

american whitewater

July / August 2001

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The First Descent of the Headwaters of the Salween

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IT'S MAGIC.



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Cover: Photo of Rio Mesquital by Tom Diegel



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Whitewater Survivor

Seeks Class V Contestants

New Reality-Based Series Offers Two Million Dollar Prize!!!

NBS Broadcasting, in association with Dingg-Batt Productions of Paloma, California, is seeking ten Class V kayakers to compete on a new reality-based outdoor adventure series, *Whitewater Survivor: The Impossible Canyon*, tentatively slated to be broadcast nationwide during prime-time in December of 2001. Applicants must be in excellent health, have outstanding wilderness survival skills and be comfortable running unfamiliar Class V+ whitewater rapids. Participants may be professional or amateur boaters. It is anticipated that an equal number of male and female kayakers will be invited to participate.

Filming of *Whitewater Survivor: The Impossible Canyon*, will take place in British Columbia during September 2001. Participants should anticipate being out of the country for at least three weeks and must be subject to no legal prohibition to international travel.

Several aspects of *Whitewater Survivor: the Impossible Canyon* will make it unique. Unlike some other televised "reality-based survivor" series, *Whitewater Survivor* will feature acknowledged *experts* doing what they do best—in a fiercely competitive milieu. The production will be filmed on a 178 mile-long remote river guaranteed to provide extreme physical and grueling mental challenges.

The exact identity of the Impossible Canyon is being kept secret, but the river has never been successfully paddled in entirety. The average gradient for the 178-mile run is 127 feet per mile with a projected flow of 2,350 cfs at the take-out, where the river flows into the Yukon. Based on preliminary scouting by helicopter, the producers anticipate that the difficulty of the run will increase as the team moves downriver. However, competitors should anticipate tackling some Class V water each day. We anticipate that the team should be able to traverse about 20 miles each day, until they reach the final 36 miles. We project that it will take three days to complete this final, most difficult section.

Contestants will need to work together to complete this first descent, while avoiding elimination from the team. Contestants will be permitted to paddle the boat of their choice. Corporations providing kayaks to "sponsored" boaters will receive no special promotional considerations from Dingg-Batt Productions unless prearranged.

The descent of the Impossible Canyon will be self-supported. Each competitor will be expected to select and carry his or her own food and gear. Although a film crew will be documenting the team's progress, they will NOT provide any support to the contestants. As a team, the contestants will be responsible for carrying their own first aid kits, safety gear and breakdown paddles. Contestants wishing to lighten their load may elect not to carry such gear, though it is anticipated that other members of the team will view such a decision negatively. It is also anticipated that the team will consider each competitor's first aid, wilderness survival, and whitewater safety skills, as well as his or her boating abilities, during the elimination process.

At least one boater will be eliminated from the team each day. On days when no contestant is eliminated by injury or death, the team will hold a fireside election and "vote off" the competitor that they view to be "the weakest link." However, any "weakest link" so voted off will be given the option of challenging any of the remaining contestants of the same sex to "hand to hand combat. (Fists and feet only, no sticks, rocks or knives.) If the "weakest link" is able to "defeat" the other contestant during this "hand to hand" session, the loser of the fight will be eliminated instead. During a subsequent ceremony the remaining members of the team will burn the eliminated boater's kayak and he or she will be exiled from the camp. Contestants so eliminated will be required to hike out of the canyon on their own, or face slow death by starvation and/or exposure.

Elimination may occur by other means as well. Elimination shall occur when a contestant loses his or her kayak or paddle or is injured so severely that he or she cannot complete the course. Injured contestants will not be removed from the canyon by the production staff. In order to enhance the dramatic potential of *Whitewater Survivor: The Impossible Canyon*, injured contestants will be given the option of hiking or crawling out of the canyon, or remaining behind by the river, presumably to be eaten by grizzly bears or wolves. In the event of a fatality, surviving members of the team will be expected to construct a riverside pyre and cremate their fallen comrade, although, in the event of a food shortage, they may elect to cannibalize the body.

On the final day of the competition the last two competitors will race head-to-head down the last seven miles of the river, through

the "Penultimate Gorge." Here the gradient averages 433 feet per mile. Our air survey suggests that the "Penultimate Gorge" contains at least four falls greater than 75 feet high, as well as a number of Class VI whirlpools and rapids. These two final competitors may elect to run or to portage these obstructions, but only the first to cross the finish line with his or her boat will take home the 2 million dollar prize. Although the production crew will be filming the action, they will not provide any safety or support.

Kayakers wishing to compete in *Whitewater Survivor: The Impossible Canyon* will be expected to sign a waiver of liability and provide a brief video documenting their personalities, whitewater skills, and personal attractiveness. They should also include a complete a resume of their whitewater accomplishments.

To obtain additional details and an application for *Whitewater Survivor: The Impossible Canyon*, visit the Dingg-Batt website at allateupwiththedumbass.com.

FANUM

"Whitewater Survivor" Contestants Needed.. .

Additional Details

Gotcha didn't I???

Admit it, we whitewater enthusiasts sometimes tend to be a trifle over enthusiastic when it comes to hard core whitewater adventure. And we tend to be a bit competitive. And we almost always need money. And sometimes we are not necessarily the brightest bulbs on the string.

In short, sometimes whitewater boaters have a tendency to be allateupwiththedumbass!

So, do you really want to know just how badly allateupwiththedumbass you are?

Then reread "Whitewater Survivor Seeks Class V Contestants" on the opposing page and ask yourself how far into the story you were when you began to suspect it was a hoax. (Count the paragraphs from the top... then check the table below.)

Paragraphs 1-2 You figured it out that quickly? Are you a real boater or just a poser?

Paragraphs 3-4 You're not so dumb. Probably an NOC grad or a slalom racer.

Paragraphs 5-6 Not the weakest link, but I hope someone else ties the boats onto the roof of your car!

Paragraphs 7-8 Duh! Have you ever tried to climb into a kayak backwards?

Paragraphs 8-9 Seriously allateupwiththedumbass! Do you, by any chance, paddle Class V... at night... alone?

Paragraphs 10-11 Totally allateupwiththedumbass! You should definitely consider a career starring in hair paddling videos. Opportunity knocks!

Paragraphs 12-13 Hopelessly allateupwiththedumbass! You can't even count! There is no paragraph 12 or 13!

Final category: You read the whole article, never figured out it was hoax, and still would like to be a contestant on Whitewater Survivor. Contact the editor of this magazine immediately. I have a couple of wonderful old boats I'd like to sell you.

Bob Gedekoh
American Whitewater Editor

Asthma and Whitewater

Dear Charlie:

Thank you for another synopsis of river accidents. I appreciate all of your hard work in putting this together, so we may all learn. However, as an asthmatic, I was disheartened to read your comment, "Clearly something about asthma that makes swimming in whitewater treacherous, and those suffering from it should think twice before running whitewater." I suspect your blanket statement comes from an ignorance of asthma, asthmatics, and maybe statistics. Two cases might suggest a trend, but not necessarily conclusive evidence of a problem.

I've been running whitewater for 20 years, 14 of those years in a kayak. I have only been slightly winded once after a swim in all of those years. Except for the Grand Canyon, all of my kayaking has been in the Northwest, where the water is not generally known for its warmth, although sometimes in the winter it's warmer than the air.

I suspect the deaths you reported being due to asthma resulted because of a lack of proper asthma management (i.e., taking the appropriate drugs at appropriate times), perhaps being out-of-shape, the trigger of cold water, or any combination of the three. However, three famous athletes, Pittsburgh Steelers' running back Jerome Betties, Olympic runner Jackie Joyner-Kersey, and Olympic "swimmer" Amy Van Dyken, prove everyday what asthmatics are capable of with conditioning and proper medication.

Not every asthmatic is affected by the same trigger. It's true that cold air and water can trigger asthma, perhaps more so in people that are out of shape. It's not true that cold air and water trigger asthma in all asthmatics. Several years ago I took a long swim on a Class IV river that involved several thrashings in holes. Other than a broken ankle (I did send you a report), I was not worse for wear. It was winter, the water level was higher than I had ever done it, and I had not been out boating all that much that winter. I was tired, but the swim did not result in an asthma attack.

I suggest that you check out the large body of literature available on asthma. A couple of places to start would be Asthma in America <http://www.asthmainamerica.com/> and Asthma Learning Lab <http://www.asthmalearninglab.com/>.

Keep up the great work with the safety column.

Sincerely,
Jack Doyle
via email

Charlie Responds

I appreciate your comments about asthma and whitewater, since they come from personal experience. I've been as winded as I want to get after some of my swims, and I don't even have asthma! It's clear that my warning about asthma-related risks in whitewater does not apply equally to everyone who suffers from it. I suspect, as you say, that poor physical condition is an important factor, and with proper treatment and conditioning the risks can be minimized. Yet there have been over ten asthma-related deaths in commercial rafting during the past decade, most of which came after trivial swims. Asthma is clearly a risk factor. The important thing is to respect your limits, whatever they are.

In 1983 a kayaking friend of mine died during a swim on the Lower Yough. He had a bad case of asthma and we believe that this was a factor in his death. He often had problems on the river, and we would find him gasping on shore and using his inhaler. This happened so often that many of us tried to avoid boating with him on harder runs. But he chose to participate anyway. This was his choice, and I think I might make a similar decision if I had to.

Good luck,
Charlie Walbridge
Safety Editor

Look to the Future!

Mr. Bowers,

I have not yet joined American Whitewater, but I have been meaning to for a while. I saw your article about the "energy crisis" in California, and I can't believe a democracy which is supposed to be run with the people in mind can make decisions like this and do what they are trying to do. As you can see, I am upset about this and would like to know if there is anything else I can do. I have already written a letter to Senator Murkowski.

I am only 15 and have only been boating since this summer. But I have a deep love for nature and the environment, and do not want our country to turn into a "concrete jungle" by the time I am in my 60s. I don't want this to happen for me, or any of my friends, and most of all, my children and grandchildren. To me it seems people nowadays only think about themselves, and have the mentality "Well...I won't be here so why don't I just let them deal with it."

It makes me extremely angry that people can think like this. If we continue on the path we are going on, our country, or planet, is going to be reduced to a smoking pile of concrete and pollution.

I would seriously like to know what else I can do to help this situation. Thanks for listening to my ranting and raving.(

Sincerely,
Will Lyons

AW Responds

Will - It was really great to get your letter. Never dismiss the power of words to change society, especially letters from someone your age and with your perspective. It's really refreshing to be reminded that the next generation is already thinking (and acting) about these issues.

Lots of older boaters (including lots associated with American Whitewater) are concerned because few young boaters seem to be interested in these "bigger picture" issues. I've got a nine-year-old daughter who thinks a lot like you, and so I've been less worried about how her generation (and yours) will handle these questions. But it's really great to get confirmation from time-to-time—as your letter provides.

And never underestimate the power of money. Even with a so-called energy crisis, lots of folks (federal and state agencies, power producers, etc.) are trying to turn this into a cash cow for their own interests, even though some of them created the situation to start. It's not pretty (or right), but it's the way the world works. It won't stop until enough people get involved and make them stop. American Whitewater and other river groups may not have the clout to make them stop, but we can keep them (with the help of our members) from destroying even more river miles in their quest for more energy.

As a boater, you know the value of rivers and this is very important. What you can do is not be silent when you see something that is wrong (like your letter to Senator Murkowski), and maybe more important, to rally your friends to this cause and make sure they speak their piece too. You've really hit it! The decisions made today will affect you and your friends throughout your life—who better to demand that society raise the bar on these decisions?

With your permission, I'd like to pass your letter along to others. Especially as we work to change the viewpoints of government and the utilities. Your letter is something we can really leverage into protection for rivers!

Rich Bowers
Past Executive Director,
American Whitewater

Pigeon Dries Poses Risks at High Levels

Hey folks,

Just a heads up on the Dries. As you may know, a paddler drowned on the Dries recently. It happened on one of the more difficult rapids, toward the end of the run.

At higher levels, the Dries become solid Class V, with keeper hydraulics and very heavy water; a bad place to swim. The paddler surfed a hydraulic and was then washed free of his boat and swam into a second hole. It was from this second hole that he was rescued, though not resuscitated. He was a good boater, had Class V boating skills, and paddled with a strong group. He flushed drowned, something that could happen to anyone who has a swim on the Dries.

The Dries are a difficult run, even at lower levels (less than 600 cfs), but at higher levels this run is not to be discounted. The Dries compare to The Watauga in difficulty. Consider that a normal run on the Watauga is in the 200-350 cfs range, a 750 cfs run on the Dries is not much different from a 600 cfs run on the Watauga. That's some big water!!

If you're thinking about running the Dries, please stay away on days when the level is high and the air/water temps are low. As swim on the Dries is far worse than a swim on the Upper Gauley due to exposure to rocks, undercuts, and the difficulty of executing a rescue. The folks who are running the Dries regularly at higher levels are the same folks who run the Green Narrows and West Prong, so they have some serious skills. Sometimes the Dries may be one of the only things running, but it's not to be taken lightly.

It took years for the Green to kill, yet only a few months after the Dries started running, we already have our first fatality. Please take care on the Dries, we don't need any more folks getting killed.

Benjamin R. Kadas
Knoxville, TN 37902

Riding the Bull

To: The Editor @ American Whitewater

OK Guys, so in the past I have always curtailed my urge to write a letter to the editor. I've ignored the Old School, New School, Pro Corran, Anti-Corran, Kayaks vs Canoe debates, and let it ride no matter how tempted I was to respond.

But, I have to say "Riding the Bull" (March/April 2001, by April Lewandowski) has finally put me over the edge. Since many of us have had our butts kicked by the bull (Bull Sluice, Chatooga River), this was the first article my husband and I read on our daily commute of

60 miles to work this morning. It works like this: He drives and I read out loud and it really makes our trip go quickly. So...with much anticipation this a.m. my husband says "Read the "Bull" story first." So I did.

I have to say I got all confused. I even turned the cover back over to make sure some jerk hadn't put an American Whitewater Cover on a Cosmopolitan. No, it really was an American Whitewater. Aside from that, it has caused some disharmony in my marriage. First off, no matter how hard my husband tries, I refuse to paddle nude or have sex on the beach between rapids.

Furthermore, he wants to know why Marcie let Andy sit on the front of her kayak and wrap his legs around her tan delicate waist. Yeah Marcie, I'd like to know why it's OK too. My husband did that over the weekend on my new Z trying to put a sprayskirt on it to break it in. He got cursed out and told to get his fat ass off my new kayak. And if he had been wearing a helmet, I would have "lovingly" taken it off his head and beat him up side his, before tossing it into the woods proclaiming "You don't need that right now".

No offense April, but I don't think those people were real. (Well, maybe Kip was real. I think I've paddled with him before, but he used a different name). I think you must have been inspired by that Harmony Ad dude to write a romance novel. Unfortunately for me, I don't read those romance novels on purpose, but yours sucked me into thinking it was about Bull Sluice. Maybe we should try to LEARN from it.

Next time my husband gets his ass kicked in the Bull, instead of standing on the rocks laughing and hollering "I told you not to take that line," I'll jump in and gingerly wrap my wifely arms around him, drag his sorry ass, Oh, I mean gently pull him to shore, and lovingly gaze into his face and say "Oh Honey, I was so scared I almost lost you." But the reality is, he'll probably open his eyes and say "Oh, yeah. Sure. Can you fetch me a Budweiser. My ass is sure hurting right now."

And if I ever run into that Andy and Marcie I'm going to tell them to get off the beach and get a room! And to leave the discount beer at the Bull. Come On, Guys. It was an April Fools Joke, Right?

Debbie Beasley
Thomasville, N.C.

Editor's reply: Gee! I really liked the Bull story. But then everyone knows I'm just a hopeless romantic!

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Guidelines for Contributors

Please read **this carefully before sending** your articles and photos! This is a volunteer publication, please cooperate and help us out. Do not send us your material without a release - signed by all authors and photographers (attached)!!!

The editorial staff of *American Whitewater* carefully reviews all material submitted for publication. We are particularly interested in receiving full-length feature articles, conservation and club news, special event announcements, articles pertaining to whitewater safety and short, humorous pieces.

Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, AW Briefs, River Voices, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines, Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater cartoons are also welcomed.

If possible, articles should be submitted on a 3-1/2-inch computer disk. (Microsoft Word if possible - others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters; use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

Those without access to a word processor may submit their articles typed. Please double space.

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or whiteprints, or color prints. Keep your originals and

send us **duplicates if possible**; **cannot** guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Because we publish in black and white, photos with a lot of contrast work best.

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water. The best features have a definite slant... or theme. They are not merely chronological recountings of river trips.

Open the story with an eye-catching lead, perhaps by telling an interesting anecdote. Dialogue should be used to heighten the reader's interest. Don't just tell us about the river... tell us about the people on the river... develop them as characters. Feature articles should not be written in the style of a local club newsletter.

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled, or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to Class III and IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personali-

ties are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through and don't be afraid to poke a little fun at yourself... and your paddling partners.

Profanity should be used only when it is absolutely necessary to effectively tell a story; it is not our intent to offend our more sensitive members and readers.

Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies, and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally responsible for the accuracy of *such* material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

Articles will be edited at the discretion of the editors to fit our format, length, and style. *Expect* to see changes in your article. *If you don't* want us to edit your article, don't send it to us! Because of our deadlines you will not be able to review the editorial changes we make prior to publication.

American Whitewater is nonprofit; the editors and contributors to *American Whitewater* are not reimbursed. On rare occasions, by *prearrangement*, professional writers receive a small honorarium when they submit stories at our request. Generally, our contributors do not expect payment, since most are members of AW, which is a volunteer conservation and safety organization.

Release For Publication

I hereby ~~release my work~~ (literary, graphic photographic) for publication in *American Whitewater* magazine.

- I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.
- I understand that I will not be paid for my work.
- I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation or agency in this work.
- I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an *American Whitewater* publication.
- I promise that this material has not been and will not soon be published by another magazine or publication and the rights to this material are clear and unrestricted.

I understand that once this material is printed in *American Whitewater* it may be reprinted or reproduced in other publications if I wish, providing I notify them that it has already appeared in *American Whitewater*.

- I understand that the contents of *American Whitewater* Magazine, including my contribution, will be archived on the *American Whitewater* web site.

Signed _____

Date _____

This release must be signed by all the contributing author(s), photographer(s) and graphic artist(s).

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Purpose

American Whitewater

Our mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

The American Whitewater (AW) is a national organization with a membership consisting of thousands of individual whitewater boating enthusiasts, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates.

CONSERVATION: AW maintains a complete national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors threats to those rivers, publishes information on river conservation, provides technical advice to local groups, works with government agencies and other river users, and-- when necessary-- takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

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, resists unjustified restrictions on government managed whitewater rivers and works with government agencies and other river users to achieve these goals.

EDUCATION: Through publication of the bimonthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater, (AW) provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

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 AW Whitewater Safety Code.

EVENTS: AW organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation, including the Ocoee Whitewater Rodeo in Tennessee, the Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), the Arkansas River Festival in Colorado, the Kennebec Festival in Maine and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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On occasion **American Whitewater** publishes official organizational **policy statements** drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.



Risa Shimoda
Executive Director
American Whitewater

It is mid-summer. Most free-flowing rivers are low, with the snowmelt season and the spring rainfall but a memory for the year, so I'll take a wild guess that you have few boating options for this afternoon or this weekend. If you plan to spend any time on the Deerfield, Kennebec, Ocoee, Nantahala, Upper Yough, Green, American...I could go on...you're most likely to have an option to paddle due to agreements in place between river users and private utility companies, TVA, or the Army Corps of Engineers. If no formal agreements are driving the release schedules, we're simply lucky that the need for power coincides with daylight hours!

For those (many) of us who are doing well to be able to plan the next weekend's boating trip, it is only due to the foresight of some dogged river warriors and/or superb relationship builders that we have these scheduled releases available to benefit the rivers' stakeholders.

On some of these (and other) rivers, getting TO the water without worrying about the safety of your vehicle or person, or having to pay fee upon fee...that's the other piece of the story. There are hundreds of access issues throughout the country, being discovered, negotiated, and resolved, as you read this.

If this piques your curiosity about issues that may have long-term effects on your future paddling options, read about your 'future water' in this issue:

- A.U.S. Energy bill threatens our ability to negotiate appropriate whitewater flows during the hydro relicensing process, as new hydro plants are proposed;
- The Ocoee Symposium has opened the door to redefine recreational opportunities on the Upper Ocoee (TN);
- Encouraging developments on the Savage (MD)
- Taking on responsibility at the Upper Yough Sang Run (MD) put-in
- Access is returned to the Cartecay (GA) and a new access fund established for the Sky (WA);
- An enlightening explanation of fees levied on noncommercial Grand Canyon boaters is...well, enlightening...

And...to ease your 'read,' update your mental hard drive with Coaching tips to perform a Bowstall, for those who have been timid to ask a dumb question of the kids performing them effortlessly...

Notice of events across the country, notably the Gorge Games Series and American River Film Festival, brought to you by American Whitewater, friends and partners...

Notice of EVEN MORE new features on the AW website:

Instant Whitewater Alerts - You can receive e-mail alerts when there is news on specific rivers of interest to you!

- American Whitewater Affiliates can create and maintain websites via the AW Affiliates Area, by which your club can create links to specific river reaches of interest (of the 3000+ available), and imbed links from the AW site to yours!
 - River Search - You can now search the entire river database by name, region, state, difficulty, and water levels, by reach or by watershed!
- and there's more....

Volunteer Note:

In March, Conservation Director John Gangemi was contacted by Sutton Bacon, a boater from the southeast, indicating he'd like to help AW as a volunteer. Little did Sutton know how quickly we'd take him up on his offer: within a couple of weeks, he and a friend had helped us register paddlers at the first 'No-Permit Required' Tallulah Gorge release. I was pleasantly surprised to see him at the Ocoee Symposium in May, and subsequently found that he has created a superb StreamKeeper site for the Ocoee. Sutton, you are awesome. We could not have the fantastic network and breadth of collective expertise without you guys who are helping us with rich data for others to use and share.

If you have an interest and a skill you think could increase our ability to help paddlers enjoy more rivers more often, please contact us at info@amwhitewater.org, or head to www.americanwhitewater.org and introduce yourself!

Note: 'Charc' is a term coined by Jim Snyder, short for 'charging arc,' intended to reference one's line in relationship to the current and how both are addressed by your boat. The seeming contradiction and available *discovery* that one can in fact 'charge' an arc with intention to create movement, impact etc., in other than a simple linear fashion seems appropriate for the comments *III* be making as ED. I hope to both help us confirm that our work is consistent with our mission, and continue to shake up what risks getting stuck to the status quo...rs

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American Whitewater July • August 2001

U.S. Energy Policy—One Giant Leap Backward for....



Forest Huebler executing "superboof" during whitewater flow study on the Chelan River, Washington. Photo JohnGangemi.

Primed by the California 'crisis,' 2001 has ushered in a rash of federal energy legislation with destructive consequences for the nation's rivers. Each bill, in its own way, 'lowers the bar' of environmental requirements for utilities that are planning to build new power projects or license existing facilities. Energy producers are exploiting the atmosphere of panic, lobbying hard for the passage of these bills, knowing their passage could equate to billions of dollars in additional profit.

The Administration's recently introduced energy policy encourages the nation's dependence on fossil fuel and hydro, at the expense of sound policy that values alternative energy sources, efficiency, and conservation measures. This energy policy threatens our rivers and wild places, requiring them to shoulder the burden of greater power yield. Say good-bye to whitewater releases. Welcome to the new millennium.

We need to make it clear to Congress and FERC that rivers belong to the public. Existing hydropower projects already divert up to 90% of a river's flow resulting in severe impacts to fish, wildlife and recreation: there is little left to give. We need to rally in defense of our rivers and prevent industry, empowered by this 'crisis,' from manipulating long-term energy policy

The Legislative and Administrative Threats

To date, there are five discrete efforts that, unchecked, could devastate rivers and undermine future river restoration efforts across the country.

■ Senator Larry Craig (R-Idaho) has reintroduced legislation that undermines the ability of federal resource agencies to guarantee minimum protection standards during relicensing. The bill (S. 71) referred to as the Hydroelectric Licensing Process Improvement Act of 2001 is cosponsored by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM). This bill is far from an improvement. This proposed legislation expedites the relicensing process at the expense of the environment. It should be renamed the Hydropower Licensing Exploitation Act of 2001. Passage of this bill would strip away the tools American Whitewater applies to restore rivers and whitewater opportunities in the hydropower relicensing process. Whitewater releases on rivers like Chelan Gorge, the Cheoah, and the North Fork Feather, to name a few, would never reach fruition if this legislation passed. Furthermore, you would see elimination of existing whitewater releases on rivers such as the Tallulah.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission recently ordered western licensees to take steps to increase generation at their facilities and offered to expedite license amendments that "remove obstacles" to increased operational flexibility. The "obstacles" at stake are baseline protections for water quality, fish and wildlife, and recreation. Already, the FERC has dropped instream flow requirements to increase power generation at two projects in Idaho. During the public hearings in April the FERC staff immediately targeted whitewater flows as superfluous license conditions impeding increased generation. FERC staff encouraged utilities to submit requests to suspend whitewater release requirements. The FERC did not factor in the economic benefits these releases provide local communities from private and commercial boating. Curtailing whitewater releases will have significant impact on the local economy.

Senator Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) has launched two threats. Last year, he ordered FERC to prepare a study recommending ways to make the licensing process less costly and less time consuming. The implicit direction was to lower the public interest standards applied in relicensing. The FERC report issued in May calls for dramatically weakening states, tribes, and federal resource agencies' ability to protect the environment during the hydropower licensing process. The FERC report proposes five legislative and eight regulatory changes, which would have a number of consequences for rivers, their wildlife, and the recreational opportunities they provide, including limiting the ability of state agencies to enforce the Clean Water Act, undercutting the ability of federal and state agencies to require steps to protect fish and wildlife and transferring ultimate authority for dams located in National Forests and on Tribal lands to the FERC.

Coincidentally, the General Accounting Office released a report culminating a year-long review of the FERC. The GAO report seriously undermined the credibility of the report issued by the FERC. The GAO found that the FERC kept incomplete records and as a result was in no position to conduct a self-audit of the hydropower licensing process. The GAO report stated that there is no data to support FERC's assertions that the hydropower relicensing process has become too lengthy and unduly costly. Nonetheless, FERC is moving forward with their self-prescribed recommendations for changes in the relicensing process. These recommendations are



Redinger Dam spilling into the San Joaquin. Photo John Gangemi.

likely to be rolled into Vice President Cheney's Energy Task Force recommendations.

Senator Murkowski's second piece of legislation is referred to as the Omnibus Energy Bill. This bill (S. 388) includes Senator Craig's language from S. 71. In addition, this legislation calls for a separate licensing process for hydro projects less than 5 megawatts. From the viewpoint of the river, small hydro can be just as damaging as large hydro. The bill also calls for increased coal mining but makes no mention of ensuring there are not undue environmental costs such as those associated with mountain top removal which takes a terrible toll on the watershed and ultimately the rivers. Lastly, the Omnibus Energy Bill calls for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Preventing drilling in ANWR has been the rallying cry this spring in the environmental community. American Whitewater is concerned that too much focus on the drilling proposal will cause the public to lose sight of the other threats this bill proposes closer to home. Congress could quickly drop the ANWR drilling proposal to appease the environmental community in exchange for more pervasive provisions impacting our rivers.

Like the Craig bill, Murkowski's legislative agenda strives to unravel the environmental regulations contained in the hydropower relicensing process. Passage of Murkowski's Omnibus Energy Bill or implementation of the FERC's recommendations will severely handicap American Whitewater in the relicensing process.

The energy plan unveiled by Vice President Cheney's Energy Task Force recommends increased domestic oil drilling and hydro-power licensing reforms. These reforms mirror those proposed by Senators Craig and Murkowski and the FERC—reforms that ultimately undermine environmental regulations in the hydropower relicensing process.

Submit a letter to Senator's Craig and Murkowski voicing your disapproval of these legislative proposals. Send a courtesy copy to your Senators and Representative. To locate your legislator log-in to <http://www.mrsmith.com/index2.html>.

The greatest opportunity to alter the language of both the Craig bill (S. 71) and the Murkowski bill (S. 388) is during the review phase by the Energy And Natural Resources Committee in the Senate. The committee then passes the final version of the bill onto the floor for debate and a vote. If your state Senator is on this committee voice your concerns to them immediately by letter or phone. The members of that committee are listed below.

Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Republicans

- Frank Murkowski, AK, Chairman
- Pete Domenici, NM
- Don Nickles, OK
- Larry Craig, ID
- Ben Nighthorse Campbell, CO
- Craig Thomas, WY
- Richard Shelby, AL
- Conrad Burns, MT
- Jon Kyl, AZ
- Charles Hagel, NE
- Gordon Smith, OR

Democrats

- Jeff Bingaman, NM Ranking Member
- Daniel Akaka, HI
- Byron Dorgan, ND
- Bob Graham, FL
- Ron Wyden, OR
- Tim Johnson, SD
- Mary Landrieu, LA
- Evan Bayh, IN
- Dianne Feinstein, CA
- Charles Schumer, NY
- Maria Cantwell, WA

Key Points to include:

1. The Federal Power Act should not be altered in a fashion that streamlines the process for licensing a hydropower project. The nation's rivers and streams are a vital resource that should not be monopolized for power production alone. Public input and resource agency review are critical components in the licensing process to ensure that non-power values are balanced with power generation. S. 71 and S. 388 neutralize resource agency authority and state's rights to protect water quality in the licensing process thus endangering adequate resource protection.
2. The General Accounting Office does not support the conclusions in the FERC's report stating that the hydropower licensing process needs reform.
3. Small hydro (< 5 megawatts) should not be exempted from the licensing process. Small hydro has just as much impact as large hydro on non-power resources.
4. Inform legislators that you oppose legislative attempts by industry to exploit our nations' resources. We should not sacrifice natural resources to meet short-term energy demands.
5. Recommend legislators focus on developing a long-term energy strategy complete with alternative energy sources and sound conservation measures. Energy policy must work in concert with resource protection.

NOW IS THE TIME TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON!

Addressing Correspondence:

To a Senator:
The Honorable (full name)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

To a Representative:
The Honorable (full name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator;

Dear Representative:

**Raft crew taking
on the Tobin
section during
whitewater flow
study On the North
Fork Feather
River, California.
Photo John
Gangemi.**



Local Groups Successful Stopping Dams on Cumberland Plateau, Tennessee

In the Trenches

By Charlene "Cheetahtrk
Thompson

Two proposed dams on the Cumberland Plateau of East Tennessee have been denied a permit or project sponsors have been told that a permit would be denied if submitted. American Whitewater along with other environmental groups in East Tennessee have vigorously opposed the proposed dams.

Daddy's Creek

A golf course retirement community proposed to build a 66-acre impoundment on Cove Branch that is a tributary entering Daddy's Creek (Class IV+) watershed near the boundary of the Obed Wild and Scenic River. The dam would impact over 8,000 stream feet of the watershed. The impoundment will also inundate approximately 10 acres of headwaters wetlands. In January, over 200 people attended a public meeting at the retirement community to discuss the impacts from the proposed dam. Jason Darby, American Whitewater Regional Coordinator, represented American Whitewater at the public meeting on the permit. Other groups such as the Tennessee Clean Water Network, Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning, Tennessee Paddle Club, Chota Canoe Club, East Tennessee Whitewater Club, and Tennessee Valley Canoe Club as well as local citizens voiced their opposition to the dam and impoundment. The impoundment permit was to enhance development of the Fairfield Glade community and would not provide drinking water. Though most of the public meeting attendees were from Fairfield Glade, all but two of the nearly 30 speakers opposed the dam. The primary concerns expressed were about potential impacts to water quality and quantity in Cove Branch and the primary streams. Because of the universal opposition by the rec-

reation and environmental communities, the State of Tennessee has denied Fairfield Glade's permit for an impoundment on Cove Branch.

Caney Fork River

The second dam was proposed by the City of Crossville and was to be located on the Caney Fork River. The city is growing rapidly from an influx of retirees and believes that it will experience a water supply shortage in the next 5 years unless additional drinking water is developed. Crossville wanted to develop a feasibility study on the construction of the dam to be located approximately 1 1/2 miles upstream of the Clifty Bridge that is the starting place for whitewater boating (Class IV-V). A dam at this location would eliminate whitewater boating in the Caney Fork River gorge. Releases from the impoundment would not be expected to meet the large flows required for whitewater boating. The dam would create a 1,200-acre lake in west Cumberland County to provide drinking water for the Crossville area. In December, Chuck Estes, American Whitewater board member, spoke to the Crossville City Council to inform them of the opposition to the dam and permit obstacles before them. At the meeting, he urged Crossville to pursue more environmentally friendly options after first completing a detailed

water needs assessment and options analysis.

Approximately 3 1/2 miles downstream of the proposed dam in the area known as Scott's Gulf, Bridgestone-Firestone, Inc., has donated 10,000 acres to the State of Tennessee to create the Bridgestone-Firestone Centennial Wilderness Area. This area is a spectacular recreational resource with a mature hardwood forest, waterfalls, river bluffs and overlooks, cave systems, and a high-quality, free-flowing river system. Constructing a dam and associated lake upstream of this area would have significant impacts on water quality and quantity that are two of the main attributes of this wilderness area. An upstream dam would totally disrupt the natural flow regime of the river. The sediment released through dam construction would have immediate and unacceptable impacts on the river system.

Based on these discussions, the City of Crossville has recently met with Tennessee regulators and was told that if a permit for a dam on the Caney Fork River were submitted it would not be granted. It is not known what further actions Crossville will take. American Whitewater will continue to monitor and evaluate future needs assessments and options for water supply on the Cumberland Plateau.

Years ago I was asked to go to a meeting and discuss river issues with the local power company. I never, ever, would have guessed I would be a grassroots type activist for my local rivers.

I'm sure many have found themselves in a similar position. Facing serious problems with little or no inside information and only limited public news releases. The feeling that your favorite river or natural area is being screwed over by politics or private interests is the tie that binds all of us together. Never thought of yourself as an activist? Well trust me, the opposition thinks you are.

Here's a checklist I have used for years with success:

- 1) Identify the actual problem—this means, figure out what they want and what you don't like about it. Now, can you turn that into a sellable problem for others to also want to support?
- 2) Identify your opponent—who exactly is REALLY behind this issue, and what is their motivation.
- 3) What will it take for them to change their opinion? How do you make them feel it was their idea and not your influence? (Why care about their feelings on changing? — Well, it is easier to get them to change if they think it's their idea.)

- 4) Organize your supporters and keep them interested and informed.
- 5) Some government agencies are actually on your side—find out which ones, get their advice, and stay in touch with them.
- 6) Never give up. There is always a way. So think outside of the box at all times. Become your opponent and think like they do. That way you can defend your position better.

One thing to always remember, you may be the rivers' only hope. So fight the good fight. Use everything available to help make your job easier and more successful.

Keep American Whitewater involved and informed. They have resources and experience in numerous areas. American Whitewater will help you fight to keep our rivers safe, clean, and free.

Save the Saluda, Free the Ocoee and Keep the Chattooga Wild and Clean!

Editor's Note: When she isn't on the road living in the Cheetah Truck, Charlene Thompson calls the "flat" Saluda River in Columbia, SC her home. Keeping rivers accessible, properly protected, and well managed is her top priority. She spends endless hours as a representative of American Whitewater and local volunteer, consultant to the Mayor's Office, US Forest Service, SCE&G and SC DNR on issues concerning the Saluda, Broad, Congaree and Chattooga Rivers. Any available freetime is spent with her favorite charity, Canoeing for Kids and the Whitewater Kids Club of Columbia. She enjoys sharing her love and respect of rivers with the children.

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Energy Prices Spawn New Hydropower Project Proposals

In the past six months there has been a plethora of applications for new hydropower projects across the U.S. This increase is largely due to high energy prices coupled with market predictions that demand will keep pace with supply for several years to come. Underlying these market incentives is the prospect that the hydropower licensing process itself may look very different when these proposals move from the drawing board to reality. American Whitewater along with other groups is working hard to ensure that changes in the licensing process do not lower the environmental standards put in place to protect rivers. You can also be sure that American Whitewater is there to fight ill-conceived projects that impact rivers and whitewater interests. The report below just in from Paul Martzen, a hardworking American Whitewater volunteer in south central California where numerous hydro proposals are being drawn up.

Paul Martzen
Fresno, California

The Kings River Conservation District (KRCD) which has authority to manage the waters of the Kings River is now studying the feasibility of restarting two major Hydro projects on the Kings River, along with a number of small hydro projects.

Rodgers Crossing Dam project would be a large dam and reservoir on the main Kings to store extra water from wet years for irrigation. The dam would be located just upstream of the confluence with the North Fork Kings River. For those familiar with the common names of rapids on the Kings, the dam would sit on top of Tiger Tail rapid. The resulting reservoir would cover the entire Class 3, "Bonzai" section of the Kings River and would extend about 4 miles past the end of the road at Garnet Dike.

This section of river has been protected since 1987 by an act of Congress which created the Kings River Special Management Area. Though the act protects the area "as if" it were a wild and scenic river, the reservoir site is not in the Wild and Scenic River system. The

compromise legislation also allows the KRCD to continue any studies on the dam that they wish.

To actually build Rodgers Crossing Dam would require Congress to repeal the special management legislation and specifically authorize construction. Local congressman George Radanovich is reportedly eager to introduce such legislation.

The Dinkey Creek project is a hydroelectric "peaking power" project. It would create a 100,000 acrefoot reservoir at about 5,500 feet elevation. The reservoir would flood the Camp El-0-Win Girl Scout camp, Camp Fresno, and the Dinkey Creek public campgrounds. The reservoir would also cover the Upper Dinkey Creek (Cherry Bomb Falls) whitewater section. The dam itself would sit on top of Cherry Bomb Falls.

The reservoir would feed water to a series of two powerhouses. The first powerhouse would sit on a huge ledge next to and near the middle of the Dinkey Creek Cascades. The Dinkey Cascades is a spectacular area where the creek drops 1,200 feet in one mile, contained between granite walls.

The second powerhouse would be near Balch Camp and would feed the water into a PG&E reservoir, from where it would enter the Kings River Powerhouse near Kirch Flat on the main Kings River. The project would dewater all of Dinkey Creek below the new reservoir. This project would also finish dewatering the NF Kings river below Balch Camp since Dinkey now supplies all the normal flows in this section.

The Dinkey Creek project came very close to construction in the 1970s and '80s, but was stalled long enough that the economics became less favorable. The present California energy situation and the national political situation are making the project look very favorable again. If the studies now underway prove sufficiently favorable, then KRCD will probably make the decision to restart the licensing process for the Dinkey project. This could happen in the next few months.

Boundary Creek, Idaho

The proposal for a hydropower project on Boundary Creek in northern Idaho has literally run into a roadblock. Closure of the Boundary Creek road paralleling the creek by the U.S. Forest Service has hampered Continental Lands ability to conduct the necessary studies to present to the Federal Energy Commission (FERC) for approval of the project. FERC notified Continental Lands by letter in March giving the company 30 days to surrender its preliminary permit, or come up with a detailed plan to meet stringent agency guidelines for a development application. Boundary County, along with Continental Lands, challenged the U.S. Forest Service's authority to close the road. In 1997 the Forest Service issued a record of decision calling for obliteration of the road due to continual washouts impacting Boundary Creek. American Whitewater filed comments in support of the road closure. Little did we know that the road closure would help us defeat a then unplanned hydropower project for this world-class creek run.

Milner Reach, Idaho

The FERC approved a modification to the existing license article requiring whitewater releases below the Milner Hydropower Project on the Snake River in Idaho. The order reduces the number of releases and institutes a reservation system for releases. Originally, the Milner project was required to make twelve weekend releases between May 1st and June 30th when inflow to the project, in excess of irrigation demands, was between 10,000 and 12,500 cfs. The flow triggers remain the same in the new order but the number of weekend days has been reduced to four. A minimum of two boaters must register with Idaho Power by 3:00 PM Friday the weekend of a release. Idaho Power petitioned for the reduction in the number of release days due to a lack of boater use in the last three years during the scheduled releases. American Whitewater argued in favor of maintaining the twelve releases coupled with a registration system to negate unused releases. In response, the FERC adopted an adaptive management approach by



which the number of releases could increase at a later date as warranted by demand. The moral here—coordinate your trips to the Milner reach with your paddling community to maximize use of these four releases. American Whitewater will publish the reservation phone number and instructions when available on the website, <www.americanwhitewater.org>.

South Boulder Creek, Colorado

The FERC issued a new license for the Gross Reservoir Hydropower Project on South Boulder Creek located just south of Boulder, Colorado. Stretches upstream and downstream of Gross Reservoir are popular with Front Range boaters (see p. 232-236, *Colorado Rivers and Creeks*, 2nd edition). In the past, Denver Water Board (DWB) has not allowed boaters on the upper run to exit via a paddle across the reservoir to the nearest road. DWB has also not allowed access below the reservoir. American Whitewater effectively advocated for non-motorized boating on the reservoir and unrestricted access to South Boulder Creek below the reservoir. Non-motorized boats are restricted to cartop carrying. DWB has been granted one year to implement the recreation management plan requiring these provisions. Local American Whitewater volunteers are working with DWB, local residents, and emergency response personnel to develop a safety plan for non-motorized boating on Gross Reservoir.

White Salmon River, Washington

On May 16-17, 2001 boaters attended meetings with the FERC staff to expedite plans to remove Condit Dam. The dam is located on the White Salmon River approximately 6 miles upstream from the confluence with the Columbia River. Through the relicensing process it became apparent that operation of this dam for hydropower generation was no longer economically viable. American Whitewater along with other groups reached a settlement with PacifiCorp to remove the dam. Dam removal would allow salmon to migrate upstream and boaters to navigate downstream adding 6 miles of Class III whitewater previously inaccessible. PacifiCorp's obligations to the Settlement expire in September 2002 if the FERC fails to approve it. Some parties leasing cabins from PacifiCorp on Northwestern reservoir created by Condit Dam want to sabotage the settlement. Restoring this reach of the White Salmon will be a huge asset to the Hood River boating community. Condit Dam obstructs downstream navigation on the White Salmon River. There is no portage route around the dam and no public access points downstream.

For more information about these or other river conservation issues contact John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director phone/fax: 406-837-3155/3156, e-mail: jgangemi@digisys.net. Please contact John if you would like to work on any of the above conservation projects or alert American Whitewater to additional conservation issues in your area.

Individual Impact

Nancy Galloway

American Whitewater is looking for a few good men - and women - to take on the utilities and landowners who threaten wild rivers and our access to them. Conservation Director John Gangemi and Access Director Jason Robertson are building a program to train volunteers to take on conservation and access issues, and WIN!

This program, **Individual Impact**, seeks to maximize the impact of each individual volunteer. It will kick off in Spring of 2002, with a two-day training that will explore how to both challenge the ownership rights that utilities and landowners presume to have to rivers, and work in cooperation with these entities. Participants will begin the process of networking, strengthening their ties, and broadening their reach. **Individual Impact** will also provide each participant with a "toolkit," describing how relicensing and access challenges are done, and provide substantive background materials to aid in these endeavors. Specialized web-based communications will be developed for the exclusive use of the participants, so they can continue to network after their training, building on each other's strategies and successes.

Through this, American Whitewater is planning to build the first rank of a knowledgeable and highly effective cadre of riverkeepers.

The program was first conceived this year after John Gangemi became the sixth American Whitewater member in 20 years to win Perception's coveted "River Conservationist of the Year" award. In order to maintain American Whitewater's pre-eminence in river conservation, John decided—like his five predecessors Pete Skinner, Pope Barrow, Mac Thornton, Steve Taylor, and Tom Christopher—to plow his \$1000 prize money back into the program.

But he wanted it to have a far greater effect, so he challenged other American Whitewater members to match his \$1000, or to give what they could to fund this new program. Rich Bowers matched this and an additional ten members have stepped up to the challenge. We are also seeking matching money from foundations in order to raise a minimum of \$50,000.

If you would like to invest in the future of whitewater rivers, here's your opportunity! Contact Nancy Galloway, Development Director at 301-589-9453 for more information, and the chance to have your own individual impact.

Put-in Closure on The Skykomish River: WA

By Meg Lee

Fear overtook my whole body. Every muscle stiffened to the point of being unable to move. My head roared, amplifying the sound of the water so that it reverberated in my head as if it were an empty cavern. I focused on the house-sized boulders that blocked my view of the rapid and tried to breathe.

My companions laughed and shouted to each other as they entered the rapid. Years of experience on the river have given them the confidence to relax and throw tricks amidst the waves. Boulder Drop is the most difficult rapid on the Skykomish River and has caused me more anguish than any other rapid in my short career as a whitewater paddler.

My only thought was the memory of the last two times I was here. I could still feel the power of its hold. I was sucked down into a recirculating hydraulic, spit back up again, tossed over and over by the river as a cat plays with his doomed prey. I needed to focus on the task in front of me. I attempted to smile and relax as I slipped between the first two boulders.

I tried to remember why I love the sport of whitewater kayaking so much. Was it the paralyzing fear or the sickening feeling in the pit of my stomach? I dimly remembered something I said earlier that day about enjoying the fear.

This is the Skykomish River, one of the many breathtaking wild and scenic rivers in Washington State. As long as river users remember, the put-in for the Skykomish River has been at the base of Sunset Falls near Index, Washington. Although the falls are un-runnable to kayakers, the sound of thousands of gallons of water pounding over the rocks gets the adrenaline pumping for the journey down the river.

Kayakers starting the journey down the Skykomish River have been launching off the rocks at the falls for as long as they can remember.

"I've been boating on the Skykomish for twenty years and that has always been the put-in for us," said Jennie Goldberg, Director of American Whitewater. "I miss it."

Jennie Goldberg is on the board of directors at American Whitewater and the Washington Kayak Club (WKC). She has been working on the problem of put-in closure since access to the area first became a problem in July of 2000. Jenny has been living in the Seattle area most of her life and rivers such as the Skykomish hold special importance to her.

"The river is beautiful and a fun play river," she said, "That is why it has become so popular in the last couple of years. The number of boaters on the river has tripled."

The growing amount of boaters on the river has caused the majority of problems at Sunset Falls. The road to the put-in is a private road for homes on the river and a state-owned fish facility. The property has never been officially accessible to the public.

"The put-in has never been public property. The land belongs to the state fish facility located there. The employees that work there have always looked the other way when kayakers came to use the put-in. The road down to the fish facility is private property and the Department of Fish and Wildlife was granted easement to truck and haul fish on the road," Goldberg said.

The problems began with run-ins between employees and boaters. The road is not wide enough for boaters to park and change into their gear while large trucks come and go chauffeuring fish.

"The reason we had problems at the put-in last summer was because good water levels lasted longer than usual this last year. This brought about conflicts between employees at the fish hatchery here and kayakers using the same roads to get to the river," said Goldberg.

Every year during June and July salmon begin to swim their way up the Skykomish River from the ocean. They battle their way up small waterfalls and fast flowing rapids to Sunset Falls. At the falls, Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) intervene in the migration upstream. The fish at the base of the falls are caught in nets and thrown into the backs of trucks filled with water. These large mobile fish tanks are trucked above the falls so the fish can continue their journey upstream to spawn.

Last summer when the large snowpack melted it kept the Skykomish River accessible to kayakers during a time of year when normally the salmon and fishermen are the only visitors to the river. Kayakers, attracted by high water levels, got in the way as truck drivers hauling thousands of gallons of fish and river water stormed up and down the road to deliver fish around the falls.

"The drivers felt they might have to slam on the brakes because of boaters in the road," said Goldberg, "The WDFW didn't want to compromise the safety of their personnel and they felt it was turning into a liability issue for them."

The last straw for the Department was when a van full of kids came down to the put-in site. Some officials from the WDFW came down to confront the driver of the van. The driver was rude and the WDFW decided not to deal with the problem of public access anymore.

"It was not entirely their fault, the problem had been building, but that was one of the final incidents that shut down the put-in," Goldberg said.

Another incident was an unrelated fatality at the falls one night. This caused the WDFW to again point to the problem of liability in allowing the public on the property. They did not want to be responsible for the problems related to public access. Nearby property owner Phillip Killion watched as rescuers pulled the body out of the river the next day.

"People from out-of-town come here and want to get as close as they can to those falls, but the rocks are covered with moss and get pretty slippery," said Killion.

Another fear the Department voiced was that people accessing the fish facility could steal the fish.

"As if kayakers are interested in stealing fish," said Goldberg.

The final decision by the WDFW was to keep the general public off their property, this included kayakers. The Sunset Falls put-in was closed. Boaters now use put-ins further downstream. But for those who know and love the river, the downstream put-ins cut off an important part of the Skykomish run. Many boaters drive hours to run the river, and now they are denied access to one of the key

features on the river. This key feature is a wave that has always been a great place to throw tricks and practice skills. It is now over a half-mile upstream of the nearest legal put-in.

Kayakers must try to convince the state and the decision-makers in the WDFW that this section of river is important to the public they are working for. The state needs to acknowledge the river is not private property and should be accessible to everyone.

For now, the only way to access the wave is to undertake a strenuous trek and paddle upstream. And so I found myself ankle deep in mud on the riverbank trying to make my way around the first rapid.

I had taken another step into the clay and watched my foot disappear underneath the thick gray mud. It was the consistency of wet cement. As I pulled my foot out of the mud, my Teva sandal stayed underneath. My left hand gripped my paddle as it slowly sank into the bank; I braced myself from slipping downward. Balanced on my right shoulder was my prize possession, my Riot 007 kayak. Although it is one of the lightest whitewater boats made, its weight threw my small frame off balance. If I leaned over to dig my Teva out of the mud I would have most likely dropped the kayak, slipped down the clay bank, and landing in a pile of kayaking gear in the riverbed below, still minus a sandal. I stood carefully balanced on one foot, watching my friend in the river below make more progress than I as he struggled to paddle upstream.

I managed to grab my Teva with ape-like toe maneuvers and hobbled across the stretch of mud. I set my boat among the roots at my feet and sighed. In our trek upstream, we had about three more rapids to portage around before we reached the top wave. I decided to risk the slippery, mossy rock portages rather than deal with any more mud.

As we drew closer to the wave, homeowners came out to watch the crazy kayakers making their way up river. I waved and smiled at our audience. I managed to get a wave back, but no smile. We reached the play spot and the other kayakers began to surf on the wave. A standing wave on a river is a feature that holds the boat in place against the moving current and lets the boater practice tricks. Being the novice in the group I was the only one who found that the wave was not sticky enough to charge my way on. I was ambushed by a variety of tips from the rest of the group.

"Lean forward." John demonstrated in his boat for me.

"Lean back more and brace." Jason yelled over a shoulder.

"Try starting up higher above the wave." Drew shrugged and offered this advice.

"Don't start so high up." Once again John showed me what he meant. I wish it was only that easy for me.

"Smile." Jack offered the best advice of the day.

I ended up on the rocks next to the wave taking pictures with a waterproof camera.

After an hour or so the six of us started down the rapids. I paddled hard to warm up, amazed by the steep peaks that rose above the river on both sides. The tallest, Mt. Index, watched over the river through snow-covered shades. I blew out of my mouth and watched the steam cloud rise in the February air.

With each rapid my heart beat faster, anticipating the dreaded Boulder Drop. We came around the corner and I caught the first glimpse.

I pulled into the first eddy and stared wide-eyed at the next drop. One deep breathe, another, maybe I needed a couple more. I paddled out of the eddy scared so stiff that my hips didn't absorb the waves above the drop. I found myself upside down headed towards a line of rocks in-between which is a six-foot drop to a hydraulic. I rolled up and braced on a truck-sized rock on the right side of the drop.

'This could be bad,' I thought momentarily.

I pushed off the rock headed sideways over the drop. I braced my paddle into the water, slammed myself against a rock on the left to straighten out and launched as far as I could over the small waterfall. I surprised myself by staying upright and paddled hard to the first person I saw in the eddy. I was finally able to breathe.

The rest of the rapid was like flying. The river picked me up the crest of a wave and then dropped me into the next leaving my stomach behind. I was part of the water itself, following its drop from the mountain peaks.

I got down the rapid and joined the other boaters at the bottom. This time no one had to remind me to smile.

Sky River Access Fund Established!

In May 2001, American Whitewater and the Washington Kayak Club established the Skykomish River Access Fund with proceeds from the 2001 Sky Fest. This fund recognizes that legal river access opportunities along the whitewater sections of the Skykomish River in Washington State are limited and diminishing. There are few public right-of-ways or easements, and there is little publicly owned land allowing legal access to this popular river.

You can help by sending donations to:

Sky Access Fund

c/o American Whitewater

P.O. Box 636

Margaretville, NY 12455

Please make checks payable to American Whitewater

American Whitewater will collect funds from our membership, affiliates, and the Rivers Council of Washington. These funds will be dedicated to improving river access on the Skykomish River in Washington State. This fund is known as the "Sky Access Fund" and donations are tax-deductible.

The primary objective for these funds will be to acquire and improve public river access sites along the Skykomish. Secondary uses of the funds may include: (1) leasing or acquiring access sites on regional whitewater rivers; (2) developing parking, changing, or toilet facilities at new and existing river access sites on regional whitewater rivers; (3) providing appropriate signage regarding river access, or (4) providing legal and management fees for maintaining, developing, and acquiring river access sites in the Skykomish region.

Nailgunner to Captain: Upper Yough, MD

By Nick Lipkowski

Editor's Note: Next time you're in Friendsville, be sure to thank John Mason and the other good folks at Mountain Surf for providing take-out access on the Upper Yough. Also be sure to thank American Whitewater's volunteers who designed and built our new changing rooms on the Upper Yough! Kudos go to Mike Bailey, Troy Dike, Nick Lipkowski, Pat Norton, Charlie Walbridge, Bob Gedekoh, Kitty and Barry Tuscano. Great work guys!

Next time you take out at Mountain Surf in Friendsville, watch your bare feet. Not that we didn't try to clean up but there are bound to be nails and bits of metal shear hiding in the grass.

Most people noticed that work began last summer when a set of wooden stairs magically appeared on the bank in an effort to slow the riverbank erosion of countless boater's feet. Barry Tuscano, American Whitewater Board of Directors secretary and veteran Upper Yough boater, built those and recently organized the work party with Mike Bailey for a brand-new changing room. Likewise, in late April, American Whitewater volunteers built changing rooms over the weekend. One Friday they were not there, and on Monday they were.

I met Barry and his wife Kitty along with Pat Norton, Troy Dyke and Mike Bailey in Friendsville for the event. Mike, a boater and the owner of Mike Bailey Construction was there to design and supervise the building while Barry brought the materials and his skills.

Just as we were concluding the task of erecting the foundation posts, all the more arduous for having to dig through tree roots, we were joined by Bob Gedekoh and Charlie Walbridge.

Only Barry, Mike and Troy had any experience with the two air-powered nail guns that Mike brought along but by the end of the afternoon, lookout! We were all having fun piloting these tools. And, as we became used to the weight and recoil of these cumbersome tools, Mike and Troy regaled the rest of us with true tails of nail gun terror.

Contrary to the nail gun attack scene you may remember from Pacific Heights, these guns are fixed with a safety that won't allow firing until the tool is positioned against a hard object, and I am happy to report asingular lack of any accidents. Maybe it's aso-called "guy thing," but I could see the gleam in my own eyes reflected in the faces of the others. I don't think I was the only one amused by the thought of Bob in scrubs going to work on suturing up a nail gun patient.

After taking off around four that afternoon to join a friend on the Lower Yough Loop in Ohio I was back on Sunday morning with Barry, Mike and Troy for the finishing touches and clean up. The four of us headed to the Loop afterwards for a little afternoon reward. I have since returned to the Upper on three occasions and am happy to report that the changing rooms are being utilized. Whether they will help ease some tensions that have surfaced in recent years regarding boater nudity in Friendsville remains to be seen. What's for certain is that none of us wants to be compelled to paddle the extra flat water to the town park downstream, so, on behalf of all boaters, American Whitewater is asking you to avoid careless and unnecessary epidermal exposure while in town.

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Fee Test on Upper Yough Sang Run Put-in: MD

By Jason Robertson

This is a test. This is only a test.

As of June 1st, American Whitewater will manage the Sang Run put-in for the Upper Yough.

In 1999, Maryland's Department of Natural Resources at Deep Creek was instructed to implement a cost recovery program for managing the put-in. The DNR began charging a \$2 parking fee and hoped to collect \$8,000 a year. However, during the first two years the agency only collected about \$1,400. Clearly the program was not working, and there was discussion of implementing broader regulations and noncompliance penalties to increase payments.

American Whitewater has headed off the move to stricter enforcement by negotiating a partnership agreement with (DNR) for managing the existing put-in. We believe that we can maintain the site for less than \$1,000 a year. The practical result of this agreement is that we will ask visitors to make a onetime annual donation when they visit the site. All donations will be returned to managing the site or working on access issues on the Yough. American Whitewater has already established an endowment to begin managing the site with help from the Martin Foundation, and a matching grant from Charlie Walbridge.

Our expenses include renting a port-a-john, maintaining the changing rooms, policing the area for trash, and mowing the grass. We are also seeking volunteers to help with mowing and cleanup. Volunteers and donors may help by contacting American Whitewater at 866-boat-4-AW or e-mailing me at Jason@amwhitewater.org.

If boaters fail to contribute a minimum of \$1,000 a year, then the test will be concluded and management of the site will revert to the DNR. We hope that this will not be necessary.

Georgia's Cartecay River is Open Again!

Photo by Julie Keller of Donna Page at S-Turn Rapid



Bob and Lisa, the owners of River Right Outfitters, have come through with another superb win for the paddling community. With American Whitewater's help, they have secured a free public put-in on Georgia's Class II-III Cartecay River and are even providing bathrooms and a riverside campground!

The Cartecay is a beautiful river ideally suited for introducing folks to whitewater canoeing and kayaking. It is an easy drive from Atlanta and has a quick shuttle. The river is fairly narrow, and is lined

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with mountain laurel, azaleas, pines, and rhododendron. If you're not game for driving all the way to Section III of the Chattooga or the Nantahala, the Cartecay is a wonderful compromise. There are a lot of private residences along the river,

however they are for the most part tastefully designed and concealed from the river. Squirting at S-turn is a blast, and Blackberry Falls is perhaps the easiest Class III introduction to creekin' in the south-east! Use has been declining steadily over the past four years as access became increasingly difficult. Free access at the put-in should solve many of the use difficulties.

American Whitewater's Access Director, Jason Robertson, credited River Right with doing all the hard work on this project, "The folks at River Right saw that there was a problem with access on the Cartecay. They approached us for strategic advice and then jumped in feet first to find an access site. Bob and Scott negotiated with the landowners to lease the site and make it available for the public. This is a fantastic example of how outfitters and American Whitewater can work hand-in-hand for the good of the paddling community!"

The new put-in is located directly across the river from the old fee site. Continue past River Right Outfitters on Lower Cartecay Road off Highway 52 for about a mile and a half. Cross over the Cartecay River



and you'll see the new put-in on your right. There's a big red kayak with a "River Right" sign on it. You'll notice two port-a-johns that are cleaned weekly. Walk towards the river and you'll find a nice, easy trail down to the water's edge where there's a sand bar for you to launch your boat. River Right also provides free shuttles when you make a purchase at the store.

The Savage River: MD

By Jason Robertson

On April 4th, 2001 American Whitewater wrote the Upper Potomac River Commission (UPRC) requesting a meeting to discuss the future of whitewater releases on the Savage River.

The Upper Potomac River Commission's (UPRC) failure to hold scheduled recreational whitewater releases on the Savage River in September 2000 is not easily understood or justified. The decision is especially confusing since: 1) Maryland's State Department of the Environment found there would be "negligible" effects; 2) Garrett County's Commissioners supported the proposed releases based on economic benefits; 3) the reservoir had more water than usual for the time of year and was 85% vs. 65% full; 4) safety and debris concerns were addressed by volunteers prior to the scheduled releases; and 5) whitewater recreation is specifically listed by law as one of four project purposes.

On the rare occasions when the UPRC has scheduled recreational whitewater releases there has been significant interest within the whitewater paddling community, and boaters have driven to the Savage from all around the mid-Atlantic. These visitors travel through Maryland, dine in Maryland, stay in Maryland's hotels overnight, and generally contribute to Maryland's rural and suburban economies.

Recognizing the value of whitewater releases to the local economy, the Board of Garrett County Commissioners supported the 2000 whitewater release application "based on benefits to recreation and tourism in Garrett County, and because of the abundance of water in the Savage Reservoir."

The Savage River Dam was constructed in 1952 for flood control, water storage, and low flow augmentation. In 1988, under the Water Resources Development Act, Congress added a fourth project purpose, "downstream recreation," defined specifically to include both whitewater boating and fishing.

The Upper Potomac River Commission (UPRC) was established in 1935 (Chapter 409, Acts of 1935) and has jurisdiction over the water resources of Alleghany County and Election District 4 (Bloomington) in Garrett County, Maryland. The UPRC has owned the dam since July 1953 and supervises the project in order to regulate the flow of the Potomac River. The project is operated in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Until recently, the Savage was the premier whitewater racecourse in the United States. Since 1969, it has been the site of the World Championships, the Pan American Cup, the World Cup, and U.S. Olympic Team Trials. In 1987, the State of Maryland invested nearly \$2 million in improvements on the Savage for the 1989 World Championships and generated an estimated \$10 million in economic benefits to Western Maryland.

On September 12, 2000 boaters requested confirmation that the whitewater releases would occur on the requested dates of September 29, 30 and October 1, 2000.

On September 14th the UPRC responded with concerns about whether there was "sufficient time to prepare" for the releases. Indicated preparations included addressing "safety issues and debris blockages." The September 14th letter included, as an attachment, a statement from the Maryland Department of the Environment dated September 6, 2000 that water quality impacts from the scheduled releases would be "negligible."

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On September 19th boaters responded that a work crew including local college students would clear debris prior to the scheduled releases. Consistent with this response, a work crew met on Friday, September 22 and cleared hazardous debris from the river channel. According to Steve Storck, an Associate Professor in the Adventuresports Program at Garrett Community College, volunteers contributed over 150 man-hours removing debris. At this time, work crew participants still expected that the scheduled releases would occur. However, the recreation releases failed to occur. In fact, the autumn draw down releases occurred later that season, at night, in the cover of darkness.

On October 16, 2000 American Whitewater's Executive Director Rich Bowers wrote the UPRC on behalf of American Whitewater's members, the USCKT, and Maryland's whitewater boating community. The broad purpose of Mr. Bowers' letter was to identify why the recreational whitewater releases did not occur in 2000, and to begin plans for regularly scheduled recreational whitewater releases in

Autumn 2001. Mr. Bowers also called and left two messages in late October 2000. As of April 4, 2001 American Whitewater had not received any acknowledgement from the UPRC to the letter or the courtesy of a response to the phone calls, which prompted our letter to Maryland's state representatives.

In late May, American Whitewater received a response from the Garrett County tourism board offering to mediate between the boating community and the UPRC. The tourism board is interested in this issue because of the principal role that they expect the Savage River Whitewater Course to play in Baltimore's application for the 2012 Olympics. We also received our first letter from the UPRC's attorneys listing several irrelevant concerns and illegitimate justifications for not providing recreational whitewater releases. At press time, American Whitewater expects to hold a meeting with UPRC and other stakeholders in July to discuss these issues and identify solutions permitting regular access to one of the East's finest dam-controlled rivers.

Fee Demo in Grand Canyon

Editorial by Tom Martin

Dear American Whitewater,

Thank you for allowing me to have this opportunity to draw your readers' attention to an abuse of the Fee Demonstration Program as applied to river runners at Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP). A solution to this abuse may be found in the now often quoted phrase "Maybe most of you don't have a problem with this. If that's the case, keep on doing nothing. it's working beautifully."

Do-it-yourself river runners have been rafting the Colorado River through Grand Canyon for over 100 years. Presently, GCNP releases only 260 river permits per year to do-it-yourself river runners desiring to undertake such an adventure. As you may also know, there are over 6,000 permit holders waiting their turn to raft the river. This group is a "captive" group, meaning that if they do not follow any and every rule GCNP requires of them, permittees will immediately forfeit their opportunity to raft through Grand Canyon. Besides offering the country's longest outstanding whitewater journey through potential wilderness, the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park is the only year-round whitewater run in the state of Arizona.

As recently as 5 years ago, do-it-yourself river runners showed up at the "Put-In" for this river journey at Lees Ferry, AZ, provided their Social Security numbers to GCNP rangers, and departed on their way. At time of launch, rafters were required to pay a per-person "special use" fee of \$10, which included a permit fee and park entrance fee.



In March of 1997, the Fee Demonstration program was initiated at GCNP, and fees for the do-it-yourself river runner went up overnight to \$107 per-person average, with absolutely no input from the river running community. River runners were forced to pay this new fee at the time of launch. The remote northern Arizona GCNP Lee's Ferry rangers were suddenly collecting over \$10,000 in cash and checks every week, potentially jeopardizing their safety. Meanwhile, backcountry services provided to river runners who were rafting through the potential wilderness of Grand Canyon National Park did not change in any appreciable way, nor have they to this day.

In December of 1998, GCNP instituted a new policy whereby river runners had to pay all Fee Demo fees 90 days in advance of trip departure. Also, no one could join the river permit group from 90 days prior to launch up to and including the day the trip launched. It should be noted that all fees are payable regardless of the individual river runner's time actually spent in the park. From one night to 45 nights spent on the river, all river runners were

required to pay the same fees. These changes were made in the face of strong public opposition. While no longer requiring the Lee's Ferry rangers to handle large amounts of cash, for the first time the Fee Demonstration Program altered a 100-year tradition of river running by not only imposing excessive fees but trip participation limitations as well.

In September 2000, GCNP instituted a new fee of \$100 on top of the existing fees, again with no public input. This new fee allowed

A C C C S S

individuals to join a river trip between 90 and 30 days prior to launch. GCNP officials noted this change was "made to increase options available to those who have scheduled trips." The Park also stated "the \$100 late fee is expected to discourage indiscriminate use of this option." The current Superintendent is on record stating "The \$100 late fee is set at a level high enough to make it unattractive as a casual alternative." Individuals joining river trips in the 90 to 30 day time period prior to trip launch now pay \$207 in Fee Demonstration fees, and joining a river party between 30 days up to and including date of launch is still prohibited.

On top of the above-mentioned changes, there are serious discrepancies in how the Fee Demonstration program is applied to other river running park visitors. Individuals who use GCNP river concessionaire services pay a flat \$10 Fee Demo fee with absolutely no restriction on when they may join a concessionaire river trip, even to the day of departure. It should be noted that 50% of river concessions passengers make over \$100,000 per year, while the do-it-yourself river runner's earning potential is much lower and matches the national average.

If we compare river runners to visitors that use the park's main entrance by automobile, we find the Fee Demo fee to be \$20 PER VEHICLE with 2 being the average number of individuals in that vehicle. This \$20 buys 2 visitors to the rim oneweek's worth of nightly educational offerings, camping services and bathroom facility access. It should be clear that do-it-yourself river runners, who pack out their solid human waste and receive the least amount of park services (not that they want any), are paying the highest Fee Demo fees anywhere in the entire federal land management system.

To recap, the Fee Demo program has proved a failure for the do-it-yourself river runner at Grand Canyon National Park for the last 5 years. The Fee Demo program was initiated and has been manipulated without public input on a captive pool of river permit holders. The Fee Demo program has not been evenly levied to similar users of the Colorado River through the park, with higher fees levied against the do-it-yourself visitors, while lower fees are levied against wealthier visitors who use concessionaire services. The Fee Demo program is charging do-it-yourself river runners the highest fees of any National Park, with no backcountry services provided from the fees charged. Most disturbing is the fact that the Fee Demo program is purposely being implemented to be "unattractive" and "discourage" park river visitation at Grand Canyon. Finally, the Fee Demo program has altered the very way do-it-yourself river runners can prepare for their river journey, impacting a century's worth of rich and colorful river running tradition on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

The above history of Fee Demo management at the Grand Canyon should be proof enough that the program has proved a total failure as applied to river runners. Fee Demo was never intended to lack fair application between similar user groups, increase risk to agency personnel, and most importantly, deter and discourage federal land visitation.

If you as a reader have stuck with this long historical review enough to read to here, you may be wondering what you can do to help in completely eliminating the use of the Fee Demo fees for river rafters in Grand Canyon. It's simple. E-mail or phone your Congressional representatives. And don't just complain about user fees. Make sure the representative you're communicating with also knows that you demand a permanent level of funding for recreation on federal lands sufficient to prevent this kind of nonsense far into the future. Otherwise, "Keep on doing nothing" but don't expect to get to the put-in anytime soon.

Sincerely yours,
Tom Martin
Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association
www.gcpba.org

Newly Proposed Insurance Rules Are a Liability

By Jason Robertson

Imagine dislocating your shoulder on a kayaking trip. Your current employer provides insurance that covers the injury. However, after changing jobs a few years later you re-injure your shoulder. This is not beyond the pale is it? Now, imagine what happens to you if the new insurance provider under the new employer is able to choose not to cover your rehabilitation of an old recreational injury. That is what the Department of Health and Human Services proposed in Spring 2001.

American Whitewater submitted comments to Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy Thompson in opposition to the nondiscrimination regulations under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

The proposed regulations state that an employer cannot refuse health-care coverage to an employee based on participation in recreational activities. Yet these same regulations permit health insurers to deny coverage for injuries sustained in connection with such recreational activities, thereby effectively reaching the same result.

The Clinton Administration passed the HIPAA legislation in 1996 and the government has since taken 5 years drafting guidelines for insurers to follow under the legislation. The new guidelines appear to conflict directly with the antidiscrimination elements of the law.

If recreationists are unable to purchase health insurance that protects them as they participate in legal recreational activities, it will affect participation. Reduced participation will have significant impacts on the economy and public health. It is difficult to believe that the Federal Government would consider, let alone propose, such a radically misguided regulation. This suggestion to allow insurance providers to limit coverage to recreationists is simply absurd.

These rules will affect more than just athletes. The proposed legislation endangers the burgeoning industry of outdoor adventure programming. This industry involves millions of people as participants, program directors, leaders, trainers, and small business owners, as well as manufacturers and suppliers of clothing and equipment. For this multi-billion dollar industry to remain viable, and for the millions of participants to continue receiving safe instruction, it is necessary for instructors and participants to have medical coverage, while participating in legal recreation. The rules that the HHS proposes will adversely affect this entire industry.

American Whitewater supports the original Congressional intent of the bill, as described in an April 2001 letter by Assistant House Majority Whip Mike Green (R-WI, 8th). Congressman Green describes how one intent of the HIPAA legislation is to protect individuals participating in outdoor adventure sports from being discriminated against and denied health insurance coverage simply because they are participating in a legal recreational activity. The proposed regulations deny this protection and fly in the face of the legislation's authors.

Congressman Mark Green and nearly 50 other House members suggested the following modification to the proposed rule. The simple modification would address American Whitewater's concerns:

"(ii) Specific rule relating to source-of-injury exclusions - (A) If a group health plan generally provides for a type of injury, the plan may not deny benefits otherwise provided for treatment of the injury if the injury resulted from an act of domestic violence or a medical condition (including both physical and mental) **or participation in legal recreational activities such as motorcycling, snowmobiling, all-terrain vehicle riding, horseback riding, skiing, or other similar activities.**"

Wolves and Hounds: The Access Paradigm

Editorial by Port

To the townspeople, we were wolves, and in our strength we acted like wolves.

You can't blame them for fearing us. We were the uncontrolled, the foreign, and the exotic. Our presence signified a change of seasons. We thrust ourselves in their midst with a reckless abandon on weekends. To the townspeople we were a culture without limits and it was their deeply bred duty as hounds to honor and defend barriers, boundaries and land.

Seeing our feral image reflected in their eyes only made us stronger, and in our strength we appeared imposing, reckless, and wild. We appeared governed by anarchy, if it could be said we were governed at all.

The townspeople would posture too. They would gun their engines and race up the middle of the road, unconsciously trying to command order from what they perceived as chaos. We answered their fears with passive aggression. If the people would project hostility towards us, then we would reflect their hostility by flaunting our bodies, our money, and our leisure time. Our actions said, "See me. Watch me. I am here today by choice. You may judge me strong, that you shall not rule me."

So we dressed and undressed in their yards, flaunting abs of steel. We cranked our music louder, and played howling songs that were as distant from the baying of country music as the townspeople were from our sport.

Our vehicles were sleek, or bold, or new, or shadowy reflections of our wealth and leisure. While the townspeople's vehicles roared, ours purred. While the townspeople's vehicles were made in America, ours came from around the world.

Knowing that the townspeople viewed alcohol as an escape and as a prelude to abandon, we drank in their parking lots and made alcohol a stimulant, "See me. I drink because I can. I drink to restore the power that I have used on the river this day."

What matter that we spend our money in the town and boost the economy? We treat this as reason to treat the townspeople like fools and peasants. Can we blame the townspeople for fomenting an uprising? Can we blame the townspeople for being uncooperative, for denying us the value of our dollars? The townspeople recognize that they desire their order, their laws, their culture, more than they desire our carelessly spent cash or life-styles. The townspeople know us for wolves and guard their lives and land as wolfhounds.

The townspeople ask themselves, "Wolves? Why invite trouble?" The townspeople are not stupid. They are not so long separated from the frontier that they have forgotten how to rid themselves of wolves by hunting them, taking their prey, and ruining their hunting

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grounds. Thus the townspeople do all that is within their power to chase the wolves away and reduce our access to the river.


Police are called to impose control and conduct petty harassment. Local laws are changed to forbid parking. Barriers are erected beside bridges. Signs are posted that forbid trespassing.

Yet we are wolves, and we are sly as well as strong. We send our representatives to the heart of the town draped in sheep's clothing. We hobble the police and limit their powers. We use county laws that supercede town law. If county law is not sufficient, we go to state law. And if state law fails, we go to Federal law. We are strong. We are pack. Yet, the townspeople are pack too, and they often outnumber us. Thus we worry at each other with little nips and darts and growling until one tucks tail and runs, or the other exposes their neck and belly in meek acceptance.

This is the image and the problem that afflicts us and threatens river access. We are wolves at heart, and the townspeople are hounds. The way for us to avoid conflict is by posing as hounds and walking meekly within the laws of the community.

Consider your words and actions carefully as your wayfaring travels take you through the heart of America. Never forget that a lone wolf can instill as much fear in the heart of a community as a pack, and that once the hostility is apparent it is your duty as pack to support American Whitewater as the alpha. As alpha, we will do our sheep's clothing and invite you to enter the town with us to restore your right and ability to act yourself.

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- Dogs discouraged...\$5 per dog per night (no kidding)
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- 8:00 P.M. at the Festival Pavilion
- Music by Bluehound
- ACE Whitewater Film Festival
- \$5 Admission / Free for onsite campers!

Saturday and Sunday mornings

- Breakfast served by the Ruritan Club / 7:00 am to 10:00 am at the On-site Dining Hall

Friday, September 21

- ACE Gauley River Rolling Rodeo (Pros)

Saturday, September 22

- World Rafting Championships-Sprint-New River Fayette Station Rapid

Sunday, September 23

- World Rafting Championships-Slalom-New River Flea Flicker Rapid
- ACE Gauley River Rolling Rodeo (non-pro)

Monday, September 24

- Animal Upper Gauley Race

Tuesday, September 25

- World Rafting Championships-Upper Gauley-4000cfs!
- Canyon Doors Whitewater Rodeo-Lower Gauley
- (Note: Boaters welcome on river for this extra day of water, but will be asked to stay out of way of raft race.)

whitewater access and conservation

For further information, call Phyllis Horowitz at 845-586-2355 or email: whiteh2o@catskill.net

EventsCentral.....

Jayne H. Abbot, Events Manager

The 2001 Inaugural Ocoee Whitewater Games

By Amy Walters

All Photos by Pat McDonnell



The 2001 inaugural Ocoee Whitewater Games were held May 17-20 at the Ocoee Olympic Whitewater Center near Ducktown, TN. The Games mixed American Whitewater's 17th Annual Ocoee Rodeo and the United States Whitewater Slalom Team Trials for the first time on one venue, giving spectators an event to remember. Not only was the venue action packed with competition, but on Saturday a paddler wedding took place, and on Friday American Whitewater hosted the Ocoee Symposium at the Whitewater Center where dozens of concerned paddlers, agencies and other stakeholders came together to discuss water issues on the Ocoee. For more information on the symposium, see the symposium article in this issue.



Slalom Races

Around 100 athletes representing seven countries attended the Trials. While only U.S. athletes were racing for team placement, international paddlers were invited to utilize the facilities for training for the upcoming World Championships to be held on the Upper Ocoee September 20-23.

The slalom portion of the Games included three races. The athletes made two runs daily and winners were posted at the end of



each time trial. The winners were decided by a final score which was a combined total of the best of two of three races.

The athletes negotiated the new "short and fast" course (from the Slam Dunk eddy to the lower bridge as opposed to bridge to bridge) and the course was changed daily. No practice runs were allowed. The athletes who made the cut were invited to continue to this summer's World Cup Series. Most of these athletes are looking to the future as they gear up for making the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team competing in Athens, Greece.

Rebecca Giddens was the overall winner for the K-1W. Rebecca, of San Diego, CA, trains six days a week. Her love of the river and the people she trains and travels with keep her "up." She will continue to the World Cup, which involves six races covering Europe, hoping to win gold.

Three-time Olympian, Scott Shipley, of Atlanta, GA, dominated the K-1 class. Scott goes back to studying Mechanical Engineering at Georgia Tech. He is also finishing a book on training at slalom kayaking which will be out by Fall. Scott said he plans to skip the World Cup events and go straight to the World Championships in September.

Other athletes attending the event included Cathy Hearn, from D.C. Her first team trials were in 1975. She thinks kayaking is special because it breeds "[interdependence...not just among [herself] and the women's class but...internationally." Bunny Johns, who was NOC's President for over 20 years, also attended as a judge. Aleta Miller, current member of the U.S. Freestyle Kayak Team competing in Sorte, Spain this summer, decided to opt out of the Games Freestyle competition to focus solely on slalom. Despite telling me of a hectic training and work schedule, she was fit and smiling, especially after making the U.S. Whitewater Slalom Team as an alternate. Despite training separately as C-1's for most of the year, Scott McClesky, Atlanta, GA, and David Hepp, Culowhee, NC, made the U.S. Whitewater Slalom Team racing C-2.

Rodeo

The rodeo portion of the Games was the first in the Gorge Whitewater Series and carried a \$6,000 purse. The Series includes four events held across the country and winners accumulate points at each going toward an overall winners' score, and a \$7,500 cash purse.

At the Rodeo site, local children, many of whom had never seen a kayak, kept Russell Johnson of the Chattanooga Whitewater Kids Club (WKC) busy all weekend long at the demo pool. The music of DJ Judd Poindexter amped the competitors for their upcoming rides as Dixie-Marie Prickett, Luke Ramsey, Dave Knox and Brad Sutton entertained the crowd as emcees. The athletes found Smiley's Hole flushy and favoring right, and the eddies up long ones if they didn't roll fast. Competitors had to show their stuff to make it past Friday's prelims.

The Non-Pro classes competed Saturday. Lookout Mountain, TN, local Becca Red did not compete at slalom at this event but had fun at the rodeo in the Junior Women's Expert category. She has already qualified for the Jr. U.S. Slalom Team and is heading to the Pre-Worlds in Poland this summer. She summed up the event with a "Pro" attitude telling me, "The fun I had was more important than winning."

Saturday also saw the Squirt Boat at Callahan's ledge. Squirt competitors Harry Field, Jesse Wilensky, and Hugh Kelly said the squirt site was entertaining. Andy Beddingfield and Brooke Winger, World Champions from 1999 in New Zealand, showed us how they could disappear, both earning first place finishes.

The Free Riding or Freestyle Through a Rapid (FTR) was a rock and water "slopestyle" in playboats with a subjective 10-point judging scale. The competitors each had two minutes to play out the river's potential on the section of the river from Callahan's ledge to the lower bridge. And they played no holds barred, even cartwheeling and spinning in Humongous. Erica Mitchell brought home gold here. So did Shane Benedict. Erica, from Fayetteville, West Virginia, said she loves to boat big water and tap the river for all it's worth the whole way down. She is currently finishing up a degree in Psychology from Mesa State University, in Grand Junction, CO.

Sunday we saw what being a Pro is all about. The K-1W finals left Brooke Winger and Erica Mitchell in a head-to-head battle. Both of these women gave their all, pummeling Smiley's hole with their boats. In the end, Brooke walked away with an \$800 check and the gold. Brooke is a member of the U.S. Freestyle Team attending this summer's World's. The Men's Pro event came down to Eric Jackson





Party

The party started off in a downpour, but that gave everybody time to get close and talk, shop the silent auction and raffle, and eat BBQ. High Country Outfitters, owned by James Sloan of Atlanta, GA, and Gerald Marshall of Ocoee, TN, was our host this year. Lots of places to camp, throw Frisbee and, when the rain cleared, the sounds of "All Things Green," a band out of Cleveland, TN, left people dancing until the wee hours of Sunday morning.

Notes

Judging was a little different this year as the event placed two "regular guys," otherwise known as noncompetitor recreational paddlers, as variety judges for the professional freestyle classes. Jimmy Blakeney, a long-time supporter of NOWR judging, trained the new variety judges and the athletes for the most part found the change a "non-issue." First-time variety judge Eric Olle of East Lansing, MI, was taking a break from working on his Ph.D. research in Cellular/Molecular Biology. He has previously judged swimming at the NCAA level and thinks the move toward using non-competing athletes

in the stand is one in the right direction. Eric judged the Pro freestyle and the FTR.

Slalom Director, Anne Rymer, and Rodeo Director, Jayne Abbot, said overall the Games "went smoother than expected. [It was a] new venture as a combined event." Brian Parsons, the USACK Director of Slalom echoed her sentiments adding, "we've been trying to get something like this together for a long time." Risa Shimoda added, "We have received great feedback on having combined...events...[However], having hundreds of athletes, coaches, and vendors on site created a logistical challenge for visitors, so we'll need to think about how we can better facilitate attendance by casual spectators."

Another note is that Susan Wilson, longtime rodeo competitor, said good-bye to the rodeo world at this event. Susan, who has competed for 12 years and organized the Ocoee Rodeo for 8, plans to spend her time playboating, training dogs at her new school, "A Good Dog's Life," and continuing to help with the North Carolina Search and Rescue Dog Association. We wish her luck! Susan, along with Roxanne Sherry (who also attended the event as an FTR judge), were the first women I remember watching "go big" under the bridge at Hell Hole. Thanks for the inspiration, ladies!

and Javid Grubbs in a huckfest for all Smiley's was worth. After loops, too many cartwheels to count, and both men using all or close to all of their allotted time, the gold went to EJ. This win puts \$1,000 in the Director of Wave Sports' pocket. With his wife Christine's help (it was not unusual to see her in an eddy helping EJ change boats so he could go straight to competing in another event class) he completed nearly every event available to him at the Ocoee Games. Jackson, from Greensboro, NC, got in his first kayak at age six and strives to live each day giving out maximum energy. He and the family will attend the Worlds in Sorte.

Last but certainly not least, the decked canoes, or C-1's. Chris Manderson of Asheville, NC, was the winner of this category. Luke Hopkins and Barry Kennon gave Chris a run for his money, but Chris' first ride was vertical, clean, and used up the clock racking up 326.37 points. Not only did this leave him in first place going into the final knockdown ride with Luke, which put Chris in the gold, but it also earned him the highest-scoring ride of the competition. All three C-1 competitors mentioned are also on the U.S. Freestyle Team and plan to attend the Worlds.

The Downriver, or "Bridge-to-Bridge" event, occurred interspersed with the Pro Finals. The men and women competed in non-glass boats of less than 10 feet in length and raced in a head-to-head format, with the men and women's classes being held separately. EJ "smoked the competition" for the men and Maria Noakes steamed her way into first for the women.

Wedding

Bill Edmonds, a longtime Ocoee competitor, and Jennifer Woods tied the knot at 6 p.m. Saturday night beside the reflection pool at the Whitewater Center. A close gathering of family and friends joined them. Bill and Jennifer choose this spot because the rock where the ceremony was held had a gap in it which Bill crossed over to his new bride and into married life. Congratulations to the happy couple!

Until next year!



Special thanks to Dave Saal for his design used for the Ocoee Awards.
A Huge Thank You to the volunteers who made the Ocoee Games such a great success!

Ocoee Update

Nancy Galloway

American Whitewater made the first, very successful effort to build a coalition of a wide array of stakeholders by hosting the "Ocoee Symposium" at the Olympic Whitewater Center on Friday, May 18th, during the U.S.A. Canoe and Kayak team trials, and immediately prior to the Ocoee Rodeo, ensuring a great deal of media attention.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) recently announced that it was increasing the fees that outfitters pay for whitewater releases and by terminating the "free" water for events on the Upper Ocoee River. This section of the Ocoee is the site of the \$22 million Olympic Whitewater Center funded largely by taxpayers. Ironically, the river channel rarely flows with water due to TVA's diversion of water to the Ocoee No. 3 powerhouse five miles downstream. Increasing the cost of whitewater releases will have serious implications on the \$20 million a year commercial rafting industry in the Ocoee region.

Up to now, there has been no concerted effort by a broad coalition of stakeholders to address the fundamental issue of "who owns the water," and work to effect a change in the TVA's outlook. American Whitewater hosted the Ocoee Symposium as a forum to draw together stakeholders in the watershed. The goal was to establish a dialogue among competing interests in an attempt to develop a long-term water management plan for the Ocoee balancing these interests. Speakers were drawn from the outfitter community, utilities, economic development interests, state and federal agencies and American Whitewater. One speaker, Larry Wall of Georgia Power, gave a brief case history of that company's work with American Whitewater on Tallulah Gorge, and crystallized the afternoon's presentations when he told the audience, "We thought they were crazy to want whitewater releases on Tallulah, but once we saw it was possible, and found that it would be better for the community than producing power with that water — well, there was really only one way to go."

It is definitely the case that it is far more beneficial to the community to have whitewater releases than to use that same water for power generation. The \$20 million made each year by commercial outfitters recirculates at least five times in the community, generating a total direct and indirect benefit of \$100 million. By contrast, the TVA would make only \$268,000 from selling the power made with that water — and it leaves the community, going straight to TVA's coffers.

Nor does the TVA suffer undue harm by releasing the water. The Ocoee No. 3 powerhouse generates only 28MW - not even 1/100th of TVA's total generating capacity of 29,469 MW. And this will become increasingly marginalized as TVA further expands capacity by opening new plants over the next two years.

Residents on Georgia's Lake Blue Ridge — the reservoir for the Ocoee system — have kept their interests foremost in TVA's planning. These are extremely well-connected, influential people who have constantly advocated for keeping lake levels high from May through August, and are now calling for this to be extended through September. Water kept in Lake Blue Ridge during the summer is water that won't be generating electricity at peak times. But the Ocoee powerhouses currently operate 95% of the time, and the lake levels are kept up even with this demand. As the generation system on the upper Ocoee is organized in such a fashion that TVA can either generate power or release the water into the channel — not both simultaneously. Hence, the water usage would be the same, and the net effect on the lake level zero.

As for the cost to ratepayers: if TVA runs a schedule of 20 releases of 9 hours each, and the cost of lost power is assessed across the company's 8 million ratepayers, the cost to each would run 2 cents per year.

Speaker after speaker built the case for continuing releases on the Ocoee. If they had to be paid for, the prices should be within reason, so that outfitters could have a viable business, and events wouldn't be bankrupted. But American Whitewater will continue to make the point that river water is a public resource — like air or forests — and should be free to the public.

The coalition has been formed, and will work to draw in additional stakeholders in the region. Another meeting will take place in late June, to better formulate the goals and strategies. Boaters and other interested parties from the region will be invited to participate, and help spearhead the grassroots advocacy that will encourage the TVA to change. The goal of the coalition is the development of a long-term water management plan that balances the needs of competing interests in the basin including power generation, whitewater recreation, and reservoir interests. American Whitewater is optimistic that a plan can be developed to meet these diverse interests.

American Whitewater's website will carry announcements of upcoming meetings and other advocacy opportunities. After building an e-mail list of locally interested parties, we can set up a list serve. We also hope to develop a chat room for this issue, so boaters can update one another on the issue.

In addition, our new Conservation and Access Associate, Kevin Colburn, will be aiding local efforts to work with the TVA and reach a mutually agreeable solution that will ensure the community continues to benefit from this extraordinary recreational resource.

HOW TO BOW STALL

By Astrid Ensign

Bow stalling is vertically balancing your kayak with the bow submerged in water as the stern balances vertically in the air. This move is an incredible way to hone in on your overall balance. Bow stalling is fun, challenging, and spectacular to watch and easy to do, but there are a few things to know before you attempt this flatwater trick. It is best to try it on a pond, lake, or pool. The flat water is the easiest place to begin to get a grasp of this move without the interference of any current.

One method for getting your boat vertical in a bow stall begins with a "plow" (as opposed to getting vertical by initiating your bow as in flatwater cartwheeling). First, get your boat moving forward in a straight line with a few powerful forward strokes to build some speed. After 5 (or so...) strokes you have generated an adequate amount of momentum and you have created a wake behind the boat. Pause for a few seconds or until you feel the wake loading up behind you giving you a bit of a lift under your stern. With this aid, you now want to get your boat to "gulp" water, plowing your boat under the water. Using a deliberate thrust forward with your torso, this will initiate the burying of your bow. At this point speed up the cadence of your strokes, putting in a few powerful strokes, as you begin to elevate vertically.

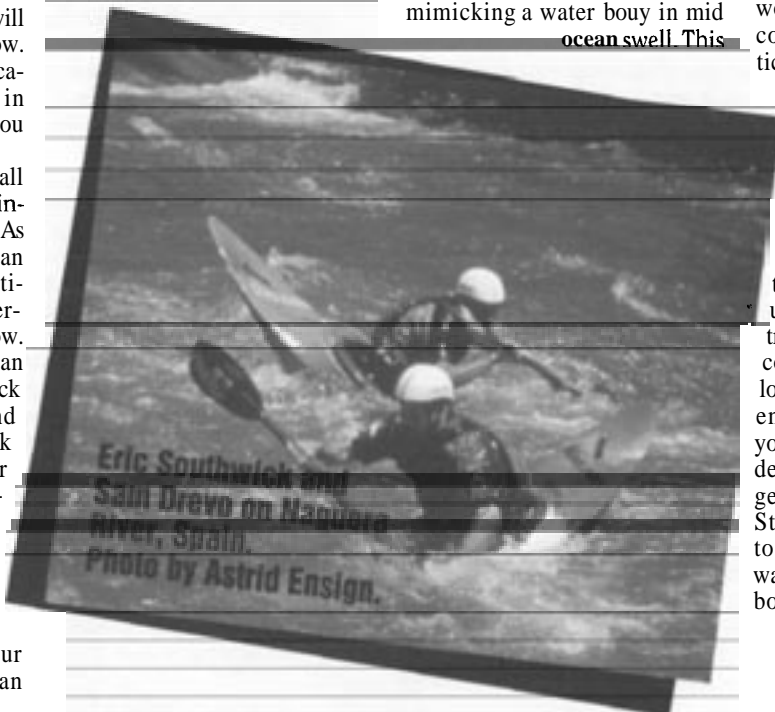
Keep in mind that during all this movement you want to maintain a solid forward posture. As soon as you bury your bow, lean slightly further forward to utilize your torso weight-transferring the weight into the bow. However you do not want to lean forward so much that your back and torso curls up and around the cockpit into the hunch back position. All this will do is lower your center of gravity and inhibit your forward transfer of speed. Now that your bow is buried, transfer your energy forward with a few powerful strokes, then you will achieve verticality. This is where your body balance or lack thereof can



be humbling.

Timing of your body movement is crucial in this move. You must execute an explosive burst forward with your torso while driving your bow down and focusing on your balance. Timing of paddle blade adjustments are just as important. Feeling slight movements of your stern above you and movement require you to make minor adjustments and readjustments of weight distribution to your position in the water.

There are different techniques for balancing once you are vertical. One technique you can use is utilizing the power face of your blade. Holding it slightly open, knife it down into the water, placing and reaching the paddle in front of you in a scooping action. Bring the paddle shaft back towards your body. By doing this you can stay more vertical as you "grab" water out in front of you. The more comfortable you get with this technique, you can really start to have fun bobbing up and down in the water, maintaining your even keeled balance and mimicking a water buoy in mid ocean swell. This



flows directly into flatwater cartwheeling, and other freestyle moves, by learning how to vertically balance your bow and stern.

If on the contrary you are getting too vertical and are going over the handle bars, this can be remedied as well. Once vertical, if you feel your stern starting to go past vertical, try changing your shaft angle from horizontal to vertical and try pushing your blades down and away out in the water in front of your boat. This will cause your past vertical momentum to halt. From there you can regain balance by utilizing your blade movement and placement of either blade by pushing a few inches up on the left or pulling back a tad bit on the right.

There is a fine line between balancing vertically utilizing both paddle blades on each side of the boat to remain balanced and sliding out on one side or the other. Your bow will most likely slide out to one side or the other in the beginning. But proper blade management will correct this. With your paddle blades submerged, you can push and pull, up or down on either blade, depending on which side you feel you may start to slide out. Once you understand how paddle stroke, timing, forward erect torso posture and blade angle work together, the bow stall will come easily. It is a matter of practice and fine adjustments to master this move. Once you have this dialed on your bow, try it on your stern.

Tip:

If you are having a hard time getting your bow to plow under the water immediately, try putting a bit of water in your cockpit. Open your skirt and allow a gallon or so of water to enter your boat. This will enable you to get your bow to plow under the water and you will quickly get the feel of how it all works. Start with this and then progress to do this move without the aid of water. The lower volume your boat the better!

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San Diego Paddle Surf Festival / March 31 - April

Freestyle Men (out of 15)
1. Rusty Sage
2. Tim Krane
3. Steve Stotter

Styrofoam Cup Intercollegiate Regional Championship / April 14-15

Beginner K-1 Men
1. Patrick Farnell
2. Mo Legendre
Beginner K-1 Women
1. Beth Scott
2. Kitty Phillips
3. Charlotte Hayes
Beginner C-1 Men
1. Patrick Farnell
Beginner K-1 Men Junior
1. Stuart Campbell
2. William Peete
3. Rein Henrichs
Sport K-1 Men (out of 7)
1. Zed Mansfield
2. David Rugh
3. Julian Esquivel
Sport K-1 Women
1. Mindy Freeman
Expert K-1 Men (out of 5)
1. Andy Love
2. Andrew Oberhardt
3. Matt Young
Expert K-1 Women
1. Katie Herzog
2. Carrie Methany

Kern River Festival / April 20-22

Pro K-1 Men (out of 28)
1. Tao Berman
2. Brad Ludden
3. Eric Southwick
Pro K-1 Women (out of 11)
1. Kelly Liles
2. Tanya Shuman
3. Anna Lavesque
Expert K-1 Men (out of 20)

1. Brad Aitken
2. Jud Keiser
3. Josh Bechtel
Expert K-1 Women (out of 4)
1. Heather Shakespeare
2. Courtney Lynch
3. Brenda Kelleher
Sport K-1 Men
1. Paul Armes
2. Timbo Angus
Men C-1
1. Andrew Bell
2. Jason Bates
Men OC-1
1. Roger Kuiken

Tariffville Whitewater Rodeo / April 21

Pro K-1 Men
1. Bryan Kirk
2. Billy Harris
3. Ted DeVoe
Pro K-1 Women
1. Jessie Stone
2. Julie Dion
3. Tiffany Manchester
Expert K-1 Men (out of 15)
1. Robert Miller
2. Dylan King
3. Glen Warner
Expert K-1 Women
1. Fanny Gregoire
2. Karen Armstrong
3. Deb O'Keefe
Junior Men (out of 11)
1. John Kennedy
2. Andy Mazer
3. Janes Kodaras
Beginner K-1 Men (out of 8)
1. Matt Allison
2. Charles Brown
3. Chris Demery
Sport K-1 Men (out of 6)
1. Matt Preye
2. Adam Bixby
3. Brian Fuller

Trinity River Freestyle Rodeo / April 28-29

Pro K-1 Men (out of 32)
1. Clay Wright
2. Javid Grubbs
3. Jay Kincaid
Pro K-1 Women (out of 10)
1. Annie Chamberlain
2. Anna Levesque
3. Tanya Shuman
C-1 Mixed
1. Dan Burke
2. Andrew Bell
3. Dan Menten

Expert K-1 Men (out of 17)
1. Dan Menton
2. Tyko Isaacson
3. Jud Keiser

Expert K-1 women (out of 7)
1. Amy Jimmerson
2. Sara Mullett
3. Courtney Lynch

Expert K-1 Men Junior (out of 17)
1. Dustin Urban
2. Kyle Scarborough
3. Marlow Long


Masters K-1 Men
1. Fran Gratz-Weiser
2. Tim Angus
3. Doug Nowacki

Sport K-1 Men
1. Don Willis
2. Grant Fulbright
3. Sean Malee
Beginner K-1 Mixed (out of 5)
1. Sheila Falek
2. Yvonne Malee
3. Stephen Mathews
Sport K-1 Junior
1. Rowan Gratz-Weiser
2. Galen Licht
3. Brian Thibbeault

New River Rodeo / April 28-29

Pro K-1 Men (out of 17)
1. Andy Bedingfield
2. Jimmy Blakeney
3. Eric Jackson
Pro K-1 Women (out of 5)
1. Brooke Winger
2. Jessie Stone
3. Erica Mitchell
Pro C-1 (out of 7)
1. Chris Manderson
2. Luke Hopkins
3. Harry Field
Expert K-1 Men (out of 28)
1. Tate Huffman

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- 2. Keith Yell
- 3. Andrew Oberhardt
- Expert K-1 Women (out of 6)
 - 1. Karyn McMullin
 - 2. Kathleen Rector
 - 3. Darren Eddy
- Expert K-1 Men Junior (out of 5)
 - 1. Chris Stafford
 - 2. Jack Shurman
 - 3. Pat Keller
- Expert K-1 Women Junior
 - 1. Heather Chapelle
 - 2. Carrie Metheny
 - 3. Lydia Pound
- Sport K-1 Men (out of 9)
 - 1. Sean Smith
 - 2. Trey Young
 - 3. Dennett Dwyer
- Sport K-1 Men Junior (out of 7)
 - 1. Chris Gragtman
 - 2. Zach Davis
 - 3. Brenden Lingg
- Beginner K-1 Men
 - 1. Seth Yearout
 - 2. Jon Ownens
 - 3. Mason Baston

Gilman Falls Rodeo / May 5

- Pro K-1 Men (out of 5)
 - 1. Billy Harris
 - 2. Stuart Mounsey
 - 3. David Garringer
- Mixed K-1 Women
 - 1. Karen McMullin
 - 2. Deb O'Keefe
 - 3. Tiffany Manchester
- Expert K-1 Men (out of 9)
 - 1. Adam Craig
 - 2. Jay Roy
 - 3. Chris Hull
- Expert K-1 Men Junior
 - 1. Jack Schurman
 - 2. Miah Shields
- C-1
 - 1. Guillaume Larue
 - 2. Vincent Dupont

Teva Oregon Cup / May 5-12

- Overall Cup Winners
 - Men
 - 1. Tao Berman
 - 2. Jayson Bowerman
 - 3. Mark Eames
 - Women
 - 1. Kelly Liles
 - 2. Anna Levesque
 - 3. Tanya Shuman

Maupin Daze

- Pro K-1 Men (out of 25)
 - 1. Jay Kincaid
 - 2. Tao Berman
 - 3. Javid Grubbs

- Pro K-1 Women (out of 7)
 - 1. Lisa Beckstead
 - 2. Tanya Shuman
 - 3. Annie Chamberlain
- Expert K-1 Men (out of 18)
 - 1. Bobby Burton
 - 2. Eric Glury
 - 3. Tyko Isaacson
- Expert K-1 Women (out of 6)
 - 1. Sara Mullett
 - 2. Natasha Nowakowski
 - 3. Stacy Johnson

Boater Xcross

- Pro Men (out of 17)
 - 1. Tao Berman
 - 2. Jayson Bowerman
 - 3. Mark Eames
- Pro Women (out of 12)
 - 1. Kelly Liles
 - 2. Anna Levesque
 - 3. Tanya Shuman
- Expert Men (out of 6)
 - 1. Josh Bechtel
 - 2. Keith Yell
 - 3. Tyko Isaacson

Canyon Creek Race

- Pro Men (out of 20)
 - 1. Jayson Bowerman
 - 2. Tao Berman
 - 3. Ryan Casey
- Pro Women (out of 10)
 - 1. Rachel Moldover
 - 2. Anna Levesque
 - 3. Sara Mullett
- Expert Men (out of 19)
 - 1. David Norell
 - 2. Jonathan Gold
 - 3. Keith Yell

Bob's Hole

- Pro K-1 Men (out of 38)
 - 1. Javid Grubbs
 - 2. Jay Kincaid
 - 3. Mark Eames
- Pro K-1 Women (out of 9)
 - 1. Lisa Beckstead
 - 2. Kelly Liles
 - 3. Kira Wing
- C-1
 - 1. Erik Eekhoff
 - 2. Jason Bates
 - 3. Dan Burke
- Expert K-1 Men (out of 27)
 - 1. Adam Craig
 - 2. Josh Bechtel
 - 3. Ken Pitta
- Expert K-1 Women (out of 7)
 - 1. Sara Mullett
 - 2. Cindy Pytel
 - 3. Amy Jimmeron

Coosa River Whitewater Festival / May 11-13

- Pro K-1 Men (out of 19)

- 1. Eric Jackson
- 2. Jimmy Blakeney
- 3. Billy Craig
- Pro K-1 Women (out of 8)
 - 1. Brooke Winger
 - 2. Erica Mitchell
 - 3. Whitney Longsdale
- C-1 Pro (out of 6)
 - 1. Barry Kennon
 - 2. Chris Manderson
 - 3. Harry Field
- Expert K-1 Men (out of 20)
 - 1. David Kahn
 - 2. Matt Thornton
 - 3. Brad Heins
- Expert K-1 Women (out of 7)
 - 1. Kat Rector
 - 2. Tiya McNabb
 - 3. Daren Eddy
- Expert K-1 Men Junior (out of 21)
 - 1. Pat Keller
 - 2. Calef Latourney
 - 3. Marlow Long

Ocoee Whitewater Games / May 18 - 20

- Freestyle Classes @ Smiley
- Pro K-1 Men (out of 32)
 - 1. Eric Jackson
 - 2. Javid Grubbs
 - 3. Brad Sutton
- Pro K-1 Women (out of 12)
 - 1. Erica Mitchell
 - 2. Brooke Winger
 - 3. Whitney Lonsdale
- Pro C-1 (out of 7)
 - 1. Chris Manderson
 - 2. William (Luke) Hopkins
 - 3. Barry Kennon

- Expert K-1 Men (out of 29)
 - 1. Aaron Napoleon
 - 2. Brad Burden
 - 3. Drew Smith

- Expert C-1
 - 1. Ryan Bahn
 - 2. Mike Costas
 - 3. Joe Stumpfelf

- Expert K-1 Women (out of 7)
 - 1. Tiya McNabb
 - 2. Kathleen Rector
 - 3. Kate Allen

- Expert K-1 Men Junior (out of 27)
 - 1. Calef Latorney
 - 2. Dustin Urban
 - 3. Jesse Murphy

- Expert K-1 Women Junior (out of 6)
 - 1. Kate Townsend

- 2. Brenna Kelleher
- 3. Heather Chapelle
- Sport Men (out of 17)
 - 1. 2 way tie: J.D. Henderson / Ryan Allen
 - 3. 3 way tie: Ed Stamm / Willy Witt / Tim Johnson
- Junior Sport Men (out of 5)
 - 1. Jim Wade
 - 2. George Patten
 - 3. Nick Stewart
- Junior Beginner Men (out of 6)
 - 1. Timothy Moore
 - 2. Will Pruett
 - 3. Brett Adams
- C-1 Expert
 - 1. Ryan Bahn
 - 2. Mike Costas
 - 3. Joe Stumpfelf

- Masters (out of 5)
 - 1. Wayne Dickert
 - 2. Stuart Holbrook
 - 3. Terry Peterson

- Squirt Women
 - 1. Brooke Winger
 - 2. Risa Shimoda
 - 3. Maria Noakes

- Squirt Men
 - 1. Andy Beddingfield
 - 2. Jessie Wilensky
 - 3. Hugh Kelly

- Downriver Women
 - 1. Maria Noakes
 - 2. Susan Wilson
 - 3. Karen Mann

- Downriver Men
 - 1. Eric Jackson
 - 2. Scott Doherty
 - 3. Shane Benedict

- K-1 Men Pro Freestyle thru a Rapid
 - 1. Shane Benedict
 - 2. Jimmy Blakeney
 - 3. Ted DeVoe

- K-1 Women Pro Freestyle thru a Rapid
 - 1. Erica Mitchell
 - 2. Jessie Stone
 - 3. Brooke Winger

Raft Race - total number of teams: 21

- 1. Ocoee Outdoors team "Let's get it"
- 2. Tie: Ocoee Outdoors team "Phat Boys"

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Ocoee Rafting (no team name provided)

3. Tie: Wildwater (no team name provided)
- NOC (no team name provided)

Wyoming Whitewater Festival / May 26-27

Pro K-1 Men (out of 15)

1. Jed Selby
2. Taylor Robertson
3. Andre Spino-Smith

Mixed K-1 Women (out of 4)

1. Amy Jimmerson
2. Christie Dobson
3. Becky Bristow

Expert K-1 Men (out of 30)

1. Dave Norell
2. Derek Ganzemuller
3. Chris Fredrickson

Expert K-1 Men Junior (out of 14)

1. Joe Skala
2. Tyler Bradt
3. Lane Jacobs

Expert K-1 Women Junior (out of 4)

1. Hailey Hamilton
2. Sarah Kemper
3. Dawn Schiferig

C-1 Men (out of 4)

1. Nathan Jackson
2. Brooks Baldwin
3. Will Yeiser

Sport K-1 Men (out of 7)

1. Cortney Boice
2. Will Yeiser
3. Grant Fullbright

Masters

1. Olaf Koehler
2. Mike Fitzpatrick

Wenatchee Whitewater Rodeo / May 26 - 27

Pro K-1 Men (out of 16)

1. Jason Bates
2. Jacob Selander
3. Tao Berman

Pro K-1 Women

1. Kira Wing
2. Sara Mullet

Expert K-1 Women Junior

1. Becky Anderson

Expert K-1 Men (out of 14)

1. Matt Huggens
2. David Norell
3. Cory Boux

Expert K-1 Women

1. Heather Shakespeare
2. Cherish Carrol

Sport K-1 Men (out of 11)

1. Darren Albright
2. Ken Scott
3. Jeff Timlick

Sport K-1 Women

1. Almut Sohn
2. Claire Hews
3. Amy Zahler

6th Annual Cheat Canyon Race.

Friday, May 4th, 2001.

Kauffman, Frazier, O'Brien, Daly's, & Mountain Streams Win!

By Floyd Talbot

With water levels dropping, many racers were on the edge of their seats. For the first time in the six-year history of the Cheat Canyon Downriver Race, the water would fall to 1'2", 700 cfs. Those in glass boats feared the exposed rocks and those in plastic were worried about the long pools between rapids. Come race day though, anxieties were tossed aside and a new attendance record would be set, showing once again that competition and excitement can still exist without rodeo boats. 58 boats and 60 paddlers would line up; competing head to head in the country's largest mass start kayaking race.

This year's race would see plenty of excitement. Three time runner-up and recent United States wild water team qualifier Steve Kauffman would finally cop his first Cheat Race title. Steve would battle 2nd place finisher Heinz Roethenmund for well over an hour before pulling ahead in the final mile to win by 21 seconds. Third place would be won by Jess Whittemore, with British sensation Chris Norbury (4th), and Rick Gusic (5th).

In another hotly contested category, the brothers, Daly (Pete & Tim) would lay claim to their second K2 title, rebounding from last year's second place finish. Pete and Tim would beat two other expert top-oduo teams (Bill Blauvelt/Duane Dittman and Pat Hamlin/Richard Grape) to lay claim to the new IBWW Cheat River sanctioned title of world's fastest K2 team.

Some other categories would not be as close. Longtime local and race veteran Chara O'Brien would deliver a standout performance in the women's division. Chara not only beat her closest competitor by over nine minutes, but also placed an incredible 9th overall, the highest place ever for a woman at the Cheat Race. The single blade class (C1 & OC1) would be won by the savvy and always dangerous, Steve "the Hammer" Frazier. Steve would top a field of competitors that included world freestyle OC-1 champion Eli Helbert, who quickly discovered that his 8 foot rodeo canoe, the "Spanish Fly," was not well equipped for downriver speed.

Since most boaters cannot afford to spend big dollars on race kayaks, the Cheat Race offered categories for other types of boats. These winners included Bob Vernon in the men's Race Boat class, notorious Nate Ober in men's Long Plastic Boat, Justin Jeffers in the men's Cruising Boat, and 18 year old Chris Evans in the Short Boat Class. Heather Rau would take the honors in the women's Cruising Boat division.

Other race highlights included the 2nd annual team competition. Two awards were handed out; a corporate cup for the fastest team of boaters from the same company and a club cup for the fastest



MST Championship Team.
Dan Herring, Kevin Kurcina, Doug Schmitt and Rick Gusic
(left to right)
Photo by Chris Herring.



Race Organizer Rick Gusic
Photo by Chris Herring.

team from a legitimate paddling club. Mountain Stream's "A" team won the corporate side (2nd year in a row), winning a close battle due in a large part to their work ethic, desire, and the fact that the other local rafting companies failing to find three boaters capable of racing. "Do any of the other outfitters have employees who boat?" was the big question regarding the embarrassing state of affairs in Ohio. Impressive job by Mountain Streams to not only win, but also to field a second "B" team. Rounding out the corporate scoring was local real estate company BP Inc, finishing third.

The Club Cup would be much closer. With menacing glares and choicewords being thrown around at the start, long-time arch rivals, Cleveland's Keelhaulers and Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Paddling Club, would finally meet. Two titans amongst the world of paddling clubs squaring off! Unfortunately for both, the Kent State Kayak club would come out of nowhere to claim the coveted prize. The men from KSU would pull off a tantalizingly close win over the Keelhaulers, with TRPC finishing third.

The last award to be calculated was the infamous "Bob Gedekoh Challenge." For the sixth year in a row, the average time of those 30 or older (44 participants with an average time of 1:33:29) was considerably less than those under thirty (14 participants with an average time of 1:44:43). Simply a crushing victory, proving once again that while the old guys may not be able to throw ends, they can still kick some serious butt when it comes to racing. But it should be noted that Gedekoh did not contribute to the old-timers efforts...he watched from the sidelines, recuperating from minor surgery performed 4 days earlier. (Weenie!)

Special thanks goes to Jeff Prycl's Rocky Mountain Kayak, (www.rockymountainkayak.com). Jeff was generous enough to donate over 45 prizes, run shuttle, and fight to keep the locals away from the keg of beer at the take-out. Thanks also to Chris Herring for time keeping and Mountain Streams Outfitters for shuttling the racers and hosting the post race party where, it should be noted, the racers failed to finish the second free keg of beer. (What's up with that? Maybe the lower water tired out the racers more than they thought!)

Thanks to all and hope to see you next year when the Cheat Race will once again kick off the Cheat River Festival weekend, hosted by Friends of Cheat (www.foc.org)

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2001 SCHEDULE OF RIVER EVENTS

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AMERICAN WHITEWATER FESTIVALS

Salmon River Whitewater Festival	July 7-8	Pulaski, NY	Dan Mann	315-299-6475	dmann@pac3.crynic.org
Etack River Festival	July 28-29	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Deerfield Festival	August 4	Charlemont, MA	Mike Coleman		colemanm@beaconarch.com
"Don't Call This a Festival River Rendezvous"	September 1-2	Belfort, NY/Beaver River	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Gauley Festival	September 22	Summersville, WV	Phyllis Horowitz	914-586-2355	whiteh2o@catskill.net
Russell Fork Rendezvous	October 1-8	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	859-278-2011	surfin@kymtnnet.org
Moose River Festival	October ?	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com

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Ocoee Whitewater Games (\$5,000)	May 18-20	Ducktown, TN	American Whitewater Events	828-645-5299	www.ocoee whitewater.com
Potomac Whitewater Festival (\$5,000)	June 1-3	Great Falls, VA	Pervis Major	301-526-7378	www.potomacfest.com
Animas River Days (\$5,000)	June 8-10	Durango, CO	Four Corners Riversports	970-259-3893	www.riversports.com
Subaru Gorge Games (\$10,000)	July 14-22	Hood River, OR	Subaru Gorge Games	541-386-7774	www.gorgegames.com

American Whitewater Cascade Series

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French Broad River Race	April 7	Warhump, TN	David Benton	865-221-0030	dbenton@jcy.net
Canyon Creek Extreme Race	May 9	Clark County, WA	Keith Jensen	503-285-0464	acksdteleport.com
French Broad River Race	May 12	Asheville, NC	Chris Donochod	828-236-1209	www.frenchbroadriverfest.com
Great Falls Race	June 2	Great Falls, VA	Pervis Major	301-526-7378	www.potomacfest.com
Colorado Creek Festival	June 23-24	Durango, CO	Taylor Beavers/Dunbar Hardy	970-385-5750	taylorheavers@hotmail.com
Black River Race	July 28-29	Watertown, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com
Gore Canyon Race	August 23-25	Kremmling, CO	Paul Tefft 990-923-3955		paultefft@enviro-actionsports.com
Animal Upper Gauley Race	September 24	Summersville, WV	Donnie Hudspeth	304-658-5016	dhud@geoweb.net
Ohio Falls Race	Sept 29-30	Ohio, PA	American Whitewater	301-589-9453	www.americanwhitewater.org
Russell Fork Race	October 6 ?	Haysi, VA	Brent Austin	606-278-2011	surfin@kymtnnet.org
Moose River Race	October ?	Old Forge, NY	Chris Koll	315-652-8397	ckoll1234@aol.com

RiversLiv 2001 NOWR Series- Presented by American Whitewater

Skyfest	July 7-8	Index, WA	Julie Albright	206-782-4566	www.image-that.com/skyfest
Black River Rodeo	July 28	Wafertown, NY	Nancy Weal	315-788-2538	fishinsp@hotmail.com
Wausau Freestyle Kayak Championship	August 25-26	Wausau, WI	Julie Walraven	715-845-5664	www.dwave.net/~wkcc
Ottawa River Rodeo	September 1-2	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223	paul@equifloxadventures.com
1 st Annual Freestyle Pro Rodeo	September 8-9	Beachburg, ONT	Wilderness Tours	613-646-2241	www.ottawakayak.com
Canyon Doors Rodeo	September 25	Fayetteville, WV	Backcountry Ski & Sports	304-574-4005	www.bcski.com
Gauley River Rolling Rodeo	September 21-23	Summersville, WV	Ace Adventure Center	304-465-3084	www.kayakwv.com
Kootenay Rodeo		Cancelled			
Get Yer Boat Salty Surf Contest	October 20-21	Oakland, CA	Elaine Baden	510-893-7833	www.calkayak.com

OTHER EVENTS

World Freestyle Championships	June 25 - July 1	Sorte, Spain	Lluís Rabaneda	www.rocroi.com/wwcfreestyle
American River Festival	September 7-9	Placerville, CA		
Export A - A Whitewater Rodeo Challenge	October 6-7	Bryson, QB	Paul Sevcik	416-222-2223

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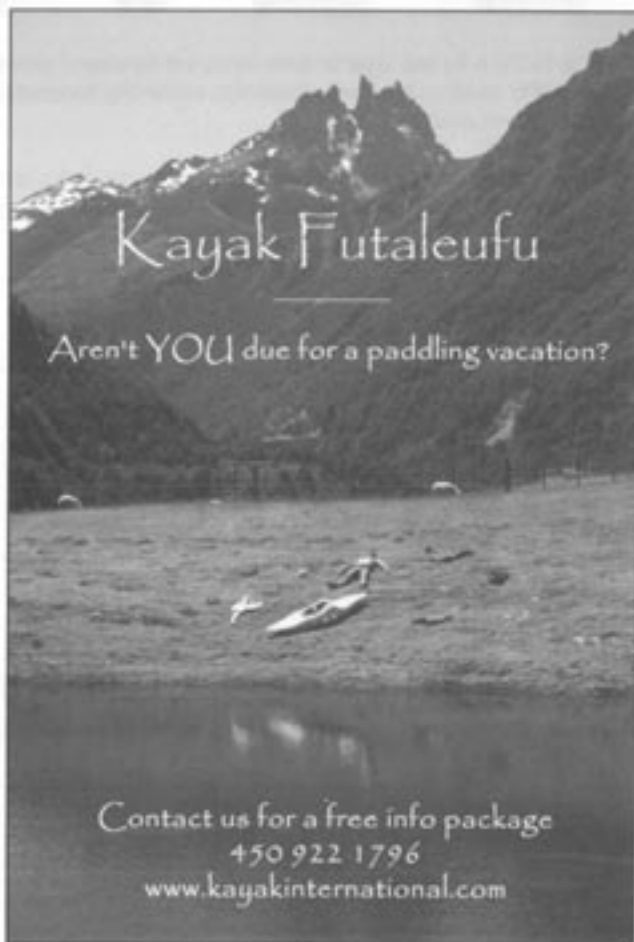


photos by Tina Meehan

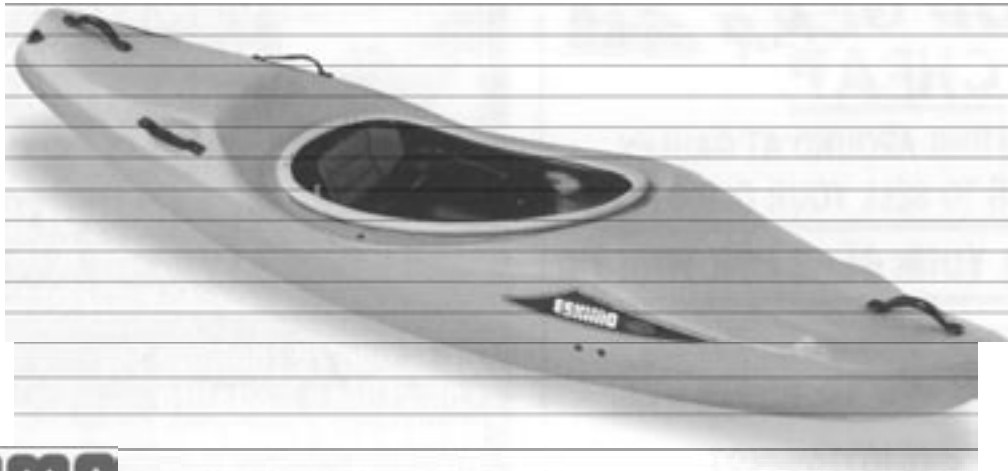
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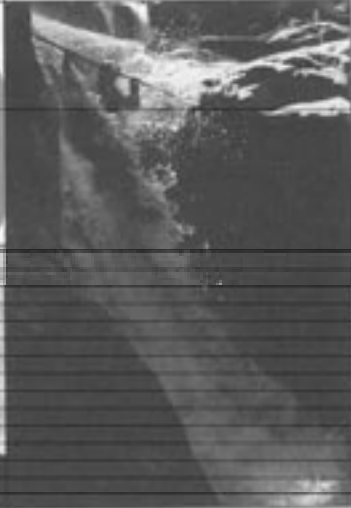


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BY RIVER THROUGH A WOUNDED LAND



STORY AND PHOTOS BY GORDON BARE

THE FIRST DESCENT OF THE HEADWATERS OF THE SALWEEN



THE
AGED
MONK

tells us that we are the first Westerners to visit his 380-year-old monastery. He and his two acolytes are delighted to show us through the partially restored temple and a new prayer hall. Long-hidden scrolls have been returned to their niches and prayer shawls once more drape icons. Newly painted Bodhisattvas peer down from several walls; other walls still show the depredations of the Cultural Revolution now a quarter century past.



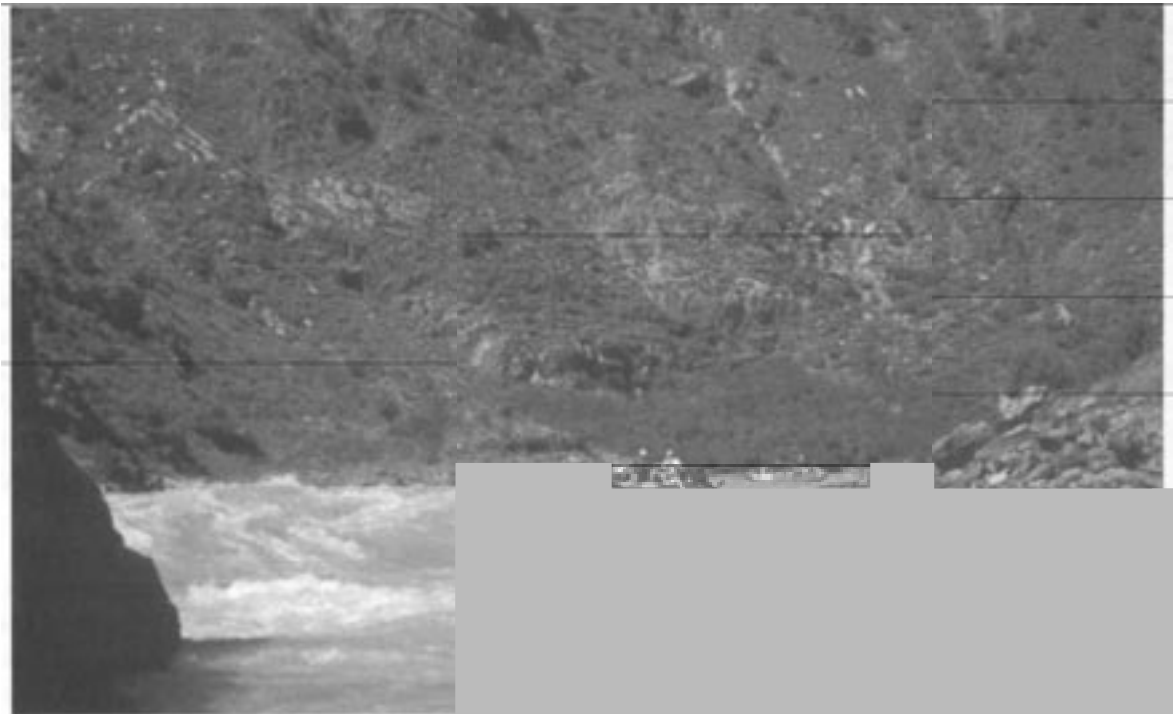
WE ARE AT THE YUDOU MONASTERY

not to be found on any map and dozens of miles from a road, on the headwaters of the Salween River in northeastern Tibet. Our party is undertaking the first descent by kayak and raft of some 154 miles of this great river of Asia. The trip gives us an opportunity to visit an area normally closed to foreigners and to experience rural Tibetan culture under assault from both technological change and Chinese control.

Our group consists of seven Americans and one Englishman, together with a representative of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a Tibetan botanist who serves as our interpreter. We are two rafts and six kayaks, experienced river runners drawn to the lure of a first descent in the most exotic and remote of settings. We've been brought together by Pete Winn, professional geologist and ex-Grand Canyon guide, under the auspices of the non-profit

Earth Sciences Expeditions. Pete has been boating the great rivers of Asia and investigating their geology for several years and has major first descents to his credit. Our oarsmen are Mike Connelly, a geologist from Washington State and Dave Hettig, a Silicon Valley lawyer. Our kayakers are a diverse lot. Pete's son Travis is a nationally ranked junior competitor. The Englishman is Phil Smith, a computer person and ex slalom racer. Phil Kantor is a photographer from Boulder. Lisa Nelowet, an environmental engineer and a serious climber from Colorado, is the only woman. For all of us, Tibet is something of a holy grail of Asian travel and of whitewater exploration.

We assemble in Lhasa for outfitting and take the opportunity to explore Tibet's ancient culture. Tibet had long had loose ties of suzerainty with China or complete independence prior to the



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Communist victory in 1949. The next year, the Peoples Liberation Army invaded Tibet and Beijing quickly moved to supplant the then youthful Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual and temporal leader. Chinese domination became increasingly repressive, and attempts to collectivize Tibet's nomads as part of Mao's Great Leap Forward resulted in widespread famine. In 1959, after a period of increasing tension, it appeared that China was preparing to kidnap the Dalai Lama. Thousands of Tibetans gathered at Lhasa's Summer Palace to defend their leader. The Dalai Lama slipped away in a two-week overland march to India. A major uprising in Lhasa resulted in pitched battles, with the PLA shelling and bombing of the Potala and other landmarks, and the death of thousands of Tibetans in Lhasa alone. Estimates of the death toll throughout Tibet from famine and revolt range upward of half a million. Another 100,000 fled to India.

Beginning in 1966, the Cultural Revolution destroyed many of Tibet's 6000 monasteries in an effort to root out all vestiges of Tibetan culture and religion. Monks were subjected to "re-education" campaigns that continue to this day. The death of Mao and liberalization under Deng Xiaoping beginning in the late 1970s brought gradual easing of collectivization and prohibitions on religion, a pattern that has continued since with intermittent crackdowns and a new threat of immigration by Han Chinese.



LHASA is now an ethnically mixed city with a majority of Han Chinese, who have been encouraged to move there by tax breaks, subsidized housing, and relief from Beijing's one child per family policy. Beijing has not released population data in an effort to disguise its policy of domination through ethnic inundation. Chinese characters now adorn road signs. The famed Potala, begun in 1645, retains its awesome grandeur dominating the skyline but is something of a mausoleum. Once the winter palace of the Dalai Lama, it now has a museum quality. Chinese tourists vastly outnumber Tibetans who seem to be conducting an informal boycott. It overlooks a large square bulldozed from an old Tibetan quarter. A Mig fighter sits incongruously in the middle, a not-so-subtle reminder of China's military muscle.

Our official Chinese minder is uncomfortable around Tibetans and tells us it is not safe in Tibetan parts of town. Perhaps so for him but we are greeted with smiles wandering the old Tibetan neighborhoods. We are welcomed at the Jokhang, Tibet's holiest temple in the heart of the town's old quarter. An endless stream of Tibetan pilgrims, usu-

ally in traditional garb, circumambulate the compound pausing to spin prayer wheels that send their devotions on their way. Others prostrate themselves at the entrance before visiting shrines lit only by hundreds of butter lamps that are continually replenished by the faithful. The manifest intensity of the religiosity far surpasses that usually evident in Judeo-Christian settings. Pole-mounted security cameras keep a watchful eye lest any gathering take on a political character.

We also visit the great monasteries of Drepung and Sera, both located just outside of town. Both suffered during the Cultural Revolution's war on all things traditional and both are experiencing major reconstruction. The population of the monasteries is now several hundred monks each, down from thousands before China's invasion. Self contained worlds in their time, the great monasteries dominated political and economic life as well as providing the locus of education. Literacy among ethnic Tibetans has plummeted as secular education has not adequately replaced the monasteries' role, particularly in rural areas, and Han occupy the relatively few slots in middle and high school equivalent grades. In the late afternoon at Drepung, monks pair off to practice a ritualized debate and take turns expounding points of logic and doctrine to each other. Emphatic handclaps emphasize each point. Though unable to understand the language, the ebb and flow are readily apparent as their mobile expressions, looks of triumph, or occasional rueful surrender to an irrefutable argument cross lingual boundaries.

OUR PUT-IN near the Siniified

town of Naqu is a hard days drive from Lhasa on the main road north to Qinghai Province. Trucks and Chinese military convoys dominate traffic. The drive is a bone jolting and mildly terrifying experience, which makes us look forward to the river. The first couple of hours take us through the relatively populated and fertile Lhasa valley before rising to the first of several passes that towered more than

15,000 feet high. Vegetation save grass disappears and the big sky vistas of the high plateau are interrupted only by herds of yaks, cattle, sheep, and goats and occasional black yak-hair tent encampments. We pause at the top of a pass to help two monks re-erect sagging ropes of multi-colored prayer flags hung by pilgrims.

At the river we find a smallish stream of swiftly flowing flatwater in a broad glacially caved valley. The altitude is 14,600

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which makes rigging rafts and loading gear a slow motion activity as not even the fittest of us have the wind to hustle about. The absolute headwaters are perhaps 50 miles further up in a series of marshes and lakes at close to 16,000 feet. The Mekong and Yangtze also originate within a scant hundred-mile circle and flow to mouths separated by many thousands of miles.

Temperatures hover in the 50s and 60s and showers regularly blow through but rarely last. This is the weather we are to become accustomed to for the next ten days. The rafts carry the food and gear giving those in kayaks the luxury of paddling empty boats. Pete's research has yielded flow and gradient data from which we can make an educated guess on the difficulty of the whitewater we will face. Averaging drops of 12 feet per mile, the river should be mild in its upper reaches where volume remains small but could become quite challenging when swollen to perhaps ten times this flow further downstream.

A handful of local herders, some on horseback, gather to watch our strange doings as we spin off into the current. At no point on the river are we in unpopulated territory as the search for pasture has created a highly dispersed population. Some quarter of Tibet's two and a half million people are nomads who have returned to herding after the forced collectivization ended. We are in the territory of the Khampas, a traditional warrior tribe in spite of their strong Buddhism. The Khampas bore the brunt of collectivization and famine and held out longest against China. Men wear long plaited hair interwoven with red cloth wound around their heads. Both men and women carry long curved knives in their belts. Shy local women are initially reluctant to come close or have their pictures taken. But with some encouragement from Lisa, they soon clamber aboard our rafts and happily pose for the Polaroids we hand out. Some ask discretely for pictures of the Dalai Lama, which are prohibited in Tibet.

Visitors quickly appear at even our most remote-seeming stops. Three youths with perhaps 100 sheep visit us the first morning as we cook oatmeal over a camp stove. They are armed with homemade yak hair slings of a type probably not out of place in a biblical setting. They demonstrate substantial accuracy but our attempts with the devices result in misfires that pose as much risk to those standing behind the shooter as to anyone in front. The shepherds report that there are no longer wolves in the vicinity as there were in their parents' day. At another stop a shaved-headed nun greets us

with palms pressed together in the Indian but not the Tibetan fashion. She has recently returned from an arduous and illegal trek to Dharmasala, the residence in exile of the Dalai Lama in northern India.

ON THE WATER

the second afternoon, the river broadens and slows. We initially suspect that we are in the pool created by some natural obstruction and that a major rapid lies ahead. But the river widens still further and the current ceases completely. We realize to our chagrin and annoyance that we can only be in the lake created by a dam— one which the Chinese Academy of Sciences had assured us was located on a tributary and not on the stretch we would run. The 100-foot tall Chalong Dam may well be the highest major dam on the planet. We are somewhat concerned since Chinese authorities tend to view dams as militarily sensitive installations. Our permit, of course, says nothing about transiting a dam. We wonder if gun-toting soldiers will order us off the river. In the event, a cheerful crew of Chinese workers helps us with the laborious task of portaging our boats and gear to the tailrace.

China is busily engaged in dam construction on many of its major rivers and is pursuing an extensive range of economic development projects in Tibet. There is also planning underway for a headwaters nature preserve, a first cautious first step toward alleviating some of the serious damage to this fragile tundra and pasture environment. Whether this protection will affect further dam construction and the degree to which development will benefit the nomad population are open questions. Most evidence suggests that economic development is principally benefiting the Han-dominated urban areas.



The next day we stop at a stupa or chorten, a dome-shaped structure capped by a tower on which is painted the all-seeing eye of Buddhist theology. It was built only last year on the site of a 300-year-old monastery named after a famous holy man. Rinji Dorje, the monk attending the chorten, invites us to his home for tea. He dons his brilliant red and yellow vestments and conducts a prayer ceremony for our benefit, chanting from ancient texts to the accompaniment of cymbals and incense.

BY RIVER THROUGH A WOUNDED LAND

The river continues at a good clip. We drop into intermittent stretches of canyon—Pete identifies the rock as metamorphosed schist—where the river necks and the whitewater action picks up to a Class III level. The kayaks enjoy playing at surfing waves and eddylines. The rafts need only row enough to stay in the main current. We make speedy progress and cover 20 miles or more in four or five hours with little effort. We had allowed time for scouting and, if necessary, portaging dangerous drops but the rapids are wide open and bouncy without being threatening. We are able to take layover days and explore side canyons.

As we drop in altitude, planted fields of barley appear. What had been scattered tents of summer herders gives way to small villages of adobe-like construction and larger crowds line the bank and gather whenever we pull over. A road appears along the river, and as we approach the administrative center of Biru we begin to look for our pick up vehicles. But the river is not quite through with us and the gradient picks up as we once more enter a mini-canyon. By now the volume is that of the Colorado through the Grand Canyon and moving at a breathtaking pace. Waves, six to eight feet high, slap us around and boils appear under our kayaks to throw us off line. But no really serious rapids lurk behind hori-

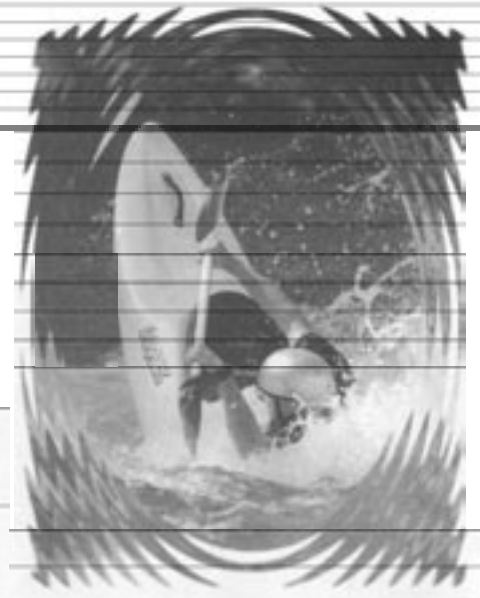


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zon lines and we are able to read and run on the fly. Several miles of this continuous big bouncy water make an exciting end for the river. Another year we may return and continue on the next stretch down to Yunnan Province near the Burma border.

River exploration provides perhaps a unique insight into a land and people. One travels through backyards, as it were. I think back to our stop at the Yudou Monastery. In spite of the gracious welcome and the obvious dedication of its three guardians, there is an incompleteness, a certain emptiness, to the place that once boasted dozens of monks and a functioning school. Our visit was both a cultural highlight and a sad reminder of the uncertainty hanging over this traditional society and its harsh interaction with modernity and authoritarian power. I come to the depressing conclusion that there is little hope for the people of Tibet to chart their own path. China's regime is too insecure, its people too numerous, and the outside world too disengaged. This conclusion is strengthened two days after returning home. A two-inch Associated Press story reports a crackdown in Lhasa and the arrest of monks at the Drepung monastery, where we had been welcomed and where we had watched the debate practice.

Perhaps a democratic China will one day have the self-confidence to grant Tibet real autonomy, but present trends in Beijing's policies are not at all encouraging. The Tibetan people have shown remarkable courage and resilience and in the Dalai Lama they have a leader with the stature of a Mandela or a John Paul II. But the tidal wave of Han immigration may render these factors mute, even if Beijing moves toward democracy, itself a highly uncertain prospect. The renewed worship, education, and construction at the monasteries, albeit tightly controlled, and the renewal of traditional village and pastoral life gives ground for a certain hope that the culture can survive if only as a minority in its own land. We count ourselves fortunate to have traveled through country restored to even a pale semblance of its past.



 **Gordon Bare, Colonel, U.S. Army** (Retired) has served and traveled extensively in Asia. He coached the U.S. Whitewater Team from 1983 to 1996.



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New Season New School

By Kyle McCutchen

The first road trip of the season. The images of perfect waterfalls, endless play spots, warm weather, and great water levels cloud my mind from the truth. Back to reality. In four days I will drive almost 1,000 miles to paddle in the snow on a polluted, drought stricken river. Fortunately I don't know this yet. I realize the possibility is there because it happens in different forms every year. I'm a little more scared this time since four of us are traveling together. The onlookers are afraid as well.



Let me explain. At age 19 and an early graduate from high school this year I'm the oldest. All of us are from Grand Junction, Colorado. Our crew consists of Adam Hackley, Travis Winn, and our newest edition, Lorraine Skalla. Our mode of transportation is to say the least, pimp—a green Toyota T-100 pickup complete with CD player, camper shell, and a rack larger than a porn stars'. Affectionately named the "Warrior," it rests peacefully with seven boats



stacked across the top, gear thrown in an unorganized stack in the back, and a few boxes of food. Even without occupants, it's a sight. Then the crew. Picture punk kids toting sunglasses, oversized cargo pants, cocky attitudes, and a music selection ranging from Static X and Blackalicious to Orbital. It's the new-school style of boating even though the love for the sport remains just as strong or stronger. Our intentions and morals are good, yet to be completely honest, we are the people our parents warned us too stay away from.

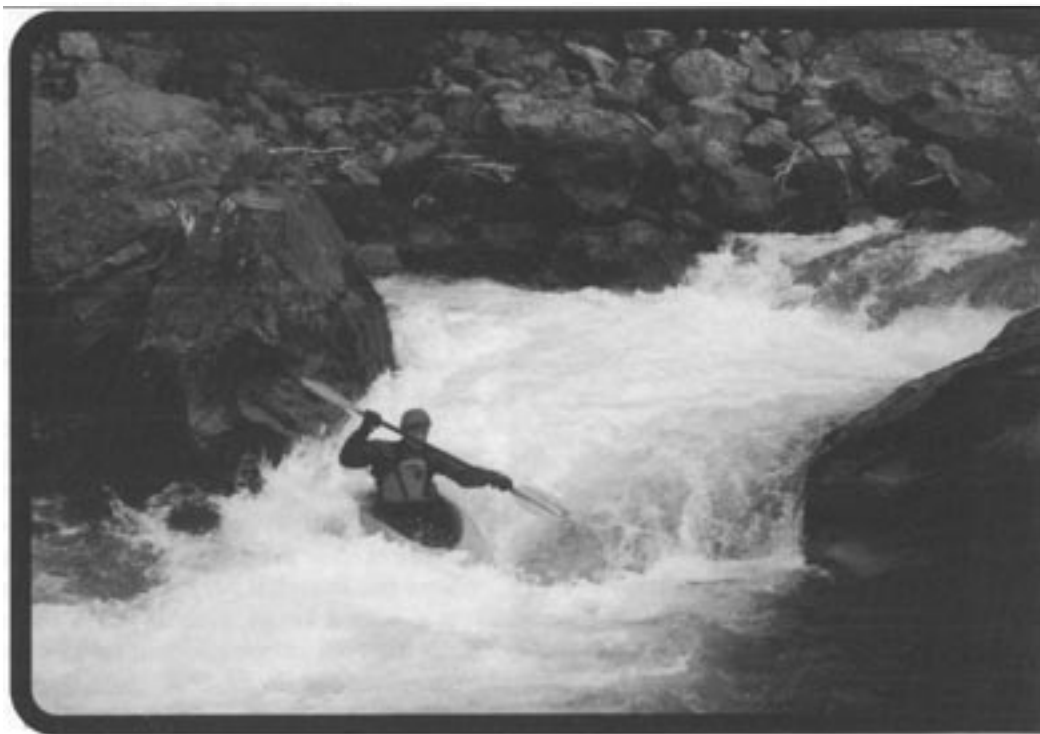
It's the first Sunday of Spring Break when the phone wakes me up at an early 10:00 am. Adam informs me that he just woke up as well. I nod while contemplating hanging up and going back to sleep. I plan to clean out my truck, pack, then go shopping at Sam's club with Adam (only place in town with 24 packs of Top Ramen). By noon we need to be at Travis' house to pick up him and Lorraine. First I sleep for another half an hour, then get dressed, and finally start to clean until I realize I need to pack and get going. My dirty truck and I arrive at the grocery store around 11:45. Half an hour later Adam and I have enough snack food to feed a small country, although we somehow missed the vegetable aisle. I load Warrior while Adam gets the "You're leaving me for kayaking AGAIN!?" lecture from his girlfriend. The debate continues: boating vs. sex.

Miraculously, Adam and I are only 45 minutes late to get the rest of the crew. The packing pattern of throw and squeeze once again is a complete success. My kayak takes a plunge off of the truck, and the trio fights over the front seat before we leave. The weather is great.

We arrive at Shoshone in Glenwood Canyon around 2:30. Being the honor students, our group decides to run shuttle later. The water is low but enough cartwheel spots and rock moves occupy our search. After a few rolls, my ice cream headache terminates my cocky attitude. Since it's our first trip together we are all pushing each other. Travis, Adam, and I take turns teaching Lorraine until she is so confused I tell her just to paddle. She does well. We arrive at the take-out ramp to find a barren parking lot. Since it is my truck, it's my one-mile run to the put-in.

By the time we reach Eisenhower tunnel on the way to Denver the sky is dropping a mixture of snow and rain. I start calling friends for a place to stay. Nate is in Tennessee, Nicole

After a few
rolls my ice
cream
headache
terminates
my cocky
attitude.





is in California, Tim is in Summit County, my aunt and uncle never answer their phone. Fortunately my relatives love boaters, so after a detour (I never get lost) we arrive.

Tired, hungry, and grouchy we are invited in. My uncle explains that he never answers the phone as he greets us. Adam and I cook chili for dinner before all of us go to bed. I'm excited enough that I barely sleep. Tomorrow we hit Bailey Canyon on the South Platte, the first Class IV (V) of the season.

Bleary-eyed, I glance out the window only to be greeted by one inch of snow. As my eyes adjust more I find Lorraine still asleep in the corner. It's 7:30 am. Adam and Travis are sleeping in the next room. I get dressed enough to visit with my aunt and uncle, who are both teachers starting their spring break. They are stoked we stopped by and ask if we actually plan to paddle today. I nod and try to stay positive while thinking of frozen gear.

Within an hour the crew is rounded up, but not ready to paddle. Today we will start with a trip to the laundromat, breakfast, and numerous prayers to the weather gods before paddling. At the laundromat, Adam made the amazing discovery of using Bounce static sheets to freshen the stench of our gear. Wet neoprene and spring scent, a match so orgasmic I had to try it on my own gear. It snows through breakfast, and during most of the 30-mile drive to the town of Bailey, our launch site. Lorraine, who wanted her paddling skills to get stronger before running something so difficult, opted to run our shuttle (we begged).

Travis, Adam and I get going about 12:30. It's their first time so I will lead most of the trip. We're all excited and the weather is holding at cloudy and cold. Patches of snow dot the river banks and the leafless trees just aren't as pretty as when I saw them last June. The eerie feeling puts us in a quiet mood. They might just be scared. I hope, because at 215 cfs the only major adrenaline rush will come from our imaginations. It isn't long until the canyon closes in and Four Falls appears. At the first fall, about 85 percent of the river goes into a sieve and boils out below the rock I'm standing on. The remaining flow squeezes between



the cliff bank and logs. I put-in at the base of this and run first. I begin to increase my speed as the first horizon comes, take a boof stroke half way into the slide, and then go deep in the backwash. As I submerge, I work left, run a ledge, and then eddy out for the second move. The rapid isn't hard here, but the snow forces us to run a gap in between two rocks, then either go straight or to the right of a ledge drop just below. I make the ferry, split the rocks, and with too much speed go straight. Both Adam and Travis cut to the right of the ledge with flawless runs.

We are all smiles as I begin to pick my way down the eddy hopping Class IV drops throughout the next few miles. I like this part of the run the best, and it may even be the steepest. Super Max comes shortly after me. The scout reveals a much shallower, rockier rapid than I remember, and because of it I can't figure out how to make a left boof at the second to last ledge. I ponder, then decide it can be done.

The lead in is fast, but vey smooth, and I eddy out above an hourglass formation. The rock on the river left is very undercut at this level, the spine in the middle is shallow and partly exposed. The right is a narrow chasm, maybe two-boat-widths wide. I ferry across, ride the spine, then boof while spinning left off of the right side. Perfect. It sounds more difficult than it actually is. The meat tricks me around the corner. I set up in the right place, but about a boat length above the second-to-last drop my boat submerges and accelerates. I back paddle and upon resurfacing attempt a backwards boof towards the left. It works well enough. The bottom chute is very clean. Travis schools me. He runs the entrance cleanly, scrapes against the right wall in the hour glass, and then sets up for below. He comes into the meat then banks into the left boof move. Smooth as butter. Adam skips it today.

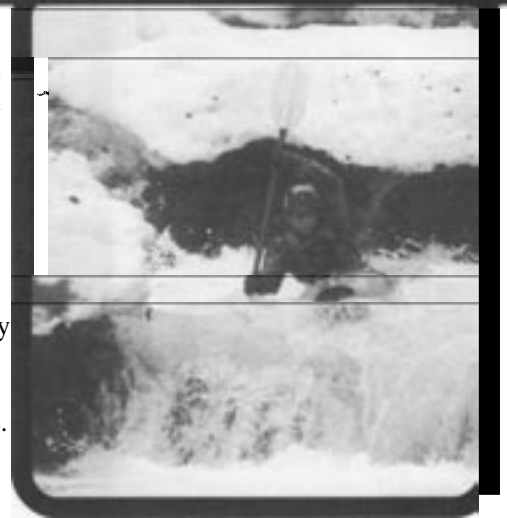
The action is relaxed until Deer Creek Rapid, and even that is small. I go deep at the entrance drop and set up for a center to right move over some shallow slide rocks in the first cascade. I'm right on-line and the bottom slide is fast. Then, suddenly, I'm flying through the air trying to regain control. A rock was hiding in the backwash. My bruised ass and I catch an eddy just in time to watch Adam and Travis bounce down. Adam gets spun around in the first slide but corrects in time for a clean finish. Suddenly, I see the bottom of Travis' boat sideways on edge and airborne. Upon landing his bow pitons, spinning his boat 180 degrees before he rolls up. He recovers his line for the rest of the rapid. Damage report: Travis has a fat lip and the bottom of my boat is very concave.

At 5:40 pm we reach the take-out exhausted, cold, hungry, and happy to see Lorraine and Warrior.

Night life in Denver is still somewhat dull since I'm at the age of 19. But compared to Grand Junction where everything except a gas station closes down by 9:30, this place rules. The glowing neon lights intrigue us, and night driving at 80 mph on 1-25 is much cooler than cruising by downtown GJ at 30 mph.

Adam and I request the first stop at Twist and Shout music store. Over the years it has become a tradition to go, listen to, and buy whatever weird music I've never heard before. When I walk in I get a hard-on. I love music, and to see a warehouse full of it is a dream come true. I immediately go towards the used section because I can't afford any more new CDs. By 8:00 pm, I am listening to as many CDs allotted to me and if it wasn't for the glances from the employees, I would have stayed all night. Unfortunately, they closed at 9:00, so by 9:10 their glares succeeded.

Next stop was downtown. Driving between the skyscrapers is cool anytime, but with Warrior, seven boats, and newly acquired techno music, life was damn good. We even-



Travis has a fat lip and the bottom of my boat is very concave.

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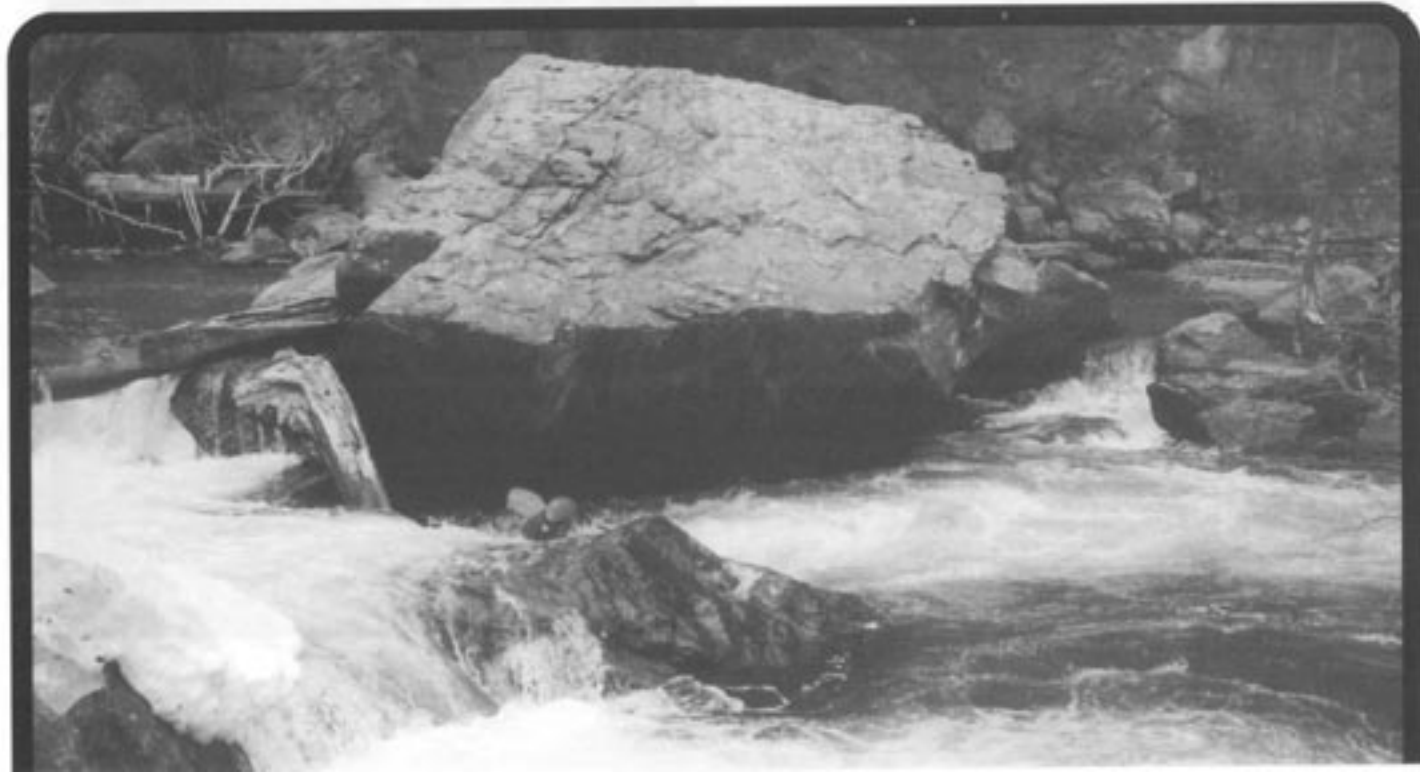
Today our crew would hit the whitewater parks, and to say the least, South Platte water quality in Denver is gross.



tually parked and walked around downtown. A stop at the Hard Rock Café finished off the night with a few appetizer platters. We all slept like babies with smashed vertebrae.

Once again I was the first to wake up, so I talked with my aunt and uncle. I sat on a bar stool in an early morning daze, sipping on water, and eating a blueberry muffin. My muscles ached. Adam could barely open his eyes when he came upstairs. We sat in silence while absorbed in watching kayak porn. Lorraine and Travis took showers, but Adam and I knew better. Today our crew would hit the whitewater parks, and to say the least, South Platte water quality in Denver is gross.

Union Chutes was almost high enough to play with foam boaters, but sketchy at that. The news was that Golden and Boulder were lost causes, which brings us here. Confluence Park, hidden between stadiums, filthy bars, a row of apartments, and a park still being built isn't exactly destination boating. The ditch here hosts one small hole to spin in and an eddy line to satisfy the cartwheel





urge. The boaters greet us by saying its better than nothing, and we all know that they're right. The sun is out, we are going paddling.

Four hours later, I have had my fix and we are all looking tired. The gear is thrown in, and we change. I put on my cleanest pair of dirty clothes, and drench myself with about half a bottle of cologne. We decide to cruise around Cherry Creek mall for a couple of hours so I hope to smell a little better than the ditch. Fortunately, the water doubles as hair gel, so my hair spikes great. Lorraine can't even run a comb through her hair. I admire her, and I can tell she is becoming addicted to paddling. She puts up with being stuffed into a truck with three smelly boater guys for four days, and smiles about it the entire trip.

From the mall we set up plans to stay at Tim Aex' place, a boater friend of mine from past seasons. We arrive to find a very lively house full of people we don't know. Everyone greets us warmly, but I'm pretty sure they won't even remember that we showed up. Tomorrow comes early, and we leave before anyone wakes. After a groggy breakfast we get on the road around 8:00 am. It snows most of the trip home. We arrive in Grand Junction a little before noon, and I sleep before work that night.

When all of us travel together there is this kind of energy that joins us. Our life-style isn't about loud music, baggy name brand clothes, swear words, or non-stop perverted jokes. Truth is we're all joined by that search for something more than the high school daily grind. Prom, football games, student senate, and AP History classes are all just too simple. We are the rebellious teens who find the greatest highs running waterfalls and throwing ends—not by being elected homecoming king or queen. We are the ones determined to learn how not to work a nine-to-five job in a cubicle the rest of our lives. Our continuous search for freedom fuels our life-style.

Our crew is the next generation of adrenaline junkies, and in every town I find kids doing exactly what we are. We are the ones who join as many fun adventures as we can because we realize that if we're happy, we are truly alive. I will see you on the river. I'll be the young, punk kid with a smile on my face.



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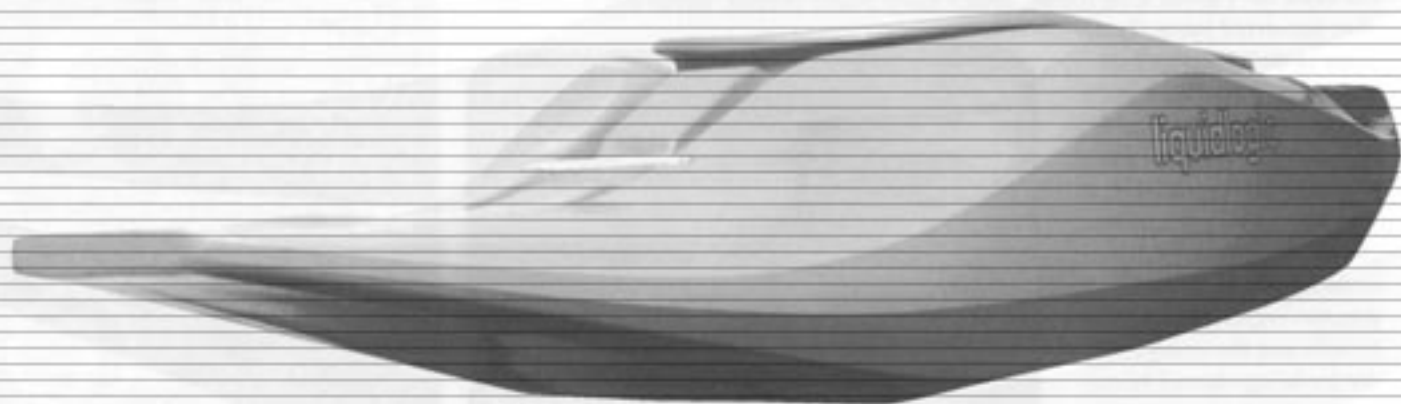
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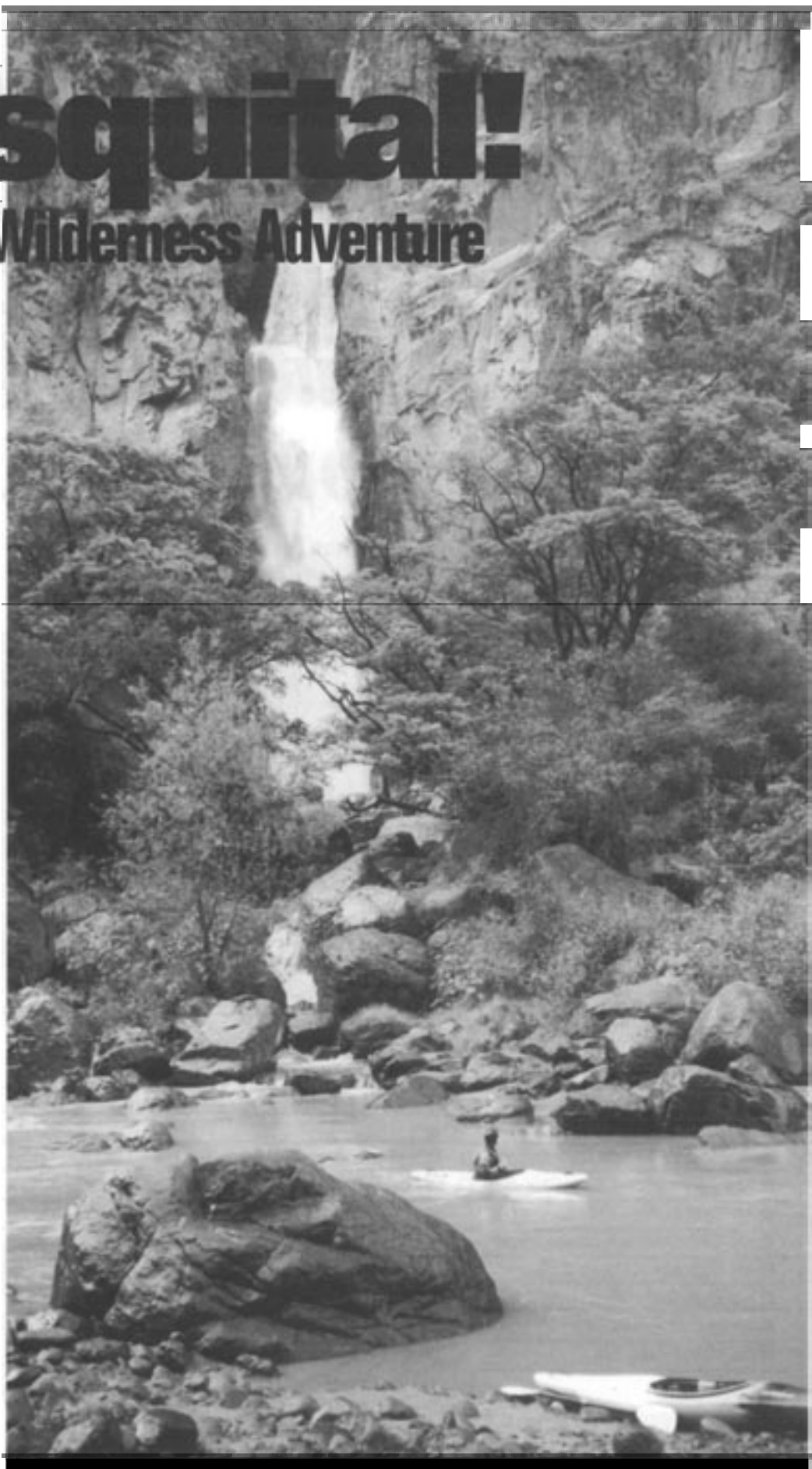
A Mexican Wilderness Adventure

By Tom Diegel

Mexico has long been famous for such great rivers

as the Usumacinto, the Agua Azul, and the Santa Maria in Chiapas and Veracruz. However, the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains, the range that forms the Mexican continental divide and runs from near the U.S. border down past Guadalajara, has tucked away deep in its canyons dozens of potentially world-class but little-known rivers. Although only a day or two's drive from the U.S. and with a relatively predictable season, these rivers have seen few or no descents. But they have the potential to rival their southern counterparts as Mexican classics.

Rocky Contos, a UC San Diego neuroscientist, has devoted years to researching the rivers of the Sierra Madre Occidental. During his doctoral studies he spent as much time poring over Mexican *topo* maps as he did dissecting mouse brains. This resulted in the identification of at least 25 rivers that are long, remote, beautiful, and challenging, and have not been explored. Rocky measured the drainage areas, identified access points, noted the historical rainfall amounts (which conve-



Mesquital!



niently comes during the monsoon season of July-September when the western US rivers are drying up), determined gradients, and painstakingly marked hundreds of kilometer-by-kilometer ticks on the *topo* maps. In anticipation of his explorations he concentrated on improving his Spanish, and finally, after finishing his dissertation and a subsequent post-doc position to amass some funds, Rocky headed to Mexico in June 2000 to pursue his dream.

Soon we began to get tantalizing e-mail dispatches from Rocky's new *hotmail* account: first descents that were hundreds of miles long with great rapids, lots of wildlife, no civilization, and awesome scenery. He was exploring them on his own, but wanted some partners. We all had busy summer schedules, but were trying to find an appropriate time to meet him. As the summer wore on it began to look like we wouldn't be able to make it, but his insistence that the paddling would be some of the most demanding we would ever do was finally too much to resist. So in early October, Mike Hobbs (another intrepid SoCal boater), and I flew to Guadalajara to meet Rocky for one of his adventures.

A couple of weeks before our arrival, Rocky had started down the Rio Mesquital, one of the longest and most committing rivers on his agenda. The Mesquital drains most of the state of Durango to the south and east of Mazatlan. However, due to fairly high water, a vertical-walled gorge, a severe gradient, and the fact that he forgot the map for what appeared to be a critical section, he decided not to solo the remainder of the run (nearly 200 miles). Instead, Rocky elected to hike out at the last possible opportunity,

leaving his boat at the river with the intention of returning and finishing the river with us. The tiny pueblo he hiked to (and spent two days at waiting for a back-of-a-pickup ride) was Xoconotle, four hours of rugged driving from Mesquital, an equally small village, that was in turn two hours from the relative metropolis of Durango.

Hooking up with Rocky proved to be more problematic than we had anticipated. Two days before we arrived we got a message that his truck had been totaled in an accident (Rocky's shuttle driver was still in the hospital with a skull fracture; he had been forced off a narrow mountain road by a log truck and rolled several times). So we would have to get from Guadalajara to Durango on our own, which didn't sound like a big deal. However, we soon found that Mexico has recently upgraded all of its long distance



All Photos by Tom Diegel

Mesquital!

buses and now none have any racks on top. Only one or two styles of buses could accommodate a kayak as big as a Rockit inside their luggage compartments. So Mike and I spent a frustrating couple of days in hot, dusty, and desolate bus stations, watching bus after bus roll on towards our destination without us aboard.

We finally made it to Durango and met up with Rocky and a new shuttle driver in a rented jeep. We headed for Mesquital. At the bridge (where Rocky had previously put in with an estimated 1200 cfs) we were dismayed to discover that there was no more than 50 cfs trickling through the rocks. With some trepidation we continued to bounce down the road toward the pueblo. When we finally arrived the local doc and a few others of the 200 folks who lived there came tumbling out of their homes, psyched to see Rocky again. Later that night, as we were about to fall asleep in the doctor's yard, a ear-piercing baby's cry in the house lit up the night; now there were 201 residents of Xoconoxtle.

The next morning we hiked to the river, retrieved Rocky's boat, and put on. Looming just downstream were the huge overhanging walls of a deep gorge. But we weren't too worried about getting walled out; with only 50 cfs we were pretty confident that we wouldn't be in danger of committing ourselves to an unrunnable section. As we paddled through the long gorge we were forced to portage every rapid and could only paddle the pools between them because of the low water. Rocky assured us that according to the topo map, there was a pretty good-sized tributary not far downstream. But when we reached it, it only contributed about 5 cfs (Mike and I didn't have our hopes up too high anyway, so we weren't too disappointed). With 200 miles to go and only 55 cfs, it



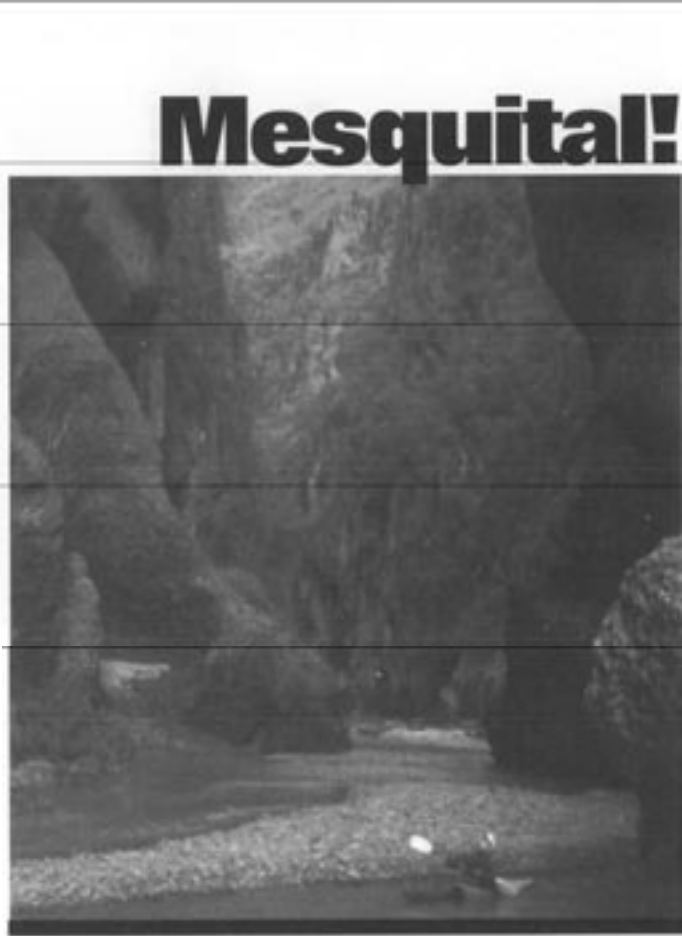
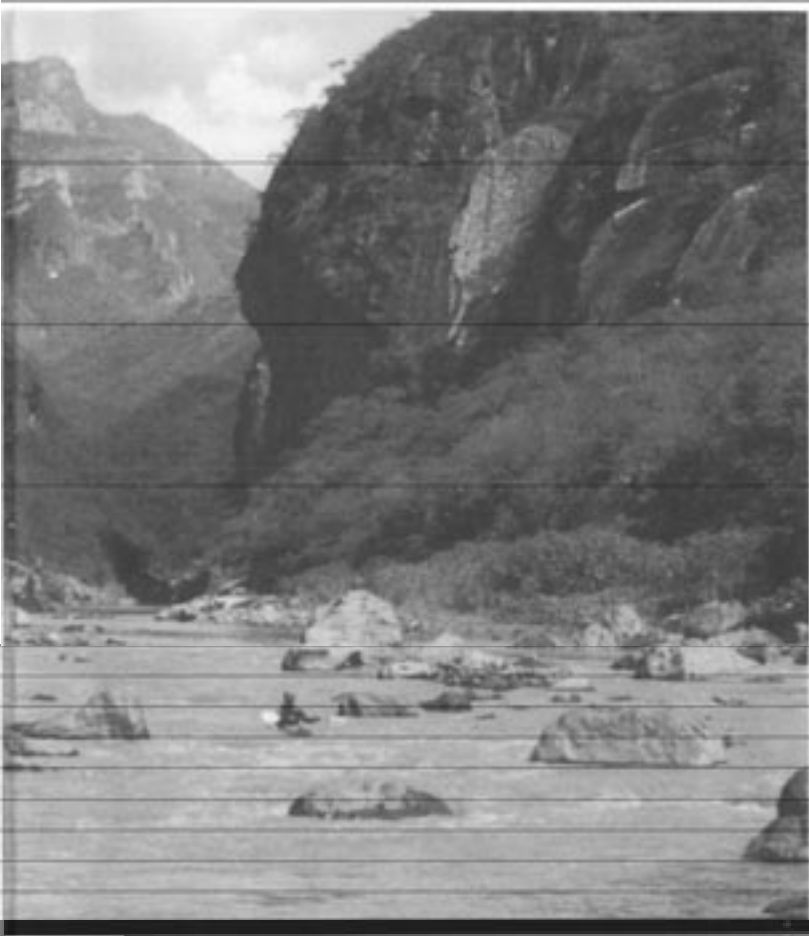
looked like it might be a very long trip, and our food supply suddenly looked very small.

This scenario continued for a day and a half. We had an unusual number of difficult portages, but the scenery was magnifico. Reminiscent of the Delores or the Zion narrows, the gorge was approximately 2,000 feet deep. Many times the walls rose straight up from the river to that height. The boulders that we were negotiating through were gigantic; house-sized hunks of polished and colorful schist (we thought) that had tumbled down from the walls to form a riparian maze unlike any we'd ever seen.

The feeling of isolation was intense; we realized with each passing kilometer that we were getting farther and farther away from what was already pretty remote. It was around this time that Rocky told us that ours wasn't actually the first descent; according to the Gringo's Guide To Mexican Whitewater, the Mesquital had been attempted first a dozen years before but a pin by one of the team members resulted in breaking both his legs, which were later amputated. This, combined with a couple of broaches by Mike and I trying to run the rock jumbles, encouraged us to be even more careful. (Several other parties have reportedly paddled the Mesquital in entirety.)

Late on day two the clouds that had been cooling our portaging began to get bigger and darker, and we started wondering if either the hurricane that had been hammering the Yucatan peninsula or the tropical depression that had been lingering off the SW coast might be moving our way. In the evening it started to rain. This continued through most of the night. Rocky said such a prolonged rain was unusual. At about 2 am we awoke to a roar and





Mesquital!

realized that the river had not only come up, it had come up several feet. The roar was the tiny rapid we had camped beside! We quickly gathered our stuff, scrambled above the high water mark, and tried to settle into sleep again. But the dim view we had gotten with our headlamps though the driving rain of the surging river made us start thinking that maybe we'd finally gotten what we wished for and then some. The steepest section of the river (100-plus feet per mile for three miles) was not far downstream. And the canyon walls didn't look any less steep or confining; it was a bad place to get flooded out.

At dawn we were surprised to find that the river had dropped a foot from its crest in the night. Now we had 500 manageable cfs of muddy water. The rapids that we'd been portaging due to rock fences had been magically transformed into mostly-runnable drops. The great maze continued, but now the enhanced flow created many different channels and options. We were in the heart of the steepest section; probing was a bit nerve-wracking. As we eased our way into the eddies behind the behemoth boulders and looked downstream, we were never sure if we'd turn to see a nice clean rapid, an awful river-wide sieve, or simply a pool.

It was a challenge to keep from getting over-committed to drops since the horizon lines were rarely straightforward. We rotated the scouting/probing duties. But even with utmost caution we had a heart-pounding moments. Once Mike mistook Rocky's shoreline signal for "scout" (hand to the forehead) to be "OK" (hand patting the top of the head). He launched into a particularly nasty rapid, where he had to make a desperate mid-rapid juke to avoid a massive sieve.

As we picked our way down the river we passed many tributaries, which was good for two reasons: we were treated to awesome waterfalls that sometimes tumbled 2,000 feet down to the river, and we had a little more water to hasten us along. Although the gradient was decreasing, the pools just got longer and the rapids stayed interesting and challenging.

But the hard fact remained that after four days we had only covered 45 of the 273 kilometers, and we had started with only seven days worth of food. We knew that after the river made a significant bend towards the south the gradient dropped below 20 feet per mile for over 100 miles. In order to avoid starving and make it out in time to catch our flights home, we'd be paddling hard on little food.

So paddle we did. About 50 km per day. Mike and Rocky were both experienced long distance sea kayakers and used to stroking all day, but it took a bit of getting used to for me. Fortunately, the scenery stayed very high quality. The vegetation in the upper gorges was sparse, but as we continued towards the ocean it gave way to lush jungly stuff. The canyon walls began to open into rolling hills. We spotted eagles, osprey, herons, 2-3 foot iguanas, desert sheep, otters, and a coatimundi (according to Mike; it was kind of a cross between a possum and a raccoon, but a little bigger). While trying to escape the wrath of the deadly kayakers, the poor coatimundi attempted a delicate friction move on a wet slab high above the river, slipped, and came careening down towards us. After a couple of big bounces over ledges he crashed into the water right next to us. I was certain he was going to be at best bro-

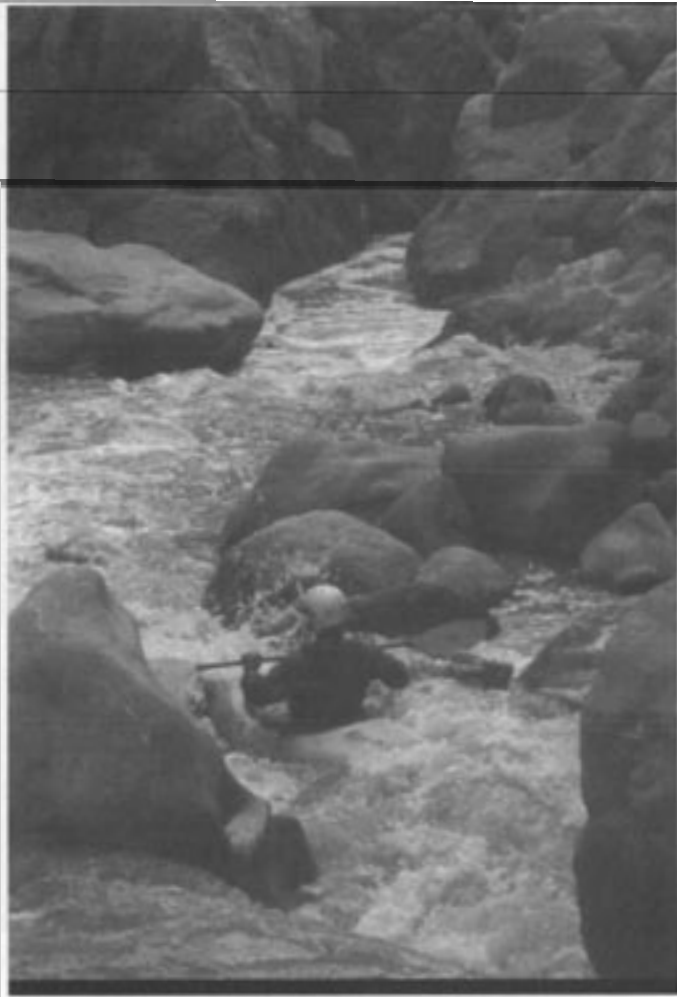
Mesquital!

ken and at worst dead, but instead he just sheepishly slunk away into some safer riparian grasses. Later we saw something weird floating fast in front of us. When we got to it it gave a quick and surprisingly large thrash and disappeared; we realized that in some of the 1/2 mile long pools there were alligators lurking, something that tempered Mike and my enthusiasm for rolling our boats to cool off.

We knew that a small pueblo was located 40 km above the take-out, and on day 8 we arrived tired and ready for some food. We had lunch in a place that was part home and part chicken coop, but the fresh handmade tortillas were awesome. At this point the gradient was in the single digits and we were floating through avocado orchards. With the increased vegetation the bugs (mosquitoes, no-see-ums, and sand fleas) were intense.

Finally we reached the first village on a primary road. After stuffing our boats on top of and into a nearly-destroyed seventies-style station wagon taxi, we rolled all the way back to Mazatlan to see if we could fly home from there. But all the flights were full, so we had to drive 7 hours back down to Guadalajara to catch our original flights.

But our adventures were not over. As we groggily hit the outskirts of Guadalajara we were psyched for the first hotel we could




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find. Mike and I were waiting in the car outside the reception area when we noticed that this hotel seemed to have "garages." As we accompanied the receptionist to the room, trying to talk her into letting 4 of us share one double room for the single price, we saw a nicely dressed woman tipping along the fake cobbles of the parking lot.

I began to suspect something was up with this "hotel." My suspicions were confirmed when our "receptionist" pressed the power button on the TV to show three people getting it in some hard-core porn.

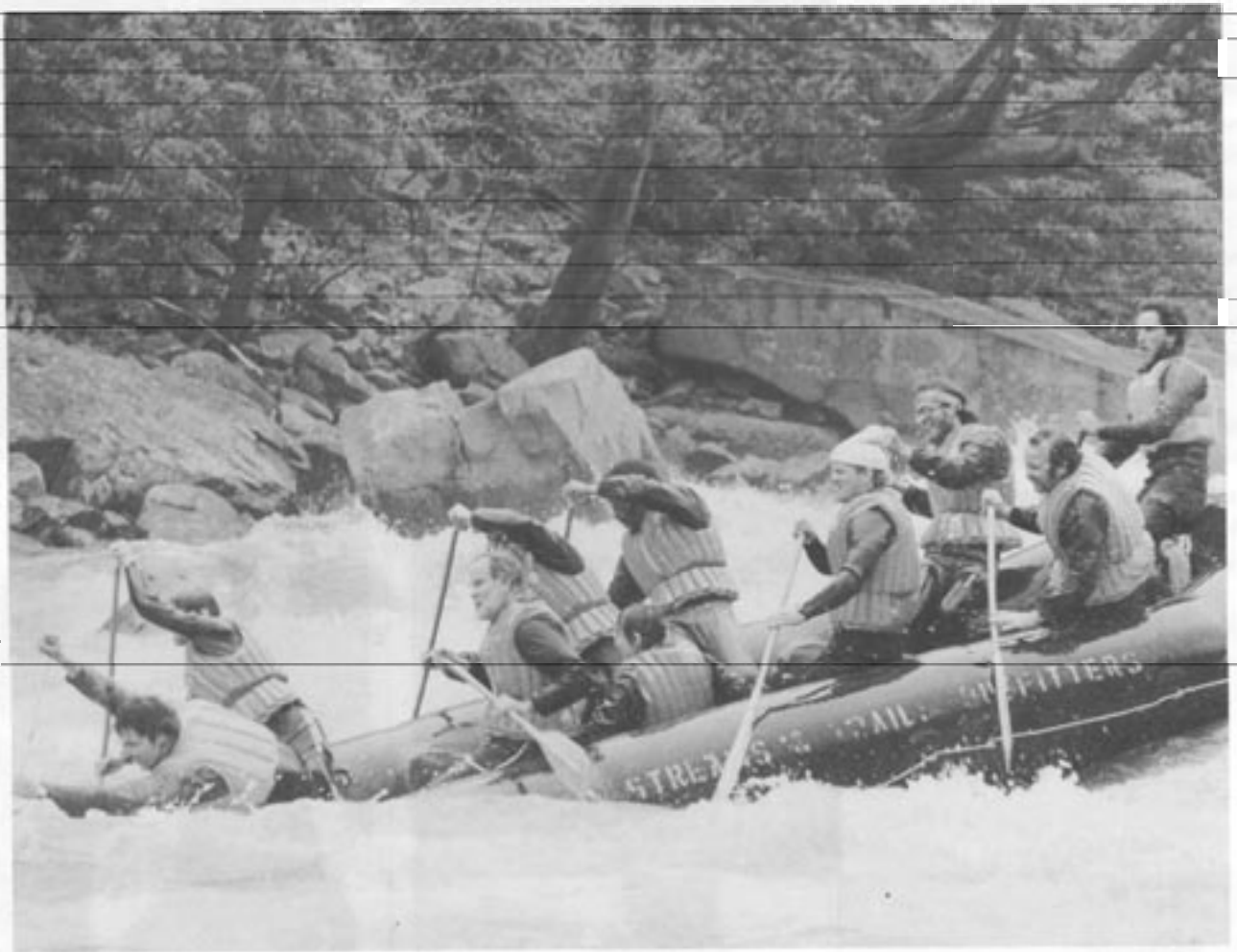
That gave us a chuckle. She's probably still laughing with her friends about the four gringo dorks who wanted to share one room.

A strange ending to a great adventure.

Postscript

Two months after our return Mike Hobbs, a 13 year veteran of the Santa Monica Fire Department and intrepid global traveler/paddler/adventure racer, died in his sleep of a congenital heart condition. Mike left behind many sad friends, family, fellow firefighters, and his fiancée.

Mike was about to leave on his next trip, one to Chile to paddle yet again one of his favorite rivers, the Futalafeu. There has been a trust created in Mike's name for Futafriends, the organization dedicated to keep Endessa from damming and flooding this South American jewel. For more information contact www.Futafriends.org



The Glory Days of Cheat River

Cheat trips were run using the same “unguided format” used on the Lower Yough. (Not every raft had a guide.)

Rafting

By Charlie Walbridge
AW Safety Editor



The Glory Days of Cheat River

In the 1970s, long before anyone could become "sponsored," the only way to make money by paddling was to become a river guide. Unlike the west, where commercial and private paddlers formed very separate groups, back east, we were all part of the same community. Since there were very few skilled whitewater paddlers around, we often tagged along on commercial trips running the Lower Yough. You got a free lunch and a shuttle in exchange for working informally as an extra safety boat. It was easy to move from this to occasional employment. There were no "standards" for guides; you just had to be known to the company manager.

On busy days "known" paddlers were sometimes approached and offered work as they unloaded boats. My first day of guiding came after my car was broken into and my wallet stolen. When I tried to borrow twenty bucks from Greg Green, he recommended me to his boss at White Water Adventurers.

By the mid-70s I also tagged along on Cheat River trips. Business here was growing fast. My friend John Brown, who guided for Mountain Streams and Trails, told me one spring that they were looking for safety boaters on the Cheat. He suggested that I come down for a training weekend and meet "the boys." Afterwards, I signed up to work several weekends during April and May. Later that spring I would meet the company owner, Ralph William McCarty.

Ralph McCarty is a man who has spent his entire life "thinking outside the box." Some people referred to him as "Crazy Ralph" because of his unique, stream-of-consciousness way of talking. I thought he was crazy like a fox! A lot of his ideas never went anywhere, but some of them were right on target, so I always listened carefully. He'd been a successful engineer in the aircraft and automotive industries in the

Midwest since the early days of World War II and held several patents.

He would soon become better known as a riverman. He became an active whitewater canoeist, a founding member of the Mad Hatter's Canoe Club of Cleveland, and an early instructor at the Western Pennsylvania Whitewater School. In the mid-60s he went to Ralph Freeze at Chicagoland Canoe and bought a high-performance European inflatable kayak for his son, Mike. Since it was not a self-bailing ducky, he added a

full fiberglass deck that would accept a spray skirt. This hot little boat was way ahead of its time.

As McCarty neared mid-life, he entered the outfitting business. He bought a number of those high performance ducks and got Chuck Tummonds, a paddler and fiberglass fabricator, to produce the add-on decks. Mountain Streams and Trails opened in 1967, offering guided ducky trips down the rivers of Western Pennsylvania and Northern West Virginia. Although his main business was

on the Lower Yough, Ralph also offered trips down the Casselman, Cheat, Upper Yough, and Lower Big Sandy! In 1968 he bought a single huge raft that he called the "Black Mariah" to accommodate friends of ducky paddlers who didn't want to travel alone.

The spaces on his raft always booked really fast, and he geared up to meet this demand. For this, he designed a unique raft, later known as "Ralph's Rocket." The side tubes extend back past a square stern to make the boat track better. An





experienced guide could use these stern tubes to climb back aboard very fast after a flip. McCarty contracted Rubber Crafters of West Virginia to build them.

In the Spring of 1968 his company, Mountain Streams and Trails (MS&T) ran its first commercial Cheat Trip. His son, Mike (the current company owner) was a junior in high school. At the Albright Ball Field (now the Cheat Canyon Campground) they used a machete to cut through the thick rhododendron that lined the riverbank to reach the water. This rhodo and the giant riverside sycamores washed away in the '85 floods. Ralph's plan was to use the Cheat to build his spring business, when the Yough ran at levels that were then thought to be too high for commercial trips.

But the Cheat business grew explosively. By the time I arrived in the mid-70s they were running eight or more trips a day of 44 people each on the weekends from Easter to Memorial Day. There was also substantial weekday business.

Cheat Season back then was bigger than Gauley Season! Appalachian Wildwaters was getting started, and Whitewater Adventurers was running a few trips, but "the boys" from MS&T had the bulk of the business. Soon, outfitters from the New River, looking for an alternative to high-water trips on that huge river, would also run the Cheat.

Guide training was informal, but thorough. Potential safety boaters were evaluated by managers and senior guides as they paddled the river. A strong roll was essential; and anyone who swam was likely to find himself demoted to "pushing rubber." We also had to learn the river. It's one thing to run the Cheat Canyon for fun, another to always know exactly where you are so you don't direct guests someplace where they don't belong. Experienced safety boaters were paired with rookies to show them the "guide rocks" and "guide eddies," where we would stop to direct rafting guests away from danger. For instance, a sharp piece of metal next to an aban-

doned railroad bridge below the Albright Ball Field could slash a raft badly. We eddied out next to it and motioned the rafts away from us. If anything bad happened, we were supposed to converge on the scene to assist. Guides were expected to be excellent river swimmers, and we practiced this skill in the icy March water.

Cheat trips were run using the same "unguided format" used on the Lower Yough. (Not every raft had a guide.) The trileader gave his safety talk as we drifted downstream from the Route 26 Bridge in Albright. He covered the difference between "small, friendly" and "big, unfriendly" rocks and what to do if you fell out of your boat. He also gave the guests a "talk-up" above major rapids while safety boaters assumed their positions. He then led his trip through the rapid. The "grunt guide" brought up the rear. He carried the group's lunches and the first aid kit, and was the person responsible for releasing pinned boats. The safety boaters circulated around unless they had a spe-

cific assignment, assisting the grunt guide as needed. We always tried to coach the guests to unpin their boat themselves to avoid the hassle of getting out of our boats.

The Cheat Canyon before the '85 flood was a lot like the Lower Yough, though slightly harder and twice as long. The rapids, except for Coliseum, were pretty straightforward. At the bottom of Decision Rapid people were warned by the trileader that if they didn't like what they had experienced, they should walk out. Some did, especially on cold days. Beech Run had a big hole halfway down at high levels. Big Nasty was just a big, frisky wave train, with no hole. At Even Nastier there was a pourovers rock just upstream of a bad pinning rock. A raft could drop into this slot like toast in a toaster. When that happened you might as well tie it off and wait for the water to go down! A guide always stood on the rock to warn people off and push them off with their feet if they didn't listen. We ate lunch just below here.

Lunch was a basic affair. Guests had their choice of mystery meat or PB&J sandwiches. There were apples and generic soda. Guides told me that the guests were so hungry that good food would be wasted on them. We'd describe the rest room facilities (boys upstream, girls downstream) and tell the customers to throw their apple cores into the woods where a 90-pound chipmunk would clean up. They were cautioned against throwing lunch meat into the woods because it would make the chipmunk carnivorous, and then we'd have to take their paddles into the woods for protection when they wanted to use the rest rooms. Lastly, everyone was told "to put the top of the pop top in the hole in the pop top can" before turning in the can to be carried out.

This was a good time to socialize with the guests, but we weren't above pulling their leg. One day a customer asked if any of us were "licensed river

The Glory Days of Cheat River



pilots." I told them my buddy Jim was a barge pilot on the Allegheny River, but that one day his barge got away from him and rammed the Interstate 79 Bridge near Pittsburgh. "And the unemployment office sent him here," I concluded.

After a long Class III stretch known as "the Doldrums" the Cheat started to pick up fast. After "Cue Ball," "Green's Hole" and "Teardrop" we arrived at High Falls, a long sloping ledge with big holes that's exciting at any level. Years earlier John Sweet showed me a great line down the middle that always worked, but it took some courage to get out there in the ten-ter at high levels. After Maze Rapid, Coliseum approached. This rapid was quite long and really tough to guide. After going through the "Upper and Lower Box," a series of tight chutes, the rafters had to skirt "The Devil's Trap" and "Coliseum Rock." Below was "Lower Coliseum." This is now called "Pete Morgan" to honor a man in Albright who ran a gas station at the Route 26 Bridge. Before the days of the internet and dial-up gauge reports, paddlers phoned him for water level readings.

At high levels Upper and Lower Coliseum ran together. We always seemed to be about

one guide short here, and people sometimes took long swims. But the guests were pretty tough in the 70s. Most were young men in there 20s who were hikers, bikers or skiers. They were looking for a bit of rugged adventure, and they got it. I don't remember any really close calls.

In those days rafting was not for the faint-hearted. People camped out at Cheat

Canyon Campground. On popular weekends it was extremely crowded. Campers sometimes got rowdy, forcing the campground owner, Grant Tichnell, to strap on his pistol to get things under control. But we were an honest bunch. It wasn't unusual to come in late at night and find Grant asleep in his chair. We'd tuck five bucks into his shirt pocket (sometimes there was quite a

lot of money in there!) and enter the campground without waking him up.

The Albright Fire Department offered breakfast and, as a result of their partnership with MS&T, they had one of the best equipped small-town fire departments in the country. There was no change area at the put-in, just a parking lot and a few portable toilets. But being a progressive company, we allowed a few female customers to change in a parked van or a school bus. Customer service was no-nonsense, and no whining was allowed. Once, while visiting "The Last Resort," MS&T's base on the Lower Yough, I overheard someone tell a guest on the phone: "Now sir, I appreciate your position, but please, just remember one thing: I have your money, and you have my sympathy!"

April Cheat trips could be brutally cold, and wetsuit rentals were not available. Our management thought it would be too much trouble, so the brochure suggested that rafting guests should get one from a dive store. A few people did, but everyone else was pretty miserable. On really cold days the guides took the matter into

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their own hands. The company had a number of huge black military surplus dry bags that we'd fill with our extra clothing. At lunch the trileader would issue the warm stuff to the coldest people. In the late 70s an enterprising young guide named Mike Minke bought a huge bread truck and set it up to carry several hundred wetsuits. He parked in Cheat Canyon Campground and did a booming business, renting everything he had at ten bucks apiece. In the evening he'd hang up all the suits, turn on a kerosene heater, and open the top vents. The next day his suits were dry and ready to be rented again.

Mike's business was very successful during Cheat and Gauley seasons. Mike liked to party, and we all worried that someone would try to roll him and take his money. It never happened, but raft company owners took careful note of his success. When they entered the

wetsuit rental business a year or two later Mike was unable to compete. After a few years he and his girlfriend moved out West. Outfitters in Maine and on the New River now tell me that wetsuit rentals are probably one of the most profitable parts of their business.

One of the things about being a guide is that you get to meet all kinds of customers, some of whom you hope you'll never see again. Late each spring we got a visit from a group we called "The Gay Weightlifter's Club." They were all quite buff and wore bikini bathing suits. One year "Big Jim," a tall, handsome guide, was assigned to be trip leader. At the end of the day I asked him how it went. He gave me a nasty look, then lifted his shirt. There were pinch marks all over his body!

Jim was a great guide, so we were disappointed when he told us that he wouldn't be guiding next season because he had

found "a great opportunity, with a future." It turned out he was going to be the quality control manager of a dog food plant in Connelsville! He never should have told us that! Guides barked at him for the rest of the season whenever his back was turned.

If there was trouble on the river, guides were expected to handle it. I still like to paddle with guides because I knew if I get in trouble, they'll come after me. One day I was working my raft through Lower Coliseum when I heard my buddy Chip Queitzsch screaming for help. Chip was an engineering student at UVA and he never got excited. I grabbed a throw rope and ran like hell. Pushing my way through a crowd of canoe clubbers on shore, I saw that Chip was chest deep holding a guy's head above water. The guy's kayak had wrapped around "trap rock" in the "second box," and his buddies were just watching the scene unfold

from shore. I got one of them to hold my rope, then swam out to release the boat.

Mountain Streams and Trails had a set procedure at the take-out. Guests carried the rafts from the river to a large U-Haul truck. Here the guides sorted gear and loaded boats. Two guides balanced a raft on their heads, took a running start, and threw it into the truck. If you bounced it off the front of the cargo compartment, it was considered a good toss. If part of the raft was left hanging out the back, it was a wimpy effort. Solo tosses got you extra points, but you had to be quick! Sometimes the raft would catch the back of your head and slam you into the truck bed with predictable results. I always kept my helmet on! A crowd of guides would hang around to critique your performance.

For many years MS&T wouldn't hire women as guides, supposedly because they



weren't strong enough to

..... but when I worked at Nantahala Outdoor Center we had a number of excellent female guides, and rafts got loaded pretty efficiently. I still remember encountering U.S. Team member and NOC guide Carrie Ashton in Ohioyle after she had been turned down at Wilderness Voyaguers. She was furious because her much-less-skilled boyfriend was hired.

In the late 60s Mountain Streams became the first river company to hire woman and minorities. Greg Green (who later started the first successful river photography business) joined Sue and Cathy Spindt living at the company headquarters in town. This "liberated" living arrangement did not set well in town, and their lease was not renewed. Greg continued to work for various companies as the first active black guide, but other women were not hired until the early 80s. Now they are found guiding on all eastern rivers, and we wonder how we managed without them.

We always told our guests that the shuttle ride at the end of the trip was as wild as the river. We weren't kidding! Anyone who has taken a trip up the Masontown side of the Cheat take-out knows how steep and narrow that road is. I kept my helmet on, and so did lots of other guides! Several times the bus seemed to span precipices as it negotiated the tight turns. We used this road because the road to Valley Point, on the other side of the river, was in very bad repair. Going out that way required a high-clearance four-wheel drive vehicle and a sense of adventure. The infamous "mud hole" at the top of the gorge was the crux move: you just gunned your engine, charged through door-deep slop and hoped for the best.

On busy days we stationed someone at the top of the hill on the Masontown Side and used CBs to make sure that two buses wouldn't meet part-way down. Sometimes locals would blow through the traffic check-

point causing a huge traffic jam. Once some guys from Masontown who were fed up with all this activity drove an old clunker of a car down the road, broached it in a narrow spot, and abandoned it. Guides from several companies, lead by a tough local man who was driving the lead bus, got out and manhandled it off the edge of the cliff! MS&T eventually switched to using vans, driving guests to the top of the road and transferring them to buses.

Eight trips a day with 44 guests each, plus guides, means that there were a lot of people to move around. When things went well, it was easy enough. Each tripler had a scheduled finish time. By hurrying up or slowing down over the last few miles you could meet your goal easily. But occasionally there was a bad pin on the river that threw the schedule off. Sometimes the rescue involved not only your own guides, but the guys from the next couple of trips. Now everyone arrived at the take-out simultaneously, and there were more people needing rides than the busses could handle. A bro-

ken-down bus would cause the same problem. This always seemed to happen when the weather was really bad.

A delay like this proved fateful for "Crazy Dave," one of our guides. He had maneuvered his way into working a trip composed of high school age girls from Fairfax County, Virginia. They were very cute, but also under age. Dave was determined to impress them, and the delay at the take-out gave him the perfect opportunity. Now, understand me, a few guides jumped from the 50 foot high deck of the Bridge at Jenkinsburg, but most of them hung by their arms from the deck before letting go. Dave announced that he was going to jump from the superstructure of the bridge, adding 30 feet to the jump. Very few people had done this, and nobody did it twice. As a crowd gathered, he climbed to the top and took the plunge. He came up screaming. His legs had parted during the fall; he was wise enough to protect his privates, but the water found another venue. He was rushed to a hospital in Morgantown to have his underpants removed. The water had

shoved them into a place where the sun never shines!

I was part of a group that would sign up for the early trips so we could take a fast, sweet run down the Big Sandy afterwards. We ran the shuttle the night before, leaving a vehicle in Jenkinsburg. The next day we would load our boats after the raft trip and go to the Sandy, hoping to get to the take-out in time to ride out with the equipment truck. Usually my Dodge Power Wagon, the designated shuttle vehicle, was crammed with more people and boats than it could safely handle. Once, bouncing up a particularly bad spot in the Valley Point Road, the wooden rack frame over the pickup truck bed broke. The people riding underneath screamed, but stopping was not an option. Afterwards we jury-rigged a repair, finished the shuttle, and made the run.

If nothing else was running, we would hang out at the put-in until it was time to get dinner in Kingwood. The company rented the second floor of an old building, known as "The Cheat Suite," the weekend guide's home away from home.



It became filthy as only guide quarters can be. You couldn't drink the water, but at least the toilets worked. Unless the weather was really awful I preferred to camp out!

One night my friend Chip brought his very attractive girlfriend Bette there. I sat and watched in amusement as several guys came into the room, saw her, then walked right into the narrow edge of an open door. Ouch! The place got a little worse every year. After I stopped guiding, MS&T built new guide quarters. This was a windowless structure across the street that everyone called "the mailbox." Appalachian Wildwaters later rented the old bank and tried to open a bar there, but rowdy locals kept tearing the place up so badly that they couldn't make a profit.

One particular afternoon turned into a guide's day from hell. Everything went wrong, and the end-of day shuttle was

horribly late. As usual, all the safety boaters had loaded their boats on the ducky trailer, a relic of our company's history with inflatable kayaks. On the way out the trailer lost a wheel. It fishtailed over the edge of the road, and several kayaks broke loose. These quickly slid into the depth of the Bull Run gorge.

It was getting dark. Running around with flashlights, we managed to find all the pieces and get rolling again. After a 11 PM dinner at the Pizza Hut in Kingwood, we got back to base and crashed. The next morning Ralph McCarty, a notorious early riser, arrived at our camp at dawn. He was annoyed that the ducky trailer had not been unloaded, and moved around camp to wake people up. His technique, crude, but effective, was to peel back a person's eyelids. Dan, his own manager, told him to get lost!

One year a bunch of strang-

ers came to town. They swaggered around, told everyone they were "Lehigh Guides," and generally seemed quite pleased with themselves. But the boys at MS&T weren't impressed. "The Lehigh's not a river, it's a damned float trip," someone said. Having already been harassed for being affiliated with the Philadelphia Canoe Club, which my guide buddies called the "Philadelphia Swimmin' Club" I kept my mouth shut. The Lehigh Guides asked to tag along on our trips, and we obliged. We lead them down tight side chutes ending in holes that we'd cut away from at the last minute. We'd also tried to get them to play in some of the Cheat's nastier holes. A favorite was "Fool's Hole," located in the Doldrums. It didn't look like much, but boy, was it deep! If, and only if, you surfed across it quickly, you could make it look easy. One of us would make the move,

then sit back and watch the fun.

The Cheat Canyon is a wild ride at high water, and was way too nasty for guide assisted trips (not a guide in every raft). Our cut-off was four feet at the Albright Bridge. If the water was higher, we moved the trips upstream to the Narrows. The Narrows is usually a Class III run with one easy Class IV drop, but at eight or nine feet this stretch gets pushy. There are huge waves and some very large holes. Keeping track of a group of self-guided rafts, let alone rescuing someone, was pretty challenging. Safety boaters towed swimmers to shore and advised them to walk downstream to the take-out. We then peeled out and rushed downstream to help someone else. The Narrows run was over very quickly, but some guests felt that it was quite long enough.

Eric Nelson, owner of Cheat River Outfitters, was on shore

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with his movie camera one day as one of our trips headed into Calamity Rock Rapid. He caught a boatload of turban-wearing Sikhs from India, as they were thrown head over heels by the big crashing wave at the bottom. As they flew out of the boat, their turbans unwound! This film was played back often over the next few years. Guides hanging out at the Cheat River Outfitters' base watching home-made boating movies would start to chant, "Swam-is, Swam-is!" until Eric would load the film. Then we savored multiple slow-motion replays. This film, like so many other things, was lost in the great 1985 flood.

After Mountain Streams started running the Gauley they realized that the Rockets just weren't big enough. So they bought a fleet of hugh black 16-footers that they called "BFRs." These "Big Fat Rafts" were terribly heavy, but

very stable. Naturally, they saw service on the Cheat at high water with a guide in each boat. These trips were a lot easier on the guests.

The Cheat was known for fantastic changes in flows which, as some locals ominously said, would "cheat you outta your life." One year in early June, 1980 (when, fortunately, I wasn't working) the river rose from 2.5 to over 14 feet in less than twelve hours. At nine o'clock, with the gauge still reading a relatively reasonable seven feet, our trips headed for the Narrows. The water was even higher in Rowlesburg, and they got in trouble soon after launching. Safety boaters recovered everyone but a man who was marooned on a midstream rock. This rock is on the shoreline at normal water levels.

John Lichter, MS&T's river manager, kayaked out to him. He decided that he could not

pull the man to safety with his kayak because there was a bad strainer just downstream. To add insult to injury, the water was still rising fast and there were several snakes on the rock as well that looked like copperheads. Fortunately, a coal company helicopter was in the vicinity. The pilot, a Vietnam veteran, made a daring one-skid landing on the rock and picked up the stranded guest. Management moved in quickly and cancelled subsequent trips.

Low water created its own problems. As the level dropped, the current slowed, and the trip took a lot longer. In addition, there were more rocks to hang up on. Guests and guides got tired and cranky. One day, after finishing trips at very low water levels, we heard a commotion from the Cheat River Outfitters base. A group of huge men were trying to bully Eric Nelson into refunding their money, which he had already

spent! They backed down when a large group of guides from both companies barged into the room to offer Eric support. On another day Jim Colianne was having problems with a raft that was being paddled by four huge men. They kept hanging up on rocks. There they would sit and scream at the guides to pull them off. Late in the day their raft hung up on a rock one more time. Fortunately, Jim pulled into an eddy, hopped out, and told them to get out of their boat. This they did, figuring he was going to pull the raft loose. The grunt guide pulled alongside with a mischievous expression on his face. Before the rafters realized what Jim was doing, he popped the valves and deflated their boat. "You've seen the streams," he said as he rolled up the boat, "Now it's time to hit the trails. Trails right over there. Watch out for snakes." He threw the raft into the

"Guides are like whores," they said, "first they do it for fun, then they do it for their friends, and then they do it for money."

grunt guide's boat and paddled off, leaving the speechless men to find their own way downstream.

Often on weekends I'd meet my old racing buddies who razzed me about "selling out." "Guides are like whores," they said, "first they do it for fun, then they do it for their friends, and then they do it for money." I didn't care, I liked being paid to paddle. We learned to play the river in between the rafts, sometimes closer than we should. To this day I don't mind mixing it up with my rubber buddies. At Boulder Line we'd do ends between oncoming rafts. Occasionally a guide's timing would be off and he'd land on top of the raft. This was one way to get in really big trouble with your trip leader.

Although many guides had fantasies of romancing a female rafting guest, it almost never

happened. Single girls didn't go rafting much, and if they did, most had better prospects than the likes of us. John Connelly was an exception. His blue eyes and charm allowed him to succeed where the others failed. One day he made a play for a lady but things didn't look good. We razzed him unmercifully at the take-out and on the bus ride back. But shortly after we got into Albright, the lady pulled up in a sports car with a bottle of wine looking for John. He grinned broadly as he hopped inside.

Years later he started Eastern River Expeditions, which became the second-largest company in Maine. After Gauley Season he drove up and ran the Kennebec and Penobscott Rivers solo, then returned home to raise the capitol he needed to open his business. The same salesmanship that he used to convince his

guests that they were having fun on the Cheat at low water served him well in his new endeavor!

Memorial Day was the last big rafting weekend on the river. To celebrate, Mountain Streams and Trails and Cheat River Outfitters threw a huge guide party on Sunday. The only down side was that we had to work the next day. One evening, on the way back to our camp, my buddy Jim and I tripped over "Fish," our river manager. He was lying semi-conscious in the grass, his eyes wide open. I never knew what "pie-eyed drunk" meant until that night. We were afraid that someone would back a car over him, so we took him to his van and laid him out, face down, under a sleeping bag. We had to work the 8:00 trip, and thought that we'd have to find the keys to the equipment truck and inflate all the boats by ourselves.

But the next morning we awoke to the sounds of raft blowers. Fish was hard at work, looking fresh, as if he'd gone to bed at 9:00!

Another time a group of us decided that Chris Walters was too drunk to drive back to Ohio. We tried to take his keys away from him. We chased him all over the campground for thirty minutes. We tackled and manhandled him many times, but he fought us off. We finally decided that a guy who could elude a dozen of his buddies was probably sober enough to drive.

In 1985 much of West Virginia experienced catastrophic flooding. The Cheat River crested at 26 feet (roughly 250,000 cfs), wiping out half of the town of Albright. Many residents had only a few minutes warning before their homes were inundated. MS&T's Cheat Suite and all the build-



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ings around it were leveled. Cheat River Outfitters was washed away, too. Eric Nelson evacuated some of his gear by truck, but stopped when his wife Peggy told him that she just couldn't stand watching him cross the precarious Route 26 Bridge, and if he did it again she would divorce him! Pete Morgan's gas station at the Bridge was flattened.

Appalachian Wildwaters lost half of its building. That evening the owner, Imre Szylagyi, took a canoe and paddled into his office to retrieve computer tapes and vital papers before they, too, were carried downstream. The water rose to the eaves of the building at Cheat Canyon Campground and took out all the magnificent old sycamores that lined the riverbank. The water kept rising, cresting over the Route 26 bridge and depositing a 5 foot diameter tree across the roadbed. There was so much debris in the river that the spillway at Lake Lynn Dam, which holds back Cheat Lake, was almost blocked. Had that happened, the dam almost certainly would have been lost.

When the water fell, devastation remained. Outfitter buses were found lying on their sides along the road leading into Albright. Rafts and T-shirts were caught in the trees and bushes lining the river for miles downstream. The banks were scoured twenty-five feet above the normal high water mark, carrying away thick growths of rhododendron and mountain laurel. Huge rocks were rolled. Many of the Cheat Canyon's rapids were changed. Coliseum Rapid was completely remade, and continues to evolve as time passes. It has become a very challenging rapid! Green's Hole above High Falls was washed away completely.

At high water a huge hole developed in Big Nasty Rapid where none existed before. All the pre-season training in 1986 had been at low water levels, so no one knew it was there. Then, on a high water day still referred to as "Black Saturday," guided trips encountered the

hole for the first time. The monster flipped three-quarters of the boats on the river, and simultaneously juggled two or three rafts with ease. As a result of experiences here and at Coliseum Rapid, companies abandoned the guide-assisted format and put a guide in every boat, unless the water was very low.

Despite the suffering and loss of life, the flood was a fascinating event. I've never seen anything like it. I'm told that an archaeologist tried to return to a site he had been working on in the Seven Islands section, upstream near Parsons. Objects recovered there had been dated and found to be several thousand years old. But when he returned, the island was gone! As a boater and a guide, it was amazing to see how this huge event changed a river I knew so well. Many of us mourn the destruction of "the old Cheat," but I have come to enjoy its successor just as much.

Nowadays the Cheat rafting season is a mere shadow of its former self. Where once sixty thousand guests ran the river each year, now barely a tenth of that go down. There are many reasons for this. The T&T Mine Spill in 1990 sent filthy water roaring down the river and gave the river a whopping dose of bad publicity. Thanks in a large measure to the efforts of the Friends of the Cheat, the river made a strong recovery. But as self-bailing rafts became more popular, companies that run summer trips on the New River Gorge realized that they could use these boats on New at high spring flows. They abandoned the Cheat and developed their lavish New River Bases, which feature hot showers, heated changing areas, restaurants, bars, and other amenities. Spring rafting, in general, is on a decline throughout the East. And I'm told it's hard to market a river that may be at a nice level one weekend, then way higher or lower the next.

Today the Cheat Canyon remains as wild and unspoiled as it was when John Bery made

his pioneering canoe run in the mid-60s. No roads penetrate its rugged gorge. As a rafting river, the Cheat is West Virginia's best-kept secret. Challenging at all levels, it remains wild and unpredictable. This makes it rewarding in a way that dam controlled runs will never be.

Come in March, when the hillsides are often streaked with snow and ice! Come in April, and see the Redbud and Serviceberry brighten the dark brown hillsides. Come in May, and watch as the delicate green leaves of Spring become the thick growth of summer. Then in June, after heavy rains, the river roars past sandbars covered with colorful wildflowers and thick, blooming stands of rhododendron and mountain laurel. For kayakers, there's plenty of big, uncrowded water and challenging play spots in a beautiful canyon!

And, who knows, perhaps someday the gloy days of Cheat River rafting will return!



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Briefs

New AmericanWhitewater.org Web River Tools

By Barry Grimes, AW Web Volunteer and Board Member

Thanks to Scott Collins, cyber volunteer Ryan Groth, StreamKeepers across the country and with help from the staff and volunteers of American Whitewater, www.americanwhitewater.org just keeps on getting better! Get online now to surf a host of new and more powerful tools to help you instantly find the whitewater info you need. Check out the new Affiliates Area, River Search function, Wireless Gauges, Photo-Video Search, Email Alerts and much more...

Affiliates Area

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/affiliates/>



This new section of AW's comprehensive online whitewater resource has been structured to allow affiliate web masters and/or their

volunteer representatives the ability to create, change, maintain and integrate their organization's contact, event, and other related information on the AmericanWhitewater.org website. This new exciting new feature allows AW Affiliates the ability to:

- * Link club or organization information directly to specific river reaches within the massive 3000+ whitewater river database.
- * Embed Affiliate website links allowing visitors interested in your organization to jump directly to your site.

The new Affiliates Area can help to boost your organization's profile on the Internet and make it easier for paddlers looking for paddlers to come together. AW has made it simple for individuals who represent their AW Affiliated organization and are willing to volunteer a little online time (HTML skills not necessary) to keep their club or organization's information updated as well as provides additional information about events or issues of importance. Please visit [AmericanWhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org) to find out how to take advantage of this new feature at this address:

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/resources/repository/affiliateInfo.html>

The new Affiliates Area on the AW web site is just one of the many benefits that American

Whitewater offers to those organizations that have joined. If your organization is not currently affiliated with American Whitewater please contact us and we'll help them become one today!

River search

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/search/>

You can now search the entire AW whitewater river database - that's over 3,300 rivers and growing - for an individual whitewater river or group of rivers based on any of the following criteria: name, region, state, difficulty, and water level. This powerful and useful new feature will allow you to perform searches for example of all rivers in the Northwest between Class III and IV that are above the minimum recommended flow. Or search for a list of all the rivers in Tennessee that are Class III and are currently running as indicated by the levels recommended by the paddlers who know them best—the AmericanWhitewater.org Streamkeepers.



Photo/Video Search

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/search/>

Thanks to the generous river image artists across the country uploading hundreds (soon to be thousands) of images and videos into AW's huge online river database their fellow paddlers will be able to search for pictures and short video clips by river, rapid, title, author, subject, state and file extension. AmericanWhitewater.org visitors may also choose the method they'd like to see them by limiting the maximum results per page and then arranging them by the most recent seen, or state or even the file extension in ascending or descending order.

Wireless Gauge Reports

AmericanWhitewater.org now supports HDML and WML web-enabled cell phones and handheld devices. To try it out on one of those devices just enter <http://>



www.americanwhitewater.org/ or visit AW's web site for more information and even an online demonstration on how to take advantage of this exciting free service.

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Stay in touch with the latest whitewater news with AmericanWhitewater.org's exclusive e-mail whitewater alerts. Any time a new article is posted to the AmericanWhitewater.org website, a text version of that article with contact information and a link to the online version of the article will be automatically sent to registered users who have set their preferences to receive alerts. Registration is free and now paddlers can stay in touch by letting AmericanWhitewater.org send them the news as it happens!

Rivers Listing by Watershed and Multi-state Reaches

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers>

Whitewater Rivers can now be grouped by drainage basin, and selected by clickable state maps. All rivers in that basin, regardless of state are listed together.

Additional Whitewater Gauges Added to the Database

<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/gauges/state/TN/>

TVA gauges have been added in TN, NC, GA, AL, and VA. The last 20 readings are kept to determine whether the level is rising or falling. Even more gauges will be added in the near future and already available are the exclusive StreamKeeper defined "virtual gauges" (virt) that can provide approximate flows for rivers not served by real-time gauges. These virtual gauges are combinations of related online river gauges based on observations by StreamKeepers of when a particular stream is likely to be running.

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There's much more on the way so please visit [americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org) often or sign up for the e-mail alerts to be notified of all future website features releases. Registration is free and in addition to all of these new features you'll be able to take advantage of Gaugebot—AW's daily e-mail gauge delivery service that gives you only the USGS, TVA, and virtual gauges you want. Registration

also allows you to design your own custom home page with your weather, favorite web links and the gauges you want updated every 30 minutes — or as soon as the USGS or TVA posts a change in the flow. Thanks to paddlers everywhere sharing their information and American Whitewater staff and cyber

volunteers the AW web site is fast becoming the whitewater boater's best and most powerful information source and tool. So what are you waiting for? Surf on over to americanwhitewater.org and get the whitewater info you need today!

Book Reviews

by Gree Herring

Grand Canyon River Hikes by Tyler Williams

"To find the truly spectacular spots you must hike farther, climb higher, and nearly die of thirst once or twice," writes author Tyler Williams in his latest book, *Grand Canyon River Hikes*. While this guide to more than 50 hikes from the Colorado River would be a jumping off point for the most adventurous, it is also just as appropriate for the casual walker. Descriptions of various hikes may include ways for the less confident to avoid needing a boost up while including a way for the more adventurous people to take a more challenging route. Occasional tidbits of info, from describing the great acoustics in Fossil Canyon to appropriate quotes from John Wesley Powell, enliven how-to information and illustrate the author's knowledge of the area. Maps, duration of hikes, black-and-white photos of each hike, and camping suggestions makes planning easy. *Grand Canyon River Hikes* sells for \$18.95 and can be found at your favorite outdoor stores, or at Amazon.com.

Tight Squeeze

You've come a long way baby! From Nancy Wiley running meaty drops in big ol' kayaks to Debs Pinniger tearing it up at the world's, there is no shortage of boats, bikinis, rodeos, and rivers in Beth Rypins' latest video, *Tight Squeeze*. The first of its kind, this video brings together some of the best girl paddlers to go creeking on the West Coast and heli-boating in New Zealand. As Shannon Carol flies off waterfalls and Erica Mitchell goes nuts getting vertical, classic vintage footage shows just how far the sport has come. See what the girls are up to... *Tight Squeeze* can be purchased for \$24.99 at your favorite outdoor store. It also can be ordered from www.horizonlineproductions.com. The website has eleven *Tight Squeeze* images that can be downloaded as free screensavers.

River Running by Verne Huser (2nd edition)

No matter how experienced a whitewater enthusiast may be, *River Running* would round out a person's knowledge of their sport. Generally written, with an eye for representing all styles of river exploration from canoeing to rafting, this book explains how to plan overnight trips, deal with emergencies (including a med-kit checklist), pick a craft, and read whitewater. Informative text along with black-and-white photos also gives the history of river running as well as thoughtful information about river conservation. When it first came out 26 years ago, this book was a classic; the updated version continues to provide timeless information that will enhance river recreation.



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River Film

Festival Scheduled for California

The Sierra Nevada Outdoor Center, Friends of the River (FOR) and American Whitewater (AW) are pleased to announce the Third Annual River Film Festival scheduled for Saturday, July 14, 2001.

This year's festival will feature, in person, river filmmakers John Armstrong, Kristi Atwell, Gordon Brown and Allison Chase.

Armstrong will be screening "Paucartambo—The Rest of the River" featuring an all-star cast of boaters from the Coloma area. Atwell's new film "Quartzite's Fall" has appearances from FOR Founder Mark Dubois. Brown and Chase will be screening "Rivers of the Underworld" featuring the Chiapas River in Mexico.

John Gangemi, Conservation Director for America Whitewater and recipient of Perception Kayakers' 2001 River Conservation of the Year Award will present this year's winner of the National Paddling Film Festival: "Controlled Flow Study on the Chelan River, Washington."

The Festival will take place at the Sierra Nevada Outdoor Center located at the corner of Lotus Road and Highway 49 in Coloma California. For those already boating they can join the filmmakers paddle during the day.

A barbecue dinner will precede showing of the films. For further information and reservations call Steve Michelson at 650-726-2460 or e-mail steve@lobitoscreekranch.com

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Rivers in WV

Level Legend: Running Below Minimum Recommended Flow Above Maximum Recommended Flow

State	River Name	Section	Class	Level Units	Updated
WV	Cheat	Albriant to Jenkinsburg Bridge	III-IV	4.51 ft	05/31 8:00am
WV	Gauley River	Summersville Dam to Mason Branch	IV-V	2500 cfs	05/31 5:00am
WV	Gauley River	Bucklick Branch to Swiss	III-IV(V)	4890 cfs	05/31 5:00am
WV	Gauley River	Mason Branch to Bucklick Branch	III+(IV)	4721 cfs	05/31 5:00am
WV	New	Thurmond to Fayette Station	III-V	5.72 ft	05/31 7:00am

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News

Report on Dimple Rock Rapid, Lower Yough, PA
 American Whitewater board member and safety expert Charlie Walbridge reports on safety meetings with park officials at Ohiopyle Falls State Park to address safety issues at Dimple Rock Rapid on the Lower Yough.

[Read More](#)

Posted: May 29, 2001

Weather For Summersville
 Partly Cloudy
 Time: 10:00
 Temp: 84 F
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 Winds: Calm

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The Road Less Traveled

By Bobby "ZoneDogg" Miller

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference."— Robert Frost

West Virginia's Lower Meadow has a big reputation on the East Coast for being difficult and dangerous. It is known for Class V rapids, by undercuts and caves. Frightening tales are associated with the name, "Lower Meadow." You might assume with the Lower Meadow's reputation, it would be a place that the Dogg had visited frequently. However, every time I tried to talk someone into running the Meadow, the overruling response was "too dangerous" or "you're crazy."

I knew I had the skill to do the run for about 5 years, but never found anyone interested in trying it. It was beginning to wear on me and I was starting to grow impatient. I mean, this was no small disappointment. It was the greatest injustice since taxation without representation!

On one bright sunny autumn day, all this was to change. My buddy, Jim Starrett, and I had debated all morning and it was finally decision time. I informed him that, if I spent my hard earned gas money to get there, that I was going to do the Meadow, with or without him.

We dropped a vehicle at Panther Creek and saw two friends who had been down the Meadow once before. They said that they definitely wouldn't consider it without a guide because all the moves were very difficult and undercuts were everywhere. This was enough to kill any chance of Jim joining me on the run. I loaded my Micro and told Jim that I was gonna run it anyway.

I was tired of hearing the stories. I respect other people's opinions, but I like to form my own. The stories I heard gave the Lower Meadow supernatural traits—like sucking full volume creek boats off the surface. And that was just the flat water! Naturally, the Dogg was skeptical. I was hell-bent on seeing this river for myself. It was time to make a stand and there was no stopping me. Sure, I was

nervous, but I was confident that I would make it down just fine.

As I suited up at the put-in, Jim tried to talk me out of the run. He was mumbling that, "Gonads are useful for their purpose, but are no substitute for brains." The Meadow was running a perfect 500 cfs on a 70-degree day. The Dogg never misses a Genuine Opportunity and this truly was a Miller Genuine Moment. It didn't matter if there were 5 hundred cfs, 4 calling birds, 3 french hens, 2 turtle doves, or a monkey nipple in a pear tree, I was going to run that river!

I downed a 2-liter bottle of Instant Gonads and shouldered my boat. I promised Jim that I'd meet him at the take-out. There was no turning back. I know that solo boating isn't the safest thing to do, but I was determined. The way I look at it, solo boating is a victimless crime, like punching someone in the dark. You never know what you are capable of until you try it. After all, back in WWII I didn't know that I was capable of shooting down those German warplanes, until I saw them crash.

Besides, I was prepared for anything. I had a first aid kit, a throw bag, my sawed-off shotgun, and a break dancing mat, in case I felt like busting a move. I put on the river and headed down through the first 100 yards of Class II rapids. I had been warned about a bad curler and undercut in the first rapid, so I jumped out to scout. Maybe it was the low water level, but there didn't appear to be too much to worry about. I got into my boat and blasted right through the curler and threaded the needle between a couple of undercuts. I continued down through a long series of delightful boulder rapids.

Soon, I was scouting a major rapid called Hell's Gate (I was able to glean the names of the major rapids through later discussions with other Meadow boaters). It split at a rock island and went through an impressive boulder drop. The right side looked doable, but had a lot of ugly undercuts near the bottom. The left side filtered into a cool looking 3-

foot boof, so I chose that as my line. I hopped in my boat and launched a niche one, landing in a cove eddy. It was definitely a SIKy. However, boaters ages 18-35 would probably classify it as schweeeet. I turned around in the cove and ferried out right in front of a sketchy looking rock and on downstream. (Editor's note: A lethal siphon is located just to the right.)

I worked my way downstream through drops that were boat scutable. I soon approached a huge rock on the right and a formidable horizon. In front of me was Brink of Disaster, a couple of technical drops leading into a 10-foot sloping ledge. This rapid is not all that hard but is right above THE major rapid on the Meadow, Coming Home To Sweet Jesus.

I aced the entrance to Brink and came flying down the slide at a speed close to 341 miles/hour. The speed kinda reminded me of my days as a drag racer. (Yeah, the women used to line the stands to see me race. Unfortunately, a severe hangnail in my left pinky sent me into early retirement.)

I walked down to view the crux of Sweet Jesus. It started with a drop into a juicy hole that circulated to the right and into a cave. If you punched the hole, you would land left of the terminal cave and you could paddle over about an 8-foot drop, followed by some fierce run out. My first thoughts were, "I can do this rapid, looks sweet to me." However, I soon came to my senses and told myself that, yes I would most likely ace the drop but....

I was by myself in one of the most famous deadly drops on the East Coast. So I headed up to the path and walked.

I worked my way down the bank to the pool below Jesus and saw another large horizon line studded with boulders. The main channel went down the middle and slammed into a large boulder sieve that was big enough to swallow a two-headed wriekazoid. The large trees sticking straight out of the boulder were a testament to this. There was a right side sneak down a slide that might have been good with more water, but that day it was dry. So I kept my boat on my shoulder.

This seemed like the perfect time to work on my break dancing moves, so I busted out the mat and proceeded to get down! I started with a backspin into a Backside 44, followed by a Master Swipe. I followed this with a Helicopter, followed by a Superman Windmill. After a few headspins, I finished out with a Nilla Ice and the old classic, The Worm! By this time, I was fired up and ready for anything! WHOOOOO!

I worked my way down many many delightful Class IV-V rapids with awesome slots and drops. Most of it could be boat scouted, but, occasionally, I'd hop out just to be safe. One really cool slide that went through a semi-narrow slot and around a turn. Another cool drop featured a steep juicy entrance into



a boulder dam with 3 slots. The center slot looked pretty cool, but I opted to go far right over a neat drop. As I worked my way down the river, I was amazed by the beauty of this forbidden river corridor. It was an absolute delight to be surrounded by such awesome beauty. I felt at one with the river and my surroundings. Each boof, slot, and drop led into another beautiful pool with gorgeous rock formations surrounded by fall foliage.

Soon, I was out scouting at a big horizon line, which I knew had to be Double Undercut. Here the Meadow dove over a 8 foot horseshoe shaped ledge, bottled up its volume, and raged down a steep wave train that slammed into a huge undercut on the right, before heading left. The idea was to hit the boof on the left of the horseshoe, but not so far left that you fell off into a second undercut extending out from the bank. Next, you had to power left to avoid the undercut at the bottom.

I hopped in my boat and headed down the approach. It was difficult to see exactly where to launch the boof. Once I saw it, I fired up a kickass launch, landed totally flat and under control, to head left and around the big undercut. Oh yesh! It was a schweeeeeeeet one! However, boater's ages 36-52 would

most definitely classify it as SIK!

Below Double Undercut, the Meadow began to mellow. There were still some good boulder drops, but they eventually lightened to Class II rapids and long pools. This gave me ample opportunity to reflect upon the awesome day I had had. The rock cliffs and foliage were even more spectacular in this stretch. It was some of the most beautiful wilderness that I have ever laid my eyes on. I thanked the Lord for giving me the balls to take on such a challenge and see such a magical place.

As I neared the end of the Meadow, I came upon an island. The right side appeared to have trees pinned in it, so I headed down the left until I came to a horizon line. The Meadow wasn't ready to give up yet. I eddied out just above the drop and peered over it. There was a 6-foot sloping ledge through a narrow slot that hit an undercut on the right and went under an overhang on the left. I peeled out angled left, busted down the slope and ducked the overhang. Quite a scweeeet drop, I must say. It was worth a little hooting and hollering.

I drifted down to the confluence with the Gauley through small slides and rock gardens. I could see the crowds paddling down the Gauley for quite a distance. This made me

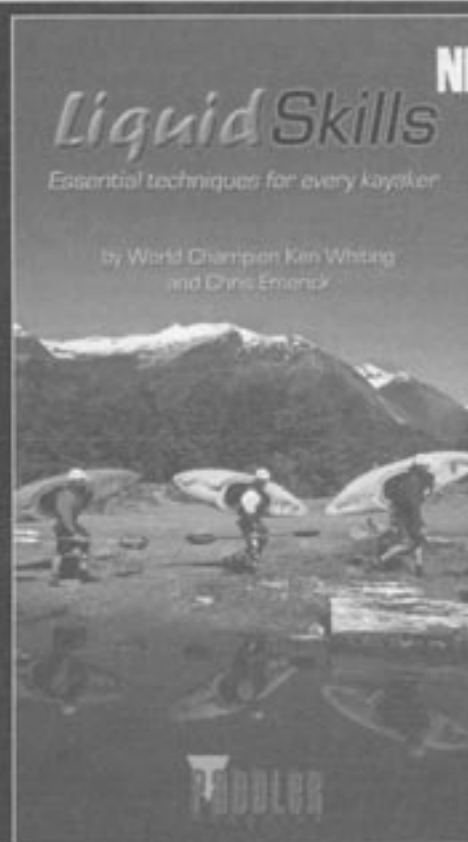
appreciate the solitude of the Meadow even more. I had experienced a beautiful run with great rapids and hadn't seen another person. I had taken the road less traveled and that made all the difference.

When the dust settled and the smoke cleared, the Dogg emerged unscathed and victorious. It was a tremendous test against the elements and I had come out shining. What could have been just another day on the Gauley had turned into a spectacular day on a new run. I would definitely rank the Meadow high on my list of favorite rivers.

I wave wheeled my Micro down the rest of the Gauley to Panther Creek. It was interesting, paddling the Gauley's big water in a creek boat. The only woundage came when I scraped my knuckle running the slot at Tumblehome. I arrived at the take-out to catch my buddy, Jim, loading his boat on the U-Haul of Shame. I had had such a good day that I couldn't give him too hard of a time.

I relived my great adventure on hike up the trail (with my boat on my shoulder, of course) and the ride back to the put-in.

Then we decided to head to the local speakeasy to celebrate the occasion. Next we headed over to the personal art studio to get tattoos. But that is another story.....



NEW

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Laying the Smackdown on the Lower Yough

By Bubby "CornDoggyDogg" Miller

With Hurricane Floyd gone, I couldn't turn down the opportunity to paddle the Lower Yough (a "DoggyStyle" river if there ever was one!), a dam-release, low-water, boney (yeah-dogs LOVE boney runs!) rock splattin' fest. So I met my paddling buds, Master Z (as in ZZZone) and Spanky at the put-in on Saturday morning. The level was bustin' at 13" and we were looking forward to a SCHWEEEEET run on a SCHWEEEEET day! OH YESH, IT WAS GONNA BE NICHE!!!! Hopefully this trip report will fulfill the cravings of the millions of CornDoggy fans out there. Before you read this, I have just one question for you: Can you smell what the CornDoggy is cookin'?!?!?

At Entrance, I couldn't pass up the tiny hole at the top just below the put-in. Master Z tried laying the smack down on this little sucker, but couldn't quite do it DoggyStyle. The CornDoggy picked up where Master Z left off, and did a SCWHEEEET 360 and did it uno, dos, tres (and the CornDoggy means uno, dos, tres!!!!) At Cucumber I got a niche boof off the top of Guide Rock, and then we geared up for the most underestimated rapid on the run, Piddley. Piddley gets the CornDoggy's juices flowing every time, and this was no exception. We scouted our lines from the right bank, and Spanky set safety down below.

I did a PHAT rock 360 just above the beefy hole and had a very cool (and I mean veerrrry cool) line on the right tongue and caught the tiny recirculating eddy, just in time for Master Z to start his run. He attempted to lay the smack down, but got backended and escaped the hole with a lot of effort. He ended up with a hangnail on his left pinky, a testament to the severity of the

repercussions for those who diss Piddley and don't give it proper respect. Moral of the story: DON'T DISS PIDDLLEY!! Some people say Piddley is a 1+ but I must say it earns a solid 2- rating in the CornDoggy's book.

I carried up 8 more times and got trashed doggystyle on my last run, so I left Piddley for another day. Laying the smack down 8 out of 9 times is a SCWHEEEET ratio!!! Afterwards, I thought it proper to rename the 360 rock "Bubby's Rock." Ooooooh, what a coooool rock it is.

I did 639 rock splats before we reached Railroad. On splat #546 (I think) I finally tore a hole through the boat, so we had to do a roody-poo repair job with some duct tape, chewing gum, and a PowerBar. I must say it was a SCWHEEEET repair job!!!! We tried the hole at Railroad, but it wasn't doing p-turkey for me, so we headed down river. We did some squirts at the bridge, but it wasn't doing p-turkey for me either, so I carried up onto the bridge and did a SCWHEEEET air wheel with a rail grab into the eddy below.

Between the bridge and Dimple, I did 893 more splats and the repair job was holding up just fine. At Dimple, we were boat-scouting the approach and I noticed a large protruding boulder about 180 feet up the gorge wall on river left. It was a prototypical doggystyle launch spot that was too good to pass up. I climbed up to the rock (oh, what a SCWHEEEET view!!) and prepared to launch. I was a bit worried about the landing area, Danger Eddy, since it was barely visible through the underbrush. But I saw a clear DoggyLine down through some Rhododendron and poison ivy, leading to a boof off of a oak tree root, then a SCWHEEEET 40-foot drop to the pool below.

I waved to my fans on Pinball Rock and laaaaaunCHED into space. The first drop went as planned, although my paddle almost got torn from my hands by the tree branches whizzing by. I did a SCWHEEEET rail grab off the tree root and then the

move fell apart. My

bas-

ketball jersey caught air and completely covered my face, obscuring my view. I tumbled DoggyStyle, catching some SIK air wheels, into the eddy.

I must say that 40 feet of blind freefall was the SCWHEEEETEST feeling I had ever had, so I climbed up and launched 4 more times with a full blindfold. Did I mention it was SCHEEEEEET?!?!? OH YESH! IT WAS NICHE!!!!

We stopped at Swimmers for a while, where Master Z tried some moves, and then I laid the SmackDown once again. I hit an 89-pointer on river left and did a SIK back blast into a stationary kick flip. OH YESH, IT WAS SCWHEEEET !!! I proclaimed the spot "Bubby's Hole," and we moved on.

Killer Falls was the spot I was looking forward to all day long. We scouted it on the right, and after we all downed 3 cans of instant gonads, we went for it. Master Z tried the right chute, and did a dog worthy slide through the slot. I launched and did a midair split wheel before subbing out. I did an underwater rail grab and resurfaced. Oh man, I must say it was SCWHEEEET!!!!

The ride home was uneventful until we reached the Youghioghny Lake Bridge. I convinced Spanky to launch me over the side and managed to catch 9 air wheels and a SCWHEEEET rail grab before I pitoned into the dry lakebed below. We laughed about it the whole way home, and talked about the moves we could try on our next trip to Ohio-pyle. I must say, this trip sure kicked my shiznit CornDoggyStyle! Great Falls, Green Narrows, and Mann's Creek are child's play compared to a DoggyStyle run on the Lower Yough at 13." Not a run for puppies.

OHYESH!!!!!! IT WAS SCWHEEEET!!!!!!
Bubby "CornDoggyDogg" Miller
(distant cousin and big fan of Bobby Miller)
Team All-In-Good-Fun

P.S. - Stav tuned for more first-hand accounts from the CornDoggy!! Next month... the GW Canal.

Editor's note: I know who wrote it, but I'm not telling.



The First Descent

"You'd get some air time boofing over that ditch" I thought, "Sweet."

of Holt School Hill

By Robert Martin

It was the winter of 1987 and I was beginning to wonder if my children would ever experience the exhilaration of sledding down a hill in the snow. I had bought two Flexible Flyer sleds several years before, but mild southern winters had yet to yield a snowfall sufficient for sledding. That changed one morning when we woke up to 5 inches of sleet and ice. After a quick breakfast I dug the sleds out of the shed, sanded the rust off the runners, and my daughter, son and I were off to Holt School Hill.

Holt School Hill, practically in my backyard, is known throughout North Durham as an excellent sledding hill. Holt School is perched atop a ridge overlooking the Eno River Valley. A large grassy hill next to the school serves as the playground. The hill starts out steeply and gradually tapers off onto the soccer field, the only flat ground on the property. Playing on the hill is like "Natural Selection." You learn to play on the side of a hill or you suffer the consequences. The hill has been soaked with the blood of hundreds of skinned knees and elbows.

As I parked my truck at the top of the hill I noticed a flurry of activity. "That's a good sign" I thought as we unloaded the sleds. As my kids and I walked over to the hilltop (put-in) I thought, "This is one of those cherished moments when a father shares a tradition with his children." A real Norman Rockwell moment. My moment was dashed when I put my daughter Kimberly on her sled and the runners cut through the slush all the way to the grass. Meanwhile, those with inner tubes, plastic sleds and discs were having a bonanza. Our Flexible Flyers, with their steel runners, were useless.

I had to do something quick to save the moment. I saw my neighbor's little boy Jamie. He was 5 years old. We called him "Put-down-that-stick-Jamie."

Jamie was a pain in the neck, but he had an inner tube. I said "Jamie! Come over here for a minute." "Hey, Mitha Ma-tin" he said, as he walked up with his inner tube. "You wouldn't mind sharing your inner tube with

Kim and Sean would you?" I extolled. "Sure Mitha Ma-tin. We can take tунth." Jamie replied happily. Kim looked at me and rolled her eyes. Nobody liked to play with Jamie, it's the stick thing. My son Sean quickly found some kids his own age that had a plastic sled. I looked at Kim and promised "It will take a little while, if my plan works, we'll have the best sled on the hill. I'll be back in few minutes."

I returned in no time with my Dagger Response kayak. It immediately drew the attention of all the kids on the hill and it proved to be an outstanding ride! The only problem with kayaking down a hill of ice is boat control. Since my boat had no edge and my paddle blade couldn't penetrate the icy crust, I had no control over the boat. It was guided by gravity and the path of least resistance. But the hill was wide, smooth, had no obstacles, and the speeds were not blinding by any means. I soon tired of fighting my way back up the icy slope and let the kids take turns riding down the hill, while I studied the other part of the hill that abuts the school.

This was the steepest part of the hill, dropping through some old oaks and rock outcroppings. I kept seeing a line through the trees, past the rock outcroppings and over a six-foot wide ditch next to the soccer field. If you could just miss that washing machine size rock halfway down, you'd have a wild ride. The incline was nearly 60 degrees going through the trees, "You'd get some air time boofing over that ditch" I thought, "Sweet."

By then many of the kids on the hill were waiting their turn to take a ride in my kayak, so I had an audience. Give a kayaker an audience and they're likely to do something stupid. I am no exception. I hoisted my boat onto my shoulder and like the great Bambino pointed to the rocky outcropping and said "I think I'll run that line." The kids reacted with excitement and word spread that Mister Martin was going to run the steepest, most dangerous part of the hill. Several of the kids asked if they could carry my boat and began fighting over the privilege. We walked over to the school and I set my boat at precisely the

spot that I hoped would allow me to miss the big rock halfway down.

From the top the line looked clean all the way to the soccer field. The ice was so slippery that I had to have the kids hold my boat while I got in. I told the kids to let go of the boat when I said, "go." There were four of the older kids holding my boat and when I said "go," instead of letting go, they gave a great heave, like a bobsled team. I couldn't help noticing the almost evil, wry smiles of the kids as they pushed in unison with everything they had.

I started off way faster than I wanted, and as gravity took hold of my boat, I began accelerating at an alarming rate. The big rock that had me worried was just a blur as I swung my paddle out of the way just in time and blew past it with only inches to spare. "Phew! I made it.... now I can concentrate on the six foot ditch that I need to boof." I hit the mound in front of the ditch and BOOF, I was flying. It was incredibly quiet now that my hull was airborne. Now if I could just make a "cool" landing I would OWN THIS HILL!

Before I landed I saw them. The soccer goal posts! You see soccer in the Old South is an anomaly. The PTA decided that, for the benefit of a well-rounded education, students should know what soccer is. But they had only a vague idea of what a soccer goal was supposed to look like. So they took two six-inch thick iron pipes and cemented them into the ground. When I hit the ground my delusions of grandeur were replaced by absolute fear. At my speed and angle I would hit the first pole, and the fulcrum effect would accelerate me into the second one. I turned my boat sideways and jammed down on my paddle with everything I had, trying to do a radical brace to slow me down.

The paddle just skipped across the surface of the ice. I can only compare what happened next to watching those "smart" bombs during Desert Storm. You know the ones, heading for an Iraqi bunker with cameras mounted on their noses. Just before they hit you can see amazing details like the window air conditioning unit, then a blank screen as the bomb detonates. The last thing I saw was an



interesting pattern of rust on the pipes that looked like a map of South America. Then a blinding flash, twinkling starry things and blackness.

The next thing I remember was a cold misty rain on my face. I opened my eyes to a cold gray sky and an incredible sensation in my back and legs. I was laying on my back several feet from my boat. Curiously, my car keys, which had been in my jeans pocket, were laying on the ice near my hat. It didn't hurt; I was almost numb. I quickly realized that I might be going into shock and that something was very wrong with my back.

"I've just broken my back!" was all I could think. So I laid there, not moving and wondering if I was going to start vomiting. After a while I decided to try and raise one leg, then the other. The numbness was passing now and the pain was setting in.

"Mitha Ma-tin, Mitha Ma-tin are you o-tay?" Jamie said as he ran toward me. "Yeah, I'm fine." I said. Never let kids know you're injured, they may confuse you with prey and attack (or is that bears?). It was then that my daughter appeared, quite distraught. Though only seven years old, Kim was very mature and savvy. She amazed me by being able to hold an adult conversation. (At that time in my own life, I still didn't believe that grown-ups came from kids).

I knew I had to get up and walk because I couldn't stand the thought of her seeing her Dad being hauled into an ambulance. So I slowly stood up, using my paddle as a crutch. Just to prove that I was okay, I grabbed my boat and walked up the hill to the truck.

I drove the kids home and told my wife I was driving to the emergency room. When they showed me the x-ray they pointed out

several bone fragments from my hip. Also, two of those little wing-like things on my vertebra that had broken off. The cockpit of my boat had done that when it was driven into my back by the impact. The doctor said that scar tissue would form around the bone fragments and they might never bother me again. If I responded to physical therapy, no surgery would be needed.

I would have learned to live with it. I can still paddle (between back injuries). A grouchy old doctor treated me once a few years later after a particularly bad episode. I told him I had pitoned in the sand while surf kayaking and got "body slammed." He snapped, "Robert, you need to grow up! Your too old to be acting like a kid." I fired him.

Grown-ups! What self-respecting kid would ever want to become one?

A Mother's Mother's Day Gift

By Patti Boyer

Now I ask you, what else would a 60 year old mother want to do with her son on Mothers' Day besides paddle a Class IV river in Northern California? I couldn't think of a better way to spend this special day with my son, Phil; so away we went.

Now get this picture. It is cold and drizzly and I am quite nervous. This is my first time paddling the North Yuba, Maytag run. I tell Phil that we should have a third person with us. Everybody knows that three is better in case of any swims. Now it isn't that I am being pessimistic, I just want to be covered, just in case.....! So, we meet our good friend, Eric Burge, who has paddled with Phil for years

and also teaches rescue courses. I'm no dummy.

We are at the put-in and I am in my dry suit, just in case.....! It is still cold and drizzly, and I am still nervous. Phil has been my mentor on the river since I started kayaking four years ago and I trust him, but I am still nervous. Will I remember to keep my head down in my roll? Will I stay out of those big woman-eating holes that I saw? Will the river snakes leave me alone and will the River Gods be with me?

Eric is in the lead, then Mom, then son. Phil's responsibility is to make sure that I have a great time and to keep me safe. Remember, it is Mothers' Day! The water is up and I am paddling hard to stay in Eric's line. We miss one big hole after another, until.....! I am over! My head keeps coming up as I try to roll. Phil is yelling at me to keep my head down. I am cussing at myself and my stupid head, and I am still upside down but in a big... I mean big... hole. Now, this hole is so big it sucks leaves off the trees!

Oh! Oh! I am out of breath. So what does an experienced kayaker do, but try for a bow rescue? I put my hands up on the bottom of the boat, but nobody is there in the hole with me. They know better. So I grab the loop and exit the boat and the hole. While I am going through all of this, Phil is praying to the

River Gods and asking himself, "Why did I bring Mom here?," and "How could I do this to my Mom?" He drops into the hole just as I exit; just missing me. Now he is getting worked by the hole while Eric rescues me. I knew I was smart to wear that dry suit and have Eric with us. I'm no Dummy! Phil finally escapes the hole and I practice my roll.

As we continue this Mothers' Day adventure, I accidentally find two more huge Mom-eating holes to "play" in, but this time I exit intact. I'm not sure why I land in these holes, but I manage to stern squirt out and roll. My heroic escape from the holes elicits lots of hooting and howling. You know that adrenaline rush.

When we get to a rapid called Two Pair, I am feeling confident. So confident that when we hit the eddy on the right I forget to lean down stream and over I go! I am upside down for the rest the rapid, but roll at the bottom. I really hate doing rapids upside down. The view just isn't as pretty.

Now I am pretty tired. After we look at Maytag, I suggest that we sit this one out. Ha, Ha! (As if I would even consider it paddling it even on a good day.)

I have had enough adrenaline rush for one day and I don't want to push my luck. So, we decide to end my Mothers' Day adventure. But as a bonus, I get my boat carried for me by two handsome studs. Kayaking is so much fun!

We all head to a friend's house for a beautiful Mother's Day dinner, one that I didn't even have to prepare!

Now I ask you again. What better way for a 60 year-old woman to spend her Mother's Day than paddling with her son and a good friend on the Yuba?

One is never too old to have fun!!!!!!



Natures Architect: The North American Beaver

Work, work all the night
While the stars are shining bright;
Work, work all the day;
I have got no time to play.

The Adventures of Paddy the Beaver,
Thornton W. Burgess

RUSHING WATER MUST SOUND LIKE NAILS ON a chalkboard to a beaver. Even a small trickle compels the animals to start damming up the flow until the noise desists. One story has it that within three minutes of a park ranger making a pit stop in the woods a beaver rushed from its den and fell a tree. No other creature can cut a sapling within seconds, swim underwater for 15 minutes, and stop-up streams so effectively.

Since beginning times, humans have been fascinated by this large rodent. The Cherokee said the beaver helped create the world, while the Crow Indians felt they would come back to Earth as beaver after they died. By the 1800s, human's became crazed with desire for the beaver's rich-brown, water-resistant pelts. The quest took trappers into the furthestmost reached of North America, which helped to settle the new world. After pelts became a common form of currency, one native American chief along the Hudson predicted, "we are rich, but shall soon be poor, for when the Beaver are destroyed we will have nothing...." It wasn't until the mid-1800s when fashion in Europe came to prefer silk that demand for beaver pelts finally diminished. By then beaver were as scarce as the buffalo.

The first efforts to reintroduce beaver into depleted habitats began in the 1900s. Restoration continues today in Utah, Wyoming, Nevada, and Idaho as a means to restore the composition, structure, and function of overgrazed and misused riparian areas. When beaver create dams, entirely new habitats are formed as flooded trees die, bogs emerge and organic muck builds up. Moose graze on the plants that thrive in newly formed ponds. Wood ducks nest in fallen trees and badly eroded banks have time to repair since soil is no longer swept rapidly downstream.

In Autumn, the mammal becomes particularly active cutting trees and building

7
Their duckteeth, colored orange by enamel, gnaw at trunks as large as three feet in diameter. The exercise keeps the top incisors from growing back into the palette and piercing the skull. The beaver continue to hack branches from the fallen trees and strategically suspend them across a river. (A skin flap behind the teeth prevents water from rushing into the beaver's mouth.) The carefully placed branches provide food during the winter as well as an insulated home that protects the mammals from the winter elements.

As temperatures drop the beaver remains with its family in the new lodge. It only leaves to bring back food or repair the dam. The branches sticking up in the air are eaten first so they don't spoil. Each member of the family consumes about 2 pounds of food a day, eating leaves and spinning wood for its bark as if it were corn on the cob. When a family member returns from a foray, the others use smell to determine if it is a beaver that belongs to the family. The beaver's sense of smell is much more developed than their sense of sight. In fact, beavers use smell to mark their territory. After scratching the Earth, or depositing a mound of material they leave a musky scent behind called castoreum. If the territory warning is ignored, or other danger is near, a beaver slaps its massive, scaly tail in warning.

Between February and June, beaver, who mate for life, generally have four young kits to tend to. Often their whines for food can be heard outside the lodge. At first, the young ones are too light to dive and have too little breath control for their parents to allow them in the water. Within two months they begin to emerge on their first journeys to land. Often older siblings, or the parents ride them on their tails or backs. For two years the babies learn the way of the beaver before heading out on their own. Their skills as dam builders will progress throughout their lives; their affect on habitats immeasurable. Whether considered buck-toothed lumberjacks, or aquatic engineers, there is no doubt that beaver reshape watersheds throughout North America.

- uses for beaver's castoreum.
- 1613—In Jesuit Relations 1610-1613, it is stated that "the beaver use their [teeth] like a sword and a saw in cutting down trees.
- 1685—In *Castorologia* by Joanne Franco castoreum is claimed to cure madness, kill fleas, remedy toothaches, and stop hiccoughs. Modern analysis reveals that castoreum contains acetylsalicylic acid which is used in aspirin.
- 1721—Pierre de Charlevoix writes, "The Indians were formerly of the opinion...that beavers were a species of animals ensued with reason, which had a government, laws, and language of their own; that this amphibious commonwealth were of chiefs or officers...and punished the lazy corporally...."
- 1748—Hudson's Bay Company posts the exchange for one beaver. It includes 16 items, among them a brass kettle, two hatchets, eight knives, four spoons, and a shirt. 1872—Castoreum is used as bait to lure beaver into traps.
- 1840s—Fashion in Europe changes from beaver to silk hats, which lowers demand for beaver pelts.
- 1940s—The state of Idaho parachutes beaver in an effort to reestablish them in mountainous areas. In 76 attempts, there was only one casualty.
- 196%—Beaver are declared the state animal in Oregon.
- 1975—Parliament declares beaver as Canada's national animal.
- 2000—Family planning among urban beavers is encouraged. Family planning methods include contraceptive implants, tubal ligations/hysterectomies, and vasectomies.
- 2001—An Alaskan magazine prints, "Manokotak-Three residents of this Yupik village in southwestern Alaska contracted botulism earlier this year after eating fermented beaver tails and feet."

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Send your letters to Dr. Kantgettenuff care of the editor of this magazine. And remember, like Bob Dylan said, love really is just a four-letter word!

THE DOCTOR SMELLS A RAT

Dear Juste,

So much has happened since I last wrote you. Do you remember the really great looking boater that I asked you about... the guy who paddles the itsy bitsy rodeo boat? My buddy Carla Garrison had warned me that any guy who paddles a little boat isn't worth having because they inevitably turn out to be itsy bitsy in other respects as well. But I didn't want to believe Carla, so I asked you about it, and you told me the same thing. In fact, you said it was a scientifically proven fact!

Well, I was silly not to listen to you because you have never lied to me or given me anything but totally reliable love advice... but this rodeo boat guy was just so cute I just had to find out for myself. So let me tell you what I did.

Do you know the Forest Service kayakers' changing rooms at the junction of the North Fork and the South Fork of the Payette? Well, when no one was looking I drilled a bitty little hole in the wall between the one for the guys and the one for the gals. Then I waited until Mr. Rodeo Cowboy came off the river and I copped a quick peek. Without going into any detail, let me just admit that you were right. Admittedly it was a chilly day and the water was really cold and I know that might have had something to do with it... but EVEN SO!

At any rate I gave up on that rodeo guy's sorry ass right then and there. But then Carla and I got to talking the whole "size thing" and we started to wonder if other things beside the size of a guy's boat might be predictive of you know what. For instance, would there be a difference between guys coming off the Class V North Fork, as opposed to the Class III South Fork? Carla was absolutely certain that there would be, but I wasn't sure.

Since we already had the hole in the wall, Carla and I decided we might as well do a scientific study to resolve the issue. So on a

busy weekend Carla stood outside and kept track of which river the guys came off, while I hid inside and peeped through the hole and kept track of... well, you know what I kept track of.

We did this for several hours on Saturday and on Sunday, and it turns out Carla was right. In fact, from what we learned, any woman that goes after a South Fork Class III boater as opposed to a North Fork Class V boater would have to be out of her mind!

But that isn't the end of the story by any means. Wait till I tell you what happened. Late Sunday afternoon, just when we were about done collecting our data, I heard a guy rattling around on the other side of the wall, so I took a look. But when I peeped through the hole I almost died of shock. He was peering right back at me! All I could think is, what a pervert!

But it turns out it wasn't a pervert at all! He was one of those Forest Service River Rangers! Somehow he figured out what I was doing. (I think that witch Carla may have told him... she has a wicked sense of humor.) At any rate, he was all set to charge me with being a peeping Tom! I was so embarrassed I could have died.

Fortunately I managed to convince him that I was really just doing scientific research for American Whitewater... I showed him the scientific data book I had been using all weekend. At any rate, once he realized that I was not some kind of weirdo, we got to talking and one thing led to another. Now, this guy is really sharp and, catch this, he paddles the North Fork of the Payette practically every day... even at really high water levels! And he does it in an absolutely gigantic Perception Overflow! (And I think I know what that means!)

Well, we've been paddling the North Fork together for a couple of weeks and sometimes when we finish the river he treats me to a chicken fried steak at the little café in Banks. Being a river ranger, he doesn't make much money... but he is so damned kewl. And after all, money isn't everything. I really do think he may be the one. But I figured I had better check with you before I did anything I might later regret.

So, Juste, what do you think? Is this river ranger the man for me?

Your devoted fan,
Goldie Digere
Boise, Idaho

My Dearest Goldie,

Well, the Good Doctor can tell from the tone of your letter that you are completely smitten with this hot dog river ranger. And judging by the difficulty of the water and the size of the boat he paddles, this fellow does

sound rather promising. And chicken fried steak, to boot! My goodness, what a sugar daddy!

But frankly, Goldie... I do have one serious concern about this gentleman. You say that he is a river ranger and that he works for the National Forest Service. Now ask yourself this before you give him your heart. Does this ranger drive around in one of those dusky green pickups and collect user fees from honest, hard working American taxpayers? Does he require them pay to camp in the national forests that they already own, so that the government can build access roads for logging companies... so those companies can rape, pillage and plunder? Does he make honest citizens wait years to buy permits to paddle the rivers that belong to them? Does he look for excuses to ticket their cars when they park along the highways that they built with their own blood, sweat and toil?

Oh, Goldie, I truly hope not! Surely you would not consort with a man who resorts to such federally sanctioned extortion. One who robs the poor to support the rich. My God, Goldie, consider the ramifications. This fellow might even be... dare I say it... an anti-environmental conservative Republican! Oh, perish the very thought of it!

And Goldie, let me share a secret with you. If this river ranger is one of those anti-environmental conservative Republican extortionists, scientific studies have shown that when it comes to size... and you know what I mean... it doesn't matter how difficult the rivers are that he paddles, or how big his boat is. If you don't believe me, pop the plug out of the change room peephole and see for yourself. Remember what my grandma Connie Kantgettenuff always used to say, "The only thing worse than a puny mutahala, is a puny conniving anti-environmental conservative Republican mutahala."

So dearest Goldie, before you give your heart to this fellow, make certain he is not a scoundrel. I trust that you will make the right decision. Keep the Good Doctor posted.

(Editor's note: I'm sure that Dr. Kantgettenuff does not wish to insult our many fine friends who are conservative Republicans. Just those who are puny-mutahaled, anti-environmental, conniving, conservative Republicans!)

FOOT IN MOUTH DISEASE

Dear Dr. Kantgettenuff,

I'm keep getting into trouble with my wife and I can't figure out why.

My wife and I paddle every weekend with several other couples. My buddy Bill's girlfriend Cindy always comes along. Cindy is a

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really hot paddler and she ain't bad to look at either, if you know what I mean. She's got all the right moves, both on and off the water. But Cindy is Bill's girlfriend, and I've got a perfectly good wife... so that is that!

Except... Every time we come home from the river my wife says things like, "Cindy sure is paddling well, don't you think?" or "Don't you think Cindy looked nice in that new bathing suit?" Then, no matter what I say, all hell breaks loose!

I learned a long time ago that it is usually best to agree with my wife. But when it comes to these Cindy related questions, that strategy just seems to backfire! Innocent replies like, "Yep, Cindy just keeps getting better and better," or "Yeah, that swimsuit really fits her well," inevitably lead to a great big s**# explosion!

You've got to help me, Dr. K. What am I doing... or saying... that is wrong?

Desperate and confused,
Dhim Witt

Dear Dhim,

Dr. Kantgettenuff advises his male clients that it almost always in their best interests to acquiesce to their wives. There are, however, certain exceptions to this rule. And you, Dhim, have stumbled into one of them. Yes, incredible as it may seem, there are certain rare instances when your wife really does not want you to agree with her observations. These Cindy-related conversations represent just such a trap, or should I say exception.

So, the next time your wife says something nice about Cindy, do not concur with her. Instead, disagree. Select an appropriate reply from the statements listed below. The number in parentheses at the end of each statement corresponds to the number of marital goody points you will score.

1. Cindy seems pretty unstable on the water. I think she needs to work on her brace. (Under no circumstances use the phrase "top heavy.") (1)
2. Cindy would paddle a whole lot better if she'd cut those straggly bangs. (2)
3. *Maybe you should help Cindy with her roll. God knows she needs it.* (3)
4. *Cindy looks ridiculous on the river with all that makeup.* (5)
5. *I think Cindy has been putting on a little weight.* (7)
6. *Cindy better stay away from the beer. It makes her behave crudely and she is starting to get a big fat a**!* (10)

Hopefully you get the drift and soon you will be able to extemporaneously create your own Cindy related small talk. Before you know it, you will surely be back in your wife's good graces! Keep us posted.

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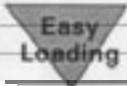
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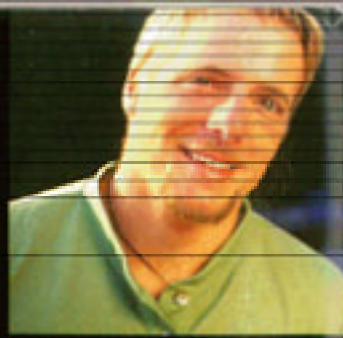
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