



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
November/December 2008



Paddling the **UNKNOWN**

Expedition Paddling on Nepal's Humla Karnali

Stalking ELFs in the Heart of the Desert"

First Descent of Hellroaring Creek"

Oh Be Joyful, and Joyful, and Joyful, and Joyful, and Joyful

Plus: A Family Adventure on the Rogue"



EJ
Trying to keep up with his kids

Lauren
Team JK since age 8

Clay
World Cup Bronze Medalist

Spins a good yarn
Stephen
Hobbit King-Jumping Bean combo, World Cup Medalist

Jay
World Champ Ultimate Fighter looking for a sparing partner

Dane
Beat Dad this year

Emily
World Champ just got her starter home (VW Van)

Pikey
Adopted by Kristine as team mascot

Jason
National Champ Hip Hop King Boy Biscuit

Nick
World Champion Keeping EJ on his toes

Devon
National Champ D.A.R.E.S. to keep kids off drugs

Reigning World Champion Black Dog

Outstanding in Our Field

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AMERICAN WHITewater

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

November/December 2008 - Volume #48 - Issue #6

COLUMNS

- 3 The Journey Ahead by Mark Singleton
- 4 Letters To the Editor
- 6 News & Notes
- 8 Board Bios
- 65 Book Review: Kayaking Alone



STEWARDSHIP UPDATES

- 14 Tuckasegee Dam Relicensing Inches Toward Success by Kevin Colburn
- 14 New Organization Formed on the Susquehanna by Kevin Colburn

PADDLING THE UNKNOWN

- 18 When a Plan Comes Together by Jeff West
- 20 Resurrection of an ELF: The Story of Fossil Creek by Christian D. Bates
- 34 Nepal's Humla Karnali by Tom Saffell
- 44 First Descent of Hellroaring Creek by Patrick Rogers



RIVER VOICES

- 10 Hell's Canyon Adventure by Reneé Paradis
- 12 It's All About the Passion by Conner Jackson
- 48 Rogue River Gods by Raoul Adamchak
- 52 Teething by Eliot Treichel
- 56 River Karma by Sharon Hailey
- 62 My Kayaking Transformation by Stacy Falk



Support American Whitewater through CFC or United Way

All of the Federal CFC campaigns (CFC # 11351) and a few of the local United Way campaigns will allow you to donate through them to AW. Also, check to see if your employer will match your charitable contributions: double your giving ... double your fun!



Cover: "Cornville" Jeff Johnson tackles the conventional line at Irving's Double Drop photo by Christian Bates



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Purpose American Whitewater

River Stewardship: An Integrated Approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

EDUCATION: AW shares information with the general public and the paddling community regarding whitewater rivers, as well as river recreation, conservation, access, and safety. This is accomplished through our bi-monthly AW Journal, a monthly e-news, americanwhitewater.org, paddling events, educational events, and through direct communication with the press.

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

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



American Whitewater Journal Staff

Editor Ambrose Tuscano
14076 Northwoods Blvd. Truckee, California 96161
e-mail: editor@americanwhitewater.org

Assitant Editor Tim Catalano

Graphic Design/Production/Photo Editor Christie Dobson

Contributing Writers

Kevin Colburn, Ambrose Tuscano, Doug Ammons, Nathan Fey, Dave Steindorf, Mark Singleton, Paul Gamache, Carla Miner, Don Kinser, Ben Lawhon, Christian Bates, Tom Blue, Harrison Metzger, Futureboater, Bob Wilson, Charlie Walbridge, Sharon Hailey

Photo Contributors

Michael Ackerman, Emily Ressler, Christian Bates, Kevin Colburn, Kent Vertrees, Dave Steindorf, Brad Xanthopoulos, Corey Morton, Sam Hamilton, Keel Brightman, All Terrain Images, Colin Moneypenny, Grant Amaral, Doug Ammons, Monte Morevac, Leland Davis, Sharon Hailey

Events / Advertising Coordinator Ben VanCamp
P.O. Box 1540, Cullowhee, NC 28723
phone 828-713-5825
e-mail: ben@amwhitewater.org

Safety Editor Charlie Walbridge
Route 1, Box 329F, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525
e-mail: ccwalbridge@cs.com

Stewarship Reports Editor
Kevin Colburn, kevin@americanwhitewater.org

American Whitewater Magazine Task Force
Jeff Espy, Dunbar Hardy, Dale-Marie Herring, John Mason, Tanya Shuman, Ambrose Tuscano

Missing Copies and Address Changes
carla@americanwhitewater.org

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

Board of Directors & Staff

**TOLL FREE NUMBER
866-BOAT4AW**

Sutton Bacon
sutton@suttonbacon.com
Atlanta, GA

Chris Bell
chris@boatingbeta.com
Asheville, NC

Rich Bowers
[nrwriters@comcast.net](mailto:nwriters@comcast.net)
Bellingham, WA

Dave Cernicek
cernicek@cluemail.com
Jackson, WY

Adam Cramer
cramerica@gmail.com
Washington, DC

Jennie Goldberg
jennie@nwwhitewater.org
Seattle, WA

Kristine Jackson
kristine@jacksonkayak.com
Rock Island, TN

Don Kinser
dkinser@ediltd.com
Marietta, GA

Evie Locke
evelynlocke@verizon.net
Charlottesville, MA

Eric Nies
nies@runbox.com
New Paltz, NY

Aaron Pruzan
aaron@jacksonholekayak.com
Jackson Hole, WY

Norwood Scott
wns111@sbcglobal.com
San Francisco, CA

Charlie Walbridge
ccwalbridge@cs.com
Bruceton Mills, WV

BOARD OFFICERS

President: Don Kinser
Vice President: Norwood Scott
Secretary: Jennie Goldberg
Treasurer: Chris Bell
At Large: Dave Cernicek

AW STAFF

Laura Blalock
Finance Manager
Cullowhee, NC
laura@americanwhitewater.org

Kevin Colburn
National Stewardship Director
Missoula, MT
kevin@americanwhitewater.org

Carla Miner
Membership Manager
West Valley City, UT
carla@americanwhitewater.org

Thomas O'Keefe
Pacific NW Stewardship Director
Seattle, WA
okeefe@americanwhitewater.org

Mark Singleton
Executive Director
Cullowhee, NC
mark@americanwhitewater.org

Dave Steindorf
California Stewardship Director
Chico, CA
dave@americanwhitewater.org

Nathan Fey
Colorado Stewardship Director
Longmont, CO
nathan@americanwhitewater.org

Jeff Paine
Outreach Director
Simsbury, CT
jeff@americanwhitewater.org

The Journey Ahead

This is an important issue of *American Whitewater*—it's your opportunity to elect board members who will represent you for the next three years. I hope you will take some time to look over the outstanding slate of candidates on page 8-9 and use the attached mail-in ballot to cast your vote as a member of American Whitewater.

American Whitewater was founded on a single premise: paddlers have a responsibility to protect wild rivers and the wildness inherent in all rivers. American Whitewater strongly believes that paddlers and other river users can be effective river advocates if they have the right tools to do so. No other community of people knows our nation's whitewater rivers so well, or so completely surveys these resources each year. With this knowledge, and through the experiences we share with rivers, comes the desire and responsibility to speak for rivers and to advocate for their protection. Rivers cannot vote, negotiate, litigate, write editorials, or file comments on their own behalf, but paddlers and other river users can be the voice of rivers in all these forums.

American Whitewater's board of directors embodies the notion of grassroots advocates who live the AW mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." Currently, the American Whitewater board consists of 13 voting members who serve three-year terms. The Executive Director works closely with the six-person Executive Committee comprised of the officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary) and two at-large members.

Because American Whitewater is administered at the staff level, the principle role of the board is that of governance—making decisions crucial to the care and feeding of the organization. In carrying out those responsibilities, members of a board must fulfill certain duties to the organization and the public it serves. This involves setting priorities and strategies to address our mission, and ensuring the administrative integrity and financial stability of the organization.

Key responsibilities of board members include:

- Determine AW's mission and purposes
- Provide ongoing support and guidance for the executive
- Ensure effective organizational planning
- Ensure adequate organizational resources
- Determine and monitor AW's programs and services
- Enhance AW's public image
- Expand AW's sphere of influence
- Attend annual board meetings and prepare adequately for them
- Assess and evaluate board performance and effectiveness

The process for becoming a board member includes the following four steps: 1. Candidates must be members of AW and will be considered and interviewed by the Nominating Committee.

2. AW board members will interview candidates and ask candidates to attend a board meeting so that they have a chance to see firsthand how the organization functions.

3. Successful candidates will be placed on the ballot.

4. AW members then elect candidates for three-year terms.

Among AW's founding principles is a commitment to "Protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources." Our board of directors has guided the organization since the mid-1950s and, in the process, left behind a legacy of river stewardship. American Whitewater volunteers and staff have worked on whitewater rivers of all sizes and challenges throughout the country. Here are just a few historical achievements:

- AW members proposed some of the initial concepts for protection of Wisconsin's waterways that Senator Gaylord Nelson incorporated into the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This legislation was passed in 1968 and we continue to use this important tool for protecting some of our nation's most spectacular rivers.

- AW has represented the public interest at over 100 federally licensed hydropower projects restoring flows on rivers that have been dewatered for decades.
- AW has worked with a variety of agencies to remove over a dozen dams on rivers and we have several more scheduled for removal, including some major projects in the West.
- AW is a founding member of the Hydropower Reform Coalition, now comprised of well over 100 organizations, representing public interest in hydropower relicensing. Our coalition has significantly enhanced the ability of the public to have a voice in the management of rivers impacted by hydropower development for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and people.
- AW has joined forces with other human powered outdoor recreation organizations to found the Outdoor Alliance (Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Hiking Society, International Mountain Biking Association, and Winter Wildlands). This coalition is aimed at representing human powered recreationists on a national level. The Outdoor Alliance represents the common goals of preserving and restoring our natural resources for responsible recreation. Our coalition approach provides a stronger voice for our interests in Washington, DC and is helping to shape public policy for improved recreational access and conservation on all American public lands.

In addition, American Whitewater is working at the state and federal level to protect our bedrock environmental laws and to preserve the ability of the public to safely enjoy clean, free-flowing rivers. These conservation efforts are made possible through your membership and donations to American Whitewater and by the commitment of volunteer board members to guide the organization.

See you on the river,



Letters to the Editor

Editor's Note: *In recent years, we've received many letters opposing the United States Forest Service's policies that ban boating on the Upper Chattooga. None have had the rhetorical weight of the following plea. This letter, addressed to the Forest Service, was forwarded to us by the author's wife. She found it in his draft e-mail folder after his death, on August 20th—literally his last wish.*

Sirs,

I am writing, because I understand the USFS is planning to implement Option 4 to effectively eliminate whitewater boating on the Upper Chattooga. This is frustrating because it is my second or third attempt to inject a little reason and fairness into the controversy.

You can rest easy that this will probably be my last attempt. I am a retired engineer former kayaker, mountain biker and hiker. I say former because in February I was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer a la Ted Kennedy. You could ask why I am using what little time I have left for what appears to be tilting bureaucratic windmills for a sport in which I can no longer participate. I have been a kayaker for almost 40 years and I cannot adequately express how rewarding the sport and resulting friendships have been. Family support and memories of those days are among the most important things I have left. I will consider myself a kayaker until the end and in what time I have left I would like to make a plea for USFS honesty and fairness in establishing regulations and openness in expressing the real reason for decisions. Everyone knows that environmental impacts have nothing to do with the decision and the real issue is pressure from well-connected interest groups.

Among kayaking, fishing, hiking and mountain biking, kayaking has by far the least impact. You should drive over the mountains sometime and look at the beautiful Tellico River. It is my favorite river, and except for a few parking spots shared with fishermen, there is no way to tell that this river has ever been used for

kayaking. In my experience on the Tellico, Little River, in The Great Smokies Park, etc kayakers are generally respectful of fishermen and we can coexist if both sides show common courtesy. Observe on a day when the water is up and see for yourself if kayakers are the Hell's Angels of outdoor sports. The people I paddle with include doctors, lawyers, scientists and engineers, some with Ph.D.s like myself.

Hiking trails create erosion, but surely no one would eliminate hiking over this. Mountain biking has serious erosion problems, and is often incompatible with hiking. Most mountain bikers are responsible and restrict themselves to designated trails and forest service roads, which are resistant to erosion. Fishing also has a low impact, except for fishing trails and the occasional line or lure inadvertently left in the river.

My wife and kids recently went boating on the Hiwassee River in Tennessee. They had a wonderful time, but she noted that there was an objectionable odor of dead fish in many areas where fishermen cleaned their catch. She never suggested that fishing should be banned only that they respect others and clean up.

1. Should there be new standards limiting railheads, trails and/or campsites? Of course if high use makes it necessary. In traveling all over the country I have seen that the USFS is usually very effective and fair in dealing with intensive use of public land.

2. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access? Again, of course, if necessary, and as long as all users are treated fairly and equally and the standards are based on empirical data and not the arbitrary opinions and hyperbole of pressure groups. The question seems to imply that all encounters should be avoided and user groups segregated. As a kayaker and hiker I have had many encounters with other hikers, kayakers and fishermen. They have been exclusively pleasant and certainly not something to be avoided or regulated.

3. Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River? The Upper Chattooga should never have been closed to boating in the first place. I would be interested to know on all USFS lands how many rivers are closed to boaters due to concerns about environmental impacts. I am a passionate believer that public lands are for all the public, not just for special interests with money and political clout. I am not inherently against special interests. After all, we whitewater boater are ourselves a special interest and often special interests play a vital role in protecting public lands. However, I can think of no case where we have ever tried to limit another group's rights because of a perceived benefit to ourselves.

I realize this letter will probably have no effect but, if one person reads it and understands in their heart how arbitrary and unfair this regulation is, perhaps in the future they will be in the position to have the courage to stand up against similar outside pressures. I can live(?) with that.

Herbert M Scull
Knoxville, TN

Dear Editor,

I very much enjoyed Paul Gamache's "R2: The High-Life of Rafting" in the September/October issue. I thought I might add a historical note and a couple of thoughts on design and technique.

My own experience with R2-ing dates back to 1986. That's when Jim Cassady (co-author with me and Fryar Calhoun of *Western Whitewater*) had the inspiration to create a two-person paddle raft—something that hadn't been practical before Cassady and others pioneered the development self-bailers in the early 1980s. Self-bailing was essential to the R2 concept, since a two-person crew couldn't spare one member for bailing. Cassady talked SOTAR into custom-building a 10-foot self-bailer, and I was Cassady's first R2 disciple. For years we had the only two "Micro-TARS" in existence, and they were regarded as a real curiosity. We always wondered whether we were the first to try R2'ing, but were never certain (by the late 80s we started to hear of people R2-ing Shredders back east). In any event we were immediately hooked and in 1993 we wrote a feature article on R2-ing for *Paddler*. Even so it took the sport a while to catch on, and as late as 1996, when I wrote a sidebar on R2-ing for Jeff Bennett's *The Complete Whitewater Rafter*, we were still drawing stares.

Incredibly, my wife and I still have our original 1986 "Micro-TAR," going strong after more than two decades of abuse on bony, challenging, creek-style water. Over the past 22 years I have paddled it more than any other boat we own. Cassady and I ordered our original boats with no thwarts, on the theory that thwarts were only essential in larger rafts for lateral rigidity, but could be eliminated in a very small urethane boat that was already incredibly stiff. I still prefer our "open" thwart-less design, which allows more versatility in paddler seating and more room for gear. We use footcups for bracing instead of thwarts, sometimes dropping to one knee for extra stability and leverage. Our fairly narrow design relies on sharp high and low bracing to keep the boat



stable, much like a tandem canoe.

Cassady and I typically paddled in an offset, diagonal seating arrangement—somewhat like a playboat-style tandem canoe—and that's still how I usually prefer to run my boat (see photos). Although Paul's article only describes side-by-side seating, I'd encourage R2 teams to experiment with diagonal seating, which has some advantages. For example, with no thwarts in the way I can paddle stern right in technical water—which gives me great control of boat angle—but then slide forward as we head over a steep drop or punch a hole so that I'm alongside my bow left partner with our weight shifted forward. Another advantage of offset seating is that if we need to shift our weight drastically to one side or the other—as in a highside or lowside—it's easy to move completely to the opposite side of the boat without banging into your partner. This kind of mobility can be a real life-saver when you broadside a rock or get an unexpected sidesurf in a big hole. Weight-shifting gets harder when you're seated side-by-side with thwarts in the way.

Thanks again for a great article on my favorite style of rafting.

Bill Cross

News & Notes



Tyler Hinton & Hailey Thompson,
winners of the 2008 Ray McLain Cup

Mach One Wins Junior Olympics....Again

By the Junior Olympic Committee

While the emphasis for the summer of 2008 was on the Olympic Games in Beijing, China, and the many World and World Cup slalom, freestyle, and wildwater events in Europe and elsewhere, the 13th annual Whitewater Junior Olympic Festival held at Wausau, Wisconsin, on July 3-13 was still quite a success.

Wausau was the site of the initial Junior Olympics competition in 1996 and also will be the site of the 2012 World Junior Slalom Championships. Having hosted numerous other national and international events over the years, this small city in the Midwest continues to rank as one of the "top ten" paddling communities in the United States.

In recent years, the JO Program has morphed from being somewhat of a cut-throat slalom competition into more of a family-friendly festival, with no fewer than five separate events: Olympic-style and extreme slalom, boater-cross, freestyle, and wildwater. Despite the changes, it was the Mach One Club coached by Dave Kurtz and headquartered in Pennsylvania that continued to lead the way. Kurtz's contingent of kids won both the Chuck Hines Cup for supremacy in the prestigious Olympic-style slalom and the Ray McLain Cup for compiling the highest number of points in all five disciplines. This was the fourth JO title for Mach One, having taken top honors in 2002, 2006, and 2007.

Placing second to Mach One this year in both Cup races was Front Range, Colorado, coached by Chris Wiegand. Front Range capped the Ray McLain Cup in 2005.

Missing from this year's JO Festival was the Nantahala Racing Club of North Carolina, which won previous Chuck Hines Cup slalom trophies in 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005. NRC's Coach Rafal Smolen was occupied over the summer months with guiding and mentoring the U.S. Junior Team on its trek to the Czech Republic for

the World Junior Slalom Championships, also contested in July.

Other clubs making a strong showing at this year's JOs in Wausau were Red River Racing, Texas; Grand Junction, Colorado; Bethesda Center of Excellence, Maryland; and Valley Mill Camp, also from Maryland. The Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia had a handful of young athletes entered, all of whom performed well. There were also several strong unaffiliated or independent youngsters.

Individually, Tyler Hinton of Lafayette, Colorado, and Hailey Thompson of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, emerged on top in the Ray McLain Cup all-around competition, winning the Paddlemeister and Paddlemeisterin awards. In the boys' bracket, Tyler compiled 40 points in the five different disciplines to finish ahead of Will Grubb, 30, and Griff Griffin, 28. In the girls' division, Hailey totaled 48 points in the five categories of competition to defeat Cara Marks, 40½, and Chelsea Borneman, 24.

Also individually, the winners of the Chuck Hines Cup Olympic-style slalom races in the various age groups were Laura Adams, Graham Bell, Chelsea Borneman, Erin Cambridge, Martin Greenberg, Griff Griffin, Courtney Groeneveld, Will Grubb, Jack Hayman, Tyler Hinton, Cara Marks, Evan Palmer-Charette, Kyle Palmer-Charette, Jordan Poffenberger, Nate Shills, Hailey Thompson, and Danny Warner.

The annual JO Youth Leadership Award, presented to a coach who has been involved with the sport for 10 or more years, went to John Brennan of Durango, Colorado. John has had several Junior Olympic winners in the past, and he continues to teach and coach girls and boys in his community. Previous winners have been Wayne Dickert of North Carolina, Dave Kurtz of Pennsylvania, Mike Larimer of Georgia, Tom Long of Idaho, and Ben and Michelle Kvanli of Texas.

In evaluating this year's JO Festival, the following comments were made:

Colorado Parent: "There are many things

I like about the new format. The kids are more relaxed, the coaches more cooperative and easier to approach, and the competition less intense."

Illinois Parent: "My daughter, a member of this year's U.S. Team competing in Europe, is a product of the expanded and restructured Junior Olympics. This is what happens when we dare to dream."

Texas Coach: "We had a great time, thanks to Julie Walraven and her tireless Wausau crew who handled a majority of the logistics. We hated to leave."

New Hampshire Competitor, competing unaffiliated: "I hung out with the Mach One Team. They had a great coach, and just having that helped me pick out faster lines and made a big difference in my race and overall time."

Montana Parent: "It's a perfect venue."

Wisconsin Volunteer: "The high price of gas probably kept some families at home, but nonetheless it was a good week."

Looking to the future, the JO Committee has identified several areas where more work needs to be done. The rules for club affiliation should be clarified. The JO Committee membership must be updated and expanded. We need to bring more youngsters into the sport—this would include boys and girls from our inner-cities as well as our suburban communities. We must continue with the concept of internationalizing the JO Festival by attracting additional athletes from other countries.

The Whitewater Junior Olympic Program has been successful over its 13 years of existence, thanks to the participation of numerous clubs and individuals from coast to coast and to our friends from Canada. Four of the five members of this year's U.S. Olympic Slalom Team and four of the Team's five alternates came up through the JO Program. Most were gold medalists in the past. But much more can be done. As always, the future presents exciting challenges.

Board Bios



Charlie Walbridge

I joined American Whitewater in the late 60s, when I was still in college and trying to learn as much as I could about whitewater. Since then I've been a slalom racer, river guide, paddle shop owner, sales rep, and paddling instructor. But at my core, I'm a river runner who loves to be on moving water. I started writing about river accidents for the AW Journal in 1975 and have continued to do so for over 30 years. I maintain the AW Accident Database on the AW web site and often serve as AW spokesperson to the media on safety issues. People in government agencies might not listen to "Charlie Walbridge from Bruceton Mills" but they have come to know and respect people who work for AW. I've been proud to be part of that process.

Since moving to Bruceton Mills, WV I've worked to maintain and improve river access in the area. My wife and I maintain the Sang Run Access on the Upper Yough for AW, mowing the grass and collecting donations from paddlers. For the past five years I've worked with Friends of the Cheat to improve the Jenkinsburg Access on the Cheat River and to create a new paddler access in Rockville on the Big Sandy. These two efforts raised over \$50,000, mostly from the paddling community. It's been exciting to translate the need for access into reality on the ground, and AW has been indispensable to that effort.

If elected, I will do what I can to make whitewater paddling safer and more accessible. I encourage anyone with questions to email me at ccwalbridge@cs.com.



Leland Davis

I've been paddling whitewater for 25 years now. From my first experience in a raft on the Nantahala, to my years paddling open canoes, C1s, and now kayaks and oar rigs, I've always been fascinated by rivers and the wild places they can take me. I dove into whitewater deeply in my college days at UNC-Asheville, where I did 4 years of heavy paddling while completing a degree in Environmental Science with a focus in energy and waste management. Juxtaposing over 100 days per year of paddling with my studies naturally drew me to examine the ways that energy and waste affect the rivers that I love. I became a believer in AW's mission, and have been a member for almost 15 years. While at UNCA, I also learned about bringing people together for paddling by co-founding a university paddling club with current AW Stewardship Director Kevin Colburn and AW Board Member Chris Bell.

Upon finishing school, I delved further into the paddling lifestyle, working an assortment of random part-time jobs so that I could live hand to mouth while kayaking as much as possible, and periodically maxing out my credit cards to travel to new and different rivers. I did freelance web work for various paddlesports industry companies before taking a job with a kayak company where I worked for several years, learning the ins and outs of how the business side of kayaking works. Ultimately, the call of the rivers I hadn't seen yet was too strong, and I returned to the kayak bum lifestyle, using my experience to start a company with my wife Andria making guidebooks and DVDs. Since then, we've spent four to six

months on the road each year, exploring the rivers of our continent from our kayaks. My goals are to be a local boater wherever I go, and to experience as many whitewater rivers as possible.

Last year I was honored to be contacted by a group of paddlers who wanted to nominate me for the AW board. They felt that the combination of my time on the river and the variety of areas where I paddle would bring a broad perspective from the field to AW's board. I also hope that as an AW board member, I can work to further the connection and communication of what AW does to all paddlers, providing greater organizational transparency and encouraging more people to support and become involved in AW. The first step of that is that I'd like your support by mailing in your vote for me for the AW board, so that I can be a true representative for the paddling public, elected by a number of paddlers. If you have any questions about me or what I hope to bring to AW, you can contact me through my website at www.RiverGypsies.com, or email me at Leland@brushymountainpublishing.com. I hope to be able to serve you and our rivers on the AW board.



Rich Bowers

Rivers today are as imperiled as ever. The current focus on reducing carbon emissions is critical but also threatens to re-open the door to new hydropower dams and storage projects on free-flowing rivers. Protecting rivers is extraordinarily important as we face a warming world and changes to the quality, quantity and timing of future stream flows. For this reason, the conservation efforts of American Whitewater (AW), and the need for knowledgeable and passionate river advocates continues to be a priority, and I continue to promote these issues.

I have been fortunate to have played a role in protecting rivers for the past 18+ years (starting as a member and volunteer with AW, then as staff, and now as a board member), and I look forward to remaining an advocate for river conservation in the future. I am also privileged to work with AW's outstanding conservation staff as the Northwest Coordinator for the Hydropower Reform Coalition, a partnership of river advocacy organizations that AW helped to develop in the early 1990s.

Air quality was the issue that captured the public's focus on climate change, but protecting water is quickly becoming the priority as habitat resiliency is destroyed, water cycles change, water temperatures increase, and more species face extinction. I look forward to standing up for rivers, and, importantly, assuring that AW has the conservation focus and the resources needed to remain a strong advocate for whitewater rivers. As an AW board member, I look forward to working alongside those who know our rivers best—paddlers and others whose lives revolve around flowing water, and whose knowledge, experience and passion for rivers is clearly evident.



Don Kinser

Hello fellow whitewater enthusiast and AW member. My name is Don Kinser and my interest in whitewater boating started in the early 1970s as a teenager growing up in the Washington, DC area. However it was not until Nanci, my wife, gave me a whitewater canoe for Christmas in 1991 (surely a green light to spend more time on the river) that my whitewater addiction became serious.

My relationship with AW began over 13 years ago while on a paddling trip to West Virginia with my good friend Joe Greiner. Joe's enthusiasm and passion for AW's mission struck me and I joined AW at his urging. I want to thank Joe for introducing me to AW. My involvement soon grew from simply a dues paying member to a committed and passionate local volunteer as I started helping with the early Tallulah releases. The more involved I became the more I learned about the great work that AW has been part of all over the country.

It was here, during those early Tallulah releases in 1997 and 1998, that Risa Shimoda recruited me to help lead AW's efforts on another local river, my home river, the Chattooga. The work on the Chattooga got me more deeply involved with AW's staff as I learned a whole new language of terms such as NEPA, DEIS, EA, ROD, "Preferred Alternative," and how agencies such as the USFS work (or don't, as the case may be).

The more involved I became with AW, as a volunteer the more awestruck I have become with the organization's accomplishments and the people that have made up the organization's staff. What makes AW accomplishments even more

astounding is how much the organization accomplishes with so little. AW is truly the "little engine that could."

My commitment to AW's mission has grown ever since those early volunteer days at Tallulah Gorge. I believe strongly in AW's mission and our river stewardship work across the country. I am honored to have helped guide AW toward continued success has a director and officer of the organization since 2002.

On May 17, 2008 AW's Board of Director's elected me to serve you as AW's President. I am excited to have this opportunity to serve, make new friends, and more importantly help continue AW's 54 year legacy as the National Voice for whitewater rivers and those of us that enjoy these wild places so passionately.

My goals for AW are to help make sure AW can continue our tremendous river stewardship work and build on the many great success of the past. An important way to insure our continued success is to grow our membership and funding so that we can accomplish even more.

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to serving to help conserve and restore America's whitewater rivers.

continued on page 11

River Voices

Hell's Canyon Adventure

By Renée C Paradis

It seems I've had a couple experiences noteworthy of a story, and apparently those casting a vote prefer to laugh about the day I lost my boat, and all my gear, down the river on a multi-day, Snake River trip! It starts out like this....

We had recently returned from the beautiful clean beaches of the post 40,000 cfs "flooded" Colorado River through Grand Canyon. By increasing the volume of water released by the dam by almost three times the average daily maximum flow for three consecutive days, the sediment was redistributed, the beaches rebuilt, and the depth of the canyon cleaned.

Unfortunately, however, at the time of our trip, Hell's Canyon's beaches had eroded away, the banks were scrubby and nature seemed out of balance. We were disappointed that our first night's camp would not be a sandy beach, but instead a spider-infested field atop a rock bench some few hundred feet up a hostile slope.

The bank was a menagerie of aggressive rock, hosting a poison oak party and play field for the most diverse spider population I've seen. As a bonus to the whole beach/camp experience, just up from the water line in one of the only clearings providing easy access to and from the river, was a pile of human waste and used toilet paper baking in the hot desert sun.

To summarize: the riverbank was not a friendly place to be at that particular camp. We unloaded our boats, hauled our gear and boats up the hill, and didn't revisit the river until the next morning's launch.

The Snake River through Hells Canyon has the same daily tide as the Colorado River; similar to many hydroelectric dam controlled rivers. Mid-day, when energy usage is at its peak, the river flow is increased to meet the increased demand.

Conversely, during the dead of night when power usage is reduced, so is the flow of the river. Hence, the rivers have a high tide mid-day, and a low tide mid-night.

Before leaving the river's edge for the last time that first night, I selected an indicator rock and made a mental note of the water level. When doing so, I wished I had paid closer attention to the water level when we first arrived at camp; the river was receding very quickly.

In the morning, things were hectic. Essentially, no one could agree on the easiest, most efficient, ergonomic way to get our boats and gear back down the hill. The boats had to be loaded on the bench and lowered; there was no room at the rivers bank.

Our trip was self-support and loaded kayaks are very heavy, indeed ... poor John, the only guy (and thankfully one strong, fit guy) was stuck with four women for seven days.

With all the fooling around, discussions, disagreements, and the like, I didn't remember to get a water level reading on the indicator rock first thing in the morning. By the time we were ready to launch, the water had already risen a good foot. John notes the river level had changed by a couple feet from the evening prior. I respond by saying I estimate four feet, maybe more.

Only forty-five minutes into our paddle we made an unplanned stop, and following the recommendation of a professional guide, decide on a hike. Joyce stayed behind, as she often does due to her M.S.. Joyce had pulled off the river a few hundred yards below the trailhead and was situated downriver from the rest of us at this point.

As the group returned to the edge of the bluff and looked upon the river and its banks, we prepared mentally for the decent and began down the trail. After rounding the first corner, just a few steps into the return, we all noticed that Joyce was in her kayak, in the river below. Our elevation

combined with the downriver distance between us and Joyce made it impossible to deduce her status. Why would she be in her kayak, all by herself? Did she get bored? It didn't make sense.

As we continued our descent down the trail, it became apparent that something was wrong. Oh my gawd! My boat! My boat was gone! The river had risen and swept away my boat and all my gear! Everyone dashed off, suited up, hopped in their boats and went chasing after my life (transportation, food, clothes, shelter, bed—my life).

What was I to do but continue walking? A million thoughts went through my mind during that hike. None of my paddling gear was clipped in; the chance of recovery, I figured, was minimal ... We needed to be to camp at a reasonable hour on that day, but had already jeopardized that goal with the difficult and lengthy start, then an unplanned hike, and now this. How could I make such a bone headed move?!





Finally I arrived at Joyce's downriver location. The other three had continued on in hot pursuit, and found themselves on the opposite side of the river, one rapid below Joyce and now me. Joyce was pretty confident they had my boat, but we had no idea if any safety gear had been recovered; I needed a PFD at a very minimum to get in or on the river. Joyce could ferry across, but she couldn't paddle down to the rest of the group or she'd be at a point of no return to me, and I couldn't continue on foot on that side of the canyon.

Upon initial realization of the graveness of the situation, everyone took off down the

continued on page 59



VOTE

Board Members 2009

Each year American Whitewater membership elects board members to serve three year terms. The following candidates are volunteering to serve three-year terms on the American Whitewater Board of Directors. Candidate biographies can be read on page 8-9.

Please vote for five American Whitewater Board of Directors:

- Charlie Walbridge
- Leland Davis
- Rich Bowers
- Don Kinser

Please write your name:

Please provide your American Whitewater membership number:

Please return ballot to:
American Whitewater
PO Box 1540
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Deadline for submitting ballots is February 1, 2009.

Thank you for your participation in this important election process.

River Voices

Kayaking: It's All About the Passion

By Conner Jackson

When I first heard of kayaking, it sounded like something that I would want to do for the rest of my life, stories told by my dad of endless sunny days on the river and forever more challenging rapids. What really got my attention, though, was the sheer passion he spoke with; every single time I sat there with impatient ears, his eyes glistened and his words flew out of his mouth like a hard-core rock song that could never be shut down. He was captivated by something that was indescribable.

I was so motivated to try this amazing sport that the minute he got done telling me about it I jumped onto the Internet and bought a cheesy yellow sevyolor inflatable kayak. At the time I was only 10 and to me the \$60 dollar price tag seemed like an enormous amount of money. But I had the money and was willing to do anything to get into the sport. Almost immediately I jumped onto the river, and it was no beginner stretch. I paddled the Middle

Fork of the Salmon for my first kayaking endeavor, the scariest part being that were no other kayakers on the trip—just me, my crazy passion, and a bunch of rafts. My dad was unable to keep me out of it. Every single time he made me get out in preparation for a Class III rapid I literally threw a temper tantrum. Eventually he was able to convince me to get into the raft, but not for long. Immediately after each big rapid I got right back in without even a thought of what I had just gone right through in the raft. It was like I was unstoppable. Each wave I went over was like lifting off in the space shuttle. The feeling was indescribable. The Middle Fork of the Salmon proved to be one my greatest achievements that only further fueled my desire to advance in the sport.

The following summer, I went down the Main Payette, which is a great beginner Class II-III run, and in my mind was no big deal because I was feeling like I could tackle any wave or hole that came my way. And almost not surprisingly, I did—except for one rapid. The rapid was called AMF (A Monkey's Friend, as me and my friends call it). It has a big left turn so you can't really tell what is around the corner. On the far

left side there is a big hole that sometimes even flips rafts. Feeling invincible, I went straight into it and the hole ate me big time. Afterwards, my dad asked me if my crash scared me at all and I simply replied "No, of course not. Why would it?" I truly thought I was unstoppable.

Even with all my great skills and luck as a kayaker, I still had not learned the inevitable lesson—that fear is a part of the sport, too. And naturally at the time, I did not think I ever would.

I was approaching a Class II+ drop on the Grande Ronde in Oregon in late May and I couldn't have felt better. The sun was not shining that day. Clouds covered the sky creating an eerie vibe in my mind that something might possibly go wrong. But I didn't think anything of it because after all, if I had made it most of the way down the Middle Fork without flipping, so why would I flip now? My Sevyolor inflatable kayak was in perfect condition to have some fun. The water was freezing and I hit the drop completely sideways on purpose, thinking I could go through anything. But it did stop me and to my amazement I found myself swimming. The icy water wrapped around me and I found myself struggling for air. I was experienced in safety so I put my feet downstream like my dad had told me. There was a long boulder garden in front of me and only one raft was in front of me about 300 yards downstream. For some reason, my mind went ballistic with fear. I started having thoughts of what could go wrong and to my amazement, I started screaming with fear. I couldn't control myself. I felt a sharp object hit my right knee and I thought I had cut my leg but when I reached down to feel it I felt the smoothness of my paddle. It was a miracle that I had grabbed it because I thought it may have sunk. Luckily, the raft had seen me and slowed down to get me. When I got in the raft I started crying and mumbling words that made no sense. I could not kayak anymore and as soon as I saw my dad



Conner Jackson after a long day surfing

Photo by Paul Palmer

pull up in his raft I jumped into it for the first time in a very long time. It was like my whole life had changed in a matter of 20 seconds. And it had.

Almost every single time after getting into a kayak past that day, I was afraid out of my mind. I tried and tried to kayak like I once had and it never worked. I found myself taking the sneaks down rapids that hardly had any consequences at all. I went to roll sessions, did the Class II Lower Main Payette numerous times, and still could not get it out of my system. It was like all the joy and happiness of the sport had drained from my soul. I did not want to kayak anymore. The feeling of not wanting to do something like this was completely alien to me. Before I had thought that most people couldn't have fear like I did unless they were crazy.

Wednesday night. Time to go kayaking. I hastily got everything ready making sure that I had all the gear possible for whatever we might do with the Longs and the rest of the Idaho River Kids instructors. I was feeling down as usual because I was still terribly afraid to kayak even the smallest of sections like the Lower Main Payette which had only two rapids. When I arrived Tom told me that I was going to go down the Lower Main—no surprise. But what I didn't know was who my instructor might be this time. So I sat there on the beach waiting for someone to call my name. Finally a man walked up beside me and introduced himself as Willard. I had never met or seen him around so I didn't quite know what to expect. He told me that he was going to help me get ready for the Upper Main Payette, which only a year ago seemed pretty easy to me but now was something monstrous. When I went down the Lower Main Payette with an instructor that day we did countless eddy turns and he worked with me on my roll at the Toilet Bowl eddy. Then as we approached Climax rapid, Willard asked me if I wanted to get out before the rapid and I replied quietly "No, I guess." And so we set forth on the biggest turning point in my kayaking career. Previously Climax, the biggest rapid on the Lower Main, had been a huge issue for me and I almost never went down it.

But on that day it was like life was coming back to me very slowly and I reluctantly made the decision to continue on forward with my confident instructor. When the time came I paddled ferociously to make the sneak on the right side. I did but after the big wave I got back into the wave train to paddle the rest of ferocious rapid. But immediately after the last wave it was like 10,000 pounds had been lifted off my chest. I was back in the game.

In just a few short weeks, with confidence, I was able to paddle down the entire length of the Main Payette along side my friends once again. Life was finally right.

Then, in August of 2007, I went down the Class III-IV South Fork of the Payette only three weeks after not wanting to kayak at all. The South Fork, in my mind, had previously seemed an almost unimaginable run for me. I did not think that I would ever even think of going down rapids like Staircase and Slalom. My passion for the sport that was finally able to be unleashed shined greater than any star in the galaxy. I was so enthusiastic about my replenished passion for kayaking that when I got a chance to make a video for the future Boise Whitewater Park, I immediately set forth to do everything in my power to make it the most convincing video—period. I was ecstatic to even think of the possibility of riding my bike down to a world-class play hole practicing loops with my friends every morning. Suddenly instead of checking football scores I was devouring every single kayaking video known to man. Roll sessions became mandatory and any kayaking gear that fit me was suddenly fair game. My life was now a wave train of passion. Everything mattered again.

Now, I am kayaking almost every day and find myself helping other young kids find their passion for the sport too. It's like the circle of kayaking is to always help other people along when you get good enough to understand that kayaking is truly a sport that you can enjoy for the rest of your life. Passion allows humans to help each other more than any other thing in the world because the people that have found the passion want to share that passion as much

as possible. Almost every single kayaker has gone through the same process of finding that passion and giving it back to others, whether it be teaching someone to roll or taking them down a new stretch of river. I strongly believe that kayaking is one of the greatest sports in the world because of this passion that flows through every single kayaker's mind.

Whether your limit is a Class III day trip or you huck off every waterfall in the state, the passion for kayaking stays with you forever. That passion makes you a better person. It keeps you going in the worst of days, and allows you to help people in a way that they will never forget. Life is fueled by passion and passion will always be at its strongest when you are kayaking.

CJ is 15 and lives in Boise, Idaho. He is currently trying to attend World Class Kayak Academy and would very much appreciate it if you visited his website at www.cjkayakgear.com.

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Stewardship Updates

Tuckasegee Dam Relicensing Inches Toward Success

By Kevin Colburn

American Whitewater has been working on securing new licenses for several dams on the Tuckasegee and Nantahala rivers since 2001. In late 2003 we signed an agreement that called for the removal of Dillsboro Dam, new releases on the West Fork of the Tuck and the Upper Nanty, and sweeping environmental enhancements. The regulatory schedule called for these measures to begin in 2006. Since then though, the process has been held up by Jackson County, North Carolina and their attorney. They have lost every one of their many challenges but have succeeded in delaying the process. This fall we expect their options to run out. Their request for a “stay” that would prevent the removal of Dillsboro Dam was just denied by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Their challenge of the state permit will be heard in court in October, and their legal challenge of FERC’s actions will also be heard this fall. Dillsboro Dam is now scheduled to be removed in early 2010.

New Organization Formed on the Susquehanna (PA)

By Kevin Colburn

Regional paddlers and AW have signed an agreement that will protect whitewater boating opportunities below Holtwood Dam on the Susquehanna River. Part of that agreement calls for monitoring the effects of upstream channel excavations on Storm Hole, and for the construction of two new waves. To help pull this off as effectively as possible a new organization has been formed to oversee the work. The Susquehanna Recreational Fund has a board made up of paddlers and other local citizens. The group will work closely with AW and local clubs. We expect the work to take several years.

Midwest Rivers Update

By Thomas O’Keefe

Fox River (WI)

American Whitewater has been active in the Midwest on a number of hydropower issues. AW member Brian Tungate contacted us when he learned that the local utility was planning to reconstruct the hydropower project in Kaukauna and divert additional flow from the river, which would eliminate several days of existing playboating opportunities on the Fox River. The utility had been ignoring the interests of whitewater boaters in this process. In fact they made the incredible claim that the project would not impact the river because flow above the powerhouse intake was equal to flow at the powerhouse outlet completely ignoring the natural river channel in between that would be dewatered. After participating in a site visit in August, federal regulators directed the utility to examine the impacts of their project on whitewater boating and aquatic habitat. We hope to start working with the utility to make sure recreation and habitat issues are properly addressed.

Red River (WI)

Several members have contacted us about the Red River in Wisconsin. For many years the powerhouse would open the gates and release a “peak flow” that would generate hydropower when rates were most favorable, providing an opportunity paddlers could enjoy. When local agency staff pointed out that these releases were not authorized by the project’s operating license, federal regulators forced the utility to stop the peaking flows. Within the next year the utility that operates this small project will need to decide whether they will seek a new license. At many projects we have been able to find a way to provide whitewater boating opportunities in a manner that is protective of aquatic resources. As relicensing gears up, federal regulators will take a new look at this project. The project could be relicensed with a new operating plan or may even be identified as a candidate for removal. We are seeking volunteers who wish to take part in this process and represent AW.





Please sign up for the Red River on the American Whitewater website using the River Networking Tool to join the list of interested individuals who we will reach out to as the relicensing gets underway.

Black River (WI)

Wisconsin's Black River has always been a challenging project and many boaters have expressed their frustration with the fact that recreational flows have not been consistent. A problem has been that when inflow to the project was not sufficient for a release at the agreed upon level, then no water was released back to the river. We have worked with the utility to develop a revised plan that includes several key elements. A significant change is that if inflow to the project is 150 cfs or more on the scheduled day a release will be provided. Through this plan we could end up with lower releases but it should eliminate the situation where releases have been cancelled at the last minute. Instead of canceling a release, flows would be provided, but at a reduced level. The utility will be required to host an annual meeting to discuss the previous year's performance and stakeholders will be able to propose modifications. Federal regulators have

provided a specific schedule and guidelines for modifying the releases. We hope this plan will lead to improved communication and a flow schedule that can be met given the operational constraints of the project. The complete plan can be found on our website and we welcome input from the community particularly those who may be interested in representing AW at the annual meeting.

West Branch Montreal (WI)

On the West Branch Montreal, local paddler Neal Schroeter has been working to see if we can schedule whitewater opportunities on this wonderful whitewater run, the site of previous competitions. Last year we published a report on flow needs for recreation on this river.

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Stewardship Updates

Colorado Stewardship

By *Nathan Fey*

In 2007, the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released its report on the eligibility of rivers in the Upper Colorado River basin for Wild and Scenic River designation. In response to potential federal protection for Colorado's headwaters, and the impact Wild and Scenic River management might have on the ability of Colorado to develop new water projects, various state agencies, local governments, and water providers came together in a collaborative effort to propose a local alternative to Wild and Scenic River management for the Colorado River.

American Whitewater joined the negotiations in late 2007, and is currently working with stakeholders and consulting agencies in good faith to develop a Management Plan Alternative that would protect the "Outstandingly Remarkable Values" (ORVs) of Gore Canyon, Pumphouse, Burns and Glenwood Canyon on the Colorado River, as identified in the 2007 Eligibility Report.

The Stakeholders Group intention is to develop a collaborative plan that balances the following: permanent protection of the ORVs; certainty for stakeholders; water project yield; and flexibility for land owners, management agencies, and water users. The group released the conceptual framework for the development of a Management Plan that will be proposed to the BLM as an alternative in their Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for their revised Management Plans for the Kremmling and Glenwood Springs Field Offices.

American Whitewater's focus as a stakeholder in the alternative planning process, is to ensure that the type and quality of the whitewater opportunities of the Upper Colorado River are analyzed, and to leverage recreational flow requirements to protect fish, wildlife habitat, and the outdoor recreation industry. We are representing private

boaters and commercial outfitters in the negotiation process, and are among the only stakeholders advocating for dynamic flows that sustain sediment transport, fish spawning cues, riparian health, and world-class whitewater experiences.

The Stakeholders Group has released the conceptual framework for the development of a Management Plan that has been proposed to the BLM as an alternative in their Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the revised Management Plans for the Kremmling and Glenwood Springs Field Offices.

California Update

by *Bob Center*

Fordyce Creek and Canyon Creek Relicensing Flow Studies

In late August and early September Recreational Flow Studies were conducted on California's Fordyce Creek and Canyon Creek as part of the Yuba-Bear / Drum Spaulding Relicensing process. AW worked with the Licensees in the design and conduct of the studies on these high Sierra creeks.



Fordyce Creek

Fordyce Creek (IV+, V, with portages), in the Northern Sierras just north of Highway 80, flows 10 miles through a wild alpine canyon before being captured by Spaulding Reservoir. The Fordyce Creek flow study was conducted over the over Labor Day weekend in late August. On Friday and Saturday 400 cfs were released from Fordyce Reservoir into the river, and on Sunday the release was 300 cfs.

Tom Saffell, who participated in the flow study, said "Fordyce is a truly classic California creek. Its mix of challenging bedrock rapids, good gradient, and beautiful alpine scenery makes for one sweet little creek." According to Stanley and Holbeck, who we all know are very familiar with California, "Fordyce creek is the best warm-up for the bigger, more well known, high Sierras runs." (Go to <http://saffell.blip.tv/#1235565> to see Tom's video of this fall's releases on Fordyce.)

About one hundred boaters turned out for the flow study; most filled out questionnaires that will be input to the Relicensing Recreational Flow Study.

In late summer, water is transferred from Fordyce Reservoir to Spaulding Reservoir to maintain the hydroelectric generating head at the power houses below Spaulding. According to PG&E, there is some operational flexibility in the schedule of this transfer. One of AW's goals in the Relicensing will be to establish flow schedules that transfer the water at boatable flows each year.

Canyon Creek

Canyon Creek (IV+, V, with portages) is in the drainage north-west of Fordyce Creek. The put-in is French Reservoir and the take-out is Sawmill Reservoir or Bowman Reservoir. The flow study was conducted during three weekends in August, with flows of 120, 100 and 80 cfs.

Running through high Sierra terrain,

Canyon creek may not measure up to Fordyce in quality, but could offer good alpine paddling when little else is running. For write-ups, photos, and video see <http://www.awetstate.com/CanyonCreekY.html> and <http://www.guttersoftheearth.blogspot.com/>

Similar to Fordyce, flows in Canyon Creek are the result of later summer water transfers from high storage reservoirs to Bowman Reservoir. As with Fordyce, AW will work with the Licensees to establish flow schedules that transfer the water at boatable flows.



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Paddling the Unknown

When a Plan Comes Together

By Jeff West

How often do paddling trips work out as planned? Not as often as we would like. I've had my share of arriving at the put-in to find river levels too high or too low. Important gear is sometimes left in the garage. I have seen paddlers use two elbow pads duck taped to their head for a misplaced helmet. How often have your paddling buddies been late meeting you? Or not shown up at all? My favorite frustrating moment of paddling is when you spend hours driving to the river to find the put-in road closed to traffic. Just getting to the river can be a major undertaking. So many variables can keep you from your perfect day of paddling.

On the other hand, sometimes everything works out in your favor. The most rewarding trips can be the ones you gamble on for water. No one else thinks your chosen creek will be flowing, but somehow you know there will be water. Sure enough, as you arrive at the put-in at daybreak, the level is perfect, but dropping. As you finish your run, other paddlers are showing up a bit too late. While the rest of the world is having their morning coffee, you're changing into dry clothes after an amazing sunrise paddling trip.

A few months ago I committed to a paddling adventure that was most likely going to become a train wreck. The plan was to fly to Colorado, find a boat, drop a vertical mile on a Class V creek I had never paddled, and be back in the office four days later. The creek was Colorado's Oh Be Joyful and to pull this adventure off was going to require paddling this amazing monster 14 times in one day. Actually, the paddling was going to be the easy part. Here's the story:

My buddy Chris and I started our adventure by sprinting through the Chattanooga airport trying to catch a flight. We were late. Imagine that. Our first major fork in the road came when Chris declined the rental car insurance upon

our arrival in Denver. I thought I should speak up, but he travels more than I do. I was sure he knew what he was doing. The nice man at Hertz presented us with their top of the line four wheel drive Jeep Grand Cherokee. This behemoth of a gas guzzler was brand new with only 29 miles registering. I knew renting a car this nice was a huge mistake, but it was our vacation. Why not live a little?

Off we drove to Crested Butte. Our journey was shaping up. We met David on the way and by early the next morning we were scouting Oh Be Joyful surrounded by beautiful mountains. Snow still covered the towering peaks and our breath turned to vapor as we labored up the put-in trail. We spent the day scouting every foot of the one mile run. This creek is amazing. It drops 400 feet in nonstop slides and waterfalls. There are only a few traditional rapids requiring boofs and technical moves. The rest is continuous sliding and dropping. The run is fast and has few eddies, one horizon line after another for a mile. The initial thought of paddling this mile long cascade 14 plus times in a day seemed impossible. But, why not try it? We were already there and the following day promised to be an epic adventure.

Hiking back to the car reminded me our quest was far more complex than just dropping a mile of gradient. Somehow, we had to drive this four wheel drive trail 14 times. The road is really just a hiking trail. Vehicles are allowed, but calling this a road is a stretch. Just getting the truck to the trail was unlikely. We were going to have to drive across the Slate River. For you fellow eastern boaters, imagine driving a brand new Jeep through the Nantahala River and you can imagine our required river crossing. The place to cross was thigh deep, graveled and presented 800 cfs of current. Chris had signed the paperwork so he took the driver's seat. The rental insurance we passed on sure sounded good about now. We thought we could make it, but the water was going to crash over the hood. A few ounces in the air intake would kill this beast. Problem solved with a tarp. We wrapped the entire front with a blue Wal-Mart camping tarp held in place with

a few yards of duck tape. The front of our Jeep was going to be submerged, but just maybe the tarp would prevent the water from flooding the intake. I couldn't believe it, but our Jeep made the crossing. If the Slate rose much higher we would become permanent residents on the far side. Oh well, there are worse places to be trapped than the take-out of Oh Be Joyful.

Crossing the Slate was only the first challenge. Three feet of snow blocked the trail. We tried, but the Jeep couldn't make it. Time to shovel! Hand paddles make great snow shovels. After a couple of hours of removing mud and snow Chris hopped in the driver's seat again and hit the gas. No problem, our little Jeep cruised straight up and a few minutes later we were at the put-in.

Our plan was coming together. The last ingredient required was a kayak. My friend Nick who lived somewhere north of Crested Butte had a spare creek boat. He had brought it from Tennessee a few weeks earlier. All we had to do was navigate the treacherous trail back to the Slate, cross the Slate, find Nick, find the boat, return tonight, cross the Slate again after dark and begin our 14 lap quest at sunrise. Yeah, right!

Finding Nick was absurdly easy. We drove north towards the pass and jokingly asked a girl who was mountain biking if she knew a guy named Nick. She asked if we meant the Nick with really big hair who just started working in Gothic as a cook. Sure, we said. That sounds about right. She gave us directions and even told us which building to search. Sure enough, as we walked through the door, there stood Nick in an apron placing dishes on a table. He had the kayak and even volunteered to help with shuttles the next day. We returned to Oh Be Joyful, crossed the treacherous Slate for our third time and set up camp. Sleeping under the stars we fell asleep with thoughts of our coming day swirling through our heads. Until now, the many distractions and impossible logistics had made the adventure seem out of reach. I'm not sure I ever imagined actually getting the opportunity to drop

a vertical mile on Oh Be Joyful. The odds of just getting there, finding the Slate low enough to cross, finding OBJ at a reasonable level to paddle from sunrise to sunset, digging the snow out of the shuttle road for our Jeep to pass were all unfavorable. Plus, we were camping at an elevation of 8,000 feet, the water was freezing, and I had never paddled here before. To add to the unlikelihood of success, we had to keep from getting injured paddling 14 laps, keep the Jeep

running for 14 hairball shuttles, and hope our boats and paddles stayed in one piece. As I drifted off to sleep, the whole venture seemed silly and unlikely. "Who knows how the day will play out, just be happy knowing you're in such a beautiful place," was my last thought of the day.


Sunrise. Time to go. David and I geared up. Chris had drawn shuttle duty for the first laps. David knew the run. If I could stay on his tail I might be able to pull this

off. The first laps were freezing. Our hands were frozen after the first strokes. The put-in for OBJ is a fitting warm-up for the run. You climb in your boat, slide into an eddy, peel out and fly off of a 15-foot waterfall called Heart Attack. Upon landing there is no eddy; the race is on. A few long slides pass, a rapid with a nasty ledge hole appears and then you catch an eddy above Deadzone, the 23 footer. Coming from the south, waterfalls are not my forte. This thing sure seemed taller than 23 feet as I flew off of it. The landing hurts a bit as you pencil in. You surface, blow the snot out your nose and get back to business. Slides, more slides, a huge slide called Avalanche and finally you're approaching the grand finale. A rapid into another slide into another huge slide, a 90 degree turn to your right, followed by a 90 degree

continued on page 60



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Padding the Unknown

Resurrection of an ELF: The Story of Fossil Creek

By Christian D. Bates

Go on about your business, folks – nothing to see here.” I tried to play it off, but the startled rim-bound hikers I had just passed couldn’t help gawking. After all, it isn’t every day that you see a guy packing a kayak around down here in the first place. But when he goes for a tumble right in front of you, then slides on by like an upended turtle, you tend to be taken aback—and on April Fools Day, no less.

Struggling with my unwieldy load, I rolled over quickly and attempted to regain my composure, hoisting myself up through the twisted branches of the juniper into which I had just crashed. “Really, I’m ok,” I insisted as one of them scrambled to lend a helping hand, looking over his shoulder in disbelief, suspecting, I’m sure, that his girlfriend was attempting to get the better of him with the aid of a hidden camera.

“You know, there’s not much water down there,” he said tentatively, as I finally got to my feet. His hands were still extended, palms outward, as if he expected me to topple over again.

“You’re not going to carry that thing for him, are you?” Rounding the bend above, pulling a rickety wheeled contraption with his own boat rattling on top, my companion finally caught up. “He’s not really that tired, he’s just clumsy...”

Ignoring the smartass with the country boy accent coming up from behind, I adjusted my shoulder straps and did a quick check for broken ankles, then said my thanks and continued on my way. Two miles down, two to go. Soon, we would be in the land of the ELF.

On June 18, 2005, after nearly a century of impoundment and diversion, Fossil Creek was reborn. With the flip of a symbolic switch, and on the anniversary of the first generator going online, the chief executive of Arizona Public Service (APS), the state’s

largest and longest serving electric utility, turned a new page in the history of central Arizona; and with that gesture, a perennial flow of 43 cubic feet per second was restored to its natural course, enlivening 14 miles of a unique travertine streambed that had scarcely known its own waters since 1909.

When rancher L. M. Turner filed for the rights to Fossil Springs at the turn of the twentieth century, he might very well have imagined the story being celebrated by many; and indeed, it has been. Named in 1976 as a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark, and nominated in 1991 to the National Register of Historic Places, the Childs-Irving Hydroelectric Project, which grew from Turner’s industrious vision, has been widely recognized as a unique feat of human drive and ingenuity. Even aside from these distinctions however, the record of this small, remote complex nestled at the base of the Mogollon Rim occupies a deserved place in the annals of southwestern history.

Situated on the left bank of the Verde River, the Childs power plant (named for bond broker S. W. Childs of the William P. Bonbright Company) is commonly regarded as Arizona’s first hydropower facility. The second installation, located upstream at Irving (named for Irving Bonbright), came along in 1916; and with the introduction of an affordable, reliable source of energy came growth. The copper mining industry, already in the midst of a boom, was hungry for alternatives to coal and other fuel based sources of power, as were the local ranching and farming communities. The creek delivered; and while the capacity of the operation was eventually outpaced, it continued to turn profits for decades, right up until the last turbine came to rest.

All the more reason, then, to applaud the leadership of APS for its eventual decision to decommission the project; rather than following through with a re-licensing request that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) was prepared to approve, permitting continued operations

through the year 2069, the company came to an agreement with conservation groups in 1999 that led to another application with the FERC – to surrender the license, and restore the creek. It was simply the right thing to do; and in an exemplary display of cooperative conservation ethics, they did it—on their own dime—to the tune of 13 million dollars. Kudos to APS.

But that part of the story has been told before; and when I made my last trip down this trail, slip-sliding in river sandals with a creek boat and a paddle, I came in celebration of it. Many others did as well. At a parking lot near Irving, an easy point of access for day users and the usual take-out for curious kayakers, license plates from four different states testified to the spreading of the news. As many onlookers fretted at the time, this already popular recreational area seemed in danger of being “loved to death” with increased publicity and overuse. This is why I’ve come today – to take a peek at the rest of the story.

Equipped with a light day pack and a good pair of boots this time, I pull in at the trailhead some time around mid-morning on a Tuesday. Six other vehicles are already clustered around a lone tree near the center of the dirt parking lot. (Apparently, I’m not the only one who likes to play hooky around here.) Taking one last pull on a cold cup of effluent from the gas station at Camp Verde, I slide in on the east side of the tree and let my dog out to water the flowers by the trail marker. From the back seat of my truck, I collect and stuff a few loose items: throw rope, camera battery, trash bags—odds and ends that might come in handy, depending on what we find.

Trek takes a few gulps of water from a collapsible dish under the rear wheel as I

Paddler Mark Chamberlin shares the creek with applauding weekend swimmers following a successful run at the put-in falls

Photos by Christian Bates



Paddling the Unknown

dump the rest of my coffee on the same unfortunate patch of flowers. I'm sure they don't notice the difference. Then, with a pat on the knot, I turn the old boy loose: "Let's go get 'em," I say, as he bounds down the path. As far as he knows, we're here on a hunt; and I suppose that we are, as I snap the tailgate shut and lock up, leaving my boat behind.

The trail from Deadman Mesa down to the brink of the Fossil Springs Wilderness is well maintained and generally user friendly. If you're fit enough to walk to your favorite fast food joint for lunch every day, rather than using the drive-thru, you'll reach the bottom comfortably in an hour or two. But as we approach the main canyon, I notice a steep chute that drops into a tributary drainage. It runs perpendicular to the angle of the morning sun,

then makes a jog northwest toward a conspicuous line of green, 1,300 feet below. It's a direct route to where I think we want to be, and after all, we're here in search of a different perspective. Off we go.

Manzanita, cliffrose, and the shattered bones of hapless off-trail hikers blanket the way as we hop, slide, and claw a path downward over loose talus and leaf-litter, ducking under thorn scrub and side-hilling delicately around obstacles as they come. Pinyon, juniper, and the occasional ponderosa pine shade the crease mercifully as it deepens, extending the sun's low angle as the impending brunt of a hot summer day threatens over my right shoulder. We reach the first of several precipitous drops as the side canyon hits a layer of bedrock and alters course. Weighing our options,

I decide to pull out the rope and lower my pack, then climb down as safely as I can, coaxing and tugging my reluctant four-legged companion as I go. He's been through this sort of thing before; he takes it in stride. By the fourth dog portage however, I begin to wonder if this is really a good idea.

As the transitional chaparral gives way to the desert, my shredded forearms sting with sweat. Unfolding the dog's bowl, I uncap a quart of water and take a seat on a fallen log, considering a quote penned by a pioneering surveyor:

The Fish barrier in the lower canyon

Photos by Christian Bates



A moderate hike of four miles through parched chaparral leads to the heart of the ELF's lair, where water melts up from the earth

Photos by Christian Bates

"...the wildest roughest damn canyon there is in Arizona...The hillsides are covered with cat-claw, mesquite and cactus, with one or more rattlesnakes in each..."

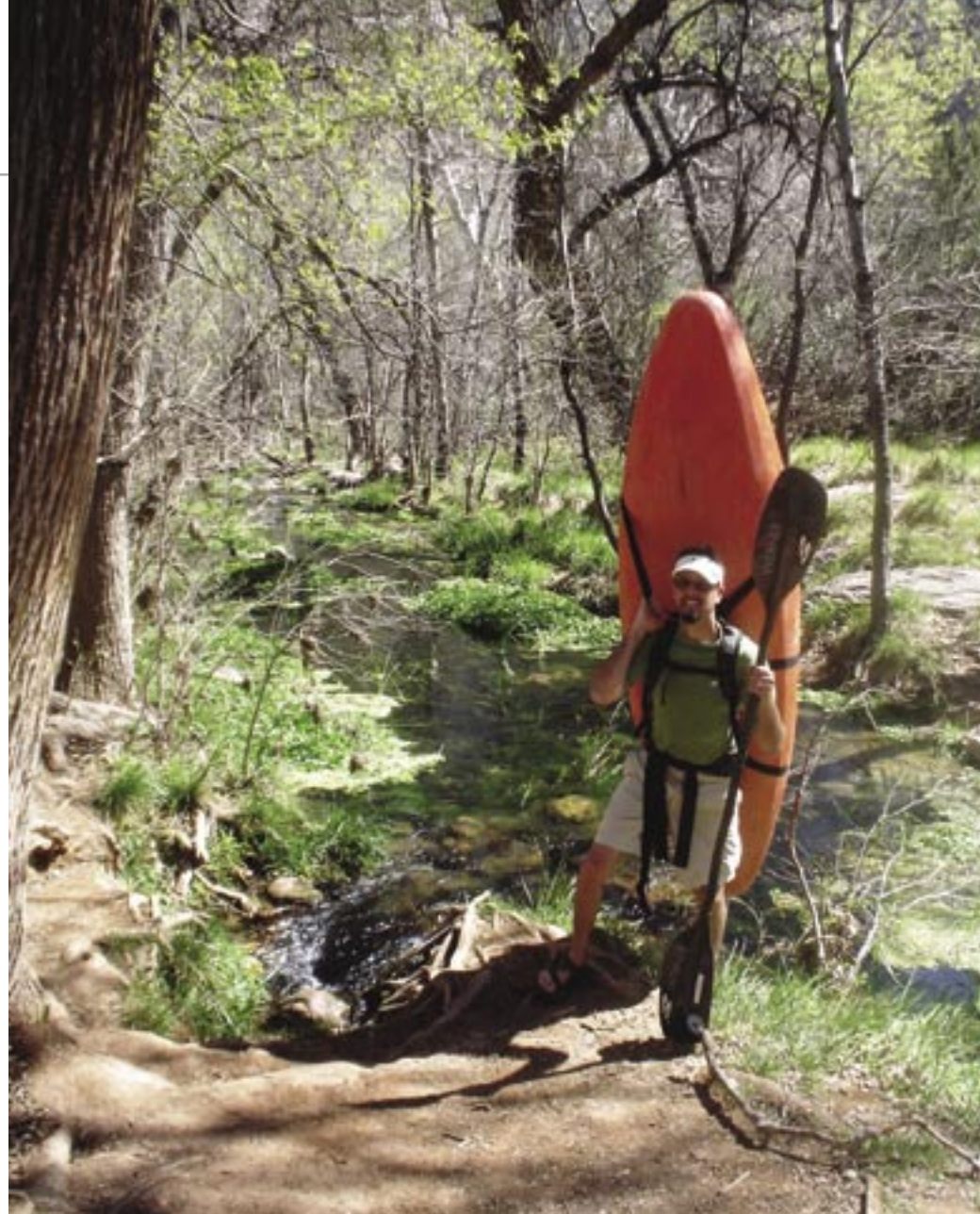
A bit over the top perhaps; but as dry leaves rustle nearby, I check the ground between my feet—just to make sure. Recapping the empty bottle, I imagine what travel in this canyon must have been like for the early explorers. Wild and rough, no doubt—and it still is.

The dog finishes his drink. I pour the drool remains on the rattlesnake lying next to us, and we move on, stepping carefully as we go.

Soon the route opens up, and it appears we're getting close, as indicated by the usual signs: a couple of beer cans, a plastic water bottle, a candy wrapper. I break out a trash bag and begin the day's collection services, a habit among conscientious visitors, including local boaters like myself. A few hundred yards on, we reach the last topographical obstacle. With a little creative rope work, we make it down. Thunder echoes from around the bend.

The unlikely detour that Fossil Creek took for so many years began behind a 40-foot dam. It was here that 95% of the stream's base flow was diverted by an astonishing network of flumes, pipes, and other civil handiwork to the Irving plant, and then on to Childs, miles upstream of the creek's actual mouth on the Verde, and on the opposite side of the imposing geologic barrier known as Ike's Backbone, which sends the natural watercourse reeling south.

But today, the liberated waters of the springs plunge over the dam in triumph. Stately cottonwoods peer over the top, each vying for a better view, like towering sentinels, keeping watch over the deep blue pool below: soul of the resurrected, seated in granite. And as we ponder the path that



brought us here, the lifeblood of the creek rolls on by, winding within its banks from one travertine shelf to the next, making things up as it goes.

Few boaters venture this far upstream; unless you're of a mind to run the dam itself (and very few are of such a mind), most of the action lies down the way. But like the majority of the infrastructure that APS is busy removing, the dam too is coming down. By the spring of 2009, those cottonwoods will have quite a different view. Perhaps then, mere mortals, paddles in hand, can take a crack it.

A two-liter soda bottle spins sluggishly in the eddy at my feet, half filled with some mysterious red concoction. I fish it out and empty the contents, adding to my collection. The scent of warm grain

alcohol induces momentary flashbacks, visions of days gone by, when a big crowd and a little cheap booze seemed a fine combination on the banks of any river.

After a snack and bit of leisure time in the mist, I pick my way carefully along the edge of the water by a route that requires three diligent points of contact, unless you're in the mood for a swim. Trek aborts the plan early and opts for the swim. (Dang those long toenails.) With the aid of the rope however, I'm able to haul him in, after negotiating some fast water across a thin shelf of wood turned to stone.

Above the dam, a lush canopy provides shade over isolated beaches and banks of wild raspberry, where a gentle path leads to the heart of the ELF's lair. Here, mineral-laden waters melt up from the

Padding the Unknown

earth, almost magically in this desert environment. The boils and seeps and the drip-drops of hanging gardens sing of a secret known only to those willing to expend the energy to get here. But the secret's out; and as we continue our stroll, we find the evidence that speaks of it. Plastic bottles are the most popular discardifacts, as always, but we collect a few exceptional items as well: the elastic band to someone's drawers, wound up in the debris of a past flood; an empty trash bag (ironically enough), tucked by the wind into a tangle of grape vines; a pair of muddy socks, draped over a protruding root.

It's a typical haul, but all in all, we're pleased: The impacts of human visitation appear to be sufficiently in check. For now, it seems the springs themselves are far enough off the beaten path to keep the worst of the riff-raff out, my own presence

notwithstanding; and as we pass quietly through a colorful cluster of tents, I'm hopeful that we'll stay the course.

But something nags at my conscience as we make our way upstream: a small matter, but one that finally forces a retracing of my steps, in case I've jumped the gun. At the edge of a sun-baked ledge overlooking a favored swimming hole, I hang the crusty pair of socks back on their snag. If my hunch is wrong, perhaps another thoughtful person will snatch them up and see that they're disposed of properly.

Crossing at the shallow end of the pool, I figure that we may as well bushwhack our way toward the lower section of the conventional trail for our return trip to the rim. My dog swims in wandering circles beside me as I drag through the water, one deliberate step at a time. Spying

a pair of day hikers resting on the opposite bank, I give a polite wave. Then, the glint of submerged aluminum catches my eye. I make a move for it – and down I go: on my ass and up to my neck.

Where there's a witness, there's a way. At least now I'm refreshed for the hike out.

With bits of hay blowing in a long trail of dust behind his decrepit old pickup, and a bright red boat sticking conspicuously out the back, my venerable friend and accomplice, the notorious "Cornville" Jeff, rolls into camp at a quarter after whenever in the morning. A light wind helps keep the bugs off as I rub desert crud from my eyes, enticed to join the living by a lukewarm cup of coffee. I take a sip, then wince and check the logo. I swear: That place must brew the stuff in a toilet bowl.

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WAVE SPORT

Steve Yeager takes the plunge at the put-in falls as Mark Chamberlain watches from below



Padding the Unknown

average kayaker. Most accurately described as explorers, rather than adventurers, they're driven by curiosity as opposed to adrenaline. Extreme nonconformists will go anywhere with enough moisture to lubricate plastic—often at the drop of a hat, and at the slightest hint of provocation. They'll skip out on staff meetings and they'll duck anniversaries; they'll walk their gear for miles and then they'll break their boats; they'll eat bugs, sleep in the rocks, and sport the same underwear for days, just to see a new canyon by the seat of their pants. And they'll do it with smiles on their faces—most of the time. But even by the desperate standards of a low water boater, the Extremely Low Flow at Fossil Creek barely qualifies as a marginal scrape. Nevertheless, it has drawn the attention of paddling enthusiasts from near and far. Easy running waterfalls will do that.

If you ran this creek in the old days, a fair amount both luck and skill were likely involved. Given the temperamental nature of the drainage, the gift of just one or the other wasn't generally good enough to get you home both wet and in one piece. Your best bet back then was to show up on the tail end of rain hitting snow, sit around in the mud for a while, and hope for the best. For those few who did pay such attention however, the best that ever came along was the occasional sideline thrill of seeing trees chewed to toothpicks at the base of the lower falls near Irving, as the Verde beckoned at a couple grand. Of course, things are different now.

After experiencing it once, the common consensus among most sane paddlers is that Fossil Creek is worth running—once. Returning a second time might

be justifiable, despite the masochistic knuckle-dragging and abuse to your boat, if you're just after some better pictures. But beyond that, deep-seated psychological issues are almost certainly at play. Squirt a garden hose over a belt of 60 grit sandpaper, add a few lumps, and you've got Fossil Creek. Bring your gloves. The old ones.

The standard run around here involves a two mile hike against the grain, through streamside mesquite thickets, swarming insects, and buzzing rattlesnakes—one or more in each bush. When you reach a 20-foot waterfall, you climb up and hop in. Make sure your buddy's got the camera ready, and mind the swimmers. Then grind your way back to Irving, until you reach the take-out falls, where you'll be compelled to climb back up and run

Below: Steve Yeager grinds over typical low-volume drop while volunteers Wendy Yeager and Melissa Bates collect trash as part of a clean-up with a local paddling club

Right: Steve Yeager takes the plunge at the put-in falls

Photo by Christian Bates



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Paddling the Unknown





Left: Fossil Creek, as viewed from above: a rare travertine wonderland

Above: If you're looking for a refreshing escape at the end of a long, hot, windy dirt road, FS 708 will get you there

Photo by Christian Bates

through again, at least once. In fact, you can probably fill an entire afternoon here if you care to get creative. Don't forget to smile for the tourists.

Beyond the lower falls, roadside access dominates the scene for a spell. Here the gradient mellows, and classic travertine dams appear in number. Deep, lazy pools back up between banks fringed with reeds, buzzing with life. Occasionally, we taste the spice of something resembling bony whitewater, but not often; the usual motivation for eddying out and exiting

our boats is to drag over a fallen log, or to avoid a delicate shelf, or to bag a dirty diaper left by some proud parent on a midstream rock (not the dangerous kind, thankfully.) These are the rules of etiquette where the concerns of nature and man collide.

The central portion of the creek, which encompasses a distance of perhaps four miles, sees a fair amount of use. This has been the case for many years, since long before any talk of decommissioning; and without a doubt, a motivated collector can still fill the back of his truck with beer cans and baby wipes on the heels of a busy weekend, if he's so inclined. Water that flows in the desert is always a beautiful—and popular—thing. But even if it does lack the wilder qualities perceived upstream and down, this stretch certainly has its charms: Rounding a bend that leads to relative seclusion, I glimpse a fine

specimen of the topless water nymph. The wildlife here is impressive in many ways.

Native fish dart from bending shadows to beams of light as we cross under Forest Service road 708, where a concrete bridge marks the heart of the motorized crowd's world. We trace an odd cusp now, at the nexus of a multiple-use quandary, with the Mazatzal Wilderness (land of the deer) bounded on river left, and common recreational shenanigans at play on our right. The creek, as one might expect, is caught precariously in between; and indeed, like a puppy tugged by the ears and tail at the hands of spoiled children, it may well face the danger of being loved to death. As litigious posturing ensues over management and planning, and with threats of long-term closures looming on the horizon, one wonders how the poor thing will fare in the end.

Paddling the Unknown

A serpentine part advances through the grass on the left bank as I contemplate the chilling effects that squabbles like these could have on future efforts at restorative conservation. But as I dip my paddle along another odd cusp (scratching the surface of the issue, as it were), I'm comforted by the fact that the residents darting around below appear to be doing quite well—never mind the bickering humans and their rope swings.

A pair of shag junipers shade a modest camp on a river right bench, where a deep cut ushers the creek quietly back into obscurity. Here, the Mazatzal Wilderness boundary overtakes both banks as the road climbs away to the west, passing the drained regulating reservoir formerly known as Stehr Lake (also named for a Bonbright operative), before crossing Ike's Backbone and making its final descent to Childs. Aside from its uppermost reaches within the Fossil Springs Wilderness, this is perhaps the least visited section of the creek, largely overlooked, somehow, by decades of surrounding activity.

The logical response when a friend invites you to join him for a run of Fossil Creek's lower canyon with an upstream take-out at Childs is to call him an idiot,

hang up, and get back to shoeing your horses. Cornville proffers a slightly more diplomatic refusal, but refuse he does, citing among other things a sore back, a trick shoulder, the insistent veto of any such idea by his wife, and (by the way) recalling the experience of a similarly hair-brained scheme, executed just a few weeks prior. Sympathetic to the cause however, he is easily conscripted as a shuttle bunny. And so, as a new sun rises over Deadman Mesa, the creek and I get a comfortable start without logistical complications.

It may not be the worst idea in the history of modern paddling man, but after a couple of miles dominated by repeated pin-balling and portages, I begin to wonder if it's not close. At double or triple the flow, the latest guidebooks might have something more to talk about; but at a base of less than 50 cubes, the whitewater experience down here is decidedly sub-marginal. Immersed in the creek's tranquility, however, somewhere between the umpteenth walk and my second bruised kidney, I'm convinced that it's worth the effort—once.

Deep blue pools reflect imposing walls of stone, as tumbled pebbles and fallen leaves glide in place beneath my boat.

The surface of the water is like the pane of a shadow box, displaying its charms as clearly at ten feet as at an inch. Off in the shallows, a mud turtle slips toward the cover of an overhung bank, kicking a distinct trail of river-born dust up behind him. And as a red-tailed hawk circles high above, a curtain of fine debris rains down from a nearby cliff: a startled mountain lion, perhaps; or just another odd run in the fabric of the landscape.

The familiar voice of a canyon wren floats down from above as I approach the well defined lip of an eight foot drop. I drift toward the horizon line slowly, looking over my left shoulder with the bow pointed upstream in restraint. One would assume this to be a natural travertine dam, at first glance, capped by a fallen log and encrusted in calcium carbonate. But on closer inspection, it's revealed to be a man-made fish barrier – constructed to protect the native species above from ruffians like the smallmouth bass below. It seems to be doing its job, but sadly, it appears that no paddlers were consulted with respect to the design: a shallow rock shelf with two narrow run-out slots at the base force another portage.

According to the Arizona Game and Fish



Department, Fossil Creek may one day qualify as a blue ribbon sport fishery—for the roundtail chub. I snicker privately over the thought of who might actually show up for that affair, observing the movement of schooling minnows as I chew on a sandwich in the shade. But as the concentric rings of a subtle disturbance advance from the opposite bank, I catch myself envisioning a return trip with a pack rod stowed behind my seat, believing optimistically that even I might catch something in a secluded spot like this. Of course, the creek is not currently open to fishing; so that idea will have to wait until at least the end of 2009, and even then, it's likely to be a sticky affair. With no fewer than ten native species inhabiting the creek above the barrier, some of them quite endangered, it's hard to say what I might land. (But who am I kidding? Fish don't bite on optimism.)

Another chip to the paddle; a new gash to the hull; deepening sunburn, suspected broken elbow. Portage. Portage again. The oppressive heat of mid-afternoon begins to take its toll on my attitude as half the flow of the morning, which I now recall with fond sentiment as having been relatively generous, seems to disappear. And as a matter of fact, that's exactly the case as the canyon opens up and the streambed turns to cobbles, six miles from the put-in, as many hours later. To my eventual relief however, the surroundings begin to look familiar as I enter the transitional zone that marks the approaching confluence with the Verde.

For over 20 years, the state of Arizona has boasted a grand inventory of one in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. That distinguished stretch of water is here, at the Verde River corridor. But after nearly two years of debate, review, and bureaucratic mumbo jumbo, it appears that Fossil Creek may be ready to join her bigger sibling on the federal roster. Introduced with widespread popular support by Arizona public servants Rick Renzi and John McCain, the legislation that would make this possible was finally included with an omnibus lands bill (S.3213) in the summer of 2008 for

consideration by the 110th congress.

And as I turn my bow into the slow green current, with a few miles yet to go (the hard way), I'm certain that she's worthy of it.

“Did you give up and crawl the whole way?” Shortly before sunset, still a half mile short of Childs, my shuttle driver locates me on hands and knees, slipping around next to my boat in the shallows of the summertime Verde, following a flurry of cursing oaths that are undoubtedly heard clear to the next county. “You know, it seems like you carry that thing more than you paddle it.”

“That’s why it’s still in one piece,” I respond through clenched teeth, tossing a barrage of loose items from the cockpit his way: helmet, throw rope, dry box for the camera – and a trash bag that is notably empty, aside from the meager bulk of my own contributions. I lift one end of the boat as he grabs the other, and we pick our way along the bank.

The left slot at Irving will put your elbow pads to the test

Photo by Christian Bates



paddling the Unknown

“So, do you think you’ll do it again?” I detect a hint of regret in his voice, as if he knows that he’s missed out on something. And as the relieving sight of a shady grove finally comes into view, where a patient dog waits under the tailgate and where captive waters once churned, I suspect that he’d like to go see it for himself.

“We’ll see, Cornville.” – We’ll see.

What’s so special about Fossil Creek? Ask the lowland leopard frog, or the yellow-billed cuckoo, or the common blackhawk

Mark Chamberlain hauls an old paint can out on the deck of his boat during a clean-up run with a local paddling club

Photo by Christian Bates

lazing in a nearby sycamore; ask the Gila topminnow or the razorback sucker—native residents that, according to the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, are among the most endangered group of fish species in the United States; ask the frustrated river rat who makes his home in the desert, near streams that commonly run dry. In a place where vast majorities of the riparian landscape have been severely degraded—or entirely lost—over the past century, Fossil Creek is a rare gem in a vast quarry of stone. And for those who yearn for more cooperative undercurrents in the world of conservation, it serves as a shining beacon on the horizon, an example that breeds hope. The inspirational value of this story can hardly be overstated.

But the creek begs for diligent stewardship, and for continued tolerance among those who wish to share in the celebration of this multi-faceted success. Come here to play in the deep blue water, and to bask in the sun, and to marvel at what can be achieved. But come with an air of respect; watch your step; and beware the serpents of paradise.

Footnote: Public access at Fossil Creek is currently restricted by a temporary closure, affecting the upper (boat-worthy) portion of the canyon. This closure is due to expire no later than March 2009, the target for completion of dam removal activities by APS. For more information, contact Coconino National Forest.



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Nepal's
Humla Karnali

By Tom Saffell



A droplet of water falling atop the holy Mount Kailas has options in life. It can join the great eastward procession around the Himalaya, aboard the Yarlung Tsangpo / Brahmaputra. Or it could escape West, by way of Indus and Sutlej. Its final option is to course due South, through the Himalaya, and take its place in the mighty Humla Karnali.

The five of us had no such options. With the Indus/Sutlej under our belts and the Tsangpo well beyond our means, the Humla Karnali was our best choice. Of course, we five were not borne of Kailas—but five flights from San Francisco can get you to Simikot, which is as close as any mortal would want to get on the Karnali. Kayaks rarely fly for free these days, so when the British Airlines staff in SFO agreed not to charge for mine, life was good. They didn't mention that the deal involved not actually putting the boat on the plane, as I later discovered in Kathmandu. Several phone calls / 'warm-up' runs / days later, one dirty yellow Habitat was located in the corner of international arrivals in Kathmandu.

Our motley crew of five consisted of Ben, Andy, Hugh, Danny and myself—a Brit born, but a California resident. Assembled in Kathmandu, the five of us dispersed across Thamel, each with his quest assigned: 8 days of food, plane tickets, enough drugs to run a small clinic for a year, and batteries that had all the letters D-U-R-A-C-E-L-L in the right order. Mission complete, Hugh, Andy and I boarded flight #4 (Kathmandu to Nepalganj) with Ben and Danny taking the 18-hour bone-jarring Super Deluxe Express, with five boats. Yeti Airline's approach for flight #5 (the final leg—Nepalganj to Simikot) would make any paddler proud: If there isn't room for the boats in the cargo hold, get rid of the passengers, fold down the seats and put them inside. So it was that five paddlers, five boats, one air stewardess, one passenger, and a dodgy plastic bottle full of gasoline arrived in Simikot, amidst a cloud of dust kicked up from the dirt runway.

Stories tell of trips to far-off lands where locals line the streets to cheer-on the

brave foreign warriors, as they take on the mighty local river. Simikot was, upon our arrival, playing host to the regional volleyball championship. As any NBC Olympics programmer will tell you, volleyball beats kayaking (cough). So with little fanfare, and five coerced porters, we eased out of the village, dropped 1,000 feet to the river banks, and made camp.

Projectile vomiting is never quiet. In Andy's case, the second bout, at 4am, in -2C (28F) air, is deliberately loud, a wake-up call to the rest of us that something is not right. With the gasoline soaked Thermarest removed from Andy's bivvy bag, we sleep again, until the sun slowly starts its procession down the steep valley walls. Morning proper is eye opening: frozen Nalgene bottles, ice on boats, a nip in the air. So starts the daily ritual of pouring camp into our sterns—speedily enough to make best use of the short days, slow enough that there is some chance of sun and warmth once on the water. Andy inaugurates the supply of Ciprofloxacin – not a classic cure for gasoline fumes, but a safe bet nonetheless. I patch the new hole in my drybag, slicing my finger for good measure as I cut the tape—first-aid kit use #2. Danny discovers that his 8 day supply of lunches has disappeared, so we redistribute the food.

So here we are, on the banks of the Karnali, one sick man healing, first-aid kit tested, life in our sterns: we are ready for an expedition...

Humla Karnali makes its introduction slowly and courteously, as if knowing that it has twelve long days to get to know us, it does not rush to show us what it is capable of. Toward the end of the day the river suddenly asserts its authority, forcing a long portage under a burning sun. I wonder how much I have to sweat before my drysuit starts acting as wetsuit. As the walking ends the sun abandons us in the first gorge, and we find a narrow sand ledge on which to scratch a camp. So the daily evening camp activity begins: a fire to dry sweat-drenched thermals; pasta to power tomorrow; the drip-drip of our filter bag making crystal clear the murky Karnali waters; and early to bed, for tomorrow will be another big day.

There aren't many twelve-day white water paddling trips out there. But if you spend enough time portaging, you can scratch one out on the Humla Karnali, Nepal.

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Paddling the Unknown

A routine is established. We each find tasks to fit us. An order forms—I am last to be ready. More portaging tests our patience for whitewater, but back on the river we get our first taste of the quality the Karnali has to offer. Our first bridge and village comes into sight, and with it another portage. We carry down the left bank, ignoring the gesticulations of a local girl, only to turn back, cross the bridge, and follow her down the river right path. Her grin says it all. This place belongs to these people. As shadows lengthen, the river opens up for us, and we crank out ten miles of pushy non-stop read-‘n-run, never eddying, clawing toward our destination. We arrive at the village exhausted with the sun set. The villagers empty a storage room for us to sleep in, and cook us Dahl Bhat, for a modest sum. Our stomachs are filled with rice and guilt. This area is food poor. Unable to grow rice, they are dependent on UN food aid, and live barely

above the nutrition line. We have 100,000 calories packed with us, a mountain of food, and yet not enough to sustain us twelve days. What would they think of us if they knew that?

Morning brings children, excited by the sight of their strange guests, and their colorful paraphernalia. We dry kit on the roof, which has a Pied-Piper like effect, drawing ever more children from around the village. We pack to leave and discover two metal whistles, formerly attached to PFDs, are missing. There is surely a universal appeal to brightly colored shiny metal objects—be they in the modern-day Aladdin’s Cave we call REI, or the remotest corner of the Himalaya. A search ensues. Even if they understand us, can they possibly comprehend what it is to us not to have whistles? Can we possibly comprehend what it is to them to have such shinily-clad aliens pass through their village? We leave without the whistles. Throughout the day we wrestle with this dilemma: how do we live the culture without exposing ourselves to the risks that this culture divide brings?

We resolve to immerse ourselves by day, but by night to camp at least one mile from villages—a happy balance.

Back on the river, more of the same class water takes us to the Lochi confluence, where we enter the gorge that seals the Humla Karnali valley from the rest of the world. Now the paddling begins to heat up. The portaging is less intense, and the water just within our limit. Ben signals a center line down a long rapid, indicating a wave train. I drop down last, crashing over huge wave after another. I peak the fifth wave, and see the sixth is a huge hole, surfing Hugh and Danny together. I take the only evasive action I can—I flip upstream as I crash into Hugh’s upright hull, sending him into a full reverse loop. The turbulence is immense. I roll on the back side, shake the water out my eyes, look downstream, and see another huge hole downstream, once again with Hugh taking a surf. We repeat our moves, and both flush. We wait nervously at the bottom of the rapid for Danny to emerge.

Portaging in the gorge we take in the

Entering the Emerald River, Lower Karnali

Photo by Hugh Thomas





Paddling the Unknown

remarkable flora. In this semi-arid high mountain land a tropical gorge is tucked away. Palm trees and cacti sprout from the cliffs, a local arrives and sells us bananas, a delightful treat. It is another world, and it spooks me. We make camp on a small beach in the gorge, amid swarms of insects.

We are in a rhythm. We quest for river miles to tuck under our belts. We focus on simple goals: confluences, gorges, bridges. We lose all sense of clock-time—nobody knows the day of the week or the month, only the day of the expedition. Time is known as hours to darkness. We push as hard as we know how and dare.

An unexpected obstacle appears. Amid an easy flatwater box-canyon a horizon

Simikot Airport. Five boats were inside there!

Photo by Hugh Thomas

line appears. A piece of cliff has fallen and blocked the middle third of the river, creating a drop. The overhanging cliffs on each side offer no escape and the dare-devil inspection from the water yields nothing. We reluctantly paddle upstream out of the canyon, climb atop its lips and inspect. A clean line takes us down the right, albeit three times bigger than it had looked from the canyon's lip. We push on.

Several more days of hard white water await us. We know we won't hit the hardest till day eight. All we can do is take each rapid as it comes, knowing that as each rapid follows the next, so does each day. The tributaries multiply the volume, and we note the change in style to big water. A local approaches during an inspection. He marks out the line with bold gesticulations. He's right on the line, but I'm not sure about the grade—it feels like more than Class II to me.

Portaging on day seven the river takes its first

lash at us. Danny's boat is dropped in a side creek while portaging. Quick reactions by Danny, and the assistance of a curious local secure the boat to a line, which Andy and I anchor by body belay. Andy asks me to take my weight off to test if he can hold it on his own, and screams with pain as I ease off the line. I put my weight back on. The boat is rescued, one dry bag missing. We count up the losses: sleeping bag, down jacket, clothes, one liter of gasoline. We're glad we packed generously. Spare down jackets sub for Danny's sleeping bag, clothes are lent, and we keep a keen eye on fuel.

The sun makes its rapid wintery descent as we wonder how many more miles of gorge lie ahead. A porters' lodge perches beside the river on the only flat. We break our rule on staying in villages—to descend further into the gorge at this time would not be wise. The Dahl Bhat is excellent, and for breakfast we are treated to Nepali doughnuts as we ready ourselves for the final push through



Ben lines up

Photo by Hugh Thomas



Paddling the Unknown

First taste of whitewater, below Chariá

Photo by Hugh Thomas



the gorge. Hugh hikes down the gorge to inspect as we pack, and returns—it goes, but it's pushy. Breaking-in is an ominous sight, as the water crashes down the gorge for half a mile then turns sharp right, still foaming, out of sight.

We exit the gorge to reach the Tila confluence, and with it the end of the hard water, or so we think. We relax a little and enjoy the boogie water. But there is a sting in the tail. Several large rapids remain, in what is now a BIG volume run—less technical than what we have already done, but with huge fluffy holes to be punched. Not the

keeper sort, but the flipper for sure. We run some, and sneak some.

Andy inspects a right side sneak (or 'Turkey Line' as we call them), and declares it good, warning of an undercut after a rooster tail boof. Andy leads off, and we follow in close pursuit. I break-in last, and as I enter the rapid I catch a small rock and dry-out. I turn myself around and push back into the flow, but the group has already disappeared beyond the next rock, unaware of my delay. I paddle on alone, recalling Andy's description in my head. I boof and slide off to the right. As the splash clears my eyes I see the cliff

dead ahead, undercut exactly at water level. I need to make left around it but my bow is right and I'll never make it. A log juts out from under the cliff towards the middle and I'm heading for the right of it. I know I mustn't go under there, of all places. I back paddle furiously and hold myself against the flow, perilously above the undercut. I spin the boat and dart for the left exit. I make it past the log, but just two feet short from clearing the undercut my stern slams into it. I spin onto it, sideways to the flow. I lean hard against the rock for one second, holding my upstream edge clear of the water, trying to claw with my hands around the



rock edge. But it is no good. It is the perfect undercut – precisely at river level, no pillow, and very powerful. I know I cannot escape this in my boat. I can hold my edge no longer, and flip. I pull my deck instantly and kick my boat away from me hard, then reach up to push off the rock ceiling. I surface. The flow is far too powerful to usefully swim. As if in sympathy the river washes me to a mid-stream eddy by a river-level rock. I grab on. There is a step in it and I climb atop. I am out the water. I look around me; nothing and nobody. My paddle surfaces and floats nearby. My rock is slippery – I cannot reach it from here. I must not fall-in for I will not be

so lucky next time. A wash lifts it and places it in my hand. I am lucky again. I stand atop the rock, mid flow, unhurt, safe, with my paddle. Now I must wait. Danny is first to the scene, and as he sees me safely on a rock, the relief is written plain on his face. I am not at all relieved—I have known all along that I am fine and that rescue will come, but I fear for my boat. Either it is already downstream of me, and I shall never see it again, or is still in the undercut, and could vanish at any moment. I am impatient to cross to the shore, but Danny and Andy's sense prevails, and I am safely pendulummed across. I sprint up the shore to the undercut, the team following. My boat is bobbing in the undercut, stern in the air, bow under water - held neatly in place by this perfect undercut. A five man rescue begins. I live-bait in and put on a line, anchored by Hugh and Ben. I attach a vector and from the shore we pull the boat upstream and sideways. It slips out of this oh-so-perfect undercut with absolute ease. Nothing lost, nothing wet. The ying-yang of this feature amuses me—what made it so impossible for me to escape from it also made it the perfect parking spot for my empty boat. I get back on the water. Life is surreal. I spend the rest of the day wondering whether I died.

We camp near a road head—the only one on the Karnali, and the only place to resupply food. We buy rice and mustard seed oil², to replace our diminished supply of olive oil.

We are now approaching the Lower Karnali, a popular four-day rafting trip. We grind out 45 miles of boogie water in one day and camp at a spectacular sandy beach, just below the rafting put-in. We all agree that if we had a beer, we'd have drunk it.

We put-on the deep emerald river, and charge hard downstream. We want to get all the rapids in the rafting section done in one day, to ease our logistics at the end of the trip. The three gorges hold endless big volume read-'n-run. We know from the guide that one significant rapid, God's Waiting Room, contains a huge hole river right. As I lead down on the right, I suspect we are there, but have to eddy right. The team has time to make left, and bombs the rapid on the river left ramp. I make a huge ferry above the hole

(to the team's amusement), and as I pass by the hole I can't help but gape at it. God must employ a very efficient receptionist, because it looks like you wouldn't have to wait long. We reach the end of the rapids as the sun disappears, and find our most beautiful camp so far, a vast sandy beach with ample wood and good sun. The rapids are over. It's time to paddle out.

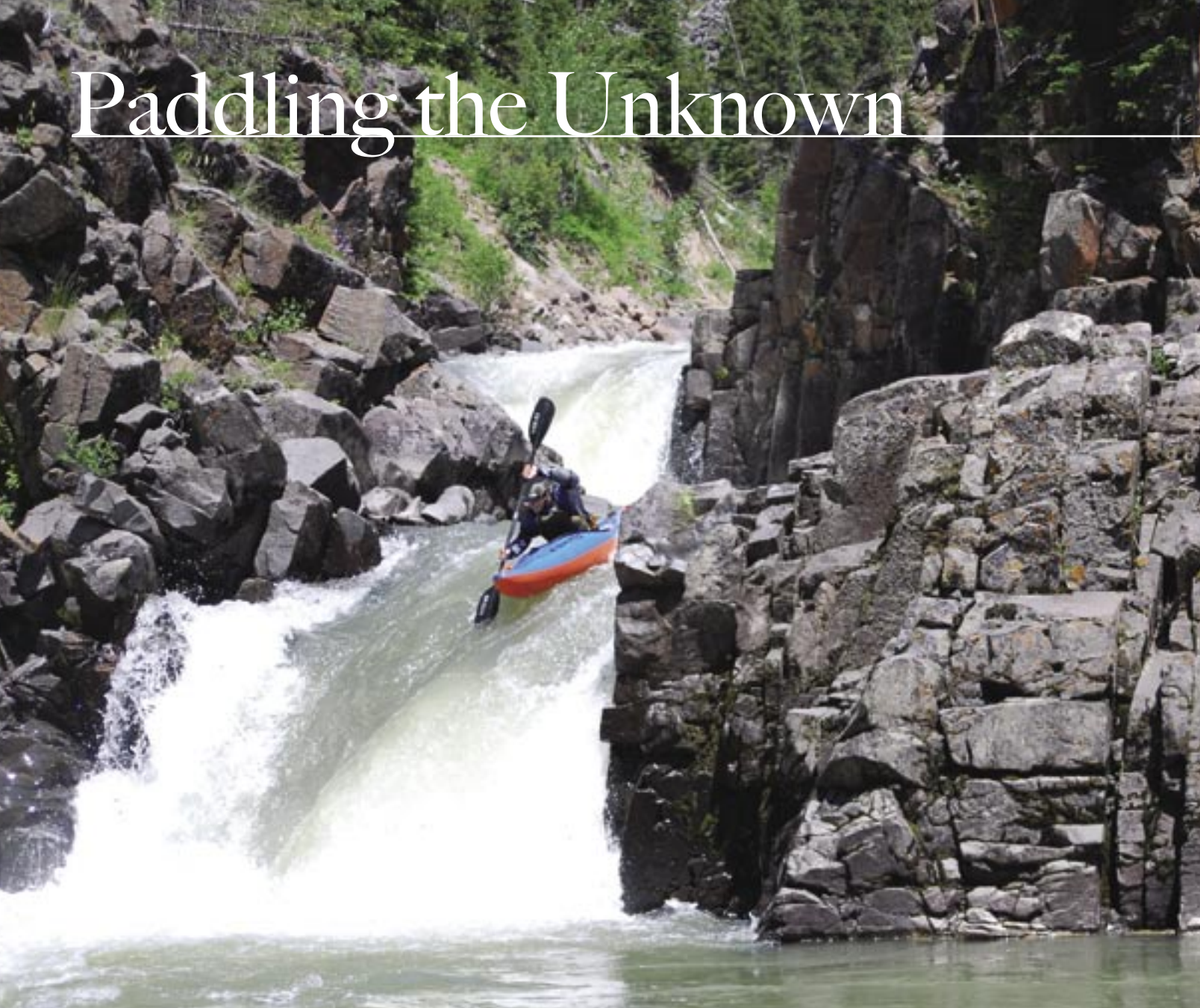
We grind out another 40 mile day, mostly on flat but moving water, through stunning low-land scenery. We find some locals fashioning dug-outs from huge trees with nothing but axes. The similarity to Hugh's Jefe Grande does not go unnoticed. The occasional rapid keeps us awake, but today is mostly a float. Vitamin-I3 is used liberally to ease us along. We arrive at our final camp, a clearing in a forest with a grassy floor. The absence of sands is a great luxury. We are now close to 500ft above sea level, and the warm evening allows us to fulfill that expeditionary must: a lengthy campfire discussion on the nature of God⁴. In the morning we discover that we have camped beside the local dug-out canoe crossing point, used to ferry children to school. Hugh, Ben and Danny take turns to captain the ship, though Hugh's experience handling a vessel of that size clearly shines through.

We put on for the final push, keen to make the take-out in time to safari next day. We are treated to a final spectacular gorge. Very suddenly, the vast incongruous bridge at Chisopani appears, as if from another world. We pull out and take the obligatory team photo. We climb the bank to the main East-West highway across Nepal and we are quickly plunged back into the dirty, noisy, hustle-bustle of Nepal that we left behind two weeks before. But life has a way of balancing things out, and in this case the beer and samosas were extra fine. The river was still frigid cold, even at 500ft. Ben and I took a swim in the river all the same. We gave no heed to the warnings of crocodiles—we didn't think the river would play such a cruel trick on us after we'd been together for twelve days.

We retreated to a safari park, where we ate

continued on page 65

Padding the Unknown



First Descent of Hellroaring Creek

By Patrick Rogers

Two years ago I was sitting around the shop relaxing after two hard weeks of work. I had spent them guiding back to back canoe trips down the Yellowstone River. The daytime was filled with relaxing meanders, and then abrupt excitement as we would have to chase teenagers and their heavily laden, capsized canoes full and equipment down Class II rapids. Every evening I'd settle down with a book to escape the mayhem of twelve teenagers and their constant chatter. Typically

around the 10th page my mind would start to wander. My thoughts were mostly about women, or perhaps cold beer, but then I'd stare off into the snowcapped peaks of the Absorka Mountain range and ponder the possibilities of exploring these giant mountains first on foot, then by boat. Mountains that big are practically required to have steep creeks galore, but I hadn't heard of a single whitewater run on this side of the range—quite odd.

Back at the shop I stare off into the very same mountains, this time from the front porch. I ask Jason, my boss and good friend at the raft company what he knows about all the creeks that drain into the valley. He talks about the runs that he's explored both by boat or by horse, or perhaps just hiking around. I'm intrigued but not all that inspired because most of his beta yields stories of log portages, ugly rocks, and maybe a good rapid here or there—nothing that's itching to become



Previous page - Casey Wilcox running the last drop of "Double Dip"

Left - Casey Wilcox getting ready for the final push over the summit

Photo by Patrick Rogers

an instant classic. By the end of the conversation he mentioned that exploring the area has been fun, but it's tough to beat runs like Big T only an hour down the road. I agree. It's tough to convince yourself to carry heavy objects through the woods when you know you've got one of the best runs in the country right in your backyard. Then his eyebrows flare up and he says, "Well, there is one run I've always wanted to do: Hellroaring creek, smack dab in the middle of those beastly

mountains." Jason has traveled deep into the wilderness for years on fall hunting trips, and knows there's potential, but it's so hard to tell because there's just a small trickle in the creek during the late fall. He explains, "The only problem is, to get there you'd have to hike for at least a day over a mountain pass with fully loaded boats."

Two years later I found myself looking up at the monstrous peaks as I took the last few steps towards exhaustion, and the summit. We're going for it, unsure of the outcome, good or bad. All I knew was that my boat is really heavy when it's loaded for a three-day attempt at a first descent. We had made the summit, and relaxed for some lunch and enjoyed the scenery before the freezing wind and hail forced us to scramble down into the valley to escape the elements.

The six miles down hill seemed far more inviting than the four miles we had just traveled up. About seven hours later we stumbled towards the confluence of the middle and west fork, our planned put-in for the next day. We're soaking wet from the rain, and sick of the mosquitoes. We didn't bother to bring raincoats or bug spray, because every ounce counts when it's shoved into a creek boat you're going to carry over a mountain.

Luckily we spotted some smoke rising off in a distant meadow; we trudged closer, and began to make out the shape of wall tents and horse corrals. We're greeted by a grizzled man wearing a wool sweater and a cowboy hat, complete with a pistol at his side, and a Skoal ring in his back pocket. He's in disbelief to see people here, let alone three guys carrying kayaks through



Bradford McArthur launching off a drop in the first gorge

Photo by Patrick Rogers

Bradford McArthur asking are you serious? We have to hike over that?

Photo by Patrick Rogers

the wilderness. He quickly invites us in for coffee and a fire to warm our bodies, which are soaked to the bone. After an hour of conversation and warmth we would have been offered a dry place to stay, but the camp was full of clients who have been enjoying pack trips by horse for the last few days. The coffee and fire sure did a number on our morale, and

made our bivy sacks a bit more inviting as we climbed into them just behind the horse corral.

The next morning we put on into the great unknown. At this point I didn't even care that we were kayaking, the trip had been amazing so far with out it. Class V rapids were the furthest thing

from my mind as we meandered through the gorgeous valley. A few hours later the meander slowly started to pick up, as we cruised through some Class III and IV. Before we knew it we were scouting the first horizon line that started as a junky pile of rocks, then magically transformed into smooth rolling Class IV and V rapids as it dropped into a magnificent canyon. Every scout proved to be more and more exciting. We began boofing our way through unknown granite gorges at what felt like the perfect flow. After running a series of two drops into an emerald pool, we all pulled over for a granola bar, and a chance to take it all in. There wasn't a single flutter of nervousness or anxiety as we peered downstream into the next



horizon line. Nothing else mattered, because at that moment all of our efforts were worth every single footstep over that mountain pass.

The day continued rapid after rapid as we made our way through the unknown water and steep committing canyon walls. There were a few spots along the way that allowed a momentary escape and a chance to scout from the rim. We spent most of the time going off a limb, and scouting as far as the next eddy. What if we came upon unrunnable drops, or couldn't portage? What about wood—you've always got to be heads up for wood. When boating in Montana, it's almost expected. We were smart about it, but there were a couple

of times where we proceeded into eddies on nothing more than a feeling. We used that ever-important gut feeling to provide confidence that the next scout would prove to be runnable.

We boated though 11 miles of amazing scenery and Class IV-V rapids placed within two distinct gorges. Once we came upon the Yellowstone National Park boundary we simply picked up our boats and walked proudly through the park. We celebrated our triumph as we grinned and smiled our way down the trails of the park that has made kayaking illegal, and whose rangers have a knack for catching poachers that make illegal runs through the park every year. Some consider paddling in

Yellowstone a peaceful protest, some like the rush and excitement of doing something illegal, but most simply can't resist the temptation of epic whitewater in the Black Canyon. The Park Service has it out for paddlers, and has even made a point to hunt down several parties by helicopter. We traveled right through the backyard of the national park with our boats shouldered in plain view. Perfectly legal, a lot of work, and sooo worth it!

River Voices

Rogue River Gods

by Raoul Adamchak

One thing lead to another and my family and I found ourselves in Galice, OR., on the doorstep of the Rogue River's Wild and Scenic section. July 4th weekend would normally have to be considered prime Rogue River trip season, and I considered our chances of getting a permit somewhere between low and none. But all was not normal, and that was part of reason we were in Galice. We had made plans to join our whitewater paddling club, the Gold Country Paddlers, for the traditional Trinity River 4th of

July weekend get together. For the first time ever, it was cancelled due to forest fires, but we wanted to boat anyway. That weekend in California, there were somewhere between 1000 and 2000 fires burning, mostly started by a freak dry lightening storm. Smoke from those fires was blowing into Oregon, and the skies were not perfectly clear. It must have caused some Rogue permit holders to stay home. And the price of gasoline didn't encourage people to drive long distances for boating either. At \$4.59 gallon for gas, I can understand how a guy could make the decision to boat local: no need to add more fuel to the global warming fire. That must have been the reason a few more

permit holders stayed home. Not to mention the flow. On July 4th the flow was a little over 3,000 cfs. I had run the river years ago in September and couldn't actually remember what the flow was then, but my guess would have been 1,500 cfs. So maybe the river was a little higher than some permit holders liked. Finally, the week before a tragedy had occurred on the river. A woman in a double inflatable had drowned in the Blossom Bar rapid. All things considered then, it shouldn't be surprising that on July 5th when I went to Smullin BLM Ranger Station just down the road from Galice, there were 38 cancelled permits and I was first (and last) in line.



It turned out to be remarkably easy to rent a raft in Galice. As long as you are willing to sign your life away, (I never did read that release form in the contract. Why bother?), and have a live credit card, you can get a decent 13-foot, self-bailing raft with oar-frame, oars, cooler, pfd, helmets, straps, and very good service. We already had food, camping equipment, and much of our own river gear because we originally thought we would run the Class II section of Rogue from below Grants Pass to the Grave Creek (cheerful name) boat ramp. We didn't expect to get a permit. We had applied for a permit in January and failed, and now one had fallen into our laps so we were headed down the Rogue.

In deciding to go, I had to evaluate the risk of taking my wife and 7- and 9-year old kids down the Rogue in raft (and an

Left: In the inflatable kayak the fish ladder is easy and fun

Below: No matter what the river had to offer, the kids were ready to have fun

Photo by Pam Ronald



inflatable for my wife). I thought we could do it. The previous two years we had done raft trips on the Deso-Gray section of the Green, (I got a permit!), and the Klamath (no permit last year). I am a Class IV kayaker with 15 years experience. I had been down this river before, and had a sense of how hard it was. In a kayak it is easy. Rafting, I knew there would be some challenges. Of course, in an emergency, there are lodges on the river, a trail that runs along it, and other rafts and jet boats (at the lower end) on the water.

Although we were the first ones at the Grave Creek boat ramp on Saturday morning, by the time everything was packed up and tied down, we were the last of four parties to leave. Things didn't start out well. I had scouted Grave Creek rapid from the path along the river early that morning, and dismissed it as Class II wave train, and for me and kids in the raft, it was a Class II wave train. My wife, Pam, flipped the double inflatable on the first lateral wave in the rapid. She separated from the boat and swam the rapid and then made it to shore. Catching her boat while rowing the raft with two kids screaming about

their mother was tricky. We eventually corralled the boat after running through the next rapid, Grave Creek Falls (a weak Class III). We pulled into an eddy and waited for Pam. And waited for Pam. Finally, she appeared 150 feet above us on the trail. Only a steep, crumbly slope and lots of poison oak separated the kids from their mother. After much hallooing back and forth she figured out how to get down. We were once again on our way. Nothing had been lost in the flip except a lot of confidence, but a river is less fun when you run out of confidence.

Pam had done great on both the Green and Klamath in the inflatable. She had been aggressive and comfortable through rapid after rapid. For whatever reason, this wasn't going to be her day. So, we made adjustments. We carefully examined our river guide (The Rogue River—A Comprehensive Guide from Prospect to Gold Beach—highly recommended), and at anything harder than Class II, she got out and walked. I would run the rapid in the raft, and then hike back and run it in the inflatable. I got a lot of exercise and exposed myself to plenty of poison oak, but it was working and everyone was happy.

Of course the first rapid after her swim was Rainy Falls, either a Class V falls, a Class IV chute or a Class III fish ladder. The ladder was the obvious choice. We eddied out to scout. I looked hard at the sharp right turn I had to make at the entrance. I ran back to the boats, hopped into the inflatable and floated almost effortlessly down the fish ladder. But it didn't ease my concern about getting the raft down it. The fish ladder is narrow. When a raft is in it, the oars, if extended, would touch each bank, which is mostly rock. Luckily, I was able to watch a skilled rafter smoothly make the tight entrance turn at the top and cruise down the ladder without mishap. I could do that! And I did more or less. After making the entrance move, I pulled the oars into the boat and prayed to the river gods. They came through and I only got stuck on one rock near the bottom and easily pivoted

River Voices

off it. The family cheered.

We scouted Tyee Rapid (not a Class IV) and I ran back and forth over a huge gravel bar twice to run both boats. After looking at this rapid and most of the other Class IIIs, I decided to take the kids in the raft instead of having them portage. It seemed safer than having them rambling through poison oak, big rocks, and brush filled with ticks.

At the end of the day we stopped at a beautiful sandbar, unmarked campsite, just above Plowshare Rapid. It was nearly perfect. It had a level tent site in the sand, easy access to the water, a safe eddy to tie the boats in, and wonderful view up and down river. The canyon was quite steep here and the likelihood of bears invading our camp seemed small. Only one other raft passed us while we were camped there. They were running late, and headed for Black Bar Lodge for the high comfort

experience. We did not envy them at all.

The next day we continued our strategy of having Pam walk around the Class IIIs. However, after the first day of bushwacking back and forth to run both the raft and inflatable, I was less enthusiastic about doing it on the second day, particularly because some of the Class IIIs on the Rogue are very easy, even in a raft. I tricked Pam into running Horseshoe Bend Rapid by pulling the raft into eddies on the way down to boat scout. By the time we went from eddy to eddy to eddy there wasn't any more rapid.

Pam did walk the next Class III, Wildcat Rapid, because it was hard to see. With the help of the river guide the kids and I flew down the right channel and ferried across to the left to avoid rocks. It was great fun. The reverse portage was a little long and I had a hard time finding where Pam had left the inflatable, but everyone

was happy. Some of the happiness ended at Quiz Show Rapid, which is a very easy rapid unless you go sideways into a whole near the center. The river is very wide here and it is easy to miss the hole. The kids and I floated through and had a good look at Pam as she came down. No matter what she did, it was obvious that the magnetic traction beam generated by that hole was going to pull her in and dump her. After we pulled her out Cliff said, "Mommy, you only swim once each day." I think he was trying to comfort her, but it was unclear that his words had that effect.

Because of this swim, we stopped to scout Kelsey Falls Rapid. I looked at it as a straightforward vee, but the river narrowed here and it was a big vee that made a lot of

Story time at the Tacoma campsite

Photo by Paoul Adamchak



noise. I ran it with the kids and pulled into an eddy below against a steep cliff. It wasn't clear how was Pam going to hike down here and how was I going to get back up. We waited for her and nothing happened. Finally I decided to climb along the cliff face, just above water level. It was like the climbing wall as Rocknassium, only if you fall, you fall into the river. In 10 minutes I was back to the inflatable, but Pam wasn't there. She had climbed high up the cliff to do another poison oak census. Eventually she made it back to the raft and performed what had become the portage ritual. She jumped in the water, pulled out the Tecnu and proceeded to rub herself down. The high poison oak density was testament to the effectiveness of Tecnu. With all the bushwacking we did on the trip, only Cliff got poison oak (on his face).

We floated happily through the next several miles of Class II until we reached our campsite for the day at Mule Creek. There is an upper Mule Creek campground and a lower. When we pulled into the upper, there was another couple of rafts there with one guy sitting there waiting. After exchanging pleasantries, we found out that he was a guide, and the guests had walked up to see Rogue River Ranch, an old settlement on the river that is maintained by the BLM. The very taciturn guide encouraged us subtly to camp at the lower site. I was inclined towards the upper because it had an easily

accessible electric fence bear barrier. "This time of year, the berries aren't ripe yet, and the bears don't come down to the river," said the guide, never smiling. "That upper camp site is too hot, the lower is much better." I hemmed and hawed trying to decide. While we were talking to the guide, a few people shambled past along the trail, and I assumed these were raft guests, but the guide explained to me that these were local folks who came down to the river for a swim. The locals were hiking a little ways upstream and then floating down to the lower campsite. It was about 3 in the afternoon, and the temperature was easily in the high nineties. I had been rowing all day and was tired and too hot. My body decided to take over, and I waded into the river and floated down to the lower campsite with the locals. There were a couple of families there, with young kids, their parents, and a grandma or two. Mule Creek came tumbling down from above and there were beautiful pools and beaches and tent sites, but no bear fence.

The locals were doing what local people have done for centuries on hot days. They had come down to river to cool off, eat, drink, play and have fun. They all had bathing suits on, but I would not have been surprised if they had been naked, long-haired, with remnants of body paint.

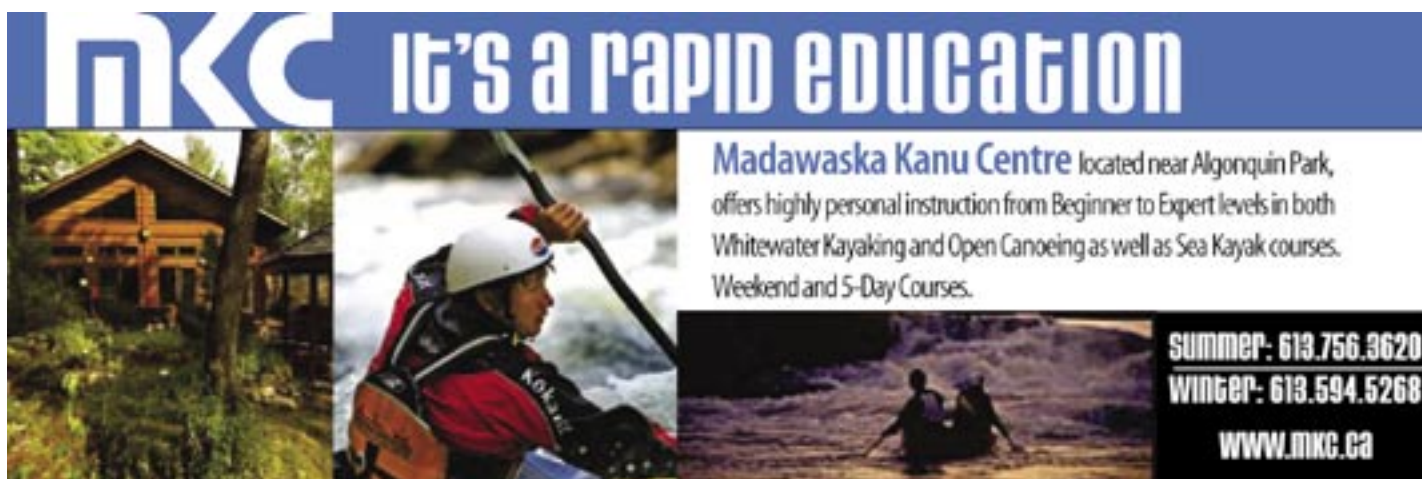
I walked back up to the upper camp to evaluate the situation, and thought I

would question the guide about Blossom Bar Rapid, the only Class IV, and most difficult and dangerous rapid on the river. He was again taciturn, "As long as you make that first move, there's no problem." Ultimately, Pam and the kids made the decision to camp at the lower site. I was tired and grumpy about it at first, but it was too beautiful to complain too much. I ended up carrying some bags of food upstream to put into the bear fence just to keep the Boy Scout side of me happy. Ironically, those were the only food bags bothered by animals!

Well, Mule Creek turned out to be one lovely campsite. It had room for 100 people between the upper and lower levels, and easy access to the Rogue River Ranch which had a museum filled with mementos and photos from the last century, old buildings and some very calm and friendly caretakers. We were the only ones there that night, and it was delightful to have to ourselves. In the last two days we had seen only a few other rafts—mostly at the put-in. I was curious where everyone was, but happy they had stayed home.

After looking at the guidebook the next morning, it was clear that Mule Creek Canyon was immediately down river. Here the river narrows between 50 foot, steep sided walls and churns through several

continued on page 54



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River Voices

Teething

By Eliot Treichel

I had to walk fast in order to keep up. It was Christmas Eve day, nearly sunset, and the streets and sidewalks in Turrialba, Costa Rica, were crowded. I was following someone I hardly knew, and we were heading for the dentist, who happened to be his girlfriend. Whenever my guide decided to jump in front of traffic, I had to scramble to stay with him, however much it hurt my mouth to do so. I'd broken my front two teeth in half a few hours earlier while kayaking the Rio Reventazon, and each step now sent a painful, icy jolt through my entire head.

The dentist's office was located on the second floor in a small commercial center. Downstairs, ice melted under seafood. A butcher cut at a pig hanging headless on a hook. Families shopped together for clothes and toys, while young beautiful women strolled arm in arm. Fireworks sold by bagfuls. The karaoke had already started.

The dentist's name was Maela. She also was a young, beautiful woman. "We have

to do something," she said, "It's Christmas Eve, and you need to smile."

I'd lost my teeth in an unnamed rapid on the Reventazon. A wave had surged, and I'd flipped awkwardly—the shaft of my paddle cracking me square in the mouth. After I rolled back upright, my first thought was Oh, I have tiny bits of stone in my mouth. I spit into my hand, saw the white pieces, then dumped them in the water and concentrated on finding an eddy.

This was my fourth day of two months in Costa Rica. Waterfalls poured into the Reventazon from steep, sun-drenched peaks. Rapids flowed one into the next with hardly a break between. White egrets filled riverside trees, making them look as if they'd been decorated for the holidays. For lunch, we ate mangoes on a fork and sucked the juice straight from the coconut. I thought I'd found paradise.

I spoke little Spanish, but Maela's English was fluent. The few times she stumbled on a word she apologized profusely. Maela shared her office with her mother, a pediatric dentist. Posters of soccer stars and cartoon dinosaurs covered the walls. A plastic parrot hung from the light that

shined into my mouth. Maela squeezed it, and it squeaked like a dog toy.

After she applied the anesthetic, Maela said, "If something butters you, just raise your hand."

I knew it was too late to raise my hand.

Maela and her assistant worked on my teeth for over two hours. They spoke Spanish, but sometimes Maela would translate for me. About halfway through the procedure the phone rang and Maela's assistant wheeled across the room to answer. She passed the receiver over to Maela, who traded her for the suction bit in my mouth.

Maela's father had wanted her to buy the best grapes in town for Christmas dinner. He'd been calling her all day. She'd found some, but she'd found them late in the afternoon, and she was not sure they were the best grapes in Turrialba. "But they are very sweet," she said to me.

When she'd finished rebuilding my teeth, Maela handed me a small mirror. My top lip still felt numb and swollen. My mouth tasted of chalk, and my gums were sore. "It's all I could do," Maela said. My



Setting shuttle

Photo by Eliot Treichel

new teeth looked strange to me, though they were straight and whole and white. I couldn't resist sliding my tongue over them, however tentatively, trying to decipher how the river had altered me.

I said goodbye to Maela near the bus terminal. In the distance, church bells rang. Maela needed to get home to help her mother make tamales. Turrialba's streets were still very crowded, and the music of the night had grown louder. Harsh, black exhaust drifted pass. For the bill, Maela said, "Pay when you can."

I owed 50,000 colones, or just over a \$100.

The smell of diesel was nearly overwhelming. It was time for me to find my way back to my hotel, to call my own family and simply say hello, saving the news about my teeth for another night. Maela and I kissed cheeks, as is custom, and I wished her a merry Christmas, knowing that somewhere in the Reventazon pieces of me were headed for the ocean.

Knowing I'd have to hurry to catch them.

Hiking outside Turrialba

Photo by Eliot Treichel



River Voices

continued from page 51

rapids, one which, Coffee Pot, is rated Class IV. I remembered how easy it was to run it in kayak at a lower flow, but mildly concerned about getting the raft through. I also thought that it would be better if we deflated the inflatable and had Pam on board the raft. That was one of my better decisions.

The river flows slowly past the Mule Creek campsite, as if reluctant to part with the beauty and tranquility there. After a couple of hundred yards though, it starts to kick up its heels, and I felt like we were charging down the river. I knew First Wall and Second Wall rapids were coming up, then Telfer's Hole—"a powerful hydraulic that forms around 3,000 cfs. Pulling too hard off the Second Wall sends many boaters over the top of Telfer's Hole." Nice. We zipped by First and Second Wall before I knew it, pulled easily past Telfer's Hole, which was big, but was on the left with plenty of room to pass. What almost caught us up though was The Narrows. The river couldn't have been more than 15 feet wide there, and was possibly less, and the water was very squirrely. We barreled down and hit the right side of wall just above the narrowest point and I spun the stern left and pirouetted through. The Coffee Pot was next, but as we were going backwards I didn't really see what the problem was there. I was breathing heavy though by the time we came through, and Pam was happy she didn't go through that in the inflatable. We didn't have much time to bask in the glory though, because Blossom Bar was less than a mile down the river. It was soon time for a scout and a walk.

At the top of the rapid there is an eddy on the right where you tuck the raft in tight against a big rock. A steel eye-bolt has been driven into a rock to make it easy to tie up. From there you climb up onto a taller

rock, where you can see Blossom. The river is littered with many large rocks. The most open channel is to the left. It runs a short way and is then blocked by a picket fence of closely spaced rocks. A raft won't make it through the picket fence easily, if at all. The picket fence was where the woman in the double inflatable had died the week before. I had read that she and her partner flipped there, and one swam out and other didn't. Death adds seriousness to a rapid. It provides a reminder that the river gods demand, at the least, respect and attention. At times it appears that they require a human sacrifice as well, but it's not something I want to believe. (We didn't know, until we talked with some other boaters while camping at Tate Creek that night, that the woman had finally washed out of the rapid the day before.)

The best strategy at Blossom Bar is to use the entrance eddy at the top right side of the left channel to slow down your raft and keep you on track to make a sharp right turn between Horn Rock and Goalpost Rock, before continuing down the center channel. Once again, I thought how in a kayak this had been as easy move, while in the raft the risk factor was higher.

Pam and kids got out to watch and portage. I went back down to the raft, clear in my head of what I had to do. I untied the raft, set my hands on the oars for the correct grip, went through the scenario again of how I was going to run the rapid, and then headed bow first toward the left channel. I drifted slowly toward the right side of channel and pulled hard into the entrance eddy. The raft continued to drift down stream, but the current, running right, pulled the bow safely around the Goalpost Rock and into the center channel. The channel was rocking and the raft went wildly over waves headed straight for Volkswagen rock at the bottom. This rock

is bigger than a Volkswagon, and parts the river in two. I wanted to go left. The river seemed to want me to go right. I pulled hard repeatedly on the oars to back ferry left, but had the bow up on rock before the current pushed me around the left. I was euphoric to make it through, and thought my family must have been thrilled to watch. But they didn't see it. From the first moment at the entrance to the final pull at the bottom took only 10 seconds. Pam and kids were talking or eating or getting organized. They had no idea how it went, although Cliff somehow saw me at the very bottom safe and sound.

At the bottom of the rapid I pulled into an eddy on the right, full of success as I nonchalantly waved to the folks in a jet boat who had just arrived. It is very incongruous to see a 30 ft. high-powered motor boat come charging up the river with rows of passengers on the front deck checking out the Wild and Scenic River. I waved and smiled and they waved back. I was happy to be in the raft.

I tied up the raft and realized that Pam and kids would never find me down here at the water's edge hidden by large rocks, so I headed up the rock strewn bank to find them. Although Blossom Bar is supposedly named after the azaleas that grow here, I can assure you that poison oak blossoms predominate. After carefully making my way through thickets of the stuff, I found the main trail and headed up stream expecting to meet my family in a few seconds. There was no sign of them. I pulled out my river whistle and blew and listened and blew some more. No sign or sound. Finally I heard some thrashing coming up from the river and saw Cliff and then Pam and Audrey thrashing through the PO. They hadn't found the main trail higher up the bank and had been following who-knows-what

through the PO. They were glad to see me and I them. We all went back to river for a Tecnu session.

After surviving Blossom Bar, especially with the knowledge that sometimes people don't, I was not surprised when a mile or so down the river we reached Paradise. This lodge is one of three located along the river that make it possible for river trips to be made without carrying any camping gear or much food. Paradise Lodge is located on river right, perhaps 100 feet up a steep rocky cliff. A railway of sorts has been built to haul gear up the slope, and there is a stairway with switchbacks for people. About 3/4s of the way up is a sign that shows the water level during a flood that happened in the 80s. When we saw it, our jaws dropped. "Wow," I said, "the water couldn't have gotten this high." Shortly after I spoke we saw another sign denoting a higher flood, and then another sign, and another, until we eventually got to the deck of the lodge itself in state of complete disbelief, where there is a final sign for the flood of '64. Looking down and across the river at the void that was once filled with water was sobering and thrilling at the same time. It was a reminder of the power and immensity of water, and how small and insignificant we lowly river runners are.

Paradise Lodge appeared to be paradise to me. A beautiful old wooden building surrounded by tall pine trees overlooks a lovely stretch of river. The sigh of the breeze through the trees and tssh, tssh of lawn sprinklers provide a soothing background noise. The bar in the lodge has cold beer and ice cream, and if you ask, vital emergency supplies like tampons. It seemed like a different world. Did the war in Iraq matter here? Was George Bush president of this place? Was there really flooding in Myanmar? The bar tender

said he kept up with news, but I had my doubts.

The rest of the river, until the take-out, was mellow enough for Pam to boat successfully in the inflatable. A few jet boats came thundering along, looking very Wild and Scenic. The river valley itself also looked Wild and Scenic, but in a more traditional way. Like all good river trips, we were almost sad and let down to reach the take-out. We had had a great time, but were now headed back to our routine world. Before we were finished packing everything up in our still handy SUV another raft trip arrived at the take-out. In the back of my mind, something about this group registered as odd. There was one oar raft with 5 people in it, and another four people in single inflatables. It seemed like a lot of people and not a lot of storage space, but I thought, some people know how to travel light. I asked, in a friendly, take-out sort of way, "How was your trip?" They replied, "Good ... but we got a raft stuck in Blossom Bar." Oh, I thought. "Yea, it's still there too. We couldn't get it off. We stopped and called up to Galice Resort to see if they could get it off for us, but they weren't very encouraging. We're headed back up to Washington. Hopefully we'll be able to get our raft and gear back." I tried my

most sympathetic reply, but losing a raft is something of a conversation stopper.

So even at the end of trip, still filled with the euphoria of the beauty of the river and a sense of success of making it down unscathed, there was a reminder from the river gods. No human sacrifices were required this week, only \$5,000 worth of raft and gear. Its no wonder 38 cancellation spots were available; the river gods can be very demanding. But when they smile on you, you can have a wonderful trip.

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The advertisement features a background image of two people kayaking on a river with white water rapids. In the foreground, there are several dry bags and a roll of fabric. The text is overlaid on the image in various fonts and sizes.

River Voices



River Karma

By Sharon Hailey

Whitewater paddlers living in the Memphis area treasure three-day weekends as a good excuse to hit some rivers that are too far away to visit on a normal weekend. Sometimes, however, the weather and river levels do not cooperate as much as we might like. All we can do is take advantage of whatever we can whenever we can. Memorial Day weekend this year was no different.

It was a beautiful Sunday on the Chattooga River. The weather was nice, the temps were perfect, and the water was cool and so clear you could see every rock in the river. Then again, most of the rocks

were above water. The folks at Chattooga Whitewater Outfitters, however, assured us that it is possible to get down the river at a level of 1.0 foot. They did not lie. We made it down, and it was even enjoyable, but it was sure a long day.

We wisely opted to put in at Sandy Ford instead of Earl's Ford, made the quarter mile hike down to the river and began scraping our way down. I began to wonder why, with the exception of a few dammed rivers, I always manage to catch everything with no more water than minimum levels, or, as I was beginning to suspect in this case, below minimum.

The guys take a break before continuing downriver

Photo by Sharon Hatley

Perhaps, I thought, my river karma is bad.

On that note, let me introduce you to some of the only other people we met on the river that day. While arranging a shuttle at CWO, we found a group of seven men, full of energy and excitement and acting like a bunch of college kids, buying cameras and water guns and getting geared up for their day in duckies on Section III of the Chattooga River. But these men weren't your typical frat brothers heading down the river. In fact, the eldest of the group was seventy-four and the others appeared to be within 10 to 15 of the same age. And since we were on the same shuttle van and

put in at the same place, we found ourselves paddling most of the day with these guys.

At first, we took advantage of having the duckies ahead of us so we could gauge how well they did over the rocks and pick out the best routes, but it wasn't long before there was carnage. The eldest man somehow managed to get his leg pinned in one of the first rapids in The Narrows, but fortunately came out only slightly scraped and a little shaken. Throughout the course of the day, there were many more swims, including one early on in which the keys to a rental car were lost. But the swims were not what made the trip a long one. The low water levels meant lots of scraping, scooting, pushing, and getting out and walking. It seemed like these guys might

have a trip nearly as epic as the movie filmed in the same location, and we found ourselves trying to do what we could to help (to make things easier, not more epic). When one of them lost a rental paddle at Painted Rock, we were glad that we had thought to bring an extra canoe paddle, but perhaps not as glad as they were. The men that we eventually started calling "our boys" were in desperate need of some drinks by the time we reached what we all thought (and hoped) was close to the end (too bad we still had about another three or four miles), so we were glad that we'd grabbed some extra drinks as an afterthought, as well.

By the time they FINALLY got to Bull Sluice, one man could barely walk, another

had lost his shorts, and one hypoglycemic man had apparently skipped lunch and the river was playing tricks on his mind. We worked hard to help with the portage and carry the duckies over the rocks and provided what few crackers and granola bars we had left to help them make it the last bit to the take-out. In the process, I managed to fall on the rocks twice badly scraping my leg both times . . . not feeling like there's any good karma here.

At the take-out, one man couldn't even stand up in the two inches of water at the

So far, so good

Photo by Sharon Hatley



River Voices



It's difficult to argue that the Chattooga isn't a beautiful river

beach, so we began helping tote boats up the long half mile, winding hill at the 76 Bridge. The whole way up, one of our new friends chanted his new favorite word: “portage.” We eventually got all “our boys” up before returning for our own boats and gear. Another group in sit-on-tops told us they saw some false teeth at the take-out . . . I was a little thankful I missed seeing them, but hoped they didn’t belong to anyone we were helping. We were very glad to see the guys all make it off the river and even more pleased to see that they all fit in the vehicle that they had managed to keep the keys to—a mini van. They offered us money and one of them even proposed marriage, but we graciously turned them down in the hopes that we might be better served with some good river karma. In the following weeks, while my scraped

leg was healing, I emailed some pictures and videos that I had taken of the guys to the addresses they had given me at the take-out. In their replies, I learned that the three cameras they had bought never worked properly and they finally got a locksmith to come unlock the other rental car about 10 p.m. and did not get in to their residence until about 11:30.

It was a good run, but it took eight long hours to cover eight miles!! Despite it all, the men remained in good spirits and were an inspiration. After all, what paddler doesn’t hope they will still be running rivers at 74? Next time, though, I think I’ll be looking for more than 1.0 foot on the gauge! We ended up being too exhausted to even do anything the next day other than run the Ocoee on the way

home. Despite having taken Tuesday off, we headed for home. There is something to be said about having a day to recover before returning to work. Meanwhile, if there is a request box for what form your river karma will take, I am looking for a fun, safe float on a river with more than a minimum flow.

River Voices

continued from page 11

trail, after my stuff without hesitation; there were no discussions about hand signals, or anything else for that matter. Joyce and I decided the now downriver team of three would just have to figure out that someone needed to hike far enough up river to ensure Joyce's ability to ferry between the two sides for communication. No problem.

Once Becky hiked far enough back upriver, on the other side, Joyce ferried across to learn of the team's findings. After meeting up with Becky, Joyce didn't have to return very far upriver for me to hear and understand her shouts of excitement. They had my PFD! (That's really all I needed to get out of this mess, or at least to get me to the next step.)

I watched as Joyce paddled up the eddy, along the bank, on the other side. She was paddling much further than we had discussed and higher than she needed. I was surprised, but at this point was just kicked back on the rocks – there was nothing else for me to do but sit, and watch. Suddenly Joyce screeches with great exclamation, "Your skirt, I found your skirt!" Well I'll be; we now had my fully loaded boat, my PFD, and my skirt!

I swam down and across the river, with Joyce as my escort, to the rest of the team. Every item was present and accounted for. And believe it or not, the entire ordeal only cost us an hour of time.

It is my humble opinion that we were meant to have that experience that day. As with all river mishaps, we learned many lessons, none of which will be wasted. I believe the accomplishment and result of the team's collaborative efforts created a mutual trust and harmony that carried us through the following week, and will be with us on future trips together. And today, I tie my boat off when on a dam controlled waterway or during storm surge, and I always clip in my gear!

To Joyce, Becky, Toria, and John, I thank you for chasing, collecting, and returning my boat and gear on that Snake trip, for all the times you've yarded me out of the water after a swim, and for dragging me along on your adventures, regardless of my behavior! Cheers, mates!



Paddling the Unknown

continued from page 19

turn to your left and then fly off of a 15 footer called Oh Be Grateful. This last one is really tough. If you mistakenly go off the middle you will land on sharp rocks. If you go off the right you will piton into really sharp rocks. The line is to hug the inside of the left turn and charge left towards the cliff wall. If you make the move the rapid is very smooth. If you screw it up, as I did three of my first four laps, it really hurts.

By lap five we were dialing it in. Paddling

the entire run from Heart Attack to Oh Be Grateful only took 15 minutes. Wow, dropping 400 feet in fifteen minutes is really fun! The shuttle took about the same amount of time. 800 feet per hour was a nice pace. The day was warming and big haired Nick arrived with hot coffee to fire us up. Around lap seven I noticed a windshield wiper lying in the back of our shuttle rig. As I picked it up I thought how nice it was for Chris to hunt for litter while driving shuttle. Then I realized the back of

our rental Jeep was not quite the same. Our Jeep was a bit shorter than the last time I saw it. Chris had backed our rental Jeep into a tree during the last shuttle. He seemed confident he could repair the damage, so I smiled and refused to get distracted. I knew the run now. David let me lead a few laps.

Lapping tough creeks is such a unique experience. You find your groove and just keep cruising. We love it. There is really no conversation, just a lot of smiling, hooting and nodding. Nothing needs to be spoken. Life is perfect.

As we completed lap ten we felt a bit of relief. In five hours we had paddled this creek more than most locals paddle here in an entire season. I knew the run, knew the little annoyance rocks, knew the spots to float and where to charge. The beauty of this valley is amazing. The rapids all flow together. No eddies, just keep it in the current and make subtle moves.

Bad news, David's boat cracked. It was repairable, but he was going to need some time to fix it. Chris geared up and off we went. Five more laps flew by before David was ready to go. I sat the next two out while Chris and David paddled. I had already secured a vertical mile for the day and can not describe how happy I felt. David needed two more for his mile. The water had risen quite a bit and the run became very pushy. The last two runs were amazing. We started the day on low water and finished in high flow. The level had doubled and the holes were getting scary. The last two laps flew by and we finished our journey by early evening.

The Jeep was still running, but looked terrible. It was time to hit Crested Butte for a big meal. The Slate was really pumping and looked impassable. What the hell, we taped the tarp on and started to go for it. At the river's edge we realized a tire was leaking. The Slate seemed to be rising by the second, the sun was setting, and air was hissing from the punctured tire. We had to change it. The four of us could have gotten jobs with a NASCAR pit crew from our tire changing performance. A few



minutes and Chris was plowing forward. The hood disappeared under a wall of water, resurfaced and submerged again. To all of our surprise the Jeep charged out of the deepest portion of the crossing and literally booted the far bank with power to spare. One kayak flew off, but we made it. Our perfect, unlikely, one-in-a-million day had actually happened.

Our trip was not yet complete. We rested the next day and set our sights on Clear Creek of the Arkansas. It is beautiful, continuous and really fun. No eddies, just miles of cruising. The creek flows through three mini gorges. They are tiny, tight and fun. This was Chris' day and David and I took turns paddling and shuttling. Chris is a hand paddler and his hands paid the price. After the first couple of runs we had to chip the ice off of his vest, helmet and hand paddles. He doesn't wear gloves, so his hands are always submerged in the ice water. Due to the cold water, no gloves, and hand paddling, Chris' hands swelled into giant balloon animal looking pudgy stumps. It was disgusting, but he didn't seem to care. I guess the cold water had long since numbed the pain. He looked liked Eddy Murphy in Dr. Klump. Thankfully, when the day ended his hands returned to normal. Chris' perseverance paid off as he may have become the first hand paddler to drop a vertical mile in a day.

Time to head home. Our trip was perfect. Despite the rental car damage which we expected to pay for out of our pockets, the trip was unbelievably fun. I would not have thought in a million years that our plan would come together.

Back at the Hertz office, we were late for our flight. Filling out the miles of paper work for the damage would make us miss our flight. The nice Hertz man came out, inspected our completely destroyed Jeep and checked it off as being fine. Chris and I stared at each other in disbelief. How could he not see that the tailgate looked like we hit a telephone pole going thirty miles per hour in reverse. Plus, the spare tire was in use and the normal wheel was tied to the roof! The shuttle

bus was leaving for the airport. What to do? Another Hertz customer was standing by watching the whole affair and spoke up. "Did you use your Discover Card," he asked. Actually, we did use a Discover Card when renting the Jeep. He explained how Discover has guaranteed rental car insurance. The damage was covered. We jumped on the bus, called Discover and made our flight.

Discover picked up the repair bill and we completed the most unlikely paddling vacation we had ever dreamed of. Life, like the river, throws so much at you. After all of these years I still enjoy the many misadventures as much as the rare perfect trips.

Sometimes, the plan actually comes together.



River Voices



My Kayaking Transformation

By Stacy Falk

The sky blue water melted into the dirt brown. This is where my transformation began. As most paddlers will agree, there is a moment when one becomes “hooked.” Mine occurred at the confluence of the little Colorado and the Colorado River in March 2003. It was my first time in a playboat, well my first time in any whitewater kayak, and I could barely stay upright. But I was “hooked” immediately.

Sitting on a raft the majority of that Grand Canyon trip, watching pro-paddlers Eleanor Perry and Laura Nash tear it up in their playboats, I could think of nothing more than being able to someday do what they were doing. Since that trip, becoming

a kayaker has been the constant focus of my life.

Eleanor, my assigned roommate in college and best friend to date, not only invited me on her family Grand Canyon trip, but she opened my eyes to the world of kayaking. We didn’t kayak together much in my beginning days, (a.k.a. the swimming days). I have other friends to thank for chasing my boat down the river. And although we didn’t start kayaking together more until I had a solid roll, I was always excited to tag along and meet her boater buddies. Ultimately, Eleanor helped set me on the right path to pursue my new favorite sport and these are just some of the moments that got me there.

Before I started kayaking I remember Eleanor taking me to this irrigation canal. Team Dagger was filming Alex Hotze while

Stacy surfs fun wave after a long day on the Arkansas River

Photo by Tom Pogwizd

we waded around in our underwear below the wave. My first sight of the “secret” M-wave captivated my attention and once again I could think of nothing more than being in a boat. It is early memories like this that were burned into my mind and fueled my motivation to be a kayaker. By the next year I had all my own gear and was determined to kayak as much as possible.

I had been kayaking for about two months when Eleanor invited me to join a little play session with Trip Jennings and their friends. Trip slapped an EP (Epicocity Project) sticker on my red ultrafuge before I attempted to surf smelter rapid at the

Animas river play park around 2500 cfs. Needless to say I swam, but I was proud.

Eleanor would briefly mention something of her paddling adventures with Trip before I met him. But I didn't really know what that entailed until that evenings showing of Bigger Than Rodeo at the local theater. Damn. I was totally amazed by what was being done in a kayak. After that I surrounded myself in kayaking publications and videos, reading about all the latest descents and watching all the hot tricks. Soon I realized that I was shaking the hands of the same paddlers that I was reading about or watching in videos when I'd randomly stop by Eleanor's to say "hi." They were usually out the door on their way to some extreme creek in San Juans and I couldn't help but be a little jealous.



Girls At Play clinic

Bigger Water, Bigger Decisions

During my second season I was constantly in my boat and one day it just clicked. I became more excited about kayaking than ever before. My friend, Ashleigh Tucker, was in similar shoes and we paddled together every chance we got. Learning from each other and pushing each other to try new things was great; we couldn't get enough. We would spend entire days in the river, even if that meant hanging in an eddy to practice hand rolls or just goof around. We'd imagine all kinds of trips and say "one day, when we're good kayakers we can go...."

It wasn't long before I craved more water, bigger waves and scarier holes. Eleanor must have sensed my craving and invited me to join the Colorado Rocky Mountain School kayak team on their first stab at the Slaughter House run where she was helping safety boat. She told the team's instructor that I was going to join them and that I could "hack it." Which is exactly what I did when I went off the center of Slaughter House falls instead of boofing left. It was my first lesson in reading bigger water and I loved it.

In 2005, the U.S. Slalom Team Trials hit Durango. One of the top slalom paddlers in the country, Zuzana Vanha, was staying with Eleanor. We got to hang out and chat about our passions for kayaking—hers obviously on a much different level than mine. But it was great to talk about the lifestyle that is kayaking. One afternoon Zuzana and I hiked up the trail along Vallecito Creek. We stopped to watch the surging water below and talked about creek boating, something she'd done a little and I only dreamed about.

Dreaming about creek boating usually occurred after watching kayak videos. After watching one such video I asked Eleanor if creeking was one of the most dangerous sports out there. She simply responded along the lines of, "you either drown or you don't." I didn't really have anything to say to that. Since I've known Eleanor she's lost at least one friend a year from paddling, most often associated with a gnarly creek of some sort. I have yet to lose a close friend to a sport that I live by. But I imagine that you accept it and paddle that much harder with each and every stroke because you know that's what that person would want.

Around my third season I reached a point where I wanted just a little more adrenaline. I wanted more of a challenge but at the same time I didn't want to put others or myself in a life-threatening situation. That was when some boaters, who I only knew from the local play hole, invited me to a trip on the Piedra. I didn't know what to do. Running a Class IV+ section of the Piedra that I only heard horror stories about, in a boat I'd never paddled, and with people I didn't really know just didn't sound like the best idea. I even called Eleanor to get some advice but she was out of town. Despite having little clue of what I was getting into, I made my own decision to go.

The weather was great and the scenery was spectacular. I tried not to dwell on what lay ahead. But upon entering the lower box canyon, I lost sight of the surface after the second big horizon line and rode it out upside down, which led to a swim. I was on one side of the river, my kayak on the other and a big drop not far below. Swimming across the river as hard I could, I remained calm and got back in my boat knowing that it only got bigger further down river.

River Voices

After scouting the mudslide drops I felt confident that I could handle it, even after my swim. The guys I was with made it clear that I could easily walk around. But I didn't want to. I have never felt so focused, excited, scared and lost all at the same time as I did paddling into Eye of the Needle. But I cleaned the line, paddling exactly how I imagined during the scout. It was my first lesson in making a decision for myself and I was happy with it.

The best thing that came out of that trip was that I met boaters who I felt comfortable with and who I could trust. This is something I've heard Eleanor talk about often, but I'd never really experienced it before. It's like skiing into the backcountry with people who know everything about avalanches, avalanche safety and rescue techniques. Although I am still in the early stages of understanding the choices and consequences associated with big water,

I recently purchased a creek boat with aspirations of running big creeks. But I know I still have a lot to learn.

This continuous transformation into kayaking has become a major part of who I am today. I thank Eleanor for introducing me to something that is so much more than the sport itself—it's a lifestyle that I want to live. If we weren't roommates our freshman year in college I think that I would have still gotten into kayaking, but it would have been a much different ride.

From the pool, to multi-day river trips, to cruising around in the Dagger Subaru and helping teach some Girls at Play clinics, kayaking has changed my life in more ways than I can write. Not only have I met some amazing people and paddled in some amazing places, but my brother Alex and I have become much closer since

I introduced him to kayaking. He appears to be just as, if not more, excited about kayaking than I am. Alex's transformation has just begun and I am grateful to be a part of his journey, as I hope others are grateful to be a part of mine.

Not long ago Eleanor admitted to me that when she first saw me in her kayak on the Little Colorado, she honestly thought that I'd never be a kayaker. But she also admits she was wrong.

Durango Girls (left to right) Jen Ross, Ashleigh Tucker and Stacy Falk hang at Smelter Rapid on the Animas River

Photo by Alison Falk



Book Review

Kayaking Alone

By Megan Seifert

Kayaking Alone is a story of Mike Barenti's river journey from the Sawtooth Mountains to the mouth of the Columbia River. Much like Barenti's 900-mile adventure, Kayaking Alone intertwines the excitement of whitewater and flat-water kayaking, the fate of diminishing wildlife, and the layers of history to create a vivid picture of the Pacific Northwest. He weaves the day-to-day tales from this adventure with the natural history of Idaho, Washington, and Oregon.

The pace of the book follows the pace of his journey. As he paddles quickly down the river the book moves along rapidly as well. His early journey through the whitewater sections on the Salmon River gives the reader a sense of adventure. He paddles through Class III and IV rapids for the first time with a fully loaded boat—all alone. Barenti gives the reader detailed accounts of the anxiety he feels before and during difficult rapids; I was personally relieved when he found a group to rafters paddle with on the most remote and difficult section of river.

Kayaking Alone is an interesting narrative because it is not just a story of a kayaking adventure. The author uses his kayaking trip to tell the story of the Pacific Salmon and detail their decline. He is not focused solely on getting to the ocean, but also on finding the answer to the conundrum that salmon have raised in the Pacific Northwest for decades: Should we protect salmon at the expense of closing down dams and losing the power they generate, and the recreation and passage opportunities that they offer?

Barenti makes the book readable for people without a background in biology or familiarity with Pacific salmon. As he talks about the salmon and the natural history of the areas he paddles through, the pace of the story slows, giving the reader the information that they need to understand the unique environmental challenges in the Pacific Northwest. At this point his journey slows as well; he has

completed all of the whitewater sections and faces long days of flat-water paddling. His challenges turn from surviving tough rapids to paddling against the winds and finding people to interview.

In Kayaking Alone, Barenti takes a journalistic approach. He interviews locals he meets along the river to try to come to a conclusion about the future of dams, whitewater, fishing, and salmon in the Northwest. He talks to biologists who are looking to save the salmon; he interviews people who depend on the dams either for power or for passage through the river; he surveys Native Americans whose history is interwoven with the salmon; and he interviews people who use the river for recreation purposes such as the myriad fisherman, jet boaters, swimmers, and kayakers he meets along the way. Those who have a vested interest in either the dams or the salmon for a living or for personal reasons are easy for Barenti and the reader to understand. But the people who want to see the salmon remain for fishing and/or nostalgia, but also want to keep dams for power make his quest more difficult, because they show how profoundly these seemingly contrasting interests impact the Pacific Northwest and its citizens. So in the end, although Barenti has a successful physical journey, his quest to find the answer to the fate of the Salmon remains unfulfilled.



continued from page 43

grandly, then slept. The following day we took a safari, and saw a domesticated elephant, some crazy monkeys, the remedial division of the Nepalese Army, some zoo-ed crocodiles, and a barracks-dwelling rhinoceros. While we dozed beside the river, awaiting our Tiger encounter, it occurred to me that what I really wanted to do was go paddling. I guess that's what happens when you get in a rhythm.

1. A brave few have descended the Humla Karnali above Simikot, but it's stout, for sure.
2. We later questioned whether mustard seed oil is in fact an automotive lubricant.
3. Ibuprofen will surely one day be reclassified as a vitamin
4. No final decision is reached

AW Corporate Partners

Class V Sponsor



In 2006, Keen's contributions will aid American Whitewater's projects in the Southeast, and the Pacific Northwest. In the Southeast Keen's support will help American Whitewater's work restoring the Catawba watershed. Additional funding from Keen will support AW's projects on the Columbia River Basin and the Cascade range in the Pacific Northwest.

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Starting out as a dream on the banks of Western North Carolina's Green River Narrows in 1999, Liquidlogic became a reality in an old farmhouse in Flat Rock, NC by 2001. Now, having teamed up with Legacy Paddlesports in Greensboro, NC, Liquidlogic's shop is located just a few miles down the road from the put-in of the Green River.

As a company, Liquidlogic's goal is to provide its customers with the safest, most reliable, and dynamic kayaks on the market. With over 100 years of combined paddling experience, Liquidlogic is a unique family of craftsmen, world-class athletes, and industry veterans who know that the difference between good and great kayaks can make or break the best of days on the river.

Besides a top-notch stable of boats seen on rivers all over the US and around the world, Liquidlogic has much to be proud of in its support of American Whitewater. 2008 saw several chances for American Whitewater and Liquidlogic to team up, especially during AW's popular river festivals.

The most memorable collaboration between Liquidlogic and American Whitewater this year came from an idea by Woody Callaway, Liquidlogic's "Lifestyle

Maintenance Technician," for a super-sized game of Rock, Paper, Scissors or "RoShamBo." At each festival a crowd of just American Whitewater members would play against Woody for goods ranging from cool paddling gear all the way up to a brand new Liquidlogic boat! Needless to say these unique competitions gathered the attention of almost everyone in attendance and proved to be huge hit.

This exciting and friendly competition that Liquidlogic devised went a long way to rewarding American Whitewater's supportive members but also to showing the value of an AW membership to those who had yet to join. This enthusiastic approach to whitewater and its fans is a reflection of the kind of company that Liquidlogic is. From the banks of the infamous Green River Narrows to your local river, Liquidlogic's presence can be felt from both the steady procession of their boats down stream but also by their staunch support of AW's mission.

liquidlogic™

Join



AMERICAN WHITEWATER Today!

American Whitewater has been extraordinarily fortunate in our ability to leverage a strong grassroots base—members and other volunteers—to assist our limited staff with many whitewater river conservation and restoration efforts.



Over the years, American Whitewater volunteers have participated in numerous hydropower meetings as well as instream and recreational flow studies; filed comments and assisted with an uncountable number of filings; appeared as expert witnesses; lobbied; worked to fight new dams, remove existing dams, deny licenses, and improve public access to rivers and streams. In nearly every river stewardship issue AW has been involved with, the outcome has been favorable to paddlers. Not only has AW secured favorable decisions for the paddling community, but we are the only national organization representing paddlers as these decisions are being made.

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

be sure that everyone you paddle with understands the work AW does, and how you, as an AW member, value that work.

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

Join on-line today at <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/membership>, call 1-866-BOAT4AW (866-262-8429), or fill out the form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Membership
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name _____
Address _____
City, St, Zip _____
Telephone () _____, AND e-mail _____
Club Affiliation _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- \$25 Junior (*Under the age of 18*)
- \$25 Individual for Affiliate Club Members (*SAVE \$10 if you are also a member of an AW Affiliate Club*)
- \$35 Individual One Year
- \$50 Family (*Immediate family members excluding children over the age of 18*)
- \$65 (2) Year Membership
- \$75 Affiliate Club Membership
- \$100 Ender Club (*Receive AW's annual Ender Club T-Shirt FREE Circle Size: S M L XL XXL*)
- \$250 Platinum Paddler (*Receive AW's IR Platinum Paddler Polartec Basec T Circle Size: S M L XL XXL*)
- \$500 Explorer Membership (*Receive a Dry Bag from Watershed FREE*)
- \$750 Lifetime Membership (*Receive AW's Lifetime Membership NRS Paddlers Duffle FREE*)
- \$1000 Legacy Membership (*Receive AW's exclusive Kokatat Knappster Shorty Top FREE*)
- \$2500 Steward Membership (*Thank you items will be arranged on an individual basis*)

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR SUBSCRIPTIONS

- \$5.00 \$10.00 \$25.00 Other \$_____ \$_____ monthly (*\$10 minimum via monthly credit card or checking acct. withdrawal. Send voided check w/check option.*)
- \$30.00 Kayak Session Subscription (*Includes a \$5 donation to AW*)
- \$40.00 LVM Subscription (*includes a \$8 donation to AW*)

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

- Do NOT share my name with like-minded groups
- Do NOT mail me the AW journal, I will read it online (*Helps us conserve and, saves AW money too!*)

PAYMENT INFORMATION

- Cash
 - Check # _____
 - Credit Card MC Visa Disc AMEX
- Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____
Name as it appears on card: _____
Signature: _____

Affiliate Clubs

AW's Original Purpose

by Carla Miner

The Affiliate Club Program lies at the very heart of AW's existence. AW's original purpose since 1957 has been to distribute information among its Affiliate Clubs. AW's relationships with local clubs have provided the backbone for the river conservation and access work it accomplishes. Over 100 clubs are now AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf. If you don't belong to a club consider joining one.

Back in March, American Whitewater challenged all its Affiliate Clubs to submit proposals for two \$1,250 grants for projects "that promote river stewardship, conservation, access and/or safety education on our nation's rivers." Of the many responses we received, those of the Atlanta Whitewater Club and the Fairbanks Paddlers stood out.

The Atlanta Whitewater Club has received funding for an ambitious project in which members will be participating in river clean-ups on 4 different rivers in the Atlanta area. These rivers include the Tellico, Cartecay, Chattooga, and Sope Creek, with some rivers having more than one cleanup date. A very worthy endeavor to be sure.

The Fairbanks Paddlers' project tackles the often overlooked question of the disposal of human waste on river trips. Over the course of a 3-4 day float trip on the popular Gulkana River in Alaska, all trip participants will be utilizing portable toilets and packing out all human waste generated on the trip. In partnership with local news sources and through education of their own members and fellow river users the Fairbanks Paddlers aim to encourage the use of portable toilets on all multi-day river trips.

American Whitewater and Clif Bar are extremely pleased to help fund these ventures and remind people to check back for project updates in the future.

Congratulations again to the Atlanta Whitewater Club and the Fairbanks Paddlers!

AFFILIATE CLUBS, we want to know what you are doing. Send your events to us a jeff@americanwhitewater.org and we will

include them in the Journal.

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by state:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

Birmingham Canoe Club, Birmingham
Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Chico Paddleheads, Chico
Otter Bar Lodge Kayak School, Forks of Salmon
River Touring Section, Angeles Chapter
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Ch., San Jose
Sierra Club SF Chapter, Livermore

Colorado

Avid4Adventure Inc., Boulder
Colorado Whitewater Asso, Englewood
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride

Georgia

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

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Assoc., Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Assoc., Chicago
Team SICK, Carbondale

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kansas

Kansas Whitewater Association, Mission

Kentucky

Bardstown Boaters, Frankfort
Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington

Maine

Outward Bound, Newry
Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Topsham

Maryland

Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Silver Spring
Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Baltimore
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Smithsburg

Massachusetts

AMC - New Hampshire Paddlers, Honover

Minnesota

SCSU Outdoor Endeavors, Saint Cloud

Missouri

Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

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

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
Colgate University, Hamilton
Hamilton College, Clinton
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Squad, Ossining
KCCNY, New York
St Lawrence University, Canton
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia

N. Carolina

Base Camp Cullowhee, Cullowhee
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Mecklenburg Regional Paddlers, Indian Trail
Outing Club at North Carolina State, Raleigh
Triad River Runners, Winston, Salem
Watauga Paddlers, Boone

Ohio

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

Oregon

Face Level Industries LLC, Portland
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Oregon Whitewater Association, Beaverton
Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Northwest Rafters Assoc, Portland
Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Bradford County Canoe and Kayak Club, Sayre
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Mechanicsburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz
PA Organization for Watersheds & Rivers, Harrisburg
Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Pittsburgh
Lehigh Valley White water Club, Lehigh Valley

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

Eastman Hiking and Canoeing, Kingsport
Tennessee Scenic River Assoc., Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga
University of Tennessee Knoxville, Knoxville

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

Utah

USU Kayak Club, Logan
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Essex Junction

Virginia

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

Washington

EPIC Outdoor Adventures, Cheney
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
University Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton
Whitman College Whiteater Club, Walla Walla

West Virginia

West VA Wildwater Association, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
NE Wisconsin Paddlers Inc. Appleton

Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

www.americanwhitewater.org

Discounted AW Membership for Affiliate Club Members

By Carla Miner, Membership Manager

AW offers a discounted Affiliate Club membership of \$25, a \$10 savings. If you are renewing your AW membership or joining as a new member, select the Affiliate Club Discounted Personal Membership online at <https://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Store/?crn=199>. Or, if you are renewing or joining by mail or telephone just mention the name of the Affiliate Club you belong to and you can take advantage of the \$25 membership.

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

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

Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

10 Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for the 2008 Clif Bar Flowing Rivers grant

For more information,
contact Carla Miner at
membership@americanwhitewater.org
or sign-up on-line at:
www.americanwhitewater.org/membership

Guidelines for Contributors



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

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

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

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

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

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled, or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to Class II, III & IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personalities are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

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

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

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

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

Send your material to:
Journal Editor
P.O. Box 1540
Cullowhee, NC 28723
E-mail: editor@americanwhitewater.org



PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723

www.americanwhitewater.org

Release for publication

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

- I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.
- I understand that I will not be paid for my work.
- I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation, or agency in this work.
- I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an American Whitewater publication
- I promise that this material has not been and will not soon be published by another magazine or publication and the rights to this material are clear and unrestricted.
- I understand that once this material is printed in American Whitewater it may be reprinted or reproduced in other publications if I wish, providing I notify them that it has already appeared in American Whitewater.
- I understand that the contents of American Whitewater Magazine, including my contribution will be archived on the American Whitewater website.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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

Send your material to:

American Whitewater Journal PO Box 1540 Cullowhee, NC 28723 or via email to editor@americanwhitewater.org

Px MY PADDLE PRESCRIPTION

PADDLER: JOHN GRACE

I'M A: WERNER SHO-GUN

TYPE: STRAIGHT

DIAMETER: STANDARD

LENGTH: 200 cm

HEIGHT: 5'11"

OCCUPATION: VIDEO GURU

LOVES PADDLING:

BECAUSE IT FORCES ME TO FOCUS - AND THE CONFUSION OF LIFE SUBSIDES FOR A BIT.



I choose to support American Whitewater through the Healthy Waters Program.

First descent Petite Mecatina, North Quebec

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Discover your custom fit paddle

- < increase your performance
- < reduce your fatigue
- < and have more fun on the water

Werner offers advanced design features with a variety of fit options to help you choose a truly custom fit paddle. Your custom fit paddle is waiting for you.

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ART & CRAFT

The Greenjacket. Dropping in 2008.



ASTRAL

Evan Garcia
Photo: Jono Ramsay