



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
Mar/Apr 2022

Studying and Planning for Returning Rapids on the Colorado River

PACKRAFTING SIN FRONTERAS ON THE
U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

A KAYAK FOR EVERY
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AMERICAN WHITewater

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal Mar/Apr 2022 – Volume 62 – Issue 2

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The Returning Rapids project asks important questions as it becomes clearer that a full Lake Powell is out of reach. Who manages the returning river below Cataract Canyon (UT) and access to it? How should we protect the restored Colorado River and its side canyons? Is the deposited lake sediment potentially dangerous? The Returning Rapids project aims to paint a picture of what is happening and how quickly things are changing. Pictured: The runout to latest rapid uncovered, Gypsum.
PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD

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PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished

through direct participation in public decision-making processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

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

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

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

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

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

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

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THE JOURNEY AHEAD



Mark made the van his office at an early age, seen here as he reads the news on a family canoe trip while his brothers kibitz.

THERE WAS A time in my life when, after the ski season, I would load up the VW bus and head out to explore our public lands and waters. Once the snow melted, it was all about paddling, river trips, windsurfing, more skiing, and generally getting lost in wide-open spaces. In those years I consumed bad truck stop coffee and drank cheap beer; I loved it! Reluctantly, I began masquerading as a semi-adult in my mid-thirties when I took my first year-round full-time job.

I've been one of the lucky ones, with a career in the outdoor industry that I've loved even if I'm still trying to figure out what it is I want to be when I grow up. My past 18 years at American Whitewater have been like getting to know a giant river wave. First getting hammered trying to break through the eddy wall, then eventually finding the shoulder to surf, and finally figuring out where the sweet spot is and carving it up. These years have been good for American Whitewater as well; it grew from a struggling organization that was just trying to keep the lights on to what it is today with a professional staff of highly respected river advocates and a solid track record of impressive outcomes.

American Whitewater is in a remarkable position right now, by any measurement the organization is stronger than it has ever been, and there is a remarkable staff team in place. The bench strength of the AW team runs deep. The right time for a leadership transition is when an organization is at the top of its game, and American Whitewater is clearly there. At the end of June, I plan to transition out of the executive director role. This provides the AW Board with a long enough runway to find the next person to

sit in the leadership chair. I will be working closely with the board to make this a smooth and thoughtful transition. The job of the executive director is both challenging and highly rewarding. For the right person, it is a dream job.

I'll be honest, there are parts of the job I am really going to miss; working with the staff is high on that list. One of the things I've stressed in my communication with the board is the first question to answer is not, "Who can replace Mark?" but rather, "How do we keep this remarkable team of staff together?". From there, the replacement question comes into focus. By any measure, American Whitewater is truly standing on a summit right now in terms of financial, stewardship mission focus/success, staff retention, engagement/membership, and communication on all platforms (Journal/social/web). There may be taller summits in this mountain range and I hope a new leader can guide AW there.

In the meantime, you'll find me in a van down by the river. I've come full circle and it's been a remarkable journey so far. One day I may even know what I want to be when I grow up.

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

STEWARDSHIP

BOARD STATEMENT

BY AW BOARD



AW Staff and Board (with a few folks not present) on a recent Cataract Canyon trip in 2021.

AFTER 18 YEARS of excellent leadership, Mark Singleton is stepping down from his position as Executive Director of American Whitewater. Although we are sad to see Mark go, we support his decision to take the time to catch an eddy after such a long and fruitful run. We look forward to the opportunities this transition will bring and we are grateful for the assistance Mark will provide in onboarding a new Director. We are excited to see what Mark and his family will do with their newfound free time.

Under Mark's leadership, American Whitewater has experienced substantial and sustainable growth, with lasting benefits for our whitewater community. Robust Stewardship Programs exist across the country, the Safety Program and Whitewater Inventory Database are providing invaluable resources, and membership is at an all-time high. Despite the challenges of a global pandemic, American Whitewater is as strong as it has ever been. All of this makes the organization well-positioned to achieve a smooth transition.

We have the utmost confidence in the team that Mark amassed to continue their work in protecting, restoring, and facilitating enjoyment of our whitewater rivers. We will work diligently to find an Executive Director who captures the spirit of the organization, is committed to growing a diverse and inclusive membership, and can manage a strong team.

AW AMERICAN WHITewater

Contribute your text and photos to *American Whitewater*

American Whitewater is a member-driven publication. If you enjoy reading it, please consider letting its pages tell your story. We are looking for articles about whitewater rivers of any variety, so let your imagination flow free!

We're always accepting submissions and we hope you'll consider contributing. For complete submission details, story topics, deadlines, and guidelines, go to:

americanwhitewater.org > Library > AW Journal



NEARLY 100 MILES OF WHITEWATER RE-OPENED IN FAR NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

By SCOTT HARDING

ON FEBRUARY 1, 2022, in far northern California, the Shasta-Trinity National Forest re-opened public access to nearly 100 miles of whitewater runs on six different rivers that had been closed since last summer's wildfires. American Whitewater advocated for the re-opening of these rivers, and we thank District Rangers Tara Jones and Chris Losi for meeting with us and for recommending that the Forest Supervisor re-open the rivers and the surrounding 395,000 acres of National Forest land. These rivers and land had been closed to all public access since early August 2021. Scroll down to see a full list of re-opened rivers.

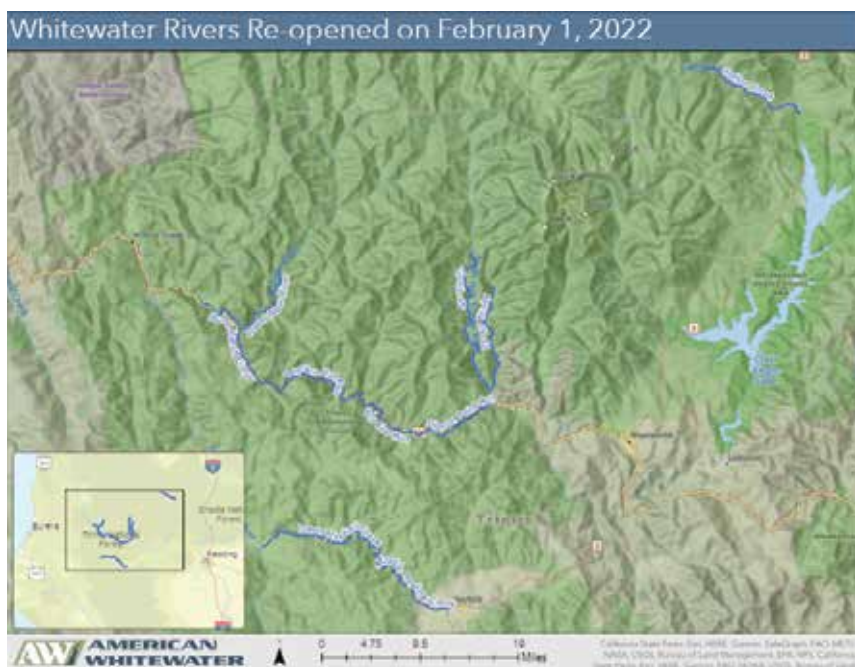
The 11 newly re-opened whitewater runs range from a wilderness hike-in packraft run to classic Trinity Alps creeks to the most popular roadside runs in northwest California and range in difficulty from Class II through V+. All of the rivers are in the Trinity River system, a tributary to the larger Klamath River, and includes 30 miles of the Trinity River itself. A significant part of the local economy depends upon whitewater rafting and other outdoor recreation in the national forest, and the area is used by local residents and indigenous people for a variety of purposes.

This area of the Klamath Mountains, halfway between Redding, CA, and the Pacific Ocean, was simultaneously impacted by the Monument Fire and the River Complex, both of which were ignited by lightning in late July 2021 and grew to become the 14th and 16th largest wildfires in California history. The two fires nearly merged in the headwaters of the North Fork Trinity River, and together they spanned a north-south distance of 78 miles. The tiny riverside town of Big Flat sustained considerable damage, including the loss of a whitewater outfitter.

As is typically the case, the fires burned at lower intensity along creeks and rivers than on the steep slopes and mountains above. For example, 16% of the area burned in the 226,000-acre Monument Fire has high severity fire effects (all trees killed) while the riparian area along whitewater runs affected by the fire typically have less than 2% high severity effects.

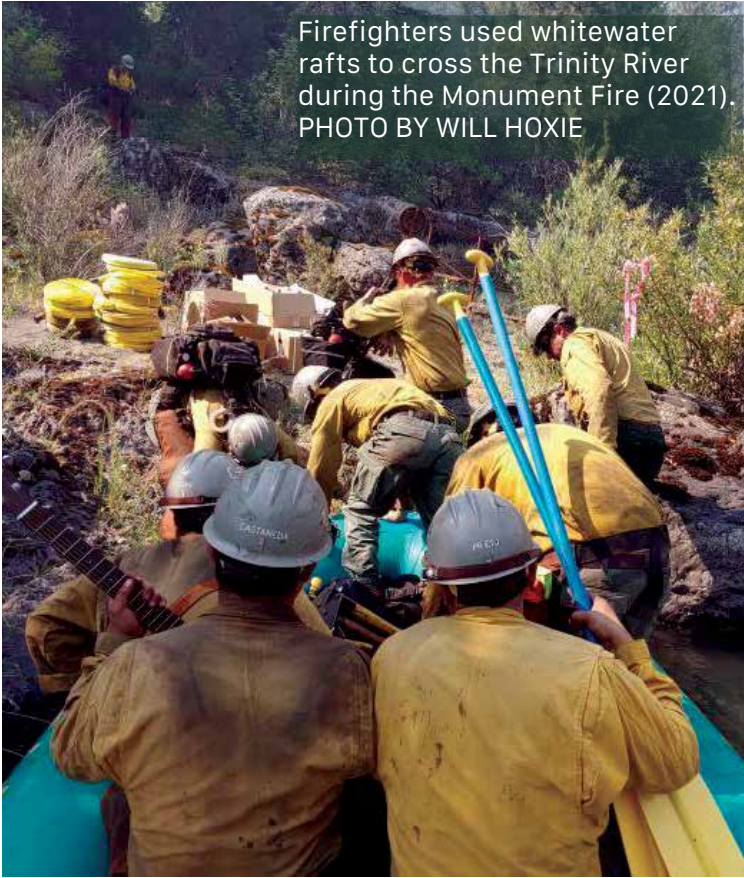
The exception to this is Coffee Creek, a 9.7-mile continuous whitewater run that burned at high intensity in the River Complex and has nearly 33% high severity fire effects along the creek. The nearby town of the same name was heavily damaged in the fire, and fall rains triggered debris flows that have clogged Coffee Creek with logs and rocks, making it essentially unrunnable for the time being. Although it is now open to the public, it is wise to skip this run until the situation stabilizes in the coming years.

For a detailed look at fire effects data for these rivers, see American Whitewater's interactive Monument Fire and River Complex river map. We use this fire severity data and GIS mapping tools to analyze rivers after fires and advocate for sensible re-openings of closed rivers based on current data and on-the-ground information.



Map of re-opened rivers on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. American Whitewater uses GIS mapping and analysis as part of its work to address wildfire closures.

Firefighters used whitewater rafts to cross the Trinity River during the Monument Fire (2021). PHOTO BY WILL HOXIE



Wildfire-related public land and river closures are now commonplace. While land management agencies lift most closures within a reasonable time following a fire, other closures are long duration, even when the rivers and land are safe to access. This is the case on the Middle Fork Feather River (Plumas National Forest, California) and the Clackamas River (Mt. Hood National Forest, Oregon). We are continuing our data-driven advocacy work to re-open these iconic Wild and Scenic rivers to the public.

RE-OPENED WHITEWATER RUNS

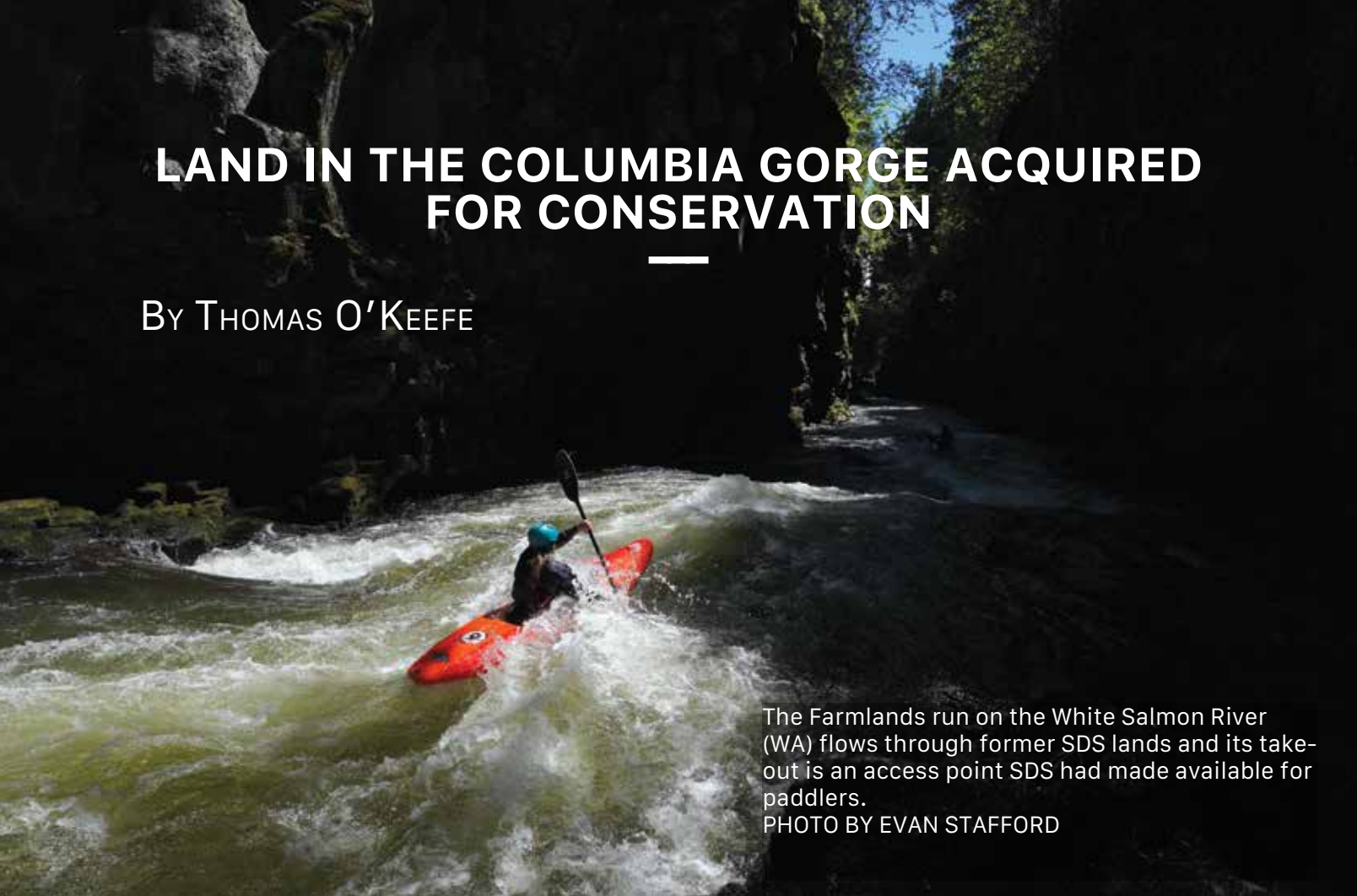
- Coffee Creek (NF Confluence to Hwy 3) *contains significant hazards
- EF NF Trinity (Todd’s Cabin Run)
- NF Trinity (Wilderness Run)
- NF Trinity (Hobo Gulch to EF NF)
- Trinity (Pigeon Point, Big Flat, & Hayden Flat runs)
- Trinity (Burnt Ranch Gorge)
- New (Lower Gorge)
- Hayfork Creek (Middle Run)
- Hayfork Creek (Lower Gorge)

Showerhead Falls on the Burnt Ranch Gorge of the Trinity River. PHOTO BY SCOTT HARDING



LAND IN THE COLUMBIA GORGE ACQUIRED FOR CONSERVATION

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE



The Farmlands run on the White Salmon River (WA) flows through former SDS lands and its take-out is an access point SDS had made available for paddlers.

PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD

IN SEPTEMBER 2020 SDS Lumber Company, the largest private landowner in the White Salmon River watershed, announced that it was reconfiguring its board for purposes of evaluating the company's options, "including a sale of the mill and timberland businesses." While the company said they would "seek to balance the interests of shareholders, employees, and the community" in any possible sale, it was unclear what the future would hold for 101,000 acres of private timberland that includes portions of the watersheds of the White Salmon, Little White Salmon, Klickitat, and Hood rivers.

These river systems originate on the southern foothills of Mt. Adams and the northern foothills of Mt. Hood and flow into the Columbia River. They have hydrological regimes that are unique to young volcanic landscapes. The young, sponge-like basalt deposits in the headwaters of these river systems capture seasonal precipitation and slowly release the water throughout the year, supplying the perennial flow of cold, clean water that is essential for climate resilience and the future of salmonids in the mid-Columbia, providing truly world-class whitewater recreation, and serving irrigation needs. The connectivity of these aquifers to the land surface makes for relatively fast recharge, but also makes these water supplies extremely vulnerable to contamination, as well as depletion resulting from development, forest conversion, and increased evapotranspiration resulting from accelerated timber harvest cycles.

As whitewater paddlers know, the unique hydrology and favorable climate of the White Salmon and Little White Salmon provide a long paddling season with big waterfalls and powerful rapids that challenge expert boaters, while other sections are suitable for intermediate paddlers, instruction, and guided raft trips that represent a significant component of the local economy. The river community has accessed these resources through private timberlands and the forests lining the gorges create the scenic landscape that is part of the overall experience of these Pacific Northwest classics.

Paddlers have only discovered these rivers in relatively recent history, however. The indigenous people represented by the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakama Nation have lived on the lands along these rivers since the beginning of time. They lived, foraged, and stewarded the entire land base, from the lowlands around the Columbia River to the snow-peaked Cascade Mountains. Territory Lands ceded to the federal government during the 1855 Treaty signing included over 12 million acres of land. A 1,130,000-acre Reservation was reserved by the Yakama Nation in a treaty signed in 1855 by Gov. Isaac Stevens of Washington, but the Yakama

Nation retained treaty rights throughout their ceded lands; their leadership has been important for many conservation victories including the removal of Condit Dam and restoration of the White Salmon River.

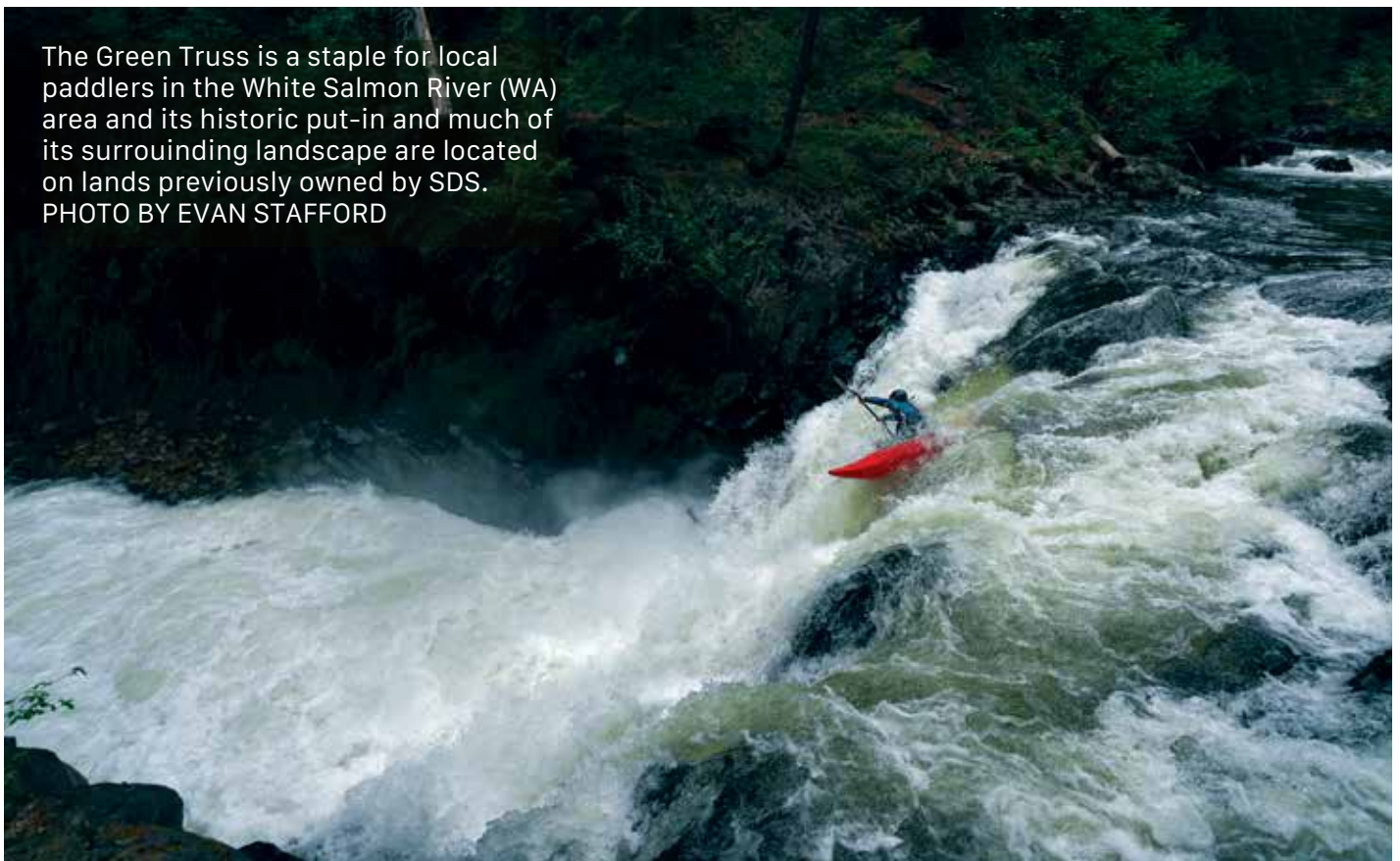
As was the case with other communities who value this landscape, the whitewater paddling community quickly recognized that future conversion and development of these lands, or transfer to a new timber company less friendly to public access, could result in impacts to instream flows and salmon habitat, development along the gorge rim, loss of access to spectacular runs like the Green Truss run, and overall degradation of the experience that makes these rivers so special.

With some great local leadership from our community, American Whitewater jumped into action and formed partnerships with Columbia Land Trust and The Conservation Fund, who pursued protection of the entire ownership and acquisition of the lands with the highest conservation value. While we were not directly involved in the transaction, we were thrilled to receive word from our partners in November 2021 that their efforts were successful. The enthusiasm of the local community for the conservation of these lands was instrumental in giving our partners the confidence to put in a strong bid for acquisition. The Conservation Fund

purchased 35,000 acres and will work with local partners to conserve these and additional timberlands including the 61,000 acres acquired by Twin Creeks Timber that will be managed by Green Diamond Management Company. Wilkins, Kaiser & Olsen, Inc. (WKO) acquired and will continue to operate the Bingen mills under the SDS Lumber name. While much of the White Salmon riverfront, including the put-in and start of the Green Truss run, was included in the lands The Conservation Fund acquired, some parcels have remained in family ownership including several along the shoreline of the White Salmon River within the Wild and Scenic River corridor downstream of BZ. We will continue to seek their full protection.

Of the many outcomes that could have occurred when outside investors control the fate of sensitive natural resources, we are pleased to have landowners and partners who understand the unique value of the White Salmon River. Whitewater paddlers live in the community and travel from around the world to experience this spectacular piece of whitewater. It is important for the community to understand that The Conservation Fund does not intend to be the long-term owner as they seek to implement a plan for long-term conservation management under a future owner. We have time to fundraise, develop, and implement a range of permanent conservation strategies with local partners that will

The Green Truss is a staple for local paddlers in the White Salmon River (WA) area and its historic put-in and much of its surrounding landscape are located on lands previously owned by SDS.
PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD



STEWARDSHIP

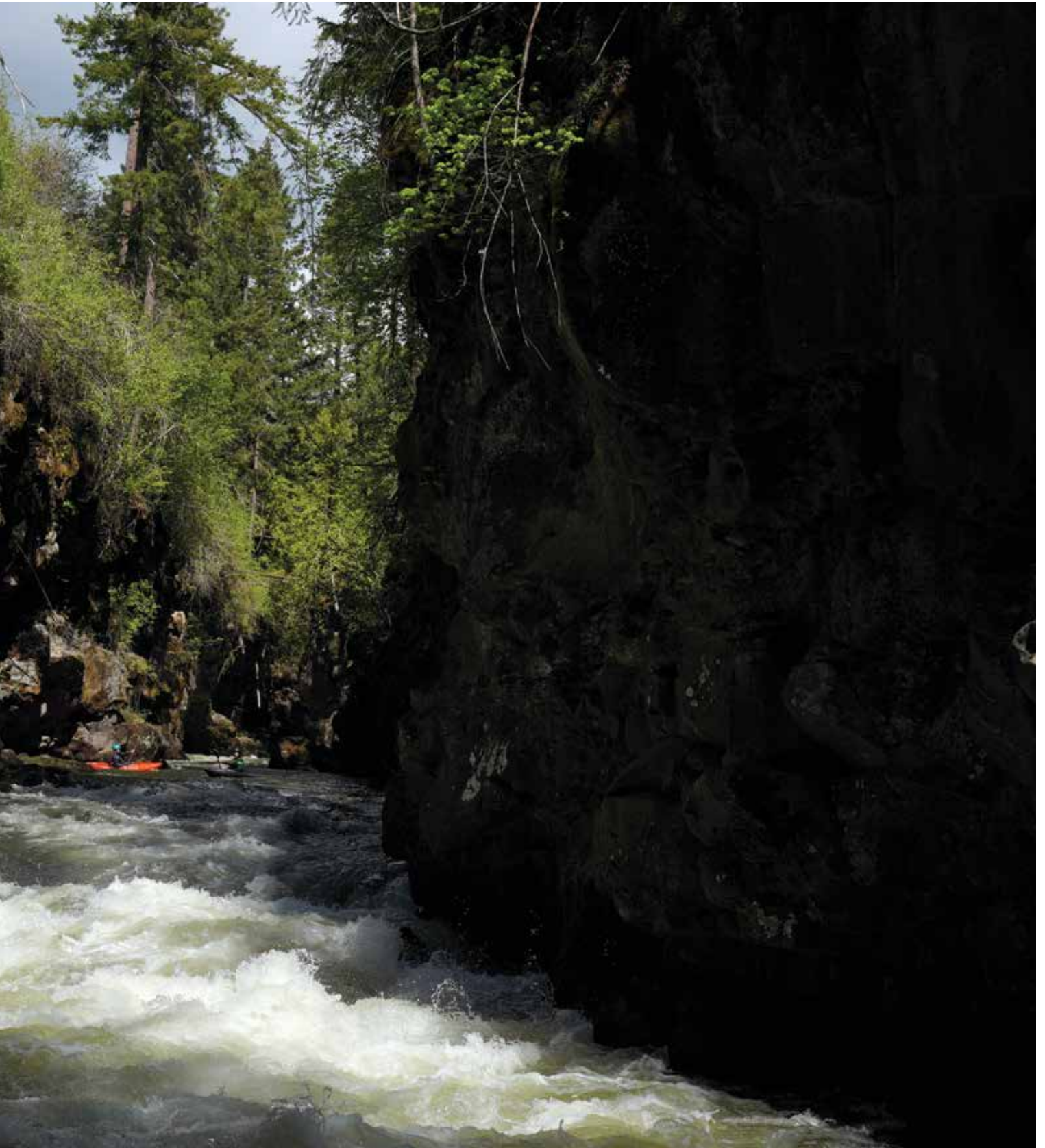
seek to secure public recreational access, ensure sustainable timber harvesting, and preserve the natural, climate, and community values of the land. We anticipate that Columbia Land Trust will be a leader in this effort. American Whitewater looks forward to being a part of this conversation.

YOU CAN SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS IN A FEW WAYS:

- We have several local volunteers with expertise in real estate, advocacy, river ecology, hydrology, and communications. Please let us know if you would like to join the team and help out. We expect to support grant proposals our partners will submit to utilize public funding to keep lands along these rivers in open space and conservation status.
- Contributions to American Whitewater support our time and capacity to work on this project. We appreciate the generosity of the Columbia Gorge paddling community that has enabled us to prioritize this project. Additional contributions to support this work are always welcome.
- If you are interested in making a more substantial contribution (>\$10,000) we are supporting the efforts of Columbia Land Trust's Forests and Rivers of the Gorge Fund that will go towards putting these lands in permanent conservation status. Private philanthropy is a critical match for some of the public funds we are working to secure. If you have the capacity to give at this level or know someone who can, please let us know and we can introduce you to our partners and schedule a time to go see the landscape in person.
- Be a good steward of these lands. We ask that whitewater paddlers please respect these lands and particularly the access to the Green Truss Run. Interest in the river has grown considerably over the past several years and it is particularly important that we demonstrate our commitment to being responsible stewards of this place. As we enter into a relationship with a new landowner first impressions are important--let's make a good one!



Paddlers enjoy the inner depths of the Farmlands run on the White Salmon River (WA).
PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD





RETURNING RAPIDS TO THE COLORADO RIVER

BY JACK STAUSS, GLEN CANYON INSTITUTE

The Colorado River serves as a water source for seven states between two countries. Human induced climate change has rapidly decreased flows over the past 20 years.
PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD

ON A SUNNY October morning, I hauled gear from a United States Geological Survey truck down to the bank of a wide, churning Colorado River. Stuff you'd expect for 28 people—Paco pads, stuffed and rolled dry bags, food and beer for six days in giant coolers. But, with the mission of the Returning Rapids Project, there was much more being loaded onto rafts. We had Pelican cases holding ultra accurate GPS survey units, buckets of sample tubes, notebooks, tripods, even a hand-held x-ray gun for identifying grain composition. A late season Meander Cataract trip is always an adventure, toeing the line between sublime and extreme. For us it would be more than rock dodging and desert relaxation. Especially for trip leader Mike DeHoff.

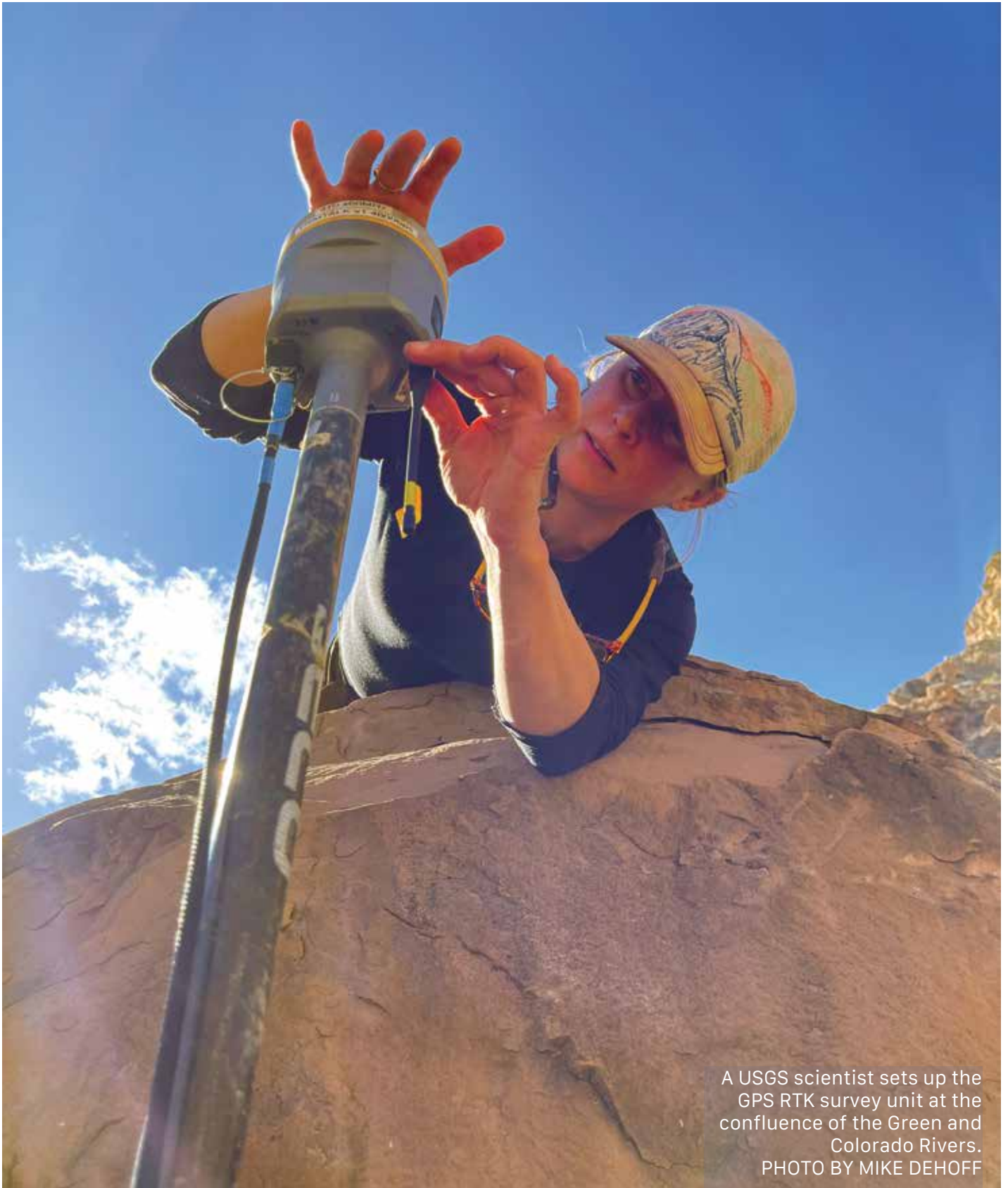
This trip was a full-on production, one that Mike would work hard to keep on track to accomplish the goal of surveying a restoring river. To him, it's an exhausting labor of love. Mike and his partners Meg, Pete, and Jamie have been down this section hundreds of times and care passionately about the place. In 2013, they started keeping track of a really interesting phenomenon that they realized was worth the effort of tracking.

When Mike first ran Cataract in the 90s, Lake Powell was full. He tells the story of spilling out after Big Drop 3 onto a cold, emerald

reservoir. Jet skiers and houseboats motored around in the pool below the rapids, a surreal civilization check after having spent several days in the remote Canyonlands National Park.

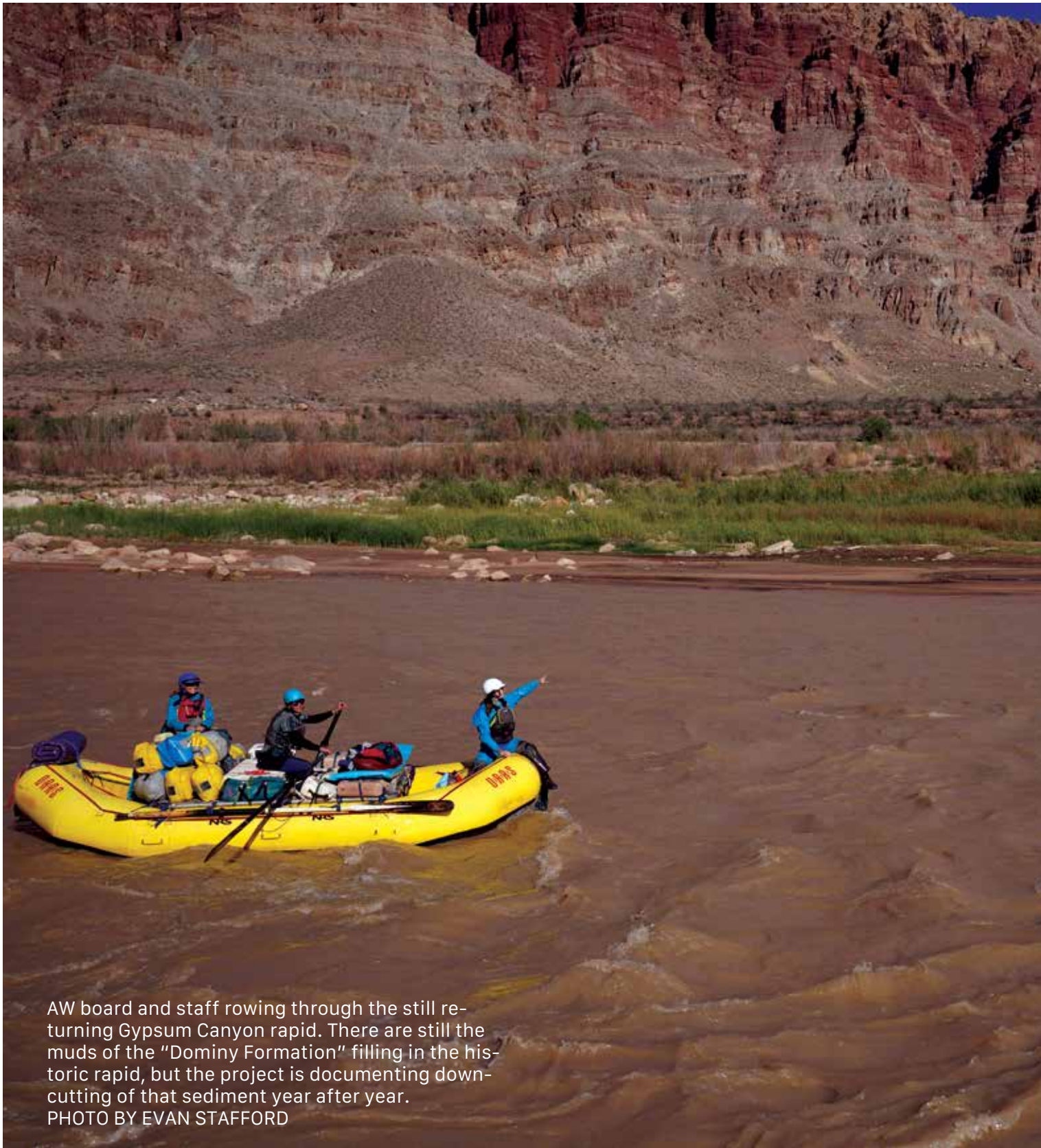
Those days are gone. The Millennial Drought, 20 years of reduced runoff brought on by an over allocation of water combined with climate change, caused aridification and the reservoir has slowly receded. These days it would be impossible to visualize the Lake Powell Mike first experienced. Mile upon mile of river now flows beyond Big Drop 3. Recently drowned rapids and new amazing hikes up side canyons now await the desert explorer.

In 2013, as they began to notice the placid waters recede, Mike and Pete decided to closely watch this transformation. They asked a simple question, "When will we start to see rapids and a living river return from the reservoir?" They identified benchmark rocks or features to understand changing water and sediment levels compared to historical photographs of the river. These started to give them a roadmap of changes taking place. Soon enough, they started to see whitewater. Starting as small wave trains and riffles and eventually becoming Class II and III rapids, the river through Cataract Canyon was restoring itself in ways no one could have imagined during full pool Lake Powell.



A USGS scientist sets up the GPS RTK survey unit at the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers.
PHOTO BY MIKE DEHOFF

STEWARDSHIP



AW board and staff rowing through the still re-
turning Gypsum Canyon rapid. There are still the
muds of the "Dominy Formation" filling in the his-
toric rapid, but the project is documenting down-
cutting of that sediment year after year.
PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD



Fast forward to 2021. Their project has garnered interest and support from myriad researchers and advocates. The Returning Rapids Project continues to ask and uncover more important questions as it becomes clearer that a full Lake Powell is out of reach: Who manages the returning river and access to it? How should we protect the restored river and side canyons? Is the deposited lake sediment potentially dangerous? While we will likely not answer these big questions on this trip, we do hope to collect information that can paint a picture of what is happening and how quickly things are changing.

While our final boats were being rigged, Paul Grams from Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC) and Scott Hynek from U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) explained how to map the bottom of the river corridor. This has not been done since 1921. A central goal of this science trip was to get a new and accurate understanding of what the channel looks like now, so we can compare a pre- and post-reservoir river.

After our crash course in GPS imagining, we boarded our boats midmorning and began our journey into one of the wildest places in the country. I took my place among the “mothership,” a flotilla of boats making miles downstream. Along with other professional environmental advocates, photographers, and journalists, I was there to help lug gear and eventually to share the story of this work. Separately, other boats launched. The GCMRC vessel took river bottom readings with the survey boat. A USGS boat with a small outboard would become known as the vessel of the “sand people,” collecting sediment samples along the way. A “hasty boat” was sent to set up the control survey units at established locations further down. Finally, the fish biologists launched and set out to find the threatened humpback chub.

Conversations about the river’s past and future filled the morning. Jack Schmidt, the legendary Utah State University professor and Center for Colorado River Studies head, told us stories from his time studying the rivers of the Colorado Basin. He spoke of moving parts in Basin management and a recent trip with policy bigwigs. There were big questions on the boat and some big decisions on the horizon. We floated and hiked and waved to the sand people as we saw them running around on a beach collecting samples. While it comprised many different activities, the fall 2021 trip ultimately was a trip about sediment, or as Mike DeHoff calls it, “The Mud.”

In order to really understand what the rapids below the reservoir’s high water mark are doing, we have to understand where the sediment that settled out when the lake was high

STEWARDSHIP

ended up and how it is moving downstream. Most of the sediment work would take place below the Big Drops. We had two days of travel to the confluence, then another day of running the rapids to get there. So down we motored. I kicked back on a tube in the front of the raft barge and closed my eyes. I let the autumn desert sun warm my face.

The morning before the confluence, the “hasty team” left early to set up a base RTK GPS unit there so the GCMRC boat could use it as a reference point for their mobile imaging. Meg Flynn led that team, and her group spent all day there at the confluence. The confluence is a powerful place. Two giant western rivers, the Green and the Colorado, meet and mix under a spire of red rock at a huge sandy beach the size of several football fields. That October day, Meg and her team hung out there in a prefrontal windstorm being blasted by sand. But they did their job. They got the RTK base setup so it could talk to the satellites and map this special place.

The Mothership worked its way downstream. We rowed some, went on an adventurous day hike, and collected driftwood to burn. We expected a storm that night. I always try to remain excited about the weather down there, even when I’m camping. Rain in the desert is a beautiful thing. Our flotilla policy conversations tried to answer the question about who was going to manage this “new” river. Glen Canyon National Recreation Area had their hands full moving boat ramps for the reservoir. The Canyonlands National Park boundary ended at the Big Drops. With the changes taking place, we all agreed that a new management strategy must be developed, and soon.

The next morning, we broke up our flotilla to row the whitewater. Mike and Pete helped us find the lines, and by Big Drop 3 the whole crew was feeling good. Mike stood on a dark boulder next to the rapid and carefully explained how to time a pull to thread the needle into the current and run the slot cleanly. Everyone nodded, wide eyed. One by one, we rowed out and shot through the wild constriction, staying far away from a toothy rock garden that could certainly ruin the day.

Scott Christensen, Glen Canyon Institute board member, and I pulled out into the water and slowly rode out onto the tongue. He made a quick motion with his oar in the water and pointed the boat straight into the wild raging river between the rocks. And in a roaring moment of spinning and splashing, the river took us for a ride. I got a face full of Colorado River water and for a minute could only hear its roar. Scott kept it upright, and as quickly as it had started, the rapid was over. We popped out at the bottom to cheers from our teammates.





This gooseneck was thought to be the confluence of the two mighty desert rivers, the Green and Colorado, by early European explorers.
PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD



AW board and staff rejoicing in the re-emerging riffle at Gypsum Canyon that has been inundated by the reservoir.
PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD

Now, below the Big Drops, it was time to get to work. That night, at High Stand camp below the rapids, Cari Johnson, a geologist from the University of Utah, explained what we had seen in Waterhole Canyon the year before, and why that place was a great laboratory for understanding sediment transport throughout the Colorado Plateau region. She showed us all a diagram of layers of lake sediment there and how quickly they have changed over the last 70 years. To scientists like her, it is like watching geological processes that usually take millions of years happen in real time. Hearing how quickly the works of man have changed this place left more questions in my mind for what the future would hold.

Her presentation was a great prep for the day to come. The USGS, Utah State, and University of Utah researchers would spend all day there. The “hasty team” would cruise down to Gypsum Rapid, where side missions near Imperial Canyon and Gypsum would take place. Dinner and drinks that night were jovial. We were all excited to get to experience the returning rapids that Mike and Pete were so passionate about. I understood why it mattered to track what was happening in this wild place.

In the morning, the geologists settled into a long day, exploring, surveying, and sampling Waterhole. The survey team continued

mapping the river, and the fish people trapped fish. It was awesome to see the team of geologists really digging into Waterhole, as I had spent a fair amount of time the year before getting baseline GPS data. They trundled around in the “Dominy Formation” (sediment banks left by Lake Powell), seeing how the sediment was deposited and how it was eroding.

I spent parts of the next couple of days with Seth Arens from Western Water Assessment, retracing plan surveys in side canyons. The transects he had established from the previous years covered a lot of ground and it was interesting to see what had changed year over year.

The most astonishing thing that had happened over the course of the previous season was the radical monsoon events that took place, specifically in Gypsum, Clearwater, and Dark Canyons. We explored these places during the last two days; they are by far some of the most beautiful and overlooked canyons in the whole area. Until recently the reservoir and sediment made access difficult. Just a couple months of flash flooding in Clearwater and Dark Canyons flushed decades of lake sediment out into the Colorado. Newly exposed bedrock, waterfalls, and alcove features astonished us all as we looked at fossils, and hiked

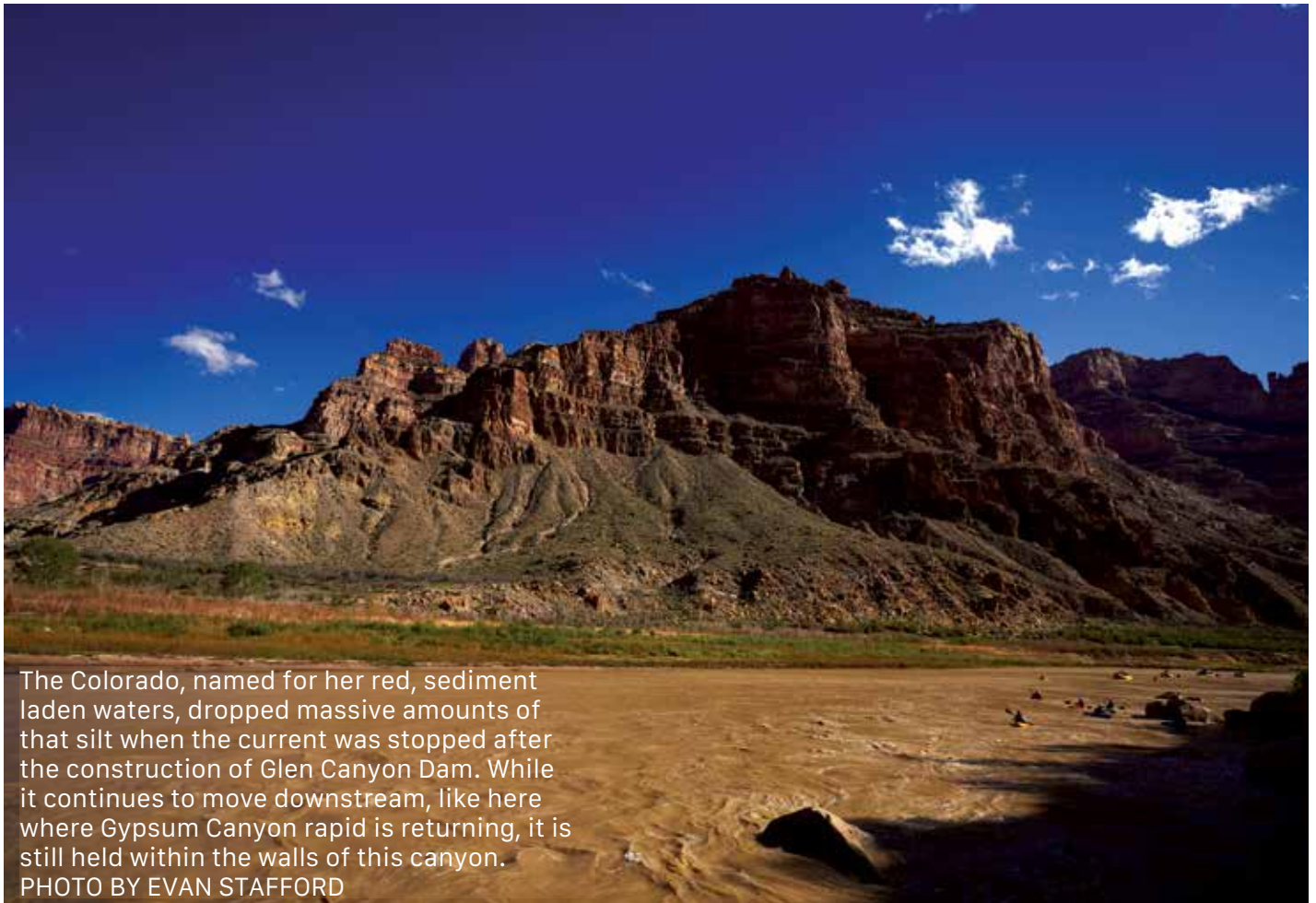
through returning willows, ash, and cottonwoods. Creeks and streams glistened among fluted red rock slots and waterfalls. It's truly an amazing place to experience as it returns from inundation.

We motored out the last 20 miles on river current. What was once a river drowned was flowing again. We caught up to a single boat. Jack Schmidt rowed alone through the returning Colorado. His grin grew wide as we caught him. He exclaimed how amazing being on what was once considered gone now felt: at once peaceful, powerful, and worth protecting.

We arrived at the notorious North Wash boat ramp late in the afternoon and made one more camp. RJ, a river guide from Boulder City, Jamie, and I drove a truck up far from the river's edge to the old shoreline of Lake Powell, half a mile from our camp. We dug through ancient Powell driftwood, collecting pieces to burn. Scorpions darted from our headlamp glow and we smiled, noting that the reservoir would likely never reach there again. Burning that wood, washed down in high flows from the '80s with the whole group was cathartic. An elegy for the 20th Century

and its want to control water in the West. The questions came up again. Who would manage this place? How would we rethink our relationship to the water and the land that was coming back to life? Who would manage this massive amount of sediment we had been traveling through? These questions need to be answered and the Returning Rapids project is exposing just how quickly things are changing.

At the end of our trip, we spent hours rolling a dozen boats up to their trailers. After that muddy work was over, we all hugged and said our goodbyes. While I ended with almost more questions than I started with, the science trip and crew that joined it gives me inspiration. It proves that people do care about this place and the future of it. Through collaboration and hard work we can find solutions that protect it for the simple reason that a river must flow. A river will flow.



The Colorado, named for her red, sediment laden waters, dropped massive amounts of that silt when the current was stopped after the construction of Glen Canyon Dam. While it continues to move downstream, like here where Gypsum Canyon rapid is returning, it is still held within the walls of this canyon.

PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD

WILDERNESS

PACKRAFTING SIN FRONTERAS:

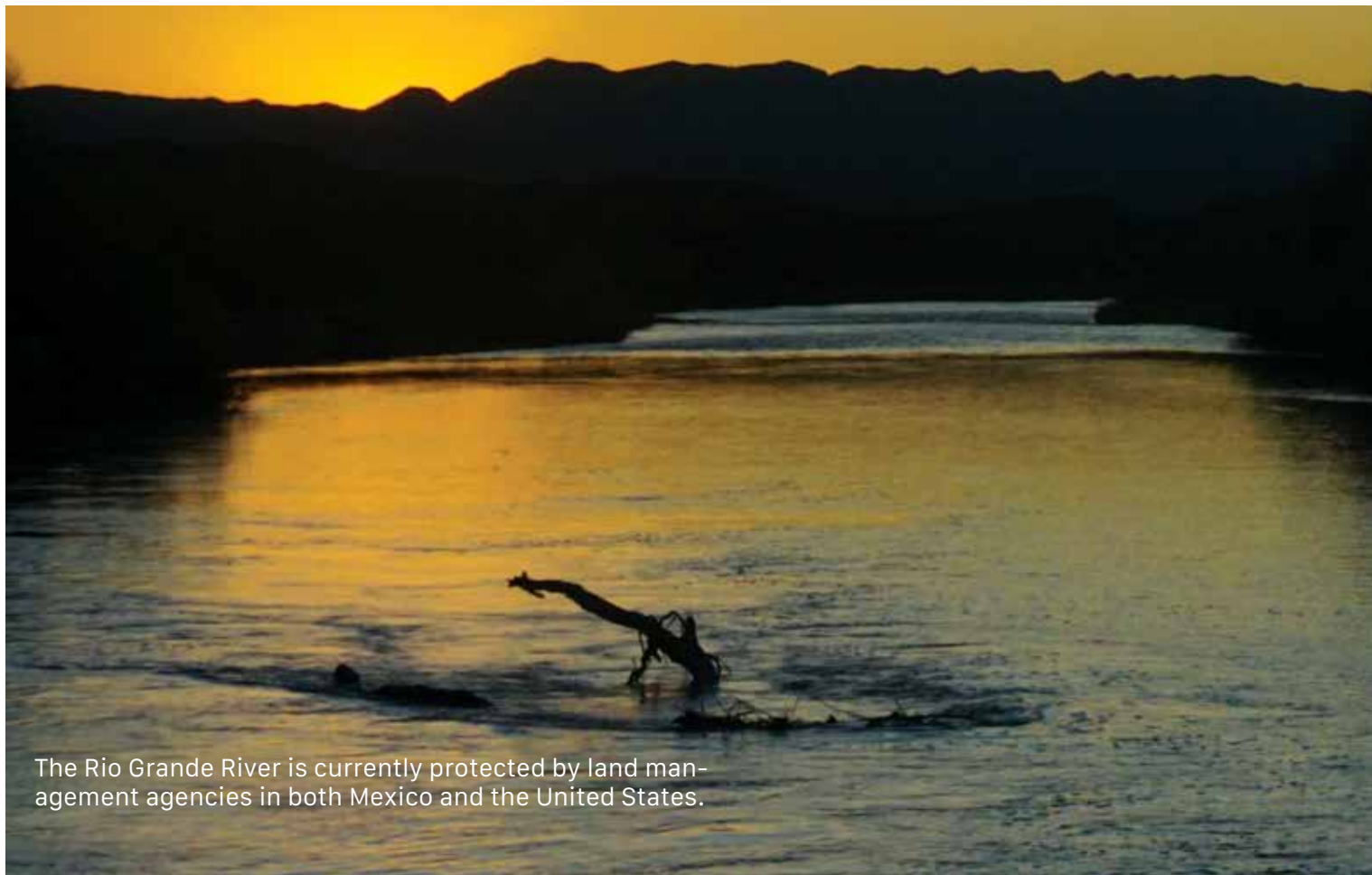
REFLECTIONS FROM THE RIO BRAVO IN A TIME BEFORE COVID-19

STORY BY MONICA MORIN AND PHOTOS BY PARKER ANDERS

IT WAS WINTER and the desert was calling. So we decided to push the boundaries and plan a 19-day packraft trip down the Rio Grande River in Texas/Rio Bravo in Chihuahua, Mexico. The 210-mile stretch between Lajitas and Dryden captures some of the most iconic canyons along the 1,200 or so miles that form the border between the US and Mexico. Of those miles, 196 are protected as Wild and Scenic. A mix of land management agencies both in the US and in Mexico help to conserve some of the corridor and surrounding desert. This includes Big Bend National Park, which protects the largest area of the Chihuahua Desert in the United States. Trading ice fog in the Pacific Northwest for crystal-clear starry nights of the desert, we headed south, for the border.

After irrigation and municipal uses, only a trickle of water makes it to Lajitas. The only exceptions are monsoons and dam releases from Rio Conchos in Mexico, the largest tributary of the Rio Grande. According to local outfitters, Mexico generally turns off the water around January 1st. It was January 7th, and we still had 600 cfs, a great flow. No one knew when it would get shut off, but luckily with packrafts there is always the option to walk.

The plan was to put on as a group of four in Lajitas, then resupply at Rio Grande Village and add a few more paddlers. By the end of day one I came down with the flu, disappointing after months of planning. I sadly waved goodbye to my friends at the take-out to Santa Elena but rejoined five days later at our resupply point.



The Rio Grande River is currently protected by land management agencies in both Mexico and the United States.

We were now a team of seven, including a strong Alaskan mother and her two boys, aged 10 and 13.

On day one of the lower stretch, we had already forgotten we were on the border with Mexico. The kids needed to change layers and we found ourselves on river right a little too close to a population center. After a few moments we looked up to see uniformed federales with assault rifles. They must have been guarding the hot springs. Maybe we should go, NOW, we thought. After a second look, we noticed the officers were smiling and taking photos of our funny boats with their smartphones. They enthusiastically motioned for us to check out the hot springs, while showing deep concern for our lack of supplies for such a long trip.

As we floated by the remote Mexican town of Boquillas, the youngest of the group practiced his Spanish with the man rowing the “ferry” across from Big Bend National Park. The border was opened here as a port of entry in 2013 after being closed in 2002. It is the only legal border crossing on the US-Mexican border unstaffed by US customs, although you must check in with an awkward video call. You are also supposed to check in with Mexican officials, but the word was they were on “vacaciones,” and had been for over a month. I absolutely LOVE Mexico! Boquillas survives off selling wire sculptures of desert critters

and “no wall” paraphernalia, along with burritos and margaritas to US tourists. When the closure hit in 2002, most residents had to leave. Some have returned but are afraid of the impacts of a border wall.

The abstract idea of politics and stress of modern society crumbled quickly as Boquillas faded into the distance and the walls of the canyon grew to dominate the landscape. The river was a path, an intact ecosystem, water in an expansive desert, a sanctuary for all living creatures, and our livelihood for the next 11 days. We were in the “middle of everywhere,” and the fact we were along a major frontera faded from our minds. The theme of the trip became wonderfully relaxing mornings with opportunities for side hikes in slot canyons and huge open drainages full of polished rock and potholes. We enjoyed each other’s company around the campfire while sharing stories and contemplating life. These moments became more vibrant by watching the excitement and enthusiasm in the kids’ eyes as they experienced their first desert excursion and we delved deeper and deeper into this unimpeded wilderness.

There were a few moments that reminded us of how others may be experiencing the same desert landscape. We found a backpack washed up on a gravel bar along with a few camps full of garbage rumored to be frequented by whom the locals refer to as “illegals.”



WILDERNESS



The Rio Grande is known for its desert scenery, night sky, and remarkable canyons.



For us, it was purely enjoyment, a place to reconnect with the land and with each other. For those crossing into the US here, it was not necessarily a choice, but a major obstacle—along the path to a better life for many, or to survival for some. Mom explained to her children that not everyone is as fortunate as we are. That didn't mean we couldn't enjoy where we were. It meant that we should appreciate what we have and share with others when given the opportunity.

Everyone has a story.

By day seven or eight, evening conversations focused on food. "I'll trade you only what you need for something that I actually want," I kept saying as I was sick of the OWYN bars bought in bulk. I think we all lost a little weight on that trip. However, I love the challenge and simplicity of packing light as opposed to hauling canoes or rafts laden with gear that must be portaged through rapids easily run with packrafts. I once heard, "You don't own your things, your things own you." However, I did savor the oranges donated to us by canoeists late in the trip.

By days nine and 10, discussions started to include what people were doing after the trip, which visibly affected the overall morale and focus. Some of us were excited to see loved ones left at home, others had to get back to the grind, while some were planning for more adventures. I personally considered the thought of leaving the simplicity of river life, night sky, and my new family daunting. I think many people experience this when leaving long trips like the Grand Canyon. This time, for me, my desire to stay was stronger than ever. We celebrated our last night with a surprised cornbread dessert, reminiscing by the fire under yet another crystal-clear starry night.

At the take-out we were greeted by our shuttle driver who was early and delivered beer. The second we got into cell service I turned on my phone and instantly felt nauseous as the van seemed to break the sound barrier. Let's turn that back off. We dropped mom and the kids off for the night and quickly parted ways, leaving the kids confused and the group split. "It's okay, we'll see you tomorrow."

I have been there before, out on a great trip with incredible people, completely living in the moment. When the bubble bursts, reality floods back in. Whatever issues you were dealing with prior—the loss of a loved one, sickness, divorce, or major breakup, finances, feeling directionless, frustration at work, rejection—you must face again. It is called re-acclimating, and not all of us acclimate well. Maybe that is why many of us are drawn to these places and why some of us decide to never leave.

THE QUIVER

TO GET YOU ON THE RIVER



FOAMIE

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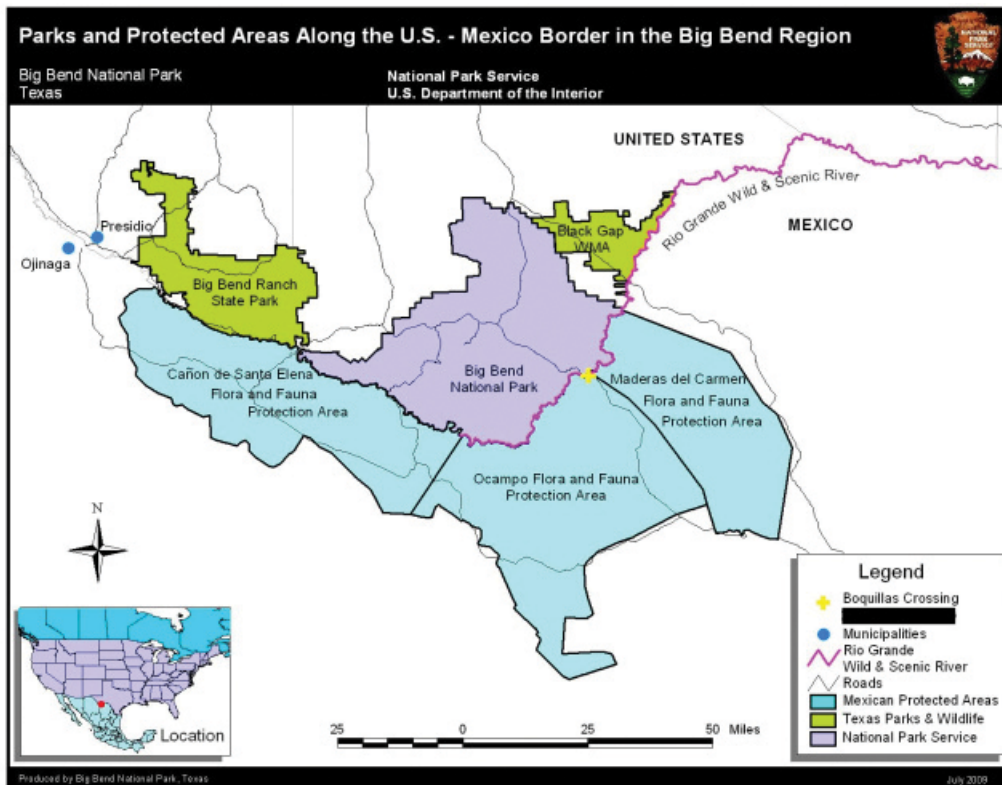
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SHAPING
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the Aztecs and the Spanish. To me it brought the trip full circle. It was a reminder of the border, the vast difference in its significance in an urban versus wilderness setting, and the stories behind it, most untold.

Now it's back to the grind. After traveling across the entire country via trains, planes, automobiles, and packrafts, I cannot help but stop and reflect. In the midst of confusion and struggles over developed world problems, the river has a way of putting it all into perspective, delivering lessons often swift but sometimes subtle.

These subtle messages echo from the calm and untamed waters of the Rio Grande and Rio Bravo, through its open, wind-swept banks and steep canyon walls, and into our lives and the lives of those whose stories are untold.

The idea of an international park arose in the early 1900s with the first agreement signed in 1934. President Roosevelt greatly supported the idea, and interest was expressed in a signed statement by President Obama. However, an international park on the Rio Grande has still not been realized.

We sat back to listen as mother reminded the children to appreciate what we have by understanding we might not always have it, taking nothing for granted. She taught that even if barriers are built, we have the power to tear down walls by listening and learning with an

The next day, five of us traveled to El Paso via train. The train was five hours late, irrelevant as time still had little meaning to us. Phones were on and charged. It happened. The end. The kids were playing video games, long external conversations with the outside pursued, and I became obsessed with the Coronavirus, not wanting to risk the current feeling of being healthy. That is it, I was holding on. Ignoring the incoming stream of notifications and voicemail, I turned off my phone. Easy, disconnect to connect, remain in the moment, the here and now. Speaking with the older ladies from Mexico who were not hypnotized by their phones helped to stave off the pressure to acclimate as I held onto the last thread of reality.

open mind. She echoes quietly from deep within the steep-walled canyons, where the outside cannot be heard, where all living creatures are free from the pressure of the masses, where all who truly hear her live a life sin fronteras.

To learn more about recent struggles along the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River visit: <https://www.americanrivers.org/ endangered-rivers/lower-rio-grande-tx/>

We rolled into El Paso late and caught a glimpse of the big red "X." It was so close I felt I could touch it as we sped by on a six-lane freeway. The X, also known as "La Equis," is a lit sculpture located on the south bank of the Rio Grande in Ciudad Juárez. It signifies a welcome to Mexico and the merging of two cultures:



Returning Rapids



Project



IT WAS A simple question: “When will we start to see rapids and a living river return from a dying reservoir?” Benchmark rocks or canyon features help document changing water and sediment levels compared to historical photographs of the river. These provided a roadmap of the changes taking place. Soon enough, whitewater replaced still waters. Starting as small wave trains and riffles and eventually becoming rapids, the river through Cataract Canyon was restoring itself in ways no one could have imagined. Works of man made the desert bloom, but at what cost? There might be a chance to get this place back and, as paddlers, are we committed to ensuring it is protected?

PERFORMANCE // REIMAGINED



BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

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CIRCLE OF LIFE ON THE CHATTOOGA RIVER

BY HANK KLAUSMAN



Hank in Bull Sluice in 2020.

OF ALL THE rivers I have paddled in the last half-century, the Chattooga remains my favorite. Flowing out of the North Carolina mountains, it forms the northeast boundary between Georgia and South Carolina. The remote and pristine beauty earned it designation as a protected river in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1974.

The Chattooga offers all levels of whitewater, ranging from mild Class II to ultimately challenging Class V. Its danger is also legendary. Two of my paddling friends have died there.

After seeing the movie *Deliverance*, which was filmed on the Chattooga in 1972, I borrowed a canoe and tried the Class III and IV rapids of Section 3 with my ten-year-old son David. There was no flotation in the boat and we wore horse collar life vests and no helmets. As you might guess, it was a disaster. Our borrowed Grumman aluminum canoe was so beat up I had to use a sledgehammer to straighten it out. The other father/son team that went with us never paddled again, and my son had nightmares for a few years.

But we kept at it, graduated to kayaks, and became good enough to paddle the hardest stretch of the Chattooga, Section 4, which boasts Class V rapids. Since the Chattooga is a natural flow, it depends on precipitation to achieve the water levels necessary for fun and safe paddling. So, when more reliable dam release rivers like the Ocoee became available, we only visited the Chattooga infrequently and at ideal levels.

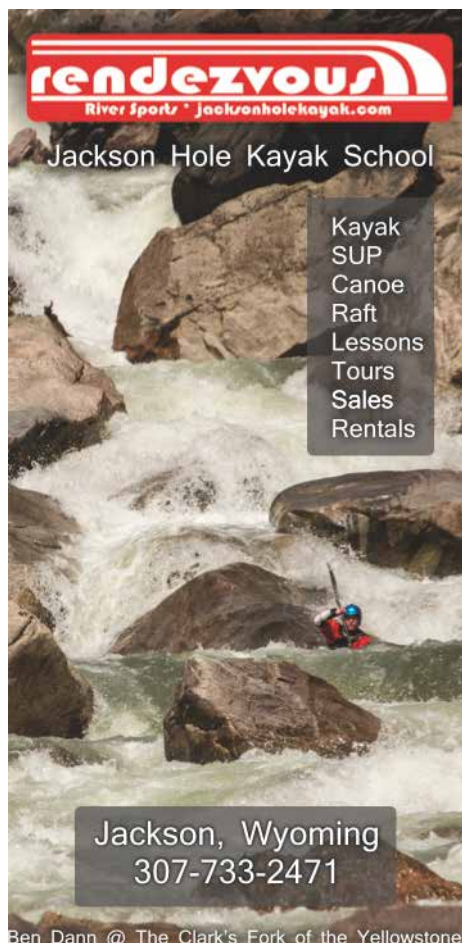
RIVER VOICES

Fast forward to 2020. I'm 80 years old and don't do Class V anymore. My son, David, has four grown kids who all paddle some. He rarely paddles, but always looks like he just won the Junior races, which he actually did as a teenager. On June 22 he agreed to return to our favorite river when one of my oldest paddling buddies, David Asbell, called to say that the water level was perfect. The sky was solid blue and the mountain laurel and rhododendron were still in bloom.

We decided to run from Thrifts Ferry to Woodall Shoals, which is called Section 3 ½. It retains the character of Section 3 and includes the first rapids in Section 4.

One price of admission to the Chattooga is you have to carry your boat in and out a quarter mile.

Just below the Thrifts Ferry put-in is a sweet rapid with a great surfing wave. About one mile in, we came to the Chattooga classic, Bull Sluice. The entrance is Class III into the eddy on the SC side (river left) above the main drop. Then there are three choices of lines. The double drop on the right is Class IV. A big, single drop is in the middle, and a high water creek line is on the far left. On



Asbell, Hank, and David in 2019

summer weekends, there is usually a large crowd to cheer you on, because the Highway 76 access is just downstream.

My run of the Bull gave us the first excitement of the day. I flipped at the bottom and took a few tries to get back up (see photo). It reminded me how important the roll is to kayakers. If you roll, basically nothing has happened. If you swim, then at least you have to recover boat and paddle, empty the boat, and get back in. You can imagine the worst. I'm sure more kayakers have died out of their boats than in them.

Next up was Surfing Rapid, one of the better playspots on the river. A raft company was swimming customers through this rapid. Both Davids tried cartwheels and enders, while I sat in the big recovery eddy and took pictures.

Screaming Left Turn is a Class III thrust through a three-foot slot under an overhanging rock, then an immediate 90 degree left turn to avoid smashing into a boulder.

Below this there are several Class II+ rapids. This is where we had our second life lesson for the day. My son, David, who had not swum out of his kayak for since he was a teenager, took a swim. Ironic that he flipped in a nothing rapid. But when he went over, he felt his head bumping along the bottom, so he got out before even thinking about rolling. Thankfully, we go him back together quickly and he was not hurt.

But the excitement was not over. We had not paddled more than a few hundred yards when the river narrowed and banks on both sides got pretty steep. In that canyon, I thought I kept hearing some animal call that I could not recognize. It was almost like braying, but not quite. As we came around a bend, we saw a coyote on a flat rock a few yards off the right bank. He had a deer fawn pinned down and was trying to finish it off. But the fawn was kicking and making the weird noises I had heard. The coyote was biting down on his right hip. I yelled at the coyote and he immediately jumped to the right bank and disappeared. The fawn had slipped or jumped into the river and was having trouble keeping its head above water. It swam over to right bank but could not climb out. It then was washed down stream to the left side. Again, the rock bank was too steep for it to get out. We tried to nudge the fawn with our boats to shore, but it panicked and swam away. Finally, we got the animal between our boats. David



Asbell with Fawn on the Chattooga

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Asbell gave me his paddle and scooped it up in his arms. We could see the right hip was torn open. We pushed his boat over to a tiny eddy on the left bank and tried to deposit the poor animal on a relatively flat rock next to the bank, but it tried to climb the steepest part and fell back in. We tried several times to get the fawn on the flat rock. But it was so terrified of us, it would swim away when we got close. The banks were too steep and current too fast for any of us to exit our boats to try to help the fawn get out of the river. After several efforts, since the fawn was on the opposite side of the river from the coyote and in a relatively calm spot, we decided we had to abandon our efforts. But I still wonder if we could have done more.

There were more rapids to handle and Rock Jumble, with a 10-foot sloping ledge, was coming up. We boat scouted and ran on far left.

The last challenge was Woodall Shoals. It is a nice Class III+ rapid with a very dangerous but unimpressive looking Class V+ hole. The first death I knew about on the Chattooga was here. Some try to run this hole, but all I can say is, don't.

The standard route for those wise enough to avoid the top hole is to hug the right riverbank. This leads you over a 10-foot slide. From there you can choose one of many lines down a natural slalom course.

The take-out is always the hardest part of the run for me. You have at least a quarter-mile hike straight up a trail to the parking lot. I start out carrying my boat, but always end up dragging it most of the way.

While recuperating from the climb, we talked about some of the life lessons we had experienced that day.

First, I hit my roll after flipping at Bull Sluice. I can roll on both sides every time in the pool, but my combat roll in the river has never been 100%. So, this life lesson was to keep trying and never give up.

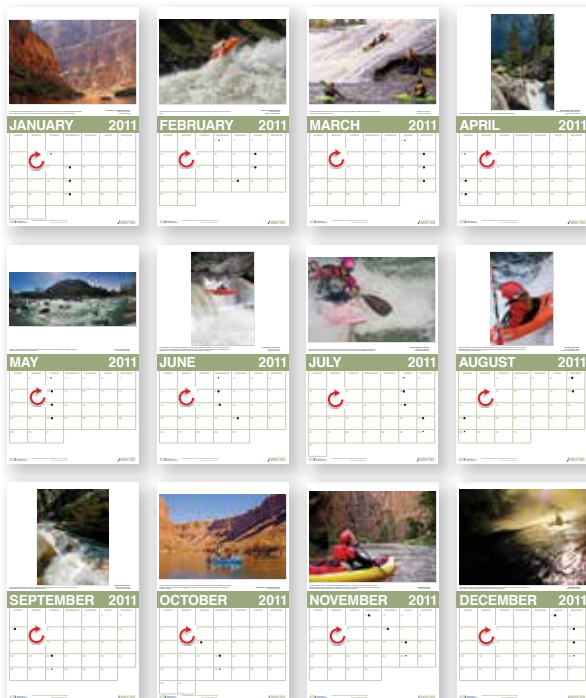
On the flip side, David had not swum out of his boat in maybe 25 years, and he swam that day. The lesson was that we are all between swims.

And the incident with the fawn just reminded us of the inevitable circle of life which is more apparent to us when we are out in nature. We all begin and end the same way.

It was a great day for me: fun time, good company, plus lessons learned. I plan to return as long as I can.

After that, I'll just write about it.

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PADDLE SMART

- Paddle within your ability • Keep your skills sharp • Communicate with your team on the river • Think for yourself • Don't let bad decisions compound • Go big, but come home safe



PADDLE INCLUSIVE

- Share it • Everyone with the proper skillset is welcome • Find a mentor • Be a mentor • Acknowledge indigenous stewardship and land • Be a positive part of the community



PADDLE NO TRACE

- Leave no trace • Always be a river steward • Use existing access areas, trails and campsites • Pack it in • Pack it out • Use restroom facilities or bring your own waste disposal • Be aware of and remove micro-trash



PADDLE PREPARED

- Plan ahead • Consult existing beta • Understand International Scale of River Difficulty and your chosen river's rating • Carry proper equipment including medical kit, spare paddle and emergency food/layers



PADDLE SAFE

- Wear your PFD • Carry a throw rope, knife and other safety gear • Practice safe river running technique • Set safety where appropriate • Take a swiftwater rescue course • Practice whitewater rescue skills regularly



PADDLE AWARE

- Check weather and flow conditions • Check for closures and river regulations • Know your ability and your group's ability • Understand surrounding landscape and escape routes • Research existing hazards, portages and critical features



PADDLE RESPECTFUL

- Consider impacts to gateway communities • Consider impacts on other paddlers • Drive slowly • Park in designated areas • Respect closures • Be friendly and represent the whitewater community positively • Appreciate cultural resources but leave undisturbed

STEPPING IT UP

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TERESA GRYDER



The author's group portaging Big Brother on the Green Truss section of the White Salmon (WA).

DON'T KNOW about you, but I hear it all the time from whitewater paddlers. "I'm going to step it up...." Some people who take up the sport are instantly addicted and want to progress super rapidly.

The problem with rapid progress is that good judgment is slow to develop, and the risks inherent in the sport escalate dramatically with each step up in class. New paddlers see Dane Jackson running Class V on YouTube and making it look so easy that they think they can do it, too. They can't. They don't appreciate how many years Dane has been paddling, nor do they have the same support for their development.

The science of risk management tells us that the people at the highest risk of making terrible decisions are the beginners and

the experts. Beginners are more likely to underestimate the skills needed or the dangers involved. This is because they just don't know. They haven't seen any accidents yet. If they keep doing it, they will eventually see.

Experts can fall into the high-risk category when they become overconfident in their skills and/or numb to the risk. Instead of remaining humble and cautious like the intermediates, they think it won't happen to them. Overconfidence borne of beginner ignorance or expert hubris is met by the same indifferent power of water. Water is soft, but it drowns.

SAFETY



AW Board Member Megi Morishita not stepping it up on Bull Run (OR).

Compared to land-based sports like mountain biking or skiing, water sports have the sad distinction of being less dangerous when it comes to injuries, and more dangerous when it comes to deaths.

HOW TO STEP IT UP

A newish paddler may think that because they can get to the bottom of a Class III rapid, they are a Class III paddler. This is not the case. A log thrown in at the top of a Class III rapid will usually emerge at the bottom... eventually. Being able to float downstream and stay right-side-up is a tiny part of paddling. Anyone who thinks they are a Class III paddler should be able to catch all the eddies, do every ferry, and surf the waves and holes in Class II rapids. When there is nothing scary left in Class II, and they are developing the same mastery in Class III rapids, they can claim to be Class III paddlers. Not before.

Stepping it up thoughtfully leaves just as much—if not more—room for fun than the alternative.

“Learn patience, you must.” It takes a considerable investment of time and energy to become a good boater. Self-rescue, whether by rolling or some other strategy, is a baseline skill. River reading and boat handling skills take years and miles to develop. You cannot learn these things from a video, teacher, or book. You must do the miles yourself, and be relaxed enough to pay attention and learn.

THE WRONG WAY

This brings me to my early days. I’d survived two easy runs in my kayak, and thought I was ready for the Nantahala. We launched at the old raft put-in and I flipped leaving the eddy and swam down to somewhere downstream from the current put-in.

My friends helped me get my gear. It was March and I was dressed in a T-shirt and cut-offs. I got back in and into the current but then flipped at the top of Patton’s Run. By the bottom of that rapid I wasn’t swimming anymore. I was floating in what I now call the crucifix position, eyes glassy, paralyzed by the icy water.

It is only because people fished me out that I am alive to tell this tale. I was ignorant about my own ignorance. The great thing about learning the hard way is that you never forget. That day I learned that what you don’t know can kill you. It was years later when I learned that floating to the bottom of a Class III rapid does not make you a Class III paddler.



UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

River runners tend to be risk takers. Rivers are powerful and you never know when something will happen. If you've been paddling long, you've seen it. Experienced paddlers accept that there are both visible/objective and hidden risks. We adjust our behavior to our risk tolerance, and adjust our risk tolerance to our lives and values. Conscious consideration of risk and reward helps us choose wisely.

Some paddlers never have a frightening experience and avoid teachings about danger. A person who is athletic and starts with instruction, modern equipment, and a strong crew can become a strong paddler without fully comprehending the risks. Such a person, if focused on running higher classes of whitewater, can develop advanced boat handling skills but lack the depth of experience and hard-won judgment that sets them up to survive in a Class V environment.

It can take hard experiences to dissolve the youthful illusion of immortality. The shattering of that illusion is enough to stop some people from ever boating again. When you've been desperate for air, seen injuries or death, and gotten so cold you can't think straight, you are beginning to have a realistic picture of the risk in whitewater paddling. Fear is reasonable.

Is it possible to comprehend the risks without having bad experiences? Perhaps so, but not everyone does. Every time another beautiful 20-something athlete dies on a Class V run I think about this: science tells us that the forebrain, which is where judgment lives, isn't fully developed until sometime in the mid-20s. We must keep teaching young paddlers, for if we let them believe they know it all, it could kill them.

HOW TO MENTOR

The next time you hear a new paddler saying they want to start doing harder stuff, talk to them. Answer their questions. Talk about skills and dangers. Help them build perspective.

All experienced river runners have a role in this effort. We can teach what we know and tell our stories. We can encourage the next generation of river people, knowing the value the river has brought into our own lives. We do not have to be certified to give our perspective or drill a new skill. Our gift to the community is to provide ample opportunities for new paddlers to learn water safety and whitewater skills on easy and moderate whitewater. There is no substitute for river time.



What to get for the paddler who has everything?

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

AMERICAN WHITewater

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Member Name: A.M. Whitewater
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Colorado River, Grand Canyon. | Photo: Evan Stafford

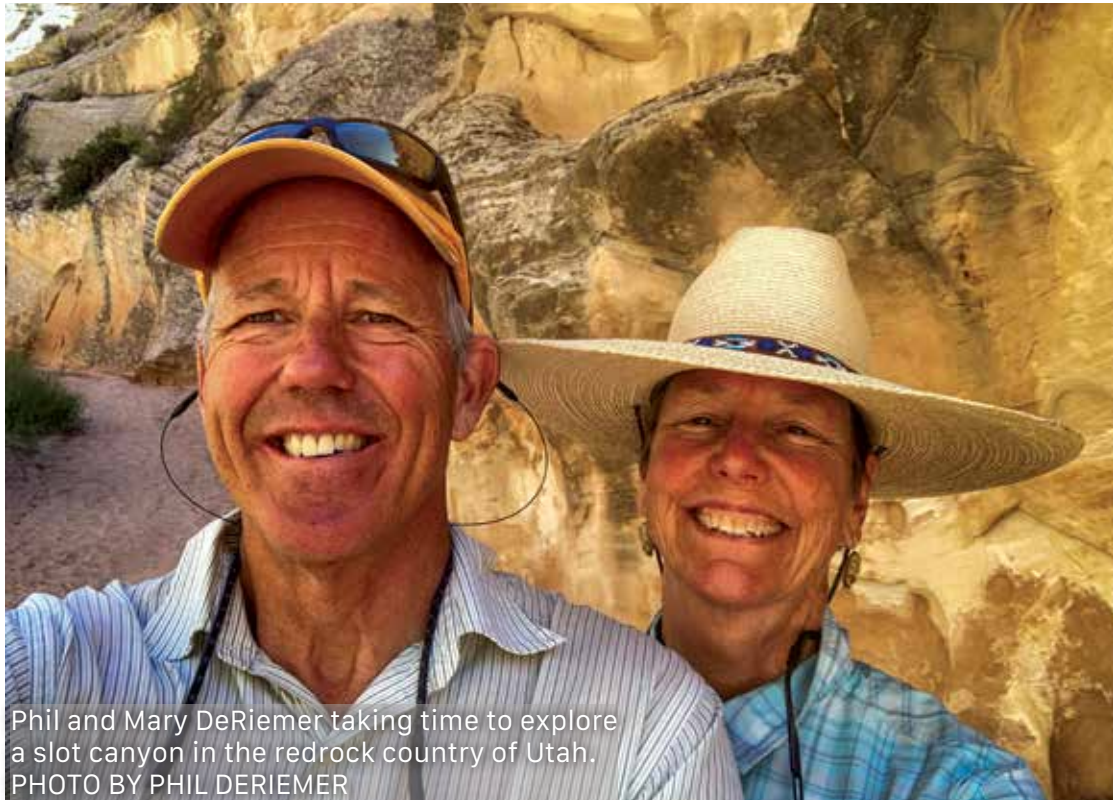
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CONTACT Bethany Overfield : 1.866.262.8429 or bethany@americanwhitewater.org

PHIL AND MARY DERIEMER TO CO-CHAIR AW'S ENDURING RIVERS CIRCLE



Phil and Mary DeRiemer taking time to explore a slot canyon in the redrock country of Utah.
PHOTO BY PHIL DERIEMER

IN THE WHITEWATER world, Mary and Phil DeRiemer rarely need an introduction; their international reputations precede them. Now, Mary and Phil DeRiemer have graciously agreed to step into the role of Co-Chairs for the American Whitewater Enduring Rivers Circle, a program 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. Or, as Mary and Phil call the program, the Forever Eddy.

For Mary, an affection for rivers started in 1980 when, as a young nurse, she began kayaking. Six months later she quit her job and moved to western North Carolina to work for Nantahala Outdoor Center. Within a few short years she was assistant head of NOC's instruction program and had won National Wildwater titles. For Phil, living on the other side of the country designing outdoor equipment, his introduction to kayaking came through a close friend who had won an inflatable kayak in a raffle. They would go

to the Trinity River and take turns, two at a time in a craft intended for one. Shortly after that, hardshells became the norm, and he never looked back. A year later Phil began working at Sundance Kayak School on the Rogue, then Otter Bar on the Cal. Salmon. Mary and Phil met when video producer Kent Ford (a former AW Director) brought a group of instructors together in 1992 to collaborate on an instructional video. Together they have been teaching, guiding, and exploring rivers as DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking ever since.

Mary and Phil shared their thoughts on American Whitewater and their Forever Eddy below.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE AMERICAN WHITEWATER ENDURING RIVERS CIRCLE?

Mary - Rivers have been my life since 1980, when I took my first kayak lesson. They have nurtured my relationships, my livelihood, my health, and sanity. The flow of running a rapid brings about a

ENDURING RIVERS

sense of joy and ease, of being whole and part of the environment. All rivers, but especially wilderness rivers, provide an opening to that which is bigger than the small person I think I am. It is this experience that I wish for everyone. It is for this that we give to ensure free-flowing rivers with access to all through the work of AW.

Phil - For nearly 40 years, rivers have played a valuable role in our lives: friendships, adventures and even business. We've benefited greatly from the hardworking individuals and organizations such as American Whitewater that have had the vision, passion, and courage to protect our rivers and our access to them. This work is never done and it is our hope that, through our involvement with the Enduring Rivers Circle, we can do our small part to see that those who do the hard work are able to continue to do so into the future. Plus, for Mary and I, we are closer to the take-out than we are to the put-in.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST AW PROJECT YOU ENGAGED WITH?

Mary & Phil - Slab Creek [a hydropower relicensing project on the South Fork of the American River CA]

WHAT IS ON YOUR BUCKET LIST FOR A RIVER STEWARDSHIP ACHIEVEMENT?

Mary - You guys are doing such a great job. I am so, so appreciative. Keep up the good work!

Phil - I have great concerns about the proposed re-opening of the Stibnite Mine on Idaho's South Fork of the Salmon and would like to see it blocked. Truth be told, there are so many on-going challenges and successes regarding river preservation and access that I rely heavily on organizations to keep me apprised and informed.

WHAT IS SOMETHING ONLY A FEW PEOPLE WOULD KNOW ABOUT YOU BOTH?

Phil proposed to me at the mouth of Wooley Creek and the Cal Salmon before hitting the take-out. We laughed and said we'd have to name our first kid Wooley. We made the decision to not have kids, so Wooley will have to be our first dog. That will happen when we retire, and as Phil says, Wooley may end up being our service dog!

If you would like to learn more about the American Whitewater Enduring Rivers Circle, please visit americanwhitewater.org>Support AW> Giving. You can learn more about DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking at www.adventurekayaking.com

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Mary DeRiemer expressing the joy she derives from being on the water while surfing a wave on Idaho's Middle Fork Salmon.
PHOTO BY PHIL DERIEMER



Phil, enjoying his job, gives the thumbs up from his office chair, Rogue River, Oregon.
PHOTO BY INDIGO CREEK OUTFITTERS

ACCIDENT SUMMARY: JULY – DECEMBER 2021

BY CHARLIE WALBRIDGE

The number of whitewater fatalities typically drops from July to December as water levels fall, but this year the count rose from 21 in the first half year to 24 in the second! There were 14 kayaking deaths, but only four of them were experienced whitewater paddlers. The other 10 were in recreational kayaks. Thanks to the pandemic, a lot of new paddlers got out on rivers for the first time. Kayak sales are way up, and many dealers were sold out. Most of these accidents occurred on mild whitewater, so it's likely that many of those who died were just looking for a fun day outside when they ran into trouble.

Other moving water accidents included two canoeists, three rafters, two paddleboarders, an IKer, a packrafter, and a drift boater. These numbers are very much in line with previous years. Listing causes, 10 paddlers had no PFDs, four were pinned in strainers, sieves, or undercuts, and there were three flush drownings. Five of the fatalities were solo or one-boat trips. (AW also logged in five "miscellaneous" deaths, five on inner tubes and one on an air mattress, none wearing life vests, which are not included in these totals) These incidents were spread throughout the U.S with Washington, Idaho, and Oregon leading with three each.

Once again, I'd like to thank Charlie Duffy, who in addition to preparing the graphs that accompany this article does a lot of behind-the-scenes work to keep the AW Accident Database accurate and functioning.

EXPERIENCED KAYAKERS:

We have reports of five deaths involving experienced kayakers, four in the U.S. and one an American travelling in Mexico. On August 9th Reese Doyle was paddling Alaska's lower Tosina River with a small group. Jule Harle, a local guide, described the run as "fairly straightforward Class III/III+ whitewater rapids, but [with] constantly changing water levels and weather factors keep[ing] the dangerous wood potential high, even for those familiar with the run." Mr. Doyle, 36, washed into a deceptively dangerous strainer that "comes up quickly and is mostly underwater." He was pinned beneath the surface for about ten minutes before other members of his group freed him. They attempted CPR without success.

Section 9 of North Carolina's French Broad River was the scene of an unfortunate death on August 13th. Tony De La Torre, 67, a solid kayaker, was paddling this Class III run with an experienced group. David Bell describes what happened when Mr. De La Torre flipped at the bottom of Swimmers Rapid:

"...after several seconds I realized he had not moved. I...performed a hand of god (rescue) on him to flip him over. I grabbed him by his PFD shoulder strap and shorty dry top. I had to grab hold of his helmet and strap to hold his head above water. His sprayskirt came loose and he was partially out of his boat. Ruth came up and pulled his boat off which allowed another boater to come up and help hold him up from the other side. We eventually had yet another boater attach his tow tether...and with the help of several other people pushing my boat from behind we got him to shore.

"Several people called 911...at 1:55. Rescue breaths and chest compressions were provided. The closest extrication point was Sandy Bottoms. Some rafters were called over to help. They had a cooler that I recommended we turn on its side to provide a hard surface for CPR. He was transferred to the raft where CPR was continued as we paddled down to Sandy Bottoms where he was moved onto the sandy shore [at around 2:30]. CPR continued... Paramedics arrived. He was shocked twice before he was taken to the ambulance. We believe he had a catastrophic event, probably a heart attack, that lead to him to turn over in flat water." (His son confirmed that Mr. De La Torre had a history of heart disease, but stayed fit by kayaking and mountain biking. He was very grateful for the group's timely and effective response.)

On October 1st Alex Kollar, 28, disappeared on Oregon's Deschutes River at Lava Island Falls, a Class IV-V drop. He was kayaking with two others when he lost his paddle in the entry and was pushed right. There are numerous log jams along the right bank and the other paddlers did not attempt to follow him. Instead, they eddied out below the main ledge and ran back up. There was no sign of him. They searched until dark before paddling to take-out to and calling for help. Rescue crews searched until 2 am. The next day they brought a larger crew with drones and an underwater camera. Mr. Kollar's gear turned up in a downstream logjam, but

his body was never recovered. He is presumed drowned due to entrapment in rocks or subsurface wood.

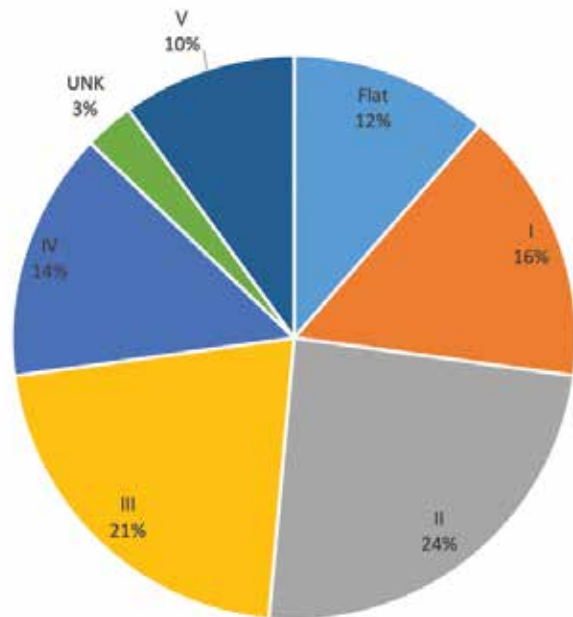
On November 16th there was a fatality on the Green Truss Bridge section of the White Salmon in Washington. Finn Woodruff, 22, was part of a very experienced four-man crew making the run at a high level. At Big Brother, a 30-foot waterfall, the group scouted and set safety before attempting the far left, high-water line. The danger here is an undercut cave on the river right. A report prepared by the group describes what happened:

“Pat watched Finn enter left...he landed at the base of Big Brother, went deep and completely submerged. He resurfaced in a stern stall, left of center of the river, well downstream of the falls. He slowly went the rest of the way over the top of the stern stall to land fully upside down...[and] was pushed across the river to the right wall.... At lower levels the current would have pulled him downriver, but at high water, the cave eddy is large enough that this was within its backtow.... Pat attempted to reach Finn with his [throw] bag across the river [from river left].... The bag did not make it across to the cave.... Finn got a grip on the slightly overhanging wall of the cave and was able to hold himself stationary against the pull of the eddy current. There are not many handholds in the overhung cave.

“...David got out of his boat and started working upstream immediately [on river right].... Leif scrambled up the portage trail [also on the right] and attempted to get his throwbag to Finn.... David got to the flat area directly overhanging the cave, and started setting up an anchor [for] a rappel.... Finn lost his grip on the overhanging wall. Hearing the shouts from across the river, David abandoned the anchor and moved to lower a rope directly above the cave. His vision was obstructed and [he] could not see the end of the rope.... Finn always seemed to be on the upstream end of the cave while the rope was on the downstream end of the cave.... Finn resurfaced unconscious. This was the first time David was able to see Finn.... He moved back to securing the anchor... to rappel down to river level. Seeing this, Pat grabbed his boat, ran up to the moving flatwater above the falls, and ferried across. David and Pat...made a plan: David would use a Munter Hitch to rappel from his Astral Green Jacket’s harness loop, while Pat would mind the rope and be able to provide the crucial strength to pull them both back.... David was able to grab Finn with his left hand...and tie in...to Finn’s shoulder strap on his life jacket.... [He] was able to get Finn on a narrow ledge.... They started CPR.”

The full report in the AW Accident Database provides many additional details on this very demanding rescue attempt. This strong, well-prepared crew did everything they could in a very dangerous place. This accident is quite similar to the one that claimed the life of Olympian Richie Weiss in 1997. Both incidents should be considered by anyone attempting this drop at high levels.

2021 Incidents/Class



AW also received this clear and informative report from Nathan Werner on the death of his friend Adam Mayo in Mexico.

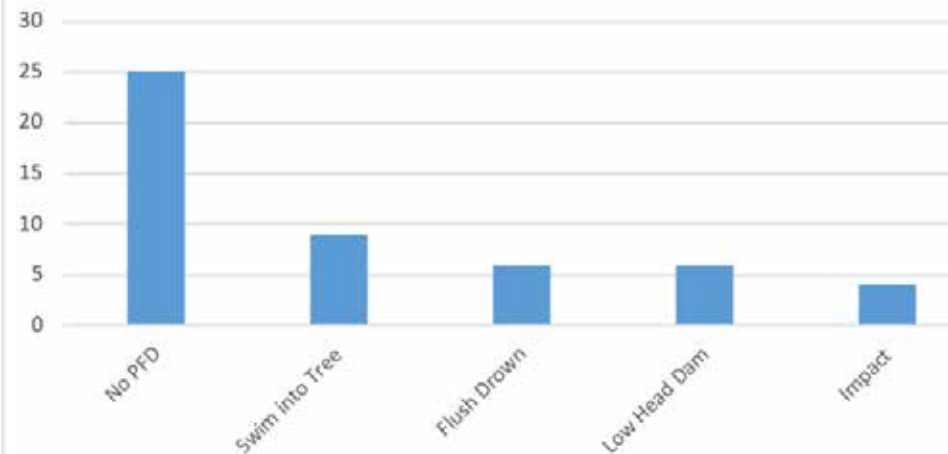
“On December 17th Adam and I put in on the upper section of the Rio Jalacingo, near Tlapacoyan, Mexico. This steep, narrow, basalt-lined jungle river is not run as often as the local classics because of several difficult portages. We were both expert paddlers and frequently paddled difficult rivers together in Colorado. Adam had run the river several times, including once the previous week. We were staying with Aventurec, a kayak outfitter in the area.

“We put on at approximately 12:30, leaving plenty of time for the five-hour trip. Our plan was for Adam to lead because of his knowledge of the run. With Adam leading we ran a series of Class III-IV slides. My memory of the events leading up to the event is incomplete as a result of the accident. I remember following Adam through a series of slides and drops before rounding a blind corner and finding myself at the lip of a huge drop. It was the mandatory portage: a 70-foot drop onto a rock shelf. I blacked out as a result of the impact, then regained consciousness floating in the pool below sometime later. I saw Adam floating face down nearby. Severely injured and in great pain, I crawled out of the river and collapsed on shore. It was 1:00 pm.

“That evening Emmett de Maynadier, an employee of Aventurec, went looking for the two kayakers when they failed to return to the lodge. I heard his yells, saw his flashlight, and called back. This happened at 9:00 pm; Mr. de Maynadier called his lodge and rallied the other kayakers staying there. The terrain at the accident site was extremely rugged with no easy way to access

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2021 - Top 5 Accident Causes



the river. The group didn't actually reach me until 11:00 pm, and the evacuation, which required ropes to navigate the steep terrain, didn't reach the road until 7:30 am. The local authorities later recovered Adam's body.

"Adam was killed instantly. I had multiple fractures to my sacrum and lumbar spine and broke my scapula. I was taken to a hospital in Mexico and later flown back to Colorado to begin a rehabilitation program that will last 6-8 months. I expect to make a good recovery.

"Since I blacked out and my memory is incomplete, exactly what happened in the lead-in to the big drop is unknown. Speculation is that Adam either lost track of where he was, or flipped in the drop upstream and washed over the falls. The eddy above the falls is not hard to catch according to those who know the run, but without Adam's guidance it would not have been obvious for me to know which eddy it was. It should be noted that Mexico does not have search and rescue squads on call like the United States, and paddlers must be prepared to affect their own rescue and evacuation. Fellow paddlers led the technical aspects of the rescue with the assistance of local paramedics."

American Whitewater thanks the paddlers who prepared these reports. It's not easy to prepare one following the death of a paddling partner, but this information is invaluable. Experienced boaters use these accounts to assess the risks and develop tactics for running difficult whitewater. This work is central to AW's mission, and we couldn't do it without you.

RECREATIONAL KAYAKERS

We have two reports of solo kayakers who drowned on the Upper New River in Virginia. This section has a few mild rapids and long stretches of flat water. On July 3rd Charles Wallace, 56, was found near Arsenal Falls. Rescuers found a submerged kayak, and later,

his body. A life vest was on board, but not used. Then on August 6th a solo kayaker died on the New River in the vicinity of Schumate Falls. William Glover, 60, was wearing a life vest. Another boater spotted him and called it in. Authorities suspect a health emergency.

Three other kayakers who were not wearing life vests also died. On July 13th Brian Curtis, 39, drowned after his kayak flipped at the Spruce Park launch site on the Lower Middle Fork of the Flathead, below the whitewater stretch. Then, on August 28th, Dalton Edwards, 29, was kayaking with a small group when he flipped, struggled, and disappeared on

the North Fork of the White River in Arkansas. Reports say that water levels were high and the current swift. On the same day 58-year-old Steven Matrese was with a group of 10 running Central Pennsylvania's Swatara Creek at high water. According to someone familiar with the group, none were experienced whitewater paddlers. Low hanging branches flipped or pinned most of the boats, causing enough problems that rescue squads were called. At the end of the day Mr. Matrese was missing; his body was found the next day.

Two other deaths resulted from boats and paddlers pinned on strainers. The Idaho State Journal reported that Heidi Weaver, 50, and her husband were kayaking on the South Fork of the Snake River when Ms. Weaver's kayak pinned against a log jam. She was held underwater and drowned. On July 31st a 15-year-old boy paddling a sit-on-top kayak died on Tennessee's Lower Hiwassee River. He was at the end of a group of 20 on this Class I-II run. When the group noticed his absence, they went back upstream. His kayak was pinned against a downed tree and the boy's body was floating a short distance below.

Ohio's Great Miami River is a popular Class II run, but on July 3rd it was running at 6000 cfs, a near flood level. Bobbie Egan, 60, drowned after her kayak flipped. She washed downstream for some distance until another padding group spotted her and pulled her ashore. She was wearing a PFD. On October 22nd Johnny Henderson, 35, was in a kayak with his children in a flood backwater near their home when a strong current took them towards a drainage pipe. Henderson fortunately got his children to safety before he was pulled under. Always remember that flood backwaters can be treacherous! The water may look flat, but it is on the move and will often carry the unwary into dangerous places.

A low head dam on Nebraska's South Platte River was the site of a fatality on October 8th. Linda D. Schledewitz, 65, was kayaking with her husband when they went over a "check dam" and capsized. They were known as avid kayak fishermen, and it's not clear if the run was deliberate. Mr. Schledewitz swam her ashore and tried to revive her.

CANOEOING DEATHS

There were two open canoe fatalities during the last six months; both involved inexperienced people. Maria Lilibeth Reyes, 46, was canoeing on Missouri's Elk River on July 27th when her canoe hit a downed tree and capsized. Ms. Reyes was trapped underwater between her canoe and the tree. On August 14th a canoe overturned in easy rapids on the Mississippi River near the Chain of Rocks Bridge. A bystander called 911 and rescue crews found a woman floating downstream holding on a canoe. The canoe sank as she was rescued. The man apparently tried to swim to the Missouri side of the river but hasn't been seen since. In both accidents life vests were not used; they would have been quite helpful in the second incident.

PADDLEBOARDS

With paddleboards, as with rec kayaks and canoes, most accidents involve moving water and unprepared paddlers. Luke Baugh of Triad River Tours reported that on July 8th two of his safety kayakers assisted the Skagit County Sheriff in locating the body of a 35-year-old woman on the Cascade River in western Washington. Her board was caught in a log jam and she was held underwater by a paddle leash attached to her ankle. Although ankle leashes are pretty commonly used, they do not release well and have been responsible for many moving water deaths over the years.

A terrible SUP accident unfolded on Oct. 30 when four standup paddleboarders died on the Cleddau River in Wales. The accident occurred during a heavy rainstorm. A group of 9 had been in the water only minutes when the flood-swollen river carried them over a low head dam. Morgan Rogers, 24, and Nicola Wheatley, 40 died at the scene; a fourth victim, Andrea Powell, 41, died at the hospital. Paul O'Dwyer, 42, died trying to rescue the other paddlers. Five other paddlers escaped unhurt from the incident, which brought dozens of first responders to the area.

High water can be deceptive, especially at flood. Stopping and portaging above unrunnable drops becomes quite difficult, especially for those without whitewater training. I suspect that they didn't realize how fast-moving the water was until they got on it, and were not prepared to avoid the dam. Paddlers should avoid extremes of weather and water unless they are VERY experienced!

But there are exceptions to the rule! Paddleboarder Nicholas Zawadzki disappeared after falling off his paddleboard in Class

III Go Left rapid on Idaho's Main Payette River on August 9th. Mr. Zawadzki, 36, was an expert paddleboarder and co-founder of Hydrus Board Tec. This was a run he had made hundreds of times. His body has still not been found. He was wearing a life vest, helmet and all the usual protective gear. His board and leash released from his PFD and were later recovered, His helmet surfaced about 3 minutes after the incident. It's not clear what happened, but some kind of underwater snagging or entrapment is likely.

RAFTING ACCIDENTS

There was only one private rafting death in the second half of the year, and it wasn't really a boating accident. On August 8th Randall Crawford, 63, drowned after swimming out to catch a loose raft at the Bratten Fishing Access on the Yellowstone River in Montana. Photos of the area show a section of river with fast current but no real rapids. He was not wearing a PFD and was carried downstream until he disappeared. His body was found several days later.

There were two commercial rafting fatalities in the same period. On July 24th a commercial raft flipped in "Rapid #5" of the Numbers section of Colorado's Arkansas River. Flow was 800 cfs. He swam some distance downstream before he was pulled from the water by guides. CPR was administered, without success. On September 10th, the opening day of West Virginia's Gauley Season, a commercial rafting trip got into trouble in Lost Paddle Rapid. The lead boat flipped against the big rock at the bottom of Hawaii 5-0 (Second Drop). A guest swam to the left and was pinned in far-left chute at the top of Tumblehome (4th drop). His body was caught in the slot and folded over. Dave Bassage confirmed that this is the place that claimed the life of kayaker Bob Taylor in 1977. It is very jumbled and undercut. The dam release was later cut back to facilitate the recovery.

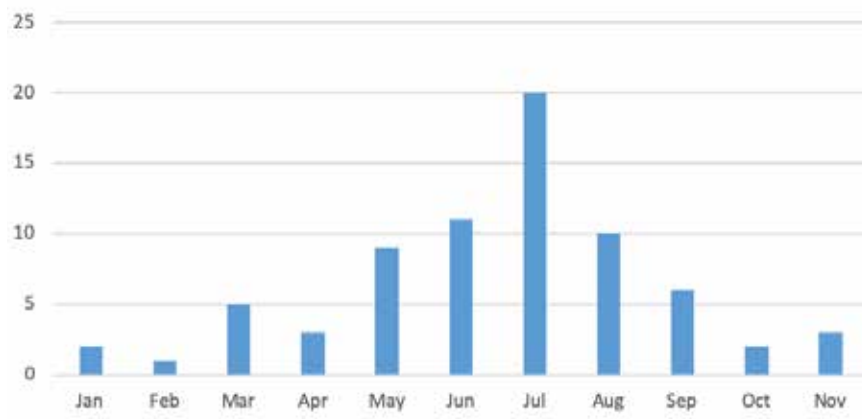
We also note a serious malfunction at the Adventurepark "Raging River" ride near Des Moines, Iowa. Michael Jaramillo, 10, was killed and four others were seriously injured when their raft capsized. Two others escaped unscathed. Like most other whitewater river rides, the rafts are attached to a conveyor belt. No life vests are worn and seat belts are used. If the raft capsizes there is a real danger of underwater entanglement. It seems like free floating boats and life-jacketed customers would be a lot safer.

RIVERSIDE CAMPING TRAGEDY

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado is one of America's best-known overnight whitewater trips. On July 14th, the second night of a commercial rafting trip, a huge storm hit their camp at Tatabatso Wash (mile 37.5). The Canyon is no stranger to violent "monsoon" thunderstorms, but this was one that was exceptionally severe. The rain started at 5:00 pm; soon hurricane force winds and hail battered the place. A small, dry wash became a wide, rushing torrent tearing through the camp. Water and rocks, some of

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them quite large, came tumbling over the rim. Many of the guests were injured by rockfall and five were later hospitalized. One guide suffered a crushed pelvis and internal injuries and faces months of rehab.

The guides and guests ran for the motor rigs and headed out into the river. Two people slipped away. Rebecca Copeland, 29, was carried downstream and drowned. A 78-year-old woman washed into the river and became stuck in an eddy along with several dry bags. She grabbed onto a bag for flotation and circled around the eddy many times until she could grab some branches and get back on land. The rest of group landed two miles downstream and used a satellite phone to call for help. The National Park Service sent two paramedics and some food, but the injured could not be evacuated until the next day because of the wild weather. For an outstanding first-person account and a frightening video of the storm go to: <https://www.harrisff.com/post/the-day-it-rained-rocks>.

IKs, PACKRAFTS AND DRIFTBOATS

We have a brief report of fatality in North Carolina's Nolichucky River Gorge on July 15th. Two men in a Bass Pro Shop tandem fishing funyak flipped in Class IV Quarter Mile Rapid. One man swam to shore; the other held onto the IK. The boat was clearly a bad choice for whitewater and suggests a disturbing lack of experience. His buddy lost sight of him and flagged down a commercial trip. The man was dead when found.

David Roberts, 73, drowned on September 2nd after his drift boat tipped over in Idaho's Portneuf River. He and another man were fishing in a drift boat that swamped and capsized. A local paddler speculates that a nearby low-head dam might have been the culprit. They were not wearing life vests. One man made it to shore, but Mr. Roberts washed downstream. His body was found a few hours later underneath a logjam.

A Coast Guard officer returning from an overnight stay in a cabin drowned in Alaska's Eagle River on September 9th. Jeffery DeRonde, 34, and a friend were paddling packrafts when both of their boats flipped. Mr. DeRonde was pushed underneath a logjam; his friend paddled out and notified authorities who were later able to recover his body.

INSPIRING EVACUATION IN THE GREEN RIVER GORGE

Every fall paddlers from all over the country converge on North Carolina's Green River Gorge to practice for the country's most famous extreme race. On November 5th Nick Parsons was seriously injured there. He writes, "I was running left side of Sunshine, but I was too far left and got rejected into

the gnarly looking rock in middle, huge hit under right butt cheek on hull, boat totally fine, didn't roll or swim, went to shore river right because I realized my leg was jacked." It turned out he had a broken hip and pelvis!

An evacuation was necessary, but the trail into the Green River Gorge is so steep it's barely walkable! Mr. Parsons weighs 220 pounds! Dozens of paddlers rallied to help EMT's get Mr. Parsons up the hill to safety. The evacuation took 3 hours. Kimberly Lughart from the Henderson County Rescue Squad told the press "I want to thank them for what they did. We got the patient out the fastest we ever have, due to their willingness to help. They did an amazing thing!"

YOU CAN HELP!

American Whitewater needs your help to gather accident reports to share with other paddlers. First person accounts from experienced paddlers, newspaper articles, and on-line posts are all important and worth sharing. Since many media articles are inaccurate or incomplete, clarifying comments from paddlers familiar with the area are really useful. And while serious incidents involving skilled whitewater paddlers are quite rare, they can teach us important lessons, help us avoid trouble, and show how to better manage emergencies. Accurate accounts of these accidents also keep malicious rumors from at bay, an important consideration in this age of Internet gossip.

To report a whitewater accident, near miss, or serious injury, please go to the Safety page on americanwhitewater.org, click "report an accident", and enter the information. You can also email me at ccwalbridge@cs.com or message "Charlie Walbridge" on Facebook. Please share newspaper articles, Facebook and chat room posts, or even rumors! Although I'm not an "investigator" I will run down sketchy reports to find out what happened. I can also help you prepare an accident report if needed.

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SINCE 2001 KAYAK SESSION HAS CONTRIBUTED TO AW FOR A VALUE OF NEARLY \$250 000 TO SUPPORT ITS TREMENDOUS EFFORTS

AW PARTNERS

\$20,000 - Class V



NEW BELGIUM.

Fat Tire

EST. COLORADO U.S.A. 1991

\$15,000 - Class IV



NANTAHALA OUTDOOR CENTER

\$10,000 - Class III



\$7,500 - Class II



NORTHWEST RAFTING CO

\$5,000 - Boof



Rocky Mountain Rafts



RIGGED FOR ADVENTURE



\$2,500 - Wave



PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT: OARS

BY STEVE MARKLE

LATE OARS FOUNDER George Wendt spent his youth exploring the river canyons of California and the Southwest. After a float trip through Glen Canyon in the early 1960s, Wendt realized how fragile the great whitewater rivers of the United States are.

“After the flooding of Glen Canyon, I experienced a profound sense of loss and with it came the realization and sense of urgency that places like this need to be shared, preserved, and protected for future generations,” Wendt later wrote. “It became my calling to deliver people into the wilderness and generate excitement for these wild places.”

In 1969, OARS became the first exclusively non-motorized rafting outfitter authorized by the National Park Service to run trips on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon. Today OARS caters to active travelers of all ages and abilities with more than 75 unique itineraries worldwide, including one-day and weekend escapes.

Now, as a second generation family-owned river outfitter, OARS is committed to preserving and protecting rivers around the world. Throughout its 53 years, OARS has forged a legacy



of premier adventure travel and meaningful contributions to conservation efforts.

Each year the company contributes to regional conservation organizations around the globe via voluntary donations and annual fundraising events. In partnership with their guests, OARS has contributed more than \$6 million in donations and fees toward the preservation of the environment and to various conservation initiatives since the company’s inception.

To honor George and Pam Wendt’s dedication to introducing people to the beauty of rivers, OARS founded The Pam & George Wendt Foundation, which helps under-resourced youth and young adults gain access to river trips and whitewater guide training through subsidized rafting excursions and guide school scholarships. The company hopes this organization will help encourage the next generation of river stewards.

As George Wendt often said, “We save what we love and we love what we know.”



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

Colorado

Dolores River Boating Advocate, Dolores

Georgia

Georgia Canoeing Association Inc, Winston

Kentucky

Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

New York

KCCNY, Brooklyn

North Carolina

West Asheville Canoe and Kayak Organization (WACKO), Asheville

Ohio

Keelhaulers, Cleveland

South Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Washington

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

AFFILIATE CLUBS BY STATE

Alaska

Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

Coosa River Paddling Club, Wetumpka
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Gold Country Paddlers, Placerville
Redwood Empire Paddlers, Santa Rosa
River City Whitewater Club, Sacramento
Smith River Alliance, Crescent City

Colorado

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

Connecticut

Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq, Lakeville

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, 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

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Freeport

Maryland

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

Minnesota

Rapids Riders, Eagan

Missouri

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

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association, Contoocook

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

New York

Kuyahoorra Valley Paddlers, Middleville

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
Oregon Whitewater Association, Tigard
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

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

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Jonesborough
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Clean Water Expected in East Tennessee, Sevierville

East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
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
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia

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

Washington

Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
Yakima River Runners, Selah

Washington, DC

Canoe Cruisers Association

West Virginia

Friends of the Cheat, Kingwood
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Bolivar
WV Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

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

Wyoming

American Packrafting Association, Wilson
Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson

Ontario

Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, Toronto

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!

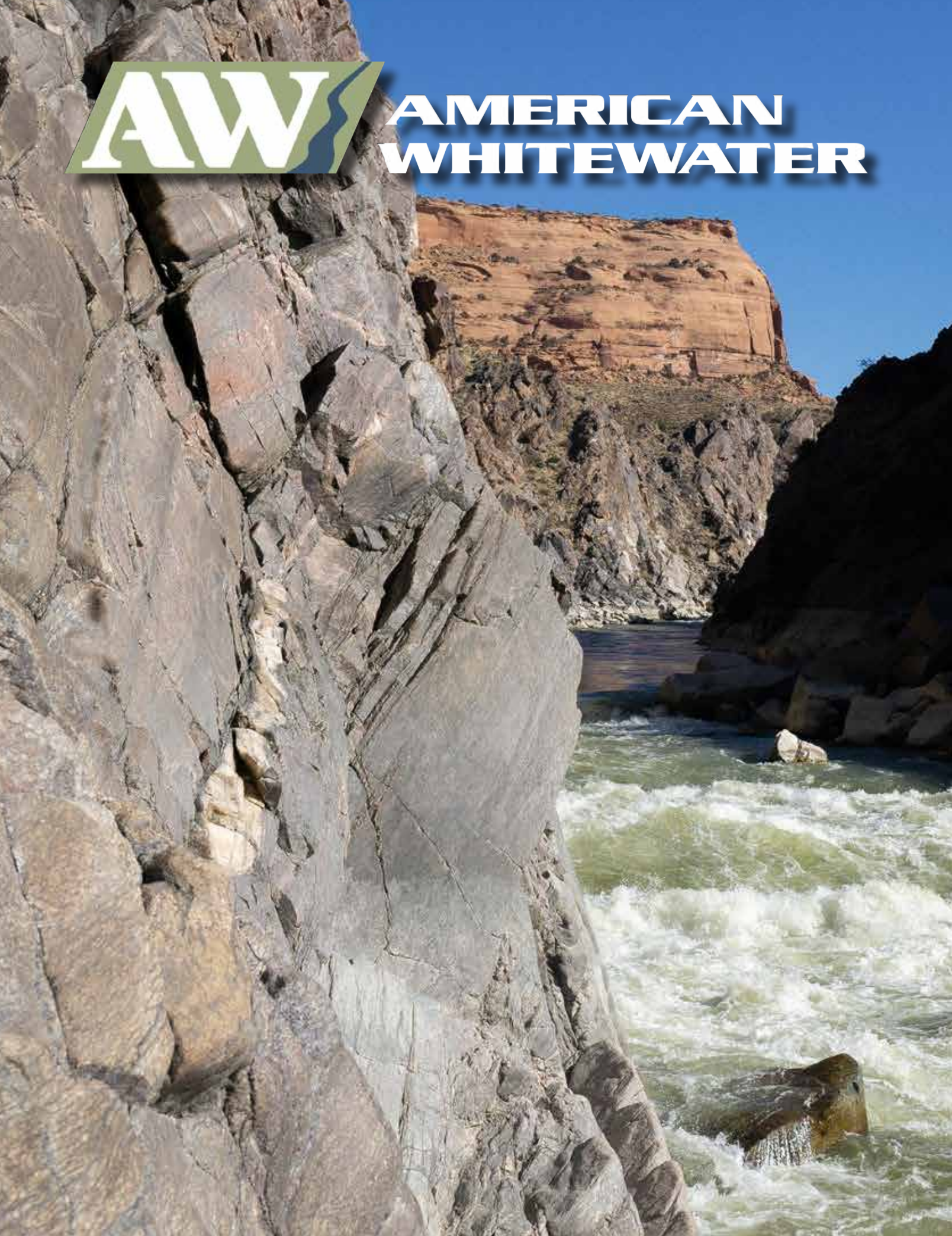
10 REASONS TO JOIN AW AS AN AFFILIATE CLUB

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.



AMERICAN WHITEWATER



The Strength of Our Voice is Your Membership

Standard w/AW Journal	\$35
Family w/AW Journal	\$50
Ender Club w/T-Shirt	\$125
Platinum Paddler w/Hoodie	\$250
Explorer w/Watershed Bag	\$500
Lifetime	\$1,000
Steward w/\$400 Kokatat Gift	\$2,500



*Incentive gifts change from time to time, please check the website for the latest rewards.

Join @ americanwhitewater.org/join

Donate @ americanwhitewater.org/donate



Membership Driven River Stewardship
americanwhitewater.org/join

Whitewater River Defenders

Since 1954

Salmon River, ID – By Evan Stafford

