



**AMERICAN
WHITEWATER**

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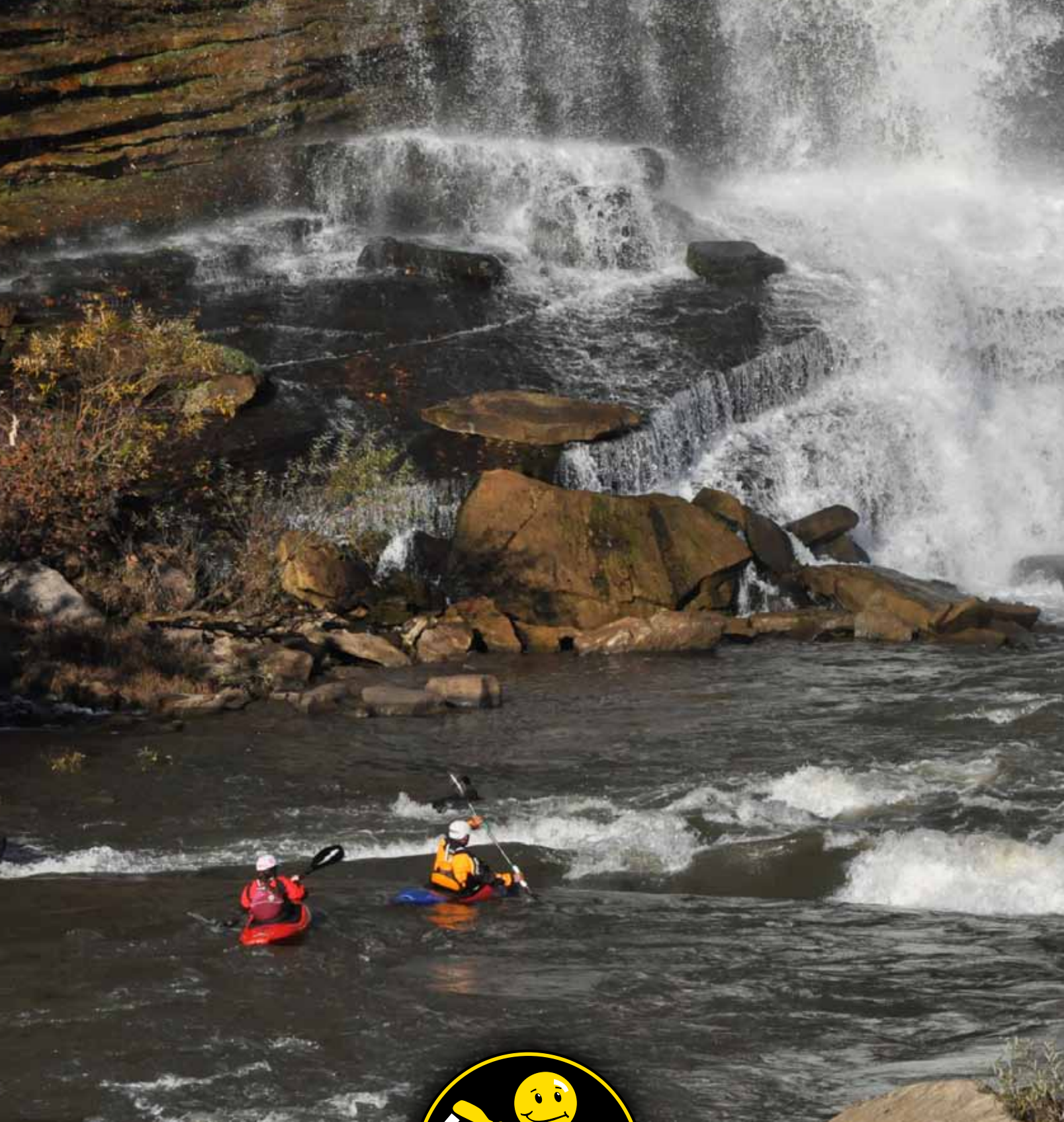
BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
May/June 2015

FIGHTING FOR THE COLORADO RIVER'S FUTURE

RECIPE FOR A PERFECT CREEK

CANOES, CANOES, CANOES

**AW ADVOCATES FOR 50+
NEW WILD AND SCENIC
RIVERS IN MONTANA!**



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A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

May/June 2015 – Volume 55– Issue 3

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Nankowep Overlook, Colorado River. Among the many threats the Grand Canyon currently faces, persistent drought and changes to streamflows are top priorities for AW.

Photo by Nathan Fey

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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

AMERICAN WHITewater HAS a long history of engaging in public lands and river management. Protecting the wilderness character of waterways through river conservation was one of the main tenets behind the inception of our organization back in the 1950s. In the 1970s, whitewater paddlers provided critical input and grassroots support for Wild and Scenic River designations across the country (and we remain an effective voice for new designations today). The 80s saw American Whitewater cut its teeth on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) dam relicensing process, with many successes restoring flows to rivers that have since become destinations for the paddling community. More recently, American Whitewater used the FERC relicensing process to identify and subsequently remove deadbeat dams that were no longer economically viable.

Through these early decades of whitewater paddling in the U.S., the community largely acted on its own, which is consistent with the individualism typical of paddlers. Through the last decade that has started to change; the millions of Americans who participate in many kinds of outdoor recreation are coming together to support public lands and the outdoor recreation economy these lands enable. Consider the impact of outdoor recreation as identified by the industry trade group Outdoor Industry Association:

- Outdoor recreation generates \$646 billion in annual consumer spending nationwide.
- Outdoor recreation is responsible for \$80 billion in federal and state tax revenue.
- The outdoor recreation industry employs 6.1 million Americans.

In addition to the direct economic impact of retail sales, wages, jobs, and tax revenue that comes from outdoor recreation, there are less tangible but equally

important economic benefits to contemplate. These include quality of life improvements congruent with easy access to high quality recreation on rivers and public lands.

Where I live, in western North Carolina, for instance, I've witnessed firsthand the attraction of some of the largest craft brewers to the region largely based on excellent recreation access and high quality water. New Belgium Brewing, Sierra Nevada, and Oscar Blues all opened, or are in the process of opening, East Coast brewing facilities in the region.

With this increased awareness of the strength of the recreation economy as a backdrop, I recently spent a week in Washington, DC working with groups that have a vested interest in the stewardship of public lands and waters. These groups included the Outdoor Industry Association (who collected the economic information above); the industry-funded Conservation Alliance, a group of outdoor industry companies that disburses its collective annual membership dues to grassroots environmental organizations like American Whitewater (they are currently funding our Wild and Scenic River and Wilderness work on the Olympic Peninsula); and the Outdoor Alliance, comprised of human-powered member organizations like American Whitewater, and was established to strengthen efforts aimed at protecting and promoting the human-powered enjoyment of the outdoors.

Collectively, these groups have the capacity to punch well above their individual weight. As was evident in my recent trip to DC, each of these groups has its own story to tell and the collective sum of those stories is powerful. The industry representatives did a great job discussing the economic benefits of outdoor recreation. Grassroots conservation groups have helped protect



Members of the Outdoor Industry Association, Conservation Alliance, and Outdoor Alliance after spending the day on Capitol Hill in support of public lands and rivers. Collectively, these groups have the capacity to punch well above their individual weight.

more than 44 million acres of wildlands. Human-powered recreation member organizations work closely with the agencies and political representatives to secure balanced federal policies that manage public lands and waters wisely.

Equally encouraging, these groups are working more closely than they ever have to address needs for "close to home" access to quality outdoor recreation, including access to rivers. In the past these groups functioned in their own silos, rarely crossing over to work collaboratively. The close correlation of economic impact data, wise land management practices, and ongoing protection of public lands and waters appeals to both ends of the political spectrum. This played out in a recent 2014 poll conducted by Colorado College that found that 69 percent of Westerners were more likely to vote for a candidate who supported enhancing protections for some public lands, like national forests. And the flipside of that: 72 percent of Westerners were less likely to vote for a candidate who supported selling public lands like national forests to reduce the budget deficit.

The whitewater paddling community doesn't need a poll to reinforce what is common on major rivers across the country.

THE JOURNEY AHEAD

In the put-in parking lot you are likely to observe a VW bus with a Grateful Dead sticker, parked next to the Volvo with a "W" sticker, parked next to the pickup truck with an NRA sticker. As whitewater paddlers, what unites us all are the rivers and the opportunities to enjoy them and share them with our friends. It's the exploration and awareness that rivers provide our community that is important. Rivers are worth protecting; they form the basis for a new conservation ethic: that time spent on the water provides motivation and impetus for the advocacy and protection of whitewater rivers.

This new conservation model is supported by large lifestyle brands like KEEN, Patagonia, Clif Bar, and others. A well-

organized trade association supports those brands and those brands provide additional support to the Conservation Alliance, which is interested in funding our work. Plus, we now have strong partnerships with other like-minded human-powered membership organizations. It's a solid model and a great example of what it takes to build an effective coalition. It also provides a source of hope for future stewardship opportunities.

After my week of meetings in DC, I left with a sense of optimism that I haven't felt in a while. Sure, the political landscape is polarized, but our shared natural heritage is something most Americans value and find worth protecting. It's the draw of these special places (in our case, rivers) that

makes paddlers a force in river stewardship and conservation.

Take care of your rivers and paddling and they will take care of you!

Mark Singleton



Executive Director

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STEWARDSHIP

COLORADO STEWARDSHIP UPDATES

BY NATHAN FEY AND BELINDA GRISWOLD



*Browns Canyon of the Arkansas gained important protections in February when it was designated as a National Monument.
Photo by Leland Davis*

Browns Canyon Designation

AS MOST OF our members know by now, American Whitewater and many other organizations celebrated a tremendous win with the designation of Browns Canyon as a National Monument in February. Browns Canyon, for those who haven't paddled it, is a whitewater treasure that draws paddlers from around the nation and the world, and it will now be safe from oil and gas development and other major threats to the surrounding landscape.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped make this possible after so many years of work!

But, as you might guess, the fight is not over. Why? Because while the lands of the canyon are protected, the waters are not. Not yet anyway. The designation of Browns Canyon National Monument did not establish or imply a federal water right that could impact existing water

users or infringe on Colorado's water planning process. AW actually supported this move because we believe our state is best positioned to steward its scarce water resources.

But as the Colorado State Water Plan proceeds, we are increasingly concerned that the state water plan is not recognizing and protecting recreational flows to the appropriate extent, particularly considering the large and growing recreation economy of our state.

This is particularly so as we review the Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan, which has not established a goal of protecting flows to sustain world-class river recreation in the basin. This is certainly not for lack of data on what exactly those flows must be to sustain recreational use; such figures are readily available for all the state's major river basins, thanks to the hard work of AW members around Colorado.

As boaters, we are absolutely committed to ensuring that protection for recreation

flows be institutionalized in the State Water Plan. AW will be urging Governor Hickenlooper and the Colorado Water Conservation Board to direct each basin to integrate a consistent approach to quantifying recreational flows, and the frequency with which those flows will be available under future conditions. This information will help all Coloradans decide what the future of our rivers will look like.

Our members are actively engaged in celebrating the Browns' Canyon victory. But it will be a hollow victory indeed if recreational flows are not maintained on the Arkansas, one of the nation's premier whitewater destinations.

Colorado State Water Plan Update

AW's Colorado Stewardship Program is pleased to announce the development of a powerful new tool that we hope will help ensure that the Colorado State Water Plan is more grounded in the reality of recreation use on the state's rivers.

STEWARDSHIP



The South Platte is one of several Colorado river basins that is covered by AW's new tool for modeling how potential changes in the Colorado State Water Plan will affect boatable days in a given drainage.

Photo by Bob Menard

The tool is able to assess what changes in boatable days will occur under future scenarios outlined in the draft basin plans, known as BIPs, or Basin Implementation Plans. The tool is available for the Yampa, the South Platte, and in the Colorado Basin. We are working to make sure each roundtable integrates this tool into their BIPs.

What this means in practice is that if water rights or diversions change, or even if their timing changes, we can plug that change into the tool and it will tell us whether there will be an increase or decrease in boatable days, and will describe that change in terms of both quantity and quality of boatable days.

The tool is also available to gauge the impact of any new diversions, such as major trans-mountain diversions, that might be proposed in the state plan. We hope this tool will help show decision-makers the impacts of their actions, while also galvanizing the boating community to advocate for sustainable river solutions in the state water plan.

Colorado River Basin Study Update

Many of you have been following the evolution of the federal Colorado River Basin Study, including AW's role on the Healthy Flows Workgroup.

We're pleased to report that as of this writing in March 2015, our flow studies on priority Colorado River Basin reaches have been completed, and should be integrated into the release of the Healthy Flows Report at the end of this month. We will also release our own version of the Flow Studies, so keep an eye out for that on the AW website.

Thanks to the basin study, we know that demand for Colorado River water has exceeded supply and it's going to get worse. We also know that upstream states will have to do something to make sure California and Nevada and Arizona get their water. The basin study is coming up with solutions, and that will have an impact on Colorado's economy and recreation opportunities.

We hope that our flow studies will help identify places around the Colorado River

Basin where we may be able to explore opportunities to meet the supply gap and enhance recreational opportunities at the same time. Conversely, the studies will also identify places where additional diversions will hurt recreation and ecosystem health.

On the Gila River, for example, we're grateful to the many boaters who participated in our survey, and that information will be a major help in showing the negative effect of the proposed Gila diversion on the vibrant New Mexico boating community and economy.

The flow studies are also important as Colorado explores ways of meeting its water delivery obligations to downstream states. For example, we know the Yampa, as a relatively free-flowing river, will be a primary driver of those requirements. Our Yampa flow studies will help assess what future releases may do to boating opportunities on the river. Similarly on the Dolores or the San Juan, we can plug future operations into our studies and see how recreation will be affected.

We want to thank the hundreds of volunteers who participated in our flow studies and identification of priority watersheds that we're now exploring solutions for!

New Mexico Navigability Showdown

March was a busy month for AW as we worked hard to derail two very troubling bills in the New Mexico legislature. The bills were a reaction to a recent opinion from New Mexico's Attorney General that suggested most riverbed and riverbanks between low and high water marks are open to public use.

But the bills went way overboard, so to speak, in trying to keep boaters off private land, and in the process tried to undo New Mexico's constitutional protection of river water as a public trust. The bills, if passed, would have made any landing on streambed or bank a criminal trespassing offense,

and would also have reversed many of the public trust protections that currently help safeguard New Mexico rivers.

As of this writing in late March, we have succeeded in stopping the bills' proponents from shifting authority to the state Game and Fish Commission to decide which rivers are navigable, and thus deserving of protection. We have also secured some good language about the bills' impact on navigability under the Clean Water Act.

But the trespassing issue remains, and AW is working hard to ensure that the Attorney General, the Game and Fish Commission, and Gov. Martinez set up a task force to study these issues instead of rushing to ill-conceived action. It just doesn't make sense to criminalize the 300,000 people who float New Mexico's rivers every year.

Gore Canyon Whitewater Park Update

In March, contractors finished the in-channel work associated with the Gore Canyon Whitewater Park near Glenwood Springs, Colorado. The park will not only

provide some great boating opportunities for paddlers of all abilities, but will also ensure a water right to keep water flowing through the Colorado to sustain recreation use. Grand County is planning a ribbon-cutting celebration for Monday, July 13 at the Park—we hope to see you there!

Colorado River: Wild and Scenic Alternative Update

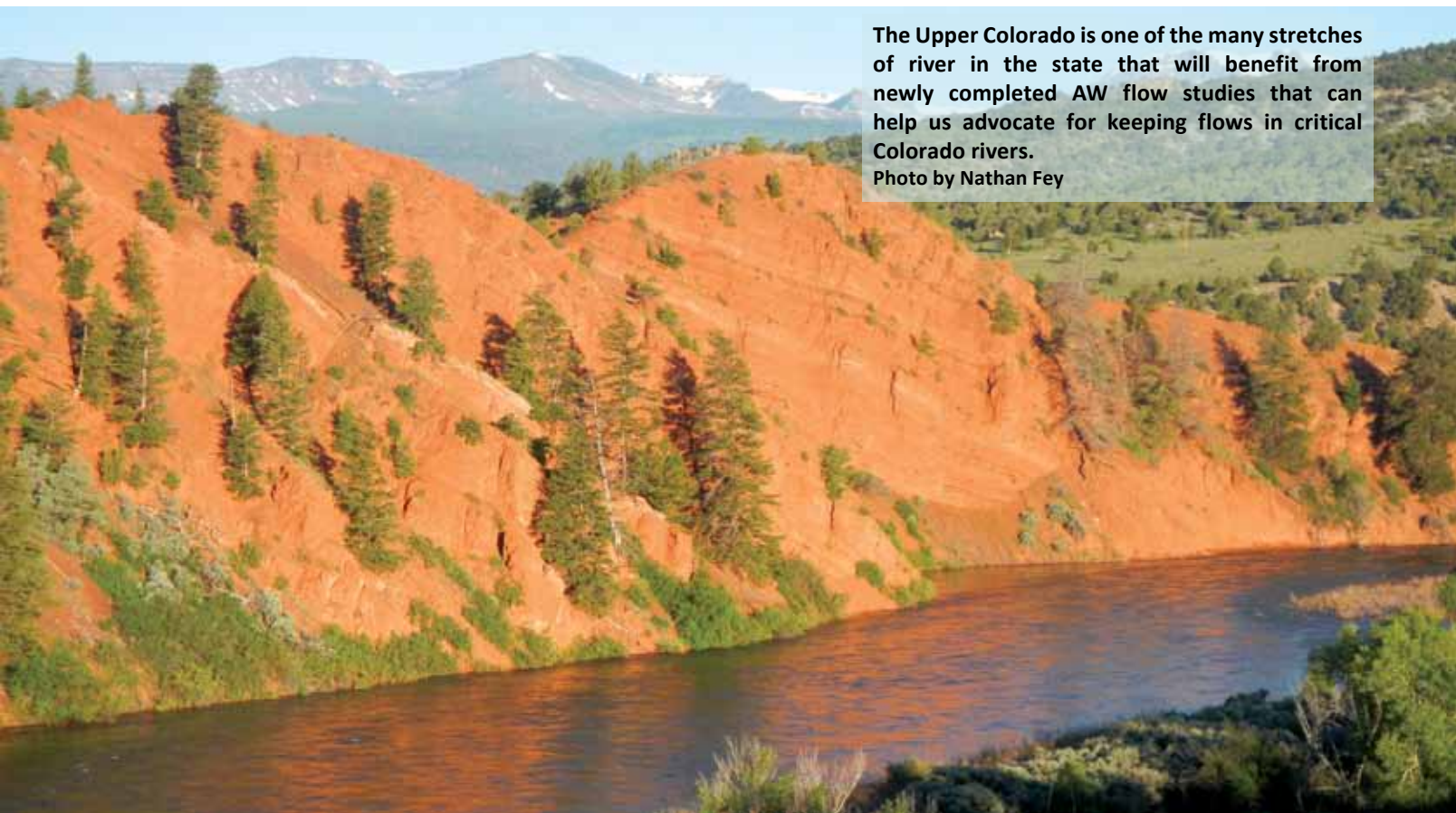
AW has been working on the Wild and Scenic Alternative Plan for the Colorado River since 2007—that's eight years! We are nearing completion of the plan and expecting a Record of Decision to come out in June 2015. If all goes well, that ROD will adopt the Alternative and give paddlers a formal, legal, and equal footing in flow management on the Upper Colorado.

We have been working to integrate our local affiliate clubs into the effort, as the plan becomes more of a reality. Now, Colorado Whitewater and our newest member, the Upper Colorado Private Boaters Association, have seats on the Stakeholder Group, and are working with AW and commercial outfitters to make sure that

recreation interests are knowledgeable, engaged, and active in protecting paddling opportunities between Gore Canyon and Glenwood Springs every season.

The Plan has been tried and tested over the past few years, and under its guidance AW has improved flows in Gore Canyon for the Annual Gore Canyon Race in August, reduced temperature threats to the fishery, and helped secure legal water rights for paddling at the new Gore Canyon Whitewater Park.

We have also developed an annual monitoring plan (if you've paddled the river, you may have already responded to our surveys) that integrates feedback of flow quality into decision making on the plan. For the last two years, paddlers and anglers have provided great feedback on their experiences on the river, and we have taken that information into consideration as changes to flows are being negotiated. For more information on monitoring (and lots more information!) check out: <http://www.upcowildandscenic.com/>



The Upper Colorado is one of the many stretches of river in the state that will benefit from newly completed AW flow studies that can help us advocate for keeping flows in critical Colorado rivers.

Photo by Nathan Fey

STEWARDSHIP

OVER 50 NEW WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS PROPOSED FOR MONTANA

BY KEVIN COLBURN



The Upper Swan River is one of a few gems we are recommending for designation in Montana's wildlife-rich Swan Valley.

EARLIER THIS SPRING American Whitewater and our partners released a proposal to designate over 50 new Wild and Scenic Rivers in Montana. The proposal is the result of conversations with over 150 groups and opinion leaders spanning a five-year period. The result is a stunning Made-in-Montana vision for protecting over 600 miles of the state's last best rivers. Over the next few months we'll be holding public meetings and attending events to collect feedback on our proposal. Then we aim to turn the proposal into bi-partisan legislation and get it signed into law.

Wild and Scenic designation will ensure that these streams are never dammed, and that their many outstanding values are protected for future generations. Rivers are a big part of the way of life in Montana. They provide incredible hunting and fishing opportunities, water for raising grain and cows, and of course spectacular paddling opportunities. As you might expect, our proposal includes an impressive variety of whitewater paddling treasures. We're

pleased to share some of the specific streams that are the focus of our campaign.

The three forks of the Flathead River are already Wild and Scenic rivers. In fact, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was first envisioned to block the proposed Spruce Park Dam on the Middle Fork of the Flathead River back in the 1950s. These big blue-green rivers run along Glacier National Park and through the Bob Marshall Wilderness, however, many of their tributaries remain unprotected. We aim to protect Trail and Whale Creeks, which flow into the North Fork of the Flathead upstream of the off-the-grid town of Polebridge, and quite a



few tributaries to the Middle Fork Flathead. In the South Fork watershed we aim to protect Graves Creek, which may be the hardest whitewater run in Montana, as well as the scenic Class II Spotted Bear River, and more advanced whitewater runs like Gorge Creek and Sullivan Creek.

Around Missoula we are looking at three clusters of streams for Wild and Scenic designation. We are proposing to designate several forks of Fish Creek, which is a crystal clear Class II+ run that flows from the Great Burn Wilderness Study Area into the popular Alberton Gorge whitewater run. Also on the list is Rock Creek, upstream of Missoula, which is a fishing paradise and includes a Class II+ section called the Dalles. Last but certainly not least are two major tributaries to the beloved Blackfoot River: Monture Creek and the North Fork of the Blackfoot. The North Fork is a fairly popular hike-in Class IV(V) run that is thick

The Gallatin River offers miles of great rafting, kayaking, and fishing.

with grizzly bears. While the North Fork is in a big open (and burned over) valley, adjacent Monture Creek flows through vertical-walled rose-colored canyons lined with trees and draped with moss.

Heading east to the Bozeman area, we are pitching the Class III-IV Gallatin River as a Wild and Scenic River. The Gallatin is the most popular whitewater run in the area for good reason, with its mix of big water and mellow sections, easy road access, and great scenery. Even closer to town, Hyalite Creek, Bozeman's little Class IV creek run, is on our list. In addition, several Class I-V sections and tributaries to the Madison River downstream of Yellowstone National Park are included our proposal.

Last but not least are the creeks rumbling out of the Beartooth Mountains near Red Lodge and Billings. The scenery in the Beartooths is rugged and dramatic as the creeks spill out of glaciated canyons onto the plains. The streams in our proposal include East Rosebud Creek, the Stillwater River, the Boulder River, and Rock Creek, along with various forks of these streams. This line up offers paddlers everything from Class II-III runs and remote adventures to accessible Class IV and V creek boating. You might recall that American Whitewater successfully opposed new hydropower

Right: A dam recently proposed near this site on East Rosebud Creek helped galvanize support for Wild and Scenic designation.

Below: Bear tracks are a constant reminder that you are never alone on Montana's backcountry rivers.

Photo by Kevin Colburn

dams that were recently proposed on the Madison River and East Rosebud Creek. Designation will ensure we won't have to fight those battles ever again.

You probably don't live in Montana. Not many people do. That's part of its charm. On many streams you are far more likely to run into a moose than another paddler. With that said, no matter where you live we hope you will help us get the Wild and Scenic Rivers proposal passed into law. There are just not many places left where nature looms so large, and as a visitor you can feel so small. Perhaps it is enough to know that there are blue-green rivers *out there* where grizzly bears and elk wander the banks, the northern lights occasionally flicker, and the snows fall and melt each year with vigor. Please endorse our proposal on www.healthyriverst.org, and keep an eye on the AW website for other opportunities to get involved.



STEWARDSHIP

WHITEWATER RELEASES PASS TESTS WITH FLYING COLORS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KEVIN COLBURN



Monitoring of releases on the Upper Nantahala showed no significant impacts on trout.

YOU PROBABLY HAVEN'T noticed, but if you've paddled a whitewater dam release run, you have likely paddled over caged or telemetry-tagged fish, water level loggers, temperature gages, turbidity monitors, marked mussels, and gravel study plots. After the releases there may have been people scouring the banks looking for stranded fish, or electro-shocking and counting fish to see how aquatic communities change over time. Yes, our releases are like an Olympic athlete training on a treadmill, wired and watched by a team of experts.

The reason for the scrutiny is simple: our river restoration efforts are at the frontiers of applied science. So we design flows that should be great for the river, and then we work with state and federal agencies to study the outcomes.

This spring we have wrapped up several multi-year monitoring efforts. The results are all good news. Releases on the Bear River (ID), West Fork Tuckasegee (NC), and Upper Nantahala (NC) all got approval to continue. We've learned a lot, and below are a few highlights.

West Fork Tuck

We negotiated seven annual releases of 250 cfs for the West Fork of the Tuck. The rest of the year this eight-mile reach remains dewatered by a hydropower diversion except for water provided by tributaries. Since the first release we've watched as the stream has turned from a mud-choked rivulet to a clear stream with a sand and bedrock channel. The monitoring results were equally positive.

Water temperatures are unaffected by the releases. Water temperatures are important for all kinds of organisms living in rivers, and reservoir releases can radically change temperatures. Not so on the West Fork, where releases had little effect.

Fish communities are not significantly affected by the releases. The same 12 species were found each fall over three years spanning the start of releases. There was also no change in the number or fitness of fish detected that was attributed to the releases.

A final report will be sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission this spring that will support the continuation of these

releases for the remainder of the multi-decade federal dam license.

Upper Nantahala

On the Upper Nantahala we negotiated eight releases annually, ranging from 250 to 450 cfs. Monitoring focused on non-native trout species that are stocked in the river for recreational angling and that reproduce there. The results show:

Adult trout are not harmed by releases. 55 trout were caged and subjected to the releases and only three died or went missing. 30 trout were caged and placed in a reference stream in which there were no releases and seven died or went missing. These results show no effect of releases on adult trout.

Water temperatures increased but not to levels that affect trout. On the warmest days, releases increased water temperatures by 3-5°C for short periods of time. These increases were below lethal levels for trout and while suboptimal, are not long enough in duration to have a significant effect.

The agencies are recommending that water temperatures continue to be monitored,

which makes sense given that we are close to biological thresholds, albeit for non-native fish that are replenished by regular stocking.

Bear River

We've reviewed over nine years of data on the Bear River and we've learned a lot as we've studied the effects of the nine annual releases of around 900 cfs.

Turbidity does not cause a significant impact. Sediment and plant matter flows, blows, and grows into the Bear River's Black Canyon every year. The first release flushed massive amounts of sediment out of the Canyon, and subsequent releases have flushed far less. While releases are sediment-laden (which can be hard on fish), the releases do a great job of regularly removing sediment and thus preventing severe turbidity events.

Releases restored a healthier, more natural riverbed. The releases reduced the amount of fine sediment (mud) in favor of gravel, cobble, and bedrock, which offered increased habitat complexity for fish and insects, as well as more natural floodplain development. Our releases are the river's equivalent of regularly brushing teeth to prevent plaque build-up.

Releases caused increases in certain insects that indicate river health. The improved habitat created by releases was linked to an increase in mayflies, caddis flies, and stoneflies that are associated with healthy streams.

Releases do not displace rare native trout. Stocked Bonneville Cutthroat Trout were implanted with telemetry transmitters, and others were given pit tags that scan like a bar code when they pass certain points

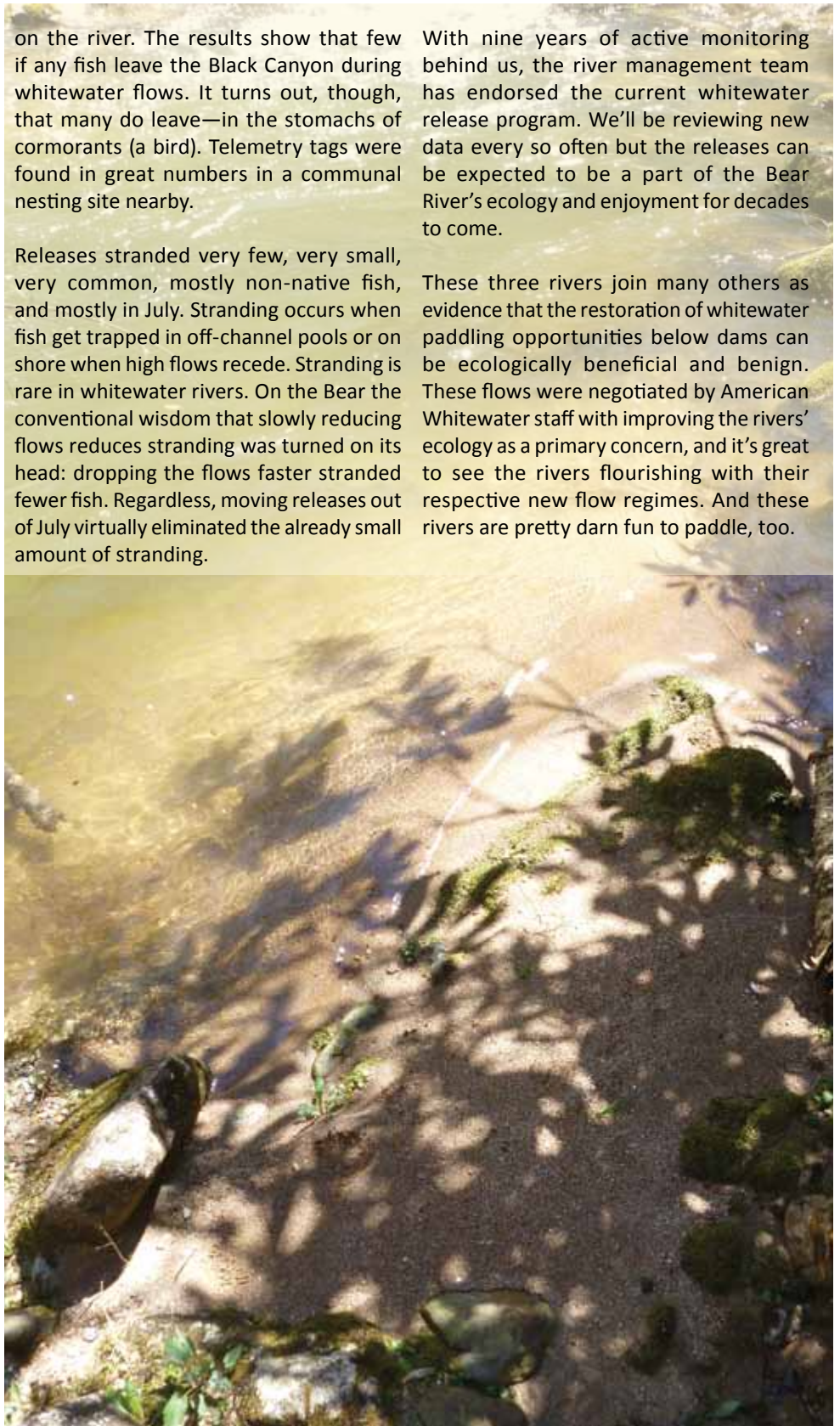
Releases on the West Fork Tuck have been shown to have no effect on water temperatures or fish populations, and sandy beaches like this one have formed where there was once mud and encroaching vegetation.

on the river. The results show that few if any fish leave the Black Canyon during whitewater flows. It turns out, though, that many do leave—in the stomachs of cormorants (a bird). Telemetry tags were found in great numbers in a communal nesting site nearby.

Releases stranded very few, very small, very common, mostly non-native fish, and mostly in July. Stranding occurs when fish get trapped in off-channel pools or on shore when high flows recede. Stranding is rare in whitewater rivers. On the Bear the conventional wisdom that slowly reducing flows reduces stranding was turned on its head: dropping the flows faster stranded fewer fish. Regardless, moving releases out of July virtually eliminated the already small amount of stranding.

With nine years of active monitoring behind us, the river management team has endorsed the current whitewater release program. We'll be reviewing new data every so often but the releases can be expected to be a part of the Bear River's ecology and enjoyment for decades to come.

These three rivers join many others as evidence that the restoration of whitewater paddling opportunities below dams can be ecologically beneficial and benign. These flows were negotiated by American Whitewater staff with improving the rivers' ecology as a primary concern, and it's great to see the rivers flourishing with their respective new flow regimes. And these rivers are pretty darn fun to paddle, too.



STEWARDSHIP

LYONS OUTDOOR GAMES: FUN IN FACE OF ADVERSITY

BY ARN HAYDEN AND MATT BOOTH



The freestyle competition at the Lyons Outdoor Games.

THE LYONS OUTDOOR Games is a premier Colorado outdoor lifestyle, adventure sport, and music festival that is held in Lyons, just north of Boulder. Where else can you wake up in a cool, funky mountain town, head out for a quick morning ride on our single track, compete in or watch some great kayaking, throw down some awesome eats, sample beer from over 50 microbreweries, watch pros compete in slackline and dirt jumping, play corn hole, run in a beer relay race, and then watch a national touring band bring the crowd to its feet to a New Orleans style funky beat?

With the 13th annual Lyons Outdoor Games quickly approaching (on May 30), there are many questions about the status of the rivers after the 1,000 year flood that hit Lyons in September of 2013. This year's event will herald a thriving comeback for its whitewater and other activity parks, and showcase their reconstruction efforts. Overall we still have great paddling, but it is different.

What happened?

The effects of the flood were tremendous; our typical high water during spring run-off

is 700-1,000 cfs. However, a massive storm that dropped 19-21 inches in the area on September 11th, 2013 created a torrent of approximately 37,000 cfs through our tiny town. The flood destroyed the roads in the canyons and scoured the river beds, in some cases 10-15 feet down to bedrock. In many cases the river created new channels through neighborhoods and fields. Both rivers and the town were forever changed. Eighteen percent of the homes in town were damaged or destroyed, and evacuations lasted for two months. It is a fascinating place to go and watch as a strong community (that knows how to throw a party) recovers from Colorado's worst natural disaster.

Rebuilding following the floods has been a challenge. In many cases governmental organizations prioritized utility interests over recreational stakeholders, and typically FEMA funding for emergency response does not cover stream reconstruction or protection. After the flood, the rivers were like pristine mountain rivers with round smooth boulders strewn throughout, juxtaposed next to destroyed roads and houses alongside them. Mother Nature is a powerful force and had returned the river

to where she wanted. The next reaction caught many recreationalists off guard. The quickest to respond to repair their assets were the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the water diversion "ditch companies." CDOT was ordered by Governor Hickenlooper to rebuild the roads in a matter of a few months and the ditch companies worked feverishly to rebuild their structures for the following growing season. Many people in mountain towns were completely cut off with little or no access back to their homes and Rocky Mountain National Park had no access other than the west side of the Continental Divide.

The quickest way to rebuild a road is to use the local materials and those materials in many cases were the boulders in the river, in the debris fields, and along the banks. Very little engineering was done to rebuild these "temporary" roads and the new pristine rivers were being stripped

Opposite: Left: South St. Vrain race.

Middle: Narrows after flood.

Right: Narrows after repair.

Photos: left by Johnathan Auerbach; middle and right by Arn Hayden

of their boulders. Roads, transportation, and home access were the priorities of the emergency phase of recovery, leaving the riverbeds in an unfriendly and altered state. Dams have been rebuilt with little thought to fish passage or boater safety, and construction crews poached materials from the river itself and left fish habitat denuded and barren.

Many volunteers, including representatives from American Whitewater, have striven to gain a foothold in the political process and are gaining momentum to ensure that the river experience, complete with healthy habitat and recovered riparian zone, becomes a part of the discussion. Thanks to this effort, the valley has begun to recover.

What's next?

The September floods of 2013 resulted in \$3.4 billion in damages across the Front Range of Colorado. The flooding also triggered an outpouring of support from neighbor to neighbor and community to community. Many of the local watersheds have created coalitions to address the needs of the river basins using a collaborative approach. The coalitions will rely on the help of local stakeholders, including recreationalists, to address the multitude of issues that lie ahead during river restoration. The newly formed Saint Vrain Creek Coalition (SVCC) will work closely with municipalities such as Boulder County, the City of Longmont, and the Town of Lyons to support the paradigm of recreational interests during

the grant application, planning, design, and construction phases of the watershed repair. The SVCC will support natural riverbed restoration while acting in the best interests of the public.

How can you help?

Send your comments on the importance of recreation on our rivers to Elise Jones with the Boulder County Commissioners office to commissioners@bouldercounty.org, and to Nathan Fey, American Whitewater's Colorado Stewardship Director at nathan@americanwhitewater.org

How is the paddling?

Overall, we have a mixed bag of successes, failures, and projects in progress. Amazingly, the flooding has created many new boatable stretches of river that previously were un-runnable. Here is a quick run-down of each paddling section.

South Saint Vrain

This section is steep and confined and the flood had a devastating effect as it rushed through this section. In many cases the river completely reconfigured itself during the event. Initially after the flood this creeking section was amazing to see. The river gained some nice Class IV sections, but also had some raw, unstable Class V sections as well. This section of the river, however, was not immune to post-flood changes. After the road was repaired, the river bed was changed by the construction that almost completely stripped the river of its large boulders. A small group of paddlers, led by Matt Booth and Ian Foley, was able to collaborate with CDOT to help them replace boulders in the river channel

and provide a more naturalized stream that is now a great new creeking run. A new Class III+ section from the rapid "One in Five" to the "Black Bear Hole" was also improved from the flood and provided a great new Class III+ section to paddle (the Lower South). Our experience is that there should be reconstruction guidelines during these types of events that limit how many boulders or large rocks can be removed from the riverbed.

Apple Valley Section

This section is still a bit in flux, but last year this Class II section was actually a better section to paddle than before. It is more channelized and has more features. It is also fascinating to see a close-up tour of a flood-ravaged area. This section has great potential for future paddling and will likely change as sections of the river are put back to where they were before. For many in Lyons this is the family run that can be done after work when the water is up.

Shelley's Cottages Run

Road crews feverishly rebuilt the highway to Estes Park after the flood, which heavily impacted this section of river. Very little paddling has been done on it as the road was blocked off for most of the paddling season. Many of the trees were stripped away and the riverbed is narrower in many cases from road construction. This is the most endangered section of river from a paddling and fisheries point of view. The river has been an afterthought in this area and needs help, but makes for an interesting paddle just the same. A point of interest regarding this section is that it is still in contention with paddlers



STEWARDSHIP

from American Whitewater advocating for river restoration and improved access. Following the flood, Longmont Dam Road was temporarily reconstructed and many ancient boulders were pulled out of the riverbed. Paddlers are now fighting to have our voices heard to get this section restored to its previous natural beauty. However, funding is an issue.

The Lyons Town Run and Whitewater Park

This area is currently undergoing dramatic changes. Most of the features were destroyed or damaged, however, there is still good paddling. Remarkably, the Black Bear Hole did survive and the A-Hole has been temporarily repaired for this year's Lyons Outdoor Games. The Town is also working in the Black Bear Hole area now to improve it for slalom racing. The Town of Lyons was awarded funding by FEMA to

rebuild the engineered whitewater park this summer, which is rare. The construction of Meadow Park should be concluded this year as well. Plans to rebuild the Black Bear Hole and the October Hole areas are also underway.

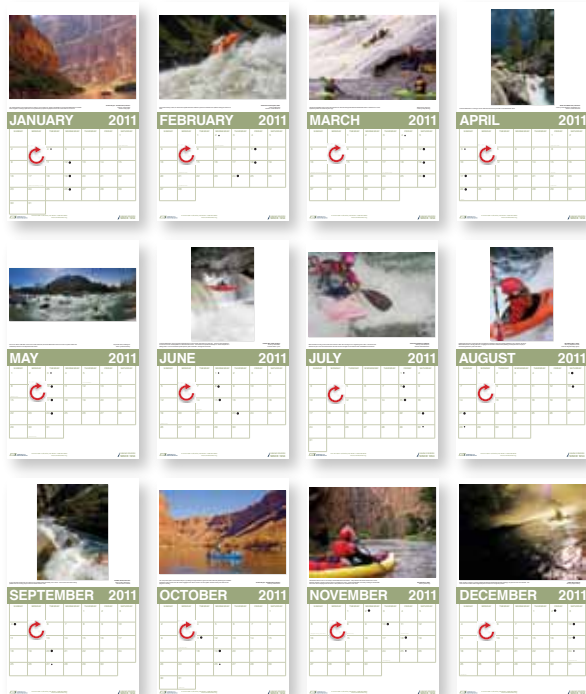
What will you see for this year's Lyons Outdoor Games?

This year the town is excited to bring back the South St. Vrain SSV Creek Race after last year's post-flood hiatus. Organizers have selected a new course and believe it will be more accessible to other creek racers. The A-hole has been temporarily repaired and the Town hopes that it will be tuned and ready for the summer's outdoor games. The river channel is being tweaked above the Black Bear Hole to provide a more direct flow into the hole for better performance and large strategic boulders are being placed upstream to improve the

slalom course as well. Luckily, we have Scott Shipley, a former Olympic kayaker and now river engineer, who lives in town, donating his firm's time (S2O Design and Engineering) to conduct emergency repairs.

Last year's event was very special for the Town of Lyons as a part of their recovery and to get out their funk. This year the Town is excited to share the beginning of its recovery with as many visitors as they can attract to their (now rebuilt) little mountain town and to get their funk on and leave with smile on their face after a super fun weekend. American Whitewater continues to sponsor the Lyons Outdoor Games, and we invite everyone to make sure that a visit to Lyons is part of your Colorado tour this year!

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STEWARDSHIP

THE PERFECT CREEK: A RECIPE

BY TIM LARAMORE, NORTH CHICKAMAUGA CREEK CONSERVANCY



Troy Leach on North Chickamauga Creek.
Photo by Tim Williams

FROM THE NORTH Chickamauga Creek Conservancy comes a recipe for the perfect creek:

1. Start with a nice, low-volume warm-up through walls of rhododendron and hemlock. Add a couple of mossy cliffs on either bank. Place a visible gauge in a nice eddy just before the gradient begins.

2. As the creek begins to twist through slots and drops, increase the gradient and volume. Place eddies where they are most appropriate. Provide at least three 10-foot-plus horizon lines. Be sure to include plenty of deep pools that turn blue under clouds and green when the sun shines.

3. Create a confluence with a similar creek and double the flow. Tone down the gradient just a hair. Lengthen the rapids and sprinkle in a few wave trains. Turn the mossy cliffs into big, sun-baked walls. Widen and deepen the gorge. This would be a great time to add bald eagles swooping through the canyon.

4. As the creek begins to reach the valley, add one final mile of Class IV rapids with easy trail access. Make all parking gravel so that boaters can enjoy their trucks. Put a visible gauge near the parking lot, and add

a big flat rock, like a stage, where boaters will stand and extrapolate levels across the area.

5. Place the creek at the southern end of a long buffet of excellent whitewater. Make it the first creek leaving town and the easiest, most reliable option.

6. Keep it protected by a dedicated community of whitewater enthusiasts and committed conservationists. If you have an AW hero like Ron Stewart, you have both. Secure thousands of acres of watershed and create an organization to ensure that the hemlocks, the sunny cliff faces, and the green and blue water remain for generations to come.

This will give you a wonderful option for three to six hours of genuine wilderness adventure and the opportunity to climb in a shuttle vehicle with preachers, teachers, landscapers, lawyers, and the gleeful unemployed.

For a wider variety of palates, continue past the Soddy Daisy take-out.

7. Turn off the gradient. Ease the flow of the creek into a meandering, 18-mile track to the Tennessee River. Add wide,

long straightaways and horseshoe bends. Increase the variety of wildlife: herons, otter, owls, and bass. Add fishing holes and refuge areas. Go heavy on the long, deep pools.

8. Around every few bends, add access points. Bridges and trails work, but launches with ramps work better for everyone. Season with canoes, paddleboards, fishing rods, and rope swings. Wind past schools, churches, houses, train tracks, and parks.

9. Blend conservationists, paddlers, and community members to improve the stewardship and advocacy for the creek.

10. Let drift for a several miles and stir in where the Tennessee River wakes up and moves toward Chattanooga.

We hope you enjoy North Chickamauga Creek, a 28-mile waterway to satisfy anyone's tastes.

The North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy would like to add one key ingredient: a permanent put-in on Cain Creek to ensure that Step 1 of the recipe can occur for years to come. For more info, visit northchick.org.



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REMEMBRANCE

JAMIE MCEWAN: A REMEMBRANCE

BY ALDEN BIRD



Jamie McEwan (left) and Lecky Haller racing at the 1989 Slalom World Championships on the Savage River in Maryland.
Photo by Art Gingert

ONCE, AT A boater party in Washington, D.C., I failed to recognize a companion with whom I'd spent hundreds of hours paddling the Potomac—until I picked out the features normally peeking from the small radius between skull cap and neck gasket. Such misrecognition is a common joke among boaters, who, like the plumed, bejeweled sailors among Nathaniel Hawthorne's dour Puritans, seem incongruous on land. Yet for the first three years that I knew New England's most famous boater, I saw James Patrick McEwan only in street clothes.

I first met Jamie McEwan in June of my freshman year at the Hotchkiss School, the boarding high school in northwest Connecticut that I attended. He arrived on campus one Saturday afternoon in June of 1997 to take his eldest son Keith and me for a finals study break to the movies. Keith was a "day student"—he lived in Salisbury and slept at home and was shuttled most days by his father, whom I had never met until he came across the immaculate quad.

Jamie McEwan was *handsome*. That much I remember thinking—mostly because I don't think I had ever noticed that about a man before. Jamie McEwan looked like a movie star—something of the Harrison Ford-as-Indiana Jones look: tall and broad shouldered and winsome. At Yale he had majored in English and captained

the wrestling team. He was an Olympic medalist, having won a bronze medal in whitewater slalom in the 1972 Olympics when he was 19, and then finishing fourth in the 1992 Olympics when he was 39. I was suitably awed to meet a real-life Olympian, and he certainly looked the part.

He came straight across the crowded lawn and his handsome face curled into smile—one that seemed to understand everything about that particular quad but also wished very much to know what I thought of it—and Jamie McEwan held out his hand.

"Hi, Alden."

Much later on, a visiting speaker asked our senior class for a show of hands: "How many of your fathers do exactly what they always dreamed of doing?"

Somewhere off to my right, I saw a lone hand raised, high and insistently, and Keith leaning forward in his seat.

By sophomore year, Keith and I shared a high-ceilinged room in Coy dormitory and I still only knew Jamie in street clothes. Though by then I'd become veteran of many off campus outings with the McEwan-Boyntons: to their gate-guarded family compound in town, to their lake house near the state border, to the movie theater in Winsted or in Millerton. Jamie

was our driver, holding forth in the new-smelling, leather-lined Mazda van about life, literature, film, and politics. What struck me from the first was the informal, almost brotherly relationship that Keith and his younger brother Devin enjoyed with their father. It was not unusual for Jamie to pick up Keith at Hotchkiss in the evening, only to idle outside Coy for 20 minutes, father and son in the front seat teasing out some ambiguity in a work of literature or a film they had just seen. While I myself got along well enough with my own father, our relationship was decidedly not "brotherly," and an appreciation for any sort of ambiguity—particularly concerning the process of parental decision making—was not on the paternal syllabus. Mr. McEwan—as I called him then—was much different.

"Alden, please," he'd say, "call me 'Jamie.'"

Jamie didn't work a conventional job like my father, but wrote articles and fiction in the converted barn he shared with his wife's creative studio. He had been a stay-at-home father and seemed to have all the time in the world for his family. He home-schooled both Keith and Keith's sister Caitlin at various times, and during Keith's eighth grade year bid his son study the complete works, as Keith once revealed (to my mother's great approval) of Dave Barry. The advent of social media has brought

forth a remarkable trove of photos of Jamie McEwan-as-father: here he is, brawny and rakish, entertaining a birthday party of children with a bubble maker, there he is, dripping wet and helmeted, holding his daughter between runs at the Nationals, or posing with progeny in Halloween costumes (tuxedo and ice axe—"a social climber!"), or blowing a kiss to his wife from the podium at the World Championships. Family man he was, Jamie McEwan.

Yet there was more to my admiration of Jamie than his good-nature and his kindness. At Hotchkiss, the pressure of an Ivy League acceptance was in the air from freshman year. Entry into a school like Yale, where Jamie had gone, stood as the ultimate goal of our endless jockeying for academic position. Yet as anyone who knew him would affirm, when Jamie McEwan looked at you, no matter who you were, you mattered completely. And for me, 15 years old and thoroughly undistinguished, to feel worthy of the attention of a man who was not only a success, but who had who had gone to Yale, was to feel as though I—whose parents who had not gone to traditional college—had finally, in some important way, been invited into the tent.

In the fall of 1998, during my junior year, I became conscious that I hadn't seen Jamie in some time. Keith had said something about his father going on a trip—"to kayak a river in Tibet that's never been done before."

One rainy November night, Keith and I studied in our room during mandatory study hall. Then someone knocked. We looked up from our books. Nobody knocks in boarding school except teachers or parents.

"Yeah?"

"Keith? Keith, I need to bring you home."

The door opened. There, soaking wet and looking sunk in some distant melancholy, stood Jamie McEwan.

"Keith," he said, "I need you home early tonight."

"Mr. McEwan," I said. "You're back."

"You know, Alden," he said slowly, looking as though he was about confess something of inestimable anguish.

"You really have to start calling me 'Jamie.'"

I could not have known it then, but at the time Jamie was a week removed from the long, sad trek out of the Himalayan river gorge where his best friend, former US Slalom Team member Doug Gordon, had drowned on what the media was beginning to call "the Mount Everest of Rivers": the Yarlung Tsangpo. For the past week, Jamie McEwan had been hounded—by the press, by boaters, and by his conscience—for his team's decision to put on a river that, in the words of one chronicler, was "considered beyond the means of what humans could do in a boat."

He was shaken. "I had believed in Doug's judgment," Jamie wrote in his journal, "...I had staked my life on that belief, more than once. Once that was swept away—literally and figuratively—I doubted everything."

Looking back, I wonder if Jamie considered quitting paddling—the sport that had defined his life for 30 years. Did such thoughts enter his mind as he turned back for a last look at the Tsangpo? Or on that rainy night in Connecticut?

Not long before he drowned on the Tsangpo, Doug Gordon wrote an article in *American Whitewater* that wrestled with this same issue, prompted by the drowning of Rich Weiss, his friend and Jamie's:

"Will I teach my son to paddle? Absolutely. And I wager Rich would have also. The joy,

Jamie McEwan (center) points the line to the author (left) and Devin McEwan at the Rattlesnake Slalom, 2000.

Photos by Norman Bird

the satisfaction, the personal growth I've experienced through paddling and the spectacular places I've seen are well worth the risk. But let's not pretend the risk isn't there" (*American Whitewater*, 1997).

But he didn't quit. I would not be writing this article if he had. But why didn't he? Maybe he reasoned that the Housatonic was no Tsangpo? Maybe he wanted to move on from Gordon's death by teaching others to paddle? Or maybe, inspired by Gordon's words, he wanted to spend more time with his sons doing what he loved most? One year after returning from Tibet, Jamie McEwan entered the office of Rick Delprete, Hotchkiss Athletic Director, and proposed, for what I think was the first time in his adult life, to formally teach paddling.

That March, six Hotchkiss students launched on the Housatonic River. For me, a skier and a mountain biker, the decision to quit lacrosse for paddling was easy. The promise of spending time with Jamie and



REMEMBRANCE



Jamie McEwan and family, 1992.
Photo Courtesy of Sandra Boynton

with Keith and Devin—who also joined—was part of it, but to quit lacrosse—the consummate prep-school sport—for the freedom of the river began to seem like just the door into life that I sought at 18.

The program's future would be short: Jamie—already a Hotchkiss wrestling coach—would end the program in 2002 after two seasons. I learned to paddle during a brief window when New England's greatest paddling legend devoted himself to teaching the sport that he loved, in the wake of his greatest tragedy, and I learned alongside his two sons.

Every afternoon during the spring of 2000, Jamie McEwan, towing a trailer of boats, met us in front of the massive Hotchkiss main building to drive us 15 minutes over the ridge to the Housatonic River, where we would spend an hour and a half practicing slalom gates at the training site that Jamie had built along with Gordon and other US Slalom members in the 1980s. Jamie held court in the van in his genial way on the drive over and the conversation often ranged to film, or to literature, or to politics—in which Jamie was a cheerfully staunch libertarian (“Can we?” “Yes!”—as Keith once summed up his father's political philosophy.) He drove us to the Punch Brook Slalom, and to the Covered Bridge Slalom. At Jamie's funeral, Bruce Lessels, owner of Zoar Outdoor and Jamie's former training partner, reminisced about the “Volvo Forums”—car rides in Jamie's Volvo

from the Housatonic to the Deerfield Valley to train slalom in the mid-1980s, during which all matter of topics were debated and discussed. I never realized until then that all those literate, jovial car rides with Jamie had such a long history, except that by the time I came around, the main participants were not Jamie's friends, but his children and their friends. He seemed to enjoy it just as much.

Whenever I could, I'd sit right in the front seat next to Jamie in order to direct the conversation to the paddling lore that I increasingly craved. That spring my irrevocable enchantment with whitewater came about not so much because of what Jamie McEwan taught me, so much as by the romance with which he spoke of this wondrous sport and of his storied past in it: of Chris Spelius gluing his spray skirt on before leading Jamie down the Niagara Gorge, of Walt Blackadar disappearing behind Jamie in Lava Falls and reappearing at the bottom, of Richard Fox, “the most arrhythmic paddler—also the winningest”—hitting Gate 1 at the '89 Worlds and storming back to win, of the great Jon Lugbill brought down by a fatal penalty in the '92 Olympics, or of that mystical, haunting gorge in the Himalayas that he sometimes still dreamed about putting on again (“Why? Just to be there.”). Though his technical instruction that spring was flawless and his rolling advice judicious, Jamie McEwan did not so much teach me to paddle as he inspired me to be haunted by waters. His tutelage brings to mind the old adage: education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

Yet he did more than tell paddling stories. The work he put into the program was real. No doubt just convincing a stringent prep school to sign off on the liability had been a chore. Jamie—with Mark and Jennifer Clarke's help—also furnished a massive amount of gear—not just boats and paddles for seven, but wetsuits, booties, jackets and gloves for us all, too. He also maintained constant upkeep on the forest of slalom gates and wires that hung across

the Housatonic: never an easy feat given fluctuating river levels and windy days. Whatever modest coaching stipend he received in no way covered all the work he put in. (Did Hotchkiss cover his gas? I can't imagine they did.) Only now do I realize how much time and effort he put into that program when he absolutely didn't need to and at a time when he could have been excused for not wanting anything to do with rivers.

But that was not who he was. His generosity extended beyond we fortunate seven and to the paddling community as a whole. The famous River House—a second house Jamie bought on the banks of the slalom course in Falls Village—he furnished rent-free to training racers for twenty years. Back in 2000 it was mesmerizing: filled with paddling posters and memorabilia (a signed poster from Corran Addison: “To the River House HACKS—you guys are bunch of goobers!”) and occupied by three boaters in their early twenties: Scott Barnes, Ted Devoe, and John Hagner. It was my dream house at the time, a paddling clubhouse that foreshadowed several of the boater establishments in which I spent my own early 20s in Brookmont, Maryland. And it was all possible because of Jamie. Once he quite literally gave me the (paddling) shirt off his back—the very same short sleeve paddle jacket, I'm quite convinced, that he'd used in the '92 Olympics. Fifty dollars was the price he charged me for my second C-1: “Just to make the transfer of ownership seem real.” My first boat had been free.

That a few years later I began to chase Jamie himself on the racecourse is not surprising, because Jamie McEwan gave several generations of aspiring racers the chance to challenge a real-life Olympic medalist. Though both Devin and I nipped at his heels, Jamie thrived on it, graciously offering advice and never once giving an

Opposite: Jamie McEwan racing at the Punch Brook Slalom, 2000.

Photos by Norman Bird

inch. It was a big moment for me when I finally beat him, but I am awed now to think just how many other boaters must have had shared this goal. At Jamie's funeral, Bruce Lessels spoke of how he had been so vexed in the early 1980s at not being able to beat "this old guy—who was probably all of 30." Just a few years before that, it had been the now-famous D.C. C-1s—Jon Lugbill, Bob Robinson, and Davey Hearn—who had measured themselves against Jamie before becoming World Champions themselves. Lecky Haller, Jamie's Olympic C-2 partner, wrote on first paddling with him, "I was awed to be in the same boat as America's only whitewater Olympic medalist at the time." But although we chased him, we never quite caught him. The United States has not won an Olympic medal in C-1 Slalom since 1972.

The last time I saw him, Pete Schwaikert (a Hotchkiss classmate and fellow McEwan protégé) and I drove out to Jamie's house at Christmas. We stood around in the converted barn studio—Pete, Devin, Keith, Jamie and me. And though Jamie—taller than any of us once—was shrunken by the cancer that would ultimately take his life, on that winter morning, as he stood around with his two sons and with two

others whose lives he had so influenced, he seemed to stand taller than when I had first met him.

Later we paddled the Housatonic together, but without him. As I took strokes where I had first taken strokes, alongside those who were there, I thought of all the rivers we had run since 2000. And I thought too of all the people we had taught or would teach to paddle. Or speak to about the romance of rivers. In time they would set their boats in rivers we had not, and in time they would paddle together without us. Then it occurred to me that there are two kinds of accomplishments in life: those for which we win medals, and those for which we do not. Jamie McEwan inspired us because he accomplished the former. But Jamie McEwan lived as fully and lived as well as any man I knew because he accomplished the latter more than he himself could have ever known. Now we paddle without him, but always because of him.

Alden Bird is the author of the whitewater guidebook Let It Rain, the novel A Significant Contribution, and of a forthcoming book about his time in whitewater.



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INTERNATIONAL PADDLING

FINLAYSON RIVER CANYON, YUKON, CANADA: A FIRST DESCENT

BY THERESA LANDMAN

BOB WAS SEARCHING through the maps for potential hunting rivers when he noticed a canyon on the Finlayson River in Yukon Province. Looking at the gradient and distance he figured it would be another Tutshi-type Class IV+ run.

It was mid-September 2014 and Bob was primarily into hunting mode; however, the canyon was right there, so how could we not run it? This is in an area where many rivers have never been run because of access challenges. However, the Finlayson River is right off the Robert Campbell Highway between Finlayson and Frances Lakes, so it was amazing to discover this canyon that has never been kayaked.

When you do a first descent there are, of course, a lot of unknowns. An impassable falls could be around any corner, so we had to be prepared that we might have to walk out and/or probably spend the night. Mid-September should be low water to run it, and with just the two of us, we would not run any hard drops. The idea, in theory, was to pick up and walk around anything



Bob Daffe boofing a drop in the Finlayson River Canyon.
Photo by Theresa Landman

we would have to scout. With the maps we estimated we had nine kilometers of easy water, then six kilometers of canyon, followed by nine kilometers of Frances Lake

back to the campground. We had left our bikes at the campground and would bike the 23 kilometer shuttle back to the put-in to pick up our vehicle.

I was so excited that I had no problem getting up early the next morning. Bob didn't seem too concerned, but I brought some extra food and clothing, just in case.

The river was beautiful and started off as an easy float. After about an hour of paddling, the canyon walls narrowed and the whitewater started to kick in. They were fun Class III-IV drops, and we were stoked but also concerned about what was coming up. At one hairpin turn Bob got out of his boat and crossed a stream to get a better look at what was ahead. I couldn't

Theresa Landman scouting the 15 ft. waterfall drop and the rest of the rapid.
Photos by Bob Daffe



see what he was looking at, but I did see him shaking his head. He came back and said he thought we could still run this rapid. If we had to get out, there were trees on a steep slope at the end of that section. I sure hoped we didn't have to climb out because it would be a slog in the thick forest, and spending the night would definitely drop the needle on the fun meter.

The rapid was pushy but still fun; we eddied out and climbed up a steep slope to scout the next drop. This next drop was an impressive 15-foot waterfall with a powerful reversal at the bottom of it. After that, there were some must-make moves to avoid a tree. Bob ran it without a hitch and waited for me to run it.

I dropped into the meaty part of the reversal and completely submerged as it wrenched my shoulder. I ran the next part

of the rapid and crossed two currents, one on my way to the tree, and the other as I headed to the eddy where Bob was. His eyes were big and wide as he looked at me. He thought I was going to hit the tree but I just made the cut to the safe eddy.

Bob had no patience to stop for lunch; he was in canyon-running mode. I stopped to wolf down a granola bar to keep up my energy.

Since the river was difficult to portage in places, we ended up running more challenging whitewater than we had anticipated. We portaged one manky drop with lots of sharp rocks but were able to run everything else in the canyon. After six kilometers of an exciting canyon we met the calm waters of Frances Lake. We were on a natural high, grinning ear to ear, and



Bob Daffe reflecting in Frances Lake.
Photo by Theresa Landman

enjoyed the flatwater paddle with all its perfect reflections.

We had discovered a canyon where everything is runnable. What a special feeling, knowing we were the first ones to kayak it!

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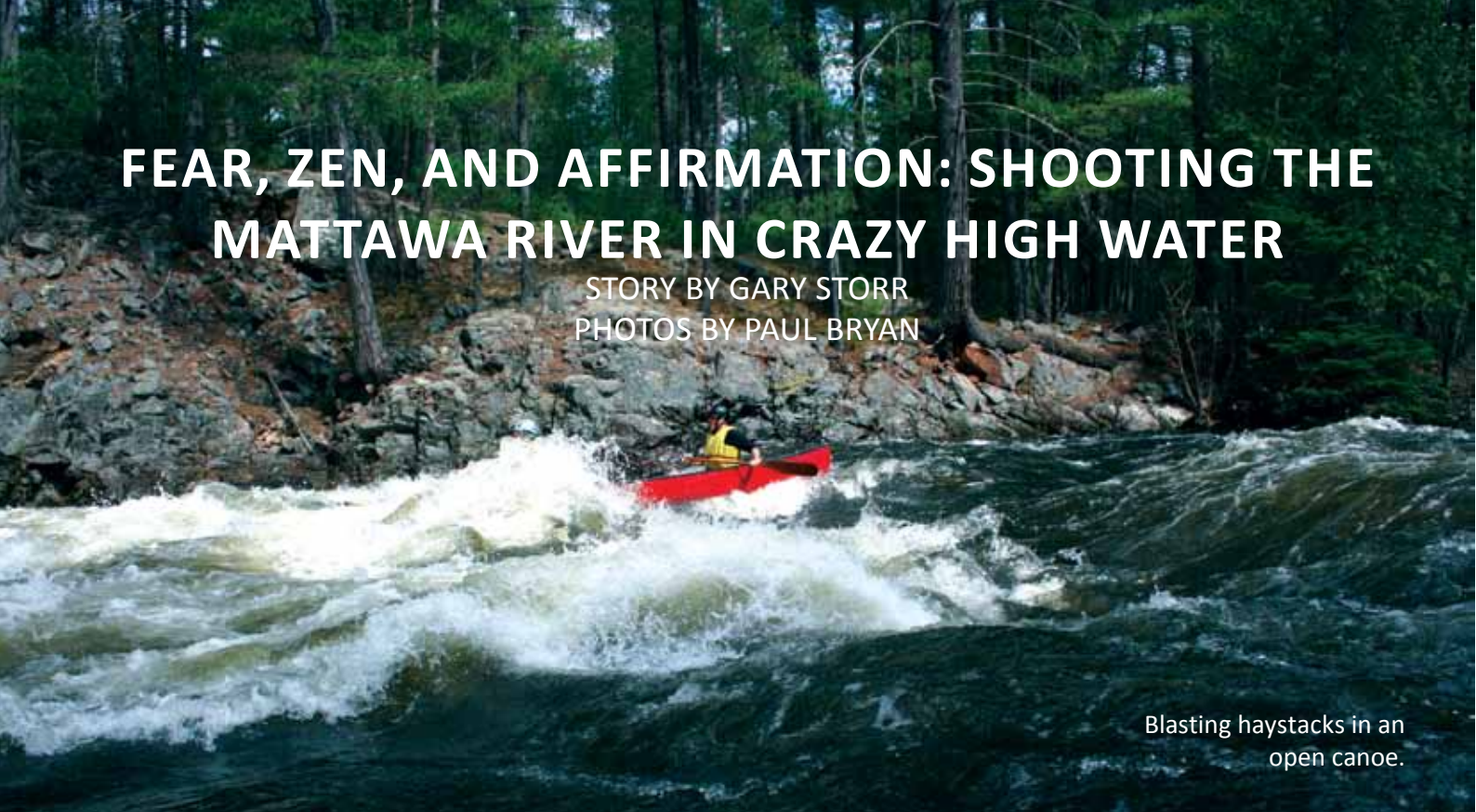


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FEAR, ZEN, AND AFFIRMATION: SHOOTING THE MATTAWA RIVER IN CRAZY HIGH WATER

STORY BY GARY STORR
PHOTOS BY PAUL BRYAN



Blasting haystacks in an open canoe.

CAN A RIVER change a person? Can a canoe trip become a life-altering experience? Or does the event simply reveal us for who we are? Four years had passed since my neighbor Graham Bryan and I tossed back a few cold ones on a sunny Sunday afternoon. That afternoon was notable because I had made Graham an offer.

The proposition was simply this: to return with Graham to the Mattawa River in Ontario, specifically to Pimisi Bay, to reshoot the rapids of the 10-kilometer-long Pimisi Run and assert dominance over his nemesis, a boulder at the base of a rapid bypassed by the Portage des Roches. This canoe-eater had bettered him on two prior outings. As a youth on a school sojourn, he and a chaperone had smashed into the beast full tilt and banana-peeled their aluminum canoe. Then, some 30 years later, with Dan Bell and me along for support, he had soloed the rapid twice more and struck the rock both times. I, too, had been humbled by this brute on my first trip down the Mattawa River. But with Dan's able assistance on this, our subsequent bid for redemption, I had triumphed, narrowly escaping its slaving maw.

Now we were going back.

This time we weren't out solely to conquer our fears or to prove ourselves—the river was running high and we wanted photographs. The flash melt of 2013 had been accompanied by heavy rains; floodwaters prevailed; towns and roadways were awash. We postponed the photo shoot, then two weeks later canceled a Petawawa River trip. An acquaintance, a former Petawawa guide, warned us that even if we succeeded in running rapids that were now raging torrents, we would be pinned against canyon walls and would swamp in the icy tumult. We always enjoyed an edge to our outings but we weren't suicidal. The decision to cancel was made for us: I received a phone call from an Algonquin Park warden who informed me that the Lake Travers Road was washed out and wouldn't be repaired in time for our arrival.

Not to be outdone, we turned our attention back to the Mattawa. Logan Montreuil, owner of Algonquin North Outfitter, responded promptly to our inquiry. "The water is high...but not crazy high," he explained. It was all we needed to hear. Graham, Dan, and I prepared for the shoot.

Our photographer, Paul Bryan, cleared his calendar.

It was on.

It was a bright Saturday morning when Logan met us at the Canadian Ecology Centre (CEC) located within Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park. The venue was ideal for our needs, as the park wouldn't open until the Victoria Day weekend in late May. Bill Steer, General Manager of the National GPS Certification Program, and Joyce Beam, Facilities Manager, had been obliging. Bill had warned us off two weeks earlier when there was still a meter of ice on Pimisi Bay. Joyce had booked us a cabin, canceled, and re-booked. The CEC is a short walk from the take-out at the foot of the Champion Rapids and Joyce allowed us to leave our vehicles at the facility until our return.

We shook hands with Logan and climbed into the truck. It had been four years since he had shuttled us to Pimisi Bay and five since he had transported my wife Debby and me to our ill-fated run. He caught us

View from the Porte de l'enfer or Gates of Hell.

up on the local buzz, then he pulled off the highway in front of the gate blocking the boat launch. Logan had long entertained the notion of cutting the chains at Sam Champlain Park—the late opening date hampered his business—but the boat launch was under authority of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and he wasn't looking for trouble with the MTO. He helped carry our canoes around the gate to the water, offered some tips, and wished us luck. The bay lapped conspicuously at the high-water mark.

Paddling across Pimisi Bay we heard the first set of rapids. The river had awakened, shaking off the last vestiges of winter. This time we knew we weren't listening to wind rustling in the treetops—we were approaching a full-throated cascade. We lugged our gear over the Portage des Perches, then waited for Paul to stumble into the thigh-high meltwater with his camera. The rapid was a Class I—less technical in high water—and we ran it

easily, fatuous grins plastered across our faces.

The significance of the waterway to the fur trade was clearly evident: the historical plaques, the dilapidated signposts marking the portages, indeed, the very essence of the Voyageurs in their deft naming of carries. It seemed as though we might hear their spirited song cloaked in the mist of the cascades:

Il y a longtemps que je t'aime,

Jamais je ne t'oublierai.


(Long have I loved you,

Never will I forget you.)

Chorus: À la claire fontaine

A large rock to the left of center marked the entry to the next stretch of whitewater. We debated whether to enter river left or right. Choosing to go with a bit of elbow






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room, we opted for the right side entrance. The longest stretch of whitewater along the Pimisi Run, it was also one of the wettest rides. Culminating in a series of rolling waves, the river bucked the canoes like a bronco shaking an unwanted rider; it flung them up and splashed them back down. We took the sprays full in the face, hooting like cowboys.

I was reminded of the words of Helga Stitt, an unbridled paddling enthusiast with whom I've canoed on several occasions: "After an exciting run through rapids, what flashes through my mind is, 'Yeah, baby, that was fun! Man, am I soaked. Let's do that again!' Knowing the rush we crave is what keeps us coming back." Save for the missing fear element, her statement perfectly echoed my sentiments.

The next rapid was unrecognizable in contrast to its low-water version. Where there had once been a tiny double drop followed sharply by a hairpin turn, the river now swelled near the take-out and left much of the Portage de la Cave underwater. The ledges were gone and we couldn't locate them. We scouted the river with concern for a cliff that intercepted the rapid along its base. Here, the edifice forced a violent left turn. Graham ran it first, enjoying a wild, unfettered ride. He descended toward the wall at the mercy

of the river but the current carried him around the bend without consequence and spat him out unscathed at the bottom. The rest of us followed. After playing here for a while, Dan and I departed apprehensively for the Portage de la Prairie.

Ahead, the river flattened into a smooth, brown slick that coursed downhill into a bay above the next portage. Thinking that Paul might want photos of the waterslide, I swung us into a 180, but it was too late. Already in the grip of the slide, we began to flow downhill bass-ackwards. We restored ourselves directionally but the maneuver had shaken Dan's confidence.

We pulled ashore at the head of the portage and walked its length. Below us, the river crashed through the Petit Paresseux Falls in full fury. Contrary to Logan's report, the water here was crazy high. It ran powerful and deep, flexing its muscle. We sat at the base of the Portage de la Prairie and sagely pointed at the cascade, attempting to stoke our resolve, but this was Class III whitewater and the mojo was fading fast. After a half an hour of uncertainty, Dan spoke. "I'm sitting this one out, guys," he said. My heart sank; I wanted pictures of this rapid but I wouldn't push the trip beyond anyone's comfort level.

Meditating into a past campfire, Graham had waxed philosophically about the effect on him of shooting rapids. "Once I'm on the tongue of a downstream V, it becomes a Zen thing. Nothing exists outside the moment—no family, no friends, no job. It's just me and the rapid," he had said.

Now, sensing a mass bail, Graham jumped to his feet. "If I don't do it now," he declared, "I never will." He marched up the path to where we'd left the canoes. Both relief and a wave of anxiety swept over me. I knew that another decision had been made for me: I was going to run it too.

Paul inched into the freezing flow, fighting the current that tried to flush him downriver. Expensive camera equipment hung in the balance. Dan and I held our breath until Paul found a foothold and settled in, ready.

Soon Graham appeared at the top of the rapid. He had chosen a line to the right of center. The old rules were quickly discarded. The ledge we'd run years earlier was far beneath the surface, no longer a factor; the boulder that had terrorized us was still prominent, but completely awash. I stared into the turbulence—it sounded like thunder and flowed like stink. Standing waves thrust upward paddle-height. A deep trough angled from river right, its sides higher than our boats. Catching air, Graham flew into the trough, rode up the far wall, and nearly capsized. We could see by the shape of his mouth that he was shouting but his adrenaline-fueled maledictions were inaudible. Bringing the bow around, he slid back in, then endured a brief pummeling through the haystacks. Surviving that, he eddied out around a small spit to the end of the portage where he floated silently in a mild state of shock. A deep pool of water sloshed at his knees.

It was late in the afternoon so we elected to stay put since there was a spacious

Graham Bryan catching air at Petit Paresseux Falls.



campsite at the top of the portage. Long ago, writer Alphonse Karr observed, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” With each outing our group grew increasingly proficient in shooting whitewater but, for Dan especially, one aspect of the sport remained constant. “Whenever I hear the sound of rapids ahead,” he said, “I feel fear.”

In the morning we wandered along the trail, coffee mugs in hand, and sat mesmerized at the base of the cascade. After a while, Dan looked up. “I’m ready now,” he said. I nodded. We returned to our canoe at the head of the portage and pushed out into the swirling, black water. We lined up right of center and allowed the river to draw us in.

Squinting ahead, I wondered where Paul had gone. He’d had sufficient time to find a perch from which to photograph our descent. Afterward, he explained: “I was blinded by the glare of the sun so I jumped in the canoe and paddled like hell upstream to cross the river. Then I ran up the rocks and found a spot just as you were coming down. I almost slid off the cliff!” I turned my attention back to the matter at hand. Rather than flying into the trough, Dan and I had decided to enter it from the open end and ride it through the middle.

We had vastly underestimated the power of the current. Our draws and pries were useless. We were going wherever the river took us. We tilted over the side of the trough and slammed into the wall of water on the opposite side. Then, like Graham, we rode up the wall and fell back in. Drenched, I hollered at the river gods as they fed us to the haystacks. And then, as suddenly as it began, it was over.

At the bottom of the portage Dan and I dumped the water from our boat and high-fived. Then we quietly collected ourselves and pushed on down the river.

* * *

The drifting haze was as thick as if we were standing on the deck of Niagara’s Maid of the Mist. No features of the waterfall were visible – only a foaming pillow of water that masked even the rocky outcrop normally seen at the center of the falls.

We paddled languidly up the riverbank to the base of Paresseux Falls then let the outflow carry us back. We moved like this in a lazy, circular fashion while Paul took photos from above. My mind was clear; I gazed at the specter before me with bovine tranquility.

Afterward, we explored the Porte de l’Enfer, or Gates of Hell, an ocher mine found high in the north embankment a short paddle from the falls. Voyageurs believed the cave to be the home of a man-eating demon.

Then, nearing the end of the Pimisi Run, we rounded the bend exiting Bouillon Lake to view the chaos of water and rock that was home to Graham’s nemesis. We fleet-footed over the smooth, round boulders that comprised the Portage des Roches and stared upriver at the rapid. Our rock was submerged. The only sign of it was a tiny curl in the middle of the river. Where I had once gasped for breath trying to pry my canoe from its grasp, the rock itself appeared to be drowning. I felt cheated—the river was mocking us, denying us our glory.

Years earlier I had described this rapid as short and unremarkable. Ironically, now that the river was hell-bent and overflowing its banks, the rapid was less impressive. No technical skill was needed: just aim the canoe straight and ride it through. Graham went first, followed by Dan and me, then Paul. With false gusto, we loaded our gear into the boats and set off down the final stretch of the Pimisi Run to its terminus at the base of the Champion Rapids.

* * *

Gary Storr (bow) and Dan Bell (stern) hitting the wall.



INTERNATIONAL PADDLING



In July of 2008, my wife Debby and I paddled the Mattawa River for the first time. The water was low, creating technical but, for the most part, gentle rapids. We had run them all except for the stretch skirted by the Portage de la Prairie. Intimidated, we had opted to walk after encountering three snorkelers attempting to retrieve gear dumped in a disastrous bid to avoid a mammoth boulder. A short time later, Debby and I also snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

An instant of indecision was all it took, a do-we-go-right-or-left moment that cost us the run. We were shooting the rapid, churning past the Portage des Roches, when a flash of mental paralysis caused us to ride up the rock. The river hurled us upon it with such force that our canoe broached like a ship side-on to a gale. It twisted and settled back into the river on its side, firmly pinned against the beast. Three quarters submerged, and our craft succumbed, folding at the center thwart—a perfect wrap.

For two hours Debby and I struggled, first to drag the waterlogged packs ashore, then to rescue our beleaguered boat. Unable to budge the canoe, we contemplated filling a daypack with a few essentials and hiking out to the highway.

Then came an epiphany. Thinking Man roused in me and threw off his torpor. Gulping for air, I fastened one end of the throw-line to the yoke near the lower, submerged gunwale. Next I tossed the rope over the upper gunwale to Debby who was standing downstream in waist-deep water. I positioned myself at the center of the canoe, and with both hands, reached into the froth. Gripping the lower gunwale, I began to strain upward in a rhythmic, rocking motion. Debby coordinated her efforts on the line to match mine, using the rock as a fulcrum against itself.

Dan Bell and Gary Storr (bow) attempting to ride the trough, Petit Paresseux Falls.

Suddenly I heard Debby's voice carry over the river. "It moved!" she yelled.

It was an electrifying moment. Redoubling our efforts, Thinking Man morphed into Primal Beast. Inch by inch we scraped our injured craft up the boulder until it quietly washed over the top. Floating the canoe to the riverbank, we examined it thoroughly. Its gunwales and thwarts were intact, a testament to the quality of its manufacturing. The hull, however, resembled a failed origami. I climbed in and, performing my best Stompin' Tom Connors impression, trampled the canoe back into shape.

Afterward, as we recovered on the riverbank, Debby expressed her take on the situation. "You were wonderful," she said. Surprised, I reached over and took her hand. It was an affirmation that buoyed my spirit and I basked in the glow.

* * *

Did the river change us? Like Orr, in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, we repeated our actions, returning to the river to dissect its components and drive our canoes through. Orr crash-landed his crippled plane into the sea after bombing missions, then awaited rescue with his men in an inflatable life raft. To the crew's amusement, he examined and made use of the survival gear he found on board, paddling the raft with a tiny Dixie-cup spoon. Orr had a plan—he persevered and paddled out of the war in a rubber raft all the way from the Mediterranean Sea to Sweden.

Each year our group returned to the places of our setbacks to try again. Unlike Orr, we had no plan, but I knew the river was shaping us, testing us, preparing us for some grandiose undertaking I couldn't yet imagine.

I no longer feel the need to return to the Mattawa River. To paraphrase Dan's words, I think we're ready.

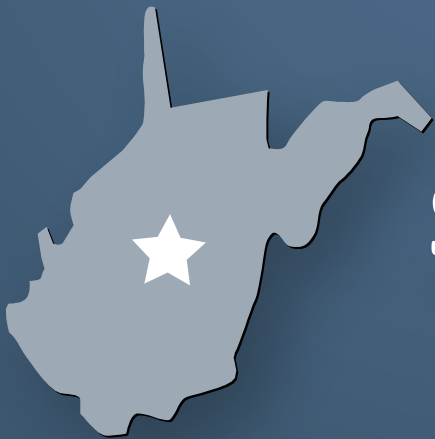


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JONDACHI FEST 2015 TENA, ECUADOR

BY CHANDRA BROWN



Laura Farrell (2nd), Emily Shanblatt (3rd), and Hannah Kertesz (1st). Upper Jondachi Race. Photo by West Howland

JANUARY 16-18, 2015 brought the first-ever Jondachi Fest to the river town of Tena, Ecuador for three days celebrating the Jondachi, and reminding local and international paddlers of the pressing need to protect the few remaining free-flowing whitewater rivers in Ecuador. As this legendary river is currently threatened by imminent hydro development, Jondachi Fest was organized as a collaborative festival and elite whitewater competition in support of the iconic and wild Rio Jondachi.

Jondachi Fest took its inspiration from the myriad grass-roots whitewater festivals popping up all over the world. In the timeless tradition of celebration as a powerful advocacy tool, conservation-minded river communities are proving the value of wild rivers as a necessary source of sustenance, drinking water, ecological connectivity, tourism revenue, recreation, and, fundamentally, human joy. Jondachi Fest was no exception.

Beginning with the Class V Upper Jondachi Race on Friday January 16, Jondachi Fest focused on enjoying the entire endangered watershed. Over sixty paddlers floated the Middle and Lower sections of the Jondachi on Saturday, January 17, spending the night at PlayaSelva Ecolodge on the banks of the Rio Hollin, downstream of the confluence with the Jondachi.

Jondachi Fest supports the Ecuadorian Rivers Institute in its pursuit of the precedent-setting designation of the proposed Jondachi-Hollin-Misahualli-Napo Ecological Corridor (essentially the international equivalent of “Wild and Scenic River” designation—the first ever endeavor of its kind in Ecuador).

Jondachi Fest 2016 is already in the works for next year. Come to Ecuador on January 15th-17th, 2016 to compete in the Upper Jondachi Race, experience this pristine watershed for yourself, and celebrate the magic of free-flowing jungle rivers.



Over sixty local and international paddlers enjoy the Lower Jondachi River at Jondachi Fest.

Photos by West Howland

Visit www.ecuadorianrivers.org or email jondachifest@ecuadorianrivers.org for information.

Competitors paddle out together after the Upper Jondachi Race.
Photo by West Howland

UPPER JONDACHI RACE 2015 RESULTS

WOMEN

- 1st:** HANNAH KERTESZ Idaho, U.S.A – 3:38
- 2nd:** LAURA FARRELL North Carolina, U.S.A. – 3:40
- 3rd:** EMILY SHANBLATT North Carolina, U.S.A. – 3:59

MEN

- 1st:** GALEN VOLCKHAUSEN Washington, U.S.A – 3:14
- 2nd:** GEORGE LOKKEN Pennsylvania, U.S.A. – 3:17
- 3rd:** DIEGO ROBLES Tena, Ecuador / DAVE GARDNER New York, U.S.A. – tied at 3:18
- 4th:** GREGORIO ANDY Tena, Ecuador – 3:21
- 5th:** BRAYAN CAYANCELA Tena, Ecuador – 3:24
- 6th:** AURELIEN LEROY Isere, France – 3:25
- 7th:** ANDRES REYES Baños, Ecuador – 3:26
- 8th:** BLAKE MAHONEY Ottawa, Canada – 3:28
- 9th:** MORGAN ARNAUD France – 3:31
- 10th:** MATHIEU ARCAND Quebec City, Quebec – 3:38
- 11th:** LUIS GRANIZO Baños, Ecuador – 3:41
- 12th:** ALVARO ANDY Tena, Ecuador – 3:45
- 13th:** IÑIGO CAMPOS Baños, Ecuador – 3:49
- 14th:** EDWIN CAZAS Baños, Ecuador – 3:50
- 15th:** JONATHAN RAMIREZ Tena, Ecuador – 3:53
- 16th:** FROILAN ANDI Tena, Ecuador – 4:09
- 17th:** LEANDRO PAPA Tena Ecuador – 5:12
- 18th:** JESÚS ANDI Tena, Ecuador – 8:30



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COOPERATION BETWEEN PADDLERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS

BY DARRON LAUGHLAND



Team member Jake Risch practicing kayak assisted swimming with members of Conway Fire Department. Photo by Ernie Mills Photography

Introduction by Charlie Walbridge, AW Safety Editor

WHITewater paddlers have been rescuing one another since the earliest days of our sport. Extended experience on moving water has given them the skills and understanding of how to operate effectively on it. Trained river runners have often rescued non-paddlers in trouble who they encounter on their trips. In the late 70s whitewater experts worked closely with several state agencies to develop the first swiftwater rescue training programs for first responders. While today's designated swiftwater rescue teams can work safely and efficiently, their skills are not honed to the levels of today's whitewater experts.

There are real barriers to any paddler who wants to help professional rescuers today, since fire and rescue personnel typically encounter only paddlers who are inexperienced and need help. They have little understanding of what a trained whitewater boater can do. Nowadays

many states have moved to give volunteer rescuers insurance coverage through workers' compensation, and with this have come substantial new training requirements. A new rescue squad member needs weeks of training before assisting in the simplest emergencies. Perhaps most important, these teams prefer to work with people they know, and are reluctant to accept help from volunteers with unproven abilities. If something goes wrong, they, not the volunteer, will be explaining why they allowed it to happen.

Professional outfitters in some, but not all, areas have developed working relationships with rescue squads and some professional guides serve on swiftwater rescue teams. In an exciting new development, a group of highly motivated whitewater paddlers in the White Mountains of New Hampshire built a team that serves as a resource for first responders throughout the area. It hasn't been easy, or quick, but it's a really solid achievement. Read on to see how they did it.

THE SWIFT RIVER was running at a high-medium level. A party of four paddlers with a raft and kayaks drove up the Kancamaugus Highway. Just downstream of Lower Falls, the intended put-in, strobes of emergency apparatus and personnel sidetracked the group. Knowing what this likely indicated, they stopped and spoke with a Fish and Game officer known to the paddlers, and the local Fire Chief. The paddlers offered the assistance of a raft and kayaker, or three kayakers. The response to the paddlers was a polite and professional, "Thanks, but no thanks." In fact, more often than not, this is the typical response when members of the public approach government agencies with an offer to assist.

After a fun and intense run, the trip arrived at the takeout without seeing the victim or searchers. While the paddlers ran shuttle back to the put-in, a cluster of fire trucks had moved downstream. A rescuer directing traffic indicated that the raft had passed near the victim in the water, although yells to gain the attention of the paddlers went

SAFETY

unheard. Still dressed for paddling, one of the paddlers spoke again with Fish and Game to offer assistance. The victim was stuck on the upstream side of a rock near an island. A short ferry across a narrow jet of water would bring a paddler 10 meters downstream of the victim, and once out of the boat, the paddler could easily walk up to access and stabilize the victim, and assist in the recovery from the island. The F&G officer on the shoreline relayed the proposal to the Incident Commander (IC) after the paddlers explained this to him.

The IC was working with the Mountain Rescue Service, a volunteer search and rescue organization known for technical rock climbing and mountaineering rescues in the White Mountains. They were rigging a line to lower a firefighter in a “gumby suit” (an ice rescue suit inappropriate for swiftwater environs), and the paddlers were waived off, but told to “stand by if they wanted to,” in the event that the strategy did not work. The paddlers stood by and watched, frustrated, as the rescue attempt unfolded. After twenty minutes, the rising water washed the victim off the rock. Searchers recovered the body the next day several miles downstream.

The mountains and rivers of New Hampshire host hundreds of thousands of tourists



WMSRT and Conway Fire Department practice victim capture systems and kayak assisted rope rigging.

Photo by Ernie Mills Photography

annually, many of whom come to swim in rivers and lakes, to photograph fall foliage, waterfalls, and immerse themselves in the scenic grandeur of the “Granite State.” Tragically, in the last decade, several residents and guests have drowned while visiting or playing in the region’s waterways. Lower Falls, a picturesque ledge waterfall on the Swift River, has been the scene of many of these fatalities and rescues.

Victims have slipped, fallen, or washed into the rapid flow of water, and then been unable to swim to safety.

The local paddling community had been having conversations about assisting fire departments and NH Fish and Game officers in their rescue and recovery operations for several years. Incidents on the Swift River and the drowning death of friend and kayaker Cliff Eisner had increased talk of organizing into a rescue team of sorts. The search and recovery of the victim who fell in the river and washed downstream from Lower Falls in 2010 shifted the conversations to action.

This catalyst for forming the White Mountain Swiftwater Rescue Team brought together a cadre of local river guides, paddlers, firefighters, and search and rescue volunteers to organize and gain the support and trust of local, state,

WMSRT member Liz Stokinger ferries lines and sets safety for Conway Fire personal accessing victim.

Photos by Ernie Mills Photography



SAFETY

and federal agencies that handle search, rescue, and recovery operations in New Hampshire. This article provides a narrative describing how the WMSRT folded the local paddling community's knowledge of rivers, hydrology, and rescue into a structure that developed relationships with the agencies in a way that benefits communities of the region. It may also serve as a template of sorts for paddlers in other regions interested in a similar endeavor.

The Mount Washington Valley and New Hampshire have a long history of volunteer search and rescue, from the storied Appalachian Mountain Club and National Ski Patrol to today's near dozen SAR teams. These teams include canine search teams, a wilderness medicine school, search teams, and technical climbing and mountaineering teams. Modeled after the Mountain Rescue Service, WMSRT is a volunteer organization composed of mainly paddlers and river guides, as well as members of fire departments, and the other SAR teams. WMSRT established callout protocols, and gear, training, and membership expectations. An advisory board of local livery owners, fire personal, F&G officers, and SAR professionals provides guidance and direction to the team. Each member maintains his or her own personal gear, and keeps up with first aid, swiftwater rescue,

and any other medical or rescue related certifications.

A group of river guides or paddlers wishing to organize themselves into a formalized rescue team has many significant hurdles to overcome. Some of these anchor to legal responsibilities and statutory obligations of the government agencies who oversee rescue and recovery operations, and some are beliefs and biases about paddlers as a user group in general. The team is fortunate to be based in a state with statutes that allow volunteer SAR teams to work with state agencies. The progress WMSRT has made includes extensive relationship building and reaching out to individuals in the agencies, in a statutory environment that allows and supports volunteers.

Conway Village Fire Department (CVFD): Fire departments in NH are responsible for rescue operations, medical emergencies, and transport. When approached by a member of the WMSRT who wanted to come and observe a department swiftwater rescue training held locally by the NH Fire Academy, the Chief's responses was, "It's public land. I can't make you leave." Since the answer wasn't actually a "no," the member then contacted the course lead instructor Ben Selleck (a former paddler) and explained what the team's goals and intentions were, and was encouraged to

get as many paddlers as possible to attend the evening lecture portion of the class to show a willingness to reach out. WMSRT members attended the first evening lecture portion of a Swiftwater Rescue Technician course to begin the relationship building. In September, during an Advanced Swiftwater Rescue course, the WMSRT received an invitation to participate as the hasty team working with Conway Fire in a night search scenario. Since then, the same chief calls the team to swim and train together and members of the fire department volunteer alongside WMSRT doing safety for the whitewater paddling leg of a local pentathlon.

NH Fish and Game (NH&G): Fish and Game in New Hampshire, in addition to enforcing hunting and fishing laws, is responsible for all backcountry searches and rescues. WMSRT members were fortunate to know two local officers socially so there was an existing relationship to build on. The officers joined an advisory board during the early formation stages and provided clear expectations and instruction on what needed to happen in order for NH&G to "call out" the team. Their concerns were organization, reliability, communication, a familiarity with the Incident Command System (command and control and how agencies are organized), and making sure the team had vetted members, so a rescue or search would not evolve into rescuing the volunteers. Including NH&G at the start was key to the development and eventual acceptance by their agency and officers. WMSRT continues to foster a relationship with the agency by inviting them to attend membership meetings and trainings. NH&G is also important from a liability and insurance standpoint. In NH, volunteer SAR organizations must sign in and out to an incident. Once signed in, a volunteer is "seen" as a state employee and covered

WMSRT member Brian Irwin discussing rescue options with Conway Fire Department after the paddler team located victims.

Photos by Ernie Mills Photography





Team members Jake Risch and Ben T-bo demonstrate and practice kayak assisted swimming techniques with a NH Fire Academy class.

Photo Courtesy of WMSRT

by the state worker's compensation and death/disability compensation in the event of an incident involving a rescuer.

US Forest Service: The USFS works closely with NHF&G and other SAR groups. Several individuals who oversee recreation in the Saco and Androscoggin Ranger Districts have spent time as Tuckerman Ravine snow rangers, and as such, have worked with SAR agencies and volunteers, and are providing valuable technical and organizational guidance to WMSRT. Due to large tracts of land under federal control with many gated access roads, developing rapport with the USFS law enforcement and recreation staff is important, as WMSRT may need to gain vehicle access during a SAR operation. As a volunteer SAR team in NH, WMSRT members receive parking passes for the National Forest. The local USFS district employees have provided guidance and support with their expertise and contacts within the SAR community.

The NH Search and Rescue Working Group and the Outdoor Council: The NHSAR Working Group is a group of SAR teams and F&G officers that get together monthly to discuss searches, rescues, and related topics. The membership includes several volunteer search teams, the Appalachian

Mountain Club, Randolph Mountain Club, and the USFS. WMSRT members attending these monthly meetings have an opportunity to work with the leadership of other teams, and further develop the relationship with F&G. The Outdoor Council provided funds for WMSRT members Liz Stokinger and Scott Lee to attend five-day swiftwater training in Oregon, and members have attended workshops on working around helicopters, search dogs, GPS, and line searching. WMSRT has presented workshops on operating in swiftwater environments to other member teams.

The breakthrough moment for the team was during an Advanced SRT course held by CFD. The advanced course includes night search operations and swims. The event took place at Lower Falls on the Swift, and included NHF&G, Conway Fire, USFS personnel, a dog search team, NH Air National Guard, and the WMSRT. The respective agencies worked together at the command post under a "Unified Command" structure, coordinating with each other. The goal was to conduct inter-agency and volunteer search team operations at night. Given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, the WMSRT deployed as the hasty team, tasked with

finding victims and patients and assisting firefighters with rescues. The speed with which paddlers could access victims in the river quickly became apparent, and as the searchers moved down river, some members remained behind to ferry lines and set safety for the firefighters executing the rescues. The WMSRT found all but one of the in-water victims quickly, and were able to find the last when the "body" was illuminated by an overhead spotlight by the National Guard crew supporting the paddlers in a Blackhawk helicopter. The event was a breakthrough for the paddlers, who, by demonstrating professionalism and ability to work within the formal rescue structure, cemented the relationships with the agencies and achieved recognition that the skills and river knowledge of paddlers were a valuable asset and resource.

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SAFETY



WMSRT member Karl Schmidt accesses and evaluates a victim while illuminated by a NH National Guard Blackhawk during a search exercise on the Swift River in Albany, NH. Photo by Ernie Mills Photography

Since the night search, CFD has called the team out to assist in several rescues and a body recovery on the Swift. NHF&G deployed the team searching for missing and overdue tubers and canoeists, and in a search of waterways for a local missing teen. The team has supported cadaver dogs and their handlers by providing and operating boats. Members have presented on the WMSRT and agency rescuers working together at the New York State Technical Rescue Conference, on high water stream crossings for local SAR teams, and at the annual NH Working Group training. Over the summer of 2014, the team received approval as a 501c3 Not for Profit organization. In the fall, fundraising began for a team equipment cache and communications equipment. The team's biggest single fundraiser is an annual ACA Swiftwater Rescue course held each spring in Conway. Jeremy Cass of Send it Whitewater and Mike Gatewood of Rescue Classes have donated the proceeds of the courses to the team, and the courses have provided training for employees of local liveries and river guides, firefighters, and team members.

The White Mountain Swiftwater Rescue Team has been successful developing the relationships and structures to effectively integrate into formal SAR systems, government agencies, and other volunteer teams. We invite other paddlers, river guides, and local paddling communities to reach out and explore working together with their local agencies. This may be done informally or formally and is best done prior to an incident. Our members may be a resource during this process, and the team may be reached at wmsrt.org or visit and like us on Facebook©.

Barriers to the formation and acceptance of paddler/river guide search and rescue teams:

- State and Federal Statutes limiting volunteer SAR organizations or citizen responders from participating in formal agency rescue and recovery operations.
- High cost of Liability, Injury, and Death Insurance for volunteer rescuer organizations.
- Communications – lack of radio interoperability and/or lack of radio

equipment. Waterproof handheld radios, powerful enough to transmit at a distance to agency frequencies, are expensive.

- Lack of familiarity operating within the ICS structure and FEMA/NIMS command and control.
- Agencies lack willingness, ability, or structure to work with “unknown entities.”
- Paddlers lack NFPA/FEMA/Homeland Security credentialing that includes training and equipment standards and are unlikely to have training to operate in flood environments.
- Whitewater craft are only as good as the operator(s). Volunteer responders

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SAFETY



WMSRT and Conway Fire work together practicing the deployment of an inflated fire hose and victim capture systems.

Photo Courtesy of WMSRT

- Take the free NIMS ICS 100 online course to gain a better understanding of the “how and why” of agency incident management.
- Organize and train the local paddling community, develop protocols and standards.
- Get out and practice and train with the agencies and first responders.
- Reach out to the community to gain support and if needed, funding.
- Incorporate and formalize the organization.

must be organized and vetted, or it will be difficult to gain acceptance by agencies.

- Differing approaches to rescuing. Paddlers move quickly with limited resources, Agency Responders move deliberately with extensive personnel and equipment resources.

Benefits to paddlers/river guides and agency responders developing working relationships:

- The paddling community has an intimate knowledge of local rivers and waterways to share.
- Paddlers can perform fast and effective rescues, transport gear, make contact with victims and patients, and provide boat and shore-based safety for rescuers and victims/patients.
- Paddlers have experience and expertise working in the swiftwater environment that in most cases significantly exceeds that of fire/rescue professionals.

- Agency rescuers offer advanced medical care and transportation, personnel and equipment resources, communication, lighting, and if needed may have motorized inflatables/craft, extensive ropes and rigging expertise and equipment, and (in some cases) fixed wing and/or helicopter resources – working together with paddlers on and near river enhances these capabilities.

- Critical time at incidents will not be wasted deciding “whose” rescue it is in cases in which the victim is a raft guest or a fellow paddler; rather, collaboration should lead to faster, safer rescues and improved outcomes.

- Practicing together improves readiness and effectiveness.

Steps paddlers can take to work with government agencies:

- Talk to local fire/rescue personnel/ State conservation officers or Fish and Game and ask what paddlers would need to do in order to work with them, including their statutory responsibilities.

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LOVE & WHITEWATER

OUR KAYAKING LOVE STORY

BY KARISSA & JON MILLER



Karissa and Jon on the Toe River in January 2013. One of our first cold weather surfing dates.

Photo by Jon Miller

Karissa:

OUR LOVE STORY does not begin at Gorilla, but that's a good place to start. On a sunny November day in Saluda, I watched kayakers of varying abilities make their way down a Class V rapid called Gorilla as they vied for the best time.

I really needed a friend that day. When I saw Jon walk by me, I stopped paying attention to the race. We had met briefly earlier in the summer, but we really didn't get to know each other until a few months later. That day at Gorilla, I invited myself kayaking with him and his son at the whitewater center in Charlotte the next day.

When I met Jon there, I remember his messy hair and his full-face helmet, and I thought, why does he wear that silly thing? When he started explaining the names of the rapids, I started to smile and I felt something. I knew he was going to be important to me. We had a great day kayaking and then parted ways.

We lived one state apart. He was in North Carolina and I was in Georgia — I didn't think we had a chance.

So I returned back home to my dog, Mattie, and another week of work. When I arrived home, I had a call from my friend, Gray,

and I learned that she was at the hospital. I gave her a ride home, and as we drove through Calhoun Drug's drive through for her prescription, Gray insisted that I call Jon.

I can't call him first, I thought, but this was my only option. So I punched in his number. No one answered; I didn't leave a message. I assumed that he would see my number on his phone and call me back. A few hours passed. Then, a day. I decided to send him a text message, so I did, and waited. I checked my phone periodically — no missed messages.

Finally, he called me. I later found out that Jon keeps his cell phone turned off. We made plans to go kayaking again at the whitewater center and then "dinner." (This meant a date?)

It was a date. Not only did Jon buy me dinner, but a nutritious breakfast and lunch too. I couldn't tell you exactly what stories we told that day or where we ate later, but I can tell you I have never felt more at home with anyone in my life. We were inseparable that weekend, and a spark was ignited.

Kayaking provided not only adrenaline-filled excitement but also the internal rush of pure joy, feeling alive and in love. Even though we lived in different towns, we managed to visit each other often. We

mailed each other letters, long letters that talked about love and plans. I adored Jon's letters; they made my week, and I looked forward to receiving them.

Within a week, we were making plans to visit each other. Within a few weeks, we were planning more kayaking adventures. Fifteen weeks later, we were engaged. Now, nearly a year later, we are more deeply in love than ever.

Jon makes kayaking romantic, but what I love and appreciate most is the mundane, everyday things. Like the way he offers to empty the water out of my kayak, carry my paddle, and wash and dry out our gear when we get home.

But there is another side to this story.

Jon:

I met Karissa on the Pigeon River for the first time. I was impressed more by her determination than her paddling skills. I watched her make about six attempts at a combat roll before she got it.

She failed to catch an eddy on Lost Guide and blew right past us. My friend and I were going to show her the line. We tried to catch up with her and finally did, but it was after she went through the rapid. I'm not sure, but I think I might have rescued her at Lost Guide.

I later found out that she didn't have any idea what she was doing, as she had only been paddling for three months. She had learned how to roll a few weeks prior before running the Pigeon. Still, her passion for paddling made an impression on me and others she encountered. She was very determined to not swim. Before we left the river that day, I gave her my number in case she wanted to paddle with us again.

I didn't see her again until the Green Narrows Race. I ran into her at the race and mentioned that my son and I were paddling the next day at the U.S. National Whitewater Center and that she was welcome to go with us. The next day she called and said she would like to go.

She met us in Charlotte and got a little confused by her GPS, which directed her to the old entrance. We finally met and spent the day paddling. We both enjoyed it and then the three of us had dinner at the whitewater restaurant. After that, we said goodbye and went our separate ways. Later on, she sent me a text message saying she would like to paddle with me or get together. So, we went back to the whitewater center again for what I would call our first date.

Some of my friends showed up, and Karissa said she wanted to try the comp (competition channel). I was a little



reluctant, since a short time earlier I had my back skinned up and my semi dry top torn up after messing up on Big Drop. She insisted. I finally agreed. She did well on the first run, but not so well on the second.

My kayak stood straight up and did something like a stern squirt at the bottom of Big Drop. She came down after me. My kayak fell downward and hit her on the head. It really rang her bell, and after that she had a nasty swim. My friend and I helped her get her kayak out. She was kind of dazed, which is the reason I think she fell for me. Just kidding!

Despite her headache, we continued to paddle the wilderness for the remainder of the day, and then we had dinner in Gastonia. Before driving her back to her Uncle's house, where she was staying for the night, we stopped and held hands at a mountain overlook—star gazing. I think that's when I fell for her.

The rest is history. We still paddle together weekly. Our love has grown stronger just as has our ability to paddle.

Both:

But, we aren't a perfect couple. Just like kayaking, we have good days and bad. One lesson we have learned is to stay calm when trying to sort out our frustrations, realizing that there are times when you have to kayak above life's holes; mostly, we have to avoid being sucked underneath the surface, where we can feel stressed and in danger.

Besides, there are a lot of good times ahead and many rivers and runs that will be epic. We are a team.

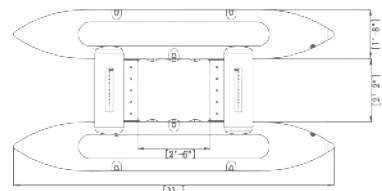
Jon and Karissa Miller at the Nantahala Outdoor Center. They were married on September 7, 2013. In planning, they made sure that their wedding did not interfere with any kayaking festivals beginning with the letter G—GAF and Gauley.
Photos by Karissa Miller

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CANOEING

CANOE SNOOTS

BY PATTI RUTKA



Tandem Canada Falls.
Photo by Ron Chase

"CANOEING IS STUPID," my former OC2 partner snarked at me on a late summer morning at the put-in for the remote and wild Canada Falls on Maine's South Branch of the Penobscot River. My robin's egg-blue Dagger Caption nestled amongst ferns on the trail leading to the river's edge, all calm before the storm of whitewater. Looking askance at the tandem boat, my ex stood with his superball-swirly-orange Mamba resting on his shoulder. Suspecting envy behind his sentiment, I stuck to my punch list, clipping in the bailer, checking airbags, tucking in the throw rope. My current partner and I readied our craft to run The Slide, a constricted torrent of water, way back in from the nearest dirt road through tangled spruce forest. After that, we'd negotiate SYBOFF, a hole named for its formidable suction of a particular part of the male anatomy should one swim there. There were more rapids of note on this Class IV run deep in the Maine woods, but these two concerned us most. Maybe my current partner and I were stupid, but the boat wasn't. It had lineage that rendered it up to the task.

I was well aware that a Mamba would keep out water better than a Caption.

I'm not snooty about canoeing (really; some of my best friends are kayakers), so I have reflected on why people still bother to canoe rather than transition to the dark side of double blades, sitting on their duffs, and hucking falls. Most folks know that those who don't learn history are condemned to repeat it. In an effort to avoid repeating history—I wanted to go down this river rather than up it (poling) or around it (portaging)—I decided to read up on how Native Americans used to deal with Maine's waterfalls, rapids, and beaver dams in millennia past. River runners who negotiated Maine waterways long before I was a thought whispered to me from the annals of time, wind, and whitecaps on Maine's interlaced water systems.

"Canoeing today is a sport, but for thousands of years it was a practical necessity," writes Dave Cook in *Above the Gravel Bar: The Native Canoe Routes of Maine*. "Space-age materials" like aluminum and rubber and plastic have replaced "fragile birch bark," and that's a good thing because taking a birch bark canoe down The Slide really would be stupid—or, more politely, it would be ill-advised. That drop could leave birch bark as busted-up as Maine's rock-bound coast. Granted, a decked boat might be

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CANOEING



smarter for The Slide's all-engulfing gush. Yet the reason open-decked canoeing is not stupid here or on most rivers in Maine is that canoes allowed Native Americans access to both the ocean and to inland rivers, ponds, and "swomps" (known to those From Away as swamps, or wetlands).

People back in the day—like, 12,000 years ago—had way more things to do than stand around looking good in dry tops and neoprene skirts. They needed to, like, survive. In that time frame Paleo-Indians came to Maine with the retreat of melting ice caps and rising water levels. With the disappearance of ice and rebound of land, water levels fell, then rose again (this took much longer than a dam release), around the time of the arrival of Europeans. Birch, along with poplar and spruce and fir and red pine appeared, enveloped by grasslands. The river systems in Maine assumed their present make-up about 5,000 years ago. Because people then did not live in permanent villages but were hunters, fishers, and gatherers, they traveled for sustenance both up and down river. Native Americans in Maine, later known collectively as the Wabanaki, often camped on clamming mudflats to tap resources from both inland resources as well as the sea. We, on the other hand, travel only downriver for recreation.

Nowadays whitewater boaters, cruisers, and racers alike know the flow of a river, its undulations, the feel of a boat descending

a filled riverbed, and how to slow and halt downriver progress. Beginners learn to grab eddies and surf a downstream ferry from point A to point B. Gravity rules. Rivers flush boats to the sea; you could say that all a boater is doing is resisting, in balletic maneuvers, the ferocious pull of gravity on water. Yet Native American-named rivers in Maine are labeled from an upstream perspective. Early Indians described waterways as they experienced them, applying themselves to survival rather than adrenaline rushes. More on names in a moment, after a little history about canoes.

Cook maintains in *Above the Gravel Bar* that dugout canoes were not used in the Maritime Provinces. He argues that dugouts, made from tree trunks, wouldn't have existed in a land in which there were no trees—an Arctic land of tundra. The Paleo-Indian, he contends, lived in an Arctic environment that didn't have the wood, much less bark, to create canoes. In 1605 explorer Samuel Champlain noted that dugouts were still being used in northern Massachusetts, but lighter birch bark craft allowed Indians to portage (or carry). A dugout could weigh 700 pounds, handle only four people, and had only four inches of freeboard unloaded. This would have been impractical given ocean water slosh. Moose hide canoes might be used for crossing lakes but these were not sturdy and became obsolete when the environment changed with rising and

The Slide.

Photo by Kevin Rogers

falling water levels. Cook notes that with climate change raw material disappeared, foreshadowing Royalex's disappearance with the changing economic environment of whitewater boating. Enter the birch bark canoe (has anyone at Esquif thought of going seriously retro?).

Birch bark, or *agwiden*, means "floats lightly." First recorded by (European) Jacques Cartier in 1535 around Prince Edward Island, birch bark canoes came in different shapes and sizes depending on the waterway navigated: rivers with rapids and waterfalls, versus the ocean with its formidable swells and tides and fog. Ocean boats were long, nearly 22 feet, able to handle marine conditions; inland boats were as small as 11 to 14 feet, and could be transported almost as easily, if not stylishly, as a Mamba at "carrying places." Constructed primarily of birch bark and white cedar, a boat's structural ribs were lashed with spruce root. Strength-to-weight ratio figured into a boat's construction. Finally, sticky stuff to keep it all together, a pitch made of spruce resin, charcoal, and fat, kept seams watertight. *Wangan*, or "gear" canoes, could carry larger cargo than a backpack. And *wangan*, when incorporated into a river's name, means a carrying place.

Tribal Historian for the Penobscot Nation, James Eric Francis, Sr., points out in Cook's book that, "Penobscots had three basic ways of naming a particular location. Places were named for their geography or geology, the resources found there, or their names are based on legends that were passed down from generation to generation." "The *hunk* sound in [names like Madunkehunk] hints at the grunting of one on a portage or of one shoving a canoe upstream 'on the pole.'" In contrast, *-ticook* suffixes on a lot of the rivers in the Penobscot watershed indicate there are no difficult carrying spots, so "No Penobscot canoe man would ever mistake a *-ticook* streak for a *hunk* stream, and these

CORRECTION

names were telltale guides for a mapless people.” European-Americans named places either after a person or a place. But names of places get way more fun and descriptive in a Native American mental mapping of waterways. Resources of a particular place could configure a name; for example, the Passagassawassakeag (don’t hurt yourself) River means “where we speared sturgeon by torchlight.” Madamiscontis means “plenty of alewives” and Androscoggin means “place for curing fish.” Or there’s the more imagination-tickling Oodoolseezicook-Ahwangan, which means, “the Entrails Pond route.” This is an example of naming a specific spot for its outstanding characteristic, which has to do with a moose carcass, but I’ll spare you the details.

Perhaps The Slide, if it were to be accurately labeled in these latter days of more durable but less classy craft, would reveal through its name “place where an open deck boat is stupid.” That might not roll off the tongue any more easily than we could roll the boat, but at least you’d remember where you’d been. And you might have a little more respect given the boat’s lineage.

“Kayaking Blind Through the Grand Canyon” Correction

AERICAN WHITEWATER WOULD like to offer a correction to Rocky Contos’s article in our May/June issue and our sincere apologies to Lonnie Bedwell, the subject of our error. Lonnie, a kayaker who completed the first blind descent of the Grand Canyon, was somehow called by two different names in the story—Lonnie Bedwell, his actual name, but also Lonnie Anderson, not his real name. We’re not totally sure how this error arose, and we regret not catching it in the editing process. Lonnie has been very gracious about the mistake, writing, “I understand...Loni Anderson was a beautiful blonde movie star.”

It’s Easy to Support AW!

American Whitewater is proud of the work we have accomplished in our stewardship program but we need your help to sustain our success. Your support through membership and donations enables our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. Donations don’t have to be large; each person doing a small part makes a noticeable difference. Many donors fail to take full advantage of federal tax incentives specifically intended to encourage charitable contributions. Such incentives often enable a donor to make a larger gift to AW at little or no additional cost. For more information about maximizing your gift visit the IRS website dedicated to charitable organizations.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN# 23-7083760. To learn more about the Giving Options below, contact us at 866-BOAT4AW or visit the “Donate” link under “Support AW” on our website at www.americanwhitewater.org

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- MissionFish: Sell your items through the MissionFish program on eBay and the proceeds come directly to AW.
- Other Assets: A gift of real estate to AW qualifies you for a tax deduction based on the property’s fair market value. If it is not a river access point, AW will sell the property and use the proceeds to protect access and restore rivers. Acceptance of property is subject to certain conditions. You may also be eligible to receive tax benefits for gifts of real property. Art and jewelry are examples of personal property items that may be eligible. Interested donors should check with your financial and tax advisors and AW on the feasibility and tax considerations of such gifts.
- Securities: Donating appreciated stock to AW benefits both the donor and whitewater rivers. The donor receives two tax-related benefits. First, the gain on the stock is not subject to capital gains taxes. Second, the donor can deduct the value of the stock as a charitable contribution.
- United Way: All federal campaigns, and a few of the local campaigns will allow you to donate to AW. AW’s UNITED WAY member # is 2302.
- Vehicle Donations: Turn that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefiting AW.

AFFILIATE CLUBS

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY CARLA MINER

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of American Whitewater's existence. American Whitewater's original purpose since 1954 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. Our relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work we accomplish. 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.

Our Affiliate Club Spotlight this issue is on the Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg an outstanding Affiliate Club and longtime supporter of our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

The Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg (CCGH) has been a paddling club in Pennsylvania since 1976. They are a voluntary, not-for-profit association of novice through experienced paddlers that organize and schedule trips throughout the year for all skill levels, as well as, other various events that include an annual weekend camping trip at the Youghiogheny in Western Pennsylvania.

Annual dues for the CCGH are an affordable \$20. Check out the Club's website <http://www.ccghpa.com/> for additional information on membership and more detailed information about the Club. Membership meetings are held on the first Wednesday evening each month.

A big thank you to the Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg for their continued support of American Whitewater and our mission to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely!

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks
Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

Coosa River Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assn,
Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
IRIE Rafting Co, Truckee
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers, San Jose

Colorado

Colorado Whitewater Assn, Denver
Dolores River Boating Advocates, Dolores
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
Upper Colorado Private Boater Asso, Glenwood

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

Georgia

Atlanta Whitewater, Atlanta
Georgia Canoeing Asso, Atlanta
Paddlers4Christ, Ellijay

Idaho

Backwoods Mountain Sports, Ketchum
Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assn, Chicago

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

Kentucky

Bluegrass Wildwater Asso, Lexington
Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Troy

Maryland

Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club, Baltimore
Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Silver Spring

Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston

Minnesota

Rapids Riders, Minneapolis
SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Missouri

Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

AMC New Hampshire Paddlers, Raymond
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Nashua

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
KCCNY, Flanders

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
Colgate University, Hamilton
FLOW Paddlers' Club, Rochester
Hamilton College, Clinton
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq., Ossining
KCCNY, Flanders
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Buffalo

North Carolina

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Davidson Outdoors, Davidson
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Charlotte
Triad River Runners, Winston-Salem
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

Ohio

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Friends of the Crooked River, Akron
Keelhauler Canoe Club, Cleveland

Oregon

Eugene Kayaker, Eugene
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Next Adventure, Portland
Northwest Rafters Association, Roseburg
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Asso, Portland
PNWKayakers.com, Portland
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Centre County, Lemont
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Holtwood Hooligans, Paradise
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Limestone
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club,
Kingsport
Tennessee Scenic River Assn, Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

Utah

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg
Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke

Washington

BEWET- Boeing Employees Whitewater & Touring Club, Bellevue
Northwest Whitewater Asso, Spokane
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

West Virginia

Dbl Z! Whitewater Club, Fayetteville
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Berkeley Springs
WV Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

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

Wyoming

American Packrafting Association, Wilson

British Columbia

Thompson Rivers Univ Adventure Studies,
Kamloops

Ontario

Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, The Kawarthas

DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

By Carla Miner, Membership Manager

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 Carla Miner at membership@americanwhitewater.org or sign-up on line at www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.

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



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Rok Sribar and friends, East Fork Kaweah, CA. © Darin McQuoid

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