



# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS  
September / October 2003



American Whitewater's  
**TOP 10**

## Conservation and Access Issues of 2003

**Austrian Adventure**

**Fall River Release Schedule**

**Opportunity Knocks on the San Joaquin**

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# AMERICAN WHITEWATER

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

Forum by Tim Nickles ..... 4

Letter to the Editor..... 6

Corner CharC by Risa Shimoda ..... 7

Volunteer Salute ..... 8

Conservation, River Ratings, Gauges and Guidbooks..... 9  
by Sue Taft

Conservation:

- Flow Studies by John Gangemi ..... 10
- Access Briefs by Jason Robertson ..... 14

Access:

- Consensus Reached by Kevin Colburn ..... 18

Special Features:

- Top Issues of 2003 ..... 24
- AW Journal in Public Libraries by Risa Shimoda..... 30
- Man Did Not Create the Rivers by Risa Shimoda ... 33
- Recalling Success by Risa Shimoda ..... 47
- Fall Release Links and Calendar ..... 49
- Top RIVER Issues for 2003 ..... 50  
by Gangemi, Robertson and Colburn

Safety:

- Accident Summary January-June 2003 ..... 56  
by Charlie Walbridge
- Injury Survey by Mike Stano and Rick Schoen ..... 61

River Voices:

- Austrian Adventure by Steve Frazier ..... 65
- Pool Slalom Racing Gaining Popularity..... 71  
by Chuck Hines

American Whitewater Journal  
Volume XLIV, No.5

## F E A T U R E S

Conservation Feature

### Flow Studies

pg. 10



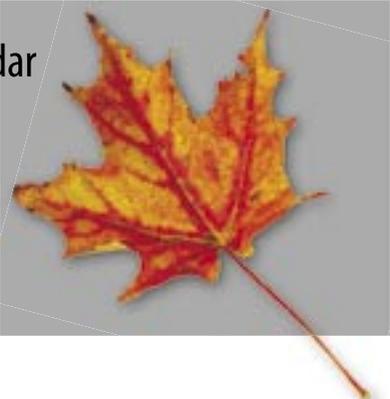
### Top Issues of 2003 pg. 24



### Fall Release Info

Links and Calendar

pg. 48



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Cover Julie Keller  
'Oceana' on the Tallulah River



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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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# Forum

by Tim Nickles



Tim Nickles  
photo by Kevin Volz

## Stewardship, Throwing Ends, and Means

I've been thinking a lot lately about stewardship, outdoor sport, and how the two interact with each other. Many individuals who've excelled at outdoor adventure and exploration have come back from the mountains or rivers to play a role in the protection of those same fragile areas. Through their experiences in the outdoors, they have come to a greater respect and knowledge of places away from cities, roads, and the man-made. This new understanding has often left them with an attitude of stewardship and a desire to protect wild places. In some, this perspective has resulted in heroic actions towards conservation and raising awareness of environmental issues in the public mind. In the majority of others, a simple caring has developed making them more

likely to take small actions like picking up trash, trail building, or volunteering with organizations like American Whitewater.

Many of the outdoor sports we all do have changed quite a bit in the last 15 years. Kayaking has grown from its roots as a sport in running rivers into almost a multi-sport in itself with the unbelievable skill and intensity of ocean surfing and playboating. Climbing has evolved from mountaineering and traditional rock climbing to mixed routes, sport climbing, and bouldering. Skiers on the screen and at the resorts are jibbing more, turning less, and hucking their carcasses off bigger and bigger drops. Even mountain bikers are pushing the limits so much they sometimes resemble skiers careening down mountains.

The changes in the world of whitewater have made our sport far more exciting and engaging to spectator audiences and captured the attention of many boaters new and old. Driven by attempts to market gear by selling excitement and by our innate desire for danger and its associated adrenaline rush, many sports have moved towards smaller venues, higher skill-levels, and more powerful dynamics. People are doing flat-out crazy things in their boats these days!

There are a lot of obvious factors influencing and being influenced by these changes. Gear manufacturers want to sell product and so they sponsor events, thus helping fund the lives of the athletes who push the envelope even further. Events need to be spectator-friendly so the competitions must be easily understood and watchable. Equipment evolves as the envelope is opened and more specialized gear is needed to duplicate the feats of the athletes at the edge. The public is fickle and easily bored, athletes are motivated and constantly trying to develop new challenges;

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None of this is rocket science and I can smell a whole new editorial on this confluence of causes and effects alone. However, this is not what I've been thinking about. My concern is with what's happening inside the minds and hearts of a sport's participants because of the style in which they approach their sport. It is that this new wave of change in how sports are engaged in has an effect on the sense of stewardship I spoke of earlier. My fear is that an exclusive focus on developing specific skills and a disengagement from the natural environment in which a sport is practiced will prevent respect and understanding of wild places from developing. I worry that without this understanding and respect, a quiet caring will not arise and stimulate real action toward protecting our rivers and mountains.

Yvon Chouinard was recently quoted in *High Country News* saying there's been an "estrangement from the environment" in the new generation of climbers. He has observed the changes in his sport and feels that without the link to the natural world, climbers will not develop into environmental stewards as readily.

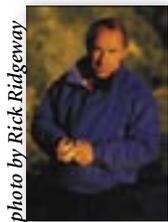


photo by Rick Ridgeway

Yvon is an example of the type of environmental champion

whose experiences in the mountains engendered a desire to preserve and protect.

He and others feel that longer, challenging trips into the wilderness create a connection to the land that can only be described as spiritual. In turn, this sense of connection changes one's views and priorities.

While some may misinterpret me, my intention here is certainly not to 'dis' those talented folks sticking loops in your favorite play-hole (and no, I am not bitter because I can't throw an end out of a wet paper bag). My intention is to encourage all of us who have a sensitivity to the wilderness to spread the word. By leading other boaters

to an appreciation of new aspects of their sport or challenging them to develop the skills associated with running rivers in a backcountry setting, we encourage exploration that may lead to self-exploration and a quickening of the conservation ethic. This can be as simple as asking the woman next to you in the eddy if she's run the Class III section above the hole you're both playing in or telling another boater about the incredible overnighter you pulled off on the Kickass River last weekend.

Although I must admit to an ideological sympathy to Yvon's opinion, I have an optimistic impression. I hope that the changes in our sport will serve to bring more people into it, some of whom may then in turn be introduced to places wild. Groups, like AW, fighting to preserve wilderness and increase access rely on these processes to bring new blood and momentum to the movements they are at the front of. We need new environmental stewards and the creative energy they bring to today's problems. Hopefully, our playholes will provide the crucible within which the next generation of conservationists can be made. 

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# Letters to the Editor

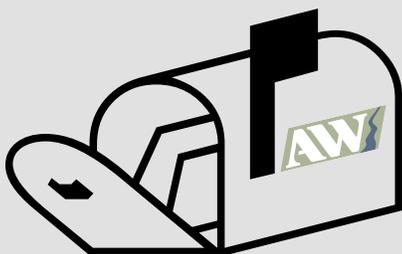
Dear American Whitewater,

Does AW support war?

It has publicly declared so in at least two issues of the magazine. See Jason Robertson's article in the most recent issue (May/June).

As much as I feel protecting public river access is important, I feel it should not be done in the name of violence, destruction and the "American consumption way of life".

--Disgruntled Member



Dear Disgruntled Member,

I hope that you will reconsider and reflect on the good work we do, rather than on a poorly stated comment. You are right that in the context of all that's happened in the past several months, my earlier comments from the May/June 2003 issue do appear to advocate for war. That was not my intent, nor is it AW's mission.

I went to the source and found the comment that you referenced, I believe it was "Dam Security Continues to Threaten Access", in the May/June 2003 issue on page 9, column 2. The statement that you were concerned about was not in reference to an article or comment about the War in Iraq; it was instead in reference to the 9/11 war and security efforts. The article was written over a month before we invaded Iraq, when it looked like that war was still unlikely. Maybe my article went too far, but it was to answer criticism from past writers suggesting that any opposition to 9/11 actions was not only unpatriotic but also not in AW's mission. I included the statements about patriotism in order to demonstrate our understanding of the nuanced problem of working on security issues after 9/11. I guess that I'll have to go back to the drawing board to work on the phrasing of our rationales.

The issue with 9/11 closures, and the point that I was trying to make, is that they are unjust and do virtually nothing to enhance "security, freedom, public services, and a way of life that we value." I was making the argument that the war for our national security outside our borders is lost if we give up those aforementioned values here at home, and that the 9/11 closures of rivers are losses to our American traditions.

In re-reading the comments in the Journal, I admit that the intent of my statements is not clear given all that has happened in the nearly four months since I wrote the article. Again, this was written before our war in Iraq. We work on a three to four month time lag between when we write our articles and when our members receive the Journal. Sometimes we are able to foretell the future; at other times we appear behind the times. In this case the world changed.

AW has no position or reason for commenting on any relation to the war in Iraq.

In contrast, the war on national security directly affects our members at dams and on rivers all across the country. If we as a society are to focus on security, then we need to do it in the right way and in a fashion that protects the traditions and rivers that we hold dear. This means that we have to work with the dam owners, the politicians, and other decision makers to impress upon them that we are not a terrorist threat to those dams.

On the other hand, if you permit me to make a flip comment, AW's Conservation Director John Gangemi and Regional Associate Kevin Colburn certainly scare the dam owners with their expertise in the FERC relicensing arena... ;-)

Our staff does great work, and the focus should be on that work. I apologize for the confusion.

Sincerely,

Jason Robertson  
Access Director, American Whitewater

**Editor's Note:** Jason's comments must have struck a G-major because I received a couple other impassioned criticisms of AW's "position" on the War. It is important to get feedback from our members and readers as it gives us a picture of what you all care about. Our country's political lawnmower is certainly worthy of much constructive debate but I would sure be psyched to print more comments on AW's conservation work or on access issues we should be paying attention to. This journal is a forum for everyone with a stake in what AW works towards and we'd love to hear from you - it helps us do our job better. Feel free to send your letters to [editor@amwhitewater.org](mailto:editor@amwhitewater.org)

# Corner Charc

by Risa Shimoda

Whitewater sport is in the midst of an uncertain stage of life-adolescence, perhaps. After a period of tremendous growth, it is being impacted by several, related trends.

Whitewater paddling has established itself in the general public's eye as an up-and-coming avocation and adventure sport. Having recently achieved this status, the activity we love is still a bit of a misfit, positioned often as a sport for the brisk and brave, sometimes an activity for the banal and brainless. The allure of adventure teases all of us at some level, yet the visual taken by a helmet cam while leaping off a steep, sheer drop is a little out of reach for the mind's eye of most.

'Non-endemic' (i.e., non-outdoor industry products') use of whitewater imagery ranges from showing boats on the roofs of sport utility vehicles in the back country, to insulting whitewater enthusiasts with reference to their lack of sense (e.g., the Honda CRX scene of a couple, after watching a kayaker plunge off a waterfall to an apparently awful landing, driving off in disgust). 'Endemic' outdoor product manufacturers tend to sponsor the visuals which reinforce the challenging, exciting, fun and inspiring aspects of whitewater recreation— the reason we all get out on weekends with friends. They have for years succeeded in portraying inspirational adventure, yet for the past few years have themselves begun to promote extreme athleticism - stunts without stories - that loses us mortals who use a weekend as an escape from spreadsheets and recyclables separation.

Why should AW care, both about the schizophrenia and the portrayal of whitewater paddlers as careless thrillseekers? AW and our work (as is noted in the feature article about autumn



Risa Shimoda  
Executive Director - American Whitewater

release season paddling) have impacted the industry, and many companies realize this. They drive market dynamics, in turn impacting our opportunity to develop new outreach opportunities. We cannot alone steer how national media portrays our sport, its most popular personalities, or the dotted line between truly admirable bravery and gusto and the testosterone-laden pursuit of stunt. We can, however, do our part to acknowledge the array of interests amongst our members and journal readership.

Our pages reflect the experiences of those who are fired up to write about their latest adventure, and we are often slave to great tales of foreign travel and first descents. That's what our members submit to our editor and ...we publish most all of our members' submissions. We have also published stories about Class II whitewater heroines and safety tips for all, from beginner to expert. We are encouraged to publish more articles about Class II-III rivers, trip and paddlers: when we receive such articles, if well-organized and accompanied by well-constructed, clear photos, we run them. If you see too few articles on topics of interest to you, we'll hope you can suggest an author, a story or a topic that will help us fill in the void and speak to others who share your sentiment. This is your journal, as our members are you, your friends and thousands who love running rivers for the same reasons you do. Let us hear from you. Better yet, let the Editor know you're writing and photographing and article about which our members will flip. **AW**

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## Volunteer Salute

by Risa Shimoda



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Rob Teegarden

During the fall of 2002, AJ McIntyre suggested the skills and experience of AW member Paige Hull might suit our internal interest in aligning our work priorities with a greater level of efficiency. While we had in hand our 2000 Strategic Plan and knew that our program priorities had shifted to address its mandates, we were still feeling frayed by accommodating more projects and opportunities than we were capable of implementing successfully.

Paige, with the support of her business partner Denise Rothman of Management Performance Concepts, Inc., discovered that we were struggling with this issue. As a consultant, trained to advise not-for-profit organizations as they design and implement against strategic plans, Paige's methodical and insightful tutelage constituted an invaluable gift to our staff.

During the next five month period, Paige volunteered to coach us as we formed a situational analysis of the organization, specifically our most important internal challenges and opportunities, and designed two-day retreat, attended by our staff, Board Member Barry Tuscano and communications specialist Alan Churchill (also an AW member). For two days we (at the home of local AW member Barbara

Brown) broke our programmatic work priorities down to the basics - challenging how we do things, for whom and at what cost, benefit and risk to our effectiveness as stewards of our rivers. Paige's role was to prod, lead, question, mirror responses, challenge, and summarize our brain dumps and subsequent reflection about our operation.

The results of this effort started in small steps, immediately. They will continue for a three-year period, and will show up in largely subtle ways to members and our other 'audiences.' It may not seem like a big deal, but for us to be able to more frequently articulate how are prioritizing issues, event planning, safety projects, etc. is large.

As a paddler and a professional, Paige was able to quickly grasp the issues we face and was incredibly nimble in her ability to gently cut through precedence that has been inhibiting important elements of growth (i.e., change). Paige, we cannot thank you enough for the stimulation in thought and the shifts that have been facilitated in our workflow and communications planning, and increased focus for our technical work and outreach efforts, both. See you on the river. **AW**



# Conservation, River Ratings, Gauges, and Guidebooks:

by Sue Taft

## How are they connected?

For conservation, the adage “use it or lose it” has particular meaning and the early founders of American Whitewater understood that. If the public is not aware of a river, of its natural beauty and recreational use, its loss to mining, hydropower, or other commercial development goes unnoticed. However, in order to raise public awareness through recreational use, one must be able to map it, describe it, and write about it in terms that convey a common understanding.

In the mid-1950’s, everything we take for granted today – river ratings and commonly accepted terms and descriptions – was in its earliest stages. Guidebooks did not exist nor were there many standards related to river running and whitewater. In recognizing that guidebooks were a critical component to conservation, American Whitewater established the Guide (book) Committee as one of its first committees.

The Guide Committee recognized that one of their biggest challenges was the lack of a common river rating system. In 1955, eight different rating systems were in use, including three from Europe. The three in regular use in this country included those used by FibArk (based in Salida, CO), commercial river runners on western rivers (sometimes referred to as the Deseret scale) and the Washington Foldboat Club (now called the Washington Kayak Club in Seattle). The FibArk scale had seven gradations and was based solely on the section of the Arkansas River used for an annual race starting in Salida. The commercial river runner scale had ten gradations and was based on the use of rafts on the large volume rivers of the Colorado Plateau. The Washington Foldboat Club (WFC) scale was more sophisticated and descriptive starting with two letter designations (A and B) and five numbered designations. The scale took into account user ability (novice to expert), river speed, and ease of reading for obstructions. However, the river terminology used by the scale – jumps, fences, and stacks – was not common across the country. In 1957, the Guide Committee, working with ACA’s Cruising Committee, recommended

the use of the International Scale first promulgated in 1954 by the International Canoe Federation in Europe. Although there were many similarities to WFC’s scale, the terminology of the International Scale removed some of the ambiguities.

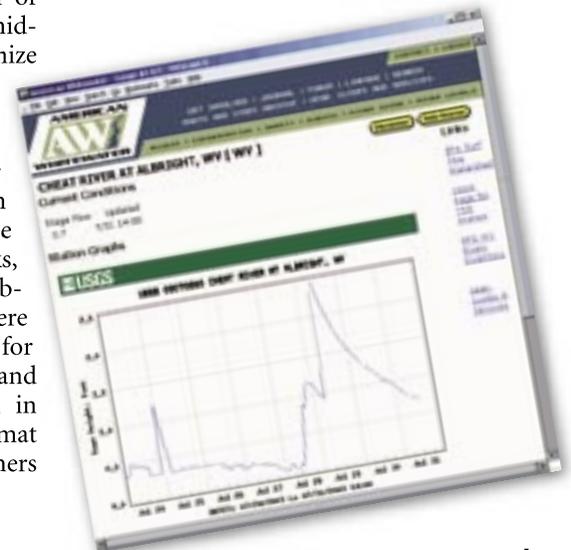
While American Whitewater and the ACA were able to successfully promote the use of the International Scale, other common references were not as straight forward. Across the country, various federal agencies tracked river flow using gauges, particularly USGS and the Army Corps of Engineers. However, not all paddlable (for whitewater purposes) watersheds were covered. While some early paddlers correlated paddlable river levels to official agency gauges, others devised their own “gauges” in their absence. These early paddler gauges often consisted of nothing more than marks at foot-intervals on a bridge abutment at a put-in or take-out. A few went one step further using colors to designate a degree of difficulty: yellow generally meant a safe level for most paddlers; orange meant more skill was required; red meant danger. One of the better and more consistent systems was devised by Randy Carter of Virginia. The basis of his system established zero as the lowest height an “expert canoeist” could run a river and corresponded to about three inches of water over the shallows. Once zero was established, a road or bridge abutment was marked in one-foot increments, often to the highest level of five feet. Paddlers from WV and the mid-Atlantic to the Southeast will recognize rivers that still use Carter’s system.

With commonly accepted and understood river ratings and river levels (gauges) came more common descriptive terminology which was the basis for the development of guidebooks, or at least the basis for regional club-maintained information. While there still remained regional preferences for terminology, guidebooks emerged and Randy Carter’s guidebook, published in 1959, became the standard for the format and type of information by which others were measured.

By the early 1960’s, the foundation for river conservation – river ratings, gauges, and guidebooks – was taking shape and American Whitewater’s role in conservation began to evolve. This evolution continues with today’s changing threats including access and recreational releases. 

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**Editor’s note:** Sue is a veteran of over twenty-five years of whitewater - as a kayaker and C-boater - on rivers across the country. She is also the author of *The River Chasers*, a narrative history of American whitewater paddling, and has become known as the historian of the sport.



# Conservation: Flow Studies

by John Gangemi, Conservation Director

*Raft Team on South Fork San Joaquin below Florence Reservoir, South Fork San Joaquin, California.*

California's unprecedented cold weather this spring, coupled with above average precipitation, brought the year's snow pack well above normal.

## Opportunity Knocks

San Joaquin Drainage, California

On Monday, June 2, 2003 my office phone rang – hydro staff from Southern California Edison (SCE) wanted to do an immediate conference call to discuss some unplanned spills from Florence Dam high in the San Joaquin drainage of California. American Whitewater, along with local paddling club affiliate San Joaquin Paddlers, has been working with SCE for the past three years in the relicensing process for seven hydroelectric projects dewatering multiple reaches in the watershed. American Whitewater and San Joaquin Paddlers requested whitewater flow studies on numerous reaches. At several of the hydro dams SCE was committing to the studies contingent on uncontrolled spill – a rare commodity in the intricate plumbing system of the San Joaquin. American Whitewater and San Joaquin Paddlers were willing to utilize spill for the flow studies if opportunities arose in the five year relicensing window with the caveat that SCE would manufacture a release if spill did not occur in that time frame.

SCE hydro staff were calling to inform me that the recent heat wave caused inflow to greatly exceed outflow and they anticipated spill from Florence Dam on Sunday, June



*Chris Clark on South Fork San Joaquin below Florence Reservoir, South Fork San Joaquin, California.*

8th, a mere six days away. Their questions to me: Could American Whitewater and San Joaquin Paddlers mobilize a team of boaters for a flow study on Sunday that week? I answered with an emphatic yes.

Florence Dam spills on average once every ten years. Less than a handful of individuals had ever paddled this high Sierra gem. Paul Martzen and I quickly pulled together a diverse team of kayakers and rafters representing local Fresno boaters as well as individuals from the South Fork American area and out of state.

From an aesthetic perspective I knew this was sure to be one of the classic flow studies

of my career so I quickly rearranged my work to accommodate SCE's schedule. To give you a mental image, picture yourself close to the Sierra crest adjacent to the Ansel Adams and John Muir wilderness in a landscape dominated by smooth granite and snow. The winding single lane road into the South Fork San Joaquin took me over Kaiser Pass where meadows remained covered with snow and water gushed under the clear Sierra sky flowing downhill across polished granite slabs. Life was good – I was in a world of granite with nowhere for the meltwater to go but downhill in the San Joaquin.

I found Todd Stanley and Peter MacLaren, the video film crew, fly fishing at the put-in location. Since it was Saturday before the flow study we elected to explore the Florence Dam spillway for some background footage. We were not disappointed. The spectacular Florence Dam is a multiple arch structure plugging two granite aprons. The spillway pours water over a 200-foot granite slide to the meadow below. The dam and spillway provided an excellent backdrop for an interview about American Whitewater's conservation efforts in the San Joaquin drainage.

Saturday night we camped at the take-out, Mono Hot Springs. This was the designated meeting location at 7 am Sunday for the boating team. Hearing of a hot spring on the far side of the river I stumbled through a wet marsh in the moonlight searching for the pool. I found the pool and soaked my travel weary bones under the moon and stars. The soak had me in a dreamy state so I threw my sleeping bag down on a sandy patch between the granite boulders – I was in spiritual heaven.

Why am I giving you all this background on a flow study? Because the Upper South Fork San Joaquin is no ordinary place on this earth; this is a sanctuary – a place where any boater or climber quickly recognizes they have come home to nirvana. Water must run overland on granite and the climbing routes are limitless. I share this only to let you know you must discover the headwaters of the San Joaquin for yourself.

We put-on the water in the benign yet spectacular Jackass Meadows just below Florence Dam. Not a single paddler complained of the meandering flat water as their eyes took in the views of granite peaks. The pace soon quickened below Jackass Meadow. We entered continuous Class IV rapids for two miles. The 750 cfs flow requested proved to provide just the right combination of pillow on the granite boulders to pad your line down this creek run. The rafters in our party were not happy with the lack of eddies. The kayakers were grinning ear to ear. I chastised myself for bringing a creek boat as I passed by perfect waves with piles on top and fluffy holes. The sloping granite created the perfect combination for whitewater boaters. Shortly after Hooper diversion the 180 feet per mile gradient backed off. We found ourselves boating through spectacular domes of granite. As the take-out loomed I wanted to continue further down this magnificent river toward the confluence with the North Fork San Joaquin, exploring deeper into the heart of this magnificent landscape. But we had work to do, surveys to complete, focus group discussions and more importantly, a celebratory cheer with those individuals committing their day to the efforts to restore whitewater flows to the South Fork San Joaquin. Few individuals have had the opportunity to paddle this reach. American Whitewater and San Joaquin Paddlers will negotiate hard to ensure you can experience the magic of this landscape in the future. Your membership and donations help us achieve this success.



## New York Boaters Unveil Capitol District Whitewater Resource

Water, particularly  
whitewater,  
has a particular  
magic that  
soothes the soul.

The Hoosic River in Schaghticoke, New York is not a particularly alluring river in its current state, dewatered by a hydropower dam. Local boaters are unaware that this dry riverbed just north of Albany contains fantastic whitewater opportunities.

On June 10-11, 2003 local boaters participated in a Whitewater Controlled Flow Study negotiated and organized by American Whitewater and Adirondack Mountain Club. Unexpectedly, a whitewater gem literally rose out of this rather industrial looking river reach. Water truly does contain magic and beauty transcending the impacts of past abuses to this river.

This dewatered reach, known as Schaghticoke after the local town, contains two distinct sections: The upper Class V 30' waterfall and the lower Class II-III. This upper section, known as the dam to Big Eddy, also contains numerous Class IV rapids with great play features at the higher flows and powerful hydraulics. Boaters

*Jason LaSelva bracing against the hydraulics on the upper section of the Hoosic River, New York.*

not interested in hucking themselves off the 30 footer can easily portage around the Falls in the center of the river and paddle the remaining Class IV or skip all this by walking the carriage road to Big Eddy. From Big Eddy to the powerhouse the Hoosic contains Class II-III rapids. At the higher flows of 1200 to 1600 cfs this Class II-III section contains excellent opportunities for novice and intermediate paddlers to hone their skills in the countless play features or simply learning to read whitewater. Many of the play features have eddy service so more advanced boaters will enjoy the reach as well.

This flow study was conducted post relicense since there was insufficient time in the settlement negotiations to undertake a study. In the settlement process, American Whitewater and Adirondack Mountain Club negotiated an annual schedule of five whitewater releases between April 15th and June 15th. For the first three years there will be one release annually. After year three, one additional whitewater release per year can be added to the schedule (capped at five releases annually) if 25 or more boaters attend each whitewater release the previous year. Whitewater releases will alternate between a weeknight and weekend day schedule. [continued on next page...]

# Conservation: Flow Studies continued

by John Gangemi, Conservation Director

Local boaters need to act responsibly in the town of Schaghticoke and surrounding areas. We are all ambassadors for our sport – poor behavior can lead to lost whitewater releases. The town of Schaghticoke and local homeowners actively opposed whitewater releases in the new FERC license due to safety concerns and access issues. Please be respectful of the local community when boating this reach. In the put-in area, park on side streets and do not block the alleyway at the put-in. Parking at the powerhouse take-out is limited to five vehicles. Boaters need to coordinate their shuttles or leave bikes at the take-out. Do not block access to the powerhouse. Homeowners on the take-out shuttle view this as a private road. Be respectful of their privacy and be sure to drive slowly. Your actions both on and off the river can influence the fate of future releases. Enjoy this newly discovered resource and thank the local folks for tolerating our enthusiasm for rivers.



*Jim Michaud navigating through the ledges on the lower section of the Hoosic River, New York.*



*Betty Lou Bailey and Jack Daniels paddle around Chuck Wilkison in one of the many playspots on the lower section of the Hoosic River, New York.*



*John Duncan running "What about Bob" on the upper section of the Hoosic River, New York.*

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## Whitewater Gems "Re-Discovered" in Central Sierras

A team of nine boaters 're-discovered' the Chawanakee Gorge – a classic Sierra boating run during a whitewater flow study on the San Joaquin River. The seven-mile long Class V Chawanakee Gorge was first boated in 1986 by Lars Holbek and Eric Magneson. In their typical guidebook style, Holbek shares humorous moments of the adventure on this descent, avoids grandstanding and provides the reader with just enough logistical information to find the put-in and take-out but leaves out the detailed blow-by-blow so you too can create your own adventure. With sixty plus rapids Class IV or greater in this seven-miles, I'll serve Holbek and Magneson some long overdue praise and admiration for tackling this run. The Chawanakee is a narrow-walled granite gorge. Holbek and Magneson tackled the run with 12'-13' boats. You wouldn't see me there in a Dancer.

There have been few descents of Chawanakee Gorge over the years because Southern California Edison's hydropower projects divert water out of this reach. But now in the relicensing of these hydro facilities, SCE is working with American Whitewater to re-birth this whitewater gem and other stellar runs in the San Joaquin drainage. The flow studies in May were the culmination of significant work in the relicense process. The study helps us pinpoint minimum acceptable and optimum flows for whitewater releases. Over the next 2-3 year period, American Whitewater will work within the collaborative relicense proceeding developing a whitewater release schedule, access plan and method for distributing flow information as well as appropriate instream flows to restore riverine ecological processes.

In addition to Chawanakee Gorge, there are a number of other whitewater reaches within the San Joaquin drainage being investigated in this relicense proceeding as well as some recently restored reaches where relicensing has already been completed.

Mono Creek below Vermillion Reservoir: American Whitewater worked with SCE on a flow study in August 2002. This four-mile reach contains Class II-III whitewater opportunities. SCE uses Mono Creek to move water in late summer to downstream reservoirs, thereby creating late season whitewater opportunities. For Class II-III boaters, Mono Creek offers excellent opportunities high in the headwaters of the San Joaquin (7,000 feet elevation) coupled with great camping, mountain biking and climbing.

Florence Dam Run: SCE's hydro operations divert water out of this seven-mile Class IV-V run high in the San Joaquin basin. American Whitewater conducted a flow study June 8th, 2003 with local boaters. This run provided continuous Class IV rapids at 7000 feet elevation with a backdrop of spectacular granite peaks and domes. This is definitely one of the most aesthetic runs in the Sierra.

Tied for First: American Whitewater carried out a whitewater flow study on this eight-mile Class IV(V) reach May 14, 2003, one day before the Chawanakee run. Tied for First contains 20-30 Class IV rapids. Done on consecutive days with the downstream Chawanakee Gorge would make one stellar weekend of paddling.

Chawanakee Gorge: Don Beveridge, 17 year kayak veteran on multiple continents, described this run quite succinctly: "Chawanakee Gorge ranks as one of the top five kayak runs I've done in all my travels!" And why not with 50-60 Class IV or greater rapids each of which ranks high on anyone's list as some of the most aesthetically appealing rapids you've ever boated. If that isn't enough to tease you, there are picture smooth granite walls similar to Bald Rock on the Middle Fork Feather and descending to the put-in below a 200' tall dam.

Horseshoe Bend: Directly below Redinger Reservoir is the six-mile Class III-IV Horseshoe Bend run. SCE just completed the relicense of this reservoir and powerhouse. American Whitewater worked out an agreement for scheduled releases, flow information and access improvements. [AWW](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)



paddler: Clay Wright

photo by Jod Weingarten

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# Access Briefs

by Jason Robertson

## Big Stony Creek Access

Dear American Whitewater Members,

Recently there were some access issues on Virginia's Big Stony Creek.

This run is situated along private and National Forest lands in Scott County, VA. It is also the site of a recent National Recreation Area proposal that got several landowners up in arms who were afraid of losing their property.

If you are planning on kayaking Big Stony, please keep in mind a few things so we don't have access problems in the future. First, when setting shuttle at the Rt. 653 bridge take-out, check with the landowner about parking there. This hasn't been a problem in the past, but let's make an extra effort to ensure that it doesn't become one. The same thing goes for access at the put-in located at the Chimney Rock Fork confluence. The landowner, Ray Begley, has no problem with us parking here and accessing the creek, he asks that if you see him, stop and chat for a bit before taking off down the creek. If Mr. Begley isn't available, his neighbor/caretaker Rick Dooley lives in the brown mobile home just down the road from the put-in. He asks that you stop and talk with Rick, and let him know that you will be parking there to access the creek. These folks have braved the weather to come out and watch us kayak on the creek, so let's afford them the courtesy of doing so. Rick is a really good guy too; he and Mr. Begley gave a friend and I a ride one day after a high water run on the creek as we were walking back to the car. Not many folks would even stop and ask what you were doing, let alone give you a ride. That just goes to show you how kind these people are if you give them the respect they deserve.

Next, when you plan on boating on Big Stony, make your BEST effort to have the majority of your paddling gear on when you arrive. I can assure you, these folks don't want to see you running around naked in their "front yard"; so keep that in mind. Same thing goes for the takeout. Try to be as discreet and low impact as possible while in the area - that way the residents

of Stony Creek will welcome us back time and again when we come to utilize this whitewater playground in their "front yard." And last, I, like many paddlers, enjoy a good cold beer after a creek run, but keep it in the cooler here. That is the last image we need to convey to these folks of us being a bunch of "drunken river hippies."

Other than that, if the rain is falling and you find yourself heading into Southwest VA to do some creek boating, have a great time and enjoy what we like to call Virginia's Outback!

On behalf of all of the paddlers in AW I would like to extend a BIG thank you to Linda Brickey for all of her effort put forth in helping with this access issue on Big Stony.

For more information about this issue:  
[www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/3788](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/3788).

Sincerely,  
John King, AW StreamKeeper

**Access Director's Note:** *Thanks John! We really appreciate all of your hard work on behalf of the boating community. Keep up the great work and let us know how this arrangement works out with the local community. -JDR*

## Oregon's Governor Provides Roadmap for Peace

Governor Kulongoski addressed the Oregon State Land Board in June in regard to Senate Bill 293-10. The bill is controversial because it significantly changes the state navigability law and limits the rights of public access to Oregon's waterways. This Governor appears to be the right man for the job at this time; he has direct knowledge of state navigability law based on litigation he pursued on the Chetco River as Attorney General. He also demonstrates a clear understanding that public use of the state's rivers is a worthy objective.

Specifically, the Governor suggested that the state "deal with the common law floatage issue which is what Montana did." Notably, Montana provides some of the clearest public rights of use on rivers in the nation. The Governor also suggested that the reason for taking this approach "was that we wanted to clarify the rights of the public



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and private landowners on waterways that have not yet been determined by the State Land Board or the courts to be navigable; and that addresses the common law floatage issue." He then outlined four principles that he felt had to be met in order to get his signature of approval:

(1) "That any bill that comes out of here... has to provide clarity and certainty... of law to users, to the property owners, and to the law enforcement personnel."

(2) That the state has to clarify the status quo. "The bill should assure public rights of use to beds and banks, consistent with current common law doctrine. That is the right to float, fish, anchor, portage and use banks up to the line of ordinary high water or reasonable and incidental uses associated with the use of the waterway."

(3) "The bill must move toward reasonable, realistic and long lasting solutions to this issue. This bill should assure that if a pilot approach... is chosen, that it test-drive a solution that is reasonable, realistic and easily applied on a statewide basis. The solution needs to be a blueprint for a long-lasting solution."

(4) "There should be no moratorium on other navigability issues that are standing in the line. The bill, if offered, as a pilot program for one river should not include a moratorium on navigability studies for the other rivers currently under consideration by the Land Board... I'm willing to work with the process to get this issue resolved, but one thing I do not want is that coming out this session, we have a piece of legislation that does not meet these principles and actually extenuates the debate over a longer period of time."

### A River Permits Primer

American Whitewater is widely considered an expert on the nuts and bolts of river permitting and how permits are viewed by recreationists. Our expertise helps us to lend a unique perspective discussions with river management agencies that compliments the desire of river managers to control or monitor use through permits.

We have begun recording our experiences in order to share our expertise with our volunteers as well as river managers. Now, we would like your help.

[continued on next page 17]

Please take some time to read our DRAFT white paper on river permits, which is posted on our website at ([www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/863/](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/archive/article/863/)). We would like to hear your opinions, and to share in your expertise as American Whitewater volunteers and river runners. This draft version is current as of June 2002; we will be updating it with your observations and comments this summer and plan to make a final version available in Fall 2003.

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# Access Briefs continued

by Jason Robertson

## Going Paddling? Check the water level AND the threat level

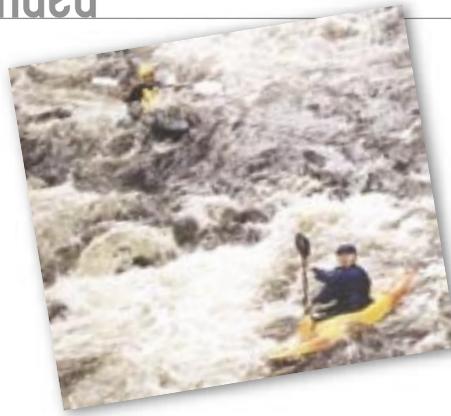
Paddlers seeking to put in on the Rio reach of the Mongaup River in upstate New York may now have to keep one eye on the river, and the other on the Department of Homeland Security.

Because the whitewater recreation area at Rio powerhouse is within an energy facility, access will depend on the official color-coded threat level. The Mongaup has been the focus of a decade-long effort, supported by AW, to obtain Class III releases as part of the recreational release schedule.

The Mongaup presently releases through one turbine (Class II+) on two weekend days each month for whitewater recreational purposes. Many local paddlers like to put in and boat weekday power releases, which occasionally run at two turbines (Class III). From time to time, paddlers would complain that they had found the gate to the half-mile long road to the put-in and parking area closed and locked. In addition to the long carry, would-be paddlers face the problem of finding a safe place to stash their cars.

An email to a representative of Mirant-NY LLC, the Rio project's licensee, elicited the following response:

"I am glad that you emailed me directly to learn more about the status of the gate that allows vehicular access into the Rio Whitewater facility. It is our intention to post a sign on the gate indicating the new guidelines but we are in the process of ordering the signs.



"When the Homeland Security Advisory System threat level is "Yellow" or lower, the gate will be open allowing vehicular access to the Rio facility at all times. When the threat level is raised to "Orange" or "Red", the gate will be closed to vehicular access although access via foot is permitted. Mirant is very sensitive to the high level of recreational use and, therefore, during scheduled whitewater releases we have an operator on site to open the gate and allow vehicular access regardless of the threat level."

## The outstanding problem is still the parking situation.

The gate is located on private land not owned by the utility, and shuttle cars have been towed from the vicinity of the gate in the past. The Kayak and Canoe Club of New York (an AW affiliate) is presently working with Mirant and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to try and resolve the issue.

It is important to stress that the bi-monthly recreational releases mandated by FERC will still go on, with full access to the facility and parking lot, regardless of the threat level.

There is no indication whether other utilities may follow Mirant's example. Boaters in the Northeast have already seen attempts at kayak and canoe registration in Connecticut in the name of combating terrorism, and may soon find themselves checking homeland security threat levels along with river levels as they plan trips. **AW**

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# Access: Consensus Reached

by Kevin Colburn

## Consensus Reached on Nantahala and Tuckasegee Rivers!

Southeastern boating just got even better.

American Whitewater recently joined a diverse group of stakeholders in signing consensus agreements on the future management of the dam-controlled Nantahala and Tuckasegee Rivers. These agreements formalize and enhance the recreational value of the dams on these rivers while mitigating their environmental impacts. The result? Two river systems that will flow cleaner and more beautiful, offer new recreational flows, have better public access, have richer diversity and abundance of aquatic species, and benefit the regional economy. American Whitewater is proud to present these landmark results

of over two years of hard work to the paddling community.

These results did not come easy. It took AW staff attending several full-day meetings each month, coordinating flow studies, researching access opportunities, reviewing documents, and building support with other groups. We worked closely with several volunteers and two affiliate clubs (Western Carolina Paddlers and Carolina Canoe Club) to reach this settlement. We also worked closely with Duke Power, Trout Unlimited, State and Federal Agencies and the many other stakeholders in this creative collaborative process. These agreements would not have been possible without the excellent facilitation we had, and without Duke Power and the other stakeholders approaching the issues with open minds.

What follows are some of the highlights of the settlement agreements that will affect paddlers and the river environment.

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## Mainstem Tuckasegee River, 35 Miles, Class I-III

The mainstem of the Tuck is a beautiful river that offers thirty-odd miles of class I-III water that is great for canoeing, kayaking and fishing. One section is a popular commercial rafting and instruction run that has benefited from voluntary recreational releases provided by Duke Power over the past few years. The Tuck is also a biologically rich bottomland river that hosts an endangered species of mussel and several rare species of fish. While impressive, the current biodiversity of the Tuck pales to historic levels before dams and sedimentation impacted the river. We approached the negotiations for the Mainstem of the Tuck knowing that the ecological restoration potential was high, and that the opportunity to formalize a recreationally beneficial flow schedule could greatly enhance paddling and fishing. The settlement agreement contains the following provisions that meet our interests on the Mainstem of the Tuck:

Better, more predictable recreation flows on the nearly 30 miles of class I-III Main Tuckasegee that balance the needs of

boaters, fishermen, Duke Power, and native species throughout the year will be provided. The release schedule was carefully crafted by angling and paddling interests to provide slightly lower flows during primary angling seasons (spring and fall) and hours of the day and slightly higher flows during primary paddling seasons and times. This part of the settlement agreement will allow for private and commercial fishing and paddling to grow on the river and will not impact the native species.

Seven new public river access areas will be built along the Tuckasegee. These access areas will be strung along the river to allow for reasonable length float trips and fisherman access. They are also intended to encourage greenway development in the local community by acting as nodes or anchors for future land protection and trail development.

In coordination with the release schedule and access areas is a flow information program that will allow paddlers and anglers to plan trips in advance and react to real-time flow information using the internet and a toll-free phone service.

Dillsboro Dam will be removed, which will



*Liz in Mist, Nantahala  
photo by Elizabeth White*

*Jet Ferry, Nantahala  
photo by Elizabeth White*

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# Access: Consensus Reached continued

by Kevin Colburn

reconnect this biologically diverse river, and allow the twelve species that exist below the dam and not above it to once again populate the upper river. This piece of the settlement was originally proposed by Duke Power as a means of addressing their obligation to provide fish passage (if requested by the US Fish and Wildlife Service) on any or all of their dams. It quickly gained favor among many of the stakeholders because of its tremendous effect on biodiversity. The 16 foot tall dam currently blocks all upstream travel of aquatic species, and is located midway between the headwater reaches and Fontana Reservoir which is the downstream end of the Tuckasegee.

## West Fork Tuckasegee, 8 miles, Class III/IV

The West Fork of the Tuck is a beautiful stream that features 8 miles of memorable and relatively straight forward creek

boating. This reach is currently completely dewatered by Glenville Reservoir and its associated diversion tunnel. After several proposals for flows and access based on the 2001 flow study, hydrological data, hikes through the gorge, and property maps, we finally settled this issue in the final meetings. The settlement will secure one 2-day weekend of paddling flows in late April and 5 additional days of paddling during the May through September period. Releases will begin in the spring of 2006. These flows will also help restore the overgrown and sediment filled stream channel to a more natural system. In addition, Duke has agreed to provide all necessary access, and flow information. The access will require trail construction and maintenance which AW has agreed to assist with.

## Tuckasegee Watershed

Several additional mitigation efforts were defined in the settlement agreement that

will significantly enhance the ecosystem integrity of the Tuckasegee Watershed:

Better minimum instream flows will be provided in some reaches, including the Mainstem of the Tuckasegee. American Whitewater strongly supports restoring healthy base-flows to rivers for the benefit of aquatic species. Such flows were increased in this settlement but some reaches will still have lower than adequate flows. These reaches have been mitigated in other ways deemed to be of greater ecological benefit than flow restoration such as the removal of Dillsboro Dam and the provisions listed below.

A critical piece of land in the headwaters of the Tuck will be bought by Duke Power and donated to the US Forest Service for conservation purposes.

Several Fishery Restoration Projects will be initiated, including reintroduction of



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Upper Nantahala, Photo Duke Power

native strains of brook trout into some headwater streams.

Duke will provide roughly \$1,000,000 to additional river conservation and water quality projects across both the Nantahala and Tuckasegee Rivers! These funds will be used to protect and restore riparian lands and to promote public river education.

### Lower Nantahala River, 5 miles, Class III

The Lower Nantahala is a classic whitewater river that nearly 300,000 people paddle each year. Reliable flows, a booming rafting industry, and a US Forest Service controlled land base all come together to make this impressive and economically valuable resource possible. Few realize that through dam relicensing, the paddling community could have actually lost the flows that we take for granted on the Nantahala. We approached negotiations regarding the Lower Nantahala recognizing that is it the holy grail of whitewater recreation and economic development in the region. Ul-

timately, every stakeholder appreciated the recreational facets of the Lower Nantahala and the releases that we are used to will be provided for at least another 30 to 40 years. In addition the US Forest Service will be improving access at the put-in. The biological impacts of maintaining the cold-water nature of the river are being mitigated with the removal of Dillsboro Dam.

### Upper Nantahala, 5 miles Dewatered Flatwater, 1 mile of Class IV, 4 miles of Class III+

The Upper Nantahala is roughly 10 miles long, and is dewatered by the several dams upstream including the large Nantahala Dam. The cascades offer a rare delight: roadside class IV waterfalls, whereas the rest of the Upper Nantahala offers continuous class III boogie water. If the dams were not present, the Upper Nantahala would be runnable an astounding average of 300 days per year. The Upper also is home to some great trout fishing. Our interests

there were to restore some additional paddling opportunities though releases, improved access, improved flow information, and to increase base flows. Our interests were met through the following provisions in the settlement agreement.

The minimum instream flow in the Upper and Lower Nantahala have been improved, as well as in several tributaries. These flows will not improve conditions in the upper 2-3 miles of the reach but will improve conditions in the paddling reaches.

8 annual releases and the necessary access provisions are planned for the Upper Nantahala (including the Cascades), in cooperation with anglers that use that reach extensively. There will be a 2-day weekend of releases in April and one in September, plus 4 summer evening releases. These releases were scheduled to avoid conflicts with anglers, and will begin in the spring of 2006.

A USGS gage will be activated as soon as possible that will provide realtime flow information in the Upper and Lower

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# Access: Consensus Reached continued

by Kevin Colburn

Nantahala. This gage will allow paddlers to remotely determine the flow in the Cascades and the Upper for the first time.

## Nantahala Watershed

In addition to the direct recreational and ecosystem mitigation, the mitigation of the Nantahala Project includes a portion of the roughly \$1,000,000 for river conservation projects, as well as the Dillsboro Dam Removal. An objective look at the two rivers clearly shows a greater need for, and more to gain from, restoration work done on the Tuck rather than the Nantahala.

It was Duke Power's willingness to negotiate in good faith, excellent facilitation, a hardworking and open-minded stakeholder group, and a creative

and effective process that will, through the consensus agreements described above, make the Nantahala and Tuckasegee Watersheds healthier and happier places to live and recreate in. We are proud to have played a strong role in this process and are excited to share our success with the outdoor recreation and river conservation community.

We may be celebrating, but the work is not over. We will be carefully tracking the remainder of the FERC relicensing process, while working closely with Duke Power and the other stakeholders on implementing the many ideas and promises laid out in the agreements. The implementation will take anywhere from 1 month to 10 years depending on the project, with most of the mitigation occurring by or during 2006.

American Whitewater would like to thank

all of the volunteers that participated in the flow studies on these rivers, all of the people on the stakeholder team that helped make such a strong and meaningful agreement, Josh Egenolf (our intern that did a great job of researching access options on the West Fork of the Tuck), Steve and Mary Lou our facilitation Gurus, and of course all the folks at Duke Power for being so professional and open-minded. Lastly we would like to thank our members for your support, and also the Mott Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust for their support through the Hydropower Reform Coalition and the direct support of Patagonia, the Turner Foundation, and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. We couldn't have done it without you, and look forward to your continued support! 

*Kevin Colburn on Cascades, Nantahala, Photo Duke Power*



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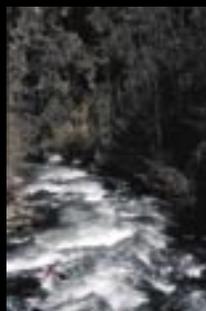


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# American Whitewater's TOP ISSUES OF 2003

In the past 12 months American Whitewater has been doing a lot of soul searching.

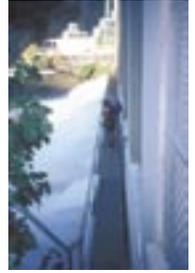
*We searched the soul of the sport (you), searched the soul of the River, and searched within ourselves to see how we could do a better job of fulfilling our mission. One of the most important things that we uncovered is a problem that plagues virtually all environmental non-profits: seeing the trees and not the forest. Like a Labrador retriever thrown too many sticks, the Environmental Community hurries to address the most pressing challenges in a near frenzy. Few would argue that American Whitewater doesn't do a good job of getting results that are consistent with our mission, but in the coming year we are trying to rise above the treetops and see the forest. We have challenged ourselves with treating the causes before we treat the symptoms. We will never stop our on-the-ground, results-driven conservation and access work, but hopefully we will continually do that work smarter and more efficiently. This year's Top Issue list represents this shift in our focus. The issues range from precedent-setting cases like the Headwaters of the Chattooga, to some of the underlying causes of this issue in the Conflicting Partners in River Conservation piece. The list is a sampling of the hundreds of active projects being worked on by American Whitewater staff and volunteers on rivers across the nation. Looking into the coming year, the paddling community will face some epic challenges regarding our right to paddle healthy rivers responsibly. The pressures on our rivers and our right to paddle them flow almost as forcefully as the River itself: hydropower diversions, pollution, development, politics, land abuse, other recreationalists, and the list goes on.*



At American Whitewater, we hope that each of you will become involved with these causes and take action. We will proudly be there helping you protect and restore rivers.

# ...hydropower diversions, pollution, development, politics, land abuse, other recreationalists, and the list goes on.

Boater contemplates water diverted from North Fork Feather River, California.



## USGS Funding Issue:

1/3 of all streamgages may be cut due to lack of funding.

**Goal:** To educate Congress and State governments about the value of these streamgages for safety, scientific research, tourism, and recreation.

**Current Status:** In an April, 2003 meeting with the USGS, American Whitewater's Access Director Jason Robertson learned that as many as 1/3 of the streamgages that our members rely on for recreation may be cut. The funding cuts are driven by three factors. First, there have been huge decreases in funding from state partners over the last 2 years, and these cuts are expected to increase even further in 2004 as long as most state budgets are in the red. Second, federal funding from Congress has been decreased or flat funded for several years. The USGS only provides funding for about 5% of the streamgages directly, but traditionally picks up the slack when states cannot meet their objectives. With State funding down, the federal funding must increase to make up the shortfall; unfortunately, this is not happening. Third, nearly half of the USGS streamgages are actually funded by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Army Corps has a requirement to contract half of its labor and budget. In the absence of the large hydropower or river channelization projects that were typical between 1950 and 1990, the Army Corps has reduced the number of contracts it can offer. The result is that the Army Corps no longer has funding for many traditional activities such as streamgaging.

**Next Steps:** Write letters to all 50 state tourism departments explaining the recreational, safety, and economic benefits of streamgaging and asking each agency to support protecting these gauges. Educate Congress about the need for adequate funding for streamgaging. Work with the Army Corps to develop a funding strategy for subcontracting out streamgaging services.

Contact: Jason Robertson,  
American Whitewater Access Director

## Boat Registration Issue:

Many states are seeking to require boat registration to make up budget shortfalls. None of these registration requirements are designed to benefit whitewater boaters or protect the natural resources.

**Goal:** To ensure that any registration fees are fair and result in a direct, measurable benefit to the whitewater community and the river resource.

**Current Status:** Only seven states currently require canoe and kayak owners to register or pay special taxes on their boats: Ohio, Alaska, Illinois, Oklahoma, Iowa, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania. Arizona repealed their registration requirements in 2000 due in part to high administration costs and an ineffective ability to return services to the public. However, in 2003, the number of states requiring new boater registrations almost doubled! Connecticut, Oregon, Washington, and Montana were all considering new registration requirements. Quick action by American Whitewater, our affiliates, and partners helped to roll back the tide on all of these registration requirements! However, these were temporary successes, and we expect new legislation to be introduced in 2004 after the registration proponents have had time to lick their wounds.

**Next Steps:** Work with the state agencies pushing boat registration legislation to ensure there is a fair means of collecting the fees and that there will be a direct, measurable benefit to the boaters who are being taxed as well as resource protection.

**Precedent:** We want to establish our ability to work in cooperation with state agencies to ensure fair management of river users to protect river resources and benefit all river users.

Contact: Jason Robertson,  
American Whitewater Access Director

## Wild and Scenic Rivers Legislation Issue:

Congress introduced legislation allowing new bridge and road construction in Wild and Scenic River corridors.

**Goal:** To ensure that Wild and Scenic Rivers protection remains strong, and to ensure the long-term protection of both designated and eligible rivers from development.

**Current Status:** In Spring 2003 House Resolution 2088 and Senate Bill 1072 were introduced to address Transportation funding issues (SAFETEA). Section 1812(i) of the Transportation bill would exempt bridges from section 7(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Section 7(a) states "...No department or agency of the United States shall assist by loan, grant, license, or otherwise in the construction of any water resources project that would have a direct and adverse effect on the values for which such river was established, as determined by the Secretary charged with its administration." Construction of highway bridges that directly affect a designated river, including "footings" in the river below the ordinary high water mark, currently must meet this standard - exemption from this section could result in bridge construction over Wild and Scenic rivers. 160 rivers have been designated as Wild and Scenic and more than 11,000 miles of river are protected; this is about 1% of the nation's total river miles. Virtually every river classified as scenic or recreational is crossed by one or more bridges. This includes more than 1/4 of all Wild and Scenic rivers and over 6,000 miles of the National Wild and Scenic System.

**Next Steps:** Educate Congress about the role and importance of section 7(a).

**Precedent:** If the federal agencies that manage wild and scenic rivers no longer have the authority to review bridge projects, the rivers

American Whitewater's  
**TOP  
 ISSUES OF  
 2003**

**Wild and Scenic Rivers**

**Legislation Issue:** continued

will have no protection from bridge construction and refurbishment, and no agency will review the impacts on the river values for which the river was designated wild, scenic, or recreational. Federal agencies will not be able to meet the non-degradation standard to "preserve and enhance" the values that led to protection of the river if they lose all control over bridges crossing wild and scenic rivers. Without section 7(a) there is no way to prevent harm to natural resource values that are protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Contact: Jason Robertson,  
 American Whitewater Access Director

**Hydropower  
 Legislation Issue:**

**Legislative Reforms of  
 Federal Power Act**

**Goal:** Protect river resources and existing environmental standards in the Federal Power Act.

**Current Status:** The hydropower utility industry continues to lobby Congress to change the Federal Power Act to solve the "hydropower dam relicensing problem" Utility lobbyists have hitched their wagon to the omnibus energy bill with a section labeled the Hydropower Title. The lobbyists have carefully steered legislators toward the "problems" inherent in licensing private hydropower projects. Not surprisingly the hydro industry's search for solutions always highlights the need to reform environmental regulations contained in the Federal Power Act.

The Senate hydropower title, S. 511, contained in the energy bill basically permits utilities to draft alternative environmental conditions to those

proposed by resource agencies. In short, the hydropower title: 1) gives utilities a louder voice than any other interest in deciding how dammed rivers are managed; 2) undermines the environmental standards that hydropower dams must meet, and 3) opens a loophole for utilities to challenge basic environmental protections on the grounds that they harm profit margins. The hydropower title further skews the licensing process in the favor of utilities, at the expense of equal public participation and critical environmental protections.

American Whitewater opposes the language in the Hydropower Title. American Whitewater recommends an amendment that 1) reduces the red tape and complexity in hydropower licensing; 2) places other interest groups - Indian tribes, states, conservation groups, communities, interested members of the public - on equal footing with industry; and 3) protects environmental quality through existing environmental laws - especially fish passage, water quality, and protection of affected federal lands.

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**Next Steps:** The House has already approved the energy bill. The Senate is poised for discussion and vote in July or August. There is likely to be heated debate in the Senate on various components of the energy bill including the hydropower title. Amendments may be proposed for the latter. The debates will likely lead to a Senate version that differs from the bill already approved by the House. The Senate and House must rectify any differences between the Senate and House energy bills in a Senate-House conference committee. Both the Senate and House must approve the final bill that comes out of the conference committee, and the President must sign it. American Whitewater will post alerts when each critical step comes up. Calls should be made, letters written, and visits to legislative offices are encouraged.

**Precedent:** The Federal Power Act should not be altered in a fashion that skews the process for licensing a hydropower project in favor of the utilities with an economic self-interest in the outcome. The nation's rivers and streams are a vital resource that should not be monopolized for power production alone. Public input and resource agency review are critical components in the licensing process to ensure that non-power values are balanced with power generation.

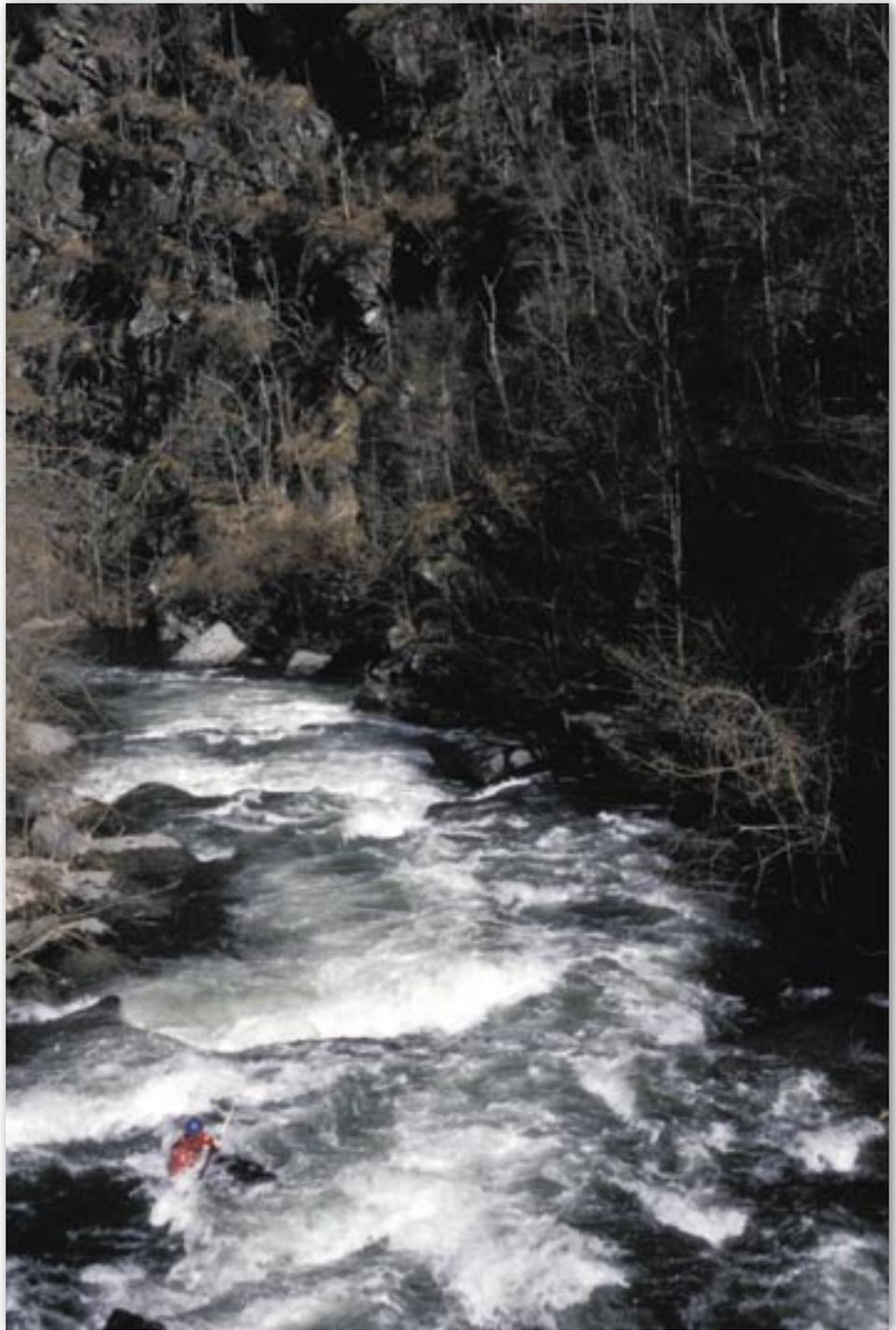
*Contact: John Gangemi,  
American Whitewater Conservation Director*

## **Conflicting Partners In River Conservation Issue:**

Recent public debates between boaters and other river users are weakening our ability to protect and restore rivers.

**Goal:** Increase solidarity among groups working to protect and restore rivers.

**Current Status:** In the past year American Whitewater staff and volunteers have increasingly found themselves at odds with fishing advocacy organizations and agencies. These conflicts have reduced our ability to protect the very resources we are all passionate about saving, namely healthy rivers and responsible public access to them. From the Headwaters of the



Chattooga in Georgia to the North Fork Feather in California, these conflicts have weakened our collective ability to represent the River, as well as our rights to recreate in a boat or a pair of waders.

The missions of many of the prominent fishing advocacy and river conservation groups are very similar to American Whitewater's, and we often work together to represent our common interests. Recent examples of this collaborative relationship are the National hydroelectric legislation work we do together with Trout Unlimited

as members of the steering committee of the Hydropower Reform Coalition, and the settlement agreements we recently signed outlining higher instream flows and public access for fishermen and boaters alike on the Tuckasegee and Nantahala Rivers in western North Carolina with Trout Unlimited and other fishing interests. In fact, our interests align on most issues: public access to public lands and waters, protecting and improving water quality, maintaining a healthy riparian buffer on our nation's rivers, protecting riparian lands from development, and re-regulating

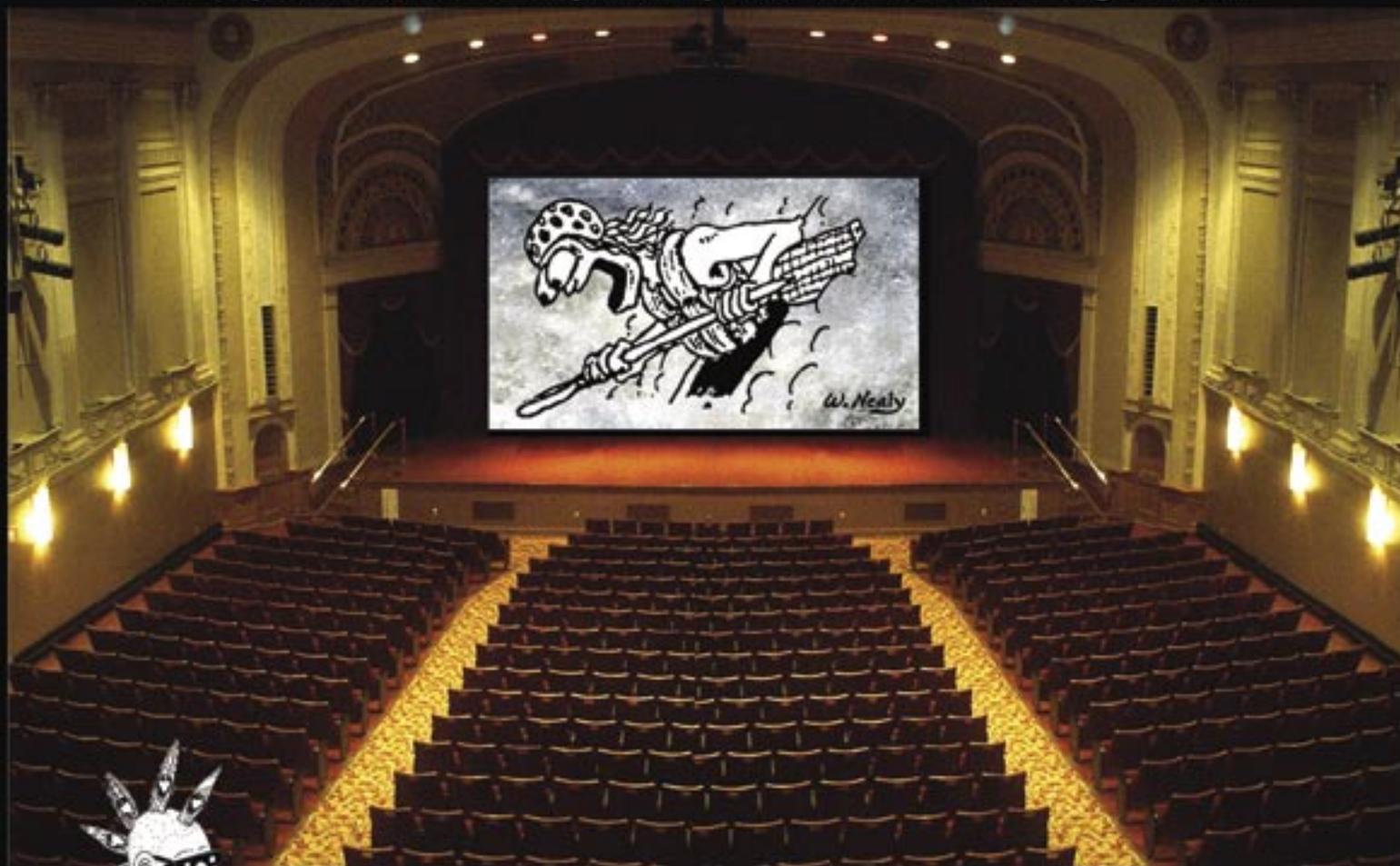
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# American Whitewater's TOP ISSUES OF 2003

dammed rivers to benefit the public and the rivers rather than the power utilities alone. These are the big battles of river conservation.

Recently, however, smaller disagreements over specific flow requirements in dammed rivers or specifics regarding public access between American Whitewater and a variety of angling advocacy groups have divided the paddling and angling communities. Instead of focusing our efforts collaboratively on river restoration, we squander our limited resources debating with one another because of too great a focus on our respective special interests. There is little doubt that when the dust clears, the Rivers are the losers in these skirmishes because our energy has been diverted away from our true adversaries; those that wish to pollute, divert, and privatize our nation's rivers.

**Precedent:** While strong partners on many river conservation issues, boating and angling groups must focus on commonalities rather than differences in order to protect and restore our nation's rivers.

*Contact: Kevin Colburn,  
Eastern Conservation and Access Associate.*

## Increased Need For Paddlers and Public To Speak Out on River Issues:

### Societal Apathy toward River Conservation.

**Goal:** Motivate paddling community and society at large to play an active role in restoration and protection of our nation's rivers.

**Current Status:** Over the past two years there has been an increasing trend to

rollback environmental protection regulations ranging from the Clean Water Act, the Federal Power Act, roadless lands protection, and basic administrative procedures within the natural resource agencies. These rollbacks, coupled with decreasing federal and state budgets for resource agencies as well as access restrictions in the name of Homeland Security pose significant threats to our nation's rivers and recreational opportunities. Meanwhile, the number of threats to our river resources continues to grow exponentially. Society appears to be watching silently this collapse of environmental protections and site-specific impacts to the nation's rivers – a public trust resource. The paddling community cannot afford to mirror society's lethargy.

As paddlers we have an opportunity to lead society by example. We need to remember that we are ambassadors for our sport both on and off the river. Along with that role comes an implicit duty to be actively involved in the protection and restoration of rivers. We can and should cultivate a strong river conservation ethic in society. Paddlers can and should be a positive force demonstrating to society at large the importance of river protection and restoration. Our river conservation actions should go beyond self-serving whitewater recreation interests and extend to protection of riverine habitats and organisms. If we don't accept this challenge to think beyond our personal recreation interests we may someday discover we have very few healthy rivers with clean water and native aquatic species to play in. Clearly, whitewater river conservation goes beyond access and flows for whitewater recreation.

American Whitewater works 24/7/365 to protect and restore rivers and our ability to float responsibly. Staff and volunteers strive to restore rivers dewatered by hydropower dams, eliminate water degradation,

improve public land management and opportunities to access rivers for responsible recreational use. We believe river restoration and protection to be our primary mission. Whitewater paddling is a by-product of a healthy river system and should be exercised in a responsible fashion.

**Next Steps:** If you enjoy recreating on rivers it is critical that you:

- Are active in local river issues.
- Promote efforts to prevent damage to rivers and enhance long-term sustainability of rivers.
- Join American Whitewater—membership funds holistic conservation and access work on local rivers.
- Lead by example.

American Whitewater promises to keep the paddling community informed of threats to local rivers and attempts to rollback environmental regulations through our website, journal and volunteer list. American Whitewater staff work closely with local river volunteers and affiliate clubs on specific river issues. American Whitewater staff has tremendous knowledge and background in river conservation and access.

**Precedent:** Rolling back environmental regulations equates to significant impacts at the local level for our nation's rivers. Paddlers need to lead our nation by example. We can be a positive force as river stewards. 

*Contact: John Gangemi,  
American Whitewater Conservation Director*

# AW Journals Find Permanent, Public Homes

by Risa Shimoda, Director

Thanks to the combined efforts of several volunteers, the *American Whitewater Journal* has several new permanent libraries to call home...

In 2002, when we moved our administrative functions from Phyllis Horowitz's office in New York to Silver Spring, we were delighted (just kidding) to receive, along with our financial records, multiple copies of journals, dating back well over a dozen years. At the same time, we were bestowed 'attic cleaning' gifts from lifetime member Pete Skinner and Jerry Meral...also stacks of old journals.

There are only so many journals we could stand to have handy, and we paled at the thought of simply tossing them. We began to lather at the thought of having sets of journals in several US libraries, keeping a set or two for internal reference, and it was at once, likely to become a frightfully labored chore to pursue that goal.

## Enter, Eager Interns!

Sneezing off the mold spores, a pair of able young men with resilient backs and great patience logged the many historical journals on hand (hundreds), dating back to our beginning in 1954. Craig Morehead, a visiting student from Baylor University and Berkeley Williams, a local high school student in need of logging volunteer hours to complete a community stewardship assignment, slogged through boxes and boxes and boxes of journals...through the Fall and Winter of 2002-2003.

This spring, we discovered another gift to the project: Jane Collins, AW member and recently retired Principal Recommending Officer for the Science and Technology Collections at the Library of Congress! What better person to attack this project at this point. After a couple of months of weekly visits, characterized by having journals strewn all over the place during

'sorts' and recounts, Jane was resolute in her accomplishment. She:

- Collated sets of journals for the permanent AW internal archive;
- Collated additional sets that were available on hand, limited only by a few serious voids; and
- Researched libraries across the country with a need and interest in filling out their 'holdings'

Having coached us to applying for and receiving our very own ISSN number (0300-7626) for the journal, Jane carted our first donated set to the Library of Congress in June, now available for reference via their online service! In addition, we shipped sets to the Adirondack Museum Library in Blue Mountain, NY; the Fayetteville Public Library in Fayetteville, WV; and the Belk Library at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC.

In addition, there are other libraries around the country which house issues of the journal.

Unabashed at the effort she's put forward, Jane commented "Now that I am retired, I only do jobs that take place outdoors, with this as an exception. It utilized my experience from having worked for thirty-one years at the Library of Congress, and is personally significant for me having been paddling for that same period. It has been a good way to 'give back.'"

The final stage of the process is rolling on: we hope to protect one of our permanent sets with a trip to a bindery, and will then be able to quit worrying about the insidious slippage of issues here and there, to time apathetic. 



Thank you, Jane,  
for this fantastic  
contribution to our  
ability to keep the  
sweat equity and love  
for paddling and our  
rivers, protected in  
several safe locales for  
years to come

## Libraries that House American Whitewater

### Library Description of Holdings as of July, 2003

Adirondack Museum Library  
1955 to present

Denver Public Library  
1955 to present

Library of Congress  
1964 to present (scattered  
back issues prior to 1972)

Middle Tennessee State University  
1973 to 2002

Dallas Public Library  
1973 to present

Belk Library at Appalachian State  
U. 1974 to present (scattered  
back issues prior to 1972)

Vancouver Public Library  
1975 to present

University of Maine at Machias  
1982 to present

Chicago Public Library  
1991 to present

Fayetteville Public Library  
Scattered back issues to present

Anoka Cnty Library #2, Blaine  
(MN) Last five years

Krietzberg Library at Norwich U.  
Current year

Lovejoy Library at Proctor Academy  
Current year

San Francisco Public Library  
Current year

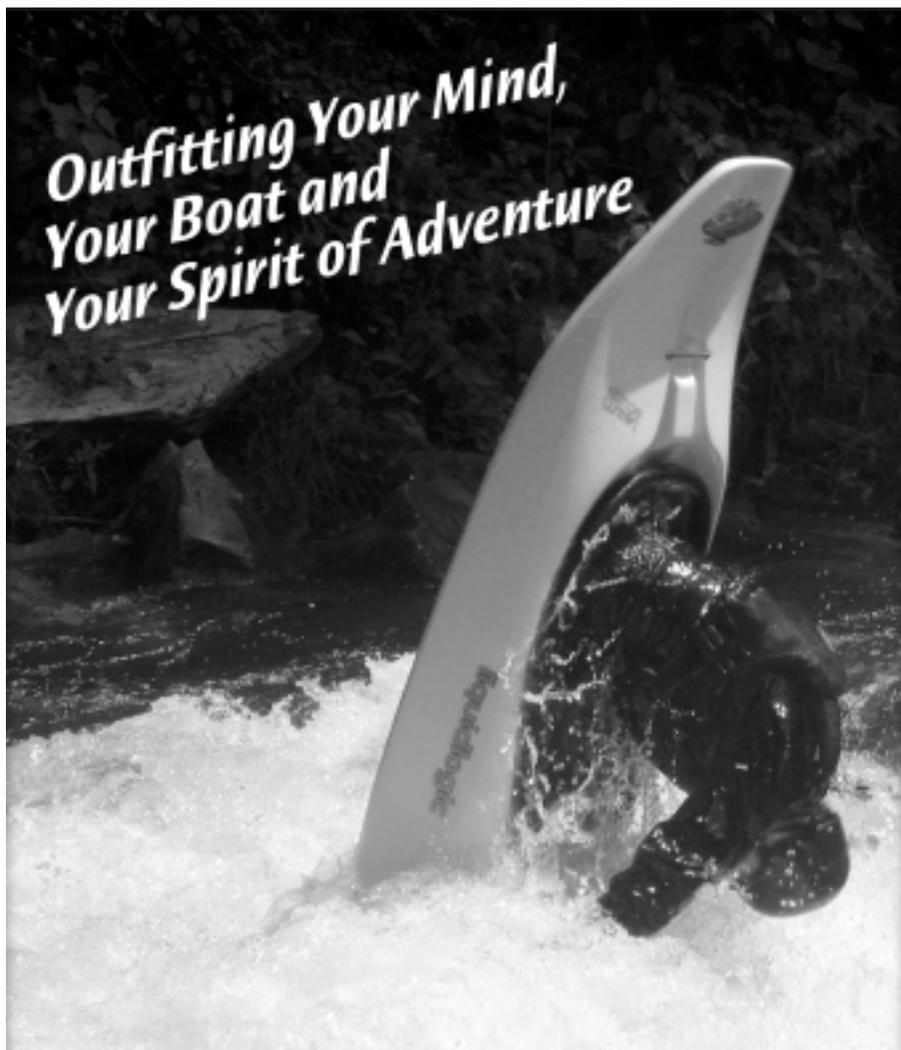
Ithaca Public Library  
1994 to Feb/March 2003

Nols Staff Library (Lander, WY)  
Lapsed

Brantford Public Library (ON)  
Lapsed

Fraser Valley Library (CO)  
Lapsed

Hood River County Library (OR)  
Lapsed



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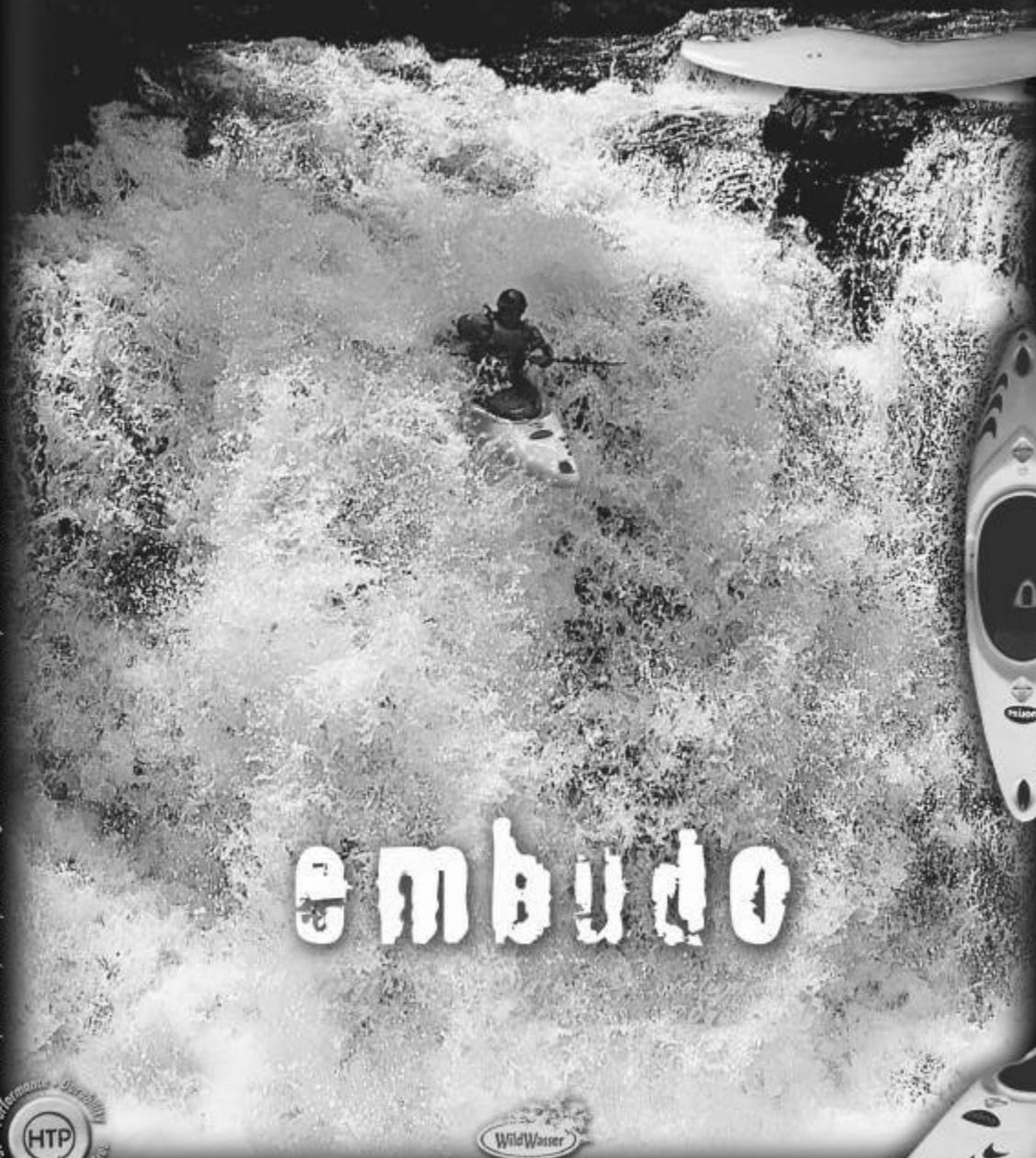
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## Man Did Not Create the Rivers that are Ours to Enjoy: Then Came the 1980's



Special Feature  
by Risa Shimoda,  
AW Executive Director

*Trip Kinney at Sweets Falls on Upper Gauley*



### 'Fall Paddling.'

For many paddlers this is an oxymoron, an unnatural phenomenon. Per the initial design of rivers (blueprinted and executed far before the first merchant raft or birchbark canoe), generous water occurs on coastal and southern rivers during the winter, and occur elsewhere during spring rains and snowmelt runoff, and after sultry summer rainbursts.

But wait. What about our being able to hop on the Gauley or Russell Fork during the fall? What about our ability to count on flows from the American, Ocoee, Upper Yough and Deerfield Rivers all year long? What about our outfitters being able to plan, book and promote 'Fall Colors' rafting trips in October, adding truly spectacular backdrops to their whitewater experiences? Although I do not want to sound like a proponent of damming rivers, these luxuries can be viewed as a blessing.

Here are some thoughts, snapshots of river fights fought, and reflections on



how scheduled releases have impacted boating on a few of the many rivers on which we now depend for both weekend escapes and vacation getaways. Note that some of the early efforts were not spearheaded by American Whitewater as an organization. They were, however, inspired and implemented by AW member paddlers who became the founders of the new responsibility AW embraced during the seventies and eighties, transforming our organization along with key allies, into our current, nationally unique role as recreational river stewards.

The inspiration to secure releases from dams otherwise profiteering from our natural resources sprang from a combination of intellect, bravado, fearless enthusiasm, and tenacity that creates success in the face of challenge. We succeeded initially because we were more nimble than our opponents. We also lost some battles because we were more naïve! We have seen the impact of our work grow, evolve and create new

opportunities for river protection. Our level of sophistication has had to rise because we've fixed a place for ourselves on federal and state agency radar screens.

When I started boating in 1975, the whitewater season in New England lasted from March through early May. Whitewater paddling meant ice cold water and hugely variable river levels. With relicensing and fall reservoir drawdowns, the fall has become like a second spring season, only with warmer water, more reliable levels, and boaters who have had the summer to hone their skills. The annual fall West River weekend is the end-of-season wind-down for New England boaters. Along with the Upper Farmington weekend and an October weekend on the Deerfield's Dryway, the fall is now a significant paddling season in its own right.

Bruce Lessels  
President  
Zoar Outdoor



I don't think that any state understands the importance of fall water, as a strategy for sustainable rural economic development, better than West Virginia. What they have been able to do over the last 20 years on the Gauley is create a whole new tourism product that helps to fuel economic development in the Summersville/Beckley community. In addition, the matching fund program within the West Virginia Department of Tourism has positioned West Virginia as one of the leading eastern locations for adventure based tourism.

Mark Singleton  
Vice President, Marketing  
Nantahala Outdoor Center

## Fall 'Release Season' Rivers

There is the monarch of release 'seasons' – the five weeks of long weekends that bring thousands of visitors and millions of dollars of revenue to the state of West Virginia. Gauley season is also a time for meeting hundreds of boaters you've met or seen before, sharing a river whose characteristics and challenging nature create quintessential whitewater fun.

### Gauley

The creation of a Gauley 'season' is, without a doubt, the most significant and dramatic milestone in the history of whitewater sport during the past 25 years. During this early autumn period, thousands of boaters head to West Virginia to rediscover this tremendous river, reach a personal goal as an intermediate or advanced paddler, and reunite with others who have made the same trek. Besides the tens of millions of

dollars that pour into Nicholas and Fayette Counties each fall, Gauley season has fueled the growth of local communities with the influx of river-related residents and permanent services.

Autumn releases resulted from the work of an entire delegation, crowned by the support of Congressman Rahall. For outfitters, releases on the Gauley River have created a guaranteed season, and a major part of our business. The public has benefited, as outfitters now have better facilities and better equipment than we would have otherwise. Conducting rafting trips on the Gauley used to be 2nd-3rd week in October event. The pleasant weather and ease of enjoyment facilitated by the earlier releases are far superior to the guaranteed frost and frequent cold rain assumed in the early days.

It has also stirred the private boaters. For the average 'good boater,' the Gauley poses a lot to handle and is therefore a milestone for them. The outfitters and boaters (see sidebar) originally collaborated to put on the Gauley River Festival and continue to support both the festival and AW's efforts to keep it going. It's continued success and promotion makes September – October more festive and exciting.

On many western rivers, the season is over. Southern boaters come to both work and play (they can work as guides on the weekends and paddle on their own most weekdays). The flow regime has changed, so that we no longer have full weeks of releases at the end of the season. There are more days in total, which is better for both commercial and non-commercial boaters. The 'good old days' were great: we could run overnight trips with the guides, mid-week...

Frank Lukacz  
President, North American River Runners

### Russell Fork

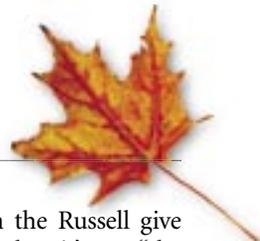
You don't just drive through Pound, Virginia on your way to some destination, nor seek to vacation in downtown Elkhorn City, KY... unless the leaves are turning golden amber and fireball red on the banks of the Russell Fork. Dancing past the Virginia – Kentucky state line through Breaks Interstate Park, the rapids Fist, El Horrendo, Triple Drop and



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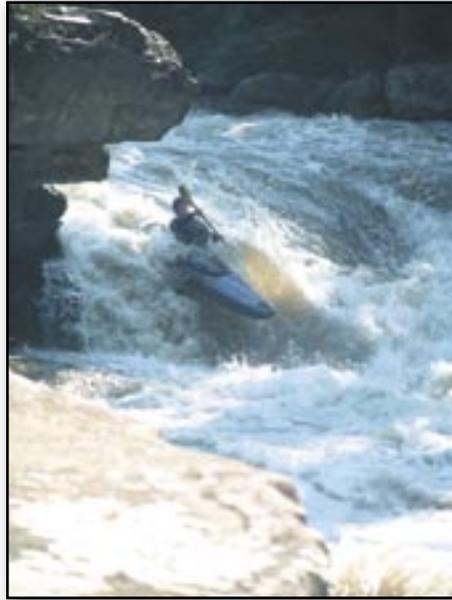
  
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Climax have been embraced as iconic for the life the Fall drawdown releases have created from an Army Corps of Engineers dam.

“I first paddled the Russell in 1978,” notes Dale Adams, now of Edmund, WV. “My buddy Ron Arny would call the dam, and they would release water for us. After awhile he said ‘you call ‘em,’ and we got their cooperation to release from late October into November.” Elkhorn City recognized the releases for the tourism opportunity they would create and jumped on in support of having annually scheduled releases. Despite pressure from anglers (in response to which hydrologist Steve Taylor conducted a thorough fish spawning analysis), boating releases have thrived, commercial interests have developed reasonable followings and Russell Fork Season has found a permanent place on whitewater calendars.

“Fall in the East is the place to be, drought or no drought,” notes Woody Callaway. “September through November following the release mini-seasons is like running rivers nowhere else in the world. Release



Kevin Colburn at El Horrendo  
Russell Fork River

*Photo Trip Kinney*

schedules like the one on the Russell give people an opportunity to plan: it’s not “the Russell is running, let’s go!”

“Have you heard comments like ‘my goal is to paddle the Russell Fork this year?’ Planned release seasons have given people an option to accelerate their learning curves!

Hey, just coining the phrase ‘release season’ and having it become part of river vernacular is itself significant.”

## Designer Releases in New York, Land of Relicensing

The architects of the first whitewater release schedules have tried to provide New England and northeastern boaters with a boating destination location from April – October. By May, schedules have been guaranteed to provide you with water in

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the following rivers (to be joined in the near future with even more 'guaranteed' river miles), and have created season extensions for popular Adirondack destination towns, as well as a boon to tiny economies that scatter themselves on the way to and between Pottsdam, Watertown, Utica and Albany.

## Black, Moose, and Racquette

The Black and the Moose turned AW's future from moribund to one of explosive growth, forging a new identity. These battles changed the identity of the organization, driven by a passion that has allowed us to grow.

For the first time the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission had encountered whitewater recreation interests intervening seriously in a Federal Hydroelectric relicensing case. We were dead in the water, far too late. Ground was broken and we were still, idealistically, intervening to insure whitewater consideration and a request for recreational releases. AW hired Steve Massaro to photographically document hydro sites. Steve discovered one day that the developer built the penstock twice as wide as had been specified in the permit. They'd already dug the ditch, in violation of their permit! We suddenly had the leverage to mount a legal challenge, good for at least a yearlong delay, putting the utility in a real bind. We asked for water 'whenever we want it,' and got it. To this day and until the expiration of the license, you can call up for water (315) 788-9121 and they are required to turn it on (on days noted in the accompanying sidebar). This is more than one could dream for, and we have Pete Skinner of West Sand Lake, NY and Steve Massaro to thank.

## Moose

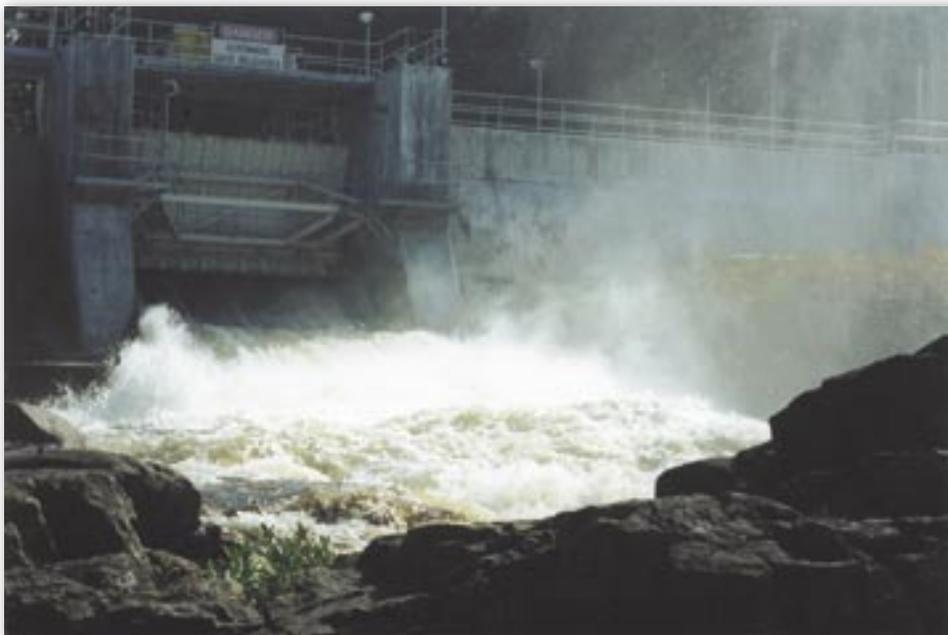
This hydro, like the Black and unlike all other New York State projects, was a brand new project. The release schedule identified in the licensing settlement guaranteed ten days of flow in the river, each year...on eight consecutive Sundays, two of which were on the first two weeks in October.

Today, ten days are identified early each calendar year. Release days are schedule for (weekend) days on which the Middle and Bottom Moose has historically flowed. We trying to mimic the original 'flow regime' as is most practical, given that there are large composite hunks of concrete and turbines installed there.

Through the success of Moose Fest, an annual celebration of the river, we are able

So, as complex as this might sound, the sequencing of releases suits boaters who can drive up, down, or over for a weekend. You'll find a stretch of river that suits your style and experience.

As an example, the Designer Release Sequence scheduled for Labor Day Weekend 2003:



ask for favorable consideration during this drawdown from the Fulton Chain of lakes in the Black River Region District. Not only do restaurants and gas stations support the paddling visitors, the utility works their hardest to make sure we have at least the minimum flow necessary to provide a safe, fun run for visitors.

## Racquette

The Racquette, releasing for six days this year, is still a river in process. The Stone Valley section, whose releases were achieved working with Bruce Carpenter at New York Rivers United and the Appalachian Mountain Club, can enjoy releases only one day per weekend, to accommodate a day each weekend for angling. We have needed to set a schedule that would be attractive to long distance paddlers.

- Beaver – Taylorville Section on Saturday: mild level
- Racquette on Saturday: beefy
- Beaver - Moser/Eagle Sunday section
- Racquette on Monday: moderate level

Racquette release planning provides a challenge slightly more complex than other release rivers. Each year, AW volunteers request specific release days ...and levels, able to utilize a 'bank account' of water, spaced over six days...the pattern is a work in progress.



## New Kid on the Release Season Block:

### Tallulah

Autumn in the Southeast is the driest season of the year. This used to mean that a paddler in Atlanta had to travel 6-8 hours to the Gauley or the Russell Fork for good paddling. Thanks to the work of many, and especially American Whitewater, this is no longer the case. With the releases on Tallulah Gorge starting in November 1997, Southeastern paddlers now have a wonderful late fall whitewater opportunity only 90 miles north of Atlanta. The fall colors are at their peak during the November release and weather is still quite moderate, for the most part. These releases bring hundreds of paddlers to the Tallulah Gorge State Park each of the three release weekends every fall, complemented by two weekends in April. Not surprising, these releases have had a significant, positive economic impact on the businesses in the area. [continued on page 44]

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— Bob Taylor: Appomattox River Company, Farmville, VA

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— Dale Adams: Beauty Mountain, Fayetteville, WV

*That I can surf with and still run class V.*

— Jack Bradley: Ripin Productions, Seattle, WA

*I just want one boat that I can take anywhere.*

— John Hart: Kayak Shed, Hood River, OR



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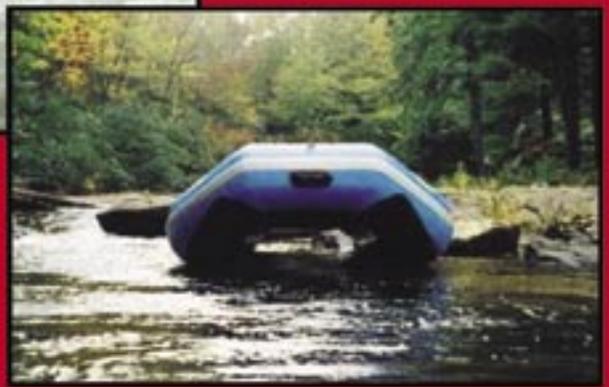
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# Special Feature continued



# ...then in 2000, 43 m

Other states are learning from this model. While no other Southeastern state is as aggressive in their adventure based tourism promotion programs as West Virginia, the advocacy of private boaters and outfitters to provide water through drawdown or relicensing in southeastern rivers is driving a growing adventure based tourism economy in these rural locations. Fall releases on the Tallulah, Ocoee and Nantahala are now a key element in the tourism mix of the southern Appalachian mountains.

## Upper Yough

The Upper Youghiogheny is a Maryland Wild and Scenic River, the only Class IV-V river stretch of any length in the state. It is a beautiful run with numerous slalom-type rapids. Releases from the hydroelectric plant at Deep Creek 1) made whitewater runs possible in dry summers when no other rivers were available in the region, 2) maintained suitable lake levels and, 3) kept the river cool for trout. With energy deregulation and new value for hydroelectric power, the power companies became more and more reluctant to announce releases and to schedule releases on weekends. This

has required AW to engage in a multi-decade battle with state agencies to protect existing whitewater opportunities. The original Upper Yough warriors included Mac Thornton, Bob Gedekoh, Barry Tuscano, Jess Whittemore, Steve Taylor, and outfitter representative Dave Bassage. Today Roger Zbel, Steve Taylor, and Adam Cramer are working with AW Staff member Jason Robertson to approach an improved schedule and notification system that will facilitate notification releases all year long!

## North Fork Feather

Since 1994 American Whitewater has been fighting to restore whitewater flows to the North Fork Feather River. Eventually, in 1999, American Whitewater convinced PG&E to conduct a Controlled Flow Whitewater Study on the Rock Creek and Cresta sections of the North Fork, 9 mile and 5 mile sections respectively. In May 2000, American Whitewater again convinced PG&E to conduct a controlled flow whitewater study on the eight mile Poe reach of the North Fork Feather that contains a 4.5 mile Class IV-V section and a 4.5 mile Class III section.

## Weekend release at the North Fork of the Feather River

*photos by Jenning Steger*

In September 2000, American Whitewater convinced PG&E to conduct a controlled flow whitewater study for the reaches dewatered by the Upper North Fork hydropower project, the 10 mile Class V Seneca reach and the 8 mile Class III Belden Reach. Adding this all up, American Whitewater has worked to restore 43 miles of the North Fork Feather River. An annual schedule of releases is already in place for the Rock Creek and Cresta reaches. American Whitewater is currently negotiating release schedules for the Upper North Fork and Poe hydropower projects.

“Releases into the Rock Creek and Cresta reaches, coupled with releases at upstream and downstream hydropower projects will make the North Fork Feather River a premier whitewater destination,” according to Kevin Lewis, a member of American Whitewater’s Board of Directors



miles were restored  
to the North Fork  
of the Feather River.



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# Special Feature continued



Ocoee River, Clay Wright  
photo by Kevin Colburn

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personally involved in the relicensing processes on the North Fork Feather.

Dave Steindorf, local paddler and American Whitewater Regional Coordinator, is delighted with the paddling prospects on the North Fork Feather, "When it comes to water in California rivers we've always said that 'PG&E giveth and PG&E taketh away.' Well American Whitewater pushed PG&E to giveth an annual schedule of whitewater releases."

In 1980 a fledging group of private boaters and outfitters organized the Ocoee River Council (ORC) in an earnest effort to keep the Ocoee River flowing after completion of the Tennessee Valley Authority's diversion project. This era was a golden era of paddling activism, when private boaters and outfitters worked together to achieve some incredible successes, laying the foundation for many of today's paddling opportunities.

The Save the Ocoee effort began after an official at TVA sent a letter explaining that no water releases would be provided without a Congressional appropriation. Since TVA's employees had successfully killed political support for that appropriation, there appeared to be little chance that the Ocoee would flow once the flume-line was completed. After we showed the letter to Bill Miller, then President of the Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, we visited Marc Hunt, owner of Sunburst Adventures, an outfitter on the Ocoee. We organized a van tour around the state with a few principles to investigate our options. By the end of the trip, the Ocoee River Council (ORC) was launched, and I was hired to take on TVA. The result was a 116-day schedule of releases annually with a visitorship of well over 300,000 people each and every year.

Shortly after ORC's formation, we sued to stop the project. During that lawsuit TVA argued that the Ocoee No. 2 project was a single purpose project for 'power generation only.' That's where we learned the value of making whitewater recreation an 'official' purpose of any hydro project. When the Corps began planning a diversion around the upper three miles of the Gauley River, they claimed that they could not provide reliable flows downstream of the dam. So began the effort to pass legislation to make whitewater recreation an 'official purpose' of the Summersville Dam, funded in part

by the newly created Gauley River Festival, first held in a cold rain in 1983 at Burnwood Campground.

It was also during this period that private developers gained access to federal dams for hydroelectric power projects. One was proposed for Summersville Dam on the Gauley, heightening the importance of installing legislation to mandate fall releases. What also emerged in the debate was the initial effort to reorder priorities in the licensing of private hydroelectric projects. In May 1984 Pope Barrow, David Conrad and I testified before the Subcommittee on Energy and Power, proposing that the Electric Consumer Protection Act (ECPA) require the consideration of recreation opportunities below licensed projects. A staffer for the subcommittee happened to be a paddler, and had facilitated my being able to testify.

Since then, AW and paddlers have seized the opportunity granted by ECPA and created hundreds of miles of new opportunities for paddling downstream of dams. Many projects on the Lehigh, Youghiogheny, Kennebec, Penobscot and New River are also protected by this provision in the law that had its origins in the effort to preserve flows on the Ocoee and Gauley Rivers in the early 1980's.

This was the first and only time that an Army Corps of Engineers proposal to build a dam was defeated by whitewater recreation interests. We defeated a Corps of Engineers dam proposal and obtained an annual release season of five weeks each fall. Victory required three congressional appropriation bills to protect flows, and one to protect this area by securing 'National Recreation' designation for the area.

Tenacity, fundraising, using business interests, and obtaining the support of key local politicians were essential to pulling this off. On the other hand, we paid a big price for getting in bed with the outfitters. They (the outfitters) were essential to kill the dam, but they succeeded in preventing the National Park Service from protecting the riverside scenery and managing the river to avoid over crowding. We are continuing to support the implementation of the Gauley Management Plan (started in 1988) to insure reasonable safe access to this treasure.

# Special Feature: Recalling Success Ocoee and Gauley

## Did You Know?

The Gauley Festival, started by CFGR (Citizens for the Gauley River), ceased its reason for being when the hydropower dam proposed on the Upper was abandoned. At that time Pope Barrow, Pete Skinner and Chris Koll took on the event to raise (largely legal) funds to fight for recreational releases on the Black River in NY.

## Upper Ocoee

We have come a long way in one year. The October 2002 forecast indicated that the Tennessee Valley Authority would discontinue releases on the Upper Ocoee, through the site of the 1996 Olympics, and charge outfitters a fee so high that it would seriously deplete any profit they would be able to make on the customer. Thanks to the decibel level of the challenge raised by AW before and during the Teva Championships in October, 2002 to publicize this atrocity, and the thoughtful effort of the Ocoee outfitters, we are now negotiating for 54 releases per year that could start as early as 2004. Our role is to continue to provide a voice for non-commercial paddlers first. 

## Contributing authors:

Risa Shimoda  
AW Executive Director

Chris Koll  
Moose Festival Organizer  
Emeritus AW Board Member

Don Kinser  
AW Board Member

Pope Barrow  
Emeritus AW Board Member

Steve Taylor  
AW Volunteer

David Brown  
Executive Director,  
America Outdoors

## Can you guess?

Which months, in order, see the greatest number of commercial passengers at Ocoee Outdoors?

June July August September

Answer: August, July, September, THEN June!  
Source: JT Lemmons, President Ocoee Outdoors

These provide focus on just a few of the 'seasons' that define our autumn river planner. To come: releases from newly relicensed dams in North Carolina, California, Washington and ...the 'Whitewater Empire' state of New York. See accompanying articles and website links for detail on the others that we've come to know and appreciate.



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# Access: Fall Release Links

by Risa Shimoda

## Gauley - West Virginia

Every weekend until the third weekend of October.  
<http://www.lrh-wc.usace.army.mil/wc/wwsched.html>

## Upper Ocoee - Tennessee

Every Saturday in September.  
<http://www.tva.gov/river/recreation/ocoeesched.htm>

## Middle Ocoee - Tennessee

Every weekend through the first of November.  
<http://www.tva.gov/river/recreation/ocoeesched.htm>

## North Fork Feather - California

Last weekend of each month, through October.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/nff/long.phtml>

## Deerfield - Massachusetts

Weekends of Sept. 6, Sept. 27, and Oct. 11.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/681/>

## Raquette - New York

Monday, Sept. 1; Saturday, Sept. 13; and Saturday, Sept. 27.  
<http://oldbt.boatertalk.com/forum/AW/345617>

## Beaver - New York

Saturday, Sept. 6; Sunday, Sept. 14;  
 Sunday, Sept. 28.  
<http://oldbt.boatertalk.com/forum/AW/345617>

## Moose - New York

Every weekend in October: all Sundays, 3rd and 4th Saturdays.  
<http://oldbt.boatertalk.com/forum/AW/345617>

## Kennebec - Maine

Every weekend, year round.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/438/>

## Tallulah - Georgia

First three weekends in November.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/506/>

## Russell Fork - West Virginia

Every weekend in October.  
<http://www.lrh-wc.usace.army.mil/wc/wwsched.html>

## Mongaup - New York

Saturday, Sept. 6; Friday, Sept. 26; Saturday, Oct. 4;  
 Sunday, Oct. 26.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1349/>

## Dead - Maine

Saturday, Sept. 13; Saturday, Oct. 4.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/787/>

## West - Vermont

Weekend of Sept. 20.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2055/>

## Menominee - Wisconsin

Most days.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/2299/>

## Upper Yough - Maryland

Mondays and Fridays until Oct. 15; Saturdays Sept. 6, Oct. 4.  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/753/>

## Black - New York

Weekends and Fridays during September,  
 Weekends in October  
<http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1255/>

2003 Fall Release Calendar										
RIVER	August 30	September 6	September 13	September 20	September 27	October 4	October 11	October 18	October 25	November 1
Beaver	-	Sat Only	Sun Only	-	Sun Only	-	-	-	-	-
Dead	Sun Only	-	Sat Only	-	-	Sat Only	-	-	-	-
Deerfield	-	Sat - Sun	-	-	Sat - Sun	-	Sat - Sun	-	-	-
Gauley	-	Fri - Mon	Sat - Sun	Sun Only	-	-				
Kennebec	Every Weekend	Every Weekend								
Middle Ocoee	-	Sat - Sun	Sat - Sun	Sat - Sun	Sat - Tues	Wed - Mon	Thurs - Sun	Sat - Sun	Sat - Sun	Sat - Sun
Mongaup	-	Sat Only	-	-	Fri Only	Sat Only	-	-	Sun Only	-
Moose	-	-	-	-	-	Sun Only	Sun Only	Sat - Sun	Sat - Sun	-
North Fork Feather	-	-	-	-	Sat - Sun	-	-	-	Sat - Sun	-
Raquette	Mon Only	-	Sat Only	-	Sat Only	-	-	-	-	-
Fussell Fork	-	-	-	-	-	Sat - Sun	Sat - Sun	Sat - Sun	Sat - Sun	-
Tallulah	First 3 Wknds in Nov	Sat - Sun								
Upper Ocoee	-	Sat Only	-	-	-	-				
West	-	-	-	Sat - Sun	-	-	-	-	-	-

# TOP RIVER ISSUES 2003

## **Cheat River Land Sale, WV Issue:**

The sale of land on the Cheat and Big Sandy Rivers could result in the loss of traditional access points on both rivers.

**Goal:** To protect access to take-out for the Cheat and Big Sandy Rivers, as well as the Rockville put-in for the Big Sandy.

**Current Status:** In June 2003, despite a tremendous offer made by Governor Bob Wise, West Virginia narrowly lost a bid to purchase the Cheat Canyon and create a new wildlife management area. American Whitewater was a key member of the Cheat Canyon Coalition, a key supporter of this effort. This summer, we have been meeting with representatives of Allegheny Wood Products, the new owner, to insure access for paddlers, hikers, and other users. Much of the land along the Cheat Canyon and Big Sandy in Northern West Virginia has been owned by Allegheny Energy since the mid-1920's. It was purchased for a dam that was never built because of extensive caverns found in the walls of the gorge. Early this spring, the company, which had narrowly averted bankruptcy, decided to put the land out to public bid. With strong support from West Virginia Governor Bob Wise, a group of dedicated state workers developed an outstanding offer of \$9.4 million for the land. Interestingly, all the money came from federal, private, or special funds. Not one penny of general revenues was used. On May 29th Allegheny Energy announced that the winning bid, \$9.75 million, had been received from Allegheny Wood Products. This was slightly higher than the \$9.4 million bid received from the West Virginia DNR. The state offered to raise its bid by \$500,000, but was quickly rejected.

The sale of this land automatically terminated American Whitewater's 10-year lease of the put in for the Big Sandy at Rockville.

**Next Steps:** American Whitewater, a founding member of the Cheat Canyon Coalition, is meeting with Allegheny Wood Products to insure continued access to the Cheat Canyon and Big Sandy Rivers.

**Precedent:** Loss of access to this property would mean the loss of the take-out for the Cheat and Big Sandy Rivers, as well as the Rockville put-in for the Big Sandy.

*Contact: Charlie Walbridge,  
American Whitewater Board of Directors*

## **Access on Skykomish and Middle-Middle Snoqualmie, WA Issue:**

Acquiring land for public recreational access to meet the rapidly growing recreational demands for visitors from the region around Seattle.

**Goal:** For government agencies to acquire and develop useful public access points on primary Class II-IV whitewater rivers in the region around Seattle.

**Current Status:** In May, American Whitewater's Access Director Jason Robertson and StreamKeeper Tom O'Keefe met with King County Parks and Recreation to discuss development plans for a take-out and put-in on the Middle-Middle Snoqualmie. The County is very interested in developing the sites we identified,

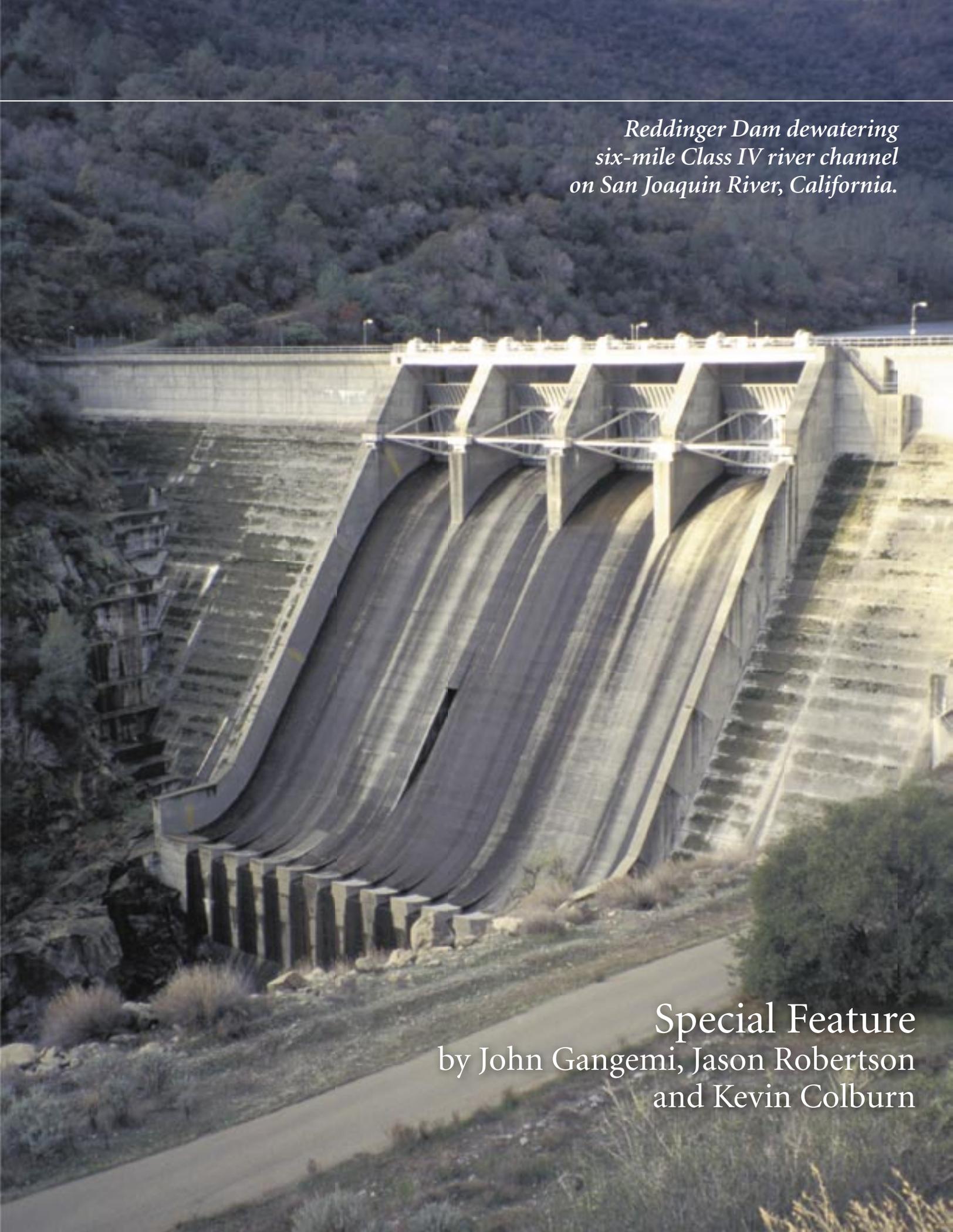
or at the very least allowing American Whitewater and our affiliates to develop the sites for the paddling community. In July, O'Keefe began circulating a proposal to develop these sites. This proposal is available on our website at [resources/repository/2220\\_rtca\\_proposal.pdf](http://resources/repository/2220_rtca_proposal.pdf).

Also in May, Robertson and O'Keefe toured the Skykomish watershed looking at potential access points. Use on this river continues to grow; yet access is inadequate. For kayakers, the best put-in is at the base of Sunset Falls on the South Fork of the Skykomish (elevation 500') – the traditional put-in. However this site was closed about 5 years ago. Currently, the best alternative access point is on Forest Service land above Powerline Rapid (1.9 river miles downstream from Sunset Falls). Additional access points include Forest Service land at the Hwy 2 bridge at mile 35.1, and on the North Fork at either the railroad bridge in the town of Index or Forest Service land near Llama Ledges less than a mile south of Index. American Whitewater is preparing a proposal for the Forest Service to formally develop the access point at Powerline. Our hope is that this will begin to solve some of the parking and access problems on the river. The obvious problem with this short-term solution is that 2 miles of whitewater are lost between Sunset Falls and Powerline, including at least one excellent play spot.

**Next Steps:** Submit proposals to the appropriate agencies and move to develop access points.

**Precedent:** If these proposals are successful, they will provide a model for future cooperative efforts between paddlers and government agencies in Washington State.

*Contact: Jason Robertson,  
American Whitewater Access Director*



*Reddinger Dam dewatering  
six-mile Class IV river channel  
on San Joaquin River, California.*

**Special Feature**  
by John Gangemi, Jason Robertson  
and Kevin Colburn

# Top River Issues of 2003 continued

by John Gangemi, Jason Robertson and Kevin Colburn

## Grand Canyon, AZ Issue:

There is a 25 year long wait list for private boater permits to float through the Grand Canyon.

**Goal:** Reducing the wait for private boater launch permits to 3 years or less.

**Current Status:** The Park will be issuing an environmental impact (EIS) statement in autumn, 2003. This EIS will list several alternatives for managing recreation on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. American Whitewater's Access Director Jason Robertson and American Whitewater Board President Kevin Lewis, a rafter, have been representing American Whitewater and private boaters at the stakeholders meetings sponsored by the Park Service. There has been one significant outcome of these meetings: at different times the commercial outfitters, wilderness advocates, and private boaters all expressed consensus that when we ran the computer model simulations using the Park's modeling program, we could easily craft scenarios that substantially increased total use AND did a better job of meeting the Park's measurable Limits of Acceptable Change for controlling ecological and social impacts than the current operational practices. This is significant, because each of our groups has approached this problem from radically different angles and perspectives. Each group believes an increase in use is a reasonable outcome of the Colorado River Management Plan (CRMP) EIS unless the Park identifies significant new impacts or concerns that are not captured in the models or literature they have provided to the public. Further, each group stated at different times in the meetings that any increase in use should be allocated to the private boaters as a fundamental matter of fairness, and each also expressed support for a primary alternative with a 50/50 division of allocation between commercial and private use. Related to these broad consensus points, American Whitewater has been advocating for the National Park Service Advisory Board to convene a meeting between the primary

recreational stakeholders to develop two viable management alternatives that meet private boater needs: one alternative would allow the continued use of motors, and one would phase out motors.

**Next Steps:** Continue to facilitate and encourage dialogue between all stakeholders and the Park Service. Submit comments on the EIS when it is released.

**Precedent:** The dialogue we have created on the Grand Canyon in the past year has opened doors at the Park Service and with our partners. American Whitewater is viewed as a professional organization capable of building bridges and looking out for the interests of both our members and the river resource.

*Contact: Jason Robertson,  
American Whitewater Access Director*

## Cheoah River Negotiations (Southeastern US) Issue:

Dam operator is offering no recreational enhancements to a dewatered world-class whitewater run and has abused the Alternative Relicensing Process.

**Goal:** Achieve a comprehensive mitigation package through the dam relicensing process that includes land protection, increased public river access, and the provision of a robust instream flow capable of protecting aquatic species and a reasonable annual schedule of recreational releases in the Cheoah River.

**Current Status:** After working diligently for three years on the relicensing of the dam that controls the Cheoah River, it became clear that the power company that owns the dam never intended to provide a single whitewater recreational enhancement. The relicensing process clearly showed that the Cheoah River would offer 9 miles of world class, Class III-IV+ continuous whitewater that would be highly desirable

to both commercial and private paddlers. The process also showed that each day of releases on the Cheoah would generate at least \$155,000 dollars for Graham County, North Carolina. These facts garnered strong support for recreational releases in the Cheoah from many stakeholders including American Whitewater, Western Carolina Paddlers, Carolina Canoe Club, at least six Commercial Outfitters, the United States Forest Service, and many other groups.

In the spring of 2003 the dam owner decided to only negotiate with a few stakeholders and to file its license application that proposed only five days of boatable flows (for ecological purposes). The recreation community was no longer invited to negotiation meetings, so American Whitewater and Western Carolina Paddlers filed nearly 50 pages of comments on the license application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Negotiations were continued without the recreation community present, and the current proposed settlement includes 18 boatable days of releases designed and scheduled for ecological purposes only. Most of these proposed releases are below the optimal flow for whitewater recreation and are scheduled primarily in the early spring. In addition, the dam owner is not proposing to provide adequate public access, to clear the live woody vegetation from the channel, to shape unplanned spills to make them boatable, or to protect a critical tributary watershed with high recreational potential.

**Next Steps:** The dam owner's decision to pursue a partial settlement with the exclusion of the recreational community seriously jeopardizes the hard work that dozens of groups have put in over the past 3 years and several key components of the settlement agreement as it exists. American Whitewater will continue to work with the dam owner and other stakeholders in pursuit of a comprehensive settlement. If the dam owner remains unwilling to mitigate the dams' impacts on the recreation community then American Whitewater will lead a coalition of recreational and environmental

interests in direct communications with FERC, and request a comprehensive mitigation package that meets all the stakeholders' needs.

**Precedent:** American Whitewater is a nationally recognized expert on dam relicensing and has signed dozens of settlements on rivers across the country. Our position on this issue will likely dictate the ultimate outcome of this seriously flawed and abused process.

Contact: Kevin Colburn,  
Eastern Conservation and Access Associate.

## Access to the Wild and Scenic Headwaters of the Chattooga (SC, NC, GA) Issue:

The U.S. Forest Service is proposing to maintain a ban on paddling the Headwaters of the Chattooga as a means of zoning what are being considered two incompatible uses, angling and paddling.

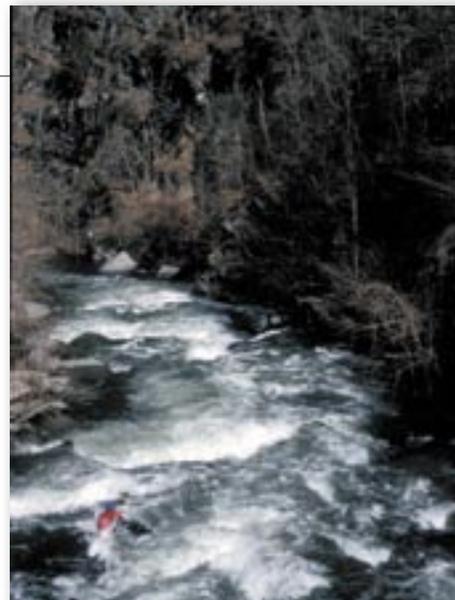
**Goal:** To have the U.S. Forest Service lift the ban on paddling the Headwaters of the Chattooga and acknowledge that paddling and fishing are compatible uses.

**Current Status:** After thousand of public comments requesting boating access to the Headwaters of the Chattooga and constant pressure from American Whitewater, The

US Forest Service (USFS) has finally studied the option of lifting the ban. We applaud the Sumter National Forest for listening to our concerns. The study comes in the form of a Draft EIS that will result in a revised forest plan. The USFS analyzed three basic alternatives relating to opening the headwaters to paddling, the first maintained the ban, the second partially opened one of three distinct sections based on season and water level, and the third opened the Headwaters without restrictions. The USFS's preferred alternative, prior to reviewing public comment, is to maintain the ban. American Whitewater is used to fighting an uphill battle on this issue and we remain optimistic that the USFS will lift the ban when they make a final decision early in 2004. Public comments were due on July 3rd, 2003, and now we are anxiously awaiting the USFS decision.

**Next Steps:** Work with the USFS in lifting the ban if that is their decision, or consider appealing a decision to maintain status quo.

**Precedent:** The Headwaters of the Chattooga is the only stretch of river in the USFS system banned to paddling for non-ecological reasons. This exception is in direct opposition of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as it was applied to the Chattooga River. The current justification for the ban (it changes regularly) would set a precedent that could have wide-ranging negative implications for all river enthusiasts. The justification being used is that backcountry angling and boating are conflicting uses and therefore must be zoned to avoid conflict. If this were applied across other rivers in the region



or the county, fishermen could lose access to half of the USFS controlled trout streams that they fish and boaters could similarly lose access to half the USFS controlled rivers they paddle. Obviously this would be a senseless disaster.

Paddlers and fishermen have demonstrated an ability to share other creeks in the Southeastern USFS system and throughout the nation without conflicts. Just over the ridge from the Chattooga in Western North Carolina American Whitewater and Trout Unlimited designed a mutually beneficial flow regime for the dam controlled Tuckasegee River that enhances the ecological integrity of the river while providing for quality fishing and paddling. Our contention is that fishing and boating are compatible uses of our mountain rivers on public lands, and that standard river etiquette is enough to avoid any potential conflicts. We will keep advocating for unrestricted access to the Headwaters of the Chattooga to protect access to all of our publicly managed rivers for all users.

Contact: Kevin Colburn,  
Eastern Conservation and Access Associate.

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# Top River Issues of 2003 continued

by John Gangemi, Jason Robertson and Kevin Colburn



Whitewater flow Study  
overseen by American Whitewater  
on Pit River, California.

## Pit River Dam Relicensing (CA) Issue:

Lack of consistent management standards of beneficial uses in hydropower license conditions on the Pit River.

**Goal:** American Whitewater seeks an annual schedule of summer whitewater releases that mimic natural flows in the Pit River reaches dewatered by hydropower operations.

**Current Status:** PG&E's hydropower operations on the Pit River dramatically dewater the Pit 3, 4 and 5 river reaches below each dam. Natural flows in the Pit River prior to dam construction rarely dropped below 2,000 cfs. As part of the relicensing process for the Pit 3, 4, and 5 hydropower project, American Whitewater requested Whitewater Controlled Flow Studies. Those studies indicated that flows equal to or slightly below historic natural flows provided ideal flows for whitewater recreation. In essence, the Pit River historically provided opportunities for whitewater boating 365 days per year. Today, PG&E's hydropower operations reduce the flow to 150 cfs in the natural river channel below each dam.

As a condition for the new 30 year hydropower license American Whitewater proposed a summer whitewater flow schedule for the seven-mile Class IV Pit 4 reach and the ten-mile Class III-IV+ Pit 5 reach. The schedule included releases in the Pit 4 and 5 reaches on consecutive weekend days equal to or below the natural hydrograph. In an effort to balance whitewater boating with other recreational uses in the river corridor such as angling, swimming and tubing, American Whitewater only requested one weekend in June and two in July, August and September as well as abstaining from whitewater releases entirely on the six mile Class III Pit 3 reach due to the high value anglers place on that reach.

Resource agencies objected to American Whitewater's proposal claiming in part that the flow fluctuations between minimum instream flows prescribed by the agencies and the whitewater flows do not adhere to the natural hydrograph and the flows will impact other flow dependent recreational users. American Whitewater contests the agencies opposition on both counts. Requiring whitewater releases to adhere to natural hydrograph metrics is inappropriate on a regulated river where the agencies have given the lion's share of the water resource to the utility for continued power generation. Compliance with the natural hydrograph should be universal for all recognized

beneficial uses including hydropower. American Whitewater believes summer whitewater releases can be managed in a fashion that minimize or eliminates impacts associated with flow fluctuations.

**Precedent:** Resource agencies once largely silent in hydro relicensing proceedings are now recognizing that aquatic organism life histories are adapted to the natural hydrograph of the river system. Unfortunately, the natural hydrograph concept has been applied inconsistently to all the beneficial uses. 

Contact: John Gangemi,  
American Whitewater Conservation Director



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# Safety: January-June 2003 Accident Summary

by Charlie Walbridge, Safety Editor

The first half of this year has been busy for anyone interested in whitewater accidents. High water in the East and good flows everywhere else has provided plenty of paddling opportunity. But with more people on the water there's a greater opportunity for trouble. From January through June we saw 11 kayak, 7 canoe, and 7 rafting fatalities. There were also several other casualties involving inner tubes and motorboats. The number of kayaking deaths is up slightly, but 4 of them, or 36%, involved people who were clearly inexperienced. This is significantly more than we've seen in past years, a clear result of the increasing popularity of kayaking with mainstream America. Significantly, 8 of the 31 victims wore no life vest and 5 were paddling alone. Demographically, 13 of the 31 victims were over 40. Young men between the ages of 18 and 25 - the stereotypical thrill-seekers - numbered only four!

These accounts are taken from a variety of sources, including newspaper clippings and personal narratives. Many were posted on Boatertalk, Mountainbuzz, and other paddling bulletin boards. Since it's impossible for one person to check all the relevant web sites and newspapers, I couldn't write this report without our regular safety correspondents. I'd like to thank Kathy Stretzky, Slim Ray, Aida Parkinson, Vince Thompson, Tim Bromelkamp, Pam Fitts, and the board and staff of American Whitewater for their ongoing support. I also appreciate those people who take the time to report on single incidents that occur in their area, or involving people they know.

## This has been the wettest spring ever on the East Coast,

so it's not surprising that a number of high-water fatalities occurred. According to a Boatertalk posting by Ann Connolly, Three men from Douglas, Alabama woke up on February 22nd and decided that the Locust Fork, which was flooding at 11.4 feet, would be fun in a raft. They found a \$25 raft and paddles at Wal-Mart but neglected to buy PFD's. They made one successful run from the Route 79 Bridge, and then decided to do it again. Just above Swan Bridge they hit a large hole and were thrown end-over-end into the rushing water. Two of the men swam to safety, but Darrell Fleming, 25, did not. Yelling, "I got the raft, don't worry, I can swim" he righted the boat and climbed back in. Unfortunately, he had no paddle! When he didn't appear at the next bridge survivors notified authorities. Search efforts were concentrated at Skookum Bluff, a waterfall downstream. Ultimately his family braved flooded trails to search the riverbank upstream of the falls and found his body.

### **Not all high water accidents involve inexperienced people!**

On March 14th, with the Youghiogheny at Ohiopyle running at a high 7.5 feet, local outfitter Joel Means launched a planned training trip on this popular summer run. Matt Painley, 19, was planning to come along. He was an experienced kayaker, but when he saw the gauge reading he backed down. Soon after they left, however, he changed his mind and put on alone. Means speculated that he might have been drawn by the perfect play waves that form just downstream, at the top of Entrance Rapid. Somehow he flipped and swam. He was

spotted by fishermen in the center of the river below Entrance Rapid, screaming for help. But without the protection of a wetsuit or a drysuit, the icy 43-degree water left him helpless. Guides, who launched soon after he did, found his lifeless body just above Dimple Rapid.

This same high water was seen in Ohio on March 16th when three kayakers decided to tackle the flooded Cuyahoga River Gorge, a class III+ run near Akron, Ohio. According to articles in the Akron Beacon-Journal, all three kayakers capsized within 100 yards of the put-in. The articles noted the use of life vests and helmets, and remarked on the absence of cold-water paddling gear. One man swam to safety, but the others did not. The bodies of Richard Jensen, 55, and Woodrow Sexton, 56, were recovered after a park ranger saw a body and several kayaks floating downriver and called emergency responders.

Fast current and icy water also proved to be a deadly combination for two paddlers on Ohio's Maumee River. According to the Toledo Blade, on March 16th Arthur Sexton, 72, and Homer Turner, 67 were fishing for walleye in an 18-foot fiberglass boat. They decided to drop anchor in the swift current. The water poured in over the transom, swamped the boat, and dumped the two men into the icy water. One man was wearing a life vest and the second man was holding onto one as they washed past startled downstream fishermen. Rescue squads were called; one man was found dead, and the other disappeared.

On March 27th two solo canoeists drowned in separate incidents separated by many miles. At 2:00 PM Walt Given (60's) was seen by a WV-DNR officer launching his canoe at a public boat access below Kanawha Falls. The water level was medium-high, about 13,200 cfs. A story in the West Virginia Wildwater Association newsletter SPLASHES said that Mr. Given wobbled briefly in the squirrely water below the 18' drop before capsizing. Although he wore a PFD, getting to shore on this wide, fast river was going to be tough. The DNR officer called 911, then

launched his boat. He found Mr. Given floating facedown in a channel between the beach and an island. He administered CPR unsuccessfully. That same day, a Massachusetts man was reported missing after he failed to complete a canoe trip down Central New Hampshire's tiny Fowler River. He eventually washed ashore and was found the following morning. He was not wearing a life vest.

Jeff Mayfield, a very experienced kayaker from Fairmont, WV, died at Big Splat on West Virginia's Big Sandy Creek. Mr. Mayfield, who had over 100 successful runs down this challenging Class V+ drop, was paddling on April 13th with long-time partner Jason Black. He was in the lead when he lost his line in the entry rapid and dropped into "The Horseshoe", a nasty three-sided ledge hole. Here he flipped. He attempted two rolls, then bailed out. By now he was right at the lip of the second drop on the far right. He washed over the 15 foot-high ledge and disappeared completely. Jason Black ran the second drop and chased Mr. Mayfield's boat, but it was empty when he got there. Working with other paddlers, he began a thorough search of the area. Mr. Mayfield's helmet and sprayskirt washed out after a time, but there was no sign of him.

Firefighters from Bruceton Mills were mobilizing when I arrived at the put-in for a late afternoon run. The Incident Commander asked my group to go down to Big Splat and assist. We arrived and began a thorough search of the base of the falls, supporting the aggressive wading of Jim Snyder and J.B. Sea. Long saplings were cut, and the entire area was carefully probed. We found nothing. We paddled out at dusk, but Black and several friends returned to maintain a vigil.

During the next week the weather remained clear, and the river level dropped steadily from 5.8. Active searching continued until Friday. A search dog alerted at the base of the falls, signifying the presence of a body. Teams of paddlers from Morgantown, Fairmont Ohio, and Friendsville overlapped and worked continuously, supported initially by local Fire and Red Cross Personnel. Signs were posted at all access points asking for clues to Mr. Mayfield's whereabouts. A generator was brought in to illuminate the falls at night. Active recovery efforts ceased on Friday, but the vigil was maintained until a scheduled memorial service eight days later.

During the service a call was received from a hiker who saw a PFD recirculating at the base of the drop. The core group returned the next day, and Jeff Snyder recovered Mr. Mayfield's body. The group placed him in a large duffel bag, lashed him to a ladder, and carried him out. While authorities normally prefer that a body be left undisturbed, they were greatly impressed by this group's tenacity and resolve.

On April 25th a family from Germany paddling a borrowed canoe capsized in the vicinity of Chain Bridge on the Potomac River in Washington, DC. According to the Channel 9 News website, the canoe carried a 43 year-old man and three 12-13 year-old children. No one was wearing a PFD. The boat was probably overloaded, and because the area is at the bottom of Class IV Little Falls Rapid tricky currents may have contributed to the boat's capsizing. Three of the paddlers swam to shore while a third was plucked from a rocky mid-river outcrop by the DC Harbor Patrol. The fourth, Jennifer Lonert, could not be found.

The Wind River is a challenging Class IV-V run that drops into the Columbia River Gorge on the Oregon side. According to the Portland Columbian Lauren Orton, 32, was thrown out of a commercial raft and washed over a 6 foot high ledge on April 27th. Her PFD and helmet surfaced, but she did not. Several days later her body had still not been located.

Jeff Ellis, an expert kayaker was killed on Shakelford Creek in Northern California's Klamath River Drainage on May 3rd. He was paddling with a group affiliated with Ashand Mine Productions, a whitewater video production company in Oregon. According to the Medford, Oregon Mail-Tribune, Jeff ran a 15-foot waterfall successfully, but was pulled back into the reversal from a downstream eddy. The article noted that his boat was full of water, making control very difficult. His friends threw him a rope and eventually one of them swam in after him. But despite all this, he drowned. Details of this incident are still sketchy, and anyone knowing more is encouraged to contact AW's Safety Committee.

The South Fork of the Yuba below Washington, California is a classic Class IV run. According to The Union, a local paper, it was running at 2000 cfs, a high level, on the afternoon of May 4th. That was when

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# Safety: January-June 2003 Accident Summary continued

by Charlie Waldbridge, Safety Editor

David Edrington and his partner began their run. Mr. Edrington, 52, bailed out of his kayak and washed over a ledge. After surfacing, he was able to hold onto his friend's kayak for a short time before losing his grip. After he disappeared, his partner called 911. A helicopter located the victim's floating body and directed rescuers to him.

A run over a low-head dam on the Androscoggin River in Northern New Hampshire proved to be a fatal mistake on May 11th. According to an article in the Manchester, NH Union Leader, two out of a group of three kayakers elected to run a dam about a half-mile north of the junction of Routes 16 and 2 in Gorham. Neither man was wearing a life vest. Both men capsized at the bottom. One man made it ashore, but Randy Corrigan, 21, disappeared. He was paddling a boat that he'd bought only two days earlier.

Paddlers throughout the country were shocked and saddened by the death of 30-year veteran kayaker Jim Rada, who died following a thrashing on the Presque Isle River in Northern Michigan. Mr. Rada, 52, had pioneered the run decades earlier. That day he was on the river with a large group of friends from Minneapolis. According to an excellent report written by John Kiffmeyer, the water levels were moderate and the weather was fine. After scouting Class V Triple Drop, Mr. Rada ran third. He dropped into a large hole in the bottom drop and surfed for several minutes. After popping out, he made a few weak roll attempts. A safety boater rushed up and saw that he'd let go of his paddle and was not moving. Then Mr. Rada and his boat were washed into Class V Nokomis Rapid, which lurked at the end of a short pool. Here he was yanked from his boat by a large hole and his life vest was torn off.

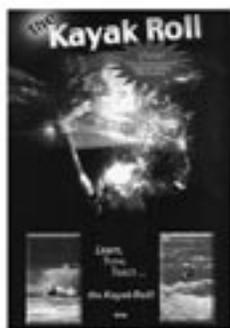
The group scrambled down the shoreline, but could do nothing. His body was seen briefly, floating deep in an eddy, but could not be reached safely. Then he disappeared. The group continued to search the area before paddling downstream to notify authorities.

The next day paddlers worked closely with state and local police to recover Mr. Rada's body. A helicopter spotted him about a mile below Nokomis, trapped under a log. Paddlers released his body, attached a line, and swung him to shore. An autopsy discovered signs of the massive heart attack that ultimately overcame him.

On May 25th the water in the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in central Idaho was running 6.5' (8800 cfs), which is extremely high. A tree had fallen across Marsh Creek, a high-water tributary to

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the Middle Fork commonly used for early season access. This would be the scene of the first of two fatalities reported by Vince Thompson's Idaho Whitewater Page. First Matt Bartley, a veteran professional guide, was oar-boating when he hit his head on the overhanging log. The impact knocked him out of his raft and he was never seen again. Because he was not wearing his PFD or helmet, a successful rescue was unlikely. Later, a 15-foot boat was found pinned in a logjam. A raft apparently hit a rock bar and Vaughn Jones fell out of the back of the boat. While attempts were made to retrieve him, the raft drifted downstream and wrapped on a large rock. Mr. Jones disappeared and has still not been found.

A group of Eastern rafters got a rough ride on Section IV of the Chattooga River, which forms the border between Georgia and South Carolina. AW's Don Kinser reported that the Route 76 gauge was reading a beefy 2.2 feet on May 26th when a six-man raft elected to make the run. Reaching the Five Falls, they pinned in the lower part of Class V Jawbone Rapid. Most of the occupants scrambled to safety, but Tony Cobb, 42, elected to stay with the raft. It came free and headed into Class V Sock-'em-dog rapid where it became stuck in a nasty hole. Mr. Cobb became entangled in a line connected to the raft and could not escape.

Kayaker Andy Leifheit was driving along the Narrows of Colorado's Poudre River on May 31 when he spotted a solo kayaker below a big drop, struggling to roll against a steep cliff. As described in a post to Mountainbuzz.com, he grabbed a PFD, helmet, and throw bag and scrambled down the steep banks to assist. He found an empty kayak floating in a roadside eddy. Heading downstream, he found several river guides at a roadside access and reported the incident. Driving back upstream, he was flagged down by a woman just above the Lower Narrows Bridge. She and her companion had just pulled a man out of the river. His helmet was missing and there were several severe head wounds. They began CPR; other boaters arrived at the scene, and one of them, an EMT, took over. They continued until authorities arrived. Several days later the lone paddler was identified as L.W Jenks, a 26-year-old truck driver whose car was found at an upstream campground.

Time ran out for a man paddling a canoe with his father and sister in Glenwood Canyon of the Colorado River. According to

the Glenwood Springs Post-Independent, the accident occurred on May 31 at 6:00 PM just below the Reverse Curve Tunnel. There are some riffles and tricky currents here at low water, but the river was nearing peak flows at the time. Life jackets were carried, but not used. After the canoe capsized, two paddlers and a dog made it safely ashore. Erich Fritz, 32, was very close to safety when he slipped beneath the water's surface. Several days later he had not been found, but his canoe washed over Shoshone Dam and was recovered by highway workers.

There were two tubing accidents in early June on whitewater rivers. On June 1st James Owens, 40, was tubing California's Class III Cashe Creek with his 13 year-old son. According to the Lake County, CA Record-Bee, the man fell off his tube in the vicinity of "The Washing Machine" and disappeared. His son hiked out 3 miles to Highway 20 where he was able to flag down a motorist. "He was wearing a life jacket" the sheriff's department said, "but we don't know about the father." Rescuers in a helicopter and on foot searched the area, but were hampered by the rugged terrain. Three days later search dogs alerted at a cave-like depression in a riverside cliff, but rescuers couldn't reach the spot. On June 8th a 55 year-old woman was tubing on a class I-II stretch of Washington's Stillaguamish River when she washed into a logjam. According to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, her friends pulled her free and performed CPR without success.

On June 2nd another strainer proved fatal for James Nelson, 35, on the North Fork of the Skykomish River. According to a post on heraldnet.com, he and a friend were making the run when he flipped and swam. He was last seen holding onto his boat. After his companion was unable to find him he notified authorities. A helicopter located Mr. Nelson's body in a logjam at dusk, and authorities made the recovery the following morning. He was wearing a PFD and wetsuit, but no helmet. Authorities said, "These people were not experienced in the water and should not have been there."

Colorado's Arkansas River was running at 3,100 cfs, a very high level, on June 2nd. According to a note sent by Renee Wilson, David Borrell, 47, was running safety for a raft on the "Fractions" section when he capsized just below the "Miracle Mile". The rafters were unable to rescue him,

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# Safety: January-June 2003 Accident Summary continued

by Charlie Waldbridge, Safety Editor

and eventually he got away from them. Rescue Squads mobilized, pulled him from the river downstream and administered CPR without success. Further details are unavailable, and anyone knowing more should contact AW's Safety Committee. Note that this was the third instance where a single accompanying boat was unable to make a rescue.

Water levels were also high on the Upper Delaware River, which forms the border between Pennsylvania and New York. This Class I-II float trip is very popular with first-timers. According to the National Park Service Morning Report a group of 54 high school students was rafting the section from Staircase Rapids to Matamoras, PA on June 2nd. At some point one of their boats capsized in the water. Three of the four students survived. The fourth, Obinna Okoro, 17, disappeared without a trace. Contrary to a signed agreement with the livery, he'd removed his life vest. Members of the Delaware River Safety Patrol, a volunteer organization, noted that many of the kids had removed their life vests and that teachers were all clustered together in one raft instead of being spread out. It apparently took the group some time to notice anyone was missing. The New York State Police was notified, and began a search by helicopter, by boat, and on foot. A week later his body had still not been found.

On June 9th Nathan Raymer, who had just graduated from college, drowned on the Watauga River at Trash Can Falls. It's unclear which section of this Northern Carolina River they were paddling, or exactly what happened. His group of 8 was paddling what the Salisbury, NC Post described as "individual rafts", probably duckies. The river was high, and several of their boats pinned on rocks. During the ensuing rescue Mr. Raymer just slipped away. Rescue workers found his body 200 yards downstream. Anyone with more information should contact the AW Safety Committee.

A church outing ended tragically on June 18th on Western Pennsylvania's French Creek. A canoe carrying two teenaged girls hit a downed tree and capsized, trapping the pair under water. When two women accompanying the girls were unable to help them, rescuers were called. Firefighters used a boat to approach the tree. They cut it to pieces with a chain saw, releasing the bodies.

Two men were presumed dead after a motorboat they were test-driving washed over a dam on the Great Miami River near Hamilton, Ohio. Kevin Loder, 24, and Danny Brodnick, 49, were in the boat when the motor on a 26-foot cabin cruiser stalled out above the dam. A third person dove off the boat and swam to safety. A bystander saw the boat turn sideways in the hydraulic and flip. People were seen clinging to the boat as it bounced and twisted, then bodies were spotted floating in the river later. Rescuers had their hands full getting this very large craft to shore.

The body of a kayaker who disappeared while paddling New Jersey's Raritan River on June 22nd was found early the following morning. Brian Tomasa, 37, was paddling alone. Although the section near New Brunswick, NJ is a popular class I-II run, it was running 5 feet above normal. No one knows exactly what happened, but there are several dangerous low head dams on the run as well as numerous strainers, bridge piers, and other obstacles in the relentless current.

American Whitewater depends entirely on its members and friends to produce this accident summary. The information we acquire is added to our Safety Database, the largest collection of its kind in the world. Created by former Safety Chair Lee Belknap and accessible at [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org), it provides a real-world basis for our safety policies. Please forward accident descriptions, newspaper articles, personal accounts, and any other material of note to [ccwalbridge@cs.com](mailto:ccwalbridge@cs.com) (Rt. 1, Box A43B, Bruceton Mills, WV 26525). 

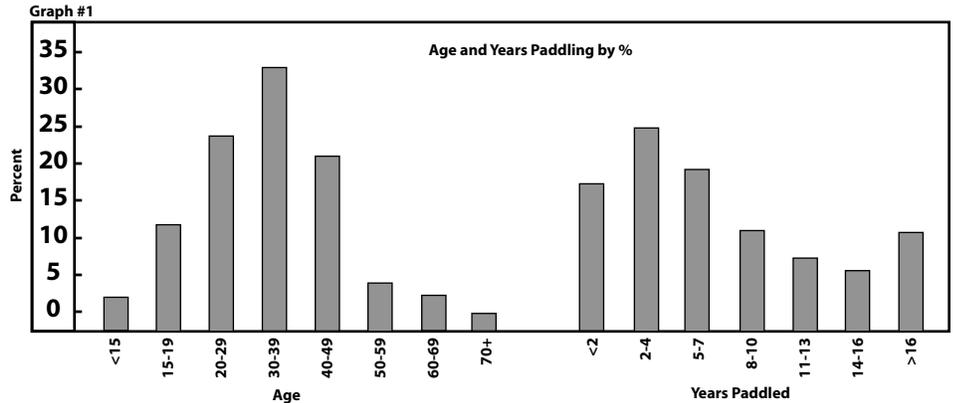
**Remember:**  
the best way to cut down on gossip and speculation after a serious incident is to prepare an account of what happened and get the word out. In addition to club newsletters, local and regional bulletin boards are an increasingly important tool. It's always useful to post a copy on the American Whitewater Forum. Found on AW's web site, [www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org), the page focuses on conservation, access, and safety programs. While run as a part of Boatertalk, it contains very little casual chat.

# Safety: Injury Survey

by Mike Stano and Rick Schoen

Following are the summary results of a whitewater injury survey conducted between June and December, 2000. The survey, which included both multiple choice and open-ended questions, was posted on the internet and passed out at river takeouts in Washington State. Surveys were excluded if incomplete or inconsistent; 319 usable questionnaires were collected with data on age, days per year paddled, years paddled, and paddling style. Information on injury types included those of acute and chronic nature. Acute injuries are traumatic events with short duration of symptoms, and chronic injuries are those with a slow onset and long duration of symptoms.

Men accounted for 72% of respondents. A third of those surveyed were between the age of 30 and 39, with a significant drop in paddlers after age 50 (Graph 1). Paddlers



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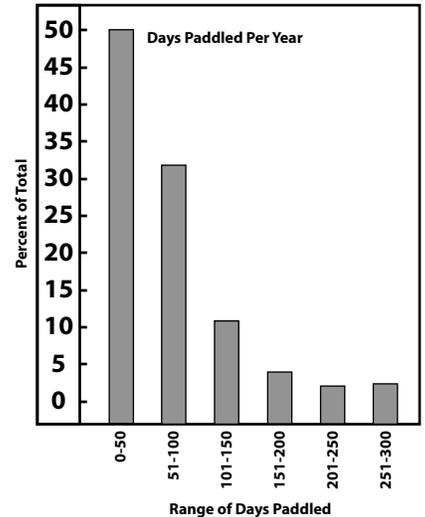
# Safety: Injury Survey

by Mike Stano and Rick Schoen

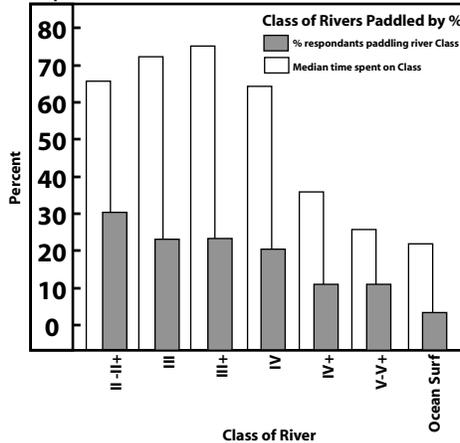
had an average of 7.3 years of experience with half paddling 50 or less days per year (Graph 2).

Graph 3 represents the percent paddling each class of river, along with the percent of those who spent half of their time paddling on that specific class of river. The majority paddled Class II through IV rivers with approximately a quarter paddling Class V rivers. In terms to style of paddling, half of those surveyed playboated (rodeo), followed by creeking, then slalom. "Other" on graph 4 includes all other forms of paddling such as ocean surfing and downriver racing. Because respondents paddled more than one style and class the total does not equal 100%.

Graph #2



Graph #3



Paddlers in the survey reported 388 acute injuries or 1.2 injuries per respondent and 286 chronic injuries or 0.9 injuries per respondent. Seventeen percent reported no injuries. Graph 5 represents the percent of acute and chronic injuries within each region of the body, medical attention received, and whether surgery was required. The shoulder region accounted for the greatest region of both acute and chronic injuries with a significant number seeking medical treatment for acute shoulder injuries; fortunately, only a small percentage required surgery. It is interesting to note that a relatively small percentage of respondents reported acute or chronic injuries in the head/face/neck region, but of those, a significant number sought medical attention.

The survey also included questions regarding equipment, specifically helmet face guards, bent shaft paddles, and feather angle of paddles (Table 1). Eleven percent reported utilizing a helmet face guard; 69% reported a face guard prevented facial injuries. It is unclear whether bent shaft paddles reduced the number of acute or chronic wrist or elbow injuries; only 12% of the respondents used a bent shaft paddle and no determination could be made on their effectiveness. Due to wrist problems, 13% decreased the feather angle of their paddle; of those, 73% reported the reduction in feather angle helped decrease their symptoms.

**Table 1  
Equipment Utilized**

Face Guards 11%  
Ben Shaft Paddle 12%

Paddle Feather Angle

0o 6%  
45o 45%  
60o 26%  
80o 9%

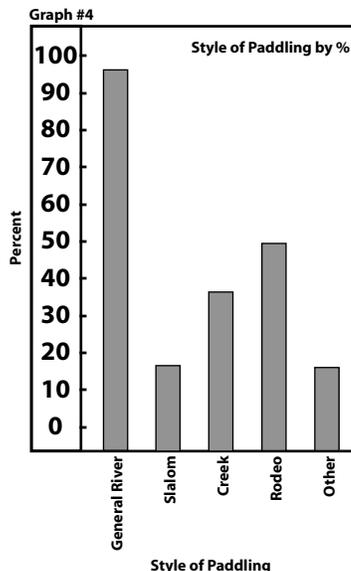
On an outside note, 14% reported diagnosis and treatment for giardia infection, and two thirds felt it was a direct result of paddling. The reported giardia infection rate in the U.S. for the general population is 4%. Blisters represented the most common minor injury; foot blisters accounted for one fourth of those surveyed, and nearly every paddler experienced hand blisters. Less than 5% reported changing their paddling habits because of blisters.

While our findings are interesting and raise additional questions, they are by no means scientific. Surveys of this type have significant limitations; we did not randomly select our respondents and did not have an equal number males and females to compare. In addition, there may have been an under representation of injury-free paddlers as many of these may not have completed the survey because they had no injuries to report. A majority completed the survey via the internet; which biased the survey to paddlers with computers and internet access. There is also recall/memory bias; some information may not be accurate for injuries sustained several years ago. The majority of paddlers participate in a variety of paddling styles;

therefore, it is difficult to make exact comparisons and draw sound conclusions. The results were based on a limited population; therefore specific conclusions related to the general paddling population cannot be made.

The conception and ultimate results of the survey developed from professional interest and love of the sport. The authors would like to thank those who loaned their expertise and advice, especially Tim Byer, MD, MPH, from the University of Colorado and Marlene Eggers, PhD, from the University of Utah. There were numerous paddling clubs and organizations that posted links to the web site, including the American Whitewater. Most of, all we would like to thank all of the paddlers who responded. 

If you would like specific data or would like to review the entire survey, please refer to Wilderness and Environmental Medicine, June 2002. Questions may be directed to Michael Stano, MS PT, CSCS, [mjstano@worldnet.att.net](mailto:mjstano@worldnet.att.net).



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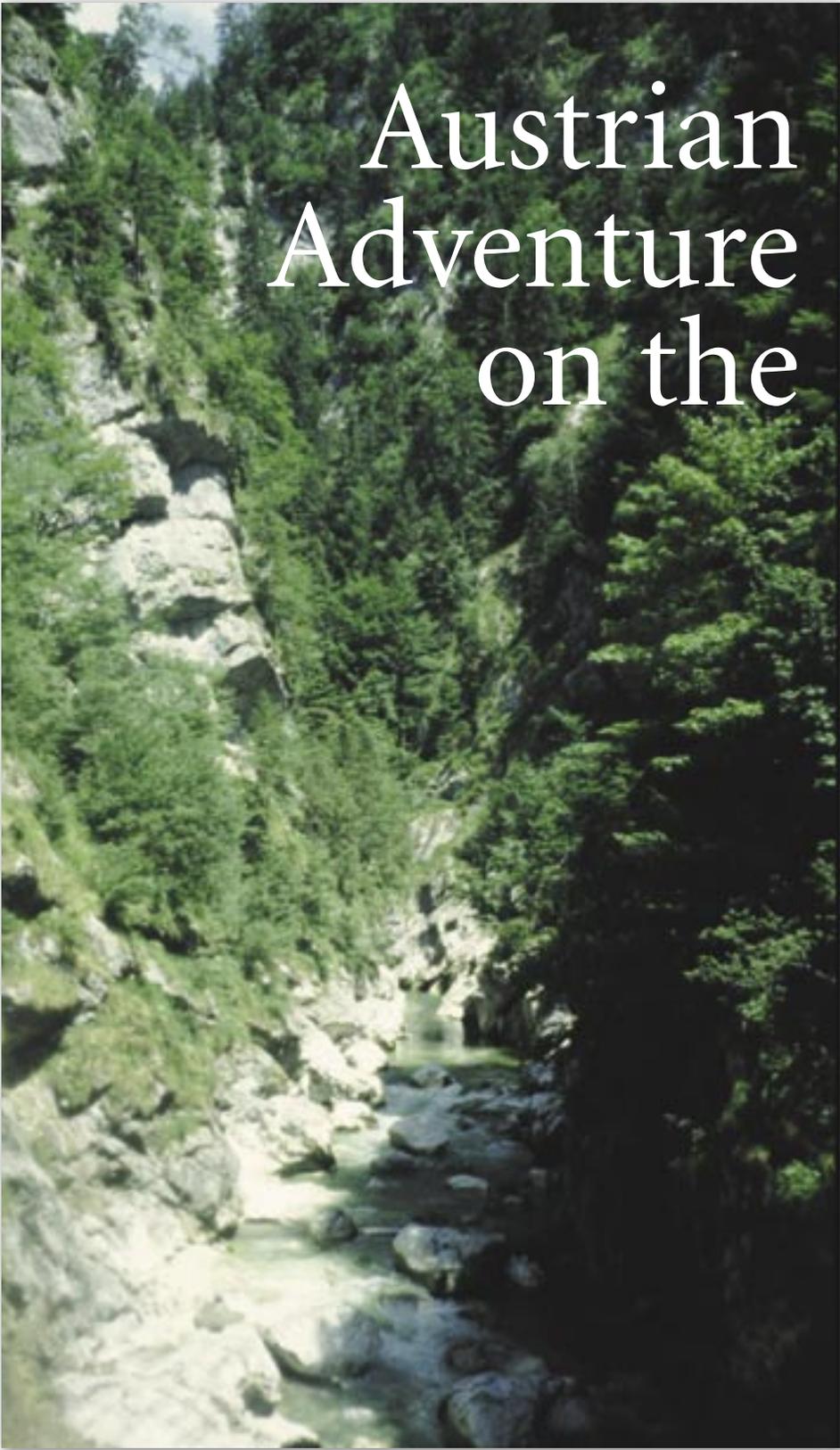
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# River Voices: Austrian Adventure

by Steve Frazier



## Austrian Adventure on the

# Brandenberger Ache

I waited patiently at the take-out for the lower Brandenberger Ache. I had arrived at about 9:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, hoping to get in a good day of boating before leaving Austria. I had to pick up a friend in Milano, Italy on Monday morning.

There were 5 sections of the Brandenberger Ache described in "White Water Europe, The North Alps", an excellent guidebook by Peter Knowles. At the top of the watershed is a Class III-IV section that actually begins in Germany before entering Austria. Usually it only has ample water in the early season and sees little use. Next is the one kilometer long Kaiserklomm (Klomm=gorge), a Class V gorge that narrows to 3 meters at its narrowest. The next run down stream combines two Class III-IV gorges, the Pinegg Gorge and the Weis Gorge, into one four kilometer run. This ends at the put-in for the Class V Tiefenbach Gorge, a four kilometer long run, that is the most difficult on the river. At the end of the Tiefenbach Gorge is the put-in for the fifth and final section, the lower Brandenberger Ache, a Class III-IV section six kilometers in length.

I had just left my friends from the Netherlands after a week of boating in Slovenia and Austria and was by myself. I was hoping to hook up with some local boaters (hopefully English speaking ones) for the day. I decided to wait at the gauge, thinking that folks would stop and check the level. It was located at the end of the bottom section, described in the guidebook as the most popular run on the river. At about 10:00 a.m. people slowly started showing up to check the gauge. My plan to meet boaters, I thought, was going to work. However, the first few groups either spoke little or no English or were headed to one of the Class V sections.

Normally, back home in the Appalachians, I would be up for some Class V, but things sometimes seem a little different when I am on another continent, by myself, and boating with people I don't know. I also had another reason to be conservative on this particular trip. Everything about it was very expensive, including getting my canoe across the Atlantic Ocean. Shipping, storage, customs fees, and the cost of building a crate for my boat was a total of about \$1150! Fortunately I was able to put

a friends boat in with mine and we split the cost. However, the point here is that I knew this was a one-way trip for my Caption, so I brought an old, well used one. The plastic had worn a little thin in spots from all the steep creeking I love, and it had few patches here and there. I knew it couldn't take too much more abuse and one week into a two-month trip was no time to have a boat wreck. I knew replacing it would be impossible.

The rivers of the Inn Valley seem to be mostly high volume and pushy by nature. They reminded me of rivers in the western U.S. in that respect. And although the Brandenberger Ache was smaller and more technical than most, it was still forceful and powerful. Since I am more used to the rivers and creeks of the Appalachians, I decided it would be best if I spent the day on one of the Class III-IV sections.

Eventually, a group of about ten Germans showed up and graciously agreed to let me come along on their trip. They hadn't decided exactly which section(s) they were going to do, but told me they had a few intermediate paddlers with them and

would probably combine a Class V section for the hair boaters with a Class III-IV section for the intermediates. I explained that I wanted nothing to do with the Class V, but would gladly wait with the others and join the group on the easier stretch. After a short discussion among themselves they decided that the six most experienced boaters would do the Kaiserklomm and then continue on with the rest of the group on the Pinegg and Weis Gorges section. The entire group would then take out before the Tiefenbach Gorge.

Our caravan of cars and vans began up the road that runs near the river. The Brandenberger Ache is a beautiful river despite the fact that a road runs up the valley with it. The road can seldom be seen from the river, but it was nice to know that it was there, just in case it was needed.

When we arrived at the take out, I left some dry clothes in their van. We drove up the river and parked at the bottom of the Kaiserklomm. At that point Matze, the guy that seemed to be the sort of unofficial trip leader, said that they were going to inspect the entire Kaiserklomm (one km) from an

And although the Brandenberger Ache was smaller and more technical than most, it was still forceful and powerful.



Timmy: Dad said he bagged over 50 first descents back in the day!

Mom: Timmy, your father is a #\$\$%&\* liar he ran shuttle while I did all those runs

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# River Voices: Austrian Adventure continued

by Steve Frazier

old mining trail that went up the river right side. He asked me if I wanted to come with them. I accepted, once again stating I didn't want to paddle any Class V, but just so I could see it. I was a bit curious.

We began walking up the gorge, which was fairly wide open and Class III in nature at that point. I started thinking maybe I should do this if it doesn't get too difficult. At that very moment, a humorous cartoon from the guidebook flashed into my mind. It shows three boaters standing by a river scouting, pointing, and talking as we all do when scouting difficult rapids. One of them has his arm outstretched and is pointing at something in the river. The caption reads, "Nigel finds his excuse". I thought to myself, "This is a Class V run. I am sure I will find my excuse and help with shuttle on this section."

As we got further upstream, the gorge began to narrow and I saw a steep drop. From our vantage point 30 meters or so above it looked like a Seven Foot Falls on the Chattooga, both in size and difficulty. I can do that I thought to myself.

As we continued upstream the gorge narrowed even more and was now only three or four meters wide with no eddies in sight. However, the rapids were easier looking Class III again. Of course I am thinking that I can handle this. We had walked what seemed to be at least half a kilometer and I still hadn't "found my excuse". The next feature upstream was a fairly tough three move rapid. First was a one-meter drop with a big hole. Next was a smaller drop that required a move back to the left where a small tongue was located. The right side had some rocks that formed some pretty substantial pourovers. If you made it left to the tongue, a one-meter boof put you into the easier Class III rapids below.

I stood there for several minutes and thought, "Sure, I can do this as long as I run the top drop on the right." This would allow me to miss the big hole, move left onto the tongue, and boof. Then I could paddle the narrowest part of the gorge,



which was Class III, and eddy out above the last big drop. I could then bail if I needed to before running it. Pretty straight forward I thought.

I asked my new friends if there was anything of consequence above here. When they said no, I asked if I could join them. Usually when I am far from home and in a situation where I am paddling in a group of strangers that aren't used to seeing canoes on Class V white water, I get one of two reactions when I ask if I can come on a difficult river. The first is the "Sure, we would love to see someone try this in a canoe!" Most of the time when I get this response, I figure they want to see some carnage. The second response is one of concern. Lots of boaters outside the southeastern United States don't have much experience or knowledge of what people can paddle in open canoes and are sometimes understandably a little skeptical and cautious. These folks had neither of the standard responses. They simply agreed to help the foreign stranger down the river. They seemed to trust my judgment.

We quickly drove up to the put in, changed

clothes and walked the 200 meters down to the river. I managed to slip and fall on my butt about half way down the wet slick path, providing some cheap entertainment for the others. At the put in, the river was calm, clear, and beautiful. As we made our way down stream, the group offered to let me be last in line, an offer I eagerly accepted. If something were to go wrong, it was nice to know they would be ahead of me.

After we went about 100 meters or so there was a Class III surfing wave to warm up on. I was last to leave this small, friendly wave. Just below it was a small Class III rapid with a long pool below, where several people were waiting. After I ran the rapid and joined them in the eddy I asked, "Are we down to where we finished scouting yet?" After one more, small rapid was the reply.

As the last kayaker peeled out, I gave him several seconds to get ahead of me and I followed, figuring I would try and duplicate his line. As I entered the current and got beyond the point of no return, I saw my probe go down a small drop and

then watched as his bow came straight up in the air. Of course I realized that there was a big hole at the bottom of this "little" drop, but it was way too late now. I went through the middle of it and was about half full of water. I was now at the point where we had finished scouting and really needed to have an empty boat and wished I were on river right. Well, I was half full of water and on river left, headed straight for the big hole. I had no choice but to line up and punch it as best I could. I went in, sank down to my chest in the hole, and as I came out I heard a loud CRACK. Not really having time to determine where the sound came from, I proceeded down stream, looking for the tongue in the next drop, which I found and was able to paddle through. The boof rock below had a small slot just to the left of it and I was somehow able to squeeze through it.

"Ok, I'm past the hardest part now and I'm still floating", I thought to myself. Well, the Class III rapids I was expecting below the

hard part was a little more difficult than I had anticipated. Luckily, after about 200 meters I was able to stop my fully laden canoe on a sort of eddy line formed by a small out cropping in the gorge wall. I was able to sort of surf with both ends of my boat being pushed against the side of the gorge. Not perfect, but at least I was stopped.

The water was very deep, so obviously stepping out of the boat was not an option. So I started bailing the water out of the boat with my helmet (I really have to start carrying a bailing bucket!) As I was doing this, I looked down to see that the thwart just in front of me had broken in half! Apparently that is what made the loud cracking noise. "That's ok," I thought, "I have a spare in the car."

I bailed and bailed and bailed for what seemed to be forever. I kept thinking that the few times I had been in this situation before it hadn't taken this long to empty

the boat. But I kept going and finally got it down to only 3-4 inches of water in the bottom. As I looked closer at the bottom of the boat, I noticed a 12-15 inch crack where water was coming in!

From the scouting hike I remembered there was a big eddy above the last big drop on river right. I thought this would be a better place to get my act back together than semi-pinned on the side of the gorge with the current rushing by. I carefully paddled down there and finished bailing the water out as much as I could. I then ferried over to the small eddy above the big drop where I could actually get out of my boat and dump the remaining water out.

"Wow!" I thought to myself. "I am finally on the side of the river with an empty canoe, ready to continue down stream." Then something dawned on me. It had taken me about 10 minutes to make it to the last rapid in the gorge. It had



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# River Voices: Austrian Adventure continued

by Steve Frazier

probably taken my new paddling partners about one. They must be wondering where I am! If I had been waiting at the bottom for someone, I would certainly be worried about him or her.

Nonetheless, considering recent events and my inaccurate assessments of the rapids upstream, I decided to spend a moment scouting this last drop from the shore. Needless to say, it was much bigger, taller, and pushier than it was from the path. The worst part seemed to be that the hole at the bottom of this virtually unportageable rapid was a lot bigger than I thought. I have always heard people say "It's always bigger at water level," and "Add a Class if you're scouting from the road." What a time to realize how true that is!

I got back in my boat, realizing that it was going to be filling up with water from the split in the bottom. I lined up on the horizon and found my spot. I hit what I thought was the perfect line, but I clipped the side of the hole at the bottom. Just as I planted a forward stroke, the front end of the canoe came straight up in the air. My 14' canoe was completely vertical. Right when I thought it was going to go over backwards, the hole released me and I was horizontal again.

I made the first eddy I could get to and bailed my injured boat. A hundred meters or so later I found my new paddling friends waiting for me. They were both relieved and ready to hear what had happened. After another short stretch of

Class III we were safely at the take out for the Kaiserklomm.

Well, my paddling day was over. I spent the rest of the afternoon walking back up to my car and retrieving my clothes from the lower take out vehicle. On the walk back up the scouting trail I was able to relive the carnage. And it did look easier from up there. Maybe next time I am in a similar situation I will remember that it is bigger at river level. It sure would have saved me a lot of trouble this time, but I would have missed out on one hell of an adventure! 

**Author's note:** *I would like to offer a special thanks to the folks that took me down this river. They are Matze Mendel, Frank Burgel, Vdo Brugel, Frank Mallhaus, Viktor Klaus, and Volkes Baucks.*



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# Pool Slalom Racing is Gaining in Popularity

by Chuck Hines

It's a long, long way from the calm water of the YMCA's indoor pool at Green Bay, WI, to the raging rapids of the Isere River at Bourg St. Maurice, France, where the 2002 World Whitewater Slalom Championships were held, but **Rebecca Bennett Giddens** managed to make the journey.

Not only that, but she finished first for the U.S. in K-1-W (women's kayak) at Bourg St. Maurice, no easy feat since racers representing more than 40 countries were entered in the world competition.

Now 24, Rebecca started kayaking at age 9 with her father, mother, brother, and sister at a Green Bay Y canoeing and kayaking camp. Soon thereafter, she began serious practicing under the supervision of Coach Ray McLain, using both the local river and the YMCA pool, where a number of slalom gates were hung.

Eventually she made the U.S. Junior Team and then the U.S. Senior Team and participated in the 2000 Olympic Games at Sydney, Australia, placing seventh, all leading up to her appearance on the victory stand at Bourg St. Maurice. She now stands a good chance of qualifying for the 2004 Olympics, which will be contested at Athens, Greece.

The utilization of pools for slalom practices by kayakers and canoeists dates back to 1962, when the first slalom gates were hung in the Dartmouth College pool. The initial pool slalom race was conducted there in the spring of 1963, requiring the competitors to maneuver through 10 gates and perform an Eskimo roll in the process. This race was won by Jay Evans, who went on to serve as the U.S. Olympic Whitewater Slalom Coach in 1972.

Over the years, many other pools around the country have been used for slalom practices. In 1979, the YMCA in Asheville, NC, hung gates and conducted its first pool slalom, featuring visiting national K-1-W winner Linda Harrison. Five years later, Asheville's young 14-year-old star, Mark Mathews, won the Y's



*Rebecca Bennett Giddens, seen here on the victory platform after winning the K-1-W event at the 2002 World Whitewater Slalom Championships, started out as a youngster paddling in the Green Bay, Wisconsin YMCA pool program.*

annual pool slalom race, and a year later, he was crowned the 1985 U.S. junior K-1 champion at the nearby Nantahala River. Says Mathews, who is still winning races nowadays in the Asheville area, “We did a lot of pool slalom practicing and racing in those days, primarily during the winter months. I remember doing the ‘double English gate’ repeatedly at our practices, with our coaches timing us, so when we moved outside to the rivers each spring, we were ready.” Eight Asheville youngsters who took part in the program at the Y during the ‘80s ended up competing internationally.

More recently, USA Canoe and Kayak, or USACK, the sport’s governing body, began promoting pool slalom racing nationally. The initial effort came in 1997, under the supervision of Wayne Dickert, a 1996 U.S. Olympian in C-2 (a two-man canoe), who now serves as Director of Instruction for the world-famous Nantahala Outdoor Center in NC. Dickert says, “So many pools were being used for winter slalom practices that we decided it was time to have a national event. We drew up rules, sent them out,

and encouraged whitewater coaches to contact their local pool managers and arrange for practice time, followed by a formal pool slalom race. Then we collected the timed results from around the country and announced the winners. It was a BIG hit from the beginning.”

Since 1997, USACK’s annual Pool Slalom Challenge has attracted every level of athlete, from German Olympic gold medalist Oliver Fix and half-a-dozen U.S. Olympians to absolute beginners, some of them quite young. Two years ago, Dickert’s C-2 partner at the ‘96 Olympics, Horace Holden, participated in the pool slalom event at Asheville’s Warren Wilson College with his sons Isaac, 7, and Simon, 5.

David Hearn, a two-time World champion and three-time U.S. Olympian in C-1 (single canoe) who now teaches and coaches in the Washington, D.C., area, says,

*Olympian Joe Jacobi, a 1992 gold medalist in whitewater slalom racing, is seen here with 7-year-old Trey Howie in the 2002 Charlotte, N.C., pool slalom race.*

“Pool slaloms are fun, and also instructive. There are categories for men and women, boys and girls in every age group – cadets, juniors, seniors, masters – and for all types of kayaks and canoes, from the sleek slalom racing boats to the more familiar recreational boats. It’s a very good, very safe introduction to slalom racing which may or may not lead participants to the more difficult whitewater races outside on the rivers.” Hearn and his sister Cathy and his wife Jennifer, all of them Olympians, have won national titles in USACK’s Pool Slalom Challenge, but as good as he is, David Hearn says, “The most fun I had in a pool slalom was sharing the cockpit of my canoe with my son Jesse two years ago.” Jesse was two at the time!

Typically, however, pool slalom practices and races are most beneficial for aspiring teen athletes, such as twin brothers Jeffrey and Russell Johnson from the small town of Franklin, NC. Representing the Nan-tahala Racing Club, a 400-member non-profit athletic organization sponsored by the larger Nantahala Outdoor Center, the Johnsons, as 15-year-olds in 1998, won



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## Pool Slalom Racing continued

by Chuck Hines

USACK's Pool Slalom Challenge in C-2, defeating ten other C-2 duos from around the country in the timed competition. Using this triumph as a stepping stone, they went on to win half-a-dozen other national junior championships on various rivers and then represented the U.S. internationally. "We actually did out timed pool slalom on a flat-water pond at the Nan-tahala Village Resort," Russell Johnson recalls. "It was similar to a small outdoor pool. So indoor and outdoor pools can be used, and even ponds."

The USACK Pool Slalom Challenge takes place from mid-January through March each year, and any reasonably-sized pool (or pond) can be utilized, with five "gates" hung from ropes stretched across the pool to create the slalom course. Practices are held to acquaint local kayakers and canoeists with the rules, and then the formal, timed event is conducted at each venue, with results forwarded to USACK for compilation and comparison.

For the several hundred pools in the U.S. already being used for Eskimo roll practices by kayakers and canoeists and for other pools seeking innovative activities, slalom can be an added attraction, bringing in new revenue for the pool management and new paddlers for local clubs, which generally have no problem paying pool rental fees. Almost always, the clubs will provide the necessary equipment such as boats, paddles, helmets, spray-skirts, and life-jackets. The gates used for slalom racing can be hung and removed in a matter of minutes. More often than not, paddlers are willing to use pools at times when no one else is inter-ested. In fact, 2002 World whitewater gold medalist Rebecca Bennett Giddens remembers using the Green Bay YMCA pool on Sunday nights when she was a beginning kayaker. "We had a large group of kayakers and canoeists of all ages, and we had a very good coach, and we had the Y pool to ourselves for a couple of hours," she recalls. "Those were good days, without which I'd never have made it to the top in this difficult sport." And then she adds, with a laugh, "Pool slalom racing surely beat our only other winter option in WI which was breaking through the ice and paddling in snowmobile suits."

For further information about using pools for slalom practices and races, contact Brian Parsons, Director of Slalom for USACK, at Bpslalom@aol.com or 703-875-6001 (phone or FAX).

*Note: Results of the most recent Pool Slalom Challenge, conducted during the winter months of 2002-03, are available at [www.whitewaterslalom.org](http://www.whitewaterslalom.org).*

About the author: Chuck Hines is a former slalom racer and coach who developed the YMCA of the USA's national whitewater paddling program in 1982. More recently, he's served as President of the Nantahala Racing Club, which has placed its athletes on the 1992, 1996, and 2000 U.S. Olympic Teams while also winning five national championships.

## Utilizing Pools For Paddling Practice

Dave Kurtz, coach of the excellent youth team from State College, PA, which won the '02 U.S. Whitewater Slalom Junior Olympics held at Golden, CO, reports that his youngsters use both the local YMCA pool and the Penn State University pool for their indoor/winter practices. The YMCA, which has a 4-lane pool, charges \$40.00 per hour and permits paddlers to use the pool on Sunday afternoons. The university, which had a larger 6-lane pool, charges \$48.00 per hour and, because of its busy aquatic schedule, restricts the paddlers to Friday evenings, which, Dave says, "seems to work out okay for us." He adds, "We charge our kids \$5.00 to \$8.00 for each practice session, which we pass on to the pool managers to cover the rental costs."

Over a dozen pools in and around the Washington D.C. area were utilized last winter for indoor kayak instruction and practicing. A partial listing of those numerous pools and programs can be found at [www.toad.net/~tony.allred/rollsessions.htm](http://www.toad.net/~tony.allred/rollsessions.htm). All the various elements of pool kayaking – basic instruction, Eskimo roll practicing, slalom racing, flat-water freestyling, socializing with other paddlers – were carried on in those pools. Based

Even though the pool seen here is narrow, it can still accommodate four slalom gates, which can be used to teach a variety of paddling strokes and skills.



on the information received, the average fee charged ranged from \$5.00 to \$7.00 per paddler, per visit, for unstructured practicing, and from \$10.00 to \$20.00 per paddler, per lesson, for instructional classes. Most of the sessions were conducted on Sundays during the winter months, thus providing additional income for pool management on a day of the week when many pools were otherwise closed or poorly attended. The indoor pool at St. Albans School in D.C. was used once again for slalom racing as part of USACK's Pool Slalom Challenge.

Chris Wiegand of the Dawson School in Lafayette, CO, indicates that approximately 50 youngsters use the school pool for kayak practicing on Sundays from 3:30 - 7:30 p.m., with each participant paying \$5.00, thus "generating an extra \$250.00 per

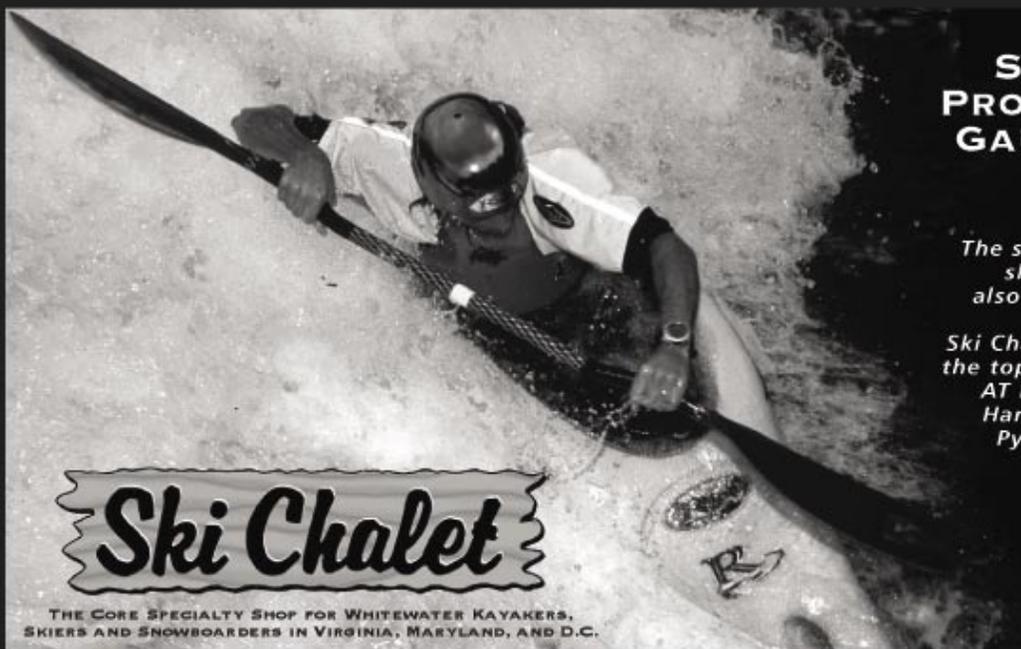
week for the pool operation," says Chris, who currently has 31 boys and girls on his slalom racing team.

At the Durango, CO, Community Recreation Center, the new pool kayak program "has taken off with great success," according to Aquatics Coordinator Betsey Theobald. "We offer open kayaking practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. for anyone who would like to come in with their kayaks and practice rolls, tricks, or just paddle around. There's no charge to our Center members, while non-members pay \$7.00 per visit. We also conduct a kids' kayaking class that includes instruction, for which we charge a higher fee. A local man will be bringing in some slalom gates and setting them up so we can conduct a pool slalom event as part of our

next winter festival. We'll also be starting a pool kayak polo program as soon as the goals arrive."

Marge Cline of the Chicago, IL, Whitewater Association states that this organization has been using a number of YMCA and school pools for indoor instruction and practicing for the past 25 years. Last winter they used five different pools. "Some years ago, we used a local wave pool and conducted pool slalom races in the artificial surf which were highly attended," Marge remembers, "but that pool is no longer available." Nowadays, the fees vary from pool to pool, and while slalom racing was a good activity in the past, Marge says that their "Pool Olympics" has become more popular, with upsidedown races, rescue relays, throw-rope tosses, etc. In addition

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# Pool Slalom Racing continued

by Chuck Hines



to the instruction, there was a 90-minute “open” pool session on Sundays last winter that usually attracted 20 to 30 recreational boaters, each of whom paid \$5.00 to the pool management.

The Nantahala Racing Club of NC and the Asheville YMCA have had a good working relationship for many years. The club provides all the equipment and instruction free to interested youngsters, and the Y provides one of its pools on Thursday nights, 6:45 - 8:30 p.m., at a minimal rate, charging only for the life-guarding costs. While the YMCA doesn't derive any extra income from this program, a former Y aquatic director states that the “good will” created by the youth kayaking, which in the past enrolled a large number of inner-city youngsters, is worth it, particularly since

the Y also opens one of its pools on Friday nights throughout the year for adult kayak practicing, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., charging \$7.00 per person and averaging about \$100.00 weekly in additional income from this program. Incidentally, two recent U.S. youth champions – Patrick Keller in Junior K-1 freestyle, Jim Wade in Junior Olympic K-1 slalom – were among those practicing in the Asheville YMCA pools last winter.

Warren Wilson College in suburban Asheville uses its indoor pool for kayak practicing and conducts a yearly slalom competition as part of USACK's Pool Slalom Challenge. The college's former varsity canoe and kayak coach, Will Leverette, says, “We have a beautiful slalom course with numbered gates which we can set up in our 6-lane, 25-yard pool

You're never too young! That's the 18-month-old Jesse Hearn with his dad, Davey Hearn, a world champion and three-time Olympian, in the 2002 pool slalom event conducted at the St. Albans School in Washington D.C.

in no time. For the annual wintertime competitive event, we usually charge the kids \$5.00 and the adults \$10.00. I think we made about \$200.00 last year from this three-hour event." The college's new coach, Lecky Haller, a world champion and two-time Olympian, adds, "We hope to have a number of current U.S. Junior Team members competing again in our 2004 pool slalom."

The Chattanooga, TN, Whitewater Kids' Club last year won their state's 4-star award for recreation programs, the highest award presented by the TN Parks and Recreation Association, after teaching basic paddling skills to 1,000 Chattanooga area youngsters, including some from the inner-city. One of the Chattanooga youngsters won a U.S. junior slalom championship the preceding year. Shaun Smith, the club's slalom coach, reports that "we used the pool at the Univ. of Tennessee-Chattanooga on Tuesday nights last winter. We have

permanent brackets on the pool wall and the ropes from which the slalom gates are hung can be stretched across the pool, and removed, in about one minute. We're also planning to start playing some kayak polo in the near future." The club has recently changed its name to Rapid Learning.

"Twice weekly, Tom Long and his family and other volunteers come and teach kayaking at our indoor pools," declares Charisse Coles of the Boise, ID, YMCA. "We've been doing this for many years. We run instructional sessions from 6:30 -7:30 and again from 7:30 - 8:30 in the evenings, with about 10 to 12 participants in each session, and we charge \$5.00 per visit to our YMCA members and \$7.00 per visit for non-members. Tom's three sons have all been members of the U.S. Slalom Team, and the program has de-veloped several other slalom and freestyle champions from the Boise area."

A beautiful Olympic-size pool at the Rio Bravo Resort in Bakersfield, CA, is used for kayak practicing by paddlers in that area, mostly youngsters. "We use the pool on Tuesdays and Sundays, 6:30-8:30 p.m.," states Patti Leveque of the Kern River Alliance. "The number of kids will vary from week to week, but often we've have 20 boats in the pool. It's a hoot. Yes, slalom is included in our program. The kids usually pay \$50.00 per year and the adults \$100.00 per year. The resort's pool is also used for our annual, popular Gold Medal Camps, in which U.S. Olympians are brought in to teach the youngsters. Last year we had Olympians Eric Giddens and Rebecca Bennett Giddens as instructors, plus others."

Just down the road in Los Angeles, "there's a permanent set of pool slalom gates at a place called the Hansen Dam Aquatic Center in Lakeview Terrace, at the north end of LA," says Terry Valle, who headed



*Saleem Penny, a student and paddler at Warren Wilson College, has fun in the pool with 8-year-old Charlie Hobart, the grandson of author Chuck Hines. Charlie has already paddled sections of the French Broad, Tuckasee, and Ocoee Rivers.*

# Pool Slalom Racing continued

by Chuck Hines

up the U.S. organization that hosted the Wildwater World Cup Championships on California's Kern River last summer. "This is a man-made lake situated in a park operated by the Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Dept. We have five numbered slalom gates in one corner of the lake, and there's a regular group of paddlers coming out to use them. The gates are an excellent teaching tool, and the slalom course helps paddlers practice diagonal moves, s-turns, off-sets, and other techniques. There's no charge, as the Rec. Dept. wants to encourage the use of the lake, which is also being used for kayak polo."

The State of Washington has long been a mecca for whitewater kayakers and sea-kayakers. The Washington Kayak Club's web-site last winter listed six pools in the Seattle-Tacoma area that were offering pool practices. At four of the sites, the practices were scheduled for Sunday mornings; at one, Saturday mornings; and at one, Wednesday nights. Club members paid \$5.00 per visit and non-members \$10.00. There was also some flat-water slalom training and kayak polo occurring on Lake Washington. Many of the participants have been involved with The League of Northwest Whitewater Racers, which annually conducts a comprehensive schedule of slalom and wildwater races, as well as operating an outstanding web-site which can be accessed at [www.nwwhitewater.com](http://www.nwwhitewater.com).

The Green Bay, WI, YMCA, where 2002 World Champion Rebecca Bennett



Giddens once practiced, is still offering kayaking instruction on Sunday afternoons and evenings during the winter months, according to the Y's Kevin Huggett. "It's our local paddling club that provides all the equipment and does all the teaching," he says, "and we are charging \$80.00 per instructional course for YMCA members, \$100.00 for non-members, with the YMCA and the club splitting the income. Since the loss of our long-time coach, Ray McLain, we're not doing as much slalom practicing," Kevin admits, "but we still offer the basic instruction and some roll practices, and it continues to be a very popular winter program for us."

Back in Atlanta, GA, U.S. Olympians Joe Jacobi and Matt Taylor have developed a pool kayaking and canoeing course for the Buckhead YMCA. Over 30 Y members

*"That way to the Ocoee," says former Nantahala Outdoor Center head instructor Gordon Grant to Nantahala Racing Club's duo of Horace Holden and Wayne Dickert, shown here practicing at the YMCA pool in Asheville, N.C., prior to representing the U.S. at the 1996 Olympic Games on the Ocoee River.*

attended an introductory session last November, with regular classes scheduled to start soon thereafter. "We will eventually offer some pool slalom racing," Joe states, "and we're also planning to conduct a team-building experience for Y staff members at the Ocoee River, site of the 1996 Olympic whitewater slalom races." This is just another example of how pool training and practicing can eventually result in increased participation out on America's rivers. 



*Pools situated in metropolitan areas can be used for bringing various ethnic groups together. Seen here is a group preparing to practice at the YMCA pool in Asheville, N.C., in a program jointly sponsored by the YMCA, the Nantahala Outdoor Center and the Nantahala Racing Club, which, since its inception in 1978, has put over 600 children into kayaks.*

# Corporate Sponsors Update

by AJ McIntyre

## Wave Sport Increases Support for AW

Signing on as a Corporate Sponsor of American Whitewater, Wave Sport has increased their support of American Whitewater from last year! Providing unrestricted funds for AW to support its missions, Wave Sport continues to be a leader in the whitewater industry. Their sponsorship in 2003 furthers AW's mission of access, conservation, and safety, while helping educate both boaters and outdoor enthusiasts about whitewater issues.

For more information as to how your business can support American Whitewater, please contact AJ McIntyre, Corporate Relations Director, at [aj@amwhitewater.org](mailto:aj@amwhitewater.org) or 301.589.9453

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# Club Affiliates

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Club Affiliates are extremely important to American Whitewater. As part of our effort to reach out to clubs, and their members, we've recently unveiled some exciting new programs. Take a look at the offers below and contact our office to find out how you can get involved.

## **Free DVD Player and LVM Subscription!**

– American Whitewater club affiliates have between now until July 31st to get 50 of their club members to join American Whitewater. If your club meets this requirement, you will receive a FREE DVD player, one year DVD subscription to Lunch Video Magazine, AND a 'best of' LVM DVD! The program starts retroactively, from the first of January – so if you've already had 50 members of your club join AW, you can take advantage of this promotion. Please e-mail or call Nick Lipkowski for more details.

## **\$500 ClifBar Grant for Regional Club Projects!**

– Your club now has the opportunity to compete against other clubs in your area for a \$500 Clif Bar Grant. ClifBar has joined forces with American Whitewater to offer this unprecedented deal. Eligible clubs can submit proposals for river-related projects and winners will be announced at each of our three flagship events this summer.

Club Affiliates by State:

### **Alaska**

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

### **Alabama**

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

### **Arizona**

Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assoc.,  
Flagstaff

### **Arkansas**

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

### **California**

Chico Paddleheads, Chico  
Gold Country Paddlers, Lotus  
Sequoia Paddlers, Windsor  
Shasta Paddlers, Anderson

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, San Jose  
Sierra Club Rts., Sacramento

### **Colorado**

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area,  
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Colorado Rocky Mt. School, Carbondale  
Colorado Whitewater Association,  
Englewood  
Pikes Peak Whitewater Club, Manitou  
Springs  
Pueblo Paddlers, Pueblo West  
Rocky Mountain Canoe Club, Littleton

### **Connecticut**

AMC Boston Chapter, Bloomfield  
AMC CT Chapter, Stafford Springs

### **Georgia**

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

### **Idaho**

Idaho Rivers United, Boise

### **Illinois**

Chicago Whitewater Association, Cary

### **Indiana**

Hoosier Canoe Club, Indianapolis

### **Kentucky**

Bluegrass Whitewater Association,  
Lexington  
Viking Canoe Club, Lewisville

### **Maine**

AMC Maine Chapter, Pownal  
Hurricane Island Outward Bound, Newry

### **Maryland**

Greater Baltimore Canoe Club, Kingsville  
Garrett Community College Adventure  
Sports, McHenry  
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Boonsboro  
Monocacy Canoe Club, Frederick  
Calleva Paddling, Germantown

### **Minnesota**

Boat Busters Anonymous, Oakdale

### **Missouri**

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

### **Montana**

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

### **Nevada**

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

### **New Hampshire**

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

### **New Jersey**

AMC NY-NJ Chapter, Rockaway  
Garden State Canoe Club, Millington  
Hunterdon Canoe Club, Flemington  
Mohawk Canoe Club, Trenton  
The Paddling Bares, Milltown

### **New Mexico**

Adobe Whitewater Club of NM,  
Albuquerque

### **New York**

Adironac Rafting Co, Lake Placid  
Clarkson Outing Club, Potsdam  
FLOW paddlers Club, Rochester  
Housatonic Canoe & Kayak Sq, Ossining  
KCCNY, Garrison  
Town Tinker Tube Rentals, Phoenicia  
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Dunkirk

### **N. Carolina**

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

### **Ohio**

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KSU Kayak Club, Kent  
Outdoor Adventure Club, Dayton  
Toledo River Gang, Waterville

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Outdoor Rec. Center, Corvallis  
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Holtwood Hooligans, Lititz  
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley

Philadelphia Canoe Club, Philadelphia  
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Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

### **S. Dakota**

Whitewater! Discussion Board, Spearfish

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Elizabethton  
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville  
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E. Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge  
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Chattanooga

### **Texas**

Bayou Whitewater Club, Houston  
Rockin' 'R' River Rides, New Braunfels  
Texas Tech Outdoor Pursuits, Lubbock

### **Utah**

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

### **Virginia**

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg  
Blue Ridge Voyageurs, Reston  
Canoe Cruisers Association, Arlington  
Coastal Canoeists Inc., Richmond  
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke  
Richmond Whitewater Club,  
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### **Vermont**

Vermont Paddlers Club, Jericho

### **Washington**

Associated Students, Bellingham  
Kayak Pursuits, Redmond  
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 Association,  
Charleston  
West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Elkins

### **Wisconsin**

Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, La Crosse

### **Wyoming**

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## **Membership Notes**

2003 has been and will continue to be a year of change at American Whitewater. One of our top goals is to take better care of our existing members, which means making it easier for you to renew, find out what projects we're working on, and better yet – get involved. As part of this effort, we'll be using the journal more often to communicate with you. Below is a list of frequently asked questions regarding membership. Please take a look at the list and if you have anything further, check out our website or e-mails us! Correct contact information can be found below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you have a suggestion, comment or question not covered here, please send it to:

Nick Lipkowski  
Office Manager  
American Whitewater  
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# Guidelines for Contributors



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies,

and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. You are legally responsible for the accuracy of such material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

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

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

## Release For Publication

- I hereby release my work (literary, graphic or photographic) for publication in American Whitewater magazine.
- I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.
- I understand that I will not be paid for my work.
- I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation or agency in this work.
- I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an American Whitewater publication.
- I promise that this material has not been and will not soon be published by another magazine or publication and the rights to this material are clear and unrestricted.
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- I understand that the contents of American Whitewater Magazine, including my contribution, will be archived on the American Whitewater web site.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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Send your material to:  
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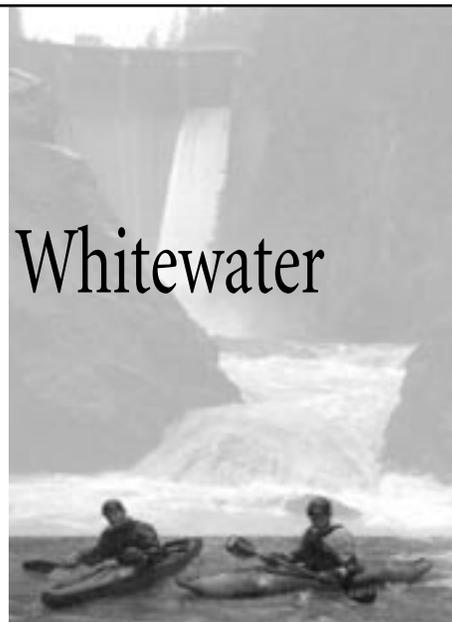
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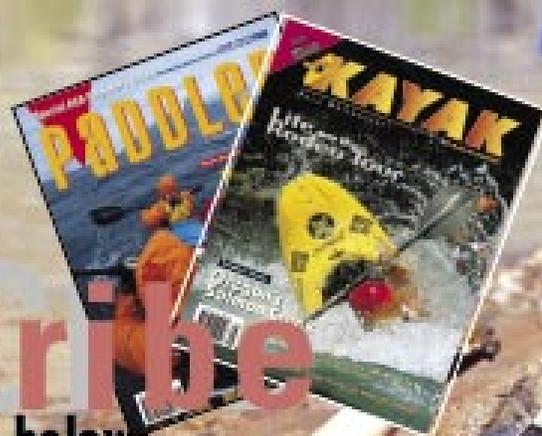
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