



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
Mar/Apr 2020

A photograph of a kayaker in a green kayak navigating a waterfall. The kayaker is wearing a purple helmet and an orange jacket. The waterfall is surrounded by dense green ferns and trees. The water is white and turbulent as it falls over the rocks.

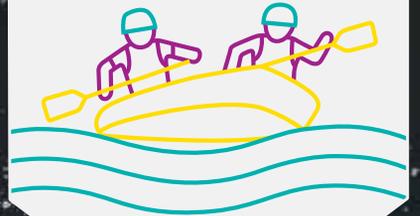
PROTECT OR DESTROY? THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER GORGE AT A CROSSROADS

THE SPANISH RIVER FLOWS THROUGH ONE MAN'S LIFE

PACKRAFTING

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American Whitewater Journal

Mar/Apr 2020 – Volume 60 – Issue 2

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Protecting America's Wilderness Act, legislation with over 1,000 miles of Wild and Scenic River designations, passed out of the House this past February. The bill is stacked with new Wild and Scenic river mile: 379 in Northern California, 204 in Southern California, and 464 on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. An incredible amount of quality paddling opportunities are represented in these new designations, including Peru Creek (CA), Canyon Creek of the Trinity (CA), Sitkum Creek (WA, pictured), and dozens of others. The bill also would provide public lands protections for the Dolores River Canyon (CO) and thousands of acres of other important watersheds.

Photo by Nathaniel Wilson

Publication Title: American Whitewater
 Issue Date: Mar/Apr 2020 Statement of Frequency:
 Published Bimonthly
 Authorized Organization's Name and Address:
 American Whitewater
 P.O. Box 1540
 Cullowhee, NC 28723

PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Founded in 1954, American Whitewater is a national non-profit organization (Non-profit # 23-7083766) with a mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." American Whitewater is a membership organization representing a broad diversity of individual whitewater enthusiasts, river conservationists, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates across America. The organization is the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States, and connects the interests of human-powered recreational river users with ecological and science-based data to achieve the goals within its mission. All rights to information contained in this publication are reserved.

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

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

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THE JOURNEY AHEAD

RECENTLY RETURNED FROM Washington DC where I spent a couple of days in planning meetings with Outdoor Alliance colleagues. Outdoor Alliance (OA) has made quite a name for itself as an influential national organization representing the interests of human-powered outdoor recreation users, including whitewater paddlers. Outdoor Alliance unites the voices of outdoor enthusiasts to conserve public lands and waters to ensure those places are managed in a way that embraces the human-powered experience. Members of this national advocacy coalition include American Whitewater, American Canoe Association, Access Fund, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, the Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, the Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation. Together, this group can pack a punch.

It wasn't always this way. When I started as the executive director here at American Whitewater some 15 years ago, the interests of our user community were often hijacked by other organizations claiming to represent paddlers. You may have heard the phrase, "if you're not at the table, you're on the menu." This was the situation back in the fall of 2004, when a small group of executive directors met in an unexceptional DC conference room off K Street to begin the process of working together. We didn't have an organization name, nor was there much money to fund an effort (REI provided a small pot of seed money to bring groups together). I remember leaving that meeting thinking, "this is a good idea, but it's probably not going anywhere."

Collaboration and coalition building is hard work, but it's one way to build influence inside the DC beltway and beyond. Our key motivation in those early days was to have greater influence with decision makers who were shaping policy for public lands and waters. What we heard in initial coalition meetings with lawmakers was, "What took you so long to start working together?" Previously, each organization represented only their own interests; working together we started to command respect as a much larger group.

Outdoor Alliance didn't have much funding until the Turner Foundation came knocking a year later. Early efforts were strapped together with bailing wire and duct tape. We were driven by the desire to tell our own story and have our members' voices heard in DC. With coalition support from Turner Foundation we were able to reach out and hire a DC based consultant to drive our efforts. If you paddle the Potomac much you probably know Adam Cramer, who came on board to assist Outdoor Alliance in 2006, and came up with the title "Policy Architect" to describe the work he was doing. Adam was also an AW Board member at the time and had been AWs lead volunteer on the state hydropower relicensing effort for the Upper Yough.

During that period, critical information on the economic impact of outdoor recreation was missing from the dialog. It wasn't until the outdoor industry began publishing studies outlining the size and impact of outdoor recreation that such information became an arrow in our quiver that shot straight and true. Policymakers were hungry for a common agenda on recreation policy, and we had the recreation policy agenda down pat and knew just how to

present it with authenticity. Outdoor Alliance policy platforms were clever, well-constructed, and attention-getting. They were also good for both recreation and conservation. It was well understood within the coalition that conservation and healthy human-powered outdoor recreation are mutually dependent.

In 2013, it became clear that the OA concept had legs and was maturing into a trusted voice for outdoor recreation and conservation. The thing that was missing was a full-time person at the helm. Adam graciously exited his DC law practice to become the full-time Outdoor Alliance Executive Director. Under his leadership OA grew from five founding member organizations (American Whitewater is one of the five) to the ten groups represented today. The budget and staff also grew.

Today OA operates on a budget of approximately a million dollars and has a paid staff of five with assistance from contractors for specific projects. The growth in staff and budget happened without cannibalization of any member organization funding. In short, OA grew the size of the pie advocating for the interests of the human-powered recreational user. If you happen to listen to Hammer Factor podcasts, you will hear Louis Geltman, OA Policy Director, talking intelligently in his policy updates. Our AW River Stewardship Team works closely with Louis, Adam, and the rest of the Outdoor Alliance staff in a strategic approach to address policy issues and management plans that impact our community of whitewater paddlers.

As I flew out of DC my plane made a pass over the National Mall; I could see the monuments stretched out in front of me



THE JOURNEY AHEAD

through my window. I thought about the evolution of our coalition and the authentic voice we speak with. I looked back on all the individuals I've had the privilege of working with through OA. The last remaining folks that have been there from the beginning are AW staff; Kevin Colburn, Thomas O'Keefe, Dave Steindorf, and myself along with Adam Cramer. Together, with current member organization executive directors, and policy staff, it's a stellar group that operates like a well-oiled machine achieving successful results in public land and water management.

Did I say coalition building is hard work? Yes, I did. It's also highly effective, given the right group of individuals, interests, and organizations.

Take care of your paddling and rivers will take care of you,



-Mark

PS - There are a limited number of seats on the American Whitewater Rogue River trip on June 18-21, 2020. Thanks to support from Northwest Rafting Company, American Whitewater members have the opportunity to join AW staff on an exclusive four-day trip down Oregon's Rogue River. You are invited to come learn more about what we're up to while having a great time enjoying one of our nation's first Wild and Scenic Rivers. The trip is fully outfitted by Northwest Rafting Company with professional guides, exceptional food,



transportation to and from the put-in, and all group equipment. Participants will have the option of bringing their own boat, renting a boat, or joining as a passenger on one of the rafts. To sign up, go to <https://my.nwrafting.com/reserve/rogue-river> and select the June 18-21 AW Trip.

What to get for the paddler who has everything?

Give them the gift of rivers with an American Whitewater membership!



Member Name: A.M. Whitewater
Member #: 007
Renewal Date: 01/01/2099

Colorado River, Grand Canyon. | Photo: Evan Stafford

DEERFIELD FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Celebrate the future of kayaking on the
deerfield river and show your support
for American Whitewater's efforts
to protect, restore and enjoy our
treasured rivers.



Deerfield Fest

Saturday, June 27

Join us at the Charlemont Fairgrounds Saturday evening for live entertainment, paddlesports gear, and a silent auction to benefit American Whitewater's conservation and access work throughout the northeast. www.americanwhitewater.org/deerfieldfest

Zoar Outdoor DemoFest

Friday, June 26 - Sunday June 28

Boat demos, sample instruction clinics & fun races. Woohoo!
www.kayaklesson.com/paddler-resources/events

www.americanwhitewater.org/deerfieldfest

COLORADO POLICY PATHWAYS

BY IAN STAFFORD

COLORADO IS HOME to high elevation runs like Oh Be Joyful creek and the Crystal River, desert multi-day trips on the Yampa and Gates of Lodore, and every type of run in between. The eighth largest state in the union is a place where solitude and environmental splendor are valued by residents and visitors alike. Colorado provides a strong blend of transplants and locals, and American Whitewater is committed to welcome and work with all river users. American Whitewater started its Colorado Program back in 2007, after a meeting of a group of boaters along the banks of the Arkansas River. Nathan Fey, now director of the state's Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, led the program from its infancy to the prominence it enjoys today: a program that houses over 16% of American Whitewater's nationwide members, and a stewardship program that includes Southern Rockies states Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona. Overall, Colorado's rivers feed 19 downstream states to the east, south, and west. The water that starts in Colorado's high alpine terrain is hotly contested, carefully monitored, and every drop possible is accounted for to ensure that each user receives the amount that is historically allotted to them. In these times of a changing climate, water scarcity, and a booming population, these challenges affect multiple user groups and industries.

Yampa River (CO) in spring flood.
Photo by Evan Stafford



STEWARDSHIP

In the past year, American Whitewater has strengthened its involvement in state policy to advocate on behalf of the boating community. In 2019, Nathan Fey left the organization after 12 productive years to become the State Director for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office. Filling Nathan's former role as the Southern Rockies Stewardship Director, longtime AW member, Gorefest Director, and river advocate Hattie Johnson joined the AW team in February as the interim director, coming on permanently in March. Southern Rockies Stewardship Assistant Kestrel Kunz has been with our regional program for four years, assists Hattie with issues facing the region, and advocates on behalf of the 1000-plus members in the area. Lastly, American Whitewater brought me onboard as its Colorado Policy Strategist to work in a new role within the state. Interacting with local and state officials, I joined the Colorado team to help increase the efforts of American Whitewater's stewardship work at the Colorado State Capitol, and through executive branch agencies.

Since we are dedicating more staff time and resources to state-level policy in Colorado, it is crucial that we provide transparency to our members, partners, and other supporters about the work that we intend to take on. In early January 2020, we released the Colorado Policy Pathways report, which outlines the policy areas we intend to work on in 2020 and beyond. An important factor is that we will be more involved in developing policy, along with helping endorse legislation that we see meets our community's values.

We will support or endorse policies that:

- Focus on economic development: The outdoor recreation economy in Colorado is valued at over \$62 billion annually, and we know that many of the greatest areas to recreate in the state are mixed throughout rural Colorado. We want to encourage these communities to develop smart,



Oh Be Joyful Creek (CO).

Photo by Evan Stafford

community-driven growth in their outdoor recreation economies, while expanding opportunities that drive people to these naturally beautiful locations.

- Have a commitment to strengthening infrastructure: As Colorado's population continues to grow, and millions more come to visit annually, we want to see policy that strengthens infrastructure in order to enhance outdoor recreation. We want to see access points to the river become more user friendly, adaptable solutions implemented that effectively provide access for high use areas, and infrastructure such as diversions and lowhead dams take recreational and

wildlife passage into account for public safety concerns.

- Support improved quality of life: Colorado's river communities are iconic for a number of reasons. Towns like Durango and Steamboat Springs provide year-round world-class recreational opportunities, while places like Salida and Glenwood Springs' identities are tied to the rivers that run through them. We want to ensure that these outdoor recreation hubs maintain their identity, culture, and likeness. Along with the well-known towns, we want communities adopting river recreation as part of their identity to develop these same attributes so that a new generation

of boaters can experience iconic river communities in the same way we do today.

Along with the values that we see as critical for this work, we have already begun to get involved in these policy area:

- Preserving and enhancing instream flow protections that support the environment and human health and are essential to healthy rivers
- Restoring Colorado's rivers to a more natural state, including urban river restoration projects, to address effects from water development, mining, and other human impacts that have degraded our rivers and river communities
- Modernizing, expanding, and implementing improved water supply forecasting systems so that boaters around the country have a better idea of when rivers will be boatable
- Protecting and enhancing recreational water rights statewide
- Supporting Federal and State level river protections, including the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
- Expanding our collaborative efforts, strengthening long lasting partnerships, and seeking out new cooperative efforts

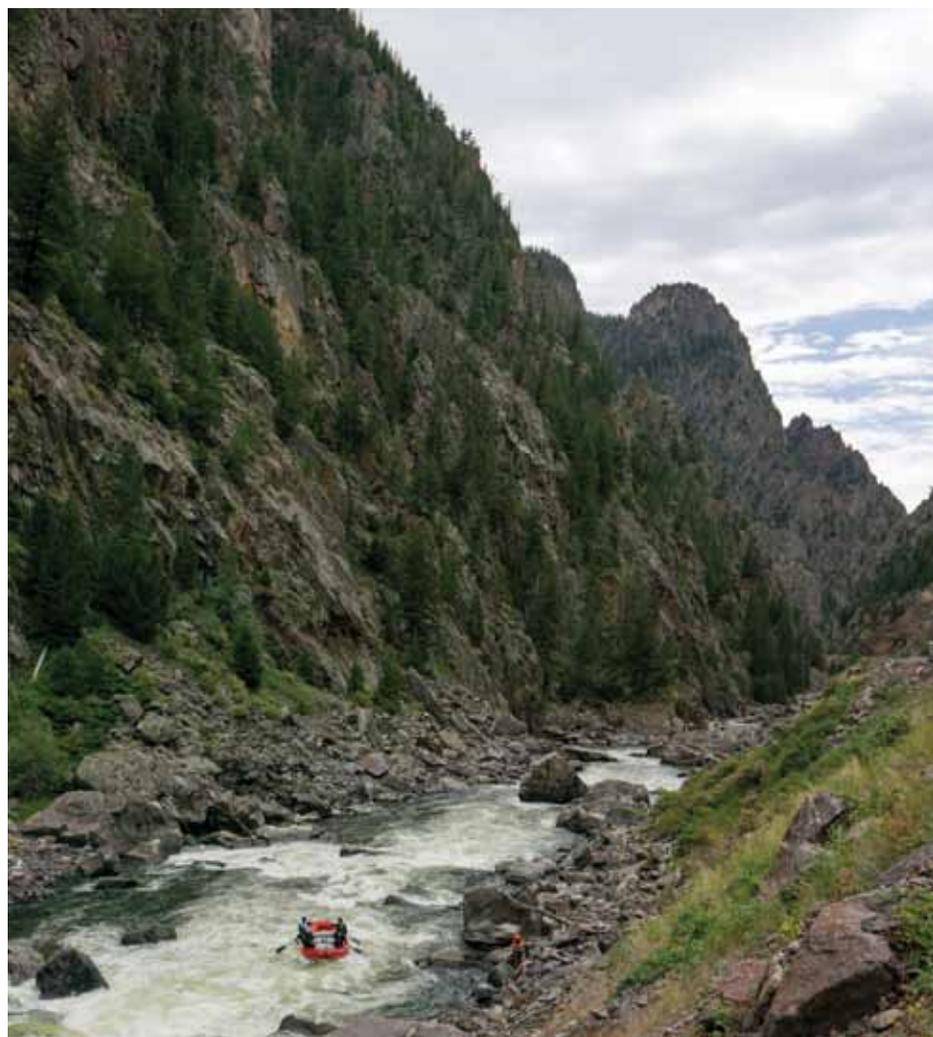
As we continue to expand our work at the Statehouse, we are simultaneously taking bold new action to engage with members throughout the state. In the fall, I hit the road with the assistance of berbur LLC to visit Grand Junction, Durango, Gunnison, Salida, Denver, Boulder, and Fort Collins, where I provided legislative trainings for AW members and friends of the organization.

Gore Canyon, Upper Colorado River (CO).
Photo by Evan Stafford

These visits touched on foundational policy knowledge, like how legislation becomes a bill at the Statehouse, why it's important to build a relationship with your local legislators, and how the different branches of state government operate. This program provided a new way to interact with AW members across the state, and we are looking forward to increasing the frequency of training sessions, and to visiting towns that we weren't able to hit in 2019. Lastly and importantly, we're also inviting members to the capitol, and arranging meetings with members and legislators back in their home districts. We want AW member's voices to be heard, and for Colorado's decisions makers to understand how important river recreation is to people throughout the state.

All of this is to say, there is a whole lot of good stuff taking place in Colorado right now! Between the work that our stewardship team is taking on in the region, our focus on policy, and building on the already impressive amount of work that takes place in the Southern Rocky Mountains, we're pleased to see the evolution of this program heading into the new decade.

This work can't be done without our members, and we would be remiss if we didn't take the time to thank you for your continued support, guidance, and high fives along the way!



STEWARDSHIP

PROTECT OR DESTROY? CHOICES FOR THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER GORGE

BY THERESA SIMSIMAN



THE SAN JOAQUIN River Gorge is a jewel awaiting its fate: it can be California's next Wild and Scenic river, or it can be destroyed by an expensive, ineffective dam project. It's a choice. The San Joaquin River Gorge is a rare find in California these days: a spectacular low-elevation river flowing through public lands near a major population center. The Gorge is full of remarkable cultural, recreational, and natural wonders and, in 2014, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recommended this river segment for addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. But the river is also threatened by the Bureau of Reclamation's proposed Temperance Flat Dam, a \$2.8 billion boondoggle that would add less than 1% to the state's water supply while

permanently destroying the San Joaquin River Gorge. Easily accessible from Fresno, Madera, Visalia, Auberry, and other Central Valley communities, the San Joaquin River Gorge provides essential access to the outdoors for a diverse array of visitors.

The San Joaquin River Gorge

Over 85,000 people visit the San Joaquin River Gorge every year to enjoy its outstanding scenery, use its extensive trail system, paddle the river's Class III-V rapids, and camp in public campgrounds. As a 6,500-acre BLM Special Recreation Management Area, there's an environmental education center and a museum that highlights the unique features of this popular area, including its rich Native American heritage. There's a National Recreation Trail and

even the world's best example of a granitic cave, the Millerton Cave System. All of this is less than an hour from Fresno, population one-million-plus people. And all of it would be flooded forever if the Temperance Flat Dam were built.

Temperance Flat Dam

Everything about the Bureau of Reclamation's proposed Temperance Flat Dam is staggering. At 665 feet tall, it would be the second tallest dam in California and the fifth tallest in the United States. Its estimated cost is \$2.8 billion, pricing it among the most expensive dams in the nation Temperance Flat Reservoir, when full, would store 1.3 million acre-feet of water.

Despite these superlative figures, the dam is expected to yield an average of just 74,000 acre-feet of water annually—less in dry years—to supply under 0.2% of California’s water use at a cost greater than users are willing to pay. The dam would reduce the storage capacity of Millerton Lake and submerge the Kerckhoff Hydroelectric Project’s powerhouses, resulting in a net loss of power generation. It’s not even known where the dam’s water would come from: The San Joaquin’s water is over-allocated by an astounding 861%, there are no available water rights, and the magnitude of climate change impacts makes the availability of water even less certain. Perhaps most staggering are the dam’s long-term, unavoidable adverse impacts on fisheries, fish and wildlife habitat, botanical resources, wetlands, cultural resources, recreation, scenery, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Why Wild And Scenic

Even in this time of polarized politics, the American public broadly supports our nation’s public lands and waters—it seems to be one of just a few issues that bridges divides and unites diverse interests. The San Joaquin River Gorge is cherished by those who know it, and Wild and Scenic designation will permanently protect this incredible and irreplaceable resource. And, until the San Joaquin River Gorge is protected by Wild and Scenic River designation and is off-limits to water project development, dam proponents will continue to squander public resources promoting and planning for a questionable project that may never be built. The time for Wild and Scenic is now!

The BLM has determined that nearly 11 miles of the San Joaquin River are eligible as a National Wild and Scenic River.

Quick Facts

- Outstanding example of a low-elevation Sierra Nevada river system near population centers
- Receives the BLM’s highest rating for scenic quality
- Rich in Native American cultural history and values
- Provides critical regional recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike
- Essential wildlife migration corridor and habitat for sensitive, threatened, or endangered species
- #sanjoaquinrivergorge to see how people are enjoying the river

Building a coalition for the protection of our rivers, American Whitewater partnered with Fresno Building Healthy Communities to introduce youth and their families to the public lands in their own backyard at the San Joaquin River Gorge.
Photo by Michelle Francesco



IS IT A RAFT? IS IT A KAYAK? NO, IT'S A PACKRAFT!

BY TOM DIEGEL



Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
and the huge Brooks Range contain
many lifetimes' worth of packraft/
hike adventures
Photo by Tom Diegel

CANOES, KAYAKS, RAFTS, and duckies have been the primary crafts of choice for river runners in the past century. However, over the last few years, many folks have started to see a new type of boat on their rivers: small, buoyant, brightly-colored pack rafts, captained by folks who are zealous in their enthusiasm for these silly little rubber dinghies. Understandably, many have wondered, so what's the story with pack rafts, and are they legit?

Human beings have been carrying their boats as long as they've been paddling them, but most craft come with barriers to transportability. Native Americans needed plenty of people to carry their log-carved canoes, Inuits' boats made from skins are much lighter but still don't easily break down into a manageable package, today's plastic and Kevlar canoes are lighter than the natives' logs but are still long and

cumbersome to carry, as are creek boats that might be hauled in to paddle steep creeks or remote rivers, especially when weighted down with food and camping gear for multi-day adventures. Duckies (traditional inflatable kayaks) do roll up, but at 30 pounds, aren't really very packable. Given these limitations, it seems inevitable that people would invent a type of boat that could be easily carried into rivers that might otherwise be inaccessible.

As with now-common tools such as GPS, speedy jet travel, and drones, packrafts trace their roots to the needs of the US military. The Air Force created very small rescue rafts for WWII pilots (made somewhat famous in the book/movie *Unbroken*). However, they were mostly ignored as potential adventure/recreation boats until the mid-1950s, when Dick Griffith took one down the Rio Urique, one of the main rivers of northern Mexico's

Copper Canyon region. Again, the concept went a bit dormant for 20 more years until some intrepid Aussies used similar boats to access the wild and remote Franklin River in Tasmania, where these military-style rescue rafts actually became the craft of choice. Around that same time, two brothers were taking those Air Force boats up into the Cascades to fish alpine lakes, and were so inspired that they created Curtis Designs which made and sold boats that weighed only a bit more than a pound. Other people were testing the limits of department store-grade "boats" intended for lake beaches that were little more than pool toys by taking them into the backcountry and down rivers because they were light and compact. In 1982, some thirty years after his Copper Canyon adventure, the same Dick Griffith showed up at the inaugural Wilderness Classic 150-mile race on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula with his boat and made short work of the many

PACKRAFTING

river crossings, and that race henceforth became fairly packraft intensive.

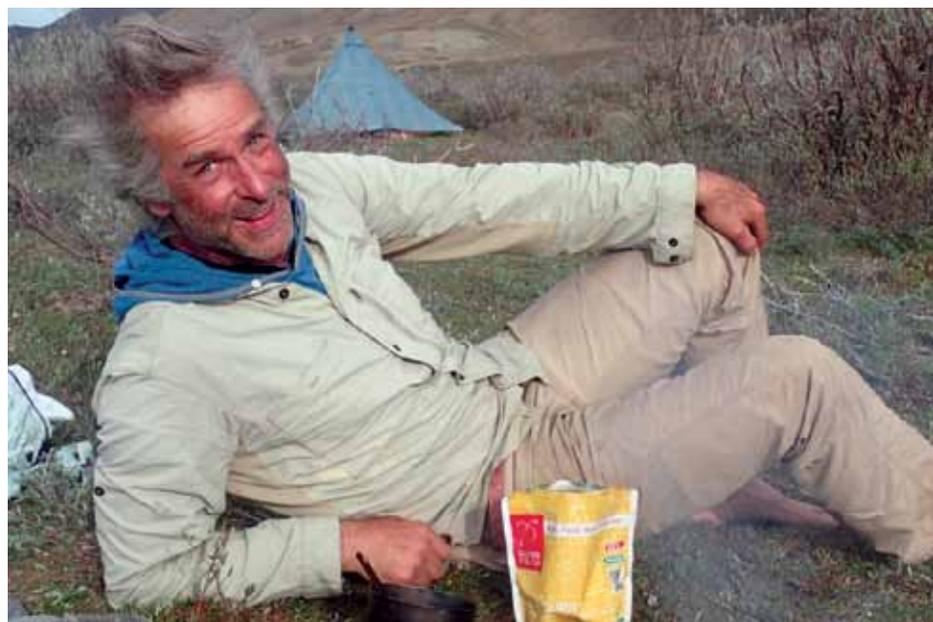
If Dick Griffith was the Grandfather of Packrafting, then certainly Roman Dial is the father. Roman's personal heatmap of Alaskan adventuring is legendary, and after he won that inaugural Wilderness Classic he was so impressed by Dick's boat that he got one for his epic Alaskan traverses, including a monumental traverse of the Alaska Range—by bicycle—using a packraft to ford and descend streams with his bike strapped to the bow. Inspired by Roman, a young Alaskan named Thor Tingey did a big Alaska range traverse (wisely, by foot) with pool toy rafts, but was dismayed at the poor performance of the boats for anything other than flatwater. As Roman puts it in his book *Packrafting!*, Thor's group was "tired of suffering in their 'shiver boats' and looked to a new and perhaps unlikely manufacturer for the ideal pack raft: his mother."

Sheri Tingey had a lot of experience manufacturing gear, and together she and Thor came up with boats that had bigger tubes and were more robust than their predecessors, yet were also light, packable, and nimble. They formed a company called "Alpacka," and embarked on a continuous cycle of creating a new concept on the boat, trying it, revising it, trying it, selling a few boats, revising it, trying it, selling more boats, etc. By the early 2000s the boats were being used not just for crossing rivers, but also for actual river trips and were being taken down real whitewater runs; other companies sprang up to address the new riparian adventurer: Kokopelli Rafts out of Denver has utilized a similar design with offshore manufacturing and lower prices, legacy raft manufacturer Aire has their

"Bakraft" that's worthy of easy whitewater, NRS has a very simple boat, and a small company called Supai Adventure Gear has superlight boats originally intended to ferry back and forth across the Colorado on Grand Canyon backpack adventures.

Just as adventurers looking for more excitement took flatwater-oriented rafts, kayaks, and canoes and modified them to be more appropriate for running whitewater, so too have packrafters pushed the evolution of their craft. Bigger tubes made them less likely to take on water, and other innovations soon followed. The

initial boat designs were basically small rafts that looked like elongated donuts, with the paddler's weight in the rear and no additional buoyancy rearward; thus early packrafts were back-ender machines in waves and small holes. To account for that tendency, the manufacturers created very sexy "big butt" boats with increased stern volume that countered the paddlers weight and were streamlined to let water spill off of them easily, so back-endering became mostly a thing of the past. The material evolved to become stronger without sacrificing weight, so packrafts could survive shallow water-dragging, and



Top: Dick Griffith giving a ride to a Taramumara native deep in the Copper Canyon in the mid-60s

Photo courtesy of Dick Griffith

Bottom: Roman Dial literally wrote the book: Packraft!

Photo by Tom Diegel

PACKRAFTING



stronger material combined with ever-improving valve systems has enabled the boats to be blown up tighter, so they don't fold and flex when going over waves, boof surprisingly well, and enable decent surfing.

Packrafters initially strapped dry bags (or backpacks with dry bags inside) on top of the bow of their boats. For flatwater this works fine, but trying to plow through Class IV whitewater with a 35-pound blob on the front of the boat was suboptimal. After a trip he did in around 2010, Teton and Antarctic climbing guide and early lower-48 packraft pioneer Forrest McCarthy was lamenting his boat's bow-heavy awkwardness and had the lightbulb moment: "What if we could put our gear inside the tubes?" As anyone who has burped a drysuit at the put-in knows, dry zippers are not only watertight, they are airtight as well, and Alpaca introduced a "Cargo Fly" Tizip zipper up the stern, so that food, clothes, and camping gear could be stuffed inside the tubes of the boat to not only vastly improve performance but also guarantee a dry sleeping bag. The boats now come with sealed internal inflatable storage bags that – once full – are clipped into the interior of the boat's tubes, lowering the cargo weight to make the boats more stable. Zip it up, blow it up (with the very clever and weightless nylon bag "pump") and you have a very whitewater worthy boat capable of carrying literally weeks' worth of gear (and beer) on the river.



Top: Transitioning from hiking to paddling at one of the many access points in Cataract Canyon.

Photo by Tom Diegel

Middle: This epic traverse of the Alaska Range by mountain bike in the mid-90s, involving multiple river crossings, spurred development of a super-light craft for crossing rivers with a bicycle.

Photo by Bill Hatcher

Bottom: Lightweight, packable watercraft have changed the way a lot of hunters are approaching the backcountry

Photo by Evan Capilis



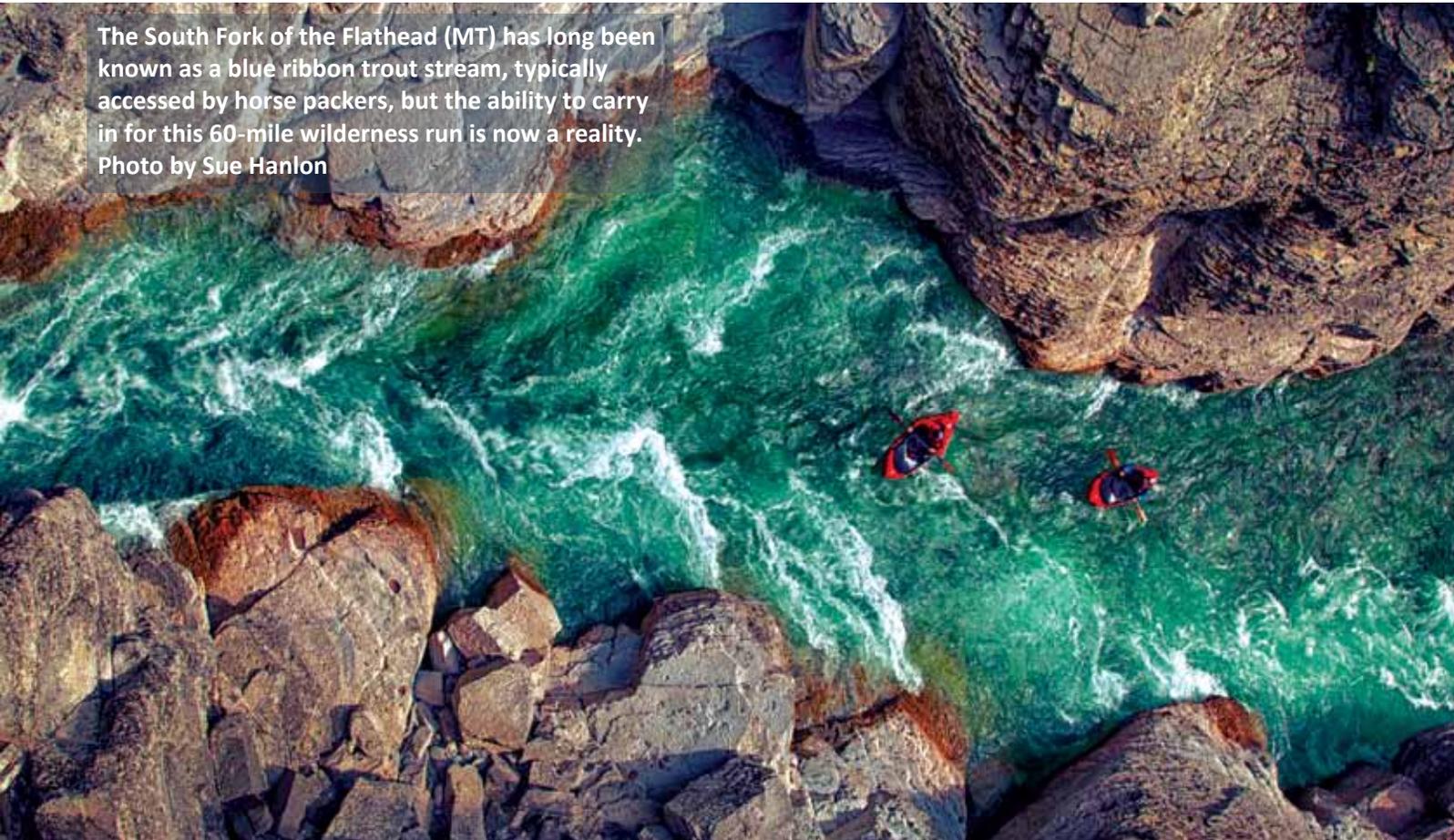


The Grand Canyon of the Elwah has historically been the domain of Class V kayakers willing to carry loaded boats up nine miles of trail to the put-in. The advent of high performance packrafts has changed that.

Photo by Mike Curiak

As anyone who has paddled a kayak knows, outfitting is key to get a snug fit, and a snug fit is a key to having a successful day on the river. The whitewater-oriented boats now come with fairly sophisticated minimalist straps and footbraces that enable strong, deep braces, and yes, you can combat roll a packraft. It is a little harder to roll than a hardshell, but returning to the pool for practice sessions, shoring up your roll stroke a bit, and using a little longer paddle can help make a packraft an effective rolling boat. And when you swim (like hardshellers, we are all between swims), the packraft enables a very quick self-rescue; flip the boat over and haul yourself in, with surprisingly little water still in the boat. The boats come with very light nylon spray skirts that are remarkably good at keeping water out of the boat, and

The South Fork of the Flathead (MT) has long been known as a blue ribbon trout stream, typically accessed by horse packers, but the ability to carry in for this 60-mile wilderness run is now a reality.
Photo by Sue Hanlon



PACKRAFTING



more and more folks are using the self-bailing styles.

If flatwater is your gig, there are plenty of options that are lighter, simpler, and cheaper than the whitewater styles, with backpackers, hunters, fishermen, canyoneers, and even adventurous mountain bikers having plenty of options to choose from. And all come in an extraordinarily small, light package. The most robust whitewater packrafts, loaded with the outfitting, roll up to the size of a two-man tent and weigh less than 10 pounds, and the range goes down to the micro boats, which weigh less than two pounds and roll to become not much bigger than a water bottle.



Once your water craft weighs just a few pounds and can fit inside a pack along with your camping gear, those squiggly blue lines on maps suddenly look a lot different and your riparian world opens up in new ways. How about a loop combining floating with crossing a few passes on foot to get into adjoining drainages? Maybe riding your bike to the put-in, floating, then riding home? Ever driven to the “put-in” at the end of the Forest Service road and looked at the trail heading up alongside the creek, and wondered what was up there? Maybe you’ve considered fly-in rivers, such as the Middle Fork Flathead or the hundreds of wilderness runs in Alaska, and have everything you need for a river trip in your backpack that fits easily into a Cessna, or maybe you’ve flown commercially to a town (or a country) that has runnable rivers but



Top: The ability to combine rivers with nearby mountains provides new opportunities for adventures.

Photo by Tom Diegel

Middle: It may be a little awkward, but paddling with a bike on your bow is a viable option for packrafts, and opens up a lot of possibilities for new adventures.

Photo by Mike Curiak

Bottom: Sheri Tingey started Alpaca Rafts and is still developing new styles for them

Photo by Thor Tingey



Hiking into the South Fork Flathead
Photo by Tom Diegel

no kayak stores to rent boats, and even if you could find a boat or paid the exorbitant fee to check a kayak (if the airlines would let you, which they won't), how will you carry the kayak on your rental car or in the ancient van crowded with people, banana boxes, and chickens?

The need that many people have to dig deeper into wild places has always resulted in gear evolutions to enable it, but historically the bulkiness of boats that are viable for river running has limited that ability. The new generation of packrafts has changed that, and now new opportunities for previously inaccessible riparian adventures are limitless!

In upcoming issues of the *AW Journal*, we'll explore more of the adventurous possibilities represented by packrafts: Southwest desert hike/bike/paddle combinations in southern Utah and the Grand Canyon, a river-based loop (finally!) linking the Main Salmon, Big Creek, and Middle Fork Salmon rivers, a weeklong, multiple-drainage loop in the Absaroka mountains into terrain that people like to call the most remote area in the lower 48, multi-drainage loops and point to points on both the south and north slopes of Alaska's Brooks Range, creative single day outings into unusual runs, and even tackling a few of the Sierra's most legendary alpine Class V "kayak" trips. Stay tuned!

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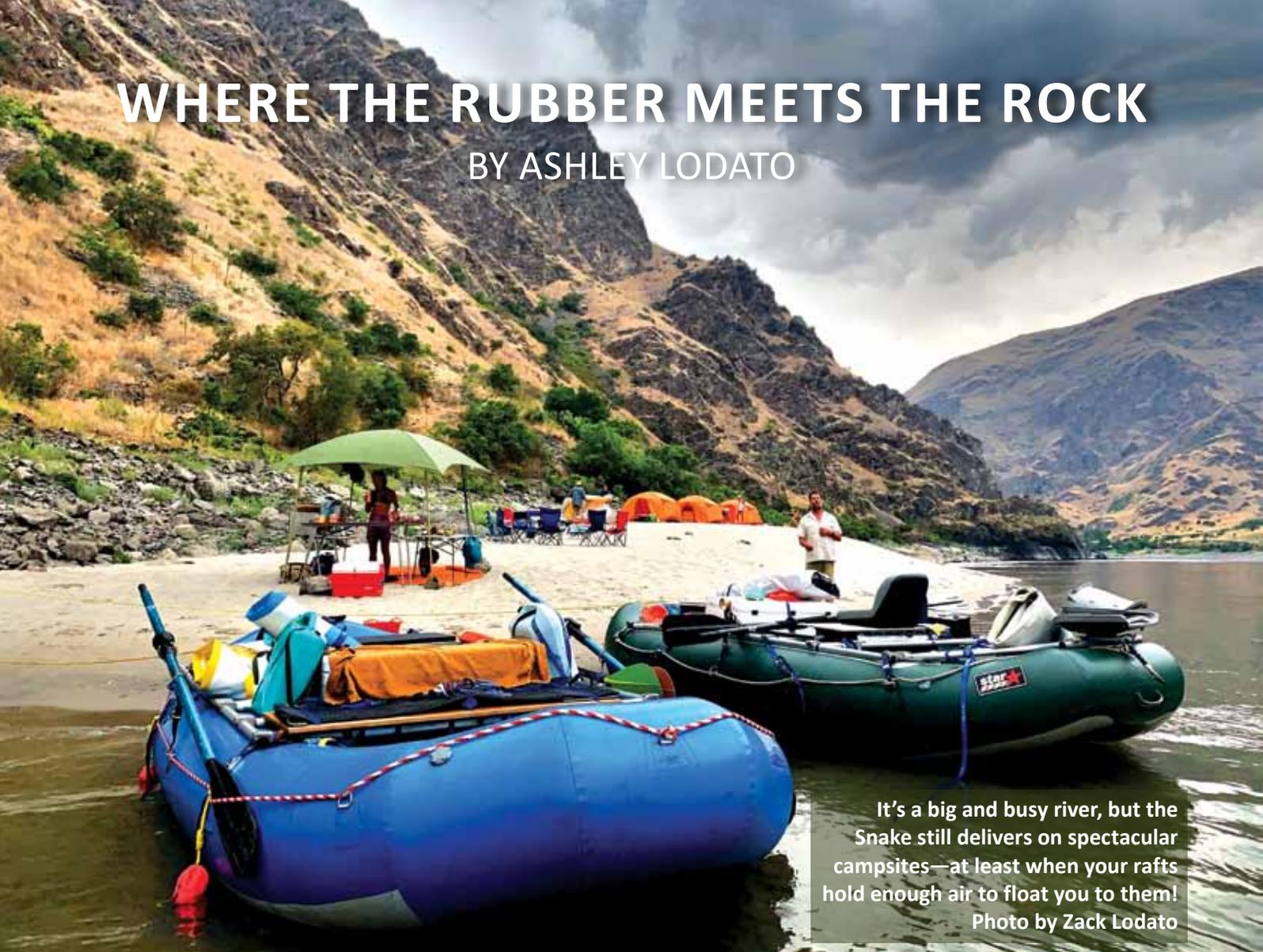
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WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROCK

BY ASHLEY LODATO



It's a big and busy river, but the Snake still delivers on spectacular campsites—at least when your rafts hold enough air to float you to them! Photo by Zack Lodato

PERHAPS WE SHOULD consider ourselves lucky that in something like 130 collective years and thousands of collective river miles, my siblings, our spouses, and I had never before experienced a punctured raft. After all, we'd wrapped canoes, pinned kayaks, and lost paddles. Wasn't popping a raft an inevitable component of river running? Somehow for us, thus far, it had not been.

Despite months of date negotiations, meal planning, and packing from our separate locations around the Pacific Northwest, each summer my brother and sister and I find ourselves driving to launch sites telling each other that this year's trip is going to be the least organized, most egregious display of dishevelment in rafting history. "We are a total horror show over here," we promise each other, using a slightly different

adjective. Each year we're sure that *this year* will be the one we've forgotten some crucial item—toilet paper, sunscreen, stove fuel; that *this year* we will have to cook over the campfire, navigate the river with no guidebook, or fashion an oar blade out of a piece of driftwood. But never once did it cross our minds (at least, not the forefront of our minds) that *this year* would be the one where we put a hole in a raft.

August 2019, I suppose, marked the end of innocence.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. The trip started inauspiciously, with my realization that I had forgotten my swimsuit. In retrospect, this was a blip so minor as to be laughable, as was the final casualty of the trip: the broken SCAT machine at the take-out. But at the time, just moments from

launching at Hammer Creek for a six-day trip on the Lower Salmon, realizing I had left my swimsuit at home seemed less of an oversight and more of a foreshadowing. If I couldn't remember my swimsuit, what else might I have forgotten?

There are a lot of things you can't get in White Bird, Idaho, population 91, and typically swimsuits would be one of those things. But the serendipity that seems to accompany river trips with mysterious frequency delivered once again. When Mi'chelle (pronounced MEE-Shell) at All Rivers Shuttle learned of my predicament, she went into her own dresser drawers, and in an unrestrained display of generosity—especially given how many river runners she encounters each year—produced not one but two brand new swimsuits, tags still on, and practically forced them into

WILDERNESS PADDLING

my willing hands. Problem solved. Oh that our next hurdle, presented a mere 48 hours later, were so easily cleared!

The Lower Salmon is not a particularly technical river, with only a few big rapids and fairly decent lines through all of them at most levels. Still, as with any moving water, there are places to get in trouble, and one of our rafts had the misfortune to discover one such place, when the left bow tube of a Star raft proved to be no match for the center rock at the top of Snowhole Rapid. But to bypass the 30 fairly uneventful but magical river miles between the Hammer Creek launch and Snowhole Rapid without a mention would be to neglect to give the river its due.

It takes less than a day to surrender to a river. Once rubber (or vinyl, or urethane) meets water, our internal rhythms succumb to the tempo of the river. The stresses of juggling schedules to sync up, the planning and packing, the shared spreadsheets for gear and food, the last-minute gear orders, and the fierce protection of the ice supply on the long drive—all evaporate from our



River-running cousins perched on a SUP
Photo by Bronwen Lodato

consciousness as the gentle slap of waves on the sides of the boat and silky feeling of sand underfoot become our accepted—

albeit temporary—reality. Once we cast off from the launch ramp, life begins anew.

Despite its reputation as the short straw of the Salmon River runs, outclassed by the more glamorous and lottery-controlled Middle and Upper Main forks of the Salmon, the Lower Salmon never feels like a consolation prize. The river itself is magnificent, the terrain is varied and interesting, the water is warm, and the beaches are remarkably pristine, especially for a stretch of river with very little administrative oversight.

More than just a special place, though, the Lower Salmon represents for my siblings and our families a bit of an idyll—a distinct swath of time of devoted completely to the pursuit of fun. Framed by rust-colored basalt columns and glittering sandbars, the Lower Salmon is a state of mind. Our kids enjoy being with us (or they put on



Signs of those who passed this way before
Photo by Zack Lodato

WILDERNESS PADDLING

The first rays of sun hit camp in time for breakfast.
Photo by Zack Lodato



a very convincing display of it); the adults get time for intimate connection, as we get into the groove of river time and find that in addition to rowing and paddling and swimming and loading and unloading, we also have time for leisurely conversations, which we drift in and out of throughout the week on the river.

For a time, we're not the parents who embarrass our children or nag at them; instead we are people who jump into the water from cliffs and belt out 80s rock tunes at the top of our lungs around an elevated metal fire pan. Which is to say that we still embarrass the kids, but somehow their humiliation is softened by the suspended reality that is river life.

When we reached Snowhole Rapid on the third day of our trip, we scouted, as we always do. Even though we've run the same line through Snowhole on all of our trips,

and even though another party ran the rapid immediately in front of us, reminding us of the line, old Outward Bound habits die hard, and are indeed still alive and well in our party consisting of five former Outward Bound instructors and the raft passengers at our mercy. So we scouted. Unsurprisingly, we selected the exact same line as years prior and which the raft party ahead of us had just run.

The first two rafts ran through without incident, and my husband and I rowed back up to the base of the rapid to take some photos of the third raft. We watched the raft approach the top of the rapid and begin to drop. Their line was slightly left, but not enough to worry anyone. As the raft gained momentum it got pulled farther left, just enough to glance off the large rock at the top of the rapid and knock the left oar out of the oarlock, and then realigned

and streamed through the rest of the rapid without incident.

Once it was clear that the raft had made it through upright and with all riders still onboard, we hooted at the passengers, pumping our raised fists and laughing at their slightly missed line. Strangely, however, the passengers did not laugh back or shake their heads in chagrin. They sat with gazes fixed forward grimly, like mastheads, as the rower got the oar back in the lock and began pushing forward with dogged determination.

Opposite Top: *Unloading after Snowhole Rapid on a postage stamp beach*
Photo by Bronwen Lodato

Middle: *Examining the damage and trying to keep a positive outlook*
Photo by Piper Lodato

Bottom: *Riverside raft repair*
Photo by Piper Lodato



Just as I was thinking, ungenerously, “What a bunch of babies; they can’t even laugh at themselves for missing a line,” my husband, who rarely worries about anything, said to me “It looks like they’re floating a little low.” It was then that we noticed that the front left tube of the raft was almost entirely under water.

As the raft moved downstream, it slumped further and moved sluggishly. Drifting into the first possible landing site, a tiny patch of sand between two large rocks on river left, the raft moved barge-like, its passengers silent and singularly focused, the front left frame beginning to dip below the surface of the water.



Once we secured the raft onshore, I reached under the water to the limp tube and ran my hands along it, expecting to find a hole.



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WILDERNESS PADDLING



Preparing the patch
Photo by Piper Lodato

It took a moment for my tactile sense to register with my brain, that what I was feeling was not the exterior of the tube, but instead the interior. Instead of running my hands along the outside of the tube, I had inserted my hand into what turned out to be a nearly contiguous 17-inch tear running parallel to the tube, a few inches below waterline. I stood up, a little shaky. “Guys,” I said. “It’s a big rip.”

Forming a bucket brigade, we unloaded and derigged the raft, reversing the process that we had gone through at Hammer Creek just three days earlier. Once everything was on shore, we flipped the raft—with some difficulty, because the river

bottom dropped steeply just offshore, so the people at the far end of the raft were working chest-deep in water.

When the raft was overturned with the left tube propped on a rock, we all stood in awestruck horror for a moment, gazing at a rip that was so much bigger than any we had ever imagined that it seemed almost surreal. *This is not us*, we thought to ourselves, *perched on this postage stamp of sand with a popped raft and no place to set up camp. This is not us, with nearly 50 miles of river between us and the take-out. This is not us, with a rented raft with a hole you could put a body through, and no idea of how comprehensive the repair kit is.* We’d

never opened the repair kit for a rented raft before; now the contents of such a kit would determine the future of our trip.

But Mi’chelle came through with the repair kit just as she had with the swimsuit, and we soon located a long strip of grey vinyl that seemed custom cut in anticipation of exactly this tear. All we had to do was round the edges.

Thus commenced an afternoon of routine river activities for most of us—eating lunch, swimming, even using the groover—while the three guys busied themselves with Raft Repair 101, complete with reading instructions for the various glues and solvents (written in 6-point font, necessitating the borrowing of the reading glasses of one of the elders on the trip), drying, sanding, measuring, cutting, gluing, waiting, inflating. When the tube held air, we all cheered, then quickly uttered a silent prayer as we flipped the raft back over. *No bubbles, no bubbles, no bubbles*, we begged.

There were bubbles. Flip, dry, glue, wait, inflate.

Bubbles.

The word “duct tape” was uttered, but the urge was swiftly squelched. We were not Barbarians; we would conduct riverside raft repair in a civilized manner. The Tear Aid tape included in the repair kit, however, was at that point deemed to be not only a perfectly legitimate repair material, but also strategically necessary—as in, “our last hope”—and it was applied with loving care, as well as more silent prayers.

Inflate. Flip. Wait. Cautiously apply pressure to the tube. One tiny bubble rose to the surface. With almost comical complicit denial, we all studiously ignored it and proclaimed the raft ready to reload, which we did with haste, as thunder and darkening skies made Snowhole Canyon feel even more ominous than it had three hours before, when we were faced with



Feeling for bubbles
Photo by Piper Lodato

a sinking ship. The lightning storm and accompanying downpour held off just long enough for us to reach a larger spit of sand at the far end of the canyon, and we hopped on to dry land to wait out the storm on shore.

But we lucked out with an empty beach, and after dinner and a round of impromptu glow-in-the-dark poi ball performances, we fell asleep.

After disaster is narrowly averted, life, for a time, shifts into sharper focus. The first spears of sunrise glowing golden on cliff tops. Waking up to the spiraling trill of the canyon wren. A nimbus of water droplets dancing back to the river's surface with each stroke of the oars. Chukkar pheasant chortling busily on shore. In *Gift from the Sea*, author Anne Morrow Lindbergh writes about life rushing "back into the void, richer, more vivid, fuller than before." Lindbergh's context is the experience of being alone, but the same thing happens after one has glimpsed potential calamity, and emerged on the other side. Life, we remember with renewed vigor, is beautiful. On the heels of Snowhole Rapid, we were reanimated, infused with a fulfillment

Riverside celebration
Photo by Zack Lodato

that would have seemed almost arrogant, were we not still so shaky considering what might have been.

Sure, we were the scrappy party with a 15-year-old perched on the tube of the stricken raft, pump in hand, giving the boat a hit of life support every 20 minutes. But hey, at least we weren't a forlorn group of stragglers crammed on a single raft with another piled high with the frame, boxes, and shrunken tubes of the third. Beyond relieved, we were, in fact, slightly jaunty.



As we tend to do with any experiences involving necessity being the mother of invention, we learned a lot about riverside raft repair: chiefly, that we will never head downriver without first confirming the presence of a beefy repair kit for each raft, and will bring extra materials just in case. But with the raft puncture now well behind us, I suspect the incident will, for the younger kids at least, just become one more river trip memory for the anthology that we're building, one tributary at a time.

Our Salmon River trips are punctuated by reminders of trips past. "Oh!" someone will exclaim, pointing to a beach, "There's where we saw the dead sturgeon!" or "Hey, that's where Mike got stung by the bee." Even the kids, some of whom started floating these rivers when they were just toddlers, remember remarkably specific things about various places on the river. "That's where Owen got ejected from the boat," or "We had costume night on that beach." We now can rightfully claim, "That's where we popped the raft." And this memory, like all the rest, will be affixed as if with a vinyl adhesive to the consciousness of everyone in our group. The river has woven itself into our collective memory, a tight fabric binding us to these moments, this river, these people, this life.

WILDERNESS WHITEWATER

DOUBLE TAKE FROM A SINGLE CANOE: GARY AND GRAHAM'S SPANISH RIVER BOGO

PART ONE: SPANISH RIVER DISPATCHES

BY GARY STORR



Dan Bell and Graham Bryan caught in the maelstrom, Agnes Rapids, 2007. Watercolor by Shirley Storr

“LIFE IS WHAT happens to you while you're busy making other plans.”
— John Lennon

A TREE CALLED GARY

During a past visit to my childhood home, I sat outside with my parents sipping iced tea and remarking about nothing in particular. Then, out of the blue, my mother pointed to the towering white pine at the back of the yard and announced, “That’s Gary.” My father nodded knowingly.

Her statement caught me off guard; I was confused. “What?” I faltered.

“We named the tree after you. You planted it when it was a seedling.” Certainly it was unconventional, to name a tree after the

person who planted it, but I suppose it gave them a degree of solace when my absences must have seemed like neglect.

My wife Debby and I were looking forward to leading our paddling group, the Canoeing Legends, on a week-long journey down the Spanish River in Ontario. While preparing for the trip I checked my gear and found that its integrity was in question. I bought a tent, a waterproof canoe pack, clothing and footwear. I arranged a shuttle and drew up a meal plan.

Then came the news: my mother was sick. She had beaten the disease twice before but now she would let it run its course. The cancer ravaged her body and when she could no longer raise herself from the couch

she opted to die with medical assistance. When her time came I held her hand and a doctor performed the “procedure,” as she called it. That night the Legends honored my mother in a toast from their campsite on the Spanish River while we raised a glass to her from home.

Now my parents are gone, the house is sold and the tree is just a tree: no one will ever know it had a name.

THE BEST CANOE TRIP I NEVER HAD

In 2007 I paddled the Spanish River in its entirety and then visited twice more in 2009 and 2012. This would be my fourth sojourn and the second time I would paddle its full navigable course. We began

as a crew of eight, four of whom had no experience in shooting rapids. When Debby and I withdrew, so did our nephew Drew.

AND THEN THERE WERE FIVE

After the trip a hush fell over the Spanish River crew; they circled their wagons... as if they'd seen ghosts. Emily eventually provided a handful of photos depicting the group engaged in campsite revelry but there was a curious lack of whitewater photography. Where were those pictures, I wondered?

"I didn't want to get my phone wet," said Emily.

"Did you see the Ninth Lake pictographs?"

"We couldn't find them," she admitted.

That seemed odd to me: I had witnessed one of their crew on a previous trip zero in on the ancient graffiti like he had their coordinates and his brain came equipped with GPS.

"What about the Agnes Rapids? Did you make it through?"

"Mom and I didn't try. The others did. Kevin scraped through but Geoff and Dan swamped. They were pretty banged up.



Geoff Ching shows how it's done, Cliff Rapids, 2019

Photo by Emily Stitt

Just before that they ran the Cascades fully loaded. They capsized there too."

Not a stellar performance by any measure. I was flummoxed. There is a strong hydraulic below the Cascades and I had recommended before the trip that they bypass it.

"Geoff was white as a sheet," Emily continued. "He was trying to hold up

his stove and got pulled back a couple of times."

I asked Geoff for his take on the Spanish River but the door remained shut. "I didn't see much of the trip from my perspective under the water," he responded tersely.

I wondered if events might have played out more agreeably had I been along for the ride. Now none of them would return to the Spanish. I would have to find new people if I was to revisit my favorite haunt.

LOSING OUR INNOCENCE

In the summer of 2007 Graham, Dan, Ross and I made our first descent of the Spanish River. Only Graham had paddled in rapids before. He had led a group down the Missinaibi River for a Federation of Ontario Naturalists (now Ontario Nature) expedition and by his own admission, was wholly unqualified for the job. He had triumphed, with a dollop of blind luck, in herding his charges unscathed to Moosonee. Now he



Dan Bell and Graham Bryan navigate a rock garden, Agnes Rapids, 2007

Photo by Gary Storr

WILDERNESS WHITEWATER

was here on the Spanish to teach us how to read rapids and execute the paddle strokes that would guide us safely to Agnew Lake in six days' time.

The long chain of lakes that began the trip was annoyingly pleasant but we were itching to cut our teeth on faster water. When the opportunity presented itself in the form of the Upper Athlone Rapids, I knew I wasn't prepared—I would need some horseshoes of my own.

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

July, 2019

Dear Emily and Drew,
Please take a minute to read this when you reach the Upper Athlone Rapids. I have a favor to ask.

I had hoped to be here at the top of the rapid with you because it is one of my favorite places. Twelve years ago Graham, Dan, Ross and I stood where you are now and looked at a wee bit of turbulence. Around the bend to the right was a lot more. With the exception of Graham we were greenhorns and I was scared witless. Finally, Graham spoke up: "Well, are we going to do this or not?"

I replied, "I guess so—it's why we're here, isn't it?" But I still wasn't convinced.

The water was low that year, making the rapids more technical. Ross and I ran the haystacks mid-river and pulled up on the gravel beach at river left. There, I took pictures of Graham and Dan as they negotiated the dogleg and bounced down the rapids hugging the right bank. We

followed without incident and celebrated our very first real rapid.

Two years later, I came back with Debby. The water was higher and the gravel beach was gone. We planned to camp on the riverbank partway along the rapid that night. As I shouldered my pack and headed down the trail, I came to a tree that bore a grim warning. The bow of a Royalex canoe was hanging from a branch. "Damn!" I cursed, as I dropped my pack and ran to the tree. "Debby doesn't need to see this." I lifted the wreckage from the tree and tossed it into the woods just as Debby rounded the bend. Too late—she had seen everything—and wasn't at all fazed.

We camped at the edge of the river and I didn't sleep a wink for worry. The rapid thundered and the ground shook under

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The Canoeing Legends 2019: (l-r) Dan Bell, Helga Stitt, Kevin Karker, Emily Stitt and Geoff Ching at Agnew Lake Lodge
Photo by Emily Stitt

us. In the morning Debby awoke from a peaceful slumber and we ran the rapid. We hit one rock at the top, the result of miscommunication, but slid over it and finished the run without mishap.

Now I'm here with you...in the form of a letter. As I write this I can hear the water cascade loud, fresh and clear. I hope that you will come to love the Spanish River as I do. Now here is the part where the favor comes in. Someday I'd like some of my ashes to be tossed at the head of the Athlone Rapids for one final run (preferably posthumously). You are amazing trip mates and if either of you runs the river again someday I'd like you to contact Debby. She will give some of me to you for this purpose.

I regret that I can't be here to ask you in person, but please consider it. Thanks.

Love,
 Uncle Gary

Yet another headwaters logjam, 2012.
Photo by Gary Storr

AGNES DOING AGNES THINGS

After the first trip in 2007 my mother painted a watercolor of Dan and Graham shooting the Agnes Rapids. She copied it from a photograph I had made. It shows Graham, the stern paddler, kneeling amidstships. A collision with a rock had pitched him forward and he was hurt. My mother, who had never sat in a canoe, wondered why he didn't have a paddle. She'd painted him as he appeared in the photo—with white knuckles firmly gripping



the gunwales. Graham will never live it down: he's been immortalized in art.

Dan continued to thrust his paddle into the foam but they had shipped too much water. The rapid washed them over a ledge at the bottom of the run and they were in to the gunwales. Exhausted, they tugged the submerged boat to shore and regrouped, nursing both brain and brawn reassuringly on terra firma.

In his 2019 attempt to even the score, Dan sheepishly admitted that he'd been kicked in the butt once again—this time Agnes had unleashed her full fury. He and his sternman, Geoff, were tossed from the boat and had pin-balled the cascade sans canoe.

Months later, Geoff's attitude softened: "I don't think I've ever made that bad a judgment call and then did it again so soon after. It's like riding a dirt bike—if you don't wipe out now and then you're not riding hard enough. But I'll be the first to admit I made some really bad choices that day and am thankful it wasn't more serious than it was. I don't scare easily but that scared me: a few bruises, a broken thwart and a damaged skid plate are no big deal. I'm not sure if the thwart broke on a rock or if I broke it after we dumped. I kicked the side of the canoe really hard so I wouldn't get pinned.

WILDERNESS WHITEWATER



Loading the boats after play on the Zig Zag Rapids, 2007. Front to back: Graham Bryan, Dan Bell and Ross Robertson
Photo by Gary Storr

"It was the hydraulic in the first wipeout that really scared me. I got sucked under several times before it spit me out. I didn't panic and took a breath when I could and hoped I would clear it soon, but I was prepared to wait for a throw rope if I had to."

Lady Agnes takes no prisoners.

GRIN AND BEAR IT

In 2009 a black bear swam across our bow, clambered up the right bank, and concealed itself behind some bushes. Then it pushed its snout through the branches and watched intently as we paddled by. It was clearly not intimidated and more concerning to me, appeared to be making some sort of mental calculation. Bears that can do math creep me out.

"That's one fellow I don't want to meet in a dark alley," I remarked to Debby. I'd had it from an unreliable source that bears could gage, by your speed and the time of day, where you were likely to put down stakes, and then be waiting for you at your take-out.

We paddled on, forgetting the bear, until it was time for lunch. A couple of kilometers below Pogamasing there were two campsites on river left. As we approached the first site we saw a flat back canoe with a two-horse kicker pulled up on shore. Two men in uniform were busy setting up a kitchen. We waved and paddled to the next site. As we yanked our canoe up the embankment the men crashed through the brush to our site. They were Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and, in no uncertain terms, told us to get off. "And there's no camping for the next 20 kilometers," they warned us. "The sites are all posted 'off-limits.'"

Were they kidding? We had just paddled 18 kilometers from our camp on the Upper Athlone Rapids. And they expected us to paddle 20 more?

"Why?" I demanded.

"There's a nuisance bear in the area. It's been scaring campers off their sites and tearing into their provisions. Someone likely fed it when it was a cub so it sees humans as a source of food. Shame."

"Why? What are you going to do?" I asked.

"Fry bacon. Let it come to us."

"Then what?"

"We'll fire a shot over its head and scare it away."

Right. I knew a rifle shot wouldn't scare a bear for long. Its curiosity would quickly bring it back.

"You guys will be so fat and greasy from slurping bacon you won't be able to move when the bear shows up," I joked. Then I added helpfully, "We saw your bear about five kilometers upriver. We have plenty of time to eat before it gets here."

"Okay," they acquiesced. "Thanks. But remember. No camping."

Unfortunately the MNR dudes were right. It was a shame. We all knew that the bear would be loaded, dead, within hours into the flat back canoe for its final journey to Sheahan.

Debby and I paddled 38 kilometers that day, all the way to Spanish Lake.

NAMELESS CONIFERS

Through the years, the Canoeing Legends have paddled countless waterways, many of them winding through vibrant wilderness. We have seen trees—millions of them—and never felt the urge to name one. But there is strange comfort in knowing that in the old neighborhood, one tree had a name. To my mind, it always will.

Now, as the snow flies, it's time to begin the process anew—cajoling, enticing, blackmailing, lying—whatever it takes to corral the Legends and, come spring, slip our canoes into the watery chaos for a raucous ride.

The mojo is percolating. Get me to the river.

* * *

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WILDERNESS WHITEWATER

PART TWO: NATURE BLOWS ITS CHANCE

BY GRAHAM BRYAN



*Over the ledge and into the drink, Dan Bell and Graham Bryan on the Agnes Rapids, 2007
Photo by Gary Storr*

CELEBRATING STUPID

Gary is the core. He has the maps. He comes up with the ideas. He has an uncanny ability to trick us. “Well,” he’ll say with a grin, “if you don’t want to come that’s fine. No need for an excuse—I understand if you’re not up for it.” Once, I ended up sleeping in the snow just because I paused before saying no to winter camping. And he is the only one of us with a canoe trailer, a weathered wooden contraption with the phrase ‘Canoeing Legends’ hand-painted on the side. He also stores ‘the pig,’ a used, factory-second, 90 pound, indestructible Royalex canoe we all pitched in for years back.

Gary is my neighbor and owns the general store. As long as I need bread and milk I am subject to trip plans. “I found this account online. Old growth forests surrounding the headwaters of the Spanish River.”

Remembering a past trip I ask, “Um, are there portages connecting these lakes?”

“Historic ones.” Always be wary of this answer. “The account is from 1998 so we know at least one party has been through lately.”

“Uh huh.”

“I figure three days on the upland lakes, paddle the Pogamasing River into the Spanish, then a couple of days of moving water to the Elbow. We’ll use the ABS boats because of the rapids on the Spanish.”

“Um.”

“You haven’t done a trip in while, but hey, I know you’re busy. Dan’s in...and Jeff too. But we’ll understand if you can’t go.”

“Well....”

“Great! I’ll call the lodge. We’ll camp there the first night. We can hire a driver to run us to the put-in and leave my truck at the Elbow.”

“Right....”

IN PURSUIT OF UTOPIA

It’s early May (2012) and I’m talking to Jan, the amiable Dutch proprietor of Agnew Lake Lodge—an evolving oasis of varnished pine and European hospitality. Located amidst fish camps and house trailers, we had camped at the lodge the night before and are now waiting for our shuttle to Rushbrook Lake.

“So, lots of folks tackle this headwaters route?” I ask Jan.

“Well, last year we dropped some guys off.”

“What did they think?”

“I dunno, we just dropped them. Never saw them again.”

Our driver, a retired lumberman, delivers us and our gear to the edge of civilization, up 90 kilometers of logging road, much of it hugging the meandering Wakonassin.

The river tantalizes us, snaking from progressively higher granite hills carpeted in white pine and still-bare poplar. We unload our gear at Rushbrook Lake. The driver bids us a hearty farewell knowing he will never see us again. We take it as friendly banter; wiser men would see it as prophecy.

Rushbrook, with an in-your-face island of giant pine opposite the launch, dares us to disappear into the woods. We accept the challenge and glide across the lake under slate skies and light rain. We find the Shakwa River and push our canoes upstream through frigid, clear, knee-deep water to Shakwa Lake. Acres and acres of majestic white pine, lovingly described in the online account, distract us from the flooded and surprisingly icy portage and the apparent lack of real campsites. Later,

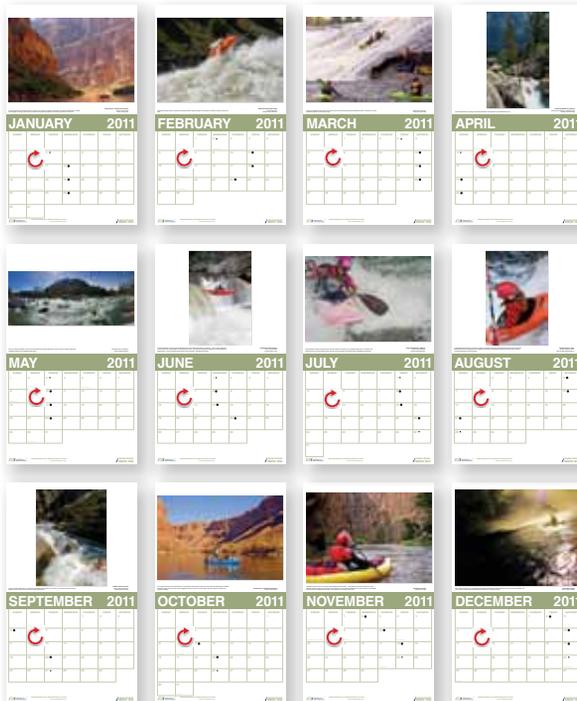
we land on a small island and hack out a campsite from the brush.

We awake to a stunning, clear blue, early spring day and pay no heed to the one kilometer portage. Brimming with optimism we assume that Gary's back, which he has just thrown out shouldering the pig, will be no problem. Beguiled by the pines, we traverse Wensley, Landry and Sinaminda lakes, all connected by progressively more challenging carries. Handy facts from the trip account: 'keep an eye out for 98 centimeter diameter pine on the left,' '...102 centimeter red pine on the portage...' pique our interest. We're experiencing the north woods on the grandest scale.

WHAT FRESH HELL IS THIS?

We camp on Gilden Lake at the end of the Sinaminda Lake portage (Sinaminda: I believe is Ojibway for "freakin' windy," but I may be wrong). The account makes no mention that the 900-meter portage threads through a series of rocky hills and valleys. At this point we also begin doubting the recorded portage lengths. Abandoned aluminum boats lay nestled in a twisted mass of mossy boreal forest. We use one for a table and another as a cooking shelter: a north wind is slicing through a very clear, very blue, cold evening sky. After supper the wind dies and I paddle out alone to witness an enormous full moon. "Closest approach to Earth in decades," I shout. "You guys oughta see this." Oddly, everyone stays on shore, opting instead for the warmth of whiskey.

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WILDERNESS WHITEWATER



The Canadian Pacific Railway hugs the Spanish River

Photo by Gary Storr

"I think I'm sick."

"You'll be okay, Gary."

The next day: more old growth, more clear skies...stunning vistas.

The trip account describes the logging history of the Pogamasing River between Little Pogamasing and Pogamasing lakes when lumbermen released water from wooden dams to push logs downstream. Always be wary of any description that includes: a) logging history and b) old dams. What we think will be a two-hour jaunt down a spring-swollen creek turns into a series of short portages around ancient log dams that instead of breaking apart have, over time, become massive logjams. We spend hours paddling 500 meters, portaging 100 or 200 meters and then repeating. We find a rusty, still-set leghold trap and gaze longingly at it as a quick excuse: "Sorry guys, crushed ankle. Gotta stop. Leave me here." We have grown weary of old pines and are beginning to understand the loggers' mania to clear-cut the wilderness. We camp at the end of a 1000-meter (2000 meter? endless?) portage that the trip account mysteriously neglects to mention. "Well, maybe they ran it," suggests Gary. "Really? Over a 20-foot waterfall?!" I reply doubtfully.

Dan and I carry the canoes as Gary is now hacking up a lung. Dan is our reality check, infinitely good-natured, thoughtful and easily the strongest and toughest of all of us. On this portage he is breathing hard but still able to throw the pig onto his shoulders. So we're good. And the campsite is fine, a solid bedrock shelf on the last waterfall. Dinner is homemade pizza, and whiskey washes it down, ebbing away the day's trials.

ANOTHER WHISKEY, JACK

In the morning, a pair of whiskey jacks glide from branch to branch, pacing Gary and me in our canoe. We reach Pogamasing Lake after another ill-described portage. In smaller countries this lake would be called an inland sea...or at least be declared a national monument. Here it's just big—a flat, sunny expanse of May-blue that requires only a couple of hours to cross. We paddle unconscious of our strokes, chatting about the minutiae of life back home. We are appreciative and truly humbled by how spoiled and free we are. If only for this one moment, the trip is worth the effort.

As Dan lowers the substantial mass of the pig over the concrete face of the Pogamasing Dam into my fatiguing arms, I realize bringing whitewater canoes on a headwaters trip may have been a tactical

error. Jeff pauses for a smoke and passes out homemade jerky and beer before we perform a canoe triathlon: paddling, swimming, and running to catch up with our boats as they careen down an otherwise impassable stream. There is a trail, but I'd hesitate to call it a portage, as that would imply one could actually carry a canoe over it. At last we fish the boats out and portage across the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks into the Spanish River.

The remaining two days on the Spanish are uneventful, the scenery majestic. Gary bears the flu-aggravated pain in his back stoically, with the same look a dog has before its final trip to the vet. We bounce along the current through granite canyons, slip through rapids and see not a soul.

At the Elbow, the access road and our trailer loom into view through a spring drizzle. We pull out, tie down the boats and shed soaked clothing. I take one last look—the river exudes kinetic energy, leaping over gravel bars against a wall of aspen. I forget everything and am ready to hop back in the canoe and join the river to wherever it takes me.

NATURE BLOWS ITS CHANCE

Over the years we have hiked on peaks that pierced the clouds, been whisked along rivers that could have easily crushed us, and pushed through dark ethereal forests on long-lost trails. Any time, nature could have rubbed us out. To be honest I'm not sure why it didn't. But so far nature has blown its chance. I like to think we have become part of the seasonal rhythms, our role once the ice breaks, to push blindly ahead against all good sense on new, ill-conceived journeys—an insatiable tribute to human stubbornness and spirit. And yet, nature spares us, because like most things, it appreciates a good joke. We will do this again and again...as sure as the ice melts and the rivers flow.

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STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Q & A WITH AW'S CALIFORNIA STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR THERESA SIMSIMAN



Theresa is always all smiles when she's about to get on the river.
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

How were you introduced to paddlesports?

I was introduced to paddlesports by my boyfriend who came back from his Intro to Whitewater Kayaking class (RK1) and proclaimed, "whitewater kayaking is awesome, you should try it!" Being fluent in bubble I translated the bubble over his head to mean, "I hope you TRY to LIKE this sport, 'cuz if you don't, this relationship is toast!" So here I am, some 22 years later, still kayaking and happily married to said boyfriend.

What's your most embarrassing paddlesports moment?

The most embarrassing paddlesports moment happened during my RK1 class. I showed up to my RK1 on the South Fork American decked out with my boyfriend's drytop. I was acting all cool because I already had the gear. I went through the entire class strutting like a peacock. Unfortunately, I was unaware of one little

detail. When I got into my boyfriend's car at the end of the day, he informed me with a laugh that he saw me from the bridge. "You looked like the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man paddling down the river! Didn't anyone tell you how to bleed the air out of your drytop?"

What's your ritual before running an intimidating rapid for the first time?

I just take the opportunity to breathe deeply.

Who has influenced you the most in your paddlesport career?

I technically don't have a paddlesport career, since I paddle for my mental health and to hang with my friends. But if I were to name my influence it would be three individuals: John Weed, Matt Hudgens, and Greg Didriksen. When I first started kayaking, I went on many trips with these

guys since they instructed for Current Adventures. No matter what we were paddling—rivers all across Costa Rica, the umpteenth time down the Wild and Scenic Rogue, or a backyard overnighter on the Carson River—they preached having fun no matter the difficulty of the river. Their sage advice has stuck with me today; rivers will always be my jungle gym.

Now had the question been who has influenced me most in my stewardship career, hands down it would be my colleague Dave Steindorf: humble, persistent, and awesomely successful in his stewardship achievements!

Tell us something that few people would know about you.

My Mother gifted me my love for the

Theresa right at home on some crisp, cold, California whitewater, NF Feather River
Photo by Dave Steindorf

outdoors and the rivers that run through it. My life adventure comes nowhere close to hers as she grew up in the Philippines during World War II, immigrated to the United States, and somehow found herself in Denver, Colorado, raising a family. It was there someone handed her a fishing pole at the YMCA of the Rockies and she was off to every lake or river in the state for years to come. Of course, she always had me in tow on these adventures and often it was just us girls. A gift in more ways than one!

Favorite river snack?

My favorite river snack is an easy one: Clif Bar Cool Mint Chocolate!

What's on your bucket list for an AW achievement?

My bucket list for an AW achievement would be to see the San Joaquin River Gorge designated as a Wild and Scenic River.

What was the first AW project you engaged with?

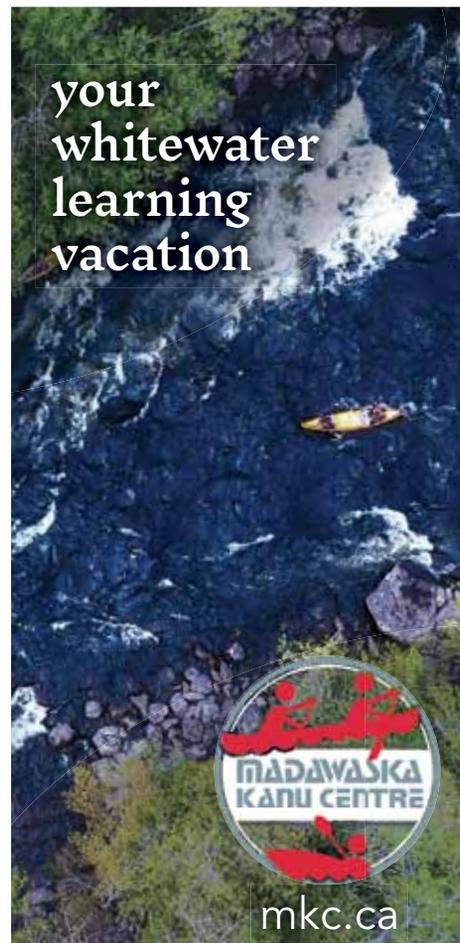
The first project I engaged with that American Whitewater had a hand in was the hydropower relicensing for Sacramento Municipal Utility District's Upper American River Project.



Theresa taking in the scenery on the wild and free-flowing Yampa River in Colorado
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

River craft of choice?

You can't just have one river craft of choice so I will list my favorite whitewater kayaks I own or wish I had never given away! Purple Necky Jive, yellow Liquid Logic Scooter, yellow Dagger Crazy 88, red white, and blue Jackson Star, and my used second generation blue Pyranha Burn.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

NEW BELGIUM'S KATIE WALLACE UNDERSTANDS THAT A BREWERY'S GREATEST ASSET IS CLEAN WATER FROM A HEALTHY RIVER



Katie Wallace of New Belgium Brewing Co.

Photo by Evan Stafford

OUR MISSION TO protect and restore America's whitewater rivers and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely isn't just good for rivers and the paddlers who frequent them. Healthy and clean rivers also support a vibrant industry of river users and entire communities who rely on rivers for their fresh water supplies. At American Whitewater, we partner with industry leaders in an official capacity to further our mission and to benefit the companies that believe in our vision. We sat down recently with New Belgium Brewing Company's Katie Wallace to discuss New Belgium's long history of river advocacy and the brewery's intimate and necessary connection to the river water that forms the basis of their product, delicious artisan beer. We hope you consider a company's commitment to river stewardship when you make purchases.

American Whitewater: Hi Katie, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your personal relationship to rivers?

I grew up along the Missouri River and its endless tributaries with a family of water nerds. We'd chase the cleanest water in the state and set up camp, go on creek hikes, and play music around the campfire. We'd monitor river health with my Mom's stream team, looking for mayflies and tadpoles. And we'd swim—Indian Creek near my Grandpa's blueberry farm was the best—crystal clear, straight from the ground. When we had to stay close to home, my dad would take us on creek hikes around town instead of going to church. I guess it was our church. We'd just follow the streams and see where they led us, crouching through the occasional drainage tunnel (Goonies!). Sometimes we'd end up in a classmate or friend's backyard. It was random and wonderful and occasionally awkward. *awkwaaaaaaaard.*

I've traveled across the world since then and visited many rivers, from Belongil Creek (Australia) to the Amazon, always feeling much better when I'm near flowing water. I don't think I could live more than a mile or so from a good river. Today the Wild and Scenic Poudre River is my backyard. It's also a working river—it waters my garden and the farms that feed me. It also makes my beer and writes my paychecks, so I'm extra lucky for that.

AW: What's your current role at New Belgium, how long have you been with the brewery, and how has your work evolved over time?

I'm the Director of Social & Environmental Impact here at New Belgium Brewing. Been here nearly 16 years. Luckily, our founders always cared about the outdoors. And rivers give us our #1 ingredient for beer. It made it easy for us to get involved in local issues when they came up. Dealing with drought, wildfire, and enormous population

growth over the last decade, I've personally learned a lot about all the complexities of Wild and Scenic working rivers in the West. Our approach to water stewardship is much more nuanced these days. We still stand strong for the flows of these rivers—our playgrounds, our life lines—and we know we need to take a collaborative approach to protecting that water.

AW: When did New Belgium become active in the protection of our water resources and what led to the decision to do so?

Over 90% of beer is water. Our founders, Kim & Jeff, traveled up to the top of the watershed before they sold their first beer. They wrote their business purpose and core values sitting on the Continental Divide and included "Environmental Stewardship" in our foundational tenets. So it's always been top of mind that we rely on healthy land and water to do our business. And since we use water to make beer, we have an added responsibility to invest in the health

of our rivers. Over 10 years ago, a diversion project came to our attention, one that proposed to take quite a bit of water out of the Poudre River to fill two new reservoirs: Glade and Galeton. We felt the project hadn't fully considered the environmental impacts and we also weren't convinced that it was the cheapest, safest alternative to quench the thirst of population growth and keep agriculture in business. So we funded a local nonprofit that was pushing back on the project in order to improve attention toward the long-term health of the river. We brewed a beer called Skinny Dip and featured people skinny dipping for a cause in the river to help get the story out. We actually replicated that campaign for Skinny Dip to fund nonprofits protecting Trestles Break (CA), taking down the Condit Dam on the White Salmon, and numerous projects for the Colorado River.

AW: What are some of the successes of river/water protection you all have been involved in?

Well, our greatest successes are in drastically reducing our water demand at the brewery and cleaning our water onsite. As for our philanthropic work, luckily we've seen good success in some of the projects we funded through the Skinny Dip campaign. Trestles was protected and thanks to the help of American Whitewater, the Condit Dam finally came down! In Fort Collins, Colorado, we've spent hundreds of thousands on river projects. We helped fund the removal of a small diversion in town that also helped to restore wetlands, we donated to instream flows on the Poudre, and also funded the feasibility study for the brand-new Whitewater Park by the brewery. We have this great river running through town and with few access points, it was hardly used. We like to fund projects that bring more people to love the river (also, I'm not too bummed about having some surf waves close by!).

When we built our brewery on a brownfield site in Asheville, North Carolina, we worked with the City and Equinox Environmental



Fort Collins' new whitewater park, two blocks from New Belgium's Brewery. Photo by Evan Stafford

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Katie enjoying some quality time on the Poudre.
Photo by Evan Stafford

to daylight (restore to above ground state) Penland Creek and improve stormwater management practices. Today we help fund water quality monitoring in the area and are funding a take-out next to our brewery. We also give dollars to the local Waterkeeper's canoe camping routes along the French Broad.

AW: What are the main sources of New Belgium's water supply?

In Fort Collins, we source water from the City of Fort Collins, who pull about half their supply out of the Poudre River and the other half out of Horsetooth Reservoir, which is Colorado River water from the Colorado Big Thompson project. The City of Asheville sources its water straight out of the Black Mountains in eastern Buncombe County. At both breweries, we're lucky enough to be the first users of the water as it comes straight out of the mountains.

AW: How much water, on average, does the brewery use in a day? How much for a single can of beer?

It takes about four gallons of water to make one gallon of beer. A quarter of that water goes out in the beer, of course, another quarter goes out with the spent grain or

evaporates, and about half that water goes back to the City who finishes cleaning it and puts it back in the river.

AW: New Belgium and American Whitewater have worked together before; can you tell us a little more about that early partnership?

Through our Skinny Dip campaign, we were lucky enough to link up with American Whitewater 10+ years ago. Most people thought we chose to work with AW because they were the most photogenic for the skinny dipping shots (which is clearly true) but we actually chose them because they were doing good collaborative work to take down the Condit Dam on the White Salmon. Last year we went back there to film Tyler Bradt and Leland Miyawaki for Fat Tire's Finding Common Ground films, and it was a completely different place. It's amazing how resilient rivers can be when we get out of their way. And it wouldn't be possible without passionate and pragmatic people like those at American Whitewater.

AW: What are your current goals for river protection?

We're focused on helping to articulate the business value of healthy, flowing rivers. In

Fort Collins we helped to start up the River District, a group of businesses surrounding the river that stand to benefit from things like the new whitewater park. And we've helped the Brewers Association kick off a study that will help craft brewers across the nation get better connected to their water supplies.

And close to home, we're focusing on the security of our water supplies by lending our business voice to policy advocacy work and by financially supporting the NPOs like American Whitewater that are doing the critical work of protecting the flows and riparian systems of our rivers. We all have to see how we can uniquely contribute to the work, and then together leverage our strengths. We know how to make beer, you know how to protect rivers; we need healthy rivers to make good beer, and most river trips wouldn't be good river trips without a tasty beer. It's all connected.

AW: How do you see a partnership with AW being the most successful?

American Whitewater has a savvy crew that understands delicate local relationships, policy, and data. You all know your strengths and you focus in on them with a good amount of diligence. Even better, the team we're working with in Colorado understands the value of cultivating common ground with diverse and dynamic interests, and collaborates well with stakeholders like the anglers, bird hunters, farmers, and businesses. Plus they are a heck ton of fun, so we're sure to have a good time working together.

As a business, we see our strengths as (1) lending our business voice when it's relevant to policy and stewardship initiatives (AW can help us to curate these opportunities), and then (2) funding the work AW knows how to do with proceeds from our beer sales (Fat Tire and Mountain Time are certified by 1% for the Planet, meaning 1% of our revenue goes to environmentally-focused nonprofits like AW. The more beer you drink, the more \$\$\$ we give!)

AW: How could other beer companies learn from your water advocacy?

A few ideas:

1. Start by getting to know the complexities of your water supplies. This isn't just about sustainability; it's also about business risk like avoiding the impacts of droughts, wildfires, algae blooms, etc. You don't want these kinds of surprises. In some cases, breweries have had to cut back production because of events like these. Keep an eye out for the water risk report coming out from the Brewers Association in 2020. Meanwhile, enter your water data into the BA Benchmarking Tool to see if you're using more or less water than most breweries your size, and check out the water saving ideas in the BA manual. All of these resources have the potential to save you money in the near-term and long-term.

2. Water risks can be completely different from one watershed to another. Start a learning cooperative with other local breweries to learn more about your watershed. We co-founded BreWater in Fort Collins, and by organizing we were able to bring in better speakers from the utility, from the nonprofits, and from the water lords of the West. We meet quarterly to learn about water supply, water quality, watershed risk, etc., and then we tour the host brewery to share ideas around water conservation in brewing.

3. Find one or two nonprofit partners that are doing excellent stewardship work on your water supplies, whether it's a local Waterkeeper or a stellar national NPO

That time AW's Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director Tom O'Keefe skinny dipped to free the Elwha River (WA). Condit Dam was removed a couple of years after this campaign and the river is now a shining example of our success in restoring rivers.

Poster courtesy of New Belgium Brewing Company

like American Whitewater. Donate what you can—beer can help and money is even better!

4. Finally, get to know your city council and your county commissioners and tell them that clean, healthy waterways matter to your business and the quality of your beers.

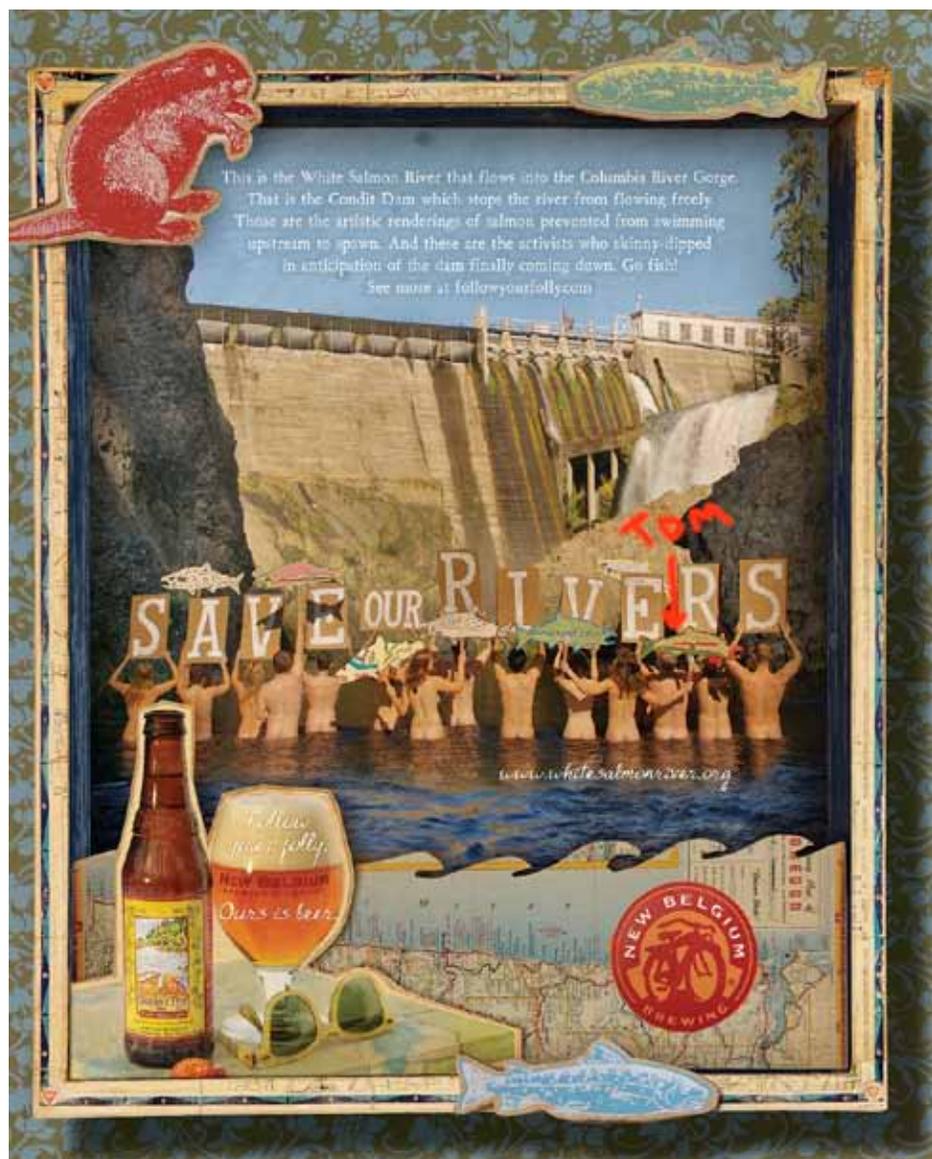
AW: What is your favorite New Belgium beer?

Impossible to pick only one! Mural is the best summertime beer or day drinking beer, I'm having a renaissance appreciation for Fat Tire Amber Ale, and occasionally I

treat myself to a Le Terrior sour beer. Oh and Voodoo Ranger Juicy Haze is always in the rotation.

AW: What is your favorite river or river trip?

Easy answer: my favorite river trip was obviously the Yampa trip with my AW friends, when it was nearly June and it snowed on us the entire time. My clothes still smell like sleet, campfire, and tequila. Never had so much fun with so many miserable people!



WHITEWATER ACCIDENT SUMMARY: JULY – DECEMBER 2019

BY CHARLIE WALBRIDGE

RIVER LEVELS IN many parts of the U.S. were higher than usual for much of the summer, setting the stage for 23 fatal accidents. These break down as follows: eight in kayaks, three in canoes, and 10 in rafts. We also received reports of nine others in “miscellaneous craft,” including six tubers. Colorado had the most deaths with eight, followed by four in Idaho and three in Oregon. Eight of the victims were not wearing life vests; other frequent causes included six strainer pins, five pins on rocks or sieves, three flush drownings, and three deaths at low head dams. Six of the fatalities occurred on one-boat trips, where paddlers had no backup when something went wrong. Six of the victims were under 30, and 10 were over 50, continuing a trend we’ve seen over the past few years. We received several excellent reports from

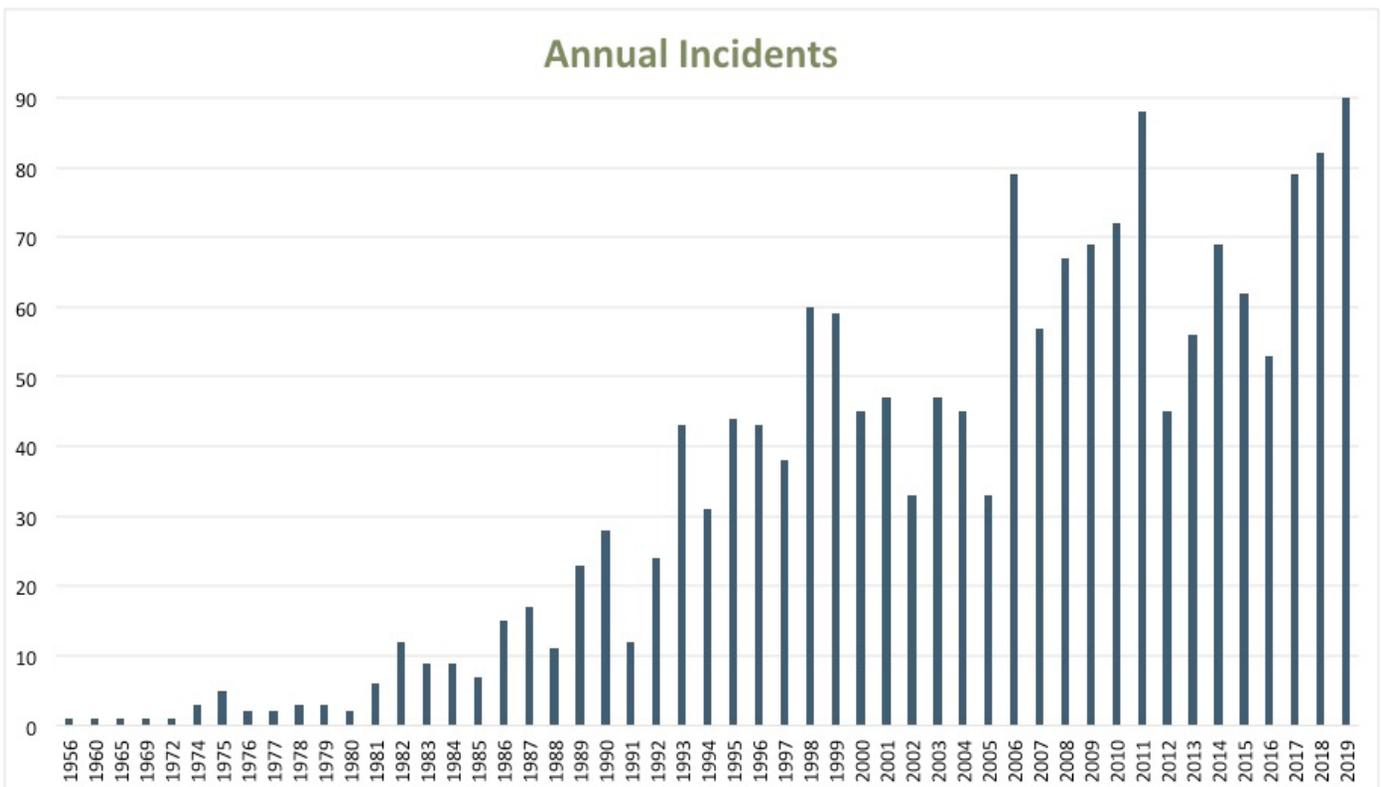
experienced paddlers describing accidents they witnessed. Charlie Duffy’s charts, summarizing trends in accidents since 1956, accompany this article.

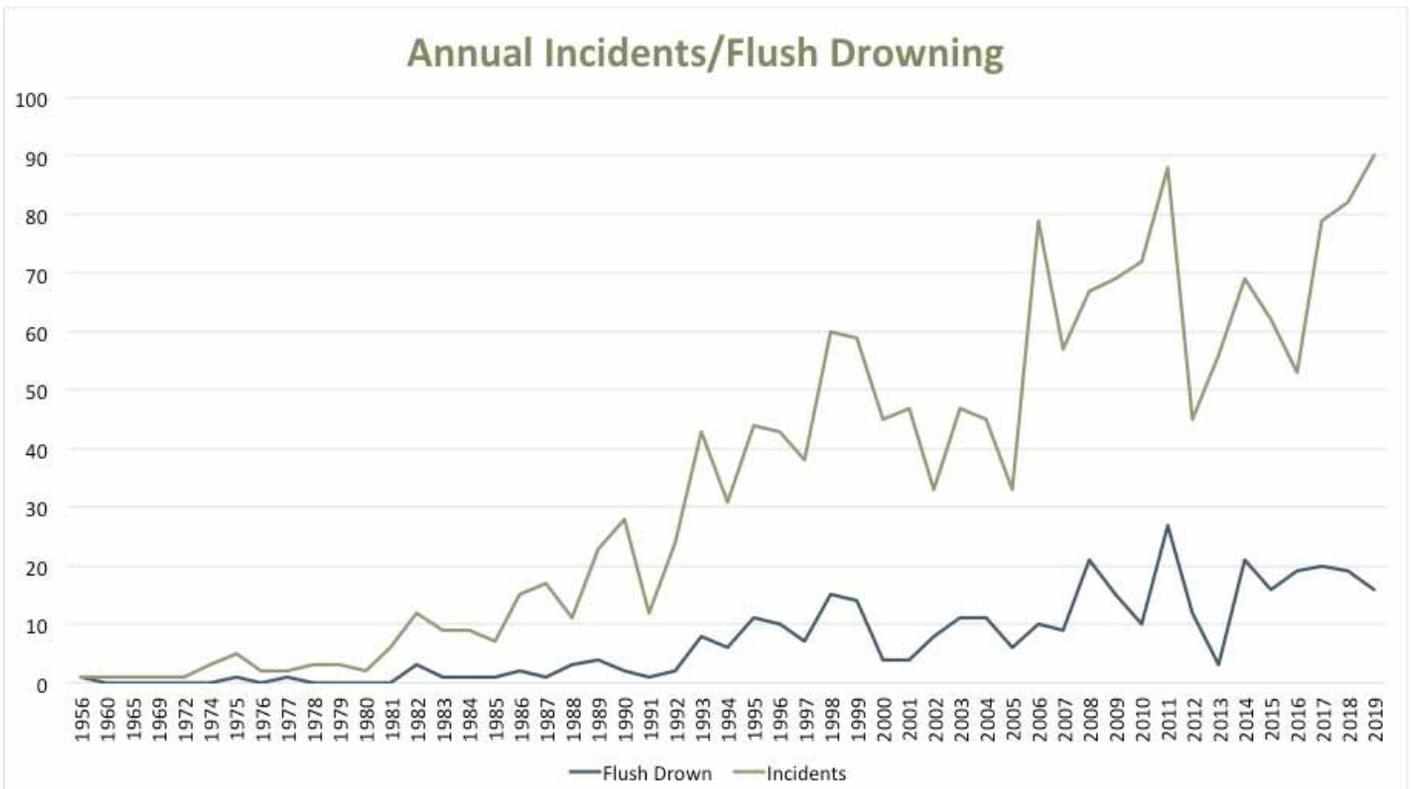
Kayak Fatalities

Three experienced whitewater kayakers died in the second half of 2019. Michael Clevenger, a professional river guide, lost his life on the Potomac River on August 1st. Mr. Clevenger, 32, was patrolling the river and assisting rental tubers floating the “Needles” section near Harper’s Ferry, WV. He was found by another kayaker hung up on a rock upstream of the Route 340 Bridge. The rescuer pulled him free, began CPR, and dialed 911. A serious health problem is the probable cause, and without nearby help he was in desperate trouble.

In December, two accidents claimed the lives of very experienced Southeastern kayakers. On December 1st, three strong paddlers put in on Henderson Creek, a Class V tributary of Richland Creek, north of Chattanooga, TN. Since Henderson Creek was running, water levels in Richland Creek (Class IV) were on the high side. An exchange of messages with Sam Manzer clarified what happened.

The biggest drop on Richland Creek is a Class V-. There is a tight, high-water sneak, but that day it was blocked by a tree. The first paddler through the chute was knocked over by the tree and swam. The second paddler came through clean and started chasing the first paddler’s boat. Andrew Gamble, 31, was running third. He was badly pinned on a rock underneath the log.





The first paddler swam ashore, saw what had happened, and sprinted upstream. He was able to reach Mr. Gamble by crawling out on the log. He pulled as hard as he could until he lost his balance and fell into the river. He ran back up, got onto the log, and made a second attempt, this time working to release the kayak. Finally, the boat and Mr. Gamble came free and washed downstream. In the meantime, a third paddler called 911. Rescue teams found Mr. Gamble's body a mile downstream.

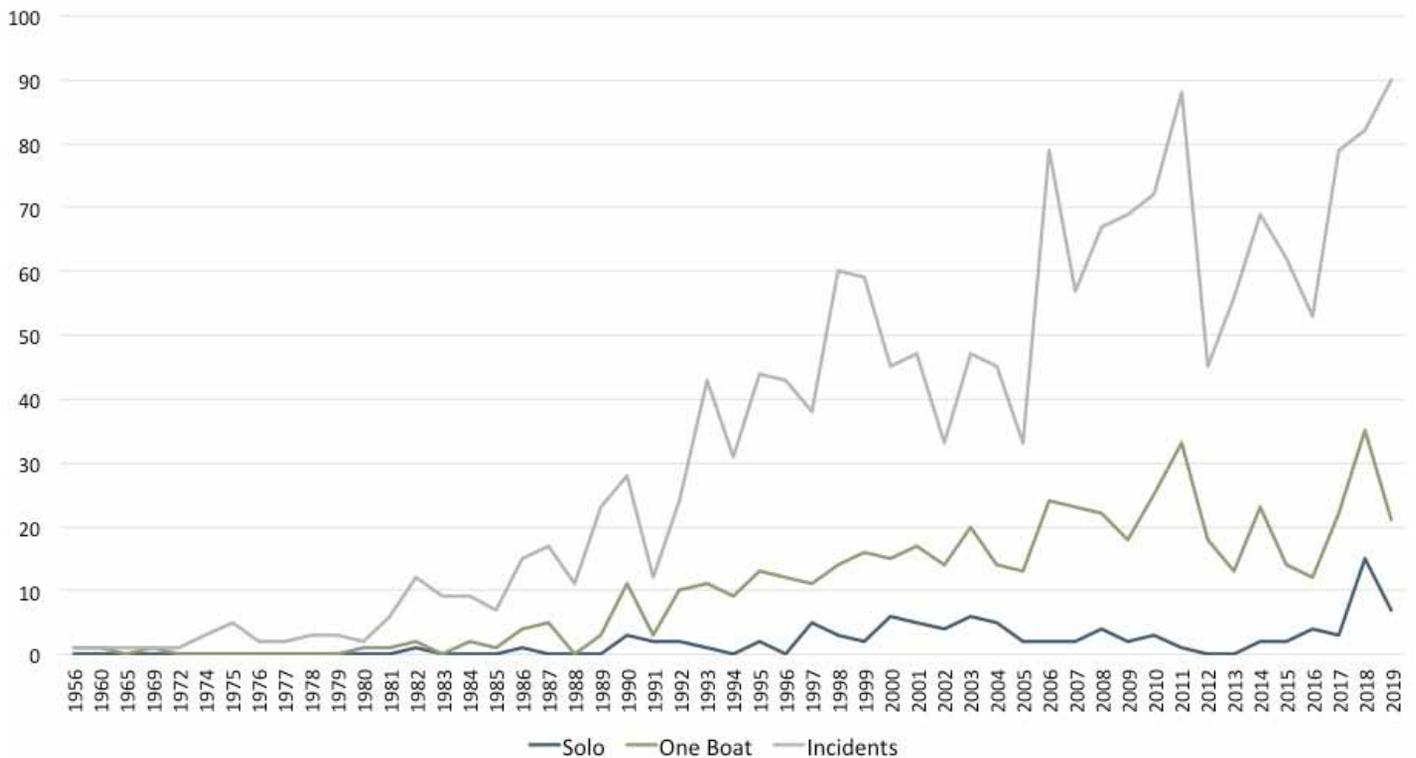
Two weeks later, on December 16th, an experienced group of seven kayakers encountered trouble on Big Laurel Creek near Asheville, NC. They scouted Stairstep, a Class IV with a sieve on the left, and paired first timers with more experienced paddlers. On her run April Morton, 31, drifted left of the main flow, flipping and bailing out just above the sieve. Her boat drifted downstream, but she was caught, head down, with just her foot showing. Here's an account of the rescue from a report prepared by Shaun Mullins:

"Within seconds, I was out of my boat with my throw rope sprinting up the river right rocks.... I had hands on her leg within about 30-40 seconds.... I began pulling up and outward as hard as I possibly could.... She was stuck in the sieve head-first and only her right leg was within reach.... Aaron got on the rock with me and we turned our attention to the eight-inch log that was... blocking the sieve.... Several other boaters have flushed through this spot in the past. Aaron and I lifted, pushed, pulled, and did everything we could to dislodge both April and the log.... I yelled for a rope.... Stuart hit me with a rope immediately, and I quickly made a few wraps around the top of the log.... At least four people were pulling on the rope as hard as they could...but it still would not dislodge. I immediately removed the rope from the log and attached it to the only part of April that I could reach, her lower right leg.... They pulled again as hard as they could, but she did not budge at all.... During this, someone was attempting to make a call to 911.

"Aaron went up to help the others pull on the rope and I stayed at the top of the sieve to continue trying to move that log and grab onto any part of April that I could and pull. I tried in vain to reach her rescue PFD to attach another carabiner/rope, but could never reach deep enough.... Additional kayakers, hikers, etc. had stopped and got involved.... The crew had to resort to using a mechanical advantage (Z-drag) system on the rope.... Once this was set up, the crew pulled and even had to reset the prusiks to make multiple pulls with the Z-drag before April was finally pulled free.... I yelled, "She's out! She's Out".... As she pulled free of the sieve, the log dislodged on its own and drifted downstream. We all jumped into the water and grabbed April.... We dragged her body onto a flat rock just a few feet away on the river left bank and CPR was started immediately.... It took approximately 20 minutes from the time she went under to the time we had her out and were performing CPR.

Assisted by several kayakers who were paramedics, the group performed high

Solo/One Boat Incidents by Year



quality CPR until EMS arrived. Despite their valiant efforts, they could not bring her back. Shaun’s full report is available in the American Whitewater Accident Database.

Four other accidents involved kayakers who were less experienced; one occurred at a low-head dam. Jerrimiah Smiley, 38, was on a multi-day camping trip with a friend on Iowa’s West Nodaway River. On July 5th the pair ran the eight-foot-high City of Clarinda dam. They flipped and swam. Mr. Smiley was retained for some time by the hydraulic. After he washed free, his friend swam him ashore, attempted CPR, and called 911. Emergency personnel took Mr. Smiley to a nearby hospital, where he was declared dead.

A 10-year-old boy died in kayaking accident on Idaho’s South Fork of the Payette River near Lowman on August 13th. Maximus Samuel Hansen was paddling with his family when he washed into a downed tree on a relatively calm stretch of the river. Few

details are available, but we know that the entire family was wearing life vests and the tree had only recently fallen into the river.

On October 26th, a local kayaker running Taos Box on New Mexico’s Rio Grande came across a kayak, two halves of a paddle, and a body lying on shore above Dead Texan Rapid. The dead man, Chris Oswalt, 62, was paddling alone. He apparently encountered trouble, broke his paddle, and swam. He was wearing blue jeans and cowboy boots, with no cold weather or water protection. Cold, hungry, and becoming hypothermic, he attempted to climb out. He fell from the steep eastern wall of the canyon and was killed. Although the water level was extremely low, only 300 cfs, first responders used a small raft to bring his body back to civilization.

Also on October 26th, Alabama’s Little River Canyon was running at 200 cfs, an extremely low level. People familiar with the canyon say that the river is almost unrunnable at

this level. Chip Sizemore, 41, and a friend decided to try it. They were experienced in Class II and III water and were wearing life vests. The river, while mostly shallow and scrapey, narrows down in places to create some surprisingly powerful chutes. A local paddler said that Mr. Sizemore was pinned on a strainer between Road Block and Humpty Dumpty. It took authorities several days to recover his body.

Canoe Fatalities

There were three canoeing deaths in the last six months of 2019. Two were in rented boats and one of these was especially tragic. On July 22nd, a group of seven in two canoes took a trip down Ohio’s Mad River. One of them was an 18-month-old infant. The group was warned to take out at the Route 55 bridge because the section downstream is clogged with strainers. After they missed the take-out, the family hit a strainer and capsized. The baby, Miya Ye, fell from her mother’s lap and was pinned underwater. First responders found the

family stranded on a midstream island. It took several hours to recover the baby.

The Androscoggin River near Bethel, ME was unusually low on August 14th, when a family of three rented a canoe for the “Wilson Rips,” a mix of flat water and easy riffles. Xiaolian Ding, 75, was sitting in the center of the boat when it broached on a rock. As his wife and daughter tried to work the canoe free, it flipped into the current. The two women were washed downstream, but Mr. Ding was trapped underneath the pinned canoe. By the time the women got back to him, it was too late. A witness on the riverbank saw what happened and called 911.

A hunting trip down the Pierre Marquette River in Amber Township, Michigan went bad for a father, son, and brother team in a 19-foot canoe. They hit a log, flipped, and were thrown into fast moving, icy water. They were not wearing life vests. As they washed downstream, the father, Steven Borkowski, 48, became unresponsive. The cause of his death is not clear; cold water shock, laryngospasm, and heart problems can be fatal in cold water, and without a life vest his chances of survival were poor. His two companions pulled him ashore and attempted CPR.

Rafting Fatalities

Colorado saw two flush drownings in early July brought on by high water. On July 1st, a 50-year-old commercial rafting guest died during a long swim on Clear Creek. He was unresponsive when brought ashore and guides could not revive him. Then, on July 5th, five people were thrown from a private raft in the Arkansas River below Salida, CO. Kayakers floating near the raft rescued four of the people, but a fifth was carried some distance downstream. He was unresponsive when pulled ashore by another kayaker.

In other commercial deaths, Anthony Vasi, 47, drowned on July 8th after his raft flipped in Class III Triplet Falls on the Green River near the Colorado-Utah border. Water

levels were moderate. He washed into a tight squeeze between two rocks called “The Birth Canal” and was held underwater. By the time he was pulled free, he was dead. On August 25th Robinson Santos died from a heart attack sustained during a swim on California’s South Fork of the American River. We have few details on the accident, which occurred on “the Gorge” section of the popular river.

A rental raft on the Pennsylvania’s Lower Youghiogheny River encountered serious trouble at Class IV River’s End on September 1st. Peter Quigley, 46, was on a family trip that included eight people in two rafts. One of the rafts hit Whale Rock, and Mr. Quigley fell out the back. He washed under the raft and into the sieve at Snaggletooth Rock. Both legs were shoved into the sieve, and the rest of his body was pushed under water. It’s not clear if he tried to stand up or was pushed there by the force of the current.

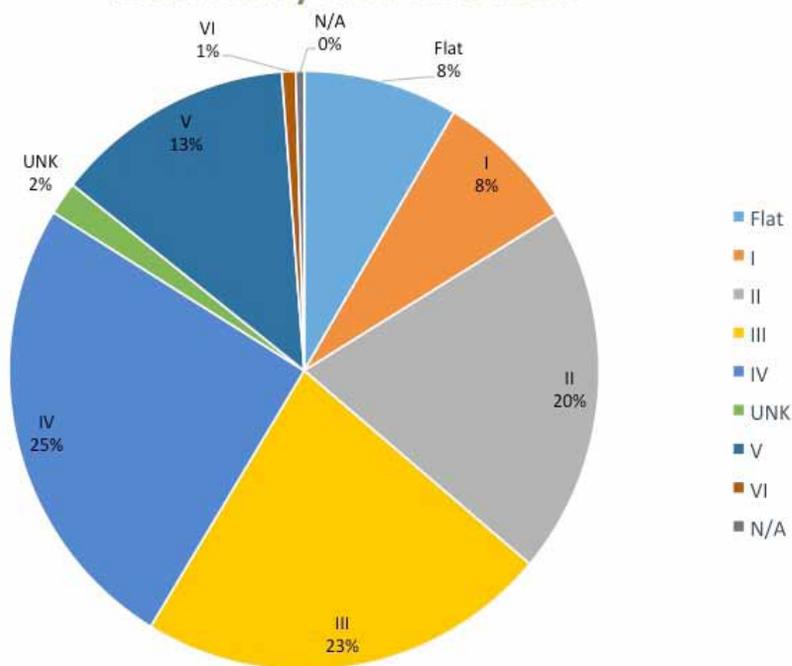
Two more rafting deaths were caused by rope entanglements in fast water. One was a tragic commercial fatality on Tennessee’s

Middle Ocoee River. Yariennys Hernandez, 15, fell out of a commercial raft at Class IV Tablesaw Rapid on July 21st. Her guides pulled her back in the raft quickly, but unbeknownst to them there was a loose rope in the river that had wrapped around her ankle. After the other end of the rope got snagged in the riverbed, Ms. Hernandez was pulled out of the raft again and held underwater. Another unfortunate rope snagging occurred on Oregon’s Rogue River. Dr. Jon Van Valkenburg, 54, was fishing from a raft with his son when he started to retrieve the anchor. He became tangled in the rope and was pulled overboard. He was later found underwater with the rope wrapped around his hand.

There were two more rafting deaths on Southern Idaho’s Payette River. One happened on a stretch of the main Payette that has strong current but no real rapids. It’s a popular float trip. On July 4th, a raft hit a submerged tree and flipped near the Washington Avenue Bridge. All five paddlers were thrown out and two,

...continued on page 50

Incidents by Class Since 1956



AW PARTNERS

\$20,000 - Class V



NEW BELGIUM.

Fat Tire

EST. COLORADO U.S.A. 1991

\$15,000 - Class IV



\$10,000 - Class III

YAKIMA

NRS



\$7,500 - Class II



\$5,000 - Boof



WERNER



\$2,500 - Wave



*Leave a lasting legacy to the
special places that made
a difference in your life.*

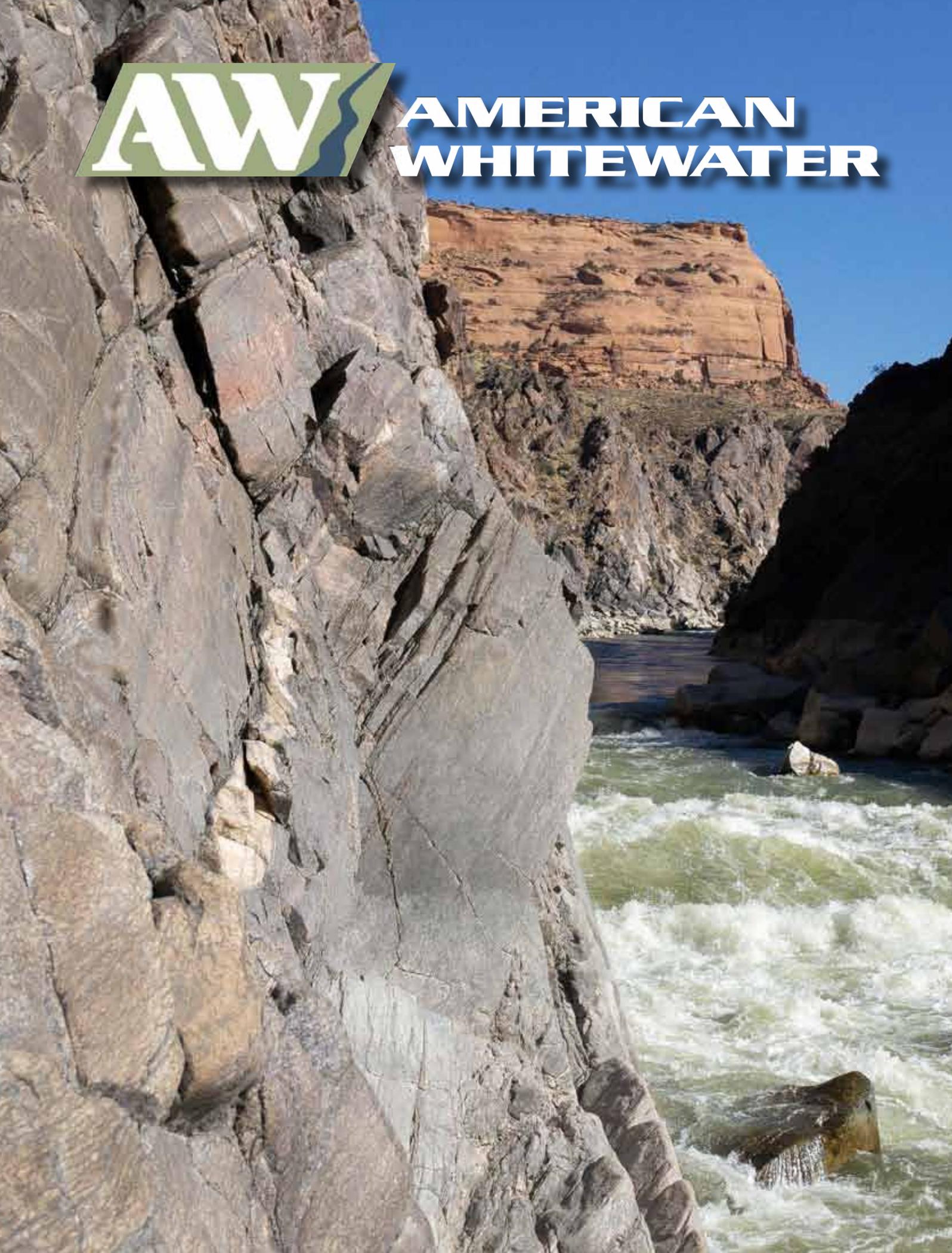


Become a member of the American Whitewater Enduring Rivers Circle, created exclusively to honor and recognize people who have helped to continue our river stewardship efforts through a gift to American Whitewater in their estate plans.

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



AMERICAN WHITEWATER



The Strength of Our Voice is Your Membership

Standard w/AW Journal	\$35
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Explorer w/Watershed Bag	\$500
Lifetime w/KEEN Shoes	\$1,000
Steward w/\$400 Kokatat Gift	\$2,500



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SAFETY

Misty Martin and Holly Reed, were caught underwater. Bystanders were able to free the two women, begin CPR, and call for help. Ms. Reed was taken by air ambulance to a Boise hospital and survived; Ms. Martin, 44, did not.

The South Fork of the Payette's "Canyon Run" has lots of fun Class III-IV rapids and a huge drop, Big Falls, which is almost always carried. The water level was moderate, and the eddy, while not huge, was very catchable. On July 12th, a three-raft trip approached the falls. Two rafts were able to pull over, but one, carrying three men, washed over the falls and flipped. Two of the rafters survived, but Kenneth J. Evans, 27, drowned. His body was located soon afterwards.

Miscellaneous Boats

Several other types of boats were involved in moving water fatalities. On July 7th Ricky Vaanstra, 59, was fishing from a motorboat in the tailwaters of a dam on Iowa's Cedar River near Palisades State Park. He was not using a PFD. The boat apparently got too close to the dam and started rocking violently. Mr. Vaanstra was thrown into the water and never resurfaced. Although witnesses called for help, his body was not recovered for three days.

Another fatality involved a paddleboard in an area with swift tidal currents. On August 3rd, Lisa Margaritis, 28, was instructing a paddleboard yoga class on Hashamomuck Pond on Long Island, New York. As the tide went out a woman was being carried by fast water under the Long Island Railroad Bridge. When Ms. Margaritis tried to help, her paddleboard pinned against a bridge piling and she fell off. Because she was tethered to the board, she couldn't free herself and hung helplessly in the current. A passing jogger jumped in and freed the pinned board, and paramedics responded. She was later taken to a nearby hospital where she was pronounced dead.

Wyoming's Snake River near Jackson Hole is a popular place to fish. The rapids are easy and straightforward, but the current

is very powerful. On August 24th, a family was fly-fishing from a drift boat. No one was wearing a life vest when they tried to run a Class I chute under a highway bridge. Someone told them stay left to avoid a wave, but they went too far left, hit a rock, and flipped. George Roulhac, 69, and two other men washed out downstream. They seemed to be doing fine until Mr. Roulhac got close enough to shore to stand up. Suddenly he was seen floating face down! They quickly pulled him ashore and began CPR, but were not successful. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Six inner tubing deaths occurred out West: on the Willamette and Deschutes in Oregon, the Poudre, South Platte, and

Clear Creek in Colorado, and the South Fork of the Boise in Idaho. In three cases, the absence of life vests was mentioned in news reports; I expect that the actual number was higher. Two of the accidents were strainer pins; another was a recirculation at a low head dam. Life vests would not have helped much in either type of case. Tubing accidents are often considered swimming accidents and are vastly underreported. Tubes are only suited for mild whitewater, and PFDs should always be used.

Close Calls and Injuries

We received reports of a number of close calls in the last six months. On July 8th, several rescue squads training on the Susquehanna River went to the aid of three

ACCIDENT REPORTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

When I started collecting accident reports in the late 70s, the information arrived by regular mail or phone and reports took weeks to prepare. This shifted to email in the '90s, and today most reports arrive via Facebook. Social media allows for fast communication and often produces good leads quickly. I usually post new information, including newspaper accounts and rumors, on my Facebook page. The idea is to confirm the details and get in contact with the people who were actually there. It has worked pretty well, but this year there were unexpected problems.

A few hours after the tragic death on Big Laurel Creek, a well-written report came in from a paddler who was also a paramedic. He had been at the scene and helped with CPR. I'd never received a first-hand account so quickly, and I posted it on Facebook without considering the timing.

The report did not give a name, but identified the deceased kayaker as an experienced woman who had recently paddled in Costa Rica. Unfortunately, he didn't realize that she was part of a group of local women who had recently paddled in Costa Rica together! This report unleashed a flurry of phone calls between these women and their friends to find out who had died. Several had been on the Big Laurel trip and were still at the hospital or had just returned home. This made a bad day even worse, and I want to apologize for not waiting longer before putting the report on line. I will be more careful of timing in the future.

After some discussion, a member of their group prepared a report, excerpts of which are in this article. These accounts are not easy to write, but they honor the one who died by providing useful lessons to the rest of us. This fast, smart, and untiring rescue is a useful model for any of us faced with a similar situation. Many people have told me that reports like this come to mind suddenly in difficult situations. I hope that they will continue to be helpful to the paddling community.

kayakers who ignored warning buoys and verbal warnings and ran the Dock Street dam in Harrisburg, PA. This dangerous low-head dam has claimed 30 lives in the past 80 years. The stakes went up when a crew of three first responders got caught in the backwash and needed rescue themselves! Fortunately, there was enough manpower present to get everyone to safety.

A man was injured on July 9th after swimming over the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. It was apparently an attempted suicide. He climbed a retaining wall, jumped in, and dropped 188 feet! Officers found him below the falls sitting on rocks near the water. He was taken to the hospital with minor injuries.

Two Boy Scout troops were rescued after an ill-fated river trip in homemade canoes ended a few miles from the boat launch. More than 20 Scouts and their leaders set off from Utah's Green River State Park on July 10th in canoes fashioned from PVC pipe and plastic tarps. They planned to go 67 miles downstream, but their trip ended after just four miles. One of the scouts hiked out to a farm and asked for help. Sherriff's deputies launched boats and over the next three hours picked up the other Scouts, who were spread out over miles of river.

Six men in a rental raft are lucky to be alive after missing the take-out for Pennsylvania's Class II Middle Youghiogeny River. The river was running high at five feet (4000 cfs) as they paddled past several warning signs and headed for Ohiopyle Falls! Fortunately, they ran the 20-foot drop on the far right side, which most people agree is the only feasible route. The boat disappeared in the huge hole below, flipped violently, and threw everyone into the water. Although badly manhandled, they all washed out uninjured. The run was captured on video and shown on several network news shows. To see it, go to Youtube and search for "Ohiopyle Falls Raft Rescue."

A July 24th "Rafting Gone Wild" event on the American River in Sacramento, CA put thousands of people on the water. There are no rapids here, but the current is fast enough to cause problems. Sacramento firefighters rescued over 30 people, most of whom were riding pool toys. Many floaters were not wearing life vests. One 20-person rescue started when a raft snagged on a strainer and three of the four occupants fell in the water. Two passing rafts tried to help but ended up getting stuck, too! In the end, there were no serious injuries.

A group of six experienced class V kayakers encountered trouble on California's East Fork of the Kaweah on July 24th. A paddler was pinned under water in a narrow gorge. Two paddlers got out to the pinned kayak. As they tried to release the boat, the trapped paddler, pinned underwater for 45 seconds, was able to wiggle out of the skirt tunnel while the sprayskirt stayed attached to the boat. He is convinced that if he had been wearing webbing around his waist, over the sprayskirt, he would not have escaped. His boat was pinned for another 45 minutes. There was a similar incident on the Middle Fork of the Kings on August 14th. A man was pinned on a strainer in a narrow gorge and shoved underwater. He could not release his sprayskirt because the strainer was in the way, but he was able to squeeze out of the waistband. He said he remembered what he'd heard about the previous incident as he struggled to get free.

On September 21st, a husband and wife team had a real scare on the Class II Violet's Lock section of the Potomac River in Maryland. The woman, 66, pinned on a log in a tight chute. As the pair struggled to deal with the situation, her boat flipped, and her head went under. Her husband jumped into the river, got her free, and they washed downstream 200 yards before he could pull her onto a midstream rock. She'd inhaled a lot of water. She was breathing, but was otherwise unresponsive. A paddler hiking nearby dialed 911, and Montgomery County, MD EMS sent two motorized

inflatables. They administered oxygen and took her to a large mid-river rock where a helicopter could land. She was conscious and breathing as she was taken to the hospital for observation.

Lastly, there was a close call on October 5th at Fist Rapid on western Virginia's Russell Fork River. Matthew Smith squirted out of a hole, hit the notoriously undercut Fist Rock, and was pushed underneath it. For a thorough recap of the event by Mr. Smith, read the article starting on pg. 40 of the 2020 Winter edition of the *American Whitewater Journal*. Mr. Smith feels that Fist has changed in the last few years, becoming more dangerous.

You Can Help!

American Whitewater needs *your* help gathering accident reports to share with other paddlers. Please share first person accounts, newspaper articles, and on-line posts. Since many media articles are inaccurate or incomplete, clarifying comments from paddlers familiar with the area are very useful. Although serious incidents involving skilled whitewater paddlers are quite rare, they teach us how to us to avoid trouble and better manage emergencies. Accurate accounts of accidents also keep malicious rumors at bay, something to consider in this age of Internet gossip. We're also very interested in accounts of successful rescues.

To share reports of whitewater accidents, near misses, or serious injuries go to the Safety page at americanwhitewater.org, click "report an accident," and enter the information. Or email ccwalbridge@cs.com or message "Charlie Walbridge" on Facebook. Feel free to share newspaper articles, chat room posts, or even rumors! I'm not an "investigator," but I will often run down sketchy reports to find out what happened. I can also help you prepare an accident report if needed.

AFFILIATE CLUBS

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY BETHANY OVERFIELD

American Whitewater's original purpose since 1954 has included distribution of information among its Affiliate Clubs. We have over 100 current AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf; if you don't belong to a club, consider joining one.

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

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

An Affiliate Club that is already being recognized as an AW Lifetime member is recognized in the annual Honor Roll as a Lifetime member. They do need to contribute either at the \$100 or the \$400 level annually to be recognized as an Affiliate Club in the AW Journal and under the Affiliate Club heading of the published Honor Roll. Is your club missing from this list? It might have expired. Contact me at membership@americanwhitewater.org to square your club membership away!

Supporting Affiliate Clubs

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

California

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers, San Jose

Colorado

Colorado Whitewater Assn, Denver
Dolores River Boating Advocates, Dolores

Georgia

Georgia Canoeing Association Inc, Winston

Kentucky

Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

New Jersey

KCCNY, Flanders

Ohio

Keelhaulers, Cleveland

Oregon

Oregon Whitewater Association, Tigard

South Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Washington

Washington Recreational River Runners,
Renton

Affiliate Club by State

Alaska

Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

Coosa River Paddling Club, Wetumpka
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Placerville
River City Whitewater Club, Sacramento
Shasta Paddlers, Redding
Smith River Alliance, Crescent City

Colorado

Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
High Country River Rafters, Wheat Ridge
Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center, Buena Vista
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club,
Longmont
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Asso, Glenwood
Springs
Western Colorado University Whitewater Club,
Gunnison

Connecticut

Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq, Lakeville

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg
Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

Kentucky

Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington

Maryland

Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club, Baltimore

Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston
Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont

Minnesota

Rapids Riders, Eagan

Missouri

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

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover
New England Canoe and Kayak Association,
Contoocook

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club of New Mexico,
Albuquerque

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
Outdoor Education/Base Camp, Hamilton
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Machias

North Carolina

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

Ohio

Friends of the Crooked River, Akron

Oregon

Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Northwest Rafters Association, Roseburg
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Centre County, Lemont
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Keystone Canoe Club, Mertztown

Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Mach One Slalom Team, State College
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Bridgeville

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Canoe and Kayak Association,
Hope Valley

Tennessee

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

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

Utah

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia

Canoe Cruisers Association, Middlebury
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Sandy Hook

Washington

Northwest Whitewater Association, Spokane
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
The Mountaineers, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle

Washington, DC

Canoe Cruisers Association

West Virginia

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

Wisconsin

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

Wyoming

American Packrafting Association, Wilson

Quebec

Montreal Kayak Club, Montreal

Ontario

Guelph Kayak Club, Elora
Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, The Kawarthas
Ontario Voyageurs Kayak Club, Otonabee

National

Team River Runner++

DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

AW offers a discounted Affiliate Club membership of \$25, a \$10 savings. If you are renewing your AW membership or joining as a new member, select the Affiliate Club Discounted Personal Membership online at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/> Or, if you are renewing or joining by mail or telephone just mention the name of the Affiliate Club you belong to and you can take advantage of the \$25 membership.

A list of AW Affiliate Clubs can be found on our website at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/>. If you do not see your Club listed here please encourage them to renew their Club membership or to join AW as a new Affiliate Club. Your Club's membership and your personal membership enable our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. When you join or renew your membership your support is helping to meet the many challenges whitewater rivers face.

If you have any questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please contact me. I can be reached at 866_BOAT-4AW or membership@americanwhitewater.org.

JOIN AMERICAN WHITEWATER AS A CLUB AFFILIATE!

10 REASONS TO JOIN AW AS AN AFFILIATE CLUB

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

For more information, contact Bethany Overfield at membership@americanwhitewater.org or sign-up on line at www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.

AW AMERICAN WHITewater

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