



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
March/April 2007

Introduction to Whitewater

Growing an OC Club Takes TLC

Life-changing Experiences From a Class II+ Paddler

A Father Contemplates the Significance of the Roll

Breakthrough on the Chattooga Headwaters
First Legal Descent in Over 30 Years!



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AMERICAN WHITewater

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

March/April 2007 - Volume #47 - Issue #2

COLUMNS

- 3 The Journey Ahead by Mark Singleton
- 4 Letters to the Editor
- 6 Safety First by Eric Nies
- 8 History: Whitewater Firsts by Sue Taft
- 10 News & Notes
- 50 Strength Training for Kayakers, Part II by Matt Young
- 58 Accident Summary by Charlie Walbridge
- 64 Corporate Partners Interview



STEWARDSHIP

- 14 Stewardship Updates by Thomas O'Keefe, Kevin Colburn
- 18 Settlement On The San Joaquin by Dave Steindorf
- 20 Rediscovering the Chattooga Headwaters by Don Kinser



FEATURE - Introduction to Whitewater

- 32 Confessions of a Class II ++ Boater by Santha Clark
- 40 Introducing People to Whitewater Canoeing by Mark Scantlebury
- 44 Vision: the Case of T-Bone Holecrusher by Brian Snyder
- 46 The Roll by Philip Urban



RIVER VOICES

- 54 Remembering Vladamir Vanha by Ken Kastorff

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Chattooga Cliff's section above Ben Pen Road

Photo by Brian D. Jacobson Trout Lip Video LLC



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Purpose American Whitewater

River Stewardship: An Integrated Approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

EDUCATION: AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

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

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



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The Journey Ahead

Journey Ahead

By Mark Singleton

It had to happen sometime! After a decade of pressure from AW, four inches of rain and a lawsuit filed last May against the Forest Service, boaters finally got on the Chattooga Headwaters for the first legal descent in 30 years. This was not your run of the mill day on the creek; it was a select group of paddlers chosen to provide feedback as part of a scientific study conducted by Forest Service consultants. What they found confirmed AW's assertion that this river is a national treasure.

For those not immediately familiar with the recent history of the Chattooga Headwaters, a boating ban has been in place since 1976 for the headwaters of this remarkable national wild and scenic river. AW successfully appealed a 2004 Forest Service management plan that upheld the ban. In that process, the Chief of the Forest Service directed the Regional Forester to conduct the first valid scientific study to examine river use by ordering a user capacity analysis. In May of 2006, AW (with local canoe clubs and ACA) filed suit against the Forest Service seeking injunctive relief and access to the river. In the language of our attorneys, the three-decade closure is "arbitrary and capricious." While the lawsuit was dismissed (and appealed), it did put a great deal of pressure on the Forest Service to conduct a sound user capacity analysis. Thus, this January 5th and 6th, boaters got on the water legally for the first time in 30 years. A firsthand account of the boater trials can be found on page 20 of this issue of *American Whitewater*.

That the Chattooga has become such a lightning rod speaks to a lack of management and enforcement; campsites and fire rings litter the water's edge and careless campers leave trash that spills over the river banks (see photo). It seems, that here on the upper reaches of the Chattooga, the only management practice that is enforced is the boating ban.


Philosophically, our actions and lawsuit

have pitted us against other environmental groups that would like to see the closure maintained to protect their groups' solitude. Unfortunately, some in this debate have mischaracterized boaters as reckless thrill-seekers who diminish the serenity of wilderness. This friction within the environmental community that shares so many common goals is a byproduct of provincial thinking and an unwillingness to acknowledge that no single type of legitimate wilderness user has a superior right to solitude.

As an organization, AW's highest and greatest purpose is to promote stewardship of our national whitewater resources. In this case, stewardship includes nationally consistent management based on rigorous science and wilderness users traveling under human power (in this case paddling). The notion that one type of wilderness-compliant user deserves a wilderness experience more than any other flies in the face of the sustainable stewardship ethic.

As the Forest Service user capacity analysis shifts gears from data collection to shaping a management decision, there will be an opportunity for public comments. Meetings are being planned now for late spring that will impact the future of river

management nationally. Make no mistake, this is much more than a local feud. Many eyes within federal land management agencies are watching. What happens here may affect rivers in your backyard. If this closure is upheld other rivers will likely see "zoning" implemented as a management policy.

It is critical for boaters across the country to participate in the upcoming public dialog. The meetings being planned for later this spring will solicit public input and shape management decisions nationwide. Attending meetings, writing letters and submitting comments to Forest Service message boards are all arrows in our quiver. Your participation as a boater is imperative! Stay tuned to the AW web site for information on meetings and how to submit comments. When the time comes, your voice will count. National treasures like the Chattooga Headwaters belong to all of us. It's time to put management practices in place that benefit all wilderness compliant users and preserve an amazing national jewel for future generations. 

The all-too-common result of summer use at Burrell's Ford.



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I always eagerly read *American Whitewater*, but I find it incredibly frustrating and perhaps even arrogant on your part that there is rarely geographical information in the articles. Would it kill you to add a line here and there about where these things are that you are presenting?

For example, stewardship articles rarely say where the rivers are that are being restored, studied, or granted or denied access or flows.

Articles on festivals often leave the reader little to go by about where the event is, if the location is not in the event's name. Am I to assume that the 24th Annual National Paddling Film Festival was somewhere in Kentucky because Kentucky Ale and Kentucky bluegrass music were consumed? At least some events list a web site, so I could look it up (although I'd rather know without that extra step), but many do not.

Even descriptions of play spots often neglect to say how one might find them. One exception that comes to mind was the article about the International Whitewater Hall of Fame in McHenry, MD. It even had a map! Also, Charlie Walbridge generally identifies where the rivers he mentions are in the Whitewater Accident Summary. These are breaths of fresh air in an otherwise dark geographical cave.

I have a hard time believing that I am the only one who does not know where all of these rivers or paddling-related film events, etc. are located.

So, please, could you make it a point to identify a nearby town or at least the state the rivers or events described in articles in *American Whitewater*? I would be happy just with a town name as the first item in an article under the writer's byline, like in newspaper articles. Maps would be even better, but that may be too much to ask (being in the publishing industry myself, I know what a hassle creating maps can be, as well as how much space they can take, but I also know how much value they can add to an article).

Thanks,
Lennard Zinn
Boulder, Colorado

Dear Editor,

As usual The November/December issue of *American Whitewater* contains articles that are informative and interesting and the photography is good.

While I appreciate that this issue features "Creek Boating," there are, however, a couple of points that I would like to make. First of all, I found no reference to open canoes or C1s. Secondly, most of the rivers featured in the articles were either difficult or extreme. If this were confined to a single issue I would not be writing this letter. However, I see this emphasis as a disturbing trend.

AW performs an excellent service to the country's paddlers, including protecting rivers and promoting safety. To do this I know you are heavily dependant on support from members and paddling clubs and that consequently you need as broad a support as possible to meet your financial commitments. I think that you need to make sure that by publishing issues like this November/December one, you do not create the impression that AW is an organization solely for elitist kayakers.

Keep up the good work, but be sure you don't narrow your focus,

Maurice Blackburn

Maurice,

One common misconception about American Whitewater is that it's run by people who only want to promote "X" at the expense of "Y." Believe me, we've received countless letters and comments in the past questioning our lack of attention to one region, discipline, or ability level. Because we cannot pay our authors or photographers for their work, we have little control over the topics our contributors choose to focus on. Our reply has been, uniformly, that we do not discriminate against stories based on their subject (so long as they have something to do with whitewater rivers), only their quality. So you see, the remedy for those complaining of any bias in our publication is to please send us content to address the situation. For example, over the past six months, our Midwestern members have responded to the challenge admirably and have thereby received a greater share of our magazine.

Should you choose to organize a group of enthusiasts to write about open canoeing, C1-ing or any other topic, you will almost certainly find your group better represented. I encourage you and all AW members to continue to take ownership in American Whitewater—both the magazine and organization.

Sincerely,
Ambrose Tuscano

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DRY BAGS

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to Mark Twitchell's letter in the Nov/Dec issue of American Whitewater criticizing the publicity of solo kayaking, and particularly my 10-day solo descent of Rio Sirupa/Yaqui in Mexico.


Solo boating *per se* is not dangerous. Would anyone argue that a solo paddle across a lake is "dangerous?" How about a Class II river, or an often-crowded Class IV river like the main Tuolumne (California)? Where you draw the line depends on your confidence in your abilities, and this varies from person to person.

I agree that it is not the best idea to paddle alone on Class V whitewater. In the Rio Sirupa article, I intentionally stated that I portaged all of the solid Class V rapids that I came upon. If topo maps suggest a river will have un-portageable Class V, I await a

companion with whom to do the trip.

Even when paddling Class V with others, there usually are situations in which partners cannot help each other. These situations have proved fatal in such well-known instances as Rich Weiss' death on the White Salmon, Chuck Kern's fatal pin in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, and Doug Gordon's flush drowning on the Yarlung Tsangpo. The additional risk undertaken when running drops at which partners cannot help is similar to the additional risk undertaken when doing a river solo, yet is rarely criticized the same way.

All paddling involves risks. The forefront of the sport will always be considered particularly "dangerous." Should we have suppressed publication of the Yarlung

Tsangpo expeditions, Walt Blackadar's solo descent of Turnback Canyon, Ed Gillette's unsupported California-to-Hawaii kayak crossing, or Powell's journey down the Grand Canyon? All these trips may be considered to show elements of "stupidity," "lack of judgment," or "death wishes," and encourage imitation. However, it seems absurd to consider suppressing such accounts, whether done solo or not. 

Regards,
Rocky Contos



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Safety First

Beginner Safety Gear: What to bring

By Eric Nies

So you're a newbie, and you want to know what safety stuff to bring on the river. Here's a list to get you started:

Good river clothes

If you are underdressed and going hypothermic, you are no fun to be around, and no one will invite you on their next trip. So, invest in some good clothes (drytop, neoprene shorts, whatever) and wear them when you need them. And remember, you are the designated rookie. This means you will generally be flipping, swimming, and getting thrashed more than your ninja buddies. It's good form to wear a little more than they do.

If you can't decide between the drytop and the paddle jacket, go with the drytop and wear a light layer under it. If you're too hot, you can always cool down with some roll practice. And even on a nice day, neoprene shorts are always a good bet, since they add some core warmth, a bit of flotation and pad some critical areas during swims. If you want, bring some light nylon shorts along for lunchtime—you can even wear them over your neoprene on the river.

Good footwear

If you are doing any kind of river run, wear shoes. They will protect you during a swim, and let you scamper on rocks with grace and confidence. Later on, when it's time for you to bail out one of your less experienced buddies, shoes can make the difference between being there with that throw rope in time and watching your

(former) pal doggie paddle into the next rapid while you tip-toe through briars and over sharp, scalding rocks. Sneakers are fine, but proper river shoes (either booties or sandals) with super-sticky river rubber really do grip better.

Floatbags

My very first kayak had heavy, slimy vinyl floatbags that leaked. I hated them. So when I got good and stopped swimming all the time, I stopped using them. Now floatbags are light, strong, and reliable, and I have them back in my boat full-time. Sure, they make the boat lighter and easier to manage during a routine swim. I think, though, that they also give the deck and walls some real support, and so make the boat stronger and safer in pins and other more troublesome situations.

Floatbags are great insurance, but only if they stay in your boat, so TIE THEM IN. I've seen plenty of floatbags that auto-ejected from boats during various misadventures. Pumping your bags up tight is a good idea, but this alone will not keep your bags in your boat. For stern bags, figure out a neat, tidy way to tie them in to the rear edge of your seat. I use superlight nylon clips. Check out the hardware section of www.seattlefabrics.com for ideas. You can also figure out ways to tie bags to the foam walls, but I've seen walls auto-eject from boats as well. The seat is generally your best anchor.

A good rope

When you are running a river, take a rope. Don't ask your buddies if you need your rope today. Just bring it. Funky rescues often need multiple lines, and even if you don't know what to do with your rope, someone else should.

There are a couple of ways to wear a throw-rope, either in a life-jacket pouch or on a special waist belt. I've played with this a bunch, and for me the jury is still out. These days, I just carry my rope in my boat, either clipped behind my seat or in my water bottle holder between my knees.

However you choose to carry your rope, make ABSOLUTELY SURE that it can't accidentally deploy out of its bag if you swim. Loose ropes in the river are truly horrible hazards. The classic error is to clip a carabiner on the end of the rope that comes out of the mouth of the bag (the end that you hold onto when you throw), and then to use this same carabiner to clip the bag into your boat. If your boat takes a thrashing, inevitably the top of the bag will loosen up and the rope will worm its way out of the bag. It's much better to clip the bag itself, or the other end of the rope, into your boat. Just remember to take off the 'biner before you throw your rope (your buddy may be a little less thankful for the rescue if you give him a black eye in the process).

Less expensive river ropes come with hardware-store grade polypropylene line. This is fine for the usual throws to swimmers. For any kind of tricky ropework—unpinning a kayak, say, or trying to pull a strainer out of a rapid—special river rescue ropes are the way to go. These ropes usually contain super-strong Spectra™ or Dyneema™ fiber, either alone or blended with polypropylene.

My thinking is, if you're bringing a rope, why not bring a real rope? Splurge on a nice 60-ft Spectra throw bag. One day you might be glad you did. And remember, rope doesn't last forever. I replace my throwbag every two years or so.

Two compact locking carabiners

In the last issue of *American Whitewater*, I sang the praises of locking carabiners, and I will do so again here. They are usually beefier and more robust than non-locking carabiners, and offer much more security with only a small penalty in terms of cost, weight, and hassle factor. Two will be plenty. Get the kind with screw-type locks, and use one to clip your rope into your boat and one to attach your drybag. I usually leave them unlocked in my boat, and lock them only when I'm doing technical or rescue stuff.

A good drybag

You'll want to bring some goodies on the river, and you'll want them to stay dry. So get a small, high-quality drybag. Along with your lunch, pack some cheap insurance, namely:

First Aid—keep it simple: a little ziplock bag with duct tape, Motrin, band aids, Ace wrap, Steristrips, maybe a SAM splint and a CPR facemask will be plenty.

Disaster kit—Space blanket bag, waterproof (piezoelectric) lighter, fire starter, small waterproof headlamp, warm hat, energy bar, \$10 bill, and coins for the phone (Rumor has it there are few payphones left out there!). Add to this as needed. Your backband will eventually break as well (usually halfway down your first hard run), so figure out a way to cowboy something together when this happens. Some folks carry a six-foot cam strap for this eventuality.

Rescue-style life jacket (maybe?)

Rescue jackets have a quick release chest harness, as well as a short tether that hooks into the harness in the back, and ends in a carabiner attaching to your waist or chest. The harness/tether has three main uses. First you can tow things with the tether—paddles, boats, ropes, even an unconscious swimmer. Second, someone can clip a rope into your harness and secure you while you do something scary, like wading above a bad drop. Third, if you get pinned, but someone can get a line to you, you can clip that line to your tether. The line then becomes a way to pull you out of the pin.


Some would argue that rookies do not have the kind of judgment and river sense needed to use a rescue jacket safely. This point has a lot of merit. Fortunately, it is an option to buy a rescue jacket, use it initially without the tether or harness, then add these items as your experience grows and as the situation demands.

For ANYONE with a rescue jacket, it's a really bad idea to let your first time using it be a real-case scenario. I remember when a buddy of mine became the second swimmer in a rescue because he didn't know how to use his rescue jacket correctly. Oops. There are lots of good weekend courses that can give you practice with these things. Take one.

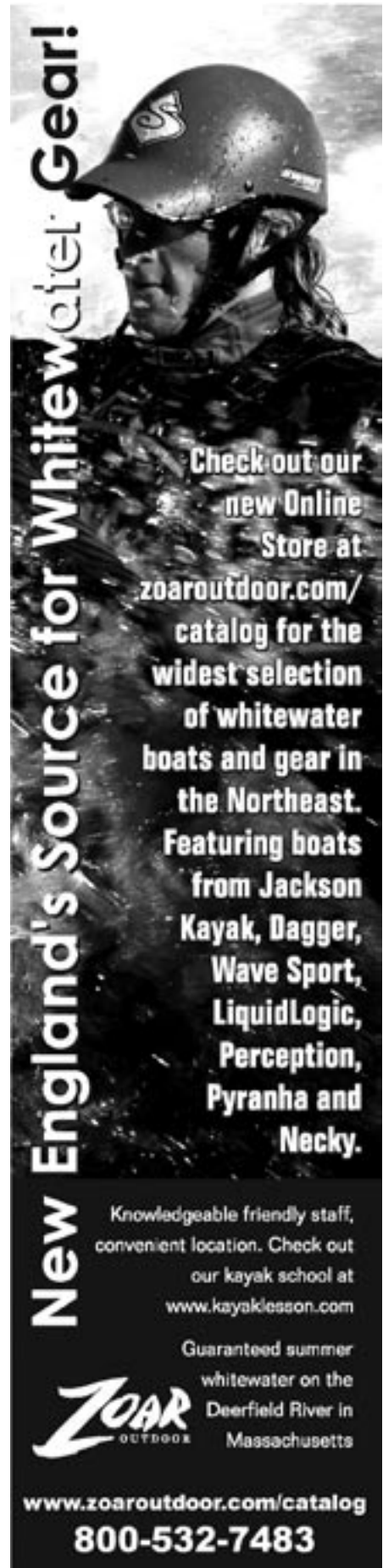
Whistle and knife

The standard lifejacket accessories. The last time I used my knife was to slice a mango at the take-out (and it was really good), but I have occasionally needed it for something more important. I have a folding knife with a short locking blade that opens one-handed. I keep it on a three-foot leash so I don't lose it in the river. The knife and leash stow in a zippered pocket on my life jacket.

And you gotta have a whistle, but please, do not use it casually. Remember your three basic signals: the super-brief chirp ("I need your attention, so stop picking your nose"), the longer single toot ("I could really use some help, so get moving"), and the repeated mega-blast ("Somebody is trying to die over here!"). Be warned: every time you use your whistle, everyone within earshot will stop and look to see what disaster is about to unfold, and everyone's pulse will double. If there is no disaster, everyone will be very mad at you for scaring the hell out of them.

So, there's your list. Good gear on your body and a few things that you throw in your boat every time as a matter of course. With this stuff, you'll be thrashing through your next epic with style and savvy. And, when you become a seasoned pro, you'll be a good role model for the next generation of rookies in your group because you'll always be prepared. 

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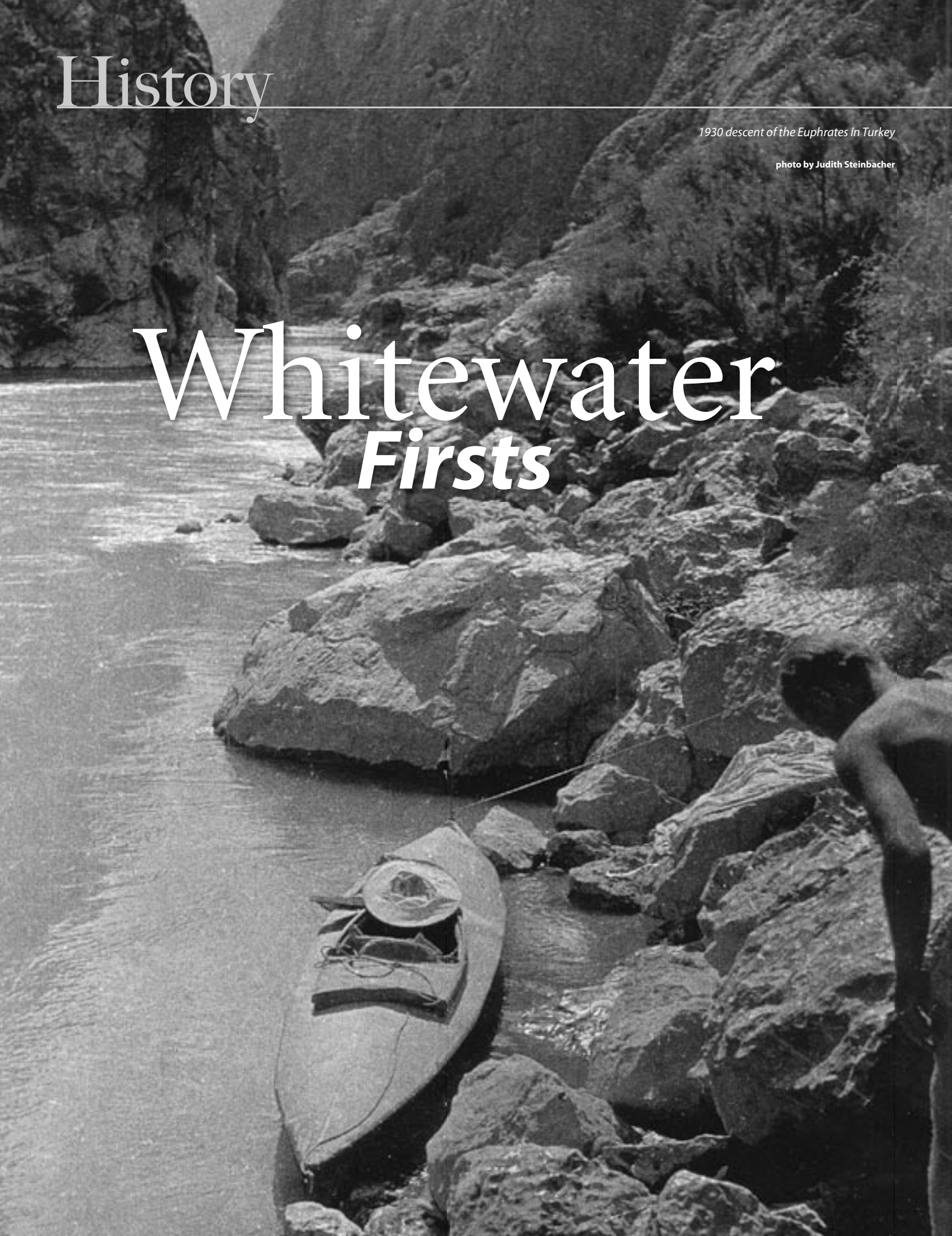
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History

1930 descent of the Euphrates in Turkey

photo by Judith Steinbacher

Whitewater *Firsts*





By Sue Taft

A 2000 descent of California's South Yuba

photo courtesy of The River Chasers

Like all sports, ours honors those who are "first." In many cases, whitewater honors first descents of waterfalls or rivers, the first to perform a specific maneuver, or the first to design a specific shape of boat or gear. However, defining what constitutes a first, let alone identifying who deserves credit for it, is often not that easy.

In many cases, the person honored for being first may not be the actual first but rather the person whose accomplishment had the greatest impact. Tom Johnson is one of those people. We honor him for designing the first rotationally molded whitewater kayak in 1973. His kayak, the River Chaser, produced by Hollowform, not only changed whitewater paddling, it also provided the basis for rotationally molded kayaks in all of paddlesports. However, the River Chaser may not have actually been the first rotationally molded river kayak. During the same year, Pierre Arcouette (owner of LPA Plastics in Quebec) designed and produced the River Runner, an entry-level kayak. He chose a non-traditional manufacturing and distribution route—his kayaks were molded in a factory-on-wheels, a rock-and-roll oven on a trailer. For two years, Pierre and his manufacturing operations traveled across the country, producing kayaks for outfitters and retailers. However, the River Runner never caught on the way the River Chaser did. Neither did the paddlesports industry's recognition of LPA's role in inventing rotationally molded kayaks.


Steve Chamberlin is another whose contribution may be remembered for its impact rather than its timing. He is often considered the first designer of offset-center cockpit slalom C-2s. However, Steve readily acknowledges that his design was not

the first, but was, rather, the first successful design. The year before his Gemini Mark II design rocked the whitewater slalom scene, Johnnie Evans built an offset-center design for the '75 World Championships. While the concept was good, the design was not, leaving Johnnie and his partner Carl Toepfner to finish 23rd out of 26 competitors. But even Johnnie's design was not the first innovation with offset center cockpits. The original concept was incorporated six years earlier at the '69 World Championships in a wildwater C-2 design by Alain Feuillette of France.

Often, even firsts which should be cut-and-dried are not. Tom Johnson is recognized by DuPont as the first to build a whitewater kayak using Kevlar® (a registered trademark of DuPont). In 1973, DuPont provided him with Kevlar to build a whitewater kayak, which they thought was the first appearance of Kevlar in a whitewater design. Until recently, their marketing brochures even included a photograph of Tom paddling his Kevlar kayak (his Bronco design, which was the basis for the aforementioned River Chaser). However, before DuPont even assigned the name "Kevlar" to the product, word about this a new material, PRD-49, spread through the young paddlesport industry.

Jim Henry, co-founder of Mad River Canoes, got his hands on PRD-49 from a DuPont sales rep and used it in both kayak and canoe prototypes. Mad River was probably the first molder/laminator to commercially produce Kevlar canoes. Dave Demaree, founder/owner of Demaree Inflatable Boats (DIB), worked at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds (ordinance testing for the military) and managed to get his hands on PRD-49. He, too, built prototype whitewater boats. And then there is Bill Masters (the founder of Perception), who was an engineer at one of the mills in South Carolina where Kevlar may have been first woven into fabric. He was another who built early prototype kayaks with this new material. So, who really was the first?

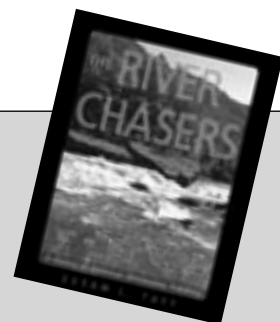
First descents are particularly problematic. What constitutes a first descent? Is it the first person to run every drop? Does it have to be a continuous descent? Does water level factor into the criteria? What constitutes runnable? Depending on the criteria, John Wesley Powell might not be assigned the first descent of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

Sometimes we get a little too carried away in trying to determine the actual first, losing sight of the bigger picture. Perhaps we should instead honor the feats and firsts in the context of the time and place, and in the case of first descents, the intestinal fortitude it took at the time they were made. Sometimes "one of the first" is the only accolade we can give with any degree of certainty. After all, this is a sport made famous by people who regularly pushed their boundaries. 

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Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers, The History of American Whitewater Canoeing and Kayaking*. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, e-mail it to editor@amwhitewater.org and look for its answer in an upcoming issue.



News & Notes

NH Paddler Honored for River Conservation Efforts

Mark Lacroix of Thornton, NH was the recipient of a “Lifetime Achievement Award” presented by The Merrimack Valley Paddlers (MVP). The award was given for his extraordinary volunteer efforts to promote whitewater paddling and river conservation. This is not the first recognition Lacroix has received for his conservation efforts. Several years ago he was selected by American Whitewater to be the organization’s New Hampshire Representative.

In presenting the award, Merrimack Valley Paddlers President Bill Smith noted some of the many contributions Lacroix has made. These include organizing river clean ups, leading beginner whitewater clinics, publishing an annual Paddlers Almanac with information on rivers, whitewater festivals, scheduled releases etc. Lacroix has also been successful in advocating for whitewater and other recreational interests through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission during the hydropower re-licensing process on several New Hampshire rivers. Smith commented, “Mark has merged his love of rivers with his technological know how for the benefit of paddlers everywhere.” For many years he has served as webmaster for the club’s web site, www.mvpcclub.org, and he was one of the original volunteers in the American Whitewater “streamkeeper” project. As a streamkeeper, Lacroix has traveled throughout New England paddling rivers, writing detailed descriptions, taking digital photos of rapids, public access spots, and river hazards and then uploading them onto a public database on the American Whitewater web site americanwhitewater.org.

Lacroix also authored the Winnepesaukee River Recreational Plan and presented it to the Winnepesaukee Watershed Management legislative committee in



November of 2006. The committee is currently studying the plan, which calls for scheduling summer releases of water from the Lakeport Dam on weekends, thereby drawing whitewater paddlers to the Winnepesaukee River and providing an economic boost to the downstream communities of Franklin, Tilton and Northfield.

Smith also commented, “It is important to acknowledge Mark’s wife (and paddling partner), Sharon Lacroix, who is also an avid paddler and has not only been supportive of the various conservation efforts that Mark has been involved in but has been an active participant in many of them as well.” They met over 20 years ago while paddling the Hudson River Gorge. Mark and Sharon reside in Thornton, NH. Mark is employed as a Project Engineer by Spraying Systems of Hudson, NH.

Reno River Festival Brings Reno to Life with Adventure Right in the Heart of Downtown

RENO, Nev. – In 1999, when a group of local businessmen and paddlers recommended that the Nevada Commission on Tourism (NCOT) explore the possibility of transforming downtown Reno’s Truckee River into a whitewater park and whitewater slalom racing course, they hardly imagined the impact their “recommendation” would have not only on the city, but on whitewater recreation itself.

Shortly thereafter, NCOT met with the necessary city and county agencies including the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority (RSCVA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss the project. A feasibility study was conducted and a plan for the project was quickly underway. By August 2003 work had begun on the \$1.5 million park, the first of its kind in the nation, right in the heart of Reno’s arts and entertainment corridor and just steps away from gaming properties, restaurants, theaters and nightlife.

By November 2003, crews had completed the 1,200-foot slalom and 1,600-foot freestyle courses featuring 11 drop pools, 7,000 tons of boulders for easy access, spectator seating and an under-bridge pedestrian walkway connecting one side of the park to the other. Its deep pools help to keep the abundant fresh water cool in the summer and provide a good habitat for fish, while strategically placed “soft spots” within the park allow room to accommodate heavy equipment required during any necessary reconstruction efforts without damaging any existing park features. These “soft spots” are simply parts of each course that were not altered or cemented in place for maintenance purposes. Because the park is divided into

two channels by an island, crews are able to block one channel while repairs are made to one side and then easily move to the other.

In May 2004, to commemorate the completion of Reno's new attraction, the Reno River Festival was born. The first ever competition drew competitors in the freestyle, boatercross and downriver categories, along with approximately 5,000 spectators for a weekend of professional competition, live music, movie premieres, product displays and clinics. Now in its fourth season, and doubling in attendance with each passing year, the Reno River Festival has quickly become one of the largest whitewater festivals in the nation, attracting more than 20,000 people in 2006. In 2007, the festival will convert from its traditional professional invitational competition to an entirely open format.

"To see the progression the Reno River Festival has made in such a short time is truly amazing," said Jim Litchfield, one of the park's designers and an advocate for its development. "The fact that we can go from an invitational format to an open format in less than five years and still keep the level of competition at an all-time high is very exciting and really speaks to the caliber of event we put on here each year."

This conversion also speaks to the benefits that the City of Reno, the festival and whitewater paddlesports themselves have gained since the inception of the Truckee River Whitewater Park at Wingfield. Upon completion of the park, downtown Reno's River District blossomed as restaurants, cafes, bars and shops opened soon thereafter. The whitewater park played a significant role in what has been coined "Reno's Renaissance" by national media. What they are finding is a revived, rejuvenated core that appeals to more than just whitewater enthusiasts. It's an environment that is fostering a community with live music, art and entertainment, as

well as a gathering place for an afternoon stroll through the park or family outing.

"The construction of the whitewater park truly contributed to the transformation that is taking place in downtown Reno. Businesses seemed to pop up over night and suddenly the River District is a core attraction for the region," said Mary Paoli, communications manager for the RSCVA. "Thousands of people are visiting the whitewater park each year with a large percentage attending the River Festival each May. This is a further testament to the fact that the park is being embraced beyond the whitewater community. Parents bring their children to play on the banks of the river, tubers and swimmers play in the rapids and the pools, young people stroll through the park watching kayakers in the water and countless locals lay out their beach towels in hopes of catching a few rays. The whitewater park has become a center of our community and the Reno River Festival is a celebration of all the river has brought us."

While the park has contributed to the Reno-Tahoe area, it has also benefited the whitewater community as a whole. By increasing community awareness of whitewater paddlesports, as demonstrated by the thousands of spectators who flock to the Reno River Festival annually, the Truckee River Whitewater Park has also increased awareness of the need for water safety. The free safety clinics hosted throughout the Reno River Festival help patrons learn about the importance of water safety and also the fun that can be had by persons properly prepared to play in a living river.

Thirteen-year-old Jason Craig is a prime example. A free clinic participant at the first Reno River Festival in 2004, Craig quickly took to the water and within two years became the youngest person ever to paddle the Scookumchuck, at age 11. He is now the reigning Junior National Freestyle champion, training daily with Reno local

and 2003 World Freestyle champion and good friend, Jay Kincaid.

The 4th annual Reno River Festival takes place May 10 - 13, 2007 at the Truckee River Whitewater Park in downtown Reno. For more details, log on to www.RenoRiverFestival.com. Bigger and better than ever, this year's event includes a charity raft race, intense kayaking competition, boatercross and downriver races, live music, food, hundreds of vendors and free entertainment throughout the weekend. It's Reno-Tahoe, America's Adventure Place, coming to life.

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Hydroelectric Dam Won't Harm Superb Kayaking at Cascadas Micos (Mexico), but Growth Could

By Tom Robey

If Cascadas Micos were in the United States it would have a permit system to control what would surely be overwhelming demand at its turquoise waterfalls. The seven or so waterfalls ranging up to 30 feet in height and sub-tropical climate draw paddlers from across the United States, especially during the winter holidays. The drops are so forgiving that even beginning kayakers can tackle them, but plunging 30 feet is such a rush that even experienced boaters run them over and over. For a repeat, you simply shoulder your boat and hike it back up the path to the put-in. The falls are located near Ciudad Valles in the state of San Luis Potosí, Mexico, a mere six-hour drive south of the border at Brownsville, Texas. This area of Mexico is known as the Huasteca Potosina.


Late in 2006 rumors of a new hydroelectric project at Cascadas Micos reached me in Santa Fe, NM. Cascadas Micos already supports two hydroelectric plants which divert some water, but the reports I heard suggested that the new dam would completely dry up the river.

My family and I traveled down to San Luis Potosí during the last week of December, 2006, to visit with old and new friends and to find out more about the new hydroelectric project. Upon my arrival to the Ciudad Valles area I once again met up with Juan Ignacio Torres Landa to visit his Huasteca Secreta eco-tourism project (huastecasecreta.com). By happenstance, when Juan Ignacio and I were in El Naranjo the first morning, we

were introduced to Beiman Cano Ramírez, the superintendent for the hydroelectric facilities. Sr. Ramírez assured us that the new project at Cascadas Micos would not divert any more water from the river. The two existing hydroelectric facilities currently each divert 1.4 cms when both are running in the wet season. During the dry season (winter) only the lower power plant is used. Both power plants are quite old, and the project is an upgrade that will significantly increase the amount of electricity generated. After the upgrade is completed the lower plant will use another 1.3 cms, or 2.7 cms total. However, during the dry season (when most U.S. kayakers are visiting) only the upper plant will be used, and it will still divert only 1.4 cms. Moreover, the upper plant returns water to the river after the first or second waterfall of the seven on the Cascadas Micos run so that the lower falls all have their full quotient of water. It was not all good news, however, as we also learned that the Mexican federal government has been issuing deep groundwater pumping permits near the headwaters at Tula, Tamaulipas, which could affect the springs that supply the river.

The fear that the new hydroelectric upgrade would dry up the river might have been valid had the project been in the United States. However, as I have seen before, Mexicans care about their land, and they work to protect their natural environmental resources. They often do better at protecting their scenic places from development than we do in the US. Nonetheless, development is coming to the Huasteca Potosina, and it may eventually take water out of the rivers. One way the boating community can help keep water in the rivers is to go run them to help demonstrate their value as wet rivers. Outdoor recreation and related tourism can help provide jobs and

economic incentives to preserve a unique region with special resources.

Even for locals, Cascadas Micos is a significant tourist draw in the eastern part of the state of San Luis Potosí, and there are other spectacular natural attractions nearby. The Huasteca Potosina is a region of karst limestone that abounds with underground rivers, travertine waterfalls and large springs. A short distance southwest of Cascadas Micos, Cascada Tamul on the Río Gallinas is a breathtaking 345-foot waterfall (which falls into the kayakable Río Santa Maria to form the Río Tampaón). Smaller rivers in the area are formed not by erosion but by deposition. As a result waterfalls are very common, and the rivers tend to have other characteristics unusual to rivers in the US. In addition, the Sierra Gorda Biosphere lies to the southwest and El Cielo Biosphere lies to the north, and both have runnable rivers on their northern borders. 

Tom Robey is the author of A Gringo's Guide to Mexican Whitewater. For more information visit: sagemesa.com.

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Stewardship Updates

AW Comes to Portland (OR) this Spring

By Thomas O'Keefe

AW would like to invite our members and supporters to a dinner at McMenamins Kennedy School in Portland, Oregon on Saturday, April 28th at 6:30 pm. American Whitewater's Board of Directors will be meeting in Portland, and we want to use this opportunity to meet the local community. Make your reservation now for the event and join your local hosts, Thomas O'Keefe, Jennie Goldberg, and Rich Bowers, for an evening of dinner, drinks, and celebration of the region's great rivers. Our featured speaker will be Alan Hamlet from the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group who will speak on Climate Change and Conservation: Challenges for the Region's Rivers.

On the Thursday and Friday leading up to this event we will also be touring two rivers where AW has worked to negotiate the removal of outdated dams on the White Salmon and Sandy River. We invite our members to join AW board members and staff on these river trips to learn more about our efforts on these projects.

To join us for the dinner or river tours please sign up with Carla Miner at carla@amwhitewater.org.

Cispus River (WA) Access Completed

By Thomas O'Keefe

After more than a decade of work by local AW volunteers, we finally have an official access site on Washington's Cispus River. It's a great site but boaters will be required to hike out 1200 feet along the access road that the timber company has chosen to keep gated. While the situation

is less than ideal for those with big boats such as rafts, you can obtain the gate code from the timber company by showing proof of liability insurance. We will also be working with the utility to determine if we can schedule some days when they will open the gate for boaters. Our first event to celebrate the new access is scheduled for March 17th. We invite all boaters to come rediscover this great Class III run.

Pacific Northwest Dams on their Way Out

By Thomas O'Keefe

Over the next five years, seven major dams are scheduled to be removed in the Pacific Northwest, with the first one coming down this summer. Plans are moving forward to remove Marmot Dam on the Sandy River this summer and Little Sandy Dam next summer as part of the settlement AW signed to decommission the outdated hydropower project on this river. AW is working with the BLM to develop a new vision for the river that focuses on resource protection and enjoyment by the public in this sanctuary just minutes from downtown Portland, Oregon.

We have just a couple of more permits that need to be secured to remove Condit Dam on the White Salmon in October 2008. The reservoir will be drained over a period of 6 hours by boring a hole at the base of the dam. Powerdale Dam on the Hood River just across the Columbia River from the White Salmon will be removed in 2010.

Work is also underway at Savage Rapids Dam on the Rogue River (OR) which is scheduled to be removed by December 2009. Removal of the Glines Canyon and Elwha Dams on the Elwha River is scheduled to begin in 2009 and preliminary work is finally getting underway.

Soon paddlers and salmon will have

wonderful new free-flowing rivers to explore!

Forest Service Road Network Continues to Crumble

By Thomas O'Keefe

Storms in the Pacific Northwest in the Fall of 2006 caused over \$30 million in damage to the Forest Service road network in Washington State as the national maintenance backlog of Forest Service roads continues to climb into the billions of dollars. Where resource extraction was once the primary function of roads on our public lands, they have become increasingly important for access to recreational opportunities. Field surveys show that the majority of roads on public land do not meet current forest road standards and the result is a network that continues to deteriorate faster with each set of storms, causing massive sedimentation problems on the rivers we all love. AW is engaged in policy discussions with other organizations and agencies to develop a future vision for management of Forest Service roads that is sustainable, protects our resources, and provides an appropriate level of public access.



Brennan's Wave in downtown Missoula is just a couple blocks from a small AW fundraiser planned for April 4th at the Kettlehouse Brewery and Roxy Theatre

photo by Kevin Colburn

Rockaway River at Risk of Closure

By Kevin Colburn

New Jersey offers paddlers relatively few choices of whitewater rivers, which makes the rivers that are there all the more important. Earlier this year, paddlers were told that paddling the Boonton Gorge of the Rockaway River was illegal based perhaps on a city ban on swimming in the gorge. Local paddlers have since begun outreach efforts toward the town of Boonton, requesting that paddling be supported rather than banned. American Whitewater has sent a letter to the town explaining the many benefits a community can receive by supporting river recreation.

Join AW Under the Big Sky

By Kevin Colburn

AW will be hosting a small celebration of whitewater boating and river conservation in Missoula, MT on April 4, 2007. Paddlers are first invited to the Kettlehouse Brewery for a round of incredible local brews from 5-8 pm. The Kettlehouse will generously donate 50 cents from each pint sold to American Whitewater. At 8 pm we'll be heading a block away to the Roxy Theatre for a premiere showing of the most recent Lunch Video Magazine, and a short presentation on AW's efforts in the region. Brennan's Wave is just a couple blocks away and will treat paddlers to some great surfing prior to the event. Come join us, and learn more about American Whitewater's efforts in the region.

Outdoor Alliance Goes to Washington DC

By Kevin Colburn

In late February, American Whitewater staff joined staff from the Access Fund, the International Mountain Biking Association, Winter Wildlands, American Hiking Society, and the American Canoe Association to educate political representatives and agency leaders on the interests of our members. As the Outdoor Alliance, a new national powerhouse of human-powered recreation groups, we shared our views that public involvement in decision making is critical to our grassroots base, that environmental protection and restoration are key to supporting healthy enjoyment of the outdoors, and that the American public supports full funding of

*Mikes Hole rapid is in the heart of
the Ausable Chasm, NY.*

photos by Willie Kern



Stewardship Updates

recreational programs and infrastructure in our National Parks, National Forests, BLM lands, and in our communities. Together we tackled tough issues like forest planning, goals for the National Park Service, mining law reform, and road maintenance.

Is Vermont's Otter Creek Hiding Something?

By Kevin Colburn

At American Whitewater, we try to leave no stone unturned. Dewatered and posted gorges are often overlooked by paddlers and the rest of the public. Such is the case with Vermont's Otter Creek, where there may or may not be paddling opportunities tucked away below several dams. To find out, AW is organizing a site visit for paddlers who will receive a guided tour of the dewatered reaches by the dam owner this spring. Will we find an epic play wave, a string of waterfalls, a beautiful river corridor, a severely impacted river ecosystem, or none of these things? You'll never know unless you go.

Radio Silence on the Nantahala and Tuckasegee (NC)


By Kevin Colburn

American Whitewater expected new federal licenses for the dams on the Nantahala and Tuckasegee Rivers in January. As this issue goes to press, no licenses have been issued, making their issuance more than a year overdue. Given the delay, it appears unlikely that recreational releases will begin on either the Upper Nantahala or the West Fork of the Tuckasegee in 2007. Keep an eye on the AW website for updates on these projects.

Ausable River Ready for Summer?

By Kevin Colburn

We really want to paddle the Ausable Chasm this summer, and we are pretty sure you do too.

After years of ridiculous debate and delays we are pushing hard to have this project completed and to have access granted to the Ausable by this spring. The Flow Study is finally ready to go to FERC, after a full year of unjustified delays. We will be asking FERC for a swift decision on this matter, and will have to oppose the dam owner's last request to keep the river closed to public enjoyment. The Ausable Chasm offers a short creek run through an incomparable vertical-walled gorge. The run is Class IV at medium flows. Ausable Chasm is runnable virtually every day of the summer and fall, and is an easy day trip for many people in New York and Vermont. 



Paddlers enjoying the first few Class III/IV drops on the Ausable Chasm, NY

photos by Willie Kern

Stewardship Updates



Settlement on the San Joaquin: Good for Boaters and the Biota

By Dave Steindorf

For over six years American Whitewater has been working to reach a settlement on Southern California Edison's (SCE) Big Creek Project on the San Joaquin River. Over the last year, settlement negotiations have been going on in earnest and we expect to report that we will be signing a settlement agreement in February 2007.

The Big Creek project has been a massive undertaking. With over twenty reservoirs, forebays and diversions, the four separate FERC licenses encompassed in the Big Creek relicensing make up the largest geographic area of any project that has been

relicensed in California. While relicensing a project this large has had its challenges, American Whitewater and the other members of the California Hydropower Reform Coalition (CHRC) have always preferred to work on a watershed as a whole rather than on a piecemeal process scattered among several different projects. We applaud Southern California Edison's willingness to combine these projects into a single relicensing process.

American Whitewater has worked diligently with state and federal agencies to restore a more natural flow regime on the San Joaquin River. It has been our goal to create new flow conditions on the San Joaquin for these projects that will benefit both the aquatic ecosystem and river recreation. This settlement will yield substantial improvements for this watershed, including:

Chawanakee Gorge on the San Joaquin

photo by Paul Martzen


- Increased instream flows
- Improved water temperature and monitoring
- Removal of four diversion dams
- Riparian and channel maintenance flows
- Flows for meadow restoration
- Internet flow information

Probably the biggest impediment to boating on any river is being able to know what the flows are while you are still at home. Driving an hour or more to a river just to find that the flows are too low or too high is an expensive and time-consuming proposition. Fortunately SCE has not only agreed to provide flow information but they have agreed to do it now! Gauges

for both the Florence to Mono, Tied For First, as well as several other runs are now on the AW river pages. We appreciate SCE providing this information ahead of the new license. If they had chosen to wait until the new license was issued we could be waiting several years to get real-time flow information on these runs.

The biggest improvement in flows for this project are the channel maintenance flows, which will occur in the spring. Flows will occur on the Florence Lake to Mono Hot Springs run on the South Fork of the San Joaquin between June 1 and July 7th. During wet years these flow will last for at least 13 days and have flow between 500 and 700 cfs for at least five days. In

above normal water years, flows in the same range will occur for a minimum of four days. Pre-spill releases will provide additional boating opportunities below Mammoth Pool Reservoir. These pre-spill releases will correct the problem that has plagued whitewater boaters in this basin for years. Even in wet years little boating opportunity has existed on this project because flow will typically change from too low up to level that are too high in a very short time. By releasing water ahead of spill events, SCE can help paddlers take advantage of a more gradual ramp up on the whitewater runs below Mammoth Pool. We also believe that these more gradual flow increases are more protective of the ecosystem.

By helping to change the focus from marginally increasing base flows to actually restoring critical functions of the snow melt hydrograph, we were able to provide ecosystem restoration as well as whitewater recreation. Fish, frogs, riparian vegetation and whitewater boaters all rely on high spring flows gradually declining to summer lows for their success. The new flow schedule for this project will help to restore the San Joaquin River for both boaters and the biota. 



AW and Kokatat recognize Paul Martzen, champion for the San Joaquin

American Whitewater and Kokatat would like to thank Paul Martzen for his long history of volunteer work for American Whitewater. Kokatat, which also has a long history of supporting American Whitewater, has presented Paul with a new Gore-Tex Drytop in recognition for all he has given to the paddling community.


Paul is a key resource in the Southern Sierra. For over six years Paul has been AW's lead volunteer on Southern California Edison's Big Creek Project. This project encompasses virtually all of the San Joaquin River drainage. In February, Paul, along with California Stewardship Director Dave Steindorf, signed the settlement agreement for this project. This agreement will restore whitewater to a number of classic reaches of the San

Joaquin. In adhering to our philosophy "good for boaters, good for the biota," these new flows on the San Joaquin will help restore the ecological functions that are critical for a healthy river.

Developing the relationships to make agreements like this happen takes time. Paul's quiet demeanor and his extensive knowledge have won him the respect of agency and utility staff. American Whitewater also recognizes that the commitment to restoring a watershed, like the San Joaquin, does not end with the signing of a settlement. Paul will continue to be the point person developing the annual flow schedules that will be a part of this new license.

While Paul is known for his work on the San Joaquin, he is also known across the country as a significant contributor to the AW web site. The contributions that Paul have made to the Stream Team Project has helped make the AW national river database the best in the country. Paul has worked hard behind the scenes to create a usable interface that allows Stream Team Members to upload river descriptions

and images to the AW website. Currently Paul is working on the AW safety project "Taking the Search Out of Search and Rescue." This project will provide paddlers and other recreationist a map interface along with GPS coordinates that will make it much easier for emergency personnel to locate those in need. This is a bold project that relies on volunteers like Paul Martzen, who not only have the desire but also the skills to make it happen.

AW's strong relationship with its outstanding group of volunteers is supported by long term funders like Kokatat. This type of mutual support makes for a winning strategy that helps AW remain one of the most productive organizations in river conservation. We would like to thank both Paul and Kokatat for making success on the San Joaquin a reality. 

Stewardship

On January 5-6, 2007, 10 lucky whitewater boaters became the first to legally run the upper 21 miles of the Chattooga River in over 30 years. For me personally, and several others on the trip, these were two of the most emotionally significant days of our paddling lives.

The Chattooga River, beginning in North Carolina and forming the border between Georgia and South Carolina, has been closed to floating use since July 1, 1976. This bizarre and, in my opinion, illegal river closure is unique among all the rivers managed by the US Forest Service. The floating ban results from a back room deal made over 30 years ago with influential local residents that opposed protecting the river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

While everyone agrees today that the Chattooga is in far better condition than it was in 1974 because of its protection as a National Wild & Scenic River, the illegal ban on floating use continues.

But now, after nearly a decade of hard work, including thousands of hours from a group of dedicated volunteers and hundreds of thousands of dollars in pro-bono legal aid, the decision to ban floating on the upper Chattooga River is finally being reviewed by the US Forest Service, albeit reluctantly.

Only after American Whitewater successfully appealed the Forest Service's

2004 decision to continue the floating ban did the Chief of the Forest Service himself declare: "The Regional Forester does not provide an adequate basis for continuing the ban on boating above Highway 28." He then directed the Regional Forester to conduct a user capacity study in order to reach a new management decision regarding floating use on the upper Chattooga.

Now, as part of this user capacity analysis, a study panel of boaters was finally allowed to legally explore the upper Chattooga River and document this extraordinary whitewater treasure.

After working so hard for so long to gain access to this truly amazing river, I was concerned that I might be let down once I actually got the chance to paddle it. I had nothing to worry about; the upper Chattooga did not disappoint.

I have had some great outdoor adventures in my life. In the last six years alone, I have climbed Long's Peak via the East Face, the Grand Teton via Exum Ridge, and Mount Baker. I have paddled the Grand Canyon, the Selway, and the Middle Fork of the Salmon. These were all great adventures. However, our "expedition" to rediscover the upper Chattooga was more personally rewarding than any of these other adventures because of what it took to get the chance and because this gem is right in my own back yard.

Excitement and Anticipation

Milt and I were almost giddy as we pulled into the Andrew Pickens District Ranger office in Walhalla, SC on a Thursday evening. Our skepticism about whether we would ever run the upper Chattooga River legally was gradually fading. It was becoming more and more apparent that this user study was really going to happen. A tremendous excitement and anticipation now replaced that skepticism.

Our excitement began to build the Monday before, after we received an email from Ben

Ellis, a consultant with the Louis Berger Group, telling us that the recent storm and the predicted rainfall met their "trigger" to mobilize the study team. Consultants from as far away as Anchorage, AK; Corvallis, OR; and Jackson, WY would converge on the Chattooga during the next few days. They would be working with both anglers and boaters as part of the ongoing User Capacity Analysis of the upper Chattooga River ordered by the Forest Service Chief in April 2005.

Those of us lucky enough to receive Ben's call spent the next three days focused on the weather websites and USGS gauge at Highway 76. We rearranged our schedules on short notice to be part of something special, our excitement growing and waning as the forecasters vacillated and the river levels fell.

Now we were actually here to begin the field work and legally run the upper 21 miles of the Chattooga River for the first time in over 30 years. We entered the office and joined the milling crowd waiting for the meeting to start. Each of us knew that we were about to be a part of something historic. The excitement among the boating panelists was palpable.

The boaters and anglers were easily distinguishable. We were the ones with the

Don K, Wade, Todd, Brian, Shayne, Milt, Don P, Ben, Bo, Ken (boys will be boys)

Photo by Jeff Owensby



Ken Holmes running the put-in ledge immediately below the sieve (the sieve may go with more water, but will a very difficult portage at higher flows).

Photo by Todd Corey



REDISCOVERING THE
chattooga
headwaters

By Don Kinser

Chattooga Headwaters

smiles on our faces, laughing and joking with each other, obviously glad to be there; the visible dismay on the faces of several anglers, clearly disgusted with the thought of boaters on “their” river stood in stark contrast.

The meeting began with the customary introductions of the consultants, panelists, and agency staff, either present or on the phone. This was one of the few times during the next two days that we would have any interaction with the anglers, either here or on the river.

David Hedden and Jeff Owensby represented the Forest Service. David and Jeff were joined by Tony White and several other agency staff on the conference phone. John Cleaves, the User Capacity Study Program Manager, would join us on Saturday.

Once we were all properly introduced, Ben Ellis chaired the meeting, joined by Bo Shelby, Doug Whitaker, and Karen Koslowski, the consulting team.

The boating panel included 10 lucky boaters: Shayne Day, Don Piper, Milt Aitken, Todd Corey, Brian Jacobson, Don Kinser, Wade Vagias, Ken Holmes, Ben Ellis (consultant), and Bo Shelby (consultant). We would get to know both Ben and Bo well during the next two days as they joined us on the river.

The angler’s panel included Doug Adams, a longtime Chattooga angler. I had the great pleasure of spending a magical day on the upper Chattooga River fishing with Doug several years ago (and we didn’t even catch any fish!). No one loves the Chattooga more than Doug. Doug was joined by Alex Watson, David Cannon, and a number of others whose names I cannot recall. It was interesting how they kept the boater and angler panel segregated, never even giving us the list of anglers’ names. Doug Whitaker, the consultant from Anchorage, would accompany the anglers on the river for the study.

The plan was to meet at the Highway 28 Boater Access just below the Highway 28

Bridge at 8 am Friday. The Forest Service would shuttle us from there to Burrell’s Ford and we would paddle the Rock Gorge and Nicholson Fields reaches of the upper Chattooga (aka Section 1). We were then to return to the Ranger office for a debriefing with the consultants and anglers at 3 pm.

Assuming all went well and the predicted rainfall materialized, we would then do the Chattooga Cliffs (aka Section 00) and Ellicott Rock (aka Section 0) reaches on Saturday. The meeting ended and we headed to our cars in the rain. This was going to be good!

January 5, 2007 Rock Gorge (12.5 mi, 5:25)

Friday dawned cloudy and rainy, just as predicted. It was also unusually warm for January, perfect weather for a great day on the Forbidden River.

We assembled at the Highway 28 boater access just downstream of the Highway 28 Bridge at 8 am. Even with our “alpine” start, everyone was all smiles and on time as we nursed our coffee, conversed, and joked while organizing our gear. The excitement was thick in the air: you could feel it. This was going to be a great day on the river.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the parking lot, the anglers didn’t look quite as excited about spending a day in the rain.

Forest Service Rangers David Hedden and Jeff Owensby were friendly and cordial as they handed out permits for us to complete, helped us load boats, and then shuttled us to Burrell’s Ford. They seemed almost as excited as we were.

Our caravan arrived at the Burrell’s Ford Bridge, made ready, and headed down the established trail to the river bank. For the last 30-plus years what we were doing has been illegal (and still is) and here we were being graciously shuttled by the Forest Service. I felt a great rush of personal satisfaction as I unloaded my

gear on the Burrell’s Ford Bridge from that green truck.

After a short riverside meeting with the consultants, Ben and Bo, to discuss river safety and how we would travel down the river, we shoved off at about 9:30 am. Everyone was in high spirits. That would not change for the rest of the weekend.

Many of you may know this river reach as Section 1. However, throughout the study we were encouraged to refer to this section as the Rock Gorge and Nicholson Fields Section (the stretch down from Lick Log Creek). Quite frankly, “Rock Gorge” sounded a whole lot better than “Section 1” and a whole lot more descriptive. So, from now on, it will be the Rock Gorge Reach. Similarly Section 0 will now be the Ellicott Rock Section and Section 00 will be the Chattooga Cliffs Section.

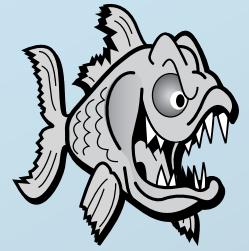
The river starts off meekly, gradually picking up gradient as it goes. After about a mile the river starts to take a long sweeping left turn and you enter a nice stretch of Class III “steps” that are easily boat scouted and straightforward.

The scenery was outstanding at every turn, with beautiful views up and down the river. However, we were all surprised by the dire state of the hemlocks here on the upper river. The hemlock wooly adelgid has wrought havoc on them, far worse than lower in the watershed.

We reached Big Bend Falls around 10:15 am and easily eddied out just above it on the right. The rain that had been sporadic much of the morning was now falling steadily. Big Bend Falls is a beautiful spot on the river that can be reached by foot. This was the only time during the day that I saw any other people. Joe Robles with the Forest Service was there to observe us at the falls and Becky Johnson from the *Smoky Mountain News* was there taking photos. Otherwise, we had the entire river corridor to ourselves.

The falls are clearly runnable, albeit Class V. We spent about 30 minutes scouting and taking pictures. However, on this day

*There are far
more stretches
of wild rivers
without play waves!*

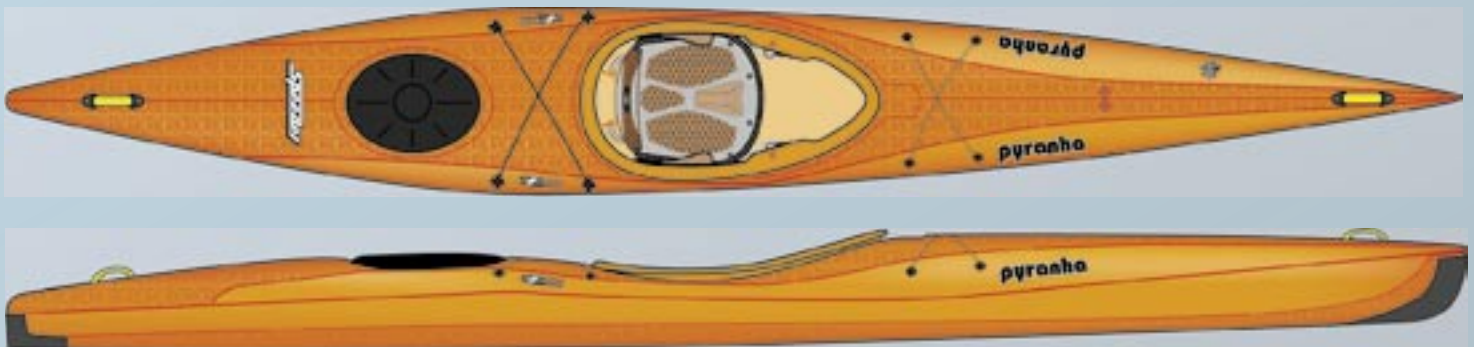


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Chattooga Headwaters

there was a log pinned vertically in the preferred landing zone on the river-right side. Some contemplated a left-side line but we all eventually portaged. This was easily accomplished down the bedrock on the river-right side. I believe that most paddlers running this section will choose to portage Big Bend Falls.

Downstream of the falls, things start to pick up with a number of Class III-IV read-and-run rapids as the river winds its way around Round Top Mountain. We reached the next major rapid called "Rock in the Crack in the Hole in the Wall" at about 11:20 am. This was another of the many rapids in the watershed originally named by early Chattooga pioneer Alan Singley. We scouted the Class IV+ drop for about 10 minutes and then we all ran it successfully, some with more style than others.

After leaving "Rock in the Crack in the Hole in the Wall," it was on to the Rock Gorge. But before entering the Rock Gorge, we had to "do the laundry" at Maytag, a stout Class IV+/V drop that guards the gates to the Rock Gorge about 10 minutes downriver.

Most paddlers will have already guessed why this rapid is so named. It is because of the spin cycle in the large hole at the bottom of the drop. We all scouted, noting some wood in the drop. Most of us ran it without any issues, but not all. I got "tagged" in the hole and took a brief, uneventful swim.

The rain continued to come down as we entered the Rock Gorge and met our next major challenge – Harvey Wallbanger. This is another stout Class IV+ drop that we all scouted. I am not sure, but I

think at least one in our group chose to portage. Most had uneventful runs; I, on the other hand, took another short and uneventful swim.

Next was a quick lunch break before we moved on to upper and lower Big Hairy Bastard. These are two fun read-and-run Class IV drops that everyone aced. We reached the end of the Rock Gorge at about 1 pm and the gradient began to ease considerably as we passed Lick Log Creek. From Lick Log Creek the Highway 28 takeout is another five miles.

The Rock Gorge is a magical place of awesome beauty. It is a great place to hike when the water is low, and even better when experienced from a boat with the energy of freely flowing river pulsating around you.

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We now found ourselves floating lazily for the next several miles along a beautiful mountain river. Everyone was all smiles even as the thunder and lightning began to rumble and light up the river gorge. I was in the back of the group talking with Bo Shelby, one of the consultants. We did not see anyone along the river. Others in the front of our group saw two backpackers, head down hiking in the rain, oblivious to our presence on the river.

They also saw David Cannon, one of the angler panelists. David was just leaving the river as they approached. Next they found Buzz Williams of the Chattooga Conservancy scowling at them from the Highway 28 Bridge.

We reached the Highway 28 Boater Access at about 2:45, just as the rain eased off.

This allowed us to get dressed quickly. We pulled into the District Ranger office at exactly 3 pm, right on time for a two-hour debriefing with the consultants.

**January 6, 2007
Chattooga Cliffs
(2.1 mi., 2:45) and
Ellicott Rock
(5.6 mi., 2:15)**

Saturday morning dawned clear and somewhat cooler. The rain from the day before was replaced with sunny blue skies. The morning chill faded and warmed to nearly 60 degrees by afternoon. The gauge at Burrell's Ford had come up a tenth of a foot overnight. We could not have asked for anything better.

Today's adventure would turn out to be much more physically demanding than the day before. Again we convened for another "alpine" start at the Burrell's Ford parking lot at 8:30 am and enjoyed another "Green Truck" Forest Service shuttle. After checking the new staff gauge at Grimshaws Bridge on Whiteside Cove road, we arrived at the trail head.

Unlike the day before when we had seen no one, on the second day we were met at the trailhead by Norman "Buzz" Williams and several other members of the Friends of the Upper Chattooga (FUC for short). Buzz went about his normal grandstanding routine, telling the Forest Service how they were doing everything wrong and how dangerous it was to allow boating on the river. He had also blocked the trailhead with his truck to make things more difficult for us. One

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Chattooga Headwaters



Chattooga River, Chattooga Cliff's section above Ben Pen Road

photo by Brian D. Jacobson/ Trout Lips Video LLC

of our group made the mistake of leaning his paddle against the tailgate of Buzz' truck and learned first hand about Buzz' southern hospitality.

Rather than put in at Grimshaws Bridge the Forest Service basically dodged the private landowner issue with a 1.8-mile "forced march" down to the confluence with Norton Mill Creek. The trail was good and we arrived at the river about 45 minutes later. After a group photo we put on and started downriver at 10:40 am.

Norton Mill Creek joins the Chattooga about two miles downstream from Grimshaws Bridge and about 0.6 miles above a massive logjam. Here the river is narrow with steep banks, thick with lush rhododendron.

We arrived at the logjam about 10 minutes later and spent about 10-15 minutes climbing up and over with our boats. After this, the bottom drops out and the real fun begins. Once past the logjam, it took us nearly an hour and a half to travel the next 0.7 miles. This stretch is full of numerous Class IV rapids, with at least one Class V drop.

Immediately after the logjam, we encountered a cool grotto and then a nice Class IV ledge. Things were starting to get very interesting.

Next was a stout Class V drop, which several of us portaged. After Milt (in his canoe) shamed the remaining kayakers into running the drop, everyone who ran it made it look easy. We then entered the first of three narrow cliff-lined "alleys" that give this stretch of river its name, Chattooga Cliffs.

The river opens up somewhat after this alley before reaching another Class IV+ drop where you want to make sure you don't go left. However, after looking at the wood in the right side of this drop, several of us again chose to portage.

We now found ourselves in the Alleyway,

a spectacular narrow sluice with vertical bedrock walls. We portaged around a large root ball that plugged the river and ran several significant rapids, including one with a large boulder bisecting the riverbed.

Somewhere down in the Alleyway there is a stunning waterfall on river right that pours into the river from high up on the cliff. I have visited and explored the Chattooga for nearly 30 years and this was unlike any other place I have seen on the river. This is also a place nearly impossible to access on foot.

We reached the sieve shortly after noon. The sieve rapid is a difficult obstacle, which everyone portaged. The logistics of this portage were made more difficult by our large group (this was really one of the few places our group size was much of a liability). It is very difficult to stage the group down into the "eddy" above the sieve and exit your boat. I say "eddy" because it is more like a slow spot in the current up against a steep, slippery, vertical rock wall. Milt was able to jump out of his canoe here more easily and helped us exit our kayaks.

It took a long time to portage. It was slippery and crowded. Someone wisely set a safety rope and we worked together to ferry our boats across a difficult spot. Once across, we had to put in immediately above a challenging six-foot, Class IV ledge. From the log jam to here the river was unrelenting.

Once back on the water, we found it an easy 20-minute cruise with a number of fun Class III ledges and drops for the remaining mile down to the Iron Bridge at Bull Pen Road.

We encountered a large audience waiting for us when we arrived just after 1 pm. The Class V drop immediately below the bridge is quite impressive and was in full sunlight. I am sure many of the onlookers were expecting (and secretly hoping for) a great deal of death and destruction. There was even a troll under the bridge

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Photo by Chris Rimmer



Day 10, Mile 136, Rush, Marlow, and Anthony cut through Deer Creek Narrows. Tapents sandstone slots, freshwater creek, shallow plunge pools, drainage debris and gravel, exposed boulders and rock, ankle-high water

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Chattooga Headwaters

with a camera. We disappointed them as all but two of our group ran the drop in a dazzling display of the state of the sport. Just for the record, I walked. I probably should also mention the consultant's swim at the bottom of the rapid, following his admonishment us at the top not to do anything stupid for the crowd.

With barely a moment to eat a quick bite of lunch, we were herded off at 1:30 to find our way down to Ellicott Rock and ultimately Burrell's Ford. This reach was rumored to be the most enjoyable and the most popular of the three sections. We would not be disappointed.

The two or so miles immediately below the bridge to Ellicott Rock is a wonderful read and run, Class IV boulder dance roughly bisected by the biggest rapid on the Chattooga: Class V Super Corkscrew.

Super Corkscrew is long and scary. It starts with a hard Class IV+ entrance and just keeps getting nastier from there. I think four of us walked the rapid along the rock shelf on river right. Several of the group, including Wade and Ken ran the rapid and made it look easy, others maybe not so much. Todd discovered just how shallow it was at the bottom part of the rapid. Shayne took all the style points for his great ender in the middle hole.

Once below Super Corkscrew, the pace quickened and we found a rhythm as we danced down one boulder drop to the next all the way to Ellicott Rock, arriving there at about 3 pm. Once below Ellicott Rock, the gradient began to ease for the next 3.5 miles or so down to Burrell's Ford.

The trail rejoins the river at Ellicott Rock and it is an easy hike up from Burrell's Ford. Not until we were below Ellicott Rock did we encounter any other people (except the spectators at Iron Bridge). We first saw a group of anglers at the confluence with the East Fork. Further downstream we passed the angler panel and a bit further on we passed a few other users as we approached the bridge.

We reached the bridge shortly before 4

pm. Our team was tired and hungry, but we were all smiles as we packed up and headed once again to the Ranger office to debrief.

Water Flow Levels

This study was primarily framed as a "flow study" to attempt to gather data about "boatability" and "fishability" at different flow levels. Last summer the Forest Service installed new staff gauges at Grimshawes Bridge, Iron Bridge, and Burrell's Ford Bridge, complete with data loggers, as part of the study. The Forest Service hydrologists have established a flow curve for the Burrell's Ford gauge to correlate the staff gauge to cfs.

The previous week's storm surged the river to nearly 6,000 cfs, primed the pump and made the user trials possible. A modest amount of rain fell Thursday night onto already saturated ground, and continued rain during the day Friday started the river rising slowly, during the day and overnight. The result was an extraordinarily stable hydrograph for our study.

Friday – Rock Gorge Section

The new staff gauge at Burrell's Ford read 1.5 feet when we put on. With the rain during the day, the level rose to 1.6 feet while we were on the river. This was reported to be 340 cfs based upon the newly established flow curves for Burrell's Ford.

The Chattooga was 1150 cfs (2.29 feet) at US 76 at about 1 pm.

I must admit I expected a rocky, bony, difficult day on a river that didn't have enough water in it. I was wrong. What we discovered was a river with an enjoyable flow and plenty of water. Later that day during the debriefing, the panel considered it to be the low end of the optimal flow range. I agree.

The water quality was outstanding as well. While maybe it was not exactly clear, the

river was certainly not muddy and was quite beautiful.

Saturday – Chattooga Cliffs and Ellicott Rock Sections

Friday's steady rain had subsided by the evening. The river rose slightly and then fell overnight. The new Burrell's Ford staff gauge read 1.6 feet when we headed up to the put in at Norton Mill Creek Saturday morning. The new staff gauge at Grimshawes Bridge read 1.25 feet when we drove past. It was heavily guarded by the local landowner's militia.

When we passed the new staff gauge at the Iron Bridge (Bull Pen Rd) it read 3 feet and the Burrell's Ford gauge read 1.55 feet when we arrived Saturday afternoon.


Both the Chattooga Cliffs and Ellicott Rock reaches had enough water at these levels. This is particularly true of the upper reach, the Chattooga Cliffs. The Ellicott Rock reach was good but a little more juice would have helped (not much more juice, however, because some of the holes could become big and hungry fast). Once again, the water quality was outstanding.

Epilogue

We were very, very lucky. The need to mobilize the necessary Forest Service staff, the expert boater panel, and consultants from across the country, all on short notice, clearly stacked the deck against the user trial portion of the capacity study ever actually occurring. However, the "perfect storm" had come together and gave the unlikely user trials a chance to happen, and a skilled team with a cooperative spirit, more rain and great support from everyone involved, especially the Forest Service, made the trials a huge success.

I just hope these two days of user trials are not the last opportunity I have to legally enjoy this magnificent place. Maybe, just maybe, you too will be able to share this adventure and experience the upper

Chattooga for yourself sometime soon.

I also hope you have enjoyed reading about our expedition to rediscover the upper Chattooga River and that you stay tuned into the ongoing user capacity study. Better yet, if you would like to have the chance to explore this wonderful place from your boat, let the Forest Service know right now. Visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/> and share your thoughts with John Cleaves, the Project Coordinator. 

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Don Piper in Harvey Wallbanger

Photo by Photo D. Jacobson/Trout Lips Video LLC



Rediscovering the Chattooga Headwaters

January 7, 2007

By Don Kinser

Milt and I were almost giddy as we pulled into the Andrew Pickens District Ranger office last Thursday evening in Walhalla, SC. Our skepticism about whether we would ever see the upper Chattooga River legally in a boat was gradually fading. It was becoming more and more apparent that this user study was really going to happen. A tremendous excitement and anticipation now replaced that skepticism.

Our excitement began to build last Monday after we received an email from Ben Ellis, a consultant with the Louis Berger Group, telling us that the recent storm and the predicted rainfall met their "trigger" to mobilize the study team. Consultants from as far away as Anchorage, AK; Corvallis, OR; and Jackson, WY would converge on the Chattooga during the next few days. They would be working with both anglers and boaters as part of the ongoing User Capacity Analysis of the upper Chattooga River ordered by the FS Chief in April 2005.

Those of us lucky enough to receive Ben's call spent the next three days focused on the weather websites and USGS gauge at Highway 76. We rearranged our schedules on short notice to be part of something special, our excitement growing and waning as the forecast vacillated and the river levels fell.

Now we were *actually here* to begin the field work and legally run the upper 21 miles of the Chattooga River for the first time in over 30 years. We entered the room and joined the crowd milling about waiting for the meeting to start. Each of us knew that we were about to be a part of something historic. The excitement among the boating panelists was palpable. You could sense it.

The boaters were easy to discern from the anglers. We were the ones with the smiles on our faces, laughing and joking with each other, obviously glad to be there. This contrasted starkly with the visible dismay on the faces of several anglers, clearly disgusted with the thought of boaters on "their" river. However, this did not dampen our spirits as we looked forward to this great adventure.

The meeting began with the customary introductions of the consultants, panelists, and agency staff either present or on the phone. This was one of the few times during the next two days that we would have any interaction with the anglers either here or on the river.

David Hedden and Jeff Owensby were there representing the Forest Service (FS). David and Jeff were joined by Tony White and several other agency staff on the conference phone. John Cleaves, the User Capacity Study Program Manager, would join us on Saturday.



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Stewardship Director Dave Steindorf
and family enjoying the Feather River.

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Introduction to Whitewater



Confessions of a Class II ++ Boater

By Santha Clark

Part I: I Once Was Lost

Why did I start kayaking? I was bored with who I was. Divorced for almost a year, I was 33 years old, and I had somehow misplaced me. I wanted to discover the chick that had been lost in the humdrum of the last 15 years. I screwed up all my courage and signed up for a class at the local university under the continuing education banner. I was extremely nervous, and as I sat outside the pool on the first night thinking, “This will be okay; swimming is my strong suit,” I couldn’t ignore the feeling that I was fooling myself. Instead

of getting right to the “swimming test,” as stated in the syllabus, the instructors sat us down in a big circle and asked us why we were there. Well, heck. I didn’t even know who I was and being bored with my life sounded, well, boring. So, while I was trying to think of a good line, the guy next to me was talking about liking all sorts of extreme sports. I raised an eyebrow and sighed—I’m a public school teacher and a single mom—I don’t do anything “extreme” except watch “Barney” on an empty stomach.

Upon completions of the “swimming test” my instructors, Jason and Mike, proudly announced that we could all swim (they had this vaguely ironic twist in their voices, that I didn’t understand at the time). First thing that entered my head as I paddled around was, “Wow, this is maneuverable.”

The kayak wasn’t like a canoe or a snark or a catamaran, I could CONTROL this thing with my measly chick arms. From there the instructors started explaining the wet exit. Mike and Jason told me to flip the boat over and then just chill and wait a minute—you know, enjoy the view. In that exact second I realized that they were both insane. I mean, strap myself into a boat and then turn it upside down so that I could not breathe and, “you know, hang out.” Once again screwing up my courage, I flipped the boat, and I slowly counted to three and tried my best to enjoy the view while hugging the hull as instructed. After what seemed longer than my count, I started pushing the cockpit back with my hands and slipping the boat off “like a pair of pants.” The bizarre thing was, when my head broke the surface and I took an initial breath of air, I felt the small tingle

photo by Sharon Hailey

of an adrenaline buzz—I didn't just like it, I really liked it. This meant that I was just as insane as they were. At last, I was finding myself.

Finally, after four weeks of class, we began practicing the roll. At some point in those weeks, my goal became just showing up for class—period. I liked it, but it was that scary to me. The last night we were all together, I must have flipped my boat 20 times trying to get it back right side up again. Towards the end, I was sucking air into my lungs after yet another failed attempt while my instructor, Mike, was holding me up by my elbow. He had patiently pulled me up again, but didn't right my boat completely so I could work on my hip snap. He leaned down and said, "You know, you could actually DO this sport." Jason was on the other side of him and looked me dead in the eye and said, "Mike doesn't say that to everyone," before he paddled off to help another student.

Now, I don't know if what Jason said was true or if Mike told that to everybody in the class, but it was true enough for me. Five weeks later, I borrowed a boat from a guy identified only as "Danny" and did my first river. It was on that river, after finishing up a little Class I+ chute, where I realized who I was. I was one of those crazy people who genuinely felt fear, but who had the ability to overcome my instincts and travel on through to the other side. On that trip, the guys kept jerkin' my chain ("only three more miles to the take-out!"). I never knew exactly where I was, but I knew I was no longer lost.

Part II: River Therapy

Like many newbies living in Memphis, my first river was the Spring River in Arkansas. I had checked out the local club's website and at 6:00 in the morning, Sharon, my chick friend from my Introduction to Kayaking class, and I were waiting at the Pilot gas station in Arkansas, right

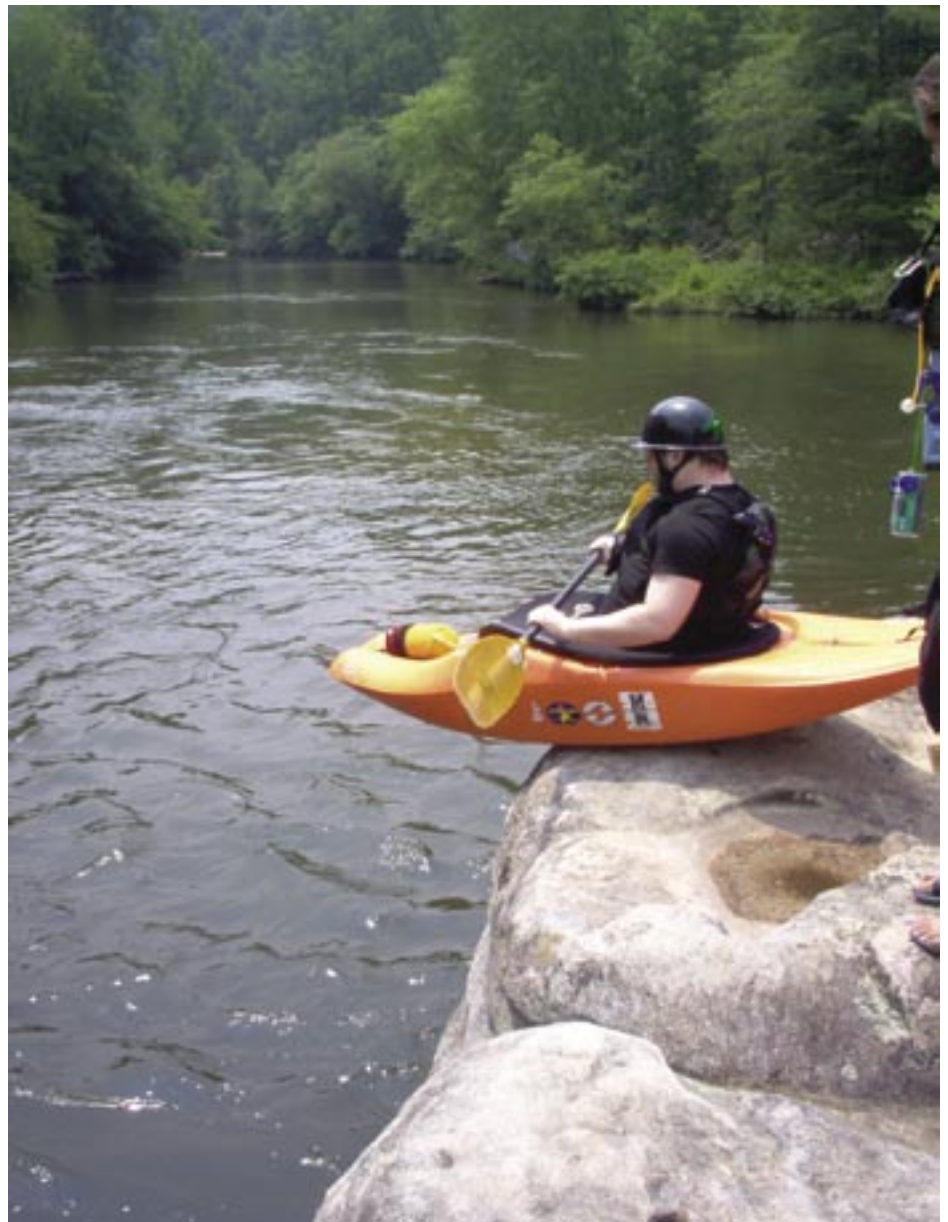
off Interstate 40. When the cars topped with kayaks arrived, we went out and introduced ourselves, everybody standing around in a big circle in the parking lot. There were about 10 boaters in all.

After moving the boats over, Sharon and I wedged ourselves into Madapple's mighty KIA hatchback and with Mhoward riding shotgun we set off. About an hour into the conversation, I mentioned that I'd just moved to Memphis from Tuscaloosa.

Mhoward said, "Cool, I was in Tuscaloosa for a while—you remember Sneaky Petes? I worked there." My stomach tightened. I said, "You remember Mike Meredith?" He said, "Yeah, I worked with him—he lived at Cobblestone Court—why, you know him?"

*Seal launching at the lunch spot,
Bear Creek, Alabama*

photo by Sharon Hailey



Introduction to Whitewater

“Yeah, I had two of his kids.”

Weird silence. My ex-husband and I had split up January 1st of that year and I had moved back home to Memphis. I took a better look at Mhoward without his sunglasses and I recognized him from those college days. Fifteen years and three states later, we were jammed into a KIA and he was doing me the favor of guiding me down my first river.

Three hours later, we got to the put-in and the guys went to set the shuttle. I was so clueless; I didn't even know what “shuttle” really meant. While we were waiting, Mhoward took me down to the boat ramp. I had never been on moving water and had no idea what I was doing. He was patient with me, explaining things like,

“Never leave your gear anywhere.” So, I got on the water and did a few hip snaps, just paddled up and down a bit. On our way at last, I kept getting advice from the guys like, “If you can't paddle it straight (major problem), just let it turn you around and start paddling backwards. That way it'll look like you MEANT to do it.”

I remember my amazement as I watched them go back up river to play; up until that day I had no clue that kayaks could actually maneuver upriver. After lunch we headed down the river to a place called Sadler's Fall. So, there's this big bend in the river and people have lawn chairs in the shallows. The whole paddle, Mhoward and the group had been warning me about the tree—well not really warning, more like saying, “Watch out for the tree” a lot.

When I'd ask any questions, they said, “You'll see.” As we approached the falls, Yobrehisif started giggling and muttered, “River carnage.” Clueless to what that meant, I watched a church group of canoes go through and reveal some extremely un-church like vocabulary. I looked at Mhoward and he said, “The trick is to keep paddling and move far enough away from the tree to not get clothes lined.” When I was ready, he gave me one more piece of advice... “Lean forward; paddle hard.” So, I leaned forward and paddled hard and then, paddled harder, all the while wondering if I looked like a dork because I was taking two strokes on my left to every one on my right. I got to the tree and was far enough out from the base that I was able to lean back slightly and go under (only grazing my knuckles on the trunk).



Old Mill Falls on Bear Creek, Alabama

photo by Sharon Hailey

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Girls at PLAY

Introduction to Whitewater



On one of the last features, there was a channel to the right that ended in a little wave train. To this day, I can see that water in my head like a still photograph. The only thought I can connect to that image is a voice saying, AWESOME.

Although the take-out was only “three more miles” from the put-in (yeah, and I actually believed them the first two times the guys told me that), by the time we hit the real take-out, I was exhausted. The next day I woke up with an exquisite migraine, got dressed and drove to Tupelo to pick up my kids from my ex-husband. I remember lying down in the car, with a towel over my head trying to keep the light out, waiting for my ex and thinking, “I’m not the same person he divorced or even the same person who dropped off the kids. I’m different now ... more powerful ... better, insane, but better.”

Part III: Falling in Love (with the river)

After I took an Introduction to Kayaking Class at the local university, my instructors told me that if I really wanted to learn to kayak, I needed to check out the website of the local paddling club. What I found was intriguing. Memphis Whitewater (MW) is a loose affiliation of whitewater addicts trapped in an unfortunate geographic location. I’m pretty sure that the Great Plains in Kansas have more “gradient” than we do here. MW is not the official ACA sponsored club in town; they are, in their own words: a “non” club—no dues, no rules, no committees; just a bunch of people who want to paddle. Any weekend might find club members driving three to 10 hours (one way) crammed into Volvo station wagons, Isuzu Troopers and KIA hatchbacks.


I went to a MW meeting after boating with the club on the Spring River in May. Some guy named Rolyak announced that he was going to lead a beginner trip down Bear Creek in Alabama. Now, the rumor in the club is that the real name of this trip is “The Alabama Death Paddle.” As the newbie, I was slightly intimidated, but my friend Sharon had paddled it before, and although she is a more advanced paddler than I am, she said it was a great river and that I should do it. On her recommendation I met the group at the Shelby County Library at 6:00 am. By 6:25 am we were on the road hoping for a 9:30/10:00 am put-in. The journey there was monotonous interstate, but as we entered Alabama, I began to notice that the topography seemed hillier.

At the put-in, we all changed huddled behind the doors of the cars. From there it was approximately a one-mile paddle to the first feature, Old Mills Falls. When we approached the feature, we beached the boats and got out to scout. Everyone was standing around talking and pointing at this branch in the main line. Roylak, our fearless trip leader, fired it up down the mail line, branch be damned. After his run, he grabbed his paddle, rope and a carabineer and climbed up the bank to “go fishing” for the branch. I watched as time after time, he lowered his paddle with the makeshift lasso, only to be denied by the slippery twig. On what must have been the tenth attempt, he got it and lifted it up out of the river. There were cheers all around and people started to run it—most of them went down, got out of their boats and carried back up for another run.

After this rapid, I started noticing something about Bear Creek. It was really pretty. It’s narrower than the Spring or Hiawassee and so the canopy of trees extends mostly over the river and shades it. It was the first river I had ever been on that I considered strikingly beautiful. From the foliage and tree lines to the rock features, this river was truly magnificent.

The next place of note was the “lunch counter,” featuring a seal launch site and a fairly decent surf spot. I ate lunch and watched the guys play in the surf waves. From there we moved on to the mandatory portage of Factory Falls. This Class V waterfall was breathtaking and the portage was much easier than I had expected. After the falls, it’s flat water for about three or four miles (NOT eight miles as is commonly claimed by the members

of MW). This gave me time to hear Russ’ undercut story and have Madapple tell of the day they took a guy down the Bear who swam 15 times between the put-in and the first feature (the only guy they ever asked to get off the river). Hearing these stories just made me want to see more rivers and experience more of this crazy club that paddled them.

If the roll classes taught me that I was insane, and the Spring River introduced me to the group, the Bear made me love paddling—both the rivers themselves and the people who treasure them. 



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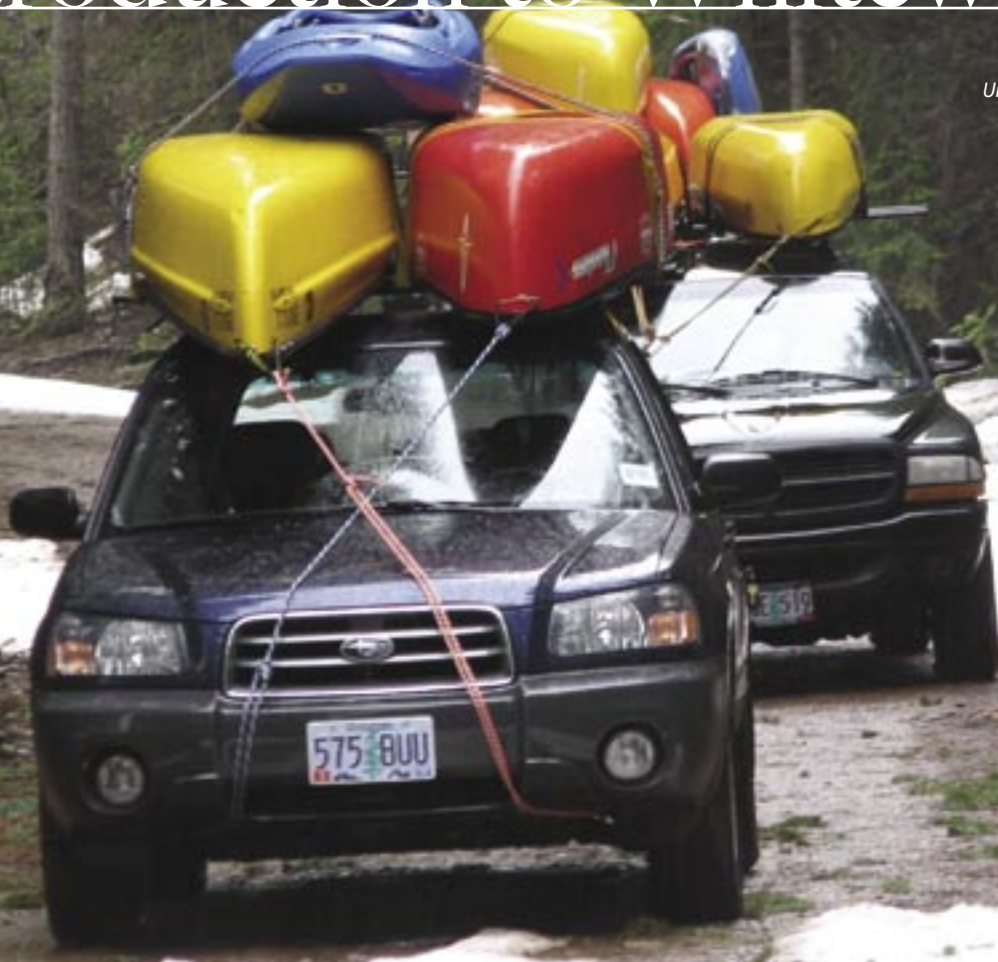

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Introduction to Whitewater

Unfortunately, winter OC paddling is a rare sight

photo by Mark Scantlebury



You What? Getting People into Whitewater Canoeing

By Mark Scantlebury

If you want to undertake something really difficult, try to get people into the niche sport of whitewater canoeing. I should know, I've been trying to do it for our club for four years now. And we're based in a veritable year-round whitewater paradise—the Pacific Northwest. Just to demonstrate how difficult it can be, I once held a free beginning whitewater canoeing lecture at the downtown REI store in Portland, Oregon. I spent 20 hours preparing a cool PowerPoint presentation complete with video clips, brought in solo whitewater canoe, a duffle bag full

of equipment, and a handful of flyers on getting started in the sport. Three people came. One was a store employee who was too embarrassed by the low turnout to leave. I gave my presentation, but never saw any of them again.

You wouldn't think a whitewater program could survive by adding just two or three canoeists a year, but when you're talking about what becomes a lifelong addiction, it turns out that is more than enough. Our club, the Lower Columbia Canoe Club (LCCC) does more than survive. It thrives. Perhaps that's just the addictive nature of whitewater canoeing. Once people are in, they don't tend to stray. I'm probably a leading candidate for a 12-step program to get this monkey off my back. I didn't stumble upon the sport until I was 46 and now seven years later, I have 12 canoes of various whitewater capabilities in my garage (my car and my wife's now reside in

the driveway), paddle nearly every weekend year round, and am president of our 200-member club. It's obvious I'm in deep.

But this article isn't about me. It's about what we do to get more me's in the club. And it's a potentially serious problem for our sport. Awareness is extremely low. Neighbors walking by as I'm putting canoes on my car will ask me if I'm going kayaking. They don't even recognize whitewater open canoes as canoes. Granted, a Dagger Phantom or Bell Ocoee doesn't look like the 16-foot lake canoe most people are familiar with, but it's plainly a canoe. When I get back into town the same neighbors I corrected earlier about my activity will ask me how my day of rafting was. People just don't believe the sport exists, that someone would deliberately take a canoe into whitewater rapids and that there would be specialized canoes for that sort of thing.

You can't blame them. You can't buy a whitewater canoe in most stores, so people don't see them or know about them. Even our local paddling store, the one that sells hundreds of whitewater kayaks and loads of lake canoes, rarely stocks whitewater canoes (though recently they've begun stocking a few—thank you, Alder Creek Kayak and Canoe). And who can blame them? Sales are pretty slow. That's why, whitewater canoes are predominately a special order item. This year, for instance, I did a 13-hour round trip drive from Portland to Vancouver B.C. to pick up a canoe (Evergreen Solito) that no local store could order for me.

We here in the Northwest are not alone with this problem of getting new people into our sport. A message from a New Jersey canoeist on Cboats.net reads:

As much as I hate to say it, ... from what I can see, WW [whitewater] canoeing is pretty much a dying sport.

Two things have really convinced me of this:

1) the youngest WW open boater I know is in her late 30's; very few new (young) paddlers seem to be coming into the sport;

2) a beginner OC1 WW instructional I am teaching for my club this weekend has exactly one student (the kayaking course the same weekend is filled up, with a waiting list).

I am now going to proceed to refute this gloomy post because, based on my experience, I don't believe this is true.

Whitewater canoeists-to-be are out there and they don't necessarily have to be ancient. The first thing to recognize is that the sport tends to appeal to people who like to do things the hard way. I don't mean to insult any kayakers out there (many of you paddle much harder water than I can), but I've heard it said that kayaking is canoeing for dummies. This is simply a humorous way to say that running a Class IV rapid under full control in a canoe isn't easy. Many of my kayaking friends often profess they couldn't paddle the runs we do in an

open boat with a single-bladed paddle. Nor are they willing to spend the time to learn. The learning curve for whitewater canoeists is acknowledgeably longer than kayaking, particularly if a person doesn't have any whitewater experience. You can take someone from beginner to Class III+ kayaker in a season, but it can take three years for a beginning canoeist to become truly proficient.

For me, this help defines the target market. If you're looking to recruit new people to the sport you have to look for people who like challenge. Lots of it. You want to target people who don't want to do things the way everyone else does. You want to reach people who do things like backcountry telemark skiing or riding bicycles to work all year long. Among our club's whitewater paddlers, we have a much higher ratio than normal of people who do such activities. We even have some unicyclists.

The LCCC offers a beginning whitewater class every year. My job is to get people into the classes. I don't claim to be wildly successful at this, but I have learned a little of what works and what doesn't—particularly in regards to reaching these people challenged at finding challenges.

One thing I do is attend the local paddling shop's "PaddleFest" every year. It's held at a lake and is mainly for people interested in lake canoes and sea kayaks. There are some whitewater kayaks for people to try. And the local Esquif representative brings a range of canoes, including some whitewater boats. I set up my booth right beside him and we feed off each other. I send people looking for canoes over to him. He sends anyone who expresses any interest in a whitewater canoe over to me to find out about our club and class. For a day of standing around chatting to people, I sign up a few bodies, but the people who come to this event generally don't fit the profile.

More effective are the posters we hang on bulletin boards in all the outdoor recreation-oriented shops in town. Everything from boutique rock climbing stores to REI. These posters include those

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Introduction to Whitewater

ubiquitous little tabs people can tear off to take the contact information with them. This being the age of easy pamphleteering using color inkjet printers, I include a photo of someone whitewater canoeing on the poster. I don't rely on the words alone because I don't think "beginning whitewater canoeing class" will register in the uninitiated brain. I also try to place ads or notices in newsletters of other outdoor clubs, from the local Nordic skiing club to, yes, kayaking clubs. I also carry copies of our club newsletter with me to hand out to people who ask about the sport at put-ins and take-outs along the river. I always tell them about our classes.

The most effective thing we do as a club to get people into our classes and into the club is ask our members to get the word out. We don't keep our favorite sport a secret. We openly recruit our friends. Probably 75 percent of the people who take our classes (flatwater or whitewater) know at least one person in the club. They're the neighbors who we have to explain it's a canoe not a kayak to. They're our co-workers who, when we're asked what we did last weekend, we tell once again like a broken record (if you're a whitewater canoeist you're probably old enough to remember records) that we were out whitewater canoeing. And they're our spouses and children.

This brings up one of the biggest issues in getting people into this sport. They usually don't have a whitewater canoe, unless they picked a used one up cheap and that's why they're looking for a class. People generally want to try the sport before they commit and buy. And that's a big problem. There's very little for them to rent. Fortunately, we have a lot of members who are willing to lend people canoes—including that local Esquif rep and the guy with a garage-full of boats writing this article. Wondering why you should hang onto that old Dagger Genesis or some other boat you wouldn't consider paddling anymore? Use it to get new people into the sport. Lend them something big and stable. The lack of rental whitewater canoes for people to rent in order to try the sport is a major obstacle for getting new people involved.



Top: Whitewater canoeing's difficulty will always keep it a fringe sport

Bottom: LCC instructors Peter and Veda Keefe demonstrating a peel out


Photos by Mark Scantlebury

We, as a club, looked into having a few rental canoes on hand, but the potential liability issues were too great for a club our size and we decided that encouraging the lending of old boats was a better solution.

Our beginning whitewater class requires people to first take our flatwater/moving water course or obtain permission from the instructor to participate. The whitewater course is a two-day course with day one mostly spent working on eddying, peel outs, and ferries. Day two we focus on using these skills while running an easy Class II stretch. But the class only gets people's feet wet. The real key to getting people into the sport is what we do after the class. We offer "class grad" trips on easy water that help people build their skills. We help get them into our community of whitewater canoeists so they can build friendships with people who can mentor them. Our club is blessed with a lot of people who will genuinely take interest in a new paddler and school them in everything from the best canoes to buy

to why a drysuit will be the best purchase you'll ever make. We make people feel safe in the sport by setting up downstream with a rope when they're running a rapid they've never run before and taking time to explain why something is the best line, instead of just pointing it out.

All this said, I have to admit from the 30 or so people who take our flatwater/moving water course to the 20 or so who then take our whitewater course, at the end of the summer, we end up with just two or three new converts to whitewater canoeing. But, in this case, I think it's quality not quantity that matters. These are people generally well-suited to the sport. They're hard-headed and eager to learn a difficult sport in a difficult craft—a boat that will dump you instantly in the water if you heel it wrong, catch a rock sideways, or get tractor-beamed into a hole. These are the people who tend to get excited about the sport, the improvement in their skills, come on lots of our trips, and, you guessed it, help bring in new people to the sport.

Will whitewater canoeing ever die? I don't think so. It's true we're one of the smaller factions in the paddling world, but I tend to think we're one of the most devoted and enthusiastic. And the reason you see so many old-timers still running whitewater in canoes? That's because it's a hard sport to quit. Long after many kayakers hang up their boats and move to rafting with the grandchildren, we're still out there in our hardshell canoes, dodging rocks and surfing waves. In fact, every other year or so, one of those converts to our sport is an older kayaker looking for a way to keep the sport exciting without having to risk Class V water. And, it's not uncommon for that convert to then bring another kayaker or two into the whitewater canoeing fold. We're not talking geometric growth here. But a person here, a person there, we're adding them on faster than we're losing them. And the most exciting thing? A couple of them are under 30. 

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Introduction to Whitewater

Vision: the Case of T-Bone Holecrusher

By Brian Snyder

One of the questions I hear often from aspiring boaters is, “What does it take to run the hard stuff?”

Does it take a special courage, a pair of platinum cajones, or is it a set of skills that comes from years on the water?

Obviously, nobody can paddle difficult whitewater without the right skills. Bravery only lasts until the last glimpse of an abandoned boat disappears over the horizon, and the hiking begins. But while the need for technique is important, it depends directly on the most overlooked part of paddling: vision.

What is vision? Vision is the sum of experience, awareness, and confidence that forms the kayaker’s sense of self and situation.

Vision begins on day one. Every paddler on earth has heard the phrase, “Look where you want to go.” But place any novice kayaker into a boat and where do they look? Right at their feet. They paddle in circles, staring at the bow of the boat. Every little reaction causes a lapse in balance, forcing them to focus on simply staying upright. Make them stare at an end point though, and they paddle to it. They may spin out of control a dozen times, but eventually they arrive.

Now, let’s take this simple concept and apply it to a more advanced situation.

T-Bone Holecrusher is renowned within his paddling club for his gripping accounts of hydraulic fury. Whether Class II or Class VI, there’s no hole that he won’t stare down and square up. Yet T-Bone has suffered lately from a string of nasty swims. It’s not that he’s mentally shaken. The broken pelvis, he feels, was a misdiagnosis. However, the gear is costing him a fortune to replace. With the price of equipment rising like floodwater, he knows another swim could put him out of

the game or worse, at serious risk of full-time employment.

With this in mind, T-Bone and his friends set out to brave the Upper North Fork of the Gnar. They are bombing down the Gnar, when out of nowhere they arrive upon the horizon line that marks the river’s crux rapid, Heinous Beatdown (III-IV). They hop out to scout.

Within seconds the line is obvious. The move at Heinous is to paddle right to left, and avoid the Beatdown Hole in the center at the bottom. Nothing but waves and heavy current stand in the way. It appears to be an average ferry.

T-Bone, the perpetual probe, pulls out first. He enters from the right with his bow pointing left poised to make the move when suddenly, a diagonal wave breaks across the deck and deflects his angle downstream toward the hole. He wobbles and turns his vision on the pourover. He strokes forward desperately attempting to flee. The hole only approaches faster. He’s still staring at the foam pile as the boat slams into the reversal, and the rodeo begins.

At first glance T-Bone’s crash appears to be the product of a blown ferry. A wave pitched the boat off course and turned it straight for the hole. In the end, our intrepid paddler had no choice but to square up and try to crush through it.

In reality though, the line was lost before he even left the eddy. T-Bone knew what to expect. He knew where he should be, and he knew where he shouldn’t. But instead of looking to where he wanted to go, he focused instead on where he did not. As soon as the first odd current changed his angle, his vision locked on the hole, and his frantic forward strokes cut a wake right for it.

Any expert kayaker will admit that rarely does a line go exactly as planned. Everyone takes a chance that, especially when paddling at the edge of their ability, things will go wrong. Angles change, edges catch, boats flip—it all happens. Such is the

nature of whitewater.

It is the ability to deal with these changes that separates great boaters from good boaters, advanced boaters from intermediates. It is the vision to focus on the end goal and make it happen—whatever it takes.

Granted, much about handling whitewater is only learned through experience. Just go and do it. Stressing over every surprise stern squirt or ugly line only wastes energy and time. Through experience balance gets better, technique improves, and big rapids lose some of their mystique.

However, a large part of vision can be taught. Whether through an instructor or personal commitment, any paddler can learn to see beyond just water and rocks.

Let’s revisit our friend T-Bone at the same rapid where he just got beat down. The line remains the standard right-to-left ferry across the wave train. The hole thunders at its same location in the center. In short, T-Bone needs to be left at the bottom.

Now, let’s refocus his gaze. Come hell or high water, he is looking to that spot on the left, the end goal. Although the eddy could dock a cruise ship, T-bone aims for the top.


He drops into the rapid and begins his ferry across. The same wave crashes over the deck, turning the boat downstream. He feels his original line compromising, yet remains focused on the end result. Instead of looking to the hole and stroking forward (increasing downstream momentum), he plants a backsweep, turns the bow back upstream and resumes the ferry in the original direction.

Does “T” hit his original target? No, but he does come within one stroke of it and easily clears the hole at the bottom.

Over time he learns to adjust his angle before he hits the wave, using the deflection in his favor. But for now he is on the right track.

Anyone who has spent significant time on the water will admit that kayaking is above all, a mental game. This is not to say that paddling in the upper realms is only for adrenaline freaks. It doesn't take brass balls and a blatant disregard for life to paddle big whitewater.

On the contrary, it requires vision—the wherewithal to deal with surprises, adapt to changes, and solve problems with a cool head. The best kayakers are those who grasp both the details and the big picture. They understand not only a rapid or a river, but their own ability and that of the others around them.

Practice vision. Focus on the end goal, and then anticipate changes. Look where you want to go, and sooner or later you'll get there. 


Look Where You Want To Go

Considering the lore that surrounds our sport, it's easy to see why many paddlers view Class IV-V whitewater as the realm of lunatics and adrenaline junkies. They see videos of steely-eyed psychos running 100-foot waterfalls. They read reports of broken backs on the Green and flush drownings on the North Fork. And at night, stories of epic thrashings from the Gauley dominate their campfires.

Everything in kayaking begins with vision. From catching eddies to rolling, to throwing cartwheels, the eyes lead the way.

Yet in the heat of battle, too often our eyes focus on the exact dangers that we are trying to avoid.

One of the hardest habits to break in a novice kayaker, is to get their eyes off the front of the boat. They stare at the bow, trying to both see and feel stability. Every little reaction causes a lapse in balance, forcing the novice to refocus on simply staying upright. The boat begins to wobble, the hips begin to shake, and the eyes return to the feet.

The golden rule of kayaking is look where you want to go. You're going to go where you look, so you might as well look where you want to go. This is perhaps the single most prevailing concept in our sport. From catching eddies to rolling, to throwing cartwheels, the eyes lead the way. 



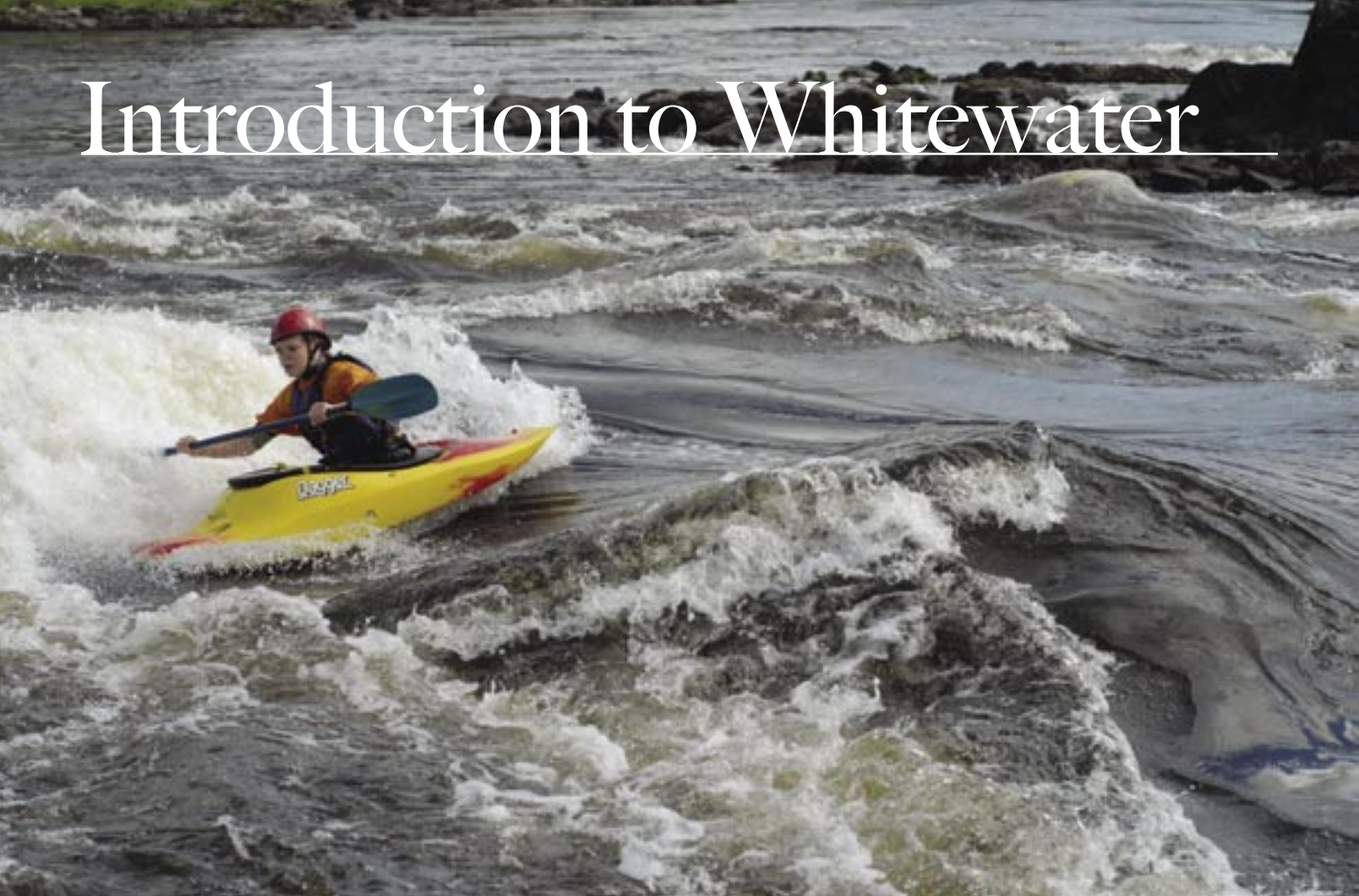
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Introduction to Whitewater



The Roll

By Philip Urban

We were on a new river, in a new state, in borrowed boats. She was upside down in a highly aerated almost toilet bowl type of a spot at the bottom of the crux drop on a run at the edge of her comfort and experience. She missed her first roll and I held my breath waiting to see what would happen next.

I've been paddling with my kids for 10 years now. My son and I caught the fever immediately and paddled passionately (100+ days a year) from the first year. My daughter was 9 years old that first year and not interested in whitewater. Winters would come and she'd come to the pool with us and snap off hand rolls on both sides but still she wanted nothing to do with being scared on the river. No worries, I was happy that she had even that limited exposure.

She paddled the Nantahala one year. That winter the whole family (four of us)

went to Chile and Chris Spe's beautiful operation on the Futaleufu. Her brother and I paddled the Futa for 10 days while she and her Mom took lessons from some of the World's best on the Class II-III Espolon. Still, the combat roll was not part of her repertoire. Her talent and basic skills were obvious and beautiful. In fact, her ability to paddle Class III without flipping contributed to her having no experience with combat rolls.

In more recent years she has paddled a couple times a season with us and styled the easy III's that we got her on. Always we were just psyched to be able to share a run with her. Often she'd end up leading and sometimes if you got close enough you could hear that she was humming or singing some song to herself. One of my best days ever on the river was when the family followed her brother to the Worlds in Graz, Austria and she and I slipped away from the drama of the comp and

paddled the source of Vienna's drinking water, a Class II-III section of the Salza. The main thing I remember from that run was leading her into a beautiful rapid with multiple house size rocks and realizing after we entered on river left that we were going to have to make something of a hairy ferry (for a Class III run) to river right in the middle of the rapid. We eddied out at the bottom with me more psyched than her that the two of us had styled the drop. I still have the snapshot displayed of the two of us at the takeout with paddles crossed as we stand with the river and the Alps in the background.

Two summers ago we ran the Kennebec Gorge at 2400 cfs. At that level the run becomes something of a pushy and at times technical Class III. Even at that level the Alleyway is big water and with her on her brother's stern and me sweeping immediately behind she flipped on a big diagonal. I watched her go for her roll

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Photo by Katie Selby



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Introduction to Whitewater

but the water was so dynamic I could see her whole upside down body clear of the water as she went for her hip snap. She swam. Her brother had her on his back deck in seconds and I pushed her boat to shore. Old friends who were with us said it was the fastest rescue they had ever seen. She was nonplussed and styled the rest of the run but it did nothing in the way of exposing her to the confidence of a successful combat roll.

In the fall of 2005 she went off to her first year of college. The girl from the deep woods of Maine chose Pratt in Brooklyn, NY as her first stop in her new life as a young adult. Manhattan by subway several times a week was her new challenging technical run and she styled this too. The several times that her Mom and I visited her in NYC it was she who led us, and I was similarly thrilled when we would

eddy out in some fantastic little restaurant that she wanted to share with us. None of this seemed to faze her and I feel quite sure that her river exposure helped her navigate this new part of her life.

So, her beloved brother now spends his summers in Buena Vista, Co. with his new lady. We all went out to visit them in June. That is how Chloe and I found ourselves on the Arkansas river paddling yet another amazingly beautiful Class III run. We were just the two of us and we had been having a great day. We got to the hardest drop, House Rock, and got out to scout. There was quite a pushy and dynamic wave train leading into the drop and most of the river went to the left of the rock. A diagonal sat at the lip of the drop feeding away from the rock but into a big wall on river left. Below the diagonal and against the House Rock sat a big aerated

swirling toilet bowl kind of a spot that looked real intimidating on a Class III run. We looked at it, discussed our line, and walked back to our boats without any drama. As I pulled my skirt on I felt a surge of predrop adrenaline and it wasn't all just out of concern for her. We decided that I would lead and she would follow after I hit the horizon line. Our plan was to use the diagonal and angle left a little to take the toilet out of play. It was funky enough so that I drove my bow into the wall on the left at the bottom of the drop and finished the runout backwards. I looked up to watch her hit the horizon a little right of where she wanted to be and she flipped on the swirling edge of the toilet.

I sat there. I sat there and watched in a way that is probably familiar to most parents. So much invested in so many ways in our children. And yet ultimately they are



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Jud Keiser, Team NRS, waiting his turn on the wave. © Chris Hoffer

on their own. I knew she was not happy. I knew her first instinct was to swim. I saw her set up for her roll, I was psyched. She missed it and I held my breath with her. A moment passed and instead of her surfacing separate from her boat I saw her setting up for another attempt. This time she snapped it off and immediately eddied out in a little micro eddy in the wall on the left. I was almost certainly as psyched as her. She gathered herself for a minute and then paddled down to the next eddy where I sat waiting to high five, make that high ten her. We both knew something big had just happened. She spoke of her determination and the tears that she felt wanting to come. I felt that most satisfying feeling of watching one of your children take a difficult step and move into a new arena of confidence and competence.


Little did either of us know just how big a


step that was.

We paddled as a family again, this time on a slightly harder section of the Arkansas and she paddled with a new level of aggressiveness born of her new confidence. She didn't flip but she explored the river more and her impeccable technique and style seemed even more beautiful to watch. Her Mom and I returned to our beloved Maine woods but she stayed for another 10 days to hang with her brother and maybe paddle a little. We got home and started getting excited calls from her telling us of her training in a couple of the Ark's holes with her brother and her future sister. She spoke of spinning in the holes and sessions with a couple dozen rolls. She was concerned about the lack of a close play hole back here in Maine. Her brother would tell me with amazement of her progress and her beautifully instinctive

technique and style. I was envious of his time with her but I was not the least bit surprised. After all, I had watched him through his progression and hers was no less beautiful, she just had a different pace.

I've written often about boating and the amazing community and beautiful places one can access through it. I've shared some of the incredible ride of watching my son become a World Champion. But, there is something really different, and beautiful, and inspiring in watching a young girl become a young woman and learn, and grow, and excel at her own pace in her own elegant way.

Thanks Chloe, you're the best. 



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tv/blog.htm search Oct '06 archives to read about the fund raiser

Strength Training for Kayakers, Part II

By Matt Young

The month of March is a very exciting time in Northern New York. Ski season is winding down, kayaking gear is taken out of its winter hiding spot, and everyone places bets on when the ice will break so we can go kayaking again. March is also when I really step up my strength training program in order to be as ready as possible for spring. It is my last chance to get as strong as possible before I really have to put those paddling muscles to work.

In this installment of strength training for kayakers, I will offer suggestions for strengthening the muscles of the lower back, legs, hips, chest, triceps, and back. This is in no way meant to be a complete workout, just a few suggestions for exercises you can incorporate into a pre-existing exercise routine. Remember, it is always best to consult a physician before beginning any exercise program.

Lower Back and Legs

Strength training for kayaking does not just involve the muscles of the shoulders, back and chest. Although strengthening these muscles is a great idea, there are a lot of muscles inside your boat that need to be strong, too. Have you ever finished a playboating session and felt like your hamstrings were tired, or gotten out of your boat to find that your hips were fatigued? You have to strengthen the muscles holding you in your boat just as much as you have to strengthen the ones doing the paddling.

Good Morning

The good morning exercise is great for strengthening the lower back and hamstring muscles. We use these muscles to help achieve better posture while sitting in our boats. Playboaters will use these muscles to drive the bow of their boat

- #1 - Starting position for the "Good Morning"
- #2 - Finishing position for the "Good Morning"
- #3- Abduction strengthens the hips
- #4 - Adduction works the opposite set of muscles

Photos by Drew Haas

into the green water for a big loop. Make sure you start with light weight on this one. Use a bar across your shoulders the same way you would for a squat. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, and hinge forward from your waist, keeping your knees straight. Bend as far forward as you can go, then come right back up to your starting position. Make sure you keep your head up.

Hip Strength

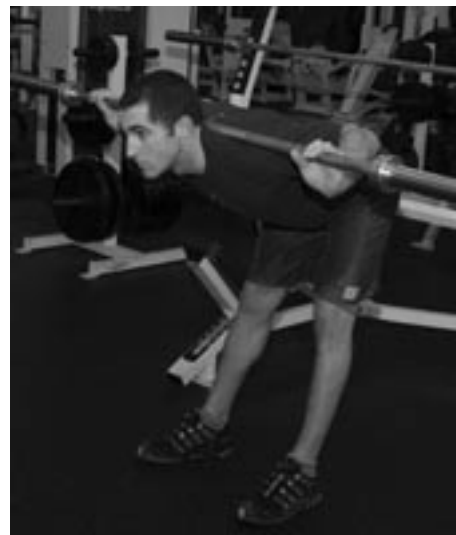
Strengthening the muscles in your hips may not seem important, but having strong hips is essential for establishing good posture and comfort.

Abduction/Adduction

There are a couple of simple movements that can be done either with ankle weights, resistance bands, or a cable machine at a gym. If you are using the cable machine you will need an ankle cuff. If you are using ankle weights, you will be lying down on your side. One movement is done with both feet beginning together and one leg moving apart. The other begins with the feet apart and one leg moving so both feet are together at the end. Keep in mind you are exercising small muscles so it is a good idea to use less weight. Don't forget to do both sides.

Chest, Triceps and Back

The bread and butter of any strength training routine for kayaking must involve the back, chest, and triceps. For kayaking-specific exercises always try to mimic kayaking movements as closely as possible. Think about which muscles are sore after kayaking, and try and choose exercises that fatigue those areas.



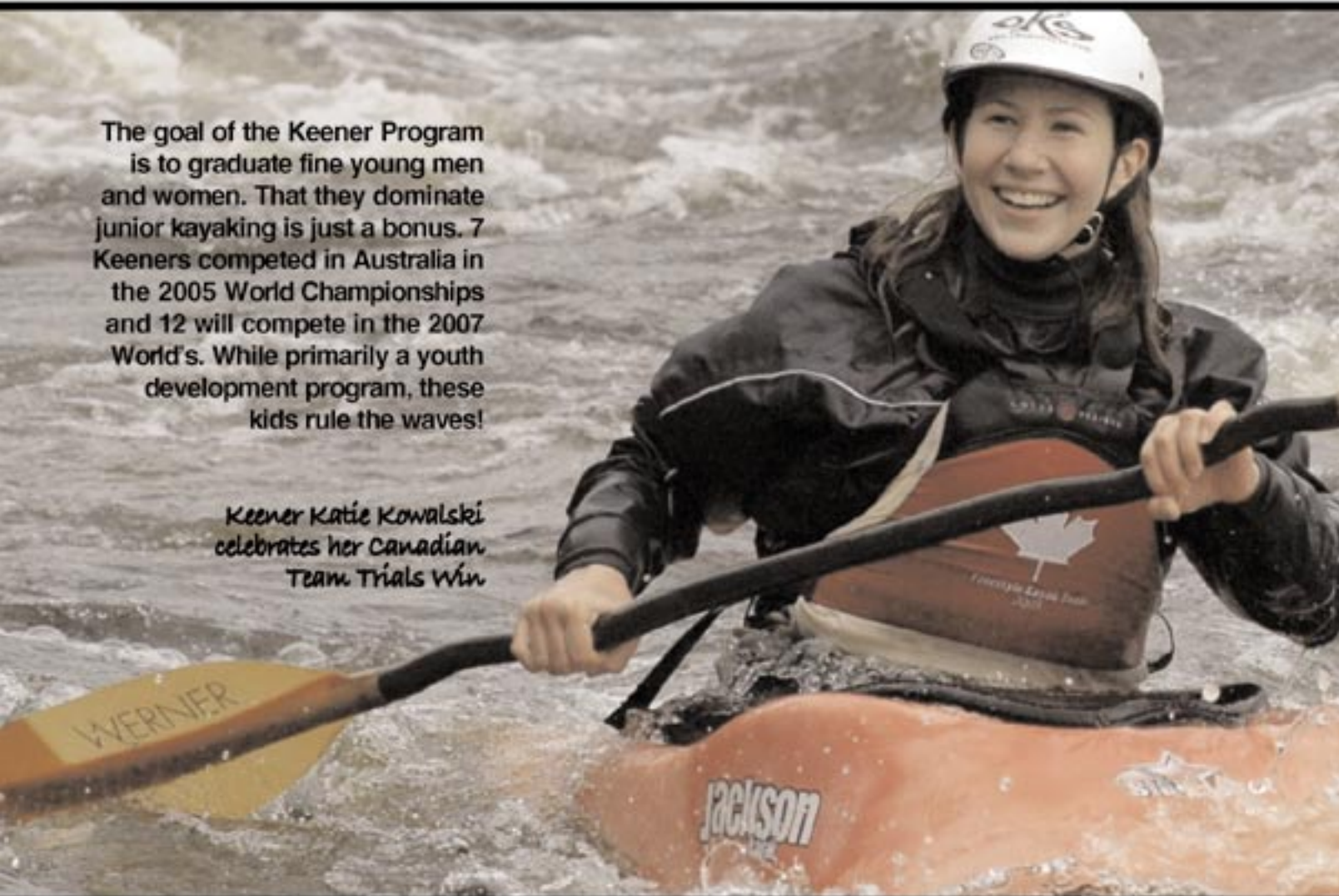


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Keener Katie Kowalski celebrates her Canadian Team Trials win



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WORLD CUP & US & CANADIAN TEAM TRIALS

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2006 WORLD CUP

MEN	Jason Craig 7
Eric Jackson 2	Thomas Fahrn 8
Stephen Wright 3	Joel Kowalski 10
Moe Kelleher 7	Keegan Grady 18
Corey Volt 11	Kalob Grady 21
Brad Sutton 21	Cameron Savage 25
Rafael Ortiz 29	Andrew Jobe 30
Jeremy Laucks 36	Chris Sarantos 35
Matt Hamilton 37	
Matt McGuire 38	WOMEN'S K1
Ben Natusch 50	Emly Jackson 2
	Tiffany Manchester 11
JUNIOR MEN	JUNIOR WOMEN
Nick Troutman 1	Katie Kowalski 5
Dane Jackson 2	
Jonathan Shales 5	

2006 US TEAM TRIALS

MEN	David Rufie 14
Eric Jackson 1	Ei Spiegel 15
Stephen Wright 7	
Clay Wright 12	JUNIOR WOMEN
Corey Volt 14	Emly Jackson 1
Jeremy Laucks 23	Brynn Weeks 2
JUNIOR MEN	
Dane Jackson 1	
Justin Platt 4	
Jason Craig 7	
David Spiegel 9	
Michael Palmer 10	
Colter Beereboom 11	
Cameron Savage 12	
Jonathan Shales 13	

2006 CANADIAN TEAM TRIALS

MEN	Nika Choquette 10
Nick Troutman 1	Mark Barsevskis 11
Joel Kowalski 8	Aaron Dilwala 12
David Neuenhuis 10	Matthew Troutman 14
Brad Sutton 12	
Matt McGuire 13	JUNIOR WOMEN
James Roddick 17	Katie Kowalski 1
Matt Hamilton 20	
JUNIOR MEN	
Thomas Fahrn 1	
Ryan Boudens 3	
Andrew Jobe 4	
Keegan Grady 5	
Chris Sarantos 7	
Scott Bothwick 9	



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Dagger


Straight arm pull-down

The straight arm pull-down is one of my favorites because when I'm done performing this exercise I almost feel like I've been kayaking. While standing up, position your hands shoulder-width apart on a pull-down bar. With open palms facing away from you and straight elbows, pull the bar down towards your waist. Feel the muscles in your upper back and triceps contract while you do this. Make sure you keep your core tight throughout the entire movement.

Pull-ups

Everyone knows them, and no one wants to do them. Pull-ups are absolutely essential for improving power and strength in kayaking. They hurt, and they're hard, but nothing will improve paddling power and strength more. Pull-ups are very easy to do in the comfort of your home, and many gyms have assisted pull-up machines if you need help. If your gym does not have an assisted pull-up machine you can do a modified pull-up. Grip the bar with your palms facing away from you. Try to keep the rest of your body still while you pull your chin over the bar. To ensure good form, pretend like you are squeezing a pencil between your shoulder blades while you perform pull-ups.

Clap Push-ups

Incorporating a plyometric push-up into your workout routine can help improve power, especially for kayaking movements that use the back face of the paddle blade. In a normal push-up position, instead of pushing up and going right back down, push up so that your hands leave the ground. Clap them together, and return right to the ground. Try doing two or three sets of 10 in a row, but not more than twice a week. 



#1 - The straight-arm pull down
#2 - Pull up
#3 - Pushup start position
#4 - Clap pushup in action

Photos by Drew Haas



River Voices

Remembering Vladimir Vanha

By Ken Kastorff

It was with sadness that I learned that one of whitewater kayaking's most influential design pioneers, Vladimir Vanha, passed away recently.

The first time I ever saw Vladimir Vanha, he was standing next to two Noah kayaks that he was trying to sell in front of the Nantahala Outdoor Center's reservations office. The year was either 1975 or 76 and Vladimir had recently defected from communist Czechoslovakia. He had come to race his newly designed slalom kayak in the Southeastern slalom race only to find out that because he hadn't pre-registered, he wouldn't be able to race.

His slalom boat looked like something out of a Star Wars movie. It was extremely low volume and was capable of sinking its ends under slalom poles. It had foot bumps to give paddlers enough room for larger feet. You have to remember that at this time the hot slalom boats were still designs like the Lettman Mark 6 and the Phoenix Slipper. No one had even thought the slalom process through enough to consider dunking ends under poles. I remember listening to Vladimir's enthusiastic Czech accent as he explained to anyone who would listen the advantages of his new design. Unfortunately, as would happen many times in the future, Vladimir's designs were so far ahead of their time that kayakers just weren't ready to give them a reasonable try. Following are just a few of the innovations that came from Vladimir's Noah Company:

Materials

Vladimir was one of the first designers to start using vinyl ester resin. Most companies in the 70s were still using polyester resin. Polyester resin didn't have the bonding strength or the abrasion resistance that vinyl ester resin did.

Ergonomics

He was way ahead of his time in ergonomics. I can remember him working over two weeks just to make a kayak seat that was up to his standards. It was the most comfortable seat ever put in a kayak (okay, I might be a bit prejudiced given it was molded off of my own butt).

Boat Design

The Jeti, AQ and AQII. One of the most radical designs that came from the mind of Vanha was certainly the Noah Jeti. Not many people realize that the Jeti came from the idea of having a boat short enough to travel on an airplane. Up to this point, paddlers would take out the walls and fold boats into thirds to get them on planes. Upon arrival they would heat the kayaks up and hope the creases didn't crack the boat. Then Vladimir came out with the Jeti. The original Jeti was less than 10 feet long at a time when most boats were still twelve to thirteen feet long.

I can still remember my reluctance to even try a Jeti the first time I saw one. It wasn't until Vladimir almost got on his knees and begged me to just give it a try that I finally grabbed a prototype from his shop to take to the lake. My reaction after I sat in the boat and rolled it was nothing less than astonishment. I couldn't believe how comfortable the boat was. And the design was such that the boat almost rolled itself. The ergonomics set you up to be able to execute a hipsnap so much better than any boat on the market. Plus it had a very comfortable seat, set low in the boat, so that you could place your knees out to the side of the boat under comfortable contoured thigh braces. This arrangement gave incredible control.

I had a student at the time who was having trouble rolling, so I switched boats with him. His first roll was incredibly easy and the look on his face was great! We quickly moved from the lake to the river. His first try surf at Surfing Rapid on the Nantahala

River was controlled and the boat easily carved back and forth on the wave. When he finally did flip while playing he rolled with no effort at all.

That was all I needed to see! By the end of that day I had my first Jeti and continued to paddle it for several years. Oh, there were kayakers out there who were convinced that the Jeti was too slow and that if you fell into a hole you'd never escape. When it really came down to it, though, I believe it just looked too weird for them and they never gave it a chance. But those who did try it loved the boat. Arlo Kleinrath took one out to Colorado and won one of the first rodeos on the Numbers of the Arkansas River and even many years later Richard Oldenquist repeated that same feat in a Jeti on the Ocoee River at Hell Hole.

The Jeti also became the boat of choice for many of us when it came to steep creek paddling. My first trips down the Narrows of the Green River were in a Jeti Grande. At the same time many of us also paddled Jettis on big water like the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. The boat was a surfing machine on any river you put it on and was always predictable and user friendly—something unusual at the time.

The Jeti design would have lasted many more years had Vladimir not lost the design rights to it. He was a brilliant designer, but business was not his strongest suit. Brilliance often pairs with eccentricity. This pairing would haunt Vladimir throughout his life. He was always under funded, and consequently would make deals with the devil if necessary to survive and fund his work. I can remember him telling me one day that he had somewhere near ten credit cards maxed out to fund the molding of a given design. It was always a struggle for Vladimir, but he never gave up and would find a way to come back even after disaster. Take the AQ, Vladimir's second whitewater kayak design. No sooner had his newly designed blow molded shipment of AQ kayaks arrived at his workshop in western North Carolina when they were destroyed in a fire caused by spontaneous



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River Voices


ignition from chemicals his brother was using to redesign a seat for a new boat. Vladimir showed up at the NOC store the next day with baggies of burnt plastic powder with notes on them, "freeze dried kayaks, just add water." And like a phoenix, Noah boats rose again with the redesigned AQ, the AQII.

I doubt that many would know that Vladimir designed the first planning hull kayak. It was called a Krakatoa, and was designed in the early 80s. The Krakatoa was about eight feet long, had a perfectly flat hull and a sharp chine. It unfortunately never went anywhere because it was twenty years ahead of its time. Imagine where the sport of kayaking would be today if only it had been given a chance.

Vladimir eventually returned to Czechoslovakia in the later part of his life. This was partly a result of his disillusionment with the American dream. And I am sure he eventually just got homesick for his country. His departure left a void in terms of characters in our sport. Take his embracement of the concept of freedom in the States, for instance. He came here because of a belief in freedom that was not to be found in a communist country, but he never understood that freedom did not mean you could drive as fast as you wanted. He thought that he had the constitutional right to drive at any speed he desired. After some rather humorous driving incidences, his friends affectionately referred to him as "The Mad Czech." When he finally ran out of drivers licenses (I think he had one

in just about every state in the South) and new disguises to avoid capture by the local police, he finally decided that his idea of freedom just didn't exist in North Carolina and it was time to return home.

Even after returning home to the Czech Republic he still continued to come out with some great designs like SQ line. It was after these designs and his return home to Europe that I eventually lost track of Vladimir. I am sure he continued to come up with great designs right up to the end.

Vladimir Vanha will be missed by all of us he touched with his brilliance and his humor and his willingness to challenge all of us in the industry with his forward thinking. 



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Accident Summary



2006 - Part II A Slow Finish to a Tough Whitewater Season

By Charlie Walbridge

High water, particularly in the West, made 2006 a tough year for whitewater paddlers. Three kayak, four canoe, and twelve rafting fatalities were reported to American Whitewater during the past six months. The total number of whitewater deaths for the year (52) is one of the highest in the last decade. But the number of kayaking deaths (14) is below average, and the canoeing death toll (8) was not particularly high. But it was a bad season for rafters, with a total of 11 commercial and 20 private fatalities. All but six rafting accidents occurred in the West. Major causes of accidents this year include a

failure to wear PFDs (15), strainers & sieves (12), flush-drowning (9), and dam hydraulics (7). The new AW Accident Database makes it easier than ever to report accidents and near misses and this may account for some of the increases over last year.

Kayaking Accidents

The Southern paddling community was rocked this past fall by the death of Shane Hulsey on the so-called "suicide" section of Alabama's Little River Canyon. Mr. Hulsey, 33, was a strong Class V paddler from Birmingham who ran this section often. He ran the river education program for the Cahaba River Society and was a swiftwater rescue instructor. On October 20th he flipped and swam in Pinball Rapid, the hardest Class V rapid on the run. Water levels were low. He was being towed by a very strong paddler, hanging

onto the grab loop, when he lost his grip or let go near the river-left shore. He then washed through a small channel very near shore and was leg/foot entrapped. Despite considerable efforts from the other four boaters with him, they could not get him free.

On October 23rd Jorge Martinez, a long-time employee of California Canoe and Kayak in San Francisco, died on a Class V section of the Rio Xico in Veracruz, Mexico. Mr. Martinez got caught in a bad hole in a big drop, flipped, and bailed out. He washed into an undercut and disappeared. His kayak came free after a time, but he did not.

The East Branch of the Saco is a very small stream that runs out of the White Mountains near Bartlett, NH. It takes a lot of water to bring it up, and on the night of October 27th that's exactly what happened.

Trent Pearce and Todd Lasher getting a rope to Ryan Kramer. Thanks to both of them, as well as Kevin Drake and Sam Hilton, Ryan escaped this predicament safely.

Photo by Kevin Drake

After a strong storm dropped up to three inches of water on the area, three solid local paddlers decided to give the East Branch a look. According to a report submitted to AW by Darren Laughlin, the water was unusually high. Two of them attempted a steep upper section, but took out after two hundred yards. They then headed for the put-in for a lower, easier section. The group launched and paddled three miles without incident down a fast-moving, narrow, bank-full stream. At the town hall bridge Cliff Eisner, 36, was running last. He flipped, attempted several rolls, and swam. One kayaker attempted a boat rescue while the second paddler ran ahead to set up a throw line. Just downstream the river drops steeply through a staircase rapid. Here the pair lost sight of Mr. Eisner. One of the paddlers continued to chase him while the second boater flagged down a car, contacted emergency services, and gave chase. They never caught up with him. Mr. Eisner's body was recovered in the large eddy behind the North Conway Fire Station, six miles downstream.

I want to thank each of these groups for sharing this information. Discussing the circumstances surrounding the loss of a friend can be very painful. I've always felt that discussing a fatal accident is a good way to honor the memory of a lost friend. By learning what we can from every tragedy we insure that some good emerges from it, even if it merely reminds us that expert-level whitewater exacts a high penalty for small mistakes.

Rafting Accidents

Life vests are the most elementary safety precaution that whitewater paddlers can take, and American Whitewater has been promoting this since the Safety Code was first written in 1957. But this advice is often ignored by inexperienced paddlers, some of whom perish because of the oversight. On July 4th two college students ran Class III Balcony Falls on Virginia's James River at high water. Neither man

wore a PFD; their boat was a cheap "pool raft" purchased from Wal-Mart. The river's flow at Buchanan, Virginia was 10,000 cfs, which local paddlers describe as, "beefy, but rather fun for experienced paddlers." The pair capsized in the drop. One man made it to shore but Aaron Cooper, 21, did not. Rescue squads recovered his body several days later. On August 26th a man fell out of his raft in the Class II San Juan Rapid on the main stem of the American River. He removed his life vest, which did not fit well, and was swimming to shore when he dropped beneath the surface.

Several older people were among the casualties this past summer. On July 16th a 60 year-old man drowned after his raft flipped in Piers Gorge of Wisconsin's Menomonee River. The group held onto the raft and pushed it ashore; somewhere in that process Mr. Siegel slipped away. I suspect, but can't be sure, that no PFD was worn. The next day 60 year-old Harvey Kappler attempted to run a Class III-IV section of Oregon's Rogue River in a lightweight Tahiti raft. He was not wearing a PFD. His companions watched as he got out on a gravel bar to free his boat, slipped, and disappeared beneath the surface. Another rafting party found him floating face down and pulled him in. A 62 year-old man who was wearing a PFD drowned after his raft capsized on the Yellowstone River in Montana on July 11th. His group had hold of him quickly, but he was having breathing problems and died soon afterwards.

Several of this year's rafting deaths involved young children. On July 14th, 5 year-old Taylor Evans fell out of a raft in fast-moving Russian Creek near Kodiak, AK. The boy washed into some underbrush and became pinned. On the South Fork of the American in California, 12-year-old Christine Piatti was caught in a foot entrapment on July 23rd. The incident occurred in Meatgrinder Rapid on the Chili Bar Run; the girl fell out of her raft and disappeared. Her father, a former commercial guide, made several unsuccessful attempts to rescue her. That same day Jasmine Ball, 12, became entangled on the raft's grab line after their

boat pinned in a log jam on Washington's Yakima River. Her stepfather pulled her out of the water after 2-3 minutes, but CPR was not effective.

The Deschutes River in Oregon had four deaths this past summer, three of them on one popular Class III section. These were the first fatalities on the river since 1993. Although some will put the blame on higher than normal water levels, the most striking incidents was the inexperience of the groups involved. Three of the four victims were not wearing life vests. Two men, 30 and 27, died in separate incidents in the Wapaninta Rapids. This Class III drop may have changed significantly since last year. In early July an 18 year-old woman and her group ignored warning signs and ran a dangerous dam spillway under the Colorado Avenue Bridge in downtown Bend. No one was wearing a life vest, and the woman herself was a non-swimmer. A huge crowd gathered as firefighters made a desperate effort to save her. The last death involved a 17 year-old girl who was part of a church sponsored trip. Unlike the others, she was wearing a life vest when her raft flipped in White Horse Rapids. But unlike her companions, she failed to wash out at the bottom. Speculation is that she became snagged underwater.

Finally, as a counterpoint to the accidents above, four very experienced rafters found trouble in the warm-up rapids of West Virginia's Upper Gauley. The group's Aire Puma stern-squirted on an eddyline and dumped two men into the water. Both were pulled in quickly, but as this was being done the boat washed towards two large rocks. The boat hit, rotated, and pinned vertically with its bottom facing upstream. All four people were thrown into the water and one man, Ben Weaver, 30, was pinned with just the top of his helmet visible. A guide who was working a trip just upstream saw the incident and moved in to help. He pulled Mr. Weaver out from under the corner of the rock and began CPR. Mr. Weaver was under water only 5-6 minutes. After a few minutes he began breathing on his own. The outfitter radioed EMS, and as the evacuation proceeded, all parties involved

Accident Summary

were optimistic. But Mr. Weaver suffered complications and died several days later.

Canoe Accidents

Canoes, like rafts, often attract inexperienced people who are not prepared for an unexpected swim. On October 21st Eric Walker, a promising minor league pitcher, was killed in Molly Shoals, a Class II rapid on the New River in Virginia. Walker, 23, was wading through the rapid with his girlfriend when he dropped into a deep pocket and was pulled away by the current. The woman made it ashore and called for help. On November 12th Joseph Rivera, 27, was padding with four other people when their presumably overloaded boat capsized on New Jersey's Passaic River. One newspaper said that the crew, which had been drinking, was trying to get ashore in "rough water." Mr. Rivera was the only one who did not make it ashore. His body was found in the intake of the power station above Great Falls. A Tulsa, Oklahoma man died on December 1st when his canoe overturned on Oklahoma's Pottawatomie River. Joshua Lantz, 19, was the only person in the boat who was not wearing a life vest. In an unfortunate and tragic incident Kara McCue, 21, was paddling on the Clear Fork of Illinois' Mohegan River on July 17th when her canoe hit a strainer and capsized. Ms. McCue became entangled in the strainer and her husband pulled off her PFD off in an attempt to pull her free.

Near Misses

This past year there were a number of well-executed rescues that show how trained paddlers can make a difference in desperate situations. On July 15th members of a Three Rivers Paddling Club group responded after Jackie Hennigan was hurt in River's End Rapid of the Lower Youghiogheny. She attempted a roll, flipped, then hit her head hard. According to Larry Fordyce, he paddled up to assist with an eskimo rescue when someone shouted, "she's not moving!" Mr. Fordyce moved rapidly alongside her and executed a "hand of god" rescue to bring her upright.

Ms. Hennigan was badly shaken, but calm. She told him she felt dazed, and her body felt numb. As Mr. Fordyce eased her towards a nearby eddy she said softly, "I can't hold on." Others in the group heard this and quickly moved in to help. Because of her symptoms the group immediately sent for help. She was life-flighted to Pittsburgh Hospital where she was evaluated by the same team she works with during the week. She was found to have a broken neck, and after lengthy surgery her prognosis is excellent

The Class II Bowmanstown section of Pennsylvania's Lehigh River was the scene of a desperate rescue on the afternoon of August 19th. According to the Pennsylvania Fish Commission the group was composed of an extended family from New York State. The lead raft hit a strainer, then a second raft collided with the first. A third raft hit the second, and at this point all three boats capsized. All rafters were wearing PFDs and all but one washed free. A ten-year-old girl from the second boat who was caught underwater was grabbed by a fast-thinking paramedic who was also along on the trip. The paramedic was also able to revive the girl. She was taken to Palmerton Hospital for observation along with a woman who had been knocked around in the mayhem. Both are fine.

The Northeast Paddlers' Message Board carried an account of a frightening near miss at Dragon's Tooth on the Deerfield River in Massachusetts. The trouble started when rafters from a local college dump-trucked in this Class IV drop, spilling everyone into the river. One member of the group, Kathy Chang, washed between two closely-spaced rocks in the top of Labrynth Rapid just downstream and became wedged between them underwater. She was upright, but her torso was being pushed forward and her head was underwater. The position was like a vertically-pinned kayaker, only without the kayak.

Several guides from Zoar Outdoors were playing just below, and they met up with two members of her group who reached the rocks from shore. Working together they were able to grab Ms. Chang by

the hips and pull her free. She had been underwater for 3-7 minutes. One of the Zoar guides is a nurse; she did an assessment and found Ms. Chang to be breathless and pulseless. They removed her life vest, opened up her drysuit, and cut the neck and wrist gaskets to facilitate treatment. She revived after 3-4 cycles of CPR. She was transported to a nearby hospital and doctors expect her to make a full recovery.

A fast thinking commercial outfitter rescued a man on Maine's Dead River during the big-water fall release on September 7th. The river was running at 5500 cfs when a raft flipped in Poplar Rapid. One person from the raft became caught in a small but very retentive hydraulic that has caused problems before. Dave Neddeau, the owner of Magic Falls Rafting, was in the right place at the right time. He spotted the man and was able to maneuver his raft over to the hole and pull him out. The man's friends thought he had been recirculated for between 5 and 7 minutes.

The man had a detectable pulse, but his face was deep blue and his eyes wide open. Mr. Neddeau started rescue breathing and the man responded quickly and began breathing on his own. By the time they reached the takeout he was conscious, but in pain and bleeding from a blow to the jaw. He was given oxygen and transported to a hospital in Bangor where he was able to make a full recovery. The man is clearly very lucky; Mr. Neddeau's trip was ahead of schedule and the next boat did not arrive on the scene until 15 minutes later.

On September 16th Initiation Rapid on the Upper Gauley lured another kayaker into its infamous river right slot, setting off a desperate effort to save him. The man, identified only as Jason, got too far left in this Class IV rapid and found himself on a line that fed right into the sieve. This spot is formed where two boulders come close together, allowing a third "chock rock" to span the gap. Paddlers are washed into the gap and where they pin on the "chock." This spot has been the site of two fatalities and innumerable close calls over the past two decades. At the release level of 2800

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Accident Summary

cfs it is especially nasty. The man was pinned vertically, with the deck of his boat pushing hard against the chock rock. He was able to reach over the rock and grab the downstream side to stabilize himself, but he could not get out.

A number of paddlers and river guides saw Jason's predicament and worked their way out to him. The rock is difficult to reach and very slippery, but anchors had been placed in it to help out with this kind of situation. Several men, including one that Jason remembers as Mike, used ropes to get themselves out to him. They lifted him higher in the water, then attached a line to his stern. A group of rafters standing in the downstream eddy pulled hard, and the boat flipped end-over end and washed into the pool below. The crowd grabbed the exhausted kayaker after his 45 minute struggle. The man caught his breath, and later paddled all the way to Swiss!

A similar incident occurred in Pieces of Risa, a rapid on the Tobin section of California's North Fork of the Feather. Here the river has tunneled through solid rock, creating a hole that fits a kayak perfectly. During the October 25th release a very experienced kayaker ran this harmless-looking poulover and found himself vertically pinned in a fast-moving current. He was able to hold his head above the water, but his sprayskirt was pinned between the boat and the rock and could not be released. Fortunately there was a big rock nearby, and his friends were able to climb on top of it. They handed him a rope for stability, then passed him a knife to cut the sprayskirt so he could climb free. The boat was securely wedged, and the group was unable to recover it until the water was turned off. You can bet this fellow had a knife with him the next time he got on the water!

A video on CBS News showed a tricky rescue on the Payette River in Idaho. A 57 year-old, Sarah Cox, broached her kayak on a rock on November 28th. A huge

crowd gathered, but no one could reach her. Fortunately she was dressed in a full drysuit and was able to hold on. An expert local kayaker was driving by and saw what had happened. He borrowed an inflatable kayak, paddled out to her, and jumped onto the rock. From there he was able to release the boat.

And lastly, John Prentice, 36, attempted to run Washington's Skykomish River on November 7th. This occurred during the recent record floods, when the river was running at 80,000+ cfs. According to the Everett, WA Daily Herald Mr. Prentice flipped and swam in the turbulent water below the Boulder Drop. Although he was fine, his red kayak was spotted by Snohomish County emergency crews who were working in the area, setting off a massive search and rescue operation. Needless to say, the authorities were pretty upset.

This situation is a thorny one for AW. The freedom to take calculated risks, in business, love, or sport is one of the most cherished prerogatives of a free people. But risk-takers sometimes die, and this makes some people very uncomfortable. The decision to put on the water is a very personal one, based on matching your skill and gear to the demands of the river. What's safe for an expert could be deadly for a novice and each paddler must take full responsibility for his or her safety. Judging water levels is confusing for non-paddlers since small streams may be at excellent levels when larger streams are flooding. And today's paddler can manage whitewater which would have been unthinkable twenty years ago.

There's always been tension between sportsmen and public safety officials. Paddling is not so different in this regard from rock climbing but its venue is much more public. In the past police and emergency responders have prevented paddlers from running rivers or rapids "for their own safety," when the whitewater in

question was really quite manageable. In a few cases they have obstructed ongoing rescue efforts. These events are rare, but not unheard of, even today.

This said, there have been many instances when emergency responders have saved the lives of paddlers who got into trouble. Most were inexperienced, but not all. Often skilled rescuers have little contact with the mainstream paddling community and don't appreciate the differences in skills or the capabilities of modern boats and gear. To them it's just another call.

Swiftwater rescues are not very common and it's hard for agencies to justify investing time and money needed to get really good at it. Since the average professional "swiftwater rescuer" has less time on the water than an intermediate kayaker it's not surprising that misunderstandings occur. Most swiftwater rescue techniques have their origins in whitewater sport, and there is no substitute for a skilled paddler who can handle a boat precisely in rough water. This skill takes hundreds of hours to develop and is out of reach for all but the most committed whitewater sportsman.

I personally believe that people should be able to try anything that they feel capable of managing, whether the authorities think it's safe or not. But in our less-than-ideal world whitewater paddlers should deal with the powers that be respectfully and stay off the water during emergencies when our presence is, at best, a distraction.


I would not have run the river that day and would have tried to talk others out of it. The conditions were, to say the least, extreme. But in the end the man rescued himself, which is as it should be. Rescue by others under these conditions is pretty unlikely.

During the past year AW's Accident Database received many compliments from paddlers and government officials

throughout the world. Unfortunately, it was also misused by several people to further their own agendas. A disgruntled employee of a rafting outfitter posted a report that was highly critical of his former employer. This posting was eventually removed. Later a major worldwide news organization used our accident numbers to support their contention that US whitewater outfitters run unsafe trips. But because our database is made up primarily of accidents involving private paddlers any inference from our numbers is at best confusing, at worst misleading. They also used the recent cluster of accidents on the Deschutes to support their thesis despite

the fact that no commercial outfitters were involved. No one at American Whitewater was contacted in preparing this story, and the company did not respond to repeated requests for an apology or correction.

American Whitewater's accident database succeeds because individual paddlers take the time to send in information on whitewater fatalities, near-misses, and rescues as they encounter them. My thanks go to our regular safety correspondents: Slim Ray, Tim Bromelcamp, Ben Bramledge, Aida Parkinson, Ken Dubel, Dane Patterson, and Matt Buynoski for their efforts. We also got regular

assistance from the AW board and staff. It's now easier than ever for someone to contribute. Go to www.americanwhitewater.org, click safety, and bring up a report form. You can then cut-and-paste newspaper stories and internet postings or write your own account. These reports are entered into our database and are forwarded to the AW Safety Committee for review. All material sent in is available online. You may also correspond directly with the safety editor, Charlie Walbridge, at ccwalbridge@cs.com. 

A prolonged rescue efforts succeeds in saving the life of a paddler in the Upper Gauley's infamous Initiation Rapid.

Photo by Maggie Snowel



AW Corporate Partners

Class V Sponsor



In 2006 Keen's contributions will aid American Whitewater's projects in the southeast and the pacific northwest. In the southeast Keen's support will help American Whitewater's work restoring the Catawba watershed. Additional funding from Keen will support AW's projects on the Columbia River Basin and the Cascade range in the pacific northwest.

Class IV Sponsors



At Dagger we love what we do because its all about the Water and American Whitewater is the organization that helps put water in our rivers. That is why Dagger has long supported American Whitewater and our proud to continue our support of their river stewardship program today.



WAVE SPORT

Wave Sport is American Whitewater's longest standing and largest philanthropic supporter. Both Wave Sport and AW are committed to one thing, whitewater.



Teva and American Whitewater have worked together for nearly a decade to protect access and conserve whitewater resources for paddlers and rafters nationwide. Teva and AW have partnered on numerous tours and events over the years, including AW's 50th Anniversary Gala in 2004.



As part of Jackson Kayak's focus on environmental responsibility, the Jackson's have long supported AW through promotional efforts. In 2006 as part of their commitment to 1% for the planet, Jackson Kayaks will be supporting AW's river stewardship work financially as well.

Class III Sponsor



Kokatat remains one of AW's strongest allies by continuing support of AW's membership and river stewardship programs. By providing American Whitewater with valuable membership and donation incentives, Kokatat will create the support we need to continue our stewardship of North American rivers.

Class II Sponsor



Boof Sponsors



Wave Sponsors



Corporate Spotlight Interview

By Ben VanCamp

In 1998, Kara Weld, an AW Board Member and co-founder of Immersion Research, decided it was time for the whitewater industry to do more to support American Whitewater's River Stewardship efforts. The idea quickly caught on with several outdoor companies and today AW receives support from over 25 companies in the outdoor community.

Companies support American Whitewater in a variety of ways, from taking on local river stewardship efforts, purchasing advertising in this magazine or on our website, sponsoring events or providing funding for the AW staff to continue its work. American Whitewater urges you to learn about who supports our efforts at: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Wiki/aw:sponsorship/>

To learn more about a few companies that certainly go above and beyond the call for American Whitewater, here is an interview with Jimmy Blakeney and Ken Hoeve, brand managers for Wave Sport Kayaks and Dagger Kayaks, respectively.

Wave Sport has been American Whitewater's strongest supporter from the whitewater market for five years now, pledging funds to support our work and donating boats that we can leverage into memberships.

Dagger Kayaks has been a long time supporter of American Whitewater and has recently hired a new brand manager, Ken "Hobie" Hoeve. Hobie is determined not to be outdone by anyone in any facet of Dagger's business, and has stepped up support of American Whitewater in 2007.

Let's get to know Jimmy and Hobie a little bit better, find out what makes them strive to be the best and why they believe so much in American Whitewater.

Let's get some basics out of the way; both

of you are "brand managers" for kayak companies. For those of us out there who may not know, what exactly does a "brand manager" do?

Hobie: I do a little bit of everything for Dagger, from managing the team to working on upcoming ads, events, clinics, demos, keeping tabs on chat rooms and answering questions, and thinking about new boat designs that are just around the corner. I try to treat Dagger as if it were my own company. If there is something I can help out with, I like to roll up my sleeves and get it done. And believe me, there is always something to do.

JB: It's actually more of a marketing director than "brand manager" as I'm not as involved in sales as a true brand manager. However I do provide direction for the brand, working with Robert Peerson on the design side and our creative services on the marketing side. I also manage our team of athletes, deal with sponsorship of events, budgeting, and still go to events, compete, do clinics and demos, trade shows, etc. It's a pretty diverse range of stuff, so it keeps me busy and always doing something different.

Wow, it sounds like there is something different everyday. Do you have a favorite part of being a brand manager? What keeps you going?

JB: The brand. I love Wave Sport. Chan Zwanzig (founder of WS in 1986) sponsored me in 1996 and I've been with Wave Sport as an athlete—and now an employee—ever since. And when I say "the brand," that means the people, the product and the whitewater lifestyle we represent.

Hobie: My favorite part is the paddling and working on the new stuff. I am a paddler to the core and being involved in the cool R&D stuff is best. I'm like a kid when it comes to that, and I'm just overwhelmed by how lucky I am to be a part of it. I also enjoy the events we attend. Not only are they fun, but they're a great way to paddle with and get feedback from the paddling public. Local paddlers often

have the best ideas so it is wise to listen to them. They know their gear and what they want.

Very cool, now every job seems to have some tough parts. What is the hardest part of being a brand manager?

JB: Probably the budget process, deciding where a very limited amount of dollars can go in order to help promote Wave Sport and the sport in general.

Hobie: The hardest part is logistics. There is a lot of planning that goes into a season of tracking athletes, boats, events, and competitions all over the world. But loving this lifestyle makes it all worthwhile. I get loads of support from Tanya Talbert, Chris Hessman, Duffy Marie Ebel and the gang back in Easley, too. I work with awesome people who love to paddle and it shows in their work.

So you both are really passionate about your companies and whitewater in general. How did you get so involved in this crazy world of whitewater kayaking?

Hobie: I got into kayaking when I moved to Colorado in 1991. I worked as an E.M.T in the winter and took up snowboarding. When summer rolled around I missed the beach and the surf of my home town. I spied kayakers going down Gore Creek in Vail and right there I knew I found my sport. I started in a borrowed Excel kayak and the rest just fell into place. I started working at a rafting company here in Colorado the following summer and met Mike Abbott. He was traveling the states and ended up working here in the valley. He was and still is that next level of paddler who made me realize the potential of kayaking. I was hooked.

JB: When I do something and fall in love with it, I become pretty obsessive. Once I started kayaking, it wasn't long before I realized I was going to have to find a way to make a living at it because I wanted to kayak non-stop, and that's what I've done for ten years.

Spotlight Interview

So how long did it take you to get involved with AW?

JB: I first picked up the mag as a beginner and just frothed over the whole thing to find any information I could, to learn more about the sport, to look for images to inspire me, and to see what the cutting edge of the sport was doing. American Whitewater was the only place to find stories and photos about nothing but whitewater. Then as I started kayaking all the time and learning firsthand about access and flow issues, I realized this organization was the group pushing for my interests as a boater. That's when I became a member and have been ever since.

Hobie: I learned about AW very quickly when I started going to competitions and hearing about all the good they do, especially when I made my first trip to the Gauley. Everyone out East knew the work they had been doing. I found that without AW many of the rivers we love to paddle would be unavailable. Then I did the 2nd release of Tallulah and I knew they were the hardest working group looking out for our river resources.

Wow, so both of you have been AW members for a long time and now you are both Athlete Ambassadors of American Whitewater; how does it feel to be helping spread the message of AW?

Hobie: It is the greatest honor I have ever received (besides being a dad). I have always encouraged others to join the organization and help out, but since being made an ambassador I feel the need to promote and fund the organization even more. What AW does is the purest and most admirable things any river ally can do. I want to see our waterways clean and accessible. AW is working day and night for just that.

JB: It's great to feel strongly about something and get to educate people about it. I just hope it hits home with paddlers just how important it is that we

have a collective voice speaking for us as a group, because we're a pretty small community and we need to come together to be heard.

Well, I want to thank you for your help as ambassadors. I have seen each of you talk about AW and I know how much it helps our cause. So statistics say there is something like 30,000 whitewater paddlers in the U.S. but AW only has a membership of about 6,500. Why do you think AW doesn't have more members?

JB: Kayakers are a pretty independent group of people. I don't think they're all the type to just jump in and join a group until they know about it and see how it represents them. But I think once they realize how critical these issues are for their enjoyment of the sport it's a no-brainer.

Hobie: I think paddlers just need to be educated a bit more. Paddlers are a friendly, fun loving group that is known for helping out when it is needed. They just need to learn that their donation and membership does make a HUGE difference. As a group we can accomplish so much and I think current AW members should encourage members of their crew to become involved too. If we could get half of those 30,000 paddlers on board we would have such a strong nation of whitewater lovers.

How did each of your companies get involved with American Whitewater?

JB: Wave Sport has been involved with AW since back in the day when AW ran the freestyle kayak events through NOWR. We provided a lot of help using our athletes as judges and helping to evaluate the rules each year. As Wave Sport grew, we stepped up our support of AW through philanthropic donations. For five years now we've been AW's largest industry supporter, something we're very proud of. We like to think our support of AW helped other companies see the light, ha ha!

Hobie: Dagger has been involved with AW

since the days in Harriman, TN. I worked with a great friend named Mike Steck. He was passionate about helping AW and getting them the resources needed to continue the mission of saving rivers for paddlers. He raised the bar and I try to build on the efforts he spearheaded. Dagger is about the paddlers and the rivers we all enjoy.

Why do you think it is important that your companies support American Whitewater?

Hobie: Why should we support AW? That's easy. Without rivers why would we make whitewater kayaks? We have to protect these river resources and I am proud that Dagger is one of the largest donors to AW and its ongoing efforts. Since we are supported by paddlers we want to give back. This is the best way to do it.

JB: Simple, because we are all in this together. The biggest thing to me is that as whitewater paddlers we have a collective voice so that our concerns are heard by politicians and interest groups.

So it sounds like each of your companies have supported AW for a while now and that your support just keeps growing. What's next for your work with American Whitewater?

JB: In 2006 we started the "AW Steward of the Year" Award to honor AW volunteers. We hope to encourage more people to get involved because these volunteers are the ones who make things happen on a local level. One person's energy and motivation is usually what ends up pushing issues to the forefront and getting big things done. In this tiny sport it's amazing how much of a difference an individual can make by getting involved.

Hobie: As we move ahead I have plans to work with AW on the Dagger Safety Initiative (DSI). My belief is that we encourage many people to get involved in the sport and take roll lessons but we don't encourage safety enough. The DSI is going to be a basic one-day class that has a classroom-type discussion and dry land

scenario work. Some people have never thrown a throw bag or don't even own one for that matter. Others have never even thought about what they would do if a boat pinned. I think if we are going to get more of the public into the sport we should also help educate them about the dangers and give them some material they can use. We also encourage them to take a full-on two or three-day class as there is so much to know. The DSI program will hopefully get paddlers motivated to learn more. World-renowned SWRI Mike Mather will head up the classes so I know we have the best man out there. We will also have members of our team on hand to make it a fun day of learning.

Hobie, you're a resident of Colorado, you've attended AW's recent roundtable on issues affecting our whitewater rivers there. Are you excited that AW is hiring a Colorado Stewardship Director?

Hobie: I am very excited about the AW Colorado Stewardship Director and will do all I can to help fund that position through on-going fundraisers and promotions. Paddlers here in Colorado have many issues with local river access and the ability to float certain stretches. We have urban growth on the Front Range as well as the western slope, water needs around the state, and land owners who refuse kayakers the right to float rivers. There is a lot of work to be done. It is going to be a full-time job. I love paddling in Colorado and want to help support whoever comes on board. I feel every Colorado river lover needs to be a member and I will try to be vocal in increasing awareness about AW.

OK, so we talked about AW, we talked about you, let's talk about your brands. What is next for Wave Sport and Dagger?


JB: Just keep pushing forward with the best equipment we can make in order to make kayaking more fun! Whitewater kayaks, period!

Hobie: Dagger has a lot going on over

the next few years. We are dedicated to making boats that outperform all the others. I often hear people ask, "Have we reached the pinnacle? What else can we do?" In response I say: "New technologies, new ideas, better, lighter resins, outfitting, you name it." There is so much we can do and we have only scratched the surface. I am excited to have the hardest working designer in the industry, Mark "Snowy" Robertson, in our corner. He is a true paddler who loves his job and knows he is in the driver's seat. He gets in early and leaves late and wants to continue making the designs that push the sport. He is from the UK but has been with us in South Carolina for many years. He has boated around the planet and understands what kayakers are looking for. I spoke with him the other day about the Agent and he was all fired up: "It was the biggest loop I have ever done!" The guy wants to make the best boats. He is tough to beat design-wise.

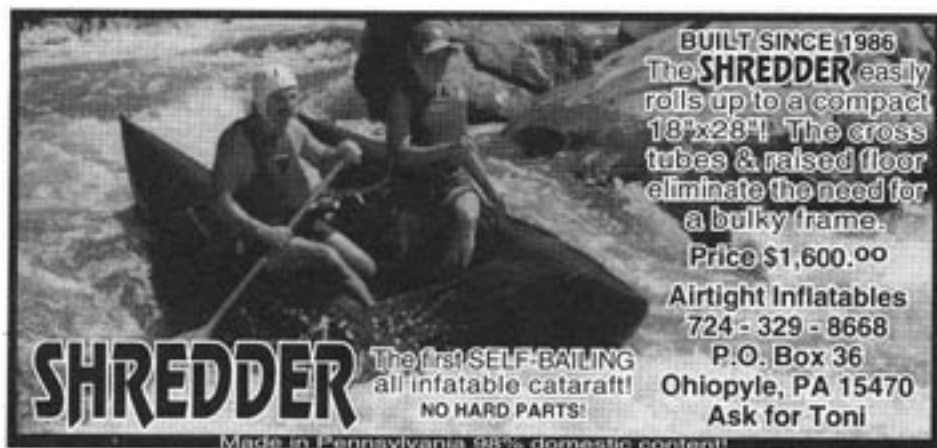
What new boats should we be looking for this year?

JB: The Habitat is our new creek boat, and we're stoked for it to be fully available this year. There were some production issues that held up its full release a bit, so in 2007 people should start to really see and try this boat and realize how great of a creek boat it is! We've got some new stuff in the works, of course, but can't talk about it just yet (J).

Hobie: Our lineup of boats is at the top right now with four of our paddlers on the US Freestyle team and going to Worlds in the Agent. Andrew Holcombe even won the North American Championship in it while we were still in the prototype stage. It's that good. And as for creeking, we are the company to watch and always have been. In 2006 the Nomad, along with our Team D paddlers, won every major US creek race there was: Homestake, Little White, Burnt Ranch, and the Green. The Nomad even set a new course record in the Green race with Pat Keller breaking the 5-minute mark in the short boat division. He even helped design a boat with Snowy that won the long boat division (the Green boat). He also won the coveted "Greenman" title. It is this kind of hard work that shows we are committed to making the best whitewater boats on the planet. We finished off 2006 strong and plan to work harder in 2007. 

Thanks guys! I really do appreciate your support of American Whitewater both as individuals and as companies. Without your support we would not be able to accomplish as much as we do!

Check out more about Wave Sport at www.wavesport.com or www.doubleyouess.com, and learn more about Dagger at www.dagger.com or www.teamdagger.com!



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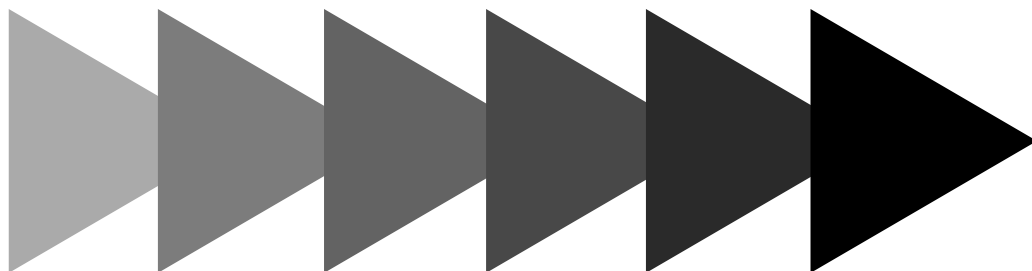
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American Whitewater has been extraordinarily fortunate in our ability to leverage a strong grassroots base—members and other volunteers—to assist our limited staff with many whitewater river conservation and restoration efforts.



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

A growing membership base is crucial to our ability to continue with our work. Some studies show that there are currently over 100,000 whitewater paddlers in the U.S. American Whitewater currently has 6,300 active members. When considering the amount of whitewater river miles that AW has had a direct impact on, this membership number is unimpressive. We need all paddlers to join American Whitewater. If you are a member, please

be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual Annual Memberships are only \$35. If you are a member of your local paddling club and your club is an Affiliate Club member of AW, join as a Club Affiliate Individual for \$25. This is a tank of gas or an inexpensive night out. This is certainly not too much to pay to have a national organization representing your paddling interests all across the country.

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

Membership
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723



P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723 • 866-BOAT-4AW

Membership Application

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

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- ___ \$250 Platinum Paddler* (Receive AW's exclusive IR Polartec shirt FREE)
- ___ \$500 Explorer Membership* (Receive a drybag from Watershed FREE)
- ___ \$750 Lifetime Membership (Receive AW's Lifetime Membership NRS Paddlers Duffle FREE)
- ___ \$1,000 Legacy Membership* (Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Gore-tex Drytop FREE)
- ___ \$2,500 Steward Membership* (Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Gore-tex Drytop and Pants FREE)

* A portion of your contribution is tax deductible. If you would like information about the tax deductibility of your contribution please speak with an AW Staff Member.

Organizational Membership Types

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- ___ \$24.99 Kayak Session subscription (Add Kayak Session to your membership at a 40% discount)

Amount

Membership subtotal \$ _____ Do NOT Mail me the AW Journal. I will read it on-line.

Donation subtotal \$ _____ Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups.

Total \$ _____

Ender Club and Platinum Paddler indicate shirt size (S, M, L, XL, XXL). We will mail gift certificate for Kokatat gear.

Transaction Type

___ Cash ___ Charge ___ Check# (payable to American Whitewater)

Card Type: MC Visa Discover AMEX

Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____

Name as it appears on card _____

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

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.

This is the fifth year that Clif Bar makes possible the AW / Clif Bar Flowing Rivers grants. Paddling clubs must be current AW Affiliate Clubs to be eligible for these \$500 grants. Clubs across the country have embarked on many wonderful programs as a result of this program (See americanwhitewater.org/content/article/view/articleid/102581 for the 2006 grant recipients). Make sure your club is an AW Affiliate Club and encourage them to apply for this grant for a local project important to paddlers in your area.

AFFILIATE CLUBS, we want to know what you are doing. Send your events to us at ben@amwhitewater.org and we will include them in the Journal.

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

California

Central CA Canoe Club (C4), Nevada City
Chico Paddle Heads, Chico
River Touring Section, Angeles Chapter

Colorado

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood
Grand Canyon Priv. Boat. Assn, Englewood
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, Englewood
University of Colorado Kayak Club, Boulder

Florida

North Florida Whitewater Assoc., Ocala

Georgia

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

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Assoc., Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Chicago

Indiana

Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville
Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kansas

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky

Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine

AMC/Maine Chapter, Portland
Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society,
Topsham
Outward Bound, Newry

Maryland

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

Massachusetts

Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont
AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers,
Honover

Minnesota

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater
Charlie Sawyer, Maple Plain

Missouri

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

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Franconia
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Merrimack

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
FLOW Paddlers Club, Rochester
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk
KCCNY, New York
Wildrivers, Millwood
St Lawrence University, Canton

N. Carolina

Appalachian State University, Boone
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Indian Trail
Warren Wilson College, Asheville
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville
Watauga Paddlers, Boone
Dixie Division ACA, Tuxedo
UNCG Outdoor Adventures, Greensboro

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
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
North West Rafters Asso, Portland

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Bens Creek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Pine Creek Valley Whitewater Association, Jersey Shore
Lehigh Valley White water Club, Lehigh Valley

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Gray
Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport
E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Memphis Whitewater, Memphis
Tennessee Scenic River Assoc., Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville

Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston
Houston Canoe Club, Houston
Kayak 4 a Kure, Amarillo

Utah

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

Virginia

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Reston
Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
FORVA, Roanoke

Washington

NW Whitewater Assoc., Spokane
Outdoor Adventure Club, Redmond
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreation River Runners, Renton
Whitman College Whitewater Club, Walla Walla
Venturing Crew 360, Snohomish
The Mountaineers, Seattle

West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Assoc., S. Charleston

Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
NE Wisconsin Paddlers Inc. Appleton
Sierra Club / John Muir Chapter, LaCrosse

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Carla Miner
Membership Coordinator

AW offers discounted AW memberships to whitewater enthusiasts who are also members of one of our Affiliate Clubs.

We supply a unique code that will automatically offer the discounted membership specific to your club allowing individuals to receive the discount on the normal AW membership renewal form or online at www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.

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

Discount codes are in place for all AW Affiliate Clubs and many members are enjoying the benefits of joining or renewing their individual AW membership for only \$25.

If you are interested in taking advantage of the Affiliate Club discount, please contact me and I will be happy to let you know your Club's unique code. I can be reached at: 866-BOAT-4AW or 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 2006 River Stewardship Institute.

For more information, contact Carla Miner at membership@amwhitewater.org or sign-up on-line at: 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 prearrangement, 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
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723
E-mail: editor@amwhitewater.org



Release for publication

I hereby release my work (literary, graphic or photographic) for publication in American Whitewater magazine

- I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.
- I understand that I will not be paid for my work.
- I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation, or agency in this work.
- I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an American Whitewater publication
- I promise that this material has not been and will not soon be published by another magazine or publication and the rights to this material are clear and unrestricted.
- I understand that once this material is printed in American Whitewater it may be reprinted or reproduced in other publications if I wish, providing I notify them that it has already appeared in American Whitewater.
- I understand that the contents of American Whitewater Magazine, including my contribution will be archived on the American Whitewater website.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

This release must be signed by the contributing author(s), photographers(s), and graphic artist(s).

Send your material to:
American Whitewater Journal PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723 or via email to
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Toby MacDermott (aka "Budget") hikes to harvest the goods of the Raven's Fork River in Tennessee.

photo by Raphael Thiebaut

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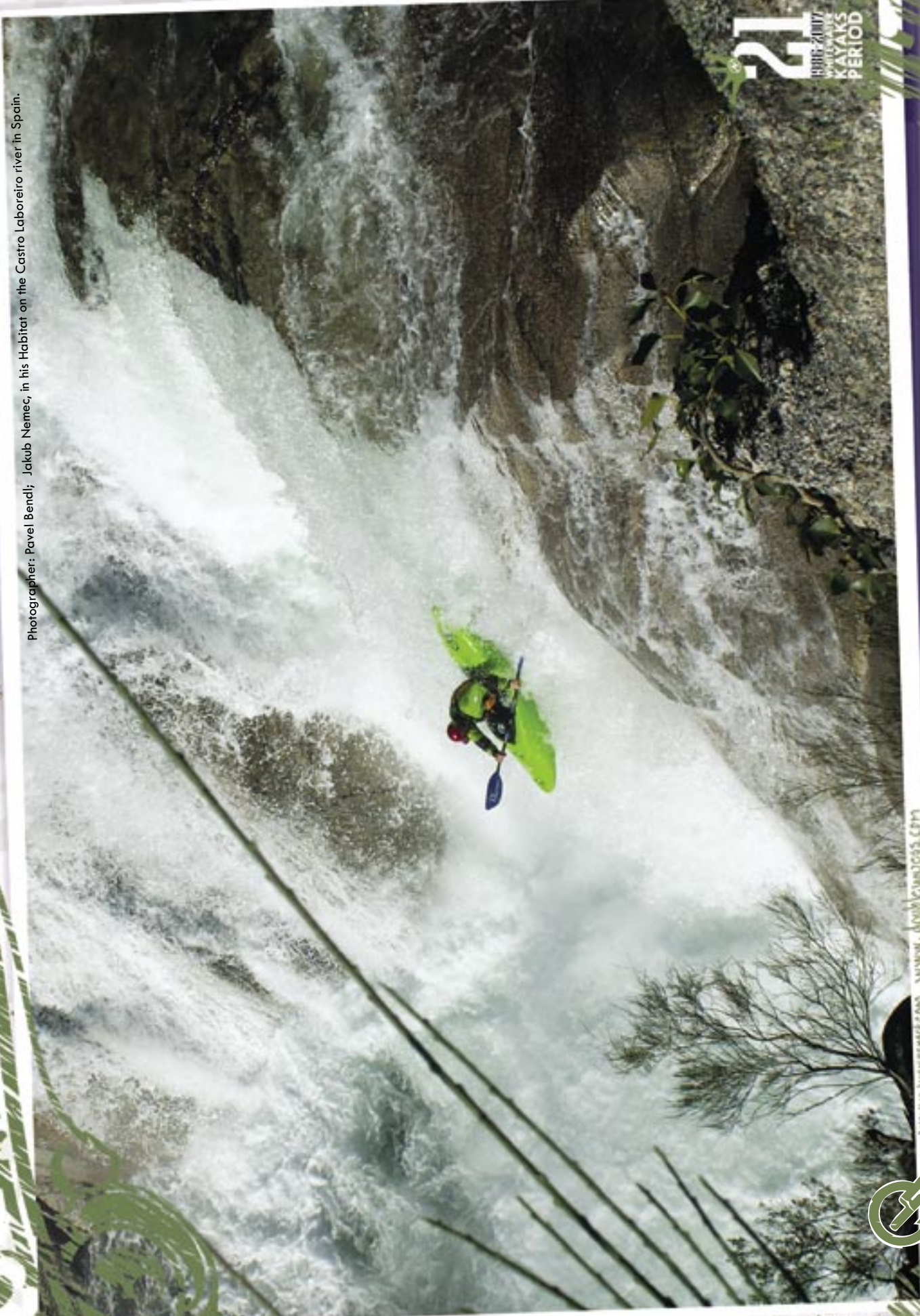
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21
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