



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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Sep/Oct 2016

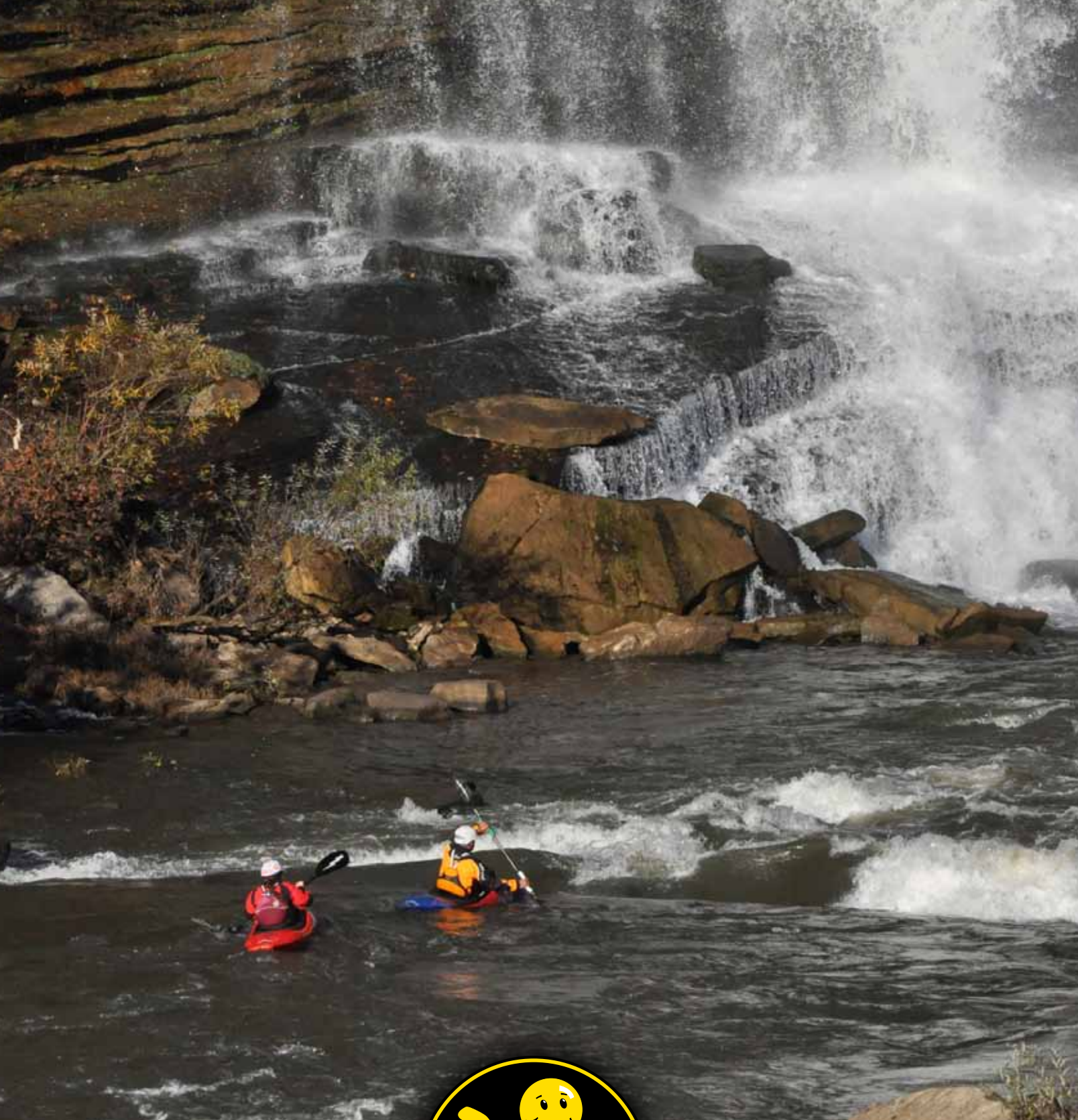
## WESTERN FAMILY ROAD TRIP!

### SUP-ing THE OWYHEE

DOLORES 2016: WHAT HAPPENED WITH RELEASES?

SEEKING WILD AND SCENIC DESIGNATION FOR SOUTHERN SIERRA GEMS





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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

## American Whitewater Journal Sep/Oct 2016 – Volume 56 – Issue 5

### COLUMNS

- 5 The Journey Ahead by **Mark Singleton**
- 50 Corrections

### STEWARDSHIP

- 8 Protecting Southern Sierra Rivers Through Forest Planning by **Megan Hooker**
- 10 Paddlers Win Right to Float Case in South Carolina by **Kevin Colburn**
- 12 How Did the River Flow by **Nathan Fey**
- 19 New Feather (CA ) Access by **Dave Steindorf**

### FEATURE ARTICLES

#### ROAD TRIPS

- 20 The Western Road Trip—Family Style by **Jordan Vickers**

#### RIVER VOICES

- 24 “Jewel in the Desert” by **Brandi Jo Petronio**

#### PADDLEBOARDING

- 28 Owyhee River Paddle Boarding by **Paul Clark (SUPPAUL)**

#### CREEKING

- 34 Glug by **Jay Carpenter**

#### MENTAL GAME

- 38 Why I Kayak by **Jerry Spence**

#### SAFETY

- 42 Whitewater Accident Summary by **Charlie Walbridge**
- 45 River Rescue Where Least Expected by **William Lee**



*In 2016, recreational releases flowed in the Dolores River (CO) for the first time in five years, though they were not planned as effectively as paddlers would have wished (for more details, see article on pg. 12 of this issue).*

Photo by Evan Stafford

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# PURPOSE

## RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

**CONSERVATION:** AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished through direct participation in public decision-making

processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

**EDUCATION:** AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding

whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, [americanwhitewater.org](http://americanwhitewater.org), paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

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

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



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Founded in 1954, American Whitewater is a national non-profit organization (Non-profit # 23-7083760) with a mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." American Whitewater is a membership organization representing a broad diversity of individual whitewater enthusiasts, river conservationists, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates across America. The organization is the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States, and connects the interests of human-powered recreational river users with ecological and science-based data to achieve the goals within its mission. All rights to information contained in this publication are reserved.

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

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# THE JOURNEY AHEAD

**W**HITewater flows on weekends that can be put on your calendar, now that's the dream! The West Fork of the Tuckasegee (NC) is a boating treat that fits that description. As most of you know, I live in western North Carolina. I'm not a natural southerner, just a transplant who is fortunate to live close to rivers that have had major American Whitewater projects associated with them. While my fit in the Southeast is sometimes a little forced (I've never been able to drink sweet tea and I do long for wide-open landscapes), local rivers have become my go-to spot for connecting with the natural world.

One of my usual routes home takes me along the Tuckasegee River, right past the old Dillsboro Dam site that was removed in 2008. Dillsboro Dam was the quintessential LDD (Little Dinky Dam). Back in 2001, American Whitewater was part of a diverse group of local, regional, and national interests that began meeting with Duke Energy to collaborate on a new plan for operating their dams in the Tuckasegee and Nantahala watersheds. The outcome of those negotiations was a comprehensive settlement agreement that Duke submitted as their application for new operating licenses. The agreement called for the removal of Dillsboro Dam and subsequent watershed enhancements like scheduled releases, new public river access areas, new parks and trails, and land conservation.

Unfortunately, the removal of Dillsboro Dam became a controversial issue in my local community and the resulting conflict delayed river restoration and enhancement projects, including scheduled releases on the West Fork of the Tuckasegee. The local county spent over a half-million dollars fighting court battles to keep the dam in place. Ironically, the dam had not produced hydroelectric power for a number of years prior to dam removal. Dam removal split the local community and was a regular subject of editorials and news coverage in a small, mostly rural mountain town. Even some American Whitewater members



*AW member John Kulka peels out of the put-in eddy and lines up for the first boof on the West Fork Tuckasegee (NC).*

**Photo by Mark Singleton**

questioned why we were spending so much energy fighting for dam removal when there was no immediate significant whitewater connected to the dam site. After a five-year legal fight the dam came

down and Federal licenses were issued for the hydro projects in 2010. Access projects began almost immediately, and in 2012 releases began on the West Fork.

# THE JOURNEY AHEAD

Now, 15 years after negotiations began, no one is saying, “I miss that old dam.” Instead, the community has embraced the river corridor and new businesses have cropped up (mostly around fly fishing—the Tuckasegee is a destination for trout fishing). The local tourism marketing organization has come together to create and market a Blueway along the river promoting the region’s natural river assets. And, the county that fought so hard against dam removal has now opened its first greenway along the river corridor—what a difference 15 years makes!

As part of the comprehensive settlement agreement, the West Fork of the Tuckasegee now has scheduled recreation flows on some summer Saturdays. The West Fork is a headwater stream on the Tuckasegee about 25 miles upstream of the dam site. The whitewater run is not for everyone; it’s a long hike in, down a well built but steep access trail, and there is consistently new wood down in the river. But for those willing to put up with these hardships, the put-in is one of the most spectacular spots I know. Floating in the powerful eddy below a 100-foot plus waterfall that concentrates the incredible power of the river is humbling; peeling out

from the put-in eddy and the rowdiness of the river is immediately intoxicating.

All this was made possible by the removal of a LDD (Little Dinky Dam) downstream that, at the time, was highly controversial and divided the community. But today, no one wants that dam back! Instead, fisherman have new access to one of the state’s best trout rivers, county residents are out walking on a new greenway, the local tourism group is marketing new outdoor product, hikers have a new trail to one of the region’s most spectacular waterfalls, boaters are paddling a new summer Class IV river, and every time I pass by that old dam site I smile.

This story is regional; it happened in western North Carolina. A similar story can be told in other regions of the country where American Whitewater staff are based. Condit Dam removal on the White Salmon in Washington State, summer flows on the Feather River in California, dependable flows on the upper Colorado River, new river access location in the northeast are all examples of stewardship work that American Whitewater staff are involved in where they live. Having staff based around the country, working on

regional river issues, leaning forward in their communities while providing technical expertise is our secret sauce and the basis of our success.

Our opponents sometimes refer to American Whitewater as the “Kayak Lobby.” What that means is that we have real power bringing local stories to policy makers. Our strength is not generated through a big office in Washington DC, it comes from local communities where our projects make a difference. We take these regional stories and use them as examples of how river stewardship makes a meaningful, hyper-local, positive impact. All this is made possible through your membership and support of American Whitewater.

See you on the river,

Mark Singleton  
Executive Director

PS: If you have boating friends that are not members of American Whitewater, please share this issue of the Journal with them. Together all members of the boating community can speak out with increased clout.



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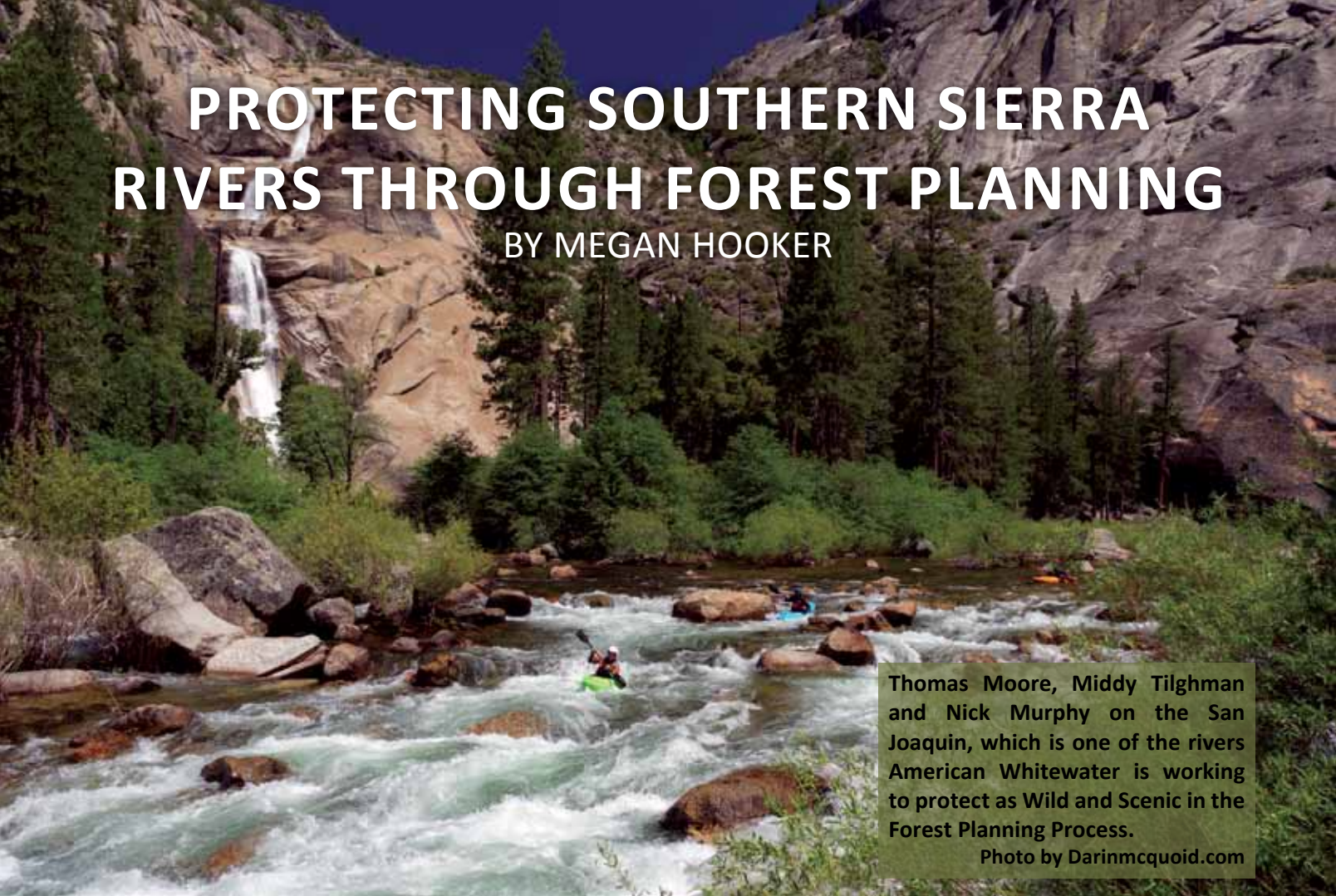


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# PROTECTING SOUTHERN SIERRA RIVERS THROUGH FOREST PLANNING

BY MEGAN HOOKER



Thomas Moore, Middy Tilghman and Nick Murphy on the San Joaquin, which is one of the rivers American Whitewater is working to protect as Wild and Scenic in the Forest Planning Process.

Photo by Darinmcquoid.com

**S**OME OF THE best whitewater rivers in the U.S. flow through public lands, which is why participating in federal land management decisions is an important part of our river stewardship work at American Whitewater.

Currently, the Inyo, Sierra, and Sequoia National Forests in California are in the middle of revising their Forest Management Plans. While it may not sound like the most exciting of topics, the forest planning process is actually a crucial opportunity to advocate for whitewater rivers. These management plans provide the foundation for how the Forest Service will manage activities across a given forest for 20 years. They take a comprehensive view, addressing everything from logging and fire, to watershed restoration and sustainable recreation opportunities, like whitewater paddling.

This is also the time that the Forest Service evaluates rivers in the forest, assessing

whether they are eligible for protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Every 20 years, we have an opportunity to protect some amazing whitewater rivers, and American Whitewater has been actively engaged in working to make this happen on these Southern Sierra forests since 2013.

The Inyo, Sierra, and Sequoia National Forests are forging a special path forward. In 2012 the Forest Service finalized a new rule that applies to the way that National Forests develop, amend and revise Forest Management Plans, and these Forests are among several that are “early adopters” of the new rule. American Whitewater and our partners at Outdoor Alliance supported the new rule because it offers a more collaborative and efficient forest planning process and integrates the concept of sustainable recreation experiences.

Another reason these three National Forests are so important to paddlers is that they’re

home to some internationally acclaimed whitewater rivers, like Dinkey Creek, the Forks of the Kern, and the San Joaquin. There are also a number of low volume runs in the region that provide a technical challenge, like Piute Creek (tributary of the SF San Joaquin), Dry Meadow Creek, Mono Creek, and Bear Creek.

For the Wild and Scenic portion of the planning process, the Forest Service is required to complete a comprehensive inventory of rivers in the forest, using the best available science and considering feedback from the public. Next, the agency determines whether those rivers are “eligible” for protection as Wild and Scenic, which means that they are freely flowing and have at least one “outstandingly remarkable value,” like pure water quality, strong fish and wildlife populations, unique geology, or special recreational experiences.



# STEWARDSHIP

Our main goal has been to ensure that the Forest Service considers all of the rivers it should for Wild and Scenic designation and recognizes those that have outstandingly remarkable whitewater recreation values. We also are advocating that the Forest Service note the whitewater values of rivers that were found eligible for Wild and Scenic during the last round of forest planning in the 1980s.

Throughout the process, American Whitewater has shared information with the Forest Service about which Southern Sierra rivers have outstanding whitewater recreation values, ensuring that the agency has details about the runs and access to relevant geospatial data. The Forest Service released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement this summer, and unfortunately the agency fell short on both inventorying many of the whitewater rivers that American Whitewater recommended, and on evaluating the whitewater recreation values on others. For example, Dinkey Creek was not inventoried at all for ½ of its length, and on the part of the river that was evaluated, the whitewater value was not even considered.



*Shannon Carroll and Kevin Smith on the San Joaquin, which is another of the rivers American Whitewater is working to protect as Wild and Scenic in the Forest Planning Process.*

**Photo by [darinmcquoid.com](http://darinmcquoid.com)**

American Whitewater will continue to engage in the process and ensure that paddler's voices are heard.

Overall, we've also been working with our partners at Outdoor Alliance—which includes mountain bikers, backcountry

skiers, hikers and climbers—to ensure that all forms of sustainable recreation are integrated into the updated plans. It's important to us that the new forest planning rule is a success. Working with the Forest Service to ensure that the forest planning process goes smoothly for these early adopter forests will help to set the stage as other forests across the country implement the new rule.

Paddlers play an important role in the Forest Planning process. In the coming years, the Forest Service will begin to update additional Forest Plans across the country. We encourage paddlers to be involved and share their experiences on these rivers. Stay tuned to American Whitewater for opportunities to weigh in.



*Jonas Grunwald on Dinkey Creek, yet another of the Southern Sierra rivers that American Whitewater is recommending as eligible for Wild and Scenic.*

**Photo by [darinmcquoid.com](http://darinmcquoid.com)**

# STEWARDSHIP

## PADDLERS WIN RIGHT TO FLOAT CASE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

BY KEVIN COLBURN



Chris Loomis proving what is obvious to paddlers: Blythe Shoals is a navigable, straightforward, really fun Class IV rapid in a canoe. Photo by Kevin Colburn

IT WAS JUST like any other paddling video premiere, except that the audience was wearing business suits and sitting soberly before a judge. The footage started on the screen and we watched paddlers slide down a 20-foot tall double slide and maneuver through a mellow rock garden at a variety of flows. It looked really fun. No one cheered after the films. There was no schwaq thrown into the crowd.

Instead, the legal sparring resumed.

The rapids in the film are known as Blythe Shoals, and are found on the South Fork of the Saluda River, not too far from Greenville, South Carolina. They flow through the remnants of an old summer camp, boys on river left and girls on river right, and the remaining lodge is now a private residence. The laughter of kids is long gone and it is a quiet place now, filled only with the sound of the Shoals.

In 2013 the owners of the old camp initiated a lawsuit asking a judge to deem Blythe Shoals non-navigable so they could prohibit, “daredevils and thrill seekers in small kayakers who are willing to assume the

risk of serious personal injury or death,” from passing through their property.

That means you.

South Carolina has a long social and legal tradition supporting travel on rivers and streams that is more relevant today than ever. We were confident that the landowner’s case was doomed based on this tradition. And yet, a bad court decision out of left field would erode the solid legal basis for the public right to float rivers. This was too great of a risk to take.

Greenville based attorney Nathan Galbreath offered to donate his time to represent American Whitewater and Foothills Paddling Club in the case. He put together a great team at his firm Nelson & Galbreath that included paddler Jeff Harris. With the team in place, we joined the lawsuit as defendants in 2014. A dizzying volley of court filings followed.

The landowners hired a surveyor to testify that the Shoals were shallow at low water, and a canoeist to testify that the shoals are un-runnable. In response, kayakers lapped Blythe Shoals with their Go-Pro cameras

gathering evidence. Jeff and Nathan compiled the videos along with written affidavits from the paddlers and a series of strong legal arguments. A hearing was scheduled for late 2014, and that is how we found ourselves in business suits watching paddling videos in a courtroom.

We kept collecting evidence after the hearing, and on a grey January evening I met Greenville area canoeist Chris Loomis at the put in for Blythe Shoals. We launched with failing daylight and a soggy film of snow on the ground, at a whopping flow of 50cfs. I slid down the first half of the double slide and eddied out. Chris nonchalantly zoomed by me and cleaned the slide below. It was dusk when we reached the takeout a few minutes later. I turned off my Go-Pro, knowing it contained proof that Blythe Shoals can in fact be navigated by canoe.

After another 18 months of legal wrangling we received the Court’s decision. It was an unequivocal affirmation of the right to paddle rivers and streams in South Carolina. Citing *Brownlee v. S.C. Dep’t of Health & Env’tl. Control*, an important prior navigability case, the July 2016 Court order concluded:

Given Brownlee, navigability for purposes of South Carolina constitutional and statutory law does not require that the waterway be used for commercial purposes. Nor does it require that it be navigable by vessels of a certain size. Nor does it require that a waterway be navigable in both directions. Nor does it require that it be passable at all points or all water levels. Nor does it require actual use. Nor is ease or difficulty of navigation or safety for all users a factor. Nor does it matter that the River may have "occasional natural obstructions to navigation, such as rapids or falls."

Instead, Brownlee clearly establishes that the standard for navigability rests on the potential for any public use, be it commercial or recreational. Under Brownlee, an established pattern of usage by kayakers, anglers, floaters, and swimmers establishes the required "valuable floatage" for navigability. In this case, Defendants went beyond demonstrating potential recreational use and presented affidavit and video evidence that recreational canoes and kayaks can and do navigate the sections of the River at issue. Although Van's Camp presented a conclusory affidavit of an expert stating his opinion that the River was not navigable, it presents no issue of material fact because the evidence

shows that the river has been navigated, is being navigated, and supports "valuable floatage." When the analysis from Brownlee is applied to the uncontested physical facts in this case, there is no question of material fact remaining as to whether the South Saluda River is navigable as it passes through the Van's Camp property.

Even if Blythe Shoals and the boulder garden could not be travelled by boat, that would not destroy the navigability of the River. The South Saluda River is navigable both prior to and immediately after the Van's Camp property. Therefore, the River is navigable as it flows through the Van's Camp property regardless of whether the Shoals and boulder garden are passable by boat.

This is a great decision! It is not groundbreaking or precedent setting though—it simply reiterates over a century of well-established South Carolina law that protects the public's right to paddle rivers. We hope this decision marks the end of this case, though of course the landowners do have the right to appeal to a higher court. We'd like to thank Nathan and Jeff, our friends at Foothills Paddlers, and the other co-defendants for all their hard work on this case.



Landowners invited everyone involved in the lawsuit to visit the old summer camp they own on the banks of the South Fork Saluda River in March of 2015. Photo by Kevin Colburn



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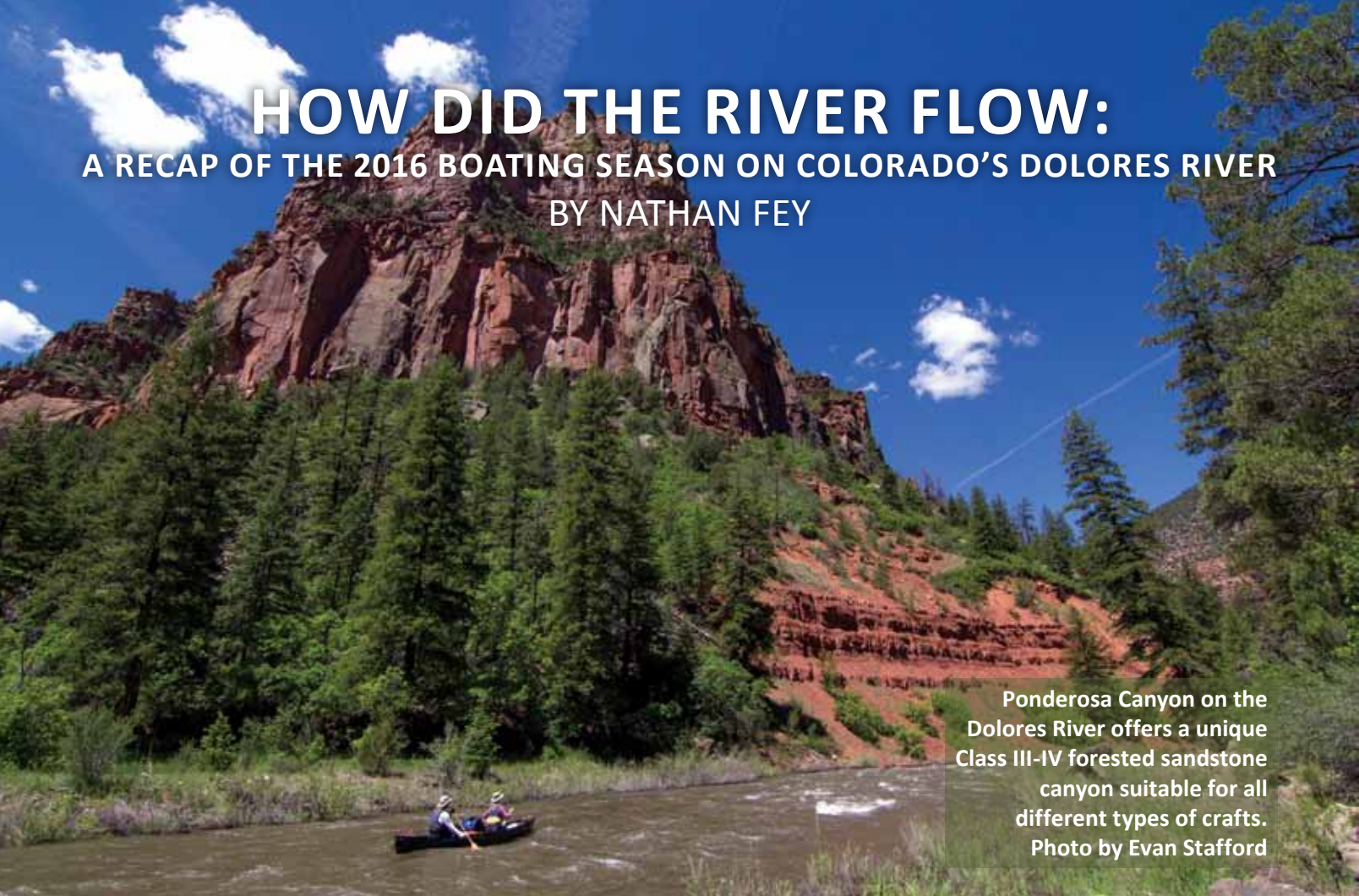
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# HOW DID THE RIVER FLOW:

## A RECAP OF THE 2016 BOATING SEASON ON COLORADO'S DOLORES RIVER

BY NATHAN FEY



Ponderosa Canyon on the Dolores River offers a unique Class III-IV forested sandstone canyon suitable for all different types of crafts. Photo by Evan Stafford

**L**AST WEEK, REPRESENTATIVES from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Dolores Water Conservancy District, and the local boating community hosted a public meeting to discuss this year's recreational releases into the lower Dolores River. This is the first year since 2011 that water managers released boating flows from McPhee Dam, which diverts Dolores flows into a network of canals, pipes, and small reservoirs across the San Juan River basin. For some, the recreational releases were something to celebrate. For others, they were confounding and underscored the frustration boaters have felt since the Project came online in 1989.

The Dolores is one of the premier rivers in the entire country, known for its iconic slickrock gorges, ponderosa forests, wilderness and wildlife. The Dolores River draws paddlers from nearly every state—when it flows. Recent drought conditions and a reduced water supply in the watershed have resulted in fewer flow days available

for whitewater boating, and a huge decline in user-days on the river. Boating flows depend upon releases of water from the Bureau of Reclamation's McPhee Reservoir, but only when conditions are right. Unlike all other project uses, whitewater boating doesn't have a water right or allocation, so any water released for boating is "surplus water," or water that can't be contained or controlled by the dam.

Many paddlers feel like water managers exercise huge discretion in how they control the reservoir's elevation before filling (and spilling), which raises questions about how water is accounted for in the Dolores system. The US Bureau of Reclamation uses snowpack data to estimate the volume of expected runoff and decide if a surplus of water can be released in groupings of five or more consecutive days, and with advance notice given to whitewater boaters.

The annual operation of McPhee Reservoir is determined by Reclamation,

in consultation with the Dolores Water Conservancy District. Beginning in March of each year they distribute forecasts of projected reservoir operations, as well as information on inflow, reservoir storage elevations, Project demands, and anticipated releases for fish and recreation. Typically, Reclamation releases forecasts every two weeks. When a "spill" occurs, DWCD provides daily updates on conditions at the reservoir and how flows in the river are being controlled.

For paddlers hoping for a good boating season, emotions run high. Boaters across the country watch spring storms stack up in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, tracking snow accumulation to determine whether a Memorial Day trip to the Dolores is a go. Twenty-sixteen proved to be a roller-coaster of expectations, and in the end, communication around the managed release left paddlers canceling their trips (at enormous expense), and then wondering why there was enough water in the river

# STEWARDSHIP

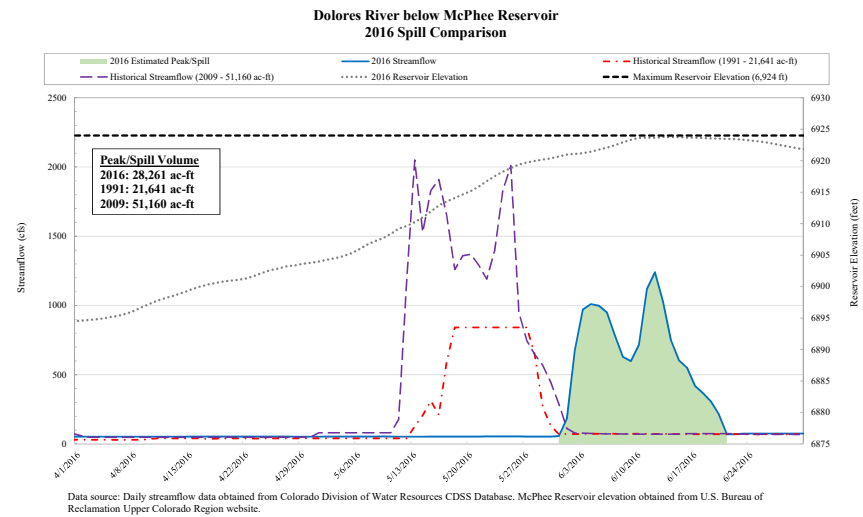
for boating, when notice was given that the “spill was off.”

We’ve plotted exactly how this year’s spill was managed alongside actual reservoir elevations, and contrasted this year’s streamflows with similar historical records (see figure to the right):

In 2016, releases from McPhee Reservoir came in two small “spills,” and while these occurred over two weekends, boaters lost the opportunity to enjoy longer trips below Bradford Bridge and the confluence with the San Miguel River. In fact, the public did not receive advance notice of the second spill, and when managers announced an 800-1000 cfs release on June 10th the boating community had no time to react. The next day, flows were 1200 cfs, and boaters were asking questions. There are also significant concerns around the effect the “spill” has had on native fish. Peak flows occurred later in the month than under more natural conditions, which may have flushed spawning fish with cold water from the reservoir. Additional monitoring by Colorado Parks and Wildlife will help us determine these impacts.

At the root of the problem was the communication system that should have informed paddlers of daily changes to infows/outflows at the Dam. The anticipated release, as forecast by BOR and DWCD, led paddlers to plan their trip around the Memorial Day weekend—taking vacation time from work. Then, on May 20th, BOR and DWCD announced that the spill was not going to happen over the holiday weekend.

AW’s staff and members have been paying close attention to how the BOR and the DWCD meet their commitments and obligations to sustain whitewater boating on the Dolores River. Last week, managers admitted they were “out of practice,” when it comes to coordinating with its stakeholders and providing sufficient information to the general paddling public in advance of a release from McPhee.



**Comparison of Boater Days (April 1 - June 30)**

| Year | Peak/Spill Volume (in ac-ft) | Greater than or equal to 1977 Whitewater Boating Mitigation (500 cfs) | Greater than or equal to Minimum Boating Flow (800 cfs) | Greater than or equal to Minimum Boatable Release (1,000 cfs) | Greater than or equal to Desired Release (1,200 cfs) |
|------|------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 2016 | 28,261                       | 15  | 7   | 4   | 1  |
| 1991 | 21,641                       | 12  | 10  | 0   | 0  |
| 2009 | 51,160                       | 18  | 15  | 14  | 12   |

Note: Minimum boatable releases is considered to be 1,000 CFS. However, 800 CFS will provide minimal boating opportunities. The desired release for boating is 1,200 CFS.



Kent Ford, a local paddler and member of AW’s Board of Directors, relayed specific examples for why communication around reservoir operations must improve. “We took out at Dove Creek Pump Station [on Thursday June 2nd]. A fully rigged raft from Salt Lake City was there waiting for a new pulse of flows as rumored.” At 10 am on Thursday, DWCD managers were answering calls and questions from paddlers about the spill—“we are done” was their answer. Boaters from Utah, Vermont, and Idaho, plus who knows how many downstream, aborted their trips on the basis of bad beta.

Ford wasn’t finished. “Every math savvy boater was predicting [that there was more water than forecasted],” he wrote, “but the DWCD website and direct calls to [DWCD General Manager] convinced people to derig and get off the water. It looks like the lake level wasn’t properly measured and reported [before the spill]. WASTED WATER! ... someone has to hold DWCD accountable for bad information. This was outright MISINFORMATION.” (See below for the timeline of release predictions and

actual flows released by DWCD and BOR).

Spill Management Criteria for McPhee Reservoir was initially set forth in the 1977 Final EIS and in several other Project Documents, as mitigating measures to alleviate the adverse effects on whitewater boating. The 1977 FEIS firmly declares that, “under project conditions all launching days would occur in groups of five or more consecutive days.” In fact, the document commanded that Reservoir Operating Criteria be developed so that launching days available during the high use period of May 21 to June 10 could be predicted, grouped, and scheduled in advance, to encourage a high efficiency of use. Reservoir Operating Criteria include:

- Minimum Boatable release is considered 1,000 CFS. However, 800 CFS will provide minimal boating opportunities. The desired release for boating is 1,200 CFS. Higher releases will shorten the number of boater days.

# STEWARDSHIP



*Paddlers crowded into the Bradfield Launch to embark on a rare Dolores River adventure.*

**Photo by Evan Stafford**

- Provide a min. of 2,000 CFS for 7 days when possible for stream bed maintenance.
- Provide peaking flows near May 21 to match the natural hydrograph.

Reclamation recently adopted a spill management approach of fully filling McPhee Reservoir before making any downstream floodwater or spill water releases. Reclamation's "fill then spill" approach does not maximize the use of forecasted spills for boating below McPhee Dam, as required in the Project documents. Reclamation's new approach and departure from criterion promulgated in the 1977 Project design documents may amount to a violation of the National Environmental Protection Act. Despite Reclamation's spill management criteria aimed at mitigating adverse impacts to whitewater boating, boaters continue to experience increasingly reduced flows downstream of McPhee Reservoir.

American Whitewater continues to work with local stakeholders and legislators to establish a National Conservation Area to protect the land and water values along 127 miles of the Dolores River. While we are actively involved in several cooperative efforts to improve flows in the Dolores River below McPhee Dam, we are increasingly leery of the progress of these efforts and are consulting with legal counsel in the event the cooperative efforts fail.

## **2016 Timeline of Forecasted Reservoir Operations**

BOR released the March 1st forecasted Reservoir Operating Plan, stating that "The [plan] indicates that... we could have a small spill beginning in May."

BOR's March 15th operating Plan stated "the CBRFC forecast indicates that we could have a spill of approx. 44,000 acre feet. With the NRCS forecast, there will not be a spill. Hopefully, we will have a clearer picture of what to expect with the April 1 forecast."

The April 15th operating plan stated "Using the most probable forecast from the CBRFC, the plan indicates a controlled release of approx. 6,500-acre foot. In reality, there are too many variables to actually predict a managed release of this size. A 6,500-acre foot release is not enough to provide rafting flows so I have used the water to facilitate fish sampling for a short period in June."

While an April forecast is still preliminary and hydrologic conditions change prior to the May-July high use boating season, a forecasted release of 6500 Acre-feet is capable of meeting original mitigation requirements of a minimum 500cfs for five consecutive days. The legal validity of BORs discretionary use of forecasted surplus inflows for fish sampling, rather than whitewater boating use, is uncertain.

BOR May 1 Operating Plan: "The May 1 inflow forecast decreased from the previous forecasts and at present we do not anticipate that McPhee Reservoir will fill this spring. Cold weather has delayed the runoff and once runoff picks up, irrigation should be in full demand, which will keep the reservoir elevation lower than if the spill had come earlier.

On May 17th, BOR stated "The [preliminary May 15th Operating Plan] shows 8 consecutive days of boatable flows beginning May 26 and ending June 2. I have hedged a little on release volumes in an effort not to over promise. Should reservoir elevations rise more than expected or more inflow information become available, we will first bump the Memorial Day volumes up to a more preferred boating release and if we have more water after that we can work on extending the spill"

The May 15th preliminary forecast closely follows McPhee Reservoir Operating Criteria, by providing advance notice of boatable releases, and timing those releases to occur over Memorial Day weekend. Based on the information provided by

BOR, paddlers scheduled their trips to take advantage of the timed releases concurrent with the holiday weekend.

On May 20th, BOR stated: The [May 15th] operating plan has changed greatly from the previous one in that the controlled release will no longer take place over Memorial Day weekend. We anticipate beginning to ramp up June 2, reach a boatable flow June 3, and continue until inflow matches demand. We believe that this decision may provide more boating days, a better boating experience, and remove any question of not filling the reservoir. The release volumes and duration is based off forecasted inflow volumes. The duration and daily volumes may vary because the reservoir will be nearly full and we will be releasing downstream inflow less demand.

DWCD had the following posted to its website: **“Spill delayed one week. No spill on Memorial Day weekend; spill now starts the following weekend.** The weather has cooled since last weekend and inflows

did not sustain last Mondays 2500 CFS inflow rate. Therefore McPhee reservoir is not going to reach the 6922 elevation trigger by Memorial Day. Consequently, we will delay the start of the McPhee downstream boating release one week and **McPhee will be spilling the first weekend in June.**”

“One major driver in this decision to delay is to avoid two small spills. The snow is hanging in the mountains with cooler temperatures and overcast weather. A Memorial Day spill would require ramping down afterwards to fill McPhee and possibly opening up again to pass the second peak of excess inflow, effectively a second spill. Ramping requirements on both ends of two spills take away from the boating flows. Also the desire for longer trips from Bradfield to below the San Miguel confluence probably would have been lost on two small spills. We expect one 10+/- day spill instead of two shorter spills.”

On May 26th, BOR released its final Operating Plan for the 2016 season: “McPhee Reservoir elevations reached 6919 early this morning. Inflows are tapering off a little due to cooler weather and decreasing area of snowpack. McPhee elevations are still rising at approximately ½ foot per day and managed releases start ramping up at elevation 6922 over 2 days to minimum rafting flows. Under the current conditions we anticipate reaching the release targets about 6 days out. That would start ramping up next Wednesday (for weekend rafting starting next Thursday – Friday time frame. The next pulse of high inflow will come from clear sunny warm days that may take hold over the Memorial weekend. Those warmer temperatures could accelerate the reservoir fill and force the managed releases a few days earlier next week, possibly moving the spill up to next Wednesday. We will monitor Dolores Inflow and update plans through the Memorial Day weekend to give a few days notice on the spill. So we anticipate the reservoir filling next week



Snaggletooth Rapid, the crux of the Dolores River above Slickrock.  
Photo by Evan Stafford

# STEWARDSHIP

to initiate a spill by the weekend for 5 days and possibly longer. We'll target releases between 1,000 1,200 CFS, but may have to vary between 800 to 1500 CFS. More detailed updates early next week. Midnight reservoir elevations are posted on the "Lake Elevation" page of the doloreswater.com website so you can track the progress towards reservoir elevation 6922'."

At this point, BOR has handed off the role of providing daily updates of reservoir and release conditions to the Dolores Water Conservancy District. DWCD had this posted to their website:

"McPhee Reservoir elevations reached 6919 early this morning. Inflows are tapering off a little due to cooler weather and decreasing area of snowpack. McPhee elevations are still rising at approximately half foot per day and managed releases start ramping up at 6922 over two days to minimum rafting flows. Under the current conditions we anticipate reaching

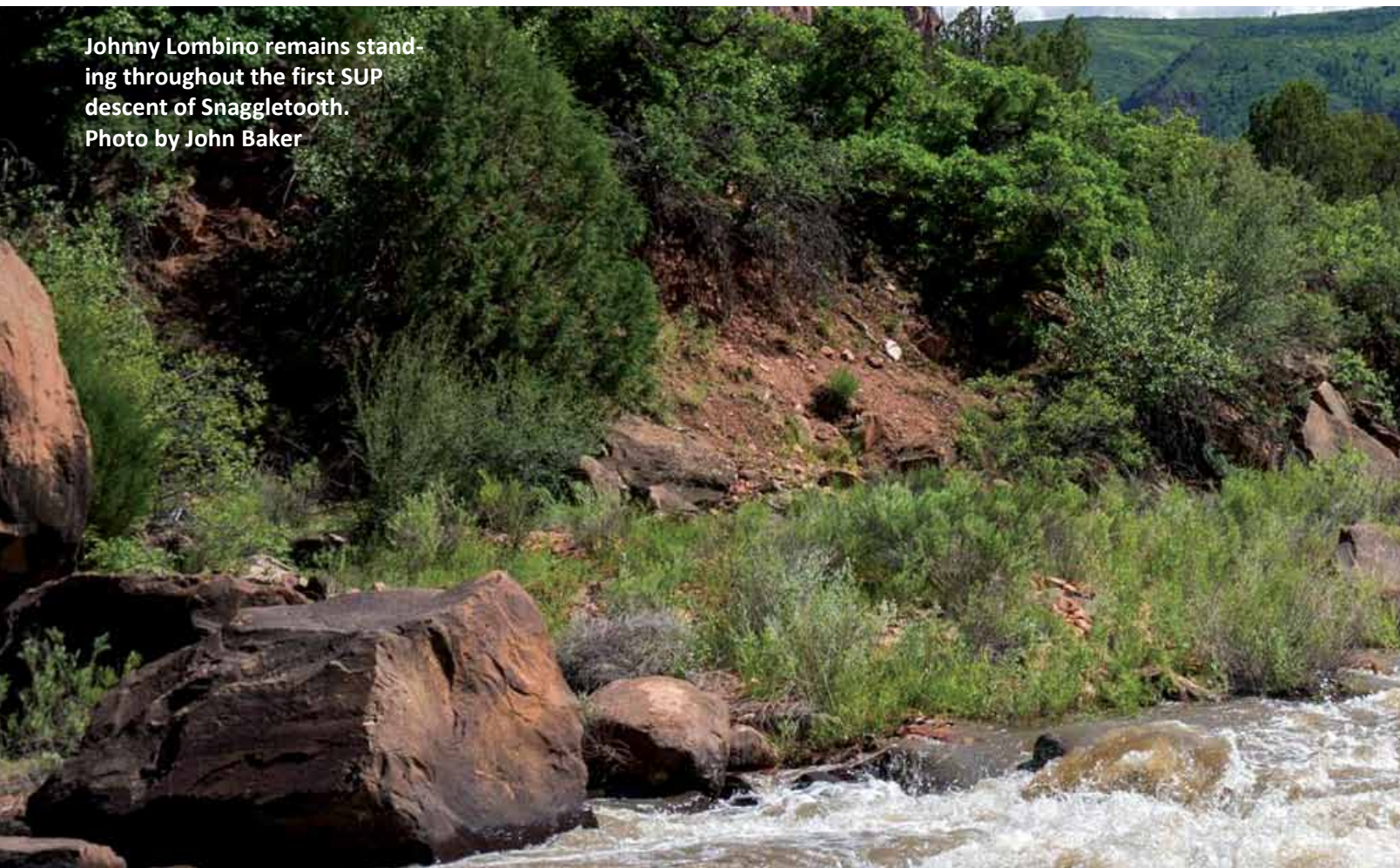
the release targets about 6 days out. That would start ramping up next Wednesday for weekend rafting starting next Thursday thru Friday time frame. The next pulse of high inflow will come from clear sunny warm days that may take hold over the Memorial weekend. Those warmer temperatures could accelerate the reservoir fill and force the managed releases a few days earlier next week, possibly moving the spill up to next Wednesday. We will monitor Dolores inflow and update plans through the Memorial Day weekend to give a few days notice on the spill. **So we anticipate the reservoir filling next week to initiate a spill by the weekend for 5 days and possibly longer. We will target releases between 1,000 to 1200 CFS, but may have to vary between 800 to 1500 CFS. More detailed updates early next week. Midnight reservoir elevations are posted on the "lake Elevation" page of this site to track progress towards 6922 ft."**

## On May 31st, DWCD's website stated:

"Rafting releases are set for next weekend June 3-5, Friday- Sunday. The releases from McPhee will be a minimum of 800 CFS by early (1:00 AM) Friday morning. Remember it takes a few hours to reach Bradford & longer to other downstream boat ramps. Releases are scheduled to remain at 800 CFS for all 3 days."

"Things cooled down and Dolores inflow slowed more than anticipated over the Memorial Day weekend so we're not starting early. It is apparent that the upper Dolores flows are headed up on the forecasted warm weather to a final June hydrograph peak, pretty standard for the Dolores. **More updates later this week as we get more information. The spill could lengthen and flows may vary higher as the reservoir approaches full, 6924, when much more inflow is passed downriver. This remains a fill & spill and will revolve around Dolores River inflow,**

Johnny Lombino remains standing throughout the first SUP descent of Snaggletooth.  
Photo by John Baker





diversions and reservoir elevation. So after Sunday, operating decisions concerning releases will be day by day and posted on the website.

**Remember the ramp down lowers between 800 down to 600 CFS over 2 days, then down to 400 over 2 days and then 2 days to 200 CFS until back at 65 CFS, a 5 ½ day total ramp down. So when flows start dropping the spill will be ending."**

### DWCD's website, 6/1

"Ramping up to minimum rafting releases began Wednesday June 1, 2016 and will reach 800 CFS by midnight Friday. It takes a few hours to reach Bradfield bridge and should be there by early morning on Friday, June 3."

### 6/5:

"Inflow at Dolores is still climbing due to higher temperatures. Minimum rafting releases from McPhee will continue through Monday, June 6 with the possibility

of ramping down beginning Tuesday, June 7."

### 6/6:

**"Rafting releases continue today and Tuesday, but then look to ramp down with the diminishing inflow at the Dolores Gage,** <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?09166500>. The Dolores river inflows kept rising through the weekend, but appear to be peaking early Monday or Tuesday morning. When the inflow starts diminishing at the Dolores Gage, DWCD will start the long ramp down process over the rest of the week. We will continue updating daily at this point until the ramp down starts. Rafting releases above 800 CFS will continue today and tomorrow, Tuesday June 7."

### 6/7:

**"The Dolores inflow has peaked and runoff dropped significantly, rafting releases below McPhee will start ramping down this afternoon. Each day will drop about**

**100 CFS until complete. So flows today about 800 CFS, tomorrow 700, Thursday 600 and so on. It is time to get off the river below McPhee and above the San Miguel confluence."**

*There was no update posted by DWCD on June 8th*

### 6/9:

**"Yesterday's spike will keep McPhee releases at 600 CFS for an extra day The current release of 600 CFS will continue into Friday afternoon before continuing to ramp down.** That would then make Saturday releases at 500 CFS, Sunday at 400 and so on until Wednesday back at 75 CFS. We are currently just topping off this week and balancing inflow so we will continue to update any changes."

### 6/10:

**"We are full! McPhee will release some additional flows downstream this weekend. After releasing boatable flows**



# STEWARDSHIP



*The Dolores River is a quintessential multi-day western river and American Whitewater is committed to making recreation releases on the Dolores as predictable and frequent as possible.*

Photo by Evan Stafford

from Friday June 3 through Tuesday June 7, it was time to ramp down to insure the filling of the reservoir. The reservoir is now at a level where we can release what

is coming down the river less diversions to water users. These releases over the weekend, June 1 thru 12, are likely to run between 800 to 1,000 CFS at which point

we will return to a ramp down averaging 100 CFS per day over 5 and a half days. Stay tuned for daily updates."

**6/11**

**"Snowpack keeps upper Dolores River running high, McPhee releases to continue several days.** Current releases will remain at 1200 CFS through Saturday into late Sunday at a minimum, waiting to see if the early Sunday morning peak. Boatable flows over 800 CFS to be releases through Monday and probably Tuesday. The cloudy cooler weather forecast should lower inflow. Releases will drop faith the river as the daily average inflow drops below 1800 CFS. Follow the ups & downs of the upper Dolores at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?09166500>. Daily updates to continue and releases between 800-1200 CFS for 3 days."

**6/12**

"Releases continued at 1,250 CFS Sunday to hold reservoir elevation. Releases will stay above 800 CFS for at least 2 more days. If Inflows continue to drop, releases could ramp down starting tomorrow morning at the earliest. The ramp down will start when the morning peak falls near 1,900 CFS."

**6/13**

"The upper Dolores inflows have dropped and McPhee releases are ramping down. Today's releases will average 1,000 CFS and Tuesday about 800 CFS. We'll confirm the ramp down schedule on Tuesday mooring exactly when the releases will drop 100 CFS per day below 800 CFS."

**6/14**

**"Releases below McPhee continue down chasing the inflow. Releases are ramping down below 800 CFS and today.** Today's releases will average about 800 CFS and drop 100 CFS per day, so Wednesday will have about 700, Thursday 600 and so on until back at 75 CFS in 5+ days. No more updates unless something changes. Continue to watch the gage below McPhee to monitor current releases."

# NEW FEATHER (CA ) ACCESS

BY DAVE STEINDORF



*Paddlers dash across Highway 70 to get to the Feather River using the current access point. Photo by Dave Steindorf*

**T**HIS JUNE, PG&E broke ground on a river access facility immediately below the Rock Creek Dam on the North Fork Feather River in California. American Whitewater has been fighting for this access over 15 years. It will provide a much safer put-in for boaters paddling the Class III Rogers Flat section of the Rock Creek reach, where paddlers have had to walk their boats across Highway 70 and then scramble down a gunitite bank in order to get to the river. American Whitewater has spent years commenting to both PG&E and resource agencies about the extreme hazard that this situation poses for both paddlers and motorists.

The original FERC license for the Rock Creek Hydroelectric Project, which was issued in 2001, only allocated \$350,000 of matching funds to improve river access on the North Fork Feather River. Early on, it became clear that this amount of funding would be completely insufficient to build a facility that would allow for off highway access to the river. In 2011, American Whitewater negotiated a deal with PG&E

*PG&E begins work on the new Rock Creek Bench access.*

**Photo by Dave Steindorf**

to limit the number of boating weekends to one per month, decreasing PG&E's expense on foregone generation and eliminating the need for expensive recreation and biological monitoring. In exchange, PG&E agreed to build this new access site.

While the flow agreement has been in place since 2012, it has taken PG&E four years to begin to construct this access facility. We hoped that construction would be completed in time for the facility to be available for this year's Feather River Festival, however it now looks that the site will be completed in October 2016. While we're disappointed about the timing, the new access will be a huge improvement for the hundreds of boaters who paddle

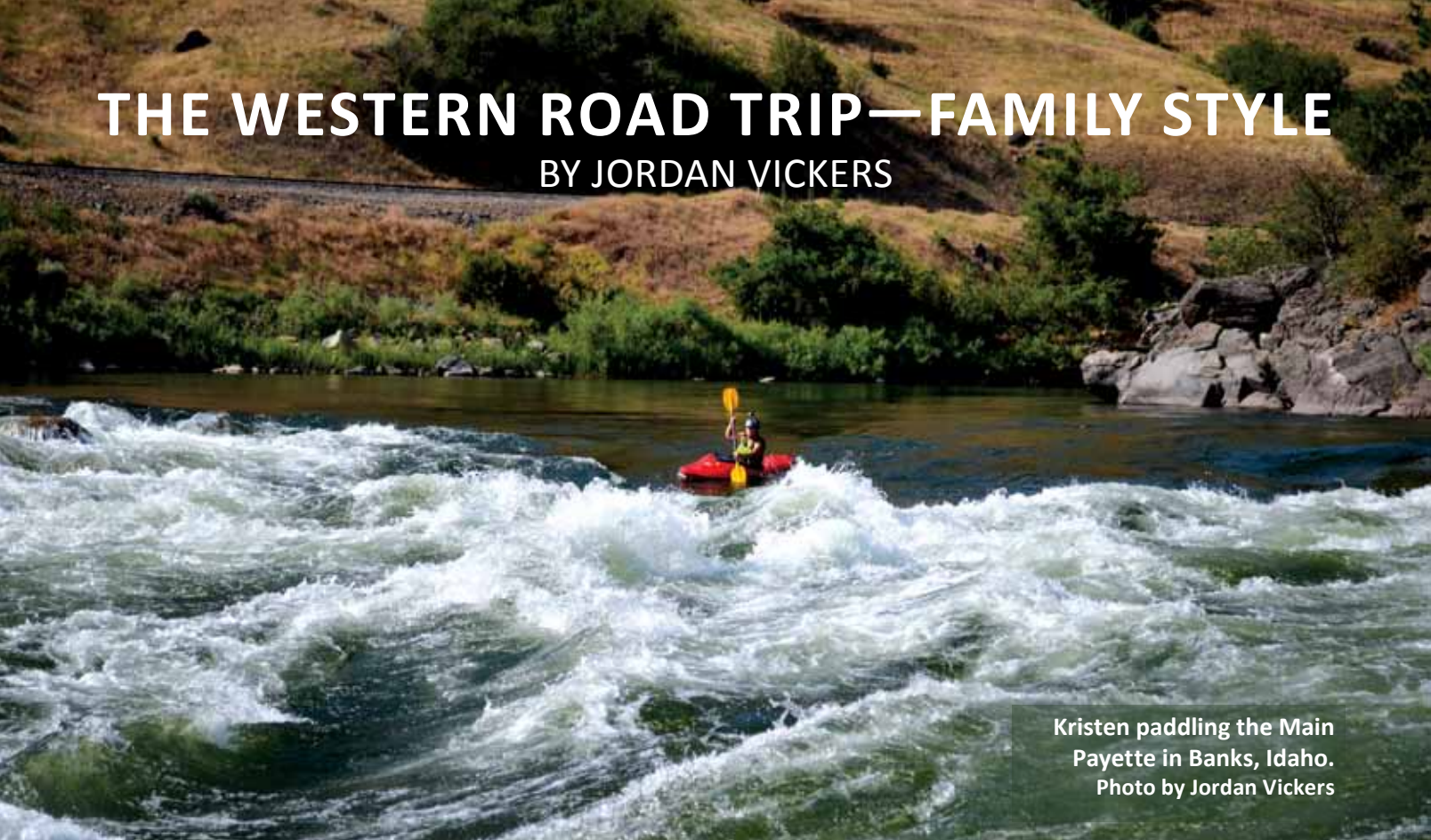
this section of the Feather River on the releases that were negotiated by American Whitewater.

This has been a big year for other improvements on the North Fork Feather River. In a separate flow agreement approved by FERC in 2015, base flows have increased overall, creating high quality paddling on the Rock Creek and Cresta reaches of the North Feather every day of the year. In fact, going forward the Feather will be boatable every day in all but critically dry years. This year's Feather Fest will be a great time to celebrate all of the improvements to the Feather River and experience first-hand what it means to bring a river back to life.



# THE WESTERN ROAD TRIP—FAMILY STYLE

## BY JORDAN VICKERS



Kristen paddling the Main Payette in Banks, Idaho.  
Photo by Jordan Vickers

IT STARTED UNCONVENTIONALLY. My wife Kristen and I live in Vermont and wanted to take a summer road trip for the purpose of exploring the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest. My parents, Mike and Martha, who reside most of the summer months in Alaska, were also interested in seeing some of the western states on their way to Alaska, and were able to join the first part of the trip. Being a master of planning is crucial to making trips happen, especially this one! The plan was to spend the first three weeks with my parents, then pick Kristen up in Seattle, and my parents would fly to Alaska. My dad, along with our one year old German Short Haired Pointer “Denali,” left for Denver in the same Yukon XL we took two years prior, loaded with bikes, boats, two tents and camping gear. A little over two days later my mother and I arrived and headed straight to Vail for the GoPro Mountain Games. It had been a life goal of mine to race Homestake Creek and things were finally coming together.

The Mountain Games in Vail are something every outdoor enthusiast should experience. There are many events for

everyone from professional athletes to casual weekend warriors, providing something for everybody to enjoy in the amazing Colorado mountains. Arriving at Homestake Creek, at an elevation of over 8,000 feet, the we found the banks were lined with spectators, camera crews, and professional kayakers. It is quite an intimidating environment for the non-professional boater, not to mention the manky 400ft/mile racecourse. On my first lap I went hard, maybe too hard, and ended up swimming out of the bottom hole just before the finish line. I can imagine my mother listening to the announcer saying, “we have our first swimmer of the day,” as I near the finish line out of sight. My second lap I was a bit more conservative but also more successful, as I finished in my boat. I felt a great sense of accomplishment racing with the pros, finishing a challenging race, and having my parents there to watch me!

Leaving Vail we headed south to the Arkansas Valley for the night. Kristen and I had taken a trip in 2013 (See *AW Journal*, July/August 2014) and it was great to bring my parents there and share the experience with them. The Arkansas River was cold and

raging. I spent the morning on the Numbers section at a good level then did some play boating in Buena Vista. That evening we headed over Cottonwood Pass, where the snow banks were several feet high, on our way to the Taylor River. My father and I tried our best at fishing but the river was too high! So I convinced him we should hop in the Dynamic Duo and go for a paddle! My father, having little whitewater experience, was a bit skeptical as we peeled out of the first eddy. Boat scouting in the Duo with my father on a cold, raging Colorado river is something I will always remember. Many paddlers learn whitewater from their parents but in my family it’s the other way around!

Leaving the Taylor River we spent the next several days in Crested Butte in the Slate River Valley camping at Oh Be Joyful (OBJ). Denali, our rambunctious dog, had the time of her life bounding through the wildflowers, hunting ground squirrels and being free for the first time since Vermont! On my previous trip I had scouted OBJ at too low of a flow and it had been on my mind a lot heading back to Colorado. The campground was bustling with paddlers

# ROAD TRIPS

and flows were optimal by mid morning everyday. I had planned to meet a friend from back home and by chance met a crew who was training for the upcoming OBJ race. Things had come together nicely and the next few days I got several top to bottom runs on Oh Be Joyful and nearby Daisy Creek. Completing descents on Oh Be Joyful and running Big Wood Falls on Daisy were truly some of the best days I have ever had paddling! It was hard to leave Crested Butte but I had to be in Seattle in ten days to pick up Kristen and I wanted to leave in time to see the North Fork Payette race in Idaho on our way.

Arriving in Idaho I happily discovered the water temperature to be many degrees warmer than that of Colorado's snow melting creeks. Hundreds of cars stacked with boats lined the canyon for the North Fork Championships, a slalom race down Jacob's Ladder, the most difficult rapid on the entire North Payette. I promptly met up with familiar paddlers and had my first run on the Lower Five of the North Fork. The next day I watched the best paddlers in the world tackle the North Fork Championships. What a sight to see! After the race, the racers paddle the remaining seven miles to the take out at Banks. I waited at the bottom of the course as



*Kristen at the Skykomish River in Washington.*

**Photo by Jordan Vickers**

the final racers finished. Together, we all headed downriver. There was no scouting and very little information given as we just followed one after another. I peeled into an eddy above Jaws, a notorious difficult rapid where I was told the line. Paddling over the horizon line I dropped into an enormous hole! I paddled hard, braced, braced again and made it through. Following some of the world's best through the warm Class V rapids had me grinning for many days afterward!

We left Idaho to spend some time in Hood River before heading up to Seattle. The recreational opportunities surrounding Hood River is unreal. Windsurfing, kayaking, fishing, skiing, and mountain biking are all just a few minutes drive out of town. The next few days I met up with locals and paddled the Green Truss section of the White Salmon, Lower Wind, and the legendary Little White Salmon (LWS). The LWS has been on my mind since I started kayaking. It has been in countless whitewater films and is a training ground for some of the world's best. Spirit Falls was the largest waterfall I have run. Standing at the lip watching paddlers successfully hitting their lines I decided to run it. My heart pumping fast as I peeled out, set my boat angle and landed softly in the pool nearly 40 feet below!

As we headed north my parents wanted to go through the parks on the way to Seattle. In 1995 my family visited Washington and went to Mt. St. Helens on our first big vacation. We spent the evening watching the sun set over Spirit Lake and eventually



*Driving by the Sawtooth Mountains at Stanley Lake, Idaho.*

**Photo by Kristen Vickers**

# ROAD TRIPS

found a campsite outside of Mt. Rainer on the Ohanepecosh River. We spent the morning hiking the “Ohanny” before heading to Seattle to pick up Kristen. Before my parents flew off to Alaska we met some relatives for a scenic breakfast in the Space Needle!

Leaving Seattle we said goodbye to my parents and were soon off to the mountains. Kristen got her first taste of Washington whitewater on the Skykomish River, a scenic Class III paddle not far from Seattle. Traveling over Stevens Pass we camped at Icicle Creek and took a short mountain bike ride near Leavenworth with Denali. The next day we headed to Tumwater Canyon to find it at a low summer time level. I did the first lap with some friendly locals and then convinced Kristen to hop in the dynamic duo for a second run. The locals we joined were a bit skeptical of us at first but we were confident in our abilities. Feeling the power of Tumwater Canyon in a K2 with your significant other is a unique

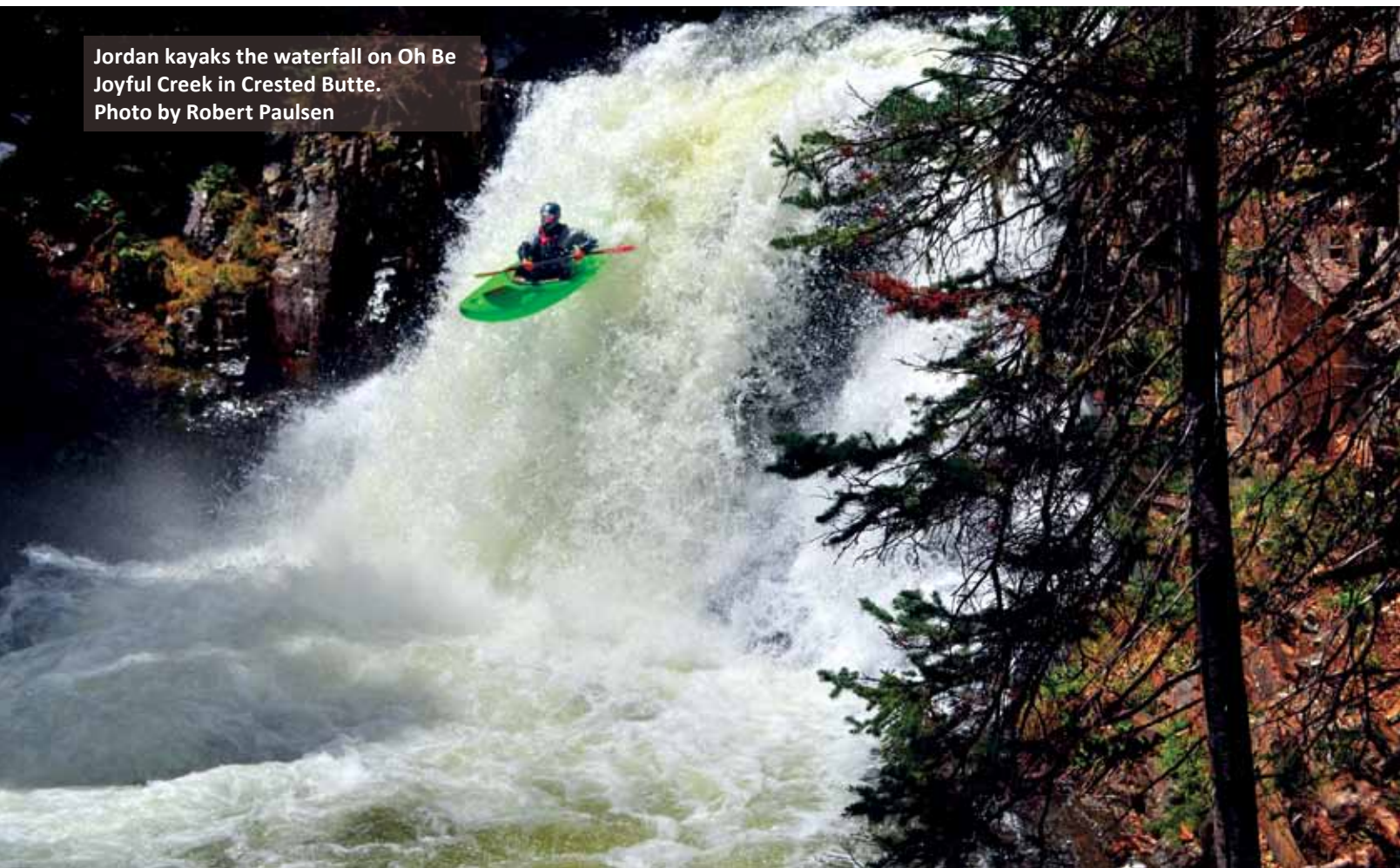
experience. That night we made our way to Kristen’s relatives who have a ranch in Mazama. We spent two days with her family mountain biking with Denali and enjoying the amenities of home life. Heading south through Yakima we backtracked towards Mt. Rainer and St. Helens. That night we car camped on a forest service road about a mile into the deep woods of Washington near the Cispus River. Just as we were falling asleep a howling wolf entered into our campsite! Denali gave a few cowardly barks and we decided to leave in search of a less exciting place to sleep.

Driving south, Kristen and I spent the next few days in Hood River, paddling the Middle White Salmon, mountain biking, enjoying the breweries and taking in a wind surfing lesson. The White Salmon should be on every paddler’s list, as it offers so much for paddlers of every level, not to mention the clean water and consistent water levels.

Moving on we made it to Bend, Oregon the day before the Meadowcamp Race on the Deschutes River. We spent a hot evening floating on our queen sized air mattress through the flatwater while Denali towed us in search of ducks and geese! The next day I raced the challenging Class IV+ Meadowcamp Race and finished in the middle of the pack. We just had time to hit the after party at a local brewery before making the trek back to Idaho.

Arriving in Idaho to a heat wave, with temperatures well over 100 degrees, we had to strategically plan our paddling in the mornings and evenings to make sure Denali was comfortable and cool. Once on the Payette, Kristen was amazed at the warmth of the water. She even had a rare “suns out guns out” (bikini only) paddle on the Main Payette! Finishing the Main Payette we dealt with a wildfire near the take-out which was quickly controlled but extended our shuttle time by several hours. The next day I managed to meet a group

Jordan kayaks the waterfall on Oh Be Joyful Creek in Crested Butte.  
Photo by Robert Paulsen





*Denali at the Ohanepecosh Campground in Washington.*  
**Photo by Jordan Vickers**

to paddle the North Fork while Kristen tanned with Denali at the beach near the take-out. The following day, before leaving for Sun Valley we paddled the "Duo" on the Staircase section of the South Fork Payette. The paddling options in this area are truly amazing for boaters of all abilities!

On our way to Sun Valley we stopped for lunch at Stanley Lake with the Sawtooth Mountains looming over us. Once in Sun Valley we decided to do some mountain biking at the resort. Heading north up the Salmon River drainage toward Missoula we stopped at a hot spring for a nice soak before bed. Getting to Missoula we spent the morning on Brennan's Wave before heading up to Alberton Gorge on the Clarks Fork. This run has great playboating with a big water feel similar to the Snake River near Jackson Hole. That night we headed east with Bozeman in our sights. We spent the fourth of July mountain biking at Big Sky, paddling and fishing the Gallatin River during the day and back to Big Sky for fireworks in the evening. The next morning it was time to head home. I dropped Kristen off at the airport in Bozeman and spent the next two and a half days driving back to Vermont.

During the drive I had time to reflect on the road trip that had been over a month long. Racing at the GoPro Mountain games is something I will always remember. Oh Be Joyful, the North Fork Payette and Little White Salmon are some of the best runs in the country. Paddling these rivers were some of the greatest moments of my life! I spent over two weeks with my parents living out of a car. They were a big part in making this trip happen and I am so thankful! Sharing experiences with my wonderful wife Kristen, discovering new places and exploring new activities is exactly what I want in life.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce we recently added to our family! In March, Kristen gave birth to our daughter, Rowen. She can be seen tagging along with Denali and her parents at rivers and mountains throughout the Northeast! Our next road trip is planned for the summer of 2017, with our sights set on California and the Pacific Northwest—this time we look forward to sharing our love of the outdoors with our amazing little girl!

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TRAVELERS REST, SOUTH CAROLINA

# RIVER VOICES

## “JEWEL IN THE DESERT”

BY BRANDI JO PETRONIO



*A flash flood surges through Elves Chasm, a tributary of the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. Members of this trip were quickly separated by the flood, as individuals climbed the the closest wall for safety.*

**Photo by  
Brandi Jo Petronio**

**E**LVES CHASM IS a small side canyon located on the Grand Canyon section of the Colorado River. Elves Chasm is a *must see!* you are told by fellow rafters, books, and maps. Our map read that Elves Chasm is “a jewel in the desert.” Naturally, we had to stop there, all 16 of us on this river trip. We longed to take refuge from the glaring August sun in the shade of Elves Chasm’s canyon walls, and jump from the top of the small, trickling waterfall into a cool, crystal clear pool of water below. We talked about Elves Chasm with enthusiasm

beforehand, just as we spoke of the larger rapids to come in the days ahead (Bedrock! Lava Falls!).

On day six or seven (or maybe it was eight?) of our rafting trip through the Grand Canyon, we excitedly reached Elves Chasm. I might not be sure of the day, but I am sure of the mileage – mile 117.2 of the 225.9 miles we rowed from Lees Ferry to the Diamond creek take-out. When we arrived at Elves Chasm, I happened to be rowing “The Poop Boat,” the raft

that carried our dung contained in ammo tins. You see, when on a desert river trip, you cannot simply go on the sand behind a shrub somewhere, because first, there are too many people rafting those areas throughout the year, and second, rain and moisture are scarce, causing all things to decompose at a very slow rate. You also cannot release your bowels into the river; that would just be *rude*. However, you *must* urinate in the river, *not* on the land. If you urinate on the land, once again there is no



telling how much time would pass before the rains came to wash it away.

In order to solve the first of these problems, boaters use a "groover." The groover is a large ammunition tin set up with a toilet seat. Back in the old days, there was no toilet seat. You finished your business with grooves on your rear-end from sitting on the ammo tin, hence the name. With the best view from the john you've ever had, you deposit your droppings into the groover, making sure to never urinate. It is pertinent that no one tinkles in the groover, because this will cause it to swell up with gases once closed, and potentially explode. This second problem is solved by placing a "pee bucket" (self explanatory) next to the groover, which is dumped into the river every morning. One by one, these ammo tins fill up and are strapped in and

rowed down the river on The Poop Boat. By the end of our trip, The Poop Boat carried ammo tins containing the concentrated organic waste of 16 people from 16 days.

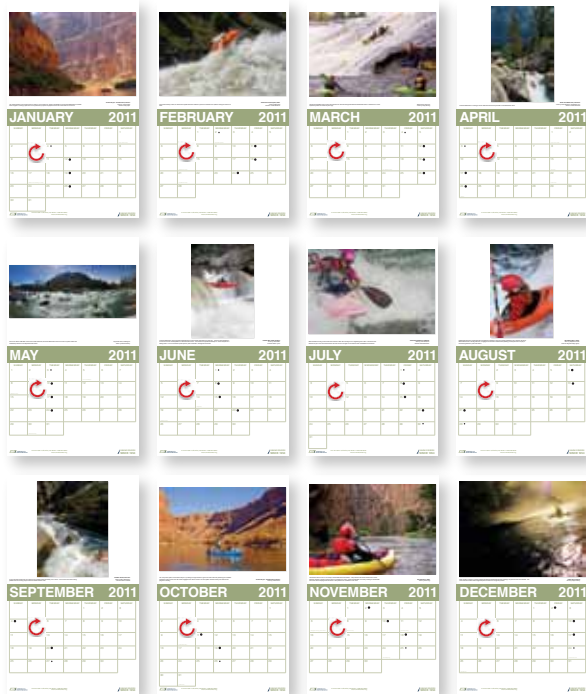
But back to Elves Chasm. After tying up The Poop Boat and entering the side canyon, I could hear echoes from our friends who had already reached the small waterfall. It was an effortless stroll between the walls of Elves Chasm, following a small, unclouded, six-inch wide stream. Seeing this crystal clear water was thrilling. Due to flash floods, the Colorado had been a murky, opaque, chocolate milk river for the length of our trip. The thought of rinsing the red silt and sand from my hair under the thin stream of falling water in Elves Chasm was electrifying.

We began to hear a low rumble, which slowly became louder as we approached the waterfall. *Is it a helicopter? Perhaps one of the other rafting trips in the canyon had to have an evacuation?*

The waterfall was now in sight and it turned out to be nothing like I had imagined. It was a red, sediment-rich waterfall, which was much larger than what I'd hoped for. I realized the rinsing of my hair with pristine, unsilted water was only a distant dream. *And wow, I began to think, that helicopter is so loud! It's beginning to sound like a rapid.*

Dale, my sweetheart who always manages to be so keenly aware (obviously not daydreaming of rinsing his hair), yelled, "This is a flash flood! Everyone climb up!"

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# RIVER VOICES

Before I knew it, his hands were on my bottom and he was pushing me up faster than I could climb the steep walls of the side canyon. Everyone else was also scrambling up the sides of the canyon as a wall of thick, orangey-red, silt-laden water roared past us. I'm not actually sure if water is the proper term in this case. The water, full of sand, sediment, rocks, woody debris, and probably even a cactus or two, resembled more of a liquid red concrete. Elves Chasm, normally a trickle of a waterfall, which flows at maybe 20 cfs, had become a raging tributary, rushing past us at 500 cfs through the narrow canyon.

Some of us had scuffled up the right side of the canyon, others the left. We stared in disbelief at the new river that separated us. Once the severity of the situation began to sink in, we began to count heads; there should have been 15 of us present. Our sixteenth member, Bobber, a wild 60-year-old Grand Canyon veteran from Montana, was napping on his boat. To our dismay, there were only 12 of us present, and the other three were nowhere to be seen. We yelled across the canyon to one another, over the roar of the flash flood, which accomplished little to nothing. Even so, we all understood the situation: three of our companions, Brubaker, Glen, and Audra, had already been enjoying the lovely Elves Chasm waterfall when the flash flood began. In horror and shock, we started scanning the water, searching for their bodies.

Leigh, the permit holder of our trip, Matt, and Corey had begun climbing the right sidewall to the now large, red waterfall in search of our friends. Finally, and to our astonishment, our missing companions were found – and safe! However, they were trapped behind the waterfall. As we could not shout across the bellow of the channeled flood, Leigh gave us the universal “everyone is okay” sign, patting her head. She then gave a thumbs-up and smiled with a sense of relief. Those trapped were also relieved. Brubaker, Glen, and Audra assumed they were safe behind the

flood, and the rest of us had most likely been swept up and washed away into the Colorado with all the other passing debris. Luckily, we were not, and although our friends were stuck, at least they were relatively safe. But for how long would they be stuck? In a few hours' time it would be dark, and we still needed to row to camp.

Corey had an ingenious idea: his climbing gear. Although a few naysayers had said, “Don't bring your climbing gear, you won't have time to climb on a 16-day trip,” he brought it anyway. Corey is a ripped, agile, Ninja-like man. He climbed the vertical walls of the side canyon like a spider. Within 15 minutes he returned from the boats with his climbing gear and a “good luck” from Bobber.

Over the next hour Corey, Matt, and Leigh rigged up a system of clips, carabineers, and ropes so that our friends behind the waterfall could be pulled up to freedom. The rest of us watched from the left wall of the canyon, unable to cross the tempestuous flood to help. At last, directly in front of the fall, where the canyon was wide, the water had gone down to about ankle deep. Here, in the shallower waters, we set safety with another rope and a row of people. We were ready to begin the rescue.

One by one, our friends were pulled up and no longer stuck behind the falls. Glen and Audra kissed passionately, like the romantic duet they are, now free from the falls and in the comfort of friends. Brubaker and his girlfriend Erica finally reunited, and fervently embraced one another as well (have you ever thought your other half was swept away by a flash flood?). By this point, the waterfall was no longer raging as it was before and the water level continued to drop. Eventually, the water level in the side canyon went down enough for us to leave. We helped one another climb down the vertical walls and then we walked back to the boats. Our Elves Chasm outing had lasted about three hours. Worn out, we untied our boats and began rowing the

three miles to our intended campsite called hundred-and-twenty-mile camp.

Mercifully, we discovered our campsite to be an immense, beautiful, sandy beach. A paradise. We agreed to camp there for a couple of days, considering that we were exhausted from our visit to one of the desert's most prized jewels.

That night, when we huddled together in the darkness around an imaginary campfire (during the summer, all trips through the Grand Canyon must haul in all of their own firewood, so campfires are rare), we talked only of the flash flood. Laughing, yelling, we were still in disbelief at our experience. The Elves Chasm event, as it will be called in history books, had brought us closer to one another and given us an epic story.

After our flash flood encounter at Elves Chasm (this was the first, but this most definitely was not the last of our flash flood encounters), I had even more admiration for the Grand Canyon and every single little side canyon we passed. Our flash flood experience was Canyon Geology 101, really. How many flash floods does it take to cut a side canyon like a hot knife cuts butter? I pondered that last drop of water that somewhere (and where, precisely?) had brought the flood surging to us. I thought of the stunning, forceful Colorado River eroding the layers of rock (limestone, sandstone, shale, volcanic matter, granite, etc.) deeper and deeper to create this unimaginably grand canyon. For me, each and every canyon had become a jewel in the desert. Each and every canyon shaped by water to be ever so lovely, the greatest jewels in the desert.



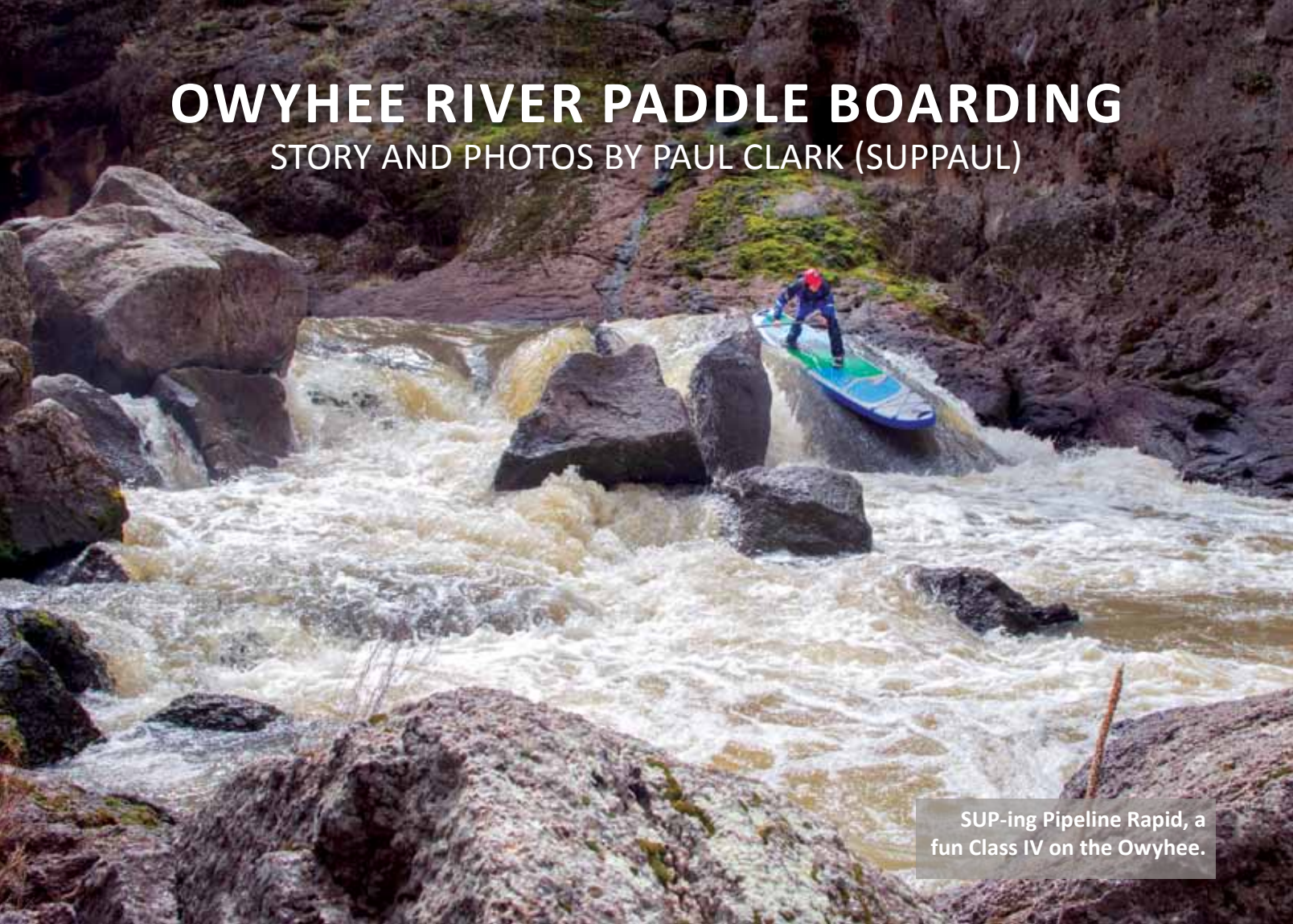
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# OWYHEE RIVER PADDLE BOARDING

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAUL CLARK (SUPPAUL)



SUP-ing Pipeline Rapid, a fun Class IV on the Owyhee.

**T**HE FIRST TIME I tethered a dry bag to my paddle board to run rivers I dreamed about the Owyhee River. On a board you can paddle light and fast carrying a backpack's worth of stuff. You can navigate rapids, hike around obstacles if needed, and carry enough gear for multi-day trips. Standing up to paddle is an option, but you can also kneel, sit, lay down, and do downward dog. A paddle board can handle tighter and more shallow lines than rafts can. I think it's the perfect river touring vehicle. And the Owyhee is a spectacular destination for the adventurous SUP athlete with river experience.

I'd been planning to run the river for the last few years, but low snow pack at the headwaters in the Independence Mountains of Nevada had dashed my hopes. This year the snow returned, and with it, water. As a wild river, the Owyhee only flows with snow melt. Not to miss out

this season, Torrey Piattt and I leaped at the chance to make the first SUP-supported descent of the Upper and Middle sections in late March when flows were spiking above 5000cfs.

## The Upper Owyhee (aka, Main Owyhee or East Fork)

The Owyhee winds creek-like from the mountains crossing into Idaho at the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. There, before the river has had the time to develop properly, it is channeled for ranch land irrigation. I had hoped to begin the trip in the marshy waters of the reservation. Miles of muddy water and barbed wire fencing changed my mind pretty quickly. Instead, we drove across the reservation on dirt

roads getting as close to where the river dives into the Owyhee Canyonlands. The



*Using technology to track our progress down the Owyhee*

# PADDLEBOARDING

## AMERICAN WHITEWATER STEWARDSHIP SIDEBAR—OWYHEE

In addition to offering a multi-day trip for SUP-ers, the mainstem Owyhee River is popular with rafters, self-support kayakers, and canoeists. Remote red rock formations and deep canyons offer opportunities for wilderness exploration and adventure. The Owyhee Canyonlands region is one of the most biologically diverse and ecologically intact areas in Oregon, and it is also under pressure from resource extraction. This is wild country, and American Whitewater's goal is to keep it that way.

While the Owyhee in Idaho was designated as Wilderness in 2009, over two million acres of the Owyhee's wilderness-quality public lands remain unprotected in Oregon. Through the Owyhee Canyonlands Campaign, American Whitewater has worked with our coalition partners to develop a conservation vision that will permanently protect the area's unique ecology, healthy wildlife habitat, rich ancient history, and fascinating geology. Under our plan, fishing, boating, hunting and hiking would continue, as would working farms and ranches. Together, we hope that we can have the foresight to safeguard the Owyhee's deep red-rock canyons, rolling plains, wild rivers, and ample recreation opportunities for current and future generations. Stay tuned to American Whitewater for opportunities to help support protecting this special place.

map I was carrying identifies River Mile One as the mouth of the canyon.

The few people who paddle the Upper Owyhee actually continue downstream on nasty dirt roads requiring high clearance 4x4 vehicles to Garat Crossing. (My wife had volunteered to drive us from our home in Bend, Oregon in conjunction with a Utah trip she was taking, then pick us up nine days later at our take out in Rome, Oregon, saving us costly shuttle expenses.) I wanted to see as much of the river as possible. Though starting at the mouth required portaging gear ¼ mile across pastures and clawing our way through alders, entering the canyon in swift water was well worth the initial effort.

Right away we understood why most people are willing to make the drive to Garat. The first six of twenty miles is a narrow boulder garden with several unnamed Class II/III rapids. I'd much rather have a deep Class IV than a shallow Class

II. At the first named rapid, "Tombstone," the trip was nearly ended as I wrapped my board. Until we were able to free the drybags and get an improvised Z-line in place the board wasn't going anywhere but underwater. We eventually liberated the board and continued on our way, lucky not to have destroyed a board so early in the trip.

Just before Garat there is a series of Class IV boulder chokes. The Rome gauge, the only indicator of water levels for the Owyhee was at 2000cfs when we put on and dropped to 1000cfs by the time we finished. At this level even on boards most of these features were unrunnable. They were sieves wide enough for a skate board but that's about it. We did a lot of laborious portaging over loose rock trying to convince ourselves it was too early for rattle snakes. Pipeline (IV+) was an exception. It is an eight-foot drop through a tight chute into a nice pool. We had to session that drop a couple of times.

The next 75 miles is a spectacular example of wilderness. By now we were in the heart of the Owyhee Canyonlands. Steep cliffs rose directly from the water. We saw falcons, big horn sheep, and elk. This section through Idaho to the Oregon border is designated Wilderness area. Much of the river is flat with some occasional whitewater. Owyhee Falls is a mandatory portage 50 miles from our put-in. It's a good couple of hours of cliffside scrambling to get around the falls, which is little more than a pile of boulders obstructing the river. Another portage around Tight Squeeze. The longest and most technical section is Cabin Rapids (IV). It's a good ¼ mile of must-make moves, hydraulics, and drops. We portaged around Cable Rapids, which were just more boulder chokes.



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

# PADDLEBOARDING



Nights were freezing and days were warm. We rarely left camp before 11, as it took all morning for the sun to reach us and help thaw our gear. But we had light past 7, giving us plenty of time to make miles. Portages and headwind slowed our pace, but we still averaged about 20 miles a day.

Just before Three Forks and the start of the Middle Owyhee is a spectacular set of warm springs cascading down a mountainside. It was snowing and we were tired. The promise of the springs motivated us, but the last thing we wanted to do is strip out of our dry suits to sit in the pools. So, we waded with our suits on, soaking up the warmth. It gave us both the opportunity to realize our suits had been punctured by thorns and the sharp lava rock paddling and portaging had subjected us to.

## Middle Owyhee

We arrived at Three Forks to meet the only other people we had seen in seven days. They were waiting out the storm before putting on the next day with their 17-foot cataraft. There was no way that size of a boat could float the Upper section. By this spot several springs creeks had entered and swelled the river. We had two days before my wife was scheduled to pick us up, and nearly 40 more miles of the most notorious whitewater on the Owyhee. Anybody who asked me beforehand about the trip wanted to know about this section: "You are running the Middle on paddle boards?!"



Though several Class IV pool-drop rapids populate this section and Widow Maker (V+) is the crown jewel, the reality is that this section has a ton of flatwater. We made miles, easily making our 20 mile per day average even accounting for scouting and portaging, where necessary. There are



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*Top: Three Forks Warm Springs, a welcome sight for cold, tired SUPers  
Middle: Typical Upper Owyhee scenery  
Bottom: Stand up paddling through the majesty of Lamber Gorge's 400-foot sheer rock walls*

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Rock Jam Rapids,  
Upper Owyhee

two rapids here that are a real whitewater test for paddle boards. The Ledge and Half Mile Rapids (both Class IV) are long with hydraulics and tight moves. Half Mile was the one rapid I had the most concerns about in doing my research because of its length. I was happy when it was in the rear view mirror and we were unscathed. We walked around Widow Maker. Ironically, just as the first bigger rapid nearly ended my trip, the very last Class III just below Widow Maker resulted in my best wreck. I flipped, capsized, and swam, almost losing my paddle. The best thing about river running with paddle boards is that you don't have to roll your boat to survive. Swimming from a boat can be a tragic thing. Swimming from a board has fewer consequences,

especially if you are connected to the board with a quick-release leash worn above the waste. My gear was rigged to flip, so no worries. I just brushed it off with a grin after retrieving my paddle down stream.

After 150 miles and nine days of paddling, we emerged from the canyon back into ranch lands. Cattle, muddy water, cans of cheap beer discarded on the shore welcomed us to civilization and to Rome, the end of the Middle and the start of the more populated Lower Owyhee to Leslie Gulch. We had met with only one other party during our time on the river. At Rome we landed as a handful of groups were rigging to head out on the Lower Owyhee. I had hoped to continue down this

section, but was thrilled to watch my wife arrive shortly after us. I'll do that section eventually. Other paddle boarders have done it. And now, every runnable section of the Owyheehas been paddled on a SUP board!

*Paul Clark is the "Duffle Bag Paddle Boarder." He is a photographer, brand ambassador, and paddle board correspondent based in Bend, Oregon. Visit his site [www.suppaul.com](http://www.suppaul.com) for more adventure SUP content.*



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# CREEKING

## GLUG

BY JAY CARPENTER



Laura along a curtain of ice.  
Photo by Jason Carpenter

*Editor's Note: This story previously ran on the blog Dirt Bag Paddlers Magazine.*

IT WOULD BE a lie if I told you the day started out like any other day before a paddling trip. It was January 16th, 2016, an island of warmth in a week of bitter cold temperatures. First of all, I made myself a pretty decent breakfast, something I never do before having to squeeze into my 5mm wetsuit in the winter. And while loading my gear into my ride's truck we discovered that Anthony and Laura had lost their canoe paddles at some point in time. And though I had planned and packed to paddle one creek, I learned on the road that we would be heading to the little town of Westfield, NY to tackle a different one.

Westfield is a quiet little town that I called home for a short time, a town that is home to concord grapes, Welch's grape juice,

Mogen David wines, and a 14-mile stretch of gorge known as Chautauqua Creek, or the "Glug" by some of the locals. This was quickly shaping up to be the adventure we had all asked for. For, if the rumors were true, we'd be the first paddlers in 10-plus years to make this decent. And as such a moment would call for, I was equipped with my GoPro but I had no memory card. So a quick trip to the store was needed. Upon opening my package to retrieve the SD card from steel-like grips of the plastic packaging, the card snapped into two pieces. In hindsight, these were probably signs to reconsider what we were about to get into.

As we pulled off onto the Westfield exit, my heart briefly started to pound. Not only because was I excited to run this creek, but it was a creek I often thought about in the two years that I've been paddling

whitewater. Not only did I call Westfield home for a little over a year, but I spent many a summer nights partying, being loud, and sleeping in that creek under the stars. And for a moment, I was caught up thinking about the greater meaning and connection between me living there at age 18 and my coming back to paddle there at age 36.

As we drove through town I was overcome by familiar places that looked quite a bit different at the same time. We drove over the Route 20 Bridge, then down a side road and underneath the bridge to the take-out. And there, in a snow bank, like a shining beacon saying, "all will be well," were the

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*Opposite: Top of the rapid leading to the ice dam.*

**Photo by Jason Carpenter**

lost canoe paddles belonging to Anthony and Laura. (Anthony and Laura paddled a feeder creek to the Chautauqua a week earlier). And for a while all was good. We picked up our fourth boater Mar, and made the ride to the put-in.

At the put-in we were treated to the beautiful scenery of a gorge maybe 15 to 20 feet at its widest. A coating of snow accented the trees and the ground while whole cliffs were encased in an armor of ice with 20-foot icicles hanging about. The creek itself started out with Class II boogie water. Caught up in the moment of a new creek and staring at the landscape, I came into the first small chute not really paying attention only to find the first of two ice dams. Not sure what to do, as this was my first encounter with one, I simply lucked out and found a channel of water that cut through the ice. At this point the creek artificially narrowed by ice to channels only four or five feet wide—maybe less. I led the group to the second major rapid, a blind drop that was hidden behind a sharp right turn in the creek. Made up of what I think are three separate little drops, this chute

was one of the highlights of the creek—except for the major ice dam below it.

In an instant the trip changed. There was nowhere to eddy out, nowhere to stop. And the boats kept piling up. Two kayaks and two canoes stuck on an ice dam. We were now looking at a life or death situation. In the chaos, one boater, Mar, came out of her boat and became trapped, clinging to the ice desperately trying not to get swept underneath. Anthony leapt from his canoe to get a rope to the trapped boater. Facing upstream, and honestly too afraid to exit my boat, I didn't move until I heard the desperation in the cries for help behind me. Seeing that Anthony was unable to pull her out on his own I decided to exit my boat. Holding onto the ice, I pulled my skirt and rolled out onto the ice. I kept rolling until the ice was solid beneath me. Fearing that I was going to fall through the ice, I belly crawled to my friend and eventually got a hand on the PFD and pulled her onto the ice. Thankfully everyone made it out of this situation ok. However, this exhausted our daylight and the thought of ice dams never left our mind.

The remainder of the run was ice dam free, fortunately, but we were now fighting fatigue, the cold, and time. As darkness set in, wood strainers now became a bigger concern than ever. In the dark, hand signals mean nothing; the word stop is useless. At one point, Anthony, running lead, got wedged on a tree. I heard him saying to eddy out, but it was too late for me. I was following too close in order to maintain a visual contact on him. I got lucky and was able to catch a hole in the bank right behind him which allowed me to get safely out. Laura was the third boat and was far enough back that she was just paddling towards voices that she heard, even though she could not make out what was being said. She came in hot, capsized and went under the strainer and lost her paddle. Fortunately it was clear below the tree and she passed safely underneath. The fourth boater just squeezed by. I, however, found myself trapped with no way to get back in the water safely with my boat. So Anthony and I walked each other across some pretty swift moving current with the strainer about 10 feet behind. I had stayed pretty dry until then, but wading in the river left



# CREEKING



us very cold with the longest, darkest half mile to the take-out that I ever paddled.

And for all that we endured, this creek was amazing. With plenty of small drops, short chutes, and non-stop water, this creek is a great introduction to steep creeks. With a few more inches of water—and less ice—this creek would be an incredible thrill ride. Stay safe out there. See you on the river!

*Editor's Note: Scan the QR Code here with your phone or tablet to watch the author's helmet cam footage of the day, including some scary ice dam scenes.*



---

*Top: Narrow channels of ice.  
Middle: Mar in the ice cold water.  
Bottom: Mar pulled to safety with some help from Anthony and Jason.*  
**Photos by Jason Carpenter**

# LIGHTEN UP



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# MENTAL GAME

## WHY I KAYAK

BY JERRY SPENCE



The author on Wonder Falls, Big Sandy River, WV.

HAVE BEEN KAYAKING for some 35 years and have been absolutely obsessed with whitewater for much of my life. During that time I have been asked and I have asked myself why I enjoy paddling so much. I have been queried on what I think the sport of kayaking gives me and why I think others pursue it. I have not really pondered it that much because I felt I didn't need to. Paddling relaxes and releases me from day-to-day burdens, it de-stresses me, and it brings me good emotions. I think other sports and endeavors probably do the same, but for me, rivers combined with gradient are one of my passions.

I am going to quote a couple of sages in the philosophy of the outdoors and try to relate their perspective to why I paddle. I will start with Henry David Thoreau, who wrote in *Walden*, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach,

and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." Rivers and woods are synonymous here for me, and I can explain some of those parallels with examples of river experiences.

For instance, one year, I paddled the Top Youghiogheny, a Class IV-V river in Western Maryland, after a heavy snowstorm, when snow blanketed all the boulders with a fresh layer of snow about six to seven inches deep. It was a very magical scene and at one point on the river I could see the 50-foot waterfall of Muddy Creek, which looked very surreal. So surreal a place, in fact, that in the summer of 1921 Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Harvey Firestone camped by these falls. They, too, must have understood what Thoreau meant, camped next to Muddy Creek Falls looking upon the rapids of the Top Yough. I don't know how you could not live more deliberately in a place like that. This scene just automatically took me into a deep

state of meditation without needing the discipline of meditating. To me, at that point in time, those were the essential facts of life. To be in the river surrounded by all those snow crowned boulders towering above me and peering at the 50-foot falls was ethereal. That experience is forever etched in my memories and I have called upon those memories in later years for relaxation.

Paddling in the Sierras of California one cannot help but be mesmerized by the expanses of white granite. I paddled the Forks of the Kern one summer while on a business trip and stopped at the Seven Teacups of Dry Meadow Creek. The Seven Teacups is a place that most people do not get to experience, but a kayak will take you there. It's just one granite bowl after another. A waterfall paradise of smooth white polished rock. Another magical place created by water and rock and fun to boat. An automatic bliss destination.

One of my greatest and most treasured experiences is sleeping in Marble Canyon of the Grand Canyon during a full moon. The walls of the canyon form a very narrow defile in Marble Canyon and at night you have a limited view of the sky. On one of the several private Grand Canyon trips I have done, a friend and I hiked up to the granaries at Nankoweep at night to sit amongst the Indian spirits and watch the moon rise and shine its light against the canyon walls. A kayak and support rafts got us there. I believe I have lived and enjoyed what nature was created for and I owe that to the sport of kayaking. These experiences are what I would consider going into the woods because I wished to live deliberately, just like Henry David Thoreau.

Beyond being out in the woods and on the river and in the ebb and flow of nature,

paddling provides another freedom: the freedom of excitement, adrenaline release, and hyper focus. Running rapids takes concentration, skill, and many other attributes that are either learned or developed over time. I read once that people spend years learning how to meditate to get to a state of complete focus. When running rapids you get to that state of focus in an instant. Running rapids frees you of all other thoughts. It's almost a purging or catharsis of sorts and can produce a natural high or euphoria. Maybe that is why there is the desire to keep coming back to the river, weekend after weekend, or to get a job working on the river full time. The body's natural morphine or endorphins are certainly flowing when charging down a Class V rapid. Nothing compares to the proverbial adrenaline rush.

Beyond the excitement of challenging whitewater, there is another more subtle benefit of paddling whitewater rivers. The revered naturalist John Muir famously said, "Keep close to Nature's heart...and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean." If Muir had been a paddler, he might have added rivers to his list of spiritual cleansers.

The answer to the question of why I paddle is multi-part and I will try to summarize. Paddling takes me far into the reaches of nature—or into the heart of it, as John Muir suggests. Rivers course through wild, beautiful areas that can't be reached on foot or by any other means. Paddling allows you to become an explorer, like Lewis and Clark or the early pioneers. It could be a new river or a section of river. It could be



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# MENTAL GAME

a river in a new country or state. There is nothing like going into a place you have never been before and navigating your way with only limited information. I have been fortunate to have paddled the Grand Canyon of the Colorado multiple times, the Main and Middle Forks of the Salmon and Selway, as well as amazing rivers all over Colorado, Idaho, West Virginia, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, New Mexico, California and the countries of Peru, Costa Rica, Canada, Ecuador, France, Switzerland, Belize and Mexico. The feeling you get from exploring new places and new rivers is very rewarding. As Muir said, it "cleanses the spirit."

Kayaking allows you to release the inner athlete and be competitive if you so desire. I have never competed in slalom racing but

have enjoyed paddling gates and I always try to turn the river into a slalom course. I use the rocks, eddies and boulders as my gates. Paddling gates whether they be real slalom gates or natural river gates takes precise energy and timing and will greatly improve your paddling skills. If you have ever had the privilege of watching Jon Lugbill or any other Olympic-level athlete paddle gates then you will know what I mean.

The last reward that paddling brings me is the interaction with people. I have met some really great and interesting people over my 35-year paddling career. Here I want to name just a couple that I have met who were not paddlers, but were very much a part of the paddling community. Glen Miller ran the shuttle for the Cheat

and Lower Big Sandy rivers in northern West Virginia for many years. He passed away recently and will be deeply missed by many boaters. Glen was the hardest working and the most honest person I have ever met. Glen was always on time and always very helpful. He used to let us pull our VW camper van on his property and camp and he has pulled me out of the ditches a couple of times when I ran off the road while looking at creeks instead of where I was heading.

I have to tell this story about Glen because it exemplifies the type of person he was. One February we decided to do a winter run on the Lower Big Sandy, a beautiful Class IV-V wilderness run with a couple of 20-foot waterfalls. We called the gauge and it was reading six point three. That was a

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good level and I decided to take a friend down in a raft while his dad kayaked with us. We arrived late at night, parked our VW van in front of Glen's barn, and went to sleep. In the morning we awoke and saw Glen putting chains on his truck and we blew up the raft and put it on his flatbed. Glen invited us in for breakfast and then we drove down to the put-in. As we got down to Rockville and the river came into view, the water level looked too low—nothing at all like six point three. I was muttering that there was no way could we get a raft down at this level. I walked over to look at the gauge and noticed a chunk of ice frozen at the six point three mark on the electronic gauge. Glen took us back to his house and declined to take any money from us. We of course made him take the money, but it was not easy and that was just the kind of person Glen was.

Another person that I and some friends became close with was Grant Titchnell. Grant owned the Cheat River Campground and was one of the most unique and funny people I have ever met. He was a very witty and very kind man. Grant passed away many years ago and I had the honor of being asked by his family to be a pall bearer at his funeral. Grant had many memorable quotes and one of my favorites was, "That guy is so stupid, if you put his brain in a pheasant he would fly backwards."

Paddling has been an integral part of my life and I would not change any of it. I don't think I have to worry about discovering I have not lived, as stated in Thoreau's quote. Now, if I were to try to answer the question why I feel other people paddle. I think it is an individual response but I am sure that many would share some of the same insight that I have given for myself. I have a tremendous circle of friends and would not have crossed paths if it were not for paddling. If someone were to ask me if I was rich I would say yes and it is not because of monetary wealth but because of what paddling has brought me.

In August of 2013 I had a very serious scare. I suddenly found myself in the ER, diagnosed with a large brain mass. Two days later I had surgery to remove a Meningioma tumor the size of a baseball. The surgery was very successful; 100% of the tumor was removed and it was benign. I was released four days after surgery, which impressed many doctors and nurses and was 10 days earlier than planned. I remained very calm through the entire experience and not once did I panic. I was told that if I didn't do anything I would die and only had a week to live. The risks of surgery were blindness, paralysis, death. Now that is like Class VIII on the whitewater scale, but I was relaxed and very calm and I attribute that to all my years of running rivers and having to just be calm and react and deal with situations.

One of my closest friends that I met through kayaking 35 years ago drove his motorcycle 10 hours to see me. He was very concerned that I would not recognize him post surgery. My other friends told me this and when Steve came into the ICU to see me I looked at him and said, "Hi Bob how are you doing." Steve/Bob got this very serious look and I let him think about it for a few minutes then I smiled and said, "Hey Steve, only kidding."

I had so many boating friends coming into surgical ICU I apologized to the nurses who of course did not mind and were very impressed that I had so many people coming in to see me. I had friends spreading the word to my friends in the Burned Out Canoe Club, and other friends in California, Oregon, Colorado, and British Columbia. Proof that whatever else they are, boaters are good people.

One of the first questions I asked my neurosurgeon before I was released was when could I kayak again. I purchased a high quality helmet and I have been back on the rivers again and working to get back on my favorite river, the Upper Yough, as soon as possible. I paddle for many reasons and paddling has given me the strength to recover from a near death experience very

rapidly. I was told many times by nurses in the hospital that people just don't do this well. I told them I am used to dealing with Class V and just pushing through it. It's a mental thing.

I hope you get out of the sport what you want to. Seeing my son row a raft down the Middle Fork of Salmon and then jump in a kayak for a day, and seeing the smiles that result from these activities confirms we lead children toward the right journey when we introduce them to whitewater. I end with one last quote by Loren Eiseley from the beginning of the book *The Emerald Mile*: "If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water," Yes, I would say there is magic in and on water. I have experienced that magic firsthand and that is why I kayak.

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## WHITewater ACCIDENT SUMMARY

### JAN-JUNE 2016

BY CHARLIE WALBRIDGE

**T**HE FIRST HALF of 2016 was a relatively quiet time for whitewater accidents. There were 19 fatal accidents reported to American Whitewater, including five kayakers, four canoeists, eight rafters: (six commercial and two private), two paddlers in inflatable kayaks, and one inner tuber. The most frequent causes of these deaths were predictable: five missing PFDs, five flush drownings, and five strainers. Age-wise we've seen a significant shift. In the mid-1970s and '80s most victims were men in their 20s and 30s, but the average age has increased in the last decade. For the first half of this year only two of the deaths involved people under 30 and twelve of the victims were over 50. This is probably tied to the graying of outdoor sports in this country, generally. Note that all those who died from flush drowning, plus the heart attack victim, were over 50, reflecting the reduction in fitness that comes with aging

#### Kayak Accidents

This year's kayak accidents included a number involving inexperienced people and two with very experienced paddlers. In the first, on January 24th, Corey Maleski did not return from a solo paddling trip on Oregon's Rogue River near Grant's Pass. No one witnessed the accident, but local newscasts said the 26 year-old man was not wearing a life vest and there was no mention of a wetsuit or drysuit.

On May 6th an unidentified man drowned after running a low head dam on the South Platte River near Fort Morgan, Colorado. He was wearing a life vest and helmet but clearly didn't know what he was getting into. Photos of the site in the *Denver Post* show a particularly nasty hydraulic; a friend watched the run and saw the kayak pop out of the hydraulic, without the paddler.

First responders found his body the next morning some distance downstream.

At Broad Run Park near Louisville, Kentucky, Sandra Mills, 55, was sharing a kayak with her sister and 10-year-old nephew on Floyds Fork of the Salt River when their kayak hit a submerged tree. According to a report from WHAS 11 TV, all three were wearing life vests. When the boat pinned Ms. Mills hit her head and was knocked unconscious. While her sister held Ms. Mills' head above water her nephew used a cell phone to call for help. First responders were there within 15 minutes; Ms. Mills was life-flighted to a hospital where she was pronounced dead.

I don't have a clear narrative for the death of Clint Maybe, the highly-regarded Midwestern kayaker who died running the Black River on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The date was April 16th; the section he was running, Narrows Park to Conglomerate Falls, contains several huge drops. News reports say he died of a head injury; we have no report from his group explaining how it happened. Anyone with this information is urged to contact us.

Upper Cherry Creek in California is one of the country's most impressive Class V+ runs. The crux is Cherry Bomb Gorge, a big sloping ledge followed by more ledges in a sheer walled gorge. Logan Farrell, 35, was paddling with a very experienced six-man crew on July 4th. They hiked into this remote run and paddled down to the gorge the day before. The next day, after scouting, they made their run. Here is an excerpt from Nate Merrill's excellent report; his full account is available in the AW Accident Database:

The 30-foot sliding falls leads directly into a sticky uniform ledge hole that

paddlers often refer to as The Weir. The whole gorge is very boxed in with vertical walls stretching up hundreds of feet on either side of the river. Jacob volunteered to go first and set up safety on river right below the weir on a small shelf. From this shelf, he would be able to reach the weir hole with his throw bag if anyone were to be stuck in the hole...I went next, followed by Jarred and Chris....

Logan...had a decent line off of the falls, but tapped the nose of his boat against the river right wall above the weir. This wall tap affected his boat angle and speed dropping into the weir and he wasn't able to clear the hole sufficiently. He began surfing the hole in his boat and almost worked his way out of the hydraulic on the river left side...(he) began to yell "rope" and Jacob deftly tossed his throw bag...but given the chaotic nature of the hydraulic (Logan) didn't see...the line. Jacob recoiled the bag and repeated the toss 2 more times, once even getting the rope over the bow of Logan's boat.

...I got out of my boat on river left and was ready with a bag if he came down river. After 70-80 seconds had elapsed, Logan finally exited his boat.... Jacob tossed his rope twice more trying to connect.... Both throws made the distance to Logan, but weren't grabbed.... It was probably only 15 seconds from when he appeared to exit his boat [to when] he was sighted floating down stream limp and unresponsive. We attempted to grab him and pull him into the river left eddy above the next series of drops, but...He swept over

the next horizon line and out of my line of sight.

The group chased Mr. Farrell down the gorge, and eventually got him ashore and began CPR. A second group, camping at the base of the gorge, assisted with CPR and after an hour passed one of them, an ICU nurse, suggested discontinuing CPR and pronouncing him dead. The group used a satellite spot device to notify authorities. A helicopter received Mr. Farrell's body at 1:30 that afternoon.

## Canoeing Accidents

This season's canoeing accidents showcase the errors typically made by inexperienced paddlers, including two men who would have survived if they had been wearing life vests. On June 5th Grant Manukynats, 29, was paddling Balcony Falls on the James River in Virginia with a friend when their canoe flipped in this Class III rapid. His partner held on to the canoe and washed downstream to safety, but Mr. Manukynats, who was not wearing a life vest, slipped beneath the water and disappeared. Then, on July 2nd, 36-year-old Justin Smith drowned after his canoe capsized in Class III Errol Rapids on New Hampshire's Androscoggin River. Neither he nor his partner was wearing a life vest; Mr. Smith was wearing waders, which filled with water and pulled him under when he tried to swim!

Two other deaths resulted from encounters with strainers. Kristen Johnsin, 25, was pinned underwater on June 12th after her canoe hit a root ball on Arkansas' Class I Buffalo River. Although she was not wearing a life vest it's doubtful that this omission made any difference here. On June 18th a husband and wife canoe team pinned on a strainer on Minnesota's Root River. Wendy Anderson, 63, was pushed underwater and pinned. Her husband swam ashore and tried to get help, but it did not arrive in time.

## Rafting Accidents

Commercial rafting accounted for eight

deaths this year; all but one occurred out West and four happened in Colorado. Most were caused by flush drowning: the death of a life-jacketed swimmer in turbulent whitewater. The *Denver Post* reported two fatalities on the Arkansas River in Class IV whitewater: Debra Brymer, 61, in Royal Gorge on May 22nd and Sandra Johnson, 51, at Zoom Flume in Brown's Canyon on July 3rd. Both were dead when rescued by other rafters in their group. The *Aspen Times* reported another death on the Slaughterhouse section of the Roaring Fork River on June 15th. James Abromitis, described as "very fit," was thrown from his raft with three other people and died after a long swim. The coroner ruled the 58 year-old man's death a heart attack.

The Wenatchee River has a popular stretch of Class III+ whitewater that gets big and fast during high water. Tom O'Keefe, AW's Northeast Stewardship Director, sent in this report: Keith Thomas, 53, was on a guided trip with his 15-year-old daughter when their raft flipped at Rock and Roll in a large hole called Satan's Eyeball. The guide and both passengers were thrown into the water; the guide flipped the raft back over and pulled the daughter into raft while Mr. Thomas was picked up by a rescue kayaker. A swift and efficient rescue here is important at higher flows because Dryden Dam, a dangerous lowhead dam, is just 1/2 mile downstream. When the rescue kayaker passed the mouth of Peshastin Creek she instructed the victim to swim to shore, Mr. Thomas was unsuccessful and was swept over Dryden Dam where he recirculated twice before washing downstream. The rescue kayaker eventually caught up with him, got him ashore, and performed CPR. The total length of his swim was 1.6 miles. Medics arrived an hour later and pronounced him dead.

The lone Eastern drowning occurred on Maine's Dead River during a May 14th 7000 cfs release from Flagstaff Lake. Skip Morris, AW's regional streamkeeper, said that Michael Arena was chaperoning a group of Boy Scouts when his raft "dump

trucked" in a big breaking wave in Lower Poplar Rapid. The 52-year-old man was thrown from the boat and washed into a nasty hole. He drowned despite being rescued quickly, a fact later confirmed by a coroner's inquest.

In Alaska, there was a double drowning on the remote Kongakut River in the Gates of the Arctic National Park. According to a long article from the Associated Press, Cheryl Minnehan and Karen Todd, both in their 60s, were in a group paddling "two person inflatable canoes" on this remote river. After waiting a day for the water to drop, they entered a Class III section. The two women were wearing life vests, but it's not known if wetsuits were used. After their "canoe" flipped the women were carried some distance in the icy current, recirculating in small holes and getting pushed under overhanging cliffs. Finally a guide in an oar rigged raft was able to catch up with them and pull them on board, but it was too late to make a difference.

On June 24th Colorado's Green River saw a different scenario unfold after a commercial raft hit, flipped, and pinned on a rock in an island channel below Upper Disaster Falls. Everyone made it ashore except Sandy Wolder, 63, who disappeared completely. Guides did an extensive search, then notified authorities. Rescue teams eventually located her body entangled in a root ball a short distance downstream, hidden under several feet of water.

We received reports of two private rafting deaths. On June 23rd Thomas Harr, 68, died in the Salmon River near the town of Salmon in Idaho. He was not wearing a life vest, and the "small inflatable catamaran-style boat" may have been a specialty fishing craft not suited for real whitewater. A few days later, on June 26th, Richard Arave, 61, was rafting the South Fork of the Boise River when his raft flipped and he disappeared. Authorities cut back the flow from an upstream dam and began an extensive search. Once the water level

# SAFETY

dropped they spotted his body entangled in log that was previously underwater.

Lastly, a woman drowned while tubing on the Shenandoah River near Harper's Ferry, WV on June 7th. She was part of a group of six travelling in a number of inner tubes lashed together with rope. Katrina Anne Meeks, 40, died after a rope connected to the tube she was using snagged and she became entangled in it. Although no one in the party was wearing a life vest, doing so would not have prevented the accident. A 13 year-old girl was stranded in mid-stream during the episode and firefighters used a helicopter to pick her up.

## Near Misses, Serious Injuries, and Rescues

We received reports of several close calls, serious injuries, and rescues. On February 24th a kayaker brought new meaning to the term "close call" after he got into trouble in the big ledges above Idaho's 189-foot Palouse Falls! The incident, documented on video, shows James Ng, 25, broaching in the lead-in to Little Palouse Falls, a substantial ledge. He flipped, then rolled up with a bloody face and a popped sprayskirt. Fortunately he was able to bail out and make it to a cliffside eddy before the big drop. His kayak did, in fact, go over the falls. His friends took him to the hospital for stitches and a brain scan, which fortunately was negative. Get the link to the video by looking up report #30077 on the AW Accident Database.

On June 20th an unidentified kayaker broke his leg during a swim on Colorado's Vallecito Creek. The river has steep, technical rapids and is not accessible without ropes. In a rescue similar to one made in 2009, first responders used technical gear to extricate the man from the 100-foot deep gorge and carried him a mile to a waiting ambulance.

A kayaker was rescued on June 26th after washing through the floodgates of a dam on New Hampshire's Winnepesaukee River, a popular Class III run. The woman flipped and bailed out upstream of the dam and

could not get to shore in time. She grabbed hold of a tree branch but could not hold on. A firefighter who was kayaking the river followed her though the drop. Although he was thrown from his kayak he was able get her ashore with help from two bystanders. She was pretty banged up and was briefly hospitalized. The firefighter was not injured.

Several waterfall runners suffered serious spinal injuries this spring. One, on April 25th, occurred on Washington's Little White Salmon River at Spirit Falls. A second happened on June 25th at a 40-foot waterfall on Colorado's Daisy Creek. Both of these incidents resulted in broken vertebrae and, in one case, a permanent disability. Although big drops are run frequently without injury these days, incidents like this are a sobering reminder of what happens when something goes wrong.

There were several instances where stranded paddlers summoned help with cell phones. On May 10th four women were paddling a fast-water section of Washington's Skykomish River when they flipped in some downed trees in a side channel. Three of the group got to shore, but one was trapped in her boat. They used a cell phone to call 911. Firefighters responded quickly, driving a powered rescue boat to the scene and extricating her with throw bags. She was taken to the hospital and treated for hypothermia. Then, on May 30th, three paddlers were stranded on the far shore of Washington's Nooksack River after their boats flipped. A passing motorist called 911 and firefighters ferried them and their gear across the river to the road. Finally, on May 24th, Gina Wright was paddling North Carolina's Haw River when she broached and pinned in a rocky Class II rapid. Her boyfriend, Patrick Pugh, tried to help but lost his kayak and paddle in the process and became stranded on nearby rock. Separated from his girlfriend by a powerful chute, he still had his cell phone and called for help. Firefighters responded, but could not reach the pair, and eventually

a rescue helicopter equipped with a hoist got them ashore.

Skilled paddlers routinely handle situations like these without calling for outside assistance. Making quick rescues of swimmers, recovering boats and gear, and helping those injured or shaken is an important part of our skill set. Although each of these groups were wearing life vests they clearly were not ready to take care of themselves after a mishap. Although cell service and first responder training are improving, neither is universal. River runners should be ready to handle their own problems!

Finally, quick action by two skilled whitewater paddlers on the lower McKenzie River in Oregon kept a bad situation from becoming tragic. One of them, William Lee, wrote brief story on pg. 45 of this issue describing what happened when four tubers were stuck in a strainer on July 4th.

Many thanks to our safety correspondents, including a number of AW board members and staff, who help make this report possible by sending in reports. Their personal observations are an important counterweight to the vague and often erroneous accounts published in newspapers. American Whitewater needs your help collecting accident information so we can share the facts and learn from them. These accounts teach us how to avoid trouble and manage emergencies. We can modify techniques, procedures, and river gear based on what we learn. To report a whitewater accident, near miss, or serious injury, please go to the safety page on the American Whitewater site, click "report an accident", and enter your information. Alternatively, you can forward links to newspaper articles, chat room posts, and first person accounts to the safety editor at [ccwalbridge@cs.com](mailto:ccwalbridge@cs.com) or message me, Charlie Walbridge, on Facebook. I can use sketchy accounts or rumors as the basis for further research, so don't hold back! I'm also ready to help you prepare a first person report if needed. Thanks!

# RIVER RESCUE WHERE LEAST EXPECTED

BY WILLIAM LEE

**R**IVER BEND, JULY 4, 2016 - Just being on this stretch of the lower Mckenzie River in Oregon on this day of the year probably violates the first safety guideline: "Avoid known hazards altogether." Lots of drunk people in vinyl pool toys. No PFDs, no paddles maybe some sunscreen. The water at put-in was still take-your-breath-away cold and I saw many panicked swimmers.

At the Bend in the River, near the hospital, four people were stuck in a strainer. They had tied vinyl rafts and tubes together and were tangled in a downed tree 10 feet from shore. The water was fast and deep. The tree was not that big and was shaking. There was a large root ball 30 feet directly downstream. They had already been there for some time and were scared. I was scared for them.

Zac and I beached and got our rope throw bags. Pretty soon one guy jumped or fell in.

I threw my bag; we yelled for him to grab it, and it worked, just like in training. My rope came out with fishing line tangled in it.

Before I could cut it clear one of the women fell from her raft and was hanging on to a branch.

Zac got his rope set to throw and she yells that she is pregnant. We convince her to let go and grab the rope and it works again.

We sit her down and discover she has a fishhook in her foot. At some point the guy still in the raft comes up with a knife and Zac talks him through cutting away safely. He and the woman still in the raft get loose.

I pulled the fishhook out of the pregnant woman's foot and put on a bandage. Travers towed her across the river to a gravel bar. Lane County rescue showed

up in a jet sled and took her aboard. They alerted people upstream but I understand more rescues occurred at that spot later. It was on Channel 9 News.

A lot of things were happening real fast. Other rafters bounced off the snag several times and crashed into the root ball below. The first guy we pulled in was babbling and in the way.

I kept falling on my butt and I lost my paddle.

I'm glad Zac was there. He was real solid and heads up.

I'm also glad I did not have my go pro on. I don't want to see that again. That same night I booked a spot for this years Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club river safety weekend. I didn't ever expect to really need those skills.

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

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

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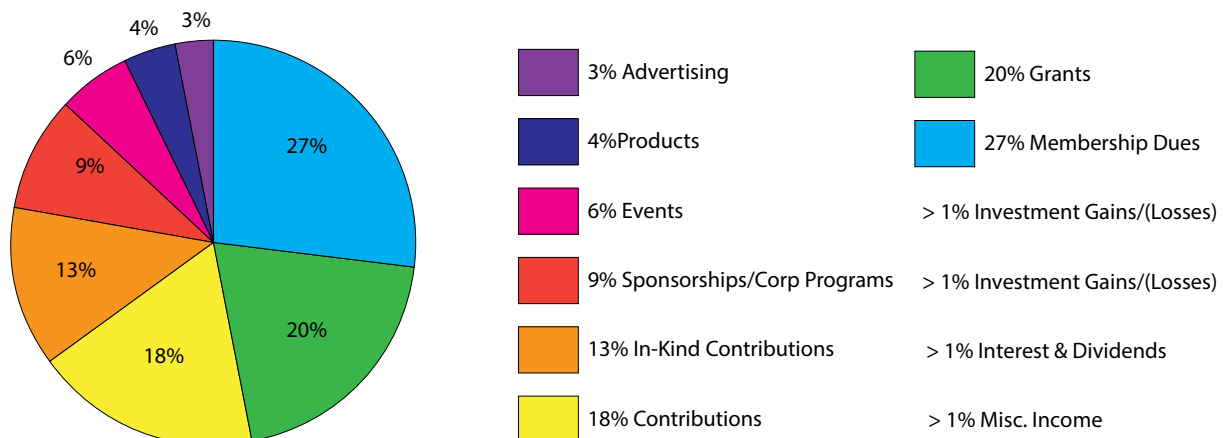
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**Correction:** The Financial Statement Activities published in the July/August American Whitewater Journal had a clerical error, the statements published here embody our annual independent audit.

## 2015 Statement of Activities

| Revenue                                    | Unrestricted       | Temporarily Restricted | Total 2015         | Total 2014         |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>PUBLIC SUPPORT</b>                      |                    |                        |                    |                    |
| Contributions                              | \$185,458          | \$62,069               | \$247,527          | \$213,847          |
| <b>OTHER REVENUE</b>                       |                    |                        |                    |                    |
| Membership dues                            | \$366,537          |                        | \$366,537          | \$358,508          |
| Advertising                                | \$44,419           |                        | \$44,419           | \$36,584           |
| Grants                                     | \$-                | \$271,474              | \$271,474          | \$463,272          |
| Events                                     | \$84,861           |                        | \$84,861           | \$86,440           |
| Sponsorships/Corp Programs                 | \$117,171          |                        | \$117,171          | \$83,120           |
| Products                                   | \$51,914           |                        | \$51,914           | \$52,667           |
| Investment Gains/(losses)                  | \$(760)            |                        | \$(760)            | \$2,648            |
| In-Kind Contributions                      | \$180,740          |                        | \$180,740          | \$235,847          |
| Interest & Dividends                       | \$903              |                        | \$903              | \$973              |
| Misc. Income                               | \$1,270            |                        | \$1,270            | \$1,022            |
| Net Assets Released from Restriction       | \$428,330          | \$(428,330)            | \$-                | \$-                |
| <b>Total Support and Revenue</b>           | <b>\$1,460,843</b> | <b>\$(94,787)</b>      | <b>\$1,366,056</b> | <b>\$1,534,928</b> |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                            |                    |                        |                    |                    |
| <b>Program Services:</b>                   |                    |                        |                    |                    |
| Access & Conservation                      | \$627,805          |                        | \$627,805          | \$860,774          |
| Public Education                           | \$407,763          |                        | \$407,763          | \$410,164          |
| <b>Total Program Services</b>              | <b>\$1,035,568</b> |                        | <b>\$1,035,568</b> | <b>\$1,270,938</b> |
| <b>SUPPORTING SERVICES</b>                 |                    |                        |                    |                    |
| General & Administrative                   | \$186,865          |                        | \$186,865          | \$134,603          |
| Fundraising                                | \$109,851          |                        | \$109,851          | \$122,939          |
| <b>Total Supporting Services</b>           | <b>\$296,716</b>   |                        | <b>\$296,716</b>   | <b>\$257,542</b>   |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                      | <b>\$1,332,284</b> |                        | <b>\$1,332,284</b> | <b>\$1,528,480</b> |
| Change in Net Assets Before Gains/(Losses) | \$128,559          | \$(94,787)             | \$33,772           | \$6,448            |
| Website Write-down                         | \$(132,274)        |                        | \$(132,274)        |                    |
| <b>Total Change in Net Assets</b>          | <b>\$(3,715)</b>   | <b>\$(94,787)</b>      | <b>\$(98,502)</b>  | <b>\$6,448</b>     |

## 2015 REVENUE SOURCES



# CORRECTIONS

In addition to the 2015 Annual Report correction noted on the previous page, we regret to note that we had a few omissions in our Honor Roll. Below are names that were inadvertently left off the 2015 Honor Roll. American Whitewater would like to thank these generous donors in addition to all of those who were recognized in the original 2015 Honor Roll. Your support makes our crucial river stewardship work possible!

## \$5,000+

California Paddlesports Council

Wild Hog

Ed Clark

Christopher Hest

George Noe

Pew Charitable Trusts

## \$100+

Roger Nott

## It's Easy to Support AW!

American Whitewater is proud of the work we have accomplished in our stewardship program but we need your help to sustain our success. Your support through membership and donations enables our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. Donations don't have to be large; each person doing a small part makes a noticeable difference. Many donors fail to take full advantage of federal tax incentives specifically intended to encourage charitable contributions. Such incentives often enable a donor to make a larger gift to AW at little or no additional cost. For more information about maximizing your gift visit the IRS website dedicated to charitable organizations.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, EIN# 23-7083760. To learn more about the Giving Options below, contact us at 866-BOAT4AW or visit the "Donate" link under "Support AW" on our website at [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)

- Donate online today!
- Monthly Giving: Contribute a minimum of \$10 via credit card or electronic transfer from your bank account.
- Bequests: Include AW in your will or living trust. Bequests to AW are generally exempt from federal or state inheritance taxes, and subject to an unlimited deduction.
- Combined Federal Campaign: Federal employees including federal civilians, military personnel and U.S. Postal Workers can donate to AW through the CFC a once a year charitable fund raising program. Look for AW (Agency #11351) in the official CFC listing of eligible donors.
- Charitable Remainder Trusts: Convert a highly appreciated asset (such as real estate or stocks) into a lifetime income while minimizing income and estate taxes.
- Employer Matching: Many employers will match your donations to non-profit organizations. This includes membership payments, as well as additional contributions. Check to see if your employer has a matching program.
- MissionFish: Sell your items through the MissionFish program on eBay and the proceeds come directly to AW.
- Other Assets: A gift of real estate to AW qualifies you for a tax deduction based on the property's fair market value. If it is not a river access point, AW will sell the property and use the proceeds to protect access and restore rivers. Acceptance of property is subject to certain conditions. You may also be eligible to receive tax benefits for gifts of real property. Art and jewelry are examples of personal property items that may be eligible. Interested donors should check with your financial and tax advisors and AW on the feasibility and tax considerations of such gifts.
- Securities: Donating appreciated stock to AW benefits both the donor and whitewater rivers. The donor receives two tax-related benefits. First, the gain on the stock is not subject to capital gains taxes. Second, the donor can deduct the value of the stock as a charitable contribution.
- United Way: All federal campaigns, and a few of the local campaigns will allow you to donate to AW. AW's UNITED WAY member # is 2302.
- Vehicle Donations: Turn that extra car, truck, or RV into a tax deductible donation benefiting AW.

# AFFILIATE CLUBS

## *The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:*

### **Alaska**

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks  
Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

### **Alabama**

Coosa River Paddling Club, Wetumpka  
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

### **Arizona**

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

### **Arkansas**

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

### **California**

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

### **Colorado**

Blue River Watershed Group  
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs  
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride  
Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club,  
Longmont  
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Asso, Glenwood  
Springs

### **Delaware**

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
Wilmington Trail Club, Newark

### **Georgia**

Atlanta Whitewater Club  
Georgia Canoeing Asso, Atlanta

### **Idaho**

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

### **Illinois**

Chicago Whitewater Assn, Chicago

### **Indiana**

Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg  
Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

### **Iowa**

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

### **Kentucky**

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

### **Maryland**

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

### **Massachusetts**

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston  
Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont

### **Michigan**

Venture 8 / Troop 8, East Lansing

### **Minnesota**

Rapids Riders, Eagan

### **Missouri**

Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield  
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

### **Montana**

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

### **Nevada**

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

### **New Hampshire**

AMC New Hampshire Paddlers, Raymond

### **New Jersey**

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks  
KCCNY, Flanders

### **New York**

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady  
FLOW Paddlers' Club, Rochester  
Hamilton College, Clinton  
Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq., Ossining  
KCCNY, Flanders  
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Buffalo

### **North Carolina**

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee  
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh  
H2o Dreams, Saluda  
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee

### **Ohio**

Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, Columbus  
Friends of the Crooked River, Akron  
Keelhauler Canoe Club, Cleveland

### **Oregon**

Eugene Kayaker, Eugene  
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland  
Next Adventure, Portland  
Northwest Rafters Association, Roseburg  
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland  
Oregon Whitewater Association, Portland  
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

### **Pennsylvania**

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oak  
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown  
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre  
Canoe Club of Centre County, Lemont  
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg  
Conewago Canoe Club, York  
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia  
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh

### **S. Carolina**

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

### **Tennessee**

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts, Limestone  
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville  
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge  
Ocoee River Council, Knoxville  
Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoeing Club,

### **Kingsport**

Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

### **Texas**

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

### **Utah**

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

### **Vermont**

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

### **Virginia**

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

### **Washington**

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

### **West Virginia**

Dbl Z! Whitewater Club, Fayetteville  
Redneck Kayak Club, Beckley  
WV Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

### **Wisconsin**

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

### **Wyoming**

American Packrafting Association, Wilson

### **Ontario**

Guelph Kayak Club, Elora  
Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, The Kawarthas

### **Quebec**

Montreal Kayak Club, Montreal

## DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

*By Carla Miner, Membership Manager*

AW offers a discounted Affiliate Club membership of \$25, a \$10 savings. If you are renewing your AW membership or joining as a new member, select the Affiliate Club Discounted Personal Membership online at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/> Or, if you are renewing or joining by mail or telephone just mention the name of the Affiliate Club you belong to and you can take advantage of the \$25 membership.

A list of AW Affiliate Clubs can be found on our website at <http://americanwhitewater.org/content/Membership/join-AW/>. If you do not see your Club listed here please encourage them to renew their Club membership or to join AW as a new Affiliate Club. Your Club's membership and your personal membership enable our staff to be active and engaged in the process of river stewardship. When you join or renew your membership your support is helping to meet the many challenges whitewater rivers face.

If you have any questions about the Affiliate Club membership, please contact me. I can be reached at 866\_BOAT-4AW or [membership@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@americanwhitewater.org).

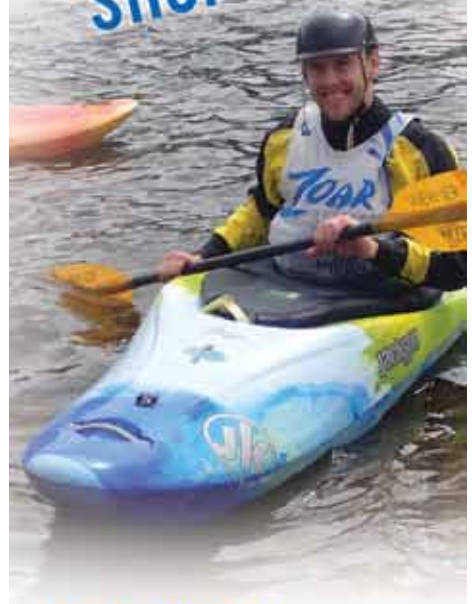
## JOIN AMERICAN WHITEWATER AS A CLUB AFFILIATE!

### 10 REASONS TO JOIN AW AS AN AFFILIATE CLUB

1. Support river access and restoration through the AW River Stewardship Team.
2. Be part of a national voice for the protection of the whitewater rivers your club values.
3. Tap into the professional expertise of AW staff for river issues that come up in your backyard.
4. Your club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Receive the American Whitewater Journal, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
6. Your club is recognized in the list of Affiliate Clubs posted to the AW website.
7. Recognize your club in the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly AW Journal.
8. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
9. Gain Club satisfaction from lending support to AW's stewardship efforts.
10. Improve your club members river karma.

For more information, contact Carla Miner at [membership@americanwhitewater.org](mailto:membership@americanwhitewater.org) or sign-up online at [www.americanwhitewater.org/membership](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership).

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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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

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[americanwhitewater.org/join](http://americanwhitewater.org/join)

The logo features the letters 'AW' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a green and blue background that resembles a stylized river or wave. To the right of the logo, the words 'AMERICAN WHITewater' are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with 'AMERICAN' on the top line and 'WHITewater' on the bottom line. The background of the entire page is a photograph of two people in a blue raft navigating white-water rapids.

# AMERICAN WHITewater

## Contribute your text and photos to *American Whitewater*

*American Whitewater* is a member-driven publication. If you enjoy reading it, please consider letting its pages tell your story. We are looking for articles about whitewater rivers of any variety, so let your imagination flow free!

We're always accepting submissions and we hope you'll consider contributing. For complete submission details, story topics, deadlines, and guidelines, go to:

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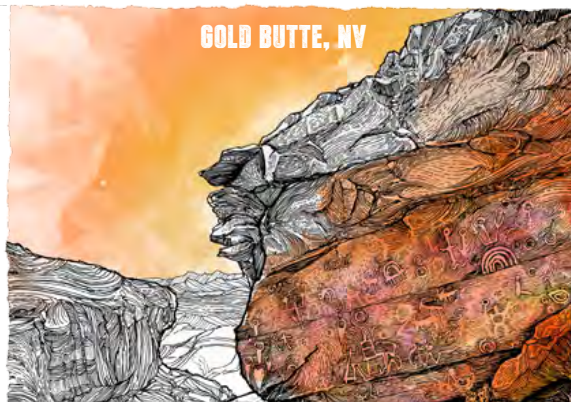
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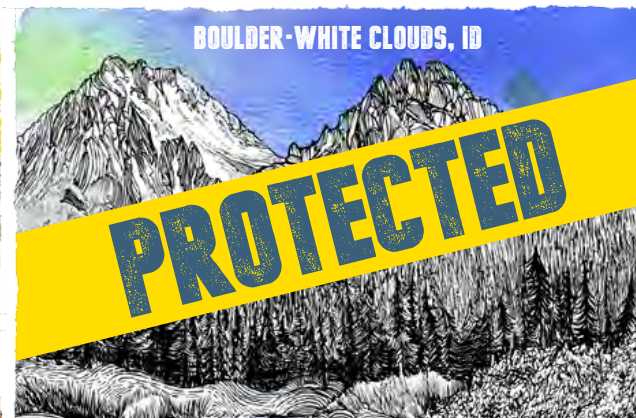
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