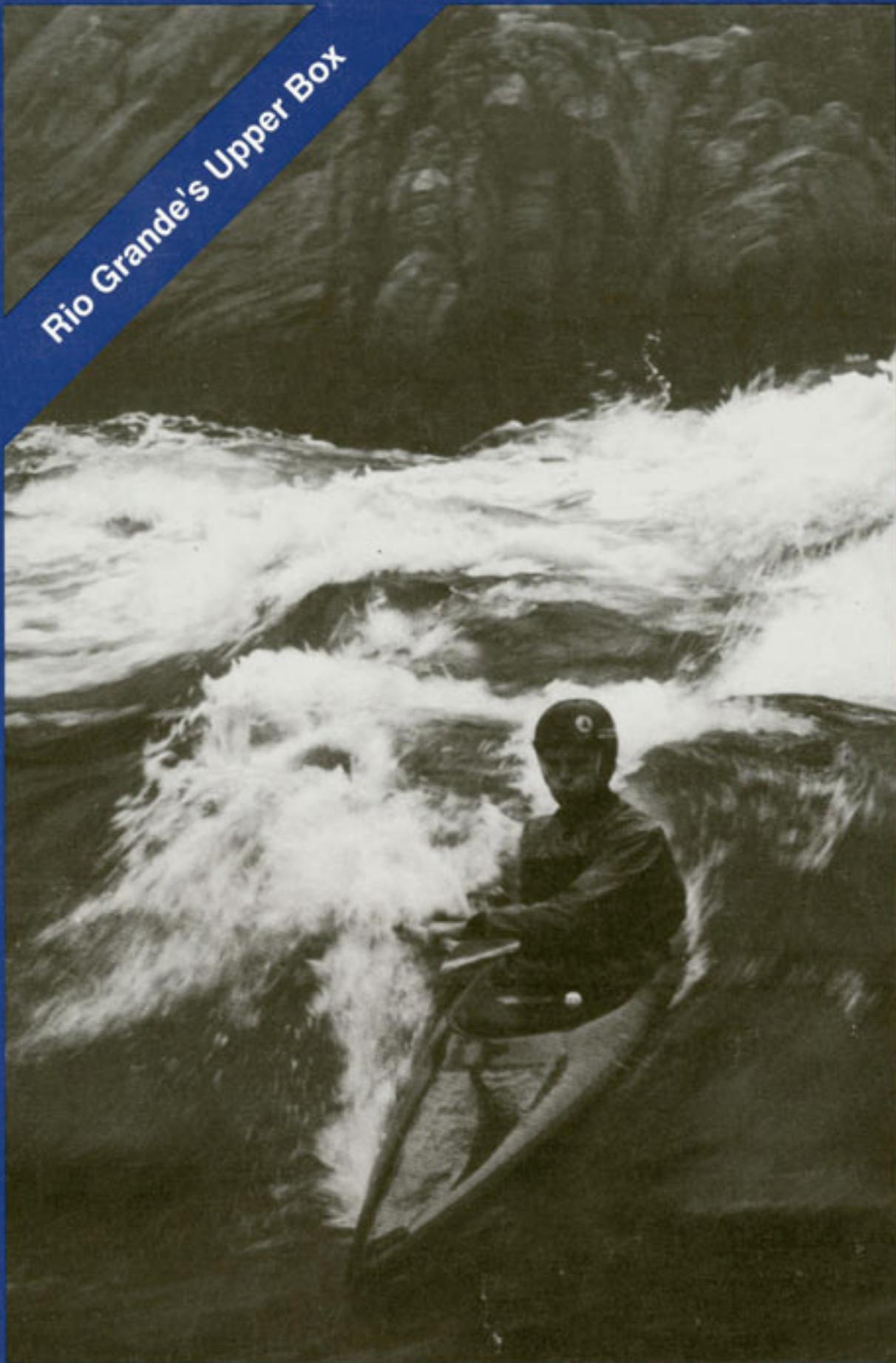


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July/August 1991

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# american whitewater

JOURNAL OF THE  
AMERICAN WHITEWATER  
AFFILIATION

July/August 1991

Volume XXXVI, No. 4

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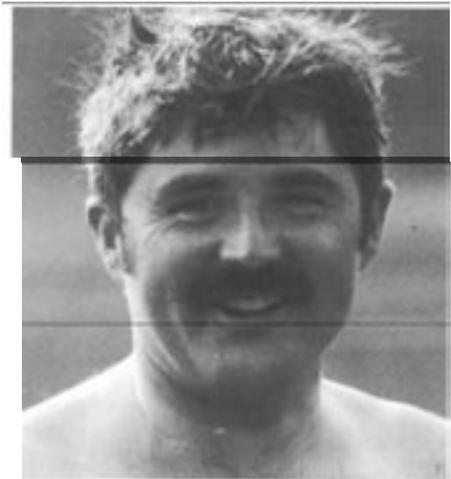
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**FORUM**

**Lend me your ears**

It's 97 degrees and it hasn't rained for a month. You could walk across the Big Sandy and never get your ankles wet. I'm hot, bored, tired and in no mood to fill this space with some profound, moralistic diatribe. You're probably not in the mood to read one anyway. So I'm going to use this space to share some useful information about an affliction that strikes a lot of us this time of year... boater's ear (a.k.a. swimmer's ear, a.k.a. otitis externa).



Boater's ear is a bacterial or fungal infection of the outer ear canal that is most common when it is hot and humid.

Activities that involve submersion of the head (ie. learning to boat, playing, and squirting) predispose to this unpleasant condition. Bacteria called *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* or *Staphylococcus aureus* are usually the culprits in these infections, but a fungus named *Aspergillus* can also cause boater's ear, particularly in tropical climates.

During summer, when rivers are warm and stagnant, the bacterial count of the water rises dramatically. But exposure to river water does not always cause the infection. Lots of us have *Pseudomonas* and *Staph* colonizing our ear canals all the time, but they are kept under control by our ears' defense mechanisms.

The ear canal of an adult is about one and one half inches long and extends from the outside to the eardrum (a.k.a. tympanic membrane), which separates the outer and middle ear. Curvatures in the canal prevent foreign objects stuck into the ear from puncturing the eardrum, but they also prevent water from draining out freely. Moisture retained in the ear is the leading factor predisposing to boater's ear.

The lining of the ear canal is very thin and delicate and is easily injured. Once it is had been traumatized, for instance with a cotton swab or burst of water from an hydraulic, it becomes easily infected. Dampness and irritation makes the lining of the canal swell, and the more it swells, the more water is trapped... hence a vicious cycle leading to boater's ear.

Some protection is provided by the ear wax (a.k.a. cerumen), a water repellent, acidic substance that has antimicrobial properties. That is why removing all the cerumen from your ear isn't such a great idea. But large chunks of cerumen and/or other debris, can occlude the ear canal and trap water.

The ear canal can also be partially occluded by bony overgrowths of the canal called exostoses. These form in response to recurrent forceful submersion in cold water and are common in scuba divers, surfers and, you guessed it, whitewater boaters. These overgrowths also trap water and debris in the canal and can be serious enough to necessitate surgery.

So what can you do to prevent boater's ear? Giving up boating is obviously not a consideration.

please turn to page 43

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## PURPOSE

The American Whitewater Affiliation (AWA) is a national organization with a membership of over 1300 whitewater boating enthusiasts and more than 50 local canoe club affiliates. The AWA was organized in 1961 to protect and enhance the recreational enjoyment of whitewater sports in America.

**EDUCATION:** Through publication of a bi-monthly journal, the AWA provides information and education about whitewater rivers, boating safety, technique, and equipment.

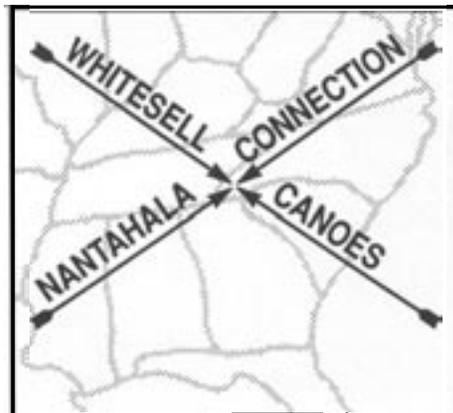
**CONSERVATION:** AWA maintains a national inventory of whitewater rivers, monitors potential threats to whitewater river resources through its "River Watch" system, publishes information on river conservation, works with government agencies to protect and preserve free-flowing whitewater rivers, and provides technical advice to local groups regarding river management and river conservation. AWA also gives annual awards to individuals to recognize exceptional contributions to river conservation and an annual "hydromania" award to recognize the proposed hydroelectric power project which would be most destructive of whitewater.

**EVENTS:** AWA organizes sporting events, contests and festivals to raise funds for river conservation. Since 1986, AWA has been the principal sponsor of the annual Gauley River Festival in Summersville, West Virginia, the largest gathering of whitewater boaters in the nation, other than at international racing events.

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

**ORGANIZATION AND PURPOSES:** AWA was incorporated under Missouri non-profit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at PO Box 85, Phoenicia, NY 12464. AWA has been granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. The charter includes the following purposes: encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of American recreational waterways or man-powered craft; protect the wilderness character of waterways through conservation of water, forests, parks, wildlife, and related resources; promote appreciation for the recreational value of wilderness cruising and of white-water sports.

**PROFESSIONAL STAFF:** Except for membership services and the Executive Director position, all AWA operations, including publication of the bimonthly magazine, are handled by volunteers.



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## LETTERS

### Country roads

Dear Editor,

AWA conservation writer Mac Thornton, writing about John Denver's "Country Road (sic)" (The title of the song is "Take Me Home, Country Roads,"), states that Denver "did not know where West Virginia is." That may be true but then neither does Thornton. The Blue Ridge mountains, referred to in the song, forms the eastern border of WV south and east from Harpers Ferry, and the Shenandoah River, while flowing for most of its length in Virginia, crosses the state line east of **Berryville** and flows entirely in WV to its mouth at Harpers Ferry. This is not the region of West Virginia whitewater legend but it is WV!

John Sweet  
Mistoe, VA

(editor's note: Mac should be forgiven for his geographic mistake. He's spent so much time helping coordinate the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, he probably thinks the state is limited to the drainage systems of the Cheat and Gauley Rivers!)

### I want my AWA

Dear Chris,

Despite the matter of it being published by amateur professionals (or is that professional amateurs), I really enjoy "American Whitewater." In fact, I find it to be, without a doubt, the finest mag for people with enough balls (no offense to Carla) to paddle solo river craft down whitewater. The laxity with which articles are written and edited delivers the wit and wisdom of real people, often apprehending feelings and experiences we have all suffered and enjoyed--all in stark contrast to the glossy tourist brochures and thirty page ads that characterize river barge and flatwater magazines. But enough gab. I haven't seen an issue since **Mar/Apr!** Could you be two months behind? Or did you screw something else up? Seriously, though, I'm dealing with a drought down here. Between the weather and my imposing thesis, I can't travel to whitewater much; the only thing running within 6 hours is the **Lower Yok** (1'...uugh--hardly worth the gas) and the Upper (twice a week, usually when I have to work). The bottom line is, I've only

paddled ten times all year, mostly during January, and I need a sop to keep me happy till I defend my thesis or kill my advisor so I can paddle. Will you please make amends? Thanks.

While I'm on the subject, I want to be **corny**. I did make up to Watertown last weekend to check out your stomping grounds. Being a virgin to the Black (and under the mistaken impression I was in for a sort of a hair boat), I hooked up with a group from Adirondack River Outfitters. Those guys were awesome--hooked me up with a shuttle (including a boat ride through the flatwater!), a photo (which I bought, but they thought to take it) and even BEER (as if they hadn't done enough already)! I owe them a million thanks; I certainly intend to recommend them to my river barging friends (yeah, I know a couple). But first and foremost, their genuine friendliness and helpfulness was strongly noticed, and in stark contrast to certain West Virginia companies who I've WORKED for even. Then there was Mike Sheridan at Hudson River; he saved me from having to steal Lee Belknap's radical spray-skirt design by lending me--a perfect stranger--his Harmony (which I'm sure I stretched way out of proportion). So if you could pass my deep appreciation to Mike, Bugz, and all the guys at ARO, I would really appreciate it.

Finally, in the last issue of AW I received, Mac, who seems quite observant, noticed (all of a sudden I guess) that "John Denver's" song "Country Roads" doesn't fit West Virginia too well. Think about it, though. Logically, do you think that the Colorado Tourism Division's poster boy would really write a song about West Virginia's mountains? Furthermore, would he name a happy song after that state's roads? Neither makes sense. "Crumbly Roads" maybe, but... Actually, that song was written by some seventies folk band (like Pure Prairie League, or something like that) about Western Virginia as they were driving through the Shenandoah Valley between gigs. John didn't write it, even though he popularized it and is often erroneously credited for it by people who don't check up on these things but publish big-note songbooks anyway, and, of course, it isn't about West Virginia, which, as Mac pointed out, makes sense.

Well, enough banter. Please send me my absent issues; I'll see you at the Gauley fest (I hope).

C. Bryan Chaffe  
Petersburg, PA

# Fremont threatened

by MARK WHITE

The Fremont, one of Utah's few surviving free flowing rivers, is being threatened by a hydroelectric facility that would be constructed just west of the Capitol Reef National Park boundary.

The project, developed by the Wayne County Water Conservation District, would consist of a 108 foot tall mile long dam, a three and one-half mile shallow reservoir, nine miles of pipeline, a holding pond, a diversion dam, a road, powerlines and a powerhouse.

The project would produce peaking flow patterns in response to power needs. As a consequence water flow volumes would fluctuate every day between 30 and 150+ cfs, which is equivalent to the average yearly fluctuation.

Opposition to the project is being spearheaded by the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. They claim that the plan is at best a "make work" project that will provide short term employment for out of area construction workers. They also argue that the project will result in the destruction of one of Utah's most beautiful riparian habitats.

The Fremont flows from west to east draining the Boulder Mountains and Parker Range. It joins Muddy Creek to form the Dirty Devil, which flows into what was once the Colorado River.

The stream is named after explorer Colonel John Fremont, who passed through the area in 1853 and stashed a cache of supplies near the river. Several years later, John Wesley Powell uncovered Fremont's cache and gave the river its name. In the pristine upper gorge, the river

remains in the same condition as it was when Fremont discovered it, more than a century ago.

Gary Nichol's, author of *A River Runner's Guide to Utah*, describes two navigable sections of the Fremont. The upper section is a class 3-6, nine mile expedition featuring fantastic scenery, excruciatingly technical whitewater and numerous mandatory portages. The gradient is 130 feet/mile.

The lower section is also nine miles in length, but is paralleled by a road and lies within Capitol Reef National Park. The gradient here is a gentler 55 feet/mile.

The dam would be located near the bottom of the steeper upper section, so that a portion of that run would be flooded. The Wayne County Water Conservation District is billing the project as an economic boost to the county through hydro power sales and increased tourism.

The proposed project would generate 8.1 megawatts, enough to serve about 4000 homes according to opponents to the project. They argue that the 400 homes in Wayne county use only a fraction of the existing available power now and that neither Wayne County nor the surrounding area is in need of any more power. 11% of the energy produced would be utilized to pump water to an elevated penstock where it will "gather enough falling force to generate the electricity."

Opponents to the project also argue that the economic impact due to increased recreational use seems unlikely, since the reservoir would be small, shallow, mossy and surrounded by extensive mud beaches. Otter Creek



The wild upper section of the Fremont River

Reservoir, Piute Reservoir, Fish Lake and Lake Powell are all nearby and each is closer to population centers and major highways. Because desert rivers carry significant amounts of sediment, concern has been raised about the life expectancy of the reservoir. The WCWCD has not studied this situation. Because of evaporation from the reservoir the project would also increase the salinity of the rivers downstream.

The WCWCD has reportedly suggested that chemical treatment and poisoning of the reservoir will be necessary periodically to control algae growth and to kill undesirable fish species. This would apparently be followed by restocking with more popular game species.

William H Greer, Director of the Utah State Department of Natural Resources, has raised several concerns regarding the effect of the project on fishing along the Fremont. He argues that the 2 cfs minimum flow is inadequate to maintain instream values. And, while the reservoir will create some fishing opportunity, Greer maintains that this is insufficient to mitigate the loss of the natural stream as a fishing resource.

"Flatwater and stream fisheries are not

comparable, nor are they exchangeable," according to a letter written by Greer to Robert Murdock, the Project Manager.

F.R. Hauch, Ph.D., of the Archaeologic-Environmental Research Corporation, identified eleven known cultural resources situated immediately within or adjacent to the dam site. Other undiscovered sites might also be present and they might have the potential to be placed in the National Historic Site Registry according to Hauch.

Two geologic fault lines are located nearby. The Thousand Lakes fault line is four miles from the proposed project and is considered active. The Teasdale fault is two miles from the site and is considered semi-active.

Opponents to the project point out that WCWCD has yet to create anything resembling a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis. Murdock has estimated a \$20 million dollar price tag for the hydro project, but estimates from David B. Mehan, of Wright Water Engineers, are that the cost would be between \$34 to \$85 million dollars. Operational costs might be several hundred thousand dollars per year.

Mehan suggested that as an alternative to boost Wayne County's economy,

that the Department of the Interior should buy the Fremont Gorge and put in campgrounds.

Environmentalists fighting the hydro project maintain that the Fremont should qualify for protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Utah Congressman Wayne Owens had introduced a bill which would designate 5.1 million acres of BLM land as wilderness.

The Fremont Gorge is encompassed in a 18,000 acre section included in Owen's Bill. Individuals interested in obtaining more information on the Fremont or the ongoing struggle to block the project should contact Ken Raitt of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance at (801) 532-5959 or Mark White at (801) 582-3445.

# Inside the Beltway *The underside of conservation*

by D. THROAT

An eight-lane interstate highway (known as the "beltway") encircles Washington, D.C.\* like an impenetrable moat isolating the capitol from the outside world. Inside this terrifying inferno, while the rest of the nation looks on in horror, the ponderous wheels of government slowly grind away. The world inside the beltway is a cacophonous Tower of Babel— inhabited by politicians, bureaucrats, T. V. newscasters, lobbyists,

lawyers, government contractors, drug addicts, and special interest groups.—Undeterred by this horrific scene, and

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# CONSERVE

of interest to whitewater boaters.—The following is a part of a continuing series of reports from inside the beltway.

"Stands for Darkness and Confusion.

## Momentum Slows for National Energy Bill

The gigantic national energy bill seems (momentarily?) stalled in the U.S. Senate. At last report, several Senators were queuing up to filibuster the bill.—This is good news for whitewater since the bill is very bad news for whitewater.—Needless to say, river conservation is far from center stage in this political drama. In fact, river issues are not even in the dressing room. The big-dog issues are whether to drill for oil in the Artic National Wildlife Refuge

and whether to mandate higher auto fuel efficiency.—But buried in legalese and fine print in the back of the bill- and in its legislative history- are some truly catastrophic provisions. These would :

(1) eliminate projects of less than 5000 kilowatts from all Federal requirements,

(2) eliminate the ability of Federal agencies (like the forest service) to protect natural resources threatened by hydropower,

(3) refuse State pleas to reverse recent Federal cases which have shredded State authority to control harmful hydro projects, and

(4) allow private contractors to control FERC's environmental impact statements.—Every hydro-power provision in the bill is designed to result in more and more unwise river

abuse— in the name of "streamlining" the licensing of new dams.—It is time for river conservationists to wake up and fight these provisions. So far, only AWA, American Rivers and the National Wildlife Federation have been pressuring Congress to drop the hydropower language. Other environmental groups are nowhere to be seen.

## Michigan Rivers Bill Still Hanging Out There

The bill to designate 14 rivers in Michigan as national wild and scenic rivers has temporarily stalled out in the House of Representatives. Prospects for passage are still good, but the timing is uncertain.

The Michigan rivers bill is of special interest to whitewater boaters because it includes no less than 7 rivers which have whitewater

segments: the Black (14 miles), tributaries of the Ontonagon (157.4 miles), the Paint (51 miles), the Pine (25 miles), the Presque Isle (57 miles), the Sturgeon (43.9 miles), and the Brule (33 miles). Good whitewater is not overabundant in Michigan (the entire State has only 250 miles of whitewater) so enactment of this bill will be a big plus.

## AWA Goes to Court in Salmon River Case

Stunned by FERC's recent decision that New York's Salmon River is "not navigable", AWA has filed a "Friend of the Court" brief in Federal court in a last-ditch effort to get this outrageous decision reversed.

The case has far-reaching implications because if the Salmon is not regarded as navigable under Federal

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law, hundreds of other whitewater rivers will be treated the same way. This means that, for some of these rivers, existing hydropower projects need not go through relicensing.

The next river on the agenda for a navigability decision is the Upper **Yough** in Maryland. In that case FERC is expected to rule that a section of the Upper **Yough** in the vicinity of the Deep Creek Project

(about 3 miles below Swallow Falls and about 3 miles upstream from Sang Run) is not navigable, even though kayakers and commercial rafts often paddle this section and even though logs were floated from that point to a sawmill downstream in Maryland many many years ago.

The consequences of these rulings could extend far beyond the issue of

hydroelectric power because, in most States, if a river is not navigable, the bed of the river is owned by the adjacent landowner.

Landowners who own the beds of nonnavigable rivers can usually keep boaters off the river. Criminal trespass actions have been brought against boaters on this basis in New York State and in Colorado.

**World Bank Ponders Bio Bio Problem**

A full scale effort is underway by AWA and other groups to save the Bio Bio River in Chile.

At a July meeting with AWA, the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth, a spokesman for the International Finance Corporation (an arm of the World Bank) promised that no precipitous action

would be taken by the IFC. The Endessa Power Company has applied to the IFC for some of the funding needed to build a massive dam to be located at the famous One-eyed Jack rapid on the Bio.

At the July meeting, the IFC spokesman told AWA representative, Pope Barrow, that a thorough environmental analysis would be done before any IFC funding would be made available. He estimated that the review could take at least another year. He warned, however, that the analysis would not be made public by the IFC.

Although the power company is reluctantly proceeding with the environmental assessment requested by the IFC, it is simultaneously carrying on an extensive television propaganda campaign in Santiago designed to undermine public

support for the anti-dam groups. — Recent reports from Chilean environmentalists indicate that the power company is growing increasingly worried that the World Bank may pull out in the face of so much environmental concern. Efforts are apparently underway to find alternative, perhaps the Interamerican Development Bank or one of the gigantic Japanese banks.

A new concern for environmentalists- especially those living in Chile- is whether the growing tide of local opposition will be snuffed out by threats and intimidation.

The bottom line is this- all boaters who want to paddle the Bio bio should get down to Chile right away in December or January. Even if Chilean and international environmental groups are able to stop World



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## **Little River Proposal Encounters Fierce Opposition**

Congressman Tom Bevill of Alabama has proposed the establishment of a National Preserve to protect the Little River Canyon in northern Alabama. The area affected includes one of the most outstanding whitewater river segments in the entire southeast, not to mention an outstanding, and little-known, canyon with scenery to rival Colorado's much more famous Royal Gorge.

The proposed legislation would permanently protect Little River Canyon from hydroelectric power

developments. (Alabama Power developed plans for a huge earthen dam in the canyon many years ago). It would also authorize the transfer of thousands of acres of Alabama Power Company property to the National Park Service, and possibly also some lands in the Desoto State Park, as well as a wildlife management area now controlled by the State of Alabama.

The proposal envisioned by Congressman Bevill does not involve including any private property - other than the Alabama Power Company lands - within the boundaries of the new Preserve, and Alabama Power officials have indicated that they like National Preserve idea.

Nevertheless, after being incited to riot by Chuck Cushman, a hired gun

brought in from Washington State, a small group of increasingly fanatical people who reside near the river have declared war on supporters of the National Preserve proposal, the National Park Service, and Congressman Bevill.

Chuck Cushman is employed by an organization (the National Inholders Association) which is adamantly opposed to new national parks and wild and scenic rivers. The Association is active in fighting the Michigan rivers bill, an omnibus Washington State wild and scenic rivers bill, and many other river conservation projects.

Cushman's special mission is to travel around the country and stir up local opposition to river conservation programs and new national parks. His usual

angle the defense of private property rights, but since no private property is affected by the Little River proposal, river conservationists are beginning to sense a broader agenda.

## **Boater Fee Controversy Continues but Kayaks and Canoes Exempt**

The boater fee controversy continues to generate political heat inside the beltway and beyond.

Thanks largely to Senator Malcom Wallop and his staff (one of whom is reported to be an avid canoeist) - the Coast Guard agreed to exempt man-powered vessels such as canoes and kayaks from the new user fee. All rafters, canoeists, and sailboard owners breathed a sigh of relief since the minimum fee

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is \$25/boat per year, and each boat would be required to have a Coat Guard sticker. (Most whitewater kayaks were exempt even under the original law since it did not apply to any watercraft less than 16 feet long.)

Jealous of the success of kayakers and canoeists in achieving exempt status, power boat and yacht owners are now creating such an enormous stink that many Washington watchers think the entire law may be doomed.

## Gunnison diversion opposed

The Bureau of Reclamation has released a statement favoring approval of a water diversion project on the Gunnison River in Colorado immediately above Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument. However, other federal agencies say the proposed hydropower plant would cause serious environmental damage to the park.

The National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Environ-

mental Protection Agency and members of Congress have all urged Reclamation to scrap the project or at least delay its final decision until an NPS study provides more information about its likely effects.

The proposed project would divert 60 to 70 percent of the water from the Gunnison River through the Black Canyon and would cause serious damage to its popular whitewater.

## Gauley releases look good despite drought conditions

Though a late-spring drought has reduced the Gauley River to a mere trickle, officials don't expect a repeat of 1988's drought-shortened whitewater season.

The Gauley's flow was cut to just 150 cfs and the restricted outflow has helped fill Summersville Lake to its usual summer level. Corps of Engineer officials are now hoping that they won't have to use the hard-earned water before the boating season begins.

They may not have to. The Kanawha River has been running at levels above the 3,000 cfs needed to maintain navigation and water quality. As long as the Kanawha's flow can continue

to be sufficient from what the New River brings in, the Gauley won't be needed to supplement water levels.

In 1988 drought forced the Corps to drain Summersville Lake to near-wintertime levels long before the whitewater season began and flows during the scheduled release period were severely curtailed.

However, the **drawdown** practices of the Corps were questioned by the AWA who suggested that more innovative release procedures could have preserved the necessary flows in Charleston, WV while allowing the whitewater season to continue.



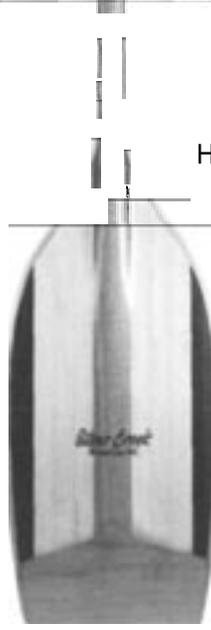
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# Ocoee Rodeo: "Best in the East"

Bill Berger photo



Bill Berger photo

By RISA SHIMODA CALLAWAY

"I think we may have caught up to the whitewater cowboys out west," said one paddler, removing his competitor's bib. "I think we may have even moved a notch past them."

The 1991 Ocoee Rodeo will be remembered as the most exciting, entertaining freestyle ever seen in the east. No question about it.



Paul Parsons photo



Paul Parsons photo

Over one hundred boaters competed in the squirt, surface decked and open canoe dasses at **Cat's Pajamas** and **Hell's Hole**, the last of the Class III-IV whitewater rapids on this popular run near Ducktown, TN, June 29-30.

Competitors logged quite a few miles to show their stuff, registering from Washington (DC and State), Idaho, Pennsylvania, the Virginias, and even Augsberg, Germany.

The addition of Women's Intermediate Surface and Squirt, and Open Canoe classes illustrated the growing breadth of the competitors, and the sheer number of truly strong competitors in every class evidenced a vast difference in depth from previous years.

Saturday at Torpedo, Forrest **Callaway** put down (literally) the longest mystery move anyone had seen, and proved that last year's powerful squirt boating performance was no fluke. He posted a second to **Bob McDonough**, who, unbelievably, won the expert class both days.

Jeff Snyder, the perennial squirtmeister, took third, looked great, but had to admit that the southern guys and gals have elevated their skill a level or two.

The women's first and second place finishers, **Susan Gentry** (Hoschtion GA, near Atlanta), and **Anita Adams** (Edmond, WV) showed strength and skill, Anita having just a month before won the women's squirt competition at the Potomac Whitewater Festival.

The most surprising class was the squirt C-1's: this group was spurred by universally solid skill and flamboyance which made for a terrific show of moves like...were those really offside screwups?

Two locals, **Mel Stuart** and **Chris Manderson** managed to ward off the threats from "fer'ners" **Scott Masterson** (VA), **George Garrett** (WV), and **Thomas Fink** (Germany!).

AWA Director **Diana Holloran** was the grande dame of the entire weekend's activities for the second year in a row. She and her rafting company, **Ocoee Rafting**, superbly organized and hosted Saturday evening's dinner, raffle, and auction, with the able assistance of **Beth Harper**, (coowner of **Man of Rubber**), with whom she phoned, planned, and panicked for months. Their forethought showed, per the smooth flow of both days' events.

"We had many more volunteers

to help this year's planning, we started earlier, and knew about several potential pitfalls before we started," **Diana** said when it was all over. "Having a history made us so much more prepared."

"Being part of the National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos series really assisted our sponsor solicitation, and made insurance less expensive, too. (NOWR is a group of over a dozen whitewater rodeos and festivals held across the U.S. from April to September)." Sponsors like **New Wave**, **Perception, Inc.**, and **Noah International** donated boats for fundraising, and **Infinity** and **Prijon** allowed us to purchase boats for the auction. Other manufacturers donating gear looked like a who's-who of whitewater-Kokatat, Patagonia, Werner Paddles, Sidewinder, Silver Creek, Harmony, ....the list goes on!"

Dagger Canoes, with the most innovative sponsorship to date, is going to pick a random name from among all of the competitors in the NOWR events this year.

The winner will win a trip to Chile courtesy of **Ladeco Airlines** and **Expediciones Chile**, and will arrive home to a new Dagger boat of choice! **Woody**

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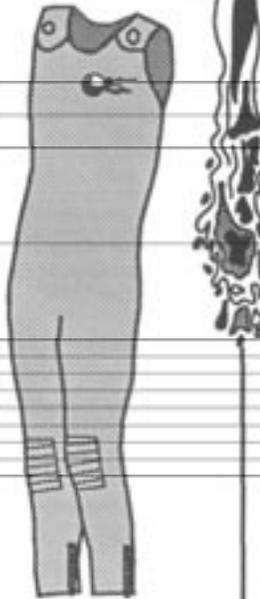
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# BRIEFS

Callaway commandeered the auctioneer's microphone to help net over \$4,000 for the AWA, some of which is earmarked for groundskeeping equipment for the Forest Service folks who maintain the put-in and take-out for us. All donations were tax-deductible, and will help the AWA continue the tradition of being the only organization in the country that works exclusively on promoting and preserving recreation on our precious whitewater rivers.

Sunday's competition once again saw many great paddlers in every single class, bar none. Man of Rubber's Beth and Gary Harper organized the raft race which timed boats from put-in to take-out. Raft teams were also required to catch several tricky eddies and pick up tokens to prove they'd been there.

The most fun for spectators at Hell's Hole was to see one of the guides in each competitive raft going airborne, in an attempt to grab a rubber bow tie hanging from the bridge above the hole.

Kathy Bolyn walked away with the K-1W Expert 1st Place but was complemented by solid competition in the entire class. The Open Boats were "pretty dang" hot, too, with the winners (Phil Foti from



Frankie *Hubbord* getting air time in the open canoe freestyle competition.

Birmingham and Felicia Mayur from Richmond took the top honors) finessing 360's, offside surfs and sky-high enders. The field of thirteen men and five women illustrated once again that we live in the land of

the best open boaters anywhere. Anywhere. (Any folks ready to view that comment as a challenge?)

Bailey Johnson from Lenoir City, TN was psyched about having competed

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(he took third), and felt his sentiment was shared by the other open boaters.

"Personally, I love to go out there and mess around. Having a huge uowd yelling and the chance to win a prize makes it just that much more fun.

"For next year," he commented later, "I'm looking forward to getting open boaters more involved with the organization of the rodeo, particularly with judging of the open boat dasses."

The Men's Expert Surface classes were nudged into high gear by the presence of German Jan Kellner. Jan works with Pyrahna, promoting their boats with his expertise in the Stunt Bat.

Promote them he does: in the practice session, Jan exhibited a truly phenomenal combination of pirouettes, Polish enders and spins that had the uowd in an uproar. He was immediately followed, though, by an equally wild show by Bad Bob McDonough.

That set the tone, and the heat was on high. Each of the Top eight men who went into the final, head-to-head competition were super to watch -- Bob, Jan, Corran Addison, Doug Wellman, Brian Fischer, Tom DeCuir, Chris Spelius, many

familiar names and faces.

The top honors ended up with Bob, Corran, and Jan, after a few wild, final sets. Also part of the final eight was Dan Gavere from Montana. Dan, an experienced competitive snowboarder and extreme skier, showed up with no boat or paddle for either day's competition, but proceeded to open a few eyes. Watch for Dan in the rodeos to come, guys and gals...

Thanks to all who came to show their support for the organizers and competitors.

Next June, this event will be even better. We're beginning to work on our improvements now, and if you'd like to help run what's becoming the hottest whitewater freestyle competition in the country, call Risa Shimoda Callaway at 704-483-2758.

Finally, a comment from Jeff Farling, who traveled from his home near Harrisburg, PA to compete on Saturday's squirt contest.

Having had his eyes opened wide at the depth of skilled boaters present, he advises that "if you're thinking of being there next year to win, start practicing now."

## Gauley Fest a birthday blow-out

By BARRY TOSCANO  
Gauley Festival Chairman

Way back in the early 80's, I planned a birthday party around a trip to the Gauley.

All my paddling buddies traveled to Summersville, where, after a day on the river, we congregated at Battle Run for a campfire meal and a few beers (actually a keg). Someone said something about a GAULEY FESTIVAL and so we piled into the back of a pickup and away we went.

What ensued was a memorable birthday party indeed. At least as much of it as I can remember was memorable!

Although they didn't know it, more than 1000 people joined me in the celebration of my birthday. The Women in Rubber gave one of their legendary performances. There were whitewater videos that planted

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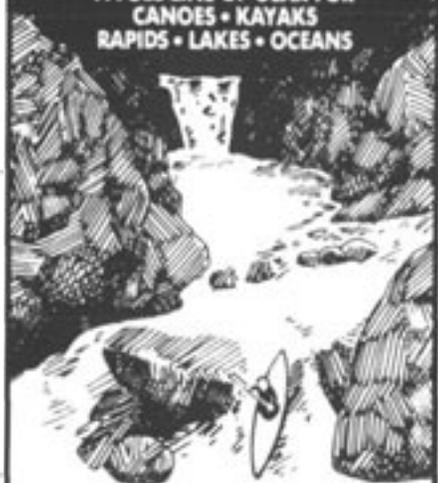
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seeds in my fertile mind, seeds that later sprouted and grew into fantastic adventures (and misadventures). But the biggest thrill of all was seeing so many people who paddle coming together at one place at one time... and for a good **cause!!!**

Since that Festival we've Saved the Gauley and moved on to other, equally important things... like the West Virginia Rivers Coalition. The Festivals are even bigger now, but the flavor remains the same. I've been helping out with the Festival for several years now, and the spirit of the shindig always reminds me of that first birthday party.

Now I'm the Festival Coordinator and by some quirk of the astrological charts this year's Festival falls right on my birthday again. Not just any birthday, mind you. My fortieth birthday!

So if you don't care about bargains on paddling gear at the silent auction

or marketplace, if you don't want a chance to hobnob with some of nation's best outfitters and boat designers, if you don't want to see the latest in equipment, if you don't want to see the hottest new whitewater videos, selected especially by the Whitewater Film Festival folks from Lexington, and you don't want to help save our precious whitewater resources... come on out anyway and help me celebrate my birthday!

We'll have live music, food, beer, games and a few surprises.

The fun starts on Saturday, September 21 at the New River Gorge Campground, off route 19, north of the New River Bridge, and runs from 5 until midnight. Admission is still only **\$5**, and I'll let you deduct that from the cost of the present you're getting for me!

Forty candles is a lot to blow out! I may need help!

## *Brown heads up America Outdoors*

Noted river conservationist and AWA Regional Coordinator David L. Brown has been named the Executive Director of America Outdoors.

America Outdoors was created earlier this year by the merger of Western River Guides Association and Eastern Professional Rivers Outfitters. American Outdoors corporate membership has grown by 25% since the merger, and now represents more than 200 companies involved in the whitewater industry, serving an estimated 1,000,000 outdoor enthusiasts each year.

America Outdoors (AO) President J.T. Lemons said, "Mr Brown is well known nationally for his efforts to promote and preserve river recreation opportunities. We needed someone with his experience addressing national recreation policy issues who has also successfully managed similar associations."

Most recently Brown worked for the Hydra Division of Rotocast Products as Vice President for Marketing and Sales. Prior to that he served as Executive Director of Eastern Professional River Outfitters Association (EPRO) and the Knoxville Watersports Festival.

Brown, an accomplished kayaker well known in the east, cut his teeth dealing with river related issues as Executive Director of the Ocoee River Council in the early 80s. He started the first Ocoee Festival, held in 1981, and organized the first whitewater rodeo in the east.

Brown was instrumental in negotiating the current recreational releases on the Ocoee. Shortly thereafter, as Executive Director of the Citizens for Gauley River, he was instrumental in blocking the hydro project on that river that would have disrupted whitewater recreation. Under his direction the Citizens for Gauley River held the First Gauley River Festival in 1983. They continued that tradition for several years before turning it over to the American Whitewater Affiliation.

"Getting flows from dams for recreational purposes is sort of my forte," Brown said in a recent interview.

According to Brown the **Secretary** of the Interior recently announced that this was to be a priority and AO hopes to help him accomplish this. Flows on the Arkansas are already being augmented and Brown hopes to lobby for enhanced flows on the Delores.

## Tohickon take-out fees increase significantly

The fall Whitewater releases on **Tohickon** Creek have been a traditional end-of-season event for hundreds of East Coast whitewater paddlers. Its five miles of continuous class III rapids are ideal for kayaks and canoes.

Some paddlers who attended the release on the **Tohickon** Creek this past spring found a notice on their cars announcing that starting this fall the take-out fees at Point Pleasant Canoes would be sharply increased.

After a follow-up discussion with Point Pleasant Canoe representatives, this is what I learned.

First, the fee for taking out on Point Pleasant Canoe property will be \$5 per person per day. \$3 of this \$5 will go to the Point Pleasant Fire Company, which is moving to new facilities.

Access will be controlled by wristbands, which can be purchased beforehand or upon arriving at the takeout. This covers the use of the property, including toilets and changing facilities, for the entire day. You can run your own shuttle, or use Point Pleasant Canoe vehicles at \$2 per trip back to the put-in.

There is no doubt that there will be considerable complaining about this fee. But the facilities at Point Pleasant Canoe are the only ones in town capable of handling the crowds which throng to the fall

releases.

For those who do not wish to pay, alternate legal access is available at **Bull's Island State Park's** boat ramp, a 1 mile flat paddle downstream on the New Jersey side of the Delaware. The shuttle is quite a bit longer, requiring a crossing on the bridges at **Stockton** or **Frenchtown**.

Whether you want to save money or maximize your time on the creek is your choice. But if neither option appeals to you, please stay **home!** The **Tohickon** Releases have survived for fifteen years because of the goodwill of the people of Point Pleasant and the sensible behavior of hundreds of canoe and kayak paddlers from all over the East Coast. The takeout fee is steep, but the old \$5 per car charge has not increased since the mid-seventies and was probably due for an increase.

**PLEASE DON'T EVEN THINK OF PARKING ILLEGALLY IN TOWN!!** You'll probably be ticketed, but worse, widespread violation of town parking regulations could lead to the cancellation of this event.

You will see some boaters using alternate access because of friendships with town residents. Do not attempt to do the same without permission. If you have any questions please call: **Charlie Walbridge 215-646-0157** Point Pleasant Canoe and Tube 215-297-TUBE

Another concern being addressed by AO and Brown is the erratic flows on the Colorado through the Grand Canyon. Wide fluctuations in volume make managing the commercial and private use of the river difficult, and there has been a great deal of concern about the effects these flows are having on the river's environment.

One of Brown's and AO's goals is to create a standardized accident report that could be used nationwide, so that an accurate data base and statistically valid analysis of commercial river accidents will be available.

Brown acknowledges that the private and commercial whitewater boating communities sometimes have different agendas, but he believes that most of the time their goals are similar... river conservation, maximizing river access and recreational opportunities and safety.

Brown has worked with AWA Director and Conservation Chairman Pope Barrow on a number of projects over the years. One of these is Riverwatch, a part of the Rivers and Trail Access Assistance Program of the National Park Service.

Riverwatch provides information

regarding the recreational use of rivers to federal agencies, most significantly, to FERC. Brown notes that the hydro power lobby has been campaigning aggressively to do away with Riverwatch and that the current administration has repeatedly attempted to zero the program's budget, in spite of congressional allocations and support.

As Executive Director of AO, Brown says he is looking forward to a warm and productive relationship with AWA as the two organizations collaborate on diverse river related projects around the country.

The new address for America Outdoors is: **p.o. box 1348**, Knoxville, Tennessee, 37901. Their phone is 615-524-4814.

## Chili Bar Rodeo slated for September

The American River Festival, including the traditional Chili Bar Rodeo, has been slated this year as a late summer event in California. Usually held in early June, this year's whitewater weekend of slalom racing, downriver racing and freestyle competition will take place September 14-15.

The uncertainty of water availability put Festival planning on hold earlier this season, but "we have been guaranteed a good level and are excited about being able to continue the tradition," says Susan Debret, owner of the River Store

and the event organizer.

The American River Festival will be the final event presented by the National Organization of Whitewater Rodeos this season. Debret believes the Festival will "surely attract top area paddlers and spectators interested in seeing them, before the summer paddling season winds down." Festival proceeds will benefit the American Rivers Land Trust.

Additional information is available from AWA President Risa Callaway at 704-483-5049 or from Susan Debret at 916-626-3435.



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## Extricating paddlers in difficult situations

# Techniques for "head-up" entrapment

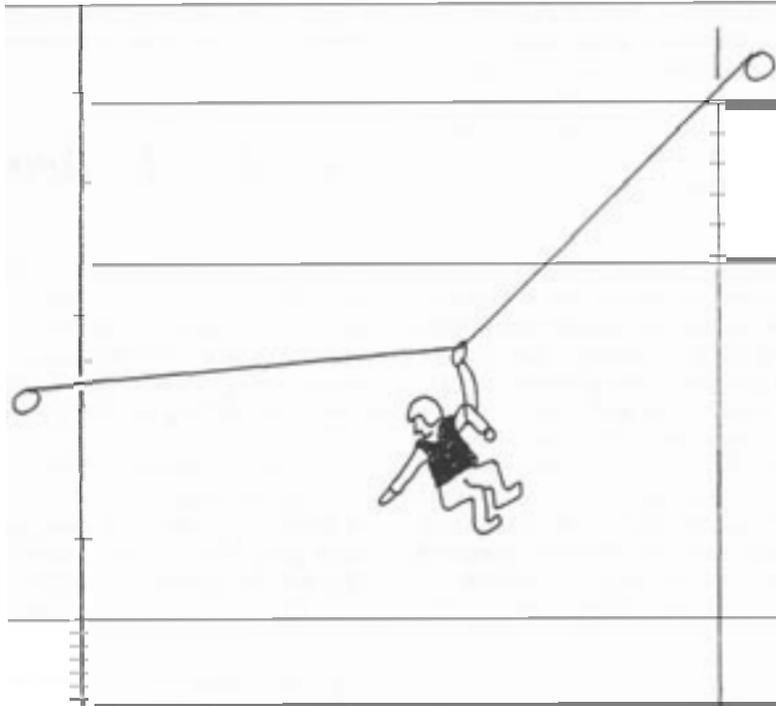
By CHARLIE WALBRIDGE  
AWA Safety Chairman

One of the scariest types of rescues to confront is the "heads-up" entrapment, in which the boater is pinned in his boat, struggling to keep his head above water. Extricating a paddler caught in this way is risky. If the rescuer inadvertently destabilizes the victim during the extrication he can be forced underwater and killed. Fortunately, a number of useful techniques have been developed during the past few years which work well in simulations and in real-life attempts. The strategy is as follows: First, stabilize the victim with a tag line. Then, if the victim can't self-rescue, get help out to him with a zip line and physically pull him free from the boat if necessary. Let's take a look at each of these procedures and the skills needed to make them work.

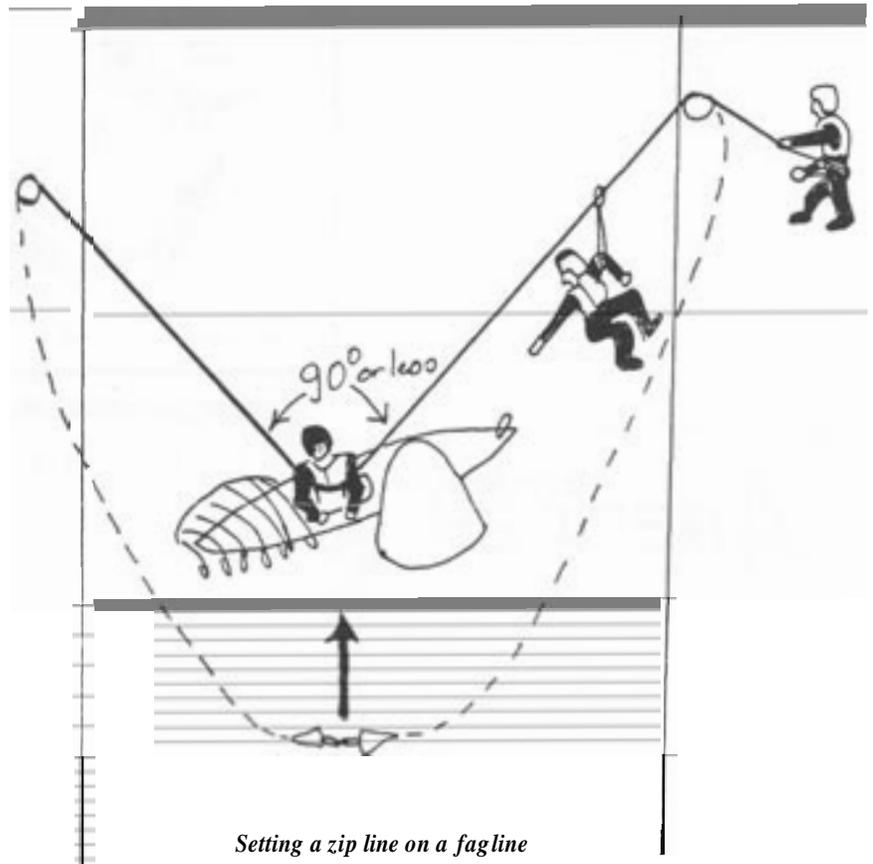
### SETTING A TAG LINE

A tag line is nothing more than a rope stretched across a section of fast-moving water to give support to a victim. It can be erected quickly with a single rescue bag or, for longer reaches, by clipping two or more rescue bags together with carabiners. This line is then pulled up under the chest of an entrapped paddler, giving the support needed to keep his head above water. Tag lines can also be used to back-up victims whose situations, while momentarily stable, seems precarious. Watch the victim carefully; you can hurt him with careless line handling. Keep the line firm, steady and mid-chest high. If the boater is weak or distracted, a life jacket can be clipped to the line for extra visibility and support. Once the victim is stabilized, rescuers will have time to figure out what to do next.

If the victim is buried in the water, getting a line up under his chest will not be easy. The rope will tend to skim across the surface of fast-moving water. Placing rescue bags at the center of the line and filling them with rocks (a snag line) is effective but time consuming. You can get a similar effect by holding the line close to or under the surface of the water as it is worked into place. Oftentimes if the vic-



*A sagged zip line — insufficient tension pulls the angle out of the line.*



*Setting a zip line on a snag line*

tim understands what you are doing he or she can put the line in place across the chest and under the arms.

### BELAYS AND ANCHORS

Set the belays or anchors for the tag line well upstream of your target. The rope should be allowed to fall well below the victim, and before being pulled upstream. Note that a tag line is never stretched tightly across the river; that would increase the strain on the anchors by a factor of four! Instead, the rope should form an angle of roughly 90 or less degrees with the victim at the center. This also creates a "pocket" which provides additional support to the trapped paddler. This requires more line than you might think; a good rule of thumb is to have a length of rope which is at least one-and-a-half times as long as the width of the chute you want to set up across.

Anchors are far stronger and more reliable than belays, but take more time to set. The most common anchor is a loop of webbing placed around a rock or tree. Experience and ingenuity will go a

long way in finding good placements. On severe runs paddlers may bring chocks or other rock climbing equipment to facilitate placements. Don't neglect to check underwater for fingers of rock which may hold a sling.

In the absence of anchors or when time is short, belays can be used. Hip belays, in which the rope passes behind the back in the pelvic area, provide the most strength. For maximum holding power, sit down and place your feet firmly against solid footholds which line your body up with the direction of the pull. This belay can be reinforced by additional paddlers grabbing hold of the **belayer** by his life jacket. Two or three people at each end of the rope can provide substantial anchoring power. The pressure of the rope on the **belayer** can be reduced by bending the line over and around a rock or tree. The object under the rope absorbs much pressure which would normally be passed to the **belayer**. It's often a simple matter for those holding the rope to drop behind a rock or in some way transfer some of the pull to a stationary object.

### ZIP LINES

Most rescues are most easily effected by paddlers applying direct muscle power at the site of the problem. Rope rescues, which apply power from a distance, are cruder and best used as a last resort. The problem is that most of the **pinnings** and entrapments occur at inconvenient locations difficult to reach from shore. Getting a rescuer to the victim under these conditions can be a real challenge.

A zip line is a tensioned length of rope anchored at both ends and set at an angle to the current. This provides a safe and secure method for ferrying rescuers across a river without boats. The user takes a length of webbing, a carabiner, and clips into the rope. To get across the current, they get into the water on their back, catch the webbing under their shoulder or elbow on the upstream side, and hold tight. The water pushes them down the line to the far shore without much fuss. The steeper the angle of the rope to the current, the faster the trip. If the angle is not steep and the line is not tensioned, the zip line may

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# SAFETY

stall out. You'll have to pull yourself down the line with your free hand.

With a tag line you have the potential for a zip line from either shore. Mike Croslin of Rescue II was the first to realize that the victim is an anchor at the apex of two tensioned lines angled to the current." A rescuer can clip in and slide down from either side; if the zip line does not slide freely, you can pull yourself across the line with your free hand. When you reach the victim, get your footing and pull the victim free. The main consideration, as always, is your safety and that of the victim. Zip lines put extra stress on your anchors or belays. The anchors must be strong enough to handle the stress. Should the anchors or belays fail, both the rescuer and victim could be at risk. Remember that you may have to let go of the tag line, so calculate beforehand the consequences of a swim. This is a dangerous technique when used above big drops, sieves, or other hazards. If manpower permits, set downstream backup in the form of a safety boater or rescue bag-equipped shore person.

## FOOT ENTRAPMENTS

Tag lines and snag lines can be used to release foot entrapments. But time is of the essence in this type of rescue, and setting one up quickly is extremely difficult. I know of only one successful rescue, made by a group of river guides on their day off, but there have been a number of near-saves. The trick is to get the rope UNDER the victim quickly. As the rope then pulled upstream, it slips down to the entrapped foot along the victim's body. As the rope is pulled further, it applies force directly to the foot, working it loose in the same direction as it went in. If there are problems, additional help can be zip-lined down to the victim. If the rescuer can get his footing, he may be able to pull the victim's head above water.

## DAM RESCUE

Tag lines provide a way to bring help to people caught in dangerous areas such as the backwash of low-head dams which lie out of reach of throw-line or boat rescues. It also works for holes, eddies, and other

situations which boaters cannot safely approach. The rescuers can tie a life vest to the line, then maneuver it across the water to the victim for support. When the victim grabs hold, he can be pulled downstream, over the boil. Alternatively, one side can give slack, allowing the victim to be pulled towards the other shore. The latter technique requires a rope which is twice as long as the length of the tag line. Before letting go of the rope; this can lead to entanglement! Holding the line clear of the water until it reaches the victim minimizes current drag and makes the rope easier to handle.

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED

These rescues can be carried out with minimal equipment: a 70' rescue bag, two carabiners, and a webbing sling which can be used as a waist loop, anchor, or zip line strap. The equipment of several boaters can be pooled for rescues like these; small groups may want to bring along some extra gear. A knife is also a good safety backup when working with ropes. The total weight of this equipment: less than

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**SAFETY ALERT**

We have had several near misses this year resulting from boaters carrying carabiners on their life jackets becoming clipped in the raft hand lines or rescue ropes. As a result, we are recommending that ONLY LOCKING CARABINERS be carried on a life jacket, and these should be carried with the lock engaged. If you prefer to use standard carabiners, carry them in a small stuff bag inside your rescue bag. These bags are available at a nominal charge from the Nantahala Outdoor Center.

*Charlie Walbridge is the chairman for the AWA and for the American Canoe Association. He is also a national director for the AWA.*

# Slim Ray severely injured after accident on Green

Submitted by GORDON GRANT

Slim Ray hurt his back badly in a run of Sunshine Falls on the Middle Green. As of July 15th, doctors at the intensive care unit of Memorial Hospital in Asheville, NC stated that the T-12 vertebrae (the lowest of the chest vertebrae, a little above the small of the back) was badly damaged, and that Slim might lose the use of his legs.

Here is what happened:

Slim was part of a group of boaters (Bunny Johns, Gordon Grant, Tom Visnius, Cat Potts, John Woolerd, Phil Curry, and two boaters from Eagle's Nest Camp named Jeff and John) many of whom were making their first run down the Green. Tom Visnius, who has run that section many times, was leading the group. Plenty of time was taken for scouting and carrying, and the group had come down to Sunshine without incident.

Sunshine is a technically difficult rapid that is generally regarded as one of the more serious dropson sections known for its seriousness. To run it, one must drive diagonally from left to right over a 15-foot drop into a small eddy, out of which one must turn and run another five-foot drop. Failure to make the diagonal move across the main drop results in the boat falling vertically onto a rock shelf.

The group got to the rapid a little after 3:00 p.m. The drop was run without incident by four of the boaters, while the rest of the group carried boats around. Slim indicated that he wanted to run. He caught the eddy on river left above the drop and began the drive toward the right shore. As his boat went off the drop, it lost its angle to the left and went straight down, hitting with terrific impact at the base and





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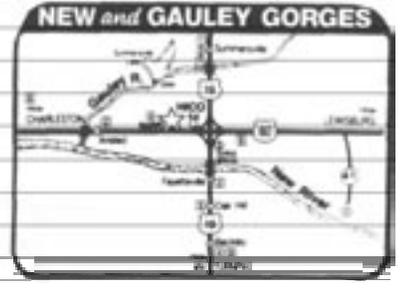
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# SAFETY

momentarily pinning.

After about three seconds, the boat pitched forward (without folding) and disappeared upside down in the spray below the falls. After about another two seconds, Slim's paddle floated out, followed by the boat, still upside down. Slim surfaced beside the boat as it swept over the second and smaller drop. As soon as he surfaced he shouted. Two ropes were thrown. Slim caught the second, and was pulled to shore by Gordon. As he was being roped in, Slim, obviously in great pain, called out that he had hurt his back. Gordon pulled him into the shallows by the shore, but did not attempt to pull him out of the water, beginning instead a primary survey and checking for responsiveness in the legs and arms. Slim reported great pain in his back, but no sensation in his lower body below the waist. The time was 3:30.

The immediate choice of first aid was to treat for a spinal injury: to keep Slim as immobilized as possible. At first, four people stayed in the water with him, allowing him to float but minimizing any movement. A pair of runners, Tom V. and

John W., went for help up a steep trail that enters above Nutcracker rapids on the river left side. The decision was made to go that route because of access to the cars of friends who had hiked in, among them Roy Snyder, a former NOC staff member now working at Camp Mondamin. The runners knew to contact rescue squads and bring them in the river left trail for an evacuation using a Stokes litter and backboard. The runners left at 3:50.

In order to keep Slim motionless, the boaters giving first aid, Bunny and Gordon, elected to keep him in the water and build a supporting structure on foam from kayak walls placed underneath him. This was decided because of the knowledge that the water would be dropping due to the closing of the release upstream at 1:30. The water began dropping at the accident site at about 4:10. As it dropped, the first aid team kept adding foam triangles cut from walls to act as shims underneath the foam planks on which Slim lay. In this way, they were able to keep him as level and immobile as conditions allowed. The water was below the level of Slim's body at about 4:50. At this point, he

was wrapped in insulating layers and covered with trash bags to prevent further heat loss.

At 5:15, Tom and John arrived with the first of the rescue squad volunteers. In order to prevent undue haste from possibly causing damage to Slim's back, the paddlers insisted on the identification of a first aid leader before any movement of Slim. The leader was Slim Mott of Henderson County rescue unit based in Flat Rock. He arrived at about 5:40, and presided over the administering of an IV of Ringers lactate, and the packaging of Slim onto a backboard and the Stokes litter.

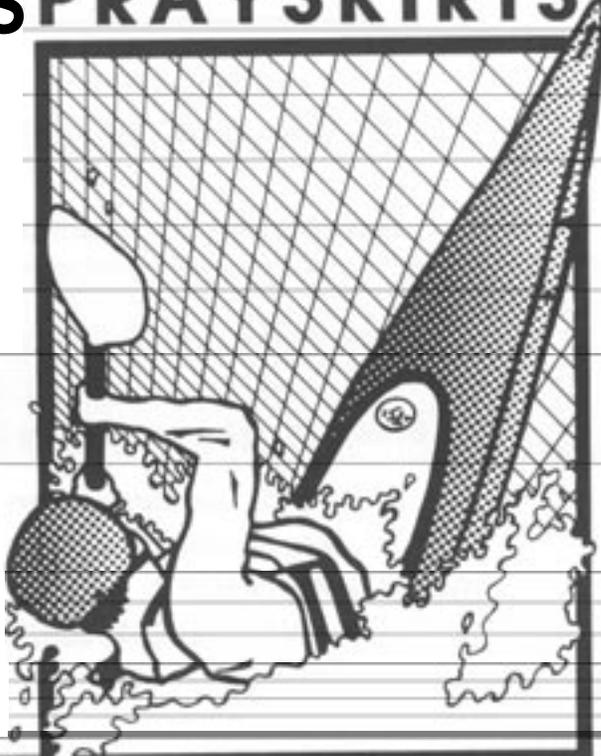
A helicopter from Memorial Mission had been radioed for shortly after the arrival of the rescue squads. It quickly responded, landing on a large flat rock on river left above Nutcracker at about 5:50. The flight paramedic, Reilly Bennet, arrived about six and took over as director of operations.

Cat Potts and other paddlers had scouted out the best evacuation trail, which went up river on the river right side for two hundred yards to a large pool.



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There, they carried three Jeti kayaks and lashed them together to form a stable platform on which to float Slim across the pool to the river left side. The trail was cleared and the kayak float was prepared while Slim was being packaged.

A team of seven paddlers and about as many rescue squad folks carried Slim up the trail and across the river on the float, getting him into the helicopter at about 7:00 pm. He was flown to the Emergency unit at Mission, arriving at about

7:20 pm.

Roy Snyder and Roland Mackell of Mondamin carried out a Jeti and Slim's paddle. The rest of the group paddled the two miles or so to the takeout, since there was barely enough water in the river to make this possible. They left the accident site at 7:30, and arrived at the take-out at about 9:00. After taking care of the shuttle, Gordon and Bunny drove straight to Mission, arriving at 10:00, and seeing Slim at 11:40. Cat, Phil and Tom arrived about

then, and stayed to hear the doctor's prognosis at 12:30.

Right now, the best thing we can do is send Slim reminders of our support. I am terribly sad that this terrible accident has happened to such a good friend, but I am confident we gave him the best care possible at the scene of the accident, made him as comfortable as we could, and prevented further injury to him—which is really all first aiders can do.

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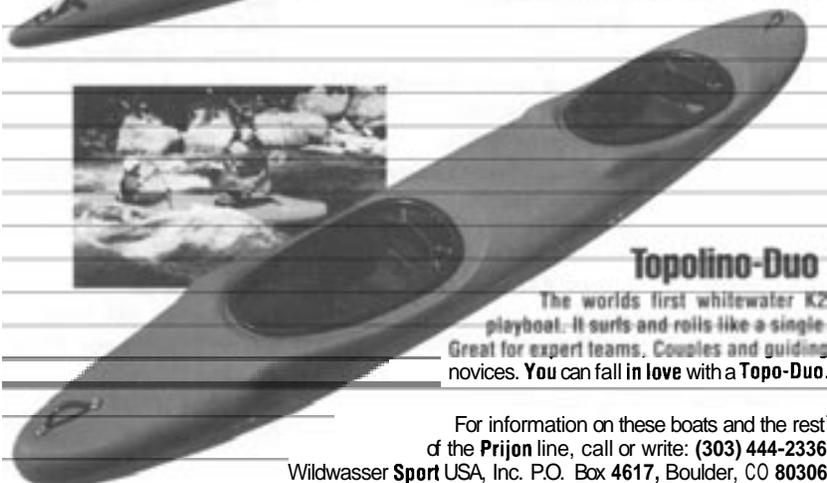
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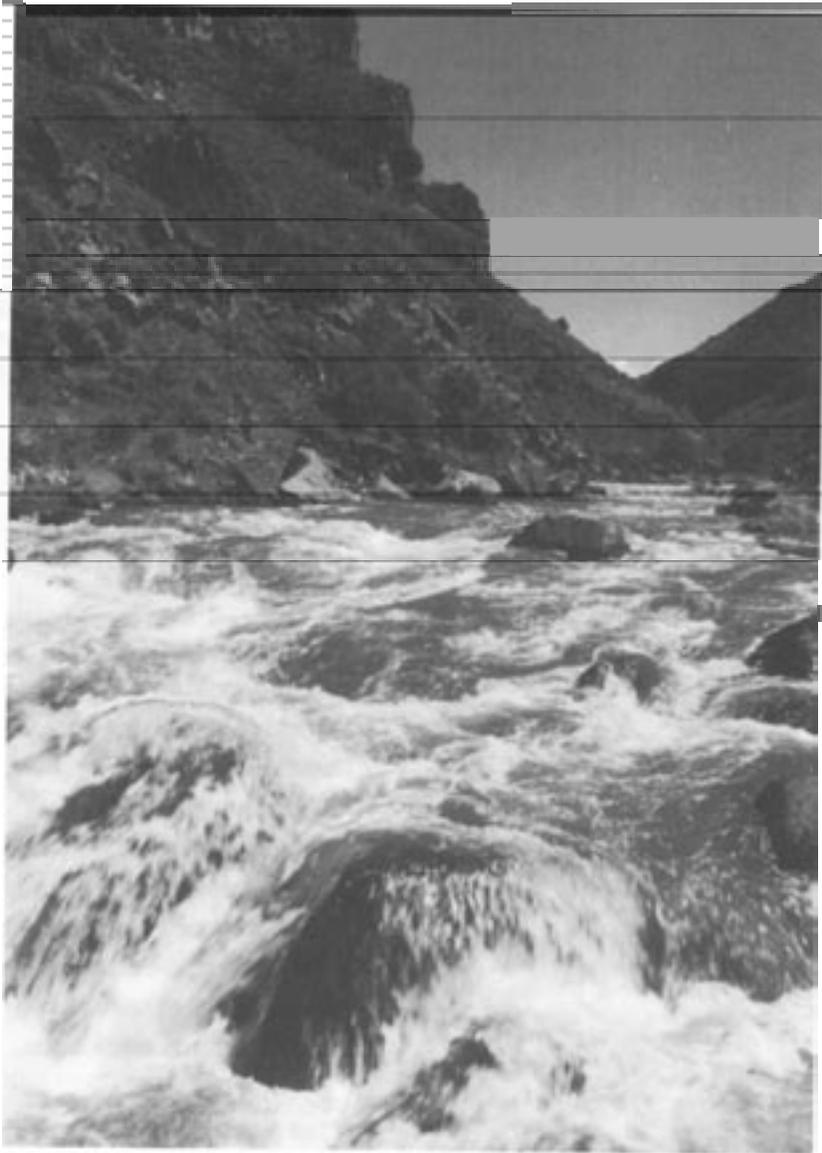
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 Risa Shimoda Callaway squirting through Double Trouble  
 Ocean Rodeo '89. Photo: BILL BURGER. © 1992 Patagonia, Inc.*

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# A Riverin' on the Rio Grande

by JED HENRY

Well, Mr. Wheat told about nearly fifteen stretches of river in the Rio Grande basin and most of them sounded right nice for fishin and floatin. Yessir, most of them sounded right fine. But there was one stretch of the Rio Grande that didn't sound too nice. Fact is, it didn't sound nice at all.

Mr. Wheat called it the Upper Box and he starts right off in bout bone crushing rapids and falls afitable expert kayakers only. Says the river was snakin through a deep gorge and droppin 120 feet per mile in parts some. It sounded real difficult to me and mighty inhospitaly, so I done the sensible thing and tore them pages right out the book and hid 'em so's Festus wouldn't see 'em if'n he took anotion to drag me up that way.

Well, it were a pretty good plan and it would have worked too if it hadn't been for Mr. Howsley and the Petrified German. That's how Festus come to find out about the Upper Box and that's how we come to run it. But if'n you're fixin to hear bout our ordeal there, you're gonna have to read some other stuff first cause I've a mind to tell this here tale in totality and save the excitin and skeery part for last.

Well, me and Festus McHugh was just a perched out behind the shanty a **mind** in our own business and **sippin** on a **jugfull** of shine and **watchin** the moon arisin cross the Rio Grande and I hadnt a goldarned thing a clatterin around in my noggin. Festus, on the other hand, was a wigglin around like a worm a just took the hook and when he gets like that I get a might nervy. **See**, I'm a peaceable feller, mostly satisfied with the way things is... but not old Festus, he's a **afidgety** hound dog, always a **lookin** for a bit of excitment.

A bit of excitment. Well, that's what he calls it... but most times it just turns out to be a passel of trouble. Festus is always **gettin** me into some blasterd perdicidy and ifn you finish this here tale you'll find out sure enough that this were to be no exception.

Festus eyeballs that brown old river and spits and says, "Where you reckon that old lady comes from?"

"Up Colorado way, I spose," says I, noncommittaldy like.

"Long way from Texas," Festus says, and then he spits agin.

"Real long way," says I, **hopin** I'd heard the end of it but **knowin** better.

All a sudden Festus up and charges in the shanty and I could hear him in there a **rootin** around like a blind pig a **lookin** for an acorn. Then the **cussin** stops and Festus saunters out the door a **grinnin** like a bull a broke into a field full a heifers and he's got a book in his hand.

I pretend not to notice but I could **see** what it were. It were that Colorado **kayakin** guide by that Doug Wheat feller, a right fine book ifn you're a **fixin** to head up that way... which I was not.

Festus took to **cipherin** for a time and then he says, "Comes down from Colorado alrighty, then passes through the heart of New Mexico. Mr. Wheat says it's a real fine crick in parts."

"Likely is," says I, **hopin** like hell Festus wasnt **gettin** a case of the itchfoot, but **knowin** damn well he probly was.

Well, Festus don't say no more bout it that night and soon he up and staggers off to the sack but he left that book a **sittin** beside me so I took me a good look at the Rio Grande part, just in case.

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Well, sure nuff next morning I wakened up... not to the sound of eggs and bacon a **fryin** like I oughter... but to a ruckus out in the yard. I stumbled over to the winder, all sleep tye eyed, half not **wantin** to look. There was Festus a **pilin** our kayaks atop his old Ford pickup.

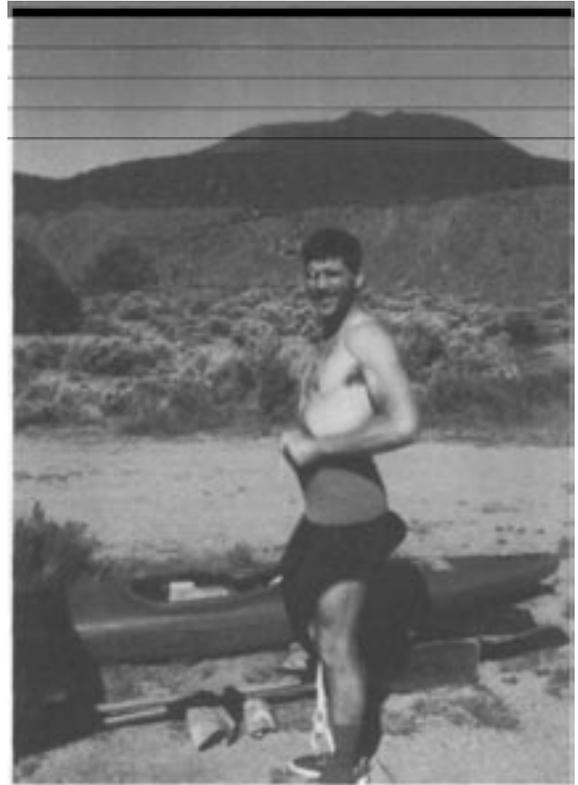
"Where you fixin to go, Festus?" asks I.

"I aint a **goin** no where," says he. "We're a **goin**. Gonna go and see where that old lady river comes from."

I moaned out loud but I knowed it **werent** no use a protestin, cause once Festus gets a bug up his fanny to do something there aint no changin his mind. So I pulled on my boots and britches and out I went. We turned the mares out to pasture and ripped open a bag of Chuckwagon and set it where the hounds could help themselves. Before I could say Jack Robinson, we was off.

It wasearly June and hotter'n hell drivin cross Texas, but by the time we got to those Rio Grande headwaters in them Colorado **Rockies**, it were **kinda** cool and that were fine by me.

You know, us Texans are right proud of the Rio Grande, but the Coloradoans and New Mexicans can be too. But I'll tell you, up in the San Juan



*Festus McHugh*

headwaters it shore looked like a different river than the one me and Festus knowed. I guess she's got every right to be a **changeable** lady... the Rio Grande being the **second** longest river in the whole USA... 1887 miles. In them miles she offers just bout ever kind of floatin a feller could want.

But I reckon me and Festus got a fair to middlin samplin and I'm a gonna share it with you.

### *Rio Grande River Hill Campground to Fern Creek Bridge*

After consultin Mr. Wheat, Festus and me decides to paddle the section of the Rio Grande just below the big reservoir in the Weminuche Wilderness. A gravel road that waggleties off route 149 sort of follers this stretch of river up to the reservoir, but the Rio Grande cuts her way into a little box canyon, so we wasnt bothered by it much.

We put in a couple of miles below the dam at the River Hill Campground and paddled bout ten miles to the Fern Creek Bridge. At the start we could **see** there was snow atop the mountains and that water was plenty cold too. Festus found a nice little **surfin** hole right away and he was in there a donuttin and **showin**



Scenes from the Connie Jo River--also known as "the Bunny Rabbit."

off til I had enough and I knocked him on out of there.

Once she got away from the road the river steepened up a bit and there was plenty of class three rapids and maybe even a couple of class fours. It werent the least bit scrapy and there were just enough rocks creatin nice cleaneddy lines for us to sharpin our boatin skills.

It werent no deep box canyon but it were a handsome one, with big old pines along the cliffsides and plenty a pretties a bloomin. Me and Festus didnt get into no trouble there and I reckon anyone who is comfy on class three plus water would like it fine.

Don't take long to run it and the shuttlins easy, so if'n you had a mind to, you could do it several times in the same day. Stead a doin that, Festus and me drove on up 149 over Slumgulion Pass and did the Lake Fork of the Gunnison... another fine class three plus run with a shuttlin and scoutin road runnin right along it. But I aint a gonna say no more bout that since it ain't in the Rio Grande watershed at all.

#### *Conejos River Platoro to South Fork Confluence*

We was back in the pickup a bouncin along, me a drivin and Festus a ponderin the map, when alls a sudden he lets out a hoop.

"They got them a river up here named after Connie Jo!" says Festus. "Now dont that beat all?"

Connie Jo was a sportin girl me and Festus trifled with back when we was

pups in Texas. I knowed Connie Jo got around but I never figured she'd ever gone quite this far. But Festus was right, Connie Jo's River was there on the map, and it was a Rio Grande tributary too. Needless to say, we was sorely tempted.

Well, we headed off in that direction as best we could but we got a bittledy lost and made a couple of loops around Sherbondy's peach orchard. Finally we stopped and asked a good old boy how far it was to Connie Jo's river. That old boy looked at us like we was dummern hoe handles, so Festus asks the question again.

"Ain't never heard of no Connie Jo's river," that old boy says, scratchen his head. Then alls a sudden he busts out laughin like he just heard the funniest thing.

"You fools be a lookin for the Cone Hay Hose River," he says. "Means bunny rabbit in Spanish." So me and Festus found out the Conejos didn't have nuthin to do with Connie Jo, but we followed that old boy's directions and found out that Bunny Rabbit was a rightsome river just the same.

Now I'd a been contented to float the Conejos along route 17 where it's just class one-two, but Festus read in Mr. Wheat's book bout an expert kayakin run upstream, just shy of the minin town of Platoro. Course he was feelin frisky from our conquest of the River Hill section of the Rio Grande, so up the long gravel Forest Service road to Platoro we goes.

We put in just south of Matoro, where the gradient picks up and the road

wanders close to the river. It was just a trifle scrapy and there was lots of rocks to dodge. The first three miles to the Lake Fork of the Conejos Campground was pretty much one big long class three plus rapid. There was a couple of strainers too that we had to portage, sc if'n you go there you best be careful. I reckon it wasnt near as hard as Mr. Wheat led us to believe, but if'n the water were running high he might be on the bull's eye.

We kept right on a goin past the Lake Fork of the Conejos and it was a purty class two plus for several miles. Then that old Bunny Rabbit snuck into his hole, a deep, steepedy walled canyon the local boys call the Pinnacles.

The next couple miles was a twistin and a turnin ride on class three, maybe four, water. We was deep in a canyon and the road was so far up you didnt even know it was there. Towering steeples of lava hung over our heads that made even those big old pines along the river look triflin. There was a strainer or two in there and plenty of wild ducks and birds and such.

Wee evenskeered up a big old cow elk and her calf along there and she took off like an old maid with a big old bee in her bussle.

Me and Festus done ourselves right proud and stayed out of trouble, but I reckon this part of the Conejos could be

interestin at high water. Just downstream the Conejos gets real flat and braided and it would take a lot of water to paddle from the South Fork down to the Highway 17 bridge.

All and all, we paddled about ten or eleven miles of the Conejos, **takin** out at a **pack horse loading area** at the South Fork confluence. It were a fare haul up the hill to the truck and poor Festus **got** a might winded a **totin** that big old T Canyon of his. He blamed it on the altitude, but I reckon all that beer he's been a **downin** had **somethin** to do with it.

Well now, we was a both **feelin** quite **cocksome** having tackled one of Mr. Wheat's expert runs, but we later found out there is expert runs and then there is EXPERT RUNS on the Rio Grande. I still hadn't told Festus about the Upper Box and I don't rightly know if I ever would have, but fate in the form of Mr. Howsley and the Petrified German did the **tellin** for me, so it don't make no mind.

### Off to Taos

Well, Mr. **Howlsey** is a likeable old gent who used to have a **fishin** show on TV in Lubbock, Texas, but now is retired and **runnin** a fishin and **grocery store** along the Conejos near Las **Mesitas**. Me and Festus stopped in to buy some vittles, but wouldnt you know we come out with a hole lot more.

Havin spotted our boats Mr. Howsley takes to **askin where we been** and where we **goin** and Festus feels obliged to fill him in. Mr Howsley says there's some respectable **fishin** and some fiercesome whitewater up on the Conejos, but then he goes and tells Festus it aint **nothin** to compare with what lies downstream on the Rio Grande outside Taos. Started **talkin** bout a 40 pound trout that got away from him down Taos way, but of course that trout **werent** what grabbed Festus by the ear. No sir, Festus wanted to here about the fiercesome whitewater and, though I tried my damndest to keep Mr. Howsley on the subject of **fishin**, out comes the story of Mr. Howsley's adventure in the Upper Box and I knowed the pig was out of the pen.

"I was lucky to come out of there with my buck knife," Mr **Hoseley** says. Seems Mr. Howsley and a ranger friend a his tried to raft that stretch of river more'n twenty years ago. Mr. Howsley wound up a **hikin** out of there late that night and **catchin** a ride with "the drunkest sheep-

herder I ever met".

Well, the more Mr. Howsley says about the falls and rocks and rapids the **perkier** Festus gets. But I reckon it was the story bout the Petrified German that set the post.

Mr. Howsely says he and that ranger wasnt the first to try and run that Upper Box. Says a year or two afore he done it another bunch of feller tried it and one of 'em, a young German feller, got took by the river.

Well, bout a year goes by and another feller was a traipisin around in that Box and he up and trips on a boot a **stickin** out of a pile a sand. That feller start a **diggin** around and damn if there ain't **somehin** in that boot... yes **sir**, it was that German, buried upside down.

And Mr. Howsley says that German was right well **perserved**, **petrified**, so to speak, by a cellular transformation brought on by the silica in the sand. Only **thing was** that German feller now weighed 400 pounds! Festus reckoned they had one hell of a time a **totin** that Petrified German up out of there. I didn't say much but after **hearin** about that Upper Box I conected it might not a been that sand that petrified that German, it might a been fright.

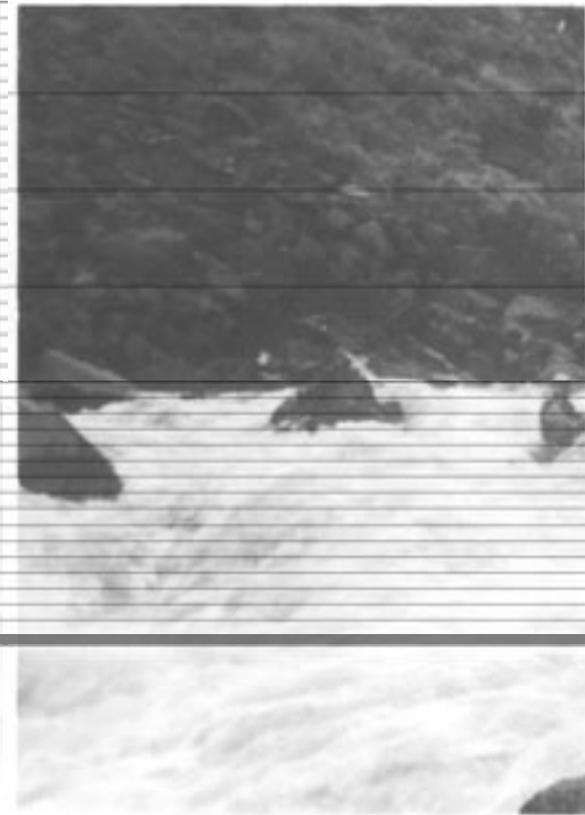
Back out in the truck, Festus done what I knowed he would and starts a **diggin** through Mr. Wheat's book a **lookin** for the section on that Upper Box. Course he can't find it cause I got it hid and I tries to convince him Mr. Wheat dont rite bout no New Mexico rivers, but Festus sees there's a **pages missin** and there ain't gonna be no peace **til** I hand 'em on over.

Well, I ain't **fraid** of Festus. but I'd just as soon lick a river as an old compadre, so I gives up and hands him them pages and sure nuff off towards Taos we go.

### The Lower Taos Box Dunn Bridge to Taos Junction Bridge

No, this aint the skeery part. I aint done **teasin** you yet. See, on the way to Taos I reads about another part of the Rio Grande, just downstream of the Upper Box, that some folks call the Lower Box and some just call the Taos Box. Well, Mr. Wheat says this Lower Taos Box aint near as hard as the Upper Box and that lots of folks does it in kayaks and rafts, whereas hardly no one is fool enough to go on that Upper Box at all.

Well, I tells Festus I ain't a gonna do that Upper Box lest we do that Lower Box first, cause I want to get a feel for the lay of the land and, besides, I figure I might



Steep class IV in Lower Box.

as well live at least one more day.

Well, Festus and me had a **rollikin** good time on that Lower Taos Box. Ain't the shortest of trips, nigh fifteen **miles** long, and there be considerable flatwater in the first half, but it's a flowin fast and there's plenty to look at.

The old lady river done whittled her way more than 600 feet into **the earth** and the canyon walls is right uppidy and **purty**. There's considerable greenery in there too, considerin how dry and hot it **be**.

We found us the Manby hot springs bout two miles from the put in on the left and me and Festus soaked there for quite a spell. Now I aint usually partial to **bathin** at **all cause** I aint very fastidy. Sides, most hot springs I seen before smelt like some old hog waller, but this one hardly smelt at all, and it were **kinda relaxin** a bobbins around in there.

There was some folks a **payin** to raft the river and a few a **raftin** it on their **ownsome** but not so many as to spoil the fun. Festus and me done the right thing and filled out a permit that **mornin** at the put in and I reckon you should too **in** you go there, since it dont cost **nothin** and the ranger seemed likesome. **If'n** you run the



Gorge Bridge on Route 64, is class three at most, but the old lady gets more cantankerous after that. Mind, you can't get in or out of that Box much once you start, specialty not around the Gorge Bridge. The cliffs is just too steepity.

Old Festus spotted some big hunks of Winnebago lyin around under that bridge, which is hundreds and hundredsof feetabove the river, **and we** speculated that them folks had themselves one hell of a last ride.

Seemed like the further we went past that Gorge Bridge the rowdier that old lady river got and towards the end there was several miles of steady class three and four water. *All* and all, she drops about **25 feet/mile**, but Mr. Wheat says she drops **70 feet/mile** in the two miles upstream of the Taos Junction.

There was some amplety rocks in the river there and I reckon when she gets high there'd be some real earnest holes too. That show off Festus found us a couple of **endo** spots and we surely did put on for them ladies in the rafts.

Well, Taos is a spritely town but **kinda** high falutin for my taste. We asked a Mexican American raft guide where we could find some tasty Mexican chow and he laughed and said he didn't rightly know cause he et plenty of that stuff at home and et Chinese when he went out.

Festus said we might as well head on up the road a piece toward the Upper Box so's we'd be ready in the morning, so

off we went and we wound up **eatin** in a little cafe named El Seville in the town of Questa Like a feller bout to hang, I figured I'd best make the most of my last supper and that cafe was a fine place for it.

Me and Festus wolfed down burritos and tacos and tamales and enchiladas and red chili so hot it swole my tongue. Then they brung us a plate full of sopaipillas, which is a sugary kind of fried bread that we doused with home made Questa virgin clover honey. By the time we got out of there I was fat and happy as a toad.

That all changed after Festus hauled me up to our camp on the rim of the Upper Box. I made the mistake of lookin down into that gorge and all of a sudden I started **thinkin** about that poor Petrified German and my innards started a **rumblin** and a **squirmin** like when you drop a **packrat** into a barrelful of **starvin** rattlers. Festus and me sat there on the edge a danglin our legs over the sides and **burpin** and **listenin** to some mangy coyote **howlin** and me a wonderin if I'm gonna live to see that sun set agin. I'll tell you I didn't sleep so good that night.

#### *The Upper Box Sheep Crossing to Dunn Bridge*

Well, I promised you a skeery part if n you stuck with me and I'm a man of my word, so here it is. Let me start off by **sayin** that the Upper Box ain't no place

Upper Box you'll need to fill one out too... they got **self** registration boxes on the trails that leads down to the river.

See the whole Rio Grande River from just south of the Colorado border past Taos has been one of them Wild and Scenic Rivers since 1968, so you best abide by the rules.

Them government folks keep a number of tolerable campgrounds a runnin along the rim of the Upper Box and they got them a headquarters up there too. They take a daily readin from the gauge on river right just below **Dunn** Bridge, and you can call 'em and find out what she's runnin. This is especial important if n you're **fixin** to run the Upper Box, since a little bit of water more or less could make a real big difference in there.

**Also**, me and Festus found out that flows from the gauges at Lobotos or at the Thirty Mile Bridge aint real helpful, since there's alot of folks a **takin** water out of the river and a lot of cricks a **puttin** water in the river 'tween them gauges and the Upper and Lower Boxes.

Well, we paddled the **Lower** Taos Box at 1700 cfs, which ain't too low and aint too high. Like I said, first half, down to where you pass under the Rio Grande



*Festus McHugh gettin hissself fastidy in the Manby Hot Springs on the Lower Box.*

to take the **missus** and the young 'uns. Course I reckon that lippy heifer Carla Garrison that rites for you would like it just fine. Sometimes I think her and Festus would make a Likely pair.

*(Editors' Note: A frightening thought, but probably true!)*

Now the hard part of the Upper Box is nine miles long and ends where the Red River comes in from river left. A feller could **carry** out there, but it'd take a mean mile of uphill **climbin**, so Festus and me planned on **paddlin** another ten miles of easy water to Dunn bridge.

Me and Festus figured it would take bout three hours to do the first nine miles, but we was wrong. It took eight. Some ways it seemed like eight minutes and some ways it seemed like eight days. Fortunately, it only took a bittledy more than an hour to paddle the last ten miles, cause there aint no hard rapids there.

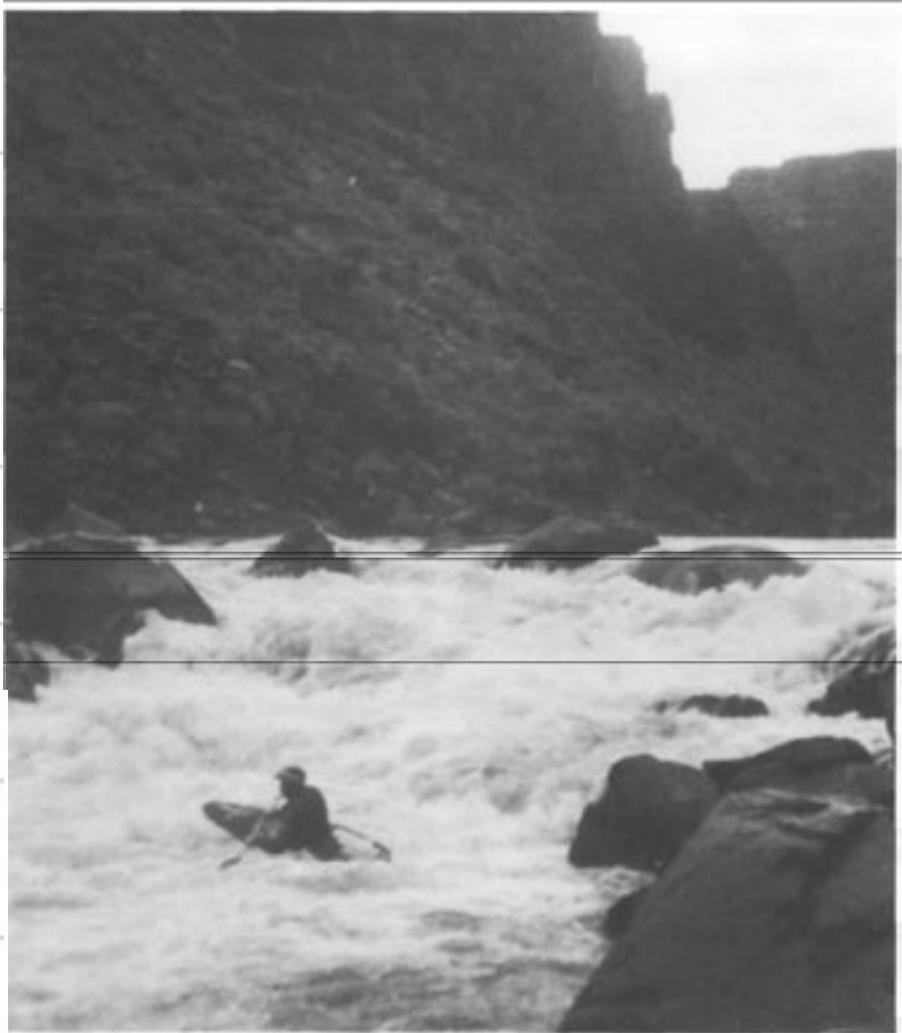
Me and Festus thought the Upper Box was a might purtier than the Lower Box cause there was more big Ponderosa pines and Douglas firs as well as pinion and juniper trees and wild roses. There's a passel of poison ivy in there too.

Them Wild and Scenic River folks says there's mule deer and rattlers and otters and a few mountain lions, but all we seen was ducks and **skippety** lissards. If'n you decide to paddle the Upper Box most likely you won't spend too much time admirin the scenery or **lookin** for critters.

You probly won't take too many pictures neither. Festus and me was gonna take a lot, but when you aint sure if'n you're even gonna live to see 'em developed, it **kind** of takes away the centive to take 'em. Just **carryin** my kayak down to the river plumb tuckered me out. Good thing she were easy for the first couple of miles, just class two and three. But once you paddle through a big rambunctious rapid under a powerline that spans the canyon... look out.

Any notions Festus and me had of runnin every rapid on the river died when we scouted the next rapid, called N.C.O. I ain't sure what N.C.O. stands for but to my mind it could be No Come Out. At 1700 cfs, the level **wewas** runnin, N.C.O. started out with a big old slide into a righteous hole, followed immediately by a souse hole, followed by an evil shaped ledge with a powerful recycle. We toted our boats around it on the left. Truth be told, **lookin** back on it, we probly ran several worse rapids later in the day.

The next big'un was Undercut Falls. Here the Rio Grande plunkertied down a sluice and crashed into something



*Festus sits at bottom of Lower Box rapid.*

we couldn't see, **for**min a big old nasty white mushroom of water. Mr. Wheat says there's a big old undercut rock in there which a feller could **see** at lower water. Mr. Wheat also says most fellers carry this and Festus did, but I was **feelin** gamey and I seen me abony sneak chute down the far left tween some rocks that would feed me to the left of the mushroom.

Festus sat aside a foul little siphon at the bottom left of the rapid so's he could **kick** me out in case it tried to swallow me up. Consequenty he couldn't see that I spent nearly half a minute pinned in my sneak chute afore I worked my way free and flushed on through. It were an **anx-**ious thirty seconds for me and it sobered me up right quick.

The Long Rapids was next and they lived up to their names. At the level we seen they **kinda** flowed one into the other and if'n a fellerswam in the first one, like as not he'd swim through the second

one too, since the old lady is real tumultidy there. We done the first one fine, though we was surprised at how big a wallop the old lady was **packin**. Festus and me spent a long time a **lookin** at the second one, cause the left side looked best clean to the bottom, but then there was a burly old keeper down there a **feedin** into an undercut rock.

As the day wore on we took to **ponderin** how there never seemed to be a clean line through none of them rapids. There was always some hole, or siphon or undercut to mess things up. And lots of time the very worst **feeture** were down near the bottom.

Well, we finally run that second Long Rapid, me a **followin** Festus in a death fairy from left to right part way through, then a eddy **hoppin** down the right and **poppin** over a ornery ledge at the bottom. We hadn't come too far, but it seemed like it, and we was glad there was

a little pool afore the old lady started shindiggin agin.

Boulder Fan rapid were next and we looked at it long and hard and there was **pinnin** spots everywhere. Festus and me toted our boats around a chunk of it, just to be safe. Two **boomn** rapids came close on the heels of Boulder Fan, the first a five and the second a four. We run 'em both, though I got me back **endodied** a **leadin** through the second one where the river keeps a curvin and a **curvin** to the left. Festus just thought that were the funniest thing. I don't know why he takes such pleasure in the misry of others.

Now every one of them rapids I'm **tellin** you about rambles on for a fearsome ways and if'n you go there you best look at 'em real good afore you start through. This surely ain't no place to be in no hurry. Course Festus and me didn't waste much time a **scoutin** the next rapids, which is the **Falls**. I know some loco weeds done run this class six mess, but my Momma didnt whelp no **stoopid** childrun, so me and Festus toted round it on the left.

While we was a **scoutin** out Big **Arsenic Springs**, which was the **next** rapid, four other fellers comes along and started **lookin** too. Three of them fellers starts a **totin** real soon. Big Arsenic were potent and horrible long and like usual there was all **kinds** of traps a feller could fall into.

You could get pinned or you could get recycled or you could get sucketeed under a rock and never be seen agin. At the top Festus leads in another one of them left to right death fairies of his and then he catches an eddy and starts to tote.

Maybe I should a toted too. But while I was **standin** there this fellow from Telluride, whose name I dont recollect, climbs in his kayak and charges right on down through Big Arsenic with a line as slick as corn silk. I reckon he **done it** before, cause he shore makes it look easy.

Starts down the center a **punchin** some big splodin waves, skirts just to the left of a gruesome **lookin** rooster tale, cuts right in front of a big old mushroom and drops over a five foot ledge, pulls **hissself** through that, then heads back to the left center toward another ledge. From **scoutin** we knowed there was only one spot to go over that ledge, just to the left of a pearly black rock. Anywhere else and a **feller** would get **pitted** or **endodied** or recirculated for shore. Course that Telluride feller hit that sweet spot fine.

Well, I started climb **backin** my boat and Festus says, "What the hell you doin, Jed Henry?"

I says, "I'm a gonna run Big Arsenic Springs. If n that Colorado cowboy can do it I reckon I can too."

Festus don't say no more but he was **lookin** right **doubtful**. And him being the one as got me in there in the first place!

Well, I like to think that if I'd a started from river left like that Telluride feller that I'd a done it just as clean. Festus don't say so, but I know he figures I'm delusivity bout that.

Out of that right eddy I comes, upstream **fairyin** to get around that rooster tail, and I almost made it, but not quite, and I sticks for a time atop it and slides off backwards. Next thing I knowed I'm facin upstream right in front of the big **roarin** mushroom, so I starts a paddlin like a feller in big trouble, which I was. Looks for a time like that mushroom is gonnawin, but finally I scoots across a sluice and winds up in a bittledy eddy on river right.

After I regains my posure I pops over the ledge and starts a **lookin** downstream for that black pearl rock, but it's a long ways off and there's quite a bit going on between me and it. I starts **makin** a beeline in that direction when **alls** a sudden I find myself facing upstream agin, **sittin** in another squirrelity eddy on river right, Festus **standin** not ten feet away. I were as surprised as him I reckon, but course I let on like I caught that eddy on purpose, rather than **admittin** that it caught me.

Out I peels a **headin** toward that black pearl rock and that old lady's **pushin** this way and a that way but never towards where I needs to go. But it dont make no mind cause I went there anyway and I finished her off just fine.

Really, I was n't **skeered**. Just tense. Bout as tense as that Petrified German.

It **werent** over yet, but the rest **werent so** bad. Festus led down right to left through a big, long rockerty class four plus rapid. That only left one **big'un**, the Conundrum just upstream of the Red River confluence mentioned by Mr. Wheat. It were just **like** he said, long, rowdy and potent, but it didn't have a mean streak like them others upstream.

Like I said before, we could a carried out here to Cebolla Mesa, but it's a damned site easier just to keep your backside in the saddle and float on down to Dunn Bridge. It only took me and Festus an hour.

**Eatin** hamburgs in Taos later on, Festus and me pondered what we had done and tried to put that Upper Box in **spective**. Over the years Festus drug me around some, so we seen a **fairsome** num-

ber of cricks. That Upper Box seemed bout as tough as that Gore Canyon on the Colorado and it has the same perverse character. If n you're a tenderfoot from **back east** I'd tell you that it's a **playin** in a league with the **Russell Fork** and Lower Meadow.

Mr. Wheat suggests that folks stay out of there at more than 2000 cfs. From what I seen at 1700 I'd say he's right, but I know a few real, real good fellers has done it higher. Mr. Wheat says maybe it can be done as low as 300 cfs, but I cant imagine what that'd be like. Festus and me would a probly been a little better off with a smidgin less water, maybe 1000 cfs or so.

At any level that Upper Box is bound to be a right serious **undertakin**, so if'n you decided to **try** it, you better leave lots of time for **scoutin** and **totin** and take along first aid kits and rescue equipment. I toted three times in there, but you could tote the whole damn thing if you had a mind to. It aint easy **totin**, though.

There are lots of folks a boat in out there these days, but this is the honest truth, only a few of 'em have any business on the Upper Box. One Petrified German in the world is enuff.

But never you mind, cause the Rio Grande is a fine lady and Festus and me figure there's stretches of that river to suit most everybody. You **all** ought to get yourself one of Mr. Wheat's books and find out for yourself.

### *Homeward Bound*

Well, **runnin** the Upper Box was the end of our adventures on the Rio Grande. I hope those of you who stuck around liked the **skeery** part at the end.

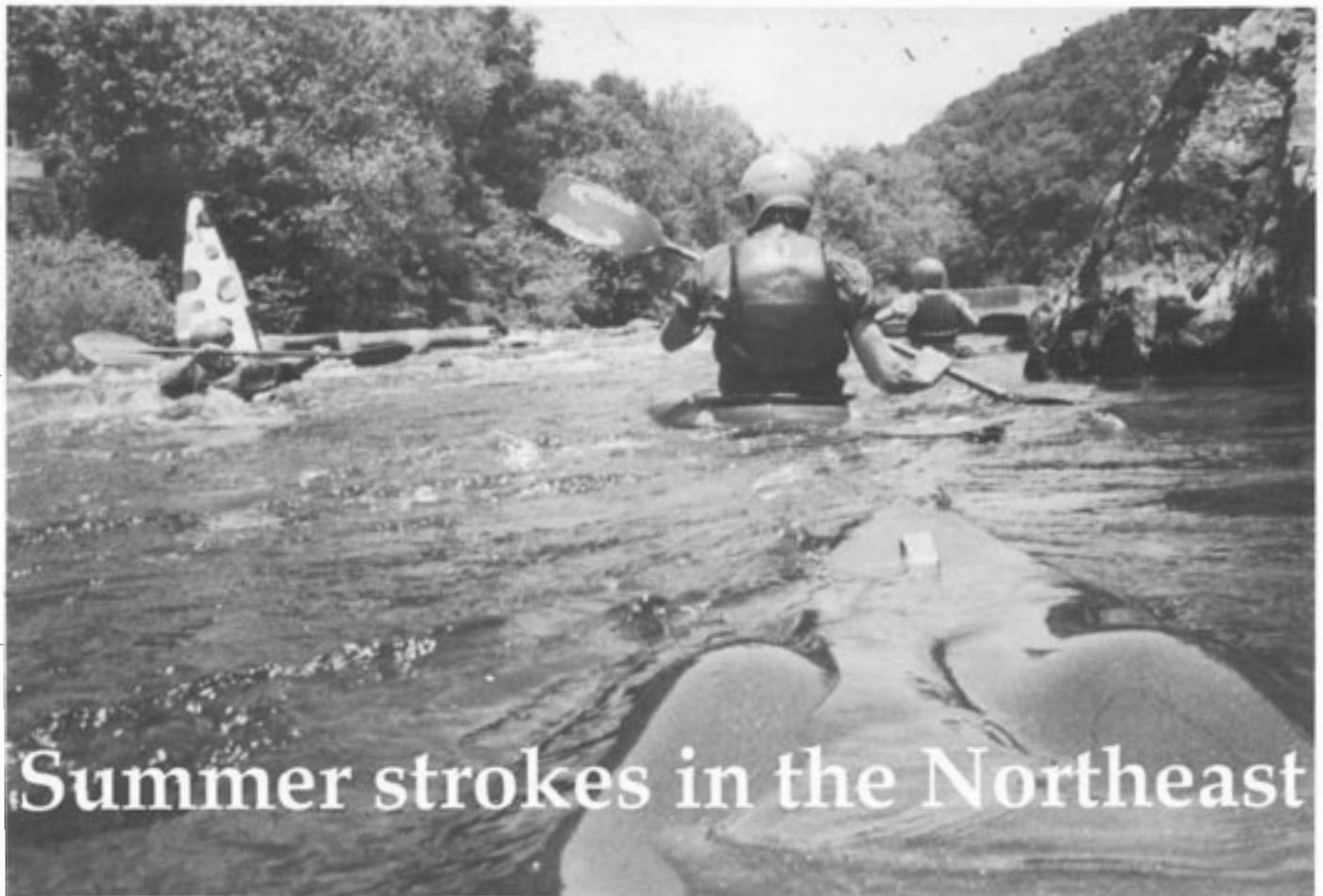
Festus and me is back in Texas safe and sound. The mares and the hounds done fine while we was gone and I'm a **fixin** to mosey off tonite after Festus hits the sack to see if I can find Connie Jo.

Seems like Festus done lost interest in **sportin** anymore, but not me. Whuppin **somethin** like the Upper Box always puts me in a powerful **sportin** mood.

**Yessir**, everythin's calm now, and that suits me fine. There's just one thing a troublin me. Festus got a package in the mail yestiddy and he's **bein** real secretive bout what he got.

Course I snuck me a look and found out it were a guidebook to Idaho rote by two fellers named **McClaren** and Moore. Festus had it open to the part bout some crick called the North Fork of the Payette.

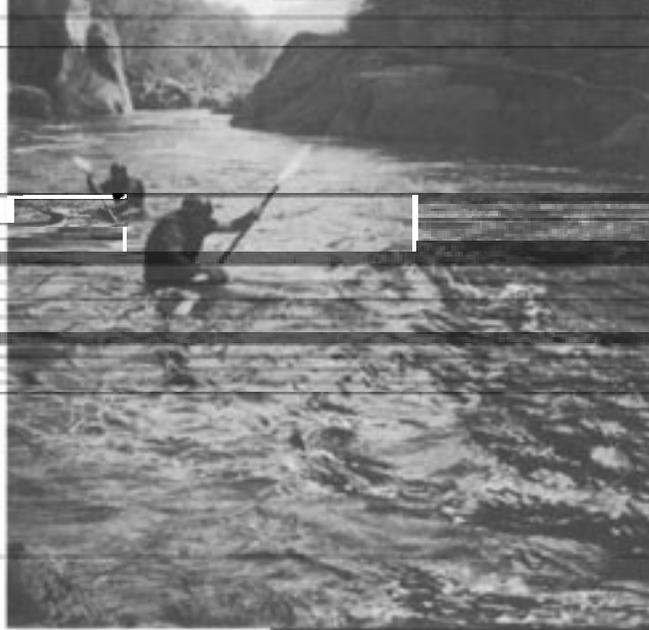
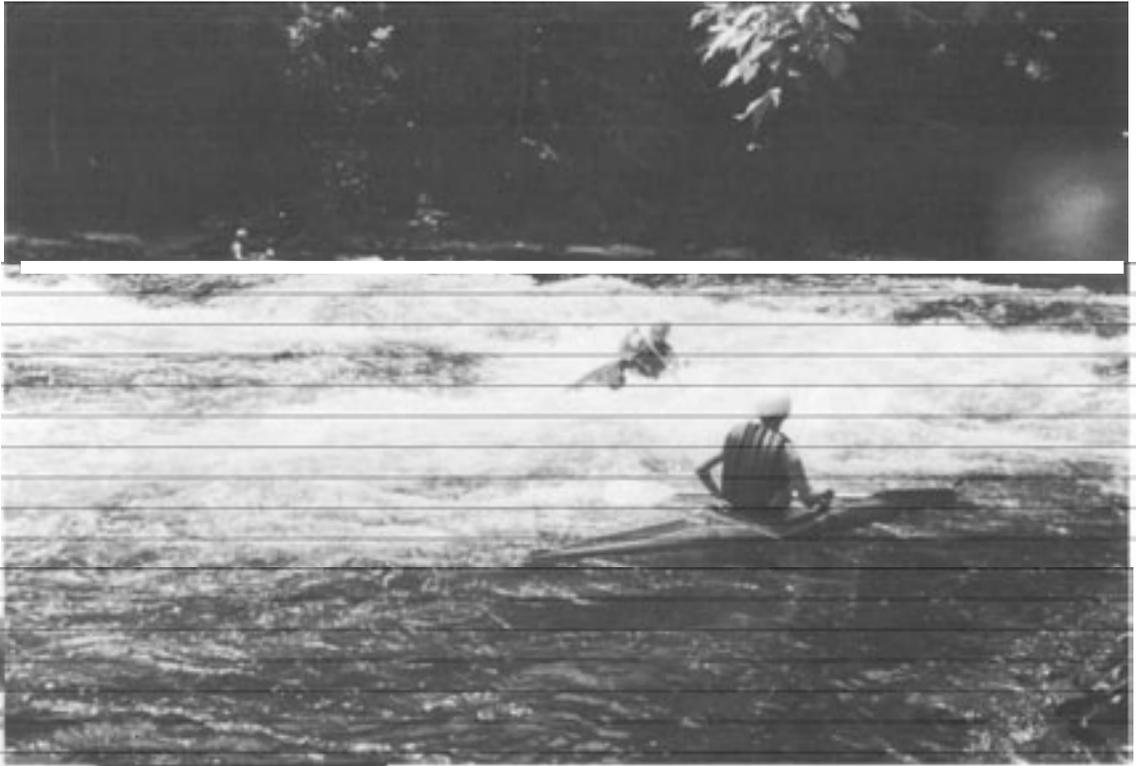
Say a prayer for this old cowboy.



It's summer; the rivers are down. The sun is boiling. I need a fix, a whitewater fix. There has got to be something more than evening social and roll sessions at the local pond. Where can I go? I think I might be going freaking insane. I think... I think I need a little psy-KAYAK-tric treatment.

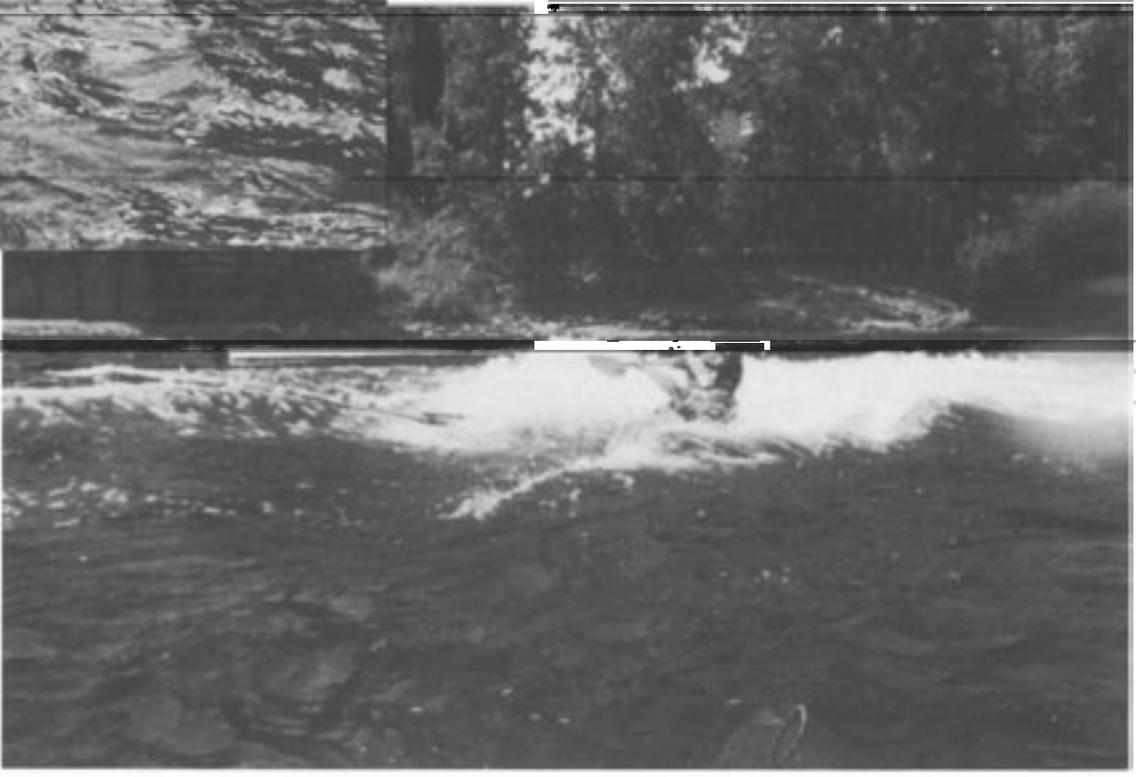
Does this sound like you? If so, read on fellow boater and maybe the doctor can help you with your problem.

*By RON RATHNOW*



## Heat Strokin'

*The Northeast boasts plenty of whitewater play spots even in the hottest days of summer. (Above) Surf's up at the Tarriffville Gorge on Connecticut's Farmington River. (Left) Squirt lines on New York's Hudson River near Hadley. (Below) Blasting at Hole Brothers on the Black River in Watertown, NY.*





Everyone knows the South has summer runs. The Ocoee in Tennessee and the New River in West Virginia – both dam releases – maintain runnable levels throughout the season. But what about New England? What do we have to run, or where can we go to play? Maybe more than you might think. In reality, just about anywhere you live in New England and eastern upstate New York puts you within an hour or two of a dam release river, the coast or numerous other play spots that have something to offer.

Quite a few dam release rivers run in the summer, some of which are very well known. Maine, the West Virginia of New England, sports most of these runs, offering three sections of the Penobscot, along with the Kennebec, Dead and Rapid Rivers.

The West Branch of the Penobscot provides Class III-V excitement starting at the McKay Station powerhouse in Ripogenus Gorge. Exterminator, Staircase and the well-known Cribworks (V) all await you in this section. The gorge section of the river offers continuous whitewater until it flattens out at Big Eddy.

After this, the river meanders on but still has a number of good Class III and Class IV rapids to offer. Outstanding scenery, dominated by Mt. Katahdin, will probably keep your mind off the flatter sections. Watch out for brainworm-enraged moose!!

Following the West Branch farther upstream, you will eventually reach Seboomook Lake and dam. This is the put-in for the wonderful (and little known) Class III-IV Seboomook section of the Penobscot. Consisting mostly of ledge drops up to eight-foot high and runnable chutes, this one offers great playing for squirt and surface boaters alike. If you like mazes, then you'll love the Labyrinth. This rapid consists of a series of broken ledges with numerous optional chutes and routes to run. Some go through, and some dead-end out. Choose carefully.

At the upstream end of Seboomook Lake the West Branch splits into the North and South Branches of the Penobscot. The South Branch, Class III-V, begins at Canada Falls Dam and runs for 3.5 miles. A good run for plastic, with technical ledge drops and one runnable 12-foot waterfall (scout carefully). A spud

boat run here in the morning, combined with a squirt boating afternoon on the Seboomook section, would make for one damn fine day of boating.

Although the Penobscot has a lot to offer, it is fairly remote. You'll probably find most of the boaters congregating in the Kennebec Gorge since it is a couple of hours closer to the major population centers. It boasts big waves, non-stop action and deep squirt lines – all within a beautiful gorge. A great place to break out the squirt boat; squirting has become the dominant action on this river. There's even an easy Class III section below the Gorge from Carry Brook to the Forks.

Just downstream from the lower Kennebec take-out at the Forks, the Dead River, Class III-IV, comes in from the west. Late in the spring, large releases (7,000 cfs or greater) make for a Kennebec-style big water run. Scheduled summer releases tend to range from 1100-1400 cfs, downgrading most of the rapids into the Class II-III range. A favorite for open boaters, the Dead at lower levels is also a good place to take new kayakers before trashing them in the Kennebec Gorge.



(Above) Surfing the bottom wave at "Black Tongue" on the Ottawa. The surfing and playing on the Ottawa actually improves with lower water levels. (Left) Rockwell Falls on the Hudson.

Deep in the woods along the Maine-New Hampshire border awaits the Rapid. This little Class IV gem connects Lake Richardson and Umbagog Lake. Usually there are a couple of scheduled releases (1400cfs or greater) towards the end of July and early in August.

The hardest part about the Rapid is just getting into it. A long flatwater paddle or motor boat ride across Umbagog Lake will get you into the Cedar Stump campground at the bottom of the Rapid. It is well worth it. You can also contract Errol Flying Service to bring you in by float plane – reasonable.

The whitewater is technical, somewhat big in places and continuous. The major attraction here is Smooth Ledge. An outstanding play spot, this is one of the best slide-type surfing and blasting holes to be found anywhere in the Northeast.

Maine also has plenty of park-and-play spots. Blue Hill Falls, outside of Bangor, offers great surfing and squirting when the tide is right. (Get there three hours before high tide.) Don't neglect the ocean beaches either. Ogunquit beach offers good surfing at the river mouth. Pay attention to the weather and watch for low pressure systems coming up the coast.

Not far from the Rapid, the Androscoggin River flows into New Hampshire, providing a constant source of Class II-III playtime. The whitewater runs below the Errol and Pontook Dams are neither long nor difficult.

Moving west into central New Hampshire, you're apt to find many of the Granite State boaters hanging out at the Bristol Gorge section of the Pemigewasset River. A Class II-III run, this stretch of the Pemi offers one of the best ender spots around. It's also deep enough for end-to-end squirting.

Dropping south into downtown Manchester, the Merrimack River cascades through the Class III-V Amoskeag Falls. Although the Falls themselves only run when the dam is overtopped, there is a good play spot below that offers a good workout and surfing year round. A large parking area right next to the rapid at Arms Park makes the action convenient.

The Connecticut River, usually quite calm and lazy, picks up a little steam along the southern New Hampshire/Vermont border. Sumner's Falls (alias Hartland Rapid) is located along Route 5 between Hartland and North Hartland and usually offers some excellent late afternoon entertainment. Midway through this quarter-mile, Class III+ ledge drop lurks the main purpose of your visit – an excellent glassy wave that offers enders at

higher flows, enders and smooth surfing at medium levels and side surfing when the water is down. Call the folks at Adventure Quest (802) 484-3939 for information on how the river is running.

Upstate New York does not lack for mid-summer offerings either. Draining the western slopes of the Adirondacks, the Black River flows to the northwest through Watertown and on into Lake Ontario. The put-in is located in downtown Watertown at the Adirondack River Outfitters rafting outpost. A Class III-V run, the Black starts off with a little industrial paddling. Then, after running or portaging the 15-foot Glen Park Falls, you enter an intimate little gorge. Rapids in the gorge remain continuous Class III-IV and provide good surfing and squirting throughout.

Deeper into the Adirondacks, along Route 12 in Lyons Falls, you'll find all the adrenalin you need on the Bottom Moose. As a result of much hard work on the parts of AWA and the Kayak and Canoe Club of New York, 10 optional weekend releases are available to paddlers during summer months. If you're interested in experiencing this Class IV-V kicker, call Pete Skinner at (518) 674-5519 or Eric and Adrienne Ryan at (212) 595-3256 to arrange for a release. This year, the entire Moose will also be running the first two Sundays in October.

Heading down to the southeastern side of the Adirondacks, we find the Sacandaga River. The final two miles provide Class II-III action beginning at the Stewart Pond Dam and ending at its junction with the Hudson River in Hadley. Daily releases (times may vary – check with Carol Leibfarth at (518) 658-3987) all summer long attract boaters from western New England and New York looking for a place to boat and cool off. Don't forget to spend some time in the dynamite surfing/ender wave on river right just below the put-in.

Just upstream (200 yards) from the junction of the Lower Sacandaga and the Hudson in Hadley, the Hudson flows over a sometimes-runable (usually late summer) 15-foot waterfall and through a short, narrow gorge. Only 20 minutes from my home outside of Saratoga, this is generally where you'll find me and my friends squirting away the summer evenings.

Down into the heart of the Catskill Mountains, you'll come across the Esopus Creek in Phoenicia, New York. While during the summer there is always enough water to scrape by (minimal releases to benefit the high trout population) and

even enjoy some of the myriad playspots offered by this Class II-III stream, four scheduled weekend releases during the summer months provide the best action to be had in this area during the dry season. Phyllis Horowitz at (914) 688-5569 will be happy to give you these dates.

Travelling northeast into Massachusetts brings us over to the Deerfield River. Located in the northwest corner of the state and flowing through the magnificent Berkshires, the Lower Deerfield offers Class II fun above and below Zoar Gap Rapid all summer long. Zoar Gap Rapid is another great park-and-play spot. A Class III rapid, it supplies good surfing, squirting and a boulder garden for all the racerheads looking for a slalom workout.

Thanks to a coalition of river and boating organizations (including New England Flow, AWA, ACA, AMC and American Rivers), the Monroe Bridge section, or upper Deerfield, will have releases on six different days this summer. The Upper is a delightful Class IV run with something to offer everyone. Don't miss this one if you can help it. The last time we had summer releases on the Upper was way back in 1987. This is a trial situation, and New England Power will be watching closely. The bigger the crowd that shows, the better our chances for more of the same in the future. This summer's scheduled release dates are as follows:

June 29-30 – 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

July 20-21 – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

August 17 – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

August 24 – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information about these releases, call Bruce Lessels at (413) 339-8596 or Norman Sims at (413) 253-7922.

East to the coast and south of Boston brings us over to Cohasset. Definitely one of the better play spots to be found, and it runs year round whether we get rain or not. When the tide comes in, the smoothest, glassiest surfing wave that I have ever seen develops. Try to arrive early since the wave gets smaller as the tide gets higher. A moonlight session might be interesting (and less crowded) also.

Cape Cod offers plenty of sand beaches for some more ocean surfing (Nauset Coast Guard Beach for example). Once again, pay attention to the tides and the weather patterns for the most productive time to go.

Dropping down into Connecticut, the Farmington River runs just to the west of Hartford. Just outside of Simsbury, the Farmington runs through the Tariffville Gorge, a Class II-III run, it is short enough that you really don't need to worry about



**Side surfing at Butcher Knife Rapid on the Ottawa River.**

a shuttle. A good surfing hole and squirt lines below provide for good excitement and entertainment on a hot summer's day.

More surfing beaches await along the Connecticut and Rhode Island coastlines. Follow the surfboarders, and you're sure to find the right place to go.

If out-of-country paddling sounds attractive, head on up to neighboring Canada. The Ottawa River in Beechburg, Ontario on the border of Ontario and Quebec offers Class III-V big water action all summer long. You can make a full day of it at Phil's Hole and McCabe's. You name it, and Phil's has it. A great squirt line at the top, Phil's Hole, if you're feeling really rambunctious, can be blasted/surfed; and McCabe's just below

provides more holes and waves to play. There are other rapids, but it just don't get any better than this.

Heading back to the east, the Rouge awaits to the west of Montreal. The Rouge offers many different sections, ranging from easy Class III up to the Class V-VI Seven Sisters section. You're bound to find something here that will keep you busy. The nude sunbathers offer an interesting diversion as well!

Originating in the Laurentians at Lake Jacques Cartier, the Jacques Cartier river heads south and meets the St. Lawrence just west of Quebec City. The JC supplies a wide range of choices for the whitewater aficionado.

The top section, known as Le

Taureau, provides 35 kilometers of non-stop Class IV-VI action. Steep, technical and intense, this section should provide plenty of excitement for all of you bored hairboaters out there looking for something new and challenging.

The river quiets down a bit after this — almost as if it's trying to rest and gather its strength for another round. The Tewksbury section, albeit not as intense as La Taureau, offers a combination of big water and technical rapids of the Class IV variety. Located in the lush Tewksbury Valley, it is a relatively short section and can be run twice a day if you so choose.

Further south, the Pont Rouge section of the JC boils through a short, but highly intense, gorge. The gorge is runnable at certain levels, but entry is limited to launching yourself off the surrounding rock walls from 20 to 30 feet above the water.

Below the gorge the river widens out and calms down into the Class II-III range. Known as the Donnacona section, it meanders for seven miles until you reach the final take-out just beyond Canada's Route 40. Although this section is not too tough, it does provide 50 to 60 great surfing waves and blasting holes per mile from top to bottom.

The initial five miles also provide wonderful scenery. Vertical rock walls of thinly layered slate plunge into the river from heights of 100 feet or so. Small streams cascading off the cliffs as waterfalls add an ethereal effect to the picture. Waves and holes abound with plenty of room to play for everyone.

After a short break the JC narrows down, turns right and rushes through a short, narrow gorge for about a mile. The added depth allows for good squirting throughout this section. Beyond the gorge the river widens out, and the banks get lower. Houses begin to appear, but there is still plenty of good surfing and blasting to be had.

An early take-out can be found when the river makes a hard left. A parking area by a pump house on river left seems to be the most popular spot. Another mile farther will bring you to the final take-out on river left just beyond where Route 40 crosses the JC.

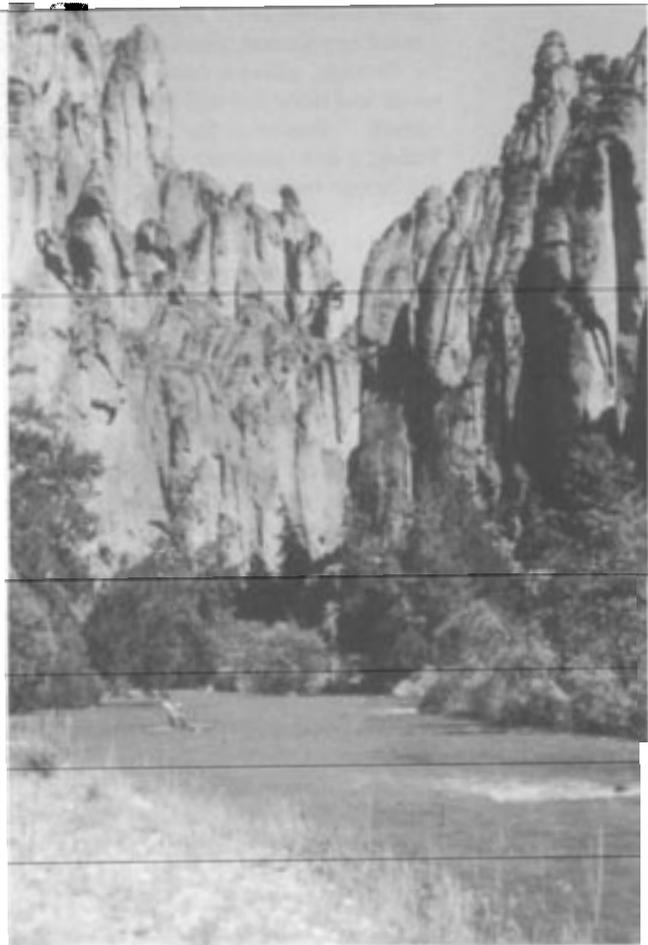
So I don't want to hear any more whining about what to do and where to go boating in the summer. No matter where you are in the Northeast there is something, somewhere that's close enough to keep you occupied in the off season. Hell, I'm not even sure when the off season is now.

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# Bombing down Idaho's Bruneau and Jarbridge

By MARK H. WHITE



I read the sign as we rolled down the dusty road:

**WARNING: Approaching Active USAF Bombing Range - Proceed at Your Own Risk".**

My mind conjured up images of heat seeking missiles chasing down our overloaded shuttle vehicle. With that thought, my right foot instinctively pushed down.

"THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTAL DEATH OR DISMEMBERMENT", the next sign read. By then our Subaru wagon was hell-bent for the put-in, attempting to escape the wrath of America's Top Guns in training. Ironically enough, The B-52s sang "Private Idaho" on the tape-deck.

The Bruneau and Jarbridge Rivers flow through hidden canyons in southern Idaho's arid desert. Looking across the vacant expanse of grey-brown nothingness, it is hard to believe the place is home to anything, let alone two river jewels.

These rivers are fed by snowmelt from the 10,000 foot Jarbridge Mountains and some thermal spring activity. The area's anemic rains frequently evaporate before penetrating the volcanic ash-laden soil and seldom reach the rivers.

Just getting to these runs is an adventure. Mountain Home, Idaho, which is south of Boise by an hour, is the jump off point where rivers leave civilization and head west into the desert.

The shuttle goes through the middle of an Air Force Gunnery range, and if you run only the main Bruneau, a class V road awaits. The carcass of a rusting car resting at the canyon bottom attests to the seriousness of the road. And you told your family that river running wasn't dangerous!

French Canadian fur trappers named the river Bruneau, meaning "brown water" in 1818. "Jarbridge" is a Shoshone Indian term which means "monster". Undoubtedly, non-swimming native Americans would have found these fast-flowing rivers to be terrifying, yet life-giving monsters.

There are actually several runs in the drainage system: the Jarbridge, the East Fork, the West Fork and the Main Bruneau.

Probably the most popular of these is the three to five day, 75 mile trip beginning at Murphy Hot Springs on the Jarbridge and concluding at the Indian Bathtub Hot Springs on the Bruneau.

Once in the canyons, nearly imperceptible from the featureless plains above, one's attitude about the area quickly changes. In spite of mod-



ern weapons testing and nuclear waste storage **not** so far **away**, the river drainage is almost completely unaffected by human activity.

The 800 foot deep canyons look just as they must have eons ago, long before humans and their **river-altering influences** existed. The water carries some silt, but is otherwise clean. The beaches have no footprints, fire pits or litter.

Our most recent trip took place during the rivers' busiest time, Memorial Day weekend. Three other parties shared the river with us; a large group of canoeists, some kayakers from Sun Valley and a party of two inflatables.

We found the Jarbidge flowing swift and high. Its fairly constant **51** foot/mile gradient keeps boaters busy avoiding the numerous sweepers which line much of the river for the ten miles below the put-in.

The Bruneau drops an average of

**27 feet/mile** for each of its **56** miles. The entire run is full of class 2 business and holds four major drops.

The first two of these are short, boulder-strewn rapids which are easily portaged. Jarbidge Falls is an exciting class V drop full of boulders and broaching potential. It too can be portaged, but the prolific poison ivy on shore scared me more than the treacherous rapid.

Five Mile Rapid on the Bruneau is a long, playful class 3-4 affair, which provides great relief after several miles of flatwater.

The canyons are full of birds. Pairs of tropical-looking Western Tanagers zipped in and out of the trees every mile or so. We spotted blue herons, golden eagles, bald eagles, ducks, geese, kingfishers and curious ravens. River otters, rattlesnakes, coyotes and big horn sheep also inhabit the area but are seldom seen by boaters.

Geothermal activity in the form

of some excellent hot springs is an added bonus on these runs. Indian Hot Springs marks the end of the Jarbidge; it pumps out about 400 gallons of very hot water per minute.

Years ago, someone hauled a porcelain-lined bathtub to the springs. It provides a well-deserved break to river runners, but you will have to transport river water with your helmet to cool the tub down.

My all time favorite tub is near the take-out, which offers a great spot to **wait while others run** the four hour shuttle. The Jarbidge/ Bruneau runs are described in several guidebooks. Grant Amaral's "Idaho: The White Water State" covers the entire drainage and the potentially complex shuttles in the greatest of detail.

Fantastic scenery, remoteness, solitude, wildlife and whitewater make the Bruneau/ Jarbidge rivers one of the west's finest multi-day trips.

## Ears...from page 2

Wear snug swim caps, wetsuits hoods or earplugs if you anticipate recurrent submersion in cold water to reduce the risk of **developing exostoses**. You won't keep all the water out of your **ears** with these barriers, but they will keep the canal warm and minimize trauma. Ear specialists recommend silicone ear plugs as opposed to the wax ones, since pieces of the wax sometimes break off and get trapped in the canal.

If you have a history of boater's ear, avoid rolling and submersion as much as possible, especially in hot, humid **weather**. After you get off the river, get as much water out of your ears as possible, but don't use cotton swabs to accomplish this. I know it feels good, but don't do it. They can make tiny cuts in the lining of the canal and cause it to swell. Instead, tilt your head to the side and bounce up and down. A hair drier at a low setting may also be used.

Some folks who get a lot of outer ear infections put a few drops of a commercially available over the counter drying agent in each ear after boating. Others use a homemade mixture of white vinegar with a touch of rubbing alcohol, although this can be pretty irritating. Your doctor can advise what is best for you.

If water remains trapped in spite of these measures, large pieces of cerumen or debris may be blocking the canal. Doctors disagree on how best to deal with this. Individuals with relatively straight, wide canals can sometimes flush this debris out

with a solution (one part hydrogen peroxide to two parts of water) gently squirted into the canal with a small syringe or bulb. Unfortunately, sometimes this can drive the debris back against the eardrum and impact it there, making removal more difficult.

Commercial ear cleaning kits are available that include softening drops that allegedly loosen the cerumen. These may or may not be effective, but remember, removing all the cerumen is not the goal, since it protects the canal from infection. Ear cleaning is a lot like sex, moderation is important.

If water remains trapped, you may have to have your canals cleaned by a physician, who can do this under direct visualization. If you actually develop boater's ear, you'll need to **see** a physician as well. How do you know when you have it? Mild cases result in a sensation of fullness and itchiness. More severe infections may lead to loss of hearing (as the canal swells shut) and severe pain. A pus like discharge may also drain from the canal in bad cases. A fever, severe headache, nausea or swollen lymph nodes suggest a very severe infection that demands immediate medical attention and oral antibiotics.

Fortunately, serious complications are rare, except in immunocompromised persons. Cleaning the canal of debris is the first step a doctor takes in treating full blown, infected boater's ear. Then medicated drops are prescribed. Usually they are used four times a day for about a week. Some doctors prefer drops containing antibiotics and

steroid-like Cortisporin suspension. Others prefer acetic acid solutions like VoSol, especially in milder cases. If the canal is badly swollen, the doctor may have to pack it with a tiny wick for a day or two, so that the medication can flow past the swelling to the inner portions of the canal.

It is best not to submerge your head at all during treatment; if you cheat on this, clearing the infection will take longer. Actually dunking your head isn't the only problem, even being in a humid environment can delay healing.

Sometimes an infection in the middle ear, on the other side of the eardrum, can cause similar symptoms. This is known as otitis media and is potentially more serious. It may be occur at the same time as a sinus infection and in severe cases it can lead to perforation of the eardrum. If pulling back on the trumpet of the ear or pushing on the knob in front of the ear causes increased pain, otitis media may be the culprit. Boaters with otitis media often complain of congestion and may develop a fever. Otitis media requires treatment by a doctor with oral antibiotics and sometimes decongestants.

So there you have it. Not our usual fare and not terribly profound, but hopefully useful. Besides, we at AWA have a vested interest taking care of your ears. We want to make sure you will be able to hear Pope Barrow when he makes his annual impassioned river conservation speech at the Gauley Festival on September 21.

I guarantee you that will be profound! And worth hearing!

Hope to see you there.

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# Achieving equity in Western river management systems

By RIC ALESCH  
Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinator

Most river management systems exist in the West. The author's knowledge of eastern river management is limited; therefore, these comments are directed at western rivers, especially multi-day river trips. are inequitable to noncommercial river runners. The few systems that treat private boaters "fairly" are normally the ones that do not control private use at all.

Unfortunately, once rules are adopted for noncommercial boaters they usually create unfair advantages for commercial boaters. This has led many private boaters to simply oppose any plan that proposes to control use on a river. This article discusses a few of the reasons why the inequities exist and it presents some standards by which river management systems may be judged for fairness. It offers a challenge for river managers to review their programs and assess whether they meet the equity tests discussed below.

The most notorious river management program is for the Colorado River in Grand Canyon National Park. An allocation system was initiated in 1972 that distinguished, probably for the first time, between commercial and noncommercial river runners. This has not only been perpetuated there ever since, but has been emulated by many other systems throughout the west.

The Grand Canyon plan has several elements that discriminate against noncommercial boaters, not only in their chances of getting on the river, but also in the stipulations that control them while running the river. Some small advances have been made in improving the allocation ratio, but the Colorado River plan is still a classic case study in inequitably rationing river use and unfairly controlling user impacts. There is still a five to ten-year waiting list for a private permit to run the river while outfitter space may be obtained only a few months in advance.

Agencies managing most other popular western rivers have adopted lottery systems whereby applicants annually compete with each other to get a noncommercial permit, often under exceedingly long odds, while commercial spaces may be easily obtained on short notice. In some

respects lottery systems are even more frustrating than a waiting list because an individual may submit an application year after year for 10 years or more and end up with nothing to show but a series of rejection letters.

Set ratios for commercial versus noncommercial boaters have proven to be extremely inflexible and unlikely to adjust to changes in relative demand. While more and more people desire the experience and economy of a private trip, the traditional allocation ratios continue to remain intact. One of the most tragic consequences of this split river allocation scheme is the schism that it has created between commercial and noncommercial boaters. While there are some differences in skill level and participant interests, the two groups have a great deal more in common, including a desire for a wildlands experience, a love for beautiful river landscapes, a quest for whitewater, and the opportunity for positive social interactions in an outdoor setting.

Split allocation systems have created an undesirable "we-they" syndrome. Dual allocation systems are usually instituted for rivers where use levels are controlled to protect the environment and prevent crowding on popular river trips. Noncommercial boaters are normally environmentally-oriented folks and they generally support carrying capacities for wild areas, but they also desire equal access to public resources.

The majority of commercial outfitters are also conservation-minded, but they have a very strong economic incentive to acquire and maintain as large a share of the user allocation as possible, regardless of the relative demand for commercial versus private trips.

Outfitters have also demonstrated a very strong influence over river allocation decision-making, including some flagrant examples of using personal ties with politicians to change agency direction where management actions were not going their way. Most river managers are very pleasant, well-intended folks, but they are under strong economic and political pressures to maintain the commer-

cially-dominated systems. Many do not understand the strong desire for private trips, and it is somewhat surprising that many have quit limited river running experience. While they have usually been on river trips hosted by an outfitter or the agency, their first hand knowledge of noncommercial boating is often quite limited.

The following standards are recommended for use in assessing whether an existing or proposed river management system is equitable to noncommercial river runners:

1. The management system should minimize distinctions between commercial and noncommercial boaters.

The best allocation system is no allocation system at all. While this may seem very hard to imagine for those who have grown up with the commercial/noncommercial river management model, it is possible to design such a system. There is no inherent reason why all boaters can not use the same reservation or lottery system. The managing agency (or a private firm under contract) could receive all requests and issue permits without regard to the trip type. Users could then decide whether they wanted to hire an approved guide to run the river or organize a private trip. While this is not a new idea, it is still a viable and untested concept and certainly worth applying on previously unregulated rivers. A more politically feasible approach for existing systems might be one that reduces the division between commercial and noncommercial boaters, such as putting a large portion of user days in a common pool for competition by all parties.

2. All boaters should have a fair and equitable chance to get on the river.

This standard relates closely to the first principle, but it allows for approaches that maintain a traditional split system while assuring that the allocation stays in synch with relative demand. If a reliable survey could be done every year and the allocation adjusted regularly to reflect demand, the equity issue would be much reduced. However, commercial operators have shown little interest in giving up a portion of their allocation as long as they think they can fill their spaces, and

relative demand is very difficult to measure. Many private boaters have simply given up trying for permit on rivers with extremely long odds of success. With all the experience and talent of the river management community, certainly some creative ways can be explored to achieve this goal.

3. The system should recognize that guides are people too.

This is a very simple equity issue. Agencies traditionally ignore guides when counting heads on the river. This seems to come from a commonly held agency belief that guides are not real "visitors," and as such should not be counted in a visitor capacity system. However, if the purpose for allocating use is to control environmental impacts and preserve a wilderness experience, it does not matter if one is a guide or not. Outfitter employees should be counted in all capacity stipulations.

4. The same rules should apply to commercial and noncommercial parties.

A common example of this inequity is in group size limits. Many river management systems permit larger groups for commercial trips. This appears to be based on pressure from commercial outfitters to maintain large group sizes for economic reasons. There is certainly no resource management or social science reason for maintaining a discrepancy. If large groups have a greater impact on campsites and crowding, then it should not matter whether they are commercial or not. In practice, private groups will still tend to be smaller on average because they have no economic incentive to fill the trip, but they should have the same rights as others to a certain maximum group size.

5. The system should count people, not boats.

This standard is met by most western river management systems. However, it was not the case for a recent management plan developed for a popular river in Colorado. Counting boats rather than people is inherently inequitable to noncommercial river runners. Commercial craft tend to be larger rafts filled to capacity. Private craft tend to be one-person kayaks, canoes, or smaller rafts with fewer passengers. A system that counts boats rather than people is insidious because it can create an appearance of equity where none exists. For example, an allocation of 30 boats per day for each sector appears to be fair on the surface. However, if the commercial craft average 7 persons per boat and the private craft average 3 persons, it results in a 70/30 split in favor of commercial use. People create

impacts, not boats, so count people, not boats.

6. Avoid limiting the number of outfitters and creating economic windfalls.

Outfitter "caps" reduce competition and immediately make rafting businesses artificially more valuable. An outfitter cap makes for a closer relationship between the companies and the managing agency. While this may be a desirable situation from an agency and company perspective, it is undesirable from a general public standpoint and particularly from a private boater viewpoint.

Fewer outfitters with an almost guaranteed future on the river tends to create some very powerful companies with a significant influence over the agency that regulates them. Public agencies usually allocate a certain number of user-days to each outfitter, generally based on historical use. This converts a public resource into a private resource and makes each outfitter very zealous of its allocation. Outfitter caps usually go hand-in-hand with split allocation systems. Once user days are allocated to a powerful outfitter it is almost impossible to take any back again to reflect changing conditions. This author is not aware of any company that has ever lost part of its allocation to transfer it to the noncommercial sector and more accurately reflect current demand.

7. The best river management system is the simplest river management system.

River management systems should be as simple as possible for several reasons, including equity. Complex systems are harder to explain to the general public and they discriminate against private boaters. Commercial operators have very strong incentives and many opportunities to learn every angle of a management system. Noncommercial boaters may only wish to run a river once every few years, and it is difficult to learn and stay up to date on a complicated system. This discourages many boaters and some simply give up trying to run a river.

I recently reviewed a river management plan for a newly regulated river in New Mexico that was very generous with its allocation ratio for private boaters, but I was dismayed by the plethora of complex rules and regulations, which even varied by season and day of the week. Agency personnel should ask if every stipulation in their management plan is really necessary for resource protection and maintaining a wilderness experience.

Wild and scenic rivers should be

places where people can escape the rule and regiment of everyday life. If you forget these standards or disagree with the specifics, they can be boiled down to one simple test—equity. Equal opportunity is one of the basic tenants of our society, and certainly it should apply to access for publicly-managed wild rivers. In almost all aspects of river management one may simply ask the question "Is the rule or system resulting in fair and equitable treatment of noncommercial boaters?" This should include consideration of the direct effects and the often more subtle indirect impacts.

A river manager once told me that he liked dealing with outfitters because it is simpler than dealing with private boaters and, if troubles developed, he could simply threaten to pull the company's permit. We need to dispel the opinion that noncommercial boaters are more difficult to manage and therefore they should be discouraged in favor of commercial operations. This author has seen no documented evidence that private boaters cause greater impacts to the environment or degrade the wilderness experience more than commercial groups. Some extra effort to manage a certain group is also no excuse for inequity. Management ease is a desirable goal, but it should not take precedence over equality and fair user impact regulation.

A final recommendation for agency river managers is to keep all relationships with commercial outfitters "at arms length." There is no quicker way to lose the confidence of a private boater than to appear to be too friendly toward the outfitters that are regulated by the agency and stand to gain financially by favorable government treatment.

To end on a more upbeat note, this author has recently seen signs that some river managers are not only recognizing the inequities, but they are also starting to do something about it. There seems to be an increase in managers with river running experience, including some with private boating backgrounds, which should increase their understanding of noncommercial users.

We have a long way to go before private boaters have an equal opportunity to get on our popular rivers, and much needs to happen to make river management systems fair to all users. However, we should continue to seek new methods to close this huge gap, and we must continue the quest to turn the "we-they" boater syndrome into "us" again.

# Building the Perfect Beast

by CARLA GARRISON

For the past several months I've been a little out of sorts and it has taken me quite a while to figure out why.

I mean, lately things have pretty much been going my way. In May I got another promotion at work and a sizable raise. I made the last payment on my pickup in March and it's still running fine. My house is in a fantastic neighborhood, in fact, the property value has doubled in five years. It's like I'm living every yuppie's dream. But somehow it seems like something is missing.

Oh, I've got plenty of friends that are there when I need them. And my health is good, in fact, I'm definitely in better shape than ever. I've been out boating nearly every weekend this spring and everyone says I'm in top form. Hell, I've already paddled seven new class V+ runs this year.

So what's wrong? What do I need to make me happy?

I know what a lot of you are saying. The same thing my mother always says. "Carla, you need to get a good man."

B.S! Anytime I "need" a good man, I go out and get one. I think every woman ought to have a good man... about once a week.

No, a man is not what I'm missing, though I won't deny that a biological imperative has something to do with my current state of depression.

You see, I've finally figured it out. What I really want... what I really need... is a baby.

That's right! Carla Garrison wants a baby!

A rug rat. A yard ape. A curtain crawler. A little tiny critter I can call my own.

Oh, I know that I've been saying for years that only a fool would sacrifice her independence and happiness to rear a child. But that was just a defense mechanism. Besides, I don't really think there is any reason why raising a baby should interfere with your lifestyle. Particularly your boating! In my experience most people just make too big a thing of it.

I don't intend to.

Take diapers, for instance. All that fussing around just to keep a baby clean. If you use paper, your environmentalist friends act like you are singlehandedly chopping down every virgin forest in the northwest. If you use

cloth, you've got a foul smelling hamper full of you know what, and you're dumping tons of phosphates into the rivers.

I'm telling you diapers are ridiculous. The only sensible way to raise a baby is to do without them. How?

Build a small stainless steel playpen in your basement with a French drain in the floor and a heat lamp overhead. Keep the baby in the playpen naked, and just hose it off three or four times a day. The baby will be clean, will be learning to love water, and you won't ever have to touch you know what.

The whole damn thing could even be automated. And a portable unit could easily be installed in your pickup so that you can take your baby on roadtrips.

Breastfeeding? Come on, get real! If God had wanted women to go through life with some kid sucking on them he wouldn't have invented bottles.

Quality time? Right! What the hell does a baby know about quality time? Hell, they're like turnips up until the time they're two or three. All you have to do is feed and water them.

Actually, it amazes me just how stupid and helpless human babies are. Hell, a baby chicken can walk and feed itself a half hour after it pops out of its egg!

No, I see no reason to waste a lot of time fawning over a kid until it's at least four or five. Anything before that it won't remember anyway. When's the last time you thanked your mother for playing peek a boo with you?

Okay, I'll admit it. Some of my childrearing ideas are a little progressive. And I'm sure some of you are saying, "Well, if that horrid woman feels like that, why does she want to have a baby at all?"

The answer is simple. I want to pass on my talents and abilities to the next generation. I want to give birth to the premiere kayaker of the twenty-first century. I want to be the mother of the Boating Superbaby.

I know I've got the genes to do it. At least I've got half of them.

And therein lies the rub.

Where to get the other half?

Who shall I choose to father my little Superboater? What man is worthy of this privilege?

Clearly it must be a boater. A damned good one. And, considering the circumstances, it will have to be one with

a fairly liberal sense of morality, or possibly, a fairly low tolerance to alcohol.

No, on second thought, that won't do. I don't want a baby that can't hold its liquor. Perhaps one of the hot young racers? God knows they've got the bodies and the talent. But I'm not so sure that's what I want. I don't think I want my baby to inherit a bunch of racerhead genes. Who wants a kid that spends its whole life running gates in some class three mud puddle?

A big, tough raft guide? They love the outdoors and there are plenty to choose from. But I can't help but wonder about the condition of their DNA. Between you and me, some of them have done more than their share of mind altering substances over the years.

Maybe one of the big name hair boaters? That would be more my style. That's what I want my kid to be. Unfortunately, most of the guys I know that paddle class six stuff aren't really all that bright. If they were, they wouldn't be doing it.

Of course if intelligence is what I want, maybe I should consider one of the river conservationists. Perhaps, even one of the AWA Directors?

Nah! Too neurotic. They worry about everything.

One of the editors of this rag?

Get real! I don't want my kid getting beat up on the playground of life.

Oh well, deciding who will father my baby is probably going to be as tough as deciding to have one at all. There are so many things to consider.

But I've still got a month or so to work it out.

You see, I'm not going to waste any time. After all, my biological clock is ticking.

I want to get the ball rolling this fall. Come to think of it, I know just the place.

The 1991 Gauley Festival.

Hmmmm! What could be more appropriate? Where better to conceive the Boating Superbaby? And so convenient. Every hot boater in the East will be there. I'll have so many to choose from. And, if I can't make up my mind, I can always take potluck.

Or let them raffle me off!

Yep! The Gauley Festival!!!

September 21, 1991.

I'll see ya there!

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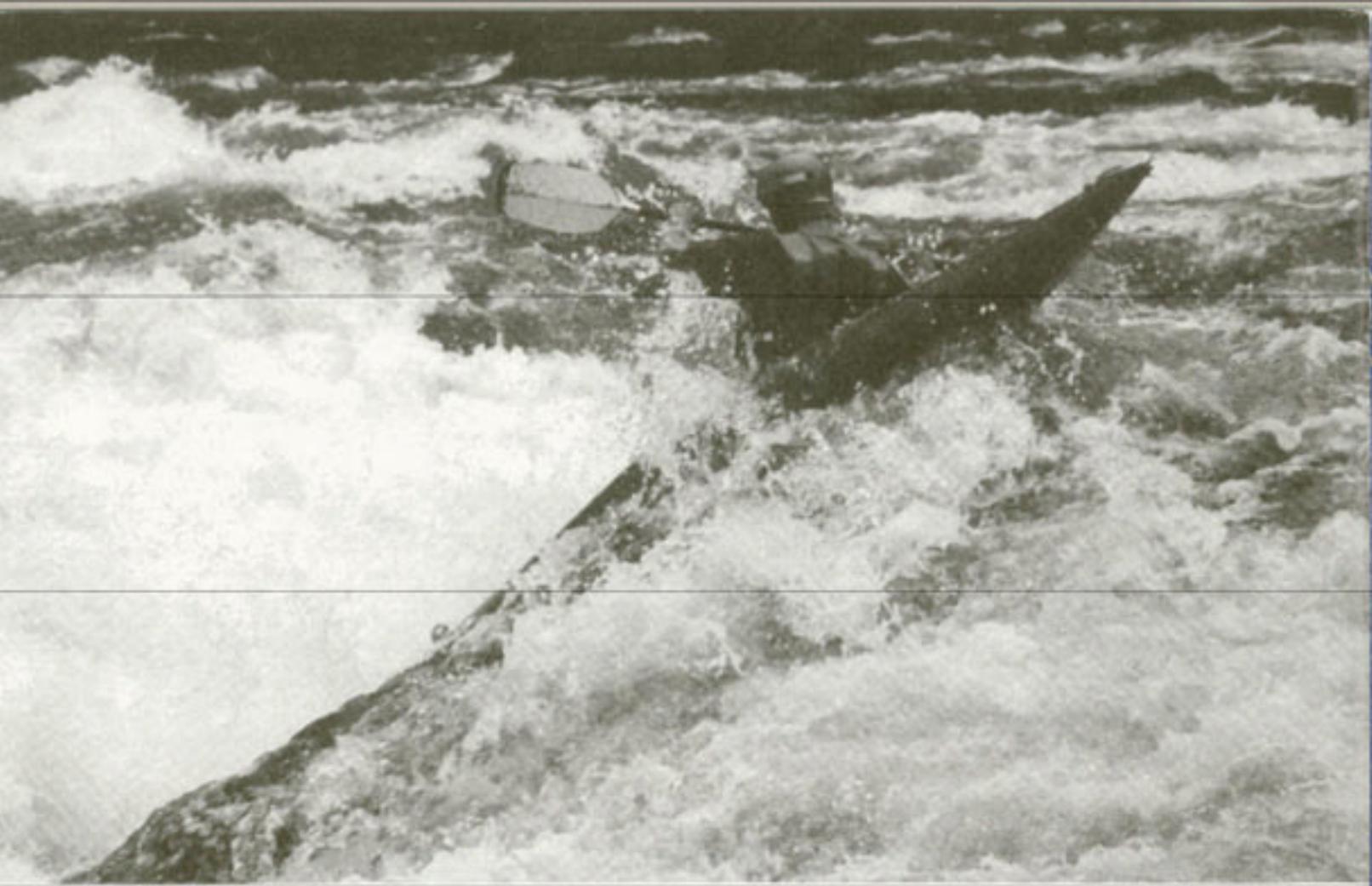
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