



AMERICAN WHITEWATER

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
March/April 2004

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50th Anniversary Gala UPDATE!
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AMERICAN WHITEWATER

A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

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CFC UnitedWay #2302

Support American Whitewater through CFC or United Way

All the federal campaigns, and a few of the local United Way campaigns will allow you to donate through them to AW. Check to see if yours in one of them. Also, check to see if your employer will match your charitable contribution - double your money , doungle your fun!



Cover by Phil DeReimer



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American Whitewater Journal
Volume XLV, No.2

F E A T U R E S

Conservation & Access Updates



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Purpose

American Whitewater

Our mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

American Whitewater (AW) is a national organization with a membership consisting of thousands of individual whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates.

CONSERVATION: AW maintains a complete national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors threats to those rivers, publishes information on river conservation, provides technical advice to local groups, works with government agencies and other river users, and-- when necessary-- takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

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

EDUCATION: Through publication of the bi-monthly magazine, and by other means, American Whitewater provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique and equipment.

SAFETY: AW promotes paddling safely, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, maintains a

uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater Difficulty) and publishes and disseminates the internationally recognized AW Whitewater Safety Code.

EVENTS: AW organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation, including the Gauley River Festival in West Virginia (the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation), and the Deerfield Festival in Massachusetts.

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1424 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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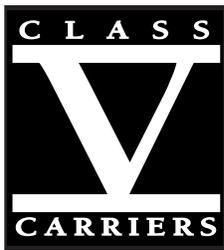
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Getting the Word Out



A Little Respect

Dear American Whitewater,

I am writing in regards to the letter from Michael Duvall in the Nov.-Dec. 2003 issue.

In his letter, Mr. Duvall says "You guys are screw-ups." I assume "guys" means the folks at AW. He goes on to point out two small logistical errors, one with AW Beta and one a mistaken membership request. Finally he suggests "Do your home work and get it right."

Just because a person screws up doesn't mean you are a screw up any more than losing a game doesn't make you a loser. Evidently, two people made a mistake. It happens. With all the changes going on at AW and the incredible work load they have, it is impressive that this doesn't happen more often.

Maybe instead of starting off with an insult, perhaps "Although you usually do a good job, we have a small problem we need to work out" might be more appropriate. In other words, show a little respect! These people who save and restore our rivers deserve it.

SYOTR,
Steve Frazier

Make a Difference for Rivers on Capitol Hill

by Matt Sicchio
Director of Outreach
American Rivers

Frustrated by our elected officials' failure to protect and restore rivers? Join your fellow paddlers, anglers, and river enthusiasts in doing something about it. American Rivers is organizing a River Lobby Day on Tuesday, May 25th in Washington, D.C. to deliver the message of river conservation to Congress. This event is being coordinated with the annual River Rally, hosted by River Network. This year's Rally is being held from May 21st to May 25th in Wintergreen, Virginia - just three hours from Washington, D.C. - and will include training sessions on effective lobbying skills and strategies. We encourage you to make your voice heard and attend both the River Lobby Day and the River Rally.

For more information, including registration and scholarship information, visit www.americanrivers.org regarding the River Lobby Day and www.rivernetwork.org regarding the River Rally.

Oops! Corrections

Gauley River Festival Dates

The Gauley River Festival dates were misprinted in the January/February AW Journal. The Gauley Festival, the largest paddling event in the country, will take place September 24-26 in Summersville, WV. It turns out that Gauley Festival is always the third weekend of Gauley season releases, which is not necessarily the third weekend in September (although it usually works out to be the same weekend); it all depends on when labor day falls.

See you all on September 24-26, 2004 for the Gauley River Festival in Summersville, WV.

See page 56 for an updated list of AW Events and Festivals.

Corner Charc

by Risa Shimoda



Risa Shimoda
Executive Director
photo by Dan Gavere

It seems reasonably critical for us, from time to time, to thank those of you who have stepped up to support AW's programs during the previous year above and beyond the call of duty (we're preparing this in January, well in advance of your reading this). For those who have donated time, effort, equipment or funds to AW, please accept this public, humble 'thank you' for your support.

As in years past, significant support last year came from proceeds from an AW Champion event. Stellar examples of events which call attention to a local resource while publicizing AW's regional or national efforts include the Moose Festival in New York (thank you, Chris Koll!), National Paddling Film Festival in Lexington (thank you Dave Margavich, Barry Grimes, and crew!), and the French Broad River Festival (thanks, Chris Donachod!).

Some of your paddling clubs cast a giant vote of support by sending donations to support our conservation and access work: thanks go to the leaders and members of the Shasta Paddlers, Georgia Canoeing Association, Lehigh Valley Paddlers, Foothills Canoe Club, Loma Prieta Sierra Club, Foothills Paddling Club, Jackson Hole Kayak Club and Kayak and Canoe Club of New York, among others, for your consideration, generosity and commitment to AW's mission.

Many of you simply have joined or renewed your AW memberships as Ender Club Members or Platinum Paddlers, and/or have made commitments to AW's financial future designate payroll deductions to AW via your workplace giving (e.g., Combined Federal Campaign for federal employees, United Way, corporate matching gifts programs). These votes of confidence make clear statements of support for our work and have allowed American Whitewater to march through a very challenging economic environment. You all rock. Seriously.

A specific list of donors will be included in the May/June issue of this journal. Please allow this to suffice as a reminder that we in fact do appreciate your support, in the way that you deem most appropriate to illustrate your enthusiasm for AW, our heritage and the great work that was started back in '54. 

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Tim Nickles
Editor

photo by Matt Davanzo

Latin America – for those who've been to parts of it, the name holds numerous often crazy associations in the memory banks. For those yet to make the trip, the imagination runs rampant with stories and photos from friends and magazines. With one entire continent and a pretty good portion of another, the Latin world holds a huge diversity of natural habitat for paddlers. The Tropical climes sport countless rain-fed runs, and the temperate and boreal areas of South America go off every spring while the northern hemisphere watches leaves lazily floating to the ground.

The allure of Latin America is fed by the grande sonrisas of the locals and their simple generosity, the incredibly diverse landscapes, and the flows created by the tropical rains in the North and Andes in the South.

Here's where I'd normally rant about how all that good stuff is tempered by the environmental and developmental dangers wrought in the service of progress and profit. Not one to disappoint, I'll offer my opinion, which is that the Southern world obviously needs to develop but it is the Northern world that determines the options available. These options are often notorious and do more to serve the already wealthy than to improve the land and its people.

The recipe tends to be IMF-style structural adjustment where the resources of an area are opened to the kind of development that must be run by big, transnational corporations. The thinking is that capital will flow into a region and all will benefit. The reality is that these projects displace more than they employ and come with a huge environmental cost. Who can afford to do things sustainably when profits are needed now?

Dams are the classic example and the associated disruption of natural river flows is no fun for paddlers. Tourism is often one industry that can serve the environment by putting a value on leaving natural resources in their natural state. So if you didn't already have an excuse to head south for a paddling adventure – here's one: by playing on free-flowing rivers and spending your

gringo dollars in the local communities you motivate the preservation of these resources by local governments. Twist your arm, eh?

For this issue, I contacted as many folks as I could who've been known to head south for work or play in the waterways of Central and South America. Once again, I was amazed when we put this journal together through exclusively volunteer articles and photos. People just sent submissions in, sometimes on short notice, sometimes with a little pestering (I won't mention any names Phil!), but always great stories with beautiful photos. Our article and photo contributors deserve thanks and praise.

Costa Rica, with the largest areas of preserved rainforest in Central America, makes for a favorite paddling destination and a couple of our stories take us there. Mark Adams describes an idyllic trip to the Pacific drainages filled with all the ingredients of a fun and memorable paddling trip. Perhaps not so much fun but certainly memorable, the story Nick Hinds shares is a gut-wrenching experience on the Rio Patria involving some serious tree-hugging and even local media exposure.

The Andes are the biggest rain block in the world with lush vegetation changing to dry, cakey desert in the span of as little as three miles. All those Pacific storms build up against the towering peaks and drop some of the biggest snowfall averages anywhere. As if to make up for all that effort, the melt comes thundering down to the Pacific each spring creating a guidebook full of killer runs in the process.



With 80% of the Andean spine within its borders, Chile is a supernatural paddling destination. The turbulent promise of adventure drew the LVM crew down this last holiday season and Daniel DeLavernne provided us with a synopsis of the craziness. As usual, the story comes with some great shots to contrast Daniel's understated account.

Chile's rivers also pulled John Cornwall down for a season of guiding on the Futaleufu and from the sounds of it, may not let him go. John shares a few entertaining and inspiring stories of he and his friends' attempts to educate locals and bring attention to the misguided development plans of profit-seekers.

Phil DeRiemer of DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking gives us an excellent historical perspective on paddling in Latin America along with a couple stories of early attempts to paddle the Paucartambo River. Reading it I really wish I'd started traveling in Latin countries a lot earlier.

Of course we are still featuring updates on all the great work the AW staff does as well as some great articles from our regular contributors. As far as Latin America is concerned though - if you haven't been there, get down there. If you've been, get your ass back. Chase some daydreams down. Your life will still be around when you finally make it back home. It will just seem a little different. 

Volunteer Salute

Westwater, Ho.....

This past September, a small band of American Whitewater members escaped life to spend a couple of days in Westwater Canyon.

The trip was facilitated and organized by Ken (board member emeritus) and Emily Ransford and Jay Kenney (current on the board and Past President).

Accompanying us were Landis Arnold (Wildwasser Sports 'jefe' and also a past AW board member), Sarah Ransford, and Michael Kennedy – enthusiastic in their support for both paddling and AW. Ken took to the oars and was periodically spotted by Landis, while Emily, Sarah, and

Michael surfed long and hard to yield a very strong play-to-water time ratio.

We 'talked' AW, 'talked' how wild Skull Rapid can be during springtime flows, 'talked' the dang tamarisk and...enjoyed the fabulous resource, a bit easier to access due to there being a friendlier permit system instituted by the Bureau of Land Management.

Thanks also go to the duo at Confluence Kayaks in Denver, Don Dowling and Jon Kahn. These gentlemen supplied a paddling vehicle for yours truly! They are stalwart AW retailers and industry partners, for which we are enthusiastically appreciative!

Looking back, perhaps the trip did indeed provide escape, but it even more importantly provided an opportunity for those who represent the pillars of thought and volunteerism. 



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AW Partner Spotlight

Clif Bar and Wavesport



Continuing Commitment to Clubs

Clif Bar has been making all-natural energy and nutrition foods since 1992. Clif Bars are a great tasting source of the energy active people need across a number of sports - from kayaking to running ultramarathons.

Clif Bar's vision has always been bigger than the bar. Today, the company is on a journey toward long-term sustainability, exploring ways to keep people, the planet, the environment and its local communities healthy for generations to come. Clif Bar recently became the first major energy bar to be certified organic, using 70 percent organic ingredients such as organic rolled oats, organic roasted soybeans and organic honey. This not only provides a better product for consumers, but also represents a step toward safeguarding the nation's soil and water.

As a company full of athletes and outdoor enthusiasts, Clif Bar is eager to support organizations that strive to raise awareness on a variety of environmental preservation and access related issues. Clif Bar is committed to sustaining both healthy people and a healthy planet and sees American Whitewater as an ideal partner in those efforts.

As part of its continuing mission to explore new sports and activities, Clif Bar joined forces with American Whitewater in 2003 to lend support to its efforts. Together, they introduced the Flowing Rivers Campaign, a series of grants awarded to AW affiliate clubs that best promote AW's objectives in restoration, conservation, access and safety education on America's rivers. Clif Bar looks forward to another successful year of the program and to helping AW raise awareness of its goals.

To learn more about Clif Bar, visit www.clifbar.com.

Wavesport presents the 2004 AW Member Appreciation Tour

Team Wavesport will be offering free clinics to celebrate American Whitewater's 50th anniversary. It's our way of thanking AW members for doing their part to help conserve our whitewater resources. Check the AW and Wavesport websites in the coming months to see where you can hook up with some of the best paddlers on the planet to improve your skills and enjoy the whitewater resources we're fortunate enough to have.

"Over the years Wavesport has strongly supported American Whitewater's mission. Whitewater resources aren't exactly a dime a dozen, and the ones we have are always under threat from competing interests who typically discount the recreational value of free-flowing rivers. Without an organization to fight for our interests they are easily overlooked in the political process that ultimately determines the 'best use' of our rivers. Together our voice is heard by those who make the decisions. American Whitewater is our collective voice, and the more we join together the easier it is to hear us."

Jimmy Blakeney
Current US Freestyle National Champion,
Wavesport team member since 1997,
AW member since 1999.



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



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



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



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



In 2004, Mt. Surf again supports AW with co-branded Duro-Ring Spray Skirts. Mt. Surf has been supporting AW's work to provide access at the take out of the Upper Yough.



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



Patagonia awarded AW a \$5,000 grant to acknowledge our leadership role in restoring rivers through the hydro-relicensing process in the western U.S.



In 2004, Smith Optics continues its sponsorship of AW's River Festivals and is now offering AW major donors a special gift from Smith Optics.



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



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

History: AW and Slalom Go Way Back

by Sue Taft

The Common Heritage of AW and Slalom in America

While slalom racing is certainly a part of the sport of whitewater, its role has changed over the years. In the '50s, slalom racing brought us the Duffek stroke. From the '50s through the '70s, it brought us evolving boat designs for river running – from the high volume designs of the '60s and early '70s to the low volume highly rockered designs of the later '70s. Outdated slalom kayaks, C-1s, and C-2s (yes, in the '60s and '70s, C-2s were commonly seen on rivers) were used for river running. Many paddlers also participated in slalom races to develop their finer river running skills. In the late '70s, offside leans used by slalom racers in low volume kayaks and C-1s became the inspiration for squirt boating. About the same time though, the advent of plastics and designs specifically for river running began to reduce slalom's influence in the sport. Today, there is but little commonality, in design and technique, between the short, highly specific plastic playboats for river running and low volume composite slalom boats. However, slalom's legacy and influence on the sport should not be overlooked. In fact, the very founding of AW is tied to slalom racing.

Although there were a few whitewater clubs scattered across the country in the mid-'50s, there was no national organization that really represented the interests of whitewater paddlers. This lack of national organization or even national infrastructure was painfully apparent when an Italian representative from the International Canoe Federation (ICF) sent an invitation to ACA to compete in a whitewater slalom race to be held in July 1953 in Merano, Italy. Although ACA purported to represent canoeing and kayaking interests in America, their lack of involvement in whitewater was apparent. ACA in turn passed the invitation to Bob McNair of the Buck Ridge Ski Club in New Jersey, a club known for their whitewater interest. McNair in turn sent letters to Eliot DuBois of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Boston chapter and Doug Brown of AMC-Connecticut. The three realized that not only did they know very little about slalom racing, they could

neither accept nor decline in any official capacity since no one really represented American whitewater paddlers. They also had no way of notifying whitewater paddlers across the country of the slalom race. As a result, DuBois and McNair decided that a national organization was needed to represent whitewater interests and so they became the key people and driving force in the founding of just such an organization, AW.

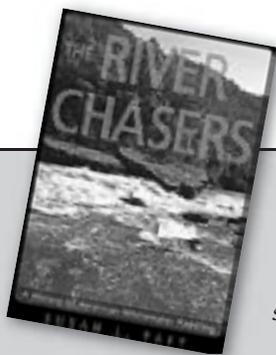
DuBois' job was to identify and contact other whitewater groups across the country. McNair's job was to learn as much about slalom racing and attract ACA's interest in it. The reasoning was that ACA, already recognized by ICF as the national governing body for flatwater (sprint) competition, was in a better position to support and organize whitewater slalom competition. After much discussion and

correspondence with scattered groups across the country, a memo on the "Formation of an Affiliation of White Water Groups" was sent to sixteen formal and informal groups on April 6, 1954. Within a year, the American White Water Affiliation (AWWA) was established and seen as a medium for the exchange of ideas and interests for whitewater. Even though slalom racing was the original impetus for its founding, AWWA's purpose did not directly involve slalom competition. AWWA's purpose was defined:

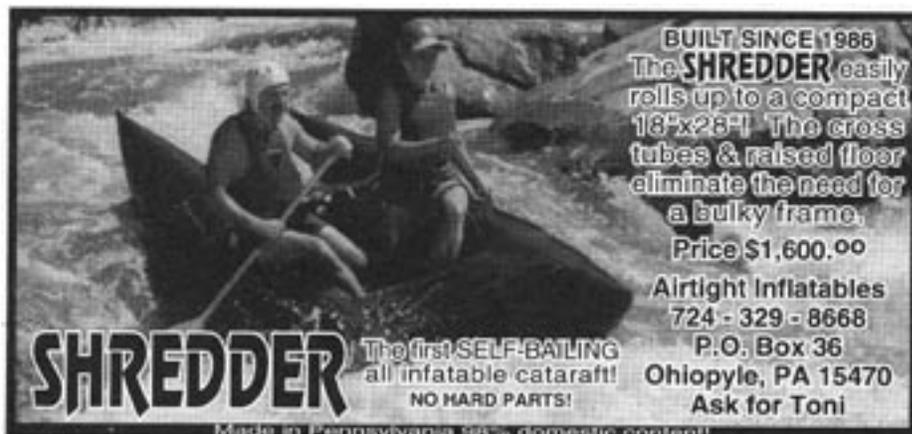
To encourage exploration and enjoyment of wilderness waterways; to foster research, study and teaching of improved techniques and equipment designs for safely negotiating white water; to protect the wilderness character of our waterways for the growing number of those who are discovering the rewards awaiting the river tourist.

Within a year, ACA established the Whitewater Committee to support whitewater competition, eventually both slalom and wildwater competition, for national and international purposes. In doing so, ACA finished the second goal of AW's founders. Now, the interests of all whitewater paddlers, competitors and river runners alike, were represented by respective national organizations.  

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Sue Taft is the author of The River Chasers, the history of American whitewater paddling. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, email it to staft@theriverchasers.com and look for its answer in an upcoming issue of American Whitewater.



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Field Notes: 50 Classics

by Tyler Williams

In traveling around the continent conducting research for *Whitewater Classics – Fifty North American Rivers Picked by the Continent's Leading Paddlers*, I visited many different rivers and river running communities. Each had its own unique flavor, and its own special cast of characters.

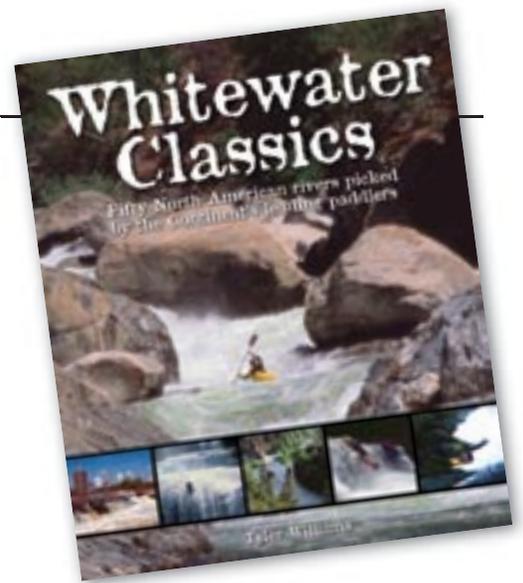
Some of these characters happened to be featured paddlers in the book, like the Snyder brothers. I caught up with Jeff for an Upper Yough run in the spring, and later paddled with his older brother Jim on his backyard creek in the fall. Anyone familiar with the modern development of whitewater paddling knows that the Snyder brothers have made a significant impact in the sport. Naturally, both days I spent paddling with them were experiences that won't soon be forgotten.

The Upper Yough run with Jeff was on a typically misty and cold semi-high-water day. Nevertheless, chasing Snyder had me dripping with sweat by the time we had passed the first rapid. I learned fast that Upper Yough paddlers are all about speed, and Snyder is no exception. This is true even as he paddles an inflatable kayak while standing, a technique known as striding. Once below the last of the rapids, Jeff convinced me to try the striding technique for myself, and I found that it was actually more stable than it appeared. Still, Class II was pushing my comfort zone. It was amazing to think that Snyder

has strided notable Class V rivers like the Upper Blackwater and Deckers Creek.

In the fall I got to paddle with Jeff's older brother Jim – the elder statesman of squirt boating. Hurricane Isabel provided adequate floodwaters to run Jim's backyard creek, and he was gracious enough to lead me down the lively stream. Like his brother Jeff, Jim also paddled an inflatable—a boat well-suited for the tiny creek of 80 cfs. Of course, 80 cfs is just my estimate of the flow. The real level on Roaring Creek is determined through a unique brand of phraseology developed by Jim. It starts at zero, then gets progressively higher with levels fun, free, fo, and mo. Riding the pulse of the hurricane's rainfall, we had a somewhat high water level – somewhere around fo, it seemed.

The run was a blur of rapidly approaching rocks and overhanging rhododendron boughs. Every few minutes I would round a corner to find Snyder waiting for me under a cave of rhododendron, ready to give the game plan for the next mile of creek. It was like being in a huddle with the quarterback calling a very long and complex play and knowing that you'd better remember the important stuff and rely on instincts for the rest. Snyder's directions were always spot-on, and everything went smoothly. Upon stepping out of the tunnel of forest surrounding the creek at the take-out, it was like emerging from the portal of the mysterious world of Snyder.



These two experiences with the Snyders came near the beginning and end of my book research, respectively, and served as fitting bookends to a truly unforgettable season. In between there was the Southwestern tour with my friend Pat, the California blitz with paddling pard' Seth, the pilgrimage to my old stomping grounds in Idaho, the adventure of my life in Alaska, new territory at the Ottawa and the Northeast, my first Gauley season in 9 years, and a flood of old memories in the South. It's been an unforgettable journey, and not one I could've done alone.

Everywhere I've been, paddlers I didn't even know opened up to me, shared their stories and floor space, gave their time, expertise, and advice, and generally have just been good folks who are fun to hang out with.

As the sport has grown, I've heard complaints about bad attitudes, and how it ain't like the good ol' days. Well, there's no debating that it's no longer the good ol' days, but basically the sport and its participants are the same. And the attitudes? I haven't seen them. Anytime numbers increase, there will surely be more bad apples in the bunch, but what I've seen is a lot of good fun-loving people who make me proud to call myself a paddler.

Now I can only hope that the book I've produced is worthy of my fellow paddlers' attention. It was a lot of fun (and work!) to write. I hope you all find it just as fun to read. Look for it in April! 



Waterways Her Way: An Anthology

by Lauren Archer

Women, Put Down Your Paddles and Take Up Your Pens!

Are you a woman paddler, rafter, or rower who likes to write about your experiences on wilderness or urban waterways? There's a new anthology from Raincoast Books on its way, due to be published in 2005, and editor Laurel Archer is looking for your stories and essays.

Waterways Her Way: An Anthology of Women's Paddling Adventures (working title) will be a literary anthology of creative non-fiction stories and personal essays about women finding adventure on rivers, lakes and oceans. Discovery is the general theme: the discoveries women make about themselves, their relationships, Nature, or the meaning of adventure. Possible specific themes include: artistic inspiration,

women-only trips, solo expeditions, mixing romantic love and paddling, spirituality, mentorship, leadership, teamwork, whitewater thrills, competing in paddlesports, and changes afoot in the paddling world.

All in all the collection will reflect the diversity of reasons women take up paddling, why they enjoy paddling, who they enjoy paddling with and why, and some of their best and/or worst experiences on the water. The multiplicity of emotions paddling watercraft evokes is often key to learning about one's self and the nature of traveling on water. Fear, passion, joy, frustration, peace, may all be part of the mix in any given experience. Stories about serene weekends canoeing on a southern lake, competing in whitewater slalom, sprint or rowing events, tripping in a traditional dugout canoe through coastal waters, paddling on a breast cancer

dragon boat team, teaching paddlesports or guiding trips on Arctic rivers or the Pacific or Atlantic oceans are all welcome. Women paddlers' backgrounds vary dramatically, and this will also be a theme in the collection.

Approximately thirty submissions will be chosen for inclusion in *Waterways Her Way*, and the pieces will be selected based on literary merit and how well the pieces fit the themes of the collection. Both unpublished and previously published pieces are welcome.

Archer is inviting women of all ages and walks of life to submit stories and essays about their unique paddling experiences. To obtain further information and detailed submission guidelines, please contact laurel.archer@telus.net

For more information about the editor and Raincoast Books, visit www.laurelarcher.com and www.raincoastbooks.com

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Field Notes: River-Running Etiquette

by Clay Wright

The rain gauge needs dumping, TVA, real-time streamflows, Intellicast, AW River Pages, the TV is flashing flood warnings, and hey, there goes a trailer on the Weather Channel . . . Creekin' season is upon us! In honor of the season I thought I'd throw out another etiquette piece, this time focused on some less obvious skills gained from experience: creek-congestion, party pitfalls, and the ever-important ride back to the top.

Don't Park on the Trail

Don't you hate the pile of boats that collects above the hard drops and makes scouting difficult and re-entry even harder? You wouldn't park your car in the on-ramp to a freeway, so why must you leave your boat on the scout/portage trail? Instead, pull your boat up PAST the common exit/entry points and to either side of the trail, making sure to avoid any contact with other boats, paddles, or gear already stored. Stacking is necessary on popular dam-release runs, but anyone who's lost a boat due to jostling can tell you it is worth an extra 10 steps to find your own space. Did someone "park" on the launch rock? Feel free to move their vehicle for them, and as far from the river as you want. When re-entering the river to run the rapid you have the authority to start where you want. Oh, and while it is fun to scout for hours, have lunch, or hang out beside the big drop, you'll enjoy it more when your stuff is free of the high traffic areas instead of headed downstream on its own.

Treat any Group like an Inseparable Unit

Have you ever been following someone down an intimidating river and had members of another group cut you off from your guide, leaving you alone above a blind corner? It sucks! Sure, boaters running directly through the run have the right of way, but not when they separate group members. Like rafting trips, quick kayaking groups should pass in easier water, making sure the slower group is reunited before the next drop. Cutting in behind someone's leader halfway down a difficult or blind section is rude and potentially dangerous. If you think you've made such a cut, you can easily patch things up – just eddy out, ask if they know the lines, and lead the group through yourself if there is any question.

Team Goals Override Personal Ones

Sometimes you paddle with a group that just doesn't work. I mean you get to run rapids and some folks are having the time of their lives, but another part of the group begins paddling cautiously, then really slowly, then claims they might just hike out. Could it be some inflamed egos are to blame? At the end of the day, if you've run the rapids and waited "patiently" at the bottom every time yet no one wants to swap phone numbers – take this as a clue that you've let the group down.

Paddling isn't a competition to see who can run the most rapids – there is too much teamwork involved. Paddling is a group sport, and the goal is to allow everyone to enjoy the trip as much as possible. Pushing your limits is fine but only if the group is comfortable with what you are doing. Maybe they aren't interested in setting up sufficient safety. Maybe they are worried about your skill compared to the danger of the drop you are running, or maybe they are just uncomfortable with some of the lines you've had so far. Even when you feel in control, if you stress out your friends you are dragging the group down rather than boosting it up. Let's give two examples:

A. Joetta Cool is a top-notch boater who regularly paddles grade 7 alone in the dark. Today she is passing up stuff she'd normally run because some guy in her party freaked when she free-wheeled "Sick-bird Falls" and swam.

B. Johnie Hot is an expert who's running all the drops first, then waiting impatiently in his boat at the bottom for his group to scout, run, portage, whatever. He's bummed some guy he's with is so timid and slow.

Who's the better kayaker?

The answer comes when Joetta's group relaxes again and has a great day while Johnie's group gets freaked out, makes mistakes, and Johnie ends up spending the dusk hours waiting in the parking lot.

There are days to test your skills and days your group just isn't up to it. Learn to recognize the difference.

The Revolving Scout (beware the parasite)

We all hate the guy who pushes to the front of the group, gets to the next horizon line, and patiently waits in the eddy for someone else to run first or portage. Such parasitic behavior is rude, and eats away at the group. Check your ego at the put in. If you are going to enjoy the lead, enjoy the responsibility of making SURE the route is safe. When paddling with experienced paddlers – big names such as BJ, Arndt, Gavere, Kerns, Lindgren, etc. – the lead rotates throughout the day. The leader becomes the scouter – probably simply giving the “all clear” and ending up in the back till an “all scout” or several “all clear’s” have him back in the lead. I call this the “rotating scout” and it is truly the fastest, safest, and most enjoyable way to travel unknown or log-prone runs by kayak. Beware when someone tells you “it looks clean” from the last eddy but waits for you to run first. They seem to value your life less than their own. In any case, if you doubt they can see everything or just have a bad feeling about it, don't go. One thousand unnecessary scouts will not make up for one too few.

Mooch vs. Bunny

How cool is the gal who snags a ride to the put in, but then “is running late, sorry” when you try and load your boat for a ride back to your car? And what about the Class



Andrew Holcomb and Jay Kincaid, they pay to play.



Potential shuttle 'buddies', Miss Zambia and friend.

photos by Clay Wright

III guy driving the group up for another run, who's “along for the ride” cause his lady needed her creek fix? Reward the favor; avoid the Mooch! If you can't help out with the shuttle, be sure to appease the group with one of more of the following:

continued on page 15



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and safety project on a local river or stream directly affecting their area's rivers.

Interested AW Club Affiliates will receive 2 boxes of Clif Bar products for distribution among their members along with the grant application.

Once received, grant applications will be reviewed by a grant committee consisting of Risa Shimoda, AW Executive Director, Jason Robertson, AW Access Director, John Gangemi, AW Conservation Director, Major Tim Kelley, AW Safety Committee Chair, and one representative of Clif Bar, Inc.

Applications are available online at www.americanwhitewater.org or can be requested via email at Michael@amwhitewater.org. Applications are currently being accepted and must be received by AW no later than May 1, 2004 at 5:00 pm est.

Awards will be announced in June 2004.

For more information, please call Michael Phelan at 828-252-0728.

Completed applications should be emailed to Michael@amwhitewater.org

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River-Running Etiquette cont.

by Clay Wright

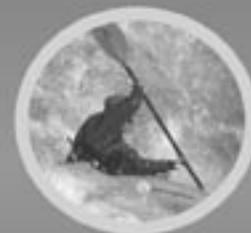
- Supply beer, sodas, snacks, or other “goodies” for the group at the take out (especially the driver)
- Drive shuttle on first run
- Drive over to check the water levels and call your friends to tell them it’s a go

Everyone else should be ready, willing, and able to run shuttle – no matter what your girlfriend has planned, no matter how much stuff you’ve got in the car, and no matter how late you are to class. If you are frequently in a hurry to get home, carry a drybag of goodies, leave drinks at the take out before you go, stash gas \$ in your drytop, or bring a shuttle-buddy for the next trip. Yeah, that’s right – BUDDIE. What moron decided shuttle running was shameful? (Probably the same guy who lies about his last swim). In any case I think we all agree that it is GREAT when someone runs your shuttle! Is it worth a couple bucks? You bet! Is it worth a little VIP treatment? Bingo--we’re onto something.

There are certainly some practices you can use to encourage shuttle running:

- Buy beer, snacks, or something this person likes in advance
- The driver rides shotgun – both ways – and not next to some wet, stinky guy
- The driver gets to drink all the beer and not drive home if desired
- The driver does NOT get grief for not paddling or have to hear about paddling all the way home
- If you just HAVE to stop at McDonalds, their Big Mac is part of the deal
- If your driver occasionally wants to run an easy stretch, you either drive or go along as a guide

Any experienced kayaker has probably been injured and suddenly became the opportune shuttle-buddy candidate. Think back and remember the things that would make it worth your while so you can make sure your ‘buddy’ will come back next time it rains. Next time you’re injured, what do YOU want out of the deal? 



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Access and Conservation: Regional Briefs

Region: East

Flashflood

11/1/03: AW gung-ho volunteer **Jeff Tallman**, dressed as Moses, showed Tallulah paddlers his stone tablet that read "Thou Shall Not Trample the Trillium!" (GA). 11/12/03: AW filed comments on the Merrimac River with **Ken Kimball** of the AMC (NH). 11/15/03: AW board member and volunteer **Sutton Bacon** pulled off a great little event at Tallulah called "the Thing" (GA). 12/03: AW filed comments on the License Application for the Saranac River requesting public access and land conservation (NY). 12/5/03: AW's **Kevin Colburn**, Western Carolina Paddlers' **Rod Baird**, and Carolina Canoe Club's **Bob Wiggins** have a potentially groundbreaking meeting with the owners of the dam on the Cheoah River (NC). 12/9/03: **Georgia Canoeing Association** voted to financially support American Whitewater's efforts to open the Chattooga Headwaters to paddling based on a request from AW board member **Don Kinser** (GA). 12/03: **Dan Mullins**, AW Intern, officially starts the Willimantic Whitewater Partnership, a nonprofit organization to focus on removing a series of dams (CT). 12/11/03: **Dave Bassage** represented paddlers at a Gauley River National Recreation Area meeting (WV). 1/6/04: Paddler **Stephen Wright** successfully set up a meeting with the owners of Holtwood Dam on the Susquehanna River regarding river access (PA).

AW and TU Give Talk on Conservation and Collaboration

One of American Whitewater's Top Issues of 2003 was "Conflicting Partners in River Conservation." American Whitewater's Kevin Colburn and Trout Unlimited's Chuck Bonham teamed up in November to tackle this issue at the first ever Partners in Stewardship Conference held in Los Angeles. The conference, hosted by the National Park Service, brought together over 1,600 individuals working in the environmental field to discuss the benefits and challenges of collaboration. The thesis of Chuck and Kevin's talk was that "When

anglers and paddlers collaborate, the river wins, and when there is conflict the river loses." Examples of collaboration such as the Tuckasegee and Mokelumne dam relicensings were used to show the strong victories the two groups are capable of accomplishing when we work together. Speaking together at the conference made a strong statement to the many river managers present that anglers and paddlers share many interests and are very capable of collaborating on river conservation and access projects.

Fall 2003 Tallulah Season a Huge Success

This past fall there were over 1,500 runs down the Tallulah River in North Georgia thanks to the landmark releases secured by American Whitewater in the late 90's. Paddlers came to the river not just to paddle, but also to celebrate the river and to help make the releases a success. Dozens of volunteers worked at the 4 volunteer positions that must be filled at all times. The Atlanta Whitewater Club adopted a weekend and packed every volunteer position with responsible and enthusiastic volunteers. In addition, roughly 150 people joined AW or renewed their membership at the releases. Based on the responsible management of the 2003 releases, it appears likely that additional releases will be added to the release schedule in the coming years. Thanks to everyone who made the 2003 Tallulah releases a success.

Route 3 Wave Debate Rekindled?

As of press time, it appears that the 2004 Freestyle Team Trials will be taking place at the Route 3 Wave on New York's Black River. The City Council of Watertown recently passed a resolution that will provide the optimum flows for the Route 3 Wave from a city-owned dam just upstream for the event. While this move seems to support local paddlers' opinions that the wave is a highly desirable surfing feature that should not be altered, it may in fact encourage the wave's alteration by a private developer in the near future. As quoted in a December 30th article in

the *Watertown Daily Times*, the developer Sarah Daniels said that while the existing wave is acceptable for a national level event, "The wave would have to be altered if we're going to bring in the world or international events; however the alterations wouldn't be major." The same article states that Daniels and her business partner Thomas O'Riley have invested roughly \$250,000 in bringing future events to their riverside property, and that they intend to bid for the World Championships in 2007.

In the summer of 2003 American Whitewater staff and volunteers toured the Black River corridor and met with representatives from the City of Watertown. We expressed our gratitude for the City's belief in the potential for whitewater recreation to have a positive affect on their community. We also urged the city to independently review the entire river corridor for opportunities to create new whitewater features rather than only focusing on an existing feature that already attracts significant use. Our primary concern on this project was and remains that paddlers have a voice in whether or not the Route 3 Wave is altered. It appeared evident from our site visit that there were likely other sites in Watertown that would offer better opportunities for powerful river features and better viewing. The development of an additional site was recommended to protect the interests of paddlers that enjoy the Route 3 Wave while also meeting the City's interest in encouraging whitewater recreation and events. It appears that the debate has once again heated up. American Whitewater will continue to advocate for a fair open process that considers the interests of all paddlers.

Region: Central and Mountain States

Gates on Lodore?

by Jason Robertson

“The river should be ‘kept open.’ The idea of closing a river is an abomination, a crime against nature, and probably illegal.” Dave Yeamans, a board member of the Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association (GCPBA) has a knack for simplifying issues to their fundamentals.

In December, 2003 Herb Hoops wrote to AW asking for our support in protecting access to the Lodore Canyon in Brown’s Park. The problems according to Herb were that: Dinosaur National Monument would no longer allow river runners to take out at the Lodore Boat Ramp; Brown’s Park National Wildlife Refuge would no longer allow river runners to park vehicles unattended at boat ramps; Brown’s Park intends to remove the campsites and boat ramps at Swinging Bridge & Crooke; and Brown’s Park intends to close the river to use below Crooke to the Monument boundary.

Herb, a director in the Colorado Plateau River Guides (CPRG), explained that “These combined actions will remove approximately 20 miles of river to use by private river runners and outfitters. The CPRG opposes the closures and actions. We have been in contact with the Moffat County Commissioners who are going to help to keep the river and access open.”

The Commissioners need any support in the form of written comments you can provide them. Their address is: Moffat County Commissioners, attn Jeff Comstock, Moffat County Courthouse, 221 Victory Way, Craig, CO 81625.

If you write, refer to the specific issues, your familiarity with the river, as well as plans to visit and whether these changes would affect whether you would spend money in Moffat County (Dinosaur to Steamboat Springs, CO along US 40).

Hoops suggests that this is “a case where the private and commercial river community can begin working together on river related issues.”

AW is advocating for the re-opening the boat ramp at Lodore as a take out, for river runners to be able to park vehicles on the county right-of-way in the refuge unattended (overnight), keeping the campgrounds and boat ramps open at Swinging Bridge and Crook, and thereby effectively keeping the river open below Crook.

No New Players in the Waiting Game

by Jason Robertson

Grand Canyon National Park has placed a hold on adding new members to the noncommercial river permit waitlist.

As part of the current Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP) planning effort, park staff and planners are carefully examining and considering alternatives to the current waitlist permit system. An overwhelming majority of public comments stated the opinion that the permit system should be overhauled. With this in mind, park management does not want to perpetuate the current system while other alternatives are being considered.

According to the Park, “there are now over 8,000 people on the waitlist, and more than 1,000 are typically added each year.”

The Park has stated that in the event that the current system is selected as part of the final CRMP decision, to be completed by December 31, 2004, the system for allowing additions to the waitlist would simply be reinstated.

Until a record of decision is made for the CRMP, current waitlist members will be served in the same manner as they have been in the past. They will soon receive the familiar annual letter regarding waitlist procedures, the schedule of release dates, and other topics. The River Permits Office may be contacted at 1-800-959-9164 or 928-638-7843.

Please go to www.nps.gov/grca for more information regarding Grand Canyon National Park. Information about the Colorado River Management Plan may be found at www.nps.gov/grca/crmp.

Region: West

by John Gangemi

Flashflood

River conservation and access work in the last two months of 2003, like the remainder of the year, continued to move at a high pace. American Whitewater staff with direct assistance from many local boaters attended hydro relicensing meetings, met with state and federal agencies and private landowners, and submitted comments where needed on various settlements, plans and license applications. The outcomes have been promising in all these forums. American Whitewater is fortunate to have a legion of river activists motivated to work on river issues in their home watersheds.

In the northern Rockies American Whitewater reviewed and filed comments on the plan to implement and monitor whitewater releases at the Bigfork Hydropower Project on the Swan River (MT). Further south in the Big Sky state American Whitewater, with a stable of interested local boaters, is actively participating in the relicensing of the Mystic Lake Hydro Project. This relicensing proceeding is just underway. Our immediate objective is development of a whitewater flow study designed to identify the range of boatable flows on West Rosebud Creek then overlay this on hydropower operations to determine opportunities and impacts. In November and early January 2004 John Gangemi, Western Conservation and Access Director, represented private boaters in the Montana River Recreation Advisory Council meetings. These meetings focused on social and biological triggers that might trigger the need for limiting use for resource protection and the strategies for limiting use—obviously a loaded topic. In the adjacent whitewater state of Idaho American Whitewater is working with PacifiCorp on the implementation

Access and Conservation: Regional Briefs

of whitewater releases into the Black Canyon of the Bear below Grace Dam. That settlement, reached in 2002, calls for augmentation of natural spills over 500 cfs in the first three years followed by 16 releases in latter years. American Whitewater filed comments with the Idaho Water Resources Board on the water quality plan for the South Fork Clearwater. Just to the south in the beehive state of Utah American Whitewater is party to removal of the American Fork hydropower project.

In Washington, an active group of local boaters, with assistance from American Whitewater staff, is reviewing and commenting on the results of the whitewater flow study on the Spokane River in September and October. The settlement agreement for the Chelan hydropower project reached conclusion. American Whitewater filed a letter in support of the settlement with the FERC. Local super volunteer Tom O'Keefe continues to undertake extraordinary work improving

access to Washington's rivers west of the Cascades as well as lay important groundwork on hydro relicensing projects.

In Oregon, American Whitewater filed comments on the Initial Consultation Document for the Carmen Smith Hydropower Project located on the Mackenzie River. Comments were filed on the whitewater controlled study report and video for the Faraday diversion on the Clackamas River (OR) dewatered by hydropower operations.

On December 18, 2003 the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved a plan that allows Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) to exit bankruptcy. The plan contains an unprecedented commitment to protect 140,000 acres of the utility's watershed lands, primarily located in California's Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountains. This historic measure ensures the habitat, recreation, and other public values of

these treasured lands will be protected forever. American Whitewater's coalition partners in the California Hydropower Reform Coalition are largely responsible for inclusion of these 140,000 acres in the bankruptcy plan. Elsewhere in California, American Whitewater staff helped finalize the study plan for the Slab Creek whitewater flow study on the South Fork American. Local boaters participated in three controlled releases on Slab Creek section to help identify the minimum acceptable and optimum whitewater flows in the relicense proceeding. Sandwiched within this project, the Eldorado Hydropower Project on the South Fork American has initiated the implementation phase for their new license. American Whitewater is monitoring this implementation.

The venerable **Pete Skinner** celebrating with a faceful in a reborn Hoosic River.

photo by John Gangemi



American Whitewater is working closely with local boaters and a coalition of conservation groups in this proceeding. American Whitewater staff serve on the recently appointed Technical Advisory Committee for the California Energy Commission's project researching the ecological effects of recreation and pulse flows on California rivers. Comments were filed with FERC on PG&E's Upper North Fork Hydropower Project. Simultaneously, American Whitewater staff worked closely with the stakeholder group for this same hydropower project in an attempt to

Bush Combat – Piru Creek Whitewater Controlled Flow Study (CA)

by Kris Schmidt

On October 4 & 11, 2003 we performed a whitewater controlled flow study on the 5 miles of Piru Creek between the base of Santa Felicia Dam to the confluence with the Santa Clara River. We had about twenty participants paddling everything from kayaks to canoes and one sit on top sea

Conservation District for providing access across the top of the dam to its base. We put in at 3:00 PM at the base of the dam. Weather was warm and sunny with no wind. This put in would offer good parking and access for a larger group. There was a sweeper immediately below the put in with passage on river right. This was shortly followed by a low head dam that is/was a gauging station. The dam sloped to river right where we found passage easiest.

The greatest obstacle in this section of the creek is brush and trees. Specifically, mulefat and willows grow densely in many sections due to the lack of flushing flows that would normally occur during storm events. The creek is continuous, not pool and drop. The eddies were generally filled with brush and trees.

After the first bend in the creek about 250 yards from the put in we encountered approximately 100-150 yards of dense brush and trees that forced us out of our boats. We dragged our boats in knee to hip deep water through the brush. This was very time consuming and arduous. It was also difficult to reach the bank where similarly dense brush was found with passage only possible via paths made by apparently very short cows. We opted to remain in the creek. At the end of this section we climbed back in our boats in mid-stream. We then paddled and pulled our way through to a cottonwood forest where the speed of the water and the gradient increased.

The entrance to this cottonwood section was made difficult by woody debris at the top of the rapid. The rapid was not difficult from a water flow point of view, but it was so enclosed by brush that a path less than two boat widths wide was clear and eddies were substantially filled with brush as well. The brush density then decreased, but the density of cottonwood logs increased. Finally this section ended in a short length that was completely impassable due to woody debris. We opted to carry around this entire section (~100-150 yards). We put in immediately below the cottonwood forest entering swift water from the bank and negotiating a small drop that required a left-right move at the top of the rapid and finishing in a small pool. Immediately after this, the run was marked by a pumping station operated by Rancho Temescal. We estimated that this was about a third of a mile into the run.

The creek then opened up somewhat, although we often had to choose our route carefully to avoid brush and trees. About



Open boaters playing during Hoosic flow study.

photo by John Gangemi

reach settlement in lieu of a decision from FERC on license conditions. In October, stakeholders including American Whitewater reached settlement for the Pit 3, 4, and 5 hydropower project on the Pit River (CA). During the month of November the details of that settlement were being finalized.

In New York, John Gangemi reviewed and commented on the Controlled Whitewater Flow Report for the Hoosic River. Gangemi provided specific language to the utility for implementation of whitewater releases for the 30 year life of the license. Releases should start spring 2004. Visit the Hoosic streamkeeper page for more information www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1320/.

kayak. This creek is a great late season Class III run during the annual September and October release to recharge ground water in Ventura and Oxnard California. This run could be a hidden gem only 30 minutes from Los Angeles if we can secure public access and get improved flows to push back the riparian vegetation encroaching on the channel. Private land bounds this run between the dam and the town of Piru, and there is currently no public put in access for this upper section. However, the lower section below Piru is a great Class II section and provides an opportunity to put beginning boaters on moving water.

On Friday, 12 September 2003, Dennis Schure (canoe) and I (kayak) performed an exploratory run at 500 CFS from the base of Santa Felicia Dam to Warring Park. Our purpose was to do reconnaissance on the run before we assembled a large group of people for the formal flow study. Thanks to John Dickenson of United Water

Access and Conservation: Regional Briefs cont.

two miles into the run we again had to portage on river left around a willow tree sweeper that completely blocked passage. This was followed shortly by a left to right move to avoid another low branch that marked the top of a small drop above the first highway bridge. The current was swift here and there was not much of an eddy to catch or time to decide what to do. It appeared that the left side passages under the bridge were blocked at least partially with woody debris. We could not confirm this later from the road and we did not want to trespass without permission to verify. The far right passage under the bridge was clear, but the drop off the concrete skirt created a small hydraulic hole that could easily be avoided by keeping close to the river left face of the bridge piling.

The creek opened up a little after this and we enjoyed a pleasant but continuous paddle. At one point we had to hip snap and lean backward to make it through a surprise point narrowed by brush and wood.

We finally reached the barbed wire fence near the end of our run. This fence was problematic. It was difficult to see until you were right on top of it since it was covered with brush and weeds. The fence was a five-wire that extended under the water, so failure to avoid it could be catastrophic. There was a mini eddy just before the fence on river left that we used to exit in a single file manner. Someone had cut two of the wires before our arrival, so we used that existing passage. Only about fifty feet further on from the fence we were forced to portage brush and trees again and carry about 150 feet. We put in again to paddle the last 100 yards to the takeout at Warring Park. The park itself provides a good rallying point and ample public parking. However, the last 200 yards before the park are not worth paddling. There did not appear to be any good road access and no really good eddies that would be easy for a group to use above the fence. We reached Warring Park at 6:00 PM. This exploratory run produced key information that allowed a safe run for the study participants.

The actual whitewater controlled flow study runs on October 4 & 11, 2003

were performed at 400 CFS and 200 CFS respectively. We found the run to be significantly less pushy at 400 CFS and more play features developed. 500 CFS was comparatively very pushy and required much more skill (Class III+ to IV) due to the brush/tree pin hazards. At 200 CFS the difficulty decreased, but the run was barely boatable at this level. However, the recreational experience was still good and the scenery was excellent because you could now take your eyes off the river hazards for short periods. Wildlife viewing was outstanding on this run as we observed coyotes, condors, egrets, herons, kingfishers, ducks, fish, etc. The solitude was also very good.

The upper section of Piru Creek is severely overgrown due to the lack of flushing flows. The water on this section of Piru Creek is definitely only Class II but the brush and tree hazards push this up to Class III+. I had intended to have my wife, a Class II paddler, participate in the controlled flow study, but would not now encourage her or other paddlers with only Class II skills to do so knowing the difficulty of the run. The run is continuous and access from the bank is very difficult in most sections due to brush and tree blockage, so affecting a rescue of a pinned or swimming boater at 500 CFS would not be easy. In addition, paddlers must be tolerant of a lot of low hanging branches, bush whacking, and accompanying hazards. The sweeper hazards requiring portage come up quickly at this flow rate and boaters must be able to react quickly. The first one-third mile of the run is not really enjoyable due to the overgrowth. However, we noted that the brush busting required on the exploratory run was considerably diminished at the end of the second flow run after 40 boats had passed. This could be a great run with some public access and regular use. The barbed wire fence near Piru is problematic and a serious hazard to boaters. Some coordinated method of warning boaters and assisting with portage around the fence is required for the uninitiated.

Most of the run described above is on private land with no public put in access currently. One of our goals in the relicense process is to secure a public put in. In the

meantime we want to caution everyone not to trespass on private land until legal access is acquired. We currently have a courteous and respectful relationship with the landowner and we want to keep it that way. In the mean time, you can put in for the short lower section at Warring Park in the town of Piru and take out at the Torrey Road crossing on the Santa Clara River.

Rogue Jetboats

by Jason Robertson

The Forest Service was scheduled to release an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in January to examine jetboat use on Oregon's Rogue River through an analysis of Special Use Permits for activities supporting jetboat use such as new dock construction, with a final Record of Decision in September 2004.

At present nearly 3000 jetboat trips race up and down the Rogue; however, when the river was designated "Wild" under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1968 jetboat use was only a fifth of today's levels. At the same time use was increasing, the size of the motors and speed of the boats was also increasing. The new, larger boats require larger docks, and development in this scenic corridor has increased to meet this need. Now some individuals are questioning whether the river corridor can still be considered "wild".

If you are concerned about the proliferation of jetboats on this "wild" river, it is imperative that you submit comments on this EIS.

Send comments to John Borton, District Ranger, Gold Beach Ranger District, 29279 South Ellensburg, Gold Beach, OR 97444 or call Ranger Borton at 541-247-3600.

CPUC Approves PG&E Bankruptcy Settlement: Protects 140,000 Acres of Watershed Land

by Steve Wald, California Hydropower Reform Coalition and Chuck Bonham, Trout Unlimited

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) approved a plan December 18, 2003 that allows Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) to exit bankruptcy. The plan contains an unprecedented commitment to protect 140,000 acres of the utility's watershed lands, primarily located in California's Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountains. This historic measure ensures the habitat, recreation, and other public values of these treasured lands will be protected forever.

At the hearing, Commissioner Peevey concluded his remarks with reference to the Lands Conservation Commitment. "Long after today's events are forgotten, the people of California will have a priceless asset – 140,000 acres of Sierra lands in perpetuity, for their use."

PG&E's watershed lands surround its vast hydropower system, and encompass rivers, lakes, forests, and wetlands. The lands have historically been managed to buffer hydropower reservoirs from erosion, but with deregulation and then PG&E's bankruptcy, the lands came under increased logging and development pressure. State agencies and conservation groups have been working to protect the lands for years.

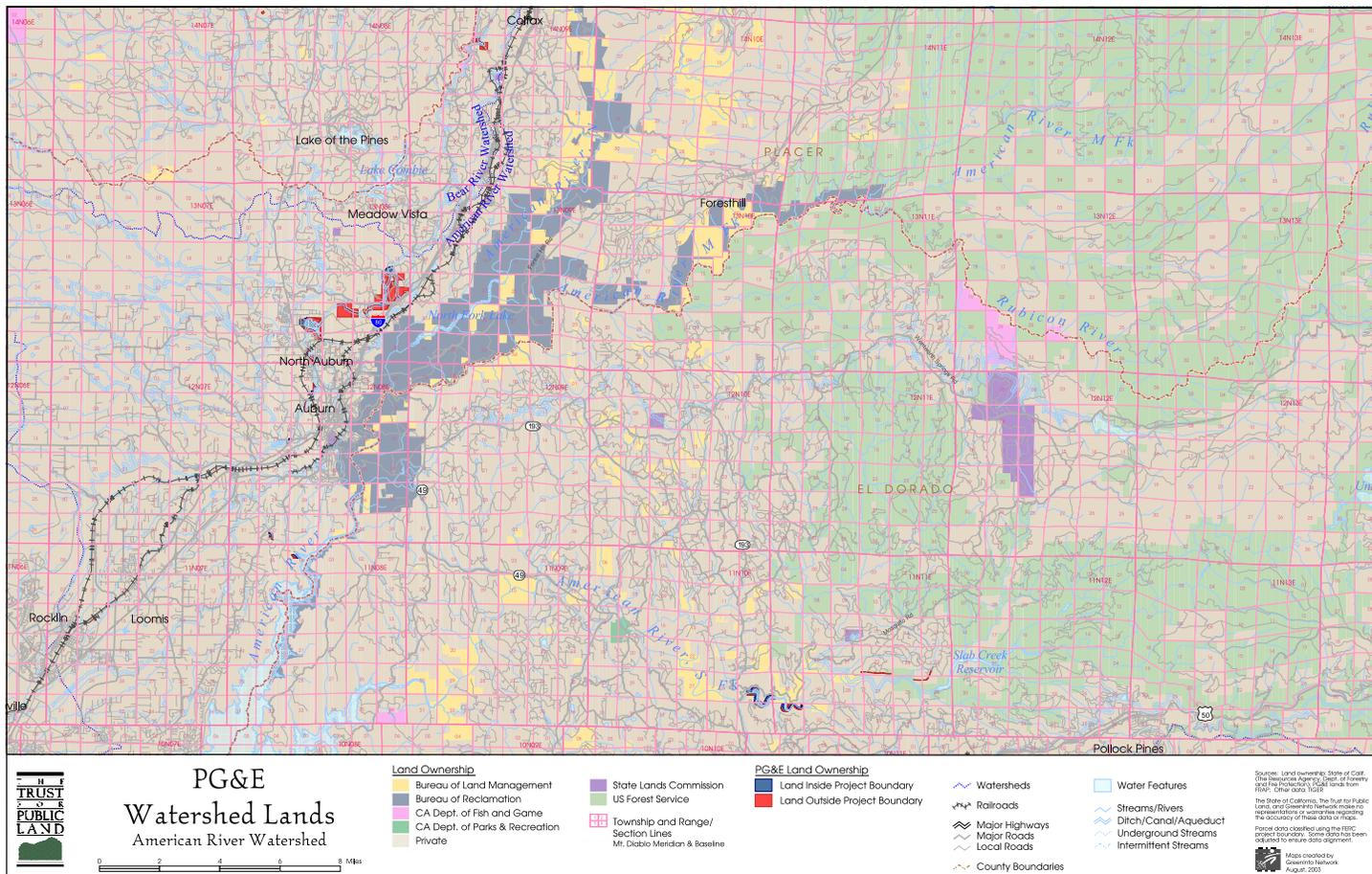
"The PG&E holdings are a remarkable assemblage of ecologically and recreationally significant lands," said Reed Holderman, Vice President and Regional Director of the Trust for Public Land. "Long term protection for wildlife and public recreation is a tremendous legacy for future generations and one of the largest land conservation accomplishments in California since the early 20th century."

In June, negotiators for the CPUC and PG&E included the Lands Conservation Commitment as part of a proposed settlement agreement to PG&E's bankruptcy. This fall, the proposed settlement was reviewed at the CPUC. A broad coalition of conservation groups

including American Whitewater, resource agencies, local governments, and industry associations agreed on a wide range of issues related to the governance and implementation of land conservation commitment. That stipulation is reflected in the final plan approved by the CPUC.

A diverse Stewardship Council will work with PG&E to identify the beneficial public values of each parcel and strategies to protect those values. PG&E will then apply to the CPUC for its permission to either donate the land or enter into a binding conservation easement. Each transaction is subject to public notice, comment, and review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

"We thank the Commission for this historic decision," said Steve Wald, director of the California Hydropower Reform Coalition, a coalition of river conservation and recreation groups that helped craft the final agreement. "Now we look forward to rolling up our sleeves and getting to the business of collaboratively protecting and enhancing these lands."



The Lands Conservation Commitment, maps, and descriptions of PG&E landholdings can be found at www.calhrc.org.

The California Hydropower Reform Coalition was formed by conservation, sportfishing, and river recreation organizations in 1997 to restore and enhance California rivers adversely affected by hydropower. The CHRC Steering Committee consists of American Rivers, American Whitewater, California Outdoors, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, California Trout, Foothill Conservancy, Friends of the River, Natural Heritage Institute, and Trout Unlimited.

Research Program Established to Investigate Ecological Effects of Recreation and Pulse Flows on California Rivers

The Public Interest Energy Research Program (PIER) of the California Energy Commission (CEC) and the Division of Water Rights of the State Water Resources Control Board have established a Pulsed Flow Research Program to address the ecological effects of manufactured or augmented flows from hydropower facilities on aquatic resources within California.

The potential benefits and impacts of these pulsed releases on the aquatic habitat and associated biotic communities are poorly understood. In the heat of a relicensing proceeding conflicts can arise among stakeholders regarding the timing and volume of flows to restore dewatered reaches. The Pulsed Flow Research is designed to replace perceptions with scientific facts about the ecological effects both positive and negative of manufactured flows.

American Whitewater serves on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Pulsed Flow Research Program. The TAC contains 20 members representing state and federal agencies, academicians,

and conservation groups. For more information about the Pulsed Flow Research Program contact John Gangemi, jgangemi@digisys.net, or visit the website www.animalscience2.ucdavis.edu/pulsedflow/index.htm.

Slab Creek Whitewater Study, South Fork American (CA)

by *Chris Shackleton*

On Thursday evening/night, Oct 30, all the kayakers and some rafters met at Round Table Pizza on Placerville Drive for pizza, beer, and an orientation session. It felt very strange to be meeting so many new faces and knowing I'd be paddling with them the next day. This was reminiscent of a commercial trip, on the Grand Canyon say. I almost always paddle in small groups, where most if not all of the paddlers are known to me. This would be a quite different experience. Two lucky kayakers stayed at my house, while other out-of-towners spread themselves amongst other locals.

The boaters were gathered to participate in the relicensing of Sacramento Municipal Utility Districts (SMUD) Upper South Fork American Hydropower Project. SMUD's hydro facilities on the Upper South Fork American dam and divert water from numerous reaches and tributaries including the following:

- South Fork American between Slab Creek Dam and White Rock Powerhouse
- South Fork Silver Creek below Ice House Reservoir
- South Fork Rubicon below Robbs Peak Reservoir
- Silver Creek below Camino Diversion Dam
- Rubicon River below Rubicon Springs

These dams and diversions impact the timing and volume of whitewater opportunities. American Whitewater's Western Conservation Director, John Gangemi recruited my expertise to help shepherd this relicensing proceeding. The



Study participants just downstream of SMUD's dam controlling flow into the Slab Creek reach.

photo by Chris Shackleton

hydro license for this project expires in 2007. Stakeholders have been meeting to iron out conditions for the new license for over two years already. American Whitewater requested whitewater flow studies to identify the minimum acceptable and optimum flows for respective reaches. The Slab Creek study is the first undertaken in this relicensing proceeding.

On the rainy Friday morning, we were out of bed by 6:30AM – way too early! Thank goodness the meeting place was only 20 minutes away... we had time to have breakfast and still get to White Rock Powerhouse (the take out) at 7:30, the meeting time. After surprisingly little milling around, we all got packed up and were driven to put in with a shuttle courtesy of SMUD. After a safety/procedures talk we put in at 9:15 – impressive I thought. Certainly way ahead of schedule! We formed two groups (called “pods”) of 6 hardshell kayakers each, and one R-2. The mix of paddlers was wide, all the way from just-in-control to awesome-super-stud. This gave us a nice cross-section of the prospective boating population for this reach, which was good from an evaluation perspective.

This didn't feel at all like a normal paddling day - on the contrary, this felt like the mission it was. Once we settled down and got into our rhythm, though, I think we all really started to enjoy the run. The scenery is good to marvelous, depending on your tree and bush type preference. Some



Study participants scouting and running Motherload Falls.

photos by Chris Shackleton



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interesting rock formations. The river crosses underneath the bridge at Mosquito Ridge Road, otherwise most of the run feels well away from civilization, and probably is. There are many excellent rapids, especially in the first half. A really nice mix of Class IV and IV+, I thought. Even the Big One (named Motherload Falls) isn't quite as fierce as its reputation - though all of us wimpy paddlers were happy enough to walk it. However the studs all ran it and mostly made it look reasonably easy. The flow on this day (scheduled to be 500 cfs but actually 610) was low but still quite reasonable in a hardshell. The R-2 didn't seem to have many problems, but full-sized rafts would surely hate it at that flow. Many of the rapids have a rock fence at the top that would hang up a raft at low flows - yet the body of the rapid tended to be bouncy enough to be quite exciting in a hardshell.

The second day (Nov 1) included almost all the same kayakers, but now without the

R-2 crew (who joined eight other rafters to crew two 14' rafts). Flow was slated to be 1000 cfs but again it was a little higher - officially 1068 cfs. I think we kayakers were all surprised by how much pushier the river was at this flow. The rafts thought this was just about minimum acceptable flow, while we kayakers thought most paddlers would probably find 1100 cfs on the high side! I blame it on those darned rock fences at the top of so many rapids - a flow which is high enough to let rafts through easily is high enough to be quite pushy when a kayaker reaches the body of the rapid. Not that the rapids were very munchy at this flow, and in fact once you get to know the river it might seem relatively tame. But for at least some of us kayakers, not knowing what lay below, this was pretty darned intimidating.

Motherload Falls was a kick at this flow. All the stud kayakers ran it again - with varying degrees of finesse. We saw one really awesome run by Charlie Center, who

not only didn't get his face wet - I swear he didn't get the top deck of his kayak wet either! This would sound more believable in a pub after several beers, I know, but that's our story and we're sticking to it. On the flip side was ... well, a flip ... just above the crux, with a just-in-time roll and a sigh of relief from the spectators.

For my part I found myself really enjoying the big water feel in this section, though the holes pack quite a punch and to get caught in one could be memorable.

That was it for me - a fun day overall but near the limit of what I'm comfortable with. So I wimped out for the third and final flow study day, scheduled for 1500 cfs but predictably closer to 1600. I hear the day went well, with the rafters loving the higher flows and the kayakers only somewhat intimidated. By now the weak-kneed bunch had been weeded out, so pretty much only studs were left.

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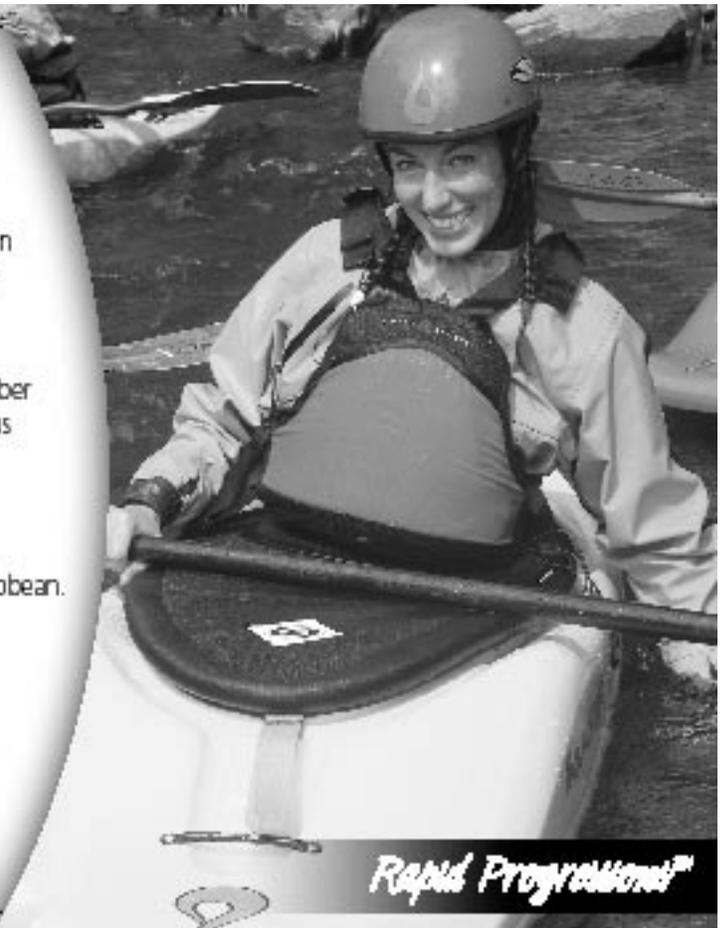


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Hey, there's more to the South Fork American than Chili Bar. Overall I rate this run as excellent, a classic, definitely at the upper end of what's available in its class. Class IV-V depending on volume. Slab Creek is a hidden gem that flows only when we're lucky – as a result of spill. This means boatable flows are very hard to predict, sporadic, erratic, and short-lived to non-existent. Participation in this relicense proceeding is critical to restore an annual schedule of flows for the next 30 to 50 years. American Whitewater, through the direct involvement of local boaters, is helping make this possible.

Some interesting discussions and decisions are ahead of us, though, when we contemplate what to ask for in the way of scheduled releases. The kayaker optimum flow seems to be in the 850 or 900 cfs range, while it sounds like rafters are looking at 1500 or 1600 cfs. Not only that, but the rafter lower limit was pretty much the kayaker upper limit! Creativity is required if scheduled releases are to offer something for everyone.

Editor's Note: *Chris Shackleton lives in the South Fork American drainage. He is renowned in the paddling community for his California Flow webpage: www.dreamflows.com. Little did Chris realize that his interest in restoring specific reaches of the South Fork American would lead to organizing a flow study, modeling flows and that adrenaline driven forum: relicensing meetings. Thanks Chris for your advocacy!*

Region: National

Flashflood

12/03: Clean Water Act protected from attempts to weaken it through a paddler supported advocacy effort. 1/7: Rec Fee demo survived 2003 and received yet another extension through Dec. 31, 2005 in the '04 appropriations bill (for a total of 5 extensions since first being passed in 1996). At present the House and Senate are considering bills associated with fee authority. The House bill includes authorization for an "America the Beautiful" pass and fee retention authority for outfitters and guides, as well as permanent Rec Fee authority for the FS, BLM, NPS, USFWS, and BOR. The Senate bill does not include the FS at this time.

American Whitewater has been working with coalition members in the Hydropower Reform Coalition in efforts to oppose industry sponsored legislation contained in the Energy Bill that proposes to decrease environmental protections in hydropower licensing. American Whitewater, along with coalition members, is also attempting to stop the administrative erosion of state and federal resource agency regulations originally written to guarantee resource protection at hydro dams.

\$36.2 Billion Required to Fix America's Dams

by Jason Robertson

"But even for those who had somehow succeeded in getting to the high ground in time, even for those who were uninjured or were lucky enough to have a roof to sleep under, there was the indescribable agony of remembering what they had seen, and not knowing what had become of others. No one really knew for sure the extent of what had happened, but they knew it had been terrible beyond belief, and if the whereabouts of someone was not known,

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Access and Conservation: Regional Briefs continued

then only the worst could be imagined. All that could be done now was to wait for morning, and hope.” – David McCullough, *The Johnstown Flood*

John Gangemi, AW’s Western Conservation and Access Director, is fond of observing that “All dams fail.” By this, John means that it is inherent to dams to fail over time, whether through geologic actions, heavy precipitation, or poor engineering. In order to prevent this failure, dam owners and operators have to be vigilant and maintain their structures.

Unfortunately, as a November 2003 peer-reviewed study by the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) notes, our nation’s dam “infrastructure is falling apart” and “Nowhere is the deterioration of our infrastructure more apparent than in our nation’s dams.”

The committee’s report, *The Cost of Rehabilitating Our Nation’s Dams: A Methodology, Estimate and Proposed Funding Mechanisms* has concluded that a minimum of \$36.2 billion is required to upgrade or repair existing dams.

The report adds that “\$10.1 billion is needed for the nation’s most critical dams, those whose failure would cause loss of human life.” Given that the states currently regulate at least 10,000 of these “high-hazard-potential” structures, each of these aging dams requires about a \$1 million for simple safety modifications.

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) supported the basic finding that the nation’s dams are at risk. ASCE’s September 2003 *Progress Report for America’s Infrastructure*, released in September, found that dams were in even worse condition than reported in 2001 when dams rated ‘D’ on the *2001 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure*. Thus the rapid deterioration of America’s dams is cause for worry.

When the Johnstown Flood occurred in 1889 with the failure of Pennsylvania’s South Fork Dam, more than 2200 people died and more than 27,000 were made homeless. The river banks and canyon were scoured bare of every living thing and the town and train tracks destroyed.

Dam failures are not simply history; they continue to occur today. In fact, at least 21 dams have failed since 2001. The ASDSO website cites the following recent examples:

“Silver Lake Dam, in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, caused the failure of downstream Tourist Park Dam and the evacuation of more than 1,800 people in the city of Marquette. The failures resulted in more than \$100 million in damage, including about \$10 million damage to utility facilities, \$4 million in environmental damage and \$3 million to roads and bridges. Twenty homes and three businesses were damaged or destroyed. The We Energies power plant, which generates half the electricity produced in the Upper Peninsula, was flooded, causing the closure of two nearby iron mines, and the layoff of about 1,100 mine workers for several weeks, until the power plant was repaired. The mine owner estimated that the shutdown cost the local economy about \$1 million a day.

“Also in May, several dams failed in North Carolina, causing the evacuation of approximately 75 homes and damages estimated at \$12 million. The state is spending nearly \$5 million to rebuild the Hope Mills dam, which provides a critical stream crossing.”

As we consider new energy and water resources policies, including new dam construction, it is vital to consider the lost recreation opportunities, harms to the environment, and potential threat to public safety. Is it really reasonable to consider building new dams when we can not even take care of the ones that have already been built?

“Those who actually saw the wall of water would talk and write of how it ‘snapped off trees like pipestems’ or ‘crushed houses like eggshells’ or picked up locomotives (and all sorts of other immense objects) ‘like so much chaff.’ But what seemed to make the most lasting impression was the cloud of dark spray that hung over the front of the wave... It was talked of as ‘the death mist’ and would be remembered always.” – David McCullough, *The Johnstown Flood* 

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FEATURE Paddling in Latin America: LVM Trip Report

by Daniel DeLavergne

The Rio Palguin

When one thinks of the fabled big water stomping grounds of Chile, huge glassy waves, serpentine spires of rock, smoking Fuji-esque volcanoes, and bucolic farm settings waft through the imagination.

These big water, wintertime runs have names like the Rio Bio Bio, Rio Baker, or the Futaleufu. Think of Chilean waterfall runs and names like the Siete Tazas, Fuy, and Palguin top the list of classics.

The Rio Palguin, perhaps the most famous of these Chilean creek runs, boasts one of the steepest, cleanest sections of river anywhere in the world. Located just twenty minutes from the mountain resort town of Pucon, the Palguin sees a vast array of boaters of various skill and commitment. The Palguin flows off the flank of Volcan Villarica and dumps into the Rio Trancura, dropping through a very substantial gradient in the process. During the winter months (May-September) the river flows at super high water and then begins a slow, spring-assisted slide toward lower waters.

The river is run by a gamut of boaters, from the crème de la crème of the river running world to crazed rafters, newbie creekers, and commercially run duckies during low water. Most boaters refer to three different sections of the Rio Palguin: Upper, Middle and Lower. All three of these sections are found in a 6-kilometer section of river, beginning just below the unrun 60-foot Palguin Falls. The Upper contains the classic Four Falls section known to most creek boaters as THE run to do on the Palguin. The Lower, consisting of the final four kilometers, features some classic boogie water with several suggested



Nate Elliot on the Rio Palguin

*photos by
Toby MacDermott*



portages. One of these, the Casa de la Muerte, tragically took the life of Brennan Guth on March 15th, 2001. These are the two commonly run sections of the Palguin, and make up 90% of the run. So what's up with the Middle?

Rumor has it that the Middle contains a plethora of unportagable drops, several in the 80-foot range. As it turns out, all six cataracts, including those in the Middle section, have been run in one day by only one person: Brennan Guth. While our crew was in Pucon we managed to knock 'em all off, but not in the same day and not by the same person. As far as I know Brennan remains the only paddler to have run all three sections, put in to take out, with no portages.

The Middle begins with a swirl-filled volcanic narrows. Right after this rapid is a longer, more compressed and more complex basalt narrows. On our five trips down the Middle, the basalt narrows was only paddled one time and the result was less than successful. The portage on the right consists of a mellow stroll through the woods on a fine horse trail; one is safely back on the river a mere two minutes after coming ashore above the narrows. The next falls is a real winner. Initially, this drop looks like a really bad idea, but it can be run with the greatest of style. Simply fly off a 20-foot curler into a desolation pit of a hole at the bottom. Fortunately, the archetypal Chilean "large, aquamarine, still pool" waits at the bottom. Most walk this one, but some run it every time.

The real heart of the Middle lies below the 20-foot curler: the Saltos Trillioscos. Comprised of three falls, the Saltos Trillioscos is a spectacular riparian scene rivaled by few sets of falls anywhere in world. The first, a 12-foot high narrow folding affair, causes many paddlers to lose their courage at the site of the hole/cave/run-out. The run-out leads to the second falls; this 30-foot falls/slide curls off the right wall and drives deep into the pool at the bottom. On our trips some walked while others ran. If one runs/swims the first falls he or she must also run/swim the second falls, but one must not necessarily run the first drop to run the second due to several seal launch options on either side of the river. Thankfully, the third falls comes after a large pool and may be portaged on river right.

That third falls of the Saltos Trillioscos, a 42-foot vertical drop, may be compared to the ultra-classic Spirit Falls (plus 10 feet and a nasty curler in the entrance ramp). The list of paddlers to run this falls reads like a global who's who of river running: Bernd Somners, Arnt Shafelin, Robby Dastin, Devon Knight, and Ben Stookesberry. One of our crew, Knoxvilleian Toby McDermott, made the decision to forgo the portage and take a chance with the Big Bird. I was standing in the spray at the bottom, off-loading boats, when the 70-foot rope bag snaked its way to the rocks at my feet. The clang of the carabineers drove home the severity of the moment. The boy was going to risk making the ultimate sacrifice (a severed spinal cord) for the love of aerial kayaking at its finest. Toby sized up the lip once more, floated off the drop, and stuck it. With exultation and respect we headed down the final 4 kilometers of the "Todos Palguin."

We cruised through classics like Triple Boof and Off the Wall, but soon came to the double drop that took Brennan's life. The top drop, a nasty narrow slot into a small corridor, leads to a 7-foot pour-over that flushes into a cave. With honor in our hearts and respect for Brennan, we proudly portaged these falls. Thinking back I bet he would have been more honored if we had run the mini-gorge and raised a salutary glass in his name. Maybe next time. 

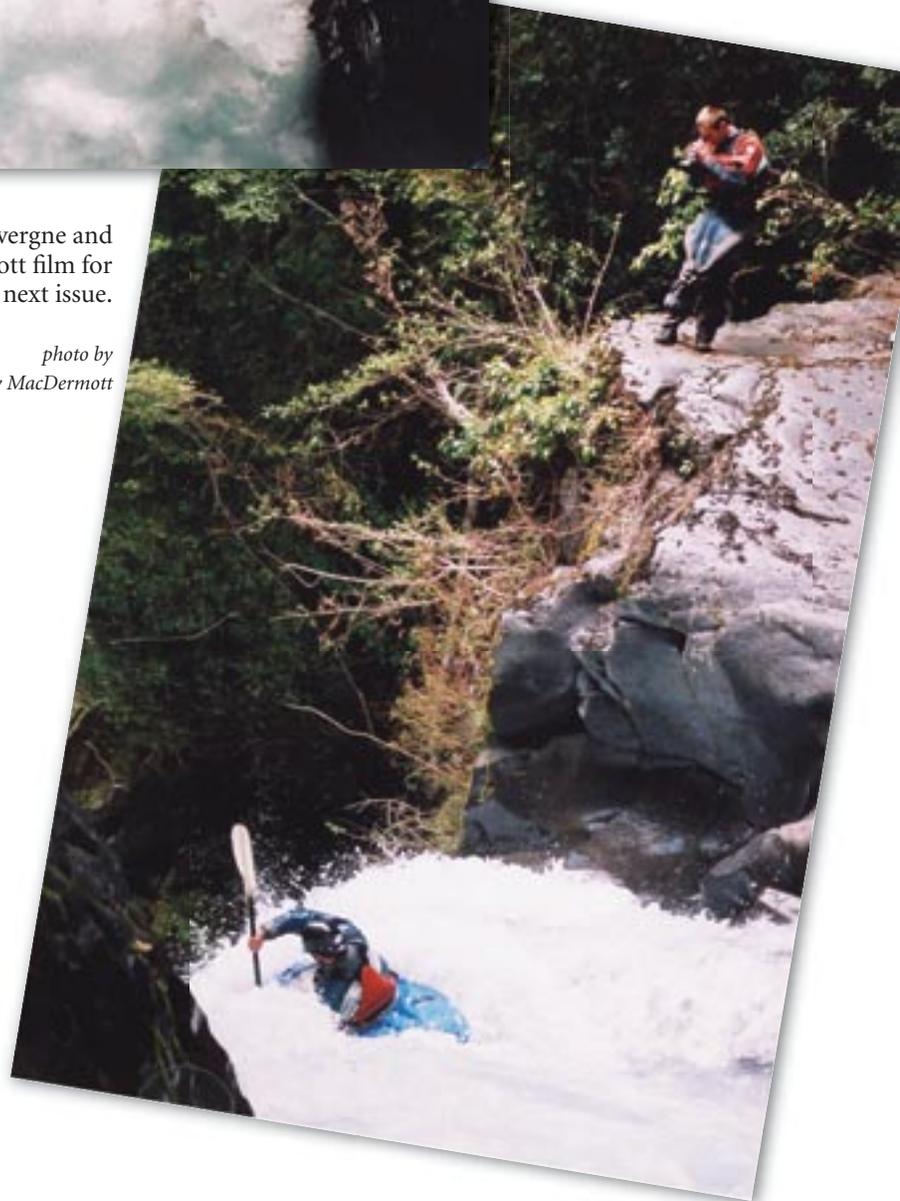


Daniel DeLavergne, whitewater porn star / entrepreneur, runs the Rio Palguin.

photo by
Toby MacDermott

Daniel DeLavergne and Nate Elliott film for LVM's next issue.

photo by
Toby MacDermott



FEATURE **Paddling in Latin America: Colombia**
by Miles Townes & Mauricio Arredondo



**Que Pena!
On Not Boating
in Colombia**

I cling to a rock, forearms burning, trying to convince goose-poop-slick rental shoes to keep me moving upwards. Behind and below me a man is yelling, “fist in crack!” as the rock takes its due from the skin on my knuckles. Beards of moss and bromeliads with flame-bright flowers cling to the rock, which stretches a hundred feet up and for a mile to either side. Despite this tropic grandeur, I can focus only on the two square feet of stone immediately in front of me. I am frustrated and hurt, and I blame the woman who has me on belay.

This woman and I dated for a pleasant month last fall, though we knew that her work would soon send her to Bogotá, capital city of Colombia. She insisted that I visit her. What could I say? I thought I might be in love, so I began learning what I could about the place.

Colombia is nearly three times the size of Montana and home to 41 million people. Much of Colombia is mountainous. Bogotá sits at 8,500’ on a plateau in the Andes Mountains, which run like vertebrae through the country. From this spine, countless rivers and streams tumble and fall to the oceans. The maps I could find were crude, but I soon guessed that Colombia must harbor whitewater

Miles Townes high over Bogota.

photos by Miles Townes

comparable to Peru or Ecuador. Through the Internet, I even found a Colombian boater named Mauricio Arredondo. I began emailing Mauricio, and he confirmed the country’s whitewater resources.

The mountains in Colombia harbor another important resource: coca leaf. Profits from the coca leaf fuel an ongoing war in that country. Of those 41 million, several thousand Colombians are loyal members of the FARC, ELN, or other armed groups. They are called guerillas, but bandits or terrorists might be more accurate. Originally, these guerillas claimed to be a communist uprising of the people, but today they fight mostly for control of coca production—so snort that, Karl Marx. Unfortunately, the war keeps all but the guerillas and Green Berets out of remote areas, meaning that many of Colombia’s rivers are unrun, unseen, and unknown to boaters. Mauricio, the boater, lives in Medellin. Until several years ago, he and his friends dared venture afar. Now the war has intensified, limiting the boaters to rivers close by, in safe territory. It is yet another way this war affects the people – though by no means the most important.

The war has given Colombia one of the highest murder rates of any country in the world; thousands are killed, injured, wounded, or simply driven from their homes every year. Because of this, support for the guerillas from the Colombian people is next to zero. Colombia also has the highest kidnapping rate in the world. Some 3,000 people annually – maybe more—are kidnapped and held for ransom in this multimillion dollar industry, including politicians, businessmen, and the occasional hapless tourist. Bogotá is considered “safe,” because it has 17% of the population but only 3% of the kidnappings.

Last fall, the Colombian government conducted a house-to-house purge of guerilla forces in the slums of Medellin. Soldiers, rebels, and civilians die in these attacks. I read of this in the paper, and write Mauricio emails expressing my sympathy and concern. His reply is too alive for grammar: “I’ll pick you up in the Airport, stay at mi casa and for sure you will love it down here.”

In December, despite my misgivings, I bought a ticket to Colombia for a long weekend in March. I can only afford a few days off work, so I tell Mauricio that I don't know whether I will make it to Medellin to boat with him. He replies: "If you find some days off, just be sure you are very welcome." I have never met Mauricio, nor communicated with him beyond email, but already I recognize his thirst for whitewater as my own.

Mauricio is a self-taught boater; he thought it looked fun and decided to do it. "I was the pioneer and started around 4 - 5 years ago, a very slow, lonely and self learning process," he writes. He and two friends bought boats and accessories over the Internet, and learned the basics from Nealy's "Kayak." They started out making bonehead mistakes like tying their paddles to their boats. Mauricio actually bought a C-1 without knowing what "C" meant. Eventually they got the hang of the sport – and put a proper seat in the C-1 – but of the three Mauricio is the only frequent boater. He's now good enough to know how lucky he is to have survived. Weird as it sounds, his addiction to rivers makes him easy to trust. His emails often come with pictures, though the pictures tend to be of the same rapid on the Rio San Juan – "a classic Class III river with a few Class IV rapids," he explains. Sometimes the river is at low water in the pictures, sometimes at flood, but always the same two rocks stand in the current. I tell him that maybe I will make another trip, and go boating with him then. As much as I want to boat, this trip is supposed to be about the woman.

In the three months after I purchase my ticket, the war makes its way into Bogotá. A car bomb explodes in downtown Bogotá, killing a bystander. Police claim to have defused several others. In February, a car bomb destroys Club Nogales, a place frequented by upper middle class and foreigners. Club Nogales is three blocks from the woman's apartment. Dozens die; more than a hundred are injured.

In those same three months, the woman began dating again. The new guy is a Colombian lawyer who doesn't speak English; he had the nerve to answer in



The Rio San Juan and the Rio Cauca.
photos by Mauricio Arredondo



Spanish when I instant messaged her. She even went to visit his family in Barranquilla. This wasn't what I had in mind, so I hinted at my ambivalence about the trip. She replied that she and the new guy were happy together but that I was still a friend and she still wanted me to visit—as if that mattered.

Unfortunately, the airline refuses to refund my ticket, so now a side-trip to Medellin looks possible, even reasonable. I will be in Colombia for three days, and a trip to Medellin would burn two of those. I tell Mauricio that I want to go boating; he responds in his usual breezy style: "Right on Miles, for me it would be real nice to go paddling with you and my friends." I mention that I want to write an article for American Whitewater, and he agrees to help. We begin planning my visit; I ask how to get to Medellin, what gear I should bring, and a hundred other questions. I am trying not to be terrified, but I know Medellin only as a city ruled by drug cartels and violence.

This has not been true for long. In the '90s, the Colombian police broke the cartels, destroying their organizations in Colombia and reducing their control over the cocaine trade. At the same time, surveillance and interception operations closed the airspace bridge from Peru and Bolivia into Colombia. Prior to that, the coca was grown in other countries – Peru and Bolivia, for example – and then flown to Colombia for processing and distribution.

Because the roads are unsafe, I will have to fly from Bogotá to Medellin. Mauricio and I agree that I will arrive on Saturday, boat on Sunday, and return to Bogotá that evening. He recommends an airline, and even finds convenient flights. I inquire about a boat, which he tells me I will have to rent from his friends for around \$80. I balk at the price initially, then relent when he explains the situation. "You don't believe how hard and how expensive [it] is for us to buy boats and gear, without the Internet it would be almost impossible... when I started 5 years ago the boats are almost in the same range of price in dollars but in those days 1 dollar was around 800 Colombian pesos now the same dollar is

FEATURE Paddling in Latin America: Columbia cont.

by Miles Townes & Mauricio Arredondo



3000 Colombian pesos!!!! With the same level of income it's really expensive for us now." His friends are loath to risk losing expensive gear to the ineptitude of persons unknown. I can sympathize.

Having settled this with Mauricio, I asked the woman to look into a ticket to Medellin. She went the extra mile and bought it, which I took as an indication that she was eager to be rid of me. She told me there was a day and half of sights in Bogotá, anyway, so I would still have plenty of time there. I promised to repay her for the ticket.

U.S. efforts in the mid-90s had two major effects on the drug trade in Colombia. First, the country went from being a minor producer of coca leaf to the world's leading producer in less than a decade. Second, the demise of the cartels has meant the diffusion of the drug industry, much of which has been taken up by those not-so-Marxist-after-all guerilla factions. But instead of glitz and luxury, the new drug lords spend their money on AK-47s and plastic explosives. Their money buys a great many guns; cocaine production earns some \$3 billion to \$5 billion per year, accounting for 3% or more of Colombia's GDP. Be as it may illegal, the World Factbook nonetheless lists "narcotics" as a major industry in Colombia ... tourism does not make the list. I am presumably one of a precious few from North America who will visit this year, and perhaps the only one there for whitewater.

Or not! No sooner do I have a ticket for Medellin than Mauricio informs me he will not be able to boat. He is sick and his friends don't want to boat high water: "The rain is been heavy for the last 2 weeks and just saw yesterday in the news how in an area near by the river the rains killed around 10 people with this landslide and how rivers shore were declare on orange alert for floods the rest of the kayakers are not really in the mood." I decide to scrub my trip to Medellin. It was shaky from the start, and I think Mauricio might have grown uncomfortable with our last-minute plans. I can understand, and resign myself to an emotionally difficult trip to Bogotá. I put away the throw-bag I bought as a thank-you gift, and email Mauricio to say

that I will call while in country.

In the United States, there are some 2 million regular cocaine users – those who have snorted, injected, smoked, or otherwise succumbed to "youthful indiscretion" within the past month. Those Americans consume most of the cocaine in the world – "we're number 1!" – and Colombia is our primary supplier. The U.S. government's response, called "Plan Colombia," is supply-reduction to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars of mostly military aid. In the past year, the U.S. has placed some 800 U.S. soldiers and other personnel in Colombia. I notice two of them on my flight from Miami to Bogotá; they have the same Junior R.O.T.C. haircut that kept me a virgin in ninth grade. I also notice that I am the only other non-Hispanic on the flight. The gate agent doesn't bother to announce the flight in English.

Not four hours later I arrived in Colombia. The woman met me at the airport, and never in the three days mentioned our history – which was fine because I realized almost immediately that I am not in love with her. The new guy was also at the airport, and he had even learned some English; I discover that I do not hate him. They take me to her cavernous apartment and I slept, trying to get acclimated to Bogotá's extreme elevation.

Our first task on Saturday was to transfer the Medellin ticket over to her name, so I didn't have to pay for it. In the airline office, I discovered the best topographic map of Colombia I had ever seen; it was webbed with brown and blue lines – gradient and water. The whole country, it seemed, was awash in whitewater. Eventually, the woman and the new guy tore me away from the map, and we spent the rest of the day seeing Bogotá – a beautiful city full of people and culture and history. That evening I danced with the new guy's younger sister at a nightclub. The sister is pretty and speaks English better than her brother. By the time we took her home I'd lost count of how often she asked whether I'm coming back.

We spend Sunday afternoon rock-climbing near a town called Suesca—my consolation prize for not going boating. This is how I came to be clinging to the moss-draped rock, being yelled at by a blonde Argentine. Hernan, our guide, had been in Colombia for three years, but would be at home anywhere I've climbed in the States. I ask him why he is in Colombia and not somewhere safer, and he told me what I had heard from nearly everyone: it is a beautiful country; nobody likes the war, but it's no reason to stop living. He says there are many good places to rock climb in Colombia. When I mention that I'm a boater, he adds that there are many good rivers, too. Hernan is hard-core; we trade email addresses when we get back to Suesca. Later, in the town, I see a storefront sign advertising "Whitewater Rafting," but the building is closed and I can't find anyone to ask about the advertisement. We drive back through fading light, past forests and fields of lush green, past villages, then suburbs, and back to Bogotá.

Colombia has perhaps the greatest plant biodiversity of any place on the planet. Mauricio's pictures catch ribbons of whitewater slicing through bright green jungle, mountains crowned in trees, tall grass tousled by wind. On Monday, my last day, the woman, the new guy, and I go to the botanic gardens in Bogotá. We find an English-speaking guide who introduces himself as "Morris" and takes us on a brief tour of the gardens. It is Morris's first day, and he still has not learned the English names of many, if any, of the exhibits. Occasionally, he identifies a plant as a

prehistoric food source: “Dinashors yoosht to eat thesee.”

Plan Colombia’s aerial spraying program drops tons of the herbicide glyphosate (aka Roundup (TM)) on coca crops and sometimes food crops and sometimes jungle. Though glyphosate is normally short-lived, critics claim the government includes an additive to make it linger. Crops get sprayed, people get sprayed, virgin jungle gets sprayed, and when the soil is dead from spraying the coca farmers clear still more jungle to begin anew. Burn, plant, spray, and repeat. This year, the U.S. government touted its first-ever demonstrated reduction in coca cultivation, although some question whether the farmers are simply cleverer in hiding their new crops. During our tour of the gardens, Morris pointed out a coca plant growing deep in one of the greenhouses: very clever, indeed.

To grow their coca leaf, the guerillas now command some 40 percent of the country’s land. Coca grows more potent at higher altitudes, so guerilla territory is exactly the land I want to see – the land with mountains and rivers and wilderness. These areas are also the hardest for the government to patrol, and so the war drags on, tragic and sad in so many ways.

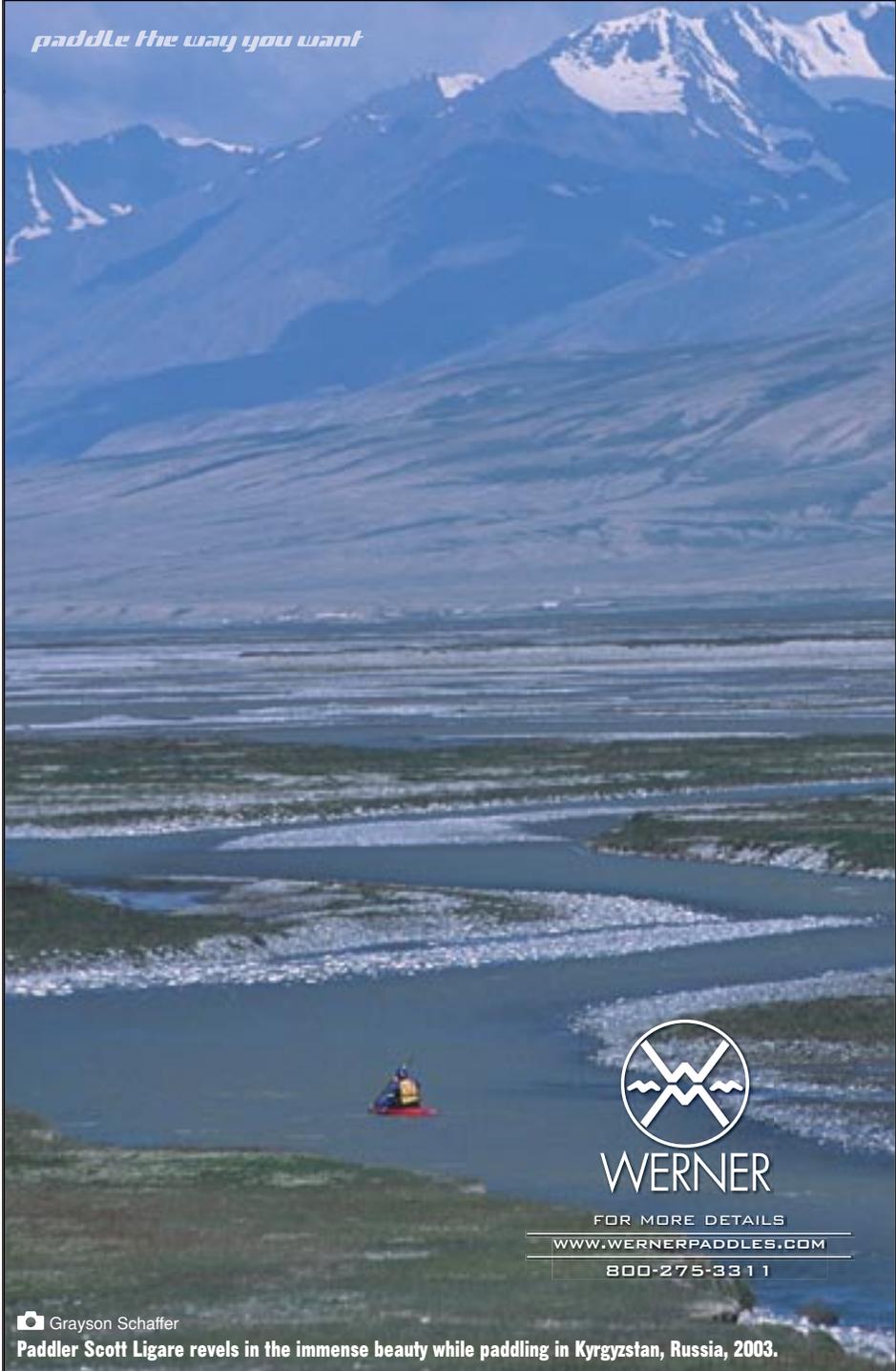
Yet all this seems distant while I walk through the gardens. Separate from the woman and her guy, I sit on a grassy hill and for a long while I look at the city and the green mountains beyond. I take deep breaths of thin air, soak in the sharp sunlight – and realize that I want to come back. This place is dangerous, but not so dangerous as I have heard. I don’t feel completely safe, of course, but this might be all I need of paradise. I want to boat here, and climb again; I want to lie on the beach, I want to dance with dark-eyed women – and war be damned. God willing, the fighting will stop someday, maybe not tomorrow, but who knows? Maybe before my name hits the top of the Grand Canyon wait list.

That night we have dinner at the woman’s apartment. The guy’s sister is there, and she again asks me whether I am coming back. Yes, I say, I hope so.

When I return home, back to the States, I see an email Mauricio has sent for this article. Not boating was a disappointment – in the hands of a lesser mortal, it would be a defeat – but I want to write about it anyway. It is even more important to me now.

Mauricio still wants me to boat with him. “Well next time you will come a bit longer for sure, I let you know when is great time,” he writes. I think he is right – next time I will go for longer. I still want to paddle Colombian whitewater. I want to see Cartagena, too, and maybe go back to Bogotá. Perhaps by the end of the summer, I will be ready for another trip. Meanwhile, I am still emailing Mauricio.

I am following the news from Colombia intently. I am trying to learn Spanish. There is in Colombia an expression: “Que Pena!” The woman told me it translates as “Such pain!” but can mean anything from a terse “Tough shit” to a polite “You shouldn’t have,” depending on context. My Spanish-English dictionary translates the phrase as “What a pity.” The sentiment is strangely apropos. 



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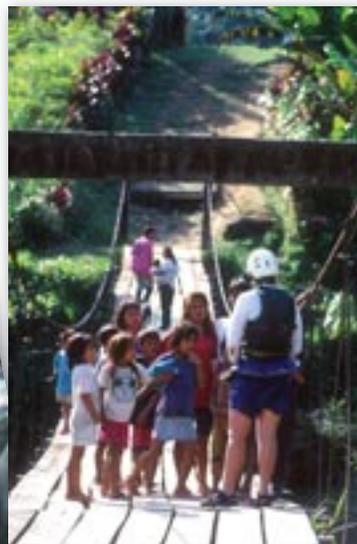
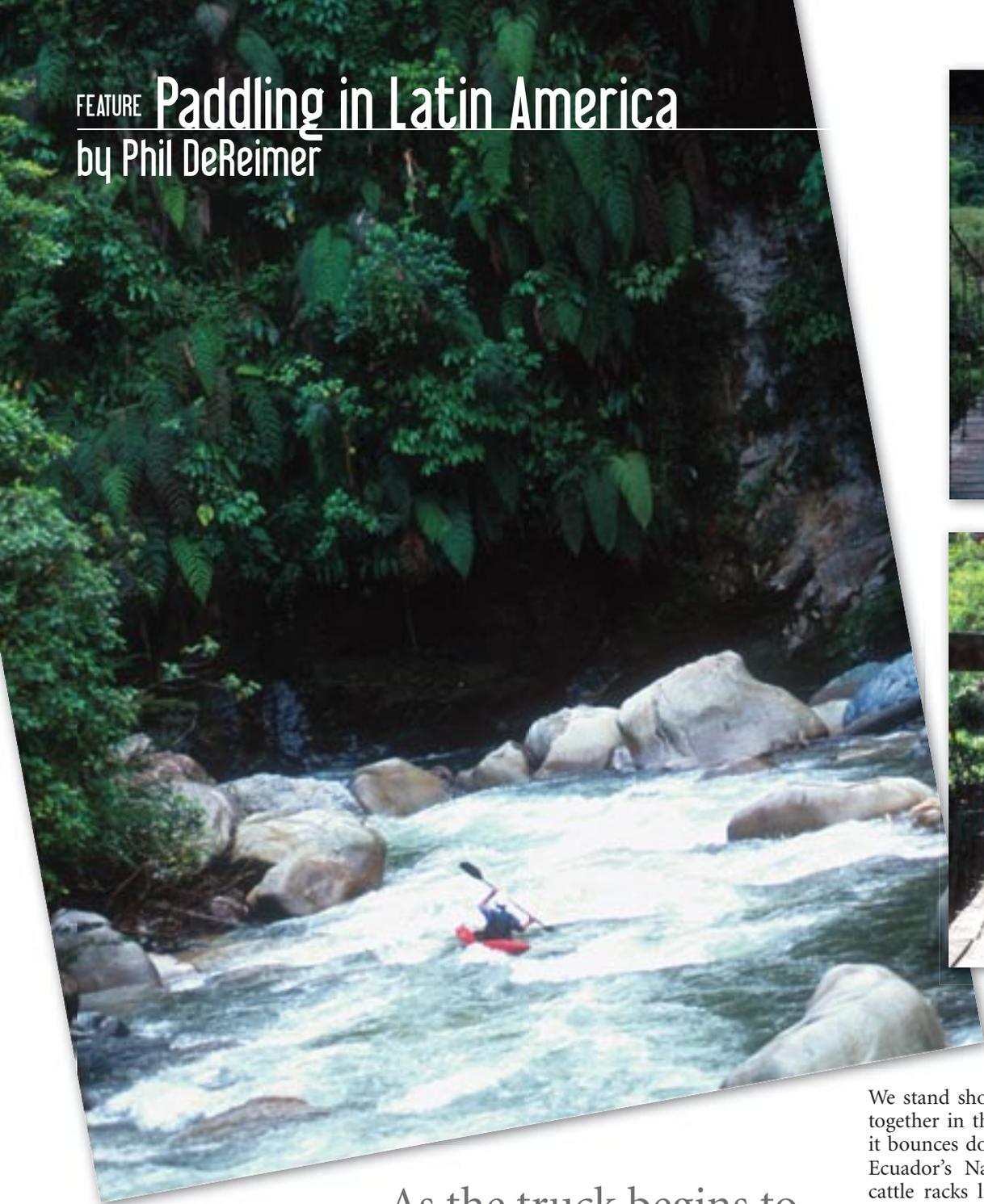
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 Grayson Schaffer
Paddler Scott Ligare revels in the immense beauty while paddling in Kyrgyzstan, Russia, 2003.

FEATURE Paddling in Latin America

by Phil DeReimer



As the truck begins to move again, someone gestures excitedly towards our kayaks and mimes the motion of paddling. Mary and I nod our heads “yes” and explain in Spanish that we have just run a stretch of the river above their town.

photos by Phil DeReimer

We stand shoulder to shoulder, crammed together in the back of a small pickup as it bounces down a narrow, rutted road in Ecuador’s Napo province. The Wooden cattle racks lining the sides of the truck flex and creak under the weight of bodies pressed hard against it as the truck careens around a sharp curve. Watching the road flash by between the slats of the rack, I wonder how much longer they will keep holding our weight. I accidentally drop my water bottle but will have to wait as the mass of other people makes it impossible for me to see where it has fallen, let alone bend down and pick it up.

I grab for the rack as the truck unexpectedly swerves to the right side and slides to an abrupt stop next to a group of five people who are standing by the side of the road. The dusty air is punctuated with staccato



bursts of Spanish shot between the driver and the group of five who have moved towards the back of the truck. Though to me there doesn't seem to be any more room, the driver waves them to pile in. As they begin to climb in I reach down and lift a small child into the truck while other passengers help her mother in. The little girl's dark brown eyes open wide as I hold her. To her, my white skin, gringo features, and weird clothing must make me look like I'm from Mars. Her mother gives me a smile as I hand her daughter back to her.

As the truck begins to move again, someone gestures excitedly towards our kayaks and mimes the motion of paddling. Mary and I nod our heads "yes" and explain in Spanish that we have just run a stretch of the river above their town. Believing that a picture is worth a thousand words in any language, Mary reaches into her pocket and pulls out a collection of photos that she always seems to carry with her. Some of the photos are of kayaking, others are of our home in California, and many are of family and friends. A conversation quickly grows around the photos. While Mary and I answer numerous questions about kayaking and where we live, we are curious about their lives, too.

We ask them simple questions, like where do they live and how many kids do they have, where do the kids go to school and what crops do they grow. There is laughter and someone generously offers us something to eat, a piece of brightly colored fruit I don't recognize. We sample it and thank them. As the truck makes more stops, some pile out while more pile in. It goes on like that for an hour or so until the truck reaches our destination. Mary and I hop out, pay the driver, and watch as the truck rumbles away in a cloud of dust. We

smile and wave goodbye to our new friends as they disappear around the next corner. Mary and I turn and look at each other, grins plastered on our faces. While the day's paddling has left us tired and satisfied, the ride we just took reminded us once again why we travel to Latin America each winter. As much as for the paddling, we go for the culture, for the spontaneous warmth and friendliness of the people we meet and the many ways in which they teach us how to look at life through a different lens. As Mary and I shoulder our boats and begin the short walk into town, we couldn't be happier.

When I first traveled to South and Central America in the mid-1970's as a teenage volunteer in a medical program that provided vaccinations to the inhabitants of remote villages, I had yet to discover kayaking. However, through those early experiences, I knew the Latin culture had a strong pull on me. Nearly a decade later, and a few years of paddling under my belt, I began to venture south with friends to sample the waters. I never imagined that I would still be doing it almost twenty years later.

My experiences paddling in Latin American style began in 1985 on a four-month trip to explore rivers in Chile and Peru. Four of us met in Santiago, Chile and, choosing budget over comfort, we rented a minivan that resembled a refrigerator on wheels. Lars Holbek, the only one of us who had paddled in Chile making him the defacto ringleader of our group, had arrived early to do some climbing in Patagonia. Lars had learned that the Chilean military had the best topo maps of country, so after his climbing trip ended he spent several afternoons at the Instituto Geographica Militar in Santiago estimating the gradient

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FEATURE **Paddling in Latin America cont.**
by Phil DeReimer

of numerous rivers by counting contour lines. Using that information, along with info he'd gleaned from other paddlers, Lars compiled a "hit list" of runs – some first descents, some not – that would keep us busy paddling and traveling for the next two months.

In terms of paddling, Chile had seen little activity by 1985. While the Bio Bio had been run in the late 70's and had since become a popular commercial rafting trip, there were countless classic runs waiting to be found. Driving along the Pan American highway, we worked our way from the Rio Aconcagua in the North, all the way to the Rios Futaleufu and Palena in the South. Where a river crossed the highway, we would stop and check our list and if it was on it, or looked good, we would turn east and leave the Pan American highway, headed toward the mountains. Once off the main highway pavement quickly turned to dust.

Our severely underpowered and equally overloaded vehicle would sputter in protest as we forced it to take us up one steep road

after another. Wherever it stopped and refused to go any further we called the put in. Typically, one of us would be the dedicated shuttle driver for the day, but sometimes, if the run looked particularly good, whose ever turn it was to drive shuttle would jog, or if even remotely possible, try to hitch the shuttle afterwards. For two months the only paddlers we saw were on the Maipo and Bio Bio rivers.

After Chile, we flew north to Peru where our focus turned to the Paucartambo River, two days drive from Cusco. Lars and filmmaker John Armstrong had been on the first descent in 1983. Following that trip, John shared with Lars that he wanted to make a documentary movie about the second descent, that it would make a good story. We met John in Lima, making us a group of five, then moved on to Cusco where we made preparations. From the outset, however, it was clear that our trip down the Paucartambo was going to have an entirely different flavor than our Chile trip had. While the trip in Chile had been freewheeling adventure steered by no one in particular, the Paucartambo trip had a

definite leader, structure, and the purpose of filming. Compared to life on the road in our rolling refrigerator, it was a big, slow moving machine that involved complicated logistics and more personnel.

Our goal was to start higher than the '83 group by going as close to the boatable source as we could. This put us a half-day's hike with our boats from Laguna Singrinacocha at 14,000+ feet. From there, the plan was to paddle some 250 miles and thousands of vertical feet to the river's confluence with the Urubamba, the same river that flows along the base of Machu Pichu. We based out of our support truck for the first leg of the trip since the road paralleled the river off and on before it ended at the town of Paucartambo.

Two weeks into the trip the water was getting bigger as innumerable side streams, fed by an unusually long rainy season, flowed into the main river each day. At that point, the boats were about to get very heavy as we were to go completely self-contained with camping and 16mm filming gear. The decision to take two weeks off to let the

water settle down was made and the group returned to Cusco. We had thought about doing the Apurimac, but the Shining Path Guerillas were active in the area during the 80's. Instead we hiked the Inca trail and did a reconnaissance of the Colca which we had heard a Polish group had done in 1981.

Returning to the Paucartambo we found the river still high, and two of our group opted out. The three of us that remained wanted to push through to one of the difficult sections encountered during the '83 trip known as the Orange Canyon. We never made it before water levels forced retreat. We were to spend the next three days hiking out of the canyon.

We returned in '86 with a larger crew and finished the river, starting at road's end in Paucartambo. For those of us that hiked out in '85, seeing the Orange Canyon first-hand and at lower flows only made us feel we had made the right decision the previous year. To have continued would have been courting disaster. Because of the slow process of filming this second trip would take us 19 days to complete. It was the longest many of us had spent on a single river trip and was done self-

contained with the exception of two food and film drops supported by mules.

While remote, this section of the Paucartambo is sparsely inhabited. People lived a very basic existence along the river raising what crops and animals they could. As we dropped in elevation and the air turned warmer you could see the change in the way people dressed, the construction of their homes and the crops they grew. Mud and thatch houses gave way to plank siding that allowed air flow. At the higher elevations where stunted potatoes were the only crop that grew, lower down it was possible to now grow things such as Yucca, herbs, and greens. Heavy wool ponchos, hand woven from alpaca and llama's wool, were replaced by slacks, shirts and sweaters. The generosity and hospitality paid to us during our descent reminded us that it is not the destination but the journey. On more than one occasion we were invited into people's very simple homes to share in something to eat, drink, or just for conversation. Guinea pigs, a regional delicacy, scurried about the dirt floors.

Toward the end of the trip we camped at the home of Demitrio, a fellow Lars and John



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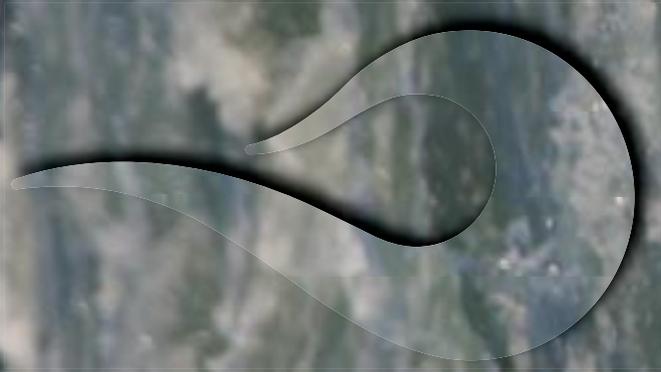
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FEATURE **Paddling in Latin America cont.**
by Phil DeReimer



had met during their first descent. They embraced like old friends. In his sixties, Demitrio had a slender muscularity from his life of hard work. He had a substantial house for the area whose front yard had been scoured by a recent flash flood of the nearby creek. The main river was not far away and the debris field had left a new and powerful rapid. We all listened as Demitrio described the excitement of the night the slide occurred leaving mudflows at his front door.

We used the next day as a chance to rest and to visit more with Demitrio. He proudly showed us the crops he was growing, as well as some of his pigs and cows. He was especially excited about taking us for a ride on the log raft he used to ferry loads across the river in the flatwater upstream of his house. We left Demitrio's and a couple of days later arrived at the confluence with the Urubamba, journey's end. After a surf session on the big water waves of the Urubamba, we loaded into a large motor canoe that took us back to the nearest road, a half day away. From there we began the drive back to Cusco and trip's end.

From Cusco a few of us headed south and paddled the Colca as well. Chile was close by and I met some friends to repeat the road trip we had done in '85, this time renting a "refrigerator" with a bigger motor. We gained access to some new runs, but were still denied on others. We now knew about the ferry to Chaiten and booked our passage in Santiago well in advance. For nine weeks we traveled from Santiago to the straights of Magellan, changing nine flat tires along the way. In Argentina, while returning north, the drain plug to our van's differential committed suicide, draining all of the oil and seizing up the rear end. We spent two nights camped along the road in the barren Pampa before getting towed to the closest town with a mechanic. Almost two weeks would pass before the parts, mechanic, and stars would align and we could get back to Santiago.

In '92, a trip down the Rio Bocano in Venezuela ended when Martial Law was imposed after an attempted coup back in the capital of Caracas. Martial Law and the associated curfew remained in effect the entire month we were in

Venezuela reminding us a lot can happen in the outside world while you are on a remote river.

Over the years I have returned to Chile three more times. In Chile, Pinoche is no longer in power and access has been eased. Talking with paddlers now I don't even recognize the names of many of the runs, demonstrating that our early trips had only scratched the surface. Our first experiences hitching shuttle on the Futa had turned into hopeless hikes due to a lack of cars in the country. Now the Futa is considered a classic where a number of local and foreign outfitters cater to paddlers and rafters. Few, if anyone, paddles the Bio Bio anymore because the Royal Flush canyon and parts upstream now reside under a lake created by the first of many proposed dams. ENDESA, the Chilean utility company, has it eyes on the Futa as well.

In Peru, the Shining Path leader has been captured and the political situation has improved. The Apurimac region once again is being visited, and the Colca has seen numerous descents including

FEATURE **Paddling in Latin America cont.**
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commercial groups. The Paucartambo has seen one other descent that I know of. Only a small handful of paddlers have been to Venezuela. In large part I suspect it is due to the political and economic situation of the country.

For the last eight seasons I have paddled in Ecuador. This country is on “the map” and sees paddlers from all around the world. Many of the obvious roadside runs have been explored, while the surface is just being scratched on the less accessible ones.

Talk to anyone about traveling and paddling abroad and you are bound to hear stories of lost luggage, misplaced kayaks, illness, injury, broken down vehicles, washed out roads, strikes, document hassles, or unrunnable flows. Mary and I have had our share of all of these, yet we keep coming back. While paddling has been the excuse, we look forward to those chance encounters with people along the river’s edge, or the crowded truck ride at day’s end; experiences where we learn the most. These alone are worth the trip. 

Editor’s Note: Phil and Mary DeRiemer are the owners of DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking. Their company conducts 9 day paddling trips in Ecuador as well as paddling adventures in the U.S.

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FEATURE Paddling in Latin America: Chile

by John Cornwall



The Road to Chile

Often as I drive south through Chile a familiar song from the Talking Heads rattles through my brain as we drive across the washboard surface they call a road down here. “Letting the days go by... water flowing... how did I get here?” Chile represents a certain pinnacle in whitewater like so many other exotic destinations. Over the past five years, I have spent my winters here paddling and trying to sustain the lifestyle I love so much through guiding, teaching people to kayak, shooting video, taking photos, digging ditches, inspirational environmental speeches, anything to scratch together enough pesos to make it to the river for a few more days of paddling on the Futaleufu. The rivers and people of Chile have stolen my heart and I gladly gave it to them.

The first I heard of Chile and its amazing whitewater was in 1989, my first year of guiding on the Ocoee. Magnificent tales of the Rio Bio Bio, and of the dams that

were about to steal it from the world of paddling, floated around the campfires like intoxicating incense. I wanted to go so badly I could taste it. However, commitments to school and lack of money prevented me from experiencing this jewel. The efforts to save it came too late. This was unfortunate for the world of whitewater, and more so for the Mapuchi Indians who were displaced by those dams and continue to riot in protest to this day. In a strangely ironic twist, the Mapuchi have been labeled as a potential terrorist threat according to recent expansion of the definition of “terrorism” by good old George W. So when I got an opportunity to go to the Futaleufu, yet another river threatened by Endessa (the same Spain-based power company that took out the Bio Bio), I knew I had to make every effort to get there.

I was first afforded this opportunity by Chris Spelius. He brought me down to help expand his company Expediciones Chile



“The rivers and people of Chile have stolen my heart and I gladly gave it to them.”

-John Cornwall

Above photo: Colleen Laffee scouting Infero Canyon on the Futaleufu River.

photos by John Cornwall

to include rafting as well as kayaking. I was warned about the Chilean pace of life, and how sometimes it takes a while to get things done. Being a southerner and someone who is not particularly in a hurry, I thought the laid back pace would be right up my alley. Little did I know exactly how laid back Chile is. I learned that the phrase “mañana en la mañana” does not really mean tomorrow in the morning, but some unspecified time in the future when they aren’t doing anything else; and that the more times they say mañana, the less likely it will ever come to pass. I also quickly learned that, even though many of my friends give me a hard time about “dicking around,” I had nothing on the Chileans. These were my kind of people.

Because of my work commitments, I didn’t get to see much more of the country other than the Futaleufu. But during that time, I came to intimately know and love this river, and I was completely addicted. The powerful and clean water of the Futa sucked me in harder than some of the biggest hydraulics I had ever seen.

I knew that, no matter what, I needed to continue coming back to explore more of this country and enjoying the fruits of this laid-back culture. Three years later I returned with a group of friends: Ken Kruger, John Hernandez, and Sue Wagner. Together, we bought a van which we named Clod Van Damme (or Clod Damn Van when it didn’t run right). The name came from a mountainous mural painted on the back door of the van, a place called Torres del Paine, and signed Clod.

Transportation in Chile is a huge issue and having your own vehicle is worth its weight in gold. Unlike Ecuador and Costa Rica where all the taxis know the shuttles for the popular runs, Chile is a place where you need a solid plan for dealing with shuttles. The further south you travel the more scarce gas and parts become and everyone is quite protective of their vehicles. For example, in Futaleufu there are no gas stations. Gas arrives from the nearest city in barrels. It is sold in 5 liter increments because that’s the size of the wine jug they use to measure it.

Now on my own, armed with a good group of friends and Clod, we set out south towards the Futaleufu. Our first destination was Pucon, where I had some friends I had made over the years. Marcela Rivas hooked us up with a place to stay and we began running a few of the many play rivers and creeks in the area. Pucon is to Chile what Fayetteville is to West Virginia. Except it has an active volcano high enough to keep a base of snow all year long, and a fabulous lake, Lago Villarica.

I would even go so far as to say that Pucon is a steep creeker’s heaven. One of my favorite runs there was the Palguin. Josh Lowery, a pioneer of the Chile scene, took me down this creek my first time. It has three sections: Upper, Middle, and Lower. The Upper and Lower are really fun for experienced paddlers and the Middle is reserved for sickos only. However, if you want to run some serious and large drops that scream “back breaker” or “compressed vertebrae,” the Middle is for you.



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FEATURE Paddling in Latin America: Chile cont.

by John Cornwell

If you like play, there is a beautiful Class III playboat run called the San Pedro. At the right levels it has a few spots that are phenomenal. Parts of the Trancura also make good play runs.

One of the best things about Pucon is that it has whitewater for all levels of boating. And if you're on the trail searching for big drops, it has more than you can shake a stick at. The town itself is developing a pretty strong local paddling scene which I believe is crucial for the sport as Chileans come to need whitewater too. If we want them to be interested in preserving these jewels of the paddling world, then the Chileans, not just Americans, need to have the desire to accomplish this task.

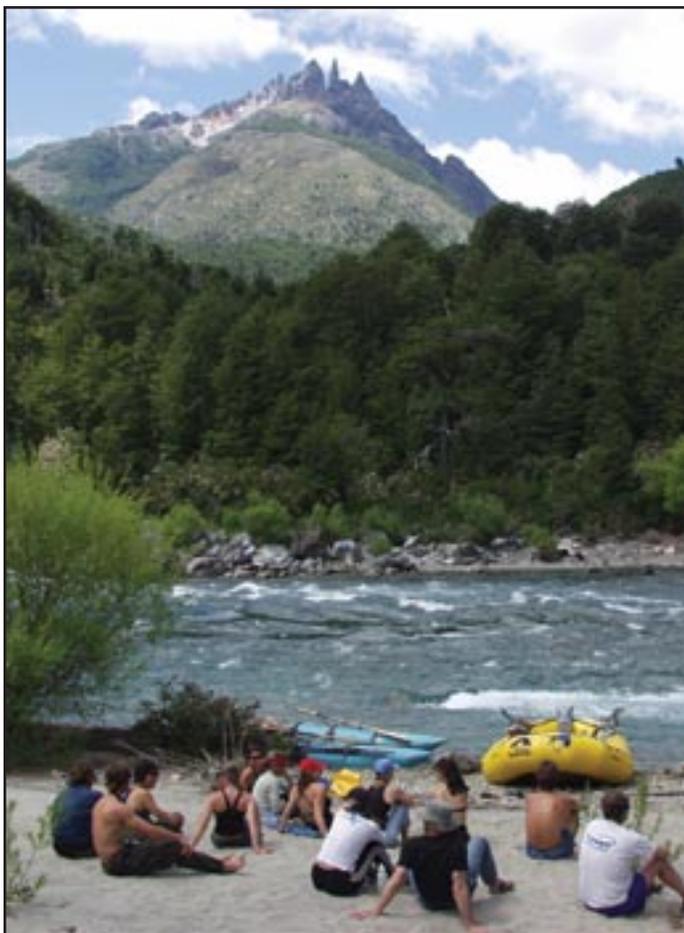
From Pucon, we experienced our first major setback: the border. We got there around 5 in the afternoon after scouting a few drops on the Alto Trancura (a fun

section which reminded me of both the Upper Yough and the Upper Blackwater). We were getting anxious to cross the frontera at El Paso Mamuil Malal, about 76 km east of Pucon and were properly armed with Visas, Passports, and the mountain of paperwork that every Chilean car dealer had assured us was correct. As we prepared to face the fierce officious scrutiny of the Chilean Aduanas, I was fairly confident in my documentation, but nothing could have prepared me for what we would learn about the force of nature that is Customs Paperwork.

Our first obstacle was convincing them that a discrepant digit in the year of purchase on the bill of sale was merely a typo. This took about 30 minutes of hackneyed Spanish. Fortunately, the digit was written correctly on one of the many other copies. The aduanero reluctantly ceded to this point and the digit was pronounced a typo.

But they were not to be deterred in their single-minded determination to adhere to the letter of the law. He went in the back, got The Book, and diligently searched its yellowed and weathered pages, probably printed in the early sixties. Finally, after about 45 minutes, he raised a finger, looked up at us, smiled, and said "aha!" He pointed out an obscure paragraph buried somewhere in the last third of the Book, which stated that if you are not a Chilean citizen, even if you have a vehicle that is legally yours with all the right paperwork and no criminal record, you may not cross the border without a notarized document saying you will return within 120 days with the vehicle, or a Chilean riding with you.

Having been thoroughly schooled in the art of not crossing international borders, we set out south towards Puerto Montt for the 12 hour ferry ride across the Gulf of Ancud, to Chaiten. This year we hit on a day that



An advertisement for Whitewater Video. The top section lists 'EXCITEMENT Into The Tsang Po End Game Wehyakin' and 'FUN VIDS Thunderballs Cock Pit Paddlesnakes'. Below that, it says 'PADDLING DVDS' and 'ACCESSORIES Orosi Sunglasses Boof Gear, Hats, T-Shirts, NosePlugs'. The website 'WWW.WHITWATERVIDEO.COM' is prominently displayed. The bottom section features a 'WINNER!' badge for the '2003 National Paddling Film Festival Best of Show & Paddler's Choice' and a video titled 'The PADDLESNAKE HUNTERS'. A quote reads: 'They hunted paddlesnakes in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and New York. But they found something even more dangerous!'. It also mentions 'On DVD & VHS See your local retailer or WhitewaterVideo.com'.

Transmar Chile was operating the smallest ship in the ferry business, the Pincoya. I had done the ferry ride several times on larger ships and so did not anticipate the ride in store for us. We happened to set out during one of the largest storms of the season. The captain immediately picked us out as trouble makers because we were drinking wine in anticipation of a great season on the Futaleufu. The fact that we weren't the captain, and this was not an Exxon oil freighter, did not factor in his decision to give the gringos a hard time.

As the day ended and night came and the storm picked up, we made a voyage to the bow of the ship to check out the waves, many of which dwarfed the tiny Pincoya. This was a thoroughly entertaining activity until they flashed us with the spot light and kept yelling for us to get away from the bow of the ship. Reluctantly we returned to Clod, Ken played his guitar, and we proceeded to drink away our fears as the storm got bigger. At several points I considered putting on my kayaking gear and untying my boat in preparation for the worst. Eventually, it got so bad that the captain headed to shore to wait out the storm near the island of Chiloe. Not until later did I find out how serious the storm had been. Even days later, 150km inland, people, when asking how our trip south went, were saying to us, "oh, you were on THAT ferry boat!"

Once in Futaleufu, Monica Ferrada (I refer to her as my Chilean Grandma), owner of a local gift shop and hospedaje called Surandes, set us up with a wonderful little house. It is sometimes harder to find a place to rent here than in NYC. Not to mention that you need a Chilean to vouch for you or you are completely out of luck. (Sort of like, oh say, crossing an international border...)

In our new house nestled in the northern reaches of Patagonia, we learned the joys of cooking on a wood burning stove, a wood burning shower, and another wood stove for heat. The local children would gather to watch the gringos chop wood and place bets on how often we would miss and curse. The house came complete with electricity, running water, some rudimentary furniture, and, inexplicably, two leather riding crops hanging on the wall next to the ram horns, hubcaps, and shrine of empty winebottles. Sue wasn't too stoked about the riding crops. Or maybe it was just the look in the eyes of the men when we saw them.

This year was one of epic water levels and was marked by two fatalities. At first, many boaters were concerned and apprehensive about the massive volume of water but as the season progressed, business continued as usual minus rafting in Inferno Canyon and Terminator, two of the more advanced sections of the Futa. To forego rafting on these sections was a difficult but wise decision. Clientele who have paid large sums of money to experience the Futa often want more than they realize they're asking for. Guides are not gods, and discretion is the better part of valor. It's every guide's duty to make the judgment based on many criteria, number one being safety. Dead men don't tip, and we live to guide another day.

I am aware it is a tease to mention the tragedy and not go into detail. But out of respect for those involved, I think it best left to this brief synopsis. When dealing with a river of this caliber at high water levels, accidents can happen to anyone at anytime. No one is immune. Complacency is the enemy. This is not a commentary on what happened merely an observation to which I try to adhere. The river was not preferential; it took an incredibly talented, skilled and experienced paddler and a rafting client. We all take our lives into our own hands every day when we paddle. I would rather focus on how many people have happily experienced the awesome power of the Futa. No one who was here will forget those days. It affected the local non-paddlers as much as the paddlers. Chileans are a very emotional people and I love them for it.

As the season paddled onward, a new issue arose. Futafriends, an organization dedicated to saving the Futaleufu, discovered a new and insidious danger to the river: a huge gold mine in Esquel, Argentina, near the headwaters of the Futaleufu. Esquel is quiet little ski town in the Chubut region. Needless to say, these people were not exactly happy about this type of development in their backyard. Since the Futa starts in Argentina and passes through Chile in its journey to the ocean, both countries are concerned. The mine will use cyanide leaching techniques to extract the gold at a rate of about one ounce per four tons of material. Maybe it's because I work in West Virginia where I have too often seen the by-products of mountain top removal, but I am very sensitive to these issues. This should be of huge interest to the fly-fishing industry because all it will take is one little "oops" to kill all the fish in the river. And their

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FEATURE **Paddling in Latin America: Chile cont.**
by John Cornwell

business is probably far more lucrative than the whitewater companies. These types of environmental accidents are stories we all know too well from our own country. Talk to Meridian Gold of Canada if you would like to find out more details of their environmental rape of this beautiful region.

So, we circled up the wagons, loaded every car we could find with Chileans, and beat feet to Argentina. Once there, I accidentally ended up being dragged in front of about 2,000 to give an impromptu speech about the perils of this type of mining. One second, I was signing a petition and talking to this older woman about the mine, and the next, she was dragging me to a microphone and simply said, "tell the people what you have seen."

From the perspective of my friends who were looking for me, they said, "it was like a scene out of Ferris Buehler's Day Off." The basic theme of my speech was "development is good when done in a conscientious manner. Meridian negotiated a five-year contract with no taxes. This type of mine does not provide many jobs and those it does can be very dangerous to the workers' lifetime health. Your children will be paying for the cleanup of this site for many years after Meridian is finished here. Please don't make the same mistakes the USA has made and is now trying to clean up."

As a reality based environmentalist, I do not believe we have the right to simply tell them not to develop their country. They need economic development as much as we do. However they have the advantage of

being able to study history and try to make the best decisions based on facts, not greed. Every day we have less unspoiled land in the world and every day their land becomes more valuable. This is difficult for a country going through a horrible economic depression and rebuilding process. At times like these any development seems good for the country. I think it is important for paddlers to be aware of these issues, since we love to paddle clean water. Anyway, after stirring up a little political unrest we made our run for the border and the relative safety of Chile.

The days rolled by and the rain kept the river at massive levels all season. International paddling is a zesty endeavor and I highly recommend it. It was quite a ride - but then, it always is. 



FEATURE Paddling in Latin America: Conejo

by Keith Chapin

Nearly all the way down the Baja peninsula, down an unmarked Class IV dirt road, there is a place called Punta Conejo that will forever be burned into my memory. When I close my eyes I can still see it, almost like I am there, and I smile every time. I still feel the rush of excitement and surprise as we crested the hill to see our objective below. My friend and I decided to make the trip to Baja as a test run for the boat we had just designed. It sounded good on paper: first we make our own surf kayak, then we test it out in Baja where we had heard of legendary waves and deserted beaches. All great plans start off with simple objectives.

Making the boat is a story in itself. Not only was it costly and time consuming, but very labor intensive (at least for us), but again,

that is another story. This story starts in South Carolina when we loaded up our unnamed and untested boat and began our 3000-mile drive just to get to the top of the peninsula. To get to the really good breaks we would drive south from the border for another thousand miles on highways littered with huge potholes and military checkpoints packed with boys toting machine guns. If you ever decide to make the trip, make sure it is in a worthy vehicle with a good friend. A 3000-mile trip with anything less could be disastrous.

Once there, finding the breaks was not easy. We had gotten some beta from a friend or two but learned there were very few distinguishing landmarks to clue us in to which one of the hundreds of dirt roads

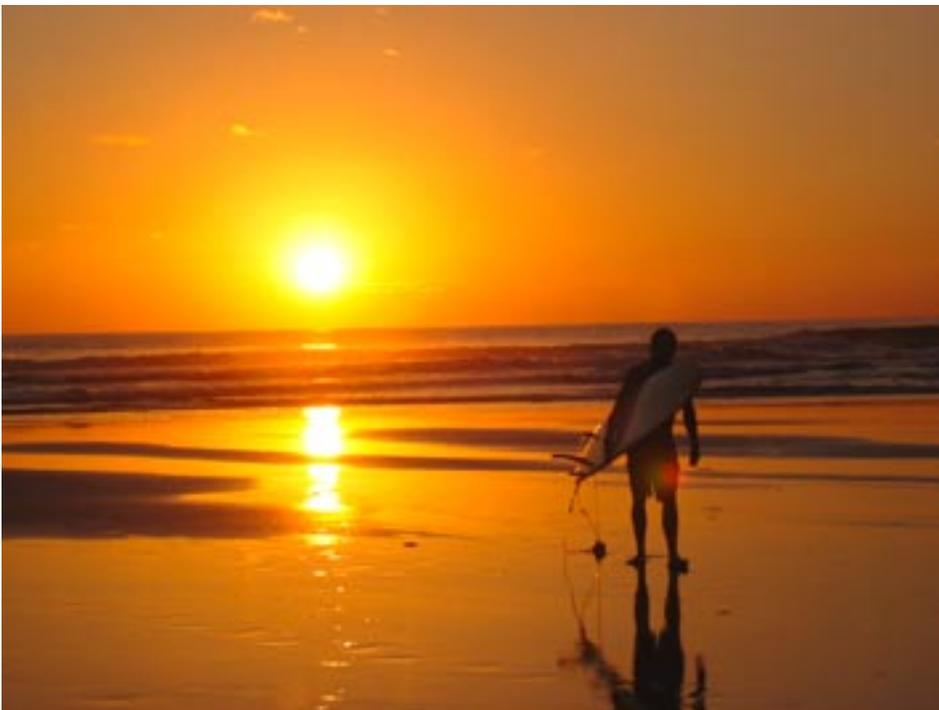
to take to get to said breaks. We began to incorporate a strategy relying a little on our pathetic AAA map and heavily on my friend's uncanny knack for sniffing out waves from miles away. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't, but on one particular day we struck gold.

The dirt road seemed endless. We crested hill after hill expecting to see the Pacific when at last we did. From 300-yards away, our first sight of Punta Conejo was a perfectly glassy blue sea highlighting a point that stuck out maybe 250 feet. Firing off that point was the most beautiful 8-foot wave I have ever seen. It was a true point break, tubing over with a light, fanning, off-shore breeze and peeling for a couple hundred yards in both directions. We both let out maniacal howls as we looked down at our dream.

Records were set that day for the shortest time taken getting gear on and getting in the water. We had to put in on reef and rocks which can be tricky with a new fiberglass boat. Once paddling, though, all other worries dissolved into the clear Pacific. The break was predictable and so easy to paddle out to. Once out, I took a moment to look down and saw the ocean floor teeming with life ten feet below. My first wave was like a breath of fresh air. It was as if we had built our boat specifically for this wave. It was fast enough for the initial tube and to race down the line with time enough for big cut backs and spins. We could not have planned it any better.

As our session came to an end and the sun was beginning to set, I was paddling out for "one more ride" and saw something I will always remember. A wave was building just before me and was illuminated by the sun shining through it. As the wave shimmered in this golden light, two large fish were riding it, silhouetted by the sun. It was then that I realized we had just found the name for our boat: Conejo. 

photo by Mark Adams



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FEATURE Paddling in Latin America: Patria 0 Muerte!

by Nick Hinds



They say Costa Rica has been done...

A small town named Turrialba was once the boating Mecca of oldschoolers. Pictures of the legends of slalom and kayaking are on restaurant walls, reminders of the pull this spot once had. Currently, complaints speak of a lack of true boating community, expensive shuttles, and stingy outfitters. With the help of some true boating “Brahs” a floor can be found to sleep on, a discounted shuttle driver talked down, and cheap but tasty local food can be bought. We went cheap, boated hard, and experienced the warm whitewater of the Costa Rican Rainforest. With an eye for adventure, Ben Stookesburry and I had been studying the options and conversations with some locals helped solidify our plans.

We had paddled for 3 days on mostly Class IV, IV+, and a couple of V rapids. The beauty of the Upper Pacuare, Upper Rio Orosi, and Pascua sections was astounding but left us hungry for steeper drops in pristine rainforest. After some thought Ben, Melissa Newel, and I decided to seek out a more remote section of River named the Rio Patria. The Patria is contained in El Parque

Braullio Carrillo. This is literally some of last virgin rainforest left in Central America. After gathering what little beta we could, we were under the impression the Rio Patria was approximately 10 miles and contained some Class IV/V and a one-hour bushwhacking portage. So we contacted our guide, got up at 4 AM, drove for 2 hours to the trailhead, and hiked our loaded boats for 4 hours on a slippery trail down to the river. With all of our camping gear, food, safety gear, and cameras, each boat weighed in at 60-75 pounds. The hike was difficult; it seemed every horsefly in the vicinity immediately took a liking to my gringo flesh.

After putting in it became apparent that the river was a little more challenging than we had planned. Helping Melissa (definitely a Class V boater but with little low volume experience) navigate down boulder strewn rapids with plenty of pin potential took time, but was doable. We reached the portage; the river walls grew upwards and formed a steep canyon section. Within its grips the river fell into a slide with a 10-ft. terminal-looking pourover falls at his base. This was followed by a 20-ft. pourover falls into a violent hole. Then, a ramp led accelerating water over a cascading 60-foot waterfall, which Ben believed would auto-boof a boater into crushed vertebrae.

We started carrying our boats on river right, bushwhacking through dense rainforest. After a quick look we thought we could rope boats from tree to tree and reach the bottom without much trouble. Starting by rapping 20 - 30 feet at a time, tree to tree, we made our way slowly 100 feet down. Moving our gear took time and it started getting late. Leaving our boats, we pushed on thinking we would find a way downstream to hike back up the next day and retrieve our gear. Melissa went first to the last tree we could see in the twilight. I had tied one end to a tree and the other end to Melissa’s shoulder strap for some backup. As she started down her hands faltered on the rope. In some of the most terrible seconds of my life, I saw the rope feeding fast and heard her fall through some branches. Suddenly there was a huge tug and then the rope stopped. I thought her lifejacket, attached to the rope, had pulled off.

“I am O.K.”

Luckily she landed on the last tree before a deadly freefall of at least 80 feet onto rocks. Melissa fell 25 feet and landed on a spot no bigger than a park bench at the base of the last tree. In disbelief, I tried to relax and then perform the same rappel with white knuckles gripping the rope. It got dark; we found out the last tree had 100 feet of drop onto rocks below us.

Anchoring into Melissa’s savior arbol we spent the night cold, without water or food, with our gear suspended 30 feet above us. We sat for 11 hours on the side of that vertical face in the rain and didn’t sleep. Ants decided we were in their path and waged war.

When morning came, Ben performed an amazing free climb back to our gear and sent it down to me. I lowered Melissa on a webbing-rigged harness down the cliff on a throw rope and lowered all the gear down to her. When all was done we were in the riverbed, minus one throw rope.

We started making our way down the river, finding it runnable but very challenging (most sections dropping about 400 feet

per mile). Scouting, portaging some V+, running some, and filming only a few, we made it down four or five miles. Choked with boulder gardens, sieves, and some un-portagable rapids, El Rio Patria was a mighty adversary worthy of respect. As the light faded away again, we found a Sandbar to sleep on. A thin layer covering rocks provided me with no sleep for the second night. Not being completely prepared, our Iodine tablets were gone and we decided it would be better to drink from the supposedly clean river than dehydrate. Eating cookies, tuna, a snicker bar, and some dried plantains kept our bodies warm and nourished.

Determined, we continued in the morning down an ever-growing flow of whitewater, fed by side streams and dropping fast. Melissa rose to the occasion, getting flipped and rolling again and again. Ben's boat scouting and river-running skills proved a huge asset. As he worked his way down one rapid he became vertically pinned, quickly exited his boat and got to shore unharmed. After an hour of setting z-drags the boat was pulled free. Ben and I helped Melissa portage multiple times and ran some really challenging rapids in the most gorgeous and remote area I had ever been.



The river finally merged with El Rio Sucio (meaning Dirty). The Sucio looked like Tang from the Iron Oxide. We knew this meant the takeout was only 30 minutes away; a welcome site as I had a flight to catch the next morning. Exhausted and happy to be in one piece our expedition finished at dusk, 3 days after our initial walk to the put in.

Our guide Diego had begun to doubt our safety after waiting at the takeout for a day and a half. He contacted the government, which mobilized a search and rescue party. Thankfully, they were organizing when we arrived and we were able to call it off. Melissa works for Costa Rica Rios Adventures and her friends there had planned to kayak down after us in the morning.

At the takeout, we wearily walked up the banks and were bombarded by three camera crews, five shutters clicking from newspaper reporters, and multiple requests for interviews. Simultaneously we received chastising from the Red Cross, Park officials, and the search and rescue party. We were weary and battered but in ecstasy from the epic journey we had just completed. At a small restaurant we watched ourselves on the national news, eating one of the best meals of Arroz y Pollo ever served. The next day stories on us were featured in four Coasta Rican newspapers.

After the meal, we called our guide for a ride back to Turrialba where I packed quickly, slept for three hours, and drove to the airport. I was on a plane back to my life in Los Estados Unidos before I knew it. The whole experience seems so surreal now, but looking back I would not have traded it for anything. Physical exhaustion, sleep deprivation, flesh eating insects, rope burns, and an aching back all seem to be secondary to the overall feeling of exultation I felt. It was an experience I will never forget and feel fortunate to have had. It was not a first descent, but an epic one. I will never assume because paddlers have gone before you that the adventure is not still there to be had. 

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FEATURE Paddling in Latin America: "Plan B" in Costa Rica

by Mark Adams

Just as the fall chill (and rain) fell over Portland, we embarked on a Costa Rican kayak adventure with Northwest River Guides, led by Sam Drevo and team. We initially got acquainted over tacos at a pre-trip dinner, followed by a pool session for some of the group and finally a kayaking packing party shortly prior to departure. The kayakers – Jonny, Nate, Kevin, Lauren, Cliff, and me – were a diverse group in terms of age, profession, and kayak abilities – with a few beginners to the sport and some more experienced boaters. Our expert guides included Sam, Jonny, and Jeremy from Portland as well as Brian from Maine (who was already in the country arranging logistics) and Arturo, a native of Mexico who now lives in Costa Rica and works with the local Rios Tropicales affiliate in Quepos. Throughout the trip they demonstrated enthusiasm, humor, and patience during the hectic times on and off the rivers.

Our adventures began right away. Aided by a few drinks at Paddlers' Pint Night, Nate checked our kayaks on his flight and successfully convinced the skeptical gate agents that the two boats were "one unit" connected by a flange – as is often the case on prototype surf skis. Excellent engineering talk that convinced even the supervisor that he was right! Being the last to arrive on a red-eye from LAX, I made it to San Jose on Saturday morning and was happy to see our bus, driver, and friends waiting right outside the terminal. We quickly learned that the original plan of boating such Costa Rican classics as the Pacuare, Reventazon, Pejibaye, and Sarapiquí was off because of flooding in that drainage. In fact, the water was so high that apparently part of the Pecuaré lodge was destroyed.

Brian and team worked hard to arrange our "Plan B" itinerary, which led us (slowly, given a landslide on the road) down the scenic drive from San Jose to Jaco on the Pacific coast and then south to Quepos, which would be our home base for much of the trip. This town gets its name from the Quepoa Indian tribe, a subgroup of the Borucas who inhabited the area at the time of the conquest. Quepos has



photo by Nate Garr



since become important as a sportfishing center and as the nearest town to Parque Nacional Manuel Antonio, one of the most visited national parks in Costa Rica.

Our first day of paddling led us to the Rio Naranjo, a great Class II-III introductory run that is named for its rather orange, muddy color. On the way to the put in we received an expert tour from Ronaldo, a local farmer and entrepreneur who grows herbs and teas. This was just the beginning of his hospitality, as he later guided a tour through the park and graciously provided surfboards for our coastal session toward the end of the trip. The river action started right away, given the medium-high water level, with plenty of boulder garden rapids and play waves. The "mini-me" (small raft) took a swim in Hurricane Caesar, which along with Robin Hood are two solid Class

III drops on the run. After an hour or so we stopped for what would become our traditional watermelon and pineapple fruit break, followed by the more mellow second half of the run.

While the Rio Naranjo was a busy mid-sized river, our next destination – Rio General – originates from its source on Mt. Chirripo and is one of the larger drainages in the country. We embarked on a two-day big water run with exciting whitewater in a rich tropical environment. The river has a gradient of 50 feet per mile and flows up to 10,000 cms, creating plenty of rapids and play waves along the way – not to mention great scenery and a lack of crowds. In fact, we did not encounter another kayak or raft party the entire trip – something that can't usually be said for the rivers of California

photo by Nate Garr

Our next day of paddling was promised to be the pinnacle of the trip and we were not disappointed.

or Oregon. We took our time enjoying innumerable waterfalls in the wide, tropical canyon as well as beautiful weather. Tropical birds, iguanas, and other wildlife can be seen along the way. After a full day of kayaking, we found our reliable bus and driver waiting at the take out.

Our next day led to bigger water and four Class IV rapids on the General, so I outfitted a CFS for the run and Nate took over my red EZ, which was a little more comfortable than his battered boat. At Screaming Right Turn, one of the big rapids that takes a huge bend to the right, we shot video (and laughed) as the raft went for the hero line and promptly shot three out of four boaters out in the water. Jeremy took the most exciting line through huge holes, while Sam aced the far left hero line without difficulty. This is an amazing run for its isolation, beauty, big water rapids, and play spots. Toward the end of the day we spent time at a killer play spot where we had lunch, soaked in the sun, and shot photos. This gave a couple of our newer boaters an opportunity to practice their rolls and paddle strokes. Later we had a long hike up a dirt road at the take out but were rewarded with fresh pineapple (picked from the local fields by our driver) and a clear view of the night stars.

During this part of the trip we stayed in San Isidro de el General, the most important



town on the Southern Interamericana, some 136 km from San Jose. The town and its surrounding region, located on the southern slope of the Chirripo National Park, is home to a population of about 40,000. San Isidro is a bustling, pleasant, and fairly modern town, although it appears to be more of a gateway to other places (such as the General) than a destination itself. The inland town is somewhat low on charm, but we kept ourselves busy with good food and nightlife in the downtown area.

Our next day of paddling was promised to be the pinnacle of the trip and we were not disappointed. After Sam's friendly (and early) knock on the door and a typical breakfast (pineapple juice, café con leche, eggs, and beans and rice), we went to the put in of the Rio Division, the main tributary to the Rio Savegre. This was the beginning of 16 miles of solid Class IV paddling which challenged everyone. It was an amazing combination run, starting with 6-8 miles of super busy, continuous creeking on the Division. This run was most like what several of us were used to in Oregon, very technical with some steep drops but no big water pushiness. Sam and I cringed as Nate dropped over a 6-foot ledge upside down, but not surprisingly he came through, rolled at the bottom, and recovered to take photos of us boofing the ledge. Arturo ran the raft down the narrow



photo by Mark Adams

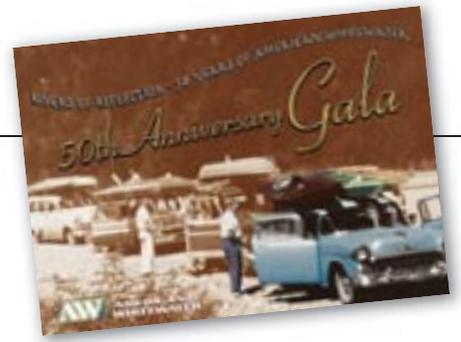
lines without a hitch, and an hour or so later we all arrived at the confluence with the Rio Savegre.

This was an incredible transition, as the narrow creek merged with a pushy big water river. We quickly adjusted our paddling styles from technical moves to busting through huge waves and big rapids. After the first few drops we took a lunch break as light rain started to fall. Brian was temporarily missing, but it turns out he was in his traditional role of kayaking ahead to shoot video along the run. After lunch was Malibu, the major Class V rapid on the trip. We scouted and then a few of the kayakers started down the rapid while Nate and I helped paddle the raft. It was a breeze as Arturo led us through a big hole and right into the nearby eddy, avoiding the really meaty stuff in the middle of the river. Just as we relaxed, he said "let's surf" and we headed straight into the big hole at the

continued on page 75

Events: Gala Event Update

by Ben VanCamp



AW's 50th Anniversary Gala Event hosted by Teva

In just a few short months paddlers and other outdoor enthusiasts from around the country will converge on Vail, Colorado for the 2004 Teva Mountain Games and American Whitewater's 50th Anniversary Gala. On June 5th 250 paddlers will take part in the Gala Event themed "Rivers of Reflections: Celebrating 50 years of whitewater paddling." Included in the weekend of activities is a paddler's art gallery, whitewater in America museum, river trips, and the Gala fundraising dinner.

Teva Mountain Games

Professional and amateur outdoor adventure athletes from Colorado and around the world will converge upon the mountains and rivers of Vail to compete in five sports and ten disciplines including: freestyle kayaking,

kayak and raft paddlecross, bouldering, speed and dyno climbing, mountain bike trials, criterion and cross country racing and mountain trail running. In addition to the athletic events, the Mountain Games will include a mountain photography competition, an interactive exhibition and demo area, live music, and mountain lifestyle parties. For more information on the Teva Mountain Games check out their website www.tevamountaingames.com!

Paddlers' Art Gallery

Artists from all over the United States have been submitting their artwork to be displayed in the American Whitewater National Paddlers Art Gallery during the 2004 AW Gala Event. The artists chosen will display their pieces in a gallery in downtown Vail during one of its busiest summer weekends. Each artist will donate one piece to American Whitewater to be part of a silent auction to raise funds for AW.

Whitewater in America Museum

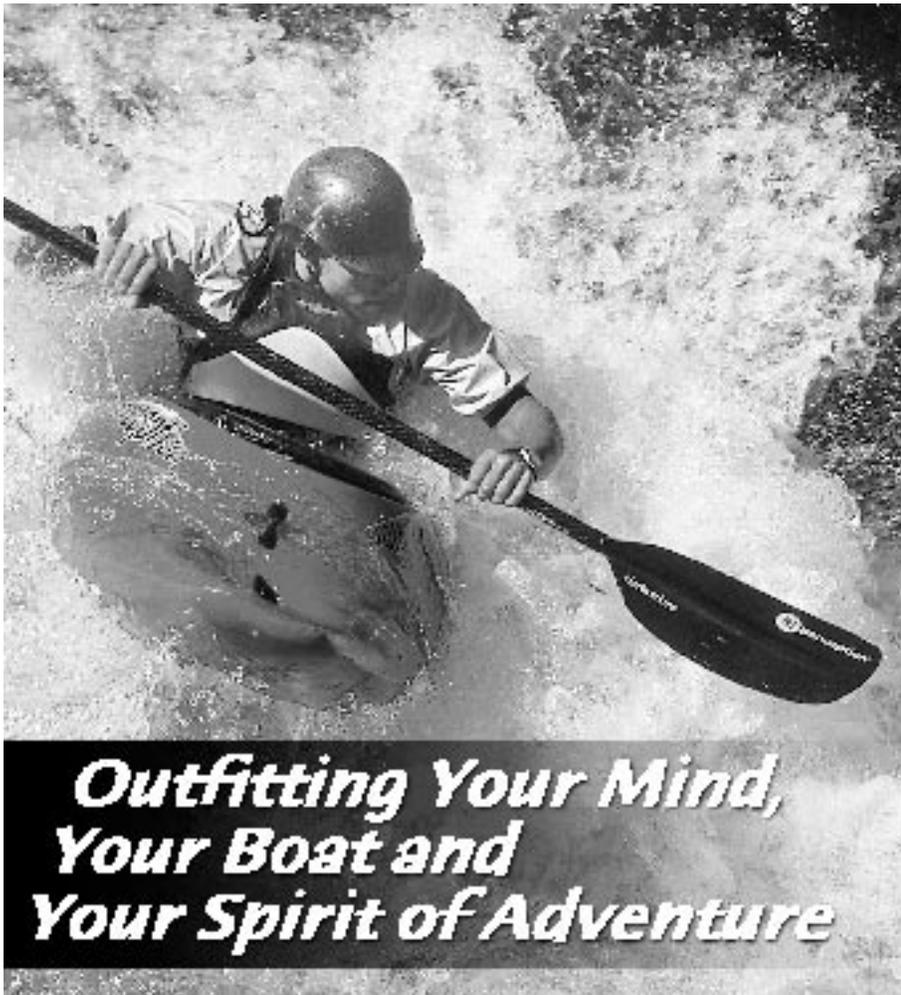
Throughout the past fifty years many things have changed in whitewater paddling...boat design, technique, and location to name a few. The whitewater museum at the Gala Event will walk the visitors through these changes that have developed over the past fifty years. Read trip reports of first descents that are now classic river runs; see some of the earliest paddling videos ever created; touch an existing fold boat. AW volunteers are working to gather some of paddling's greatest memorabilia in one location, if you would like to help or contribute your own piece of history contact Ben VanCamp at ben@amwhitewater.org.

continued on page 73

2004 American Whitewater Supporting Events

Date	Event	Location	Contact
February 28	National Paddling Film Fest	Lexington, KY*	www.surfbwa.org/npff
April 10-11	Trinity River Festival	Big Flat, CA	www.trinityriverrafting.com
April 18	Higaldo Falls River Festival	Navasota, TX	http://philosophy.tamu.edu/~sdaniel/hf-fest3.html
April 23-25	Stonycreek Rendezvous	Tire Hill, PA	spodratsky@aol.com
April 24	American AW Member Booth	Placerville, CA*	wms111@aol.com
May 1	Cheat River Race	Albright, WV*	www.cheat.org
May 22	Wenatchee River Festival	Cashmere, WA*	Darren Albright (253) 549-3945
June 4-6	Coosa River Whitewater Festival	Wetumpka, AL	Southern Trails (334) 272-0952
June 5-6	Big Fork Whitewater Festival	Big Fork, MT	www.bigfork.org (406) 837-5888
June 11-13	Potomac Whitewater Festival	Great Falls, MD	www.potomacfest.com
June 11-13	Wyoming WW Championships	Jackson, WY*	jacksonholekayak@wyoming.com
July 24	N. Fork Feather Member Booth	Caribou, CA*	klweis@snowcrest.net
August 1-2	AW Deerfield River Fest	Charlemont, MA*	www.americanwhitewater.org
Sept 10-11	Ohioyle Falls Race	Ohioyle, PA	BJ2Aadams@Juno.com
September 24-26	AW Gauley River Festival	Summersville, WV*	www.americanwhitewater.org
Sept 25-26	West River Releases	Jamaica, VT	http://vtparks.anr.state.vt.us/hm/jamaica.cfm
Oct 1-3	Russell Fork Rendezvous	Haysi, VA	John_foy@alltel.net
Oct 16-17	Moose River Festival	Old Forge, NY*	Ckoll234@aol.com (315) 673-3837
Oct 22-24	Whitewater Symposium	Bryson City	www.wwsymposium.com
Oct 29-31	NOC's GAF	Byrson City	www.noc.com
November 20th	"The Thing" at Tallulah	Tallulah Falls, GA*	sutton@suttonbacon.com

* 2004 AW Membership Appreciation Booths



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AW Trivia Game

by Ben VanCamp

Questions

1. In what year was American Whitewater founded?
2. Who was American Whitewater's first corporate partner?
3. How many executive board members currently sit on the AW board of directors?
4. What was the original purpose of American Whitewater?
5. What AW executive board member has served the longest?
6. In what year did AW found the NOWR (National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos)?
7. How many staff does American Whitewater currently have?
8. How many people have at some point been AW executive board members?
9. In what year did American Whitewater develop the international scale of river difficulty?
10. When did American Whitewater take over organizing the Gauley River Festival?
11. When American Whitewater took over the Gauley River Festival the money raised went to what cause?
12. In what year did Liquid Logic run the first color advertisement in the AW journal?
13. How many river descriptions can be found on the American Whitewater website?
14. Who was American Whitewater's first full time employee?
15. How many different states does AW's affiliate clubs represent?
16. In 1987 who saved a broke American Whitewater with a \$10,000 check?
17. What year was the first Ocoee Rodeo?
18. What year was the first Tallulah Releases?
19. How many pieces of property does American Whitewater own?
20. How many letters are used to abbreviate American Whitewater?
21. Who was the first person to win the Ocoee Rodeo?
22. Who was the first editor of American Whitewater?
23. What eastern U.S. river is required to give water on demand for recreational boaters?
24. When did American Whitewater publish the first ever picture and story of running a waterfall?
25. What year was Davy Hearn arrested on the Potomac River? [See answers on next pg.]

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AW Trivia Game

by Ben VanCamp

Answers

1. American Whitewater was founded in 1954 when six clubs got together to form a national organization. (2 points, - 2 point if you needed a calculator)
2. Inventor of the ratchet backband, Immersion Research became AW's first corporate partner in 2001. (5 points, add 1 point for each piece of IR gear you own)
3. American Whitewater's board of directors is a dedicated group of volunteers that work to guide AW's staff and volunteers to meet our mission. Currently there are 26 board members. (10 points, 1 point if you checked the inside cover)
4. Local clubs started AW with the intent to share information between local paddling clubs and communities. (4 points)
5. Pete Skinner served on the American Whitewater board of directors from 1977 to 1999 for a total of 22 years of dedicated service. Thanks Pete! (8 points)
6. American Whitewater founded NOWR in 1988. (10 points, 20 if you competed in a NOWR event in the 80's)
7. American Whitewater currently has eight full time employees. (5 points, - 5 points if you checked the inside cover)
8. Throughout AW's 50 years a total of 149 dedicated boaters have served on the American Whitewater's board of directors. (15 points, 25 points if you were one of them)
9. In 1959 the American Whitewater Safety Committee developed the first international scale of difficulty for whitewater. This system still exists today with only minor modifications. (6 points)
10. American Whitewater began running the Gauley River Festival in 1986. (6 points)
11. When American Whitewater began to organize the Gauley River Festival the money raised went to pay for the fight for recreational releases on the Black River in New York. (3 points, add 8 points if you have been to Gauley Fest and the Black)
12. Liquid Logic ran the first color advertisements in the AW Journal in 2001 and it's never been the same since. (4 points, 15 points if you saved them all)
13. The American Whitewater website is full of great information including 4,100 river descriptions. (2 points, add 10 points for each one you wrote)
14. Rich Bowers was AW's first full time employee and is still active with AW today as an honorary executive board member. (3 points)
15. AW's affiliate clubs help AW to represent paddlers from 36 different states. (3 points, -6 points if you looked in the back of the Journal, +10 points if you are a member of an affiliate club)
16. Yvonne Chouinard, founder of Patagonia and past AW board member saved AW from certain bankruptcy with a \$10,000 check when he found AW Board President Pete Skinner sitting on his doorstep. (4 points)
17. The first Ocoee Rodeo took place in 1981 (6 points, 200points if you attended)
18. The first scheduled recreational release on The Tallulah arranged by American Whitewater was in November 1997. (4 points, 8 points if you ever walked around Oceana)
19. Throughout the years American Whitewater has purchased several key pieces of property to help provide parking lots, take outs, and put ins at various rivers. American Whitewater currently owns four pieces of property including land on the Elkourn River (KY), the Blackwater (WV), John's Creek (VA), and the Watagua (TN). (3 points, 6 if you've been to them all)
20. American Whitewater was originally abbreviated AWWA and as time went on whitewater became one word and AWWA became AWA and since then we have managed to simplify things more with just AW as the abbreviation. (1 points, 4 points if you understood the explanation)
21. Rusty Dunbar was the proud champion of the 1st Ocoee Rodeo his prize was a lifejacket made by Kathy Mullet. Rusty also won the 2nd and 3rd Ocoee Rodeo as well.
22. The first editor of the American Whitewater Journal was Joe Lacy from Denver, CO. The editor for this journal has always been a volunteer position.
23. The Black River in New York is required to give water on demand as long as you call ahead. (2 points)
24. The summer issue in 1973 of the AW journal featured Martin Begun running Potter's Falls in Tennessee. This photo broke the long-standing stigma of the dangers of waterfalls. (6 points, 2 extra per waterfall you've ran, - 4 points for each one over 30 feet)
25. Davy Hearn was arrested in 1998 running the Potomac at high water. This led to a lengthy battle that American Whitewater won loosening the restrictions imposed on boaters of the Potomac Falls. (4 points, 8 extra points if you have been arrested for boating)



Ticket to Ride.™

Admit One.
[Member of American Whitewater]
Señoritas on the South Fork
of the American
Sunday, April 25, 2004



TM



Ticket to Ride.™

Admit One.
[Member of American Whitewater]
Ladies on the Lower G
Friday, September 24, 2004

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

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

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

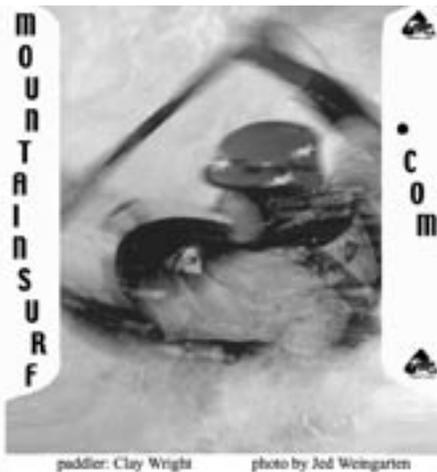
Señoritas on the South Fork / American - April 25, 2004
Ladies on the Lower G - September 24, 2004

[Gauley trip requires \$30 per person fee for permit]

For more information call the AW Outreach Office at: 828-252-0728



Ticket to Ride.



paddler: Clay Wright photo by Jed Weingarten

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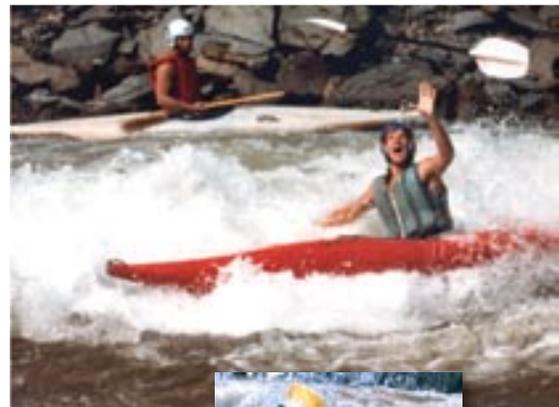
Events: The Changing of Freestyle

by Shane Benedict / USFKA

Rodeo is dead they said! Oh the humanity, the turmoil, the drama! I can't believe they said that!

We all know rodeo is not yet dead but the wake-up call tells us that change is necessary. 2003 was a quiet year for freestyle. The main reason was the loss of overall support and organization by American Whitewater, who had been largely responsible for the sport of freestyle for the last 20 years. American Whitewater saw rodeos as a great vehicle to bring paddlers together to increase the awareness of conservation issues. When AW started organizing rodeos they were small, grassroots events with lots of local support and involvement. They evolved into a huge tour across U.S. and Canada. AW began to realize this was distracting them from their main focus which was and is river conservation. In 1997, in an effort to alleviate some of the organizational issues and get paddlers more involved in the sport, they brought in athlete volunteers to help with the organization of competitors and rules. That group became the USFKA (United States Freestyle Kayak Association). AW even helped the USFKA get its own non-profit status. In the fall of 2002, AW saw that they could no longer support the sport in its entirety and handed over the reigns to the USFKA. It is now our job to work with local event organizers and the volunteers who make our sport happen to create the freestyle tour. This transition of organization from AW to the USFKA has been a challenge but we are working hard to make the change work.

The paddling itself has also changed a great deal. In the first events, a hand surf, barrel roll, or ender would win an event and the undying adoration of your peers. As the sport moved into the 90s the cartwheel, blunt, and beginnings of the air movement were visible. Now all hell has broken loose and there are more variations of aerial moves than there are boat models, which says a lot. This huge change in how boats are paddled is like the beginning of the air moves in skateboarding, or the forward pass in football. It has completely changed our sport. The added bonus is that boats are being designed to make all the fun new moves easier for all of us. Loops, air blunts,



Old schooler - Shane Benedict, 'paddle tossing' back in the day.
New schooler - Marlow Long 'air blunting' in competition.

and air screws are all within our reach.

Rules and rule changes are a part of all sports and ours is no different. When rodeos first started we used a 1-10 scale much like the Olympics. It worked but paddlers felt it was too subjective. A new system was put in place in 1993 which gave a numerical value to every move and paddlers' points were added up as they went. In 1998, we added variety scores which made the paddlers do more different moves during their rides. As paddlers' skill level escalated it became a matter of how fast paddlers could do the moves and not necessarily who was doing the best moves. We spent 5 years working within that system trying to better emphasize variety as the level of paddling soared.

This short history brings us up the present. In 2004 the USFKA is working on a new system to change with the sport so that paddlers aren't rushing to do as many moves as possible but are instead setting up to do the biggest moves they can. The basic idea we are working on is a 45-second ride, but now only the top 5 different moves will count. This will encourage variety and push paddlers to showcase their most dynamic moves. There is more to it, but that is the general direction.

The change should create a fun and exciting event to be a part of and watch.

The future of freestyle is here. Paddlers are doing things we were just dreaming of only a few years ago. Boats are bringing those new moves to all paddlers that go out to their local wave or hole and playboat for exercise, challenge, or competition. There are more sites for freestyle competitions because of smaller boats, whitewater parks all over the U.S., and more active playboaters than ever before, all searching for the perfect wave.

We are hoping for all events to become more fun, challenging, and diverse for paddlers. More and more organizers are running different types of events including boatercross, extreme races, head-to-head races, and big trick contests; something the bigger, older events have always done. Some great examples are The Oregon Cup, The Potomac River Festival, and the Ocoee Rodeo (now defunct). These events were and are amazing and fun for all because everyone can be involved - local freestylers, traveling pros, rafters, creekers, and even non-paddlers.

So this becomes our big mission: To bring energy back into freestyle by helping local event organizers and volunteers to create events that involve the larger river community, and push the sport. It is all of our jobs to also remember the things that have always made freestyle so much fun.

The USFKA is a group of paddlers elected by you to organize the sport of freestyle. We want your input and your help in making these important things happen; let us know what you think will help us move forward. You can call or email us with ideas for events, rules, or best of all to volunteer yourself. 

The 2004 Freestyle Schedule

(dates are subject to change)

April 10-11	Trinity Whitewater Festival
April 17-18	Kern River Rodeo
April 24-25	American River Festival
May 1	Cheat Festival
May 1-9	The Oregon Cup
May 14-16	Reno Pro Invitational
May 15-16	Missoula, MT Event
May 29	Gunnison, CO Event
June 3-6	Vail Mountain Games
June 4-6	Animas River Days
June 11-13	Yampa River Festival
June 16-20	FIBARK
June 19	Skykomish
July 10	Payette Throwdown
July 24	North Fork Feather
Aug. 27-29	Black River Festival (U.S. Team Trials)
Sept. 4-11	Canada Cup, Ottawa

The USFKA consists of:

President: Kristine Jackson
kristine@jacksonkayak.com

Vice President: Shane Benedict
shane@liquidlogickayaks.com

Athlete Rep: Macy Burnham
macykayak@hotmail.com

Team Manager: Dan Gavere

Treasurer: Ellis Smith

Advisors: Clay Wright, Christie Dobson,
Jimmy Blakeney

Special Recognition also goes to:
Ken Ransford (Ken and Ellis gained the USFKA Ellis Smith 501-c status)
Jane Abbott and Risa Shimoda (Jane and Risa helped make rodeo what it is today)
Mike Phelan (Events Director for AW)

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Events: River Stewardship Institute

by Ben VanCamp / Presented by Kokatat



Empowering River Activists

Is there a river in your backyard that is in jeopardy? Have local government agencies, private landowners, or a power company brought in high dollar lawyers and hired gun consultants to tell you how the “process” works? Do you wish you had the skills to be a force in saving your local resources, or do you wish you knew more about how the process is supposed to work, or do you wish you were better at negotiating and defending our right to enjoy resources that belong to the public? Then you need to attend AW’s River Stewardship Institute.

In 2004, AW will branch out in a new direction with a innovative program called the River Stewardship Institute (RSI) presented by Kokatat. For the first time in its history, AW will be offering an intensive training for whitewater enthusiasts who would like to become actively involved in the protection of the rivers in their local communities.

American Whitewater’s numerous volunteers, board of directors, and staff work countless hours striving towards our mission to conserve and restore America’s whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. With the boating community growing and the rising threats of access closures, water rights, legislative issues, dam construction and relicensing AW cannot adequately represent the boating community on each issue, without support. AW is searching for twenty volunteers to become the next generation of river stewards and activists armed with the skills and knowledge to address these threats.

The River Stewardship Institute (RSI) is an intensive training program designed to prepare individuals to become tomorrow’s whitewater river activists. This seven-day innovative training will take place on the Klamath River in California October 9th-16th thanks to the generous support from Kokatat and logistical support of John McDermott, owner of The River Dancers, a Klamath based whitewater-rafting outfitter. Mr. McDermott was very excited to be part of this opportunity: “The River Dancers

welcomes the American Whitewater River Stewardship Institute to experience the Klamath River. We see the love of rivers and nature as the motivation, science as a means of understanding, wisdom the potential harmonizer of diverse human interests, and fun the common joy, to be shared on this Klamath River journey.”

This training program will include two days on the Upper Klamath (Class III-IV) and 4 days on the Lower Klamath River (Class II-III). Paddlers of all ability levels are welcome to apply. The American Whitewater Senior Staff and national experts on river conservation will provide RSI and trip leadership.

AW will be accepting applications (available online) for participants through the 1st of June. Participants selected for the program will be chosen based on the following criteria:

- Leadership and influence potential with the local river community.
- Demonstrated ability and interest in becoming lifelong river conservation volunteer.
- Demonstrated effectiveness at oral and written communication.
- The level of threats being faced by rivers in the volunteer’s home region

American Whitewater is working diligently to obtain funding for the program through grant and sponsorship opportunities, allowing us to minimize the cost to the RSI participants. It is due to this funding that AW can offer this seven-day river experience for only \$150 plus personal travel expenses.



The River Stewardship curriculum has been designed to give each participant the knowledge and skills to battle against the attorneys and hired-gun consultants hired by special interests groups. Upon completion RSI participants will be able to:

- Apply basic ecological and hydrological principles to real life river restoration projects.
- Represent a stakeholders group in a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) hydropower relicensing process
- Utilize existing legal precedents and mediation techniques to address threats to river access by private landowners and government agencies.
- Employ public relation strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of communication vehicles and messages.
- Develop marketing strategies to increase the membership and support of river conservation organizations.

After completing the training RSI graduates will be some of the nation’s most highly trained river activists and will be expected to contribute the following after their training:

- Serve a minimum of two terms as an AW Regional Coordinator for the local paddling community
- Contribute a minimum of three articles per year detailing their efforts as a local river activist to the AW Journal and website.
- Work with the American Whitewater Staff to ensure that the issues facing the local paddling community are addressed on both a local and national level.
- Assist the American Whitewater Staff at maximizing the public relations opportunities offered at local river and watershed events.
- Represent AW and the local paddling community at regional stakeholders meetings.

The Klamath River (OR & CA) flows from the southern Oregon mountains to the California coast. The river is divided into two popular boating sections, the Upper and Lower Klamath. The Klamath River is a member of the National Wild and Scenic River program since 1995. Below are trip descriptions from *California Whitewater: A Guide to Rivers* by Jim Cassady and Fryar Calhoun.

Upper Klamath

Difficulty: Class IV+
Length: 11 miles

“The Upper Klamath flows through a rugged high desert canyon cut into volcanic rocks. The river is on the Pacific Flyway, a migratory route for a great variety of birds. Boaters may see blue and green herons, bald and golden eagles, falcons, ospreys, cormorants, Canadian geese, numerous species of river birds, and even pelicans. Along the way they can stop to look at remains of old mines, ranches, and mills. Even in the late summer and early fall, when most Sierra rivers are marginally runnable at best, the Upper Klamath’s dam-controlled flows provide more than enough water to swamp your boat.” (*California Whitewater: A Guide to the Rivers*)

Lower Klamath

Difficulty: Class III
Length: 100 miles

“Although boaters often overlook it, the Klamath offers a variety of excellent one-day and overnight trips on the longest Wild

and Scenic segment in the state (California). The river’s unique combination of moderate rapids, warm water (in summer), easy access, superb scenery, abundant wildlife, excellent camping, and fairly light use make it one of the state’s best floats. Well known for its salmon and steelhead fishing, the Klamath is truly a year round river – though it should be avoided during the heavy winter rains, when it becomes a raging torrent. (*California Whitewater: A Guide to the Rivers*)

Access and Conservation Issues on the Klamath

The Klamath River for all its beauty and greatness is plagued with many issues that are indicative of the problems facing rivers throughout the country. These challenges make it an ideal learning environment for teaching river activists how to work through these problems.

In December 2000 PacifiCorp initiated the relicensing process for the six dams and seven powerhouses that make up the Klamath Project, whose license expires February 28, 2006. In anticipation of PacifiCorp’s application for a new license, American Whitewater has identified several de-watered river reaches affected by six dams on the Klamath. In September 2002, American Whitewater completed flow studies on two of these reaches. Along with other members of the California Hydropower Reform Coalition, American Whitewater is working with tribes, non-governmental organizations, and local alliances and coalitions on fish passage, recreation, biological flows, and other highly volatile water allocation issues in the Klamath Basin.

This training will be the first of its kind in the United States. “Recreationalists” protecting the areas that they enjoy is the only viable option for the protection of our natural resources. If you would enjoy spending a week on the Klamath River and



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learning the skills and techniques necessary to protect your home river then be sure to apply for one of the twenty spots at AW’s River Stewardship Institute.

No previous experience is necessary, just a willingness to learn. If you are interested in making a difference in your paddling community please contact AW for more information at (828) 252-0728 or check the AW website www.americanwhitewater.org. Applications are available online and can be mailed to American Whitewater, River Stewardship Institute 20 Battery Park Suite 302 Asheville NC, 28801 or they can be emailed to ben@amwhitewater.org 



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Safety: Shoulder Dislocations in Whitewater Boating

by Robin Pope, PA-C

To Reduce ... or Not?

You and your paddling buddies are having a great day on the river, shredding everything in sight. Unfortunately, one of your friends gets thrashed in a hole and ends up swimming. When you reach him, he's sitting on shore and says that it hurts to move his arm. Did he dislocate his shoulder, or do something else? Should you start tugging on his arm? How do you decide? These are important questions, because shoulder injuries are common among whitewater paddlers.

Most of the time, shoulder injuries are simple sprains and strains that are easily treated. However, more significant injuries, including fractures and dislocations, can also occur. Appropriate management of shoulder injuries reduces pain and shortens recovery time, but requires an ability to accurately diagnose the injury. In particular, recognizing fractures and dislocations is important because both require specific treatments and appropriate follow up after the injury.

Treatment for a dislocated shoulder includes reducing the dislocation (i.e., putting the shoulder back into joint) as quickly as possible and protecting the shoulder from further injury. In a hospital, most health care providers X-ray potentially dislocated joints before trying to reduce them. However, X-ray machines are tough to find on a riverbank! A variety of wilderness medical programs (such as Wilderness Medical Associates, SOLO, and Wilderness Medical Institute) teach how to decide whether or not to attempt reductions. As with paddling, these techniques are best learned in a hands-on class.

When a paddler injures his shoulder, four questions should be answered before deciding to attempt a reduction. First, and most important, are there any other more serious injuries? Shoulder dislocations are painful, but they aren't life threatening. Before focusing on an obviously dislocated shoulder, make sure the patient's airway, breathing and circulation are secure, and look for other injuries. If a rescuer pays attention only to the obvious injury, it is easy to miss more subtle, and more serious, injuries. Rescuers treating patients with

shoulder injuries should carefully look for other injuries, including damage to nerves, blood vessels, and bones, including the collarbone (clavicle), the ribs and the cervical spine (neck). In addition, hypothermia should always be a concern with any paddling-related injury.

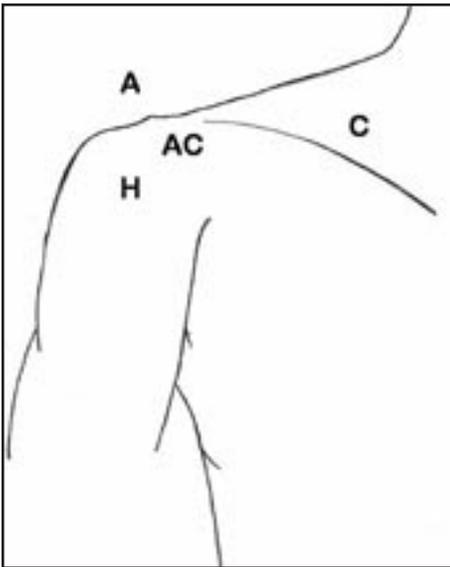
Second, how did the injury occur? Muscle strain generally occurs over time, due to overuse or poor paddling technique. Strained shoulders hurt, but should have essentially normal strength and range of motion. Most shoulder dislocations (both while paddling and everywhere else) occur when the upper arm is lifted away from the body, with the palm forward and held above and behind the elbow – exactly like a high brace gone bad. In this position, pressure applied against the hand and forearm (for example, bracing with poor technique) levers the upper arm forward, out of the shoulder socket. This is an indirect mechanism of injury, and is unlikely to cause a significant fracture. Typically, a shoulder dislocated this way will be deformed, when compared to the uninjured side (Figures 1 and 2). The affected shoulder loses its rounded contour and a depression between the humerus (upper arm bone) and the point of the shoulder (the acromioclavicular, or AC joint) often can be felt. Patients generally hold their arm somewhat away from the body, and they are almost completely unable to move the shoulder.

On the other hand, a direct blow to the shoulder (such as falling off a mountain bike or smacking your shoulder against the bottom of the river) is much more likely to break a bone. Direct impact injuries are common in whitewater paddling, and the patient's physical appearance is not always enough to distinguish between fractures and dislocations (especially when the victim is wearing 2 layers of fleece, a drytop and a PFD). Shoulder injuries caused by direct impact, and associated with severe pain or loss of function, should therefore be treated as fractures. Manipulating a broken bone near the shoulder joint could damage blood vessels and nerves, and cause permanent loss of function in the arm. Distinguishing a direct vs. an indirect mechanism of injury thus can make a significant difference in treatment.

Third, where did the injury occur? If a shoulder injury occurs on a river like the Ocoee, it may make sense to simply apply a sling to the injured shoulder and evacuate the patient to the medical center 20 minutes away, where someone who previously has treated dozens of shoulder dislocations can care for the patient. On the other hand, evacuation could take days on rivers like the Middle Fork of the Salmon, and in that case a patient would clearly benefit from field reduction. After a reduction, victims may not be able to paddle, but they likely will be more comfortable. In addition, evacuation probably will be easier, and recovery time likely will be reduced. Wilderness medicine programs suggest that if definitive care is more than an hour or two away, field reduction of dislocated joints should be considered.

Fourth, do the rescuers know how to examine and treat shoulder injuries? Reducing a dislocated shoulder is relatively straightforward, but do you really want someone to manipulate your shoulder if they've only read about the procedure? Would you let someone who had only read about paddling lead you on your first trip down the Gauley? Table 2 lists contact information for several well-known wilderness medicine programs. All of them teach how to examine shoulders, how to find injuries to blood vessels and nerves, and how (and when) to try to reduce dislocated shoulders. As paddlers, we choose to go to places where calling 911 isn't an option, and it's in our best interest to learn these skills so we can take care of each other.

Once you decide to reduce a potentially dislocated shoulder, remember that if the patient has significant pain when the reduction is attempted, you should stop and reconsider what you're doing. Early reduction of a dislocated shoulder eases pain and simplifies evacuation, and is often the appropriate course of action. However, manipulating a broken bone causes severe pain, and could damage nerves, lung tissue and blood vessels, or even drive bone shards through the skin to create an open fracture. Reduction immediately after injury should help with pain, so if reduction attempts cause more pain, it suggests that something else may be going on. Remember that shoulder dislocations

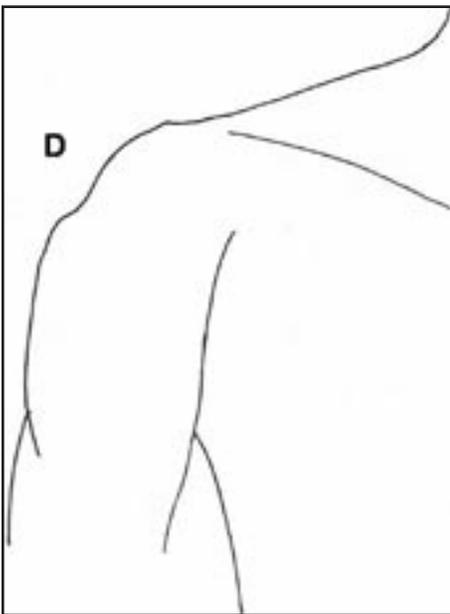


Above: A normal right shoulder.

A: acromion process (the point of the shoulder). C: clavicle (collarbone). AC: acromioclavicular joint (injured in a shoulder separation). H: head of the humerus (the upper arm bone).

Below: A dislocated right shoulder.

D: depression formed when the head of the dislocates forward and down. This depression may be easier to feel than to see.



aren't fatal injuries. On the other hand, punctured lungs or lacerated arteries, caused by manipulating a broken bone in the shoulder, could be life threatening. If you're not sure what is going on, applying a sling and evacuating the victim is the way to go. A sling is the correct treatment for severe muscle strain and fractures around the shoulder, and will help protect any injured shoulder whenever there are

doubts about appropriate treatment. In any event, remember that after a shoulder is reduced, the victim may not be able to paddle, and will be at much higher risk for a repeat dislocation.

Shoulder dislocations are one of the most common significant injuries for whitewater boaters. Field reduction reduces pain, eases evacuation and improves long term recovery, but reduction attempts are not always appropriate. Any paddler with a serious shoulder injury, including a successfully reduced dislocated shoulder, should follow up as soon as possible in an emergency room or with an orthopedic specialist. In an emergency department, the shoulder can be stabilized and other injuries can be treated, whereas an orthopedic specialist can help the victim begin physical therapy and, if necessary, perform surgical repairs. Appropriate follow up after a shoulder injury will speed recovery, reduce the risk of future injuries, and help the boater get safely back on the water as soon as possible. 

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Table 1: Criteria for field reduction of a dislocated shoulder

- 1) Treat life-threatening injuries first.
- 2) Indirect mechanism of injury.
- 3) Wilderness environment (more than 1- 2 hours from definitive care).
- 4) Trained personnel on hand.
- 5) When in doubt, apply a sling and treat as a fracture.

Table 2: A short list of wilderness medicine educational programs. There are at least 30 other programs in the United States that offer similar training, but these are the largest and best known.

Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities (SOLO)
www.soloschools.com
PO Box 3150
Conway, NH 03818
603-447-6711

Wilderness Medical Associates
www.wildmed.com
RFD 2, box 890
Bryant Pond, ME
207-665-2707

Wilderness Medicine Institute
www.nols.edu/wmi/
NOLS
284 Lincoln St
Lander, WY 82520-2848
1-800-710-NOLS

Biography: Robin is a physician assistant in the emergency department at Durham Regional Hospital, in Durham, NC. He also is an ACA instructor trainer in swiftwater rescue and whitewater kayaking.

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Safety: Whitewater Accident Report

by Charlie Walbridge

June-December 2003

Although most of the West experienced drier than average weather last summer, many parts of the East Coast had the wettest year in over a century. High water and warm temperatures drew many inexperienced people to the river, and some of these encounters ended in tragedy. From June through December 2003 American Whitewater received reports of 9 kayak, 8 canoe, and 7 rafting fatalities. Five of these deaths were caused by high water, and five by low-head dams. The yearly totals of 20 kayak, 15 canoe and 14 rafting deaths are the highest numbers we've seen in the last decade. Kayak fatalities, as usual, often involved experienced paddlers.

These accounts came from a variety of sources, and are based primarily on newspaper articles and personal narratives. Many were posted on Boatertalk, Mountainbuzz, and other paddling bulletin boards. Since it's impossible for one person to keep track of all relevant web sites and newspapers, I'd like to thank my regular safety correspondents: Tim Bromelkamp, Kathy Streltzky, Slim Ray, Aida Parkinson, Ken Dubel, Susan Oehler, and the board and staff of American Whitewater for forwarding the majority of this material. I also appreciate those paddlers who take the time to report on incidents occurring in their area or involving people they know.

On June 2nd there was a kayaking fatality on the Class III "Fractions" section of the Arkansas River in Colorado. According to a report submitted by senior ranger Stuart Pappenfort, the trouble began about a mile below the Riverside put in. David Borrell flipped and swam while kayaking along with two friends in a raft. The rafters attempted a rescue, but it was held up because Mr. Borrell asked them to pull his kayak on board first. Somewhere in the process the rafters lost sight of the swimmer for about a minute. When the pair spotted him again he was floating face-down. They quickly pulled him aboard the raft and brought him ashore. One man began CPR while the other ran to a nearby house and called 911. Despite a prompt response from the local police and ambulance services, resuscitation attempts were unsuccessful.

Mr. Borrell had been kayaking for twenty years and had guided on the Arkansas professionally for ten. While it's unusual for people with this much experience to die on the water, Ranger Pappenfort notes that this section of the Arkansas is often underestimated by boaters who are familiar with more difficult stretches of the river. The flow that day was 3170 cfs – high, but not extreme. Because of the drought this was the most water anyone had seen in years. Although it's not clear what turned Mr. Borrell from a swimmer to a floater, clearly he was in the water too long. Rescuers should always work to save people first, and the group could have improved the odds by getting Mr. Borrell into their raft before attempting to grab the kayak.

A 23 year-old Maryland man died on the Shenandoah River near Harper's Ferry, West Virginia on June 29th. According to a report published in "Splashes", the newsletter of the West Virginia Wildwater Association, Jesse Heise was paddling with two other people when he flipped and swam at Bull Falls, a Class II+ ledge. The river was running 4.2' that day, which is medium-high. He was floating down a wave train, holding onto his boat and paddle, when his sprayskirt caught on a submerged log. The snag was deep in the water and not visible from upstream. A group of paddlers and river guides formed a human chain. They were not sure how he was caught at first; they thought it might be a foot entrapment. Once they figured out the mechanism, someone passed a knife to the lead rescuer who quickly cut Mr. Heise free. After using a cell phone to contact 911, they floated the victim down to the Route 340 Bridge. Because of some unexplained confusion the ambulance didn't arrive for almost an hour. It's not clear that this would have made a difference, however.

Because the Shenandoah River is popular with novices, the hidden snag was not forgotten. About a month later, when the river dropped to 2.8', a group of river guides arrived at Bull Falls to remove it. The snag was almost completely hidden in a standing wave. After several hours of fancy rope work they removed an 8" diameter tree, complete with its root ball. This is almost certainly what snagged Mr. Heise's sprayskirt.

A number of inexperienced paddlers met death over the Fourth of July weekend. On July 3rd, Jason Smith, 27, drowned in the Class V+ rapids of Tumwater Canyon on Washington's Wenatchee River. Mr. Smith was paddling solo; his wife was watching from the road when he flipped in Chaos Rapid and disappeared. Rescuers found his body the next day, floating in a pool between the big drops. AW's Brian Behle, who lives in nearby Leavenworth, says that this sort of thing happens every year. Indeed, there was a second drowning in the area during August!

On July 4th Richard DeLaurenzo and his wife capsized while paddling through Class II Shohola Rapids on the Upper Delaware River. This river, which forms the border between Pennsylvania and New York, is very popular with first-timers. According to the National Park Service Morning Report neither paddler was wearing a life vest. Their canoe hit a rock and ejected them both. They attempted to hold onto their canoe as they floated downstream, but Mr. DeLaurenzo lost consciousness and let go. Bystanders pulled him ashore and began CPR, but their efforts were in vain.

On the same day the French Broad River near Asheville, NC was running at a high and muddy 8,000 cfs. Heyward Bozart, 52, was camping nearby with his 22 year-old son. They decided to canoe the Class II rapids near Ledge Park. Their boat capsized quickly and the pair was washed away. Mr. Bozart was found dead roughly four miles downstream; his son made it to a small island and was brought to safety by rescue squads.

Lastly, on the evening of July 5th, two men and a woman decided to go tubing on Wilson's Creek. This Class IV run near Morganton, North Carolina was running high following heavy rains. The group had been drinking, and they quickly got into trouble. Bystanders rescued two of the party, but a third person slipped away. He washed downstream and presumably drowned.

On July 5th there were two commercial outfitting fatalities involving guests who died unexpectedly after taking a seemingly

Safety: Whitewater Accident Report cont.

by Charlie Walbridge

survivable swim through a rapid. On the Lower Kern River, Richard Thurman, 63, complained of difficulty breathing after floating through a Class I-II riffle. He was unable to climb back into his raft or swim ashore; when two guides finally got him inside a raft he was no longer breathing. Two river guides, one of whom is an EMT, and a pair of doctors who were on the trip started CPR. Paramedics responded quickly and took over the resuscitation attempt. Despite their efforts Mr. Thurman never regained consciousness. Total elapsed time was just 3 minutes from the first sign of trouble to unresponsiveness.

That same day there was a similar accident on the Lower Youghiogheny River in Western Pennsylvania. Water levels were modest, 2 feet at Ohio Pyle, when Andrew Deardon, 46, took a guide-assisted trip down the river with his church group. He was thrown into the water after his raft flipped at the top of Class III+ Dimple Rapid. At first the situation seemed routine according to the [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#). All four people in the raft surfaced near the boat and grabbed hold of the perimeter lines. But Mr. Deardon, who at 5'11 and 400 pounds was a very large man, let go of the raft a short distance below. He was quickly picked up by a safety kayaker, but he was clearly in distress and let go of this boat, too. By the time guides hauled him into their raft at the bottom of Swimmer's Rapid he was not breathing. They started CPR at once. Park rangers and EMS personnel arrived quickly via the riverside bike path to help out. He was evacuated by ambulance to Uniontown Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Tragedy struck a small group of experienced kayakers on the Upper South fork of the California Salmon on July 7th. According to a report written by Mike Sampson and posted on Boatertalk, the flow on this Class IV-V run was pretty minimal, about 350 cfs. Mr. Sampson was working his way down a steep, obstructed boulder garden when he heard three sharp blasts on a whistle. He scrambled downstream with his rope to see Wayne Hawthorne, 48, badly pinned on and under a submerged rock. The other member of the party was standing on the rock, holding Mr. Hawthorne's head

above water. This pin occurred just above an 8' waterfall, and the boulders creating the drop apparently also created a very dangerous sieve.

When Mr. Sampson swam out to the site he was almost pulled underneath the pinned boat himself! The two men began a desperate struggle against the tremendous suction, but Mr. Hawthorne kept sinking deeper and deeper. He finally lost consciousness and his PFD came off. Eventually he disappeared from view. The loose PFD, along with both pairs of the rescuer's river shoes, were also sucked down into the hole. At this point, one of the rescuers washed downstream. The remaining rescuer reached down for the kayak and found the cockpit empty. Realizing that they'd done all they could, they hiked out and notified authorities.

The body recovery was an epic task. The next day a rescue team brought a 9:1 haul system and a grappling hook. They hooked the kayak, pulled, and straightened the hook! The body was finally recovered on August 9th. Lower water levels allowed the rescuers to use an underwater camera to locate Mr. Hawthorne, who they then brought to the surface after six hours of hard work.

A fifteen year-old camp counselor drowned while paddling the Nantahala River on July 12th. Joel Hayes was part of a staff trip, running the river in rented boats. According to John Griffin, Mr. Hayes was in a double duck with a friend. At the bottom of "The Ledges" the pair hit a raft that was pinned on a large rock near the right bank and flipped. The rock does not look particularly dangerous, but is badly undercut. Mr. Hayes washed under the raft, then under the rock where he was pinned. The other person in the double duck washed clear of this hazard.

Senior staff from the group began rescue attempts at once, assisted by guides from PRO and NOC. They were able to pull Mr. Hayes out from under the rock using a Z-drag. Unfortunately, he had been under water for about fifteen minutes and efforts to revive him were fruitless.

Soon afterwards, outfitters met with power company and forest service officials to examine the site at very low flows. The group pulled a number of tangled logs out from under the rock using a winch. Their consensus is that these logs, which were hidden underwater at release levels, may have caused the accident. A warning sign was placed upstream to warn of the undercut rock below.

The Tewksbury section of the Jacques Cartier River is a magnificent Class IV run near Quebec City in Canada. AW member Skip Morris reports that a professional guide died in Class IV Blueberry Island Rapid on July 22nd. He was thrown from his raft while running a steep chute on the left, towards the bottom. He popped right up afterwards, and appeared to be fine, but he never rejoined the group below. Rescuers using a tethered raft and a long pole thoroughly searched the riverbed. The guide was found in the pool way below the rapid. Rope had escaped from his waist-belt throw bag and become snagged on a rock, holding him under water. The bag did not have a conventional quick release buckle (with a flap and a ball), but used a side-release buckle similar to that used on many backpack waist bands. Many people feel that this sort of buckle is difficult to find and operate in an emergency. Users of this type of throwbag need to recognize the danger and take appropriate steps.

Matt Sheridan, 18, died on the upper section of British Columbia's Rutherford Creek on July 30th. An expert kayaker, his runs have been featured in several issues of Lunch Video Magazine and he was known as "New School Matt". Pat Keller reported to Boatertalk that he and Matt were very familiar with this run. After running the 35 foot falls they walked around "Portage Rapid" on river right to a seal launch spot just below. The landing looked nasty, and it was. Mr. Sheridan, 18, launched first, hit the wrong side of a shifting boil, and was carried upstream into an undercut cave. Here he was knocked over and probably hit his head.

Mr. Keller got his rope, but slipped on the greasy rocks as he was setting up and landed in the water. After washing under a

rock wall he was carried into the top of a Class V rapid. He quickly swam ashore and was heading back upriver when he saw Mr. Sheridan's kayak float free, upside down, with him inside. The kayak got caught in a small ledge-hole. Mr. Keller swam out and attempted to grab the boat, but it pulsed free and washed into the Class V rapid below. Mr. Keller hurried downstream and spotted Mr. Sheridan's kayak pinned in the crux of a big drop. Realizing the futility of further rescue efforts, he swam across the river, hiked out, and notified authorities. The next morning Mr. Sheridan was found, still in his boat, washed up on a downstream rock.

In the Midwest, four inexperienced paddlers unwisely chose to run low-head dams at high flows. The results were predictably tragic. On July 8th two canoes carrying four young women capsized at the base of a 5' high dam on the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River in Eastern Illinois. According to Eric Sprenne, an AW regional coordinator, the dam is a known killer, and there are strong warnings about it in the guidebook "Paddling Illinois". Fortunately, two of the four girls were able to grab an inner tube that was floating in the

backwash. The Danville, IL Commercial News noted that the recirculation was so powerful that the two teens were literally bouncing off the face of the dam. The pair also tried to support Sandra Barnett, 24, but she slipped out of her life vest and was pulled under water. A 16 year-old girl made it ashore and went for help. An hour later Danville firefighters threw a rope to the two girls. They had to time the extrication to avoid a collision with a large log that was loose in the backwash; even then it took a number of strong men to pull the girls free.

An unidentified man drowned on July 16th after his canoe flipped upstream of the 4' high Winter Street Dam on the Olentangy River about 20 miles north of Columbus, Ohio. He apparently washed over the dam into the backwash; a second man swam ashore and survived. According to the Outdoor Adventure Club's Mark Steinmetz, the flow was 1700 cfs, which he calls "high and pushy". Neither man was wearing a PFD. The victim's body was found two days later.

There were two more drownings at a dam on the Great Miami River near Dayton,

Ohio. The first accident occurred on August 15th and involved a father and his two sons in a canoe. According to the AW's Doug Sauer, who watched the TV news and sent web postings, they capsized in the backwash after they tried to recover balls that were caught there. The father and one of his boys survived, but a second 9 year-old son did not. Another incident on the Olentangy involved a 30 year-old man whose boat capsized above a dam at 11:00 pm on October 9th. Needless to say, it was pitch dark outside. Rescuers who recovered the body said he was in "a small two-person plastic boat", but did not identify it further. The articles alluded to several other recent rescues around the dam.

The Clark Fork of the Yellowstone in Montana was the scene of one death and several close encounters with eternity this past summer. The run contains two days of challenging Class IV-V water and several mandatory portages in a steep gorge. On August 7th a group of seven strong Class V boaters were on the second day of a successful run. But even though the party included three paddlers who had made the trip before, they forgot that below the "Leap of Faith" the mandatory portage

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Safety: Whitewater Accident Report cont.

by Charlie Walbridge

around an unrunnable section comes up pretty fast. Here the river goes under a field of giant boulders and over several huge drops. The group ran a straightforward Class IV ledge, went around a blind bend, and all hell broke loose.

AW Safety Chair Tim Kelly is preparing a detailed account for the AW Journal using excellent reports from Boatertalk and Mountainbuzz and some incredibly gripping email accounts. I won't try to duplicate his work, but I will try to summarize what happened. First, the entire group washed into a sieve and over a cascade, dropping about 50 feet. The cascade had multiple sieves, underground tunnels, and drains. Two surfaced in lightless underwater caverns. One was able to climb out after a desperate struggle, while the other was forced to blow his whistle until paddlers on the surface heard him and lowered a rope. One paddler (who remained in his boat somehow) and three swimmers reached safety in a pool below this cascade. Three of these paddlers suffered serious injuries, including serious cuts, broken bones, a ruptured eardrum, and a collapsed lung.

Dan Crain, 42, a former college football player and smoke jumper, was knocked unconscious. He was still in his boat when he washed into the first pool. He then went over a 20 foot falls. This lead into another massive sieve that dropped 30 feet into a second pool below. When rescuers got to his kayak he was no longer inside. His body was spotted four hours later, pinned between two rocks in the middle of the river. It could not be recovered for several weeks,

Several other groups who were running the river helped with the search and recovery. Several boats were missing. The walking wounded had to face the final few miles of Class IV water and the dreadful duties of notifying the family and reporting the accident to authorities.

By August 9th the Clackamas River near Portland, Oregon was running at 700 cfs, a pretty low level. According to Mike Jolley of the Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, three paddlers were running the river below Bob's Hole just before 3:00 pm. There Ryan

Philbrick, paddling an inflatable kayak, flipped and swam. He washed up against a large rock and apparently caught his foot. One of his friends threw him a rope, but he could not hold on and disappeared underwater. Rescue crews were summoned, and they recovered the body at 7:20 pm.

An unidentified kayaker died in the backwash of a gauging weir below Pine Flat Dam on the Kings River near Fresno, CA. This low head dam has been the site of trouble before. AW's Paul Martzen reported on Boatertalk that the trouble started when a "Class IV Boater" who was new to the area told a local paddler he wanted to try to surf the reversal. Despite strong warnings against doing so, he entered the backwash. He could surf it, but he couldn't get out. Another kayaker moved in and attempted a rescue, inadvertently breaking the most basic rules of working around dams. He too was caught by the hydraulic. He flipped, bailed out, and began recirculating helplessly.

The local paddler knew what to do. He returned to shore and grabbed several throw ropes and ran out on a bridge just upstream. With help of several bystanders he lowered a rope down to the trapped men, and then ran a second line down the shore to a spot below the dam. From here it was possible to pull the Class IV boater downstream to safety. He suffered nerve damage to one arm that he wrapped the rope around, testifying to the force of the pull needed. The would-be rescuer, unfortunately, was unconscious by the time the rope arrived. In a few minutes he was stripped of his PFD, and then washed out of the hydraulic. They pulled him to shore and began CPR, but could not revive him.

The Wenatchee River above Tumwater Canyon is calm and beautiful as it flowed along Highway 2 towards Leavenworth, Washington on August 13th. A group floating the river, three rafts manned by two adults and five young girls, had no idea what lay ahead. Investigators later described the rafts as "the sort of thing that you buy at a discount store" and noted that there was only one PFD on board. But anyone who drove further down the road could see the notorious Class V+ Rapids waiting below.

Below the "Old Iron Bridge" the river changes character abruptly, and the group washed into the first big rapid. The results were predictable. According to a *Wenatchee World* article sent by AW's Paul Delaney, two of the three rafts flipped, tossing four people into the water. Three were stranded in mid-river and had to be rescued. A fourth rafter, Alisa Belcourt, 15, could not be found. Emergency responders searched the area for over a week; her body was finally found on August 22nd.

Hurricanes mean high water, and this can provide challenging sport for skilled paddlers. But it's another story when reckless thrill-seekers become involved. According to the Harrisonburg, Virginia's *Daily News-Record*, three college students made a fast trip down Black's Run just after midnight on September 19th. This tiny creek, which runs right through Harrisonburg, seldom has enough water to float a boat. The trio had a good first run, and decided to try it again. As before, they launched their canoe behind their home. But the water was rising, and they capsized at about 2:36 am. Two men swam to shore safely, but a third did not. Rescuers were called out, but initially saw nothing but flood waters and darkness. At 7:30 that morning they found the body of Chris Ball, 21, in the creek. People at the memorial service remembered the dead man as a charismatic athlete and leader who "lived his life in a flash".

After years of dedicated work by American Whitewater, the rapids of the North Fork of the Feather River in Northern California are running again. But the events of September 27th showed that paddling them is not without risk. Eric Petlock, an active local paddler who became AW's principal investigator, filed a report that tells the following story. A raft containing four experienced paddlers and one first-timer were making their way down the Class III-IV Cresta Run when they broadsided on a rock and flipped. The first-timer, Yannick Meraud, 38, swam towards the river left shore. He was pushed up against and under a huge granite slab which lay alongside the riverbank. Witnesses saw him disappear, and tried to help by running a line along the margin of the slab. When they did not

June-December 2003 Summary

Date	Victim's Name	Age	Boat	River	State	Cl.	Factors
6/2	David Borell	?	K-1	Arkansas River Fractions Section	CO	III	Flush drowning; high water
6/28	?	?	Tube	Delaware River Scudders Falls	PA/NJ	II	No PFD
6/29	Jesse Heiss	23	K-1	Shenandoah River	WV	III	Sprayskirt snagged
7/3	Jason Smith	27	Raft	Icicle Creek	WA	IV?	Solo Paddler; cause unknown
7/4	Richard DiLaurenzio	?	Canoe	Delaware River	NY/PA	II	No PFD
7/4	Hoyt Boyzart	52	Canoe	French Broad River	NC	II+	High water, Inexperience
7/5	?(Man)	?	Tube	Wilson's Creek	NC	IV	High water, Inexperience
7/5	Richard Thurman	63	Raft	Kern River	CA	II	Health problem
7/5	Andrew Darden	46	Comm Raft	L. Youghiogheny River	PA	IV	Health problem
7/7	Sandra Bennett	24	Canoe	M.F. Vermillion	IL	X	Caught by dam
7/8	Wayne Hawthorne	48	K-1	S.F. California Salmon	CA	IV?	Caught in sieve
7/12	Joel Hayes	17	Raft	Nantahala River	NC	III	Undercut rock
7/16	?(Man)	?	Canoe	Olentangy River	OH	X	Caught by dam
7/22	?(Guide)	?	Comm Raft	Jacques-Cartier River	PQ, Can	IV	Sanged on rope
7/30	Matt Sheridan	18	K-1	Rutherford Creek	B.C., Can	VI	Undercut rock
8/7	Dan Crain	?	K-1	Clark Fork River	MT	X	Missed portage
8/9	Ryan Philbrick	29	IK	Clackimas River	OR	II	Foot entrapment
8/13	?(Girl)	13	Raft	Wenachee River Tumwater Canyon	WA	V+	Flush drowning, Inexperience
8/15	?(Boy)	9	Canoe	Great Miami River	OH	X	Caught by dam
9/15	?(Man)	?	K-1	King's River	CA	X	Caught by dam
9/19	Christopher Bell	21	Canoe	Black's Run	VA	?	Paddling at night; high water
9/27	Yannick Meraud	38	Raft	N.F. Feather	CA	IV	Undercut rock
9/29	James Williamson	58	Canoe	Oswegachie River	NY	?	Pinned by strainer
10/9	?(Man)	30	? Boat	Great Miami River	OH	X	Caught by dam, boating at night
11/9	Keith Green	40	K-1	Chatooga River	GA/SC	IV+	Undercut rock
11/19	?(Man)	?	Canoe	Watauga River	TN	?	Pinned by strainer
11/21	Josh Reichert	22	K-1	Shenandoah River	WV	III	High water, cold water

Total:

8 - Kayak
8 - Canoe
7 - Raft
2 - Tube
2 - Unknown

Yearly Total:

19 - Kayak
15 - Canoe
14 - Raft
3 - Tube
4 - Motorboat
1 - Unknown

Andy

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Safety: Whitewater Accident Report cont.

by Charlie Walbridge

succeed, they sent for help. Rescue squad members who recovered the body the next day reported that the slab is actually the roof of a giant underwater cave. They believe that Mr. Meraud eddied out in there and could not escape. We hope that this tragedy will alert other boaters to this danger spot and prevent future accidents.

A story in the Harrisburg, PA *Patriot News* reported that James Williamson, 58, died while canoeing on the rain-swollen Oswegatchie River in New York's Adirondack Mountains. Mr. Williamson, a Central Pennsylvania political figure, was canoeing with friends on September 28th when his canoe struck a logjam and capsized. His body was found the next day. No other details are available, and those with information are encouraged to contact the Safety Committee.

Paddlers in the Northwest were shocked to learn that Ben Manfredi, a well-known paddler, skier, and mountaineer, died while paddling the Grand Canyon of the Elwha River in Olympic National Park. Mr. Manfredi, 24, had made a solo run earlier in the year and knew the river. He and his three friends planned to complete the entire run in a single long day. After an 8 mile hike to the put-in they would run 8.5 miles of Class IV-V rapids in a steep-walled gorge. The flow on November 9th was 1024 cfs, a perfect level.

The group reached the put in at about 10:30 am, and their run through the Upper Canyon went smoothly. They reached the entrance to the Lower Canyon, Goblin's Gate, at 2:45 pm. After scouting, the first paddler ran through and set safety. Mr. Manfredi came next. He flipped in a small pourover and made four roll attempts before washing over a big drop into a Class I runoff. He flushed through a short stretch of easy whitewater and then around a bend.

The safety boater gave chase, and caught sight of a kayak floating upside-down in an eddy. He could see that Mr. Manfredi was still inside as he approached. He quickly righted the kayak; Mr. Manfredi's sprayskirt

was still in place and his paddle was still in his hands. The other paddlers arrived and helped get Mr. Manfredi out of his boat and onto a rock. Two of the men did CPR while a third went for help. After continuing resuscitation efforts for an hour without success, the pair followed wilderness protocols and discontinued their efforts. They secured his body and scrambled out of the canyon. Olympic Mountain Rescue hiked in and recovered his body the next day.

Mr. Manfredi was a very strong paddler who had not bailed out of his kayak in over two years. There was no sign of a head injury, and his friends speculated that he probably kept trying to roll back up until he lost consciousness. This would not have been the first time it has happened to someone, and this reminds us all that although rolling is important, we must always leave a reserve so we can bail out and swim. Someone also suggested that a new pair of neoprene gloves may have made orienting the paddle blade more difficult than anticipated, and that this is what caused his rolls to fail.

November 9th also saw a drowning on Section IV of the Chatooga River near Clayton, Georgia. Water levels were modest, 1.6' feet at the Rt. 76 Bridge. Two different groups who were working their way through the "Five Falls" section met up above Class V Corkscrew Rapids. It's not entirely clear what happened next, but here's my best attempt, based on Boatertalk posts and an email sent to me by Dennis Kerrigan, a rescue instructor and longtime Chatooga guide.

Keith Green, 40, was in the first group. He elected to run Class V Corkscrew Rapid while others in his group watched. He flipped and bailed out, but appeared to be in good shape and swimming aggressively above Crack in the Rock.

Two paddlers from the second group followed. Neither one saw Mr. Green's swim and one of them separated his shoulder and needed help. As the second group dealt with the injured person several people

from the first group ran Corkscrew and continued working their way downstream. None of them realized that Mr. Green was in trouble.

After the uninjured boater from the second group finished running the Five Falls he was dismayed to find two paddles floating in the pool below Soc 'em Dog Rapid. By now a member of the first group started to ask if anyone had seen a guy in a green helmet. A search began, but Mr. Green had disappeared. On November 12th rescuers using an underwater camera found his body pinned in Right Crack.

With all the confusion it's not surprising that there was some finger-pointing afterwards. Certainly it would have been useful to set safety below Corkscrew beforehand, and this would have provided one reliable witness to the accident. But drops of this difficulty are often run without setting downstream safety, and if that risk is taken, someone has to go first. When a paddler misses their roll at Corkscrew, it's imperative that they bail out and start swimming to the right side at once. There's a large eddy here which is pretty easy to catch at most levels. Crack in the Rock is a notorious body snatcher, and can make a swimmer disappear instantly. You do not want to get washed here without your boat!

Having lots of people around sometimes gives paddlers a false sense of security, and makes it tough to keep track of people. Although groups often assist each another on the river, it's unreasonable to expect other parties to keep track of people in your group. We often lose sight of someone for a few seconds on difficult runs, especially if there are distractions or obstacles. Mr. Green is not the first person to disappear suddenly on a river with a lot of people nearby, and he won't be the last. Group management techniques like the buddy system are useful in crowds, but not foolproof.

Heavy rains in the week before Thanksgiving sent Watauga River levels shooting up. On November 19th three men attempted to

paddle the lower river, a roadside Class II-III run located below Wautauga Lake and upstream of Elizabethton, Tennessee. Their canoe flipped, and one man became pinned between the boat and some logs, and drowned. The other two paddlers managed to swim to a small, debris-strewn island. They were later brought to safety by the Carter County Swiftwater rescue Team.

This same high water was too much for a couple of kayakers on the Shenandoah River near Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. According to an article in *Splashes*, the newsletter of the West Virginia Wildwater Association, the level that day was 9.4 feet, or 22,000 cfs. This made the river extremely wide and fast. Two students with kayaks rented from a university outdoor program put in at Millville. Both men had taken a short introductory course at the college which included no whitewater training. They had helmets and PFD's, but no wetsuits.

The pair didn't make it very far before they flipped and swam. One man let go of his boat and returned quickly to shore. Josh Reichert, 22, held onto his boat and was

carried some distance downstream. It's not known how long he was conscious, but the Shenandoah Staircase at that level is a long Class IV rapid with huge waves and holes. Rob Traynham, who was involved with the aerial search, told AW's Tim Bromelkamp that the victim worked at a summer camp which took campers on rafting trips down the Shenandoah. This experience clearly did not prepare him for the river at high flows. His body was spotted several days later in a logjam near the confluence with the Potomac River.

There were many positive and inspiring stories to come out of this year. Lives were saved by outstanding rescues on the Little White Salmon in Washington, Jawbone Rapid on the Chatooga (an account to be featured in the AW Journal), and Initiation Rapid on the Gauley. Rumors of many other heads-up rescues by boaters abound. We also got word that a man survived a swim over Ohiopyle Falls at 7.6 feet. Another one went over Niagara Falls and lived!

Please remember that American Whitewater depends on its members and friends to

send the information contained in this accident summary. We appreciate all your submissions, and ask all our readers to send relevant information. The information we acquire is also added to our Safety Database, the largest collection of its kind in the world. Created by former Safety Chair Lee Belknap and accessible at www.americanwhitewater.org, it provides a real-world basis for our safety program. Please forward accident descriptions, newspaper articles, personal accounts, and other material of note to ccwalbridge@cs.com (Rt. 1, Box A43B, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525).

Remember that the best way to cut down on gossip and speculation after a serious incident is to prepare a full account of what happened and get the word out. In addition to club newsletters, local and regional bulletin boards are an increasingly important communications tool. It's also useful to post place a copy on the American Whitewater Forum. Found on AW's web site, www.americanwhitewater.org it focuses on conservation, access, and safety programs. While run as a forum within Boatertalk, it contains very little casual chat. 

Events: Gala Update continued from page 56

River Trips

Spring time in the Rocky Mountain means many things...warm days, snow melts, and raging rivers. The Colorado Whitewater Association, one of AW's founding clubs, has agreed to lead guided trips on Sunday for participants in the AW Gala event on some of the Rockies' most famous river runs. Trips for all abilities of whitewater enthusiasts are being planned for the guests of the Gala to enjoy.

Gala Fundraising Dinner

The Gala fundraising dinner will be held at the Lodge at Vail in downtown Vail on Saturday June 5th, 2004. This event will be a gathering of AW supporters of both present and past. Whitewater celebrities of the past fifty years are expected to attend making for a memorable night. The Gala dinner will include a silent auction and a guest speaker. Private tables and individual tickets are already on sale so call AW to reserve your spot, contact Ben VanCamp at (828) 252-0728 or at ben@amwhitewater.org!

Information about the Gala event is constantly being updated on the American Whitewater website, www.americanwhitewater.org



Timmy: If I keep maxin' it out like this, I'll be running the #1% with Tommy in NO TIME. Yeeeaooouuhhhhh!!!!!!!



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FEATURE Paddling in Latin America: "Plan B" in Costa Rica cont.

by Mark Adams

continued from page 55

bottom. The surfing was great but then the raft suddenly shot upward, sending Nate and I toward the sky and into the river. Luckily, it was one of those non-traumatic swims after which we floated right into an eddy. Both Jonny Ott and Nate styled the rapid in their kayaks, although they had a little excitement as they were tossed around in that last hole – Nate's got some nice new scratches on his helmet to show for it!

It was a long day but a great chance to see a run that apparently very few groups have kayaked before. Just as we thought it couldn't get better, we pulled into the Rafiki Safari Lodge. This is an African-style open-air lodge in the middle of 750 private acres of paradise on the Rio Savegre. Our comfortable yet remote lodging consisted of African style tent cabins with comfy beds, big decks with a view, and the nicest bathrooms on the entire trip. It was an unbelievable place, set in the middle of

tropical wilderness and hosted by friendly folks, several of whom were from Montana. At this point in the trip we had bonded with our new friends and guides, and I personally felt lucky to be in such a great place with such a cool group of people.

After a gourmet meal of seafood and steak, we sat on rocking chairs and swings, staring into the starry sky.

Day two on the Savegre was much more straightforward, starting off with the Class III La Boca del Diablo rapid but then

mellowing out to mostly Class II+ rapids as the river found its way to the Pacific Ocean. Just as we thought it couldn't get any better, the Rafiki Lodge truck drove up with a freshly cooked lunch for us in the middle of the run – a great treat! It was a relaxing trip after the previous day's excitement, and we were "greeted" at the take out eddy with a big crocodile, although he showed little interest in chomping us or even checking us out. After loading up the bus, we made our way through the dirt roads and African palm oil plantations back to Quepos, where we enjoyed air-conditioned comfort for the next three nights (air conditioning is key to drying out your wet gear in tropical, humid climates).

After five days of subsequently more difficult rivers, our trip slowed down a bit as we got back into enjoying the town, including some shopping and sightseeing. On Friday we took a day off to enjoy an



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FEATURE **Paddling in Latin America: "Plan B" in Costa Rica cont.**
by Mark Adams

expertly guided tour of Parque Nacional Manuel Antonio by Ronaldo – where we saw monkeys, sloths, birds, and other wildlife. At 683 hectares, Manuel Antonio is by far the smallest park in the national park system, but it is also one of the most popular. This is because of its beautiful forest-backed tropical beaches, dramatic rocky headlands, prolific wildlife, and maintained trail network.

It is tough to end such a great trip, but on Sunday it was back to San Jose for another round of boat packing followed by our farewell dinner. Life is short, so if you get the chance to kayak in Costa Rica or other tropical destinations my advice is to take advantage of it. Thanks again to our guides, the hospitable citizens of Costa Rica, my newly found friends, and a great roommate for an incredible trip. 

For more information:
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Affiliate Clubs: AW's Original Purpose

by Michael Phelan / Director of Outreach Services

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

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

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

2nd Flowing Rivers Grant Program, sponsored by Clif Bar

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

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Alabama

Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

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

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

California

Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus
River Skills Center, Mt. Shasta
Sequoia Paddling Club, Windsor
Shasta Paddlers, Redding

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, San Jose
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Granada Hills

Colorado

Arkansas Headwaters Recreations Area, Salida
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West
Colorado White Water Assoc., Englewood
Gunnison Valley Paddle Club, Almont

Georgia

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

Idaho

Idaho Rivers Sports, Boise

Illinois

Chicago Whitewater Association, Cary

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

Kentucky

Viking Canoe Club, Louisville
Bluegrass Whitewater Assoc., Lexington

Maine

AMC Maine Chapter, Hallowell
Hurricane Island Outward Bound, Newry

Massachusetts

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston

Maryland

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

Minnesota

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater

Missouri

Kansas City Whitewater Club, Raymore
Meramec River Canoe Club, Fenton
Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City

Streamtech, St. Louis

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

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

New Jersey

Garden State Canoe Club, Millington
Hunterdon Canoe Club, Flemington
The Paddling Bares, Milltown

New Mexico

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

New York

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

N. Carolina

Camp Carolina, Brevard
Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Triad River Runners, Winston-Salem
Western Carolina Paddlers, Asheville

Ohio

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

Oregon

Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

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

S. Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Tennessee

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

Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston

Utah

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

Virginia

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

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

Washington

Associated Students, Bellingham
The Mountaineers, Seattle
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Spokane Canoe and Kayak Club, Spokane
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle

West Virginia

West Virginia Wildwater Assoc., Charleston

Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, La Crosse

Wyoming

Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson

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- AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Sugarloaf, PA
- McCallie School Outdoor Program, Chattanooga, TN
- Desert Paddlers Club, Tempe, AZ
- Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines
- Gunnison Valley Paddle club, Almont

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

Membership Notes

One of our top goals is to take better care of our existing members, which means making it easier for you to renew, find out what projects we're working on, and better yet - get involved. As part of this effort, we'll be using the journal more often to communicate with you. Below is a list of frequently asked questions regarding membership. Please take a look at the list and if you have anything further, check out our website or e-mail us! Correct contact information can be found below.

Question: I am moving, how do I notify American Whitewater of my new address?

Answer: You can submit your address change three ways: 1) On our website (look under the 'membership' section), 2) By sending us an e-mail to membership@amwhitewater.org with the words 'address change' in the subject field or by 3) calling our office and letting us know of the change.

Question: I did notify American Whitewater of my address change, but haven't received my journal, why?

Answer: Address changes must be made at least two weeks before the issue is delivered. For example, for the September/August journal, we need your address change by August 20th.

Question: I've noticed a code on the label of my journal that reads '20030105' next to my name - what does it mean?

Answer: That code is actually your expiration date. The '2003' is the year you expire. The following '05' is the journal issue you expire on and the final '01' is the year you first became a member. We run 6 issues every year, so the number 05 correlates with the Sept/Oct issue (06 would be Nov/Dec and so on).

Question: I renewed my membership, but received another renewal notice in the mail!

Answer: I think this is the most frequently asked question. The main reason is your renewal wasn't processed before the next round of renewals was sent. We go to great lengths to minimize this problem as much as possible, as it's a waste of paper, time and money. Unfortunately, our printer needs time to prepare the renewal forms and we have to send them the names several weeks in advance. One way to solve this problem is to sign-up for e-renewals. Call or e-mail our office, or go to our website for more details on the program. If you have a suggestion, comment or question not covered here, please send it to:

Nick Lipkowski
Office Manager / American Whitewater
301-589-9453
nick@amwhitewater.org

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 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.

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- 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.
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- I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an American Whitewater publication.
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- I understand that the contents of American Whitewater Magazine, including my contribution, will be archived on the American Whitewater web site.

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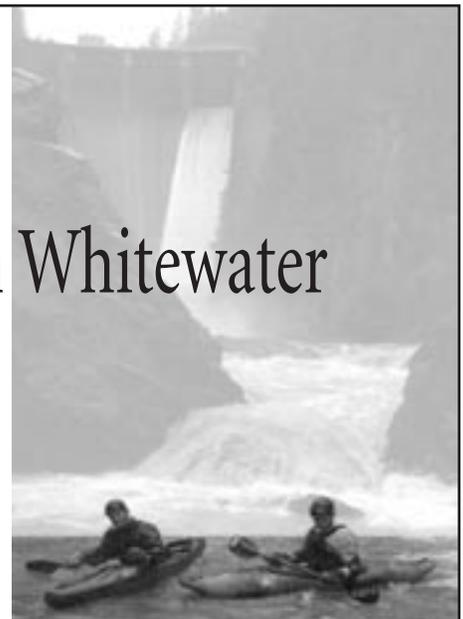
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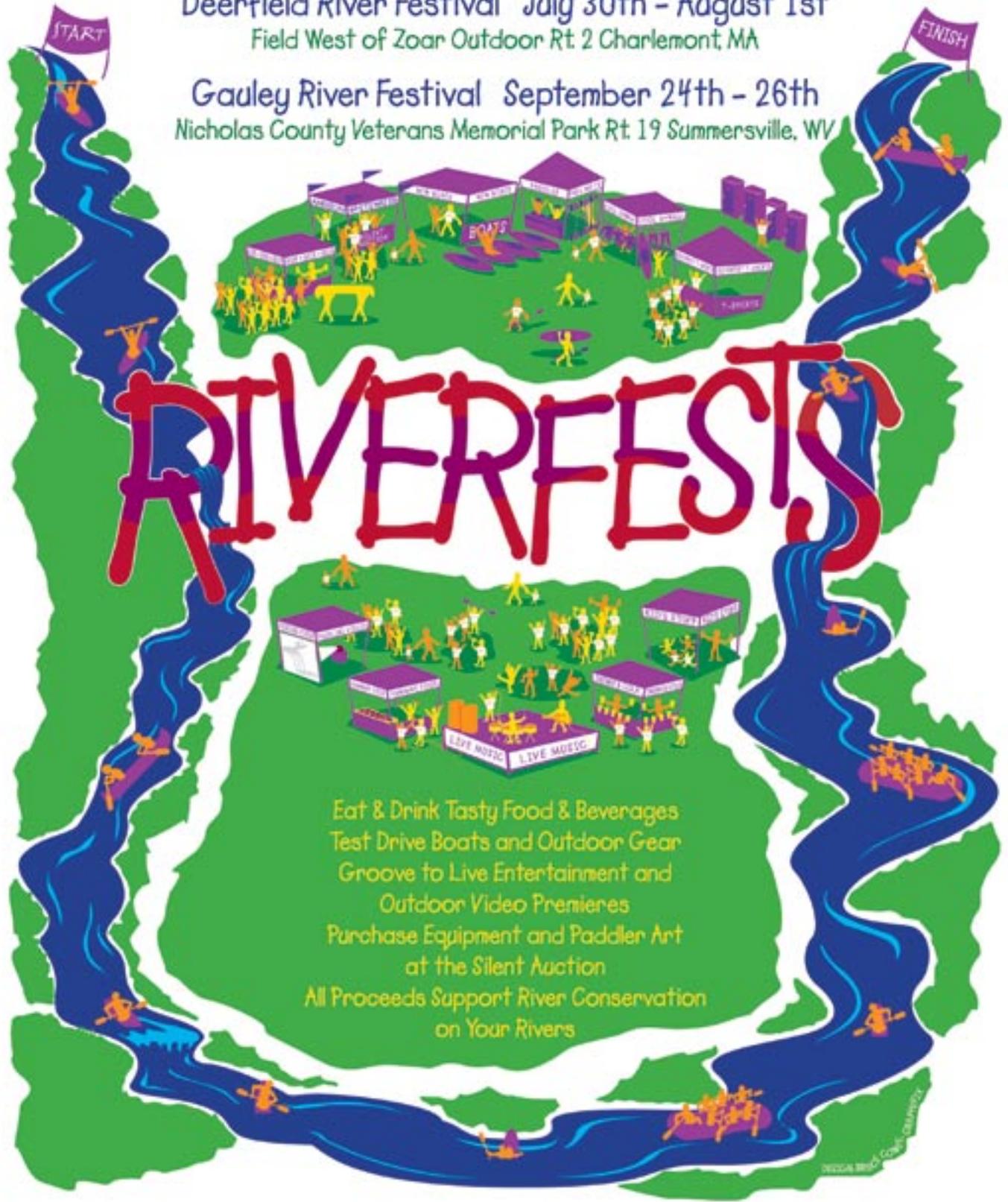


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call 1-800-Boat-4AW for more information!

Deerfield River Festival July 30th - August 1st
Field West of Zoar Outdoor Rt. 2 Charlemont, MA

Gauley River Festival September 24th - 26th
Nicholas County Veterans Memorial Park Rt. 19 Summersville, WV



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 All Proceeds Support River Conservation
 on Your Rivers



The 'D' is for Dominance



Team D Pro: Andre Spino-Smith, Andrew Holcombe, Anna Levesque, Ben Selznick, Brad Burden, Brad Ludden, Brandon Knapp, Brendan Mack, Brooks Baldwin, Bryan Kirk, Dustin Knapp, Dustin Urban, Jay Kincaid, Jayson Bowerman, Jed Selby, Jesse Murphy, Keith Liles, Kelly Liles, Mariann Saether, Michael Quinif, Pat Keller, Rush Sturges, Scott Feindel, Tao Berman, Tobias Bersch.

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