

# american whitewater

November/December 1999

**A First Descent  
in Ecuador**  
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Humble  
Confidence  
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Volume XXXIX, No. 6

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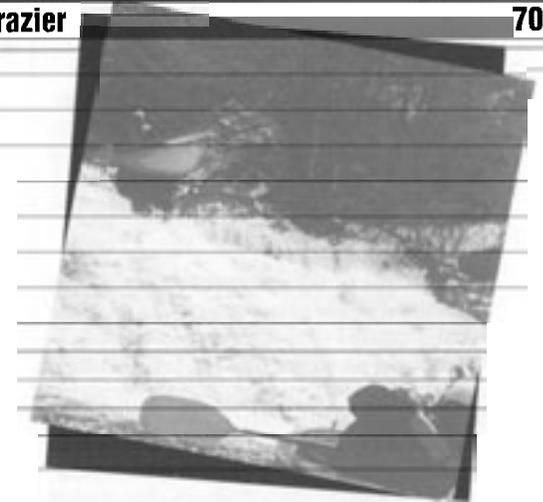
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Cover Photo: Dave Gustafson on AmityCreek. Photo by John Linn



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## Tom Toms, Rail Grabs and the New Millennium

*Everytime I pick up a magazine or switch on the TV or radio I find solemn reflections on the passing of the Old Millennium and the cosmic importance of the New Millennium. There seems to be two schools of thought. New age optimists are cheerfully projecting that the year 2000 will usher in a utopia supported by new technologies. At the same time, doomsday prophets are predicting that in 2000, calamitous hurricanes, earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, falling comets, and floods will destroy the world.*

Right now, living in the drought-stricken Appalachians where the paddling has been abysmal for nearly a year, I'd settle for a good hard rain! Yes, I'm a little cranky. So fasten your seat belts, cause it's going to be a bumpy flight.

As editor of this magazine, certainly an influential publication if ever there was one, I feel obligated to contribute to this Millennium Madness. Unfortunately, I'm not much of a prophet. I have no idea what lies ahead for paddlers beyond the year 2000. But I can't pass up this opportunity to start the New Millennium with everyone pi\*\*ed off at once. So let me suggest several whitewater-related innovations, inventions, and ideas from the Old Millennium that we should definitely leave behind.

- 1 The words *kewl*, *dude*, *rad*, *gnarly* and *Xtreme*. We need these words...**NOT**
- 2 Raucous hip hop soundtracks to whitewater videos. Can someone explain to me what Puff Daddy has to do with whitewater? Why can't whitewater videos have soundtracks by more appropriate artists, like Vanilla Fudge or the Kinks, for instance?



- 3 Those black rubber strips some boat manufacturers put around cockpit rims...the ones that always fall off. Does anyone know what the hell those things are for?
- 4 Rail grabs. I actually had to ask a kewl friend of mine to tell me what rail grabs were. "Dude, it's like when you let go of your paddle and grab your cockpit rim while making a really rad gnarly move." "Why would you do such a thing?" I asked incredulously. "Wouldn't it be better to hold onto your paddle when you are making a rad gnarly move?" "Well, *that* wouldn't be very Xtreme!" he replied sarcastically. Right. (Mayberail grabs were invented to keep those black rubber strips from falling off.)
- 5 Tom Toms. Or, more precisely, tom tom playing after 11 p.m. in public campgrounds. My introduction to tom tom playing occurred about a year ago in a tent city near the New River. The tom tom playing commenced at 10 o'clock. For a while it was an interesting novelty. By 11 o'clock it had become tiresome. By midnight it was downright annoying. By 1 a.m. it was maddening. Finally, some big tough river cowboys I know launched a raid on the tom tom campsite. (I was afraid it was going to get ugly, so I hid in my tent.) After a minor skirmish, the "braves" surrendered their drums and we all got some sleep. Okay, I know what you are thinking... that I am just jealous

because I don't have a tom tom. This is true... but I do have a clarinet. You know, one of those long black things that squeal like a stuck pig. Of course I haven't played my clarinet since I was 12 years old. Nevertheless, I think I'm going to start taking it with me on overnight river trips. That way when the tom tom playing starts, I'll be able to join right in!

- 6 Fee demo. Fee demo is when the government you support with your tax dollars charges you a fee to put up your tent, hike, camp, kayak, or even park your car on the public lands which you, as a citizen, own. And, guess what? In many locations the money raised by collecting these fees does not even cover the cost of collecting these fees! Fee demo, like many members of congress who support it, should obviously be left in the Old Millennium.
- 7 Self-righteous "conservation" organizations unwilling to compromise or consider other groups' positions. They often waste their energy sabotaging the efforts of other, less militant green groups. They will fight to the death to preserve *their* right to enjoy public lands at the expense of everyone else's. For instance, some of them think it is fine for *them* to backpack through our national parks, but not for us to kayak through them. C'mon folks. If you are really worried about the Yellowstone ecosystem and you want to show your muscle... take on the snowmobile concessionaires, the RV lobby, or the agricultural associations that want to ex-

terminate the recently-reintroduced wolves. Play your tom toms and do a rain dance in front of *their* teepees, not ours!

8 Whitewater kayak and canoe advertisements that do not feature any pictures of boats and/or whitewater. Some of them don't have photos of anything real at all, just *pop art*. If I wanted to see that I'd go to the Brooklyn Museum of Art and look at that famous elephant poop exhibit! Or the recent ad that reminded me of an old Michael Jackson video. No, not the one where he grabs his crotch... apparently his version of a *railgrab*. I mean the one where Michael flies around in the cutest little rocket ship. Somehow this subliminal association did not inspire me to go out and buy a boat! I don't like ads that feature a lot of *world famous whitewater celebrities*, either. I don't know about you, but I buy boats, not personalities.

9 The ongoing "competition" to set the world record for kayaking over the highest waterfall. Carried to its logical conclusion, this will inevitably lead to a lot of sad tom tom playing.

10 Insensitive safety pontificators. You know the type. Whitewater safety "experts" full of self righteous indignation who rant and rave in club newsletters and on Internet newsgroups about *who was to blame* and *what should have been done* after there has been a river fatality. All too often these insensitive pontificators don't even wait until the details of an accident are available — they proselytize on the basis of rumor and supposition. We don't really need these self styled "experts" in the New Millennium, do we?

Bob Gedekoh

*(Opinions expressed in the Forum almost always represent those of Bob Gedekoh and almost never represent those of the Membership, Board, or Staff of American Whitewater, most of whom are safety-oriented, conservation minded, tactful, tom tom playing, rail grabbing, gnarly dudes and dudettes who are devoted fans of Puff Daddy and would never stoop to such blatant sarcasm!)*

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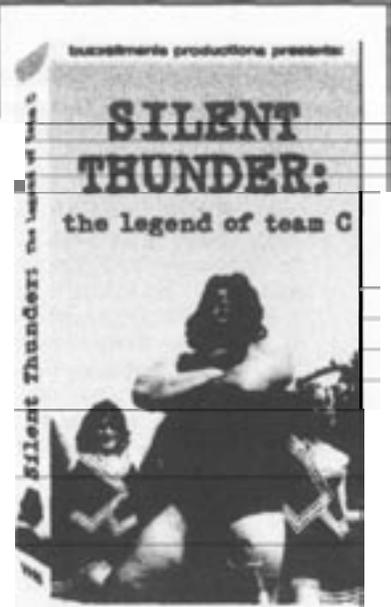
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## John Foss Tributary Appreciated

Dear Bob:

As you know, it was July 5, 1998 when we suffered tremendous pain at the loss of my brother, John Foss, in Peru. I have been remiss in expressing a warm thank you to you and the staff at AW. Your team put together a very nice tribute to John in the September/October 1998 issue of *American Whitewater*. Unfortunately at that time, we were just too numb from the entire ordeal and somehow missed thanking you for your support. We have read the articles many times and have shown them to many of our friends.

Last year, Phyllis Horowitz sent us several copies of the magazine, which we have been able to hand out to close friends. It is truly another piece of John that we can hold onto and share with others. We thank you for all the kindness shown to our family.

My brother Tom and I met Ken Ransford and Ric Alesch at the Gore River Festival in August of 1998. We attended the festival because we were packing up John's things in Telluride and had the opportunity to meet several of John's friends there. Ken and Ric were extremely gracious and supportive to us. In March of this year, I received an e-mail from John Gangemi offering support in our endeavors of John's book *Chili Whitewater: A Rafting and Kayaking Guide*, which we are working hard to bring to fruition and hope to have published by year end or 1st quarter of 2000.

Because of your friendship at our time of great need and your affiliation with my brother, we are now members of AW. We are happy to be able to help support your organization and look forward to doing so for many years down the road. On behalf of John's family, I sincerely want to thank the staff at AW, including those who worked on my brother's tribute "behind the scenes." You are a terrific group of people and I know why John felt so highly of all of you and AW. Please share our gratitude with everyone.

Sincerely,

Pattie Todd

Lindenhurst, Illinois

*Editor's note: John Foss was a dedicated AW Regional Director who died in 1998 on a first descent in South America. The posthumous publication of his guidebook is widely anticipated. His website can be visited at:*

*<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/aventurasandes>*

## Anti Rodeo Rant

Just a friendly letter to the organizers of the Ottawa Rodeo:

What the hell do you think you are doing organizing a rodeo on the last long weekend of summer? Or on any weekend, for that matter. Rodeos should be held mid week because, let's be honest, the contestants don't have real jobs. Then you can keep the waves to yourselves and the rest of us working paddlers won't have to put up with the line jumping wave hogs that are attracted to the rodeo circuit.

You know us don't you? The working paddlers... we are the people that pay retail for our boats and, in case you are wondering, we don't do that so that we can drive 5-10 hours and then paddle flat water to watch someone else have all the fun. That's right, rodeo boys, you're not the only ones who are unbelievably selfish. It's the nature of the sport. We would rather be trying moves ourselves than watch you dudes crank off endless cartwheels. Kayaking is not a spectator sport, unless of course you're talking about midwinter when you need a fix. Then the kayak video is perfect. (This is another point. If you did hold the rodeo mid week, then the people who want to watch will have to buy the video.)

But if it is a choice between watching some dude who spent all summer on the river going for his one millionth cartwheel or shredding the wave myself...well, I'm sorry rodeo boy, wait your turn, I'm next in line. Which brings me to the one benefit of the rodeo. On Sunday, when the experts were competing and all of the wannabees were watching, the rest of the boaters were having fun joking with each other and (get this) waiting their turn in line. That's right, we knew who was next in line and we were relaxed and having fun. I can't understand why somebody can spend long enough on the river to learn the moves but can't quite learn courtesy.

So how about moving that annoying old rodeo to mid week and, if you must hold one on a weekend, limit it to people who have full-time jobs outside of the paddling industry. In fact, the categories could go something like this: 1. Single with a full-time job. 2. Married with a full-time job. 3. Married with a full-time job and children. 4. Single with two full-time jobs and children.

This would be so much better, because lets face the truth, anyone can spend all summer on the Ottawa with an X and learn to cartwheel and flat spin, but if a single mom with kids can get out there and surf, then you've got a superstar.

One more thing to think about. When you are on the river decked out from head to bootie in factory-sponsored gear and are surfing a hot wave like the garburetor, try smiling. It is supposed to be fun! I realize that notable exceptions like Ken Whiting and Eric Jackson really are enjoying themselves, but if I had a dollar for every pouting rodeo dude I saw on the weekend...well, I wouldn't be rich, but I could probably buy a case of beer.

Cheers and happy boating.

Kevin Maggs

Married with a full-time job and children.

Editor's Note: Remind me never to cut in line in front of this guy!!!

## Dam Complexities

Dear Editor,

After finishing a research trip to inventory riparian vegetation along the lower Salmon Gorge and Hell's Canyon of the Snake, our scientific study team stopped by NRS in Moscow to pick up some reading for the afternoon drive back to Canada. It was interesting to note that most of the paddling magazines featured articles about dam de-commissioning. Fueled by the excitement surrounding the breaching of Edwards Dam on Maine's Kennebec River, both the press and the boating community have become captivated by the prospects for freeing North American rivers.

However, the technical aspects are substantially more complex than generally portrayed. The article in the July/Aug. 1999 issue *American Whitewater* by Richard Ingebretsen and Steve Hannon about Glen Canyon is particularly misleading. These authors suggest that following the removal of the Glen Canyon Dam, 'The impounded soils and sediments would flush out quickly.' This is quite incorrect since the depositional delta in Powell Reservoir would be large and deep enough that substantial sediment would remain after dam removal.

With a much more serious error, the authors suggest that 'A botanist's wildflower dream would ensue. Cottonwoods, hackberry trees, box elders, mesquite, and acacia would quickly populate the rich soil. In perhaps a hundred years the canyon bottoms would slowly return to their historic condition'.

In contrast to this glowing forecast, current scientific evidence overwhelmingly predicts that the riparian, or floodplain, woodlands will NEVER return to the pre-dam condition. In addition to the artificial sediment status and impacts of other upstream impoundments and diversions that will per-

sist, there have been severe infestations of Eurasian plants. These foreign weeds have found their way to North America either by accident or deliberate introduction and some proliferate explosively since there are no North American insects or other herbivores that act to control their populations.

The proliferation of tamarisk, or salt cedar, would be almost certain following the drawdown of Powell Reservoir. This Asian tree would very likely become the dominant woody plant in the riparian zone. It only takes a quick stop at Moab, UT, upstream of Powell Reservoir, or a trip to the San Juan, a nearby tributary, to gauge the invasive vigor of tamarisk. We and others have studied the ecology of cottonwoods and tamarisk along the Colorado River and elsewhere and tamarisk management is a current focus for riparian restoration projects throughout the American southwest.

While the proliferation of tamarisk would discourage the reestablishment of native Fremont cottonwoods and sandbar willows, the transitional zones that would be re-exposed and barren of vegetation might even be more problematic. It is unclear which exotic plants would dominate in these zones but the encroachment of noxious weeds such as yellow star-thistle, other knapweeds, white-top, and various other nasty, alien weeds would be almost certain. These vigorous exotics could dominate the transitional zones well before the slow-growing, native hackberry has a chance to become reestablished. Moving up into the higher elevation zones, cheat grass, a poor species for either native wildlife or cattle, would be likely to encroach and prosper, along with other exotic upland species.

With these pessimistic prospects, the decommissioning of dams must be executed cautiously. My own view is that Glen Canyon should await more modest decommissioning projects that would provide the knowledge needed to discourage the explosion of exotic weeds that would preclude the restoration of native woodlands. There are numerous other dams undergoing environmental assessment that might be better early candidates for decommissioning. Consistent with the present ranking of American Rivers, consideration for breaching of the lower Snake River dams may have a greater urgency since the Columbia Basin salmon stocks are collapsing abruptly. However, the Snake River decommissionings are also fraught with environmental (and political) complexities and again, mismanagement during dam removal could result in riparian ecosystems that lack the desired aesthetic, recreational, cultural and wildlife habitat values.

The knowledge-lapse expressed by Ingebretsen and Hannon is rather common. Most river resource managers have a very limited understanding of the complexity and

vulnerability of riparian processes. The current dam decommissionings are typically driven by fisheries concerns and many fisheries biologists are regrettably narrow-sighted with respect to the overall riverine ecosystems that include both the aquatic and riparian components.

Thus, rather than following the questionable construction of the Glen Canyon Dam with another misguided environmental action, we should proceed very carefully with dam decommissioning. Fortunately there are some promising precedents with respect to river restoration, such as along the Truckee River downstream of Reno, NV, and these indicate that careful in-stream flow management can provide an effective tool for the partial restoration of western rivers.

Stewart Rood  
Professor of Riparian Ecology  
University of Lethbridge, Alberta

Scanned photo file enclosed: The Colorado River upstream of Powell Reservoir has become dominated by tamarisk (salt cedar), an exotic tree from Asia. Tamarisk out-competes the native cottonwoods and willows that historically provided the basis for riparian woodlands with exceptionally rich wildlife habitats. Unless very carefully managed, it is likely that tamarisk and other exotic, invasive weeds would colonize and dominate the initially barren landscape that would follow the drawdown of Powell Reservoir.

*(Editor's note: Sorry, but we were technically unable to reproduce the photo.)*

## Professor Rood:

Thank you professor Rood for your informative letter regarding dam removal and specifically your concerns regarding the article in the July/August issue of American Whitewater on Glen Canyon Dam. American Whitewater is in complete agreement with your comments on the need to be cognizant of the ecological complexities of dam removal prior to advocating that course of action. American Whitewater examines dam removal on a case-by-case basis and only after credible scientific analysis is conducted. American Whitewater considers removal in cases where the dam is no longer economically viable and/or the environmental impacts associated with the project outweigh the dam's benefits. This policy, adopted by the American Whitewater Board of Directors, balances dam removal with river restoration. In some cases American Whitewater

recommends decommissioning a project but retaining the dam structure for environmental reasons such as obstructing upstream fish passage to prevent exotic species invasions or trapping toxic pollutants in reservoir sediments. In each case the recommended course of action is based on credible studies.

The guest article on Glen Canyon Dam was intended to educate members on the need to study the removal of Glen Canyon Dam as part of a broader Environmental Impact Study (EIS) investigating the impacts associated with the dam and potential operational changes that might mitigate impacts. Your informative letter highlighted some of the complexities to consider which the dam removal alternative overlooked in that article. Thank you. Our readers are better informed as a result of your letter.

American Whitewater supports the need for an EIS of Glen Canyon Dam. This must not be confused with endorsement for removal of Glen Canyon Dam. By supporting the EIS, American Whitewater hopes scientific studies will illustrate the pros and cons of dam removal enabling the public and agencies to make an informed decision. The concerns raised in your letter regarding restoration of riparian vegetation should be thoroughly investigated in an environmental impact study of Glen Canyon Dam. Without the EIS, the public is unable to compare dam removal with a series of operational alternatives designed to mitigate the impacts of Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River. The information generated from such an EIS will not only assist the decision-making process for the future of Glen Canyon Dam but will also greatly benefit the existing knowledge base on dam removal and associated river restoration worldwide. American Whitewater strongly supports this type of information gathering.

Your letter implies that American Whitewater is jumping on the dam removal bandwagon. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, American Whitewater is one of the key river conservation organizations making dam removal a reality. American Whitewater's rational approach to river restoration has helped create the present political climate that makes dam removal a possibility. For years, American Whitewater has actively petitioned the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the agency overseeing the licensing of all private hydro-power dams in the U.S., to include dam removal alternatives in relicensing as well as require utility-financed funding mechanisms for dam removal as a component of a hydro-power license. This work was manifested in the removal of Edward's Dam in Maine this

past summer. American Whitewater was one of the groups participating in the multi-year negotiations that eventually culminated in the removal of Edward's Dam. The removal of Condit Dam on Washington's White Salmon River was announced in September (see article in this issue). American Whitewater was a principle player in the relicensing proceeding and settlement that culminated in an agreement to remove Condit Dam. Lastly, on a historical note, in 1955 American Whitewater formally opposed the construction of Glen Canyon Dam before it was built. Clearly, dam removal is not a new concept for American Whitewater but rather a cornerstone of the organizations conservation program focused on protecting and restoring America's whitewater rivers.

As you point out, river restoration involves a process far more complex than just removing dams. American Whitewater welcomes your input and shared expertise, as well as that of other members, to help us sort through this complexity and make well-informed decisions. Please feel free to share your opinion openly and often! After all, you are part of the tapestry of experience and energy that has been woven by our membership.

Your input and those of other members will help shape our future, as an organization and as a steward of whitewater river conservation.

Sincerely,

John T. Gangemi  
Conservation Director

Editor's Note: American Whitewater wants to make it easy for you to volunteer your expertise on issues of your choice. If you are interested in assisting American Whitewater in any of our program areas — Conservation, Access, Safety, or Events — don't be shy. Contact us by phone at (301) 589-9453 or by e-mail at <Sam@amwhitewater.org>.

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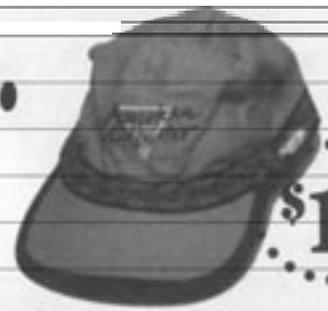
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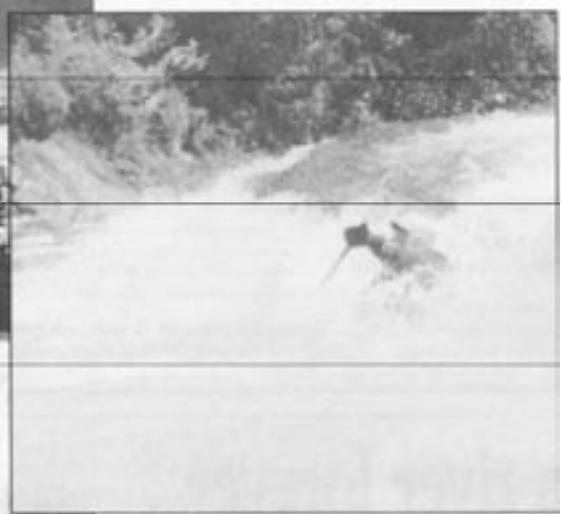
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# Guidelines for Contributors

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

The editorial staff of American Whitewater carefully reviews all material submitted for publication. We are particularly interested in receiving full-length feature articles, conservation and club news, special event announcements, articles pertaining to whitewater safety and short, humorous pieces.

Articles should fit our established format; that is, they should be stylistically patterned to fit into our Features, AW Briefs, River Voices, Conservation Currents, Safety Lines, Humor or End Notes sections. Exceptional photographs and whitewater cartoons are also welcomed.

If possible, articles should be submitted on a 3-inch computer cassette. (*Word Perfect* preferred – others accepted.) Please do not alter the margins or spacing parameters: use the standard default settings. Send a printed copy of the article as well.

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

Photos may be submitted as slides, black or white prints, or color prints. Keep your originals

and send us duplicates if possible; we cannot guarantee the safe return of your pictures. If you want us to return your pictures, include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission. Because we publish in black and white, photos with a lot of contrast work best.

American Whitewater feature articles should relate to some aspect of whitewater boating. Please do not submit articles pertaining to sea kayaking or flat water. The best features have a definite slant... or theme. They are not merely chronological recountings of river trips.

Open the story with an eye-catching lead, perhaps by telling an interesting anecdote. Dialogue should be used to heighten the reader's interest. Don't just tell us about the river... tell us about the people on the river... develop them as characters. Feature articles should not be written in the style of a local club newsletter.

If you are writing about a commonly paddled river, your story should be told from a unique perspective. Articles about difficult, infrequently paddled, or exotic rivers are given special consideration. But we are also interested in well written, unusual articles pertaining to Class III and IV rivers as well. Feature stories do not have to be about a specific river. Articles about paddling techniques, the river environment and river personali-

ties are also accepted. Pieces that incorporate humor are especially welcome. Open boating and rafting stories are welcome.

Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through and don't be afraid to poke a little fun at yourself... and your paddling partners.

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

Please check all facts carefully, particularly those regarding individuals, government agencies, and corporations involved in river access and environmental matters. *You* are legally responsible for the accuracy of *such* material. Make sure names are spelled correctly and river gradients and distances are correctly calculated.

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

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

## Release For Publication

I hereby release my work (literary, graphic or photographic) for publication in **American Whitewater** magazine.

I understand that my work may be edited or cropped at the editors' discretion.

I understand that I will not be paid for my work.

I accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information included in my submission. I have not libeled or slandered any individual, corporation or agency in this work.

I understand that all or some of my work may be reprinted at some future date in an American Whitewater publication.

I promise that this material has not been and will not soon be published by another magazine or publication and the rights to this material are clear and unrestricted.

I understand that once this material is printed in American Whitewater it may be reprinted or reproduced in other publications if I wish, providing I notify them that it has already appeared in American Whitewater.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Send your material to Bob Gedekoh, R.D.#4, Box 228, Elizabeth, PA. 15037. Please use regular first class postage.... Not certified mail.

# You can save a river forever... ... by planning a gift for

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Please direct inquiries to Ken Ransford, attorney and CPA, 970-963-6800, or by e-mail at ransford@csn.net.

## Purpose

### American Whitewater

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

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

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

takes legal action to prevent river abuse.

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

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

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

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

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

AW was incorporated under Missouri nonprofit corporation laws in 1961 and maintains its principal mailing address at 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301) 589-9453. AW is tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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The opinions expressed in the features and editorials of **American Whitewater** are those of the individual authors. They do not necessarily represent those of the **Directors of the American Whitewater** or the editors of this publication.

On occasion **American Whitewater** publishes official organizational policy statements drafted and approved by the Board of Directors. These policy statements will be clearly identified.

# Director's Cut

by Rich Bowers

## "The River Knows the Way"



### "All dams fail!"

That was the mantra provided by John Gangemi in the July/August edition of the Journal. This fact was supported in John McPhee's recent New Yorker article, which explained that "Dams are said to last about fifty years. One in four American dams is that old and eighty-five percent will be by 2020." (*Farewell to the Nineteenth Century*, Sept. 27, 1999)

However, many still argue that men and women should not look at removing dams. Reasons given include flood control, power generation, and the belief that dams represent lasting monuments to human engineering and technological expertise.

Having spent a bit of time studying and working on dam issues, I agree. It's difficult to look at any dam, especially those built at the turn of the last century, and not marvel that these were built using no more than horses, mules, and sweat. But dams are monuments to a time past. Today, there is a better understanding of how these structures affect rivers, about the interrelationship between human action, and the natural world. As John McPhee said in an earlier, 1971 New Yorker article "...the reaction to dams is so violent because rivers are the ultimate metaphors of existence, and dams destroy rivers." (*Encounters with the Archdruid*)

And there are different priorities too. While power is still needed, there are other interests to be considered. Today, recreation,

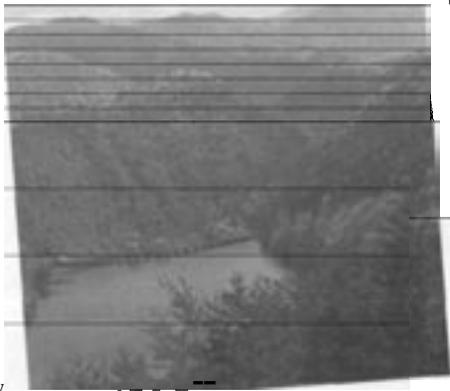
the health of fisheries, a need for solitude, all of these play a part in how we view rivers - and how we view quality of life.

To be sure, there are many questions over the best way to remove a dam, to restore free-flowing rivers that have been stilled for decades or more. And of course, the politics of any such decision is an even greater and often insurmountable obstacle. But today's monument for engineering skill and technology lies in our ability to restore lost rivers, and to do this well.

If we ignore the fact that all dams fail, then we simply hand the problem back to nature. Nature, I believe, will be far less subtle in removing dams.

Each river has been working to remove its dams since before they were completed. As

author Katie Lee puts it in her book *All My Rivers are Gone*, "The River knows the way." Listening to Katie (as I had the opportunity to do at a joint American Whitewater/Glen Canyon Institute event in October), you can almost see the water eating away at these structures. And as Richard Bangs says in *Whitewater Adventure*, eventually the river wins. "Wild rivers are earth's renegades, defying gravity, dancing to their own tunes, resisting the authority of humans, always chipping away, and eventually always winning."



As we enter a new age (this is the last Journal of the old millennium) we have the ability to correct many of the mistakes made in the past. But to do this we need not only a break in the historic timeline, but also a change in thinking.

As a boater and a part of American Whitewater, I'm glad to be a part of this new thinking. Happier yet that boaters, and others who know the river, are taking a lead on

removing dams. For more on dam removal read John Gangemi's article on the agreement to remove Condit Dam on Washington's White Salmon River. Signed by American Whitewater and other organizations, agencies, and tribes, this agreement offers forty-three miles of river to migrating salmon, and opens eleven miles of whitewater not available since the dam was built.

And while American Whitewater is not advocating that all dams be removed, everyone needs to look at dams in a new light. Are they economical? Do they make sense? Do we want them? Let's start by scrutinizing those dams on our home rivers and favorite paddling streams (I have a few on my list). And let's start to build new monuments for a new age!

At our recent Gauley Festival meeting, American Whitewater nominated five boaters to join our volunteer Board of Directors. Chosen because of their passion, hard work, and credibility within the sport of whitewater, each of these women (Mary DeReimer, Jennie Goldberg, Sherry Olson, Lynn Aycock, and Kara Ruppel) are uniquely qualified to help this organization grow and promote its mission. Please register your vote for each of these nominees, and join me in welcoming them to the ranks of American Whitewater.

Stepping down from our board this year are some of American Whitewater's strongest and most dedicated directors; Ric Alesch (our current President), Pete Skinner, Susan Wilson, and Ron Stewart. While we intend to keep them working with us, their participation at the board level will be sorely missed. Each has played a role in growing this organization, and improving rivers. Thanks — and we look forward to running rivers with you in the future!

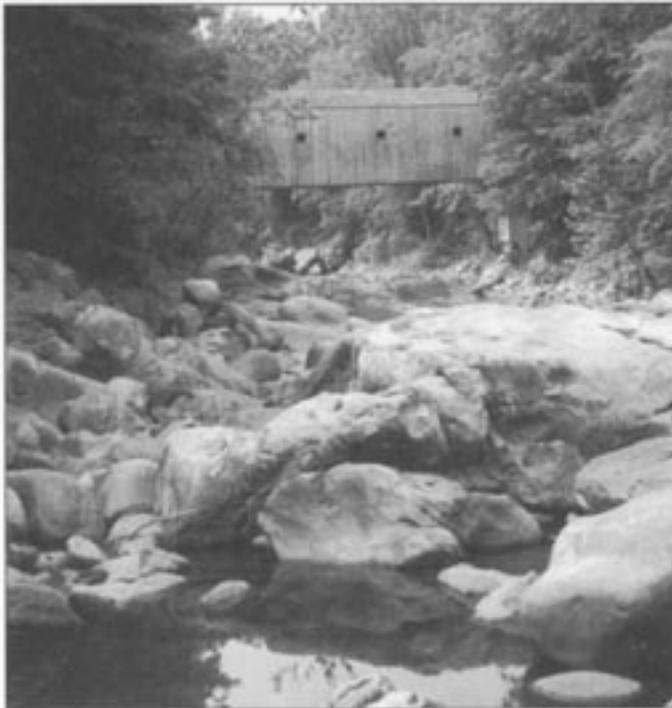
<p><b>We are Whitewater!</b></p>  <p><b>ZOAR</b> OUTDOOR</p> <p>800 532-7483 Cherlemont, Massachusetts www.zoaroutdoor.com info@zoaroutdoor.com</p>	<p><b>River Rescue Workshops</b></p> <p>Geared toward intermediate to advanced boaters, we follow the ACA River Rescue curriculum and teach both rescue techniques and safe river running practices.</p> <p>July 9      June 11 May 22-23    July 29-30 August 28-29</p> <p><b>Rodeo/Play Clinics</b></p> <p>Learn the whitewater play secrets of top play boaters. Taught on the Dryway section of the Deerfield River.</p> <p>Kent Ford - July 30-31 Sonnie van der Ros - Aug. 6-7 Chris Spelius - October 9-10</p>	<p><b>DeRiemer Adventure Kayaking</b></p>  <p>phone/fax: 530.295.0830 email: info@adventurekayaking.com www.adventurekayaking.com</p>	<p>We've been guiding kayakers in Ecuador since 1995, and around the world since 1983!</p> <p>If you're looking for an exceptional trip, come play with us. <i>Phil &amp; Mary</i></p> <p>Our wilderness trips can take you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ecuador</b> January &amp; February</li> <li>• <b>California Sierra</b> May &amp; June</li> <li>• <b>Middle Fork of the Salmon River</b> July</li> <li>• <b>Rogue River, OR</b> August &amp; September</li> </ul>
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Conserve

## Housatonic Relicense

# Enters Final Phase. Lend Your Voice MOW!

This past September, Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) submitted their final license applications to the Federal Energy Regulatory Agency (FERC), the agency responsible for licensing non-federal hydropower projects. This final phase of relicensing the projects shifts the process from the utility back to FERC. FERC will review the license application then serve notice to all parties on the mail list that the application is ready for comment, protest, and motions to intervene. This is a critical point in the relicensing process and ultimately sets in stone the next 30 years of whitewater boating on the Housatonic River. The paddling community has a single opportunity to correct the imbalances in this proposed license, namely a complete lack of scheduled whitewater releases. Now is the time to let your voice be heard on behalf of whitewater paddling on the Housatonic. Like Paul Revere riding through the night to alert the colonists of the British,



De-watered section below Bull's Bridge hydropower project, a popular section for our boaters when the project spills.

whitewater paddlers must pass the word that now is the time to fight for our recreation.

Two projects are up for relicensing on the Housatonic River with multiple powerhouses and dams. The Fall's Village and Bull's Bridge projects are of greatest concern for whitewater boaters. See the July-August 1999 issue of American Whitewater to get more information about the Housatonic and the hydropower projects.

Fishery issues have dominated the relicensing of these projects despite the fact that whitewater boaters far outnumber fishermen on the river. Despite their minority, fishing interests have been extremely vocal in the process and have been well represented by their local state fish agency, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). As a state agency, the DEP has the ability to write conditions that will become part of the new 30 year license. Unfortunately for the boating community, the DEP's revenue is derived primarily from collecting fishing license fees. More fish in the river equals more fishermen which means more licenses sold. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see DEP's primary interest and conflict for that matter in this relicense — producing more fish so that in return the department gets a bigger budget.

The DEP is managing the Fall's Village reach of the river as a cold-water fishery despite the fact that historically the Housatonic was a warm water fishery. DEP opposes whitewater releases on the river claiming the flows lead to increased water temperatures causing mortality in brown and rainbow trout, both nonnative species in the Housatonic. This claim has never been substantiated despite several studies. The DEP's self interest in this relicense is transparent due to the fact that the department is not requesting flows in any of the river reaches completely de-watered by the projects nor are they calling for an end to detrimental peaking operations at hydropower facilities outside the trout management area. Ironically, the DEP calls themselves environmental stewards despite the fact that there is nothing natural about their trout management plan on the Housatonic. Don't let the name fool you, environmental protection is not their game.

Unfortunately, the whitewater community does not have an agency counterpart with regulatory authority to represent them in these relicensings. The bottom line is that there are no scheduled whitewater flows for these two important reaches of the Housatonic. The whitewater boating community must rally to correct this imbalance at Fall's Village and Bull's Bridge. Take the time to submit a letter on behalf of the Connecticut boating community and restoration of the Housatonic River. The local boating community is organizing a letter writing campaign and phone tree. Exercise your whitewater advocacy — help protect the future of the Housatonic. You can help them by submitting letters or making phone calls to key people in Connecticut government.

### If not you, then who?

For more information and sample letters and addresses visit the Housatonic relicense website <http://www.npmb.com/housatonic/index.htm>. For more information about the hydropower projects on the Housatonic and the relicensing process contact Marc Organschi [mao@broweroraanschi.com](mailto:mao@broweroraanschi.com), Jennifer Clarke 860-672-6365 or John Gangemi 406-837-3155; e-mail: [jaanaemi@diais.vs.net](mailto:jaanaemi@diais.vs.net).

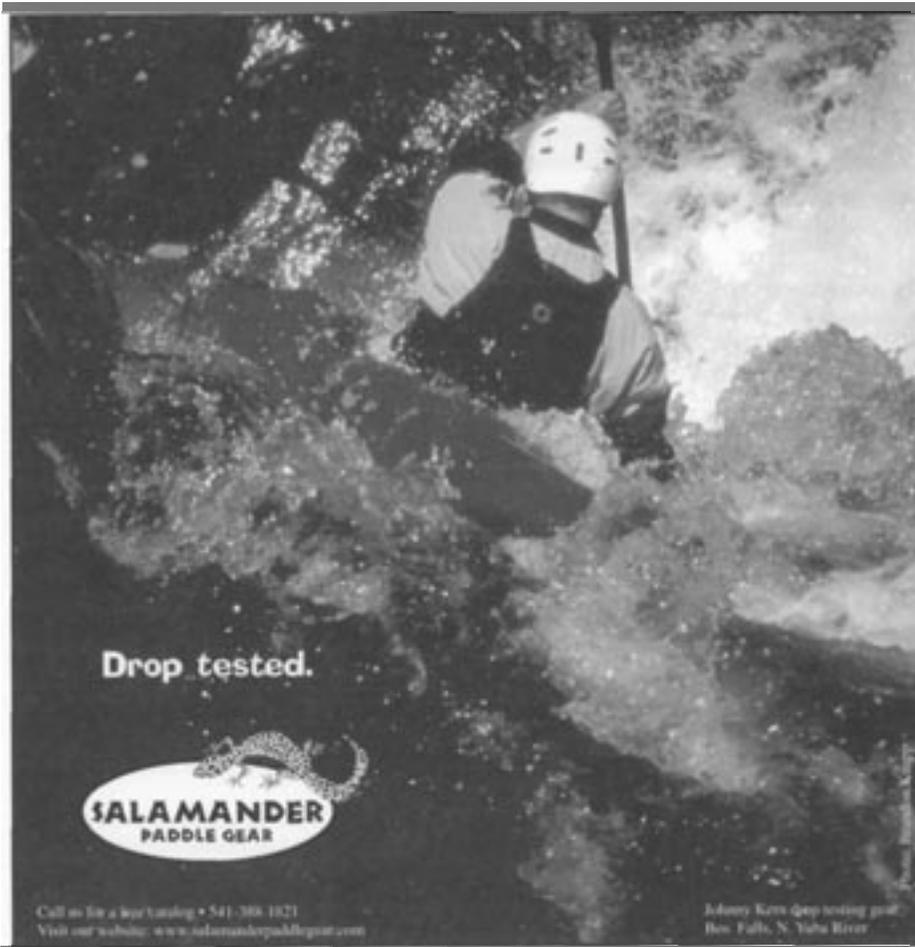
## Bigfork Whitewater Festival Donates \$\$\$ to American Whitewater Conservation Program

The 1999 Bigfork Whitewater Festival recently donated \$2,100 to American Whitewater's Conservation Program. The money will help fund efforts to protect the integrity of the Swan River threatened by the relicensing of the Bigfork Hydroelectric Project. John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director and resident of Bigfork, applauded the donation. "It is especially gratifying to see the Bigfork Whitewater Festival dedicate funds for conservation and access causes. Whitewater festivals were originally created as a means of raising awareness among the paddling community about issues threatening the livelihood of our sport. The threats are real in Bigfork. Recent developments in the relicensing of the local hydropower project jeopardize the future existence of the event. This donation helps bring us that much closer to securing future events in Bigfork and plenty of access to the Swan River."

Gangemi summarized the present status and potential threats associated with this relicense. "In addition to the typical posturing and negotiating associated with a given hydropower relicense, the relicensing of the Bigfork hydro project is complicated by three factors; 1) the restructuring of electric power generation in Montana; 2) PacifiCorp's intention to sell the hydro project; and 3) lost access on the adjacent 400 acre parcel of river corridor land owned by PacifiCorp also included in the sale.

In addition to the \$2,100 donated to American Whitewater, the five-member festival committee voted to give \$1,000 to the Bigfork Development Corporation, and an additional \$500 for enhancement of the local park where many boaters camp during the festival.

The annual event attracts world-class boaters to the rapids on the Swan. "The Bigfork Festival is a great opportunity for local paddlers to compete against some of the best paddlers in the world. Surprisingly, the local boaters come out pretty well," said Derreck Thompson, race director for the past two years. The festival will be expanded to a three day event on Memorial Day weekend next year, May 27-29, 2000. For information on the festival call 406-881-5202.



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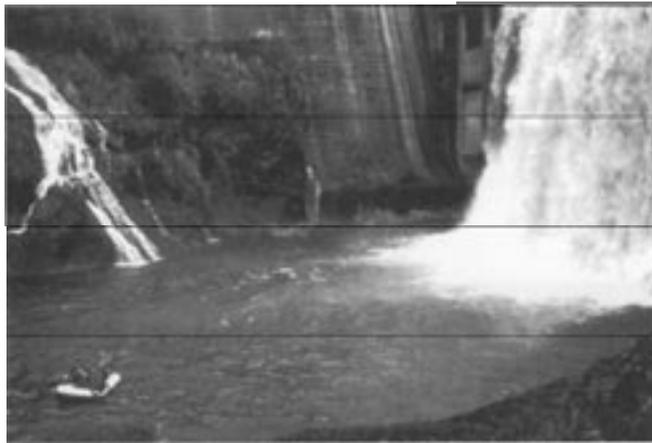
FRANCE-SWITZERLAND

# HISTORIC CONDIT DAM REMOVAL AGREEMENT SIGNED

## VISION OF A FREE-FLOWING WHITE SALMON RIVER

On September 22, 1999 PacifiCorp signed an agreement to remove Condit Dam on the White Salmon River in Southwest Washington State. The culmination of two years of negotiations between state and federal agencies, American Whitewater, and 13 other environmental groups. The agreement calls for removal of the 125-foot-tall concrete dam that, since 1913, has diverted water from the natural channel obstructing downstream navigation and blocking upstream fish passage.

The White Salmon River is well recognized in the paddling community for its challenging whitewater available year round. Jeff and Tonya Bennett (*A Guide to the Whitewater Rivers of Washington*) describe four sections on the White Salmon comprising 25 miles of Class IV and V whitewater. The famed Green Truss run is described as a "proving ground for many Class V paddlers; great vertical!" The section below Condit Dam is not even mentioned in the Bennett's guidebook because the 125-foot-tall dam, coupled with steep canyon walls downstream, effectively restricted access and thus boating opportunities on this three-mile stretch to the Columbia River. Dam removal will allow paddlers to enjoy this scenic Class III float to the Columbia. Furthermore, Condit Dam inundated an additional four miles of the White Salmon River under Northwestern Lake. There is no telling what rapids are waiting to be reborn when the dam is removed. Sum total, dam removal equates to seven additional miles of whitewater available year round on the White Salmon River.



Boaters exploring whitewater reach below Condit Dam during the 1992 flow study.

"This voluntary agreement signifies an important step in restoring fisheries and recreational opportunities on the White Salmon River," said John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director. "More importantly, this agreement serves as a model for other rivers where dam removal is being considered. After credible scientific study, the stakeholders and utility collectively came to the conclusion that dam removal was the best restoration alternative for the White Salmon River. Furthermore, this agreement reinforces the financial and societal obligation of utilities to remove dams they have constructed and generated profits."

American Whitewater recognized early-on that the river might benefit immensely if Condit Dam were removed. In 1989, when the process first started, dam removal was not a concept embraced by many of the stakeholders. As early as 1992, American Whitewater urged FERC to consider dam removal. "As this intervention proceeds, one of the questions considered will be the balancing of power generation against the benefits of restoring the White Salmon to its historic free-flowing condition." American Whitewater recognized that dam removal and its associated recreational and fishery benefits far outweighed the power generation value from the project.

The settlement discussions focusing on dam removal were largely the result of the outcome from the regulatory relicensing process. In October 1996, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the federal agency overseeing licensing of private hydropower dams,

issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) outlining the environmental mitigation and enhancement measures necessary to ensure adequate resource protection in a new 30 year license for Condit. The FEIS imposed \$30 million of license conditions primarily consisting of construction of fish ladders and screens. PacifiCorp determined that these new requirements would make the project uneconomic to operate over the life of the 30-year license. In January 1997, PacifiCorp petitioned FERC to halt the licensing proceedings for Condit and initiated settlement discussions with the intervenors in the licensing process.

The principal goal for the negotiations was to find a middle path acceptable to all parties. The resulting agreement allows PacifiCorp to continue generating power for an additional seven years without the costly FERC mandated requirements. During this period, funds

generated by project operations will go toward dam removal, engineering, permitting, a fisheries enhancement fund, and a fund to enhance a traditional Indian fishing site at the mouth of the White Salmon River. The overall costs will not exceed \$17.15 million. For all parties, this agreement gives strong assurance about dam-removal responsibilities and costs at Condit. Without the agreement, PacifiCorp customers and shareholders would have faced making continued investments in an uneconomic project while the environmental community would have faced uncertainty in the future regarding parties ultimately responsible for funding and completing dam removal.

Katherine Ransel, spokesperson for American Rivers and legal counsel for the 13 other conservation groups, commended PacifiCorp for taking a businesslike approach to resolving this case. "The agreement is a good result for the company's customers because it is based on a sound financial plan and avoids protracted litigation, and is clearly the best result for the White Salmon River." In addition to American Whitewater and American Rivers, other environmental organizations signing the agreement were the Columbia Gorge Audubon Society, Columbia Gorge Coalition, Columbia River United, Federation of Fly Fishers, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Friends of the Earth, the Mountaineers, Rivers Council of Washington, The Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, Washington Trout, and the Washington Wilderness Coalition.

During the fall of 2006, a large hole will be drilled in the base of the dam, and through it the reservoir will be drained fairly rapidly. Most of the sediment will be flushed when the dam is breached. The dam will then be taken down in pieces, and once again this federally-designated wild and scenic river will be completely free flowing for its 43-mile length from the flanks of Mt. Adams to the confluence with the Columbia River.

For more information on Condit Dam, or dam removal, contact John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director at (406) 837-3155 or at [jgangemi@digisys.net](mailto:jgangemi@digisys.net), or contact American Whitewater's Executive Office at (301) 589-9453.

# JIM FALLS RECREATIONAL IN-STREAM FLOW STUDY

## CHIPPEWA RIVER - JULY 15TH, 1999

Prepared by Angie Tornes, National Park Service

### BACKGROUND

Negotiations are underway for relicensing three hydropower projects on the Chippewa River via a settlement agreement. Northern States Power is the applicant; other stake holders include federal and state resource agencies, local government, homeowners associations, hunting and fishing groups, and an environmental group. Primary issues of concern include recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, efficient flow modeling and coordination, and water quality.

The National Park Service requested that a recreational in-stream flow study be conducted in the Jim Falls bypass (natural river) reach to determine if whitewater boating was feasible in the channel and if controlled flow releases would enhance the recreational opportunities there. Of equal concern was the impact of flow releases on spawning and rearing habitat of sturgeon, small mouth bass, and catfish. Consequently, the WDNR and US Fish and Wildlife Service had recently requested year-round stable minimum flows of 240 cfs rather than the existing two minimum flows, 20 cfs for winter and the 240 the balance of the year.

The Jim Falls Hydropower Project, owned by NPS, was licensed in the 1980s and is located between two of the three dams currently undergoing relicensing.

### AREA DESCRIPTION

The bypass reach is 0.75 miles long, drops 20' in elevation, and is approximately 150' wide. A relatively flat boulder garden comprises the area immediately downstream from the dam to approximately 113 to 112 the way downstream. Just upstream of an old bridge and pilings, the channel divides allowing boaters to explore two different routes, each with 2-foot drops at the end. Another couple hundred feet downstream is another drop; a last drop and play spot is a couple hundred feet further downstream.

Put-in is at the old bridge near Jim Falls, take-out is just downstream of the new bridge; both access points are on river right.

Minimum flow in the channel required in the existing license is 240 cfs. This low flow fills a central channel of the bypass reach.

### METHODOLOGY

Three flows were evaluated in order of decreasing volume on the day of the study: 850, 650, and 450 cubic feet per second (cfs). Flows were held steady for 1.5 hours; 0.5 hours between flows was used for shuttle and evaluation while flows were downramped to the next flow. A flow of 240 cfs was evaluated at several dates prior to the study. Nine kayakers from the region with a wide expertise range evaluated the flows in a variety of whitewater play boats. Survey forms used included a matrix cross referencing flow with playability,

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safety, and overall quality; and a summary form requesting opinions on the highest quality flow, as well as optimum flow for various kayaking experience levels.

After each flow, fishery biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and Northern States Power Company walked the channel to document any fish stranding.

After the last flow, study participants discussed their findings with respect to boatability and fishery impacts.

## RESULTS

Eight survey forms were completed by the intermediate and experienced kayakers: the beginner kayaker did not run all levels and consequently did not complete the form. Six kayakers, two of which were expert and four were intermediate, believed that 650 cfs provided the highest-quality experience. Two kayakers, both expert, preferred 850 cfs. Therefore 75% of the participants recommended 650 cfs as the flow level which provides the highest quality experience.

## DISCUSSION

The two kayakers who preferred 850 cfs also would have preferred greater flows, stating that play spots were abundant and dangerous rocks were submerged. The six who preferred 650 cfs did so because of greater ability to play at all three drops, particularly the second drop which was more "pushy" at 850, and because difficult rocks were still submerged at 650. Several of these six also enjoyed the 850 level, suggesting flows of up to 1500 cfs might enhance kayaking but still chose 650 as an overall preferred choice. All eight boaters described 450 cfs as marginal, exposing rocks difficult to navigate around. Those three boaters who had evaluated 240 cfs on a previous date uniformly gave it very low to poor ratings, stating that only one of the three drops was boatable at that level and that was used only as a last resort when no other options were available.

Boaters expressed numerous thanks for the opportunity to explore preferred levels of potential recreational flow releases. Boaters also expressed concern about a submerged rock at the base of the third drop and requested that it be removed if possible. Their preference for future releases is to have two releases per month starting in July, each lasting 4-6 hours midday on Saturday, and not on the third weekend of the month, which is the scheduled recreational flow release from the Hatfield dam on the Black River. (Note: coordinating the two projects' releases for the same day/weekend might prove attractive for boaters from greater distances.) Lastly, boaters agreed that a flow hotline would be useful as well as a website, if feasible.

The fishery biologists reported that higher flows than 240 were necessary in the spring, stating that 850 was an attractive flow. Higher flows would be most beneficial for 6-8 weeks from mid-April through May. As flows receded through a "ramp down speed," Young of Year small mouth bass 1.5" were more capable of escaping stranding. One area is land locked; NSP could create a channel in this area as they have done in other landlocked areas. In conclusion, if appropriate ramping rates were integrated into the recreational flow release and a channel created to the landlocked pool, few, if any, stranding problems were anticipated.

Settlement negotiations are currently underway with NSP. Ideally, the whitewater community would like to have flow releases of 650 cfs between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Releases would be on two weekends in July and two weekends in August. In addition, NSP would provide a flow hotline which will give current flow in the bypass channel, whether it's rising or falling, and the dates and times for scheduled releases. Informational signs would be placed at the put-in and take-out. It is hoped the whitewater community will reach agreement with NSP by January, 2000.

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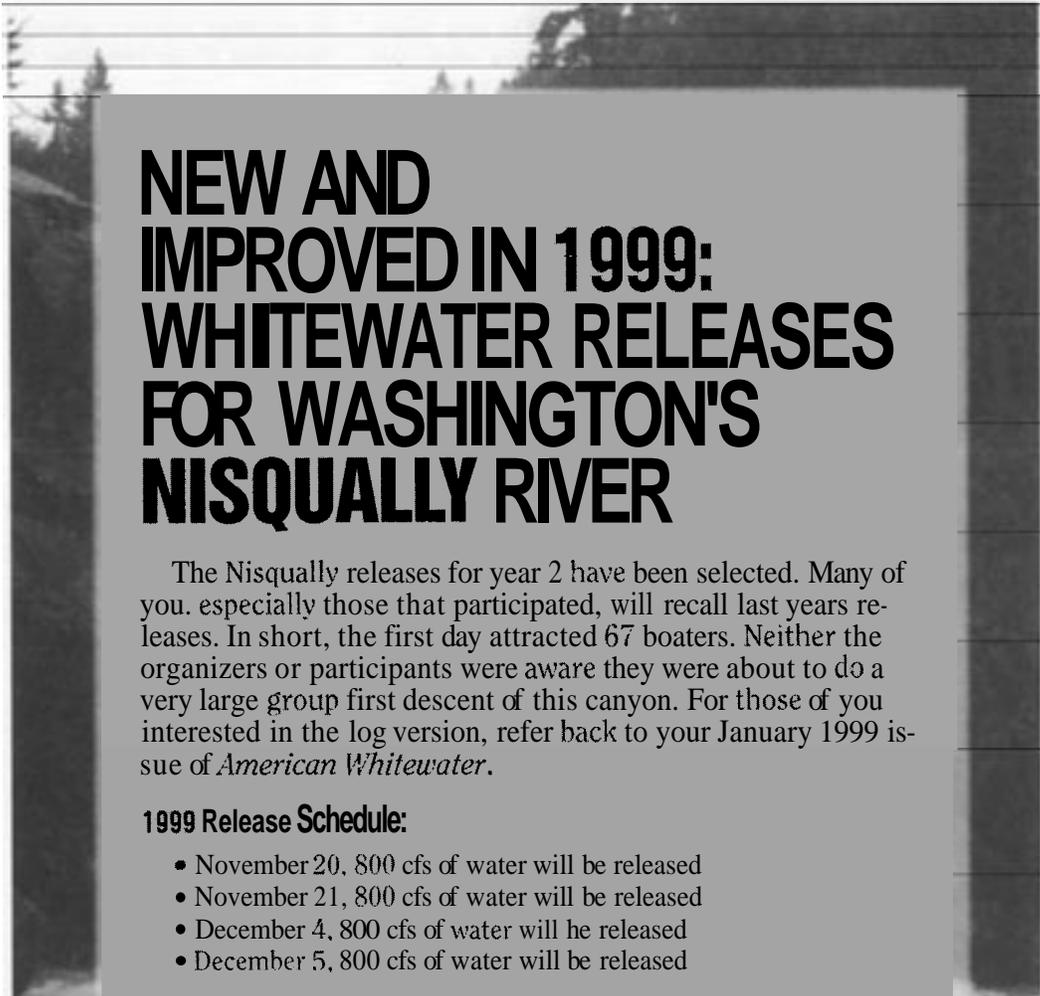
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C O N S C R V C

Improvements for 1999. We can't make the boating any easier nor can we change the put-in but we do promise logistical changes. Boaters will be able to park near the dam, thus eliminating the shuttle ride from the park. This will reduce congestion at the descent into the canyon and improved logistics at the descent. Paddlers are required to sign a waiver prior to entering into the LaGrande Canyon.

The releases are the outcome of a six year hydropower relicensing effort by American Whitewater to get an annual schedule of whitewater releases in the bypass channel for Washington's LaGrande Canyon, a 1.7 mile spectacular Class IV and V river with its headwaters located on Mount Rainier. Prior to this license condition, and except for dam maintenance and flood conditions, the LaGrande Canyon had been dewatered since 1912, the year the dam was built.

Due to concerns over access and a preconceived lack of demand for this whitewater resource, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) required an initial three-year monitoring study in this 30 year license. Future releases hinge on adequate attendance and safety. Boaters are asked to complete a short evaluation form after each run. Results of the evaluation form are the basis for reports submitted to FERC. Based on the recommendations in the final report, FERC will issue a decision regarding whitewater releases for the ensuing 27 years remaining in the project license.



## NEW AND IMPROVED IN 1999: WHITEWATER RELEASES FOR WASHINGTON'S NISQUALLY RIVER

The Nisqually releases for year 2 have been selected. Many of you, especially those that participated, will recall last years releases. In short, the first day attracted 67 boaters. Neither the organizers or participants were aware they were about to do a very large group first descent of this canyon. For those of you interested in the log version, refer back to your January 1999 issue of *American Whitewater*.

### 1999 Release Schedule:

- November 20, 800 cfs of water will be released
- November 21, 800 cfs of water will be released
- December 4, 800 cfs of water will be released
- December 5, 800 cfs of water will be released



So come join us on the LaGrande Canyon in November and December.

While short, this section of river runs through the spectacular 300-foot deep LaGrande Canyon, which is in some places no more than 20 feet wide. It offers advanced-to-expert whitewater rapids such as "Triple Slide," "Hammer Slammer," "X-Falls," "Boof and Boogie" and one of the best rodeo holes in Washington state.

### Lessons Learned From 1998 Releases

Punctuality: An early start is imperative particularly given the

unavoidable delays descending into the canyon. Registration is at 8:00 a.m.

Logistics: Designate a team leader for each paddling group. This individual should be skilled with rigging boats for a belayed descent. Ideally, paddling teams would contain members capable of rigging and belaying boats. If you have questions about rigging boats for the lower ask for assistance from someone in the know. Additional volunteers dedicated to belaying boats into the canyon would greatly accelerate the descent. These volunteers should be equipped with handheld radios for ease of communication.

Equipment per paddler: man-

datory — throwbags, twowebbing slings, and 2-3 carabiners, preferably locking. Assume this is an inaccessible canyon (because it is) therefore boaters must be prepared for self-rescue. Equipment necessary for self-rescue includes, but is not limited to, the following items; breakdown paddle, repair kit, first aid kit, bivvy kit, and extra food.

Additional equipment: We set up approximately 450 feet of climbing rope (three rope lengths) from the canyon rim to the water. Ideally, one ropewould be dedicated to belaying boats with a second line functioning as a hand line. Two belay stations are necessary for lowering boats.

Each belay station must be equipped with a heavy duty belay device. We destroyed one locking carabiner due to the dirt on the rope.

### BACKGROUND ON THE NISQUALLY RELEASES

The La Grande Canyon is situated just downstream of the Nisqually Hydroelectric Project. The La Grande Dam diverts water from the 1.7 mile canyon to a powerhouse downstream dewatering the natural river channel except during extreme flood events. The Nisqually Project is a privately-owned hydroelectric facility regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). FERC grants private utilities 30 to 50 year licenses. Roughly six years prior to license expiration, the utility must initiate a relicensing process to secure a new license. The relicensing process, through the input of state and federal agencies and the public, is intended to evaluate project operations and establish specific

conditions in the next license term for resource protection, mitigation, and enhancement.

American Whitewater's Conservation Program has been actively involved across the country restoring whitewater rivers through the relicensing process. American Whitewater along with the Rivers Council of Washington actively pursued annual whitewater releases as a condition of the new license for the Nisqually Hydroelectric Project. In June 1994, flow levels of 800 and 1000 cfs were tested as part of a whitewater feasibility study. Based, in part, on these tests the FERC required Tacoma Public Utilities to make four whitewater releases annually. Initially, the boating community requested these releases occur in the summer months when boating opportunities on adjacent rivers were less likely. The Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, silent for much of the relicensing process, objected to summer releases claiming releases would impact spawning fish. The parties agreed

to schedule releases between November 15 and December 31 annually. Furthermore, the releases were set for an initial three year evaluation period. At the end of three year evaluation period, FERC would reassess the license condition requiring whitewater releases.

Tacoma Public Utilities has been extremely concerned with liability issues surrounding the whitewater releases, and justifiably so. The put-in requires a five hundred foot descent down a steep gully and is likely more difficult than the rapids. Once in the La Grande Canyon, the near vertical walls give you only one logical way out. To ease their liability concerns, Tacoma put together a video of the rapids enabling paddlers to make an informed decision about the difficulty of the whitewater prior to descending into the La Grande Canyon. Upon completion of the run, paddlers are asked to fill out a

survey to record their impressions of the paddling experience. The results of these surveys will be submitted to the FERC upon completion of the three year evaluation phase of the releases. American Whitewater will work closely with Tacoma compiling the report.

For more information about hydropower relicensing, the Nisqually releases, or to provide feedback on the La Grande Canyon releases contact American Whitewater's Conservation Office at 482 Electric Avenue, Bigfork, MT 59911. Phone: (406) 837-3155 - Fax: (406) 837-3156 e-mail: [jgangemi@digisys.net](mailto:jgangemi@digisys.net)

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## American Whitewater Position Announcement

# Executive Assistant

**American Whitewater is looking for a full-time Executive Assistant in our Silver Spring, Maryland office.**

Primary duties include: organizing the office; assisting the Executive Director; representing the organization via phone, fax, and e-mail; and coordinating the efforts of board, staff, and volunteers.

General Duties: Office management and daily administrative work. File maintenance, supervision of intern program, and coordination of river programs.

Requirements: Maturity and experience in small office management and all areas of office support. Must be a self-starter with excellent organization and communication skills. Candidates need to be comfortable and effective in balancing multiple tasks and able to handle both mundane tasks as well as advanced program issues. Applicants must have computer expertise including e-mail, word processing, data-entry, and managing a membership database. A sense of humor is mandatory and an interest in rivers and outdoor recreation is a big plus!

Other requirements that will help: basic accounting, and experience in desktop publishing including Web design and html.

Available: Immediately for a full-time position. Salary \$22k plus benefits based on experience.

To Apply: Send letter of interest, resume, and references as soon as possible, but no later than January 1, 2000 to American Whitewater, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Fax (301) 589-6121 or e-mail: Richb@amwhitewater.org

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

American Whitewater is an equal opportunity employer

## American Whitewater Position Announcement

# Development Professional

**Are you interested in — Rivers? Outdoor recreation and whitewater boating? Helping to conserve and restore America's whitewater rivers and streams? Do you have direct development and communications experience? Are you tired of being just another fund-raiser? Are you looking to set up your own shop and let your commitment and creativity set the pace?**

American Whitewater is seeking a development professional to plan and manage our fund-raising activities. Responsibilities include researching and writing foundation and corporate grants, soliciting and closing major gifts, increasing organizational awareness, and developing and implementing near and long-term funding strategies.

Qualified applicants will have experience in fund-raising, communications, public relations, membership, and a desire to put these skills to use improving natural resources and the effectiveness of American Whitewater. If you have top-notch writing and speaking skills, are able to articulate a paddler's vision for America's wild rivers and would enjoy life near the nation's capitol, this is the job for you!

Additional skills required include strong organizational and management ability; computer literacy; and an ability and willingness to work with American Whitewater's headquarters in Silver Spring, MD (just outside of Washington DC and one block from the Metro). A sense of humor is mandatory and an interest in rivers and outdoor recreation is a big plus!

Salary is \$40K plus benefits. American Whitewater will fill this position as quickly as possible so send letter, resume, and writing sample to Development Position, American Whitewater, 1430 Fenwick Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20910; fax to (301) 589-6121, or e-mail your information to Richb@amwhitewater.org/

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# "Actions Speak Louder Than Words"

## Patagonia's Challenge Program



When I came on as Conservation Director for AW over two years ago I inherited the hydropower relicensing for the Rock Creek-Cresta project on the North Fork Feather River in California. Because the new license for the Rock Creek-Cresta project was overdue by 19 years agencies and other river conservation groups warned me not to waste energy attempting to get whitewater releases in a license that was already predetermined. I ignored their advice. With funding from Patagonia I initiated a campaign to get whitewater releases written into the new license. After countless hours negotiating with the utilities and motivating the agencies, we succeeded in getting a whitewater flow study on the Feather. Now we are working out the details for an annual schedule of whitewater releases. This outcome would not have been possible without the generous support of Patagonia.

And now Patagonia makes it convenient for you as a paddler and consumer to achieve successful outcomes in your efforts to protect and restore local rivers. Over the past year, Patagonia has sponsored American Whitewater's conservation efforts monetarily through a unique initiative referred to as the American Whitewater Challenge Program. When you buy a Patagonia watersports product through mail order or at one of their retail stores, you have an option of making a donation to American Whitewater. Patagonia will match your donation up to the full price of the garment. This matching gift idea, unprecedented in the outdoor sports industry, symbolizes Patagonia's

commitment as an environmental company and their philosophy to empower individuals at the grassroots level to make the difference. Now it is time for us paddlers to display our level of commitment for river protection and restoration.

In the early 1980s Patagonia, recognizing the valuable role a paddling organization brought to river conservation, made a pivotal donation to American Whitewater that in all likelihood kept the organization from folding (see side-bar). At the time of the donation, American Whitewater was struggling financially with 200 members. Since that time American Whitewater has grown significantly boasting 8,000 members and an additional 80,000 paddlers represented by club affiliates. Patagonia has supported environmental activism with their own grants program by committing 10 percent of their pre-tax profits to grassroots environmental groups. Patagonia has donated \$14 million to over 900 organizations since the grants program began in 1985. The program funds grassroots organizations that help protect and restore ecological integrity. Patagonia has continued to support American Whitewater's conservation program over the years with numerous grants totaling approximately \$50,000. Patagonia is also a founding member of the Conservation Alliance, a unique industry consortium formed in 1989. The Alliance serves as the outdoor industry's unified voice in support of the environment. To date, the 63 member Alliance has donated \$2.6 million to environmental organizations of which approximately \$1 million has

been granted to river protection programs.

Patagonia's commitment as an environmental company goes beyond funding environmental organizations. Frustrated with most companies shallow commitment toward environmental responsibility, Patagonia elected to do something about environmental impacts in their own business. They started with a close examination of their operations and line of products. Patagonia hired an independent team of scientists to audit the environmental impacts associated with every phase of their business from the source of raw materials, to shipping, to in-house production practices.

The audit revealed opportunities to eliminate environmental impacts and waste in the production of their products. Striving to reduce impacts even further, Patagonia continues to research and develop technologies that minimize environmental impacts and promote recyclable materials. For Patagonia, the benefits from the process of researching and manufacturing environmentally responsible products is as important as the sale of the merchandise. These business practices increase production costs, an expense Patagonia is willing to carry in order to help build a market for environmentally clean products.

The American Whitewater Challenge Program is a natural match between American Whitewater and Patagonia. The American Whitewater Challenge Program empowers customers with a choice to endorse environmental responsibility through the products they purchase. In other words, outdoor

enthusiasts are given an opportunity to exercise their advocacy on behalf of the environment where they recreate. For Patagonia, the program helps drive the development of available market of environmentally friendly products thus making it easier for other companies to risk venturing into the more costly field. For the paddling community, the American Whitewater Challenge Program allows boaters to play a significant role in protecting their local rivers. Patagonia often justifies their financial commitment to environmental responsibility with the slogan, "Actions speak louder than words." For the paddling community, Patagonia presents a tremendous opportunity to embrace this slogan. So if you need paddling gear in '99 give Patagonia a strong look. Not only is their gear extremely functional and durable but it's also working toward protecting your rivers. Through the remainder of 1999, Patagonia will match your donation to American Whitewater when you purchase a Patagonia watersports product up to the cost of the product. Be an advocate for rivers and remember "Actions speak louder than words."

To request a catalog call Patagonia at 800-638-6464. For more information about American Whitewater's Conservation Program call John Gangemi 406-837-3155 or write <jgangemi@digisys.net>.



It was 1985 or so. AW (then the more mellifluous AWA) was nearly defunct. A decade of decline had left us with a few hundred dollars in the bank, a few hundred members on our rolls and a demoralized Board of Directors. Worst of all, whitewater in America faced its most perilous moment; national and state legislation and the energy crisis had teamed up to create a small hydropower development boom! Quick buck artists

scoured the countryside and found lots of whitewater which they wanted to extinguish in refurbished penstocks and turbines. Worse yet, relicensing for hundreds of dams loomed large as well.

When one particularly rapacious developer targeted my most cherished run, the Bottom Moose, however, it was my personal Pearl Harbor. I knew something extreme was needed. I put away my paddle and made a desperate move, investing my meager savings on a plane ticket to California, hoping to see the sculpture complex lead AW's



ons of adventure and to case.

Like a Jack in the Box, I surprised Yvon Chouinard who was picking up garbage in a climbing park near Ventura. He listened intently in the hot sun as I stammered out AWA's tale of woe and the threats of hydro horror. His boyish face creased with a smile, he asked "How much money does AW need.?" I hadn't planned for so quick a response so I blurted out "\$10,000." It was a sum unheard of at AW, but enough to get our Whitewater Defense Project on the track. Yvon didn't flinch — he just said "OK and bent down to pick up another squashed soda can. This is a man of vision and commitment — and AW delivered. In time, Yvon saw the success of his investment and continued his support for AW over the next 15 years.

Since then, Yvon and I have spent time together, musing on what will happen to our globe and how business and the environmental imperative must team up to save some shreds of our beautiful planet. AW and America's whitewater owe much to this true hero.

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## Rodeo Boaters Put \$\$\$ into American Whitewater Conservation Program

A group of professional rodeo boaters donated \$600 to help fund American Whitewater's hydropower relicensing efforts in the Pacific Northwest. The money was generated from the 1999 Wicked Whitewater Raffle coordinated by Sam Drevo. The raffle, now in its second year, was created as a mechanism to help offset expenses accrued by top rodeo boaters traveling to events. This year the raffle helped fund over 30 nationally ranked paddlers. For some boaters, this will help fund travel to the 1999 Freestyle World Championships in Taupo, New Zealand in December.

"This donation goes beyond the monetary benefits received," says John Gangemi, Conservation Director for American Whitewater. "The funds will assist in our efforts to restore rivers, public access and whitewater flows in the Pacific Northwest most notably the Chelan Project in Washington and the Bigfork Project in Montana. But more importantly, this donation signifies a commitment by the cutting-edge rodeo crowd that river conservation is a priority for them. Thank you for the donation and setting an example for the remainder of the whitewater community to follow."



Talented rodeo boater Sam Drevo donates funds for American Whitewater's river conservation efforts to Conservation Director John Gangemi.

## State Wild and Scenic Designation Approved for California's South Fork Yuba River

In September, the California State Legislature designated 39 miles of the South Fork Yuba River in the Sierra Nevada to the state Wild & Scenic Rivers System. As of this writing the legislation awaits the Governor's signature to become law. If signed by the Governor, the South Yuba would be the first expansion of the California Wild & Scenic Rivers System in more than a decade. Formal designation ensures that this scenic and popular recreation river is protected from the threat of new dams.

"This is a great victory in the fight against further dam building in California," said John Gangemi, American Whitewater Conservation Director. "Many of California's rivers are already heavily developed for water and power purposes. Restoring these impacted rivers through the regulatory process is sometimes a daunting task. Legislation such as this brings a breath of optimism for rivers. It's nice to

see the free flowing character of a magnificent whitewater river like the South Yuba protected for future generations."

The following Class III-V whitewater runs are situated within this 39 mile section of the South Yuba; Washington to Edwards, Edwards to Purdons Crossing, Purdons Crossing to Highway 49 bridge, and Highway 49 bridge to Bridgeport. State Wild and Scenic prevents new dam construction on this 39 miles of the Yuba River. In other words, some of the premier whitewater in California will be protected with this designation.

Nevada County residents have been fighting dam proposals targeting their favorite recreation river for more than 20 years. Getting this legislation passed was the culmination of a six month grassroots lobbying campaign spearheaded by Nevada County, the South Yuba River Citizens League, Friends of the River, with a significant amount

of support and letter writing from other river conservation organizations such as American Whitewater. Nevada County supported the bill because the river generates more than \$25 million in tourism and recreation revenues every year for the local economy.

Wild & Scenic designation precludes two dams proposed by Yuba County that would have drowned a state park, thousands of acres of public recreation land, hundreds of acres of private property, and classic Californiawhitewater. Yuba County was interested in building a dam on the South Yuba allegedly for flood control purposes, but there are more economically feasible and less environmentally de-

structive flood control alternatives in the Yuba watershed than building a new dam on the South Yuba.

The state system is similar to the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System in that new dams are prohibited on designated rivers. However, state agencies and local governments retain existing authority to manage public resources and land use on state designated rivers. Although state rivers can be added to the federal system with the approval of the state's Governor and the Secretary of Interior, these dual-designated rivers remain under state and local control.

# New Opportunity for Restoring Rivers and Streams Impacted by Hydropower

In September, American Whitewater along with the California Hydropower Reform Coalition\* (CHRC) and other national, statewide, and local conservation and recreation organizations signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Pacific Gas and Electric Corporation (PG&E) in an effort to gain significant environmental improvements for streams and rivers affected by PG&E's vast system of hydroelectric dams and diversions in California. The MOU was part of potential state legislation that would have permitted Pacific Gas and Electric to qualify as an unregulated power producer in California. In the long-run the legislation was never introduced due to opposition largely concerned with energy policy rather than river restoration. Despite the defeat, the MOU sets a precedent for state restructuring across the nation that will likely herald broad-scale river restoration.

In 1992, Congress passed legislation granting individual states the authority to deregulate the power industry. Each state is free to draft its own plan within certain side boards. California was one of the first states to pass restructuring legislation permitting utilities to sell power in a competitive marketplace. Under the California plan, PG&E and Southern California Edison (SCE) are required to develop a plan to "market value" their generation assets through sale or appraisal. Because of the public resources at stake, their divestiture proposals must meet the approval of the state legislature and Public Utilities Commission.

Recognizing that PG&E needed support from the environmental community for their divestiture proposal, American Whitewater and the CHRC leveraged significant improvements at PG&E's hydropower facilities in exchange for signatures. After months of negotiations the groups signed an MOU with PG&E that called for an immediate doubling of minimum in-stream flows, establishing a framework and trust fund to increase flows even further to meet state water quality standards, and the creation of a comprehensive monitoring program. The MOU totaled over \$275 million in environmental benefits. The group also signed a Lands MOU that protected all 140,000 acres of land currently owned by PG&E. The groups agreed that the combined MOUs represented the greatest opportunity for river restoration California had seen in years. PG&E's total inventory includes 68 power plants and over 170 dams on 16 rivers, producing enough electricity to power four million homes.

Unfortunately, because legislation failed to pass during the last state legislative session, the MOU is nullified. However, it is anticipated that the MOU will be the environmental cornerstone for any future proposals by PG&E or the state legislature. The inability to get legislation passed during the last session with the accompanying MOU is by no means viewed as a failure. On the contrary, this was a tremendous learning experience for the groups and laid the groundwork for future river restoration opportunities. The MOU establishes a benchmark for PG&E's and SCE's divestiture proposal as well as divestiture proposals in other states.

\*The California Hydropower Reform Coalition was founded by American Whitewater, Friends of the River, and California Trout as a means of collectively working on hydropower relicensing in the state. The coalition steering committee includes American Whitewater, California Outdoors, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, California Trout, Foot-hill Conservancy, Friends of the River, Natural Heritage Institute, and Trout Unlimited. Joining the CHRC on the MOU were American Rivers, the Planning and Conservation League, and National Audubon Society.

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# Forest Service Is Making Plans for You on the Chattooga

By Jason Robertson

The Sumter National Forest has begun preparing plans that will affect private boater's opportunities to visit the Chattooga River.

The Forest is revising its Land Resources Management Plan (LRMP). This plan has not been updated since 1985 when the current limits on commercial use of the Chattooga River were implemented. Since then, commercial use has increased from 39,000 visitors per year to 58,000, while private use has increased from 15,000 to 27,000.

At present, the Forest Service is planning to release the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) with a broader range of alternatives sometime this winter.

In the meantime, as part of the scoping process, the Forest Service's planners released a draft in October of their preferences for managing South Carolina's Sumter National Forest and the Wild and Scenic portion of the Chattooga River.

This draft document, called Alternative 1, emphasizes the restoration and maintenance of Sumter National Forest on an ecosystem basis to provide: healthy watersheds and riparian ecosystems; sustain-

able and diverse ecosystems that support viable plant, wildlife and fish populations; habitats for those species needing large, contiguous forested landscapes; a spectrum of high-quality, nature-based recreational settings, within the capabilities of the land, which are not widely available on non-Federal lands; a variety of old growth communities to meet biological and social needs; protection for inventoried roadless areas, outstandingly remarkable river values, and high quality scenic areas; the minimum transportation system necessary while protecting forest resources; and, finally, high-quality sawtimber products.

Of the other issues dealing with river management, Issue 4 (Riparian Area Mgmt) and 13 (Chattooga Watershed) look like great objectives, while Issue 7 (Recreational opportunities) would benefit from the specific listing of floating opportunities.

American Whitewater is also encouraging the forest planners to address the issue of whitewater boating in the Chattooga's headwaters on Sections 00, 0, and 1.

## Chattooga Part I: Forest Services Proposes Capping Private Access!

There's been a lot of discussion on the Internet over the last couple of months about the Forest Service's suggestion for setting limits on private access on Section III and IV of the Chattooga River.

The issue that's got the boating community up in arms is Issue 11 (Wild & Scenic Rivers) of the preferred alternative, which suggests the possibility of capping private use. At present, commercial caps from the 80s are not expected to increase above current limits.

When private boater and Chattooga outfitter Bruce Hare first publicized the issue in October, I spoke with Tony White, the author of the draft document. Mr. White is a courteous and conscientious gentleman. While he acknowledged that this alternative might be controversial, I'm not certain that he foresaw how agitated the boating community would become over the spectacle of setting private use limits. However, one of the reasons the Forest Service released this alternative as an early draft of the preferred alternative was to foster discussion and solicit public input. This was a strategy that's apparently paid off in spades, as indicated by the fact that I received more than 40 messages from our members on this issue in the first week the draft was released!

As the primary planner for the Sumter National Forest, Mr. White is charged with achieving certain goals. One of these goals comes from discussions and statements with visitors, that we, the boating community, "would like to keep things as they *are*"; hence the Forest Service's interpretation and concept of capping use. However, another equally valid interpretation of this statement is that the current (nonrestrictive) registration system is working and that private use should NOT be capped.

While protecting the river for environmental reasons is a laudable goal, it does not appear to be necessary at this time, and capping use

### ACTION ALERT: Protect Your Access to the Chattooga!

There are 2 easy steps to protecting your interests on the Chattooga. The first is to educate yourself, and the second is to let the Forest planners know about your concerns.

You can best educate yourself by checking the forest's planning documents on the web (<http://svinet2.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/>) and asking the planners ([twhite/r8\\_fms@fs.fed.us](mailto:twhite/r8_fms@fs.fed.us) (803-561-4072)) to have your name added to the Forest's mailing list. Once your name is on the list, you will be notified of all deadlines for commenting on the Forest's plans, and will get the Forest's information on river management on the Chattooga.

Please identify yourself as a boater, and as an American Whitewater supporter, in your comments. Ask the Forest Planners to carefully consider American Whitewater's comments, and to support our proposals for managing Sections III and IV as well as the headwaters sections 00, 0, and 1.

More information about American Whitewater's proposals is available on our website ([www.awa.org](http://www.awa.org)) under the Access page.

A C C C S S

for social reasons places the Forest Service in a precarious position of pushing a political agenda. This is especially true as the Forest Service is already increasing enforcement and demanding more from visitors in terms of parking fees, and thereby raising the bar for access.

The goals that our community and the Forest Service should keep in mind are the protection of the river corridor, encouragement of low-impact visitation, and preservation of the visitor experience. While capping private visitation may promote aspects of these goals, the caps will have multiple unintended consequences that are more serious than high visitation on a few weekends per year. For instance, we have observed that limits on private access promote: 1) increased dissatisfaction among visitors; 2) conflicts between user groups as they debate over who has a greater right to visit and use the resource; 3) conflicts over private versus commercial use limits; and 4) the creation of permits as commodities which can be hoarded, traded, or sold.

While caps are designed to limit use, the nearly universal effect that we've observed on the 25 rivers with permits nationwide, has been a rapid increase in use as soon as the permits are implemented. People tend to charge out and grab up the permits in a speculative fashion and use winds up rising after just one or two years and maximizes use at the capacity limit. In other words, getting a permit becomes a goal unto itself, and the accomplishment of getting these permits is nearly as great as actually developing the skills to run the river.

Therefore, the Forest Service will have to provide much greater justification that capacity limits are necessary than was initially included in the release of the Forest Service's draft document before American Whitewater will begin considering ANY limits on private use. Our position is supported by our members who point to Sections I-IV of the Chattooga as an example of a river that is well managed. The long-term cap on commercial access has been very effective, and the open-ended access for private boaters has always been appreciated. Furthermore, many local and regional boaters have called and written to me in the last few days explaining that they don't feel the river is crowded except on a tiny handful of historically high-use weekends, or that the use is anywhere near the point where caps are necessary for social or environmental reasons.

Therefore, the task that we face in the coming months will be sharing this experiential information with the Forest Service. We need to let them know that if they can justify caps we might support them, but that in our opinions as regular visitors and forest users we do not support caps on private use.

However, as we participate in the process we can also offer constructive criticism and credit the planning team for their hard work in crafting this document. With the exception of Issue 11, this draft alternative deserves our support.

### Issue 11:

The Chattooga Wild, Scenic and Recreation River is managed to protect its outstandingly remarkable values. The Turkey-Stevens Creek rivers on the Long Cane is recommended for W&SR.

Boating use on the Chattooga W&S River remains at current levels. Commercial use levels remain as in the current Sumter Plan. **Private use is capped at current use levels.**

The outstandingly remarkable values of all eligible rivers are protected.

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A Proposal for Allowing Limited Whitewater Access to:

# Sections 00, 0, and 1 in the Headwaters of the Chattooga River

## Summary:

American Whitewater recommends lifting the boater ban on Sections 00, 0, and 1 of the Chattooga between December 1<sup>st</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> as well as on the rare occasions when the river rises above 2.6 feet at Highway 76. This proposal maximizes the opportunity for boating while minimizing the potential for conflicts with other visitors.

## A Review of the Problem

On May 10, 1974 Congress identified 57 miles of the Chattooga River for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

The headwaters of the Chattooga River include some of the most beautiful and remote areas in the southeastern Appalachians. The river plunges out of the Nantahala National Forest in North Carolina, through the Ellicott Rock Wilderness, and between the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia and Sumter National Forest in South Carolina. The boating community commonly identifies these portions of the river as Sections 00, 0, and 1.

Though Sections 00, 0, and 1 are closed to whitewater recreationists, dozens of boaters challenge the Forest Service ban every year. In a way, the Forest Service predicted the importance of these river segments as long ago as 1985, when they stated that "This river corridor has the potential to become one of the most significant areas in the east providing a wide range of challenging outdoor recreational pursuits in a primitive setting."

Though we do not condone breaking the law, it is a well-known fact that it is possible to run the river without getting caught by the River Rangers. In fact, boating footage has appeared regularly in promotional videos since the late 1980s. These videos have been distributed throughout the country, and most southeastern boaters can readily identify footage from the headwaters of the Chattooga. However, the tacit acceptance of boating within the headwaters by the River Rangers is not an acceptable alternative to modifying the ban and legalizing boating in the headwaters at different times of the year.

American Whitewater's members do not want to break the rules here; instead, we simply seek a legitimate opportunity to visit the headwaters of this beautiful river and challenge ourselves on its waterfalls and cascades. The fact that boaters are compelled to challenge the boating ban is strong evidence that access to the river is of national interest to our community.

Part of the reason for this interest is that boaters can count on these sections to have adequate flows even when many of the other regional creeks are too low or too high. Another part of the interest is of course fostered by the long history of river running in the southeast and the tradition of "steep creeking" which began more

than 20 years ago on the headwaters and tributaries of the Chattooga River. Other reasons for interest in access to the headwaters, as identified by the Forest Service, include the river's unique scenic and isolation qualities."

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the headwaters of the Chattooga were considered too dangerous for floating by commercial rafters. As a result, on January 8, 1981, Forest Supervisor Donald W. Eng prohibited floating north of SC/GA Highway 28 for public safety purposes at the same time he required the use of safety equipment such as helmets and life jackets.

However, private use patterns were already changing and the nature of river running was evolving. Primarily, advances in boating techniques, training, safety, and equipment were rapidly improving; and with this evolution private boaters switched from the use of army surplus rafts to specially crafted canoes and kayaks made specifically for running the waterfalls and cascades in the Appalachians.

Now, 20 years later, the forbidding headwaters of the Chattooga, with its remote waterfalls and dramatic whitewater, has become a desirable boating destination for mainstream whitewater canoers and kayakers. A quick look at the number and caliber of visitors on Section IV provide even more evidence that the boating ban has reached an age where it is no longer necessary for purposes of public safety. In fact, the USFS River Rangers have acknowledged in private conversations that the ban is no longer useful for purposes of public safety.

However, as the private boaters were making well-documented advances in safety equipment and techniques, the ban was reaffirmed in 1985 when the Forest Service released the Land and Resources Management Plan (LRMP) for the Chattooga. As in 1981, the LRMP limited floating to Sections I, II, III, & IV in the Sumter and Chattahoochee National Forests. However, no mention of safety was made in regard to the boating ban; instead, the ban was described as a tool for providing "quality trout fishing."

In other words, the ban was altered in order to prevent possible conflicts between fishermen and floaters. In some ways this change was understandable; after all, this river has long been recognized as one of the finest stocked-trout fisheries in the region. However, it is possible to set appropriate limits on use that would maximize the public's opportunity to visit and enjoy this beautiful setting whether they are fishing, hiking, or floating.

In retrospect, the closure does not appear consistent with the purpose of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. After all, whitewater kayaking and canoeing are consistent with wilderness management, represent two of the oldest and most primitive forms of human-powered travel in North America as well as two of the most uniquely American pastimes, and do not damage the environment or leave a detectable trail.

Regardless, the River Rangers do not require a total ban on floating in the headwaters of the Chattooga in order to perform their duties and exercise their responsibilities. Instead, the Forest Service can let Mother Nature be the judge and arbiter of appropriate uses. Simply put, Sections 00, 0, and 1 are most suitable for whitewater recreation at times when they are least suitable for other activities such as fishing or swimming. Therefore floating could, and should, be allowed on a limited seasonal basis.

Whitewater boaters can only run the river when there is sufficient water to float and negotiate the rapids; whereas fishermen and other river users tend to avoid the river at higher flows when boaters would be present. The corollary is that boaters would avoid the river at lower flows when fishermen and hikers would be present. There would be limited opportunities for encounters between the different users, and, as the Forest Service emphasizes, "Numerous people may use the river at the same time, but bends and rapids prevent long sight distances, and falling water mutes sounds."

**A Logical Solution**

On behalf of our members, American Whitewater proposes new guidelines for floating on Sections 00, 0, and 1 of the Chattooga River. Briefly, we recommend lifting the boater ban between December 1<sup>st</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> as well as occasions when the river rises above 2.6 feet at Highway 76. The river level is easily confirmed by checking the Highway 76 gauge or USGS gauge on the Internet. This recommendation satisfies the boating community while preventing the development of conflicts with other forest users such as the fishing community.

The establishment of a clearly defined, limited use season also allows the USFS to gauge use and monitor safety on these sections. Furthermore, limiting access to the colder winter months or periods of relatively high water naturally deters less qualified boaters from using the river.

We recommend requiring boaters to self-register at the put-in launch sites for Sections 00, 0, and 1. Self-registration is already conducted on Sections I, II, III and IV. Therefore it should not be difficult or unreasonable to implement the same system on Sections 00, 0, and 1. If use exceeds the limits of acceptable change (LAC), then use may be restricted. However, it is unlikely that access will need to

be artificially limited given the difficult nature of the whitewater and the proposed winter use season.

Use should be managed within the Land and Resource Management Plan under the relevant Wild & Scenic classification for each section (wild or recreational). Both wild and recreational statuses convey USFS responsibility to manage for and provide "water-oriented recreational opportunities in a primitive setting."

Given the degree of difficult whitewater and congested nature of the river corridor in these sections, we recommend limiting use to canoes, kayaks, and small inflatable kayaks (such as "Shredders™" or "duckies"). These river sections are not well suited for rafting or commercially-guided activities. However, the rivers are very suitable for other forms of whitewater recreation as demonstrated on regional creeks such as the Stekoa, Overflow, Tallulah, and Horsepasture.

Concerns for safety, rescue, and emergency evacuation can be addressed. Whitewater recreation carries certain identifiable risks. The use of appropriate safety gear such as helmets, life jackets, throw ropes, spare paddles, and first aid kits mitigates these risks. Furthermore, training in first aid and CPR can also help to reduce the risks associated with outdoor activities such as, but not limited to, boating.

The river managers and rangers on the Chattooga are already well-versed and trained in the management of whitewater recreation; therefore we do not anticipate a need for additional training or staffing to manage use on Sections 0, 00, and 1. Furthermore, the River Rangers are under no false expectations regarding their ability to help with river safety. As the river managers are aware, most boating teams are able to conduct their own rescues when accidents occur.

# Trouble on the Waters

If you had trouble getting to the river, let us know. Use this form to report access problems so that AW can convince legislators and government authorities where and when river access is a problem. If you have met an irate landowner, noticed signs forbidding access, or were stopped by a landowner, barbed wire fence or a locked gate, tell us about it on this form. If several boaters are arrested or involved, only one form should be filled out per incident naming a boater available for future contact.

River \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident \_\_\_\_\_

Access code categories: List below or circle the categories, multiple categories are OK.

Brief description of incident:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Boater contact  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner/Agency/Sheriff contact (if known)  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

1. Trespass. Ticket, warning or arrest for:
- 1.01 Trespass on private property
  - 1.02 Trespass on public property
  - 1.03 Criminal trespass
  - 1.04 Civil trespass

2. Public Access Closure
- 2.01 Denied by federal law
  - 2.01.01 Denied by BLM
  - 2.01.02 Denied by Forest Service
  - 2.01.03 Denied by Nat'l Park Service
  - 2.02 Denied by state
  - 2.03 Denied by local authority
  - 2.04 Denied by administrative edict

3. Injury from man-made obstacles
- 3.01 Barbed wire or fence
  - 3.02 Low head dam

- 4. Obstacles running river, scouting or portaging
- 4.01 Fence or chain on land blocking access
- 4.02 Fence, wire, or tree on river blocking access
- 4.03 Posted no trespassing sign
- 4.04 Vehicle towed, ticketed, or vandalized
- 4.05 Threats or acts of violence

5. Closures: Rivers closed that were once open
- 5.01 Closed by private landowner
  - 5.02 Closed by government agency
  - 5.02.01 Federal
  - 5.02.02 State
  - 5.02.03 Local
  - 5.03 High water closure

- Now access fees
- 6.01 Charged by private landowner
  - 6.02 Charged by government agency
  - 6.02.01 Federal
  - 6.02.02 State
  - 6.02.03 Local

- Dam controlled rivers
- 7.01 Water turned off
  - 7.02 Inconsistent flow: too much or too little
  - 7.03 No notice of releases

Send to Ken Ransford, 475 Sierra Vista, Carbondale, CO 81623, 970-963-6800, FAX 970-963-6700. ransford@csn.net

**Access is a constant struggle. The AW Access Committee needs your help.**

# Champion River Corridors Open to The Public Today (NY)

By: Neil F. Woodworth,  
Counsel for the Adirondack Mountain Club  
Contact: nwoodworth@globa12000.net

The newest additions to Adirondack Forest Preserve are open for the first time in more than century.

On August 10, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner John P. Cahill announced that the famous "northern flow" corridors of the Deer, St. Regis, Oswegatchie, and Grass rivers were being opened to public use for the first time in more than a century.

Access to the corridors was part of the largest land conservation transaction in New York State's history, an agreement announced by Governor George E. Pataki in July that preserves 144,300 acres of forest land formerly owned by Champion International Corporation. The property encompasses three large, noncontiguous blocks of land located in portions of 10 towns in St. Lawrence, Franklin, Lewis, and Herkimer counties within the Adirondack Park. The balance of the lands will open to public use next summer.

"For the first time in more than 100 years, the public will have access to the famous 'northern flow' river corridors that boast some of the best canoeing areas in the country," Cahill said. "Although dry weather may temporarily curtail water recreation in some areas this season, this property will provide vast new recreational opportunities for years to come."

Because low water conditions prevail across the North Country, DEC recommends that people contemplating a canoe or kayak trip contact DEC's regional offices in the North Country for the latest conditions.

In order to separate public and private uses of the lands, public use of the fee lands will be limited to a 500-foot corridor on either side of the rivers. Hunting, fishing and trapping will be allowed on those lands beginning July 1, 2000.

On the 110,000 acres of private lands that will be opened to public use through a conservation easement, private hunting clubs retain exclusive hunting and trapping rights during the big game season for the next 15 years. Consequently, these lands will be closed to the public (except for primary access corridors used to reach the fee lands) from Sept. 1 through December 31, until 2014. Beginning in 2015, those lands will be open to the public year-round.

The river corridor lands opened in August consist of three properties known as the Santa Clara, Tooley Pond, and Croghan tracts. The lands were purchased for their significant stretches of high quality recreational water.

The three properties are all within the Adirondack Park and are subject to its rules and regulations. More information on these properties is available on the DEC web site at: [www.dec.ny.us](http://www.dec.ny.us).

## AMC Requests Assistance on Access Problems in Vermont and Massachusetts

By: Peter Donahue

*Note from American Whitewater's Access Director: One of the things that I've learned since coming to work for American Whitewater is that there are an unlimited number of river access problems in our country, and we need all the help we can get. AMC's commitment to working on river access issues in the northeast will be a large help and I encourage our members to work with them in reporting and addressing these issues.*

The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) is a nonprofit conservation and recreation organization with over 83,000 members throughout the Northeast. The AMC promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers, and trails for the benefit of all people.

Our paddling members have recently brought to our attention the need to investigate river access issues in this region. In response to this need, we have begun a study of the access sites on the whitewater rivers of Southern Vermont and Western Massachusetts. Our goal is to identify those sites which have already been closed by landowners or are vulnerable to closure in the near future due to land sales, changes in ownership, or poor relationships between boaters and landowners.

We hope to have a report available for Southern Vermont and Western Massachusetts by the early part of 2000. If you would like information regarding AMC's river access work or would like to inform us of access problems in any of the Northeastern states please contact AMC's River Conservation Advocate, Peter Donahue, at (617) 523-0655 ext. 314 or [pdonahue@amcinfo.org](mailto:pdonahue@amcinfo.org).

## Kayakers Now Welcomed to Bidwell Park - Chico, CA

By: Scott Blankenfeld, Intern, American Whitewater

After setting shuttle and driving to the top of the canyon's south rim, we prepared ourselves for the water and began the two-mile hike down to Big Chico Creek. During our run, Tim Krane and I alternated leading each rapid as the other shot video. This would surely be a historic moment for kayaking in Chico, California.

Bidwell Park, America's fourth largest city park is located in Chico. The park has long been closed to hard shell watercrafts. This means that the creek would be open to swimmers and tubers, but not for kayakers. Why should kayakers be left out? Maybe to assure safety of the swimmers, but nobody really knows.

Few whitewater boaters have ever noticed this creek for it's runnability (probably because the park attracts mostly bikers, hikers, and swimmers), until Ken Fowler of Chico Paddleheads was stopped while kayaking in the park and was questioned by a ranger.

Later Ken and Kevin Lewis (Conservation Co-Chair on the American Whitewater Board of Directors) researched similar cases that set precedent, and Ken petitioned the Chico City Park commission for permission to enter the creek with a kayak. The Park Commission and Ken were concerned with the safety of other park users. They agreed to open the park to kayaks and other whitewater crafts between the dates of November 1 and April 30 when there are not likely to be swimmers in the creek and the water is at a runnable level.

The Class V run had been done before, and the kayakers, like Ken, were generally hassled by park rangers. However, Tim Krane and I

were left alone as we ran the first legal descent of Big Chico Creek through Upper Bidwell Park in February 1999. We found that the run through the park to be a technical, low-volume creek. Rocky clusters of Lovejoy Basalt create a lot of great boof drops, and the river also squeezes through a half-mile vertically walled gorge.

On our run we had a number of tricky portages requiring us to rope our boats and even build driftwood bridges across crevasses on which to seal launch into the moving water below.

Gaining access to Big Chico Creek is a perfect example of how doing research, having tact, and caring for the rights of boaters has gained access to yet another creek in California. However, the fight for Big Chico Creek is not over. A local landowner has blocked the road to an access point that's further upstream; but Ken Fowler is on the scene again, working to open up another whitewater run in Northern California.

## Island Creek Cleared and Reopened for Use (TN)

By Chuck Estes

Island Creek has been cleared of strainers and is now open for boating for the first time in a couple of years. This is one of the best short whitewater runs on the Cumberland Plateau. It is a 2 1/2-mile Class IV+ run with spectacular scenery. See Monte Smith's guide book if you need more details. Unfortunately it has been unrunnable for the past two years due to massive amounts of strainers from ice and snowstorms.

On September 18 & 19, 12 members of the East Tennessee Whitewater Club with the approval and assistance of Obed Park Service ranger Rob Turan hiked into Island Creek and completed the removal. Using chainsaws and muscle, the group cleared out all major strainers in the creek channel and removed several debris dams. Care was taken to clear the strainers for boater safety but not impact the scenic nature of the creek. On Saturday, our group of eleven divided into two groups with one group starting at the top and one coming up from the bottom. On Sunday, a group of four of us came back for more and did a sweep from the top, clearing out the remainder of the strainers and debris dams.

In the first mile and a half, stay on the left side of the small islands that split the flow. The left side of these rapids has the best channel and is less likely to have strainers. The channel should be clear down to the most difficult rapid, Compound Fracture. This is about two thirds of the way through the run. A large debris dam has been removed 50 yards above the rapid. A part of a large hemlock log still remains there on the left side of the channel that should alert paddlers that Compound Fracture is coming up. At the top of Rock House rapid (the very large undercut on river left), we had to leave the butt end of a large tree wedged into the river left wall. There is plenty of room for the normal left center run. All else is now clear down to a very large debris dam immediately below the old stone railroad bridge pier. The debris dam is in the middle of the creek. We have cleared out the left side of the creek, which is the most open channel and historically the most common route. We also cleared the extreme right side of the debris dam; however, this is a much narrower channel with a small drop and a tricky angle that must be negotiated. The confluence with the Emory River is located about 200 yards downriver.

We cut many large logs into 3-4 foot sections, and expect it will take a major rainfall to float out the debris. Normal runs are at 10,000 cfs on the Oakdale gauge. We expect a level of 30,000 to 40,000 may be needed to float the debris down to the Emory.

**ATTENTION:** Please use extreme caution in running Island Creek this paddling season since the debris will move and possibly create hazards. Also there is debris above the put-in bridge that could move downstream over time and several large dead trees are poised

to fall into the channel from the top of the gorge. This winter and spring please check in at the Wartburg National Park Service visitor center prior to running Island Creek to get the latest status. Also, after any run, please check back in with the Park Service visitor center to let them know what you observed so information can be passed on to other boaters.

Thanks to the following for all their hardwork: Dave Walton (who worked both days, helped organize, and made an initial scouting hike), Paul Akers, Sam Suffern, Tom Berg, Ralph Harvey, Bob Olszewski, Tom Pritchard, Charlie and Zed Mansfield, Jomo and Toby MacDermott, and Ranger Rob Turan.

## Obed River Designated Outstanding National Resource Water (TN)

Source: American Rivers

The Obed Wild and Scenic River in Tennessee has received the highest level of environmental protection under state law. The 45-mile river and its tributaries have been designated an Outstanding National Resource Water, indicating the highest scenic and ecological importance. This designation is good news for paddlers as well as the threatened and endangered species that frequent the area.

## CALL FOR LAWYERS!

### American Whitewater Seeks Volunteers with Legal Training to Review Our Nationwide Survey of All 50 State's Navigability Laws!

Confusion over the rights and obligations of boaters versus the rights and obligations of landowners and other river users is matched by the uncertainty about the proper role of government river managing agencies.

How responsible should public agencies be for the safety of those who undertake risk-taking recreational activities on public lands? What rules are needed to protect rivers and riverine areas from environmental damage? What agency policies are best to ensure fairness between competing use groups? Who should pay for facilities and services to make river access possible? What if sightseers and hikers as well as river runners use these facilities? What obligations do water project developers have to make amends for the loss of recreational opportunities when dams are built or licensed by the government? These difficult public policy issues affect the opportunities of whitewater boaters to pursue their sport.

American Whitewater is completing a Navigability Handbook to help clarify some of these questions and the public right to access and use the rivers and streams in all 50 states. We hope that the information in this handbook will serve as a starting point for educating the reader on navigability law in general and will contribute to a resolution of conflicts, leading to a better and more enjoyable relationship among river users, managers, landowners, and others with an interest in these resources.

This document is laid out in a simple format that has each state's laws detailed separately from other states. Under each state heading there are five sections with brief descriptions of: 1) the state of the law, 2) a description of the State Test of Navigability; 3) the extent of public rights in navigable waters; 4) statutes governing landowner liability; and 5) miscellaneous addenda that are relevant to the issue.

We need lawyers from all 50 states to volunteer to assist us with our final review.

**Please e-mail Jason Robertson at [Access@amwhitewater.org](mailto:Access@amwhitewater.org) or call 301-589-9453 to volunteer.**

## CALL FOR RESEARCHERS!

### Boaters Need Good Research to Share with River Managers

Boater's access rights are being threatened on a number of rivers based on poor science, poor research, and prejudicial assumptions on the parts of river managers, landowners, and county administrators.

American Whitewater is looking for researchers that are interested in writing white papers for us and working on issues related to:

- Crowding in Wilderness Areas
- Motors on Wilderness Rivers
- Boater Impacts on the Environment
- Boater Impacts on Endangered Species (such as Salmon and Harlequin Ducks)
- Experiential Learning
- Hydropower Impacts
- Economic Impacts of Boating
- Effects of Fees on the Boating Community
- User Conflicts
- The State of the Industry
- Safety

We cannot fund your research directly, but we can provide assistance in getting grants from the national agencies. There are a number of great research opportunities for students to work on their Master's degrees on these subjects, and for experts to contribute meaningfully to our ability to canoe, kayak, and raft!

Please e-mail Jason Robertson at [Access@amwhitewater.org](mailto:Access@amwhitewater.org) or call 301-589-9453 to volunteer.

## Intern Focusing on National Hydropower Projects

By Scott Blankenfeld, Autumn Intern

There are over 1,700 hydropower projects licensed by The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Although, there is a complete list of these projects, there is no listing that relates these projects to whitewater. Since the ideal location for a dam and the ideal location for a whitewater run is a river with gradient, the need for a hydropower/whitewater catalog exists.

I am working in the conservation program under the supervision of John Gangemi, as I research all the FERC hydropower licenses and am putting them together in the form of a handbook. This handbook will serve two main functions. First, American Whitewater (AW) will use this information to set priorities and determine which projects to get involved with and intervene in their relicensings. Secondly, it will help American Whitewater's members become more informed on local hydro issues.

I will be gathering information from government agencies, whitewater guidebooks, AW staff, volunteers, members, and affiliates. The final product will help everybody who holds a stake in our precious whitewater resource to not only be informed of recreational whitewater releases, but also to serve as a starting place for getting involved with local hydropower issues.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please contact me at the Silver Spring office or e-mail: ([scott@amwhitewater.org](mailto:scott@amwhitewater.org)).

*Editor's Note: Scott Blankenfeld is a senior at California State University, Chico. He will receive his Bachelor of Science in Commercial and Community Recreation upon completion of his internship at American Whitewater in December. Upon completion of his degree Scott will begin searching for employment in the whitewater/rivers industry.*

# NOW—A River Runs Through It !!!

By Tom Christopher  
AW Board Member

## EDWARDS DAM REMOVED IN HISTORIC FERC DECISION

Late in June I got a call from Andrew Fahlund, a friend of mine from Washington, D. C. who works for American Rivers as Director of their Hydropower Programs. "Are you going up to Augusta for the breaching of the Edwards dam on July 1st?" he inquired. "To tell you the truth, I hadn't really given it much thought," I said. For the past year I had been incredibly busy at work and was also trying to finish up working on a settlement on several rivers in western Maine. To me it was more important that the Edwards Dam was being removed than my actual attendance at the event, besides, our close friend and colleague Steve Brooke of the Kennebec Coalition was the one deserving of all the kudos for directing the ten-year effort to remove the dam.

"Well," Andrew said, "I think you should go. We all need to be there to support Steve and besides, this is history in the making." I still hesitated. "Andrew I just don't think I can take the time off, I haven't even been in my boat this year and it's almost July."

"You need to get out there now," his voice slightly pushy. "And I was wondering as long as we're in Maine, will you take me down the Kennebec Gorge?" I knew then that he had me and there was nothing I could do about it. I had blown Andrew off on the Deerfield a year earlier to attend to an important AW donor who wanted to run

Maine's Dead River, and I was still feeling guilty. Andrew is one of the unsung river heroes that toils tediously in Washington to provide us with information, support, and legislative assistance from his desk at American Rivers. Because of his love of rivers, Andrew has decided to get up close and personal to his work by learning how to boat. He also was looking to add to his river portfolio, and who was I to discourage him.

"O. K. I'll be there," trying to sound positive through my groan. "What time and where should I meet you?"

"The breaching is set to go off at 9:00 a.m. so why don't you meet me at the site," Andrew chirped. "By the way, I think you should get there early, I think there may be a bit of a crowd for the festivities."

So late on the eve of river history I packed up my boat and gear, loaded the mobile kayak condo, and headed up to Augusta, relieved that I was finally going to spend some time in my boat. After a three hour drive and a quick stop at Ralph's Roast Beef Ranch for a sandwich, I dragged my semiconscious body into bed a little after midnight. I figured an early arrival at the site would be in the bag. I didn't have a clue of what I was in store for the following day.

The day began as any other ordinary day in early July- it was bright and sunny, cool in the early morning with the temperature rising quickly and the humidity starting to build to an oppressive level. I was looking forward to seeing Andrew and other old friends who would be there. It was a relief to be thinking about what was going to take place later. After all, it was the first time in our nation's history that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission had ordered the removal of an operating dam that was still producing energy.

The Edwards Dam is 162 years old, built in 1837, and at 920 feet wide, it became a plug in a river that was once one of the nation's most

productive fisheries. Although the Kennebec River has undergone many changes in its 200 year history, none had been as destructive as the building of the Edwards Dam. It had been constructed primarily for the purpose of providing mechanical power to the textile and saw mills along the river bank. But the dam had the practical effect of virtually destroying huge populations of salmon, sturgeon, rainbow smelt and other anadromous fish by flooding critical upstream habitat and creating an impenetrable barrier to spawning grounds. In addition, overfishing, log drives, municipal sewage, paper mill wastes and other industrial toxins compounded the degradation of the river and virtually destroyed the entire river ecosystem.

The mills have long since closed, and the workers, many of French-Canadian ancestry, have also moved on. What was left was the Edwards Manufacturing Company, a commercial enterprise that produced no products but over the years had converted water power to electrical energy by installing generators that produced only 3.5 megawatts of energy. This minuscule amount of energy is equal to one-tenth of one percent of Maine's energy usage. However, the project did produce impressive revenues for its owners. With minimal operation and maintenance costs the owners of the Edwards Dam grossed more than \$ 2.5 million dollars each year—high profits at the expense one of the most beautiful rivers in America and clearly not in the public interest.

During the relicensing process, FERC concluded the value and benefits to the public interest outweighed the economic value to the owners of the dam, and ordered the dam removed. It is expected that the creation of seventeen miles of additional spawning habitat and the flow restoration provided by the dam removal will generate millions of dollars through the development of a world class sport fishery and other recreational activities including whitewater boating as rapids emerge from below the reservoir.

I stopped and had a celebratory breakfast—since I'm always on a diet I look for any opportunity to increase my caloric intake beyond wheat toast and water without having to make too many excuses to my conscience or beloved wife Shirley. As I drove to the dam, I noticed more traffic than usual as I crossed the bridge spanning the Kennebec River. When I got to the other side of the river I saw all sorts of law enforcement officers directing traffic towards the site. I finally arrived at a parking spot about three quarters of a mile away from the dam. It was barely eight o'clock.

Grabbing my camera, I sensed an urgency that I had not anticipated and I followed a wide line of people towards the dam site. Descending a small hill and rounding a blind corner, my eyes embraced a crowd of people, tents, exhibits from environmental organizations, and even a display from a commercial rafting outfitter. Hundreds of folding chairs had been placed in front of a huge video screen projecting an array of historical events and facts about the Edwards Dam and the Kennebec River. This was a party—and the excitement about what was going to happen literally seemed to displace the electricity which had been previously produced by the generators.

On an elevated platform were a dozen television video cameras and reporters wandered through the crowd gathering stories, personal reflections and tidbits of trivia. Many elderly people were there, with tales of their childhood and life along the banks of the Kennebec

and in the textile and saw mills. Some looked sad, for they knew this was an end of an era, an end to a slower time when each neighbor and coworker was an important part of the fabric within the close-knit community. There was some anger, mostly directed at the "damned environmentalists," who couldn't mind their own business and were causing all the trouble for "folks who live here." But everyone could tell what was about to unfold would be historic- the death of an era and a rebirth of a river.

I wandered through the crowd, taking everything in and trying to process what was happening, greeting many friends and colleagues from my past ten years of conservation work. Of course it was impossible to avoid my adversaries—dam operators from other projects in New England, and employees and staff who took part in countless and prolonged negotiating sessions, often filled with acrimony. Somehow though, today was different, with a sense of truce in recognition of the coming breach of the dam and the knowledge that it would transcend any differences that we might have. Even as opposing warriors, for this day, there was a bond that formed in the name of the good battles that had been fought and those which would continue to rage.

The dignitaries approached the podium, each with words of wisdom and hope that the impending breach was the right thing to do. The Mayor of Augusta, William Dowling, recounted his days running logs on the river and Governor Angus King mused that we might find the body of Jimmy Hoffa buried in the sediments once the waters withdrew. Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt remarked, "This is a moment in history that begins here and will be repeated many times in the coming years. Rivers flow through our lives filling our memories with richness from the past, but rivers also flow into the future." Governor King and Secretary Babbitt both reached for the cord of a brass colored bell in its steeple to signal across the river for the breaching to begin at the coffer



dam which had been constructed on the far side of the Kennebec

Across the river, halfway up the escarpment carved by the Kennebec, stood St. Augustine's church with its towering steeple.

The bell rung once, twice, three times, and all at once every bell in the St. Augustine Church across the river began to toll, filling the entire valley and city of Augusta with the joyous sounds of renewal and the hope a free-flowing river would bring in the coming years.

Equipment operator Reggie Barnes of H. E. Sargent, the contractor responsible for the dam removal, climbed up into the cab of his Caterpillar 385 B Excavator with a five-foot wide bucket. Foreman Bruce Skilling from Sargent and Norman Michaud of E-Pro Engineering broke a bottle of champagne over the bucket, shook hands and stepped back to let Barnes do his work. At 9:21 a.m. on July 1, 1999, beginning with the riprap holding down the southern face of the coffer dam, Barnes began scooping buckets full of rocks and gravel. By 9:32 a.m. the water began as a muddy trickle and soon burst forward in a powerful torrent, free at last, free at last.

Reggie Barnes spun the cab of the backhoe around, his work done and his place in history secure, and rushed to the high ground before he was swept into the 15 foot-wide gap in the river. Across the river the crowd of 1,500 people watched through binoculars, telescopes and on closed-circuit TV and cheered wildly and enthusiastically as the gap in the dam grew wider to 75 feet. The church bells tolled for the next hour in jubilant celebration, free at last, free at last. Within

an hour the water behind the impoundment dropped a foot, caving out a vicious hole at the bottom of the breach that soon became a snare for some of the old timber crib.

As I stood and watched, I was overcome by the emotions that always follow when the human spirit overcomes adversity. To be part of this, and to work with those who have toiled selflessly for so many years to achieve this moment, to share this moment with me, has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my own conservation career. This has reemphasized the importance of American Whitewater's work in hydropower relicensing and certainly proves that a small group of dedicated, committed individuals can effect enormous change within our society.

When Mahatma Gandhi was taken from his prison cell after one of his many interments he was asked by the Governor Regent of India what he expected from his British rulers, and he politely replied, "I expect them sir, to quit India!" It strikes me that we should expect no less from those who have destroyed our rivers and ecosystems with dam construction. While we may not be able to remove all dams we should certainly expect FERC to support appropriate mitigation measures through the relicensing process for those that must remain in service. It is also critical to develop alternative forms of energy which will negate the necessity for future dam building, so we can preserve our rivers for future generations.

The next day, Andrew, Steve Brooke, myself, and an entire cadre of conservationists, sportsmen, and river enthusiasts took to the river in canoes, putting in below the next dam upstream at Ft. Halifax, in order to be the first to paddle this newly free-flowing section of the Kennebec River. We toiled seventeen miles downstream against strong headwinds that were sweeping up the river valley, checking how water levels had subsided as we paddled along what was once an enormous reservoir. By the time we reached Augusta the level had dropped six feet. In spite of the mucky silt-covered new river bank, we could see that the Kennebec would be able to restore itself very quickly. The fishermen in the group were eagerly discussing new salmon habitat and an afternoon thundershower that drove us to the shore was already dissolving the silt on the banks and washing it down to the sea. Earlier, a bald eagle flew overhead, as well as a few osprey and a great blue heron with a fish in its mouth. To me these were all signs that the river gods were happy. They were sending us their messengers to tell us we were doing a good thing.

This story is not about killer whitewater or an extraordinary overseas adventure, but a tribute to all who through persistence, faith, and hard work overcame enormous obstacles to achieve a great moment in river conservation. It will be marked in history as a turning point in a quiet revolution to save our rivers. It is an event that should inspire all of us to continue our work in saving rivers. And to my friend Andrew Fahland, thanks for twisting my arm and bringing me along. It was a life experience.

## NEW ENGLAND VICTORY # 2

By Tom Christopher  
AW Board Member

### Settlement Agreement Forged On Western Maine's Rapid & Megalloway Rivers.

On July 29, 1999, with Governor Angus S. King and Ron Loviglio, Commissioner of Maine's Department of Conservation present, Florida Power & Light, owners of the Union Water Power Company in western Maine, announced that a settlement agreement had been reached on licensing conditions for the operation of Upper and Middle dams in the headwaters region of the Androscoggin River. This agreement includes provisions that guarantee releases for whitewater recreation over the course of the next fifty years on both the Rapid and Megalloway rivers.

Upper and Middle dams impound Mooselookmeguntic, Cupsuptic, and Upper and Lower Richardson Lakes, important reservoirs which have provided enhanced flows and flood protection for downstream communities as well as power generation for nearly 115 years. In addition, a reopener clause on the Union Water Power's Azischoos Dam and the Megalloway River paved the way for their inclusion into the settlement agreement as partial mitigation for the environmental impacts caused by the dams of both projects.

American Whitewater and New England FLOW began negotiations with Union Water Power Company in December of 1995. Over the last four years they have worked with other conservation allies including the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Conservation Law Foundation, American Rivers, Rangely Lakes Heritage Trust and Trout Unlimited to develop a comprehensive mitigation package which would balance the competing interests utilizing the resources of the region. This collaborative team also included state and federal resource agencies, municipalities, and camp owners. Over the course of four years and with thousands of man-hours put into meetings and extended negotiations by the interveners, a settlement agreement was forged. This settlement maintains the safety and economic benefits of the dams to Union Water Power while protecting and enhancing environmental and recreational values.

In a historic, precedent-setting move, Union Water Power Company agreed to fund an independent consultant, Alec Giffen of Land

& Water Associates, Hallowell, Maine, to report directly to the conservation coalition. His purpose was to provide them with in-depth analysis on issues which varied from fish spawning and whitewater flows to land protection and resource management. Having an autonomous consultant allowed the collaborative participants to utilize technical and scientific expertise that would have otherwise been difficult to fund through their respective organizations. Access to critical information about daily peaking operations and difficult-to-obtain historical data on the management of the resources gave all of the respective parties the opportunity to gain valuable insight regarding potential mitigation strategies.

Pioneer whitewater boaters had been using the Rapid River since the end of World War II, but water availability occurred only during periods of high seasonal flows. In recent years Union Water Power Company had verbally agreed to release water on two weekends in July and two weekends in August. Although boatable, water levels were often inconsistent and presented significant safety hazards at the lower levels. If higher flows occurred on non-boating weekends or at other times, it was almost impossible for boaters or fishermen to find out about these flows.

Although whitewater boaters had been utilizing the Rapid River for many years there was a serious danger that the existing boating flows would be entirely eliminated in order to provide stable lake levels for camp owners on the upstream lakes. In addition to their objections, fishing interest groups were strongly opposed to any continuation of the upper level flows, which they considered to be disrupting to the world-class brook trout fishery on the Rapid River. Access to Rapid River had always been extremely difficult due to the fact that Union Water Power did not own any of the lands surrounding the project and that there were strenuous objections by many of the different interest groups to increasing or improving access to the resource. It was necessary for the boaters to recognize the pristine recreational values which made this region so special and still defend

their rights to use these resources in a way which would be compatible with other interests, while minimizing the impacts that boating activities might create.

In order to preserve the back country character of the region, the interveners developed a water management plan which preserved and enhanced the existing boating usage of the Rapid River and opened up the Megalloway River to significant boating opportunities in an area which had easier, more direct access. It was the opinion of the interest groups that recreational needs would change significantly over the next 50 years. A committee, which included American Whitewater, was established to evaluate these changes and consider which actions or mitigation would be necessary to meet the increased recreational demands of the future. In order to support this program a fund of \$100,000 dollars has been established by the licensee, using the interest for continuing studies on fishing, boating, and future land acquisition. In addition to these funds, Union Water Power has planned to spend \$7,000 dollars annually over the term of the license for additional fisheries studies and monitoring.

This settlement agreement completely eliminates the lower boating flows on the Rapid River on scheduled release days. Instead, it will provide higher flows which vary between 1,300 cfs and 1,800 cfs. It also adds two days, one in July and one in August, that will allow boating for three straight days as part of extended weekend releases. When added to the release schedule of the Megalloway River, there is now boating every weekend in this region from the last weekend in June through the first weekend in September.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT:

>WHITE WATER BOATING: 22 days of scheduled whitewater boating, every weekend from the last weekend in June through the first weekend in September, at varying flows between 900 cfs and 1,800 cfs.

>FLOW-PHONE: For release information on nonscheduled boating flows from May 1<sup>st</sup> until September 30<sup>th</sup> each year. (There will be many more days of boating available through this notification system).

>LAND PROTECTION: Permanent conservation easements will be donated on portions of UWP lands including two small islands above Upper Dam, a 250-foot easement on both sides of the Rapid River below Middle Dam and a 10-rodstrip (167 feet) on the rest of the Rapid River extending to Lake Umbagog which abuts a 500-foot easement recently acquired by the Maine DIFW, totaling 350 acres and 5.9 miles of shoreline protection.

>PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT FUND: Including \$600,000 dollars to Rangely Lakes Heritage Trust for ongoing stewardship activities, \$750,000 dollars for acquisition of additional shorelands or conservation easements, and \$150,000 dollars for future protection or enhancement measures for water quality, fish & wildlife habitat, and wetlands.

>RECREATIONAL FACILITIES: While preserving the back country character of the area, UWP will provide canoe portage trails, picnic areas, handicap access to existing boat launches, and improvements to launch sites.

>STUDIES: UWP will contribute \$100,000 dollars to complete future studies related to boating, fisheries, and future recreational needs, and will spend an average of \$7,000 dollars annually for the term of the license for additional fisheries studies and monitoring.

>FISHERIES: New minimum flows for habitat enhancement and for riverine habitat below dams

>LAKE LEVEL MANAGEMENT: Measures to minimize impacts to reservoir levels to enhance fall fish spawning in lake tributaries, summer recreation, and loon nesting.

#### SIGNATORIES TO THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Union Water Power Company American Rivers	New England FLOW H. Dept. of Environmental Services
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Angus King (left) Governor of Maine, congratulates Tom Christopher for AW's role in the Settlement Agreement.

American Whitewater	Rangely Lakes Heritage Trust
Appalachian Mountain Club	Saco Bound / Downeast Whitewater
Conservation Law Foundation	Trout Unlimited
Maine Dept. of Conservation	Town of Berlin, NH.
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	Town of Gorham, NH.
Maine State Planning Office	U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Mooselookmeguntic Improvement Association	National Park Service

In order to fully comprehend the significance of this settlement agreement to the boating community, it must be recognized that the upper Androscoggin headwaters have been managed specifically and without any change for more than 100 years for the benefit of the downstream industries involved in paper making or other forms of manufacturing. Further, it has been designated as a "world-class" fishery during this same period for large brook trout and landlocked salmon, even though other important species like the giant blue-backed trout have been lost because of dam building. It was very difficult for the boating community to gain any standing in these proceedings, and over the course of four years and two separate whitewater suitability studies, American Whitewater carved out a tenable position which was acceptable to other user groups.

The size of this watershed encompasses thousands of square miles, and given the number of boating releases obtained coupled with the remote character of the region, places the importance of this victory on a scale that exceeds the value of the Deerfield Settlement Agreement that was signed just five years ago. More important still is the ability of American Whitewater to firmly establish an important and meaningful presence in environmental proceedings with state and federal agencies. Boating victories of this magnitude and that of the Deerfield River continue to establish our authority in river recreation issues throughout the United States and further confirm our expertise and skill in developing resource management plans built on the principles of "balanced use."

It is to the credit of American Whitewater that, for the first time, we will hold an important seat on a committee that will decide which recreational opportunities will be available on these valuable resources over the next 50 years. With this achievement goes the important responsibility for continued protection and balanced-use as our own sport grows and the coming generations of younger boaters will seek to enjoy the outstanding and remarkable beauty of the Rapid and Megalloway Rivers. Godspeed to those who will follow in our footsteps in the future, for it is up to them to protect what we have now achieved.

# Events.....Central.....



By Jayne H. Abbot

## GAULEY FESTIVAL

Wow, what a festival! Another year of warm dry weather brought out over 4,000 paddlers to American Whitewater's largest river celebration of the year. The camping area was overflowing with tents as those eager to indulge in all festival activities packed into the site. An astounding 100 booths filled the marketplace to the brim, some last minute vendors even had to be turned away. The center ring, generally a vast oasis of space, was looking crowded as three vendors, Perception, Teva and Lotus, set up their billboard RV's, sound system and couch city inside the Marketplace circle. Hot tunes provided by Fox Trot Zulu included some incredible drumming. A most welcome and interesting addition to the festival was Eskimo's kayak simulator, something to be experienced to be believed. Incredible numbers of volunteers turned out to help create one of the smoothest running events ever. What an incredible party! If you couldn't make it this year, be sure to make your plans to be there next year! Mark your calendars with this important date: GAULEY FESTIVAL - SEPTEMBER 16, 2000.



# NOWR NEWS

Best of luck to our US Freestyle Team as they go for the gold in New Zealand on December 1-5!

## NEW CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM ANNOUNCED

During the summer of 1999, the Events Office was lucky enough to have an intern, Walker Daves, to do some research into other competitive sports such as mountain biking, snowboarding, skiing, gymnastics and skating. His research focused on such things as judging, classification and ranking systems, membership and sponsorship. This research has helped in developing an exciting new standardized NOWR classification system designed to provide freestyle competitors with a visible "progression," i.e., a defined means of moving through the ranks. The system will also help to create a foundation of amateur/local events and competitors, and a more defined "Pro" class.

The following are specifics on the new system. Questions and registration materials can be ordered from the Events Office by calling 828-645-5299 or email at jhabbot@aol.com.

### Class.

First, paddlers are classified based on their age as of December 31 of the current year:

Class	Paddler Age
Junior	18 and under
Senior	19 - 39
Masters	40 and up

### Category.

Secondly, each paddler is categorized according to ability and rodeo paddling proficiency:

Category	Definition
Beginner	Casual, local competitor, first timer
Sport	Intermediate regional competitor
Expert	Advanced national/regional competitor
Pro*	Highest national/international competitor (only available to Senior age category)*

*"Competitors in the Junior and Masters age categories may apply to participate in the Senior Pro class out of the Expert class in their respective age categories."*

If a junior turns 19 or a senior turns 40 after the first of the year, they can elect to remain in their respective age category for that year or move up to the next age category. However, once the election is made, it cannot be changed until the following year.

### Class Definitions:

Competitors can initially choose their own level. A competitor could choose to begin in Sport or Expert. To progress to the next level, a competitor must meet the requirements of that category. Competitors must complete an application form and be accepted by the review committee to be allowed into the Pro class.

### Beginner

This category is designed for the entry level paddler. The Beginner level helps the paddler get familiar with paddling in competition. Judging is composed of technical and style only. After placing in the top five in three events over a 1-year period, a Beginner paddler must advance to the Sport category. A beginner may also *choose* to advance after

placing in the top three in five events over a 3-year period.

### Sport

This category reflects improved skills and developed strength and stamina. The Sport class should make up the bulk of participants at events. Judging is composed of technical and style only. After placing in the top five in three events over a 1-year period, a Sport paddler must advance to the Expert category. A Sport may also *choose* to advance after placing in the top three in five events over a 3-year period.

### Expert

At this level, rodeo skills, strength and stamina have reached an exceptional level; competition is fierce. Judging is composed

of technical, style and variety multipliers (at the organizers' discretion). Any Expert paddler placing in the top five at three events in a three-year period, may apply to be upgraded to Pro.

### Pro

At this level, skills, strength and stamina have reached a world class level. To paddle at this level, competitors must complete and submit an application to NOWR and a separate \$15.00 pro class registration fee. The application will be reviewed by an "upgrading committee." Judging is composed of technical, style and variety multipliers.

### Boat Type/Discipline:

There are 3 boat types/disciplines within the categories: K-1, C-1 and OC-1. NOWR allows only one level difference between disciplines. For example, a sport paddler in K-1 can only go as high as an Expert in C-1, or a Beginner in OC-1 can only go as high as Sport in C-1.

## NOWR Membership Registration:

### Beginner, Sport and Expert

For 2000, the registration program will be voluntary. In 2001 and beyond, all competitors must be registered with NOWR to compete in an NOWR sanctioned event. The cost is \$25.00 and includes a membership with American Whitewater.

### Pro

All Pro paddlers MUST be registered with NOWR in 2000 to compete at the Pro level at any NOWR event. To facilitate the inception of this process in 2000, all competitors who were eligible to compete in the 1999 team trials qualify as Pro paddlers on the 2000 schedule. However, they still must register with NOWR to compete as a Pro at NOWR events. Other competitors may be allowed into this class at NOWR's discretion during this first year. All organizers will receive a list of registered Pro competitors prior to their event. Paddlers registered with NOWR will be issued an "NOWR Freestyle Kayaking License" (not necessarily a card) with a License Number that must be available at registration. The license number will be available also on the list provided to organizers.

Events may choose to offer the following categories of classes at their events:

- 1 Beginner and Sport levels only
- 2 Beginner, Sport and Expert only
- 3 Beginner, Sport, Expert and Pro\*
- 4 Pro only\*

*Events offering Pro classes must be approved by the US Freestyle Kayak Committee (USFKC)*

# Winners of NOWR 1999 Point Series Championship (PSC) and North American Cup (NAC)

The Point Series Championship (PSC) consisted of 10 events across the country where athletes gained points with their five highest event points counting towards their ranking. The North American Cup (NAC) consisted of three premier events, Ocoee Rodeo, Animas River Days and Wausau Rodeo where the competitors' highest placement at the Ocoee or Animas counted with Wausau being a mandatory event. Congratulations to all the winners of NOWR's 1999 championships!



Allen Braswell, age 26 - 1st place C-1 NAC and 1st place C-1 PSC



Jimmy Blakenev, age 27 - 3rd place NAC  
Jimmy began kayaking in 1995 while at-

tending Virginia Tech. 1998 was his first year touring the rodeo circuit and kayaking full-time, during which Jimmy won the prestigious Ocoee Rodeo and ranked 3rd in the overall NOWR Point Series. This year he won the Potomac, Yampa and Boulder freestyle events, along with numerous other top three finishes. When not on the river, Jimmy also works hard as the chairman of the US Freestyle Kayak Committee (USFKC) to promote, develop and enhance the sport of freestyle kayaking. Jimmy would like to thank his family, friends and sponsors, WaveSport, AT Paddles/Revealed Water Products, Orosi, 5.10, and Immersion Research for their support.

Allen lives in Murphy, NC and has been paddling since he was 8 years old. At the age of 16 he was raft guiding, and eventually got into slalom racing, where he learned the basics. He competed in slalom for 4 years and then moved onto rodeo freestyle. In 1999 Allen has 8 impressive 1st place wins at Kern, Maupin, Bob's Hole, Ocoee, Potomac, FiBark, Animas and Ottawa, and is a member of the US Freestyle Kayak Team. His goals for this season are to support his lifestyle and give the most support to his son. Allen's sponsors include Perception, Patagonia, Teva, Smith, Paddler Magazine, Outdoor Life Network and Mountain Surf.

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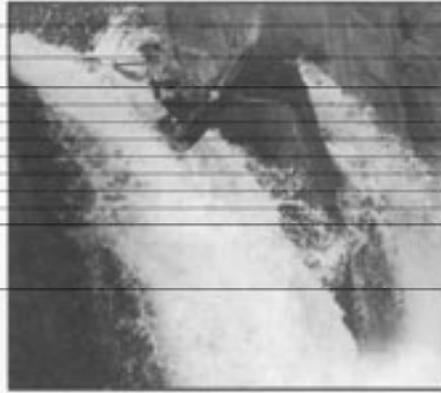
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Photo: NPPF 1998 Best Paddling Image Winner by Julie Keller



**Brad Bullock, age 18 - 2nd place Juniors K-1 NAC**  
 Brad began kayaking at the age of 15. After his first lesson, he was "hooked!" Since then he has been working summers teaching kayaking and traveling to rivers and creeks in Georgia, West Virginia, Colorado, Oregon, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Brad likes creeking, but his passion is play boating. He has just recently begun to compete seriously in freestyle and would like to compete more, work and school permitting. Brad lives in Kennesaw, GA, is a senior at Harrison High School, and is not currently sponsored.

Animas, Potomac, New, Coosa, and Ocoee River Rodeos. He is a member of the US Freestyle Kayak Team in C-1. His present goals are to win the C-1 Worlds competition and to make the team next year in K-1. His favorite river is the White Salmon in Washington State, and his sponsors are Wave Sport, Immersion Research, Extra Sport, Ruff Stuff, Orosi and 5.10.



**Eric Jackson, age 35 - 1st place Men's K-1 PSC, 2nd place Men's K-1 NAC and 3rd place C-1 NAC**  
 Eric, or EJ as he is known in paddling circles, is a well-established character in both slalom and freestyle kayaking. As a member of the US Canoe and Kayak Team since 1989, Eric divides his time training, traveling and competing in both disciplines. His goal is to compete in slalom at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and win the World Rodeo Championship. EJ is the only member of the US Freestyle Team to compete in more than one class, K-1 and C-1, this December at the 1999 World Freestyle Championship in New Zealand. EJ is sponsored by Wave Sport, Werner, Orosi, Lotus Designs, Swiss Army and Wilderness Tours of Canada.



well known for his numerous extreme descents of rivers around the world. He has paddle extensively in 11 countries and has plans for more remote first descents. Brandon is a photographer in his spare time and also promotes his sponsors: Dagger, Oakley, Mountain Surf, and AT Paddles.



**Macy Burnham, age 19 - 3rd place Men's K-1**  
 Macy currently lives in Eugene, OR. In the winter he is a part-time student at Lane Community College and describes himself as a "full-time paddle bum." He has been paddling for 5 years and has been competing on the pro circuit for the past two. This year he traveled on the circuit with Perception's Clean-It-Up Tour, while also instructing kayak clinics. Macy's favorite river is Lake Creek in Oregon, and his sponsors include Perception, Bomber Gear and Lightning.



**Brandon Knapp, age 23 - 2nd place PSC**  
 Brandon, a resident of Jacksonville, Oregon, has competed on the pro circuit for the past five years. This year he attended 23 events and highlights include 1st place at the Kern for the third year, 5th place in the NAC and a spot on the US Freestyle Team, for the second time in his career. Brandon is also



**Brad Ludden, age 18 - 1st place Juniors K-1 PSC**  
 "FUN!FUN!FUN! It is all about fun, life that is." Brad views his life as a never ending quest for fun. He loves to hike, bike, ski, and most of all kayak. Brad has been kayaking for 9 years and sees it as a tool to experience more of the world, meet more people and have more fun. He has been a member of the US Freestyle Team twice and is currently traveling around the world before attending college. Despite all his travels, Brad still enjoys heading home to Montana and paddling at the Lochsa for the weekend with his family. He is thankful for his sister, Courtney, mother, Jinny, and dad, Chuck for they have taught him the meaning of Fun. Brad is sponsored by Riot, 5.10 and Ropegun.

**Luke Hopkins, age 21 - 2nd place C-1 PSC and 3rd place C-1 NAC**  
 Luke lives in Blacksburg, VA and is a student at Virginia Tech. He has paddled across the US with a high concentration in West Virginia, Canada, and Mexico. Over the last two years, Luke has accumulated a long list of finishes in the top three places at the

**Chris Manderson, age 31 - 3rd place C-1 PSC**  
 Chris lives in Asheville, NC, along with Jake The Dog, a Blue Heeler mix, who was voted "most likely to bite" on the rodeo tour (Jake, that is). Chris has an MBA from Western Carolina University, and conservatively describes this year as "a good season" with four 1st place finishes at the New, Coosa, FiBark and Wausau. Along with winning the top spot at West Coast Team trial which secured him a C-1 position on the 1999 US Freestyle Kayak Team in New Zealand. Chris



would like to thank his sponsors, Perception, Watershed, Mitchell Paddles, and Shred Ready Helmets.



Kyle McCutchen, age 17 - 3rd place Junior K-1 PSC  
 Kyle started paddling sea kayaks at the age of 11. Since then, Kyle has been competing in rodeos for the past 3 years. He lives with his family in Grand Junction, CO, where he paddled 80 days this season including treks to Westwater Canyon once a week through the winter months. This year Kyle traveled to the Oregon Cup series, which is the farthest he's ever been from Colorado. Kyle enjoys kayaking because of the people he meets, the adventures he has, and "the rush." Kyle would like to thank his parents, his favorite paddling partners and Riot for believing in him.



Patrick Metheny, age 18 - 3rd place Juniors K-1 NAC  
 "When I bought my first boat, I never knew what a huge part of my life kayaking would become." Patrick began kayaking with his father 4 years ago to escape a house full of Girl Scouts once a week, ever since then he's been hooked. Patrick lives in Roanoke, VA and currently works for Back Country Ski and Sports, though he admits kayaking competitively would be his ideal job and a goal he is working towards. 1999 is Patrick's last year to compete as a junior, and he is looking

forward to moving into the men's pro class. Currently Patrick is not sponsored, but he's working on it.

Aleta Miller, age 19 - 3rd place Women's K-1 PSA  
 Aleta is originally from Benton, TN and the Ocoee is her home river. She has competed in two slalom Junior World Championships, in the Czech Republic (1996) and Austria (1998). She is currently ranked 7th in the world in Junior Whitewater Slalom and 8th in the country in Senior Whitewater Slalom. Aleta has won seven national whitewater rodeos in the past 3 years and is a member of the 1999 US Surf Kayak Team, as well as the US Freestyle Team. Her sponsors include: Wave Sport, THULE, Snapdragon, Lotus Designs, and Orosi.



Erica Mitchell, age 22 - 2nd place Women's K-1 NCA and 2nd place Women's K-1 PSA  
 Erica is originally from Cincinnati, OH, and started paddling with her dad when she was twelve. Since then she has distinguished herself as one of the nations most talented freestyle and river running kayakers. This year she won 1st place at the Potomac Rodeo and Great Falls Race, and 1st place at Wausau with a ride that would have put her in with the top three men. Erica is a member of the 1999 US Freestyle Team traveling to New Zealand this December. When not paddling Erica attends school at the University of Utah and Mesa State College working towards a degree in psychology. Erica would like to thank her parents, friends and sponsors, Wave Sport, Orosi, 5.10, and AT Paddles for their support.



Deb Ruehle, age 31 - 1st place Women's K-1 NAC and 3rd place Women's K-1 PSC  
 Deb is originally from Detroit, MI and attended college at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where she began kayaking.



She continued her graduate education in physical therapy at Emory in Atlanta, where she became a regular on the Ocoee. Deb made the US Freestyle Team in 1997 and again this year. She says, "I never expected to paddle so well this year in competition, but I guess when you don't put too much pressure on yourself things just happen." Her goal is to place in the top five at the worlds; she is sponsored by Pyranha, AT Paddles, Bomber Gear and Orosi.



Andre Spino-Smith, age 16 - 1st place Juniors K-1 NAC and 2nd place Juniors K-1 PSC  
 Andre started paddling at the age of 11. He is from Floyd, VA, a small town in the Blue Ridge Mountains. This was Andre's first year on the Rodeo circuit. In addition to winning the North American Cup, he has qualified for the US Junior Freestyle Team and will be competing at the World Championships in New Zealand in December. Andre's goals are to win the Worlds this year and to be a top senior competitor his first year competing in the men's class. Andre would like to thank his sponsors: Riot, Stohlquist, Whitewater Destinations, Orosi, and Surf the Earth.



Brad Sutton, age 22 - 1st place NAC

Brad has been paddling since he was 11 and competing in world rodeos at the age of 16. He is a member of the 1999 Canadian Freestyle Kayak Team and is looking forward to spot on the podium in New Zealand as he competes in his fourth World Championship. Brad is sponsored by Dagger, Immersion Research, Snap Dragon, Werner, Orosi, Lotus Designs, and Robinson's.



Brooke Winger, age 22 - 1st place Women's K-1 PSC

Brooke has been paddling since the age of 13 and finds her roots in slalom racing, where she competed as a junior on the national level. She is a member of the 1999 US Freestyle Team and hopes to place in the top three this year in New Zealand. After the Worlds, she plans to complete her education at California State University. Brooke's other interests include riding show horses, skiing, climbing, running, and anything that puts her outdoors. Her sponsors are Wave Sport, California Canoe and Kayak, Lightning Paddles, Manastash, Grateful Heads, and Aloe Up.

# NOWR Results

## For full results see our web site at

[www.nowr.org](http://www.nowr.org)

### Wausau Whitewater Rodeo - August 28-29

Class: Pro/Elite

#### Men's K-1

- 1 Brad Sutton
- 2 Eric Jackson
- 3 BJ Johnson
- 4 Brendan Mark
- 5 Dave Persolja
- 6 Charlie Beavers
- 7 Billy Craig
- 8 Jimmy Blakeney
- 9 Jayson Bowerman
- 10 Keith Liles
- 11 Dan Gavere
- 12 David Garringer

#### Women's K-1

- 1 Erica Mitchell
- 2 Deb Ruehle
- 3 Kelly Murphy
- 4 Brooke Winger
- 5 Tanya Shuman
- 6 Jamie Simon
- 7 Harriet Taylor
- 8 Aleta Miller
- 9 Katie Johnson
- 10 Christie Dobson
- 11 Tracy Hillstrom

#### Junior K-1

- 1 Andre Spino-Smith
- 2 Sean Brabant
- 3 Andy Zerger
- 4 Kellen Betsch
- 5 Billy Davison
- 6 Luke Cotton

#### C-1

- 1 Chris Manderson
- 2 Allen Manderson
- 3 Joe Langman
- 4 Brian Miller
- 5 Eli Helbert
- 6 Craig Reidner
- 7 Fygsen Teal
- 8 Jack Landry

#### OC-1

- 1 Eli Helbert
- 2 Joe Langman
- 3 Teal Fygsen
- 4 Brian Miller
- 5 Bobby Jackson
- 6 Roy Crimmins
- 7 Jack Landry
- 8 Jayson Bowerman

### Ottawa River Rodeo - September 4-6

Class: Pro/Elite

#### Men's K-1

- 1 Tyler Curis
- 2 Eric Jackson
- 3 Ken Whiting
- 4 Eric Southwick
- 5 BJ Johnson
- 6 Charlie Beavers
- 7 Darrell Weib
- 8 Kevin Verette
- 9 Dustin Knapp
- 10 Brad Ludden
- 11 Jayson Bowerman
- 12 Javid Grubbs

#### Women's K-1

- 1 Shannon Carroll
- 2 Deb Ruehle
- 3 Simone
- 4 Brooke Winger
- 5 Tanya Shuman
- 6 Aleta Miller
- 7 Julie Dion
- 8 Moto
- 9 Kelly Murphy
- 10 Whitney Lonsdale
- 11 Ruth Gordon

#### Juniors K-1

- 1 Brad Ludden
- 2 Hal Monkman
- 3 Sean Brabant
- 4 Andre Spino-Smith
- 5 Scott Mann
- 6 Patrick Camblia
- 7 Nathan McDade
- 8 David Tiedje
- 9 Shane Groves
- 10 Jesse Murphy
- 11 Pat Keller
- 12 Andy Zerger

#### C-1

- 1 Allen Braswell
- 2 Brian Miller
- 3 Chris McDermott
- 4 Danny Kortze

#### OC-1

- 1 Joe Langman
- 2 Tom Fredricks
- 3 Mark Scriver
- 4 GeeGee
- 5 Brian Miller
- 6 Eli Helbert

## 1999 NOWR Point Series Results

### Men

1	Eric Jackson	300.8
2	Brandon Knapp	282.3
3	Macy Burnham	274.3
4	Brad Sutton	273.5
5	Dan Gavere	271.5
6	Jimmy Blakeney	270.3
7	Eric Southwick	225.9
8	Jayson Bowerman	221.0
9	Dustin Knapp	220.8
10	Andy Bedingfield	216.0
11	Kale Frieze	205.5
12	David Persolja	180.3
13	Shane Benedict	178.0
14	Keith Liles	173.0
15	Billy Craig	164.5
16	Luke Hopkins	143.0
17	Jay Kincaid	137.0
18	Raymond Cotton	131.1
19	Richard Oldenquist	113.1
20	Ben Coleman	111.0
21	Sam Drevo	111.5
22	Ron Turner	105.5
23	Craig Heflin	91.0
24	Bryan Kirk	70.0
25	John Grossman	69.0
26	Chip Hogan	57.0
27	Rusty Sage	54.0
28	Keith Yell	43.0
29	Tom Fredericks	29.0
30	Tommy Hilleke	7.0
31	Gil Rocha	6.0

### Woman

1.	Brooke Winger	86.8
2.	Erica Mitchell	82.9
3.	Deh Ruehle	78.4

4.	Jamie Simon	69.8
5.	Aleta Miller	69.2
6.	Kelly Murphy	50.1
7.	Polly Green	41.9
8.	Tanya Shuman	39.8
9.	Kimberly Jordan	34.8
10.	Karen Mann	34.2
11.	Shannon Lee Carroll	32.1
12.	Whitney Lonsdale	30.0
13.	Julie Dion	27.5
14.	Amy Wiley	23.9
15.	Harriet Taylor	23.4
16.	Erin Miller	23.2
17.	Sara Kraushaar	5.0
18.	C. Bradley Richmond	2.0
19.	Jessie Stone	2.0

### C-1

1.	Allen Braswell	54.2
2.	Luke Hopkins	44.5
3.	Chris Manderson	38.5
4.	Eric Jackson	30.2
5.	Ellis Smith	18.3
6.	Shane Benedict	5.5
7.	Norwood Scott	4.6

### Juniors

1.	Brad Ludden	111.0
2.	Andre Spino-Smith	84.4
3.	Kyle McCutchen	53.6
4.	Andrew Holcome	46.0
5.	Patrick Methany	36.6
6.	Derek Beitler	31.8
7.	Brad Bullock	21.1
8.	Sam Perry	14.0
9.	Jack Schurman	2.0

## 1999 North American Cup Results

### Men

1.	Brad Sutton	135.0
2.	Eric Jackson	124.0
3.	Jimmy Blakeney	103.6
4.	David Persolja	95.7
5.	Brandon Knapp	89.3
6.	Kale Frieze	88.5
7.	Dan Gavere	73.0
8.	Richard Oldenquist	70.2
9.	Billy Craig	70.0
10.	Jayson Bowerman	68.0
11.	Keith Liles	65.0
12.	Raymond Cotton	63.1
13.	Eric Southwick	62.0
14.	Macy Burnham	60.9
15.	Andy Bedingfield	59.0
16.	Dustin Knapp	57.0
17.	Ben Coleman	54.0
18.	Luke Hopkins	48.0
19.	Sam Drevo	46.0
19.	John Grossman	46.0
21.	Craig Heflin	41.0

### Women

1.	Deb Ruehle	38.4
2.	Erica Mitchell	37.9
3.	Aleta Miller	28.0

4.	Brooke Winger	27.7
5.	Kelly Murphy	25.9
6.	Jamie Simon	24.8
7.	Tanya Shuman	18.1
8.	Julie Dion	12.5
9.	Karen Mann	11.0
9.	Harriet Taylor	11.0
11.	Kimberly Jordan	8.0
12.	Polly Green	6.0
12.	Amy Wiley	6.0
14.	C. Bradley Richmond	2.0
14.	Jessie Stone	2.0

### C-1

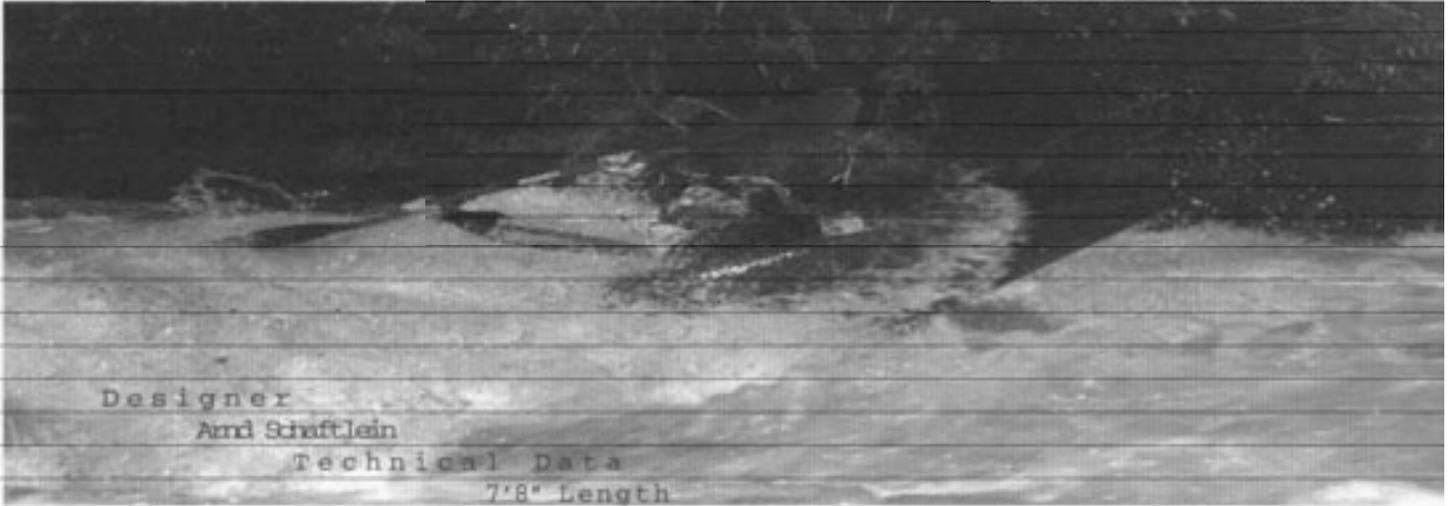
1.	Allen Braswell	31.2
2.	Eric Jackson	18.6
3.	Luke Hopkins	16.2
4.	Chris Manderson	15.0
5.	Ellis Smith	11.4

### Junior

1.	Andre Spino-Smith	31.8
2.	Brad Bullock	20.1
3.	Patrick Metheny	11.4
4.	Kyle McCutchen	9.0

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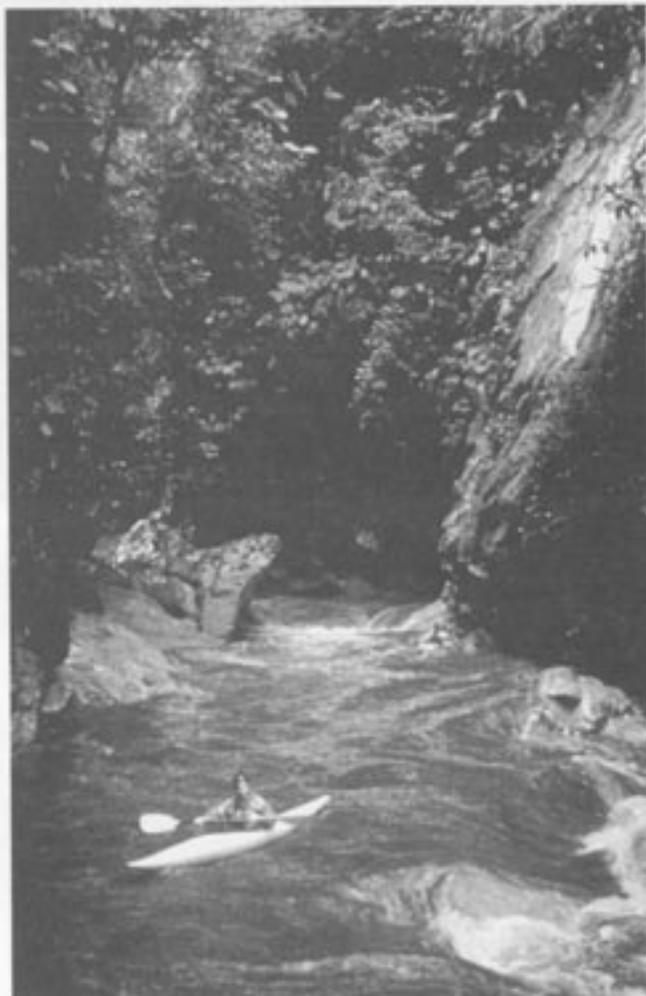
*A "typical" Encanto rapid.*



*Genner Coronel going airborne.*



*Genner Coronel in the trenches.*



*In foreground, Dan Dixon rounds the first impasse.*



*Dan Dixon early in the run.*

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# A First Descent in Ecuador

---

## THE TERMS OF ENCHANTMENT

BY MATT TERRY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT TERRY

As I bobbed in the eddy beneath the smooth surface of the basalt wall, drops of water sprinkled down from high above. This dripping marked the time for me while others in our group did the dirty work of pushing downriver. We were stopped at yet another crux in the run. The water tumbled through this box canyon and then made an abrupt turn to the right. Anything could be around the corner. From my position, I had only been able to catch glimpses of what was transpiring below.

I had last seen Dan Dixon scaling the rock wall on river right and by climbing vines until he disappeared barefoot with a machete into the jungle canopy above. Periodically, pieces of foliage would drop and a rustling of the undergrowth could be observed. Later, Dan reappeared, looking not unlike the jungle himself. There were reasons why he was known as Greystoke. He made his way down to the ledge where Genner Coronel was waiting with the calm, unflappable demeanor he had perfected on these epic exploratory trips in his homeland of Ecuador. Dan's raised, outstretched arms and shrugged shoulders were not the response any of us were hoping to glean from his heroic effort to get a peek around the corner.

At this point we were walled in. We had spread ourselves out through this section in the canyon to facilitate some means of escape, but a retreat from the Rio Encanto would not be easy. We had staggered our positions in the rapids so that we could help pull each other back up the drops, if necessary. This was the only way we could safely probe more deeply into the gorge. Tom Diegel was our last link to a break in the canyon upstream. He sat stoically in his boat with his arms crossed, perched on top of a rock. After I relayed the signal, Tom remained expressionless as the cool water misted around him from the rapid above. Only the occasional twitching of his thick eyebrows gave any sign of life. Duncan Eccleston was out of his boat, standing on a rock not far below me. He began to shift nervously on his wiry legs and caressed his sunbleached goatee.

The only way to get a glimpse of what lay around the corner was to be on river left.

Three large boulders clung to the base of that wall. They added much-needed texture to an increasingly overhung cliff face. Getting there was a problem. The current ran fast along the wall, banked off the boulders, and then fed directly over a series of drops—before charging around the blind right-hand turn. Duncan was summoned downstream to join the effort. He rallied with a big cry of enthusiasm, got in his boat, and paddled down to join them on the river right shelf.

Movement of any kind was a welcomed relief. But if this group of three could not push through this crux, each of us knew that we could go no further downstream. Our only other option was a grueling hike out through dense mountain jungle. Out on the rock ledge, the trio of paddlers stood together and began to formulate a plan.

I let the current spin me in the eddy one more time. A hummingbird zoomed around my head and hovered at eye-level. I gazed up at the giant tree ferns and the lush jungle vegetation clinging to the walls above me. The sun broke through the cloud cover and the water streaming down the canyon walls shimmered and sparkled in the light. My eyes closed. I thought back to my first glimpse of the river, the last three attempts to do this run, and everything that had turned us back along the way...

### An Elusive Coal

Genner and I first spotted the Rio Encanto while looking at a map of the Pastaza watershed in December of 1997. The name of the river first caught my eye. We could only imagine why it was called the River of Enchantment. The Encanto drained an isolated area between two magnificent volcanoes known as El Altar and Tungurahua. The headwaters plummeted from the cordillera and then evened out to a steady gradient of 200 feet/mile, before joining the Rio Pastaza. All of this was tantalizing, but direct access to a put-in was lacking. A direct road ascended part of the way up an adjacent drainage. However, it would be necessary to cross over a significant divide to reach the Encanto. This run would take some planning.



TOP PHOTO: Dan Dixon trekking to the put-in;  
MIDDLE PHOTO LEFT TO RIGHT: Dan, Duncan, Tom,  
and Genner; BOTTOM PHOTO: Genner drop-testing  
on the Rio Encanto.



Ecuador is the smallest country in South America. It is about the size of Colorado, but is positioned in the tropics along the Earth's equatorial band. Peru borders along the south and east. Colombia lies to the north and the Pacific Ocean laps at the West Coast. What Ecuador lacks in size, it makes up for in diversity. Two Andean mountain chains run parallel through the country and divide the land into three zones; the western coast, the central Sierra, and the Amazon basin, otherwise known as the *Oriente*. The Rio Pastaza is a major watershed which drains the central Sierravalley. It cuts all the way through the eastern cordillera to the lowland jungles of the *Oriente*. The amount of awesome whitewater in this river alone is mind-boggling. However, since it drains a populated area with heavy pollution, the river has been off limits for health-conscious boaters.

We had chosen, instead, to focus on kayaking the side tributaries in the Rio Pastaza Canyon. Here development was at a minimum and the water seemed pristine. At the time, we were trying to identify some straightforward day trips on the runnable sections of these side creeks that could be easily accessed from either Baños or Puyo. These towns lie at the top and bottom of the Pastaza Canyon, respectively. Genner had already pioneered classic runs on the Rio Topo and the Rio Zuñac. Early in 1998, Genner and I, along with two Brits named Mark Potts and Andy Round, opened up sections of the Rio Verde and the Verde Chico, which were the remaining unexplored tributaries on the north side of the Pastaza Canyon.

About this time, we had taken a renewed interest in pursuing the Rio Encanto. We had seen the steep valley zig-zagging up into the mountains across the canyon from the road. The foliage was so dense that even the mouth of the river was obscured from view. No one had done any of the tributaries on the south side of the Pastaza Canyon. The road access was very limited, and the mountains were more abrupt. We knew finding access to a put-in would be difficult to the Rio Encanto, so we decided to start at the mouth of the river and work our way up.

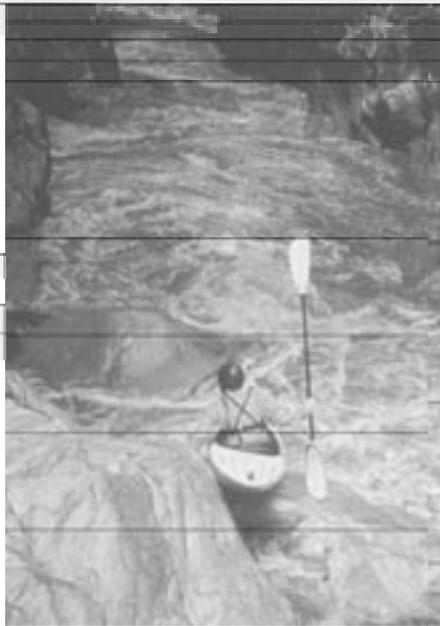
Getting to the mouth of the Encanto was an adventure in itself; it involved braving the turbid waters of the Rio Pastaza. Once our boats had crossed into the emer-

ald flow of the Encanto, we discovered a riverine paradise. After portaging our kayaks upstream for a few rapids, we decided to change tactics and hike, swim, and climb our way up the river. It was entrenched in a short, bedrock canyon that was broken up just enough to allow us to move along the sides as it twisted through its dense jungle-clad borders. The rapids were abrupt drops and short waterfalls into deep pools. We continued upstream until we were running out of daylight. Since we had probed the more substantial drops while swimming our way upstream, we took great pleasure in jumping off of them on the way back to our boats. We were like kids in a candy store. We could not wait to see what the rest of the river was like.

To find access to the put-in, we followed the dirt road that led up the adjacent drainage to its end. A steep and muddy trail continued from there. We consulted some local farmers about the trail system. We were told that the trail climbed the mountain and then branched. One of the trails supposedly met the Rio Encanto on the other side. Those who had seen the river spoke of large waterfalls, fast current, and lots of rocks. When they heard of our intentions to run the Rio Encanto in kayaks, we were met with tight lips and wide-eyed stares.

"No es navegable," they whispered, "Hay saltos y cascadas. Es peligroso. Muy corrientoso." This response was fairly common from the people we met in our pursuits. At times these warnings were well founded, but we had learned to trust our own instincts when it came to navigability. Our curiosity was sparked. Unfortunately, before we could explore the trail to the river, other responsibilities forced us to postpone our plans. But, the mystery of the Rio Encanto lingered in our dreams.

Almost a year passed before I had a chance to get back to the Encanto. I had managed to persuade Mark Potts and Andy Round to join me in an attempt to find a trail to the put-in. Our first surprise was that the crude roadbed had been extended by over two miles up to the top of the mountain ridge which separated us from the river. Already several clear cuts were visible. A makeshift sawmill had been constructed to cut the logs into boards and planks on site. Was this the future of all the primary rainforest left in the Amazon



Dan Dixon ready to launch.



Only one way out for Duncan Eccleston.

Basin? There was an interesting concurrence of events: the new road development to the ridgetop, timber harvesting of the old growth forest on top, and the construction of a foreign tourist lodge with wooden cabañas lower down on the road.

We explored the new timber clearings just below the ridgetop for signs of trails leading towards the river, but found only dead ends. Fortunately, the logging had not yet penetrated too deeply into the rugged terrain. All that could be seen of the river from afar was a thin, deep depression in the canopy of trees. Eventually we found a trail which seemed promising. It led downward just before the end of the road. Lengths of cordwood were tightly positioned next to one another in a highly-uniform manner. Mark Potts is a tall, lanky fellow who despises hiking rough terrain, and sometimes even walking in general; most often he is seen with a boat. He gasped when he saw the endless *Lincoln Log* trail that led out of sight as it twisted downward with the steep slope. This type of trail was ideal for mules. They are able to dig the sharp edges of their hooves into the narrow gaps between the logs, and gain purchase on what would otherwise be an unmanageable mudslide. But for two-legged creatures, such trails are torture. The logs were rarely dry, and usually covered with some kind of slime or rainforest funk that made each step a game of Russian roulette. The consequences of a spill were ugly with long runouts, shear drop-offs, and hard landings. The thorny trees and plants along the sides didn't help much, either.

We cautiously eased our way down the trail. Now and then, someone would cry out, followed by a heavy crumpling thud, as they landed hard on the logs. Finally, it leveled out into an open muddy trail which followed the contour of the land as it led up the drainage. Every so often it would disappear into gullies of mud. After over an hour of pursuing the trail, we still had not met the river. In fact, we thought we were only climbing further away from it. The river couldn't even be heard and the trail had become very overgrown. We were sure we had missed a fork that led down to the river. We decided to give up on this trail and turned back to try again another day.

We returned soon after and tried exploring down in a tiny streambed that we had crossed off of the main trail. This was promising at first. Then we came to a twenty-foot waterfall, followed by a larger drop, which

fell again, out of sight into a tight, sheer-sided, miniature gorge. Moving along the sides was not a viable option. We groaned and turned to head back to the trailhead. We searched for other trails leading down to the river and found nothing. By this time, Mark and Andy were disenchanted with the prospect of looking for the river, and took up a game of tin can cricket in the vacant roadway to pass the time.

I was pretty frustrated. We could see the outline of the river valley below us, but finding our way down to the water seemed next to impossible. Even if we cut a direct path through the dense jungle to the river, we would still have to negotiate the steep sides of the gorge. This would require technical climbing equipment which we did not have. Mark and Andy had already lost interest. I was beginning to wonder if it was all worth it. Just then, a weathered man emerged from the jungle with a long machete and a small dirty rucksack. Startled, I asked him where he came from, and he said that he had been far away on the other side of the river, where there were lagoons up on a high plateau. He drew a map in the dirt and told me of a key fork in the trail by a fallen tree.

With renewed enthusiasm, I took off alone to find the river. I flew down the trail and across the mud pits in my Chaco sandals. I passed where we had turned back before. Then I came to the key fork in the trail. Rounding a corner, the startled cries of a brilliant orange and black or Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, shattered the silence. I could hear the river below, still hidden in the depths of the jungle. Soon, the trail began to drop abruptly down steep slopes. Before I knew it, I was at the river. I had made it from the top in under an hour!

At first I just stared at the river. I was amazed I had actually found it. Here, the



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Encanto was an open streambed about 20 feet wide, surrounded by dense jungle. The river was at a very low flow. The sun-bleached rocks gleamed in stark contrast to the clear dark water that flowed around them. The gradient was very even and continuous. There were no big waterfalls or substantial rapids. Even so, it seemed to be dropping at about 100-150 feet/mile.

I couldn't wait to check the river out and set off splashing through the shallow downstream. The butterflies were the first thing that caught my attention. There were hundreds, if not thousands, of them on the exposed rocks. They had glossy black bodies and flaming red, metallic blue, vibrant yellow and orange wings. They were so intent on sucking up the nutrients deposited on the rocks that they didn't seem to notice me. They swarmed around me freely. This place was truly enchanted.

I continued downstream until I was satisfied I had a feel for this upper section of the Encanto. The rapids I scouted below the put-in were steep and technical boulder gardens. I had not reached the point where the river dropped into the bedrock canyon, but was comfortable with the character it had at either end. The gradients on the topo maps seemed to correlate reasonably with the river features. It looked like there was a way to portage what I had seen so far, although it might take a lot of effort. We were now to a point where we could either complete a full scout of this run by canyoneering it by foot with ropes and harnesses, or just bring boats along as well. I was ready to paddle the Encanto. I just hoped we wouldn't be turned back and have to hike out with all our gear. I cruised back to the top of the trailhead, where Mark and Andy were still enthralled with the mindless activity of beating on a tin can with a stick. Confounded Brits! I had finally met with success in securing the access on the Rio Encanto. This was a big step forward. Now, all we had left to do was connect the points.

Then the waiting began. Genner and I had made a pact that we would complete this run together. Due to various commitments, it took awhile before we could assemble our first descent team. Several attempts were scheduled. But each time a group gathered, something turned us back. We were starting to wonder if "something" was warning us away from the Encanto. Maybe there were reasons why we should leave the Rio Encanto alone? But we were lured back to the river by its captivating nature. Each time we were denied, we were given another glimpse of breathtaking beauty. In the end, the Brits had to return to England, and the other boaters who had tried to join us lost hope. Genner and I left our boats hidden in the

jungle by the river as a token of our commitment to the run.

It was important to have a solid group of paddlers to run the Encanto. Three weeks passed before a new first descent team came together. In that time, I met a couple of witty guys named Tom Diegel and Duncan Eccleston. We traveled to the southern part of the country to explore boating opportunities near the historic town of Cuenca while heavy rains pounded the *Oriente*. After opening up a prime new section of the Rio Tomebamba flowing from Las Cajas Natl. Park, I knew that I had found the right paddlers to make our team complete.

We made our way to the town of Puyo. Paddling the nearby rivers and creeks gave us a chance to get a feel for the water levels and local weather patterns. The wet season came early this year in the Amazon Basin. We seemed to be stuck under a big rain cloud. In most rain-fed drainages you have to worry about having enough water. Here, we were waiting for it to stop raining so the rivers would come down.

It was Carnival time in Ecuador. People were pouring into the provincial capital. This was the time when the conservative population could cut loose and get their ya-ya's out. Schools and businesses closed, roads were barricaded, and bands played in the streets. Politicians rallied for support between sets and batches of the sweet and potent Ecuadorian moonshine, called *aguardiente*, flowed freely. Police wagons were on patrol to enforce the recent legislation banning the tradition of "Carnavalizing" friends and neighbors, as well as random passers-by. These hapless victims would be sacked with a barrage of water balloons or buckets of water. Once soaked, they would be coated with dust, confetti, or flour. Supposedly it was a therapeutic way of dealing with social stress and tension. In reality, it was a prankster's dream come true.

During this excitement, a window in the rain appeared. The colossal peak of El Altar emerged from its blanket of cloud cover for the first time in weeks. The stars were realigned just right and a dynamic group of paddlers were coming together. A pickup truck was hired to meet us the next morning and take us to the trailhead. We gathered food and gear together once again. Genner and Dan would arrive during the night.

It seemed like the music had just stopped playing when we awoke. Genner had rolled in

late in the evening, but Dan Dixon was nowhere to be seen. We were loading up the pickup when he arrived. Dan had been up all night salsa-dancing in the nearby city of Tena. It was still dark as we left town and headed toward the mountains. We had to weave around the drunks in the streets. The ones that were still moving did their best to slow us down by stumbling in front of our vehicle with bewildered gazes.

The road was wet, but we attributed the moisture to the dense fog that hung in the valleys. As we headed up the Pastaza canyon, we slogged down yogurt, and munched on bread and hard-boiled eggs. When we crossed the Rio Topo and the Rio Zuñac, both rivers seemed to have optimal levels. We turned off of the main road, crossed the Rio Pastaza, and followed the narrow dirt road to the top of the mountain ridge overlooking the Encanto drainage.

Twice our journey was nearly thwarted. A landslide almost cut off the roadway completely. Then our vehicle could not make it up a muddy slope. Our driver was hesitant to continue. We still had almost two miles and 800 vertical feet to reach the trailhead and we could not afford to waste our time and energy

climbing this mountain with our gear. We hoped to finish this run in one day. Dan and Genner climbed up on the side rails right over the balding rear wheels and jumped up and down, while the rest of us pushed the truck up the hill. We convinced the driver to get a full-torquing head start. In a raging fit of high-rewing pistons, spinning tires, and bugging eyeballs, we managed to breach the muddy impasse and make it to the ridgetop.

The sky was opaque, but getting brighter as the sun rose. We left our gear in piles by the trailhead and walked to a viewpoint to look out over the Encanto valley. Low-lying clouds formed a white ribbon which filled the cleft between the deeply forested ridges. The roar of the river could barely be heard. By this time I knew the trail to the put-in quite well. Dan loaded his kayak onto his head and walked barefoot down the path. The two-hour trek with gear was actually an enjoyable way to start off the adventure into the unknown. We carried on at a leisurely pace, marveling at the scenery. A couple of new tree falls from the recent storms made for some interesting machete-driven detours.

We were pleased to find the Encanto at what appeared to be an optimal flow of 300-400 cfs. Genner and I reclaimed the boats we had left hidden in the jungle for three weeks



*Tom Diegel slides in from camp, day two.*

and washed them out liberally along the riverbank. Soon our team was ready to go. This was the first time we had all paddled together. Before we set out, we gathered together and reviewed signals, talked about the committing nature of the run, and decided under what conditions we would give up and abort the trip. We were starting at just under 5,000 feet in elevation. The river would drop 1,100 feet in roughly 5 miles to the confluence with the Pastaza. Overall, the gradient averaged 220 feet/mile. The steepest section dropped 385 feet/mile, and it only eased off to 160 feet/mile. We expected the crux of the run to come about half-way through in a dynamic S-turn gorge, which made a profound contour feature on the map. Here the river doubled back on itself twice while dropping over 200 feet/mile. In addition, a significant tributary joined on the outside of the first bend. We anticipated some big rapids and long portages in the S-turn section, which measured about a mile.

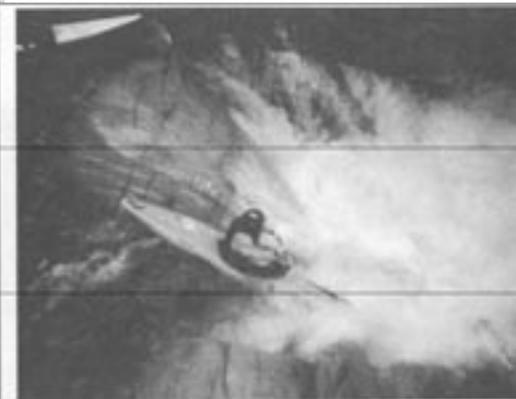
At first there were fast, shallow and con-

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*Genner Coronel riding the flume.*



"I should have worn nose plugs!"

tinuous rapids. Soon the riverbed became more chunky with rough boulders and rock outcrops forming tight chutes and short vertical drops with pools. An hour into the run we came to a section which became noticeably more steep. Most of us portaged 2 impressive rapids in succession. The first had a screaming 12-foot boof that landed right on a nasty elbow-crunching rock. Some misplaced trees made for a complicated entry into the second drop that squeezed between two tight boulders that could be mistaken for a sump at lower water. Dan was the only one to run the entire sequence. He looked smooth and deliberate, even while glancing off the unavoidable cruncher rock. We all regrouped at the bottom of the last drop for a bombs-away plunge over the final 10-foot marbled granite ledge.

We didn't know we were in the S-turn

gorge for certain until we saw the big tributary enter from the river right. A large, house-sized boulder marked the confluence. There was a virtual island of jungle growing on top of the huge rock. Some brilliant red flowers hung out over the water. I broached my boat across a small channel on an abrupt ledge at the base of this boulder to scout. I found that the small spout poured into a nasty sieve just wide enough to trap a boat. I directed the group to ski-jump the middle of the ledge for big air. Just below, at the confluence, the tributary added enough flow to double the volume. It appeared to be raining further up the valley. This branch of the river seemed to be of volcanic origin. The water was so dark it was almost black, with a strange, muddled texture of unstable depth. The grit of the sediment stung the eyes when it splashed. When it mixed in with the river, the water turned ashen gray.

We were on the alert, since we expected the crux to be in the section with the 90-degree bends. Instead, the rapids were mostly boat-scoutable, and the gorge only walled up on one side at a time. Before the last distinct bend in the S-turn section, we were surprised by the remnants of an old footbridge across the river. The wooden boards, along with most of the structure, had long since rotted away. Now it was defined as a jungle feature by a variety of parasitic plants, mosses, and bromeliads which clung to the hidden framework for support. It was like something out of a fairy-tale. Tom commented that he expected to see a troll pop out from somewhere along the side. There was no evidence of any trail leading away from the crossing.

Eventually we saw a nice place to eat lunch. Everyone had big smiles on their faces. Scarfing down the last of his tuna and cheese sandwich, Genner started to comment on the imminent completion of the river. Duncan cut him off in mid-sentence. "Don't say it, we'll be jinxed!" It had been a

great trip so far. We had come a substantial way and passed through the steepest sections, but we weren't done yet. While we nibbled the last of our Oreo cookies, I noted that we still had not come to where the river dropped into the bedrock canyon.

Soon, I found myself atop a large round boulder in the middle of the river with my mouth gaping. Smooth rock walls rose up along both sides below and ushered the water through a long corridor. At the end of the runout, the river made a sharp left turn and

disappeared from sight. The Encanto still had some hoops for us to jump through. The entire group assembled on top of the boulder and contemplated the next move. Just upstream there was a break in the canyon. Having a means of escape was reassuring. We were determined to run the river if there was any way possible. But, we were at the brink of a turbulent waterfall that dropped 30-feet in two quick tiers. The hole at the base was frothy and presumably clean, but a good part of the outflow went under the right-hand wall. There was a good line driving off the side of the boulder we were on. It landed in fast, unstable water, just in time to flush over the bottom drop. But the entire right side of the channel sieved out in a nasty gulch against the wall. It was not possible to get a view from either side of the river. No one was eager to probe the entrance to this blind canyon with a hero line through a drop we couldn't even adequately scout. In the corridor below, there were two big river-wide ledges that looked pretty beefy.

A small sneak chute on the left provided the option to get out on a big rock ledge. Then we could do a 15-foot seal launch to bypass the entrance drop and focus on what was below. Our glimmer of hope beyond this impasse was an opening of light from the right side, across from where the river disappeared to the left. Our map indicated a small side creek should be coming in nearby from the right. It looked possible to get out there and see what was around the corner. If it did not open up around the bend, the creek bed might provide some means of escape. But we elected to leave part of the group with access to the break in the canyon above, so that we could get help from above if needed.

With the stakes in the fire, it came time to get down to business. Genner was the last to get out on the scouting boulder, therefore his boat was the most accessible. He rose to the occasion and assumed the role of probe. Genner got back in the water and made the move down to the staging area for the seal launch. We all watched anxiously as our Ecuadorian counterpart slid off the rock ledge in his bright red Overflow and went head-to-head with the first riverwide ledge-hole. He punched the first one easily on the right. The reactionary waves came in hard from the sides and Genner had to stroke it to make it left on the next drop. He rode the current around a pocket in the left wall, out of our



Dun Dixon MUNCHEDED.

sight, and came back into view cranking hard for the drop. Landing it, the foaming hydraulic shot him directly across the river with remarkable speed, all the way to the river right wall. We were impressed. That was a bizarre finish! Making his way down the smaller ledges below, Genner got out on the right bank.

Genner spent a few moments surveying the scene. We had three signals: 1) waving everyone to come down; 2) bringing one more person down; or 3) we're screwed—indicated by an exaggerated slice to the neck. In a promising manner, Genner motioned for one more person. Dan was next up. We gave him one of the machetes and a Powerbar. Some time passed before we got another signal after Dan joined Genner. Finally, one more person was gestured down. Tom was ready to go. He was our last player. We had vowed to keep at least two people at the top to provide a means of help and egress. Duncan and I had a machete, food, and climbing gear. Genner and I knew the lay of the land the best. We had purposefully kept ourselves separate in case we needed to test that knowledge when the team was split.

After Tom got out to join the others, he gave us a very troubled look and an iffy signal with his hands. As it turned out, the bright

opening to the right was not a side creek at all, but was the Encanto itself. A hulking slab of rock blocked the channel, leaning from the base of the right wall to the left. The water passed underneath and made a 270-degree bend back to the right. The trouble was that there was no side creek to allow a means of escape from the canyon, only a kink in the river where logs and debris had collected. The river remained walled in, sporting a big rapid above yet another hidden turn. This time the river vanished to the right.

Upstream, Duncan and I were taking in all that was around us, trying not to get lost in the perplexity of the situation. We observed that the river was rising somewhat, but was not out of control. The dark water swirled and churned in the chaos below. It had been misting off and on throughout the day. Now full sunshine hit us from above. Hordes of butterflies began teeming around Duncan and I on the boulder. This had to be a good omen. The spirit of the river was with us.

Finally Duncan and I got the signal to come down. Evidently, the problem had been solved. We jumped up and slapped a big high-five. We did not want to hike out. When I arrived at the alcove at the first bend, Tom motioned for me to get out and look. "It's a little sketchy," he said, "But it goes." I climbed up and over the rocks to see Dan down below a full-on rapid, hanging onto the wall in a micro-eddy on river left. Genner was in the

last eddy above the rapid under a shower of water, looking fairly stressed and uncomfortable. He glared a bit under his helmet and shouted, "Hurry Up!" I picked a line for the big rapid and joined Genner in his eddy. "What's up?" I asked. "What took you so long?" he countered, "I've been sitting here forever."

"Where are you running this thing?" I inquired while holding my position in the edge of the eddy and trying to look over my shoulder at the drop. "I don't even remember what it looks like, I've been here so long," Genner remarked, "Dan ran down the left. There are two drops. He backlooped out of the bottom. Make sure you punch it."

"Well, here goes, I'll see you down there," I said, and peeled out. I boofed the Overflow X airborne off the first drop, and landed mostly flat. Immediately there was another ledge. It formed a huge horseshoe-shaped hole so I jammed for the side. I landed at the corner of the big hydraulic and pushed through as it chomped at my stern. As I approached Dan, he gave me thumbs up on my line and said encouragingly, "Keep going. It looks like it opens up around the corner. Go see what's there." I smiled as I

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floated around the corner with my eyes perked and my heart pounding.

It opened up in a relative sense of the word. There were no huge waterfalls and there was room to move on the bank. However, the walls were still sheer. I got out of my boat on a shallow ledge and waited for the others to paddle around the corner. One by one, the paddlers appeared with similar facial expressions of awe. We were quite certain no one had every glimpsed that portion of the river before. We were overcome by the intense beauty. The milky water contrasted sharply to the clean, glistening surface of the wet, sculpted rock. The colors in the labyrinth of multi-flora jungle plants hanging all around us piqued in the rays of filtered light. It was another world....another place and time. There was a powerful vibe here that commanded our respect.

After a long moment of wonder, we let out big sighs of relief and congratulated Dan on his probing move to push through our first major quandary. "Someone had to do it," he stated matter of factly, "What else could we have done? It has to ease up sooner or later."

We proceeded with some quick scouting from the bank, but soon were stopped again in a flat pool backed up by some gradient. Water

oozed from the walls above the pool. With all of the plants and vines hanging down, we felt like we were in a tropical terrarium with fountains and jets of mist. There was a steep break in the canyon on the river left side. At last there was a chance to get out if needed. It was late in the day. We knew we were close to the end, but we were not done. There were clearly some big rapids below us. We scouted from an enormous anvil-shaped boulder. It was next to a big slide rapid that reminded us of a flume ride at an amusement park. Below, it got busy, and the gorge tightened up again.

Genner and Dan had done such a good job of probing earlier that we did not want to stand in their way. We did not hesitate to let them run first to scope things out. Again, we waited for a signal. After about 30 minutes of exchanging grimaces, moving from one side to the other, and eddy-hopping to different vantage points, we received a signal. Dan gave a slice to his neck. That was it. This time, there wasn't an option to proceed. The gorge constricted again. The river disappeared to the right at another blind turn. There was no way to get out and even scout the rapids. Our moods sank at the prospect of failure this far into the run. Just thinking about hiking out made me shudder. We helped Dan and Genner get back to our position and we attained upstream to the break in the canyon we had spotted earlier.

Regrettably, we helped each other haul our boats up on top of a rock outcrop beside the break in the canyon. No one was ready to

tackle hiking or climbing out of the gorge. It would be dark in another hour. Getting benighted in the jungle, far from level ground, was not what we were looking forward to. Even though we had planned on completing the Encanto in a single day, we had brought overnight gear and extra food, just in case. Everyone was quick to agree with the suggestion to camp on the rock outcrop and hike out the next day. Space was limited, but we made do. Before dark, Dan used a machete to

cut a rough trail up the steep embankment. A rope was lowered from a tree in case we had to make a fast retreat in the night. We also got a good fix on the water level. I made some dinner, mixing up toasted barley flour, known locally as *machica*, with sugar and water to form fist-sized dough balls. Yum. Sure, it was basic grub, but the *machica* didn't need to be cooked. We found it to be one of our favorite expedition foods.

As darkness enveloped the "Machica Gorge", Dan eased the stars out with the melodic playing of his flute. It was the first time we had been able to see the night sky in nearly a month. As we drifted off to sleep, Orion sprawled across our narrow window from the gorge to the heavens above. Only a bird-sized moth with a fascination for the shiny mylar surface of our space blankets stirred us in the night.

Our biggest surprise the next morning was that the river had dropped over six inches and became much more clear. We wondered if there might be some new possibilities for pushing the crux if more rocks were exposed to scout from. As we ate our breakfast dough balls, we scoured the map for leads. Genner's altimeter had proved to be most inaccurate, thanks to the changing barometric pressure with the lifting weather pattern. It actually said we had gained elevation since we launched! We took compass readings, recalled major landmarks, and, after much discussion, pinpointed our position as no more than a mile from the Rio Pastaza. This meant that we had to be close to where Genner and I had hiked to before. All geared up, we slid down the rock face for a rise-and-shine splash in the water and a second look at our impasse. Sure enough, some of the rocks that were submerged the day before offered reasonable scouting perches.

I focused on the paddlers downstream on the rock ledge. Dan seemed to lead the discussion on how to push the crux by making several controlled paddlestroke motions in the air with his hands. His white Pirouette was brought down off the ledge. In the water I saw Dan making the same series of ghost strokes again. He picked up his paddle and began to move. There was a flash between the rocks that obstructed my view. I next saw the stern of Dan's boat rocking sideways against the leading edge of the top boulder in the current. Duncan and Genner were riveted with attention. Then the end of the boat slid upwards. I looked over to see Duncan and Genner over on the shelf on their knees, bowing down in idyllic praise.

I had only seen Dan perform such "practice" air strokes once before. He had sized up a straightforward boof into a deep gulch. After going through some calculating motions, he came at it backwards, winged a perfect 180-degree spin off the side, and landed the slot perfectly. This time, using only three strokes, he had managed to cross the current, launch himself out of the water, and land in a gap between the cliff face and the top boulder that was more narrow than the width of his boat. Then he got out of the boat and up on the rock without dropping a single piece of equipment. This was definitely the move of the day. No one else could have done it!



LEFT TO RIGHT: Dan, Genner, Matt, Duncan, and Tom — take-out shuttle.

We watched in astonishment as Dan began to climb up on the boulders and along the slippery rock face. He pulled himself up to a narrow ledge on the river left wall. This was as far as Dan could go to see around the corner. Everyone was focused on Dan. Time stood still. Then came the moment of truth. Dan turned to face us as he raised one arm defiantly in the air. This was the news we were waiting for. Now the group could push forward again. Dan was the man!

Tom had taken to jumping up and down and doing windmills to stay warm. He pulled his OverflowX off its perch and paddled down to join me. We each took great pleasure in running through the overhung chasm and passing through to the other side. With gleeful smiles and much praise for Greystoke, we headed onward.

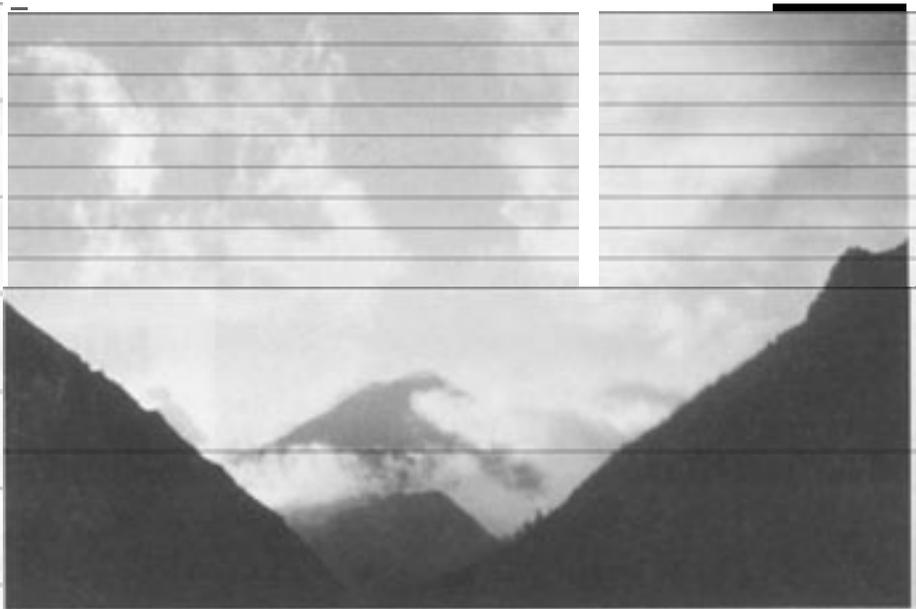
The Machica Gorge opened up into a wide cathedral-type bowl. The whole river poured through a narrow 15-foot slot between the granite bedrock sides and into a broad, rounded pool below. Across the pool, a cascade streamed down the cliffs. Genner and I stood on opposite sides of the steep water-spout debating the line. Dan scouted and decided to run through. As soon as he hit the bottom his full-size Pirouette was quaffed in the crease and began throwing ends. I was so close that I almost got hit by the whirl of white plastic. More ends flashed than I could count. It sounded like a kick-boxing soundtrack with the boat hitting the walls. Dan lost grip of his paddle; but it caught in his PFD's tow system and pulled him out of the hole like a parachute.

I reached out to stabilize Dan's boat. He was a bit dazed and commented, "I should have worn my nose plugs for that one." Floating out in the pool, we saw that his boat was crumpled and folded, with a big crease under his legs. We all laughed as we portaged the drop while Dan worked at flexing the plastic back into shape with a big stick.

After a few more rapids, I recognized the spot that Genner and I had hiked to a year before. We were ecstatic. The remaining section of river went quickly. We pulled over to scout the last big drop. We coined this one Enchantment Falls. It was a rammed-out 18-foot drop with a big splash at the bottom. Genner patted me on the back and said, "It's all yours. Go for it."

When we paddled out the mouth of the Encanto it was still early in the afternoon. A warm breeze kissed at our faces. It had been a big day and we reveled in the feeling of accomplishment. This one had made us earn it. The persistence paid off. We had passed through a privileged domain. Behind us, the jungle swallowed the river in its impenetrable clutches as quickly as we floated away. The inner realm of the Encanto revealed to our eyes what no person had ever experienced before. No longer was this place a mystery.

Before we crossed into the brown waters of the Pastaza, we donned our nose plugs and bade farewell to the river of Enchantment. In



VOLCANO: Volcan Tungurahua.

a few miles we reached the take-out where a road came down from the canyon rim above. As luck would have it, a truck was waiting by a footbridge to pick up some cattle. We persuaded the driver to take us into town and come back later for the cows. This saved us a brutal hike up to the main road, where we would have to hitch a ride back into town.

Carnaval was still kicking hard. On the way to Puyo a large group of partygoers lined up to assault us with water balloons as we passed by. The driver rolled up his windows, and we reached down into the bed of the truck, as if we were ready to unleash the wrath of hell on them. They fell for our bluff and began to scatter. We laughed as we sped on by. Back in town we took great pleasure in stuffing ourselves with a BBQ dinner and capped it all off with a visit to our favorite ice cream shop. It was a day to remember. *Encanto...mi amor. Cuando voy a regresar para ti?*

*On behalf of all of the past and present members of the Ecuador Expedition Team, we would like to thank Perception, Inc., Mountain Safety Research, Northwest River Supplies, Patagonia, Chaco Sandals, and Snapdragon Designs for providing the highest-quality products and expedition gear. Also, a special thanks to Rios Ecuador for furnishing excellent transportation services and making our stay in the country comfortable and hassle-free.*

*The rivers of Ecuador are under increasing threat from foreign oil and mining interests, deforestation, and other development. The damming of rivers has not yet been fully pursued in a land with great hydroelectric potential. Much of the pressure put on this fragile environment comes from the over zealous consumption of oil, gasoline, minerals, and rainforest products by the United*

*States and other industrialized nations. Please live simply so that others may simply live. Remember to support the organizations working to manage these issues so that there will be wild and remote rivers such as the Río Encanto to paddle in the future.*

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## A Tale of Paddling on Minnesota's North Shore

By Hal Crimmel

# Humble Confidence

I've learned to keep an eye on the horizon in the Upper Midwest, where green—not white—is the color people dread. This is not because Midwesterners associate summer's verdant hues with rain-soaked skies and bouts of beastly humidity. Is it not because summer brings frenzied clouds of biting insects that savage Sunday picnics from Sioux Falls to Sault Ste. Marie. Nor is it due to the torment of eating yet another potluck meal of tuna hot dish and marshmallow-laden lime Jell-O in a neighbor's backyard, though you would not be wrong that these are serious psychosocial stressors in a region defined by the tranquility of winter.

You see, the white season promises a measure of calm here. In winter there is no lawn to mow, no garden to weed, no picnic Jell-O to eat. Dairy Princess parades are long over, their princesses safely back in school. Cabins have been shuttered. It is a season of silence, of quiet white storms and clear hushed nights. Animals rest. Frost and ice have stunned the exuberant drone of insects. The chatter of birds has faded south. A welcome stillness falls across prairie and forest.

No, winter is not a time to fear, but the hopeful return of birds marks the beginning of that time when moisture-laden warm spring air spills into cooler winter air, brewing fearsome storms that stain the

Above: John Linn in Gazebo Falls. Amity Creek  
Photo by Paul Everson

sky a savage emerald. Boiling up over the empty expanses of the Dakotas, these storms are hungry for towns and people and cars by the time they get to Minnesota. In the spring of 1998, tornadoes feasted on the state, twirling across field and farm, roto-rooting counties from Iowa to the Canadian border instilling fear statewide.

For me, the fear of severe weather and the anxiety produced by the start of paddling season seem to have cross-pollinated one another. Early in the 1998 season, I was the solitary victim of a rare underwater storm that developed after I flipped in a narrow chute.

The storm was so localized, in fact, that it parted me from my boat on a rocky stretch of tiny Amity Creek, an explosive run plunging down to the clear waters of Lake Superior. I suddenly felt a kinship with the victim emerging from a storm cellar in time to see his wide screen television perform a brief aerial waltz with a pretty neighbor's lingerie collection before both swirl into oblivion. Surveying the damage while standing in chest deep March snowmelt I watched my paddle disappearing around a bend in the creek, where it would later be ground to bits, a sole blade the only survivor. My new Rockit lazily turned over and over in the hole like a roast chicken on a spit. I fingered a few new helmet gouges and sneaked a look at the ten curious paddlers watching the drama from the small stone bridge spanning the creek.

My throat began to swell, as does a snake's when it swallows a large mammal. I reflected on the popularity of pie in Minnesota, and how Betty's Pies, a famous eatery just up the Lake Superior shore from Duluth, serves hundreds of delicious slices every day. I was speechless for a moment, until, finally, the enormous slice of humble pie slid down my gullet and lodged in my stomach. I can assure you that few Minnesotans have enjoyed their pie the way I savored my chilly meal of humble pie that morning, at the bottom of aptly named Smiley Face slide.

Let me explain. Just two years prior the polished pink granite slides and flumes of my hometown creeks—New York's North Flow rivers—the South and Main Branch of the Grass, the Oswegatchie, the St. Regis and others—were just hours away, as was the Moose in Old Forge, Vermont's West Branch of the Deerfield and Upper New Haven, and the Rouge in Quebec.

There was even the Poestenkill, a tough little creek with miles of Class III-IV paddling and two seventy-foot waterfalls not 30 minutes from my Albany, New York, home. Near the takeout in downtown Troy awaited a gastrointestinally challenging, artery-busting meal of miniature chili dogs. In more desperate moments a booming surf wave on the somewhat toxic Mohawk River beckoned a few miles away in the gnarly rust belt town of Cohoes, which sported its own version of terrifying Class VI miniature chili dogs. Yes, in New York, I was a serf in a far-flung whitewater kingdom. I thought to myself, I live in the Durango, Colorado, of the East, only better. *I've been to Durango and there were no miniature chili dogs.*

My kingdom of rock and water abruptly collapsed on a gloomy April morning in 1996 when my wife announced that she had been accepted into graduate school ..... in Minnesota.

Minnesota!? That flat state near Fargo?!

I felt ill.

Later that night, I bitterly envisioned future spring paddling seasons spent running irrigation ditches while tanked up on cheap Midwestern beer, pursued by angry, corn-fed landowners. I glumly foresaw pinning on rusty barbed wire, and rashes induced by the poisonous ag runoff sloshing through muddy streams—this was my preconception of Minnesota whitewater. Weakly, I subscribed to a bass fishing publication, surfed the Mall of America website, planned to sell my boating gear. The trip from New York across the flat, hot, dieselly, stretches of I-90 with its fast-food and classic rock stations seemed like the proverbial descent into Hell.

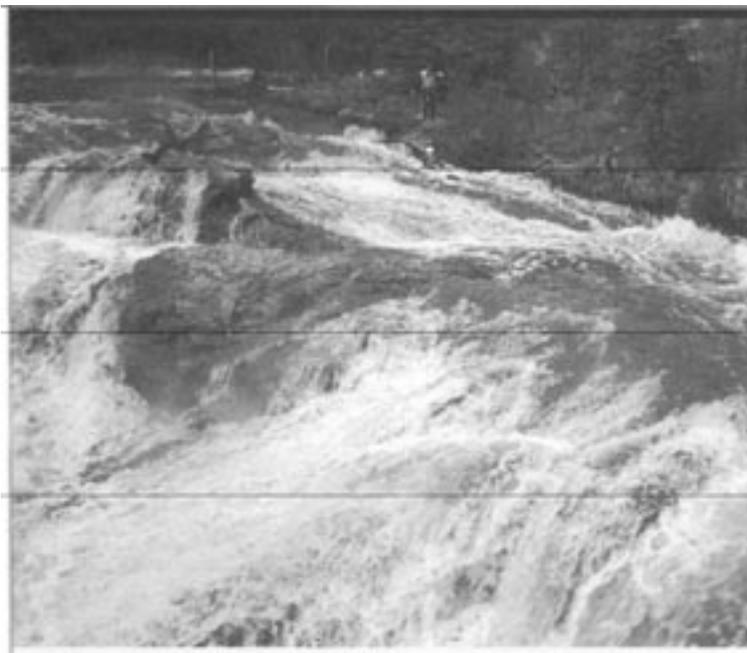
Minnesota, mercifully, seemed better. I had heard of the Kettle River. An atlas showed a promising spate of creeks cutting across a height of land stretching from Duluth to the Canadian border at Grand Portage. *American Whitewater* listed Boat Busters Anonymous as a resource, so I sent off a letter in the hopes of meeting some paddlers

**My throat began to swell,  
as does a snake's when it  
swallows a large mammal.**



▶ Above: Paul Everson in the runoff after "Ski Jump", Split Rock River  
Below: Paul Everson running Split Rock River





**Some paddlers tried the bait and switch, pretending to leave, only to return later and face another showdown...**

who shared my love of river running and steep creeking.

A few months later I received a call from Jim Rada, local paddling guru and author of a well-written guide to rivers in the Upper Midwest. Jim invited me to a slide and video show later that fall. There I met Jim, Paul Everson, Tim Hebrink, and other fixtures of the Minnesota creek boating scene. I watched a video shot by Rod Thompson, a local kayaker and videographer, containing hairy footage of waterfalls and rocky steep creeks hidden in narrow canyons with names like the Devil's Track and Cascade.

With exciting runs like these I figured that creeking in Minnesota would be an exercise in avoiding other paddlers. It's not. Most runs are tough on paddles and boats, and take place during a short, cold season on remote and difficult rivers that deter many boaters. That's not all. On my first creek run in Minnesota a gun-toting landowner provided another deterrent while we prepared to put in on the Split Rock, a class IV-V run. On this cold April day the usual pre-run chatter was stilled by the angry snap of an aluminum storm door slamming shut and the frenzied revving of a small engine. An old Honda roared out of the ratty third growth hardwoods along the road, with a mean big-bellied bastard astride. Our group was treated to what any Minnesotan knows is not Minnesota Nice:

"You got two f—kin' minutes to get the f—outta here before I start shootin."

"Two f-ing minutes."

"Two f-ing minutes before I start shootin."

My friend Mark King, who looks like a cross between Minnesota's new governor, Jesse Ventura, and a man who has done ten hard years in a military prison, stepped up and got in his face. I was impressed.

The motorcycle roared. The storm door slapped once and then again.

That's when the gunfire began.

A few brave souls voted to stand and fight, arguing intricacies of access rights and making appeals to strength in numbers. More rational voices felt that rights or no rights, we would still find ourselves on the wrong end of a shotgun, and headed for other runs. Personally, I had enough holes in my drysuit without subjecting it to any more. Some paddlers tried the bait and switch, pretending to leave, only to return later and face another showdown, in which Rod Thompson, the videographer, would calmly declare, "You can't possibly shoot all of us. One of us will get away." The Minnesota character, local author Garrison Keillor once said, is one of "humble confidence." This, surely, was humble confidence.

I would not return to the Split Rock River until a year later, on the day of my bruising morning swim on Amity Creek. After breaking one and losing another paddle on Amity Creek, our group decided to drive north along the Lake Superior shoreline to the Split Rock, giving me just about an hour to look for humble confidence. I didn't see any, but on the two-mile carry upstream to the put-in, I realized I would need every ounce I could borrow. The rapids grew bigger around every corner. The red rock canyon grew deeper and the shadows grew longer. Sweating and stripped to the waist despite the forty-degree temperatures, we relentlessly marched upstream. I began to have doubts about running so many big drops so fast, for if we were to get out before dark, we would have to GO. There would be no time for extended scouting. I realized the hike up was the scout, and that I would have to try and remember the lines now.

Paul, Mark King, and I stopped for a rest at a rocky slide called Winfrey's Whimper, where a piton rock claimed a paddler's ankles many years ago. We were soon joined by the others: Chris Ringsven, Wendy Auldreich, Charles Griffiths, and Pete Roth. A cool wind blew the sound of thundering current louder and louder, as if the river's power had uprooted boulders and was tumbling them down the riverbed. In a second, boulder-sized blocks of ice came tumbling into view and down the drop, banging wildly on the bedrock ledges and against one another, rumbling over and through holes. An entire tree, then more ice and limbs followed, creating a symphony of wood and rock and ice and water that was at once beautiful and terrible.

The thought of sharing an eddy above a major drop with this lethal

parade sent shudders through our sweating torsos. Jittery at this display of nature's power, we turned back to our boats, electrified for the carry upstream where the river moaned and muttered in the canyon deep below. The rich odor of thawing earth mingled with the pungent scent of spruce and cedar as we inhaled the damp freshness of melting snow while trudging up the steep trail.

After a quick scout at the put in we descended a hole-filled rapid, and quickly entered the darkening canyon, running steep flumes and river-wide slides that dropped twenty feet or more, paused briefly, and then dropped another twenty feet. Wendy and I, both first timers, were particularly concerned about one very steep slide with no clear lead in that suddenly plummeted down and around a corner, down again and through a strong hole at the bottom. I asked her partner, Charles, a Brit expat living in Minnesota, how he had run the drop in the past. "I'm running right," he confidently said in his clipped accent, and peeled out into the current. I took one look at the enigmatic horizon line and shouted at his back as it disappeared over the lip, "Yeah, LOOKS GOOD."

I peeled out and dropped into the slide, speeding between pourovers and broken rock, following the current with a few strong strokes, as it worked its way to the center. I turned to watch Wendy and others run the same line. We eddied out and gazed at the red rock canyon, with ice still clinging in spots and water seeping down the slick face to trickle into the tawny river water. Above us upstream the river was a veil of fluttering white.

Downstream more flat brown horizon lines called us out of the eddy. We ran one, then another, guided only by the accurate lines outlined by Paul and Charles as we slipped down smooth slide after smooth slide. The group was in a groove, despite the gathering darkness, as we rounded a bend that showed a major horizon line and the tops of trees far below. "This is Ski Jump," shouted Paul as he paddled by, "the line is just right of center. Don't be too far left or you'll go off the ski jump!" I appreciated the advice, but the horizon line was river wide, a good 70-100 feet, and the current was starting to motor. "Just right of center" could be about anywhere. The river greedily gathered speed. Before my mind could register what was about to happen, I launched crazily into the air, rocketing through space long enough to see swimmers and throw ropes deployed below. I touched down hard but cleanly with just enough time to brace stiffly off solid rock before splattering through a hole.

Below, I spun the boat around to see a solid sheet of water cascading over a river wide slide punctuated by a cowlick of rock that flung water high into the air. Above, Mark appeared. His orange Rockit seemed to pause, then accelerated faster and faster before catapulting into the damp evening air and safely back down again. We looked at each other, eyes bugging out, adrenal glands kicking in all four barrels. Below, Pete Roth, an experienced climber and boater, was doing private penance to the gods of gravity, after a head first landing briefly separated him from his boat.

Light was failing rapidly and the clouds had congealed to a brooding grey film. Pete got back in the saddle and we rounded the corner above Under the Log, a difficult rapid first run in 1996. After the usual posturing and scouting, Dan Monskey, who had joined us halfway down after taking a wrong turn on the hike up, Mark, Paul, and Charles decided to run. It was an especially big decision for Mark, since he had only paddled creeks for one season. The river dropped a dozen feet down a steep slide, pillowed into a rockwall, turned nearly 100 degrees to the left, and plunged down a 15 foot slide that flowed directly under an enormous tree blocking the river.

Dan and Charles ran successfully, and it was Mark's turn. He entered the rapid, braced into the pillow, down the muscular final pitch and slipped under the log cleanly, and emerged, solidly in the world of class V paddling. Paul ran next in near darkness, burying his boat in the pillow and flipping so suddenly in a violent sticky seam that I was glad to be portaging. He rolled up in time to limbo under the log, to the relief of those watching in the ashen twilight. Downstream below the final small ledge the river had cawed a welcoming wide

Left page : Annette Trebite Split Rock River



Left page below: Split Rock River  
Photo by Paul Everson

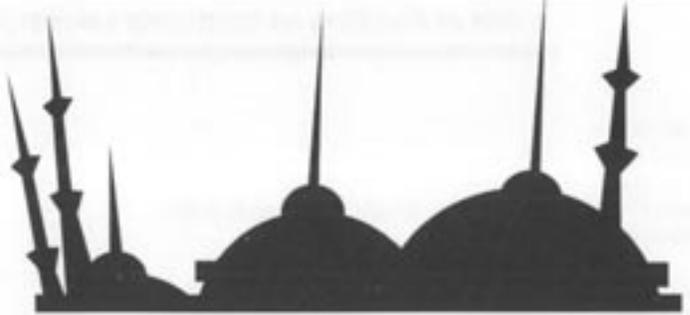
Below: Dave Gustavson on Amity Creek  
Photo by John Linn

valley that spread out to greet the misty Lake Superior shoreline.

Anticipating the ethereal coda of slipping quietly into the largest body of freshwater on the continent, we quickly paddled the final half-mile of river, putting the dark canyon behind us. The Split Rock, once white with a brawling fury, now seemed a subdued trickle as we bobbed along its back. Our energy exhausted on its rust brown waters, it was soon the river's turn to yield to the greater presence of the cold, clear waters of Lake Superior.



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# HARSH Justice

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## IN TURKEY

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## Ever Have Your Shuttle Vehicle Broken Into?

By Larry Dunn

Have you ever had that awful, sinking feeling that comes when you return to your vehicle at the put-in after a day of boating, and find that someone has broken into your car? Disbelief quickly turns to rage as you inventory the damage and determine your losses. Revenge! Who did this to me! Just let me get my hands on the bastard!

After a series of broken windshield incidents at the Westwater (Colorado River, Utah) take-out some years ago, I had fantasies of hiding among the desert sagebrush all day with a shot-gun, waiting to catch the perpetrators in action, then blast them. Fortunately, I would always rather spend the day boating and I don't own a gun. But, I've had one experience with a put-in break-in unlike any other.

It was the summer of 1990 and a group of us were spending a month paddling in Turkey. The Gulf War was still in the future and kayaking in the Middle East seemed like an exotic adventure. One day we headed up the Kara River which flows north out of the Pontic Mountains to the Black Sea. We drove up a rough dirt road into the mountains about 25 miles, scouting the river and looking for a put-in. We found a spot 3 miles upstream of the village of Dagbasi and began unloading our gear from the two Italian rent-a-wrecks we had gotten from Avis in Istanbul. A group of 12-year-old boys gathered around, fascinated by the kayaks and other strange-looking stuff spilling out of the cars.

As we put-in and paddled around a bend in the river, I got a bad feeling about the boys. I eddied out and ran up the road back to our cars. Sure enough, the boys were all over the cars. They scattered when they saw me and, after a few minutes, I returned to the river, certain that I had scared them off for good.

A few hours later we returned to the cars after running the river. Someone had pried the side window down. It was amazing, they



had broken into the car without breaking the window or picking the lock. It turned out that the only thing missing was my daypack. It contained my camera, exposed film and clothing.

The usual indignation that comes with such personal violation welled right to the surface. We were also concerned that Avis would hit us up for repair of the jammed window, so we decided to go to the authorities and file a report. At Dagbasi, we found a small Gendarmerie office with 3 nineteen-year-old conscripts. The gendarmes are a sort of military police, a unit of the Turkish Army, set up to keep the peace in rural Turkey. I assumed that such a petty theft would be impossible to solve in such a remote area.

The young soldiers spoke no English; we spoke no Turkish. One member of our group, Steve, was fluent in German, and a Turk who had been a guest worker in Germany and was visiting his ancestral village served as an interpreter. We were told they could do nothing for us and we would have to go to the larger town on the Black Sea Coast to the regional office of the Gendarmerie to report the crime.

Two hours of dirt road driving later we arrived at the coast. Steve and I went to the Gendarmerie office while the other guys tried to fix the car. We were escorted to a patio and introduced to a young officer who spoke German and an older, senior officer who spoke only Turkish. Steve told the story in German, the young officer translated to Turkish, and then the questions came back in reverse order. They said this was a serious offense and that it had to be dealt with.

The police said there had been only four thefts committed in this area in the last year, so this was a big deal. Then the old officer left and soon thereafter an enlisted man showed up with a big silver tray filled with tea and cookies. We sat and chatted in German and English with the young officer for nearly two hours. It was all very pleasant, but eventually, Steve and I figured that was all that was going to happen and we told him we would be leaving. He stood up and asked us to wait a bit more, they were just about ready to take action.

A few minutes later a military troop-transport truck pulled up. The old officer and the young German-speaking officer got in the front. Steve and I hopped onto wooden benches in the canvas-covered back. There were three young soldiers already sitting inside, dressed in full green-camouflaged battle dress. Each had on a pack and carried an M-16. They looked very serious and didn't say a word to Steve or I as we bumped our way up the dirt road for two more hours back to Dagbasi.

It was dark when we arrived in Dagbasi. The three soldiers we had originally encountered at the garrison jumped into the truck. They were now dressed like the others with packs, helmets, and automatic rifles. The



officers, Steve, and I got out and were immediately seated in front of a small shop. Out came another silver serving platter with tea and cookies. We again started the English-German-Turkish chit-chat with the officers and the shopkeeper as we watched the truck start working up the mountain-side switchback by switchback. We could mark their progress as we watched the headlights of the truck go back and forth up the hill, periodically stopping for a time as the soldiers went house to house. I could only imagine how these poor people must have felt when the knock on the door revealed M-16 toting soldiers at the threshold.



Gradually we lost sight of the truck and, after some hours, Steve and I went for a walk along the dark road with the young officer. We were pals now and we talked about whether Islamic fundamentalism in neighboring Iran was spreading into Turkey. He reminded us of the strategic role played by Turkey as a member of NATO during the cold war with, what was at that time, the very recently "former" Soviet Union.

But when we got far enough away from the village, the young officer got to the subject that was really of interest to him. "Is it really true... in the West... about pre-marital sex?" He was engaged to be married and had had only one experience, which he was quick to tell us about.

"Sex, oh yeah, as much as you want!" Well, maybe that isn't exactly what Steve said in German. But he did confirm the Turkish officer's impression of the West as a sexual paradise.

Eventually the truck returned and we all went to the Spartan garrison office. A 12-year-old boy and his parents filed into a room with the officers, Steve, and I. The room had a typewriter, an old crank-style telephone,

and single lightbulb dangling from a cord in the middle of ceiling. They handed my daypack to me. I couldn't believe it. This Islamic Justice was impressive! They began typing up a report on the old typewriter, 3 carbon-copies included, of course. Did I want to press charges? No, I was elated to get my pack back, and the boy and his parents looked like they had already had a very bad night. Was everything inside the pack? I checked, almost everything was there, but my film was gone and a sweater was missing. Steve translated from English to German, the young officer translated from German to Turkish.

Suddenly it was silent in the room and the increased tension on the faces of the Turks was clear. I was confused, what had just happened? It was nearly midnight and they were going to head back up into the hills to find the rest of my stuff. Steve and I were exhausted and just wanted to get back to our friends and get to sleep.

"Was it possible that the missing items had fallen out in the car?" they asked. Well no, Steve and I knew the items weren't in the car, but we wanted to call it a night. We didn't want the Turks sending out the army again for a middle of the night door-to-door search.

It was decided that I would call our friends at the regional Gendarmerie office and have them search the car for the missing items. I got on the old telephone. It was full of static, the worst connection I'd ever had. To be heard I had to yell as loudly as I could. Without being able to describe our situation in detail, I began screaming into the phone in English, while everyone in the room looked on. Only Steve knew what I was saying.

**"ERIC, GO OUT TO THE CAR AND LOOK AROUND AND THEN COME BACK AND SAY THAT YOU FOUND MY STUFF!"**

**"WHAT?"**

**"GO OUT TO THE CAR, THEN COME BACK AND SAY THAT YOU FOUND MY STUFF!"**

**"WHAT?"**

I looked around the room, they were all looking at me. Steve was rolling his eyes.

**"JUST GO OUT TO THE CAR AND COME BACK AND SAY I FOUND IT."**

I was screaming into the phone; it was crazy. The Turks didn't know what I was saying, but looked on with concern. Finally, Eric returned from the car. He didn't know what the hell was going on, but he picked up the phone and yelled, "I FOUND IT."

I turned from the phone, and said, "He found it". Steve translated into German. The young officer translated into Turkish. Everyone was relieved. The ordeal was over, just a few more hours on a dirt road in the back of a Turkish army truck and we were done.

Editor's note: Larry Dunn is an AW Regional Coordinator whose paddling adventures have taken him to Mexico, Canada, Nepal and Chile.

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# Exploring the Rio Pascua A Chilean First Descent

By Josh Lowry

"If you know anyone who wants to try a crazy thing, ...." read the postcard I received from the fjords of Southern Chile in 1990. Claudio Hopperdietzl, a friend from Puyuhuapi, a small coastal town his father had settled, went on to describe the Rio Pascua as "the most difficult river in Chile."

Beyond the end of the road in Southern Aisen lies Lago O'Higgins, which captures the runoff from the Northeast slope of the Southern Ice Field, a frozen expanse of ice and rock covering several hundred square kilometers. Flowing from the lake to the ocean, the Rio Pascua forms several small lakes divided by 100 ft. waterfalls, before squeezing its 35,000 cfs through a narrow canyon only 50 ft. wide in places, while dropping 50 ft/mile for most of its 16 kilometers.

Vertical rocky walls, no beaches, and the impenetrable temperate rain forest surrounding the canyon complete the picture, suggesting difficult scouting, portaging or escape. The river finally belches its highly-aerated water onto the coastal plain, where it meanders lazily to the ocean 20 kilometers later. Once there, it is still 100 kilometers along the coast to Tortel, the nearest settlement.

My friend Claudio grew up in Puyuhuapi, deep in the fjords just south of Futaleufu. He always had a keen interest in rivers and was a wealth of information on the local rivers. I had met him in '86, when, stopping at his gas station, he insisted on taking us to the Rio Cisnes for a I<sup>st</sup> descent. It took me several years to get back to his town, but he recognized me immediately when we appeared at his gas station in January of '96. Inviting us into his house, Claudio showed us maps, aerial photos, and an early explorers description of the Pascua, which piqued my interest.

Lack of access provided the biggest problem, which prevented me or anyone else from attempting it for several years. Finally, I was ready to try it, but could not find willing companions. My curiosity got the best of me, however, and in February of '98 I went south toying with the idea of a solo run. Even if I had to portage the entire canyon, I reasoned, it would be worth it to see what is there.

But in Coyaique I met two people who had actually been in the area. Tales of impenetrable bamboo thickets which took four men four days of hard machete work to penetrate discouraged me. After a turn in the weather for the worse, my cautious sanity returned and I retreated, hoping to someday find wor-

thy paddling partners with whom I could return. It was the next Chilean summer when it all came together.

Meanwhile, I studied the maps. I was still sure it was possible. I returned to Chile the following year and, eventually, it finally all fell together.

I had met up with Robby Dastinin Pucon. We paddled our way south, driving my traditional shuttle vehicle, an old ambulance. We ran many known rivers and made a 1<sup>st</sup> descent on the Rio Llizan. Flowing near the Rio Fuy, the Llizan is a Class V steep creek through granite slot canyons with unportagable blind drops. Robby described it as "Sketchy."

The drought that year limited our boating, although we still found plenty of whitewater early in the season. Eventually, we landed in Futaleufu, where there is always water.

"I just received e-mail from John Hart and Arron Pruzan," Robby said "they want to run the Pascua, and will be here in a month."

It looked like a team was shaping up. I spent the month getting accustomed to big water hydraulics by paddling the Futaleufu.

John and Arron arrived with Rafa and Felipe Parot, two Chilean kayakers who had a van and kayak trailer. They would provide land support. We loaded up and headed south, but not until Robby and John traded their rodeo boats for higher-volume Diablos. I had a Rockit and Arron had brought a Godzilla. Now we were equipped for multi-day big water boating. However, we still had to work out the logistics.

We stopped by Claudio's house on the way south and talked about details. It was uncanny how well Claudio knew the river, although he had never been in the area. As we poured over the maps, he pointed out where we would need to portage and where it would be safe to boat. We later agreed he was right on most of the time.

"First, how will you get there?" Claudio asked. "The roads go nowhere close!"

We had no idea, but we were used to winging it, which is just what we did in the end. The next stop was in Coyaique, the capital of the region known as Aisen. Speaking with several people we received mostly encouragement and a few "that's impossibles!" We did arrange a flight into Villa O'Higgins, the nearest airstrip to the river, which would facilitate a scout on the way in. From the Villa we would still need to

cross the lake, about 100 kilometers, to get to the river.

Wanting to warm up to big water, we stopped at the Rio Baker on our drive south to meet the plane. The largest river in Chile provided some great experience in heavy hydraulics. We paddled the upper canyon, which contains some of the largest rapids I have seen anywhere. I had run this section several times in the past and was always awed by the force of the water. I felt several days kayaking here would be best, however time restraints limited us to one day, since our plane was chartered for the next day.

Although Rafa and Felipe are two of the best Chilean paddlers, they didn't feel they had the experience needed for the first descent, so we left them behind for land support. Cramming our four kayaks and ourselves into the twin engine Piper, we flew south on a very bumpy flight. While holding the kayaks secure with one hand, my other hand gripping a barf bag, I tried to concentrate on the many rivers below us.

Soon we were swooping low over the Pascua, tilting the plane on edge for a better view. It was obvious that the hot weather had thawed the glaciers, and the runoff was now filling the river to the top of its banks, flooding any beaches. We saw a tight canyon filled with swirling water. Looking for unrunnable rapids as well as portage possibilities, we tried to stamp mental map onto our memory banks. We all felt we had seen most of the river, and it looked promising. The unseen portions were to be a source of constant surprise.

Staggering out of the plane, we were greeted by the local Carabineros (police) and escorted to see the pilot of the only boat, which we needed to cross the lake.

Robby and Arron tried everything to wrangle a good price, including exchanging kisses with his daughter, as is the custom, sharing several rounds of Maté tea, and, finally, groveling, before deciding it was hopeless and coughing up the dough for the 10 hour trip.

"We're committed now," I thought as I watched the boat steam away, leaving us stranded on the mossy shore near the outlet. It was late, so we camped there.

The morning sun illuminated jagged peaks bursting from the ice fields above us, thrusting through pink clouds and piercing the cold blue sky.

A few scraps of singed beef and an empty

box of fine Chilean wine were the only signs of our final feast the previous night. From now on we were self-supporting; it was to be freeze dried food for the duration.

While the unusually hot dry summer had dried up most of the creeks in Chile, the Rio Pascuawas raging. Lago O'Higgins was more than a meter higher than usual, its waters lapping into the trees and bushes along shore.

As we paddled off the lake and onto the river, we estimated the flow to be about 50,000 cfs. The 200 meter wide river soon narrowed to a third as a horizon appeared downstream. Stopping early to prevent being sucked over the edge, we began our first portage around a killer rapid, dropping 100 feet over 300 yards. Hydraulics and keeper holes galore convinced us the walk was worthwhile. Soon we reached the first small lake, Chico.

Riding the tail waves halfway across Lago Chico, gale force winds whipped spray in our faces. Hugging the shoreline, we worked our way around the small lake to the next falls, which almost looked runnable. There was an easy ramp to portage down, however, and we soon found ourselves on the next small lake. Only a few hundred yards long.

A short paddle brought us to a 100 foot vertical falls. We had seen a photo of this in a book by an explorer named Grosse. Written in the 40s, he described the falls as millions of lost kilowatt hours. I can assure you that ENDESA, the Chilean electric company has plans to capture them.

A quick paddle through an open valley brought us to our camp in a protected bay. This set us up to scout the canyon entrance the next morning.

With an early start we floated down to the canyon entrance, where we parked our boats and bushwhacked through Cypress thickets to the edge of the gorge. Scouting from 300 feet up, it's very difficult to see the vertical topography of the water. We could see a river-wide hole, which appeared to be a big haystack wave of solid froth. Arron and John were willing to run it, but Robby and I were leery of what lay downstream. We did notice a good eddy on the right, which would allow us to run the first half mile or so and still escape the river.

After experiencing this half mile of steep swirly water with huge banked turns and powerful whirlpools, we gained a new respect for the river. John and Arron both decided to portage with us and we began the climb out of the canyon to a bench several hundred feet above the roaring chasm.

Several Andean Condors circled overhead hoping that we would make a fatal mistake and become their next meal. As we traversed a partially forested hillside, clouds swirled down off glacier shrouded peaks, dissipating into thin wisps overhead, robbing us of needed shade. Sweat dripping off our brows; we dragged our yaks over grassy knolls and

through patches of enchanted forest made up mostly of Coihue and Dwarf Cypress. Foot thick moss and lichen covered everything, softening our frequent tumbles, caused by the mat obscuring footholds in the rough rocky terrain.

Through the trees I caught a glimpse into the narrow canyon. It was full of seething, swirling whitewater. To my dismay, I saw a monster rapid leading into yet another river-wide hole. Vertical walls rising from river's edge prevented river level portaging, so we were committed to bashing our way through, high above the maelstrom, wondering if our six days of food would be enough to carry us through the next 16 kilometers.

The next day a constant drizzle brought relief from the heat, but we were soaked to the bone during our portage. Eventually we made our way past the gnarl and back to the river. A quick scout by Robby suggested that we could eddy hop and scout as needed, so we prepared our boats and ourselves for the experience.

Lashing my paddle to my wrist, I seal launched into the eddy. Losing my paddle here in the crux canyon would likely mean a swim to the ocean through constant whirlpools and frigid water, an experience I did not relish. We peeled out into the powerful current. At first I was a little paranoid, but soon I felt at home. Everything clicked and I was totally under control. We eddy-hopped downriver, scouting as needed. I found I didn't need to paddle very hard, I could just plant my blade in the main current and concentrate on boat angle.

We kept this up for several miles until we eddied out on the right to scout a blind corner. Robbico yelled "Big Rock Rapid, Big Rock Rapid," signifying the prominent landmark we had seen from the air. Relieved to have made it this far, we climbed up for a look. We spotted a big boofy route, but clean, and we all cleaned it—almost.

As John attempted to peel out, the contrary current spit him up onto the wall. Spinning a splat into a surf, he deftly surfed the cushion around the corner. I made sure to make a wide peel out, only to be swallowed by the whirlpool in the opposite eddy. Fortunately it spit me out and, after a quick roll, I careened around the corner to find John laughing in an eddy below.

Here the continuous rocky walls were interrupted. It was the only wide place in the canyon. We found a camp next to a side creek and set up a tarp for the fire because it was still drizzling.

Spirits were high as we celebrated our success. We were past the 50 ft/mile section; it would be 30 ft/mile for the next 8 kilometers. We figured we were past the worst, although with 50,000 cfs squeezing through the narrow canyon, we still had plenty of action ahead of us.

The rain stopped at dusk but the stars

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and moon kept us company the rest of the night.

We woke up to sunshine on the Pasqua! Twelve kilometers to go, with only the "big boil" we had seen from the plane to worry about.

We peeled out into the whirlpools and swirlies, eddy hopping and scouting from the tops of waves. Paddling non stop big water rapids with an occasional Class IV or V, we traded off lead, catching eddies to catch our breath.

As I approached one blind rapid I saw Arron standing on shore, pointing out the correct route. I slipped behind a huge lateral wave and blasted on by.

I led for awhile, feeling great, connecting with the water. Several kilometers went by without a stop. Then I saw an easy eddy on the right, just before a narrowing of the river. A quickscout through thick vegetation revealed a Class V+ rapid. I couldn't quite see the problem, but from their vantage point higher on the hillside, Jon and Arron reported "upstream water" and "some twisted s—t."

It sounded like heavy eddies and boils to me. We trusted their judgement and portaged once more. It was not easy.

This time the vegetation was very thick, blocking every step. As we came closer to the coast, the increased rainfall gave birth to a

full-on rain forest. Thick moss covered everything. We were constantly stepping through a void, falling in to the hip, sometimes dangling, other times buried in muck. We made our way up a steep hill over dead fall. At the top it was a little clearer, but convoluted ground slowed our progress. After four grueling hours we crawled down a creek, pushing our boats ahead to clear a crawlway.

Reaching the river bank, we collapsed in exhaustion as the sun slipped behind the ridge. Somehow, Arron rallied us and we prepared for the final push.

After smearing more paddle wax on my cockpit rim to prevent skirt implosion, I slipped into my kayak and into a fast eddy. I was quickly carried to the top of the eddy and I peeled out hard, accelerating into the next narrows. Heavy rapids with large diagonal waves ended in big swirlies. I capsized. It was dark underwater and I was tossed about, making it hard to roll. The last portage had left me with little energy. After four attempts I was still down, running out of breath. Finally, I gave one more concerted effort, finishing my roll with a forward sweep. I found myself upright, sucking in air. Fortunately, there was an eddy handy and we pulled in to recover.

Glancing downstream I saw a huge gaping hole. Then the river disappeared over the horizon. We climbed up once again to scout. This time we saw a clear line. Back in the kayak, I felt barely rested, but confident.

We had to ferry hard across the strong current, punch a right lateral wave, then jig right past the hole, then to the left of a big whirlpool. Robbie was in front of me. He cut across the river, but a seam in the current caught his bow, sucking it down. Instantly he was cart-wheeling downriver through the center of the hole. Fortunately he braced up and continued downstream. This gave me incentive to concentrate on the move and I slid on through with no problem. The river narrowed again and we braced against violent lateral waves and punched strong "V" waves, paddling through heavy boils and eddies until we reached calmwaters. Then, magically the canyon opened up. We knew that we had survived the torrent.

Downstream, the wide blue river was friendly, meandering through a broad valley. A sense of elation seized us as we realized we had succeeded in the first descent of the Rio Pasqua.



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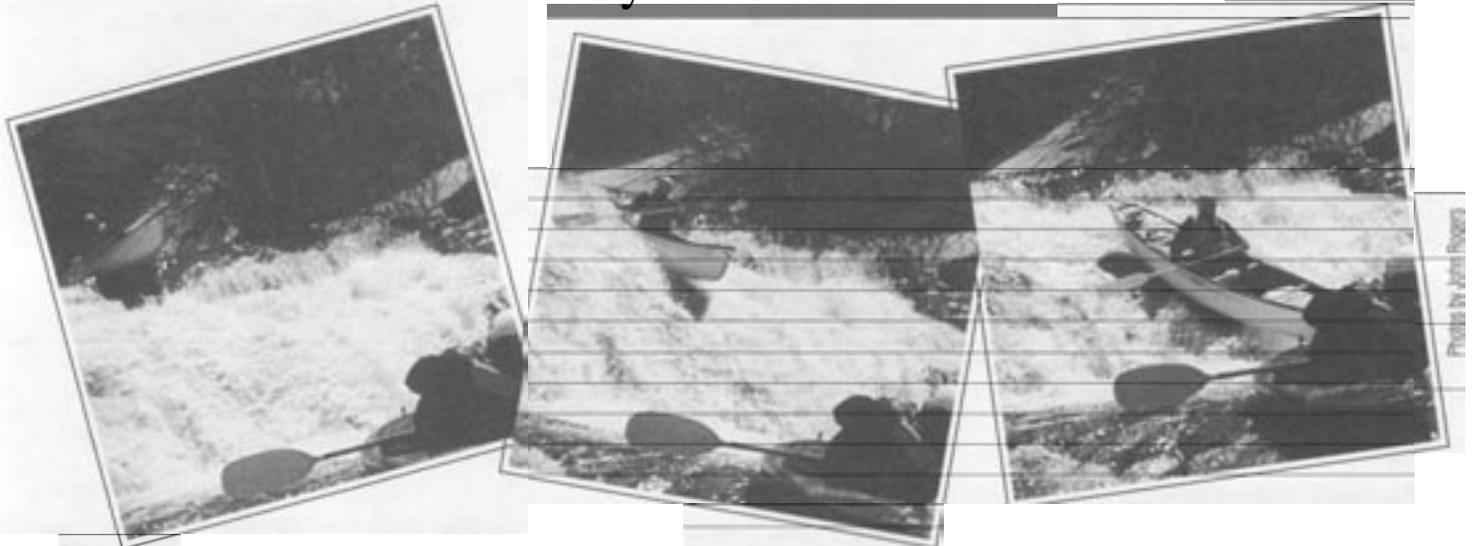
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# Steep Creekin' California Style

Open Boating Brush Creek ·  
By Steve Frazier



Photos by John Frazier

Living in Atlanta, Georgia and learning to paddle in the southeast, I have grown accustomed to the rivers and creeks of the Appalachians. Being an open canoeist, streambeds with steep drops and deep pools below lend themselves to my style of boating. I love to free fall over a steep rapid or waterfall and land safely in the pool below. The pools at the bottom are just as important as the drops themselves. They give me a place to bail my canoe before continuing on to the next rapid.

On my first visit to Colorado in June of 1985, I discovered that many western rivers are a lot different than our rivers back east. The individual rapids have less gradient, but make up for it by having more volume. They are usually longer and more forceful. In other words, a lot of western whitewater is a far cry from the drop/pool situation I am accustomed to. Coming out of your boat at the top of a rapid out west can often lead to a long, cold swim. I discovered this sad fact time and time again during my first trips out west.

After adapting my paddling style to this new environment, I came to love paddling in the west. It represented a whole new set of challenges in a totally different setting. Now, on weekends, I paddle in the southeast, staying within two or three hours of home and the albatross (my job). I save my precious two-week vacation for a trip west of the Mis-

issippi. All year I patiently look forward to my annual pilgrimage to the land where rivers are fast and continuous, the days are warm and dry and nights clear and cool.

Early on I often thought "what a perfect place the west is for paddling." I loved every thing about it. Well, almost everything. The only thing I didn't like was that there didn't seem to be any steep creeks. But after a decade of operating under this assumption, I

**...We were able to glimpse  
a couple of the steep  
drops...this only  
intensified the anxiety...**

discovered how wrong I was.

In March of 1996 I decided to quit my job of over ten years, so I could dedicate myself to paddling full time. A three and a half month western paddling trip was soon planned. My first stop would be the Kern River Festival in Kernville, Ca. Having been to California only once before, I had little idea what the state had to offer. I would soon find out.

After completing the down river race on Saturday morning, April 21, I was graciously invited on a trip down Brush Creek with Lynn Siodmac from South Pasadena and Ed Lucero from New Mexico. Ed knew the creek fairly well. Lynn and I would be first timers on Brush Creek.

From the little riverside park where the Fest is held, we drove 20 miles up the Upper Kern to the take-out. We put my Caption on Lynn's vehicle, along with the two kayaks, and drove the short, but steep road to the put-in, which happens to be the Brush Creek helicopter pad. On the way up the hill we were able to glimpse a couple of the steep drops we were about to attempt. This only intensified the anxiety I typically experience before beginning a trip of this difficulty, especially for the first time. Nevertheless, I couldn't wait to get on. When we reached the put-in after the quarter mile walk through heavy brush, I easily realized how the creek got its name. I also began to see a small "up side" to having the world's oldest and most worn out dry suit.

Another thing dawned on me as I set my boat down next to the beautiful, clear water...it probably wouldn't be a good idea to paddle a steep, rocky, low-volume creek without a helmet! As I ran back up the hill to retrieve my forgotten headgear I couldn't help but wonder what my new friends were thinking. "What have we gotten ourselves into?" No doubt! Actually, they were both good natured about my blunder, giving me only a tiny dose of well-deserved grief.

The creek was only about six feet wide at the launch, but after a couple hundred yards of scraping down rocky drops and shallow ledges while ducking under branches, it began to widen a little, although no significant tributaries joined it. A few more shallow slides and narrow passages led us to a taste of what I had come for—an eighteen-foot waterfall that landed in a clear, deep pool.

Ed advised us to run straight down the middle as he peeled out, showing us the way 'till he disappeared over the horizon. An uplifted paddle blade indicated Ed was safe and ready to take Lynn's and my pictures as we went off the falls. Lynn peeled out and negotiated the short, straightforward approach. Then he flew off the drop, vanishing from sight.

I wanted to take the drop exactly where my paddling partners had gone. I got up as much speed as possible during the approach so I could get the best launch. One final stroke at the top and I was over the edge. The first three or four feet of the plunge is a 45-degree shelf that launches boaters. The last fifteen feet is a free fall.

I loved the feeling as I flew through the air and landed in the previously unseen pool. I felt right at home. I took the camera while Ed and Lynn paddled their kayaks behind the falls. As they reappeared I took their pictures as the water from the drop cascaded over them in the California sunlight.

As we made our way down stream, running several smaller ledges and slides, I no-

ticed something. Although this creek was very steep (400 feet/mile for one and a half miles), it was not technically difficult. With Ed leading the way over the blind drops, scouting was mostly unnecessary. It was great fun with very little effort.

The next rapid had the most vertical drop on the run. As I eddied out to bail my canoe above the drop, I looked down stream and decided to scout. There was a small ledge with a fairly big hole near the top of the rapid that gave my kayaking friends a little trouble. I was concerned it might swamp my boat, making the long slide into the stream left

As I started, I was pleased that I was able to paddle around the top hole with ease. A few seconds later, however, I realized that making that important eddy was going to be a little trickier than I had anticipated. Although I had gone to the right of the hole, I hadn't managed to get my bow pointed back toward the staging eddy on the left. Instead I was pointed slightly right. As I shot down stream, I tried to correct my angle, but I was on a steep slide with very little water flowing over it. I could feel the smooth granite bedrock of the creek under my boat, but it was doing nothing to slow me down, nor was it allowing me to do any maneuvering. Everything was happening way too fast. As I reached the end of the slide, I hadn't managed to make any

**At the bottom is an ugly rock ready to abuse boaters who don't make the move...**

mid-way staging eddy a bumpy, boat abusive experience. A 15-foot fall lurked just below that eddy. Ed and Lynn peeled out of the eddy on strong ferries and ran the falls as far right as possible. Once again a large hole, there was a deep recovery pool at the bottom.

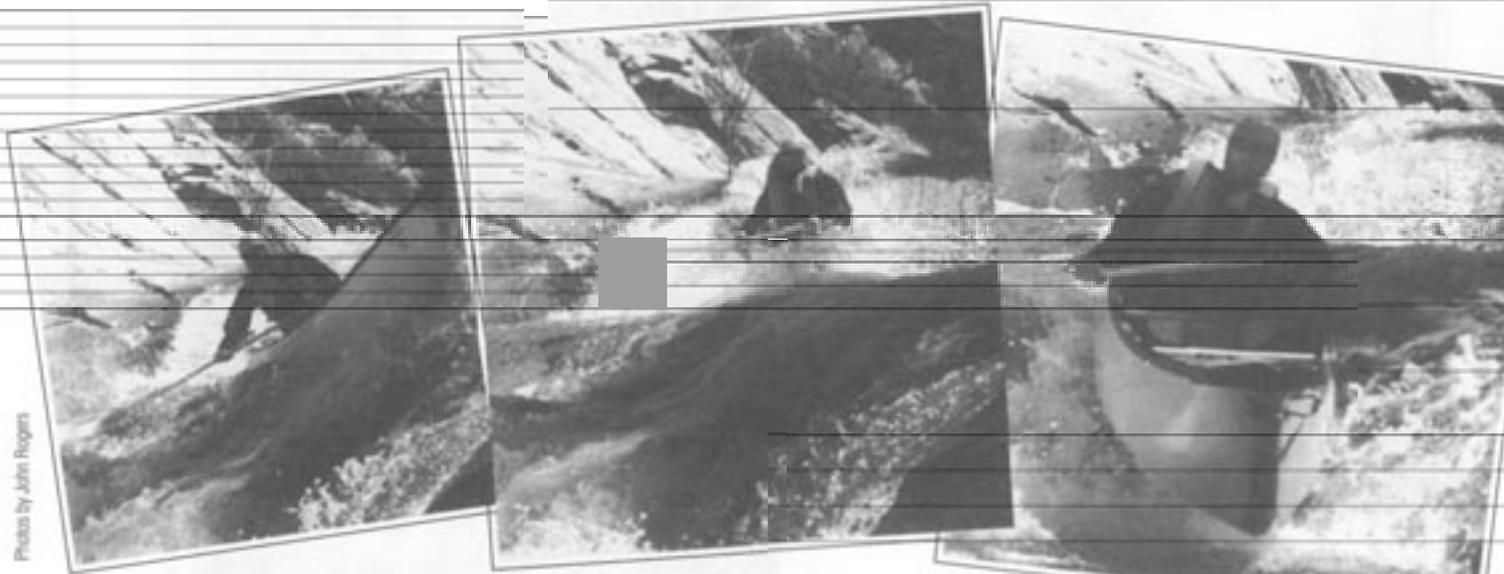
Their line looked good to me, but I was still concerned about running the hole at the top of the first drop. I decided that with a little extra effort and maneuvering I could circumvent the hole to the right, then move back to the left and catch the staging eddy. From that eddy I planned to duplicate their line over the final falls. I didn't really know why they had made the ferry across the stream so they could run the falls on the right. All I knew was they did it. I decided I would too, then ask questions later.

Progress toward the left, but I had been able to correct my angle slightly. When I hit the deep water above the final fall, I managed two powerful strokes, just enough to make the eddy.

After bailing I made the ferry to the right and enjoyed the reward of launching the falls and landing in the pool below. As I looked back at the forty or so vertical feet we had just descended, I couldn't help but observe that it wouldn't have mattered if I had taken the final falls on the left. There was little less water flowing over that side, but still enough.

After a couple of enjoyable rapids we paddled down a 100-yard long aquatic bobsled ride. The next three drops were less than friendly.

The first of these three starts with a long shallow narrow approach, which allows little maneuvering. As you approach the main drop, a ten-foot slide, the



Photos by John Rogers

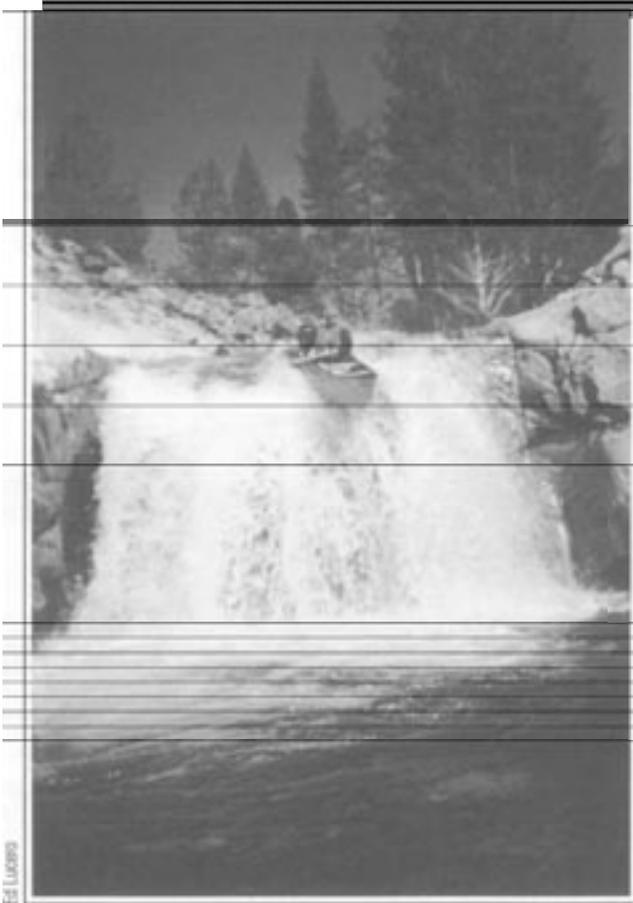
*CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:  
Steve Frazier in a  
smaller drop just  
down from the put-in.*

*Brush Creek is good  
to the last drop!*

*Frazier running  
the BIG drop!*



John Rogers



Est. Lucero



John Rogers

to the right. At the bottom of the drop on the left is an ugly rock ready to abuse boats and boaters who don't make the move to the right. But the move to the right is through shallow flow and is, at best, boat abusive. On another trip down Brush Creek in '97, I flipped my boat here and bruised my left elbow. I have learned to portage here, although most kayakers do scrape down the rapid. But I've never heard anybody say, "it's great fun" or even "it's OK."

Just below this nasty drop comes a six-foot ledge, which leads into a short flume.

After about 20 feet a big boulder forms the left bank while a smaller rock protrudes from the right. The rock on the right is slightly downstream of its brother on the left. All the water pillows off the smaller rock, then flows through a very tight pinch. Try as I might, I just couldn't see myself making the move between the rocks. All I could imagine was my boat trapped in the slot, underwater, coming out like a taco or not coming out at all. This is not a good mental picture when you are on day two of a three and a half month paddling vacation. I portaged. Both Lynn and

Ed elected to run it, and made it look easy.

After a third, tight, bony drop, we came to ugly drop number three. Although a difficult portage, it was an easy decision. Here Brush Creek splits into two as it bends to the right and descends 12 feet. At the bottom the two halves reunite in a small, extremely tight slot with a low hanging tree. The approach to the rapid is only five feet wide, but it widens as you approach the split and becomes very rocky. In fact, except for the tree at the bottom, all I saw was rocks. I watched as Ed and Lynn cleaned it, but my mind was made up. I was in no mood to abuse my boat or my body.

After the portage, the creek narrowed to three feet. After this narrow slide it plummeted six feet into a nice pool. As soon as I reached the pool, Ed began to describe the next rapid. "Steep and very narrow," he said. I was trying to pay attention to what he was saying, but it was difficult to ignore the big snake basking on a rock beside my boat.

As we paddled around the corner a horizon line came into view. While scouting I noticed a very small trickle of water flowing through a smooth flume on the right. An excellent high-water line, I thought to myself. Unfortunately, we were on low water, so that was out. The left side, where most of the water flows, was just like Ed described—steep and very narrow. The top ledge was only a little wider than my canoe. At the bottom of this three-foot ledge, a small hole forms that can make it difficult to maintain the correct line as you plunge down the steep 15-foot slot that immediately follows. Just like clockwork, Ed and Lynn made it look easy. As I approached the tight entrance, I hoped I could match their lines one more time. When I went over the drop I was lined up perfectly. As I slid down the narrow passage, all I had to do was lift my paddle to avoid a bashing and thereby minimize my dental bills. As my canoe entered the pool at the bottom, Ed informed me that was the last big drop.

I had mixed emotions about that. I didn't want the fun to end. However, knowing that the last one-quarter mile of creek remaining was Class III and easy IV gave me time to relax and enjoy my surroundings without worrying about what was around the next bend. What had once been a fairly tight, deep canyon with smooth granite walls was now opening. As we made our way to the take-out we were all smiles, taking turns leading through minor rapids and snapping pictures. It had been a perfect day.

Brush Creek has a fairly small window of runnability, probably about 3–4 weeks in early spring during a good snow year. I was lucky to hit that window. I was even luckier to be with Lynn and Ed on my first trip. Not too many boaters would be willing to adopt a stranger with an open canoe to tackle such a difficult creek. As Ed and I completed the shuttle and we all said good-bye, exchanging phone numbers and addresses, I realized that there really could be steep creeking west of the Mississippi.

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## Candidates for the Board of Directors of American Whitewater

Here are the candidates and their statements for your consideration. Also are some changes to the American Whitewater Constitution. Approval by the general membership is next. So please vote.



### Barry Grimes

Richmond, Kentucky

Having served on the American Whitewater board of directors for four years, I feel the need to humbly seek another term of office. Paddling whitewater rivers continues to flood me and my entire family with enjoyment and I owe the River Gods in a large way.

This year, along with my Woman in Rubber wife, Cynthia, I was able to watch my 12 year old son Daniel paddle the Gauley in West Virginia and my 9 year old daughter Emily, K1 the Hiwassee in Tennessee. Thanks to the many committed and enthusiastic volunteer paddlers within my home organization, The Bluegrass Wildwater Association, of Lexington, Kentucky I have been able to pass the National Paddling Film Festival coordinator's hat that I had worn for 13 of the NPPF's 17 years, into capable hands. Now, as the recently elected chairman of the cyberspace committee charged with AW web oversight, I am looking forward to concentrating on new ways to serve the sport that has so enhanced my life.

With your support, I hope to continue assisting other committed American Whitewater volunteers, board members, regional coordinators and staff in their efforts to create a completely new and redesigned American Whitewater internet presence.

AW's new home on the net, now under construction, is an attempt to engage, inform and entertain whitewater boaters as never before. As currently planned, this next generation, interactive website will become a tool that will grow in power and utility fueled with information provided by every individual

in the boating community- volunteering via their home computer keyboards.

Everyone concerned with gaining more and safer whitewater would probably agree that there is "strength in numbers" - the more voices we have the better our chance to be heard. With the completion of the new AW website, we are hoping that there will be a consensus among whitewater paddlers that there is also "strength in information." The faster we communicate and keep feeding each other what we know - the safer, more current and vigilant we can be in protecting and increasing whitewater opportunities for all of us. In the new millennium Mo' info = Mo'Flow.

I look forward to continuing to serve the River Gods and working with the great American Whitewater membership. It is my hope to give back a little of what they and you all have so generously given to me. Thanks for your support and may your favorite watershed run clean and running full.

### Landis Arnold

Boulder, Colorado

My first term as an AW director was very interesting for me personally. I was happy to see many of the issues that are critical to the paddling world finally rise to the table. My primary area of interest is "Access," because this is one area where problems and opportunities present themselves at every turn. The current Grand Canyon River Management Plan is but one of dozens of "Regulation Processes" which we have needed, or will need to approach with our full attention. Closer to my home, the South Boulder Creek (CO) FERC process, initiated communication with many of the municipal water agencies. These agencies had deemed our paddling across their reservoirs an act of trespass. But, for us, these reservoirs merely provided a natural exit to river runs.

There is very much left to do. We need to clarify our right to legally "navigate" the rivers that we already paddle. The issues vary from state to state, but American Whitewater is the national organization that should take the lead on these issues, while we continue to do our traditional work in safety, community and communication.

### Lee Belknap

Glen Allen, Virginia

I often tell people that Whitewater sports are not addicting. To prove the point I need only to point to myself. After all, I quit every Monday. After 22 years and thousands of Class II to VI whitewater runs, I'm constantly amazed that paddling never gets old.

It's hard to imagine how many of those trips might never have happened had it not been for the hard work of the incredible volunteers, staff, and interns at American Whitewater.

As a board member, I've been very much involved in strategic planning and policy making for the organization. As Safety chairman I've been involved with all aspects of whitewater safety including the new benchmarked whitewater classification system, the Whitewater Accident Database on the website, and the Whitewater Safety Flash Cards. I've also been involved with many access issues including the Watauga and Johns Creek. The website and magazine have been a high priority as well.

As we proceed into the next millennium, the sport will continue to grow, and so will American Whitewater. As a board member, I will continue to work to maintain and build the link between the organization, it's members, volunteers, and staff. It is this solid link that has taken American Whitewater to where it is today, and it is this link that will continue to make it the best organization for whitewater boaters anywhere.

I hope that you will vote to allow me to continue as a board member for the next four years.





## Bob Gedekoh

Elizabeth, Pennsylvania

My first involvement with American Whitewater occurred about 15 years ago when someone conned me into flipping burgers at a rainy Gauley Festival. At that time American Whitewater was a shoestring organization with no professional staff and limited financial resources. But, even then, AW had one tremendous asset, a cadre of bright, dynamic volunteers who were obsessed with whitewater. As my involvement with the organization grew, I was astonished to learn how much these folks, scattered all over the country, were managing to accomplish. I wanted to be part of that team.

I have been a member of the AW Board of Directors for more than a decade and have been the volunteer editor of this magazine for seven years. During that time the membership of the organization has grown tremendously and we now have a talented, professional, full-time staff working on access, conservation and AW events. Nevertheless, the "culture" of the organization has not changed; AW is still primarily a volunteer-driven organization. Most of AW's festivals are organized and manned by volunteers, all of our safety work is done by volunteers and almost all of AW's conservation and access victories can be attributed, at least in part, to volunteer efforts. Volunteers are AW's biggest assets. I hope that will never change.

Editing this magazine is a lot of work but it is a lot of fun, too. Through the magazine I have met thousands of boaters from all over the country. What a motley crew you are! Keeping this in mind, I try to put something in every issue for everyone. With our limited manpower and financial resources, I know this magazine cannot be as slick as some of the professionally-produced, commercial publications you see on the magazine racks.

What I want it to be is a magazine about boaters like you- created by boaters like you- for boaters like you. I want *American Whitewater* to reflect the diversity of our membership and I want it to serve as a forum for our members. A place where you can say what you think. I want American Whitewater to be your magazine.

I want the magazine to be entertaining, but, more importantly, I want it to promote AW's events, safety, conservation, and access agenda. And, most important of all, I want the magazine to inspire you to get involved in American Whitewater. Not just by sending money, but by committing your talents and energy. That's what we really need, because that's what really makes American Whitewater tick.

## Kara Ruppel Weld

Confluence, Pennsylvania

I started paddling in 1979 in the front of an open canoe with my dad on the Youghiogheny River in the town where I grew up- Confluence, Pennsylvania. The next year my Dad built me my own kayak and I discovered slalom racing. A few years later my parents bought Riversport Paddling School and paddling pretty much consumed our lives. Not long thereafter I made the US Team and became National Champion.

While racing I traveled and paddled all over the world. Almost four years ago I retired from competition and started Immersion Research, a

whitewater clothing company with my husband, expeditionary paddler, John Weld. Now, I enjoy running creeks and rivers and play boating.

I want to be a member of the AW board of directors because I appreciate what AW has done for the sport of whitewater. I feel it's time for me to join the extraordinary group of people at AW and give something back to the sport. In regard to AW events and competitions, I can apply the expertise that I gained through slalom racing to the issues facing the sport of freestyle paddling. I sewed as an athlete representative in the Ohio-Penn Division on the National Slalom Committee and I also sewed on the Athlete Agreement Disciplinary Committee.

My experience in the Olympic Slalom movement should be valuable in directing the future of rodeo paddling. It goes without saying that as a serious recreational paddler, I am also interested in the conservation and access issues concerning the nation's rivers. I would be honored to join the board and I am ready to give a tremendous amount of energy to American Whitewater.



## Jennie Goldberg

Seattle, Washington

I started paddling 20 years ago and over the years my life has come to revolve around water. I love whitewater kayaking and slalom racing as well as canoe tripping. I swim in the morning before work. I work as a water quality specialist for the City of Seattle where I manage the electric utility's water quality compliance program. Previously I worked on developing pollution prevention programs for storm water runoff for the City. And, when the day is through, I even sleep on a waterbed.

Water is an important aspect of my life.

Because I spend so much time around, in, and on water, I feel strongly committed to ensuring there will always be plenty of clean and free-flowing water across the United States. That's why I'm interested in serving on the AW Board of Directors.

I would bring my years of experience as a board member with various nonprofit groups, including the Rivers Council of Washington, to assist AW as it continues growing into a cohesive organization and politically effective advocate for rivers. See you at the river on the water!

# Vote for Directors



## Mary DeRiemer

Lotus, California

My name is Mary Hayes DeRiemer and I am honored to be nominated to the AW Board of Directors. Whitewater has profoundly shaped my life. At age 23 I left a nursing supervisor position to follow the call of the river. I've never looked back. The river provided me with life lessons, respect, health, wonder and awe. The river continues to be my livelihood. Through teaching and guiding for the last 20 years, I have shared this passion for rivers with many folks. I'd like to contribute my time and energy as a board member of AW because I believe I can help the organization meet its goals.

## Lynn Aycock

Hico, WV & Roanoke, VA

I have been a white water open boater and involved in riverwork for more than 15 years. I prefer creek boating, and some of my favorites include the Upper Yough (MD), Watauga (NC), Cranberry (WV), and John's Creek (VA).

Most recently a great deal of my time has been spent working with AWA and the Coastal Canoeists purchasing and developing a new take-out for John's Creek. Continued efforts are needed on this project, since a local landowner had a paddler arrested for trespassing, and is claiming his property rights were bestowed by a King's Grant. The current issue is now one of property ownership and the definition of navigability. A team has been compiled to work at restoring access for paddlers to the white water of John's Creek. The effort is being coordinated by AWA, and the team consists of legal experts, surveyors, conservationists, and local boaters. There is much work to be done and I am committed to assist AWA accordingly.

Prior to the "John's Creek Project" and adopting/finish raising our Niece and Nephew, I was very active in the Coastal Canoeists Club, which is primarily a VA/NC paddling club. I served on the Board of Directors for many years including the capacity of Secretary and Cruise Chairman. For more than four years, I scheduled weekly club trips for all boating levels.

As a Director, I will continue to contribute my energy and time towards the goal of boating, protecting and preserving our wild rivers.

## Chuck Estes

Oak Ridge, Tennessee

This is an exciting time of growth and opportunity for American Whitewater. I would like to continue serving on the Board to help AW focus on our core mission areas of conservation, access and safety. I have 20 years of whitewater experience with creeks and wilderness rivers as my favorite runs.

AW's protection of whitewater rivers all over the country has been phenomenal and I would like to continue the work, especially in the Cumberland Plateau and in the Smokies. As our sport grows, AW must provide effective communication tools, so I will support our excellent journal and ever-expanding web page. Our membership efforts should focus on our af-



filiates, events and web page. I will do my best to enhance the effectiveness of our regional coordinators and other volunteers. Our river festivals, rodeos and races are exciting events and a great way to increase the public's awareness of whitewater sport. More importantly, they are a great way for the public to learn about AW's river access and conservation efforts.

I would especially like to work with the Safety Committee to promote safe boating practices, utilizing our journal, web page and other forums. With changes in boat design and equipment and the dramatic increase in the number of whitewater boaters on the river, AW has an opportunity and an obligation to disseminate information regarding safe boating techniques and rescue practices.

seminate information regarding safe boating techniques and rescue practices.

## Chris Koll

Liverpool, New York

Thank heavens the AW board and staff is filled with so many dedicated and responsible individuals willing to shoulder the burden of critical access, safety and conservation issues. That has allowed me to poke around the periphery of the organization for the past 15 years doing most of the fun stuff.

I annually schedule releases on the Bottom Moose and Beaver Rivers, organize the Black, Moose and Beaver Fests, represent private boaters' concerns on the Black, run

the Gauley Fest Silent Auction, coordinate the New York Home Rivers Program and write a bunch of articles for the journal. It hasn't exactly been hard labor—what I do for AW mostly requires that I boat a lot of days, hang out with paddlers and drink beer at festivals. But, hey—I do all those things *well*.

And if reelected, I'll continue to fulfill those duties. Come to think of it—if not reelected, I'll still volunteer for those jobs. But please vote for me anyway—if the Board is composed exclusively of serious candidates...the fun stuff will never get done!



# Vote for Directors



**Bob Glanville**

Boston, New York

I have been on the AW Board of Directors since the mid-80s and for much of that time had the privilege of serving as Secretary to the Board and as a member of the Executive Committee. During that time AW has grown from a 1,500 member, eastern-oriented boating organization with a single part-time staff person to an 8,000-member national conservation organization with a staff of six full-time professionals. Accordingly, I am well acquainted with both AW's accomplishments and the challenges facing the organization.

Through the efforts of its staff and a highly dedicated and energetic volunteer Board of Directors, AW has become the most effective organization in the country advocating for the preservation of our scarce whitewater resources and securing boater access to those waters. This has entailed vigorous participation in hydro relicensing projects throughout the nation and involvement in litigation relating to the right of the public to navigate rivers traversing private property. I have been involved in some of the relicensing work in New York State, particularly as it relates to the Salmon, Beaver and Racquette rivers. In each case, we have secured significant recreational whitewater releases that have benefited many paddlers.

I have also been involved in a number of lawsuits in New York and elsewhere, that have either preserved or expanded the right of boaters to navigate rivers running through private lands, to gain access to navigable waters, or to resist efforts to close rivers to navigation during times of high water. I was also instrumental in establishing and administering AW's insurance program and frequently contribute to an assessment of liability risks associated with AW activities. I ask for your support in providing me with an opportunity to continue to contribute to AW's important mission.

## Sherry D. Olson

Cumming, Georgia

Gaining and maintaining river access is one of most important purposes AWA can serve for its membership and the paddlers of America. If elected as a Board Member, I would like to use my skills as a real estate lawyer and negotiator to further this cause. Having run a small business (law firm) for the past 6 years, I know how to get things done. Implementation and organization are two of my strongest attributes.

I've been paddling since 1984; however, my first real experience with AWA started the first weekend of the Tallulah River Releases in 1997 when I volunteered to help with registration. Through this process, I have been active in the Tallulah Releases and AWA. Tallulah is a true River Access success story for AWA, and as a Board Member, I would like to use the Tallulah Releases as a model to gain access through the Hydropower Dam Relicensing Process to more rivers. Last March, I attended the Hydropower Reform Coalition Symposium to learn more about this process.

The Tallulah Releases is also an "Event" success story as the releases have gained AWA much recognition and increased membership. Events which AWA sponsors or participates in are a means for voicing AWA's Mission.

As a Board Member, I would also like to use my past fund raising experience to tap into new resources for funding AWA's Mission. Kayaking is the latest marketing craze. Most car commercials have either a boat on



top of roof racks or someone running a waterfall. Corporate sponsorship could help AWA fund many more Access and Event projects.

Although I've been paddling for 15 years (10 tandem and 5 solo), I'm still what AWA classifies as an Intermediate Paddler. Not being a thrill seeker, my greatest passion is the wilderness experience of Class I-III whitewater rivers. Once a year, my husband and I take off for an expedition to some isolated river hundreds of miles away from "progress" and "population" to regain our sanity. Weekend trips to our local rivers has reinforced my desire to protect these natural resources as an AWA Board Member.

Whether or not you vote for me, consider the Mission of AWA and GET INVOLVED!

### American Whitewater Board of Directors Election Ballot

Please indicate your approval or disapproval and return to:  
American Whitewater  
P.O. Box 636

Margaretville, NY 12455  
Candidates require a minimum of 50% approval from the general membership to be named to the Board. Ballots must be postmarked by February 20, 2000.

### Changes to American Whitewater Constitution

The following two changes to American Whitewater's Constitution have been approved by the board of directors in 1999. Per the Constitution, we are providing this ballot for your vote. Please check the appropriate box for approval or disapproval.

1. Proposed Change (Section 5, Paragraph 3): The Board of Directors shall be assisted by a ~~four~~ five--member Executive Committee composed of the President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Executive Director for the organization. Explanation: The Board has approved adding the Treasurer to the Executive Committee.
  2. Proposed Change (Section 10, Paragraph 1): Directors shall hold office for a term of ~~four~~ three (3) years. Explanation: To allow increased diversity and turnover on the Board.
- In addition, American Whitewater has made some consistency or gender reference

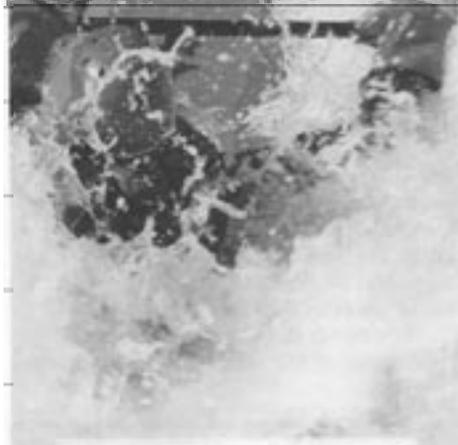
correctness" changes to update our Constitution and Bylaws.

	Approve	Disapprove
Landis Arnold		
Lynn Aycock		
Lee Belknap		
Mary DeRiemer		
Chuck Estes		
Bob Gedekoh		
Bob Glanville		
Jennie Goldberg		
Barry Grimes		
Chris Koll		
Sherry D. Olson		
Kara Ruppel Weld		



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# October Whispers

By Ken Strickland

It was three weeks ago when I first heard it. I was feeling my way through the darkness of the basement, searching for the outside door that was my gate to an early morning run. As I opened the door, it creaked in protest as doors will sometimes do. Yet, there was another sound as well; a sound that I can only describe as a whisper. It seemed to faintly say,

"It will soon..."

But the words trailed away unintelligibly when a slight breeze swirled by and rattled a mound of dead leaves. I paused and listened—cupping my hands near my ears—but there was nothing more. I closed the door behind me and ran out to greet the dawn.

It happened again last weekend. I had awakened early in order to prepare and load my paddling gear for a river trip. As I bumped through the dark basement, the whispers floated out of the darkness and sent cold chills up my spine. As I groped for the light switch I heard,

"It will soon be ..."

Two hundred watts of incandescence erased the darkness and the whispers ceased. I looked to the far dark corner where the voice seemed to have come from, but there was nothing more than a long wooden dowel with the sundry garb of winter's past hanging from it. But, this time there had been no doubt in my mind; I had heard something mysterious that I could not explain. I nervously continued to load my paddling gear, stopping on occasion to listen—holding my breath—but there was nothing more.

Our whitewater trip was as all such trips should be: paddling challenging whitewater in a beautiful, natural setting. There was a nip of fall in the air, noticeable when the bends of the river took us into the shadows. Overhead and still attached to their provider's thin fingers, leaves with tints of yellow and red fluttered in the breeze, testing their wings for an upcoming flight. My core-temp top felt good as the waves broke over the bow of my

kayak, sending crisp sheets of water onto my bare arms and into my face. I also felt those small but chilly streams of water that had breached the security of my spray cover. They seem to always find those warm, hidden reaches of one's anatomy where they're least welcomed.

This morning I arose early in order to check the temperature. As I peered through the window, feathery etchings on the pane framed the thermometer. A skinny 26 degrees smiled back at me. "Burr...!" I said, thinking about the day ahead. *Better get it all together; I'll need a little more warm gear than last week.* I opened the door to the basement then paused as I looked down the steps that led into the dark gulf. Everything I needed was down there ... where the whispers were. With the resolve that I feel at the top of a difficult rapid, I took that first step. I hadn't journeyed far when I felt a presence ... watching me. I stumbled through the mixed shadows of night and dawn and was still some distance from the light switch when the whispers began,

"It will soon be ..."

I wheeled around in the direction of the whispers just in time to see a headless and legless shade flying toward me from out of the darkness ...

"MY TIME!"

I was taken by surprise as handless arms wrapped around me. In a terrific struggle we fell to the floor. The creature soon engulfed me with its very form as we fought! I kicked and punched to no avail. I felt tight grips upon each of my wrists—tenacious, strength-sapping constrictions—and then it began to choke me! I could feel the veins in my neck bulging and my face becoming red ... then the shadows became darker ... ever darker ... and I passed out.

*Woosh!* I came to with a jolt as the first large wave slapped me in the face with its iciness. Then another and another followed in quick succession! *Gosh, where did my summer wages go?* I thought, as I paddled downstream and slid into the shadowed eddy near a large wave. As I took my place in line with the front-surfers gathered there, a bare-armed kayaker looked at me and joked, "Hey, I've got a screen door I'll swap for your drytop!" As I tugged at the tight neck gasket I momentarily considered his offer.

I looked at the goose-bumps on his bare arms and laughed, "No way! This is late October in the mountains ... time for a drytop!"



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# A Paddler Looks at Snowboarding

"Grateful" Ed Ditto

In Maine they have this thing called "winter," which is when certain temperature-sensitive portions of the male anatomy burrow and hide for five months and rivers turn into that cold solid stuff that you use to chill beer. I was astonished to discover that in Maine in February water doesn't flow downhill...it just lays around in piles! But, it was my discovery that kayaking was impossible in the absence of flowing water, which directed my attention towards other pursuits. I am very proud to report that there are other sports in which one may participate when conditions aren't ideally suited for paddling.

No, I mean it! I've seen it with my own two eyes.

For example, there is a sport they call "snowboarding." You might think that this would involve snow and a board of some sort, but you'd be leaving out an important ingredient: lots and lots of cash! It works something like this...

First, you find someone in Maine who owns an old farmhouse and knows how to buy bagels. You write a massive check to "Fron'd's Bed and Breakfast," and you're all set with lodging for the weekend. You now have a place to leave all your spare clothes, except that you won't have any spare clothes because it's winter in Maine and you will have to wear every stitch of clothing you own! You'd be amazed at how much body heat you retain if you stuff your thong with Kleenex...and you'll raise eyebrows at the ski shop!

Yes, your next stop on the way to the ski resort is the ski shop. You're not actually buying skis here, but you want to make sure you have a good coating of wax on the bottom of your snowboard, and you have to have this coating of wax installed by a pro. I'm not sure what kind of wax this is...bee's, ear, or Mr. Zog's Sex, but it is crucial because it is slicker than eel snot and you wouldn't want to be careening wildly down a vertical sheet of ice unless you were standing on something slicker than eel snot.

You might think that's kind of weird, but what do you know? Nothing, which is why you should send your wife to take skiing

lessons after you get to the slopes. You could teach her yourself, except for two facts: 1) You have no idea how to ski, and 2) alimony sucks. Better to pay a ski bunny named "Bunny" a massive check, and she takes your wife off to "ski school" and teaches her how to giggle.

Now you're ready to snowboard, except that you have to buy a lift ticket first! You guessed it...yet another massive check...and then you find the nearest "lift line," which is a lot like a long line of people standing around on eel snot. Eventually you get into a little basket and ride up to the top of the mountain while suspended from a steel cable that looks as if it might twang loose in the fierce arctic wind blasting you in your Kleenex-insulated butt. You might hear that somewhere on the mountain is a lift where you ride in a heated boxcar...possibly called a "ganja-la"...but you'll never find it.

It's possible that you'll have a bit of trouble getting off the lift at the top, but if you should fall down, don't worry...you can always cushion your fall on the pile of people who fell down before you got there. Once you've extricated yourself from that tangle, you have to sit down on the snow (grateful for the Kleenex in your thong) and buckle on your snowboard. And then you're ready! To sit in the lodge and drink hot buttered rum.

But no! There is a whole mountain between you and that rum. And unfortunately, this is where your checkbook fails you. You could offer the lift operators a hundred million billion dollars, and they still wouldn't carry you down the mountain in a sedan chair. You're committed. You have to Take The Plunge.

Now pay attention! There is one key technique in this sport. You must stay "on an edge!" "On the edge of hysteria" and "On the edge of a nervous alcoholic breakdown" do not qualify. Since you're standing sideways on a board, you have to keep your weight on the edge under your toes or on the edge under your heels in order to maintain proper balance. Complicating matters is the fact that you want to keep your weight on the edge that's uphill, because if you dig in your

downhill edge, you will fall down hard enough to crack the mountain. And your arctic-blasted butt!

Which is why you'll notice that snowboarding down a mountain is a lot like throwing yourself on a hardwood floor all day long. At speed! With hypothermia! Sober! Poor! So as you work your way down to the lodge and that rum, you'll need to remember three things:

1) Farts do not have lumps. That's just your snowboard sticking out of there. Get up and try again.

2) Pain is good. You can feel the pain in your broken tailbone because your neck is not snapped. Get up and try again.

3) This is fun, dammit. Get up and try again.

After a full day of snowboarding, you'll be ready to collect your wife and move to the surface of the sun, or hell, or someplace even warmer. So you stop at the lodge after you learn that Bunny invited your wife to the end-of-day "Ski School Wine And Cheese Party," which is a bunch of people sitting around on their sore butts guzzling wine and getting too buzzed to stagger to the cheese tray.

This is where you make an interesting discovery. Note that "hot buttered rum" and "wine and cheese" have an important common ingredient: fat! And why is fat so important, you may ask? Well, if you were three snowboards across at the hips and you fell on your ass all day, you wouldn't notice! You'd have plenty of padding! So in order to snowboard properly, you should drink plenty of rum and wine and eat plenty of hot buttered cheese. Then you'll be good to go. To St. Thomas, I mean, where you can sweat those unsightly pounds away on the beach.

It is no accident that rum comes from tropical countries. Like Vitamin C, rum is fat-soluble. Which is why I recommend that if you're going to go snowboarding, you should make sure that you have plenty of cash, and you should invest it in a tropical vacation. Or in a new kayak.



# British Daredevil Remembered

## Richard Carson 1969-1999

By Elmore Holmes

It was six o'clock in the morning and I was about to give up on a paddling trip. Richard had agreed to be at my house by four o'clock so that we could get an early start for Little River Canyon in northeast Alabama. But as dawn broke into full daylight there was no sign of him. My attempts to call his downtown apartment had yielded nothing but endless ringing.

Richard Carson had not been my first choice of a paddling buddy for the day, mainly because I didn't know him well. My only previous experience with him had been on a trip to the Gauley the previous fall. Although he had proven to be a highly capable boater, he still was not the first person I thought of when seeking a partner for a challenging run like Little River Canyon.

A native of Newcastle, England, Richard had not lived in the Memphis area very long. A gifted biochemist who had earned his Ph.D. by the age of 25, he had moved to Memphis for postdoctoral work at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. He worked long hours and did not frequent canoe club meetings. Calling him had not crossed my mind until Lanier Fogg, one of several people who had turned down my invitation to go paddling, suggested it. I gave Richard a call and our date was set.

But now it appeared that Richard was a no-show. I was back in bed and drifting into

dreamland when the phone finally rang.

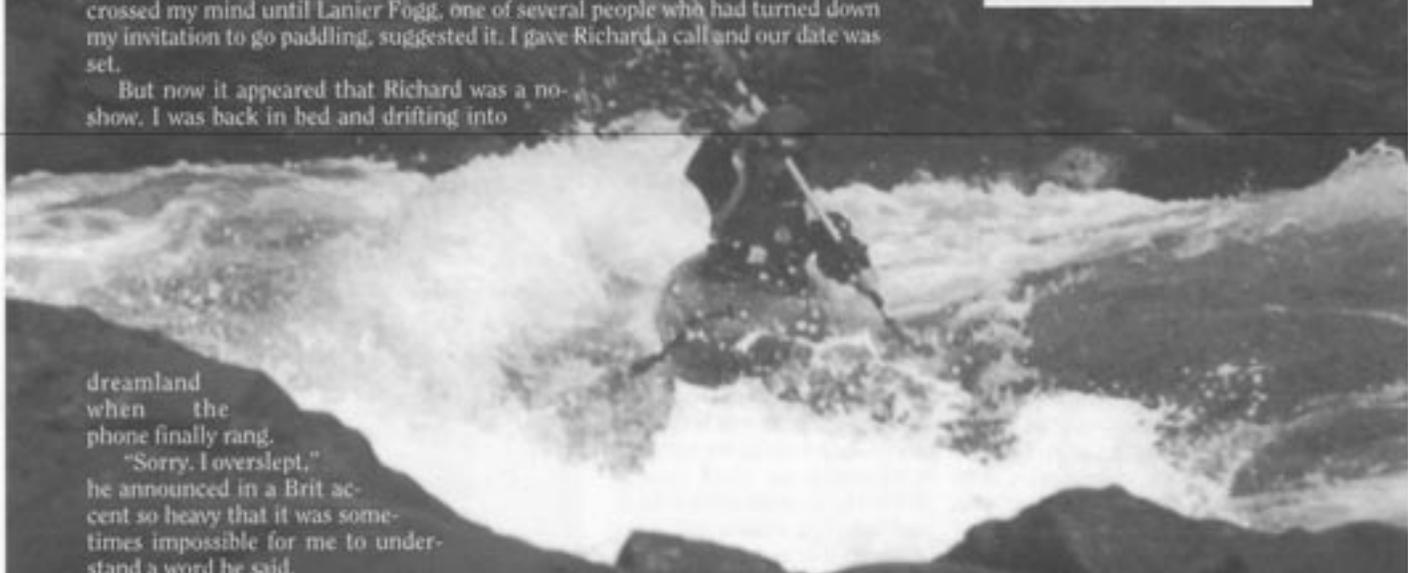
"Sorry. I overslept," he announced in a Brit accent so heavy that it was sometimes impossible for me to understand a word he said.

"Didn't you hear your phone ringing?" I protested.

"Um, no—stayed out rather late last night. But I'm still keen t'paddle," he said cheerfully.

I thought about this. Richard would get to my house around seven o'clock, pushing our arrival at the river past noon. It was early March and we would be hard-pressed to reach the take-out before nightfall. Part of my exasperation was actually a feeling of foreboding that stemmed from my lack of confidence on Little River Canyon. Richard had never run this Class IV-V piece of water and I had run it only once before, with Lanier and several other friends. Though I had gotten down it in one piece, I feared that I would not be able to recognize the major rapids.

Furthermore, I would be paddling a new boat, a Lazer kayak converted to a C-1 that I would later come to regard as the worst boat I have ever owned. It was incredibly tippy and quite difficult to turn, even though it was short by 1995 standards. All in all, I had plenty of reasons to tell Richard to forget it and go back to bed.



**Back: Forest above and rock below frame Richard Cason's descent of Iron Ring on the Upper Gauley in 1994.**

**Inset: Richard does a dance at the Little River Canyon Take-out.**

**Photos by Elmore Holmes**



Rotors spinning, Richard Carson tumbles down Humpty Dumpty in the Little River Canyon in 1995.

"Hurry up and get over here," I told the limey scoundrel.

We wasted little time making the trek across north Mississippi and Alabama and shortly after noon we were dragging our boats down the steep put-in trail. Like everything else about him, Richard's appearance on the river was unusual. His boat was a purple Topolino, which in '95 was much shorter than anything else on the market. His headgear was a bombproof motorcycle helmet with face guard. Richard himself was not a big guy — 5'6" or so, 135 pounds. When he donned his boat and gear he resembled an aquatic cousin of Barney.

Considering Richard's choice of such a stable boat and protective headgear, one might get the impression that he was an excessively cautious river-runner, but he was in fact quite the opposite. Richard approached big whitewater with a distinctively cavalier enthusiasm — a foolhardy approach, perhaps, but I believe it was an expression of Richard's carefree, happy-go-lucky disposition, rather than the result of macho insecurity.

This Little River Canyon neophyte was obviously the more relaxed of our twosome that day. While I nervously wobbled my way downstream, Richard immersed himself in the river as though he had been born of the springs that fed it. Richard's seat-of-the-pants style was most apparent at Pinball, the most difficult rapid on the river. A jumble of huge boulders divides the river into several slots, of which only the one on the right is runnable. From upstream the correct route is by no means obvious and even though I knew which slot to run, I felt it necessary to eddy out and scout the violent, twisting drop below.

As I did so, I called to Richard, who had paddled on seemingly oblivious to the maelstrom ahead. But he either could not or would not hear me and he disappeared over the small entrance falls before I could pop my skirt. Alarmed, I grabbed my rope and

scrambled over the rocks toward what I was certain would be a situation of dire emergency. I fully expected to see Richard in the clutches of a monster hole, or stuffed beneath an undercut rock, or wedged into a boulder sieve, or pinned broadside in one of the narrow slots.

When I crested the final boulder obstructing my downstream view, all I saw was a boat, in an eddy, at the bottom of the drop, with Richard in it, his smiling face beaming at me from deep inside the motorcycle mask.

I managed to relax for the rest of the run, knowing that Richard didn't need my help getting down the river. We reached the mouth of the canyon minutes before nightfall (of course), and we headed back to Memphis, and our respective lives.

I didn't see Richard for several months, but occasionally I would get wind of his latest paddling adventure. That summer, Lanier and I and several friends traveled to Colorado, where an enormous snowpack had produced record water levels that gave us all the paddling excitement we could handle. While there, we heard that Richard had visited Idaho with a few of his friends and run the North Fork of the Payette at a level high in the thousands of cubic feet per second.

Back in the East, Richard and I got together for an Ocoee run now and then. One weekend we ran the Russell Fork and the North Fork of the French Broad, but in general our paths rarely crossed.

In the meantime, I pursued my passion for paddling with others or by myself. I made my first trip to Idaho in the summer of '96, and I went straight to the North Fork of the Payette, eager to find out what all the fuss was about. Tagging along with a group of locals, I imme-

diately found out what the fuss was about. The water of the North Fork Payette is huge; at the same time, the riverbed is steep, technical, and rocky. For the first half-mile of the run, I felt I was simply hanging on, not really in control. In Nutcracker, the second or third rapid on the river, I got thrashed in the biggest hole I have ever seen, and I did something I have done perhaps only one other time in my life: I walked off the river.

After that summer, I don't think I ever saw Richard again. Occasionally I would ask other St. Jude employees if he was still living in Memphis and they would say, "Yeah, he's around, but he's busy at work." If Richard was doing any paddling, he wasn't doing it with anybody I knew.

Richard died on August 14 of this year. A big and powerful, yet steep and technical river was the scene of his undoing: the North Fork of the Payette. The man accompanying him that day said he became stuck in a gigantic hole in a rapid called Nutcracker.

Richard came out of his boat in a daze—perhaps from a blow to the head, although it had seemed that the helmet he wore could have protected him from an atomic explosion. I can only wonder whether his fatal dance with the hole was the result of his nonchalant river-running style.

The sport of paddling is populated with all manner of characters—people who look funny, people who paddle funny, people who say and do funny things. Richard was unique in that he seemed to personify *all* the oddball characteristics. My experiences with Richard were brief but whimsical, and I am grateful that several moments of his short life were spent with me.



Richard Carson, left, enjoys a relaxing moment with Memphis paddler Greg Raymond in Five Boat Hole on the lower Gauley River in 1994.

# It's All About Local flavor

By Sam McLamb

We pulled in to the remote gas station in a one stoplight town on our way to the local play spot. Questioning why there even was a stoplight, we stumbled out of the car and pushed where the sign said pull. Once inside, a muscular man in a cut up tee shirt stepped out of the back with a beaming smile.

**"You goin' whitewaterin' again! Shoot, them's rough waters where you're headed. You college boys are nuts! Did I ever tell you about the time..."**

We stood there in shock as the stranger wove a story of his visit to our school on a party weekend. This was one of those traditional weekends when the entire campus and surrounding community, professors and all, became inebriated and celebrated for days on end. One of those weekends when someone ended up riding a mounted moose head in one of the frat houses, celebrating their birthday wearing only what had been poured on them. Yes, that would be the very same house that our new friend had stumbled into, looking for the next keg and finding instead a shocking view of a very different world. What we had thought humorous had left him horrified.

While most stories I've heard in out-of-the-way places on the way to the river do not involve my alma mater, too many of these stories, sharing worlds and perspectives, are

disappearing. Or rather, they are becoming harder to find.

Lank and Nick's, The Dillard House, Rose's Hideaway, Glisson's. You probably have not heard of these places unless you are a local- or you take the road less traveled through the east. Too often boaters pass by these kinds of places. Instead they seek out the certainty of what the Wendy's Spicy Chicken Filet Combo (Combo #6) will be like. They think that by dodging the "local places" they can avoid the stares, occasional bad food and sermons by old ladies determined to save their souls.

But after a while, Combo #6 becomes just what it is. Generic. Not just the food, but the experience. While you may get to choose whether it is drive through or dine-in, regular or "Super Biggie," it's going to be the same.

continued page 84 ▶

## If It Pays I Won't Do It!

By Chris Kelly  
AWA Board Member

At our annual Gauley Fest meeting, the AW board of directors discussed several of the organizations' recent successes. It was clear to all of us that none of these would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of committed volunteers. In order to share these successes and the effort, which brought them to fruition, we decided to establish a volunteer recognition section in the Journal.

The name of this new column, which appears above, is a quote from Dave Steindorf. Dave, working with his troops from the Chico Paddleheads, became the focal point of AW's successful campaign to reestablish boating on the North Fork of California's Feather River. Dave took time away from his wife Lisa and daughter Molly to learn the complexities of the relicensing process to organize and coordinate volunteers for flow studies and negotiate with the power company for the releases. When California boaters enjoy the beautiful North Fork of the Feather, please give a tip of the helmet to Dave and the Chico Paddleheads.

Across the continent boaters had been enjoying the Class V drops of Tennessee's Watauga River until two years ago, when a new owner closed access to the traditional take-out. After AW bought a small parcel of property, Bob Tonnie's of Gray, TN got to work coordinating the construction and

maintenance of the new take-out. Bob worked with members of the Appalachian Paddling Enthusiasts (APES), notably Dewey Fuller who worked on the road and John Heffernan, who arranged for the survey, and members of the Western Carolina Paddlers and their fearless leaders Chris Bell and Leland Davis. With Bob's guidance they were able to design the signs, construct the staircase and changing screen, and maintain good relations with the neighbors. So, when your boat is pinned in Stateline Falls and you are walking out, remember Bob Tonnie's.

The Arkansas Canoe Club has chalked up two significant victories in the past year for Ozark paddlers. During the most recent session of the Arkansas Legislature several bills were introduced which would have limited access to Ozark whitewater streams which are "frequently paddled." This would have eliminated all the little creeks and probably had an impact on such Ozark jewels as the Cossett River and Richland Creek. The ACC responded quickly and professionally to this threat by mobilizing a large group of knowledgeable volunteers to evaluate the legislation, lobby the members, and work with like-minded organizations. They eventually convinced the sponsor to withdraw the legislation. Speaking as a former legislator who was tangentially involved in the effort, I found it to be an



impressive performance.

Another serious threat to Ozark boating arose in conjunction with the relicensing of the Remmel Dam on the

Ouachita River. The Ouachita, a Class I and II stream west of Little Rock, has a wonderful ledge at Malvern that, with releases, provides regular summer play water for drought-weary Ozark paddlers. Walter Felton, immediate past president of the ACC, was able to secure a position on the Applicant Prepared Environmental Assessment Team and is working to secure regular releases several times a week for recreational purposes. As of this writing it appears that the releases will be included in the final plan. Walter, current ACC president Dave Robertson and the entire membership of the ACC deserve the thanks of all who paddle in the Ozarks.

Anyone reading this column will be able to identify dozens of other people whose serious contributions have not yet been mentioned. Please do so and send me their names. We want to let you know how your fellow paddlers are contributing to the future of our sport.

Send your suggestions (individual volunteers or paddling clubs) to me at: Chris Kelly, 3201 Rodeo Drive, Columbia, MO 65203 or ckelly1022@aol.com.



Flavor continued from page 82

In Desert Solitaire, Edward Abbey wrote that Americans were becoming detached from nature, increasingly viewing our National Parks through the safety glass of the modern vehicle, always pushing for more and faster highways. I have come to realize that this has led not only to detachment from nature, but from other people, perspectives, and ideas. It is all too easy to ignore the world at 70 miles an hour. But, think about it. Every one that you pass has their own set of stories and adventures. And more than likely, they have a lot more information about their home communities than your Gazetteer.



Traveling, be it for paddling, climbing, or anything else, is by its nature an adventure. While the road takes you to new places, it takes you by many other new people and ideas as well. Too often I find myself in a frenzy racing to a river several hours away, surely pushing the tolerance of every high-

way patrolman I pass. But tired, sore, and relaxed is often the best condition for soaking in the local flavor. Coincidentally, this is the state I usually find myself in after a full day of playing on a river.

Conversations can lead to so much, from invaluable information on take-outs, to hot chocolate on a cold, wet day, to simply building better relations with an important community. These exchanges are well worth the extra effort of travelling on a two lane road and taking the time to extend a listening ear.

I never learned the name of the man at the gas station. He shared his stories and hospitality. We shared our time and friendly exchanges.

One day, on our way to another river adventure, he gave us a taste of the pork loin that he was grilling behind the store. "Now fellas, I bet you've never had anything like this before." Though all of us had, we didn't let on. Talk about local flavor!

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## Searching for me =GeeSpot

### Video Review

By Greg Akins

As might be expected, Corran Addison takes an unorthodox approach to instructional videos with the just released Searching for the "Gee" Spot.

Aimed at the advanced intermediate roдео boater, or an advanced kayaker just learning roдео techniques, this video demonstrates all the latest moves. Corran delivers instructional commentary from a studio. Filmed examples and three dimensional computer graphics provide visual support for his instruction.

This format is effective in applying the "first tell — then show — then practice" philosophy of learning/teaching. Corran makes it clear from the start that he doesn't expect anyone to become a superstar boater just from watching this film. Consequently, the moves are reviewed quickly, allowing a greater range of tricks than a more detailed

video might have. Probably, the best way to learn from this video is to focus on a section at a time: watch the "Double Pump" section, go practice, repeat as needed.

Corran's instructions are generally simple to follow. He typically describes a move once and lets the visuals do the rest. Beyond this, while Corran is describing the moves, he conveys an attitude that describes roдео boating as the most fun anyone can have in a kayak. Watching this video should make even the stodgiest boater a hole-loving, end-throwing, fun-hog.

If Corran's attitude doesn't do the trick, the filming that accompanies the commentary will. It is fantastic.

Corran has mentioned in other media that his first love is surfing. To that end there is abundant footage of huge surfwaves on the Ottawa and in British Columbia. Of course, there is also plenty of hole riding, flatwater moves and big drop tricks for appeal to any taste. Long after the video outlives its usefulness as an instructional film, the footage of

Corran freewheeling off 20 foot drops will be fun to watch.

The greatest breakthrough of this film, however, is the computer graphics. Preston Holmes provided innovative computer animations, and the advanced computer technology fits well with the cutting edge roдео. Rather than just showing the movement of the kayak throughout a specific trick, the torso rotation of the paddler and the placement of the paddle are clearly shown. While watching a live paddler practice moves there is often some uncertainty about the exact paddle strokes being used, the computer animation removes this guess work and slowly describes every nuance of performing even the most advanced moves.

This video is a bit too advanced for a beginner boater. Some basic skills should be practiced before trying these more advanced moves. Corran suggests being able to get ends and stern squirts as a prerequisite to these tricks. Once those simple techniques are learned, however, this video will give the determined roдео star all the ammunition necessary to start showing off at their local playspot.

To get a copy of this video call Riot Kayaks at 514.931.0366, surf to [www.riotkavaks.com](http://www.riotkavaks.com), or start harassing your local Riot dealer.

## "Twitch" Spotlights North American Daredevils

### Video Review

By Greg Akins

When I was 9 or 10 years old the kids I hung out with were preoccupied with throwing themselves off buildings. Youthful fearlessness coupled with immature cognitive functions enabled us to engage in this reckless pursuit. First Jeff came to school bragging about a daring plummet from the top of his parents' one-story ranch. The next day Tony checked in, confident he had set the new standard with a plunge from a two-story window. Finally, a kid named Scott iced the cake with the unbeatable feat of hurling himself from a third-story roof. That last accomplishment was barely believable until I saw the new video from Eric Link and Video Link Productions, Twitch.

Tao Berman, Gavin Murdoch, Ben Selznick and Marco Collela play the roles of modern day building jumpers. Fortunately, the jumps are from huge, ugly waterfalls, rather than man made structures. Following a route through the United States, Canada and Mexico, these boys launch themselves into huge flooded western rivers, gnarly holes in Canada and 100 foot staggered drops in Mexico.

The highlight of this video is not so much the skill of the boaters, but rather the mon-

strosity of the whitewater they venture into. Some of the runs included are well known frequently paddled rivers. However, there are also a number of first descents and some high water runs that are, I'm sure, well beyond what the typical Class V boater would tackle. Included are descents of Upper North Fork of the Skykomish, Montana's Big Timber Creek, White Pine Creek and other, mostly northwestern, rivers. The Rogue and Ottawa represent Canada. A healthy dose of Mexican rivers including the Santa Maria, Cascados Micos and Salto fill the last third of the video. The highlight of this Mexican paddling is a first descent of a 75+ feet vertical drop on the Rio Tomato that is claimed as a world record.

At first I was a little put-off by this video, but after watching it a few times it started to grow on me. There seemed to be a lot of

building jumping buddies and the same bragadocio that characterized my high school wrestling team (especially the "empty beer bottle smashed against the head" scene). But when I got past the bravado and considered the difficulty of the whitewater runs featured, I couldn't help but be impressed.

Music and additional footage help to convey an attitude of enthusiasm; these guys emit plenty. The soundtrack is hard-core. Great if you like that type of music and easy to avoid if your television has a volume ad-

justment. Along with the whitewater footage, there are some short clips of snowboarding, snow kayaking and bridge jumping. Finally, following the trend of adding outtakes, Twitch includes a section entitled, "The Lines Nobody Followed."

This is an exciting video to watch. There isn't much play paddling included, which is fine. I enjoy watching steep creek paddling more than cartwheeling and surfing, anyway. The intensity of the whitewater more than makes up for the lack of rock 360s and rail grabs. If you want to add some big drop insanity to your video library and have something to shock the relatives with at Thanksgiving, you can order Twitch by visiting [www.ydolink.com](http://www.ydolink.com), or by calling 509.548.9048.

## Paddle List on Net

"The Paddle List is a low-volume listserv of local TN / KY / NC / SC / GA / WVA / VA paddling interests, such as conservation, access, river conditions, pick-up trips, roll sessions, etc. To subscribe send an e-mail to [wepaddle@usit.net](mailto:wepaddle@usit.net) with "subscribe paddle" (no quote marks) in the body of the e-mail message."

Dale Robinson, Knoxville

# Highlights of the Potomac Festival

## Great Falls Race

Photos by Emmy Truckemiller and Steve Dorick

The Great Falls Race is perhaps the most dramatic and dazzling event of the Potomac Whitewater Festival, which was held on June 6 this year. This downriver race is a 60-second adrenaline-packed descent of 60 vertical feet through Class 5+ Great Falls on the Potomac River, Maryland. This year the race was held on the Maryland side, featuring the top drop, Pummel, Z-turn and the final drop, Horseshoe.

The race was for expert Class 5+ paddlers only who had previous experience running Great Falls. Potential contestants were requested to review the Boater Etiquette statement from AWA regarding boating at Great Falls.

### RACE FORMAT:

The race consisted of individually timed qualifying runs leading to semifinal head-to-head elimination heats, then a final 3-person head-to-head heat. For the men the top 9 finishers of the qualifier runs advanced to the 3-person head-to-head semifinal heats. The top 3 finishers of each of the semifinal heats then advanced to the final head-to-head heat to determine the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. For the women there were only finals, due to the limited number of female entrants.

Photo by Emmy Truckemiller



Photo by Steve Dorrick



Photo by Emmy Truckemiller

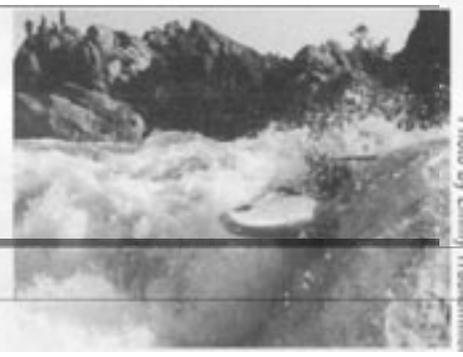


Photo by Emmy Truckemiller

The top 9 men were assigned to semifinal heats based on finish order, as follows:

- HEATA 1st 8th 9th
- HEAT B 2nd 6th 7th
- HEAT C 3rd 4th 5th

With this format, those with faster qualifying runs had easier competition in the semifinal heats. Only the winners of each semifinal heat advanced to the finals. The 6 boaters who did not advance to the finals placed 4 through 9 in the final rankings, with the exact rank determined by their time in the qualifier.

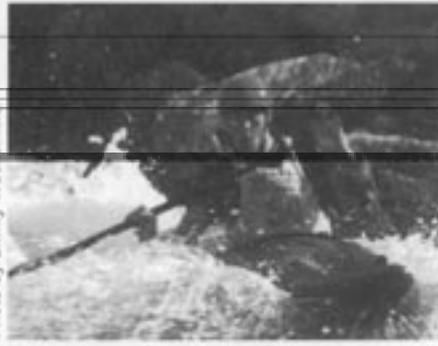


Photo by Emmy Truckemiller



Photo by Steve Dorrick

**RESULTS**  
**FINAL RESULTS AFTER HEAD-TO-HEAD ELIMINATION HEATS**

- 1. Eric Jackson
- 2. Dave Persolja
- 3. Dustin Knapp
- 4. Brian Homberg
- 5. Oliver Grossman
- 6. Tommy Hilleka
- 7. Jimmy Blakeney
- 8. Paul Schelp
- 9. Steve Burnard

**QUALIFIER RESULTS (BASED ON INDIVIDUAL TIMED RUNS)**

- 10. Carleton Goold
- 11. Jason Sullivan
- 12. Bobby Miller
- 13. Jason Hale
- 14. Greg Morrison
- 15. Erica Mitchell
- 16. Chris Good
- 17. Drew Verdecchia
- 18. Bryan Kirk
- 19. Walt Lynch
- 20. Skip Brown - DNF



Photo by Emmy Truckemiller



Photo by Steve Dorrick

# Upper Yough Race Results 1999

Despite a summer long drought which rendered conditions less than favorable, the 19th running of the Upper Yough Race was held in Friendsville, Maryland on September 10. The race had been postponed from July because releases from Deep Creek Lake had been curtailed due to low lake levels.

This year the race course was shortened to include only the most difficult section of the Class IV+ run, from Bastard Falls to FU Falls. This was necessary because the release on race day was limited to three hours. Race organizer Jesse Whittemore of Mountain Surf had hoped that late summer rains would allow a traditional race, but as August progressed it became apparent this was unlikely, so the shortened course and September date were chosen.

"We thought it was important to hold the race, even if conditions were less than favorable. This was the 19th running of the race... in 1999! This way next year's race will be the 20th... in the year 2000!"

Whittemore expressed gratitude to the private boaters and raft companies who graciously cleared the course during the actual event on the day of the event.

For the eighteenth time in 19 years Friendsville native Roger Zbel, owner of Precision Rafting, captured the prize. Giving Roger a real run for his money was veteran hair racer Ted Newton, who paddled a Wavehopper. Veteran slalom racer Brain Homberg came in just four seconds behind Newton.

Perhaps the biggest surprise was dentist Ken Kyser, a dark horse who drilled his usual boating companions and placed fifth.

Stacie Cardin posted the fastest time in the Women's Division. Steve Frazier captured the open boat title, with Nolan Whitesell just a half minute behind.

Place/Name	Class	Time	Place/Name	Class	Time
1 Roger Zbel	WWK1	0:12:08	20 Jim Field	K1S	0:17:41
2 Ted Newton	WH	0:12:22	21 Steve Frazier	OC	0:18:30
3 Brian Homberg	WWK1	0:12:26	22 Nolan Whitesell	OC	0:19:02
4 Steve Kauffman	WWK1	0:12:58	23 Nancy Zbel	K1SW	0:21:01
5 Ken Kyser	K1L	0:13:14	24 Carolyn Dick	K1SW	0:23:13
6 Jess Whittemore	WH	0:13:27	25 John Deardorff	OC	0:23:25
7 Scott Stough	K1L	0:13:38	26 Lindsay Blauvelt	K1SW	0:24:06
8 Charles Stump	K1L	0:14:07	26 Kimberly Hogan	K1SW	??? Time was lost, sorry!
9 Curtis Rohrbaugh	K1L	0:14:08			
10 Jeff Nelson	K1L	0:14:27			
11 Steve Barnard	K1S	0:14:28			
12 Tarion O'Carroll	K1S	0:14:34	WWK1	Wildwater Kayak	
13 Paul Hoda	WH	0:14:59	WH	Wave Hopper	
14 Bob Gedekoh	K1S	0:15:40	K1L	Kayak Long (11' - 13')	
15 Barry Tuscano	K1L	0:15:46			
16 Donald B. Smith	K1S	0:15:50	K1S	Kayak Short (< 11')	
17 Sam McLamb	K1L	0:16:01	OC	Open Canoe	
18 Patrick C. Norton	K1S	0:17:26	W	at end - Women	
19 Stacy Cardin	K1SW	0:17:36			

Top down: Roger Zbel in Triple Drop. Lindsay Blauvelt in Triple Drop. Bob Gedekoh in Triple Drop. "Theme Boater" The Yellow Jacket, Pat Norton in Triple Drop. Scott Stough of Friendsville in Triple Drop. All Photos by Bill Young.



# THE GORE CANYON FESTIVAL GOES BIG



Aaron Phillips  
4<sup>th</sup> place finisher  
in Men's Race  
division about to  
drop Tunnel ...  
nice shot of AW  
hib

Story by Paul Tefft

All Gore photos by Todd Patrick

Once again the Gore Canyon Festival proved to be one of the most popular paddlesports events in the West. Even without the US National Rafting Championship (which was held at Gore in 1998), the festival saw a record number of spectators and competitors. 86 kayakers, 29 raft teams, one cataraft team, 1 C-1er and a crazy kiwi on a boogie board (river sledge), tackled the canyon's Class IV and V rapids.

When the spray settled, perennial contender Charlie MacArthur was at the top of the pack in the Race Division with a time of 20:44 down the 4.5 mile course. Always one of the fastest kayakers in the event, Charlie was finally allowed his shot at the top when course record holder and US Wildwater Champion, Nelson Oldham, failed to show. Nelson didn't return to defend his crown because he was under the gun (a more applicable expression might be - under the roof) trying to get a new house finished. Two other Perception Wavehopper paddlers rounded out the top three, Bryan Dreher took second with Jeff Parker grabbing third.

In the Recreational Division (boats 9 ft - 12 ft) Andy O'Reilly sped into first with Tim Kennedy and Justin Beckwith rounding out the top three. Due to the proliferation of the new short playboats the former rodeo category was split up into two categories. In the Old School Rodeo Division (boats 8-9 ft), Brent Toepper blazed down the course in amazingly fast time for a short boat (23 minutes flat) to take first. Craig Kisker took second and Matt Mattson finished in third in this highly competitive division. In the New School Rodeo Division (kayaks 8 ft and under), Jay

Moffatt cartwheeled down the course into first place with Ants Cullwick and Ken Hoeve squirting into second and third respectively.

A record number of women took to the water with Buffy Bailey returning to regain her former crown as the fastest woman down the Gore. Buffy charged the course in a Perception Dancer, proving that old playboats can still make the moves. Marcia Ready was second in the women's Race Division with Helen Carlson in third. Enough women entered to split the field into two classes. In the newly formed women's Recreational Division Polly Green garnered first place, followed by Jessica Marsan and Lisa Beckstead.

Always the spectators' favorite due to inevitable carnage, rafters made a strong showing again during the event. Team Mongo Products stroked to the top of the pack with a fast time of 25:46. Team Nova led by Greg Caretto also had a fast clean run and paddled into second. Team Clear Creek rounded out the top three. The Clear Creek Team, led by Captain John Rice, holds the course record and is the current US National Champions. (The team that the National Champions fielded in the race was not the same as the one that one the US championships, so the results were not considered a major upset.) Team Clear Creek will still represent the US in the World Championships next February in Chile.

As always a blow out bash was held at the Pumhouse Campground after the event. Innumerable kegs of Fat Tire Ale, live music and sponsors and vendors' booths all helped make the Riverside Rage one of the biggest paddlesports parties of the year. Over ten thousand dollars in cash and prizes were awarded to the top competitors during the event's award ceremony. To keep the dancing crowd stoked, the event coordinators kept a constant stream of swag raining down from the stage into the crowd. The Rage reached its crescendo when extreme soul boater Ed Lucero took a slug from a bottle of Bacardi 151 and then jumped onto the crowd for a body surf. After a great day of competition, Ed surfed across the cheering crowd's hands under the stars, next to the mighty Colorado River.

For more information on the Gore Festival surf into [www.environmentalsports.com](http://www.environmentalsports.com) or [www.aw.org/](http://www.aw.org/). To order the new video release "The Best of Gore" (which features amazing kayak and raft crash and burn footage captured during the Gore Race's first decade) send a check for \$29.95 to Enviro-Action Sports, PO Box 4784, Aspen, CO 81612 or call the Nantahala Outdoor Center @ 800-367-3521. To order the 1999 Competitor's Race Video call (303) 444-8414 or to obtain stills from the 1999 event contact Todd Patrick @ (970) 925-9181.

C-1er Mike Costas above Tunnel Falls



Above: The Creature Craft at the bottom of Tunnel Falls (this funky new raft design is supposed to re-right itself, which it did in Gore Rapid but didn't after getting flipped in Tunnel)

# GORE RACE RESULTS

Photos by Todd Patrick

## Division: Race/Kayak 12 ft. and up/Men

Name	Bib	Start Time/ Finish Time/ Course Time
1 Charlie MacArthur	2	01:30:00 01:50:43 00:20:43
2 Bryan Dreher	1	01:30:59 01:52:05 00:21:05
3 Jeff Parker	24	01:31:59 01:53:35 00:21:35
4 Arron Phillips	112	01:33:00 01:56:08 00:23:08
5 Dave Zinn	10	01:34:00 01:57:54 00:23:53

## Division: Recreation /Kayak 9 to 12 ft./Men/Includes T-Slalom

Name	Bib	Start Time/Finish Time/ Course Time
1 Andy O'Reilly	29	01:53:59 02:15:46 00:21:46
2 Tim Kennedy	121	01:37:00 01:59:03 00:22:03
3 Justin Beckwith	16	01:50:00 02:12:25 00:22:25
4 Tor Anderson	82	01:39:59 02:02:31 00:22:32
5 Charlie Ebel	14	01:52:00 02:14:33 00:22:33
6 Karl Lavter	4	01:48:59 02:11:40 00:22:41
7 Gary Chrisman	15	01:53:00 02:15:41 00:22:41
8 David Dill	69	01:46:00 02:08:54 00:22:54
9 Alan Hadley	183	01:38:00 02:01:05 00:23:05
10 Jono Stevens	104	01:45:00 02:08:12 00:23:11
11 Polk Deters	205	01:57:00 02:20:21 00:23:21
12 Corey Hall	38	01:56:00 02:19:36 00:23:35
13 Mike Pagel	8	01:51:00 02:14:35 00:23:35
14 Corey Hall		01:56:00 02:19:36 00:23:35
15 Christian Mason	87	01:44:00 02:07:55 00:23:55
16 Ken Ransford	123	01:43:00 02:07:41 00:24:40
17 Jack Ferguson	124	01:42:00 02:06:53 00:24:53
18 Bill Bevins	0	01:46:59 02:12:59 00:25:58
19 Randy Kennedy	128	01:41:00 02:07:23 00:26:22
20 Paul Byars	27	01:54:59 02:33:52 00:38:52
21 John Mattson	122	01:39:00 5:15+

## Division: Old School Rodeo/Kayak 8 - 9 ft./Men/Includes Rpm

Name	Bib	Start Time/ Finish Time/ Course Time
1 Brent Toepper	175	02:28:59 02:52:00 00:23:00
2 Craia Kisker	229	01:59:00 02:23:18 00:24:18
3 John Mattson	104	01:58:00 02:22:22 00:24:22
4 Forrest Luna	86	02:24:59 02:49:30 00:24:30
5 Frank Pickell	101	02:09:59 02:34:39 00:24:40
6 Clay Staley	34	02:28:00 02:52:41 00:24:40
7 David Kahn	102	02:08:59 02:33:42 00:24:43
8 Sean Glackin	114	02:04:59 02:29:45 00:24:45
9 Craig Frithsen	97	02:10:59 02:35:47 00:24:48
10 John Mclean	89	02:13:59 02:39:01 00:25:02
11 T J Gulizia	53	02:32:59 02:58:09 00:25:09
12 Joe Blair	117	02:03:59 02:29:11 00:25:11
13 Crash Lowe	5	02:26:59 02:52:15 00:25:15
14 Kevin Fisher	55	02:21:59 02:47:56 00:25:56
15 Brendan Kiernan	88	02:24:00 02:49:57 00:25:56
16 Iain Murray	242	02:17:59 02:44:08 00:26:09
17 Chad Gorby	62	02:18:59 02:45:14 00:26:15
18 Tom Aex	174	02:03:00 02:29:22 00:26:21
19 Rick Ihuken	57	02:22:59 02:49:30 00:26:30
20 Ian Schwendly	94	02:11:59 02:38:44 00:26:44
21 Don Hillmoth	93	02:12:59 02:39:55 00:26:55
22 Paul St. Ruth	189	02:01:00 02:27:56 00:26:56
23 William Finnoff	187	02:00:00 02:26:59 00:26:59
24 Clay Jutte	37	02:01:59 02:29:00 00:27:00
25 Chris Meskow	73	02:15:59 02:43:01 00:27:01
26 AirJeff Loy	67	02:19:59 02:47:41 00:27:42
27 Mike Ruby	115	02:05:59 02:34:51 00:28:51
28 Dan Crain	70	02:16:59 02:46:07 00:29:07
29 Dan Stetz	74	02:14:59 02:44:37 00:29:38
30 Doug Doty	108	02:08:00 02:38:24 00:30:24
31 Pat Barill	113	02:06:59 02:38:16 00:31:16
32 Daniell Mitchel	238	02:30:00 5:15+
33 Blair Clark	58	D.N.S.
34 Barry Adams	35	D.N.S.

## Division: Rodeo/Kayak 8 & Under/Men

Name	Bib	Start Time/ Finish Time/ Course Time
1 Jay Moffaatt	193	02:38:00 03:01:45 00:23:44
2 Ants Cullwick	17	02:37:00 03:01:18 00:24:18
3 Ken Hoeve	176	02:33:59 02:58:46 00:24:47
4 Greg Francis	28	02:39:59 03:05:28 00:25:28
5 Chad Wamack	32	02:38:59 03:05:03 00:26:03
6 Johnathon Fuqua	60	02:36:00 03:02:16 00:26:16
7 Earl Richmond	118	02:31:59 02:58:22 00:26:22
8 Andy Blakeslee	42	02:30:59 02:57:58 00:26:58
9 Todd Andrew	71	02:35:00 03:02:57 00:27:57
10 Jeff Maling	30	D.N.S.

## Division: Kayak /Women

Name	Bib	Start Time/ Finish Time/ Course Time
OVER 9 FEET		
1 Buffy Bailey	109	02:41:00 03:03:52 00:22:52

2 Marcia Ready	66	02:42:00	03:08:06	00:26:06
3 Helen Carlson	23	02:51:59	03:18:30	00:26:30
4 Claire Carren	59	02:48:00	03:19:19	00:31:18

## UNDER 9 FEET

1 Polly Green	107	02:44:00	03:09:36	00:25:35
2 Jessica Marsan	130	02:44:59	03:11:11	00:26:12
3 Lisa Beckstead	168	02:46:59	03:13:36	00:26:37
4 Andi Burnie - Fortin	170	02:42:59	03:09:48	00:26:48
5 Bradley Richmond	31	02:50:59	03:18:02	00:27:02
6 Dawn Powell	54	02:48:59	03:16:06	00:27:06
7 Courtney Lynch	7	02:50:00	03:18:02	00:28:02
8 Niki Mehall	85	02:46:00	D.N.F.	D.Q.

## Division: Rafts - Men

Team Name	Captain	Bib #	Start Time/Finish Time/Course Time
1 Mongo Products - Timberline	Mongo	52	03:02:59 03:28:46 00:25:46
2 Team Nova	Greg Caretto	21	03:32:59 03:59:32 00:26:32
3 Another Clear Creek Team	John Rice	19	03:00:00 03:26:50 00:26:51
4 Rio Bravo / BWR	Rick Bravo	65	03:45:00 04:11:50 00:26:51
5 Timberline Blackjack	Billy Mattison	63	03:06:00 03:32:52 00:26:52
6 Red Headed Stepchildren	Kate Lavassevr	72	03:26:59 03:53:56 00:26:56
7 Two Dudes from Salida	Mike Whittington	91	04:24:00 04:50:57 00:26:57
8 Timberline Dolly Bongor	Marshall Kingler	64	03:57:00 04:24:49 00:27:50
9 Team Flashback	Dan Burkes	50	04:00:00 04:28:03 00:28:03
10 No Sub for Experience	Colin Carpenter	68	03:15:00 03:43:12 00:28:12
11 Riff Raft I	Big Bad JT	79	03:09:00 03:37:25 00:28:25
12 Down River	John Solanik	11	04:05:59 04:34:32 00:28:32
13 American Adventure Expedit.	Jay McGuire	116	03:54:00 04:22:40 00:28:40
14 Riff Raft II	Blair	78	03:24:00 03:52:51 00:28:50
15 Sub Terminal XTC	Dan Skala	119	04:17:59 04:47:32 00:29:32
16 Renagades	Max Young	92	04:09:00 04:38:35 00:29:34
17 Lakota One	Mike Reid	36	03:18:00 03:47:43 00:29:42
18 Team Sony	Joe Russo	239	03:47:59 04:17:49 00:29:49
19 STINKY PINKY!!!!!!	John Ehriek	240	03:38:59 04:09:37 00:30:37
20 BWR: Rook Takes Queen	Larry Davidson	120	03:42:00 04:13:29 00:31:29
21 Monarch Guides	Todd Toledo	105	03:21:00 03:53:06 00:32:06
22 Up Tha Creek	Rick Covington	237	03:11:59 03:44:40 00:32:40
23 Cogan's Heroes	Tom Zimmek	173	04:15:00 04:47:45 00:32:45
24 Creature Craft	Darren Vancil	181	04:03:00 04:37:59 00:34:59
25 Splatter Puppets	Tammy McDermott	75	03:35:59 04:11:21 00:35:21
26 Scraps	Rob Peeters	80	04:27:00 05:03:20 00:36:20
27 Dynamic Adventure	David Whimmer	18	04:11:59 5:15+

## WOMEN

1 Timberline Bugs & The Flygirls	Katherine Bugby	25	03:29:59 04:00:03 00:30:03
2 Rugs on Rubber	Darcy Geachter	81	04:20:59 04:53:52 00:32:52

## Division: Alternative

Team Name	Captain	Bib #	Start Time	Finish Time
1 BOC - Topo-Duo	Eric Bader	12	02:21:00	02:48:37 00:27:37
2 Mick Costas - C1		106	02:53:00	03:23:09 00:30:10
3 Gary Pera - Boogie Boarder-river sledge		84	02:53:59	03:26:44 00:32:44
4 Wonder Raft - Cataract David Axelrod		39	03:51:00	04:29:49 00:38:49
5 Fortin & Mahall - Topo-Duo		171	01:35:00	02:22:58 00:47:59
6 David Zinn - C1		10	03:50:00	5:15+

## Division: Recreation/Kayak 9 to 12 ft./Men/Includes T-Slalom

Name
1 Tim Kennedy
2 Alan Hadley
3 John Mattson
4 Tor Anderson
5 Randy Kennedy
6 Jack Ferguson
7 Ken Ransford
8 Christian Mason
9 Jono Stevens
10 David Dill
11 Bill Bevins
12 Corey Hall
13 Karl Lavter
14 Justin Beckwith
15 Mike Pagel
16 Charlie Ebel
17 Gary Chrisman
18 Andy O'Reilly
19 Paul Byars
20 Daniell Mitchel
21 Polk Deters



▲ Team Black Diamond goes into the drink in Tunnel



▲ The "New" Tunnel is plenty of proficient at flipping rafts!



▲ The rare boof of the "New" Tunnel Falls

▼ Topo Duo team of Fortin and Mahall gets buried in Tunnel



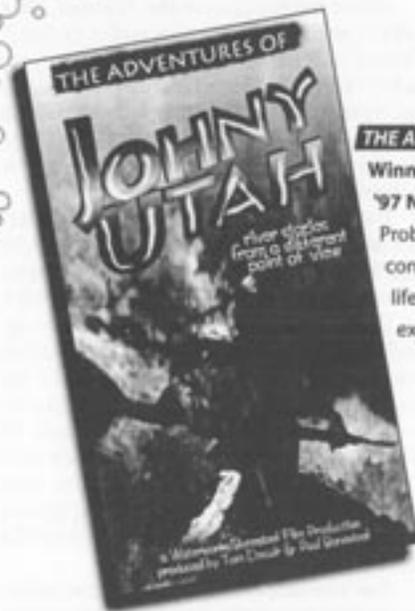
▲ Topo Duo team of Fortin and Mahall rolling up at the bottom of Tunnel



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## Modifying Plastic Boats

By Dana Castro

15 years ago the only way to have a unique boat was to say, "Make my Dancer PINK!" Since then a market that was dominated by one boat is now shared by dozens. And yet the demand for individual performance and expression is not sated, but growing stronger, sprouting into more and more directions. One such sprout is the growing number of boaters who modify their own (plastic) boats in an effort to better match their own weights, strengths, paddling styles, and tastes.

Operating independently, with no commercial incentive to market techniques or broadcast results, boaters have generated an amazing proliferation of techniques, from neo-Cave Man (aka the "Toyota method") to advanced Boolian-Techno Nerd in nature. Being afflicted with what my wife, friends, and I have been forced to accept as an incurable, chronic disease (Chronic Boat Tinkering Disorder, or CBTDD for short), I have sprouted off in my own direction. Exciting trial and saddening (and expensive) error have led me to a technique in which I have a cautious degree of confidence.

This technique will allow for a (relatively) high degree of control which will produce a (sometimes) nearly factory look to the finished product. The boat modified as below is likely to be safer than those modified by the crude application of vast force, which may produce lopsided asymmetric modifications with weak spots or hidden cracks. However, no matter the level of sophistication with which you approach your unsuspecting polyethylene victim, if you choose to modify a boat you **MUST** understand "THE THREE RULES OF BOAT MODIFICATION..."

One is that flatter boats are (geometrically) less strong than full volume boats to begin with. When modified, the risk of pinning, wrapping, and paddler entrapment leading to drowning and/or injury may be **INCREASED!** As a result you **MUST** exercise careful judgement about **WHERE** and **WHEN** to paddle a modified boat. If you aren't willing to **REMAIN ATTENTIVE** to this issue, then don't modify your boat!

Secondly, do not expect a boat manufacturer to honor a warranty on a modified boat. Successful modifications may keep a paddler happy and in the purchased boat, rather than saying disappointed things about the boat and then moving on, frequently to another manufacturer's entry. Nevertheless, do not expect a happy reception when you call with a problem. If you damage your boat in the process of attempting to modify it, no individual or company is going to accept responsibility for it.

Thirdly, even though the techniques below will give you a high degree of control, and even some ability to reverse changes you have made, you must accept the risk that you may not like your finished product. Modifying plastic is certainly still a "black art," and if your "colors run together," you must be willing to accept this as the price of exploring the realm of creativity. So again, if and only if you are willing to accept these premises and to remain attentive to them, should you try to tune into the "artist" in you and put your boat on the easel I will describe.

The modifications are done with the application of heat and pressure and allow the boater to subtract from (or add to) the volume of the boat, to make small redistributions to the volume, to add foot bumps, and to change the nature of the rocker characteristics. This can be done without cutting or welding the boat, and it allows substantial room for creative experimentation and expression of individual taste, without the tremendous investment of time associated with the development of the plug and mold necessary for a composite boat. The changes, if successful, may allow smaller, less strong paddlers, including women and older paddlers, to do more easily specific "moves," and for paddlers in general to expand their technique and experience.

The critical element in reshaping a boat is to do it in a controlled manner. This requires the construction of a rudimentary "boat jig." To achieve a permanent and strong result, boat plastic must be heated not only completely through its thickness, but also to a point that the molecular bonds begin to loosen. At this point it is very soft and relatively little force will induce a change in shape. Control over the amount of force, the location of the force, and the distance over which the force is allowed to exert itself is critical to achieving the desired degree of change, and *only* the desired degree of change. (That is, if you get the plastic hot enough to loosen the molecular bonds and try to use the "Toyota Method," you will end up with a new type of boat called a "2-D"). As well, the jig holds the position while a slow and complete cooling process occurs. All this will increase the tendency for the modifications to be permanently maintained despite exposure to sunlight. Inadequate, irregular, or too rapid heating (and cooling) may surprise the boater with all sorts of strange rearrangements of the plastic when the boat is taken down off the roof after driving to the river on a sunny day!

The project will require two saw horses, about four 8 foot 2x4s, some 3/4 inch plywood, and a dozen or so 3 inch drywall screws. A few tools will be needed, including

a propane torch, at least four 18 inch or longer bar clamps, and a saw (such as a saber saw) to cut rough forms out of the 2x4s. A power screwdriver (or drill) with a Phillips head driving point is lots of help, but not absolutely necessary. This will sound complicated, but really, I promise, it's not that big a job!

To begin with, measure the boat and subtract about 4 feet from the length. Set the two saw horses this distance apart. Take two eight foot 2x4s and, using 3 inch drywall screws, attach them to the outer ends of the saw horses such that there is a distance between them the width of the boat. (That is what the power screwdriver is for; if you can screw those puppies in by hand you're strong enough so that you don't need to modify your boat!) These 2x4s will be referred to as the "longitudinal stringers" of the boat jig.

Take the walls out of the boat (but leave the seat in), and remove all hardware and grab loops from the decks, including the drain plug. Put the boat on the saw horses so that it nestles between the lengthwise 2x4s, overhanging each saw horse at the ends by the same amount. Cut a piece of 3/4 inch thick plywood, 3 feet long by 2 feet wide and put it on the saw horse supporting the end of the boat — stern, probably — that you wish to modify first. (The plywood supports the bottom of the boat, as opposed to having it rest on the cross bar of the saw horse, which would dent the bottom.)

Adjust the position of the plywood piece so that the end extends to the end of the boat. Without causing the boat to move, rope down the **OTHER** end of the boat firmly to the jig so that if one pushes down forcefully on the end to be modified, the other end will not rise into the air. (The intended victim must not be allowed to escape!)

The next step will be to cut a "compression piece." This is a section of 2x4 about 20 to 24 inches long, which is placed lengthwise and on edge on the center of the deck, which will be the region to which pressure is applied. (As I will expand on later, the point to which pressure is applied should **NOT** be the area that is heated and changed.) The profile to which this piece will be cut is made by holding the 2x4 edgewise on the deck and, using a marker or pencil, tracing the deck profile onto the wood. Cut it to the profile and set this "compression piece" aside for the moment.

Now you have a decision to make: whether you want to change the rocker. Serious rodeo competitors will have their own preferences here (usually less rocker), but for the all around recreational play boater who will spend more time spinning in holes and surfing waves than counting cartwheels, my rec-

## Modifying Plastic Boats

ommendation would be to add some rocker, especially to the stern. It helps with back surfing and flat spinning and does not noticeably hurt stern squirting or speed. A little extra rocker may also help reduce the risk of pitons when rapids are actually run. In as much as the boat will tend to increase its rocker as the decks are flattened due to the geometry of a boat hull, to add a lot of rocker, you may (with the marker pen), accentuate the elliptical curve on the compression piece. To add only a little bit of rocker, use the existing deck profile without modification. Cut the compression pieces along the marked line with a saber saw (or other), and place it on the center of the stern deck.

The second means of controlling the induction of rocker is by adjusting the fore and aft location of center of support under the boat (the plywood piece). This is accomplished by cutting a 3 foot 2x4 piece and placing it crosswise on the longitudinal stringers UNDER the plywood (but toward the end of the boat). The plywood is then supported partly by the saw horse and partly by the extra 2x4 piece. By changing the position of this 2x4 piece you will end up adjusting the point at which the hull is supported. If the support point under the boat is moved toward the cockpit, the tendency to induce rocker will be lessened. Taken to an extreme in which the pressure is applied while the bow is "cantilevered" or unsupported from beneath, this may even reduce existing rocker, while still reducing the volume of the boat. Conversely, if the (plywood) support point is moved towards the end of the boat the tendency will be to generate much more rocker.

Now, from 2x4 stock, cut two more 3 foot pieces. Put the compression piece back on the deck, right in the center. Put one 3 foot 2x4 piece crosswise towards one end of the compression piece and attach each end of this cross piece to the longitudinal stringers (that parallel the boat) with bar clamps set to a light pressure. Put the second piece at crosswise towards the other end of the compression piece and use the other two bar clamps to hold this one in place, also with light pressure.

Kneeling behind the boat look carefully at the deck profile and fix it in your mind. Measure the depth of the boat at selected spots, if you are not sure of your ability to keep the original profile in mind. On second thought, measure the boat even if you are sure of yourself! After a suitable period of time in which you admire your handiwork, you should now crank in about 15-20 lbs. pressure on each clamp. If your mouth is too dry to spit go no further; otherwise, you are now ready to light up the torch.

To flatten the boat with rocker controlled by the above mechanisms, heat the outer edge (i.e. the side) of the boat in an area about 1 inch wide at the stern expanding to about 3 inches wide at a point just aft of the cockpit. If you only want to flatten the ends of the boat (but not the cockpit region), do NOT heat the sides of the boat in the cockpit region. Heat both sides either by repeated passes with the

torch. The torch works very well; it generates lots of heat and is very precise and controllable. However, you must keep the torch moving or you will melt and burn the plastic (bad). Holding the flame more nearly parallel to the plastic as opposed to perpendicular to the surface may help. The critical factor here is patience.

After a while, perhaps five or more minutes, the plastic, which is now about hot enough to burn skin, will get a characteristic shine that you will learn to recognize and will begin to deform with the clamp pressure applied to the compression piece. As if by magic the clamps will seem to get loose; the boat will only deform to that point. The clamps can be tightened up a bit at a time to make the boat flatter as desired. Keep a close eye on the degree of rocker while doing this and control the induction of rocker by adjusting the center underneath the boat as described above. Again, the key element in the heating is to get it really hot, just short of the temperature at which the plastic will sag without compression, but not so hot as to burn or actually melt the plastic. It is also of note that different plastics need different amounts of heat; more on this point later. Eventually the boat will become "flat enough." This is of course where the art blends with the science and where the fun comes in. However, do not accept advice from spectators drinking beer! Allow the entire setup to cool overnight and then repeat the process for the other end of the boat, if desired.

A second type of modification involves inducing concavity in the decks. This can be done using the same set up. However, it should be done as a separate step; i.e., not at the same time as the flattening process. Essentially the difference is where the heat is applied. To induce concavity into the deck apply pressure using the compression piece and then heat two long skinny triangular bands of deck surface, parallel to the compression piece. The imaginary triangles are about an inch wide near the tip of the boat and about 3 inches wide as you approach the part where the deck starts to slope up to the cockpit. Do NOT heat the deck closer than about 2 inches from either side of the compression piece or you will end up not with a concave deck but instead with a "V" shaped indentation in the rear deck.

If you do the bow and there is insufficient room left for your feet, do not despair. To make my boat perform the way I wanted I had to get it down to the point that, with my size 9 feet and 30 inch inseam, I could not comfortably get my feet into the boat with neoprene socks on, much less booties. So a third type of modification is the addition of small foot bumps.

The most difficult part of this process is simply finding a rounded piece of plastic or metal that can be used to push up on the inside of the deck in the appropriate position, which is at the ball of the foot. No special jigs are needed here, just a 1x2 or similar piece of wood about three feet long and a couple of 4

inch lengths of 2x4. One end of the 1x2 pushes UP on the rounded piece of material, and the 2x4 pieces create a fulcrum a foot or less back. By pushing DOWN on the end that sticks out of the cockpit, a considerably upwards force can be generated in a controlled fashion.

UNIFORMLY and gradually, heat an oval "donut" over the foot spot, about 8 inches by 5 inches, while exerting pressure up from the inside. Don't heat the "hole" of the "donut," (the very center of the oval.) Presto, a foot bump will form. HOLD the pressure until it cools by tying or wedging the lever arm in position. Again, be patient, go slow and it should work out fine. These won't come out looking like they came out of a mold, but if done carefully the appearance is not unattractive. This, by the way, is the only instance in which you will apply pressure (pretty much) directly to the area you are heating.

Beyond these specific directions there are some generic issues to understand when working with plastic. One is that, as mentioned above, there are several different types of plastic: X-linked and Linear being the two most common. Cross linked is considered tougher and more expensive, but difficult to repair. Linear is softer, often making a heavier boat, but is easy to repair. Cross linked will absorb a great deal more heat from your torch, perhaps twice as much or more, before its shape will easily and permanently change. This can be nerve wracking but just be patient, eventually X-linked will soften fully and, if the pressure is applied in the right places, the deformation will be clean and controlled with no wrinkles, sags, or bubbled areas. Just keep the torch moving slowly, never pausing and burning the surface of the plastic. As mentioned, achieving the correct temperature is one of the factors that necessitates the boat jig. With this much heat, uncontrolled pressure even of feet or hands, much less Toyotas, tends to cause excessive, localized deformations that will invariably be asymmetric fore and aft and side to side.

As mentioned above in most situations, the heat must not be applied to the place that is under pressure. Pressure is applied "remote:" from the heated regions. Pressure applied to cold plastic will stretch or bend the adjacent (hot) plastic which will "distribute" the deformation over a larger area. This should produce nice smooth lines and no wrinkles. Beyond that be sure that there is only one way the plastic can go as it becomes soft. It's sort of like cutting a tree so it will fall in the direction you want; you have to visualize ahead of time what will happen to the plastic as it becomes soft.

Another point worth mentioning is that while you can modify boats quite extensively with these techniques, you can't make a silk squirt boat out of a sow's Topolino! Better results will be obtained by making subtle changes to a boat that started out being at least OK. It takes a few cojones to do this to a good boat, but these modifications tend to be reasonably easy. The uninitiated who try

to make a fighter plane out of an old blimp will just end up with a dead old blimp.

Finally, what to do if a bubble or sag occurs? Well, this is the only situation in which you put pressure directly onto a heated area. In essence, heat the plastic and then press a large auto body squeegee (or two) against the sag until it looks right. Wear gloves! Then hit it with water from a spray bottle to freeze it in place. If you don't like the result repeat the process until you have it right. This, by the way, is the only situation in which you may rapidly cool the hot plastic. Allowing the bonds to reform slowly will substantially increase the permanence of the changes so that even when baking in the sun on the roof of the car, the boat will hold its shape. As a last resort, a palm sized random orbital sander will do a surprisingly good job at smoothing out roughened or slightly wrinkled plastic. A few quick torch passes will restore the shine.

Assorted details include the (obvious) fact that you will in most cases have to cut down the end regions of the mini-cell walls. Remember, as I stated at the outset, these modifications may reduce the strength of the boat. Don't forget the **THREE RULES OF BOAT MODIFICATION** when you get on the river!

Foam foot blocks may in some cases be necessary if the foot braces no longer fit. Use mini-cell for this purpose. Start out with triangles that are too big and cut and sand until they fit. Proper fit should leave a slight

clearance between the block and the inside surface of the deck, so that the foam does not try to re-expand the boat shape. The best sanding material is 36 grit sandpaper, no higher. If you like, you can glue them to what is left of the front wall for greater security. When done right they are real comfy and warm and secure, and if you do piton, you can't slip past them like you can with foot pegs.

At this point one might say, "why not just get a squirt boat?" Well, a squirt boat is a different type of animal so to speak. As a longtime, year-round squirt boater (I'm in recovery from that one) on all sorts of water including the Upper Yough, I can tell you that there is a drastically different feel to a boat with a low volume cockpit region as compared to a playboat with shrunken ends. The squirt boat does its own special things that nothing else in the world can duplicate. However, while very small, these modified plastic boats are comfy, they have nice back rests, they float nicely (even in rapids), you can key hole exit from them, and, of course, you can smash them on rocks all day because they're plastic. As I get old and weak I've come to appreciate these things.

Now once again, let me emphasize **RULE NUMBER ONE**, the safety issue... These modifications will detract somewhat from the resistance of the boat to fold its ends over obstructions. Certainly do not use a boat modified in this manner for steep or shallow rocky or wooded creeks, and be even more

cautious than normal when encountering pinning possibilities in general. That said, I do find that the boats that I have modified this way have been able to take a terrific pounding on rocks at play spots without complaint. They turn on a dime and, with practice, the attitude (bow up or down) of the boat can be controlled quite precisely. Whatever modifications are made, they should not be done in a manner that will interfere with the ability to make a "key hole" type of exit.

The point, though, is not to go "crashing down hard stuff," but to have fun, exercise, and challenge in safer places where the forces of the river become focused together into big crashing funny looking white things. Properly set up for an individual's weight and ability, these modified boats excel at multiplying the fun factor, in a more individual sort of way. Skills become sharpened and reactions quickened as one spends time in the small, low-volume boats, and these skills will in time become ingrained even when switching to the "big water boat."

Finally, there is the element of creativity. I enjoy the relentless newness of the river, even after nearly two decades of white water paddling. I find the play spots to be forever different. Even at the same water level a hole will always seem to find a way to do something to me that is in some way new. When off the river, I (and some others), seem to enjoy extending this exploration even to the venerable plastic boat itself.

## Don't Modify That Boat!!!!

### A Serious Look at the Downside of Boat Modification

By Bob Gedekoh

Editor, *American Whitewater*

It is no secret that more and more rodeo boaters have been attempting to modify the shape of their plastic boats to "fit" their body habitus, paddling styles and skills. Current boat modification techniques range from the primitive- driving over the boat with a truck to flatten it out... to elegant and complex-like the one Dana Castro describes in the opinion piece we are publishing in this issue. At a recent AW board meeting, I discussed boat modification in general and Dana Castro's article in particular with a number of knowledgeable board members and with several plastic boat manufacturer's reps. The consensus of opinion was that, for 99.9% of whitewater boaters, plastic boat modification is not a good idea.

Nevertheless, everyone agreed that we should allow Dana to describe his method of boat modification... provided we made it clear

that American Whitewater, the editorial staff of the magazine and the boat manufacturers do not sanction such plastic boat modifications. We also agreed that we should tell you what our objections to boat modification are.

This magazine is a forum in which we allow boaters to express their views and opinions. Publication of an opinion piece here does not in any way imply that the editors agree with the author or that we think the ideas he or she expresses are good ones. The methods Dana Castro describes to modify plastic boats are, no doubt, better than the more primitive alternatives that many boaters are using. But that still does not mean following his "recipe" is in your best interests. In short, if you decide to modify your kayak... you do so **AT YOUR OWN RISK!**

So, why do we think that boat modification is not a good idea for most boaters?

The first reason, and the most important, is that we believe boat modifications may make a kayak less safe. Plastic boats are

designed and produced by experts with years of experience. The shape of these boats and the internal outfitting are carefully designed to maximize performance and safety. When you alter the shape and/or internal outfitting (foot braces, walls), you may increase the chances that the craft will fall victim to entrapment (pin or broach). It is also possible that, because of the compromised structural integrity, the boat will be more likely to collapse... trapping you inside. This type of entrapment could have fatal consequences. These are only two examples of the safety hazards associated with boat modification; there may be others! What must be recognized is that the consequences of such modifications may be unpredictable without the extensive performance and safety testing undertaken by manufacturers. Those who choose to modify their boats must be willing to take full responsibility for their actions. If they are injured or killed in such a boat, they or their families should not attempt to shift that responsibility to anyone else.

## Don't Modify That Boat!!!!

The second reason why you should not modify your boat is that you may damage it in the process. Different companies use different types of plastic. Some of these plastics are linear, others are cross-linked. These plastics have different melting points and characteristics. Every manufacturer we spoke with said that melting a boat would, at best, weaken it. As one rep said, "Every time you heat a boat to the point of changing its molecular structure, you are making it more likely to fold or warp." There is also the real chance that the boat might ignite, resulting in irreparable harm to the craft. Potentially harmful fumes might be released and it is even possible that you will start a fire. Obviously, no manufacturer should be expected to warrant a boat that has been modified.

Finally, we believe that for most recreational paddlers there is no need to modify existing products. There are at least ten kayak manufacturers distributing boats in this country. During the past few years there has been an explosion of new designs on the market. Kayaks now come in virtually every conceivable size and shape. With so many available designs, it is hard to imagine that the average recreational boater cannot find a suitable craft. If you shop around, you should be able

to find a boat to suit your purposes that will not require modification.

Many of the nation's top whitewater rodeo competitors paddle unmodified kayaks produced by familiar manufacturers. Admittedly, a few in this elite group make subtle modifications to their boats because they believe it will enhance their performance in competition. Does it give them an edge? It is hard to say. But it seems unlikely that such modification should be necessary for non-competitive play boaters. Boat modifications are not substitutes for natural ability, skill, and practice. Reshaping your kayak with a torch will not turn you into Dan Gavere, Jamie Simon, or Eric Jackson.

Dana Castro is an expert paddler and perfectionist. What works for him may not work for you. He would be the first person to tell you that. In his article he expresses his concern that recreational boaters will attempt to paddle difficult whitewater in modified crafts and he cautions against this. We share that concern. The bottom line is that if you choose to modify your boat, you do so at your own risk. It is a matter of personal responsibility. Every paddler must be willing to accept the consequences of his or her decisions. If you aren't willing to do that, don't even think about modifying your boat!

## Dana Castro Responds

Dana Castro, the author of "Modifying Plastic Boats," has reviewed *American Whitewater's* response to his article and states that he is fundamentally in agreement with it.

"I certainly am not recommending that paddlers routinely modify their boats," says Castro. "I am speaking to those who would be inclined to make changes to their boats but, following the plethora of 'quick and easy' approaches, might do so with crude technique and poor result."

Castro adds that, "Modification has its advantages and disadvantages, both are outlined, for the most part, by both articles... Performed carefully by boaters, who will then use the finished products carefully, the advantages may outweigh the disadvantages... For those who would take the issue too casually, I would agree, stay away from boat modification."



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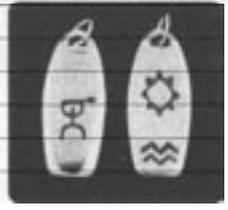
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