



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS  
September/October 2004

# 2004 Conservation UPDATE

*Gauley Guide*  
*Rock Island in Danger!*  
*Colorado's Lost River*

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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

**A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY**

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Cover: Bryan Kirk on the Gauley River in between Pillow Rock and Hungry Mother rapids.  
*Photo by Christie Dobson*



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## American Whitewater Journal

Volume XLV, No.4

### F E A T U R E S

Field Notes

# Best of the Gauley!

pg. 16



Feature

# Conservation and Access San Miguel

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# Gala Recap



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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.

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 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 Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1424 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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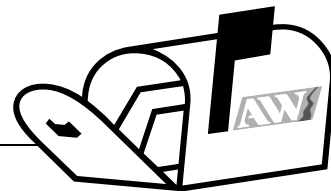


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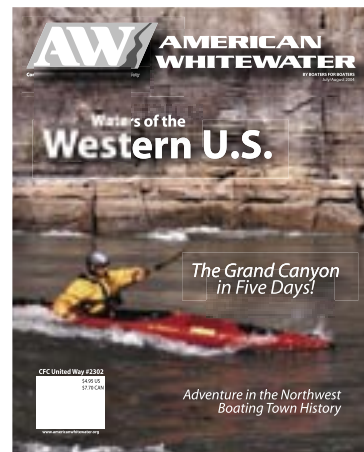
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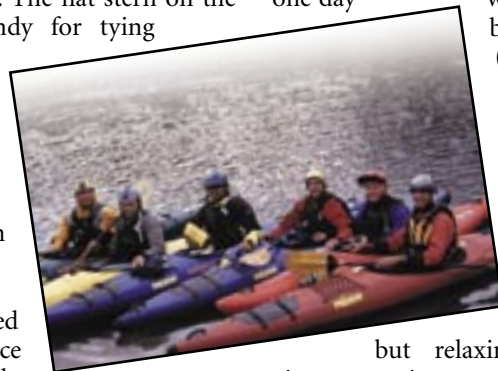
# Letters to the Editor



I read with interest Jeff West's account of his five-day trip down the Grand. P.J. Call and I made a two-day trip in Desolation Canyon (about 40 miles per day) 2 years ago. After that, I started looking for "hybrid" type kayaks.



We used the largest modern (at that time) yaks we could find (an Overflow and an RPM). Once you take out all the internal support and float bags, those rigs are OK for a couple of days. The flat stern on the RPM came in handy for tying down a larger dry bag! The Deso Ranger said that no sea kayaks would be allowed. Seems some epic rescues have resulted from such past use.



I'm disappointed that the Park Service Rangers in the Grand are not up on local history. A five-day kayaks-only trip down the Grand to Lake Mead was made in 1984. John Jaycox (infamous Gore Canyon racer), Brooks Hoven, and myself blew down the canyon at 50 miles per day. We spent more time hiking side canyons each day than we did paddling. Our secret - on launch day, August 13, a three day 70,000 cfs test of newly modified spillways at Glen Canyon Dam started!

I know that at first, blowing down the river at a high rate of speed sounds a bit insensitive and boorish. But it is not. Traveling is a pure use of the kayak and traveling with purpose as the French Voyagers must have done gives one a more clear and lasting view of geography.

A seven-day trip down the Middle Fork of the Salmon was enjoyable and very social but I did not really learn the lay of the river until I later (1981) paddled it in one day with Colorado's boat building John Brown. (Yes, if, like a voyager, you get up early, go to bed late, and work all day, you can travel 100 miles down-river in a single day.)

Sometimes our desire for a wild but relaxing natural getaway gives us an inaccurate sense of just how large the last remaining natural places are. I now realize that the big Idaho river trips are not true wilderness expeditions but only day trips for determined paddlers. There are many reasons for using whitewater kayaks, knowing the true size and configuration of the land is one of them.

And since we are talking self-supported long distance whitewater kayaking, let's not forget Fletcher Anderson, a Colorado whitewater racer and author who paddled the Grand at normal flows in 48 hours in a 14 foot downriver kayak! **AW**

Randy Welch  
Lakewood, Colorado



Jason Robertson  
photo by Jed Weingarten

## The Heart of the Boating Community Has Earned AW's Thanks

AW's 50 year record of success is no accident. Instead it is built on our active base of donors, volunteers, and members.

Our members constitute the moral core and heart of the boating community. These unique paddlers represent the people who take personal responsibility for their actions and strive to protect America's whitewater rivers for their friends, families, and future generations.

Protection takes many forms, whether it is striving to secure access and launch points, preventing logging along the banks of wild and scenic watersheds, or securing releases from dams on favorite rivers.

As we hear in the news, protecting the places and values we love is expensive; but the failure to protect the places and rivers we cherish is even more costly.

Continuation of AW's mission is made possible by our donors who represent the fiber at the heart of our membership and

support our staff and volunteer's efforts. The donors listed below in American Whitewater's 2003 Honor Roll have earned our appreciation and rightfully deserve both our thanks and yours.

If you know someone on this list, please thank them for stepping up and building the strong body of members and volunteers that AW requires to pursue our mission and defend your rivers from threats to access, pollution, loss of flows by dams, or unnecessary boater registration requirements.

When I talk with audiences around the country, the perception is that AW represents tens of thousands of boaters. While we do speak for the greater boating community, our membership represents only a small portion of all the whitewater boaters in the nation. By some counts, our members represent as little as 3% of whitewater paddlers.

At any given moment during the year, American Whitewater has about 6500 active

memberships. A large percentage of these memberships are Family Memberships with multiple individuals, which increase our roles to about 8000 members. This number seems low, and AW's board and staff are trying to increase membership, and we need your help.

One easy way for you to help is by asking a friend to register through our Member-get-a-member campaign; forms are available at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/1151/>. Members receive the AW Journal and help a great cause.

Another easy way to help is by making a donation and becoming a Major Donor or Platinum Paddler; if you would like more information about our donor opportunities, please call me at 866-BOAT-4-AW or email me at Jason@awa.org.

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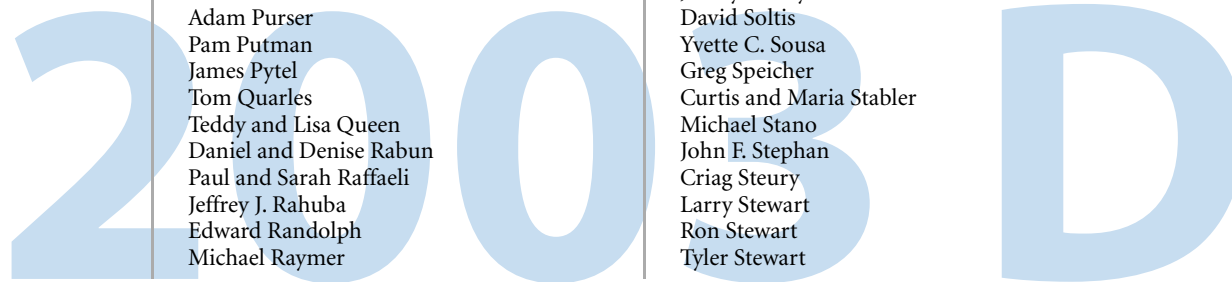
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# Some Words From the Editor

Tim Nickles

I saw a young woman  
the other day with a  
T-shirt that said  
“Punk Voter”.

She looked pretty hip – at least she had some unusual piercings and stuff – and I started to think that maybe politics was finally getting cool in America. Of course it’s not cool like the Beastie Boys or boating Class V but people who are not traditionally involved in politics are starting to come into the arena. The Boss is even jumping into the game; playing with the Vote for Change tour and editorializing in the New York Times in favor of a regime change here at home.

It is probably just a passing phase and many of the voters du jour will fall back into line after November. Although one can certainly hope that some of these people (who seem to be used to minding their own business) will run up against how many problems there are with the way our country is governed and become galvanized and motivated to take action.

You don’t have to look far to see galvanizing examples, especially if you’re interested in environmental protection. The move by the current Administration to allow States to bypass the protection offered to wilderness by the Roadless Rule is a worrying example of how our government works. The Rule was created in 2001 to protect roadless areas in our National Forest and was accompanied by overwhelming public support – some 2 million Americans voiced their approval. The current move to undermine the Rule by allowing individual States to appeal is undergoing a period of public comment which ends mid-September and is largely unreported. If you get this issue in time, you can do some research yourself and send your opinion to [statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us](mailto:statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us).

This issue focuses on American Whitewater’s most important conservation

work. The American Whitewater conservation staff has chosen five issues to represent, both geographically and substantively, the breadth of work that our organization is involved in. The hope is that each of our members can find something in this overview to relate to on a personal level and thus better understand AW’s work.

In addition to the conservation feature, this issue contains several excellent articles from our members. Harrison Meztger supplied us with a gripping story of a rescue performed on the Chattooga River. The account is clear and detailed and provides a good case-study for understanding rescue situations if you haven’t been unlucky enough to find yourself in one recently.

There is so much history in the Grand Canyon river business, both natural and cultural. Much of this history is stored in the heads and hearts of the River’s most constant companions – the professional river guides. Richard Quartaroli sent us an informative description of a project the Grand Canyon River Guides have been running for more than ten years to document Grand Canyon river-running history while it is still available.


While the Olympics will be long over by the time you get this issue, we’ve included a first-hand account of the course and its nuances from Cathy Hearn. You probably didn’t get to see quite as much of the course as you would’ve wanted on TV so at least now you can hear about it from a fellow paddler and AW member.

Andrew Dunning, a high school student at the Academy of Huge Experiences, presented us with a report on an environmental threat to the Caney Fork River. The Caney Fork houses one of the



Tim Nickles  
Editor

photo by Matt Davanzo

most popular play features in America (Rock Island) and is facing the possibility of getting sewage water dumped into it by a neighboring community. Finally, David Regela gives us a short description of the San Miguel River in Southwestern Colorado – one of the most beautiful areas in the state. 

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# Partner Spotlight Patagonia and Smith Optics


## patagonia®

Patagonia, Inc., the outdoor gear and apparel company, donates one percent of sales toward the preservation and restoration of the natural environment.

Since 1985 Patagonia's total grants and in-kind donations have exceeded \$20 million. Last year alone, Patagonia donated over a quarter of a million dollars to non-profits protecting water resources from the destructive effects of damming, development and pollution.

The company's commitment to addressing the environmental crisis extends beyond grant-making. Finding ways to minimize environmental harm is key to the company's mission. After pioneering the use of PCR® (post-consumer recycled) polyester in 1993, Patagonia has continued to innovate with low impact products, such as organic cotton sportswear and Hemp-PCR® blend jeans. Company-wide environmental campaigns bring Patagonia's customers into the fold, encouraging them to take direct action on timely environmental issues. Salmon Nation, Patagonia's last environmental campaign, focused on the importance of protecting wild salmon, a key indicator species and bellweather of ecological health. An in-store and online letter-writing and email campaign generated over 15,000 customer comments advocating for the removal of 3 dams on the Lower Snake River to promote salmon recovery.

Patagonia's current Vote the Environment campaign urges Americans to place environmental concerns at the top of their priority lists in the November elections.

In-store, online, catalog, and wholesale communications encourage citizens to register to vote at [www.patagonia.com/vote](http://www.patagonia.com/vote), research the candidates' environmental records, and vote the environment on November 2nd. 

*To find out more about Patagonia's environmental initiatives and its support of American Whitewater, please visit [www.patagonia.com/enviro](http://www.patagonia.com/enviro).*



## additional contributors

LOTUS  DESIGNS

Last year, Lotus Designs co-branded the Sherman PFD and Spectra Throwbag to support AW work, becoming one of AW's biggest Corporate Sponsors. For 2004, they are adding two co-branded pfd's, including the women's Lolita so female paddlers can show their support of AW!



Back by popular demand, AW will be releasing its revised Safety Flash Cards. Adventure Medical Kits produces these essential cards which will be available from retailers carrying the Adventure Medical Kits line of products.



NOC looks forward to continuing their successful Rapid Progressions Clinics and supporting AW by educating new paddlers about the river they enjoy while helping to increase AW's membership!



Kokatat remains one of AW's strongest allies by continuing support of AW events and outreach and is playing a major role with AW's River Stewardship Institute on the Klamath River this year.



In 2003, Clif Bar initiated The Flowing Rivers Campaign to help AW increase its Affiliate Clubs through six \$500 grants to support work on conservation, access or safety issues. Clif Bar has extended its support in 2004 and AW looks forward to continued success.



Smith Optics is also a proud sponsor of the 2004 American Whitewater festival series and supported AW's Spring fundraising drive by providing free sunglasses to all of the major donors of that giving campaign.



Wavesport continues to support AW because whitewater rivers are not exactly a dime a dozen. In addition to a substantial monthly donation, Team Wavesport will be offering free clinics to AW members to help celebrate AW's Anniversary and thank AW members for doing their part. Check the AW and Wavesport websites for more information.



AW looks forward to continuing its relationship with Dagger in 2004. Look for opportunities to paddle with Team D through your local AW Affiliate Club!



Walden Kayaks is donating four recreational and light touring kayaks every year for the next five years, available for sale on the American Whitewater website through 2008. Today, friends of American Whitewater may purchase a Walden Experience, Adirondack, Odyssey, or Vista Expedition online to further support American Whitewater's efforts to conserve and restore America's rivers and streams.



AW is honored to have Teva as one of its most important allies. For years AW and Teva have partnered in various forms to reach out to the paddling public. In 2004, Teva presented AW's 50th Anniversary Gala in Vail, CO at the Teva Mountain Games.




In 2004, IR continues to lead the industry in demonstrating corporate responsibility. IR has continued its support of AW with its AW branded product, and the industry's first Pro Donation Program. AW is grateful to have such a dedicated and sincere corporate partner.

Based in Sun Valley, Idaho, Smith Optics, Inc. was founded in 1965 with the creation of the first-ever goggle featuring a sealed thermal lens and breathable vent foam. In the early years, founder Dr. Bob Smith, an orthodontist by trade, made goggles by hand using dental tools, foam and glue. Before he struck a deal for manufacturing of Smith goggles in the late 60s, Smith would often trade his creations for lift tickets. These early prototypes were usually manufactured by Smith and friends around the kitchen table.

Building on that goggle heritage and extending its expertise, Smith Sport Optics has gone on to set the standard for high performance eyewear and goggles. Innovations over the years include the Fog-X anti-fog coating, PMT Perforated Membrane Technology lens ventilation system, patented Turbo C.A.M. Constant Air Management system, patented Regulator adjustable lens ventilation system, patented Roll Off's film advance system for motocross, patented ODS (Ocular Docking System) prescription insert and patented Slider series sunglasses, the most innovative interchangeable lens sunglass available.

Today, Smith Optics has become synonymous with innovative, durable, top-quality products in the eyewear and goggle market. The company is also recognized for its unparalleled team roster, which boasts some of the top names in biking, motocross, skiing, snowboarding, surfing, skateboarding and kayaking. Like many other companies, Smith utilizes team input as a key element of new product introductions. In addition, Smith athletes are actively involved in the development process for performance testing and coloration selection. Smith is proud to support whitewater athletes such as Andrew Holcombe, Ben Selznick, Billy Harris, Clay Wright, Dan Gavere, Dave Garringer, Dixie-Marree Prickett, Dustin Urban, Jesse Murphy, Johnnie Kern, Marlow Long, Nikki Kelly, Tiffany Manchester, and Taylor Robertson.

American Whitewater and Smith Optics look forward to continuing this collaboration through the end of the 2004 season and look forward to working together on more innovative programming for 2005. 

Voodoo



# History A Surprise Olympic Medal

By the time this issue is in print, we will know how well our Olympians in slalom performed in Athens.

by Sue Taft


In this Olympics as well as the previous three ('92, '96, and '00), we came into the Games with very real hopes of winning a medal in at least one event. However, this brings to mind the very first Olympics in '72 where we were not only considered an underdog, we were not even considered. Not only was the young Team U.S.A. fairly untested in international competition, previous U.S. teams had only just within the previous few World Championships begun to place within the top 10.

As was anticipated, all the gold medals for slalom in '72 were won by the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), however, one bronze medal went to the most unlikely underdog, Jamie McEwan paddling C-1. Because of his low ranking, McEwan was the 32nd racer toward the end of the C-1 class. By the time McEwan made his second run, the presumed bronze medal winner was already being interviewed by a TV correspondent [medals at that time were determined by the best of two runs]. While the interview was taking place, the event announcer's play-by-play of McEwan's run could be heard in the background. As McEwan's run down the course continued, the growing excite-

ment in the announcer's voice became evident. The interviewer and presumed bronze medal winner began to notice the crowds' response. As everyone's attention turned to McEwan's run, the incredulous and disappointed look on the presumed bronze medal winner's face told the story as McEwan finished the course winning the bronze.

McEwan's win was a shock because he had not become a serious racer until after 1969. His best and only finish in World Championship competition was a 17th place finish in 1971. While in Europe during the summer of 1971, he ran the new course at Augsburg, Germany, the site for the '72 Olympics. At Zoom Flume, the current threw him into the concrete wall and bloodied his hand. On his second run, he broke his boat. He did not even attempt a third run. Upon his return home, he almost gave up competing altogether. However, McEwan's good friend, Wick Walker, convinced him otherwise and he made up his mind to try out for the U.S. Olympic team. He made the team although the knowledge that he had not successfully run the Augsburg course remained on his mind. Needless to say, he apparently overcame those

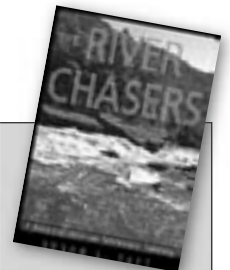
previous experiences on the course, and his underdog status, to win a medal.

Jamie McEwan and Wick Walker, along with Jamie's brother, Tom, have a long shared history of whitewater racing and exploration including the tragic Tsang Po River run in 2000. 

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Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers*, *The History of American Whitewater Paddling*. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, email it to [staft@theriverchasers.com](mailto:staft@theriverchasers.com) and look for its answer in an upcoming issue of the *American Whitewater Journal*.



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## AW is Thrilled to Announce the 2004 Winners of the AW "Flowing Rivers Grant Program" supported by Clif Bar

We received three times as many proposals this year as last. Consequently, the committee had many strong proposals to choose from.

The projects that we did select for funding were selected because:

1. they directly affected access, conservation, and safety
2. the projects were likely to have a lasting effect
3. the funding would contribute to the project's completion
4. the benefits of the project would benefit the local community

This year's recipients were the Iowa Whitewater Coalition from Des Moines, IA and the Chota Canoe Club from Knoxville, TN. Each club will receive \$500 to support their chosen project.

### Iowa Whitewater Coalition (IWC)

The IWC is seeking to 'reconnect rivers' that have been separated by low head dams. As part of a statewide initiative to create water trails across Iowa, the IWC proposes to retrofit dams to provide safe passage and class II-III whitewater parks. This AW funding will initiate the process in Des Moines as a pilot for other projects.


For more information about the IWC visit  
[www.iowawhitewater.org](http://www.iowawhitewater.org)

### Chota Canoe Club

The Chota Canoe Club will create a grassroots awareness campaign for Crooked Fork Creek. Crooked Fork Creek suffers from pollution from a number of abutting towns that dump their sewage directly into the creek. The Club intends to create a campaign that includes educational and promotional materials aimed at both the local and visiting paddling communities. The Emory-Obed Watershed Association will be a partner for the project. Using the AW Grant, the Club has secured an additional \$825 for the project.

For more information about Crooked Fork Creek go to <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1738/>

AW wishes both Clubs success with their projects and offers a sincere thank you to Clif Bar for helping to make our nation's rivers a better place to enjoy. Each club will be submitting an article to AW chronicling their project in Spring '05. AW salutes these paddlers making a difference in their backyards.

AW will continue the "Flowing Rivers Campaign" in 2005. If you are an AW Affiliate Club or would like to help support this program, please contact Michael Phelan at 828-252-0728. 



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# Field Notes



Dave Garringer  
making the move through  
the left slot at Insignificant.

*photo by Katie Johnson*

Green leaves turning yellow, a cool breeze blowing through your after-work session, and the Ocoee is losing its charm: it all means one thing – Gauley season is here again!

## The Best of the Gauley

Your Guide: *Clay Wright*

Sorry for you Left coasters (Cherry's a personal fave), but to honor this great river I decided to showcase the Gauley's "Best" features so we can all enjoy it even more. Of course you should SCOUT any line you haven't run before, so consider this a 'guide' of places to check out from shore. Make your own decisions, have a rope handy, and never drop into a slot or side-channel without a buddy watching your run. There are play-holes, surf-waves, slots, and boofs on the Gauley . . .but also undercuts, sieves, and pin spots. Paddle accordingly.

## Playboating

The Gauley is a playboating mecca, for sure. River Runners scan down a few.

## Best Play Hole

1. Gomer's - the first crowded spot on the river, for good reason. Loops anyone?

2. Hungry Mother: left side pourover between Pillow and the Meadow - small line, big loops, and retentive to the point of 'violent thrashings' - thus rarely crowded

3. Koontz Flume: the top hole at Koontz is probably the # 1 hole on the river, yet lacks eddy access. Long walk-up (river right), and the undercut behind the right eddy keep this hot-spot empty all season. Worth walking for.

**Honorable Mention:** Left side below Canyon Doors - rodeo-worthy but touchy: the hole at the bottom of the rapid after Iron Ring (watch for traffic), the spinny hole in the center right, three drops below Sweets.

## Best Play Wave

1. Diagonal Ledges - this smooth open wave is heaven for the longer boats but still fun in the 6'ers.

2. Insignificant - it's dodge-ball with the constant traffic but the speed is sweet.

3. Bat Cave Wave: third rapid below Pillow - small, but sweet and loopable!

**Honorable mention** - Lower Mash, Iron Curtain (watch the traffic), Lower Stairstep, Mason's Branch.

## Best Down-River Play Maneuver

1. The Rock 360 at Sweets - challenging, committing, and in front of an audience - the classic "Fallin Down" trick is still sick. Melt-down to black attack for style points.

2. Pillow-splat - the classic 'splat to oblivion' is open to everyone (rafts, canoes, wavehoppers). Suck it up and splat that sucka!

3. Wave-wheel/kickflip/macho-move off the waves above Iron Ring. A flashy way to get people to watch you run Iron Ring upside down.

**Honorable Mention:** "Freewheel to oblivion" off left side of Volkswagen, kickflip the 'V' wave two rapids below Iron Ring, the big-boat mystery-move in the 2' ledge above Mason Branch, "Triple Splat" sequence on the right above the Meadow confluence.

## Best Place to Avoid

What's the worst place you could go on the Gauley?

1. Initiation crack on right - this death-trap sees near-misses every year. When you get to the first big breaking waves (about a mile past the Upper put-in) GO LEFT of them!

2. The right crack at Pure Screamin Hell (Lower G) - worth seeing; gross!

3. Two nasty pin rocks on the left side, next rapid down from Initiation. Several nasty pins have occurred on these two rocks that barely break the surface; one just after a left slot and the other just to the right of the wide, low rock that makes it. Run right (with the main flow) or be extremely careful far left.

**Honorable Mentions:** Beth and Roger recommend against flipping at 2nd Drop Lost Paddle (a knock-out rock lies just under the surface downstream). 'Frenchie' warns of a cave in the rocks on the left at Tumblehome (just right of the left 'boof line') Jimmy Blakeney gives respect to the 'back crack' in the 'Room of Doom,' Andrew Holcombe, Deb Reuhle, and Kevin Hammond had bad-trips through 'Parking-lot-slot' (on the right below the



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# Field Notes

put-in), and Gauley guidebook author Katie Johnson reminds us that 'under a raft' is as dangerous as any undercut - and there are more of them out on the weekend. I personally attest that surfing Sweets Falls isn't sweet, and oh, if you didn't know Ship Rock is highly dangerous for swimmers - now you do.

## Best Places to Scare Yourself

1. Room Of Doom - this 'eddy' is backed by pillow rock and requires commitment and precision in the midst of the meat of the rapid. A swim here is rugged, but scraped knuckles are usually the biggest risk. Avoid the crack on the left side!

2. Left to right at Iron Ring - scout the far left 'creek lines' to the midstream left eddy, then ferry across - yup above the obstruction - to river right, ideally into the river-right eddy.

3. Melt-down line at Sweets Falls: catch the eddy river-left, right at the lip, mark dildo rock's location, then drop in just to its left (between the dildo and the 'boof'). Obviously, pinning on Dildo is to be avoided. So is broaching between the dildo and the 'boof' rock. Consider setting a rope as you scout.

**Honorable mentions:** Meltdown at Woods Ferry - super-powerful seam slams you deep - too bad it's below Mason Branch. Boof the right side of Sweets (best at low water), Surf the top wave, then catch the left eddies above Pillow Rock, Boof right into Iron Ring (you probably won't make the eddy).

Lower: run right channel at Koontz Flume (scout first!), Surf Lower Mash wave. Run 'Chicken Ender slot right side of Diagonal Ledges, Boof right of PSHell Hole into the eddy, then turn and surf out.

## Best Boofs

1. the Boof at Sweets. Practice from the left eddy before coming in hot for the 'on the fly' experience. The fastest water is just right of the eddy, but it's a nasty piton if you don't get left of the seam (right Dinver, Rob, and Steve?)

2. 'Jump Rock' - three rapids below Pillow Rock or the rapid above 'Hungry Mother'. This 4' poulover in the center channel makes

a sweet boof with no risk, but the locals freewheel into the hole before throwing down.

3. Anvil Rock - left side of Insignificant just above the surf waves. This 1' boof is bigger at low water, so 'Double Boof' from the left rock ONTO the Anvil boof - it's rad.

Honorable mention: 'Rocketship rock' on the left side near the bottom of Upper Mash on the Lower G. This long ramp is tough to find at first, but has a nice 'kick' to it.

## Most wicked Slots

1. Video-boater's Leftcrack at 2nd Drop of Lost Paddle. Scout this one before you drop in, as the twisting current pushes into the left wall and you're only 1/2 way down Lost Paddle

2. Mailbox slot - middle right of last Tumblehome drop (Lost Paddle) - nailing this 3' wide slot requires momentum and careful paddle-placement. Don't forget about the pour-over exit.


3. Left to right move below first big rock below the 'razorback' but well above 'Ship Rock' - this is harder than it looks. While you will probably slam the right wall, you can clean it fast with practice.

3. (tie) Far Left 'Creek-line' at Iron Ring - a narrow chute between sharp rocks that demands a controlled exit - you can stay left and keep it creeky or hit the ferry move above 'Woodstock Rock' from here.

## Honorable Mention:

Box Canyon - this 'must-do classic' is a magnet for rafts. Check for pinned rafts before bombing in, and always keep an eye on any rafts in the eddy. That left wall is a magnet for kayaks; left to right momentum is essential!

Parking Lot Slot - scout well and consider setting safety. Just below the put-in on the right, if you have hard left to right momentum you can cruise an 'S-turn' through the large, undercut boulders. The logs that plug the undercut come and go, so some years this slot is safer than others.

See you on the river or at the Fest! 

# Field Notes



## The Unpredictable DRIES of the new

by Tanya Shuman

Santa Monica, CA. Fresh out of the water from a morning surf session and six new messages are staring at me from the screen of my cell phone. Holy Smokes, it's barely even 8 AM!

I tell my friend Renee that something must be up as I dial voice mail. Each message is an excited friend telling me the Southeast is flooding and the New River Gorge is at the optimal level. "Get on a plane and fly out, what are you waiting for?"

The New River Gorge is extremely unpredictable but for the next three days it was definitely going to go off, forming some of the biggest free-standing river waves in the world. This is kayaking's Jaws or Maverick's with waves standing over twenty feet high. They are like rollercoasters and spit you out like watermelon seeds, first sending you shooting down their face then launching you flying into the air.

While in sunny So Cal, surfing had become a new challenge for me that complements my true passion for kayaking. But now that the heavens have released into the New River at a section called the Dries, I am canceling my surfing plans. From my



*Tanya Shuman (top) and Clay Wright (below) go big on the Dries of the New, put-in wave.*


*photos by Jimmy Blakeney and Tanya Shuman*



messages, I knew the water level was going to be optimal to form two perfect waves. The second one is more powerful and is where most of today's sickest freestyle moves are showcased. At times, this wave sucks in its stomach, then suddenly let's go sending you screaming across its belly.

The airtime can be addictive. A number of the best boaters in the world were there already or coming from far away places to take part. Well known boaters like Clay Wright, Jimmy Blakeney, Dave Garringer, Brain Jennings, Anna Levesque, Bryan Kirk, BJ and Katie Johnson were all there. Even Scott Lingren, one of the paddlesports industry top filmmakers, flew in from California to film.

No time to lose. My ticket bought, it's time to pack and head East. The water is rising and the waves are beginning to form. We are lucky to have them. Three years ago they weren't here. A catastrophic flood that caused about 1000 years of geologic change in a day created these waves. Houses, cars, and who knows what washed down Laurel Creek into the New River leaving an unrunnable creek and the best free-standing waves on Earth. Like they say, take the good with the bad.

I'll always take the good knowing that in a few hours I'll be with some of my best of friends riding the largest waves on Earth. Southern California will have to wait while I chase the endless wave that got me to where I am today. This was a wave that doesn't wait for anyone and would be gone if I paused to even take a breath. This is what I live for. 

# Conservation & Access Regional Updates

by John Gangemi

American Whitewater's participation in hydropower licensing over the past five-years has been tremendously successful. This success continues to gain momentum across the nation. California is a current hotbed of hydro relicensing.

**In California** boaters are utilizing monthly releases on the North Fork Feather River achieved through American Whitewater's role in the relicensing of the Rock Creek-Cresta Hydro Project. In the spring of 2004, American Whitewater secured additional whitewater releases further upstream on the North Fork Feather on the Class III Belden Reach. American Whitewater is also participating in a relicense proceeding for the Poe Hydro Project on the North Fork Feather. In the past year, American Whitewater's former adversary, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), has agreed to additional whitewater releases on two sections of the Pit River, the Stanislaus, and additional sections on the North Fork Feather. American Whitewater and PG&E are currently discussing the advantages of a regional whitewater release schedule for northern California rivers with hydropower dams. American Whitewater also played a key role in securing public ownership of 140,000 acres of PG&E watershed lands in the PG&E bankruptcy case. Protection of these lands will be an important driver shaping future public recreation patterns in California. Also in California, American Whitewater has also been assisting with whitewater flow studies on Piru Creek, the Kern, and three tributaries to the South Fork American as well as resolving the long-standing court battle on the Upper Kern leading to an annual schedule of 39 days of whitewater releases from Fairview Dam.

**In Oregon**, American Whitewater is close to reaching agreement for whitewater releases on the North Fork of the Rogue River and we recently helped organize a land-based flow study on the Mackenzie River. On the Clackamas River local volunteer Keith Jensen is participating in settlement negotiations for Portland General Electric's hydropower projects affecting flows for Bob's Hole as well as the dewatered Cazadero section.

**In Washington State**, American Whitewater led the successful fight over the past year that blocked the construction of five new dams. On the Cispus River, American Whitewater, along with terrific assistance from local volunteers, is working to get the Lewis County Public Utility District to provide river access upstream of their reservoir as required in their FERC license. Lewis Public Utility District has been out of compliance for nearly ten-years, but we are making progress through the persistence of local volunteers coupled with American Whitewater staff. Also in Washington State, local volunteer Tom O'Keefe is doing tremendous work developing formal access sites to rivers such as the Snoqualmie through a combination of state funds and foundation money. On the Spokane River local boaters are actively engaged in the relicensing of Avista's hydropower dams. Whitewater flow studies were conducted in the fall of 2003. New flow regimes and release schedules are being negotiated this summer.

**In Montana**, American Whitewater celebrated the first whitewater releases on the Swan River on July 7, 2004. Whitewater releases are part of the new PacifiCorp hydro license for the Bigfork project. Releases are scheduled for each Wednesday evening July through August. American Whitewater also developed jointly with PPL Montana an internet-based whitewater flow study for West Rosebud Creek (MT) affected by the Mystic Dam Hydropower Project. In June, 2004 American Whitewater staff completed participation in the Montana River Recreation Advisory Council convened to draft a guidance document for the state to manage river recreation across the state. The draft guidance document goes out for public review and comment this summer.

**In Colorado**, Denver Water starts implementation of the recreation plan for the Gross Reservoir Hydropower Project on South Boulder Creek. In that relicense process American Whitewater made it legal for boaters to access South Boulder Creek as well as allow paddling on Gross Reservoir.

American Whitewater continues to play an integral role in the drafting of the new Colorado River Management Plan for the Grand Canyon (AZ). Grand Canyon National Park has an excellent opportunity to correct the mistakes of past management practices in the new plan. American Whitewater is skeptical park management will admit past mistakes let alone take corrective action in the future management plan. Unfortunately many other federal agencies have used the Grand Canyon as a template for development of river management plans on rivers elsewhere in the country. Clearly, American Whitewater wants the Grand Canyon to get it right this time so other river management plans can be updated as well.

**In Minnesota**, American Whitewater is assisting with a whitewater flow study on the St. Louis River just outside Duluth. This is a post-license study designed to update flow volumes in an existing license to keep pace with changing boat designs in the past ten-years. During the summer of 2004 there are multiple whitewater releases at hydropower projects throughout Wisconsin and parts of Minnesota all the result of hydropower relicensing work over the past ten-years—check the American Whitewater website for updates and enjoy the water!

**In April** 2004 American Whitewater and local boaters celebrated the first whitewater releases negotiated in the hydropower license on the Hoosic River (NY). American Whitewater and the Kayak and Canoe Club of New York celebrated a FERC victory on the Mongaup River. The FERC determined in a long contested case that the hydro operator is required to make whitewater releases and post flow information. American Whitewater continues to battle with New York Gas and Electric (NYSEG) in the relicensing of their hydropower projects on the Ausable and Saranac rivers (NY). NYSEG is thumbing



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their nose at New York navigability laws believing the company has no requirement to provide public access downstream of their dams that obstruct navigation. Agreement appears to be close for the multiple dams on the West Branch of the Penobscot (ME). American Whitewater is working with the Army Corps of Engineers for more reliable releases on the West River (VT).

### In the mid Atlantic region,

AW staff and volunteers remain focused on achieving reliable releases on a handful of rivers including Stonycreek, N. Branch Potomac, and the Lehigh River. Volunteers are working hard to improve the safety of access to the Susquehanna at Holtwood and at Indian Creek in Pennsylvania. Charlie Walbridge is still doing a valiant job of defending the Cheat Canyon and the Big Sandy in Northern West Virginia from ecological and access impacts. Staff and volunteers are also participating in the Park Service planning process regarding access and conservation on the Gauley River. The entire state of Virginia remains an access quagmire, where antiquated property rights often make paddling illegal. AW will continue seeking solutions in this contentious uphill battle for reasonable public river access.

### The Southeast

continues to be a region overflowing with successful and challenging river stewardship projects. We recently won releases from TVA on the Upper Ocoee and 4 other Class II rivers in Tennessee. Volunteer Andrew Lazenby is paddling 40 miles per week all summer as he participates in flow studies on the Catawba River this summer, while also attending monthly relicensing meetings. The Carolina Canoe Club is also intimately involved in the Catawba Relicensing and is representing paddlers with dedication and a vast commitment of time and energy. Greg Lawrence has been doing a great job of working on access issues like Johnnies Creek in Alabama as a new AW Regional Coordinator. We are still fighting hard to protect the Nantahala and Tuckasegee relicensing settlement that we signed in late 2003, and also still working for a solid schedule of releases on the Cheoah River. Volunteer Kevin Miller is making progress on having 3 dams on 12-mile creek in SC removed. We are all on the edge of our seats awaiting the resolution of our efforts to lift a ban on paddling Chattooga Headwaters. 



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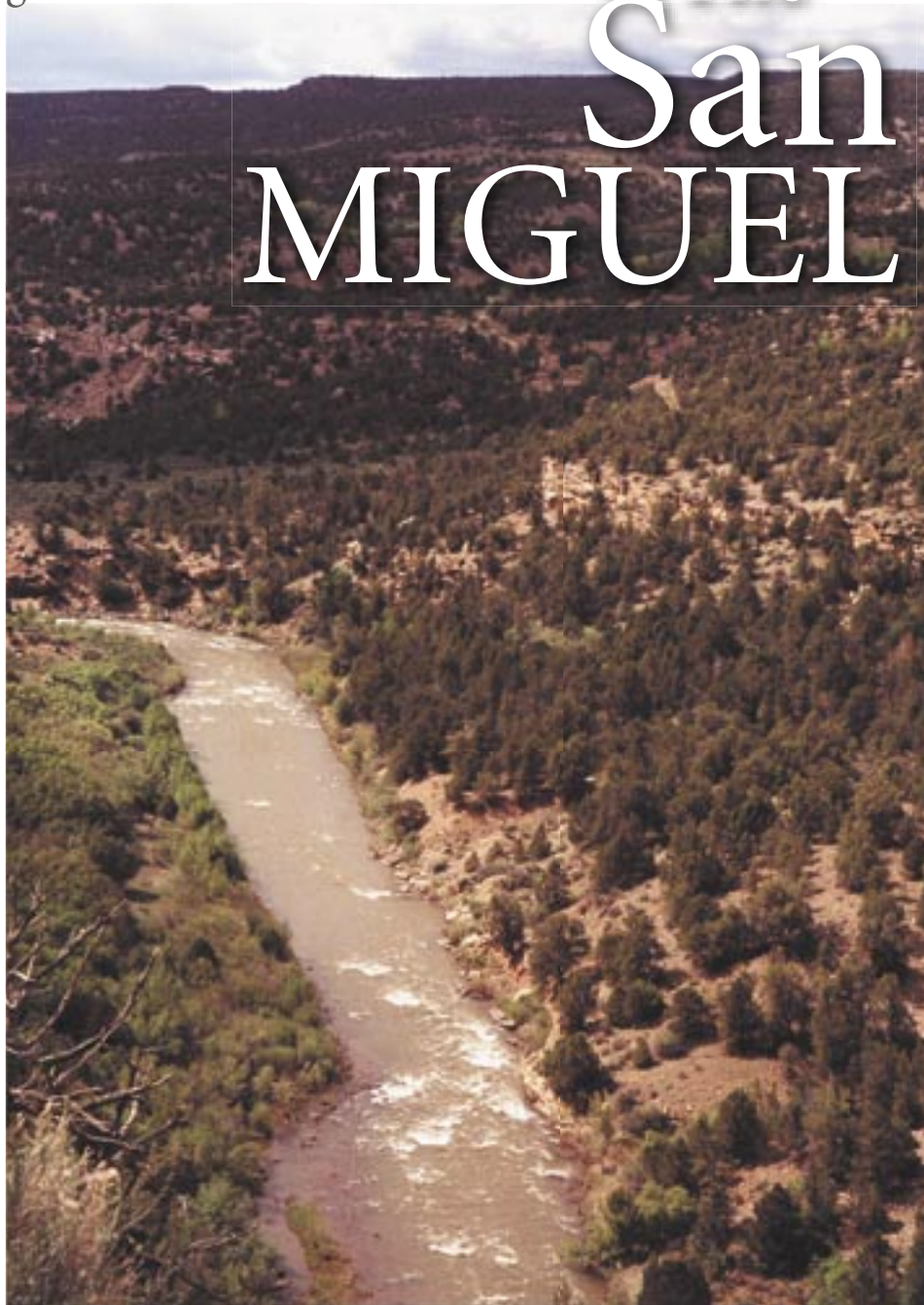
# Nantahala Outdoor Center

# Feature - Conservation & Access

## Colorado's Lost River

by David J. Regela

Barely 70 miles long, a smaller mountain twin to Colorado's popular Dolores River, the San Miguel qualifies as the last 'undiscovered' whitewater gem in the state.



Incredibly, my first fling with the San Miguel River came on a 4th of July weekend that found the river corridor alive with wildlife - but completely devoid of boaters. Heavily forested slopes, in a white sandstone canyon, frame a liquid freight train of a watercourse that spills out of the San Juan Mountains at an average rate of descent of over 40 fpm.

Outside of Telluride, Colorado, an ancient, hanging glacier carved Bridalveil, Ingram, and Coronet Falls, which combine to form the San Miguel. The river becomes boatable within sight of its origins, just below the departed glaciers' terminal moraine, at the confluence with South Fork Creek. The Bureau of Land Management provides a series of access points over the next 50 miles that facilitate both day trips and overnight excursions. Colorado Highway 145 parallels the river from a high bench for 29 miles before the San Miguel loops well away from the road for the 21-mile wilderness jaunt through Norwood Canyon.

A conversation with a local Telluride outfitter revealed that ballooning, hang-gliding, ski touring, and four-wheeling all outrank whitewater in the valley's recreational pecking order. Most commercial raft trips concentrate on one of several upper sections that can be negotiated in a couple of hours. "People come here for the atmosphere, shopping, and the restaurants," my informant confided. "They want a quick, exciting river trip, and lunch at a trendy café in town," he said. "Norwood Canyon is pretty much wide open."

"Wide open" is also a good description of the area's colorful history. Gold and silver fired the initial surge in Telluride. The Liberty Bell, Smuggler, Pandora, and Tomboy mines extracted a fortune from the jagged, encompassing peaks, and the San Miguel Valley Bank was the gracious beneficiary. Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch chose this cozy mountain institution for their first large-scale caper that didn't involve a train. Jack Dempsey, who later became world heavyweight boxing champ, got his pugilistic start as a bouncer in a local brothel. Cattlemen and sheepherders warred bloodily for control of the lush mountain grazing rights. And sporadic conflicts with the indigenous Ute Indians resulted in their





reluctant removal to a reservation, prompting a raucous “land-rush” which gobbled up much of the valley.

Then carnotite was discovered. It’s a canary yellow ore that is the source material for radium to treat cancer, vanadium to harden steel, and uranium. In fact, San Miguel uranium was tapped during the Manhattan Project’s push to create the first atomic bombs. All that remains of the boom are surrounding towns with alien-sounding names like Nucla, Vanadium, and Naturita, and the ruins of the mills at Uraavan and Vancorum.

Because its source lies at extreme elevation, the San Miguel sometimes peaks later than other Colorado Plateau rivers – as late as mid-July. With a constant gradient that approaches 50 fpm, the whitewater is continuous Class III. Few eddies exist at high flows. Blind curves and the shallow, rocky nature of the river demand caution. Sweepers are often quite abundant. An experienced Grand Canyon boatman of my acquaintance once sacrificed his boat, and almost his butt, to an unfortunately placed log-jam.


Norwood Canyon is the showcase of the San Miguel. It contains one of the last, undisturbed, mid-elevation riparian areas in Colorado. In addition to the bear and elk and turkey, the canyon provides safe haven for bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and longtail weasels, which have disappeared from surrounding areas. Paleontologists

have recovered the fossilized remains of dinosaurs, and deeply incised petroglyphs testify to the passing presence of early man.

About halfway through this splashy, exhilarating reach, Horsefly Creek enters on river-right. Despite the unappealing appellation, it’s a crystalline trout stream and probably the best overnight camp in the canyon.

A little over a mile below Horsefly is a lowhead diversion dam that can be dangerous. An eddy and rocky cobble-bar on the left, just above the subtle horizon-line, provide stopping places to line or portage. The dam can only be safely run at low levels, and only on the far left side.

The climax of Norwood Canyon is an area called the “ledges.” Layered sandstone bedrock spans the entire river, creating a weird series of oblique standing waves, ledge holes, boils and swirls. Surfing is unavoidable. The take-out is just above Pinon Bridge (Old Highway 90).

Below the Pinon Bridge is a series of small diversions and a lethal weir that defies portage and limits access to the last miles of the San Miguel and its eventual confluence with the Dolores River. This section is seldom run. 

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# Top River Issues for 2004

*Each year American Whitewater highlights a series of issues affecting whitewater rivers across the nation by publishing our Top River Issues. American Whitewater staff selected this year's Top Issues because we feel they are of critical importance this year and are representative of our broad work in river conservation and access. This year we have chosen only five, but American Whitewater staff and our network of committed volunteers are working on hundreds of river's across the nation. The list encompasses river stewardship efforts through dam removal and hydropower licensing, as well as our efforts to counter high profile challenges to paddlers' rights to access rivers.*



Each river issue presents a unique set of problems requiring unique and creative solutions, and we offer these case studies in river stewardship in the hope that paddlers will learn from them as we have. We also offer them as a rallying cry for the work that American Whitewater does on paddlers' behalf.



photo by Julie Keller

We at AW are proud to represent and assist paddlers on these complex and demanding projects and it is your support that makes this work possible. Without support for AW from the paddling community, we would lose ALL FIVE of our Top River Issues.

American Whitewater has had an incredibly successful 50 years of river conservation and we are more effective today than ever before. Our success in river conservation and access work is the direct result of our work model that leverages the knowledge and expertise of a small professional staff working closely with volunteers that have local knowledge and passion to protect their home rivers. This volunteer model allows American Whitewater to be a national leader in river conservation and access while operating on a lean annual budget. In October 2004, American Whitewater launches the River Stewardship Institute - a seven-day intensive field course designed to empower river advocates with the tools and skills to make a difference protecting and restoring whitewater rivers in their region.

In close conjunction with the River Stewardship Institute, American Whitewater staff are developing a River Stewardship Tool kit that will function as the curriculum for this course and as

an enduring online tool for river users nationwide. The River Stewardship Toolkit will offer the paddling community online advice, background materials and case studies as well as other information on a wide range of topics including dam relicensing

## American Whitewater's River Stewardship Issues for 2004

Chattooga River  
Colorado River-Grand Canyon  
Nooksack River  
Willimantic River  
Saranac and Ausable Rivers

and removal, water quality reporting, participation in public processes, and general river ecology, as well as a diverse array of river access issues.

By providing these tools to paddlers online, American Whitewater hopes to increase the effectiveness of our volunteer program. This is of critical importance because we have a small staff that can only work on a limited number of projects on an in-depth

level, while we are lucky to have hundreds of individuals willing to dedicate their time on a volunteer basis to river stewardship projects. Furthermore, the RST will catalog the institutional knowledge of current AW staff and volunteers and will share that knowledge with anyone willing to work to protect or restore a river in their own back yard.

2004 marks an especially important year for river conservation and access because 2004 is a national election year. Federal regulations and the politics that drive them control almost every aspect of river stewardship. The past four years has made this painfully evident as our ability to stand up to corporate pressures on our nation's rivers has been weakened in too many ways to count. As citizens in a democratic society we all have a responsibility to vote, and as paddlers we have a responsibility to make an informed vote that considers our vote's impacts on the rivers we enjoy. Voting is just one step - your step - in the democratic process. It is essential for each of us to educate ourselves about each candidate running for office at the local, state, and national level. Research your candidates - learn their position on the public's rights to participate in public processes like those we use to protect rivers. Remember, rivers can't vote - you can.

# Feature - Top River Issues

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

**Issue:** The United States Forest Service has renewed a ban on paddling over 20 miles of the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River.

**Goal:** To secure responsible and equitable access on this federally managed river, while defeating a precedent that could lead to discriminatory paddling bans on other rivers.

**Current Status:** Our 100 page appeal of the USFS decision to renew the paddling ban is in the office of the Chief of the USFS, undergoing analysis by a team of USFS experts and awaiting a decision by the Chief. A decision is expected on or before September 23rd, 2004.

In their decision to ban paddling and the analysis that lead up to the decision, the Sumter National Forest made bold and unsupported claims that, if supported by the Chief, could change the way the USFS manages the recreational use of many of its prized whitewater rivers. The section of the Chattooga River in question was designated as a National Wild and Scenic River specifically because of its incredible value as a whitewater paddling resource. The Sumter National Forest, though, has decided to ban paddling because they feel that paddling is incompatible with angling and have suggested that paddling is an inappropriate wilderness activity.

Our appeal clearly shows that the US Constitution, USFS regulations, The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and other federal legislation, case law, relevant scientific literature, and any concept of equality strongly support our right to paddle the

Chattooga River Headwaters. Our appeal was drafted by our incredible pro bono attorney Nathan Galbreath from the Dallas office of Patton Boggs Law Firm, AW Board Member Don Kinser, AW Regional Coordinator Charlene Coleman, and AW Eastern Regional Director Kevin Colburn. Our document professionally and inarguably refutes each false claim made by the Sumter National Forest, and has a vast reservoir of references to support our case. We are now eagerly awaiting a decision by the Chief of the USFS. We would like to thank the Georgia Canoeing Association, the family and friends of Charles Paul Horner, and our other donors for supporting this very important effort to protect paddlers' rights.

**Next Steps:** If the Chief of the USFS rules in our favor, then paddlers will have the same rights as everyone else to enjoy the entire Chattooga River in the fall of 2004, and we



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will begin a new collaborative relationship with the Sumter National Forest. If the Chief rules in favor of the Sumter National Forest then we will challenge his decision in court, with the help of Patton Boggs. A court challenge will require time and resources and we hope we can count on our membership to support such a challenge if the need arises.

**Precedent:** The USFS paddling ban on the Chattooga sets a bad precedent for Wild and Scenic River management. The previous ban was enacted long ago with no analysis and no justification, and has motivated 8 years of opposition from the paddling community. This prejudicial river management plan must be challenged. River closures should only be permitted where proper scientific analysis warrants the closure.

## Grand Canyon, Colorado River - Arizona

**Issue:** The 25 year wait continues for private boaters lucky enough to already be on the permit list; however, the list is closed to all new applicants pending the release of a final EIS for the Colorado River Management Plan. Meanwhile the National Park Service's plans to release the EIS continue to experience delays.

**Goal:** Reducing the private boater wait for launch permits to 3 years or less, and protecting the high quality wilderness experience.

**Current Status:** The Park has delayed issuing an environmental impact statement (EIS), originally promised in summer 2003. When released, this EIS will list several alternatives for managing recreation on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. American Whitewater's Director Jason Robertson and President Kevin Lewis have been working with our affiliate, the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association (GCPBA), representing private boaters to the Park Service. The general assumption, which has been verified by multiple sources within the Park Service, is that the delays have been caused by a rift between the Grand Canyon unit and the headquarters staff over whether to



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Heat medium non-stick pan to medium. Spread soft butter on both sides of bread slices. Sprinkle grated cheese over two slices of bread. Cover cheese with remaining slices. Place in pan and grill until crispy, golden brown. Flip with plastic spatula. Grill side two. Watch for smoke indicating burning of your perfect sandwich. Place on plate and cut in half. Add ketchup.

Enjoy with a fresh copy of *Rapid*, The Whitewater Freeboating Magazine.



\*Read full back issues and subscribe online at [www.rapidmag.com](http://www.rapidmag.com).

# Feature - Top River Issues

## Nooksack River, Washington

maintain a virtual status quo or to make more substantial changes to access and use by private and commercial visitors.

American Whitewater has retained a legal team to represent private boater interests and is working closely with the GCPBA to ensure that your interests are represented.

**Next Steps:** Submit comments on the EIS when it is released and advocate for improved access.

*Contact: Jason Robertson,  
American Whitewater Access Director*

**Issue:** Navigability determination of Nooksack River and the FERC's failure to terminate a hydro project operating unlawfully without adhering to federal licensing requirements.

**Goal:** Overturn the FERC's navigability determination and terminate hydro project operations until a licensing proceeding is completed.

**Current Status:** Non-federal hydropower projects are required to obtain a license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) if the project is 1) located on a navigable waterway; 2) federal lands or 3) connected to the interstate electric grid. In 1997 the Nooksack Falls hydropower project was abandoned by

the previous owner. A new owner has refurbished the project but contends the project does not require a FERC license.

In order to resolve the issue the FERC initiated studies to determine if the Nooksack project was indeed jurisdictional based on one of the three licensing criteria. In March 2004, the FERC declared the Nooksack Falls project jurisdictional thereby requiring a hydropower license to operate. FERC determined jurisdiction based on the fact that transmission for the Nooksack Falls project went across U.S. Forest Service lands. The FERC concluded that the Nooksack River was not a navigable waterway. American Whitewater disagrees with the FERC's navigability determination.

Interstate commerce by definition makes a river a navigable waterway. The Nooksack was used for log drives




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to mills that exported wood products across state lines. Furthermore Washington law defines a navigable waterway as a river that can float a "bolt of shingles". Historical records available to the FERC identify shingle drives on the Nooksack. In addition, the Nooksack presently is used for commercial rafting purposes just downstream of the powerhouse. Commercial clients travel from adjacent states and Canada to raft the Nooksack. FERC is also aware of these commercial rafting operations. American Whitewater believes the FERC erred in their navigability determination. FERC's failure to identify the Nooksack as a navigable waterway sets a bad precedent for licensing other potential hydropower projects. American Whitewater has appealed the FERC ruling requesting the FERC reconsider the navigability of the Nooksack.

Presently, the Nooksack Falls project is being operated without a license despite



*This powerhouse which sat abandoned for years is now operating without a license.*

*photo by Tom O'Keefe*

the FERC's ruling. Section 23(b)(1) of the Federal Power Act requires that a jurisdictional project must have a license in order to operate. Further, the Commission has previously enforced this legal requirement by ordering jurisdictional projects to stop operating until the

licensing process is complete and a new license can be issued. The FERC should not deviate from that enforcement policy here. Nor does it make sense for the FERC to allow a project to operate until a license can be issued – this would obviate the need, purpose and function of licensing, in addition to driving down any incentive for the prospective licensee to complete the licensing process.

This issue is not only one of administrative function, but of material harm to the river and its biological and recreational resources, which include endangered species and popular whitewater runs. The licensing process established by Congress in the Federal Power Act was designed to balance power and non-power values. Congress

recognized that our nation's waterways play an integral role in commerce as well as part of the public trust. Hydropower operations and their associated facilities and dams have the potential to monopolize river resources for a single purpose. The Nooksack Falls hydropower operator is

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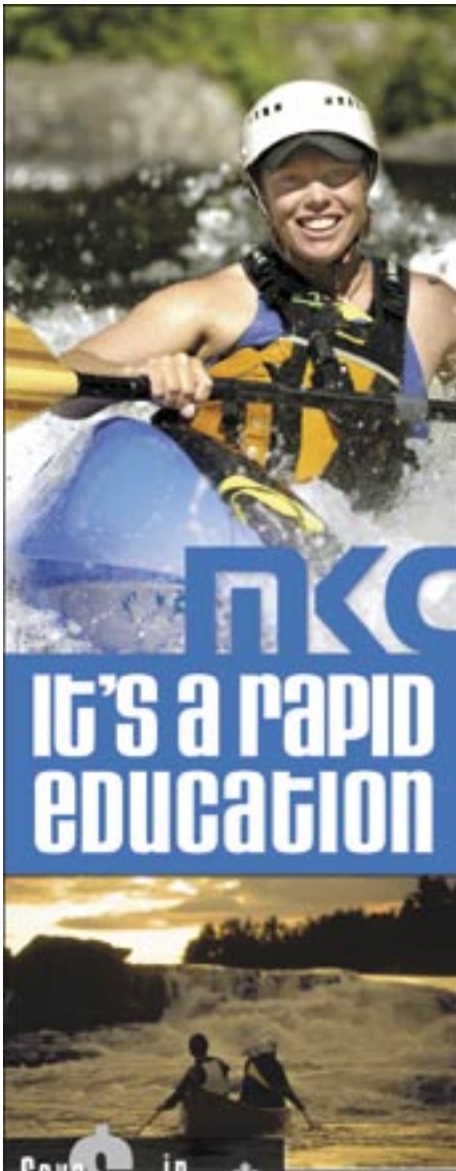
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# Feature - Top River Issues



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defying the intent of Congress and the purpose of the Federal Power Act.

**Next Steps:** File petition requesting that FERC issue a cease operations order and initiate a licensing proceeding. Track American Whitewater's appeal on the FERC's navigability determination for the Nooksack River.

**Precedent:** The FERC's navigability determination must be overturned otherwise other hydropower projects may escape licensing despite the presence of commercial rafting operations and historical records of interstate commerce.

The owner of the Nooksack Falls hydropower project is operating a project in violation of federal law. The FERC must enforce its clear legal mandate under the Federal Power Act and immediately order the Nooksack Falls project to stop operating until a project license is issued. Failure to do so jeopardizes the FERC's jurisdictional authority and enforcement credibility not to mention sending inconsistent messages to existing hydro operators complying with the licensing requirements under the Federal Power Act.

**Contact:**

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## Willimantic River Dam Removal and Restoration Connecticut

**Issue:** Innovative paddler-driven dam removal project is gaining momentum on the Willimantic River. The river is clogged with small dams that have ended major native fish migrations, covered up whitewater features and denied the town of Willimantic the many social benefits of having a free flowing river flow through their town.

**Goal:** To restore whitewater paddling opportunities, native fish runs, and a community's river district.

**Current Status:** Dan Mullins is a man with a vision who is bringing that vision to fruition with startling speed and efficiency. Dan drove through the ailing mill town of Willimantic, CT two years ago and saw the potential for green city parks where there are now rail yards, whitewater play features where there are stagnant reservoirs, and thriving fish migrations where today there are none. So Dan contacted American Whitewater about becoming an intern and promptly started a non profit organization called the Willimantic Whitewater Partnership (check out [www.willimanticicwhitewater.org](http://www.willimanticicwhitewater.org)). He pulled together a board of directors, convinced the state of Connecticut to change their anadromous fish recovery plan to include the Willimantic River, built a team of volunteer resource

*continued on page 38*



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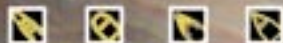


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# 50 YEARS

of American Whitewater



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photos by JED WEINGARTEN

Every so often you get the opportunity to witness something really special, something that really stands out from the norm. American Whitewater's 50th Anniversary was one of those opportunities.

On June 5th, at the Teva Mountain Games in Vail, Colorado 250 of America's most influential whitewater paddlers gathered in one place to pause and reflect on 50 years of American Whitewater. The attendees bridged generations of American paddling from Rob Lesser, to Sue Taft, to Chris Spellius, to Willie Kern, and on to the next generation of paddlers with Eric Jackson's son Dane.

Attendees gathered and shared stories of fiberglass boats, homemade skirts, and epic trips looking for the put-ins and take-outs of what are now whitewater classics. This whitewater event was anything but typical. There were no board shorts, there was no polypro, and there wasn't even a paddling film in sight. Attendees arrived dressed to the "nines" with many attendees sporting suits, evening dresses, and tuxes. These people had gathered to celebrate the history of one of the most effective whitewater organizations in the world.

Guiding the celebration as emcee was whitewater legend Willie Kern. The evening showcased the efforts of many

of AW's most dedicated volunteers by presenting several awards. Legacy Awards were presented to Mac Thornton, Charlie Walbridge, and Tom Christopher for outstanding individual contributions to AW. AW founding member Oz Hawksley was presented with the Founders Award for pioneering contributions in conservation, access, and safety and Tom O'Keefe was presented with the Rising Star Award for his recent contributions to the organization.

The evening culminated with a presentation by keynote speaker Wade Davis. Wade Davis is a National Geographic Explorer in Residence. He stunned the crowd with tales and pictures of his world travels and the problems of vanishing tribal cultures and medicinal plants being eradicated by natural resource exploitation.

One of the most touching moments of the evening was when AW champion Pete Skinner came to the podium and announced that an anonymous donor had made a fundraising challenge to the audience. For every dollar raised that evening, the donor would match each donation dollar for dollar. Simultaneously, many of today's and yesterday's paddling celebrities stood up and made significant financial pledges to AW. In one fell swoop, the frugal men and women of whitewater stood up and clearly indicated that a strong and healthy AW was a priority for the future of our rivers and sport. In this single evening over \$30,000 was raised to support all of American Whitewater's work in river access and conservation.

AW would like to thank each and every one of the people who took time out of their busy schedules, put their paddling on hold and came to celebrate the history of our



continued on page 58

*Teva's Liz Ferrin and key  
note speaker Wade Davis*



*Long time AW Champion, Pete Skinner  
and speaker Wade Davis*



*Master of Ceremonies Willie Kern and  
AW's Safety Chairman Charlie Walbridge*



# Conservation & Access

# Sewage Water Dumping

by Andrew Dunning

## Sewage Water Dumping Near Rock Island

The Caney Fork River holds one of the most sought-after and recognizable whitewater play features in America. Being world renowned for its beauty and accessibility, Rock Island is the play-spot of choice for many professional freestyle kayakers. Recently, Jackson Kayak and the Academy of Huge Experiences, a high school for kayakers, chose this destination for their base of operations. Unfortunately, due to events over the last few months, a decision was made by nearby Van Buren County that could damage the river's already fragile ecosystem.

The city of Spencer, TN has been issued a 20-year permit to dump treated wastewater into the Caney Fork River. In order to dump Spencer will have to build a ten-mile pipeline to transport almost 250,000 gallons of water a day. The cost of such a pipeline is estimated to be 2.9 million dollars at \$55 per foot of piping. Not only could this method of wastewater disposal harm the environment, the city of Spencer does not have the requisite funds. Spencer does have a simple, cheap, and environmentally safe solution to this problem but has chosen to dump in the Caney Fork River for reasons not known to the public.

## Effects of Sewage Dumping

Since September 2003 there has been an ongoing battle between the city of Spencer and an organization called the Friends of the Caney Fork (FCF). According to Ricky Dunn, Chairman of FCF, the organization wants to protect the Caney Fork River. Spencer, located in Van Buren County, wants to dump their treated wastewater into the Caney Fork, located in White County. The FCF has already spent \$19,000 writing in opposition to the proposal.

Wastewater contains nutrients which promote overgrowth of blue-green algae – an algae naturally occurring in waterways. Blooms of algae block light in the waterways and lower the oxygen level in the water thereby killing native flora by depriving them of light and oxygen.



The city of Spencer must raise \$2.9 million to follow through with their wastewater disposal plan. The city applied for a \$1 million grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA declined their application but offered Spencer a \$2 million grant to land irrigate the wastewater. Spencer did not accept the land irrigation grant but instead chose to take out a \$1 million loan to build the pipeline, a loan the citizens of Spencer would have to repay.

## An Alternative Solution


The best solution to Spencer's waste disposal problem is land irrigation. A nearby golf course owner offered to dispose of the wastewater (by irrigating his fields) if Spencer could get the wastewater to his site. The nutrients in the wastewater, which harm waterways, are beneficial to the soil. Land irrigating naturally purifies the water. During the water cycle, evaporation and condensation remove all the dissolved substances. The action of soil bacteria chemically converts dissolved organic contaminants to simple compounds and the filtrations through sand and gravel removes suspended matter from groundwater.

## Protective Bill Passed Too Late

At the time Spencer was applying for their permit, the Friends of the Caney Fork presented a bill to the state of Tennessee Legislature requiring wastewater dumping plans to always opt for an environmental method of removal if available. This bill would have forced Spencer to utilize the proposed land irrigation. The bill passed in state legislation, but only after Spencer had received their permit. Thus, Spencer has been grand-fathered past the bill and has the right to dump into the Caney Fork at this time.

## Details of the Dump Site

White County, Warren County, and local environmentalists are in opposition to Spencer's chosen method of wastewater disposal. The dumpsite is planned at mile marker 104.6 on the Caney Fork; an area of low flow that is dry when the dam is not releasing. The dumpsite is directly across from public boat docks frequented by locals and boaters and directly upstream from Rock Island.

Spencer has a less expensive, non-damaging alternative but for unknown reasons has chosen to go into debt and damage the local ecosystem. As of the publication of this article the Friends of the Caney Fork are still fundraising and fighting to avoid the building of the pipeline and dumping on the Caney Fork. To find out more about the FCF's efforts, go to [http://www.cumberlandrivercompact.org/caney\\_fork\\_meetings.html](http://www.cumberlandrivercompact.org/caney_fork_meetings.html). 

*Andrew Dunning completed this research project while attending the Academy of Huge Experiences, a high school for kayakers.*



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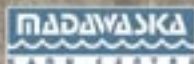
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# Their Lips are MOVING

Grand Canyon  
River Runner  
Tribal Elders  
Tell Tales

by Richard D. Quartaroli

## “No Sh\*t, There I Was!”

A little over ten years ago, some folks at Grand Canyon River Guides (GCRG) had a brilliant idea: now that the organization was up and running and the first big political resource battle of passing the Grand Canyon Protection Act had ended, how about preserving Colorado River runners' stories - those “words from the heart” of the Grand Canyon river-running community. First mentioned in the Winter 1992-93 issue of *The News* (now *Boatman's Quarterly Review* or BQR), the next winter's issue announced the awarding of a grant from the Southwestern Foundation for Education and Historical Preservation (est. 1992 in Tucson, Ariz.) to do just that. The way I heard it was that Grand Canyon Dories boatman, Lew Steiger, had rescued a passenger from the Colorado River, one who just happened to be on the Foundation's board. The grateful woman thanked Lew and asked what she could do in return to repay him; you can guess the rest. This tale from the Grand Canyon may

be true, or may be tall but one should never let truth get in the way of a good story. As Wallace Stegner wrote about an arguable John Wesley Powell river event: “But even if the story is not true, it ought to be.”

## The “Old Timers”

Around that same time Bob Webb and Ted Melis of the USGS, working with the Bureau of Reclamation's Glen Canyon Environmental Studies, organized a Grand Canyon river trip for pre-Glen Canyon Dam river runners. These elders of our tribe had experienced the unregulated river and the intent was to record their impressions of changes to the riverine environment, thereby gaining “new insights into Grand Canyon history and environmental changes along the Colorado River.” Those of us lucky enough to be involved with the trip affectionately called them the Legends or Old Timers.

In boatman Brad Dimock's write-up, he referred to something else: “[S]ome of us

on the crew had ulterior motives. Stories (also called history) ... There was an ample supply, and Lew Steiger and his film man Jeff worked dawn to dusk recording it all.” Dimock concluded: “[T]he best part of the trip was getting to know the truly wonderful people behind those legendary names. Superstars one and all, each one a monument to the honorable trade of Grand Canyon boating ... It was, and I'm not kidding, the coolest trip I've ever been on.”

## “An Old Man Dies... A Book Is Lost”

The GCRG project has collected around 80 oral histories, “living memories of the past,” and is now seeking further funding to continue the project. Time is always running out, as old timers, recent-generation boaters, and even contemporary boatmen are unfortunately running that last rapid. Of those already interviewed, almost 25% have since died. Some members of GCRG are also on the Advisory Council of Save

the Boats, a cooperative project between Grand Canyon National Park and the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation. For decades the historic boat collection at Grand Canyon has been languishing in the courtyard of the old visitors' center. Conservation of these artifacts and other historic boats is underway; part of the project will be to collect oral histories from boaters with particular knowledge of boat construction and history.

## "Emphasis is On Doing"

If any of you are contemplating an oral history project for your particular organization or community, the recommendation is always to actually do some interviews. Projects can begin small and grow. As noted above, "delays run the risk that interviewees will die before they can be interviewed, for oral historians are in a perpetual contest with the actuarial realities." That does not mean that you shouldn't plan ahead, just as with boating, but don't wait too long. Perhaps the best way to begin is to align your project with a reputable oral history organization, historical society, or university special collections or archives.

From the start, the GCRG project has been a joint endeavor with Northern Arizona University, Cline Library, Special Collections and Archives Department. "An interview becomes an oral history only when it has been recorded, processed in some way, made available in an archive, library, or other repository, or reproduced in relatively verbatim form as a publication. Availability for general research, reinterpretation, and verification defines oral history. By preserving the tapes and transcripts of their interviews, oral historians seek to leave as complete, candid, and reliable a record as possible."

## Important, Informative, Fun, and Good for You

Every year GCRG seeks input from its membership on how the association is doing, many commenting on how enjoyable they find the printed interviews. The oral history project is among the most popular portions of the BQR.6 In fact, this article is a direct result of that popularity; Jason Robertson, American Whitewater's National Policy Director, enjoys the interviews so

much that he asked me to write about them. Seventy percent of the issues have had interviews and the issues are often referred to by their interviewee's name. "Words from the heart" are important for your river history, informative for your community, and a good way for you to publicize your organization. They are also a tremendous amount of fun, conducting them, hearing them, reading them. It's like being able to hang around the campfire with some of the best folks you've ever met, swapping stories like there's no tomorrow. **AW**

**Editor's Note:** *Richard D. Quartaroli has been boating the Colorado River through Grand Canyon since 1973. He is a past president of the Grand Canyon River Guides, was the first Research Librarian for the Glen Canyon Environmental Studies, and is the Special Collections Librarian at the Cline Library*

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# Feature - Top River Issues

continued from page 38

argue every potentially precedent setting and anti-paddling point that NYSEG makes over the coming months and years.

**Precedent:** NYSEG represents the corporate pressure that is constantly vying for the public's rivers. While many dam owners work with the public to share the rivers they profit from, NYSEG fights for absolute control. Without American Whitewater's presence, NYSEG could change the face of paddling in New England and elsewhere by successfully claiming that dam owners have no responsibility to mitigate their impacts on recreation. **AW**

Contact: Kevin Colburn, Eastern Regional Director

## Current AW River Issues:

### Alabama

Coosa, Johnnies Creek

### Alaska

State Hydropower Licensing Legislation

### Arizona

Grand Canyon, Fossil Creek

### California

Kern, South Fork American, Middle and South Stanislaus, North Fork Feather, Piru Creek, Pit, San Joaquin, Mokelumne, Klamath, West Branch Feather, Butte Creek, American, Middle Fork Feather, Cherry Creek, Fordyce Creek, Truckee

### Colorado

South Boulder Creek, Boulder Creek, Williams Fork, South Platte

### Connecticut

Willamantec

### Georgia

Tallulah, Chattahoochee, Chattooga

### Idaho

Bear, Malad, Snake, Middle Fk Salmon, Main Salmon, State Boater Registration bill

### Indiana

McCormicks Creek

### Kentucky

Elkhorn

### Maine

West Branch Penobscot, Penobscot, Kennebec, Dead

### Maryland

Savage, Youghiogeny

### Massachusetts

Deerfield

### Michigan

Sturgeon

### Minnesota

St. Louis

### Montana

Clark Fork, West Rosebud Creek, Swan, Mt River Recreation Advisory Council

### New Hampshire

Contoocook

### New York

Ausable, Hoosic, Saranac, Mongaup

### North Carolina

Catawba, Cheoah, Yellow Creek, East Fk. Tuckasegee, West Fk. Tuckasegee, Main Tuckasegee, Nantahala, Toxaway, Watauga, Wilson Creek

### Oregon

Clackamas, Columbia, Klamath, McKenzie, North Fork Rogue, North Umpqua

### Pennsylvania

Lehigh, Stonycreek

### South Carolina

Catawba, Twelvemile Creek, Chattooga

### Tennessee

Little Tennessee, Watauga, Ocoee, Hiwassee

### Utah

American Fork

### Washington

Cispus, Clear Creek, Green, Middle Fork Snoqualmie, Nooksack, Snoqualmie, Sultan, Spokane, Stillaguamish

### West Virginia

Gauley

### Wisconsin

Wisconsin River, Pine, Menominee, Paint, Montreal

### Wyoming

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# The River's Pull

by Harrison Metzger

Lee Belknap will never forget seeing his friend Rod Baird struggling to free himself from his kayak trapped beneath a boulder on the Chattooga River.

"I can tell you when he was fighting to get that breath it was perfectly clear to me that here was a man who wanted to live," said Belknap, 45, of Hendersonville, N.C.

On Sunday, July 20, Baird and Belknap and four kayaking friends launched at the U.S. 76 bridge for the seven-mile trip down a segment of the Chattooga River known as Section IV. That day the water took on character that makes it a National Wild and Scenic River, which is to say pretty to look at, deceptively treacherous.

The Chattooga was flowing about 1.8 feet that day, a level considered medium high. At this flow the major rapids are powerful Class IVs with consequences due to numerous undercut rocks.

"We were having a beautiful day," said Robin Knupp, an expert kayaker and friend of Baird's. "The water was just fine and we were behind most of the traffic. Everybody was doing fine, though getting tired from so much playing."

Flowing from North Carolina, the Chattooga delineates the border of Georgia and South Carolina for 40 miles. It packs its biggest and hardest rapids into a 500-yard stretch called the Five Falls, just upstream of where it is silenced beneath Lake Tugaloo.

The Five Falls is a chaotic jumble of white foam crashing over, around and under dark granite carved into gnarled and twisted shapes by the river's current. The tortured shape of the stream bed is one reason the river has claimed 37 lives since the early 1970s.

To the untrained eye, the Chattooga is an enticing wonderland of rushing whitewater set against shores of dark evergreens and craggy banks. But it takes experience and skill to run the river, and Baird and his companions were all veteran adventure boaters. They included Belknap, an engineer with GE Lighting Systems in Hendersonville; Knupp; Belknap's girlfriend, Kathy Cody; Asheville neurologist Terry McGhee; and Annette DuPont, a physical therapist from Asheville.

## Trouble at Jawbone

Jawbone is the fourth rapid in the Five Falls. The current drops to the left into a calm area called the Parking Lot, then funnels down 6 feet into a series of powerful waves. About 100 feet downstream, the flow splits around a boulder called Hydroelectric Rock and drops another 3 feet.

Several boaters over the years have flushed through the base of Hydroelectric Rock in an underwater cavern formed by the boulder and another rock. Upstream, in the main drop, another undercut rock called Decap juts from the right bank.

Kayakers and canoeists usually paddle into the eddy above the main drop, crash through the waves at the bottom and then turn right or left to avoid Hydroelectric Rock. But Baird's run went wrong.

"Rod came out of the Parking Lot too high," said Travis Buck, a raft guide and veteran kayaker who was watching from the shore next to Jawbone. "Basically it put him on a collision course. He got swept under Decap sideways and it really knocked him good."

Buck yelled to alert his friend, Stephen Morrison.

"I thought at the very least we would have a swimmer with a head injury," Buck said.

Baird rolled his kayak upright but appeared "a little dazed" as he washed through the waves toward Hydroelectric Rock, Buck said. Other witnesses said Baird was still trying to right himself when he hit the boulder.

"He definitely hit his roll, but I'm afraid the little bell-ringing he had taken slowed him down," Buck said. "He got sucked right into Hydro and got stuck."

## Fighting for air

McGhee, the neurologist, saw Baird's trouble from upstream. He grabbed the bow of Baird's kayak as he washed by, but was unable to overcome the force of the current to pull it out of the rock.

Baird's Pyranha Inazone kayak went into the cavern stern first and washed most of the way through before getting stuck. He was trapped inside, underwater.

Belknap, like McGhee, was sitting in his kayak in a small pool on the right above Hydroelectric Rock. In 26 years of paddling the Chattooga, Belknap had gotten in the habit of waiting at that spot, just in case anyone had trouble.

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When Belknap saw the rushing current sweep Baird's kayak into the hole, he paddled around the back side of the boulder just in time to see the kayak become wedged under the rock.

"I wasn't sure if he was still in it," Belknap said. "I waited for a very short moment; a paddle came out, he was still nowhere in sight. Then his hand came out the water. He was reaching for anybody that might have been there."

Belknap paddled his kayak close to the rock.

"He grabbed hold of the nose of my boat and tried to get to the surface to breathe," he said. "With one possible exception, he couldn't get more than two inches from the surface."

The trapped kayaker tried several times to get air, and may have gotten a breath on one attempt. Then he went limp.

Belknap jumped out of his kayak into the deep water behind the rock. Lacking a handhold, he wedged his hands in a crack to climb up onto Hydroelectric Rock, holding onto his kayak with the other hand. Then he grabbed a rescue rope out of his boat and let his kayak drift away.

"At that point I had people on both sides of the river yelling to me. One threw a rope from river left. The other was Travis (Buck), who told me to stop everything and help him (get) on the rock. That seemed like the best plan."

Buck knew more about the danger than anyone. He had swum in the pool around Hydroelectric Rock at low water with a scuba mask and peered into the spot where Baird was wedged. But today the Chattooga was pulsating with a powerful current as he jumped from the shore.

Belknap threw him a rope but missed. He quickly tried again.

"I was sweeping by and with the three or four coils (of rope) in his hand he tagged me and pulled me up on the rock," Buck said.

## Freed from Hydro

Buck had jumped in upstream of the same hole that had swallowed Baird.

"I really wasn't focused on much of anything but getting my butt on that rock and my hand on that boat," he said.

He turned to DuPont and Knupp, the two female kayakers who had stopped behind the rock, to give them instructions.

"He said, 'As soon as I get him out of that rock you are going to start CPR,'" recalled DuPont, 34. "It wasn't, 'if I get him out of the rock' but when. There was not a moment of hesitation in Travis's voice."

Buck grabbed the front of Baird's kayak and gave it one shove, then several more.

"I grabbed the bow loop and pushed and pushed and pushed until it let loose, then I turned around and jumped back in the water," he said.

Buck grabbed the front of Baird's kayak and started trying to tug him over to the shore, as Knupp and DuPont tried to assist from their kayaks. They knew that just downstream the river cascades over Sock 'em Dog, one of its most feared rapids.

"Rod's boat was full of water but he was still in it (upside down)," Knupp said. "We weren't getting anywhere. He was just so heavy you couldn't hold onto him."

Boaters running Sock 'em Dog must fight a strong right-to-left current to go over an underwater rock called the Launching Pad. That shoots the boater over a 6-foot sheer drop and over a hydraulic trap that can hold boaters or bodies.

Holding the grab loop of Baird's kayak in one hand, Buck swam furiously for the right shore above the next drop.

"We ended up getting swept down to the next pool above the Dog," Buck said. "We were on the right bank but there was nothing to grab onto. We went through the gate rocks. I let go of his boat and caught



# Safety

## The River's Pull continued

the boater's eddy (on the right shore.)”

Buck looked downstream just in time to see Baird's unconscious body, now separated from the kayak, go off the Launching Pad.

“I don't think I ever felt so low in my life as I did crawling out of that eddy,” Buck said, “because I really felt we had lost him.”

River rescue expert Travis Buck had seen people swim Sock 'em Dog rapid before. But this time the victim was unconscious.

Baird, a 56-year-old Asheville health care consultant, had been in Buck's grasp. The 30-year-old Buck had held on to Baird's kayak and had swum to the river's right shore, but he had to let go to avoid being sucked into the next rapid.

Baird was out of his kayak now, swept downstream toward the Launching Pad,

the horizon where the river plunges into Sock 'em Dog, one of its most dangerous rapids.

If Baird had gone to the left of the pad, he would have been caught in the deadly hydraulic at the base of the 6-foot falls or have become wedged beneath underwater rocks downstream.

Somehow he shot right over it.

At lower water levels in past summers, Buck had dived with a scuba mask in the pool below Sock 'em Dog and seen the underwater hazards. That gave him insight into why it is called “Dead Man's Pool.”

“The rocks in the middle of the river are just wickedly undercut,” he said. “I've seen swimmers who were in big life jackets with a lung full of air disappear for a long period of time and pop up downstream.

Obviously, a swimmer with no air in his lungs is in a precarious position.”

As Buck ran down the shore, he saw things for the paddling crew were going from bad to worse. A kayaker was getting hammered in her boat at the base of Sock 'em Dog. It was Annette DuPont.

Another of Baird's friends, 42-year-old Robin Knupp, had chased him down Sock 'em Dog after seeing him disappear over the edge. She and DuPont both got stuck in the hydraulic trap beneath the ledge.

“At this point I thought we were going to have another drowning,” Buck said. “I just threw my hands in the air because there wasn't a damn thing I could do ... and went down and started dealing with Rod.”

Buck's paddling partner Stephen Morrison had jumped in the pool below Sock 'em



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Dog and had swum with Baird's limp body to shore. Upstream, Knupp fought her way out of the rapid's grasp in her kayak and yelled for Morrison to strip off Baird's life jacket and get him on a level surface. DuPont swam out of the rapid.

## Down for the count

About six minutes and 35 seconds had elapsed since the accident. The time frame was known because Milt Aiken, an Atlanta canoe paddler and producer of the Paddlesnake whitewater videos, taped part of the rescue.

Buck grabbed Baird around the waist and flipped him over, trying to force water from his lungs.

"He was purple, almost black, completely unresponsive with no pulse, no breathing," Buck said. "I just started barking orders, getting his crew motivated to do what they needed to do."

Swimming out of Sock 'em Dog, DuPont was one of the first people on the scene. She and her boyfriend, Asheville neurologist Terry McGhee, started cardiopulmonary resuscitation on Baird. The pint-sized DuPont clamped her mouth over Baird's to pump air into his water-filled lungs as McGhee rhythmically compressed Baird's chest.

After about five minutes, McGhee felt a pulse. A couple of minutes later Baird took a first weak, rasping breath.

DuPont, who is recertified in CPR every year, had practiced the procedure many times but never had performed it in an emergency. It had been decades since McGhee had performed CPR in an emergency, as a young intern.

"I had lost hope," said McGhee, 52, an expert kayaker and friend of Baird's for 15 years. "I thought there was no possible way he was coming back. When he took his first breath it just energized everybody."

## Evacuation the hard way

If Baird's first breath recharged the rescuers, their struggle was far from over.

Buck sent other paddlers upstream to find a backboard that rafting companies stash near Corkscrew Rapid on the South Carolina side of the river for emergencies. But the group was on the Georgia side, where a rock wall and jumble of boulders make walking downstream impossible.

Lee Belknap, a veteran kayaker from Hendersonville, had been stranded atop Hydroelectric Rock after he had helped Buck free Baird. He swam across the river with the help of his girlfriend, Kathy Cody, to recover his kayak.

The group made a pontoon boat by lashing the backboard atop Belknap's and Cody's kayaks. The loaded Baird on top and swam him across Dead Man's Pool to the South Carolina shore.

Then began a back-breaking hour-long carry over boulders and through dense brush. Several strong teenagers who were with Aiken, the Atlanta videographer, helped carry Baird as the group of 10 or so made its way downstream, passing the backboard up and over the huge rocks.

When some members of the group got discouraged or tried to rest, Buck refused to let them quit.

"We have one hour to get this man to advanced medical care, and that's it," he yelled to the group.

"It was terribly hard; Rod is not slight-framed," Buck said. "Everybody did great and pushed past the point where they had to give and then gave a little more."

Baird drew his wrists in close to his body and clenched his jaw. Buck and McGhee worried Baird was "posturing," a tense drawing in of the extremities that sometimes indicates brain damage or a patient near death. But Buck refused to allow the group to give in to despair.

"Travis was the real story there," McGhee



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# Safety

## The River's Pull continued

said. "His determination and will not to ever put Rod down really saved his life."

### Out of the wilderness

The group had planned to carry Baird out of the gorge at Possum Creek and had sent Morrison ahead to alert EMS. But nearing Lake Tugaloo they got word that another kayaker had been able to flag down a fishing boat. It was waiting downstream, but once again they would have to swim him across the river atop the kayaks.

"That was difficult because the river was a lot swifter than we thought," McGhee said.

"We got washed down a long way. Then we carried him down on the riverbank on the right for another 10 minutes."

At the lake, they met a paddler who is also a firefighter/EMT from nearby Hall County, Ga. McGhee climbed aboard the boat with the EMT and left the rest of the group to hike back to recover the gear.

It took about 30 minutes for the slow fishing boat to cover the two miles down Lake Tugaloo to the boat ramp, where an ambulance was waiting. Baird's blood oxygen had dropped to 60 percent, far below the normal range of 95 to 100, McGhee said. But with oxygen from the ambulance, "in a few minutes he perked back up to about 87 percent."

At the emergency room of the Oconee County Hospital in Seneca, S.C., McGhee identified himself as a physician.

"The doctors immediately let me into the room and I had free range of the entire emergency room," McGhee said.

McGhee began making plans to get Baird to Mission St. Joseph's Hospital in Asheville while the Oconee County doctors ran a battery of tests. McGhee called Dr. Trent McCain at the Asheville hospital, who authorized an immediate transfer.

"We tried to get the helicopter (the Mission Air Medical Ambulance) to come, but it was rainy and foggy," McGhee said.

So McGhee rode in the ambulance with his friend, a trip that took about an hour and a half.

Back in Asheville, David Knupp, Robin's husband, sent out e-mails to his friends in the Western Carolina Paddlers club.

"He is stable and CAT scan came back good, and is responding somewhat," David Knupp said in a late-night e-mail.

It was the first of many e-mails sent out to the paddling community over the coming weeks. Paddlers and friends from across the country prayed and sent well wishes to Baird, his wife, Bess; daughter, Amber; and son, Grant.

"The Asheville community really pulled for Rod, and people from everywhere were praying for Rod," DuPont said.

Baird was sedated and put on a respirator. The next few days were excruciating for Baird's family and friends as they awaited some word.

Then on Wednesday, July 23, three days after the near drowning, Baird did something no one expected. For one day, he was able to come off the respirator, talk and even joke a bit.

The first hint Baird had come through the ordeal intact came the day before when Robin Knupp and her husband visited him.

"Things are looking excellent," she said

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in an e-mail that Tuesday. "When Rod is off his sedation, he is alert, motioning for water, recognizing people, giving the thumbs up sign, wondering what has happened to him."

He remained in ICU for more than two weeks, recovering from lung and kidney damage. He was released Aug. 18 and is expected to make a full recovery.

## The string of pearls

Baird was a founder and president of Visiting Health Professionals, which merged with Thom's Rehab to become Care Partners. VHP had three employees when it began in 1977 and 500 when it merged in 1997. The Baltimore native is also conservation chairman for the Western Carolina Paddlers.

Working with the river advocacy group American Whitewater, he has fought to force a Tennessee company to restore water for trout fishing and whitewater paddling to the Cheoah River in Graham County.

Baird remembers nothing of that day on the river. But he feels overwhelmed by the love and support people have given his family and him, and by the strength of his wife. Today, Baird speaks with amazement of the perfect alignment of events that saved his life.

"I view my life as a string of pearls, and each pearl is a string of luck," he said. "I started out with a black one, getting sucked into Hydro, then had this perfect string of luck that everyone there knew how to deal with a rescue scenario."

Like everyone else on the trip, McGhee insists on no personal glory. "I did no more or less than anyone else," he says. "It was a team effort from 12 or 15 people, and if any one of those people hadn't been there, he wouldn't have gotten out."

"Lucky man," Buck said of the man who lived to tell of his near-death adventure, even if secondhand. "He's here to do something." **AW**

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....this punk @## couldn't even make it into "you gonna eat that"

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A kayaker is seen from behind, standing on a dark rock. They are wearing a black helmet with a "HEADS" logo, a yellow and red jacket, and a red life vest. The background is a large, turbulent white-water river with a lot of foam and spray.

# extreme MEASURES

by Lila Marie Thomas

In late October the Eugene, Oregon rains start falling and don't stop until early May. The pros come back to the valley full to the brim with summer boating adventures. The nearby McKenzie and Lake Creek Rivers swell and fold back in on themselves to form river-wide holes and huge glassy green waves.

But what excites most of the pros in the valley and keeps them coming back year after year are the creeks and waterfalls lying hidden up and down the West coast like a white watery web. From Northern California to British Columbia the waterways are pulsing with rain that just won't quit. With the increased marketing in extreme kayaking--catapulting it from fringe to famous in less than five years--are the young and invincible meeting risks too great on the water?

*photos by JOCK BRADLEY*

Jock Bradley, one of the industry's foremost extreme kayaking photographers, describes how a routine shoot can go awry. Two years ago Jock and a crew of seven world-class boaters were doing a shoot at Rainbow Pool Falls on the South Fork of the Toulomme. It was a 17-foot "truck and huck" spot. While the guys were cycling the falls Jock stood on a ledge shooting roll after roll of film. On river right there was a slight undercut. One of the boaters came off the lip in an odd way and got sucked into the undercut and disappeared behind the falls. Within fifteen seconds three people stood ashore with throw bags in hand. Jock ran to his truck parked nearby to call 911 and get more climbing gear and equipment to perhaps wench him out with his truck. Christian Knight repeatedly tossed his throwbag into the falls. When he felt tension Tao jumped from the top of the falls into the pool below and along with Josh Bechtel's help, pulled him out from behind the curtain. He was sitting upright in his boat behind the falls the entire time with no way to get out.

"I think that all of us thought we had seen the last of him. We just had no way of communicating to him," says Jock. "That was the closest I've come to losing

someone. I've got to admit it really made me wonder if I should be photographing people hucking waterfalls."

**"Extreme kayaking invokes fear. It sells. Because fear is something everyone can identify with," says Jock.**

Tao Berman, three time world record holder, describes why extreme kayaking is important to the entire sport. "The sport of kayaking is image based," says Tao. "Extreme kayaking is what draws attention from the mainstream. Look at how many car commercials feature kayaks these days."

The extreme serves as a window into the world of kayaking that, once opened, reveals itself to beginners as river-running and playboating. It is the unattainable. Done by a few of the most experienced and brave, it nevertheless represents the entire sport.

Shane Benedict, co-founder of Liquid Logic kayak company puts it like this "Money in the whitewater industry is going into marketing extreme kayaking," he says. "A photograph of someone hucking themselves off a 90-foot waterfall is more impressive than a photograph of someone on a wave." As attention shifts towards the highest drops, the biggest rivers, and the most dangerous descents the athletes are striving to meet the demand. Are they pushing too hard to maintain an unrealistic image of kayaking?

"On the extreme side of the sport I have only pushed myself," says Tao. "When I run a drop it's like a puzzle I have to put together. Sometimes I have a foot margin between life and death. If I don't believe personally I can make my line I won't do it."

"When running a huge drop it is all about knowing your line, believing you can do it and sticking it," says David Grove, extreme kayaker. "It doesn't have anything to do with anyone else and that is what I love about it."

*continued on next page*



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# Safety Extreme Measures

“There is potential for all kayakers to get caught up in the whole “Kodak courage’ thing,” says Dave Zinn, an extreme kayaker and member of team Dagger.

“But hopefully through experience we can all gain a more realistic expectation of ourselves on the river and learn to walk away.”

Bradley says he only works with professional kayakers during extreme photo shoots. “There is one steadfast rule that applies whenever I pick up a camera to photograph kayaking: the kayaker’s safety comes first,” says Jock. “It doesn’t matter how much money has been spent, how long it has taken to get to the river, or what the sponsors think. If the boater has any doubt what so ever about the drop, then I expect them not to run it.”

“This summer I had a crew of four guys waiting at the top of a waterfall before daylight,” he says. “There was only a ten minute window for the light. The world-class athletes understand what is expected of them. Amateurs are doing it for their love of the water not the job. They don’t put the same level of importance on it.”

Charlie Walbridge, AW Safety Editor, says that there are an approximated 20 deaths per year in the sport of kayaking. And that number is on the rise as more inexperienced boaters try harder runs.

*continued on page 59*



**Somewhere within Chris' abnormally large head were thoughts of large aerials, moonpies, twinkies and three more really cool LVM t-shirts.**



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# Events Women in Slalom

by Chuck Hines

Before she graduated from high school in 1985, Becky Weis logged over 1,000 river miles, and soon thereafter she paddled some of the very toughest stretches of whitewater in the country, such as the Niagara River Gorge, the Upper Nantahala, North Chickamauga Creek, Overflow Creek, the Meadow, the North Fork of the Payette out west, and Chattooga Section Four at 5 feet.

It all culminated when she finished in a first-place tie in international freestyle competition in 1994.

But let's go back to the beginning. I recall receiving a phone call from Becky's father, canoeing guru Chuck Weis, in 1981. He said, "Becky's run all the rivers here in Indiana, and I'd like her to get more instruction." In those days, we had a very good YMCA kids' kayaking club in Asheville, North Carolina, so I invited Becky, 13 at the time, to join us.

She came and shared a bedroom in our home with my own daughter, Heather, and after a rocky start on a paddling trip down remote Snowbird Creek, Becky soon blossomed into a whitewater whiz. Together we ran the Lower Green, Nantahala, Nolichucky, Tuckasegee, and several other rivers around Western North Carolina, and Becky also trained with us at our slalom course on the French Broad River. When we conducted our annual French Broad River races, she upset the field of more experienced women and girls and took top honors in the slalom.

Becky went back home to Indiana but each summer thereafter returned to Asheville and then to the Nantahala Outdoor Center, and she won the K-1W Jr. slalom races at the 1983 and 1985 U.S. Championships and competed in Europe. Then, as an older teen, she paddled all of the 'hairy' river sections mentioned above, and she was one of the first women to run the Class IV-V Green River Narrows.

She became certified to teach kayaking at the Nantahala Outdoor Center, which she has said is her proudest achievement. Even-

tually she came to college here in Asheville and helped teach beginning-level students in our local program. Finally she took up freestyle (or whitewater rodeo) when it was first becoming popular and earned the aforementioned first-place tie – and Gold Medal – at a major international competition in Europe in 1994.


Still a resident of Asheville, Becky recently stated, "Much of the confidence and skill necessary for me to run all those tough rivers I actually gained from my early years of slalom practicing and competing."

Today, in the Olympic Year of 2004, we have many good younger slalom racers who are striving to follow in the footsteps of such stars as Barbara Wright, Peggy Nutt Mitchell, Carrie Ashton, Cindy Goodwin, Louise Holcombe, Linda Harrison, Wendy Stone, Kara Weld, Cathy Hearn, Dana Chladek and many others, including Becky Weis, who've led the way in this very difficult sport.

What is whitewater slalom racing, anyway? Well, here's a very brief history:

- 1932 - First slalom races held in Switzerland
- 1949 - First Slalom World Championships
- 1956 - First U.S. Slalom National Championships
- 1972 - First Olympic Games Whitewater Slalom in Augsburg, West Germany
- 1981 - Junior & Master categories added to the U.S. Slalom National Championships

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1986 - First Junior World Slalom Championships

1989 - Whitewater Slalom World Championships held in the U.S. for the first time on the Savage River in Western Maryland

1996 - Olympic Games Whitewater Slalom held in the U.S. for the first time on the Ocoee River in Tennessee, attracting daily capacity crowds of 15,000+ over four consecutive days

1996 - First U.S. Junior Olympic Slalom Championships

2003 - A record 70 countries compete in the Whitewater Slalom World Championships, all hoping to qualify for the 2004 Olympics

2004 - Olympic Games Whitewater Slalom in Athens, Greece on August 17-20

From a technical standpoint, slalom racing is a sport in which athletes in four different classes of racing boats maneuver down the river and through a series of 18 to 20 gates, attempting to avoid hitting the poles that form the gates. The athletes are timed from start to finish over the course, which generally requires about two minutes of adept boat-handling, depending on the difficulty of the river. There are such obstacles as rapids and rocks, pulsating waves and treacherous hydraulics, and it's not unusual for the water level to go up or down during the competition and for the wind to cause the poles to swing freely. Athletes must be moving forward through some gates and upstream, against the slower moving current, at other gates. Missing a gate entirely is a 50-second penalty. Touching a pole with one's body, boat, or paddle, even barely, is a 2-second penalty. Each athlete is given two race runs through the course, with the total time determining the results. Oh yes, one other thing: the slalom courses not only change from one river to the next but also are changed by a team of course designers from the Qualifier race one day to the Final race the next day on the same river. Therefore this is a competition of constantly changing challenges, maybe more so than any other sport, and at the highest level, just a single touch of one

pole, resulting in a 2-second penalty, can keep a racer out of the medals. To succeed, athletes must be fast and clean, meaning they must be moving at top speed from the starting gate to the finish line while maintaining expert boat control to avoid the dangling poles and the various river obstacles. It is not easy.

The four categories or classes of competition are C-1 (men's solo canoe), K-1 (men's kayak), K-1W (women's kayak), and C-2 (a decked canoe in which there can be two men, two women, or one of each). Through the years, including this year's Olympics, all slalom racing boats had to be long and narrow, but starting in 2005, the boats can be half-a-meter shorter, possibly removing about 10 inches from each end.

Races and training camps are conducted around the country every year, with a dozen of the key sites being Atlanta; the Nantahala Outdoor Center in western

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# Events

## Women in Slalom

continued

North Carolina; the Ocoee River in eastern Tennessee; the Bethesda Center of Excellence in suburban Washington, DC; the rivers of Pennsylvania, which host the yearly Penn Cup series; the rivers of New England; the urban slalom courses in South Bend, Indiana, and Wausau, Wisconsin; the St. Francis River in Missouri; the many rivers of Colorado, where slalom races have been held for over 50 years; the Guadalupe and San Marcos Rivers in Texas; the Kern River in California; and all the excellent whitewater rivers of the Pacific Northwest. While these locales usually have the most races and camps and the best coaching, there are many other sites from Asheville to Alabama to Albuquerque where slalom racing is pursued and enjoyed. During the winter months, gates are frequently hung at indoor pools from coast to coast, offering a novel type of practicing and competing.

Overseeing all of this slalom activity, from the sanctioning of beginning-level races to the selecting of our National and Olympic Team members, is an organization called USA Canoe & Kayak, which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina.

In an effort to present a fairly complete picture of the U.S. women's slalom racing scene in 2004, Chuck Hines recently interviewed a dozen athletes, coaches, and slalom leaders, from well-established stars to aspiring youngsters to those in the middle, representing every corner of the country. Following is a listing of the ladies interviewed:



**Candice Caldwell**, 19, is a student at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina.

**Michelle Clements**, 24, is a resident of San Marcos, Texas, and is a recent graduate of Texas State University. Married to Olympian Ben Kvanli, she works the night shift in Chemistry and Transfusion Services at a hospital that serves as a major trauma center, enabling her to train during the daytime.

**Amy Dingle**, 29, is a resident of Athens, Ohio. A graduate of Ohio University, she is currently Coordinator of Outdoor Activities at the University. She is also an athlete representative to USA Canoe & Kayak.



**Rebecca Giddens**, 26, is a resident of San Diego, California, who competed for the U.S. at the 2000 Olympics and was the women's Slalom World Champion in 2002. She is a member of the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team and will be competing at Athens, Greece. She is married to Olympian Eric Giddens, who is in the process of completing his Ph.D. in oceanography. Some of her comments in this article are taken from an interview she did with Ann Beman, a California-based paddler and writer.

**Jennie Goldberg**, 50, has a Masters degree in Public Administration and works on water quality issues for the City of Seattle, Washington. She is also Vice-President of American Whitewater. In this article, she represents the Masters category of competition for athletes ages 40 and over.



**Gwen Greeley**, 19, is a student at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina.



**Jennifer Hearn**, 42, is a resident of Bethesda, Maryland. She has volunteered and competed in slalom racing since the mid 1980s, and served as a coach for the U.S. Slalom Team at the 2000 Olympics. She's married to World Champion and Olympian Davey Hearn, and they have a 5-year-old son. Jennifer works as the Public Relations Director for Walden Kayaks, and she continues to coach and promote whitewater slalom racing via [www.daveyhearn.com](http://www.daveyhearn.com).





**Hannah Larsen**, 23, is a recent graduate of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and is a member of the 2004 U.S. World Cup Team. She is planning to enter medical school in 2005 and eventually become a psychiatrist.



**Sarah Leith**, 27, is a graduate of American University in Washington, DC, where she posted a 3.97 grade point average while earning her degree in Accounting. She is a member of the 2004 U.S. World Cup Team. She plans to go on and get her MBA after working in DC for a couple of years.


**Paris Robinson**, 15, is a student at Holy Innocents' School in Smyrna, Georgia.

**Molly Stock**, 16, is a student at The Potomac School in McLean, Virginia. She is currently the top-ranked K-1W Junior slalom racer in the U.S.

**Terry Valle**, 52, is a resident of Los Angeles, California, and is a Certified Public Accountant by profession. While she has competed in slalom on the recreational level, she is best known for organizing and supervising major national and international races on the West Coast, and her participation demonstrates how important an organizer and "leader" can be for this sport.

Chuck Hines asks each of these women:

- When did you start paddling? Racing?
- Where have you raced, and what have been your top accomplishments?
- Where do you train, and who have been your most important coaches or mentors?
- What have been your biggest problems in slalom training and racing?
- For those who've been involved with slalom racing for at least ten years, what have been the major changes in the sport?
- What do you think could be done to bring more young girls and boys into the sport of slalom racing?
- What are your future goals, in slalom and otherwise?

To find out their answers to these questions and more please visit [www.daveyhearn.com](http://www.daveyhearn.com) on the web. 

**About the author:** *Chuck Hines is a former slalom racer who has coached women's and men's national champions in swimming, triathlon, water-polo, and whitewater racing, earning induction into the Western North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame for his coaching feats. He served as President of the Nantahala Racing Club of Western North Carolina in the 1990s. The Nantahala Racing Club has placed its whitewater athletes on eight U.S. Olympic teams, including this year, while winning numerous national championships.*



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# Events

# Napo River Festival

## Fifth Annual Napo River Festival

January 14-16, 2005  
Tena - Napo - Ecuador  
festival@kayakecuador.com  
www.kayakecuador.com

Traditional music & dancing - Kayak Rodeo - Dugout Canoe Races

Downriver Raft & Kayak Races - Arts & Crafts - Balsa Rafts

The Napo River Festival is an annual event organized by the Ecuadorian Rivers Institute to raise awareness of the Napo watershed, its importance, and threats to it from development.

This unique gathering seeks to educate the Ecuadorian people and others about

watershed issues, preserve cultural traditions, and promote sustainable forms of development and resource management. The Napo River is important because it is the last major tributary of the Amazon River in Ecuador that remains free-flowing and has minimal development and contamination in its headwaters.

The rivers & creeks in the Napo watershed are world class paddling destinations and the Napo watershed hosts some of the greatest levels of biodiversity found on the planet as well as some of the last remnants of native Amazon culture.

Come celebrate with us.

Experience Ecuadorian culture and hospitality.

**Paddle the rivers in the Amazon.** 



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# Events Calendar

## 2004 American Whitewater Supporting Events

| Date            | Event                    | Location            | Contact  |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Sept 10-11      | Ohiopyle Falls Race      | Ohiopyle, PA        | BJ2Aadams@Juno.com                             |
| September 24-26 | AW Gauley River Festival | Summersville, WV*   | www.americanwhitewater.org                     |
| Sept 25-26      | West River Releases      | Jamaica, VT         | http://vtparks.anr.state.vt.us/htm/jamaica.cfm |
| Oct 1-3         | Russell Fork Rendezvous  | Haysi, VA           | John_foy@alltel.net                            |
| Oct 16-17       | Moose River Festival     | Old Forge, NY*      | Ckoll234@aol.com (315) 673-3837                |
| Oct 22-24       | Whitewater Symposium     | Bryson City         | www.wwsymposium.com                            |
| Oct 29-31       | NOC's GAF                | Byrson City         | www.noc.com                                    |
| November 20th   | "The Thing" at Tallulah  | Tallulah Falls, GA* | sutton@suttonbacon.com                         |

\* 2004 AW Membership Appreciation Booths



Ticket to Ride.

Admit One.  
[Member of American Whitewater]

Ladies on the Lower G  
Friday, September 24, 2004



Ticket to Ride.

The watery women of Lotus Designs will be hosting these gatherings of the ladies as a gift to the good folks at American Whitewater. Any woman who is comfortable rolling in class 3+ whitewater is encouraged to sign up for tips, tricks, and take-out talk.

Registration is free to **Members of American Whitewater!**

Donations to American Whitewater are greatly appreciated to help keep up their work of protecting and restoring whitewater rivers across the country.

Ladies on the Lower G / Gauley River, WV September 24, 2004

For more information call the AW Outreach Office at: 828-252-0728 OR visit [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)



# AW Gala Recap continued

# 50 YEARS

of American Whitewater

AW's Acting Executive Director, Jason Robertson enjoys the appetizers at the AW Gala



sport and organization with each other. I hope that the paddling community does not wait another 50 years to gather, reflect, and celebrate.

The event could not have been a success without the support of our generous host Teva, and additional support from the Adventure Sports Center International, Volkswagen, Patagonia, Dagger, Extrasport, Werner Paddles, and the Otter Bar Lodge and Kayak School.

A final, special thanks goes out to all of the volunteers who helped to make the evening a smashing success.

American Whitewater (AW) is proud to have played such a distinctive role in nurturing whitewater paddling since 1954. AW is one of the world's most successful whitewater river conservation and access organizations, publishes the oldest continually published whitewater magazine, hosts the most comprehensive website on American whitewater, and is the author of the International Scale of Whitewater difficulty. [AW](#)

For more information about American Whitewater please visit: [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)



Wavesport's Jimmy Blakeney and Dagger's "Hobie" swap secrets.



Gerald Eldridge of AW getting Eric Jackson's signature



Tom O'Keefe receives Volunteer of the Year Award

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# Safety Extreme Measures

“At an expert level of the sport,” says Walbridge “good judgment, including an honest knowledge of your abilities and limits, is the key to safety. Paddlers base their judgment on previous experience. You start with easy rapids and work up gradually in small steps. Going too fast can mean getting beyond your experience level. It’s all about skill and judgment, not blind courage.”

## So, is there a limit on extreme kayaking?

“If boat designs keep improving and people keep pushing the realms of reality it will just get better and better,” says David Grove.

“I think it will always be a fringe sport because of accessibility to the mainstream and perceived danger,” says Tao. “But there are endless possibilities.”

Extreme kayakers across the world are running waterfalls over 100-feet high. They are boating rivers that were never thought possible. Extreme kayaking is pushing the sport into the mainstream and shocking not only the boating community but also the world. It is the evolution of human, boat, and water happening before our very eyes. And its roots go back to the simple humanistic drive to do something that has never been done before. 

*When not writing, Lila Marie Thomas enjoys paddling the rivers of the Pacific Northwest. She lives in Eugene, Oregon and has a M.S. from the University of Oregon in Magazine Writing and Journalism.*



# Affiliate Clubs

# AW's Original Purpose

by Michael Phelan

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1957 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over eighty-five clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club consider joining one.

For 2004, AW is excited to announce several programs for AW Affiliate Clubs.

River Stewardship Institute: A week-long conservation and access training program designed to prepare river activists with the tools necessary to successfully save their rivers.

2nd Flowing Rivers Grant Program, sponsored by Clif Bar

BRAND NEW Affiliate Club section of the AW Journal dedicated to promoting your club and its events with the whitewater community at large. If your Affiliate Club would like to be one of the first to begin listing your club's major events in the Journal, please email [ben@amwhitewater.org](mailto:ben@amwhitewater.org) for more details.

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

## **Alaska**

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

## **Alabama**

Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery  
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

## **Arizona**

Desert Paddlers Club, Tempe  
Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assoc, Flagstaff

## **Arkansas**

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

## **California**

B.S.A. Durham Troop 16, Durham  
Chico Paddleheads, Chico  
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus  
River Skills Center, Mt. Shasta  
Sequoia Paddling Club, Windsor

Shasta Paddlers, Redding  
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, San Jose  
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Granada Hills

## **Colorado**

Arkansas Headwaters Recreations Area, Salida  
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West  
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood  
FiBark Boat Races, Englewood  
Gunnison Valley Paddle Club, Almont  
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs  
WATER, Grand Junction

## **Georgia**

Atlanta Whitewater Club, Atlanta  
Georgia Canoeing Association, Atlanta  
Georgia Tech Outdoor Recreation, Atlanta

## **Idaho**

Idaho Rivers Sports, Boise  
Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

## **Illinois**

Chicago Whitewater Association, Cary

## **Iowa**

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

## **Indiana**

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis  
Ohio Valley Whitewater Club, Evansville

## **Kentucky**

Viking Canoe Club, Louisville  
Bluegrass Whitewater Association, Lexington

## **Maine**

AMC Maine Chapter, Hallowell

## **Massachusetts**

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston

## **Maryland**

Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville  
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Boonsboro  
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick

## **Minnesota**

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater

## **Missouri**

Kansas City Whitewater Club, Raymore  
Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis  
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield  
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City  
Streamtech, St. Louis

## **Montana**

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

## **Nevada**

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

## **New Hampshire**

Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover  
Merrimack Valley Paddlers, Merrimack  
Mt. Washington Valley Paddlers, Franconia  
Waterline, Manchester

## **New Jersey**

Hunterdon Canoe Club, Flemington  
The Paddling Bares, Milltown

## **New Mexico**

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

## **New York**

FLOW Paddlers Club, Rochester  
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining  
KCCNY, S. Hackensack  
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia  
Whitewater Challengers, Old Forge  
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk

## **N. Carolina**

Camp Carolina, Brevard  
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh  
Dixie Division of ACA, Tuxedo  
Nantahala Racing Club, Gastonia  
Triad River Runners, Winston-Salem  
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

## **Ohio**

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus  
Keel Haulers Canoe Club, Westlake  
Outdoor Adventure Club, Dayton  
Toledo River Gang, Waterville

## **Oregon**

Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton  
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

## **Pennsylvania**

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf  
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown  
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg  
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz  
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh  
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley

## **S. Carolina**

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

## Tennessee

America Outdoors, Knoxville  
Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts,  
Elizabethton  
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville  
E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge  
Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport  
McCallie School Outdoor Program,  
Chattanooga  
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga  
University of Tennessee Outing Club, Knoxville  
Tennessee Scenic River Association, Grimsley

## Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston

## Utah

University of Utah, Salt Lake City  
USU Kayak Club, Logan

## Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynch Station  
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington  
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond  
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke  
Richmond Whitewater Club, Mechanicsville

## Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

## Washington

W.W.U. Associated Students, Bellingham  
The Mountaineers, Seattle  
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle  
Washington Recreation River Runners, Renton  
University Kayak Club, Seattle

## West Virginia

West Virginia Wildwater Assoc., Charleston

## Wisconsin

Badger State Boating Society, Waukesha  
Hoofers Outing Club, Madison  
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, La Crosse  
Northern Paddle and Trail, Rhinelander  
River Alliance of Wisconsin, Madison

## Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson Hole

Canada, British Columbia  
Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

## Club Update: Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Michael Phelan  
Director of Outreach Services

I wanted to let everyone know about a new exclusive feature available on our website for AW Affiliate Clubs. In the recent past, AW has been offering discounted AW memberships to whitewater enthusiasts who are also a member of one of AW's Affiliate Clubs.

We now have the ability to offer this discounted membership online! For each club, AW will create a unique URL that will automatically offer the discounted membership and/or we can provide a coupon code that is specific to your club that will allow individuals to input the code on the normal AW Membership Page and then receive the discount.

Both options work equally well and minimize the opportunity that one of your members will be inconvenienced.

Several clubs have already set up the program and their members are enjoying the benefits of being an AW Member for only \$25 instead of \$35!

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact me and I would be happy to help your club set up this program. I can be reached at 828-252-0728 or Michael@amwhitewater.org.

## Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

### "10" Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for a spot in the AW 2004 River Stewardship Institute.

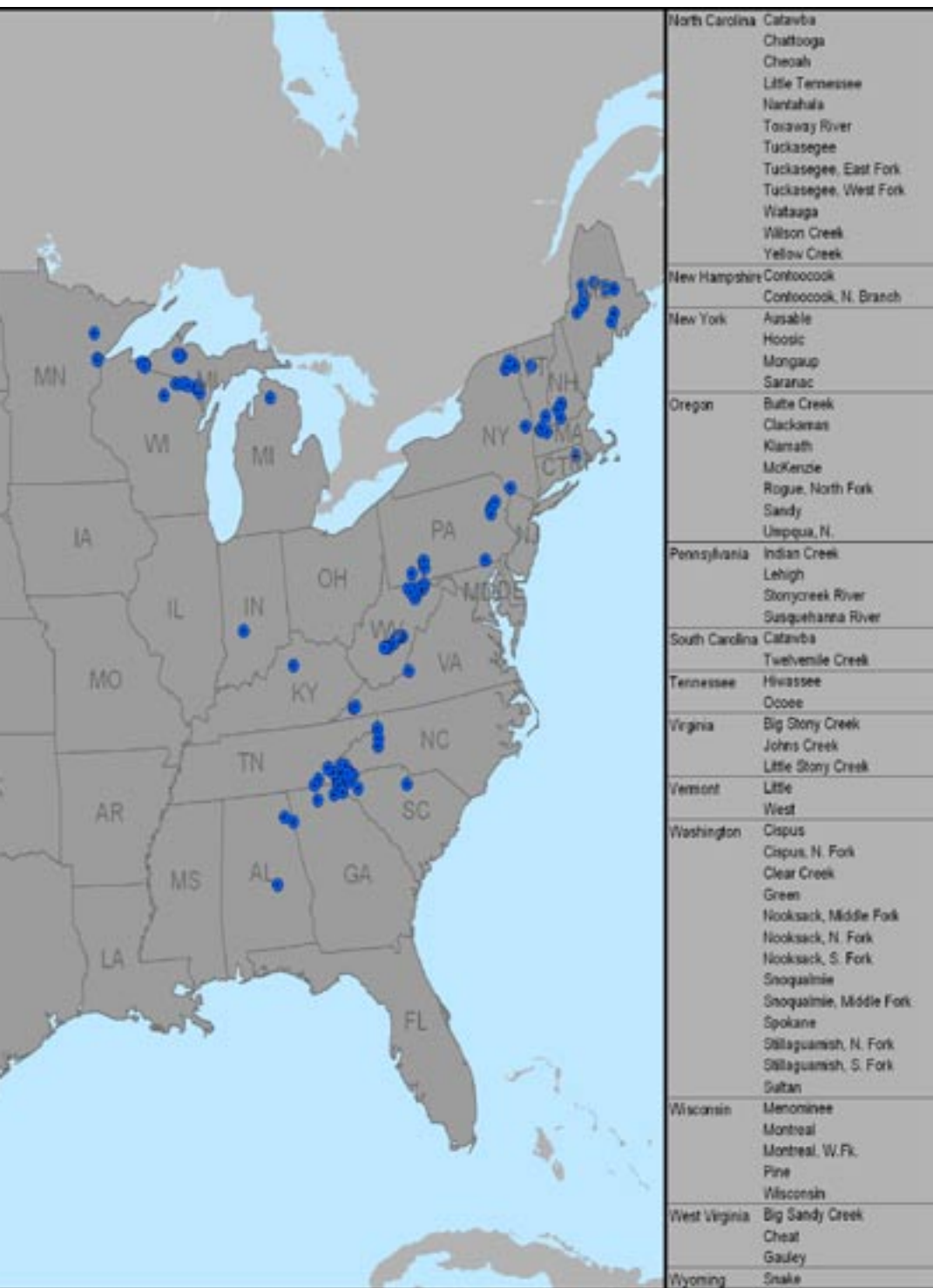
**For more information,**  
contact Michael Phelan at  
michael@amwhitewater.org  
AW Outreach Office at 828-252-0728  
or sign-up on-line at:  
www.americanwhitewater.org/membership

# Conservation and Access

## AW Rivers







# 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).

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

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

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints, or color prints or electronic, digital photos, 300 dpi tiffs, Photoshop or high res jpegs minimum 3”x5.” Keep your originals and send us duplicates if possible; we cannot guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. The better the photos the better the reproduction.

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water.

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 II, III & 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.

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

Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies, and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally responsible

for the accuracy of such material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

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

American Whitewater is a nonprofit; the editors and contributors to American Whitewater are not reimbursed. On rare occasions, by pre-arrangement, 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 AWW, which is a volunteer conservation and safety organization.

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Silver Spring MD 20910  
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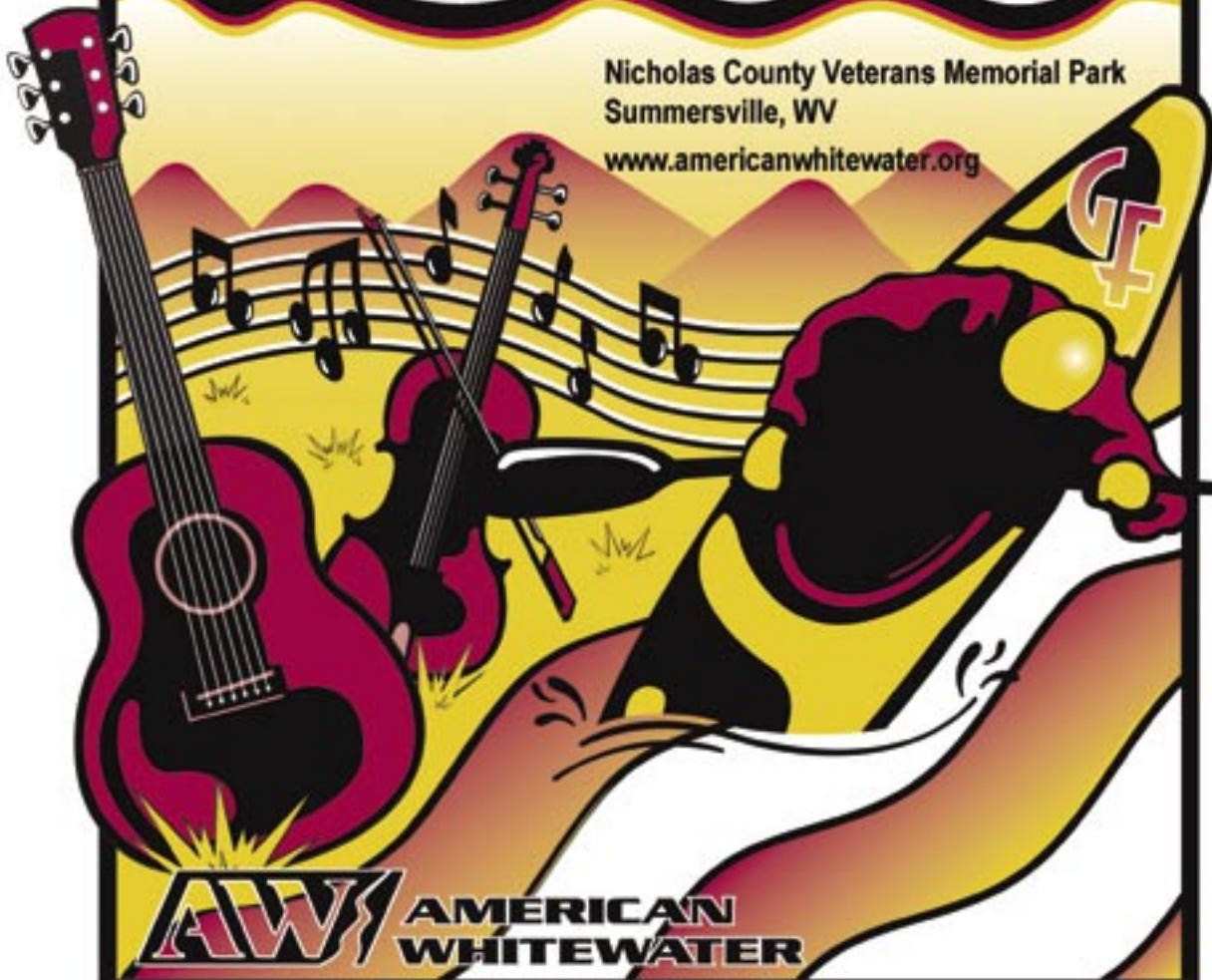
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