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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

**A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY**

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Photo by Jeff West



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## American Whitewater Journal

Volume XLV, No.3

# F E A T U R E S

Conservation & Access Updates

## Regional Updates

pg. 16



Feature

## Exploring the Upper Sultan

pg. 26



## Olympic Games

pg. 56



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# Purpose **American Whitewater**

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

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

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

**RIVER ACCESS:** To assure public access to whitewater rivers pursuant to the guidelines

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

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

**SAFETY:** AW promotes paddling safely, publishes reports on whitewater accidents, maintains a uniform national ranking system for whitewater rivers (the International Scale of Whitewater

Difficulty) and publishes and disseminates the internationally recognized AW Whitewater Safety Code.

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

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



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

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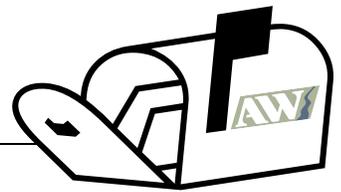


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# Letters to the Editor



Lots of your writers and editors are world travelers and very sophisticated. Unfortunately, some of your readers, like me, haven't gotten out of town. It would be so much nicer to read articles that identified what state or country something was in by the first paragraph, not, as in many of your articles, in the last paragraph or not at all.

Like, I assume Westwater Canyon (pg 7, March/April 2004 issue) is in Colorado but where? And I'm guessing Colorado only because of the plug you gave the outfitter.

Thanks,  
Flo Samuels

Dear Flo,  
Thanks for your suggestion, we will try to implement it via an editor's note where needed. Westwater Canyon is on the Colorado River, downstream of Ruby and Horsethief Canyons near the Colorado/Utah border.

Dear Bryan - Although I have the greatest respect for the work you do as a streamkeeper, I must admit I disagree with your views expressed regarding articles in American Whitewater.

I too am a boater with a family, and as you said in your letter "which is probably most of AW's members". My wife and I both work so we can support our family and continue in our love for whitewater. We have chosen to live a rather simple life relative to the typical "AMERICAN" life of BIG cars, BIG houses, and all the other conveniences many people take for granted. Instead, we have chosen to put our hard-earned surplus funds toward travel, and I know of many others who fall into our income bracket who do the same. I recently have had the opportunity to spend two incredible January boating trips in Costa Rica. The people, the rivers, the culture, the food are all incredible. Also, I have learned much about the environmental issues facing Central America through this travel.

In addition, careful attention to the name "Central America" would imply these countries also make up part of what we like to call "AMERICA". The wonderful people in these countries are very proud to call themselves Americans. Also, a great number of these people are also indigenous to their land, and in my opinion have as much, if not more of a right to call themselves Americans than those of us who live in "NORTH AMERICA". However, I am very proud to be able to say I am an American and appreciate what we have available.

I hope to continue to enjoy the wonderful whitewater I have in my backyard of Asheville, NC and all the other opportunities available in this country. I also look forward to my travels to other parts of America including Canada, Central and South America. I hope you also have the opportunity to do the same. The trip can be rather economical if you do some research beforehand. I would be happy to give you some tips and contacts.

Happy Creeking  
Thomas Minton

# Corner Charc

by Jason Robertson, Acting Executive Director

“The undertaking of a new action brings new strength.”

-Evenius

The first time I recall hearing someone shout at me to “**Do something!**” was when I was surfing a hole on the Ocoee in 1991.

The boater shouting at me was Risa Shimoda, who I knew at the time only by legend, and photographs in the AWA Journal. Risa was (and still is) one of the best boaters in the country, and to my everlasting appreciation, Risa didn't stop at simply telling me to change, she showed me how to do several new tricks and gave me the confidence to try them. My perception of being told to do something changed from an initial embarrassment at holding up the line to a personally rewarding challenge that quickly led me to learn “retendo” moves and to learn how to spin in “donuts”.

Since those early years when I transitioned from my canoe to a raft and eventually into a kayak, the sport has grown from a very comfortable status quo in which surfing and enders were the apex of cool to an edgier style in which blunts, cartwheels, and even more radical moves have grown into vogue. New boat designs have made it so easy to “Do Something” that everyone from new to old school boaters can participate in the action on America's waves.

Now, it is my turn to “Do something” one more time. I have been given the exciting challenge of taking over the reins from Risa, who resigned in April, and am temporarily leading American Whitewater as Acting Executive Director.

While I don't think Risa intended to challenge me at the personal and professional level through her resignation, I find it comforting that the same person who opened my boating horizons 13 years ago, and a person who I now count as a friend, is placing the organization she cares so much about in my hands and trusting me to grow my expertise and represent AW at the highest levels.

For six months, through October 2004, I will be shifting my conservation and access duties as National Policy Director and spending much time working on streamlining AW's systems, conducting AW's fund raising, developing AW's membership, fulfilling AW's promises to funders and sponsors, managing AW's team of expert staff, and representing AW in the halls of Congress. I can imagine no more rewarding challenge.



Jason Robertson  
photo by Jed Weingarten

I sometimes think about AW as if designing a new boat. Hopefully by making some tweaks to a working design we will be able to learn new tricks and continue improving at everything we do from conservation to access and from sharing safety techniques to building the whitewater community. Some changes will be more visible than others, but all are planned to enhance our performance and AW's ability to represent you.

My challenge to you is the same challenge that I received from Risa in 1991 – to do something. In this case, take this opportunity to do something new for American Whitewater whether it is volunteering at a festival, sharing your expert skills in a technical field, asking a friend to join, making a donation at a personally rewarding level, submitting an article to our Journal, applying for the board, or representing AW in a FERC relicensing. Do something. Together our actions will make a difference and will strengthen AW. 

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# Some Words From the Editor

Tim Nickles



Tim Nickles  
Editor

photo by Matt Davanzo

Last weekend I was up in Vail at the Teva Mountain Games and the American Whitewater 50th Anniversary Gala. The Gala was a spectacular party hosted by Willie Kern and featured powerful interruptions by Pete Skinner. We feasted and drank at the (mostly) open bar and Pete whipped the crowd into such a frenzy of support that AW had an extremely successful fundraising event. Notable awards were handed out to Board members Charlie Walbridge and Tom Christopher for their lifetime contributions and super volunteer Tom O'Keefe received an award for his untiring and very effective work.

The capper was a talk by National Geographic explorer Wade Davis about his experiences living with and coming to understand cultures throughout the world; including several in the Amazonian drainage. He experienced firsthand the alternate worldviews and cultures of these varied social groups and presented his thesis that these different societies are not failed versions of us but that each represents a unique answer to question of how are we to live in this world. His work also led him to study the psychotropic botanicals that formed an integral part of the cultures he was learning about. I think many of us were happy to hear that kindred spirits lived on and enjoyed the bounty of rivers throughout the world.

This issue gives a shout out to the whitewater on the western side of our country. The waters of our western seaboard are as special as they are fleeting and fickle. Powered by the sun, they only come out to play when it's warm and then get bored as soon as the snowpack runs out. People I meet from the East always talk of year-round paddling, release seasons, and rain-fed runs. In Colorado, we're at the mercy of the snowpack, the sun, and the water boards of the various municipalities controlling our dams.

Here in Boulder we've all been waiting for the run-off to start. A friend last week

wondered out loud if the Poudre was going to run this year at all and the play run through town has been too low for everyone except the drunken inner-tube pilots. The reservoir 3000 feet above us has been close to spilling for a week and all we needed was a heat wave to crank up the creeks.

The game is on this week and every boater I know is dropping everything to get on the local rivers while they last. I didn't get to go boating today and with that small lapse I missed out on probably a tenth of the kayaking season local to Boulder.

Drought has been coloring most of the Western water situation for the last five years and things seem to be getting grim. At a dinner with friends a while back, some of the conversation turned to the drainages of the mighty Colorado and hushed words were spoken of the end of the Grand Canyon. With downstream usage climbing due to development of the Southwest, these drought years have put a hurting to Lake Powell so bad that some say in as few as three years the Lake will drain down below the dam outflow tubes and the party will be over. Sounds hard to believe but Vegas sure has been getting big. Hmmm.

We all know of the difficulty involved in getting an opportunity to take part in a private trip down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. The waiting list is legendary. So daunting many never sign up in the first place, let alone eagerly await a departure date. The process for getting private permits is so messed up now that the National Park Service has basically thrown up its arms and stopped allowing people to sign up until they get the thing figured out.

When Jeff West finally got a launch date for the Grand he didn't let his life get in the way and his solution was unconventional and inspiring. He and his buddies had five days to run the 225 miles to Diamond Creek so they used

14-foot whitewater touring kayaks and went for it. Their story may give you some ideas.

Jim Pytel shares a very entertaining story of boating the flood waters of Canyon Creek outside of Portland and really captures the fun factor involved in running harder whitewater.

AW's man in the Northwest, Tom O'Keefe, fights rain, mudslides, brush thickets, and fading daylight to bring us a story of adventure on the Sultan River near Seattle, WA. His story underscores the fleeting and fickle nature of western whitewater and reminds us of the spoils for those who chase it.

This issue starts a new path for the journal as we have shortened its 84 pages to a more svelte 68. We hope this change raises quality by allowing us to be more selective with what we publish and trimming less important content. In our next issue AW's staff will present its top ten conservation and access issue for the coming year so look out for that and lend a hand wherever you can. 

# Contest for Kids Benefits AW by Jackson Kayaks



Only ONE MONTH  
left to win a Jackson  
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American Whitewater is pleased to announce that Jackson Kayaks and AW will conduct the 2004 AW Membership Drive for Kids – a program for enthusiastic young paddlers. Jackson Kayaks believes that it is critical that younger paddlers understand the importance of supporting American Whitewater with membership. To support their commitment, Jackson Kayaks will award a new Jackson Kayak to the paddler who collects the most AW memberships during the contest period. Additional prizes from IR, Lotus Designs, and AW will be awarded for runners-up.

The AW Membership Drive will start on June 1st and end on July 31st. Only

paddlers who have not yet passed their eighteenth birthday by July 31st, 2004, meet the minimum requirement for participation, and submit complete and accurate forms will be eligible to win. The winner will be announced at the AW Deerfield River Festival in Charlemont, MA on July 31st, 2004. Winners need not be present to collect their rewards. Special AW Membership Forms can be downloaded from both the AW website [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org) and Jackson Kayak's website [www.jacksonkayak.com](http://www.jacksonkayak.com).

Recruiters must collect at least (5) memberships to be eligible to win the kayak. In order for each eligible

recruited membership to be counted, each corresponding membership form submitted must include the name and AW membership number of the recruiting member. Running tallies for each recruiter will be available on both the AW and Jackson Kayak websites. Tallies will be updated every two weeks beginning on June 12th and ending on July 24th. **AW**

For more information, please visit [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org).

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# Partner Spotlight

## Kokatat and NOC

Since 1971, Kokatat Watersports Wear has manufactured high-quality outdoor gear in the coastal city of Arcata, California.

Our inspiration comes from the water that surrounds us: miles of rugged coastline, dozens of rivers and creeks, quiet lagoons and bays. Still under the guidance of the original owner, Steve O'Meara, the current focus on paddlesports clothing and accessories keeps approximately 100 people working full-time and brings significant benefits to our small community.

Kokatat manufactures the most extensive collection of paddlesport's clothing and accessories for male and female paddlers of all ages, and many Kokatat innovations are considered standard issue on current paddling clothing designs. Our legendary GORE-TEX® dry suits are used the world over for expeditions and research, for work and play.

Preserving access to the nation's waterways is vital in the current political climate. To that end, Kokatat supports several local and regional organizations working to keep the rivers of northern California healthy. Continuing a tradition of collaboration with American Whitewater, we will be welcoming the participants of the River Stewardship Institute to our backyard in October of this year.

To find out more about Kokatat, visit [www.kokatat.com](http://www.kokatat.com).

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Show your support for American Whitewater by purchasing an American Whitewater GMER today!

### additional contributors



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



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



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



Walden Kayaks is donating four recreational and light touring kayaks every year for the next five years, available for sale on the American Whitewater website through 2008. Today, friends of American Whitewater may purchase a Walden Experience, Adirondack, Odyssey, or Vista Expedition online to further support American Whitewater's efforts to conserve and restore America's rivers and streams.



In 2003, Clif Bar initiated The Flowing Rivers Campaign to help AW increase its Affiliate Clubs through six \$500 grants to support work on conservation, access or safety issues. Clif Bar has extended its support in 2004 and AW looks forward to continued success.



Wavesport continues to support AW because whitewater rivers are not exactly a dime a dozen. In addition to a substantial monthly donation, Team Wavesport will be offering free clinics to AW members to help celebrate AW's Anniversary and thank AW members for doing their part. Check the AW and Wavesport websites for more information.



When spring is hopping at the Nantahala Outdoor Center, it's usually because of great water levels.



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



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



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



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

This spring, however, brought a lot of excitement because of changes in at the western North Carolina outfitter. Payson Kennedy, one of NOC's three founders and the creator of the NOC philosophy, returned to the helm as CEO. Payson brings with him moral leadership – an important quality at an employee-owned company – as well as decades of experience managing NOC.

Part of this transition has meant a re-emphasis on NOC's core values of outdoor recreation and leadership. NOC Instruction, led by 1996 Olympian Wayne Dickert, is an important part of that mission. NOC recently lowered its instructor-to-guest ratio to ensure personalized attention. Guest instructors this summer include worlds freestyle medalist Andrew Holcombe (Payson's own grandson) and Girls at Play creator Anna Levesque, who will both teach playboating courses in August.

Off the river, the Outfitter's Store recently re-organized merchandise to dedicate the entire top floor to paddlesports. New product lines include popular Esquif canoes and Astral PFDs. And NOC now rents kayaks. Relia's Garden Restaurant has re-opened to the public this season. New to Relia's, upstairs you'll find the Paddler's Pub, for hot and cold beverages.

In August, three Nantahala Racing Club athletes will participate in the Olympic Games in Greece, including long-time NOC staffer Chris Ennis (C-1), as well as former Olympians Joe Jacobi and Matt Taylor.

So it's a big year for NOC, and its relationship with American Whitewater is more important than ever. We always encourage NOC customers to support AW and the essential advocacy work they do. For more information, call NOC Guest Relations at 800-232-7238, or visit [www.noc.com](http://www.noc.com). 



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# Field Notes

## Clay's Corner

by Clay Wright

### Pinning:

Even if you never plan on running Class IV, don't even own a creekboat, and only come out on sunny summer dam-release runs – if you are a whitewater kayaker you might pin your kayak in the river. Heck, some people pin several times a day! There are several different ways you can pin your kayak and all sorts of ways to get yourself free; in the following, I'll focus on some basics.

### Basic Pin Prevention

The best way to get yourself out of a pin situation is to avoid getting into it. This means scouting, squaring up, and learning to 'get personal' with obstructions. By scouting blind horizon lines (even on runs you know well), you'll be MUCH less likely to be surprised by a new log or rock in the channel. When you are headed for

an obstruction you won't be able to miss, consider hitting it with the bow or the stern of your boat instead of the side. Sure, you'll piton, but after the hit you'll be ferrying away from it, rather than stuck sideways against it.

If you DO end up heading sideways towards an obstruction, be the first thing to hit – putting your hands and body between the rock and your boat. This way you can push with your hands to get your kayak started around the obstruction and hold your upstream edge out of the current at the same time. Be sure to choose the side the most water is heading, so that you are working with, rather than against, the current.

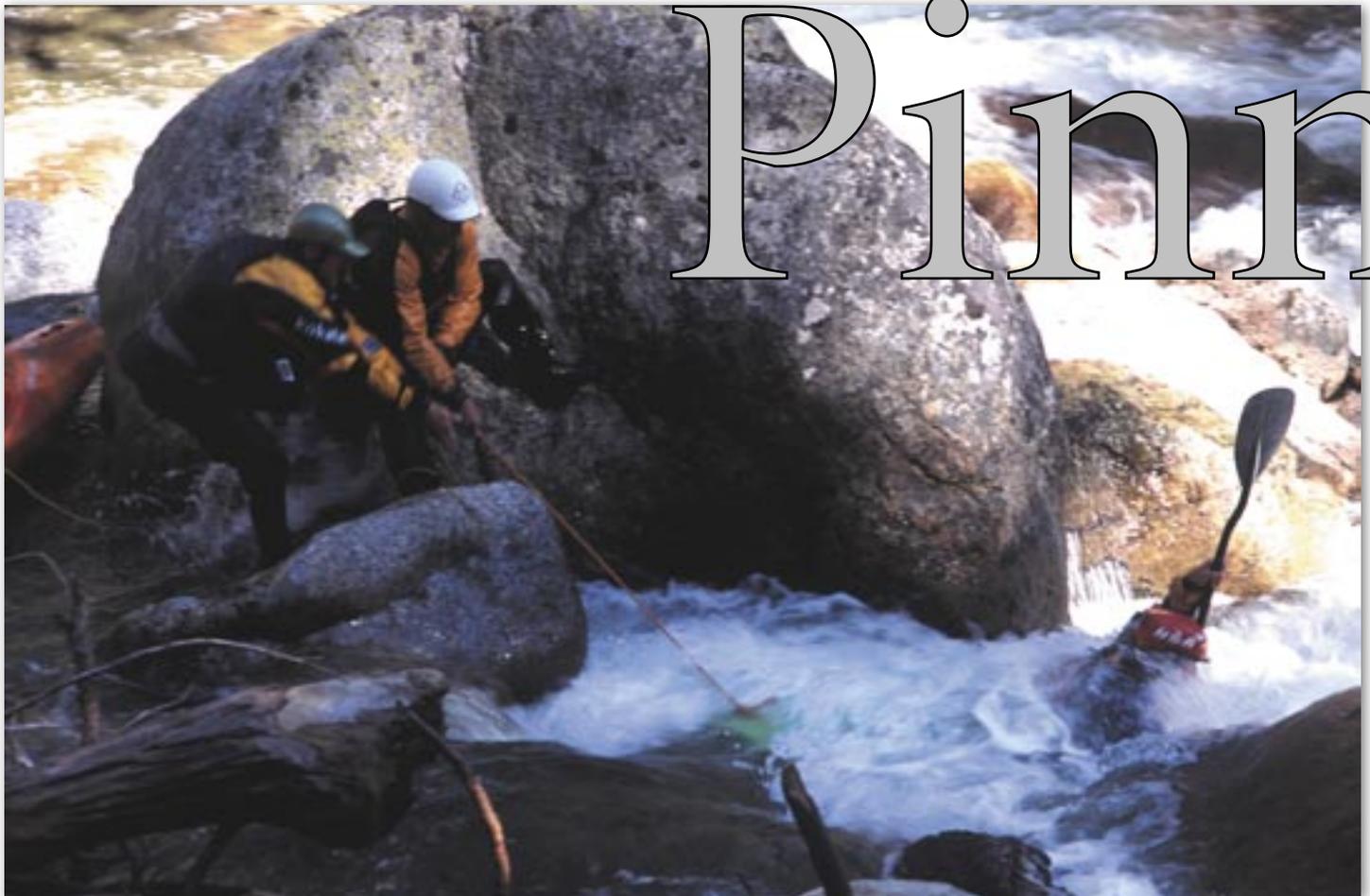
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Clay getting some help from Eric Jackson and Seth Warren on South Silver in California  
*photo by Jed Weingarten*

Then plant a last deep stroke towards that direction as you get flipped upstream. This is a very effective method of getting the boat moving around the obstruction as long as you're reaching the right way!

### Pitons and Vertical Pins

With today's short boats you can get pinned vertically in ledges as small as 2' high! Learning to identify awkward boils in the hole surface or split bubble-trails in the outflow takes practice, so in general keep your kayak where you can see it! Learning to keep your boat at the surface on familiar water by practicing 'boofs' off rocks, 'late boofs' on the way down ramps, and 'sideways hops' off shallow shelves will give you much-needed tools when trying new rivers or just new lines on the Tellico.



No matter what, though, the more you paddle on low-volume rivers, the more likely you'll come to an abrupt stop sometime, so lets talk about...

## Getting Pinned

Bam! You boofed a bit early, rolled off the lip, and slammed into the bottom of the river. The noise and shock are fresh in your ears – but what do you do? MOVE! The best time to free yourself from a pin is the moment of impact. The tail is either going to fall down beside you, bounce back up in an ender, or settle down under the current and onto the ledge. If you can spin your tail out of the main flow before it gets settled, or even 'ender' up, out, and away from the drop you're home free. If it does settle in, you've entered the next section of this article:

# ing

## Light Pins

"Yuk- that looks awful! The boat's completely covered and the water is spraying off the paddlers back like a faucet. . .what's he saying?"

In my experience, most pins look worse from the outside than they do from the boat. You're stuck and figuring how to get un-pinned while everyone around is yelling, digging out ropes, and scrambling back to the spot. Use this time wisely! If the boat isn't in a strong current and you feel you are stable, then make an assessment of your situation.

- What should your buddies do once they get to you?
- Can someone wade to your bow or stern?
- Is it safe to swim from here?
- Can you safely exit your boat?
- Can you pry the boat over or push yourself up and off with your paddle?
- Do you need a rope – and from where?

Think quickly and take charge of your scene before someone does something that unexpectedly makes matters worse. In some cases you are better off with your skirt ON, keeping the boat buoyant and light while figuring out your options for an in-boat extraction you can paddle away from.

## 'Hard' Pins

The distinction between a 'light' pin and a 'hard' pin is best made by the pinned boater, because he is the one who can feel the force of the water and any flexing of the plastic. When you come to a stop, at the first hint of boat-flex, instability, or major current forces I advise "rapid bail-prep": Get your knees out of the thigh hooks ASAP in case the deck starts flexing downwards. Once done, if things still 'feel ok' and you are head-up and stable, start planning your own rescue just as in the 'light' pin.

Can you see and/or communicate with your rescuers?

Can you push off the bottom with your paddle?

Can you get your legs out of the boat if you decide to swim?

Some boats come with safety 'pillars' to step up on – allowing you to 'jump' free of the boat as you pull the skirt. Others have elongated cockpit rims you can step on while you extract the other leg. If the boat is flexing, these will come in handy so you might want to practice in the backyard first. In some cases you'll be wise to wait for a rope that can pull you up and out. The way you went into the pin is usually the best way to get you and your boat out.

In any case, your best option is to tell your rescuers what you want done BEFORE any ropes get thrown. You've got the most information about your situation and the most time for planning the extraction. You've also got the most to gain by making your pin just an unsettling moment during an otherwise great day on the river. **AW**



paddler: Clay Wright photo by Jed Weingarten

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# History Salida, CO

by Sue Taft

## More Than Just a Boating Town

A remote town in Colorado began its history as one of America's first boating towns when it started a downriver race on the Arkansas River. In an effort to attract locals and tourists to support the area's businesses, the Chamber of Commerce of Salida began a tradition with their first race in 1949. Scheduled in June to take advantage of peak snow melt and run-off, the race has become the oldest and most continuous whitewater (wildwater) race in the Western Hemisphere.

The official story behind the origin of the race is that it started in 1948 over a cup of coffee. The unofficial story is that it started when two drinking buddies challenged one another to a rowboat race from Salida to Canon City. They did not make it very far but publicity around the escapade prompted the local Chamber of Commerce to sponsor a race the following year. Word spread far and wide about the upcoming race even making it onto the United Press news wire. Coincidentally, two visiting Swiss paddlers heard of the race and decided to enter. The river was high and muddy for the first race and many of the would-be contestants dropped out merely at the sight of it. Although portaging frequently, the Swiss paddlers easily won the race in their foldboat along with the money purse put up by the Chamber of Commerce.

Upon their return to Europe, the Swiss paddlers spread word about the race. Coincidentally, a European photographer and filmmaker, also present at the race, filmed the event. He, too, spread word about the race showing his movies to foldboat clubs in Austria, Germany, France, and Switzerland. Within a few short years, Salida became known as a premiere paddling destination in the United States for European paddlers. Top European racers from Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia came to Salida to compete, handily beating the American competitors. Because of the success of the race, the Chamber of Commerce even began sponsoring European competitors for the annual event.

More than just competitors in the race, the Europeans also introduced American paddlers to the latest paddling techniques and boat designs (both canoe and kayak) from Europe. In 1953, Erich Seidel with another German colleague set up a slalom course at the race to demonstrate gate running. In 1955, two Swiss canoeists brought an all-fiberglass canoe specifically designed with an integral deck with one long middle cockpit. It was the first truly closed canoe that any American paddlers had ever seen. Within a few short years, American paddlers were designing and building their own.

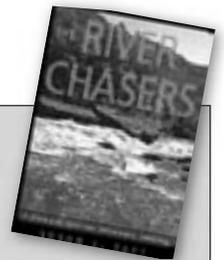
America's rise in international slalom competition through the 1960's and 1970's can be directly attributed to the presence of two other prominent European competitors who regularly competed at the Salida race in the 1950's. Roger Paris of France and Walter Kirschbaum of Germany eventually immigrated permanently to the United States and taught kayaking professionally to scores of young American paddlers at the Colorado Rocky Mountain School in Carbondale.

...All of this because Salida, a remote town in Colorado, sponsored a little race on a river, and it doing so, helped establish its own place in the history of American whitewater. **AW**

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American Whitewater.



Sue Taft is the author of *The River Chasers*, *The History of American Whitewater Paddling*. If you have a topic or question you would like answered, email it to [staft@theriverchasers.com](mailto:staft@theriverchasers.com) and look for its answer in an upcoming issue of the *American Whitewater Journal*.



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*Clay Staley drops the big one on Oh-Be-Voyful. © Christian Robertson*

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# American Whitewater News

## The Benefits and Rewards of Membership

### Membership Cards

AW is excited to announce that after 50 years we now have official AW Membership cards. The cards arrived in our members' mailboxes in early May. The AW Membership Card makes it easy for paddlers to take full advantage of the benefits of being an AW member at events, participating retailers and online.

Be sure to carry your AW Membership Card with you whenever you head out to the rivers. You never know when you will receive free refreshments, the opportunity to win gear, or free clinics with some of the sport's most talented athletes.

An AW Membership entitles our members to an expanding list of membership benefits that includes:

- Six exciting issues of the American Whitewater Journal – a \$29 newsstand value
- Our monthly online newsletter "AW Beta" featuring the latest whitewater news
- 10% discount on outdoor equipment from Nantahala Outdoor Center Store
- Access to free clinics with some of the sport's leading athletes from Wave Sport, Lotus Designs, and Jackson Kayaks
- 40% off the subscription price of Kayak Session magazine
- Unlimited access to the most comprehensive whitewater resource website in the world
- An American Whitewater logo decal



### Act Now and You Will Also Receive!!!

VIP treatment at an event in your area. During 2004, AW Volunteers will be setting up booths to celebrate AW's 50th Anniversary at regional paddling events. Each stop of the tour will feature a Hospitality Tent designed to express our gratitude for your support during our first 50 years of creating a whitewater legacy. At each stop of the AW Membership Appreciation Tour, Team Wavesport athletes will be hosting river runs for AW



members. So come out and play with AW and Wavesport at an event near you.

All you need to do is stop by any AW Hospitality Tent, show your AW Membership Card and let our volunteers thank you. Each hospitality tent will be unique from the others but all will involve free stuff and camaraderie. Come by and learn about all the great work you help support.

To check out a list of events on the AW Membership Appreciation Tour visit [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org).

### But Wait There is More!

In May, Scott Collins, AW's webmaster, introduced three new benefits for AW members on the website. Check out these new features:

New Website Features for "Members Only"

- **River Maps** - An exciting new way to find the rivers that are running.
- **Online Full Color AW Journals** Read the Journal two weeks before your buddy steals yours.
- **AW Merchandise Discounts** AW members will get 10% off all of their purchases made online. 

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# Conservation & Access Regional Update

by John Gangemi and John Patrouch

## Region: WEST

by John Gangemi

In the northern Rockies American Whitewater staff and PacifiCorp have finalized a three-year whitewater monitoring plan for the Bigfork Hydropower Project on the Swan River (MT). Whitewater releases will begin Wednesday evening from 5 to 9 PM July through August provided the USGS gage below Swan Lake is equal to or greater than 800 cfs. Further south in Montana, American Whitewater has worked with PPL Montana developing an internet-based whitewater flow study that will take place for the entire summer on West Rosebud Creek. PPL Montana operates the Mystic Lake Hydro Project on West Rosebud Creek (MT). The internet-based whitewater study will be accessible via American Whitewater's website [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org). Local boaters have developed an excellent streamkeeper page for this reach. There will also be a link to real-time flows for West Rosebud on the streamkeeper page. Please add West Rosebud Creek to your summer boating plans. In June, American Whitewater staff participated in the Montana River Recreation Advisory Council presentation to the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Board of Commissioners. American Whitewater staff served on the 22 member Advisory Council for the past 1.5 years developing a river recreation management guidance document. The FWP commissioners are adopting the recommendations in a rulemaking.

American Whitewater and local volunteer Charlie Vincent continue to work on the post license implementation phase of the Bear River hydropower project (ID). We were shocked to learn in April that the Twin Lakes Canal Company proposes to build yet another dam on the Bear River. This dam would inundate the Oneida Narrows reach, a popular Class II reach for boaters in southeast ID and northern UT. Local boater Jeff Seamons and others have been working closely with American Whitewater staff to oppose this new dam. The FERC released the draft environmental



**John Gangemi racing in the Swan Whitewater Festival.**

*photo by Tony Gangemi*

assessment for Idaho Power's Malad hydropower project (ID). The Malad hydropower project dewateres two Class IV sections of the Malad River. Because the Malad River is spring-fed it would have supported whitewater boating year round absent the hydropower diversions. The FERC EA does not require Idaho Power to provide a schedule of whitewater releases but does require improved access, flow phone and portages around the dams. American Whitewater is looking for local volunteers to assist with this hydro relicense. Restoring a regular schedule of flows particularly in the summer months would greatly enhance boating opportunities to this arid part of Idaho.

In Washington local volunteers continue to do an excellent job on the Spokane River hydropower project. The collaborative approach used in this relicense demands significant time commitments from volunteers such as John Patrouch, John Karpenko, Robbi Castleberry, and Paul Delaney. These individuals recognize the importance of advocating for whitewater resources and river protection knowing the reward will come in the 30 to 50-year hydro license. American Whitewater staff met with these volunteers and representatives from other organizations and the tribes in May to facilitate communication and discussion of individual interests in the relicense proceeding as well as mutually agreeable outcomes.

In Oregon, American Whitewater staff developed a land-based whitewater feasibility study for the Carmen Smith Hydropower Project located on the Mackenzie River. The land-based reconnaissance approach is being used due to uncertainty about the whitewater opportunities that exist on the bypass reaches for the Mackenzie and Smith Rivers. This reconnaissance approach has been used as the first step by American Whitewater staff at other projects across the country.

*If you would like to participate in this reconnaissance please contact John Gangemi [jgangemi@digisys.net](mailto:jgangemi@digisys.net)*

On the border with Oregon and California, the Klamath Hydropower Project reached a new stage in the relicense process. The FERC requested comments on PacifiCorp's license application. American Whitewater filed comments encouraging the FERC to undertake an objective analysis of dam removal in the basin as well as consider a range of other alternatives that includes a schedule of whitewater flows in the six-mile Class IV JC Boyle bypass as well as a schedule of flows in the popular Class IV commercial run known as Hell's Corner.

In California, American Whitewater staff are working with PG&E on selection of an access site required in the new hydropower license for the Pit 1 Hydropower Project. American Whitewater recently posted flow information on the streamkeeper page for the Pit River reach dewatered by the Pit 1 Hydropower Project. Downstream on the Pit 3, 4, 5 Hydropower Project American Whitewater staff are working with resource agencies, PG&E and other stakeholders developing biological and recreation monitoring plans for the new license.

Also in California, local volunteers conducted a whitewater flow study on Silver Creek, a tributary to the South Fork American as part of the licensing of Sacramento Utility Districts (SMUD) South Fork American River Hydropower Project.

On the North Fork Feather River (CA) American Whitewater staff signed a



Women's rafting team on the Tobin section of the North Fork Feather during the whitewater flow study.

*photo by John Gangemi*

settlement agreement with PG&E, resource agencies and other stakeholders for a new license for the Upper North Fork Hydropower Project. That settlement agreement provides access improvements, increased instream flows and a schedule of whitewater releases for the six-mile Class III Belden reach. There will also be an annual spring release for the ten-mile Class V Seneca reach. In April, American Whitewater and other parties to the Rock Creek-Cresta Settlement set the 2004 schedule for whitewater releases on the five-mile Class IV Cresta reach, the four-mile Class III Rodgers Flat reach and the four-mile Class V Tobin reach. These releases occur on the 4th weekend of the month (not the last weekend) June through October. Cresta is released on Saturday and the other two reaches on Sunday. In June, the Cresta reach may be postponed to avoid impacts to foothill yellow-legged frogs. Check the American Whitewater website and streamkeeper page for updates. Just downstream, American Whitewater staff continue to work with PG&E in a collaborative proceeding on the Poe Hydropower Project. American Whitewater would like to restore boating opportunities to the nine-mile bypass reach which contains a four-mile Class IV(V) section and a four-mile Class III section. We are also looking to secure access improvements and real-time flow information.

The FERC amended the Kern River No. 3 Hydropower license to include the US Forest Service's revised conditions for project operation. American Whitewater along with Friends of the River and the Natural Heritage Institute successfully

appealed twice the US Forest Service's previous conditions because those conditions did not adequately protect recreation opportunities on the river. The new conditions finally establish an annual schedule for whitewater releases on the seventeen mile reach of the upper Kern dewatered by the KR3 hydropower project. The schedule is dependent on inflows to Fairview Dam.

## FERC Relicensing: Spokane River - Idaho, Washington

*by John Patrouch*

The Spokane River provides Class II-III whitewater paddling for local and regional residents in eastern Washington and northern Idaho. Common runs are the 2-3 mile long Upper Spokane run (Class II) and the 4-5 mile long Lower Spokane run (Class II-III). There are a number of "park and play" areas on the Upper Spokane, including Trailer Park Wave, Corbin Park, Stateline (Dead Dog Hole), Sullivan Hole and the Zoo Hole. River flow varies from 40,000 cfs to under 1,000 cfs with good play from 35,000 down to about 2,500 cfs.

The river begins at Idaho's Lake Couer D'Alene and flows through eastern Washington State till joining the Columbia River upstream of Grand Coulee Dam. Seven dams are located in the river, five are owned by AVISTA and currently undergoing FERC re-licensing. Of particular interest to whitewater boaters and other downstream interests is the Post Falls Dam located about six miles downstream of Lake Coeur D'Alene.

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# Conservation & Access Regional Update

by John Gangemi and John Patrouch

Post Falls dam raises the water level of Lake CDA by about 8 feet and controls river flow and lake elevation during summer months.

Re-licensing the AVISTA Dams is being done through the Alternative Licensing Process (ALP). Stakeholders involved in the re-licensing include the cities of Coeur D'Alene, Post Falls, and Spokane and the Coeur D'Alene and Spokane Indian tribes. Idaho and Washington government land management and environmental agencies as well as a large number of local interest groups representing land owners, fisheries, paddlers, and general recreational groups are also involved. Paddling groups active in the process are the Inland Northwest Whitewater Association, the Spokane Canoe and Kayak Club, and American Whitewater (AWA).

The re-licensing process is half completed. Recommendations from the individual workgroups will be submitted by August, 2004 to the Plenary group. The Plenary group will coordinate the recommendations and prepare the license application to be submitted to FERC in 2005. To support decisions on how to manage the Spokane River/Coeur D'Alene Lake system water balances, water quality, recreation use, fisheries, cultural, and terrestrial aspects are being studied as they relate to Project (the dams) impacts.

A "Whitewater Paddling Instream Flow Assessment" documenting whitewater opportunities, access points, and identifying project impacts on whitewater opportunities was recently completed. The study plan was developed by the Louis Berger Group with assistance from AVISTA and AWA.

Louis Berger worked with local paddling groups, AVISTA, and AWA to gather two teams of local volunteer boaters with intermediate or greater whitewater boating skills. We were fortunate to have two members of the AVISTA re-licensing team participate in the instream assessment. One team participated in the river-running assessment with the second assessing the park-and-play areas. Hard shell kayaks, catarafts, and open canoes were used for

the river runs and kayaks for the park and play features. The study took place September 15-19 and October 25-31, 2003 at flows ranging from 1,500 cfs to 4,500 cfs. These are flows that can be run through the Post Falls Dam turbines.

The study resulted in determining and documenting minimum and preferred flows for the river runs and the "park and play" features. The study concluded that: "Whitewater boating opportunities on the Spokane River occur year round. When flows exceed approximately 1,500 cfs, river running opportunities exist. "Park-and-play" boating opportunities exist when flows exceed 2,500 cfs. During dry water years, boating is limited during the late summer and early fall months when flows can drop below 1,000 cfs." (Louis Berger-Whitewater Flow Assessment). This information will be used to develop flow recommendations for whitewater boating on the Spokane River.

The local paddling groups are developing and proposing the following: recommendations to the workgroups to improve, enhance, and extend whitewater opportunities on the Spokane River:

1. Minor adjustments to seasonal flows to extend use of the "park and play" areas.
2. Upgrade flow gauges and AVISTA flow projections to real-time internet access.
3. Develop a weekly/monthly whitewater flow release schedule for low water years.
4. Specific improved accesses.
5. AVISTA support for proposed whitewater parks at Post Falls and Spokane.
6. Support increasing minimum river flows from the current 300 cfs to the 1,200cfs needed for river recreation.
7. Continue to work with AVISTA and the other stakeholders to improve whitewater recreation on the river after the FERC license is submitted.

These proposals are currently being developed with the help of the workgroups and AWA. It is our intention to develop them into Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement measures (PM&E's) that will become part of the new FERC operating license.

*photo by Mick "Holehog" French*



The Spokane River system is relatively complex. The upper half runs through an urban/suburban area, Lake Couer D'Alene is a major economic factor for northern Idaho, the EPA cleanup of mining wastes from Idaho's Silver Valley and the river's interchange with the Spokane-Rathdrum Prairie sole source aquifer are important factors in how the river is and will be managed. The City of Spokane, Riverside State Park, river water quality, and fisheries benefit from increased river flows. Currently, the system is operated to maintain Lake CDA levels with little attention paid to river flows. Balancing CDA lake elevations with realistic minimum flows is also an important outcome of this re-licensing for many of the downstream users, including the boating community.

The re-licensing process has provided local paddlers opportunity to have a say in how the river system will be managed for the next 30-50 years. The process has provided opportunities to meet and communicate with other stakeholders about their concerns and needs. Participating in the re-licensing process has been time-consuming but very rewarding. We have learned a lot about how and why the system is operated the way it is. Concurrently, we have educated non-boaters in the groups about what we do and what our needs are. AVISTA and the workgroups have been interested and supportive. Without the participation of the local boating groups and AWA there would be little recognition of whitewater boating on the Spokane River.

*Information about running the Spokane River are available on the AWA web site and in regional guide books. The AWA web site links are: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2234/> and <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2233/>*

### Region: East

April 3,4,10,11, 2004: Countless volunteers help AW board member Sutton Bacon and AW staff manage the Tallulah River releases in Northern Georgia.

4/12/04: AW volunteer attorneys Nathan Galbreath and John Austin joined AW staff Kevin Colburn in a meeting with the US-Forest Service regarding the Headwaters of the Chattooga (NC/SC/GA).

*continued on page 44*

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# Feature Western Rivers



## High Times on Canyon Creek

Kris above Bigger Kahuna

By Jim Pytel

### Canyon Creek is the Six Flags Adventure Park of Washington creaking.

Typically runnable from late October to early May, depending on snowpack and rain conditions, it is a whitewater playground that justly deserves this popular and pleasurable reputation. While not unusually hard its subtle trickery has dealt a high number of comeuppances to up and coming novice creekers and its tight knit turns have often echoed the humble phrase, “I think I’m over my head.”

I am of the caliber of kayaker that can only serve to offer condolences to those afflicted and befuddled boaters who find themselves at odds with this most beautiful of beasts. Though the essence of this proclamation may seem boastful its justification is found in my intimacy with this passage. At the time of this

writing I’ve transited Canyon Creek nineteen times in snow, wind, rain, and sun. It is with tangible vividness I see in my mind’s eye the log skewed approach to Swizzle Sticks, hear the bass drum pound of Big Kahuna in my lungs, and smell the mist rent air below Hammering Spot. The twentieth descent will assuredly awaken these same senses and bring with it amazing new discovery. To put it in another manner, I am enchanted with Canyon Creek.

Though feelings run deep, I am not exclusive in my affections for this one passage and I spend a fair amount of time in pursuit of elusive drainages or other similarly rewarding riverine relationships. It was on such a thwarted adventure I found myself again at Canyon Creek’s faithful door.

The date was December 13th and an iridescent cloud of the most furious reds, purples, and yellows was pounding the once clear skies of a digital simulacrum of the Pacific Northwest on my computer screen. The time was 6am and I was

jumping at the bit to dive into this most perfect storm. Though the hazy fog of last night’s revelries pulled one eye to the side as if I slept next to something magnetic I could not sleep through the promise of new discoveries.

My boating partner, however, could. Kris Wilson, the self styled Lord of the Little White, was doing his best to live up to his reputation as the hardest sleeping kayaker in Portland. It is with full experiential knowledge of the kayaking community’s propensity towards untimeliness I am saying that Kris Wilson’s sleep habits border on the edge of narcolepsy. It is absolutely unreal.

Picking through the epicenter of an apparent localized earthquake I stepped over a pile of paperwork, a spilled laundry hamper, a pair of curiously heat warped butter knives, and a couple stringless guitars on the floor. “Mrrmrrh. Gargle. Ack.” From the bedroom Kris waved his arm like a wounded seal would flap a dismembered flipper when trying to dial a phone. “Not go. Too tired.”

"Yes go. Get up." It is with somewhat cruel satisfaction I recall forcibly dumping Kris from his sleeping bag on the banks of the North Fork of the Payette last summer. If I could only find his bedroom through the obstacles on the floor I'd do the same. Nothing would dissuade us from our goal of Trout Creek.

Nothing except 8 feet of snow. I gasp in sheer incredulity at the reports of a glacier's advance across the put in road. Another ice age has visited the Pacific Northwest overnight. A sleepy eyed Kris and I shake the phone tree of the Portland kayaking community only to find it bare of fruit. Our usual crowd is embroiled in other pursuits, too hung over, or 'has plans.' Those plans no doubt involve curling up on the couch watching Speed Racer all day. Our time on this Earth is but short and we will not share this idle fate. Fearing Kris's eyelids would permanently shut I reached into the Keno lottery game of my memory and pulled out whatever labeled ping pong ball I could grab. The ball read 'Copper Creek'.

Kris's eyes opened ever so slightly. "Yeah. That's got an 18 footer in it."

"And we could run laps on the Final Five," said I, pressing the deal.

A smile broke out across Kris's once somnolent features. It was set.

Or so we thought. Nothing smacks in the face of our hubris as the weather we experienced on the drive to Copper. Shattered tree limbs lay across our path and bewildered rain soaked cows wandered aimlessly around new pasture having been blown into the hills from Hazel Dell. Once desiccated ditches were now raging torrents of whitewater with surfable waves. As we climbed towards our destination the weather only proceeded to get worse. Snow, piles of snow, crouched on the roadside and soon even the heartiest of red neck plow men dared not push it away. We stopped in utter disbelief at our tiny, tiny existence in the face of this overwhelming onslaught. Copper Creek was no longer an option. Kris's eyelids drooped.

I pressed a cup of coffee in his hands and jammed a thought into his head. "Canyon Creek." Faithful Canyon Creek. Always there for the boys.

"What's it running?" asked Kris.

Hmmm. At 6am the Heison gauge on the East Fork of the Lewis was reading 1200cfs which ordinarily correlates to a nice medium level on our desired destination. Undoubtedly it had gone up since my last inspection, but, in what later turned out to be a gross error in judgment given the environment over which we just transited, I didn't think it was rising that fast. "Should be medium-high," said I. How much towards the high end of this spectrum I was soon to find out.

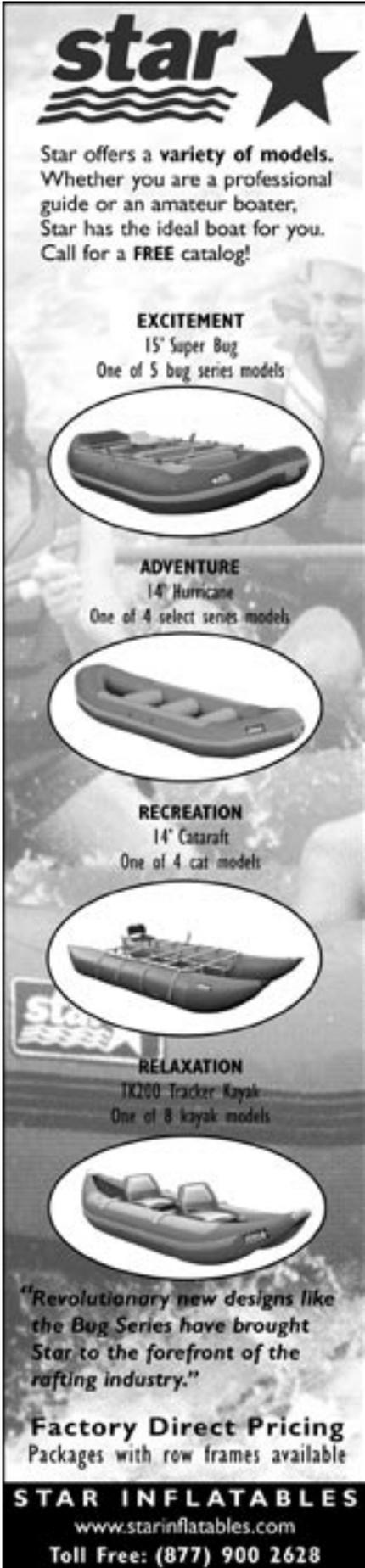
Our immediate concern was to secure shuttle. This proved to be no easy task in the wind swept parking lot of the Chelatchee Prairie General Store in a pounding rain. We fanned out and began to solicit the locals. My first attempt at establishing contact with my fellow man resulted in an old farmer shutting the window of his truck as I approached. No luck there. I was then denied assistance by a family that would've been hard pressed to come up with a complete set of functional teeth between the lot of them. Similarly deterred Kris met me below the dripping overhang. "I think you're scaring them off," he observed.

I sighed in agreement knowing full well my propensity to come off as 'a little jumpy.' "What'd you come up with?" I asked.

"Well," said Kris and shook his head, "I think I'd have better luck if I put my drysuit on, shoved an empty beer ball on my head, and pretended I was an astronaut that needed a ride back to my space ship behind Tum-Tum mountain." We shared a laugh and agreed that it'd probably be better if just one of us canvassed the parking lot. "Don't worry," said Kris, "I speak logger." and hiked his thumb at a sign advertising Fried Spotted Owl Wings.

After a quick run up the put in road we stood at the Fly Creek bridge in clear disbelief at what roared below us. What is normally a pristine green meeting of two mountain streams, Canyon and Fly Creek, was a mud colored collision of oceans. We tried in vain to peer through the mist and ascertain the level of the river but the chocolate fluid that lapped at the bridge footing allowed no glimpse of the unit\* below.

\*The unit is the standard reference point for measuring Canyon Creek's level. It has been referred to over the broad spectrum of the kayaking community



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# Feature Canyon Creek

as 'the foot', 'the pylon' or alternatively 'the square platform'. Let's get one thing straight here ... it's 'the unit'. Refer to it as such or run the risk of being ostracized by those that do not speak your foreign tongue. We are, after all, a community, and communities have standards of behavior and recognizable speech patterns. If boaters from Seattle want to call it something different, fine, so be it, but in Portland it's called 'the unit'. Get it? Got it? Good. Now that I've said my piece on the unit, let's discuss what it's used for. Basically anything below the unit is low and anything above it is high. It's that simple. Folks typically run Canyon from 10 to 12 inches below to about 6 inches above.

Lacking any frame of reference we did what any reasonable prudent young man would do given that their very well being depends upon the quality of their decision ... we guessed.

"I don't know. Looks like it's maybe 8 inches above."

"Do people run it that high?"

"I guess so," said I, vaguely recalling a misty rumor of someone possibly running it at 1.5' above the unit. We shrugged our shoulders, got ready, and Kris took off down the road in pursuit of shuttle. In no time flat he rounded the bend in the back of a pickup truck of a family intent on getting a Christmas tree that evening. Apparently the astronaut trick worked. We leapt the tank trap ditch, bound down the put in trail, and readied ourselves on the curiously smaller shore.

Like a severed artery the mud colored lifeblood of our planet gushed from an ordinarily mild-mannered Fly Creek and slammed into the brown roller coaster of Canyon Creek. Wide eyed we slid from the bank and were quickly pulled under the bridge having barely enough time to glance at where once the unit stood. The upper reaches of the pylon ('the pylon' being the portion of 'the foot' above 'the unit') rhythmically bobbed in and out of the soil colored soup with an odd white smear winking in and out of existence.

"Maybe a little above 8 inches," I shrugged and was pulled downstream.

What we experienced next was akin to kayaking nirvana, a solid mile of gorgeous whitewater. Waves of the most beautiful persuasion appeared on each and every corner. Foam crested and bucking, huge crashing ones and thick ribbed glassy ones. Wave after beautiful wave. I longed for the responsiveness of my playboat but leapt upon them just the same. Rapids sprung from the depths and challenged us with churning hole and challenging moves. We frolicked in these heavy haystacks with abandon. Not a more perfect stretch of river could be imagined. A tiny sobering thought crept from the deep recesses of my consciousness ... the first mile is ordinarily flat. It was with a long glance at the cable trail, the last reasonable hike out, we entered the gorge.

Mindful of the altered nature of this once familiar run I was still not prepared for my first encounter with the radically changed Entrance. What ordinarily is a defined angular ledge drop with a pair of logs high on the canyon wall was now a series of giant haystack waves with sinister pinchers plunged deep in the main current. Swizzle Stick's net of wall clinging logs was visible just below the run out but nowhere could be seen Swizzle Stick's rapid. It appeared entirely washed out. As if the mile of great play was not enough to convince me of the great undertaking we were about to commence the simple fact of a rapid disappearing was enough to clue me in that we were dealing with a level just a mite higher than 8" above the unit. Tight Gorge twisted into the distance and around the bend.

"You first." I pointed to Kris. "I'll take pictures." Such is the advantage of being camera man and having gullible friends. Kris stepped to the task and was quickly ground under the haystacks of Entrance rapid, narrowly escaping the hungry tusks of the once benign logs. He emerged from the muddy depths and was sucked downstream through Swizzle Sticks and into the seething chaos of the Tight Gorge.

I slapped my camera into my box, jammed it and myself into my boat and slid into the water not wanting to be separated from my paddling buddy. Hindsight insists that I should've been more cautious in my approach. The lead wave of Entrance seemed to batter Kris left, so, wishing to avoid this same fate I lined up on center with aggressive forward momentum. Far too aggressive for the circumstances it turns out. Up and over the wave I drove, only to slip subtly to the right and straight into the descending fangs of the overhanging logs. Bang! My boat slammed to a halt and I swung wildly backwards as water devils grabbed the edge of my craft a gave me a half flip. In potential broach situations, balance is not an ally so I threw my body backwards into the current and momentum peeled me off the log. I righted myself, ducked under Swizzle Stick's namesake and plunged into the Tights. Ordinarily a constricted maze of many turns, it was a now veritable hall of giant whirlpools and vanishing seams. Emerging from the chaos I encountered my similarly wide eyed friend uttering the same thought, "We need to stick together."

We battled our way through a number of unknown features and found ourselves

above a steaming horizon line. Both of us stared in absolute disbelief. Every atom of my body screamed at once, "Where are we?!"

"Can this really be Terminator?" I asked in mistrust of my own senses.

Kris shrugged his shoulders and headed for a thin eddy clinging above the drop. I followed him in and we both craned our necks in a vane attempt to scout what lay in our path. "Hold my boat. I'll get out." After a brief aquatic acrobat routine above the lip of a drop I finally made it to shore and inspected the monster before us. Nothing was as it should've been. A monstrous poulover formed on the right side only to be rivaled in size by the one on the left. A wide diagonal chute blazed between them and spilt into what can only be described as an ocean in a box. "Looks good." I gave Kris the thumbs up and described the line in purposely emotionless fact. "Keep a brace handy at the bottom." Kris and I both disappeared into the roar and emerged in fast moving water above stream of the bungee bridge.

Below this thin stretch cord of modernity lay Bitch Slapper, affectionately known among some of my crew as 50-50 because



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# Feature Canyon Creek

of its even handed dealing of hammerings. Thankfully, it turned out to be free of hazards. The bungee bridge, noticeably absent of alcoholic dunderpates, passed high overhead and we sooner, rather than later, found ourselves above Prelude to Thrasher. Kris, a first hand witness to this rapid's characteristic undercut, chose to beach himself on shore and slide down a narrow chute on the left. I scouted from my boat.

Water does amazing things. I've paddled for 9+ years and still haven't seen all the things it can do. Prelude had what looked like an underwater fireworks display going on on the right side, a huge hole in the middle, and a challenging diagonal chute on the left. I'd never seen an underwater fireworks display before but I knew damn sure I didn't want to be there nor did I want to be in the hole. So, the diagonal

chute it was. I lined up, paddled off the lip, and straight into an unseen rock. Damn.

Seizing my brief moment of zero velocity the river took control and sweep me backwards over the wide center chute, it being the residence of the huge hole I referred to earlier. In an interesting commentary about physics and whitewater I've noticed time has a way of dilating prior to a major ass kicking. As I accelerated  $9.8\text{m/s}^2$  backwards towards certain doom, I saw in sickening slow motion the barrage of underwater explosions on river right and wished I had the capacity to rewind time and redo my entrance. Unfortunately, life has no rewind button and I plummeted into the collapsing mass a prisoner of this unfortunate dimension. I clenched my teeth, assumed a crash position, and prepared for the worst. In what can only be described as paranormal activity, what happened was this ... absolutely nothing. Like the inexplicable magic bullet that hit JFK and the governor of Texas at the same time, I slipped through the impenetrable gravitational well without so much as getting my hair wet. With a tremendous heave, the hole surged just as I hit the backwash and I slipped through like a high energy particle out the back. Wide eyed, I back paddled through the roar and made the next eddy. Quantum tunneling or an act of karma? You be the judge.

"You're one lucky son of a bitch." was Kris's estimate.

I hissed a sigh of relief through my teeth and made a mental note to stop being such a jackass to people. Karma exists. It works. It's real. No place is this more evident than the river.

Thrasher Prime's roar quickly filled the canyon walls. Not a single recognizable feature could be discerned. Ordinarily an intimidating double chute, Thrasher was now an aquatic atomic bomb. Errant logs fell off the lip in clots and never resurfaced. Kris raised his eyes and slipped down a narrow sneak chute on the far, far left, over what would normally be considered the shore. Considering that

my karmic bank account was dangerously on the verge of being overdrawn, I chose to follow Kris down this far left chute.

Here we paused above a liquid avalanche formerly known as the Boulder Garden. Not a single boulder could be seen but the tortured humps of thumping pourovers and exploding waves hinted at their existence just below the muddy surface. Kris and I dove headfirst into the chaos stopping two thirds of the way down in a miraculous Idaho eddy (a handful of riverside vegetation) above the horizon line of a ravenous blackhole. We quickly leapt from our craft to scout this imposing cataclysm before us and could not believe our eyes. What is ordinarily a problematic keeper hole in the lower reaches of the boulder garden was now the event horizon of a collapsing star. Kris and my errant helmet straps fluttered in the wind and the hole's gravity tugged at our clothing. If we opened our mouths our very words were drawn into the tremendous reversal and slammed into unrecognizable sounds. Through ESP alone we were able to communicate the following shared observation:

"F\*\*k that. Let's walk."

Pricker bushes, goats heads, wait-a-whiles, brambles, and briars saw us around the beast and we soon stood above the thundering Bigger Kahuna. Though it seemed the sanest path, walking this drop was not an option. Off, over, and around a giant pothole poured the entire force of the flooded Canyon Creek. The normal route was buried far against the left wall and a great curtain of coffee colored water poured over the right side. While the far right route seemed promising, the landing did not; for the entire roiling pool rushed into the undercut right wall. A sure line and a steady landing were a must in this trying situation. I again readied my camera and kept my rope bag close on hand. What exactly was I going to do with my rope, I had no idea. The undercut was mighty deep and the current mighty strong. My paddling buddy nodded his head, peeled from the eddy, and made for his line.

*continued on page 42*



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# Feature Western Rivers

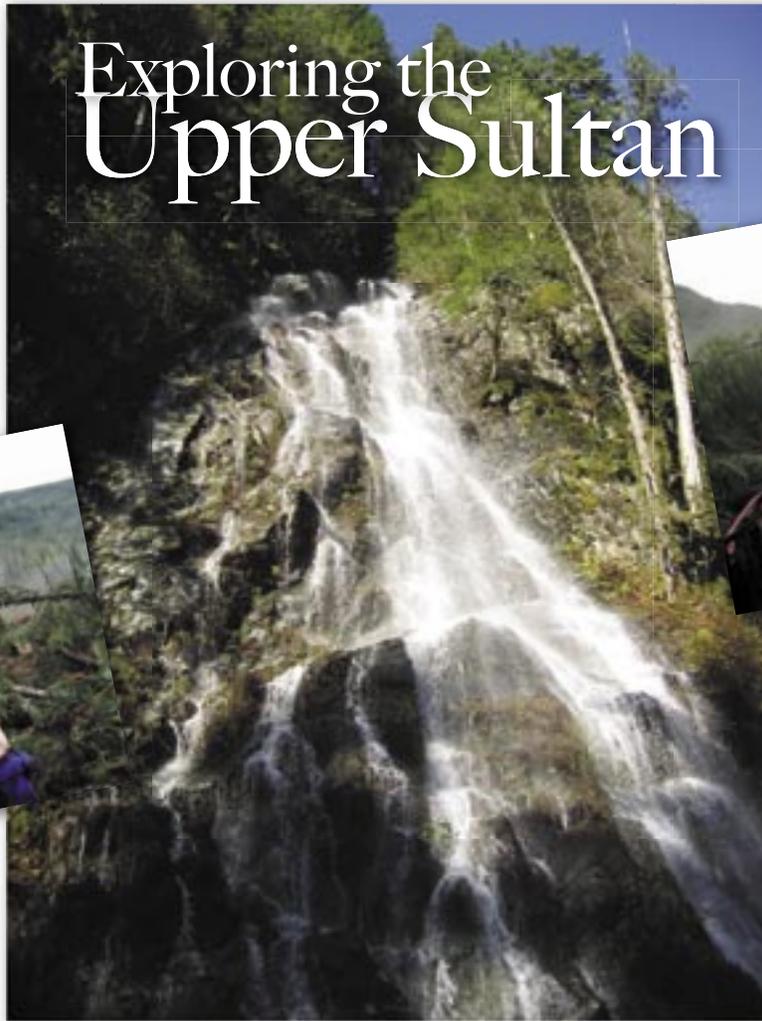
by Tom O'Keefe

## Exploring the Upper Sultan

One of the many waterfalls that plunged into the river from high above on the canyon rim.



Tom O'Keefe, Tom contemplates the best route across the debris slide.



Tom O'Keefe and Chris Fuller, Taking a break at the put-in after the long hike in.

*photos by Mike Giddings*

October is my favorite month to be boater in the Pacific Northwest. We all wait in anxious anticipation for the arrival of the fall rains. This past fall they arrived with overwhelming intensity. Following a record dry summer with barely an inch of rain a series of fronts roared across the Pacific drenching Western Washington and British Columbia. As co-workers lamented the fact that summer was officially over and disappeared into their Gore Tex cocoons for six months of cold and wet, boats came out of storage and my phone began ringing off the hook—my wife lamented, “it must be boating season”. As the evening news opened with stories of volunteers filling sand bags and I took renewed interest in the weather report, boating plans began to form and in the back of everyone’s mind was the question—would the Upper Sultan River possibly run?

The Sultan River would be one of Western Washington’s most popular whitewater resources. With the take out less than an hour from downtown Seattle and 13 miles of incredible class III and IV whitewater in a stunning bedrock canyon, it was once one of the region’s premiere whitewater rivers. Unfortunately the City of Everett tapped the river for its municipal water supply at the beginning of the 20th century. A small diversion dam that is still functional was constructed in 1930 and then a storage reservoir was constructed 6.5 miles upstream of that in 1965 with the original construction of Culmback Dam. The whitewater remained accessible through the early 80’s but in 1982 the dam was enlarged to its current size, effectively eliminating the spectacular whitewater opportunities that were available on this river. Now bypass flows are limited to a

small trickle that weaves its way under and around the boulders.

Today, paddling opportunities on the Upper Sultan only occur when the level of Spada Reservoir reaches the overflow tubes and water once again returns to the channel. This typically occurs only once in several years and the water managers seem to have become increasingly proficient at making sure no water is “wasted” by funneling every possible drop down through the tubes to the powerhouse 11 miles downstream from the dam, and keeping plenty of storage capacity available to absorb the onslaught of winter storms. The one exception to this is when extremely heavy rains hit Western Washington. Once or if we’re lucky a couple times a year a storm can hit that provides sufficient inflow to the bedrock canyon such that you

actually have boatable flows for a few short hours without any spill from the reservoir. Since this can happen any day of the week, you have to be ready to call in sick with a case of the “Sultan flu” and get yourself up to the river.

There are additional factors that further complicate the logistics of the run. Given the difficulty of predicting the flood crest you often don't have a good idea of what flows will be until 11 pm the night before. Because the run is in a remote river canyon that is rarely run you have to be fully prepared for an expedition type trip, with maps, extra food, headlamps, and all the assorted safety gear. Then there's the matter of getting to the river itself. The road to the dam is closed (thanks to terrorism concerns) requiring a 2 mile hike in on the road and then precise navigation of the mining trails down to the river (they aren't completely obvious and you don't want to expend a lot of energy in trial-and-error route finding with a heavy boat and all your expedition gear on your shoulder). Once you're on the water you have 11 miles of whitewater before you reach the powerhouse, hopefully before dark, where you have another 2 miles with too much water as the tubes will be blowing out their full 1200 cfs during flood.

The evening of October 20th the rain was still coming down hard and it was looking like a good opportunity to explore the Sultan River Canyon. My friend Mike Giddings, a companion on a few epic adventures we've shared over the past decade and the one responsible for redirecting my life to that of a whitewater junkie, happened to be in town from North Carolina and Chris Fuller who still enjoys the freedom of a graduate student schedule were both ready to join the adventure. We awoke Tuesday morning to learn that the rain had tapered off and flows were on their way down. More troubling was the fact that when we pulled up the internet gauge, located midway through the upper canyon, flows had apparently dropped instantly from 2000 cfs to 70 cfs at around 11 pm. Convinced ourselves that this had to be a problem with the gauge (the nearby Skykomish River had peaked at 90,000 cfs and was still cranking), we set out for the river as the sun began to break through the clouds.

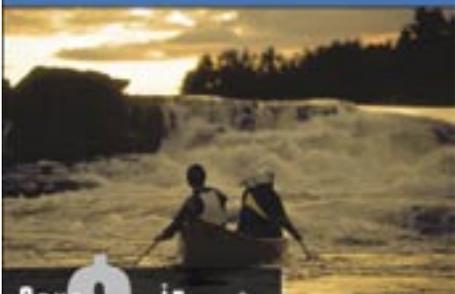
It was approximately 9 am when we left our cars and began the hike down to the river. The day started out easy as we knew right where to go following the paved road down to the dam and then an old logging

road that parallels the canyon below it on river left for a couple miles. Our first obstacle appeared before us however as we discovered that several hundred feet of road had been lost in a massive landslide. Looking high up the slope we could see the initiation point that had triggered a slurry of mud, boulders, and mature trees that had been tossed down the slope like a box of toothpicks. We would later learn that this was only one of several road failures that occurred throughout the National Forest on the slopes of the Western Cascades resulting in millions of dollars of road damage. The task before us was to cross the muddy slurry which extended downslope to the river below. Sinking up to our waist in the saturated soil and climbing up, over, and through the downed timber we began what would be a very rough day for my drysuit. More than an hour later we had crossed the landslide and were committed to the canyon. A series of well maintained trails led down to the river. Gold was first discovered in this river back in 1870 and local prospectors continue to work their claims and maintain informal access routes down to the river.

It was approximately noon when we finally reached the river and we had already burned nearly half the available daylight—we all realized that with 13 miles of river before us and sunset shortly after 6 pm we had to work efficiently to make it out by dark. The biggest rapid on the river—Last Nasty—loomed downstream below the powerhouse where we would have to contend with the combined flows of the upper run and the flow reentering the river from the tubes. After a short break to recover our energy we were on our way down the river. Starting out the flow was barely more than 150 cfs. With only a trickle at the base of the dam, the bypass reach is entirely dependent on inflow from the sides. With the steep bedrock walls of the gorge the river has a small effective watershed area and it was obvious that flows were dropping quickly with the break in the weather and sunlight pouring into the canyon. We were treated to a beautiful scene however as small headwater streams cascaded over the canyon rim, fanning out in an impressive display that provided sustenance for the equally amazing hanging gardens that carpeted the canyon walls with a diverse array of mosses and ferns. The true beauty of the temperate rain forest was in full display and the whitewater only got better as we continued on downstream with more flow pouring in every few hundred yards.



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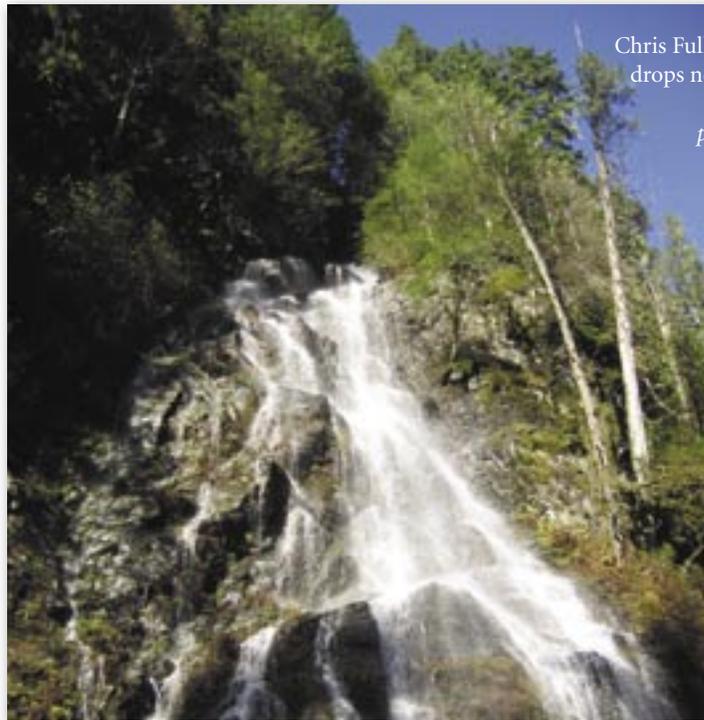
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# Feature

## Exploring the Upper Sultan

While the early rapids involved technical slalom moves through low water channels we were able to set a good pace and the constrained nature of the river through the bedrock canyon meant we had good pools with plenty of water to float our boats. We could only imagine how fun this would be with the full power of a free-flowing river creating what would be some truly wonderful whitewater.

As we approached the old diversion dam at mid-afternoon we were finally paddling with plenty of water and although the section we had just passed through turned out to be the most scenic of the trip, the rapids waiting downstream would provide the best whitewater. As we portaged the diversion dam on the right, a worker from the public utility came over to see what we were up to. He was out checking on the dam and we asked him about the strange behavior of the gauge the night before. He explained that he had come out to flush the gravel by opening a gate on the dam at



Chris Fuller  
drops near  
photo

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11 pm and that a corresponding change in stage height when he did this meant that the gauge was no longer reading in the appropriate range.

With approximately 1000 cfs now in the river, the whitewater had finally come to life and we were treated to a great series of class IV pool drop rapids, each with fun and challenging lines and most of which could be safely boat scouted. Although we found the run remarkably clear of wood there were a couple log hazards. We spent some time scouting one drop in particular that consisted of a series of two holes and a runout that pushed into a series of logs that were wedged vertically on end. I took the lead and

The challenges to running the upper Sultan are considerable. You have to be willing to take advantage of a winter rainstorm on a moment's notice (likely at 11 pm the night before and usually on a weekday), you then have to get all your gear ready and be setting shuttle before it's even light the next morning, you have to be prepared to hike your boat in at least two miles and possibly longer depending on the snow situation at Olney Pass, and you have to be willing to negotiate Last Nasty (most likely as dusk approaches) with what you may find to be too much water. Despite these barriers, the river is still enjoyed by a few groups every year and if you finally make it to the water you can celebrate the fact that you're on one of the region's finest whitewater runs. 

**Note:** The current license for the Sultan River Hydropower Project is set to expire in 2011. American Whitewater has already begun working with the local paddling community with the combined goals of improving access (gate closures related to perceived security threats have been an ongoing issue), flows, and transfer of information between the utility and the general public. If you would like to be more involved please contact local StreamKeeper Andy Bridge or WA Regional Coordinator Tom O'Keefe [okeefe@riversandcreeks.com](mailto:okeefe@riversandcreeks.com). Formal meetings with the utility to discuss relicensing are expected to begin later this year.



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Enjoy with a fresh copy of *Rapid*, The Whitewater Freeboating Magazine.



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JUD KEISER

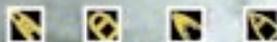


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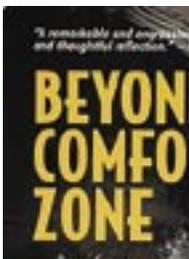


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# Feature Grand Canyon Express

by Jeff West



Like many of the seven thousand six hundred paddlers waiting for a Grand Canyon private permit launch date I thought I would never get to launch.

In fact, in eighteen years when my permit slowly works its way to the top of the list and I receive my date, I figure I will be too old, too fat, and have too many responsibilities to take most of a month off and paddle the Colorado. The only alternative to waiting for decades or paying for a high priced commercial trip is to attempt to obtain a cancellation date. (A trip made available most likely due to the participants growing too old, too fat, and accumulating too many responsibilities.) The problem is that cancellation dates are often given out only one month before the launch date; which makes it tough to find

sixteen buddies with enough money and time to participate on one month's notice.

This past fall I was confronted with this exact problem. While calling the Park Service hoping to obtain a cancellation launch date I made it through the busy phone lines and a Ranger answered. I've dialed this number hundreds, maybe thousands of times in recent years and always gotten a busy signal or recording. I could not believe it. A real, talking Ranger had offered me a launch date for the Grand Canyon. I yelled "yes", answered a few questions, said good-bye, and began running around my office hugging everyone in sight. A few minutes later I was back at my desk, staring at my calendar and fighting back tears. The permit was good for up to twenty one days of bliss on the river. I, however, just realized I had to be finished with my 225-mile trip in five days. I continued to stare in disbelief; prior commitments left me with only five days to paddle the Colorado.

What should I do - call the Park Service and cancel? Never. But 225 miles in

five days, is 45 miles per day! Having never paddled more than fifteen miles in a day, 45 would kill me. A few hours later my buddy Jonathan, who regularly winds down after work by paddling long distances for fun, called me. I told him of the dilemma. He assured me that this was no dilemma at all. In fact, this sounded like the perfect vacation to him. He explained, "We borrow hybrid kayaks, go fast, and knock the entire trip out in five days." I thought he was nuts. He continued, "It will be like backpacking. We pack everything we need in our boats eliminating the need for rafts. With the current we can average nine mph so we only have to paddle five hours per day."

I had never heard of a "hybrid" kayak. Jonathan described them to me. He said, "Both Prijon and Dagger produce them. They are about fourteen feet long, can handle big whitewater, and have hatches like a sea kayak for camping gear." These boats are meant as a crossover between touring and whitewater. Maybe I was desperate to go but the more I thought about it the more I knew it was doable. I

am used to paddling four to six hours a day and I can live out of a backpack for five days. By the end of the day I was back on cloud nine. I began the preparations knowing in a few weeks I was going to paddle the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

Immediately I noticed how smooth this trip was going to be. Normal preparations for a Grand trip take weeks of planning, as rafts have to be rented, and a kitchen capable of feeding sixteen people three meals per day has to be organized and stocked. Normal trip leaders spend hours trying to accommodate the individual needs of every group member and make sure fifteen friends will cooperate and get along for a multi-week trip. The entire preparation process for this style of trip took four hours. I arranged a shuttle through the Hualapai Indians, bought the same type of food and supplies I would normally backpack with, and shoved all of my gear in the convenient deck hatches of a borrowed Prijon Yukon Expedition.

Now the tough part: finding friends willing to participate in such an endeavor. Of course, Jonathan Shanin was in. Jonathan is a past member of the U.S. kayak marathon team. He actually enjoys paddling long distances. He could not wait to leave me begging for mercy while trying to keep up with him. Pete Persolja smiled as I asked him to join us. He loves a challenge and knew we were clueless as to what we had chosen to do. Chris Pesce quickly signed on. Chris owns a videography service on the Ocoee and hand paddles while filming raft trips for an extra workout. Jonathan, Pete, Chris, and I had all traveled together

on adventures before and you could not ask for better partners on a journey. Rounding out the team was Spencer Solem and Erik Boomer. Spencer had lived out of a kayak on long trips before and video boats the Gauley during the fall. Erik met us at the put-in, literally. I only knew his brother Abe and none of us knew Erik before the trip. Abe showed up at my doorstep a few months earlier wondering if there was any whitewater in the area. My house is ten miles from the Ocoee! He was just learning how to paddle and was cart wheeling a few days later. Abe had wrestled for Nebraska and was possibly the best athlete I have ever known. He stayed with me for a month and became a solid kayaker. When this trip fell into my lap I immediately asked Abe to join us. Because of family obligations, Abe had to pass but asked if his sixteen year old brother could take his place. Sure, I told him, why not? Abe is one of those guys you just do not question. He said his brother would be fine and that was the end of the discussion.

After three weeks of anticipation we arrived at Lee's Ferry. The Grand Canyon is incredible. The vivid landscape, the openness, and the powerful river have always entranced me. The excitement of camping on the beach before starting the trip is overwhelming. The Lee's Ferry Ranger inspected our equipment and filled us in on proper camping etiquette. By now our trip seemed completely normal. The Grand Canyon in five days; I was sure this must be a regular occurrence. Then Chris, asked Ranger Hall how often people paddle the entire canyon in five days. Ranger Hall started laughing. He



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# Feature Grand Canyon Express by Jeff West

wasn't aware of anyone doing this before. I could have read Chris' expression from a mile away, "What has Jeff gotten us into?" I was starting to sweat it. What had I gotten us into? Was it even possible to paddle forty five miles per day for five days? Could these hybrid kayaks handle the whitewater? Were my friends going to hate me after this? It turned out I had unwittingly created a whole new kind of Grand Canyon adventure. The following are my journal entries from our incredible five day odyssey.

## Day One:

I cannot believe the speed of these kayaks. Paddling at a normal pace we knocked out the 4.5 miles of flat-water from Lee's Ferry to Navajo Bridge in thirty minutes. When I realized we could truly move at nine mph, the monkey was off my back. I could easily paddle at this pace for five hours a day. Badger Creek Rapid proved to be a

good test for the performance of a hybrid in big whitewater. No problem, these boats maneuvered well and punched the biggest, gnarliest holes. The roaring twenties were incredible. Through this section there is a sizable rapid spaced every mile. The rapids are similar in difficulty to those found on the Lower Gauley. There is nothing like finishing a big rapid and looking back at your friends all bombing through in perfect formation. By five o'clock we rolled into camp at mile 45. At the beginning of the day we didn't know if we could take the mileage or if these kayaks could handle the whitewater. Neither was an issue. After a gourmet dinner prepared by Chef Pete, I fell to sleep watching a meteor shower. I had just had the perfect day.

## Day Two:

Day two was incredible. We started with a little surfing at President Harding Rapid. Heading downstream we encountered

very mild whitewater. We were thankful to be in speedy fourteen foot kayaks. The incredible scenery rolled by. We broke for lunch at the confluence of the Little Colorado. To our surprise the Little was aqua blue, no sediment. The Hopi Indians believe their ancestors emerged from their previous world within this watershed. If there ever was a Garden of Eden, we had found it. The little Colorado is truly a magical spot.

During the next ten miles of paddling we realized how encompassing the area is. Until now the inner gorge and the immediate vertical walls were all you could see. Now, the full height and distance to the rim is exposed. You see the multiple stair-step vertical cliffs and talus slopes rising back from the river for over ten miles and 4500 vertical feet.

Soon the whitewater intensified. Starting

Soon the whitewater intensified. Starting with Unkar Rapid we went head to head with some big holes.



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with Unkar Rapid we went head to head with some big holes. Nevilles, Hance, and Sockdolager all blew by. We finished the day with Horn Creek rapid. I had always heard that Horn Creek consisted only of waves. I floated to the horizon expecting a big wavetrain. The crashing noise told a different story. Apparently, Horn's is a little bigger at the lower level we had this day. Horn's was huge with holes everywhere. I began pouring on the forward strokes building speed and momentum. Straight down the middle I was heading for a monster pillow of white. I lowered my shoulders and hoped for the best. No traditional whitewater kayak would have made it through that hole without a trashing. The Yukon just saved my tail. I looked back to see my buddies one by one punch through. We floated the next few minutes to camp exchanging smiles. I had told everyone to expect big waves. The surprise of finding the hole was the best part of the day.

#### Day Three:

One of the greatest things about the Canyon is that all of the biggest rapids are in the middle of the trip. Granite and Hermit were sensational. After scouting Crystal, Pete chose to run the center of the hole. There is nothing like seeing a fourteen foot kayak cart wheeling in a hole the size of a Mack truck. Pete not only stayed in control, but after his skirt blew he paddled to shore laughing. Needless to say the rest of us skirted the hole.

Through this section the Canyon's appearance becomes intimidating. The shear and jagged rocks keep you focused. By today's standards the Grand's rapids are considered relatively easy. However, you imagine the early explorer's nightmare of trying to navigate this run. I doubt Powell ever envisioned people paddling the Grand Canyon strictly for fun. In the afternoon the whitewater eased. Ahead of schedule we shifted into slow gear and focused on the scenery. We passed a private raft trip and chose a campsite directly across from Deer Creek Falls, which plummets fifty feet within view of the Colorado. This had to be a dream; it is not often you fall asleep to a billion stars and a fifty-foot waterfall.

#### Day Four:

Like any good river trip there's always a day you'd be fine just hanging out, drinking beer, and doing basically nothing. The fourth day was this for me. I really did not want to put on my paddling gear let alone paddle 45 miles. After a sluggish start the day turned out as great as any

day in paradise. We made exceptionally good time through this section where the Colorado narrows significantly. In a little more than an hour of paddling we arrived at the only big rapid of the day: Upset. Unbeknownst to us, at low water Upset has a sizable hole and we paddled through unsuspecting. Chris, who was filming a documentary, had strapped a video camera to my helmet. As I floated along behind them trying to keep the camera steady I realized what I was headed for a second too late. I tried to turn but there was no avoiding this one. I hit the

hole, flipped and expected to never see the camera again. I rolled up to hear everyone hooting. The camera was still in place and all was well.

After Upset we floated the few miles to Havasu Creek. Havasu is home to the Havasupai Indians; possibly the most unique reservation in the Southwest. The Havasupai live in a small village nine miles from the confluence of Havasu Creek and the Colorado. Their village has no road to it, only a footpath. The closest automobiles are another nine miles farther up the

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# Feature Grand Canyon Express

by Jeff West

trail. To visit Supai, you, as well as the residents, must walk, ride a burro, or take a helicopter. The village of Supai, Havasu Creek, and the three incredible 50+ foot travertine waterfalls in this canyon make it one of the most spectacular places I have seen. After a little hiking and a big lunch it was time to continue downstream. The river slows and widens through here. The mileage was tough but the scenery was incredible. As had been the case for the first three days we found a rhythm and knocked out the miles. If I were paddling elsewhere I could not have lasted an hour. However, in the Grand Canyon you are so mesmerized by the surroundings the miles fly by. Before we knew it we arrived at Vulcan's Anvil, the core of an extinct volcano which rises straight up from the center of the Colorado. The lava flow was a recent event in geological time and probably occurred when the river was

here. Imagine paddling a river when a volcano erupts from beneath your favorite surf wave. Vulcan's Anvil is less than a mile above Lava Falls. We made camp on the River-left beach and watched a remarkable sunset. As the moon rose you could see the Anvil looming out of the river. We slept well knowing that we had almost completed the long journey through the Grand Canyon.

#### Day Five:

Lava for breakfast. Our last day in paradise began with a bang. With only a few minutes to warm up we found ourselves feeling the roar of what once was considered the nastiest rapid on the continent. Of course, times have changed. Lava is no longer as menacing as once thought. Floating to the horizon line could have fooled us; the thundering roars of this rapid left every one's heart pounding.

We all decided to run the river right line. Chris had swam here a few years before, and decided to redeem himself by hand paddling. I followed him, filming his line. The entrance to the rapid is confusing, as it is hard to tell if you are getting too close to the hole. In these kayaks we knew there would be no time to correct a bad line. Fortunately, we were on line and spent the next several seconds in the biggest crashing wave train I've ever seen. From the bottom, we could see a faint rainbow forming from the mist. Everyone's line was solid and after a long rejoice we began the final 45 miles of our journey. The day was filled with smiles and a lot of hooting. Mile 209 rapid had the biggest, fluffiest hole on the river. We all tried our luck at punching it but one by one we did a huge backender and flushed through. Though it is hard to believe, we all wished there were more miles that day. We wanted to keep

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paddling and not return to the world.

As we came around the last bend and saw our cars parked at the takeout we felt both an incredible amount of relief and sadness as our journey ended. Secretly, we all had doubts about making it. Something might go wrong or the miles would be too much. It was a great sensation to ramp on shore at the take out and truly realize that the trip had been a huge success. The smiles from my friends were indescribable, and yet another sight I'll never forget.

For most paddlers, a Grand Canyon trip is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Many of the thousands of folks on the waiting list often spend hours dreaming how great it will be to lead their buddies through the Canyon. Unfortunately, these dreams often do not materialize. The waiting list has become so long and the time and

planning required to lead a conventional private trip are discouraging. At first, I used my permit for this five day trip reluctantly. I feared I would not get the complete experience in only five days. I was wrong. I have participated in a few Grand Canyon trips and this was my favorite by far. The planning for a conventional trip is overwhelming. The expense is as much as a month long paddling trip to South America. The coordination and cooperation required between sixteen friends can be burdensome. All of these concerns were eliminated by this style of trip. The planning required only a few hours. The expense was minimal. The challenge of the trip weeded out the friends who probably would have been the bad apples on a conventional trip.

Most of all, I feel I experienced the Canyon fully and was able to focus on the beauty.

I did not worry about rigging a raft or preparing an elaborate meal. My focus was on the scenery and the river. My 5-day trip was not a vacation but a journey. The feeling of being completely self contained is extremely rewarding. The rush of flying through the big waves and holes with the speed of a fourteen foot kayak was incredible. Instead of floating through and seeing the canyon I felt as though I experienced it.

I highly recommend this style of trip although I think an 8-day trip would be preferable. With fewer miles per day there would be plenty of time to explore side canyons and hikes. You can organize it in a moments notice, keep expenses low, and experience more in less time. The Grand Canyon is a place all paddlers should see. Maybe this style of trip will allow more to see it and change what they see. **AW**

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# Feature Canyon Creek continued

A word about Kris Wilson, drinker, smoker, pool hustler, and ladies man. Bonds forged on such classics as the Little White, the Upper Upper Cispus, and eight hour drives to Idaho, he is a trusted friend and excellent paddling partner. Smooth in approach, flawless in execution, collected and cool in the face of danger, Kris is an example of what all creek boaters should strive to be. Which is why it came as such a surprise to see him plummet like a no momentum sack of shit off the edge of this thundering drop and disappear carping a roll under the curtain.

“Oh crap.” I fumbled with my camera as a thrashing Kris disappeared into the undercut below me. “Crap. Crap. Double Crap.” I hopped around and bounded close to the edge in a vain effort to sight him below the overhang. A bit of blue broke the surface and his upside down boat bounced against far right wall just beyond the reach of the undercut. Floundering, Kris he-manned a roll and paddled into the middle of the pool with a fear induced smile.

“Lucky son of a bitch.” I mused and slid into my craft.

Seeing how the lip momentarily robbed him of momentum, I opted for a route that followed a majority of the current over the edge. I sailed clear in that most desired freedom from the toils of gravity ... the boof. How sweet the sound. Kris congratulated the line and we continue down the rain swollen rapids.

It was not long before we floated above the Drop Zone, three precipitous cataracts in close proximity. Being the last spasms of gradient before it plowed into the languid flatwater of Merwin Reservoir (Reservoir, not lake. Lakes are natural, reservoirs aren't) Canyon Creek would not go out without a bang. The first of these is the 10' Champagne, a straight shot off a triangular prow rock. However, this beacon was enshrouded in an unbroken curtain of raging flood water. We scouted and decided on a narrow chute pressed up against the far left wall. From our vantage

point high on the canyon wall, try as we may, we could not see the bottom of the next drop, the 10' Hammering Spot. As Kris lined up for the first drop, I waited on shore with a throw bag in case he needed to be extracted from between the drops. Kris, as is his character, smoothly approached the desired launch pad and with a single stroke cleared it in the sweetest boof of the day. He paddled to the river left shore and scouted Hammering Spot. A pat on the head signaled it was okay and my retrieval services would not be warranted. Grateful, I slid into my boat and lined up for the drop off Champagne.

Water has a way of awakening you when your attention strays. Jubilant that I would not have to haul my companion out of the canyon and conduct a retreat through the woods I should've been more attentive to my line off this narrow drop. With subtle left to right motion my nose dove under a curtain of water on my right just as I made my final stroke. Entrapped in this current's flow I plummeted off line. Back ender! I cursed my own stupidity and performed a roll in the outwash that barely landed me in the eddy above Hammering Spot. Similarly an unbroken belt of raging water poured over this 10' drop and blasted a veil of mist into the air. I scrapped down a narrow chute on far left and beat my craft across the river to take a shot of Kris in the midst of the action.

We now stood above Toby's, the most dangerous rapid on the run and our only barrier to the placid refuge of Merwin Reservoir. No matter how you look at Toby's, whether high water or low water, it's manky and full of surprises. Jumbles of rock, broken ledges, and other unseen obstacles wait in ambush at every corner. The sight of a notorious fatality in 2000 and a near miss in 2001, this rapid is not to be trifled with. I scouted on the far right side and found a chute against an angular block tumbled from the right wall. Strong left to right momentum would be required. I returned upstream and told Kris of my plans.

“But what about the flake move?” asked

Kris of his usual line.

“Dude, the flake move has some shit going on that I've never seen before.” said I. True enough, the once handy flake now had a twisting flume of water that blasted over it and split in two in mid air.

“I think I can make it.” said Kris.

I looked him in the eyes and shook my head to the negative. “You'll explode.”

“So what's our line?” he asked.

“Well, a three foot wide chute on far right. Line up at the top just to the right of two diagonal curlers pointing into the flake. Trust me. Don't follow those curlers.”

Kris uncertainly nodded his head and we began our descent. In what can be considered the lesser of a whole lot of evil, I chose a good line. Outside of this situation on any other rapid, this line would've been considered less than ideal. Down here it was our only option. I deftly slipped past the snaring embrace of the two curlers, passed just right of the exploding flake, and launched off the lip of the desired chute. My elation was cut short by contact with a rock hidden just below the boiling surface. Thankfully, my momentum and angle caused me to glance off this hidden obstruction and into the eddy unscathed. Next, came a hesitant Kris. With longing that quickly changed to dread he watched the flake move pass and made for the right hand chute. I've seen people take some pretty hard hits before but never have I seen a boat completely stop in the middle of the river. Complete, dead still, no motion stop. BANG! Kris landed square on the hidden rock and halted all forward progress. Like I said, Toby's is manky and full of unwanted surprises. A curtain of water poured over the back of his boat and thankfully pushed him free. Missing the eddy, he squirted into the main current and over two remaining bonus round rapids in what would ordinarily be the flatwater of the lake. I peeled out and encountered him in our first period of calm in the last 3.2 miles.

A look of pain contorted his features, "My ass hurts. What's my boat look like?" He rolled over and displayed a completely perpendicular crease in his hull like the entire boat had been folded in half and stuffed in an envelope.

I simply laughed and gave him a high five. We had survived.

After a smoky ritual on the bridge spanning Merwin we quenched our thirst in the tiny hamlet of Amboy, Washington. Immediately conspicuous in this den of hard working mountain folk we ingratiated ourselves to the locals and adopted their customs. Beers and dead animals were the fare of the evening. Kris and I settled into reflection of the day's whirlwind of activity. While objectively it can be stated that we exhibited poor judgment in our decision to put on this rain swollen river, there was something about this experience that served to cement our bonds of friendship. Together we tackled this unknown challenge and through sheer tenacity and trust saw it through to the end. It is one thing to run a river, it is quite another experience to be over one's head. I'm glad we pulled each other through. Everything turned out to be runnable, but the unknown lay around each and every bend. First hand witness to a different Canyon Creek I am far more aware and appreciative of its spectrum of emotions. Though an accurate measurement has yet to be made, an unconfirmed estimate places our memorable journey at 30" above the unit and rapidly rising.

We paid in cash as not to betray our identity as city folk and pushed into the rainy night. Fool's diversion, this is kayaking. This is what I love to do. 

**About the author:** *Jim Pytel is a resident of Portland, OR, and finds part time employment with eNRG Kayaking School [www.enrgkayaking.com](http://www.enrgkayaking.com) as an instructor and photographer. He is an aspiring writer and is currently shirking the responsibility of finishing his first novel.*



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# Conservation & Access Regional Updates continued

4/15/04: AW files a formal appeal of the USFS decision to ban paddling on the Chattooga River upstream of Highway 28.

4/20/04: Intern James Wood finishes draft online water quality reporting tool (SE pilot project). April 29th and 30th: AW volunteer Andrew Lazenby attends Catawba Relicensing meetings and recon hike through the Great Falls bypass reach with AW staff Kevin Colburn (SC).

5/3/04: AW files comments opposing the FERC decision to not provide public access to the beautiful Ausable Chasm (NY).

5/5/04: AW files final comments on the Cheoah River with help from volunteer Rod Baird (NC).

AW Appeals US Forest Service decision to ban boating on 20 miles of the Chattooga River.

On April 15th, American Whitewater and our pro bono attorneys at Patton Boggs filed a formal appeal requesting that the Chief of the USFS overturn a regional decision to ban paddling on 20 miles of the Wild and Scenic River. Our appeal is about 90 pages and as attorney Nathan Galbreath put it, "there is not a single word of fluff in it." This document will serve AW and the paddling community for years to come as a reference. In it, we draw on regulations, case law, and the scientific literature to make a strong case for paddlers' rights to use our publicly managed rivers in an equitable and responsible manner. The USFS must now decide whether or not to maintain the precedent setting and discriminatory decision to ban paddling on the Chattooga. The USFS has until September 23rd to issue a final decision on this issue. 

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# Feature

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The Tamarisk, also known as the saltcedar, is an ornamental, flowering tree providing shade, refuge for wildlife and birds, and erosion control on the banks of rivers, right? WRONG!!

Tamarisk is a tenacious plant with deep, extensive root systems that can reach down to 100 feet. The leaf litter produced by tamarisks deposit a salt residue on the soil and the plant quickly re-sprouts after fire. Consequently, the tamarisk has displaced cottonwoods, willow, and other native riparian species. Tamarisk thickets are strangling streams and rivers, providing poor habitat for livestock, wild animals, and birds, increasing fire hazard; and limiting human use of waterways.

While each of these issues is important, the single most critical problem is "TAMARISK STEALS WATER". The tamarisk uses significantly more water than the native vegetation it has displaced. In the West, the loss of water is 2.0 to 4.5 million acre feet of water per year over the amount of water native plants would use. In other words, this is enough water to supply water for 20 million people or to irrigate over 1,000,000 acres of land.

How did the tamarisk get so prevalent along waterways in the West?

Tamarisk is a native plant of central Asia. In the late 1800s eight tamarisk species were introduced in the U.S. for use in New Mexico for erosion control on the rivers and to be used as ornamentals, windbreaks, and shade trees. The tamarisk has no natural enemies, such as insects or diseases, to keep the population in check. This has allowed the tamarisk to spread unchecked along western waterways and replace native vegetation with dense, monotypic stands. By 1920, the plant had



spread to 50,000 acres and by 1960 it had spread to over 1,000,000 acres. Tamarisks have replaced 90% of existing cottonwood communities.

Willow tree roots grow laterally while tamarisk roots grow deep into the ground. The tamarisk is very efficient in using sugars and starches and thrives in drought conditions. Tamarisks are more abundant in dry areas while willow and cottonwoods are more dominant in wet sites. Where rivers have been dammed and the flow of water regulated, tamarisk stands are 10 times more dense than areas where the river is free flowing. Cottonwoods, on the other hand, are stimulated by flooding.

Tamarisk can displace native species by raising the salinity of the soil. Tamarisk accomplishes this by pushing salt into the lower, older leaves on the plant and then dropping the leaves on the surrounding soil. Native riparian plants such as cottonwood and willow cannot compete as cottonwoods will not tolerate salt concentrations of more than 1,500 ppm and the soil.

Every mature tamarisk tree produces 500,000 seeds per year with almost 100% germination. If the seeds fall on wet sand, the seed will germinate within 12 hours. The plant grows rapidly, maturing from a seedling in just one year. The tamarisk

is extremely adaptable and has aggressive survival characteristics that make it particularly insidious in the arid western United States. It establishes easily in areas where surface water or ground water is available and so is especially threatening to desert springs, oases, and natural waterholes.

Tamarisk threatens wildlife in these areas by soaking up available water, changing the water quality, driving out native plants, grasses, trees, and shrubs, and blocking access to water by its dense growth. Tamarisk absorbs an enormous amount of water, losing it to the atmosphere through transpiration from leaves and stems. Along the Colorado River system alone, tamarisk is estimated to absorb and transpire one half million acre-feet, or 61 billion gallons of water, each year. (1 acre foot = 123,000 gallons.) Each mature plant absorbs approximately 200 gallons of water per day.

Fire favors tamarisk. The dense thickets are hot and dry so fire occurs frequently and spreads rapidly. Tamarisk's extensive and deep root structure is largely unharmed by fire, allowing it to recover more quickly than native plants and fill in the burned area. For this reason, fire is NOT recommended as a control measure.

Is the problem really that serious?

Invasive noxious weeds are proving to be the

# Feature Trouble with Tammies

single greatest threat to natural ecosystems in the West. Noxious weeds are invading nearly as many acres of federal land each year as are burned by wildfire. And while land recovers from wildfire, land does not recover from noxious weeds.

Wildfire and weed spread are very similar. Both start from a small beginning, display exponential growth, and generate an expanding perimeter. Burning embers suspended in wind create new fires ahead of the expanding fire perimeter and similarly, weed seeds create new small infestations ahead of the expanding perimeter of the main weed infestation.

The process of fighting wildfires and invasive weeds have striking similarities and, whether they realize it or not, state and federal land managers that have been trained to fight wildfires also have been trained to battle invasive weeds in a logical and efficient manner. The process of sizing up the fire and developing a plan, containment, mopping up after the fire is controlled, and revegetation can all be applied to the control of invasive species such as the tamarisk.

One of the most striking differences between wildfire management and weed management is when the processes begin. About 54% of all wildfires are initially attacked when the incident size is 0.1 acres and 93% of all wildfires are attacked when they are 10 acres or less in size. Only 2% of wildfires are initially attacked when the burned area is at least 1000 acres. In contrast, only 11% of noxious weed infestations are initially attacked when they are 0.1 acres or less, 75% of noxious weed infestations are attacked when they are 10 acres in size or greater, and 31% of weed infestations are first attacked when they exceed 1000 acres! Clearly, weed management should follow the wildfire management paradigm relative to when the battle is begun.

Is anything being done to control the spread of the tamarisk?

Currently the U.S. government has allocated \$234 million for the eradication of the tamarisk. Because there is no natural enemy in the Americas, it is extremely difficult to control. Control efforts have included mechanical methods, such as

ripping, bulldozing, and fire, chemical control with herbicides, and biological control. Experience has shown the plant will continue to return unless the root system is killed or removed entirely.

Historically along the Rio Grande, in the wetland habitat at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico, the riparian communities in the middle Rio Grande were dominated by mosaics of cottonwood, willow, mesquite, wolfberry brushlands, saltgrass, and alkali sacaton meadows and grasslands. These vegetative areas were established and maintained by spring flooding events that periodically scoured the floodplain. Today this landscape is altered due to agricultural and urban developments and water demands. Exotic species, including saltcedar and Russian olive, have spread rapidly in this void and have created additional hurdles in the riparian habitat restoration process.

Since 1987, the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge has refined techniques to determine site restoration potential, control exotic species, and restore native wetland communities on over 810 hectares (2,000 acres) of degraded saltcedar dominated floodplain. Use of the D7 class bulldozer, which destroys the root crown 12-18" below the soil surface, has been proven to kill tamarisk. The roots of the saltcedar can be as extensive underground as the entire tree is above the ground surface. The dozers can clear approximately six acres of tamarisks per day. A root plow then follows the dozer and digs up the roots at the rate of three acres per day. After the root plow, a root rake is used to remove the remaining roots, clearing 15 acres per day. This approach costs approximately \$700 per acre and is 98-99% effective in maintaining control of the saltcedar.

The San Miguel River, a tributary of the Dolores River in the Upper Colorado River Basin, is one of the few remaining naturally functioning riparian ecosystems in the western United States. The project's goals are ambitious and unique: to establish the San Miguel as the only naturally functioning, tamarisk-free river in the Upper Colorado River Basin. The river flows from a 14,000' elevation to an elevation of 5,000' and is 80

miles long and consists of 1 million acres. While riparian areas make up less than 2% of Colorado, yet 90% of the native species depend on them.

The project began in 2001 with mapping and informational meetings where information was created and dispersed. In 2002 was the beginning of tamarisk removal on public and private lands, clearing 25 miles. During the years 2003-2005, ongoing removal, monitoring, and education will continue. The final project evaluation and mapping will be completed in 2006 with a total cost for the project estimated at \$640,000.

Saltcedar trees have virtually destroyed much of the native habitat needed by certain animals, birds and plants along Texas rivers. The Pecos River stretches over 300 miles in Texas before emptying into the Rio Grande near Langtry. Most of this river mileage is armored with dense, mature stands of saltcedar that have created a monoculture. From 1999 through 2002, 128 miles of saltcedar along the Pecos River and its tributaries in Texas (6341 acres of saltcedar) have been treated with Arsenal herbicide using the state-of-the-art application technology of helicopters. Helicopters are preferred over airplanes for applying Arsenal because there is less drift of the herbicide, the helicopters can fly at slower speeds, and they make less banked turns. In addition, helicopters can spray a swath 45' wide. The cost of using helicopters to spray the herbicide on 10,245 acres is \$1,999,000

Another way to control the tamarisk is by the use of non-domesticated organisms, such as insects. The benefits to using this type of control is environmentally compatible, the results are permanent, there is no pollution, the cost is low, the control is self containing, and it controls regrowth.

To help combat this exotic pest plant, the United States Department of Agriculture developed a biological control research and implementation effort that is now well under way and showing significant success. The *Diorhabda elongate* beetle from China, Crete, and other Eurasian locations have been tested by USDA-ARS scientists in Albany, CA and Temple, TX for efficacy and safety and have been permitted for

release by both the US Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA-APHIS. Releases were initially made in six western states in limited release areas where cage studies verified the efficacy of these insect's natural enemies. Open field releases have further verified their effectiveness in multiple field sites.

For example, release of 1300 beetles in the summer of 2001 increased to millions of beetles in two seasons so that over 400 acres of saltcedar was totally defoliated in research sites in Lovelock, Nevada. Similar results have been seen in Pueblo, Colorado, Delta, Utah, and Lovell, Wyoming. Additional research is being conducted to provide beetles adapted for more southern areas. These beetles should be effective in states such as California, New Mexico and Texas.

The first population of the leaf beetle, *Diorhabda elongata*, to be tested as a saltcedar biocontrol agent, originated in the northwest corner of China, Xinjiang Province, near the town of Fukang. This insect population enters a state of dormancy, known as diapause, in response to daylengths shorter than about 14.5 hours of light. This diapause response results in a shutdown of the reproductive systems of both male and female beetles, as well as a departure of adults from the host plant and movement to the leaf litter. With this photoperiod requirement, the beetles cannot achieve two full generations per year at latitudes below the 37th parallel and will probably fail to thrive in the southern range of saltcedar. For this reason, new populations of *D. elongata* are being collected from a number of sites in Europe, Asia, and Africa. These populations reproduce under shorter daylengths and will be compatible with the southern range of saltcedar

Work with the saltcedar leaf beetle, *Diorhabda elongata*, has proceeded according to a plan drawn up by the Consortium for the Biological Control of Saltcedar. This plan was a response to USFWS concerns about potential effects of immediate, widespread insect releases on the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. Work within secure field cages began in 1997 in Pueblo and additional sites

followed. Open field releases occurred at all selected sites in spring 2001. Now, after three full field seasons, most sites where this insect can survive are reporting large increases in beetle populations, noticeable defoliation of saltcedar, and expanded areas of beetle infestation. Due to the novelty of notable defoliation in the field, long-term effects on the trees are not yet known.

While all these methods are effective in varying degrees, the development of an overarching management structure, coupled with sustainable funding, is necessary to get control of the exotic species, tamaricaceae. Otherwise, there will be only limited success in the daunting task of suppression, revegetation, and long-term maintenance on the thousands of miles of rivers and streams throughout the western U.S. impacted by tamarisk.

Currently the Tamarisk Coalition is taking

the lead to develop a collaborative effort between the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah. This multi-year effort includes a progression of tasks that will fill critical information gaps and provide demonstration projects essential to gaining public acceptance to take action to restore western rivers and streams.

Information for this article was gathered at the 2003 Tamarisk Symposium held at the Two Rivers convention center in Grand Junction, CO, on 22-24 October 2003. Sponsored by Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Colorado Weed Management Association, The Division of Wildlife, First National Bank of the Rockies, Moss Inc., The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and The Tamarisk Coalition.

More information can be found at <http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/TRA/saltcedar2003.html>



Dad: "Timmy, do you know what to do if a stranger offers you LVM?"

Timmy: "Yeah Dad, ask that cheap @#\$ if he paid for his copy"



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# Feature Cataract Canyon

## Who Needs Film?

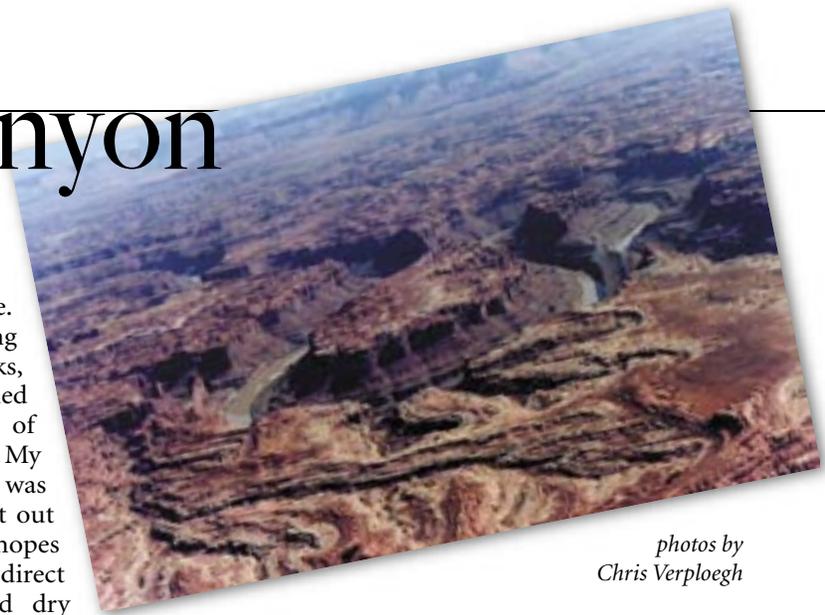
I hate the sinking feeling I get realizing I just made a huge mistake. I was standing beside my kayak above Mile Long Rapid on the Colorado River in Cataract Canyon. I was staring at possibly the best surf hole I have seen in days. The problem?... I just realized my thirty-five millimeter camera is sitting safely on a rock one and a half miles upstream. I had left it there an hour earlier while taking a short break from my kayak. Like a complete bonehead, I forgot to grab it before I hopped back into my boat. So there I sat, watching my buddies throw a zillion ends in the hole just downstream of me. Then I look upstream at the formidable hike ahead of me. Do I hike back up for the camera? Do I try to paddle upstream and portage around the rapids? Or do I forget it and go for the surf of my life. A few other things to consider: It was a beautiful winter day in southern Utah. The temperature at the moment might be thirty-five degrees. This was probably the warmest it has been during our two week trip. As soon as the sun disappears above the cliff walls the temperature will drop to around twenty. It was now three o'clock in the afternoon (sunset in three hours). My friends are surfing, yelling at me to forget the camera. Of course, they did not realize all the film I had taken of them during our trip was in the case with the camera. If they had, they probably would have gladly seen me off to retrieve my misplaced goods. The evening's campsite is only two miles further downstream. The rational choice would have been to write the camera off to a moment of stupidity and go surf in the big hole. However rational I have always claimed to be, I could not pass up a challenge like this. Besides, it almost seemed too easy. I had three hours to jog up the bank, grab the camera, return, and paddle the two miles to camp. Plus, this would get me out of kitchen duty and my other camp chores. Seemed like the right thing to do at the time.

So the adventure begins. I quickly changed into a dry set of expedition

weight capaliene. I found my hiking boots and socks, which were buried at the bottom of my dry bag. My kayaking gear was wet so I spread it out on the rocks in hopes the last bit of direct sun shine would dry it before my return.

As I was about to leave my buddy Pete recommended I take my petzel flashlight and extra batteries. This was possibly the best advice a friend ever gave me. I remembered laughing at him thinking I would be in camp tonight with at least thirty minutes of daylight to spare. I said my goodbyes, grabbed my water bottle, and started scampering upstream along the bank.

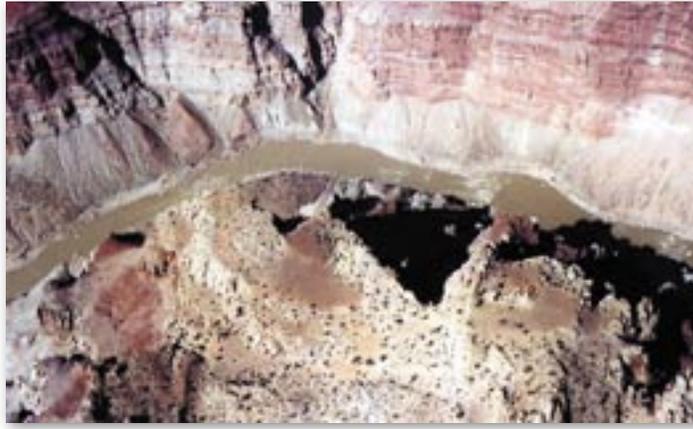
I quickly discovered how difficult this was going to be. The bank was nothing more than the debris pile of talus from the cliffs. The boulders ranged from coffee table size to house size. The river had been creating this pile of rubble for many millennia. The talus was sloped at forty-five degrees, stretching from the bottom of a three hundred foot cliff down to the water. The river was spaced anywhere from twenty to one hundred feet from the vertical cliff wall. I scampered, leaped, and crawled my way over the boulders. I had hoped to find a game trail to follow, but no such luck. I kept an intense pace, knowing that I had to make the best time possible on this first leg. Running and jumping from one rock to another was awesome. This was probably the only time I had broken a sweat in weeks. The cold air burned my throat a little, but I felt great. After an intense forty five minutes of non stop scampering I stopped to look around. In the distance, I could still see my kayak downstream. Broken hearted, I thought of turning back. I realized there was no way to make it to camp before dark. I knew I could paddle the whitewater by flashlight. What to do? I had perhaps



photos by  
Chris Verploegh

made it halfway. I had another three quarters of a mile to go. I would have definitely continued, but I was coming to a bend in the river. I was on the inside of the bend and could not see what lay ahead. In fact, the talus slope I was traversing seemed to disappear into the river. The Colorado appeared to flow adjacent to the three hundred foot cliff wall around the bend. I was still a quarter mile away from the bend. I could not tell for sure. Should I invest the little daylight I had left knowing there was a cliff I might not make it around? If I turned back now I could still surf at the hole for a few rides and easily make it to camp before dark. I could not quit. I would always regret not seeing if I could make it around the meander. I convinced myself there would be a great trail ahead and a nice beach adjacent to the cliff to walk on. I smiled, drank some water, and took off sprinting over boulders again. The beauty of this canyon is as great as the Grand. The mosaic of reds stretched out to the dark blue sky. The sun had long since left the river bed. The top of the cliffs on the side I was traveling were still lit in direct light. The Colorado beside me made the terrain seem friendlier. I actually found a rough game trail. The Big Horn sheep who live here would probably not appreciate my trespass. I had seen them for days from the conveyor belt of a river. They always stared with curiosity. I doubt I would have received a warm welcome upon stumbling into a herd. Who am I kidding? Although I felt agile and nimble leaping from boulders, I'm sure a bighorn would have heard my clumsy human feet a mile away. There

was probably a herd standing above me laughing at the silly human making such slow progress to an impossible destination. I began around the bend and saw my journey come to an end. The river did in fact meet the vertical wall. The talus slope reappeared just thirty feet further upstream. Looking up I noticed a small ledge about twenty feet above water level. If I could make it along the ledge without falling I could return to the talus slope and retrieve my camera in just a few minutes. I'm terrified of heights. At least I would land in water if I fell. The climb was tedious. The ledge was less than a foot wide in places. The crumbling sedimentary rock did not make for the best foothold. I had to ascend higher than I anticipated. There was no good route to climb back to the upstream talus slope. I ended up about forty feet above water level. I glanced at my watch, four thirty. I should have already been there and started my return trip. Climbing down is always the hard part. Finally, I



contemplating swimming around this thing. The time was five twenty. I knew I could not climb around the first cliff in the dark. I had to be returning and pass the first cliff by six o'clock. I knew if I waited for even a few minutes to think about it I would start shivering uncontrollably. There was no way I could prevent hypothermia if my clothes were wet. Here goes... I stripped my clothes and boots off. I tied my pant legs in a knot, shoved the shirt and boots in, held it all above my

was on the upstream boulders. Moving around the bend I recognized the bottom of the rapid where my camera waited. The rapid was long, perhaps four hundred feet. I was so close I celebrated too early. Coming into view was another vertical cliff. There was no way around this one. I could see from this point the rock my camera set beside. It was still two hundred feet further upstream, but I could see it. The cliff was overhanging and I did not have a chance in hell of climbing it. This cliff was only thirty feet wide. I could not believe I was

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head and eased into the thirty two degree water. The air temp was the same and I immediately began trembling. I was able to wade at waist depth for the first fifteen feet. The depth increased. My chest and then shoulders sank beneath the ice water. For some reason I began to grunt and growl. I saw how insanely stupid all of this was and began to crack up. I went to tippy toe depth, praying to find shallow ground. Only ten more feet to shore. Now, my laughing turned to coughing. I had to swim for it. My face slipped under the surface. I have never

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# Feature Cataract Canyon

experienced as much anxiety as that moment. My body was freaking out. I had to hold my clothes above water. They could not get wet or I would have been completely screwed. I could not even swim hard in order to keep the clothes dry. I had to doggy paddle to shore. I carefully flung my clothes to safety and exploded out of the water. I yelled so loudly that I heard an echo bounce around the canyon walls for five seconds. I frantically replaced my clothing and boots. My body heat would hopefully dry the dampness left by my skin. I immediately began running upstream along a beach. A very bad thought entered my mind. I envisioned my buddies grabbing the camera before they left earlier in the day. They never thought I would actually traverse back up here to get it and were planning to pull it out and surprise me at dinner. I would have killed them if after all this there was

no camera to recover. Only one hundred feet to go. I had to duck into a dense Tamarisk tree forest. The Tamarisk tree is a pest to the Colorado. Man introduced it to the area only a hundred years ago. Since, it has migrated upstream and destroyed most of the endemic plant life. The tamarisk is a rugged tree and almost impossible to crawl through. There I was on my belly crawling in the ten inches of space under this little forest when I found what may have saved my life. I came face to face with an ancient tall boy of Keystone Light beer. The label was so bleached you could barely make out the logo. The can was perfectly full and completely intact. Undoubtedly the remnant of some long ago river trip, this can of beer got away and had been waiting there under the Tamarisk tree just for me. In awe, I grabbed it, stood up and ran the last few feet to my camera. It was patiently waiting for me. I could not believe it. I sat down for the first time in two and a half hours. I cracked open the beer and sucked down some badly needed calories. The best beer I have ever had. Looking at my watch I jumped and sprinted back under the Tamarisk tree. I had to make it around both cliffs before dark. I tore off my clothes, repeated my bundling and swam like hell. This time was not quite as bad. I threw my clothes back on and began climbing around the other cliff. I was exhausted and only had about fifteen minutes of daylight to do a climb which took thirty minutes earlier. I flew up to the most dangerous and difficult part. I had to lunge and grab a hand hold five feet away. The move was as exposed as possible. The freezing water waiting for me forty feet straight down. With the light disappearing I made the move. My feet both slipped off the ledge as I hung by my handhold. The adrenaline kicked in and I hauled myself up onto the footing. I stood up still clinging to the rock and looked at the relatively easy climb down to the talus slope. I fished my petzel out, strapped it around my head as the sun disappeared for the day. If this flashlight did not work I would have frozen in twenty degree temperatures on the side of that cliff for the next twelve hours. Thank God, the

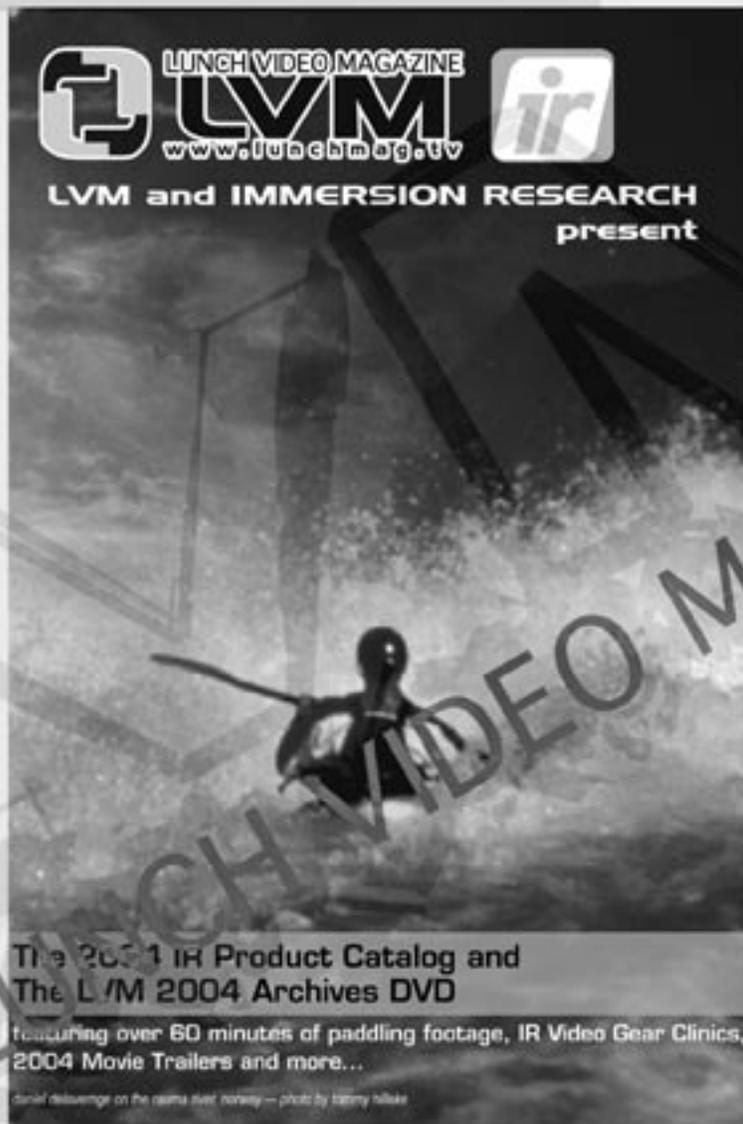
light turned on. I carefully followed the trail to the rivers edge and began my miles' hike downstream to my kayak. There was no rush at this point. I knew I must go slowly. If I fell I could lose or break the flashlight. I took my time and an hour later arrived at my starting point.

My kayak and all gear were frozen solid. My dry top and fleece could have been used as a hatchet they were so flat and stiff. I was starving. I can hardly describe how happy I was to have an army MRE meal in the back of my boat. The capilene I was wearing was dry and warm while hiking, but not even close to being adequate while sitting. I went ahead and pried my frozen paddling gear on over my fleece. Spray skirt, life jacket, and helmet, everything I had. I wrapped the petzel over my helmet, grabbed the duct tape and began taping the light to my head. If this thing fell off in the middle of a rapid I would be terrified. I ripped the MRE open and began the heating process of dinner. Those army guys are very crafty. They created a little pouch that you pour a few ounces of water in which heats the pouch containing the beef ravioli. Amazing. In five minutes I had a warm meal complete with pound cake for dessert. It was now 8:00; I had been going full strength for five hours. I looked downstream into the dark hearing the roar of whitewater. I was at the top of Mile Long Rapid which is solid class III-IV. As I began to pack my boots I was reminded of the temperature. I had only taken them off twenty minutes earlier but they had already frozen solid from the sweat. Oh well, at least they no longer smelled. I shoved them in the stern and climbed in my boat. The skirt refused to cooperate. It, too, was frozen solid and barely stretched around the cockpit. There I sat: warm, full, and very happy. I had survived an epic adventure. I could make it through the evening just sitting there. Why risk paddling two miles of solid whitewater in sub freezing temperatures, by myself, in the dark? My kayak was perched waiting to go. I probably could have even slept for a while just sitting there on my rock. I

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# Feature Cataract Canyon

was extremely lucky to have made it this far. Why push it? A swim in this water could have killed me. The thought of my light going out in the middle of a bad rapid was terrifying. What the hell... I slid in and never stopped paddling. I even went for a surf on the wave just downstream. I caught it on a front surf and immediately began throwing ends. I was having a pretty good ride until I flipped. I rolled just in time to hit the next hole. My Petzel provided about fifteen feet of light. I could hear the holes long before I could see them. Once they were in sight I had time for two good strokes. The experience was terrifying. I managed to stay upright through the rest of it, dodging the meat of what I could see. I did a few unintentional splat wheels trying to avoid boulders. The first mile was the tough one. Afterwards, I was able to float and stare at the stars.

Just then, I noticed the most bizarre creature staring at me. His eyes were reflecting my light from about fifty feet away. I presumed it was some type of small mammal on a cliff. As I paddled closer I could see the outline of its body. A large man was standing there staring at me. He was shaped like a professional wrestler. The broadest shoulders I've ever seen on a man. Approximately six feet tall. I thought I must be delirious. I must be having some sort of delusion due to exhaustion. I ferried towards it but could not keep from washing downstream. As I slid closer to the bank it started walking downstream to keep up with me. Was this Big Foot? Maybe a member of some ancient Anasazi tribe? I yelled over to it and it picked up the pace. This is nuts, I thought. I have not seen another person outside of my group in a week. There is no way some hiker is down here walking around three hours after dusk. Finally, I was able to eddy out.. Now I was fifty feet downstream of it. It was coming towards me but stopped just barely too far away for me to tell what or who it was. It continued to stare at me and finally stepped out of my view. I was both scared and amazed. Some huge bipedal creature was stalking me. I turned downstream and took off. I was praying

that my buddies had set camp up on the other side of the river. A few minutes of paddling hard and I saw the camp fire. Crap, they camped on the same side as the giant creature. I jumped out on the beach yelling for them to pack up. We had to move across the river. They had been drinking for hours, thought I was already dead, and welcomed the visit of some strange creature. I stood by the fire for an hour refusing to take my paddling gear off. I figured I could be out of there in twenty seconds if I had to. Slowly, I calmed down and figured if I were to be attacked by big foot tonight I might as well drink some beer. The exhaustion took over and I was out cold in a matter of minutes.

I slept as sound as ever and awoke to an incredible sunrise. I looked around at the beach I could not see the night before. And there he was. Bigfoot, in the flesh. A huge male Big Horn Sheep studied me. He was facing me so I could not see his side profile. His shoulders as impressive as I remembered. His coat was white in the front and dark behind his shoulders. Seeing him from fifty feet with a flashlight the night before would maybe explain the mystery creature. He must have been as curious of me as I was of him. I saw Bigfoot. He saw a floating spaceship with a strange light shining out. I certainly was not disappointed to learn that I saw him; I hope he felt the same.

Years later, I still have the crushed Keystone Light can. Everyone wonders why it is nailed to my office wall. The camera still takes a great picture. The photos from that trip as well as my other travels are invaluable possessions. However, they hardly compare to the experience of rescuing my camera. You take a camera on trips to bring home photos so you can remember the details. My camera provided me with much greater images of an experience than a photo could ever do. Better than video too. 

# Safety Mental Safety Skills

by Andrew Jillings

If accidents happened when we expected them to, they wouldn't be accidents.

If you walk around a busy put-in on a summer's day, chances are that most boats you see will have a throw bag stuffed behind the seat. Some might even have rescue pulleys or a first aid kit. If you're like these folks, you've made physical preparations for a rescue. But how much mental preparation have you done?

It's important to think now about how you work in a group, since it can help you respond quickly and effectively when the time comes. If you were thrown into a rescue situation this instant, how well would you perform? In answering this question, one of the first things most people do is envision whether they would act either as a good leader or an effective follower.

A typical rescue scenario often conjures up an image of the "Autocratic" leadership model, where one person barks commands and other people fall in line to perform them. This picture is based on the accumulated image of the leaders we've been exposed to over the years – mostly from Hollywood and the media.

But is this really the best kind of leadership, or are there other, more effective methods? The notion that leaders are born, not made, went out of fashion after the Second World War, when enlisted men had to be promoted to officer rank after the "officer class" of society ran out of raw material. Pretty soon it became obvious that the necessary skills were available in all kinds of people, not just those who were "born to it." What became more obvious later was that good leadership in one situation was not good leadership in another, and so the notion of "situational leadership" gained popularity.

When taking the lead in a rescue, you must balance task related needs (tying knots, choosing the best wading technique) with behavioral needs (getting people committed to the plan, making everyone as useful as they can be).

At first glance, it may seem that in a rescue situation, the best way to make decisions is

to just tell people what to do—the "Telling" method. After all, time is short and decisive action needed, right?

However, as you may have experienced yourself, it's often more effective to make sure the person you're directing knows what they are doing and actually wants to do it. Perhaps you've told Chris to go and get help, when in fact she can tie knots faster than an Eagle Scout on espresso. Time permitting, it helps to describe all the tasks involved and then assign people according to their skills and desire. It's no good asking Eddie the Eagle Scout to tie a bowline if he's so freaked out he can't remember where to start. If he can't think straight he'll be better off in a less essential role like pulling on a rope when he's told.

In a highly skilled group, it may be better to "Sell" ideas and have time for others to suggest better ones before setting the rescue in motion. This works because people become more effective and coordinated in performing their designated tasks.

Ardent fans of the autocratic method may argue that it's more important for people to just get on and do what they're told, that there's no time for a damned town meeting. It always worked for John Wayne, right? And that Lt. Ripley from *Alien*, she was a true model of leadership under pressure, surely?

True, an emergency is not the time for prolonged discussion, but getting people to participate in what they do best will ultimately achieve a faster, more efficient rescue. Clearly there is a balance between Telling, Selling, Participating, and Delegating, based not only on the urgency of the situation, but also its complexity and the expertise of the group.

Another problem with autocratic leadership is that it works well in hierarchies like the military, a hospital ER, or the Boy Scouts, but the reality of a group of friends out on the river for a day is that there is no preexisting hierarchy and no scriptwriter...heck, there's not even dramatic background music.

So how do we act during a crisis? Who does the talking? Who thinks? Who acts?

We might yearn to be Sigourney Weaver stuffing multi-jawed monsters into airlocks (and who hasn't?), but until one has been in a gruesome or terrifying situation, we just don't know how we're going to behave.

One of the first things to remember is that there is always time to think. There might not be very much of it, but thinking first and acting second always produces better results than the reverse. Then, turn to the Emergency Services model: first priority is to look after yourself and your team, then the victim (better to have one victim than multiple victims). Would you have the leadership skills and bravery to not attempt a rescue, if it were likely to create another victim? There seems to be a tragedy every year involving a drowning victim being joined by two or three others who jumped in to save them.

In our hypothetical emergency situation, there are additional complications. Chances are there aren't enough people along to have just one role each, so assigning them will include combining tasks or coordinating the timing of each one. Setting upstream guard probably isn't as important as sending someone for help, so prioritizing is important too. All this can be achieved in just a few seconds if everyone has a chance for quick input and is prepared to listen.

If you find yourself in a "leadership" position, here are a few hints to help you most effectively support your team. First, be like Yoda (but talk normally): ask people if they could do things for you—it sounds a lot different than giving an order, even if the result is the same. People will want to help in situations like this, and a touch of courtesy and a brief explanation go a long way. This also makes people more effective because they understand their role in relation to everything else going on within the rescue effort and can adapt quickly if the situation changes.

With large groups, it's important to delegate, as any one person simply can't keep track of everything that's happening. Ask people to take charge of something ("Al, will you arrange upstream and downstream safety for me, and let me

*continued on page 61*

# Riding the Flood

by Jason Robertson

## Riding James Clinton's Flood: an American Legend

"Here was built a dam the summer of 1779 by the Soldiers under Gen. Clinton to enable them to join the forces of Gen. Sullivan at Tioga."

*-Historic marker on the Susquehanna at Cooperstown on Lake Ostego.*

Night was falling in Syracuse and we were just finishing our Christmas dinner, which had started hours earlier at noon.

I was deep in winter sloth, and my thoughts were far away from the river and deep into the question of whether I had room in my belly for just one more homemade pierogi. As I started to reach across the table with my fork, Mike, my father-in-law's girlfriend's father, pulled out a book and turned to ask me a question.

"My daughter tells me you canoe?"

I put the fork back down, and picked up my glass of Gewurtzraminer instead, "Yes, I do a lot of canoeing; but I do a lot more kayaking and have also worked as a raft guide. Basically I work on whitewater river recreation and stewardship.

Mike gave me an odd look, clearly the only words that sank in were 'whitewater' and 'raft guide', but he was determined to have a conversation and tell a story. Mike pushed my plate away, set the book in front of me and tapped the cover with his pointer finger, "I bet you've never heard this story; it's about the Revolution, a dam, and a fleet of canoes.

I struggled to come fully alert; this was a challenge after eating so much over such a long day of feasting. I was recently married and new to the family. In fact, this was only the third time I'd ever met Mike and many of the other family members. My in-laws are recent arrivals to America and my wife is a third generation combination of Polish and Irish ancestry. Thus far everyone I'd ever met in Syracuse was of Polish descent and acceptable conversations and activities were limited to beer, wine, food, sports, Iraq, and the weather (which, true to stereotype,

is bad by nature and good by grace). Mike was not related by blood to my wife, but he shared the same Polish roots with my father-in-law. This was the first interesting conversation of the weekend, and the first pause in the family's feeding frenzy.

My wife turned from her own conversation and said, "Jason's family fought in the Revolution," before getting up to clear her plate and go in the next room with her grandmother.

"That was in the Carolinas," it was time to get to the real story and to the navy blue tome that Mike's hand was still resting on, "My ancestors fought in the Battle of Kings Mountain; they hiked to and from the battlefield so there weren't any canoes involved. I'll tell my story some other time; what's your tale.

There was a pause; Mike liked building drama. Meanwhile, noises around us continued as the extended family continued their conversations throughout the house while the children played loudly in the living room.

"You know this part of New York played an important part in the Revolution?"

Patience, I thought, patience--he'll get to the point.

"The area was just starting to get settled as the war started. There were only 300 residents in the area known as Cherry Valley by the start of the Revolution. It was surveyed and settled in the 1760's but after two decades, the Indians had decided they didn't like having the white men there, so they attacked the settlement in November 1776 and slaughtered a sixth of them. A couple years later, the Indians attacked again and drove the last of the settlers back East. Of course the Indians wouldn't have attacked on their own; they were actually sponsored and armed by the British.

I poured myself some more wine; this was going to be a long story.

"Washington and the Continental Congress weren't going to stand for this, so Washington sent Sullivan out with Clinton

on a punitive expedition in '79. General James Clinton was the Governor's brother. He was sent to meet Sullivan with 1800 men to quell the Iroquois threat," Mike paused and looked up towards the light over the table, "some say he only had 1500 men, but I believe he had 1800.

"Sullivan would head up the Susquehanna River from the Chesapeake Bay and Clinton would go up the Mohawk from Schenectady to Canajoharie, crossing to Otsego Lake and down the Susquehanna to meet Sullivan at Tioga. Of course there was no road at that time from the Mohawk to Otsego, so Clinton's men had to build one and portage their boats and baggage. Once they were on the lake, the troops could paddle across and camp on the far shore at what is now known as Cooperstown.

I was lost. I work on rivers, but I only had the faintest idea that the Susquehanna in Maryland went up through Pennsylvania to New York. I had certainly never given it any thought as an "invasion route", partially because I'd never considered going so far upstream an appealing idea, and partially because I know that there are so many dams on the river.

"Clinton arrived on Otsego Lake with as many as 220 bateaux, which were basically large flat-bottomed canoes, and reported to Washington on May 28, 1779 that he was prepared for the offensive. However, Clinton had a problem, the Susquehanna, which flows from the lake, was too shallow for his boats, he had no horse, and the area was still a wilderness with no roads. What do you think he did?"

I was still feeling overcome by food, wine, and warmth, so it took me a second to realize that Mike was addressing the question to me. However, my wife's uncle Jimmy saved me when he pulled up a chair and quipped, "He built a dam.

Mike responded, "That's right; he built a dam. You see, with the river so low, Clinton knew he needed more water. He dammed the lake, which is pretty narrow at the mouth, and celebrated the 4th of July with gunfire and rum," to which Mike lifted a glass with a knowing wink and took a drink,

“and he raised the water about three feet, lined his boats up, and at 6 PM on August 8th tore out the dam so his fleet could sail on the flood waters into Indian country.

“Wait.” I was trying to picture this, “You’re saying Clinton and his men rode this flood at night?”

“No, they actually waited until the following morning and at first light started floating out three men to a bateaux.

I was still feeling skeptical, “Three men per boat in 220 boats? That only adds up to 660 men. Where were the others?”

“They ran through the night and came on the Indian villages just as the boats arrived. But that’s a different story from the one I’m telling you.” Mike inhaled.

“Clinton’s men rode the flood 30 miles, dodging drowned trees and strainers, which they called ‘flood wood’. Can you imagine what it was like? Who knows if it was orderly or chaotic. Some of the boats must’ve been snagged, others must’ve tipped. History doesn’t tell us about the individual mis-adventures. But we know Clinton rode the flood.” Mike took a breath and draft from his rum and coke.

“The floodwaters traveled over 100 miles. Indians up and down the Susquehanna were astonished; first they were alarmed by the lowering of the river and the poor fishing harvest over the middle of the summer, and later they were frightened by the flood and the sudden appearance of the white man’s fleet on the crest of the bubble. In fact, according to a report in the *Gazetteer of New York*, many Indians thought the Great Spirit had deserted them, and gone to aid the white man. Regardless, the Indians fled to the British fort at Niagara, and Clinton destroyed three Indian villages belonging to the Tuscarora as well as the Iroquois and Tory settlement at Newtown, while Sullivan destroyed villages belonging to the Seneca and Cayuga.

Mike sighed, “Of course this was war, and no war is ever won so easily, even by the abandonment of the Great Spirit. By October, after Sullivan and Clinton had

returned East, the Indians brought their own retribution back to the settlers and the slaughter continued for many more years even after the British left.” Mike looked introspective, yet Uncle Jimmy looked strangely expectant.

Jimmy clearly couldn’t wait any longer to be part of the conversation, “You know what ‘Otsego’ means? It’s Indian for meeting place. When you get home, go to the library and check out James Fenimore Cooper’s *Leatherstocking Tales*, especially *The Deerslayer*; he was from this area and wrote about Clinton’s dam.” After pausing for a very brief breath, Jimmy launched in again “Do you fish? Do you like shad? Washington’s troops lived off salted shad from the Delaware at Valley Forge. Susquehanna was also full of them. Seine fisheries on the Susquehanna in the 1800’s caught something like 400,000 per day!” Jimmy was an avid fisherman; I’d never seen him catch anything, but each summer he’d race out in his boat at the family’s camp and spend a week floating back and forth with a beer in one hand and a rod in the other. “First they built the canal, and then they built several large dams; but it was Holtwood that killed the shad. Holtwood.” It sounded like he was saying the word ‘Devil’. “They were all dead by the 1930’s. Now the power companies trap and transport shad from Conowingo Dam upstream to hatcheries and started operating fish lifts at Holtwood, Safe Harbor and York Haven Dams in the 90’s.” Almost as an afterthought Jimmy exploded “400,000 per day to none! And now we’re supposed to be happy about a handful? You should work on that at your American Whitewater!”

In the awkward pause that followed, Mike’s daughter came in and took him out to say goodbye to a relative, Jimmy refilled his Rum and Coke, and before I knew it the evening was over, and I never did get to see the title of Mike’s navy blue book.

However, I did just as Jimmy suggested, and went to my bookshelf where I pulled my copy of the *The Deerslayer* and read Cooper’s description with fresh eyes: “[Beyond] the fringe of bushes immediately on the shore of the lake . . . [was] a narrow stream, of sufficient depth of limpid water,

with a strong current, and a canopy of leaves, upheld by arches composed of the limbs of hoary trees. Bushes lined the shores, as usual, but they left sufficient space between them to admit the passage of any thing that did not exceed twenty feet in width, and to allow of a perspective ahead of eight or ten times that distance.

I also went to the library and found that Cooper had written a description of Clinton’s exploit in the introduction to *THE PIONEERS: Or, The Sources of the Susquehanna*, which was the story of Natty Bumpo.

Then I found a book *Down the Susquehanna to the Chesapeake* by Jack Brubaker and learned that around 1870 the residents of Cooperstown blew up the last of Clinton’s dam works in a 4th of July celebration. Later, in 1905, another dam was built several hundred feet downstream of the outlet. First the dam was used to secure drinking water for the town, and now it is used regulate the flow of the Susquehanna to flush Cooperstown’s treated sewage. Despite the presence of the treatment facility the water is relatively clean.

Finally, I learned that canoe recreation occurs on the river and that there is a large Memorial Day race at the General Clinton Canoe Regatta (<http://www.canoeregatta.org/>), titled in memory of Clinton’s expedition, in which competitors race 70 miles on the largely flatwater river from Cooperstown to Bainbridge.

Mike was right; I’d never heard his story, but it was a good one and I feel richer for the sharing of it. I think I’ll make an effort to visit this summer, canoe the river, enjoy the scenery and see if I can catch a shad firsthand.

This part of the Susquehanna is about as wide as a living room and it meanders like the course of a parcheesi game. Trees broken by spring floods had toppled into or across the river. We hacked our way through or lifted our craft over. ❧

- *Ralph Gray on canoeing the first miles of the Susquehanna, National Geographic Magazine, July 1950.*

# Events Olympic Games

by Cathy Hearn



## Athens 2004 Olympic Games Whitewater Slalom

The nature of rivers is that they flow to the sea. The 2004 Olympic Whitewater course appears as an opalescent turquoise serpent overlooking the sea from which it flows forth. Taking its water from the Saronic Gulf, the course rises up from its holding lake and tumbles back again in a tortuous coil at the site of the old Athens airport.

The Olympic course and its extensions of warmup lake and training channels is constructed of concrete, local rock, and plastic obstacles which fit into concrete pegboards set into the bed of the river. This system, like the one for the Sydney 2000 Olympics, allows for easy movement of the

obstacles, making it possible to create an almost infinite number of rapids of differing complexity and difficulty. Indeed, the course design team has experimented extensively with the obstacle configurations, giving training athletes a new river for each workout during part of the Olympic preparation.

The saltwater flowing in the Olympic course in Athens foams more easily than does freshwater, making this a fantastically bright and white stretch of whitewater. That brilliance coupled with the salt provides a new challenge for the eyes of the competitors, and puts new value on the kinesthetic skills necessary for great whitewater paddling.

The field of competitors for the 2004 Olympic Slalom events has been selected from an original group of more than 160 athletes from nearly 70 countries, with qualifying opportunities at the 2003 World Championships in Augsburg, Germany, and at the 2004 World Cup on the Olympic Course in Athens. The International Canoe Federation has worked in concert with established whitewater nations to develop athletes and programs from at least 40 nations new to whitewater Olympic slalom competition, resulting in qualification race participation by nations such as Togo, Thailand, Algeria, India, Taipei, Kazakstan and Romania, to mention but a few.





Athletes contending for the medals in Athens will include those who have already collected Olympic and World medals, as well as those who have only recently achieved their lifelong goal of reaching the Olympics. Favorites in the men's kayak include such big-water specialists as the American Scott Parsons, Canada's past World Champ David Ford, and past Olympic medalists Pierpaolo Ferrazzi (Italy) and Thomas Schmidt (Germany). The women's field is arguably the strongest ever, with nations like Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Great Britain earning less Olympic spots than they have women who could win medals. Challenging these and other nations' champions will be American Rebecca Giddens, who has demonstrated extraordinary strength, water sense, and performance smarts in collecting past medals.

In the canoe classes, the Germans, French, Slovaks and Czechs have again had their medal potential curtailed as they have less Olympic spots than they have excellent boaters. Chris Ennis, with a strong slalom history, including a world junior medal, will represent the US in the C1 event. The US C2s proved their solidarity of skill as they battled as a trio, with the young team of Larimer and Babcock qualifying an Olympic spot for the US, which was ultimately claimed by past Olympic Champion Joe Jacobi and his partner Matt Taylor.

The 2004 Athens Olympic Slalom course is bordered by a spectacular steep curved wedge of spectator stands which afford

clear views of the course from all sections. The atmosphere during the Olympic competition will surely be charged with excitement and noise. The cheering of the spectators mixed with the music of the whitewater and augmented by the lively and expert commentary of announcers Lamar Sims and Kent Ford, both from Colorado, should be outstanding.

Approaching the whitewater center in Athens, the first impressions are of a green oasis, the scent of moving water on the wind, and then the view of the turquoise jewel that is the paddling complex. Close up, the breeze carries salt spray, and the course appears luminescent and alive in its movement. The water has the most fantastic ocean feel in river form-- the features are somewhat soft while at the same time packing substantial punch, and some of them are just plain wierd, with the variable water and boils of a big river in flood. Best of all for new paddlers and veterans alike is the comfortable climate, warm water, and safe nature of the course.

The real beauty of artificial courses like the one built for the Athens 2004 Olympics is the legacy of whitewater experiences that carry on beyond the event. A course like this one, and the one in Sydney, constructed in areas with no natural whitewater, make both the active and spectator versions of whitewater sport accessible to many people who otherwise might never experience the beauty, joy, challenge and reward of playing in and around rivers. 

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# Events

# Deerfield River Festival

## Deerfield River Festival July 30th – August 2nd

American Whitewater and New England F.L.O.W. started the Deerfield River Festival in 1994 to celebrate the successful dam relicensing process that took place in 1993. Ten years later the party continues to commemorate the releases and the impact that they have had on boating in New England.

Located in Charlemont, Massachusetts on the banks of the Deerfield River the American Whitewater Deerfield River Festival has served as a summer highlight for New England boaters for the past ten years. The festival day is full of competitions for all paddling abilities, boat demos, and family programs. As the sun sets the party grows, with a



silent auction, outdoor and whitewater marketplace, used boat sale, and live music. This year's festival will feature the Hooked Village Tour and Eastern Mountain Sports "Raise the Roof Tour". The Eastern Mountain Sports "Raise the Roof Tour" brings a forty foot climbing wall to the Deerfield Festival, along with gear giveaways and product demos.

The Deerfield River offers whitewater fun for anyone that attends. From Fife Brook Dam in Florida, Massachusetts to the Number 4 dam in Buckland, the Deerfield River flows unimpeded for 17 miles. The longest stretch without a dam on the main river, this run is also among the most heavily used by whitewater paddlers.

From a boating perspective, the most prominent feature here is Zoar Gap, a Class III-III+ rapid five miles downstream from the dam. But there is much more of interest than whitewater alone. The history of this stretch is closely linked to the development of the railroad and hydropower. Environmentally, this section is important for the variety of bird species including red tail hawks, ospreys, bald eagles, and blue herons,

its active beavers, and its potential as a trout fishery.

The "Dryway" Monroe Bridge section offers five miles of rushing Class III-IV whitewater. The Dryway is one of the great relicensing success stories of New England. Dewatered except for occasional spillage until 1991, the Dryway now has a schedule of 32 days each season when it's open for boating. Thanks to an agreement reached between the power company and several environmental and recreational groups, intermediate and advanced boaters in the Northeast no longer have to travel long distances or wait until spring to get a whitewater fix.

The Deerfield Festival not only celebrates the river release but also the beauty of the Berkshire Mountains. Many festival goers chose to go hiking, mountain biking, or fishing in the area before joining the party at the festival. 

*For more information on the Deerfield River Festival check out the events section of [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)!*

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# Events Calendar

## 2004 American Whitewater Supporting Events

Date	Event	Location	Contact
July 24	N. Fork Feather Member Booth	Caribou, CA*	klweis@snowcrest.net
August 1-2	AW Deerfield River Fest	Charlemont, MA*	www.americanwhitewater.org
Sept 10-11	Ohiopyle Falls Race	Ohiopyle, PA	BJ2Adams@Juno.com
September 24-26	AW Gauley River Festival	Summersville, WV*	www.americanwhitewater.org
Sept 25-26	West River Releases	Jamaica, VT	http://vtparks.anr.state.vt.us/htm/jamaica.cfm
Oct 1-3	Russell Fork Rendezvous	Haysi, VA	John_foy@alltel.net
Oct 16-17	Moose River Festival	Old Forge, NY*	Ckoll234@aol.com (315) 673-3837
Oct 22-24	Whitewater Symposium	Bryson City	www.wwsymposium.com
Oct 29-31	NOC's GAF	Byrson City	www.noc.com
November 20th	"The Thing" at Tallulah	Tallulah Falls, GA*	sutton@suttonbacon.com

\* 2004 AW Membership Appreciation Booths



## First Annual Wavesport Open - September 24-26

### At the American Whitewater Gauley River Festival

### Your chance to get paid to play!

Wavesport is excited to announce a new style of kayak competition, one that embraces all paddlers, in all boats. This event defines the true meaning of playboating, a free form, no rules, no restrictions style that embodies the reason we all paddle...to be creative and have fun on the river.

This invitational event brings together the best kayaking has to offer, and your included. Yes, you're invited, and so are all your friends! All you have to do is paddle the Upper Gauley on Friday, September 24th (times to be announced)

The Wavesport Open is open to any boat, has no entry fee, no entry form, and best of all no hassle. At the top of Pillow and Sweets Falls we'll have organizers who will take your information and professional videographers will film your run for the competition. All you do is try to impress us as you make your way through each rapid. Competition categories include the coveted Best of Show, Sickest Move, Worst Carnage, and Best Overall Run.

The next day at Gauley Fest watch the winners reel at the Wavesport booth to see if you made the cut. If you did cash and prizes could be yours. Keep an eye on [www.wavesport.com](http://www.wavesport.com) for event developments as Gauley Fest 2004 draws closer.

# In Memory of Jim Rada

by Hal Crimmel and Paul Everson

Pioneer whitewater kayaker Jim Rada died of a heart attack on May 17th, 2003 at the age of 52 while running Triple Drop rapids on the Presque Isle River, a Class IV-V river that he had been paddling almost every year since the mid 1970s.

Losing Jim Rada, who represented the best of whitewater boating, came as a shock to the close-knit Minnesota paddling community. He appeared to be in excellent health, being an avid cross-country skier, bicyclist and hockey enthusiast.

Rada, who first began kayaking in the 1970s, soon helped to pioneer many whitewater runs in Minnesota and Wisconsin, along with Pete Cary, Al Button and "Fearless" Fred Young. His proudest and most notable kayaking achievement was his solo first descent of the Class V Devil's Track River near Grand Marais, which is still considered the most difficult run on Minnesota's Lake Superior North Shore. Rada figured out that the best way to scout rivers was to ski them, and in the winters he scouted out potential runs such as the Devil's Track before paddling them in spring. Rada was also well known during the fiberglass days for his crude yet creative boat constructions, known as "Radaks". Looking already crumpled and worn even though fresh from the boat mold, the Radaks included

such deck features as glow in the dark stars embedded in midnight blue epoxy and orange turtles and fish in a spring green deck above an orange seam line.

As a result of his hard work and years of paddling, he wrote a 146+ page guidebook, *Northwoods Whitewater*, which remains the authoritative guide to serious whitewater in the Upper Midwest. The book will be released in 2004 by Volcano Studio, Inc.

Jim worked as a professor of physics and astronomy at several colleges and universities in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. He loved to bring his telescope on kayaking trips and sleep out under the stars, often offering impromptu seminars. One of his favorite places to do this was at the Wisconsin cabin he built entirely by hand with his wife Karen Jensen. Nicknamed "the Rodent Ranch" for the many mice that called the place home, the cabin and the abandoned orchard it sat on was a special place, where he and Karen welcomed many friends over the years.

Rada was a man of deep principles. He was drafted during the Vietnam War, and felt strongly that that particular war was wrong. Although he could have obtained a student deferment to avoid fighting, he chose to resist and was sent to jail for several months. His independent streak defined his kayaking. He was a purist who favored action over talk, a man who didn't let the latest paddling fads get in the way of communing with the wild rivers he loved. Running a river with Jim was special, because he was a person who distilled paddling to its essence, and sought only to experience it in its purest form. The sun glinting off the late spring snowpack, the rumble of the rapids, the boreal forest at the edge of

the moving water—all were as profoundly important to Jim as the people he spent time with.

He willingly shared his love of life and of Minnesota's rivers with any boaters expressing an interest. Rada would invite new paddlers to meet his boating friends and watch videos and slide shows showcasing many of the region's best runs. He also traveled the world with his wife Karen, to whom he was deeply devoted. The two had many wonderful adventures together in Europe, Alaska, Canada, New Zealand and throughout the lower 48. In August 2002, after over 10 years on the Grand Canyon waiting list, he took what would prove to be his last extended river trip, with Karen and many close friends, including John Alt, Chel Anderson, and Paul Everson. On this trip, "The Admiral" expressed his love for the canyon and its river, and for the friends who could accompany him. Sleeping in the sand, bathing in the river, absorbing all that the Canyon offered, and spending time with his wife, Rada reveled in the sheer joy of being alive in this beautiful place.

His accident was the second river-related death of one of our kayaking friends in the last several years. Though I know Paul consistently paddles difficult whitewater, Jim's accident made me reconsider whether kayaking should be a part of my life. But the day of his funeral I decided to make a solo run down Red Canyon on Utah's Green River. I poached a campsite under a stand of big Ponderosa pine, lay naked in the sun, drank the two beers I had stuffed in my boat, and watched the water slip by in the clear desert light. Jim Rada's life was full of rivers. It's what he would have wanted for us all. 

*An account of the accident appears on page 58 of the September/October 2003 issue of American Whitewater.*

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## The Admiral

by Paul Everson

Sleeping out beneath the stars  
beyond the snow banks trees and far  
river gurglings cold and fast  
Spring is here along at last

The Admiral wakes surveys his fleet  
Battered hulls and plastic sleek  
His exploits many displayed in turn  
Gouges laced from bow to stern

His friends still snooze tucked snug in  
their bags  
dreaming of the best day they've ever  
had

Their gnarled gear strewn in heaps  
hangs from trees, trucks and jeeps

He breathes in deep the risen sun  
anticipating intense fun  
Wolfs down waffles bread and jam  
Drinks his water from an old gas can

Loaded up, he motivates all  
Keen wit, playful laugh  
Make distance small  
Driving time fast

Upon water and portage trail  
he leads with his smile  
Our spirits sail

His twinkling eyes insightfully seek  
lines between hazardous reefs

Squirting holes and punching seams  
the Admiral kayaks as he dreams  
of mountain rivers, other lives  
washed downstream before our time

Assails at last  
life's forward list  
The Admiral goes down  
with his ship

Released at last arms stretched high  
Becoming one with the starry sky

New springs come melting late  
Primal streams feed the greatest lake  
Waters weep and boulders choke  
They'll sorely miss his valiant stroke

Left amidst the leafy paths  
I still hear his voice and his laugh

As I contemplate which line to take  
I see his smile in beam, spray and flake

# Safety Mental Safety Skills continued

most effectively support your team. First, be like Yoda (but talk normally): ask people if they could do things for you—it sounds a lot different than giving an order, even if the result is the same. People will want to help in situations like this, and a touch of courtesy and a brief explanation go a long way. This also makes people more effective because they understand their role in relation to everything else going on within the rescue effort and can adapt quickly if the situation changes.

With large groups, it's important to delegate, as any one person simply can't keep track of everything that's happening. Ask people to take charge of something

("Al, will you arrange upstream and downstream safety for me, and let me know when they're in place? Thanks."). Identify people who know what they're doing and get them to do what they are best at.

In this role, which Emergency Services teams call the "Incident Commander," you should not be involved with knot tying or other small tasks, as you can lose sight of the big picture. If possible, get to a position where you can see what's going on and can be easily found, and stay there. This allows people to find you quickly, and allows you to get on with the thinking and planning. Consider your role as a sort of servant leadership, where you are there to help everyone else achieve the task of rescuing someone or something.

If you discover there is already a competent (or even passable) person acting as Incident Commander, your role might be as a good follower. The qualities of a capable follower are often more critical to emergency situations that those we typically associate with "leadership." Think about it: if you have two or three dominant personality types fighting over what's the best way to solve a particular problem and whose

voice can go the loudest, what good does that do the victim? A method of good followership is to imagine yourself the leader and ask, "What would help me the most?" Sometimes it's getting good suggestions; sometimes it's having people shut up, do their own task, and let you think. As a follower, decide what to do based on what helps the leader solve the problem, not what makes you feel good

So next time you're on the water, be mentally prepared to step into any of the roles that may be needed if things go wrong. The next time you pull out the throwbag for a bit of practice, stop and do some mental rehearsal too. Better still, do it now. 

**About the author:** *Andrew Jillings paddles, mostly in the Adirondacks, mostly in his creek boat, and mostly lemon-free. He is an ACA kayak instructor trainer and canoe instructor with Zoar Outdoor in Charlmont MA. When not on the water he is Director of Adventure Programs at Hamilton College in Clinton, NY.*

# Affiliate Clubs

# AW's Original Purpose

by Michael Phelan

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

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

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

**2nd Flowing Rivers Grant Program,** sponsored by Clif Bar

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

The AW Journal Club Affiliates by State:

## **Alaska**

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

## **Alabama**

Coosa Paddling Club, Montgomery  
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

## **Arizona**

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

## **Arkansas**

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

## **California**

Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus  
River Skills Center, Mt. Shasta  
Sequoia Paddling Club, Windsor  
Shasta Paddlers, Redding  
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, San Jose  
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Granada Hills

## **Colorado**

Arkansas Headwaters Recreations Area, Salida  
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West  
Colorado White Water Association, Englewood  
Gunnison Valley Paddle Club, Almont  
WATER, Grand Junction

## **Georgia**

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

## **Idaho**

Idaho Rivers Sports, Boise  
Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

## **Illinois**

Chicago Whitewater Association, Cary

## **Iowa**

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, Des Moines

## **Indiana**

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

## **Kentucky**

Viking Canoe Club, Louisville  
Bluegrass Whitewater Association,  
Lexington

## **Maine**

AMC Maine Chapter, Hallowell

## **Massachusetts**

AMC Boston Chapter, Boston

## **Maryland**

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

## **Minnesota**

Boat Busters Anonymous, Stillwater

## **Missouri**

Kansas City Whitewater Club, Raymore  
Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis  
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield  
Ozark Wilderness Waterways, Kansas City  
Streamtech, St. Louis

## **Montana**

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

## **Nevada**

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

## **New Hampshire**

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

## **New Jersey**

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

## **New Mexico**

Adobe Whitewater Club, Albuquerque

## **New York**

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

## **N. Carolina**

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

## **Ohio**

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

## **Oregon**

Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

## **Pennsylvania**

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

## **S. Carolina**

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville  
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

## **Tennessee**

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

Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga  
University of Tennessee Outing Club, Knoxville  
Tennessee Scenic River Association, Grimsley

#### Texas

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston

#### Utah

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

#### Virginia

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

#### Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

#### Washington

W.W.U. Associated Students, Bellingham  
The Mountaineers, Seattle  
Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle  
Spokane Canoe and Kayak Club, Spokane  
Washington Kayak Club, Seattle  
University Kayak Club, Seattle

#### West Virginia

West Virginia Wildwater Assoc., Charleston

#### Wisconsin

Hoofers Outing Club, Madison  
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, La Crosse  
Northern Paddle and Trail, Rhinelander

Canada, British Columbia

Vancouver Kayak Club, Vancouver

### Our newest clubs...

- B.S.A. Durham Troop 16, Durham CA
- Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Colorado Springs CO
- Ohio Valley Whiewater Club, Evansville IN
- Dixie Division of ACA, Tuxedo NC
- Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton WA
- Badger State Boating Society, Waukesha WI

## Club Update: Discounted AW Memberships for Affiliate Club Members

by Michael Phelan  
Director of Outreach Services

I wanted to let everyone know about a new exclusive feature available on our website for AW Affiliate Clubs. In the recent past, AW has been offering discounted AW memberships to whitewater enthusiasts who are also a member of one of AW's Affiliate Clubs.

We now have the ability to offer this discounted membership online! For each club, AW will create a unique URL that will automatically offer the discounted membership and/or we can provide a coupon code that is specific to your club that will allow individuals to input the code on the normal AW Membership Page and then receive the discount.

Both options work equally well and minimize the opportunity that one of your members will be inconvenienced.

Several clubs have already set up the program and their members are enjoying the benefits of being an AW Member for only \$25 instead of \$35!

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact me and I would be happy to help your club set up this program. I can be reached at 828-252-0728 or Michael@amwhitewater.org.

## Join American Whitewater as a Club Affiliate!

### "10" Reasons to Join AW as an Affiliate Club

1. Receive the *American Whitewater Journal*, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
2. Join the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly *AW Journal*.
3. List club events in the *AW Journal*.
4. Your Club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Have technical expertise for your Club conservation and access committees 'on tap.'
6. Have access to technical and onsite assistance for your Club's event planning.
7. Enjoy VIP benefits for "Joint Members" at AW events.
8. Participate in exclusive AW Affiliate Club promotions.
9. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
10. Eligible to apply for a spot in the AW 2004 River Stewardship Institute.

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

# Guidelines for Contributors



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies, and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally responsible

for the accuracy of such material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

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

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

Send your material to:  
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Ticket to Ride.

Admit One.  
[Member of American Whitewater]

Ladies on the Lower G  
Friday, September 24, 2004



TM

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

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

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

Ladies on the Lower G / Gauley River, WV September 24, 2004

For more information call the AW Outreach Office at: 828-252-0728 OR visit [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)



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CHECK OUT [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org) or call 1-800-Boat-4AW for more information!

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

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

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