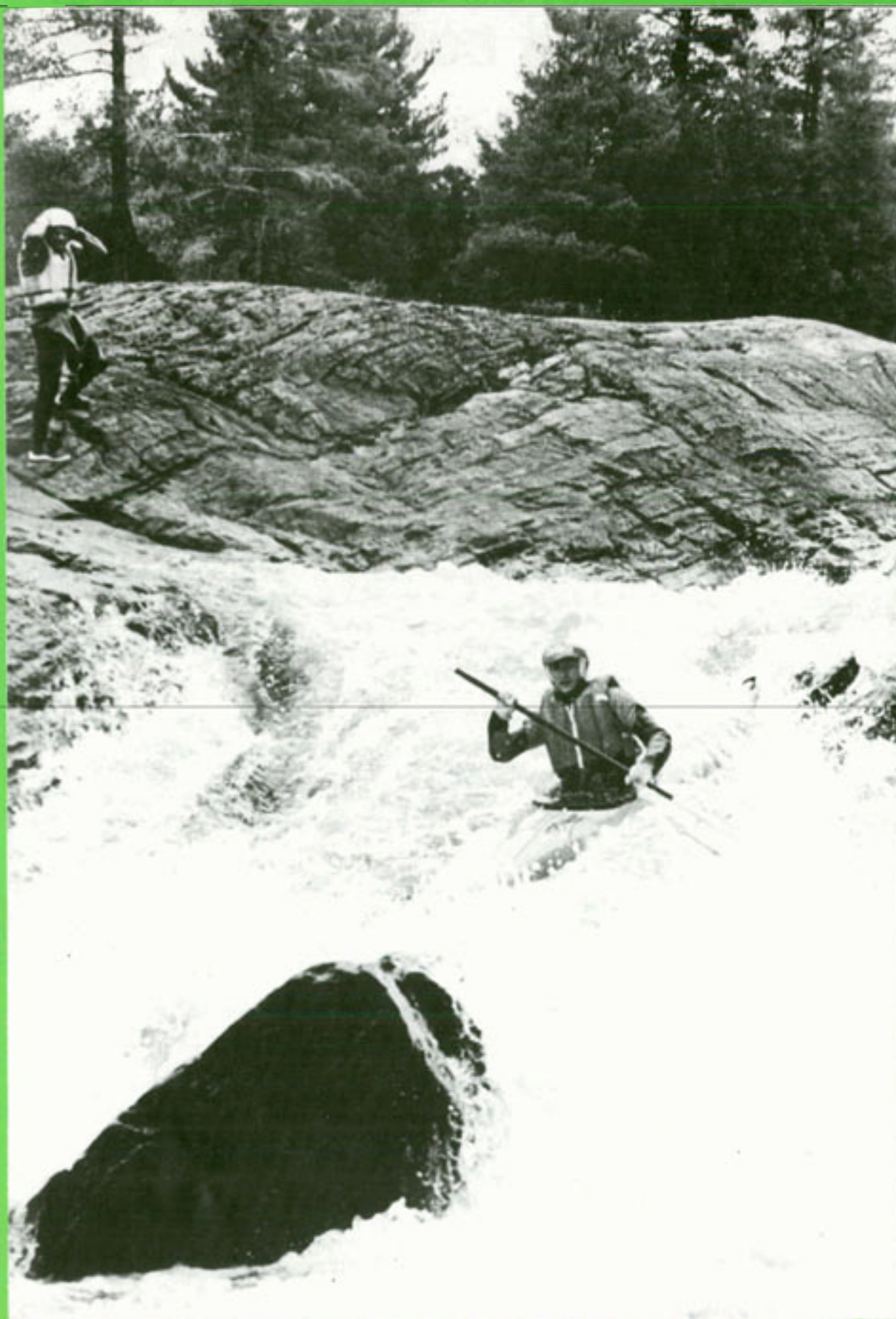


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# american whitewater

November/December 1988

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—Bruce Penrod

### ABOUT THE PADDLER

Bruce Penrod has been paddling and racing whitewater in both tandem and solo open canoes for 10 years. His experiences include many of the most popular runs in the East from Maine's Dead and Kennebec to Georgia's Chattooga. He and his wife Janice had the first known tandem open boat run on the difficult Upper Yough. Only one and a half hours away from his home in Pennsylvania, the Upper Yough sharpens his skills often for his favorite type of river. He most enjoys the tight, technical runs of the Appalachian creeks including the only recently run Paint Creek dropping an average of 150 feet per mile and loaded with water falls. His is an American Canoe Association Instructor Trainer and the owner of Penrods' Canoe, which specializes in wood trimmed canoes and outfitting whitewater canoes. He has paddled many different boats since he began but most recently has paddled a Whitesell hull trimmed in wood. His new boat is the XL-13.

# american whitewater

JOURNAL OF THE  
AMERICAN WHITEWATER  
AFFILIATION

November/December 1988

Volume XXXIII, No. 6

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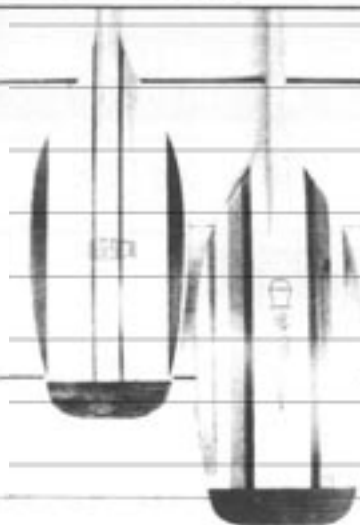
### End Piece

So what do you call a "Young, urban, professional paddler?"

*by Gary Carlson*

Front cover: Funnel Rapid on New York's Bottom Moose

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## editor's forum

### Do you know who your friends are?

I remember a Gauley Festival a few years back. The battle to defeat the Long Tunnel proposal had recently been defeated and paddlers were in a "forgive and forget" mood.

Present at the Festival was a high official from the Corps of Engineers. He was introduced and the crowd was requested to give him as a hand as "the fellow who brings us the water."

The crowd provided a polite if somewhat restrained response but I was left thinking, "Wait a minute, aren't these the guys we were going at it tooth-and-nail just a few months ago?"

I guess the festival organizers were simply hoping that now that the fight is over, if we treat the Corps like good guys, you'll treat us like good guys.

If nothing else, the actions of the Corps during the past Gauley season proves that old enmities die hard.

It's true that the draught of 1988 was tough on everyone--paddlers have to suffer along with the farmers and barge operators. But the truth of the matter is, the Corps could have done more to provide whitewater releases.

The dynamics of providing whitewater releases while sustaining minimum flows to downstream communities are complicated. But as explained in an article in this issue, releases could have been accomplished.

We can only guess at the Corps' motives. But rest assured, a lot of questions will be asked over the winter--not only by the AWA but by West Virginia politicians and leaders of commerce who were furious over the damage suffered by the local rafting industry.

If nothing else--the 1988 Gauley season reminds us who our friends are--and who they aren't.



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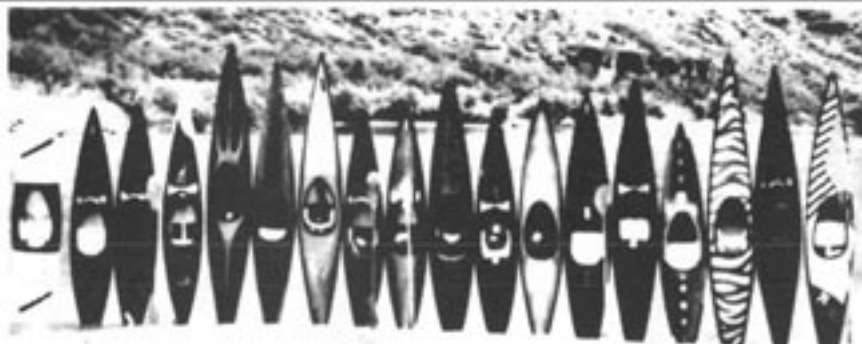
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## letters to awa

Dear Chris,

I want to complement you on the May/June, 1985 issue of American Whitewater. It is the best issue yet. I like the mix of conservation issues, safety issues, and the articles on Class IV and V rivers. I agree with your editorial; Canoe and River Runner seem to cater to intermediate paddlers and those who choose not to run difficult whitewater. It's nice to have a magazine which does address more difficult rivers. Keep up the good work.

By the way, I missed some issues of American Whitewater; Nov./Dec., 1986; Nov./Dec., 1987; and Jan./Feb., 1988. Is there any way I can get back issues of those dates?

Thanks again.

Guy D. Bateman  
Bangor, ME

EDITOR'S REPLY: Glad you asked that last question, Guy, because a lot of people get confused about how to contact American Whitewater. Basically, any editorial questions should be directed to me...ad inquiries to Phyllis Horowitz...back issue requests to Pete Skinner...and membership inquiries and applications to Marge Weaver at 146 N. Brockway, Palatine, Illinois. My address as well as Phyllis' and Pete's can be found in the masthead.

Sorry that the staff is so spread out--but we're all volunteers, turning out the magazine as a hobby at our homes in our spare time. Letters like yours make the hours we spend more worthwhile.

Dear Board of Directors:

I have been a member of the American Whitewater Affiliation for about 30 years, and have canoed and kayaked down rivers in many countries around the world.

I have scads of grand nieces and nephews that I take canoeing and kayaking who like to read American

#### Whitewater.

I was shocked and disgusted when I found out that they had read the first word in the middle column of page 33 of the July/August American Whitewater.

Today I received your notice to renew my membership. I shall when I receive a letter from you saying that there will be no more "four letter words" in future American Whitewater magazines.

Sincerely,  
Ronald B. Drummond  
Capistrano Beach, CA

(editor's note: The word Ron objected to--a synonym of "manure"--was part of a direct quote. I thought long and hard about including it--not because of I was afraid of reader sensitivity, but because the word was used during an informal interview in which a little mild profanity is natural, and I was afraid the tone wouldn't carry into the article.

After some reflection, I included the word, primarily because it was used as part of a fairly common expression that communicated precisely what the speaker intended. And although there are some "four-letter words" that I have no intention of ever printing, I can't make a blanket statement about excluding all mild profanity when it sometimes fits the writer's purpose.

I hope you'll reconsider, Ron. We'd hate to lose a member of your long standing.

Editor,

Some suggestions for future articles:

1. Handling characteristics of **the most** common squirt boats; comfort ratings; how constructed; durability; etc.

2. Articles on western rivers; if you're not receiving any, recruit them. American Whitewater is in danger of

## letters

becoming a purely eastern newsletter.

3. Evaluations of the new **squirt** vest **PFDs** including comparisons with standard **PFDs** in Class V rapids and big holes. The **NOC** people do this sort of thing under controlled conditions.

4. Monthly column on first aid (advanced stuff, not basics, in **detail**—how to properly use adrenalin kits, treatment of diabetics, etc.)

5. Get someone who knows what they're doing to print your **B&W** photos. It **is** possible to print so the whitewater is not overexposed and the paddler is not underexposed.

Name not included  
Baltimore, MD

(editor's note: I wish I could credit this letter because every suggestion is on the mark. However, I could use some help in realizing these improvements:

1. I'd be happy to write more product reviews, unfortunately, I don't possess the technical **background** to make **judgments** regarding high-tech fiberglass and kevlar boat construction. Nor does American Whitewater have access to a stable of test boats like some of the glossy whitewater publications. Now if New Wave would ship me a Falcon and a Demon III, Watauga Laminates send me a Extra Jet and a **ProJet**, and Wilderness Systems truck me a Surge...

2. I am not at all happy about the lack of articles on western water. We have recruited, no, begged for manuscripts from western boaters. There has been no response.

What readers don't realize is that American Whitewater receives very little submitted material on **any** subject. As I write this, four weeks from deadline, I have yet to receive a single feature article. Consequently, I wind up writing more than I really want and filling up the rest of the magazine with material solicited from acquaintances. And as I live and boat in the east—that's what gets featured.

Writing up a river trip is not as easy as it sounds. While potential contributors don't need to be Tom Wolfes,

I still expect the story to demonstrate a basic level of writing skill as well as be accompanied with **photographs**. And oh yes—it must be free. We don't pay for publication in American **Whitewater**.

3. Great idea. How about it, **NOC**?

4. Another fine suggestion. Is there a paddling EMT in the house?

5. The quality of our photography is varied. One problem is that most photo contributions come in the form of color slides and the resolution suffers during conversion to **B&W**. But of course, the biggest difficulty is that few of our contributors are professional photographers. I end up shooting a goodly amount of film in my **idiot-proof**, completely automatic 35mm and I don't know the difference between aperture and an f-stop.

Get someone who does know? Not so easy. How do you **"get"** a volunteer?

Basically, I feel good about all your comments. It means that readers are starting to expect the same kind of **"professional"** stories and articles from American Whitewater that they find in the glossies.

Please be patient. I'm trying. Remember—I **kick** out the magazine as a hobby, at night, after my real job. Like the writers and photographers, I don't get paid.

And finally, American **White-**water operates on a minimal budget. I want to give you the **best** product I can—**but the AWA's** highest priority is spending money of safety and conservation issues—not **printing** a magazine.

*please turn to page 40*

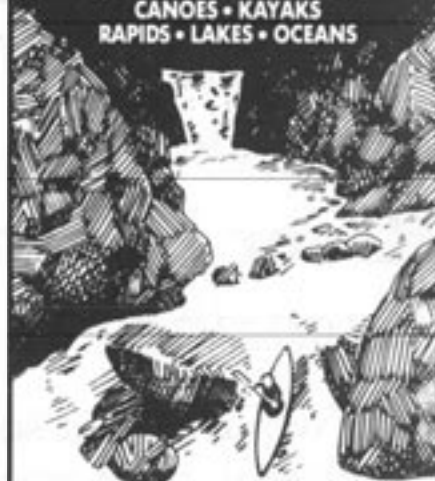
### SUBMITTALS?

American Whitewater encourages paddlers to submit articles and photos regarding whitewater recreation, safety or conservation. Contact Chris Koll at 7987 #5 Road W., Fabius, NY 13063



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So, even if you don't want another magazine cluttering your coffee table, join the AWA and find other creative uses for American Whitewater. Your cat and endangered whitewater rivers will thank you.

Yes, I want to join AWA and receive a subscription to American Whitewater. I've enclosed my tax-deductible contribution of \$15 (\$18 Canada, \$25 overseas) to help conserve our whitewater resources and promote river safety.

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## awa briefs

# Donations sought to acquire Upper Youghiogeny land



*Meat Cleaver rapid, one of the Upper Yough's classic drops.*

The Natural Lands Trust, whose land acquisition program along Maryland's Upper Yough has already protected significant portions of the river corridor, must locate additional financial support in order keep 155 acres for the Trust's scenic river preserve between Hoyes Run and Sang Run.

There are many issues related to the protection of the Yough corridor. The Maryland DNR has arranged to acquire a great deal of Yough land without any management plan, and already some local officials have expressed ideas for "improving" the corridor with a helicopter pad and scenic railroad. Conservationists need to be involved in helping to protect the corridor from piecemeal development.

While the Lands Trust have been carrying the ball in acquiring Yough land—including the 90-acre property at Sang Run which whitewater boaters use free of charge for legal access to the Upper Yough—paddlers have living down to their reputation as being the most tight-fisted of recreationists.

The Land Trust has sent a let-

ter explaining the need for additional funding to approximately 65 river organizations and 65 kayakers who had signed the NLT's register at Sang Run and to date have received three donations totaling \$135.

The Land Trust needs additional gifts and grants by January, 1989. Donors can make their support payable to the Natural Lands Trust, Inc., Room 452, 711 West 40th Street, Baltimore, MD 21211. Gifts are a qualified, tax deductible, charitable contribution.

## Perception names Mark Dubois

Perception, Incorporated, the nation's largest manufacturer of white-water kayaks, is pleased to announce that Mark Dubois, 39, of Sacramento, CA, has been selected as the 1988 River Conservationist of the Year. Included in the Perception award is a monetary gift of \$1,000.

Dubois has achieved the respect of river enthusiasts nationwide

## briefs

for his early efforts to save the Stanislaus River, and for his ability to mobilize people. The ranks of volunteers working to save our rivers are filled with those who became directly involved due to his encouragement and inspiration. Dubois' own commitment was strikingly evident when he chained himself to a rock to protest the rising waters of the New Melones Dam.

Two years ago, Dubois' crusade took on a wider scope with the founding of the International Rivers Network, an organization directed toward the river conservation issues of Third World countries. Friends warned Dubois he had taken on too much this time; but in June of this year, in San Francisco, he successfully produced the first IRN conference. Here, he obtained sponsorships to bring together river conservationists and other environmentalists from around the world in order to share ideas on the preservation of free-flowing rivers.

DuBois is a piper of river conservationists. He approaches technical arguments as a humanist, living humbly in order to devote his energies to the benefit of threatened rivers. He



co-founded Friends of the River in California fifteen years ago and remains as a member of the Board of Directors.

Begun in 1981, the River Conservationist Award is given by Perception, Inc. annually to a group or individual that has contributed significantly to one or more of our free-flowing rivers.

## Iron Ring Rip-off!

The Gauley's famous symbol of a bygone era in West Virginia--the Iron Ring--has been sawed off by vandals and stolen. According to Wild Water West Virginia, the huge eye ring was sunk into a rock shelf to assist in blasting a channel to float logs through a particularly nasty rapid in the early 1900s.

Early boaters named the infamous rapid "Iron Ring." Vandals apparently hacksawed through the ring's two-inch thick iron anchor and now someone has a blackmarket conversation piece on their mantle.

A \$100 reward is being offered for return of the iron ring, no questions asked. If recovered, the ring will be turned over to the appropriate

governmental entity for safekeeping and display.

Those who would like to pledge money to increase the reward, or who can help recover the ring, contact Mac Thornton, 322 10th St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003, or call (202) 543-4923.

## Moose releases successful

The conclusion of the first year of scheduled water releases on New York's Bottom Moose River proved successful beyond expectation as dozens of paddlers tested the class 5 river. *please turn to page 40*

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### AWA Whitewater Inventory

---

# A first step in river conservation

At a recent conference in Washington, AWA unveiled its new National Inventory of Whitewater Rivers. The conference was held on November 18th and 19th of this year to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

River conservationists and outdoor recreation big wigs from around the nation were there to run shoulders, plot strategy and plan the agenda for river conservation in the 1990s. AWA was represented by Pope Barrow and Mac Thornton who presented the inventory to William Penn Mott, Director of the National Park Service.

AWA requested that the Park Service include whitewater segments in the existing Nationwide Inventory of Rivers. As noted by Thornton, "Federal agencies should wake up to the growing popularity of whitewater recreation and the need to preserve the best whitewater rivers for future generations."

A Computerized Database of Whitewater Now Available

The AWA Whitewater Rivers Inventory is a computerized list (on D-Base III-plus) naming whitewater river segments in each state with rapids of class II level of difficulty or above. The list includes the county, the starting and



***Boater crashes into hydraulic below Bottom Moose's 40-Foot Slide. Adverse hydro sites, like one proposed at the lip of these falls, can be quickly identified thanks to the Whitewater Inventory.***

ending point of whitewater segments, the mileage and the range of classification of the rapids in each segment (using the AWA International Scale of Difficulty of I to VI).

The inventory for each state is available to anyone at a minimal cost to cover handling and mailing: \$2 for a print-out of a single

state, \$15 for the entire U.S. Write to AWA Whitewater Inventory Project, 136-13th St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

A \$1 rebate is provided if you send back information about a whitewater segment (class II to V) that has been mistakenly omitted from the inventory.

#### A Startling Point for New Conservation Efforts

According to Thornton, "Last year the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors made two important findings about whitewater: (1) whitewater rivers are an increasingly scarce and **valuable** natural resource, (2) whitewater rivers face many competing and conflicting uses, including hydropower, flood control and water supply. We thoroughly agree with the Commission's finding.

"The inventory is the starting point for **AWA's** whitewater river conservation efforts in the 1990s," Thornton said.

The inventory is designed to provide the kind of hard data that Congress and government agencies say they need in order to take any kind of protective action. The inventory may also have a number of other uses.

The inventory may also have a number of other uses. The National Park Service could use the list of whitewater rivers in its State river conservation efforts. In addition, other government agencies (such as the Forest Service, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, etc.) and private conservation organizations could use the data in ways which would give greater visibility, and possibly greater

# conservation

protection, to whitewater rivers. It is already being used by AWA to sift through the hundreds of pending hydropower developments to identify important whitewater river segments threatened by power projects.

## A Blind Sport In Government Data

Whitewater is a black hole in government data on water resources. At the present time there is no national or regional list of whitewater rivers. In fact, for most states, there is no comprehensive list of whitewater rivers in the state.

This means that Federal and State agencies usually have nothing to work with so far as whitewater recreation is concerned when they are

doing things like analyzing the availability and quality of outdoor recreation opportunities, putting together river basin studies, and planning for water resources projects. This leaves a significant gap in government planning and in other work done by agencies such as the Corps of Engineers, the Forest Service, the National Park Service and the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors. Whitewater rivers fall through the gap.

## Data Gap Hampers Protection Efforts

It is disconcerting to realize that Federal agencies with authority to build or approve water projects, and State agencies with authority to issue clean water permits, are

totally unaware of the location of whitewater rivers and of the scarcity and demand for whitewater recreation opportunities.

Often when development is proposed for an important whitewater river segment these agencies, electric utilities and private developers are unaware (or claim to be unaware) that the section involved is a recreational resource. This low visibility and lack of data has severely hampered the efforts of local canoe clubs and national groups to protect whitewater river segments.

Even whitewater rivers of a very rare type (those with class IV whitewater in summertime) such as the Black River in New York, the Housatonic

River in Connecticut, the Klamath River in Oregon, the Penobscot in Maine and the Savage River in Maryland, are still not officially recognized by State and Federal agencies as important whitewater recreation sites.

## Preparing a Computerized Inventory

AWA felt that the first step needed to deal with the problem was for the AWA to prepare its own nationwide inventory of whitewater rivers. The list could not be prepared by a consultant for several reasons. First, the expense would be too great. Second, AWA felt it to be important that the list be based on data in which the AWA has complete confidence.

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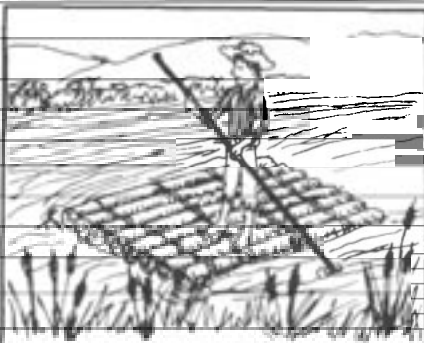
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# conservation

## ***TRAPPED!***

### **Future wild and scenic rivers endangered**

In the waning days of the 100th Congress, the National Rifle Association and an organization representing State wildlife management agencies served notice that they would fight the designation of new park service managed wild and scenic rivers.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) is one of the most powerful lobbying groups in Washington. The NRA is universally feared because of its huge active membership, its reputation for waging successful campaigns of distortion and half-truths, and its ability to take revenge on members of Congress who do not toe the line.

In the last week of September, all members of Congress received a letter from the NRA concerning the West Virginia Rivers bill. The letter stated that the NRA opposed the bill because hunting and trapping are not allowed in national parks or in park service managed wild and scenic rivers. Meanwhile, Gordon Robertson of the International State and Ter-

ritorial Fish and Game Association notified AWA Director Pope Barrow that the bill would "never get out of Congress" unless it was amended to allow trapping in the scenic river segments.

Supporters of the wild and scenic rivers system see this as a new and ominous obstacle to the inclusion of new rivers in the system. The chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, Bruce Vento, from Minnesota, has stated that he does not want to change park service policy of not allowing trapping in national parks and certain other park service managed areas such as wild and scenic rivers.

National Recreation Areas are not subject to the no-trapping policy. The policy also does not affect those rivers which are on national forest lands such as the Chatoga in Georgia or the many rivers in the Oregon Rivers bill which is now pending before Congress. But it does affect virtually all

proposals to designate a wild and scenic river anywhere in the United States which is not already a national forest. Unfortunately, this is most of the rivers which are potential candidates for designation which are located in the east.

The bottom line is that a serious stalemate has developed in efforts to add new river segments to the wild and scenic rivers system. On one side stands the Park Service with its no trapping policy. They are supported by the key committees in Congress which have jurisdiction over bills adding new

rivers to the system.

On the other side stands the trappers, the National Rifle Association, and the State Fish and Game agencies. They are expected to fight any new wild and scenic river designation unless the Park Service and Congressional Committees allow language to be included specifically saying that trapping will be allowed. Neither side has the political muscle to score a win over the other. Unless this stalemate can be broken it is expected to bring new additions of park service managed wild and scenic rivers to a screeching halt.

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# conservation Savage River hydro project blocked

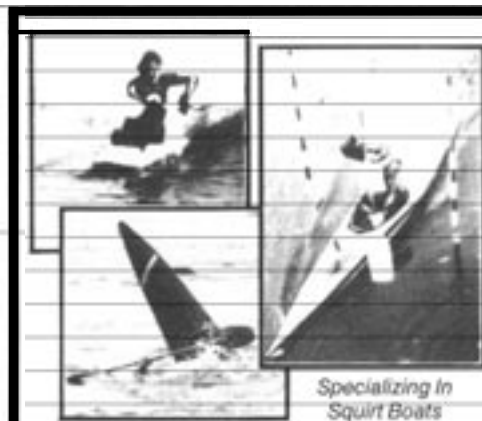
The Maryland state government has apparently killed the current proposal for construction of a hydropower project at the Savage River Dam. Acting on a petition from the Savage River Defense Fund, Torrey Brown, Secretary of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, has turned down the developer's request for use of state-owned land adjacent to the Dam for siting of the hydropower facility. Reed Hydro, the developer, requires use of the property, but lacks the power to force the state to grant it rights to the property.

The Savage River in western Maryland is the



Don Cochran photo

*Jennifer Stone of the U.S. on the Savage during the Maryland Internations*



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## conservation

site of the 1989 World Canoe and Kayak Championships, the first time this prestigious event has ever been held in the U.S.A. Water flows required for whitewater recreation are made possible by releases from the Savage River Dam. The Savage River Defense Fund, an all-volunteer group of whitewater paddlers, has been waging a campaign to preserve whitewater flows on the Savage River from the threat of hydropower development.

In the documents turning down Reed Hydro's request, the State said that, "... the question posed to the State as proprietor of the affected lands is whether it is advisable to add hydro-electric generation to the competing demands to be made upon the Savage River Dam and Reservoir in the future. Out of concern for the future of this unique area, Secretary Brown has concluded that this additional use should not be started."

S.R.D.F. Chairman Mac Thornton reacted to the Secretary's decision by stating, "Maryland recognizes that hydro development needs to be balanced against the important public interests in recreational opportunities, tourism development, and preservation of outstanding natural resources. Hopefully, FERC and the hydro industry will see this point too. Thank you, Maryland!"

S.R.D.F. attorneys have moved for dismissal of the application of Reed Hydro now pending at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. If successful,

paddlers will have defeated the threat of hydro on the pre-eminent whitewater race course in the United States • at least for the foreseeable future.

Unfortunately, paddlers may have to fight the Savage battle again if a new application is filed before FERC for a hydro license. Since the current application was for an exemption from licensing, FERC would be powerless

to condemn state land to benefit Reed Hydro. In an actual licensing proceeding, the state land could be condemned, even if the state protests. However, S.R.D.F. would be in a good posture in a future proceeding. Strong public opposition, and the opposition of the State of Maryland, are now a matter of record at FERC. This will discourage future hydro developers. Also, by law

FERC is clearly required to consider recreational and environmental impacts of development. Unless and until the time a license application is filed, the Savage appears safe from the threat of hydropower.

S.R.D.F. is affiliated with the American Canoe Association, which has served as the intervenor in the current FERC proceeding, along with the U.S. Whitewater Team.

## *Scenic railroad proposed for Blackwater corridor*

West Virginia's two senators have announced an agreement with CSX Corp. to facilitate the purchase of an existing rail line to operate the proposed Blackwater Canyon Scenic Railroad in Tucker County, W. Va. CSX abandoned the rail line following heavy damage inflicted by the Great Flood in November 1985.

Sens. Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller said that CSX and the Trust for Public Lands, a non-profit organization which acts to acquire land in the public interest, completed their negotiations on the final day that CSX agreed to suspend its track removal operations pending the outcome of the negotiations. Under the terms of the agreement, the trust holds the right to purchase the property for 19 months at a price of \$800,000.

The Tucker County Development Authority is seeking



***Boaters prepare to launch below one of the Blackwater's challenging drops.***

Economic Development Administration backing to develop the scenic railroad. The project, to be operated as a joint public-private venture, calls for the development of a 10-mile railroad between Hendricks and Thomas along the Blackwater River.

This project probably is, on balance, of benefit to boaters. Having a scenic railway operated by local interests would be a strong political force

against further development in the Blackwater Canyon. The occasional intrusion of a quaint-looking train is not that serious, particularly because on this river, the eyes of paddlers are usually glued to the Class IV-V rapids anyhow. The scenic railway is also better than the other alternative which has been proposed for the old rail line: an off road vehicle (ORV) trail.

## FERC eases relicensing rec plan requirements

State recreation officials won a major victory when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) said it will accept most any kind of state plan in evaluating hydro projects for licensing.

FERC backed down from a previous policy that would accept only comprehensive plans that balanced competing uses and that were authorized by a specific state law. FERC also withdrew a laundry list of guidelines for plans.

As a result of the FERC decision, states will be able to submit planning for single uses, such as recreation, for consideration in the licensing of hydro projects. And, argue state officials, that comports with the Electric Consumers Protection Act of 1986 (ECPA), which gives recreation and conservation equal footing with energy in the licensing of hydroelectric projects.

Nevertheless, FERC says it will continue to give multi-use plans top priority in considering license applications. Citing ECPA's direction to "resolve competing interests," FERC said no single recommendation "can veto a proposed project. Moreover, the fewer the beneficial uses of a waterway that a state or Federal plan has considered and balanced, the less



*Both fishermen and whitewater boaters may participate in the relicensing of existing hydro projects. However, the two outdoor-oriented groups may clash over the issue of water pulsing. Pulsing is necessary for adequate whitewater flows.*

weight will be attached to a proposed project's inconsistency with the plan..."

FERC issued its original order restricting state input to hydro licensing on October 20, 1987. Petitions for a rehearing were then filed by American Rivers, AWA, eight states (California, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Oregon, Vermont and Washington) and several other private and public organizations. FERC held a rehearing on April 27 and published its change of mind May 4. The rule went into effect June 3.

The states received a big boost from Congress just before FERC made its decision. On April 26 eight senators, including five Republicans, expressed "serious concern" about FERC's initial ruling

in a letter to the commission. The senators said the FERC rule "defines comprehensive planning so narrowly that few existing plans will qualify as comprehensive plans under section 3(b). As a result, many state and Federal agency river plans will not receive the consideration from the Commission which they are entitled to under this provision.

FERC got the message and said it would accept any plan that "(1) is prepared by an agency established by Federal law that has the authority to prepare such a plan, or by a state agency authorized to conduct such planning pursuant to state law; (2) is a comprehensive study of one or more of the beneficial uses of a waterway or waterways; (3) articulates the standards applied, the

date relied upon and the methodology used; and (4) is filed with the...Commission."

## Oregon rivers bill gains momentum

It's not going anywhere in Congress this year. And there is plenty of quibbling on the margins.

But a tidal wave carrying an Oregon wild and scenic rivers bill (S 2148) has all but drowned out opposition.

That was made clear at a hearing July 26 of the Senate Energy Committee on S 2148, introduced by Oregon Senators Mark Hatfield (R) and **please turn to page 39**

# Reporting whitewater accidents: a difficult but vital responsibility

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*Sharing information  
about boating incidents  
can help prevent future  
mishaps*

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By Charlie Walbridge  
AWA Safety Chairman

Whitewater accidents, although tragic, provide a unique opportunity for safety education. They immediately grab the river runner's attention, and have a powerful impact can be used to make paddlers more aware of their habits on the water.

I have long felt that accidents need to be given the widest possible publicity, both to educate the unwary and to prevent the start of rumors which seek to minimize or sensationalize what happened. There is benefit for even the most careful boater in these gruesome narratives as well. A series of accidents with a common cause may indicate a previously unrecognized problem which can be halted if whitewater enthusiasts recognize what needs to be done and do it.

The river remains the ultimate teacher; most of the safety precautions we take for granted developed after hard experience on the water.

Whitewater paddlers are also interested in near-misses; accidents which, though not fatal, could easily have been so had circumstances been slightly altered. Luck, in these cases, gives us a second chance to deal with the problems these incidents expose.

Although information on these incidents is incomplete, it tends to give advance warnings of failure in our "risk management system." Near-miss reports are an important part of the evaluation process in large professional organizations such as Outward Bound, where reporting is mandatory so problems can be corrected before someone dies.

Over the years I've written up a number of accidents and near-misses. These are contained in the River Safety Report of the American Canoe Association. This publication costs \$4.00, and can be examined in detail by writing the ACA at Box 1900, Newinton, VA 22122. My ability to present this publi-

cation depends entirely on the quality of the reports received. Many people would probably like to contribute, but don't know how to **gather** the information. There are a number of things to think about when you are trying to document these events.

First and foremost, always keep in mind that a fatal accident is an extremely stressful and unpleasant event in the lives of the survivors. Often the person who died was a close personal friend. The death was completely unexpected, and was witnessed with an intimacy that is rare in our culture. It is profoundly upsetting. Many paddlers have great difficulty talking about what happened. Most find their boating ability severely effected for months afterwards. A few give up paddling entirely.

After the grief wears off, a strong sense of guilt lingers. Even when any reasonable person feels that those present did all they could, the survivors replay the accident in their minds over and over. Even years later, matters remain unsettled. Not surprisingly, they often do not write up a formal report. The investigator must recognize this, and proceed with the utmost sensitivity to make this vital information public.

Secondly, you have got to be sensitive to the survivor's need for confidentiality. Many times there are pending legal matters, such as insurance claims, wills or lawsuits. The investigator seldom knows the issues, and must take care not to inadvertently complicate the affairs of the deceased.

Carelessly written statements or articles can prevent prompt resolution of these matters, and cause innocent people unnecessary pain. My standing rule is that a person's privacy must be respected, and that the people involved should be able to talk without fear that they will be misquoted.

Thirdly, you must recognize



the limits of your investigation and restrict your comments accordingly. Volunteer investigators typically lack the resources for an in-depth probe, and are limited to making a relatively superficial inquiry. While a brief account of an accident based on a quick discussion with a second-hand source can be helpful, it often provides a merest outline of what transpired.

An interview with survivors or rescuers is often needed to get details, but even then questions and inconsistencies may arise. This is not surprising. Lawyers will tell you that dozens of people can witness the same crime and give conflicting stories. Some questions may never be answered fully. You must draw a firm line between what you know and what you are speculating upon, as the truth may come back to haunt you at a later date.

Lastly, you must be careful not to turn your accident study into an inquisition. People love to criticize others, but only those who were there, dealing with demands and stress of the moment, really know what happened. The issue is not to place "blame" on someone, but to get the story out to the paddling community. Remember that the survivors have been through a lot. They worry, and rightly so, that some self-important writer with preconceived notions will twist their story around, making them look worse than they already feel.

If you act like the District Attorney, they will exercise their right to remain silent. If you give them some control over the way their story is told, you can gain their confidence and get their help. I also encourage those involved in an accident to produce their own report. I also offer my writing skills to those for whom this may be difficult.

Say you have just heard about an accident in an area you frequent involving people not known to you. You're curious, perhaps because you know the river or because you are a club officer, river manager, or someone else with a special interest in safety. Sometimes a secondhand account will satisfy you, sometimes not. Here's how to learn more.

First, find the names of the survivors. If the accident occurred on

the Roaring River in Colorado, perhaps an outfitter, ranger, or local boater will know the names of those in the party and the city they were from. More info can be learned by calling a local friend or club officer.

They can often tell you more about the incident, something about the paddlers and their skills, and whether or not a report is "in the works." If someone else is putting an account together, get your information from them. Dealing with the repeated inquiries of numerous self-appointed "investigators" may be extremely annoying to those involved.

*My standing rule is that a person's privacy must be respected, and that the people involved should be able to talk without fear that they will be misquoted.*

By now you have notes which read something like this:

Name of Victim: John Smith (Supposedly a good class IV boater).

Survivors: Three people from Portland; you have a phone number of one.

**Location:** Roaring River, upper run, near Cheswick, Colorado, a class III+ run with a few class IV rapids and one portage.

**Time:** Late June.

**Conditions:** Nice weather, water level unknown.

**What happened:** Victim failed to roll after playing a wave, was washed into a tree and pinned. Party could not get to him in time to do any good.

You have learned that no one else is preparing a report, so you decide to contact one of the survivors. You identify yourself, and tell them you're trying to write up a description of John Smith's accident for your club, agency, or organization. If they don't know you, they may not want to talk. Tell them that you feel that the facts surrounding accidents need to be publicized to educate the boating community and to set the record straight. If this isn't done, wild rumors based on third-

hand information invariably appear. Say that you will send them a copy of your report for their approval prior to publication. This normally gives them the confidence to proceed.

If they still are uneasy, ask if you can get the story "off the record", keeping the information confidential. This is usually the best approach when potential legal entanglements make caution advisable.

If they agree to talk, then you can ask: "What happened?" This is usually enough to get most of the story. You find out the four of them were running a river they'd paddled before at a lower level. At the bottom of a big drop the victim was playing a hole (not a wave) and got trashed.

The victim was a stubborn man who hated to swim. He kept trying to roll but wasn't coming up. He washed down a little drop, then up against a downed tree next to a cliff. When the boat wrapped the group, which had been slowly following him in case he didn't roll, realized he was in trouble. They couldn't get to him quickly because the current against the cliff was so fast and there was no good eddies. It took fifteen minutes to get a rope to the boat, and a lot longer to pull it out.

Some questions may remain. "How was the water level?" (sort of high, but not flooded). "How big was the hole?" (John was good in holes. This one didn't look so bad, but it really threw him around). "What was the exact time?" (June 15, Saturday, at about 2:00 pm).

Notice the tone of the questions. I'm gathering facts here, not conducting an inquisition. Empathy is important. Imagine how you would feel under the circumstances. Avoid accusing questions like "Who was your triplader?" "What was he doing in the hole?" and "Why didn't you get a rope to him faster?" Remember that even though you may think you know what happened, you weren't there and first impressions are often wrong. Don't embarrass yourself by sharing your ignorance with everyone.

By now you have most of the information needed to write your report. Sometimes you have questions which can be cleared up by another *please turn to page 37*

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*Drought and water politics  
combine to provide a dry and dismal*

# Gauley '88

**Despite no water in the river and plenty of rain in the sky, the AWA Gauley Festival proved a strong success**

Through the month of August, while rafters and boaters banded down the near-dry New and the level of the Gauley behind Summersville Dam dipped lower and lower, it didn't rain in West Virginia.

And through the first three weeks of September while tropical storms battered the gulf coast and anxious boaters hoped for some residual effects in the drought-stricken Appalachians, it didn't rain in West Virginia.

No, it didn't rain in West Virginia until the Saturday of the AWA Gauley River Festival. It poured in the morning on the AWA volunteers setting up the lights, booths and stage. It showered through the afternoon as the Whitewater Marketplace exhibitors displayed their merchandise. It drizzled into early evening while the Festival participants streamed through the gates.

The rain came three weeks too late. Citing the low level of the Summersville Reservoir, the Army Corps of Engineers had already significantly reduced the scheduled fall Gauley River whitewater release schedule.

The opening weekend of Gauley season was cancelled entirely.



*AWA director Pete Skinner at work during preparations for a soggy 1988 Gauley River Festival.*

These second weekend saw flows of 1,500 CFS--down from the customary 2,400 CFS release--for seven hours on Saturday and Sunday.

Gauley Festival co-chairpersons Bob Gedekoh and Diana Holder hoped for at least reduced flows on both days of the Festival weekend. The Corps delayed making a decision until the Thursday before the Festival--and then announced there would only be a reduced release on one day: Sunday.

The festival staff put on a brave face; half a weekend was better than none. But then the rains came.

Efficiency was reduced as tarps were hastily rigged, electronic equipment covered and merchandise rearranged in dry corners. After consider-

able confusion, dismay and discomfort, the festival grounds stood ready for the celebration to commence.

Or would it? Would the reduced flow on the Gauley discourage paddlers from traveling to the heart of West Virginia? Would the weather persuade boaters who were present to seek out of dry place to wait out the storm? Would the festival prove a bust?

Five hours later, with the rain reduced to an occasional sprinkle, the AWA volunteers watched the last of the 1,000 participants slowly leave the soggy area. The general consensus remained: it was a good festival.

No, given the circumstances, it was an excellent festival.

Attendance figures for 1988

equaled those of 1987, when the Festival was held under excellent weather conditions and with on a full-release weekend. And the overall revenue earned for AWA conservation projects was similar to profits gained at past Festivals.

Why did so many paddlers brave the elements to make this year's Festival a success? The incredible variety of attractions pieced together by Gedekoh and Holder may have had something to do with it.

First there was the Marketplace: over 30 exhibitors including all major boat manufacturers and many prominent makers of canoes, inflatables,

paddles and clothing were represented. Participants had an opportunity to check out the latest trends within the white-water industry.

The video tent played to a full house all evening as slide shows and videos of some of the hairiest paddling on record had the crowd in an uproar.

Onstage, the combination of folksinger Renny Brouder and the band Reflections played to strong reviews while the appearance of the Women in Rubber brought down the house.

Admittedly, there were some disappointments: paddlers waiting to eat suffered a wait in a long line. But the presence of unlimited beverage did man-

age to keep spirits high.

And the weather did force the cancellation of the much-anticipated Bear Rasslin' spectacle, but with all the other activities on tap, it was a minor disappointment.

In fact, with the number of people who showed up despite the adverse conditions, some of the AWA volunteers were left speculating that perhaps the rain and the limited release was actually a blessing in disguise. What would have happened if we had perfect conditions? Could we have handled twice the number of people?

Next year we'll see.

Check the appropriate response...

## 1988 Gauley releases were cut because:

- ☐ the Army Corps couldn't figure out how to reregulate downstream flows
- ☐ the Army Corps didn't want expend the effort to reregulating flows
- ☐ the Army Corps still doesn't like whitewater boaters

As Eastern boaters fully appreciate, it's been a very dry summer. Due to the draught, the Summersville Lake level was steadily lowered by the Huntington Army Corps over the summer to supply water for Charleston's "dilution of pollution" flow criteria.

Some boaters took advantage of the frequent 1,000 cfs flows from Summersville. It's not the Gauley we all know and love, but it's far from tame. However, by the time of the traditional fall season, 80 percent of the normal drawdown water was gone.

Whitewater recreation is now a project purpose of Summersville Dam but, understandably, pollution control comes first before any recreation. Despite the lake's condition, the Huntington Corps was telling folks it was doing

everything possible to provide minimum releases on the weekends.

There was talk of using the downstream locks and dams to reregulate pulsed whitewater releases into a more steady flow for pollution control. Besides, a weekend of minimum water releases amounts to a relatively small amount of water.

One weekend release requires at most 0.8 percent of the minimal water required by Charleston. Furthermore, the West Virginia Governor wanted the releases. It looked good for weekend releases until four days before the opening weekend. Huntington cancelled the first two days and stated all weekends would be cancelled unless there was rain.

Boating interests felt blind-

sided by the sudden switch in Huntington's attitude. Huntington's position was that any flows over the flow dictated by the pollution control criteria in Charleston (1,060 cfs or less from Summersville) was wasted water.

As a consequence, the AWA, outfitters, Congressman Rahall, Senator Byrd and Rockefeller requested Huntington to consider using the locks and dams on the Kanawha to reregulate the elevated whitewater flows during the weekends. Such reregulation would convert weekend whitewater flows into a 100 percent contributor to the more steady flows required by Charleston. In other words, the excess flow from weekend whitewater releases would be caught, temporarily stored and gradually released over a 2 to 5 day period as



*Paddlers braved a persistent rain to browse through the Whitewater Marketplace at the 1988 AWA Gauley River Festival.*

## WV Rivers Bill passes despite "sneak attack"

### Gauley "long tunnel" still an issue

by Ron Berke

In the waning hours of the 100th Congress, the West Virginia Rivers bill dodged a bullet which very nearly killed the bill. The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources orchestrated an unexpected last-minute sneak attack on the bill. Without some fancy footwork by West Virginia's skilled legislative tactician, Congressman Nick Rahall, the bill would have bled to death in the final days of the Congressional session.

Instead, almost miraculously, it passed the House of Representatives on October 4th, was approved by the Senate several days later and was awaiting the President's signature as this article went to press. The passage of the West Virginia Rivers Bill was a cliff-hanger, long awaited by whitewater boaters. The bill will put the Gauley, the Meadow, and the Bluestone in "forever protected" status under the National Park Service jurisdiction. It also has several provisions dealing with management of the New River.

#### Quick Start With a Push from Lugbill and Others

At first, the bill moved quickly through the House of Representatives with almost no opposition. Jon Lugbill testified in support of the bill for the ACA, as did Mac Thornton for the Canoe Cruisers Association. So did a number of other whitewater river advocates. Some provisions in the bill dealing with the New River—the Cunard put-in, the use of motorized rafts, etc.—troubled private haters. Most, however, were willing to swallow a hefty dose of castor oil to get the Gauley, Meadow, and Bluestone permanently in the shelter of

needed by Charleston.

Boating interests felt reregulation was possible because two days of 5-hour, 2400 cfs pulsed flows require an excess of 1,500 to 2,400 acre-feet of water (depending on conditions in Charleston). This volume of water would fit nicely into the "variable volume" at the locks and dams of 3,000 acre-feet. USGS data showed this "variable volume" was not being used during the drought of 1988 compared to previous years.

In response to congressional requests, Huntington stated in writing that the locks and dams did not have "storage capability" because the pools are maintained at maximum water depth for loading docks. No details or data was offered to support these statements.

However, this statement is in contradiction to operations just last year. USGS data strongly suggests that the locks and dams have sufficient control and sufficient storage to reregulate whitewater flows and such operations will not interfere with loading dock operations.

The analysis using USGS data was sent to the Huntington District four days before the AWA Gauley Festival. As of this writing, there has been no official response from Huntington. However, unofficially the Corps seems to be trying to change the subject by finding previously unmentioned and

unsubstantiated problems with the pulsing of flows (i.e. the elevation of flows for 4 to 8 hours) for whitewater recreation.

So called "problems" with pulsing flows is a familiar sound. Five years ago, when Huntington was promoting the long tunnel project on the Gauley, Huntington had "problems" with the pulsing flows for unsubstantiated legal reasons. In 1983, Huntington would not pulse flows for whitewater recreation. As a consequence, a volume of water sufficient for four weekends of pulsed flows was released over one weekend. Huntington stated at that time that when the long tunnel project was authorized, then it could start to provide whitewater recreation flows.

The Assistant Secretary of the Army had problems with all this nonsense and instructed Huntington to prepare a report on how it could provide whitewater releases. The long tunnel project was not mentioned again until recently when the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources said that it wants the Town of Summerville to amend its hydropower license application so as to construct the long tunnel instead of a project at the dam. As a promotion for the project, it was stated that there would not be problems with water this year if the long tunnel was in place.

As usual, no detailed reasoning and information was offered.

the national park system.

### **The Greenbrier Mess Puts on the Brakes**

Before the bill was approved by the House of Representatives, West Virginia environmental groups persuaded West Virginia Congressman, Harley O. Staggers Jr., to add another river--the Greenbrier--to the bill. Congressman Rahall, the bill's chief sponsor, agreed since the Greenbrier was in Congressman Staggers district.

With the addition of the Greenbrier, however, the bill was suddenly a controversial item. Its progress slowed, then stopped. Holding hearings in the Greenbrier area, Senator Rockefeller found unhappy constituents. Little political groundwork had been done to get local support for the river. It became clear that inclusion of the Greenbrier would mire the entire bill in controversy.

Although the West Va. Highlands Conservancy (a local environmental group) fought to keep the Greenbrier in the bill, it was hopeless. Local opposition could not be placated. After almost a year of struggle and anxiety, Senator Rockefeller obtained a general agreement to drop the Greenbrier out of the bill. By this time, however, valuable momentum had been lost for the bill as a whole.

### **Monkey Wrench Thrown In by the WVA**

During the long stall in the Senate, the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources saw a chance to throw in a monkey wrench. A handful of trappers operate in the Gauley, Meadow, and Bluestone, mostly catching mink. Acting through a Washington lobbying organization, the W.V.A. DNR persuaded Senate leaders to add language to the bill to keep the National Park Service from banning trapping along the river banks. This posed no problems for the bill's supporters, but it did pose problems for key political leaders in the House of Representatives.

### **Trapping Furry Critters**

Under long-standing policy, trapping furry critters is a "no, no" in park service-managed wild and scenic rivers. The House bill designated portions of the Bluestone and Meadow Rivers as wild and scenic rivers. The

Gauley was to become a National Recreation Area. All three would be managed by the Park Service to protect scenic and recreational values. And trapping would not be allowed in any of the three rivers.

A powerful subcommittee chairman with control over the bill's progress was a well-known opponent of trapping in wild and scenic rivers. (Although he did not oppose trapping in the Gauley since it was to be a National Recreation Area, technically not part of the wild and scenic system). He refused to move the bill unless the Senate trapping provisions were deleted from the Meadow and Bluestone. It looked like a Mexican standoff. Any limit on trapping was unacceptable to the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Smelling blood, the DNR began looking for ways to finish off the bill for good. To the dismay of whitewater groups, they found a powerful ally in the National Rifle Association (NRA). The NRA was alerted to the trapping issue and they vowed to kill the bill if trapping was not allowed in all river segments covered by the bill. Letters went out from the NRA to every member of Congress opposing the bill.

With national groups like the NRA becoming involved, the West Virginia battle over trapping created reverberations far beyond West Virginia. In fact, it now threatens other

future wild and scenic river candidates throughout the nation.

### **Reincarnation of the Long Tunnel Project**

One curious thing did come to light during West Virginia DNR's effort to derail the bill. A spokesman for the agency, Ron Potesta, admitted to a staff aide to Congressman Nick Rahall that DNR was still advocating construction of a Corps of Engineers hydroelectric project (the "long tunnel" project) on the Gauley. This monstrous project would wreak havoc on the 5 miles of fabulous world-class whitewater between the dam and Pillow Rock Rapid.

Citizens for Gauley River had managed to stuff this miserable idea in a coffin 5 years earlier. Now it looked like the DNR, possibly with the encouragement of the Corps of Engineers, was trying to pry the coffin open and unleash the old vampire again. Potesta did not link the DNR's efforts to kill the bill to the "long tunnel" project. But it is obvious to anyone that making the Gauley a National Recreation Area would put a permanent stake through the heart of the "long tunnel" idea.

### **Love Affair with a Monster**

The West Va. DNR had been a backer of the "long tunnel" monster from the beginning. The Army Corps of Engineers had planned to develop a tailwaters fishery for the DNR below Summerville Dam if the long tunnel

*please turn to page 40*



*Gauley Festival co-chairperson Diana Holder, bullhorn in hand, mobilizes forces at the Festival.*



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# Oh , Mother... it's the **Hubbard!**

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*With a gradient  
approaching nearly  
300 feet per mile,  
Hubbard Brook provides  
Weep-creekin'' excitement  
to New England boaters.*

---



by John Porterfield  
American Whitewater regional editor

Its tight chutes and waterfalls have attracted adventurous swimmers and divers since the turn of the century...local boys dared each other into leaps from granite cliffs into the deep coldwater pools. City folk dangled their legs in the fast running stream, and slid down moss-covered water slides, wearing the seat out of their jeans.

It was summertime-out for a picnic to escape the radiant heat from the concrete and pavement of Springfield, Hartford and the suburbs. Time to relax and cool off and enjoy the country in the foothills that crowd the southwestern border of Massachusetts and Connecticut. Time for lemonade, hot dogs, and a dip in the stream.

Nowadays, polyethylenes have replaced the cotton fibers snagged on the rocks that line Hubbard Brook's banks. During the late 60's and early 70's, local New England paddlers in fiberglass boats scoured their topographic maps in search of that unconquered run...that first descent down a "tough run", which usually meant over 100 feet per mile.

Rivers such as the West Branch of the Westfield were run from Becket to Bancroft in Massachusetts's Berkshires. Wardsboro Brook in southern Vermont was claimed, followed by a string of other runs—the Ellis in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the Boreas and the Hudson River Gorge in the Adirondacks, the Kennebec and West Branch of the Penobscot in Maine, Bulls Bridge on the Housatonic River in southwestern Connecticut—and countless others, each an equal achievement in the progression of whitewater sport.

Hubbard Brook was checked, but was initially discarded as being too steep, with sections mapped at close to 300 feet per mile gradient.

But with the advent of rotomolded and composite technology in the mid-seventies, boat-busting, steep creeking runs became more of a realistic challenge, both technically and financially. The lure of "being the first" became tightly focused on the steeper, highly technical streams that so far had



*C-1 boaters slide down a series of ledges while descending the steep Hubbard Brook.*

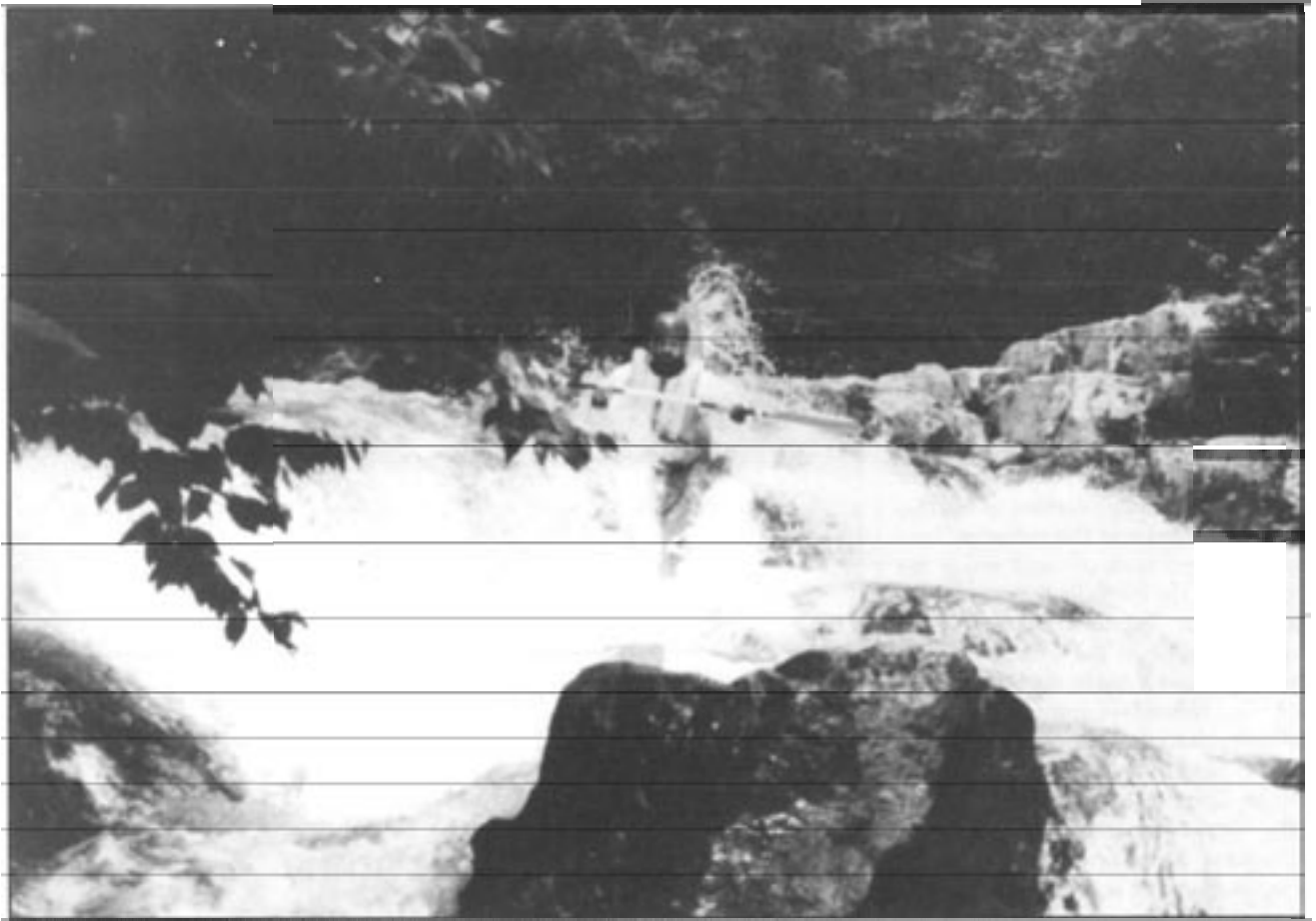
resisted the bite of the paddle.

As best as we can tell, Hubbard Brook remained unclaimed until 1985 when a group of Connecticut boaters took the plunge and opened up serious use of the stream that flows close to the popular Upper Farmington River and Sandy Brook runs.

The run starts out with an innocuous 60 feet per mile gradient within the confines of Granville State Park. Congested talus and boulder traps dominate the initial third of the run of the run, giving way to a ledgy drop-pool nature consistent with Berkshire runs such as the Cold River, the Upper Deerfield, and the West Branch of the Westfield. The Hubbard's unusual geology produces a top-end gradient of nearly 300 feet per mile at the end of the four-mile run.

Hypothetically, you should scout everything on the Hubbard. Practically, you can see most of the drops from your boat—nothing is blind, and the entire run has that "fly by the seat of your pants" feel. A "plastic boat run", Hubbard Brook has plenty of potential for pins. One drop, appropriately named Nose Pin, is famous for it.

After some warmup drops and a clean, vertical plunge called Seven Foot Falls (boy, that name sounds familiar) Hubbard Brook leaves the State



*Boaters need to thread their way through a maze of rocks to avoid pinning ~~when~~ picking their way down the technical Hubbard Brook.*

Park area and a significant increase in difficulty and gradient is seen. Eddies are scarce during this top portion, and boat scouting is considered the most feasible option. A well-worn state park trail leads down the left bank, allowing for early departures should the nerves fail. The middle section's geology features such notable rapids such as Nose Pin, Bump-and-Grind Slide, and The Big One, mingled with Class IV challenges. Here, easier scrambles up the bank can be made to scout the vertical drops. The final two miles of drops known as Outer Limits fall steeper than the last, with the gradient nearly achieving the status usually reserved for the Himalayas. Unlike the top section, most of the drops here are shorter, with abundant eddies to gather your strength in.

The first drop, Bridge Rapid, creeps up on you. Lulled by the mild mill stream above, there is nothing of consequence until a right hand turn

reveals a short twisting drop; steep technical and studded with **boulders**—a great place to see if your reactions are up to snuff. The drop is just above the only bridge that crosses the **runnable** portion of the **Hubbard**. A quick roll **isn't** quick enough—so stay **upright**, a feat hard to do because of the many pinning situations that are present.

Below Bridge Rapid the **Hubbard** enters the camping area of Granville State Park. Most of the moves required to weave through the boulder **studded** fields are **easier** than the descent through Bridge Rapid. The stream here is 20 yards wide, with few eddies and always the possibility of strainers.

A **eight-foot** boulder on river left marks the top of 7-Foot Falls, a nearly vertical, clean drop into a large, deep pool. A short walk allows for repeat attempts down this drop, one of the safer plummets on the **Hubbard**. If anyone **is having difficulty** with the run at this point, it's time to hit the park

road on the right.

The **Hubbard** now leaves the camping area and its own version of civilization. A significant increase in difficulty and gradient are encountered as the **Hubbard** begins to really test your abilities. The next drop, Nose Pin, demands expert boating skills to avoid an almost mandatory nose pin in a pile of boulder rubble. The run starts down the right side, towards a four-foot ledge. **The ledge** is clean, but the outflow **isn't—it's** packed with small boulders. The only way to run this **basher** is to head right, and angle your boat so you are almost sideways going over the ledge.

This isn't easy as a large boulder and a hole guard the right bank. The flow also wants to drive you left—if you run this drop clean you are in an elite group—most end up with a momentary nose pin! This rapid is a highly recommended **portage** at any **level—especially** at high water.

After you have pulled **your-**

self off the boulder pile and have patched up the knuckle scrapes from bracing too far downstream, Class IV rock dodging continues, until a wide, 25 degree slide is seen below a river-wide horizon line. Bump-and-GrindSlide is a significant rapid, with plenty of potential for screw ups and abrasions.

A handful of five to six foot ledges that drop into pools are found between the slide and "The Big One".... No two ledges are alike, and a few of them "sleepers" that look easy but can catch your stern and force you into the ear-bracing mode popular with pour over swimmers.

"The Big One" follows. The entire flow of the stream is compressed into a five foot slot, which then vertically plunges four feet. That's the entrance—what follows earns this rapid its name. After plunging through the entrance, a ski jump follows, complicated with a lot of nasty rooster tails.

The main flow then bounces off a long boulder along the left shoreline and into a long hole below the ski jump. The flow tends to twist you to the right—with a safe bet that if you end up sideways, one of the rooster tails will snag your hull and flip you over. This is something you certainly want to avoid unless you plan on joining Ichabod Crane on his moonlight rides through the Berkshires.

Below "The Big One", the streambed reverts to the congested boulder pile geology found at the beginning of the run. Each drop is steeper than the last, with the gradient nearly achieving 300 ft/mi. Near the end of the run a half-mile long rapid, even steeper than the previous drops, charges down the hillside, with plenty of pin potential in store. Saving the best for last, a short fifty yard rapid, as steep as they come, puts up the Hubbard's last attempt to stop you from completing your run.

The put-in on Massachusetts Route 57 is just over 7 miles east of the town of New Boston, where the Class III-IV Upper Farmington section is found. The ideal put-in is a half-mile west of the entrance to Granville State Park. The take out is reached from the state park road. From the put-in, head east on Route 57 to the park entrance on the right. Follow the park road to Route 20; turn left, and continue for two and a

half miles until you again cross Hubbard Brook. Turn left immediately after the bridge; the gauging station, and the take out lie a couple hundred yards in, upstream of the Route 20 bridge.

Technically, there is no boating allowed inside the park, so park outside of the park at the put-in. The park rangers generally don't bother boaters - the paddling season generally precedes full staffing of the state park and tubers are considered much easier prey.

The urban sprawl of a slowly awakening Springfield has yet to reach this pocket of the Bay State, an area known for excellent sharp cheddar cheese, maple syrup, and apples. Farming is prominent, and small towns offer side trips to explore a town green, historic home and a genuine general store. During the spring paddling season and a timely fall release and race on the Upper Farmington, commerce in this secluded area reaps modest benefits

local paddling clubs, such as the Appalachian Mountain Club. The recommended gauge level for running Hubbard Brook is between three and a half and a little over four feet on the gauge at the take-out. Below three and a half feet, the run will be similar to traveling through a wet pinball machine; much over four feet, plan on spending as much time walking around drops as running them.

Water quality is excellent, as Hubbard Brook feeds Barkhamstead Reservoir, the drinking water supply for the Hartford, Connecticut area. Wildlife is abundant, deer pause along the collecting pools for a drink, raccoon and opossum prepare dinner at dusk among the volkswagen-sized boulders. Hubbard Brook offers challenges to expert boaters who need that adrenaline fix provided only by steep, tight, technical whitewater.



from whitewater enthusiasts, spending their boating allowances on a few weekends of good water, beer, and New England cooking.

Classically New England, the Hubbard is served up in the spring when the nearby Sandy Brook and New Boston section of the upper Farmington River are flowing. Gauge levels between Sandy Brook and Hubbard Brook are consistent, and information on Sandy Brook can be obtained through a number of river hotlines offered by

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*Traditional paddlers  
may sniff,  
but boaters are rushing  
to perform...*

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## Stupid Whitewater Tricks

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### Decked boaters reign over tuber subspecies

By Michelle Mahood

It's been said that kayakers as a rule suffer from a superiority complex when it comes to their chosen sport. This is absolutely not the case. Kayakers actually are superior. It's not a complex.

Kayakersevolved as a species from nearly all walks of river life. Many canoers and rafters have come to prefer kayaking over their previous pastimes. Here, we must make an exception for "tubers", an odd life form found in large numbers on popular waterways who aspire to be nothing more than perhaps inebriated. Tubers, it should be noted, have no skills, throw beer cans in the river, and are known to have outstanding traffic warrants. They exist only as a subject for derision by serious river people and merit no further mention in this **article**. Kayakers, on the other hand, were put on the earth for many reasons, and are known to serve a number of useful functions. Some of the more memorable ones...

1. To look cool; to be on the cutting edge of river fashion. This includes amassing entire rooms full of **kayaking** gear, wetsuits, drysuits, paddling jackets, trendy **nose** clips, and other high-tech, expensive equipment.

2. To paddle upstream for prolonged periods of time, prompting untrained observers to call out helpful instructions on direction of river flow.

3. To justify wearing those **menacing-looking** knives on their life jackets, usually employed for life-threatening situations like cutting **brie** cheese during lunch stops and frightening ill-behaved tubers.

4. To be a yoke about the necks of canoeing friends, inducing them to carry alarmingly **large and bulky** "support provisions" in their canoes on trips, while constantly reminding them of their duty to act as beats of burden, **i.e.**, "Gee, I don't think you ought to play that wave—you've got my camera, sleeping bag, and my mother-in-law.. Well, on second thought..." Coupled with this desire to have their gear carried by canoers is the kayaker's maddening habit of expecting his canoeing friends to actually be grateful for his company. I mean, who's **gonna** rescue you if you take a swim?

### Having "fun" Is the only rule

By Alex Cooptavenus

We were loitering in the eddy above the 15-foot Glen Park Falls on New York's Black River when Tim Kelly scratched his brush-cut head and announced, "I think I'm going to try a melt-down."

Say what?

"I read about it last night in (Jim) Snyder's book," Kelly explained. "When you run the falls, instead of trying to stay flat when you launch off the lip so you can **boof** the bottom hole, you attain the green water on top then lean forward."

Again?

"You **try** to stay with the green water as it goes under the hole," Kelly said. "Then your boat comes rocketing up on the other side of the boil."

Right...

"Tell you what, Tim," I said. "Let me run before you."

From the pool below the falls, we watched Tim make his run. His brightly colored Jet appeared at the brink of the falls and, sure enough, Tim leaned forward. **The kayak** plunged straight down into the maw of the hydraulic and after a moment, ended straight back up...still in the grip of the hole.

For 10 **heart-stopping** seconds, Kelly **vertically** surfed the falls. I **wish** I could report that as a group, we jumped into action, initiating a rescue. The situation had the possibility of a disaster.

But **instead**, we simply sat back and laughed:

"Look, he's back-blasting the falls..."

"**Tim**, you didn't attain the green water..."

"Twirl your paddle..."

Happily, Kelly emerged unscathed moments later. But the incident **stands as** testimony to the changing attitudes of boaters toward whitewater fun. Across the nation, paddlers are attempting bizarre stunts both in and out of their boats.

And while these feats might be shrugged off as stupid whitewater tricks, the increasing number of these



5. To be a source of entertainment for the rest of the river crowd at popular rapids. Many kayakers are known to accept money and/or food after particularly good ends or hand-rolls, and will cheerfully work themselves into total exhaustion if a sufficient number of onlookers is present to appreciate this display of talent. Indeed, rolling for beer is a way of life for many kayakers, who **simply will** not roll unless a tangible incentive is offered.

6. To be a rescue device. Kayakers, believed (correctly) by other forms of river life to be always in control and possessed of superhuman skill, are continuously put upon to rescue swimmers, dogs, coolers and other semi-floating objects from the water. One look at the face of a clawing, desperate swimmer draped around your bow will confirm this, and only serves to fuel the kayaker's feeling of superiority. Rescuing swimmers too panic-crazed to even kick their feet can be a tedious business, however, and many kayakers have given it up altogether as simply too tiring. Some of them—the same ones who avidly deployed their rescue bags just a season earlier at the first sign of a swimmer—have become so jaded that they are reluctant to get involved in nondangerous rescues where they might need to re-stuff their rescue bags. A typical scenario:

SWIMMER: (Bobbing up and down in current, flailing arms) Oh, help me, help me!"

KAYAKER ER: (In nearby eddy, rope in hand, slightly bored expression) How much?

SWIMMER: (Desperate look on face) I lost my wallet! No cash on me! What about American Express? Please! (Hand appears above water, momentary flash of green plastic before submerging again)

KAYAKER: (Look of interest on face, considering) Well, let's see... Dinner on the **AmEx**, camping fee up **front**, a six-pack, **and** re-stuff the rope... **okay**... (At this point, kayaker reluctantly tosses rope.)

As by now you will doubtless agree, kayakers obviously are the elite of any river. If your group doesn't have its own kayaker, or better—several kayakers, hang around a good play spot, offer lots of beverages, storage space, and other amenities, and you could get lucky!



*Boater uses conventional watercraft to plunge into the middle of Coliseum rapid on the Ottawa River.*

incidents seem to indicate a trend in the sport worth observing.

### Tubing

Big water on the Canada's Ottawa River can be an intimidating experience—particularly at Coliseum, the climactic final rapid of the main channel.

At "**Colly**," the Ottawa necks down forming a large, smooth entrance wave sweeping into an exploding second breaker that pulses up to ten feet high before collapsing into a crashing foam pile. Most boaters crest the opening wave, then crank to the right in order to avoid the worst of the breaking wave.

That is, if they run the rapid at all.

In mid August of this year, the Ottawa was running at spring levels, due to hydro releases upstream. The left shore of Colly was lined with anxious paddlers, slack-jawed, staring at the ominous second wave and the maelstrom of holes and waves that followed.

Then, in the upstream eddy, a pair of tubers leisurely paddled their way out into the middle of the current. They wore paddling life jackets, helmets and they apparently knew where they were going as they used their hands to position the tubes squarely in the middle of the rapid.

The tubes coasted over the opening wave and slid down the tongue into the meat of the second breaker. The foam pile towered high above their heads before swallowing the tubers entirely. The tubers were lost from sight for three seconds before reappearing 10 yards downstream.

I turned to the boaters perched on the rocks:

"Kind of puts it in perspective, doesn't it?"

Over the years, tubers have served as an object of derision for whitewater boaters. And deservedly so. For every tuber who has an inkling of the power of a **whitewater** river, there's a host of ignorant amateurs who simply show up at a put-in expecting to simply float down class IV rapids.

For example, during the past summer's low-water (1,000 cfs) releases on West Virginia's Gauley, a Kentucky boater pulled into the eddy above the class V Pillow Rock rapid only to find a young family, armed with tubes, **prepar-**



*Tuber follows the same line through the meat of Coliseum's huge breaking wave.*



*Yough Falls--the scene of many stupid whitewater tricks.*

ing to embark.

The boater quickly informed the family of their imminent peril, and the wife and children opted to hike out the Carnifax Ferry trail. The husband derided their decision, and elected to continue on downstream.

His **tube** washed up at Iron Ring. His body was recovered a couple days later.

But the fact remains: not all tubers are geeks. Many have extensive whitewater experience who are looking for some minimalist thrills.

### Waterfall stunts

The Lower **Youghiogeny** has long been one of the most heavily used whitewater streams in the nation. And with Ohiopyle Falls, a sheer 18-foot drop, in plain view at the put-in, it's not surprising that the falls have served as the proving ground for considerable stupid whitewater tricks.

First it was enough to simply run Ohiopyle Falls. Then boaters started to surf the hole at the top of the drop, before running the falls. Then paddlers began to run the falls at night...then they would surf the hole and run the falls at night.

But one of the most bizarre stories involving the falls was related to me this summer:

"Teople are starting to **swim** the falls," the story went, "but there's a

definite trick to it. As you approach the lip of the falls you reach out with your hand, grab the edge, and pull as you launch out. Then you arch your back on the way down..."

"So you land flat," I interposed. "You want to body boof."

"Right," he said. "Body boof."

You'd think "body-boofing" Ohiopyle Falls would be a feat tough to top. That is, until someone ran a Jet-ski over the edge.

The **Jet-skier** was reportedly experienced at jumping ramps and must have figured a waterfall wouldn't be much different. Unfortunately, ramps don't feature little hydraulics at their approach like Ohiopyle Falls. The hole separated the Jet-skier from his machine with each plummeting over the falls in different directions.

The pilot safely surfaced in the pool below where he was promptly arrested by park officials.

### Swimming the rapids

Remember when the deepest humiliation a paddler could endure was to come out of his boat? When a boater would prefer confessing to sex offenses rather than taking a swim?

Those attitudes passed permanently away last Gauley season when Jeff Snyder waded into the river wearing a **wetsuit**, helmet, PFD and a pair of flippers and proceeded to float his way

down the Upper Gauley. The swim was witnessed that weekend by the thousands of rafters and boaters **navigating** the river by more conventional methods, and before the day was done, swimming rapids was suddenly fashionable.

As a matter of fact, by the time he had reached Pillow Rock, a group of expert paddlers had decided to join Snyder in swimming the rapid, climbing up on top of the huge boulder and leaping into the giant pillow of water billowing off the rock face.

Of course, not many boaters have taken Snyder's example to the extreme of swimming entire class V rivers, but they have elevated the practice to a level beyond the "body surfing" of class II water typical of a commercial rafting trip. Like boating, high-end swimming requires a knowledge of water.

Just below Lower Keeney on West Virginia's New River is a dynamic eddy line that has emerged a favorite play of squirt boaters. But after an hour of mindless squirting, chances are someone will pull of boat out on shore, scramble over the rocks to the top of the eddy, and hurl himself into the current.

The swimmer bobs on the surface until he reaches the interface of



*Swimmer launches himself into eddy line on the New River.*

the eddy line. Then, he abruptly disappears, sucked **beneath** the water—human mystery move!

Swimmers on the Black add a slight variation to a similar move. At the bottom of the opening rapid, a strong eddy line breaks down into a series of **small** whirlpools. As swimmers approach, **they** raise an arm above their heads, so that when pulled down in a whirlpool, all that remains is a hand—slowly rotating above the surface.

There's no denying that the minimalist sensation of **a body** floating in moving water is **pleasurable**. In France, for instance, commercial outfitters have marketed the attraction by booking trips **on class III** rivers using a strange **single-person** craft that resembles a **boogie** board with a windshield. Bicycle-like handlebars are mounted to the board to allow passengers to hang on and they control the craft by kicking their legs.

Experienced riders are capable of skillfully navigating more difficult water, surf waves and perform many of the moves of a decked boat.

#### Putting it into perspective

So you **ask—what's** the big deal? People have been performing stupid whitewater tricks for as long as there's been whitewater rivers. What's all this nonsense about emerging trends?

The big difference lies in who is performing these tricks. In the past, experienced whitewater boaters considered themselves above such activities. Tubing and swimming were just a whitewater sideshow and the participants ignorant clowns. So how come boaters who know whitewater—who are experts in their **boats—choose** to goof **around** performing crazy stunts?

There can be a number of explanations:

1. The familiarity factor—It's no secret that novice boaters often demonstrate a courage born of ignorance. I remember my initial whitewater experience, long before I ever considered **kayaking**, when a friend and I paddled a \$50 10-foot raft down West Virginia's Cheat Canyon at five feet. We laughed at the commercial outfitters who with a look of concern asked us, "Do you know this river?"

Looking back with the benefit of 10 years of experience, I can't explain how we survived the day. And for the

**first** several years of boating, after I **started** to understand the power of water, I would have never attempted such a stupid expedition.

But you know, **after** many years of class V boating, I have to confess that **I've** developed a certain ennui toward **class III/IV** water. Hell, I know that a paddler can die on **class III** as readily as on class V—but intermediate water just doesn't intimidate me anymore. If someone **suggested** we paddle the Cheat on inflatable alligators, I'd probably be willing to give it a shot.

2. Weird is good—Part of the attraction of whitewater boating is that it is an individual's sport. Paddlers have always gone to **great** lengths to prove their uniqueness.

First it was **simply** **embroidering** their names on their PFDs. Then **came** custom helmets. When fiberglass boats reappeared, paddlers made a statement with wild metalflake decks.

On the water, boaters attempted to keep a step ahead of the crowd by developing new moves. First it was simply surfing tricks: paddle twirling, hand surfing, doughnuts and pirouettes. Then came the squirting craze with an entire new routine.

But now if you put on any river, wildly-decorated squirt boats abound. Dozens of squirtists perform at every eddy. What's a boater to do in order to stand out in a crowd...hence stupid whitewater tricks.

3. The jungle-gym **syndrome**—As boaters have gained greater understanding of whitewater, their percep-

tion of a river has changed: whitewater is not so much a perilous medium to be traveled with great care as much as it is a liquid playground. Like a playground jungle-gym, a river invites innovative frolic.

Of course, suggesting that messing around on a whitewater river entails no more risk than an outing at a neighborhood playground is dangerous ground. But it's important to realize that most of these bizarre tricks are being performed by boaters who are already well familiar with the characteristics of whitewater. They know the river. They use top equipment. And despite the apparent risk of their **stunts**, few trashings have been reported.

4. **The whitewater professionals**—Purists may turn up their noses at what appears to be frivolous activity on the river, it's tough to treat people like Jeff Snyder with the disdain of the past. You know that although he may be swimming a river one day—but he may be back in a kayak twenty-four hours later paddling an expedition-class river like the Upper Blackwater.

But why would a person swim or tube a river when they could opt to boat? Essentially, **whitewater** tricksters aren't so much whitewater boaters as they are whitewater people. Spending 100 days or more a year on the water, they have the time and opportunity to explore practically every variation of whitewater recreation.

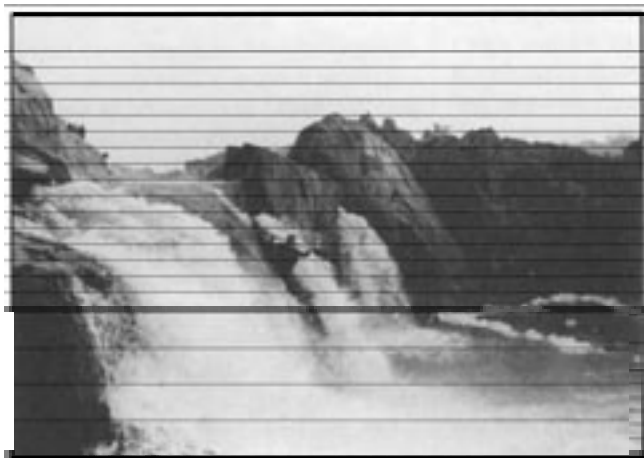
Goofing around in whitewater is fun. Now what's so stupid about that?



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# Not your ordinary kind of races



## *Sprinting down Great Falls*

by Ed Grove

The Great Falls of the Potomac River, located minutes outside metropolitan Washington, D.C., has long been considered the Eastern prototype of a class VI rapid.

The Virginia side of the rapid is composed of three drops: U-Hole, S-Turn and culminating with the sheer 25-foot Spout waterfall. The rapid has been run—but only by the most daring experts.

So...what better course to run a river race?

Nine intrepid decked boaters participated in the first Great Falls Rapid Race the morning of September 10, sprinting down the three drops of the Virginia side of the Great Falls. **Dan Schnurrenberger**, a member of the 1984 U.S. Olympic Flatwater Team and a current member of the Wildwater Team, finished the short but heavy-duty course in a winning time of 88 seconds.

**Jon Lugbill**, nine-time C-1 slalom world champion was second while **Tom McEwan** took third.

Race organizer Andy Bridge and U.S. Team coach Bill Endicott took special measures to ensure this race was as safe as possible. First, recognizing the extraordinary paddling skills needed and the dangers inherent to the race, it was by invitation only and half the racers were members of the U.S. Whitewater Team. Second, water level was critical. The Little Falls gauge had to be between 2.7 and 3.1 feet for the race to take place (The gauge Sunday morning was 3.03 feet).

Next, safety boats and ropes were set at key places along the course in case of mishap. There was even a practice run early Saturday morning to be sure safety and other needs



## *The Upper Yough in under 30 minutes*

By Joe Greiner

George Mower stared at his watch. "Ten seconds, Joe." I looked up into the sunset and waited. "Five, four, three, two, one, GO!!!" My blades bit into the water and I started off after 29 other kayaks who had already begun. George would start two more K-1's and then seven women kayakers and then three C-1 paddlers before following us downstream. 42 people with one aim...get down five of the toughest miles of Eastern boating as fast (and as safely) as we can.

I wasn't really sure that I wanted to do this. I knew that I wouldn't be fast on two counts. First, this was only my eighth trip down the river and while I was familiar with the recreational routes, I was not confident running the race lines. Therefore, I would descend slower but less risky routes than the top-seeded racers. Second, I was paddling my Aeroquatic and it was the shortest boat in the race. But I had heard that the Upper Yough Downriver race was fun and that everybody was welcome. It was a personal challenge and I decided to face it.

Thursday, August 18—race day. When I checked in that morning at the race headquarters—Precision Rafting in Friendsville, Md.,—I asked Roger Zbel and Phil Coleman if slow people whose top priority was finishing safely were welcome. They assured me they were, took my money, gave me a T-shirt that read "Hurry up!! Every chance you get!!!" and seeded me last. They turned out to be almost correct.

Summer flows on the Upper Yough rely upon hydro-electric releases from Penn Elec's Deep Creek Lake power plant. With the recent drought, releases had been

## Great Falls

were met. Finally, the race was run in accordance with National Park Service regulations which require that paddlers running Great Falls put in early in the day and only from the Maryland side of Great Falls. Consequently, the race started just after 7 a.m. and was finished well before 8:30 a.m.

The race was well documented. Not only were private and professional photographers there with cameras and VCRs, but Channel 5 also covered the event which was on the Sunday night news. Paddlers who missed this historic event need not despair; Paul Marshall is working on a video of the entire race which

should be available in the near future. Interested paddlers can contact Paul at P.O. Box 16081, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Because this experimental race was such a success, plans are now being made to make it an annual event. Race organizers are scheduling it for next August and anticipate



that 20 boaters will enter. However, please remember this race is only for expert paddlers familiar with running waterfalls—three of the nine racers got stuck in the hole below the Spout and came out of their boats.

## Upper Yough Race

limited to two hours on certain weekday afternoons. Water normally arrives at the Sang Run put-in two hours after start of generation and takes an additional four hours to continue downstream to the takeout in Friendsville.

Penn Elech had promised five hours of water starting at 11 a.m. for the race. But at 1 p.m., there was no sign of water at Sang Run. Frantic calls to the dam at Deep Creek revealed that an emergency had forced equipment replacement and during the distraction, the utility had forgotten to turn on the water until 12:30 p.m.

The race had been scheduled to start at 4:30 from Stretch Rock, three miles downstream from the put-in. With the water being late, we would now start at 6:00 p.m.

The late start was necessary to prevent the early starters from out-paddling the bubble of water. Everyone who is familiar with the race's six-year history knows that Zbel has won every running but one. In that event, Roger, who is always the top seed and starts first, outran the water and lost time bumping through the rocks at the finish. Jeff Snyder, the second boater out of the gate, had enough water to finish cleanly and edged Roger out.

Ever since then, race organizers are sure not to start too early. Still, the thought of starting down the heart of the Upper Yough at 6:00 p.m. or later with night just around the corner, added more juice to the adrenalin flow.

Around 5:30 everybody started pulling into Stretch Rock. The race is very informal. The rules are simple. You must give help if asked and you must allow a pass if the

person passing started behind you. Any boat, regardless of length, than can be paddled is acceptable.

Apparently, Jesse Wittemore had been promising a newly designed boat in an attempt to get an edge on Roger. Rumor had it that the design included a motor. Jesse's appearance at the start was eagerly anticipated.

Sure enough, when Wittemore came around the corner, he was paddling a radical boat for the K-1 class—a Whitesell open canoe with a hard, yellow spray cover over the bow, extending back to the end of the bow air bags. It gave the effect of a cabin cruiser.

As Wittemore pulled in, he was heard to say that the motor idea wasn't quite ready yet. We would all have to wait for next year. He had the only open boat in the race and as he had entered the K-1 class, he would have to test himself and his boat against the other K-1's.

At precisely 6:00, George Mower, the starter, looked at his watches that had been synchronized with the finish judge watches and sent Zbell on his way. As Jeff Snyder pulled into his spot as the second seed, Roger windmilled furiously toward Gap Falls, the first drop. Because of the late start, Roger was paddling almost directly into the sun. Water streaming off faces of his paddle was backlit, generating rainbows off both blades.

Every minute, George sent another racer on his way. Boaters were seeded based on last year's finish—or by guess if they hadn't raced before. Finally, it was my turn.

With two late entries behind me and then only a gap

of three minutes until the start of the first woman boater, I was confident that I would be passed. I am not a "hot" boater—although I like to think of myself as "solid". But despite the presence of boaters ahead and behind me, I remained essentially alone as I ran the race.

I didn't want to burn myself out before arriving at the heart of the whitewater, about one and a half miles into the race. So, I paddled strongly but not to exhaustion as I ran through Gap Falls and the one mile of class III whitewater to Bastard Falls.

I had made up my mind not to be passed while in Bastard or downstream at Meat Cleaver. I looked over my shoulder before entering Bastard and, sure enough, someone was about 50 yards back. I pulled over to let him go by and then started into the rapid. I hit Aerial Eddy about halfway down and, much to my surprise, passed someone sitting in the eddy. Well, at least I wouldn't be last.

Charlie's Choice, Snaggletooth, Triple Drop and National Falls fell behind me before I encountered the first spectators and safety boats below National Falls. Additional people awaited at Tommy's Hole.

Most of the difficulty was behind me after Tommy's Hole and I started to relax and go for more speed. Zinger and Trap Run Falls flew by. Surprise!...I passed another boat. No surprise!...I was passed by the last K-1 starter.

As I approached Heinzerling, I could see a large crowd on both sides of the difficult and potentially dangerous left hand line. More people sat on the pillowed rock. I felt like an ancient Christian entering the coliseum. I was tempted to try my luck on the left hand race route, but, the ingrained drive for self-preservation won out and I turned into the Rifle and ran the right hand approach. My bow lifted up and over the pillowed rock and down through Boulder Dance.

Next came Meat Cleaver. I looked over my shoulder and saw Kara Ruppel, the top-seeded woman K-1. She was quite a way behind but closing fast. I probably could have cleared the rapid before she entered, but I stuck to my plan and eddied out to let her through. She smiled as she went by.

Later, Kara told me that she

was deliberating whether to ask for a pass and was relieved to see me pull over. She didn't want two boats in Meat Cleaver, either.

From the Cleaver to the finish, I was pretty sure I would be OK. I was paddling well within myself and decided to turn it up a notch. Rocky I and II and Powerful Popper went by. The safety boaters below Lost-and-Found waved as I stroked by. Cheeseburger Falls, Backender, Wright's Hole and Double Pencil Sharpener wrapped up the difficult section and I had I more mile to Kendall and the end of the race.

During high school and college, my sports were team sports and I was never the star. Ovations and cheers were reserved for the efforts of the team or for a star. Suddenly, there was Kendall Rock with the gathered throng of finishers, spectators and timers. As I approached, the crowd erupted with cheers and yells—urging me on. The fact that most of these people didn't know me or that I was obviously among the slowest boaters didn't seem to matter. What a feeling! I finished with a big smile.

Each succeeding finisher was greeted with a similar reception—whether they were the second-seeded woman or the slowest man finishing. After a while, I think I understood. By cheering the effort of the paddlers, regardless of result, we were applauding the river and its difficulty and acknowledging the courage and skill it took to "Hurry up!! Every chance you get!!"

After the final finisher had arrived, we waited for the spectators and safety boaters to complete the river. Mower received a big hand for the fine job he did as starter and also, because, he essentially was a racer. He had to wait for the last boater to leave and then follow them down.

That night, it was party time. The results were posted and Roger had won again. Six wins out of seven races—but it doesn't come as much of a surprise—after all, Zbell is a member of the U.S. team in the Wildwater event.

Before the race, several boaters set personal goals for the race. Bob Gedekoh wanted to go under 40 minutes and so did several other first-time racers. They all made it and Bob logged a clocking of 36.36, 15th in the men's field, 16th overall, and (informally) first in the "plastic boat" division.

I thought that 40 minutes was too low a goal, but I hoped I could beat my age. Age 43...time 42.58, 28th out of 32 K-1 and 36th of 42 overall. Satisfaction. Next year, I will go under 40. Maybe I can turn back the clock on my age, also?

One vignette captures the "fun" atmosphere surrounding the race. Two people had taken videos of the race. One camera was at National Falls and the other at Heinzerling. That night at the party, a TV and VCR were set up and the tapes played back.

First (naturally) through National Falls was Roger. He made a nice approach in his long downriver kayak. Zbel and Snyder were the only two racers to use these long unwieldy craft. Everybody else paddled boats of slalom or cruising designs.

Zbel crested the top and then, gasp, a bobble, and Roger went along the right hand wall. He was upright, he had lost some time, but the overall effect was not elegant. As this unfolded on the tube, boos rang out from every corner of the audience. Jeers and cries of derision poured down upon Roger, standing there helplessly before the onslaught. The tape was rewound and replayed. The boos got louder.

In vaudeville, this was known as a "tough audience". The winner by more than a minute was loudly bobbed, albeit good-naturedly, for a bobble.

I guess that sums up the race. Tough river. Tough race. Tough audience.

God willing, I'll see you there next year.

#### Upper Yough Downriver Race Results

##### K-1

1. Roger Zbel	29.06
2. Jeff Snyder	30.13
3. Brian Holmberg	31.44
4. Dan Schnurrenberger	32.23
5. Phil Coleman	32.40
6. Ted Newton	33.04
7. Tom Buzzel	33.53
8. Bill Heller	34.43
9. Rick Gasic	35.11
10. Scott Stouch	35.28

##### K-1-W

1. Kara Ruppel	35.34
2. Jane Allison	36.42
3. Char O'Brien	37.34



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# Gerber "Clip Lock" provokes controversy

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Editor,

I sent the following letter to Gerber in October 1987; I have not received a response. Since then, another friend has had a Gerber "Clip Lock" accidentally fall from the sheath. This incident occurred while guiding a raft on the Arkansas, and resulted in a minor laceration to her leg. I would like to hear from other boaters who have had this type of problem with Gerber "Clip Locks".

Joseph R. Gerber, Jr.  
Gerber Legendary Blades  
P.O. Box 23088  
Portland, Oregon 97223

Dear Mr. Gerber,

I am writing to complain about a design problem with your "Clip Lock" River Knife. I am a long-time fan of Gerber knives. When I first saw a "Clip Lock" I was very impressed. I sold the "Tekna" that I had used kayaking for 5 years and bought a single-edge "Clip Lock". I mounted it point-up on the left hand shoulder of my lifejacket, where the "Tekna" had been. Six trips later, my "Clip Lock" fell out of its sheath and disappeared while I was playing in Class IV water.

I considered this a freak occurrence until 2 weeks later when Todd Martin of Dallas lost his "Clip Lock" (which I had given him as a college graduation present) in the same rapid under identical circumstances. The rapid, Hueco Falls on the Guadalupe River in Texas, was at flood stage. The water was powerful and deep; the bottom was not involved in either loss. Although both of us eskimorolled many times, the circumstances were not unusual for whitewater boating. My old "Tekna" survived similar situations many times.

I feel that a knife marketed as a river knife should be secure under these circumstances. In addition to the loss of the knife, there is some danger to the boater when the knife is loose. I have talked to one boater who plans to attach a shock cord lanyard from the handle of his "Clip Lock" to his lifejacket. This will solve the loss problem, but aggravates the danger to the boater.

I would like Gerber to replace the knives that Todd and I lost, and address the security problem so that I do not lose another one.

Sincerely,  
James Hasse  
Houston, Texas



Jim does not need to look far to find boaters who have experienced similar problems with the Gerber "Clip Lock". I lost a "Clip Lock" that was mounted point-up on my life jacket, and I am personally aware of three other paddlers whose knives disappeared from their sheaths while on the water.

The problem appears to be attributable to a pair of reasons: first, the fact that many boaters like to wear their knives point-up. This position does offer better accessibility, which can be a crucial factor in case of an emergency.

However, wearing the knife upside-down necessitates 100% reliability of the locking mechanism. And the knife's initial design does not appear to produce that level of dependability.

The knife is held in its sheath by its "springlock" device—an integral piece of the handle that applies pressure against the lip of the sheath. To release the blade, the boater pushes against the spring and the knife can be drawn.

When the blade is worn point-up, the obvious placement of the spring is against the lifejacket so that the boater can grip the handle with a cross-hand draw and squeeze the spring with his thumb. Unfortunately, kayaking requires twisting and turning of the upper body and the lifejacket itself can press against the handle and release the knife.

Since I lost my first "Clip Lock", I bought another. I've never actually needed a knife for a river emergency, but there's been countless occasions when I've absolutely required a blade to open a ringless beer can or cut a piece of cheese.

I wear the blade point down, but there have still been occasions when I've tossed my lifejacket in the back of my truck and find that impact with the bed has opened the spring and the knife has temporarily vanished into the debris that collects there.

To be fair, the Gerber blade is of exceptional quality: the blade holds an edge like nobody's business and the grip feels good to the hand. But a river knife does require a superior locking device—and the early designs of the "Clip Lock" failed in that department.

Gerber is aware of the blade's early deficiencies.

"We have received some complaints



*The two photos illustrate the flaw in the old "Clip Lock" design. In the top photo, the formerly exposed spring is evident. At the bottom, when the spring is compressed against a PFD, the blade's locking mechanism is released.*

about losses of Clip-lock knives since their introduction," said Douglas Hutchens, Gerber Design Engineering Manager. "In response we have redesigned the locking clip to prevent accidental releases like you mentioned. The new configuration also has a lanyard hole for people who want use of such a feature."

Specifically, Gerber has recessed the "clip-lock" feature within the handle so that pressure against the spring cannot free the blade. Secondly, the spring has been bulked up so that accidental pressure won't prematurely

release the knife.

An inspection of the new design indicates the blade has a more secure seat in the sheath. Not surprisingly, boaters may find the recessed spring more difficult to find and extract when they want to release the blade, but not overwhelmingly so.

Recent reports from boaters confirm that these two changes have resolved the problem in securing the Gerber knife. But boaters who own the initial edition of the blade should exercise caution in attaching the knife to their lifejacket.

## safety cont.

member of the party, or a friend who knows the river. Your efforts are limited mostly by time and energy. In legal cases all possible witnesses are interviewed, but we're writing a story, not preparing a brief. If I have only sketchy information, perhaps secondhand, I'll write a one-paragraph summary with superficial conclusions. But with good information I'll write a longer report divided into five parts:

**HEADING:** The title: Fatal accident on the \_\_\_\_\_ River, followed by location, date, river level and difficulty.

**SUMMARY:** A brief account of what happened in few sentences.

**DESCRIPTION:** Here's where we lay out the details. A description of the run. The name of the victim and his background. The layout of the accident site. And a narrative about the event itself, the rescue, and the arrival of outside help. If the victim was not dead on the scene, a brief notation of what finally happened is in order.

**ANALYSIS:** Here's where you try to answer some of the questions posed by the description. Perhaps past history of the viciousness of the hole. A comment on the victim's tenacity and toughness, with the observation that this is not always the best thing to do. Suggestions of how the rescue might have proceeded faster based on hindsight or advice from other experts. Wording is very important, and I will cover this in a moment.

**CONCLUSIONS:** If you had to sum it up, what would you say? Perhaps that it shows that a single-minded stubbornness in rolling is not always good, and that **there are** times to bail out. Perhaps a comment that even

with **good** people along, there are places on the river where swift rescue is almost impossible. Focus on one idea, and keep it short!

It's important that in the analysis and conclusion phase that you point out problems without being accusatory. Instead of saying "John was known to be stubborn, and he stupidly stayed in his boat until he washed against a tree" **try** "Tenacity in rolling is usually a virtue, but in this case it was not. The victim was washed down a small drop into a tree where he became suddenly and securely pinned."

Instead of "I don't understand why the group couldn't get a rope to him for fifteen minutes" **try** "the group mobilized for rescue immediately, but were hampered by swift water, poor footing, and a lack of eddies. Despite their best efforts (a key phrase; even when people don't do the best thing, they invariably give it their utmost effort) they were unable to reach the victim for almost fifteen minutes. By then it was too late." This approach will gain quick approval of your source when you present the approach.

Is this a "whitewash?" Maybe. But remember: you weren't there. We're not **talking** about high crimes and misdemeanors here. We're **talking** about a group of friends whose fun day of paddling had an unexpected tragic end which no one wanted.

You may hear all kinds of wild rumors. The victim was on drugs. She was crazy and irresponsible on the water. His buddies left him to die. Don't dignify these malicious remarks by putting them in print unless you are completely sure that they're true. **Then** think again. Often they are wild **rumors** spread by people with a hidden agenda. And there are the sensibilities of the family

to consider, as well as possible legal action if you are wrong. You'd best be extremely careful when you take rumors public under your byline.

Even when terrible mistakes were made, remember that they were not deliberate. Most errors could easily have been made by any one of us, and nothing is gained by **making the survivors look like fools**. Had **circumstances** been different, they would be **writing** and you would be reading. Try to make the thought processes which lead to the oversight obvious to your reader so that they will not repeat the mental errors.

For example, if no **wetsuits** were worn on a cold river, you can say that "Because of the extreme heat, the group chose not to wear wetsuits. But upon capsizing, the absence of **wetsuits** in the icy water, combined with the continuous nature of the rapids, turned the situation from uncomfortable to desperate." Remember we are trying to learn why it happened so we can avoid similar mistakes ourselves. In this case, **the hope** is that when someone on another rafting trip complains about wetsuits, the reader will be motivated to tell them why they should keep them on.

Once you've written the report and gotten the approval of the survivors, there's one more thing to think about before you put it in the club newsletter. Remember that these publications will, in all likelihood, be delivered to the victim's home where his wife, relatives, and kids will read it. It can be pretty shocking to come upon this, unexpected, several months after the fact. Someone may want to contact the relatives and show them the report before they are likely to see it. Occasionally they will ask for a **delay** in publication because of matters **connected** with the estate. Such requests are usually reasonable, and should be honored.

As you have gathered, there is a lot to think about when constructing an accident report. As paddlers, the standard of sensitivity we are aiming towards is considerably higher than that used by newsmen or police. But by getting the information out we increase awareness and save lives. This causes some good to result from these tragic events, which is both a comfort to the family and a benefit to whitewater sport.



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**THE 2ND ANNUAL  
APRIL 1 & 2, 1989**



**Class III, IV water**

- **Wildwater race**
- **Whitewater rodeo**

**Cash prizes**

- **Exhibitors**
- **Spaghetti dinner**

The Benscreek Canoe Club, Inc. from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, home of famous floods, has been trying for years to convince local authorities that water releases from a large reservoir above the Stonycreek Canyon could bring paddlers and tourists into the area. Help us prove this by showing up for this exciting event. We are requesting a release and hoping for the best. Normal levels are usually adequate during this time of year but a release would make it even better. Your presence may insure future water releases even through the summer. For more information, read this publication or call Bruce Penrod (814) 487-4164.

# L. Yough project to start

The hydro developer at Yough Lake Dam has been granted permission to proceed with construction of his project, under conditions which guarantee sufficient flows for whitewater at Ohiopyle.

The developer has the capacity to pump 325 CFS over the Dam, during construction in the discharge tunnel. However, if the flow at Ohiopyle falls below 650 CFS at any time, the developer must cease work and allow flows through the tunnel. During the next fall and winter, flows at Ohiopyle must equal a minimum of 500 CFS.

Construction must be completed by March 1, 1989.



*Boaters will continue to stream through the gates at the Lower Yough put-in despite construction of an upstream hydro project.*

## No action from MD DNR on Upper Yough mess

Each summer during the summer, boaters from the Mid Atlantic area congregate at the Upper Yough to catch the brief release from Deep Creek Lake, courtesy of the Penn Elec Company.

Each week, as they paddle downstream, they are surrounded by huge flotillas of rafts. It seems as though a new company shows up every month.

Even more troubling, each week brings a new view of the scarred slopes along the river banks where timbering is in progress in obvious violation of the State Wild and Scenic River law.

Timbering on at least one parcel in the wild and scenic corridor is now so widespread as to cause comment among even the most hardened observers. In several areas, trees and brush have been just pushed into the river. Fires are left smoldering unattended. Road cuts are becoming visible from the river in several locations in the scenic corridor.

Meanwhile, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the agency responsible for enforcing State regulations designed to protect the scenic character of the river, is nowhere in evidence. The DNR just looks the other way.

DNR has adopted the "Os-trich Approach" to scenic preservation and management of commercial rafting at the Upper Yough—just put your head in the sand and you won't be troubled by reality.

After promising to do a study of river safety and congestion for two years running, DNR has done virtually nothing to get the study underway. After promising to put emergency regulations in place in 1987 and then again in 1988, DNR has likewise done virtually nothing. The agency is beginning to develop a major league talent for doing

nothing.

The same pattern seems to be in place with the State's highly acclaimed plan to purchase lands in the Upper Yough scenic corridor. The State was supposed to start buying large parcels of land adjacent to the river from landowners who want to sell. But so far, only two tracts owned by the Penn Elec Power Company have been purchased.

The State's failure to fulfill its management responsibilities at the Upper Yough is leading us right back into the rathole we were in several years ago.

## Oregon cont.

Robert Packwood (R). The bill would designate 40 rivers covering 1,705 miles as wild and scenic. By comparison, in the 20 years since the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act became law only 75 rivers have been added to the system.

The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) generally endorsed the bill, although they recommended modest alterations in the length and type of designation of many segments. Although the forest industry, while worried about adverse impacts on timber harvests, did "not

oppose" the bill on condition that it authorize timber sales elsewhere to offset losses from river designations.

S 2148, and its House companion 4259, introduced by Rep. Denny Smith (R-Ore.), will not go anywhere this year because Congress is almost out of time. And the sheer technical complexity of forging a compromise among all the parties interested in each river will be time consuming. But the influence of Hatfield on natural resource issues, particularly in the Forest Service, insures that the bill will make a strong run next year.

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## WV Rivers cont.

was built. This kind of attraction brings in a lot of **fishing licenses**. And the DNR budget is funded by fishing and hunting licenses. DNR officials have been unhappy ever since Citizens for Gauley River and other whitewater groups convinced Congress not to fund the Corps long-tunnel project.

The sudden resurrection of the long-tunnel project left proponents of the West Virginia Rivers bill suspicious. Did the DNR's affection for that project have something to do with their effort to kill the bill?

Supporters Panic but Congressman Puts it All Together

When word got out about the long-tunnel talk and about **NRA oppo-**

**sition** to the bill, whitewater groups were panic-stricken. But the bill's sponsor, **Congressman Nick Rahall**, kept his cool. He moved quickly to outflank the opposition. Fortunately, he was able to do this without undercutting the key protections contained in the bill.

Rahall amended the bill to delete the Meadow River from the wild and scenic category. At the same time, he expanded the boundaries of the **proposed** Gauley River National Recreation Area to bring in the lower Meadow. Since trapping is not controversial in national recreation areas, Rahall's ingenious maneuver sidestepped **the problem**. It allowed river conservationists to keep the lower Meadow in protected status although not as a wild and scenic river. In addition,

he persuaded both sides to accept language allowing West Virginia to continue an existing wildlife management program (including trapping) in the Bluestone as long as it wanted.

These moves allowed the **bill** to pass without further snags. The West Virginia Rivers Bill is a landmark piece of legislation, a big victory for whitewater rivers. All along the way, the bill was only millimeters from crushing defeat. Whitewater fans owe a huge debt to Congressman Nick Rahall of West Virginia and to his incredibly hardworking and enthusiastic staff. They drafted the bill and struggled to gain enactment of it for more than two years. In the end, Rahall's skillful and determined legislative maneuvering saved it from a vicious last minute sneak attack.

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## letters cont.

Dear Sirs,

I am a professional raft guide for a large rafting company in West **Virginia**. I am writing to you in regards to an incident which occurred on the New River.

A worker was raft guiding Memorial Day weekend. He was running Fayette Station rapid, which is a popular play spot for kayakers. At the bottom of the rapid a kayaker intentionally paddled the nose of his boat onto the raft, spearing the guide in the ribs. Had it not been for the **padding** in his lifejacket this guide would have been seriously injured. As it was he had bruised ribs and missed several days of work.

As a kayaker and a raft guide for many years, I have never witnessed such a malicious act from one boater to another. Possibly that kayaker was not aware that **guiding** rafts is some people's livelihood. When a guide is injured and is unable to work they lose income.

I feel that the only way to resolve the situation between kayakers and rafters is to respect each other's space and show a little common courtesy.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Zerkle  
Hico, WV

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## Moose cont.



Despite low levels through the spring and summer, paddlers took advantage of the **10** scheduled release dates as well as using many of the **10** optional dates that were available upon demand.

Because of the river's degree of difficulty, the Bottom Moose has never received the paddling pressure evident on intermediate runs. However, low water conditions combined with the publicity generated by the release **program encour-**

aged a record number of boaters over the past season.

The **sign-in program** demanded by Long Lake Energy did not prove particularly burdensome and the safe use of the resource during the season may demonstrate to the power company the needlessness of continuing the policy in **future** years.



## Adlronclack Mt Club Sch-enectady

☐ Jack Daniels  
722 Rankin Ave.  
Schenectady, NY 12308-3425

## Allegheny Canoe Club

☐ Walt Pilewski  
755 W. Spring St.  
Titusville, PA 16534

## Antioch Kayak Club

☐ Karl Mahle  
PE Dept. Antioch College  
Yellow Springs, OH 45387

## App. Mt. Club Cl. Bk. Chap.

☐ Bill Cushwa  
63 Silver St.  
South Hadley, MA 01075

## Australlan Institute of Sport

PO Box 176  
Belconnen, Australia  
ACT 2616

## Baer's River Workshop

RR1 138 Arcadia Rd.  
Hope Valley, RI 02832

## Beartooth Paddler's Society

☐ Micheal Maxwell  
4440 Toyon Drive  
Billings, MT 59106

## Blue Ridge River Runners

☐ Travis Overstreet, Sr.  
PO Box 315  
Monroe, VA 24574

## Boat Busters Anonymous

2961 Hemingway Ave.  
St. Paul MN 55119

## Buck Ridge Ski Club

PO Box 179  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

## Carolina Canoe Club

PO Box 9011  
Greensboro, NC 27408

## Champaign Canoeing

☐ Keech T. Leclair  
Brayton Park  
Ossining, NY 10562

## Ctl. IL Whltewater Club

2502 Willow Street  
Pekin, IL 61554

## Chicago Whltewater Assn.

☐ Marge Cline  
1343 N. Portage  
Palatine, IL 60067

## Coastal Canoeists

PO Box 566  
Richmond, VA 23204

## Colorado Whltewater Assoc.

7600 E. Arapahoe  
Englewood, CO 80112

## E. TN Whltewater Club

PO Box 3074  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

## EMC Outdoor Program

1500 N. 30th, Box 556  
Billings, MT 59101

## Explorer Post 2001

11627 South Arbor  
Houston, TX 77089

## GLOP.

☐ James Tibensky  
PO Box 2576  
Chicago, IL 60690

## Georgia Canoeing Assoc.

PO Box 7023  
Atlanta, GA 30357

## Gr. Baltimore Canoe Club

PO Box 235  
Riderwood, MD 21139

## Hong Kong Snakes KC

22 Bushy Hill Rd.  
Simsbury, CT 06070

## Idaho Whltewater Assoc.

1418 Sherman  
Boise, ID 83702

## John Abbott College

☐ Jim Ongena  
Ste. Anne de Bellevue  
Quebec, H9X3L9

## Kayak Chapter

☐ John O'Malley  
3119 Amherst Ave.  
Manhattan, KS 66502-3097

## KCCNY

☐ Phyllis Horowitz  
PO Box 329  
Phonocia, NY 12464

## Lehigh Valley Canoe Club

PO Box 2726  
Lehigh Valley, PA 18001

## Lower Columbia Canoe Club

Box 5284  
Portland, OR 97208-5284

## Meramec River Canoe Club

☐ Earl Biffle  
26 Lake Road  
Fenton, MO 63026

## Niagara Gorge Kayak Club

☐ Douglas Bushnell  
7661 Tonawanda Cr. Rd.  
Lockport, NY 14090-9348

## NORS

Att: Mary McCurdy  
Box 6847  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

## Northern AZ Paddlers Club

PO Box 1224  
Flagstaff, AZ 86002

## Northwest Passage

515 Maple  
Wilmette, IL 60091

## Outdoor Adventure Program

Bldg. 2800  
Mt. Home AFB  
ID, 83648-5000

## Ozark Wilderness Waterways

PO Box 16032  
Kansas City, MO 64112

## Philadelphia Canoe Club

4900 Ridge Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19128

## Piedmont Paddlers Canoe Club

PO Box 41051  
Charlotte, NC 28241-0501

## River Rendezvous

PO Box 888  
Telluride, CO 81435

## Ross Fink

7659 Goodland Ave.  
N. Hollywood, CA 91605

## Rutgers U. Outdoor Club

☐ Robert Markley  
PO Box 231  
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

## Sierra Club Loma Prieta Ch.

☐ Dave Kim  
3309 Oxford Lane  
San Jose, CA 95117

## Syracuse Outing Club

☐ Mark Defley, Whitewater Ch.  
Ski Lodge, Skytop Rd.  
Syracuse, NY 13210

## Texas Whitewater Assoc.

Box 5429  
Austin, TX 78763

## Three Rivers Paddling Club

☐ George Mower  
206 Spencer Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15227

## Toledo River Gang

☐ Jim Hock  
320 Cyril St.  
Toledo, OH 43605-1802

## Valdez Alpine Club

☐ Andrew Embick MD  
PO Box 1889  
Valdez, AK 99686

## Viking Canoe Club

PO Box 32263  
Louisville, KY 40232

## Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club

PO Box 1062  
Corvallis, OR 97339

## WPAFB Outdoor Adventure Club

☐ Rod Joblove  
2845 Liberty Ellerton Rd.  
Dayton, OH 45418

## *Business and boating leave paddlers...*

# Adding an extra 'P' to Yuppie

Here's a hypothetical lifestyle crisis for you to ponder:

You're a rising young corporate star already pulling down a salary in the mid-thirties. And while you work out of either Pittsburgh, Washington, Atlanta, San Francisco, Denver or Seattle, there's plenty of whitewater runs in easy driving distance.

Let's face it: whitewater boating isn't prominently listed on your resume. The fact that you spend weekends dropping over waterfalls, that you wear the same pair of river shorts for 48 straight hours, or that you exercise the discretion of a street person as to where you sleep would not necessarily reinforce your business image.

Demographics indicate that whitewater boaters are primarily well-educated individuals with professional occupations who live in urban settings. That's an ironic statistic. Whitewater boating exudes a definite backwoods aura.

The rustic informality that surrounds boating can't be explained away by the fact that paddling is an outdoors activity. There are plenty of other outdoors sports that re, well, more socially acceptable.

**Skiing**, for instance. A typical skier appears on the slopes attired in a pastel outfit that may well cost more than the boards, boots and bindings on his feet. And even after a skier spends an entire day bashing moguls, he can step out of his bindings and into a bar looking as fresh and fashionable as when the day began.

Compare that with your appearance while preparing for a cold weather run. You look like a human zip-loc. Sealed into a dry suit, your

appear like you're modeling the latest fashion for toxic-waste removal. Dangling from your waist is the spray skirt—a device totally foreign to anyone outside the whitewater community. Most observers figure it to be a neoprene codpiece.

And so far as stepping off the river and into a bistro—forget it. By the time you're done with a run, a line of mucus drips from your nose, your hair is spiked like a Punker, blood streams from your knuckles and the pungent odor of unwashed polypropylene wafts from your body—not exactly what is called "dressing for success."

Boating and business don't necessarily blend in other regards. You can seal a deal with acclient while riding up a chairlift, or strolling down a fairway or even on a cycling excursion, but can you imagine sharing an eddy above a class V drop and discussing stock options?

Whitewater boating is too selfish to allow the work-a-day world intrude. It demands all of the boater's attention while on the river and most of his time from Saturday morning until Sunday night.

So you're careful to conceal your pastime: boats are well hidden in the basement of your townhouse, racks are pulled off the roof of your BMW or Honda first thing Monday morning and those frequent long weekends are explained away by imaginary participation in a more socially acceptable activity...like golf, or sailing.

It's tough to be a young, urban, professional paddler. That extra 'P' in the acronym could flush your career down the toilet.

But—what happens if one day

a senior Vice President ushers you into his office, shakes your hand and congratulates you on your promotion to a position in Des Moines...or Omaha...or Topeka?

**Jeez, it's** time to fish or cut bait. And you have the following options:

(1) **Move to the Midwest.** Take up windsurfing.

(2) Proclaim a medical condition prevents accepting the **transfer**—you're allergic to corn and wheat pollen.

(3) Tender your resignation, dispose of all earthly possessions and accept employment as a raft guide.

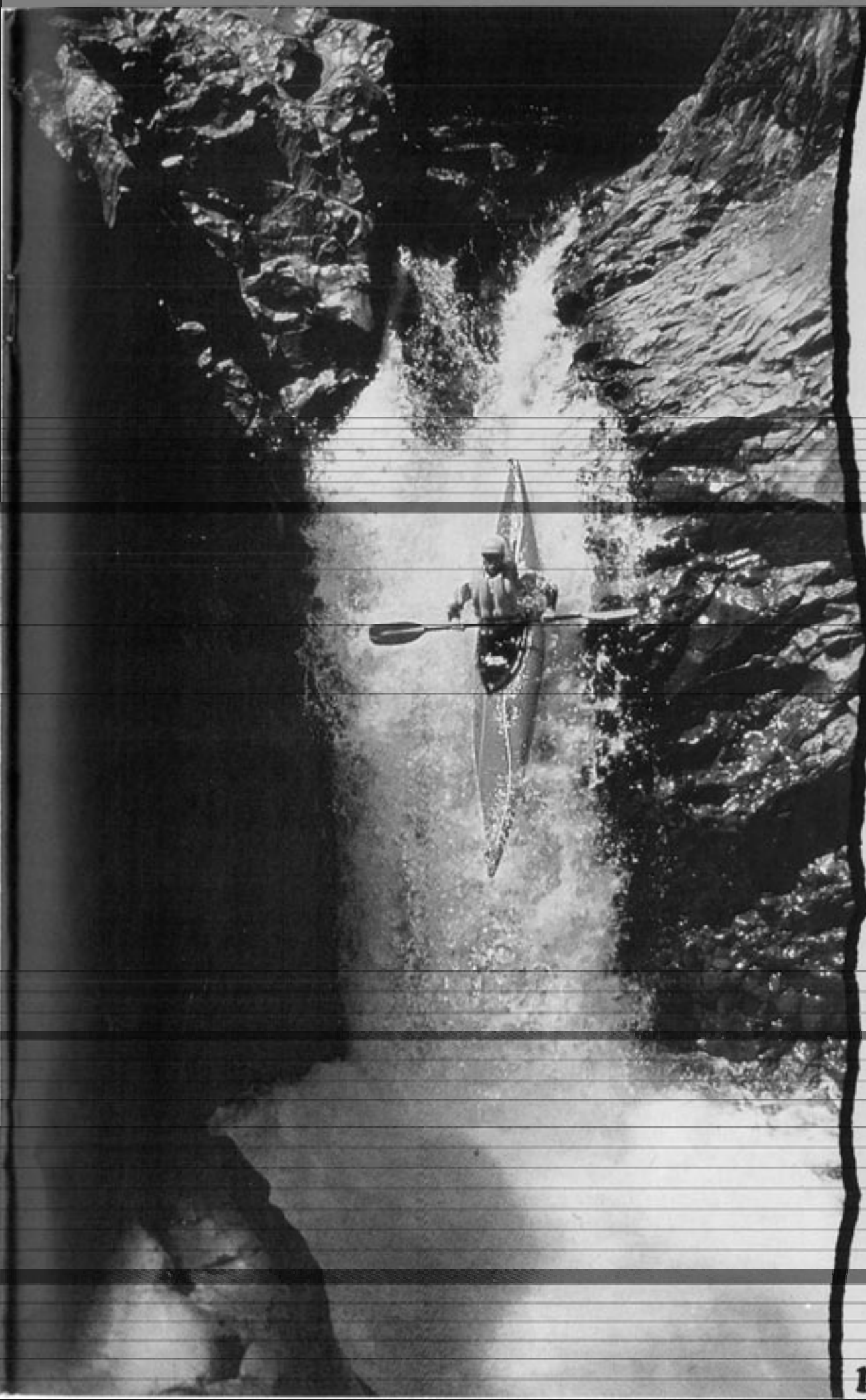
**There** are some exceptions. The city of Chicago, for instance, has an active whitewater paddling community. You can tell when a Chicago paddler is parked at a river takeout: Illinois plates, an odometer that reads over 100,000 miles and road-kill **insects** splattered deep on the nose of the boat roped on the roof.

Midwestern boaters, who rely on frequent long weekends for pilgrimages to West Virginia and Tennessee, find it more difficult concealing their secret pastime:

"You're **taking** Friday off again, Bob? What's going on...you have a mistress locked up out in the country?"

Well, there's an element of truth to that assumption. And **Lord** knows...in some circles, it's better to be labeled a philanderer than a whitewater boater.

*By Gary Carlson, who despite ample cause, hides few of his sins.*



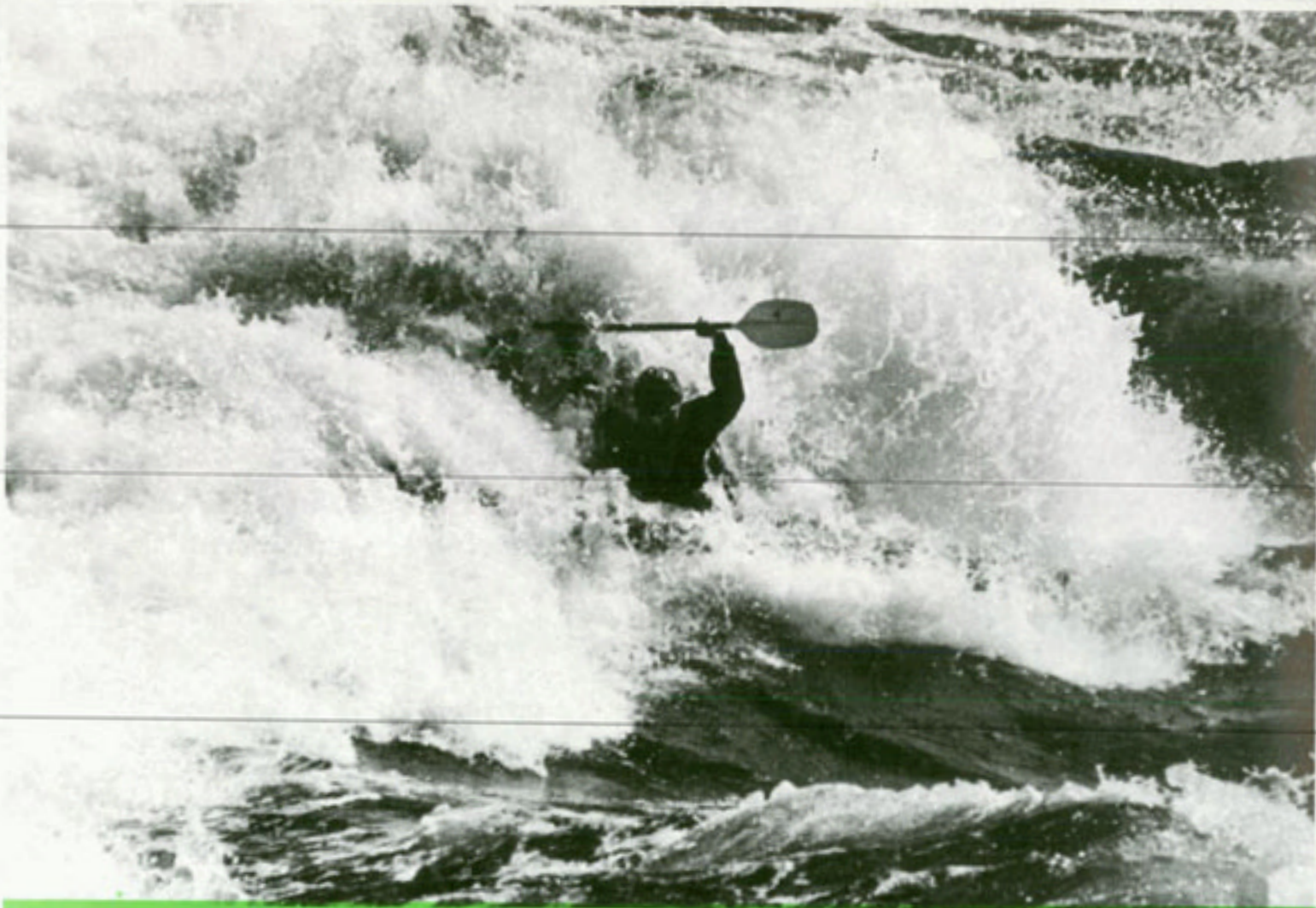
Take  
me  
to  
the  
river...  
drop  
me  
in  
the  
water...

Phil DeRiemer, Siete  
Tazas, Rio Claro, Chile  
Photo by Lars Holbek.  
Kayak by Perception.

1110 Powdersville Road,  
Easley, South Carolina 29640.  
(803) 859-7518

  
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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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*Address Correction Requested*

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