive Director The Journey Ahead

by Mark Singleton



## The New Face of AW's Board of Directors

As of this writing, I have been on the job for about three months. One of the noteworthy events in this early stage of my tenure as executive director is the December board conference call.

The call is an important organizational function and forces a focused state of mind that allows real business to be done. One major outcome of the December call is the election of a new group of officers. Leading that group is our new President, Sutton Bacon, king of the Thing at the Tallulah and Vice President, the ever optimistic, Don Kinser. As Secretary, Norwood Scott is our chief record keeper. Jeff Leighton serves as our Treasurer and provides high-level input to float the organization. Rounding out the AW Executive Committee are David Ennis and Tom Christopher who both serve as Directors at Large. Kevin Lewis provides his long-term strategic insight as immediate Past President. All of these folks have other full-time jobs and put their time in as volunteers. They work closely with me, giving freely of their time and have been an enormous assistance as I transition into my executive role.

In addition to the selection of our executive committee, new board members were elected in December. Please join with me in welcoming them:

**Liz Ferrin**, Promotions Manager at Teva from Santa Barbara, CA.

**Kristine Jackson**, Jackson Kayaks Business Manager (and more!) from Rock Island, TN.

**Patricia Supanich**, Peak Performance Business Solutions coach from Vail, CO.

**Andrew Jillings**, Hamilton University outdoor educator from Clinton, NY.


**Chris Bell**, University of North Carolina Asheville economist and boating beta web guy, Asheville, NC.

**Mark LaCroix**, Spraying Systems engineer from Thornton, NH.

Also, **Aaron Pruzan** and **David Cernicek**, both of Jackson Hole, WY were reelected to serve on the board.

Built on highly successful AW conservation, access and safety work, this band of boaters has an ambitious agenda. They will get things started at the upcoming board of directors meeting scheduled to piggyback with the Reno, NV Whitewater Festival in May.

Our group is full of fresh ideas, new faces and true to the core. A complete list of board members, with their email addresses, is available on page 2.

Again, for the new folks (like me) I want to extend heartfelt appreciation in return for their commitment to service. I can't imagine a better group to land in and I look forward to working with all AW members as we collectively strive to represent our deep sense of respect and responsibility for whitewater resources. 

# History Olympic Medals

by Susan Taft

## U.S. Athletes Come into Their Own— in a Big Way


While the U.S. won a bronze medal in Olympic slalom in 1972, the first Olympics to include whitewater, American paddlers continued to have limited success in World Championship competition until 1979. That year, at the Championships in Jonquierre, Quebec, the U.S. C-1 team established their dominance and in doing so, shaped the future of slalom competition.

Following Jamie McEwan's Olympic bronze medal win in 1972, a spirit of can-do and experimentation followed for American paddlers and designers. Young, new American paddlers coming into their own challenged the long-standing dependence on European designs. While the first American designed kayak premiered in World Championship competition in 1975 (the Slipper followed by an extremely successful off-set center C-2 design in 1977, the Gemini Mark II), it was the C-1 designs and technique innovations by young, determined American paddlers that raised the bar.

The changes in slalom design specs for C-1s came with the first two World Championships in 1971 and 1973. While the trend toward lower volume and gate sneaking for kayaks opened the doors to new ideas, there was no single school of thought that guided the next generation of design for canoes. Using the latest slalom kayak design from Prijon, four young C-1 racers from the D.C. area (Jon and Ron Lugbill, David Hearn, and Bob Robison), made their first C-1, the Max II. While the design was crude with its straight sides, a flat bottom, hard transitions, and its widest point aft of center, the unfaired transitions and hard edges proved serendipitous. Their experimentation with technique in the Max IIs resulted in off-side leans and stern pivot, moves that provided the basis for new and successful gate-running techniques. At the 1977 World Championships, the young

American C-1 paddlers showed promise but finished out of the medals. Expanding upon these innovations, they designed the Super Max, a stream-lined Max II, which they used to sweep the medals in the first Pre-Worlds in 1978. At the World Championships the following year, American C-1 paddlers swept the medals again and won the team event. For the next ten years in World Championship C-1 competition, Jon Lugbill and David Hearn dominated all competitors with their iterations of "Maxes" and associated cross-paddling and stern pivot turn techniques.

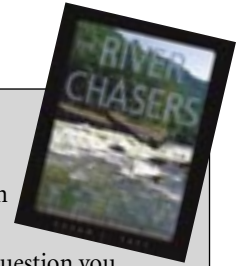
However, another serendipitous event occurred at Jonquierre aside from the spectacular American C-1 medal sweep. While warming up for the race, Jon Lugbill performed a bow pivot, perhaps the first to do so or at least, the first to recognize its importance. Upon returning home after the race, the Americans experimented and found that bow pivots were very effective in slower current. This had different implications and uses than the stern pivot and when combined with the boat edges and off-side leans, set the course for more than just slalom competition. It supported advances in river-running and also contributed to the birth of a new sport: squirtboating.

Thirty years later, slalom is again in a position to benefit from major design changes with a one-half meter reduction in the minimum length requirement for each class of boats. Can American racers repeat the example set by earlier C-1 racers and raise the bar once again? 

Copyright © 2005 Susan L. Taft  
All rights reserved.

With permission for use by American Whitewater.

Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers*, the history of American Whitewater Paddling. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, e-mail it to [editor@amwhitewater.org](mailto:editor@amwhitewater.org) and look for its answer in an upcoming issue.



Custom squirt, surf &  
whitewater kayaks  
created as  
individually as  
you are

**PS Composites, Inc.**

2535 Roundtop Rd.  
Middletown PA 17057  
717-944-1752

[www.customkayak.com](http://www.customkayak.com)



# Field Notes

## The Late Boof

by Clay Wright



With the introduction of the Topolino and Micro designs, the ability to boof a kayak off a ledge spread like wild-fire, right down to the basic levels of the sport.

Soon, everyone was flat-landing anywhere possible, enjoying the newfound freedom from the nasal douche and potential pin that accompanied it. But at what price this freedom? Back injuries have replaced ankle injuries as the most common reason your buddy can't boat, and slopers have

replaced pourovers as the feature to fear when scouting a new run. Have no fear, the Late Boof is here! In celebration of the Creek Season at hand, I am writing about this definitively modern creek boating technique, which has evolved to improve the way we fall, slide, and land.

In the classic boof, you reach forward to plant a vertical blade at the lip, thrust your hips out, and then crunch your body back forwards on the way down to protect your back and stabilize the landing. This works great. But today's fleet of creekers is designed with short sterns, wide or semi-planing hulls, and wide upswept bows. They land flat without speed, arc to the surface in an instant, and rarely backender if your angle is right. The drawback to these short, "phat" designs is that they don't bridge the hole of a 4-foot ledge, are slow to paddle up and over a raised backwash, and

come down hard when all that surface area lands at once. "Boof, Oomph, Paddle like hell"—it's 90s creaking in a nutshell. But those of us foolish enough taking planning hulled rodeo boats down steep runs and off waterfalls have noticed certain things:

1. You carry more speed by planning across a hole than you do by landing flat on the boil.
2. You can land at well OVER the '45 degree angle' in shorter boats without going deep or losing control.

Carried into creek boat design, the late boof technique has found its home.



Clay Wright late boofing off of Horseshoe Falls - Great Falls, TN (Rock Island)

Photos by Patrick Levesque


**How to:**

A. Paddle smoothly to the lip, lean forwards and grab the falling water (instead of the point of separation) with a vertical stroke. Allow the boat to rock forwards so that you can see down the drop, holding the stroke till you spot the boil.

B. As long as you didn't lean back, your paddle is still holding lots of water and a normal boof will work just as good here as it did at the lip. The difference is that your head and shoulders are now at a 45 degree angle and your boat is further out from the lip and closer to the angle you want to land, making it much easier to gage how hard to pull.

C. Pull that stroke just hard enough that the rotation of the boat stops heading towards vertical and gives you a nice angle with which to greet that pool or boil below you. On slides, you should wait till just before your bow hits the hole from maximum trajectory away from the drop

D. Anticipate the impact and resulting speed away from the drop you are about to encounter by leaning slightly forwards, staying centered over your boat, and planning that next stoke which is gonna' happen really fast if you've done things right so far.

So there you go, modern boof technique in a nutshell. On more vertical drops you may want to wait longer and incorporate an Oregon Tuck into your landing by continuing your forwards lean right down to the deck while streamlining your paddle off to your side. On the steep slides encountered on bedrock runs like the Tallulah, Green, and much of California you'll want to increase your speed by paddling down the face, raising the bow at bottom so your hull can plane-out out across the backwash (and often well into the pool below). And in shallow water or where rocks lie just inches under the surface, a big loud "BOOF" is still just as fun and rewarding as ever. 

Happy Creek Season to all (except your chiropractor).

A vertical banner for Needmore Adventure. The background is a grayscale image of a kayaker in a black kayak navigating a turbulent waterfall. The text is overlaid on the image in various colors and fonts. At the top, "slovenia" is in white, "france" is in black, "new zealand" is in white, "bhutan" is in white, "mexico" is in black, "whitewater" is in white, "kayaking" is in black, and "rafting" is in white. At the bottom, "needmore adventure" is in black, "1888 900 9091" is in black, "1828 488 0522" is in black, and "www.needmore.com" is in black.

slovenia  
france  
new zealand  
bhutan  
mexico  
whitewater  
kayaking  
rafting  
needmore adventure  
1888 900 9091  
1828 488 0522  
www.needmore.com

# Field Notes

## Off-Season

### Two Whitewater Women Tackle Winter Way Down South

by **Nikki Kelly and Tanya Shuman**

#### An Off-season Down Under

By *Nikki Kelly*

Kia ora, Tena koutou katoa – “greetings to you all”

For most, the kayaking season eases off with the onslaught of snow and cold waters. For some, this is the time to paddle on foreign terrain.

This year I have chosen the Kaituna River on the North Island of New Zealand to be my home. The Kaituna is famous for her “bottom hole,” where auto cartwheels and loops are a dime a dozen and the world’s highest commercially-rafted waterfall drops 21 feet. Just a fifteen minute walk completes the shuttle. Add that to homemade lattes, a fish’n’chip shop and a slalom course, and you can visualize the rich life that has attracted strict slalom buffs, rodeo dogs and creek boaters alike for over a decade now. This training ground is an off-season paradise.

I believe there are two main ingredients to creaking: having your “grade five head on” (your mind is your strongest ally) and skill. My off-season is geared around refining my paddling skills. I train slalom every 2nd day, striving for the ultimate carve and always better lines. Slalom gates simulate any hard move on a steep creek, without the consequences.

While paddling the Kaituna and Wairoa Rivers I worked on improving my boof stroke. I also picked up a hot tip from John Grace and worked on spotting my landings. In addition, I did some cross-training. I paddled a Waka (commonly known as an outrigger) on the lake that feeds the Kaituna, practiced yoga, played touch football, and rode some single track through the redwood forest. Variety is the

spice of life.

So that’s my off season. Now I’m looking forward to big water out West. A philosophy I just recently heard but that I really like says, “Nothing is ever perfect; there is always room for improvement.” Get off the couch, keep fit and strong, and have an awesome creek season.

Ka kite ano – “see you again”.



*Nikki Kelly guiding Tutea Falls on the Kaituna River in New Zealand.*

Photo by [kaitiaki.co.nz](http://kaitiaki.co.nz)

*Itunda Rapid on the White Nile River, Uganda*

Photos by [Alex Nicks](#)



## Big Smiles, Big Waves and (uuugh!) Tiny Insects: An off-season in Uganda

By Tanya Shuman

I watched intently, my eyes glued as he began removing the tiny infesting organism from his foot. He explained in detail that this “jigger” was a female flea that had burrowed into a tiny crack in his foot. She had been looking for a safe place with a good source of nutrition to lay her eggs. Rob’s toe was ideal so she had made herself comfortable and was now sucking his blood. He had been irresponsible for several days, busy ignoring the problem. The creature had grown and was now 10 times its normal size and filled with eggs about the size of a pea.

I took a closer examination and only saw a black dot. “Doesn’t look too bad,” I said.

“Yeah, not too bad, she hasn’t burst yet... releasing all her eggs. It just itches like heck,” he explained.

This was utterly disgusting, but I kept on watching in amazement. He had already soaked his foot for 15 minutes and with a sharp knife was beginning to dig a circle around the black dot. Rob described to me that this was imperative in order to capture all her laid eggs. “See, take a look at this,” he said as he rose to show me the white mushy globs on his knife. “Those are the eggs.”



Nikki Kelly



Tanya Shuman

“Holy smokes,” I thought, “this is getting grosser by the moment.” However, I continued to stare attentively at his foot. Within a few minutes he had gotten to the base of her tail and, by applying the tweezers, slowly removed the sliver-thin 1/4 inch “jigger.” In the process, Rob left a perfectly round crater in his foot.

“All done,” he exclaimed with a smile as he wrapped the wound for protection.

This is one of the many unexpected and unreal moments captured forever in my memory about my trip to Africa for the month of December. I spent three weeks on the Nile River in Uganda. For most of the time I based out of an island called the Hairy Lemon, which in the Webster Kayaker’s

Dictionary means ultimate paradise.

The island is based between two world-class waves, the Nile Special and Malalu. The biggest decision of the day was choosing between these two amazing waves. Sometimes it came down to deciding if my body could even make it through another day of all-out paddling. Almost always I embraced the call of the waves and dragged my aching body out to be rejuvenated by the sheer joy of this experience. Often I chose the Nile Special as the morning wake up call and Malalu as the evening sunset paddle. The river levels were ideal.

I came to Uganda with no expectations except to focus on training for the World Championships in 2005. What I got in



Tanya Shuman going for big air

Photo by Marlow Long

# Field Notes Off-Season

return is hard to articulate. Each day my body and mind were tested as I kayaked and pushed myself to new limits. I challenged myself to learn new tricks and perfect old ones.

During my stay I was fortunate to paddle with some of the best kayakers in the world: Marlow Long, Rush Sturges, Tyler Brandt, Shane Benedict, Whitney Longsdale, and Laura Nash. It was sure a pleasure and privilege to paddle with them. At times when I thought I couldn't go any further, a nod or reassuring comment from a fellow kayaker would help me to direct my focus back on my game. In my experience the sense of camaraderie has been a major part of the kayaking community.

Without question, Africa is an amazing country rich in wildlife, culture, history, and people. Uganda provides an outside hands-on school complete with biology, zoology, international relations and human ingenuity. Everyday something bizarre and extraordinary would take place; I saw a


pig slaughtered for dinner, studied the architecture of a termite mound, and witnessed the peculiar characteristics of a queen termite. Many times I caught myself thinking, "Is this real or am I playing a part out of a National Geographic Special on Television?"

When I think of the African people, the children stick out in my mind. They simply are beautiful and are always beaming with joy and excitement. "Jambo! Jambo! Mzungu!" ("Hello, Hello, White People!") sang the children as they raced out of their mud huts, waving their hands to greet us. I have traveled extensively, but I have never encountered more embracing smiles in my life.



*Bird's eye view of Itunda Rapid on the White Nile*

Photo by Alex Nicks

As I turned around, I saw my friends with smiles almost as big replying back, "Jambo! Jambo!" I smile to myself and realize that kayaking has given me the opportunity to see many beautiful places and a connection with people who seem to engage life with such passion and virtue. 

*Marlow Long clean blunting on the Nile Special Wave*


Photo by Tanya Shuman





# AW News & Notes Journal Archives

## Journal Archives Recognized

Washington D.C. – The Washington Post, one of the nation's leading newspapers recognized American Whitewater's new online Journal archives. In his January 16th column, The Outside Line, Post writer, John Mullen calls the archives "a huge treasure, one you don't have to give back." Mullen came upon the archives during a random web search and was amazed by the depth and breadth of the material available for free to anyone with an Internet connection. The glowing praise is hardly surprising to anyone who's delved into this online world of history. As Mullen concludes, "You can spend hours in the archive and come out without having begun to skim what's available." See it for yourself at: [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org). 



## AW News

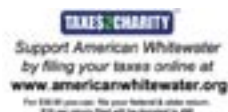


We Love Taxes! That's the new motto around American Whitewater these days. AW has partnered with Frontier Tax Solutions and will be offering their Taxes2Charity program to the AW community for the 2005 tax season.

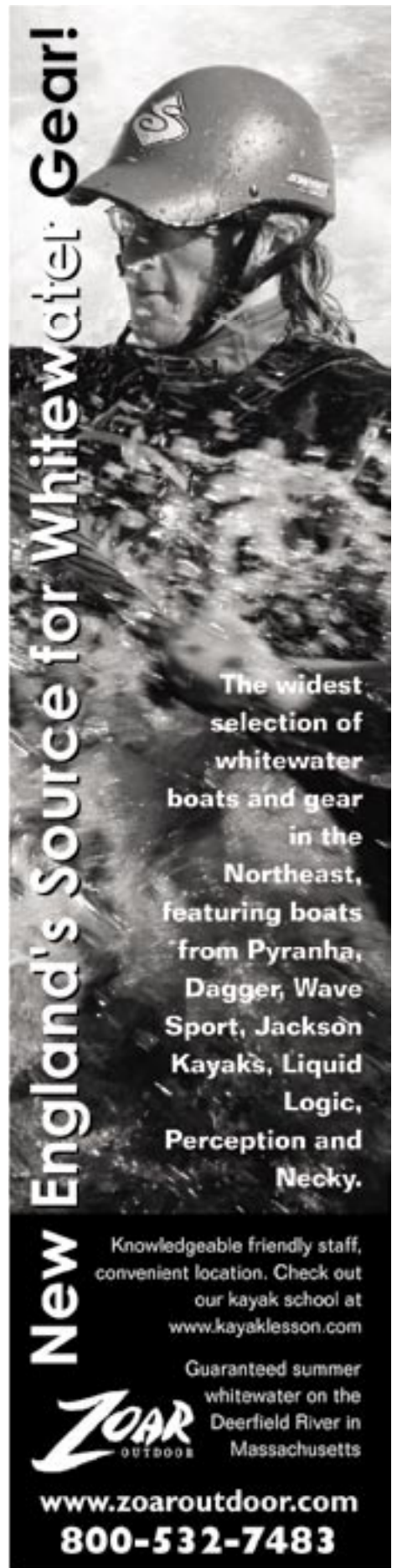
Taxes2Charity works by allowing any individual to prepare and

file their federal and state tax returns online at the American Whitewater website (<http://www.americanwhitewater.org>) for just \$39.95. Ten dollars of each return filed will be donated back to AW.

*Look for the 'Taxes2Charity' link on our website for additional information.*



New England's Source for Whitewater Gear!



The widest selection of whitewater boats and gear in the Northeast, featuring boats from Pyranha, Dagger, Wave Sport, Jackson Kayaks, Liquid Logic, Perception and Necky.

Knowledgeable friendly staff, convenient location. Check out our kayak school at [www.kayaklesson.com](http://www.kayaklesson.com)

Guaranteed summer whitewater on the Deerfield River in Massachusetts



[www.zoaroutdoor.com](http://www.zoaroutdoor.com)  
800-532-7483

# AW News & Notes

## Happenings

### National Paddling Film Fest Goes on the Road


Kalispell, MT – Now whitewater enthusiasts from the Northern Rockies will have an opportunity to catch the exciting action of the best American whitewater films—even if they can't make it to Lexington, Kentucky. The National Paddling Film Festival (NPF), a production of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association, and the premier paddlesports film contest in the U.S., is going on the road! If you are from Western Montana, or have the means to get there, be sure to check out the NPF road show, April 6th, 2005 from 7-10 p.m. at the Flathead High School Auditorium. The event will showcase the best of the best from the NPF, including paddlesports film, video and digital imaging. The road show is sponsored by Silver Moon Kayak

Company and a portion of the proceeds go to American Whitewater. Don't miss out on this exciting evening of entertainment, prizes (win a kayak!), and support for a great cause.

For more information call (406) 752-3794 or visit: <http://www.silvermoonkayak.com/events.html>.

### Wenatchee River Festival

Cashmere, WA – The first annual Wenatchee River Festival will be held June 11th and 12th, 2005 a mere paddlestroke from Leavenworth, WA, the tackily distinctive Bavarian-themed town. Be sure to check out this stop on American Whitewater's Member Appreciation Tour! The festival site is at the take-out for the popular play run on the Wenatchee River

in Cashmere, WA. Festival events will include: rafting events, kayak races, clinics, food, music and much more. Whitewater opportunities extend beyond Cashmere, and include Icicle Creek, Peshastin Creek, the Chiwawa and the Little Wenatchee, ranging from class II to V+. The festival is sponsored by the Washington Kayak Club, with help from other regional paddling clubs. So get out of your boat long enough to raise funds to improve the conservation, restoration, access and safe enjoyment of whitewater rivers in the Pacific Northwest. 

For more information, contact: Jennie Goldberg 206.933.1178, [festival@wenatcheeriver.com](mailto:festival@wenatcheeriver.com), or visit: [www.wenatcheeriver.com](http://www.wenatcheeriver.com).



8th Annual French Broad River Festival May 6-8, 2005

Hot Springs Spa and Campground - Hot Springs, North Carolina  
Only Moments North of Asheville

Come spend Mother's Day weekend with Family and Friends listening to the Sounds of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Big City Sunrise, and other great regional music. You can also shop for New Outdoor Gear at the Silent Auction or wish one of our many Vendors or Watch and or Participate in either the Kayak Rolling Rodeo, the Mass Start Bicycle Race, or the French Broad River Raft Race.

Admission to the Festival is \$50. This includes: Camping, Music, Registration Fees For Whitewater Events (if you have your own Boat), one Raffle Ticket, and Good Times. If You don't have Your Own Boat, but would like to be in the Raft Race, a limited number of Tickets are available for \$75. These include a Spot in a Raft for the Raft Race with a Guide, plus Everything the \$50 Ticket Offers. Ticket Orders Placed before March 30, 2005 will receive a Free T-Shirt upon arrival at the Festival.

[www.frenchbroadriverfestival.com](http://www.frenchbroadriverfestival.com)



Jay Kincaid, World Champion Reno-Tahoe

reno  
RIVERFESTIVAL

May 12-15, 2005

Don't miss the second coming of America's premier whitewater festival – The Reno River Festival – May 12 – 15, 2005 in the heart of downtown Reno at the Truckee River Whitewater Park.

Jay Kincaid and Brook Winger, the 2004 reigning champions will return to strut their stuff along with top pros competing in the Invitational Rodeo. And if you are aspiring to become a whitewater champion yourself we have the Open Rodeo where all podium winners will advance to the Invitational Rodeo and compete with the **best of the best.**

- INTERNATIONAL RODEO
- OPEN RODEO - \$30 ENTRY FEE
- INSTRUCTIONAL CLINICS WITH THE PROS
- FOOD & BEER GARDEN
- LIVE "PLAY BY PLAY" ANNOUNCERS, DJ's & MUSIC
- INDUSTRY EXPO & PRODUCT DEMOS

For event details and hotel accommodations  
1-800-FOR RENO  
[www.RenoRiverFestival.com](http://www.RenoRiverFestival.com)

*Reno-Tahoe*  
AMERICA'S ADVENTURE PLACE  
1-800-FOR-RENO  
[VisitRenoTahoe.com](http://VisitRenoTahoe.com)



100% pure adrenaline.

# Conservation Going Green

by Mefford Williams



## Begins With You

Here are the first words of the movement going new school:

As far as eastern religions go, Jainism has not quite accomplished the worldwide familiarity of Buddhism, but parallels the teachings of the Buddha in origin and as a reaction to Hinduism. Jainism embraces all aspects of nature as possessing a spirit: all creatures great and small, even the life of flowers and seeds. As humans, our cognizance separates us and burdens our lives: with the ability of abstract perception we are responsible for limiting the inevitable suffering of all fellow earthly inhabitants. The penultimate reach of a Jainist can be to starve: naked and un-bathed (think of all the little creatures murdered by bathing) in full custodial commitment.

Now this may seem pretty far out there, especially for a whitewater magazine,

but Jainism can send a perfectly clear message about responsibility. As lovers of and indulgers in the beauty of the river environment, we should be assuming an inherent responsibility. The new school frame of reference is about environmental protection and a custodial attitude towards our beloved rivers getting just as much attention as conservation and access.

As a springboard for our ideas: [lvmenvironmental.blogspot.com](http://lvmenvironmental.blogspot.com) is first on the scene: an easily accessible medium, drafting concepts for later magazine or video publication. Our goals are not to rant and rave, adopting the pedantic environmental activist attitude of shaming and blaming, but to provide the information and resources allowing the kayaking community to act as front-runners in an ever growing green movement.

So after that brief introduction, like it or not—straight to your face—our first big issue: PVC foam. PVC is short for polyvinyl chloride: the cheapest, most disposable, low-grade polymer, which nearly all of us have strapped to our backs on every kayaking venture. For approximately fifteen years, PVC has been used in personal flotation devices (PFD's) because of the malleable, gooey-soft quality of this buoyant foam, which makes for ideal flotation on our kayaking torsos. There are some major issues with PVC however: First of all, the manufacturing process involves the use of heavy metals,

chlorine, and the formation of dioxins and other persistent organic pollutants. When the foam decomposes these same toxic additives leach out, and their presence within the plastic foam prevents it from being recyclable.

Individuals exposed during production or to production effluents in the air and water surrounding vinyl chloride plants have increased risk of cancer, birth defects in their children, and a laundry list of other health hazards. Although effluent from the plants is regulated by state and federal standards that does not mean harmful effects are eliminated, especially from the air and waterways surrounding the plants. Here is our connection as boaters and our opportunity to make an impact: toxic effluent in our rivers, their products strapped to our backs.

Currently, one company in the whitewater industry is actively leading the way, pursuing and producing an alternative; without naming names that means everyone else is using PVC. The boys and girls at Astral Buoyancy Company are utilizing polyethylene foam and kapok fibers to manufacture their more environmentally conscious PFD's. Polyethylene foam is more durable and produces the same buoyancy as PVC with half the product. In addition, it lacks all the nasty production drawbacks of its counterpart. Polyethylene is stiffer and more difficult to manage, however, creating design and comfort issues. According to Astral head honcho Philip Curry, "The well documented environmental negatives of PVC far outweigh the difficulties inherent in using polyethylene." Polyethylene is not perfect, but is much less harmful and is a step in the right direction. Astral's other ingredient, kapok, is a natural fiber harvested from the seeds of the tropical kapok tree; the tapered-shape of the fibers




*Philip Curry playing in the Kaypok. Kaypok is naturally occurring seed fiber from the rain-forest and was used in most marine life preservers up through the late 1980s.*

Photo by Mefford Williams

*Tagged and Bagged. Polyethylene scraps from the Astral shaping floor headed to the Recycler. Polyethylene is a #2 recyclable polymer, ready to see a new life and not a new landfill.*

Photo by Mefford Williams

carry seeds in the tropical winds and will help float your body on the river. In all new models for 2005, Astral Buoyancy will have phased-out the use of PVC entirely with a great reduction of PVC use in older models as well.

Although the kayaking community is not going to make a huge impression on the multi-billion dollar plastics industry, we can certainly send a clear message to all our PFD manufacturers: with an alternative readily available and plenty of negative evidence against PVC, we want something different, we want a better product—no more PVC on the river. 

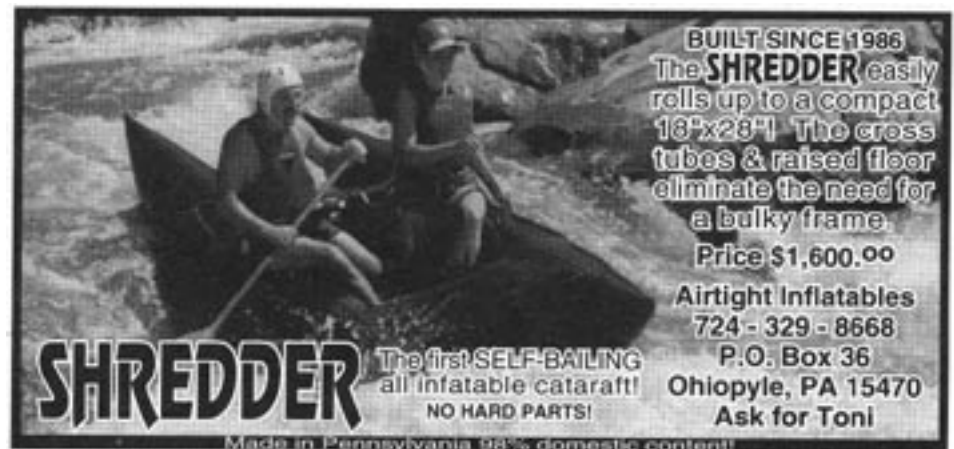
For more information (including references), visit: <http://lvmenvironmental.blogspot.com/2005/02/pvc-article-for-american-whitewater.html>.




**STAHL SAC**  
You and Your Gear Go Everywhere!

Stahlsac Bags Get You and Your Gear From There to Here!

For Stahlsac "Steel Bags" Call: 1-800-521-2247  
[www.stahlsac.com](http://www.stahlsac.com)



**BUILT SINCE 1986**  
The **SHREDDER** easily rolls up to a compact 18"x28"! The cross tubes & raised floor eliminate the need for a bulky frame.  
Price \$1,600.00  
Airtight Inflatables  
724 - 329 - 8668  
P.O. Box 36  
Hiopyle, PA 15470  
Ask for Toni

**SHREDDER** The first SELF-BAILING all inflatable cataract! NO HARD PARTS!

Made in Pennsylvania 88% domestic content!

# Conservation & Access

## Pittston Farm & Canada Falls



### A Step Back in Time

by Tom Christopher, AW Board Member

The decision to embrace whitewater boating as a lifestyle is hardly a conscious one, but something that creeps silently into one's subconscious until suddenly, it's just there. It is difficult to tell exactly how this happens—for some it may be their first rafting trip and for others it may be the siren's lure of challenges to be overcome. However, the overwhelming adrenaline rush you get after a difficult steep creek is just as important as, and no less significant than, the calm feeling of being one with the water. The silent gracefulness of a paddler who slips quietly into the current and heads downstream is a scene that each of us understands and loves.

As the years pass we travel to different rivers, building our skills and meeting new friends, to share a lifestyle and a bond with the places we come to love. Like the birds of the sky and the creatures of the wild, each year we form migratory patterns as we travel from river to river, returning to those places that we love, those rivers where we join friends that

we have not seen for the long, cold winter months. Always, each of us has a "special place" which, for whatever reason, touches our hearts and minds more than any other.

For many of us who make our annual pilgrimage to the "Great North Woods" of Maine, that is a place called Pittston Farm. At the fork of the North and South Branches of the West Branch of the Penobscot River lies Pittston Farm, the takeout for what is now called the "Canada Falls" section of the Penobscot. The farm actually began sometime between 1850 and 1879 and changed ownership many times until it was purchased by the Great Northern Paper Company in 1906. Originally hunters and fishermen on their way to Canada could stop by the farm to purchase food and supplies from the various owners. After the Great Northern purchase, the farm was expanded and improved over the

*Whitewater release from Canada Falls Dam for American Whitewater's Controlled Flow Whitewater Study on the South Branch of the Penobscot River in May 2002.*

Photo by John Gangemi

course of the next eight years, growing to over 100 acres.

The farm was the mainstay of Great Northern's timber operations, which in its heyday had 4,500 employees working to cut timber. The operation was actually larger than many small towns, with its barns for over 100 horses that also held almost 300 tons of hay as fodder for the winter months. In addition there was a blacksmith shop, pump house, ice house, and store house that held over 6,000 bushels of grain. A "frost-proof" potato house kept 6,750 bushels of vegetables, primarily of the root varieties. In 1912 a new boarding house was built that could sleep 40 men on the second floor, and its large kitchen could serve over 50 people in its dining room. The third floor would serve as a hospital with 30 beds and a full-time nurse in attendance. One can only imagine the seriousness of the injuries woodsmen would suffer under the

yoke of the axe and saw. The farm had its own baseball team, telephones, and even generated its own electricity.

Pittston Farm remained a center of activity until 1971 when the end of log drives signaled the demise of its usefulness. Over the years buildings were torn down and the farm fell into the inevitable stages of disrepair that time and weather ravage on old buildings. In 1992 the property was purchased by Ken and Sonja Twitchell and the restoration process began. Today Pittston Farm is open to the public and is now home to an inn with accommodations for 60 guests, a restaurant, sporting camps, and a campground that spreads out onto the floodplain between the North & South Branches of the Penobscot. Homespun hospitality greets visitors and the dining room provides "all-you-can-eat," three meals a day with a "lumberjack-style buffet."

This was the scene that greeted AW staff and volunteers in May 2002 as they assembled to conduct boating flow studies on the Canada Falls and Seboomook sections of the Penobscot River. FERC had ruled that the storage projects of Canada Falls and Seboomook Lakes, along with several others, were jurisdictional and had to be licensed. The generating facilities had been purchased from the Great Northern Paper Company by Great Lakes Hydro America (GLHA), a subsidiary of Brascan, Inc., a Canadian holding company.

Gathered here were boaters, Maine DIF&W fisheries biologists, company officials, representatives of the Penobscot Nation and the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and consultants for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Three days of flow studies had been scheduled and Pittston Farm and the Twitchell's hospitality were the base of operations. GLHA arranged for shuttle vehicles and for the next three days boaters were able to paddle a range of flow regimes and complete survey questions to quantify what would best fit paddlers' flow needs and would not conflict with the interests of other stakeholders. The result was an exhausting paddling experience that developed a variable framework that would provide safe paddling for boaters of varying skills levels.

At the end of each day boaters would shuttle back to Pittston Farm for a supper banquet. We would then participate in focus groups conducted by John Gangemi to discuss points of view on the day's runs. The dining hall was warm and friendly, with fires glowing in the fireplaces, and as the evening wore on boaters would look at the memorabilia the Twitchells had collected. One early "lumber days" menu boasted a full-breakfast for 12 cents. The atmosphere was heavy with comfort, conviviality, and thoughts of days gone by. It was a special place.

*Boaters on the Canada Falls reach of the South Branch Penobscot River in May 2002 for American Whitewater's Controlled Flow Whitewater Study.*

Photo by John Gangemi



It was over a year before stakeholders finally came to an agreement that everyone could live with. For boaters the agreement contained all of the elements that reflected the best of what we had negotiated. It provided for flows at Canada Falls every Saturday from the 4th of July weekend until the 2nd weekend in September. The "Settlement Agreement" also provided a change in the minimum flow on the Seboomook section, increasing it to 500 cfs, thereby providing boatable flows twenty-four hours a day. But this journey did not end with the signing of the settlement agreement.

The Environmental Protection Agency ruled that a "Use Attainability Analysis" (UAA) needed to be completed before the State of Maine could issue a "401 Water Quality Certificate." When this was completed, then the license application would be complete and ready for FERC review. This was the first time in history stakeholders faced a UAA as an additional roadblock to negotiating settlement agreements in the relicensing process. And there was one other problem....a big problem. In the deed from the Great Northern

## Whitewater Challengers

New York's #1 Dealer  
in Kayaks, Canoes  
and Gear!

Pyranha  
Wavesport  
Jackson Kayaks  
Prijon

**We're so  
close to the  
Moose River,  
we consider  
it family!!**

Route 28  
Old Forge, NY 13420  
wcmoose@capital.net  
315-369-6699



# Conservation & Access Pittston Farm & Canada Falls

Paper Company to GLHA, all riparian lands were transferred to another entity called "Northwoods Associates," comprised of Somerset Woodlands, Merriweather LLC, and other timber management combines that were the current rulers and managers of timber activities and access throughout the region. The caveat being that "if the 200-foot strips were required in the FERC license as riparian buffer zones, they would have to be returned to GLHA at no cost," and GLHA only had until January 1, 2005 to receive their license or the buffer zones would be lost.

Since 200-foot buffers had been negotiated as part of the "Settlement Agreement," and given the complexity of adding a UAA proceeding and the "401 Water Quality Certificate" in mid-November to the equation, the process was simply going to run out of time. Even under the best of conditions FERC would not get all the information until early December, and there were no illusions about how long it would take to get a license from FERC. History and time were not on our side.

On the morning of December 24th 2004, notice was served that FERC had issued the operating license to GLHA for Canada Falls, Seboomook, and the rest of the impoundments included in the "Settlement Agreement." Merry Christmas!! Now miles of additional buffer zone protection would be part of the final package. The impossible had happened, and better yet, the FERC license reflected every single benefit that AW and New England FLOW had negotiated. It was another major victory in New England for whitewater boaters, and better yet, it would introduce an entirely new generation of paddlers to a very special place called Pittston Farm.

Thinking back, I wonder about what makes Pittston Farm, Canada Falls, and Seboomook so unique and special. I think it is a nostalgic step back in time to a period when, in spite of great hardships and the dogged weariness of early timbering, people survived. In our electronic televised fast-paced world that we think is stressful, one can only guess at what it took to survive in the cold, bleak Northwood's winters at Pittston Farm. Yet, as you walk the grounds and through the restored buildings there is a sense of vitality, of life and an indomitable spirit that will always exist in this place.

In this place of moose and bear, the lower barn at Pittston Farm still houses giant Percheron horses, the working breed that ploughed the fields before tractors. The middle barn today has gentle and always curious llamas to entertain visitors throughout the year, and of course this scene would not be complete without goats, and there are many. During the boating flow studies a new "kid" was born and Mrs. Twitchell spent a cold night in the barn to help the nanny that was having a "real hard time." The newborn was wrapped in a blanket and brought up to the kitchen before daybreak and placed in a wicker basket next to the wood stove to keep it warm while Mrs. Twitchell fed it with a baby bottle. This special place is a step back in time and one that piques the imagination to wonder what life must have been like during its earlier days. Pittston Farm is real—an honest place, with a spirit of hard work and achievement, but most important, this "step back in time" gives you a sense of joy.

## Canada Falls / Seboomook Boating Flows - 2005

Canada Falls (South Branch Penobscot):


<u>Weekend</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Flow Level</u>
1	July 2nd	500 cfs
2	July 9th	600 cfs
3	July 16th	600 cfs
4	July 23rd	900 cfs
5	July 30th	600 cfs
6	August 6th	600 cfs
7	August 13th	750 cfs
8	August 20th	600 cfs
9	August 27th	750 cfs
10	September 3rd	750 cfs
11	September 10th	600 cfs

Flows will begin at 10 AM and continue until 3 PM on each release date.

## Seboomook Section (West Branch Penobscot):

Minimum daily flow increased to 500 cfs from July 16 to August 31 twenty-four hours per day. From September 1 to October 14, minimum instream flows will be between 750 and 1250 cfs for fish attraction, angling and recreational boating.

Special "high-water" release—Labor Day Weekend, Saturday, September 3rd from 10 AM to 3 PM, the dam operator will release 1500 cfs from Seboomook Dam.

Flow Information System: From April 1 until October 15 of each year, the dam operator will report daily on the Internet and on a toll free phone number the current and predicted flows for the upcoming three (3) days at the reservoir outlets. This stipulation is to provide information to the public about when flows suitable for boating are available. (Please note that there may be additional non-scheduled boatable flows throughout the season when it is necessary to move water downstream for flood control or generation capacity). 

**Author's Note:** Details about the activities at Pittston Farm were taken from *Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow—A History of Pittston Farm*. Durward J. Ferland Jr., Moosehead Communications, Greenville, Maine. 1995. USBN 1-890454-08-7

*If you want to make reservations at Pittston Farm for whitewater releases this summer you can reach them at (207) 280-0000.*

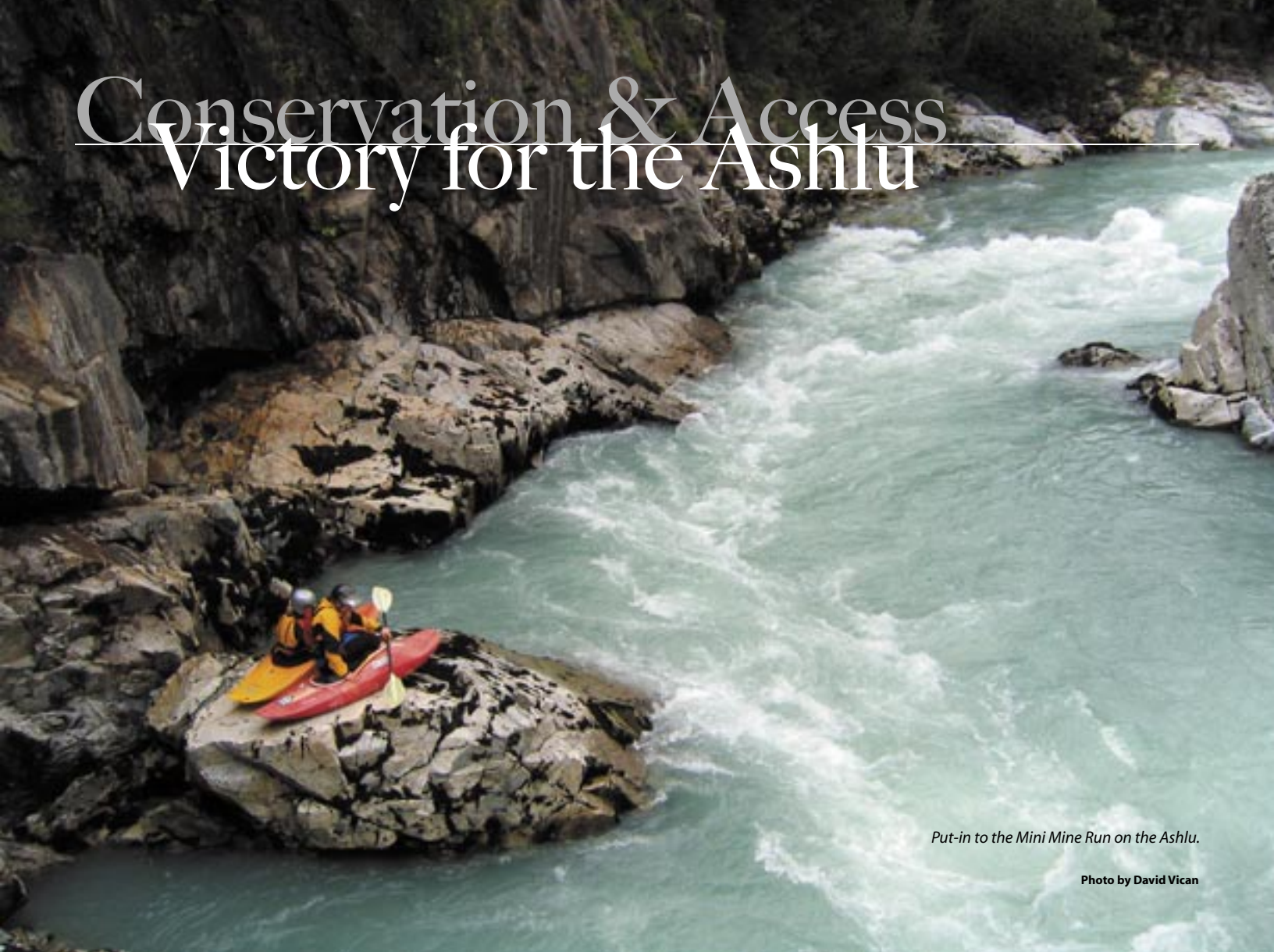
*Pittston Farm marks the take-out for the Canada Falls reach of the South Branch Penobscot River.*

Photo by John Gangemi





# Conservation & Access Victory for the Ashlu



*Put-in to the Mini Mine Run on the Ashlu.*

**Photo by David Vican**

## **Victory for the Ashlu, British Columbia**

*By Tom O'Keefe*


It has been a long process but in January 2005 the Squamish Lilloett Regional District (SLRD) Board issued their decision and denied the re-zoning request required for construction of the proposed Ashlu Hydroelectric Project in Southwest British Columbia. This decision followed a long series of public meetings and emotional testimony. In reaching their decision, the SLRD Board recognized the numerous concerns put forward by those who expressed opposition to the project, noting that the project did not fit with the SLRD's own policies on these projects, due to the lack of community support and other factors.

Several attributes of the Ashlu define it

as one of Southwest British Columbia's signature whitewater runs: easy access, a long season that extends through late summer, distinct sections suited for a range of skill levels from intermediate to expert, stunning scenery and beautiful water, and fantastic well-defined whitewater features. The Ashlu is not the only river in this corridor facing threats. We hope that as a result of this process the need for a comprehensive regional-based planning effort will be realized so that future battles can be avoided.

This victory did not come easily and bridges within the community will need to be mended. In support of the project, members of the Squamish Nation representing native people with a historic interest in the river, made a case for the economic opportunities they felt the project would bring. They noted that recreational use had not brought them any jobs, and kayakers had not sought

their permission for use of the river. As a community we have an obligation to show respect to the local community and those with a historic interest in the river.

Thanks to Stuart Smith of the Whitewater Kayaking Association of British Columbia [Editor's note: for Mr. Smith's reply, please see the Letter to the Editor in this issue] for keeping the community informed and providing local leadership on this issue, and special thanks to AW member Shane Robinson for representing the interests of AW's membership and helping rally folks from the States. Thanks also to those who value the tremendous world-class paddling opportunities in the Sea to Sky corridor and who took the time to write in: you made a difference. 

*More information on Ashlu whitewater opportunities and photos can be found at [Paddleguides.com](http://Paddleguides.com). Past articles covering this issue can be found by searching [americanwhitewater.org](http://americanwhitewater.org).*

# Conservation & Access

## Western Updates

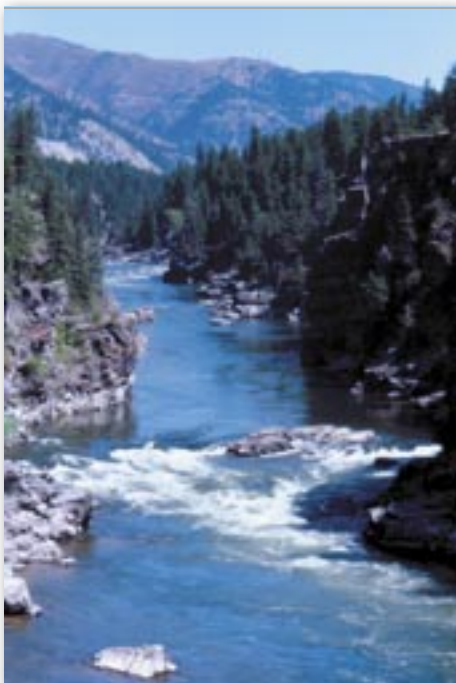
### Whitewater Santa Delivers Alberton Gorge to Western Montana Boaters!

By John Gangemi

Western Montana boaters received an early December Christmas present, making them true believers in the Whitewater Santa. The gift was transferal of 306 acres of river corridor lands along the Clark Fork's seven-mile Alberton Gorge to public ownership. This marked the culmination of a ten-year effort by Santa and his elves to transfer this 306 acre parcel from former Montana Power Co. ownership to the public so it could be protected in perpetuity. In the November/December 2004 American Whitewater, journal staff provided a detailed article explaining American Whitewater's involvement in this transaction dating back to 1998 and the critical role of local boaters in making sure this land was protected. In early December the transfer to public ownership became official.

*Alberton Gorge corridor overlooking Fang rapid on the Clark Fork River, Montana*

Photo by Aaron Berg



*Sandy Beach is a popular put-in location for kayakers on the Alberton Gorge section of the Clark Fork River, Montana.*

Photo by Aaron Berg

### It's Official! Milltown Dam (Montana) Slated For Removal

By John Gangemi

Santa did not stop with the Alberton Gorge Christmas gift for western Montana boaters. He also gave them the EPA's Record of Decision on December 21, 2004 determining that Milltown Dam on the Clark Fork River will be removed. These two river protection and restoration efforts are huge gifts for Missoula, Montana and surrounding communities.

American Whitewater got involved in this dam removal issue when PPL Montana's hydropower project came up for relicensing. Milltown Dam and the reservoir sediments are part of an EPA superfund site. Relicensing of the Milltown Dam has been delayed for the past two years while the EPA and the state of Montana negotiate a consent decree for clean-up of the Clark Fork River and Milltown Dam site. American Whitewater has protested the relicensing delays, claiming that the FERC initiate a decommissioning plan for the dam. American Whitewater believes removal is the solution to the public health issues related to the superfund site. Work at Milltown Reservoir will begin this winter, with removal of the dam as early as January 2006. Then will come the excavation of

2.6 million cubic yards of contaminated reservoir sediments, a two-year job. Within seven years, the cleanup will be complete and the free-flowing confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot rivers - blocked by Milltown Dam since 1908 - will be restored.

### West Rosebud Creek, Montana

By John Gangemi

In December, Ian McIntosh and Ron Ladders attended meetings with PPL Montana, FERC staff and agency staff to review upcoming field studies for 2005 associated with the Mystic Hydropower Project on West Rosebud Creek, Montana. Those studies include an extension of the internet-based whitewater flow study from 2004. This unique approach enables any boater to participate in the whitewater flow study for this hydropower project. The survey questions and information about the whitewater flow study can be viewed online at [www.mysticlakeproject.com/](http://www.mysticlakeproject.com/). If you are planning to be in southeast Montana this summer (July) then check the flow information (available on the same website) for West Rosebud to see if it is in a boatable range. Your input via the survey will greatly assist us in the relicensing process. For more information about the whitewater opportunities on West Rosebud see the streamkeeper page, [www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1020/](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1020/).

### Nooksack Falls, Washington

By John Gangemi

The Nooksack Falls Hydropower Project appeared on American Whitewater's Top River Issues for 2004. The owner operates the project without a FERC hydropower license. In October 2004 the FERC determined the project did not need a FERC license. This October's decision reverses the FERC March 2004 ruling which determined licensing was required

*continued on page 57*

# Paddle the way you want

It's your right



*"The new blade shapes were awesome, plenty of power to make thousands of moves on that run, light enough to carry over 12,000 foot peaks, and in 6,400 feet of gradient, no one as much as cracked a blade....highly unusual with our crew.*

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

*- Tommy Hilleke, LVM - 7 Rivers Expedition*

## Powerhouse

Neutral Bent Shaft - Glass



## Sho-Gun

Neutral Bent Shaft - Carbon



Features like our Neutral Bent Shaft in Carbon or Fiberglass, in either Small or Standard diameter are a few of the ways you can find the fit, performance, and comfort you deserve.



Nikki Kelly

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



# WERNER

FOR MORE DETAILS

[WWW.WERNERPADDLES.COM](http://WWW.WERNERPADDLES.COM)

800-275-3311

# Saving the Magpie

By James McBeath

---

*Top: Team celebrates one final amazing day as they sit with the endangered Magpie Falls as a back drop.*

*Below: Tyler Curtis and Dale Monkman run some of the Magpie's fun rapids!*

*Right page: Put-in at Magpie Lake...nothing less than spectacular.*

**Photos by Lisa Utronki**



The phone rang on an early August afternoon. It was a rather distraught Eric Hertz.

Before we even had a chance for hellos, I heard him say, “They’re going to dam the Magpie!”

Eric and his company, Earth River ([www.earthriver.com](http://www.earthriver.com)), have long been running the Magpie with their high-end clientele. Eric has also partnered with Robert Kennedy Jr. on a number of occasions to foster the awareness and legislation to protect some of the world’s most spectacular whitewater rivers. The Magpie is their latest challenge, and one they seemed to be taking seriously. Indeed,

as soon as Eric heard of the dam plans, he ran a Magpie trip with Kennedy and leaders from many eco-organizations. To the dismay of dam planners, his trip made front-page fodder across North America.

The mysterious Magpie River was suddenly beginning to catch my attention. Why such a big fuss? Truth be told, Eric only runs the elite rivers of the world like the Futaleufu, Yangtze, Umpqua, and Colca. I didn’t think the Magpie was even on the radar with these...or was it? It had always been a mystery to me that Eric ran such a little-known river—one I never took the opportunity to investigate. But, the rivers Eric had picked up the gauntlet on before were all well-known whitewater gems like the Bio Bio, and Futaleufu, so I decided to trust his judgement.

“How can I help?” I asked.

“Do you think you can get some good names onto the Magpie... say, in a month from now?” he asked. “We’ll pay for the flights and food.” Sooo, free food, flights—I’m in!

The Magpie River sits near Sept Îles and just North of the town of Havre St Pierre, Quebec, Canada. It runs from James Bay to the St Lawrence where it empties out after hundreds of miles of cascading whitewater. There are two main sections split by Magpie Lake, the upper section is a class IV/V+ creek section that is hardly run (if ever), and the lower section is a 55-mile stretch of class II to V whitewater. It’s this lower section I was tasked to run with a group of paddling greats.

The area in this part of Quebec boasts of some of the most scenic driving, incredible whale watching and some of the nicest folk around. Its business culture is driven by your standard fare of fishing, logging, tourism, mining and, unfortunately damming. Where many are blaming the local towns on this rampant development, it’s simply their business environment. They know of no other alternatives; revenue is not easy to find. No, the real blame goes to the current hydro policies set up between the governments and hydropower’s biggest player, Hydro Quebec.





# Saving the Magpie

*This portion of Northern Quebec boasts of one of North America's greatest watersheds running through spruce forest and boglands.*

Photos by Lisa Utronki

---

Quebec has a unique hydro-electrical market in that, due to mandatory demonopolization actions, Hydro Quebec must purchase the first 25 years of hydro power from any private dam on any Quebec waters. This policy is the equivalent of guaranteeing 25 years of business for any hydro producer who has the startup money. Needless to say, the chase is on and, depending on which government is in power, rivers are either up for sale or taken off the market. Five years ago, for example, 32 rivers were open for bids from private dam companies, today there are none... but there are loopholes to crawl through. The Magpie, for instance, has an existing structure on the river and is therefore deemed outside of the current government's moratorium on private dams. Hydromega, a dam producer partnered with a local municipality group, has jumped through this loophole and has dam projects slated to begin as early as January 2005. It was only when they launched a bid and publicly entered the approval process that the projects came to light.

With some funding from Liquid Skills, Earth River and Riot Kayaks, the Magpie expedition was a go. We immediately found out that Steve Fisher, Brendan Mark and Tyler Curtis were in. Pretty soon word of the trip spread and the phone was ringing every hour. World champions, national champions, local Quebec paddling dignitaries and international paddling stars all climbed aboard the Liquid Skills bus in Ottawa and Montreal for the long drive to the Magpie. Our job: head to the Magpie, run her waters and let our voices be heard with a carefully planned press conference afterwards in Montreal.

The bus trip was an overnight, non-stop trip through the winding foothills of Quebec. We followed the St. Lawrence from Montreal up to Sept Illes. After the first 3 hours of the 14-hour drive, we started counting the dams. The highway that leads to Havre Ste Pierre had well over fifty rivers crossing its path, dumping into the St Lawrence. Many of these rivers bore some sort of structure, be it a dam, weir or fish ladder. We were amazed that so many potentially classic runs were already dammed and blocked from passage. When

we pulled out a map to look closer at this watershed, we decided then and there that this province was paddling paradise lost.

As it happened, our arrival in the Magpie region was marked by a 58-foot waterfall on the Riviere des Rochers. When the boys saw it spilling under the highway, there was a collective shout of “stop!”. To my amazement, instead of running back to take a closer look at the falls, they all went directly to the trailer and started pulling out the boats. I was content with eating my share of wild blueberries while the experts hucked the roadside falls. It made me wonder if we would be able to keep them occupied on the Magpie.

Every one of us pitched in as we prepped for the flight into the river. The vehicle of choice was the Beaver floatplane. Two of these classics were waiting for us at a bog lake in Havre St. Pierre. We shuttled all paddlers and gear up to Magpie Lake with four flights in each plane. The planes were flying from the break of dawn until a bit after noon.

The flight was eye opening in a number of ways. The bog and rolling spruce forest landscape was veined with rivers

and pocketed with lakes. This confirmed our earlier suspicions of the vastness of this area’s watershed. There was, quite simply put, more water than land. Sadly, we knew from our drive, many of these rivers, especially to the south, ended in some form of manmade structure. Another sad note was the amount of clear cutting being done. Many pockets of spruce trees were leveled by forestry. Add the famed Spruce Bud Worm damage from the 70s and 80s and there is quite a bit of forest devastation.

By the time the last group arrived we had the trip ready to go. With a final stretch, a photo session and a quiet moment, the trip began with a classic Steve Fisher question, “I wonder what all the rich people are doing right now?”

Day one on the river settled our nerves and brought the familiar sound of boats cutting the water, river talk and the squeak of oars. Just around the corner from our setup beach the water started moving; we settled into a current that wouldn’t let up for days. At this point, the river was the perfect class II-III warm-up. None of the rapids were significant. A novice paddler could run any and all sections. As a trip

developer I saw the potential for a great warm-up day where generic skills could be covered with light intermediates. Even more importantly, there was no fear factor for those a bit hesitant... just a gentle float through spruce forests. As one of two intermediate paddlers on the trip, I was happy, but I began to worry about Fisher and the boys. I hoped it would get a bit more exciting for them on day two.

After an afternoon of play and slow, gentle progress through the first few miles of rapids, we stopped at our first camp. It was a beach that provided a perfect casual camp for that perfect casual day. The camping on the Magpie is plentiful. Around most corners there are either sand or rock beaches, tons of driftwood for the perfect fire and a good bit of shelter from the elements should you need it. More surprising to us was the absence of insects. It seems that September is the time to run the Magpie! Many of us slept out in the open air, typically with beers still in hand.

Day two saw an increase in difficulty. Lisa Utronki, our filmmaker, was quite happy as the action started to build. With cameras rolling all through the trip, she, too, was worried that this trip wasn’t going to

[WWW.IMMERSIONRESEARCH.COM](http://WWW.IMMERSIONRESEARCH.COM)



John Grace at Double Porch Falls, zipper Cherry Creek, CA, and Mouth Springs, Royal Gorge, CA — Photos by Sunny Hilder



Immersion research  
Competition LX Dry Top  
Zipperless-Entry Union Suit

**Immersion Research Team**

<input type="checkbox"/> Jimmy Blakeney	<input type="checkbox"/> Yvonton Mehler
<input type="checkbox"/> Spencer Cooke	<input type="checkbox"/> Jesse Murphy
<input type="checkbox"/> Daniel DeLaVergne	<input type="checkbox"/> Mariann Saether
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>John Grace</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Jed Selby
<input type="checkbox"/> Javid Grubbs	<input type="checkbox"/> Andre Spino-Smith
<input type="checkbox"/> Luke Hopkins	<input type="checkbox"/> Kevin Vanette
<input type="checkbox"/> Pat Keller	<input type="checkbox"/> Ken Whiting

INFO@IMMERSIONRESEARCH.COM OR PH: 1-814-443-9180

Check out John Grace's newest film *The Seven Rivers Expedition* presented by Tova and UJM. ([www.7RiversExpedition.com](http://www.7RiversExpedition.com))

# Saving Mag





# the people

Left: Expedition leader, James McBeath follows the impromptu trail through the marsh towards the final camp.

Right: Costa Rican superstar, Jose Rodriquez runs Eternal Falls, a drop slated for flooding by dam projects!

Photos by Lisa Utronki



provide excitement. From here on down, the river often split or narrowed into multilevel drops. The good news for the intermediate paddlers was that there was usually a class III route for them. The good news for the experts was that many of the splits conveniently provided a class IV or V drop. The only two drops without a class III run could be walked in 30 seconds. The entire river to this point was pool drop. The entertainment factor skyrocketed as the experts and creek boats were put to good use. While we intermediate paddlers ran the fun waves and played, the power boaters were setting up throw ropes and cameras on the other side of the river. Double drops were the order of the day in the class IV-V sections. The typical rapid was a single falls with a big burly hole at the bottom. There were a few wrong-way Charlies, but everyone made it out safe. Watching the experts set up and plan their run was a good part of the show. Guys like Steve Fisher, Brendan Mark, Tyler Curtis, the Hitchins boys and our Quebec lads all had a go at most of these rapids. All of them had that burn in their eyes as they scouted and big grins as they popped up at the bottom of the drops. Most importantly they were challenged. With the intermediate boaters happy with the big waves and the fun play and the world champs happy with the falls, I became a bit more at ease.

Camp two was on the rocks of the Magpie. Rain began falling as we slept. The next morning we awoke to dripping skies and soaked gear. It was at this camp I tried trout fishing. I hadn't fished for freshwater trout since my boyhood days at my uncle's

place in Newfoundland. The fishing here was good—a bit too good. Ten minutes in, I had amassed a pile of eight fish. This confirmed that the river was still unspoiled. A warm breakfast later and we were in the water for another classic Magpie day.

Day three saw more of the same as day two. There were classic big drops with fun sneaks for light intermediates. We lined, we carried gear and we enjoyed the scenes the Magpie brought us. It had rapids that combined the Ottawa with the Seven Sisters of the Rouge. The wildlife—including birds, fish, deer, and moose—all seemed to be unaware that humans existed. It was this day I was at my most relaxed and began to really take it all in. It was on day three that I concluded that I was on the trip of a lifetime!

For the rest of the trip I was focused. The focus was the result of my newfound realization and the fact that we were approaching the sections of the river where dam planners envision three major structures, the first of which were to start this January.

After a night of sleeping in still-damp bags, we awoke to one of the most amazing days of paddling I have seen. The sun was hot by 8am, the food was a perfect hash of all our leftovers, the scene was awe-inspiring and the anticipation was high as we were facing the biggest set of drops on the trip. This meant lining rafts, portaging gear and running waterfalls!

Polly Green  
Team Kokatat

GORE-TEX<sup>®</sup> Regee Dry Top

GORE-TEX<sup>®</sup> Wave Dry Top

GORE-TEX<sup>®</sup> Front Entry (GFE) Dry Suit

# Kōkatat

watersports wear

800-225-9749 707-822-7621  
www.kokatat.com email kokatat@kokatat.com  
Please contact us for a free catalog

# M Saving the Magpie

We quickly came to the first falls, Magpie Falls. The river opened wide, dug down deep into Nature's soul and sent forth one of the most magnificent shows of natural might I have ever seen. The Magpie falls are simply spectacular. Even if the deafening roar had been muted, there would still have been that silence amongst us paddlers as we sat in awe on the rocks watching the show. A permanent rainbow arched over the falls; the sheer power was jaw dropping. Most of us seal-launched into the base of the falls and sat amongst the giants as water crashed down around us in a crescendo of God-like fingers. It was hard to pull ourselves away from this scene... the scene of the third planned dam.

After the Magpie falls came one of the trip's many highlights: a runnable, 25-foot waterfall. With a hidden approach and many barely-runnable lines, the experts hit this drop from all angles... highlight reel fodder for sure! The team dubbed this falls

Eternal Falls in hopes that it will remain eternal for future generations to enjoy... not to be flooded by the dam project.

The grand finale was what all the intermediates and experts alike will remember for a good while: a big meaty class IV rapid that saw intermediates and experts running together. With the natural increase in skill level and comfort over the previous three days, the intermediates were ready for a final challenge. This was by far the longest rapid on the river and was highlighted by wave after wave, lots of break and a few moves. It was an amazing ending to the trip of a lifetime. The smiles and the high-fives at the bottom of the run said it all.

So now it was back to reality. This entire last day would be wiped off the map by the planned dams. The first dam would flood the final section as well as much of Eternal Falls. Future dams at Eternal Falls

and Magpie Falls would create a lake over some of the fantastic, diverse whitewater upstream. These dams—even just one—would ruin all of the great final day experiences for future Magpie trips.

As equipment was being loaded I sat listening to Lisa Utronki interview Greg Smith, our "on-loan" guide from Earth River. He said that the Magpie was the rare river that challenges him as a raft guide. It wasn't just the whitewater, he pointed out, but lining rafts, cruising around rocks, and big hydraulics and setting up camps on rocky cliffs.

His words made me realize that with proper leadership, this trip can be a classic for all paddlers. Everyone will come off a Magpie trip challenged, from light intermediates to experts. Even Greg, a guide that has seen Peru, China, Chile, Ecuador and most of the major rivers in Canada and the US, is challenged by the Magpie. It's a quiet,

*continued on page 34*

**We Didn't Realize Races had Speed Limits**

Ask us about the new **Sealed Floor Pocket Rafts** that are **so fast they're banned** by the World Rafting Championships.

**Breakin' the rules** has never been so worthwhile.

**AIRE**

For a free catalog call 800-247-3432, visit 800-Box 186, Wendouville, ID 83680, or log on to [www.aire.com](http://www.aire.com)

# pyranha



since 1971



**S-M** (pre-production guide)

Length 6'7"  
Width 25"  
Volume 46 USGal  
Weight 28.5lbs  
Suggested Range 99-185lbs

**M-L**

Length 6'9"  
Width 26"  
Volume 51 USGal  
Weight 29.5lbs  
Suggested Range 130-265lbs

**...making some noise in 2005**

For more information check out [www.pyranha.com](http://www.pyranha.com)

Pyranha US - 306 Elk Park Drive - Asheville - NC 28804

p: (828) 254 1101 - f: (828) 254 1117 - e: [sales@pyranhaus.com](mailto:sales@pyranhaus.com)

Teva AD  
full page  
color

hardworking type challenge, not the big adrenalin-rush type challenge... though you can find that as well if you want.

I later asked Eric Hertz a question that I should have asked long before he called me: "With the Zambezi, Nile, Umpana, Futaleufu and others under your belt, how does the Magpie stack up?"

"Top five," he answered immediately.

Top five. Here I was setting up trips all over the place, only to find that I have a top five run right here in Canada. The reality of the damming situation hit me like a ton of bricks. The clarity in Eric's plea made complete sense. Water all summer long (spring to winter), continuous pool drop rapids runnable for class II-III paddlers and challenging enough for Steve Fisher and all only a 2 hour flights away from NYC, Ottawa, Boston, and Chicago?

"Holy crap!"  
"Yup."

The 2004 Magpie kayak expedition ended with a press conference back in Montreal. The conference was organized by Fondations Rivieres and was attended by dignitaries from Sierra Club, Greenpeace and other organizations. I think most of us were still in shock. It was surreal to come from such a quiet, pristine environment to Montreal morning traffic, cameras, microphones, busy questions, hidden agendas and politics. We sat in our places,

the lights came on and both Steve Fisher and I spoke about the experience and what we found. When it was over, it was difficult to say whether or not we got our message across. You simply had to be there; you had to have been on the river with us. You can't see the shame in damming the Magpie without actually running the river, carrying the gear over rocks, holding your hands up to the mist at Magpie falls and feeling the surge as you pop through the last big hole on day four. As I looked to those in the audience who hadn't been there and as I spoke to them individually I was at a loss to recognize whether or not they truly understood. Probably not. But it made a good story.

Well the word is out. After the initial trip by Kennedy and the press coverage that followed, and after our trip and subsequent lobbying by Eric Hertz, Kennedy and others, it was left in the hands of the legislatures. The dam producers, Hydromega and those hoping to benefit from the dam were shell shocked by the attention. Hertz with his press savvy, Kennedy and his attention-getting power and our trip of paddling dignitaries all combined to make tensions high. As due process, the BAPE commission of Canada had to do an impact study. They looked at both sides and came back with recommendations—only recommendations—for the government to consider. The BAPE commission obviously heard our cry. Thanks mostly to Eric and groups like Rivieres Fondation, Greenpeace and the Sierra Club, they saw the potential

*continued on page 38*



**KAYAK**  
*The Magpie River*

**LIQUID SKILLS**  
Canada's Premier Kayak School and Paddling Center

**Fly-in Trip**  
**Eat, Sleep, Kayak.**

**liquidskills.com**  
**613.582.3340**

TEVA CENTRE

ER SPREAD

# Long winter?



subscribe to

# **RAPID** MAGAZINE

[www.rapidmag.com](http://www.rapidmag.com)

TRIPLE  
LETTER  
SCORE




# Saving the Magpie

for developing adventure tourism instead of hydropower. They recommended that only one structure be added on to the existing dam. They also recommended steps taken to encourage adventure activity in the area. This, I guess must have been a bit of a blow to the planners. With the initial goals of building multiple hydro sources farther up the river, being limited to one dam is less appealing. But, alas, this was just a recommendation.

Today is January 19th. The first phase was supposed to have started this month. It has not. Instead there is another plan to build a smaller structure on the existing dam. Talks continue. This new plan will reduce the damage significantly, but may still set a precedent that we cannot allow. The saga continues.

The best thing for this river and this area is visitors. We need to show that the region can make money from tourism. If we spend our dollars in hotels and restaurants, the local economy will depend less on the revenues from dams. Run this river, sleep on its banks, keep it safe and clean for others... let your voices be known! Long live a free Magpie.

A documentary film was produced from this trip and will be available at [www.magpierrever.com](http://www.magpierrever.com) starting March of 2005. Proceeds from this DVD will go to Fondations Rivieres, those who keep the fight going for the Magpie and other rivers in Quebec. 

*About the Author: James McBeath is the owner of an adventure specializing web development company, the founder of Kayak Futeleufu and a partner with Liquid Skills.*





If your antics  
on the river  
cause more  
laughs than  
cheers, tell us  
about  
them...



...we'll still  
laugh, but  
you might  
win some free gear for  
your trouble.



**AW** AMERICAN  
WHITEWATER  
The American Whitewater  
River Story and Photo  
Contest



Visit [www.americanwhitewater.org/contest](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/contest) for more details

# Re-discovering **QUEBEC** Whitewater

By Alden Bird and Simon Wiles

**Editor's Note:** Much to our delight, we received two pieces describing the whitewater rivers of Quebec Province in time for our creeking issue. Rather than choose between them, we are offering the thoughts of both authors side by side. While Mr. Bird's comments are an excerpt from his forthcoming guidebook, Mr. Wiles, a local ace in Vermont, is also trying to raise awareness of the abundant creeks and rivers Quebec has to offer.

When Jim Michaud loaned me one of the last known copies of Gilles Fortin's spectacular whitewater guidebook to Quebec, *Guide des Rivieres Sportive au Quebec* (1980), I read it in a daze of pleasure. The next day I laced my car—already a potent mixture of boats and gear—with maps of Quebec and Canadian money. I backed out of the driveway and set off north.

Fortin's old masterpiece (written in French and long out of print) is the only guidebook that Eastern Canada has ever known. While many of Canada's rivers have become world-famous (like the Ottawa and Lachine), there is no current guide for them. So after much exploring, I took it upon myself to write a new guidebook for Eastern Canada and New England, tentatively titled *When the Levee Breaks*. It is due out sometime in the next six months. The book will feature more than 30 rivers in Quebec and Ontario, in addition to many rivers in New England and New York. I only hope my book can pit your reasonable elements against unconquerable passions in such a favorable way as Gilles Fortin's old book once did for me. -AB



## Neilson River

Difficulty: III-V  
Location: Saint Raymond, Quebec  
River Length: 2.5 miles (lower)  
8 miles (upper)  
Shuttle Length: 2.5 miles (lower)  
8 miles (upper)  
Suggested Flow: Low to Medium-High  
(spring, summer)  
Profile: Pool-Drop

### Description:

This is Quebec. For some reason the rivers run all year. Don't ask, just head to the Neilson, the Upper Yough of Quebec. This is the river of choice for the local experts because it has an easy shuttle and many, many quality rapids. You can run it in the spring when it is cranking (30 cms on the take out gauge is considered a good level, 70 is high) or during the summer when it's down at 7 cms and more like a creek. The



Top: Fred Corriel on the Malbaie  
Bottom: Jonny Adler on the Neilson River

Photos by Simon Wiles

upper section of the Neilson is horizonline after horizonline. If you paddle C-1, your not-so-tall kayaking friends will keep asking you, "Dude, what's it look like?" For miles and miles there are good class III and IV drops with a class V or two in there.

When the river winds back to the road, the short class V lower section starts. There are some big drops, so low summer flows are most reasonable. The second drop on the

lower section contains a very dangerous sieve on the right that has threatened the life of at least one boater. More class V drops lead to the bridge at the bottom.

Many years ago the Neilson was threatened by a big hydro project. Fortunately, this never materialized, because it is one of the best rivers in Quebec. -AB

The Nielson section of the Saint Anne River is a great spring run—12 Miles of action packed horizon lines. Our late May visit coincided with high water (30 cms). At this level the run was non-stop, back-to-back rapids for the entire 12 miles. Mostly class IV rapids—many of which led around corners and over blind drops—tested us constantly.

One of the hardest gorge sections boasted six back-to-back drops, all of which sported sizable holes to avoid or punch.

Towards the end of the section, the rapids transformed to pool drop. A fabulous slide rapid was particularly memorable. We took out where the road came close to the river for the first time in 12 miles. We

didn't attempt the final two miles down to the bridge due to high water, but I will be going back when levels drop. The last 2 miles contain exceptionally large falls and slides. -SW

## Sautauriski

Difficulty: IV  
Location: Jacques-Cartier Park  
River Length: 8 miles  
Shuttle Length: 24 miles  
Suggested Flow: Medium-High (spring)  
Profile: Wilderness

The Sautauriski is an excellent class IV wilderness adventure. This is a great river in the spring, or in the summer when the Taureau is too high. The Sautauriski begins with class III drops—long boulder fields that you may or may not be able to scout from the eddies above. Soon the river plunges over three class V drops—the top two have perhaps never been run. After these, the Sautauriski becomes class IV. Several rapids require scouting, but none are overly difficult. This section is like a mini Taureau. The paddle out leads you back into the Jacques-Cartier Park, the

meeting place for many good rivers (and for many good paddlers, too). -AB

After paddling the Nielson, we drove an hour east into the Jacques Cartier National Park. The “Jacque,” a popular rafting and paddling river, with a number of good sections, was running high, but our target was the Sautauriski, a side stream. We camped overnight in the Park, and set our shuttle at the highest take out road. The shuttle for this run is a bit of a monster: out of the park, head north, and then back in on a dirt road. The road is gated until mid May, but luckily had opened the weekend before.

The Sautauriski was recommended by everyone we met at the Nielson, and it didn't disappoint. The rapids were slightly easier than the Nielson, and the river had less volume. A seal launch portage marked the start of the middle portion of the river, which contained non-stop ledge boofing and class IV rapids. The only disappointment was the three miles of shallow flatish water before the take out. -SW

*continued on next page*

**Introducing tributary inflatables**

**A F F O R D A B L E P E R F O R M A N C E !**

**TOMCAT SOLO**

**NEW STRIKE 2**

**NEW 12.0 SF**

**NEW 14.0 SB**

For a free catalog contact **AIRE** at 800.247.3432, P.O. Box 186, Meridian, Idaho 83680 or visit [www.aire.com](http://www.aire.com).



## Lower Cache

Difficulty: IV  
Location: Jacques-Cartier Park  
River Length: 1 mile  
Shuttle Length: 1 mile  
Suggested Flow: Medium (spring, after small rain)  
Profile: Steep Creek

The Cache is a beautiful steep creek that is located on the access road to the famous Jacques-Cartier Park. This is like a river stationed on the only road into West Virginia: the Cache is strategically positioned.

For intermediates the Upper Cache is a long class III section. Just make sure you get out before the lower section begins. The Lower Cache is a mile of slides and falls. You will come to five-foot drop after five-foot drop with countless slides. One class V 25-foot cascade lurks near the top, but other than that the action is small, steep and continuous—everything a steep creek should be. -AB

---

*Ed Clark on the Cache River*  
Photo by Simon Wiles

Daniel DeLoverright

This In-Flight MP3 is brought to you by ShredReady.  
Helmet: Sherlock and its Can-Can Audio Earflaps.

SHREDREADY.COM

Following our run on the Saturiski, we passed over the Cache. The level looked low, but then, how much water do you need to drop falls and slides?

Ed had paddled the Cache before, thankfully, so we knew what we were in for. What I didn't realize was that we were in for such a treat.

The Cache might only be 2 kilometers long, but it is steep—very steep. Spectacular fall followed slide, into more falls, and more slides...for 2 kilometers—with no flat water! As it happened, the level turned out to be just fine.

The main event was a twisting double drop that only Ed managed to nail. Jonny and I tested various lines, fortunately without serious consequences. A series of slides culminating in a great triple slide led to a short 100-meter stretch of scrappy shallow

# Re-discovering **QUEBEC** Whitewater

rapids down to the take out bridge, where Ed and I sunned ourselves, contemplating a great weekend of boating, while Jonny hitched the shuttle. -SW

## Jacques-Cartier

Taureau ("The Bull") section

Difficulty: V  
 Location: Jacques-Cartier Park  
 River Length: 15 miles  
 Shuttle Length: 50 miles  
 Suggested Flow: Low (June – September)  
 Profile: Wilderness

I will never forget the feeling of paddling the Upper Yough the week after I ran the Taureau. Once stiff and biting, the Yough suddenly tasted like club soda. If the Yough is algebra, the Taureau is calculus.

Amazingly, the Taureau runs all summer. A good guess would be that there are 100 rapids on the Taureau, with 18 class Vs and no mandatory portages (although most

portage the waterfall). My group took 5.5 hours, though we portaged only twice and shore-scouted just four rapids.

The Taureau has been compared to Linville Gorge. I have never run Linville, but the Taureau is far and away the most committing river I have done. Paddling deep into the impenetrable Canadian forest is like paddling out into open ocean. The black flies are vicious as vodka. One group hiked out in 2001. They took refuge from the flies by staying under water for 30-second intervals. Fortunately, as long as you are on the water boating, you will not notice the flies.

The Taureau challenges you most in its deepest reaches. The river starts slow—a mile of flatwater, then class II, III and finally class IV before Triple Drop, a notorious class V. Then the Taureau is good for a long time. The rapids are juicy and steep. There are long, complicated ones like Logjam—rapids that you would see

~ The Widest Selection Of ~  
**Whitewater Paddling DVDs**

<b>New Titles</b>	<b>The Classics</b>
One World	Silent Thunder
Twitch V	Fun Forever
Air Force 1	Path of the Paddle

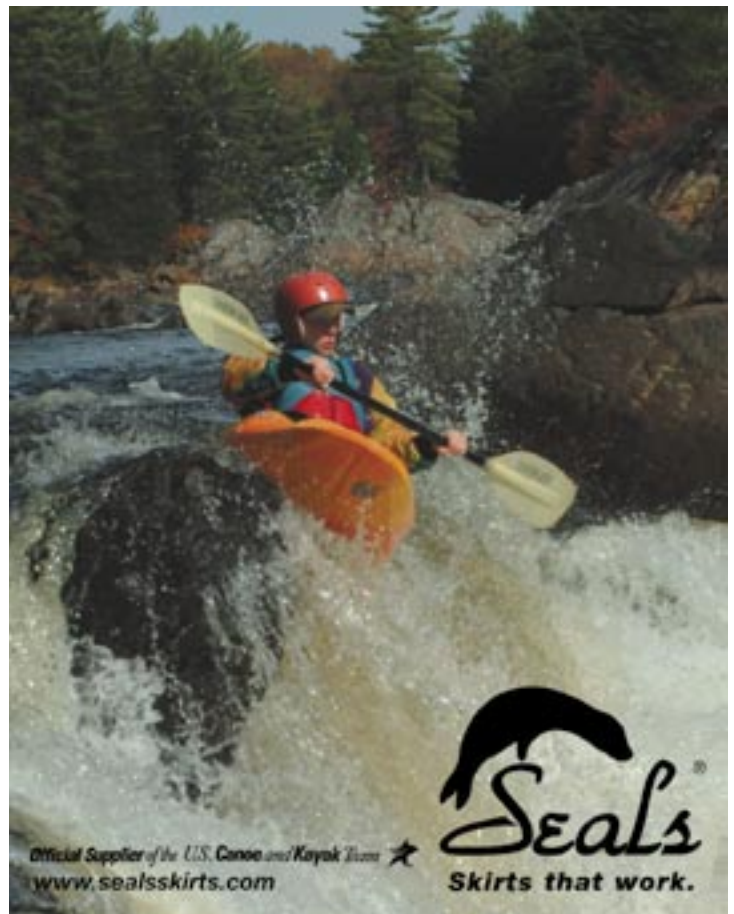
**Instructionals** from E.J., Ken Whiting & Kent Ford  
**WhitewaterVideo.com**

**PADDLESNAKE!**  
**DOUBLE FEATURE!**



Over an hour of DVD quality Southeastern Whitewater  
 See every rapid in Tallulah and the carnage they can cause  
 13 Southeast runs and more

See your local dealer or [WhitewaterVideo.com](http://WhitewaterVideo.com)




Official Supplier of the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Teams  
[www.sealsskirts.com](http://www.sealsskirts.com)  
**Skirts that work.**

# Re-discovering **QUEBEC** Whitewater



Ed Clark on the Cache River  
Photo by Simon Wiles

people walking if they were on the Upper Yough. There are also short rapids with one good move to make, like Razor Rock and Hump and Pump. After what feels like 17 normal Eastern rivers back-to-back, you descend the final class V, Comin' Home, Mohammed. Even if you opt for "The Ladies Tee" route, you are a damn good boater in my book.

After all hell has been reined in, the river snakes through class IV chutes and then class III rapids before the gorge walls push back, revealing beautiful distant vistas on the float down into the Park. Consider it a victory lap. -AB

The Taureau Gorge is where my Quebec class V experience started. This mid-summer run is usually only possible when other sections of the Jacque Cartier are too low. It is rarely too low to run, but groups have, however, found it with too much water.

**KAYAK ECUADOR RAFT**

**SMALL WORLD ADVENTURES**

[www.smallworldadventures.com](http://www.smallworldadventures.com)  
1-800-585-2925

Like the Sautauriski, shuttle is set at the highest road access, known as Camp 4. Then it's a 2-hour drive back out of the park, north, then back in on dirt roads. A shuttle bunny would be handy, just make sure they park at the right take out.

The World Whitewater guidebook describes the Taureau as "a hair run, one of the most difficult stretches of river on the East continent." Many groups have run this as a two day trip, but an early start, and a fast group should ensure that you don't run out of daylight. Also the Mosquitos are really bad. I wouldn't want to spend the night on the riverbank.

While the Taureau is set in a spectacular 1500 ft deep gorge, the towering bald rock walls are set back from the river, with dense fir trees flanking the shores. All the rapids can be portaged with some difficulty if needed, but if you start portaging, or even inspecting unnecessarily, it will be a long day.

From the dirt road access, the first 5kms are a warm up, with plenty of flat water, and nothing more than class II-III rapids.

The middle section is where "the bull" starts to charge. There are at least 18 named rapids all hard class IV or higher, and countless others, separated by only small pools and boogie water. One of the first rapids is a 25-foot waterfall, which has been run on the narrow right channel, but is usually portaged on the right.

A major side stream joins from the right, about half way down the gorge. A dangerous rapid follows shortly after. It can

be run at higher levels, but in lower water, the only line drops into a bad siphon. It is an easy scout and portage on the right.

The final 5 km of this long day is exhausting flat water and easy rapids down to the take out.

Having someone who knows the river is almost essential if you expect to complete the run in a day. Emergency gear is also a must; it is a long way out! Several groups have lost boats, and been forced to walk out, back up river. There are no paths or roads inside the gorge. Reports that these groups were mercilessly eaten alive by bugs have not been disproved. -SW

## Malbaie

Difficulty: IV  
 Location: Parc des Hautes Gorges de la Riviere Malbaie  
 River Length: 7 miles  
 Suggested Flow: Summer  
 Profile: Wilderness, Pool-Drop

Description:  
 The Malbaie is not exactly close to Quebec City (about 1.5 hours away) but that is the point. It is the absolute reverse of your daily routine. Get away for a day to the Malbaie. If not, as Warren Miller would say, "You will be one year older when you do."

The Malbaie is the only river mentioned here that is northeast of Quebec City. It flows north along Route 381 in Charlevoix and then turns east. The first section is class II-III, but when the river reaches the Park, it starts dropping for a 7-mile section that is a Canadian gem.

**CULEBRA**  
**GO** **FRAMELESS**  
 Jack's Plastic Welding  
**WWW.JPWINC.COM (505) 334-8748**

Anna Levesque

**MKC**  
**HIGH PERFORMANCE FOR SERIOUS PADDLERS**

**NEW!** ▶ **High Performance Week**  
 - MKC's Adult training camp  
 Fine tune your Paddling Skills and Get Fit for Life!  
 Expert coaching and personal Physio & Posture analysis, Nutrition and custom Boat Outfitting.  
**June 06 - 10**

**Freeboating Courses**  
 - special guest instructors  
 Ken Whiting, Billy Harris, Tiffany Manchester and Anna Levesque, Paul Mason & Andrew Westwood  
**May 21/22, Jun 27- 01, Aug 01-05, Aug 27/28**

Andrew Westwood

**Week of Rivers**  
 - a week of paddling Canada's best whitewater  
 Canadian Shield (Ontario and Quebec)  
**June 13 - 17**  
 Canadian Rockies (Alberta and British Columbia)  
**June 25 - 29**

**WWW.MKC.CA**  
**SUMMER: 613.756.3620**  
**WINTER: 613.594.5268**



# Re-discovering **QUEBEC** Whitewater

*Enthusiastic Yankees explore some of  
Quebec's finest whitewater.*

**Photo by Simon Wiles**

**"Like No Other"**  
Tao Bernau





**X-Traxt™**

Fully accessorize-able lead paddler's rescue vest.  
Center-back towing anchor-point gives added control to the rescuer.  
U.L. tested & USCG approved for live-bait & strong-swimmer rescue.  
Built-in 100 lb. tensile tested full body harness.



**DRIFTer**

Sleek body contouring fit.  
Stretchy, comfortable neoprene padded shoulders.  
Unique "Cinch" harness system prevents ride-up.



**BetSEA**

The first truly anatomically correct vest...  
Contoured cups wrap rather than crush...  
...for Women.



**Kitty**

First side entry vest for Women.  
The closest fit to the sports-bra concept.  
Anatomically sculpted inside foam for a perfect fit,  
and shaped for women, cup size B to D.



**Stohlquist**

Visit our web site for dealer nearest you. [www.stohlquist.com](http://www.stohlquist.com)

Amazingly, the Malbaie area has become less developed over time. You can still see the remains of an elaborate bridge system over the river. Roads that once existed are becoming more overgrown every year. Unfortunately the dirt road to the take out is blocked by a gate, requiring some skillful "maneuvering." The same road is plagued by sinkholes. And, sadly, it becomes more difficult to pass every year. I would bring a dirt bike.

But, put in on the spectacular Malbaie and you will not regret your efforts. The first few miles are beautiful flat stretches, with fun class IV ledges and slides in between. After a few warm up rapids, you come to a clean 30-foot waterfall. For me, this waterfall alone was worth an entire trip to Canada.

There are many more rapids spaced evenly with quick water. Some of these drops are rather exciting. There are some long class IIIs, lots of class IV, and IV+s, and one class V. It keeps going for a glorious long time. There is a beautiful double drop, the kind where you can really grab the lip with your paddle and boof in slow motion. Near the bottom of the run is a ledge (that we now call Simon's Hole), which saw three in our group inadvertently surfing together. The last rapid is the Meltdown Drop, a 12 foot falls. Go for the boof, or go for the big meltdown.

We ran the Malbaie and Taureau in the same August weekend. I found the Malbaie a perfect laid-back complement to the intense Taureau. I also found that, while it is possible to do the Malbaie hung over, it would not be recommended for the Taureau. -AB






After picking up our shuttle car, and draining some well-earned beers following our run of the Taureau, we headed east for a couple of hours to the Malbaie. We were planning to start higher than the Vermont boys had paddled before, aiming for a 30-foot falls that had been seen above the put in by previous parties.

We managed to get the truck about a mile up a disused road, with trees bashing the windows on both sides. From there, we hiked a further mile along the disused road, before dropping down to the river through thick standing and fallen trees.

Fortunately, we'd got it spot on. A couple of easy ledges and slides, led us to an imposing horizon line and clouds of rising mist. Here the river dropped into a sheer sided gorge. We hopped out and found, to our amazement, a perfectly clean 30 footer. With no shortage of volunteers to go first, we set cameras and watched as one after another hucked the falls into the gorge.

Following the falls, there was no shortage of other good falls and slides, down to the normal put in bridge. From the normal put in, the rapids were smaller and more constricted. Several problematic rapids were scattered amongst the fun stuff. A funnel drop, which induced much down time was the last major rapid, before we came across the shuttle car. A treacherous drive back along a sinkhole-ridden dirt road completed the excitement for the weekend. -SW 

**About the Authors:** Alden Bird lives in Washington D.C. and is currently working towards publishing his whitewater guidebook, *When the Levee Breaks*.

Simon Wiles is a whitewater tourist living in Vermont, USA who will be spending several more weekends in Quebec this year.

# Another first for Hyside

It's a Thwart!



## It's a Drybag!

It's the world's first air tight thwart with zipper access to a built-in watertight drybag.

## It's Free!

Get a free zipper thwart with any 2005 Hyside boat purchase. That's a \$170 value! To find a dealer nearest you and further details, visit [Hyside.com](http://Hyside.com).

Also new for 2005:



### Hyside Rowing Frames:

Built by Hyside- with the same quality you've come to expect from the rest of our products!

**Visit [hyside.com](http://hyside.com) today!**

\* Patent pending



# HYSIDE

WHITewater INFLATABLES

Call for pricing & availability

**800.868.5987**

Teva AD  
full page  
color



## Corsica's Upper Vecchio

Ostensibly, we were scouting a river. In truth, we were just another batch of thrill-addicted kayakers looking for trouble.

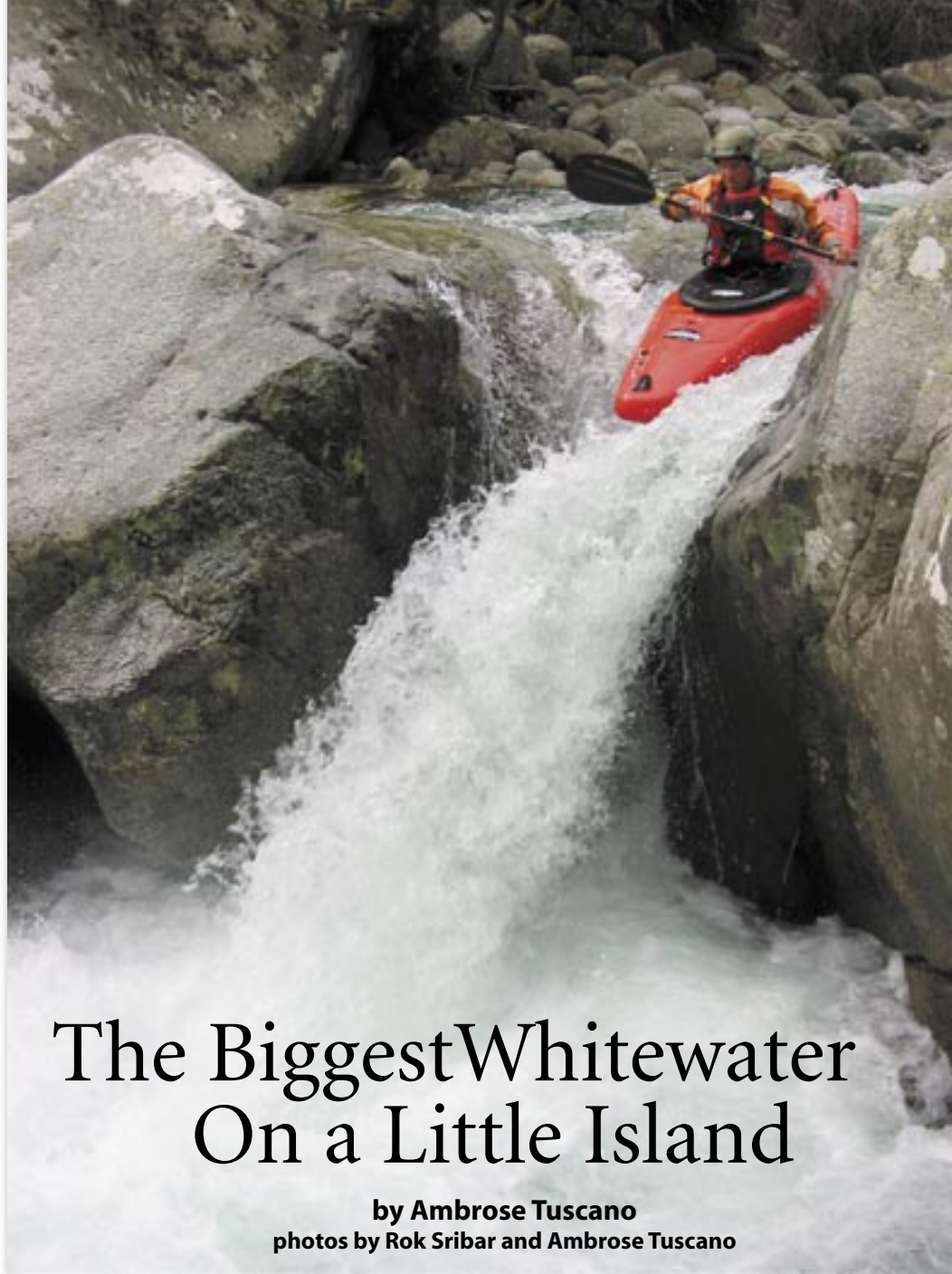
As soon as we found the side-road leading up to the railroad bridge, I knew something was bound to happen. The bridge was a quarter mile arch of stone and steel with a pair of tracks across its top. Beneath the rails, tucked amongst beams and supports, ran a narrow steel walkway. Though the catwalk was designed to serve railroad maintenance workers, it occasionally attracted the attention of those unable to resist an invitation to adventure.

"I think I see a trapdoor," my dad said, pointing. "Out there, between the rails." As the oldest member of the group, he was able to draw upon years of experience spotting potential mischief.

On the catwalk, I traded in my fear of being mauled by a commuter train for a fear of falling from high places. The walkway was sturdy in a very see-through sort of way. A steel latticework platform barely distorted my view of the river below. Glancing anxiously at the six-second freefall between

*Right: Karl Lavtar tackles the Upper Vecchio's first drop.*

*Left: Somewhere between Roseheim, Germany and Livorno, Italy.*



# The Biggest Whitewater On a Little Island

by **Ambrose Tuscano**  
photos by **Rok Sribar and Ambrose Tuscano**

my feet, I tightened my grip on the railing.

The rest of the group was gathered about on the catwalk, snapping pictures and monkeying their way onto an enormous stone pillar rising hundreds of feet from the river canyon below. Taking care to look out, rather than down, I shuffled my way toward them. "Simple," I told myself, "just don't focus too close."

From here, the upstream view was spectacular. Patches of shrubby greens accented the otherwise gray landscape of the V-shaped Vecchio River gorge. The river turned a lazy right-hand corner and flowed into view before curving back to

its left and running through a section of boulder-strewn riverbed.

"Hey, come on out," my dad called from the unprotected top of a massive support. "You can see even better from here."

"Nah, I'm fine." I tried to sound flippant, but failed.

"I want to take a picture of you guys." Raising the camera to my eye, I focused on framing my dad and Meg between the bridge beams. I held my breath to steady my body, and noticed that I was still shaking. "Really," I thought, "this is pathetic." Then it hit me like an eight-foot

# Otter Bar Lodge

## Kayak School

World-class  
paddling location

Industry-leading  
kayak instruction

Programs for  
paddlers of all levels

Grand Canyon  
September Trips

New Zealand Trips

Kids Kayaking  
Camps



530 462 4772  
otterbar@aol.com  
www.otterbar.com

# the biggest whitewa

breaking wave: it was the bridge vibrating, not me. The roar of a train atop the bridge drowned out any further conversation. The forgotten camera dangled by its strap as I clutched the catwalk railing with both hands and squeezed my eyes shut. A few seconds of bucking and swaying were followed by a minute of smaller, more rhythmic pulses from the bridge; the passenger train's cacophony retreated briskly into the Corsican evening.

"Pretty cool," Joel said.

"Yeah," I managed, "if you're into that sort of thing." I gave him a weak smile. "At least the river looks good."

"Not too hard," Karl agreed. "Well . . . not from here, at least," he amended as he and Rok drew up single file behind Joel.

"Boys," Rok said, "I can tell you now, Upper Vecchio is plenty of excitement." Everyone smiled. Not as exciting, I hoped, as standing ten feet below the wheels of a speeding train.

Whitewater kayaking had brought us all to Corsica. Though our places of origin dotted the United States, our group converged on Munich, Germany in late April for the start of a kayak-till-you-drop vacation. The early arrivals, my dad (Barry), Karl, Meg, and I, picked up kayaks at the Prijon factory in Rosenheim, Germany. From there we drove to Livorno, Italy where the latecomers, Rok and Joel, met us at the ferry.

After disembarking the ferry in Bastia, a scenic port city in the northeast corner of Corsica, we drove for about an hour and found ourselves in the mountains. The trip illustrates the island's compactness, one of its most alluring traits to visiting kayakers. Squeezed into the 40 miles between Corsica's closest shores is a spine of mountains rising more than 8,500 feet. From these snowcapped heights flow something like 42 rivers and dozens of tributaries, rushing madly to the sea. For whitewater kayakers, Corsica is that rare mix of abundant, challenging whitewater, easily accessible and centrally located.

Both Rok and my dad had explored Corsica's rivers before. In 1998 they came with a large group. It was a diverse blend of singles and couples, kayakers and hikers,

*The Crew: (L to R) Ambrose Tuscano, Karl Lavtar, Meg Seifert, Barry Tuscano, Joel Passevoy and Rok Sribar*



# ter on a little island

Californians and New Yorkers, Europeans and Republicans. Rok wanted to introduce a few of his American friends to the island, but when word got out about the trip, it evolved beyond control. This time, Rok was determined to keep the group small and the focus on whitewater.

The second oldest group member, Rok Sribar was our guide to Corsica. Though he didn't speak a word of French, Italian or Corsican, he had toured the island with a kayak many times in the past. Most of his trips were not so logistically challenging as the 1998 expedition. From his native

Slovenia, Corsica was within driving range; the perfect destination for April whitewater trips. At one time Rok was much more familiar with the rivers of Corsica than he is today; ours was only his second trip since he moved to the United States in the late 1980s. Since then he has graduated from Cornell with a PhD, held several corporate jobs, and relocated to California. Rok showed me a dozen Class V Cali runs my first year in the West. To this day, he is the only top-notch kayaker I know who is a high-powered executive in his spare time.

Long before we had any concrete plans for a trip to Corsica, Rok spoke of the Upper Vecchio. Widely regarded as Corsica's most

*The bridge and tunnel.*



# the biggest whitewater on a little island

challenging and dangerous whitewater run, the stretch held special significance for Rok. On both of his previous attempts in the early and mid 80s he had been forced to walk out of the river. Not only was the hike out of the Vecchio's steep, overgrown gorge an excruciating experience, but both times his group found itself following the railroad to safety. The tracks themselves were an obvious improvement over any other route out of the rugged canyon. However, the last stretch of railroad led through a long, dark, narrow tunnel. The tunnel was so long, in fact, that a train could theoretically sneak up on a kayaker before he could sprint through the tunnel—especially if he had to drag a boat through the dark passageway with him.

“Glad I wasn’t there,” I thought to myself as we climbed back through the trapdoor and onto the bridge’s surface. As I looked out across the span I realized that the bridge fed directly into the mouth of a tunnel. This was it, I realized. This was where Rok and his companions had twice come racing out of the darkness, kayaks in hand, only to find that they still had a lengthy, narrow bridge to negotiate before their ordeal was truly finished. With a shudder, and a nervous glance over my shoulder, I followed the group back to the cars. Logistics was the one concern that was absent our group as we made camp that night. Since the island offered so many excellent day runs, Rok knew that Corsica was best explored with a shuttle driver.

Before putting the trip together, he asked Meg, my longtime girlfriend, if she would accompany us to Corsica. She agreed, and was soon the beneficiary of an all-expense-paid trip to Europe. On this day she would also have the help of my dad, who had opted to skip the Upper Vecchio. To make things simpler still, we had found a camp not ten minutes from the put in.

The morning came too soon. Though everything was prepared in advance for the big day, we were all a little worse for the wear. It was our tenth day in Europe, and our eighth on the water. Joel, Meg and I had

---

*Karl Lavtar in a classic Upper Vecchio rapid.*





# Merchandise



New Vintage T-Shirt  
 Celebrating 50 years of AW  
 100% Cotton Color: Natural  
 S - XXL  
 Price: \$18.95

AW's awesome Flex Fit®  
 Hat w/IR logo  
 Navy (One size fits all)  
 Price: \$18



AW Hooded Sweatshirt  
 100% Cotton  
 Color: Grey or Red  
 Sizes S - XXL  
 Price: \$36

**Purchase AW merchandise on-line at  
[www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org).  
 Hit SHOP then AW Merchandise.  
 You can also call toll free to  
 place your order over the phone  
 at (866) 262-8429**



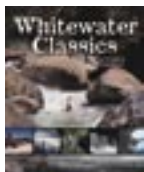
IR Thick Skin  
 Sizes S - L  
 Price: \$68



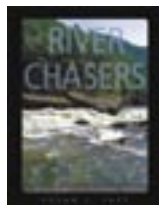
Baby Doll T-shirt  
 100% Cotton  
 Sizes S - L  
 Price: \$20



Throw bag: Lotus  
 Spectra throwbag w/AW  
 logo (3/8" in diameter  
 x 80' in length). A  
 great price for a great  
 throwbag!



Whitewater Classics  
 Price: \$26.95



River Chasers  
 Price: \$39.95



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

## Shipping and Handling:

Orders <= \$2.00 - Please add \$0.50 for shipping  
 Orders \$2.01-\$75.00 - Please add \$8.50 for shipping  
 Orders > \$75.00 - Please add \$12.50 for shipping

# the biggest whitewater on a little island

each taken our turn with a debilitating 24-hour vomiting bug that had made its way through the group. But, as we began our hike to the put in at 9 that morning, I could feel morale improving. Rok, Karl, Joel and I were ready for what the river had to offer. Though we put on only eight kilometers above the railway bridge, the river did not even resemble the one we had seen from the catwalk. Here the Vecchio was small and rocky. For the first kilometer, our biggest challenge was finding channels deep enough to float our kayaks through the continuous rock gardens. Finally, we came upon our first horizon line, created by a ten-foot waterfall. We all ran cleanly, in spite of a tricky launch area, and continued downstream.

Immediately, we sensed the character of the river change. Several tributaries had swelled the Vecchio's volume and now the geology was beginning to lend itself to a deeper riverbed; shortly, we came upon our first distinct gorge. From above we could see only a series of challenging drops, runnable but without obvious eddies. Rok and Joel paddled into the last eddy before the canyon and got out of their boats to scout downstream. They motioned that there was an eddy big enough for one around the corner. In a flash, Karl peeled out into the current and bounced through the whitewater, out of view.

For the next few minutes they were all out of my sight. Since there hadn't been time to get nervous earlier that morning, I took advantage of the lull to catch up on my worrying. I looked closely at the rapids downstream. A series of three difficult drops were separated by very short stretches of slow water. Then the river disappeared briefly around a corner, but I could see it exiting the canyon through a distinct river-wide horizon line. I told myself if I just dealt with the drops one at a time, I would be fine. Looking up, I saw Joel walking back to his boat. He motioned that we were to round the corner together.

---

*Joel Passevoy threading the Upper Vecchio's boulders.*

Knowing that Joel had just had a close up look at the rapids, I timed my entrance





move so I would be right behind him entering the first drop. We maneuvered safely around the corner, and Rok and Karl came into view. They were positioned just below the exit drop of the gorge. From this perspective, the final horizon line was not as big as I had feared. Still, it was a very constricted slot encompassing the entire river's flow and dropping four feet over an even ledge. With sufficient speed and a solid final stroke, we would easily clear the backwash . . . without, we would need throw ropes to fish us out of the hole. Rok and Karl motioned for us to aim for the right side of the drop, where a slight imperfection in the ledge made the hydraulic easier to clear. With a deep breath, I aimed my boat straight downstream, took a good last stroke and splashed through the ledge drop safely. Joel made the move easily, then exited his boat and prepared his throw rope on shore, while Rok and Karl hiked back up to their boats.

I was alone again, encompassed by the roar of water plunging over the ledge. Looking back upstream from my vantage point, low on the water, I could see why it was a good place to have a rope handy. The boulders that constricted the river looked to be undercut, and the opaque veil of falling water revealed glimpses of a large cave behind the hydraulic. "Not a great place to be stuck," I thought, listening to the violent throbbing of aerated water and rock pulsing through the drop.

Rok and Karl appeared suddenly at the top of the drop, and I had a first rate view of their smooth runs. Everyone took a turn eyeing the ledge from their boat before we all turned and headed downstream. For the most part, the next portion of the river consisted of challenging drops that we could scout from our boats. The confounding factor was the Vecchio's tendency to flow under or through pieces of rock. We carried one simple slide because the right  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the river passed directly beneath a monstrous boulder. Still, as the morning wore on, we could tell that we were making good progress.

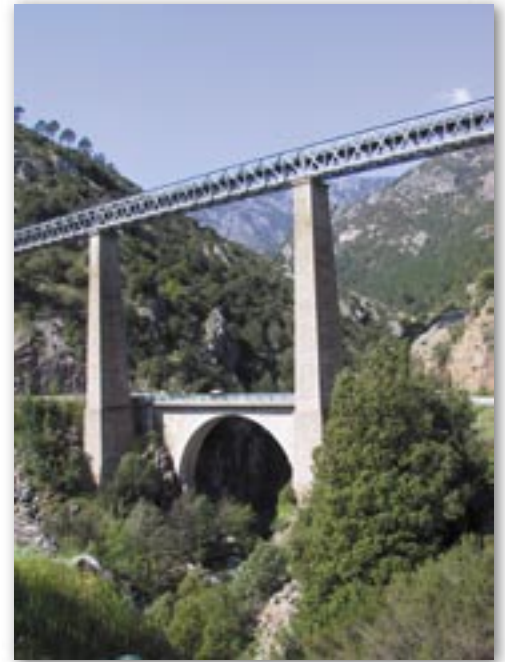
By noon we reached one of the few drops that Rok would remember all day. The entire river poured through a chute six

feet wide and six feet high. An uneven horizon formed a flume of water that climbed the river right shore, while the majority of the river dropped straight into a thundering hole. The approach looked simple, but the final stroke would be difficult to place, and the river-left wall was clearly undercut for 20 feet downstream of the drop. To top it all off, Rok told us the story of his good friend who had swum at this spot on his last attempt of the Vecchio.

"He went caving," Rok said, pointing at the space behind the veil of the drop.

I was convinced that the rapid was not worth getting re-circulated into an underwater cave for; the others appeared to agree. Instead, we lounged in the noontime warmth for an hour, confident that we were more than halfway through our ordeal. When we finally mobilized back to the river, our progress was impeded by frequent shore scouting and several portages. Finally, around 3 p.m. we reached another spot that had stuck in Rok's memory. An obvious horizon line brought us out of our boats and we saw a series of class V+ rapids feeding directly into a 40-foot waterfall.

Despite a complicated portage of the waterfall gorge, we were in high spirits as we put back in above a narrow but calm section of water. As we floated through the 12-foot wide vertical walls, I gave silent thanks that the river had not chosen to drop through such a tight spot. We were all feeling somewhat confident and relieved after the portage. While we were dragging our boats over the large



boulders on the river right shore, Rok told us that, though he had never kayaked below this spot, his brother had, and he told Rok that the takeout was an easy 90 minute paddle from the waterfall portage.

So it was with a certain measure of surprise that we noted the distinct shift in the river's character just downstream. There was no denying it: the rapids were steeper and more undercut after the waterfall. Though frequent scouting and portaging delayed our progress, at first we maintained the hope that the railroad bridge would appear just around the next corner. After an hour and a half we realized that we were fooling ourselves. In a couple of places we spent over an hour advancing our boats little more than 100 meters along the shore. Though half of the handful of rapids we carried after the waterfall were "runnable" we were being cautious—and for good reason. Even on land we were encountering sieves. During two separate portages, the only course of travel along the bank forced us to lower ourselves



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

84,000 Hits a Day! 8,800 Unique Hits!

Introduce your business to a new opportunity to advertise.  
Be a part of the number ONE internet resource for paddlers.

For more info contact:  
Ben VanCamp / American Whitewater  
828-252-0728 [ben@amwhitewater.org](mailto:ben@amwhitewater.org)

# the biggest whitewater on a little island



*Left: The upstream view from the bridge.*

*Right: The Corsican landscape features fine art and rugged terrain.*

to water level through holes in the boulder jumbles that lined the shores.

At least one of the drops we ran in this section was of questionable safety. The entry slot was a mere half-boat width and led into a blind slot with no eddies between. Luckily we all made it safely through the rapid, though Joel was tossed into the bottom slot on his head and Karl was pulled in backwards.

In another place, we took out at the lip of a 15-foot falls and decided to portage due to the strength of the recirculation. However, Karl had a fluke flip as he was ferrying to shore. He made a quick recovery roll about 8 feet from the lip of the falls. Luckily his boat was already facing upstream and he paddled to the eddy with Rok yelling encouragement from shore, averting a sure beating at the base of the falls.

Morale was in steady decline until 6:30 when we rounded a bend in the river

and saw the railroad and highway bridges ahead. As we paddled with renewed energy, we were able to make out the tiny shapes of Meg and Barry clinging to a pier beneath the tracks of the railroad bridge.

Two of the final rapids represent the Upper Vecchio to a tee. In the first, a large sieve dominated the middle of a small rapid. I got out to scout and realized that the sieve was so large that we could paddle through it upright. Since this was the only slot with sufficient water to float a boat, we went for it. After ducking through the sieve without incident, we came to another scout. Though the rapid was not particularly steep or long, no one could find a line through the convoluted sieve fest. After nearly 15 minutes of frustrated scurrying, we gave up and began our final portage. It was a lengthy affair, requiring ropes and lasting nearly a half hour. Though it was maddening to have to portage such a small drop within sight of the takeout, it was a wise decision; the drop featured dozens

of sieves—more than I've ever seen in a single rapid.

Finally it was over. Meg and my dad had more than enough time to climb down from the railroad bridge while we fumbled through the last rapids, and they awaited us with a mixture of anxiety at the length of our expedition and joy that we had emerged from the canyon unscathed. It was 7:30. We had spent over 10 hours on eight kilometers of river.

As I sat luxuriating with a river-chilled beer on the banks of the Vecchio, I gazed wearily upstream at the river, then overhead at the towering railroad bridge. Despite the aching muscles and mental fatigue I had suffered, I was truly thankful to have finished the run on the river, and not on the rails. [AWW](#)

# Conservation & Access Updates

continued from page 24



Right: Nooksack Falls  
Photo by Tom O'Keefe



Left: The Rogue River

for the project. American Whitewater was stunned by this FERC decision, particularly since the Commission's decision is not consistent with the FERC staff's navigability report and analysis of transmission line boundaries. American Whitewater is now researching historic information to add to the FERC's navigability report. We plan to file this information with the FERC as additional evidence and grounds to reconsider their ruling on license jurisdiction.

## North Fork Rogue, Oregon

By John Gangemi

American Whitewater filed comments with the FERC for the licensing of the Prospect Hydropower Project located on the North Fork Rogue River, Oregon. American Whitewater has been working on this hydro project since 2002. The Prospect Project dewater a five mile reach of the North Fork Rogue containing Class V and Class IV paddling opportunities. The powerhouse also precludes access to a Class III reach containing year-round boatable flows. PacifiCorp, the project operator, has agreed to provide two weekends annually of whitewater releases in the new license. It is now up to the FERC to include those whitewater releases in the new license as well as access improvements. Restoring flows to this reach will provide a great benefit to the southern Oregon paddling community. [AW](#)

*Look good · Paddle Right*

## EVENTS

**8-Hour Adventure Race**  
**March 26, 2005**  
Not your typical 8-hour day! Teams of three run, bike and boat through the wilds of the Nantahala National Forest surrounding NOC, all while solving orienteering challenges.

**Spring Splash**  
**April 2, 2005**  
Kick off Whitewater Season 2005 at NOC with super sales, a used gear flea market, mini-clinics, music and more.

**12-Hour Adventure Race**  
**April 23, 2005**  
The second of NOC's 2005 adventure races, this dawn-to-dusk competition will have three-person teams vying for spots in the US Adventure Racing Association's National Finals.

**www.noc.com**

From cold weather wear to steep creek technique, count on NOC to get you where you want to be for spring paddling.

Highway 19W, Bryson City, North Carolina  
**877.626.8242 • www.noc.com**

WHITEWATER INSTRUCTION • OUTFITTER'S STORE • MAIL ORDER  
BIKE & KAYAK RENTALS • RAFTING • RESTAURANTS • LODGING



Nantahala  
Outdoor  
Center

# Nantahala Outdoor Center



Since its inception, Clif Bar Inc. has supported hundreds of non-profit organizations and events nationwide focused on environmental, health and social issues.

At Clif Bar Inc., we are on a long journey toward sustainability. Our mission has always been to sustain the individual—from the outdoor enthusiast hiking or paddling to the busy mother—by offering healthy nutrition products and through conscientious business decisions that sustain our communities and the planet.

Efforts to reduce our ecological footprint include using organic ingredients, supporting a wind farm to offset the company's CO2 emissions, purchasing certified organic cotton for our promotional T-shirts and incorporating "green" office practices. The company continually seeks new ways of doing business in an eco-friendly manner. Clif Bar Inc. also encourages employee involvement in community organizations and events. In 2004, employees contributed over 2100 hours of their time to volunteer for more than 50 different non-profit organizations in their local community and abroad.

Clif Bar is proud to support American Whitewater and other groups that promote outdoor recreation. This year Clif Bar is increasing its support as a Platinum Sponsor of AW and bringing back the "Clif Bar Flowing Rivers Grants" for another year. In addition, Clif Bar will be supporting the AW Member Appreciation Tour. Stop by the AW booth to grab a Clif Bar!


### **SAVE Crooked Fork Creek Thanks CLIF BAR!**

*by Turtle Mac Dermott*

Crooked Fork Creek (CFC) in Morgan County, TN is widely known in the boating community for Potter's Falls, a sweet 15-foot vertical drop. In fact, the first cover of American Whitewater to feature a paddler running a waterfall (summer of 1973) was taken at Potter's Falls. Since that time, the nearby town of Wartburg, headquarters of the National Wild and Scenic Obed River, has installed a wastewater treatment plant just upstream of Potter's Falls. During times of high rainfall, the treatment plant discharges untreated waste directly into the stream. Unfortunately, this is precisely the same time the boaters come to CFC. The boaters want the storm water, but not the untreated discharges. Further upstream, rural communities, small industrial operations, two state incarceration facilities, tiny three-cow farming operations and rural schools all discharge into the creek and foul the water, to varying degrees. Many of these same folk enjoy the Potter's Falls and neighboring Laymance Falls for the summer swimming pleasure and nature experience, hardly aware of the suspect water quality.

One of the growing threats to water quality for many whitewater streams is an increase in housing developments without adequate sewer systems situated near streams and rivers. A growing trend in rural East Tennessee, as in many other parts of the country, is population growth in small, remote communities, frequently located near the headwaters of pastoral streams. CFC is such a stream, flowing out of the nearby hills, meandering through its flood plain and finally draining into the Emory River. Increased pollution of CFC, due to industrial and agricultural operations, municipal wastewater discharges and often, partially or untreated household sewage from rural communities, has caused severe and persistent water quality declines to affect recreational users downstream. These problems are similar to many watersheds

in the southeast. Because recreational users of the rivers (e.g. boaters) are in the closest contact with the water, they need be in the forefront of activism.

The wider watershed, the Emory River, is under the watchful eye of the Emory River Watershed Association (ERWA), a local educational, investigative and protective body of outdoor users groups and concerned citizens. Chota Canoe Club of Knoxville and the ERWA are working in many suitable and subtle ways to influence the well-being of the waterways in the drainage area, including CFC. The Clif Bar Grant has allowed Chota to purchase small awareness stickers drawing attention to the plight of this creek- Save Crooked Fork Creek- and to develop methods to educate stakeholders of the impacts that non-point source pollution has on the CFC. Although the CFC is not in immediate or terminal danger, the long term health of this fine creek and boating destination requires problem identification, monitoring and education of the stakeholders of the need to Treasure Crooked Fork Creek. 

# Conservation & Access

# Iowa WW Coalition

## Flowing Rivers Grant Narrative

by Nate Hoogeveen  
President, Iowa Whitewater Coalition

The Iowa Whitewater Coalition dates back to 2002, when a group of whitewater boaters and several paddling groups decided they'd had enough of low-head dams. They suggested retrofitting two dams to create whitewater courses in downtown Des Moines. Remarkably, the spring after the initial idea was proposed, a paddler had a fatal run over the Scott Street Dam.

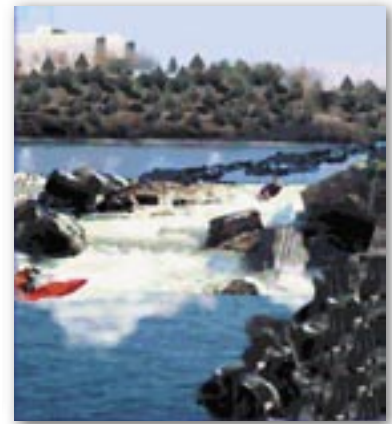
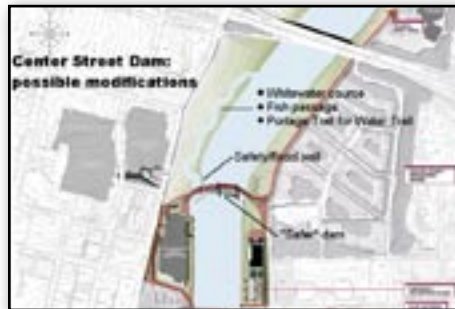
Dams are one of the most serious safety hazards in the Midwest. Unfortunately, low-head dams are common, and more often than not the evening news begins with a dramatic story of a drowning and (almost always) a protracted, unsuccessful rescue at a low-head dam. It happens to paddlers, swimmers, and anglers alike.

Low-head dams are a problem that we wish would just go away. Fortunately, the Iowa Whitewater Coalition (IWC) is doing its part to make that happen, both in Des Moines and other places in Iowa. The IWC has an active contingent working with the City of Waterloo to create a safer-passage whitewater chute at a dam there. Generally, the IWC has received positive press in television and newspapers for its stance on dam issues. Where upstream water levels need to be maintained for some reason (municipal water intakes, for instance) the IWC is recommending that the scour hole beneath essentially be filled in with rocks and boulders. This action has been demonstrated as a solution by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The Iowa Whitewater Coalition has used the \$500 of Flowing Rivers' campaign funds to hire a professional video producer to help us make its case to both the public and to potential donors and governmental agencies. Showing is much better than telling, and the video will allow IWC board members to make presentations throughout the year.

The IWC's overall plan has received other funds, including a tentative commitment by the City of Des Moines to use \$50,000 of a state grant to run a feasibility study on making the dams safer and creating a national-class whitewater course in Des Moines. The IWC also wrote a successful \$25,135 grant application for Polk County to create a water trail. Some of those funds will be used to install cabling and warning signs at the Scott Street Dam, as well as provide public education about dam safety. The Des Moines Whitewater Course is also on a Master Plan to create a river walk along the Des Moines River in downtown Des Moines.

This season, the IWC will enhance safe boating practices by offering a swiftwater rescue training scholarship, and will continue to have practice sessions on flatwater and whitewater throughout the upcoming season. The Iowa Whitewater Coalition boats recreationally in Iowa, around the Midwest, and beyond. See us on the Web at [www.iowawhitewater.org](http://www.iowawhitewater.org).



# Conservation & Access

## Eastern Updates

### Twelve Mile Creek (SC) Dam Removal

By Kevin Miller, AW Regional Coordinator

Dam removal on Twelve Mile Creek could begin as early as March. Plans are to remove the lower two dams. Following dam removal, additional activities will take place to restore the riverbed. This process could be completed in as few as two years. There are currently no plans to remove the uppermost dam, which is currently a critical structure for the Easley-Central Water District's water intake system. Once these two dams are removed, paddlers will be able to enjoy two miles of whitewater similar in watershed area and gradient to the upper Tellico River below the ledges.

Local paddlers have expressed a large interest in the river. Last spring, the Foothills Paddling Club, an AW affiliate club, organized a river cleanup. Roughly 40 participants from across upstate South Carolina showed up to help, and over 200 cubic feet of trash was removed. Local newspapers and television stations reported on the event.

Despite the benefit to boaters, the primary reason for dam removal is PCB remediation. The flow of clean sediment down Twelve Mile Creek will facilitate the burial of PCBs in Lake Hartwell, separating them from the food chain. Many believe the recreational opportunities of a free-flowing river can help revitalize the local community. Others will be sad to see the dams go. Often, their parents or grandparents moved to the area to work at the mill operated by electricity generated by the dams.

Obviously, there are many advantages of dam removal: paddling, PCB remediation, river restoration, ecological restoration, and potential economic revitalization. Many challenges remain. A local grassroots effort is working to incorporate into a non-

profit organization, Friends of Twelve Mile River. This group, along with AW, will work to ensure that these benefits are realized while looking for ways to preserve the historic value of the dams to the community long after they have been removed.

*Staff Note: Kevin Miller is doing a great job of advocating for river restoration on behalf of paddlers. Thanks Kevin!*

### Citizens Agenda for Rivers Gains Momentum

By Kevin Colburn

The National Citizen's Agenda for Rivers was developed as a policy platform for river conservation. The agenda is a blueprint for action for federal and state decision makers and outlines some 30 state and federal actions that can be taken to protect water quality, ensure enough water for people and rivers, and protect watersheds by managing the effects of sprawl. The document has been written to remind our elected and appointed officials that rivers and streams matter—and that protecting them is one of the responsibilities that goes with leadership. More than 300 organizations and 3.7 million individuals have already endorsed the agenda—including American Whitewater—and the list keeps growing. By endorsing the agenda, we have joined a large coalition of organizations broadly supportive of strong clean water law and policies, sensible water conservation, and sound watershed development practices. We hope that you will consider adding your name to the list: [www.healthyrivers.org](http://www.healthyrivers.org).

### Etowah and Amicalola Rivers to Become Wild and Scenic?

By Kevin Colburn

Paddlers have long been a driving force behind movements to designate rivers as Wild and Scenic. The most recent case is in Georgia, where a group of paddlers and

other concerned citizens are pushing for state designation of the Etowah and Amicalola rivers. Designation would halt several threats to these whitewater rivers including urban sprawl, reservoir construction, and/or airport construction. American Whitewater supports this designation and is asking our members to do the same.


### Two Big Questions Answered this Spring in the Southeast

By Kevin Colburn

This spring American Whitewater expects two of our most important eastern stewardship efforts to come to resolution. A new FERC license is due in February for the Cheoah River in North Carolina, which should resolve several outstanding debates in that relicensing case. We should know the future releases schedule and whether or not the power company will be allowed to charge for extra releases. Also, we have been told to expect an answer to our appeal of the USFS decision to maintain the ban on boating 21 miles of the Chattooga—only six months late! If we win our appeal it will be time to go paddling, otherwise it will be time to go to court. While we are confident that we would win in court, we would rather go paddling.

### FERC Agrees with AW on the Ausable (NY)

By Kevin Colburn

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission acknowledged in December that they carefully followed the paper debate between AW and New York State Electric and Gas regarding river access on the Ausable River. The FERC also decided that none of NYSEG's arguments for literally locking boaters out of the class IV+ Ausable Chasm justified doing so. Based on this decision, the FERC ordered NYSEG to work with AW to complete flow studies in 2005 and then present a boating access plan to the FERC. AW will be continuing our commitment to this Top River Issue of 2004 well into 2005 and we are happy to report this interim success. 

# 3 GOOD REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE TO KAYAK SESSION MAGAZINE



get a  
**37%**  
discount  
off the cover price  
**\$24.99**  
(normally \$39.80)  
**FREE SHIPPING**

For every  
subscription purchased  
through AW  
**\$5**  
goes direct  
to AW!!!



**Because  
you  
can!**



**The International Whitewater Magazine**

100% whitewater, more photos than any other kayaking magazine.  
Fresh, powerful, and inspiring... yep, that's Kayak Session!

\*Special offer available only with the use of the present form (photocopy accepted)

Please sign me up for one year (four issues)

Start my subscription with: current:  next issue

**GET A TASTE!**  
Visit award winning website  
[www.kayaksession.com](http://www.kayaksession.com)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

Method of payment  Mastercard  Visa  Cheque

Credit card Number                 Exp. date: \_\_\_\_\_/20 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

You may fax this form and/or credit card orders to: 301-565-6714

Detach and mail to: American Whitewater / Kayak Session Subscription - 1424 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Call Toll free: 866-BOAT4AW - [info@amwhitewater.org](mailto:info@amwhitewater.org) or subscribe online @ [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)

# Tribute To A Friend

by J.A. Hinton

## The Body

The water shot through the thin fissure. A cauldron of white bubbles erupted from the depths and danced with magic. In that cloud of white chaos existed the spirit of the river, and somewhere beneath it, the corpse of a friend.

“Andy, what’s that in the water?” shouted Todd over the river’s roar.

“It’s only leaves” I replied, referring to the dark silhouettes swaying and swimming in the current. Their shapes were tattered and torn: faint figures with missing lobes or broken stems; abandoned appendages of oaks, maples, birch, beech and poplars. They darted into view for a fraction of a second then disappeared into the sub-surface froth.

Todd’s face was tense, and his eyes focused on something downstream. “No, behind you.”

As I began to contradict him, I caught a glimpse of the white parachute cord. The day before, Lance had secured one end of the cord to a crude, foot-length hook. Then he had reached underwater and worked the hook into the body. We tied the other end of the cord to a rock downstream. If the body came loose then this system would keep it from washing downstream and disappearing through other rocks and rapids. Only moments before the cord had pointed from the shore to the body upstream of me. But now the cord was behind me and drifting away quickly.

I was soloing a small raft just below the drop. As I pivoted it around, my friend Snuffy leapt into the compartment beside

me and together we chased after the body. From the corner of my eye I saw others, running down the rocks and leaping from boulder to boulder, to grab the anchored end of the line and reel in the loaded hook.

We were ten feet from the body, now eight feet, now six. Although Snuffy and I were in a light current, the water felt like molasses as we trudged the last few feet to the area above the corpse. No one knew if the hook would hold under tension. No one knew if the long slender fragment of iron carefully curved and slightly sharpened to a blunt point would catch under bone or if it would simply tear through tissue.

I first heard of the drowning one week earlier, after walking into the local Mexican restaurant, a favorite eatery for boaters. My friend George was as about to leave as I was entering.




I just lost my job!  
Now I've got time  
to watch my new  
issue of LVM!

**LVM**  
LUNCH VIDEO MAGAZINE  
to subscribe:  
[www.lunchmag.tv](http://www.lunchmag.tv)



## West Virginia Paddling Icon Dies at 62

Jon Dragan, the first rafting outfitter to offer trips on West Virginia’s New and Gauley Rivers, died suddenly on February 12th, 2005. He was 62. Jon began his commercial rafting career in 1964 on the Youghiogheny River; in 1966 John Sweet took him down the New River Gorge. Dragan looked past the area’s strip mines, junked cars and ramshackle houses, and saw the marvelous beauty of its mountains and rivers. He and his brothers founded Wildwater Unlimited in 1968 and soon became known for their high standards on and off the river. Their early guests included many future outfitters and guides. Over the next three decades, the whitewater rafting business became an economic engine that transformed the area. Over five million rafting guests have run the New and Gauley in the past 37 years. Jon was a long time member of American Whitewater and a strong C-1 paddler in the early part of his career. He will be sorely missed by thousands of paddlers in New River country and beyond. 



I said hello. He replied, "I think we had a drowning in Right Crack today." His tone was so casual that the words almost went unnoticed. It was only after hearing the full story that their meaning became real.

George described what he knew of the incident. A lone kayaker met up with a group of paddlers at the put in for Section IV of the Chattooga River. When the group got to the five falls, an area with five continuous rapids and a 75 fpm gradient within a quarter of a mile, the kayaker offered to run each rapid first and hold rope for the others at the bottom. As the rest of the group was scouting Corkscrew he ran the rapid, got caught in the hole at the bottom, and swam. According to other boaters he was almost out of the current and in the large eddy on the right when he turned and went for his boat as it headed for the next rapid, Crack in the Rock.

Crack in the Rock is formed by large boulders lined across the river, pooling the upstream water like a dam. In between the boulders are narrow slots: Left Crack, Middle Crack, Right Crack, and Far Right Crack. Although most of the current is headed for Right Crack, at medium to low water this area is so undercut that the river disappears from view as it goes underneath the corners of the two adjacent rocks and around a log standing vertically in between them. The kayaker and his boat had disappeared in this area. During the recovery we discovered that the boat had actually pinned his left leg to the log, preventing him from flushing through the undercut. When George finished the story, I asked him if he knew who the victim was. Reluctantly, I recognized the name.

Snuffy and I hovered above the corpse, a pale ghostly apparition lying six feet below us in the crystal clear water. Lance was hollering at me to jump in after it, but his orders never took hold. Perhaps I realized the corpse was too deep, or I saw that the cord was holding and there was no need for such heroics. Or maybe I was afraid.

Whatever the reason, I was oblivious to any outside influence. My eyes and my thoughts drifted with the corpse in its aquatic world. Carefully, I took my hand off the paddle

t-grip and placed it underwater, hooking the cord and pulling it to the surface. The body ascended slowly, gradually increasing in size and clarity.

Details began to emerge. The current had stripped off most of the paddling gear, leaving the body bare except for a few shreds of black poly pro. A faint cloud of blood seeped from the large gaping hole in the hip where on the day before, the recovery team had tried to free the corpse by cutting off the entrapped leg. The hands were wrinkled and white, like they had been placed in paint, and the rest of the body was a rainbow of colors. Some portions appeared pail while others red and flushed.

The entire form was slightly swollen and arched into a fetal position. As we hauled the body close to the shore it appeared as a baby being birthed from the water.

The body once answered to the name of Keith Green. I had paddled with Keith seven years ago on a whirlwind road trip to the Upper Yough, which included a brief stop at the New River Gorge. Three co-workers and I got off our raft trips on a summer afternoon and loaded up an old Honda Accord for an all-night drive. At the put-in for the Yough we ran into another friend, Will Haggood, and his traveling companion, Keith Green. Keith was one of those rare individuals you instantly liked: slightly eccentric, fun, and caring. Early each morning we would stand around his truck, groggily gossiping as Keith eagerly served us cappuccinos. The hum of the portable generator and the gurgling of the espresso machine was our morning serenade.

I still couldn't see the face. I wanted to see it. I wanted to recognize it. As we rolled the corpse out of the water and onto the rock his head turned briefly towards mine. His were eyes were shut, his cheeks plump and rosy, and his lips protruded and puffy. He appeared to be holding his breath. The expression was peaceful, although the features were unfamiliar. It was years of not seeing each other, not the distortion of death that made his face difficult to recognize.


We zipped the body into a nylon army surplus bag, and two members of the rescue squad helped me pull it into the center of the raft. They went to the front compartment to be my crew while I cam-strapped the body to the thwarts and D-rings. The four of us left the eddy, entered the current, and headed for the remainder of the Five Falls.

During our first road trip, none of us knew Keith had sight problems. It was only later that another paddler referred to him as "Blind Keith" because he suffered from tunnel vision. But it explained a lot. It explained why he would blaze past us in boulder gardens, why he almost stepped out in front of a car when we were bar hopping in Charleston, West Virginia, and why he would drive precariously close to the edge of the windy gravel road that took us out of the New River Gorge.

I hung out with Keith several more times after that initial trip, but then lost track of him. I had assumed that his vision had gotten worse, and that he was staying away from the river, or that he had lost interest in boating after our common friend, Will, had drowned on a flooded creek in California. But I couldn't help but wonder if his sight problems had contributed to his drowning. Had he not been able to see the hydraulic that caused him to swim? Had he not been able to realize how close he was to Right Crack when he went after his boat?

Keith was always a friendly guy, wild-eyed and enthusiastic. He loved life almost as much as he loved boating. This was not Keith, this clump of tissue and bone and fluid wrapped in a bag of nylon and plastic. Keith could never sit idle through the rapids; Keith would never let everyone be so somber with so few smiles. Keith would hoot and holler as we ran the river. Keith would make us laugh.

It ceased to be Keith at 3pm on Sunday, November 9, 2003. Keith was a personality. Keith was a special spirit. What was in that bag had neither. It was no more alive than the rock or the log or the boat.

But the river is alive. She has a persona that changes and grows. She is as moody as the water levels, and reveals different aspects of herself with every encounter. She teaches, she ignores, she gives, she takes. This is why Keith loved her, why he longed to be near her. This is why he desired a caress that can bring affection as well as death. Keith died doing what he loved on a sunny afternoon. This was only his body. 

## Beaver River Rendezvous

by Bryan Griessemer

### Thank you for a Real Good Time!

Through paths unknown, nearly every year I find myself eddied left above the first drop of the Eagle section of the Beaver River. Each year I drop blindly into the cascade, and each year I know that whatever consequence may occur, it will all be over very quickly. For years I have looked to the river for answers to questions I don't even know how to ask. Each time I paddle, with every river I run, a new lesson is learned and a new memory is formed. Returning to the Beaver River Rendezvous this September, I became instantly nostalgic. I flew in from Salt Lake City the day before the releases and had not seen many of my friends for almost an entire year. As I sped along the dirt-covered Adirondack roads on the way to the river, the excitement of

returning home drew to mind the memory of the last time I had run the Beaver just over two years ago.

I continued driving and allowed my mind to slip back to that last Beaver weekend. I visualized the way in which each kayak-topped vehicle arrived on the scene much like a caravan of Volkswagen busses on summer tour. I recalled the hospitality of the people I met that weekend, and I remembered the simple joy of spending yet another day on the water with my friends.

My thoughts took me back two years to the Moser campground where cold beers and hot fires had blurred the transition from one incredible day on the river to

the next. That first night at Moser, Bubba and friends had already set up in the lot when I rolled in. Bootleg music rang out from the speakers of their RV. They offered beers and a warm plate of baked beans to whoever was hungry. I was pleased to oblige, and with haste wrapped the beans I received in a cold flour tortilla. The dogs stared at me with disappointment when they discovered that I wasn't willing to share, and I returned like a humble beggar to lie next to the fire for a while.

That next morning I had decided to set up shuttle early and was pleased not to be rushing about the crowd. Wary from the day before, I napped on the hull of my boat and waited for my friends to arrive.

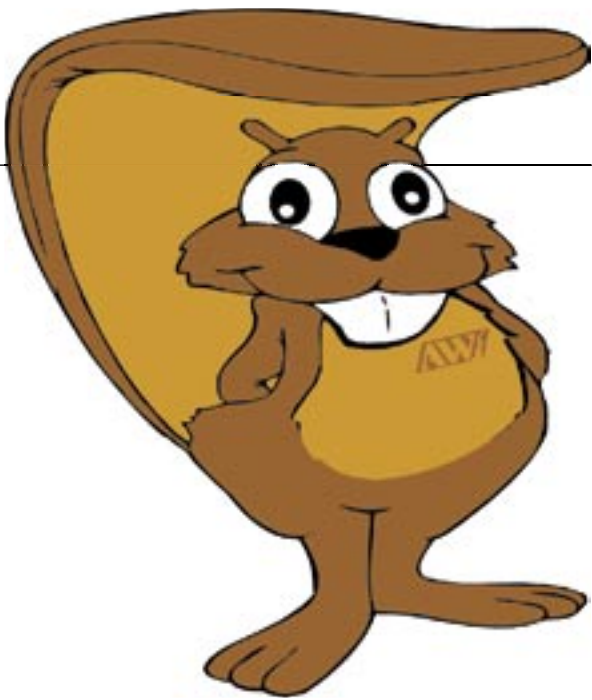


My husband and I were having... "difficulties" in our love life. Then...we got LVM. My husband's intimacy problems haven't gone away, but at least now that #@!\$% doesn't get worked as bad when we run the gnarl!

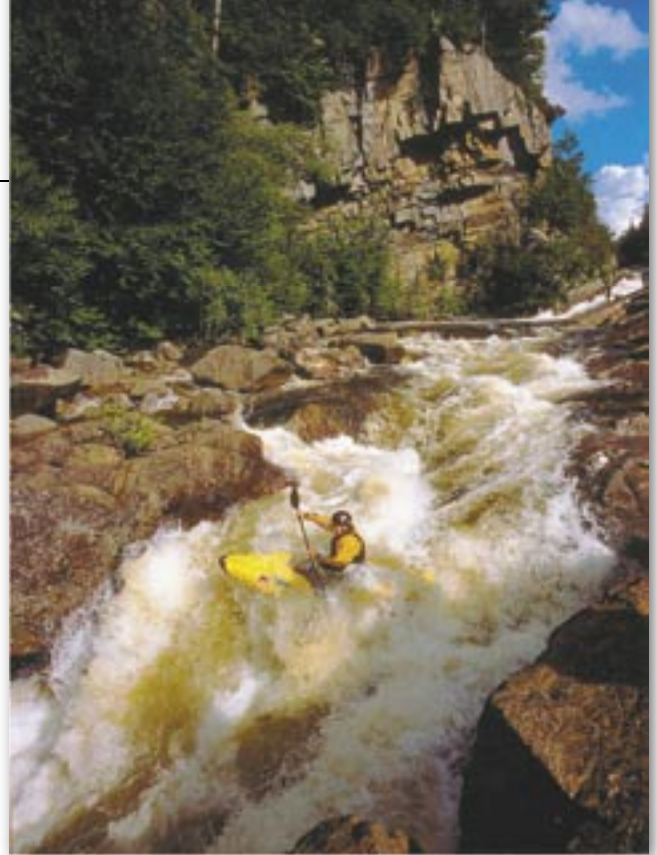


LUNCH VIDEO MAGAZINE  
to subscribe:  
[www.lunchmag.tv](http://www.lunchmag.tv)





Photos by Don Cochran




When they finally showed we promptly exchanged greetings and put on without delay. As we approached the top of the first ten-foot waterfall that marks the beginning of the Moser section, a line ten boats deep had formed. At the bottom there was another line filled with boaters waiting in turn to hop out and run again. There was always a line at each drop where onlookers congregated and assessed their abilities. The crowds that year would have been unfortunate were they not filled with friends and familiar faces. Like it or not, the Beaver River Rendezvous was a social event.

After we had completed a second run our band of gypsies took some tailgate time to wind down, enjoy the breaking sun, and drink a few regional beverages. To this day it staggers me to recall the quantity of Genesee Cream Ales that were consumed. I recall someone commenting that were we to remain much longer they would be in no shape to run the 400-foot per mile section of river. More humble than certain, the thought served as an offering from mortal lips to the omnipresent river gods. It appeared to be more of a formality than it was a declaration, and sure enough we soon found ourselves rally racing the dirt roads toward the majestic Eagle section, stopping not infrequently to ask each other if in fact they really did know the way. I thought to myself what a worthy investment a map would have been. The aptly but similarly-named roads confused us. Was it a right on Soft Maple Road or a left on Red Oak? Then again, I'm sure the map could have been spared in substitution for a friend with a few remaining brain cells.

By the time we had arrived at the Eagle section it was late. There were less than half the cars that had been there the previous day. We climbed our way down to the creek's edge and discovered the water flowing with an increased urgency down the cascading collection of slides and drops. I remember feeling hesitant about putting on, even though the lines appeared much the same as before. I knew that by winter I would regret passing up the fleeting opportunity, that perfect marriage of water and gravity. I turned around and looked for Ted Devoe who was in similar rough shape as I. His eyes were narrow but focused and with assurance he nodded to me and I nodded back in return. I knew then that we would run. When we had reached our vehicles to gear up a worker for the Orion Power Company had already arrived to shut down the flow. He promised us a few extra minutes if we were swift. Assuring him that we would be, we strode off to our separate vehicles and geared up in solitude.

We dropped in from the pond above, over the twenty-foot dam at the top, and down to the first drop. Encouraged to run first, I pulled out from the top eddy with a left-hand stroke and before I could grab a full visual of the rapid below I was bracing off the right-hand pillow and falling quickly. At the bottom of the slide a quick left-hand dufek lined me up for the next steep. Two

careful forward strokes and a strong right sweep through one last diagonal wave was all there was before I was once again falling. Safely in the pool below I rolled up in time to see Ted carrying good momentum down the slide. As he hit the hole beneath the drop he blasted vertically into the air. In graceful reply, he threw the bow of his boat 180 degrees around, landing a perfect air wheel. He paddled into the eddy where I had been waiting and nodded again, this time with a smile. Only a few remaining onlookers shared the moment, yet it is one that I will remember forever.

It is difficult to describe what it is that makes a memory so significant. I felt blessed that day on the Eagle. Though our judgment was at best marginal, we were given a beautiful gift—the gift of the unknown. Not only was the moment perfect in that it occurred without consequence, but it also brought into creation a moment of spontaneity. The river is a miraculous system capable of both beauty and violence. It can as easily unite people from around the globe as it can take from us those closest to our heart. Despite the fine line, we are continuously drawn to it day after day, wherever there's water running over rock. There is a desperate beauty, perhaps, in our need for these rivers just as there is in the rapids themselves. I am forever both humbled and thankful. 

# Book Review

# Laugh of the Water Nymph

Review by Ken Strickland

From time to time a unique convergence of creativity, experience, and insight takes place, and something notable results. The book *Laugh of the Water Nymph* by Doug Ammons is one such convergence. In it, Doug provides stories that capture the experience, magic, and passion of flowing water. For those of us whose lives are inextricably caught up in the river, this book shares the emotions that are at the heart of why we paddle.


Of course this book has been decades in the making. For inspiration Doug draws upon the experience of his many years of paddling the classic rivers of the Northern Rockies, as well as expeditions to the Himalayas, Mexico, and South America. And, when one considers his journeys into the hinterlands of northern Canada and Alaska, where the near mythical river-realms of the Alsek, Stikine, and Susitna abide, it almost seems that the writer-poet has conferred with the River Gods themselves and returned with stories to tell.

People who have enjoyed Doug's stories and essays published in various magazines will find these have been only a hint of what he has been working on. Of the 22 stories in this collection, only 5 have ever before been published. They span every mood, from sheer delight to sadness, satire to white-knuckle dread, from fear to fond remembrance. Ammons uses water to express the feelings which draw us again and again to the water - emotions that many of us are aware of but which we are seldom able to express ourselves. Some stories, like "The Games of the Mayan Gods" and "Fear," lead into metaphorical dimensions when rivers become more than rivers. Others, like "The Tahiti Room," "Waves in the Darkness," and the title story "Laugh of the Water Nymph," eloquently weave quest and myth.

While I have certain favorites,

his story "Counting Coup Along the Yellowstone River" stands out. It's a true account of a bandit run down an illegal river, where the ensuing chase by the authorities to apprehend the culprits reaches epic proportions in manpower and equipment. The personalities, absurdities, and comic twists of the story are a hoot, but at the same time the commentary is so sharp-edged it is worth careful contemplation by river access activists and even key-holding bureaucrats.

A midsection graced with stunning photographs by the renowned outdoor photographer Charlie Munsey and German paddler/photographer Markus Schmid make this instant classic a work of beauty.

This is a book for all paddlers. If you like to read but have trouble finding good river stories, you'll love this book. If you can't stand reading, the photos alone are worth it. And most of all, if you ever want to show somebody - a parent or a friend, young or old - why kayaking is such an incredible sport, all you have to do is give them this book. 



The price is \$29.50 plus \$5.00 S&H in the USA.

Mail order from:  
Water Nymph Press  
415 Keith Ave.  
Missoula, MT 59801

Or visit his website at:  
<http://www.dougammons.com>

Or visit the AW bookstore at:  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/library/>



**CAMP MOR**  
WWW.CAMP MOR.COM  
**CANOE AND KAYAK  
OUTFITTERS**  
DRY BAGS • PFDs • INFLATABLES  
• NEOPRENE CLOTHING  
• CAR RACKS • ACCESSORIES  
**PLUS:**  
• BACKPACKING  
• CLIMBING  
• FAMILY CAMPING  
• RUGGED CLOTHING  
& FOOTWEAR  
**NAME BRANDS AT  
THE LOWEST PRICES**  
AOL  
keyword:  
CAMP MOR  
**CALL FOR OUR FREE CATALOG  
1-(800) 230-2151**  
**Or Write to Us at:**  
PO BOX 700-AW0,  
SADDLE RIVER, N.J.  
07458-0700

# Video Review

## Twitch V

Review by Mike Hoffman

From the start, “Twitch V” goes big.

Opening up in the wilds of Argentina, Tao Berman launches an outrageous 80+ foot jungle waterfall—what might be the money shot for a lesser video—while the opening credits roll. From there the movie cranks up the action and hardly ever slows down.




The latest offering from Videolink Productions clocks in at just under 35 minutes, and not a second is wasted. While this film has everything the genre demands—shuttletruck soundtrack, grand carnage, adolescent humor, and huge whitewater—what sets “Twitch V” apart from your average boater flick is its examination of the professional kayaker’s mindset. Through the paddler’s commentary—specifically Tao Berman’s—the viewer gets an in-depth look at what goes through the mind of a pro. While in Alaska, our heroes discourse on what it takes to make extreme drops go smooth... and why the slightest lapse of focus can lead to some pretty painful consequences. We see guys get wrecked on a line that their buddy just aced. But more importantly, we see them successfully tackle drops that their mate just got spanked on.

The slides and waterfalls in “Twitch V” are among the most extreme ever filmed, even if some of the drops are a bit trashy. From Alaska our heroes finish up by tackling some gnarlier whitewater in the Pacific Northwest. As for the true money shot of the movie, Tao tacksels a slide so large and fast that after I cursed in horror at seeing the impact, I could only shake my head and marvel at how crazy/brave/stupid he really is. In order to pick the proper adjective for “Twitch V’s” star, be sure to check out “Fearless: The Tao Berman Story” in the special features. Combining interviews of Tao and interviews of friends talking about Tao, you get a good idea of what floats around under his helmet. Whether he’s

crazy or controlled is for you to decide, but you can’t really argue that he’s going as big as anyone in the sport.

Combining serious whitewater with thoughtful discussion makes this film work. Throw in a bit of extreme trampoline-ing and some belly slapping and you’ve got a winner of a movie.

Finally, while most every movie has some type of gimmick, “Twitch V” presents a new twist on playboating so innovative and exciting, you can’t help but believe Tao when he says that they’ve discovered a new type of competition playboating. Why should I spoil it? Get this great video and check it out for yourself. 

Join us for the second whitewater release from the Quemahoning Dam - Johnstown, PA

April 22-24  
2005



Amateur Rodeo  
Flat Water Race  
Guided Raft Trip  
Big Silent Auction  
Camping On Site  
Live Entertainment  
Gear Vendors / Demos  
Environmental Exhibits  
Food On Site Sat & Sun  
Great Party!



Stonycreek  
Rendezvous



www.benscreekcanoeclub.com  
814-266-4276

# From the Editor The Last Word



by Ambrose Tuscano

## Continuing Education For Boaters

Not too long ago, I was watching a whitewater video with my friend, Mike, when we fell into an interesting conversation:

Mike: Man, kayakers just aren't very good.

Me: Compared to...?

Mike: I don't know...snowboarders, climbers, surfers, skiers...

Me: How can you compare athletes between sports?

Mike: Well...kayakers just get beat up more often.

It was kind of hard to argue with him. As we spoke, a professional kayaker was throwing himself down a wet, nearly-vertical rock face. As the hull of his boat skipped down the slab, I could only imagine his vertebrae fusing together. Still, this was no different than a snowboarder flying through a steep, rocky chute: it was someone on the leading edge of a potentially extreme sport taking a calculated risk. But it got me thinking....

Why do whitewater enthusiasts have such an unstructured learning process? I know there are very good whitewater schools out there, but I don't know very many boaters who've had any formal instruction. Most kayakers and canoers I know were introduced to the sport by friends; some learned through local clubs. While these are time-honored ways to enter whitewater paddlesports, learning technique from friends and even local club leaders can be dangerous. At some point a paddler needs to have some general principles explained and her own habits critiqued. A simple, "Follow me!" approach can lead to technique that is expedient, but ultimately inefficient and wild.

The upshot of this trial and error approach to learning to boat is a whitewater population with largely unexamined technique. I would feel much better about our sport if I had the sense that many boaters sit around and discuss the forward stroke, that they argue about the best way to roll, that they recognize which of their buddies have the best posture in their boat. This is the kind of dialogue that needs to spread throughout the whitewater community. When it does, not only will everyone's skills improve, but also whitewater paddlesports will be safer.

My idea is that by focusing on skills, we will be able to stop the all-too-common temptation of fantasy boating. Every boater has one or many dream runs that they aspire to someday tackle. In this case, let's say I dream of running the Middle Kings. Obviously, I am fantasizing about this run (instead of doing it) because I know I'm not good enough right now. So before I attempt this river, I should improve my river skills. In addition to becoming better at reading whitewater, and being more comfortable in it, let's say I need to boof better, roll better, and ferry better. I can practice these things for countless hours without necessarily making any improvements to my technique; without some guiding principles, I won't know how to practice these elements properly. Hence, I might eventually get better at reading water, and more comfortable on easier runs, but I would not necessarily be a better technical boater. And if I were to let my drive to run this fantasy river take hold (after all, I feel much better than before), I would be a danger to my group and to myself.

For some reason, paddling over a waterfall seems far more appealing to an intermediate kayaker than dropping off a cliff is to an intermediate skier. Part of

the problem with a sport like ours, is that there is no physical barrier to going beyond our abilities. Rock climbers find that the route they choose prevents their passage if they are not good enough to climb it. Unfortunately, whitewater poses no such barrier; in a fit of temporary insanity, I would be perfectly capable of paddling my kayak right over Niagara Falls. Due to the very nature of our sport, we don't face the consequences of our decisions until it's too late to undo them.

Part of the solution, as I proposed earlier, is to start thinking about how we paddle. When we spend our time practicing the proper technique instead of just the easiest way, we can make great leaps in our whitewater skills. Another benefit of this scenario is that we recognize specific areas where our technique is not good or efficient. This makes us less likely to attempt a river where our deficiencies might cause trouble. In turn, this (hopefully) reduces the chance of premature fantasy fulfillment.

Should the advent of tech-talk seem like an unlikely future for the paddling community, I would like to offer two potential sources of hope. The playboating element of our community spends far more attention to the technical aspects of kayaking and canoeing than the river running element. While not all playboating skills are applicable to river running, many are and many more can shed light onto proper downstream technique. A line of discourse connecting playboating technique and river running technique would do wonders for the entire whitewater community.

Another potential resource for technical whitewater discussion is downriver and slalom racers. While this element of our community has dwindled in recent years, perhaps a renewed interest in these disciplines will benefit paddlers of all

Top Right: Al Gregory running Upper Cherry Creek, in the California Sierra Nevada's.

Next: Shannon Carroll in her element in the Royal Gorge of California's American River.

Photos by Charlie Munsey



stripes. Certainly, no paddler understands the elements of a proper forward stroke like a downriver racer, and no one can talk about quick, efficient turning like a slalom racer. Many practical whitewater skills are used in slalom and downriver racing. Racers tend to arrive at the best technique—otherwise they're not efficient enough to win races. Lucky for us, those efficiencies will also help simple river runners like me become more skilled.

So next time you miss an eddy or blow your line, don't listen to your buddy who says you just didn't paddle hard enough. Recognize instead that you probably were not paddling properly. Determining how to paddle efficiently will help you prevent your mistake in the future; doing more of the same old thing probably won't. **AWW**



Above: Scott Lindgren on the super slides of Dinky Creek, California

Left: Kayaker Brad Lancaster descending "Skyscraper" on California's South Silver run of the American River.

Photos by Charlie Munsey



Star offers a variety of models. Whether you are a professional guide or an amateur boater, Star has the ideal boat for you. Call for a **FREE** catalog!

**EXCITEMENT**

15' Super Bug  
One of 5 bug series models



**ADVENTURE**

14' Hurricane  
One of 4 select series models



**RECREATION**

14' Cataract  
One of 4 cat models



**RELAXATION**

TX200 Tracker Kayak  
One of 8 kayak models



"Revolutionary new designs like the Bug Series have brought Star to the forefront of the rafting industry."

**Factory Direct Pricing**  
Packages with row frames available

**STAR INFLATABLES**

www.starinflatables.com

Toll Free: (877) 900 2628

# Affiliate Clubs

# AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1957 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over 100 clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club consider joining one.

For 2005, AW is excited to announce several programs for AW Affiliate Clubs.

**2nd River Stewardship Institute:** A week-long conservation and access training program designed to prepare river activists with the tools necessary to successfully save their rivers.

**2nd Flowing Rivers Grant Program,** sponsored by Clif Bar

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

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

## **Alaska**

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

## **Alabama**

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

## **Arkansas**

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

## **Arizona**

Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assoc, Flagstaff

## **California**

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

## **Colorado**

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder  
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood  
FiBark Boat Races, Englewood  
Gunnison Valley Paddle Club, Almont  
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs  
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West  
Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, Englewood  
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder  
WATER, Grand Junction

## **Florida**

Project Challenge Inc., Miami

## **Georgia**

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

## **Idaho**

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

## **Illinois**

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Evergreen Park

## **Indiana**

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis  
Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville

## **Iowa**

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

## **Kansas**

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

## **Kentucky**

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

## **Maine**

AMC Maine Chapter, Hallowell

## **Maryland**

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

## **Minnesota**

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater

## **Missouri**

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

## **Montana**

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

## **Nevada**

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

## **New Hampshire**

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

## **New Jersey**

Hunterdon Canoe Club, Flemington  
The Paddling Bares, Milltown

## **New Mexico**

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

## **New York**

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

## **N. Carolina**

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

## **Ohio**

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

## **Oregon**

Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland  
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton  
Pacific Outback, Forest Grove  
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

## **Pennsylvania**

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

## **S. Carolina**

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia



### Tennessee

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

### Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston

### Utah

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

### Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station  
Blue Ridge Voyageurs, McLean  
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington  
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond  
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke

### Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

### Washington

The Mountaineers, Seattle  
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle  
University Kayak Club, Seattle  
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle  
Washington Recreation River Runners, Renton  
Whitman College Whitewater Club, Walla Walla

### West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Assoc., S. Charleston

### Wisconsin

Badger State Boating Society, Waukesha  
Hoofers Outing Club, Madison  
Northern Paddle and Trail, Rhinelander  
Pure Water Paddlers, Eau Claire  
River Alliance of Wisconsin, Madison  
Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, LaCrosse

### Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson Hole

### Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

### Canada, Ontario

Madawaska Kanu Camp Inc., Ottawa

## Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Carla Miner  
Membership Coordinator

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

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

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

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

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

## Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

### "10" Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for a spot in the AW 2005 River Stewardship Institute.

**For more information,**  
contact Carla Miner at  
[membership@amwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@amwhitewater.org)  
AW Outreach Office at 828-252-0728  
or sign-up on-line at:  
[www.americanwhitewater.org/membership](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership)

# Guidelines for Contributors



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Send your material to:  
Journal Editor  
1424 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring MD 20910  
E-mail: [editor@amwhitewater.org](mailto:editor@amwhitewater.org)

## American Whitewater River Festivals

### DEERFIELD RIVER FESTIVAL

JULY 29th - 31st

CHARLEMONT, MA

### GAMBEL RIVER FESTIVAL

SEPT. 23rd - 25th

SUMMERSVILLE, WV



[www.americanwhitewater.org/events](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/events)



2009 S Main St.  
Moscow, ID 83843

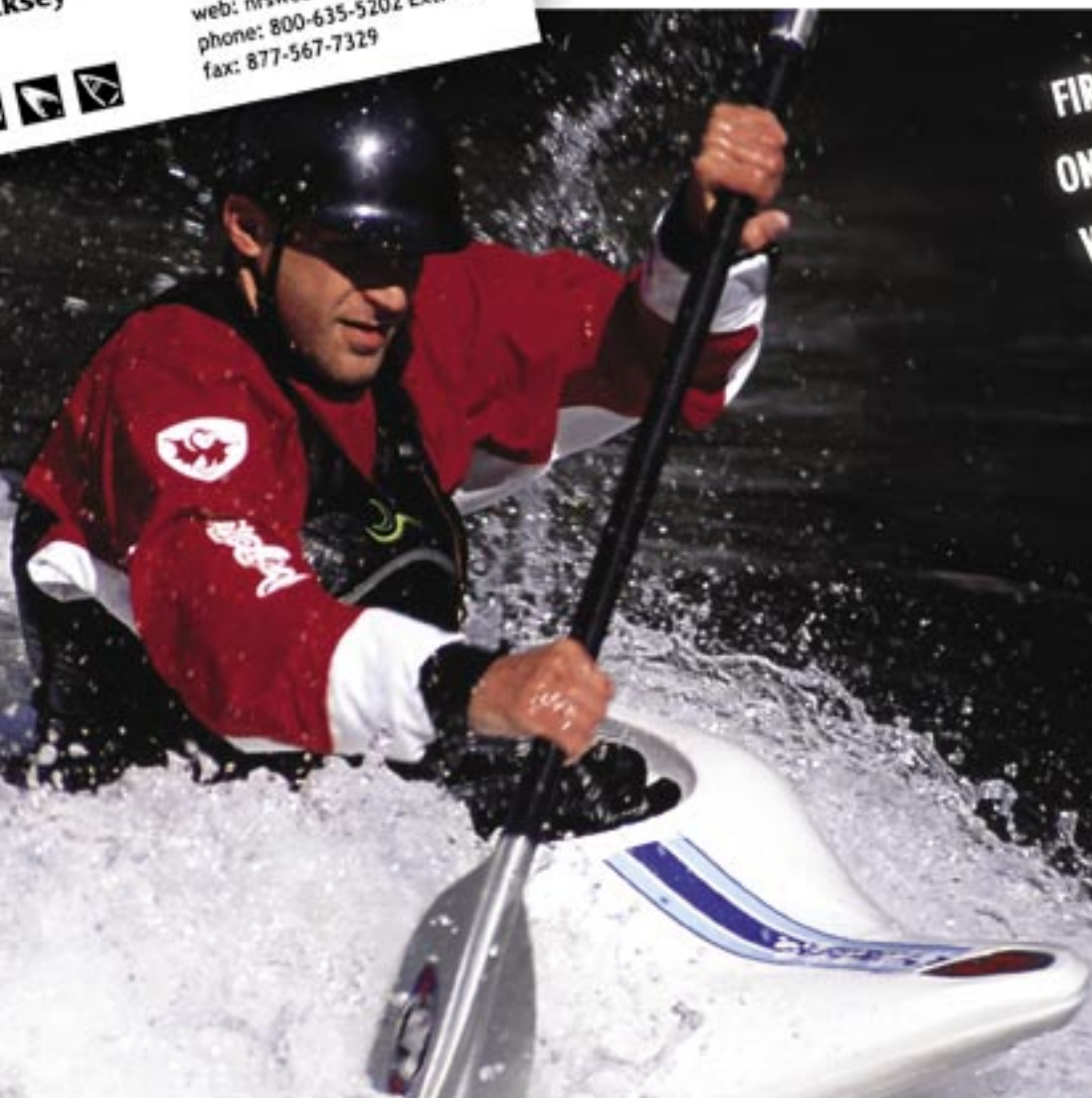
**Ellis Cucksey**  
Team NRS



web: [nrsweb.com](http://nrsweb.com)  
phone: 800-635-5202 Ext. 264  
fax: 877-567-7329

If you want to paddle twelve months of the year like I do, give me a call, I'll point you in the direction of your nearest dealer and send you a free catalog. Or go to [nrsweb.com](http://nrsweb.com), where you'll find great deals on everything you need.

**FIRST  
ON THE  
WATER®**



Ellis Cucksey, Team NRS, surfs a DragoRossi Squashtail, Clearwater, Idaho. ©John Bales/NRS

## **FREE CATALOG**

**FREE CALL 1-800-635-5202**

**or go to [www.nrsweb.com](http://www.nrsweb.com)**

Find a NRS dealer near you: [www.nrsweb.com/dealerlocator](http://www.nrsweb.com/dealerlocator)



wherever there's water. *Dagger.com*



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

**A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY**

**AW Journal**  
1424 Fenwick Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Change Service Requested

NON- PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT #127  
NEWARK OHIO