



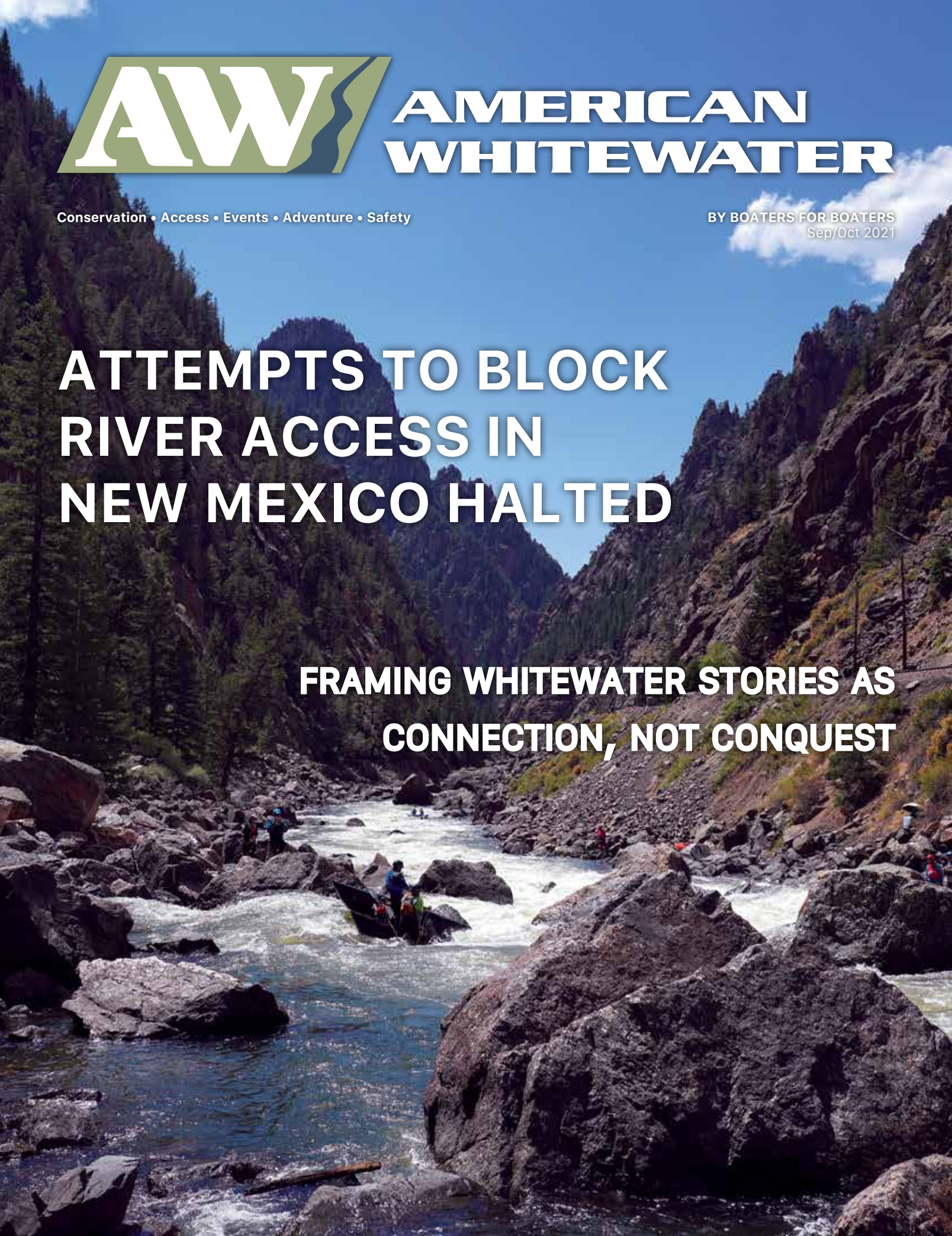
AMERICAN WHITEWATER

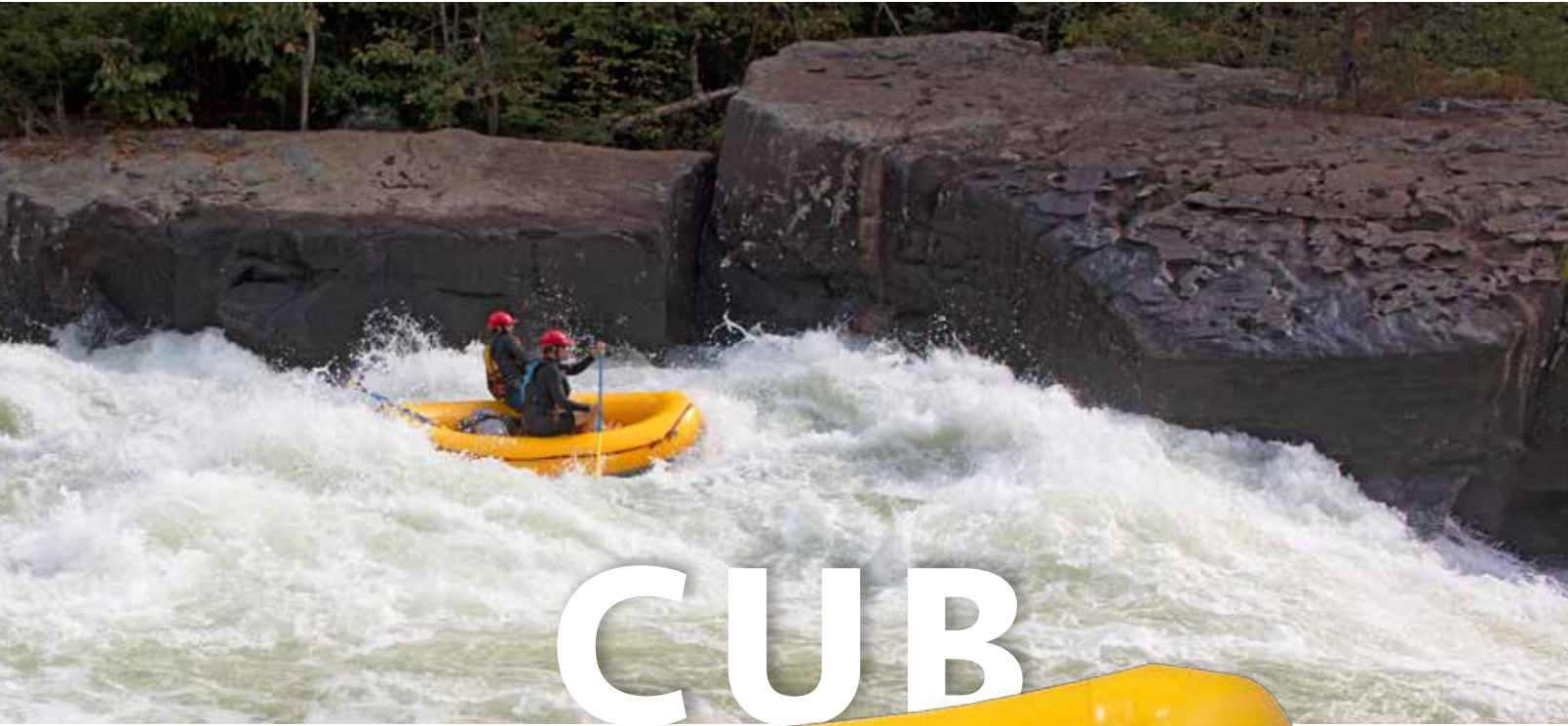
Conservation • Access • Events • Adventure • Safety

BY BOATERS FOR BOATERS
Sep/Oct 2021

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FRAMING WHITEWATER STORIES AS CONNECTION, NOT CONQUEST





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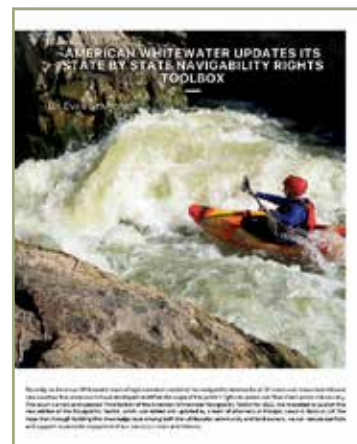
A VOLUNTEER PUBLICATION PROMOTING RIVER CONSERVATION, ACCESS AND SAFETY

American Whitewater Journal

Sep/Oct 2021 – Volume 61 – Issue 4

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Cover Photo

The Gore Canyon Race, a celebration of the Upper Colorado River, has a long storied history in Colorado. In 2016, American Whitewater resumed organizing the event, providing paddlers with a yearly opportunity to come together and enjoy the river, a key component of our regional stewardship approach. Boaters who frequently enjoy their rivers step up to protect their rivers. Our work protecting boating flows in the Upper Colorado has a direct relationship to the enjoyment of the river's canyons and whitewater parks we've helped facilitate, making the Gore Canyon Race and Festival a perfect setting for the celebration of our work and the river's impact on the community.

PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD

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PURPOSE

RIVER STEWARDSHIP: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

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

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

CONSERVATION: AW's professional staff works closely with volunteers and partner organizations to protect the ecological and scenic values of all whitewater rivers. These goals are accomplished

through direct participation in public decision-making processes, grassroots advocacy, coalition building, empowerment of volunteers, public outreach and education, and, when necessary, legal action.

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

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

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

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

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

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Founded in 1954, American Whitewater is a national non-profit organization (Non-profit # 23-7083760) with a mission "to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely." American Whitewater is a membership organization representing a broad diversity of individual whitewater enthusiasts, river conservationists, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates across America. The organization is the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States, and connects the interests of human-powered recreational river users with ecological and science-based data to achieve the goals within its mission. All rights to information contained in this publication are reserved.

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AS I WRITE this introduction to the *American Whitewater Journal* it's the dog days of summer. That phrase usually refers to the oppressive days of August, when heat and humidity leave us sluggish, exhausted, and yearning for relief. Like many of you, I feel like the dog days have been going on for the last year and a half. When Covid first hit in March of 2020, there was a rally to "pivot" and rethink guidelines for paddling during a pandemic; many of those guidelines became standard ways to interact. We also made the incredibly difficult decision to cancel in-person events last year and this summer to move to a scaled down event mix.

If the last year and a half haven't been enough to set folks on their heels, there is now a terrible fire season in the far west impacting many rivers that are important to this community. In yet another "pivot" the staff at American Whitewater released a new online mapping tool, the Wildfire Information Map (available at americanwhitewater.org front page through 12/21). The tool brings together the American Whitewater National Whitewater Inventory with the latest wildfire information. As an example, the Dixie Fire has now burned over 730,000 acres, has total personnel of over 5900 individuals, and is only 41% contained (as of 8/24/21). The Dixie Fire has also burned the event site for Feather Fest (CA) leading to the cancelation of Feather Festival and yet another "pivot."

Sadly, the impacts from fire don't end when the fire is put out. An example of post-fire impacts is what happened in Glenwood Canyon with the closing of I-70 for a period in August when several mud and debris flows were triggered during heavy rainstorms. The mudslides are a result of the Grizzly Creek Fire that burned 32,631 acres in 2020. The debris flowed into the Colorado River at Barrell Springs altering the course of the river. A similar tragic event happened on the Poudre River (CO) in an area that burned last year from the 326-square-mile Cameron Peak fire. Debris flows as an aftermath of fire is not just a western thing; the Nantahala River (NC) has experienced road and river closures as a result of fires that burned in 2016.

As many of you have seen in the press, there is a lot of news about the increased traffic to public lands and parks. It's true, Americans love their public lands and rivers now more than ever. If there has been a silver lining to the last year and a half, it is the value Americans place on their ability to get outdoors and find solace in nature and on rivers. That urge to be outdoors and in nature has helped many of us find balance in trying times. Plus, it's made clear that protecting public lands and rivers, and access to the outdoors, are important issues of our time.

One of the ways staff at American Whitewater have seen this urge to be outside and on rivers is in the increasing number of individuals participating in whitewater recreation. Along with increased participation came a rise in the number of accidents reported on Class II rivers. In an educational effort, staff and partners worked together to develop the Paddle Wise code for river runners. The mission was to create a simple and shareable message for the increasing number of individuals participating in whitewater recreation. The Paddle Wise campaign is designed to encourage our community to paddle safe, paddle no trace, paddle prepared, paddle smart, paddle respectfully, paddle inclusive, and paddle aware. Many people new to the outdoors are unfamiliar with the ethics practiced by more experienced river users, and increased outdoor participation has put greater pressure on our public lands and waters. Join us in helping to spread the Paddle Wise message at www.paddlewise.org.

The term "pivot" does not adequately cover the course corrections needed in such a dynamic period. The truth is, it's been a series of moves, spread out over time, that is keeping all of us on our toes. The good news in this story is that our membership support has never been stronger and the stewardship work of the organization is focused and on track. In a somewhat ironic twist of fate, we are a stronger organization now than we were before Covid.

As a community of paddlers and river lovers, the way we make sense of the challenges around us is to spend time on the water. Rivers help to sharpen our focus and provide us with a way to process what's going on around us. Spending time with family and friends on the water is the best way I know to unpack the complicated world we live in.

Thank you for being a part of this awesome river community. Please stay safe, healthy, and on the water.

Take care of rivers and rivers will take care of you,



THE WAR TO PROTECT PUBLIC LANDS AND WATER WINS A BATTLE IN NEW MEXICO

BY HATTIE JOHNSON

IN A MEETING at the state capitol in Santa Fe the morning of August 12th, 2021, the New Mexico Game Commission voted unanimously to reject five pending applications for non-navigable water status—a process that has resulted in closing off whitewater segments to boating with concertina wire fences and dangerous diversions since its inception in 2017.

The rule was the result of a 2015 bill that sought to establish private ownership of public waters that run through private land. When the legislature declined to authorize this sort of privatization scheme, the State Game Commission instituted the rule that allows for private landowners to apply for non-navigable waters and subject those passing on “their” streams to criminal trespass.

At the forefront of the fight for both the state law and agency rulemaking is Texas oil and mineral lawyer, Dan Perry. After purchasing Trout Stalker Ranch on the Rio Chama and Chamita in 2011, Perry was actively involved in the consideration of the 2015 bill, arguing that protection and conservation of our lands depends mainly on private landowners. This anti-public land rhetoric is also used by groups like the Western Landowners Alliance and their partner organization, Property and Environment Research Center, whose president developed a “Blueprint for Auctioning off all Public Lands.” After working with the state’s governor to secure \$8M in public funds for clean-up and restoration of the river on his property, Perry’s efforts shifted to ensuring that work would be accessible only by those who paid for permission to access his land.

The New Mexico constitution gives the legal right to paddle all New Mexico rivers and streams. The constitution states, “[T]he unappropriated water of every natural stream, perennial or torrential, within the State of New Mexico, is hereby declared to belong to the public....”

The State Game Commission acted far beyond its authority when it promulgated the rule in 2017. Rivers once promoted by the New Mexico State Parks Division in their publication, “New Mexico Whitewater - A Guide to River Trips,” are now being blocked by private landowners with barricades, cables, and No Trespassing

signs. The closures now include portions of the upper Chama and Pecos Rivers.

In April 2020, an American Whitewater Affiliate Club and partner, the Adobe Whitewater Club (AWC), joined New Mexico Wildlife Federation and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to petition the New Mexico Supreme Court to uphold the constitutional rights of the people to access our public waters, even where they cross private lands.

The vote this August came on the heels of a dramatic meeting in June at which the commissioners were slated to review the five new applications. In a surprise turn of events, the chairwoman, citing a potential conflict of interest, pushed back the hearing until this most recent vote on August 12. American Whitewater, as a member of the New Mexico Paddlers Coalition (AW, ACA, AWC, and New Mexico River Outfitters Association) and in partnership with organizations such as New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and New Mexico Wildlife Federation, has been providing detailed comments to the commission identifying that not only are the proposed “non-navigable” segments of river in fact navigable, but that granting them this status would likely also violate the New Mexico constitution, which protects all unappropriated waters of the state as belonging to the public.

Jeremy Vesbach, vice-chairman of the commission, said he couldn’t vote to approve any of the applications.

“I think it’s a denial of the public’s constitutional right to deny access to the streambed,” Vesbach said. He added that it’s well known that people have floated watercraft on several of the rivers at issue.

Commissioner Tirzio Lopez held up a copy of his signed oath of office.

“This piece of paper here is the oath I took on becoming a New Mexico state game commissioner,” Lopez said. He proceeded to read the portion that says the unappropriated water of the state belongs to the public.

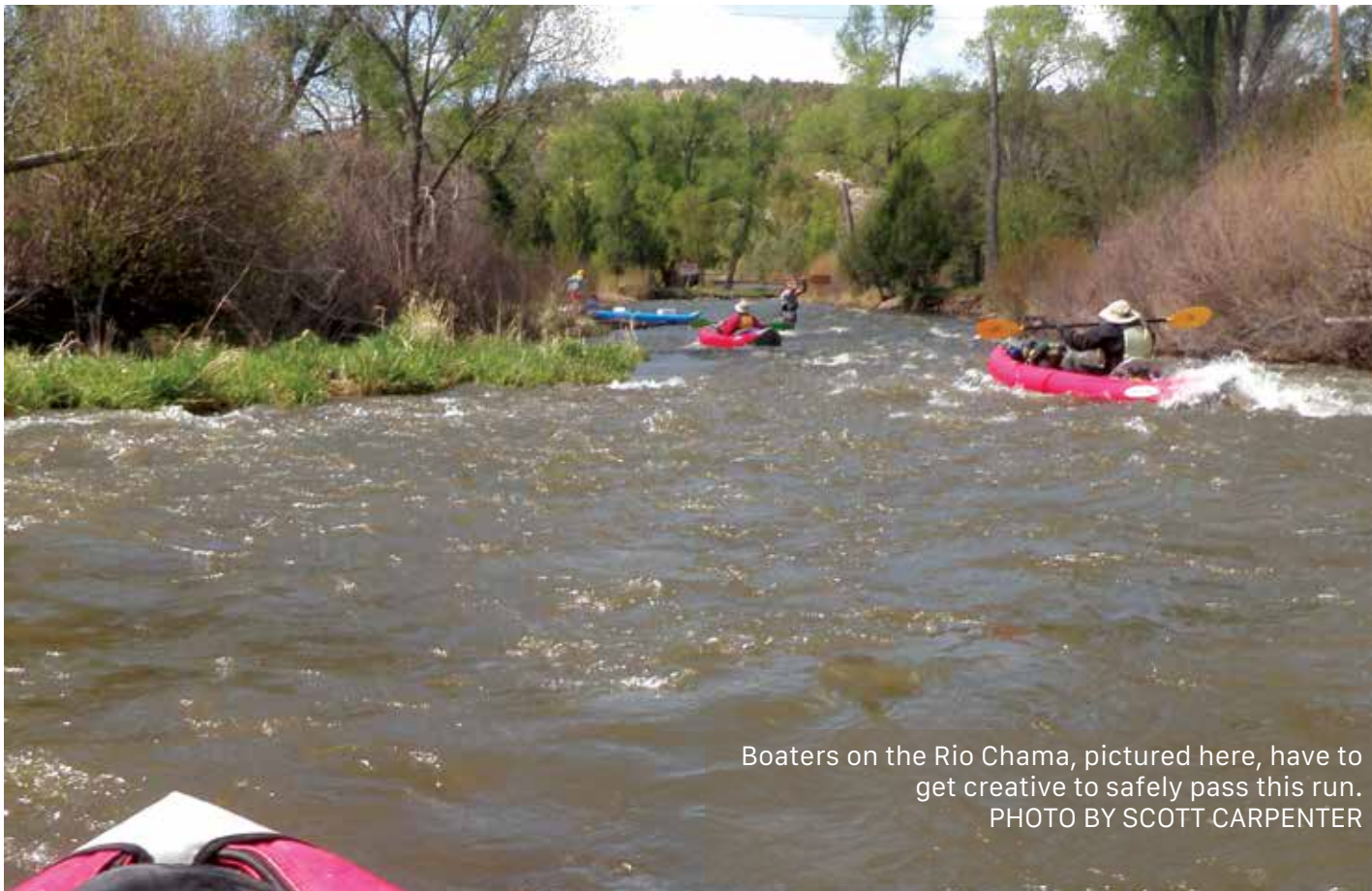


Commissioner Jimmy Bates, the lone Republican on the commission, voted to deny the applications but made no comment.

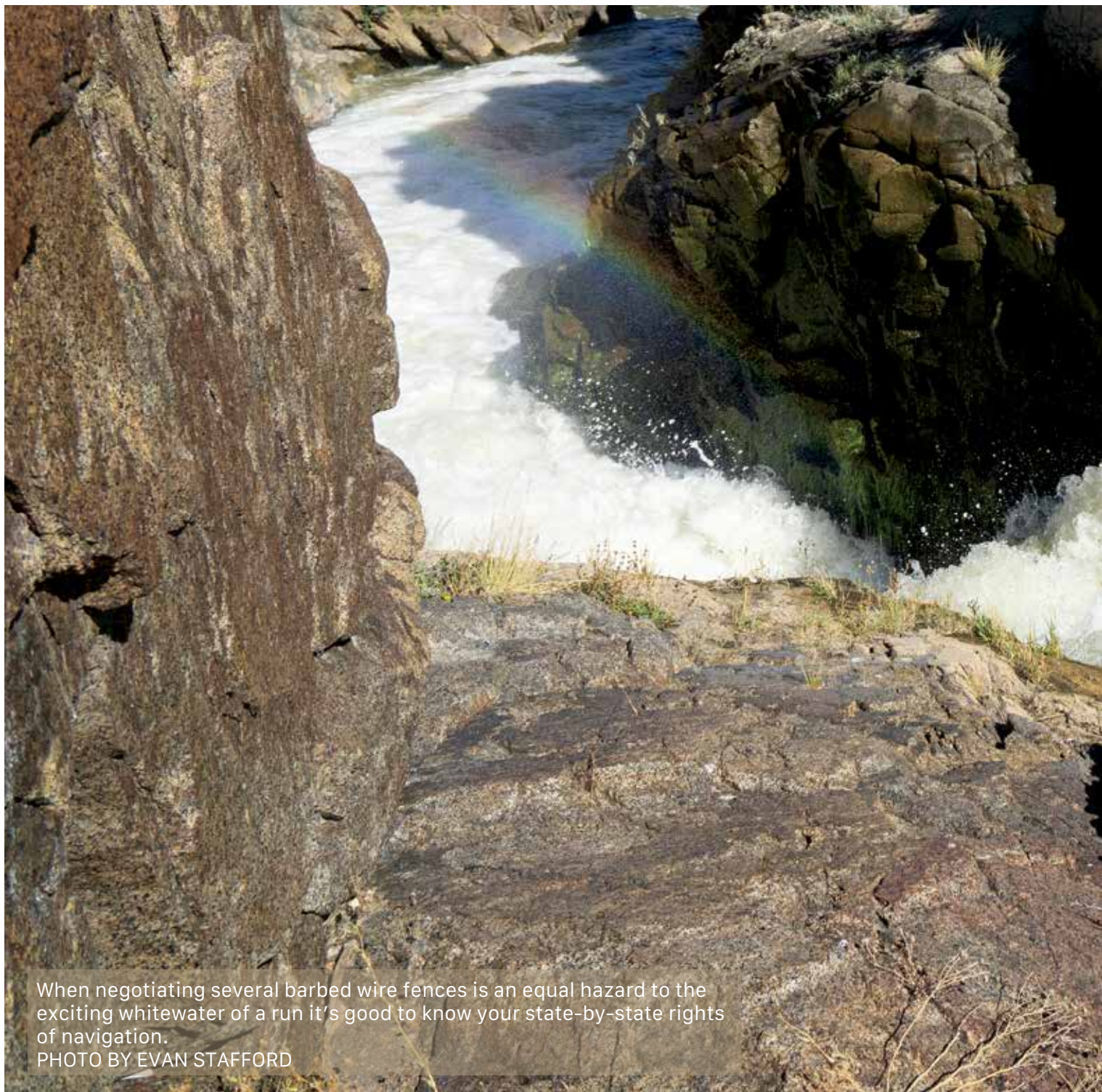
Commission Chair Sharon Salazar Hickey abstained from the votes, noting that the New Mexico Wildlife Federation and other groups have a pending legal challenge against the certification program.

This is an enormous win but only a single battle in the ongoing war to preserve the lawfully protected right for the public to access its rivers and streams. Unfortunately, this is far from over. We are still awaiting a decision from the New Mexico Supreme Court on the constitutionality of the rule that made these applications possible.

Proponents of the Non-navigable Waters certifications in New Mexico claim their intention is not to impede paddlers passage but is only to stop contact with the bed or banks of the river. Not only have barbed wire fences and signage disallowing the use of "watercraft" popped up in response to certified non-navigable applications, access to the bed and banks is essential to paddlers.
PHOTO BY SCOTT CARPENTER



Boaters on the Rio Chama, pictured here, have to get creative to safely pass this run.
PHOTO BY SCOTT CARPENTER



When negotiating several barbed wire fences is an equal hazard to the exciting whitewater of a run it's good to know your state-by-state rights of navigation.
PHOTO BY EVAN STAFFORD

A **AMERICAN WHITEWATER'S ACCESS** policy, as a part of our river stewardship program, has sought to ensure rights of public access to rivers and streams for recreational use by human-powered watercraft including kayaks, canoes, and rafts. As a part of American Whitewater's mission, we've also sought to improve citizens' knowledge of the rights Americans have to access and float our nation's rivers and streams. In 2000, American Whitewater first published a navigability toolkit as a starting point for creating this pool of knowledge. In 2007, we were proud to publish the Second Edition of the Navigability Toolkit. As time has passed and access issues in a handful of states have become more and more common and navigability laws have been tested, we decided it was time to revamp the toolkit and make sure our community knows it's available for their benefit.



AMERICAN WHITEWATER UPDATES ITS STATE-BY-STATE NAVIGABILITY RIGHTS TOOLBOX

BY EVAN STAFFORD

Recently, an American Whitewater team of legal volunteers revisited the navigability statutes for all 50 states and researched relevant new case law that state courts have developed to define the scope of the public's rights to access and float rivers across the country. The result is a new and updated Third Edition of the American Whitewater Navigability Toolkit for 2021. We're excited to publish this new edition of the Navigability Toolkit, which was edited and updated by a team of attorneys at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP. We hope that through building this knowledge base among both the whitewater community and land owners, we can reduce conflicts and support responsible enjoyment of our country's rivers and streams.



Like many western states, New Mexico has many livestock fences that create issues for paddlers and don't always have a Game and Fish Department certification prior to being put up. A durable solution is needed to remove unnecessary fences and retrofit livestock fences with paddler-friendly solutions.

PHOTO BY SCOTT CARPENTER

Opposite: Despite these signs, you have a constitutional right to float the Pecos, New Mexico.

PHOTO BY SCOTT CARPENTER

The public's right to access rivers has been controversial most likely since the concept of "property law" was created. Current laws on navigability in the United States were, and are still, influenced by the Institutes of Justinian, ancient English judicial opinions, the Northwest Ordinance, the obscure "equal footing" doctrine, and theories enunciated by the Supreme Court in the 1870 Daniel Ball case. Times have changed significantly since navigability laws in this country were established and digging for clams in the streambed, building docks, piloting barges, and floating logs downstream are no longer the sole focus of navigability law, precedent, or conflict. Legal opinions and precedents surrounding river access have multiplied and at times become more complex, while attempts to establish recreational use and the public's enjoyment of rivers for swimming, floating, sport fishing, kayaking, and canoeing now form the basis of modern navigability law.

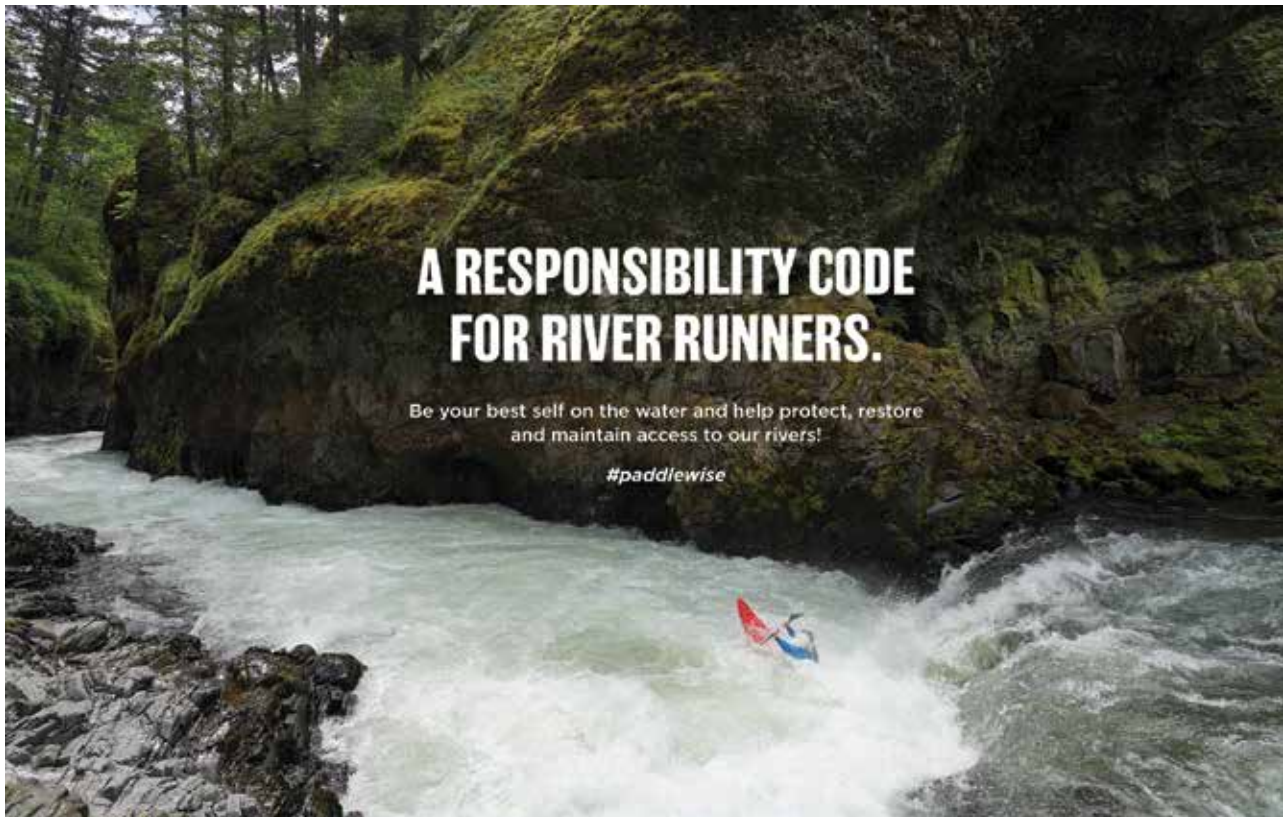
Meanwhile, rivers continue to see more use and riverside lands have become more developed. Dams and diversions, timber and mining operations, outfitters, and private residences have been, and continue to be, built along riverbanks, at times causing conflicts with public river users. Laws, such as the recent river privatization law in New Mexico and New Mexico State Game Commission Rule that attempted to certify streams as "non-navigable" (see *The War to Protect Public Lands and Water Wins a Battle in New Mexico* pg. 6), have sought to circumvent and undermine the public's right to access and float rivers in multiple states. American Whitewater has played an active role in standing up for the public's navigability rights, utilizing this guide alongside our legal team of volunteers in states where these issues have cropped up.

We hope this Toolkit helps clarify some of the rights of the public to access and use the rivers and streams in the fifty states and Puerto Rico. Our intention is for the information in this handbook to serve as a starting point for educating the reader on navigability law in general and will contribute to a reduction of conflicts and more enjoyable relationships between river users, managers, landowners, and others with an interest in these resources. The "law" is always changing, and therefore all of the information contained in this guide needs to be reconfirmed prior to going to any court. This Toolkit is only as up to date as its publish date and this resource does not replace proper legal representation if you were ever to become entangled in an access dispute. It is intended to provide a non-definitive resource to assess your state-by-state navigability situation and to help create an understanding about where it is and is not appropriate to assert navigability rights, with the hope of saving the whitewater community a bit of the hassle in potential future conflicts. To access the Third Edition of the Navigability Toolkit please visit www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Wiki/access:start?



A SUMMER OF PADDLE WISE

BY EVAN STAFFORD



EARLY THIS SPRING, we started to notice a trend we generally regard as positive in the river running community: growth. Over the past 18-24 months we've seen a rapid swell of participation in not only whitewater recreation, but outdoor activities in general. Maybe it was the inability to go to the movies or catch a show, or that recommended pandemic safety protocols encouraged outdoor recreation, and probably no one or two factors alone can completely explain this paddlesports expansion, but expand it did. According to the Outdoor Foundation, from 2019 to 2020, nearly 8 million more Americans participated in outdoor activities in general, and whitewater recreation participation increased by 7% over that single year. That's tens of thousands of new paddlers, many visiting the river for the first time without formal instruction or even experienced friends to help guide them.

American Whitewater believes that increasing the number of whitewater boaters in our communities and broadening the base of citizens visiting our rivers is integral to fulfilling our mission. Part of our founding purpose is to "encourage the exploration, enjoyment, and preservation of America's recreational waterways for human-powered craft." We believe the more river enthusiasts there are, the more active and effective river advocates we will have by our side. However, another important part of our founding purpose is to "promote and celebrate safety, proficiency, and responsibility in all aspects of whitewater activities...."

So, with this surge in paddlesports participation, we felt it was our responsibility to dust off the basic guidelines for paddling safely and responsibly and to create a program designed to spread the stoke of responsible river running. Through a buildout

and design partnership with Northwest River Supply, American Whitewater developed Paddle Wise. This simple and shareable responsibility message is aimed at educating new participants in whitewater recreation, and to serve as a reminder for experienced river runners of all backgrounds and abilities. You may have encountered Recreate Responsibly, a campaign that American Whitewater helped develop meant to encourage people to get outside safely and maintain access to our parks, trails, beaches, mountains, and rivers. Paddle Wise is the river recreation-specific equivalent, and taking this responsibility code to heart not only helps make sure you represent the whitewater community well and enjoy the river safely, it will help protect, restore, and maintain access to our rivers for everyone.

This past summer we've seen an incredibly positive reception for Paddle Wise's message. Our efforts to spread this responsibility code have been met with an equal effort from the whitewater industry, river managing agencies, whitewater educators, and the boating community to get the word out alongside us. With fun graphics and easily digestible notes on how to act the right way around rivers, we hope we've provided a solid tool for



promoting the safe and responsible enjoyment and exploration of our whitewater rivers—and we hope you'll join us in sharing this important message. Visit www.PaddleWise.org to download the toolkit and find out more.



RESTORING BENEFICIAL FLOWS TO THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER GORGE STARTS WITH A STUDY

BY THERESA SIMSIMAN

AN OPPORTUNITY TO return beneficial flows to the San Joaquin River Gorge through the relicensing process of the Kerckhoff Hydropower Project owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) began in 2017. American Whitewater, along with support from the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service, secured an assessment of crucial whitewater resources on the watershed below Kerckhoff Reservoir, providing managing agencies and American Whitewater the baseline information on access and flows needed to generate effective protections, mitigations, and enhancements for inclusion in a new license for the Project.

Prior to the construction of a project powerhouse in 1982, boating reaches below Kerckhoff Dam had dependable recreational flows throughout the summer. These flows were enjoyed by many an old-time paddler. But these days, PG&E's operation of the powerhouse with a max generating capacity of 5,000 cfs keeps flows below Kerckhoff Dam either too low or unpredictable. Sustained whitewater boating flows have become a rare occurrence for the San Joaquin River Gorge and the current hydropower license has no condition that requires recreational releases. American Whitewater hopes results of an on-water boating flow study will help change this dynamic.

A few challenges, however, have delayed the implementation of an on-water study. The first delay came from PG&E in 2019. They postponed the study citing safety and liability concerns related to flow fluctuations and trip and fall hazards around the project facilities on the uppermost run. American Whitewater and the National Park Service responded with strategies to mitigate the concerns including a suggestion to have PG&E staff escort participants through the Kerckhoff Dam facilities and having participants hike further downstream to put in. Eventually, at the start of 2020, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission weighed in requiring PG&E to conduct a site visit to address the safety and liability concerns and to determine the feasibility of an on-water study. Then, COVID-19 happened! Obscured in the blur of the pandemic, progress toward a completed study was halted. And while a fall site visit finally set the stage for a flow study in December of 2020, the virus' resurgence put a quick end to those plans.

Jump-starting the process in 2021, American Whitewater made recommendations to take advantage of approved Long Term Operating Rules for the upstream Big Creek 4 Hydropower Project owned by Southern California Edison. The first implementation of these rules in 2021 would provide springtime recreational releases on the San Joaquin River upstream of Kerckhoff Reservoir. These inflows could then be passed through and shaped by the Kerckhoff Project providing the right conditions for a boating study. PG&E concurred and began planning to provide flows to coincide with SCE's release. Finally, on June 6, 2021, nine experienced hard-shell kayakers and expedition rafters participated in a day-long flow study combining the Class V Patterson Bend run and the Class IV-V K1 Powerhouse and K2 Powerhouse run. The results of the study are scheduled to be filed with FERC in September. Needless to say, the final study report will help managing agencies and American Whitewater refine a range of acceptable boating flows for the reach, evaluate access points, and it will provide crucial insight into the real-time capability of the Kerckhoff Project to control instream flow for the benefit of both recreation on the river and native aquatic species.

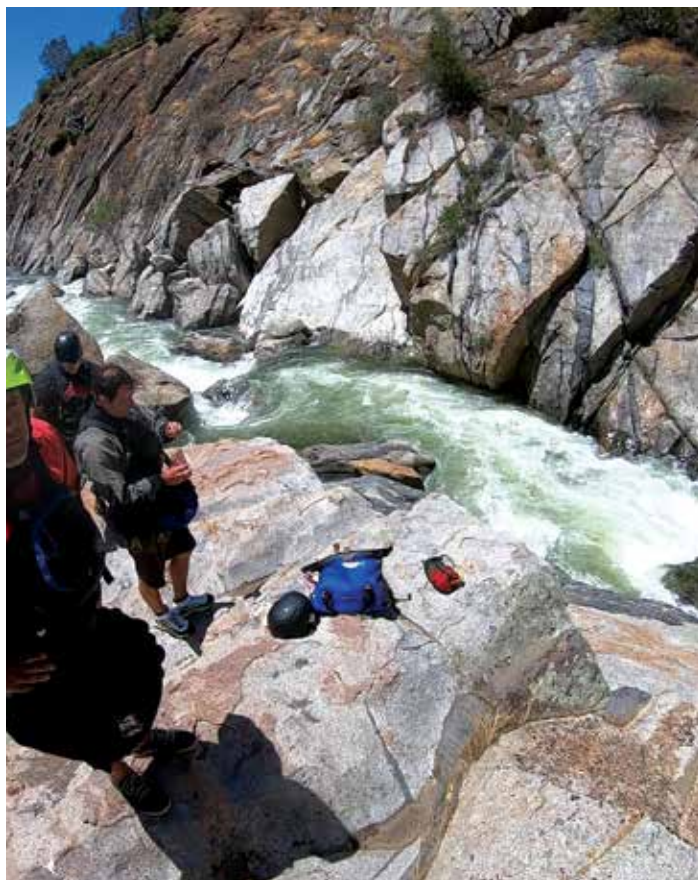
American Whitewater would like to extend our biggest thank-you to the hard-working volunteers who made up the boating flow study team. This includes Trevor Croft, Kailee Hutchison, Nathan Stayrook Hobbs, Nate Corona, Dan Sadowski, Gavin Rieser, Marc Musgrove, Eric Giddens, and Allen Speering. Their consistent participation throughout the process resulted in a robust on-water study that helps managing agencies and American Whitewater return beneficial flows to the San Joaquin River Gorge.

Top Left: The on-water flow study helps to identify access issues like this narrow trail to the put-in at Patterson Bend.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY TREVOR CROFT RAFTING MAGAZINE

Top Right: Feedback from participants help refine flow ranges for crux rapids like Binocular on the Patterson Bend Reach.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARC MUSGROVE



On-water flow study participants baking in the sun at take-out.
PHOTO BY THERESA L. LOREJO-SIMSIMAN

HALA ATCHA WHITEWATER SUP

**STOMPBOX 2.0
FIN SYSTEM**



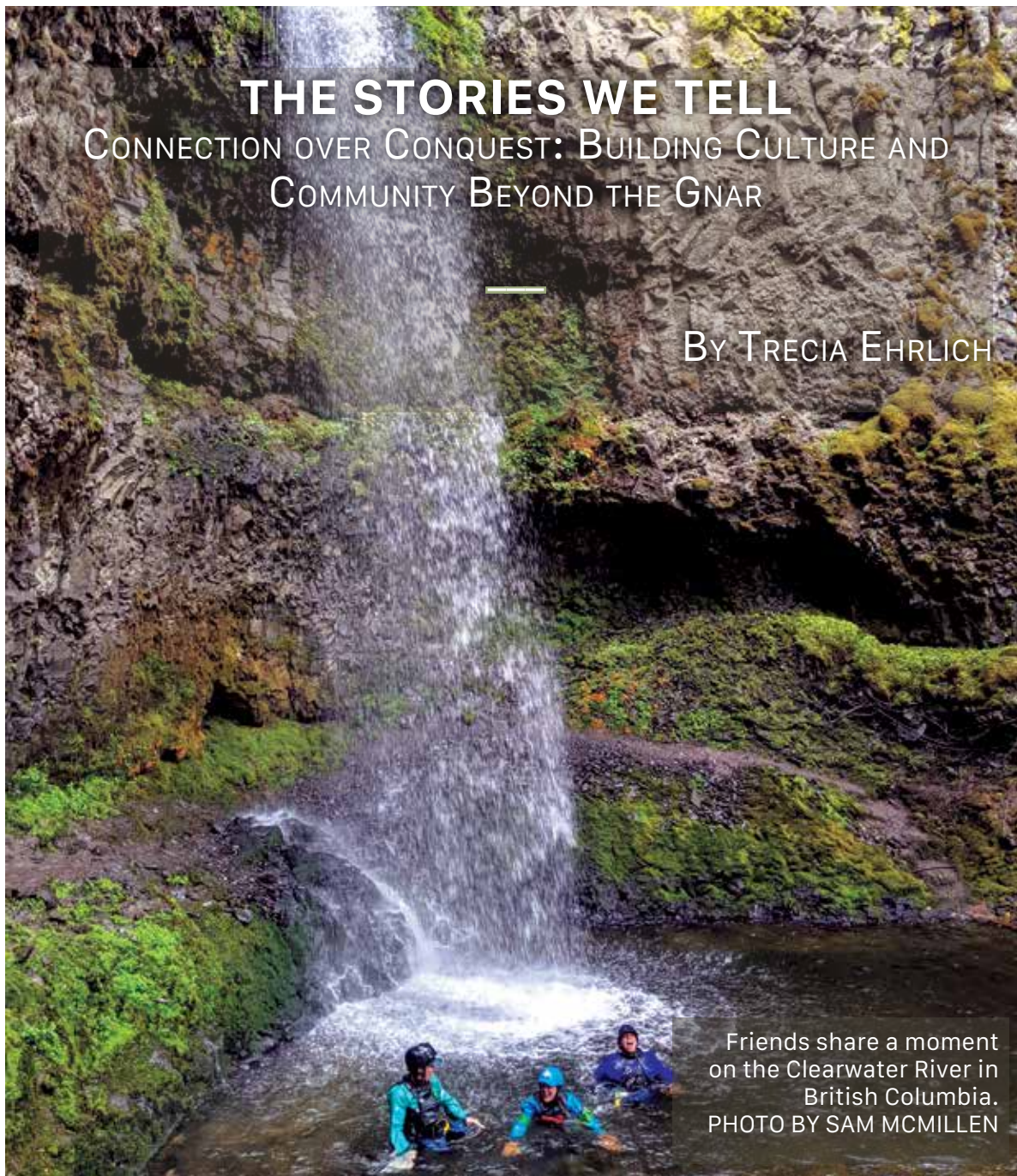
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THEY WERE THE strangest of creatures; hydrophytes, to say the least. Their desires were often counterintuitive to their deepest biological instincts. While they spent the first years of life figuring out how to balance their limbs on stable earth, what bonded them was their near compulsive drive to understand how their bodies could relate to water. To balance on, fight against, and dance with moving water engaged them like a Romance language. They learned the language at different paces, and spoke different dialects; but they all understood one another to some degree. They vacillated between fear and joy in single moments, sometimes unable to distinguish between the two. And in a world of chaos and disconnection, they were lucky enough to have found their tribe. To put it simply, they were river people.



What draws us to whitewater rivers is rarely *just* the adrenaline or the challenge. The journey is made worthwhile by the places we visit and the company we keep on the water. Let's keep telling more stories that feature these essential components of whitewater.

PHOTO BY TRECIA EHRLICH

They shared actions, language, rituals, role models, experiences, places, clothing, gear and stories: all of the components that accumulate to form culture.

As paddlers take on these rituals and experiences, they join a community, and what that community repeats, perpetuates, upholds, and celebrates, over time becomes their culture. What that culture looks like is up to us: the river people.

When I dig through the Internet, I find that, by and large, we celebrate the superlatives: The tallest waterfall, the first descent, the highest water, the most remote, the steepest drop, the most continuous, the tightest gorge, the boldest trick, the hardest run, the youngest paddler, the first woman. For a small percentage of paddlers, these superlatives are embedded in their daily actions, and yet they are not representative of the daily river life of the majority of paddlers. In my own local community, I see the newest of paddlers, as well as the oldest and strongest of paddlers, playing in our backyard Class II park-and-surf, all basking in the joy of a day on the river that is clearly nothing superlative. These daily joyful experiences on the river, however, are much easier to find when surfing the wave, rather than surfing the web.

One might argue that no harm is done if what is perpetuated and upheld online is not representative of our larger experience, but I see how what we uphold and celebrate online trickles down into our community. I see it when a brand new paddler asks to be shown down the Class IV+ on our home run, despite not yet having nailed his combat roll. I see it when I sit at a campfire, and discuss a new run with a man I do not know, who tells me, "You got this!" despite never having paddled with me. And I see it when I suggest to yet another non-paddling girlfriend that she come out and try the sport. "I don't know," she says, "it looks kind of extreme."

I respond in the same way I always do. "It is sometimes, but it's not most times, and it certainly doesn't have to be." Let me be clear, this chasm between our experiences and the narratives built around them are not unique to whitewater paddling. Celebrating the extreme and superlative can be found in the stories that disproportionately celebrate free solo rock climbing, downhill mountain biking, free skiing, and beyond. In fact, these narratives share a storytelling tradition that dates at least as far back as settler colonialism, when white men built and perpetuated myths of the rugged individualist in order to steal land from Indigenous people.

Whether I am reading a history book about the American Revolutionary War, or a headline about the recent accomplishments of a whitewater paddler, the language of conquest is shared. It is no longer acceptable (nor moral or ethical) to publicly celebrate the conquering of people, and yet we have normalized the celebration of conquering mountains, slabs of rock, rivers, and even our own

fears. But how do we protect the things we conquer? How do we respect the places and feelings that make our world, that make our humanness, if we objectify them for the purpose of our own conquest? And how do we expand participation in outdoor sports beyond the White male if we continue to pass down the language and narratives that built and maintain their supposed supremacy?

My intent is not to minimize or diminish the accomplishments of the incredible athletes, explorers, and river people who have broadened the horizons of whitewater paddling as we know it. If you find yourself feeling defensive after reading this, sit with that. Take a breath. Now, consider the rest of this writing an invitation, one you can joyfully accept or respectfully decline.

My intent is to create more space to celebrate and uphold a greater variety of river stories. Stories that will get repeated and celebrated over time in a way that expands our culture in real life and online. Whitewater paddling has been, and continues to be, a small and niche sport. I personally have a strong desire for the tradition of whitewater paddling to continue well beyond my time here, and I believe this will require recruiting new paddlers, and protecting our rivers by creating a deeper, more mature love with them.

Have you experienced young love? It is a love that needs to win, a love with a nauseous gut, a love that has red and puffy eyes the next day, and a love that leaves when it gets disappointed. This is the love for rivers that I see most widely in social media posts. A love that is based on how the rivers allow us to perform. A love that requires specific flow ranges and prefers ideal weather conditions. A love that allows us to be first, most, tallest, steepest, best.

In the end, a young love is not always a sustainable love, a stable love, a love that can withstand disappointments. We must celebrate a love for rivers that is unshaken when we drive two hours for a snow covered put-in road and a log choked gorge and a love for rivers when every forecast suggests they'll come into a runnable range, but never do. We must love how the rivers continue to run when no one is there to watch their performance. On the coldest days, in the loneliest places, these rivers run for no one. We must make room for stories that celebrate our capacity to connect with rivers, rather than conquer them. We must make room for stories that illustrate the nourishment and richness that rivers and the river community give to our lives, and in turn, the nourishment that we can give back to rivers. When we study the health of rivers, we study their pH levels, their salinity, their vegetation and their dissolved oxygen, but at the end of the day, healthy rivers also rely upon healthy human relationships with rivers. We must study our relationship to rivers, we must study our own thoughts about rivers, we must be intentional about the stories we tell, as those river stories become our culture. Let's build a culture of connection.



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SHAPING
ADVENTURE

NOT A TOTAL DRAG: THE SAN JUAN RIVER AT LOW WATER

BY ASHLEY LODATO

IF YOU ARE lucky enough to score a permit on Utah's San Juan River, you shouldn't, we decided, cancel the trip simply because the flow is minimal. No, we realized later—despite countless disembarkments to push or pull watercraft off sand heaves, cobble strands, and rock bars—when you win that San Juan permit, you go. You sort and pack your gear in northern Washington, snowbanks flanking the truck you load with raft and rigging, and you drive southeast, through rain and Ponderosa Pine to red dirt and slot canyons. When you get that permit, you go.

When we'd tried to float the San Juan River five years ago, permits had been available four days before the launch date. This year, with increased demand for river time and a seemingly endless

number of parties encumbered by neither employment nor the constraints of a traditional school year, permits were scarce. We acquired ours by chance—a serendipitously timed look at the availability web page; the 11th and final member of our trip was added only by an additional cancellation the Thursday prior to our Monday launch. He got in his truck and began the drive to southeastern Utah the next day.

Moan all you want about the lack of available permits—and believe me, we did—but once you're on the river you're thankful for the permitting crucible that gives your party an experience increasingly rare in the Lower 48: a trip that feels intimate and even somewhat remote.



No tent fly required—ever, as it turned out on this rainless trip.
PHOTO BY ASHLEY LODATO

WILDERNESS



As sunset approaches, the walls surrounding the river seem to glow.
PHOTO BY ASHLEY LODATO



Rafting with friends during a pandemic is a surreal experience, if only because everything seems so—well—normal. After a drive through the gorgeous, wild, and fiercely independent states that landlock the San Juan; after being, quite often, the only people in roadside rest areas and service stations wearing masks or acknowledging the existence of COVID, launching on the San Juan was an astonishingly clean break between pandemic life and the period of suspended reality that our week on the river ended up being.

We've been warned that running the river below 500 cfs can be frustrating, and it is. But many of us cut our expedition teeth on the dubious wisdom of a fellow former Outward Bound instructor, who unfailingly advised us to "smoke 'em if you've got 'em"—a reference to running out that last pack of cigarettes, and a nugget that we employ liberally with great success to a multitude of life situations. We had the San Juan permit; we were going to smoke it, by gum.

The moment we launch, our concerns about water level seem inconsequential. Canyon walls lacquered with desert varnish tower over us at our first lunch site. Somehow it is this, these rough canyon walls spackled with black crust, that allow us to surrender to river time. We gather around the table, the first of many feasts spread out before us, and take our first full breaths as a group.

No matter how well you know the other members of your river party, there is always an adjustment period, a threshold that must be crossed before you coalesce as a unit. The sooner it happens, the better, but it must happen organically; it can't be forced. Fortunately for us, that elusive threshold is crossed at that first lunch stop, although no one can explain later how or why that happens. It's tricky to articulate. All we know is that we stepped onto that sandbar as clusters of disparate family units and stepped off that sandbar as a group.

I'm the last to paddle away from our lunch site, stepping onto my stand up paddleboard (SUP) with black mud-caked feet, which I try to rinse off with water scooped by my paddle blade. I glance behind me and see only our footprints on the sand bar. These too, will disappear, with wind, water, and time. Looking ahead I see a raft rowing as close to the walls as the oar blades will allow, as if the sandstone itself radiates a magnetic pull. As the current—minimal as it is—draws us downstream, the walls draw us in, as if the river and the buff overhangs above are wrapping us in their embrace.

Although it is late afternoon when we reach River House Ruin campsite, we're not anxious to camp yet, still curious to see what is around the next bend. But once we look at the camp itself there's no chance we're going to leave it unexplored.



Even high above it, the river still beckons.
PHOTO BY ASHLEY LODATO

Those of us in kayaks, packrafts, and SUPs reach the beach first and return on foot to help drag the rafts across the cobbles just below the river's surface, each one slick with biofilm.

After we unload the boats, we look up at the sandstone walls glowing with the sun's last rays. A short walk out the back of our campsite leads us to River House Ruin, an Ancestral Puebloan multi-room dwelling built into a natural overhang in the cliff. Sandstone and red clay rooms with pictographs and petroglyphs, pottery, and stone tools still remain, echoes of the agrarian communities that lived here a thousand years ago. Looking across the river we see another cliff dwelling, far higher than the one we're exploring, and we wave to the clan that in our imagination still resides in that sun-soaked overhang.

As I take a picture of our group seated near the ruin, I'm struck by *déjà vu*. "I've seen these places," I think to myself. But I'm unable to recall whether I hold a memory of Internet or guidebook images, or if my sense of familiarity comes from seeing my parents' photos of their time in this place.

Years ago, when their activities were eclipsed by my own preoccupation with career and early motherhood, my parents spent six weeks each spring volunteering at the San Juan River's Sand Island boat launch. The San Juan is my parents' river more than mine, and I felt their deep knowledge of and appreciation for the river as we planned our trip.

We are headed into an area my parents know well, and where they are still—remarkably—known. When the ranger calls me for the COVID-era pre-trip phone call that has replaced the launch day check-in, at the end of the call he casually drops my parents' names and asked if I'm related to them—these BLM volunteers who he last saw nearly a decade ago. "Yes, I am," I say. Later I realize that since I'm related to my parents, I am, by association, also related to this river they know so intimately. When we launch I feel them with us in spirit.

On any raft trip—or any trip, for that matter—it's useful to have something to complain about, something that mars the perfection of the trip. Otherwise, returning home is too painful. On an April San Juan trip, the low water often provides a legitimate reason to whine a bit. Add that to pandemic closures of the Navajo Reservation, rendering the entire left side of the river off limits, and you've got yourself a shred of disappointment to cling to once you are forced to end the trip and head home.

Thanks to our obsessive checking of the river gauge in the days leading up to the trip, we know that the San Juan will be low. When we arrive at Sand Island the knowledge is visually confirmed: the river is seasonably, unsurprisingly, shallow. It is so low that I remove two of the three skegs in my SUP, replacing the center fin with the smallest possible size—a scant 3" dangling into the water to give me some directional control. Still, I scrape the river bottom

dozens, hundreds, seemingly thousands of times throughout the 84-mile trip, half of it on the final day, where accumulating Lake Powell silt makes the river channel nearly impassible at these flows.

Still, navigating a SUP in low water is easy: dismount, walk the board through the shallows, reload. Navigating a raft down a bony river, however, is exhausting and, eventually, demoralizing. The kids quickly tire of jumping out to pull the raft off rocks and sandbars, and take to dozing—or pretending to doze—in the hope that someone else will jump off first and do the dirty work.

And dirty work it is, in this San Juan River sediment. There's the red-brown dust that mixes to a ruddy paste, the fine buff dust that leaves watermarks on your shins when you step into the water, and the gummy black sludge at the mouths of side canyons. It sifts into your tent zipper, coats the bottom of boats, packs into camp table legs. Wet PFDs piled in the dirt at the Clay Hills take-out require a scrub brushing at home after the trip, and mud-filled grooves in soles of booties must be reamed out with a screwdriver.

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Ben Dann @ The Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone

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If there's one thing we learned from the yard sale that was 2020, it's the importance of natural places and free flowing rivers in our lives. This year, we hope you'll join NRS in taking steps to break down barriers to the outdoors, protect our most precious places, and promote access for all of us—regardless of who you are or where you live.

In 2021, we are proud to welcome a new class of paddle-activists to our ambassador team. We're also helping train new leaders from diverse backgrounds and working with our partners to spread the word on paddling ethics and safety.

Join us for the journey.

Clockwise: River activist Vera Knook on the Salaach River, Austria; standing up for the iconic Oetz River in Austria; Anup Garung meeting the locals while documenting endangered river communities in Nepal; Hudson River Runners sharing the love of whitewater on the Hudson River, NY.

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A patina of wind-blown clay particles creates the iconic desert varnish so distinctive in the Southwest.
PHOTO BY ASHLEY LODATO

Still, it's worth it, and we don't even have to remind ourselves of it all that often. Our toes in the sand at lunch sites, a glimpse of ancient steps cut into a wall, the polished floors of side canyons, bighorn sheep grazing on sparse vegetation, the gloriously endless spray of stars on an inky sky—these are things we do not take for granted.

Early one morning we hike up to the canyon rim on the historic Honaker Trail, reaching the welcome warmth of the sun only when we attain the lip of the gorge. From a high point just beyond the trail we can see into Monument Valley and to snowcapped distant peaks. But the river calls us back, as it does from every side hike we've ever done on any river trip. "Come back down," it beckons. "This is where you belong."

At low water, Government Rapid is our only formidable obstacle, but it's an appalling one. At first glance we can't even find a line, so boulder-strewn is it. But in the same way that one's eyes inevitably find a line through a raging rapid, no matter how plausible, we eventually determine a line through the pinball machine of Government Rapid.

It's so low that we decide to offload ballast—everyone other than the oarsmen—in order to ride a bit higher. The first raft runs through, hits the exposed boulder in the center of the rapid, but pivots off and floats through successfully, if not gracefully. The second raft follows the line of the first but instead of swiveling off the boulder comes to a lurching stop squarely on top of it. No amount of bouncing and weight shifting dislodges him, so we

finally catch a throw bag the oarsman lobs at us and with five of us pulling on it, tug him free and swing him into an eddy below.

As we're stuffing the throw bag back in its sack we see another party approach the rapid, and decide to watch their lines. Like us, they offload all passengers, as well as new oarsmen. Two members of their party (one of whom is, inexplicably, completely nude from the waist down, save for a sprayskirt) run all the rafts through the rapid, temporarily pinning a few of their boats just like we did. It's no surprise that the Government gives no one an easy ride.

The afternoon of the final night on the river, we wander alone or in pairs up Slickhorn Canyon, disappointed to see that the clear pools featured so prominently in the river guide are slimy stagnant puddles. The canyon alternately expands and contracts, as shining wide fields of slickrock give way to thickets of hackberry and scrubby oak. The kids retreat to the campsite's limited shade to play a card game, and as we explorers return to camp we can hear their laughter echoing off the rocks.

When we reconvene for dinner, we are subdued in the way groups often are on the last night of a trip, content to absorb the visual feast the river offers as the last rays of sun slip off rosy canyon walls and the evening sky fades to pastel.

Later, we sit by the river, listening to silty water whispering over cobble. We aren't yet aware that 18 miles of near-constant hauling rafts off sandbars awaits us the next day, but it wouldn't matter. Even if we have to walk the last section of it, the trip itself has been anything but a drag.



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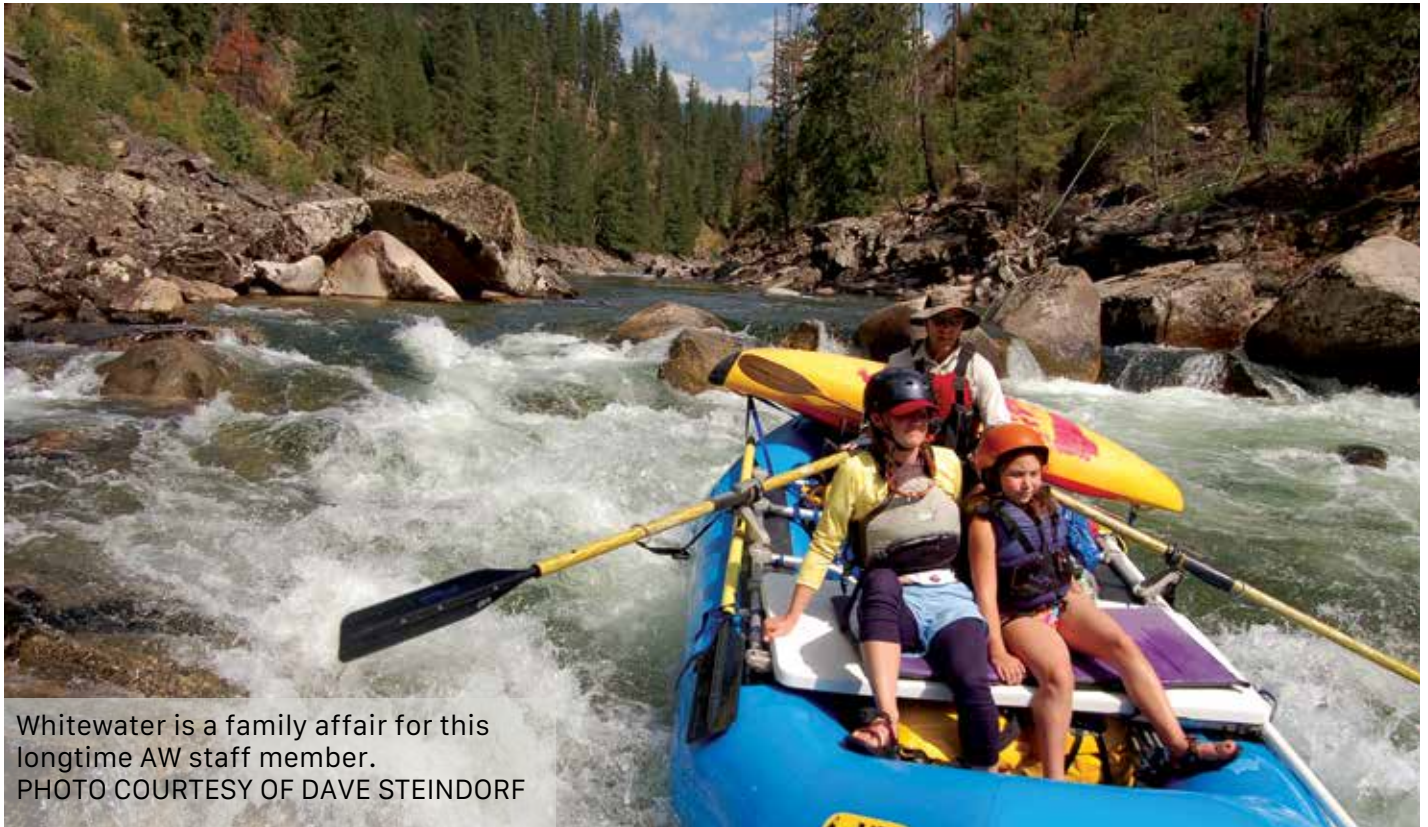
The Gore Canyon Race (CO) is an annual celebration of the Upper Colorado River held by American Whitewater with the support of both local and national partners. After over a decade of advocacy, the Upper Colorado River Wild and Scenic Alternative Management Plan (AMP) was finalized and formally accepted in 2020 by the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service to protect and enhance its flow related values; Values like whitewater boating on a diverse set of river reaches including Gore Canyon, Pumphouse, Shoshone and many more. Second place overall finisher and first place short boat champ Riley Frank styling the longboat race line in Gore Rapid during the 2021 race.

Photo by Evan Stafford

STEWARDSHIP

STAFF HIGHLIGHT: DAVE STEINDORF

BY EVAN STAFFORD



Whitewater is a family affair for this longtime AW staff member.
PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE STEINDORF

HOW WERE YOU INTRODUCED TO PADDLESPORTS?

I have been rowing boats and paddling kayaks since I was a kid. I was introduced to whitewater kayaking by my former wife, Lisa Benaron, when I was 30. It was something that I always wanted to do but had never had the opportunity.

WHAT'S YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING PADDLESPORTS MOMENT?

My one and only raft flip ever was on the Middle Fork Salmon at 1.8 feet. Not an easy task. There are very few holes at this level, and almost none that will flip a boat but I am always up for a challenge. At this point in my rafting career, I had run the Middle Fork at 6.5 feet, the Grand Canyon several times, the Selway,

Yampa, Green etc. The event happened at Pistol Creek, one the bigger rapids on the Middle Fork, but no big deal at low flows. I was following my good friend Kevin Lewis into the rapid. The normal line at low flows is down the left, but for some reason Kevin decided to charge right of the hole at the bottom. Not knowing any better, I decided to follow. Some indecision kept me from getting far enough right to miss the hole. Straightening up and hitting the hole square would have still fixed the problem. I managed to hit the hole slow and sideways. Making matters worse, because of my stellar rowing skills, I was the designated sweep boat. The rest of the group was already downstream, pulling into the Pistol Creek Camp, where we were going to be staying that night. I floated around the corner upside down, right into the camp. After hearing a couple people ask, "How the f%&*



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STEWARDSHIP

did you do that?" I picked up my bruised ego, righted my boat, drained the water from my not-so-dry box, and proceeded to move on with my life.

WHAT'S YOUR RITUAL BEFORE RUNNING AN INTIMIDATING RAPID FOR THE FIRST TIME?

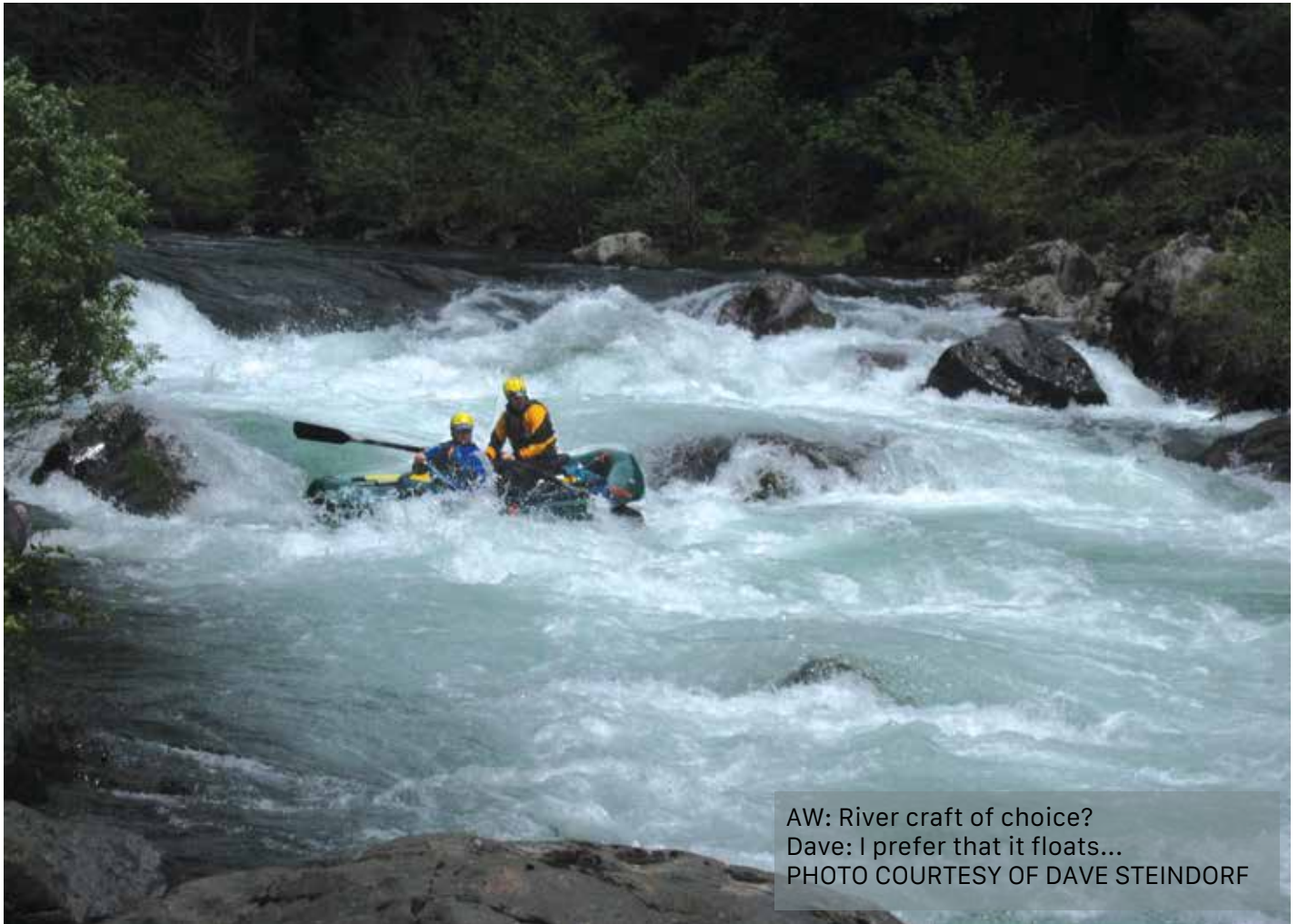
Scout from the bottom up, don't stare at it too long, and make the call whether to use my paddle or my shoes.

WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOU THE MOST IN YOUR PADDLESPORT CAREER?

I was very fortunate to have gotten plugged into the NOC crowd of the 1990s. Eric Nies, Francis Glass, Mary and Phil DeRiemer and others. In my mind, the best instructors, and friends, on the planet.



Rowing the Grand.
PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE STEINDORF



AW: River craft of choice?
Dave: I prefer that it floats...
PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE STEINDORF

TELL US SOMETHING THAT FEW PEOPLE WOULD KNOW ABOUT YOU.

In a previous life I was a high school social studies teacher. Econ, history, math, yearbook; no better place to learn how to manage a room full of people.

FAVORITE RIVER SNACK?

Trail mix.

WHAT'S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST FOR AN AW ACHIEVEMENT?

This is going to sound dry as hell, but I have been working on a tool with the Department of Energy that will improve our assessment of the value of hydropower. Why, you ask? I believe that if we use hydropower to its highest value, bringing electricity to the grid after the sun goes down, when solar power is not available, we will not need to use as much water as we have in the past. This means that water could be returned to rivers and we can have more green energy. I know, very geeky, but it is my dream.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST AW PROJECT YOU ENGAGED WITH?

The relicensing of the Rock Creek/ Cresta project on the North Fork Feather River. That was 24 years ago. Relicensing will start again in about five years. It is my hope to show up to the first meeting and swing my cane at the new PG&E staff.

RIVER CRAFT OF CHOICE?

Depends on where I am going. Grand Canyon: raft; Sacramento River: canoe; Deer Creek: kayak. I do prefer that they float.

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THE RIVER IS FORGIVING (UNTIL IT ISN'T)

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TERESA GRyder



The tall falls (18-footer, second drop in Shipherd) and the paddler is plugging it.

PEOPLE SAY THAT the river is forgiving. Usually nothing bad happens, even when you goof. You get wet, bump a rock, get water up your nose, but you can be an idiot and avoid punishment for a long time. This forgiving nature is sometimes called “the wicked environment.” It’s wicked because getting away with slack practices conditions you to be complacent. Then, when bad things happen, they tend to be devastating.

The Wind River is a lovely crystal cold stream that flows out of Washington into the Columbia River. The Lower Wind has pool-drop whitewater, with four large drops near the end called Shipherd Falls. Shipherd consists of a 12-footer with an autoboo, a vertical 18-footer, a bony slide, and a 10-foot weir, all quite close together. We paddle it every summer, enjoying splashy verticality on hot days. You can lap the falls, and there is a hot springs below. It’s river heaven.

We don’t scout or set safety. We just go. We know the lines. We can roll. For years we have gotten away with this approach. I know how to set shore-based safety. I worked as a paddle raft guide on the Chattooga, where we set so many ropes in the Five Falls that no customers swim the next drop after a flip. But stopping to set ropes while kayaking Shipherd would interrupt our flow. My crew had formed before I came along. This was a private trip. I had excuses.

SAFETY



On the day in question, we flowed with ease. Everybody hit the autobooft at the 12-footer and eddied out before the 18-footer. Plugging the hole there is the most common mistake. Sometimes you don't come out right away, and if you swim there you're going deep.

We were experimenting with a new boof and someone missed it. He went under for a long time and came up separate from his kayak. Then he got shoved to the bottom. When he finally resurfaced he was accelerating into the bony slide. Swimming that slide is a recipe for broken bones.

People were on the rocks nearby but nobody had a rope handy. Someone reached and nearly made contact. Any grip extender—a rope, strap or paddle—would have reached him, but it didn't happen. Then, "You're in the shit, going down where you don't want to be."



He popped up for a moment below the slide and was swept over the final 10-foot weir. A boater raced down to find him unhurt except for a banged knee. It could have been much worse. We were lucky. The river was forgiving, again.

Assuming that nothing will happen because it hasn't yet is a mistake. We can neglect safety and get away with it for so long that we think we're doing everything right. This mental shift has been called the "normalization of deviance."

I deviated. I know best safety practices but I didn't follow them, out of laziness and because of time constraints and social pressure. I knew we should be prepared to rescue a swimmer between those drops, but I didn't insist.

Normalization is getting used to deviating from safety best practices. It was routine not to worry about it. No scout, no rope, just go. The casual attitude became normal.

The term normalization of deviance was coined by a sociologist reviewing the

Top: The bony slide (third drop in Shipherd); paddler is Steve Gass

Bottom: Paddlers below Shipherd Falls (the bottom three drops are visible in the background).

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The tall falls done right.

Challenger disaster. The root cause of the disaster had to do with NASA officials allowing flights of the space shuttle in spite of a design flaw with the O-rings. Over time they became insensitive to the deviant practice until it didn't seem wrong anymore.

Climbers know the rope rule, which is a directive to replace your belay rope when it has been stressed by too many falls. You just can't trust it anymore, even though it may look fine. Paddlers don't have a belay rope; we have the forgiving nature of the river. Each time you get lucky that something worse didn't happen, it's like falling on your metaphorical rope. Being lucky is a clue that it may be time to upgrade your safety practices, because luck doesn't hold.

To make smart safety decisions, study and understand the risks. Any chances you take add up to higher cumulative risk. Next decide on your own risk tolerance. This is a personal choice that can change during your life. Develop rules to keep you inside your tolerance, follow your rules, and reward yourself when you do. Finally, review your personal safety rules each time something happens. Update your rules if they aren't keeping you inside your personal risk tolerance.

Being conscientious about safety takes time and effort, but it can save us all from preventable injuries and fatalities. It's hard, but it's worth it.

PADDLE WISE

a responsibility code
for river runners



PADDLE SMART

- Paddle within your ability • Keep your skills sharp • Communicate with your team on the river • Think for yourself • Don't let bad decisions compound • Go big, but come home safe



PADDLE INCLUSIVE

- Share it • Everyone with the proper skillset is welcome • Find a mentor • Be a mentor • Acknowledge indigenous stewardship and land • Be a positive part of the community



PADDLE NO TRACE

- Leave no trace • Always be a river steward • Use existing access areas, trails and campsites • Pack it in • Pack it out • Use restroom facilities or bring your own waste disposal • Be aware of and remove micro-trash



PADDLE PREPARED

- Plan ahead • Consult existing beta • Understand International Scale of River Difficulty and your chosen river's rating • Carry proper equipment including medical kit, spare paddle and emergency food/layers



PADDLE SAFE

- Wear your PFD • Carry a throw rope, knife and other safety gear • Practice safe river running technique • Set safety where appropriate • Take a swiftwater rescue course • Practice whitewater rescue skills regularly



PADDLE AWARE

- Check weather and flow conditions • Check for closures and river regulations • Know your ability and your group's ability • Understand surrounding landscape and escape routes • Research existing hazards, portages and critical features

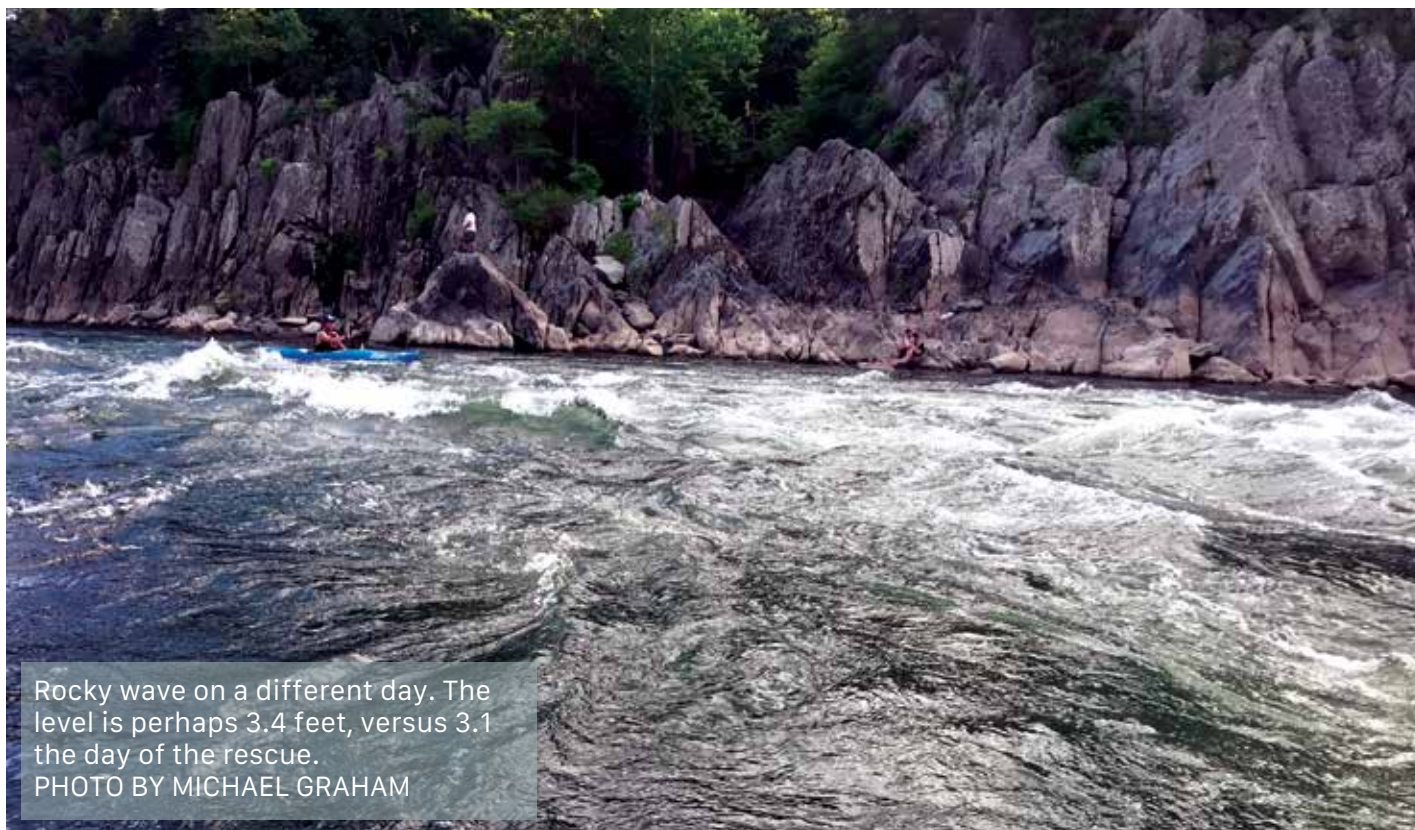


PADDLE RESPECTFUL

- Consider impacts to gateway communities • Consider impacts on other paddlers • Drive slowly • Park in designated areas • Respect closures • Be friendly and represent the whitewater community positively • Appreciate cultural resources but leave undisturbed

CHILD RESCUED IN MATHER GORGE

BY MICHAEL GRAHAM



MATHER GORGE ON the Potomac River is a mile-long canyon just outside of Washington, DC. Starting at the base of Great Falls rapid, it is characterized by sheer walls with hiking trails at the top and a few Class II and III rapids. Bill and I met at Carderock, a few miles below the Gorge, at about 10 a.m. on Saturday, July 10th, 2021, for an upstream “attainment” session. This is a great way to enjoy the Potomac, get some exercise, and see friends. I have attainment session about once a week, so I would never have expected that this would be a day that I will remember forever and made such a difference in the life of a young child and his family.

From Carderock, it is about a four-mile paddle upstream over a few Class II+ rapids to get to Rocky Island rapid on the Mather Gorge section of the Potomac. Along our way upstream, Bill and I ran into John and Rich and we all arrived at the river right

eddy (Virginia side) just below Rocky Island rapid at about the same time.

Rocky Island rapid (Rocky Wave to locals) is about a half mile downstream of Great Falls and there the canyon walls constrict to roughly 50-75 feet wide. So, the flow is fast and deep with strong eddy lines, areas of swirls, and upwellings. At some levels (3.9-4.8 feet on the Little Falls gauge or about 11,000-22,000 cfs), Rocky Island rapid forms an amazing long boat surfing wave with some shorter, steeper waves in a wave train behind the first. On this day, at 3.1 feet on the gauge (3,400 cfs), Rocky was a wave train of shallow waves extending about 20-30 yards. There is one point near the first wave where pedestrians can walk down to the water.

It was a beautiful day and there were about 20 or more hikers along the edge of the cliff moving along in small groups. All

SAFETY

along the cliffs, groups of climbers were rock climbing. John and Rich were in shorter boats and made an attempt or two at the attainment when John noticed a group of rock climbers just upstream of us shouting. I didn't catch what they said but John thought they were alerting us to a "swimmer," (i.e., someone in the water and not in a boat).

All of us looked upstream and, at first, I didn't see anyone. Then I did notice something, but I couldn't identify what it was at first. It looked like a small, dark ball that was mostly submerged and drifting down the river left side (Maryland side) of the river about five feet off the shore. It took me a moment more to realize it was just the top of the head of a small child. I think all of us realized the child was in grave danger at the same moment because, without a word, we all shot across the river to intercept the child. We spread out a little in the rapid and I ended up directly downstream of the child. I was paddling upstream through the rapid and was about two waves from the top of the rapid when the child entered the rapid and disappeared at the first wave.

I teach whitewater kayaking and swiftwater rescue and I have pulled a lot of people from the water. However, everyone before this child was wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) and they have always floated high in the water or bobbed up quickly. So, I was confused when the child disappeared. What I thought at the time was that he was being recirculated in the top wave so, I started to paddle up to that wave. Just then, I looked down and saw the top of his head and his arms outstretched and lifeless. He was about a foot under my boat which is close to the limit of visibility in the Potomac.

I only had a split second before he drifted away, so I grabbed him with my left arm, pulled him near the surface, and got a better hold with both arms to pull him up on my deck. He was completely limp and silent for a few seconds, but then I heard him gasp and start breathing! I still get choked up just thinking about how happy I was to hear him breathe. Still, the child did not move or try to hold on. With both my hands occupied keeping him from falling back in, I couldn't paddle and we were carried down the Rocky Island rapid wave train and toward Wetbottom rapid about a quarter mile downstream. About this time, the child weakly said, "Help me," and I told him he was safe and I wouldn't let anything happen to him.

Just a moment later, John and Rich flanked me and helped me secure the child. It was like we were a well-practiced team, and everyone just did exactly the thing that was needed. Rich took off his PFD and loosely secured it to the child. Rich also had the presence of mind to ask the child his name and we all used it to reassure the child that he was safe. Both Rich and John had short boats that would not have worked well for carrying a passenger, so it made sense for me to carry the boy to shore. Rich and

John worked together to move the child to my back deck so I could paddle him to the Maryland shore (river left), which was the closest.

Once we got the child to the Maryland shore, he told us his parents were on the Virginia side and it was clear that he was desperate to get back to them. John, Rich, and I looked at each other and I am pretty sure we all thought that was not the best idea. Then, Rich spent some time making the PFD fit the child securely and the idea didn't seem so terrible anymore. While Rich was working on the PFD, I called 911 to let them know that the child was safe. The boy was just 7 years old and didn't know his parent's phone number, so we hoped that if his parent called, the 911 operator could let them know. John could hear the parents wailing for their child and ferried back over to the Virginia side and ran up the path to get the parents. Bill noticed a couple on the rocks of Rocky Island that seemed to be in contact with a parent of the child and were trying to communicate the parent's phone number by shouting and using hand gestures. The noise from the river made it very hard to hear. Bill paddled up to them hoping to be able to relay the phone number back to me (because I was the only member of our group with an accessible phone) if they were successful. Ultimately, the communication across the river stopped before we could get a number – possibly because John had made direct contact with parents and they were making their way down to the water's edge.

With the child secured in the PFD, laying on my back deck, and holding my waist tightly, we headed back across the river. Rich and Bill flanked me as I ferried across and got the child to the Virginia shore at the path up to the trails. Just as we arrived, John returned with the parents. Obviously, the parents were overjoyed to have their child back. The mom broke down and was hugging the child and it took a little while for Rich to get his PFD back. There wasn't much to say other than "Thank you," and "Glad we could help," so we said our goodbyes. I wish I had gotten some contact information for the parents. I feel like I have a connection with them now, and it would be amazing to see the child grow up and to know I helped that happen.

On any normal day, that would have been the end of the story. But this day, I continued my attainment, while Rich and John walked out to get to their cars, and Bill headed back downstream to Carderock. Once I attained Rocky Island rapid, I only got about 100 feet because I ran into a man standing on a rock near the Virginia shore. He didn't have a PFD or any climbing gear and the only way out from where he was located was a shear rock face straight up. He asked if the child was OK and was relieved when I said he was safe. He told me that he and the child did not know each other but were both climbing on the rocks. The child was directly above the man when the child fell and knocked both of them into the water. The water in this section sometimes

looks deceptively placid. However, it is extremely dangerous with swirling currents that pull a swimmer down and make it difficult to get to shore. The man said he tried to save the boy but ended up only barely able to save himself. We talked a bit and I explained how I could take him down to the path below the rapid if he held on to the grab loop on the stern of my boat. He agreed and I did get him down safely. It turned out to be much more difficult than when I normally tow people to shore. Again, I am used to rescuing kayakers wearing PFDs and who know how to swim along. This guy was like an anchor. By the time I got to shore, I was done with my workout. The guy thanked me and I headed back downstream.

I was below Wetbottom rapid when the first Search and Rescue boat arrived. I guess it was about 15 minutes after the boy fell in the water. It really is amazing how fast Search and Rescue can arrive in an emergency. Even so, I don't think the little boy had that much time left when we pulled him from underwater. It is my understanding that, when people are listless and non-responsive, they are seconds away from passing out and aspirating water. As low as the child was floating in and under the water, I think that he would have sunk if he had aspirated any water. At that point in Mather gorge, the water might be 30 feet deep and with only a foot or two of visibility.

I credit my training (American Canoe Association "ACA" Level 4 Swift Water Rescue instructor, L4 White Water kayak instructor, and NOLS certified Wilderness First Aid) with my quick reactions and logical thinking during the rescue. All of the kayakers involved in the rescue were paddling well within our abilities and at no point did we put ourselves at risk. I credit the experience, training, and kayaking skill of the other kayakers that the rescue went so smoothly.

I have second-guessed myself about returning the child to the Virginia side of the river but, once we had the PFD secured to him, I was absolutely confident that no one was placed in danger by shuttling the child to his parents. Looking back, it felt like everything went very smoothly. Even though this was a very intense situation, no one yelled or got in the way. Everyone picked a task and did it.

I don't know if the parents took their child to get checked out. In general, people who nearly drown should be checked by a medical professional. It is possible that water aspirated into the lungs can cause issues later on. While the child seemed fine after his ordeal, I do wish I had been adamant that they stay and wait for search and rescue to perform a complete medical check.



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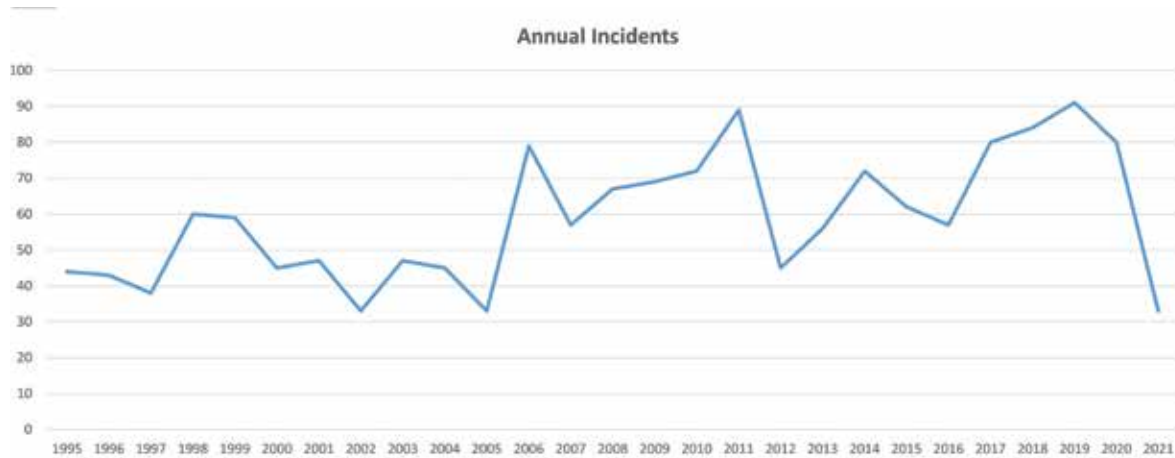


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Colorado River, Grand Canyon. | Photo: Evan Stafford

AMERICAN WHITEWATER ACCIDENT SUMMARY JAN-JUNE 2021

By CHARLIE WALBRIDGE



THE ACCIDENT REPORTS received by AW in the first 6 months of 2021 paint a different picture from what we had at this time last year. Only 21 deaths have been reported, down from 30 in 2020. The biggest change is the reduced number of recreational kayak accidents: only seven this year versus 15 a year ago. It seems that people are resuming normal activities at this point in the pandemic, and are less likely to try paddling. Rafting deaths have also declined, from 10 to four, probably the result of usually low water in Colorado and California where the sport is most popular. Only a surge in canoeing deaths, from none in 2020 to five so far this year, kept the total from declining even further. Accident causes include eight where no PFDs were used; four paddlers trapped in low head dam hydraulics; four flush drownings; and two strainer pins. Six of the accidents involved solo paddlers or one-boat trips, where the lack of the safety that a second boat provides may have been a contributing factor. Deaths were evenly distributed, with five states having two fatalities each.

I'd like to thank all the people who sent reports, forwarded articles, or answered my questions. A special thanks goes to Charlie Duffy, who created the charts that accompany this article and helped identify glitches in the database.

WHITEWATER KAYAKERS

We've lost four skilled paddlers in Class IV-V whitewater so far this year, and each accident was followed by a well-crafted report

from members of the victim's group. These are hard to write, and make sobering reading. When I started reporting accidents over 40 years ago, I thought that we could identify a cause behind each fatality. Yet, with several of these deaths you see an element of random perversity, where small mishaps that wouldn't be a problem on easier rivers combine with unforgiving rapids to tragic effect. They remind us of the risks we take when pursuing the sport at a high level.

On March 25th there was a death on Tennessee's Nolichucky River. Craig Quigly, 60, was a capable paddler with several previous runs down the river. He was paddling with a group of four when trouble struck in Class IV Quarter Mile Rapid. Scott Fisher tells what happened:

"The incident occurred about 1/3 of the way through Quarter Mile rapid.... The group caught the river right eddy above block rock, and ferried above the hazard. Craig ferried successfully across the river and caught an edge in slack.... He flipped, and after several unsuccessful roll attempts, swam out of his boat. John and I reached him quickly and we instructed Craig to grab my stern.... I towed Craig to river-left, instructing him to assist by kicking, which he did, and brought him to the eddy above Copper Rock. At this point I told him to swim into the eddy.... Craig made no attempt to do so, however, and subsequently we washed into the slot to the left of Copper rock.... He showed no self-rescue behavior and went face down in the current.... I exited my boat,

swam to Craig, turned him to a face up position and quickly towed him to shore. John and I laid him on stable ground, removed his PFD and began CPR, rotating compressions and rescue breaths between us.... Our assessment is that Craig likely either had a heart attack during his swim or flush drowned."

On May 28th there was a fatality in the Class IV "Wild Mile" of Montana's Swan River. Lindsay Ashton, 25, was a talented multi-sport outdoorswoman who worked as a wildlands firefighter each summer. She was very fit and capable. Here's what happened according to Finan Lund-Andersen, who attempted the rescue:

"Lindsay Ashton flipped and never attempted to roll...her helmet was ripped off when she flipped and she had a pretty good contusion on her head. She floated upside down and unconscious into a logjam where another paddling partner and I were able to get to her. After about a minute of tugging and pulling her body flushed through the logjam. I jumped back in my kayak and raced down river to find her floating face down.... I held her head out of the water as best as I could, but kept losing track of her in the rapids and then would find her again and keep her head up.

"We made it though the rapids but the river was still moving fast into town. I was able to keep her head out of the water and whistle for help on shore. There are many docks where the river gets close to the lake, and one of them had a good sized logjam underneath. I wasn't able to paddle while holding her head up, and we floated into (it).... I held onto her until the last second, and was barely able to make it around the logjam without getting pinned myself.... Luckily, she immediately flushed through the logjam and I was there to keep her head out of the water. At this point we were in the lake, and a paddle boarder came out to aid. I threw her on his board and after he did some rescue breaths he paddled her to shore where there were many people waiting to do CPR. She had a pulse but wasn't breathing, but after six rounds of CPR she could breathe on her own."

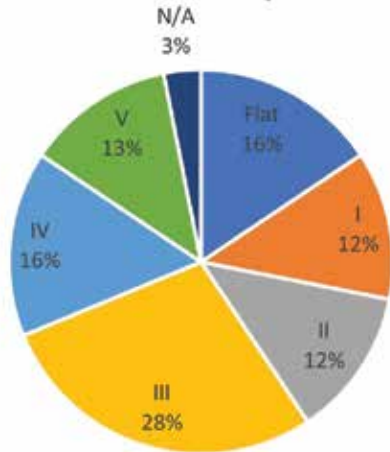
Ms. Ashton was life-flighted to Logan Health Medical Center and placed in a medically induced coma. Treatment was unsuccessful, and she died there three weeks later.

The paddling community was shocked by the death of Joe Hatcher, 46, who was well known in West Virginia, Oregon, and Northern California. He was leading two first-time paddlers down California's Upper Cherry Creek, a world-



The site of the Cherry Creek accident. The victim's boat is visible in the hydraulic; the tip of the island is at the photo's right edge. PHOTO BY DAVE FORMOLO

2021 Incidents/Class



renowned Class V+ run that he knew well. It requires a rugged eight-mile hike to the put-in. When they arrived, the group found the flow was 380 cfs, almost double their 200 cfs target. They decided to attempt the run anyway, and a report filed by his group describes what happened:

“Joseph explained that at the current level the first part of the next drop was a portage due to water pushing very hard into a midstream sieve.... Though the three of us were all out of our boats at the top of this drop, we did not take the extra few seconds to scout the ledge hole below. Joseph put his spray skirt on and launched...he disappeared over the horizon.... Dave...didn’t see Joseph emerging in the pool below.... Dave immediately shot over to where he could see over the drop with his throw bag.... He yelled to me that Joseph was getting surfed, and I quickly ran over with my throw bag.

“...Joseph was in the process of pulling his skirt and swimming. The ledge was about eight-10 feet tall with two flakes on either side of the main hole, with about a 10-15-foot boil line created by the island just downstream. Dave immediately got his bag ready.... His throw landed inches in front of Joseph’s head and he tried to grab the rope with his hands and then legs before the boil...pushed both the rope and Joseph back into the boil.... Dave pulled on his rope but felt no tension.... Joseph resurfaced at the edge of the boil and I yelled to try to get his attention, and I threw my rope. My bag also landed inches in front of Joseph’s head, but he again grabbed at the rope with no success.... Dave attempted another throw, and again Joseph was unable to grab the rope. I had my rope pulled up and situated for another throw when Dave decided to jump off the dry side of the drop onto the island downstream. When he reached the Island, I had thrown again.... Dave then attempted a third throw from the island and he finally felt tension but as he began to pull, the tension was released.

“We both threw many more times from our different positions landing several more effective tosses. But as we continued...the throws became less effective, and we began to feel hopeless.... Joseph had recirculated in the hole at least 10-15 times and was no longer fighting to escape or attempting to grab our thrown ropes.... We attempted to create lassos with our ropes in hopes to snag Joseph but were unsuccessful.... Joseph went deep and finally flushed out and floated past the island into the pool below. Dave, on the island, dove into the water after him...and began to swim him to shore.... Dave attempted to start compressions while I loosened and removed Joseph’s pfd. We then started trading giving compressions and breaths and after a few cycles I took over while Dave went to his bag and activated the SOS on his In-Reach to get help on the way. In about 40 minutes...the helicopter was on its way.”

After an hour and a half, the group made the difficult decision to discontinue CPR. Mr. Hatcher’s body was brought out by the helicopter.

Chason P. Russell, a 41-year-old professional mountain guide and Mountain Rescue Aspen volunteer, died on June 17th on Colorado’s Crystal River. He was kayaking with two other men when he flipped in the lower part of Class V+ Meatgrinder Rapid. Here are some excerpts from a much longer article in the describing the accident and the recovery effort: “Chaison took a hard blow to the helmet and felt the need to eject himself from his kayak. Chason has been kayaking for over 25 years and has only swam out of his boat once or twice.... Stan brought his boat to within Chason’s reach and made contact and began paddling him to shore. The two went through another hole..., which caused Stan’s boat to flip. The two lost contact at the time and Stan rolled his boat back upright to see Chason get flushed over the next river feature and submerge completely. He saw Chason begin to rise and then stop just shy of the surface. We know now that Chason’s leg became stuck in an entrapment, or lodged between rocks that held him in place.

“Stan whipped his kayak into the eddy...and attempted to make contact again. The situation became quite dangerous for Stan.... He lost his paddle while attempting to make contact with Chason.... Once on shore he made every effort to get a rope to Chason but too much time had passed and Chason remained stuck and had become unresponsive.

“It was Stan Prichard’s firm opinion that Chason never became dislodged from his entrapment and was still in the same basic location.... Those of us who knew and loved Chason could not stand by without attempting to recover him from the river.... The group was comprised of about 30 people: swift water rescue technicians and instructors, ski patrollers, mountain guides, world class kayakers, rock climbers, doctors, EMTs and loved ones.... On

Saturday (June 19) the group built a ropes system across the river to guide a raft, controlled from shore, into the area where Chason Russell submerged. We conducted a 'grid search' of the roughly 15-by-15-foot space in the lower half of Meatgrinder rapid.... We located his body. Members of the group were able to get a rope around him—his body was approximately three feet below the surface.... We were able to pull him free. He was...found within a few feet of his last sighted location.”

LOW HEAD DAMS

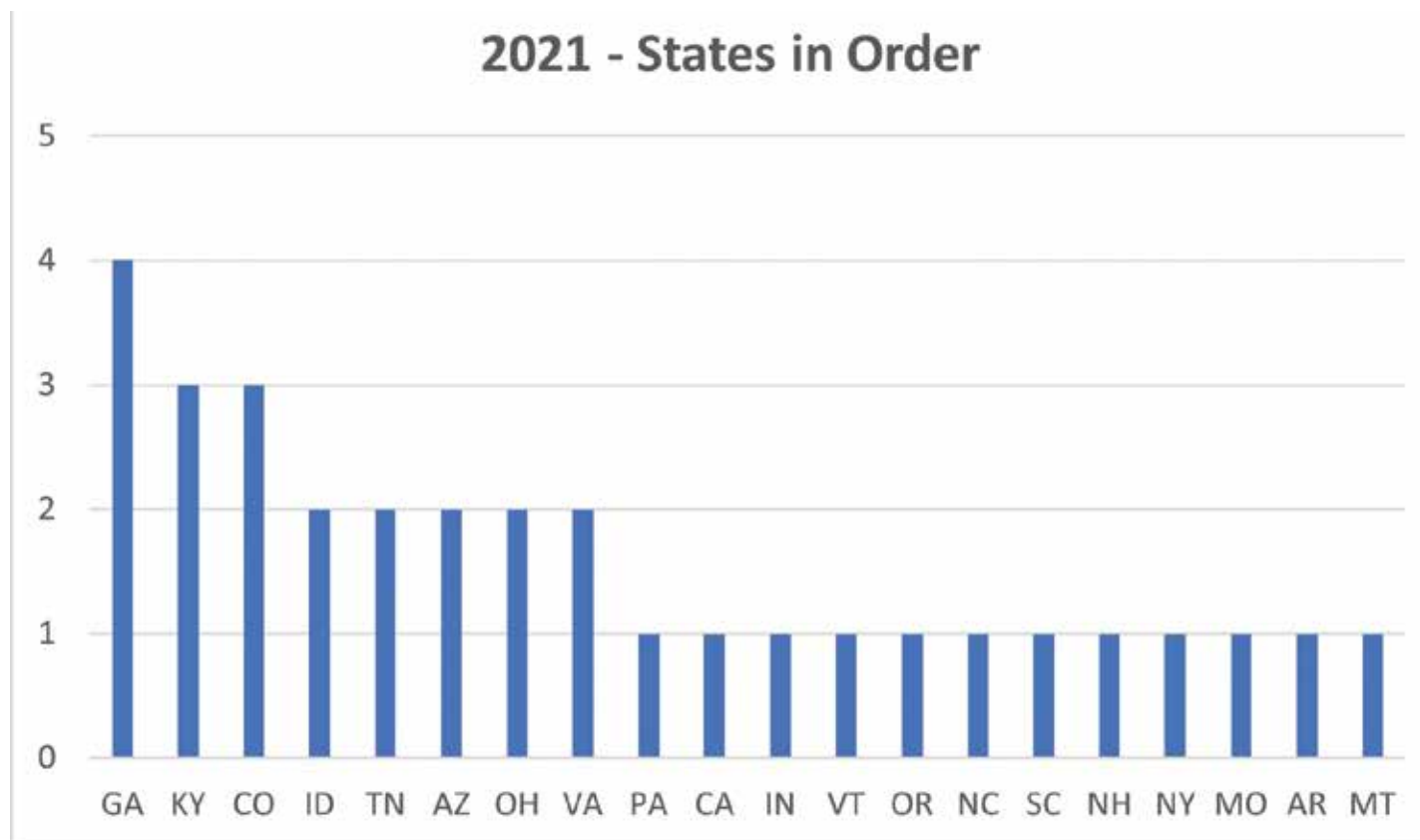
There were four fatal accidents around low head dams this year, starting with the January 10th death of a young kayak fisherman on the Ohio River near Louisville, Kentucky. Jacob Stover, 16, put in above the Second Street Bridge. The Falls of the Ohio Dam is just downstream and the WAVE 3 News Skytrack Weather Camera showed a kayaker believed to be Mr. Stover paddling in circles as he was being pushed towards the dam. He looked like someone who was being pushed around by a fast current. He was paddling alone, so there were no witnesses to what happened next. The dam has a powerful hydraulic at its base, and if he survived that he would be in the middle of a wide, icy river. His boat was found below the dam the next day; his body turned up two months later, over 100 miles downstream.

On March 30th the Indianapolis Fire Department received 911 calls about an overturned canoe washing over a dam. Carlos Ramirez, 17, was paddling with another man and a dog. They panicked just upstream of a low-head dam, jumped from the canoe, and tried to swim to safety. Neither man was wearing a life vest. The adult and the dog got to shore safely, but Mr. Rodriguez was last seen washing downstream. His body was found a week later.

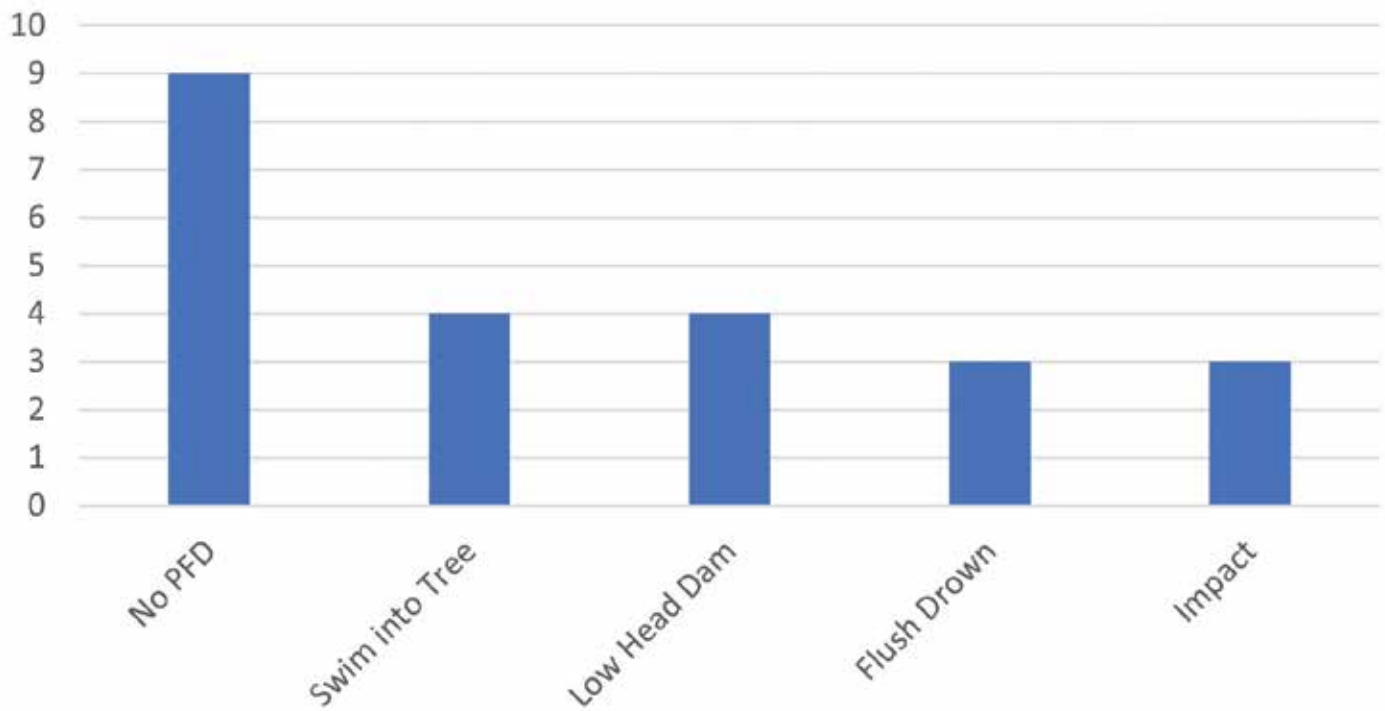
A few weeks later, on May 5th, a couple got into trouble running their kayaks over Great Crossing Dam on Kentucky's North Elkhorn Creek. Water was high following heavy rains. A man driving home from work saw the pair struggling in the backwash and was able to rescue the woman. Her fiancée, Eduardo Ponce, 26, was battered by recirculating logs and pulled underwater. Firefighters chased his body down; it pinned briefly on a bridge pier before they were able to grab it.

North Carolina's Dan River was the scene of one of the deadliest dam-related accidents on record. A group of 9 people using inner tubes launched upstream of the Duke Energy Dam in Eden, NC. They were not aware the dam was there and missed the warning signs and a portage path. They went over the dam at around 7:30 p.m. Five members of the group were killed, including a pregnant woman and a seven-year-old child. The survivors, a man and three

2021 - States in Order



2021 - Top 5 Accident Causes



teens, were unable to rescue themselves and spent the next 20 hours in the water. They were finally spotted by a Duke Energy employee at 3:30 p.m. the next day.

GRAND CANYON RAFTING DEATHS

On April 26th there were two rafting deaths in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River in Arizona. Tom Martin reports that a 37-foot motor rig collided with a boulder at river mile 57, in a very easy rapid, and flipped. These huge commercial craft seldom capsize, but when they do it's ugly! There are places underneath a flipped boat that can trap people. Some of the passengers were able to reach the left and right banks while others stayed with the boat. The raft washed downstream almost a half mile before eddying out along the right shore. Those floating alongside the boat were able to get ashore here, but two others were swept downriver. One of them, a woman, lost consciousness and did not recover despite lengthy CPR. The boat eventually came close enough to shore that the passengers were able to grab it. One of them, a retired wildlands firefighter, took off his lifejacket, swam under the boat, and retrieved two passengers who were trapped there. The second boat on the trip was apparently too far behind to be of any help.

A second death occurred when James Crocker, 63, fell out after his private raft hit "Emilio's Hole," a dangerous feature at the top of Class IV Hance Rapids. He took a long, nasty swim through very big water and was unresponsive when he was picked up. CPR was attempted without success.

FLUSH DROWNINGS

Two other rafting deaths were the result of long whitewater swims where a life vest wasn't enough to keep the victims alive. On April 1st Tennessee's Pigeon River was running over 4,000 cfs at the Hartford Plant, a high flow. The Class III+ run starts out with big crashing waves. A commercial raft flipped, dumping everyone into the river. Norvell Fleming, 39, was unconscious when pulled ashore three quarters of a mile downstream. Guides, assisted by kayakers, attempted CPR and brought him across the river to where EMS was standing by.

On the other side of the country Jason Post, 34, drowned in the Minam River near Minam State Park in Oregon. This river, a tributary of the Grande Ronde, was running at 6,000 cfs, a high level. Their four-person raft, heavily loaded with overnight gear, broached and flipped on the "Minam Roller." This feature becomes quite aggressive in high water, despite a Class III rating.

Since this was a one-boat trip, there was no rescue backup. The others swam to shore; Mr. Post was found later, floating face down. Cold water probably played a role in this fatality.

STRAINERS AND SIEVES

There were two strainer-related fatalities so far this year; both occurred in Class I whitewater. David Robles, 82, died on June 19th during a high-water run on Missouri's Current River. His open canoe hit a submerged root ball and folded, trapping him. On June 30th Heidi Weaver, 50, and her husband were kayaking on the South Fork of the Idaho's Snake River downstream from Lorenzo Bridge. Weaver's kayak hit a logjam and flipped, trapping her underwater. First responders recovered her body an hour later.

In Southeastern Pennsylvania, an Amish man was killed on Muddy Creek, a popular intermediate (Class II-III) run for local paddlers. Class V+ Muddy Creek Gorge is usually portaged; it's narrow and full of dangerous undercuts. Rob Danner says that Amish paddlers run the creek often in rec kayaks with no sprayskirts or PFDs. The Muddy was extremely low at 115 cfs on May 24th when three men attempted the run. It looks like two of the men carried around the Gorge while a third man, John Beachy, 53, was lagging behind and didn't realize that he needed to get out. He was pulled into the Gorge where he capsized and pinned.

NO LIFE VESTS IN USE

Lastly, there were seven fatal accidents that could have been prevented if the victim had been wearing a life vest. Five of these deaths occurred on one-boat trips, so there was no backup in case of trouble.

A man fishing from a rec kayak drowned on Georgia's Chattahoochee River below Buford Dam. David Southern, 41, was paddling alone on May 25th, so we don't know what exactly what happened. He was not wearing a PFD. Rick Thompson, who paddles this section of river often, said the releases are irregular and the river rises quickly and without warning. He said it was "scary" the first time he encountered it!

On Arkansas' Buffalo River, Charles Harman died after his canoe capsized on June 5th. His son survived and he rallied bystanders to get his father out of the water and begin CPR. The coroner later ruled that heart attack was the cause of death.

On June 6th a canoe capsized while running McCoy Falls on the New River in Western Virginia. It's described as a straightforward Class II rapid and an unpleasant swim on a large river. Neither man was wearing a life vest; one survived, but Jeffrey Nicely, 59, did not.

David Spencer, 31, drowned after his bass boat lost power and capsized in Demon's Drop Rapids on Idaho's Salmon River. This

is just upstream of the Pine Bar Recreation Area. Neither Mr. Spencer nor his companion was wearing a PFD.

A Vermont couple is dead after their canoe capsized on Lewis Creek near Charlotte, Vermont. Martha Illick, 70, and Terrence Dinnan, 71, were paddling with their three-year-old grandson on April 19th when the accident occurred. There were no witnesses. The boy was wearing a life vest, they were not. He survived, swam to shore, and made his way to safety.

Mark Stevern, 41, was with group of rec boat paddlers who got in trouble at "The Chutes" on Ohio's Paint Creek. The accident occurred on March 21st. Grigory Filimonov, who attempted a rescue, calls this a Class III drop with large waves and holes. He writes, "The guy flipped over just before the Chutes. Walmart kayak, no PFD, no dry or wetsuit, probably after few beers. He swam all Chutes in ice-cold water. I tried to save him after the last wave. He grabbed my stern loop, held on for 10 seconds, then released and went under the dirty water."

And finally, Ronald "Casey" Van Haren, 37, died after his kayak flipped on Virginia's Appomattox River near Hopewell Marina. The accident happened on March 3rd; the river here has mild current but no rapids. A friend of the missing man said this was Mr. Van Haren's first time out. "He bought the kayak yesterday and had just snapped a photo on the river when the kayak flipped. He was excited you know, he got up early to take it out."

YOU CAN HELP!

American Whitewater needs **your help** to gather accident reports for us to share with other paddlers. First person accounts from experienced paddlers, newspaper articles, and on-line posts are all important. Since media articles are often inaccurate or incomplete, clarifying comments from paddlers familiar with the area are really useful. And while serious incidents involving skilled whitewater paddlers are quite rare, they often teach us important lessons, help us avoid trouble, and show how to better manage emergencies. Accurate accounts of these accidents also keep malicious rumors at bay, something to consider in this age of Internet gossip.

To report a whitewater accident, near miss, or serious injury, please go to the Safety page on americanwhitewater.org, click "report an accident," and enter the information. Or you can email me at ccwalbridge@cs.com or message "Charlie Walbridge" on Facebook. Feel free to share newspaper articles, chat room posts, or even rumors! I'm not an "investigator," but I often run down sketchy reports online to find out what happened. I can also help you prepare an accident report if needed.

AW PARTNERS

\$20,000 - Class V



NEW BELGIUM.

Fat Tire

EST. COLORADO U.S.A. 1991

\$15,000 - Class IV



NRS

\$15,000 - Class III



\$7,500 - Class II



\$5,000 - Boof



Rocky Mountain Rafts



\$2,500 - Wave





NORTHWEST RAFTING CO

Each day American Whitewater faces new challenges that threaten our whitewater rivers. To aid us in this fight, we rely on support from members, donors, foundations, and partners in the industry. Companies throughout the whitewater and outdoor industries are stepping forward to support AW's River Stewardship work. American Whitewater urges you not to make purchase decisions blindly. When you buy your next piece of outdoor gear there are many factors to consider: quality, dependability, comfort, safety, and fashion. American Whitewater hopes you will add one more consideration to this list: corporate responsibility. Support companies that support your rivers.

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We are exclusively focused on offering the best whitewater rafting trips in the West. Our truly expeditionary whitewater experiences on the Illinois and Chetco rivers cross the vast Kalmiopsis Wilderness. Our trips on the Rogue and Middle Fork of the Salmon are high energy, family-friendly adventures on two of the most incredible and beloved rivers in the northwest. Our rafting and cultural tour in Bhutan gives the intrepid traveler an unforgettable, soul-stirring understanding of a country that warmly welcomes its visitors but actively protects itself from becoming over-touristed.

Our selective size enables us to offer exceptional whitewater rafting and kayaking trips that adhere to the highest standards of safety, guide experience, and knowledge, and guest comfort on the water and off.

We strive for professionalism and consideration in everything we do, from the first time you contact us until you're home again. With many of our guests repeat customers, and recognition from such leading industry organizations as National Geographic, Traveler, and Outside Magazine, we are confident you'll find a NWRC trip is a one-of-a-kind, when-can-we-do-this-again adventure.

We believe sharing wilderness and wild rivers is the best way for people to understand the value of our public lands and to become advocates for their conservation and preservation. Unless people know about these pristine places and can experience their transformative power, the wilderness is nothing more than an abstract thought with the potential to be easily consumed by privatization and careless development.

We are inspired by a vision of a country in which our Wild & Scenic rivers are enjoyed and respected, from both intimate and distant perspectives. Our guests build and strengthen their connections with nature, with their fellow travelers, and most especially with themselves.

For the past few years, America Whitewater has partnered with Northwest Rafting Company for a trip on the Wild and Scenic Rogue River focused on our stewardship activities. This trip provides a great opportunity to connect with members in ways that build a lasting understanding of the role of recreation in fostering a stewardship ethic. Join us June 16-19, 2022, on the Wild and Scenic Rogue River. Bookings can be made on the Northwest Rafting Company website.



AFFILIATE CLUBS

AW'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE

BY BETHANY OVERFIELD

American Whitewater's original purpose since 1954 has included distribution of information among its Affiliate Clubs. We have over 100 current AW Club Affiliates and they are all doing great work on your behalf; if you don't belong to a club, consider joining one.

American Whitewater has two levels of Affiliate Clubs - a Supporting Affiliate Club or an Affiliate Club. Affiliate Clubs that choose AW's \$100 annual level are recognized in the AW Journal, on our website club page, and in our annually published Honor Roll. In order to be recognized at this level, a Club needs to maintain an annual \$100 contribution.

Affiliate Clubs that choose AW's \$400 Supporting Affiliate Club annual level are recognized in the AW Journal, on our website club page, and in our annually published Honor Roll as well as being listed as sponsors of an AW stewardship presentation each year. In order to be recognized at this level, a Club needs to maintain an annual \$400 contribution. A Supporting Affiliate Club can revert to the \$100 Affiliate Club annual level at any time.

An Affiliate Club that is already being recognized as an AW Lifetime member is recognized in the annual Honor Roll as a Lifetime member. They do need to contribute either at the \$100 or the \$400 level annually to be recognized as an Affiliate Club in the AW Journal and under the Affiliate Club heading of the published Honor Roll. Is your club missing from this list? It might have expired. Contact me at membership@americanwhitewater.org to square your club membership away!

SUPPORTING AFFILIATE CLUBS

Alaska

Fairbanks Paddlers, Fairbanks

Arkansas

Arkansas Canoe Club, Little Rock

Colorado

Dolores River Boating Advocate, Dolores

Georgia

Georgia Canoeing Association Inc, Winston

Kentucky

Bluegrass Wildwater Association, Lexington
Viking Canoe Club, Louisville

New York

KCCNY, Brooklyn

North Carolina

West Asheville Canoe and Kayak Organization (WACKO), Asheville

Ohio

Keelhaulers, Cleveland

Oregon

Oregon Whitewater Association, Tigard

South Carolina

Foothills Paddling Club, Greenville
Palmetto Paddlers, Columbia

Washington

Paddle Trails Canoe Club, Seattle
Washington Kayak Club, Redmond
Washington Recreational River Runners, Renton

AFFILIATE CLUBS BY STATE

Alaska

Nova River Runners Inc., Chickaloon

Alabama

Coosa River Paddling Club, Wetumpka
Huntsville Canoe Club, Huntsville

Arizona

Outdoors Unlimited, Flagstaff

California

Gold Country Paddlers, Placerville
Redwood Empire Paddlers, Santa Rosa
River City Whitewater Club, Sacramento
Smith River Alliance, Crescent City

Colorado

Diversity Whitewater, Fort Collins
Friends of the Yampa, Steamboat Springs
Rocky Mountain Outdoor Center, Buena Vista
Royal Gorge River Initiative Org, Canon City
San Miguel Whitewater Asso, Telluride
Team Colorado Whitewater Racing Club, Longmont
Upper Colorado Private Boaters Asso, Glenwood Springs

Connecticut

Housatonic Area Canoe & Kayak Sq, Lakeville

Delaware

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

Idaho

Idaho Whitewater Association, Boise

Indiana

Hoosier Canoe Club, Brownsburg
Ohio Valley Paddlers, Evansville

Iowa

Iowa Whitewater Coalition, W. Des Moines

Kentucky

Elkhorn Paddlers, Lexington

Maine

Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, Freeport

Maryland

Baltimore Canoe & Kayak Club, Baltimore
Blue Ridge Voyagers, Rockville

Minnesota

Rapids Riders, Eagan

Missouri

Missouri Whitewater Association, St. Louis
Ozark Mountain Paddlers, Springfield

Montana

Beartooth Paddlers Society, Billings

Nevada

Sierra Nevada Whitewater Club, Reno

New Hampshire

Ledyard Canoe Club, Hanover
New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association, Contoocook

New Jersey

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)

New York

ADK Schenectady, Schenectady
Kuyahoor Valley Paddlers, Middleville
Zoar Valley Paddling Club, Machias

North Carolina

Carolina Canoe Club, Raleigh
Landmark Learning, Cullowhee
Mind Body Play, Asheville

Ohio

Friends of the Crooked River, Akron

Oregon

Lower Columbia Canoe Club, Portland
Northwest Rafters Association, Roseburg
Oregon Kayak and Canoe Club, Portland
Willamette Kayak and Canoe Club, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, Oaks (PA)
Benscreek Canoe Club, Johnstown
Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, Harrisburg
Conewago Canoe Club, York
Lehigh Valley Canoe Club, Lehigh Valley
Three Rivers Paddling Club, Bridgeville

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Canoe and Kayak Association,
Hope Valley

Tennessee

Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts,
Jonesborough
Chota Canoe Club, Knoxville
Clean Water Expected in East Tennessee,
Sevierville
East Tennessee Whitewater Club, Oak Ridge
Eastman Recreation Club, Kingsport
Tennessee Scenic River Association, Nashville
Tennessee Valley Canoe Club, Knoxville

Texas

Houston Canoe Club, Houston

Utah

High Jim and the A.S.K., Salt Lake City
Utah Whitewater Club, Salt Lake City

Vermont

Vermont Paddlers Club, Montpelier

Virginia

Blue Ridge River Runners, Lynchburg
Canoe Cruisers Association, Middlebury
Coastal Canoeists, Richmond
Float Fishermen of Virginia, Roanoke

Washington

Spokane Canoe & Kayak Club, Spokane
Yakima River Runners, Selah

Washington, DC

Canoe Cruisers Association

West Virginia

DbI Z! Whitewater Club, Fayetteville
Friends of the Cheat, Kingwood
Mason Dixon Canoe Cruisers, Bolivar
WV Wildwater Assn, S. Charleston

Wisconsin

North East Wisconsin Paddlers, Inc., Neenah
Rapids Riders, Eagan
Sierra Club/John Muir Chapter, Madison

Wyoming

American Packrafting Association, Wilson
Jackson Hole Kayak Club, Jackson

Ontario

Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers, Toronto

National

Team River Runner

DISCOUNTED AW MEMBERSHIP FOR AFFILIATE CLUB MEMBERS

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

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

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

JOIN AMERICAN WHITewater AS A CLUB AFFILIATE!

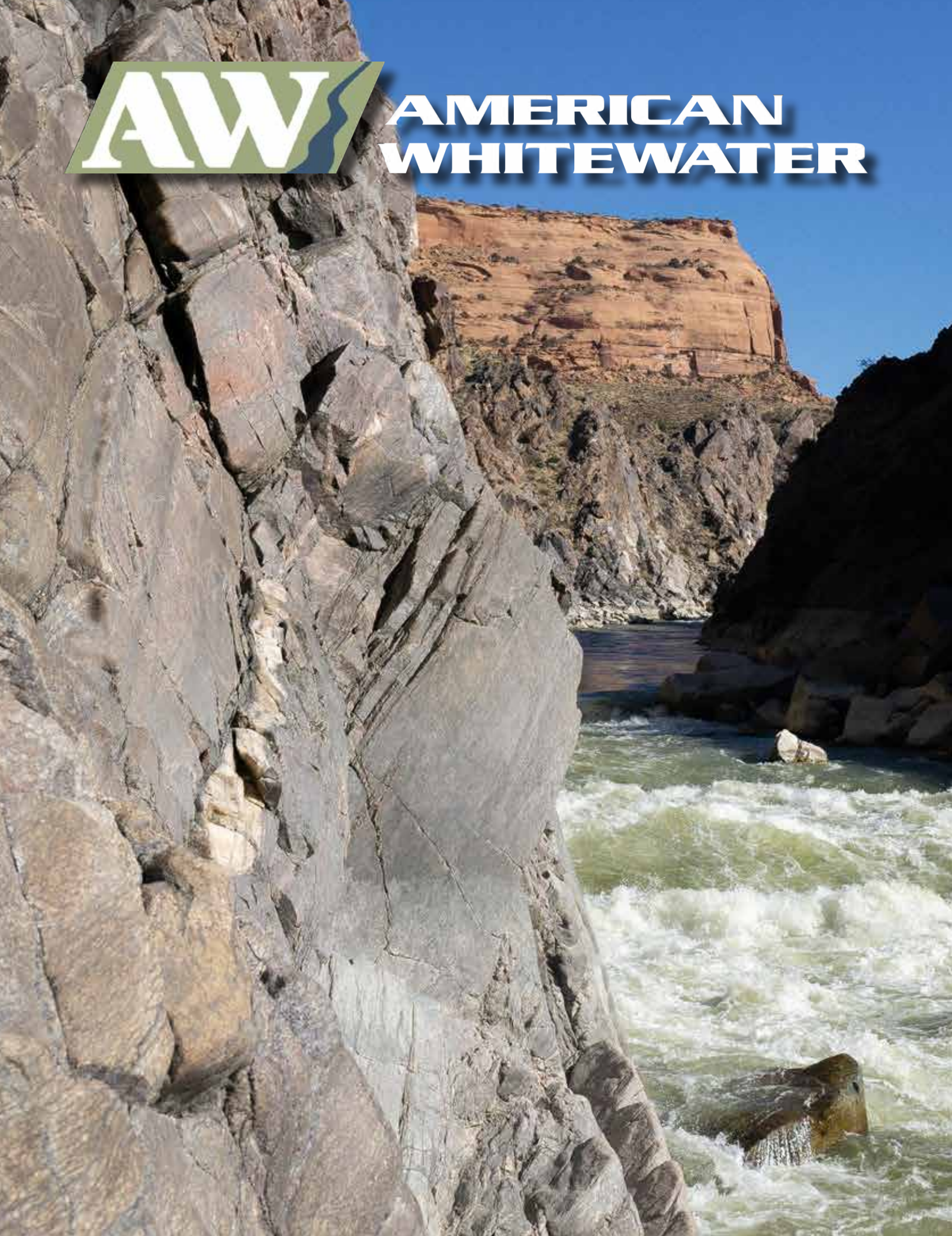
10 REASONS TO JOIN AW AS AN AFFILIATE CLUB

1. Support river access and restoration through the AW River Stewardship Team.
2. Be part of a national voice for the protection of the whitewater rivers your club values.
3. Tap into the professional expertise of AW staff for river issues that come up in your backyard.
4. Your club's members can become AW members for \$25. A \$10 savings!
5. Receive the American Whitewater Journal, the oldest continually published whitewater magazine.
6. Your club is recognized in the list of Affiliate Clubs posted to the AW website.
7. Recognize your club in the list of Affiliate Clubs noted in each bi-monthly AW Journal.
8. Post Club information on the AW Website to help paddlers find you.
9. Gain Club satisfaction from lending support to AW's stewardship efforts.
10. Improve your club members river karma.

For more information, contact Bethany Overfield at membership@americanwhitewater.org or sign-up on line at www.americanwhitewater.org/membership.



AMERICAN WHITEWATER



The Strength of Our Voice is Your Membership

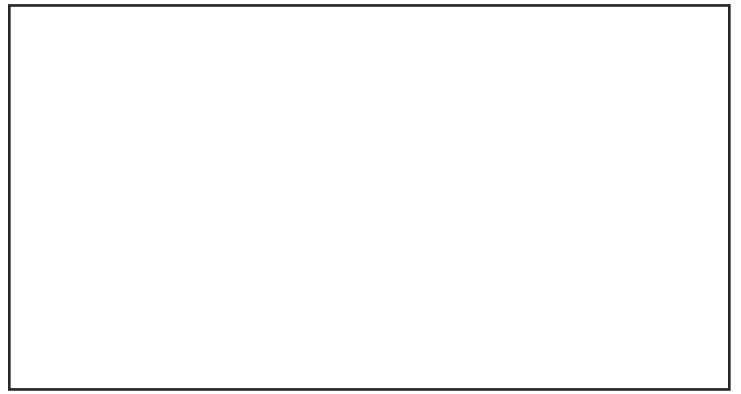
Standard w/AW Journal	\$35
Family w/AW Journal	\$50
Ender Club w/T-Shirt	\$125
Platinum Paddler w/Hoodie	\$250
Explorer w/Watershed Bag	\$500
Lifetime	\$1,000
Steward w/\$400 Kokatat Gift	\$2,500



*Incentive gifts change from time to time, please check the website for the latest rewards.

Join @ americanwhitewater.org/join

Donate @ americanwhitewater.org/donate



Membership Driven River Stewardship
americanwhitewater.org/join

Whitewater River Defenders

Since 1954

Big Creek, NC – By Evan Stafford

