



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

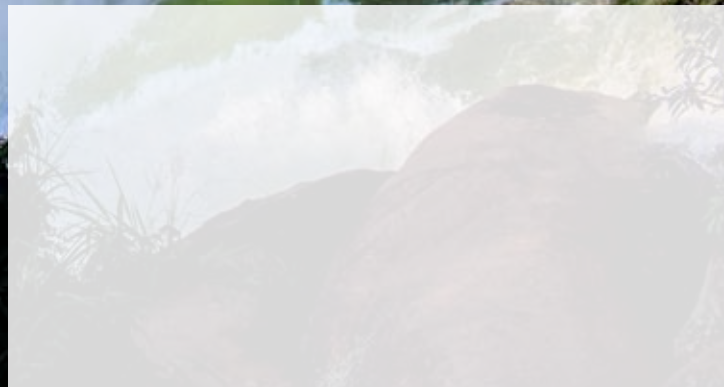
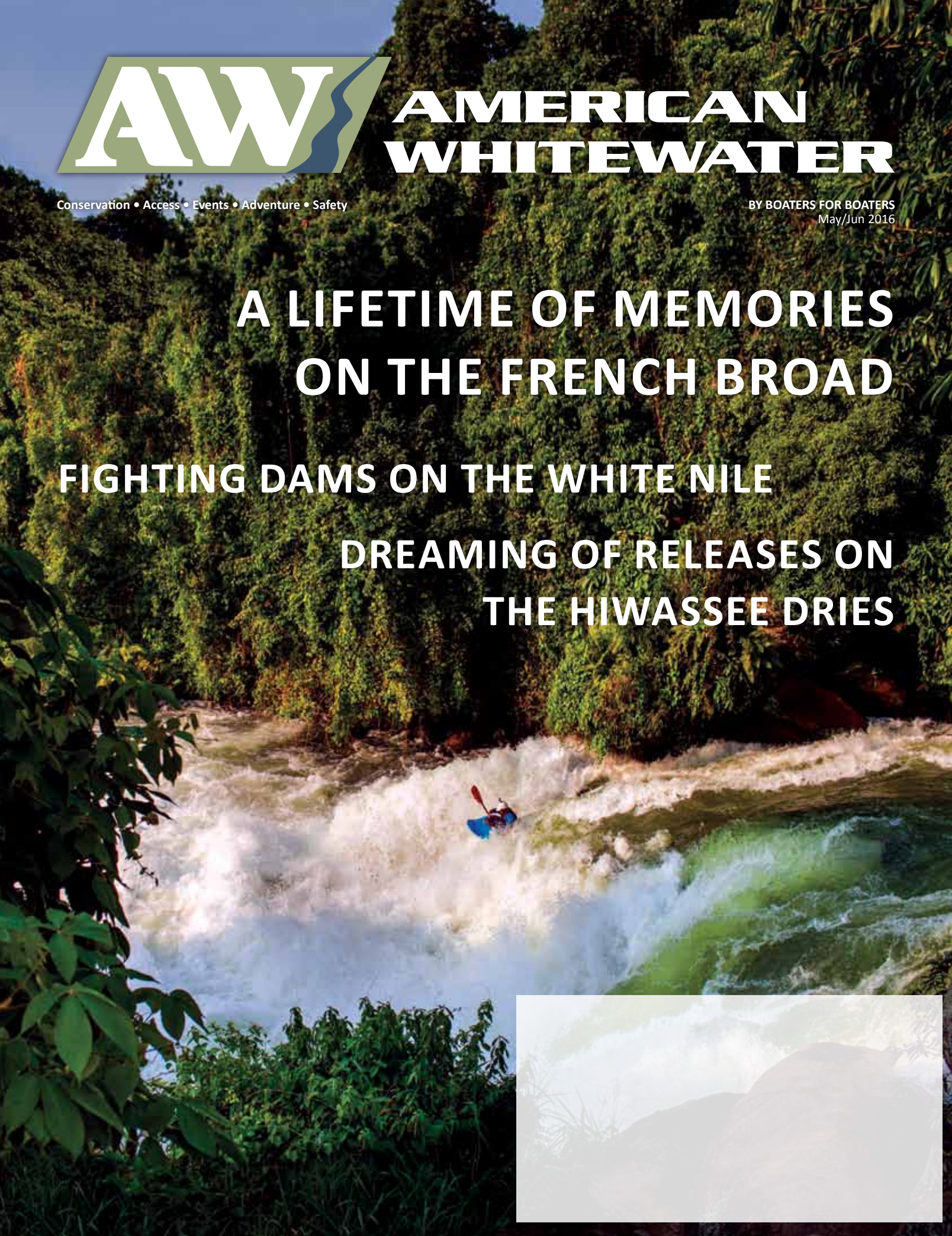
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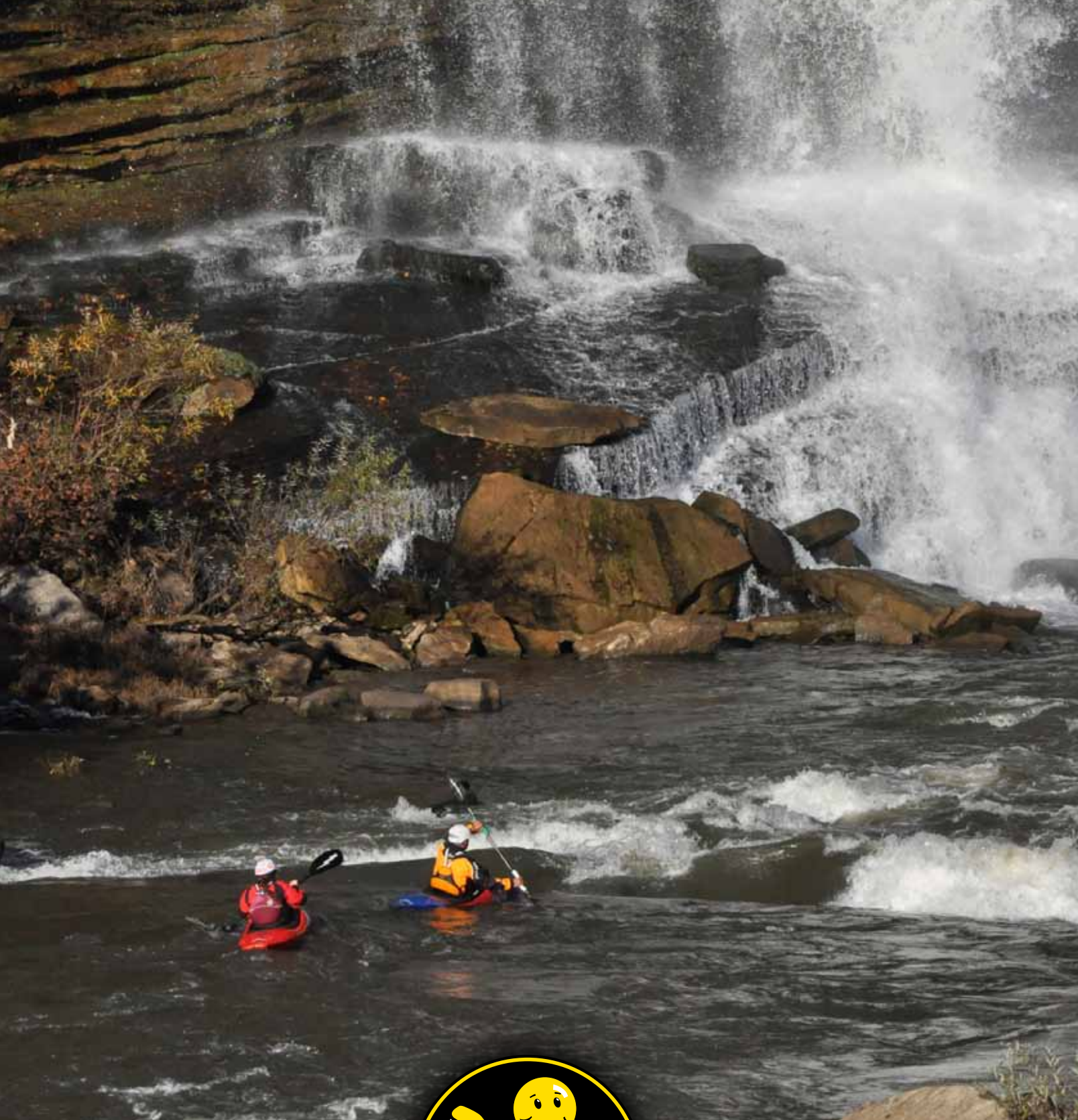
BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS  
May/June 2016

## A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES ON THE FRENCH BROAD

### FIGHTING DAMS ON THE WHITE NILE

### DREAMING OF RELEASES ON THE HIWASSEE DRIES





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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

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Luke Borserio of British Columbia, Canada running Kalagala Falls on the White Nile in Uganda.

Photo by Haley Mckee

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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](http://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.

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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



**R**IVERS ARE THE circulatory system of the planet and no other group knows the headwater reaches of major river systems better than boaters. It's that intimate knowledge that provides relevance to our river stewardship efforts and helps to keep the conversation real with policy makers and river managers. Our community knows first-hand that you can't love what you don't know. It's our common love of whitewater that makes us such passionate defenders of rivers.

In our national stewardship project work we have some major buckets that our work falls into, which can be represented by the labels Protect, Restore, and Enjoy.

## Protect

American Whitewater has been a key player in protecting our treasured free-flowing rivers through growing the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. From our early advocacy in support of protecting the Selway River in Idaho, to our current Wild and Scenic River campaigns in Washington state and Montana, we are a consistent voice for those who experience first-hand the beauty and joy of free-flowing rivers.

## Restore

American Whitewater has restored flows to dry rivers below dams across the country, and is a pioneer in bringing political and scientific legitimacy to restoring flows in a way that both improves riparian habitat and connects people to rivers. Rivers like the Feather in California, Chelan in Washington, Fox in Wisconsin, and Cheoah in North Carolina were once dry, but are living rivers again thanks to our leadership. We've also worked with fellow river advocates to remove dams that have outlived their useful life, restoring fish habitat and recreation opportunities to rivers throughout the country, including Washington's White Salmon River (Condit Dam), North Carolina's Tuckasegee River (Dillsboro Dam), and Montana's Clark Fork River (Milltown Dam). We are currently engaged in advocating for recreational flows on the New River Dries (WV), something that could bring tremendous value to an economically depressed area with new recreational opportunities for adventure-based tourism.

## Enjoy

American Whitewater knows that those who have a personal connection to rivers are the most powerful and effective river conservation advocates. We connect the public with rivers through promoting whitewater safety and improving public access to waterways. We also maintain the National Whitewater Inventory, a comprehensive database of over 7,000 whitewater runs, representing the nation's most extensive atlas of whitewater rivers.

This compelling mix of stewardship project outcomes allows American Whitewater to foster strong additional corporate and foundation support. We are able to solicit three additional dollars for every membership dollar we receive. That three-to-one match allows us to stretch your membership investment. Where else can you make a one-dollar investment and immediately stretch it to four dollars in support of river conservation? This match, combined with a lean organizational model,

allows American Whitewater to leave a footprint much larger than our actual shoe size.

These projects require a long-term view. Many of our stewardship efforts take decades for completion; political campaigns, hydropower relicensing, and building community support are all long-term investments in our stewardship program. American Whitewater has been doing this work for a while; we formed as an organization back in the 1950s to encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of America's recreational waterways for human-powered craft. With over 60 years of experience informing our stewardship project work we are just getting started. Rivers today face many threats, the challenges are real, and we have the team in place to lead to long-term success.

As we look to the future, we continue to appreciate the importance of rivers and their role in supporting the health and well being of the paddling community. We remain committed to giving back to these special places and have a great story to tell right now. Our stewardship projects are making a real difference to rivers and local communities, while providing flows for recreation and habitat. If you are reading this publication and you are not a member, please consider supporting this work. If you are a member, thanks for your support; pass this issue on to a friend and let that friend know what we are doing. There has never been a better time to support American Whitewater.

Take care of our wild rivers and they will take care of you (and thus your paddling)!

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Mark".

Executive Director, American Whitewater

# STEWARDSHIP

## COLORADO FLOOD RECOVERY

BY NATHAN FEY

**S**AFETY HAS BEEN a core issue for American Whitewater since 1954, and today we are leaders in accident analysis and safety education. We regularly advise legislative bodies, river managers, local governments, and whitewater users. In Colorado, AW is working with local paddlers, communities, and state and federal agencies to enhance safety and reduce risks from infrastructure destroyed during the 2013 floods. The Highland Ditch diversion on the St. Vrain River in Lyons, Colorado is one of those projects.

Small, low-head dams like the Highland Ditch structure are responsible for over 8% of river fatalities. In 2012, AW and a small group of engineers and anglers were working with Highland Ditch Company to remove the original 1870 dam and replace it with structures better suited for fish and boater passage—adding to the existing slalom course popular with local high-school racing teams and part of the Lyons Outdoor Games. The original dam was destroyed in the flooding, and in anticipation of the 2014 irrigation season, Highland Ditch Co. moved quickly, without following regulations or consulting with stakeholders like AW, to replace and rebuild their diversion with a solid concrete dam (see picture).

The Ditch Company had applied for funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to repair or replace the diversion, but their request was denied. That didn't stop the construction, and once Highland completed the project they requested over \$1 Million from FEMA for reimbursement of the dam's rebuilding. Highland Ditch Co. was notified by FEMA that the structure was not in compliance, and that the Town of Lyons was at risk and liable for additional flood waters backing up behind the dam. The Town may be forced to remove the dam to protect public safety. Whitewater rivers contain many hazards that are not always easily recognized.

Among the most frequent killers are dams, weirs, ledges, reversals, holes, and hydraulics. When water drops over an obstacle, it curls back on itself, forming a strong upstream current, which may be capable of holding a boat or swimmer. Some hydraulics make for excellent sport, like whitewater parks. Others are proven killers. Hydraulics around man-made dams must be treated with utmost respect regardless of their height or the level of the river. Across Colorado, low-head dams like the Highland Ditch diversion are being replaced with updated engineering that can meet the needs of the irrigators, while reconnecting fish habitat and improving boater safety.

The new Highland Ditch dam is a poster child for the dangers of low-head dams. It has all of the classic dangers: water too deep to stand in, uniform near-vertical face with no breaks or irregularities, concrete walls on either shore to prevent side exit, potential underwater debris, and a strong river-wide hydraulic. Once someone finds him or herself floating into it, there is not much chance for escape.

Hazards exist not only from going over the dam, an obvious source of danger, but also from being caught in the backwash below the dam, where the power of the water is sometimes overlooked. Anything or anyone entering the backwash below the dam, including anglers or waders, can be trapped and recirculated. A person caught in the backwash of a low-head dam in certain flows will be carried back upstream to



*The Highland Diversion in Lyons, Colorado.*

**Photo by Matt Booth**

the face of the dam, where water pouring over it will push them down under and back beneath the boil. When the victim struggles to the surface, the backwash again carries him to the face of the dam, thus continuing the cycle. The only exit from the "drowning machine" is for a victim to dive below the surface and catch downstream current that is flowing beneath the reversal. Unless highly trained, most enthusiasts including families and pets do not, or cannot, self-rescue when trapped by such hydraulics.

Efforts by the Town of Lyons and local volunteers continue to put pressure on Highland to fix the problem made worse by the company's rebuilding of the diversion. In early 2016, FEMA gave Highland Ditch Company 120 days to comply with regulations ignored during post-flood construction. If, among other issues, Highland can demonstrate that it has consulted with stakeholders and the local community, and that its diversion will not increase the danger of flood conditions in the future, FEMA may award the reimbursement.

# EAGLE RIVER PARK (EAGLE, CO)

BY TOWN OF EAGLE STAFF



Eagle River Park design.  
Photo by Town of Eagle, CO

**T**HE DESIGN AND construction of the Eagle River Park is the first step in implementation of the Town of Eagle’s visionary and ambitious River Corridor Master Plan that was adopted by the town in December of 2015 ([www.townofeaglerivercorridorplan.org](http://www.townofeaglerivercorridorplan.org)).

The Eagle River Park has been identified for a section of the Eagle River that was reconfigured and heavily affected by the construction of Interstate 70 in the early 1970s. The area along this particular section of the Eagle River is currently used primarily as a large dirt parking lot for semi-trucks. There is a chain link fence along the dirt parking lot that inhibits access to the river. The current use of this area creates a less than desirable first impression for the Town of Eagle, as well as the Eagle County Fairgrounds. With the construction of the Eagle River Park the gateway for both the Town of Eagle and the County Fairgrounds will be considerably improved.

The primary objective in the design of the Eagle River Park is to create a project that is a win-win for all stakeholders involved. The

town envisions a river park that includes the following:

- World-class in-stream features for beginner to pro-level kayakers, stand-up paddle boarders, and river surfers
- Improved fish passage and habitat
- Preservation of existing, mature areas of riparian vegetation, as well as planting of new riparian vegetation to improve the riparian ecosystem
- Boulder terracing along the riverbank to improve river access and to reinforce and stabilize the riverbank
- Natural depositional areas along the edge of the river that will provide beach areas for residents and visitors to enjoy along the river
- Improved downstream passage for river users, including a bypass channel for those who want to skirt the first two in-stream features

- An ADA accessible route to the river
- A roughly 2.5 acres riverside park that will provide active and passive recreation areas, river overlooks, restrooms, and areas for mobile vendors (e.g., food trucks)
- Amenities for swift water rescue training
- Connections to local and regional trail networks
- A parking area that will accommodate day users of the Eagle River Park, users of the nearby Eagle County Rodeo Arena and Fairgrounds, and semi-trucks during emergency closures of Interstate 70

Preliminary cost estimates provided to the town by S20 Design ([s2odesign.com](http://s2odesign.com)) and studioINSITE ([studio-insite.com](http://studio-insite.com)) for Phase I of the Eagle River Park totaled approximately \$5.6 million. Phase I includes the in-stream features and riverbank improvements, the riverside park, and

# STEWARDSHIP

connections to local and regional trails. Being a small community of approximately 6,500 people, the Town of Eagle has limited financial resources to fund a project of this magnitude. Therefore, the town had to investigate a variety of options in order to find a potential source of funding for this project. Ultimately, the town landed on a 0.5% sales tax increase to fund the Phase I improvements. The town intends to leverage a portion of the revenues from this additional sales tax for grants. On April 5, 2016, voters in Eagle will decide whether or not to approve the 0.5% sales tax increase. If voters approve the tax increase, the town anticipates beginning construction of the Eagle River Park in the winter of 2016.

Estimates prepared for the Eagle River Park predict that the river park will attract

anywhere from 17,165 – 32,847 non-commercial river users (i.e., kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders) per year. Assuming that the average expenditure per user is \$35, it is estimated that the town will see an increase in total expenditures of \$600,775 - \$1,149,645. This will equate to \$24,031 - \$45,986 of additional tax revenue for the town. The estimates for the Eagle River Park do not account for the economic impacts of new residents, new businesses, non-river user visits or additional interstate travelers who may be attracted to Eagle as a result of the river park. Based on discussions with other communities that have constructed river parks, the economic impacts that Eagle could realize may be significantly greater than those generated solely by kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders.

The Town of Eagle is excited to have American Whitewater's support for the implementation of the town's River Corridor Master Plan. Partnerships between the town and organizations such as American Whitewater are essential to bringing this plan's bold vision to fruition.

Those interested in learning more about the Eagle River Park project or the Town of Eagle's - River Corridor Plan should contact Matt Farrar (Assistant Town Planner) at the Town of Eagle ([matt.farrar@townofeagle.org](mailto:matt.farrar@townofeagle.org)).





# ACKS

## MAIN STREET

### BUENA VISTA A TOWN THAT GOES WITH THE FLOW

by ANNA SITTON

At the base of the Sawatch mountain range lives a one-stoplight town, and a river runs through it.

From the first sign of snowmelt to the time the leaves start their change, the Arkansas River Valley is the place to be. The overall sense of community revolves around Sup'ing the Milk Run with a handful of your favorite friends, riding your bike down to surf in our play park until the sun sets, getting your heart rate up on the Pine Creek and Numbers section of the Ark, and exploring the Brown's Canyon Monument by raft, kayak, or foot. There is something for everyone in those summer days that keep on giving.

Around the endless amount of activities offered by this valley, is the support of a community that throws itself into making all the fun as accessible as simply showing up. Start your day with a steaming cup of coffee from The Buena Vista Roastery, head over to Colorado Kayak Supply and pick up anything you need to enjoy all that the river has to offer, and finish your day sipping a cold beer from Eddyline Brewery or a cocktail from the Deerhammer Distillery.

The big bang that starts off our incredible river season is Paddlefest, which falls on Memorial Day weekend. If you're looking for a way to get involved in river sports, ready to hone your skills, or just want a good party that involves playing on water; this is the place to be. Clinics, competitions, races, and concerts make it a weekend not to miss!

The Arkansas River Valley has captured the hearts of all who visit or now call it home. It is the mountain town that just won't quit, and the summer months give it the soul that makes it a nook worth exploring.



ACKS  
PaddleFest.com

# STEWARDSHIP

## HIWASSEE DRIES- A RARE DELIGHT

BY RUTLEDGE RIDDLE



*The Hiwassee Dries starts off with a bang as it gushes through Hollywood Bowl Rapid, the biggest on the run.*

**Photo by Kevin Colburn**

**O**N FEBRUARY 6TH, 2016 a group of Asheville boaters consisting of Oliver Ramming, Miles Murphy, Andrew Holcombe, Kevin Colburn, and myself met at eight a.m. to go to the Hiwassee Dries. For everyone except me this was their first time on the river and they really had no idea what to expect. I'd told them of large-volume swirly rapids with great play features and tree dodging flat water, but they still seemed skeptical. A river of this character is rare in the Southeast.

The drive from Asheville is about two and a half hours, and it can feel tempting to stop at times since you are passing right through the Nantahala Gorge and other great whitewater runs. However, the drive is very scenic and makes for a manageable day trip. Besides great conversation to keep us occupied, we decided to do some more research on the Hiwassee River on the section we were going to do that day, the Dries.

We found that the Hiwassee Dries is a 9.2-mile section of river in Eastern Tennessee. It was dammed and dewatered in 1943

by the Tennessee Valley Authority for power generation, and the powerhouse has remained in use to this day. Thanks to work on the powerhouse the river ran for much of the winter of 2015-2016, before the Dries were dried up again as water was once again diverted through a pipe to the powerhouse. The river drains 2,700 square miles and has an average flow of 2,400 cubic feet per second at the Appalachia Dam. It drops an average of 32 feet per mile on this section (for comparison, the Upper Gauley drops an average of 36 feet per mile).

After hearing several of these statistics, the boaters sleepily listening in the backseat began to perk up. Not long after this, we turned onto a dirt road to find the take-out/put-in. The road seemed to be in good shape. The Toyota mini-van that we were all riding in had no problems. We dropped boats and two people at the put-in, which is on the way to the take-out. Then we continued on that road until we reached a dead end and the gate. We decided it would be best for us to park at the gate since the parking area below was near the construction site on the powerhouse.

All in all, it probably took 25 minutes to run shuttle.

From the put-in, you could just see the river through the trees below. It was a short, steep hike down but the closer we got the more excited everyone was getting. People were contemplating what was below. "Were we about to run the new Gauley?" we jokingly asked each other on the way down. We hiked up along the river for 200 yards and took a look at the first rapid, Hollywood Bowl. It was an awesome multistep rapid with many different lines that cater to varying levels of comfort and





The author, Rutledge Riddle at the takeout for the Hiwassee Dries.

Photo by Kevin Colburn

skill. It had some big holes and big wave trains but nothing too scary or difficult.

The next 5.7 miles was some of the most fun big water rapids I've run, interspersed with moving flat water and wave trains.

The gorge is beautiful and even in February we saw kingfishers darting up and down the river. Many of the play features are catch on the fly, so that the more times you run the river, the more fun it gets. Even if you are not in an old school slicey boat or

new school looping machine, you can still have fun charging across boily eddy lines and planing over holes. I was in my creek boat and had so much fun carving turns on green waves and just watching everyone else's faces light up when we rolled into every rapid.

With the dewatering of the river, the forest has encroached on the riverbed. In many places this is not the case but in some—mostly flatwater—sections you are literally paddling through a forest. While this is unusual, it just shows that the impact of the dewatering is widespread and hurts the natural ecosystem of the river and the surrounding ecosystems. With more consistent releases, this could become a classic run for kayakers and rafters in the Southeast.

## HIWASSEE DRIES

By Kevin Colburn

Rutledge nailed it: The Hiwassee Dries are awesome! Unfortunately, Appalachia Dam is owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority, a New Deal era pseudo-government corporation that is exempt from many of the rules governing normal power companies. American Whitewater tried to get releases in 2003-2005, but TVA refused, claiming rare plants in the dry riverbed would be affected by any flows. TVA is both the power company and the regulator, and this fox-in-the-henhouse situation makes objectivity difficult to come by at best. So the river stayed dry. Along with the Pigeon River Dries, the Hiwassee Dries is one of the last epic stretches of whitewater dewatered by a hydropower dam in the South that American Whitewater and our friends have not secured releases on. We hope to change that.

Rutledge didn't mention this, but he organized this trip, wrote the article, and made a short film of our trip as a senior project for his high school. He did a great job, and his project has helped to document the incredible value that flow restoration could have on the Hiwassee Dries.

Check out [americanwhitewater.org](http://americanwhitewater.org) for more beta about the whitewater!

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**CAMP GREEN COVE** FOR GIRLS

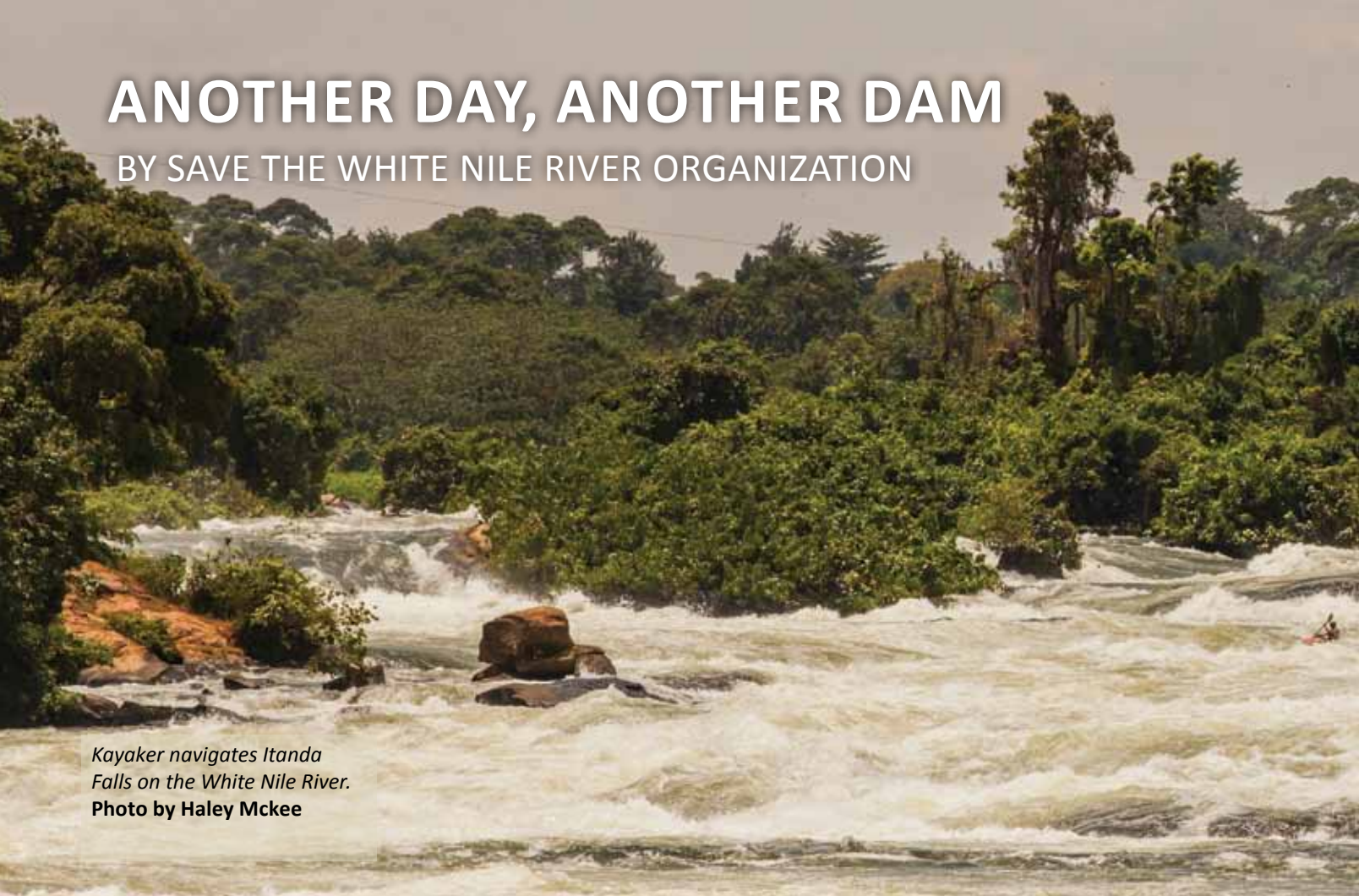


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In Canoe & Kayak's words: "NC camps with top-level instruction since 1922. Kids methodically pass skills first on lakes, then on whitewater of graduated difficulty, until at summers end they are running Class III-IV rapids. Though noncompetitive in their outlook, many campers have gone on to race on the U.S. Olympic Team. The camps offer a wide range of other outdoor pursuits as well."

# ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DAM

BY SAVE THE WHITE NILE RIVER ORGANIZATION



*Kayaker navigates Itanda Falls on the White Nile River.*

**Photo by Haley Mckee**

**T**HE WHITE NILE in Uganda holds a special place in the hearts of whitewater enthusiasts. The river is guaranteed to run year-round and the water is a consistent 78 degrees Fahrenheit so you can leave your drysuit at home. A variety of rapids for all abilities (Class I-VI) and the abundance of epic surf waves seal the reputation of the White Nile as a true paddling paradise.

But all is not well on the White Nile. This iconic stretch of river is facing a threat in the form of—you guessed it—a new hydropower project. The Isimba Dam is under construction right now and without your help there is a chance that the waves of the White Nile will be silenced forever.

Fortunately, it is not too late to make a difference. A new campaign by the Save the White Nile River Organization offers an easy way for river users around the world to get involved. Read on to see how one click from you could help to save the mighty

White Nile, or visit [www.savethewhitenile.org](http://www.savethewhitenile.org) to take action.

In 2011 the White Nile was changed forever when the Bujagali Dam became operational. When the reservoir was created many rapids were flooded. Among those lost were Bujagali falls, long considered a national treasure and a sacred spiritual site for Ugandans. However, many rapids remained downstream and rafting and kayaking operators continued their activities on this fantastic stretch of river. Apart from a slightly longer drive, the experience of visiting water enthusiasts has been largely unaffected.

Unfortunately, the forced relocation of the tour operators brought with it a sharp decline in visitor numbers to the Bujagali area. Souvenir shops, chapatti stands, artists, motorcycle and taxi drivers, restaurants, hair salons, local guides, and many others went out of business. People who had previously provided an integral

part of the tourism experience in Uganda suddenly found themselves unable to feed their families.

Fast forward to 2016 and electricity prices are higher than ever before. The Bujagali Dam is run as a private/public partnership. The terms of the deal mean that the Government of Uganda has to buy the power at a very high rate, some of the most expensive hydropower in the world. People still eat their dinner by candlelight, but now they eat quietly. The noisy flood of tourists has become a trickle and the once majestic roar of the rapids has been silenced by a dam that has affected people here in all the wrong ways. Talk now around the dinner table is once again of hydropower. It seems that the lessons of yesterday have already been forgotten as history is poised to repeat itself. The shadow of the Isimba Dam is looming.

Little is known about the construction of the Isimba Dam; it may be complete as



# THE WHITE NILE NEEDS YOUR HELP

early as next year. The Government of Uganda has been very reluctant to release any information about the project and consistently avoids addressing concerns that local people, environmentalists, and tourism operators have raised. One clear fact is that the development of the Isimba Dam violates a legally binding agreement between the World Bank and the Government of Uganda.

This agreement is known as the Kalagala Offset Indemnity Agreement, and it was designed to make up for some of the environmental and economic damage inflicted by the Bujagali Dam. The Bujagali project was largely funded by the World Bank and, when the true scale of the negative impacts became clear, they stepped in to protect the area from further damage. The Kalagala Offset Indemnity Agreement created a conservation area, protecting the section of river below Kalagala Falls from future hydropower

schemes, schemes just like the new Isimba Dam.

Ugandan politicians are eager to develop the country's power generation potential, and for good reason. Around 10% of the population has access to electricity at home and daily power outages are the norm. In 2012 the Ugandan Government quietly accepted funding from the Chinese Exim Bank and the China International Water & Electric Corporation set to work on the construction of Isimba. Nobody would argue that Uganda does not need power; however, in the case of Isimba the cost of power is simply too high. Several more hydropower projects, much larger than Isimba, will soon be in operation. When they are, the small amount of power generated by Isimba will become almost irrelevant in comparison.

Flooding this protected stretch of the White Nile will indeed be costly. Many jobs will be lost and homes will be flooded. Of

equal concern is the environmental impact of the project. The river section in question houses an astonishing level of biodiversity and is a critical breeding ground for many species. Among those affected will be Uganda's national bird, the Crested Crane, which is already endangered due to habitat loss. Fish eagles, the African equivalent of the American Bald Eagle, nest high in the treetops along the river banks. Monitor lizards, thought to have lived alongside the dinosaurs, sun themselves on soon-to-be-submerged rocks. River otters play in the flow and chase fish in the eddies. The list goes on and on.

The Nile provides for all of these creatures. If Isimba goes ahead as planned, the river of today will become a stagnant pool, prime breeding ground not for cranes and otters, but rather for malarial mosquitoes and waterborne parasites.

Ugandan law states that an environmental impact assessment must be performed

# STEWARDSHIP



*Local kids grow up watching the kayakers and rafters on the river. As adults they often become accomplished kayakers and river guides and successful members of their communities.*

**Photo by Haley Mckee**

before any large hydropower project is approved. Despite the ongoing construction of Isimba there is still no evidence of any such assessment. The Ministry of Energy has instead announced its intention to build a museum. Its purpose would be to display the lost biodiversity and once-rich cultural history of the flooded area for "future generations."

With construction already underway, what are the options? Believe it or not, it is possible for development and conservation to coexist peacefully. In the planning stages of Isimba several potential sizes for the dam were considered. The larger dams break the Kalagala Offset Agreement and flood the protected area. This is what the government is planning to do.

*In this rural area of Uganda, the river is the lifeblood of both the human and natural communities.*

**Photo by Haley Mckee**

The smallest option would, on the other hand, not break the agreement. The reservoir would be much smaller and the effect on wildlife would be negligible. All the rapids would remain for kayakers to enjoy and significant amounts of power



would still be generated. This is what we are asking the World Bank and the Government of Uganda to do. The White Nile needs your help!

When the World Bank signed the Kalagala Offset Indemnity Agreement they made a commitment to the White Nile and to the people of Uganda. So far this commitment has not been honored. In January of 2016 the Save the White Nile River Organization began an aggressive email campaign to urge the World Bank to step up and intervene. The website [www.savethewhitenile.org](http://www.savethewhitenile.org) offers visitors a simple one-click method to contact the World Bank with a pre-written statement of concern. It is important to show the World Bank that their inaction has not gone unnoticed.

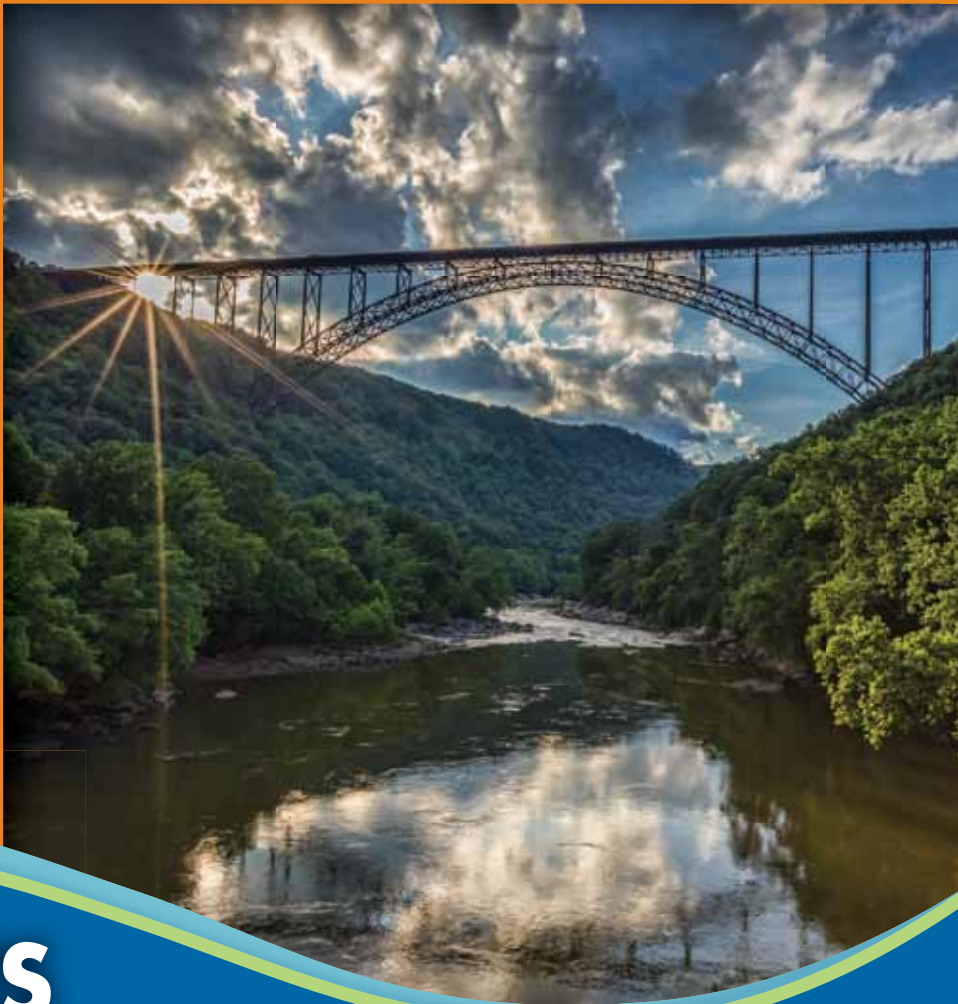
The dam construction is underway and time is running out so let's take action before it is too late! To join the campaign for a smaller dam at Isimba all you need is an email address and one spare minute. Together we can make a difference; together we can save the White Nile.

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# RIVER VOICES

## MY FRENCH BROAD

BY ADAM HERZOG



Adam cartwheeling on Section 9.  
Photo by Brian Leonard

**O**N OCTOBER 4, 2015 I slid down the banks of the muddy brown French Broad River and dropped in with a splash, breaking the pre-dawn silence around me. My road cone-orange racing kayak parted the waters and I took my first strokes of the day.

Roughly 50,000 strokes and 10 hours later I pulled into the last eddy on the big river near Newport, Tennessee. I had successfully paddled 87 miles from Long Shoals Road in South Asheville to Lake Douglas in a single day.

Rewind a year and a half to December of 2013. On one of the shortest days of the year my good buddy Chris Gragtmans and I paddled the upper reaches of the river from Rosman, NC to Bent Creek in Asheville. Incredibly, the 60-mile stretch took the same amount of time as the longer, lower section.

I have now kayaked, in two days, the French Broad River in its entirety—from the confluence of the North and West Forks down to the lake.

The conditions were similar on both days. Inches of rain brought all the local rivers to near flood stage (10 to 15 thousand cfs on the French Broad in Asheville). Most of my

whitewater paddling friends questioned my decision to pass up creek boating powder days for flatwater slog fests. “Why?” they ask. This is why: My relationship with the French Broad began when I was 13 years old, a burgeoning boater, pushing my limits. Section 9, the classic whitewater gorge, was one of the first rivers I ran that was away from a road. Although railroad tracks line the river from start to finish, to me it was wilderness.

My first attempt at the iconic Frank Bells rapid near Hot Springs was particularly memorable. We scouted from the railroad tracks. I had never seen such majesty and power as the water sluicing through the bottom of Frank’s. I was awestruck, but game to give it a try. My dad was not interested and decided to stick to the sneak down the left of the island. Our friend Lightning would lead me down. He was paddling a Gyramax C1 and I was in a Noah Jetty. We entered the slackwater above the drop and jitters faded with the pull of the current. I was focused, ready to tackle my biggest rapid to date. I took a deep breath and cleared my mind.

Lightning suddenly pulled an about face and frantically began paddling back upstream. I turned around and followed suit, confused, the stern of my boat nearly past the point

of no return. We wind milled upriver and breathlessly floated through the mellow sneak my dad had just run. Lightning said, “I don’t know; I just wasn’t feeling it.”

“Would have been nice to know,” I thought, chagrined at being cheated out of my first Class IV.

A few years later, after graduating from high school and floundering around my hometown of Cullowhee for a while, I landed a job with the Nantahala Outdoor Center. I grew up close to the Nantahala and assumed I would be guiding there, but the management offered me a job on the French Broad (known by staff as Siberia) and I said, “Sure, why not.” It would be a decision that would alter the course of my life.

I became more interested in steep creeks while I worked on Section 9 and the nearby Nolichucky. “Boof every rock” was my mantra and I made every attempt to do that on my days off. Rain brought Spring Creek, Big Laurel, and Brush Creek up and we would sneak creek runs in between rafting trips.

I was never a player off the water, but somehow I met a girl (we were just kids),



and for the first time in my life I could say I had a girlfriend.

In my early 20s my kayaking obsession intensified and I moved to Asheville in the off season. Every local paddler remembers their first run of Boxcar Falls on the North Fork of the French Broad and I am no exception. It was an early morning run and as I looked back up the river bright sunlight ignited the spray of the falls.

By the early 2000s I was a full-blown hair boater, frequently pushing what was considered “high water.” One afternoon, I was hanging out around Brevard looking for something to get into. Water levels were already high and it was still pounding hard rain. We drove up Looking Glass Creek—too much wood. We checked out the North Fork—too easy. Finally we went to the West Fork—it was way too high, at nearly three feet on the gauge. “Just right,” we said, and dropped into one of the more intense river experiences I have ever had. The normally bony slides were freight trains of water careening down the mountain. There was no way to stop above them, so we just stayed in the flow and hoped for the best.

The French Broad made me the paddler, and the person, I am today. Paddling the watershed from Rosman to the lake gave

me a chance to reflect on the last 25 years of my life in a profound way.

Chris and I slogged through 60 miles of flatwater, through farm fields in the Mills River Valley. The North and West Forks were at runnable levels that day, but we chose to challenge ourselves with a death march as difficult as an ultramarathon. And we saw the watershed with new eyes at the end of the day. Lined with dirty farms and fields, the French Broad is a working river. It’s the lifeblood of agricultural industry in western North Carolina.

When my wife (along with our baby son) dropped me off for the second leg of the journey I was alone. Soloing through the lower reaches of the river was an intensely personal experience, one that provided many opportunities for reflection.

The first leg, through the Biltmore Estate, was mirror-calm and pastoral. As I floated into the heart of the city, day was breaking. Business people drove into town, homeless people broke down makeshift shelters, birds skirted along the river banks.

Mission Hospital, where I was born, loomed in the distance. I thought about all the hours I had spent there, first as a paramedic and later as a nurse. I thought of my son Hudson, born there last February.



*William “Wild Bill” Holcombe and Adam on a shorter day.*

**Photo by Jed Hinkley**

The current quickly pushed me along and I arrived at my first portage at mile 20, two hours after starting. Woodfin is where the whitewater begins to pick up at 10,000 cfs. I relished the unique feeling of big water, pushing through haystacks all the way down to the Ledges Park and Alexander Waves. I organize a weekly attainment race at the Ledges. The local paddling community gets together on Monday nights for a laid back session and a few brews. “No attaining today,” I thought as I punched offset holes.

Calm water brought me, in time, to the town of Marshall. Marshall has not changed a bit since the 90s, and probably a long time before that. It is quiet but not quaint, in some odd, unsettling way. Two more portages around dams and I was at the put-in of Section 8, one of the most scenic sections on the river to that point.

I was tiring. Blisters sprouted like weeds on my fingers. I wrapped them in Gorilla tape and carried on. I was mildly nervous about Section 9. It is not difficult whitewater, but it is big. A fatigued solo swim in big water is dangerous regardless of what class the whitewater is.

*Scouting the flatwater downstream of Hot Springs from Lovers Leap.*

**Photo by Glenn Laplante**



# RIVER VOICES

But when I hit the normal put-in at Barnard it was like meeting an old friend. I passed the confluence with Brush Creek. Now it's a local favorite, but when I first started paddling there it was a secret stash. I shredded through S Turn, Pillow, and the Ledges without pause. I passed the Big Laurel, a creek I first ran at 15 years of age. It was probably the first creek I ever paddled. I remembered a late evening solo run of the Laurel at six feet. The setting sun burned my retinas as I gutted right down the middle, punching big holes all the way to the confluence.

I passed the NOC staff housing I spent two summers living in, sweating it out on drunken humid nights. At Hot Springs I took a needed break. I got a cheeseburger at the campground store, where my 21-year-old friends bought me beer before I was of age.

Below Hot Springs the river is less familiar to me. We used to commute to the Pigeon River on Highway 25/70, which parallels the French Broad, but I had not previously paddled the 50 miles between Section 10 and the lake.

As I stroked past Del Rio, Tennessee, I recalled an establishment we used to drive by known as the Brown House. One day a friend and I got bored and decided to check it out. We figured they might serve us beer. They did serve us alcohol and although we denied the offer we could have bought anything else we wanted there. A six-foot-tall beast of a woman with bleach blond hair and a long black dress, slit to her thigh, asked us in a husky smokers hack, "You boys looking for a date?" We were not, but a 70-year-old toothless cockfighter from Newport took her up on the offer.

They left for a few minutes, and when they came back she brushed her teeth at the bar.

I thought I was hallucinating as the day got longer. Music seemed to be blaring from the bank of the river. It was. A biker bar on the water featured a loud live band playing Skynrd covers. "Woohooo!" I shouted to them, my fist raised. They returned my redneck salute.

Finally, as the sun set, I paddled to the shore where my trusty 78-year-old shuttle driver, Wild Bill, waited for me in his Jeep. The Jeep has almost as many miles as Wild Bill himself, so I breathed a quiet sigh of relief when I saw him.

I drank a cold beer I had picked up in Hot Springs and we drove back up the river, the river of my life: the French Broad.

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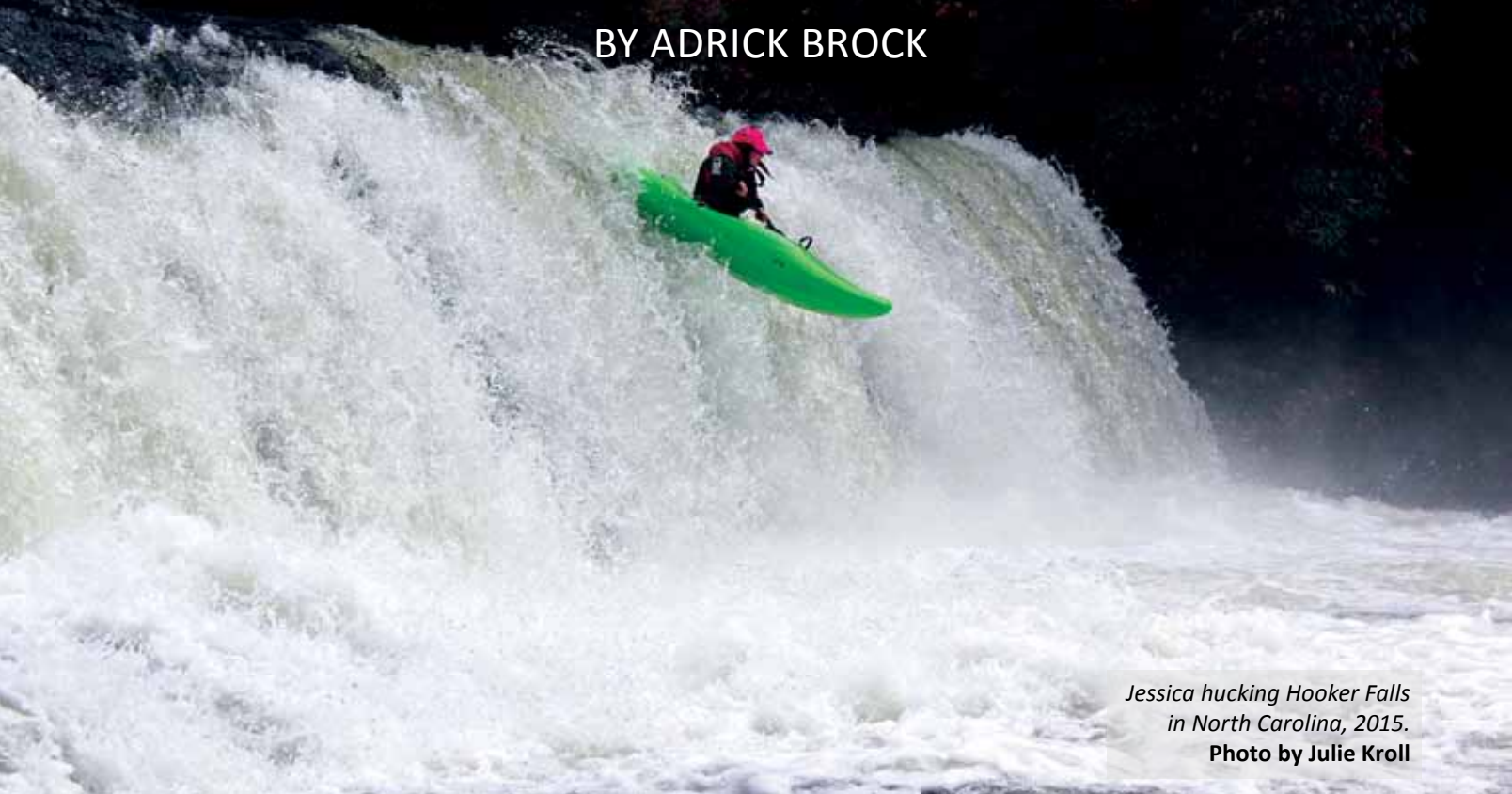
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# LIKE A GIRL

## JESSICA WEIGANDT ON FACEBOOK, FEMINISM, AND THE RIVER

BY ADRICK BROCK



*Jessica hucking Hooker Falls in North Carolina, 2015.*

**Photo by Julie Kroll**

IT SEEMS PREDESTINED that the daughter of two ACA instructors would grow up to love kayaking, but for 18-year-old Jessica Weigandt, her passion for paddling was hard earned. Early on, kayaking was a given for her and her sister, who were taken by their parents to local rivers for weekend clinics and family trips. She was given her first kayak for Christmas at the age of six, but there came a time when she just wasn't that into it.

To begin with, there weren't a lot of girls on the river. "I was hanging out with these weird, smelly boys who would be loud and rowdy," she says. "It was a weird environment for a middle-school aged girl to be coming up in." Sure, she still enjoyed being on the water, but her enthusiasm for paddling every weekend was waning.

In her freshman year of high school, Jessica went to a film festival at nearby Hollins University. Hollins happened to have a women's downriver racing team. In 2012, they'd gone to nationals, and a few of the

women had placed. A medal ceremony preceded the film festival, and Jessica's wheels started spinning.

One of the films showing that evening was a production by Canadian extreme kayaker, Katrina van Wijk, and her tribe of fellow female kayakers called TiTS Deep. The film showed footage of women not much older than Jessica running some of the largest and most technical waterfalls in Chile's Patagonia region. "We breath whitewater," Katrina says in a dramatic voice over, as Britain's Beth Hume paddles over the edge of Cascada Los Alceres. "Kayaking motivates us, brings us to spectacular places, and introduces us to incredible people."

Not only were the women in the film aces on the water, they seemed to be having a lot of fun doing it. Instead of the self-serious scouting faces that dominate a lot of male paddling videos, Katrina and her friends were shown dancing in their dry suits and hugging one another in the runout of epic drops.

Jessica was captivated. "I watched that video and was completely in awe that this many women could compete at that kind of level of whitewater."

The next day, she visited the TiTS Deep Vimeo page and watched the entire web series. She found Katrina on Facebook and sent her a message. She didn't expect a response (all she'd said was for Katrina to keep it up) but a few days later, Van Wijk wrote back. "It was like getting a personalized message from my hero," says Jessica.

The two started up a correspondence. Jessica told Katrina about the barriers she was facing in her paddling. Not only were there not enough girls to go boating with, but Weigandt had, like so many young paddlers, hit a plateau. She had a solid roll, but wasn't yet comfortable pushing her boundaries on Class III and IV rivers. Most of the local kayak camps were for beginners, and she needed a tougher challenge.

# WOMEN & WHITEWATER

As it turned out, Katrina was also the head instructor of Whitewater Riders, a 2-week kayak camp designed for teens like Jessica. The two had more in common than Jessica knew; Katrina is also the daughter of kayak and canoe instructors. Her parents, Claudia and Dirk, own and operate the Madawaska Kanu Centre in southern Ontario. MKC is Canada's oldest whitewater school, and the facility serves as the base camp for the Riders program.

Jessica went to the camp that summer (another fateful Christmas gift from her parents), and for two weeks she learned to paddle alongside Van Wijk and other pro boaters like Emily Jackson, Martina Wegman, and Canadian slalom team member Thea Frollick. Despite feeling nervous about her skill level—would the other kids be hotshots?—and despite being away from home, she and the other teens in the program formed a tight and inseparable crew within hours.

"It was a cool dynamic," she says, "meeting all these kids from all over Canada and the US and having a shared passion for being on the river." Egos were put aside in favor of teamwork. The Riders were taught that they were each responsible for one



*The Whitewater Riders session two crew of 2015.*

**Photo by Emily Jackson**

another's wellbeing on the water, and that they were there to become leaders, not just cartwheeling aficionados.

Jessica attended the program two summers in a row, and saw the effects. For one, the camp really influenced her confidence, and this meant that she was

more eager to tackle larger rivers in her home state. She was able to paddle with better boaters, which introduced her to a larger community. Importantly, she started meeting other girls her age.

For her Grade 12 independent study project, Jessica shot and edited her own



# WOMEN & WHITEWATER

paddling video. Like A Girl is Weigandt's homage to Katrina's TiTS Deep productions, an 11-minute montage of all the female boaters she's shared the river with. The video also serves as a call to arms. "These are our stories," Jessica says in a voiceover not unlike Van Wijk's. "We are powerful. We are determined. We are enthusiastic. We are scared. We are beaters. We get off line. We push ourselves. We are paddlers, but most importantly, we are women, and we do it like a girl."

Katrina featured Like A Girl on her Vimeo page, and the attention it got was overwhelming (to date, it has been viewed nearly 7,000 times). Jessica had come full circle: young girls were friending her on Facebook and writing her messages to say how inspiring they'd found the film. Some of them weren't even kayakers. According to Jessica, they were just encouraged to "see women getting outside."

Weigandt is now a freshman at Brevard College in North Carolina. She's studying Wilderness Leadership and Experiential

Education and aims to make a career as an outdoor guide and journalist. For her, embracing social media and digital storytelling will be essential to get other young people excited about the outdoors, and, more importantly, about protecting the rivers she loves.

"Without kayaking, I don't think I would care so much about the environment, or have so much respect for my surroundings. With kayaking, I'm able to feel connected to the world. I'm able to take an interest in this world we live in." She hopes her videos also reveal just how fun the sport can be, despite the fear that comes with it.

Adults who grew up without the Internet are often wary (terrified might be a better word) of the younger generation's computer mania. It's hard not to imagine all the electricity required to run Google's mainframes, or to think about the rivers that must be dammed in order to generate that power. We see teenagers walking around in zombie-like packs with ear buds crammed

into their skulls, and we can practically feel the apocalypse inching closer.

It can seem dire, for sure, but someone like Jessica reminds us that stewardship is still alive in young people, and that rivers will continue to be fought for, even if the fight moves online. She thinks it would be a mistake not to capitalize on the reach and popularity of the Internet. Dane Jackson, for instance, recently used Snapchat to document a paddling trip in Hawaii. It was Facebook, and Katrina's Vimeo page, that connected Jessica to a community of boaters that extends beyond the "smelly boys" her dad boats with.

She still paddles with her parents, she notes, and it's one of the closest bonds they share. "Having a passion in life is something that's important for everyone to have. I would be on a completely different track if not for whitewater. I definitely don't think I'd be as happy as I am."

*Playing in the hole at the NOC in North Carolina, 2015.*  
Photo by Gabe Braganza



# WARNING:

WHITEWATER PADDLING CAN BE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE. IF YOU HAVE A SMILE ON YOUR FACE LASTING MORE THAN 4 HOURS, SEEK IMMEDIATE HELP FROM A PADDLING PROFESSIONAL. PEOPLE WHO ENGAGE IN WHITEWATER PADDLING TEND TO SCREAM UNCONTROLLABLY WHILE NAVIGATING DIFFICULT RAPIDS. DO NOT ENGAGE IN WHITEWATER PADDLING UNLESS YOU ARE WILLING TO BECOME TOTALLY OBSESSED.

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Celebrate the Deerfield with American Whitewater's Annual Deerfield Fest. The festival site will be bustling with activity including a whitewater marketplace, live entertainment, beer, and a silent auction with awesome outdoor gear. All proceeds from the festival support American Whitewater's conservation and access work throughout the Northeast.

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

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# MENTAL GAME

## A DELICATE FLOWER AND COMBAT ROLLS

BY BETH BERRY



Author at the put-in of Tohickon Creek.  
Photo by Ed Berry

**P**HILADELPHIA'S BOATHOUSE ROW, a historic site on the east bank of the Schuylkill River, encompasses 15 boathouses that are home to rowing clubs and their equipment. Watching the long, sleek boats with eight synchronized rowers and a coxswain during a regatta piqued my interest. Later that day, a single scull with one occupant caught my eye. I thought, *that's what I want to do someday.*

That "someday" came when my husband Eddie and I signed up for a two-day whitewater kayak class on the Lehigh River. The colorful plastic playboat was my equivalent of a single scull. By the end of the second day of class, I was hooked. I immediately put an Eskimo roll on my to-do list. A private lesson with Jerry McAward, owner of Northeast Pennsylvania Kayak School, got me to my dream. I rolled! I was so excited about this that I hung my nose plugs on the rear view mirror of my car.

Ten years later, pool sessions and private lessons galore, I still struggle with my combat roll. Why? Well, some days it's my head. No, not lifting it. The circuitry in my brain loses its way and my muscle memory suffers from amnesia. Evidence of this phenomena occurred again last season. On a trip on the Lehigh River with

a group of friends, I was on fire. Surfing up a storm, taking all the challenging lines, making them pretty, and rolling up with ease. I was moving up a level. The following week, my attempts at surfing and rolling were just that, attempts. I think I swam....

I play the piano, and when I come to a difficult passage I play the right hand and left hand notes separately, then together, and repeat that process until my motor neurons fire with the accuracy of a sharpshooter. How does this relate to my roll? My motor neurons haven't been able to memorize the melody of the movements of a successful roll and I hit a wrong note every time.

Why do I keep choking? Well, first, I was middle-aged when I started whitewater kayaking. Second, while I am comfortable in water (I have my advanced certification in scuba diving), I never played sports as a kid. I did start skiing in my early teens and have continued, with instruction, through my adult life to ski out West on black runs and bowls. I don't feel the fear on the slopes that I have experienced in whitewater kayaking. And it's not just the water that plays with my head, it's my ego that gets in the way. Good-natured teasing has me whining how mean other paddlers are.

Being called Captain of the Swim Team isn't such a terrible thing; actually, it's funny. But because of it, in part, I allowed my desire to have a bombproof roll to become an obsession, which, in turn, takes away all the fun and excitement and camaraderie of whitewater paddling.

My obsession did take a second seat at times when I discovered there are lots of ways to improve in this sport. I spent my first season helping out a kayak school on flatwater and river days where I was exposed to constant instruction. I took a class given by two Olympians; I spent five days in an ACA Instructor certification class and recertified four years later. Basic First Aid, Wilderness First Aid, and CPR were among my credentials. I guided whitewater raft trips one summer. My husband and I built a house in Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania to be close to whitewater. We joined a paddling club and lead trips down the Lehigh River.

In the late winter of 2015, I took a four-session hypnosis treatment for sports anxiety. That worked well for a couple of

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*The author and Denise Hackman at the take-out of Tohickon Creek (PA)*

Photo by Ed Berry



local trips. However, during a March trip to North Carolina, my muscle memory went into retrograde once again. On the first of four days of kayaking instruction with Jason McClure, an instructor from Nantahala Outdoor Center, Ed and I did the upper section of the Nantahala. I was in top form on this feisty read-and-run section and successfully rolled when I needed. The next day we started off at a lake for some roll practice for the other two persons in our group. I failed three rolls on the lake. A foreboding feeling of doom proved true when we paddled Section 9 of the French Broad. Luckily, a split second Hand of God from Jason saved me from a lengthy swim.

Late last season I planned a trip on the Lehigh with my friend, Denise Hackman, someone I was comfortable paddling with. A gentle soul, she is a level four ACA instructor and has paddled in Costa Rica and Ecuador. To my horror, on my way to the put-in, she sent me a text saying another woman was joining us. The "other woman" was also a level four ACA instructor and I was intimidated (prevented or discouraged from acting because of fear) to paddle with her. I was a mess when I got to the put-in, which they noticed. Both told me to take

my time; they were in no rush, and we could wait and relax until I felt better.

Even though I was given time to decompress, the inevitable happened, I flipped in a hole and couldn't get up, and ended up swimming a long rapid that I had successfully navigated for the past nine years. The woman paddler who I feared lassoed my water-filled kayak and got it to the side (no easy feat—though super fit, she doesn't weigh much and was paddling a playboat in high water). During the difficult retrieval, she yelled, "The next time you swim, bring a smaller boat!" I started laughing and couldn't stop. The three of us had dinner afterwards and I came clean about my feelings. I said something to the effect that *you guys have bombproof rolls, kayaking must be easy for you*. Well, not only did both of them vigorously disagree with me, but they each shared the anxiety they had while kayaking. The woman who told me to bring a smaller boat opined that she admired me because I did other rivers/creeks. Well, I gratefully picked up the check for dinner and thanked them for enlightening me.

Since that day, I make an effort to connect with woman paddlers on the river and



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# MENTAL GAME



The author at Cucumber Rapid on the Youghiogheny River (PA)  
Photo by Outdoor Adventure

on Facebook every chance I get. In the past, every time I blew a roll and came out of my kayak, my ego was as tattered as a trampled wildflower. Well, I'm tired of having a fragile inner core. I've revved up my workout schedule starting this past January. Strength equals confidence. Also, I've noticed the similarity between certain movements of my exercise routines and performing a roll, that heretofore mystery of separation of upper and lower body. Most importantly, I'm building a firewall that my ego can't hack to protect what it is about whitewater kayaking that I love: Being on the water with my fellow paddlers having fun.

A large advertisement for the 36th Annual Yampa River Festival. The background is a photograph of a kayaker in a blue kayak navigating white water rapids. The kayaker is wearing a red helmet and a yellow and white life vest. The text is overlaid on the image.

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# INTRO TO WHITEWATER

## FIRST LOVES AND FIRST SWIMS

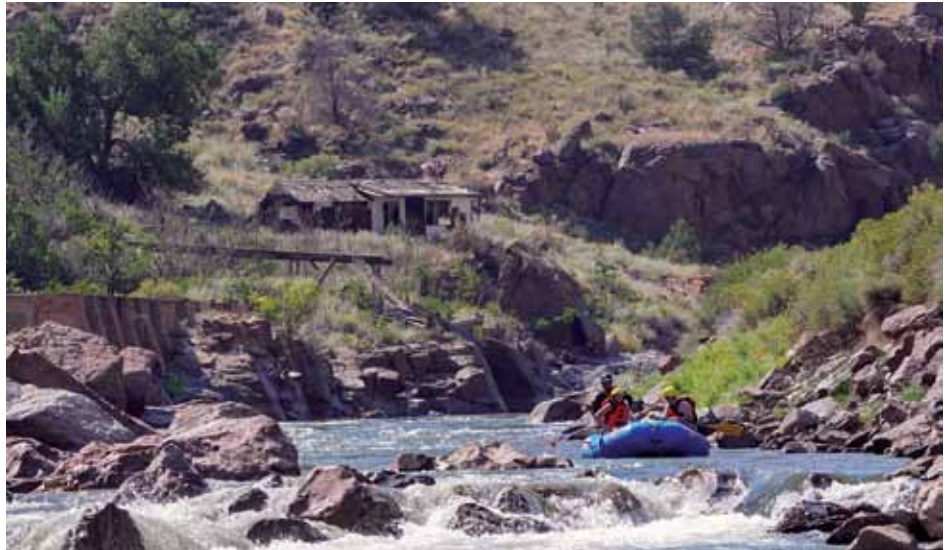
BY BRANDI JO PETRONIO

**W**HEN I FIRST arrived in Cañon City, Colorado, I had no intentions of falling in love with whitewater, or even partaking. However, I was living in a small trailer across the street from a rafting company, River Runners, where a good friend of mine had previously worked for eight summer seasons. He had given one of the “river rats” my phone number, so it was only a matter of time before I would be yanked out of my trailer and thrown on a rubber raft. To be honest, at first, I was terrified. When I received a call to join a play trip down the Royal Gorge section of the Arkansas, I searched my head for excuses.

Only one came to mind: “I don’t have any of the right gear!”

But my attempt to avoid the trip failed. Those river rats rounded up a wetsuit, PFD, helmet, and a paddle for me. I was given a general safety talk, taught how to paddle, and off I went in a 14-foot rubber raft with a seasoned guide, Justin, and his girlfriend, Lisette.

I’m not sure if either of them noticed the quiver in my voice or the perpetual shake in my hands, but if they did, nothing was said. We quickly approached the first succession of rapids: Primero, Segundo, and Tercero. Justin guided the boat with ease through these, bringing me some comfort. Still, I knew one of our biggest rapids, Sunshine Falls, was creeping up. My stomach churned. My mouth was dry. My breath was quick and shallow (probably also because of that PFD cinching down on my lungs). Before I knew it, we had reached Sunshine Falls, but something inside me changed. As we entered the rapid my fear became awe and excitement. The adrenaline rushed through my veins and I hollered shouts of joy as we paddled through the crests of waves.



*Rafters navigate the Arkansas River through the Royal Gorge near Cañon City, CO*  
**Photo by Adam Caimi**

Continuing downriver, we soon entered the heart of the gorge. Cliff walls shot up, straight out of the river, and looked as if they reached the sky. I was bewildered and filled with pleasure by the people, the gorge, and the river.

After paddling through the Narrows, and other rapids named Sledge Hammer, Wallslammer, and Boat Eater, our fleet of rafts eddied out in a spot called Corner Pocket. Corner Pocket is a small, boulder-covered beach along the riverbank within the deep cliffs of the gorge after all of the major rapids. The view from Corner Pocket, of the river and the gorge, is unrivaled by any other. We cracked beers, passed around a flask of whiskey (for the warmth, of course), and celebrated. It wasn’t a celebration of conquest, but rather a thank you to the river gods for safe passage.

After a few beers, we got back into the boats and proceeded down river, headed towards the take-out, where dry clothes awaited us.

The deed had been done. I had fallen in love. So much in love, that I got a job working in the office of the rafting company, running shuttles to the river when needed, booking trips, selling photos, and packing lunches. Many days after work, I headed to the river. On my days off (few and far between when working a seasonal job), I also headed to the river. My hunger for the river was insatiable.

\* \* \*

As we all know, you can’t always control whether or not you are going to stay in the raft or end up in the river while going through a rapid. There are both pluses and minuses to this situation.

If you fall out of the raft, or flip the raft, it is a learning experience. When a river feature demands your attention by way of flipping your raft, you are unlikely to ever forget that feature. Hence, you now know the river slightly better than before. Sometimes swimming a rapid can be fun, but whether it is a ‘good’ swim or a ‘bad’ swim, it almost always makes for a great story.

# INTRO TO WHITEWATER

Having said that, only sometimes is swimming a rapid enjoyable. Most times it can be terrifying and also incredibly dangerous. Swimming could result in numerous types of injuries, or in extreme cases, death.

Inevitably, if you raft on a regular basis, you will swim. I understood this, and before each trip on the river, I wondered, will today be the day?

On a hot day in mid-July, several of us had planned on doing a play trip down the river after work. However, the workday finished later than expected, so half of the group decided not to go. Following the quick change of plans, I bounced back and forth in my head about whether or not I should go. Ultimately, I decided, why not? After closing up the office and hurriedly gathering my gear, I hopped in the van that was bound for the river.

Almost immediately after taking my seat in the van, queasiness overcame my stomach. I had an uncanny feeling that I was going to have my first swim. On this particular trip I was going to be paddling with two second-year guides, Tara and J-tini, who were training to check out on the Royal Gorge section of the river. Although I trusted their abilities to get us down the river, this unsettled feeling still made me nervous. A voice in the back of my head told me to face the fear and get the swim over with. If it didn't happen today, it was going to another day. There's no better time than now, I heard.

I said nothing and we continued the trip as usual, setting shuttle, strapping our gear into the boats, and then pushing off from shore. Most of the river trip carried on as usual too, until we reached Wallslammer.

When entering the rapid Wallslammer, you need to stay away from the left side of the river, which is a boulder garden, and thus a bad place to be. There is a passageway on river right, but it is also important to keep your distance from the right wall of

the gorge, which forms a cave-like spot, where you or your boat could potentially be slammed against the wall and indefinitely pinned by the force of water.

Fearing the towering wall that we were hastily approaching, we paddled the boat slightly more left than it should have been. In an instant, the left side of our boat forcefully hit a rock, which spun us and sent me flying out of the boat and into the river. I landed not so much in the river, but instead on a rock, until the swift current quickly picked me up and put me in the river.

During these moments, when having an out-of-boat experience, you must think and act without delay. While timing your breathing with the calms and crests of the river, two things should immediately cross your mind. 1) Don't stand in the river! Get those feet up and swim! 2) Swim where? Back to the boat! If this isn't possible, and there are no safer spots to swim towards, roll over and put your feet down stream of you (nose and toes!). Would you rather your face or your feet bounce off rocks, taking the brunt of the beating?

Fortunately, once I realized I was no longer in the raft, I was not far from it.

I could hear Tara yelling, "Brandi, back here!"

I swam the short distance back to the boat and Tara pulled me in, while J-tini, who was guiding, continued to steer the boat. Immediately, Tara and I had to resume paddling. Seconds later, we had survived Wallslammer, and I was gleefully cheering.

Deep in my core, I always knew my first swim would be in Wallslammer. Each time I journeyed down the river, I avoided looking at the imminent, cave-like wall for which the rapid was named. Eventually, that river feature was obliged to demand my attention.

Now with the majority of rapids behind us, we reached Corner Pocket for our

customary festivities. J-tini apologized to me, feeling that it was his fault I swam. I hugged him, thanked him, and explained my logic: The idea of my first swim had been looming over my head, making me anxious. Now, not only was it over with, but it was also a good experience. I fell out, I swam, I got right back in the boat, and all was well. While he and I walked around the small beach together, my right butt cheek was throbbing. I realized I was going to have a bruise, which secretly filled me with delight. I love small battle wounds to show for obstacles overcome.

In the days that followed, I did have a lovely (and evolving) battle wound to show for my swim. The bruise, which ranged from the deep reds and purples of a sunset to the dark yellows and greens of a forest, spanned the entire side of my right cheek—and I took pride in it. If someone asked how my first swim was, I pulled my pants down a bit and flashed the bruise. I even took a picture of the bruise and sent it to my parents, which in hindsight, I'm sure did not make them feel at ease about my new hobby.

Eventually, my glorious summer on the Arkansas River began winding down, with the Colorado rafting season coming to a close. However, I was not ready for my summer love with whitewater to end. As what happens to many boaters after their first season, I began to realize this was not some summer fling that would fade as the warm weather left, but instead a life-long kind of love. I wanted to experience more rivers, big and small, lazy and tempestuous. So, after parting ways with the Arkansas (for the time being), I journeyed to other rivers, staying for months on some and days on others, gracefully dancing with a few and unexpectedly swimming a couple. Often, I think of the Arkansas River, mainly the Royal Gorge, with the enduring thoughts many have of their first love for years to come. As of now, I have yet to return to the Arkansas, although I feel the reunion is nearing.

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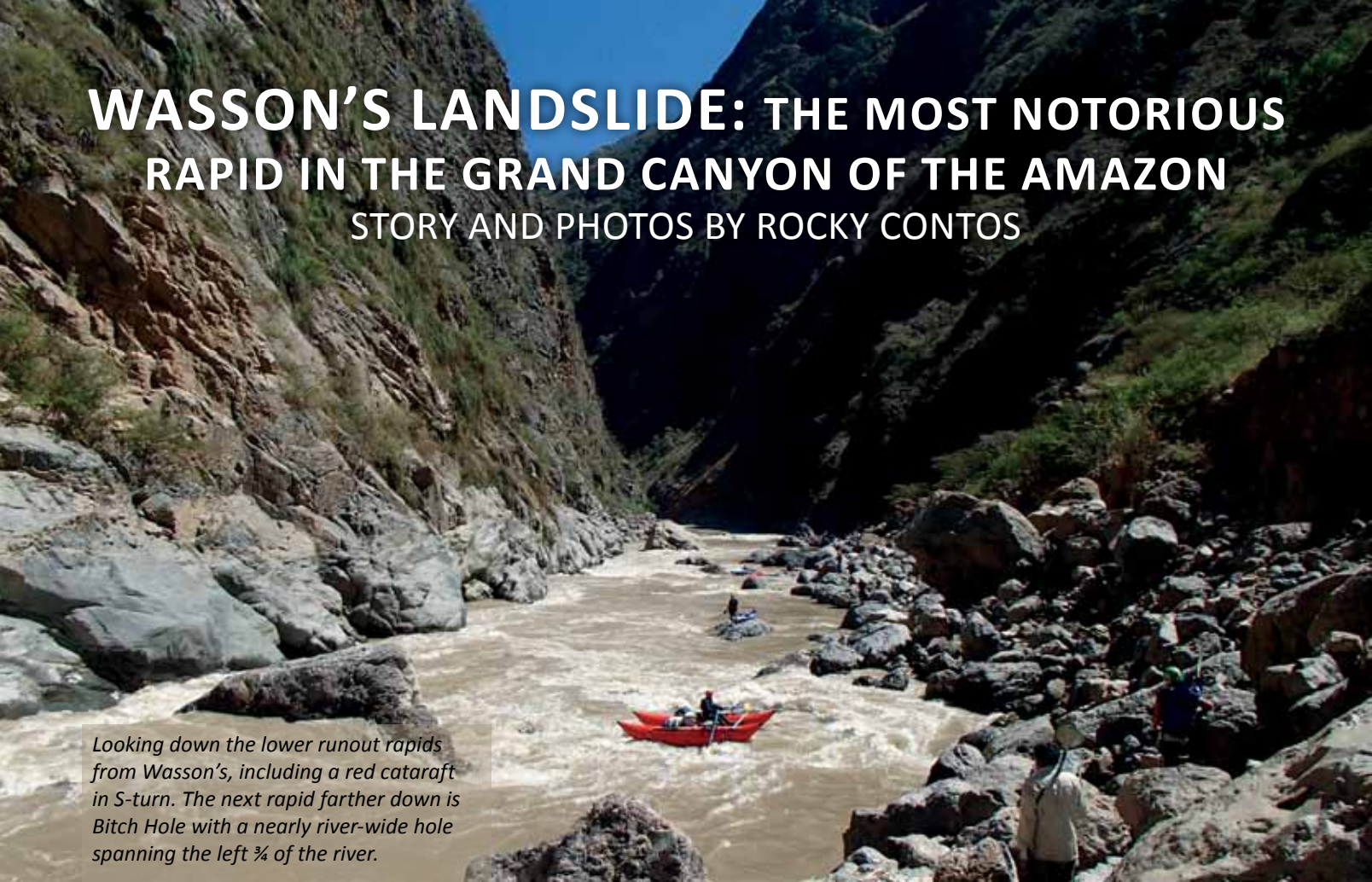
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# WASSON'S LANDSLIDE: THE MOST NOTORIOUS RAPID IN THE GRAND CANYON OF THE AMAZON

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROCKY CONTOS



*Looking down the lower runoff rapids from Wasson's, including a red cataraft in S-turn. The next rapid farther down is Bitch Hole with a nearly river-wide hole spanning the left ¾ of the river.*

**N**INE DAYS INTO our Grand Canyon Amazon trip on Río Marañón, our group is facing a day of reckoning. We must pass through the most difficult spot of the 30-day trip, a dangerous and long Class V rapid called Wasson's Landslide in the Inner Gorge. We are camped at the idyllic Wasson's Staging beach—reminiscent of Grapevine camp on the Colorado.

Starting at dawn, I kayak ahead solo to assess the rapid at the current water level and will radio back to the group how and where to approach. This October day, the river happens to be at an optimal medium flow. After a quick scout, I run my kayak through the rapid, portaging only Junkpile. I'm not too worried about the group—everybody can always safely walk around the rapid on the right side. The big challenges are stopping everyone above it and then lining the rafts through. But it's always possible something can go wrong—last time we lost a whole raft! Today I'm hopeful that we'll be able to get through easily: with a strong crew, optimal water

level, and an early start, maybe we'll even finish with some light to spare so we can make it to a nicer camp downstream.

Whenever someone talks about floating down the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, invariably the discussion turns to its most difficult rapid: Lava Falls. Lava often conjures up a trembling feeling, and memories of scary boat-flipping waves, holes, and swims. While old school rafters still like to call it a Class V (or the maximum "10" on the Grand Canyon scale), Lava Falls rates only a Class IV or IV+ on most modern paddlers' scales. That's because, overall, there isn't too much to be concerned about in the rapid. The main danger is a big ledge hole near the top that can easily flip boats and result in a violent beat-down or recirculation. But the ledge hole is easy to miss—rafts, kayaks, dories, and other types of craft typically run standard right or left lines around it, usually getting through fine but occasionally flipping in other big crashing confused waves and currents. Yet even if someone does swim, there is a long calmer section downstream to recover in

before coming to the next rapid, Son of Lava, which is only Class III.

The 343-mile-long Grand Canyon of the Amazon (Río Marañón) similarly has a rapid that stands out above the rest in terms of difficulty: Wasson's Landslide, located about 99 miles downstream of the uppermost raft put-in by the Río Puchka confluence. But unlike Lava Falls, Wasson's is a bona fide Class V where rafters line or portage due to the flip potential and dangers of swimming the rapid. Although kayakers occasionally will run the whole rapid—and rafts have run the upper part of the rapid—to date there has not been a successful raft descent.

Although the rapid had no name prior to my first run down the river in July 2012, it was described by John Wasson in the premier South American Explorer's club journal in 1978. In his article, Wasson outlined how he, Tom Fischer, Steve Gaskill, and Ellen Toll did the first descent of much of Río Marañón over 36 days in July-August 1977, starting at Rondos (where Ríos Nupe and Lauricocha

# INTERNATIONAL WHITEWATER

join to form the nominal Marañón) and continuing 524 miles downstream to Imacita/Nazareth. Wasson, Fischer, and Gaskill paddled new plastic Hollowform kayaks while Toll rowed a 12-foot standard bucket raft. In the 88-mile Headwaters section of the river downstream of Rondos, the group encountered a small river with many difficult portages, and soon decided that Ellen and the raft should take the roads to an access point by Chingas (i.e. Río Puchka confluence) since, as Wasson wrote, "This part of the river is just not suitable to a raft." After the group reunited, the next point of note was five days later where they encountered: "Hard portage at rapids caused by a huge landslide. Must be portaged. Would be extremely difficult at high water." Two days later, they arrived in Chagal.

Kurt Casey wrote a similar description of the rapid after his Marañón descent from a point in the Headwaters section down to Chagal in July 2000: "In 2 km there is another heavy section of whitewater where the left wall is vertical hard rock. There is a mandatory 100-meter portage on the right and then big water action continues for another hour until a great camp is found under fruit groves of Matibamba at 1420 meters ... The river is now around 3500 cfs."

Given that Wasson was the first to report on the rapid, the first to pass through safely, and his description was confirmed by Casey, it seemed appropriate to refer to the rapid as "Wasson's Landslide," which is how I labeled this spot on my maps before our first trip in 2012. I have used this name ever since.

Wasson's Landslide is found in the heart of the Inner Gorge, the 50-mile section of canyon between the villages of Huchus and Chagal where walls rising directly up from the water constrict the Marañón to narrow widths and help make some of the

river's most fearsome rapids. Unlike most rapids in the Grand Canyon Amazon, which were formed at the entrances of tributaries and *quebradas* (side gullies and streams where debris is often deposited into the riverbed), Wasson's was created by a slide off the side of the mountain. Huge boulders litter the riverbed while smaller ones up the right bank allow a portage of the rapid at all but flood flows. Probably because the rapid was created by a large landslide that backed up the river when it occurred, the approach to Wasson's is fairly calm Class II upstream for about three miles. The whole rapid extends over 500 meters and can be divided into the following parts:

**Approach (Llegada):** wall on the left and a gravel bar island where the current speeds up and often no eddies are found

**Entrance (Entrada):** Class III-IV waves/holes followed by a large eddy on the right and fast current on the left by the wall

**Ledge (Repisa):** difficult drop where two-three boulders often create several channels; most water flows on the left by the wall in a steep drop with high flip potential

**Junkpile (Yonke):** big boulder on the right with a small rocky channel to the right of it that we usually take rafts through



Satellite view of Wasson's Landslide showing the major parts of the rapid.

# INTERNATIONAL WHITEWATER



**Sieve Rock (Siphon):** the last part of the main rapid where at low flows, a huge boulder blocks two-thirds of the riverbed on the left and water appears to flow under it



**Runout (Salida):** a series of about three more challenging rapids: Not Bad, S-Turn, and Bitch Hole



With the other kayakers now down near me at the start of the rapid, I radio to Pedro that all is good on the standard approach. Pedro rows the catraft down to the island eddy and we get him over to the right bank, then we call for each of the other four oarsmen to come down one at a time—in each case, stopping them at the small island eddy first, and then having them row (with rope safety) to the right side where we stop them again. Great—now everybody is stopped and out to the safety of the right bank! From here it is straightforward to walk to the end of the rapid and even past most of the run-out. We line the rafts down to the Ledge and unload personal bags there for each person to portage to the end, and folks take off. We then push the lightened rafts over the right side of the Ledge.

The Ledge is interesting since it's quite clear that this part of the rapid has changed over the years. On my first run in 2012, a prominent dark pyramid boulder stuck up high in the middle of the river here, and other large boulders were evident in the riverbed downstream. In 2013, the pyramid boulder was no longer there—it probably was washed downstream by a flood, along with other boulders that were visible previously. In the following year, even one more disappeared. Although the Ledge was always difficult, with fewer boulders it seemed a bit easier. Four Dutch men took a raft from Puchka to Chagual in 1987 and posted video in 2013. They clearly ran the Ledge then, but it looked a bit easier without boulders clogging it, and had a better recovery pool below. The Sieve Rock seemingly was still there—their “Einde” [“End”] shot in the video is a

Photos showing the changes in the upper part of Wasson's Landslide over a three-year period 2012-2014.





*Here a raft is shown stuck in Junkpile (Oct 2014). I hopped onto the raft, took items off, and deflated a tube a bit to get it off.*

picture of them posed just downstream of it with their tent next to the river.

I've rowed the rafts from the Ledge down to Junkpile in the past, but this time I decide it's better to line them. The sun starts moving down in the sky. It is after 2 pm by the time we have all the rafts at Junkpile, where a small, steep channel is obstructed with rocks and often makes lining rafts difficult. Usually some creativity is necessary to get the rafts through. For example, at lower flows, we often use one raft as a bumper-boat to bounce the others away from a channel that will get them stuck. At the medium flow today, I think we can line them over the rocks that seem covered with enough water. Pedro is doubtful, but without any better plan, we give it a go.

Although the first raft gets stuck briefly at the end of Junkpile, we get it to slide over and through without further problems. Yeah!!! We get the second and third through fine too. I figure the guys can finish the job, so go off to paddle a kayak farther

down. But as I return, to my dismay I see DC shaking his head in disappointment. "We're not making it out of here today," he says and points. I look and see the green raft stuck in a bad way with the yellow one on top of it! They brought the yellow one down to try to knock the green one out, but that only resulted in both of them getting stuck. I make a risky jump onto the rafts and derig items to lighten the loads. It seems to work. But in the end, we have to deflate two tubes on one of the rafts, and we've lost the egg container. All told, we spend an extra two hours in this fiasco, and it is clear we will be spending the night at Wasson's.

I've been through Wasson's on seven separate occasions now at low, medium, and high flows, and have safely led 60 folks through. While it is never easy, for rafts it is safest at low-to-medium levels. Four times we did it quickly enough to arrive at a nicer camp downstream with daylight to spare, but the other times we ended up benighted and camped on the meager flat areas among the rocks. Fortunately,

there is plenty of spring water along the portage route.

Although getting rafts through the Junkpile is usually the most challenging part of the lining and has caused some memorable problems, we have experienced mishaps in other parts of the rapid too: (1) lost ropes from getting stuck on submerged objects, (2) rafts flipping during the lining, (3) bags and boxes coming off of flipped or tilted rafts, (4) a kayaker flipping on the right side in the Approach and swimming Entrance, and (5) a rope breaking and a raft getting away just before dusk.

The raft that got away is a story unto itself. Again, we were lining the rafts down to Sieve Rock and it was getting late—about 15 minutes before dusk. As the crew let the final raft out, it seemed to go into the main current and over to the hole before

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# INTERNATIONAL WHITEWATER



*In June 2014 from a safer eddy along the gravel bar island, the group carefully brought each raft to the side of the river and caught it since there was no eddy to stop on the side that season.*

the Sieve Rock. It swayed back and forth a number of times but nobody was getting it over to the right side. Eventually the force was just too great. The rope snapped and off the red raft went. It floated into and through the hole, around the Sieve Rock, through the Runout to Bitch Hole where it flipped over. It took me awhile to get suited up and give chase in my kayak. As I paddled down around the bend, it became so dark that I couldn't see the rapids at all. I retreated in defeat back to camp. Two days later we met some locals who told us they saw the raft float by on the evening it got away—upright! Nobody could stop it because it was in the middle of the current. But they did get an oar and a cooler—items that had dislodged and washed ashore. The next day I paddled downstream, and

*Chad Thatcher paddles his kayak through the Class IV runout in Wasson's at high flows, getting a thrill from huge silty waves.*

to my great surprise and relief, I found the raft upright in a shallow side channel of the river! It was somewhat funny—bags were opened, tent parts strewn about,

and 18 empty beer cans sat around one of the camp chairs. Someone obviously had a party!

After lining the rafts down to near the Sieve Rock, it is almost dusk so we all settle in for an easy dinner and camp. While the camp area is mostly rocks and boulders, there are a few small flat patches around where some tents can be set up and Paco Pads laid out. We enjoy a simple pasta meal and rest well in the warm night. The next day we're awake early. The water is up and we decide to line the rafts around Sieve Rock. Pedro, David, and I take turns rowing the five rafts down past the S-turn part of the Runout. David gets stuck briefly in a hole there, but is pulled out. We've made it!! Everyone is comfortable with the river from here, so we reload the rafts and soon are paddling and rowing around Bitch Hole further into the gorge.

Despite being a major obstacle to pass through, Wasson's Landslide is a defining feature of the Grand Canyon Amazon. It stands out among all rapids, instills fear in those attempting passage, and allows Class V kayakers to really show their stuff. While it is challenging and tiring to get large loaded rafts through, it can at the same time be a





*Participants are often asked to carry their personal bags around the rapid due to the danger of rafts flipping during lining or other problems.*

rewarding and bonding experience for a group. The presence of Wasson's makes a full Grand Canyon Amazon trip more like an "expedition" rather than an easy "float through a park." Experiencing this kind of obstacle just once with big loaded rafts makes you appreciate the accomplishment of John Wesley Powell even more. His group portaged approximately a dozen such dangerous passages on their first descent through the Colorado's Grand Canyon.

In 1977, John Wasson's crew was the first to pass through the most difficult rapid on the Grand Canyon Amazon. Although I was likely the first to paddle the entire

rapid (in 2012 in a kayak), the honor of the rapid's name should go to the first descent team, and especially to Wasson who took the time to write and publish an article mentioning it and the river.

*Rocky Contos regularly organizes and runs trips through the Grand Canyon of the Amazon (see [www.SierraRios.org](http://www.SierraRios.org)), several of which are planned for the second half of 2016. On trips that include the Inner Gorge, participants are usually asked to help with the lining and portaging only as much as they are comfortable with. Note that in 2015, the rapid had become even more cleared of boulders and easier to negotiate, with several raft runs of nearly the entire rapid (at lower flows).*

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# RIVER VOICES

## HIDDEN DEPTHS

BY PATTI RUTKA



Round Pond in the Allagash Wilderness  
by moonlight  
Photo by Ken Gordon

**S**PARKS FLEW UP from the campfire, glowing souls liberated toward a starlit heaven. Canoes and kayaks were loaded on roof racks. A full moon rose over Seboomook, the mystical section of Maine's West Branch of the Penobscot River.

"Everybody got their light sticks?" asked Kyle, a redneck re-routed from Pennsylvania to Maine, now a Huff Post reader, and the organizer for the evening's moonlight paddle.

"I'd like one more," I said, snugging a luminescent green wand onto the stern of my little purple canoe.

Subdued by the deepening evening, our group of 12 shut doors on Subaru and GMC trucks. Potholing our way a mile and a half up the dirt road to the put-in at a modest 18 miles an hour, we kept a lookout for bear and moose in the headlights. Once parked, we tossed canoe tie-down straps into vehicles, pulled out life jackets and helmets and paddles, then slid canoes and kayaks into a still section of river.

The moon would not rise high enough above the trees to light our way this night; we'd need to employ all our senses. Light sticks on every boat bobbed in an eerie paint-by-number illumination. Only night

sounds, the feel of water under the hull, and foreknowledge of the river's features would guide us downriver.

"This is freaky," commented Kenny. "Remind me again why we're doing this? Does somebody have a problem with actually seeing what we're paddling?" His Abe Lincoln beard jutted from his chin, clearly profiled in the scant remaining light that dusted a northern latitude sky.

Though I was childless, for some reason I'd always felt like a mom to Kenny, like I had to answer every question that bubbled up from his mouth. But now I paused, sensing an answer formulating at a depth greater than the origins of my usual facile reply.

"I've been promising this moonlight trip to Doug for a decade," filled in Kyle. "And we have to make this run in under an hour, because I can't keep Doug from his beer much longer."

Doug snorted. "Yeah, come on, kids, quit millin'. We're not getting any closer to the beer."

Great. I was stuck with the Three Stooges on a night I assumed would be filled with awe and wonder. "You can laugh or you can cry," my mother had taught me in

one of her many life-lesson sound bites. Somehow, the night begged more options.

Doug and Kyle and Kenny and I hand-over-handed our canoes across a culvert into the swallowing darkness. The boats settled in their watery cradle.

One by one, a string of drifting Chinese lanterns, the group slipped into line and kept order. A few words were spoken in low tones, but soon silence settled on our flotilla in a unison prayer, beseeching the shadowy woods and bottomless river to tend us softly.

What Doug didn't know was that this would be one of the last times he'd paddle his beloved whitewater. Doug's weakening heart had necessitated open-heart surgery. His use of nitroglycerin on more than one river over the last few years had signaled to the rest of us that he didn't have too many trips left in him.

I'd visited him in the brightly lit hospital after his operation the autumn before.

"You wash your hands?" he'd joked with me, surprised but warmed by my visit. His shins, Maine-pale under the hospital gown, looked thin, not as sturdy as they seemed on the river, as he lay on top of sterile bed sheets.

# RIVER VOICES



*Moonlight over West Branch of the Penobscot below Lobster Stream*  
**Photo by Jennifer Jones**

“How long before we see you back on the water?” I prompted him.

He shook his head, prevaricating in a low grumble, not meeting my eyes.

“Well, the doc says I can’t paddle for a couple months...so we’ll see – maybe next summer I’ll be back on board. I’ve been practicing walking up and down the hallways with the IV rig. I’m thinking tomorrow I may break out and go for ice cream,” he laughed.

I wasn’t sure which would kill him faster—the weak heart, or the not being in a canoe. The last time we’d talked about his heart it wasn’t talking I’d done.

“I can’t haul your body down this river by myself!” I’d trembled at him in suppressed fury on the last river we’d paddled. The rest of the group had gone downstream, out of sight, unaware that Doug’s chest gripped him. I’d been surfing on a wave, and by the time I reached him I was the only one around as he shoved his boat into alders along the bank.

“You won’t have to!” he’d snapped back at me. He’d swallowed the nitro he kept on a chain around his neck and paddled on ahead, outpacing me in his faster canoe, until he’d caught the group. I’d come to love Doug as I had so many of our paddling group. Back in camp, swatting black flies, we’d made up over a Miller.

Kyle knew he had to quit stalling on Doug’s ancient desire to paddle Seboomook by moonlight. “We’re doin’ the moonlight paddle Doug’s been plannin’ for ten years,” he said in an email to marshal the paddling family. And so we all had driven dusty roads into the Maine Northwoods on a blue-moon weekend to gather for Doug’s chicken-in-a-can made over the fire, and to paddle in the dimness.

We dipped our paddles rhythmically as the river carried us the first mile of flatwater, guided only by crickets in the brush. The trees closed in on each paddler’s back, wrapped us in velvet deeper than the speckled heavens arching above, as the moon fingered its way through tangled spruce.

I reflected on Maine river runners long before I was even a thought: they whispered to me from the annals of time and Maine’s interlaced water systems. Tonight, in the rushing darkness, we would paddle down rather than ascend the river by poling; neither would we portage around rapids the way Native Americans had. We would go with the water’s flow, downstream, with only the sound of water crashing back on itself to guide us.

Maine’s First Peoples, later known collectively as the Wabanaki, traveled for sustenance in both directions rather than simply for recreation downriver, as did we. As modern boaters we knew only the flow of a river downstream, its undulations, how to slow and halt downriver progress. Gravity draws water to the sea; you could say that all a good canoeist is doing is resisting, in balletic maneuvers, the inexorable pull of gravity on water.

Indians named notable places along a river, and rivers themselves, according to a river’s resources, or its distinctive topography, or legends passed from generation to generation. Such a naming system, rather than a map, guided river travelers. (No doubt with the use of daylight, unlike our trip.) Passagassawassakeag River meant, “Where we speared sturgeon by torchlight”; Oodoolseezicook-Ahwangan meant “the Entrails Pond route.” The “hunk” in names like Madunkehunk hinted at the grunting involved in shoving a canoe upstream, while – “ticoon” suffixes indicated easy places to carry a canoe. Perhaps Seboomook meant, “The place where one listens in the dark, feeling only water under the hull!”

This night my canoe joined an eons-old, gravity-driven course to the ocean. Flowing water never ceased. But as we came upon the first rapid, fear rose in my throat. I could turn nothing back. I’d run the river scores of times before by daylight, never in utter darkness. The only guidance now was the increasing churn of water, hounds to the hunter. Beneath me an expanse of water mingled the boat hull with waves.

No longer was the boat mine, a discreet entity, but corporeal with the dark and moon and sliding water. Who knew what lurked beneath the surface, whether the anxieties of Kenny's imagination, the mysteries of Doug's fragile heart, or my own unfathomable fears?

As water pooled a hundred feet upstream of that first rushing rapid, the boat floated like Thumbelina's leaf. I lined up behind Doug. Lines of current lifted my canoe, carried it without my doing. Bereft of guidance, I surrendered my need to dictate the boat's direction. The current gathered speed, narrowed between voiceless rock walls leaning in, and gushed down the chute of whitewater to slide into the waiting pool below. Each subsequent rapid became the same: listen, relax, glide, whoosh. Stabilize. One by one the line of boats navigated each rapid.

Until Kenny got a case of the stupids, stuck his paddle in water upstream of a jagged rapid called Elevator, and flipped as his canoe turned sideways to the current. There was a discouraged cry, scrabbling and splashing, and the clunk of his paddle on his gunwale as he swam his boat into an eddy pool.

"Kenny! What'd you do that for?" barked Kyle. Kenny periodically capsized not because he couldn't keep his boat upright, but just because.

"I dunno," grumbled Kenny, as we waited for him to collect his yard sale.

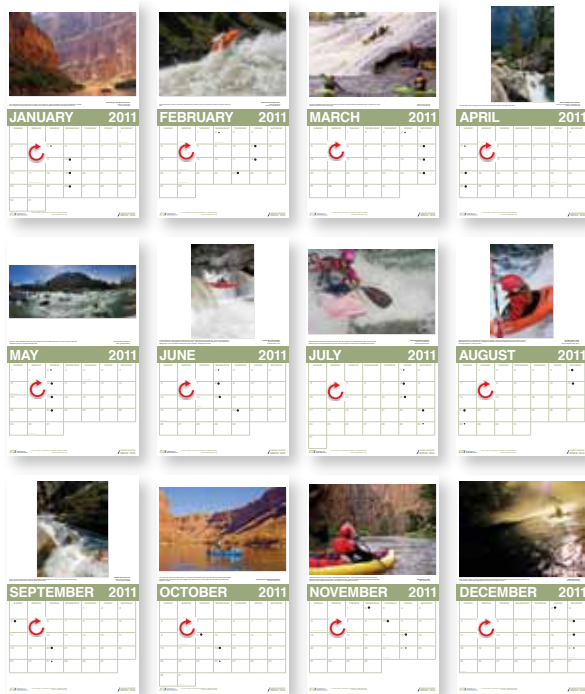
An owl hooted off in the woods. We resumed our orderly progress.

It dawned on me that we did not need our eyes to see the water; the river embraced

us. The boats knew precisely where to go, as if tapping into some Boat Body translated through the millennia. Even our hearts beat as one, Doug's and everyone else's, rising to the moon, carried on the journeying river. Somewhere along the years of river running, Doug had taught me the sensuousness of slipping a canoe onto a surfing wave, to resist gravity for a moment as brief as a human heartbeat, or perhaps as seemingly long as a human life. He taught me to listen to a boat on water as Indians listened to rivers, naming them, sensing them. The deep-water treasure of the moonlit night remained both a certainty and a mystery.

<sup>1</sup> Native American names and meanings from *Above the Gravel Bar: the Native Canoe Routes of Maine*, by Dave Cook, Polar Bear and Company, 1985

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# RIVER VOICES

## NOBLE BROWN DOG: A RIVER DOG STORY

BY ALLYSON KAUFFMAN

**W**ORDS FROM A young girl echoed through Alta Lake State Park: "Mister, we have your puppy."

James was preparing dinner for a group soon to be arriving from a day of rafting on the Methow River. He had recently passed up others in the litter outside a grocery store near Pateros. James told me he was holding out for a female because, from past experience, he knew that female dogs are usually more docile. "We named her Daisy, but you can call her whatever you want," the girl continued. Daisy was just eight weeks old. She was a beautiful auburn brown with contrasting white paws. Her ears drooped softly, covering her eyes, and on occasion one ear would lift, alerting her to her surroundings. Daisy came with an attitude triple her size. She was many things, but docile was not one of them!

We had been looking for just the right canine companion for a while when Daisy stumbled into our lives. She rode the entire way back to Seattle resting on James' lap and her life on the river began just a few short weeks after getting home. James, Steph, myself, and now Daisy were chaperoning 10 high school students down the Deschutes river in Oregon. Daisy did not immediately take to her expected perch on the oar boat. Becoming a stoic, well-groomed river dog was something she would soon grow into. Taking care



*Daisy on the Rogue River, Oregon*  
**Photo by Janet Marsh**

of a new puppy for life on the river while running a business on a shoestring was something James and I would grow into. Daisy's agility moving around on rafts slowly improved, and she finally took to swimming in Icicle Creek after we moved to Leavenworth, though, similar to James, swimming was something she would only do after extensive coaxing!

Daisy has been on many rivers since that first trip on the Deschutes. Her river log is extensive, rivaling the experience of many veteran guides, from the Salmon River in Idaho to the Rogue River in Oregon. She has many buried treasures along the banks of rivers throughout the Northwest, saved for a later date. Daisy could lead you to your lost glove, shoe, or wallet with the correct approach!

Of course, some of the best times with her weren't just on the river. She loved chasing chestnuts and pine cones around Haller Lake and later on trails in Leavenworth. Daisy was an integral part of the Wilson Street gang, roaming free throughout the neighborhood and foraging trails through the snow. Like many dogs, she was able to occupy her fair share of the bed. She

*Canine on the Lower Salmon, Idaho*  
**Photo by James Moore**



was skunked more than once and loved the smell of dead salmon carcass against her fur. Daisy never hesitated to desert us for bacon from neighboring camps. She also preferred the front seat!

I will continue to miss the time we shared together both on and off the river, her unbridled indifference, inquisitive looks, warmth on a cold clear night alongside the river, and unconditional love!

Daisy will be immortalized through treasured memories and Haiku.

*A noble brown dog  
Sitting stoic and alert.  
Not a germ of thought!*

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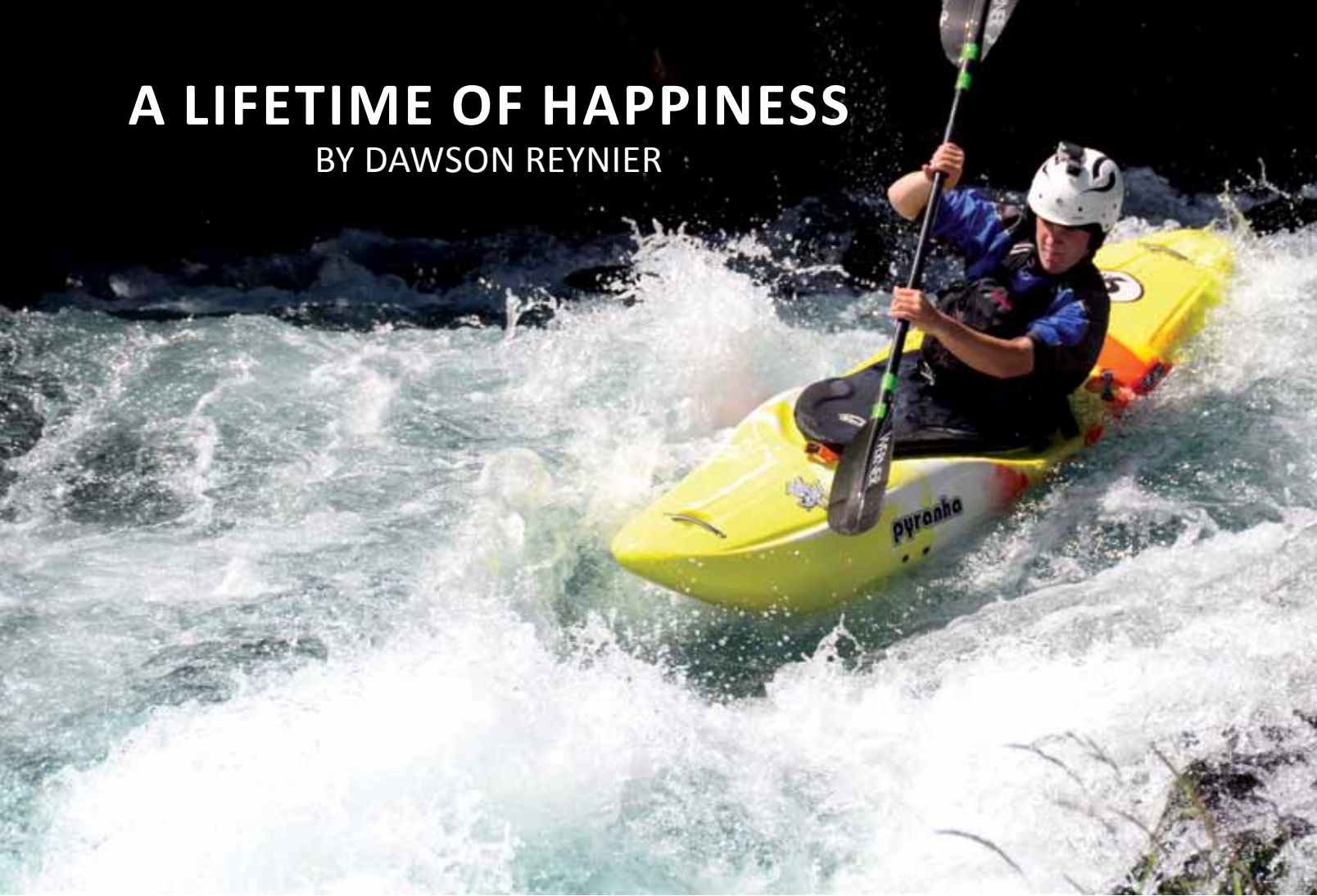
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# A LIFETIME OF HAPPINESS

BY DAWSON REYNIER



**I**MAGINE THIS: YOU are hidden, deep in a basalt canyon, with no one around but your three best friends. The air is only 30 degrees, and your breath is rolling up in shapeless clouds. You stick your hands in the water to warm them, but it does nothing. As glacier run-off, the water barely tops 45 degrees. You stifle a shiver and yell across the channel to your buddy. It doesn't matter what you say, as the response is the same. A smile, stretching ear-to-ear, widens on his face. The worries of annoying bosses and tough classes melt away.

Not many people understand kayaking or kayakers. People look at us like we're crazy. Anyone who has ever boated near a road, bridge, sidewalk, trail, or building can attest to the fact that people stare. Is it jealousy? Worry? If I had to identify it, I would say it is wonder. They ask themselves: how do they do it? Isn't it dangerous? Do they know what could happen to them? Yes and yes. It is dangerous, and we do understand what can happen. Many kayakers know

someone who has been seriously injured by the sport. That is not why we do what we do. We do it for the love of the sport.

This idea applies to those who kayak for the right purpose. There is a certain contingent of kayakers who don't do it for the beauty. They do it for the challenge. This is an acceptable reason, but it will not supply one with a lifetime of happiness like kayaking for joy can. My father is in his mid-50s and is still able to paddle at a high level, simply because he has continued to kayak even after he reached the peak of his ability. There are some boaters who strive to get to a high level, but when they arrive, there is the nagging question of what to do next. Kayaking for joy prevents this problem. There are always new places to see, new people to meet, and new experiences to enjoy.

One emotion comes from a common saying in the kayaking world. You often hear boaters say "church." To the naked

ear, it means a building where people gather to embrace their spirituality and God. To kayakers, it has another meaning. We use "church" to describe something that is beyond words. Something that is "out of this world." This experience also has the idea of friendship built into it. The root of church is ecclesia—community. The outdoors brings us together, just as all religions do for people all over the world. They have something to rely on, something to always be there for them. So do we. We have the mountains high, the valleys low, and the rivers wide. The term does not just apply to kayakers. Anyone who has seen the untouched form of nature can experience this feeling. Seeing a tangerine-colored sun dip below the ocean horizon, a sheet of

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*Above: Focus on happiness*

*Opposite: The feeling of falling keeps me sane.*

**Photo by Doug Cohen,  
White Salmon Photography**

# WHY I PADDLE

shimmering snow spray as you carve a turn, or the opal-blue water disappear over the lip of a waterfall in front of your kayak—you are a part of this. You are invested. You are in this group of people, on this earth.

Having this community is what makes us kayakers. It does not define us. It makes us better, together. You never see a kayaker without another. We come in pairs. Could we go alone? Are we good enough? Yes and no. We could go alone. However, we choose not to. We are linked to each other. We look out for one another. You are safer in numbers. You are never good enough to abandon community. You are never good enough to abandon family.

The question I get most often is not how I do it, but why I do it. The reason is difficult to explain. Why does a heart beat? Why does a river flow? It has to. Kayaking combines everything in a normal day and stuffs it into a single activity. To the unaccustomed, looking at a rapid might reveal an impassable labyrinth of boulders, waves, and holes. However, to a boater, it looks different. Looking at a rapid is like looking at a math problem. We don't look at what the water is doing. We look at what the water will do to us. We see how it will move us, and how it will carry us to the next location, the next move. How can I solve this in the most quick and efficient way?

How can I take this equation and connect it to that equation? How can I take this paddle stroke and link it to that paddle stroke? How do the pieces fit together? That's what kayaking is. Problem solving. It allows everyday problems to seem miniscule in comparison to Class V. If we can conquer that, we can conquer anything life can throw at us.

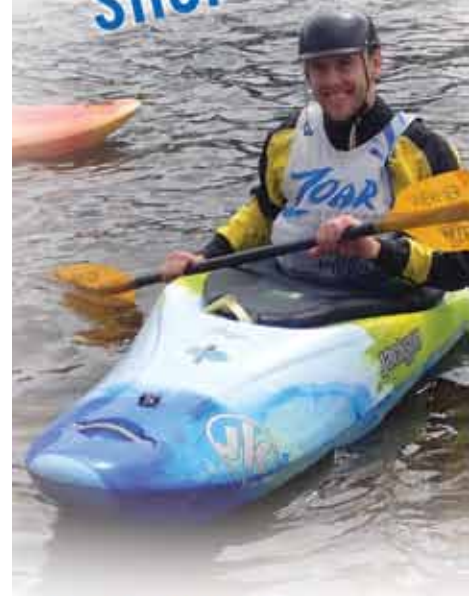
\* \* \*

My friends in school constantly make fun of me. "Any good boofs today?" they ask, or "Do you even kayak?" I laugh, give them a dry smile, and play along. I've accepted their teasing, but in truth, kayaking saved me.

The river, with the birds chirping and its train-like roar of whitewater, is an escape from the traffic, the annoying boss, the lying politicians, and the bullies at school. The worst day of the week can turn into the best day of the week, simply by getting on the water. The icy splash of glacier run-off can clear your mind of all things, getting you down to the simplest concept of earth: the movement of water to the sea. You are completely within this concept, this necessary truth. You are riding the train to the sea. You are in the flow, the flow of the river, the flow of your life.



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# RIVER VOICES

## MAY I JOIN YOU?

BY HANK KLAUSMAN

**T**HINK ABOUT THE following scenarios: A stranger shows up at the put-in for a Class V river and asks if he can join your group. Or you mention to some cute gal on the ski lift that you are going to the double black diamond tree runs and she asks if she can join you.

I'm sure anyone who does sports involving serious risks has been faced with similar predicaments.

In risk sports, you have to pick your partners using a different standard than you would for a game of pick up basketball. Ultimately, giving the honest and correct answer must trump being diplomatic. In some cases you can't have both, so you must always chose safety first.

A good comparison is the great game of golf. The wonderful concept of golf is that players at any skill level can play together and still have fun. Each player plays against his own handicap, so players can all play the

same course together without one player messing up the fun. Unless, of course, we all keep having to look for someone's ball.

But when high-risk adventures are involved, there are two important parts to your reply. The first and most important is to be honest and correct. And just as important, especially if the answer is no, is to be diplomatic.

Since I'm not the most polished diplomat, I've found the best initial response is to start asking questions about the person's experience and expertise. Then I ask for more details. If the paddler says he has paddled the section before, I might ask how he did, and how many times he's done it. Ask about his roll and general paddling experience.

In asking, I'm trying to find out if he has the experience and judgment to avoid getting himself or the group in trouble. We all know every risk sport has the uncalculated risk that we all must assume. But each member must be competent enough to keep him- or herself and the group out of unnecessary danger. Also ask if he is willing and able to help if you or others get in trouble.

If you aren't comfortable about this person, then you must be polite but firm. Remember, once you accept someone into your group, you and the others become responsible for him. You are under no obligation to take along someone who is not qualified. So give as many reasons as you can think of. Suggest other runs. Don't become part of some horror story.

Have fun but be safe. See you on a river or ski run. Who knows, maybe we'll even paddle or ski together.



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

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

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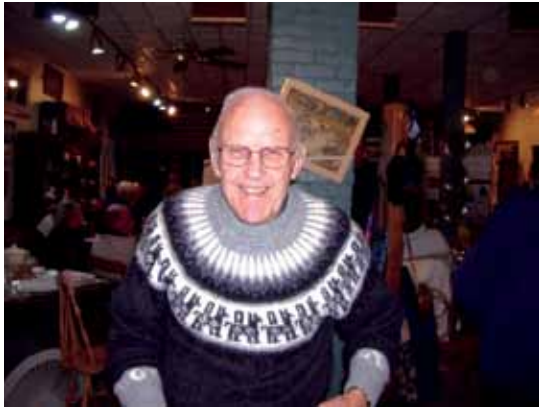
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# REMEMBRANCE

## REMEMBERING EDWARD S. (TED) ACTON

BY JIM SINDELAR, MICHAEL BENFIELD, WARREN MANHARD



**T**ED ACTON WAS born in his parents' home in Shawinigan Falls, Quebec on May 15, 1914. He was the son of Yoeli S. Acton and Edward H. Acton. He passed away on October 16, 2015 in North Conway at age 101. A 1933 graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy, Ted went on to receive his Electrical Engineering degree from Cornell University in 1937. He worked for the General Electric Company for 42 years.

Ted loved and lived life to its fullest. His passions were whitewater canoeing and kayaking, skiing, tennis, golf, building his home, electronics, music and travelling. Before the Second World War, he and his brother canoed the Danube in their Klepper Folbot. He had many other flatwater and whitewater experiences before joining the Appalachian Mountain Club's whitewater program in 1964. He quickly became a rated expert whitewater canoeist and kayaker as well as a senior leader of the club. He led many whitewater and ski touring trips for the Boston Chapter of the AMC and private trips as well, frequently hosting participants in his second home in Freedom, NH. He became an instructor in whitewater boating. For many summers, he ran kayak rolling sessions for paddlers there. He served a term as chairman of the AMC Boston Canoe Committee. He was an AMC life member.

The Army Corps of Engineers made water releases for recreational boating. A problem arose when it was discovered a number of fishermen had been caught in rapidly increasing water levels behind the Townsend Dam on the West River in Vermont that was capturing the Ball Mountain Dam water release. The Army Corps did not want the extra water to pass on through to the Connecticut River all at once. The fishing community complained to the Army Corps and the Army Corps complained to someone in the boating community. The Army Corps said it could only release water for recreational boating in the future if the shores above the Townsend Dam were posted and that would be the responsibility of the boating community. Ted volunteered to be liaison between the Army Corps and the boating community. Part of what he did was make sure he had a team of volunteers to post the warnings about rapid changes in water levels in that area each year. Ted was familiar with the West River because he had paddled it before the Ball Mountain Dam was constructed.

Ted was definitely a New England whitewater pioneer. He appeared in the *American Whitewater Journal* a number of times, including a photo of him taken on his last whitewater kayak trip at age 87 on New Hampshire's Pemigewasett

River. He participated in the first National Whitewater Downriver race on Maine's Rapid River, circa 1940. He was well known for creating clever ways of carrying whitewater boats on vehicles, starting with a jury-rig rack on his Model A Ford and running through his last boating trip.

In skiing, as well as kayaking, his style was always aggressive, full speed ahead. He participated and placed in downhill ski races well into his 80s. He also kayaked regularly into his 80s, well after his younger friends had retired from the sport.

He celebrated his 100th birthday in July 2014 at a picnic party near his home in New Hampshire. Forty-two of his canoeing and kayaking friends from around New England feted him with mutual tales of adventures that he elaborated upon or corrected, much to the delight of his devoted audience.

# POETRY

## A KAYAK SAVED, A PADDLE LOST; SET FREE FROM DOOM, BUT AT A COST

BY JACK MITCHELL

*Editor's Note: Coliseum Rapid is on the Cheat River in north-central West Virginia.*

In Coliseum on the Cheat, a close-call,  
smack-down, near-defeat:

I'd done this line, this run, before; but for  
the boils, it was a bore.

I'd slipped into a micro-eddy because my  
nose-clips weren't quite ready,

Had laid my paddle on my skirt...I should  
have been much more alert.

Abruptly, I became aware: my bow was  
rising, getting air!

My boat was sinking down in back. I  
nearly had a heart attack!

And, it wasn't any wonder: my kayak's  
stern was going under.

But, under what, I couldn't know...how  
deep or fast, how strong the flow.

At first beneath logs jammed I stuck...a  
siphon seized me, darn my luck!

Splooosh, in a flash, over I turned, my luck  
stone-cold...frustration burned.

But, it was May, the water warm. I didn't  
fear "I'd bought the farm."

Well, anyway, I tried to roll; so, with  
God's grace, I'd save my soul.

I faintly heard a distant knell; was it for  
me, the Doomsday Bell?

Was Lucifer lighting my way, to dusty  
death, a bed of clay?

Above my paddle, I scraped rock. My  
heart beat like an old-time clock.

The seconds ticked 'til I'd get air. Thus  
was I caught in Satan's snare,

In trouble deep, without a prayer, this  
mess I'd made, it was a bear!

As by a 'gator, I was caught. Would my  
wet exit be for naught?

No room to roll, there was no doubt. I  
popped my skirt, alarmed, bailed out.

My paddle I let go to chance. To save  
myself required free hands.

Perhaps, I was too much in haste. My  
stick's now lost, regretted waste.

Not hopeless deep into the hole, to gain  
the sunshine was my goal.

I caught a break; some luck I had: the  
suck, I found, was not too bad.

Good fortune, too: handholds I felt, as in  
a game, high cards were dealt.

The cards were down; the game was up!  
Was I to die like a drowned pup?

I played my hand; I won the pot! I pulled  
myself out of that spot.

The current there ran not too strong.  
Hand over hand, I crawled along.

My boat, I saw, had moved no deeper. It  
seemed the trap was no 'yak-keeper.

I tugged. I pulled. The boat stayed fast.  
But, buddy, Mac, came round at last.

"Hey, dude," he soothed, "don't have  
a cow. I'll just pound down upon your  
bow."

"I'll show you now the warden's key that  
soon will have your boat sprung free!"

"And, dude, you know, I am your 'bro,  
but, next you swim, get video!"

He stomped the bow while out I jerked,  
and our joint efforts finally worked!

But, though we searched for it anon, my  
dear, old paddle was long gone.



# 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.

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

### Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks  
Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

### Alabama

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

### Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff  
Southern Arizona Paddlers Club, Tucson  
Thunderbird Outdoor Restoration  
Organization, Glendale

### Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

### California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico  
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus  
Shasta Paddlers, Redding  
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Paddlers, San Jose

### Colorado

Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs  
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride  
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Asso, Glenwood  
Springs

### Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

### Georgia

Georgia Canoeing Asso, Atlanta

### Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

### Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assn, Chicago

### Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg  
Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

### Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

### Kentucky

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

### Maryland

Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club, Baltimore  
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

### Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston  
Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont

### Michigan

Venture 8 / Troop 8, East Lansing

### Minnesota

Rapids Riders, Eagan

### Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Assn, St Louis  
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

### New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
KCCNY, Flanders

### New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady  
AMC NY/NJ Chapter, New York  
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  
H2o Dreams, Saluda  
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee  
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 Association, Portland  
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

### Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oak  
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown  
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre

Canoe Club of Centre County, Lemont  
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg  
Holtwood Hooligans, Paradise  
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley  
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia  
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 Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

### Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

### Utah

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

### Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

### Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg  
Canoe Cruisers Association, Herndon  
Coastal Canoeists Inc, Richmond  
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke

### Washington

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

### West Virginia

Dbl Z! Whitewater Club, Fayetteville  
Redneck Kayak Club, Beckley  
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

### Ontario

Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, The Kawarthas

### Quebec

Montreal Kayak Club, Montreal

## **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](mailto: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](mailto:membership@americanwhitewater.org) or sign-up on line at [www.americanwhitewater.org/membership](http://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](http://americanwhitewater.org) > Library > AW Journal**



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

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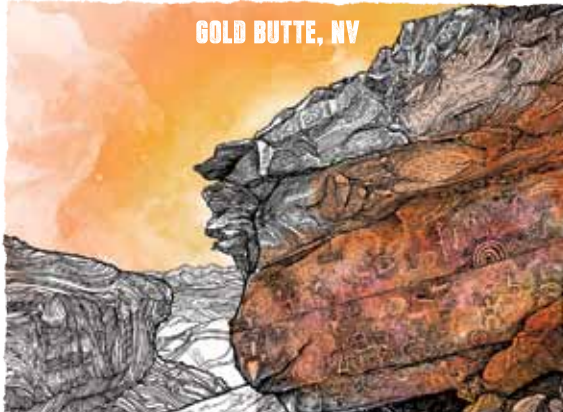
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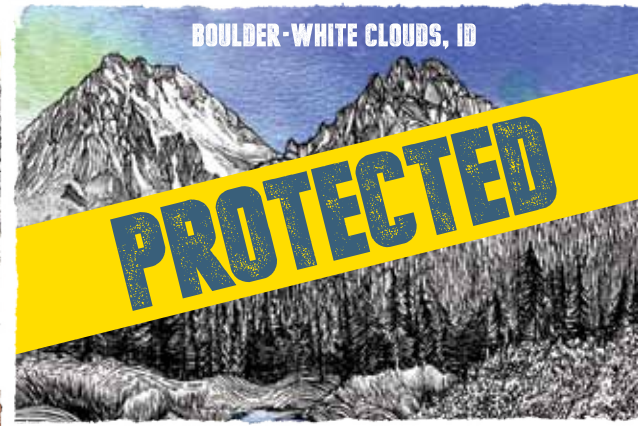
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