

# american whitewater

September/October 1997

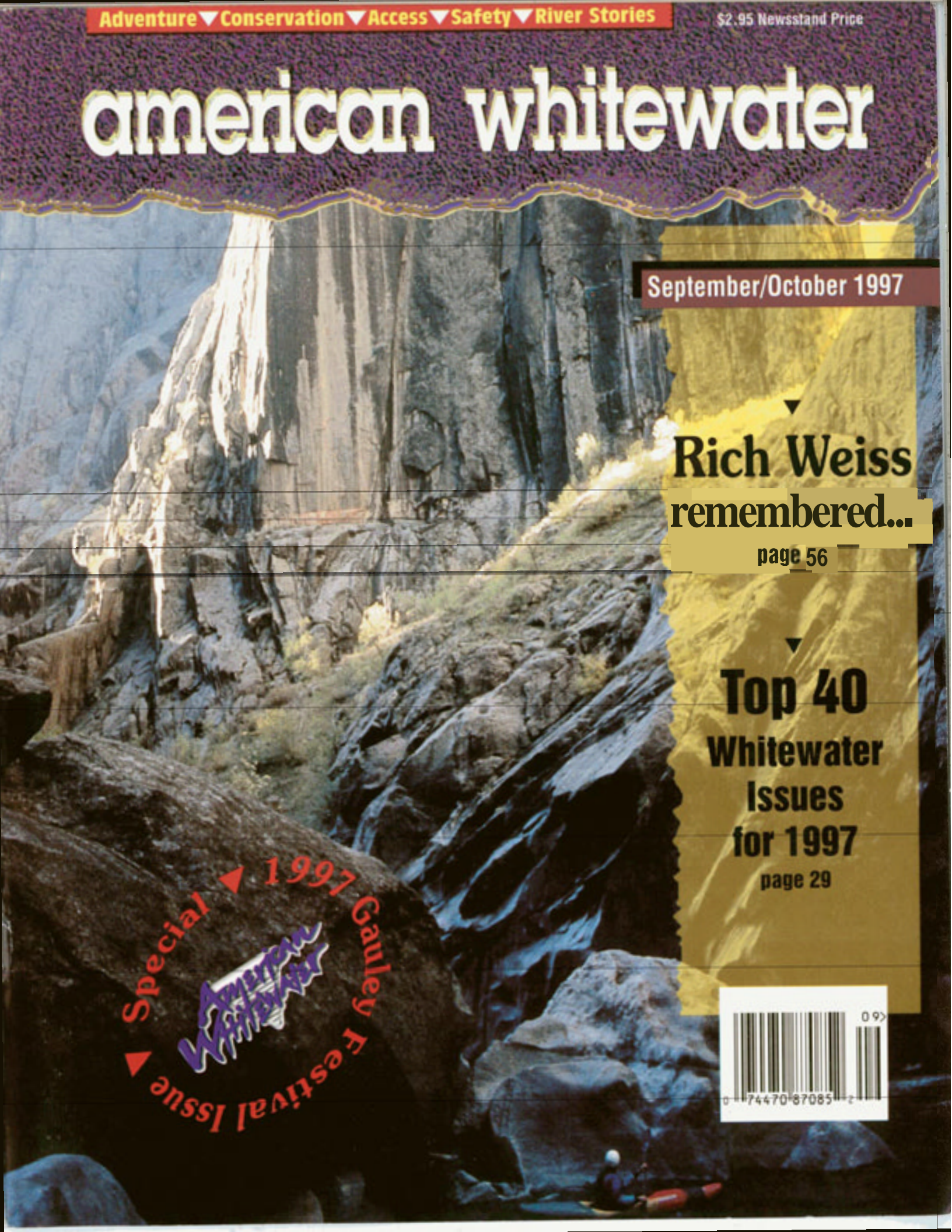
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Journal of the American Whitewater

Volume XXXVII, No.5

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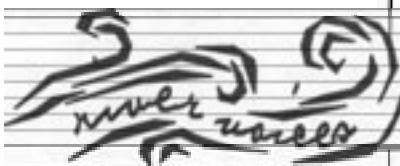
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going strong!**

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remembered by friends

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by Bobby Miller

Cover: Photo by John Foss  
of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison

## News Flash

As we were going to press we received word that whitewater kayaking has been reinstated in the Australian Olympics to be held in the year 2000. More information regarding this exciting unexpected development will be in the Nov/Dec 1997 issue of American Whitewater.

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## Director's Cut

by Rich Bowers

An Anniversary is a time for both reflection and planning. This issue of the Journal takes a look at 40 years of American Whitewater, our celebration of rivers through the decades, and looks ahead to the future of America's wildest rivers.

For historical reflection, read though Sue Taft's article on the early years of American Whitewater. It's a great documentary, not only on our organization, but on the growth of whitewater sports through the years. It's also quite an eye-opener, highlighting our founding principles and early dedication to river conservation and recreational access.

For a more personal reflection, read though the quotes and memorials on two-time Olympian, World Silver Medalist and Ph.D., Rich Weiss. In July, Rich died while running Washington State's Upper White Salmon. While high water and mishaps have taken several outstanding boaters this year, Rich's death reminds us that accidents can happen to anyone - anytime and anywhere. American Whitewater sends our sincere condolences to the family and friends of all of these paddlers.

Looking forward, American Whitewater is hard at work planning how we will prioritize our conservation, access and events efforts in the coming months. Take a look through our annual "Top 40" river issues

to find out where a significant part of our time will be spent. If your local river has managed to escape the threats on our list, count yourself among the lucky. But come work with us anyway! I'm certain our list includes other rivers you paddle, or perhaps that one river you have always wanted to run? Help us guarantee that it will still be there, and accessible, when you're ready for it.

Speaking of forward-looking, check out the new "Membership Mania" contest. Besides being fun and offering great prizes, this contest will help us recruit more boaters and provide needed leverage in the effort to restore and improve rivers and streams. Even better, it directly targets those we most want to be our members - whitewater boaters. Who better to lead the fight?

If you're reading this as you walk into the gate at Gauley Fest '97 - Welcome to our 40" Anniversary Party! If you couldn't make it this year, put it on your calendar; it really is the boating event of the year - a great party celebrating some great rivers in West Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic.

And while you're setting your boating agenda, don't forget to add Tallulah to your schedule and send in your permit slip for November (included in this Journal). And no matter your home state, if you're making the fall east coast circuit, stop by the Coosa Whitewater Festival and the Ocoee Rodeo. What better place to reflect and look ahead than on the water!

You can do some boating research too. If Mother Nature cooperates with suitable water, you can talk with local boaters and

paddle the streams to find out firsthand how the proposed transmission line will affect the Meadow, how a proposed dam may affect the Russell Fork, how the Upper Ocoee or Upper Chattooga will be managed, or how timber cutting may destroy the beauty of the Blackwater.

Here at American Whitewater, the Directors and staff are planning the next 40 years. And while we don't have a crystal ball, we know that the future, like the past, will depend on the support and volunteer efforts of boaters everywhere.

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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.

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## Holding ourselves more accountable

Dear Bob,

Let me first assure you that I am writing this with the interest of the paddling community at heart. Some readers may be offended by my remarks and others might ignore them, but I think it is time that we boaters started holding ourselves more accountable to the rest of the world. This is an appropriate time to raise the issue, considering your recent reprinting of *The Ten Commandments for Boaters Visiting Small River Towns* (May/June American Whitewater). Especially pertinent is the first commandment, which deals with boaters and their language. I believe that this concern has been raised in the past by one former AWA member, Carla Gamson, but I think it would be beneficial to address it again to inform new members and refresh the memories of the older ones.

As the sport of whitewater kayaking/canoeing grew out of its infancy nearly thirty years ago, boaters began to develop many different phrases to describe things that normal people would never need to talk about. Eventually, this process led to the creation of an entire boater lingo. Today we tend to use this slang whenever we are with our paddling friends and then forget about it when we are around non-boaters. This natural transition of vocabularies leads people to forget that they are even using paddling language. Most of the time there is nothing wrong with this, but when boaters hold conversations in front of land-lubbers, serious miscommunications can occur.

Often, this will result in the paddlers simply confusing the non-boaters. Eddy lines and class V drops might sound, to the layman, like fishing equipment and saline solution respectively. At worst they might think that the boaters using these terms are just insane, which is often the case. However, there are some paddling phrases that must never be used in front of non-boaters.

This sentence, for instance, could most definitely be misinterpreted by a normal person: "I paddled a Dancer today...yeah, the white one." In addition to offending people, this statement could land the speaker in jail. Or, think about the implications of this: "I found a hole in my skirt yesterday, but I slapped some more rubber on it and I was good to go." I hope you get my drift. I could go on with some of the more vulgar possibilities, but considering my audience, I'm sure most of you have thought of them already.

In addition to paddling terminology and equipment, the names of many rapids are worthy of omission in polite company. The Upper Yough, for instance, boasts an unusually high percentage of vulgarity in its rapids' names. One rapid in particular deserves mention for a couple of reasons. First, the very level of obscenity, dictates that I can't even mention it in this letter. Second, and more importantly, it has been tactfully re-named "Lost and Found." I think that this sets a good precedent for the whole boating community. I don't have a problem with the name of this particular rapid, but when I find it necessary to refer to it in front of non-boaters, I am relieved to be able to call it something else. In the near future, I think that an effort should be made to provide "alternate" names for rapids on rivers all over the country. Perhaps AWA could be of service in this operation, printing a finalized copy of the re-naming for all of its members. This way, only the ACA members would sound like pigs (just kidding).

Well that about wraps up my remarks on this subject. I hope that I have succeeded in raising awareness, if not concern about this problem. I believe that,

even though it was never stated in the charter, one of the main objectives of AWA is to civilize its members (I mean, before this journal was published, most of us didn't have any reason to read). In order to do so, boaters have got to start monitoring their speech and tactfully editing it in appropriate situations. Once this process begins, I don't think it will be long before we boaters loose the shitty image we've earned.

Sincerely,  
Ambrose Tuscano  
Bolivar, Pennsylvania

## Just Don't Read It

Dear AWA,

To the people incensed by the articles found in your magazine I have the following words; THEN DONT READ THE F#@KING ARTICLE.

Sincerely,  
Joshua Kaufman  
Uncensored in Radford, VA

Editor's Reply: I like this guy! I think—

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## Editor, Corran Trashed Again

Dear Bob Gedekoh,

Thanks for your answer to my letter in the May/June issue, BUT...So, "American Whitewater has never been very politically correct," hmm. Well, I see your "Ten Commandments for Boaters Visiting Small River Towns" on page 4. All very P.C. So which Commandments do you think we should break? "Thou shalt not attempt to consort with those whom custom has deemed off limits." perhaps? I also see, on page 13, that the purposes of the AWA include conservation, river access, education and safety, all of which are very politically correct. Which of them shall we not do? How about we decide that there is no need for landowners to be P.C. about river access? Why bother with conservation? Or perhaps it is only sexism about which you do not want to be politically correct.

It seems to me that the use of "politically correct" to trash people who object to racism/sexism/anti-environmentalism was brought to us by the same people who think that landowners should be able to do whatever they want on their property, including polluting rivers, denying river access and so on. Trashing people for being P.C. is simply a justification for business as usual: racism, sexism, and destruction of the environment, and so on. Where do you stand? Business as usual?

Back to my problem. I feel personally insulted and injured by Corran's article and your response to my criticism of it. I demand redress, and challenge you each to a duel. Not to death of course, but I demand a chance to kick your respective asses and redeem my honor. I'm sure the row will be colorful enough to satisfy you, and I guarantee that you will think differently about injuring people when I am through with you. It is easy for you and Corran to trash me verbally, at a safe distance, and to smugly justify what you say because you are oh, so bad and charmingly incorrect and un-P.C. But if you are men at all, and not total cowards, you should be willing to face those you insult and injure directly. So let us set a time and place, I'm not kidding. And print this, please.

Looking forward to hearing from you.  
Linda Peer  
Phoenicia, NY

**Editors Note:** You are clearly more than a match for me, so I must concede defeat. I already feel like Evander Holyfield—after he had his ear chewed off. Regarding your challenge, Corran Addison

will have to speak for himself.

But, more seriously, I appreciate your concern and criticism of American Whitewater. I will be the first to admit that I am not always politically correct. How many people really are? In my experience those who profess to be politically correct are all too often just practiced in keeping their prejudices hidden. I'd

rather take on a blatant sexist/ racist/ anti environmentalist any day, than a sneaky, subversive one.

My goal as the editor of this magazine is to give all whitewater paddlers the opportunity to express themselves. That doesn't mean that I support or agree with everything our contributors (who are all AWA members) have to say. Let's face it, paddlers are a pretty diverse group of people. Sometimes I don't like some of the opinions expressed by other paddlers within these pages at all. But my personal philosophy is not the issue here.

The real issue is freedom of speech, in this case, the right of other AWA members to say what they want in their magazine. I think that freedom of speech means allowing others to speak their minds, even when what they have to say does not conform to the politically correct status quo of the moment.

Besides, I find that you can learn a lot about people if you just listen. Given enough rope, criminals often hang themselves. And given enough words, many writers reveal aspects of their characters that they never intended to divulge. Isn't that part of the fun of reading our articles?

Also, keep in mind that much of what we publish is humor—not meant to be taken seriously. Corran Addison's piece was one of these. So are those written by Jonathan Katz. Do you honestly believe that they personally adhere to the attitudes that were expressed in their articles? Isn't it possible that they were, in fact, poking fun at them?

I will not deny that you raise a valid point. The pages of this magazine should not be used to intentionally and maliciously offend the legitimate sensitivities of others. Nor should they be used to vindictively slander individuals, groups of people or institutions. This is, after all, just a whitewater magazine, not the New York Times. As the Stones said, "It's only rock and roll." I would hate to see anyone seriously hurt by the contents of American Whitewater. It just isn't that important.

Believe me, being the volunteer editor of this magazine isn't easy, in fact, it's like walking a tightrope. It's hard to keep everybody happy without offending someone. I don't want American

Whitewater to be boring and bland. I want it to reflect the character of AWA members to be exciting, stimulating and a little bit outrageous.

Maybe sometimes we go too far. It you really think so, I'm sorry.

## Despicable Chauvinist

Dear Editor:

It seems en vogue these days to criticize "political correctness" and even to brag about being "politically incorrect" (as in your Editor's reply, letters May/June). But would you say: "I think our sexism is part of our charm"? I hope not, and I certainly don't think it is.

Frankly I find your chauvinistic, "boys will be boys" and "half the people like it" defense of Addison and Katz despicable. Were the readers who "hated" Nancy offended by it? Were they mostly women? Did they see it as just one more piece of evidence that the entire newspaper (kayaking) establishment is sexist, and a welcome place to be as long as you're willing to put up with that sexism? Don't insult us with poor analogy.

I pay dues to read about safety issues and to promote river conservation, not to Further alienate the small (comparatively) population of women boaters. Such drivel is all around us and need not be part of a whitewater forum.

On a separate issue, Dana Edward Castro's skills article (May/June) is interesting but a little wrong. Castro says, "the foam indicates some sort of depression in the river bottom which by definition must have rocks at the downstream end." This is not true for a typical hydraulic; rock might be at the downstream end

by chance but hydraulics are formed by the rocks upstream of the foam. The foam pile is theoretically the deepest place in the local area and downstream rocks would only be incidental.

Please read Jeffrey F. Mount's California Rivers and Streams or a fluid mechanics text for an explanation of this "hydraulic jump" phenomenon.

Though this might change people's perceptions of where pin spots are and aren't likely to be, I don't think it should disrecommend Castro's skill-enhancing, little-to-lose suggestion.

Sincerely,  
Kipchoge Spencer  
Snowmass, CO

**Editor's Reply:** "Mama said there would be days like this, there would be days like this my Mama said..."

## New C-1 Praised

Dear Editor:

There has been an ongoing discussion in the letters to the editor about the lack of good decked canoe (C-1) boat designs on the market. Paddlers have gone to the trouble of converting a variety of kayaks to C-1's, some of which work acceptably for some, but not at all for others, who need more cockpit room for long or large legs. Others have opted for expensive custom glass designs for lighter weight and improved play characteristics.

Dagger has finally designed a boat that should meet the demands of most whitewater C-1 paddlers with the "ATOM". It's volume is 66 gals., length is 9'8", width is 26", and weight is 43 lbs. It's much lighter than the Cascade, with much better responsiveness. It has a flat bottom, surfs well (especially in the ocean waves), boofs, spins easily, and has a low enough rear deck to blast and bow surf holes, although it's not as radical as the RPM. It makes pivot turns easily and rolls easily. It appears to be great on small creeks, too, staying on the surface and not diving to the bottom.

Although small, it is remarkably stable, even enough for beginners. It's got enough volume, even for a 200 lb. paddler. And best of all for all the large, tall paddlers out there, there is plenty of cockpit room, although everyone will have to pad it out with knee cups, shin blocks, and move the inner thigh straps back several inches. This involves drilling new holes just even with the front of the seat. Dagger, please take note! Dagger has a molded hip brace that clips to the back of the cockpit, but is an accessory that must be bought separately.

The only bad news is that the ATOM is slow as far a flat out speed goes, but makes up for it my being easy to accelerate quickly to top hull speed. It's not as slow as the RPM, however. I doubt speed will matter much, since not many will be buying this boat to paddle flat water.

Everyone I have loaned this boat to has fallen in love with it. It's going to be hard to know when my creek boating is extreme enough to force me back to the volume (and weight) of the Cascade. Maybe never?

**Editor:** I am not associated with the Dagger boat company in any way, and

the remarks in this are my opinion alone.

Dennis Huntley  
Shelby, NC

*Editor's Note: As a matter of principle we do not usually run reviews of new boats. But since the limited number of plastic C-1's has been an issue lately in this forum, I am making an exception.*

## Correction

We are sorry that the byline was **left** off of **How** I got **to be younger than Mayo Gravatt** on page 106 of the July/August issue of **American Whitewater**. The story was written by Bill Hay.

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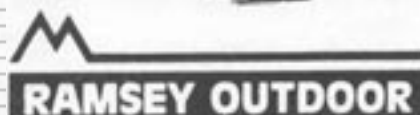
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# Guidelines for Contributors

Please read this carefully before sending us 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, AWBriefs, 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" computer cassette. (WordPerfect preferred - 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 work processor may submit their articles typed. Please double space.

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints or color prints. Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we can not 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 flatwater. 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 personalities 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 intentionally 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 non-profit; 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 or 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.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This release must be signed by all the contributing author(s), photographer(s) and graphic artist(s).  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Send your material to Bob Gedekoh,  
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Lee Bonfiglio running Sheppard's Falls, Wind River, WA. Dave Steiner photo.

# THRILLSEEKER



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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 bi-monthly 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 non-profit 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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## Tallulah Releases Set for Three Weekends in November,

This fall, three weekends of whitewater releases have been scheduled for Tallulah Gorge, the "Niagara of the South" in northeastern Georgia. These releases are currently scheduled for the weekend of November 1/2, 8/9, and 15/16.

Due to an agreement between Georgia Power Company, Georgia State Parks and national and local boating organizations, releases will be scheduled for the first two weekends in April and the first three weekends in November. These will be scheduled for the next 30 years, the length of Georgia Power's license through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission process.

Tallulah Gorge is an **advanced/expert** whitewater run involving Class IV and V rapids. In addition, it has severely limited access in and out of the canyon in case of accident, and is further restricted due to the fragile nature of the gorge and the existence of the federally endangered species "Persistent Trillium."

If you are unsure of your whitewater skills, please do not attempt the Gorge. Boating accidents are always unwelcome, but

are even more unwelcome during initial releases. Besides hurting yourself, you may jeopardize future whitewater in this incredibly beautiful canyon.

Tallulah Gorge has recently been added as a Georgia State Park, and is administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Due to the fragile nature of this area, access will be limited to 120 boaters per day (currently, limits for all other users including climbers and hikers is limited to 100 people per day). To help administer this program, to protect the resource, and to be as fair as possible, American Whitewater and the Georgia Canoe Association have helped Georgia DNR produce this permit. If you have comments on this permit, please contact American Whitewater at (301) 589-9453.

Right now, all systems are go for November releases. However, actual access to the gorge is dependent on a trail which is to be built this summer. To verify releases, even with a permit, please call 1-888-GPC-LAKE.

### TALLULAH GORGE STATE PARK WHITEWATER BOATING RELEASES PROPOSED PERMITTING SYSTEM

[Please Read All of the Instructions. Failure to Comply May Result in Your Not Receiving a Permit]

1. Only persons paddling Qualified Whitewater Craft will be permitted to paddle Tallulah Gorge. Qualified Whitewater Craft is defined as follows: kayaks (one person and two person), whitewater canoes or open hard boats (solo and tandem), decked canoes, including C-1s and C-2s and "Qualified Inflatables." Qualified Inflatables mean inflatable craft owned (not rented or borrowed) by the applicant or one of the people in his or her group that conform to established DNR guidelines.
2. Permits allow access for both days of the release weekend. Each permit holder (or one of up to four alternates listed on the permit application) must check in by 12:00 p.m. each day or the permit will be released on a first come, first served basis.
3. An applicant may request one permit for each of the scheduled release weekends. Up to five paddlers paddling Qualified Whitewater Craft are authorized per permit. A separate request must be submitted for each scheduled release weekend.
4. Each permit request must be prepared by hand and mailed by the applicant.
5. Permits are nontransferable and the applicant (or one of the alternates listed on the permit request) must present proof of identity at the check in.
6. Any fraudulent application will disqualify the applicant and all alternates listed on the permit from receiving the requested permit or any permit in the future.
7. Requests will be filled on a first come, first served basis by postmark date. **NOT RECEIPT DATE.** Absolutely no metered mail, courier or hand delivered packages of any kind will be accepted. Certified mail may be used for either the permit request and/or the return envelope at the applicant's expense.
8. We will begin accepting requests for the 1997 (Spring/Fall) releases on October 1, 1997. Permit requests postmarked prior to this date will not be accepted.
9. Failure to comply with these rules may result in disqualification of the applicant's permit request.
10. Remember that polite, responsible and safe behavior might ultimately result in greater access.
11. Permit holders are encouraged to confirm that the scheduled release has not been postponed due to adverse conditions or **emergency** before departing for Tallulah by calling 1-888-GPC-LAKE and noting whether or not a postponement message has been added to the recording.
12. Applicants are reminded that much of Tallulah Gorge State Park is extremely rugged and potentially hazardous. It is an environmentally sensitive area. To protect the visitor from the gorge, and more importantly, the gorge from the visitor, all regulations and laws are strictly enforced.

### PERMIT INSTRUCTIONS

- I. ALL PERMIT REQUESTS MUST BE MAILED IN A LETTER SIZED ENVELOPE.
- II. THE OUTSIDE OF THE ENVELOPE MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING:
  - A. The applicant's name and return address in the upper left hand corner;
  - B. Adequate U.S. postage for First Class Mail;
  - C. Addressed to:  
Tallulah Gorge State Park  
Boating Permits  
P.O. Box 248  
Tallulah Falls, GA 30573
  - D. In the lower right hand corner:
    - i) The date of the weekend release which the applicant is requesting (only one weekend per request.)
    - ii) Number of people in the applicant's group (not to exceed 5, including yourself)
- III. THE APPLICANT MUST ENCLOSE THE FOLLOWING INFO/ITEMS **INSIDE THE ENVELOPE:**
  - A. A letter sized return envelope bearing the applicant's return address and adequate U.S. postage for first class mail; and
  - B. a 3 x 5 index card containing the following information:
    - i) the applicant's name, address, and daytime phone number;
    - ii) (OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED): The names and daytime phone numbers of up to four (4) alternates who would be authorized to check in if the applicant is unavailable;
    - iii) Date of the one (1) scheduled weekend release being requested; and
    - iv) Number of people in the applicant's group (not to exceed five (5), including the applicant).

# American Heritage Rivers Initiative

In the May/June Edition, American Whitewater outlined President Clinton's American Heritage Rivers Initiative (AHRI) which would provide funding to river communities to clean up pollution and revitalize waterfronts. Since then a lot has happened.

In July Representatives Chenoweth and Doolittle pushed a bill (HR 1842) to terminate the AHRI (for more on Representative Chenoweth's river antics, see our Top 40 summary on Hells Canyon). In the months preceding this oversight hearing, wise use/anti government proponents flooded Capitol Hill with fax and email messages. According to an article in the Washington Post, their vision of the

AHRI range from the first step in global domination by the United Nations - another step in destroying ethics, morals, home and God," to private property restrictions via "aerial photography and satellite" surveillance.

While some of this may seem more like science fiction than improving rivers, this outcry will necessitate that those involved with rivers, including boaters, anglers, local landowners and watershed groups, will need to work that much harder to make this program work.

To help, send a letter of support to Kathleen McGinty at the Council on Environmental Quality - Old Executive Office Building, Room 360,

Washington, DC 20501 fax: 202-456-6546. Here are some points to include:

AHRI is about reducing bureaucracy, not increasing it.

The AHRI will impose no new regulations and no additional funding authorities. It does not affect private property rights, and it does not create any federal land use controls. AHRI reflects the bipartisan view that the federal government should assist communities in meeting local objectives for river revitalization and stewardship.

AHRI will make the federal government a partner with local communities who are developing broad-based partnerships for river restoration and revitalization.

AHRI can serve as a model of the most innovative, economically successful, and ecologically sustainable approaches to river restoration and protection.

Finally, remind the administration that:

Healthy rivers are essential to the quality of life and economic health of river communities, especially those who use these resources.

The purpose of AHRI is to improve rivers - let's stay on track!

For more information, please contact Chad Smith at American Rivers 202-547-6900 x3023, fax at 202-347-9240, or via email at <chadsmith@amrivers.org>.

## FERC Appointments

In the last Journal, American Whitewater reported that FERC Chairwoman Elizabeth Moler had been nominated by President Clinton as Deputy Secretary of the US Department of Energy. This appointment was confirmed, and on June 12th the President announced that FERC Commissioner James J. Hoecker would be the new Chairman. Chairman Hoecker was nominated to the Commission in 1993, and has also worked in several earlier staff positions within the Agency.

The Commission, a de-facto (and often reluctant) river manager through their control of all privately owned hydropower dams, is composed of five members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Each Commissioner is appointed to a five-year staggered term, and each has a equal vote. The departure of Chair Moler and the announced departure of Commissioner Santa, leaves several open positions. The Hydropower Reform Coalition is actively seeking to promote qualified applicants with a background in hydropower and natural resource protection.



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# Hot Boating in the Deep South

## FERC rules for summer flows on Alabama's Coosa

On June 16th, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a final order for improved minimum and recreational flows below Jordan Dam on Alabama's Coosa River. The Coosa offers some seven miles of Class II-III whitewater. For boaters experienced with deep southern summers, the next nearest and dependable whitewater has mandated a trip to Tennessee's Ocoee

The FERC decision requires Alabama Power (the dam owner) to release the following flows:

June 16 through October 31st - water to be released alternately at 4,000, 6,000 and 8,000 cfs on Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.

April 1 through May 31st - 8,000 cfs every day from 6 a.m. until noon.

■ Special releases will be scheduled for civic events, 4th of July, Memorial Day and Labor Day.

This decision is a huge win for whitewater boaters, and guarantees almost daily boatable flows on this outstanding river. Boaters should send a big "Thank You" to the Coosa River Paddling Club which has pursued these releases for the past ten years. Paddlers also owe a debt of gratitude to Lonnie Carden who has attended meetings, written letters and endured numerous and aggravating set-backs and delays throughout this period. American Whitewater staff have vowed not to let Lonnie buy beer for the next year (at least while we are with him), and we encourage other boaters to do the same.

For other boaters and paddling clubs seeking whitewater releases below

dams (especially relicensing), Lonnie is a source of great experience on dealing with FERC and corporate America. "This is a great win, but it should have happened years ago," said Lonnie. "When you have people who don't play by the rules - it's aggravating."

**Amen, Lonnie!**

For more information on whitewater studies and dam relicensing, contact American Whitewater's John Gangemi at 406-837-3155 or call Lonnie Carden at Southern Trails 334-272-1207.

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## To Fee or Not to Fee

by Rich Hoffman, Access Director

In June, American Whitewater testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Parks, Historic Preservation and Recreation, chaired by Senator Craig Thomas of Wyoming. The scope of the oversight hearing was to examine entrance fees, special use fees, and the status of the Fee Demonstration Program in the National Park System. Our testimony focused on the new fee program at Grand Canyon National Park and outlined our concerns about the implications of this program for other recreation uses in the National Park System.

Also testifying that day was Denis Galvin, Acting Director of the NPS. Mr. Galvin's statement included a section on "special use fees." (At GCNP, non-commercial river running at Grand Canyon is classified as a "special use" for which 100% of its management costs must be recovered.) His testimony discusses what activities are classified as "special park uses":

"Special activities within a park that are not otherwise available to all park users. These activities are generally called special park uses. They may or may not support the purposes for which the park was established. Each request **must be carefully analyzed and thoughtfully considered.** A special park use is defined as "any activity which is proposed for, or exists within, a National Park System area which requires or required some type of written permission from a National Park Service official.

"Special park uses range from special events such as weddings, community meetings, organized athletic events or races to activities such as grazing or use and occupancy of NPS owned buildings to rights-of-way for sewer and water lines, utility lines, or fiberoptic and other communication cables, to telecommunication antennas and transmitters. The provision of these uses is above and beyond a park's regular program and falls outside of a park's annual budget."

From this listing, it does not appear that the scope of uses classified as "special" generally includes such activities as non-commercial river running. And certainly, travelling down the river is available to all park users. Because of the need to limit the numbers of people who can travel down the canyon at

a given time, they can't all go at once, but anyone who wants to go may go. This "limited use" type of situation seems to be substantially different from an activity like a wedding, which is open only to the invitees.

Mr. Galvin's testimony goes on to discuss the cost recovery provisions associated with special uses, and the steps that the NPS plans to take to ensure consistency among the units of the Park System:

"Congress has directed that each service or thing of value provided by an agency is to be self-sustaining to the extent possible and that regulations and policies shall be as uniform as practicable between agencies. OMB Circular A-25 sets out the guidelines for the establishment and collection of fees for special park uses.

"The circular requires that the costs associated with the provision of a service be recovered as well as a fee for the value of the service or the rental of the property or facility. Further, Congress has authorized the National Park Service to recover the costs associated with special park uses and retain the fees assessed and credit them to the appropriation current at the time the activity occurred. Thus the NPS is able to recover the costs it incurs for providing special park uses. In FY 1996, special park fee revenues retained by NPS totaled approximately \$6.5 million. In 1995, both the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Dept. of the Interior's Office of the Inspector General (IG) conducted audits of how the National Park Service managed special park use fees. The IG's audit discovered "inconsistencies among the parks regarding: (1) the types of activities that were subject to a

fee; (2) the bases for determining the amount of the fee; and (3) the use of fee revenues." The IG audit recommendation to correct these and other findings was primarily for the Service to expedite the revision of NPS-53, "Special Park Uses," which would give specific and definitive direction for all of the points raised by the IG.

"The NPS is responding to both the GAO and IG audit recommendations. The overriding comment received from both reports was that the Service lacked consistency managing special park uses. The Service is planning a two pronged response to this situation. First we recognize that the existing NPS guideline on special park uses, NPS-53, is significantly out of date and in need of revision. We have been working on this revision and are planning publication this year. Secondly, we plan to train at the regional and park levels using the completed policy and procedural guidance as both textbook and reference.

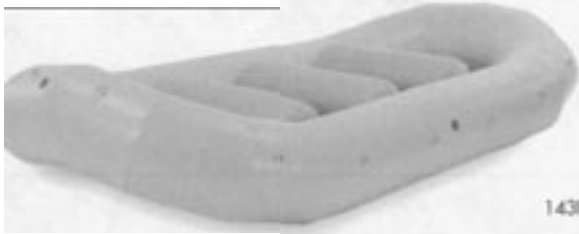
"While most of the special park uses applied for are compatible with park purposes, they are not the primary activity for which those parks were established or funded. Because of this, the Service must continue to retain the ability to recover costs associated with special park uses. Without this authority parks would not have the financial resources to accommodate these activities."

Also testifying at this hearing was Phil Vorhees of the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA). The NPCA advocated that Congress wait until the end of the 3 year test period of the fee demonstration program before making this authority permanent. One of the reasons for waiting that Mr.

Paul Santana at Granite Rapid Grand Canyon. Photo by Christopher Smith Photography

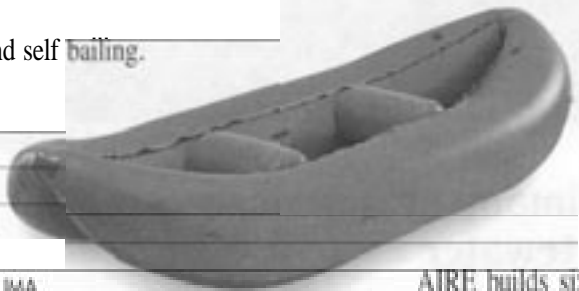


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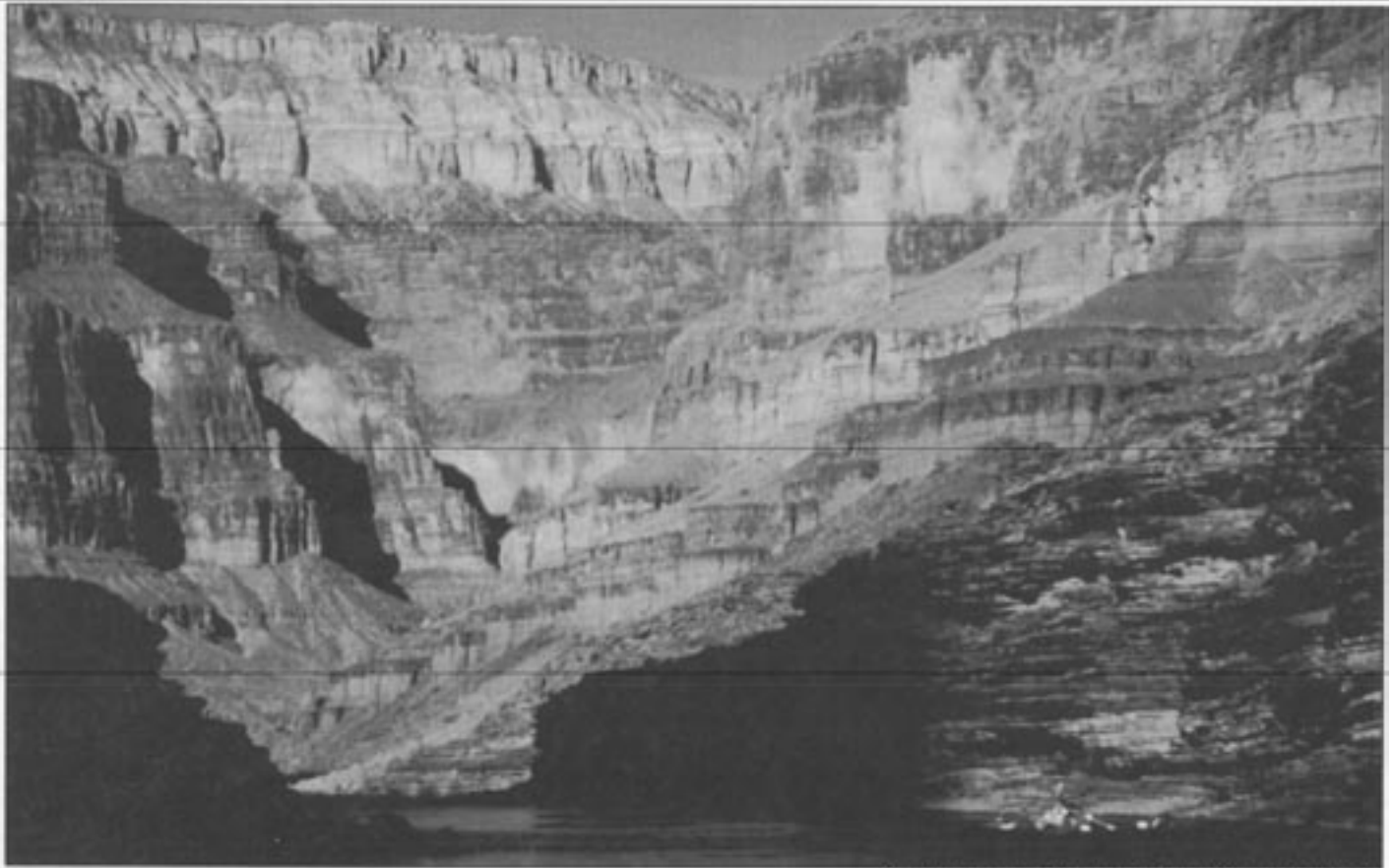


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Conquistador Aisle. Photo by Christopher Smith Photography

Vorhees discussed is the need to iron out some of the problems that this new fee authority has created: "The testimony being given by American Whitewater about the problems facing private boaters at the Grand Canyon is an excellent example of some of the problems with the implementation of the program. In that example, the park has attempted to move from nominal fees to full cost recovery for the use of the river in one step, without a well planned program for understanding public reaction., I hope and expect that the Park Service will take the boaters' concerns as constructive criticism and make adjustments accordingly."

For their part, Grand Canyon National Park has not been silent. Their response has been mostly focused on their legal authority to impose such fees, with very little attention on the public policy matters (such as equity among comparable user groups) and needs analysis which lie at the heart of the matter. In one letter to American Whitewater, GCNP stated that "many members of your organization appear unwilling to help provide direct financial support to on-the-ground projects at Grand Canyon for their use of and impact upon the natural and cultural resources of the Grand Canyon." This distortion of our position is troubling, especially considering our reiteration of our support for resource conservation and management, and willingness to pay a fair fee. We just do not believe that with over 90% of GCNP being backcountry, one user group should not be singled out to pay for resource projects that have a much broader constituency; that the need to levy a tax must first be demonstrated before the tax is levied; and that recreational users in National Parks need to be held to comparable standards.

As detailed in the July/August issue, GCNP made minor modifications to the program, but are maintaining their position of waiting until the program has "run its course" before making additional changes. While we appreciate the willingness of GCNP to make these changes, we do not feel that they address the central problems with the fee program, as outlined in the testimony below.

## Testimony of American Whitewater

Richard R. Hoffman, Access Director

June 19, 1997

Subcommittee on National Parks, Historic Preservation and Recreation

United States Senate, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of American Whitewater, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding entrance and special use fees, and the status of the Fee Demonstration Program for units of the National Park System.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit organization that was founded in 1957. We have over 5,800 members and 100 canoe club affiliates, representing approximately 30,000 whitewater boaters. Our mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. We represent the interests of **non-commercial** boaters.

My testimony today will focus on the new fee program that was implemented in December 1996 for non-commercial boaters who float the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park.

As you know, some of the most outstanding whitewater rivers in the U.S. are administered by the NPS, and the Grand Canyon is without equal. In general, it is our experience that the NPS does an excellent job of managing these resources and that the majority of the new fees for the NPS have been **well-designed** and successfully implemented.

American Whitewater supports fees that are fair, that are consistent with fees charged to other park users, and that are

developed with public input. As frequent park visitors, we support fees that offset the costs of management and facilities provided specifically for river users. In 1996, we supported the fee demonstration program because it met the above criteria and because the majority of the funds will stay on-site. We recognize the important role that these fees play in the larger picture of making federal land management agencies more self-sufficient and producing a balanced budget.

However, while we support user fees in general, our constituency has several concerns about the new fee program for non-commercial boaters at Grand Canyon. In short, we do not think that the new fees at GCNP meet the above standards of a fair and equitable fee program, and we are concerned about the precedent that these fees may set for other recreational uses in National Parks.

Grand Canyon National Park announced the new fee program for non-commercial boaters in a letter dated December 20, 1996. The new fees are a combination of two separate authorities: the Fee Demonstration Program and the Cost Recovery Program, a program designed to recover the costs of managing "special park uses." These fees substantially increase the cost of an average non-commercial trip down the Colorado River from approximately \$130 to \$1500. Our constituency has four principal concerns with the new fee program at GCNP.

## Public Input

In November 1996, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt stated, "Our highest priority as we implement the test fee demonstration program is to articulate to the public the need for their participation and support." However, there was no opportunity for public participation prior to the implementation of these fees. The public did not receive important basic information about the fee program until nearly three months after the fees were in place.

## Overlapping Fees

From the language of the fee demonstration program (PL 104-134), it is apparent that Congress did not intend federal land management agencies to charge multiple levels of fees for the same activity. Section (d)(2) of PL 104-134 states that "Fees charged pursuant to this section shall be in lieu of fees charged under any other provision of law." Furthermore, the fee demonstration program provides for the recovery of the costs of managing recreational uses. The opening paragraph of the fee demonstration law states that the NPS shall "implement a fee program to demonstrate the feasibility of user-generated cost recovery for the operation and maintenance of recreation areas or sites and habitat enhancement projects on Federal lands" (emphasis added).

Taken together, the fee demonstration and cost recovery programs will raise over \$480,000 from non-commercial boaters, while—according to Park Service estimates—it costs \$275,000 to manage this use. To the best of our knowledge, no other comparable non-commercial use within GCNP or the National Park System is charged a level of fees which exceed operational costs by 80%. We do not believe that it is equitable to target only one group of users to fund backlogged projects which have not been identified and which are the responsibility of all park users.

## Structure of the Cost Recovery Program

Another of our principal concerns with the new fee program centers around the structure of the Cost Recovery program. Un-

der the current river management plan, members of the public who wish to guide themselves down the river (i.e. non-commercial boaters) must wait an average of 10 years. This lengthy wait is the result of the inequitable split allocation between commercial use—with 70% of the available supply of user days—and non-commercial use—with the remaining 30%. Under the Cost Recovery Program, non-commercial boaters must now pay \$100 to add their name to the waiting list and \$25/year to maintain their name on the waiting list. With an average wait of 10 years to receive a permit, non-commercial boaters will pay \$350 before entering the park. Clearly, these fees are not commensurate with the services provided. In addition, if you cannot make the trip when your name is called, no provision exists for a refund.

## Special Use Classification

GCNP has classified non-commercial river running as a "special use" and has stated that they are required to recover 100% of their management costs. However, the classification of non-commercial river running as a "special use" does not appear to follow the intent of Congress. In a letter to American Whitewater dated March 19, 1997, Congressman Jim Hansen, Chairman of the National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee, states, "When Congress enacted the provision authorizing the National Park Service to retain such fees in 1992, it was intended to permit the National Park Service to recover fees from such special events, such as demonstrations on the Mall in Washington, DC. In fact, the legislation was enacted after the National Park Service denied a permit for a demonstration on the Mall, due to a lack of funds. However, the National Park Service has never issued any guidance as to how that authority should be implemented. Instead, individual superintendents have started to describe a wide variety of routine and ongoing activities, from backcountry camping to parking as 'special park uses,' and started retaining the fees collected from such activities" (see attachment).

The NPS guideline that discusses special park uses (NPS-53) has been in revision for the past several years, and to our knowledge there is no schedule for the final form, despite the fact that an audit from the Interior Inspector General in 1995 recommended that the NPS expedite the revision of NPS-53. The debate over special uses prompted the Park Service to issue a moratorium on new special park use fees in 1996. A memo from the Deputy Director to all Field Directors and Superintendents dated February 27, 1996 states: "the imposition of 'New' special use fees is prohibited until further notice" (see attachment).

The 1995 audit on special park uses by the Interior Inspector General concluded that "the Park Service did not implement its authority to collect and retain fees for special park uses in a consistent manner." By singling out non-commercial river running as a special use for which 100% cost recovery must be achieved, GCNP appears to be maintaining inconsistent practices.

An equitable system must charge the same level of fees for all comparable uses. A recent newsletter from the River Management Society (an association comprised of professional river managers) discusses this issue: "is it equitable to charge someone a fee for hiking a back-country trail, but not charge someone a fee for driving a back-country road? Is it equitable for one user group to be expected to pay for all costs of administering the area they use, while other groups are subsidized by the general populace? The answer to all these questions has to be no. Most people will gladly pay their share; but they have to be convinced that their share is equitable in relation to others and other uses." GCNP has stated that non-commercial river running is appropriately categorized as a "special use" because "demand clearly exceeds available user days." However, it should be recognized that this high demand was created by GCNP's inequi-

table allocation system that distributes 70% of the user days to commercial users and only 30% to non-commercial users.

From a broader perspective, we are troubled that GCNP's classification of non-commercial river running as a special use discourages low impact, human powered activities in National Parks, and sends the message that the most appropriate activity in National Parks is driving in private automobiles. Certainly, John Wesley Powell navigated the Colorado River by boat long before the first cars appeared on the Rim.

In conclusion, our constituency has four major concerns with the new fee program at Grand Canyon National Park: 1) the process by which the fees were established, 2) the combination of two separate fee authorities for the same activity, creating a level of fees that is inconsistent with fees charged to comparable uses, 3) the structure of the Cost Recovery Program that requires non-commercial boaters to pay to stand in line, and 4) the classification of non-commercial river running as a "special park use."

We advocate a simpler and less restrictive fee system that would be easier for GCNP to administer and would be supported by the non-commercial boater. One possible solution would be to consolidate all fees under one fee authority and to transfer the costs to the user at the time when services are being provided. There is certainly room to work on this new fee program and we encourage GCNP to actively involve those members of the public who enjoy floating down rivers, a constituency that has consistently expressed a desire to pay a reasonable fee.



Photo by Bob Gedek

## Colorado River Management Plan Update

Now is the time to begin your involvement for the upcoming revision of the management plan for the Colorado River as it flows through Grand Canyon National Park! This new plan will update the plan written in 1989. As we mentioned in the last issue, please add your name to the mailing list for the management plan by writing to:

Grand Canyon National Park Science Center, Grand Canyon National Park, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023, Attn: Linda Jalbert.

There will also be Management Plan workshops in September, 1997. These public meetings will be held in the following cities;

- Portland on September 5th and 6th , 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM Friday and 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM Saturday, at Lewis and Clark College Templeton Student Center
- Salt Lake City on September 12th and 13th , same times, at Holiday Inn Airport, 1659 W North temple
- Phoenix on September 19th and 20th , same times, at the YWCA Leadership Development Center, 9440 N. 25th Ave. (East of I-25 at Dunlop and 25<sup>th</sup> Ave.)

While we hope this plan will address the above mentioned fee issue, the larger issue centers around access and allocation.

As stated by the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association (GCPBA): "Over the years the Park Service has grappled with the method of allocating "user days" between the private and commercial worlds. The Park's attempts have resulted in the present ratios which, depending on how users are counted, range anywhere from 70% to 80% commercial use and 20% to 30% private use. In fact, when all the bodies using the river are counted, only 13% of the people who launched during the 1996 season were private users. These policies concerning user allocation have resulted in a current "waiting list" of over 5600 people who have applied for a private permit to travel the Colorado River in Grand Canyon. At roughly 270 launches per year, and including cancellations, a person applying for a permit today will have to wait well over ten years for their chance to lead a private trip in the canyon!"

For more information about GCPBA, you can contact these hard working folks at:

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# Public Access to the Numbers at Last!

by Ric Alesch

Ground breaking at the Numbers put-in. Photo by Rich Bowers

After 10 years of effort, we finally have a public putin for the Numbers section of the Arkansas River above Buena Vista, Colorado.

This Spring the U.S. Forest Service purchased a parcel of land that allowed continuous road access paralleling the Railroad tracks up to a site above the Arkansas Placer, which is the land where we put in for many years (on both sides of the river), but which has been off limits for the last couple years. The new putin is basically where many folks have been accessing the river during the last year by parking on RR property near the highway and making a stealth dash across the tracks.

Getting the new putin opened up was not as easy as it may seem. The site is owned by the Forest Service, but the river is managed by the State Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). There were some sticky Federal/State co-management issues, including the right to enforce regulations and collect fees. When I heard that the cooperative agreement was bogging down in red tape, we made an offer for American Whitewater and CWWA to put up \$500 each to help make this site a reality. This helped get the negotiations going again, and over the Memorial day weekend we co-sponsored a volunteer day to construct the access. I participated in a short ground-breaking ceremony on May 23, where I presented the donation to agency officials. A sign at the new putin acknowledges our efforts to establish this new access site. (See accompanying photos.)

Now for some objective comments. To be honest, this is not an ideal putin. It requires a one mile plus drive up a dirt road to a narrow site squeezed between the railroad, river and private land; with no camping. This is considered a temporary solution. CWWA, American Whitewater, DPR, U.S. Forest Service, and

BLM all intend to continue working on acquiring the Arkansas Placer, and on getting road access reestablished on the east side of the river. One or both of these solutions would allow access and camping at more ideal locations. The materials used in constructing the new site will then be pulled up and reused at a more desirable location. Because this may take some time, we should plan on using the current site for the foreseeable future. I should also mention that the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) has installed a pay station (with the standard \$1 fee). They have decided that any new recreation site in the park will be a fee site, and this is no exception. The fees will be used to pay for leasing the portable toilets, keeping the road passable, enforcing regulations (such as the 11am launch limit for rafts) and keeping the area clean. While fees are not something that any of us wants to pay, a buck to have public access seems reasonable to me after all the hassles we have endured in recent years. By law the AHRA must raise all its operating revenue from user fees. However, we will encourage the recreation area managers to keep the fee at the \$1 level since this is a primitive site (which is what we prefer) that should need relatively little maintenance for our needs.

While this solution is not ideal, it is quite a relief to this author to have a putin on the Numbers at last. This section of Ark has been rated as one of the 10 best runs in the country, and it is an honor to be involved in solving access issues for this area. A lot of folks worked hard to make this put-in a reality, including Steve Reese and Dave Taliaferro, co-managers for the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, Rich (Rainey) Hoffman, Access Director for American Whitewater.

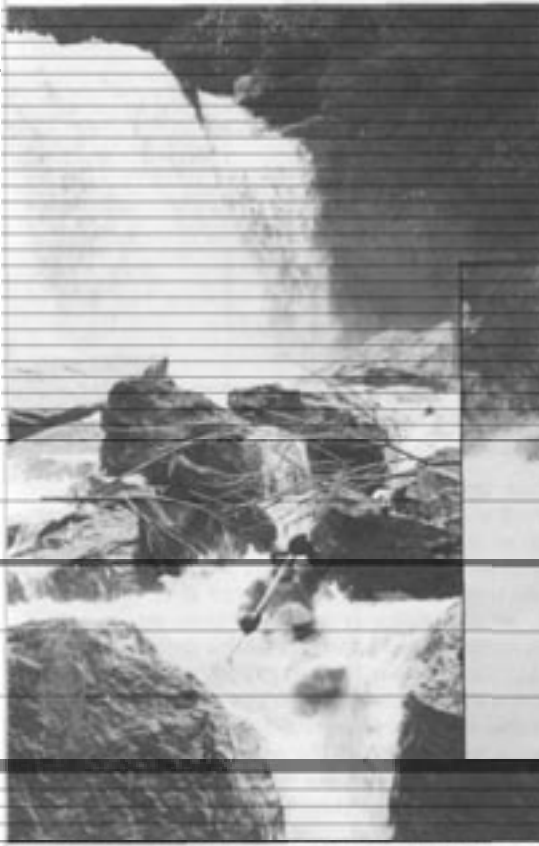
To find the new putin, exit the highway at Scotts Bridge, cross the railroad tracks, turn left, and follow the signs up to the site.

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by Jayne H. Abbot

## American Whitewater/NOWR Event Manager

If this summers crowds are any indication, paddlemania is here to stay! Events are bigger and better than they've ever been with spectator numbers on the rise and competitors from around the country loaded up to hit the rodeo circuit in everything from tricked out trucks and vans to full size plush RV's. From the enormously successful Kennebec Festival in Maine to competition mania at Animas River Days in Durango, the summer has been chalk full of paddling events to fit everyone's style. Whitewater freestyle rodeos, parties, auctions, vendors, demos and lots of whitewater action add up to **one very good time!**

"The band was a crowd pleaser and vendors showed up in force," says Tom Christopher organizer of the Kennebec Festival and long time American Whitewater board member. "The event raised close to \$1000 for American Whitewater conservation and access programs". Thanks Tom for all your hard work in making this event a success! During the month of June, six NOWR (National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos) events were held to cheers of thousands. During the last week of May, half of our U.S. rodeo team was chosen at the first of two team trials held in Rock Island, TN. Congratulations to our team members and best of luck in September at the World Championship in Ottawa! Highlights from the pro/expert women's, men's and junior rodeo results are listed below. For complete results check out our web sites at [www.awa.org](http://www.awa.org) and [www.nowr.org](http://www.nowr.org).

Coosa Whitewater Festival.  
Photo by Lonnie Carden



### East Coast Team Trials - May 29 - 30

- Men's K-1**  
 1. Marc Lyle  
 2. Clay Wright  
 3. Brandon Knapp  
 4. Shane Benedict

- Women's K-1**  
 1. Brenda Ernst  
 2. Amy Wiley  
 3. Karen Mann

- Junior K-1**  
 1. Rusty Sage  
 2. Javid Grubbs

- Open Canoe**  
 1. Billy David  
 2. Bob Beasley  
 3. Marshall Fox  
 4. Dave Simpson

- C-1 Men's**  
 1. Shane Benedict  
 2. Adam Bovd

Coosa Whitewater Festival.  
 Photo by Lonnie Carden

- Men's Squirt**  
 1. Clay Wright  
 2. Eric Zitzow

- Women's Squirt**  
 1. Susan Wilson  
 2. Deb Ruehle

### Maupin Daze Whitewater Festival - May 31-June 1

- Men's K-1 Expert**  
 1. Tom Fredericks  
 2. Nico Chassing  
 3. Macy Burnham

- Women's K-1 Expert**  
 1. Polly Green  
 2. Amy Lundstrom

**Junior K-1 Expert**  
 No class

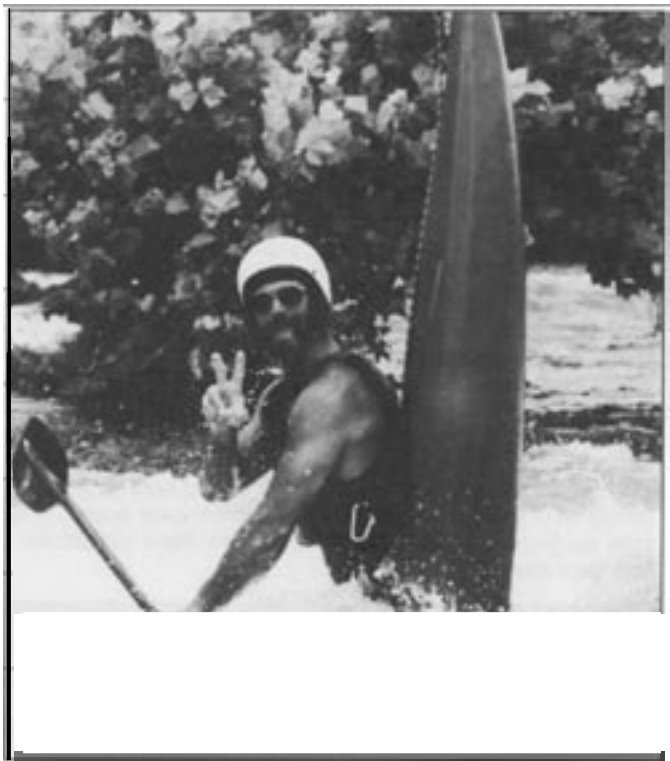
### Jackson Hole Rodeo - May 30-June 1

- Men's K-1 Expert**  
 1. Eric Southwick  
 2. Bill Taggart  
 3. Chris Emerick

- Women's K-1 Expert**  
 1. Annie Chamberlain  
 2. Tanya Shuman  
 3. Alexa Shuman

**Junior K-1 Expert**  
 No class

### Headwater Championship (FIBARK) - June 13-15 - Results in next issue



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### Taylor River Rodeo - June 21-22

- Men's K-1 Expert**  
 1. Chuck Kern  
 2. Bo Wallace  
 3. Dan Gavere

- Women's K-1 Expert**  
 1. Saskia VanMourik  
 2. Erica Mitchell  
 3. Brenda Ernst

- Junior K-1 Expert**  
 1. Ben Coleman  
 2. Ruben Kuehmstedt  
 3. Raymond Cotton

### Willow River Paddlefest - June 20-22 No expert classes held

- Men's K-1**  
 1. Will Morris  
 2. Bart Wagner  
 3. Kevin Hendersen

- Women's K-1**  
 1. Heather Lamson  
 2. Susan Azoferfa  
 3. Eva Van Enden

**Junior K-1**  
 No class

### Animas River Days - June 27-28

- Men's K-1 Expert**  
 1. Clay Wright  
 2. Richard Oldenquist  
 3. Jason Wanstrath

- Women's K-1 Expert**  
 1. Amy Wiley  
 2. Jamie Simon  
 3. Susan Wilson

- Junior K-1 Expert**  
 1. Macy Burnham  
 2. Ruben Kuehmstadt  
 3. Ryan Felt



# TOP 40 WHITEWATER ISSUES FOR 1997

by Rich Hoffman, Access Director and John Gangemi, Conservation Director  
(with help from friends, associates, and members)

**W**elcome to American Whitewater's annual round-up of the issues and trends which affect the rivers that we work on, live beside, and paddle on a daily or weekly basis. The rivers that are threatened are not just outstanding in terms of recreation - but in many cases are some of the wildest, most remote and most beautiful rivers in the nation.

The responsibility for protecting these rivers lies, in large part, in the hands of those who know and understand them. Your hands! Whitewater boaters, anglers, and landowners with a direct interest in rivers have always been at the forefront on river conservation, and will continue to raise the awareness of rivers in the future.

In 1996, whitewater paddlers played an important role in saving rivers and insuring access, and proved that small groups can be effective - especially when motivated by such an exciting medium - whitewater. Last year, boaters formed the impetus for restoring: the Deerfield in Massachusetts; Tallulah in Georgia (just two months from the first release!); Nisqually in Washington State (releases to start this November or next); and, as we go to press, at restoring flow and providing summer releases on Alabama's Coosa River (see separate article)! In Tennessee, paddlers took the lead and have seriously delayed the Armstrong pumped storage project, a proposed dam which would have affected both Brush and North Chickamauga Creek.

Whitewater boaters were likewise effective in protecting river access. In 1996, and in the opening months of 1997, boaters improved access to: Oregon's **Metolius**; Colorado's **Arkansas** (Numbers section); New York's **Black**; West Virginia's **Blackwater** and **Dry Fork**; and have now locked in a contract on a permanent take-out for North Carolina's fabulous **Watauga**. An impressive record for a year's work!

However, while we can be effective on individual issues and rivers, paddlers have also understood that to effectively address national trends and to stave off large movements which threaten our rivers and streams, we need help. We need to find ways to involve more people, make more friends, and raise river awareness with even more interests and the general public.

And 1997 is already seeing its share of these trends and movements. By just reading through our Top 40 River Issues, you can get a good feel for what these are and how they will affect our rivers in the coming months. Evolving themes such as: electric industry deregulation (the greening of hydro?); fee legisla-

tion at the local, state and federal levels; high water closures and other liability concerns; all of these will determine how and when we can paddle rivers.

Boaters have been **successfully** creating coalitions to address these issues - coalitions to reform dams on both the national and state levels (California), to improve navigability law (Oregon and Colorado), to strengthen the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the President's newly announced American Heritage Rivers Initiative. And boaters are today working closer with other recreation organizations also, creating strong bonds with hikers, bikers and climbers. All of this to strengthen our ability to protect and restore rivers.

I credit boaters with all of the above for two reasons. First, because American Whitewater is, and has always been, an extension of its membership. And secondly, because nothing listed in this introduction was accomplished without the efforts of many individuals, clubs, groups, and friends of whitewater.

I perceive a direct relationship between the successes of the past twelve months, and the increased staffing, professionalism and emphasis that American Whitewater has given Conservation, Access and Events in the past few years. American Whitewater was involved in each of the above efforts, and took a lead role on many. American Whitewater continues to be involved, at some level, with almost all of the Top 40 issues listed for 1997.

I hope you will agree that this year's Top 40 list demonstrates American Whitewater's continuing and successful commitment to represent boaters, and to improve and restore whitewater rivers. In our 40<sup>th</sup> year, American Whitewater is well on its way to providing our membership with an even longer list of river "wins" for 1997, and Rainey, John, Jayne, Phyllis and I look forward to working with many of you on local rivers in the coming months.

Rich Bowers, Executive Director

#### Acronyms:

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement  
EA: Environmental Assessment  
FERC: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
FS: Forest Service

# AMERICAN WHITewater's TOP 40

NPS: National Park Service  
BLM: Bureau of Land Management  
FWS: Fish and Wildlife Service

To contact Rich Hoffman, Access Director, call our Silver Spring, MD office at 301-589-9453 or email at [awa@compuserve.com](mailto:awa@compuserve.com). To reach John Gangemi, conservation Director, call Bigfork, MT at 406-837-3155 or email at [jgangemi@digisys.net](mailto:jgangemi@digisys.net)

## 1. Russell Fork, Kentucky and Virginia Issue: Proposed new dam

**Current Status:** The Army Corps of Engineers has released a Draft EIS for Haysi Dam upstream of Breaks Interstate Park. Haysi dam is being proposed for flood control in the Levisa Fork Basin. While whitewater boaters and locals have forged strong relationships over the past years, the promised flood protection for Levisa Fork residents is overstated due to the small percentage of the basin upstream of the proposed Haysi Dam. The whitewater releases presented as part of this plan are unlikely to reach fruition given the list of environmental constraints and added costs, shared by state and local entities, to achieve the necessary water storage required for releases.

**National Precedent:** Increasingly, large scale public works projects are being window-dressed to appeal to special interest groups. In the case of Haysi Dam, the Army Corps has attempted to eliminate their most vocal opponents, the paddling community, by offering whitewater releases. In so doing, the Army

Corps has craftily shifted the argumentative focus to the type of dam that will be constructed rather than fighting against dam construction period. The public should object to these deceptive practices. In addition to commenting on the DEIS, American Whitewater will attempt to keep this project from being authorized by Congress as part of the 1998 Water Resources Development Act.

*Contact Person: John Gangemi*

## 2. South Fork American River, California Issues: Access, relicensing, decommissioning

**Current Status:** A lot is happening on the South Fork American! El Dorado County is in the process of revising their River Management Plan for the popular Chili Bar section, and the county has divided this plan into a three-phase process. The results from Phases I and II are online at <http://co.el-dorado.ca.us/parks>.

The River Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) spent 18 months holding public meetings with the consultant (RMI) to draft "a range of management alternatives" for the EIR. Unfortunately RMAC and RMI have developed different preferred plans. The county Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will choose which plan will be the preferred alternative for the final EIR. The consultant's preferred plan includes private boater fees and possible future limits on private boater use, while the RMAC plan does not include these controversial items. American Whitewater representatives met with the El Dorado County Council this past spring to discuss the proposed boater fees and use limits for which no clear need was established during the study phases of the project.

Another issue is, as the Report states, the "relationship between whitewater recreation activities and the water quality of the South Fork of the American River continues to be a primary concern." However, solely looking at boater impacts on water quality appears to be shortsighted considering that the study will not investigate the far greater effects of upstream water diversions and riverside mining, grading, grazing and septic tanks. This "boaters cause water pollution" issue also appears to be part of the upcoming Truckee River CRMP and river management plan.

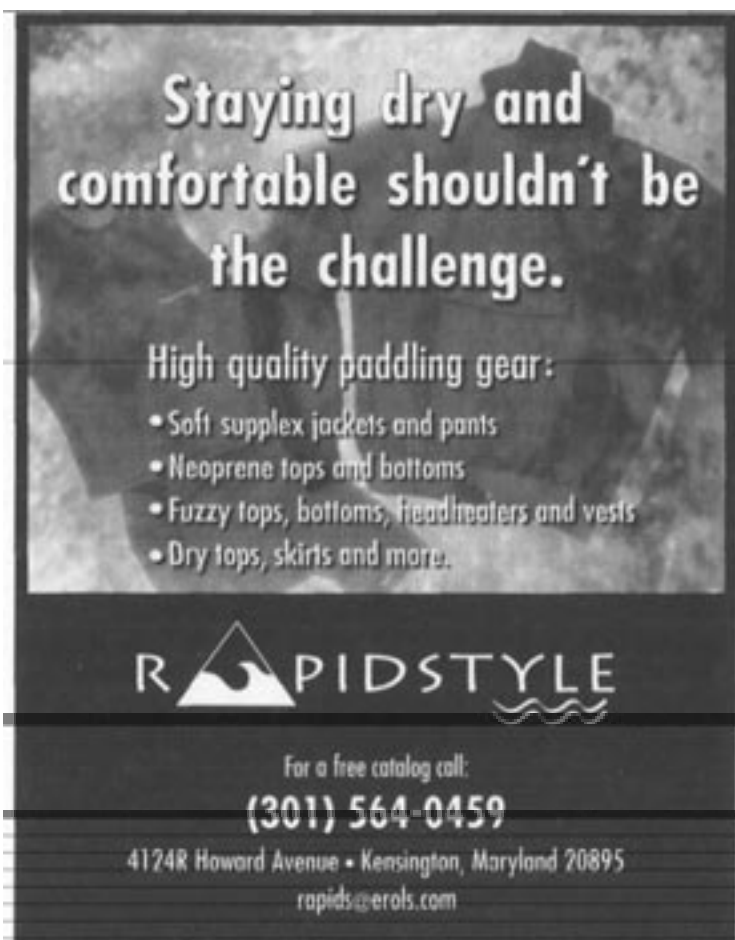
**Relicensing:** The upstream El Dorado Project 184 affects three of the upper runs (Kyburz, Riverton to Peavine, and Goldengate), and is in the initial stages of the FERC relicensing process. PG&E recently canceled the sale of the project to the local water district (EID), and is reported to be considering decommissioning the project.

**Regional and National Precedent:** Decommissioning projects may become more commonplace if deregulation does in fact lead to a decrease in electric rates but the future energy market is anyone's guess at best. In any event, decommissioning projects needs to be carried out in a calculated fashion that mitigates past impacts and offers enhancement and protection of the river resource in a state comparable to pre-project conditions.

*Contact person: John Gangemi, Rich Hoffman, Mike Fentress on the South Fork at (916) 622-293, and for the Truckee River, Charlie Albright at (702) 787-1751.*

## 3. Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona Issue: Fees, Management

**Current Status:** In January, Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) increased the fees for non-commercial boaters by 1500% with no public input. While boaters have consistently expressed



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their desire to pay a reasonable and equitable fee, the new fees at Grand Canyon are neither, raising funds that exceed their stated operational costs by 80%. These fees have also exacerbated the inequitable split allocation system by making non-commercial boaters pay for waiting in line, a wait that lasts an average of 10 years.

The good news is that GCNP is updating the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP) starting this year, and has done an excellent job of involving the public to date. This process will address the critical issues affecting the Canyon, including access, wilderness, and important resource concerns. To become involved in this process, add your name by writing to: Grand Canyon National Park Science Center, Grand Canyon National Park, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023, Attn: Linda Jalbert. Public Workshops are scheduled for September, 1997 in the following locations:

Portland on September 5th and 6th, 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM Friday and 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM Saturday, at Lewis and Clark College Templeton Student Center

Salt Lake City on September 12th and 13th, same times, at Holiday Inn Airport, 1659 W North Temple

Phoenix on September 19th and 20th, same times, at the YWCA Leadership Development Center, 9440 N. 25th Ave. (East of I-25 at Dunlop and 25th Ave.)

For additional information on this issue, see separate article in this issue.

Contact: Rich Hoffman.

#### 4. North Fork of the Feather River

Issue: Hydropower relicense and Access

Current Status: Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) has failed to relicense Rock Creek and Cresta hydropower facilities choosing instead to operate under original license conditions annually since 1979, the original date for relicense. In short, PG&E has abused the FERC relicense process. Minimum instream flows below these dams are approximately 20 cfs. FERC issued a Draft EA in the spring of 1997 describing the preferred conditions for a new license. American Whitewater, along with numerous other groups and Federal and state agencies, requested the current Draft EA be discarded since it did not adequately assess present conditions on the river.

National Precedent: Rock Creek and Cresta is the first project up for relicense on the North Fork of the Feather. Four additional hydropower facilities are due for relicense in the next decade. This presents an opportunity to restore approximately thirty river miles and re-establish the equivalent river mileage to the California whitewater inventory.

Contact persons: John Gangemi or Kevin Lewis, W (916) 221-8722, klewis@snowcrest.net

#### 5. Gauley River, WV

Issue: New Hydro License; Access

Current Status (Hydro): In the January/February edition of American Whitewater, we reported on the AWA's appeal of FERC's order to approve modifications to the Summersville dam Hydroelectric project. This approval would allow transmission lines to cross the Middle Meadow and run along Glade Creek. On January 21, 1997 FERC denied rehearing by both AWA and the Mt. Lookout - Mt. Nebo Property Protection Association. Both parties have appealed FERC's decision regarding the transmission line route.

At this point, the efforts of American Whitewater and the Property Association have resulted in a stay of all construction

for the project, including both the transmission line and the project itself. The next step is to comment on the visual resources plan for this project, although FERC has ruled that neither party can comment on re-routing the line.

Current Status (Access): Last year, the NPS was required by legislation to acquire access at the less-desirable Woods Ferry take-out for non-commercial access. This site is downstream of the Mason Branch take-out (AKA Panther Mountain Road) that most boaters currently use. The Park Service is hoping to acquire Mason Branch also, but the landowners are not willing sellers at this time.

Contact: Rich Hoffman or Rich Bowers.

#### 6. Rights of Passage: NY, CO, VA, PA, GA

Issue: Access

Current Status: In the past year, American Whitewater has been involved with litigation and legislation in several states that influences the right of the public to recreate on streams. In New York, we filed an amicus brief on the Salmon River to make sure that the progress made in the favorable S. Branch Moose case was not eroded. In Colorado, our efforts to pass legislation were thwarted in 1995, but our legal eagles have successfully helped boaters charged with trespass on the South Platte. In Virginia, we signed onto an amicus brief that contemplated the public rights on a river that was declared navigable by the Army Corps of Engineers, but flowed past land grants made by the King of England. In the end, the Virginia Supreme Court determined that

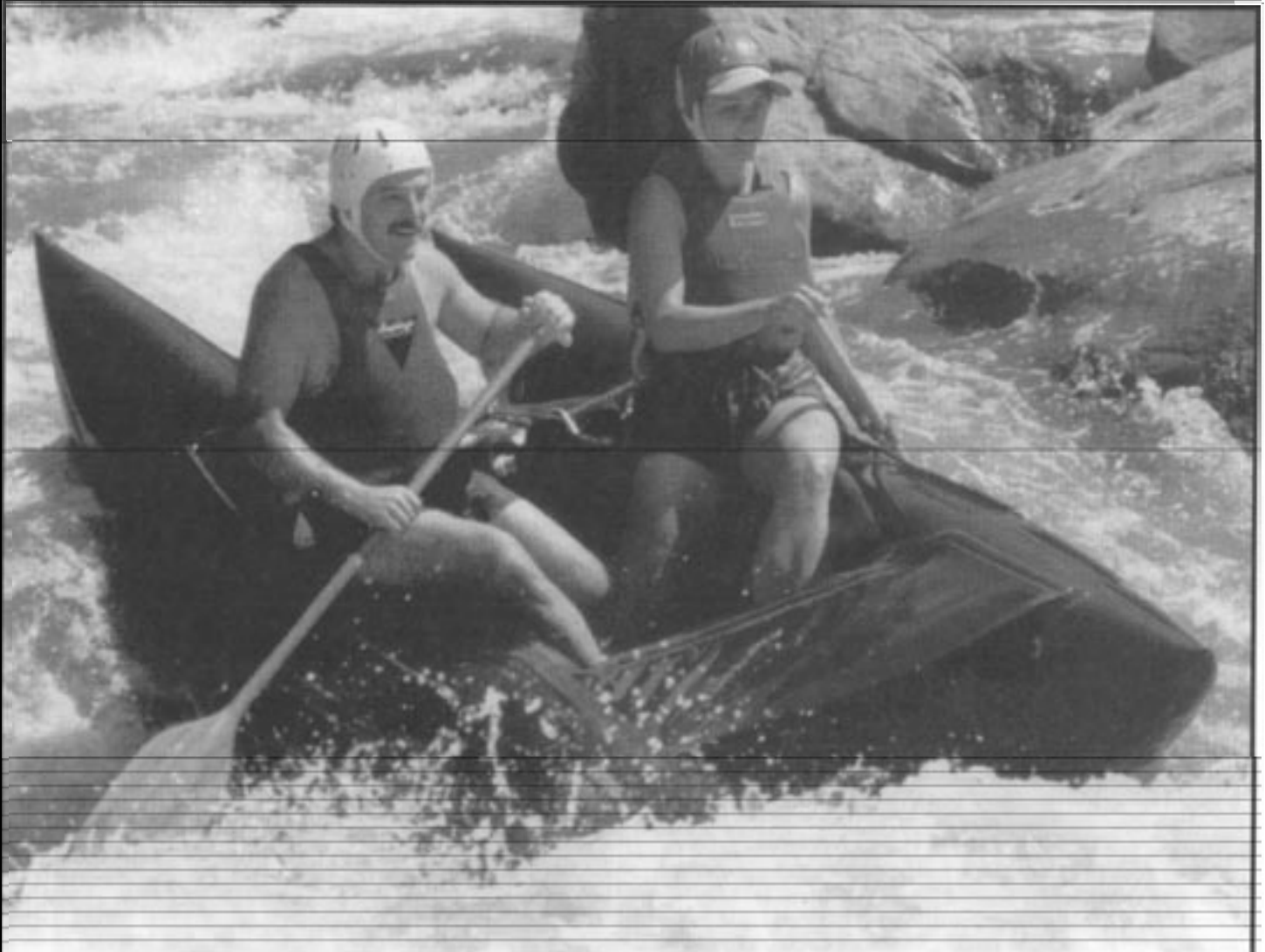


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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER'S TOP 40

the King's land grants allowed the property owner to prevent fishing. In Georgia, we assisted with litigation that challenged the right of a municipality to exclude non-County residents from using the river. Finally, we are monitoring litigation in Pennsylvania on the Lehigh River between a private fishing club and a local angler.

Contact: Rich Hoffman.

## 7. Blackwater, West Virginia

Issue: Logging, water quality and aesthetic impacts

**Current Status:** A 3,000 acre private inholding of the Monongahela National Forest spanning the Blackwater Canyon area from the railroad grade to the opposite canyon rim has been purchased by Allegheny Hardwoods of Petersburg West Virginia. Timber harvesting will begin on a 500 acre tract in the lower canyon upstream from the town of Hendricks in September of this year. Haul roads are being constructed as this journal goes to press.

The Blackwater Canyon has an 8 mile continuous class IV-V in a wilderness setting. The Blackwater Canyon Campaign is attempting to raise funds to purchase and protect the 3000 acres in Blackwater Canyon for public use, scenic and recreational enjoyment, and wildlife habitat before logging begins.

**Regional Precedent:** Logging in the Blackwater Canyon would greatly impact the aesthetic character, water quality and habitat for threatened and endangered species. State jurisdiction for logging on private lands is limited to presenting a list of voluntary Best Management Practices that advise the landowner about strategies aimed at reducing impacts. The landowner has no obligation to comply with these practices which should be more aptly named Best

Minimal Practices because in reality this list of suggested practices falls far short of protecting the environment from logging impacts. The Department of Forestry simply requires that the sale be overseen by a forest professional. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is responsible for enforcing water quality laws after violations occur giving them no authority in the planning or logging phase. In other words, private lands in West Virginia are open for timber harvest virtually free of environmental constraints.

Contact Person: John Gangemi

## 8. Raquette River, New York, Colten Et Hannawa/ Sugar Island segments near Potsdam

Issue: Procurement of whitewater releases

**Current Status:** Over a dozen different hydro projects on New York's Workhorse of the North are going through FERC relicensing. After years of effort focusing the power company's (Niagara Mohawk) and FERC's attention on wonderful sections of whitewater in bypass reaches among the projects, American Whitewater's Pete Skinner was successful in getting whitewater feasibility studies completed. These studies showed that there was plenty of Class II - V whitewater in granite gorges replete with waterfalls, spectacular scenery and numerous play spots. To say that these segments were great would be an understatement. New York Rivers United and local paddlers have been representing top end paddler's interests in the interminable negotiations which have dragged on for many months. Recent breakthroughs may pave the way toward summertime releases for the full array of paddling skills and tastes. The future for northern Adirondack

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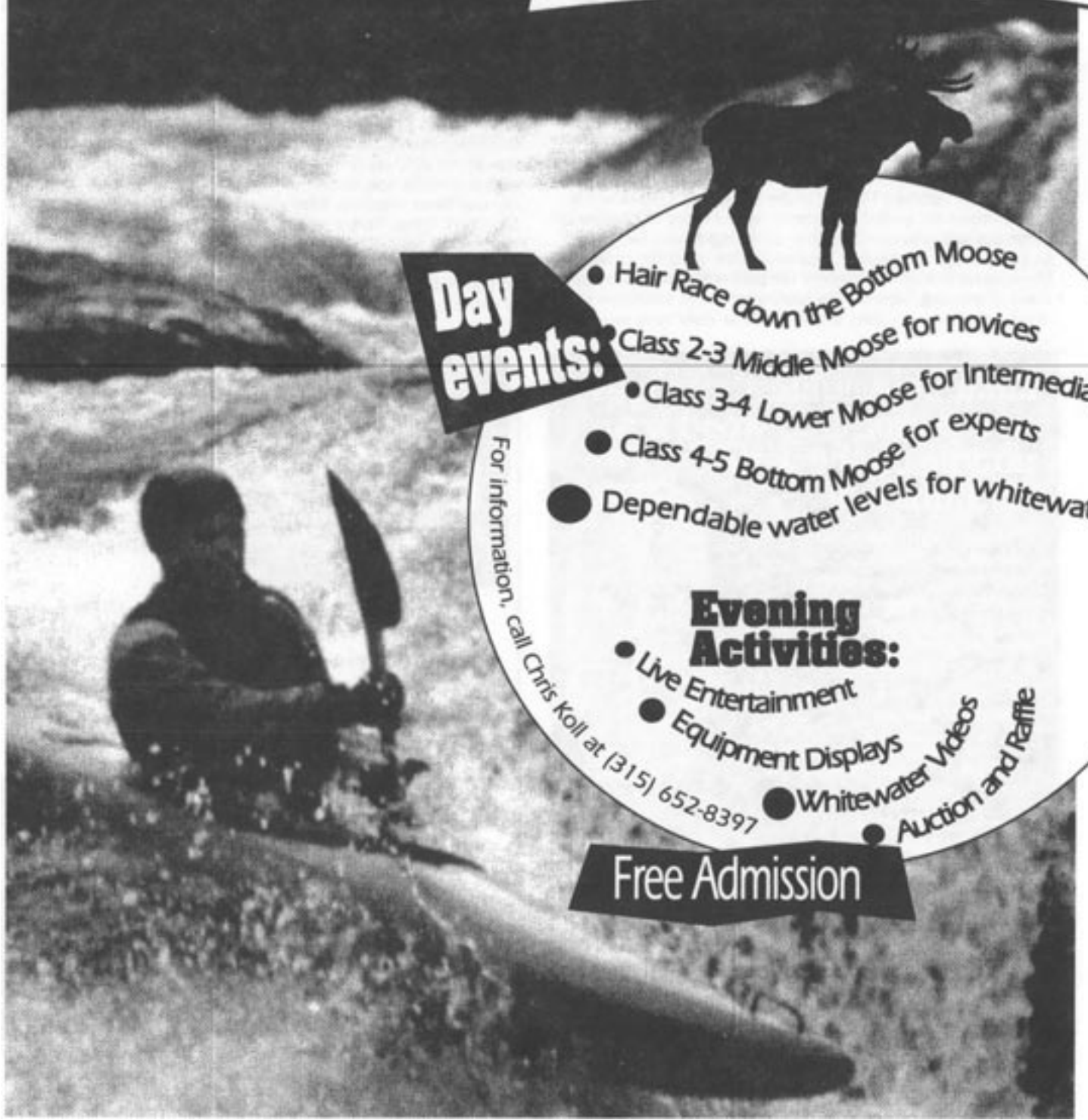
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Contact: Bruce Carpenter, New York Rivers United, E-mail = nyru@igc.apc.org or Bob Dowman at (work): (315) 268-3836.

## 9. Potomac River, Maryland and high water closures in other states

Issue: Water Quality and high water closures

Current Status (Access): 1997 was the year of the river closure. While the "arrest" of Davey Hearn on the Potomac in 1996 was certainly the most publicized example, exceptionally high water caused local authorities to close down rivers in many states, including Virginia, California, Nevada, Montana, and Idaho. While local authorities have many legitimate concerns related to high water, American Whitewater and its affiliate clubs have been trying to solve these problems while still allowing experienced and equipped members of the public to pursue their sport. On the Potomac, several solutions that have been proposed include a registration or permit system, or an exemption of appropriate whitewater boats from a closure. Statistics and experience illustrate that river closures will not significantly improve river safety, and that education is the only way to improve safety. With that in mind, American Whitewater has been working with local authorities to improve education by proper signage and volunteer river patrols.

Contact: Rich Hoffman or Steve Taylor, 301-299-8426 or potomacsurf@worldnet.att.net

Current Status (Water quality): Named the "Top Most Endan-

gered River of 1997" by American Rivers, the quality of the Potomac's water is threatened by literally tons of animal feces entering the river upstream. This pollution is a direct threat to the millions of people who depend on the Potomac as a water supply, and for those who enjoy the recreational aspects of the river from its headwaters in West Virginia to its confluence with the Chesapeake Bay.

Contact: American Rivers, 202-547-6900.

## 10. Uinta and Yellowstone Rivers, Utah

Issue: New dam construction

Current Status: Central Utah Water Conservancy District has recently completed the DEIS for construction of two dams on the Uinta and Yellowstone rivers respectively. These reservoirs would store water for agricultural purposes enabling alfalfa farmers to extend their growing season. The reservoirs will inundate up to five miles of river on the Ute Indian Reservation, decrease flows into the confluence with the Green River where the endangered Colorado squawfish seeks refuge and degrade water quality with agricultural return water. Proponents say this project is designed to help Native Americans obtain their water rights when, in fact, the Utes will receive only ten percent of the water from the project. Any economic gains the Utes might gain from the available water will be offset by the loss of tribal lands to reservoir waters. The Final EIS is due out in the fall/winter of 1997.

National Precedent: This is another example of window-dressing a public works project that benefits a small minority at the expense of taxpayers (projected cost \$247 million), the envi-

Falling Down Productions presents

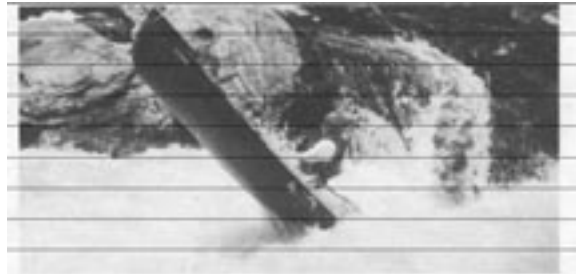
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# AMERICAN WHITewater's TOP 40

ronment, Native Americans and the recreational community.

**Contact Persons:** Zach Frankel, Utah Rivers Council (801)486-4776 or Mark White, American Whitewater Regional Coordinator (801)582-3445.

## 11. Chattooga River, Georgia, South and North Carolina

**Issue:** Access

**Current Status:** The Sumter National Forest is in the process of revising its Management Plan, which includes the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River. One issue of importance is the prohibition of boating on Sections 0 and 1. While open to many other recreational uses such as fishing, hiking, camping, and horseback riding, whitewater boaters who float through these areas are subject to fines and arrest. American Whitewater believes that there is no compelling reason for the current ban on whitewater boating on Sections 1 and 0. While American Whitewater is sensitive to the desire of other users for solitude and a wilderness experience, these values are important to whitewater boaters as well. However, putting a higher value on the solitude of one user group over another is not equitable public policy. In addition, whitewater boating on these two sections is only possible at high water levels when the fishing is not good. We have recommended that the new management plan allow boating during certain windows of time, for instance, high flows or certain months.

**Contact:** Rich Hoffman.

## 12. Ocoee River, Tennessee

**Issue:** Access, Flows and Future use

**Current Status:** This past February, the Forest Service issued a favorable decision in its EIS for the future use of the upper Ocoee River Corridor by recommending Alternative 5, a plan with high amounts of recreational use. Alternative 5 would include regularly scheduled flows of 1,400 to 2,000 cfs on 74 days during the year.

However, it is unclear how many of these releases will be available to the general public, or whether TVA will be amenable to providing flows in this stretch. American Whitewater is also concerned with recent proposals for inflatable kayak rentals on the popular middle stretch of the Ocoee, from the perspective of safety and crowding.

**Contact:** AWA Director Ron Stewart (615) 756-3170 or Rich Hoffman.

## 13. Cheat River, West Virginia

**Issue:** Acid Mine Drainage

**Current Status:** Friends of the Cheat and the River of Promise Task Force continued to make progress this year in their effort to reverse the effects of over a century of land and water abuse by coal mining. Since the first Cheat River Festival just two and a half years ago, over seven million dollars of state, federal, and private money have been applied to the severe acid mine drainage problem that renders eight tributaries of the Cheat unable to

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# AMERICAN WHITewater'S TOP 40

support even insect life. There is an incredible amount of work left to do, but this year, for the first time in twenty or more years, a resurgence of fish life has been recorded in the Canyon portion of the Cheat. Within the next few years the entire Big Sandy watershed could be sporting a healthy fishery due to projects planned on Sovern Run, Beaver Creek, Cherry Run, and elsewhere.

A major threat to future progress is the limited amount of coal tax funds returned to the state for reclamation projects. Since the inception of a special abandoned mine lands tax in 1977, West Virginia coal operators have paid \$519,318,589 into a fund that has only returned about \$250,000,000 for projects. The remainder has been hoarded by Congress to mask the size of the federal deficit. A large number of important projects have been placed "on the shelf" for lack of funding.

To learn more, come to the fourth Cheat River Festival May 2, 1998 (see Briefs).

Contact person: *Dave Bassage* at (304) 379-3141 or [dbassage@access.mountain.net](mailto:dbassage@access.mountain.net)

## 14. Housatonic River, Connecticut Issue: Hydropower relicense & recreational userconflicts

Current Status: The release schedule which coincided with summer power demands was altered in the early 1990's to address summer fish kills. However, no scientific studies have been conducted to date identifying the cause of the fish mortality or linking this to recreational flows. Nonetheless, summer releases

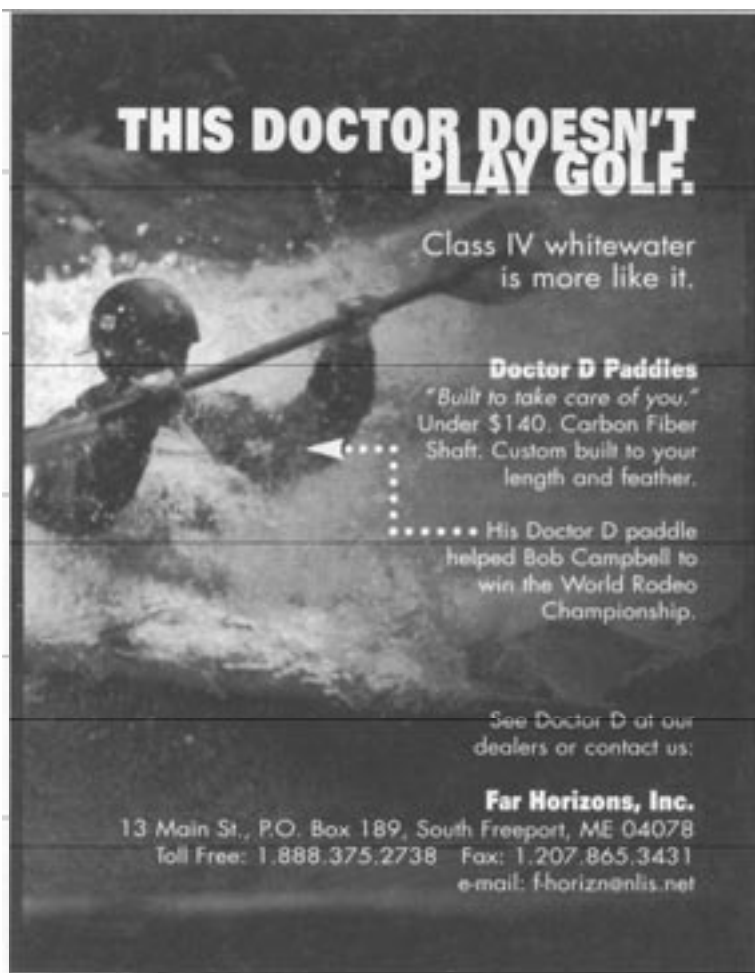
from Fall's Village power plant are restricted by a combined river and reservoir temperature model greatly limiting the available days for whitewater paddling. Furthermore, the Housatonic was historically a warmwater fishery. Currently, a coldwater fishery has been artificially propagated by state agencies and local angling groups through annual stocking. Five hydropower projects on the Housatonic including Fall's Village are due for relicensing in 2001. American Whitewater, along with local paddling clubs and shops, will strive for license conditions favoring more equitable use of the river resource.

National Precedent: The current flow regime was implemented without proper scientific analysis or legal process. The end result is that the current flow regime favors a single user group at the expense of other groups. Project modifications should follow the prescribed legal process and undergo rigorous scientific analysis as well as economic and social study.

Contact Persons: *John Gangemi* or *Jennifer Clarke* at 860-672-6365.

## 15. Sacandaga River, NY Issue: Relicensing and new approaches to minimum flow

Current Status: Relicensing of the E.J. West Project and the Conklingville Dam which impounds the Great Sacandaga Lake, and new approaches to minimum flows, ramping, water management, access and land stewardship could doom one of the Northeast's favorite family and play whitewater rivers nestled on the southern edge of the beautiful Adirondacks.



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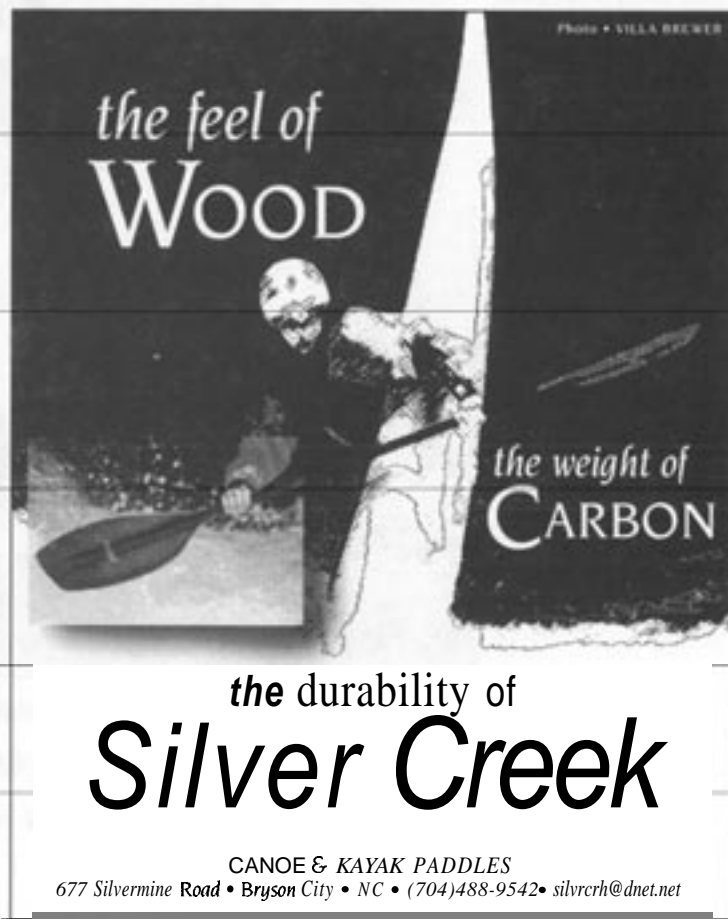


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AWA has created a mathematical model which served as the early foundation for assessing the downstream and lake impacts of different water management schemes. Now the power company, Niagara Mohawk, hired a modeler to do the work full time. These models are now the subject of discussion and refinement preparatory to full negotiation this fall and winter among many parties. Since so much is at stake for so many parties, the outcome is unclear.

**Local, state, regional and/or National Precedent:** Since so much water is at stake, the final arrangement here will redefine recreation, industrial, aquatic ecosystems and water quality in the Upper Hudson, Great Sacandaga Lake, and Lower Sacandaga River for the next few decades.

**Contact Person:** AWA and New York Rivers United have been major players here. Pete Skinner serves as the major contact at 518-674-5519 or at [skimp@rpi.edu](mailto:skimp@rpi.edu)

### 16. Kennebec River, Maine

**Issue:** Access, Hydro Relicensing

**Current Status:** Negotiations continue over conditions to renew CMP's FERC license. Hanging in the balance is the possibility of improved flows (including recreational use at lower flows) and better scheduling. AWA is also looking to purchase land below Black Brooke rapids. If negotiations are successful, this land would provide an additional take out for boaters. There is a possibility that this could also lead to a change in CMP's desire to charge a fee to access the river.

**Contact:** Tom Christopher (508) 534-9447 or Rich Bowers.

### 17. Moxie Stream, Maine

**Issue:** Relicensing and decommissioning

**Current Status:** In early July, FERC decided that Central Maine Power (CMP) could walk away from their storage dam on Moxie, a Class V tributary of the Kennebec Gorge. In the past year, FERC has reviewed the need to issue licenses on several streams which were questionable as to navigability. American Whitewater and others have been able to fight off this threat on most rivers.

However, navigability was not the issue on Moxie, FERC based their decision on Moxie's not being a direct part of power production (CMP quit releasing water last year when they decided they no longer needed Moxie dam). FERC says little about many years of prior use (since 1925), or the fact that CMP basically told FERC (step by step) how their jurisdiction works. This decision could jeopardize annual whitewater releases, minimum flows for fish and aesthetics, and lake levels for camp owners.

**National Precedent:** If allowed to stand, this decision could eventually allow all storage projects to be excluded from FERC jurisdiction. All an applicant needs to do is announce they no longer use the storage dam in question. For deregulation this is even worse. FERC's ruling, in part, details how Moxie is only a small part of CMP's production, and un-economic. If this stands, any dam which loses money could be abandoned without surrender based on this decision.

**Contact:** Rich Bowers



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# GRAND PRIZES... TWO WHITEWATER TRIPS TO ECUADOR

# AMERICAN WHITEWATER'S TOP 40

## 18. Arkansas River, Colorado

Issue: Access

**Current Status:** This past spring, the dogged efforts of the State of Colorado, BLM, Forest Service, Colorado White Water Association (CWWA) and American Whitewater paid off: we established a legal access site to the Numbers. All parties recognize that this site is not an ideal solution, and we are continuing to pursue reopening County Road 371 (parallels the river on river left) that was illegally vacated by the County and an adjacent landowner several years ago. We also remain hopeful that other properties may become available for river access in the future.

Contact: *Rich Hoffman.*

## 19. Colorado River through Gore Canyon, Colorado

Issue: Access

**Current Status:** After attempts to pursue the traditional access site on the North side were ambushed, American Whitewater has encouraged the BLM to pursue a land exchange that, among other things, would secure a legal access point at the confluence of the Blue and Colorado Rivers. This land exchange will likely be finished by Fall of 1997.

Contact: *Rich Hoffman.*

## 20. Animas River, Colorado

Issue: Proposed Pump-Storage Project

**Current Status:** After 30 years and \$71 million in appropriations for Animas-La Plata (ALP), project supporters, recognizing likely failure to get authorization let alone appropriations, have abandoned the project in its present form for a modified project plan as yet undetermined. As this issue of the journal went to press, Representatives Petri (R-WI) and DeFazio (D-OR) sponsored legislation deauthorizing the ALP federal reclamation project. Senators Feingold (D-WI), Brownback (R-KS) and Gregg (R-NH) attempted to introduce similar legislation in the Senate. Petri and Defazio hoped to eliminate further funding under the Energy and Water Appropriations bill claiming that no more money should be spent on ALP without a legitimate plan in hand that is environmentally and economically justifiable.

**National Precedent:** Defeating ALP in its present form will send a firm message to both the Bureau of Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers that Congress will not accept water development projects that are fiscally and environmentally irresponsible.

Contact Person: *John Gangemi*

## 21. Canyonlands National Park

Issue: Access, Management

**Current Status:** In January, American Whitewater commented on the River Management Plan for Canyonlands National Park which is being revised. Canyonlands encompasses the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers, downstream of which lies Cataract Canyon. The issue of greatest concern in this management plan is the split allocation which currently portions 86% of the use to commercial outfitters and only 9% for non-commercial use.

Contact: *Rich Hoffman.*

## 22. Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone, Montana and Wyoming

Issue: Proposed Gold Mine

**Current Status:** The controversy surrounding the proposed gold mine in the headwaters of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River remains unresolved. President Clinton attempted to purchase the mining claims two summers ago but Congress has failed to appropriate the \$65 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. More importantly, one mining claim owner with a substantial percentage of the private property surrounding the claims is not willing to sell. Despite one unwilling seller, purchase of the remaining claims would render this gold mine uneconomical for industrial extraction of the ore thus greatly reducing potential environmental impacts.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have jointly issued an environmental impact statement for public lands surrounding the private lands of the proposed New World Mine. The preferred alternative withdraws adjacent public lands from future mining but does not stop Crown Butte from developing the New World Mine.

Precedent: See Blackfoot River.

Contact Persons: *John Gangemi or Rick Alexander (406)587-2869.*

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# AMERICAN WHITewater'S TOP 40

## 23. Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

Issue: Access

**Current Status:** While snowmobiling, motor boating on lakes, and backcountry hiking and fishing are allowed in the Park, all rivers in Yellowstone are closed to whitewater boating. After meeting with Park staff in 1995 and receiving a mountain of responses from the boating community, the AWA will be finalizing a proposal for whitewater boating in the Park this year.

**Contact:** Rich Hoffman, John Gangemi, or Mark White (801) 582-3445.

## 24. Blackfoot River

Issue: Proposed Gold Mine

**Current Status:** Phelps Dodge and Canyon Resources Mining Company are proposing to develop the McDonald Gold Project on the Blackfoot River in Montana. This river was the geographical focal point of Norman McClean's novel and later film, "A River Runs Through It." The Blackfoot also has a variety of whitewater. The proposed gold mine entails a 1300 foot deep pit where the river now flows. Accidental spills or breaches of mine tailings will contaminate much of the length of the Blackfoot River jeopardizing paddlers health and aquatic organisms in particular bull trout and west slope cutthroat trout both recognized as state sensitive species and the former pending addition to the federal endangered species list. The Blackfoot River is one of the last refuges for bull trout in the Clark Fork River basin of western Montana.

**Precedent:** The USFS and BLM efforts focus attention on the need to set guidelines and limits for mining operations on public lands. The next step is legislative revision of the 1872 mining law. In its present form, mining claims filed on public lands convey ownership of that land to the claim holder.

**Contact Persons:** John Gangemi or Bonnie Gestring, Montana Environmental Information Center, (406)443-2520.

## 25. Hells Canyon Hells Canyon, Snake River, Oregon

Issue: Jet boats and legislation

**Current Status:** In July, Representative Helen Chenoweth's (R-ID) bill, H.R. 838, barely squeaked by in an effort to legislate the Snake Wild and Scenic River in Hells Canyon as a jet boat speedway. However, this bill and its Senate companion bill, S. 360, introduced by Idaho Senator Larry Craig, have united private floaters, conservation and wilderness advocacy groups, river protection advocates, and float outfitters together in outrage.

The Chenoweth/Craig bill would legislate jet boat domination in Hells Canyon: It would prohibit the establishment of non-motorized zones on the river, prohibit the Forest Service from even recognizing concurrent motorized and non-motorized use as being a conflict, and would mandate maximum established jet boat use levels as a minimum for future river management plans.

**National Precedent:** The Craig/Chenoweth bill would not only condemn the Snake Wild and Scenic River in Hells Canyon to permanent jet boat domination, it would also set a precedent for more or less unlimited motorized use on a federal wild and scenic river regardless of the impacts on other uses and values.

**Contact** John Gangemi, Rich Bowers, or Ric Bailey at the Hells Canyon Preservation Council, (541) 432-8100 or at [hpcpc@oregontrail.net](mailto:hpcpc@oregontrail.net)

## 26. Bear River, Idaho

Issue: Hydropower Relicence

**Current Status:** In May, American Whitewater conducted a whitewater feasibility study on the Black Canyon of the Bear River below the diversion for Grace Power Plant to determine appropriate flows for whitewater recreation. Results from the study will be used by the FERC to set hydropower license conditions which include scheduled whitewater releases. The relicence process continues for Grace Power Plant.

**National Precedent:** Whitewater feasibility studies are an extremely important component of the data used by FERC, and establish important precedents and data necessary for improving recreational flows in relicensing.

**Contact Persons:** John Gangemi or Mark White, American Whitewater Regional Coordinator (801)582-3445.

## 27. Cispus River, Washington

Issue: Access

**Current Status:** As a condition to its FERC license for dam construction, the Lewis County Public Utility District (PUD) was required to construct a public access site upstream of its reservoir. While an access site was established, timber companies have prevented boaters from reaching this site by closing access along the roads. This past year, the PUD applied to FERC to amend its license requirement to establish this take-out. American Whitewater and Rivers Council of Washington—with help from Washington Kayak Club—have formally opposed this license amendment. The matter is being decided by FERC staff; a decision will likely be made this year.

**Contact:** Rich Hoffman, Director Brooke Drury (206-284-6310) or RCW's Heather Nilsen (206) 283-4988.

## 28. White Salmon, Washington

Issue: Dam Removal, Access

**Current Status:** Condit Dam floods or dewateres up to 5 miles of the lower White Salmon River. Access to the river's namesake has likewise been blocked to all but three miles of the river since 1912, all in exchange for a minuscule amount of electricity. After years of fighting for full ecosystem restoration, river conservation groups, including American Whitewater, are now engaged in promising discussions with dam owner PacifiCorp, government agencies, and the Yakima Indian Nation to bring about dam removal. At press time, the top question seems to be more one of when than how. Stay tuned! With respect to access, we are still hopeful to work with the Forest Service to secure access at BZ Comers.

**National Precedent:** Condit removal may lay the groundwork for decommissioning other projects. Dam removal is rarely considered as an alternative to relicensing a hydropower project. Decommissioning projects presents an additional list of uncertain environmental problems. Decommissioning needs to be carried out in a calculated fashion mitigating past impacts and offering enhancement and protection of the river resource in a state comparable to pre-project conditions.

**Contact Person:** John Gangemi or Brooke Drury, The Mountaineers, 206-284-6310.

# AMERICAN WHITEWATER'S TOP 40

## 29. Canyon Creek, Washington Issue: Proposed hydropower project

**Current Status:** The uncertainty of future energy markets have brought a slight reprieve for Canyon Creek. The hydro developer currently holds a preliminary permit giving him exclusive rights to hydro development at the site for a limited time period. The Canyon Creek hydropower developer has not fulfilled obligations under the preliminary permit which require submission of study reports to FERC. Numerous groups have written to FERC accusing the developer of "site-banking"—obtaining a preliminary permit but taking no action to develop an application for a license. The bottomline: Canyon Creek still remains vulnerable to hydro-power development. This spring, American Whitewater and local boaters helped raise awareness of this issue by staging the first ever Canyon Creek Race and Festival.

**National Precedent:** FERC should condemn the preliminary permit based on the permit holders failure to fulfill terms and conditions required under the permit. In so doing, FERC will discourage other would be hydropower developers from "site banking."

**Contact Person:** Brooke Druy, the Mountaineers (206)284-6310 or Andrew Wulfers (503)650-3603.

and other property rights groups had several bills introduced that would have been extremely damaging to public rights along Oregon rivers. In turn, river recreationists introduced a bill that would mimic the successful Montana Stream Access Law. In the end, none of the bills passed. At the moment, requests have been made to the Division of State Lands to conduct "navigability studies," a determination as to whether a particular river meets the criteria for the federal test for stream bed title (if it meets the criteria, the river bed and banks belong to the state and are held in trust for the public). There has not been any recent litigation that examines the public rights under the state navigability law.

**Contact:** Rich Hoffman.

## 31. Deschutes River, Oregon Issue: Access

**Current Status:** The BLM recently instituted an innovative management plan for the Deschutes River that gets rid of the traditional split allocation system and establishes a common pool for all river use. The upcoming seasons will test whether or not the system will be practical to administer and will prove fair and equitable among different river users.

**Contact:** Rich Hoffman.

## 30. Navigability Law in Oregon Issue: Access

**Current Status:** Oregon's most recent legislative session saw a flurry of activity with respect to navigability. The Farm Bureau

## 32. South Fork Trinity River, CA Issue: Access

**Current Status:** A Draft EA was issued for facility improvements at Low Water Crossing on the South Fork of the Trinity River, near the site of the access dispute with the Low Bridge landowner. The purpose of the improvements are to provide better river access and reduce trespass. The proposed improvements include an engineered trail with steps and a handrail, a boat ramp, a small parking area, turnaround, and restrooms.

**For further information, please contact Aida Parkinson at (707) 839-2101.**

## 33. Pit River, California Issue: Hydropower Relicense

**Current status:** In early June American Whitewater and Shasta Paddlers submitted joint recommendations to FERC for consideration in preparation of the draft environmental assessment on Pit #1. In light of Pacific Gas & Electric's refusal to negotiate we called for the commission to implement the recommendations of the whitewater boating study. The boating study identified the need for 37 days of water releases to meet the projected needs of the boating community during the 30 year life of the pending license. A successful outcome in the re-license of Pit #1 will set the tone for future licenses on the Pit River.

**Watershed Precedent:** Pit #1 is the first step in the re-licensing process of the watershed. In the next few years the re-license process will start on Pit #3, Pit #4, and Pit #5. American Whitewater and Shasta Paddlers are committed to remain fully involved in this process in order to guarantee the public a healthy river corridor, protection for fish and wildlife, adequate water quality, and recreational boating flows.

**Contact Person:** John Gangemi or Kevin Lewis, (916) 221-8722 or [klewis@snowcrest.net](mailto:klewis@snowcrest.net)

## 34. Cosumnes River, California Issue: Access

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**Current Status:** Access to this foothills gem has been problematic since the 60's. The run is logically split into two 10 mile stretches of river by the Latrobe Road Bridge—the upper run being Class IV-V and the lower run being Class II-III. However, private landowners and local law enforcement officers have hassled boaters attempting to access this river. For the past year, American Whitewater has been investigating the possibility of transferring an ideal piece of river access real estate into public hands, but there has been significant opposition from the local community to this project. (See accompanying article for more details.)

Contact: Rich *Hoffman*.

## 35. Mokelumne River, California

**Issues:** Proposed hydro projects, access restrictions, relicensing

**Current Status:** FERC turned down the Mokelumne Water and Power Authority amended preliminary permit to build a 420 ft. dam on the Middle Bar section of the Mokelumne River. However the unamended version of this project is still a 190 foot high dam with a 40,000 acre ft. reservoir. This could flood the lower part of the Electra run and end ongoing efforts to extend the length of the Electra run to the Middle Bar area. East Bay Municipal Utilities District is still denying boaters access to the Middle Bar section of the river so they can keep open the option of raising Pardee Dam for additional water storage.

American Whitewater was granted intervenor status by FERC on the Mokelumne Project #137 last year, which includes multiple hydropower facilities that dewater the Class II Electra, Class III Ponderosa, Class IV Tigers Creek and Class V Devils Nose runs. The Draft EA for the project was issued last December recommending many improvements for whitewater recreation, particularly on the Electra section. This spring American Whitewater submitted joint comments with Friends of the River, Foothills Conservancy, and California Outdoors, asking for better in-stream flows, additional whitewater recreation facilities and recreational flows on the upper runs.

Contact persons: Pete Bell, Foothills *Conservancy*(209) 296-5734, Susan Scheufele, American Whitewater Director (408) 459-7978.

## 36. American River, California

**Issue:** Auburn Dam

**Current Status:** Auburn dam was rejected twice in Congress, once in 1992 and again in 1996. Representatives on both sides of the aisle agree they would prefer not to consider the proposal again, likening the last vote to a "bloody battle" they'd care not to revisit.

Nevertheless, dam proponents like Rep. John Doolittle (R-CA) with support from Rep. Pombo (R-CA) may attempt to forward a proposal as part of the 1998 Water Resources and Development Act. Voted on in early summer, talks regarding the content of the legislation will most likely begin in early fall with a vote in June of 1998.

**National Precedent:** The fact that the current American River flood control system sufficiently handled the dramatic January 1997 flooding that devastated adjacent California watersheds underscores that no more dams are needed in the American River basin.

Contact Person: Traci Sheehan, American River Campaign Coordinator, Friends of the River, 916-442-3155 x222 or *email:* tsheehan@friendsofheriver.org

## 37. Walker River, California

**Issue:** Channelizing Walker River

**Current Status:** The Walker River, a state designated wild and scenic river, flooded its banks during the January floods damaging highway 395. The California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) rebuilt the highway and river channel. In the process, the rapids on the Walker were drastically altered taking away much of the character of this section of whitewater. This "river restoration" was viewed as a great triumph and team building exercise by CALTRANS.

**National and Regional Precedent:** CALTRANS actions clearly overstepped their authority violating state wild and scenic rivers protection. CALTRANS use of heavy equipment in the river channel demonstrates their lack of concern for river ecosystems and whitewater recreation. Most whitewater rivers in the U.S. serve as transportation corridors for railroads and highways not to mention the primary locations for human settlements. Flood damage repairs to infrastructure should not be unconditional nor waive the necessary permits that protect water quality and riverine habitats.

Contact person: Charlie *Albright*, (702) 787-1751

## 38. Kern River and Forks of the Kern

**Issue:** Relicensing and Access

**Current Status:** In early 1997, American Whitewater, Friends of the River, and the Kernville Community Consensus Council met with the Forest Service, and convinced them of the benefits of beginning negotiations on the Upper Kern. These discussions would address additional flow improvements to the river, which had been marginally improved through the FERC process. As we went to press, we await the response of Southern California Edison.

On the lower Kern negotiations continue. So far, recreationists and other parties have succeeded in raising the level of discussion to include possible access improvements along Highway 178, portages around existing dams, and improvements at downstream dams. Still listed among the harder issues is the possibility of scheduled whitewater releases for the lower Kern.

Earlier this spring, American Whitewater and others met with the Forest Service to discuss an improved private boater system on the wilderness "Forks" run. So far, the Forest Service has not commented on our proposal.

Contact: Rich Bowers or John Gangemi.

## 39. North Fork of the Kings River, California

**Issue:** Hydropower Relicense

**Current Status:** The license for six hydroelectric facilities expired in 1985. These facilities collectively fall into one license with FERC, project #1988. The Haas-Kings facility in particular has dewatered 5 miles of the North Fork of the Kings River. FERC issued a final EA in which the Sierra National Forest issued 4(e) conditions requiring the licensee to operate the hydro facility within identified parameters. American Whitewater and other river groups appealed the Sierra National Forest 4(e) conditions based on the grounds that they were inadequate. The appeal was granted. The Sierra National Forests second round of 4(e) conditions offered less protection of the public resource than the first set of 4(e) conditions. American Whitewater, Friends of the River and the California Hydropower Reform Coalition plan



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# AMERICAN WHITewater's TOP 40

to appeal the latest 4(e) conditions.

National Precedent: The Sierra National Forest failed to identify the necessary license conditions that would insure protection of the river resource. Furthermore, the Sierra National Forest refused to recognize whitewater recreation interests within the forest boundary.

Contact Person: Richard Penny, Friends of the River 916-442-3155  
rpenny@friendsoftheriver.org

## 40. Land and Water Conservation Fund

### Issue: Access Conservation

Current Status: A coalition of public interest groups called Americans for our Heritage and Recreation (AHR), of which American Whitewater is a member, has been working to guarantee funding for the critical LWCF. While over 30 years ago, Congress authorized \$900 million annually from off-shore oil taxes to go towards land acquisition and recreation facilities, in recent years, this fund has been slowly diminishing. For river lovers, these funds have helped to protect and provide access to such outstanding rivers as the White Salmon (WA), Chattooga (GA, SC, NC), Lake Fork of the Gunnison (CO), and Rappahannock (VA). While the budget agreement appeared to lock in the FY 1998 appropriation at \$700 million, ideologues in the House of Representatives are trying to remove this funding. At press time (end of July), the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, aided by the hard work of Senator Leahy (W) and Murkowski (AK), included the \$700 million in their mark-up of the FY 98 bill. Of that \$700 million, \$315 million is dedicated to acquire land from the New World Mine around the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone (see #22 above) and Headwater Forest in California, and \$100 million is allocated to grants to states over a four year period.

Contact: Rich Hoffman.

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# AMERICAN Whitewater





# 40 Years and Going Strong!

by Sue Taft

The seeds of river exploration were planted very early in American history. In the East fur traders adopted the Native American canoes. In the West wooden rafts and other crafts were used as early as Lewis and Clark, but prominently brought to public attention by Powell's exploration of

Colorado and Green Rivers in 1869. The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) had members active in the exploration of rivers about the time of WWI using wood and canvas canoes. Later they expanded to folding kayaks. In the Southeast river explorers paddled wood and canvas canoes.

Although these boats were fragile, modem paddlers would be amazed at the difficulty of water explored.

After WWII, two developments greatly affected the growth of the infant white water sport: the availability of Grumman aluminum canoes and military surplus rafts and pontoons. The durable nature of these vessels coupled with their relatively inexpensive cost resulted in an explosion of river exploration and in the number

## American WHITEWATER



Director's Election

AMERICA'S OLDEST WHITEWATER MAGAZINE  
A THIRTY YEAR TRADITION  
September-October 1997  
\$1.95  
Non-Resident Rate - November

Vol. XXXI, No. 3

AMERICA'S OLDEST WHITEWATER MAGAZINE  
A THIRTY YEAR TRADITION  
May-June 1997  
\$1.95  
Non-Resident Rate - July

Vol. XXXI, No. 2

of white water paddlers. New clubs

were founded with white water and exploration in mind such as the Washington Foldboat Club and the Buck Ridge Ski Club. Meanwhile other established groups were expanding into white water, such as the River Touring Section of the San Francisco Bay Area Sierra Club and the various AMC chapters. However, running white water was still a new sport.

The clubs were learning by trial and error and developing their own safety and teaching programs. There was very little inter-communication between clubs. This became apparent when an invitation was sent to America by the ICF (International Canoe Federation) to compete in a white water slalom race in (1953) in Merano, Italy. The invitation eventually made its way to Bob McNair of the Buck Ridge Ski Club, which had an ongoing white water instruction program. He, in turn, sent letters to Doug Brown of AMC-Connecticut and Eliot Dubois of AMC-Boston. They realized that they faced a dilemma. Not only could they not accept the invitation to compete, since they had no way of notifying all American paddlers, but they could not officially decline it either, since no one really represented all American white water paddlers. To add to their frustration, they realized that the Europeans were much further along in their technical skills.

So Bob McNair and Eliot Dubois became the key people and driving force for the establishment of an "organization". Eliot's job was to try to identify and contact other white water groups around the country- rafters, foldboaters and canoeists. Bob's job was to learn as much as he could about slalom racing and try to get the ACA (American Canoe Association) interested,





## 40 Years and Going Strong!

since it was already recognized by ICF (International Canoe Federation) as the governing body for flatwater canoeing and kayaking. After much discussion and correspondence with scattered groups and individuals around the country a memo was circulated to 16 groups on April 6, 1954 addressing the "Formation of an Affiliation of White Water Groups." The American White Water Affiliation, AWWA, was intended to be a medium for the exchange of ideas. The idea was to start informally, hoping that a formal organization would take shape as needed. The initial plan was that reps from each affiliated club would send packages of information to one individual, the "Secretary", who would in turn collect, collate, and re-mail the material to the reps.

This soon evolved into a magazine, the Journal of American

White Water, first published in May of 1955. In the first issue the Purpose Statement read: *To encourage exploration and enjoyment of wilderness waterways; to foster research, study and teaching of improved techniques and equipment designs for safely negotiating white water; to protect the wilderness character of our waterways for the growing number of those who are discovering the rewards awaiting the river tourist.* The Affiliation was described as: ... *an affiliation of groups and clubs, professionals and amateur alike, who share a common interest in the AWA purposes..... Thus, the Affiliation is a channel for bringing together ideas, procedures and experiences.*

*The early members of course brought much vision to what they thought AWA could be. The founder is often considered to be Eliot Dubois of AMC-Boston, however, the following were either on the first executive committee or part of the original correspondence: Eliot DuBois, Bruce Grant (founder of the River Touring Section of the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club), Laurence Grinnell (author of Canoeable Waterways of New York State), Wolf Bauer (founder of the Washington Foldboat Club), Clyde Jones (Colorado White Water Association), Steve Bradley of Boulder, Oz Hawksley, Marvin McLarty, Wolfgang Lert, Walter*

*Burmeister (author of Appalachia White Water), W.S. Gardiner, Don Rupp (Buck Ridge Ski Club), Bob McNair (founder of the Buck Ridge Ski Club), and Harold Kiehm (The Prairie Club).*

By the end of 1956 the individual membership was 440 and there were ten affiliated clubs. (They were in touch with 30 more.) Before that year's end an ex-

the sport because it was causing it to be a crowded pastime. He said, "I'm leaving it. I did my paddling before it got to be like skiing!"

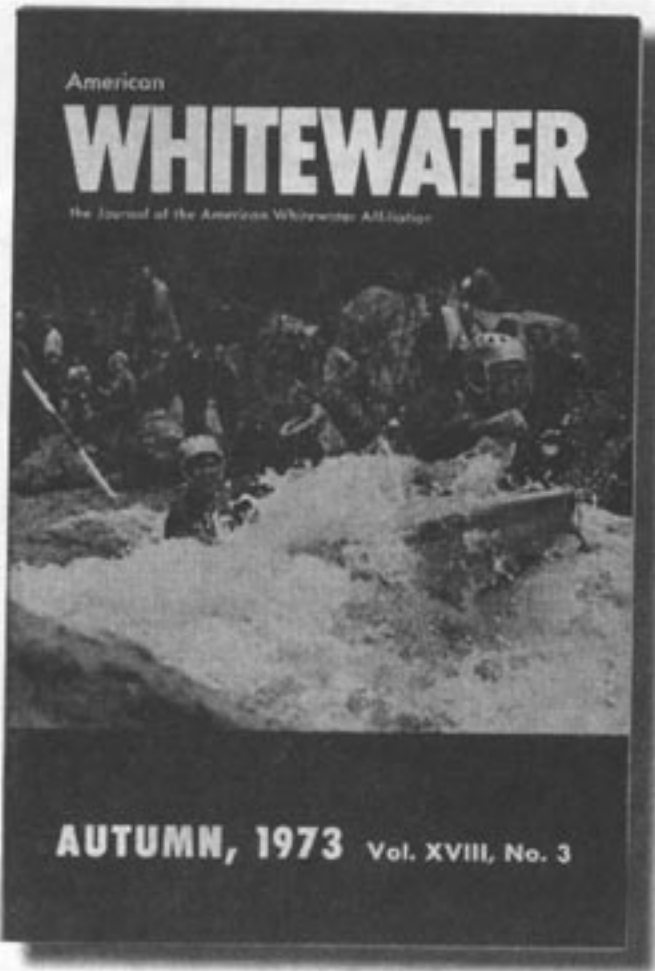
By 1968 there were over 1600 members. In 1971, Bob Burrell (co-author of Wildwater West Virginia) wrote an article for the Journal because of his concern for the apparent emphasis on slalom racing and the growing problems with river crowding..... "slalom skills are good, but the American paddler needs to be concerned that rivers are getting crowded." He mentioned having to wait in line at Cucumber on the Yough in Pennsylvania. "Organize, yes to repulse river rapers..... think quality, but think small."

But Bob McNair (author of Basic River Canoeing) argued that the organization needed vast numbers of dues paying members to support staff and promote issues. He maintained that until this occurred, industry would not get involved in manufacturing quality boats, and, if there were no industry, there would be no capital to support competition (such as the Olympics). A third member replied "Think quality but think big."

Unfortunately years of relative stagnation in AWA membership followed until the late '80s. About this time, changes were taking place within the organization. Increasingly proactive rolls were being taken by the AWA officers as well as Directors, particularly in the realm of conservation. This increased activism translated to an upswing in membership. In October of 1990 the membership

topped 2000. In 1995 AWA reached 4573, a 55% increase over 1994!

To encourage the exploration and enjoyment of wilderness rivers, trips, reports and river descriptions were included in the very first issue of the Journal. They continue to be included in the Journal, now officially known as American Whitewater. The early years also saw the establishment of a Guidebook Committee, to encourage the writing of guidebooks with a greater degree of uniformity. Many of the earliest writers of guidebooks were part of, or influenced by, that committee. These included Walter Burmeister (the Appalachian White Water series), Randy Carter (Virginia White Water), and Wolf Bauer, Eliot Dubois and Lawrence Grinnell (Canoeable Waterways of New York State). The Committee, in cooperation with ACA's Cruising Committee, pre-



ecutive board was in place. This was followed by the completion of a Constitution and By Laws. At the heart of the Affiliation was a General Committee, made up of representatives of affiliated clubs. The Service Committees of Safety, Conservation, Membership, and Editorial were formed. By 1959 the organization was officially known as the American White Water Affiliation, the AWA.

Membership grew quite rapidly in the early years. An annual membership list was published until 1960, when the membership approached 1000. Quite a few members were upset by the discontinuation of this list, since it had been a resource for contacting other members when traveling around the country, particularly on paddling vacations. Yet as early as 1958, one member wrote in the Journal that AWA should de-emphasize



pared and recommended a uniform river grading system to be used in guide books. An effort was made to adhere to the intent of the International Scale adopted by the ICF in 1954. As more and more guidebooks were written and became available, this committee no longer was necessary. The river rating system then came under the guidance of the Safety Committee.

It was also recognized that another important consideration in guidebook creation and river running is monitoring river flow levels. Early paddlers used their own systems. AWA did not officially adopt any one system, but did publicize their use. In 1958, John Berry and Bob Harrigan (of the CCA-Canoe Cruisers Association of the DC area) began painting markers on bridges at one-foot intervals. A 1-foot mark meant low water and a 2-foot mark meant a desirable level, while a 3 or 4-foot mark meant danger was present. In 1961, the AMC Canoeing Guidebook Committee was placing gauge marks on all popular rivers in New England. Yellow was the lowest level and meant low flow. Orange was the optimum and red was the highest, indicating danger. In 1967 it was suggested that the River Marker System of Randy Carter be used. This entailed marks from 0 through 5, at one-foot intervals with 0 being the lowest possible level to run the river. Guidebooks could then refer to these gauges. The Army Corp of Engineers started installing automated flow metering devices on some rivers in the mid '60's in the west and 1969 in the east. In the late '70s the Army Corp of Engineers began to provide phone numbers to call for levels and in 1980 the TVA did the same. Finally, in 1995, river levels became available by surfing Cyberspace. All of this was being brought to the attention of AWA members through the Journal.

The Safety Committee has always been involved in reporting accidents, reviewing and recommending equipment and rescue techniques and education. In 1957, the Code (later to be known as the Safety Code) was presented to members. The basics of the Safety Code have remained intact over the years, with few modifications. The Code was put into booklet form in 1962. In 1972 the importance and wide acceptance of the Safety Code was demonstrated when Ohio State Park erected a sign at the put in for the Lower Yough that read "... boating

must be done in accordance with the AWA Safety Code."

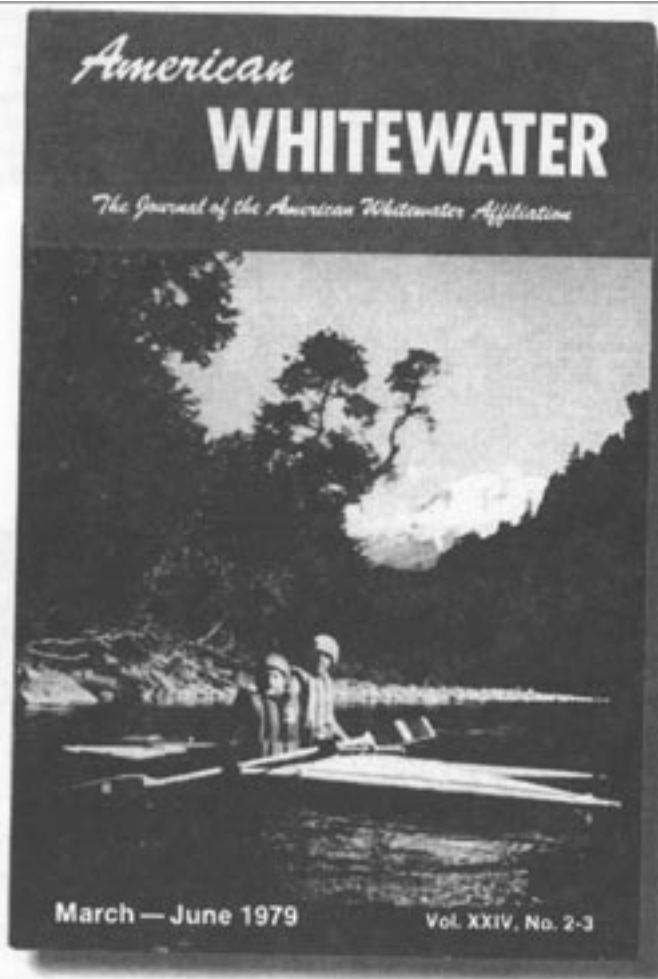
Early safety discussions revolved around equipment, particularly the use of "life vests." Everyone generally agreed that life vests were important, but most of those available were largely unsuitable. Some correspondents maintained that life vests should merely be available in the

niques and the creation of clinics for river rescue. In 1978 the AWA River Signals Committee issued the river signals guide. The following year AWA was involved in a Coast Guard grant to investigate accidents-and safety. **AWARE** (AWA Research Effort) was funded for a year. Deck collapse and entrapment in the newly available rotationally molded kayaks led to concern about walls, manufacturer responsibility, materials, etc. in the early '80's. River fatalities continued to increase in the mid to late '80's. Articles in American Whitewater focused on river rescue, self-rescue and the use of CPR. Coincidentally there was some controversy regarding rating devaluation of rivers as they were "conquered." Concern about such downgrading appeared as early as 1972. In 1984 a revised listing of ratings for rivers across the country was published with the hope of restoring some degree of uniformity to the system. In the early '90s, as more and more extreme rivers were being run and better equipment became available, suggestions were made to change the river rating system itself, expanding the Class V category. These discussions have continued (i.e. in this very issue).

In 1993 a review of the accidents suggested that boaters were becoming cavalier about high water runs. It was also noted that skill and equipment can not replace experience. But

as early as 1959, an article in the Journal expressed this concern. "Safety is more than the possession of mere equipment. Safety is primarily competence based upon humble learning and routine practice.... Safety is the gleanings of pearls of wisdom from those who have lost boats or competitions or possibly even friends to the almighty rivers. Safety is respect, and is proportionate to time invested. Safety is the recognition of our own limits and the act of staying within these limits."

River trips reported in the '50s were in canoes, foldboats and rafts, on rivers such as the Colorado, the Yampa, the Green River (Desolation and Gray Canyon), the Salmon and Middle Fork of the Salmon Rivers. Foldboats were paddled down Hell's Canyon of the Snake as well as the Middle Fork of the Salmon. In 1959, the



boat, but not necessarily worn. The AWA performed tests on two Coast Guard approved Kapok filled life vests in 1961 and in 1963 on all available models. As better vests became available using closed-cell foam panels, wearing them while paddling became the norm. AWA became involved with dialog with the Coast Guard in 1972 when they proposed new rules for life vests. Other discussions involved helmets, flotation, bow and stem lines, and wet suits as accidents and close calls called attention to apparent equipment deficiencies. In 1977, a Safety Task Force was formed involving USCA, ACA and AWA.

Deaths of inexperienced boaters attributed to the Deliverance Syndrome (the film Deliverance hit the screens in 1973). Fatalities involving experienced boaters led to discussions of river rescue tech-



## 40 Years and Going Strong!

River Touring Section of the Sierra Club scored an important first by promoting a float trip on the Clearwater, the Selway, and the Lochsa to demonstrate the need to preserve the wilderness values of the Clearwater watershed. In 1960 the AWA sponsored scouting trips on the Upper Selway and the North Fork of the Clearwater, and, in following years, the Yampa and Middle Fork of the Salmon. At the same time these western rivers were being explored, eastern paddlers were exploring the Yough Gorge and Upper Yough (in 15' and 17' Grumman canoes), and the

Quechee Gorge in Vermont. Canoeists from Oak Ridge were exploring the South Fork of the Tennessee River. Missouri and Arkansas canoeists were exploring the Ozarks. Other rivers being explored, (but not necessarily for the first time) during the '60s, included the French Broad and the Obed systems, the New, the Peshtigo, the Moose of New York, the Mattagami and Nottaway Rivers in Canada, Cross Mountain Canyon on the Yampa, the Eel and Trinity Rivers in California, and the Animas. Some of these rivers were later dammed. Boaters also ventured into Mexico and Costa Rica.

The '70s saw an explosion in exploration as boats became more durable and paddling techniques were refined. The

Upper Stanislaus Gorge, the American, the Tuolumne, the Dead, the South Fork of the Salmon, the Chattooga, the Gauley, the Baptism and Brule Rivers, Yuba, Wind River, Shoshone, Hoback, Gross Ventre, Wenatchee, Clarks Fork, Meadow Run, North Fork of the Feather, the North Fork of the Payette and the Kennebec were all paddled and documented in American Whitewater. Trips to Bhutan, the Urubamba in Peru and the Bio-Bio in Chile were also covered in the Journal.

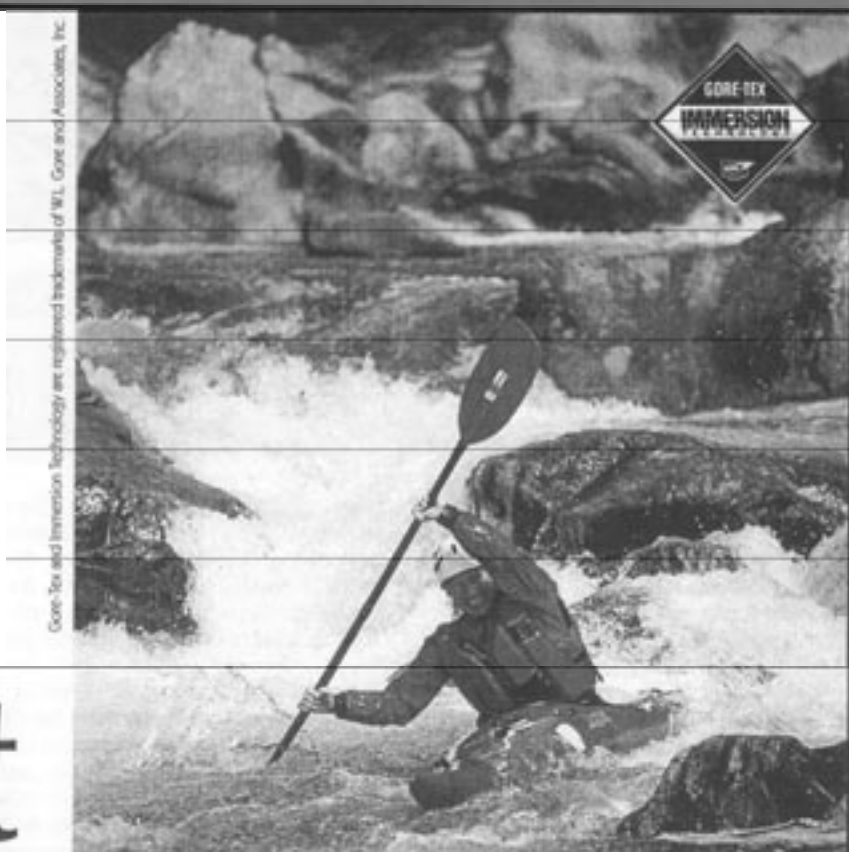
The '80s saw further international river explorations in Nepal in New Zealand, South America, China, and Quebec. Class V runs such as the Susitna, Burnt Gorge of the Trinity, Crooked River Gorge, Middle Fork of the Feather-Bald

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Rock Canyon in the states were also reported. Steep creeking became the realm of the top paddlers. In 1988, the "Top 10" rivers in the Appalachians were listed as the Moose, Top and Upper Yough, Big Sandy, Blackwater, Meadow, Russell Fork, Watauga, Linville, Ovefflow Creek and Little River. Ten years prior to that this list would have included the Tygart, Cheat, Black, Chattooga, New and Gauley rivers. The Top and Upper Yough, Blackwater, Meadow and Russell Fork remain in the forefront to this day. But the '90's continue to see many more new steep creek runs both in the east and west. And the international exploration of big volume watersheds continues.

None of this would have been possible without the perfection of techniques, another important component of AWA's Purpose. White water technique was evolving rapidly. The transition from folding kayaks to rigid "fiberglass" kayaks and open canoes to decked canoes was important. Terms such as eddy turn, Figure 8 turn, Figure S turn, stack or roller surging, ferry surfing, eddy jumping and eddy christy appeared in American Whitewater. Paddlers were learning to "play" the river. In 1958 the Duffek stroke was described and was considered to be a revolution in white water technique for kayaking. Canoeing technique was also undergoing changes in the late '50s. Prior to this, canoeing relied upon passive techniques such as back paddling, setting, and cross draws. This evolved toward a more active and aggressive approach, using braces, pries and leans.

Eskimo rolls were initially considered tricks, but soon became appreciated for their safety factor. In 1960, the Eskimo roll was known by only a few, primarily in the Rockies and Far West. The screw roll was known by fewer still. The Duffek was something to talk about. But many kayakers (referred to as kayakists) were still not using even skirts. Many canoeists were still sitting in canoes with keels. By 1966 dramatic changes had taken place. In 1961, the Journal published a description of two types of rolls: the screw roll and the put-across roll (a variation of an extended roll). And in 1964, AWA brought Milo and Irmgard Duffek across the Atlantic to instruct AWA members and clubs across the United States and Canada. Other European paddlers visiting or relocated to this country, such as former Kayak World Champion Walter Kirschbaum, Swiss legend Paul Bruhin (of KCCNY), and former French Champion Roger Paris, also contributed to the advancement in technique.

By the early '70s, AWA members were reading about techniques for dealing with southerly holes and Walt Blackadar's "nonchalant" approach (often sideways or

backwards) to big water boating. He liked to call it, "Hair boating." The cover of the Summer 1973 Journal was controversial, with the photo of Martin Begun running the 15' vertical Potter's Falls on the Crooked Fork in Tennessee. This initiated a new examination of falls running.

Articles followed on how to select and play the "right hole." By the early '80s squirt boating mania was promoted with discussions of new techniques, terminology and radical boat designs. White water rodeo achieved prominence in the 1990's. Rivers that were once the realm of the elite have become the playgrounds of thousands of paddlers, further demonstrating how far technique and instruction have advanced.

Although racing or competition per se was not listed as part of the original Purpose, it was recognized as an important element in developing improved technical skills for American paddlers. And, after all, it was the initial seed to the development of the Affiliation. Cruisers often raced in the early races to gain additional skills. The gap between racers and cruisers during that era was small. In the early years slalom and wild water racing were seen as a means of developing the skills of cruisers. Race schedules were regularly reported in the Journal, as well as results. This continued through the mid-70s but thereafter only involved the National team selection, World Cup, and Olympic races.

However, as early as 1962 there was controversy surrounding cruising vs. racing in various clubs. Controversy continued when the ACA was recognized as the governing body for racing. By 1966, members asked whether the AWA should continue its involvement with racing, since race boats, both slalom and downriver, were becoming so specialized that they were no longer used for cruising. The schism between racers and cruisers was further widened when slalom racing was given Olympic status. Now training for racing was more than just a weekend pastime. The AWA eventually discontinued its involvement with slalom and wildwater racing, leaving it to the ACA and other associated racing organizations.

However, the early '80s saw a reemergence of enthusiasm for competition in the AWA in the form of "extreme racing." This started with the Upper Yough Down River Race, followed by the Great Falls and Gore Canyon races. Interest in this type of racing increased in the '90s with events on the Watauga, the North Fork of the Payette, the Bottom Moose and even the Green Narrows. A new organization was formed, the WKF (the World Kayak Federation), to promote this avenue of the sport. Simultaneously, rodeo emerged in

the late '70s in the west as a means of showing off technical skills. It spread to the east by the early '80s. Many rodeo related festivals incorporated an awareness of river/conservation issues. In the mid-80's rodeos were being held on the Clackamas, Wenatchee and Payette in the west, and Ocoee in the east. In 1986 the Eastern Freestyle Championships sponsored by the AWA were held on the Black River in New York, to publicize the threat to the Black of dams. In 1989 the NOWR, the National Organization for White Water Rodeos, was formed with AWA's support to better orchestrate the efforts of festival and rodeo organizers around the country and to use rodeos as a means to support and draw attention to access and conservation issues.

Throughout the years, the publication of the American Whitewater has remained a priority for the Affiliation. Without it as a means of disseminating information to and from members, the Affiliation could not exist. The Journal has been the vehicle to disseminate information regarding conservation issues, safety, education, river trips as well as equipment. Topics covered in the '50s and '60s included how to make flexible and rigid decks for open canoes, helmet design, and snorkels for use when capsized using air in the boat itself. In the '70s articles told how to make a neoprene wet suit and spray skirt (with patterns provided) and design and build your own boat. These home made fiberglass boats provided an important base for the fledgling paddlesport industry, but later there was controversy regarding mold "rip-offs" of licensed designs.

American Whitewater has been a forum for controversy, and, at times, the object of controversy itself. Controversies in the '60s included the suggestion that boaters be issued certification cards, so that easterners would know the skill level of westerners, and vice versa. One disgusted member responded that AWA was becoming "like the Sierra Club" wanting to "classify everything." Numerous letters to the editor in the early '70s revolved around Jay Evan's (former National Coach) controversial comment that no open canoes should be used above Class II. Liability concerns and trip leader responsibility came to the forefront in the '80s. In the early '90s it was instructor certification.

Controversy involving the Journal has often involved content: too many articles about eastern rivers, too many articles about western rivers, and more recently, too much Class V. Through it all, the editors have reminded the membership that



## 40 Years and Going Strong!

they are the contributors to the Journal. Humor and tongue-in-cheek articles have been a part of the Journal from the beginning. Lately

American Whitewater has published some fiction and even poetry. In 1995 the AWA launched its own web site facilitating rapid communication with its members via cyberspace.

The organizational structure of the AWA has changed since its initial incorporation in 1961. It was, after all, the intent of the founders to allow the Affiliation to remain flexible as long as it remained true to its original Purpose of promoting river exploration, conservation, safety and education. Intermittently there was discussion of merging the AWA with other organizations in order to achieve the organization's goals. The early members suspected that eventually a paid professional staff, supported by a large membership, would be required to accomplish the Affiliation's goals, especially in the realm of conservation. In 1961 a controversial proposal was made to combine the ACA and the AWA to be the ICF representative body. Ten years later, in 1971, it was proposed that the ACA, the AWA, and a new organization, the USCA, jointly issue a magazine. And eleven years later, in 1982, after much discussion, the AWA declined to unite with NORS and ACA; but rather to remain a separate, but cooperative organization.

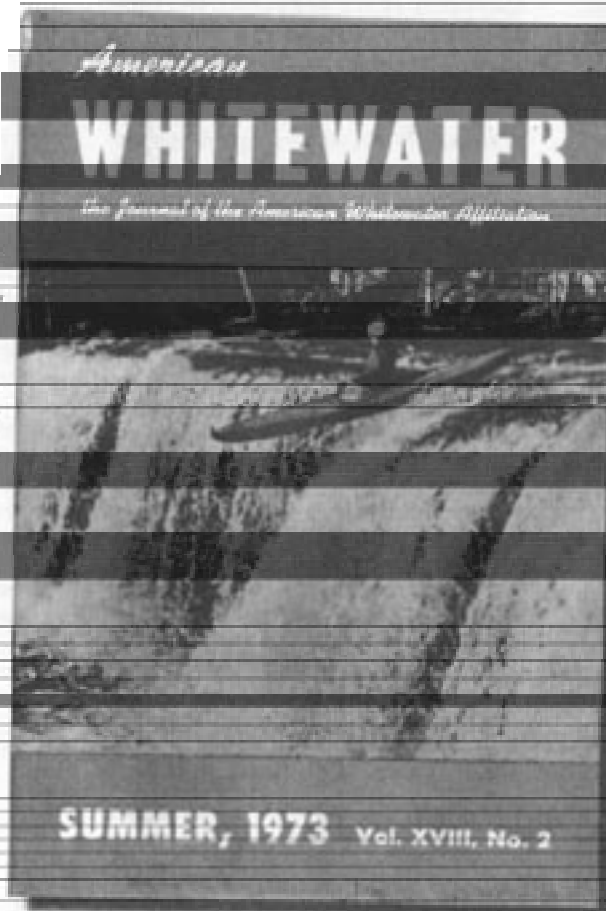
From the very beginning conservation has been at the forefront of AWA's mission. AWA's approach had always been to inform the membership and encourage activism. In 1956 the Conservation Committee encouraged the membership to write the 85th Congress regarding the pending Wilderness Bill. The next year it was the proposed Glen Canyon dam. In 1960, the membership was encouraged to make phone calls and become active in various local issues. AWA's sponsored a trip in 1961 to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to enhance awareness. Through the '60s and '70s the potential loss of white water of rivers to dams remained a big concern, especially in California. It slowly became apparent that

the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 did very little in most areas to guarantee river preservation.

River access problems were first recognized in the late '70s both in the east (on the Lehigh) and in the west (on the

Russian). The Tuolumne battle exploded in the mid-70s. Gunshots literally rang out during the access battle on the Upper **Yough** in 1977. Regulation of river trips hit the Rogue in 1978. Quotas hit the Lower **Yough** in 1981.

At the same time white water was threatened by dams on the North and South Fork of the Payette, the Gauley, and the Cheat watershed. The Stanislaus



was lost in 1982. In the face of all these threats the AWA and other groups joined forces and new strategies were applied. The AWA learned how to intervene with FERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, in the licensing of new dams for hydro. In 1984 the AWA produced an intervention format to be used in dealing with FERC. However it wasn't until the Electric Consumers Protection Act of 1986 granted recreation and conservation equal footing with energy in licensing and relicensing of hydroelectric projects that AWA was able to make major strides in this arena. This Act forced FERC to listen to what the AWA was saying. At the same time the Ocoee and Gauley Festivals proved effective at raising awareness and support.

In 1986 AWA was in the grips of financial crisis. Then the AWA assumed control of the Gauley Festival and made

\$2000. At about the same time AWA found a donor in Yuon Chouard, founder of Patagonia, Inc., climber and white water boater. Within months Chris Koll became the editor of American Whitewater and instituted the larger 8\_ by 11 format. This allowed the Journal to go mainstream. AWA was on a roll with new life and vigor. This soon translated into clout and renewed respect in the realm of river conservation. In 1988, AWA unveiled the National Inventory of White Water Rivers. This was to be the foundation of AWA's conservation efforts of the '90s. In 1992, after almost forty years, the dreams of AWA founders were fulfilled with the hiring of its first paid Executive Director. Other paid staff members were soon added, but, to this day, most of the AWA's work is done by volunteers.

The truly incredible thing about AWA is that it has been guided by such volunteers for forty years. Many of these volunteers have contributed phenomenal amounts of time and energy. As elder members "wear out", "fresh hands" come on board. I could never name all those who have made the AWA what it is today, but rest assured anyone who has chaired a committee, or been an editor, or served on the board of directors, or organized a festival deserves every paddlers heartfelt thanks!

### About the author:

*Susan (Sue) Taft has been a white water boater (K1, C2 and C1) since she abandoned flatwater marathon racing, built her first white water kayak in 1976 and joined the KeelHauler Canoe Club. Her interest as a paddler as well as involvement with the paddlesport industry in recent years has prompted her to research the evolution of white water paddling (canoeing and kayaking) in North America for a book to be available sometime late 1998. For those clubs who have not returned her white water survey, there is still time. Her mailing address is:*

*Susan Taft  
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Clarksburg, MD 21029-00301  
She wants to hear from paddlers, past and present. You'll see her in a woodstrip whitewater kayak around the country.*



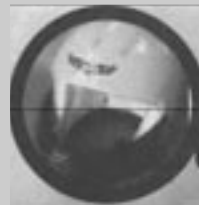
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Rich Weiss during the 1995 World Championships on the artificial whitewater course at Htre Pierpoint in Nottingham England. This qualifying race earned him an American K1 starting position for the 1996 Olympics.

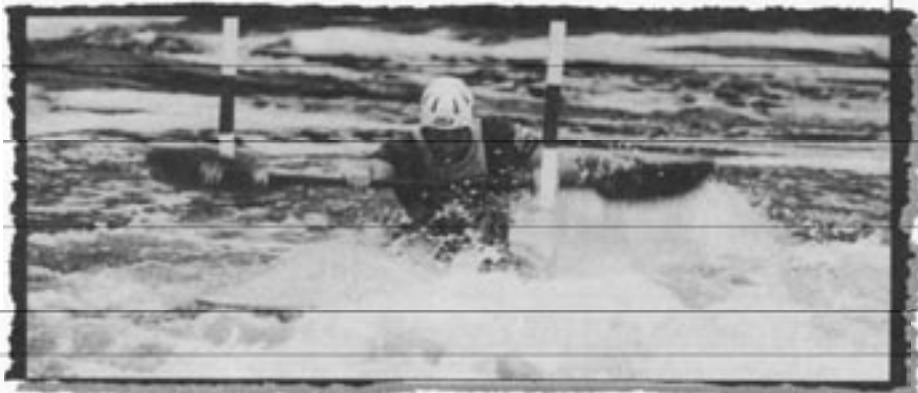


Photo: Jennifer Hearn

## Richard Alfred Weiss

1963-1997

Rich Weiss started to paddle as a youngster on the Yampa River in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where his mother was a ski instructor. During high school he was a dedicated wrestler and he ultimately received an athletic scholarship to the Colorado School of Mines. After graduating with a degree in geological engineering, he received a master's degree in hydrogeology from Penn State, and, later, a doctorate from the University of British Columbia.

While in college Weiss started to focus on slalom racing and during the mid 1980's he lived and trained in the Washington, D.C. area with several other top whitewater competitors.

"He was a guy who came to the sport with nothing and gave everything," said Elliot Weintrob, a former teammate and close friend, in an interview published in the **Washington Post**.

"Even using the worst equipment he would beat everyone. His level of commitment was right up there with Jon Lugbill."

"He was a great guy, everyone loved him," added teammate Dana Chladek in the same article. "When I first met him in 1984 he showed up with an old heavy paddle that was bent. He had this beat-up ratty equipment, but he never complained."

It is widely believed that Weiss was robbed of a medal in the 1989 World Slalom Championships on the Savage River in Maryland. He was penalized five seconds there for touching a gate that many observers say he did not hit. But Weiss accepted the decision graciously and was consequently awarded the Jack Kelly Fair Play award for the best display of sportsmanship by an Olympic class U.S. athlete.

Weiss continued to compete and was ranked third overall in the World Cup standings in 1991. Then, in 1993, he became the first American male kayak paddler to medal in a world championship, when he captured the silver in Mezzana, Italy.

Weiss represented the United States in the 1992 Olympics in La Seu d'Urgell, Spain, where he finished sixteenth. He went on to place sixth at the 1996 Olympic Games on the Ocoee.

According to officials with the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team, Weiss had not officially announced his retirement, but he did not try out for the 1997 U.S. team. Instead, he moved to Oregon to establish an environmental consulting firm, Weisswater Associates, which specialized in monitoring underground water flow.

Weiss married his wife, Rosi, in 1988. She is expecting their first child this fall.

"Husband, expectant father, Ph.D., world silver medalist, two-time Olympian, Rich was, in short, the best we had to give," said Bill Endicott, former U.S. team coach, in an Associated Press interview. "He was one of the sport's greatest athletes and role models. He was so strong, yet so calm, decent and generous."

"Many of our athletes are admired for their skill and ability", added Terry Kent, executive director of the kayak team. "Richie had all of that, but above all he was known for his caring and calm compassion, friendship and class."

Editor's Note: We at **American Whitewater** would like to express our deep appreciation to everyone who contributed to this tribute to Rich Weiss. We would especially like to acknowledge Jennifer and Davey Hearn, who provided most of the photos, and John Weld, and Doug Gordon who contacted many of the contributors for us.

## The Eulogy

by Brian Parsons

### Close Friend and Paddling Buddy

How do you eulogize your hero, other than to say **Richie** is the greatest man I've ever known. It is more than obvious that we are all experiencing devastating loss—but you know who I feel for as much as anyone in this room? The people that will never be touched by Rich the way we all have been. He elevated us as human beings. And for that we are all fortunate.

A man for others and often of few words, Richie always loved seeing other people do well, and we always loved seeing Rich and Rosi do well. In 1985, he took me beyond expectations, and because of them both, I am a better person today.

Joe Jacoby put it best, "Every moment with Rich was special and memorable." Richie had an unconditional acceptance in the form of respect for everyone he met. He always tapped into the goodness and always made you feel special.

The other day, some of us discussed having an Olympic flag cover Rich. We didn't really like the idea because Rich was as Olympian, but more importantly, he truly was a gentleman, a scholar and a father,

There was never a wasted day in Rich's life. No such thing as a day off. Today, we must bury Rich, but never forget him.

So work a little harder, spend more quality time with your families, do an extra loop in the fall, and DON'T waste another minute; they are all precious.

In a way this is a call to arms; for hugging and support. From this moment onward, Rosi and Baby will need all the arms we can give them.

How can you eulogize your hero? Richie is the greatest man I've ever known.

A memorial fund has been established for Rich Weiss's family. If you would like to help, send your contribution to:  
**Richard Weiss Memorial Fund,**  
Colorado Community  
First National Bank,  
P.O. Box 2948,  
Steamboat Springs, CO 80477.

# The Weiss Accident... What Really Happened



by John Trujillo, Elliot Weintrob and Bill Endicott

Rich Weiss on the falls of the upper Rio Paquarre, Costa Rica, 1987.

Prepared July 12, 1997

**Editors Note:**  
Bill Endicott, of Brookmont, Md., was the US whitewater slalom team coach for many years, including much of the time Rich Weiss was on the team. Revered among boaters the world over, Bill coached several of the most decorated athletes in slalom history and has written several books on whitewater racing.

Elliot Weintrob is a former long time slalom racer. He and Marty McCormick made up the top US C-2 team going into the Barcelona Olympics, John Trujillo is an accomplished expert paddler and was paddling with Rich Weiss when he died.

The whitewater canoeing family was shocked to hear of the death of Rich Weiss, one of its most talented members. A two-time Olympian, World Silver Medalist and a Ph.D. known for his calm judgment, Rich seemed a most unlikely candidate for a boating mishap. We all want to understand what happened because we fear, "if it could happen to him, it could happen to us."

Several people contributed to this document. First is John Trujillo, who is the only witness to what happened. Second is Elliot Weintrob who interviewed John, hiked in to examine the accident site and talked to pertinent persons. Lastly, is Bill Endicott who, working with Elliot, wove all the available information into a narrative. After this was done, it was sent to John to make sure it comported with what he knew.

## Background

On Wednesday, June 25, 1997, John and Rich were running the Green Truss section of the White Salmon River in Washington State, which is about 6 miles long. The accident itself occurred on the rapid known as "Big Brother." John and Rich were preparing for a wildwater type of race there, to be held approximately 2 weeks later.



Photo: David Hearn

Rosi, Rich's wife, was running shuttle for Rich and John.

After she dropped them off at the put-in she went to the bottom of the run and waited. John and Rich were both in plastic boats and were wearing lifejackets and helmets. The air temperature was

about 80 degrees and the water temperature 50-55 degrees.

## Description of the River

The river is creek-like, about 30 feet wide and contains about 2,000 cfs. It is technical and pushy, a pool, drop, pool, drop situation. It is rated class 5 in the local guide book. The water level on the day of the accident was 4 feet. Average flow on this run is 3-3.5 feet. The river was high on the day of the accident, but Rich and John had run it at 5 feet two weeks earlier and 4.5 feet two days earlier. They knew the river and the lines.

Big Brother is a 30-foot waterfall with a small lead-in drop of no more than 2 feet which is not vertical, followed by an approximately 27-foot vertical falls. The falls is fairly shallow on the river left two-thirds of the drop, with a majority of the water going over the right one-third, and then into a big hydraulic at the base of the falls.

Although Big Brother is the largest vertical drop on the run, it is not known as the most difficult section, nor does it have the most difficult approach. It is about three-quarters of a mile into the run. John and Rich had done well on the run up to that point and they felt fine as they approached Big Brother.

Big Brother is set within a lush, heavily-treed gorge. Right at the rapid there are 2 approximately 30-foot high vertical walls. The mist off the right hand side of the river creates a moss-covered environment encompassing the entire right hand wall.

There is a great deal of mist. From the top of the drop it is difficult to see what is going on below.

On river right about 6 to 9 feet out from the base of the falls but still in the backwash of the hydraulic there is an undercut cave that is visible at about 35 feet, but not visible on the day of the accident. In a previous trip on the river, John had a mishap at this place and had been pushed into the cave, while still in his boat. He remained there for about 30 seconds before finally being released.

Below the hydraulic is a slow moving pool for about 40 feet. Below this flat pool, however, there is a 15-foot waterfall. It is run on river right, but it is not an easy run. Below it is a large hydraulic in the center of the river. After this drop the water pushes to river right. It was 100 feet downstream of this falls where Rich's body was found on the river right, washed up against a log about 10 inches in diameter, stripped of all bark and branches. The police report stated that Rich died after going over a 15-foot waterfall and, while it is true that he washed over this falls, it was not where the original accident occurred.

## The Accident

Standard practice for running Big Brother is to eddy out on river left, get out of the boat, scout the falls, review what is known as the appropriate line and proceed. This is what John and Rich did.

The correct line is a wide peel-out from river left, going two-thirds of the way across the narrow river, enabling one to make a move starting from river right back to river left. This enables one to follow a seam of water over the more shallow part of the falls and away from the hydraulic on river right.

In the peel-out in setting up the maneuver, one travels over a slight (18-24 inch, but not vertical) drop before hooking back left, banking off a boil-line to do so.

In the past, the drop has been run numerous times successfully and upright. Other boaters have flipped at the bottom of the drop but then made easy rolls.

On this day, John was the first over the drop. He was on line, flipped at the bottom, rolled and was pushed to river left where he eddied out. Rich came next. He was too far right; he did not get over to the left soon enough. This resulted in him dropping into the hydraulic on the river right. He was immediately back-ended in the hydraulic. He was still in the boat at the time.

When John saw that Rich was not immediately spit out of the hydraulic, he noted the time on his wristwatch, 5:16 PM and about 30 seconds. He did this because he was well-versed in river safety procedures and knew that it was important to be aware of time passing in a dangerous situation. For instance, it is known that at 2 minutes underwater, the subject is likely to be unconscious but able to be resuscitated. At 10 minutes it gets marginal. And after 15 minutes it is probably too late to do anything. John was prepared for Rich to wash out either alone or in his boat, and to perform a boat rescue.

But the kayak continued to cartwheel. The mist was so severe John had difficulty seeing whether Rich was still in the boat or not. But at 2 minutes, John saw that Rich was definitely not in the boat any more. At this point, John quickly exited his boat on river right and proceeded upstream along the narrow, slippery bank jutting 4-5 feet out from the vertical wall, getting as close to the hydraulic as possible. During this period Rich's boat washed out of the hydraulic, but there was still no sign of Rich.

John then started throwing his throw-rope into the falls, hoping that Rich might grab it, or that it might ensnare Rich. He

did this for about 40 minutes. He threw the rope everywhere, including into the underwater cave that he knew was there.

When he could see that this was not working, he got back into his boat, ran the next drop, retrieved Rich's boat and got out below the drop on river right. He then hiked out to the road, hitch-hiked to town and called the Sheriff. He estimates that he made this call about 90 minutes after the accident, or about 6:46 PM.

## Rescue Team

The sheriff came to where John was. John led him and 2 rescue team members into the river. They immediately found Rich on the log. He still had his life jacket and helmet on. But it took about 5 hours (or until about 11:45 PM) to get him from the river and the gorge back to the road where Rosi waited.

Rich had a slight cut over his left eye, too low down to be protected by any helmet. There was a second small cut on the right temple. There was a third cut, this one on his forehead, from an accident one week previously and not caused by this incident. No other marks were noticed by any one of several people who saw the body.

The Klickitat County District Attorney, Knute Rife, who investigated the matter, says that the cause of death was drowning but there is no way of telling whether a blow to the head caused Rich to go unconscious first and then drown, or whether he drowned without being knocked out.

Rich was 1993 Silver Medalist in the World Championship of the Noce River in Mezzana, Italy. First World Championship K1 medal for the United States. Also pictured are 1st place Richard Fox and 3rd place Melvin Jones, both of Great Britain.





# A Perfect Day... A Perfect Friend

by Scott Shipley

June 1996, from left to right, Brian Parsons, Rich Weiss and Scott Parsons.



Photo: Durango Co.

## Fellow Team Member

I remember the morning was crisp and clear. Despite how early it was we were all trying to control the excitement that hung in the air. "Surf missions" like this always started early, just so we could make it to the wave on time. We all met at the Tamahi rapid around 4, so we could drive to Vancouver and make our ferry before seven. Timing is everything on trips to the narrows. None of us wanted to miss the only ferry that would get us to the sunshine coast in time for the tide change.

The annual fall trip to Skookumchuck is a yearly pilgrimage for the racers who train in or around Western British Columbia. It is a short break that both ends the previous year on a positive note and starts the next training season off with a bang. Skookumchuck is a seldom sampled treat for most racers at the Canadian National team training site in Chilliwack, British Columbia. A day trip to the "Shook" requires that the tides match the ferry schedule, a relatively infrequent occurrence. Still, there are perfect tides many more times a year than this group of underpaid athletes can afford to make this trip. Long drives and expensive ferry rides make this a prohibitively expensive excursion. So most racers save and wait for perfect days and perfect tides.

This would turn out to be one of those perfectly crafted days. There would be five of us, all packed into my Dad's old silver Econoline van. We were predominantly expatriated Americans in Canada preparing for the Olympics. The American men's kayak team had, for the most part, relocated to Chilliwack, British Columbia in search of a year round whitewater training site. There were four of us training there full time that year. Rich and Rosi were the first to arrive. Rich was by far the

most successful of our group. He had won the first ever World Cup medals that year, which topped off a career that many of us hoped to match.

He was short and silent. The kind of guy that doesn't say much until you really got to know him. Not at all intimidating, but anyone who had ever seen him pull on a paddle knew that he was one of the most powerful men to ever pick up a blade.

Rich and Rosi were like two ducks on a pond. Wherever Rich was, so was Rosi, and vice versa. This morning was no different. Yet Rich and Rosi were as different as they were the same. Rosi was much more outgoing and talkative than Rich and never failed to charm newcomers. In fact, she was usually the one they remembered. On this morning she was as excited as the rest of us and passed the time talking about the last trip we had taken to this same rapid.

Brad Nelson and Brian Brown would arrive last that morning, but still in time to load the boats without too much rush. Brian was a prolific tobacco chewer and coffee drinker, but typically put these vices aside from the start of the training season until the last race of the World Cup Circuit. This left him about 3 weeks a year, centered around our Skookumchuck trip, to partake in these dark habits. My guess when he arrived was that this was about as wired as the normally complacent Brian ever got. Brian, when not blitzing down a race course, had the pace of a jungle sloth. He was forever behind schedule. Many's the time that some one or other would stumble upon Brian out training long after dark, still trying to catch up with the three o'clock workout. If not for his morning coffee there would have been slim chance to catch the morning ferry.

To many it would seem odd to have the entire U.S. mens

kayak team living and training so far from home soil and the U.S. coaching staff. Especially when you consider the extreme winters that Chilliwack typically experiences. The Chilliwack training site has long held the reputation of being the coldest whitewater course in North America. For most of the winter the snow line sits

halfway up the ridge that continually shadows the slalom course itself. Often the snow line dips low enough to blanket the rocky river banks, so getting to the water is as chilly an experience as the first wave that washes over the racer. So why is it that so many racers have relocated to so desolate a location? Two reasons: Tamah is 800 meters of the most rocking whitewater that ever sat beneath training gates, and Rich Weiss.

For most of the U.S. and Canadian Whitewater teams this had been a long and difficult year. The World Cup season started off with a 65 day tour of Europe before wrapping up with two final races in Canada and the States. As usual the Europeans had all but dominated our men's kayak team. Rich was the one exception. He had finished third in the overall World Cup rankings that year—exceptional, not just because he was the first American mens kayak to do so, but also the first to ever finish better than fifth in any individual race! Rich was the Lion King to beat all Lion Kings in the sport of whitewater slalom and we had become his pride, hoping to hone our skills against his experience.

I remember glancing at Richie in the rearview mirror that morning on the way to the Narrows and weighing the loudness of his actions against the quietness of his presence. He sat quietly in the car and listened to the conversation. Every once in a while adding this and that. He was quick to laugh, but mostly unheard over the boom of our boisterous howling.

Rich started to paddle late and I often wondered if any of us could ever have beaten him if he had started as early as most of us. Richie didn't turn his full attention to kayaking until he was nineteen or twenty. He had been a four time state high school wrestling champ before going to Colorado School of Mines on a wrestling scholarship. He eventually turned his attention to kayaking in lieu of the mats, but you could hardly tell the difference in the way he trained.

Rich was famous for how hard he worked out. Like a wrestler he was up every morning between five and six warming up. Like a wrestler he left every one he trained wondering whether he actually felt pain the same way they did. On the ferry ride to the sunshine coast, he looked like a piece of cut granite. His arms covered in exposed veins, his chest massively larger than his belt line could ever be. Even at 5'8" Richie was not mistaken by a person on that ferry for anything but an athlete.

To many being the best in the country would seem a precarious position. Every hot shot that came down the road claimed that he was the next Richie Weiss, then spent 4-5 years trying to bump him out of first place. But Richie Weiss was different. He cultivated and tailored his replacements, some to go where even he did not.

That is how I first came to know him. One of the few ways a kayaker can raise money without signing on to a road crew (something Rich had already done) is to teach clinics. I spent a winters savings to go to just such a clinic taught by then National Champion Rich Weiss at the Riversport kayak center in Pennsylvania.

At the time Rich was still fairly new to international kayaking, but already a hero to all of us kids. He drove an old beat up V.W. beetle that looked more like a rubik cube than a car. He spent the week taking us running through the "jungle" of western Pennsylvania and training hours in the gates. We watched Rich do every move we ever dreamed of on the then legendary "Upper Yough". At the end of the week our camp's best finisher would be seventh in the country,

## They Don't Come Any Better by Doug Gordon

Jon **Lugbill**, Jamie **McEwan**, Bob **Robison**, Eric **Jackson**—World Champions, National Champions, Olympic Medalists. **Form** all parts of the **country** the finest **slalom** paddlers in the United States gathered in Steamboat Springs on July 1st. But this time **they were** then, not for a race, but to **say** good-bye to one of their **own**, Richie Weiss, **two** time Olympic team member, National Champion, and the **first American K-1** to medal in a World Championships, had **died** on the White Salmon **river** in southern Washington.

**For those who were top American K-1 paddlers in the early to mid 80's**, Rich Weiss was like the **posse** in **Butch Cassidy** and the **Sundance Kid**, **Every** time I **looked over my** shoulder there he was, head bobbing and bent Norse paddle **windmilling** though the **water**, **gaining ground** on me at a depressing rate,

**"Who is this guy?"**

Of course I learned soon **enough** who he was and despite **my** best **efforts** he passed me in short **order**. But like a quick ride on **another boat's** wake, there **was** an unexpected **boost** from **being** passed by **Richie**. His **determination** and good nature benefited all of us who paddled with **him**. He was **brutally honest** with himself about his **level of effort** and that helped the rest of us be honest as well. In the ensuing years a number of obstacles were thrown in **his** path, including **two** highly **questionable** penalties which denied him **medals** in the 1989 World Championships and **1992 Olympics**. **But** he kept pressing onwards and at the **1993 World Championships in Mezzana, Italy**, he reached the goal that **had** been the **holy grail** of American K-1's for **25 years** a **spot** on the **awards platform** in the **most competitive** event in **whitewater** racing.

**Richie's** death has **reverberated through** the **slalom world** and it **should** reverberate **through** the cruising world as well. For many top paddlers, **racers** and cruisers alike, it has been **all** too easy to **ignore** the increasing number of river deaths. **"That wouldn't** have happened to **me...I'm** better than he **was...I'm** smarter **than** that," a n the subconscious **thoughts** which many, including myself, have had,

**Sorry folks**, but that won't cut it any **longer**. They don't **come** any **better** or any smarter than Rich Weiss **it's** time to **say** it **out loud**; paddling **Class V1 whitewater** (and yes, that's what it should be **called** **despite** the prevalent **attitude** here in the West) is risky **business**. **Will I still** teach **my** son to paddle? Absolutely, and I wager **Rich** would have **also**. The **joy**, the **satisfaction**, the personal **growth** I've experienced **through** paddling and the spectacular places I've seen are well **worth** the **risk**. But let's not pretend that the risk **isn't** there, it's there and it's **very real** and if we **don't** do **everything we** can to deal **with** it and **minimize** it, then we've missed a **very important** lesson,

Richie would win his first National title. I would spend the next 7 years trying to catch him, before we all emigrated here to train together.

Training in Canada could have been Richie's chance to hide from the rest of us and keep the secrets of his speed to himself. Rich could easily have limited his training partners to the Canadian team and left the rest of us to fend for ourselves. But that was not the character of the man. Rich and I met once a week, usually over one of Rosi's famous pasta and cheese creations. We would then outline our training plan for the week. This workout here, that workout there-like fitting together a puzzle that allowed us to complete all the twelve to fourteen workouts that we needed every seven days.

Our first workout together had been a bit of a wake-up call for me. I had never met anyone who worked half as hard as I in the Junior ranks, and I had upped my training volume a level since outgrowing that age group. By this point I could match Rich in speed on anything short of a full length race run and considered us to be peers, just short of being equal. That is until I tried to keep up with him through a set of "Brute loops".

A brute loop is an aerobic workout on whitewater named for the paddle downstream, paddle back upstream, looping pattern, using the same piece of whitewater over and over again. In the course of 24 minutes Rich had become the first person to pass me in 3 years, and he had done it twice! By the end of that workout it was all I could do to pick up my boat and wander off through the snow towards my car. I was floored to hear Rich ask if I would be designing the next course or not—he was only half done! The bottom line is that Richie was doing twice the workouts of the number two boat on the U.S. team, at twice the pace!

Not all days in the Chilliwack valley were spent cranking out gate loop after gate loop. But a "day on" and a "day off" were pretty much the same for Richie.

Today is a day "off". Instead of doing two workouts today Rich will give up his training routine for some quality play time. He will paddle 30 minutes out

from the dock in Egglon, the nearest port to the Skookumchuck narrows.

From there he will spend four and a half to five hours non-stop in the boat. Taking only a short break to sample the fruit that Rosi

has dehydrated especially for this trip, he will get back in his boat and paddle 45 minutes back to the dock (it's an upstream paddle on the way home). By now most of us will be so tired we can barely stay awake, and so sore we can only think of taking the week off.

Rich will then quietly goad us into making the trip home so that he can be in bed in time for a full night's sleep so he can get back to "real" training the next day. Not what most folks would call getting away from the office!

On that magical day on the Skookumchuck narrows I remember, even as we launched our boats, Rich was already a dot on the horizon. I watch them paddling out through the fjord. "I spend more f\*#\$ing time looking at that guy's back" I said to no one in general. When I turn around everyone was nodding. They had all had a lot of that view in the last few years themselves.

## "WEISSMAN"

by Margaret Langsford

Member Canadian Olympic Team

I first met Riihie when he and Rosi moved to Vancouver so he could do his Doctorate. I was at the beginning of my paddling career and was privileged and honored to be able to train with him. This is where our friendship began,

Richie was a role model for all those around him, He was a leader, a motivator and an inspiration to all those who knew him, He was someone I truly admired and respected.

Although he was a man of few words, to those of us who knew him, he was one of wise words. I used to call him "Weissman" and although I never told him why, to me it meant "Wise man". As a friend he would always listen, A good listener he was. He was one to always provide sound advice and was one to never pass judgment.


Richie was a teacher, He instilled in me and many others our work ethic. He showed me what it takes to be successful in both sport and in life outside of sport, He was one to never quit and one to never complain,

We must remember Richie for who he was and the lessons he taught us and for the precious moments we shared with him, I always knew that when Richie was around we were going to have fun.

He was like a brother to me.

He was a true gentleman,

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The great racers are the ones who can pull off just about anything from anywhere. Richie was one of the chosen few who could routinely do what most never dreamed possible. The best coach I ever spoke to said that great slalomists aren't the ones who can stay on line all the time. Instead they are the ones who can deal with being off line better than anyone else. In some ways a racer's collection of saves is as telling as his collection of medals. In both respects Rich was a star.

I had seen him do everything from jump a fall backwards and land in the gate to rolling up while doing an eddy turn at the same time. Sometimes I still secretly attempt to mimic difficult moves that I've seen Richie make, just to see if I can match his skill. But he made those very moves the first time he tried them!

That day on the "Skook" we spent three hours surfing "the wave". "It's a smiling wave" Brian observed because we all laughed so hard while surfing that it was almost impossible not to inhale gallons of salt water. Even that seemed funny at the time.

Then it happened. Slalom boats are long, sleek and fast, but they're also sharp and hard to control. Surfing a large, fast, steep wave in a slalom boat is akin to skiing a steep mogul field. It takes a pro to keep from augering in.

The three of us were on the wave at the same time. All of us were madly cutting from side to side to keep our bows from drilling into the green water at the base of the wave. This is my favorite thing to do in a kayak. I love the feel of the boat rocketing off one edge and on to the other. For just an instant I lost track of my two comrades on the wave.

Brian and I suddenly lock up against each other, so that we were nothing more than a raft, with both our paddles tangled together. Neither one of us was able to do anything about the fact that our pencil sharp boats were heading for Richie's side of the wave.

Rich, the quintessential seat-of-the-pants man cut right back of us. Brian and I, still laughing, screamed and laughed even harder about our impending triple impalement. The next thing I knew I sensed Rich paddling somewhere over my head. Then he was gone. He had switched sides with Brian and I. In so doing we had completed the first "on the wave switch" any of us had ever heard of.

That was all we did for the rest of the day. It's not often that we racers discover a new move. Not after 20 years doing the same thing. We weren't about to waste this opportunity. By the end of the day the wave was glassy and our spunk was gone. Now we were "soul surfing". Rich and I alone for a time. The sun was behind the ridge and the wave had become a dark reflecting mirror. No one was saying anything anymore. We were just sucking in the last bit of pure surfing we'd get before the end of the next summer's Olympics.

Rich and I were quietly doing our switches. Up and back, down and over. Knife sharp bows passing at lighting speeds inches from our heads. Up and back, down and over.

Time really did stand still. That is where I left Rich. That is where Rich and I are today, endlessly looping each other. Oh, I know he's gone now. That particular wave on that particular day is too. But I will never remember Rich without remembering that perfect day, that perfect time, that perfect ride, that perfect man.

Goodbye, old friend.



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## Pure Excitement

by **Eric Giddens**

Fellow Team Member

Rich Weiss was **my** hero. But, like any real hero, **he** never wanted that status. He tried to stay out of the spotlight, but many of us still caught a glimpse of his greatness. He taught **us many** things, not through his words, but through his actions. He taught us about paddling, but more importantly, he taught us about **lie**,

To watch Richie paddle was pure excitement. He would leave the start gate like a **raging** bull. His arms bulging and his head bobbing, he left nothing behind. He was the stars and stripes in a sport dominated by Europeans. As long as Rich **Weiss** was on the water, we held our breath and knew we still had a chance,

**I** was at the Savage **river** in 1989 when he received a **penalty on** a controversial call that cost him a medal. **I** was ten **feet** away from him in the 1992 Olympics when he was again a victim of a controversial call also costing him a medal. He never complained, though, and in 1993 he finally got his well-deserved medal in the World Championships. **I** was starting **two** boats behind him and did not get to watch. **It** still upsets me to this day that **I** never got to see that run,

**As** great a boater as Rich was, he was ten times **his** person. He deserved all the recognition we could **give, yet, year** after year he would find a way to sneak into the **shadows** while flashier people stole the show. Rich never raced kayaks for **glory**. Rich never raced kayaks to beat **everyone** else. Rich raced kayaks because he loved it, because it was magic. He **didn't** need **slalom**, slalom needed him. Rich had other things in his **life** that were his heart and soul. **His** wife, Rosi, and their child (whom we are **expecting** in the world shortly) are what kept **his** spirit **alive**.

**I** know that these **two** things are what **will** continue to keep his **spirit alive**. Rich would trade every special moment he had in kayaking to be able to grow old with Rosi and watch their baby grow. Don't worry Rich, we'll keep a good eye on **them** for **you**. And who **knows**, maybe one day we **can** swap stories. **I'll tell you** all about them if **you** tell me what happened in '93, in Italy, in that one run **I** never got to see.



## Here Is Our Best

by Michael Larimer

Coach

Richie Weiss passed away on a river run this summer. He was the type of man we will not soon see again. The wound of my own grief is just healing, the scar will never go away.

Richie was an American in the best sense of the word. An outdoorsman, competitor, husband, teammate. He always rooted for the underdog, especially his beloved Broncos. He never, ever, quit trying his hardest at anything. He was totally convinced he could do anything in the world, including basketball. Richie was an unassuming, humble, man who was at his most dangerous when things looked the worst. He had a depth of relationship with Rosi which was beyond description and a love for children, animals, and other things his quiet strength could support.

I am so glad to have known Rich. His example is one I will hold myself, my children, and those around me to attain. We are all in the hands of a power greater than ourselves and I am certain that power has embraced Richie. He was a man about whom I could stand back and say, here is our best, we have no better.

## So Many Rivers, So Little Time

by Davey Hearn  
Fellow Team Member



Photo: Jennifer Hearn

The world whitewater family lost a superhero with the passing of Dr. Rich Weiss. I lost a very good friend who was always a pleasure to be around. An inspiration to paddlers of every level, Rich enjoyed kayaking at the highest levels immensely. He was the first ever American to medal in the K1 class in World Cup and World Championships slalom races. His infectious grin and playful boyish nature meshed well with his high intelligence and serious commitment to top achievement by hard work. Never one to waste words, Rich quietly led our Team by the example of his consistently vigorous training regimen and the stellar results which followed. His finely honed skills on the river were matched by his positive attitude. He was always respectful and considerate of his peers, the consummate good sport Rich profoundly cared about whitewater sport, and volunteered his time and expertise unselfishly.

Rich enjoyed backflips off picnic tables, Calvin and Hobbes, life with his wife Rosi (they were inseparable) 360 hellos on skis, one-on-one bball, jungle runs, and waterfalls. Known for his careful judgment, calm temper, not to mention a Ph.D. in groundwater hydrology, Rich was one of the most unlikely to have this happen.

So let us be again reminded of the inherent dangers of our chosen elemental pursuit, and mindful of the fragility of our own lives. But let us not wish for a pillow-padded life insulated against human experience.

The spirit embodied by Rich Weiss will live on among the many whose lives his touched in enjoying whitewater rivers and the pattern of life.

## A Remarkable Man

by b m a Sims

Paddling Buddy

On a warm, sunny summer afternoon we buried Richie on a rise overlooking the Eagle river valley. Family and friends gathered to give each other strength. To say farewell to a remarkable man,

Writing this note is difficult. Many of you knew Richie Weiss and have your own memories, just as I have mine. I've known Richie since about 1979-80, and I remember those years—road trips with Rich, Tony Steitz, Sue Norman, Brad Koji; local races and camps in the Colorado high country with 15 or 20 of us hanging the course, racing while other racers ran along to score and time, and striking the course. And I remember the two of us running rivers in Colorado. Most poignantly, now, I recall treasured moments when Rich and I and one or two others would sit around my basement watching television and talking. In more recent times, I recall spending time with Richie and Rosi: Turrialba, Mezzana, Seo, Nottingham, Copperhill - Rosi and Richie conspiring on a surprise birthday in Vail, Colorado. Each of us has memories. Memories of Richie make me smile—what is hard is trying to help those of you who didn't know him, understand him a little.

When I think of Rich. I think of his quiet confidence and competence. He knew who he was and what talents he had without being egotistical about his abilities and achievements. I think of a sly sense of humor, a look that would let you know that he saw the joke. I think of a keen intelligence and fierce determination. Rich was, mentally, one of the strongest people I've ever known. But mostly I think of someone who had a sense of self and was comfortable with who he was. His love for Rosi suffused everything he did. Rich and Rosi not only complemented one another, they completed each other. That is the Richie Weiss I wish you could know. A truly wonderful and remarkable man. A marvelous friend.

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# He Was My Hero

by Kara Ruppell-Weld

## Fellow Team Member

I have read almost everything that has been written about Rich since his death. Every piece I've read has captured an amazing part of Rich's life or great character. Having known Rich well, I want to say the same truly wonderful things that have already been written about him and many more. It seems that there are not enough great words to describe this man.

At his memorial service, it was an honor to hear his brother (who led the service), to see his adorable mother, Edith, to see his face in his sibling's faces, to see all of the people who loved him, to feel his baby kicking inside of Rosi. As much as I miss him and am sad for Rosi, his family and everyone who knew him, I can't help but to feel sorry for all of the people who didn't get to know Rich. A good friend of mine that had only met Rich once said simply, "He was my hero."

About 12 years ago, Rich came out east to become a great slalom racer. That summer he became Uncle Richie to me. I had already known Rich for a year. It was 1984 and it was our first team trials. I was lucky enough to make the junior team because I managed not to swim. Rich made the B team with his famous bent Norse paddle. Because of our performances at those trials we were able to travel to Europe to experience our first taste of real slalom racing. All my wonderful memories with Rich start with that trip. Rich's diligence, kindness and ever present smile made him my idol.

The next summer I really got to know Rich. I was barely old enough to drive and Uncle Richie escorted Brian Parsons and me to the Mid-America Cup Races. After finding his wallet under our sofa cushions, we finally took off in his VW. Bug. You had to bungee cord the gear shift to keep it in fourth gear. Our parents were a little wary with our means of transportation, but I guess they

Rich Weiss during the 1994 World Cup event on the Isere River in Boura St. Maurice, France.



Photo: Jennifer Hearn

knew that the experience with Rich was worth it. And it was.

One time I remember running the Yough "Loop" at 10 feet with Richie, and getting surfed in a huge hole. When I was finally released from the hole, I'll never forget him sitting in the eddy and his smile. I was a little freaked out, but Rich reassured me that it was good for me. The high water was a pretty big deal to me, but Rich was right at home. Despite his quiet demeanor, he was always making a big impression.

It seems that Rich was always with me during the next 10 years, even when we were far apart. I can still hear words of advice that he gave me at many team trials and big races. I will always remember the unselfish things that he did for me and others. The influence that he had on me has helped make me who I am, and I wish every aspiring kayaker could spend some time with him. I was running the Loop the other day at the usual low summer level and those huge holes that I surfed at 10 feet were only dry rocks. But just like the memory of that day long ago, Richie's smile and spirit is still with me every time I am on the river. Good-bye, Uncle Richie.

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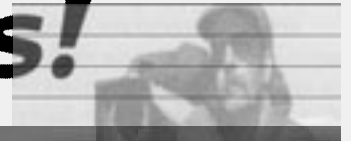
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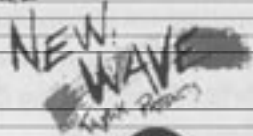
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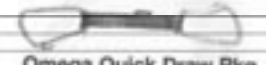
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# MAN VS. THE ELEMENTS

## MY DUEL with ROBE CANYON

by Christian Knight

I don't know what I was thinking when I suggested that we paddle Robe Canyon. Perhaps it was the bravado stemming from trips to Tumwater Canyon. Perhaps it was our recent no-portage conquests of the Upper White Salmon and the Upper Cispus. These runs were both Class V-VI, but I did okay. Maybe Robe would be the same way. It was, after all, low water. The Top Tye and Foss (tributaries to the Skykomish) were mere trickles and our last Class V resort, Tumwater, had dropped to 1000 cfs. I needed to paddle something, and Robe "was there."

With the exception of Tao, our usual tight paddling group, Josh, Morgan, Darren, Tembe, and I planned out duel with Robe.

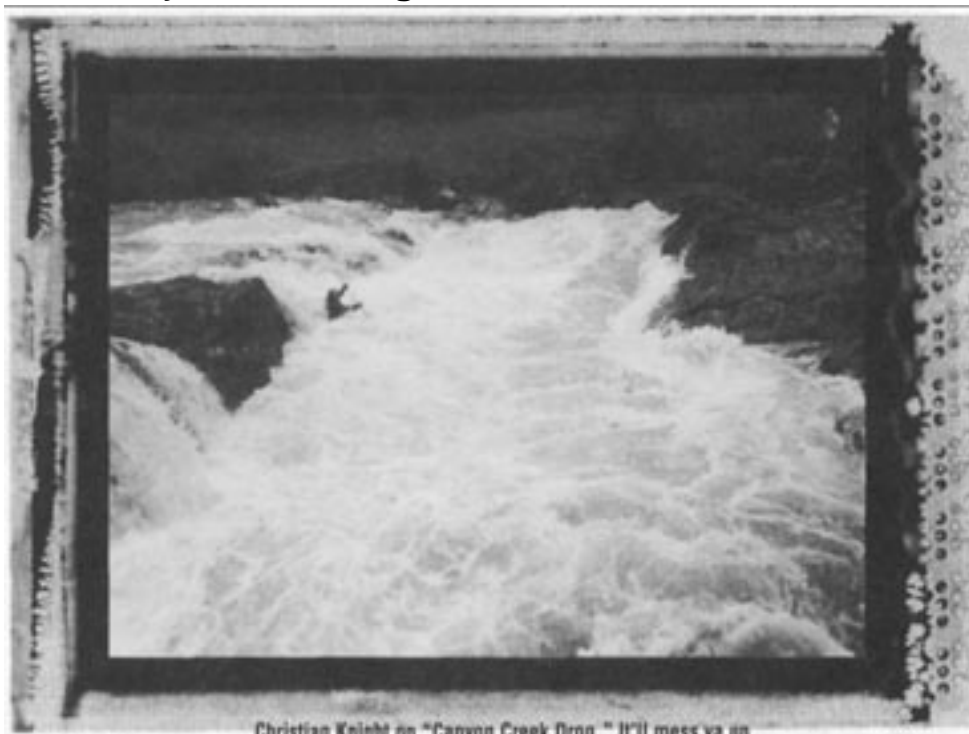
The rainy night before our trip, Darren called my house and notified me that our low water exploratory run on Robe had evolved into a high water 6.5-7 foot highwater run. Of course I should have cancelled the trip, but I just resorted to the infamous cope, "We can walk all but one drop."

We put in on flatwater. The worst kind. Flatwater gives me too much time to think and doubt skills; it breeds anxiety.

When the canyon constricted and the tunnel appeared on the right, the roar of the first significant rapid lurked below. We scrambled along the trail, weaving between hikers, to scout. This "must be Tunnel Rapid," I thought. The rapid began with some ledge holes sparsely placed, and then the first of two cruxes. The whole river dropped seven to eight feet into a violent hole. There appeared to be a seam through the middle, which grabbed Morgan's interest. I also considered this line, but the boof on the left seemed more predictable. The river then plundered through a short garden of holes, then strained between a row of trashy rocks, on the right. The left side offered a large boulder with a hole recirculating directly above it. "This is supposed to be one of the easier rapids," Tembe told me, "Not very assuring."

All but Darren ran the whole thing, with relatively clean lines. We congregated in the pool below, each secretly breathing a sigh of relief. This was short lived as the rage of Sunshine Falls echoed below us. It was going to be a long day.

We climbed along the slippery canyon bank to scout this intimidating rapid. The right side was filled with sieves and pinning opportunities. The left side offered a sticky double drop with a beautifully placed broach rock in the middle. The bottom of the rapid sent my eyes searching futilely for a portage trail. "Great," I thought as I stared onto the swelling chaos below, "this must be the unwalkable one."



Christian Knight on "Canyon Creek Drop." It'll mess ya up.

"Are you gonna run this one?" Josh asked with eyes glazed over. "Well, I don't think we have an option."

So the five of us stood on our slippery scout rock waiting for someone to volunteer to run first. But we all were cowards. Then, out of the aerated waters of Tunnel Rapid, came a string of kayakers to the rescue. Or at least to run first. I recognized two of them; Steve Colb and Pete Flanagan. All of them, except Steve, crowded into our scout rock.

With the shrill of a whistle blast, Steve paddled towards the double drop, (my line of choice). When he dropped over the first ledge, he immediately paddled right to avoid the hole at the bottom of the second. He accomplished his, but also slammed into the broach rock. He flipped violently, still broached evenly. His boat began to flex as the water tried pulling him off in both directions. After a few tense filled seconds, he rolled off of the boulder, still upside down, and blasted through the hole. He rolled at the bottom like he had just flipped surfing a wave. I looked at Josh's tense, wrought face, knowing his nauseating expression was a direct reflection of my own.

A few more paddlers ran the double drop without incident, save a cartwheel or so. Before I knew it the once crowded scout rock was empty, and the turbulent eddy at the bottom was full of kayakers bumping up against one another. "Well," I thought to myself, "I guess that makes it my turn."

I got in my boat and paddled toward the left side of the double drop. The first ledge stalled my momentum, but I was determined to steer clear of the broach rock so I continued paddling into the meatier part of the hole. I punched through and landed in the eddy. I looked around to find that everyone had abandoned the eddy except Pete Flanagan.

I felt like I had nothing left in me, except frustration.

"What do I do here?" I sheepishly asked. "Watch this ferry, it's important. If you miss that eddy over there, turn around, paddle like hell, and DONT SWIM."

Sounds easy enough. "Paddle like hell and don't swim". I repeated it to myself.

He abandoned me, ferrying into the weak **outwash** of holes as if they are eddies. He landed in the microeddy on the right side directly across from where I sat, anxiously awaiting my turn. Then he disappeared into the chaos exploding just a few feet below. I was all alone. With a heartbeat almost as loud as the water, I ferried across the river and into the eddy on the right side. Then I paddled over the swell, now seeing the chaos up close and personal. I landed in the short pool at the bottom. Only Josh and Morgan were waiting for me.

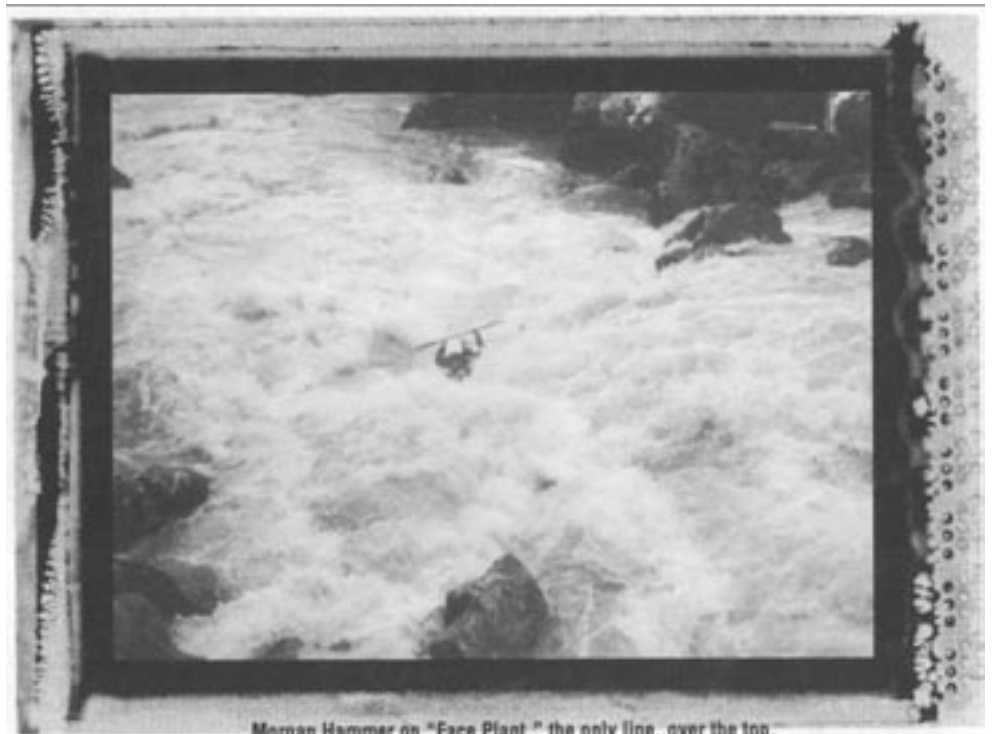
"Where did Tembe and Darren go?"

"They're trying to keep up with Colb and those guys". Josh smirked, "Hurry up, we've got to go!" "Don't screw this ne

So, naturally, I did. Josh had the habit of under emphasizing moves, so I instinctively knew this one was important. But suddenly, from behind, came Darren, I turned to see his pale face and wide eyes. When I turned back, Josh was waiting in the safe pool below. I missed it. Damn it! The glare of the sun prevented me from accurately interpreting paddle instructions from him.

"Great, what now"? I thought. All I saw was a horizon line. As I paddled toward the horizon line, I was hoping to receive instructions from Josh. The glare disappeared long enough for me to see Josh emphatically pointing to river right. Too late! I looked down into a gigantic hole. This is going to be bad. I closed my eyes in anticipation of the inevitable. The hole, (which I later learned in Don's Hole, poor Don.) flipped me instantly. I rolled up, fully expecting to be flipped or cartwheeled again. But it forgave me.

Josh didn't. "Why did you go over there"! He yelled



Morgan Hammer on "Face Plant," the only line, over the top.

residence in the room of doom. Then it drifted into the sun, like Clint Eastwood.

"Go Morgan go!" we pressed. Morgan bravely chased it through the rapid, punching the hole and eluded the room. But after he cleaned it he turned to watch Tembe. "What is he doing? GO! The boat!" we yelled.

My boat drifted on downstream, eventually fading out of sight.

My first thought was to chase it by foot, but that was squelched when I looked up at the overhanging canyon walls. There was no way around the rapid on the right. Two options remained: Either swim the rapid and probably end up in the Room, or the obvious, but more time consuming, cross the left where the walls were just extremely steep, but not overhanging. Whatever we were going to do, we'd have to do it fast, because my boat was blissfully drifting on, and the sun was falling behind the walls.

**My boat drifted on downstream, eventually fading out of sight.**

"Didn't you watch me?" He went on and on.

After we ran more of the same type of rapids, blind, we caught up with Tembe, who claims he was waiting for us. He was not happy and he didn't make any effort to contain it. Gnarly rivers always had that effect on Tembe. They always made him imtable. The gnarlier the river, the more imtable Tembe. Naturally Tembe was fuming. He yelled at us for everything; scouting too long, causing him to be disconnected from Colb and the others. So when we pulled off to scout a loud horizon line dotted with trashy boulders, he erupted. "What are you doing? Run it straight down the middle!" I began my rebuttal while I was getting out of my boat. For the first time in two hours, I was more concerned with conversation than my life.

Straight down the middle seemed to be the line. Through the big hole at the bottom and into the man made room of doom. Boy was I glad I decided to scout.

After some debate as to whether the hole at the bottom could be punched, my beautiful turquoise Overflow decided to see for itself, without me. Morgan was still in his boat. But after one failed attempt to shove it back to the nearby shore, my boat ran the line of choice. We all gawked as it cartwheeled in the bottom hole and nearly claimed

Darren set up a throwline belay while Josh escorted me across the swiftly moving pool above Hole in the Wall. We then agreed that I should climb up the canyon and walk around the canyon rim. Easier said than done. My ascent began in moist, loosely packed jagged rocks and ended in towering trees. It was more frustrating than scary. When I reached the top I doubled over in exhaustion, panting. The sweat that had accumulated drained from my forehead to my nose then trickled to the ground. The fleece inside my **drysuit** was soaked with sweat.

After a brief rest I began my walk around the canyon rim through the dense forest, waiting for that beckoning whistle that would signal the recovery of my boat. Eventually I heard it, blasting about every five seconds.

"I get the point!" I screamed. So I descended the steep canyon anxiously awaiting the sight of my recovered boat. I reached the bottom panting twice as hard as when I reached the top. I silently searched the bank for my boat. To no avail.

"Where's my boat?" I asked.

"Down there somewhere," they replied, looking downstream into another huge rapid.

"You'll have to climb back up and continue to circle the rim." I was

getting frustrated.

"You mean you called me down here to tell me I would have to climb back up to continue doing what I was already doing!"

I sat on the rocks elevated above the river in exhaustion watching them clean the rapid, then fade out of sight. I was too tired to be angry, and too careless to blame anyone.

After I caught my breath, I began the three hundred foot ascent back up the canyon.

Sweat flooded my eyes, saturating my hair and fleece. My climb ended in the same fashion as the first with me doubled over and **panting**, but still anxiously awaiting the whistle blast that would signal the recovery of my boat.

Eventually I heard it; this time it was more emphatically blown than the last, a good sign.

So I again descended the canyon in a dry creek bed, which I used for steps. But soon the crude steps of the **creekbed** disappeared into jagged, trashy rock. I searched frantically for a safe route, but it simply did not exist. I stared down at the rocky shore that jugged out twenty feet to the river, considering a desperate leap. But I would have had to be Carl Lewis to clear the rocky shore to land in the water. Josh and Tembe sat below in their boats suggesting different routes that would inevitably result in a thirty-five to forty foot plummet **into** solid rock. There had to be another way! Eventually I found a point where I could jump and land in the **runout** of the last rapid. My only **worry** was the water depth. So I leapt into a ball and plunged into the refreshing river.

I surfaced downstream and immediately began stroking for shore. Then Josh and Tembe broke the sad news to me that my boat was still unrecovered. And it would have to stay that way until at least tomorrow, because there was no time to continue the search. I would have to hike out. But where?

They pointed to an old railroad grade fifty feet above the wall on the right. They assured me that it led all of the way out.

They escorted me across the river. With my paddle clipped into my towline I began the 5.7 climb to the railroad. My paddle was a menace, however, I refused to lose my boat and paddle in the same day.

Josh and Tembe waited to confirm my safe arrival on the railroad grade, wished me luck, and paddled off into the now pink sun.

Twenty feet later I discovered that the railroad grade had been washed away, except for the sharded fragment which I was already standing on. Then I stared up at a vertical wall, with nothing for handholds except a few weak rooted ferns and loose rocks. I was screwed. I hadn't drank or eaten **anything** since morning. I had exhausted my energy. I felt like I had nothing left in me, except frustration. I was all alone. Perhaps I had lost my duel with Robe. But I refused to be held captive by it.

There was only one option. A three hundred foot climb with no ropes, no strength, nothing except sheer will. My hands trembled as I made my first move. About thirty feet up I began to feel that my suggestion to run Robe was a mistake. My feet were sliding out of position and there was nothing within reach, except a **fern**, two feet off my fingertips. The **butterflies** in my stomach began to swarm as I blindly leapt for that fern. It held me! Not far from the fern was a

crack, which I used for some time. Each move was calculated and gut wrenching.

I lost track of time and distance until a rock slipped from beneath my feet and went airborne for two hundred feet. I couldn't hear it hit. I smeared the wall, suddenly attacked by fear. One mistake, one misjudgment, and I was dead.

Im only twenty, I want to make it to school tomorrow. I can make it, I just have to focus. So I continued my climb. I eventually reached the top and my adrenaline faded, revealing how exhausted I was. I sprawled face down with my feet hanging over the lip of the vertical canyon wall. It was a good feeling. I had survived everything Robe had thrown my way so far. My saturated fleece began to chill my body, so I cut my rest short, realizing that Robe still had a few more cards up its sleeve.

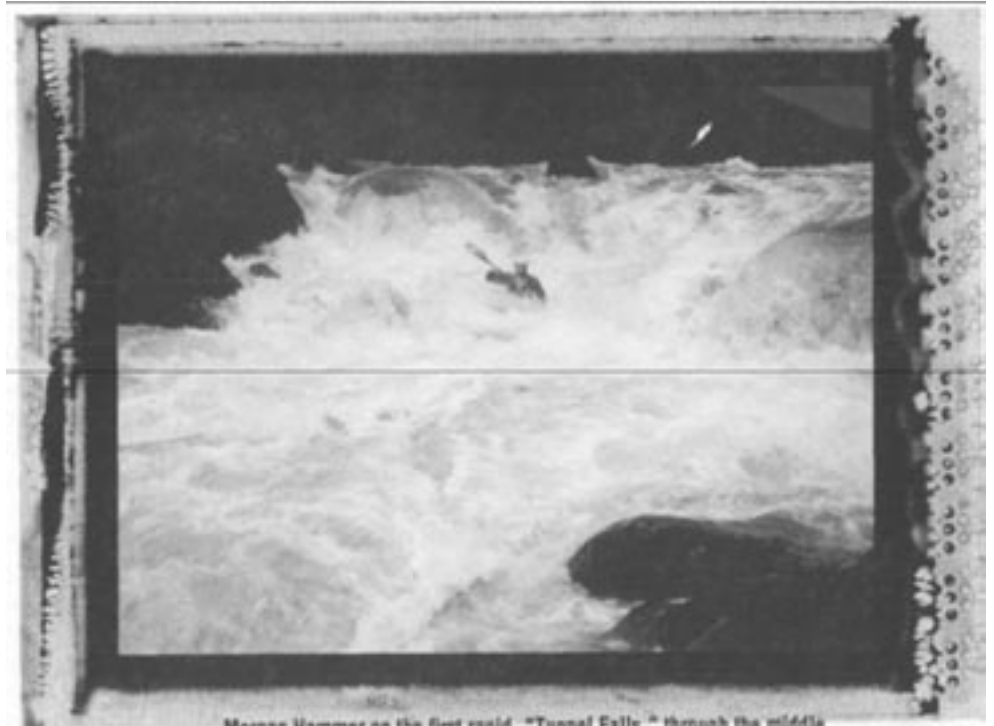
All I saw was towering trees. I had no idea where to go except away from the canyon, I set off on my march through the forest. The forest seemed endless and soon my march had disintegrated into a fatigued stagger. I stumbled on, trying to come to terms with the fact that I might just have to spend the night out here. It was a lonely feeling. I remembered the American Whitewater story about the Easterner who spent the night on the Clavey. "I bet his fleece wasn't saturated through," I thought.

Just as darkness began to fall I began to see signs of man, old beer cans, logging stakes, etc. Finally I entered a dense clearcut. **Initially** this squelched every speck of hope left in me. But then I realized that where there's a logging, there's got to be a logging road. So I continued to stumble around the edge of the forest and clearcut. Soon I reached the Promised Land. A crude gravel road, but nevertheless, it would eventually lead out.

I walked four miles, enveloped in darkness, finally reaching the highway. I stuck my thumb out, as I always do for the shuttle, and got a ride back to my car at the **take-out**. My aching body didn't prevent me from smiling.

Until, that is, I didn't find the others there waiting. And, even worse, I discovered I had accidentally locked my keys in the car.

**It was going to be a long night.**



Morgan Hammer on the first rapid, "Tunnel Falls," through the middle.

# DRAKES CREEK:

## High Water

### Nirvana in Backwater Appalachia

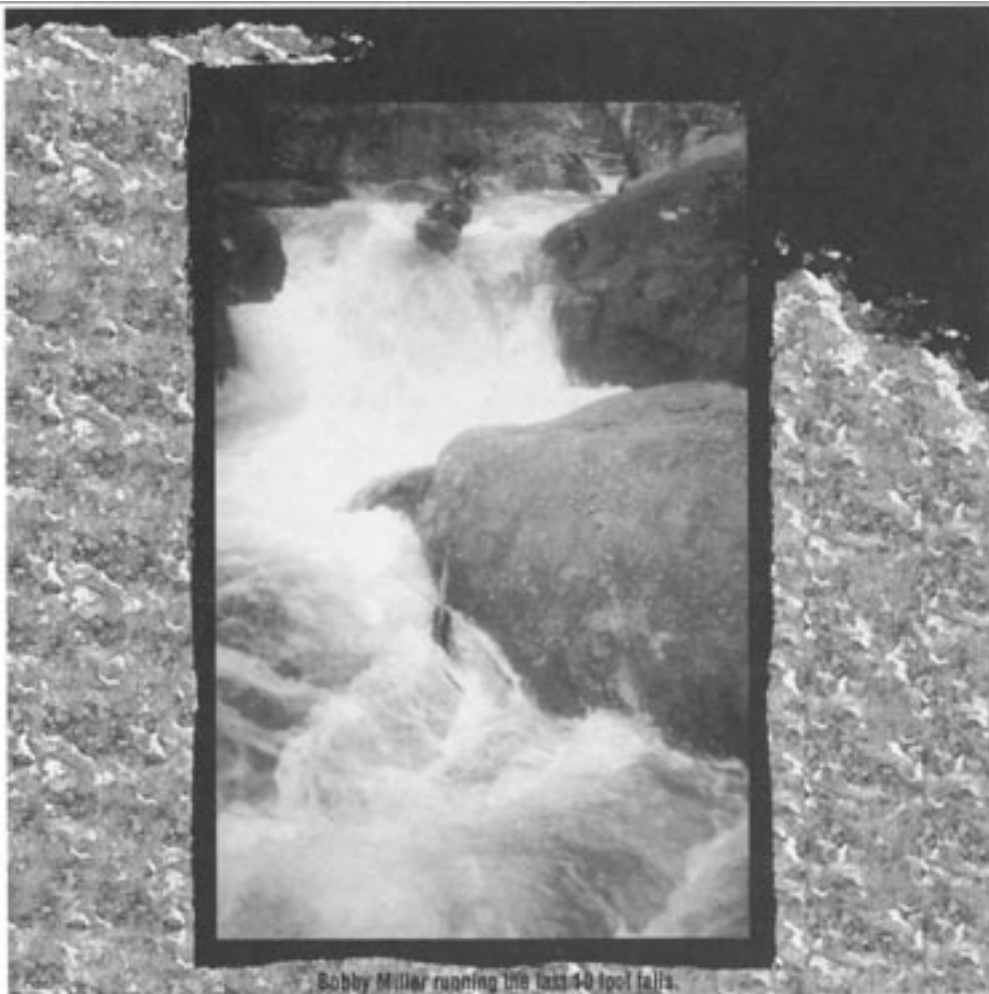
by Bobby Miller

Memorial Day' 1997, dawned on a sodden southwestern Pennsylvania. The torrential downpour over the weekend had filled local rivers with large volumes of muddy-brown water, and put a crimp in our boating plans. As paddlers faced with the paradoxi-

cal dilemma of excess water, our group (including myself, Jeff and Eric Nelson, Chris Piraino, Bob Allen, and Andy Delatore) handled itself admirably. A quick check of the gauges eliminated all of the normal high-water destinations. The Blackwater was running about

1000 cfs, and the Big Sandy was a whopping 10 feet. There was discussion of several smaller streams, like Otter Creek, Meadow Run, and Fikes Creek, but the gauge readings were unavailable, and besides, we'd already done those. Instead, I suggested something that we were all unfamiliar with: Drakes Creek.

The extent of our combined group knowledge of this run amounted to hearsay, but every time I'd heard it mentioned, it fell in the same breath as "awesome," "outrageous," or simply, "whoah!" We searched for the creek on a Pennsylvania map and found that it emptied into the Youghiogheney near Confluence. Deciding that this was an acceptable distance, we placed a call (: to a boater in Friendsville, Maryland to get the scouting report. "Drakes?" he asked, "I can't help you much there. The only time I ever put on, I got my butt whipped in the first rapid and walked out." That was all the encouragement we needed. Within minutes we had unanimously agreed upon it, and within an hour we were standing on its banks, staring as a fifteen foot wide train of brown flushed by at a serious pace. This immediately inspired awe, as well as the spontaneous urge for bladder relief in many group members.



Bobby Miller running the last 40 foot falls.



Andy Delatore in the 30 foot slide.

After running a brief shuttle, we were back at the put-in, sliding into our paddling gear mechanically, while our minds (or mine at least) tried to imagine the much-anticipated run. I can't vouch for the others, but my "virtual Drakes" didn't do the real thing justice.

The creek began mercifully with a half mile of continuous class II, in the midst of which was a foot-bridge which we were able to squeeze under. As we floated around a bend in the river, we were confronted abruptly with a horizon line. From there the creek dropped steadily at a rate of nearly 250 feet per mile.

Several smaller ledges preceded our first major rapid. Clambering onto shore, I felt my eyes bulge

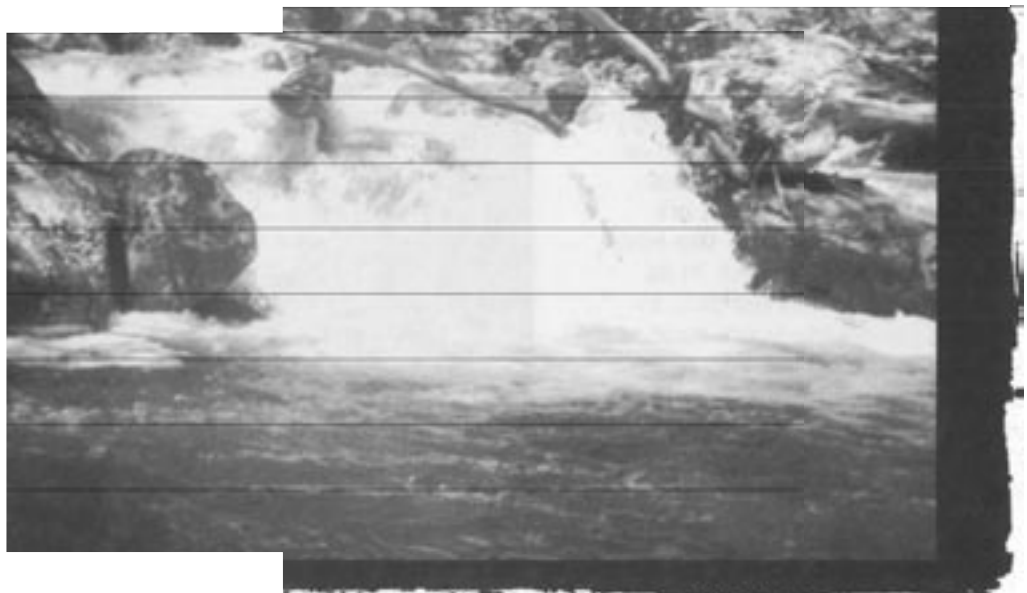
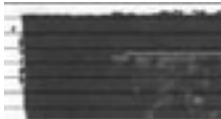


as I caught my first glimpse of "the slide." Before us lay a long, steep drop which angled sharply to the right about 1/3 of the way down. The extreme bottom-left of the drop was guarded by a menacing rock that practically screamed, "piton." In order to avoid this hazard, we would have to cut to the right where the slide curved and remain—against the main current of water—on that side the rest of the way down. As the group stood there on the bank, admiring this dangerously gorgeous piece of whitewater, I felt like whistling a tune. Nothing makes me happier than a new class V drop. Nothing, except perhaps, my sweet line down the right side of this slide.

Sitting at the bottom of the rapid, I watched some group members who will

**"We had sneaked into the zoo after hours, played with the pandas, petted the lions, fed the elephants and then rode triumphantly on their backs'."**

Bobby Miller in the pinney 10 foot ledge under the overhanging tree.



remain nameless) provide additional entertainment by doing some fancy spinning where the drop curved, and running the last part of the slide in reverse.

Even though "the slide" was the most impressive-looking drop on Drakes, there were others downstream that were its match in difficulty. One, in particular, was a ten foot ledge which had to be run dead center. On the right was an ugly-looking slot that no one was interested in exploring, while the left side of the drop was protected by a log which jutted out of the water at the very lip of the ledge. Since I was the only one who chose to run this drop, I think I can say authoritatively that it required a certain amount of finesse.

The run featured several other high ledge drops as well as an uncountable number of smaller ledges and slides. Even the "smaller" drops were an adventure, though. At every horizon line we found ourselves out of our boats; boat-scouting was usually not an option. However inconvenient these instances might have been, they were undoubtedly necessary. Even some of the most incongruous rapids had hidden pin spots and strainers in their midst. **As** a result of our inboat/out-of-boat approach, Drakes took longer to complete than one would expect of a two mile run. However, I can't complain at all. I actually enjoyed the experience of doing a creek that our group was totally unfamiliar with.

Even though I was completely exhausted after this run, I felt as though we had accomplished something more than just another day on the water. We had experienced a wild creek in its most natural form. I felt like, instead of taking the usual tour, we had sneaked into the zoo after hours, played with the pandas, petted the lions, fed the elephants and then rode triumphantly on their backs'.





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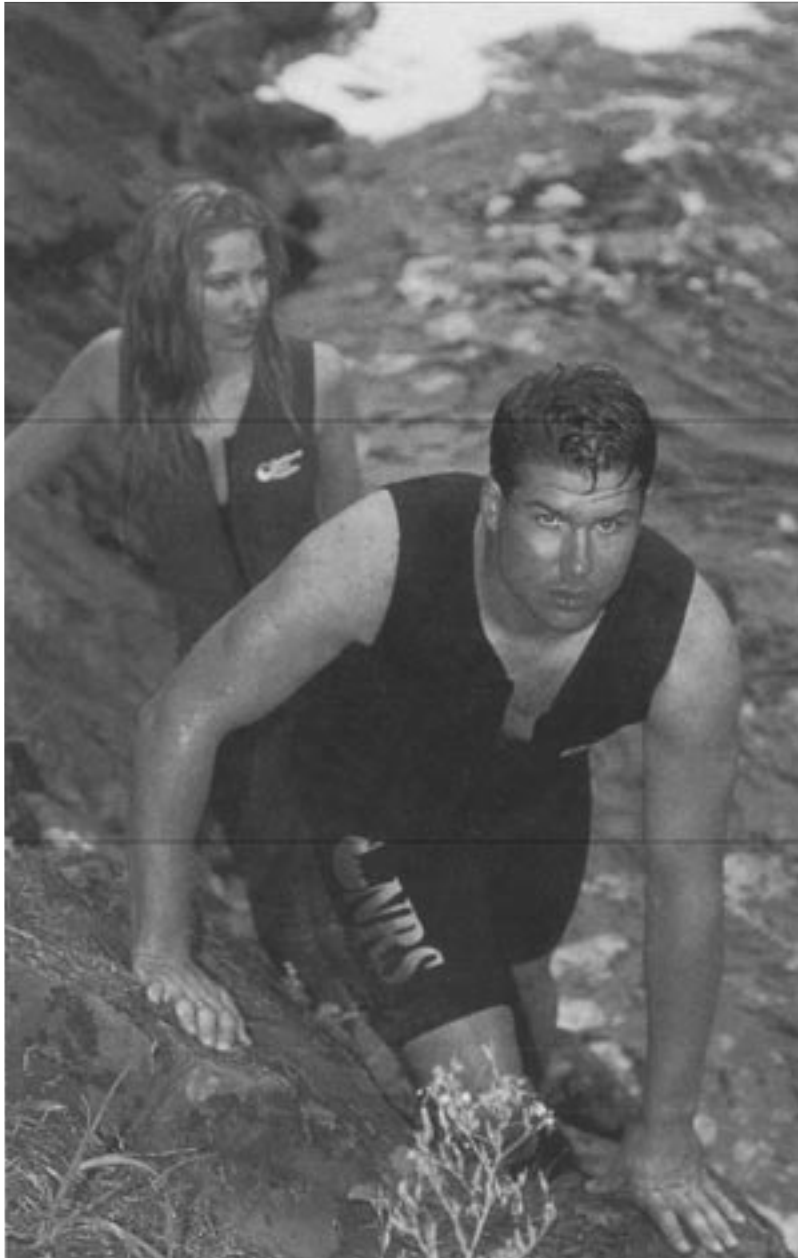
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PADDLING A PYRANHA JOHN DOE AT SOMETHING FALLS. PHOTO: CHRISTIE DOBSON



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Hayden Glatté and Bryan Tooley pack it in after the first descent of the Rio Urihante, Venezuela.  
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## Difficult Rivers Claim Expert Paddlers

by Charlie Walbridge

The shocking death of Rich Weiss on the White Salmon river has prompted a lot of soul-searching in the paddling community, and it brought home to me the limits of safety reporting. When I first began collecting accounts of fatal whitewater accidents in 1975 my goal was to identify and publicize their causes so others could avoid making similar mistakes. I've since found out that this is not always possible. During the past few years an unsettling number of expert paddlers have been killed while attempting difficult rapids. The only "cause" of these deaths is the demanding nature of difficult Class V drops, which are brutally intolerant of errors in water reading, boat handling, and judgment. Easier rivers, by contrast, are usually more lenient, but not always.

Whitewater paddling is a sport with an ample margin of safety for the well-trained participants. But while most moving water accidents still involve inexperienced boaters, the risks do not always continue to decrease as your experience grows! Top-level American paddlers are routinely running extremely dangerous rivers and rapids. Like the Europeans experts who pursued the sport with similar intensity decades before we did, they sometimes die.

The skills, equipment, and fitness of top experts has improved a lot in the past 10-20 years, but not enough to offset the added risk. (I saw a video of four people running a huge drop. Three of them supposedly had to be hospitalized!) Both the least inexperienced and the most skilled and daring paddlers are at risk, creating a "reverse bell curve" that has serious implications for high-level paddlers.

### Here are some examples from 1997:

On May 13 Robert Walmer of Salida, Colorado was killed in Class V Pine Creek Rapid on the Arkansas near Buena Vista, Colorado. Roger Lynn, the CWWA Safety Chair, reported that the water level was 2.2 feet that day, a moderate level. Walmer, 32, was in his third season of boating and had run the rapid twice before earlier that spring. He was a superb athlete; an expert skier, and in great physical shape. The group scouted the rapid before running it.

Walmer got in trouble at the end of the "S-Turn", hitting the "Terminator" hole and bailing out. Initially he had hold of his boat, but he lost his grip and recirculated in one of the three big holes further downstream. He then tried to swim for shore, but soon began to float helplessly. His partners chased him down and got him to shore quickly, no small feat in the powerful rapids that lie below. One man began CPR while the other ran for help. EMS amved and Walmer was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead. This is the second fatal accident in this rapid (Pine Creek) in two years, and Roger Lynn personally knows of several people who were badly injured and almost killed here.

On May 27 Dan Wagner of Pocatello, Idaho was part of a group of 7 making an early season run on Idaho's Middle Fork of the Salmon. Internet postings report that the group put on at Marsh Creek because the road to Dagger Falls was snowed in. The gauge read 7.7', a very high level. At this level Idaho paddler Doug Purl describes the run as "a screaming toboggan ride....a half stroke from disaster." Needless to say the water is extremely cold. Two people in a cataraft flipped at Murphy's hole, one mile from Dagger Falls. One of the two got swept away. The group chased the swimmer down to Velvet Falls; a river wide reversal with a very small break at this level. Here a second raft flipped and recovering this boat ended the chase. The victim was swept all the way to Indian Creek, nor-

mally a day's travel downstream, in less than two hours! He apparently died of hypothermia, although the long, difficult swim certainly contributed to his death.

On June 3 Dugald Bremmer, an expert kayaker from Flagstaff, Arizona, was killed on the Silver Fork of the American near Kyburtz, CA. Internet postings by Keith Gershon and others reported that Bremmer and his group arrived at a very steep, demanding drop. The other three members of the group portaged as Bremmer prepared to run the drop alone. Part way down he pinned between two rocks. The pin seemed stable, and several members of the group waded out to help him. At this point Bremmer decided to remove his spray skirt. His high-volume creek boat filled with water immediately, and before Bremmer could exit, it was sucked backwards over a steep drop and into a drain. The lack of float bags in the boat may have contributed to the speed with which this situation became unmanageable. Afterwards, only two feet of the kayak was visible above the water.

Several of the group lost their footing in the ensuing rescue attempts. One person was actually sucked into the drain and had to chimney out, hand-over-hand, up another person's legs. The body was recovered the following Sunday when a party lead by paddlers Eric Magnuson, Lars Holbeck, and Mike Weiss joined forces with the sheriffs swiftwater rescue team. A tyrolean was set up and both Lars and Eric were sent out to the accident site. Lars cut a hole in the bow and was trying to locate Bremmer's feet when the body came loose. Bremmer's body was recovered about 40 downstream, snagged in a tree. He was placed on a litter and carried to the trailhead.

On Wednesday, June 25 Rich Weiss, a Kayak Silver Medalist at the 1993 World Kayak Championships and a man known for his skill, intelligence, and sportsmanship, was killed while attempting to run "Big Brother", a 30' class V+ waterfall on southern Washington's White Salmon River. Water levels on the river were high, but not flooded. An internet posting by Paul Schelp, based on information provided by Eric Jackson, gave the following account: Weiss, 33, lived in nearby Hood River and had run the fatal drop many times. He was paddling that day with one other boater. After scouting, his partner ran first and gave him the "thumbs up" sign. Weiss followed, but was ten feet too far right. His boat was caught in a nasty hole at the base of the drop and cartwheeled violently for several minutes. When it was ejected Weiss was not inside it. His partner got out of his boat and after a difficult scramble reached the base

of the drop. There was no sign of Weiss, and after a thorough search he sent for help. Rescuers had to rappell down a 200' cliff to recover the body, which was found snagged on a tree a short distance downstream. Reports of a head injury and equipment tom from Weiss's body appear to be unfounded at this time.

*Editors Note: A more detailed account of this incident, prepared by former slalom team coach Bill Endicott, Elliot Weintrob and John Trujillo, who was paddling with Rich Weiss that day, is also in this issue of American Whitewater.*

On May 12 Joel Hathorn, described as a strong, bold paddler from Boise, Idaho, died during a first descent of Warren Creek a half mile from its confluence with the Main Salmon. He reportedly missed the last eddy above an unrunnable drop.

On June 28 Henry Filip, 38, was killed while running class V+ Meatgrinder Rapid on Colorado's Crystal River near Redstone, Colorado. The river was running 1200 cfs, a very high level. Filip was apparently boating alone, although his descent was being videoed by others. Both internet postings were extremely sketchy, and more information is needed.

In addition to the fatalities, there are a number of terrifying near-miss stories circulating. The Crested Butte, Colorado "Chronicle" describes a situation in which a paddler missed his line at the brink of "Stupid Falls", a 60 foot drop on the Upper East River. The lucky survivor apparently pinned vertically part way down the drop, bailed out, and washed over the last 30 feet of the drop. Aside from a broken foot suffered in the initial impact, he sustained only cuts and bruises. He was treated and evacuated by a local rescue squad.

*American Whitewater believes that individual paddlers have a right to attempt rapids they feel they can negotiate safely. Nonetheless, these deaths are a clear warning that extreme rapids carry extreme risk. If you chose to play in this arena you must understand that no known precautions can prevent all accidents in Class V whitewater. The random element of uncontrolled risk, called "objective danger" by mountaineers, is always present in whitewater, but becomes much more common in extreme rapids. Paddlers planning to face this challenge should prepare for desperate rescues, serious injuries, and deaths within their group.*

# Accidents Numbers Down In 1997

by Charlie Walbridge

In addition to the deaths of expert boaters described elsewhere in this magazine, a number of other whitewater accidents were reported to me. Each one has something to teach us, from the often repeated basic lessons of the dangers of high water, low dams, and strainers, to other causes more obscure but equally deadly. My thanks to all those who forwarded reports, and to Larry Stone, Dan Roberts, and Kevin Sulewski for keeping an eye on Rec.Boats.Paddle and forwarding messages of interest to me.

On March 3, 1997 Dr. Raymond Neef, 31, an experienced kayaker, drowned after his kayak wrapped around a tree just 100 yards below the put-in on Boone Creek near Lexington, Kentucky. This river, Class III-IV at normal flows; comes up quickly and was flooded that Sunday morning. Internet postings and newspaper articles report that Neef and his companion launched their boats at 7:30 AM and almost immediately encountered trouble. Neef's pin looked manageable at first, so his companion attempted to reach him with a throw line. Suddenly the boat bent and wrapped, trapping Neef inside and pulling him under water. The pin was very bad according to those who saw footage on the evening news. It took rescue squads 7 hours, using a telfer lower, to recover the body.

On March 19 Morgan Chang, 39, and two other kayakers from Vancouver, BC were attempting the Upper Seymour River (normally class III) at flood levels. Internet postings describe Chang as a "keen intermediate" paddler. He flipped near the take-out, attempted a roll, and bailed out. The group had discussed how to deal with this situation before the run and agreed that the best thing to do was to abandon their gear and swim to shore. But Chang held onto his gear and was swept down-

stream into Seymour Canyon, which is Class IV+, even at low flows. He was found 1 kilometer downstream below the canyon. He was rushed to the hospital where he died from injuries sustained during his swim.

On March 29 Kevin Blattman died on the North Fork of the Santiam near Lyons, Washington. The e-mail I received from Jim Virgin of the ACA is sketchy, but it appears that Blattman was paddling tandem in a sit-on-top kayak. He flipped in a class II rapid, bailed out, and became entangled on a rope apparently left in the river. His partner dove into the water several times to free him, but was unable to do so. Anyone who has more information is urged to contact me.

On April 4 a party of 5 launched two canoes at Highway 65 on Cauldron Creek in to Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. This class I-II stream was, in the words of news reports, a "flooded, log-jammed mess". One boat contained Kevin Adkins, who was not wearing a life vest, and his fiancée and son, who were. Adkins fell out of his boat and grabbed a tree. His son grabbed a tree branch to slow the canoe down and capsized it. Mr. Adkins then left his tree to rescue the others. His son made it to shore safely; his fiancée swam to an island. Rescue squads were called; two boatloads of emergency responders capsized while attempting to help. While all this was going on, a second party of canoeists flipped and swam. Recovery operations continued until sunset, but eventually all but Mr. Adkins were accounted for. The next day paddler Howard Elliot put in at first light in the hopes of finding Adkins alive. He spotted the victim's body pinned against a tree 3/4 of a mile below the capsized point. He returned to shore, notified authorities, then, with the help of his son, Clay, retrieved the body.

On April 27 a guided raft hit a rock on the Class II-III Toutle River in Western Washington State. Water levels were very high from recent rain. The upstream tube was sucked under,

overturning the raft and spilling all 8 occupants. Seven made it to safety, although several of the survivors were

S a

## Accidents Numbers Down In 1997

washed under a logjam. Corina Sofranko, 28, is still missing and is presumed dead. A rescue hovercraft, a poor choice for use in swiftwater, was sent out to search for her. The hovercraft flipped, but the four occupants were unharmed.

On May 6 Michael Day, an experienced kayaker and the popular coach of the Keyser, West Virginia football team, drowned on the Savage River near its confluence with the Potomac above Luke, Maryland. This Class III-IV stream was the site of the 1989 World Championships; at 1200 cfs it is very fast, with few eddies. The Savage, like many small streams, also contains dangerous strainers. Chuck Stump, one of the survivors, reported that Day was paddling with Stump and another paddler when he broached on a strainer and bailed out. While one member of the group brought Day to shore, Stump chased the kayak through continuous class III+ rapids to the confluence with the Potomac. Since Day's back was up against a steep slope topped by a fence festooned with "no trespassing" signs he elected to swim downstream about 100 yards to a large eddy. As his companion got back into his boat, Day entered the current and

disappeared. When he did not appear in the eddy or at the confluence, his friends began searching for him. After this proved fruitless the authorities were notified. As the water went down a flash of color was detected around a submerged tree. Their worst fears were realized when Day's body was recovered the following day.

The decision by Day to re-enter the water, while unusual, was not unreasonable. The Savage has a long history of tense relationships with landowners and Day was trying to avoid trespassing. Rapids can normally be swum safely, but submerged strainers pose a significant hidden hazard and cannot always be detected from upstream. Moreover, the conventional feet-first swimming position takes you underneath strainers rather than over them. Day had no way of anticipating the danger, and it happened so quickly that his predicament went unseen and rescue was impossible.

On June 17 three kayakers attempted a run on the Sturgeon River near L'Anse, Michigan. The river was high after recent rains. One member of this group, paddling a kiwi-style kayak, was swept over

25' Sturgeon Falls. He did not survive the plunge. Sierra Club leader Carole **Snowdon**, who reported the accident, judged the flow at the take out unsafe and took her group elsewhere.

On May 30 Larry Kendrick, the police chief of the city of San Marcos, Texas, met death while practicing for the Texas Water Safari. He was with his son in a canoe on the flooded San Marcos river. The report, forwarded by the ACA's David Reichert, states that the pair apparently paddled over Saber Tooth rapid, which had washed out, without knowing it. They became confused as to their location, a common problem in very high water, and inadvertently paddled over Outline Dam just downstream. A 12' drop at normal levels, this dam has a homble hydraulic at high water. Mr. Kendrick's body has not been recovered.

June 4 saw three fatalities in the Rocky Mountain Region. In Colorado near Denver Mike Stano reported that a kayaker, paddling alone, attempted to run a spillway at a low head dam on Clear Creek outside of Denver. He was recirculated for 10 minutes before flushing out. He was pulled to shore by two law en-

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forcement officers and pronounced dead at a nearby hospital. There was also a commercial rafting fatality involving a guest who drowned after a long swim on the Poudre River near Fort Collins. These accounts, taken from Internet postings and local papers, are quite sketchy and more information is needed.

On the same day in Idaho there was a fatality on the South Fork of the Payette north of Boise. Brian Reynolds, 23, of Santa Fe, New Mexico drowned at Blackadar's Rapid in the popular Canyon section. Postings to [rec.boats.paddle](http://rec.boats.paddle) by Michael Heyenkamp and Molly McFadden reported a flow of 5500 cfs at Lowman. According to guidebooks anything over 2000 cfs is considered high. After

Reynolds hit a hole and flipped, the neck gasket on the his **drytop**, temporarily repaired with duct tape, blew out. Water filled the **drytop**, causing him to miss several roll attempts and bail out. At this point he tried to swim to shore, but the canyon is very narrow and fast here. He was repeatedly sucked under water for extended periods. At one point he grabbed hold of another kayak but could not hold on. Eventually he was pushed to shore, where his group began CPR and sent for help.

In the thread that followed this report Idaho's Doug Purl made the telling observation that the enemy in many drowning situations is panic, which causes a person to struggle inappropriately against the

river, rather than conserve energy. "Fear kills in surging water by preventing swimmers from rationally timing their inhalations to correspond with the crests of waves." I hope that Doug will elaborate further for American Whitewater in the future.


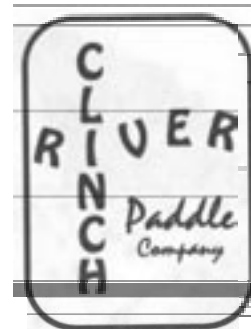
Early June saw two drownings on the Truckee River on the East slope of the California Sierras the Nevada border. Internet postings report that Duke Henry Jardin, 31, a beginning kayaker, was killed on June 7 after running a low-head dam on this tiny Class II creek. A bystander pulled him from the river, began CPR, and summoned help. Unfortunately it was too late. The next day on the main Truckee, a commercial rafter ejected from a raft after hitting a rock in Bronco Billy rapid near Floriston. The victim was caught underwater by a submerged tree limb and died despite the presence of a county rescue team training in the area.

June 15th, Father's Day, turned tragic for a Kentucky family kayaking the Licking River. A man, his brother, and his youngest son were paddling near Terry Dam in Cynthiana, Kentucky. All were wearing PFD's. One person - it's unclear who - was sucked into the dam's hydraulic from downstream. In the wild scene that

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**Accidents Numbers Down In 1997**

ensued each man tried to save the other. Larry Ratliff, 53, and his youngest son Terry, 23 were pulled into the hydraulic and drowned. Both were pronounced dead at the scene. The victim's brother capsized in the rescue attempt and was washed out unharmed.

In the unusual occurrence department, on June 15, three commercial rafts were running the Class 3-4 whitewater on the Middle Fork of the Flathead east of Glacier Park when a 100 foot high cottonwood fell on the lead boat. The raft was pinned by the deadfall, and several passengers washed downstream. Fast and efficient rescue by the guides prevented any fatalities, but several passengers were injured badly enough to be evacuated by helicopter. All are expected to survive.

In an accident proving that easy rivers cannot be taken lightly, Geno Schumar, a class IV-V kayaker, met death in the Class II waters of the Eagle River near Anchorage, Alaska on July 2, 1997. An Internet posting by Danny Crow reported that Shumar was apparently playing in a whirlpool rapid above a section of shoreline thick with strainer hazards. He flipped, bailed out, and made it to shore along a steep cut-bank. After attempting to climb the slippery clay bank



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he slipped back into the water. His companion, who could not get to Shumar, saw him wash downstream into a strainer. After attempting to reach Shumar without success he left the area to summon help.

On a very positive note, American Whitewater Executive Director Rich Bowers passed on this story of a real heads-up save! Tom Aex, a seasonal ranger for the BLM, was kayaking the Arkansas when he saw a raft pin on a bridge pier near Salida, Colorado. Coming closer, he spotted a hand sticking out of the water! The rest of the victim's body was completely immersed, because his foot was caught in a rope used to secure a bailing bucket. Mr. Aex maneuvered into position and held the victim's head above water. When help arrived he used his knife to cut the rope, freeing the man's leg.

In another positive development, Class VI River Runners was found not liable for the death of a guest pinned on Flint Rock above Middle Keaney in 1992. This outfitter is known for its well-trained guides and its timely assistance to private paddlers on the New and Gauley. The plaintiff based its case, in part, on an "unconventional" interpretation of the AWA Safety Code, which was not supported by this organization. The trial brought out that this accident, while tragic, could not have been prevented and that the outfitter met or exceeded the standard of care for the whitewater rafting industry.

*The number of accidents in my files for 1997, 15, is still relatively small, which may indicate that 1997 is shaping up as "safe" year. The AWA depends on you, our members, to send newspaper clippings, club newsletter write-ups, internet postings, and personal observations to us. If you know of an incident which is not listed here please send the information to Charlie Walbridge, American Whitewater Safety Committee, 230 Penllyn Pike; Blue Bell, PA 19422; Phone 215-646-0157; Fax 215-643-0668; Email: cwal@compuserve.com. I'd rather get duplicate reports than not hear of an incident. I and your fellow paddlers will thank you for your trouble.*

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# Preventing Dislocations

by Perri Rothemich

A friend once told me, "If you haven't tweaked your shoulder- you ain't paddling." Going by this- I'm one hell of a paddler- But, it doesn't have to be this way. By improving technique and adopting a new routine, you can reduce, if not eliminate, your risk of shoulder dislocation. I hope my experience will help you. Some people learn from others, some learn by doing. Unfortunately, I learned from doing. Back in October I began my fight with my shoulder at Double Z on the New River in WV. I had an anterior dislocation, and subsequently dislocated it almost every day. In February, I leaned over to touch my shoes, subluxed my shoulder, and lost all feeling to my arm. After 45 minutes of panic, the feeling in my arm returned, but not 3 fingers. I had complete shoulder reconstruction 3 days later. 4 months post-op I still have a loss of sensation in 2 fingers. The worst part of my whole ordeal is knowing that it was preventable.

## Are You Paddling Correctly? Are You Sure?

This is the technique part. Everyone has something they can work on- better technique is the key to becoming a better boater. Here are some simple things you can do on a lake, large eddy, or swimming pool. First, the forward stroke. 1- Never let your shoulder go above your chin. By keeping your shoulder low, you're keeping it close. This allows less leverage to yank it in a direction it shouldn't go. 2- Less is more. Use fewer strokes, and make them count. Watch the elite boaters paddle. They aren't paddling like mad. The fewer strokes per minute you take, the less your shoulder is out on the line, and the less likely are you to dislocate. Taking fewer, but more powerful strokes will also boost your endurance. The paddling elite look good because of their strokes. Arms, back, hips, the whole nine yards. The forward stroke should be close to the boat. Toe to stem. Keep your shoulder below your chin. Thrust your whole body into each stroke and you'll get more oomph for your stroke.

For the backstroke your paddle should be almost parallel to your boat. Stem to toe. Pull your opposite arm across the cockpit and use those back muscles!!! Remember- use hips whenever possible. This does two things. It won't wear you out as quickly, and it will make you a stronger boater. Again, the paddling elite make it look simple- but you don't see what's going on below the deck. Hips are incredibly important in paddling.

You can test yourself. Paddle in a straight line- consciously making sure your shoulders are low. Now take a second to notice what your hips are doing. IF they aren't doing anything, keep working.

The brace is probably the leading cause of shoulder dislocations. Again, dislocations are avoidable in most situations. Good news-you can teach yourself the right way to brace, and actually use it to your benefit. On the lake, flip a few times to find your "point of no return." You'll find it pretty quick. Snap your hips over. At first you will be able to snap back and stay upright. But then, uh oh! There you go- over. Alas, your point of no return. Before you get thoroughly water logged, do this again. But just as you get to your "edge" use your paddle to side slip for a minute. Your opposite arm should be resting on the raised chime of your boat, and your power arm should be tight against your side. You can either use a light brace and hip snap back upright- or you can carve your blade back and forth and use your brace as a stroke. This is the most shoulder friendly method.

Text book roll. Think you've got one? Get someone to watch you. Exactly. You need work. Before I ripped my shoulder out 90 or so times too many, I operated by the "it gets me up- so I don't care what it looks like" method. But now I'm a more deliberate boater, and my roll has changed 120%. The key to your roll is tuck-tuck-tuck! One, this will keep you from bashing your face against a rock [Been there, Done that! It hurts!]. More importantly, it keeps your shoulder close when pulling your paddle

to the surface. You will have less torque on your shoulder if your paddle is on the surface rather than 5 or 6 inches below. You don't want your sweep to go past the half way point, because then you are applying pressure at an unnatural angle.

You're probably saying to yourself "this is way too much work. It's not worth it. I'll be fine." Ha! That's all I have to say. I thought that. Would I trade in my shoulder dislocations? Maybe. But I've become a much better boater because of them. I just hope you can learn from my experience before you have an arm dangling loosely and painfully from the socket.

## A Strong Shoulder is a Stable Shoulder

Strength is your best friend. Just in the past month there have been 15+ postings on [rec.boats.paddle](http://rec.boats.paddle) with this very question: "What are some exercises I can do to strengthen my shoulder?" Well- I'm gonna tell you.

Not everyone has access to a gym. Not to mention the time- but there are some simple things you can do to strengthen your shoulders and keep them happy, all in the comfort of your own home. If you can get your hands on a theraband, that is ideal, but you can use a bungee cord, as well. Tie a knot in one end and stand on the other. Hold the knot and alternate going forward to 90\_ and sideways to 90-. Do each in reps of 20 with each shoulder.

Now in each hand hold one end of your cord/band. Using a controlled motion, pull symmetrically until your arms are at 180-. Repeat 10 times (in front and not overhead).

Finally, locate something that weighs between 5 and 10 pounds (a gallon of milk is 8 lbs, a bag of sugar is 5). Lean over, stick your butt out and hold both arms straight down. Bending your elbows, pull arms up, holding shoulders still. Repeat 20 times.

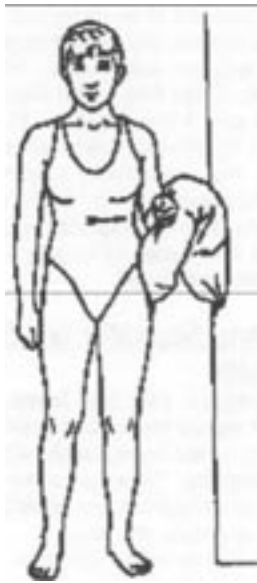
## Too Late. Can I Rehab?

So you say "Sure, this is great, but it's too late. I've tweaked my shoulder. What

**SHOULDER - I Strengthening Activities**  
**Isometric Abduction**

Using a wall to provide resistance, press into wall with elbow. Use light moderate maximal resistance.

Hold 10 seconds.  
 Repeat 10 times.  
 Do 2 sessions per day.



can I do to make sure this doesn't happen again?" I have some great tips for you, too. 90% of all shoulder injuries don't need surgery. You will want to see a doc for the initial diagnosis and therapy plan, however. Don't take shoulder injuries lightly, but at the same time, don't rush into surgery. Many of the problems people encounter with their shoulders can be fixed with a strict physical therapy program. If they say 4 times a day, they mean 4 times a day. Do the exercise, and you'll be much happier with the outcome.

Isometric Abduction is a great way to strengthen both rotator cuff and ACL areas. It uses a controlled motion that won't hurt tender ligaments as they try to heal on their own. Figure 1 shows a good way to utilize abduction. Keep your feet directly under the shoulder blades, with about a foot between them. This exercise, done correctly, trains the rotator cuff to act as a wall for the "joint." The shoulder is a ball and socket like the hip. The rota-

tor cuff comes around the back of the shoulder to hold the humerus up to the scapula and collar bone.

After a dislocation people tend to favor the shoulder and keep it immobile. It is good to favor it, and not jump back on a river, but it is crucial to keep it in motion. The shoulder can "freeze up" faster than any other joint in the body. This exercise helps keep this from happening, because you supply the resistance, and do as little or as much as feels right for you. Another exercise that is good for keeping a shoulder from freezing is what therapist

call "hanging there". You simply lean over, let your arm drop, and swing your shoulder in a nice small circle.

Figure 2 represents the inward motion of abduction.

This also is done with your own force, and you decide how much and as little force to use. Hold it for 10 seconds and repeat 10 times.

Figure 3 works the rotator cuff muscle. If you are having serious trouble with this exercise you should go see a doctor and tell him/her this, because it



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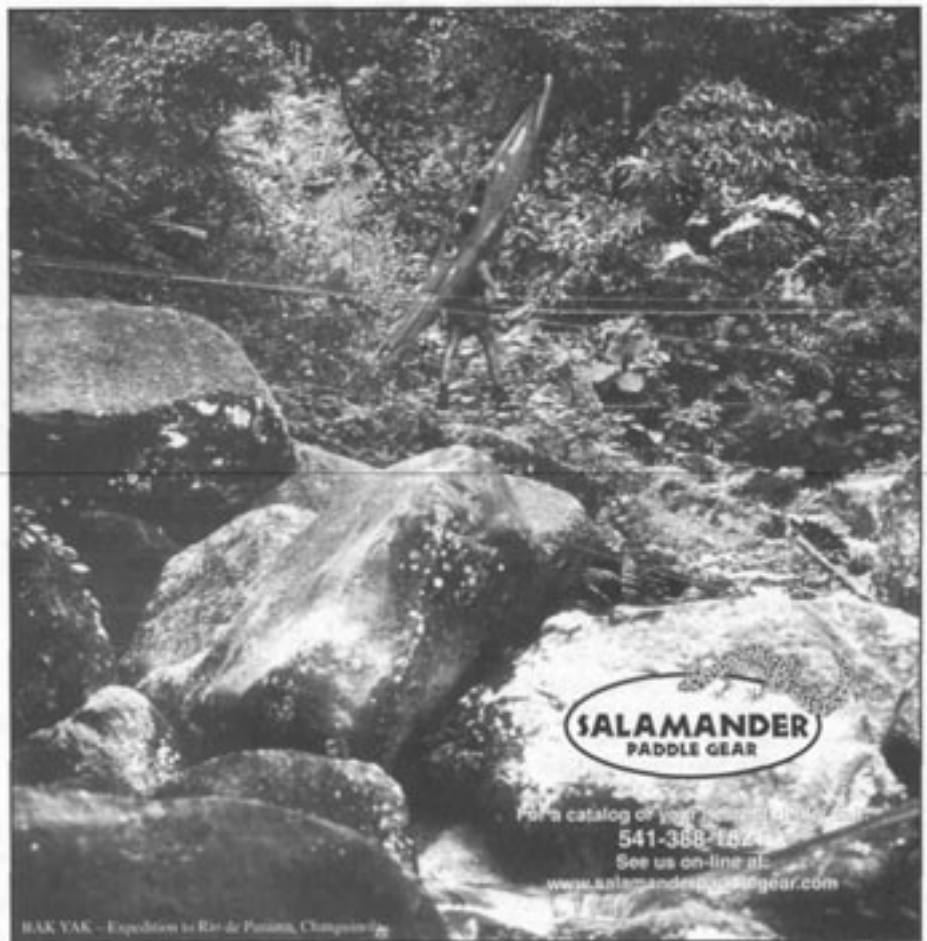
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may mean you have a

more serious problem, like a torn rotator cuff. Start without any weight in the hand and see how it feels. Go only to 90° and hold it for 10 seconds. When you bring your arm back down, don't drop it, bring it down slowly. After you feel comfortable with this, gradually increase weight up to 10 pounds.

Figure 4 presents one of the best strengthening exercises out there. It works your rotator cuff, ACL, and biceps. Start with both thumbs facing front at your side. Slowly, and with controlled motion bring both arms to a 180° position. Repeat this 20 times with as much weight as comfortable for you. You can also do this before paddling as a great way to stretch, but only use 2-5 pounds, and only repeat 5-10 times so you don't wear yourself out.

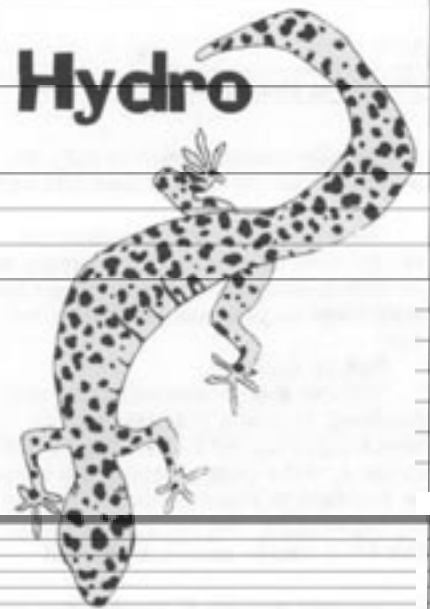
For those of you that had an ACL separation, you'll remember Figure 5 well.

While lying face down, and thumbs













towards the floor, bring our shoulder blades together and arms backwards. It is important not to go too far, because you may do more harm than good. Only go as far as comfortable. When you reach your pain threshold, stop, and don't go any further. Again, start with no weight, and work your way up to about 5 or 6 pounds.

Figures 6 and 7 require either a theraband [optimal] or a bungee cord that doesn't have too much resistance. Figure 6 is external rotation and Figure 7 is internal.

They work different muscles for the overall benefit of your shoulder. Tie a knot in one end of your band/cord. Put the knotted end in a shut door to act as your stopper. Stand approximately 2-3 feet away from the door and externally rotate your shoulder. Stop first at 90° and when you feel strong and comfortable, continue to 180°. For internal rotation start at 90° to begin with and pull the cord to your tummy. When you feel



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## SHOULDER - 2 Strengthening Activities Isometric Adduction

Gently squeeze pillow using light moderate maximal resistance.

Hold 10 seconds.  
Repeat 10 times.  
Do 2 sessions per day.



## SHOULDER - 3 Progressive Resistive Exercises External Rotation (sidelying)



Raise arm up toward ceiling. Keep elbow bent and in at side.  
Repeat 10 times with 5 pounds.  
Do 1 sessions per day.

comfortable enough to start at 180, do so, but shorten the holding time, and only repeat 10 times.

There are many other exercises you can get from either a physical therapist or an orthopedic surgeon. These will get you started and on your way to a full recovery!

Back on the River

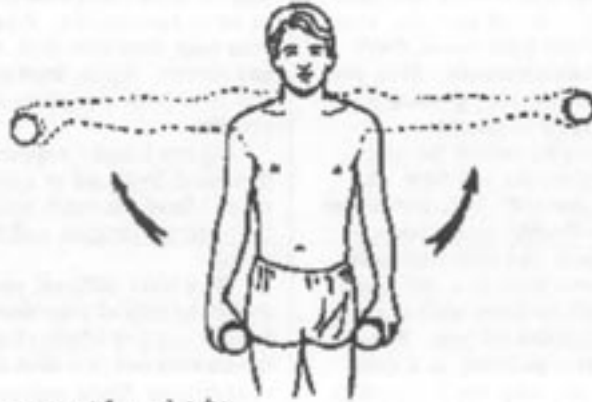
You can also do some exercises while paddling. Flatwater paddling may not sound appealing, but I actually have come to like it. After surgery I thought it would be 8 months to a year before I'd even see my kayak again. But I'm happy to report that I'm 4 months post-op with a full range of motion. And I'm paddling again. I'm not back on Class V, yet- but give me time.

Lately I've discovered a new strengthening wonder. Near my apartment there is a river with a slow moving current. If I spawn upstream for about half an hour I come

to a nice, deep eddy line. So I hop in a squirt boat, do my 30 minute work out, and then have fun before my 30 minute paddle back. During the 30 minutes I work on strokes, and endurance. I don't necessarily sprint- but I do maintain the speed that I start out with.

SHOULDER - 4

Progressive Resistive Exercises: Abduction (standing)



Raise arms out from body.

Repeat 20 times with 5-10 pounds.

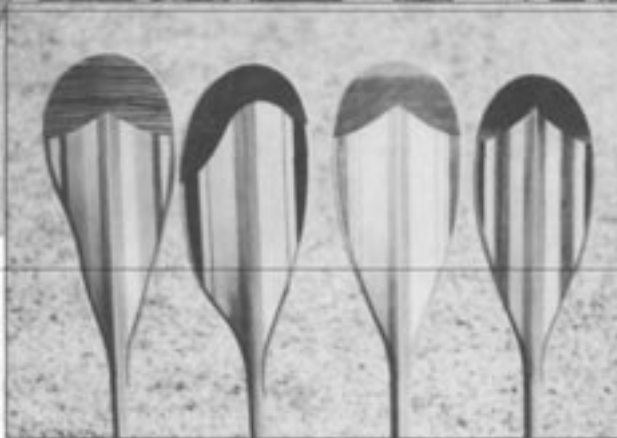
Do 2 sessions per day.

Now, try to remember all this stuff while you are negotiating a rapid with your heart in your throat, and your endorphins at a sky high level. It might save you some pain and months of being a disgruntled shuttle bunny. I've learned more about boating and technique in the past 7 months than I had in the past 12

years of my kayaking career. This bionic babe isn't letting a few pins and stitches stop her. Good luck, and feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

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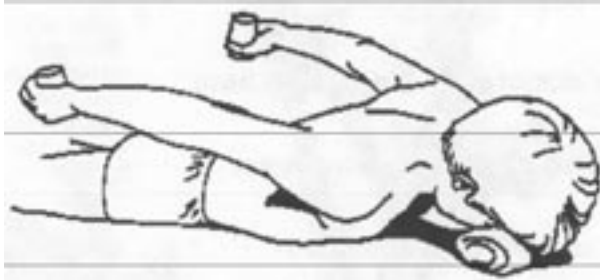
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**SHOULDER 5**  
Progressive Resistive Exercises  
Extension (prone)



Raise arms off floor keeping elbow straight.  
Repeat 20 times with 5 pounds.  
Do 1 sessions per day.

**SHOULDER - 6** Strengthening Activities  
Active Resistive External Rotation



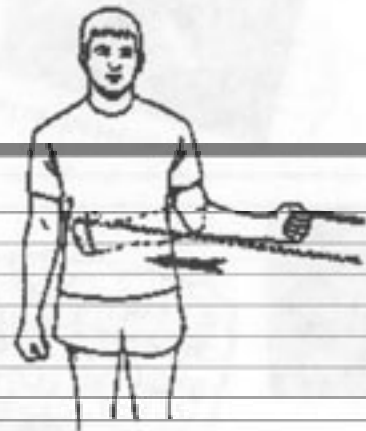
Using tubing, and keeping elbow in at side,  
Be sure to keep forearm parallel to floor.  
Repeat 20 times.  
Do 2 sessions per day.  
Don't Go all the way out.

**SHOULDER -** Strengthening Activities  
Active Resistive Internal Rotation

Don't Go all the way out.

Using tubing, and keeping elbow in at side, rotate arm inward across body. Be sure to keep forearm parallel to floor.

Repeat 20 times.  
Do 2 sessions per day.



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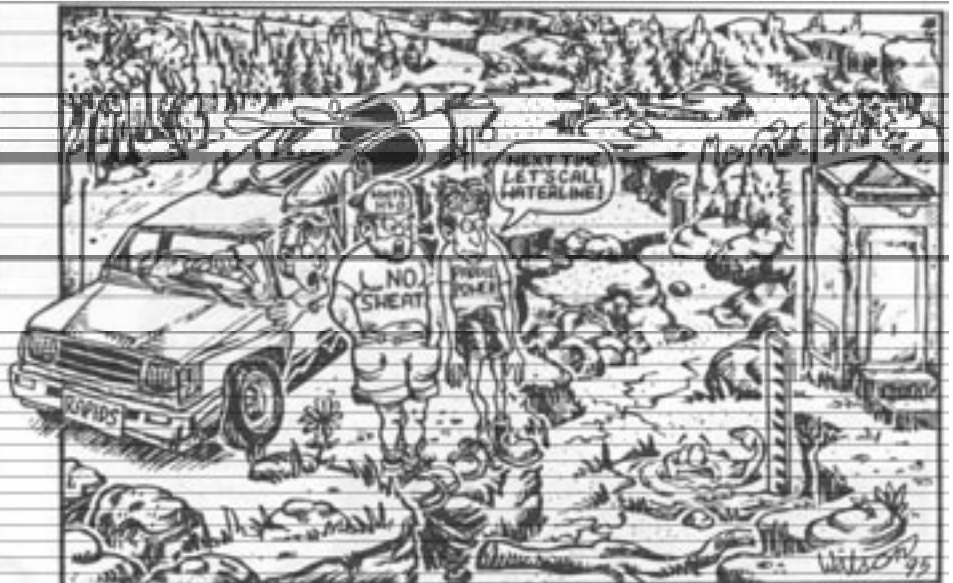
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# Upgrading the American version of the International Scale of River Difficulty

by Lee Belknap, Chairman, AWA Safety Committee

Two and a half years ago American Whitewater introduced a project to update the International Scale of River Difficulty. Frankly, we were hoping that someone else would step out from under a waterfall somewhere and take on this task, but nobody threw that rope, so the American Whitewater Safety Committee was swept into the bottomless canyon that the project became. Mind you, the results are not ours alone. More than 100 expert paddlers from across the country contributed to the new system. Others added comments that were helpful in determining the best way to present these changes. The Safety Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to this effort. We would like to apologize at this time for not being able to respond personally to those of you who wrote involved letters. The massive amount of computer time this project required prevented us from providing the level of response that these letters deserved.

Why change the old system? Why not leave well enough alone? Because "well enough" was falling apart. While some believed that the old rating definitions were very specific and were doing the job, a look at the overall picture identified some large discrepancies. The same rapid was rated from class II to class VI by different sources! Groups of experts were forced to downgrade the whole system as they pushed on to higher diffi-

culty. Folks just learning were having a hard time figuring out the conflicting messages they were getting from experts, old timers, government agencies, guidebooks, etc. It was getting hard for an entry level class III paddler to enjoy a run on the upper end of the class 3 scale, not to mention what was happening in the class IV range. At one point in time this writer started wondering if the dry joke he frequently repeated was coming true: When asked to rate unfamiliar rapids his response was: "It's all class IV!"

For those who have concerns about the modifications, PLEASE SHOW SOME MERCY. There are a million valid ways to have done this and the majority of the last 2 1/2 years was spent coming to the best consensus possible. One might guess that about half of you will find the results satisfactory, while the other half will have reservations, some very serious and well considered. The AWA rating system is used by a wide variety of groups including experts, beginners, all skills in-between, guidebook writers (who will have many thousands of changes to make) and government agencies, including some that reference the rating system in the code of law. In many cases these legal references will be in conflict with this updated scale of whitewater difficulty.

We received many well thought out letters describing various concerns about any proposed system. One common reser-

vation about the rating system in general, and one that sometimes resulted in a refusal to take part in any further discussions, was the notion that the rating system caused a "tremendous problem" in the sport due to "...paddlers motivated by ego, image, being cool, etc., who are not in touch with their abilities and can't identify a safe rapid from a dangerous one." Would this "problem" (if it is in fact a problem) go away if the rating system were abolished? Unlikely! We would also have to abolish river names, rapids names, and all campfire war stories. I don't know about you, but I'd probably resort to pictographs to make up for these lost communication methods – what would a skull and bones symbol rate?

The goal of any whitewater rating system is to improve communication between whitewater boaters around the country. As an important communication tool that boaters have relied on for decades, the rating system was falling apart. The following modifications are an attempt to patch up the worst holes, and there were some major ones. There may be much more that can be added to this effort, and those ideas can be implemented later if there is enough interest in the boating community. These changes should put us off on a good start. We will try to explain as carefully as possible why things were done the way they were. If you find this effort totally unsatisfactory, please discuss it with your friends and, if necessary, *American Whitewater*. Experience has shown us that it is very difficult to communicate about these modifications but after discussion we usually find that we are not as far apart as first thought.

When discussing rivers or rapids paddlers regularly consider a number of factors. The questions asked may include: How dangerous is it, where is it, how big or small, how remote, how easy are the portages ... (see inset next page)? All of these factors can be described in very specific terms. For example, hazards can be discussed in precise terms that describe the exact nature of the undercut, strainer, or whatever. But there is one major factor that cannot be described in such specific terms and it is a factor that is per-

**What's new?: Three major changes are being made to upgrade the International Scale of River Difficulty.**

- Focus more on the variable hardest to describe: "Difficulty".
- Open the scale for future growth as more difficult runs are made while providing more graduations within the scale. The system will now include plus's and minus's as well as a decimal system within class 5.
- Anchor the system in the physical world instead of the mental by creating a list of benchmarks at specified flows that the paddling community can use to compare all other rapids and rivers to.

haps the most talked about. That factor is difficulty, or "how hard is it". The only way to answer a question like this is via comparison to another more familiar rapid. A standard description of a rapids may go like this: 'Lumpy Falls is almost as hard as Heavy Falls on the Harden river with a little bit of Twister rapids thrown in and a nasty hole next to an undercut wall on the bottom left'. The narrator may go on to describe how close to the road this place is, the water level, how constricted, any other significant factors, and, if you're lucky, a good war story. But what if the listener(s) aren't familiar with the Harden River? This is where a rating system can most effectively fill in the gaps.

**List of potential dimensions:**

Location  
Hazards

- Flow
- Size
- Partners

- Remoteness
- Length/Time required
- Equipment (which boat, which paddle, camping gear, etc...)

- Portability
- air and water temperature
- Available time.

The purpose of the SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY is to compare the DIFFICULTY of rivers and rapids. When we specify a rating for a rapids, we are comparing it to other rapids that are about as difficult.

In the past this was done with definitions that were based on a scale that had no room to grow. Human variables effecting ratings included individual perceptual differences, drifting average skill levels (as skills increased the ratings decreased), variations between groups, individual group dynamics, and even individual ego.

The compromise solution to this basic problem requires 3 basic changes. First, focus more on the variable hardest to describe, specifically "difficulty". Second, open the scale for future growth, as more difficult runs are made (and provide more graduations within the scale to patch up the damage that has already been done by downgrading), and third, anchor the system in the physical world by creating a list of benchmark rapids that the paddling community can use to compare all other rapids and rivers to. The list of benchmarks will be introduced in the next issue of American Whitewater (more on this later in this article). It is important to note that rapids were chosen for the benchmarks instead of rivers because rapid difficulty is the largest factor used to determine the difficulty of a river (having written this, I'm sure someone will find an exception).

By focusing more on difficulty and less on danger we are actually following a trend within the paddling community. As long as we are careful to specify hazards when we describe a rapid, this seems to work well. Proposals have been made to

add an extra designation to the classification for particularly hazardous locations, or where fatalities may have occurred. These proposals are good ones and may be added later if there is a demand for this. For now, the focus of the revisions will be on the difficulty component. Again, if there is enough dissatisfaction with the new emphasis on difficulty, then an additional designation to note danger can be added. Comments on this are encouraged.

The scale will be revised to open the top end and to add increments within the lower classes. For the lower classes, Class II+, III-, III+, IV-, and IV+ have been

added. In general these should apply to be the top or bottom quarter of a classification range.

Of the many options to open the top end of the scale, the most favored method was to mimic the climbing scale with an

OPEN ENDED class 5.x scale. The decimal range HAS NO TOP END. With this scale new class VI is problematic. Countless discussions regarding what to do with class VI resulted in changing it to an "extreme and exploratory" class. Once an extreme rapids has been run more than a few times, those familiar with it should be able to use the 5.x scale to classify it, something that would be difficult before it was actually run.

The final and most complicated task to upgrade the rating scale is to anchor the system by basing it on a list of benchmark rapids. As mentioned earlier, this list will be introduced in the next issue of American Whitewater. In order for this to work, each benchmark will apply to very specific conditions. These will include name, location, and water level range. The latter is very important because of the large effect of water level on difficulty. Other variables will be assumed as follows:

- Climatic conditions to be normal for the season that the river is most likely to be runnable.
- The rapids are rated for the paddler on a first run who is following another

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Scale of River Difficulty.

paddler who is familiar with the rapids.

- It is ALWAYS important to specify hazards in words when describing a rapids. There is no way a rating system can do this in any but the most minimal way.

- While rapids are made of solid rock, they do occasionally change. When this happens to a rapids on the list, the AW safety committee will need to be notified of any change in difficulty so that the benchmark ratings can be kept up to date.

The benchmarks were created by polling almost 80 boaters and generating nearly 3000 data points. Each data point was a specific rapid at a specific level rated by one of our 80 participants. To make a complicated story short, averages were generated for each rapid and the rapids were placed in order. Countless filters were required for the results to make sense including a final manual elimination of a few that just didn't look right.

The list of benchmarks is still being proofread by a large number of boaters. This is the reason why they will not be published until the next issue of American Whitewater. In the meantime feel free to contact us with comments. After reviewing any comments, American

Whitewater will make any last minute corrections, and then they will become part of all future publications of the American Whitewater Safety Code.

#### IV. INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY (revised 9-97.).

This is the American version of a rating system used to compare river difficulty throughout the world. This system is not exact; rivers do not always fit easily into one category, and regional or individual interpretations may cause misunderstandings. It is no substitute for a guidebook or accurate first-hand descriptions of a run.

Paddlers attempting difficult runs in an unfamiliar area should act cautiously until they get a feel for the way the scale is interpreted locally. River difficulty may change each year due to fluctuations in water level, downed trees, recent floods, geological disturbances, or bad weather. Stay alert for unexpected problems!

As river difficulty increases, the danger to swimming paddlers becomes more severe. As rapids become longer and more continuous, the challenge increases. There is a difference between running an occasional Class N rapid and dealing with an entire river of this category. Allow an extra margin of safety between skills and river ratings when the water is cold or if the river itself is remote or inaccessible.

Examples of commonly run rapids that fit each of the classifications are pre-

sented in the attached document "INTERNATIONAL SCALE OF RIVER DIFFICULTY - STANDARD RATED RAPIDS OF THE UNITED STATES". Rapids of a difficulty similar to a rapids on this list are rated the same. This scale is also used to rate rivers. A river rating should take into account many factors including the difficulty of individual rapids, remoteness, hazards, etc.

#### THE SIX DIFFICULTY CLASSES:

Class I: Easy. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves. Few obstructions, all obvious and easily missed with little training. Risk to swimmers is slight; self-rescue is easy.

Class II: Novice. Straightforward rapids with wide, clear channels which are evident without scouting. Occasional maneuvering may be required, but rocks and medium sized waves are easily missed by trained paddlers. Swimmers are seldom injured and group assistance, while helpful, is seldom needed. Rapids that are at the upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class II+".

Class III: Intermediate. Rapids with moderate, irregular waves which may be difficult to avoid and which can swamp an open canoe. Complex maneuvers in fast current and good boat control in tight passages or around ledges are often required; large waves or strainers may be present but are easily avoided. Strong eddies and powerful current effects can be found, particularly on large-volume riv-

#### The classes: a listing of class 1 through 5.3

	IV
II	IV+
II+	5.1
III-	5.2
III	5.3
III+	5.x
IV-	

Scale of River  
Difficulty.

ers. Scouting is advisable for inexperienced parties. Injuries while swimming are rare; self-rescue is usually easy but group assistance may be required to avoid long swims. Rapids that are at the lower or upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class III-" or "Class III+" respectively.

**Class IV: Advanced.** Intense, powerful but predictable rapids requiring precise boat handling in turbulent water. Depending on the character of the river, it may feature large, unavoidable waves and holes or constricted passages demanding fast maneuvers under pressure. A fast, reliable eddy turn may be needed to initiate maneuvers, scout rapids, or rest. Rapids may require "must" moves above dangerous hazards. Scouting may be necessary the first time down. Risk of injury to swimmers is moderate to high, and water conditions may make self-rescue difficult. Group assistance for rescue is often essential but requires practiced skills. A strong Eskimo roll is highly recommended. Rapids that are at the lower or upper end of this difficulty range are designated "Class IV-" or "Class IV+" respectively.

**Class 5: Expert.** Extremely long, obstructed, or very violent rapids which expose a paddler to added risk. Drops may contain large, unavoidable waves and holes or steep, congested chutes with complex, demanding routes. Rapids may continue for long distances between pools, demanding a high level of fitness. What eddies exist may be small, turbulent, or difficult to reach. At the high end of the scale, several of these factors may be combined. Scouting is Recommended but may be difficult. Swims are dangerous, and rescue is often difficult even for experts. A very reliable Eskimo roll, proper equipment, extensive experience, and practiced rescue skills are essential. Because of the large range of difficulty that exists beyond class IV, Class 5 is an open ended, multiple level scale designated by Class 5.0, 5.1, 5.2, etc... Each of these levels is an order of magnitude more difficult than the last. For instance, increasing the difficulty from class 5.0 to class 5.1 is a similar order of magnitude as increasing from class IV to Class 5.0.

**Class VI: Extreme and Exploratory.** These runs have almost never been attempted and often exemplify the extremes of difficulty, unpredictability and danger. The consequences of errors may be very severe and rescue may be impossible. For teams of experts only, at favorable water levels, after close personal inspection and taking all precautions.



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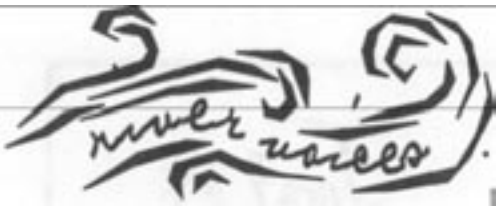
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# Pure Genius

by Ken Strickland

While on my way to the Chattooga River last Summer I stopped off at a favorite whitewater shop to pick up a sponge. My previous sponge had somehow disappeared into the black hole of "loan me your sponge" and I needed a new one. The shop owner said that he didn't stock sponges anymore and now carried stem drain plug retro-kits instead. He implied that everyone was going to the drain plugs and that sponges would soon be an endangered species. I left empty handed knowing that time constraints wouldn't allow me to retro-fit. But I was also wondering if I was missing out on another cutting-edge trend. That little incident brought back a memory...

It was during the Winter of 1975 that Joe Stubbs and I made our first descent of Section I of the Chattooga. We were both nervous as well as excited about paddling this section of the river. We termed such excursions "backyard expeditions" and

spent most of our weekends seeking them out. As we looked downstream from Burrell's Ford, the river disappeared into the misty shadows. Somewhere down there we knew that a magnificent riverwide waterfall and a foreboding place called the Rock Gorge awaited us.

We were soon joined by Allen Singley, our River Meister. During the 1970's Allen was pushing the whitewater envelope. In an era when canoe club and group swims were the norm, Allen was out there solo creekin' (although it had no such name at the time) and, with a small group of friends (or his dog), exploring what were to become some of the South's classic, yet esoteric runs. Today several formidable drops bear his name or were named by him. On Overflow Creek we have Singley's Falls and the ominous Great Marginal Monster. Whimsical, yet descriptive names are a Singley signature.

We donned our gear, put on, and paddled into the mist. The first rapid of consequence that we encountered was called "Hole in the Wall." I recall that Allen said, "Stay a bit right or you might break your ankles." With a description like that, I had no problem in keeping a bit right. This was my first experience

with the concept of the "Verbal Scout." This is when someone who knows the river gives you a verbal description of what's over that spray filled horizon line just as you're about to go over it. A little later Joe and I watched from the safety of the right bank (the verbal scout had failed us) as Allen picked his way down the approach rapid, then precisely hit the slot of safe passage over Big Bend Falls. Remember, this was 1975 and boats were made of fiberglass, thirteen feet (plus change) in length, and a boof was.. well, I don't know what a boof was in 1975. We worked our way down into the Rock Gorge. Just before Allen disappeared over another blind drop, he said, "This is Harvey Wallbanger, be careful!" We ducked under a huge hemlock log and blindly followed him over the double drop. I flipped in a reflex wave coming off the rock wall that Mother Nature had placed entirely too close to the runoff of the drop. I guess it was understood that the name of this drop also doubled as a "Verbal Scout." I had missed the connection entirely and met "Harvey."

Later Joe and I watched from the safety of the left bank as Allen came over a steep drop, punched a good - sized hole,



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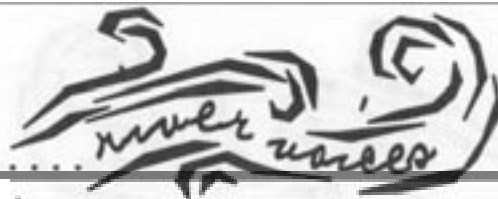
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then caught a narrow, offset exit slot (enhanced by the presence of a vertical log). It was shortly after this rapid, **Maytag**, that IT happened.

As Joe and I dumped the water from our boats in a staunch conventional manner, we noticed that Allen tilted his C-1 upright after fiddling with something on the stem.

What I had previously though was a big ball of "duck tape" on the stem of his boat (a common sight in the 70's) was actually a half-glassed, half-taped halved plastic Clorox bottle strategically embedded, cap up, in the stem of his C-1.

As he unscrewed the cap and tilted the boat upright, a beautiful little artesian spout of river water leapt from the bowels of his boat, danced down the rocks, and returned home.

Joe and I looked at each other - words were neither spoken nor needed - we knew that this was one of those special little moments that periodically comes by in life (we didn't need much back then). Earlier we had witnessed his paddling genius and now we witnessed his inventive, functional genius. We all returned to the river and finished the rapids - Upper and Lower Big Harry Bastard were the closing curtains of the Rock Gorge. As we paddled the flatwater section to the Highway 28 takeout, the conversation between Joe and I was noticeably uplifted.

Nowadays when I look at the new boats, I see that many have stem drain plugs. A trip to one's favorite whitewater wishbook and there they'll be - those nice little retro-fit kits all bundled up in their plastic bags. In retrospect, I'm certain that Allen had his "hoola hoop," his "pet rock," or his "chia pet" there in that halved plastic Clorox bottle (although certainly more functional). But it was just for him, no big deal.

I had all but forgotten about this until that one day last Summer when I walked into a whitewater shop and couldn't buy a

sponge. I just thought I'd share a fond memory of a beautiful stretch of River and a true story about one of our original River Legends here in the South.


Ken, "I still remove water from my boat with a sponge" - Strickland.

**noah**

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# Fall On the Moose

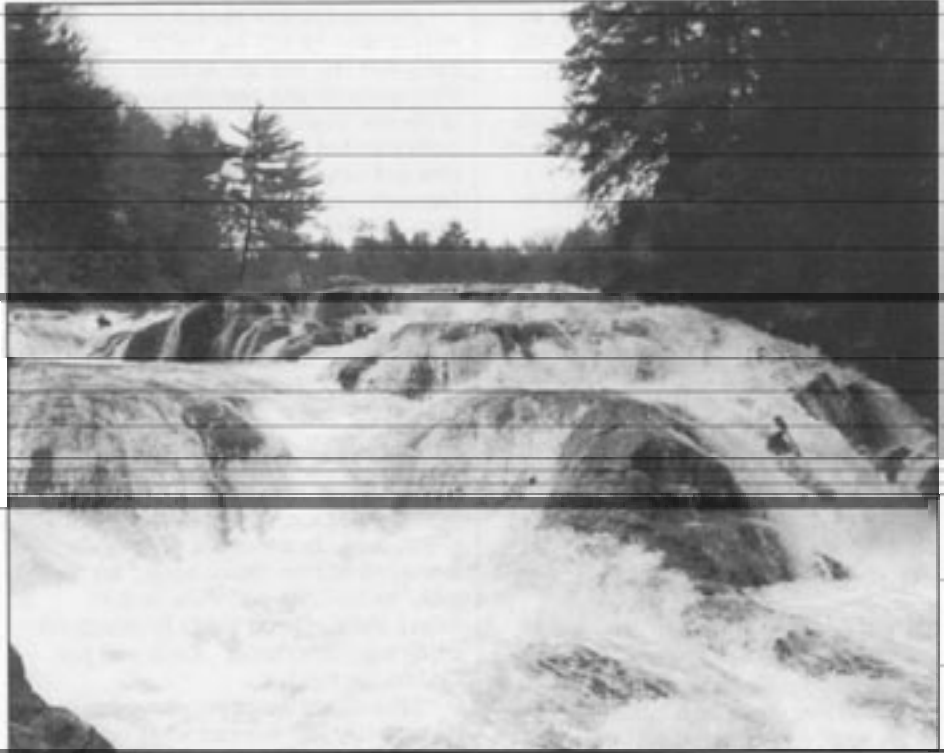
## Holy Waters

by Jonathan Baker

There we were, driving through the Vermont countryside during an early autumn sunset. The heat pouring onto our feet. Windows cracked open, filling the van with a cascade of smells: hay bales and manure, the deep, sobering base of a hibernating earthen floor, and crisp maple leaves being eaten by a John Deere. Drenched in scents, we continued west to the Adirondacks. The peculiar humor of AM talk radio keeping us entertained. We watched as the sun slipped like molasses behind the weathered mountains as we entered New York's Adirondacks. Two hours later we reached Old Forge. The moon occasionally peeked out to illuminate the barren lakes and ponds, only to disappear again behind a blanket of clouds. This summer time town was quiet now. We pulled off Main Street, away from the lingering street lights and motel signs and retired into the back of our 'steel tent', resting up for the 'Mighty Moose' come morning.

Dawn came quickly. Empty stomachs rang like alarm clocks. Our morning hair standing proud, we headed down town to the Muffin Patch. Filled with boaters from all over the East, we were greeted like locals in this small town community of migrating paddlers. We enjoyed our meals, exchanged stories from trips past and caught up with friends we might see only a few times a year. The memories ran thick, the exaggerations even thicker. Breakfast was soon devoured as we headed off to our put-in at the Bottom Moose.

A fifty-foot, sixty degree rock slide called Fowlersville Falls awaited us at the put-in. Looking at its horizon the word "lemmings" quickly came to mind. The Moose continues with drops such as Knife Edge, Sureform, Agers Falls and the omnipresent ender, Crystal. And for those who haven't had enough excitement, the final closure known as Matilla. All fired up with adrenaline and anxiety, knowing the consequences a solid class 5 rapid can inflict, you evaluate your skills, scout the drop, and decide. Oh, let's not forget about that quick Hail Mary. It can never hurt. Then the thrill of a clean run down



Bottom Moose. Photo by Jonathan Baker

Crystal, or even a not so clean run. And the intensity of your concentration as you plummet over the last drop. Only to disappear into the white froth below, hopefully reappearing soon after. Behind all this 'apparent' bravery and skill (I guess that is what some would call it), the true paddler has experienced much more than it seems.

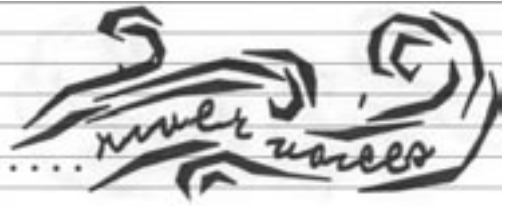
The Moose offers a current of sensory delights. Mind and body contend in a harmonious tension, with the forces of nature (translation-how long can you hold your breath?). Along with the simplistic beauty of nature (watch out for that rebar!). But in all seriousness, the water truly does cleanse the soul. The surreal suddenly becomes real. The confusion transforms to serenity. The paddler is now in his element. Our eyes grow fierce and intense. A childish, devilish grin finds its way to our face. Things become simple again. Sitting on top of waves I often wonder if the river is still, and the world is flowing by me. It is an ultimate freedom. There are few rules to follow. Don't lean up stream while hole playing, swims are cold, rocks are hard, pour-overs are bad. Kind of like the Ten Commandments, only fewer. We transcend into the heaven we spell n.a.t.u.r.e. and the providence of flowing water.

It is this water that builds a strong camaraderie both on and off the river. Kayakers speak their own language. "She peeled out of the eddy, boofed off the

slab and dropped over the fall, popping a big ol' stem squirt!" Yes, we talk like that. Release dates and festivals, heavy rains and snow melt reunite this band of whitewater gypsies. Our Easter comes in the form of spring floods and our Thanksgiving as late Autumn rains. While others can be found driving their Pathfinders, spending hundreds of dollars on ski slopes, the paddler is that fool with the rusty Toyota going to baptize themselves in the holy waters. Liquid ice! Ahhhh, the Pemi in March, nothing will wake you up faster.

Water has always been a symbol of life. We evolved from the sea. Spent nine months suspended in a world of liquid serenity. Are composed (seventy-five percent) of it. It is the staple of life on this planet. Our ecology is grounded upon it, and we upon our ecology. We are intrinsically connected to the water, and unconsciously drawn to it. As stewards we must try to preserve, protect, and fight for its resurrection. Water reawakens our senses and revives our connection with the beauty and mysticism of nature. So what are you waiting for? Go get wet?

**Editor's Note:** The AWA Moose Festival is slated for October 18 in Old Forge, New York. For info call (315) 652-8397 or see the announcement in this issue.



# Is This a Dream: Near Death on the Russell Fork

by David Wallace

Grey, cool to the touch skin, unconscious, and not breathing--lifeless. Ken is walking a fine line between life and death, and right now, he's more dead than alive. I'm holding his head while my companions check for a pulse. His face is ashen. Teeth clinched tightly shut, but his eyes are wide open with pupils as big as saucers. I've never seen anyone like this before. No pulse, so we start CPR. David starts mouth to mouth, then Mike with chest compressions.

Almost immediately after starting CPR, up comes Ken's breakfast, mixed with river water. After clearing Ken's mouth, David continues--CPR is definitely not for wimps. Ken's partner runs to get a physician friend who is downstream of us here at Triple Drop.

"COME ON KEN! HANG WITH US KEN! DON'T YOU DIE ON US!" We are

all shouting as if we can will him back to life. Minutes go by. Marshall relieves David on mouth to mouth. We all know that if Ken does not come around soon, his chances are grim. The adrenaline is pumping among everyone, and time seems a blur.

After 5 to 10 minutes of we see a slight movement of Ken's nose and mouth--he's starting to faintly breathe on his own. A medical school student comes up to offer help, and other boaters are now gathering around. Richard, Ken's physician friend runs up, out of breath. We all feel this great weight of anxiety lifted as Richard begins supervising Ken's care and he continues to breathe on his own.

We were on a typical early Sunday blitz run down the Russell Fork that fall day. Most of us had run the river for several years, and we were bombing down to El Horrendo for a few "laps". We were ahead of most boaters that morning. When we got to Fist, I saw ropes out and people on top of the big river left rock. A boater had flushed underneath the rock, but was OK--That was spooky!

I was the first to Triple Drop and ran the traditional right of center line the first drop, then got out on the left. I'd always loved this rapid, considered it great fun, and had not seen anyone hurt here before. I'd seen boaters surf the hole on river right and usually paddle out fine. But that day the water was higher than in past years and the hole larger. All of us made it through fine except for Nolan, who surfed, rolled, and with a boat full of water, has to continue downstream. Carnage! But he's fine down below.

Carol had decided to portage the first drop on river left, and I heard her yelling. I saw a kayaker from another group in his boat surfing the hole, but in the middle. I got my rope ready for a swimmer. Very soon he punched out, and after making eye contact, Carol threw her rope. It was

at least a 40 ft. throw and she had the distance, but it fell just downstream of him. I joined Carol and several others from our group with our ropes ready.

When I got in position, I was shocked to see a person who was already very weak, unable to stay on the surface, or actively lunge for ropes. I realize that things are going to get grim if we don't get a rope in his hands quickly. I'm the third to throw--make eye contact--release. Damn! He is sucked under just as I release my rope, and does not see the rope land in the hole next to him. After he resurfaced, still in the hole, he was even more lifeless. Things were desperate!

Soon he would be unconscious and unable to grab anything. One of his paddling partners and I jumped in our boats to try a boat based rescue. Four of my group were still on shore throwing ropes.

But before we could push off I looked up and saw a person whose head was under water, but both arms were held high with a rope clinched in his hands. It is an image I will never forget. We scrambled up the bank just as my friends pulled him out of the water. We learned that his name is Ken.

Ken is now sitting upright, and Carol is behind him with her arms around him. His eyes are closed and he's taking deep breaths. Carol looked very supportive, caring, and relieved--it looks like Ken was going to make it. A couple of times he opened his eyes and asked, "Am I dreaming?" He seemed to respond well to Carol and Richard as they tried to explain what happened. Ken would later say in the hospital that our faces were just white blobs that seemed to float in a dream like state. All of us are emotionally wasted, but relieved. I was amazed at how long it took for Ken to come around--close to an hour before he started to talk even a little.

About one and a half hours into the incident, EMT's and Paramedics from Haysi arrived (many thanks for their help, and to the commercial raft guide who radioed for assistance), administered oxygen with Richard's help, and started getting Ken ready for transport. A helicopter was going to attempt a landing on the rocks next to the second drop in Triple Drop--definitely ballsy. There are now 50-75 people on river left and right as if this was some surreal circus. And Ken was the "Main Event".

I saw familiar faces--Woody, Lee, others--and they had this look that said, "glad you're doing this thing, man, and not us." To our amazement we watched a raft paddle into the hole at first drop and

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surf with their clueless passengers, oblivious to the EMT's and others working just feet away to save Ken's life. A helicopter from Virginia flew in, made a "right stuff" landing, and 10 minutes later Ken was on his way to the hospital. The whole thing was over in 2 hours.

This event was briefly mentioned in an earlier article in *American Whitewater*. In hindsight, we could have done some things differently, but we were the ones on the scene and we did our best in a difficult situation. I've read these incident accounts for years, but until you experience a near drowning (or a drowning) first hand, it is really hard to imagine such a highly emotional situation. Our group will never take Triple Drop for granted again. Some may never run it again. It definitely has changed the way I look at hydraulics. I no longer assume that when people are stuck in a hole, they will wash out OK. I think this is too often the outlook that expert boaters take.

It took all six of us throwing ropes be-

fore Ken was finally able to grasp one. Very few paddlers have done a tethered swimmer rescue before, but that probably would have been necessary had he not grabbed a rope when he did. None of our group had "rescue" type PFDs with a pick release harness and we were not thinking of that option. We are all very glad that we did not have to attempt rescue of an unconscious body.

Epilog: This past winter, some of us got to meet Ken, and boated with him on the Class IV/V section of Little River Canyon in Alabama. He is doing well, and seems to be on his way to recovery, both mentally and physically. CPR can save lives—get certified, and badger your paddling partners into the training also—a life may depend on it.

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# Trucks, Mires, & Muddy Escapes

By Mike Hoffman and Ambrose Tuscano

I first met Ambrose our sophomore year at Taft, a Connecticut boarding school. When we learned of each other's whitewater addictions, we became good friends. I showed him some of the great rivers my New England state had to offer, but after every run he would scoff and begin telling tales of a far-off land known as West Virginia. He spoke of rivers called Gauley, New, and Sandy and boasted about how big and bad they were. The following fall he invited me to his home near Pittsburgh and promised a few days of paddling that would change my life. When I got there, Ambrose told me about a river down in West Virginia with monster rapids and a big waterfall; he said it was one of his favorite runs. Despite the river's other charms, it was probably the word waterfall that had me sold. Whatever the case, I took the story hook, line, and sinker, and agreed to embark on a trip that I am sure will always rank high on my list of river stories.

Over Thanksgiving break of our Junior year, I invited Mike to my house for a wild week of whitewater, West Virginia style. We were both pretty excited for him to experience some real paddling (although, I must admit, I was looking at it from more of an entertainment standpoint). You see, Mike is from Connecticut, where rivers tend to be short, flat and cold. So, naturally, when I first told him about all of the terrific paddling available in our neighboring state, he was skeptical.

When Mike arrived, however, I was disappointed to report that water levels in the area were pathetically low. I began frantically searching the gauges for a river with more than a trickle of water in it. Finally, I discovered that the Arden section of the Tygart was running at a decent level. I had been there two years earlier, and I vaguely remembered it as a larger river with one big rapid and a waterfall. Yeah ... good idea; previous experience with Mike told me that he was a sucker for waterfalls.

The next objective was to find someone to accompany us on the four hour drive to the Tygart. My parents were busy that day, and each boater I called

begged off with some lame excuse; one even claimed he had to go to work. If you can imagine that. By virtue of the fact that Mike didn't have a drivers license, we were going to have to bike our shuttle. Had I been a more careful reader of outdoors, I would have realized that this trip wasn't meant to be, but I was young and stubborn and so ignored these prime warnings from the river gods.

I had to wake Dad to ask for directions; he groggily pointed to a West Virginia map, and mumbled some advice about the put in, then drifted back to sleep. With directions in hand, I had only to convince Mike to endure the four hour drive, the biked shuttle, and the bitter cold; the river would take care of itself.

We got up at six in the morning and began the trip. Once we had loaded the bikes, boats and gear in to the back of Ambrose's pickup, we grabbed a bag of chips and some soda and headed south. Being ambitious videographers with big plans for the making of the first feature length, big screen, multimillion dollar kayak film, we brought the Sony handycam to record this momentous trip. I got in the passenger seat, and assumed my duties as navigator and deejay.

After many miles of West Virginia highways and back roads, we arrived at what we estimated to be the correct turn. We bounced down an unpaved track until we came to the bridge that Ambrose's father had identified as the landmark for the put in: "Just go to the bridge and drive upstream as far as you want until you see a good spot to put in." Anticipating the long bike ride ahead of us we only drove up stream about a quarter of a mile before we stopped to unload the kayaks. We stashed the boats along the riverbank in case one of the three people to travel the road that day happened to be a boat thief, then proceeded to the takeout.

It was situated on a steep, deserted dirt road servicing a few hunting shanties. After unloading the bikes we changed quickly in the brisk morning air. Just as we were about to leave, Ambrose spied a deeply rutted road that led down to the riverbank. "Now there's an idea!" he said.

"If we park on the shore we won't have to lug our boats up the hill." I don't remember what my reply was, but I am sure that I was skeptical about his plan. Before I could voice my concern, though, the truck was parked, and we were on our way to the river.

We biked the shuttle quickly and, within an hour of leaving the truck, were on the water. Though it had been almost five hours since we left Ambrose's house, I wasn't tired at all; instead I was psyched for the big rapids and much anticipated waterfall. As we paddled out from shore and into the current, I felt a sense of accomplishment; with the difficult stuff behind us there was only fun ahead.

At first, I found the river to be relaxing. The first mile was comprised of small waves that serve no purpose other than splashing cold water on your face: nuisance rapids. As the clouds set in and the temperature dropped, we eddied out above our first major rapid. I was beginning to enjoy this river immensely; maybe Ambrose was right about the quality of West Virginia whitewater.

As we eddied on the right above the first major drop, a quiet murmur of doubt began in the back of my mind. My recollection of the Tygart placed the first rapid as a river-wide ledge, runnable on the left by skirting a large undercut. As we got out of our boats, however, it became apparent that either my memory was shot or the river had changed its course or ... I didn't let myself think of the other possibility. Still, as we scouted the drop in the plummeting temperatures, it became obvious to me that the rapid before us was none other than Wells Falls. Although this wasn't a true "waterfall," it was still mighty impressive. Where the river narrowed all of the water piled into what appeared to be a deadly hole on river-left. Rumor had it that if a boater said his prayers faithfully he would be flushed through the drop. Staring at the thundering maw, I couldn't help thinking that we weren't in Kansas any longer. Try as I might, I couldn't figure out how we could be at Wells already. According to my vague memory of the river, we had skipped several rapids and, most importantly, the waterfall.

Keeping those woves to myself, I got the video equipment out and prepared to run the drop. Like a sign from the heavens, snow began to fall just as I was getting into my boat. By the time I paddled out of the eddy and committed myself to



the drop large flakes were swirling through the air, obscuring visibility. This really didn't concern me though, because as my boat picked up speed toward the exploding water I offered up my final prayers and squeezed my eyes shut.

As my boat crashed through the wall of water I released my victory cry and waved my paddle towards the shore. Then I paddled over to the eddy, climbed up on the rock and took over videographer duties from Mike.

Blowing on frigid fingers, I was amazed at how long it took him to get ready to run the drop; apparently he was saying a more extensive prayer than I had. This theory continued to hold true, because when Mike finally paddled out of the eddy, and through the drop he seemed to have completed the run without wetting his face. He gave me a look that said, "You told me this was hard," but I could only shrug. I think we both might have done multiple runs but just at that moment the snow shower upgraded itself to an arctic tempest, and we were persuaded to head downstream.

Floating some flatwater, I struggled with the issue of when I ought to tell Mike of my suspicions. As we rounded a bend in the river, we were idly chatting, me facing downstream and Mike floating backwards. Just then, over his shoulder, I saw what appeared to be a blue pickup sitting on the right shore. "This," I thought, "would be a good time to tell him."

When Ambrose informed me that we had put in too far down stream I really wasn't very angry. The flurries at Wells Falls had turned into a near blizzard; our helmets and life-jackets were powdered with snow. My hands were freezing, and at that point a warm truck was much more appealing than an icy waterfall. Sure enough, just as Ambrose broke the news, we rounded a corner and saw the dirty, blue pickup waiting on the riverbank. I thought briefly that it would be nice not having to haul our boats up the hill. I even figured that if we turned the heat way up in the truck, we would get warm enough to drive back **upstream** and run the **waterfall**. We loaded the boats

and started the truck, ready to move on to bigger and better things. It was at that moment that the river gods decided to have some fun and teach us a lesson about trucks and mud.

With the truck toasty warm and the radio playing, Ambrose shifted into drive and we headed out to run the rapids we had missed ... or so we thought. As we started to pull away from the river, the tires spun hopelessly on the soggy bank. Although we were only about ten yards from the gravel road, nothing in our power was going to get us there. We tried sticking any number of things beneath the wheels for traction: rocks, logs, lifejackets; even a pair of bar-b-que grills we found in the woods. Each time we spun the wheels, the truck would slide dangerously close to a feeder creek on our right. After more than ninety minutes of pushing, pulling, and swearing, all we had to show for our effort was a set of bald, smoking tires and a truck covered with mud, inside and out. It was safe to say that I was quite angry.

"You stupid truck," I said, aiming a kick at its mud-caked tire. "I ought to just leave you here to rust." Driven by a powerful anger and frustration I set out walking up the take-out road. Had I been less enraged, I might have realized that anyone we might come across on this lonely road would most likely be there to dump a dead body into the lake; this was not a chic neighborhood. The only houses around were summer shacks, uninhabited this late in the fall. Even if we hiked the mile and a half back to the main road, our chances of getting help were slim (especially since we both looked like losing contestants in a mudwrestling tournament. As we trudged up the dirt road, fear began to seep into my mind, mixing with the anger. What if we couldn't get help? It was getting late and I really didn't have a good plan.

It was at that moment, in the depths of despair, that I heard the noise. At first I couldn't believe my ears. It was the sound of another engine. Running up the road in a frenzy, I spotted the white pickup. It was a full size, four-wheel drive monster, and a man in cover-alls was busily loading garbage into the back of it. I can't imagine what he must have thought when he saw us coming up the road in our mud-covered dry-suits, but it was to his credit that he didn't break and run. In fact, when we had explained our situation to him, he proved extremely cooperative. In no time at all we were back at the river bank with a chain hooked between our trucks.

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As we sat in our respective vehicles he called back to me, "All set?" I gave him the thumbs-up and he laid on the accelerator, with no apparent effect. He got out of the truck, and came down to where I was.

"Can you see what's holding us up," I asked.

Looking things over quickly he replied, "it would probably be better if you didn't have your truck in park."

I sheepishly put the truck in neutral and moments later we were back on solid ground. After we had thanked him profusely, he drove off to haul more garbage.

When we finally got back onto dry ground, we had been off the river for two hours. We were too exhausted and frustrated to think about getting back on the river, even though where we had put in was less than an eighth of a mile from Moat's Falls (the object of my obsession). Instead, we simply packed up the bikes and headed home. A stop at a wonderful Italian restaurant was the only saving grace of the day. It has been almost two years since the trip, but I have not yet run the top section of the Arden. Still ob-

essed with waterfalls, I look forward to the day when I can add the elusive Moat's to my list.

Even though we no longer go to school together, Ambrose and I keep in touch. I am still living in Connecticut, and I must admit that, after several tours of "South-em" paddling, Ambrose enjoys a better variety of whitewater. Still, as this story illustrates admirably, we New Englanders hold the advantage of brains.

While it would be easy for many adults to read this story, shake their heads in disbelief and mutter, "Kids, these days!" it is important for them to remember that humans learn best by experience. So many of today's "wise" boaters learned everything they know about boating by doing it wrong at least once. My dad, for instance, claims that when he first started boating, he would swim every rapid several times before he would ever complete it in his boat. (One story about the New at 20+ feet comes readily to mind.) So hopefully, at worst, this story will comfort those old-time boaters ("I used to have to walk my shuttles(through two feet of snow(without any shoes)") and make them

realize that "those youngsters" don't have it as easy as they think.

As for me, I must admit that that trip taught me a few things, albeit the hard way. I learned that while I may be able to paddle with adults, they know a thing or two more than me about life in general. They know, for instance, that when a lake is at a particularly low level, the area normally underwater becomes exceedingly slick, and, therefore, they don't park cars there. They also know that when traveling to an unknown river, one should gather comprehensive directions about the location of the put-in.

Although I had to learn these lessons the hard way, this knowledge is fundamental in the pursuit of life, liberty and whitewater. And it comes with the additional satisfaction that when anyone brings up the Arden section of the Tygart, I can tell one hell of a story about my friend, Mike, and how he once got us stuck in the mud for hours.

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## Perception Prevails In Dispute With Copenhagen And Skoal Outfitters

After months of arbitration, Perception is pleased to announce that Copenhagen and Skoal Outfitters, a promotion by U.S. Tobacco Sales and Marketing Inc., have ceased using the Perception kayak as part of its "Free Gear for Lids" promotion. The issue at hand was the use of the Perception kayak in the promotional advertisements and collateral pieces. The kayak, whose decklines are trademarked, was not only used without permission but was also misrepresented as a competitor's product.

"I am very pleased that we were able to reach an agreement," states Perception President, Bill Masters. "As an outdoor company whose target is primarily youths, it is essential that we maintain our 'No Tobacco' stance."

## Cheat River Festival A Success

1500 enthusiastic participants dodged raindrops to ensure another successful Cheat Fest at the confluence of Muddy Creek and the Cheat River near Albright, WV, May 3. Rain and good water levels are becoming a tradition for this important fundraising event benefiting the efforts of Friends of the Cheat and the West Virginia Rivers Coalition to address a wide variety of issues within the Cheat Watershed.

This was the most diverse and best organized of the three Cheat Fests held to date. Partiers danced to the music of eight regional bands into the wee hours, children romped in the kids area, and nationally ranked trials bicyclists wowed the crowd with their stunts. Great deals abounded at the silent auction and just about every whitewater manufacturer imaginable was represented with a booth. This was not just a paddling event, however. Fine woodwork, hand crafted jewelry, drums, and pottery were on sale as well. Demonstrations were held by a local raptor center and a wolf dog association. You could even shop for a new Subaru.

About forty racers participated in the Cheat Canyon race the day before the festival. Roger Zbel continued his dominance of the Appalachian racing scene with his first place finish overall, and Colleen Laffey won the women's division. Each received fine crafted trophies by woodworker and Friends of the Cheat Board Chair Mykl Messer. Special thanks to the outstanding efforts of Cheat Fest organizer Teresa Gryder.

The 1998 Cheat Fest is set for Saturday, May 2. Call Friends of the Cheat at 304 379 3141 or check our web site at [www.pitt.edu/~jsteckel/cheat](http://www.pitt.edu/~jsteckel/cheat).

## 1997 Western Carolina Rescue Rodeo A Success

by Chris Bell, Rodeo Coordinator

It was a creek boater's dream, a rodeo organizer's nightmare: torrential Friday evening and early Saturday morning rain, with more forecast to come. Thoughts of the amount of money already committed raced through my head as my truck cut a wake through the water cascading across the highway. Would anyone show up? If they did, would we be able to hold any of the events? Would the club go broke? Why hadn't I brought my creek boat?

Just outside Bryson City the rain turned to a light mist. Things were looking up. Perhaps the river Gods were pleased with what they saw. Still, the National Weather Service was calling for continued heavy rain and flash floods in the Cumberland Plateau and the Smokies. Could we go on? Even if the teams could compete, wouldn't the judging forms get soaking wet?

Tom Piccirilli, one of the first volunteers to arrive, told me, "No problem, we run slalom races in pouring rain all the time." Then he disappeared. In his absence teams and volunteers began arriving in droves, directed by ground control officer Curtis Clark to unload, move their

vehicles to the most remote parking lots, and return to register.

In the midst of registering volunteers and teams I looked up to notice that Tom had returned with yards of clear plastic sheeting, sheeting he was turning into a rapidly growing pile of clip board rain coats. In the end the rain held off all day, except at dinner time, and the rodeo turned out to be the best attended ever, with seven full teams and close to 40 volunteers.

Though I wish I could take the credit for how smoothly the rodeo ran despite conditions that could have led to disaster, I can't - Tom's initiative turned out to be just the first in a series of gallant efforts made by small army of volunteers who saw needs and filled them before being asked. These efforts included: Clemson Whitewater Club members Oliver Heim and Robin Yarbrough selling T-shirts and displaying the prizes all day long, Steve Heiselman coordinating the flow of safety boaters and teams in the river events, Tom *Visnius* sweet-talking the folks at Relia's Kitchen out of a cooler full of hot coffee, and David Lee setting up two tents

just minutes before the rain returned and we were to sit down to what would have been a very wet dinner.

The competition was top-notch, with six of the seven teams finishing third or better in at least two events. In the end it was the well-trained team from Brevard NC's Camp Carolina -

"Carolina Carnage" - that emerged on top. These guys (Charles "Cha Cha Linguine" Thompson, Jim "Smoothie" Hampton, David "Blacky" Black, "E.Z." Gregory and Hank "Dr. Duke" Duke) were so good that it appeared at times as if their moves had been choreographed in advance.

While only one team finished in first place, "the only losers were those who didn't participate." The rest of the winning teams were: Carolina Canoe Club (Raleigh, NC), Clemson Whitewater Club Orange (Clemson, SC), Clemson Whitewater Club XXX (Clemson, SC), Eastern Michigan University (Ypsilanti, MI), Four Chicks and a Richard (Asheville, NC - this is the "family-friendly" version of their name), and Tennessee Valley Canoe Club (Chattanooga, TN).

## 1997 Western Carolina Rescue Rodeo results

### Perception, Inc. Rope Throw

Clemson Orange.....	(20)
2. Four Chicks.....	(18)
2. EMU.....	(18)
2. CCC.....	(18)
2. Camp Carolina.....	(18)
TVCC.....	(16)
Clemson XXX.....	(12)

### Savage Designs Self Rescue

Camp Carolina.....	(1:12.75)
EMU.....	(2:45.40)
Clemson Orange.....	(4:08.19)
TVCC.....	(4:17.03)
Clemson XXX.....	(4:17.75)
Four Chicks.....	(5:46.19)
CCC.....	(9:13.00)

### Nantahala Outdoor Center Team Rescue

Clemson Orange.....	(5:25)
Four Chicks.....	(7:13)
Camp Carolina.....	(9:28)
EMU.....	(13:03)
TVCC.....	(14:18)
Clemson XXX.....	(20:30)

CCC..... (25:00)

### Dagger Canoe Company Rescue Scenario

Camp Carolina.....	(43)
TVCC.....	(39)
Clemson Orange.....	(36)
Four Chicks.....	(30)
EMU.....	(29)
CCC.....	(27)
Clemson XXX.....	(26)

### Menasha Ridge Press First Aid Scenario

CCC.....	(204)
Camp Carolina.....	(198)
TVCC.....	(167)
EMU.....	(165)
Clemson XXX.....	(157)
Clemson Orange.....	(153)
Four Chicks.....	(151)

### Lotus Designs Equipment Roundup

Camp Carolina.....	(2:40)
EMU.....	(2:44)

Clemson Orange.....	(3:04)
Clemson XXX.....	(3:10)
CCC.....	(3:44)
Four Chicks.....	(4:54)
TVCC.....	(5:27)

### American Whitewater Affiliation Overall Championship

(sum of individual event finishes, low score wins).

Camp Carolina.....	(11.5)
Clemson Orange.....	(17)
EMU.....	(20.5)
TVCC.....	(27)
Four Chicks.....	(28.5)
CCC.....	(29.5)
Clemson XXX.....	(34)

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## Night Paddling in Winter on Boulder Creek

Beginning in November, the local public utility releases about 150 cfs on Boulder Creek nightly. The releases hit the slalom course above Eben Fine Park around 6:30 pm and run for 2 hours. The flow provides enough water for playing in the class II+ drops in the slalom course and various play spots down stream. The slalom course is well lit by street lights. The section between the slalom course and 9th street is fairly dark and a decent understanding of the lines makes this more enjoyable. In addition, Boulder Canyon (Class III-V) can be interesting during these releases, if one has good knowledge of the required lines (and very interesting if one does not). Due to its depth and steep, narrow sides, Boulder Canyon can be quite dark even on nights with a full moon (hence, the need to know the required lines). Some have tried using head lamps, but these generally don't shine far enough ahead to be of much use (you see the rock a millisecond before you are pinned on it) and they blind their paddling partners.

Beginning in late October, the Boulder Kayak and Kanu Club meets every Tuesday night at 6:00 pm at the parking area on Arapahoe St. above Eben Fine Park to paddle the creek. They set up the shuttle, after which some proceed to the put-in at the top of the slalom course while others go to the put in at Four Mile Canyon. All meet again at the Widowmaker hole for some rodeo fun, then proceed downstream to the take-out at Central Park. The fun then continues, spilling over into town, and some of Boulder's fine drinking establishments. They go in any weather (blizzards are the best), and all are welcome.

The New Year's Eve Boulder Creek Icebreaker Paddle O' Rama is held every year on Boulder Creek. Meet at the dam at the top of the slalom course at 6 PM for pre-race revelry. Prizes are awarded to the fastest and best lit boaters.

## Bringing in the New Year with an ice Cream Headache

by Warren Wilson

This wasn't what I had expected. Just one minute into the third annual Boulder Creek, New Year's Eve, Icebreaker Paddle O' Rama, I was hanging upside down in a two person kayak in black water on a black night with ice-burges lumbering by. I sat there for a few seconds wondering if I could roll the boat with a beginner in the bow. Cold water washing over my legs answered the question. Gary Thacker, the beginner in the bow, was out and I had to follow his lead. Undaunted by our swim, Gary, who must've hit his head on a rock, insisted we try again. We continued our practice run down the slalom course with an entourage of apparently-concerned followers. If they were concerned for our well-being, their worries were misplaced. They should have been concerned for the slalom course, being that we managed to collide with most of the gates. Looking upstream after our practice run, the course was alive with swinging poles. The only gates which escaped unscathed were those we missed altogether.

The New Year's eve paddling festival on Boulder Creek takes advantage of the winter evening dam releases-averaging 150 cfs-which usually hit the slalom course between 6 and 7pm and run for up to two hours. The morning before the race, the overhanging ice on the banks was cleared, slalom gates were hung and a bonfire was built. Glow sticks were placed on each gate (red for upstream, green for downstream) and luminarias lined the paved path which runs along the edge of the creek.

In order that the race be useful to those practicing for the Olympics, a standard race format was used. The racers started at the dam, blazed through the gates, then jumped out of their boats below the dreaded Widowmaker Hole. From there it was a 200 yard sprint back up the creek path to the bonfire at the dam, where the timer awaited our arrival to stop the watch. Racers were penalized for socially unacceptable behavior such as to arriving when the time keeper was opening a new beverage or taking a drink. Each racer gate-judged his or her own run and added appropriate penalties to their own time.

Now that Gary and I had the course dialed in, we sat on the bank enjoying macrobrews, while conducting visualization exercises of what would surely be a record breaking descent of the course. When the fated time arrived, we smoked the course cleanly (see the part above about gate-judging) and jaunted like gazelles on the icy creek path back to the fire, stunning the crowd with our speed. Gary Lacy, a.k.a. Squirtin' Moses, went next in his boat adorned with flashing Christmas lights (taking the prize for the "best lit boater"). Although we heard the crack of paddle on wood many times and saw gates gyrating wildly as he passed, Squirtin' Moses also professed to have made a clean run. Although unconfirmed, reports surfaced of Squirtin' Moses being driven back to the bonfire. Landis Arnold followed and claimed to have had a clean run. However, the red, green, and white paint on his helmet and fresh splinters in his knuckles did generate some discussion. While he appeared to enjoy the paddling, it was apparent to all present that he preferred the sprint up the icy creek path. The grace of Landis bounding up the path in full winter paddling garb brought to mind images of Michael Johnson breaking the 200 meter world record. Mike Creshaw was next and actually reported touching a couple of gates on his descent. We were aghast at this display of ineptitude on the course, but hired him on the spot as club treasurer. A slew of others tackled the course but none could top Gary Lacy's time (or, perhaps, find a ride back to the bonfire). Gary Thacker and I consoled ourselves, recognizing that this was only a warm-up for Sydney.

The slalom was followed by a down-river race from the dam to the final drop on the course, the Widowmaker. We started Le Mans style en masse. Gary Lacy began by sliding through the bonfire (providing his hull with an illegal heat treatment) and into the creek. Gary Thacker and I went over the first drop with a pile of boats and flailing paddles and found ourselves once again head-down in the icy black stuff. This time we stayed in the boat and managed a primitive roll by clawing our way up the bank. This unfortunate incident gave Allison Mattson a hole shot which she converted to victory.

A number of paddlers spent the evening off the race course and in the Widowmaker Hole getting big air and making odd facial expressions (as if they had a vice on their head) when they rolled up out of the icy depths. A rodeo competition was to follow the slalom and downriver races, but we were a sodden, cold and tired group who thought only of hurrying home to watch Dick Clark count down the last seconds of the year. The festival ended with a lavish creek-side awards banquet hosted by Prijon/Wildwasser, the event's sponsor, and all went home laden with prizes and ice-cream headaches.



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# AW Contest Announced... Membership Mania

by Paul Tefft

For 40 years American Whitewater (AW) has been working to protect and conserve America's waterways through a diverse array of avenues. Over the years AW has fought and won innumerable battles to save, enhance and preserve our whitewater resources. One of our organization's most valuable assets in the ongoing saga of river conservation has been our constituency. Since AW's inception, hundreds of dedicated volunteers have donated their time to help achieve AW's mission, "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." We now invite our members to join us in the quest to fulfill our goals by participating in a membership contest.

AW's 40th Anniversary Membership Mania is a contest which has been created to help AW increase its membership base and raise awareness about the merits of the organization. The contest is designed to help AW members to support their sport by signing up their paddling friends. Of course, like the thought of a cold beer at the take-out, a little motivation never hurts. So the members who recruit the most new members will be awarded product prizes and be featured/thanked in a future article published in this very world class whitewater publication.

The contest is simple. The AW members who sign up the most new members will win product prizes. Thousands of dollars worth of prizes have been donated by the contest's generous sponsors. Two phenomenal grand prizes will be awarded...whitewater paddling trips to Ecuador with Larry Vermeeren of Small World Adventures! Some of the contest's other outstanding prizes are brand new

whitewater kayaks donated by Savage, Prijon, Dagger and Perception. Additionally, hundreds of stunning whitewater posters from Chris Smith Photography will be given away. AW and the contest sponsors have made it easy for you to be a winner.

Current members can sign up new members using the special registration forms which are inserted in American Whitewater. To become a membership maniac all you need to do is remove these forms, fill out your name, address etc., find a paddling buddy who isn't currently a member and sign him/her up into the country's premier whitewater river conservation organization. The contest will run from Gauley Festival '97 until Gauley Festival '98, so you have lots of time to get into the membership mania spirit. The winners will be announced and thanked at the 1998 Gauley Festival. At the Membership Mania award ceremony the prizes will be awarded. Contest participants need not be present to win but we highly recommend that you put the Gauley Festival on your paddling itinerary since it is one of the highlights of the season.

AW's flagship event, the Gauley Festival, continues to increase in popularity each year. This growth parallels the growth in paddle sports. In a world with a rapidly increasing human population, growth in just about everything is inevitable, including paddle sports. As our rivers become more crowded each year, AW's role as the voice to protect paddler's interests becomes increasingly important. A louder voice is a stronger voice, one which is more often heard, listened to and able to elicit results. A larger membership base for the AW translates directly into a more powerful and effective lobby.

AW's 40th Anniversary Membership Mania has been created to give our mem-

bers the chance to make a difference by increasing our constituency base. Executive Director of American Whitewater, Rich Bowers, elaborates on the reasoning for the need for more whitewater paddlers to join the organization. "As an organization of only a few thousand members, AW has been incredibly successful in saving rivers and opening access in the past. But if we want to do more, and fight bigger battles, we need to show that boaters are united and working together. The best method of showing support for the work we do, is for boaters to join as members."

This logic is great ammunition for signing up your non-AW friends. I personally know lots of paddlers who know about the AW, like the organization and what it stands for, believe in its goals, but haven't gotten around to signing up or have let their membership lapse. These people are prime Membership Mania candidates. I have created a top secret mission possible campaign plan which targets these new mania members and practically guarantees an exotic, Small World Adventures trip to Ecuador.

Even though my membership mania mission is top secret, you have already received security clearance by virtue of your AW status and now are privy to this plan. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to remove the special MM registration forms, sneak them into your shuttle vehicle, take them to the river(s), and distribute them to your non-AW paddling pals. Don't forget to remind your recruits that in addition to supporting a great organization, they get a free subscription to this magazine. The registration forms will not self-destruct until September 1998, so you have plenty of time to start planning your journey to Ecuador. As you dip your paddle blade in for your first South America stroke, you should remember that you can and did make a difference!



## Carolina Paddling Film Festival to Span Four Cities

The Carolina Paddlesport Film Festival, a fundraiser for Canoeing for Kids, will be held December 16-19 in four different Carolina cities. The festival, sponsored by Pategonia, Inc., will feature whitewater and sea kayaking films according to Clay Bernicke.

The December 16<sup>th</sup> showing will be at the Fine Arts Theater in Asheville. On December 17<sup>th</sup> the festival moves to Coffee Underground in Greenville. On the 18<sup>th</sup> the films will be presented at the Nickelodeon Theatre in Columbia and on the 19<sup>th</sup> at the Terrace Theater in Charleston.

ShowTime's each night are 7 and 9 p.m. and admission is \$6. For additional information call (803)777-9181.





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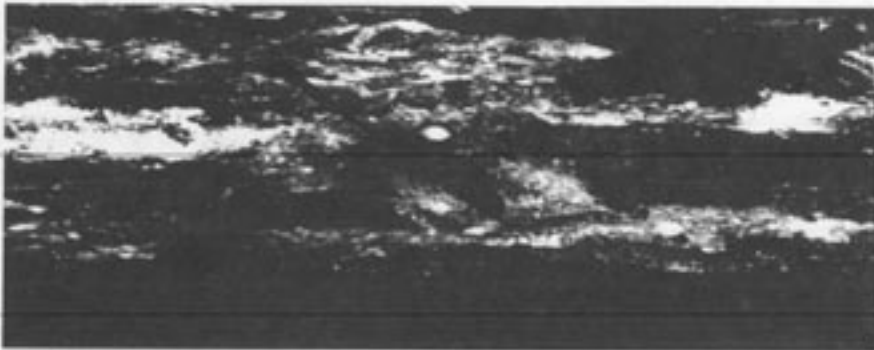
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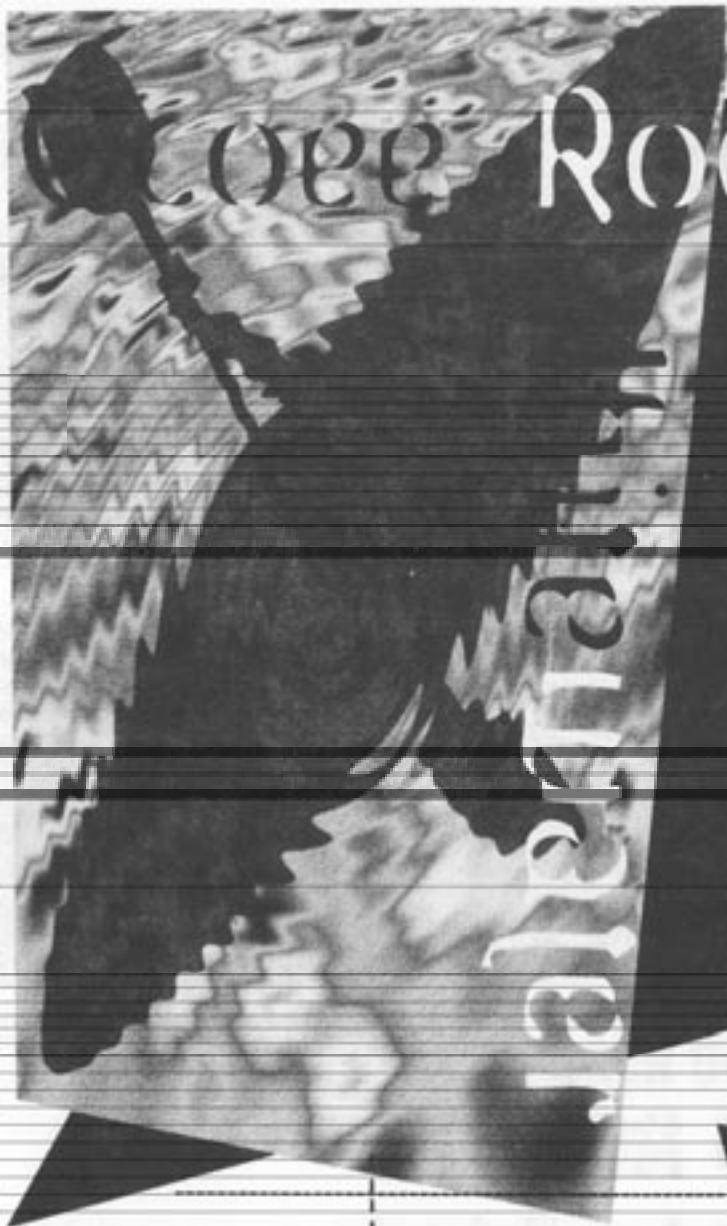


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**7:00 - 10:00** Final Registration at OARS (Limited Registration)

Saturday, October 11  
**9:00 - 1:00** Freestyle Through a Rapid Competition on Upper Ocoee  
**9:00 - 5:00** Freestyle, open Canoe, and Squirt competition at Hell Hole  
**7:00 p.m.** Party and Dinner at OARS

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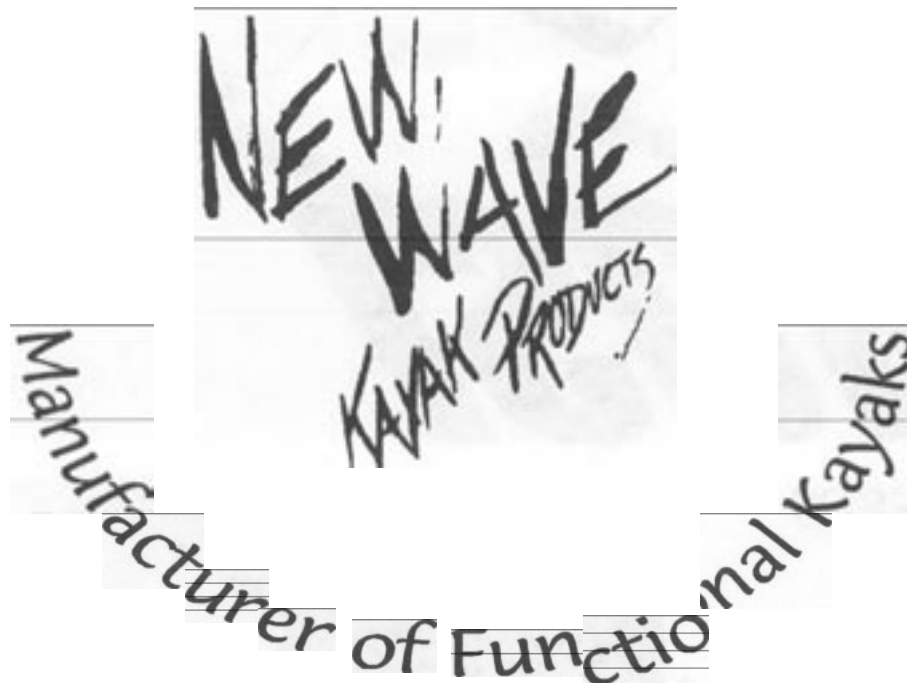
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Paddler - Ed Lucero

Photo by John Fullbright



# The General Theory of Wacko Relativity

## Or An Explanation of River Time

by Scott C. Reuman (Dr. Surf)

Recently discovered at Princeton University in files thought lost for more than 60 years were notes by Edgar Einstein, brother of the Nobel prize-winning physicist. Albert, Edgar's older brother, is well known for his General Theory of Relativity and other works. Edgar, however, had done theoretical work of his own. Until now his work was little known and less well understood.

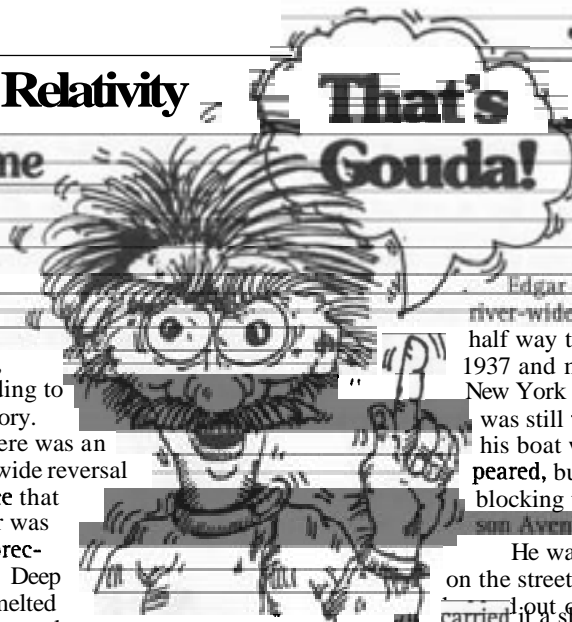
The missing files have been dubbed the Wacko Theory of Relativity, not because the Theory is false, but more surprisingly, because the Theory is true and yet it predicts impossible events.

Edgar was a river runner, a kayaker during the era before plastic, before kevlar, even before fiberglass. Edgar's boats were built from frameworks of bone and covered with the waxy skins of Gouda cheese. Edgar loved Gouda so there was a constant supply available. It was in this boat during a river trip down the San Luce River in the Utah that Edgar first encountered the phenomenon that

would strike him like an apple on Newton's head, eventually leading to his Wacko Theory.

It seems there was an unusual river-wide reversal on the San Luce that year. The river was running at unprecedented levels. Deep winter snows melted in less than one week by record heat waves. River gauges did not exist back then, but the river level has been estimated by experts at around 275,000 cfs, approximately the flow of the biggest flood in the Colorado River. But the Colorado averages 75 feet in width, the San Luce has a river channel only 10 wide. Edgar launched at noon, expecting to reach the takeout 45 miles downstream by 2pm.

Fortunately for us he never made it.



Edgar dropped into the river-wide reversal about half way through his trip in 1937 and materialized in New York City in 1997. He was still wet and still in his boat when he reappeared, but he was now blocking traffic on Madison Avenue.

He was hardly noticed on the streets of NYC. He carried out of his boat and

the nearby subway where he caught the 8:15 to New Jersey and back to Princeton.

The Wacko Theory is based on his experience and I'll make an attempt to present the first lay description here. It goes like this:

At the flows Edgar encountered along the San Luce River, the water speed in places reached about 65 mph. The reversal however was in a region known for gravitational anomalies and as the water



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recirculated (with Edgar in it) its speed was squared with each return to the center of the hole. As his speed increased, Edgar's mass also increased (that's Albert's theory, and I'll leave that to another discussion). As his mass increased the river was constricted even more and the speed of recirculation accelerated.

According to Edgar's calculations, it took approximately 32 second to reach light speed, well within his ability to hold his breath. Edgar recalls seeing the muddy red water turn a shining ultraviolet blue suggesting that a "blue shift" was happening, the light from the water affected by his relative speed. (This "blue shift" has spawned a corollary to Wacko Theory that predicts that all river holes will appear blue to any one at the bottom).

Once Edgar reached light speed the shape of his craft distorted, as things do at those velocities, and the only place similarly distorted was the perception of reality in New York. Since similar distortions seek to cancel one another and since Edgar's speed freed him from the time-span continuum, and since Edgar's mass was less than New York's, he naturally ap-

peared in the heart of the city.

When reporters found him in his older brother's office at Princeton the following day, Edgar admitted to being slightly dizzy from the effects of his adventure. He stated, "Everyone knows that river time is different from real time. I just happened to get a slightly longer adventure than most. I'd go back in a minute, but my boat's been damaged and it'll take a while to repair. Do you like Gouda?"

So, next time you take a river trip and the days seem to go at a different pace, you can thank Edgar Einstein for explaining the phenomenon and proving the effect exists.

Editor's Note:

Dr. Surf lives in *Nederland*, Colorado. His popular column used to appear in *River Runner*, but now in the greener pastures of *American Whitewater!*

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