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May/Jun 2018

KIDS AND WHITEWATER
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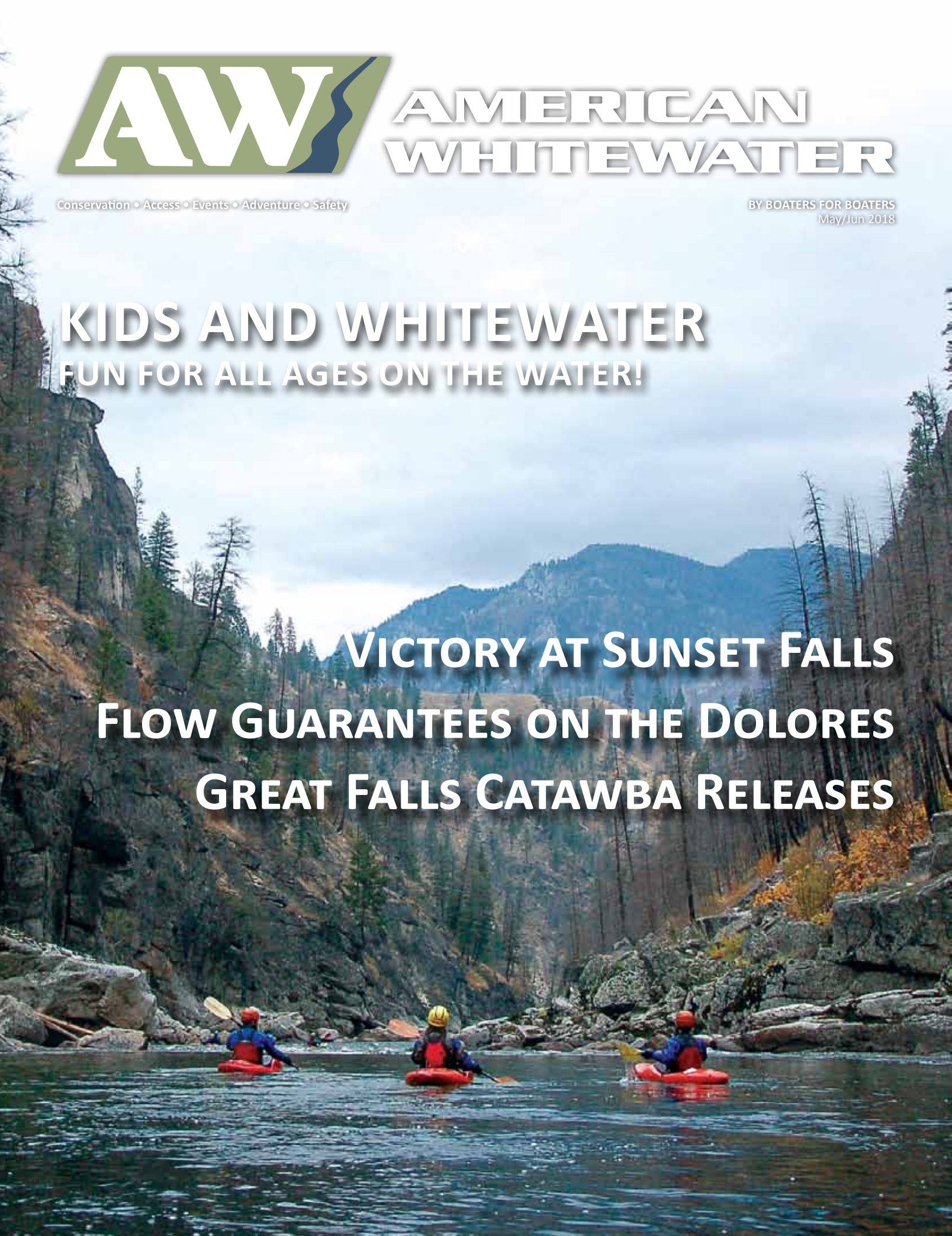
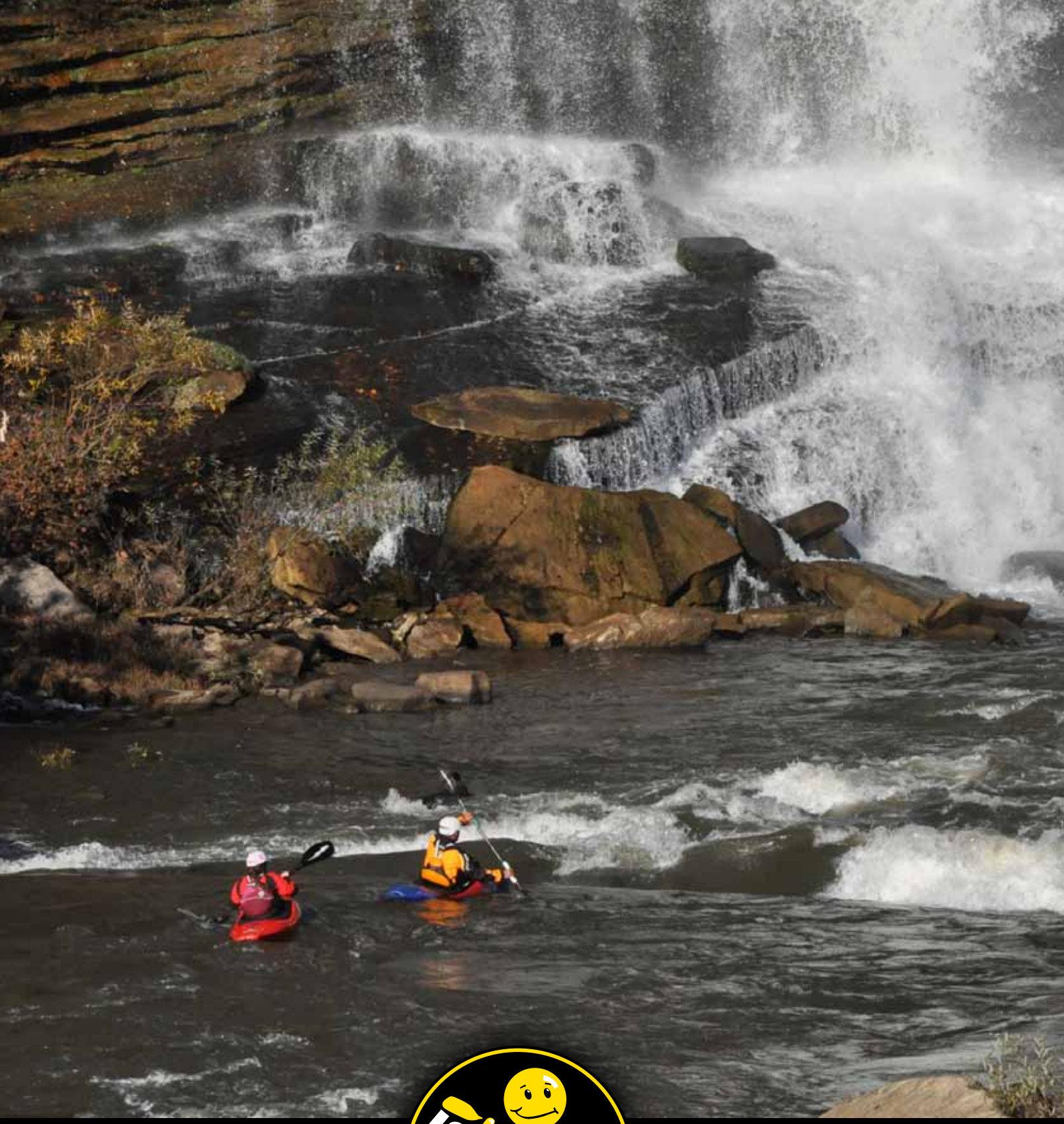
VICTORY AT SUNSET FALLS

FLOW GUARANTEES ON THE DOLORES

GREAT FALLS CATAWBA RELEASES





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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

May/Jun 2018 – Volume 58 – Issue 3

COLUMNS

STEWARDSHIP

FEATURE ARTICLES

WILD RIVER LIFE

THE HISTORY OF WHITEWATER

RIVER VOICES

LOVE AND WHITEWATER

KIDS AND WHITEWATER

The South Fork of the Salmon River (ID) is a magnificent river with an incredibly wide range of whitewater opportunities on numerous stretches, including the East Fork, all the way through a wilderness multi-day run that takes you to the confluence with the Salmon River at Mackey Bar on the Main Salmon wilderness run. The South Fork is under threat from a massive mining proposal, with three giant open-pit mines that will affect already restored wetlands, and re-route and re-channel streams in the headwaters of the East Fork of the South Fork. Stay tuned to American Whitewater for opportunities to take action to protect this fantastic whitewater resource.

Photo by Kevin Colburn

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PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision-making processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

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

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

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

American Whitewater Journal Staff

Editor Ambrose Tuscano
P.O. Box 913, Soda Springs, California 95728
e-mail: editor@americanwhitewater.org

Graphic Design/Production/Photo Editor Megan Seifert

Assistant Editors Patricia Rutka, Erica J. Seifert, Barry Tuscano

Contributing Writers
Mark Singleton, Kevin Colburn, Thomas O'Keefe, Evan Stafford, Nathan Fey, Susan Elliott, Dan Demaree, Chuck McHenry, Juliet Matthews, Paul Janda, Peyton Janda, Ambrose Tuscano

Photo Contributors
Kevin Colburn, Ben Edson, University of Washington Libraries, Thomas O'Keefe, Scott Carpenter, Evan Stafford, Kent Perillo, Stuart Perillo, Wild River Life, Rich Hardin, Chuck McHenry, Peter Birdsong, Paul Janda, Dana King, Ambrose Tuscano, Kitty Tuscano, Meg Seifert

Industry Partnerships and Adverstising: Mark Singleton
e-mail: mark@americanwhitewater.org

Safety Editor Charlie Walbridge
Route 1, Box 329F, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525
e-mail: ccwalbridge@cs.com

Stewardship Reports Editor
Evan Stafford evan@americanwhitewater.org

Missing Copies and Address Changes
Carla Miner, carla@americanwhitewater.org

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.

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

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

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THE JOURNEY AHEAD

We're dialing back the wheels of time here at American Whitewater to 1968, the year of the historic passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Our community was among the first to advocate for a system designed to protect pristine and free-flowing rivers in the United States. On October 2, 1968, President Johnson signed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act into law. As part of the original act, eight rivers were designated as National Wild and Scenic Rivers: the Clearwater (ID), including its major tributaries, the Lochsa and Selway, Eleven Point (MO), Feather (CA), Rio Grande (NM), Rogue (OR), St. Croix (WI & MN), Salmon (ID), and Wolf (WI).

As paddlers, we know firsthand the mood swing of wild rivers—everything from rowdy to tranquil. During the early history of American Whitewater, our founders shared the magnificence of several of the original eight in the *American Whitewater Journal*. They wrote passionately about the need for a national river protection system and worked with leaders in the national river conservation community to successfully develop and support what would become the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act identifies outstandingly remarkable values that include scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, and cultural values. Rivers designated under the Act are preserved in their free-flowing condition and are not dammed or otherwise impeded. A Wild and Scenic designation essentially vetoes licensing new hydropower projects on the river. It also provides very strong protection against oil, gas and mineral development, and creates a federal reserved water right to protect flow-dependent values. Today, over 12,000 miles of rivers enjoy Wild and Scenic River protection.

The 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act marks an incredible opportunity to build positive awareness, support, and activism around the need to grow our one-of-a-kind system of protecting outstanding rivers. In keeping with the theme that the best defense is a good offense, American Whitewater is working to designate new rivers for protection under the Act. We are the co-architect of several Wild and Scenic River bills that are moving through Congress or in the works that would protect some of our nation's most spectacular headwaters. In addition, we seek new protections through National Forest and BLM planning efforts.

For those of you keeping a scorecard, here are the Wild and Scenic Rivers bills before this session of Congress:

- Wild Olympics–464 miles (WA)
- Oregon Wildlands–278 miles (OR)
- East Rosebud–20 miles (MT)
- Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook–62 miles (CT)
- California Desert Protection Act–73 miles (CA)
- Central Coast Heritage Protection Act–159 miles (CA)

We are advocating for legislation to protect these rivers:

- Montana Headwaters–potential 700 miles
- Gila and San Francisco–100 miles (NM)
- Nolichucky–7 miles (NC/TN)
- Owyhee expansion–45 miles (OR)
- Northern California Conservation and Recreation Act–485 miles (CA)
- Green River–54 miles (UT)

For legislation to be successful grassroots advocacy on behalf of wild rivers is key. With partners across the outdoor industry, American Whitewater is a nonprofit leader in the 5000 Miles of Wild Campaign (www.5000miles.org). Together with our friends at American Rivers, Idaho Rivers United, and Pacific Rivers, we are bringing together grassroots partners, individuals and businesses in a united campaign for wild rivers. The goal of the campaign is to protect 5,000 miles of Wild Rivers.

Along with pushing for new protections, we are celebrating the more than 12,000 miles of current designations at a 50th Anniversary party at Gauley Fest in West Virginia on September 15th. So get ready to relive 1968 and dig through the closets, visit the thrift store, or snag your parents old duds and come out to get *groovy* at Gauley Fest in support of the 50th anniversary of one of the best things to happen for wild rivers!

Executive Director, American Whitewater

NEW RELEASE PLANS FOR THE GREAT FALLS OF THE CATAWBA (SC)

BY KEVIN COLBURN

The first rapid on the short channel may not receive flow from releases. **Photo by Ben Edson**

The Great Falls of the Catawba is an eerily quiet place, with all the water flowing listlessly through a hydropower canal over the hill. Wandering around the sunbaked boulders in the expansive dry riverbed where rumbling water belongs, I see that something is obviously awry. Three-foot long skeletons of toothy fish called gar drape over rocks where the eagles and ubiquitous vultures have picked them clean. Sweat does not evaporate. Pools of standing water are thick with algae. This is interior South Carolina, 280 feet above sea level, where the Great Falls of the Catawba once roared—and will again soon.

I spent quite a few days exploring the Great Falls between 2002 and 2005 with American Whitewater volunteer Andrew Lazenby. We brainstormed about the area's potential to support restored flows and whitewater paddling, while mapping old trails and potential access sites. At the same time, we were attending monthly meetings with Duke Power, Carolina Canoe Club, and dozens of other groups collaborating on a new license for the dams that dewater the Great Falls. Together, we negotiated and carried out a whitewater flow study in 2004 during which we documented the Class II-III+ big water offered by the Great Falls. For just those couple of days, dry rocks were replaced by countless surfing waves and our spirits soared.

In 2005 we pitched a proposal to the collaborative group that included a robust schedule of dam releases, several new access areas, flow information, and new trails and land conservation opportunities. Based on years of work, many of these measures—but not all—were adopted by the group and accepted by Duke Power. One of our moonshot ideas was for Duke Power to build a whitewater chute into the Great Falls that would release water, allow boat passage, provide fish passage, oxygenate the water, and create a well-designed surfing wave at the proposed continuous base flows. We pitched this idea and it landed with a thud. Duke Power countered with a proposal for a simple portage trail around the diversion dam and we acquiesced.

After years of unrelated delays, the new Federal License for the Catawba dams was issued in 2015. Shortly thereafter, Duke Power revealed their plans for the portage trail; it had been rerouted up over Mountain Island to avoid sensitive habitats near the dam. The trail would require a fairly grueling hike and launch paddlers below several rapids on an already short

stretch of river. This was a non-starter for us and we openly opposed the idea.

At the same time, plans for how to release flows over the diversion dam were in flux. We consulted with Duke throughout 2016 and 2017 and dusted off our proposal for a whitewater chute through the dam. We offered recent examples of similar projects, and recommended a range of engineers qualified for the task. Then things got quiet until March of 2018, when we were invited to a public meeting to discuss Great Falls access. Scott Shipley, designer of the Charlotte Whitewater Park, among many others, was on the agenda. Could it be?

Yep. Scott took to the lectern and began showing detailed schematics of two whitewater chutes that Duke Power proposed to build through the 1500-foot long, 14-foot high "Long Channel" diversion dam. The first looked like a high-tech version of our 2005 proposal. It would deliver 450-850 cfs through a straight channel with three drops every day of the year. At recreational release flows of 2,950 cfs, water would flow into the second chute, which switches back along the base of the dam over nine drop structures.

Paddlers in canoes, kayaks, or other craft will be able to use these chutes to ride the releases right through the diversion dam into the Long Channel. There will be eddies on either side of the drop structures, and the whitewater is being designed to accommodate the Class II-III paddlers who will be attracted to the Great Falls. Paddlers can, if they wish, hike back up and run the chutes again if they are using them for training or park and play. Just like we proposed 15 years ago, these chutes are likely to provide fish passage and water oxygenation in addition to other values.

We asked Duke Power if the structures could be built in the footprint of the upstream reservoir rather than on top of a portion of the natural river. The answer was no, but instead they minimized the footprint as much as possible, and are trying to integrate natural bedrock fins into the design. We asked if the drop structures could be designed as high quality surfing waves. The answer was maybe, but safe passage is the primary project goal. We strongly encouraged them to create interesting and attractive whitewater features in the channels, including surfing waves.

The whitewater chutes were rolled out in the meeting as a proposal from Duke Energy, and were met with enthusiastic support. The project will go through the permitting process this fall and you should be able to enjoy the Long Channel and these cool chutes through the dam by 2022.

The Great Falls has two channels: a river left 1.8-mile "Long Channel" that is wide and stocked with many small waves and eddies, and a river right 0.6-mile "Short Channel" that is compressed and features some big wave trains and great surfing. Getting into the Short Channel will require a portage around the diversion dam. In the same March meeting where we learned the good news about the Long Channel, we also got some bad news about the Short Channel. New gates are needed to provide releases, and the only place where Duke Energy can install them will release the flows below the first rapid on the run. This rapid is a technical Class III+ ledge drop that offered lots of excitement during the flow study. In the meeting, we stressed the value of the first rapid and pushed for opportunities to release water through it, but ultimately it is likely to remain dewatered. There is a possibility, at least, that the new release location will activate rapids in other parts of the channel.

River restoration requires a long game, sometimes a really long game. When the gates are opened in 2022 and the Great Falls becomes a river again, it will have been 20 years since we first hiked into the dry riverbed and imagined a river roaring back to life. We can't wait to join you on the water and celebrate the first releases, even if we are all a bit older at the party than we imagined when we started this project.

Paddlers fired up for the Great Falls flow study in 2005.
Photo by Ben Edson

SUNSET FALLS DAM PROJECT ON SF SKYKOMISH (WA) CANCELLED

BY THOMAS O'KEEFE

The original hair boater, Al Fausett, runs Sunset Falls. A crowd of 3000 gathered to watch the stunt. **By permission: University of Washington Libraries. Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives Division, photo PIC0330.**

This past April, Snohomish County Public Utility District Board of Commissioners directed their staff to cease the effort to pursue a final federal license for the Sunset Falls hydropower project on Washington's South Fork Skykomish River. In a recent news release, the utility announced that it would continue to emphasize cost-effective conservation and renewable energy resources.

For the past decade, American Whitewater has been directly engaged in the dialogue about the Sunset Falls Project, which was proposed on a river segment with multiple state and federal protections. The South Fork Skykomish is a State Scenic Waterway, the Forest Service has recommended it for Wild and Scenic designation, the reach is protected from hydropower development by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, and instream flows are protected by the State of Washington. Despite these protections and overwhelming public opposition, Snohomish County PUD decided to move forward with a project proposal. American Whitewater agreed to accept the possibility of a project and was the only non-governmental organization to join settlement discussions convened by Snohomish PUD with agencies and tribes over the past two years.

"While we appreciate the efforts of staff at Snohomish County PUD who took our concerns seriously and worked in good faith to address them, we support the decision by the Board of Commissioners to move on from this project," stated Thomas O'Keefe of American Whitewater. "Sunset Falls will continue to roar with life over the massive granite slab and we hope to someday restore access to this inspirational and powerful site."

Background and History

American Whitewater has been engaged in discussions over this project for the past decade. In 2008, Snohomish County PUD developed a list of 140 sites for new hydropower development in a four-county region and identified 40 small hydroelectric projects located either in or near the utility's service territory that could be developed, constructed, and operated by the utility to meet its growing customer demand. The list was further narrowed to approximately a dozen sites and American Whitewater was invited to provide input on these sites along with partners in the conservation community that included American Rivers, Conservation Northwest, North Cascades Conservation Council, and Sierra Club.

In our 2009 joint comments, we expressed specific concerns with the Sunset Falls site, noting that it was on the only State Scenic Waterway in Western Washington. We wrote that, "dewatering this scenic and popular falls just above the confluence of the South and North Forks of the Skykomish River would be a tragedy." In addition to the issues of aesthetic impacts on the falls, we expressed concerns with impacts to salmon and bull trout.

Snohomish County PUD proceeded with the project and filed for a Preliminary Permit to develop the site. In December 2011, American Whitewater took the

Sunset in all of its glory.
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

Tyler Bradt dropping into Sunset Falls in 2010.
Photo by Eric Boomer

lead in drafting comments in opposition and we were joined by Alpine Lakes Protection Society, American Rivers, North Cascades Conservation Council, Sierra Club – Washington State Chapter, The Mountaineers, and Washington Wild.

The permit was granted and Snohomish County PUD next proceeded with filing a Notice of Intent to develop a project. This kicked the public dialogue into high gear. In June 2013, American Whitewater attended the public scoping meeting in Index, Washington and as the first speaker invited to the microphone, Stewardship Director Thomas O'Keefe stated, "I have tremendous respect for my colleagues here at the PUD; we have worked with these folks for over a decade, but sometimes your friends make mistakes, and this project is simply inappropriate." As the evening continued, additional concerns were raised by local residents who expressed an interest in a future for the community based on resource conservation.

We followed the meeting with formal written comments and were joined by the Alpine Lakes Protection Society, American Rivers, Conservation Northwest, North Cascades Conservation Council, Sierra Club – Washington State Chapter, The Mountaineers, Washington Wild, and Wild Washington Rivers. In our comments we noted that the river was a State Scenic Waterway, recommended for Wild and Scenic designation by the Forest Service, and in an area protected from hydropower development by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. With the support of the Hydropower Reform Coalition we also conducted a formal economic analysis of the project, concluding that it would not be price-competitive relative to other renewable energy sources, and would not provide ancillary services to complement other renewable energy sources.

American Whitewater actively engaged in an extensive study process to further evaluate the site over a two-year period, and in April 2016 we filed comments on the Draft License application. We were joined by a large coalition of our partners. We reiterated past concerns we had with the project and the development of hydropower on a currently free-flowing river, and also noted the existence of a state instream flow rule that would prevent diverting water from the river at levels necessary to support a hydropower project.

The Tulalip Tribe expressed deep concerns with impacts to salmon writing that, "the project creates a new source of mortality which impairs the Tribe's ability to achieve salmon recovery and maintain resources of cultural importance. The Tulalip Tribes strongly recommend that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission deny this application."

Following the deep concerns with the project as proposed in the Draft License Application, American Whitewater joined settlement discussions convened by Snohomish PUD that included resource agencies and tribes. Snohomish PUD felt they could still refine their proposal in a way that would meet stakeholder concerns. We agreed to accept the possibility that the project would be constructed and to join the dialogue over how the project would move forward. Snohomish County PUD committed to work with the group and proceed with a Final License Application if a settlement agreement could be reached.

Through the settlement process, we were strong advocates for aesthetics and recreation, as well as the fishery resources that were a primary concern for the Tulalip and Snoqualmie Tribes and Federal resource agencies. We were also concerned with any new precedent that would be created to allow a project in a Northwest Power and Conservation Council Protected Area or modifications to the instream flow rule that would have been required to divert the water necessary for the project. This week's decision by the Board of Commissioners ends the process to seek an agreement that would form the basis of a Final License Application. While we committed to the settlement process in good faith, we are pleased with the decision to emphasize cost-effective conservation and alternative renewable energy resources as alternatives to the development of a hydropower project at Sunset Falls.

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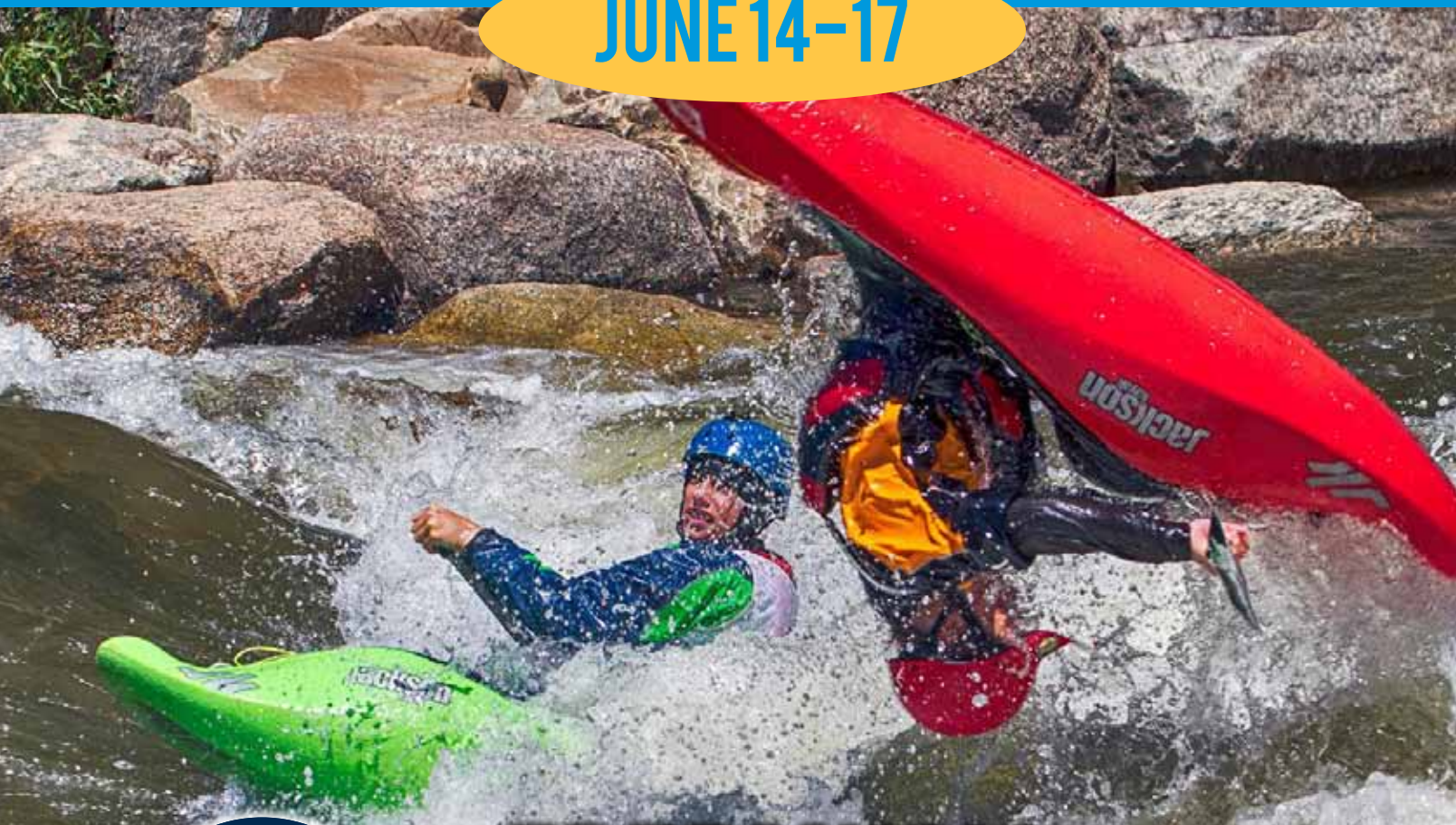

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NEW MEXICO SETS DANGEROUS PRECEDENT DENYING PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO FLOAT

BY EVAN STAFFORD

The Pecos River in New Mexico has numerous fences to negotiate. **Photo by Scott Carpenter**

In the closing days of 2017, the New Mexico Game and Fish Commission adopted a new rule allowing private landowners to undergo a process to certify streams running through their property as "non-navigable" and subject to a trespass statute outlined in the new rule. American Whitewater sees this as a serious threat to the public's right to access and float rivers and creeks in New Mexico. The rule was adopted with extremely limited public input and was rushed through the rule hearing, making its passage even more troubling.

In September 2017, the Game and Fish Commission chose not to hear the same rule based on the New Mexico constitution's assertion that water in a stream is public and on a 2014 Attorney General opinion stating that, "No. A private landowner cannot prevent persons from fishing in a public stream that flows across the landowner's property, provided the public stream is accessible without trespass across privately owned adjacent lands."

Three months later, however, the Commission called an "emergency meeting" in Albuquerque to allow a hearing on the rule. By creating an "emergency" meeting scenario, they limited the time for public comment to 10 days, while 30 days is the established norm set by the New Mexico Legislature when they originally outlined the process for rule making by the Commission. During this special meeting, disregarding overwhelming public input against it, the Commission began the procedure of allowing landowners to certify streambeds as "non-navigable" and to close off public access via sanctioned fences, and private property/no trespass signage.

Many legal experts and the current and former New Mexico Attorney General see this rule as unconstitutional. Legal challenges are expected; however, a controversial 2015 bill that was also quietly and quickly passed in the closing days of a legislative session may give legal cover to these efforts to bar public access to the state's waterways. The bill, which implies

private ownership of public waters through private lands, seemed to be in response to the aforementioned Attorney General Gary King's statement affirming the public's right to wade and fish in streams that flow through private property.

A small number of landowners and fishing outfitters across the West have long wanted to cordon off streams on private property to create exclusive fishing enclaves. When they didn't hear the response they wanted from the New Mexico AG, they turned to the state Senate, which obliged them by passing Senate Bill 226 USE OF PUBLIC WATER & LANDOWNER PROTECTION, which states recreational users can't walk or wade onto private property through "non-navigable public water" without written permission.

The "non-navigable" clause appeared at first to maintain the status quo. As long as a river or creek was considered navigable under New Mexico state law the public could float and access it, but with the Game and Fish Commission's blessing via this new rule, landowners can "certify" public waters running through their property as "non-navigable," which creates a situation under Bill 226 in which the public's right to access those waters is effectively removed. Nowhere in these legal battles is the public's right to float specifically addressed; however, in applications of the new rule by landowners, fencing across rivers has already created situations in which paddlers have been forced to cut, squeeze under, or illegally trespass to portage these obstructions. American Whitewater is working with our partners in New Mexico to determine the best course of action to protect boaters' right to float and we will continue to keep you informed as this access situation develops.

COURT GUARANTEES NEW MINIMUM FLOWS ON THE DOLORES

BY NATHAN FEY

The Dolores River below Gateway.
Photo by Evan Stafford

In April, a Colorado water court approved in-stream flow water rights (ISFs) for the lower Dolores River, protecting up to 900 cfs during spring peak flows as well as essential winter flows on a 33-mile stretch of the Dolores River below the San Miguel River confluence. The state ISF right is intended to support river health and habitat for native fish, and also protects flows that support paddling opportunities.

The new in-stream flows for the lower Dolores River can be monitored and enforced, thereby ensuring long-term protections for minimum flows of 200 cfs from March 16 to April 14; 900 cfs from April 15 to June 14; 400 cfs from June 15 to July 15; 200 cfs from July 16 to August 14; and 100 cfs from August 15 to March 15.

The new ISF rights are junior to all existing rights, which means that 900 cfs may not be in the river when we have low snowpack like we do in 2018. The rights protect 900 cfs from any future development, but unfortunately do not restore flows below McPhee Dam or to the river above the San Miguel confluence. Put another way, if there is 900 cfs in the river after all existing diverters have taken their portion, no diversions whose water rights are junior to the ISF will be allowed to take any more water out of the river.

American Whitewater's 2010 Recreational Flow Study for the Dolores River identified 800 cfs as the minimum flow for rafting this section. We are pleased that the State is protecting peak spring flows that also benefit whitewater paddling, as this is a fantastic multi-day river trip with multiple side canyon hikes and excellent camping.

The Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD), which develops water for use in the region, filed a legal challenge to the in-stream flow rights, arguing that the minimum flows were too high. The SWCD asked for a one percent depletion allowance on the in-stream flow to accommodate future development. The Dolores Water Conservancy District, which manages McPhee Dam, also objected to the new Dolores in-stream flow right because it may limit future development needs.

If approved, the depletion allowance would have been the first time in-stream flow water rights were opened to future carve-out, eliminating the long-term protections provided by these rights. The Court ruled against these proposed carve-outs, which is a big win for Colorado, future ISF rights, and for the Dolores.

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AW FILES PROTEST IN LATEST GREEN RIVER PIPELINE APPLICATION (UT)

BY NATHAN FEY

The Green River below Flaming Gorge has been recommended for designation as a Wild and Scenic River. Photo by Kent Perillo

Another attempt to pump water from Utah's Green River and deliver it to Colorado's Front Range cities has resurfaced in a recent application to the Utah Division of Water Resources for a Water Rights Export Application. American Whitewater has opposed the project, known as the Green River Pipeline or Regional Watershed Supply Project (RWSP), for nearly a decade over concerns about its impact on the Green and Colorado Rivers. The RWSP has been rejected twice previously by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Army Corps of Engineers, and AW intervened in both of those permitting efforts.

According to the latest application, 55,000 acre-feet of water would be withdrawn from the Green River in Utah for export to Colorado's Front Range Urban Corridor, for unknown uses. The proposed export of water from the Green River would undoubtedly result in changes in downstream flows over the life of the project. This raises considerable ecological, recreational, and economic concerns, as the proposed export will affect public recreation and the natural stream environment of the entire Green River.

The US Department of Interior has recommended designation of the Green River below Flaming Gorge as a Wild and Scenic River, providing permanent protection, specifically, of the free-flowing condition of the river, its water quality, and other nationally and regionally significant values. No water-related projects having direct or adverse effects on the ORVs (outstanding remarkable values) or free-flowing condition of the Green River were proposed at the time of the recommendation.

Normal reservoir releases through Flaming Gorge power plant outside of spring run-off flows were determined sufficient to protect the Wild and Scenic values for which the river was determined eligible. The applicant has failed to consult with the Bureau of Land Management or the Bureau of Reclamation regarding impacts to the Green River from diverting water below Flaming Gorge reservoir under current operations, and no reference to contracting for additional water releases from Flaming Gorge has been made by the applicant. Under normal operations, there is little or no water available for additional diversion,

Opposite: A new pipeline proposal threatens the outstandingly remarkable values of the free-flowing condition of the Green, its water quality, and the critical habitat it provides.
Photo by Stuart Perillo

with the rare exception of very high spring flood releases, which currently enhance existing downstream, environmental, and recreational uses.

Additionally, the Green River downstream of Flaming Gorge is the only river reach in the entire Colorado River Basin that the US Fish and Wildlife Service found to have the carrying capacity to support a minimum viable population of Colorado Pike Minnow. If flows in the Green are compromised, these endangered fish populations have little to no chance of being restored.

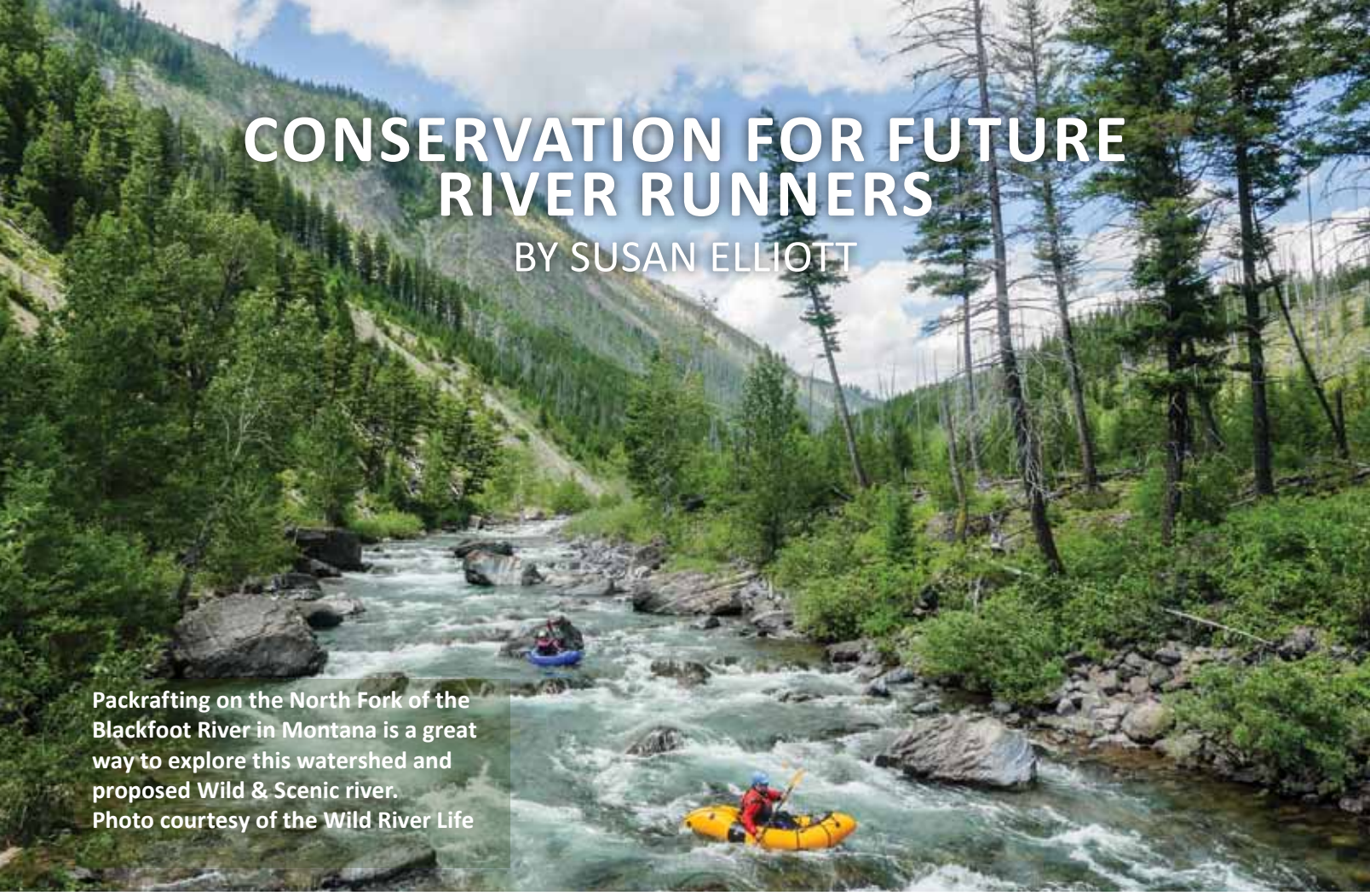
By some estimates, a pipeline to deliver Green River water to Colorado would require up to 500,000 MWh of electricity each year—enough power to meet the needs of 50,000 residents of Colorado (including their home, business, and industrial electricity needs). This figure reflects the net electricity consumption; the pipeline would require over 1,000,000 MWh, but would generate some hydropower to offset this.

Best estimates indicate that this application, if approved, would reduce important downstream flows from Flaming Gorge reservoir during spring floods, affect the free-flowing condition of the Green River, and could seriously raise the risk of a Compact Call on the Colorado River in a prolonged dry spell. The applicant has claimed there is water available for export; however, it is unclear and highly disputed as to how much water Colorado has remaining to develop at a reasonable risk under the 1922 and 1948 compacts.

Water Horse Resources Water Rights Export Application is speculative and assumes availability of water with no consideration of impacts to downstream needs. In its letter, American Whitewater urges the Division to act with prudence and reject their application.

CONSERVATION FOR FUTURE RIVER RUNNERS

BY SUSAN ELLIOTT



Packrafting on the North Fork of the Blackfoot River in Montana is a great way to explore this watershed and proposed Wild & Scenic river. Photo courtesy of the Wild River Life

I've always had a proclivity for the conservation of natural places. It felt obvious to me: if we want to live on this planet, we have to use its resources wisely. I rarely thought of the next generation, especially during my traveling twenties. I thought about boofing; I thought about visiting rivers around the world; I thought about how one day I might make a difference. I may have had "future generations" in mind, but I certainly wasn't thinking of a specific person. And then came Little Dipper, and my thoughts about the future of rivers suddenly had a very real beneficiary.

My body alerted me of her presence before she actually arrived. As we navigated around the country seeking rivers last year, there were several moments when it was impossible to ignore her. Like when I sat in the backseat of Joe's car on the way to the Chetco, feeling the tight turns and near nausea on the circuitous roads within the Kalmiopsis Wilderness (OR). Or when I stumbled with pure exhaustion from our raft to our camp every afternoon on the Owyhee River (ID). Then, more obviously, when I pulled on my drysuit one day to find it no longer fit around my growing belly.

Almost a year later, Little Dipper is four-months-old, and we sit together next to the Nolichucky River (TN). She makes small noises rooted in wonder as she sees another kid playing in the shallow pool, or a raft paddle up to the take-out. I now see the Nolichucky in a whole new way. I think about her throwing rocks in the water, and later riding in a raft between Adam and me. Perhaps she'll even kayak or stand-up paddle board the gorge when she is older.

Adam and Susan pause to take in the view of the North Fork Blackfoot River in Montana as they hike to the put-in.
Photo courtesy of the Wild River Life

But will she know this as a free-flowing, wild river? Or will she know it as a dam-controlled and regulated river? What can I do to help ensure this place stay wild and wonderful for her?

As we float our 50 Wild and Scenic rivers, I've learned that just paddling can make a difference. I visit rivers frequently, to say the least, and I talk to people about the watersheds that I visit. We may begin conversations with rivers I've already explored, but they almost always lead to discussions of rivers I believe should be paddled, rivers that should be talked about more, that should be emphatically celebrated. Otherwise, these places may soon be usurped by development or hydropower or our own insatiable consumption.

This is why we chose to visit "future" Wild and Scenic rivers as a part of our 50 rivers goal. We floated rivers on the Olympic Peninsula that local residents and businesses have identified for conservation. We stopped by the Madison and North Fork Blackfoot rivers in Montana, both of which are included in a citizen's proposal for more Wild and Scenic designations throughout the state. And just last week, we paddled Big Laurel Creek and the Nolichucky River in North Carolina and Tennessee, respectively, both of which have been identified as eligible for protection.

These are Little Dipper's generation of Wild and Scenic Rivers. Our role is to help get them there so that she, and all our kids, can live in a country in which we continually work to protect our outstanding natural resources. And perhaps, one day, I'll be able to show her down the Wild and Scenic Nolichucky River.

Opposite: The next generation of the wild river life.
Photo courtesy of the Wild River Life

CONQUERING THOSE TRICKY UPRIVER CURRENTS

BY DAN DEMAREE

Dan Demaree ferries back and forth just above the Dimple's Rapid boulder on the Lower Yough (PA). **Photo by Rich Hardin**

In the early 1970s, I worked as a safety kayaker and raft guide on the Lower Youghiogheny River in Ohiopyle, Pennsylvania. The Lower Yough, a beautiful seven-and-a-half-mile stretch of Class II-III whitewater, was the primary weekend destination for whitewater boaters in the mid-Atlantic area back then, with reliable daily water releases.

On our days off, those of us who hungered for larger challenges drove across the Pennsylvania/Maryland state line to run the Upper Yough or into West Virginia to paddle the Big Sandy or the Cheat. Prior to 1971, only about 40 people had paddled the Upper Yough and only a few of the rapids such as Gap Falls, National Falls, and Heinzerling Falls actually had names. The Upper Yough is a nearly 10-mile stretch of fantastic whitewater with boulder-strewn drops and ledges. The river has an average gradient of 52 feet per mile and a maximum gradient of 140 feet per mile. Lots of Class IV-V fun for those who can handle it!

In the spring of 1972, I got a call from Paul Davidson, who asked me to take him down the Upper Yough so that he could stop and diagram the rapids for his new guidebook. As I recall, I would run each rapid first in my 13-foot fiberglass Prijon kayak and then wait for Paul to eddy out in his C-1. I would describe each rapid before we went down and then serve as safety boater for Paul, since this was his first trip. Believe it or not, we did not see anyone else at all on the river that day, a far cry from the large crowds of kayaks and rafts that you see there now. Later that year, the first edition of the guidebook, *Wildwater West Virginia,* by Bob Burrell and Paul Davidson, came out with a statement to the effect that anyone wanting to run the Upper Yough should call the Demaree brothers—either Dave or Dan—so we began getting frequent calls to guide people down.

And though John Sweet from Penn State Outing Club had named several of the rapids, the names we had given seemed to stick more, because people saw them in the guidebook. For example, John called the first major rapid "Long Rapid" and I called it "Bastard Falls." John called another rapid "Bickham's Tree Rapid" and my brother Dave and I called it "Meatcleaver." However, the biggest effect of this book was that the number of people who wanted to paddle the river exploded; we started receiving calls weekly to guide people on the Upper Yough. We gladly did this for the love of paddling, not money, although I did accept a few free meals or beers back then.

As I think back on those many great trips down the river, the main thing I remember are the interesting people with whom I met and paddled. I remember when a fellow guide named Bobby Alexander and I took Eric Evans (nine-time national slalom champion) and a bunch of racers from the Ledyard Canoe Club down the upper at around 2.5 feet (a medium-high flow). Eric was a strong big water boater, so he had no issues, but it was funny to see

some of the other slalom racers nervously back paddling in eddies upstream in their 25-pound fiberglass slalom kayaks. Some of them were more than a little anxious about what was waiting for them downstream!

However, when I think about all of the people that I paddled the Upper with during the 1970s, one of the most unforgettable characters was a guy named Laslo Berty. Laslo was a short, muscular kayaker of Hungarian descent, who paddled out of the Philadelphia Canoe Club. He was a brash kayaker who constantly talked about his exploratory trips on virgin whitewater rivers in South America. And to his credit, Laslo was the first person to successfully explore some of those rivers.

Several boaters had warned me about Laslo, because he had a history of alienating people that he paddled with. For example, he took Greg Green on an exploratory trip to Peru that was scheduled to last several weeks. But when he bombed down the first big water run without waiting in the eddies, Greg was understandably upset. After an intense argument in the car, Greg took an early flight back to the USA.

After hearing these types of stories from other paddlers, I was a little cautious when Laslo showed up one day, asking us to take him down the Upper Yough. He wanted to tag along, because he heard that there were one or two dangerous rapids (primarily "Lost & Found") where you could get badly pinned if you didn't run the correct route.

As I recall, Jim Snyder (who a few years later helped pioneer squirt kayaking) and I were planning to run both the Top Yough and Upper Yough on the same day. The Top Yough is a skinnier section of the river with a maximum gradient of 110 feet per mile. The Top Yough is located upstream of the Deep Creek Lake power plant, so it can only be run after a good rainfall, but Jimmy and I were raring to go, due to recent rains.

After checking with the other guides (most of whom were scheduled to work the Lower Yough that day), Jimmy and I set out in my car with Laslo and his friend not far behind. We parked the take-out car in Friendsville and then drove to one of the alternate put-ins we used back then, the kind where you had to hike in through dense vegetation along a small brook to reach the river.

In spite of the rumors about Laslo's huge ego, I have to admit that we actually got along fairly well. He was clearly enthusiastic about the untamed whitewater rivers in South America and he piqued my curiosity about running some rivers in Peru (something I didn't do until 2005).

When we got to the put-in, I remembered that this particular section of the river was wide and featured extremely slow moving water, compared to where the river narrowed in the gorge, farther downstream. As Jimmy and I got into our boats, Laslo's friend (who was quite nervous) said, "Hey Dan. Which way is downstream?"

"Hah!" This set off my practical joke instincts, so I replied, "Just follow us on down this way," but I pointed my boat "*upriver*," NOT "*downriver*."

Jimmy looked at me briefly like, "what the heck are you doing?" but I gave him a quick wink and said, "Go along with me."

So as Laslo and his friend got into their kayaks, Jimmy and I slowly paddled upriver, while pretending that we were going downriver. I thought that they would notice immediately; however, they were so caught up in getting ready for the first big rapid that they didn't notice.

Dan Demaree running Swallowtail Falls on the Top Yough (MD) in a 13 foot Augsburg Prijon fiberglass kayak (not visible).
Photographer unknown

The cover of the original Wildwater West Virginia guide-book *by Bob Burrell and Paul Davidson. This book was HUGE in popularizing runs like the Gauley River (WV) and the Upper Yough (MD).*

At first, the current was so slow, that it was quite easy to act like we were going downriver, with Laslo and his buddy right behind us. Jimmy and I were telling them that the drops were somewhat smaller than those on the Upper Yough, but that the rapids were more continuous once we got into the main action.

I yelled, "Yeah, make sure you warm up good in this flat stuff, because there won't be any let-up once the rapids start," chuckling to myself as I "drifted" upriver.

After a minute or so, I started to notice the small eddies on the sides of the rocks going the wrong way and even saw a few small sticks floating at us, not with us. Right after that, Laslo asked, "Are you sure we are going downriver? This seems like we are going upriver to me."

And Jimmy and I echoed, "No way! We've done this section a few times before. We know where we are going!" All of the while, we were trying to hold back a good laugh.

The current was beginning to pick up even more, so it was getting more difficult to act like we were floating downriver. We had to take longer strokes, but act casual about it at the same time.

We continued to say, "Just follow us downriver. The first big rapid is right around the corner."

But just about then, Laslo's river running instincts kicked in. He yelled, "Dammit Demaree! What are you doing? Do you guys know where the hell you are going? Look at the grass on the side of the river. It is all pointing the wrong way!" Then he proceeded to chew us out for our prank with a string of profanity.

At that point, Jimmy and I cracked up laughing and spun our kayaks around to face the fury of Laslo and his buddy. Laslo was fuming mad at me, but his friend broke into a sheepish grin.

I don't recall anything else about that trip, other than we had a fantastic run with no swims. As was our custom back then, we all went out to Glisan's Restaurant for dinner afterward. I recently heard that Laslo had passed away some time ago. Although he is now gone, I will always remember his over-the-top personality and the day we conquered those tricky upriver currents on the Top Yough.

About the Author:

The author in 2018.

Dan Demaree was an active kayaker and raft guide on the Lower Yough, Upper Yough, Cheat, New, and Gauley Rivers in the 1970s and early 80s. In 1973, he designed one of the first prototype short kayaks in the USA called the Backender Boat. In 1974, Dan worked with Chuck Tummonds of Ohio to design the Slipper slalom kayak, which was later manufactured and distributed by Phoenix Kayaks. In addition, Dan named six of the major rapids on the Upper Yough as shown on Chris Preperato's excellent website, History of the Upper Yough (www.historyoftheupperyough.com). These days, Dan runs DPR Group (www.dprgroup.com), a public relations and marketing agency headquartered in Frederick, MD. Now in his early 60s, Dan hopes to get in good enough shape to paddle the Upper Yough a few times this summer.

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WINTER'S RUN

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CHUCK McHENRY

Cat's Paw Rapid on the Saint Francis River (MO) in the setting sun

It is a Thursday in February, and I am running the trail along the St. Francis River (MO). I have delayed until the heat of the day. The temperature at 1 pm is 15 degrees F, and the wind chill is 10. Three days ago, the Saint was eight feet over its normal level. From then until now the temperature has not gotten above freezing and last night registered single digits. The river has dropped in this time, and is now 36 inches on the gauge. This is a beefy level, with Class III to IV rapids, but the main attraction is ice, five feet of river-dropping ice formations in the river and along the river banks.

I half expected a few kayakers to be out and about. The level is a good one, but I am solo on this day; undoubtedly they all think it too cold.

The sun is big and shining with that close-to-the-earth-in-winter brilliance, in a crystalline blue, cloudless sky. The wind blows irregularly, and when it does, it blows faint, wispy trails of ice crystals off the trees, making a shimmering curtain of mist in the sky. How often do these conditions occur? It must be rare, I think, as the last time this happened was years ago, with friends who no longer paddle.

As I run "Turtle Alley," that section between Turkey Creek Picnic Ground and Mud Creek Pool, where the trail follows only 10 to 20 yards from the river, there are bright flashes of light coming from the river: screaming photons, 186,000 miles per second, hurled from the sun, only to get trapped by the ice, jolted into quantum-pin turns, and sent streaming in every direction in prismatic chaos, some to finally find rest by crashing into the rods and cones in my eyes. Like tiny flashbulbs going off—blue, red, white—they speckle not only the bare trees all about me, but also the thicker branched canopy above, in an ever-changing light show that any rock band would kill to have on stage.

My thoughts wander. I've been running this trail for 30 years and little has changed. Unlike the graveled rivers, the Saint, trapped in its granite gorge, cannot change in any but the subtlest of ways. In 30 years I have seen the first door, at Three Doors rapid, gradually take preeminence over the other two. As huge boulders get moved in the floods, I have seen play holes and waves change, to be replaced by new ones in other places. But that is all. The mighty flood of '93, with all its foot-tons of force, with all its pounding mega-cfs, could only make a few, barely noticeable differences. What has been changed by man rarely lasts. Footbridges and bathrooms have come and gone with the floods, and even the Silver Mines Dam, a mighty structure in its day, is slowly melting back into the river with each passing flood.

For the first 15 years I was always alone on the trail—always amazed that no one else seemed interested. I would hide my boat and gear at the top, drive to the bottom, then run the three-mile trail back up, thus ensuring my shuttle. Then along came my wife, Di—I remember that first day when we ran together. I patronizingly told her I wouldn't leave her too far behind. By the first mile her license plate was disappearing in the turns ahead of me. I didn't know she

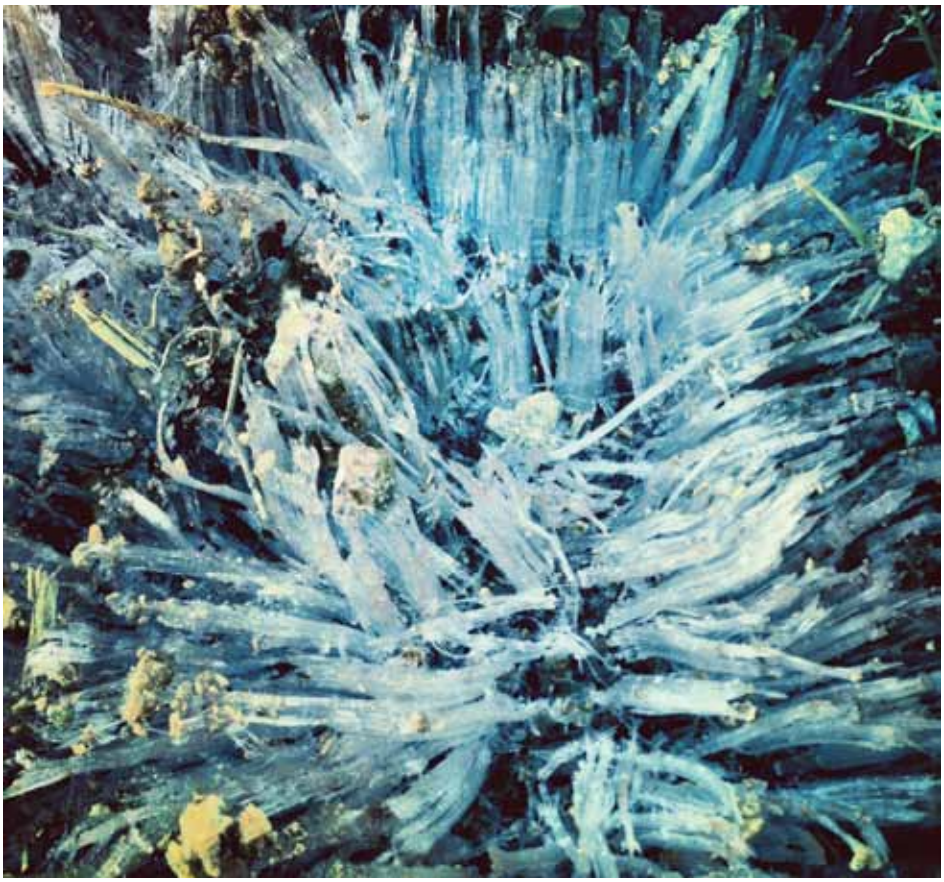
Opposite: Double Drop Rapid at Ice Noon

was an adventure racer and a marathoner! Live and learn….

Don't know how, but in time I was able to keep up with her, and I had three to four good years of running the trail with her, watching everything change throughout the seasons, all within the unifying context of the river. In the spring we would run on beautiful carpets of red bud blossoms, flanked by Sweet William, phlox, goat's beard, violets, bluets…each adding their perfume to the air. Running the trail in full moonlight, we witnessed the dogwoods, in full bloom, doing their mysterious weaving dances through the woods. And we would kayak down a river of silver moonbeams, watching new universes form in the moonlit spray of rapids. We ran amid beautiful fall colors, picking careful footsteps in the leaves so as not to twist an ankle. We ran on her birthday, Dec. 24th, in a foot of freshly fallen snow, and were almost disappointed to reach millstream and have to get into our boats. But then, being on the river with all the rocks covered in snow was not so bad, either.

The warm days of spring and summer are certainly the best of all. It's always a laugh to run Turtle Alley and holler 'oooga-boooga,' scaring hundreds of frantically plopping turtles into the water. Spring is coolness under the green canopy…an occasional deer…chasing turkeys up the path until they have no other choice but to lift their ponderous bodies into the air and fly. There are ever-present terrapins and lizards, and startled ducks flapping their wings in that rapid-fire, strange looking, alternating up-and-down "V" that they make in flight. The snakes awake! The hog-nosed snake—what a faker, so menacing as he rears up and flattens his head like a cobra, vibrating his tail in the leaves like a rattler, then when all else fails, wriggling in death throes, being the ultimate ham, putting poor Hamlet to shame. It is rare, but a viper could cross the path, something to keep the adrenaline up! But most of all, there are the green snakes, fresh from shedding their skins—so intensely green and glowing they're almost luminescent, and so gentle and docile. In April, waves of tiny toads, fresh from their tadpole ponds, are everywhere, so thick it takes great effort not to step on them. And then the crows, in flocks, cawing in crow cacophony, feasting…and then it's done. They are gone. Fecundity, the overpowering by the masses, sends a million tiny frogs to the river, and some lucky few make it all the way, they must, because every year it starts anew!

RIVER VOICES



Ice flowers

Once, in early spring, water still cold, I saw a red fox crossing the river at near the Millstream put-in. She was swimming so well I thought her a muskrat. She climbed up the bank, shook out the water, looked at me, and stopped dead still on the trail. Our eyes locked for moments then she gave me a, "Haven't you ever seen a fox before?" look, and off she went. Deer cross the river, even in flood, and I am amazed that with their hoofs they can swim at all, but they do quite well. Once, on one of those rare March days, when the sun came out bright and shining and warming the air like summer, I passed a beaver getting a tan on the bank, lolling on its back and completely unconcerned with a kayaker drifting by.

Summer comes and the trail overgrows, and after June, the days when the river is up are rare. These are the days for being alone on the river. For sliding and bumping down the river and fishing the pools. I remember Di giving a yell, and watching her kayak sailing across the pool below double drop, fishing line taut, pulled by a grandfather small mouth. I was wondering what she was going to do if she flipped, hold on to the pole, or to the paddle?

Fall—the crisp air, and the smell of fallen leaves. Turtles digging under the earth to hide. Food everywhere! Wild grape, cat briar tips, persimmons, Chantrelle mushrooms, Maypops, pawpaws, hickory and hazel nuts, all laid out for the discerning gourmet. The wind blows with the promise of winter sleep.

Then Di broke her ankle in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, and I now run the trail, as before, alone, and I miss her running with me, but I smile at the constant flow of memories. Sometimes I become so lost in thought that I don't even remember running up the heartbreak hills and am surprised to suddenly find I'm on the millstream trail, running on the bluffs, looking down at the river below with only a half mile to go, and checking the rapids for debris. I almost always stand at Pine Bluff, a 100-foot cliff, and look up and down river, and marvel at how truly beautiful it all is, and how lucky I am to be here now. This must surely be the best life I've lived so far….

Along Turtle Alley there is a thicket of Yellow Ironweed. In the late fall I make it a point to harvest the stalks, cutting them three to six inches above the ground. Some I cut in various diagonals. Some I frazzle. Some I cut star patterns across their cross-sections or other designs. I'm rewarded for these efforts in the winter with a bank full of delicately beautiful ice flowers, paper thin petals formed by the capillary action of water rising up the stalks then freezing and expanding and extending outward. I've seen pictures of ice flowers in magazines, and while they are pretty, with completely random and unpredictable shapes, they are tame. My ice flowers, too finely delicate to even touch, are the madly whorled, abstract, non-Euclidean visions of a mad Jack Frost with a paint brush!

By a presumed similar action, there are places on the trail where the clay itself rises up in brown crystalline stalks, shaped like dense staghorn mushrooms. Close inspection reveals a labyrinth of structure—ugly and beautiful in its uniqueness. They crunch when I run upon them.

On this particular February day the trail is treacherous. I fall twice—full-on, feet-out-from-under-me falls. For those who criticize the safety of running the river alone, how odd to think the trail is far more dangerous! Slick ice is everywhere. Sometimes it is covered by windblown leaves. Sometimes there is deep spring water under it, and breaking through and getting my shoes wet is not a savory prospect.

Deerfield Festival Weekend

Come home to the Deerfield River to celebrate 20+ years of whitewater boating with friends. Show your support for American Whitewater's efforts to protect, restore, and enjoy our treasured rivers for the next 40 years.

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RIVER VOICES

Ice shelves make for a narrow passage, Saint Francis River (MO)

There is an inch of newly fallen snow. Does it mute out all the normal noises? It seems so strangely quiet. No birds, no animal noises…where is everybody? Safe in dens and nests, I presume, on a day this cold. Even though there's a myriad of tracks crossing the trail—mice, rabbits, turkeys, deer—I see no creatures save the solitary eagle in the sky above. So very quiet… except when the wind gusts and trees awaken with complaining creaks, others answering, fading away as the wind moves upriver. Occasionally there is a dripping, where even at 20 degrees the sun is able to warm rock enough to melt ice. So very quiet…except for the Saint. She seems to be roaring angrily at me. Did I miscalculate her level? Did an ice dam break? I stop to check familiar landmarks and assure myself that it is no higher than three feet.

I pinned on the Saint at the three foot level, at Cat's Paw, in the middle of the night, solo, under the full moon. A vertical pin, bow up, on a rock called "shark's fin," and all my efforts to free myself only succeeded in sinking me gradually deeper, until the water was up to my chin. The thought that this was the end crossed my mind, but then, miraculously, she let me go, my boat peeling off to the right and down the chute. As I gathered my gear and boat in the pool below I gave thanks to her, and promised to take care of her for the rest of my life, which I have done—helping to stop polluters, and a dam, and combing her riparian hair of trash every year. In return I feel that she will never take me, at any level, under any circumstances.

I reach Millstream and my boat, stashed in the woods, and change into my boating gear. The river is everything I thought it'd be. Ice is everywhere and the bright sun illuminates it into diamond candelabras. All of the rocks look like ice mushrooms. They have bald-ice domes and then stretch outwards over the water into skirts. Five-foot-long icicles, all in a row, hanging from brush and branches, form curtains of varying thickness, marking the cold of night and the relative warmth of day. Some of the curtains strangely bend in 90-degree arcs, crystalline rainbows starting out horizontal to the river, then gradually curving gracefully downwards to verticality. It dawns on me—as the river drops, ice forms on branches, and as the branches grow heavier, the branches begin sagging downward, until finally the branch itself is pointing downwards, leaving the first part of the icicle formation now pointing horizontally.

I resist the urge to go crashing into the ice, to send it flying all about, thinking instead that perhaps it will last the weekend and others will get to see it. I have memories of a good friend doing that very thing on a similar winter's day years ago. Full speed into an ice curtain and the crystals went everywhere like shrapnel and we were

Ice bells

all laughing and marveling at the beauty. The water itself is speckled bright with countless floating ice bells and prisms.

It is hard to play on the river in 15-degree weather. Nevertheless, I have to surf on the beautifully formed waves at Entrance Rapid, Cat's Paw, and Double Drop. My pogied hands can't stand the water for long, and I have to stick fingers in my mouth to warm them up again. Rickety-rack Rapid is an ice palace. The river's splashing and boiling has created a miasma of fantastic ice sculptures. I take pictures, but taking a picture is a study of doing things quickly and efficiently before wet fingers become unsuitably numb. The wind starts blowing upriver and I feel my hair starting to freeze to the inside of my helmet. At Mud Creek pool, high in the tree at the cliffs, is "Wally," a magnificent, American Bald Eagle, who I see so often I have named him. Wally always cocks his head and watches me as I drift just below him. I like to think we have seen each other so many times that he knows me. The sun gets lower and disappears, and I know that the dam and Silver Mines areas will be deep in cold shadow, that there will be an instant 10-degree drop in temperature—a gentle urging to stop gawking and get on down the river.

There are huge sheets of ice cascading down the cliffs on river right at Silver Mines. A great heron wades in the pool near Little Drop and flies off, scolding me for interrupting his fishing. Fat Man's Squeeze is closed off by ice and I have to make an impromptu turn to river left. If I hit the ice shelf…would it break, or would I have to roll under it? The low water bridge at the take-out is a mass of ice, no concrete visible anywhere.

Taking out is difficult. My boat cannot get a purchase on the ice-covered river bank. My zippers are frozen, making keys difficult to obtain, especially when hands are frozen after mere seconds. My helmet is frozen to my hair, and knots are impossibly ice-welded. Nevertheless, I unzip a few notches, back off, try again, back off, and finally I free enough space in my drysuit that I can get the key and I am done. I jump into the van with heater at full blast so I can defrost out of my gear.

It's been a run on a winter's day—nothing more, nothing less.

LOVE AND WHITEWATER

THE LEGENDARY CHATTOOGA: A WILDWATER WEDDING

BY JULIET MATTHEWS

Just Married - Troy and Juliet Matthews. **Photo by Peter Birdsong**

Deep in the foothills of the southern Appalachian Mountains runs a beautiful and wild river called the Chattooga. Known as a premier Southeastern paddling destination and home to many ancient Cherokee Indian legends and myths, the only way to see the entire beauty of this river is to paddle down her free-flowing whitewater path. The Chattooga serves as a natural border between the states of Georgia and South Carolina and is one of just a few rivers that have been federally protected as Wild and Scenic rivers since 1974. You won't find houses, stores, or any development along the banks of this river, but those who dare to venture down her whitewater rapids will find nature in its purest form and an extreme adventure that will test the skills of even the most elite whitewater boaters. With her crystal clear water and animal and plant life almost untouched by mankind, paddling down the Chattooga River is like taking a step back to a time when rivers ran free and concrete wasn't even a word.

When my husband, Troy, proposed to me, it was only natural that we would have a whitewater kayaking destination wedding. My whitewater kayaking adventures and slalom racing throughout the Southeastern United States was the reason we met and kayaking was a big part of our lives. It didn't take us long to decide that the Chattooga River was our number one choice for getting hitched. We had previously kayaked and camped on sections III and IV of the Chattooga River, navigating the challenging Class IV whitewater rapids, and couldn't imagine a more breathtaking or memorable place to say our vows. Our whitewater wedding celebration wouldn't stop at the bank, though; it would include Troy and I being married by Olympic athlete Wayne Dickert and then kayaking down the most difficult and secluded part of the river, known as Section IV.

We decided to get married a month after our engagement on an unseasonably warm day in December. Joining us would be our family and friends plus 30 other unexpected kayakers who heard there was a river wedding and joined to help us celebrate. It took us the entire time from engagement to the wedding date to get a minister, plan a reception, prepare the gear, and gather the boats and raft necessary to get everyone down the river. Then, on December 13th, we joined hands on the sandy beach of the Chattooga River and said, "I do." Because we planned to immediately launch our boats onto the river after saying our vows, the entire wedding party wore waterproof Goretex dry-gear. Immediately after becoming husband and wife, we put on our helmets, grabbed our paddles, and launched onto the cold water.

As we paddled away from the bank, I gave a big wave to our friends and family who wouldn't be joining us on the river, including

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LOVE AND WHITEWATER

The Bride and Groom Saying I Do with Wayne Dickert.
Photo by Peter Birdsong

my 92-year-old Grandmother from Japan, who hiked into the gorge to see us marry. I also checked my kayak and gear once more and said a little safety prayer before passing under the road, the last sign of civilization we would see before we reached the take-out. My heart rate accelerated as I knew we were about to enter a section of the river that drops around 100 feet per mile. It was no secret that this section of the river required advanced paddling skills and could be physically demanding. It was also no secret that it had taken many lives in the past. Cell phone service would be non-existent and the river would demand we all be on top of our paddling game.

My husband, along with my former law partner and a few of our very close friends, paddled our whitewater kayaks while the remainder of our wedding party and

The Groom Entering Soc Em Dog Rapid on Section IV of the Chattooga.
Photo by Peter Birdsong

friends chose to raft. Our friend Matthew guided the raft, since he had plenty of experience moonlighting as a guide during the warmer months. It wasn't long before the sight of the Highway 76 bridge was a distant memory and the pace of the water began to pick up. The sound of cars and artificial noise was replaced by the sounds of nature and the uniquely loud roar made by water paving its way over and through rocks. Within the first mile of the trip, we found ourselves surrounded by a plethora of rhododendron and a canopy of tall pine and hemlock trees. The smell of car fumes disappeared and the scent of fresh air, pine, and clean water filled our lungs. Huge boulders were scattered along the banks and throughout the river, requiring careful scouting and navigation.

The first two miles took us through a handful of exhilarating Class II-III rapids like Rock Jumble, Screaming Left Turn, Surfer's Rapid and Woodall Shoals. It was a good warm-up for the 20-plus rapids to come. Around mile 2.3 we reached a Class IV rapid called Seven-foot Falls and the sound of water channelizing through boulders got really loud. We couldn't see what lay at the bottom of the drop, so we got out of our boats and walked the rocky bank to scout the rapid and plan our lines. Navigating this waterfall would require setting and holding one's boat at a right angle while using a rock as a launch pad to clear a nasty hydraulic at the base. A mistake could mean getting stuck in the hole or hitting the rock wall below to the left of the waterfall.

Before approaching the drop, I set my angle, took several carefully planted forward strokes, aimed for the rock to the right of the waterfall, and cleared the hole. The stern of my boat plunged deep into the water and then up sprang my boat. Excited to have cleared the bottom hole, I relaxed a bit, but not for long, as I was quickly approaching the tall granite rock wall to my left. I took a couple of correction strokes, which kept me from hitting the wall. Our friends cheered with joy and the smile my husband gave me filled my soul with warmth. It was a smile he would wear all day. With the exception of my former law partner, who flipped at the bottom and came out of his boat, we all had clean lines off the waterfall.

For roughly the next two miles the river took us through nine more Class II-III rapids, but not without us stopping to check out a gorgeous, towering 50-foot waterfall which

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LOVE AND WHITEWATER

The Bride's entry.
Photo by Peter Birdsong

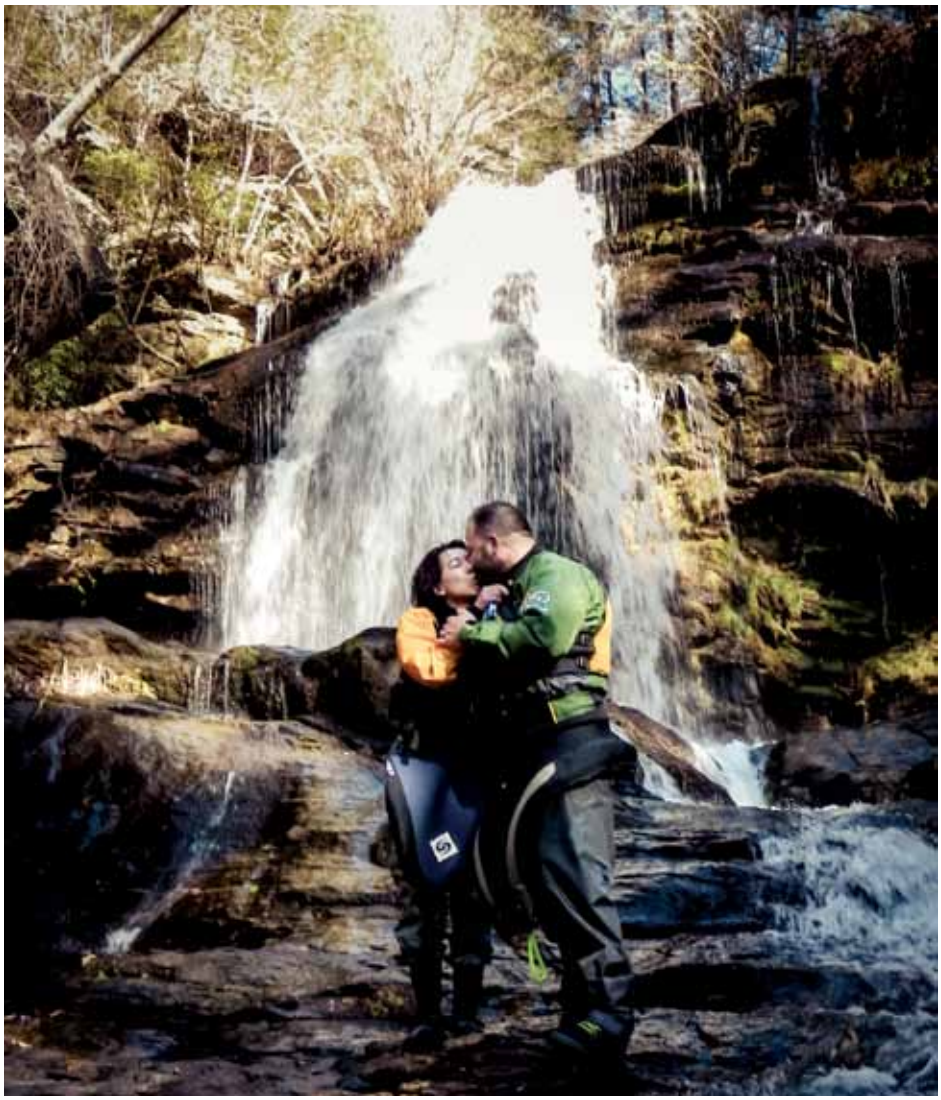
flowed out of the side of the mountain called Long Creek Falls. It was around this time that almost everyone in our wedding party was getting hungry and thirsty. As I pulled out my bottle of water and Power Bar, I discovered that very few people in our group had food or water. When I cracked open one of the three snacks I had brought, I received a look from two guests that suggested I might be bonked over the head if I didn't share, and thus a bag of trail mix, a Power Bar, Rice Krispy treat, and 20 ounces of water got passed around for everyone to have a little bite to eat and a drink.

Once everyone had stretched their legs, we got back into our boats and launched onto the next part of Section IV, which would be the most demanding and dangerous section of the trip. At mile four, we reached a rapid called Ravens Chute, which contained undercut rocks where the current flowed underneath but not out of them. There were also potholes, man-sized tunnels or holes carved into rocks from years of water and sand drilling into the rocks. Some of the potholes on the Chattooga are so large that a human being has been known to flush into, through, and straight out of one, resurfacing far downstream. My previous route down Raven's Chute was mistakenly through the middle of the rapid, where I flipped, received a hard bashing from the rocks, and had my paddle ripped out of my hands. On this day I, along with others on the trip, chose to take the cleaner path to the left over a large curler of water and into a narrow flume-like chute that shot my boat out of it like a speeding bullet. The rush of navigating a smooth, clean, fast line was exhilarating.

The river slowed to a slightly gentler pace for a short moment before taking us through the next mile of technical Class III rapids. Before we knew it, we had reached Entrance, the first waterfall of five that were back-to-back in the Five Falls section. A mistake here could decrease the chances of everyone making it to the take-out at the lake healthy and happy. However, the joy of a clean, smooth ride through the wild rapids most definitely falls within one of the most challenging, exciting, and unforgettable whitewater experiences of my life.

As the granite rock cliff walls got taller and the river narrowed down, we prepared to enter Entrance Rapid. I stopped in an eddy, took a deep breath, sat up straight, and picked my path before peeling out into the main flow to enter the rapid. While everyone kayaking had good lines through Entrance, our family and friends in the raft did not. After clearing the rapid, I stopped and looked back upstream in time to see things go askew. The raft smacked head on into the huge boulder to its left. Before I could gasp, the raft went completely vertical and out launched all its passengers, straight into the water like torpedoes. Everyone quickly swam to the raft and got in as fast as they could, then paddled to the bank. Once everyone regained their composure, we launched back onto the river to scout our next falls, Corkscrew, which is rated as a solid Class IV+. Around this time the sun had already begun to disappear behind the gorge wall and the temperature was starting to drop. We had

LOVE AND WHITEWATER



Bride and Groom and Long Creek Falls.
Photo by Peter Birdsong

about two hours and over two miles to go before getting to the take-out and then to our reception.

Corkscrew is a name that fits this rapid well, as it requires moving from river right to river left. The water, fast moving and turbulent, flows directly above a nasty hole that will toss a boat and body around like a small plastic ball in a washing machine if one gets stuck in it. Twenty yards downstream is the next fall called Crack in the Rock which gets its name for good reason. Here, the river channels down and flows through three very narrow slots called Left, Middle, and Right Crack, all of which are barely wide enough to allow a kayak to pass through them. With the river ever-changing, and the Left and Right Cracks filled with wood and other strainers, on this day the preferred route through Crack in the Rock was through the Middle Crack, which dropped quickly upon entry into yet another hole. Given the raft would not fit through any of the Cracks, the crew was forced to carry it over tall boulders and put back on the river below. I also made the decision to walk this rapid, partly because I knew many others had not made it through and because I didn't feel confident I could navigate it without error.

With only two more falls in the Five Falls section left to go, we rounded the corner and saw one huge, elongated tongue of a wave, which dropped through the gorge, took a hard left turn and narrowly skirted a sticky hole. This was a rapid called Jawbone. First, we would have to clear an undercut rock called Decap and then Hydroelectric Rock, a 4.5-foot tall, three-foot wide and three-foot long hole in a rock, just barely large enough to fit a boat through but definitely not a boat and a person. As I entered this rapid, everything seemed to move in slow motion and I was overjoyed with amazement at how the river and hundreds of years of moving water could carve a path through the house-sized boulders that we navigated. I felt eternally grateful that life had given me the chance to travel down this path. It was at this moment that I felt we all were doing a melodious dance with the river. Jawbone gave us one amazingly incredible, clean ride.

By now, it was becoming apparent that we only had about an hour before the sun would set and the temperature was definitely getting colder. Thirst and hunger were starting to set in and thoughts of hot showers and wedding cake were increasing. Some of the other kayakers who paddled down the river in front of us had stopped on the rocks to the left of Soc-em-Dog and built a small fire to enjoy while watching other boaters launch off the rapid. This rapid would be the last fall of the Five Falls section, pushing water extremely fast to the right side of the river. It also has a turbulent entry, and a peculiar, triangular pointed rock at the lip right where the water forcefully drops eight feet into a chunky hole that can crush a boat like a tin can. Several people have lost boats to this hole and it definitely was not the place to be upside down or swimming.

To clear the hole, it was important to set and hold an angle, which allowed one to

use that peculiar, triangular rock as a launch pad to jump and clear the turbulence of the hole that waits at the bottom. During my previous run of this rapid, I approached the launch pad at a bad angle and felt the stern of my boat hit a rock and quickly shift sideways. I barely touched the launch pad and the result was a hard crash sideways into the hole, which on that day, fortunately, spit me out. Ambitiously thinking we could still make it to our reception on time, I decided to keep on walking my boat right around the rapid while everyone else had clean lines off the Dog.

We had made it through the Five Falls section, and what an incredible ride it was. There were only two more rapids to go before the river met Lake Tugaloo and the flatwater paddle to our cars began. About this time, I totally relaxed and forgot that Shoulderbone Rapid, a Class IV drop with yet more undercut rocks and potholes, was waiting for me and demanded my attention. Thinking I was free and clear of any risk of capsizing or swimming out of my boat for the day, I entered Shoulderbone Rapid sideways with no speed and got churned in the munchie hole. Exhausted and dehydrated, I failed to roll, popped my spray-skirt, and swam. By now, my concern turned to actually getting off the river before the sun set, and I swiftly got to the bank, emptied my kayak of water, and got back in to hustle to the take-out.

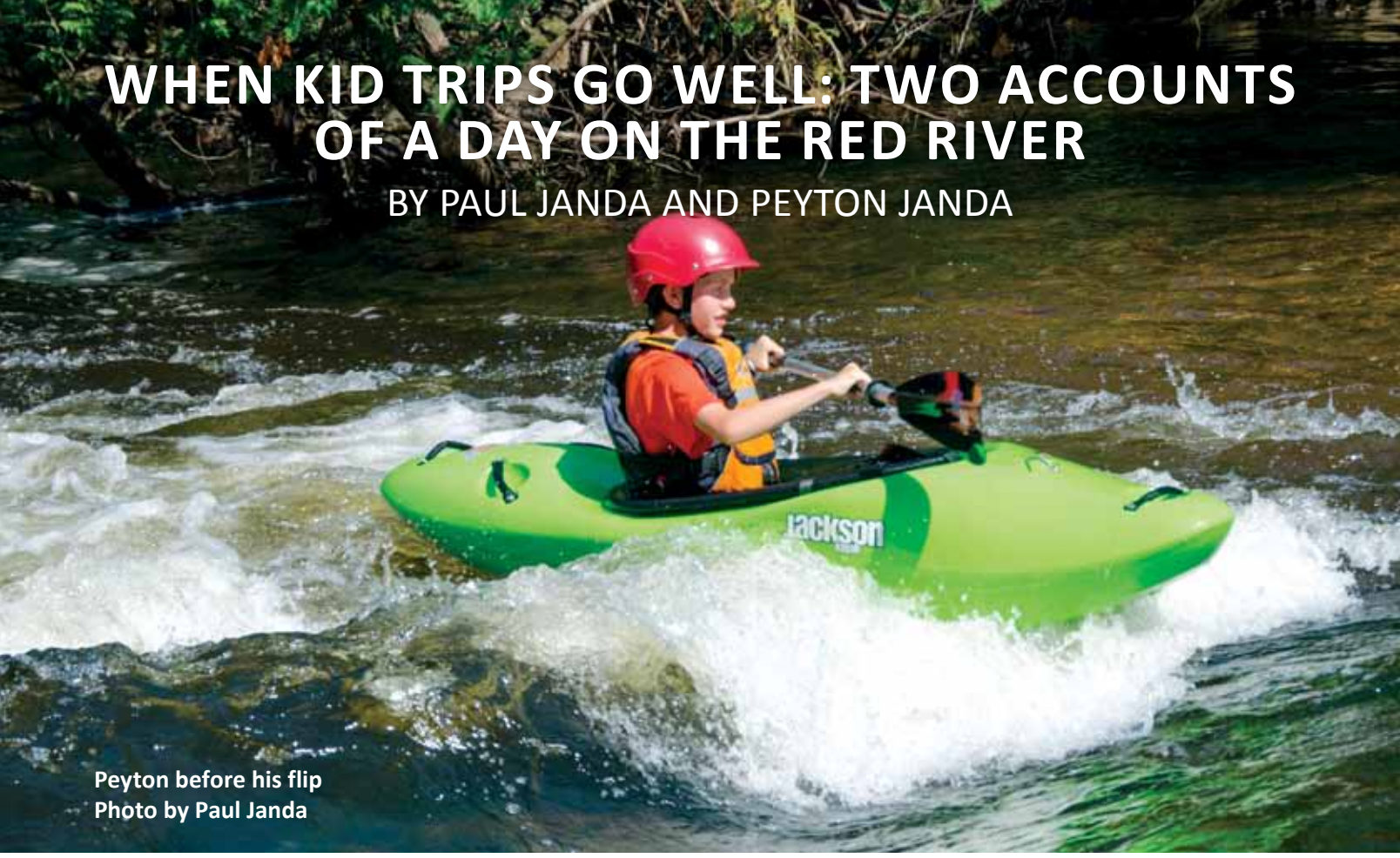
Once we passed through the last rapid, Quaalude, the river flowed into the lake and the two-mile flatwater paddle began. The sun had almost disappeared when my husband and I looked up and saw a bald eagle flying over us. The river had not only given us a glorious and safe ride, but we now got the gift of being greeted by this rare and beautiful bird. For the last mile we slowed down. Troy and I were the final two paddlers to make it off the river that day. At this point, we simply wanted to soak in as much of this moment as possible. After all, it was the love of exploring rivers and creeks that brought us together.

At six o'clock we rounded a corner of the lake and saw the concrete ramp leading up to our vehicles. It took less than a minute for almost everyone to pile into the vehicles and turn the heat on full blast. While some of the guys were scavenging the cars for any sign of food, water, or adult beverage, Troy, Matthew and I threw the boats on top of the vehicles, tied them off, and crammed all of the gear and paddles inside. We wouldn't have phone signal for at least another 30 minutes, making it impossible to call and let the rest of our family and guests know that we were going to be late for our reception. Still, neither our lateness, the cold, nor our hunger took away the smiles and joy we felt as newlyweds having shared the day's adventure down this legendary river.

Our reception was held at a family-owned lodge about 40 minutes from the take-out. We arrived at the lodge close to seven o'clock. I took what felt like the hottest, most wonderful shower ever, slipped into my wedding dress, and quickly fixed my hair and makeup. At eight o'clock Troy and I joined hands and finally made it to the reception to greet the remainder of our family and friends for the celebration. That night, we shared stories from our daytime adventures and were showered with wonderful memories and experiences each of our guests had shared with us. While we didn't do any dancing at our reception I couldn't help but to feel that all day the river was playing us a song which let us dance down her beautiful path. It was, for sure, this whitewater kayaker's dream wedding come true.

WHEN KID TRIPS GO WELL: TWO ACCOUNTS OF A DAY ON THE RED RIVER

BY PAUL JANDA AND PEYTON JANDA



Peyton before his flip
Photo by Paul Janda

This is a story about a fun day on the river that our 10-year-old son chose to write about all by himself for a school assignment. Jokes, exaggerations, and tall stories are a regular part of the fun in our family outdoor adventures. We hope you enjoy his rendition (including spelling and grammar errors) of a family outing on the Red River, in North Central Wisconsin.

Before you read Peyton's version, I (Paul, his dad) will give an adult-friendly account of the day he wrote about. The Class II section we paddled is extraordinarily pristine and relatively undeveloped. The combination of low flows, mild rapids, and creek-like ambience make it a perfect little river for beginners. On the day of Peyton's adventure, we had a group of five adults and seven kids, ages seven through 13. The weather was perfect, the river was calling to us, and the kids knew that we were going to have fun.

All of the adults are longtime friends and paddling enthusiasts, with a strong bias towards whitewater. Naturally, we want our kids to play and paddle together. I have been organizing family oriented canoe camping outings since our oldest child has been a baby. In recent years, we've been very fortunate to expand into whitewater outings. Of course, the whitewater outings are made much easier when our friends include paddling royalty like Thomas O'Keefe (AW Stewardship Director) and AW Board Member, Megi Morishita, plus several expert paddlers from the Midwest.

It takes lots of planning and energy to make these trips happen. Just ask any teacher about a simple field trip to the local museum! But the payoff is 110% worth the effort.

We started the day with our usual put-in excitement. The kids jumped out of the cars before we were even parked. They immediately showed their internal conflicts over wanting to play in the river versus expectations to help unload gear. The unloading and gearing up was an immersive, joyful experience of using excitement to involve the kids with getting ready to hit the river. I can direct the children's enthusiasm if we have enough time and are well prepared for their age-appropriate needs. The key is to use their anticipation of a good day as the fuel for powering my personal Zen patience.

We brought two canoes for contingencies with the youngest kids. Taka paddled a ducky. Our youngest daughter, seven-year-old Lindsey, rode in the canoe. These were her first Class II rapids in anything other than a raft. She loved it. The other kids paddled kayaks. The two oldest boys, 13 years old, were skilled enough to (mostly) take care of themselves.

We launched. After the usual reminders of safety and river paddling order, we got to the first Class II. It is a small, simple drop with a tongue in the middle and a ledge on the left. On the right is a very nice flat rock, easy to carry back upstream over. The kids did many laps, compliments of their schlepping river guide (me). Lindsey couldn't get enough turns in the canoe and ducky.

Onwards to a long, glassy, shallow tongue, which culminates in a small surfing wave.

KIDS AND WHITEWATER

Again, easy access. The older boys had their epic bow surfs and tried their hands at paddle batons and back surfing. The younger kids and adults did several laps of simply swimming and sliding down the tongue.

Next up were two small ledges, known as Double Drop. This was the scene of Peyton's only swim of the day. It made quite an impression on him, but was not destructive to his confidence. Peyton was bolstered by observing other kids having the same problem with the same surfing wave.

Just downstream, Monastery Rapid (a.k.a. Novitiate Falls) is a narrow Class III with a sticky hole at the top and a nice four-foot drop at the bottom. We spent a lot of time there. After portaging the canoes, we watched the locals purposely get thrashed in the hole with their blow-up swimming pool toys. Ugh. Thankfully, their experience ended with fun, and not injury.

Peyton runs while Charlie empties his boat
Photo by Thomas O'Keefe

After the locals cleared out, the adults in our group did a couple of laps, thereby demonstrating to the kids what was possible. Each kid did at least four laps on the bottom pitch. It was a great learning experience and they couldn't get enough of it. Their trip schlepper helped a lot, but with a few well placed comments, they were willing do some of the work of getting their own boats back to the launch spot.

The last notable rapid is a beautiful place known as Ziemers Falls. Ziemers is, rightfully, a popular spot. It has an awesome rope swing above the rapid. The middle of the rapid includes a huge pool for swimming and with easy access to a set of Precambrian rock ledges. The entire rapid is a curvy Class II with a Class II+/III- run-out. Instruction time for the kids! The theme was scouting and eddy hopping through a complex rapid. The kids did great and we had quite an audience of locals. I love making friends at places like that!

Our paddling time came to an end with a steep climb to the cars, then snacks all around. We had a truly wonderful day. The last testament to our day was the relative silence of the car ride.

Peyton's perspective on the following page is the product of a school writing project. We were surprised when his teacher showed us what he'd written. Peyton came up with all of that all by himself. Another sign of a memorable day.

Paul and Lindsey Janda—canoe fun*!*
By Dana King

KAYAK FLIP

BY PEYTON JANDA

Peyton right before his flip.
Photo by Paul Janda

IT STARTED LAST summer, 2017, I was 10 years old.

I was on the Red River in Wisconsin, I was in a edie with my Dad who has glasses on his face.

We were close to the center of the rapids, and I was slowly drifting out of the edie!

I was off to the side of the river in between the bank of the river and a line of rocks.

I started to paddle upriver aggressively to get back to my Dad and the edie. I noticed that I could not get back to him so I stopped trying to get back to him. I for once in that moment started paddling calmly. But then it got thinner in that spot and really fast. I felt really nervous cause it was getting speedy, fast.

It started pulling me into a gap in the line of rocks. There were five rocks, forming a little dip in the line.

- WEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE.- I holard cheerfully, as I kayaked down the current. But when I saw the gap I was like -AHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!- I was horrified at the site of it. Then I got pulled into it. I was sort of nervous because, I did not know what to do. This guy that is smaller than my dad named Tom helped me out of it.

-Do you have a plan?- Tom asked

-YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEESSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

Charlie and Lindsey run Lower Monastary.
By Paul Janda

Mr. Butt Pincher.

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS! -I screamed at the top of my lungs.

-WWWWWHAAAAAAAAAATTTTT ISSIIIIIIIIIIIII IT!!- yelled Tom.

-TO GO STRAIT ACROSS THE RIVERRRRRRRRRRRRR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!-I screamed back.

After that, about one or two hours later we were at a smaller rapid.

Charlie, my brother who was 13, six foot tall, on the dot, told me -I'll give you five dollars if you surf that- -ok- I answered. After I finished the rapid I started to surf the rapid.

Then it happened, I started to lean to the left. I was so horrified I literally almost pood myself. Ok I actually peed myself. *My parents don't know that I peed*.

It was no fun at all when a crayfish pinched my butt. -OOOWWW!!!!- I hollered in pain.

His name is Mr. Butt Pincher.

In the end a guy named Steve who is taller than my dad but not as tall as Charlie came across the river to help me get back across the river. It smelled like fresh water and flowers and it slightly smelled like dead fish. -Ew I smell dead fish- I exclaimed. -Try to walk sideways- Steve told me. So I started to walk sideways watching out to not miss any rocks followed Steve across the river. -That was great- mentioned my dad as I climbed out of the river.

KING OF THE WOOORLD!!!!!!!!

THE END

A FATHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHING BOATING

BY AMBROSE TUSCANO

The author and his daughter on the Smith River (MT). Photo by Meg Seifert

Editor's Note: *In the September 2017 issue of this magazine I wrote about my journey from being a very active, committed kayaker to being a 95% retired kayaker. One of the big inspirations for me to retire was the birth of our two children. Here, I continue that story with a lot of ideas that revolve around children and whitewater, very deliberately seen through the lens of my experiences. If this article inspires any comment or reaction at all, please consider sending us your thoughts: editor@americanwhitewater.org.*

"Once upon a time, a soon-to-be father asked a friend, who had already been a parent for some years, for parenting advice. Mostly it was to allay his fears of the unknown.

'What should we do if it won't sleep,' he asked.

'Are diapers as bad as everyone says?'

'How can I get it to stop crying?'

'When can we start daycare?'

And finally, 'How did you figure all this stuff out?'

Of course the answers were neither simple, nor certain, because every child is unique in some ways, and all require attention and adaptation on their parents' part. But the experienced parent felt good about imparting his hard-earned wisdom to his friend. He, too, had consulted the oracles that are more experienced parents. Indeed, he was still consulting them—as many as he could—as his infant became a toddler, as his second child was born, and yet still as his eldest entered kindergarten. As far as he could understand, there was no reason to ever face the future of parenting without inside information from those who had already overcome those challenges.

And yet…one thing puzzled him. It gnawed at him as a doubt, an uncertainty he couldn't quite put his finger on. It was not a crucial thing—at least not to him and his family—but it did feel important, generally. When he was able to identify it, he realized that the puzzle was this: those who were expecting their first child were exceedingly curious, asking many questions, but almost immediately after the baby was born, the questions stopped.

The father wondered absently whether his early advice had been bad. Perhaps his various friends had turned to more reliable sources once his recommendations had failed them. Then again, maybe he had been too honest and scared them; maybe his friend just wanted to hear that everything would be alright, no matter what. It was also possible that parenting had proved so much more intuitive than his friends had expected that once they began doing it, instincts overrode the need for outside answers. Or maybe new

parents just got so overwhelmed by the new responsibilities that there was no time to ask more questions, no time for anything but the present.

Over time, the father came to believe something that incorporated pieces of all of these possibilities and yet was different still. Though no scientific evidence could be gathered to support his hypothesis, he came to suspect that, as much as anything, new parents want to believe that what they are doing is right for their children. And one difficult reality of seeking consultation is the possibility that the advice might contradict what the new parents thought or—worse yet—had already done.

Reflecting upon his hypothesis, the man took stock of the many kinds of discord and conflict among various people in his life that he had experienced, witnessed secondhand, or heard about. Betrayal of a best friend, vicious slander of a neighbor, co-workers brawling over status or attention—even adultery. None of them seemed to produce more acrimonious or long-lived disagreement than those between parents whose children had come into conflict. In fact, long after the children had forgiven or forgotten each other, the parents would begrudge and remember. This, the father thought, could explain the reluctance of new parents to open themselves up to feedback. The same powerful instinct that drives them to protect their child far beyond the point of reason.

THE END."

Soft footsteps entered the silent room. The mother quietly, but matter-of-factly said, "Come on. The kids have been asleep since 'diapers,' and there's a sink full of dishes that need to be washed."

A Child's Perspective

I was introduced to whitewater at what many would consider to be a young age. In the Perception-Dancer-fits-all era of kayak production, I was still too small to reach the foot braces. Not many years later, I was too large for an RPM or most other early playboats. But in between, as my body grew rapidly, my brain was forming a very distinct association with whitewater rivers: fear. Just thinking about an impending weekend trip to the river would make me seize up; actually going was the worst thing I had encountered in my young life.

I hated it.

At age 11, I submitted a short article about kayaking to this very magazine. As I read it again today, I am struck by what it does and doesn't say about this time in my life. (If you're an American Whitewater member, you can go into the archives on our website (Library→AW Journal), do a "Journal Search" with my name as Author, and select the earliest entry from the May/June 1990 issue, where you can read this masterpiece for yourself.) The issue you are now reading marks the 28th anniversary of that first publication of mine, and so it's perhaps fitting if I quote myself for the sake of anyone who doesn't want to dig through the archives.

Titled, "A kid's perspective on learning to boat," it dives into the issue directly: "I was first in a kayak five years ago. My dad tried to teach me to roll…. At first it wasn't that bad." It describes my first experiences in a kayak—weekly roll practices, featuring wet exits—thus: "I was terrified every Saturday night when I had to go and flop around in a tippy plastic kayak." It also describes what I liked about kayaking—the wilderness experience: "…when I relaxed I could enjoy how beautiful it was." It concludes with two very vague anecdotes about swim experiences—one at Double Hydraulic on the Lower Yough and one on a high Stoneycreek River (PA)—and the pronouncement: "…kayaking just doesn't turn me on as much as hockey or baseball." Being in the rare position of knowing exactly what an author thought and comparing it to what he actually wrote, I find it surprisingly honest, though it relies on euphemism to mask the level of terror kayaking inspired in me.

So what does this story have to say to anyone else who is considering introducing kids to whitewater? Is it a cautionary tale? A valuable lesson? Or is it another piece of advice to ignore if it differs from your beliefs about parenting? If you will follow along to the end, you will undoubtedly decide for yourself.

The author's mom, wife and daughter on the Smith River.
Photo by Ambrose Tuscano

KIDS AND WHITEWATER

The author's father and son on the Smith River (MT), enjoying the wildlife
Photo by Ambrose Tuscano

Learning to Ask Questions

Long before we had kids, or were even married, my wife (girlfriend at the time) was relentless about asking anyone she thought was a "good" parent for advice about raising kids. I was pretty much the least likely person to ever have kids: an only child, totally obsessed with kayaking, skiing, and anything that could get me into remote, beautiful wilderness in a way that only a 20-something can afford to be. So I wasn't asking many questions at that time. But she persisted in planning for a future that I surely couldn't see, and by the time I had matured enough to accept that raising children could be valuable, I had started imitating her advice-seeking.

Some of the best advice I ever got about being a parent came three or four years before the birth of our first child, when I was talking to a friend (and father) on a long drive through the California flatlands on our way to the Kern River. One point he emphasized was the value of planning for what was to come, which ideally involved both parents talking about how they wanted to parent, then coming to a consensus. This should, he warned, not take place in front of the child(ren). The nine months of pregnancy, plus roughly the first year of parenthood, were excellent opportunities to hash out philosophies about raising children without danger of revealing to the subject of those discussions that his or her parents were not born knowing what to do.

His second piece of wisdom was tailored to what I needed to hear, and it has stuck with me, but I believe it has wider applicability to all parents. He told me that, as a father, I would never be The One. If my kids were sick, or sad, or scared, or injured, he said, they would not ask for me. They would not want me—unless their mother was unavailable. Being second place was ok, though, he said. You don't have to be The One for parenting to be valuable and joyous. I have come to understand that while he was 100% correct in my case, in some families the father can be The One. More important than any gender assumption is the principle that it's about what the kids need, not about what either parent wants to believe about his or her own importance. Learning not to get one's feelings hurt when a child screams and cries for its mother in the night even as its father rocks it and sings it lullabies helps avoid resentment toward an innocent—if difficult—creature. Infants and kids can only do what their instincts drive them to do. Adults have a choice in how we think and how we behave.

So what do these principles have to do with whitewater? Something, but certainly not everything. They led us to ask and discuss whether we wanted our kids to be introduced to whitewater as young as I had been. After all, I can't say my experience

Three-year-old nap time on the gear boat while brother floats in his IK
By Ambrose Tuscano

A test drive on the South Fork American River with other people's kids, circa 2007
By Ambrose Tuscano

as a kid provided a smooth roadmap to a lifelong love of whitewater—but it certainly didn't fail, either. For us, this discussion was about the rewards of raising kids with tools to access the most remote, beautiful places in the world and simultaneously an honest accounting of the risks, which we both knew well. We had lost two close friends to Class III whitewater, and had no illusions that if we set our kids' feet upon this path their journeys would be free of danger.

The Experiment

In the early 2000s, a decade before we became parents, we had friends who were raising two boys, and whitewater was a central part of their parenting strategy. We became involved in this experiment because it was fun and educational. It was like getting to do a practice run of raising whitewater enthusiasts, monitoring the results, and—perhaps best of all—not having to deal with the consequences if the experiment failed.

The friends had a principle behind their efforts. It was: start easy and stay easy; don't rush; increase the fun without increasing the difficulty. This had not been my dad's approach to introducing me to whitewater, so it offered an interesting counterpoint. To be honest, I started out very skeptical of this approach, mainly because it was so foreign. "How can you possibly do the same short, Class II stretch of river a hundred times," I wondered. "I'd be bored out of my mind!" In fact, I was pretty bored and disengaged the first few times we accompanied them to the river. I would float along in my self-enclosed kayak, in my self-centered world, focused on what the river was doing for me. In truth, it was doing very little, and, I thought, I could be using this time for something a little more my speed.

But as I began to look closer, to pay attention and to talk it over more with my wife, I realized that we were witnessing something special. The more times we went to the river with our friends, the older the boys got, the more I engaged in the experience, the more fun I had. First I got out of my kayak and into a paddle raft. There, in closer proximity to the kids (who were the reason we had all come to the river, after all), I learned that fun can be a self-fulfilling expectation. If your starting attitude is bad, you'll likely have a bad day. If you start out excited, you'll be open to the little things that make a kid's face light up, that can make everyone laugh. Setting opposite sides of a raft paddling vigorously in opposite directions in flatwater can be a highlight of the day. Playing on the shore during an extended lunch break can be even better than the rapids. That's ok. Whatever was good for the kids was good for the group, I learned.

What I came to believe about our friends' experiment was that they were on to something highly effective. After all, you cannot push a kid to love whitewater—especially not the same way an adult loves whitewater. But if you offer it as a fun, kid-centric experience—like going to a playground or pool—it can be accepted as just another part of the fabric of your child's life. As they grow older they can invite friends and spread the gospel, they can explore easy wilderness rivers, captain rafts, and eventually, when they are ready,

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

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

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

Membership support is what will determine our ability to continue our river stewardship work in the years to come. Individual Annual Memberships are only $35. If you are a member of your local paddling club and your club is an Affiliate Club member of AW, join as a Club Affiliate Individual for $25. This is 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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Cullowhee, NC 28723

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KIDS AND WHITEWATER

The author's son, just before his third birthday, on the SF American (CA) with a friend
Photo by Ambrose Tuscano

at their own initiative, they can try kayaking in a hardshell. By this prescription, a kid might not raft his/her first Class III river until he/she is 12. They might not kayak anything that hard for a few years longer. But when they do, they will have strong skills, the ability to read water, and a love of traveling on rivers. Most importantly, they will not associate whitewater with fear.

Putting Theory into Practice

Around the time our friends' kids grew out of the Class II stretch of the South Fork American River, our children were born. We bought a used raft and, when my son was just shy of his second birthday, we took him to the river for the first time. The trips that first summer went as well as we could have dreamed. He laughed when the waves splashed over the tubes of the raft, and played endlessly in the pool formed inside by the combination of a self-bailing floor and his heavy dad, overbalancing one corner of the boat.

Probably we were too confident in our plan, as the next summer we discovered that our son was capable of being scared, even though he'd already accepted the river as fun. Somehow, without a single intense, uncontrolled moment in the raft, he internalized a fear of the river's biggest rapid, Barking Dog. Probably it was our attempts to spice up the whitewater experience that introduced fear into his mind: "Do you think Barking Dog is around the corner," we would ask. "Do you hear that, Griffin? I thought I heard barking," we would say, or "What sound does a dog make, Griffin?" At some point he started asking us if we could walk Barking Dog. We assured him that would be totally unnecessary. We started sneaking the rapid to help him relax on the river. Eventually, he got more comfortable with Barking Dog again, but it was a good lesson for us: even if we were 100% confident in our ability to raft this stretch of river safely, our kids wouldn't necessarily trust us. Questioning one's parents starts young.

We have been so fortunate to be able to build on our frequent day trips on the South Fork by adding a multi-day river trip to our annual calendar. This has become one of our most cherished shared traditions as a family. First was a non-wilderness trip on the Rogue (OR), above the famous Wild and Scenic section, where we floated from county campground to county campground each day, carrying no overnight gear in our raft. My parents accompanied us, and it was really special for our five-year-old son

The author's son on the Smith River (MT)
Photo by Ambrose Tuscano

to get to paddle sections of flatwater in his little IK, following behind his grandfather's kayak. The best part of that trip was just spending time together on the river and in camp, appreciating the outdoors, and not having to worry about being miles away from civilization with a two- and five-year-old.

Last year, we won a permit lottery for the Smith River in Montana, which was the perfect introduction to wilderness rivers. The Smith is a little-known destination for whitewater, but is quite popular for fishing. By the time we put on in late June, the river had nearly dropped below "runnable" levels, but once again, we had an outstanding time with three generations sharing the water, the wilderness, and the camping. Our rented 16-foot oar rig posed a huge challenge for me, since I had almost no rowing experience, but everyone else had a blast on the water. Griffin paddled 80% of the five-day trip in his own IK, while our three-year-old daughter, Mari, enjoyed singing and laughing in the paddle raft with her mom and grandmother, often taking afternoon naps on the front of my gear boat. The river's main challenges were the meandering bends, which, especially in a large, heavy oar rig, were difficult to negotiate cleanly. On the last day, when we came to the river's two Class II rapids, we were surprised by how easy they seemed. Even though we'd been looking forward to them for four days, Griffin had paddled through them before he realized they were "the rapids." Still, the trip was a huge success. We had done wilderness without any serious hitches. The scenery had far exceeded our expectations, we had again discovered that being on a wilderness river can be a powerfully positive force for people of any age, and no one had been scared for an instant.

This year, we're going much bigger. Not long after this issue goes to print, we will continue our wilderness river tradition by floating the Green River (UT) through Desolation and Gray Canyons. While I've never experienced this section of river, my research tells me that we can expect a trip that is nearly twice as many days long, and a volume that is much higher than the Smith's, with a handful of rapids that are at least Class III in a hot desert environment.

How will it go? Will the kids love the rapids, or be scared by the big water? Will we survive the mosquitoes, apply enough sunscreen, and safely avoid the poisonous desert fauna? Will the wilderness experience strengthen our family bond, or make us all sick of one another? Maybe both….

The truth is, it wouldn't be a valuable experience without some unknowns. It's the essence of adventure, after all, and we believe it will be a great learning experience for our kids. At the same time, we're not leaving everything to chance. By the time we put on, we expect to be as prepared as possible for any risks, especially knowing when and where we will encounter the Class III rapids so that we can scout appropriately and, if we decide it's best, walk the kids around it.

Much as anyone with significant experience with wild rivers, I know that a plan often doesn't get you all the way to the bottom of a challenging drop; improvisation is necessary. But if you start every rapid blind, without good information or intentions, chances are the beatings will be more frequent and more severe. And who wants to increase the risk of taking a parenting "swim" instead of doing some scouting around the proverbial bend in the river with the best interests of their kids at heart?

So, should everyone raise their kids the same way? Is our plan for introducing kids to whitewater the best idea for everyone? Probably not. But as I was told many years ago, I believe every family should make a plan well ahead of time and use it to guide all future decisions, and I think each of those decisions should revolve around one simple principle: do what's best for the kids in the long run. Adopting these basic principles has had a positive effect on our family and I hope it can be of use to others considering or about to embark on their family journey into whitewater.

The family enjoying their first multi-day river trip on the Rogue (OR)
By Kitty Tuscano

AFFILIATE CLUBS

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY CARLA MINER

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

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

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

An Affiliate Club that is already being recognized as an AW Lifetime member is recognized in the annual Honor Roll as a Lifetime member. They do need to contribute either at the $100 or the $400 level annually to be recognized an as Affiliate Club in the AW Journal and under the Affiliate Club heading of the published Honor Roll.

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Dolores River Boating Advocates, Dolores

Kentucky
Bluegrass Wildwater Asso, Lexington

New Jersey
KCCNY, Flanders

North Carolina
Girls at Play, Asheville

Ohio
Keelhaulers, Cleveland

Pennsylvania
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg

South Carolina
Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville

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

Affiliate Club by State

Alaska
Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama
Coosa River Paddling Club, Wetumpka
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

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

Arkansas
Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California
Auburn River Festival Club, Auburn
Chico Paddleheads, Chico
River City Whitewater Club, Sacramento
Shasta Paddlers, Redding

Colorado
Colorado Whitewater Assn, Denver
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
High Country River Rafters, Wheatridge
Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center, Buena Vista
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club, Longmont
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Asso, Glenwood Springs

Connecticut
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq, Lakeville

Delaware
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

Georgia
Georgia Canoeing Asso, Atlanta

Idaho
Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Indiana
Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg

Iowa
Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

Kentucky
Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

Maine
Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Freeport

Maryland
Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club, Baltimore
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Hagerstown
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

Massachusetts
AMC Boston Chapter, Boston
Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont

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

New York
ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
KCCNY, Flanders
Colgate University, Hamilton
Flow Paddlers' Club, Rochester
Zoar Valley Paddling, Machias

North Carolina
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee
Providence Day School Paddling Club, Charlotte
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Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus
Friends of the Crooked River, Akron

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Lower Columbia Canoe Club, 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
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Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Centre County, Lemont
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Mach One Slalom Team, State College
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia

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

Texas
Houston Canoe Club, Houston
Team River Runner, San Antonio

Vermont
Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Sandy Hook

Washington
BEWET- Boeing Employees Whitewater & Touring Club, Bellevue
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
The Mountaineers, Seattle
University Kayak Club, Seattle

West Virginia
WV Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

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

Wyoming
American Packrafting Association, Wilson

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

Quebec
Club de Canoe-Kayak, Montreal

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By Carla Miner, Membership Manager

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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.

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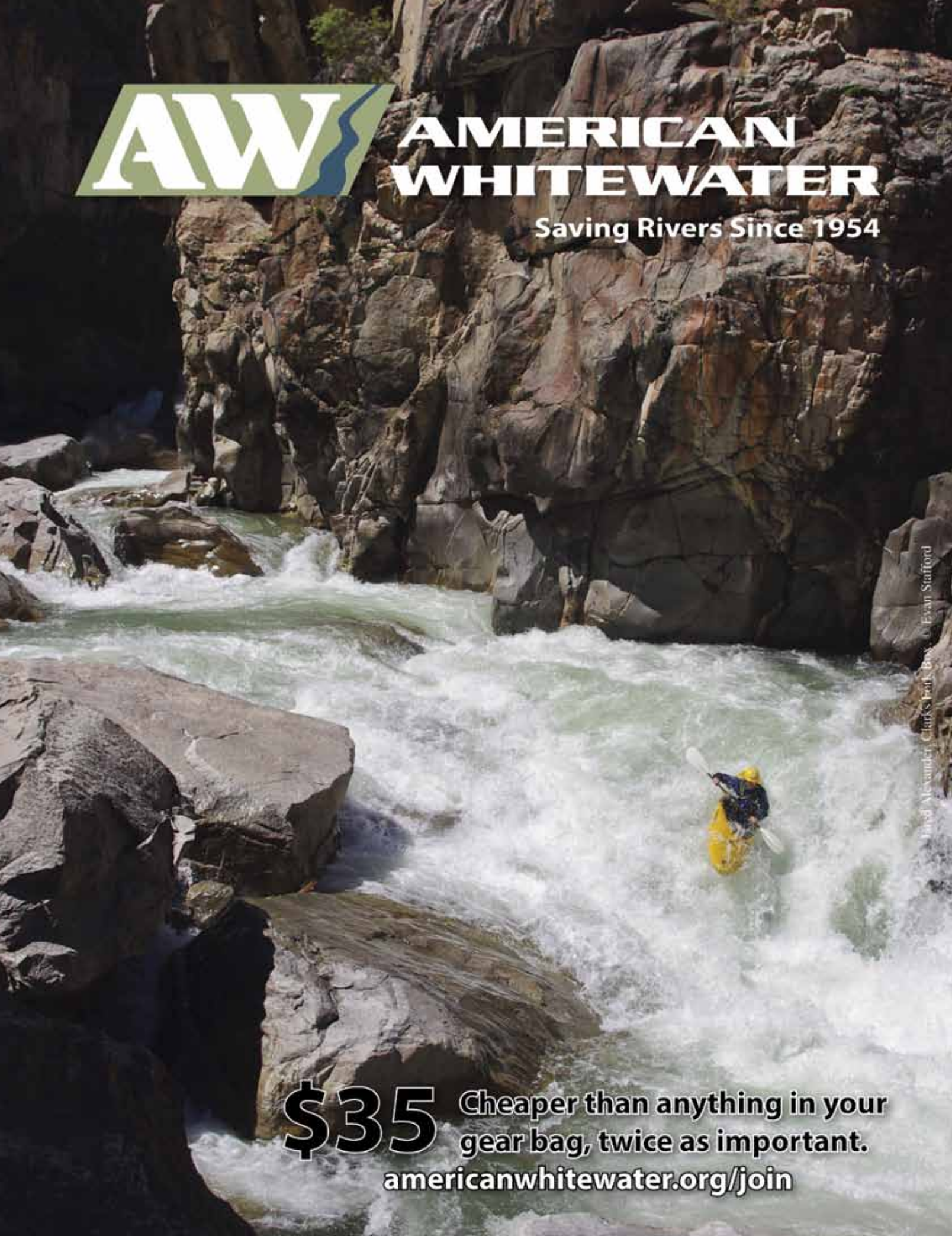
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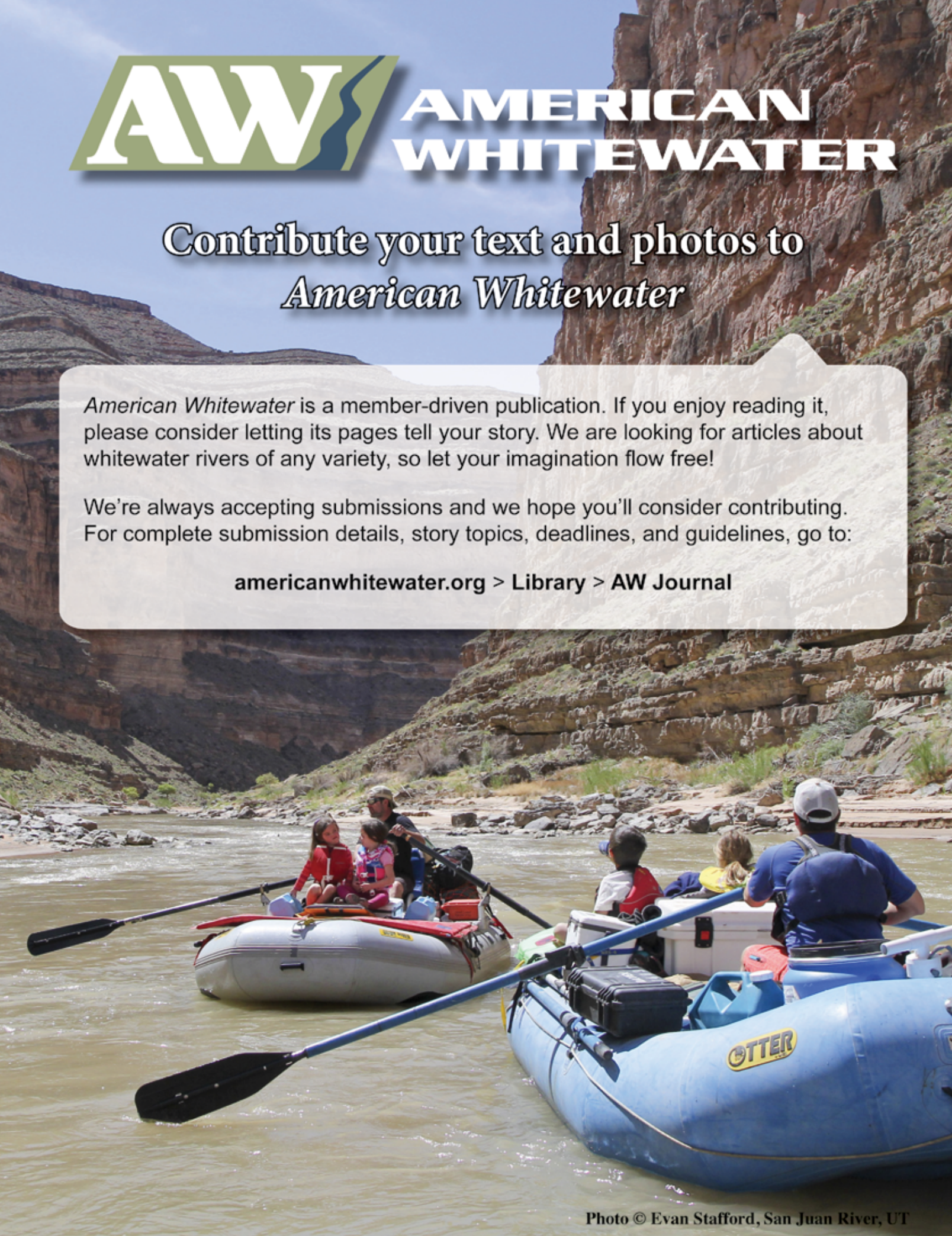

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